

In their forthcoming book, *Woof: A Gay Man's Guide to Dogs* (www.bowtiepress.com), author Andrew DePrisco and illustrator Jason O'Malley offer a tongue-in-cheek breakdown of what sorts of gay personalities gravitate toward which breeds of dogs. So it's instructive to note that O'Malley has a miniature pinscher (Tino), a dog heavily acquired, according to the book, by the "lady of leisure" gay set.

in the Dog House

a country home for man and man's best friend

STORY BY JORGE S. ARANGO | PHOTOS BY JULIE WEBER

Not that O'Malley, 38, sits around eating bonbons all day. He's a busy boy. A successful illustrator for 10 years now, he has also launched an outfit called Handsome Devil Press (www.handsomedevilpress.com) with his companion and business partner, J.R. Craigmile, also 38. While they produce lines appropriate for various audiences, their specialty is "gay-oriented greeting cards that aren't tacky or pornographic," O'Malley says. "There are already enough rainbows and triangles out there, and porn stars with a bow tie on."

Craigmile's dog (Simon), however, is a Rhodesian ridgeback, a large, hound-like breed that corresponds, according to *Woof*, to "the all-American boy." Can these very different breeds—of both beast and man—co-exist harmoniously? (Note to authors: Sequel! Maybe *Woof Woof: A Gay Dog Owner's Guide to Dating?*) Happily, the two make an excellent pair, though as with anything, it takes compromise. The purchase and outfitting of their house is a



good illustration of how the men work things through.

On the face of it, their lives are amazingly congruent. They both hail from Michigan—O'Malley from Birmingham and Craigmile from Pontiac, just 20 minutes away. Both spent time in



Chicago after college before moving on to New York—Craigmile in 1990, O'Malley in '96. They actually met in New York through Chicago connections: Their respective best girlfriends, who still live in the Windy City, set them up on a blind date in 2002. They hit it off immediately and started seeing each other, but maintained their separate apartments over the next couple of years. "When you think about how gay relationships happen," Craigmile observes, "ours developed very slowly."

Then, when O'Malley's lease was close to expiring three years ago, they decided to buy a house together. Craigmile had rented weekend homes in Lake Katrine and Tivoli for years, having fallen in love with the area while doing accounting work for the movie *Nobody's Fool*, which was filmed in Beacon. (His day job for the past 15 years has been



Jason O'Malley and J.R. Craigmile

keeping movies on budget; among the titles he's worked on are *Hoffa*, *The Firm*, *12 Monkeys*, *Cecil B. Demented*, and *Kinsey*.) "It's the least exciting job in a very exciting industry," he says dryly.)

Their initial search proved futile. "We saw so many rundown shacks and horrible houses," O'Malley remembers. "So I said I really think we need a gay realtor who understands our tastes. We're not fixer-uppers; we didn't want to renovate. I was a little nature-phobic. I needed high-speed Internet and modern conveniences." (Dear reader: Getting the min pin connection here?)

So they hired Jeff Serouya of Westwood Metes & Bounds. "It made all the difference having gay realtors," Craigmile says. "They had an understanding of where *not* to look and what type of house we wanted." Shortly into this second house-hunting phase, they bought a turnkey cottage on land that had been a campground for Norwegian immigrants since, they estimate, the late '60s.

The couple, who call themselves modern bohemians (MoBos for short), set up house with O'Malley's apartment furniture. Then



the negotiation began. "I am much more modern in my tastes," O'Malley explains. "It's less comfortable, but it looks great."

Craigmile (the Rhodesian ridgeback owner, remember?) wasn't

exactly feeling that aesthetic. "I didn't even know what midcentury modern was," he admits. "I'm much more comfy cozy, earth tones, and folk art."

Their compromise? "I'm in charge of the inside, he's in charge of the outside," O'Malley says. "I actually wrote out a contract saying that and made him sign. It's not legally binding, of course." Yet O'Malley took into consideration his all-American boy's tastes, and, he says, "We've been merging these two aesthetics ever since into a kind of rustic modern."

So, for example, the main area has plenty of clean, modern lines. O'Malley's Paul McCobb sideboard creates a sense of separation between living and dining spaces. To its right are a Noguchi-like, kidney-shaped coffee table (a garbage treasure); Marcel Breuer's Wassily chair (a hand-me-down from O'Malley's parents); and a 1940s-style sofa and chair from Room & Board. Along the window, however, is a collection of birdhouses—a cottage-y touch for sure, although O'Malley points out that they have streamlined 1950s profiles.

At the other end of the sideboard is a sturdy, dark farm table bought in a junk shop for \$200, surrounded by Eames DAR chairs discovered at Lost & Found Antiques in Stone Ridge.



There are also some 1970s Kartell storage units that O'Malley converted into a bar (these came from his parents as well), and Harry Bertoia barstools at the kitchen counter.

Of course, each man absorbed bits of the

other's aesthetic by osmosis. It is O'Malley who's done graphic-design work for DKNY, *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, American Express, Gap, and Mini Cooper. Yet it was Craigmile who discovered two works by the highly collectible graphic artist Charley Harper at an Internet auction. And some old lockers that serve as extra storage—a quaint cottage mudroom touch—were O'Malley's idea, not Craigmile's.



Outside, Craigmile undertook the cleanup of the property and oversaw the building of a terrace off the winterized porch. He also had a retaining wall built to hold back the waters that overflow the stream in spring, but Mother Nature proved stronger and the terrace flooded out. He's regrouping efforts there, as well as planning a deck off the living room and a vegetable garden.

And Tino and Simon? They've negotiated their relationship, too. "It would be impossible to take the dogs back to the city," Craigmile says. ☺

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