

\$7.95us

Pipes

AND TOBACCOS
Spring 2013

Waxing meerschaum pipes

COVER STORY
Pipemaker Charles Cole

Third-generation carver
Nanna Ivarsson

LEGENDARY NAMEBRAND PIPES & PIPE TOBACCOS

CASSANO

Since 1898

Cassano Vida



Cassano Milano

MAURO ARMELLINI

Rugged and masculine, these handcrafted Mediterranean Briar pipes are top quality at a reasonable price. Handmade in Italy.



BEN WADE OF LONDON

Since 1860
Colindale,
Ovation,
Burnsbury



KARL ERIK

HARDCASTLE'S 1908

Made in London



BRITANNIA



Since 1956
Executive, Dodler

NEW

DESIGN BERLIN

Yin & Yang



NEW La Rocca Cognac



La Rocca Plum **NEW**



GREAT PIPE TOBACCOS

Treat yourself to some of the most popular blends. Each is unique and expertly tinned to ensure freshness.

AMERICA'S PREMIER
PIPE COMPANY

Distributed by James Norman Ltd.

800-525-5629 • jamesnormanltd.aol.com



extraordinary
tobaccos for the
discriminating
pipe smoker

*PLANTA pipe tobaccos of the year
blended by hand*

Each year, PLANTA Tabak-Manufaktur of Germany introduces a new limited-edition tobacco mixture for its tobacco of the year series. Expertly formulated, hand blended and conscientiously tested, these blends represent the very best in their categories. Only PLANTA's reputation and influence allows it to find the supreme pinnacle of quality leaf from various crops to use in its special-edition blends. Available at fine tobacco shops.

2006: A sweet pear mixture

Noble Black Cavendish, nutty Burley and Virginia flakes rounded off with the natural sweetness of the Williams Christ pear. Extraordinary taste experience

2007: Black and mellow, aromatic and smooth

Black Cavendish with the aroma of thoroughly matured bilberries. A delightful experience pleasing to the tongue

2008: An exotic mixture

Vivacious yellow Virginias and contrasting Black Cavendish and brown Burley with exotic fruit extracts. An exquisite smoking experience

2010: After dinner mixture

Full of contrast but also harmonic, 2010 features honey-colored Virginia grades and Black Cavendish with the gentle aromas of chocolate and smoky Scottish whisky. Full bodied pleasure for relaxing moments

2011: The 2011 edition is called Caribbean Mixture and is designed to take you on an island vacation with each puff. Partially pressed red-brown Virginias and a trace of soft black Cavendish are ready rubbed, topped with genuine Jamaican rum and the flavor of ripe passion fruit. It is an aromatic for the true connoisseur

2012: An African Dream: Bright yellow Virginias ripened in the African sun blended with brown Burley and deep Black Cavendish produce harmonic appearance and exquisite taste. Flavours of ripe fruits of the Marula tree determine the character of this particular blend and provide complete smoking pleasure. Fruity/Medium.

Sans Souci: Fruity with caramel, smooth and sweet

Bright and mellow mixture of high-quality Golden Virginias, Burley and Black Cavendish. Fascinating and full of taste

Mild English: Exclusive, aristocratic, typically English

High ratio of Latakia from Syria and Cyprus and broad cut Virginia grades

Full English: Traditional, smoky and very English

Originally Syrian Latakia rounded off with various Virginia grades and a touch of full bodied Java tobaccos



- 12** Finding a voice
Charles Cole achieves his pipemaking dream by connecting to the pipe community.
- 20** Bill Unger
The longtime editor of the *Pipe Collector* has passed away.
- 22** Testing one, two, three!
A pipe-smoking radio personality commissions meerschaum pipes inspired by classic microphones.
- 27** Readers' gift set for the pipe smoker
An early 20th century book publisher offered a unique pipe gift set.
- 28** Kansas comet
Cigar & Tabac has created a loyal pipe clientele in the Kansas City area.
- 34** Carving a path of her own
Nanna Ivarsson builds on the legacies of her grandfather, Sixten, and father, Lars.
- 41** Writers of Smokingpipes.com
It takes both photographic and written communication to help pipe smokers buy pipes online, and Smokingpipes.com provides the best by maintaining a staff of the best.

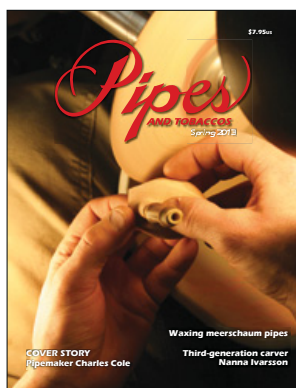
- 46** The cat in the red hat
Former economist Kjeld Sørensen adopts the symbol of his local pipe club for his Red Hat pipes.
- 50** Waxing meerschaum pipes
Different immersion and alternative finishing techniques are explored to get the best patina on a meerschaum pipe.

ON THE COVER

Charles Cole crafts a pipe on the sanding disc.
(Photo by Jordan Cole)

REGULAR FEATURES

- 4 EDITOR'S DESK
6 PIPE LINES
38 PIPEFULS
54 TRIAL BY FIRE
62 EVENTS
62 ADVERTISING INDEX
63 PRIME RETAILERS
64 PARTING SHOTS



Lane & Peter Stokkebye Bulk Pipe Tobacco

Accept No Substitutes



SCANDINAVIAN TOBACCO GROUP

Often imitated. Never duplicated. Insist on genuine Lane and Peter Stokkebye bulk pipe tobacco.

Learn more about all of our brands at stgpipe.com.

WARNING: This Product Contains/Produces Chemicals Known To The State Of California To Cause Cancer And Birth Defects Or Other Reproductive Harm.



Barbarians and their mates

My wife invited a couple she met at her church to our home the other night. I say "her" church because it's not mine. Even though I accompany her occasionally, and for a few years attended often, my own belief system differs significantly from hers. She thinks I'm a barbarian dirtbag, I think she's a deluded sentimentalist, and we get along marvelously.

I get along with our church acquaintances, too, even though I'm unapologetically candid with my opinions when asked. That sometimes leads to horrified reactions, which I find satisfying. Her church doesn't tolerate tobacco use by members, so I sometimes ask for the smoking section when ushers offer to seat us—which may explain why my wife doesn't seem terribly disappointed when I elect not to attend. I'd go more often if folks at the church were like the guys on Christianpipesmokers.net—those guys rock.

So when this couple showed up for dinner, I didn't know what to expect—sometimes people are engaging conversationalists, sometimes they're capable only of worn platitudes; sometimes they're tolerant of my opinions, sometimes they run screaming from the house. However they react, I'm entertained.

The women sat on the couch talking about whatever it is women talk about, while the husband—we'll call him Walt—and I sat facing each other across the coffee table. We volleyed politics back and forth, then the DMV and cable TV companies, all of which we agreed are fundamentally Satanic in character. When he asked if I was a member of the church, I answered, "Gosh, no."

"Do you go at all?" he asked.

"Sure, about once a month. To hang out with the wife."

"I go every week," he said. "I found it makes things ..."—he glanced at his wife and lowered his voice—"... easier."

When Walt asked what I do for a living, I braced myself. Sometimes people are interested, but most church people quickly change the subject. Occasionally, they're appalled at my moral turpitude. One once called me a child killer and insisted on leaving immediately.

Walt warmed up when he heard about *P&T* magazine. "I used to smoke cigars and pipes," he said. "I still have a sultan meerschaum—haven't smoked in years, though." He glanced at his wife again.

At dinner I insisted on saying grace, which scared my wife. She gave me a look that I easily recognized as meaning, "Be careful or you'll be sleeping in the garage." I acknowledged the universe at large for the remarkable physical laws that permit carbon-based life forms to find happiness in an environment such as our tiny planet provides. One corner of Walt's mouth rose in a smile, his wife opened one eye in frank confusion, and my wife telepathically informed me of my new sleeping arrangements. After dinner the women adjourned upstairs to my wife's craft room to tinker with a broken sewing machine.

I suggested to Walt that we step out on the deck for a smoke. "I have some well-aged cigars," I said.

"Gosh, I don't know," he said, glancing at the staircase.

"They'll be up there for quite a while," I said. "That sewing machine is toast"

So Walt enjoyed a cigar and I had a pipe. We talked and joked and were back inside when the women came downstairs.

Walt's wife was puzzled. "You smell a little like cigars," she said.

"Walt was kind enough to join me on the deck," I said, "while I had a smoke."

"Oh, my," she said. "You smoke? Well, we should be going."

The wives stood on the front stoop talking while Walt and I shook hands in the foyer. "Would you like some cigars and pipe tobacco to take with you?" I asked.

He glanced again through the door at his wife. "I better not," he said. "But do you have a copy of that pipe magazine you can spare?"

After they left, I said, "That visit made me appreciate how lucky I am. You're an awfully good, awfully patient wife."

"OK," she said. "Maybe you won't have to sleep in the garage."

Chuck

Pipes

AND TOBACCOS

*A quarterly magazine celebrating pipes of
all kinds and fine tobaccos*

Editorial

Chuck Stanion	EDITOR IN CHIEF
Stephen A. Ross	ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Amy Bissinger	COPY/DESIGN EDITOR
T.S. Donahue	COPY EDITOR

Advertising

Rich Perkins	SALES MANAGER
Greg Cole	SALES REPRESENTATIVE
Marilyn Jackson	SALES COORDINATOR

Production

Nicole Franker	PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE
Antoine Reid	PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE
Dan Kurtz	PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE

Marketing

Kathryn Kyle	MARKETING MANAGER
--------------	-------------------

Circulation

Heather Brittingham	CUSTOMER SERVICE
---------------------	------------------

Administration

Phil Bowling	PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Dayton Matlick	CHAIRMAN
Noel Morris	CEO/SALES DIRECTOR
Rhonda Combs	CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
Brandie Green	STAFF ACCOUNTANT
Beatriz Gutierrez	STAFF ACCOUNTANT
Irene Joiner	HR ADMINISTRATOR/OFFICE MANAGER

HEADQUARTERS: *Pipes and tobaccos*

3101 Poplarwood Court, Suite 115
Raleigh, NC 27604
Telephone: 919.872.5040
Fax: 919.876.6531

Email: chuck@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com

Subscription email:

subscribe@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com

Website: www.pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com

CIRCULATION:

Customer Service
919.872.5040 ext. 238
or email

customerservice@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com

Pipes and tobaccos (USPS 015682) is published quarterly by SpecComm International Inc., 3101 Poplarwood Court, Suite 115, Raleigh, NC 27604. Subscriptions: \$28 a year domestic; \$48 a year international. Periodicals Class postage paid at Raleigh, N.C., and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 2013 by SpecComm International Inc. *Pipes and tobaccos* magazine is a trademark of SpecComm International Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use in whole or in part of the contents of this magazine without prior written permission is prohibited. *Pipes and tobaccos* makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of content published. Neither the publisher nor the advertisers will be held responsible for any errors found herein, and the publisher accepts no liability for the accuracy of the statements made by advertisers in advertising and promotional materials. The opinions expressed by contributing editors are not necessarily those of the publisher. The information included and items promoted in this magazine are intended for an adult audience. For subscription information: Write to address below or call 919.872.5040.

Postmaster: Send Form 3579 with address changes to *Pipes and tobaccos*, 3101 Poplarwood Court, Suite 115, Raleigh, NC 27604. Printed in the USA.



BEHIND EVERY BEAUTIFUL OBJECT
THERE IS ALWAYS A STORY



OSCAR
TIGER SMOOTH



OSCAR
TIGER RUSTIC



4360 Big Barn Dr Little River, SC 29566
p 843.491.4150 f 864.751.5704

For a list of product offerings visit us at
www.laudisi.com/products



P&T Readers RESPOND

Who needs a golden ticket ...

Is there money to be made in tobacco? If not today, certainly yesterday, based, literally, on a bit of anecdotal evidence in *The Lorillard Story* by Maxwell Fox (1947). In 1860, Lorillard introduced Century fine-cut tobacco to celebrate its 100th anniversary, and a novel marketing-merchandising idea using "century" was introduced to spur sales. For about a year soon after the Civil War ended, the company began to insert \$100 into packages of Century tobacco. According to Fox, "Each Monday, for instance, they would pack a \$100 note in one package; each Tuesday, \$50 bills would go into a

couple of packages; on Wednesday it would be five \$20 bills; on Thursday 10 \$10 bills, Friday 20 \$5 bills and Saturday 50 \$2 bills." How about that for a *random* act of kindness?

Ben Rapaport
Cyberspace

Tarler tribute

The Tarler family and staff of Cornell & Diehl Inc. would like to express our gratitude to *P&T* for the very moving tribute to Craig Tarler in the Winter 2013 issue. While Craig's passing wasn't entirely unexpected, it was a blow which has been softened by the

outpouring of support from the pipe community. The old phrase "gone but not forgotten" is certainly borne out by such lovely remembrances as those found in your tribute. While Craig is terribly missed daily here, he is always present with us as we strive to live up to and fulfill his vision of what Cornell & Diehl should be.

*The Tarler family and staff of
Cornell & Diehl Inc.
Morganton, N.C.*

Peterson post

I just received the latest issue. Great content! I always especially love the



Mastro Beraldi

Created by father and son in Rome, Italy, each Mastro Beraldi pipe is a unique, hand made creation. Even the adornments and extensions are fabricated in their workshop, allowing them to produce singular compositions that are also modestly priced.

Distributed by
R.D. Field
Importer of Fine Briar Pipes
Available at finer pipe shops
www.rdfield.com

AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE SELLING PIPE TOBACCO BRAND



So many pipe tobaccos. So little time. But on every shelf, in every tobacco cellar, one should always find space for the brand that popularized aromatic pipe tobacco in America. Often mimicked. Never duplicated. For your next bowl, consider Captain Black.



SCANDINAVIAN TOBACCO GROUP

www.stglanpipe.com

Marc Munroe Dion short stories; he is such a fine writer and great storyteller. The article on the Vollmer & Nilsson pipe artisan duo was nice, too. I love the look of their “classics”-inspired pipe designs and hope to add one of their awesome billiard blasts to my collection—I mostly collect blasts. [Rick] Newcombe’s article on Peterson pipes is an interesting harbinger to the upcoming book on the same. I also noticed the inclusion of a short note near the end of his article mentioning that Gary Malmberg is one of the two authors writing this much-anticipated book. Gary is a Sacramento-area resident whose pipe club, the SPCA (Sacramento Pipe Collectors Assembly), I regularly attend twice monthly. The SPCA is such a fine pipe club and group of very passionate hobbyists. I cannot adequately describe how lucky we are to have such a fine club and a man like Gary who is so unselfish with the time he devotes to our hobby.

Gary, too, is a fine writer and amazingly knowledgeable on all things Peterson, as well as Dunhill. You should consider him for a future article. You should also check out Gary’s fine store on eBay, Second Hand Smokes, which specializes in estate pipes. As for the Peterson book, we in the SPCA have known for quite some time now that Gary has been intensely working on this project, and can’t wait for its publication. Given his devoted scholarly research and deep knowledge, Gary’s book will be an informative joy to read.

Thanks for your great publication. My only disappointment is that I read it all in one day. Now it’s time for some McClelland’s Blackwoods Flake in my latest acquisition, a mint-condition 1963 Group 4 Dunhill Shell Billiard, and some single malt.

*David Zembo
Cyberspace*

How many pipes?

I’m fairly new to pipe smoking, but have been smoking, dipping, chewing and whatever else that could be done with tobacco since I was 14 years old, and I’m now 59. From the start when I still smoked Camel non-filters, I loved pipes for the beautiful artwork that they are.

About 15 years ago, I started a small collection because I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time. I came upon an estate sale that had more than 30 pipes, and all were of higher quality than what I call your drugstore brands. There were Petersons, Preben Holms, Caminetos and many others that were priced at about \$1 apiece. Yes, a once-in-a-lifetime find. I carted them home and set them all up on the racks they came with and looked on them in amazement.

That had just started my pipe collection, though since I was about 14 I found myself drawn to collecting

**MISSOURI
MEERSCHAUM Company**



An
**AMERICAN
LEGEND**

There’s nothing quite like a Genuine Missouri Meerschaum corn cob pipe – the coolest, smoothest pipe you’ll ever smoke!

CornCobPipe.com



400 W. Front Street • PO Box 226 • Washington, MO 63090 • 800-888-2109 • pipes@corncobpipe.com

antiques of every kind, but, then as now, I did not have the pocketbook to afford them. So I found myself searching junk stores, thrift stores and the like; I even found some nice relics in dumpsters. Anyway, the pipe collection grew to about 50 pipes, and I found many of them at flea markets and such for around \$5 apiece. And these were all at least middle-grade pipes. I tried smoking a few of them but gagged with every attempt. Cheap tobacco, [being] unaware of how to pack a pipe and not knowing how to smoke it led me to set them aside, but it didn't stop me from collecting them and enjoying their beauty.

Several years went by until I had to move out of my house and into my daughter's because I could no longer work due to a disability. I sold off many items, including the pipes, and sadly some I'll never be able to replace.

Life went on as it always does, and about 10 years later I found my

own place again and once again I got the pipe bug. I had about four pipes that I had held back from sale and started collecting again. Now I have more than 250 pipes of all categories, including antique, strange, a few meerschaums and metals but mostly briars, and I don't know which I like most. I even started smoking them again, but only ones I felt were easily replaced if I should damage one. I started smoking just corncobs and found they'd smoked well in the beginning but would turn sour no matter how well I cleaned them. I pick these pipes up anywhere I can, so next to none of them are new unless I get brave and spend my month's allowance. The cobs were estates that I'd get in amongst a lot of other pipes I would buy from time to time—what I prefer to call “experienced pipes.”

I started picking a couple out of the collection, first one, then two, to smoke. Now it's four and I think that's a good number for me, because even

though I've learned how to smoke them and found a wonderful tobacco, I still only have about two bowls a day—one in the morning with my coffee and one maybe around noon or after supper. By the way, the tobacco I found was given to me by a Secret Santa on a forum I belong to; it's Escudo. I think it's just heaven in a tin with a good cup of coffee. And nothing fancy for me, just Maxwell House, but brewed rich.

I now restore all my own pipes right down to repairing cracks, restraining and replacing stems when I'm unable to repair them. Paying to have them repaired cost too much money that I'd rather spend on buying pipes, so like always, I learned to fix it myself and save a buck.

Now to answer the other question, “How many pipes should I have?”

There's several ways to look at this; the monster I have on my back says, “I need as many as I can get!” While the man inside tells me, “No more

Kjeld Sorensen



A NEW GREAT DANE

With 20 years of pipe-making experience, including an

apprenticeship with Tom Eltang,

Kjeld Sorensen integrates his knowledge of the Japanese aesthetic with his mastery of the home-grown

Danish style, creating a fresh and

lively look and feel to his high quality hand crafted Red Hat briars.



Distributed by

 **R.D. Field**

Importer of Fine Briar Pipes

Available at finer pipe shops

www.rdfield.com

than you can use!" I realize many pipe smokers only have around maybe seven to 10 pipes and use them all. I, on the other hand, collect and smoke, and it's not a secret to me that there are many whose collections make mine look like only a drawer-full. So, how many pipes do I need? Three hundred would be my answer now, but ask me when I get there; I'm sure the number will have changed.

Ron Powell
Cyberspace

Well, that is really an easy question. One. Why would you need any more than just one? I guess if you are a regular pipe smoker you should at least let them dry out. OK, maybe three pipes. But now let's take into consideration that you enjoy your pipes daily—then I would be safe saying seven: one for every day of the week. That's what you need to have for a proper number of pipes—six in the

holder and one in your hand.

OK, so now you are considered a pipe smoker. I bet friends and family will be buying you pipes for holidays and birthdays, so you have to take that number into consideration. So maybe over the next couple of years you receive three more special pipes. Well, now you have six pipes in the holder, one in your hand and three special-occasion pipes. I guess you buy another pipe holder to accommodate the new pipes. That will add another three spaces to fill with other pipes. You can't leave those holes empty, so now you are on the hunt for the pipe you always wanted. You buy your new dream pipe, and then guess what? You promise yourself that you will only smoke one type of tobacco in that pipe. No drug-store cherry tobacco for your dream pipe—only the best.

Now you think, "OK, this will be easy. I will only have my fancy pipes from now on and out with my old."

But you get a little sentimental and decide to keep the old pipes, after you told the wife that you will get rid of them, but you had some great moments with those old pipes. You can't get rid of old friends, can you? No, you're not made of stone. You have a heart, you smoke a pipe. So now this brings you to that ledge you face as a pipe smoker. Do I make the commitment and obtain 52 pipes for 52 weeks? Yes, you do. That is an easy task. You are not only a pipe smoker but now a pipe collector—you are hooked. Let's face it; you will be a daily smoker, so you better be prepared. Yes, buckle up, because you are looking at 365 pipes for every day of the year. So basically your easy question of "How many pipes?" is very simple—anywhere from one to 365 pipes is the perfect number to have.

Jay Riippi
Cyberspace

THE CHICAGOLAND INTERNATIONAL PIPE AND TOBACCIANA SHOW



- More than 300 exhibitor tables available at the show. The cost of a table is \$140. Once the tables are sold out, a waiting list will be started for those still interested in one.
- A pipemaking seminar on Wednesday, May 1, and Thursday, May 2. The cost is \$75 per person. Pipe focus group seminars will be held. Tobacciana seminars will be held on Friday as well as Saturday evening.
- There will be a CPCC "Pre-Show" (Buy/Sell/Trade) held on Friday, May 3, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A "Post-Show" will be held Monday, May 6, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. for those looking to buy before departing.
- The United Pipe Clubs of America (UPCA) will have its national smoking contest in the tent on Sunday, May 6, at 1 p.m. Contact Mike "Doc" Garr or David Bull for more information.
- The Saturday evening CPCC dinner will cost \$65 per ticket. Attendees will receive Tobacciana goody bags.

***** The CPCC 6,000-square-foot smoking tent will be available from 1 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1, through the early morning of May 6. Drinks and food will be available in the tent during regular business hours.**



MAY 4-5, 2013

Held at the Mega Center,
Pheasant Run Resort
4051 East Main St.
St. Charles, IL 60174

For room reservations call
(630) 584-6300 or
(800) 999-3319. Mention the
show for special rates.

For more information, e-mail Craig Cobine at porshcigar@aol.com or visit

www.chicagopipeshow.com

**FREE Friday evening
CPCC welcome
dinner!**

"Short Shelf Life"

TAKES ON NEW MEANING.



Another best seller from WESSEX.

Over 20 different mixtures, blends, flakes, twists and plugs. Batch blended original formulas, traditional English to modern American. By pipe smokers for pipe smokers.

