



# Bichon Bits & Bytes

September 2012 Bichon FurKids Rescue

## Announcing the BFK 2013 Calendar Contest Winners



Selecting winners from the many attractive photos that were submitted to the 2013 Calendar Contest was a challenge - and you helped us to make that very tough decision! The votes have been tabulated and we have three winners - and a very close runner up!

Our first prize goes to Mark and Susan Fountain for Hermione.



Second prize is awarded to Prescilla Molitor for Rascal and Bandit at the Beach.

Deb and Tom Gibb and their amazing pack of bichons garnered third prize,

And close behind was Judy Rudin's Gracie and Cooper! (Judy adopted Gracie as Cooper's companion at a recent Bichon Bash and they are an amazing pair.)

We are excited about the many adorable photos that were submitted - and our wonderful volunteer designers will soon be hard at work creating the 2013 calendar that will feature these furkids. The calendar will be printed and ready for purchase in October (in time for holiday gift giving and, of course, the Fall Bichon Bash.) We'll let you know how and when to order your calendars.

Again many thanks to all of you happy bichon Moms and Dads. You certainly have shown us the many adorable furkids that are in our community.



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# My Dog Rocco

By Muffy Marracco

I remember the first thing I wrote. It now hangs on my living room wall, framed. I carefully scrawled out the following declaration: SMUM DAE IM GON TO BYE A PUPE. Some day, I'm going to buy a puppy.

Well, if I could go back and talk to that kindergarten, I'd tell her it's much better to ADOPT A PUPE than buy one.

When my parents got divorced, I was consoled with a puppy. He was a purebred bichon frise, with papers, and he was assuredly the cutest thing ever. We named him Hanno. When he died 16 years later, I was heartbroken. It took me nearly a year to decide that I was ready for another dog. But this time I wanted to rescue a dog.

I adopted Rocco on Dec. 31, 2008. A couple weeks before, I had contacted Bichon FurKids to start the process. Now they said that perhaps this was the dog for me. I hopped in the car to go meet him. Several hours later, I rang in the new year with some cheap wine and a dog on my lap.

The shelter called him Evan. They also called him unadoptable. I'd be the first to admit he has his problems on the leash - aggression and fear, for one - but indoors he is a source of joy and delight and absolute love every day. Rocco doesn't love easily, but he loves quickly and steadfastly.



Two years later

And what a good boy he is! He never gets into the trash or chews the furniture or poops on the floor. When I start to stir in the morning, as the alarm goes off, Rocco plops himself down on my chest for a few solid minutes of hardcore snuggling. Ear rubs. Tummy tickles. It's an awesome way to greet the day.

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Rocco looking handsome



## My Dog Rocco, continued from page 2

Every day I am grateful that Rocco was rescued. I can't imagine my days without him. I am so thankful for the Bichon FurKids volunteers who took him from the shelter, cared for him and fostered him until I came along. They saw a dirty, shaggy and fearful beast in the shelter and saved him so that he could be my friend and baby and protector.



**Our first photo together**

Hanno was bought from a breeder. Rocco is some mutt from the pound. My love for them is equal. And where Hanno was strong, Rocco is weak. But the opposite is

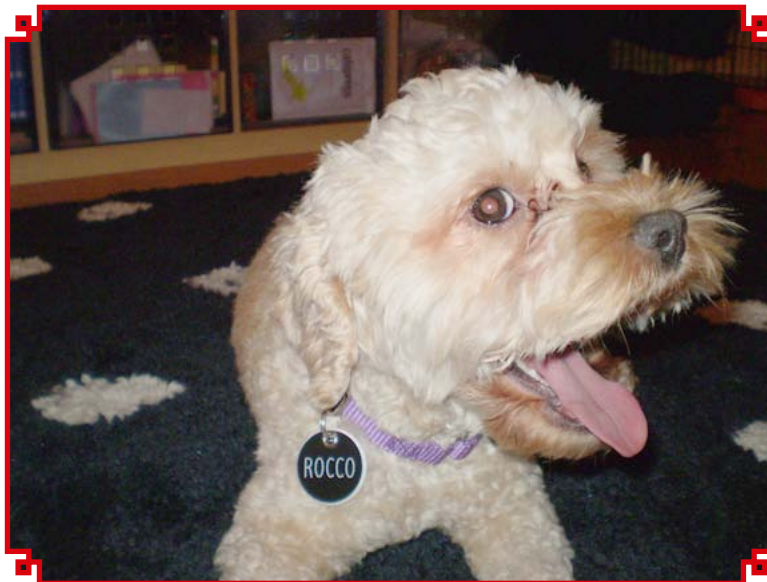
true as well. Rocco excels in different ways. For instance, Hanno never quite got the hang of housebreaking. (My mother still laments what he did to her white silk couch.) But Rocco is utterly trustworthy in that regard. Two cute dogs, two totally different skill sets.



