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CigarMinder

THE HANDY CLIP-ON-A-CLIP
GOES GOLD WITH 500K SALES **p. 12**

PRODUCT
SHOWCASE **p. 10**

HOLIDAY RETAIL GUIDE
WITH DR. SMOKE **p. 14**

12



Harold Heydt,
CigarMinder Founder

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14



FEATURES

12 Sales of the CigarMinder Near 500K Units Worldwide

How Harold Heydt Turned a Small Crisis into
a Hugely Successful Tobacco Product.

BY MURDOCH MCBRIDE

14 Holiday Retail Guide

Dr. Smoke's tips for both shoppers and shop
owners on how to help someone with holiday
gift selections and buying tobacco products.



DEPARTMENTS

Editorial	6
Brand News	8
Product Showcase	10
Advertiser Index	15

{ Editor's Letter }

Looking Through the Prism of Tobacco Products

What makes *Tobacco Products International* unique? The simple answer is this: We are unique because we exist and because we see the industry through the prism of tobacco products. *TPI* is published together with the world's premier tobacco trade publication, the venerable *Tobacco International*, but it is different and unique...in fact, it's the only magazine of its kind dedicated solely to the distribution, development, marketing and promotion of tobacco products everywhere around the world, outside North America. Like our sister publication, *SmokeShop*, *TPI* covers a full range of tobacco products, but because we focus outside North America we are able to promote and support a number of products that we might not otherwise be able to. And we can often offer regional ordering information for product distribution. But there is another, more important *raison d'être* for *TPI's* presence in the industry, and that is our editorial commitment to tobacco product people. Our subscribers, readers, and advertisers come to us with questions and ideas, usually at a point where they need assistance in promoting a product.

These are our most welcome calls and they can often develop into meaningful exchanges and even editorial ideas. We encourage this exchange because it helps us stay focused on who we need to be thinking about—the people who do all that development, distribution and marketing for tobacco products. Take this month's cover story as an example.

Our cover features Harold Heydt, the founder of the popular CigarMinder, which was introduced in 1997 and is about to pass the 500K sales threshold. After hearing about the product and how well it works, we reached out to Harold in Florida and got him to tell his story, which is based on the value of a good idea and how important it is to see it through.

In addition to Harold's CigarMinder, we have showcased several other tobacco products inside this issue, from pipes to cutters and to the beautifully packaged, premium flavored Heaven Cigars created by Heavenly Cigars founder Heather Phillips.

And to make the retail experience a bit more fun for all, our resident smoke shop expert, Roger Bacon appears in *TPI* on loan from our sister publication, *SMOKE* magazine. In his capacity as Dr. Smoke, Roger shares useful advice on purchasing pipes, cigars and other tobacco products for the holidays or any other occasion. Having someone knowledgeable in your corner makes that first trip to the smoke shop a bit less intimidating and Dr. Smoke's guidance is useful for both shoppers and retailers alike.

Meanwhile, *TPI* is continuing to put together a comprehensive review of the RYO and MYO markets. If you are an RYO manufacturer, supplier or distributor and you believe that you have something interesting or noteworthy to contribute to the narrative, please feel welcome and don't hesitate to reach out to us at editor@tobaccointernational.com.

Tobacco Products International is also moving up...to higher ground here in New York City. In early January our offices will be located just across the East River in Long Island City. Our new mailing address will be announced soon and, for the time being, and throughout a brief transition period, our telephone numbers will remain the same.

We wish you a safe and happy holiday season and look forward to working with you in 2013.

» **Murdoch McBride**
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The CigarMinder

How Harold Heydt Turned Misfortune
Into a Successful Tobacco Product

» BY MURDOCH MCBRIDE

If necessity is the mother of invention, then Harold Heydt was its poster child on one memorable day back in February 1997. Heydt was riding on the golf course when he experienced a sudden crisis—his cigar, a nice Cohiba no less, accidentally fell to the ground.

"It fell off my golf cart and right into a puddle," Heydt said. "I was somewhat miffed. Twenty minutes later, as I arrived at my home, my daughter, Jenna, walked past me wearing a hair clip on her head. So I looked at her walking by and had an inspiration. "I grabbed it off her and said, 'I've got an idea!'"

The popular CigarMinder was born.

The CigarMinder is a universal cigar clip that attaches to just about anything and holds your cigar right there for you...Cohibas, Short Stories, Ezra Zions, you name it, the CigarMinder does the job.

Heydt recalled how quickly the inspiration became an idea and then a successful tobacco product.

"Before the afternoon was over," Heydt said, "I had created a prototype to get the concept of a 'clip attached to a clip' firmly etched in my mind. I also came up with the name, CigarMinder, just to keep it simple.

"I had been playing golf with a friend who happened to do manufacturing," Heydt told TPI. "I phoned him and explained what I wanted, and struck a deal to have him act as my agent during development and manufacturing. We sent my prototype to the factory and began what was a quick transfer of concept. By exchanging ideas through e-mail over the internet we were able to arrive at a final design quickly."

Heydt said that while the design was being brought to fruition he took care of the details. "With the help of a local advertising company we developed the packaging," he said. "We worked with a local attorney to start the process to secure a patent and trademark. The first CigarMinder was sold in November of '97 and sometime in early 2013 we will celebrate our 500,000 sale."

Heydt's CigarMinder is sold widely around the world and he is in negotiations for additional European distribution. Heydt says that 98 percent of his distribution is through distributors and vendors, with just two percent of his business coming direct over his website at <http://www.cigarminder.com>.

"It's sold at tobacco shops and golf venues," Heydt explained. "CigarMinder has a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$9.95 and our annual sales right now are between 48-50K pieces."

The CigarMinder comes in one color, black. "I like to say it's like the Model T," Heydt joked. "You can have it in any color you want, so long as it's black."



The idea to put the right CigarMinder team in place early on was really critical to his success. Heydt quickly credits his team for "the ideas behind the idea" which ensured that his invention got to the market successfully.

"I was very fortunate," Heydt said. "The guy who hooked me up and found me the manufacturer also helped liaise with their on-site people. We e-mailed back and forth and pretty quickly we finalized on a "clip on clip" design that could attach to golf carts and that's how we got spinning. I credit my agent with getting me in touch with the right people at the right time," Heydt said.

"The right team is very important and I tell people all the time that if you get an idea, you owe it to yourself to see it through to find out if there is a market for it....you never know what's going to hit," Heydt said.

Heydt also credits his agent and friend Bernie Orban, for much of CigarMinder's success. "As far as I was concerned," Heydt recalls, "it was Bernie who made the transition work, from a concept to a rough prototype and then into a working model. The process was smooth and quick. We began working on the CigarMinder in February 1997 and we sold the first one in November."

While Heydt is close to passing the 500K unit sales mark, some of his most memorable CigarMinder customers did not actually buy the product. Some time back, a group of U.S. servicemen in Iraq learned about CigarMinder and contacted Heydt, asking if they could purchase and have shipped a number of CigarMinders to the troops there. Heydt refused payment and shipped the lot to the soldiers at no charge (see photo). And did he ever repay his daughter for that hair clip he appropriated?

"Of course," he said. "My daughter calls herself the CigarMinder Heiress," Heydt said. She says I can have it as long as I want it but after that...it's hers."

TPI