

This Santa Rosa resident went from training dolphins to dogs

Good Dawg Training, located in Bennett Valley, focuses on positive-reinforcement training.



Slide 1 of 5

Colette Edwards, right, instructs Alexis Sanchez on how to train her puppy, Clementine, at Good Dawg Training in Santa Rosa on Wednesday, May 7, 2025. (Christopher Chung/The Press Democrat)

MELANIE NGUYEN
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When Alexis Sanchez found out about a new dog training facility in Bennett Valley, she thought it might be good for her eight-month-old Golden Retriever puppy, Clementine.

She knew the owner of Good Dawg Training, Colette Edwards, would be training her dog – but little did Sanchez realize Edwards would be training her on how to care for her pet.

“I always feel like it’s more about helping me and training me and my abilities to help train Clementine,” Sanchez said. “Rather than just focusing on Clementine and making sure Clementine learns it, (Edwards) also is making sure that I am comfortable and confident.”

Edwards opened her training facility at 2700 Yulupa Avenue, in March. She focuses on positive-reinforcement training rather than training based on punishing bad behavior.

The facility includes a mock veterinary office to help prepare dogs and their owners for vet visits. Edwards teaches owners how to help their dogs onto scales and navigate a visit to the vet, but she does not provide veterinarian services.

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She also offers private dog training.

Before she became a dog trainer , Edwards trained seals and dolphins for 27 years at the South African Association for Marine Biological Research where she worked her way up to assistant curator of the mammal and bird department.

She said the seals were like “dogs in wetsuits,” but said the main difference between training seals and dogs were the dog owners.

“Animals are easy to train, it’s the humans that are more difficult. So I basically teach people to teach their dogs,” Edwards said.

Edwards left her job in 2021 after she met her now-wife Olivia online. Edwards moved to Santa Rosa in 2022 and the couple were married the same year. They shares three dogs: a chihuahua pomeranian mix named Junior, a chihuahua spaniel mix named Steward and a labradoodle named Libby.

In addition, Edwards has two Bassett hounds back in South Africa named Bruno and Betty – her logo is based on them.

She started her business in 2023 with private at-home dog training. She opened Good Dawg on March 17 with room to offer creative services such as her “vacuum victory” training to help dogs overcome the fear of loud sounds.

“I like to be flexible and meet clients where they are,” Edwards said. “It’s bespoke training for their needs going at their pace.”

Group training sessions start at \$200 for four hour-long sessions and private training sessions start at \$320.

Dog social gatherings called Yappy Hours are \$10 per event and they also offer dog puzzle exchanges.

You can reach Staff Writer Melanie Nguyen at 707-521-5457 or melanie.nguyen@pressdemocrat.com. On X (Twitter) @mellybelly119

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