

DRIVING**BELLS & WHISTLES**

# Dogproofing For the S.U.V.

When Fido goes for a ride in the family car, the usual choice is throwing a towel or blanket over the back seat to try to catch dirt and shedding hair or simply commit to the inevitable vacuuming.

Now the Best Friends Company, a new business in Royal Oak, Mich., a suburb of Detroit, has come up with a seat cover designed specifically for certain sport utility vehicles. Called NeatSeat, it is made from a fabric that has the look and feel of ultrasuede but is, the company says, antimicrobial, machine washable and resistant to stains and moisture. The seat covers come in three patterns and four color combinations, a mocha dog bone design, a mocha and a slate gray paw print pattern and camouflage of browns and beiges. The same fabric is used for NeatSleep, a lightweight bed that can be used for camping.

NeatSeat was initially custom fitted to the Ford Explorer, Mercury Mountaineer, Jeep Grand Cherokee, Chevrolet Blazer and TrailBlazer and GMC Envoy. Covers for more models are on the way. Leslie Touma, an executive at Lear, the manufacturer of automobile seats, founded Best Friends this year, drawn by what looks like a large market. American households own 68 million dogs, and many ride regularly in cars.

NeatSeat and NeatSleep will be available in the fall at the company's Web site, [www.bestfriendscompany.com](http://www.bestfriendscompany.com), which starts in the next month. Later, the company expects to sell them through stores and car dealers.

MICHELLE KREBS



**CLEAN SEATS** Custom seat covers for dogs, now for a few car models, will soon be made for more.