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Mark Newman  
Reviewer ranking: #174,821

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Mark Newman's Activity:



Reviewed No Title ...

**This an absolutely horrible book on Minecraft**

October 27, 2014

This an absolutely horrible book on Minecraft. It is full of incomplete descriptions of various tasks and actions within Minecraft. A simple example can be found on the first two pages. The first page says to chop down trees to get wood. The second page tells you to use the wood planks you acquired to make a crafting table. Not only is there little guidance on how a crafting table is actually produced from planks, but the first page only got you wood, not wood planks. The step describing how to turn the wood into planks is nowhere to be found.

Then there are basic screenshots of crafting ideas, all of which are in black and white. This makes it nearly impossible to figure out what the crafting ingredients are since there are no descriptions, only pictures! Then you reach the Redstone section and along with incomplete descriptions are "broken link" icons where the screenshots are supposed to be! This book clearly went through no editing or proofing process.

I won't even waste more of my time outlining what all is wrong with this book. It is a completely amateur outing trying to capitalize on the popularity of a wonderful game.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Fairy Gardening: Creating Your Own Magical Miniature Garden ... by Julie Bawden-Davis

0 of 1 people found this review helpful

**Great book with wonderful illustrations**

May 17, 2013

This book has really sparked my 9-yr-old daughter's interest. She keeps asking when we can build a fairy garden. Should be a fun project for us to do together!

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Reviewed Frigidaire FFMV162L 1.6 Cubic Foot Over-The-Range Microwave with Fits-More Capacity, 1,100 Watts and, Black ...

1 of 3 people found this review helpful

**Good value but annoying features**

February 28, 2013

We purchased this microwave (the white version) out of desperation when our current microwave died. After many comparisons, we settled on this basic model because of the price. We got a relatively powerful unit, with a decent reputation

for reliability, for a relatively inexpensive price.

That is the "good" and why I gave it a generous 3 stars. The "bad" is what prompted me to fix our old microwave (a Kenmore) and return it to service. This Frigidaire is now a backup unit in the basement where it won't annoy me as much.

This unit has a "done" beeper that is loud and persistent. It sounds three times when the food is done and continues EVEN WHEN YOU OPEN THE DOOR! This is annoying. I had even read about this in a review before buying this unit and thought, oh, I can live with that. I'm usually not too picky. As it turns out, yes, I can live with it, but it is annoying nonetheless. There IS one trick that minimizes the annoyance. If you are near the microwave while it is beeping, press "Stop/Cancel" BEFORE opening the door. This will stop the buzzer. But if you open the door first, the beep will do a full three, loud cycles. (Who thought up that design?) And yeah, it's loud.

My second gripe is that the door is clunky and loud. Our old microwave opened and closed with very little noise. The "latching mechanism" operated very smoothly. Quite the opposite for this unit. Every time I close it, I feel like I'm slamming it shut. Again, a slight annoyance, but it's something I wish I didn't have to get used to.

So, if you want a cheaper microwave and are willing to live with these annoyances (think hard!), this is the unit for you. For something I use on a daily basis, I prefer a better unit.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed McCormick Grill Mates Mojito Lime Seasoning, 13.5-Ounce ...

2 of 2 people found this review helpful

#### Great tasting spice

December 25, 2012

We use this on chicken and fish and really like it. It's a great tasting spice that is not very hot or spicy. It's more tangy.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Puzz 3D Eiffel Tower 703 Pieces ...

1 of 1 people found this review helpful

#### Challenging, quality puzzle

June 06, 2012

We got this puzzle about 10 years ago, I'd guess. It is the same puzzle, just a different box design. Finished, this puzzle stands about 3 feet tall!

It is very challenging to put together, but no worse than your standard 1000 piece puzzle. If you're not up for that challenge, forget this puzzle as it might be frustrating. Many pieces interlock just as they would in a standard puzzle. Others are notched and connect with one another at an angle. Still others have notches that insert into square holes at a right angle. (For example, if you look at the picture, the bottom of the lowest "legs" are all pieces with notches that drop into square holes in the four square supports shown.) Regardless of how they interconnect, the connections are quite solid once made. This is a surprisingly sturdy puzzle when completed!

