

Cat Food Crazy

Peter Gerstenzang hunts for the perfect cat food for Gracie.

By Peter Gerstenzang

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There are only two things in the world that drive me crazy. First, when I'm awake at 4 a.m., how come all I can find to watch are reruns of "Becker"? The second? With all the choices out there, how can a simpleton pick the right cat food? Now you're wondering, if you don't pick the right cat food, does that make you a simpleton? No comment.

See, Gracie is moving to adulthood. So, aside from the fact that she'll be dating soon, she also has to start eating grown-up food. Whenever I go to the pet store, the choices are so numerous that I usually end up sobbing and running out empty-handed. Here's what I have learned, without mentioning brand names — at least until my lawyer settles the most recent libel case.

I started Gracie on a certain food because it was advertised by a certain actor whom I liked in a certain film, which was nominated for a certain award. (Note to lawyers: Was that OK?) The food was colorful and delicious, and Gracie loved it. But later, I went online and read 206 hateful comments about the stuff. The comments claimed the food is filled with corn and wheat. If your cats don't have allergies, it will give them allergies. If your cats have allergies, it will make their heads explode. Granted, it was the Internet, but why take a chance? So, I went back to the store.

I found a salesman who seemed like a cat himself — he licked his hands. (Reassuring or disturbing — you decide.) He gave me the grand tour.

The salesman first suggested a pricey brand filled with duck, chicken and salmon — three animals I was sure couldn't coexist peacefully. The salesman insisted they did when they were deceased. I took a few cans. He also told me that wet food generally was better than dry because most cats don't drink enough water. I told him that Gracie did, so he paused and said he could always sell me some cat diapers if Gracie got too much water. This guy also informed me this brand had no wheat or corn in it. I said that was fine and that his pitch had enough corn as it was.

Some experts recommend dry food as a supplement to canned food. Thus, the salesman then sold me a bag of the stuff — large enough that my biggest worry was how to get it home. Coincidentally, the pet food store was next to a U-Haul place. Actually, I don't think coincidence had anything to do with it.

Two hours later, I walked out of the store with enough cat food bags and cans that Gracie could pick and choose until she found something she liked. I bought enough bags and cans, actually, to do something else rather clever. There's no way I can ever pay off my bill unless I hang out a sign and start my own cat food store. So, I guess I will. Come on over, and bring your cat. We open Friday.