Distributed by Arango Cigar Co. - Northbrook, IL 60062

Finding a voice

Connecting with the pipemaking community helped Charles Cole achieve his dream

At the Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show (CPCC) in 2009, at some point between making coffee for customers with my (then) company's cantankerous espresso machine, and digging through six gigantic boxes of T-shirts to find the one M that I was sure was lurking amongst all the XXXLs, I bumped into Charles Cole and took a look at his briars. As this was our first encounter, I had no previous work to judge progress, but the man was as likeable as all hell, and his work was definitely at that magical tipping point where I thought a few of his pipes would look great on our site. I also had little doubt that his percentage of highly marketable pieces was high enough to take very seriously. I dragged one of the company's (Smokingpipes.com) talent scouts over for a peek, and while he agreed on the potential, an hour before, Massimiliano Rimensi (Il Duca) had come to me with a letter of introduction from Claudio Cavicchi, Nanna Ivarsson

designs were about to be launched with Stanwell ... this just wasn't going to be the year. In 2010, I again attended the CPCC (this time as a "private citizen") and immediately went looking for Charles. Now being able to evaluate progress, I looked at his wares and my knees buckled a bit.

Tall, fit and always found wearing his beloved jeans and western boots, Charles could pass as a casting director's dream for a frontier movie, or even a promotional figure for his home state of Wyoming. Though to the casual observer he might appear to be a rancher, the truth of the matter is that Charles is an American pipe carver of the first rank: the closest he gets to a steer is the "Eat it all, and it's free!" 80 oz. steak at the local diner, and Wyoming is thousands of miles away from his birthplace.

Charles was born in 1965, the fourth child of parents who lived in Pembroke, Ky. His mother had a college degree and worked as a teacher before becoming (and eventually retiring as) a librarian at

the Fort Campbell Army base. His father was a yardmaster for the former L&N railroad and died of a heart attack well before being able to enjoy the benefits of retirement. As the last child of the family with an age gap of five years to his next oldest sibling (his sisters were nine and 10 years older), Charles spent his formative years basically growing up alone.

When Charles turned 11, his father purchased a small farm to raise a modest amount of livestock, as well as the area's usual cash crop, tobacco, since it was the most lucrative. While most lads his age earned their discretionary money through weekly allowances and paper routes, Charles was given complete control of his own tobacco plot. With a little help from the family, through planting, tending, stripping, curing and baling the tobacco for auction, Charles was allowed to keep the profits that his patch eventually yielded. While tending tobacco from seed to sale is backbreaking work at any age, let alone 11, the experience inculcated in young Charles a deep appreciation and fascination for the noble weed. Perhaps too much so; Charles was rolling homemade cigars and cigarettes, and chewing and smoking his finished product in anything that could pass for a pipe.

Columnist Mary Schmich observed "... the most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives; some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't." While Charles always held firm career goals, life often seems to have a set of roadblocks and monkey wrenches just waiting for the perfect moment, and life employed the same with alarming frequency during Charles' earlier years. From the ages of 19 to 35, he found himself bouncing between Wyoming and his

All photos by Charles, Catherine or Jordan Cole







native Kentucky holding situations that ranged from owning 14 properties by age 23 to work he describes as "... little more than slave labor, where I saw many a man cry on the job and even more quit in the middle of the shift."

One of the few bright spots during this period occurred when Charles left college to live with his older brother Ed in Gillette, Wyo. The move was motivated by Charles' desire to get to know his sibling better, and the union paid fine dividends. Charles and Ed worked together for six years and grew to become best friends, and it was while working with Ed that Charles met Catherine, his future wife. It wasn't until the late '90s and the acquisition of a home health-care agency in Wyoming (a business that he and Catherine still own today) that Charles finally achieved the stability and sense of real life progress that had eluded him for so many years.

Present day, living a near-idyllic life, his home and workshop surrounded by beautiful mountains in Star Valley, Wyo., Charles can reflect with some detachment on the chaos of his earlier years. While he wouldn't wish much of that life on anyone, he admits that performing a mind-numbing variety of jobs, often under arduous conditions, forged a "never settle" perspective, as well as revealed numerous pipe-related skill sets he might not have discovered otherwise.

Today, Charles' pipe work is considered among the best of American pipe-makers. His work has garnered accolades from both prominent collectors and fellow pipe artisans, and the waiting list for a Cole pipe is nearly as long as the lunch line of the Chick-fil-A across from Bob Jones University. If you had speculated about this type of success with Charles at the beginning of his serious pipe career, however, he would have advised "Don't bet a major appliance on it."

Charles' first plunge into pipecarving was inspired by a cover story that appeared in a 2006 issue of *Pe&T* magazine. The subject was Mark Tinsky and Charles was enthralled: "Pipemaking and fly fishing—it can't get any cooler than that!" His foray into carving began in the same manner as many of today's best American artisans, with a predrilled "carve-it-yourself" block from the cover subject himself. To say the result of Charles' first attempt left him unsatisfied would be a gross

understatement. “An abomination,” was his exact critique. Undaunted, he called Mark and asked for some tips. Mark explained that either he could explain the basic process over a two-hour period, and Charles still wouldn’t really have a grasp, or Charles could visit his workshop. Charles made the trip to Montana, and observing Mark’s working processes was a revelation: “It was a real eye-opener for me and made me more determined than ever to make a quality pipe of my own from start to finish.”

Armed with new knowledge, fueled by ambition and carrying a decent stockpile of Tinsky’s briar, our hero returned home and set about making “20 horrible pipes. There were times that I would look at the paws that had once created some fine knives and ask ‘Who are you, and what have you done with my hands?’” Frustrated, but no less determined to eventually become a quality pipemaker, for the next couple of years Charles continued to carve at a slower pace. While unhappy with most of his work during this period (he described to me one attempt to create a bent brandy that emerged looking like a failed glass-blowing experiment), some of his pipes sold rapidly on consignment at a pipe shop in Jackson.

It was also during this time that Charles became an avid reader of *Pipes and tobaccos* magazine, and gazing at the work of the likes of Jody Davis and Brad Pohlmann triggered an epiphany: Pipemaking could be far more than just a process to create a smoking instrument—it was an opportunity to create three-dimensional beauty from one of the most unforgiving materials on the planet.

One of the most important defining events in Charles’ career came with his decision to attend the first (and last) Sparks/Reno Pipe & Tobacco show in March 2008 as a vendor. “I walked in the door scared to death about showing my pipes, and, after sitting down, I looked up across the way and there was Brad Pohlmann! I couldn’t believe it! I asked Brad to look at my pipes and give me his opinion. Brad did his level best to be kind, said they were ‘OK’ but I could see ‘Horrible!’ written all over his face. Brad then suggested that I should talk to Todd [Johnson], the gent sitting next to him, and hit him up for some suggestions. Funny now, but not then, I looked straight at Brad and asked, ‘Todd who?’” ▶



Charles talked to Todd and, like Brad, found him to be both amiable and frank in his appraisal: "You have a lot to learn and a long road in front of you, but these briars show strong potential." Todd also invited Charles to come to his workshop and take some lessons, an offer Charles accepted six months later when finances allowed. Also in attendance, and eager to encourage and advise the fledgling carver, were Jeff Gracik and Steve Morrisette.

Charles left the Sparks/Reno show bolstered by a virtual mini-encyclopedia of fresh techniques, as well as yet another eye-opener: Though the pipecarving trade (like any artistic community) was composed of individuals who were in competition with one another, there was none of the expected backbiting, presence of "primo uomini" or damning of others with faint praise. Quite the contrary: The camaraderie he encountered was unprecedented in his experience, and every pipemaker he had contact with appeared genuinely interested in his success.

That sense of support and community continued to grow when Charles took a booth at the Chicago pipe show a mere three months later. Any preshow jitters rapidly began to fade when Brad looked at his pipes and said he was incredulous at the amount of progress Charles had made in a scant 90 days. A stop-by and word of encouragement from Lars Ivarsson poleaxed any residual angst, and by the time Tom Eltang and Hans "Former" Nielsen added their reassurance and suggestions: "I almost wanted to pinch myself. I felt like an aspir-

ing guitar player who attended a rock fest, and wound up receiving free lessons from Keith Richards, Jimmy Page, B.B. King and Les Paul."

Charles fulfilled both a promise and dream in August 2008, when he made the pilgrimage to Todd's workshop in Tennessee and studied for two weeks with the American carver. As you have probably gathered by now, Charles doesn't have much use for equivocation, and he certainly doesn't when it comes to describing the importance to his art of that visit: "With Todd I had found my path to creative pipecarving, and essentially changed everything I was doing. Aside from the occasional use of a lathe for a standard shape, I knew that I had to retool and relearn the craft from scratch." Watching Johnson create his magic in a nonrigid manner and then shape his bits to such perfection that it was almost impossible to envision any other conclusion convinced Charles that the path to his carving aspirations lay within the "go with the flow" approach started by the Danes and later adopted by many great carvers around the globe.

Along with the subtleties involved in hand-shaping a terrific bit, Charles believes the greatest gift he received from Todd was the ability to rethink the very manner in which he had been viewing shapes. When Charles related that his biggest stumbling block in creating pipes was a near-obsessive need to constantly question a shape in process and agonize over how a form might look at every possible angle, Todd sighed and drew out a famous quote that will stay

with Charles forever: "Perfectionism is the enemy of creation." Todd pointed out that absolute perfection wouldn't be found in any briar born, or yet to be born. If completely deconstructed and viewed hard enough, every pipe contained something questionable within its execution. Charles needed to metaphorically step away for a moment, take a deep breath and envision the shape in the manner that any art should be considered (as a totality), and then create that shape.

While Charles gives Todd the lion's share of credit for the renaissance of his art, he is also quick to cite the influence of his good friend and oft-time mentor Brad Pohlmann. When I joked with Charles about the amount of mental juggling that was required to juxtapose two mentors with such wildly differing outlooks on pipemaking, he chuckled and said, "I'll agree that's a hell of a pair to draw to. While I do my best to approach my overarching shapes as a totality, let's face it; there are many individual facets that benefit from tight scrutiny. Brad will often intently focus on some aspect of a pipe and I don't really get the point. Then he will say, 'The eye looks, but it does not see!' and then will make the tiniest correction that markedly improves the shape. Todd helped me find my artistic voice, but a small part of my inner precisionist will always be around, and that part truly enjoys Brad's rigorous approach."

Charles' present-day philosophy on pipemaking is as straightforward as his manner of speaking. While he'll patiently answer questions about draft hole sizes (4 mm, unless requested otherwise), the interface of the tenon and mortise, bore widths and chamber shapes, he gets a bit put off when he sees a professional pipemaker being lauded for his drilling and engineering: "That should be a given—if the carver can't drill a straight hole or create a proper tenon, they have no business representing themselves as quality pipemakers." Though classic shapes are in the minority of his production, Charles has a fondness for them and enjoys the challenge of creating shapes that have little tolerance for error, because every pipe smoker carries a machine-made template around in his or her head. When all is said and done, however, it's that clean, Danish-inspired liquidity of form that moves Charles' soul. Looking at the current waiting list for a Cole pipe, it would appear that many a collector has felt moved as well. P&T



BULK-TOBACCOS-INCLUDE:
DUNHILL  **MCCLELLAND**
LANE-LIMITED **STOKKEBYE**
SAMUEL-GAWITH **ALTADIS** **AND-MORE**

***Perhaps the best selection of bulk
 and tinned tobaccos in the world,
 at the best prices!***

www.paylesspipes.com

PHONE 1-866-747-3747



FREE SHIPPING* WITH PURCHASE OF 2 LBS! BULK TOBACCO!

TINNED-TOBACCOS-INCLUDE:

DUNHILL  **FRIBOURGE & TREYER SPECIAL BROWN FLAKE**

PETERSON  **ASTLEY'S NO.109**

MACBAREN  **ERINMORE FLAKE**

TOWNSMAN CAVENDISH SILVER  **FIELD & STREAM** 

 **SOLANI GREEN**  **CAPTAIN BLACK** 

CAO BLUE NOTE  **SAMUEL GAWITH KENDAL CREAM** 

PEASE  **CORNELL & DIEHL**

TOWNSMAN CAVENDISH BLUE

 **MY OWN BLEND**  **REINER COPPER LABEL PROFESSIONAL**

SAVINELLI  **MY OWN BLEND** 

MCCLELLAND  **COUNTRY DOCTOR**

SAMUEL-GAWITH SQUADRON LEADER  **MODEL** 

TOWNSMAN CAVENDISH-BLACK  **WESSEX**

 **CAO SWEET VANILLA HONEYDEW**  **ERINMORE MIXTURE**

SOLANI SWEET MYSTERY  **ACADIAN PERIQUE**

A N D M O R E

*UPS GROUND



PRIME Retailers: Shops with exemplary customer service and inventory,

Smoking Pipes **2** WEB SITES = **1** BIG COMPANY
www.smoking-pipes.com www.meerschauumstore.com

SINCE 1963

Since 1960

Alabama's Oldest Pipe & Tobacco Shop

.....

2502 Memorial Pkwy SW
 Huntsville, AL 35801
 PH: 256-539-6431
 FAX: 256-533-5695
humidorpipeshop@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook

HPS
 HUMIDOR PIPE SHOP, INC.

The Briar & The Burley
Since 1972

**OVER 2000
 PIPES IN STOCK**

101 W. Kirkwood
 Bloomington, IN
 812.332.3300
 Open Mon-Sat
 10am-9pm

www.Pulversbriar.com

Might be worth a peek.

e-mail: Mpulvers@aol.com

Marty Pulvers, Proprietor

Online & Phone Ordering.
OVER 250 VARIETIES
 OF BULK, TINNED, AND CUSTOM BLEND
TOBACCO.
A Fine Selection OF
New AND Estate Pipes.

JUST FOR HIM

www.justforhim.com
unclebob@justforhim.com
417.886.8380

The BRIARY

Home of the best in quality tobaccos and pipes, including hundreds of great values not found on our website. Give us a call to learn more, or visit us in person or on the Web. We can help you find the pipe you've always wanted and the tobacco to let it perform at its best.

The Briary
 609 Oak Grove Road
 Homewood, AL 35209
 877-3BRIARY (877-327-4279)

See our inventory at
www.thebriary.com

knowledgeable staff and a proven enthusiasm for pipes

Pipes **PRIME**

- and the future looks bright...



10 years online and 47 in the trade
Thanks to all our loyal customers

Margit & Aage Bisgaard

www.bisgaard-pipes.com



Cigar
& Tabac Ltd.

- * PREMIUM CIGARS
- * PIPES & TOBACCO
- * HUMIDORS
- * LIGHTERS
- * ACCESSORIES

- * TSUGE
- * FERNDOWN
- * CAMINETTO
- * SAVINELLI
- * SER JACOPO
- * CASTELLO

* AND MANY MORE!

www.cigarandtabacltd.com

6898 WEST 105TH STREET, OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS 66212
913.381.5597 | 800.359.0381

QUALITY BRIAR

Specializing in Artisan Pipes

MAKERS:

Cornelius Mänz
Poul Ilsted
Adam Remington
Wolfgang Becker
Rad Davis
Love & Sara Geiger
Maigurs Knets
Michail Revyagin
Will Purdy
Alex Florov
Kurt Balleby
Todd Johnson
Sergey Ailarov
Gregor Lobnik



pipe by
Cornelius Mänz

*Personal service and
outstanding selection*

(508) 579-4772
Nick@qualitybriar.com
www.qualitybriar.com



1-888-64-TOBAK

*The tobacco collection
everyone's talking about!*

Red Paramour
The Connoisseurs Flake
Knightsbridge
Fireside
Turkish Mystery
PL11-010
Old Church
Dominion
PL11-012

"Hand Blended Tobaccos of Exceptional Quality"

www.cigarsandpipes.com

15 Park Avenue, Clifton Park, New York 12065



4noggins.com

PIPE TOBACCO AND ACCESSORIES

4noggins.com was founded as a Vermont company specializing in quality pipe tobacco and accessories. Our tobacco is from the finest blenders and friends at:

- Cornell & Diehl
- GL Pease
- McClelland
- Butera Pipe
- Monjure International
- XYZ
- Samuel Gawith
- Gawith Hoggarth
- and others



Our vision of service is to provide top quality products at a fair price, with superb customer service. We strive for 100% customer satisfaction.

**FREE USPS
PRIORITY MAIL
SHIPPING
ON ALL DOMESTIC
ORDERS OVER
\$99.00**

4noggins.com
Middlebury, VT
800.364.5126



Towson, MD
25 W. Allegheny Ave.
410-828-4555
410-825-5798

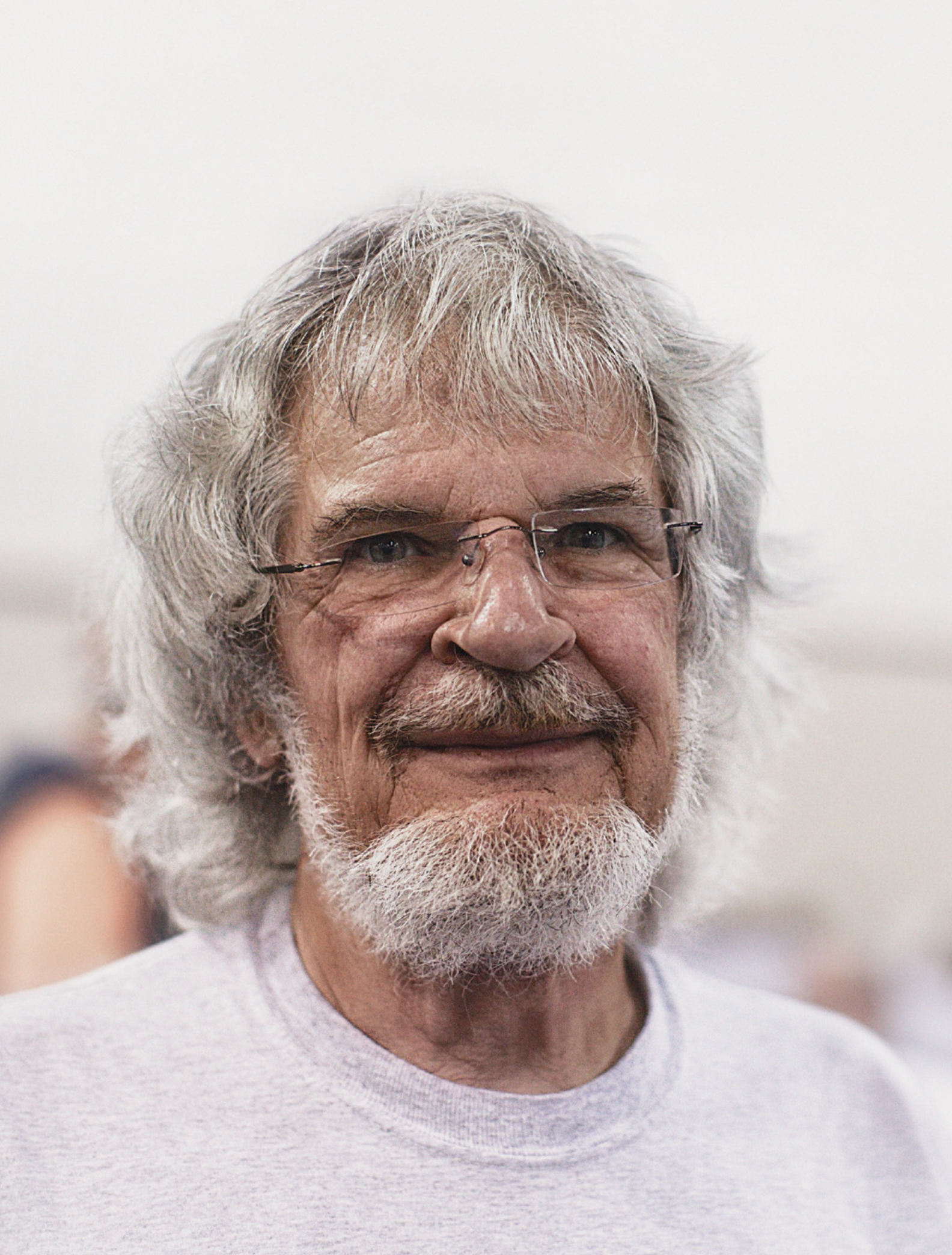
Fader's
Maryland's leading tobacconist now in our 120th
year offering premium tobacco products, fine
men's gifts, and personalized service since 1891.

Annapolis, MD
Annapolis Plaza
150-F Jennifer Rd.
877-289-7665

Owings Mills, MD
Valley Village
Shopping Center
410-363-7799

Catonsville, MD
40 West
Shopping Center
410-744-9090

www.faderstobacco.com • faderstobacco@verizon.net • 800-999-3233



Bill Unger

When Bill Unger announced his terminal leukemia in the publication he edited, the *Pipe Collector*, he was pragmatically blunt. His words could be paraphrased as, “I’m not enduring invasive medical procedures, so I have less than a year. But now on to important matters: the future of the *Pipe Collector*.” And he described the transition to a new editor and new secretary/treasurer for the North American Society of Pipe Collectors (NASPC), positions he held longer than I can estimate. Virtually forever.

No sentiment. No reminiscences. No sad farewells. Just encouragement to maintain memberships and support the publication: “First of all, renew your membership now without delay ... second, keep writing those good articles for the *Pipe Collector*. Do that, and everything should be fine for something that is unique in the pipe world.”

That was December 2012. He passed away less than a month later, on New Year’s Day 2013.

His farewell perfectly reflected his personality. It wasn’t about him; it was about the things he believed in. This was a man who gave to the pipe community and supported the hobby with everything he had, right to the end of his life.

Bill was easy to spot at any pipe show. Tall, muscular, with vestigial long gray hair and beard from his counter-

culture days in the ’60s, he inevitably worked the words “Have you renewed your membership?” into every conversation. He loved Tracy Mincer pipes and wrote a book about them, *The Custom-Bilt Pipe Story*. Anyone who has authored a book on pipes can tell you it’s not done for profit; it’s done for love of the subject and drive to contribute to the community.

Perhaps his most important contribution was his work on the *Pipe Collector*. As editor, he helped people find their own voices and offered them a place to publish their opinions, speculations, theories, knowledge, histories and stories in the finest pipe publication of its kind. An accomplished writer himself, with a Ph.D. in English, Bill rarely wrote much for the publication. He preferred helping others do so.

I knew Bill for 16 years. We would talk on the phone regularly, especially regarding submissions that were made to both the *Pipe Collector* and *Pipes and tobaccos* magazines. We were never competitors—we worked together to find the best venue for particular articles. I’d often hear from a writer with an article that Bill had said would be better in *P&T* than in the *Pipe Collector*, and I reciprocated when circumstances merited. Sometimes we’d find ourselves both wanting the same simultaneously submitted article and had to resort to a

coin toss. Bill would toss the coin and tell me over the phone whether I had won. He was remarkably lucky.

Bill Unger was fun, knowledgeable, generous, ethical; he was a friend to most and an inspiration to pipe smokers everywhere. I admired him, and now I miss him terribly. The best thing we can do to remember Bill, though, is to support the pipe community in general and the *Pipe Collector* in particular. To quote Bill: “Are you a member? You should subscribe today!” And every time you receive it in the mail, give a silent thanks to Bill Unger for all he has done to make pipe smoking and collecting a more enjoyable hobby.

