



THE BEERBELLY

Removable spare tire serves stealthy brews

Think Camelbak meets a keg: The Beerbelly snugly tucks up to 80 ounces of “the beverage of your choice” in a plastic bladder that you discreetly wear in a sling beneath your shirt. Only the tip of a sipping tube—and a bodacious gut that jiggles and churns like a waterbed—hint at the delights underneath. And wait, there’s more! It also comes with a “pleasure extender gel pack”—a belly-shaped blob that, when inserted into the sling, augments your liquid’s cold (or hot) lifespan. In short, the Beerbelly is probably the best and worst idea ever to befall mankind.

The box and illustrated instructions graphically portray the typical Beerbelly user as game-attending, chick-rallyin’ dude, though they are quick to point out the product is “NOT JUST FOR GUYS, CHICKS DIGG’M TOO!” (Because “pregnant and boozing” is precisely the image that today’s women are looking to project. But I digress.)

Opting for expendable water as my testing fluid, I filled up the bladder, slipped it into the neoprene sling and strapped myself in. If only it were that easy; between the awkward insertion floppiness and confusion on which Velcro was intended to go where, it took 10 clumsy minutes (each of them sober!) to finally arrange it all. Yet, aside from looking totally ridiculous and having a plastic pipeline routed directly into my face, I almost could view this as fun. See also: bendy straws.

thebeerbelly.com

ARRIVE ALIVE DISPOSABLE ALCOHOL BREATHTESTER

Breath-bag outs booze-bags

There are five steps to the test clearly diagrammed on the bag; simple in theory, but a potential boondoggle if you happen to be hammered and trying it for the first time. Pull this? Blow there? It’s also worth noting the fine print warning you to wait 20 minutes after having a drink and 3 minutes after smoking before taking the test. It’s not rocket science, but I’d recommend a run-through when you’re only mildly buzzed, just so you can get the drill down.

Since I only had one precious sample, and each test is single-use only, I decided to make it a celebratory night ... all in the name of science, of course. Commencing the evening with a rum tasting entailing four stiff drinks over two hours, I then proceeded with a classic martini, finally capping the night with two heady cocktails. (No disrespect to beer.) I walked home (a 20-minute stroll) and gaily ripped open the plastic, removed the tube, pushed in the ends, blew into the bag, attached the tube to the bag and squeezed it, forcing the air into the granules. The crystals turn green in the presence of alcohol, and if the green extends past the marked line, you’re over the legal driving limit. I can see how a borderline verdict can get hazy—akin to squeeze-strip battery testers or those fade-blue toothbrush bristles—but at a glance, it’s easy to tell if you’ve gone way beyond your faculties. Of course, if you simply can’t perform the test, that’s a good sign, too.

contralco.com



THE BOTTLE POPPER: THE ULTIMATE BOTTLE OPENER

Bring it to a party and watch it pop mad caps

Using the Bottle Popper—push it down, pop it up—is heinously addictive. The smooth action, the sound of quick release: every bottle I opened directly hit a pleasure nerve in my brain, probably adjacent to spots reserved for bubblewrap-popping and mole-whacking. Owning this thing makes you dream of mountains of beer you could open all at once. Aside from the Popper’s obnoxious logo, one could be easily seduced by its charms.

The side of the box claims that the Popper is, among other things, “fun,” “simple to use” and functional “on any crown bottle cap, even twist-offs!” I have no quibbles with the first two, but the third assertion hit a slight snag. The first bottle-popping attempt was actually thwarted by an innocuous-looking bottle of St. Louis Premium



Pêche from the Belgian Van Honsebrouck brewery. I plunged the Bottle Popper on the cap, pulled up and ... no dice. The springs were spronging and the innards were clicking, but the mechanisms within in the gadget were not getting me closer to the nectar within the bottle. After a bout of uselessly bonking the popper on the bottle over and over, I was soon reminded (thanks, Jason!) that Belgian caps can be slightly broader in diameter than the typical top. Ah. This shortcoming may be a corner case for an otherwise superior bottle opener, but for the Belgian beerheads out there, *caveat emptor*.

bottlepopper.com

Christine Liu loves respecting a good beer, especially when it happens to match her shoes. When not slurping—and photographing—a bowl of spicy noodles, find her canvassing Boston’s lifestyle scene and taking her Macbook out for a walk.