

## Celebrity Designer a Dog Lover at Heart

**WE TV reality show follows Hollywood designer and dog rescue advocate Kari Whitman.**

Posted: February 26, 2007, 5 a.m. EST

Credit: Roger Snider/WE TV Interior designer Kari Whitman, the star of her own reality show that premieres on WE TV March 3, is a designer by profession, but her heart lies in helping dogs.

"Designer to the Stars: Kari Whitman" follows the Hollywood designer as she gives glamorous home makeovers to celebrities such as Jessica Alba, Virginia Madsen, and Kristen Bell. The show also chronicles Whitman's efforts to help dogs, as part of her work with Ace of Hearts Dog Rescue, a Los Angeles-based organization she founded. The rescue group, named after Whitman's late American Bulldog-American Staffordshire Terrier mix Ace, focuses on helping last-chance shelter dogs, especially pit bull-type dogs ([www.acesangels.org](http://www.acesangels.org)). Since its inception, Ace of Hearts has found homes for more than 1,000 formerly abused and abandoned dogs.

Whether she's dealing with design dilemmas, catering to her high-profile clientele, keeping her rotating assistant pool in line or trying to place a rescued dog in the homes of her clients, Kari Whitman's life is anything but dull. "I wanted viewers to see the real business of design – not just the before and after, but what goes into the 'during,'" said Whitman. "I think we've done a great job poking fun at the whole design process and how the good, the bad and the ugly impacts all of us, even celebrities... That's the thing about design – it's the great equalizer."

Thanks to Whitman's love for dogs, she also considers canines in her design work. She offers her top tips for dog-friendly design: Choose washable paint with a satin finish instead of a flat finish to keep your walls looking fresh and clean. When choosing upholstery, select colors that closely match your dog. If you have a white dog, pick a white or light-colored fabric. If you have a multi-colored dog, patterns and tweeds are less likely to show signs of shedding. Use stain-resistant fabrics such as Crypton, or opt for washable fabrics like ultrasuede or pleather, which look like the real thing. In feeding areas, hard surfaces are your best option. Ceramic tile, concrete and laminate flooring are recommended. Also, choose a feeding station that doubles as a storage container for convenience. Choose a feeding station that not only matches your décor, but allows your dog to stand in an upright position, as it will be easier on his joints. There are a variety of options on the market in wrought iron, wood, and faux stone. Find a unique storage bin for your dog's toys such as a large basket or a vintage crate. If you choose hardwood flooring, beech, bamboo or recycled teak are hardwoods that will be more scratch resistant than other varieties of wood. Place mats inside and outside of doggie doors to reduce the amount of dirt and debris being tracked into your home. If you plan on bathing your pet at home, install a handheld shower spray in the bathroom.

"Designer to the Stars: Kari Whitman" premieres March 3, 2007, with back-to-back episodes beginning at 10 p.m. EST on the WE cable network. Visit [www.we.tv](http://www.we.tv) for more information.