

Some collars are better than others

I am, I must admit, a picky person who tends to research things before purchasing them but, when I find something I like, I tend to stick with it. When I decided to buy a definitive collar for Briony, I ended up at [Maxizoo](#) (a supermarket for pets) and I opted for a flat [Hurtta](#) collar. I liked the colour (red) and the softness (neoprene). I did not want a leather collar, as I like to wash my collars sometimes, a soft, synthetic one was just perfect. Besides liking its softness and its design, I quickly realized this collar could offer more. It was, indeed, a cross between a standard flat collar and a choke collar. You could not really choke the dog, but the fact the it could get tighter is extremely useful as this forbids the collar from slipping away. This should never happen, but it can indeed happen to dogs with narrow heads, wearing standard collars: if the dog bounces backwards for any reasons, he can quickly get out of the collar. Those owning sighthounds, infact, tend to purchase specific "sighthounds collars", or to rely on half choke collars that naturally get tighter around the dog's neck. The old Hurtta flat collar, however, is way more wearable than the standard half-choke collar and does not look bad as sighthounds collars often do on other breeds: it does not hang from the dog's neck and can therefore be left on the dog without any risks. In a few words, it is small, ergonomic and handy. I think this collar has a lot of Pros and just a few **Cons**: colour fades quickly and price is a bit high, if compared to similar model but, its other talents make it worth a purchase. The problem is... that Hurtta does not longer produces them. I e-mailed the company and they, unfortunately, confirmed this.

I therefore had to find another collar like this and, to be

honest, I still haven't found any, but I found a very nice lady from Germany who did its best to copy this model. She was the only person (I contacted a few) accepting to try to recreate a model without having it in her hands. Barbara Schoenen, of the Etsy shop "[The Present for You](#)" gave me ample choice and I could literally design my own collar. I could pick the cloth I wanted and she even ordered a specific red neoprene that would match nicely with the pattern I choose. This lady tried very hard to make the perfect collar and whereas it is not perfect yet (but she is working on improving it), she gave me a high quality product. The collar is sturdy and safe and can be ordered with a plastic (lighter) buckle or with a sturdier metal buckle, perfect for bigger dogs. Mine is made of cotton and neoprene. The cotton cloth is high quality but it is quite "smooth" and the intermediate hooks tend to move a bit. A rougher cloth would probably be better at keeping them in place but, again, mine is just a minor complain. These collars cost a bit more than those you can find in shops, but their prices are extremely reasonable and having your own, unique, handmade collar, has no price. Shipping fees are reasonable as well and the collars come nicely packed, perfect to be gifted to someone, or to yourself! So as a **Pros** we have: fully customizable; artisan willing to do what you ask; excellent quality and great quality price/ratio. As a **Cons** I'd say that some things might be slightly improved; metal buckle is very sturdy but makes the collar too heavy for a setter (but it is perfect for a Labrador, GSP, GWP...; price is higher than the standard collar in shops (but not much higher than the Hurttta); a bit of waiting to get it made.

Before closing the article I would like to mention a third option, the Hunter standard collar named [Hunter Neoprene Vario Plus](#). I saw one in a shop and bought it while waiting for Barbara's collar to come. Why did I buy it? Quality/price ratio is great, this collar was around 10 euros or less and it is nicely made, using nylon and neoprene and adding a few more

euros you can get a matching lead available in different length. It comes in a few nice colours and you can easily find it online or in shops. So... which are the **Cons**? Intermediate “hooks” slide as well and, most of all, the collar, despite looking like the Hurtta one, is indeed a standard flat collar and it can slip away if your dog has a narrow head... It happened to me. It could be an excellent and affordable option if you have a large headed dog, not the best option with a narrow head.

Strudel di Mele – I dolci di Flavia

Ingredienti:

1 rotolo di pasta foglia rettangolare

Per il ripieno:

- 3 mele
- 2 cucchiaini di zucchero
- Un cucchiaino di cannella
- Pinoli q.b.
- Noci q.b.
- Uvette q.b.
- Un cucchiaio di rum
- 2 cucchiaini di pangrattato

Lavorazione:

mettete a mollo le uvette in acqua calda o grappa. Intanto potete tostare i 2 cucchiaini di pangrattato in una padella leggermente imburrata.

