

# the Pet Elite

The Pet Elite is the premier pet industry publication written exclusively for high-end retailers. Published quarterly, The Pet Elite is designed to keep luxury pet buyers on the cutting edge of this lucrative specialty channel.

The Pet Elite is mailed to a hand-selected list of retailers around the world, including pet boutiques, pet spas, high-end department stores and luxury gift stores. Each issue features countless pet products representing the current trends for the upcoming season, profiles of successful pet businesses and effective store promotions and merchandising.

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

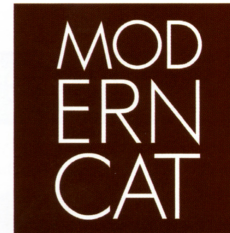


32



By Melissa Breau

## Trend Report



The Pet Elite recently sat down with **Kate Benjamin**, founder and editor of **Moderncat.net**, to discuss what modern cat owners are looking for.

Moderncat.net is an online resource for design-conscious cat owners. The site is presented primarily as a blog, consisting of short posts that highlight new products and provide information relating to cat care. Moderncat encourages readers to post comments, allowing for conversations to take place. Because of this, Moderncat has developed into a blogging community, with over 4,500 subscribers, an average of 1,000 visits per day, an average of 2,000 page-views per day and readers from over 100 countries.

**TPE:** What is Moderncat's main focus?

**Benjamin:** Most posts focus on some aspect of design—interior design, product design, graphic design or architecture. Consumers are becoming design-conscious, as reflected in the marketing of high-end designer furniture as well as in the advertising campaigns of mass retailers like Target (“Design For All”). Design is ubiquitous, and pet owners are affected by it just as much as other consumers.

**TPE:** How does the site benefit the retailer?

**Benjamin:** Consumer feedback blogs like Moderncat provide some of the most valuable information a business owner can ask for. I hear from manufacturers directly when they have a new product available, and I've launched several new products and a few new companies on the site. Retailers can learn a lot about new

cat products and companies from this blog, and they can read consumer feedback.

**TPE:** Where do you look to keep up-to-date on new products and industry trends?

**Benjamin:** I regularly read pet industry trade publications, as well as consumer magazines for pet owners, specifically cat owners. I also keep tabs on other pet info websites and blogs, plus I try to attend the major pet product trade shows each year to see what's new. Lately, my readers have been a great source of ideas and knowledge. People are always sending me links to interesting information and products and telling me about their own experiences.

**TPE:** What trends are developing and growing in the pet lifestyle industry?

**Benjamin:** Consumers are demanding products that are attractive, modern and functional. Today's pet owners are changing, and they are being referred to as “uber owners,” meaning young professionals with expendable income who treat their pets like children. Several companies are already offering high-end pet furniture and gear designed specifically for these consumers. Although this group may not represent the bulk of pet product consumers, I would venture to say that the tastes and preferences of these “uber owners,” and others like them, will trickle down to the mass market, influencing the design of all types of pet products.

**TPE:** What trends do you foresee for 2009?

**Benjamin:** Definitely more affordable options, especially in light of the recent economic distress. Eco-friendly, natural options will probably continue to see increased popularity. Design-conscious products—meaning aesthetically and functionally well-designed products—will start to be the standard in pet products.

I also believe that businesses that provide outstanding customer service will have a better chance of weathering the current economic storm. The social media plays a big role in exposing businesses that provide poor service. If someone has a bad experience, you can bet they will post a comment somewhere telling others about the incident. ■

