

ART, FASHION & DESIGN ISSUE

# THE American **DOG** MAGAZINE

YOUR DOG. YOUR FAMILY. YOUR LIFESTYLE.

**PRESIDENT  
BARACK OBAMA  
with BABY!**  
3-legged puppy mill  
rescue dog

**Julia Szabo**  
*Pet Design  
Authority*

*PIT BULL*  
**BSL**

**BEST FRIENDS  
ANIMAL SOCIETY**  
*in Los Angeles*

**Author Jana Kohl**  
*Anti-puppy mill*  
**CRUSADER**




[www.theamericandogmag.com](http://www.theamericandogmag.com)

# Interior Design



## Dog-Friendly Decorating

By Julia Szabo   
Author of *Animal House Style*  
[www.animalhousestyle.com](http://www.animalhousestyle.com)

---

*P*it bulls have been unfairly stereotyped in the mainstream media as natural-born killers. But here's what I've discovered after 14 years of rescuing and living with these amazing dogs: they're natural-born decorators! And they're not alone. In fact, any rescued dog, regardless of breed or type, size or stripe, will gladly work—for free—as your live-in decorator and style consultant. He or she will let you know which home furnishings and accessories work—and which ones don't. How will they communicate their design know-how? By voting with their feet, of course!

OPPOSITE: The Red Cross Palm Beach Showhouse designed by Eric Cohler. Photo by Francis Smith.

RIGHT: Photo shoot of the Eric Cohler textile Collection for Lee Jofa. Designs were inspired by Eric's former and present pets. Photo Courtesy of Lee Jofa.

BELOW: Eric Cohler and Sebastian. Photo by Dana Rose Lee.

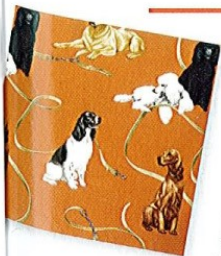
Not surprisingly, the design world's biggest, most in-demand talents are dog lovers whose best friends have tastes as refined as their own. Case in point: New Yorker Eric Cohler, whose hip, elegant spaces are routinely showcased in such magazines as *Traditional Home* and *House Beautiful*. A dog lover for as long as he can remember, Eric happens to be allergic to dogs—but refuses to let a little thing like an unpleasant physical reaction keep him from dog adoption. Eric is drawn to standard Poodles because they sport a key design feature—human-like hair that doesn't trigger his allergies—and so, he happily lives with a gorgeous white-haired guy named Sebastian, adopted through Poodle rescue.

Two things instantly strike you about this dapper designer, whether you meet him for a moment or you hear one of his engaging lectures on the subject of (what else?) design: his intelligence and his great sense of style. Little wonder Eric and Sebastian are so compatible: renowned for their intelligence, Poodles also have a sense of style that's as high as their IQ. And true to his breed, Sebastian is one very smart, stylish dog with impressive pooch panache. Like his owner, he's a ... design hound.

Sebastian is one of several dogs featured on "Unleashed," a delightful canine-themed fabric that Eric designed for the prestigious fabric company Lee Jofa. A trompe l'oeil leather leash winds around the dog figures in a motif Eric borrowed from a 1950s Hermes-style silk scarf, and all of the dogs appearing alongside Sebastian and his predecessor Tyler, a black Standard Poodle, are breeds Eric has had as companions over the years, including a yellow lab and an Irish Setter.

"My home is my dog's home first, and mine second," Eric says. "If it's the other way around, then it's not safe for the dog. If Sebastian is comfortable here, I'm definitely comfortable."

Those are words to live by—and design by. So whenever Eric is hired to design spaces for clients with dogs, as he did for his fellow design professional Stephen Elrod and Elrod's two Pugs—he makes the needs of the resident canines a top priority, just as he does at home. Want to know a few of his expert tips and trade secrets? Read on!



- "For smaller dogs, we've created a little dog bed in the kitchen, built in to a cupboard—I took the door off a cupboard and made it into a little bunk for the dog," Eric explains. "Sebastian is too big for that, but in the apartment I'm planning to move into there's a hall staircase, with a space underneath that's five feet deep, four feet high, and three feet wide; the people who lived there before had made it into a storage space for luggage. I'm



going to line the space with my 'Unleashed' fabric." A plus: giving a dog his own den with fabric-covered walls to muffle sound is especially helpful if Spot is thunder-phobic, or easily frightened by fireworks on the Fourth of July. 🐾