—Chuck Stanion

Photo by Neill Archer Roan,
www.apassionforpipes.com

The Pipe Collector, published six times a year, may be subscribed to by joining the North American Society of Pipe Collectors. Dues are \$18 per year U.S.; \$22 Canadian; \$35 elsewhere; or \$10 for an emailed PDF. The NASPC may be contacted at P.O. Box 9642, Columbus, OH 43209-9642; email: naspc@graphictouch.biz; website: www.naspc.org.

Testing one, two, three!

Miracles in meerschaum: the 'mic pipes'

"The man has great pipes."

No greater compliment can be paid to the voice of a professional broadcaster than "The man has great pipes." I should know. As a lifelong veteran of local morning radio and syndicated overnight shows, those words of awe and respect have *never* been said about my voice. Compared to most on-air personalities and authoritative newsmen, I sound like a cartoon character.

But as any pipe smoker knows, any man can have great pipes if (a) he is willing to spend enough money, (b) he goes to the right estate sales or (c) he knows a world-class pipe carver. I have gotten to know Burak Servi, and he and his Turkish team work miracles in meerschaum.

And it would take miracle workers to bring my dream of "mic pipes"—inspired by radio's most iconic microphone designs—to life.

Like most decent miracles, mine started with a vision. I indulge my love of pipe smoking ritualistically, on special nights when the heavens are clear, when the business of the day needs the perfect capstone before bedtime. It was on such a night last year as I was looking up at the stars, drawing some dark mocha smoke from my favorite, GDB magnum-sized bent briar, when I had a vision of a classic studio microphone that was also a pipe. As I smoked my briar, I reflected on the recent news from my doctor that I was going to have to give up my full-time radio career if I ever wanted to see any

progress with my severe, omnipresent tinnitus (a permanent whistle-buzz in my ears). If I could no longer be behind a mic for a living, I imagined, at least I could be behind a mic pipe for life.

Classic mics and classic pipes have a natural connection, of course. Orson Wells, Walter Cronkite and Daniel Schorr are just a few of the legends from the golden age of radio and early TV pictured in publicity shots broadcasting in a cloud of pipe smoke. In fact, it's hard to tell what's more beautiful in those old black-and-white photos: those amazing microphones or those elegant pipes.

For example, the RCA 77 Series microphone, popularized in the 1930s by the RCA Corporation, might be what most people picture if you asked them, "What does a microphone look like?" With its distinctive capsule-shaped design that appears at home either hanging upside down from a boom or sitting up for a newscast on a mic stand, wherever you see the distinct outline of an RCA 77 Series mic, you know it means "speak here." If you ever need a reminder of the endurance of that symbolic shape, just look at the "mute" button on your nearest iPhone.

"In the late 1950s, it is reported that all three major networks were using the 77 microphone," says Steve Raymer, director of the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting in St. Louis Park, Minn., a showcase for early radio and television technology. "Plus, any recording studio that RCA or

Columbia were involved with [was] using the 77. It doesn't hurt that both Larry King and David Letterman have 77s on their desk. People identify with the images they grew up with."

So sacred is the silhouette of the RCA 77 Series to me that I felt like it was an almost holy obligation to either get the detail of a mic pipe, honoring it perfectly, or not have the carving done at all. It would take tremendous service from a true artist. And as I know now, you cannot spell service without "Servi." Burak Servi is the co-proprietor of www.meerschaummarket.com, a manufacturers' representative of Turkish craftsmen and a proud inheritor of Turkey's meerschaum pipe tradition.

"During the late 1800s and the early 1900s, meerschaum was mined here in Eskisehir, Turkey, and exported to Vienna, Austria," Servi says. "The Turkish government banned the exportation of raw stone in the 1930s and wanted to take the art (of meerschaum carving) to Turkey. So Austrian artists came to Turkey and trained talented Turkish boys who were going to be the master carvers of the future. Since the 1930s, meerschaum is only mined and carved in Turkey in my city of Eskisehir, and the art [has] been transferred from generation to generation."

Servi himself was one of those generations continuing the Turkish tradition. "In 1978, my father started this meerschaum business, and with the help of me and my brother, who were in the



The Electro-Voice Velocity

Photo by Joe Brandmeier

United States during the 1980s, the business grew in a short time. My brother and I were attending shows and doing door-to-door smoke shop marketing. So this was a family business. My brother and I were marketing worldwide, and my father, in Turkey, was in charge of the production.”

The intricate, inventive and often whimsical production of the meerschaum pipes pictured on Servi’s website convinced me that these Turkish artisans could transubstantiate my divine vision into stone. I considered finding a wood carver, but, as Servi says, “Unlike briar, meerschaum is a mineral (hydrous magnesium silicate) that is light and more comfortable for smoking. Also it is more suitable for carving and creating great art [that] is unique and belongs to Eskisehir only.”

So, I emailed Servi some color photos of the RCA 77 Series mic and my specs for a pipe. The way I saw it in my head, the bowl would consist of just the top two-thirds of the mic so it wouldn’t be too big, heavy and awkward, while the heel of the bowl would be cut so it would stand flat on my desk. Also, I wanted the arms of the microphone’s bracket to pull back and form the shank of the pipe. At first, I thought it might be too much to ask, but Servi assured me that he had the perfect man for the job. “This is a great idea. F. Can is one of my carvers, and he loves to do things like this, something new and something no one has made before.”

And if F. Can has not carved it in meerschaum, chances are it’s never been made before.

“Fahrettin Can is one of the most

experienced carvers in the industry,” Servi later explained. “Consider that he was born in 1938 and he is still carving well at the age of 75. F. Can is the creator of many models of meerschaum pipes. He is also a ‘first generation’ Turkish carver who learned meerschaum carving directly from the Austrians. He only carves a few pipes a month,” Servi adds proudly, “and he only carves for me.”

Seeing the first production photos from the Eskisehir workshop confirmed what I already knew: Like any pipe collector, I had to have more! As far as classic microphones go, only one design model rivals the RCA 77, and so I knew the next pipe had to represent the more spherical Shure 55 Series first introduced by Sidney Shure in Chicago in 1939. ►



Shure 55 Series

To be sure, the 55 Series microphone is not only synonymous with broadcasting but also live stage performing as well. Picture the kind of microphone that Elvis Presley was singing into on one of the most popularly collected stamps of all time. In fact, the Shure 55S, a slightly smaller, more angular version of the original 55, is known in the business simply as “The Elvis Mic.” Steve Raymer says there is a reason why the Shure 55 Series was preferred by R&B and rock ‘n’ roll performers and why the RCA 77 tended to stay in the studio.

“The RCA 77 ... mics were delicate, while the 55s were rugged,” he explains. “Both the Shure 55 and the RCA 77 responded in (the same) manner, but you could hold a 55 in your hand like you could hold the head of a loved one, and it had enough weight to allow a performer



to feel like they were singing to [the] one whose head they were holding.” According to Raymer, the RCA 77 and the Shure 55 mics are prized equally by collectors. “I was surprised to see that the 55 sold for about the same money as the RCA 77. ... The 55 was a dynamic mic that produced pretty good response, but nowhere near that of the RCA.”

To do justice to a Shure 55 Series pipe, though, Servi had another master carver in mind: his friend I. Baglan. “Ismail Baglan has been carving since his teenage years and has a good personality that makes you feel as though your pipe has been made by a member of your family.”

This time, Servi did not follow my specs at all. I expressly told him that he need not worry about getting the Shure 55 exactly right, but he totally ignored me. Instead, the Shure 55 mic pipe so closely resembles its muse that I don’t know whether to plug it into my mouth or an amplifier.

“I was so excited to make those antique microphone pipes,” Servi says. “Normally when I receive an order, I am happy because I earn money, but when I received your order, I was so excited and so happy that I and my team of carvers had a target.” I. Baglan’s prominent signature on the side of my Shure 55’s mic pipe shank tells me that he knows he hit the bull’s-eye.

The third most iconic mic, however, was going to be the trickiest of all, because after ovoid and spherical, the next pipe challenge I had for Servi could only be called boxy. The Electro-Voice Velocity (or V Series) mics shared the same geometric three-dimensional shape of another well-known microphone that came before it, the RCA 44 Series, but what exactly is that? A hexahedron? A decahedron? Does anybody know? Steve Raymer?

“Skyscraper. The RCA 44 was introduced two years after the Empire State Building was erected.” Raymer would know. The Pavek Museum of Broadcasting is dedicated to offering educational programs for elementary, secondary and post-secondary students. Besides, that’s better than what I had. I was describing the EV V Series as a kind of Mayan pyramidal ice cream cone. I’ll go with skyscraper. ►



RCA 77 Series

Photo by Joe Brandmeier



Electro-Voice is not a household name, but contrary to the RCA, EV mics are still being made today. EV was incorporated in 1930 in South Bend, Ind., by two men who saw a market for less expensive but better-made microphones than what was commercially available at the time. Each EV mic was handmade at the rate of about one a week, but after that humble start, EV later developed such a reputation for quality and durability that the Electro-Voice RE-20 is now the gold standard for broadcast engineers everywhere, and in the case of Rush Limbaugh's famous Golden EIB microphone, it may be the single most famous mic in the history of talk radio.

Whether the design of Rush Limbaugh's golden mic could ever work as a smoking pipe, however, I will leave to somebody else to order. If anybody could make that or any of your pipe dreams work, it would be Burak Servi. "I am like an orchestra conductor synchronizing multiple carvers and workers and miners of raw stone to get the best results.

"[The mic pipes] was not an easy project, but I trusted my team, and I knew they can carve anything when I motivate them well and when I explain to them what the customers want," he says. Servi is confident that his talented Turks are up to any artistic challenge.

"They are such sensitive people—they are artists—but if you motivate them well and if you treat them kindly, they will give their days and nights for a single pipe. But if you break their heart with a single word, you may not be able to get a pipe carved even if you paid a thousand dollars per pipe!"

Fortunately, each pipe and its custom-made case only cost me \$225 plus shipping from Turkey. So, for a little more than \$700, I finally have the best pipes in radio—and that truly is a miracle. *P&T*

Follow Ian Punnett on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/deaconpunnett>



Photo by Joe Brandmeier

Readers' gift set for the pipe smoker

Pipe smokers are familiar with what is often called a pipe gift set, usually intended as a starter set for the beginner. Normally composed of a pipe, tobacco, pipe tool, pipe cleaners and matches or lighter, it might also include a tobacco pouch, wind screen or even a cork knocker for an ashtray. An early 20th century book publisher, however, offered a distinctive variation on—or perhaps a precursor to—such gift sets.

In 1907, Dodge Publishing Co. published Charles Welsh's *The Fragrant Weed: Some of the Good Things Which Have Been Said or Sung About Tobacco*. Just as the early 20th century H.M. Caldwell Co. tobacco books (*P&T*, Summer 2012) provided an excellent survey in prose, verse and song of all the forms in which tobacco has been enjoyed over the centuries, so too does this single volume. The following poem will assuredly hit home with those pipe smokers whose first experience with the pipe left something to be desired:

NICOTIANA (BY A BEGINNER)

O! INDIAN weed, Tobacco hight
(But stay! first let me get a light,)
The choicest gift the world e'er saw—
(Confound this pipe! why don't it draw?)

Thou art of plants the noblest gem,
(There's something sticking in the stem,)
Thy healing properties none doubt;
(That knitting-needle's got it out.)

Virginian leaf! thou wert the cause
Of Raleigh's genius (now it draws),
Thou didst inspire his tuneful song,
(Dear me! this Bird's Eye's very strong.)

Tobacco! whilst I thee adore,
(I don't think I shall smoke much more,)
With awe, almost, thy praise I sing.
(This giddiness is not the thing.)

Of human pleasures thou the crown!
(I shall be better lying down),
Oh! anodyne of mental pain.
(You don't catch me at this again!)
"Judy." London

Let's hope the budding pipe smoker persevered. And for all those who love the outdoors and appreciate how smoking a pipe (or cigar) enhances their experience of it, they will find themselves nodding in agreement with this piece:

WHAT I LIKE

To lie with half-closed eyes, as in a dream,
Upon the grassy bank of some calm stream—
And smoke.

To climb with daring feet some rugged rock,
And sit aloft where gulls and curlews flock—
And smoke.

To wander lonely on the ocean's brink,
And of the good old times to muse and think—
And smoke.

To hide me in some deep and woody glen,
Far from unhealthy haunts of sordid men—
And smoke.

To linger in some fairy haunted vale
While all about me falls the moonlight pale—
And smoke.
Henry Leigh



The Fragrant Weed was first listed in the 1907 Dodge catalog as available in a cloth binding and a "Smoker's Edition." But what on earth constituted a smoker's edition? The catalog entry provided no clue. In search of an answer, I turned to *Publishers' Weekly* for that year and found in the Sept. 28 issue a slightly more detailed description of this publication: "bound in grass cloth, ordinary edition ...; also smoker's edition with pipe and tobacco, boxed." But a question still remained—what did this look like?

Not until seven years later, however, did the publisher finally include in its annual catalog an illustration of this gift set. Obviously the pipe is a bulldog shape. Comparing the size of the actual book to its size in the catalog's illustration, I estimate by extrapolation that the pipe could have measured as much as 5.5 inches in length. Certainly by no means a diminutive gimmick.

The Smoker's Edition was last made available in 1916, the book itself in 1927. Unfortunately, the chances of an example of the former surviving are slim to none. With the pipe removed for use and the packet of tobacco discarded once empty, there would be little reason to retain the box. But maybe some ardent bibliophile, if not pipe smoker, sequestered this gem, and one may yet turn up. Dodge Publishing Co., in any event, deserves credit for offering a noteworthy gift set for smokers that would appeal to a beginner or veteran alike. *P&T*



Kansas comet

Cigar & Tabac has created a loyal following among pipe connoisseurs in the heartland

Pipemen take up the hobby for all kinds of reasons, but Lyn Beyer's was an unusual case. An undergraduate at the University of Missouri back in 1966, the khaki-clad Beyer (pronounced Buy-er) paid \$14.95 to buy his father a Falcon pipe meant to serve as both a Christmas present and a means of weaning the old man away from his beloved cigarettes. His father never got to see the present—just before delivery he died of a heart attack at the age of 60. Lyn took the pipe on to school and smoked it as a sort of memorial to his father's tobacco experiences.

"I could have returned that pipe and gotten my money back," Beyer, who is 66 today, remembers. "But I figured that if it was meant for him and he couldn't have it, then it was meant for me to have and smoke."

He's still smoking today, with a collection of more than 1,100 pipes that has grown so far beyond cataloguing that most are kept in 20-gallon plastic tubs at his home in suburban Kansas City. He has at least 60 unsmoked Savinelli Autographs and another 14 still-new Preben Holm creations. His tastes today run in favor of freehands, often

with plateau tops in large sizes. Few people around the country have ever seen Beyer's collection, because he attends few pipe shows and is reluctant to jump into Internet chat rooms to confer with other collectors about blends, vintages and carving styles.

And yet practically everybody with an enthusiasm for tobacco in Kansas City knows Beyer. He's the proprietor of one of the heartland's best retail shops, Cigar & Tabac Ltd. in the Kansas City suburb of Overland Park. He's also the co-founder and sponsor of one of the best clubs anywhere, the Greater Kansas City Pipe Club, which meets monthly at his store with 50 members or so in attendance and a real agenda of guest speakers and tobacco sampling. Beyer is fully immersed in all things briar, carving his own pipes, performing repairs for customers and blending his own tobaccos with assistance from McClelland Tobacco Co., which is headquartered a short drive away. Beyer and his wife and partner, Bobbe—the two have been married 44 years—are such good friends with McClelland's owners, Mike and Mary McNiel, that they spend Thanksgiving together every year.

At a time when many tobacco emporiums are retreating from pipes, Cigar & Tabac is fearlessly devoted to its inventory of 700 pipes and 80 bulk tobaccos—17 of them created by Beyer himself—as well as 1,400 cigar labels, the latter on display in a sprawling



Lyn and Bobbe Beyer

1,600-square-foot walk-in humidor within the 4,000-square-foot store. Cigar & Tabac sells an average of five pipes a day, or more than 1,500 a year, though this remains decidedly a small business.

There is also a second store, Town & Country Tobacco, spanning 1,400 square feet with 250 pipes on display, in the St. Louis suburb of Town and Country, Mo. Beyer is a St. Louis native, and he has harbored notions of retiring back to his hometown someday, even if he's too busy with the headquarters store in Overland Park to move anywhere anytime soon.

Cigar & Tabac thrives in otherwise fiercely competitive markets. The Town & Country Tobacco store faces off against entrenched rivals such as John Dengler Tobacconist in St. Charles and Jon's Pipe Shop in Clayton. In Overland Park, the main rivals include Diebel's Sportsmens Gallery in the Country Club Plaza, which stocks the Dunhill and Davidoff brands that Cigar & Tabac doesn't have, and the two-location Outlaw Cigar Co. Each of the rivals has formidable walk-in humidors and lots of space as well as the advantage of superior locations. But they can't match Beyer's pipe selection and services tailored for briar connoisseurs.

Beyer is that rare tobacconist who has actual big-box retail training and experience. After graduating from college in 1968, and marrying Bobbe, he embarked on a career with Sears, Roebuck & Co., completing a management program in El Paso, Texas, then embarking on a merry-go-round that included stops at Sears stores around Texas before finally transferring to Kansas City in '72. But Sears' management changed and the business became too stressful, and before long Beyer switched careers to life insurance, selling on commission, and then later did some public relations work. It this time he was smoking pipes—he got his first Jobey freehand from Diebel's in 1973—and learning more about tobaccos.

Cigar & Tabac was born in 1982, with Beyer investing \$20,000 in a claustrophobic 585-square-foot retail nook in an enclosed mall in Overland Park, 10 blocks from the current location. It was an inauspicious start, with Lyn selling GBDs, Comoy's and Jobeys priced

from \$15 to \$40 along with a couple of dozen bulk tobaccos. His first proprietary blend was called Black Forest and was a combination of cherry and vanilla flavors. "I had to give it away back at the start. Now it's my second-biggest seller," Beyer recalls. Business in the '80s, he adds, was so tough that he couldn't pay himself a salary throughout his first five years. The couple and their lone child, Jennifer (40 years old now), depended on Bobbe's income as a bank officer.

Caution was the byword for Beyer as he built the business slowly. Kansas City's legacy tobacconist, called Eng-

lander's, was put up for sale in the '80s and offered to Beyer. He negotiated to buy it until the price got too high, then backed off. It later went to a relative and eventually went out of business. Beyer has fond memories of the pipe industry in those days, when wholesale reps for brands such as Savinelli, Comoy and GBD all lived in Kansas City and were a fount of knowledge. "Each guy would come back from a tour of the factory and tell me about all the new products that were coming," Beyer says. "They had great stories to share with you and everything was conducted on





a personal basis. Now the reps are gone. If you need a Savinelli for your shelf, you get on the phone and talk to somebody you don't know long distance to place an order. It isn't the same at all."

By 1987 Cigar & Tabac was the biggest pipe retailer in the region, and Beyer moved up to a larger, 1,500-square-foot space notable for a 500-square-foot humidor. Through the early and mid-'90s he was growing 25 percent and more a year, with pipe volume reaching 500 pieces annually. By 1997, Bobbe quit her job at the bank and came on as a partner. Lyn now spends more time with one of his abiding passions, the Masonic Lodge. He's a 32nd degree Mason, is in the grand lodge line in Kansas and is devoted to various fundraising projects, such as an annual golf tournament for his customers that helps raise money for cancer research at the University of Kansas.

The move to the present store came in 1997, and since then Cigar & Tabac has widened its lead as a pipe retailer over other stores in the region. The store sells an impressive 500 pounds of tobacco a month; some of his bulk offerings are so good that Beyer has elected to tin them in an anniversary series that now stretches through six different blends dating back to the store's fifth year in business (aromatic back then) to the present, a 30-year anniversary blend that is a medium English with a healthy dose of Syrian Latakia. Most of the bulk tobacco contains McClel-



land leaf, though there is some Stokkebye, Gawith and Mac Baren sprinkled in too.

The Overland Park store has seating for more than two dozen people in its lounge, while the suburban St. Louis store can accommodate a half dozen or so. The lounges are busy all day with customers, the crowds rotating between morning, afternoon and evening. Bridge is played at Overland Park; chess is the preferred game in St. Louis. Most of the surrounding areas ban public smoking, and Beyer himself doesn't smoke in his own house. Thus he admits that "lounges are important to my customers, but only up to a point. I want a guy to come in here and light up and maybe get a coffee and work on his laptop for a couple of hours. But I don't want him to sit here all day like this is his own home." Beyer keeps tight control over his operations, since he's usually on the sales floor himself. "I hate sitting on my ass in an office," he says.

It's tempting for any tobacconist to broaden his merchandise to appeal to a wider audience. But Beyer is notable in resisting the temptation. He once stocked walking sticks and similar male accessories, but no more. "I know tobacco well. That's what I'll stick to," he says. He eschews hookah altogether. "We don't sell hookah and never will," he vows. "College kids are doing hookah around here at the moment, but we're not after that kind of customer. They're just following a trend that's

bound to run out of gas eventually."

Cigar & Tabac puts some of its inventory up on its website at www.cigarandtabacld.com. However, it hasn't graduated to actual e-commerce yet. Prospective customers must dial up the store to inquire about buying something. Prices run all over the map. The store offers a \$1,500 Castello Fiammata billiard and another priced at \$1,000 with a silver band and longer shank. There's a Radice bamboo-shanked Dublin priced at \$495, along with an unusual spiral-shanked Radice author priced at \$445.

There's also a Nording modified bulldog/apple with silver band that's one-quarter bent and priced at \$380. A bent Tonni Nielsen freehand with plateau top has been sitting on the shelf priced at \$800. Some retailers would be getting ready to mark it down and move it. Not Beyer, who has great patience. "In 30 years of retailing, one thing I've learned is that there is a buyer for every pipe," he says. "Whether it takes one year or three years for that buyer to come along doesn't matter to me. I don't have to sell today. I can wait."

Beyer personally is partial to Danish pipes, though he can be spied around the shop every day smoking brands ranging from Design Berlin to Michael Parks, Castello to Peterson clenched in his teeth. He prefers aromatic English and mature Virginia tobaccos. He doesn't stock Dunhill except in estate pipes, but he does have a good selection



The lounge at the Town & Country Tobacco store outside St. Louis is managed by John Lancaster (right).



of English names that includes an Ashton LX pebble-grain Dublin and an assortment of eight Ferndowns topped by a half-bent Tudor Root 3 Star billiard with fine bird's-eye grain.

In his own collection, Beyer is a particular fan of a long-forgotten name, Kerry Wathen, a Kansas City pipemaker who died in 1985. Beyer bought his first Wathen pipe in 1974 and now has a collection of more than 150. Wathen worked for a time at a now-defunct shop called the Briar Patch in Kansas City, but later turned to pipemaking in unconventional fashion. "He'd be tucked away for three months at a time making pipes, then emerge from his house and go around to all the local shops and see if he could sell what he'd just made," Beyer recalls. "He was a true artist, an unsung hero of pipemaking."

