

## COOLER THAN YOU'LL EVER BE

If there's one thing left that everyone can agree on it's that weekends are not made for warm or lukewarm drinks. When you need coolin', baby you're not foolin'. Fortunately we live in a high-tech age and can buy devices known as "coolers" to keep our reagents at proper temperature. But which of the many coolers on the market is best for weekend partying? Hang on, willya, we're getting to that. Immediately below is the Official Weekend Warrior Cooler Shoot-Out.

Unfortunately, the test got rigorous right off the bat when the volunteer testers turned out to be my old chums from the Old Vets and Beatniks Rod And Roscoe Club. This almost always complicates things. The idea was to test the coolers under field conditions by loading them with food and beverages (I could have sworn there was some food in one of them somewhere) and then setting out on an expedition to do what many people enjoy on weekends, namely slaughtering smaller fellow living beings whose only crime was to occupy a lower rung on the food chain, and then eating their corpses. The coolers would be graded for capacity, durability, and whatever you'd call the ability to keep something cold.

### **The coolers tested were:**

"Goodtime", solid white foam, \$ 1.19

"Lil Playmate", with swivel lid, 18.00

"Chill" Soft Cooler , fabric 14.99

"Igloo" 36 Quart Legend 24.99

"Rubbermaid" 54 Quart 24.99

"Coleman" 54 Quart "SteelBelted" 60.00

"Igloo" 128 Quart Marine Legend 189.00

The testing crew consisted of "Smokin" Joe Gasparetti, the Doctor himself-- "Doc" Hardesty, Tiny Tim Markham, and a couple of other anglers/pirates who prefer anonymity. Old hounds, sea dogs, the sort of men who go down to (and often under) the sea in ships.

As is usual in such maneuvers, the first night was devoted to the usual softening up of the local community through light-hearted havoc and horseplay while avoiding as always the responsible authorities. Frankly, authorities give me a rash and this feeling runs high in OV&BR&RC circles. Somewhere along the line, and fulfilling another tradition, several misguided young women attached themselves to our party (some in shockingly innovative ways) and were thus shanghaied into the upcoming Cooler Test. As the sun rose, we drank a toast to Steve McQueen in honor of his role as The Cooler King in "The Great Escape". Then, Jolly Roger hoisted on a diesel cruiser and coolers in hand, we embarked.

The young women who accompanied us were of short acquaintance, deep thirsts, limited vocabularies, and brief wardrobes. In fact they could barely scrape up enough scraps of fluorescent pink and green fabric to cover their essential goodness. No problem. The OV&BR&RC is ever a friend to the homeless, hapless, underfed, and underclothed. Supply lines secure, we turned serious attention to the tests.

Right away we detected a failure in several of the larger units. The 54 quart models, for instance, would not accept 54 quarts of beer, no matter how they were stacked. I was prepared to downgrade all such items, until Tiny Tim pointed out that it probably would hold 54 quarts if they were emptied into it. He was prevented from trying this theory out.

Tests went well at first. The coldness tests were excellent from all units. People kept repeating the tests, exclaiming, "Wow, check out how cold this is!" and demonstrating on various warm-blooded parts of various anatomies. All units passed. As time went on we noticed poorer performances from the smaller units. For one thing, they got empty.

Tiny Tim tried to do more technical temperature tests, but the thermometer had disappeared, probably in the hands of Doc and one of the girls we hadn't seen in quite a while. He had been muttering about the importance of ovulation temperatures. So Smokin' Joe tested the effectiveness of the Igloo 36 by sticking his toe in the gelid, stagnant water in which floated a few odd beverage cans, some scraps of food, and a pre-tested condom. This did not yield professional results, apparently, so he tried it with his wrist, then his elbow, and finally his face. He seemed to like this sensation and remained that way for quite a while, gathering in-depth data, evidently relishing the cool white solitude of the view. Unfortunately, Doc liked the view of Joe's rump up in the air, so he gave him a friendly boot. This created tension. I was afraid

these two deadly warriors would start fighting. Or worse, singing. But Doc suddenly told Joe to "cool out" and began a deep meditation on motion and alimentation by leaning over the rail for a prolonged period. This practice, which he called "chum-baiting the fish", involved passing previously digested pieces of fish back into the water like a true sportsman. One more of the great cycles by which nature works her wonders.

Joe was experiencing a very literal mindset at the time and took Doc's advice to heart, as we found out when one of the girls refused to get any live bait on the grounds that it was in the Rubbermaid cooler, which was now also occupied by Joe, sitting nekkid in the icy water, head thrown back at a dangerous angle and complaining of friction burns. I swear, that guy will bitch about anything. Anyway, he left the cooler soon after the Doctor tossed in a wounded sting ray he had caught. But the girl still wouldn't get the bait. I might add that the Rubbermaid proved a satisfactory container not only for the ice and bait, but also for a pain-crazed sting ray and Joe's booty in similar condition.

