

Give thanks for Brussels sprouts!

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

Here is a great veggie dish to serve alongside your Thanksgiving turkey this year. I used to really, really dislike Brussels sprouts. I don't think my mom ever made us eat them, but if she had, I'm pretty sure they would have been stuffed in my pockets before getting anywhere close to my fork. The idea of boiled, soggy heads of baby cabbage just seemed gross. In fact a few years ago, when my friend said she was going to make Brussels sprouts for one of our weekend get-away dinners, I said, "That's fine, but I will never eat them." Only, I did end up tasting them and absolutely loved them! She roasted them with a little bit of olive oil and salt and they were crunchy, perfectly browned and amazing. A few months later, another friend served them sautéed in olive oil and

then added to a salad of butter lettuce with heart of palm, pancetta, blue cheese and vinaigrette dressing. They were delightful done both ways. Nowadays, whenever I venture to New York City to visit my daughter, I always stop by the City Kitchen to pick up an order of roasted Brussels sprouts, served with red grapes, fig jam, sherry vinegar, walnuts and mint yogurt. This sounds like a very odd combination, but it's incredible!

Now that I'm a huge fan of Brussels sprouts, I don't want you to miss out on these crunchy little cruciferae. Here is a fun way to serve them as a side dish or even as a great vegetarian dish, if you omit the sausage. I love toasted walnuts with them, but pecans or pistachios would also be great.

Cheesy, nutty Brussels sprouts

(Serves 4-6 as a side dish)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ pounds Brussels sprouts, cleaned and halved (can quarter large sprouts)
- 2 large shallots, chopped
- 3-4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large chicken apple sausages (precooked), cut into small pieces
- ½ cup grated sharp white cheddar (can use Pecorino Romano or Parmesan, if you prefer)
- ¾ cup walnut halves, toasted
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Clean Brussels sprouts and cut in half, or quarter if really large. Place in a cast iron skillet and pour about ½ cup water in the bottom of the pan. Cover and heat over medium-high heat for about 3 minutes, to slightly blanch the sprouts. Do not over cook. They should still be al dente. The water will mostly be evaporated. Immediately transfer sprouts from skillet to a bowl and toss with 1-2 tablespoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Meanwhile, using the same skillet, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil and sauté shallots just until translucent. Remove shallots from skillet. Increase heat to high and when pan is very hot, add Brussels sprouts, shallots and chicken apple sausage all back to the skillet. Cook for approximately 4 to 5 minutes, turning often with a spatula, until sprouts and shallots are nicely browned. The key is to have the pan really hot before sizzling the sprouts, so they'll brown nicely but not get over-cooked. Remove from heat and add cheese and walnuts. Toss to mix. Serve hot.

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



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Fears and anxieties in pets

Part 1 - Challenges during the vet visit

By Mona Miller, DVM

There are many reasons why pets feel anxiety and exhibit fear, just as there are many reasons in humans. Some of these include individual chemical makeup or temperament; others are based on previous traumatic experiences. Some phobias are very specific – such as loud sounds like thunder or gunshots, meeting strangers, being separated from a primary owner, or car rides. Other animals have a general level of anxiety and are fearful in many different types of situations.

Understanding the causes and triggers of a pet's anxiety is very helpful in being able to manage the resultant fear response. A thorough discussion is often warranted. I regard fear/anxiety as a medical/behavioral issue that should be diagnosed, so that management and treatment options can be provided. It is difficult to address fear/anxiety completely when also addressing other medical issues, including preventive care. My ideal is to schedule a separate appointment to discuss this thoroughly.

Fearfulness at the veterinary hospital provides a challenge to the vet team to achieve the goal of the visit without allowing escalation of fear to aggression. Pets have more attuned senses than humans, and the sights, sounds and smells associated with a vet hospital can be overwhelming, even for a temperamentally balanced pet. For a fearful pet, all these combined with the physically close contact necessary for a vet to perform

an exam or administer an injection may escalate into a feeling of being cornered. And for most individuals, if feeling threatened enough, a self-defense aggression response will kick in. Fearfulness can escalate to fear aggression. This is the second part of the nervous system's "flight or fight" response to stress.

Thus, one common consequence of working with a stressed pet is the inability to restrain the animal in a safe and comforting manner. When a dog is snarling or growling, or a cat is hissing with his ears flat to his head, veterinary personnel are taking a risk when they attempt to vaccinate or draw a blood sample – the risk of a bite. Animal bite wounds can be very dangerous, including potentially fatal issues such as rabies infection, and serious bacterial infections. Additionally, the well-intentioned veterinary professional has to question whether accomplishing the procedural goal (vaccine, blood draw, etc.) is worth the stress to the animal – and often, it certainly is not.