Beyer would like to have the time to make more pipes. He's made three dozen himself, as well as spending long hours doing repairs for customers and also fixing lighters. "Fix a lighter for a customer and you're like a god to them," he says. "I might spend two hours fixing a lighter and charge five bucks for the work. But that customer will then go out and tell all his buddies to buy their lighters from me."

The most recent Beyer pipe, a paneled billiard, sold for \$450. He has a freehand Canadian at his home workshop that he's been toiling away on for five years. "I'm not satisfied with the shape yet," he grumbles. He's also got a bulldog design drawn up but hasn't found the right

block of briar yet to get started on it. As for estates, he's got boxes full of old pipes that he's collected from around town that he hasn't gotten around to reconditioning yet. There's hardly enough time in the day to run two stores and work on lathes and sanding wheels too, he says. "As it is, I'm probably one of only a few pipe retailers in the country who also makes his own pipes," he says.

As if all this weren't enough, Beyer also travels to the Caribbean regularly to blend his own cigars. He has a house brand called Cobuto, priced between \$7 and \$9 in four sizes, that features Nicaraguan, Honduran and Costa Rican filler and a Sumatran wrapper. He also has Oliva making private-label cigars for his shop and sources other private-label products from small Dominican factories. "Exclusive labels boost your credibility as a tobacco retailer," Beyer insists.

The industry is impressed. During a recent visit to Cigar & Tabac, Pete Johnson, the president and owner of Tatuaje Cigars, marveled at the deep inventory in the store's humidor. Johnson, who got his start as a clerk and blender at the old Gus's Smoke Shop in Studio City, Calif., two decades ago at the age of 22, has a collection of more than 100 pipes, many of them unsmoked rarities. "Most of the old pipe shops are gone now," Johnson laments. "Lyn Beyer is one guy who can still sell cigars and pipes at the same time. You don't see that much anymore. So many new tobacco shops today are clueless on the subject of pipes."

Beyer draws on his Sears experience in making his store the best it can be, he says. He likes to say that he can size up a new customer on first encounter in a moment, estimating precisely what he's prepared to spend that day. Bob Oswald, an employee who is also a master leather craftsman, suggests that Beyer's deep knowledge of the industry is what draws customers. "Yet he never shares his knowledge in an intimidating way," Oswald says.

Cigar & Tabac offers a virtual fool-proof warranty on every pipe it sells, something few competitors try to match. The policy occasionally comes back to haunt Beyer. "I'll get a guy who burns out a pipe, and I know that it was his fault because he was smoking way too hot. But I'll replace the pipe for free anyway," Beyer says. "At the same time, however, I'll teach him the right way to smoke that replacement pipe from the start."

Which brings up Beyer's ultimate merchandising lesson, gleaned from an executive at Sears some 40 years ago. "He had a roomful of trainees and he asked us all what the best sale we could make was," Beyer recalls. "Everybody in the room had a guess—like the sale carrying the biggest profit margin or the biggest price tag. We were all wrong, he told us. 'The best sale you can make is the repeat sale—the transaction that encourages the customer to come right back to you again,' he said. I've never forgotten that. I've built this company for the long haul on that same rule." P&T



Pipe of the Year 2013

by Rad Davis

If you're a traditionalist, this year's offering may be irresistible: a saddle-bit billiard by American carver Rad Davis. For comfort and utility, it can't be beat. The lines and proportions are minimalist and the execution perfect, with an Ebonite stem and the bowl fashioned after the classic Dunhill LB shape. This pipe is a no-nonsense machine designed for the optimum enjoyment of tobacco.

That's not to imply that it's no more attractive than a garden spade—it's beautiful. Especially notable is the spalted tamarind shank decoration, each piece unique. Tamarind is a wood from Southeast Asia, and spalting is a byproduct of decomposition that takes place as the wood lies on the floor of a forest. Under the correct temperature and humidity conditions, spalting causes many different and intricate patterns in the wood.

Rad Davis pipes are known for their high level of execution combined with relative low cost. That makes his pipes an extraordinary value. He's been told by many that he should raise his prices. "I don't want to," he says. "I like selling everything I make, and I like selling it quickly."

He doesn't wax poetic when speaking of his work. We tried to coax him into a flowery explanation of his design process by asking, "What were you trying to accomplish with this design?" He paused and said, "I was trying to make a billiard." Undeterred, we kept pushing. "What's your design philosophy?" we asked. "I don't have a philosophy," he said. "I make pipes." You have to admire that practical sensibility.

By the time you receive this issue of *P&T*, we should have photos of each available pipe on our website. Only 30 were made, so if you're interested, don't wait too long. Prices range from \$375–\$900.

Here are the approximate dimensions:

Length: 5.75 inches

Height: 2 inches

Width: 1.5 inches

Inside bowl diameter: 0.87 inches

Bowl depth: 1.75 inches

To order, visit www.pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com; call 800.346.7460, ext. 238; or email customerservice@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com.



Carving a path of her own

*Nanna Ivarsson builds on the legacies established
by her grandfather, Sixten, and father, Lars*

There's a certain bit of insecurity that most artists feel about their craft. The self-expression on display in their work brings with it a baring of the soul, a deep desire to connect one's passion and experiences with those of others, to comment on the human condition in a variety of mediums—canvas, clay, bronze or wood. There is also the desire to stand out and shout “Here I am!”—to leave something behind that others will admire years after the artist's life has ended. Each painting or sculpture is an opportunity to make a statement and forge a legacy. The best artists approach those opportunities nervously, anxious to see what they may achieve and how they will be received. It's that anxiety that makes them work all the harder to hone their skills, no matter whether they are young or old. Each new piece brings with it the thrill and satisfaction of having created it and the hopes and prayers that others might like it.

A pipemaker, Nanna Ivarsson is one such artist. The daughter of Danish pipemaker Lars Ivarsson and the grand-

daughter of legendary pipemaker Sixten Ivarsson, Nanna grew up in the workshops of her father and grandfather. She sold her first pipe when she was just 9 years old—the sale price was approximately \$35 and a little more than 8 pounds of candy. She discussed pipemaking with her grandfather and father and took their lessons to heart. But despite the years of experience and learning from two of the world's more important pipemakers, she still gets butterflies in her stomach when she shows a pipe to a potential customer.

“I still get nervous about presenting a pipe, but then when I hear the buyer express his appreciation for it, I get relieved,” she explains. “With a pipe, I'm never finished. There are always thoughts of what I could do to make it better. When it's not finished, I can still think about what I can do with it. But when it's done, it's done. I have to force myself to accept it. And then I want to send it away because when it's sitting here, I'm always thinking about what I could have done to make it better. I could

have bent the stem on this one a little bit more,’ for example. Or, ‘Perhaps I have bent the stem a bit too much.’ I am always second-guessing my work on a pipe.”

The constant search for perfection that drives most artists is compounded for Nanna by the success and reputation of her father and grandfather. When pipe people think of the name Ivarsson, they think of only the very best—pipes that might belong more in a museum than inside the cabinet of a pipe smoker.

A Swede who immigrated to Denmark in the 1930s to work in his brother-in-law's bill-collecting firm, Sixten came to pipe-making after World War II. Working at Poul Nielsen's Kyringe-piben, which would later become Stanwell, Sixten tweaked the classic English shapes by making them slimmer and adding graceful curves before branching out and crafting completely original freehand shapes. Some have claimed that Sixten was the world's best and most important pipemaker, and it's hard to overestimate his influence in pipemaking. His designs and work ethic have inspired countless pipemakers, and his work has elevated the reputation of pipemakers from being viewed as relatively unskilled workers turning countless bowls on a factory lathe to the status of highly skilled artisans—sculptors, rather than factory workers.

Nearly as highly regarded as his father, Lars has become known for crafting pipes that exude life by bringing out the organic qualities of the briar. Not as driven to make as many pipes as Sixten, Lars has experimented more with the briar and sought an emotional and spiritual connection with it to bring out the shape nature intended.

Nanna naturally took after her grandfather and father, often spending her free



time in their workshop, pretending to make pipes when she was very young. As she grew older, they allowed her to turn make-believe into reality one step at a time. By the time she had reached her teenage years, she was finally deemed old enough to use the most dangerous equipment in the workshop.

When she was 18, Nanna apprenticed at Sixten's Copenhagen studio while simultaneously pursuing a degree in industrial design at the prestigious Danmarks Designskole. While pipemaking was satisfying, Nanna sought a different avenue to express her creativity.

After successfully completing her degree, Nanna secured work at a firm designing household goods and furniture, but there were always the happy memories of making pipes. After two years working at the design firm, she left to learn more about pipemaking from her father.

After Nanna had worked with him for a year, Lars agreed she had mastered pipemaking well enough to set up her own workshop. She took much of her late grandfather's equipment (Sixten died in 2001) and established a workshop in a building shared by craftsmen, artisans, designers and artists in Copenhagen. She then moved to New York City and worked in a similar building in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. Only able to obtain 90-day work visas, she had to travel back to Denmark every three months and get another visa to return to New York. Tiring of the trans-Atlantic crossings every three months, Nanna eventually returned to Denmark.

Today, Nanna and her sons, Sixten and Mattis, live in a home in a forest near her family in Køge. Nanna's workshop is a large, bright and airy space. Adorning the walls are a few calendars and pieces of art, pictures of pipes and framed photos of Sixten at work. With the photos and Sixten's pipemaking equipment inside, his influence is still present more than a decade after his death. Yet Nanna says her father has had a more direct impact on her pipemaking aesthetic.

"I was raised with the shapes that my father made, and they have become my idea of beauty," the 38-year-old says. "My father's pipes are so incredibly beautiful. His pipes are alive. They are so tense and powerful. They are strong. I think he makes the perfect pipes."

Her admiration for her father's work





goes beyond the products he makes. By working with her father, Nanna developed a way of communicating with him so they know exactly what the other means even though they may be miles apart and talking over the telephone. It is a difficult accomplishment to achieve in the visual arts—to describe exactly what you see to someone so that he sees the same thing.

“My father and I can talk about shapes as if we were sitting here together and drawing on the same piece of paper instead of talking on the telephone. I can draw what he’s telling me over the phone. I know exactly what he taught me. We are so close, shape-wise. My grandfather loved to make pipes, but he was a hardworking man. My father has the same feelings that I have. It’s very nice to talk to him because he understands exactly how I feel when I’m making a pipe—the disappointment and the exhilaration.”

Rather than emulate the work of her father and grandfather, Nanna has strived to capture her own creative expression. It first happened in the industrial design field, and it is now happening in pipemaking. Each pipe is an opportunity for Nanna to step forward as an artist and a pipemaker in her own right—a challenge she is welcoming with more comfort.

“It’s important that I try to get away from [their] shapes and force myself to do something of my own,” she comments. “I never try to copy a pipe. But following the grain, I sometimes see the same thing my father or grandfather would see. They were so inspired, and they have nearly done all the shapes that a person could do, so it’s very hard to find a new shape. My pipes are changing a little bit all the time. I am very strongly influenced by my father in shaping a pipe because I think his pipes are so beautiful, but there are differences. When I make a shape, it is very similar to his but it is different. There is a Nanna shape versus a Lars shape versus a Sixten shape. Now I am more comfortable making the Nanna shape. My experience is just like my father’s, who was influenced by his father and then over time started developing his own shapes.”

When describing pipemaking, Nanna often uses words with emotional connotations, such as “disappointment,” “exhilaration” and “happiness.” When asked what she likes most about being a pipemaker, she simply replies that making pipes makes her happy. She experiences joy in carrying

on the family tradition and unlocking the best shape possible from the briar.

“Pipemaking is a dream,” she says. “When you make pipes, you dream about them all the time. You find a block and you start to think about what sort of pipe it will produce. Then you start to make it and you still dream about it. Quite often you get disappointed; other times you make a nearly perfect pipe. You always have expectations for the pipe. ‘Oh, this will be the best pipe I have ever made.’ I don’t think about anything else. I live in that moment of creativity. It’s so exciting. I have a feeling of total happiness when I’m making a pipe. With some blocks, I have this feeling that this is better than being in love. That’s probably why it’s so wonderful being a pipemaker. That’s the feeling I’m chasing because I don’t have it always. Some pipes just bring it out.”

Since she has had children, Nanna makes fewer pipes—she made just 33 in 2010 and approximately 50 in 2011. As her children get older and start school, she hopes she can increase production, though it will always remain relatively small.

“Sixty pipes a year is about right,” she says. “I spend about a week on a pipe and I am always working on three or four pipes at one time. If it’s not up to my standards it’s thrown away. I probably complete only 25 percent of the pipes I start. All of the pipes I sell must be as perfect as they can be because I have a name to live up to all the time.”

Nanna makes only freehand pipes because she enjoys the freedom of listening to what the briar’s grain is telling her about the best shape it will produce. Working with her hands at the 6 o’clock and 9 o’clock positions at the sanding wheel, she deftly makes adjustments to the shape when a flaw appears. Shaping a pipe on the sanding disc is one of her favorite steps in pipemaking. It is the step that most allows her to express her own creativity in the sculpture.

“Shapes naturally pop up due to what the grain presents,” she says. “When I’m carving I’m trying to be faithful to the wood all the time. The grain decides how the pipe will be. I used to sketch the shape on the pipe when I was younger but now I can see the shape inside. My grandfather and father always said that you have to grind into the red lines. You just have to see the pipe inside the briar and catch it. I think I was in my 20s when I understood

what they were talking about. It was a matter of working with the briar enough to see what is inside. Sometimes you get a flaw and have to change the shape. It's my job to catch the shape inside the block. It doesn't happen always, but it's very exciting to make the shape that you think that block will yield."

Having the freedom to capture the best shape, making freehand pipes also gives Nanna an opportunity to imprint a little bit of herself into the wood.

"I think it's hard to make the classic shapes and give them my own touch in a way that hasn't been seen before. I practiced doing that, but there is so little to work with. Of course I can make them, but if I don't have any of my personality to add to it, then I shouldn't do it. I want people to see a pipe and know immediately that it is a pipe I have made because it has some of my personality in it."

One of the distinguishing characteristics of a Nanna Ivarsson pipe is the transition from the shank to the tobacco chamber. By removing more wood where the shank and the tobacco chamber meet, she creates a graceful curve.

"There is a personal way of shaping in the lines that you create that is similar to the way you shape letters in your writing," she explains. "Making the transformation between the shank and the tobacco bowl a little more graceful makes the overall pipe easier to look at. I want simple lines that are graceful, easy and natural looking. When a person sees a pipe I have made, I want him to think it is a very simple shape. Economy of sculpture and simplicity is better because the most important part is the wood. You try to present the grain in the most beautiful way."

While a beautiful pipe is important, Nanna stresses making a pipe that smokes well is even more important. After she has created the shape on the sanding disc, she drills the tobacco chamber and the airhole. She eschews a vise or any implement other than her steady hands to hold the pipe as she drills.

"I just drill the hole very fast—doing it by hand makes pipemaking very interesting," she jokes. "I always start with a small bit and then go to larger ones while all the time checking the progress. Drilling in increments allows me quite a lot of control."

A pipe must be comfortable in the hand and the airflow must be smooth and uninterrupted. Nanna doesn't sand inside



the draft hole because she says her drilling technique is so fast that it eliminates any obstructions. She leaves a very small space—1 mm to 2 mm—between the mortise and tenon and crafts the airhole inside the hand-cut Ebonite mouthpiece from 4 mm to 1.6 mm.

Nanna doesn't grade her pipes. They are simply sandblasted or smooth. Sandblasts sell for approximately \$2,500 to \$3,500, and smooth pipes sell for a little more than \$4,500 to more than \$6,000.

"I don't grade my pipes because all of them have to be good," she says. "It used to be that sandblasted pipes had flaws in the wood, but now pipemakers are recognizing that sandblasts are beautiful in their own right. Some wood is perfect for a sandblast. If I have a block and see a weak cross grain, but I can bring that grain out with a sandblast, I will do it."

All of her pipes are stamped with the year they are made, the production number from that year and "NI." However, Nanna has made three pipes in her lifetime that were so good they deserved special recognition, which she marks with a special fish stamp—the same mark

of excellence her father uses.

"Using the fish stamp is a personal statement that I am very happy and satisfied about the pipe," she explains. "I have to have an extremely good feeling about it. I have to think that there is no way I could have done it better. I have to like it so much. The grain has to be excellent, though there could be a sandblast fish pipe. I am honored to use it because my father uses it. There are so many kinds of creatures used in pipe stamps, so why not use one that has been used in the family?"

Whatever pipe she is working on at the moment is Nanna's favorite pipe. Despite dreaming about the pipe she is currently working on, she also allows herself to think about how she would like to progress as a pipemaker.

"I'd like to go more into the classical shapes and develop my own style," she states. "I would like to make a bird's-eye that is my own. I make them very much like my father's now. I've made some that I'm very happy with, but the better you get the more you want to learn. Someday, perhaps I can make the perfect pipe. That goal is at the end of the road." P&T



A noteworthy volume of response was received from the previous column, not all of which could be included here. The subject of collecting struck a chord with many readers, and I would like first to excerpt a few paragraphs from Mr. Owen KenKnight of Northfield, Minn.:

I own close to 50 pipes, and lately I've sold about 70. The ones I sold were acquired over the course of many years, and for one reason or another didn't suit me. Everything I know has been learned by making mistakes. The first pipe I bought was wrong for me in every way, and it took a long time to find out what I really wanted. Now, as I'm starting to get old, what I want most of all is to sit down in the evening with a pipe I can smoke and a book I can read. And a glass of scotch at my elbow is not unwelcome. I'll buy a few more pipes from time to time—I've just discovered the charms of the Lovat, for instance—but the truth is that I have enough.

To enjoy what we've got without wanting more is a step toward the saints and mystics. The philosophy is not so good for business, though, and probably should be left to those who are turning grey—if they can stick to it!

Mr. KenKnight and I have reached a similar point. I actually find it difficult to part with my pipes, and few have left my possession over the years. I acquire, but rarely disburse. My experiences with "estate" pipe dealers receiving my treasures have been poor, and I could kick myself over some that have left my hands, so that is a practice of the dim past. To be honest, despite the number of pipes I have, I come back repeatedly to a very limited number, and they satisfy me in their use. The favorites are tried and true friends. So the old reliables are cared for and tended with special consideration. I keep the others to remind me of the journey to get the select few that are just right. I have always contended that pipe smoking is a mystical

experience, hence the few practitioners, as there are few mystics. And as my hair is virtually white, I can say that it has not been bad for business, because I have gone through a heckuva lot of pipes to get here.

More specific to the Jobey Stromboli I have collected, Mr. Mark Irwin relates this charming story:

In 1975 as a junior in high school, I spent my time in Algebra II drawing pipes with a friend of mine instead of listening to the instructor, which is probably one reason I teach English and failed that class. Some of the pipes we frequently drew were the Jobey Stromboli, which we drooled over at every opportunity when we went down to Ted's Pipe Shoppe in Utica Square (Tulsa, Okla.) on Saturday mornings. We could never decide which color stem we liked the most.

They were expensive—for us. \$12.50. Basket pipes were \$7–8. I finally scrimped enough to buy my Stromboli 300, a square-shanked billiard with yellow stem—perhaps the shape fourth from the left in your photograph? I smoked it just the other night—it's been refurbished three or four times (by me), had a hole poked through the bottom of the bowl (by me) and remains in a place of great honor in the cenobium (pipe rack).

In 1976, being in a downtown high school, I frequently skipped fourth period to browse the bookstores and have an extended lunch at one of the best hamburger joints in town. Almost as frequently I took my girlfriend, who usually bought my lunch. One day I lit up my Stromboli at the table after a fine repast (wow—it's hard to remember a time I could smoke at a restaurant), and a little old lady—probably the age I am now—leaned over to my girlfriend and said, "Isn't he cute? You should marry him." It seemed very embarrassing at the time. Of course, that girl did marry me. She's been a faithful supporter of all things pipe going on 35 years now.

Ah, the power of the Jobey Stromboli is not limited to bewitching my daughters,

but extends even to promoting romance and lifelong commitment! It is a remarkable thing. But I must turn to the subject of this column, the corn cob.

The corn cob pipe has been with us for quite a while and is a quintessentially American product (please see the previous issue for an article on the Missouri Meerschaum Co.). It is iconic in many ways, from Popeye through the resolution shown by Gen. Douglas MacArthur in clamp-jawed profile. It is also considered by many to be an inferior smoke, or at the least *déclassé*, something for the *hoi polloi*, but not the cultured and sophisticated. I would beg to differ. I note it in American literature, as smoked by Roger Mifflin, the protagonist of *The Haunted Bookshop* by Christopher Morley, from whom I filched the name for this column. I also have it on good authority that, while usually pictured with a cigarette looking cool, Sammy Davis Jr. had a cob in the handkerchief pocket of his jacket while he lived in London. There are innumerable other examples from literature and life.

Aside from the undeserved image problem, I find them to be cool, light and excellent smokers. They come from Missouri Meerschaum in two forms: filled with clay on the exterior, and natural, or unfilled. Please refer to the pictures of the Missouri Pride (unfilled) and the Washington (filled), different models of the same pipe from Missouri Meerschaum. One can order these directly from the company (www.corncobpipe.com) and other sources mentioned below, in addition to drugstore and convenience store racks. The early history of the pipe is dominated by clays prior to the advent and eventual dominance of briar as the principal material. And in filling in the exterior of the bowl with clay, the absorptive virtues of the pipe are augmented along with heat tolerance, and I believe there is some longevity benefit as well. However, the unfilled cob weighs virtually nothing compared to all other pipes of similar size, and is a unique



At left is a Washington pipe from Missouri Meerschaum; its surface is filled with clay. The Missouri Pride at right has a natural, unfilled surface.

experience, especially for those with dentition or TMJ problems. I commend them to your attention.

There are two issues that pipemen raise as objections to corncobs, and I have solutions for both. One is breaking them in and the other is the stem. As far as breaking cobs in, this relates to what one considers the breaking-in process. To me, it is not just the charring of the bowl, but also the absorption of tar into the bowl. This colors the bowl in a briar and meerschaum. In other woods that permit combustion, are porous and draw away moisture, the tar may actually appear on the outside. I have seen on cherry, rosewood and bubinga bowls dots of tar form on the outside as it is drawn away from the tobacco during smoking. People have told me they can taste the corn while breaking it in (which cannot be for long, or be that unpleasant, nor have I noticed much), but the worst part to me is getting to the heel and burning the wooden stem that extends into the bowl. My solution is heretical to some, but works for me. I place a small amount of a neutral tobacco in the bottom of the bowl. I have no suggestions for aromatic smokers. I use Five Brothers for this, and if that is too much for your tastes, then I would suggest cubed Burley from Cornell & Diehl or Uhle's. Either of these companies can supply you with a completely unadulterated cubed Burley, or there are adulterated ones from other sources. One of the original, brown-labeled McClelland Virginia flakes will do quite well too. Placing a small amount into the bottom of the bowl, I light up, and rather than smoking it slowly, I gently

blow into the pipe. Yes, I know, this is a terrible transgression, but the effect is to char not only the walls at the bottom, but the woody stem and perhaps plug, which taste like smoking tongue depressors if you were to smoke this far down without them being charred. This process might require repeating. Then, I smoke increasingly filled bowls, making sure to tamp with mechanical regularity all the way down each time. This seems like a lot of trouble, and unnecessary for other materials, but trust me: This will produce a cob that you will be reaching for again and again. I herein admit to having more than 10 cobs right at the moment, a couple specific to Lake District products oiled with exotic substances as only the English can. I have developed an occasional taste for these, and they do not ghost a bowl; they fully inhabit and immutably possess it. This Anglo-American pairing of a cob with a Lake District flake strikes me as the most effective joint effort since Operation Overlord (permit me my hyperbole in the interest of my point).

