

FINE FURNISHINGS for FIDO

A Maitland duo has created a cure for the common dog crate.



ROBERTO GONZALEZ/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Dog Day Architecture co-founder Stephanie Henley shows off a design that looks like an end table.

By JEAN PATTESON
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Dog owners who crate their dogs love the convenience of the crate. They just don't love the way it looks. A big metal crate in an elegantly appointed room is like a mutt at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. It just doesn't fit.

Two Maitland women have a solution. Stephanie Henley and her personal assistant, Faith Hill, founders of Dog Day Architecture, have created a collection of furniture designed to cover those functional but unsightly metal crates — or replace them entirely.

"You walk into a beautiful room, and here's this hideous crate. It spoils the whole look of the room," says Henley, a designer with Beasley &



STEPHANIE HENLEY

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Coming up next: A line of crate accessories

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Henley Interior Design in Winter Park.

Hill is well-acquainted with the problem. "My mother has a greyhound. She crates it. The crate is so ugly, but there's nothing she can do to cover it," says Hill.

Well, she could purchase a cloth cover to slip over the sides and back of the crate. But such covers, available at pet-supply stores in a variety of sizes and colors, are mainly intended to screen out drafts. They do little to disguise the crate — especially from the front, where the metal bars remain exposed.

Henley and Hill had something more radical in mind. And more upscale.

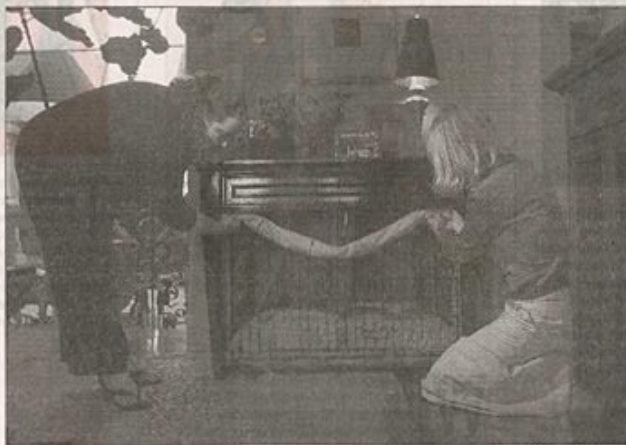
It's not just an end table

Henley leads the way into her home, where samples of Dog Day Architecture's designs are on display. The pieces blend so perfectly with their luxurious surroundings, it's unlikely a visitor could pick them out.

Alongside a couch is what appears to be a honey-colored end table. It has a single drawer and beautifully carved fretwork panels on the front and sides. Arranged on top are a plant in a ceramic pot, a leather-bound book and a framed family photograph.

Henley flips a latch, and the front panel swings open. It is actually the door to an exceptionally elegant crate.

This is the Doggie Den, Hen-



Faith Hill (left) and Stephanie Henley's Crate Cover allows a dog's home to blend with a room's décor.

ley explains. Fashioned from birch wood, it comes in three sizes and five color stains: ebony, dark walnut, cappuccino, natural and weathered white.

Across from the Doggie Den is a handsome black table detailed with double molding and cove edges. Suspended between its tapered legs is a box-pleated skirt.

To the sound of ripping Velcro, Henley whips the skirt from the front of the table. Underneath is a large metal crate.

This skirted table is Dog

Day's Crate Cover. The skirt can be rolled up and secured with tabs, allowing the crate door to be opened. Thanks to the Velcro strips, the skirt is easily removed for cleaning — or replacement with a different color or pattern.

Without a drawer, the Crate Cover comes in sizes small, medium and large. With a drawer, it is available only in small and medium.

"The drawer would make the large table too high — more like an armoire," says Henley.

In time, she adds, armoire-style crates will be added to the collection.

Classic designs

Henley's husband, Troy Beasley, first came up with the idea for a line of classy dog furniture about a year ago.

In January, Henley and Hill started sketching designs for crates and crate covers, using a computer to scale them to dogs of various sizes. By May, they were working on prototypes.

They wanted their designs



STEPHANIE HENLEY

With the fabric skirt raised, you can easily let your dog in or out.

to be functional but beautiful. And because the furniture would be sold over the Internet, it had to be easy to ship.

"Some assembly is required," says Henley. "But it's not difficult. Most of the pieces just slide into place. If Faith and I can assemble them, anyone can."

They decided to start with classic designs that would suit any room and any style of décor. The Doggie Dens can double as end tables or bedside tables, says Henley. The Crate Cover tables can be placed behind a couch, against a wall or in the corner of a room.

The furniture is built in San-

ford; the fabric skirts are made in DeLand. Prices range from \$500-\$1,000, depending on the size of the piece.

With the first collection of furniture set to launch on dogdayarchitecture.com by mid-November, Henley and Hill are turning their attention to a line of crate accessories, including pillows with removable, washable covers.

"Once you get going with the doggie culture, the possibilities are endless," says Henley.

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