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Paris label does luxury doggy digs, dishes, beds

By JENNY BARCHFIELD Associated Press

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PARIS—A three-story town house on Paris' exclusive Place Vendome, with sumptuous interiors hung with plush red velvet and dazzling gilded chandeliers—it's an address fit for a king.

Or his dog.

The property in question is actually a miniature poodle-sized replica of a tony Paris townhouse, handmade for discerning pooches with deep pockets and a taste for the finer things in life.

The 4-foot-tall dog house—complete with a canopy bed and velvet-lined drawers for storing Rex's accessories—is the jewel in the crown of Puppy de Paris, a new luxury canine comfort line crafted by prized French artisans.

Other offerings in the line by Frenchwoman Karin Fainas include "Le Canape Place de la Madeleine," a velvet bed painted with scenes from Parisian bakeries and fitted with lion's paw feet in hand-cast silver, and a doggy bowl in gold-dipped bronze that looks more like more like a crown than something you'd intentionally fill with dog chow.

"I used to work in fine jewelry, and my clients would inevitably have little dogs in tote," said Fainas, a 41-year-old with elegant features and close-cropped hair. "They were always telling me, 'What about my dog? You should make beautiful things for him, he deserves them just as much as I do.'"

So Fainas set about doing just that.

She drew on the contacts she'd made through her now-shuttered jewelry line to assemble a stable of French artisans. Though Fainas comes up with the general design, she outsources the manufacture of her products to these craftspeople, each of whom specializes in a single aspect of production.

A bronze-caster makes the doggy beds' gold leaf-covered lion's paw feet using a centuries-old method.

A woman who fashions made-to-measure jewelry boxes for Place Vendome's toniest houses handles the upholstery, stretching and folding the canine couches' fabric coverings just so.

The velvet itself is the work of family-owned house that has been churning out France's finest fabrics for more than 160 years—though this particularly velvet is treated with Teflon for dog-proof easy cleaning.

The gilded handles that adorn the "Appartement de Place Vendome" dog house are made by a house that was founded in 1885, with an archive of fancy doorknobs and elaborate closures that stretch back to the epoch of Louis XIV.

"I'm really adamant about these products being 100 percent made in France, down to the smallest detail," said Fainas.

The Made in France label comes with a price: from euro9,800 for the dog bowl to euro14,800 for the Haussmannian master apartment house. The little couches are euro11,800.

For dog lovers with enough disposable income, the label's hefty price tags are not a problem.

"For lots of people, their dogs are their constant companions and best friends," said Fainas. "So there's literally no doubt they're worth it."

Online:

<http://www.puppydeparis.fr>

American cocker spaniel 'Vasco' poses with a decorative bowl in... ((AP Photo/Jacques Brinon))

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