In una fondina tagliate le mele a fettine, aggiungete poi i due cucchiaini di zucchero, il cucchiaino di cannella, il cucchiaio di rum e infine unite le uvette, i pinoli e le noci. Mescolate bene il tutto.

Prendete la pasta sfoglia con la sua carta forno, bucherellatela e cospargete tutta la superficie col pangrattato in modo che poi aiuterà ad assorbire l'umidità della frutta. Aggiungete il ripieno di frutta e chiudete bene i bordi. Potete fare i tipici tagli in superficie e per dorare meglio la sfoglia spennellarla con un po' di latte.

Cottura: 180 gradi per 35 minuti circa (o fino a doratura).

Servite con una pallina di gelato alla vaniglia.

Puoi iniziare a leggere le ricette di Flavia da [qui](#) o trovarle raccolte [qui](#).

[Vai alla prossima ricetta.](#)

Dalla parte del cane

Eccomi, finalmente dopo alcuni mesi molto intensi. Ho terminato gli esami necessari alla laurea in medicina veterinaria e ora, tirocini a parte, dovrò occuparmi della tesi che riguarderà i cani da caccia. Se volete saperne di più sul [Gundog Research Project](#) cliccate sul link. Prima di affrontare la letteratura scientifica dura e pura, ho deciso di dare un'occhiata ai libri che avevo in casa e... ho alcuni suggerimenti. Se non la conoscete, iniziate a guardarvi i lavori di Temple Grandin, questa donna ha molto da dire. (Alcuni dei suoi libri sono pubblicati in italiano).

Poi, andando più nel dettaglio, vi consiglio uno dei miei

libri preferiti. Il titolo originale inglese è In Defence of Dogs di John Bradshaw orrendamente tradotto in “La naturale superiorità del cane sull’uomo” e... pare fuori stampa. Un vero peccato: è un libro gradevolissimo da leggersi e di grande rigore scientifico, ogni cinofilo dovrebbe leggerlo. Il secondo libro si intitola The Domestic Dog. Its Evolution, Behavior and Interactions with People. Si tratta di un’antologia curata da James Serpell che racchiude parti di differenti studiosi tra cui Raymond Coppinger, M.B. Willis, Benjamin and Lynette Hart e Valerie O’ Farrel. Non mi risulta tradotto in italiano ma c’è anche un articolo curato da Boitani e altri collaboratori. Io possiedo l’edizione del 1995, prima edizione, ma ho intenzione di controllare anche la nuova edizione, 2016 sicuramente più aggiornata.

Un’altra risorsa interessante è il corso online [Animal Behavior and Welfare](#) a cura della University of Edinburgh disponibile online attraverso la piattaforma [Coursera.org](#) il corso è gratuito e sono disponibili i sottotitoli delle lezioni in italiano.

Cercherò di scrivere altro molto presto!

In Defence of Dogs

I am back after a couple of very busy months: I was busy writing for “real” magazines, freelancing as a translator and editor and... studying for my last veterinary school exam. Now that all veterinary schools exams are over, internships aside, I need to start researching more for my dissertation which is going to be on Gundog Welfare ([check the link for more information](#)). Right before starting to dig into scientific journals, I decided explore the books and ebooks I have at

home and I wish to share something with you. First of all, if you have not done it yet, take some time and explore the works of [Temple Grandin](#). Yes, she focuses on livestock mainly, but her stuff is great.

As a second step I suggest you two books I am going through. One is titled In Defence of Dogs by John Bradshaw. This is one of my favourite books ever: it is pleasurable to read and yet extremely accurate. Every dog lover should own a copy, especially if he or she plans to train his dog. The other book is titled The Domestic Dog. Its Evolution, Behavior and Interactions with People and it is edited by James Serpell. The book is indeed a collection of chapters by different scholars such as Raymond Coppinger, M.B. Willis, Benjamin and Lynette Hart and Valerie O' Farrel. I currently have the first edition, published in 1995 but I know there is an updated 2nd edition published in 2016.

One more valuable resource on [Animal Behavior and Welfare](#) is the online course by the University of Edinburgh available online through the [Coursera.org](#) educational platform. It can be taken for free and subtitles are available in different languages.

I will try to be back soon with more articles!