As for quality, it gets high marks for how well the pieces fit together. Some puzzles have such a similar cut to some pieces that it is difficult to be sure that two pieces do indeed go together. Not so with this puzzle. Each piece appears to be unique. The fact that this is a structural puzzle probably helps -- there is a LOT of variation between some pieces. All pieces are made of foam-backing with the "picture" glued to the front. There is only one minor quality problem I had -- some of the picture paper has begun to peel from the backing. I say "minor" because this only appears to be happening to the pieces that have to be inserted into holes, not the ones that interlock like normal puzzle pieces. I think this happens because some of the construction requires a bit of finesse to get the notched pieces into their respective square holes. It's really not difficult, but the process can cause the paper layer to "catch" on the edges of the hole and peel, especially when my children help. (They use more of a brute force method!)

Pros

----

Challenging but fun to construct

Quality construction overall

Impressive when completed

Cons

---

Some peeling of paper layer on some pieces

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Horizon PST 8 Rear Roller Part Number 014682-B ...

#### Just what my treadmill needed

March 19, 2012

Recently, our Horizon PST8 treadmill started making loud clanking noises on and off while running. Since we've got well over 8000 miles of running on the machine, it was not surprising that something had worn out. We narrowed it to the rear roller. This was actually difficult to do since the noise seemed to vibrate through the entire steel frame of the machine. Using a screwdriver to touch the rear roller and then "listening" through the handle made it clear where the noise was emanating from.

At any rate, this new roller cleared up the problem. As a bonus, it was simple to replace. We love our PST8, so it was great to be able to keep it running for just over a hundred bucks from The Treadmill Doctor.

Note that this rear roller is a replacement part for several different Horizon models. Highly recommended!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Ansell ProjeX 97-978 Leather Driver Glove, Large (Pack of 1 Pair) ...

5 of 5 people found this review helpful

#### Beware -- these run small

November 30, 2011

Good gloves, but they definitely run small. I usually wear L, but these are way too tight and do not feel like they cover my wrists at all. I need to return them for a pair of XL.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Fodor's Around Washington, D.C. with Kids (Travel Guide) ... by Fodor's

13 of 13 people found this review helpful

#### Very useful!

April 15, 2011

We used this for our very first trip to DC with our kids. It was an excellent resource for us. We knew absolutely nothing about DC when we started planning this trip.

The layout is fun and concise. It lists 68 of the top attractions in and around the city. Each two-page listing includes the following:

- \* 2-4 paragraph description of the attraction with details and recommendations on how to visit it.
- \* A "Make the Most of Your Time" info box with tips and tricks.
- \* An "Eats For Kids" info box with at least one suggestion for food in or nearby the attraction.
- \* A "Keep in Mind" info box with additional insight.
- \* Address, phone, cost, hours, and age appropriateness all laid out in a standardized, easy-to-find manner.

In addition, there is a short, 5-6 page intro with some tips about preparing for your trip, getting around town, etc. At the end of the book is an index section that is organized with fun titles like "Lost in Space", showing all of the space-oriented attractions, or "Art Attack" with art attractions.

All in all, this was a friendly, fun, and helpful guide to enjoying the city. It made all the difference on our trip as we were able to quickly narrow our focus on the attractions that would be best for our family.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Stanley 94-549 16-Piece Cushion Grip Screwdriver Set ...

1 of 1 people found this review helpful

**Great set**

February 08, 2011

I haven't been using these very long, but I'm happy with them so far. They appear well-designed and sturdy. They're easy to grip, and they look like they should last.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Compatible Toner Replaces Canon X25 ...

5 of 5 people found this review helpful

**Decent replacement, not perfect**

January 06, 2011

I'd give this product 5 stars for value and 3 stars for quality. It's a great value at a fraction of the original toner's price. Are the printer manufacturer's really marking up toner that much?!?!?

