

Builders Make Pets a Top Priority

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Sure, your buyers like the house they're considering, but do their pets? It's a question that's coming up more frequently, and it's causing builders to put the needs their clients' four-legged friends front and center.

From designing homes with amenities including 'smart' pet doors and elaborate washing and grooming areas, to creating separate living spaces for pets, it's clear that pets are an important factor when helping clients buy or remodel a home.

Standard Pacific Homes was one of the first builders to make pet comfort a priority. Last year [they built model homes](#) that offered a pet suite as an optional amenity. These suites included 170 square feet of pet housing, wash and water stations, automated feeders, comfortable bedding, cabinets for pet toys and food, and access for a puppy run.

Read more: [4 Steps to a Pet-Friendly House](#)

Since then, more buyers are seeking out homes that keep their pets' needs on the forefront, and with 79.8 million pet-owning households throughout the country, the demand for pet-friendly homes could grow significantly.

Now other builders are seeing the importance in designing a home that is a perfect fit for pets. “We are finding that pet owners are growing more aware of the benefits of designing homes with pets in mind, says Rhyse Altman, an architect designer with Visbeen Architects in Grand Rapids, Mich. “What we are most concerned with is making it easier for their pets to eat, sleep, play, etcetera, on their own terms with as much independence as possible. The last thing a pet owner wants is to be tripping over food dishes, staring at a kennel in the middle of the living room, smelling the litter box or getting up in the middle of the night to let the dog out.”

These are some things to consider when building or remodeling a home to make it more pet-friendly:

- Make sure the home has enough space for pets to run around and play in a natural environment.
- Choose hard surfaced flooring that makes cleaning up after pets easier, and even seek out flooring that is similar in color to the pet's fur. Specialized flooring made with pets in mind is also an option.
- Consider installing an electronic or 'smart' pet door. It's one of the most popular pet amenities right now, and owners can coordinate the times when it's open.

- For cat owners, a litter box area that blends in with surrounding cabinets can be placed underneath a countertop in the kitchen or laundry room.
- A pet food station set at the pet's height can be created out of a slide-out cabinet drawer.
- A washing area is a prime concern for pet owners. Some options include putting a walk-in shower near the garage or backyard. It's ideal to construct this washing zone near an area where the pet can be washed off before entering the house.
- And of course, the ultimate luxury for any pampered pet: a room and bed of their own.

“Whatever people want for their pets, they are going to get,” Rhona Sutter, a real estate agent in Naples, Fla. recently told the Washington Post. “Pets are something buyers definitely take into consideration now.”

Source: "[More home builders catering to buyers' four-legged companions.](#)" Washington Post (Oct. 8, 2015)