

kitchen & bath DESIGN NEWS[®]

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Positive Outlook



Pet-Friendly Spaces

Planning a space for the entire family may also include designing in conveniences for the beloved family pet, from feeding stations, bathing areas and organized storage for toys to a cozy dedicated napping space.

BY ELLEN CHEEVER, CMKBD, ASID, CAPS

As an occasional TV watcher, I've noticed a change in the way family pets are referred to these days. No longer are we "pet owners," now we are "pet parents." Dogs in some ads are referred to by the adult as "my other child!"

Such references to the family pet come as no surprise to me. Many of my clients want space for their pets to nap, organized storage for their toys, a convenient bathing area and a properly planned feeding station included within their new kitchen space.

So in 2016 and beyond, in addition to designing the kitchen for the way a family lives, we should include design ideas for the family's four-legged members. Everything from Fido's size, fur length, personality and age should be taken into account.

Let's start by considering an area for the dog to "keep an eye on the family" while napping or resting.

SPACE FOR NAPPING

Kitchen designers have been taught to use every inch of space for storage of food stuffs and other kitchen-related paraphernalia. In the future, we'll allocate floor space differently. For multi-generational families, as well as families with a beloved pet (notably if it is a large beloved pet!), we need to leave open floor space in a plan. Think about the family that has a three-year-old, as well as a teenager and perhaps an aging aunt: Leaving floor space for the 40" wide x 30" deep x 36" high playpen, or a 24"-diameter roll-around activity seat for the youngster is a good idea.

Planning a seating space at the island for a mature family member to be able to be part of the cooking fun, as well as part of the conversation, is also important. Including a nearby computer station for the teenager will assist in adult supervision of the user's Internet activity.

◀ A New Jersey showroom includes an example of a pet's lounging area tucked underneath a peninsula cabinet.

*Designed by Peter Salerno, CMKBD, Peter Salerno, Inc., Wyckoff, NJ, www.petersalerno.com.
Photography by Peter Rymwid, Peter Rymwid Photography, Wayne, NJ, www.peterrymwid.com*

☑ In another showroom near Philadelphia, a cozy spot for a small pet is positioned underneath a custom banquette in a kitchen display.

Designed by Ellen Cheever, CMKBD, ASID, CAPS, Ellen Cheever & Associates, Wilmington, DE, www.ellencheever.com, for Tague Lumber, Inc., Philadelphia, PA, www.taguelumber.com



☑ A design firm in the Washington, D.C. area created a wonderful pet center just off the kitchen. The dogs' beds are placed apartment style — two floors! The pantry has been raised, allowing for a pull-out drawerhead to conceal their pets' food bowls, or provide a third spot for a smaller family pet to relax!

*Designed/Built by Four Brothers LLC, Washington, DC, www.fourbrotherscarpentry.com.
Photo: Hadley Photography, Fairfax, VA, www.greghadleyphotography.com*

Space to create a cozy resting spot for the pet will be appreciated, as well. The animal's size dictates the floor space needed.

- Round beds, for example, are available in 25", 36", 44" and 52" diameters to accommodate dogs weighing less than 25 lbs., all the way up those that are 90+ lbs. in weight.
- Rectangular dog couches take even more room.
 - ~ A small 25" x 20" couch for pets under 25 lbs.
 - ~ A medium sized 36" x 28" dog couch for a 25 to 60 lb. pet.
 - ~ A large 44" x 34" dog couch for a 60 to 90 lb. dog.
 - ~ An extra large 52" x 42" dog couch for a 90+ lb. pet.

There may be a second spot requested for a dog's personal sleeping area! Many pet owners (particularly those with smaller dogs) will build in a permanent pet bed, either in a drawer or alcove, or create a little cushioned window seat for them so they can be "part of the family" without being underfoot.

A PET CRATE OR CARRIER

Most dog owners will use a crate for their dog, at least initially in the training period, and many will keep the crate, since dogs like to have a private space or "den" that they can call their own.

There are a number of furniture-style crates on the market today that really look like furniture — some are gorgeous carved wood designs, and many look like and double as end tables (since no one wants a big crate sitting in their Great Room).

These unique furniture-style crates vary greatly in size. Knowing standard dog crate and carrier sizes will assist the design professional during the initial planning stage.

