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Orange Bone, a new kind of pet store

February 18, 1:50 AM • [LA Small Dogs Examiner](#) • [Johnny Ortiz](#)

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Selling puppies in a pet store, especially since Oprah's notorious Puppy Mill episode aired last year, can easily alienate members of the dog community, incite protest and boycott and be bad business in today's climate. The Orange Bone, Melrose Avenue's newest pet store, is changing its business model and selling puppies from local rescues and shelters.



Orange Bone, working with Last Chance for Animals, is committed to saving dogs on death row. It all sounds too good to be true so I decided to check out it for myself. Not surprisingly for a store on Melrose Avenue, the place has a sleek, glossy modern look; it resembles a [Pinkberry](#) store more than a typical pet store you'd find in a mall. Los Angeles has its fill of nice looking pet boutique so I went straight to the dogs.

On a Tuesday afternoon the store was packed. I eavesdrop as Ray Maldonado, regularly referred to as the store's dog guy by many patrons and coincidentally the vice president, talks to a couple considering a pit bull puppy. As I stand around and wait for my turn, I noticed the Orange Bone offers financing. Ray says potential buyers have the option to complete a credit application. He says for those who need it and qualify; it helps to get the dog placed a little easier. Wow. Rays reminds me, "It is all about the dogs."

While Ray excuses himself to answer another customer's questions, I take a second to review their sales contract. I was very pleased to see the following, "Adopter agrees if for any reason you cannot keep the puppy you will return it to Orange Bone so we may place it in a new home." People are not guaranteed a refund, but may exchange the dog within specified timelines for another if they're inclined. I think it says a great deal about the store that their first priority is to make sure puppies are placed in a stable and loving environment and will always accept a dog back.

Ray is still with another customer so I ask the Kennel Supervisor, Joseph Maldonado, Ray's little brother, about the care of the puppies. He says he and Ray live nearby and are at the store nearly 20 plus hours each day. Joseph says, "I get here every morning at 8 a.m. to walk the dogs before we open at 11." The dogs are also all supervised by monitors and short circuit camera feeds.

Ray says they only started working with shelters and rescues in December 2008 after getting some negative feedback. He was once an animal control officer for the city so he really wanted to reinvent the system to make it work for everyone. According to Ray's records, they have placed about 150 dogs since December 2008 and it's their goal to place a 1,000 dogs by the year's end. Ray also happily boasts that about 25 percent, if not more, were on death row.

First impressions can say a lot and Ray and Orange Bone left an indelible impression on me and Rufus today. Ray and his team sincerely seem committed to the dogs with a real hands-on approach in their permanently placement. In the short hour that I lingered unannounced at the store I witnessed more than one person come in who had been working closely with Ray to find the perfect furry friend. It's not hard to imagine since Ray is the kind of guy who immediately becomes everyone's best friend.

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Other notable features about the store include the Three Dog Bakery treats they offer, the wide assortment of doggie apparel, collars, leashes and stylist carriers. They also work with a trainer, Jessica Dragon, so new parents can get started on the right paw.

If you're looking for a new dog, stop by and visit Ray. Tell him Rufus and Johnny from Examiner.com sent you.

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Los Angeles, CA 90046

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F. 323. 852. 1299
Info@orangebone.com

Mon - Sat 11am to 8pm
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What a fantastic idea and concept....please,please open one in NYC!

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What a phenomenal idea! Unfortunately, many people still equate animal shelters with "the pound," a sterile, foreboding place where animals check in, but never check out. Orange Bone has made its store inviting, eye-catching and, most importantly, humane. I can see their business idea spreading across the country. I plan to stop by and visit when I'm in L.A. next month for the Luxury Pet Pavilion trade show.

February 19, 9:27 AM



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