



## The Good Dog Food Company

# Organic, Nutritious and Yum! – Oh, My!

BY CINDI R. MACIOLEK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM K. DECKER

Everyone deserves a gourmet meal, even Fifi and Fido. Now your furry four-legged friends can enjoy home cooked cuisine without the hassle. As we head into the holiday season, indulge your loyal companions with a Thanksgiving treat of healthy eating from Good Dog Food Company.

We all know that quality meals provide necessary nutrients to help us live healthy and fulfilling lives. Our skin is softer, our hair is shinier, we're more energetic and our disposition is more balanced. We think of organic vegetables, grass-fed free range beef and other

comparable ingredients as part of a good diet. And, if the meals are home cooked, all the better. Well, Fido and Fifi are no different than us.

Some owners have gone to the extreme of creating these nutrient-rich foods at home, but there's no need for you to slave over a hot stove or hire a private chef for your favorite canine. Jillian and Ian Kester, owners of the Good Dog Food Company, offer high quality, gourmet food with pre-packaged convenience.



*Ian and Jillian Kester with their dogs.*

Jillian is a lifer from The Meadows School, having attended from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. After graduation, she attended the University of Richmond, a small liberal arts college in Richmond, Virginia. During her junior year, she studied abroad in Italy, focused on Italian society and culture with an emphasis on fine art. For one month, she lived with an Italian family.

Jillian was already addicted to good home-cooked meals from her own mother, but the wonderful sensations of the Italian grandmother's cooking sent her over the edge. She was hooked. She had to cook. After graduation, she headed for culinary school.

Ian grew up in Springfield, Missouri, then lived in Colorado for a period of time. He decided to come to Las Vegas to study at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts Las Vegas in Summerlin about the same time that Jillian opted to attend. They met, fell in love, and the rest, as they say, is history.

"I thought I'd go to New York and work in restaurants, but once I met my husband, things changed," said Jillian. "I never worked in a restaurant before culinary school, but the last three months of the program, you have to work in a restaurant. That's when I realized I wasn't cut out for that kind of job."

The young couple thought they'd start a catering business upon graduation. Then, they considered running a glorified roach coach service to local offices at lunch time. "We decided we didn't want to be holed up in a tin can in the middle of summer," said Jillian.

Then something magical happened. Their beloved bulldog mascot, Trucker, entered their lives.

"Trucker is my first dog, and with food being so important to me, I started paying attention to what I fed him," said Jillian. "I wanted to prepare him home-cooked meals, but I was advised to wait until he was no longer a puppy. That's when I started cooking for him. I realized no one was selling fresh food for dogs, so I started reading as much as I could about the process."

Jillian and Ian soon discovered how complex it is to make the right kind of fresh dog food. "It's people food for dogs, but it's formulated to have the right nutrients," said Jillian. "It's not like serving them table scraps which often have a high salt content and the wrong balance of nutrients. Table scraps can be dangerous for your dog. Just because you serve them people food quality doesn't mean



“Our dogs eat better than we do,” Jillian continued. “Everything they get is whole grain, fresh veggies, no corn, soy or wheat in the food, and the cows are not fed corn either.”

that it's okay. It has to have the right nutrient balance for it to be healthy.”

The couple hired a doctor of veterinary nutrition to help them finalize the formulation for their first product, Trucker's Mutt-Loaf. It contains all organic veggies, including green beans, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, peas, bell peppers; all-natural meat from grass-fed cows on open pastures who don't receive any hormones or antibiotics; and additional goodies like organic brown rice, oat bran and dried herbs. Yum!

"We're very particular about the quality of the ingredients that go into our products," said Jillian. "We meet with the farmers and the butcher and visit the farms to monitor the process, so this truly is a farm-to-table dog food."

Initially, Ian was doing all the preparation in Las Vegas, but as the company grew, the couple had to look elsewhere for help. The ingredients are now raised and prepared in Oregon, then frozen and shipped for future enjoyment.