- 20" L x 30" W x 15" H for a small pet.
- 36" L x 23" W x 27" H for a medium pet.
- 42" L x 30" W x 32" H for a large pet
- 56" L x 39" W x 48" H for an extra large pet.

You also want to consider the atmosphere. All special areas used by two- or four-legged family members — that playpen or the dog couch — should be planned a safe and comfortable distance from air conditioning or heating ducts, out of direct sunlight throughout the day. If you live in an extremely cold climate, adding heat below a tile or wood floor in the entire kitchen will be an added advantage for the pet's napping pillow, as well as make bare feet more comfortable for the people using the space. Or, plan an electrical outlet at floor level in the pet's area so the client can include a heated mat underneath or incorporate into the dog's bed.



Here is a great example of a private space for the family's pet member, which is integrated into the cabinetry. Neat and comfortable for all!

Keep the pet area away from a major traffic pattern used by the cook and visiting guests. One interesting approach I have seen is extending a counter without a cabinet underneath so the pet resting area can be somewhat enclosed in the captured area. Talk with your clients – they'll know their dog's personality, and where the dog will be the most comfortable.

Once you have found a spot for the family pet to relax or sleep, remember they also enjoy a good meal, tolerate an occasional bath and require a place for their horde of chewed up toys. Let's start with a pet enjoying a meal – I'm going to focus on dogs, but the ideas are transferable to other types of pets as well.

THE FEEDING STATION

Before planning a feeding station, learn about the pet's eating schedule.

- Scenario A: Some dogs eat all of their food immediately when it's put down; therefore, the food bowls can be concealed a good part of the day.
- Scenario B: Other dogs eat a little bit now, a little bit later; therefore, the bowls must be available all day long.

Regardless of the meal service, water is filled/changed periodically throughout day with clean/cold water, or even one of today's more popular pet drinking fountains. An open eating and drinking center might be the best solution.

Be sensitive to the dog's drinking habits. As much as we love them, when dogs drink, they sometimes slobber! Your clients may not be on top of it with a mop every time this happens. Therefore, you do not want any surface surrounding these built-in bowls that will be ruined from repeated attacks of moisture.

PET FOOD STORAGE

Plan a spot to store dry and/or canned dog food close to the pet's eating spot. Realize that dry food will stay fresh and dry if it's in tightly sealed bins. Be aware of the size and weight of the bag of dog food your client normally purchases: You may want to transfer it into bins that are placed on a roll-out shelf.

Dry dog food comes in a variety of bag sizes: 3 lbs., 5 lbs., 15 lbs., 20 lbs., 30 lbs., 40 lbs. and 50 lbs. However, the size of the bag purchased is not always based on the size of the dog, but



In a classic island kitchen, a special drawer that extends to the floor, by attaching the toe kick to the drawer runners, is created for a small pet that dines at a specific time. The concern with this type of a 'center stage' pull-out feeding station is that it may interfere with a major traffic pattern for the humans who use the space.

Photo: Courtesy of Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry, www.plainfancycabinetry.com.

rather on how the client shops. Canned dog food must also be considered. Some dogs only eat canned, some only dry, others a mixture of both. Cans are usually purchased according to the size of the pet: 3.5 oz., 13 oz., 22 oz. cans, etc.

Wall-mounted pet food bins, in a variety of shapes and sizes, are available that conveniently store dry dog food. I've been told that cat owners sometimes use these bins to store litter products. Cat litter comes in a variety of containers (pails, jugs, bags, boxes/cartons) and sizes: typically in 8 lb., 15 lb., 20 lb., 25 lb., 30 lb., 35 lb. and 40 lb. containers.

Many dog and cat owners also use elevated feeders bowls, not only for hygiene and cleanliness, but also because they can be easier on pets with back or neck problems or arthritis – and



A spot for a pet's food bowls needs to be located at the appropriate height for ergonomically sound mealtime use. An architectural firm in Portland, OR created a nice eating station for a larger dog by creating a niche at the end of an island. Note that the miniature table containing the recessed bowls can be easily removed from the enclosure for servicing.

Photo: Courtesy of Buckenmeyer Architecture, Portland, OR, www.buckenmeyerllc.com

In a beautiful display at the Chicago Mart, an elegant banquette completes this transitional kitchen. At the end of the banquette is a pull-out feeding area. Because it's against a wall, no one needs to be worried about someone tripping over the feeding drawer!

