

# Dog-Friendly Design

Think you have to choose between a lovely home and your lovable dog? Think again. We talked with prominent designers across the country to learn the best tips and tricks for marrying the house of your dreams with your real-life pooch.



Grand-scale club chairs, used by New York City designer Heather Higgins, covered in stain-resistant treated fabrics provide a comfortable perch for both parents and dogs.

Right: Bill Demma



**Left:** Pre-war architecture provides a charming backdrop for this urban pied-a-terre for a couple with their two Cockapoos, Andie and Cooper.

**Above:** New York City designer Heather Higgins and her dog Winslow.

## Heather Higgins

A successful home design is determined by whether or not it promotes an emotional connection or a healing and restorative experience, says Heather Higgins, a New York City-based designer and pet parent to Schnauzer / Long-haired Dachshund mix Winslow. "Our home is an integral part of our lives and sets the stage for almost every experience we have. It can facilitate tasks, energize our spirit and provide us with great comfort," she says. Part of Higgins' design philosophy includes the idea of functionality and ease-of-maintenance, particularly for homeowners with dogs.

Working with a diverse group of clients, Higgins recently added her clean, simple style to the city home of retired art director Ira Madris and Bill Demma, pet parents to Cockapoos Andie and Cooper. "This city home was designed to align with the very sophisticated, cosmopolitan image of the owners...it also needed to provide a welcoming environment for their dogs, Andie and Cooper—two very important members of the family. The design challenge was to achieve both elegance and practicality simultaneously," she says. Higgins rose to the design challenge by incorporating furniture pieces with durable, dog friendly finishes and patterned carpets in dark coloration to camouflage any possible pet accidents. "The scale of the furniture was influenced both by the architecture and the fact that the cuddly canines like to curl up on the furniture with the owners, in easy view of one another," she says.

## Tips

★ When you have pets, paint is the safest and easiest to maintain wall finish. Many paint finishes are easy to clean, but a traditional "flat" finish is not one of them.

★ Removable slipcovers have always provided a practical solution for curling up on the sofa with pets and allow you to use fabrics that are lighter in color or have a more solid appearance, because they can be easily cleaned.

★ It's no longer necessary to have a large tartan plaid dog bed in the middle of your mid-fifties modern living room. If you are spending time, energy and hard-earned money to create the living room of your dreams, it's worth the additional investment to have pet beds and accessories custom-upholstered to match the style and design.



The hardwood flooring provides a dog friendly surface for Andie and Cooper's game of tug-of-war.