On the quality side, however, this is not a perfect product replacement. I've been happy with the text quality, but I've noticed light vertical bars in gray-scale areas. I also had some "dirty" prints when I first installed the cartridge where there was a general gray sheen over the entire page. After 25-30 prints, however, this went away. This is definitely not a deal-breaker for my uses.

Be warned also that there may be a strip of paper over the roller that needs to be removed before installing. I did not see this (nor were there any instructions included) and my first page jammed badly! I opened the printer to find my crumpled paper AND this paper strip crunched together. (This could also have been the source of my "dirty" printing problems!)

At present, I am extremely pleased with this product given it's price.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Chocolate Fix Board Game (Colors And Parts May Vary) ...

2 of 2 people found this review helpful

**Fun logic game for kids 7+**

January 04, 2011

My three girls, ages 7,8,10, all enjoyed playing this game. It is important to note that it is a solitary game -- not one that they play together (though there was some "helping" going on). My youngest can do the easier puzzles but needed some hints for the more advanced ones.

The only drawback is that my 10-yr-old finished all of the challenges before Christmas day was over. Not sure she'll be back to play again for a few months (until she can "forget" the solutions)!

All in all, a neat, compact, fun little logic game that is self-contained enough to take anywhere. Just don't lose your chocolates!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Tru-Fit Ice/Heat Gel Pack One Size Fits All (Pack of 3) ...

14 of 14 people found this review helpful

**Fantastic ice pack**

October 29, 2009

Not only are these better than a home solution (ziplocks with ice), they are a definite upgrade from some blue gel bags I bought at my local sporting goods store. The freezer ziplocks were a nightmare, splitting and leaking after just a couple uses. The blue gel bags were OK, but not nearly as cold as the Tru-fit gel packs.

These babies will give you ice burn if you're not careful. I consider this a good thing, though, as it is possible to add a towel or two to cut down on the cold but there is no good way to make a gel pack colder!

I did find that the corners of the gel pack tend to scratch my skin a bit. Simple solution -- carefully cut rounded corners onto the gel pack using household scissors. I say carefully because you don't want to over-do it and find the gel oozing out! There is plenty of material on the corners, so it's not a big risk.

[...Read more](#)

Reviewed No Title ...

**Better than ice in a zip-loc bag**

September 10, 2009

Yes, I have been icing using crushed ice in a double-bagged zip-loc. Can't get more than a couple uses out of it before the bags rip and my leg/arm gets soaked.

So, this item was a big improvement for me. Now I can ice hands-free. No more freezing my hand off as I hold the bag in place. I also don't have to worry about using a towel with the ice bag -- the neoprene holder serves this role well.

I've only used this device for a week, so I can't comment on how long the gel pack will hold up. We'll see. As for how long it works out of the freezer, I've found that I can ice both knees for a good 5-10 minutes each before it warms up to the point of being ineffective. I'll pick up a couple more gel packs to have on hand just in case.

I did find that the corners of the gel pack tend to scratch my skin a bit. Simple solution -- carefully cut rounded corners onto the gel pack using household scissors. I say carefully because you don't want to over-do it and find the gel oozing out! There is plenty of material on the corners, so it's not a big risk.

Overall, works great and a great upgrade from the home solution!

[...Read more](#)

Reviewed Pet Story ...

14 of 14 people found this review helpful

**Exceeded our expectations!**

September 10, 2009

This was just a great "craft" project for my nine-year-old daughter. She was able to complete it with very little assistance. She chose to do the on-line version. With this approach, you can add photos, text, and graphics via an on-line interface. The drawback is that you cannot include hand-drawings unless you scan them. Not a big deal for us.

The best part was getting the book back from the publisher. This is included in the price of the initial product as long as you don't exceed the standard number of pages. The book was just great! My daughter was beaming when she opened the package and saw the book. It was very professionally done, making it hard to distinguish from a "real" published book.

Some reviews of "Illustory" have lamented the limited number of pages included, but this was not a real limitation for us. We felt that 15 pages were plenty for the simple book we planned.

