



Fasten Your Leashes

The Dogtravel Company invites you to fly the furry skies.

By **JUSTIN OCEAN**

Although the idea of stuffing your best friend into your luggage to sneak 'em along on a vacation makes for a good joke, for many dog lovers, checking pooch in the cargo hold is no laughing matter. In the last quarter of 2007, the airline industry saw five losses, six injuries, and three deaths while in transit, according to PetFlight.com. That's a small percentage of the total number of animals flown (Continental alone transported 10,263 animals in December), but given the starring roles pets play in many gay families, that's 14 incidents too many. When was the last time your *human* baby was lost in transit? Enter the **Dogtravel Company** (DogtravelCompany.net; annual membership \$29.99). Billed as a full-service travel club for dog lovers, it allows members to book in-cabin flights on noncommercial airlines with Fido tucked safely into the seat next to them. Additional perks include dog-friendly train service (complete with a grass-covered play car), vacation packages, auto rentals, discounts at pet-friendly hotels, insurance plans, and a pet-friendly cruise/flight package is in the works for 2009 as well. The company currently offers on-demand service for groups from four to 120 passengers (canine and human)—an especially alluring option for those who belong to kennel clubs or are hitting the dog show circuit—and starting this summer, regular flight service on 737s will be offered between high-demand cities such as New York, Fort Lauderdale, and Los Angeles. As demand grows, routes will follow. Tickets aren't cheap—comparable to a full-fare business-class seat each way for both humans and canines—but for many pet owners, the peace of mind is priceless. □