

# Cloud 9

## Pipe Blend Reviews

by Sherman Carver



### **Frog Morton the Bayou** by McClelland Tobacco Co.

This is number 3 in McClelland's Frog series (Frog Morton and Frog Morton on the Town). It comes in 50 and 100 gram tins. This is a softer type of latikia blend with a touch of perique. Even though I didn't care for the aroma in the tin (sort of like old gymn shorts) this turned out to be a nice smoking blend which left no bitterness on the palate (all the more surprising to me since I used to hate latikias in my earlier pipe smoking days).

Til next time, keep puffing away and maybe one of these days you'll find a blend that is your CLOUD NINE...

Tri State Pipe & Tobacco Club recommends:



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## Pipes & Tobaccos

### 3 Fort Wayne Locations

Downtown: 624 S Calhoun (260) 424-1429  
6410 W Jefferson Blvd (260) 432-0002  
George Square (260) 493-2806

<http://www.riegelspipeandtobaccos.com>

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# Tri State Pipe & Tobacco Club

## Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1  
March 2003



"An informal society of  
pipe smoking friends"

"No one has even begun to understand comradeship who does not accept with it a certain hearty eagerness in eating, drinking, or smoking..." G.K. Chesterton

The Tri State Pipe & Tobacco Club was founded in the year 2000 by three friends (Larry Rathburn, Andy Spencer, and Dan Hudson) as a way for pipesmokers and enthusiasts to get together on a regular basis and share their fondness of pipes and tobacco.

Our members are from all over the greater Fort Wayne, Indiana area. Our informal meetings take place about 5:30 pm around the middle of each month in an area restaurant--one that is pipesmoker friendly of course.

Among our members are pipemakers, shop owners, estate pipe dealers, serious collectors and pipe smokers. Meeting nights are social events with pipes sold, bought, traded and more importantly smoked. Many tobaccos can be sampled and purchased. The informal discussions include pipemaking methods & materials, tobacco blends, pipemakers, new acquisitions and more. Members show their newly acquired pipes and the old favorites, including some one of kind pipes.

Our membership is somewhere around 20-25. We get anywhere from 8-15 on meeting nights. Our meetings are open to anyone who is interested and newcomers are always made to feel welcome. So if you are interested in stopping by, check our website or call one of our club leaders listed below for meeting information.

### CLUB OFFICERS

**President: Dennis Nichols** (260) 744-4797 [dennisnichols@hotmail.com](mailto:dennisnichols@hotmail.com)

**Vice Pres: Robert Rhodes Jr.** (260) 749-9534 [j.rhodes30@verizon.net](mailto:j.rhodes30@verizon.net)

[www.tsptc.com](http://www.tsptc.com)

## Pipe and Pen

by clubmember Andy Spencer

It is gratifying to once again have a forum through which to reach the membership of the Tri-State Pipe and Tobacco Club. Indeed, this new section of the newsletter also coincides with the return of the newsletter itself, after a hiatus of well over a year! Much has happened during the intervening period, and as a result of some turmoil and transition I feel that our club will emerge as a stronger organization than ever before.

Forgive me for showing my age in selecting a title for what I hope will become a regular column in our newsletter, for no one outside of perhaps Afghanistan uses a pen to write articles for publication anymore. I believe a tendency to harken to past ways of doing things is sometimes called recidivism, but then isn't that also what some consider pipe-smoking to be? After all, the number of smokers in our society has declined, and by all indications pipe smokers appear to be even more of an endangered category than your plain vanilla cigarette or cigar smoker.

From having spoken at some length with many of our membership, it seems that the age-old tradition of lighting a pipe helps us to slow down the frenetic pace of today's complex world. I, for one, am delighted to be able to hold onto something as seemingly out-of-touch as pipe-smoking if it enables me to hold the pressing demands of work and family at bay when a needed break from it all is in order. Just when the walls seem to be pressing in a little too closely, or deadlines loom ominously (April 15<sup>th</sup> IS fast approaching!) being able to disengage from it all—if only for a little while—is an almost magical thing.

There is nothing like a favorite pipe and a good blend to transport me from whatever situation or predicament I find myself in to a more relaxed state of mind. Whether in the presence of just one fellow pipe-smoker or a dozen, there is a special comraderie attendant with our pastime. The barriers of political ideologies, religious persuasions, or even nationalities are of little consequence when a fellow pipe-smoker asks to borrow a match or a pipe-cleaner.

Aside from relaxation and fellowship, pipe smoking seems to be chock full of unusual and interesting moments. Usually it is a sedate and calm hobby, but it can have its exciting moments, as well, as witnessed by my frantically brushing live sparks from my suit jacket as I returned from a business trip late last year. I'm sure passing motorists looked over and thought I was being assailed by some unseen snake or swarm of insects as I flailed about while attempting to keep my vehicle in its own lane.

