

REAL ESTATE

## Don't forget your pets when remodeling

Doggy showers, pet doors among options to consider

By JOSH BAKER

With nearly 50 percent of the U.S. population owning at least one dog or cat, it's no wonder many homeowners take their pets into consideration when it's time to remodel. In fact, there are numerous things homeowners can do to make their homes more comfortable and functional for their four-legged housemates. Some of our top pet remodeling requests at BOWA include:

**Doggy Showers:** Often located in a family foyer or garage, tiled barrier-free doggy showers are an increasingly popular option. Special designs with little or no curb and a hand-held sprayer at a lower level make easy work of rinsing off muddy paws after a romp in the backyard or giving Rover a full bath. Many even opt to use custom-painted tiles featuring their own pet's breed and other themed graphics.

**Feeding Stations:** Depending on your needs and the allowable space, a feeding station can get pretty elaborate. Consider a custom shelf built into kitchen or family foyer cabinetry, with cutouts for bowls and a nearby storage area suitable for large bags of food, treats, toys and leashes. To take it a step further, we have had clients install a water line and faucet with an automatic water attachment – as their pets drink, the bowl is automatically refilled.

**Hidden Litter Boxes:** Many choose to

hide an unsightly litter box in some type of enclosure, whether it's a purchased freestanding piece or a specially designed area in custom cabinetry with a whimsical cat-shaped cutout entry. Family foyers are a common location, but with a bit of carpentry work, you may be able to provide Fluffy access to the garage or another out-of-the-way location.

**Pet Doors:** Since they first entered the market, pet doors have come a long way. Now with styles that fit into French doors, panels that fit in screen doors, some that (believe it or not) accommodate pets up to 220 pounds, and infrared and magnetic key options, pet doors are a great way to give your four-legged family members access to the great outdoors. Some people even choose to create special doors inside the home allowing access to a room even when the "people door" is closed.

**Sleeping Areas and Hideaways:** Humans are not the only ones who enjoy retiring to the peaceful sanctuary of their bedroom — so do pets. Consider creating a built-in bed or crate area in your laundry room or family foyer where your companion can curl up for an afternoon nap or escape from the hustle and bustle of company.

**Reality TV:** Give your pet their own version of "reality television" in the form of a window seat or low windows that give them a view of what's going on outside. Just like teenagers, pets can entertain themselves for hours on end by just staring at "reality TV."

Most importantly, if you decide to stay



There are many ways to make your home more comfortable for dogs and cats.

in your home during a remodeling project, there are many things that can be done to make the environment more safe and comfortable for your pet. For example, signs can be posted to make sure certain doors remain closed and caution is used when entering particular rooms. Also, extra care should be taken to ensure hazardous materials are picked up from accessible construction areas to protect curious pets.

We understand that for many homeowners, pets are important members of

the family. With a bit of careful planning and clever design, you can bring those unique pet-friendly features that will truly integrate your four-legged friends with the rest of your beautiful home.

**JOSH BAKER** is the founder and co-chair of BOWA, an award-winning design and construction company specializing in luxury renovations, remodels and additions in the greater Washington, D.C. area. BOWA has more than 25 years of experience and has been honored with 170 local and national awards. For more information, visit [bowa.com](http://bowa.com) or call 703-734-9050.