

## La Verne Entrepreneur Won't Roll Over When It Comes to His Culinary Canine Creations

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Edward Mac at the Young Chefs Academy in Claremont stands by some of his Canine Culinary Creations.

Edward Mac eats dog food.

But before thinking the worst – that this 26-year-old is starving or has fallen on hard times — consider what's been on his menu lately: The All-American Breakfast, with eggs, sweet potatoes, uncured applewood-smoked bacon, parmesan, parsley, organic garlic and bone meal; Hunter's Delight with venison, potatoes, pears and carrots; and Salmon Special with wild Alaskan salmon, rice peas and yogurt.

He cooks and packages these and other homemade creations not for humans, but for dogs, although as the chef he's guilty of too often sampling the servings.

"I eat it, definitely," said Mac. "The organic beef and barley, the turkey and quinoas, the wild



salmon."

With ingredients like that, many purchased from Trader Joes, Whole Foods and Amy's Farm in Ontario or culled from his own garden, who could blame him for taking a nibble at the kibble? His Canine Culinary Creations, also the name of his company, are strictly five-star quality, putting fast-food joints and most other restaurants to shame, as well as most pet food suppliers, when it comes to serving healthy free-range, hormone-free, organic ingredients.

Mac didn't exactly set out to be the chef de cuisine for dogs. The La Verne resident, who attended La Verne Heights and Ramona Middle School before moving to Pasadena and graduating from Blair High School, went to U.C. Berkeley to study cognitive science but after a year he found it wasn't for him and enrolled in Pasadena's Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts. After completing the 15-month program, he has been a chef and caterer for literally hundreds of celebrity-type balls and banquets in Los Angeles. Finally, wearying of the commute to the Westside, he hired on as a chef and instructor with the Young Chefs Academy in Claremont.

"I got sick and tired of the drive into L.A.," said Mac. "I had been to a million parties. I live in La Verne, so I wanted to bring my talent closer to home."

With kids as his new clientele, his culinary spirit was revitalized.

"Working with the kids really touched me in a way that's different than working in a restaurant," Mac said. "Working in a restaurant is gracious work, but it's a different feeling. When you make the food with the kids, when they eat it, they say it's the greatest thing in the world. When I see kids eating broccoli and peas, and all these other kinds of food you don't see kids normally eat, I think it's great."



Sapphire, photo by Andrea Viray, courtesy of Edward Mac.

They certainly aren't eating SpaghettiOs out of a can. Two recent dishes Mac showed his young chefs how to cook were pasta salad with roasted broccoli, and a braised lamb shank with English peas and risotto. Most cooking classes at the Young Chef's Academy take about 90 minutes.

Loving his new job, Mac bought a new two-month-old puppy, a German shepherd mix named Sapphire, to take on outings in La Verne's Marshall Canyon. After his breeder told him not to serve Sapphire any training treats or food containing wheat, corn and soy training treats, he grew frustrated finding products without those fillers.

"I bought some treats off the shelf, but I had a hard time training my dog," said Mac about the treat/praise system he was trying to use to train Sapphire. "She was just very unresponsive."

That's when Mac had his aha moment. He decided to make hard-to-find food himself. He started going online and gobbling up cookbooks for canines, and testing out the recipes in his home kitchen. His first creation was Puppy Crack, training treats made with hormone-free chicken liver. Pleased with his efforts, using Sapphire as his guinea pig, he started cranking out more healthy mixes, such as organic beef and barley, corned beef and cabbage, and turkey and quinoas. Dishes with wild elk, kangaroo, antelope and venison followed – all gourmet stuff that dogs and their owners could finally get excited about, he said.



Photo by MSG Photograph captures Edward Mac creating a canine culinary treat.

Mac took his canine treats from his kitchen to the streets – Claremont’s Green Market on Friday in the city’s Village — to gain some human feedback. Dog lovers and their dogs loved them. Mac sells his pet food in bulk or in meals of 10 pre-packed cups for \$25. His customers typically mix his cooked culinary cuisine with three parts kibble.

“The thing is you don’t have to use much of it,” Mac said. “It really attracts the dogs to eating the food.”

Interestingly, Mac isn’t required to own a special health department license to whip up a batch of pork, green beans and brown rice, better known as Friday Night Supper, or any of his other tasty treats, because his culinary pet food is not intended for human consumption. At the same time, he is part of an effort to build a health-inspected facility in north Pomona, a cooperative kitchen where chefs for either humans or dogs can go to cook.

“I’m just raising the bar,” Mac said. “It’s not required, but I want to be able to make food for pets in a health-inspected facility.”

In his new venture, Mac wants to do everything the right way. Besides making all-natural pet food that is delicious and nutritious, using organic fruits and vegetables whenever possible, he is a steward of the environment.

“We source our ingredients as locally as possible, print on recycled paper, and are committed to sustainability,” Mac said. “Most of our pet food and treats can be made out of 100% organic and sustainable ingredients when requested.”

Mac invites customers to thumb through one of his canine cookbooks and custom order any meal that strikes their fancy. He will also teach on February 20 and March 6, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., a Kibble Cooking Class. at the Young Chefs Academy. On March 28, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., he will teach a Raw Ingredients Dog Food Class. Also scheduled for spring are:

April 8, 9 – Kids-Only Cooking and Dog Treat Mini Camp

April 24 – Healthy Dehydrated Treats for Dogs

May 30 – Grilling and Chilling with your Dog

Call Young Chefs Academy for times, curriculum, prices and other information or visit [www.youngchefsacademy.com](http://www.youngchefsacademy.com) <sup>[1]</sup>.

To reach Mac, call (626-376-2057), email ([chefed@canineculinarycreations.com](mailto:chefed@canineculinarycreations.com) <sup>[2]</sup>) or visit his website ([www.canineculinarycreations.com](http://www.canineculinarycreations.com) <sup>[3]</sup>). By the end of the year, the enterprising chef expects to be selling his doggie treats and meals at a dozen farmers' markets.

Mac's company also offers pet-sitting services and quick and private in-home dog training classes using positive reinforcement instructional methods. One thing you can be sure of, your dogs will eat well however much or little they learn.

*February is Canine Teeth Cleaning Month, so head over to Palace Pet Salon in La Verne, where a cold nose is always treated with a warm heart, 485 Foothill Blvd. in La Verne, (909) 593-5714.*

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[1] [www.youngchefsacademy.com](http://www.youngchefsacademy.com): <http://www.youngchefsacademy.com/>

[2] [chefed@canineculinarycreations.com](mailto:chefed@canineculinarycreations.com): <mailto:chefed@canineculinarycreations.com>

[3] [www.canineculinarycreations.com](http://www.canineculinarycreations.com): <http://www.canineculinarycreations.com/>