Photo: Courtesy of Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry, www.plainfancycabinetry.com



❏ A designer who attended one of my *KBDN* seminars shared this great island solution with me. The dog feeding and water bowls are tucked at the end of an island for continuous feeding and safety for all.

❏ Pet bowls should not be placed in a heavily used people walking area. Using the end of a base cabinet makes sense. In this excellent example, a stone top is used in the enclosure where the removable bowls are placed. Rather than a simple wood top, some type of easily-to-clean surface should be used on the feeding station's 'counter' surface.

Designed by Mark Haddad, AKBD, and Susan Cracraft, AKBD, Haddad Hakansson Design Studio, Watertown, MA, www.hhdesignstudio.com.

Photo: Joseph St. Pierre, JS Photography, www.jsphotography.us

❏ This is another great example of the strategy. In this case the bowls are in a cabinet right next to the mudroom, once again inset into countertop material.

Designed by Mark Haddad, AKBD, and Louie Kerbici, Haddad Hakansson Design Studio, Watertown, MA, www.hhdesignstudio.com.

Photo: Jamie Salomon, James R. Salomon Photography, www.salomonphoto.com/home.html

some veterinarians believe they can help minimize the risk of bloat, a potentially deadly condition that primarily impacts large dogs. Additionally, raised feeders can be easier for older pet owners or physically challenged people for whom bending to pick up bowls from the floor can be challenging. Elevated feeders come in a variety of forms, from elegant hand-carved wood with the pet's name engraved into the design and decorative wrought iron to simple plastic or laminate. Some can be designed as permanent built-ins while others are easily moved to wherever they are needed.

In recent years, the holistic trend of "raw feeding" has become increasingly popular with dog owners concerned about the large number of pet food recalls, and intrigued by a growing

body of research showing the benefits of feeding dogs a "species-appropriate diet." For homeowners who feed raw, this may mean a need for greater freezer space (for buying in bulk), as well as greater concerns about sanitation (just as with handling raw food while cooking, those who are feeding raw to their dog may want hands-free faucets and easy-to-clean surfaces that have antibacterial properties to minimize cross contamination).

TOY STORAGE

For keeping toys at bay, think about about a hamper-type mechanism, where toys can be easily tossed into or removed. Or, consider a box that sits on the floor (perhaps a drawer box) so they are easily retrievable by the pet.

❏ Special purpose storage cabinets originally designed as trash receptacles can make a great place to store dry dog food. In this example, the trash needs are filled by the large bin. Dog food can be stored in the removable smaller container in position two.

Photo: Courtesy of Häfele America Co, www.hafele.com/us

❏ For larger dogs, or pet parents who shop in bulk, a full waste receptacle may be best reserved for dry food stuffs. Make sure you specify a storage system that includes a lid.

Photo: Courtesy of Rev-A-Shelf, www.rev-a-shelf.com





BATHING

We all know that pets like to bring “the outdoors in.” They seem to revel in having dirt-matted hair, muddy feet and odd odors. Installing a well-organized pet shower in the mud room can keep your dog as clean as possible.

A pet bath can be created by using an oversized stainless steel sink outfitted with a pull-out (not pull-down!) faucet for smaller dogs. I have also seen commercial floor-mounted sinks used for medium sized dogs.

If space can be carved out of the laundry/mud room, for a larger pet, a mini-shower is an excellent idea. Elevate the shower base to create a comfortable working zone for the pet's bather. Use a hand-held showerhead to maximize flexibility of the water spray direction. If the pet's bather can reach over and into an enclosed space, finish the shower with double-hinged shower doors. If not, make sure the shower wet walls are combined with a non-slip floor material and provide nearby towel storage for “doggy dry-off.”

Just as aging consumers look for wellness products to help ease aches and pains, pet owners may also look for products that can help increase comfort for older pets. Hydrotherapy, so popular with people, has slowly begun to gain traction with pet owners and, as a result, owners of older pets may choose to include a pet whirlpool or pet spa in the pet bathing area.