So what is the vet left to do, when he or she cannot accomplish the medical goal of the exam? In these situations, I usually offer my clients a few options – and almost all involve chemical sedation. Sometimes I can give an injectable sedative (or even general anesthesia) and accomplish the goal in the same day. This option is often subject to scheduling logistics. For instance, I would not offer sedation toward the end of a work

day, so that I don't send home a sedated pet to recover fully at home, when the vet hospital is closed. So that leaves rescheduling for another day – either to give that same injectable sedative or have the client give an oral form at home a couple hours prior to the appointment.

Muzzles are routinely used, for both dogs and cats, in order to decrease the physical possibility of a bite. If a veterinarian recommends using a muzzle to perform an exam or inject a vaccine, it doesn't mean that your pet is a bad animal. It means that there's a safety issue, usually because your pet is afraid and will bite if his fear level is pushed to feeling the need to defend himself. In some animals, they get a sense of calm when a muzzle is placed, and they are more cooperative with procedures.

I routinely recommend using Thundershirt vests for dogs, and they can be used for cats too. These are designed to hug tightly like a pressure wrap, much like swaddling a baby or giving a snug hug to someone. The name refers to thundershower sound phobia, but the vest is effective for any anxiety, in my opinion. These are readily affordable and available through pet stores or online merchants. I recommend giving these a minimum of 6 to 10 times before deciding that it's not working. It's best to put the vest on your pet about 30 to 60 minutes prior to the known stress trigger. For mildly fearful pets, a Thundershirt alone will make a difference

in taking the fear out of a vet visit. For moderately or significantly fearful pets, Thundershirts definitely help (and cannot hurt) and can be used with anti-anxiety or sedative medications. Thundershirts can be used in any "situational anxiety," such as car rides, vet visits, loud sounds, meeting new people or dogs. More information can be found at <https://www.thundershirt.com>.

In the next couple articles, I will address the value of social visits to desensitize a dog to the vet hospital; as well as methods that can be used to help calm cats during a vet visit; and I will address medications – anti-anxiety versus sedatives. Stay tuned!



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at MonaSDVM@aol.com. She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

'The Guilty' – a unique thriller in Orinda and Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Poster provided

"The Guilty" is a movie like very few others. Think Aristotelian drama: one place, one time, one action. Think redemption; think inner challenge and minimalist thriller. This is a piece of art from a form perspective, and a very successful suspense story that builds on a nerve racking increasing tempo until the denouement and catharsis for the hero.

Director Gustav Möller takes spectators on a riveting adventure while the camera

does not leave the confines of a dusty dark office. Alarm dispatcher and demoted police officer Asger Holm, played by Jakob Cedergren, answers emergency calls from the Danish equivalent of our 911. When the movie opens, we don't know why he was sent there, but his frustration is palpable. It is his last day on the job, the last hours of what seems to have been a punishment, when he gets a phone call from a terrified woman, Iben, who seems to have been kidnapped.

When the call is suddenly disconnected, the search for the woman and her kidnapper begins. Holm has nothing but a phone and a computer but he is determined to rescue her. The policeman oversteps the boundaries of his role, calling on former partners, trying to save the victim and prove to himself and the world that he is still capable of making a difference.

But Holm is outside of the situation; he makes assumptions that lead to decisions that can become catastrophic.

The action takes just as long as the movie itself, and during that hour and a half, the audience empathise is pulled further inside the story. The real tour de force of Möller, the director, is that by the end of the movie the audience has the feeling of having "seen" the whole thing, and lived through the drama. The different characters are more precisely outlined and developed than in other movies that show much more. Möller draws on the imagination of the spectator. Like when a great book gives the feeling that you are part of the story, this film draws you in.

Cedergren's performance, of course, is spectacular. He is on camera from start to finish, often in closeups, and it is his emotions that captures the audience. The voice talents

had to be just remarkable, considering that is the only thing connecting the audience to this character. Jessica Dinnage stands out as Iben, channeling the wide range of emotions of her character through her voice.

The single location of the movie never feels cheap, instead it increases the anxious tension created by the fact that the hero is bound to this place while a drama is unfolding outside of his grasp. The fact that it happens in real time also intensifies the thrilling effect.

There is no respite in the film, no pleasant moment to relax in between tense scenes; the action is intense from start to finish, leaving the spectator breathless.

"The Guilty" is part of the International Film Showcase that for more than eight years has brought top international movies, including many Oscar selected films, to Orinda once a month. Now Lamorinda in twice blessed since after the first week in Orinda, the foreign films selected by Efi Lubliner and Joe Canterbury will play for a second week in Moraga. This Denmark submission to the 2018 Oscars will open Nov. 2 at the Orinda Theatre and Nov. 9 at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. For more information, visit internationalshowcase.org and lamorindatheatres.com.