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### Newest pet gifts aim to solve problems

By KRISTEN LEVINE

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Published: December 1, 2009

I visited three pet product trade shows this year, from Orlando to Las Vegas to Chicago. Despite the economy's continuing floundering, manufacturers are still coming up with innovative products to meet the demands of pet parents.

If the American Pet Product Association's forecast is correct, Americans will have spent \$45.4 billion on our pets in 2009, up 5 percent from 2008!

But spending is running more toward safety, comfort and practicality than past years' bling. With that in mind, here are my picks for pet gifts with substance.

#### SAFETY Pet First Aid Kits by Wag'N Enterprises

For the hiking, camping dog, a well-equipped first aid kit is a must. Wag'N Mayday Pet First Aid Kits are packed with wound-care supplies. The Skinny Mayday, \$18.95, weighs just 7 ounces and includes a bone-shaped karabiner to clip to a purse or belt loop. It has 35 pieces of basic pet first aid items. The larger Well-Fed Mayday, \$44, was designed for more adventurous pets that might run into trouble while hiking or traveling. Wag'N Enterprises will donate a portion of proceeds to the Morris Animal Foundation's Canine Cancer Campaign for each Pet First Aid Kit purchased. Find them at [www.wagn4u.com](http://www.wagn4u.com).

IDTAG.com pet tags

IDTAG.com offers an innovative way to find lost pets. Each of the company's tags has a unique identity number. The pet owner registers the number at [IDTAG.com](http://IDTAG.com) and can create an online pet profile with photos, veterinary records and owner contact information. If the pet goes missing, the owner calls the [IDTAG.com](http://IDTAG.com) phone center or logs onto the site. IDTAG.com immediately broadcasts an emergency "Amber-type Alert," notifying a network of animal shelters, hospitals and rescue

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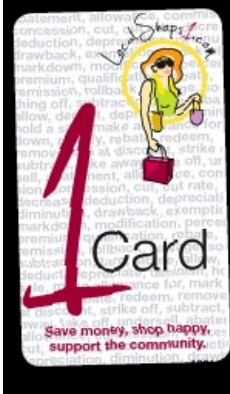
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### Newest pet gifts aim to solve problems

organizations within 50 miles of where the pet was last seen. (Nationwide, the network now includes more than 15,000 organizations.) Live operators, available 24/7, will call up to six emergency contact numbers to notify the owner when the pet has been found. And anyone who recovers a pet can call the toll-free number on the tag or log on to [www.IDTAG.com](http://www.IDTAG.com).

Subscribing to [IDTAG.com](http://IDTAG.com) is free for the first six months with the purchase of an IDTAG (\$7.99 to \$9.99). Annual subscription rates are \$6.95 — less for longer-term subscriptions. Find IDTAGs at PetSmart stores and many independent pet stores; for information, visit [www.idtag.com](http://www.idtag.com).

#### COMFORT Got cot?

The Pet Cot is a dog bed good for home or traveling, inside or out. It comes in four sizes to suit breeds up to 200 pounds, and the small size is perfect for cats. The Kakadu Pet Cot is an elevated bed that protects cold, hot, damp and uneven surfaces. It's particularly helpful for geriatric dogs and those with orthopedic ailments. Spring locks on each leg allow for quick assembly and disassembly without tools. Prices range from \$30.93 for the small size to \$67.20 for extra large. Order online at [www.kakadupet.com](http://www.kakadupet.com).

#### Neko Habitat Pet Beds (warning, splurge alert!)

Drawing inspiration from the high-end, sleek "people furniture" market, the debut line of Habitat beds feature comfort for pet and style for owner. Three luxury pet beds — the "Cradle," "Pan" and "Wave" — are available in six colors. Soft, lightweight cushions are reversible and constructed from eye-catching fabrics, including faux fur and lofted Poly-fil. They're designed for easy cleaning, and they're urethane foam-free (in case of accidental ingestion by "chewy" dogs and cats). The beds are best for kittens, cats and small dogs. The Cradle frame, which sells for \$249.99, is available only at [www.nekohabitat.com](http://www.nekohabitat.com) or by calling (415) 939-6356.

#### PRACTICALITY Out, out darned spot

SpotBot Pet by Bissell is a carpet spot cleaner that promises to do all the work. Two liquid formulas battle "back end stains" (if you know what I mean) or "front end stains," which tend to need more enzymatic action.

I am a spokesperson for Bissell, under contract to promote pet adoption and educate pet owners about clean-up solutions. That said, I use SpotBot in my multipet home, and it works. It costs \$139 at major retailers including Target, Walmart and Sears.

**Write to pet-lifestyle expert Kristen Levine at Fetching Communications, P.O. Box 222, Tarpon Springs FL 34688; e-mail [kristen@fetchingcommunications.com](mailto:kristen@fetchingcommunications.com).**

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