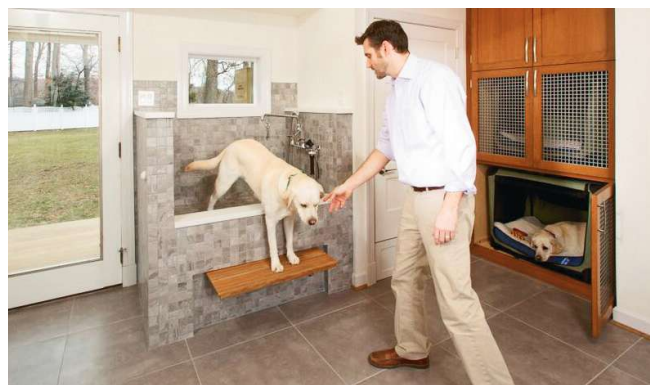
EXERCISING STORAGE

If you also plan a neat and organized area by the back door for outdoor items, the client will be ready for the dog's command, “Take me for a walk.”

A narrow pull-out cabinet, or a base, wall or tall side-entry cabinet can be a perfect spot to keep leashes, plastic bags and scooper, and other dog walking paraphernalia, as well as a coat, orange reflective vest, hat and gloves, an umbrella and flashlight for the walker. Place this type of storage center close to the back door. Create a storage area for outdoor activities!

▶ Narrow kitchen base cabinet storage systems, that are designed to pull out and store a multitude of items with various hooks or some type of backerboard system, can be ideal for the ‘walking the dog’ section of the kitchen.

Photo: Courtesy of Rev-A-Shelf, www.rev-a-shelf.com



▶ A well-organized pet washing station has been created next to the back door. A flip-up/flip-down ledge is planned so the dogs can enter into the bathing area without being lifted.

Designed/Built by Four Brothers LLC, Washington, DC, www.fourbrotherscarpentry.com.
Photo: Hadley Photography, Fairfax, VA, www.greghadleyphotography.com

▶ A builder in Delaware has really rethought the ‘laundry room’ – transforming it into an activity room. With washer and dryer on a pedestal in the foreground, they are comfortably located for the user. In this activity space, there is a floor-level washing station – it could be for pets or gardening boots! A ‘napping’ area is attractively placed in the corner, along with the pet bowls. Well done!

Photo: Courtesy of Echelon Custom Homes, Rehoboth Beach, DE, www.echeloncustomhomes.com

FLOORING

When considering wood floors for a client who has a pet, specify unfinished hardwood, and finish with a complete top coat finish (avoid prefinished hardwood flooring) so an occasional wet “accident” cannot penetrate.

As dogs age, they can have greater trouble navigating hard floors. Not only are these surfaces slippery, but a slide-and-fall accident can also cause painful injuries. Older pet owners may consider a softer cushioned designer laminate (one piece flooring also prevents water damage), or they may incorporate yoga mats or throw rugs in heavily pet-traversed areas.

If you live in a hot climate, realize that many dogs will be fond of ceramic tile – because the tile stays cool. Remember, unlike their human counterparts, dogs spend the vast majority of their days “on the floor.” They not only walk on it, but they sit on it, sleep on it, roll on it, shed on it and happily eat from it in the event a tasty treat drops from the table! One extra thought about tile floors: just like for humans, such a hard surface can put a strain on an older animal's feet, legs and back.

A WORD OF CAUTION

While I've talked about planning spaces specifically for the pets to be comfortable in the kitchen – realize that pets can also have an impact on the cook's equipment and sink area. For example, motion-sensor faucets can be set off by the inquisitive cat prancing along the countertop. This can be a disaster if the faucet swings beyond the limits of the sink: a flood can occur. How about the possibility of our friendly pooch jumping up and down and potentially hitting touch screen controls for an oven? Be aware of how technology and pets might collide.

WOW – a new center of activity we need to accommodate! While at first we might doubt we can find the room for these pet-friendly features, the best designers listen carefully to their prospective clients to clearly understand their priorities. If the pet's comfort is highly valued by the homeowner – finding the space is a winning strategy!

Don't miss this design opportunity! 📌



Ellen Cheever, CMKBD, ASID, CAPS, is a well-known author, designer, speaker and marketing specialist. A member of the NKBA Hall of Fame, Cheever gained prominence in the industry early on as the author of two design education textbooks. She manages an award-winning design firm, Ellen Cheever & Associates, and has been part of the management team of several major cabinet companies.