



John Mahoney, general manager at Art Dogs & Grace, is happy to explain cannabis hardware to customers.
PHOTO/JERI DAVIS

Glassy eyed

Cannabis hardware

When it comes pipes, bongs, dab rigs or vaporizers, putting in the time to do a bit of research and purchasing something high quality can make a difference in your experience and maybe even your health.

At Art Dogs & Grace, 218 Vassar St., general manager John Mahoney is happy to spend time explaining the options, which vary more than you might expect.

Vaporizers have been on the market for years now, and they come in multiple varieties, some which work with either flower or concentrates, others with both.

"We try to concentrate on better quality ones that are better backed," Mahoney said. "Vaporizers are kind of like computers these days. Every couple of months, something new is coming out."

Mahoney explained that some vaporizers—like one called the Volcano, made by company Storz and Bickel—are large and intended for home use. Others, including Pax vaporizers are compact and portable. Some, like the Dr. Dabber Switch, can be used for both concentrates and flower and come with a water pipe attachment.

"With concentrates becoming so much more popular, there have been a lot more electronics for concentrates that have come out," Mahoney added.

These can be a good alternative to dab rigs, which require more hardware—including a torch—and have a learning curve.

One called the Huni Badger is what's known as a "nectar collector." According to Mahoney, it's electronic, and you can simply turn it on, let it heat up and dip it directly into concentrates. (Pro tip: dip nectar collectors lightly into the side of the concentrate container instead of the center to avoid wasting product.)

Even if you're in the market for a simple bong or traditional pipe, there are things to consider. Mahoney said the first is the quality of the materials. At Art Dogs, the glassware is made in the United States.

"A lot of the stuff that's imported has leaded colors or drilled out bowl holes—different things that make it so you don't want to smoke out of it," Mahoney said. "The first time you smoke out of a pipe that has a drilled out bowl hole, if you haven't cleared the pipe and cleaned it properly, you could possibly inhale glass off of that first hit—which silicosis is a serious problem."

Another tip Mahoney gives is to look for a pipe with a larger carburetor than bowl hole, as this will allow you to clear the smoke from the pipe—preventing stale smoke from lingering in it.

When it comes to bongs, Mahoney advises looking for ones that have advanced downstems (the glass piece that connects the bowl to the body of the bong).

"The main thing with a water pipe is getting that percolation, so you're making more contact with the water," he said. "A classic downstem that has a big hole in the bottom and slits on the sides."

Because the smoke is going to take the path of least resistance, it'll move mostly through the big hole, Mahoney explained, resulting in little percolation. Newer styles of bongs come with downstems that are attached to the bottom of the bong and rely on slits—often called "percs"—to create airflow through water. One company called Mobius makes what it calls a matrix perc.

"That perc is crosscut vertically and horizontally, so it has a ton of holes all the way around it, generating more bubbles," he said. "It's ... stacking bubbles on top of themselves. And with that stacking effect—one, you're reducing the air space, so there's not time for your smoke to become stale; and it's generating so many bubbles that you're making more contact with the water, meaning cleaner, cooler smoke." □

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