

STUDIO CITY

South



A Purr-fect Solution for Cat Parents

By Elyse Glickman

There is a great cat dilemma being thrust upon Sherman Oaks families. Experts and cat behaviorists - from America's favorite "Cat Daddy" Jackson Galaxy to the American Association of Feline Practitioners (veterinarians), agree that cats should not go outside unsupervised. While cats benefit from exercise and fresh air, too many hazards (cars, coyotes, fighting, disease, and poison) conspire to knock years off their lives.



Indoor cats, however, suffer from a lack of stimulation, which leads to boredom and behavioral issues. This is why Alan Breslauer, AKA the Catio Guy, endeavored to bridge the gap between outdoor and indoor cats by creating safe enclosures called catios (cat patios). After building a couple of catios over a decade for his own cats, Monkey and

Cooper, he launched "Custom Catios," specializing in state of the art enclosures that not only keep cats safe and stimulated, but also blend in with houses to ensure homeowners are happy, too.

"I saw a massive need," says Breslauer, who spent the last six years in corporate America doing law firm marketing and business development before launching the company. "There are 75 million cats living in one-third of all American homes, and nobody was providing a high-end solution to the problem."

Breslauer's enclosures left an impression with Jackson Galaxy, who hired Custom Catios to appear on his Animal Planet show, "Cat vs. Dog." Breslauer looks back fondly at the experience, and credits Galaxy for his generosity in sharing his vast cat wisdom. "I will forever be indebted to Jackson who taught me so much about catios. All my clients benefit from the knowledge he imparted to me."

While there are prefab catio products on the market, the cage-like structures leave much to be desired. "We are extremely cognizant of home aesthetics. As such, we've done a couple of stained redwood enclosures that are simply breathtaking," Breslauer says. "I'm also a fan of translucent roofs that allow sun to shine through enclosures

into the home. In terms of seeing how different features come together, it was great fun designing and building a stunning catio for YouTube star Anna Akana, which includes a 20-foot bridge and a dozen shelves for her six cats.

Breslauer notes that there are other benefits for both cats and humans, including the ability to move the litter box outside, improving sanitary conditions and smell within the home. Increased outdoor vertical space, meanwhile, often leads to better camaraderie in multi-cat households. Catio owners also report getting better sleep as cats are able to get their nighttime stimulation in an enclosure rather than pestering their human parents.

"The cats absolutely love the floor to ceiling sisal rope poles," he observes. "Watching a cat scamper up a 10-foot pole is awesome! We also paint internal shelves with artificial sand for extra grip. For the same reason, we use industrial strength outdoor carpeting on ramps. Cat safety figures into everything we do, which is why we always use spring hinges to ensure doors close automatically, thereby preventing cats from escaping."

Breslauer details other cool features that were created in response to home site challenges. For example, his team designed a step-up "chimney" along a house, which led to a bridge over a trafficked walkway that deposited the cats into a structure built on a planter ten feet from the house. "We take pride in our ability to overcome obstacles," Breslauer states emphatically.

Breslauer's "Catios" are an investment that will extend the life of cats and improve and enrich the lives of their humans. "On average, it takes our experienced team two to three days to build an enclosure," he says. "With that said, the price range has been from about \$3,000 to \$35,000 with the average catio running between \$5,000 and \$7,000."

Despite the cost, Breslauer says his clients are universally thrilled with the result: "Witnessing the sheer joy and happiness experienced by my clients watching their cats explore the outdoors in a new catio for the first time is incomparable."

To commission a "Catio" for your home or inquire about a consultation, visit customcatios.com

