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Humane dog treats

by Laurel Miller (buzz@boulderweekly.com)

Mutt Mingles offer the canine culinary cognoscenti an opportunity to sample various gourmet treats, which are all the rage these days. Some snacks are actually labeled "human grade," meaning that the ingredients are all approved for human consumption. This is how I found myself trying an Apple Harvest Mutt Muncher, which basically tasted like apple-flavored sawdust. Comprised of unbleached wheat flour, oat flour, rolled oats, apples and cinnamon, it wasn't too much different from many healthy Homo sapiens' snacks on the market and tasted about the same. Given the odiferous animal by-product nature of the other treats offered, I passed taste-testing duties on to my associate, Bello.

Breathies, by Dogswell: These jerky-like chicken strips are flecked with halitosis-fighting parsley and mint and were greedily devoured by my tester—impressive, given his notorious finicky palate.

WellBite, by Wellness: These slightly chewy squares of pure chicken and venison were mighty tasty, according to Bello, who loved them almost as much as the Breathies. Only the Mutt Munchers and the kibble, peanut butter Mini Naturals by Zuke's got the paws down.

Over at Pearl Street's Colorado Canines, co-owner Rick Frankel keeps busy making his Brown Dog Jerky Treats by hand, in-house. Frankel started Brown Dog a little more than a year ago, and uses only 100 percent grass-fed, Colorado-raised buffalo sourced from local ranches in his human-grade treats. Bello nobly sampled the raw product and approved wholeheartedly. Brown Dog is available at Colorado Canines (www.coloradocanines.com), as well as natural food and specialty pet shops throughout Colorado.

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