**Hot Dog Rocco**

So the lesson is this. Buying a dog guarantees you nothing. Dogs from breeders are not better in any particular way than dogs that are rescued. Puppies are cute but that doesn't last - however, the damage they do to your couch might be forever. Every dog has personality quirks, problems, issues, whatever - and every dog does their own unique hilarious traits like attacking the vacuum cleaner or blitzing around the dining room table.

*The only thing that is certain is that when you rescue a dog you are saving that dog's life.*



**Happy Rocco !**

## I RESCUED A HUMAN TODAY

Her eyes met mine as she walked down the corridor peering apprehensively into the kennels. I felt her need instantly and knew I had to help her. I wagged my tail, not too exuberantly, so she wouldn't be afraid.

As she stopped at my kennel I blocked her view from a little accident I had in the back of my cage. I didn't want her to know that I hadn't been walked today. Sometimes the shelter keepers get too busy and I didn't want her to think poorly of them.

As she read my kennel card I hoped that she wouldn't feel sad about my past. I only have the future to look forward to and want to make a difference in someone's life.

She got down on her knees and made little kissy sounds at me. I shoved my shoulder and side of my head up against the bars to comfort her. Gentle fingertips caressed my neck; she was desperate for companionship.

A tear fell down her cheek and I raised my paw to assure her that all would be well. Soon my kennel door opened and her smile was so bright that I instantly jumped into her arms. I would promise to keep her safe. I would promise to always be by her side. I would promise to do everything I could to see that radiant smile and sparkle in her eyes. I was so fortunate that she came down my corridor. So many more are out there who haven't walked the corridors. So many more to be saved. At least I could save one.

\* \* \* \* \* I RESCUED A HUMAN TODAY \* \* \* \* \*



# THE NEW WORLD OF PET FOOD

It wasn't that long ago that pet food choices were limited to a few brands of dry kibble or cans at the local grocery store. These days there are hundreds of brands and dozens of different styles of pet food to choose from. You can find whole stores dedicated to pet food as well as isles of pet food at super stores like Walmart, Target and Costco. Even gas stations and convenience stores are dedicating prime shelf space to pet foods. With so many options, it can be quite overwhelming to the pet parent looking to find the best.

The decision you make about how you feed your pet depends on a lot of factors, including your own resources, the amount of time you can commit to the preparation of food, your life style, your budget, and of course the individual needs of your pets. One piece of advice I give to anyone interested in learning more about pet nutrition: you do not have to make a choice and stick with it. In fact, contrary to popular belief, most animals do best on a varied diet, with exposure to an array of different nutrients.

BY DENISE  
PETRILLO  
CLIFTON

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Be sure any new diet changes are done gradually, allowing your pets' digestive tract an opportunity to adjust to the new foods. If your pet is on a strict vet regulated diet, it is important to consult with your vet before making any changes. I do encourage you to always get a second opinion, however, if your vet is adamant about feeding a prescription diet. Some of the prescription diets on the market are full of less-than-desirable ingredients and another vet may have a completely different recommendation.

Don't stress too much about the decision. The fact that you are reading this article tells me that you are interested in learning and taking the initiative to think for yourself instead of trusting big brand marketing to tell you what's best for your pets. As you continue to seek knowledge and as your circumstances change with the flow of life, your feeding decisions will naturally change as well. Here are the diet choices:

## Dry Food a.k.a Kibble

This is basically "fast food" for pets. It is convenient, affordable, there is some form of it available almost everywhere you go, and typically it doesn't provide the optimum amount of nutrition because of high processing. The majority of the dry foods on the market are literally garbage, consisting primarily of genetically modified corn parts, wheat gluten and other fractionized grains with the nutritious parts leached out and used for human products; diseased meats unfit for human consumption and mystery meats (a mash-up of diseased species including horses, road kill and much worse), as well as chemical additives and dyes to make it taste and look more appealing.

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# THE NEW WORLD OF PET FOOD



IN MY OPINION  
A BALANCED  
RAW DIET  
OFFERS  
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YOUR PET.

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There are some good brands out there which take care to use real meats, whole fruits and vegetables, and although the kibble cooking process uses extremely high heat, the makers of these brands ensure that quality supplements and sometimes freeze-dried raw ingredients are added back into the food after cooking. If you are going to feed a "fast food," be sure to use one of these brands. Some to try: Orijen, Acana, Nutrisca, Pure Vita, Earthborn, Artemis, and Great Life. When selecting a kibble, be sure there is no corn, wheat, soy, by-products, or unspecified meats. One of my favorite websites to check out is [www.dogfoodadvisor.com](http://www.dogfoodadvisor.com). This website is a non-biased database that rates most of the commercial foods on the market one to five stars, and then explains in detail how the food got its score.

## Canned or Wet Food

The hydration found in wet food is great for your pets. While canned food is a form of convenience food, many of the premium-grade versions are much less processed than their kibble counterparts. Brands like Merrick, Evanger's, Tiki, Party Animal, and Weruva to name a few, use ingredients like white meat chicken and whole vegetables you can see with your own eyes. The abundance of moisture make canned foods easier to digest as well as lower in calories than kibble.