By that time the "Goodtime" all-foam cooler was totally demolished, the result of Doc having had his face resting on it while somebody sat on that very face. Let me caution you that coolers are not made for this purpose. In fact I don't beleive there is anything specificaly made for resting your head on during face-sitting sessions. Pity, too. All that was left of the cheap foam chest was little white spheroids of foam that kept showing up in every little inconvenient cran and nooky, a reminder that those too ignorant to avoid history are doomed to keep eating it. Hey, for \$1.19 you don't get bronze monuments to posterity. What you get is beaches covered with little white crud. We'd have to call the "Goodtime" a failure, on ecological, psychological and scatological grounds--smart weekenders come better prepared than that.

At this point Smokin' Joe decided it would be prudent to test the coolers' bullet-proof properties. It would be easy, he pointed out, for some fool to drop a spear gun, which could then go off and ventilate a cooler, spilling lots of quantity. This seemed believeable at the time, since he was twirling a speargun, practicing fast draws with it. The test was simple enough. Joe hauled off and plugged the Igloo dead center with one shot. The spear went right through the side, and through a fish inside. Seeing the fish impaled on the spear set Joe's ever-mercurial mind caroming down other channels and he went off to cook the fish over the charcoal...en brochette.

So we had no spear to test the other chests. The Old Beats Club seldom lacks

firepower, however, and a withering crossfire ensued, which few of the chests survived. When we do a shootout in the column, me bucko, you may believe that a shootout will be had by all. Since the chests had been heaved over the side to give them a sporting chance, the tests terminated at this point--though it should be noted that whereas the Igloo 36 came apart immediately, the Steel Belted Coleman showed some impressive stuff. It even deflected a shot from a .22 some fool had brought along. (But in case it was smug about it, Doc blew the top right off it with a one-handed blast from his sawed-off 12 guage.)

If anyone thinks this test excessive or hazardous, let me hasten to note that all precautions were taken--there were no beverages left in the chests by the time of the tests. We hauled the survivors back aboard, and Joe plopped down on the Marine Legend which still served as a fine seat despite multiple wounds from large-caliber revolvers. And a stab wound from some berserker. He was joined by a girl from Camp Pendleton, who claimed to be a bit of a Marine Legend herself.

At that point the coolers had flunked the ultimate test--they were all empty. After travails that would have daunted Ulysses we limped pack into port flying the jolly roger and several other bold ensigns composed largely of flourescent pink and green fabric. We decided that all the chill units rated careful consideration for purchase--much more careful than we were capable of at the moment.

A few last minute tests were performed back at Tiny Tim's apartment, including the highly controversial test of being dropped from his second story landing onto the hood of the neighbor's MG (which the Steel-belted Coleman passed with flying colors--mostly chips of British Racing Green). And the crucial Being Kicked To Pieces In a Brute, Blitzed Rage Test, performed by Joe after he turned and tripped over the Rubbermaid with an armfull of fish poles. The Rubbermaid would certainly have flunked this test were we not grading on the curve. Smoking Joe, after all is a Black Belt in some kind of crazy Japanese crap.

That, then, was our cooler test. Cooler than you'll ever be. As usual with the Weekend Warrior's consumer awareness, you're on your own, Pilgrim.

Before closing we have to take care of some disagreeable business. I know you will share my intense dissappointment when I report to you that I have recived two sniveling letters from readers, despite my suggestion that those

with such inclinations might prefer to pound sand.

The first, and I'm sure this will come as no great surprise was from Mary Lang at the "Reader", whining about our recent mention of her mucophagic attitude. She even cited his association with a number of lawyers--Jewish, no less, and all from the Big Apple. Well, make my day, Mary Contrary. The Weekend Warrior is not too big on lawyers, but DOES have guns and money, not to mention a soupcon of rabid psychopathology. So go ahead, just start up.

The other letter objected to our reference to "Caucasian" iced tea. Okay, okay. Pick nits if you must. Make that "European-American" iced tea. And hope you choke.

Because you know, we don't cotton to complaints around here and take compliments only if they are wringingly sincere or properly unctuous. Further bitching will be forwarded to Santa Claus at the North Pole. So if you wanna get persnickety, you just might find yourself with a stocking full of coal and switches next Christmas, and nobody to blame but your own hypercritical (and/or hypocritical) tendencies. So suit yourself. Remember this column is for YOU, so believe it or leave it.