

Giacomo's Patio Is Soon Going to the Dogs

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Now Houstonians can add one more restaurant patio to the list of dog-friendly dining zones. **Lynette Hawkins**, the owner of **Giacomo's**—who named the restaurant after her late dog—says she will soon be in possession of the license allowing her **guests to dine with their dogs** on the expansive patio overlooking Westheimer.

The \$117.75 license is issued after the Houston Health Department certifies that the space conforms to certain standards, including the availability of hand sanitizer and a waste-disposal station. Giacomo's passed this week.

Says Hawkins:

I wanted the certificate because I love the company of dogs, as do many of my customers. I grew up in Italy and France, where people were very relaxed about allowing pets in restaurants. We always took Schnapps, our dachshund, to our favorite neighborhood restaurants, where he would compete with the resident dog and/or cat for table scraps. It seemed contradictory to have a restaurant named for my beloved yellow lab, Giacomo, without having a dog-friendly patio," Hawkins says, when asked why she petitioned the city for the license. "Many of my patrons who live in the neighborhood walk their dogs over to Giacomo's to get take-out, and all of them have told me they would prefer to eat on the patio with their dogs, but they want to spend as much time as possible with their pets after a long day of work and separation.

I think allowing dogs on my patio may affect my business incrementally: my regular customers with dogs will probably dine here more frequently, and I may get a few new customers when they hear about the patio," Hawkins says. "I don't think I will lose anyone. Judging by the way just about all my customers ooh and ah over the pictures of Giacomo in the entrance, I am pretty sure they are all dog lovers.