I am not really sure what the difference is between "Illustory" and "Pet Story". I'm sure you could write a pet book using the former and a normal book using the latter. There do appear to be slight differences in number of pages included, so just compare the two products if you're considering them.

Overall, a great way for my daughter to be creative and get an awesome keepsake in the process!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Tupperware Impressions 11oz Tumbler Green Set of 4 ...

### Very high quality but pricey

February 05, 2009

We love these tumblers. They're great for our kids: 5,6, and 9 years old. Keeps them from spilling their drinks when they're sitting in the living room or family room. The lids seal very securely around the top. Also, the rubber gasket in the straw hole is surprisingly effective at keeping liquid from spilling when the cup is knocked over.

Only complaint is the price. I guess you have to pay for quality!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Casio Men's WVA430DJ-1A Waveceptor Solar Atomic Ana-Digi Sport Watch ...

8 of 8 people found this review helpful

### Love always having the EXACT time!

January 22, 2009

This is a great watch. No batteries to replace and it always syncs up to the correct time overnight. Whenever watch batteries have run down in the past, I've always had to special order a new one. Why can't they be a standard type carried in a local store? So, with this watch, I no longer have that hassle.

As some others have said, it is somewhat large and heavy. Keep this in mind if you have smaller wrists. Unlike others, I did not have to pay to have the watch band adjusted. I went to my local Macy's jewelry counter and they happily adjusted it for free. Maybe I just got lucky. The others ARE correct, however, that it takes a special tool to do the adjustment. I have a variety of smaller screwdrivers (very small) and yet none would work on this band.

I have only a minor complaint. I keep the digital display set to "world time" so that it shows PST time which is where my company's home office is located. I often accidentally hit one of the buttons on the outer rim of the watch face which changes the time zone. To correct this, I have to cycle through 23 time zones to get back to PST. Not a huge deal, just a minor annoyance.

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Reviewed Three One-Acts by David Lindsay-Abaire - Acting Edition ... by David Lindsay-Abaire

1 of 1 people found this review helpful

### Great stories

December 22, 2008

Great little stories from a Pulitzer Prize winning American playwright. I laughed out loud at "Baby Food". As another reviewer noted, however, these are not for anyone easily offended by language or offbeat humor.

Anyone considering this should be aware, however, that these are VERY short one-act plays. All were originally part of the increasingly popular 24-hour festivals or 10-minute play festivals. I think only Crazy Eights would play for more than 10 minutes. This only detracts from these stories if you're looking for longer plays to pair for an "evening of one-acts".

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Reviewed Sennheiser HD 497 Dynamic Hi-Fi Headphones (Silver) (Discontinued by Manufacturer) ...

1 of 1 people found this review helpful

### Great sounding, affordable headphones

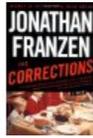
September 26, 2005

These are just the best headphones I've ever used. Granted I've never spent over a hundred bucks on a pair (except to try then return a pair of Grado's), but I don't claim to be an audiophile, either.

I tend to wear headphones for most of the day as I sit and work at a computer. These have not yet given me any discomfort. I have a larger than average head, but the headphone band doesn't seem to be straining when I ease the earpads apart to put them on. (My last pair broke at the headband within 6 months of use.)

I won't go on in detail because others have done a fine job of singing the praises of these headphones. I will say that I don't understand the proliferation of \$20 headphones that sound horrible when you can spend less than \$20 more for these far superior headphones!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed The Corrections: A Novel ... by Jonathan Franzen

2 of 4 people found this review helpful

**Best book in a loooooong time**

May 10, 2005

Having grown up in the Midwest, this book really struck a cord. I recognized each of the characters as being extreme examples of people I knew. OK, maybe they were a composite of some of the best/worst in those people, but the traits were very familiar.

There are definitely some heavy moments, but for the most part I was literally laughing out loud. This had a curious effect since I was serving on jury duty at the time. Most of the humor was effective while not being over-done. I hate it when an author beats you over the head with the humor. Franzen does not.

One of my favorite sections was told from the point of view of the father. He is entering the early stages of senility and Franzen captured this point of view perfectly.