Another issue that people have mentioned to me are the stems, or bits. The pipes last longer than the bits for many. The simple solution is to buy another bit, which is 50 cents from Missouri Meerschaum. Yes, that is twice two bits, pun intended. Nothing costs that much anymore. However, in the interest of an even more permanent solution, and dressing up the appearance, even changing the functionality, I have recently discovered the "Forever" Stems from Walker Briar Works (www.walkerbriarworks.com), which also deals in Missouri Meerschaum pipes,

but only the clay-filled ones. These are excellent and of high quality and creativity, made from vulcanite, Lucite or even both. They come in quite a variety of shapes, colors and lengths, and I have grown immediately fond of them. I cannot fail to mention that they have a Stem Restoration Kit for vulcanite bits that has a two-step process (de-oxidation and cleaning, then waxing) that works quite well, not requiring a buffing wheel.

At the high end of the aftermarket cob reworking, we find Riccardo Santia, from Ontario, Canada. These have been featured in another issue of *P&T* (Fall 2012). He takes a basic Missouri Meerschaum pipe bowl as a point of departure and brings it to a completely different place. Using bamboo shanks, he adds a premium acrylic stem and plugs the bottom with briar. My break-in process outlined above would not be necessary with this pipe. I have not had the pleasure of trying one of these, but am looking forward to the experience. (OK, so I am still collecting pipes. What of it?) They are available from his site (rsantiapiques.com or riccosantia@hotmail.com) and his Facebook page, along with www.aristocob.com (another source for Missouri Meerschaum products). The Aristocob website is named for a George Jetson-esque pipe with fins for heat sinks and a replaceable cob liner that is no longer manufactured. The website, however, is a paean to cobs. See the site's YouTube piece, at www.youtube.com/user/Aristocob, on how to get the most enjoyment from a corncob.

One may consider corncobs part of our indigenous culture, just as there



from tribe to tribe, depending on what was more abundant and convenient. Pipes, too, were considered a status symbol, as fancier wooden and brass pipes, decorated with gemstone inlays and other adornments, were reserved for tribal royalties. Bamboo pipes were by far the most common.

The pipes in the photograph [are] a modern interpretation of the Taiwanese aboriginal bamboo pipes, made by a Taiwanese pipemaker who also carves briar pipes. The bowl is made from Makino Bamboo (Guei Zhu in Mandarin Chinese, Kei-Chiku in Japanese), indigenous to Taiwan. Makino is one of the fastest-growing bamboos, with an average daily growth of almost a foot. This growth rate is due to its porous and highly absorbent nature, which, luckily for us, makes it an excellent choice as pipe-bowl material. (In Japan, Taiwan and China, bamboo charcoal is widely used for healthy living, as water and air purifier—What is bamboo charcoal? A used bamboo pipe bowl!)

The pipemaker named this line of bamboo pipes “Seediq Bale,” after the Seediq tribe. (Seediq means “men”; Seediq Bale means “real men.”) Pipes of this style are prominently featured in the 2011 Taiwanese historical drama *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*. These pipes are still being made and used by the aborigines, though not as refined and exacting in construction as the one photographed.



I had the opportunity to try a bamboo, and it was surprising. With very dense unusual woods rather than briar (from Africa, for example), breaking them in is difficult because of difficulty charring as well as a lack of natural absorptive capacity. Even some briers, when broken in, resent moisture and are simply wet pipes. The bamboo charred slower than a cob, but was quite willing and able, like a cob, to absorb moisture that would have been a gurggle-fest in African ironwood, for instance. I am interested in how long they last and whether they are subject to burnout, but that is a longer experiment than can be reported upon here. They are a nice cob alternative, but not as ubiquitous.

What are your thoughts regarding corn-cobs? How about materials other than briar or meerschaum? Write! A letter c/o P&T or wserad@pipesandtobaccosmagazine.com. Next issue: flavorings, casings and things you didn't know were in your tobacco and, of course, whithersoever the readership listeth. P&T

are beers made around the world from local ingredients (coconut, figs and dates, honey, etc.). In Taiwan, such a local component would be bamboo. Note in the picture Chris Lee, proprietor of iBriar.com, in addition to being a violinist, high school music teacher, church choir director, owner and factotum of a private music studio, and a member of the New York Pipe Club and NASPC. (I am tired at just re-reading all that. No wonder the man needs a relaxing pipe now and again.) He relates a short history of tobacco and the bamboo pipe in Taiwan:

Cultivation of Tobacco in Taiwan began with the colonization of the island in the 17th century by the Spanish, and, more importantly, the Dutch. Dutch missionaries brought ... to Formosa, and to the aborigines, Christianity, Pipe, and tobacco. Though

there are varying traditions and customs among the tribes, the common word for “tobacco” is “tamaku.” Brightleaf Virginia tobacco was grown in small quantities as a side-crop for personal use. Depending on the season, tobacco leaves were air- or fire-cured, and formed into twists or ropes for storage. Tobacco was highly valued in Taiwanese aboriginal societies, both as a status symbol (often reserved for elders), and as a good for bartering. High-quality tobacco was sought after, and to offer another person tobacco would be considered an offering of close friendship and respect.

The most common way of enjoying tobacco was by smoking a pipe. Pipe smoking was very common for adults, both men and women, and especially older folks, who would always have their pipe and their tobacco, stored in leather pouches hanging off their belts. Material for pipe-making varied

The writers of Smokingpipes.com

It takes a group of talented professionals to keep an online pipe and tobacco business flourishing

Fifteen years ago, there were only limited numbers of people who would buy pipes online. The prevalent opinion was, “I can’t buy a pipe until I hold it in my hand and see it for myself.” That was understandable. Every pipe is individual, every one different—different grain, size, texture, weight, balance. Photos can be misleading as to size and even proportion; descriptions can be subjective and a pipe’s personality impossible to determine except in person (and often not even then; some pipes don’t truly reveal themselves until after many smokes). But with consistency, reputation and the trust of its customers, a business can make it work. The best online vendors now provide as much information as possible to make purchasing something as personal as a pipe that much easier. By offering clients consistent information, measurements, detailed descriptions and photos from several angles, merchants have helped pipe smokers become more comfortable with the online buying experience. It’s reached a level where many people who had no previous need of a computer

have become proficient with them for the express purpose of pursuing their pipe collecting more efficiently. Indeed, many pipes can be found only online and nowhere else.

Among the most successful and innovative of these modern pipe merchants is Smokingpipes.com, run by Sykes Wilford. The site is state-of-the-art. In many ways, Wilford is the Steve Jobs of the

Smokingpipes.com experience.

And it is an experience. For example, Smokingpipes.com now provides secure, detailed records for its customers, who can log in and see exactly what their purchasing history is, including specific dates, number of items and totals spent. Clicking on any particular order will reveal a detailed invoice with every item listed. Clients can check how many pipes they’ve purchased in any given year or across several years, what finish those pipes have, what countries of manufacture they represent and what tobacco brands customers buy (all represented in colorful graphs and charts), and thereby help to understand their own trends. For example, they might note that 75 percent of the pipes they’ve bought in the past year have been Danish estate pipes, or that 50 percent had sandblasted finishes, or that 80 percent of the tobacco they’ve bought in the past five years has been by McClelland or Mac Baren or Cornell & Diehl. Those trends will allow purchasers to refine their search strategies.

Also interesting are the badges earned



Photo by John Sutherland, courtesy of Smokingpipes.com
Pipe by Alex Florov

pipe world. Though not the gazillionaire (we presume) that Jobs became, Wilford possesses a similar genius for utilizing and repurposing existing technology to provide unique products for his particular customers. One of Wilford’s defining motivations is to constantly improve the

by customers and displayed on their profiles. These badges are bronze, silver and gold, in categories such as number of different tobaccos tried, number of years as a customer and VIP status, among others.

Online extras such as these help generate a dynamic online experience and provide better customer service—and they are just plain fun.

But where Smokingpipes.com truly excels is in the information it relays. It stays in constant contact with its clientele through two newsletters every week that provide entertaining articles as well as rundowns of new pipes and products. These newsletters simplify things for their readers—they're easy and fast to scroll through, so readers can quickly see if anything interests them. And if something does, a click will bring them to a more detailed list of products or a specific pipe or tobacco, including photos, comprehensive descriptions and, in most cases, short histories of the brands.

That's a lot of information, and it doesn't just materialize by itself. Smokingpipes.com employs nearly 40 people and continues to expand. A tremendous amount of activity takes place behind the scenes so that pipe enthusiasts can see those new pipes and other products every week. It takes photographers, researchers, writers, administrative staff, sales staff, customer service staff, purchasing staff, quality control staff, shipping staff, warehouse staff, data entry staff, estate pipe restoration staff, programmers, website techs ... it takes a lot of people all doing their jobs quickly and efficiently. Add to all that a beautiful, well-stocked, brick-and-mortar store, Low Country Pipe & Cigar, which also needs to be staffed and stocked and run, and you can see why everyone connected to the company keeps very busy.

The Smokingpipes.com representatives that consumers hear from most are the writers who generate copy for the newsletters and the website. Blogs, pipe descriptions, histories, anecdotes, interviews—this is the information that permits buyers to feel comfortable in purchasing a pipe without actually holding it, and it needs to be done for 400–500 pipes a week, plus accessories and tobacco. Most of the writers have other responsibilities as well, so it's amazing

that so much information is provided. You may already have read tens of thousands of their words. They all have distinctive personalities and styles, and they each have fans of their work. Here are the writers of Smokingpipes.com:

Sykes Wilford

The business started in 2000 in Wilford's college dorm room and has grown steadily since. "The big changes in presentation," he says, "really started happening in 2003–2004. I started writing



deeper commentaries that skirted the edges of art criticism; I thought that's how pipes should be discussed. It became a mental process for a couple of years where I was writing increasingly more complex—though not necessarily better—pipe descriptions and learning all I could about art criticism so I could sound relatively knowledgeable."

Art criticism seems like a fine approach for high-grade artisan pipes, but people like to buy inexpensive pipes as well. "It works fine with Tokutomi or Lars Ivarsson, but not so well with factory pipes, which also need descriptions. So I was experimenting with the subjective aspects of describing pipes. The measurements and details are objective—is it briar or meerschaum, it is this size—but the art is subjective. The description has always been an exercise in the writer's response to a pipe. Especially with high grades, descriptions contextualize the pipe in time and place or in an art movement."

Wilford says there is no rulebook for the writers of Smokingpipes.com. "Write what you want—as long as it's literate and intelligent and thoughtful, just about anything goes." Anything but mistakes—the staff tries to limit those. "We copy edit each other's work. We make sure that everything is edited because otherwise horrible things can happen."

One trait every writer needs is a mas-

tery of identifying specifically who the audience is and how to talk with that audience. Some people visit Smokingpipes.com to buy an inexpensive pipe because they're fairly new to smoking, though experienced pipe smokers also like an inexpensive factory pipe as well. Those who purchase artisan pipes in the \$1,000-plus range tend to be (though aren't always) more experienced smokers who know quite a lot about pipes in general. And there are plenty of enthusiasts who fall in the middle. Providing the right rhetorical tone and detail of information, appealing to everyone, can be challenging. "Coming up with the right balance is really tough," says Wilford. "We have to be careful not to assume too much about what our audience is already familiar with, and we don't want to bore readers with information they already have. We'll do more introductory-level coverage with a pipemaker who is new to us. But the descriptions aren't the only form of information on the website—those who want more than what is in the descriptions or introductions can often find it elsewhere on the site. Many of the pipemakers on the website have received some sort of treatment, such as a photo essay or blog posts. Descriptions stand alone and work as a whole in relationship to a particular pipe. Elsewhere, we might have an article on a pipemaker with links to blog posts and other pertinent information."

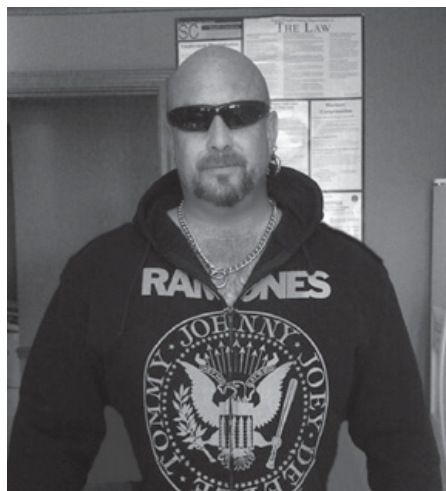
The twice-a-week newsletter sent by Smokingpipes.com is something that many look forward to, as it provides both entertainment and information. "The newsletter is in two parts," says Wilford. "The introduction, which rotates between writers, serves an editorial function, sort of a letter from the editor; it sets the tone, it entertains, and some people look forward to them. Sometimes we do an awesome job, sometimes not, but we do more than a hundred a year, so not every one is better than its predecessors. The second part is a list of the different pipe brands represented in the update, written by the people who have done the write-ups of the individual pipes for that brand, so they're already familiar with them."

"Usually the introduction will elicit a handful of email responses, mostly positive, occasionally negative." But Wilford has found that as a general style has been

developed for the newsletter, somewhat less feedback has been forthcoming. "And less criticism as well, so you might say that our style has been shaped both internally and externally. We listen to what people like and don't like and try to always move in a positive direction."

R. "Bear" Graves

Though he is no longer a part of the Smokingpipes.com team, Graves was the first of the full-time writers and helped set the tone for the way pipe information and entertainment would be presented.



"Sykes himself was the first real describer of pipes for the company," says Graves. "He employed me. I'm positive he lost sleep wondering what he'd done."

Graves has a medical background and a long history as a pipe lover. He also has experience in high-pressure sales, which doesn't work on pipe enthusiasts, so he had to figure out how to do what he'd been hired to do. "We were making it up as we went along. It took about a year to learn it was just a matter of having a conversation with a pipe buddy. That conversational tone is what pipe guys respond to. I learned to employ a little knowledge with a small amount of humor to engage the reader. After that, my reviews started to get positive comments. We'd hear from people saying they liked my stuff."

Graves says that there was a period during which he was writing more than 1,000,000 words a year. "It was a hell of a grind sometimes because it was all mine—I was the only describer." Those numbers are especially impressive when one learns that Graves types with only two fingers—that's 500,000-plus words

per finger, per year. Those are two undeniably articulate forefingers.

There was more than just describing pipes; Graves contributed in all categories. "I did verbiage for the Low Country website, artisan profiles, interviews and a lot more. Once I had done enough that Sykes no longer felt he needed to supplement my work, I was responsible for more than 70 percent of the writing that went on the website." He found a rhythm and some loose formulas to help the workflow. "I'd start out: bang, bang, bang, three adjectives—something like 'flowing in form, elegant in spirit and precise in engineering.' I'd use lots of parentheses, because I speak parenthetically. And I wrote endlessly. I'm the anti-Hemingway; I don't know how to write a short sentence."

Ted Swearingen

With his responsibilities as vice president and general manager, Swearingen writes somewhat less than he used to. "I do a few high-grade pipe descriptions and a handful of intros a month, or a blog post. I don't do as much as I did. But when I first came here I was doing



a lot more." The newsletters and website are what made Swearingen pursue a job with Smokingpipes.com in the first place. "The pipe descriptions are what helped me decide. As a pipe smoker, I wanted to work here, and what I especially appreciated were the pipe descriptions."

He wasn't out of work when he applied, but he knew he wanted to pursue a career in the pipe industry. "I had a job in California, but I came here for an interview and we all got along. Now I'm here."

Sykes Wilford says that Swearingen's situation was unusual. "Here was this guy who was clearly the right kind of person for us—he loved pipes, had some skills and lots of enthusiasm. We didn't have a specific opening, but we

couldn't pass up an opportunity to add someone like Ted to our staff."

Swearingen soon became adept with the pipe descriptions. "You have to treat every pipe individually. Sometimes you get stuck because you don't want to repeat yourself, but as long as you approach every pipe as a unique object, you're fine. There are differences in every pipe—the grain or slight variations in the stain or any number of other details. Maybe the mouthpiece is special on this piece versus another piece, or the button is thinner. By concentrating on those characteristics, you keep from getting stale."

Mouthpieces are especially important indicators for him. "I tend to look at the mouthpiece carefully. You can tell a lot about the way a pipe is made and will perform by looking at the mouthpiece—how much room there is between the end of the tenon and the wall of the mortise, how elegant is the bend, how does the button look, are there file marks. I will occasionally spend significant time writing about a mouthpiece. It's very important."

To connect with his readers, Swearingen reveals some of himself, creating an online camaraderie. "It's part of the process to share a bit of ourselves with our customers. We do that deliberately. There's a difference in tone and personality between all of us." Different clients have different favorites among the writers, but with the variety at Smokingpipes.com, there will be someone on staff who will write in a way that will appeal to nearly everyone. If one writer's work doesn't quite resonate with a reader, another writer's will.

"You have to be objective as well. I'm a fan of smaller pipes, so if I'm describing a large pipe it might be easy for me to say, 'This pipe is too ridiculously big.' I take myself, and my personal tastes, out of the equation. Sometimes a pipe is extraordinarily attractive to me personally, and I have to remember not to let my exuberance overcome my objectivity. I have to be truthful first, and I don't want to mislead anyone with my enthusiasm."

Not only does Swearingen now work in his favorite industry—he also gets to go to pipe shows courtesy of the company. Sure, he has to work, but the important thing is he's there. "Pipe shows

are great. We have so many customers whom we don't talk with on the phone or correspond with very often. It's helpful to meet them in person, and it's encouraging to see folks who are a part of what makes Smokingpipes.com work—they're on our site, they're reading our blog, they're engaged with our products and through that they learn a little about me, they're comfortable coming up to me at a show and talking with me." Perhaps that's the best perk of all.

Eric Squires

"I'm a copywriter and I also do a big chunk of the copy editing," says Squires. "There are days when everything flows and you can burn through three or four batches of pipes, and then at other times it's difficult to try to keep things fresh." Writer's block is not something a



Smokingpipes.com writer can afford—the pace is too stringent. "I try to look for things outside of pipes—a particular shape or design, or outside subjects that particular pipemakers are interested in. One pipemaker is into art nouveau, so I spent some time digging through information on the art nouveau movement before writing about his pipes." That exercise gave him some great material to work with.

"I might look at something that might not appeal to me personally—maybe the design or shape or color isn't something I like—and I look at it from a standpoint that there are obviously people who do like it or it wouldn't keep being made, so

I try to take that perspective."

Sometimes Squires, like all the writers at Smokingpipes.com, runs across something he doesn't know enough about. "You try to research things on the Internet and find out later that what you've discovered is completely wrong. But on the website, that's correctable. With the text at the top of a pipemaker's page, if there's a mistake there, I can correct it immediately. You don't want misinformation floating around." Misinformation has a way of promulgating online, so it's best to kill it quickly.

"When I was a kid," says Squires, "my parents had a complete wall in the den covered with books, so at an early age I started reading everything I could reach. I was always a bookworm." Though he didn't realize it at the time, that early reading prepared him for the research and writing he's doing now.

The big change for Squires was when Bear Graves left the company. At the time, the updates weren't as large as now, but it was unquestionably an intimidating amount of work. "Suddenly 80 percent of the writing fell on my shoulders. The first year was a real grind because I was still learning. And I had other secondary responsibilities. The first year, it was definitely tough to get things done on time. But by the second year, I got into a natural flow."

Squires, like his colleagues, found that entries for factory pipes were different than for artisan pipes. "With pipes like Petersons or Savinellis, they are often an entry pipe for customers, and the description is different because of that. Experienced pipe guys already know what a Peterson system is, and you don't want to repeat that too often, but new guys need to know. It's the higher-end pipes, Tokutomi or whatever, when you're talking about the art of the pipe. Buyers of those pipes are usually people who've been around a while and know pipes very well.

"When I applied here, my resume had nothing pertinent. I'd worked in the solar industry, just smaller applications for homes and small businesses. I didn't know if I could write. I started out in quality control and data entry, which helped me learn about pipes. It's kind of a cottage industry. I became a pipe smoker by working here. My granddad and uncle had smoked pipes and I had

fond memories of them. Working here provided a great opportunity to learn a lot about them. And right away I was introduced to a lot of great tobaccos." Now he finds himself alternating between pipes and cigars all day.

Adam Davidson

Davidson is a generalist in a very specialized world. A renowned pipemaker himself, he also studies pipes by other makers and knows the histories of more brands than most of us could even name. He helps educate his colleagues on the subtleties of pipes, appraises pipes, restores pipes, researches



pipes and establishes their manufacture dates, buys pipes—and he writes about pipes, too.

"We had too many pipes for one person to write up," says Davidson, "so I started helping. Sykes was still doing high grades. I was supplementing estates. As years went by we had more new pipes and new pipemakers, so I started helping out with those. I work with 13 different pipemakers now to order new pipes. Those are easier for me to write about because I've worked with their makers. At the time the pipes come in, I already know those particular pipes."

Estate pipes are a little different. "We do thousands of them a year; what I try to do is look at the style of the time, date the pipe, find what was going on at the time and how the pipe was made. I'll

explain from a pipemaker's perspective how that pipe was made. I know how rare something might be, or how a particular pipemaker accomplishes some of the things he does. A customer might not know why they like a pipe, so I'll explain the proportion of stem to bowl or some other aspect to help [them] understand why they might be attracted to that pipe. Or I can explain, as a pipemaker, why one part of the pipe is sandblasted, for instance."

Deadlines are always looming at Smokingpipes.com. "For Thursday updates," says Davidson, "everything has to be done by Wednesday because everything needs to be read by someone else to avoid mistakes. Sometimes, if I'm inspired by a particular pipe that comes in, I'll do a blog post about it. For pipe descriptions, you just get in the groove, one pipe after another. In newsletters and pipe descriptions I'll insert some humor or history and try to keep it mixed so people don't get bored. It can get tricky."

