

Monstrosity Pipes (Merchandise Review)

Written by Dave McKendry
Monday, 08 March 2010 17:34



I have to preface this review by saying that I don't smoke a pipe. Well, I don't smoke *this* kind of pipe... Wait, I may want to run for political office someday. OK, I don't smoke, but I made an exception for this coverage. Fortunately, I was guided through the process by Olie Sylvester, owner and artist over at OomPaul.com.

Each pipe, or Monstrosity as they're called over at the OomPaul [website](#), is a hand-carved work of art, available in extremely limited quantities. The Monstrosities are treated like living beings, each with its own gruesome tale printed on its adoption notice. It's like a Cabbage Patch Kid for adults, just not as flammable.



Sylvester set me up with Trunkulosis (pictured). He's a short stubby thing that fits smoothly into your hand (that's Trunkulosis, not Sylvester). At first, it looked like someone just stuck a stem into a hunk of wood they found in their back yard and called it a pipe, but a closer look revealed the fine detail and carving that went into giving Trunkulosis a scary "face" and personality. It is, in every good sense of the word, a monstrosity, a brilliant bit of gruesome craftsmanship.

As for the smoking, Sylvester also sent along a very nice Black Aromatic tobacco. I don't know much about the stuff, but I can only guess that this is the good shit. My first attempt was not the gasping-and-choking affair I thought it would be. With Trunkulosis' help, I was puffing away like a pro. It was a nice experience without a single bit of wayward ash, tobacco or burning ember, just smooth smoking. But be warned: These are heavy, so make sure to always hold on with at least one hand. I almost lost several years of expensive dental work trying to keep a grip with just my teeth.

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At first glance, you may think about building a shire and helping out a few hobbits, but make no mistake about it: This is a rock star's pipe, a true piece of heavy metal, albeit carved from wood. These horror-themed pipes are hardcore items that take the sophistication and snobbery out of pipe smoking, combining Gothic carvings with reptilian features; it's easy to see why some fans call Sylvester the "Stephen King of the pipe world." He hosts a weekly podcast at the OomPaul site for pipe aficionados (no, I didn't know they existed either), and stands behind his work with a lifetime guarantee (who does that anymore?!). So now, thanks to my Monstrosity, I am an occasional pipe smoker indoctrinated by a great pipe.

And by the way, smoking is bad for you, so don't do it, kids. Disclaimer, disclaimer, disclaimer, legal notice, and we're done.

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