This book has been out long enough that the hype has worn off. It's a good thing as most things are best approached with few or no expectations. Enjoy!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Plantronics M214C Headset with Adjustable Volume ...

2 of 2 people found this review helpful

**Used to be a good headset**

July 25, 2013

I owned this back in 2007 and it was a great headset. Until it broke. Well, these things don't work forever, so I ordered a new one in Nov 2011. This new model (same product code) is not the same. The old boom mic was straight, the new one is curved. This should not have been a big problem, but the headset no longer fits snugly. This causes the earpiece and boom to flop around which often pushes the mic right into my mouth.

Otherwise, I love the actual operation and clarity of this headset. Shame it no longer fits well.

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Reviewed Mennon DV-s 46 Screw Mount 46mm Digital Video Camcorder Lens Hood with Cap, Black ...

**Caused vignetting with Panny HC-V720 camcorder**

April 15, 2013

This product might be good in general, but it did not work with my Panasonic HC-V720 camcorder when zoomed out to widest angle. You can see the edge of the hood on either side of the frame. If OIS is employed to reduce hand-motion, these edges

become moving bars as the OIS makes adjustments. Note that this is true whether or NOT I use a UV lens -- using a UV lens just makes the situation a tad worse.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Frigidaire FFMV162L 1.6 Cubic Foot Over-The-Range Microwave with Fits-More Capacity, 1,100 Watts and, Bisque ...

8 of 8 people found this review helpful

#### **Good value but annoying features**

February 28, 2013

We purchased this microwave out of desperation when our current microwave died. After many comparisons, we settled on this basic model because of the price. We got a relatively powerful unit, with a decent reputation for reliability, for a relatively inexpensive price.

That is the "good" and why I gave it a generous 3 stars. The "bad" is what prompted me to fix our old microwave (a Kenmore) and return it to service. This Frigidaire is now a backup unit in the basement where it won't annoy me as much.

This unit has a "done" beeper that is loud and persistent. It sounds three times when the food is done and continues EVEN WHEN YOU OPEN THE DOOR! This is annoying. I had even read about this in a review before buying this unit and thought, oh, I can live with that. I'm usually not too picky. As it turns out, yes, I can live with it, but it is annoying nonetheless. There IS one trick that minimizes the annoyance. If you are near the microwave while it is beeping, press "Stop/Cancel" BEFORE opening the door. This will stop the buzzer. But if you open the door first, the beep will do a full three, loud cycles. (Who thought up that design?) And yeah, it's loud.

My second gripe is that the door is clunky and loud. Our old microwave opened and closed with very little noise. The "latching mechanism" operated very smoothly. Quite the opposite for this unit. Every time I close it, I feel like I'm slamming it shut. Again, a slight annoyance, but it's something I wish I didn't have to get used to.

So, if you want a cheaper microwave and are willing to live with these annoyances (think hard!), this is the unit for you. For something I use on a daily basis, I prefer a better unit.

UPDATE 01/13/14: I must admit that we've gotten used to the annoying buzzer. We're generally good about pressing that "Cancel" button before opening the door so that the buzzer stops. However...

I noted above that the door is clunky and loud. Well, this has translated over time into cracks forming around the top and bottom of the door handle where it attaches to the door. I hope that one day the handle doesn't break off in someone's hand!

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Reviewed OBi202 VoIP Phone Adapter with Router, 2-Phone Ports, T.38 Fax ...

8 of 8 people found this review helpful

#### **Free phone service -- how can you fail?**

August 06, 2012

This is just a great little device that allows me to receive and place calls on two separate lines with Google Voice accounts. I use this for just that -- so I can't comment on some of the fancier capabilities of this little gem of a device. I have one line dedicated as a business line and my business phone is connected to the first port. The other line is for our house phone and thus the base unit for that phone is connected to the second port. We have several satellite phones around the house that also feed into that base phone wirelessly.

Just like that we've replaced a 35-40 dollar monthly phone bill (which didn't even include long distance!) for about a 75 dollar flat fee. Of course it won't stay free if Google Voice starts charging (as most believe they will), but I can't believe it will be anywhere near our old costs.

