



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL STORE



Right to left: Co-owner Marlene Masney (with Fleur), co-owner Dave Masney, and staff members Johanne Cyr and Kim Thompson (with Pearl).

Bones Pet Boutique

Burlington, ON

Marlene and Dave Masney were 30 year banking professionals when they brought Belle, their beautiful Standard Poodle, home. As they fed her a typical kibble diet, they were dismayed to see her teeth become yellow and her coat get coarse; after a rabies vaccine she developed irritable bowel disease. They contacted the breeder who opened their eyes about feeding real, raw food. After several days of feeding a raw diet, they realized Belle was back to her normal, energetic self and gradually her teeth whitened and her coat softened.

Realizing many others had the same experience, they built a website to share what they'd learned. They also sold a local supplier's frozen raw food out of their garage for several years until they made a decision to open Bones Pet Boutique in 2005. They chose not to sell any dry kibble or canned products, and it was a huge leap of faith to leave behind their well paid careers to become the first totally raw pet food store in Ontario. It was a large investment in freezers, decor and time, but Marlene and Dave felt confident that they could make a successful business doing what they were passionate about.

The store has a unique feel with its signature leopard carpet and wooden furnishings from Mexico. It doesn't smell or look like a pet store and the dogs love the carpet instead of a slippery floor. People thought they were insane to carpet the store but the leopard print is very forgiving! Marlene's car is also wrapped in the leopard print – wish we had room for a photo of that!

Most new clients are referrals - some of them from a local vet who even started feeding raw herself after seeing how healthy Marlene and Dave's raw fed dogs were! Sometimes people have seen clients' dogs in the parks and noticed how

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good the raw fed dogs look. And referring clients get a little freebie as a thank you!

Bones doesn't sell anything to new clients, but focuses on education. Bones and salmonella are the things people are most afraid of. Every new client receives a half hour session from a knowledgeable, trained staff member, along with a start up kit containing a food sample, thawing container and the booklet "Real Food for Pets" written by Marlene. After trying the samples on their dogs, they're usually back the next day to buy more food! Bones shares new health information through their newsletter, and the store has an "education table" with a monthly theme - perhaps a specific health issue or a useful remedy.

People sometimes come in thinking they can't afford to feed raw, but once they start and find their dogs are never sick, they realize how much they're saving in vet bills!

Bones stocks products from 12 Canadian suppliers (some exclusive) offering 13 unique proteins and a wide selection of "Bones"! They also sell supplements and organic shampoos, and they have a groomer with 30 years of experience. She grooms one dog (or family of dogs) at a time - no cages, just a nice little spa!

As for the future ... well, they've talked about that a lot. Their "retirement hobby" has grown into a successful business. They've had clients wanting to franchise but instead, if they want to open a store Dave and Marlene will coach and mentor them for a fee. Dave is the authority on marketing, equipment, suppliers, ordering, etc. and Marlene is the food expert!

You can visit Bones at 1500 Upper Middle Road, Burlington, Ontario, or online at bonespetboutique.com 



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