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Consumer Report: Hits From The Vapir

FM turns on the lava lamp, pumps the Cypress Hill, and passes 'round a fatty Digital Aromatherapy Vaporizer

By THE CRIMSON STAFF

World peace. The Grateful Dead. Recent breakthroughs in the field of hydroponics. Chocolate cake. Though seemingly staggering in their randomness, these concepts might suddenly assume a certain cosmic unity immediately after (and for roughly three to five hours following) use of the Vapir, the world's most advanced "digital aromatherapy vaporizer."

Yes, to use the Vapir is to stand, sit or, perhaps, nap peacefully on the vanguard of smoking technology. The Vapir actually takes the smoke out of smoking by heating rather than burning the herb, which permits the user to enjoy what the Vapir heralds as the very "essence of plant." With the use of infrared rays, convection currents and its own microprocessor, the Vapir is capable of heating herbs to temperatures up to 400 degrees Fahrenheit, releasing the herb as a barely visible vapor mist rather than as smoke.

Before the Vapir, herbal enthusiasts could rarely partake of the essence of plant without at least one cough, choke or hack marring the experience. By doing away with smoke and most of its carcinogens, the Vapir ensures those nettlesome signs of impending lung cancer won't get in the way of a good time. In the words of the 19th-century novelist Victor Hugo, which appear on the very first

page of the Vapir's user's manual, "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come."

Who knows what the hell Hugo was smoking or out of what he was smoking it when he proclaimed the Vapir superior in force to all the world's armies. It is, however, fair to say that the Vapir, in all its technological newfangledness, could at the very least hold its own against the Canadian navy.

With the Vapir, you can vaporize just about anything, you name it: tobacco, mint, coriander, dang qui, adder's tongue, purging buckthorn, nodding wakerobin, or any other herb you might have lying around the house. Even that herb your roommate keeps in abundance in sandwich baggies at the back of his sock drawer—ostensibly for its "perfuming properties"—would work just fine. It's doubtful the Canadian navy would let you vaporize anything on board the HMCS Saskatoon.

But, wait, there's more! The Vapir is also armed with a purple laser light, which in Vapir-brochure-hyperbolic-speak is elegantly termed the "Herbal Illuminative Photon Ejector," so that the user can see the essence of plant before becoming one with it. The on-panel digital display also features a handy alarm to alert you when digital aromatherapy session should end and your post-digital-aromatherapy-session snack should begin. Future models of the Vapir even promise a USB port so that the device can interface with the Internet or your PDA. Why would you ever want to that, you ask? Who knows. It's just cool.

Not least of all, the Vapir comes with its own instructional DVD, which sets new standards for general education in its attempt to communicate the basic functions of this home appliance. The DVD, which takes the form of a fictional narrative, follows the basic plot line of the movie *The Matrix*, with the oddly Laurence Fishburne-like character of "Orpheum" dispensing the mystical wisdom of the Vapir to a youthful "Blaze" Scott Evans, a character that not only recreates but redoubles Keanu Reeves' trademarked lack-brained helplessness. It's almost worth buying a Vapir just to lend a hand of support to this unabashed copyright infringement.

While the Vapir may be a venerable technology, don't put out that (bayberry bush) blunt too quickly. There's more than one reason why grandma has smoked three packs of Menthols every day since she was 10—the customs and rituals of smoking possess an allure than cannot be easily overlooked.

Moreover, guilt-free inhalation doesn't come cheap. At \$300 for a corded model and \$400 for the battery-rechargeable unit, the Vapir seems a rich man's toy even when one accounts for the free single-strapped Vapir tote bag and the font of wisdom that is the Vapir users' manual, which alone is likely worth upwards of \$100. Here's but one golden nugget from the manual: "Many enjoy vaporizing with dimmed lights and a favorite CD...we suggest the Vapir World Beat CD."

With the Vapir or without it, friends, continue to herbalize and fight the conforming will of the Man. With the Vapir, however, and its more health-conscious smoking technology, you might also be able to take the good fight to the Woman as well. Yes, Mother Nature, that humorless smoke-hating harpy.