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Approximately 1,000 wds

NOTHING BUT THE BEST

FELINE FURNITURE

Written by June Grayson, Photographed by Richard Grayson

Your cats deserve the very best. That is why, according to Dave and Linda Brinkman, your cats deserve cat furniture manufactured by the American Cat Emporium (ACE).

Natural bark hardwood branches support carpet covered boxes of various sizes and shapes where cats can play, perch, and sleep.

Dave Brnkman started in high school as a clerk in a local pet shop. He spent the next twenty years in the pet industry and ended up in Chicago where he managed a wholesale warehouse.

Linda Wisniewski worked as a quality assurance technologist at Quaker Oats when they met and married eight years ago. She

had her bachelor's degree in Home Economics and a master's degree in nutrition. She liked to refinish and upholster furniture in her free time.

They decided to invent a sideline business which Linda could operate from the dining room table when she stayed home to raise their children. Dave would keep his fulltime salaried job.

They would produce top of the line cat furniture. Although there were about six other national companies making pet furniture eight years ago, they knew that they could design a better product and give better service.

They opened a small factory in McHenry and employed four workers. In only one year that facility was too small, so they moved to a 20,000 barn in Elburn, Illinois, where they had room eventually for fifteen workers.

Within two years they had grossed \$100,000 and Dave had to quit his job so they could both work in the new company.

It helped that Dave knew the pet industry so well and that their first manufacturer's sales representative in the midwest was the best in the industry.

Their latest expansion? They have bought out another manufacturer in the pet industry who made wooden rabbit cages and small pet toys.

For the past year, they traveled between the two factories.

"We only seem to be able to operate in a hands-on fashion," explains Linda. So last spring, they closed the Elburn facility and moved the company to Camp Douglas, Wisconsin. "Since we sell nationally to distributors, and not retail, we can locate anyplace," Linda says.

Visit any pet store in the Chicago area and you are likely to see several items from ACE on display. You can buy a one dollar toy of cardboard covered with carpeting and with a bell inside to amuse your cat.

Or you can buy a multiple cat perch four foot wide and six feet high for your cats to scratch and frolic upon during the day.

The natural shape of the branches determine the design. Multiple carpet covered boxes provide tunnels, ferris wheels, perches, and nests to amuse pussy.