"We don't use any preservatives, so it's

frozen after preparation," said Jillian. "It's just thaw and serve." Since it's expensive to ship frozen food long distances, the product is currently only available to residents of Nevada, Arizona and Southern California.

"People don't realize that canned dog food goes through a heat process that destroys the good stuff," Jillian said. "The nutrients listed on the label are prior to heating. Our food is all fresh."

"Our dogs eat better than we do," Jillian continued. "Everything they get is whole grain, fresh veggies, no corn, soy or wheat in the food, and the cows are not fed corn either. We use really expensive ingredients but you get what you pay for." A five-pound bag, enough to feed a 15-pound dog for a week, costs \$32.99.

Doggy Style Pet Spa in Henderson was looking for a remarkable food to match their upscale salon. When they found out about Good Dog Food Company, they decided to carry the product exclusively.



“We didn’t want just ordinary bagged dog food,” said the owner. “When we met Ian and Jillian, we felt that their product was so unique and complementary to our brand, we decided we weren’t going to carry any other.”

“It’s great stuff,” continued the owner. “My dogs love it. We believe in it so much we’re offering one pound free with a purchase of a full groom through the end of the year.”

Customer Jaime Martin has a seven-year-old English bulldog named Lucy who suffers greatly from allergies. She licked constantly, her paws would get pussy, she was on medications including Benadryl, and she was at the vet quite often to get her paws drained. Jaime tried everything she could, including feeding her organic food, but nothing seemed to work. Then she tried Trucker’s Mutt-Loaf, and her whole world changed.

“It’s been great,” said Jaime. “Lucy’s been on her new food for seven months, and she’s changed considerably. She doesn’t lick anymore, her paws don’t get pussy, she’s off the medication, she’s lost weight, and one unexpected plus – she’s not as gassy as she used to be. I tried all the expensive food at the vet, and nothing worked. I was surprised that Trucker’s Mutt-Loaf worked, but I’m really grateful.”

Jaime also has a bull mastiff whose coat has turned super white while eating Trucker’s Mutt-Loaf. “She now looks clean all the time,” she said.

“I’m so grateful for Ian and Jillian,” Jaime continued. “They’re great with animals and I love them both!”

Scraps for Pets in Summerlin has been carrying the product for about six months. Owner Catherine Dalinis said, “We’re very fussy about the food we let into our store. Being home cooked fills a niche we didn’t have. We love the fact that the ingredients are what you’d find in any healthy kitchen, and processed minimally. It’s healthy, nutritious and dogs like it.”

Customers can ask for a free sample at the store. “People who take the samples end up buying the product,” Catherine said. “It’s just a matter of people finding out about it. The food is frozen, so it’s as if someone cooked especially for their dog.”

“I just love Ian and Jillian,” said Catherine. “They’re great people, and they even went out of their way to help us procure a product for our special needs dogs. They really impressed us, and we truly appreciate all that they’ve done.”

Although you can purchase Trucker’s Mutt-Loaf at select stores around town, online purchases will receive a special treat – home delivery. It’s just part of the personal service the company provides, as a way to get to know their customers. The company is also willing to work with pet owners on costs for larger dogs.

New products are coming out about once



A bowl of Trucker’s Mutt-Loaf.

per quarter with future recipes to include Duke’s Buffalo Stew, Lucy’s Little Lamb Dinner, Billy’s Goat Grub for dogs with allergies, and Penelope’s Grain-free Feast for pups with special needs. For more details on the new recipes as well as holiday gift baskets, visit [www.gooddogfoodcompany.com](http://www.gooddogfoodcompany.com).

“We’re not trying to make the second-best dog food, we’re trying to make the best,” said Jillian. “I know that this is something that people and their dogs will love. It’s just a matter of getting it into their hands. Our food is a complete diet, not just a treat. People are getting more and more conscious about what they – and their pets – consume, and this is a great solution. Even picky eaters like it!” □