Davidson believes in using his personality as a writing tool. "I think my personality shines through, or some of the pipemaking aspects I describe shine through." With his pipemaking experience, Davidson can explain to an incredulous client exactly why a pipe is worth \$1,200 or more. For example, Davidson recently wrote about a Former pipe that was simple and elegant with no added decorations. "It was a simple apple, free of accents, and I realized it belonged in the less-is-more category of art appreciation. Former used the right amount of reserve because that was exactly the right approach with this pipe. He looked at the block of briar and knew that the best way to capitalize on its characteristics was to keep it simple and create what at first glance would be a simple apple. While it may have looked simple, it takes a pipemaker years to be able to recognize that and render a pipe that doesn't go overboard and reduce the pipe's potential with distracting decorative features."

Then, too, the best approach to describing a pipe may be to concentrate on the maker himself. "Peter Heeschen always has a smile, and when people buy one of his pipes they're going to think about having met him, so I might talk about him. With some pipes,

especially older pipes from the 1930s or '40s and earlier, I like to speculate about what it was like for the original owner. There were no cars, so he had to ride a horse to the store, everyone had a curled mustache, everything was different. It's impossible for me to smoke an old pipe and not think about what was happening when it was young."

Davidson gets consistent positive feedback on his writing. Everyone there gets positive feedback, but Davidson's writing resonates with a large number of readers because of his pipemaker perspective. "People seem to know me because I write about some personal things, though we don't want to overdo that. We try to think of a story that's factual from our own lives. It's important to pipe people that they know they're reading something from another pipe person. We try to help people find new perspectives for thinking about pipes, and we try to help people understand what a certain pipe is about."

John Sutherland

Originally hired as a photographer in July 2011, Sutherland came to Smokingpipes.com with a Master of Fine Arts in studio arts from Clemson University and dove into the massive



responsibilities shared by the staff of three photographers. Approximately 2,000 photos a week are required, and each of those photos needs editing and processing for inclusion on the website.

Since that wasn't enough to keep him busy, Sutherland started helping with the writing in early 2012. "They like to challenge us here," says Sutherland. "Everyone is encouraged to push the boundaries of their traditional job titles and contribute wherever they can. I found myself doing a blog."

Like other staff members, Sutherland was new to smoking when he joined the crew. It's not required that staff smoke, but with the best tobaccos and pipes in the world coming through the doors, few can suppress their curiosity. "Our tobacco collection is pretty overwhelming," he says. "And there are good people here to advise me. Right now I'm enjoying and exploring McClelland Virginias. I've never been a fan of cigars, though."

His photographic duties soon evolved into other areas, and now he finds himself doing mainly administrative work and graphic design for the website and for advertising. "I still do some editing, but since I'm such a slow writer, I'm writing less than previously." When he does write, he tends to emphasize the artistic aspects of pipes, which is not hard to understand given his fine arts background. "The biggest appeal for me with pipes is their form and aesthetics, so I concentrate in those areas. I also like to make people laugh—I try to go there when I can. Sometimes I might get too accustomed to a particular brand I've been writing a lot about, but there's always another brand waiting."

For Sutherland, one of the attractions of working at Smokingpipes.com is that every day brings different challenges. "A day may start with trying to get the update together, but everything else is constantly evolving with whatever projects we're working on—maybe the photo gallery, or photos of pipes, experiments with lighting, or advertising. There's always a lot I'm working on. It doesn't get old."

He didn't know anything about pipes when he started and had no idea that a collector community for such objects existed. Now he's immersed in it. "You never know where life will take you. It's worked out great, though. This job is the most fun I've ever had, and the most challenging. There's no boredom. There's no such thing as a typical day at Smokingpipes.com." P&T

The cat in the red hat

Easily recognizable at pipe shows wearing his pipe club's signature red hat, Kjeld Sørensen makes the transition from economist to pipemaker

A quiet man, Kjeld Sørensen wears a loud hat. The red felt derby with a black band adorned with the white silhouette of a pipe is a badge of honor worn by members of Sørensen's pipe club, Sydsjællands Pibelaug (which roughly translates to Pipe Club of Southern Zealand), whenever they compete at slow-smoking competitions in Denmark or abroad. Noticing how easy it was to recognize fellow pipe club members at competitions, the 61-year-old Sørensen reasoned that it would be the perfect accoutrement to wear at pipe

shows so visitors could easily find him. Furthermore, adopting the name Red Hat Pipes for his business was an easy way for pipe smokers to remember him. Sørensen's marketing idea was simple, effective and inexpensive, which isn't a surprise considering his previous vocation as an economist.

Attending university at Aarhus, on Denmark's Jutland Peninsula, an 18-year-old Sørensen befriended a pipe smoker on campus. Intrigued by the pipe clenched in his friend's teeth, Sørensen expressed an interest in trying

pipe smoking himself. His friend was more than willing to teach Sørensen how to smoke a pipe, helping the young Dane avoid the common pitfalls most new pipe smokers experience and encouraging him to try different tobaccos. Sørensen had made a lifelong friend and adopted a lifelong hobby.

After graduation Sørensen entered the corporate world, tallying figures, creating budgets, forecasting profits and trading currencies. He spent 25 years as an economist, using some of his free time to travel with the pipe club to slow-smoking competitions and pipe shows around Europe. Working with spreadsheets and crunching numbers became more tedious the longer he did it. He yearned for an opportunity to express his creativity. Economics paid the bills, put a roof over his family's heads and allowed him to live comfortably—it was just becoming unsatisfactory. In 2000, the company for which he worked significantly downsized, cutting approximately half of its workforce. Feeling uneasy about his future in the company and doubting that he wanted to continue in economics, Sørensen retired, choosing to spend his newfound free time playing more golf, tending the garden and trying his hand at pipemaking.

"Economics wasn't fun anymore," he simply states. "That was the time that I decided to try making my hobby my profession."

Sørensen ordered a few predrilled



bowls and carved them but was unhappy with the results. Then his younger brother, Sven, told him of an ad seeking a pipe repairman that he had seen in a local paper. His brother wrote down the number, gave it to Sørensen and encouraged him to call. Scrounging up some courage, Sørensen dialed the number. Tom Eltang answered. The two arranged a time for Sørensen to travel the short distance from his home in Roskilde to Copenhagen for an interview.

"I had never met him before," Sørensen recalls. "We talked for seven hours. I showed him a few pipes that I had made already. While I was unhappy with those pipes, Tom saw some things that showed him that I might have some potential as a pipemaker. We also found out we could do something for each other. I could help him with economics and he could help me in pipemaking."

Imagine being an amateur painter just starting out and being accepted to learn from a master such as Michelangelo, Jackson Pollack, Salvador Dalí or Andy Warhol. That was the type of opportunity Eltang gave Sørensen.

"I was very fortunate," he explains. "For two years, I went there several times a week. Tom taught me the steps and wouldn't let me proceed to the next step before he was satisfied with my work on the previous steps. One task he had me do was carve 30 pipes with the same shape. He watched what I was doing and told me how I could be better. When you do the same thing time after time, it becomes easier. For him, it was a way to teach me how to get the feeling in my hands. And he got some pipes made. Watching him helped me progress as well. I tried to emulate how he moved his hands while he was at the sanding disc. It's like learning a golf swing—seeing it is one thing, but doing it is something else entirely. Tom taught me the discipline required of pipemaking. He taught me that good enough wasn't good enough. I still make my mistakes, but Tom is a very good teacher."

After two years of apprenticeship, Sørensen felt confident enough in his ability to offer his pipes to the public. While he occasionally travels to Copenhagen to use Eltang's sandblasting equipment, Sørensen has dedicated a small portion of the two-car garage attached to his home as a pipemaking studio.



The workshop is meticulously organized and kept very clean. Blocks of briar are arranged in plastic tubs on shelves in one area of the work space. German Ebonite rods, bits of horn and bamboo are placed together in another section of the shop. Two workbenches hold a lathe, belt sander, sanding disc and a plethora of hand files and sanding paper. A half-circle window above one of the benches lets in ample light and affords a view of Roskilde Fjord and the nearby Viking Ship Museum, home to five Viking ships that were deliberately sunk in the fjord around 1070 as a defensive measure to protect the Viking capital, and were recovered from the fjord's bottom in 1962 and put on display.

It's a gray, rainy day in Roskilde, and it's not hard to imagine a Viking long ship, sails billowing and oars up, beat-

ing down the fjord to return to Roskilde, which contains one of the oldest cathedrals in Scandinavia, the final resting place of many Danish monarchs.

The cleanliness and order of Sørensen's workshop is shadowed by the way the mild-mannered man goes about pipemaking. Used to carefully scanning and double-checking figures in his previous career as an economist, Sørensen takes immense care and spends a lot of time crafting each of his pipes. He's in no rush because his financial well-being doesn't depend on the sale of his pipes. He estimates that he spends at least a full day to as much as two days working on each pipe, striving always to produce pipes with smooth finishes.

"I'm very keen at finding the wood that will allow me to make smooth pipes," Sørensen explains. "I start



slowly from the outside and judge the surfaces to predict how it will go to lessen the chance of having a flaw that will cause me to have to sandblast it. I can look at a block and see what parts of the wood are immediately unusable. Then I look at what's left and consider what shape will fit into that remaining wood, and then I start to work very slowly from the outside in. There are certain rules you think of when it comes to flaws in the briar, but then briar doesn't play by the rules. It always breaks them. The more beautiful the briar, the more flaws you've got to deal with, it seems."

Eschewing the bottom-line mentality of economics, Sørensen estimates that he throws away 10 percent of his estimated annual production of 150 pipes because he deems those pipes unfit for even sandblasting, which he does using Eltang's equipment. He no

longer uses Algerian briar, which he says is too prone to flaws, and now uses Greek or Corsican briar that he purchases from other Danish pipemakers, such as Per Jeppesen from Neerup Pipes and Eltang.

"We don't have that many needs," he explains. "We aren't dependent on making money on the pipes to live. I have the freedom to say that something is not good enough to sell and throw it out. I can take the time needed to get the job done. I'm privileged, but I've worked hard to get that privilege and I was lucky."

What Sørensen means by working slowly from the outside in is a measured approach using the disc sander to chip away at the wood until a basic shape emerges. He then uses a belt sander and hand files to fine-tune the shape and eliminate any flaws that appear in the wood.

"One small step at a time," he comments. "I do a lot of my fine-tuned sanding using sandpaper and hand files. I see Tom Eltang work and I am amazed by his skill at the sanding disc. I have a lot of room for improvement working on the sanding disc. One of my goals in pipemaking is to increase my comfort level with the machinery so I can do more with it. I wouldn't make more pipes, but I would take the time saved at the shaping and use it at another step in the process, such as making the finish better. If I can reach the point where I can come closer to the finished shape on the sanding wheel, then I will feel better. I won't have to work so much with sandpaper afterward. You get tired of a pipe if you use 24 hours to get the shape. The rest of it you do too fast because you spent so much time shaping it. To avoid that risk I'd like to get a little closer to the final shape before I start using my hands."

While acknowledging that he still lacks confidence in his use of the sanding wheel, Sørensen sees areas where his work has greatly improved.

"Sometimes I can see all the time I put into a certain step really paying off," he says. "I can see my development and I know it's changing—hopefully for the better—with every effort. My shaping is more elegant. There's more economy in the lines and the curving is definitely better. The staining has improved. The stem work is a lot better. I'd like to continue to improve all my pipemaking steps. That's the main part."

The majority of Sørensen's work is classic pipes, and he thinks he is best at making horns and blowfish. He favors classic shapes because each block presents different possibilities to pursue within a shape that has definite rules.

"Classic pipes are like classical music—everyone knows how the song goes," he explains. "Everybody can see if it's right or wrong, and I love the challenge."

Finding ways of expressing his creativity within the rules of crafting classic pipe shapes can improve the way he approaches a freehand pipe. A pipe-maker can find inspiration for his freehand pipes from the classic pipes he makes, Sørensen reasons.

"When I began, I was maybe utterly

too far on the side of making freehand pipes,” he says. “In freehand pipes, only the pipemaker knows how it should go so it’s never wrong. I had to go back to concentrate on classics and see how they’re made and should look to make better freehand pipes. To make better freehand pipes, you have to be very good at making the classics. You can transfer the elegance and the lines to the freehand. You have to get organized before you can make something interesting. That’s the way to get better. You learn symmetry and elegance of the line and proportions.”

No matter what the shape, Sørensen says that how well a pipe smokes is the most important measure of its value. As a disciple of the Tom Eltang school of pipemaking, Sørensen rigidly adheres to Eltang’s assertion that 4 mm is the correct diameter of the airhole, and tapering it down to 2 mm by the tip of the stem ensures that the air flows at the same speed throughout the pipe, thus reducing turbulence and the chances of tongue bite. Sørensen also pays careful attention to how a pipe feels, not only in the mouth, but also as it’s held in the hand.

“I have to make pipes with the ways people hold them in mind,” he explains. “I get some help from the members of my pipe club. I show them the pipes I make and ask them to pick them up and see how they hold them. That gives me ideas for other shapes. I believe the feeling of the pipe is more important than its beauty.”

Continuing to hone his craft, Sørensen admits that he finds it difficult to price his pipes. Preferring a customer pay less for one of his pipes, he conservatively comes up with a figure. Red Hat Pipes can be purchased for as little as \$300, and the most expensive pipe he’s sold so far—a Ramses shape—went for \$600.

“The primary thing is that a pipe I sell must be worth the money I ask for it,” he says. “Quality and price must be very close. Reputation makes it easier to get your pipes sold compared to other pipemakers, but I don’t think it should be a factor in price making. The price should only be the quality of the pipe. You build your reputation by the quality of your pipes.”

One recent sign of Sørensen’s

improving reputation is an agreement he reached with R.D. Field LLC, making that company the exclusive United States importer and distributor of Red Hat Pipes. He also hopes to gain the attention of other reputable pipe dealers outside the U.S., including Scandinavian Pipes and Italy’s Al Paschia.

“It’s up to me to get the quality good enough that they say it’s good and [they] want to sell my pipes,” he comments. “You can’t do it with just a few pipes—it must be for all the pipes I make.”

Sørensen makes the statement of how he’d like to grow as a pipemaker simply and realistically, as if he were making a presentation to a company’s

board of directors. It’s a sober, meticulous approach that mirrors the man’s personality. Now working for himself, Sørensen finds that he enjoys the freedom that pipemaking has given him, and he expresses no regrets.

“A lot of people have approached me and asked me why I don’t go back into economics, because they say I was so good at it,” he says. “That happened a lot, especially when I was an amateur pipemaker just starting out. Now, they’re seeing how much my work has improved and that I can make a living at it. I now work in a hobby that I used to pursue when I was on vacation from my old job. How many people are that lucky?” P&T



Waxing meerschaum pipes

Techniques of immersion and alternative finishing

For as long as I've known that meerschaum pipes color, I've listened to discussions about how these pipes are finished. The finishing of carved block in a bath of beeswax, tallow, spermaceti, organic oils and just about anything that someone has said, read or had a revelation about, has always held my attention. I'm not alone in the quest for knowledge about this topic, so this essay should be welcomed by those who have wondered about what has historically been considered proprietary. Because most of us will likely never see a meerschaum pipe that has not been finished, my research has technically been about re-waxing meerschaum pipes. This is a minor distinction, because the waxing process for both new and used meerschaums is essentially the

same. Waxing a block meerschaum provides protection for the pipe's surface and promotes the development and display of the patina, or coloration, for which these pipes are so highly prized. Legends abound in the meerschaum community, and some of my personal favorites involve tales of the secrets that past masters have taken to the grave.

Other disclosures of wisdom include using steam to produce even coloration in a pipe with a spotty display of color, setting a meerschaum in whole milk overnight to return it to the pristine white color of a new pipe, or cleaning a meerschaum by fire, like what is done to clean a clay pipe. None of these suggestions are advisable. The steam will bleach the color from the pipe, and I'm not sure what any-

one would do with a meerschaum that is saturated in milk fat. Fire will discolor a meerschaum to brown or black, which might be the objective in a specialty finish, but not the result sought for cleaning a pipe. Not everything that you read or hear is correct, and this is the case with information on waxing meerschaums.

There's no shortage of artisans today who are working with a propriety process or technique of wax application for meerschaums. Claims of extraordinary results about how well these finished pipes color and smoke abound. Not surprisingly, this same talk has been going on for decades with the same level of clarity of revelation as the pronouncements of the Oracle at Delphi. It is an interesting study that can take one into the past, seeking knowledge in translations of ancient manuscripts, up to the present, where the sharing of information in the Turkish meerschaum community is extremely limited. My primary focus in this essay will be on simple methods that use inexpensive materials available today. Because there are more ways to wax a meerschaum, and not everyone will choose immersion, this discussion also includes alternatives, so that informed choices are available. It is advisable to exercise due caution if you choose to employ anything you read in this essay. Working with flammable liquids and volatiles is inherently dangerous. I mention this because I have no desire to provide information that can lead to disastrous consequences if due diligence and caution are ignored.

The higher the melting point of what the carver uses to finish the pipe, the



Sadik Yanik's Cossack

longer it will remain on the pipe's surface. Carnauba wax has a higher melting temperature (180 F to 190 F) than beeswax and puts a great layer on the pipe, but it colors very unevenly. Montan wax, a fossilized plant wax with multiple applications, has an even higher melting temperature (190 F to 200 F) with a great look and color, but it smells awful. Since spermaceti cannot be legally obtained anymore, some have found jojoba oil, an additive used in many cosmetic products (melting temperature around 50 F), to be a suitable substitute that can be rubbed onto the pipe. I haven't tried using jojoba oil as yet, so I cannot speak to this from personal experience. There are some accounts of using spermaceti and jojoba oil without beeswax, with mixed results. This leaves us with using white beeswax, because it does well in coating a meerschaum pipe and doesn't have an objectionable odor. Beeswax has been used to finish meerschaum pipes for a long time; still, it's a good idea to know something about it before trying to use it. White beeswax has a high melting point range of 144 F to 147 F. If beeswax is heated above 185 F, discoloration occurs, which may help explain how some carvers apply dark luster wax finishes without the use of a pigment, as well as how a fire-cured finish might be accomplished, coupled with the use of dark beeswax. The flash point of beeswax is 399.9 F. It is flammable when melted into a liquid state and can quickly ignite when boiled, so care is advisable when melting it for use; the temperature should be kept around 160 F. I prefer to use a cosmetic grade of white beeswax that has been refined without the use of chemicals or a bleaching agent. It can be ordered online from a variety of apothecary sellers and beekeepers. Lower grades of beeswax from yellow to brown can be used, but white beeswax provides a clear finish that allows for the best display of the meerschaum block characteristics. Using additives or less-refined beeswax will lower the melting point of the wax, making it easier for it to dissipate during smoking.

You will need a metal pot that's large enough to hold a pound or two of melted wax to allow complete submersion of your meerschaum pipe; a heat source, preferably without an open flame; a thermometer; and a good supply of old newspapers and white cotton rags. The news-

papers should be spread around the base of the melting pot, unless you enjoy cleaning spattered wax off everything within a six-foot radius. The white cotton rags are for buffing the wax finish.

If this will be your first experience with liquid beeswax, I suggest that you use a meerschaum that has a smooth finish so you can learn more about how the wax is absorbed. You can use one with intricate carving, but you can wind up spending a good deal of time digging the excess wax out of the pipe's detailed carving if too much beeswax is collected on the bowl. Next, you need to remove all of the fittings from the meerschaum pipe, which assumes this can be done without damage to the pipe. Using a meerschaum that has a bone screw anchored in the shank of the pipe isn't a good idea if you don't know how to get it out without damaging the pipe. Using cork to block off the bowl's chamber and draft is recommended, as the taste of burning beeswax in the pipe's chamber is not pleasant. It is a good idea to insert a bit of white cotton rag in the chamber in case any beeswax manages to get inside; it will collect the wax and can easily be removed. It is also advisable that when you cork off the draft in the shank, you make a handle from wood, like a tenon and handle plug, so that you can dip the pipe into and remove it from the wax. Prior to dipping the pipe in the wax, clean off any dust or grime from the surface using a clean, white cotton cloth and Everclear. *It is advisable to avoid touching the bowl during this wax application.* The pipe must be bone dry before putting it into liquid wax, in order to avoid the risk of cracking it with the rapid expansion of moisture into steam produced by the heat. It is important to pay attention to how the bowl takes the wax in order to avoid oversaturation of the meerschaum, resulting in filling the pipe's chamber and draft with beeswax. When you see that the pipe isn't taking any more wax, remove it from the wax immersion; there are no set times to leave the pipe in the wax bath. In recent dialogue with Michael Butera, he has this to say ...

I have worked with Bekler in the past when we made the Butera by Bekler Meerschaum Pipes He of course did all the work on the pipe itself including the waxing I complete the pipes by making the



E. Cor's Full Moon Rising



Sadik Yanik's Art Deco



Fikri Baki's Blazing Saddles

fittings and mouthpieces What I gained from this experience was that the wax coating should be primarily beeswax (refined white or refined yellow), and the pipe should only be submerged into the hot wax for a period of time that when the pipe is taken out of the wax, the excess wax should drip off without much effort ... allowing it to drip off along with a rag to lightly wipe is, I think, the correct way ... then, allow to cool and then polish. The more (or longer) the pipe is waxed, the more it absorbs (as smoked) The pipe tends to gain too much weight and the coloring process begins to stop The wax coating on the surface is what holds the tars that eventually color the pipe If you smoke a meer too hot, the wax is sucked deeper into the porous meer, and that area of the pipe usually does not color Therefore, if there is a therefore, as the wax goes deeper into the meer, that is where the tars will be held: *deeper*, not allowing the tars to get to the surface (what I just said is the most important part of this discussion when considering waxing or re-waxing to promote coloring).

My personal belief, based on some experience with Turkish carvers, is that density, size and porosity has absolutely nothing to do with time (length of immersion). I believe that Turkish carvers want first to put a thin coating of beeswax on all their pipes, and second, they submerge [them] only long enough for the meerschaum pipe to heat to a point that when taken out of the wax, the excess wax drips off into the hot wax pot easily ... they do not (I believe) spend much time wiping away or even carving away excess wax on even the most complex or intricate of carvings.

Most people that have experience will leave the pipe in the wax for about two minutes, while rotating the pipe around to make sure the wax is evenly distributed. I would caution you against vigorously stirring the pot, because the wax can splash or drip onto your heat source. It is important to shake off the excess wax immediately after removing the pipe from the melted

wax, which is why I suggest that you have a handle in the cork that blocks the draft in the shank. I spread a lot of newspaper on the floor so I can shake it off at a distance from my electric heater because I don't want to start a fire. After allowing the pipe bowl to cool for a minute or so, I'll immerse it in the wax bath more than one time to ensure a buildup of an exterior coat. Following the last immersion, I'll shake the excess wax off the pipe again and polish it as it cools with clean, white cotton rags, taking care to avoid touching the pipe's surface during any part of this waxing and polishing cycle. Since you will likely be waxing a pipe that has already been waxed by a carver, this should provide ample wax as an exterior coat. If you are waxing a pipe that has never been waxed before, a single application using an immersion time of around three to four minutes is satisfactory. The key to success is to verify that the external coat of wax is thick enough to buff to a smooth surface and that it is uniform over the entire pipe. *Warman's Tobacco Collectibles: An Identification and Price Guide* (July 1, 2003, 269), <http://goo.gl/qhgf3>, expands on this principle as follows:

Though there are many different wax formulas, beeswax yields the rich coloring associated with the finest meerschaums The subtle differences in color and tone among pipes are intentional, achieved by careful dipping of the pipes a specific number of times.

