

## Dog-Friendly Home Decorating Tips

**Try some of these dog-friendly, yet stylish, decorating tips.**

*Sally Deneen*

When Jennifer Fredreck and her husband Mitch Frankenberg opened a bed and breakfast in Vermont, they envisioned a dog-friendly interior design that could accommodate as many as 20 dogs while maintaining a comfortable inn. Though “dog-friendly” and “interior design” seem incongruous concepts, they needn’t be. Consider these tricks:

**Opt for machine-washables.** You can find beautiful, washable duvet covers and shams for your down-filled comforters and pillows.

“You’re not compromising on looks,” assures interior designer Marilee Bentz of Florida who recommends washables even for dog-less clients. Many don’t require ironing, unless you want a pressed look.

**Plan your entryway.** To combat muddy paws, Fredreck and Frankenberg installed slate and marble pavers just outside the entrance to The Paw House Inn in Vermont. Crushed slate — easier on dogs’ paws than pebbles, which can stick in between pads — fills what otherwise would be muddy low spots.

Most important, they needed a large utilitarian space to clean muddy paws, so the couple built a mud room. “That’s the best thing we’ve ever done,” Frankenberg says. A laundry room or garage can also serve this purpose.

**Run for cover.** All sofas and chairs at the couple’s inn are covered with removable washable slipcovers made of heavy fabrics, such as denim or canvas. “We stay away from anything sheer or lightweight. The heavier, the better,” Fredreck says.

**Go for a simple look.** Fredreck keeps knickknacks out of reach of dogs’ sweeping tails and jaws, relegating such decorations to common areas, not guest rooms. “We’ve really streamlined what’s in the rooms,” Fredreck says. “We have what’s necessary,” including dog beds with washable covers.

**Consider distressed leather.** Try distressed leather furniture for a library look, Bentz says. Opt for high quality leather that’s thick enough to tolerate dogs’ claws.

**Employ dog tricks.** Bentz suggests this tactic for keeping dogs off special furniture: Teach your dog that she’s only allowed on furniture with your permission. Next, whenever you’re away for the day, lay a sheet of aluminum foil on the front edge of the furniture piece — the sofa, for example. The unsettling crackle of the wrinkling foil will discourage your dog from climbing on the furniture.

**Match pieces.** In Bentz’ home, her 7-pound Maltese-Poodle mix, Snickers, clambers onto the sofa with the help of a matching upholstered ottoman. In her bedroom, another stool for Snickers is upholstered with a pillow sham matching the bedding. And for clients, Bentz also has a carpenter build pet stairs wrapped with carpet that matches the new décor.

In the end, the key to a dog-friendly interior is this: “You want to de-stress the house,” Bentz says.

Dog lovers want their pets to curl up on the sofa and to lounge alongside them in bed, but still maintain an attractive home. “They really do want their dogs to be in their lives,” says Bentz, who counts herself among them. She never watches TV alone, as her French Brittany, Sammy and Lulu, and little Snickers always sit with her.

Sally Deneen is a DOG FANCY contributing editor who lives in Seattle. She is co-author of “The Dog Lover’s Companion to Florida” (Avalon Travel Publishing, 2005, \$20.95) with her husband, Robert McClure.