

**Puppy palace:** It's hard to find an unoccupied niche in the retail world these days. Want to open a store that only sells candles? Join the crowd. How about a shop that sells bath and body products produced in environmentally friendly ways? Been there, done that.

Despite the obstacles, Stuart Grannen has found a niche, and it doesn't have as much to do with what he is selling as the atmosphere he sells it in.

His shop, Architectural Artifacts Inc., at 4325 N. Ravenswood Ave., is a dog-friendly retailer. A sign on the shop's door informs customers their dogs are welcome. Canine shoppers are offered treats and water. They also are free to frolic

among the mostly indestructible merchandise with Grannen's dog Clayton, a big yellow Labrador.

Clayton is the third in his line, so to speak.

Grannen has been bringing dogs to work for 14 years. Zelda and Rap, chocolate Labs who were Clayton's predecessors, are now buried across the street from the shop.

Grannen decided to take his dog-friendly theme to a new level this year with a party on the weekend of Dec. 15. Human shoppers were served breakfast while their canine companions enjoyed doggie gift baskets filled with treats and toys.

"Hundreds of dogs came," Grannen says. "It did get a little crazy at one point." But it also was good for the top line: The shop racked up \$80,000 in sales during the weekend.

It was just one good weekend among many. The shop, which