

AT HOME

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IT'S NATURAL: Interior designer Suzanne Lasky tells homeowners to stop fighting the tendencies of their pets. Corona, who's 17, likes to be up in the sunshine, so Lasky has cleared a space on her desk where her cat can relax.



LEIGH SHELL ROBERTUS, TRIBUNE

PET FRIENDLY: Scottsdale-based designer Suzanne Lasky wants pets, like her 2-year-old Australian shepherd mix Andi, to be as comfortable as humans in their homes. She recently started offering her clients Pawprint Design Services, designing rooms with pet and human needs in mind. She recommends covering prized upholstered items, such as sofas, with throws that are the same color as the pets. That way their fur is not as noticeable. When it gets dirty, the blanket goes into the washing machine.

Pet decorated

Interior designer fashions living spaces for the 4-legged family members

By CHRISTINA VANOVERBEKE
TRIBUNE

When Eva Chugaman embarked upon a project to redecorate the formal living room of her north Scottsdale home, the biggest obstacle was her 7-year-old beagle named Hunter.

Hunter had grown accustomed to stretching out on the living room couch, and Chugaman thought if she was going to invest in new furniture for the room, she didn't want it to end up smelling like a dog.

"When we redecorated it was very important to me that it be a nice formal space," she says. "The old couches were pretty beat up and we replaced them. That was where Hunter slept and I didn't want him on the new couches. I needed him in a separate space."

That's when she called in Suzanne Lasky, an East Valley interior designer who makes pets a special consider-

Resource

Suzanne Lasky
S Interior Design
(480) 220-4659
www.sinteriordesign.com

ation in her design work. Lasky has been an interior designer for years but says about a year ago she began thinking that she needed to find a niche in the market that would set her apart from the competition.

"Nothing really resonated with me until this," she says of Pawprint Design Services, a part of her company, S Interior Design. "When I was a girl, I wanted to be a veterinarian. I've always loved animals. I thought how wonderful would it be to combine interior design with working with pets."



PAUL O'NEILL, TRIBUNE

WORKING WITH ANIMALS: The pillows in the corner of the Chugaman home used to be part of a sofa where the dog Hunter liked to sit. When the sofa had to go, Eva Chugaman worked with designer Lasky to find a solution that would keep Hunter and the family happy.

Pet decorated

A PLACE TO REST: Lasky, who describes her style as comfortable and eclectic, laid a dog and cat bed side by side in the family room where 17-year-old cat Corona can cuddle up next to Andi.

PHOTOS BY
LEIGH SHELLE
ROBERTUS,
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"It's about understanding what your pets need to be happy in the home," she says. "About 90 percent of my clients have pets. It's up to them to decide how far they want to take it in the design of their home."

Lasky asks clients to fill out extensive client profiles that includes explaining how and where the pets spend their time, where they sleep, where they eat.

From there, she develops a plan for a livable design that will make the entire family happy, including the four-legged members.

For Chugaman, it was about easing Hunter into the new design and keeping him in the family spaces, but out of the formal entertaining spaces.

"Suzanne suggested keeping the pillows from the old couch and making them into a bed, so he wouldn't feel detached," says Chugaman.

The pillows were situated in the corner of a family room, where Hunter could scratch and roll around without harming a fiber of the Chugaman's new upholstery.

The next step in weening Hunter from the

couch is to replace the material on the pillows with one that won't absorb pet odors the way cottons and chenilles (what most pet beds are covered in) will.

"I'm working with Suzanne to replace those pillows with something nicer and plusher," says Chugaman says.

She's tried buying Hunter new dog beds, but he never wants to sleep on them. "I've just always thought, 'My God, he's so picky,'" she says. "But Suzanne explained, they're focused on scent. You've sat on the old couch. It has your scent and his scent all over it."

Chugaman says she would never have thought she could have great design and make Hunter happy.

"She made it so easy. You don't even realize when you redecorate home how much your pet is affected. Most every house has a pet in it and most people treat their pets like part of the family.

"What I love about working with Suzanne," says Chugaman, "is that she was able to find a space just for the dog."

CONTACT WRITER:
(480) 898-6534
or cvanoverbeke@aztrib.com



ADAPTABLE DECOR: Keeping this shade rolled up partially prevents Corona from being tempted to shred it. Both Corona and Andi enjoy looking out the window during the day, so Lasky has placed a mat in front of it that matches the decor of the room, which keeps the carpet from getting worn and dirty.

Making your home pet friendly

Appropriate fabric: With pets, as with children, washable is best. Microfiber and suede are great choices for upholstered pieces, says Lasky.

When choosing a pet bed, make sure the cover is removable so you can launder it. Avoid chenilles and other loose and absorbent fabrics — they hold odors and pet hair.

Durable floors: Carpet will hold more pet odor than wood, but there are better choices when choosing a floor with your pets in mind. Lasky says laminate floors will hold up best and darker stains will show scratches more than lighter.

Hide messes: Cats love to do their dirty work in private. Lasky says if you have a powder room with standard cabinets you can actually install a pet door in the side of it and hide the litter box inside. It keeps the box out of sight, makes clean up easy and your kitty will thank you.


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Exclusive Provider of Pawprint Design Services
Stunning Interiors With Pets in Mind
 480.220.4659 Main
 480.998.9119 Fax
www.sinteriordesign.com