Other situations related to pipe-smoking can be equally remarkable, as demonstrated by a friend's Boston Terrier cocking its head to one side as it

## Some Blends to Take Note of

Normally I tend to favor English blends, preferably those liberally laced with Syrian latakia. However, I have recently come across a couple of aromatics which are well worth a try. Riegel's employee and current TSPTC President Dennis Nichols took Frank Brougner's outstanding combination of Columbian Mocha and VBC and went one better by adding an equal part of "Ruff Stuff." One-third each of the Mocha, Virginia Black Cavendish and Ruff Stuff makes for a suprisingly tasty smoke, the latter making for a more even and consistent burning rate. Most people really seem to cotton to the aroma of this blend!

The other aromatic blend which caught my attention was really something of an accident. I had on hand some Stokkebye's Vanilla left over from a lot I had purchased perhaps four years ago from Frank Bougher at the downtown Riegel's. Nice blend, but it burned a tad hot for my tongue. Well, aging for four years made that tobacco more mild, and blending in it equal parts with Paul Olsen A's Bourbon Blend and Riegel's "Match It" (the latter being nothing other than the famed Lane IQ blend) made for a very pleasing and flavorful smoke. Even my wife, who is very difficult to impress with even the most fragrant aroma, remarked very favorably on this mixture. Moreover, unlike so many aromatics this combination was every bit as enjoyable to smoke as it was to smell. I think I'm going to add this one to my regular roation, especially in social situations!

Andy Spencer

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tried to understand why its owners friend, namely yours truly, was apparently on fire. Neither its owner nor its mistress are smokers, so the appearance of vast billows of aromatic pipe smoke seemed to puzzle the canine as it continued to cock its head from one side to the other as it studied me. No doubt the puzzled pooch thought me to be something of a phenomenon, as smoke wreathed about my head but I did not burst into flame or otherwise endanger the dog's favorite couch.

Thankfully, even among today's largely non-smoking public pipe-smoking does not seem to put people off quite so much as does smoking cigarettes, or even cigars, for that matter. Don't get me wrong—we still must endeavor to be conscious that lighting/relighting our pipes can generate a large concentration of smoke, and can thereby somewhat overwhelm non-smokers in our midst. Usually it helps simply to be aware of our proximity to others, and to be discreet about lighting a pipe by turning away slightly and blowing smoke in a different direction at that time. It has also been brought to my attention that some Fort Wayne-area restaurants tend to prefer that pipe-smokers go elsewhere, even if they permit other forms of tobacco use. By and large, though, lighting a pipe with a Virginia or, better yet, an aromatic blend can lead to fellow diners practically float over to your table to inquire about “that wonderful smelling blend.”

As a group, those of us who comprise TSPTC have been very fortunate to be able to enjoy so many area restaurants which welcome all of us pipe-smokers and value our business. Certainly people in some other parts of the country are unable to enjoy what we almost take for granted. The relatively new mayor of New York City signed a law barring smoking of any kind in all public restaurants and even bars in that great city. Some cities and municipalities in the People's Republic of California likewise prohibit smoking even in bars, or for that matter in the out-of-doors (!). I even read about a lawsuit, either already filed or being contemplated, on the part of a disgruntled (as if there were any other kind!) nonsmoker against a fellow apartment dweller whose smoke evidently gets recycled through a common HVAC system. We must all be vigilant to ensure that our individual rights, whether applying to freedom of speech or what-have-you, are not further eroded by those who would lead our lives for us.

At any rate, I want to thank all of the membership who make up TSPTC for making this such a special club. This has to be the best group of people I've ever dealt with, and certainly all of you make it a real pleasure—one which I greatly look forward to—to get together each month and catch up on the happenings and goings on in one another's lives. Hope everyone has (or had, depending on when this comes out) a great St. Patrick's Day—God bless!

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**“Pipe Smoke”**  
(Musings from Andy Spencer)

Once in awhile each of us has something of note to contribute, whether it be an original poem or lyric, or one which catches our eye or ear. Early last year I happened to be in the living room when my kids were flipping through music videos, something I only allow them to do when G- and PG-rated ones are on, and a most unusual song caught my attention. I’ve long been a huge fan of Johnny Cash, the quintessential “Man in Black” who has gained millions of fans both in and outside of country music with his “to the quick” delivery, his selection of often stunningly touching lyrics, and his plain spoken, deeply religious convictions and humility. Yet I had never heard a stark, spare recording he made in recent years, his still riveting baritone resonating with only a lone acoustic guitar to underscore his singing. Intriguing lyrics to swirl around in one’s head while contemplating their meaning, so I thought I’d share them here,

**The Beast in Me**

The Beast in me  
is caged by frail and fragile bars  
Restless by day and by night  
rants and rages at the stars  
God help the beast in me

The beast in me  
has had to learn to live with the pain  
and how to shelter from the rain  
and in the twinkling of an eye  
might have to be restrained  
God help the beast in me

Sometimes it tries to kid me  
that it’s just a teddy bear  
and even somehow manage to vanish into air  
and that is when I must beware  
of the beast in me that everybody knows  
they’ve seen him out dressed in my clothes  
patiently unclear if it’s New York or New Year  
God help the beast in me

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