I'm somewhat technically inclined and the whole setup and configuration went smoothly. I'm guessing this would be more daunting for someone with no technical know-how whatsoever. For those folks, I suggest using your "phone a friend" option as we all tend to know at least one person with some moderate tech savvy.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Plus Paper Clinch Stapleless Stapler, Pink ...

#### Excellent little "green" gadget!

April 14, 2012

This stapler works just as advertised. It seems to work on up to 5 sheets or so, though I recently stapled 6 pieces when submitting my taxes. My kids love the ingenious way it works. The actual "staple" holds very well, too. The way it folds the tab into a slit gives it good staying power.

I want to buy another one!

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Reviewed Belkin 6 feet Mini Stereo Extension 3.5mm Stereo Plug M/f (Discontinued by Manufacturer) ...

0 of 3 people found this review helpful

#### Probably good if not abused

March 05, 2012

I'm going to admit up front that I probably abused this cable. I wrapped the female end around a bar on the treadmill to keep it in place. Now I've got sketchy performance when listening through headphones -- the left and right alternately cut out depending on how I bend the cable end. I now HAVE to bend the cable end and I have to do it in just the right way or else I get just right, left, or nothing.

So, be careful how you handle this cable. I've certainly learned my lesson for the next cable.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Honey Stinger Organic Waffles, Honey, 1-Ounce Packages (Pack of 16) ...

#### Great for variety during long rides

September 27, 2011

I've used drinks, bars, gels, and gummies on rides. This product has been great for adding variety to my routine. They've replace the bars for me as they're lighter and easier on my stomach.

They work great for me on the bike, but I'm not sure I'd try them on the run. My stomach's not usually game for solids when running.

Give them a try -- they're easy to buy as singles at running and biking stores if you're not sure about committing to a box!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Moen T62152 Brantford Posi-Temp Shower Trim Kit without Valve, Chrome ...

6 of 6 people found this review helpful

#### Easy install and good flow

April 15, 2011

We purchased this to replace an older Moen set after a remodel. We left the Moen valve in the wall, so this kit (which does NOT include a valve) was just right for us. Each manufacturer seems to have their own design for valves, so we stuck with Moen to ensure compatability.

This was a cinch to install on the existing value. The instructions could have been better -- they mainly consisted of a series of

illustrations -- but I was able to figure out what they meant. Everything installed nice and snug. There is no wiggle room of any kind in the handle.

My wife likes a shower head with decent flow and was concerned that this basic-looking head might not suffice. She is a happy camper, though, as it puts out a very good spray. Note that there are no adjustments, so if you're looking for the ability to increase/decrease the flow, look elsewhere.

Note that this installation requires thread tape for both ends of the shower head pipe. This is pretty standard and can be found in any big-box hardware store. It is also easy to use -- just wrap the teflon "tape" around the threads and then screw on the shower head.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed ClassicReader Three-pair Valu-Pac, 2.00 ...

7 of 7 people found this review helpful

**Excellent value**

January 06, 2011

These were the same price or cheaper than a single pair in my local office supply or drug store. They're also half the price of a similar 3-pack at the local big box store. That's the starting point for my review as it was THE over-riding factor for this purchase.

I like the fact that with three pairs I can have them spread throughout the house, ready to use at a moment's notice. My sight has degraded to the point of having to read labels at arm's length! These are "half glasses" as someone mentioned, and I like that fact. They're built solely for close-up use, so the ability to easily glance over the top half of these glasses to look at anything over 8" away is key.

They're built of sturdy plastic and shouldn't break easily. Not horrible to look at, but I probably won't be wearing them outside of the house so what do I care!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Forbidden Island ...

**Excellent cooperative game**

January 04, 2011

Yes, this is a fun game. As far as kids go, I'd guess it will appeal more to boys than girls. I've got three girls (7, 8, 10) and they were actually somewhat scared by it! Yes, it states "for ages 10+", but the younger ones were definitely capable, particularly because it is a group effort.