Initially, as the pipe absorbs the wax, coloration will begin to show. This will fade as the pipe is smoked, but will eventually become resident in the meerschaum with continued waxing and smoking. Waxing meerschaum pipes affords a preview of future developments in the coloring process. Admittedly, this is my least favorite technique for waxing a meerschaum pipe. It takes a lot of time, makes a real mess and can really be a chore if you are waxing more than one pipe at a time.

As an alternative, here's what Beth Sermet from SMS Meerschaum Pipes has to say about routine waxing:

Supplies

Preparation: 100% beeswax cakes—confectionery quality

Old towel or cloth—to prevent hot wax from dripping or spattering onto other surfaces

Hair dryer—multiple temperature and fan settings

Cotton swabs—for brushing the melted beeswax

Polishing cloth—soft white terrycloth towel or white flannel

Technique

STEP 1: Use a hair dryer set to hot temperature setting, but low air speed.

Heat the beeswax cake to consistency of lip balm. Hold the pipe by the stem. Smear onto the bowl directly from the beeswax cake like lipstick. *Do not touch the bowl with your fingers during any of the steps ...*

STEP 2: Continue to heat a section of the surface of the bowl until the wax becomes liquid. Use the cotton swab like a brush to paint the area with a coating of wax. Push the molten wax into crevices and hard-to-access areas. The swab may unravel as it absorbs excess wax. Coat the entire bowl surface evenly. CAUTION: Try to prevent the wax from dripping into the tobacco hole since it will leave a bitter taste.

STEP 3: Heat the bowl again to allow complete absorption of the wax. Set the pipe down on the towel to cool.

STEP 4: After the bowl cools to room temperature, buff the surface to a high gloss using a towel first then the flannel cloth for the final buffing. If the surface is tacky, too much wax is on the surface. Heat this area again and remove excess wax with a cotton swab and buff again.

STEP 5: Repeat when the surface becomes soiled or dull. Excessive waxing may cause too much wax accumulation, resulting in a tacky surface and dripping wax when the pipe is smoked.

The only thing I have to add to what Beth Sermet has told me is that all of the plastic fittings should be removed from the pipe before waxing it. Otherwise, the fittings can become deformed by the heat that you apply to the bowl. I use a tube made of rolled-up pasteboard or cardboard that I insert into the bowl's chamber to hold the pipe during this waxing procedure. Because the beeswax is used at lower temperatures, the odds of starting a fire are reduced but not entirely eliminated. As long as you use common

sense, there shouldn't be a problem.

The easiest way to wax a meerschaum pipe is to apply the beeswax directly to the pipe's surface during the smoke. The heat of the pipe will melt the wax, and what the bowl absorbs will be self-limiting. The excess that isn't absorbed can easily be buffed off using a clean, white cotton cloth. In *English mechanics and the world of science* (Volume 33, "Technology & Engineering," 1881, 600, <http://goo.gl/ZphYz>, this method of waxing is mentioned.

Waxing meerschaum pipes

Does a "Smoker" (a colored meerschaum pipe) attain its coloring in the lathe, or has it merely received an application of wax by hand to make the pipe color? If the latter, one has only to procure a piece of white wax, and then when the pipe is just warm enough to melt it, rub the wax over the surface and let it soak in. This question is still with us today, as there are abundant examples of estate pipes that have been "colored" by means other than smoking.

It was the late Laurence B. Koback, aka "Sailorman Jack," who taught me this technique. Jack achieved impressive coloring results with his meerschaums and told a lot of people in the pipe community about it. Using an empty 50-gram tobacco tin that I've lined with foil, I melt white beeswax to form a quarter-inch-thick brick. When it cools, this wax slab will be easy to remove from the tin and can be cut up into triangle shapes. These small triangles make it convenient and easy to apply beeswax to my pipes while I smoke them. This is my favorite method of applying beeswax, because it is effective and convenient. Another variation of this same method of application is to impregnate a soft, white, cotton flannel cloth with beeswax and use it to rub the pipe while it is still warm, followed by buffing lightly with another white cotton cloth to remove any excess and polish the pipe.

Some meerschaum pipes are so finely detailed in carving that these methods of protecting them involving beeswax are not advisable because buffing would involve skills that I do not possess. What works for me is using a product called Halcyon II, which is available from Fine Pipes International, www.finepipes.com. It doesn't aid in coloring the meerschaum pipes I use it on, but it does afford protection and doesn't require buffing, when used sparingly.

You now have information about



Sadik Yanik's Art Deco



Sadik Yanik's Ice Cream Man from Hell

waxing by immersion and some good alternatives. I'll dedicate my next pipe to your successful efforts at waxing and coloring your meerschaum pipes.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the contributions I was given to compile this research on such a narrowly focused topic, by the following people: Premal Chheda, Michael Butera, Beth Sermet, Deniz Ural and Ben Rapaport. Without the collective knowledge, experience and encouragement of these individuals, this essay would not have been possible. P&T

Fred Bass founded the All Things Meerschaum Group on Oct. 14, 2008, for anyone interested in meerschaum pipes, carvers, culture and history, and the care and maintenance of meerschaums. If you have an interest in, or are curious about the meerschaum experience, you can contact Fred at fbass16117@aol.com or on Smoker's Forums, www.smokersforums.co.uk.



BY TAD GAGE AND JOE HARB

Trial by FIRE

Villiger Stokkebye International's lineup of bulk Newminster tobaccos reflects influences from classic Stokkebye mixtures (a company Villiger acquired), and deft blending and tobacco sourcing from Mac Baren. While some of these tobaccos are reprises of classic Stokkebye blends, there are some intriguing differences. One of these is the use of African and South American Virginias in a number of the blends. When employed properly, they can lend significant sweetness and depth. Although

equatorially grown Virginia is still Virginia leaf, its tropical characteristics make it markedly different from leaf grown in the Eastern United States. As a leading maker of dry-cured cigars, Villiger has been sourcing tobacco from these areas for a long time. And if you associate Danish blends with a lot of topping, prepare to be surprised.

No. 403 Superior Round Slices

GAGE: Having something of a fetish for and fascination with spun-cut

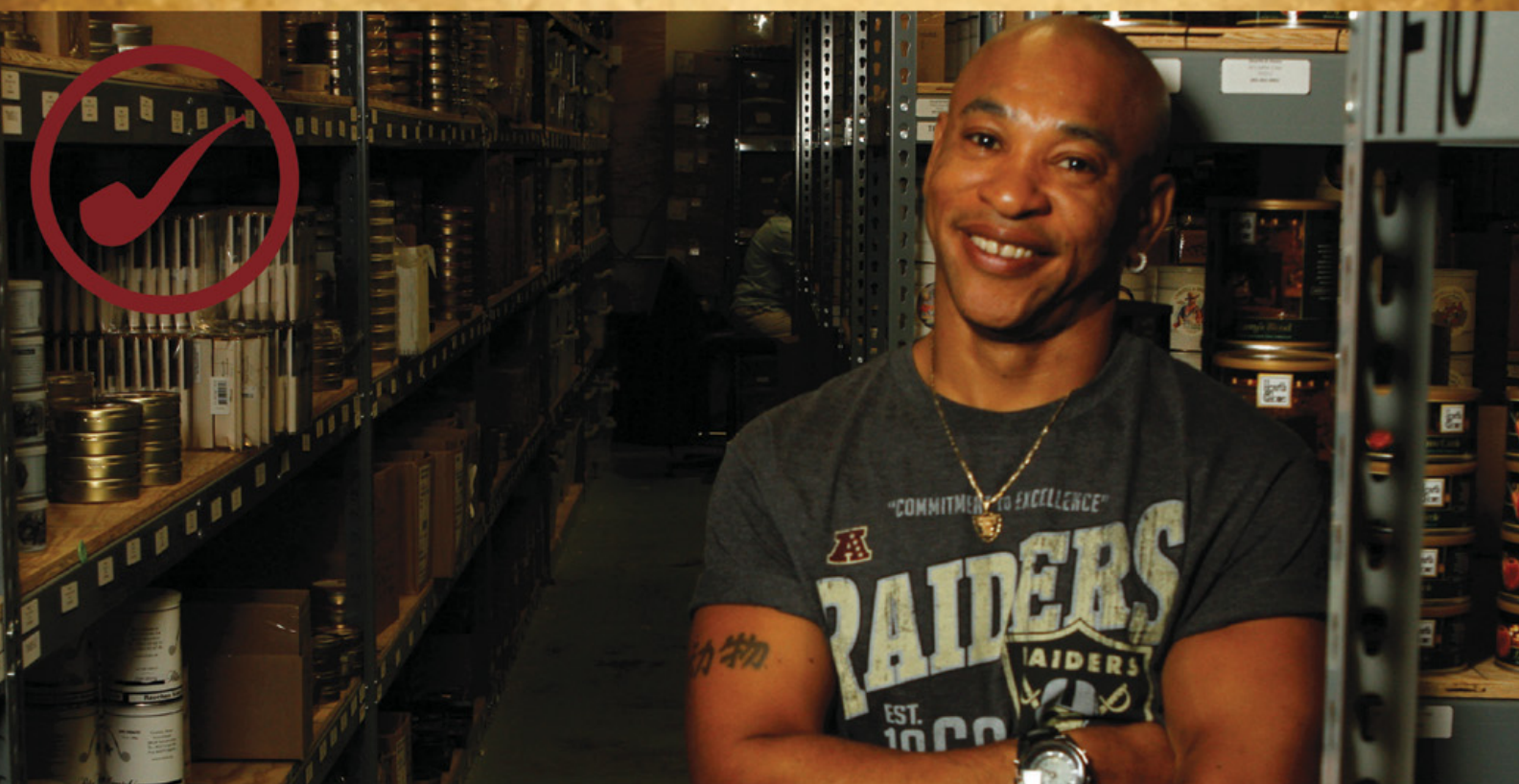
round slices (Three Nuns, Escudo, etc.), this was the Newminster tobacco that first attracted me to the lineup. There are only a few machines worldwide that can spin tobacco into long ropes and slice those ropes into disks. I also like disks for the fact they offer a number of smoking options, from leaving whole or as very lightly broken disks to bring out more distinct characteristics of the components, or more assertively broken to create an evenly distributed blend. ►

Lucienne®
Lighters of Distinction

Since 1971

East West Trading Corp.
Phone: 773-588-7115 • Fax: 773-588-7121
www.lucienne.com

FUJIMA®
Premium Smoking Accessories



MEET AARON

Aaron is one of the most important people at Smokingpipes.com. As a member of the shipping team, he's responsible for making sure that your order goes out right, every time. Whether it's pulling tins of tobacco from the shelves, weighing out bulk pipe tobacco, or double checking an order someone else pulled, Aaron is constantly on the go. Actually, it was a challenge to get him to stop long enough to take his photo for this ad.

But Aaron doesn't mind. He loves his job. Why? Because he doesn't just ship pipes, he smokes them.



WE ARE QUALITY. WE ARE EXPERTS.
WE ARE SMOKINGPIPES.COM



These mottled disks, with an “eye” of dark fired Kentucky leaf (a Burley-like but different species that’s aged, pressed and heat-cured) surrounded by well-aged flue-cured and red Virginia leaf, are worthy of framing. The pouch aroma was slightly honeyed, but mostly had a rich smell of Virginia. Villiger says this is lightly aromatic, but if it is, it is an extremely light topcoat. Good thing, too, because the tobaccos are too tasty to cover up.

I’ll offer two alternative scenarios that yielded different results. The first was to smoke the disks moist and intact, with a few shreds to help maintain combustion. The moisture content was acceptable, but they could be dried for a day with no harm. This treatment delivered prominent Virginia sweetness, highlighting some well-aged leaf. There were cinnamon and light honey flavors (natural, not derived from casing), intermingled with an earthy, peppery hit from the dark fired. To get the most out of the leaf, I’d recommend smoking the disks whole

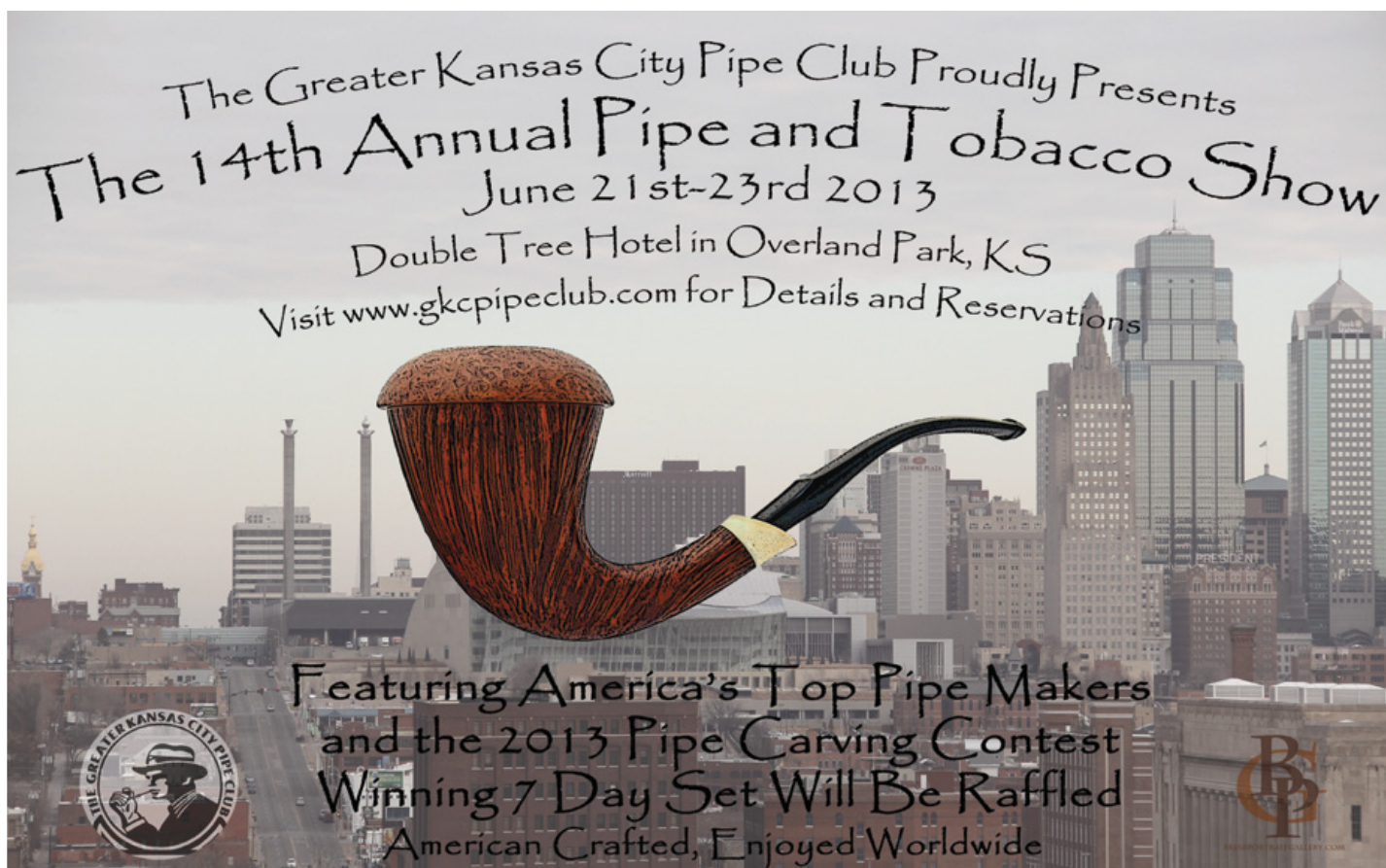
rather than aggressively broken. It was enjoyable from start to finish, although the sugary, flue-cured bright Virginias were a bit sharp at times, warning me to let the mixture rest before relighting.

The second method, which I learned from smoking vintage Three Nuns that had dried out, was to leave the tobacco in an open container and allow it to completely dry down (and it quickly does). Leaving the fragile disks as whole as possible, I packed my pipe lightly and fired up. Immediately, I noted a far more pronounced black pepper taste from the Kentucky. The Virginia sweetness was definitely there, but I enjoyed the slightly grilled beefsteak, almost cigar-like prominence of the dark fired leaf. The dry tobacco required slow puffing, but if carefully managed, it was smooth with no tongue bite. I am not a proponent of smoking super-dry tobaccos, but it worked in this case. Less aggressive drying enables you to strike a middle ground.

This spun cut may incorporate the same leaf that’s in Mac Baren’s HH



Old Dark Fired, one of Mac Baren’s best. But wrapping up the dark fired leaf with some mellow and bright Virginia is genius. If you miss Orlik’s discontinued Dark Strong Kentucky, this is a fine replacement. I imagine this will only mellow with age. If you’re into cellaring, I’d recommend getting some glass canning jars, packing the disks in them, covering (no vacuum sealing needed) and letting the tobacco age for a couple years. I’m betting this will be luxurious and still nicely moist.

HARB: This blend features very thin disks of Virginia tobacco leaf wrapped around a core of dark fired Kentucky tobacco. I prefer to cut the disks into quarters and then lightly rub the segments out so that I have shorter strands of tobacco. This makes packing easier and helps distribute the different components more evenly. It also helps keep the ribbons from burning too fast. Once through the charring light, the Virginia delivered a light flavor that was tangy and lightly sweet, and this was



The Greater Kansas City Pipe Club Proudly Presents
The 14th Annual Pipe and Tobacco Show
June 21st-23rd 2013
Double Tree Hotel in Overland Park, KS
Visit www.gkcpipeclub.com for Details and Reservations

Featuring America's Top Pipe Makers
and the 2013 Pipe Carving Contest
Winning 7 Day Set Will Be Raffled
American Crafted, Enjoyed Worldwide



matched with a bold darker note and a moderate level of body from the Kentucky leaf. Superior Round Slices was easy to light and to keep lit, which are good qualities for a beginner. The overall light flavor profile is a nice change of pace if you just want a pleasant, smooth-burning blend.

No. 1 All Natural

GAGE: A nice, shaggy, broken flake cut distinguishes this mixture from many run-of-the-mill generic light Cavendish blends you'll find. Ribbons of brown and gold Virginias alternate with generous strips of variegated light and dark leaf cut from pressed cakes, giving this a great deal of visual interest. The pouch aroma is mostly Virginia with a light flowery scent. The mixture is presented as not having any aromatic flavorings, and I couldn't detect any obvious topping in my tastings.

The mix of cuts makes this a snap to pack and light, although it performs even better with a day or two of drying. It dries out quickly, underscoring a lack of aromatic saucing

that would keep it artificially moist for a prolonged period. As light Cavendish mixtures go, this was a refreshing combination of nicely aged U.S. Virginias and Brazilian Virginias, giving it more interest and complexity than most light Cavendish blends. Finding a middle ground between aromatic and English character, it's a simple, satisfying crossover smoke for English smokers looking for something with appealing Virginia sweetness and aromatic smokers seeking the same thing but without topping. It left no ghosting in the pipe. It can burn a trifle hot, so slow smoking is a benefit. It might age well, and offers interesting potential for blending experiments.

HARB: All Natural is described as a straight-cut Cavendish blend of mild flue-cured Virginias. The aroma is light and slightly sweet. The cut is broken flakes mixed in with long, thin ribbons. Once stoked to embers, the blend was very smooth, and the flavor was light to moderate, with a nice sweetness. As I pro-

gressed down the bowl, I picked up occasional deeper notes. The blend was slightly moist, and the first tasting I tried with no drying had a tendency to overheat. I allowed the blend to dry a bit with subsequent bowls, and they were smooth and cool, particularly with a slow puffing rhythm. I liked the blend best when I gave it just enough air to keep the burn above a smolder. Pipe smokers who like the lighter Virginia blends should enjoy this one.

No. 52 Ultimate English

GAGE: If you like the aroma of a classic Balkan blend like Presbyterian Mixture or Dunhill Early Morning Pipe, buy a big bag of Ultimate English and use it for aromatherapy. Ultimate is an attractive, fine-cut mixture with a fairly even mix of Cyprian Latakia, Virginias and Oriental leaf (they say Turkish, I say Greek Basma). Every single charring light delivered an off-putting punch of sinus-tweaking smoke. This dissipated immediately and never returned, but I found a couple of quick



Call 1-800-251-3016 to find a White Spot retailer near you.



MUSIC CITY MARKETING, INC.
Exclusive U.S. Distributor

charring puffs and getting myself out of the way was the best way to mitigate this rough start.

On the second light, the mixture settled in nicely, delivering an excellent balance of Latakia smokiness, pungency from the Oriental leaf and a bit of sweetness from the Virginia leaf. I try to resist comparisons, but I thought this was every bit as good as Presbyterian or Early Morning Pipe, but with a bulk price point. I continue to be at a loss to accurately describe good Oriental leaf, but it has a sweet/not-sweet sugar content and a slight fresh and wholesome barnyard character like a well-aged red wine or creamy, noble, “stinky” cheese. I also liked the easy-smoking fine ribbon cut of this mixture. It made for easy lighting and cool burning.

This is a winner straight from the bag, showing off lots of character and good age behind the leaf. I don’t think it will gain additional character or interest with aging, but it certainly won’t hurt to jar it up and keep it around for a few years to dip into. This one competes with some of the best non-cased, Oriental-forward Balkan blends you’re going to find these days.

HARB: Described as the blend with the most Latakia in the series, this blend also has a variety of Oriental tobaccos and subtle Virginias. The

aromas that waft up are the smokiness of the Latakia, the spices of the Orientals and the sweetness of the Virginias. Once in the pipe and burning, however, it is the Orientals that lead the flavor, with the Latakia adding pungency to the smoke and the Virginias contributing a delicate sweetness to the flavor profile. This is a well-rounded blend that is rich and smooth, with a nice complexity. By mid-bowl, the Latakia blossomed and became more dominant without obscuring the Oriental characters. People who like the more heavy Latakia English blends may enjoy Ultimate English as a lighter blend that also gives them a good complement of Latakia while remaining complex.

No. 306 English Orient

GAGE: This blend confused me. There’s a lot going on here, with African Virginias, Cyprian Latakia, Mexican Burley and Turkish Samsun. All fine and good until they added the black Cavendish, which I like, but its sweet/smoky flavor clashed with the pungent Turkish leaf. It lights and burns clean and dry. If you like aromatic English-style blends, this could be your cup of tea. It seemed indecisive to my palate.

HARB: The smoky, pungent aroma of Latakia is prominent in the pouch,

with spicy herbal aromas of Oriental varieties underneath. At the start, however, it is the Oriental varieties that contribute spice and stoutness to the flavor, and the Latakia adds depth and complexity to the smoke. English Orient is very smooth and the tobaccos used are well-balanced.

