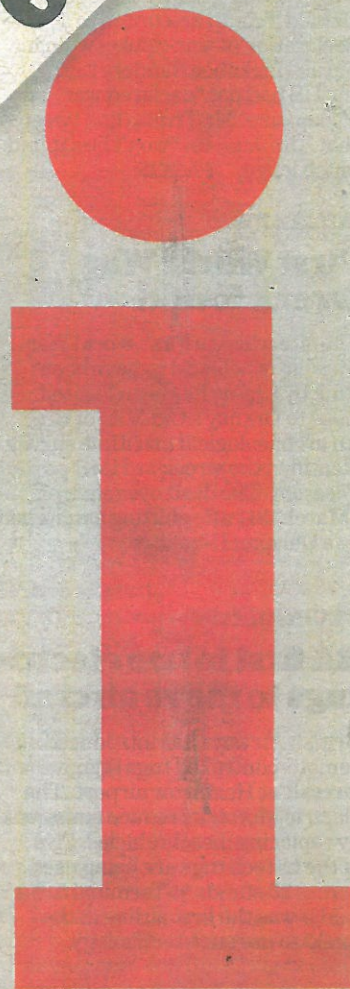


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THE **i** PAPER - BRITAIN'S FIRST AND ONLY CONCISE **QUALITY** TITLE



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LIFESTYLE

The vet that's cool for cats

By making his clinic stress-free, Dr Jeremy Campbell is revolutionising pet treatment. By **Marie Carter**

Sitting in his carrier in a busy waiting room, Felix the tortoiseshell cat is on hyper alert. Two large dogs are eyeballing him only yards away. Normally, he'd be running now, if not confined to his temporary bed, left leg immobile due to a road accident a week ago.

When cats are taken to the vet, they often find the experience stressful - not only because they're ill or injured but because it can be a terrifying place for them. The cacophony of canine barking, whining and clawing can send a cat's cortisol stress hormones soaring through the roof. That's

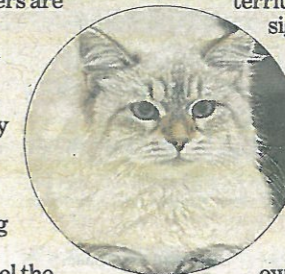
why many owners resist taking their beloved mog to the vet in the first place - and why Dr Jeremy Campbell was moved to launch the London Cat Clinic, designed and built around their specific needs. "Cats like to control their home environment, and being taken out of this without any preparation or

consideration makes them nervous and increases anxiety, which puts their self-preservation mode in overdrive," explains Dr Campbell, saying other pet owners are not usually to blame.

"Following on from the trauma of the carrier and trip, they are greeted by a lovely friendly Labrador. Unfortunately, while the dog's owner thinks the dog is being 'friendly', the cat and the cat owner don't feel the same way."

Beyond a no dogs policy, what else do they do to help? "We release a synthetic calming pheromone

into the air. This is the same as the pheromone that cats release when they are 'bunting' or rubbing up against objects that mark their home territory. It sends the olfactory signal that 'there is no need to be anxious, this place is fine'," he says.



Dr Campbell and his team also give the cat owner transportation advice and their medical specialisation helps, too. "Our staff are all cat owners and know there are specific, gentle ways that we can handle our patients," he adds. Because of their small body size, cats are very prone to lose a lot of

heat when they are anaesthetised, which can significantly delay their recovery on the day and also the resultant wound healing if surgery has been performed. The team use circulated warm air blankets to cover patients throughout surgery. Dr Campbell's ultimate ambition is to revolutionise a visit to the vets for all cats. Even the average inner-city, hard-pressed practice, he says, can help stressed cats by having a separate seating area for cat owners, a separate cat ward, pheromone diffusers, and an improved understanding of a cat's needs.

Marie Carter is the editor and publisher of 'Pets Magazine'. Visit petsmag.co.uk