

The Best Doghouses At This Year's Barkitecture

By Meredith Deliso

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Photo by Meredith Deliso

Like looking at pictures of adorable puppies? Then check out our [slideshow from Barkitecture](#).

We want to feel as happy as this dog looks.

A cabana fit for two. A poolside respite. A cushioned swing. No, these aren't home improvements, but some of the best offerings from this year's Barkitecture.

The [annual benefit for animal rescue group Pup Squad](#), held along the three-block stretch of the Houston Pavilions on Saturday, challenged architects, designers and artists to reinvent your typical Snoopy creation. And this year's event had some of the best competition yet, with more doghouses selling at face value (a sizable \$500) than ever before during a preview on Friday before the main event.

"I don't know if the economy is getting better, or people like the idea of cool doghouses," said Pup Squad director of marketing Phil Hudson, who fell in love with Barkitecture while living in Austin and brought it to Houston three years ago.

Indeed, by midday Saturday, this year's fundraiser was set to raise \$15,000 for the volunteer organization. Hudson pointed to the high-caliber designs for the success.

"Some years we have had some dogs," said Hudson (pun, obviously, intended). "This year, they were all really creative and amazing."

Judges gave out ribbons for first place ("best in show"), second place and third place, and "People's Choice," "Kid's Choice" and a silent auction during the main event helped determine some of the crowd favorites. But we also wanted to throw in our two cents and highlight some of the doghouses that blew us away at this year's Barkitecture -- and by doghouses, we mean those that looked the farthest thing from it.



Photo by Meredith Deliso

Dog spa by FKP

This spa house won Best in Show, and it's clear to see why. We can just picture Lady from "Lady and the Tramp" sipping a tropical drink (you know, the kind with an umbrella) poolside while getting her nails done. If you had no sense of scale, you'd think this sleekly crafted design was for human use. But this one's for the dogs, and then some -- rumor had it that the buyer was going to use the pool for her 20-pound turtle.



Photo by Meredith Deliso

1963 Airstream Camper by English + Associates

That's right -- those red shiny labels lining this camper are salvaged from Lone Star beer cans. Many a post-work happy hour must have gone into collecting enough cans to coat this Texas-proud, stylish home, which turned heads during on Saturday for its fun, playful design. No detail was left out, either, from the wheels to the square window to the little Texas "license" on the door. Now, if only it came with a matching human-sized camper.



Photo by Meredith Deliso

Swing by Wilson Architectural Group

Sure, there's no shade if you wanted to keep this puppy outdoors, and your dog will have to constantly disembark to get a lick of water. But there might be nothing funnier than watching a dog react to swinging on this tree house-inspired design, which most-successfully threw the whole concept of a four-walled doghouse out the window and came up with something completely, utterly different.

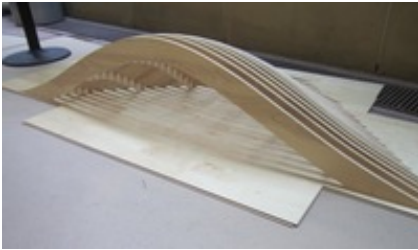


Photo by Meredith Deliso

Sculpture by Kha Dinh

Most of the doghouses created were geared towards those pets on the smaller size, but this one's for the tiniest runt in the world. Despite its limitations, the piece won third place, certainly impressing for its innovative, mesmerizing architecture -- its sheer simplicity inspiring. It's also the rare doghouse meant to provide a space for your dog indoors, fitting neatly in a corner. Because sometimes it's just too hot to leave your dog outside all day.



Photo by Meredith Deliso

Trophy doghouse by John Gay

This one's for all the top dogs. By far the biggest doghouse on display, standing taller than most of the people walking through the Houston Pavilions, it was also one of the most garish in its design, thanks to the blend of metal and wood -- and that giant trophy. But we love the humor and heart behind it. Plus the bone-shaped cutouts are cute, almost subtle touches, compared to the rest.

HONORABLE MENTION



Photo by Meredith Deliso

House by Brave Architecture

It has a beautiful finish, great colors, and uses recycled lumber (for the eco-conscious among us). But we mainly love this doghouse, which took home second place, because of how happy Krissy is in it (refer back to our first photo and prepare to have your heart melt). The lab mix got right inside and looked right at home, a big, sloppy grin slapped across her mutt. And if a dog gives a doghouse her approval, you know it's good.



Photo by Meredith Deliso

Cabana by PBK

While you cool off in the pool, your four-legged friend can get some shade in this Doggie Cabana. Everything about it is so thoughtful - the comfy pillows, the holders for water and food, even the arrangement of bone details on the back to let you know who's in charge. There were plenty of bone (and, for that matter, paw) images to be found on this year's designs, but we liked this artful arrangement the most. It's like they're raining from heaven, which must be every dog's dream.

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