

## Heavenly Hutches Launches Range of Miniature Hutches

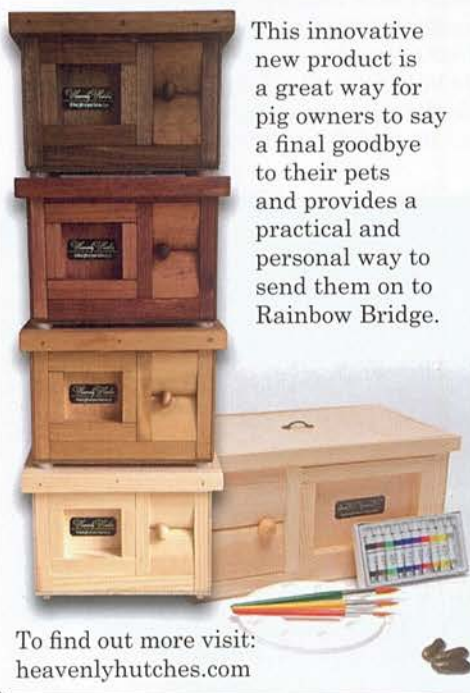
Heavenly Hutches has produced a range of small 'hutches' to help us say goodbye to our beloved guinea pigs who have crossed to Rainbow Bridge.

It is never easy when we lose a beloved pet, and when they pass away it can be hard to know what to do next. Heavenly Hutches has launched two new products specifically to help pet owners deal with the loss of their pet, by providing a comforting 'mini hutch' to bury them in, or hold their ashes.

The larger of the two products is designed to be buried. It comes in four different colours and is lined with velvet inside. Each design comes with a gold ribbon tied scroll, which is inked with a beautiful Rainbow Bridge poem and a space for you to write your own personal message. These can be buried with your pet as a final goodbye and help owners deal with their loss of their beloved furry. Additionally it comes with instructions on how to bury your pet correctly, as well as details on how to find your nearest pet cemetery.

One of the four wooden designs comes in plain wood with a ten-piece acrylic paint set, for those wishing to create their own design.

The second product also comes in four wooden designs, and also resembles a mini hutch, but is designed to hold your pet's ashes. There is room on the top for a plaque for those wishing to inscribe their pet's name.



This innovative new product is a great way for pig owners to say a final goodbye to their pets and provides a practical and personal way to send them on to Rainbow Bridge.

To find out more visit:  
[heavenlyhutches.com](http://heavenlyhutches.com)

## Live Streaming From Guinea Pig Web Cams!

When Guinea Pig Magazine stumbled across the HappyCavy website, it's safe to say that we were nothing short of amazed. As we looked around, an image of a rather impressive C&C cage fills the homepage, displaying ramps and tubes and, if you look hard enough, you can just make out the furry behinds of a few piggies. Upon further inspection however, this cage is nothing short of extraordinary, and these pigs are, in fact, cavy celebrities.

Around the cage are four cameras, each one streaming live footage of the pigs doing their daily activities. More impressively, the web cams have over 2,000 visits a day from people all over the world.

Guinea Pig Magazine eagerly tested it out, and much to our delight, we were able to flick from camera to camera, watching the HappyCavy herd go about their daily business. Not only did this seem very impressive, to use technology in such a way, but the HappyCavy herd have their own feeding tube in which users can use an app from their mobile phone to feed the guinea pigs treats. Yes - our minds were blown too!

For a small fee, you can see treats whooshing down the tube and watch as the herd enjoy them, and part of the payment goes towards Orange County Cavy Haven to support other guinea pigs.



*The guinea pig Treater took about a year and a half to develop, test, and deploy*

### OUR EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

*We chatted exclusively to Brian, HappyCavy's human and innovative piggy mad inventor, to find out about the HappyCavy Herd and their celebrity lifestyle...*

#### *Hi Brian, tell us about the HappyCavy herd!*

The HappyCavy Herd – consisting of Hammy, Feebee, and Buttercup – are the three guinea pigs featured on the live guinea pig webcams. Hammy is 'Official Spokes-pig' of HappyCavy, with Buttercup and occasionally Feebee making appearances on the HappyCavy blog.

At 5½ years old, Hammy is one-half of the original cast-members of HappyCavy. The first cavies to be broadcast were Hammy and the late Ms. Piglet.

Hammy was adopted at about 4 to 6 months old. She is the 'author' of the HappyCavy Guinea Pig Blog and has written over 180 articles (with some help from us humans), on topics ranging from guinea pig health to nutrition and care advice.

Feebee and Buttercup began their life at HappyCavy in January 2011. They were adopted as a bonded pair from a private party in Spanaway, Washington, USA. Buttercup is a natural born cuddler. Her favorite past-time is purring and rumbling up to her sisters, inviting them to play. She will always accept a rub on the head or behind the ears, and happily obliges long cuddle sessions.



