



HEALTHY TREATS FOR OUR CANINE COMPANIONS

Text by Dr Terence Tan

As doctors, the health and dietary needs of patients are our top priority. However, there are many individuals who also value the health of man's best friends – dogs. What then, is the difference between The Barkery's products and commercially available options? Dr Terence Tan speaks to Ann Marie Chua of The Barkery, to find out more about what they offer.

Thanks for taking the time to speak with us, Ann Marie. Perhaps we could start with the beginning; what is The Barkery all about?

The Barkery is essentially about good food for dogs. In the past, I think many people thought that dogs could eat anything and that the quality of dog food wasn't very important. But now, more and more people are beginning to realise that a good diet is fundamental to a happy and healthy life, so The Barkery is about producing such delicious and nutritious food options for dogs.

Our treats and cakes are all made from scratch, using only canine-friendly ingredients. We don't use any artificial ingredients, additives, flavouring or

colouring; our cakes are frosted and decorated with veggies, and contain ingredients like premium minced meat, carrots, celery and pumpkin.

What's the main difference between what you guys do and commercial kibble or treats?

I would say that the key differences are the type and quality of the ingredients we use, and the fact that our food is freshly prepared. We don't use ingredients that we can't pronounce. We make our products using only all-natural whole food ingredients. Our food is also produced fresh and we keep them on the shelves the all-natural way – that is, through dehydration or refrigeration. We don't coat our food with chemicals or preservatives, and we know every single ingredient that goes into the mix.

Are there any foods we should avoid giving to our dogs?

There are quite a number of foods we should avoid giving to our dogs! Most of them are quite well-known, such as chocolates, onions and grapes. Xylitol is great big NO. We don't recommend giving your dogs human food either, because the foods we eat on a regular basis are often heavily processed and

seasoned, and they don't do well in a dog's digestive system; foods like ham and bacon contain way too much sodium. Additionally, if you give your dogs such foods or leftovers, you will spoil them. If they become picky eaters, they may not want to eat healthier and less rich food in the future.

What are some memorable projects you've worked on?

We've had plenty of fun making custom cakes for our customers; sometimes the requests for custom designs are quite difficult for us because we don't use artificial colouring or ingredients like sugar fondant to make our cakes. But it's a lot of fun to experiment and there's a real sense of accomplishment when we meet the customer's expectations while adhering to our philosophy of only using all-natural healthy ingredients. I think the most incredible cakes we've done are the 3D dog cakes that are customised to look like our customers' dogs. It takes half a day to carve out the shape of the dog and decorate it with veggies. But the results are more than worth it!

However, I think the most memorable projects The Barkery has embarked on are the ones associated with animal adoption or welfare groups. In our first

year, we did this thing called “Christmas for the Shelter Dogs”, and had partnered three shelters to bring some meatloaves and Christmas goodies to the dogs living at the shelters. When we delivered the food to the dogs, it was amazing to see them gobble down with such enjoyment the food we prepared. It was really great to also speak to the rescuers and volunteers who work with these dogs and have done so much for them, giving up so much of their time and even their own money to help this cause. It left a huge impression on us, so we try to do our best to support the shelters and animal welfare groups as much as we can.

Dr Terence Tan runs Enable Healthcare, providing clinical solutions and services. He has a strong interest in musical instruments and artisanal crafts. In his spare time, he plays and builds guitars. Feel free to contact him at terence@guitarbench.com.



What's next on the horizon for The Barkery?

We hope to bring more health-oriented products to our shelves! Stuff that owners can get not just for special occasions, but for everyday feeding that will make a positive difference to their dogs' lives. ♦

Note: The Barkery is currently unable to take orders for 3D cakes as their baker had to step down for health reasons.

Legend

1. Dog Face Pupcakes made of meatloaf and vegetables
2. Four lucky pups enjoying a Christmas cake all to themselves
3. Elizabeth, co-founder of The Barkery, with a sweet dog from Uncle Khoe's K9 Shelter
4. A 3D dog cake hand-carved from meatloaf, and frosted and decorated with vegetables

