

Bau-Wow!-haus

by Janet Cass

This above-ground doghouse, designed by Julie MacLeod, Shea Architects, and Ted MacLeod, Wirtanen, Clark, Larsen, comes with a ramp for easy access.



Photo Credit: R. McMonigal

"Tongue-in-cheek fun." That's how Randall M. Buffie, AIA, described his experience creating a doghouse. *Doghouse?* What—you never designed for a client in a fur coat?

Architect-designed doghouses will be auctioned at St. Paul, Minnesota's second annual Dog Day Afternoon fund-raiser this summer. Benefiting DIFFA (Design Industry Foundation Fighting AIDS) and local humane societies, this festival of things canine is a wonderfully offbeat way to enjoy a Saturday afternoon outdoors. And, for architects who donate a doghouse, it's clever advertising.

Why donate a doghouse? For starters, roughly 3,500 people attended last summer's Dog Day Afternoon—that's a lot of potential clients who'll see your work! Not only will you be marketing your skills to homebuyers, you'll be networking in a relaxed setting with some of the Twin Cities' most highly pedigreed architects. All the designers of last year's doghouses have won awards in their field and/or work for well-known firms.

For architects, Dog Day Afternoon affords the rare opportunity to make a uniquely personal statement. After all, there isn't the usual client dialogue on this

project. Buffie found that creating a doghouse for last year's benefit was "a freeing exercise in design," bound only by a few basic design criteria.

How does one approach the design process for a doghouse? The Humane Society notes that a dog must be able to stand up and turn around inside its dwelling. *Dog Fancy* magazine's September '96 issue further recommends a hinged or removable roof to facilitate cleaning, as well as an off-center entrance to allow the dog to curl up in a corner away from the wind.

Similar protection from the elements could be provided by a tunnel-like entrance that curves at its interior terminus, while flaps could allow easy access. *Dog Fancy* suggests that the exterior be of non-toxic material in case the dog chews on it. Nor should the exterior have sharp, splintery, or rough edges.

Within these minimal design boundaries, the doghouse at last year's fund-raiser represented quite an array of artistic vision. Buffie found that his approximately 40-hour project afforded him the opportunity to experiment with design techniques, including the installation of a curved copper roof.

Realized in a wide variety of size, shape, and color, the structures at last year's Dog Day Afternoon were truly one-of-a-kind pieces of functional outdoor art. They were versatile enough to serve as a child's playhouse or as outdoor storage space. For architects working with landscape architecture, the doghouse, as an outbuilding, helps indoor and outdoor space harmonize by providing repetition of architectural elements seen in the main house. Also, the doghouse has the ability to introduce shade into an otherwise relentlessly sunny landscape—an important way to enhance the comfort of the resident.

Providing residential comfort was on the mind of another participant in 1996's Dog Day Afternoon: Rosemary McMonigal, AIA. She saw her doghouse design as a way "to explore massing, composition, and the use of color." One of her design goals was to provide the dog with different scales of space. To accomplish this, two volumes of space were used: A smaller area in the back



Photo Credit: J. Cass

This K9 design, by Randall Buffie, AIA, includes a deck for your dog's sunbathing pleasure.

of the house where the dog could curl up; and a larger space near the entrance where the occupant could enter, stand, or sit.

More options for sitting were facilitated by another of McMonigal's design goals, which was to include indoor/outdoor transitions. Multiple decking affords the inhabitant a chance to be outside without being in contact with the ground. Some lucky dog undoubtedly appreciated that during this past winter. Decking also reduces the amount of dirt tracked into the house, as the lucky owner of Randall Buffie's redwood-decked doghouse knows.

Another creative aspect of doghouse design is choice of color. While some areas of the United States have historically tolerated a vibrant external house color, architect McMonigal hasn't found that to be the case in the area of the Midwest where Dog Day Afternoon is held. Her last goal, to increase public acceptance of individualistic exterior colors, was addressed by painting her doghouse burgundy, yellow, and blue.

So, in order to have the satisfaction of using your creative energies to benefit a worthy cause, while expanding your design horizons and your name recognition, why not create a doghouse for Dog Day Afternoon '97? You never know—the buyer of your canine castle might just decide they need you to design a human-scaled space to match!

For more information, contact Randall M. Buffie, AIA, Architect, Inc., 612-288-9800, 1562 Rustic Hills Drive, Eagan, MN 55121-1131.

Photo Credit: R. McMonigal



Designed Rosemary McMonigal, AIA, this is for the entrepreneurial pet. The builder was Jeff Jenior.

