

# Dialling up the décor for your pets

A pet-friendly design can contribute to a house's appeal

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Special to Postmedia Network

**W**e all love our pets, but sometimes they can take over even the best laid decorating plans.

Scattered toys, dingy doggy beds, and sloppy feeding areas can all take the shine off your home décor.

But there's no need to turn a home into a dumping ground for pets' needs. There are plenty of ways to dress up or hide unsightly items that are both practical and fashionable.

You can even turn areas such as mud rooms or laundry rooms into veritable palaces for your four-footed friends.

## Hidden treasures

Jane Lockhart, interior designer at Jane Lockhart Interior Design in Toronto says one of the big things that can add to the clutter is all the accessories you end up collecting, such as leashes, dog boots or clothing.

Her suggestion? "If you don't have a mudroom or garage to store them, you can always have an ottoman or stool that opens up that looks like part of your kitchen or living room furniture."

On some projects, Lockhart has designed a separate dog pantry for keeping medications, food, and other items stored in handy pull-out sections. "For my own dog, I did a full wall of cabinetry but instead of the doors winging open, I used roll-up garage-style doors, which made it easier to pull things out."

## Unsightly bowls

Getting rid of unsightly bowls is easy. Simply turn a bottom drawer into a handy built-in feeding station, she says.



If you don't have a mudroom or garage to store all your pet accessories, you can always use an ottoman or stool.

"You can do that anywhere you have cabinetry such as a kitchen or mud room. You just pull out the drawer and the bowls are right there."

If you're short on cabinetry, incorporate a small drawer under a small stool instead.

## Sleeping in style

Another big eye sore can be dog crates. There's a good selection of designer crates out there, some of which look like small tables that can be matched to your human furnishings.

For owners who only crate their dogs at night, a simple daytime fix is a cover that matches the fabric of your bed covering, Lockhart says.

For pet beds, there's no shortage of shapes, sizes and cover designs. Some even come with matching



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For the ultimate glam feature, look to your laundry room. It's the perfect place to add a doggie spa.

throw pillows for the sofa. If you're tight for space, a pet-sized Murphy bed that can be closed when it's not needed is a perfect choice.

## Finishing touches

You can always add some bling with some artful finishing touches, from designer jars and containers for treats and food, to decorative hooks and boxes for poop bags or cat litter boxes.

If you're the type of owner that lets your pet get on couches and beds, it's easy to find a pet step stool can be matched to your décor, from classic to contemporary styles.

## A day at the spa

For the ultimate glam feature look to your laundry room. It's the perfect place to add a doggie spa, says Diana Di Carlo, sales and operations manager for Desco Plumbing and Heating Supply Inc. in Mississauga.

"That's where a lot of people are putting in pet washing stations. Laundry rooms are often part of the

main floor and no longer a dungeon in the basement that no one sees."

Options can run from the simple such as incorporating steps into an existing cabinet that can be pulled out for the dog to climb to the laundry tub.

Or if you have the budget, go for a custom designed half-height shower units complete with original tile work and sleek fixtures. For a bit of extra, why not add a cozy towel warmer for your pet's towels and blankets.

While you're at it, you can extend the existing pipes to add a handy

water-drinking station, Di Carlo suggests.

And for home owners or cottagers whose dogs love romping outdoors in the mud and sand, a small outdoor shower base with a wall mounted faucet and handheld shower can come in very handy.

At the end of the day, a pet-friendly design can actually contribute to a house's appeal when it comes time to put it on the market, Lockhart says. "It's something more and more people actually value as a buying feature."



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