## Raw diets

In my opinion a balanced raw diet offers the most abundant source in bio-available nutrients for your pet. There are many different brands of raw diets on the market. Some of them are considered complete and balanced, and others are not. Because our pets are built to be able to fend for themselves by hunting and eating prey, digesting highly processed foods can put a lot of stress on their digestive system which can translate into a low immune system, lack of energy, allergies, and a list of other ailments. By feeding a raw diet you are taking away this unnecessary stress and all of the ailments that stem from it.

Pets that have been fed over-processed or poor quality foods may take a while to transition onto a raw food diet. I recommend doing your homework. A few great books to read: *Dr. Pitcairn's New Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats* by Richard H. Pitcairn and Susan Hubble Pitcairn, *The Barf Diet (Raw Feeding for Dogs and Cats Using Evolutionary Principles)* by Dr. Ian Billinghurst, and *Scared Poopless: The Straight Scoop on Dog Care* by Chiclet T. Dog and Jan Rasmusen.

**Tip:** Most veterinarians out there are not trained or comfortable with raw feeding, it is not a subject that is taught in vet school. There are however many local holistic veterinarians that do highly recommend raw food such as Dr. Tamara Hebbler, Dr. Keith Weingardt, and Dr. Monica Laflin.

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# THE NEW WORLD OF PET FOOD

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## Freeze-dried Diets

This form of processing uses no heat, therefore all of the nutrients are retained. More and more brands of freeze-dried diets are popping up for those families that want the convenience of a kibble diet but the nutrient profile of a raw diet. K9 Natural and Sojo's are two great brands to try.

## Dehydrated Diets

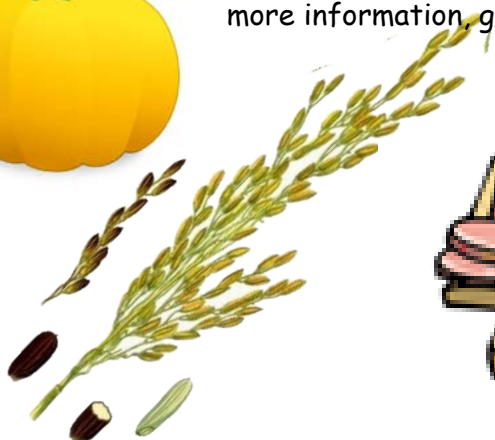
For pet parents that are a little uneasy about feeding raw food but want high quality food that is not nutritionally compromised, this is the diet of choice. Dehydration is a form of processing that typically uses a very low heat to remove the moisture from the food and to kill pathogens, leaving a nutrient dense, convenient food that has no chemical preservatives. The one to try is The Honest Kitchen, they are a great San Diego based company with lots of healthy choices for both dog and cat.

## Fresh Cooked Diets

Nothing beats a home-cooked meal! A fresh cooked diet prepared at home or pre-made is a wise option for the extremely picky, sick, digestion-challenged, or just plain pampered. If you decide to make your pets' food yourself, be sure you are supplementing with a great whole food multivitamin and using recipes approved by your holistic veterinarian. If you don't have the time, fret not! My Perfect Pet is a local company here in Poway, California that makes homemade, preservative-free food for your pet with fresh, restaurant quality ingredients and freezes it for your convenience. For more information about My Perfect Pet, go to: <http://www.myperfectpetfood.com>

## About the Author

This article was written by Denise Petrillo Clifton, Owner & Operator of Pupologie, a unique mom & pop pet boutique and resource center located in pet-loving Encinitas, California. Pupologie has the widest selection of truly healthy pet foods in the area, plus great toys, supplements, treats and accessories for your dog and cat. Also offered are services like titer testing clinics, anesthesia-free teeth cleaning, and pet photography. For more information, go to <http://pupologie.com>.



## What do Upscale Fashion, Accessories AND Bichons have in common? A FUN-FILLED DAY!

On Saturday, August 25th, the Carlsbad Forum was awash in (mostly) little white dogs with dark black eyes and noses who were doing their best to steal hearts! These fluffs were, of course, furkids from San Diego and Orange County who came

# chico's

to entertain and educate people about the joys of owning a bichon. Before the afternoon was over three of them had found forever families (with approved adopters who attended the event) and many people went home to think about adopting our breed.

While customers who frequent the upscale fashionable women's clothing and accessories store were treated to the newest fall fashions, they also had to pass through a 'collection' of fosters ready to meet - and charm- them (in order to enter the store.) No one seemed to mind the 'distraction' and many customers stopped on the way out as well.

Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers, foster moms and dads who turned out, set up, engaged visitors and showed them bichon love. Thanks to Vicky Hetrick whose idea it was to do the event - and, above all, thanks to Candi Robbin, the phenomenal General Manager of Chico's in the Forum!!! Candi opened her store to us and gave us the opportunity to showcase the FurKids. In addition she contributed a percent of all sales that were made at Chico's during the time we were there.

It was truly a delightful day, incredible weather, an excellent turnout - and many of us were also forced to treat ourselves to some beautiful clothes or accessories.

We hope to be invited back next year!  
THANK YOU CANDI AND CHICO'S!

