CREATURE COMFORTS

Smitten Kittens
A pet home, a plaything, and a must-have that are all cat tested and O approved.

PAWESOME PODS
There’s no telling cats what to do: Buy them a monogrammed bed, they snooze on your keyboard; toss them a jingly ball, they attack your lingerie. But that was before Wooly Cat Caves. Hand-felted in natural or dyed 100 percent Alpine wool and shaped like Telestubbles, the snug abodes will woo even the most defiant mousers. (From $161; etsy.com)

WICKA WICKA WHISKERS
Unleash your cat’s inner DJ with this cardboard turntable scratching pad. Its disc spins like a real record, so your feline performer will be dropping sick beats and grooving on Catchella’s main stage in no time. Bonus track: Your couch will relish the much-needed relief. ($35; uncommongoods.com)

FELINE LIFELINE
Let’s get down to the nitty-and-not-so-gritty. Lightweight, anti-clump, and odorless, PrettyLitter lets your pet pee worry-free because it changes color when it detects a pH imbalance. Green, blue, yellow, orange, and red might indicate different maladies (and that a call to the vet could be in order). Plus, PrettyLitter is actually pretty, with a glittery, slightly pink hue akin to Himalayan salt. Bling-bling! ($21 per bag; prettlitter.com)
—CHARLOTTE BEACH

SECOND ACT

Head Over Heels
How Kat Mendenhall two-stepped into a new career.

FOR NATIVE TEXAN Kat Mendenhall, cowboy boots are more than footwear. Like country music and saying “y’all,” they’re a cornerstone of her heritage (at one point, her closet held 26 pairs). Mendenhall, 52, wore them to dinner, her daughter’s high school graduation (“those were more ornate”), and, for 25-plus years, her various jobs in telecommunications sales. But in 2010, hoping to correct digestive problems, she rocked her own world by going vegan—and it would only be a matter of time before the leather boots hit the dust.

Before she quit cowhide, however, in 2013 the Dallasite decided to quit her job: “Going vegan really made me feel a need to be purposeful,” says Mendenhall. “It was hard giving up a lucrative career, but I had about three years’ worth of resources. What I didn’t have was a plan.” A few months later, she was driving behind a cattle trailer—and voilà. “I made eye contact with a cow and felt a punch in my gut. I’d stopped eating animals, but I still wore them. I told a friend. This is shallow, but I don’t know what I’m going to do without my boots.” She looked at me and said, “Make vegan ones!”

Mendenhall’s big challenge: sourcing a material that could mimic cowhide. Enter Majilite, a microfiber that shares leather’s texture and durability. Her bigger challenge: finding an old-school bootmaker who’d handle a nontraditional textile. Enter Tomasso Arditti, an El Paso craftsman. “When Tomasso sent me the first prototype,” says Mendenhall, “I literally fell to the floor and cried.”

Since launching her eponymous line in 2015, Mendenhall has designed and sold more than 130 sets of bespoke boots at about $500 a pop. Her clients have some famous names (Miley Cyrus, a committed vegan) and some not so famous (James Moss, her 81-year-old dad, who wears his size 16s to church). She’s even made a few pairs to kick off her new personal collection.

Says Mendenhall, “I just wanted to change the world without changing my style.” Yee-haw!
—ROBYN ROSS