The Geek who Snuggles up to Byte

Meet the mascots of the three Lemon Tree Hotels in the city. In keeping with the company’s Pooch Policy, the three branches have adopted a stray dog each.

**Meet Byte**, Her designation: Assistant, K9 Squad, Lemon Tree Hotels. Of at least 5 yrs. what her visiting card would’ve read — if she carried one. Instead, what she has is a wag and a wobble that can charm the pants off all the George Clooneys in the world. Byte is a golden Labrador pup who lives in the Lemon Tree Hotel in Electronic City. She was adopted onto and as a half-a-year-ago, when the hotel’s General Manager, Mahesh Venna, was returning from a rescue and found her abandoned on the road. Byte is now an integral part of the hotel and a member of the K9 Squad — that’s what the hotel’s dogs are called.

At the other end of the city, is **Snuggles aka Eat Tree**, a black and white Pit Bull, which resides at group’s Hotel near Ulsoor Lake. Not surprisingly, her name reflects her attitude and snuggles, we are told, loves her cuddles.

At their third outlet in the city, in Whitefield, is **Geek**, a fan and white Customer Analytics Specialist. According to the hotel staff, this “genius boy” is known to be observant, analytical and inquisitive. He loves in collecting information about guests and helps the team deliver delights. He loves to meet and interact with people. You will always find him wagging his tail at the sight of friendly faces and who better to let us know about guests than him,” says Anubhusha, K9 Squad, Corporate Communications in Sustainability Initiatives, The Lemon Tree Hotel Company. Salt also gives us a tip — Geek can be won over with a good funny stuff. Geek was an abandoned three-month-old pup when he came to live at the hotel.

Left unattended, these stray would have had to fend for themselves on the city’s streets scavenging for food and shelter like thousands of their counterparts. But a Pooch Policy came to their rescue.

Lemon Tree Hotels’ Pooch Policy was initiated by the group’s founder, Pata Kovani, himself a dog lover. Under this policy, all 27 hotels of the group’s presence, 2400+ rooms have adopted a Pooch. The adopted strays are named, microchipped, fed and get their daily dose of exercise. They are fed them to your four times a day, which includes a diet of milk and dog food, as well as vegetables and non-meat-based meals. Since Byte is a beach, she is fed Caesar and creamed meat.

The dogs are taken care of by a securely, positioned, like also we walk the dogs at least four times a day. Though there is a dog shelter built within the hotel premises, the dogs are free to pick their favourite spots. Geek, for instance, can be found — relaxing — in the back office or on the roof in the GM’s office. Each member of the K9 squad follows a daily schedule – which mostly involves, eating, walking, sleeping, playing, cuddling up, being petted and daydreaming — that’s strictly adhered to. Although no specific budget has been set aside for their upkeep, around Rs. 1000 a day is spent on the dogs. The staff and sometimes, hotel guests, enjoy playing with the dogs too. “Guests, who are dog lovers, are very happy to see the dogs and enjoy playing with them. Dogs are stress busters,” Lal says.

The Pooch Policy came into existence 12 years ago, when their first dog to be adopted, was picked up by Pata Kovani’s son, Akash at a park in Delhi in 2002 (incidentally, K9 is the name Lemon Tree was founded). The pup was kept in the office in an empty computer box lined with old clothes, before running into the house upstairs in winter. Sparkly went on to become a mascot of sorts for the hotel.

Sparkly Kovani is the name of the loyal and senior food critic of Lemon Tree Hotel. Lal says, Sparkly embodies those “values of beingness, fun and spirited energy.”

Since Sparkly is the winner of the K9 Squad, we have an assassin’s apprentice — Arjun, a Playful boy, K9 Squad Street Artist, reassuring assistant to the nine-dog-club. This dapper dog, black and brown, with white legs, definitely has “wet noodle blood in veins.”

“The dogs represent team work, fun, and play every day and a lot like life,” Lal says. The K9 Squad needs in agreement. Interestingly, Lemon Tree Hotel has no pet policy for guests.