Feebee is a fuzz monster, and the most bullish of the crew. Fortunately, Hammy is patient, and allows her the space she needs. Large, wispy black fuzz hangs from her face and chubby bottom. She is feisty, strong-headed, and will quickly nudge away any guinea pig who gets to the hay or pellets before her. She appears to merely tolerate The Humans, in that she has figured out there is a connection between The Humans and food.

### **What gave you the idea to start live streaming your pigs?**



We live in Portland, Oregon, on the West Coast of the United States. In early 2009, shortly after adopting Hammy and Piglet, the HappyCavy Humans had to take separate trips to the US East Coast.

We scrambled to find an appropriate 'pig-sitter' for our new family members, and settled on a company we felt we could trust. But, being the ever-cautious humans we are, we wanted to keep an eye on the HappyCavy guinea pigs while we were away. So a website was built (Human #1, Brian, is a web designer and developer by trade) and we installed two webcams trained on to food and water to ensure they were being cared for properly. We began broadcasting the web streams publicly, to make it easier to check in.

It was never the intention to keep the website and webcams online indefinitely. It was simply an easy safety measure while the care-takers were away.

Installing the webcams was a very good idea. During the vacation, the webcams were used to discover that food and care were not being delivered daily or as directed by the pet sitters. There was certain neglect on the pet sitting company's part.

Fortunately, we were vigilantly checking in and caught it early. It only happened one day. Friends were called and, fortunately, someone was found to begin providing immediate attention. But, after we returned, we found we enjoyed 'spying' on the guinea pigs throughout the day!

During 2009, there wasn't as much about guinea pigs online as there is today. Information was harder to come by, and facts were fuzzy at best. We thought that the webcams were the perfect way to show people what guinea pigs were really like: their behavior, diet, interaction with each other and humans etc.

A few months after returning from vacation, a re-design of HappyCavy.com was conducted and a blog was launched. Years later, more guinea pigs were added, along with 2 more webcams, which brings us to present day.

### **What was the inspiration behind the treat feeder?**

The inspiration for the treater was initial reason we started

HappyCavy: an experiment in creating virtual, real-time ways to connect humans to guinea pigs.

Currently, the HappyCavy Forever Home room is decked-out with wireless, remote-controlled air conditioning, lighting, and a variety of other monitoring and security systems, all developed and deployed by the HappyCavy team of Humans.

The Guinea Pig Treater took about a year and a half to develop, test, and deploy. We are currently exploring alternative payment structures, a more intuitive user experience, and better Guinea Pig Treater placement on the webcams. This all must be negotiated with our current payment processor, with whom talks are already in progress.

### **Without giving away your inventive secrets, how does the treat feeder work?**

The Guinea Pig Treater is a micro-controlled mechanism that is wired into the 4-camera HappyCavy.com webcam system. It is connected via guinea pig magic to an online payment system and front-facing 'web app' that users can access from their mobile devices or desktop computers. Users can pay \$1 (USD) to run the Guinea Pig Treater for up to 24 hours.

### **So the pigs can be given treats with no humans in sight? Have they worked out what this mysterious tube is?**

Absolutely. It didn't take them very long at all. The HappyCavy Herd are all very comfortable with their humans, so when webcam system maintenance or Guinea Pig Treater installation was under way, they got right up to what was being done, and after just a few test 'treatings', they knew its purpose.

Hammy is disinterested, which is her modus operandi. Feebee will swarm the Guinea Pig Treater if there is nothing more interesting to chew on at that moment. Buttercup is the most excited. She acts like a puppy. If she is awake, the brief light sequence which signals to viewers that treats are dispensing simply mesmerize her. Each time a friend gives them a treat online, she runs to the bowl nearest to her and waits for whatever will show up. It's always the same thing: a few timothy hay pellets, just delivered specially enough to catch her attention. Thank goodness for Buttercup, lover of all things flashy.

We have experimented with making the pellets more enticing. When developing the Guinea Pig Treater prototype about a year ago, we – above all – needed to make sure it would be safe for the HappyCavy guinea pigs. Thus, we are not feeding any 'treats' per se - just regular timothy-hay pellets sourced from our local feed store.





First, we experimented with adding dried parsley to a container of pellets. After a few days, we removed the pellets and used them in the feeder. It didn't seem to encourage their interest, and it was simply very difficult to keep up with making them. So we're exploring other ways to capture Feebee and Hammy's interest with safe and measurably non-harmful methods, whether it's visual or with the 'treat' feed itself.

