



Dear Miss Petiquette,

My husband and I have started out 2010 with a New Year's resolution to save more money with some little lifestyle changes. We plan to spend less time going out and more time at home. Little things like hiring DVDs rather than going to the movies, cutting back on spending, making use of leftovers and trying not to dine out.

It's the non-dining out that we've already hit a snag with. Instead of meeting friends at restaurants, we're making an effort to invite people to our place for simple barbeques and home-cooked dinners. We recently had a set of friends around and all was going well until one person requested that our dog be sent outside. She didn't like him being near the dining table and made a suggestion that it wasn't very 'sanitary'.

Hagen is our four-year-old Lab and bitsa mix. He's a sweet dog and very social. He's also an 'inside' dog and wants nothing more than to be around us and anyone visiting. He doesn't beg at the table (we've never fed him scraps) and he's not under anyone's feet.

We've never considered that Hagen's presence be annoying or unhygienic in the slightest. He is part of our 'family' and would never want to shove him outside when guests are around. Are we perhaps being too overindulgent to Hagen and not considering that there are some people who will not share our views on Hagen's run-of-the-house?

Marion R.
Milson's Point

Dear Marion,

Without knowing too much about your friend and whether she is a 'germaphobe' or 'dogist' I'm unable to determine exactly where your friend is coming from.

But, hospitality—the great gift of inviting others into your home—is very much a dying artform. It is much easier to catch-up with friends at a restaurant or café rather than take the care and devotion to cooking them a meal and breaking bread. Expense aside, you're actually offering much more in the way you're opening your door and sanctuary to people you consider your friends.

Those friends should be able to take you warts-and-all and appreciate that you have a furry house-mate. Being a friend, she surely would have known that you have a doggie and that he is well loved and occupies a special place in your home. For her to expect or request you change the house-rules for the few hours she is visiting is audacious.

Ultimately it's over to you as to whether her comfort comes before you, your husband's and Hagen's. There are a few options that you can consider.

- 1: Suggest the next catch-up be at her house.
- 2: Decide whether there are friends where it is that much easier to meet at a restaurant or café and build that into your yearly budget.
- 3: Stick to your house rules and don't compromise on Hagen's run-of-the-house. If your friend complains and makes murmurs about this again, laugh it off, make a happy face and then drag your husband into the kitchen to help serve the next course all while muttering under your breath that perhaps it's time to seek some new friends.

Miss Petiquette (not her real name) lives in a cramped urban cottage with her dog and two cockatiels. Her partially blind bunny has since crossed over the rainbow bridge. One pet down, Miss Petiquette has even more time on her hands to answer your questions regarding manners in the modern age for pet lovers. Miss Petiquette is on hand to deal with your perplexing petiquette and personal problems.

Email her at behaviour@urbananimal.net



modern manners

Petiquette Questions Answered

Furry Festivities & Animal Attractions

Saturday, March 13

Beneful Bark in the Park

This free event is open for all people to bring their doggies and join in the fun. There will be free dog washing and grooming, free samples and free advice on behaviour and nutrition. The event will have live music and hosted by Channel 9's Steve Jacobs.

10:00am to 2:00pm

Victoria Park, Cnr Parramatta & City Roads, Chippendale

Sunday, March 28

Kids Un-Limbited Easter Egg Hunt & BBQ

This is a fundraising event to assist children who are recent amputees. There will be a jumping castle and rides for little ones.

Sydney Olympic Park, Bicentennial Park (by the twin sails)

Sunday, May 16

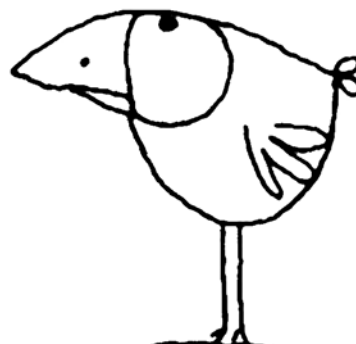
RSPCA Million Paws Walk

Annual fundraising event that includes a 4k walk, various stalls and dog washing.

The Overflow, Sydney Olympic Park

Registration from 8:00am, walk commences 10:00am, event concludes 2:00pm

twigseeds®



my inner bird doesn't
feel like chirping today

Illustrations by Kate Knapp. © Twigseeds Pty Ltd Australia 2010