As I mentioned, however, they were frightened by the idea that the island was "sinking". Beware of this if your children have active imaginations like mine! Despite being scared, they were all up and playing it again the next morning -- albeit without letting the water rise. Of course this defeats the whole purpose, making it a cinch to win, but they were having fun.

I look forward to playing this game with a group of adults to see how it compares. All in all, a fun experience!

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Bright Nights, Dark Days ... by Cavo

3 of 5 people found this review helpful

**Not as rockin' as you'd think**

May 18, 2010

If you buy this because of "Champagne", you may be disappointed. I expected a harder edge to the disc. To each his own, though.

I'm not surprised to hear they opened for "Daughtry" as they have a similar style overall. If you like that, you might not be disappointed. I was hoping for more of a "Sick Puppies", whose "You're Going Down" was more exemplive of the overall tone of their CD "Tri-Polar".

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed The Vegan Scoop: 150 Recipes for Dairy-Free Ice Cream that Tastes Better Than the "Real" Thing ... by del Torro, Wheeler

109 of 116 people found this review helpful

**Uninspired and repetitive**

October 29, 2009

First let me say the I did learn two things from this book -- saving it from a one-star rating. Those things were:

Arrowroot powder is a nice additive for better texture

Soy creamer can be used for a creamier texture

I have made soy-based ice cream for years now, but have never used either of these ingredients. I would merely take a regular ice cream recipe and substitute soy milk for real milk. These concoctions were good, but lacked a bit in the texture department. Now I have a solution!

As for the rest of this recipe book, it is a single base recipe for the majority with a single ingredient added to make a unique flavor. So, for Espresso ice cream, add 1/4 c espresso to the base recipe. For "Earl Grey", steep the soy milk in 8 bags of Earl Grey -- same base recipe otherwise! Are we to believe that adding a single simple ingredient will transform this recipe into the perfect balance of new flavors? No additional sugar or slightly less sugar would be better? And does every recipe really benefit from EXACTLY 1 Tbls of vanilla extract?

Also, I tried one of the "novelty" flavors -- Chocolate Martini. Next to the recipe is a picture of thick, creamy, dark chocolate ice cream with a frozen black olive on the side. Wow! Amazing that you can get such a wonderful looking ice cream from sugar water and a total of 6 teaspoons of various liquors. Well, you can't! The mix looks like dirty water and the finished product looks like a dirty slushy -- and tastes about the same.

I am going to buy "Lick It!" which is recommended by another reviewer. Sounds more promising. I'll also be experimenting with my own recipes by adding various quantities of soy creamer and arrowroot powder.

[...Read more](#)



Reviewed Presto 07046 Tilt 'n Drain Big Griddle Cool-Touch Electric Griddle ...

**Great size and quality**

August 08, 2009

So far, we love this griddle! It replaces a cheap, Black and Decker griddle we got for Christmas a year and a half ago. We used that one once or twice a month and it was ready to throw out in just over a year. The surface had deteriorated and the plug became unreliable, falling out mid-cooking. Furthermore, the griddle never seemed to heat evenly from the day we got it.

The Presto is a huge upgrade. If given 10 minutes to heat up, it heats more evenly than the B&D. It is not perfect, but not annoying. We've gotten used to which areas need just a few extra seconds for browning pancakes. Again, not a big deal. All but the higher end griddles (aka bigger \$\$\$) seem to have this problem to some degree. For the size of this griddle, we're very pleased with it.

As for size, this is perfect for our family. We can easily cook 9 decent-sized pancakes at a time. A big upgrade from the standard griddle as more people can start eating immediately after the first batch is done.

We've used the tilt feature once so far, and it worked OK. We were cooking bacon, which turned out wonderful. I did have to tilt it manually a bit more in order to get the excess grease to drain. Not a big deal to us. It is nice that the built-in tilt handles some of it.

I had read another review that said the tilt feature was easy to accidentally engage. I thought this was ridiculous until it happened to me! This was not a big deal, however, as it only happened once and didn't cause any major problems. The sides are cool to the touch, so I merely pushed them back together, bringing the surface back to horizontal. I do love how easy it is

to engage/disengage. I'll accept the occasional accidental tilt.