**Do many people tune in to see and feed your piggies?**

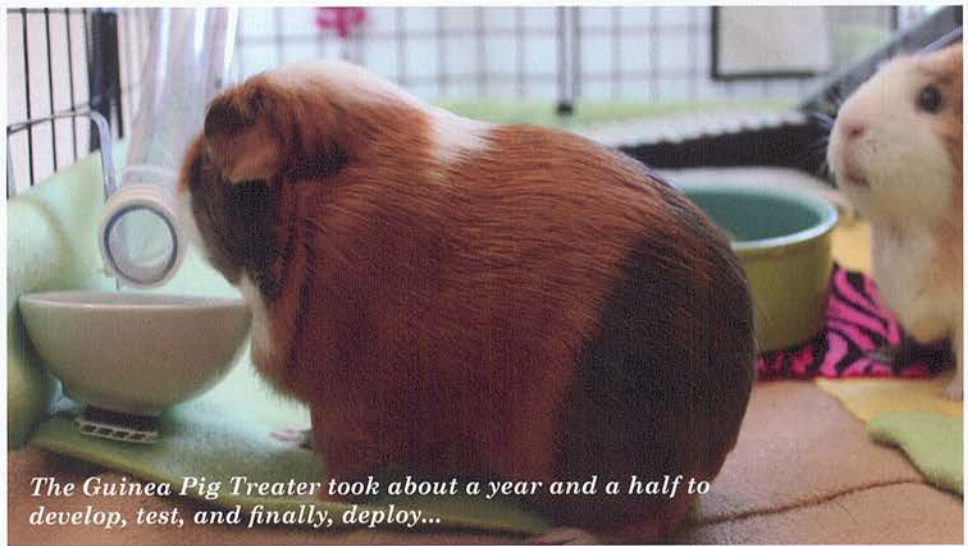
We get a lot of visits to the website, our blog, and people who tune in to the webcams. There are over 2 thousand visits each day for the webcams. During this summer, the Treater averaged about 5 to 6 uses per week. It has seemed to garner a healthy amount of traction. As we continue to make improvements to the device, the web app, and the user experience, our goal is to create an entertaining and rescue-supporting past-time for other guinea pig enthusiasts around the world.

**Tell us about your pig's personalities!**

Hammy is the oldest of the HappyCavy Herd. She is quiet, patient, and very intelligent. To illustrate her intelligence, Hammy hates being picked up (like most guinea pigs). But, within a few months, she trained the Humans to use her cuddle sack to pick her up for floor time. When it's time, a Human points to her sack and says, "Get in the tube, Hammy!" or "Tube time!" She gets right in and squeals the whole way, reminding us to be careful. If an attempt is made to pick her up, she runs. Then she stands by her tube with a look like, "We do this my way, Human!"

Feebee is the bull-dog. She will push her way to the food bowl, but she loves to play with her original cage-mate, Buttercup. Feebee is a happy, lively guinea pig, full of energy. Her wispy locks of black fuzz highlight her firecracker personality.

Buttercup is just here to make friends and cuddle. She will chase Hammy around the cage to play, nudging her butt and purring against her to instigate play time. While Hammy sometimes engages in play, it's usually up to the Humans to reach in the cage, give her a good rub (to which she pushes back on their hands and purrs deeply), and take her for a cuddle if need be. She is blissfully unaware of most things going on around her, unless it's an invitation for a good-natured chase or snuggle. The one thing she is aware



*The Guinea Pig Treater took about a year and a half to develop, test, and finally, deploy...*

*(And above) Stars of the Piggy Reality show, Feebee, Hammy, and Buttercup*



of, however, is when that Treat Feeder lights up. She runs right beside it and waits patiently, mesmerized by the lights.

**How much have you raised for the charity so far?**

We have currently raised \$200 for the charity, and we'd love to see more. One half of the purchase price (after fees) is donated to Orange County Cavy Haven, a guinea pig rescue in Orange County, California, USA. The other half goes towards administrative costs such as electricity, maintenance, and web hosting costs. We are working with our payment processor to greatly reduce our fees; we hope to donate these potential additional earnings to the guinea pig charity.

**You're obviously a keen piggy lover; where did your love and passion for guinea pigs come from?**

We have both had animals since a young age. Mostly cats, but also hamsters, parakeets, and fish. Around 2009, they wanted to add a fuzzy friend to the family. Unfortunately, Human #2 is allergic to cats, and neither of us enjoy being woken up in the early morning to walk a dog. After a lot of soul-searching, research, and visiting with different types of animals, guinea pigs were the obvious choice. Shy, generally good-natured, and slow to warm up, their introverted personalities mirrored aspects of each of the Humans'.

As vegetarians (and, for 10 years, vegans), we are passionate about animal rights and are keenly aware of the suffering animals endure every day. While HappyCavy is a welcoming, non-judgmental community for ALL guinea pig enthusiasts and care-takers, our advocacy for "adopt over shop" is something we attempt to work into HappyCavy whenever the opportunity arises.

**To see the HappyCavy herd and view them on live cameras, visit [HappyCavy.com](http://HappyCavy.com) - and to see Hammy and the Human's blog visit [www.happycavy.com/blog](http://www.happycavy.com/blog)**

*We are just a little bit addicted to the HappyCavy webcam here at GPM!*