

# IT'S CATS-ONLY CARE



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**Veterinarian Irene Fujishima** dispenses a little TLC to 19-year-old Mercedes during the cat's visit to the Sacramento Cat Hospital this week. Michael and Phyllis Robertson of Gold River bring Mercedes to the hospital once a week to flush out the Himalayan cat's one working kidney. Mercedes has been a patient of the cat hospital for 10 years.

## More clinics offer exclusive treatment for clients who can be . . . a bit prickly

BY ANNE GONZALES  
*Bee Correspondent*

Cats know they're in a class of their own.

A cadre of cats-only veterinarians and their owners think so, too. They say the furry, purring species is so different from dogs that cats need their own doctors focused on their special needs.

### What is a diplomate?

A diplomate is a veterinarian who has completed a residency program or six years of clinical veterinary practice and passed a rigorous two-day written examination.

A cat-only practice is also calming to the pets and the humans around them.

"Cats get stressed out around dogs," Fujishima said. "Some owners put off taking their cat to the vet because of a bad experience. There are no barking

dogs here, and we try to make it as pleasant as possible for the cats and their owners."

Fujishima works at one of the nation's first and oldest cat hospitals, the Sacramento Cat Hospital in Carmichael, founded in 1974. In addition to the more routine services offered by small-animal clinics, the cat hospital gives help with more complex feline cases, including behavioral consultations, pain management, surgery, nutritional counseling, and geriatric and hospice care.

Half of the cats coming to the practice are more than 10 years old, said Billie Bensen Martin, owner of the hospital. She said the more complicated cases involve treatment of diabetes, hyperthyroidism, heart disease, kidney disease and cancer. The office also treats orthopedic and neurologic problems in cats.

Michael and Phyllis Robertson of Gold River bring their 19-year-old cat, Mercedes, to the Sacramento Cat Hospital once a week for a treatment to flush out the Himalayan cat's one working kidney. Mercedes has been a patient of the cat hospital for

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**Cat owner** Michael Robertson watches as Irene Fujishima, right, and vet tech Sandy Cooper examine Mercedes at the Carmichael cat hospital, which the 19-year-old pet visits once per week.



