



# Internet Interpet

By Lisa Treen

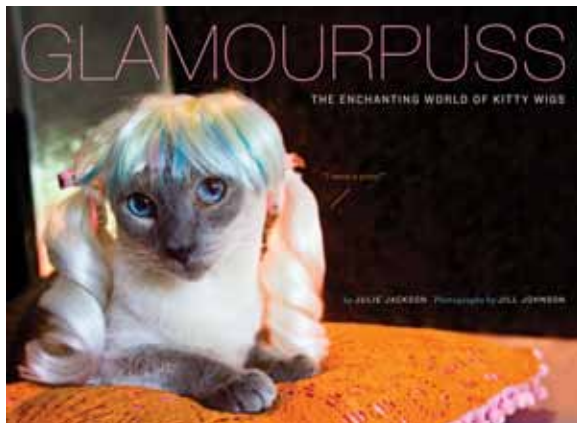


**W**ant your dog to be the butt of the joke at the dog park? Then this product has your pooch's back; **Rear Gear** the dog butt cover is made for his unsightly rear.

That's right, you heard it here first. Apparently someone believes that a dog's behind is quite unsavoury to look at. They also believe that other pet owners find this view of a dog so abhorrent that there should be a product we can all buy and cover it up.

"Rear Gear is handmade in Portland, OR and offers a cheerful solution to be-rid your favourite pet's un-manicured back side." So the makers say. Rear Gear also promises, "there will be no more Mr. Brown Eye," which is curious as no one here at Urban Animal has ever considered this to be a problem. So if you believe your dogs behind is so repugnant you can fix this by attaching one of these nifty little covers. "Rear Gear comes in many designs including a disco ball, air freshener, heart, flower, biohazard, smiley face, number one ribbon, cupcake, sheriff's badge, dice, and you can even make yours custom, so there's a Rear Gear for everyone."

Is there nothing that our American cousins won't try to sell us? Last year it was the **Snuggie for Dogs**; the dog version of the fleecie blanket with sleeves. The human version was funny enough and if you feel like a laugh you can get online and You Tube the words Snuggie Pub Crawl.



These events held around the world involve dozens of people (called Snugglers) descending on perfectly nice establishments wearing their Snuggies.

We've searched high and low for needless cat accessories and have found something much better than hairball control. We've found **Kitty Wigs**; cat-sized wigs intended to encourage playful interaction between you and your pet. From the creative imagination of Julie Jackson. She's teamed her idea with photographer, Jill Johnson and together they've released the book *Glamourpuss: The Enchanting World of Kitty Wigs*.

It includes 60 gorgeous photos of cats in wigs with clever captions about what's going on in their little heads.

As Jackson states from her press release "One day I was thinking about cats and wigs (because that's the kind of thing I think about) and I searched on **Flickr.com** to see what was out there. I found a few images, but noticed that all the wigs were kind of ill-fitting and not really made for cats. I recognized the need for a wig that pet photo enthusiasts could use with their pets."

Kitty Wigs come in four styles: Pink Passion, Bashful Blonde, Silver Fox and Electric Blue. For the cost of \$50 (add on \$25 extra for shipping to Australia) you receive your own Kitty Wig on a round form, hairnet, woven label, instructions and a toy mouse—all brought to you in a stylish



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metal Kitty Wig branded travel case for safekeeping.

Jackson has some advice for using your Kitty Wig:

*"Any cat will take to a wig as long as it is presented in the right spirit and with patience. Our wigs don't have chinstraps or ear holes because cats don't enjoy confinement or stress. It's very important that the wigs are introduced slowly and with a lot of positive reinforcement. Kitty Wigs are not meant to be a cat toy; they come in their own case because they require supervision and care. Ideally, the wig is a perfect photo prop and the result of your playtime will be great photos. We have a Kitty Wigs group set up on Flickr so that everyone can share the results of their labour!"*

There are worse things that you can do to your cat and if a wig, some playtime and a few cute photos bring you and kitty closer, then we're all for it.

Nintendo has developed a fun and interactive way to get us all moving. The world of gaming has long been viewed as a sedentary pastime that wouldn't

work-out anything more than your digits. However, Nintendo's Wii Fit changed that with active games and the introduction of the pressure sensitive Balance Board that measures your centre of gravity, weight distribution and balance.

Nintendo's DS has joined the fitness family by binging out the **Personal Trainer: Walking** device that is part of a series of self-guided fitness games for the Nintendo user. You can create a Mii character (or import yours from your Wii system) and sync it with one of up to four activity meters—so up to four family members can use this. The package comes with two Activity Meter™ accessories that record every step users take and when they take it. Personal Trainer: Walking translates the data into interactive graphs that help users set goals and see their progress over time. The devices are about the size and weight of a normal pedometer.

And here's the good news for you and your canine walk-fit machine; the activity meter can be attached to a collar to measure



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both you and your dog's level of activity through the day. Yours can be clipped to a belt or popped into a bag and before you can say "run, Spot run" you'll be able to record every step taken throughout the day. The data received can then be synced to send data wirelessly to a Nintendo DS or Nintendo DSi system.

The software converts users' information into fun, interactive graphical displays. These 'life rhythm' readouts allow users to discover interesting facts about their levels of activity throughout the day and help them avoid being sedentary.

The 'Walk the World' feature lets users draw pictures on the face of the Earth using the total number of steps they take, while users who have wireless broadband Internet access can see a display of the total steps taken by users around the world on their virtual journey to other planets in 'Space Walk'. In a virtual world, your dog need never have to wear his Rear Gear.



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