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## Editors' Choice Winners

This year, the samples and photos we received from manufacturers for our Editors' Choice Awards contest communicated to us their own theme: innovation. It's no surprise that this year customers want products to do more and look better before they lay their money down, but we were pleasantly surprised by how quickly manufacturers have stepped up to the plate to provide exciting new designs and ideas to the marketplace. Innovations came in the form of style, engineering and plain old why-didn't-I-think-of-that ideas. Here are our 10 Editors' Choice winners for 2009.

### 1. Formal wear Chien Coature Animal Melange Coat

Yes, we know the economy has tanked, but the luxury market is still very much up and running in pet products, so we simply can't ignore all the beautiful high-end products available. This coat without a doubt took the cake this year. The Animal Melange Coat is made of two layers of Italian lambskin with animal shapes cut out of the top layer. After it is stitched together, a band of platinum and 24-karat gold seed beads is placed around each shape. The coat's collar is embellished with 24-karat gold and sterling silver balls, and sterling and gold beads encrust the edges of the garment. Chien Coature designer Rebecca Bissi outdid herself with this coat and we admire her adventurous approach to design.



### 2. Casual wear Dog In The Closet



#### Los Angeles Escape-Proof Harness Vest

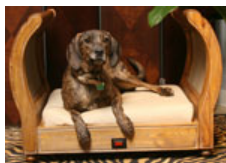
Having seen a lot of garments made of denim that just don't have much style, we were skeptical when we read the description of this item, but as soon as it was out of the box and on a dog, our minds were changed. Our test dog for this product is no clotheshorse but the step-in design made dressing him easy. A unique twist lock prevents unwanted escapes when walking and serves as a connector for leashes. What differentiates this look from the other sturdy harnesses with interesting engineering is its style. Perfectly distressed denim is accessorized with a silver-gray 100 percent silk applique with white embroidered angel wings and a gold-studded red silk heart. Once our test dog was fully dressed, our hearts melted.

### 3. Gift FouFou Dog Breed-Specific Tags

As most of us know from hitting the trade show circuit year after year, one of the worst parts of traveling is being away from our pets (unless, of course, they are our travel companions!). What better way to remind yourself of the sweetness of home than an adorable breed-specific tag to attach to your luggage? FouFou Dog's creative director, Evelyn Yu, says the tags are available in 17 dog breeds. There is one cat tag and two more on the way soon. Cartoony-cute, but not in an immature way, these tags are made of soft and sturdy leather and come in great colors. Yu says they can be used for gym bags, purses and other items, not just luggage. FouFou Dog also offers a spinning display stand to retailers, making this a great point-of-purchase item.



### 4. Bed Wavemaker LLC



#### Fauna Sauna

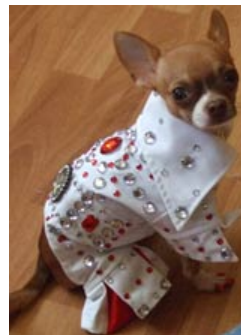
This young company has hit the market with a big idea we found both innovative and well-executed. Fauna Sauna beds feature radiant infrared heat emitted from side and top panels, which mimic for pets the feeling of lying in a ray of sun coming through a window. Made from sturdy hardwood like a fine piece of furniture for humans, the Fauna Sauna also has a practical and beautiful cushion with a washable cover. Aging pets with joint problems and the like are certain to enjoy their sauna experiences, though younger pets who just love to lounge will, too. One precaution with regards to this product: Humans may get a bit jealous of their pets!

### 5. Neckwear Bandabbling Slobber Blotter

Nothing cramps a dog's style like drool, but Maureen Edwards of Bandabbling has found a way to keep even gooey dogs presentable. The Slobber Blotter is designed to blot the drool from a dog's face and fur. The bandana is long enough to catch all the drool before it hits the floor, the furniture or



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the car, eliminating the need for drool rags and paper towels. A great idea on its own, the Slobber Blotter is even better because Bandabbling considered style in its design. Since it's available with classic brown plaid trim surrounding a terrycloth center for male dogs and modern pink floral around pink terrycloth for females, no one would ever guess the dog was wearing a drool bib because it looks like a stylish bandana. Like all bandanas from Bandabbling, the Slobber Blotter has an adjustable snap closure to keep it in place.



## 6. Feeders/Dishes

### Tower Star Pets LLC



#### Neater Feeder

So many pets, from dainty cats to burly bull mastiffs, make such a mess when they eat that a placemat is little defense against a disgusting kitchen floor. Consumers have been crying out for a better way to keep things clean. The Neater Feeder is a brilliant solution. Made of hard plastic, but still stylish enough for most homes, this easy-to-assemble and clean diner drains spilled water into a separate compartment and catches dry and wet

food bits before they hit the floor.

## 7. Memorial

### Soft-Hearted Products

#### Soft-Hearted Pillow Pet Urn

Resulting in a big "Why haven't we seen this before?" from our judges was this very sweet approach to memorializing pets from a new company in Florida. A major departure from the wood, ceramic and stone urns available on the market, this product gives the mourning pet owner a way to continue to hold and hug the lost pet in the form of a velvet-soft pillow with the pet's ashes safely contained inside a zippered pouch at the center.



## 8. Waste Disposal

### Klauber Enterprises Inc.



#### Doggie Doo Drain

It's clean and it's green in more ways than one. The Doggie Doo Drain easily screws into any sewer or septic cleanout and serves as a great way to dispose of pet waste directly into a public system that is already designed to clean and handle it. Far preferable to an outdoor trash can filled with small bags of waste baking in the sun until weekly pickup arrives, this product allows pet owners to simply

shovel waste into a funnel and rinse it down. Boutique owners who sell this product may receive some thank-you notes from local trash collectors who celebrate being free of the "doggie doo" odor.

## 9. Toy

### Hip Doggie Inc.

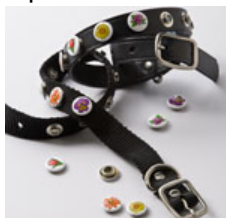
#### 100% Vegetable Loofah Dental Toys

It's a toy! It's a toothbrush! It's both, only better! Lots of entries this year included products that do more than one thing, but this item was a particularly well-thought-out and stylish one. Made from tough but chewy loofah material, the toy is strong enough to clean a dog's teeth but soft enough not to hurt his gums. Our test dog chewed his loofah toy practically all day. While the loofah slowly shreds, it flosses the dog's teeth. All the fibers are digestible and will not expand in the pet's stomach, and the product is USDA certified organic, which is still a pretty rare designation for a toy. For dogs that need a little extra incentive to gnaw away at their loofah, the natural meat flavor is sure to get them started. On top of that, the toy designs are adorable!



## 10. Collar

### Snap 2 It LLC



#### Snaps Collar

Though boutique owners love selling the very best and most durable items in their stores, we're sure many have wished there were some way they could do so without limiting the profitability of their collar and leash sections. Until that collar breaks or wears out, that customer who bought it might not come back. Snaps collars are the answer to that, since the durable nylon or leather accessories are customizable based on the season, the owner's individual style or the personality of the dog. Snap 2

It sells adorable buttons that snap securely onto their collars with themes including everything from spring flowers to Christmas trees. In this market when a lot of consumers are looking for fun ways to dress up their pets without breaking the bank, Snaps collars are a great way to draw in more revenue. They may even attract those customers who never really considered style for their pets but might when they find it's so easy and relatively understated.

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