

## Celebrating 25 Years of Unparalleled, End-of-Life Pet Care in a Brand New, State-of-the Art Memorial Center

Double in size, Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory's new memorial center is located at 2122 Whitfield Park Avenue in Sarasota



By Candace T. Botha

For Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory, 2013 has been a year of extraordinary significance. In addition to celebrating 25 years of consummate service as the leading pet crematory in Southwest Florida, owners Raymond and Barbara Bounds have realized a long-held vision of purchasing a building and creating a memorial center of their very own.

Weary of paying rent in a building that was not well maintained and was situated on property with "no aesthetic value," the couple began the arduous search for a new location last year.

"Acquiring property of our own not only allowed us the freedom to expand, but also gave us complete control of the building's appearance," Raymond comments. "For many years, we have wanted a more modern facility that also offered a more welcoming and comforting ambiance for our clients."

After months of construction and renovations that were completed to the Bounds' exact specifications, the new memorial center—which is double the size of the former facility—officially became operational in October.

Inside the front door of the 6,000 square-foot facility, which is located at 2122 Whitfield Park Avenue in Sarasota, a waiting

room decorated in warm earth tones and furnished with comfortable couches, provides a quiet space where grieving pet owners can gather to wait for their pets' cremains.

Adjacent to the waiting room is a showroom, where an extensive assortment of urns are on display, should pet owners wish to select a different urn.

"Most of our clients are very pleased with the beautifully engraved wooden box that is part of our most popular cremation package," Barbara says. "Our intention is never to sell our clients other urns, but to make them aware of the extensive range of options for memorializing their pets that are available."

Pet owners also can find a selection of urns and pet loss products online at Belspur Oaks' Web site, [www.BelspurOaks.com](http://www.BelspurOaks.com).

The showroom also serves as a quiet place where pet owners can hold an intimate memorial service or spend a few final moments with their pets in private viewings prior to cremation.

To complement the purchase of the new building, the Bounds also bought three state-of-the-art, computer-controlled cremation units. The fuel-efficient crematories also are environmentally friendly, using only natural gas.

Both the upgrade in equipment and the addition of a third cremation unit enables Belspur Oaks to increase efficiency and return each pet's cremains to the owner more quickly.

Cremations completed same day or within 24 hours always

have been standard procedure at Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory. Equally important is the crematory's three-step identification system that includes thorough documentation with a three-part form and a tracking tag that stays with the pet through each stage of the cremation process, so pet owners are assured that they only receive the remains of their pets.

Outdoors at the new facility, the property features a much larger parking lot, shaded by four magnificent oak trees. To the left of the memorial center is a large, grassy area, where Ray-

The new showroom offers a wide selection of urns and a glowing fireplace



mond and Barbara plan to create a Remembrance Garden.

"Our vision is to create a peaceful, private area where pet owners can spend time in reflection and find solace as they mourn the loss of their pets," Barbara says.

For both Raymond and Barbara, the Remembrance Garden, which is slated for completion by next spring, will exemplify the care and compassion they offer grieving pet owners.

It was, in fact, their own experience years ago, when their beloved cat that had passed away was returned to them in a empty pet food bag that had been sealed with duct tape, that Barbara and Raymond made the decision to offer animal owners a more dignified and respectful end-of-life experience for their pets.

"The passing of a pet is devastating and, for some, can be more distressing than the loss of a human," Barbara says. "We are here to listen and to help pet owners move forward and find peace."

In addition to the newly designed memorial center, Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory now also offers extended grief services.

Longtime supporters of Bentley's House, a Sarasota-based pet loss support group that meets on the third Thursday of each month at Unity of Sarasota on Proctor Road, Raymond and Bar-

bara also include a comforting grief booklet with each cremation package. The booklet, complete with colorful photos and inspiring quotations, has received many compliments from both pet owners and veterinarians alike.

Community residents who wish to have their pets cremated have three options: they can contact their veterinarians, who will handle the arrangements; they can call Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory directly; or they can contact Vet Care Express Animal

Warm & inviting, the waiting room provides a quiet place to find solace



Three new, state-of-the-art cremation units allow quicker return of cremains to pet owners



Ambulance, who will transport the deceased pet to Belspur Oaks.

It takes true commitment to work in a difficult and often stressful industry for so many years. But despite the heartache they experience in dealing with death day after day, Raymond and Barbara are proud of the legacy of quality care that has become the hallmark of Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory.

"It makes me feel so good inside to know that

I am helping people who are really hurting," Barbara says. "The positive feedback that we have received consistently through the years verifies that we are providing a much-needed service with love, care and dignity."

"I know that we are doing the right thing in our community," Barbara adds. "You have to have a passion for helping people to do this kind of work, or you just won't last."

What more could you ask for from the people with whom you entrust your pet when it's time to say your final goodbye? 🐾

Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory's new memorial center is located at 2122 Whitfield Park Avenue in Sarasota. For more information, call 941-751-5044, or visit [www.BelspurOaks.com](http://www.BelspurOaks.com).

Photos courtesy of Belspur Oaks Pet Crematory