

Dog Bites

Mother, son team up to make all-natural treats for canines



Marlene Most, right, and her son, Bret Windhauser, take a break from making dog treats to pose for a portrait. Most, a registered dietitian who has a doctorate in veterinary physiology, developed the all-natural, handmade treats.

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Bret Windhauser sometimes can't resist the temptation to taste while he's helping his mom make dog treats, and he pops a couple into his mouth.

Fortunately, The Dunham School seventh-grader isn't munching on just any canine biscuits — they're all-natural, freshly made Delightful Dog Tender Bites developed by his mother, Marlene Most, for her Baton Rouge-based, specialty food company, Most Delightful Foods LLC.

Most, a registered dietitian with a doctorate in veterinary physiology who teaches at the LSU School of Human Ecology, said the dog treats "started as an idea for a people snack."

The Delightful Dog Tender Bites and the crunchy Delightful Dog Bites both contain sweet potato, rolled oats, cherry juice, cinnamon, molasses, flax seed and whole-wheat flour.

"I selected the ingredients because they are mostly high in antioxidants and other beneficial ingredients," Most said.

The company also markets a frozen treat product, Delightful Dog Frost Bites, that is sold as a mix, and Delightful Dog Cakes, which are 6-inch, 1-pound, bundt-style carrot cakes. They also sell a wheat-free version of the Dog Bites.

"People like our products because they're all natural, and dogs like the flavor," Most said.

She started the business in 2007 and had the first products available by Christmas 2007.

"The dog treats business combines my love of dogs with my nutritional background," she said. "And with Bret being interested, too, we've had fun getting it started."

Most, who grew up in Littleton, Colo., but has lived in Baton Rouge since 1982, loves to bake.

"I help her sometimes," said Bret, who will be 13 on Jan. 28. "Every year we do Christmas cookies."

"He was 2, I think, when he was rolling cookie dough" for sugar cookies and helping make the Christmas cookies she had learned to make with her own mother, Most recalled.

"I have more ideas. Eventually, I want to do human food. At the beginning, I was looking at making our cookies, but you can't make a living making Christmas cookies."

Another issue was the need for a commercial kitchen to prepare food for humans. By beginning with the dog treats, Most was able to incorporate, get a tax identification number and bar codes, all things needed to start a food company. “We have the Louisiana product seal. I’m proud of that, and now that we are established, it will be easier to go into human foods.”

She continued, “I bounce ideas off him (Bret). He was the idea person for the cake, and I experimented.”

They were at Petland of Baton Rouge making a delivery “when a girl at the counter asked about dog cakes,” Most said. “When we were walking back to the car, Bret said, ‘Mom, we have to do the cakes.’”

“He went on the Internet to research the dog cakes, pricing, size portions, what was available,” Most said. “I wanted to do a more sophisticated cake, but Bret didn’t want to do a frosting because of shipping issues. He even selects the colored bows that top the cakes to match the occasion.”

She said the cakes, which are available for \$14.99 only through their Web site — <http://www.mostdelightfulfoods.com> — are aimed at customers who like to include their pets in celebrations, such as a birthday or holiday. “Our customers like to spoil their dogs.”

Their other products are available at various places, including both locations of Calandro’s Supermarket, Matherne’s Supermarket at Bluebonnet and Perkins, Petland of Baton Rouge, Party Animal, Paw-ticular Pups Boutique in Denham Springs, and the Ralph’s Market at Jones Creek and Tiger Bend and in Pelican Point.

The handmade Dog Bites are labor intensive, Most said. Each batch makes about 240 treats, enough to fill three 12-ounce bags. Eight friends help with the packaging, she said.

“We’re interested in going to the next step and getting someone to make them for us,” Most added. “Bret would still do the cakes and Frost Bites.”