

Pet friendly

Love your animals – and your home – with sturdy, stylish fabric and tips to chew on

By Kimberly L. Jackson

Living with style while living with pets will always pose some challenges, but the two needs aren't mutually exclusive.

While designating a place for toys, leashes, food and supplies will go a long way, the stains, odors and damage to possessions that can come with pets are an enduring concern.

However, smart planning of the décor can make it possible to keep a lovely home even in the presence of animals, says Bruce Norman Long, a Princeton interior designer.

"Certainly no one wants to spend what is required for a custom interior and have their little loved ones shred it." The process of home-protection begins with selecting pet-friendly materials, Long says. "It's the opposite of fragile fabrics like silk or printed chintz." Instead, he suggests heavier weaves and sturdy tapestry weights. "We have also opted for fitted slipcovers in a cotton duck twill that could be removed and laundered and put back on."

Another option is performance fabrics. Think of those weather- and sun-resistant patio fabrics moving indoors. Interior fabrics engineered by Chella Textiles, are made to look and feel pretty in the living room, but, like the company's outdoor fabrics, they can be cleaned with bleach – even those in vivid colors or patterns.

"The fabric is solution-dyed," explains Marcy Graham, a Chella spokeswoman. "All of the properties in the fabric, including color, are in the chemical solution from which the fiber is extruded." Translated, that means threads of various colors that are used to weave Chella fabrics each contain the dye and other properties that make them resistant to stains, sun-fading, bleaching and moisture damage. The company offers 400 acrylic fabric options through interior designers. "You will find light weights and heavy weights, Chenilles, boucles, jacquards," Graham says. "All different types and weights of weaves." Expect to pay between \$50 to \$200 or more per yard, depending on style and the designer's rates. See options and request samples at chellatextiles.com

"The main benefit is that you don't have to worry about keeping pets or children off the fabric," Graham says. The surface is



Roxy and her owner can be at peace when she naps on a chair upholstered in stain- and odor-resistant fabric from Chella Textiles.

looped construction. "Low-loop carpets are better performers for humans, cut pile carpets are better for pets." And those who prefer natural-fiber upholstery should have it protected with a stain- and moisture-resisting fabric sealant. Long recommends Fiber-Seal. "It's a pretty good insurance policy," he says.

And while leather might be a durable choice for homes with children, Long says not so for cats and dogs. "It's tactile," he explains. "For dogs, it's a big chewy toy. For cats, leather has that perfect feeling. Their claws go in and they tug."

Made for pets

But even when precautions are taken mishaps will happen. Dogs and puppies will gnaw fine things, cat will claw through the chair backs. Long says his own late cat of 16 years was not the destructive type, but still did some damage. "I just realized that I loved him more than I loved the chair," said the designer, likely sharing the sentiment of many pet owners.

In spacious homes, Long has created a mudroom with a floor drain where a dog's paws can be hosed off with a hand-spray shower after dirt-stirring outdoor play or

proof fabric that can be used to protect furniture from pet accidents and dirt. It comes in several designs. The slipcover company Sure Fit also makes a variety of pet-proofing products, ranging from furniture covers to

watering station with a catch basin to collect what would otherwise be on the floor. See a video at neaterfeeder.com, where the four sizes range from \$36.15 for a cat feeder to \$65.99 for a large dog feeder.



The Neater Feeder's tray stand keeps pet foods and water off the floor. It comes in four sizes: three for small to large dogs, and one for cats.