I do recommend, as another reviewer stated, forgoing the Pam. The non-stick surface is excellent, so we don't risk "gunking it up" by using any type of greasing agent. Plastic/wood implements are key, though, as you don't want to ruin this excellent non-stick surface!

Love it!

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Reviewed 8 oz mini jar with lid for Oster & Osterizer blenders. ...

3 of 3 people found this review helpful

**Great concept, did not hold up in dishwasher**

February 05, 2009

I really like the concept of this jar. It worked great, blending up some chipotle peppers in adobo sauce. It was also easier to get the finished product out and into my dish than if I'd used the full blender jar. However...

I put this in the dishwasher and after three washings, it has a myriad of spider cracks around the inside at the base. Beware that this item does not appear to be dishwasher safe. I'd still buy it -- I just wouldn't put it in the dishwasher!

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Reviewed Rabbit Hole ... by David Lindsay-Abaire

5 of 5 people found this review helpful

**Great writing, moving story**

December 22, 2008

This is a well-written play that tugs the heartstrings without being overly sentimental or manipulative. It is a tough subject to be sure, but the playwright adeptly mixes in just enough humor to keep it from becoming downright depressing. There is also hope that the central couple will overcome the fallout from this tragic event to repair their own relationship and come to terms with their loss.

The writing is naturalistic to the point that I heard conversations that I've had with my own wife. I chuckled as the husband dug himself a hole than struggled to get out of it to no avail. Gentlemen, be prepared for a few lessons!

I have not seen a production of this play, but I imagine that care must be taken by those involved not to allow any of the performances to become self-indulgent. There are even notes to this effect in the forward by the author himself. Danger, danger -- this play could be a depressing mess if done poorly!!!

It wouldn't surprise me to see this become a movie in the next few years. I'd love to see it mounted as an independent film with the original Broadway cast.

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Reviewed Stick Scents Diffusers, 4-Ounce Bottles, Holiday Variety Pack of 3 ...

**Nice, but not for a large area**

December 22, 2008

First, I love the concept behind this company and the good work they're doing in the community. That helped me pull the trigger on this purchase. I also like the scent that we first opened. As others have noted, these are easy on the nose and not overpowering and artificial like some other products.

I believe we made a mistake, however, by placing this in our kitchen which is "open" and part of our great room. In this large area, you really need to be standing at the sink to get any aroma at all. I think these would be more effective in a small

bathroom or an enclosed room. Also, beware that the 4-oz product has lasted just under 2 months for us during a cold, Ohio winter. Yes, it is drier than usual at this time of year. We have only fipped the sticks a handful of times, too, so I don't imagine the lifespan has been shortened as a result of that.

Bottom line, though, is that we enjoy the scent when we CAN smell it. I think we'll open another one in our master bath to see how it does.

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Reviewed Creative MuVo TX FM 512 MB MP3 Player ...

3 of 3 people found this review helpful

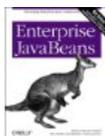
**So far, so good after one false start**

September 26, 2005

Have been very happy with this little player. Like others, I am thrilled with ability to plug the player directly into the computer. Great design.

I did have one problem with the first unit I purchased, so be sure to thoroughly test during the trial period! The first unit would slowly increase in volume from 1 to 30, then when it hit 31 it would make a huge jump in volume! As luck would have it, the volume at 30 was way too low and 31 was way too loud. Back it went for a quick and easy exchange.

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Reviewed Enterprise JavaBeans, Fourth Edition ... by Richard Monson-Haefel

**Excellent reference for EJB**

May 10, 2005

First note that I am a long-time OO developer, but relative newcomer to Java and J2EE. With barely a year under my belt of Java, JSPs, and Servlets, I found this book an excellent learning resource for EJB. Were I a rank beginner, I think I may have been lost.

I had the luck (?) to have begun reading the Third Edition before realizing that it wasn't the latest. I have found the Fourth Edition to be a vast improvement over that one -- easier to understand and less outdated info.

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