By mid-bowl, the Latakia contributed more pungency to the flavor, but still remained just under the Orientals. The blend was dry in the pouch, and smoked dry and evenly throughout the bowl, leaving a nice, soft, gray ash. For some pipe smokers, this may be a crossover blend between the Oriental blends and the English blends that feature a stronger Latakia component. Definitely a must-try for those who like a rich and smooth blend with prominent flavors.

No. 17 English Luxus

GAGE: The pouch aroma, a pleasing, albeit light aroma of Virginias and Cyprian Latakia, telegraphs what this blend will be. This medium ribbon mixture doesn’t deliver much in the way of Latakia, but the use of a “kitchen sink” mix of black Cavendish, African Virginia and Mexican Burley delivers a lightly aromatic and interesting smoke. Mild enough to be an all-day smoke for those who seek that, the blend is noncommittal if you’re looking for a greater Latakia influence. Like English Orient, I found it a bit of a palate stumper, but less so because the Turkish is absent.

HARB: English Luxus is an Oriental/Latakia/Virginia blend that has Cavendish added, which imparts fruity caramel and vanilla tones to complement those of the Virginias and Turkish tobaccos. Dark fired Kentucky adds body and boldness, and the Latakia lends a smoky complexity to the aroma. At the first light, it is the Cavendish that is noteworthy. Once stoked to embers, the Virginias are a good base for the Orientals to take over. By mid-bowl, I still missed the Latakia contribution of a classic English blend. It is in the smoke, but not dominant as I would expect. This is a smooth and cool-burning blend with no bite that has plenty of flavor and complexity, without the Latakia being the principal character. It should be attractive to those who like the Oriental-style blends, but may not gain the favor of those who want a strong complement of Latakia.

NYPC

NEW YORK STATE-OF-MIND COLLECTION

Pipe Tobacco • Net Weight 2oz. (57g)

Pipe Tobacco • Net Weight 2oz. (57g)

Pipe Tobacco • Net Weight 2oz. (57g)

Pipe Tobacco • Net Weight 2oz. (57g)

The New York Pipe Club's collection of pipe tobaccos reflects the historic and vibrant character of our City.

CREATED FOR THE NEW YORK PIPE CLUB, AND EXCLUSIVELY DISTRIBUTED BY HEARTH & HOME PIPE TOBACCOS, AND PIPESANDCIGARS.COM

WWW.PIPESANDCIGARS.COM

1645 CENTRAL AVENUE, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12205

PHONE: 1-800-494-9144

www.newyorkpipeclub.com

No. 400 Superior Navy Flake

GAGE: You could dismiss this as a rehash of Mac Baren's Navy Flake, which has been around for years, but I think that would be doing this particular tobacco an injustice. Yes, the look is similar to Mac Baren's and other flakes: beautifully mottled slices of brindled golden and brown leaf, a very light baked cookie pouch aroma, and so on. First off, this is either not cased, or the topping is so slight as to be imperceptible. That's a big plus right there. The description of a Navy Flake is probably one of the broadest in the tobacco world. I don't know about you, but I have a hard time getting fired up about Navy Flakes saturated in rum or doused with flavors like vanilla and honey. But an honest Navy Flake can be a thing of beauty. Of course, you could argue it isn't Navy Flake without rum, but I won't be listening.

The flakes are composed of Virginias from the U.S., Africa and Brazil. On lighting, one clear difference in this flake is a definite Brazilian and African leaf influence.

It's still a through-and-through Virginia flake, but with a different flavor profile than any sliced flake I can recall. It has good moisture content in the pouch, but it can be dried slightly to facilitate burning. As with the sliced disks, I do like to keep flakes as whole as possible to maximize the interplay of the different tobaccos. One thing fun about bulk tobacco is the ability to buy a serious amount to cellar without breaking the bank, as might be the case with an equivalent weight in tins. Packed tightly in glass canning jars, I think some aging will mitigate the Virginias' slight grassy edge and leave you with a thing of beauty to enjoy in coming years.

HARB: Virginias from the U.S., Brazil and Africa have been pressed into flakes and cut very thin. The aroma is light and sweet. The flakes are easy to rub out, but for the first tasting I separated the ribbons too much and got small flecks that tended to migrate to the draft hole, so for the second tasting I partially

broke them apart and avoided that tendency. Navy Flakes are known to be seasoned with rum, but this blend has a very light touch of rum. The Virginias used were sweet and had a very delicate flavor and richness. Overall, the blend smoked smooth and remained pretty much the same throughout the bowl, leaving a gray ash. It is a nice, straightforward blend that would be a good introduction to the Virginias.

No. 201 Straight Black

GAGE: Any smoker who likes black Cavendish embarks on that never ending quest to find the toasty, smoky, molasses character promised by this steamed product. I enjoy a good black Cavendish, but the quest frequently ends with a goopy dottle and a sour aftertaste. Typical of the blend, the pouch aroma was a delicious honey-molasses mix. While the blend was a bit sticky when pressed firmly, it nestled just fine in the pipe and lit quickly. You can dry this down for a few days with no harm, and it actually does become drier.

I liked the fact Newminster created a mixture using a base of South American Virginia tobaccos rather than the usual Burley or even American Virginias—they lent a depth and richness not commonly found in black Cavendish. The end result was a silky, sultry blend with a considerable amount of natural sweetness and hints of very dark caramel and roasted hazelnuts. Any flavorings or toppings seemed reasonably neutral, and there was no bitter glycerin aftertaste. If you are on the hunt for a serious straight black Cavendish, Straight Black delivered the goods.

By nature, the mixture is somewhat monochromatic. This makes it a good candidate for mixing with other tobaccos: Try blending with a very heavy Latakia mixture (with minimal Oriental leaf) to lend some additional smokiness and coolness, or with a non-aromatic Virginia to introduce brightness.

HARB: This is what I consider a true Cavendish, because it has been Cavendish processed and is also presented



The subject is pipes...
If the question is dunhill
The answer is De La Concha

WINNER: 2010 WHITE SPOT RETAILER OF THE YEAR
WINNER (Michael Bowman): 2010 WHITE SPOT SALESPERSON OF THE YEAR

A Grand Tradition of pipe excellence since 1964.
30-50 White Spot pipes displayed at any given time.
Also fine Briars from Vprati, Radice, Winslow, Davidoff and others.



1390 Avenue of the Americas, (btwn 56th & 57th Sts), New York, NY 10019
T 212.757.3167/5341 F 212.333.3162 Toll Free 888.CIGAR.04
www.delaconcha.com email: melendi@delaconcha.com



Make Your Own Pipes at Home!

With no prior experience and with only basic tools you can learn to carve heirloom pipes. Everything you need is available from PIMO, the source for pipe making supplies for both the novice and the advanced pipe crafter.

STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTION

Order PIMO's Guide to Pipe-Crafting at Home, "the Bible of pipe making" for over a quarter of a century. Complete Instruction. 112 pages. Profusely Illustrated. \$19.95 (plus \$5.50 postage)

VISA/MasterCard Accepted

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Briar blocks, Stems, Tools and Finishing Supplies are listed in our FREE catalog. To get yours, write to: PIMO, Butternut Lane, P.O. Box 2043, Manchester Center, VT 05255 or call: (802) 362-3371, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.



pimopipecraft.com
pimo@vermontel.net

as a Cavendish cut. It is flavored with a light to moderate amount of vanilla and fruit, and was quite moist in the pouch. I let it air dry for several hours, but the blend still had a tendency to overheat during the charring light. Once stoked, it did settle down with a soft, slow puffing rhythm and produced lots of flavor notes that were tart and sweet, with a hint of berries and an occasional floral note. Overall, Straight Black burned smooth and relatively dry, and had a very pleasant flavor. This is the type of blend that can be added in small amounts to other blends to slow the burn and to impart a variation in flavor.

No. 3 Very Cherry

GAGE: Since the dawn of civilization, humanity has been searching for a cherry-flavored blend that delivers at least a hint of cherries and doesn't taste like underarm deodorant. Although I can't say this tasted exactly like cherry/tobacco pie, Very Cherry served up a nice combination of high-quality, light Cavendish-style Virginia leaf and some convincing cherry character. Importantly, it delivered none of the bite or aftertaste that makes you feel like munching on cherry pits would be a better alternative.

Although Villiger describes this Newminster blend as containing only flue-cured Virginia leaf, it also appears to contain some darker aged Virginia leaf. It was refreshing to find a quality Virginia mixture (moderately fine-cut leaf with no big chunks) that features excellent tobacco and a restrained amount of cherry topping. It was a good changeup from bland Burley sauced to goopy proportions. Very Cherry's pouch aroma is powerful, but its taste is subtle and its room aroma delicious enough to woo anyone. It smokes very clean and dry, but I would smoke this in a briar or meerschaum dedicated to aromatics. There is some ghosting.

HARB: The aroma of this blend scented the air even before I opened the pouch. It is a mix of thin ribbons with some broken flake, and was moderately

moist in the pouch. I let it dry before loading it in a pipe. At first light, there was a prominent cherry fragrance and flavor, but it did not mask the underlying flavor of the tobacco. At the beginning of the bowl, there was moderate aggression on the palate that signaled a bit of body, but the smoke was smooth with no harshness. As with other cherry blends, there was a tendency to overheat and bite, but that tendency could be contained with soft, slow puffs. By mid-bowl, there was less cherry flavor. Very Cherry burned evenly to a gray ash and left a slightly moist dottle. Cherry blends have been popular for a long time and continue to attract a faithful following. Very Cherry is a blend that is an appropriate candidate to be added to the fold.

No. 31 Optimal Choice

GAGE: The black Cavendish pouch aroma was relatively prominent in this moderately dark ribbon cut that also features African Virginia leaf and a touch of Burley. Definitely aromatic, it delivers (as advertised) some fruit and vanilla flavor, although the topping is by no means overpowering. This would appeal to the aromatic tobacco lover seeking a blend with plenty of tobacco character and interest. Billed as one of the most popular Newminster blends, Optimal Choice is easy to smoke. I found that it delivered a bit of topping aftertaste, but it's a solid performer nonetheless.

HARB: This is a blend of Black Cavendish, Burley and flue-cured Virginia tobaccos, and is flavored with a cocktail of vanilla and fruit essences. The tin aroma is sweet and fruity. The cut is a mix of Cavendish chunks interspersed with thin ribbons of lighter tobacco. The chunks let the blend burn slow and cool, and the ribbons help the blend stay lit through the bowl. The vanilla is the prominent flavoring, but it is light enough not to drown out the fruitiness that is added, allowing the underlying flavor of the tobacco to come through. Vanilla has long been a favorite flavoring for Cavendish, and Optimal Choice is a nice addition to the flavor genre. P&T

The greatest pipe tobacco resource ever compiled



tobaccoreviews.com

We are growing daily:

50,113 reviews • 4,363 tobaccos • 11,989 reviewers

Join the team. Add your own reviews and read what your fellow pipe smokers have to say about any blend you're considering.

AD INDEX

4noggins.com	19
Arango Cigar Co.	11
Bisgaard Pipes	19
Bradley Pipe Tool Ltd. Co.	62
Chicagoland Pipe Show	10
Cigar & Tabac Ltd.	19
Cup O'Joes	CVR4
De La Concha	59
East-West Trading Co.	54
Fader's	19
Greater Kansas City Pipe Club	56
Humidor Pipe Shop	18
James Norman Limited	CV2-1
Just for Him	18
Lane Limited	3, 7
Meerschaum Store	18
Missouri Meerschaum Co.	8
Music City Marketing	57
New York Pipe Club	58
Park Lane	19
Payless Pipes	17
Pulvers Briar	18
Quality Briar	19
R.D. Field	6, 9
Savinelli	5
Smokingpipes.com	CVR3, 55
SpecComm Int'l	32, 33, 61
Stemco-Pimo	60
The Briar & The Burley	18
The Briary Pipe & Tobacco Co.	18

Braley Hand-Crafted Pipe Smoking Sets

a Veteran Owned Business

Available in stainless steel or brass covered with a choice of fine quality leathers, Braley pipe tool sets are designed to fit perfectly in vehicle drink holders for effortless one-hand accessibility to your lighter, pipe tool and pipe cleaners. Design your own or choose from a large variety of choices. Proudly built in the U.S. and built to last.



www.braleypipetool.com

Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show

The Chicagoland International Pipe & Tobacciana Show will be May 4–5 at the Pheasant Run Resort, 4051 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL 60174. Reservation phone numbers are 800.999.3319 or 630.584.6300. Mention the show and receive a special room rate. For more information, contact Craig Cobine at porshcigar@aol.com or visit the show's website at www.chicagopipeshow.com.

CORPS pipe show

The 29th annual Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers Pipe & Cigar Smokers Exposition will be Oct. 11–13 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center, 403 N. Third St., Richmond, VA 23219. Show hours will be Saturday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Visit the CORPS website at www.corppipesmokers.org or the CORPS Facebook page (search: Conclave) for more information and direct links to exhibitor table reservations, hotel room reservations, member information and expo updates.

Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show

The 2013 Greater Kansas City Pipe & Tobacco Show will be June 21–23 at the Doubletree Hotel, 10100 College Blvd., Overland Park, KS 66210. Call the hotel at 913.451.6100 and ask for the Greater KC Pipe Club room block to receive a special room rate. The 2013 show will feature the fourth annual Carver's Contest, with contestants offering entries in the Dublin family of shapes. For information, visit the Kansas City Pipe Club's website at www.gkcpipeclub.com or contact Quinton Wells at 816.223.9506; email: quinton@gkcpipeclub.com.

NASPC Show

The annual North American Society of Pipe Collectors Show will be Saturday, Aug. 24, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 600 Metro Place North, Dublin, OH 43017. Phone the hotel at 866.372.5566 and mention the NASPC Show for special room rates. For information, contact the NASPC, P.O. Box 9642, Columbus, OH 43209; email: naspc@graphictouch.biz; website: www.naspc.org.

New York Pipe Show

The 20th annual New York Pipe Show will be Saturday, March 9, at the Wyndham Garden Newark Airport hotel (formerly Ramada). The show starts at 10 a.m. and free parking is available. Special room rates may be obtained by calling the hotel at 973.824.4000 and asking about the pipe show discount. For more information, contact Richard Esserman at 238 Aycrigg Ave., Unit D, Passaic, NJ 07055; email: rhonabluestein@aol.com.

Raleigh pipe show

The Triangle Area Pipe Smokers Club (TAPS) is hosting its 16th Annual Pipe and Tobacco Expo on Saturday, April 14, from 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the James G. Martin Building at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds. For information, contact TAPS at 919.848.0685; pipechief@nc.rr.com; website: www.tapsclub.us.

West Coast Pipe Show

The fifth annual West Coast Pipe Show will be Nov. 2–3 at the Palace Station Hotel & Casino. Smoking is allowed in the entire show area, including the smoking lounge in the ballroom. For West Coast Pipe Show room rates, contact the Palace Station Hotel & Casino at 800.634.3101; website: www.palacestation.com. Call early to reserve your smoking rooms. For table reservations and other information, contact Steve O'Neill at P.O. Box 2258, Kapaa, HI 96746; phone: 435.760.2411; email: steve@westcoastpipeshow.com; website: www.westcoastpipeshow.com.

Pipes and tobaccos magazine PRIME Retailers

Please patronize these P&T PRIME retailers—shops that have dedicated themselves to the service of discerning pipe smokers everywhere.



4noggins.com

www.4noggins.com
40 Court St.
Middlebury, VT 05753
802.382.1699
800.364.5126

Bisgaard Pipes

www.bisgaard-pipes.com
Jeppe Aakjers Vej 9
8400 Ebeltoft
Denmark
+45.8634.1007

Brale Pipe Tool Ltd. Co.

www.braleypipetool.com
202 South Byrd St.
Tishomingo, OK 73460
855.860.9962

Cigar & Tabac Ltd.

www.cigarandtabacltd.com
6898 W. 105th St.
Overland Park, KS 66212
913.381.5597

Cup O'Joe's

www.cupojoes.com
959 State Rte. 9
Suite T
Queensbury, NY 12804
518.615.0107
888.689.6876

De La Concha

www.delaconcha.com
1390 6th Ave. & 57th St.
New York, NY 10019
212.757.3167
888.CIGAR.04
(888.244.2704)

Fader's (four locations)

www.faderstobac.com
800.999.3233

Store/Warehouse Location

25 Allegheny Ave.
Towson, MD 21204
410.828.4555

Annapolis Plaza

150-F Jennifer Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
877.289.7665

Valley Village Shopping Center

9173 Reisterstown Road
Owings Mills, MD 21117
410.363.7799

40 West Shopping Center

728 North Rolling Road
Catonsville, MD 21228
410.744.9090

Humidor Pipe Shop

www.humidorpipeshop.com
2502 Memorial Parkway SW
Huntsville, AL 35801
256.539.6431

Just For Him

www.justforhim.com
1334 East Battlefield
Springfield, MO 65804
417.886.8380

Meerschaum Store

www.meerschaumStore.com
Ismet Inonu Cad. Baskurt
IsMerkezi No: 54
26130 Eskisehir / Turkey

Park-Lane Tobacconist

www.cigarsandpipes.com
15 Park Ave.
Clifton Park, NY 12065
518.371.6ASH (6274)

Pulvers Briar

www.pulversbriar.com
P.O. Box 61146
Palo Alto, CA 94306
650.965.7403

Quality Briar

www.qualitybriar.com
1303 Grafton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
508.579.4772

Smokingpipes.com

www.smokingpipes.com
2 East Hwy. 90
Little River, SC 29566
843.281.9304

The Briar & The Burley

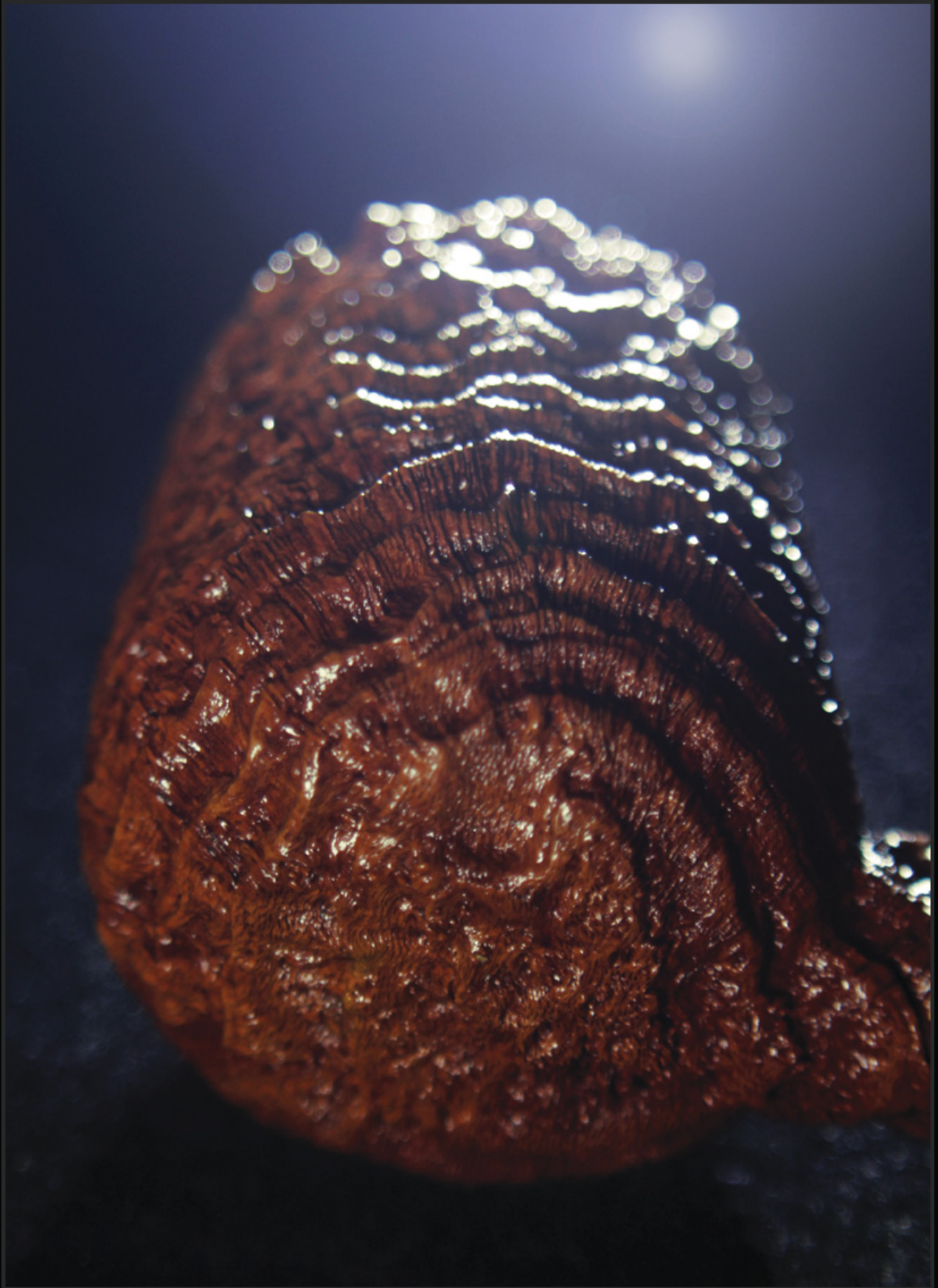
101 West Kirkwood Ave.
Suite 100
Bloomington, IN 47404
812.332.3300
812.327.9591

The Briary Pipe & Tobacco Shop

www.thebriary.com
609 Oak Grove Road
Homewood, AL 35209
205.942.9001
877.327.4279

Pipes and tobaccos magazine PRIME Retailers.
Visit us today!

PARTING SHOTS



Pipe by J.T. Cooke • Photo by Chuck Stanion



MEET BRANDON

If you were to ask the guys around the office who has the single coolest job at Smokingpipes.com, more than likely, they'd say Brandon does. As Smokingpipes.com's Pipe Manager, Brandon is responsible for purchasing somewhere over two thousand pipes each month. It's a mammoth job, and one that is obviously pretty important around here.

But Brandon is up to the task. His fascination with pipes and pipe smoking started at an early age thanks to his grandfather, a Norwegian shoemaker and pipe smoker. Today, Brandon brings passion and expertise to his selection of pipes, seeking out the best pipes from around the world to share with you. And Brandon takes this responsibility seriously. He, and others from Smokingpipes.com, spend hundreds of hours a year on planes, scouring the globe for the finest pipes available.

It's a tough job, but Brandon doesn't mind. Why? Because he doesn't just purchase pipes, he smokes them.

 *Smokingpipes.com*

WE ARE QUALITY. WE ARE EXPERTS.
WE ARE SMOKINGPIPES.COM



Looking for the right pipe?

It Does Exist !!



Cupojoes.com

888-689-6876

Altmann