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LOW 40k HIGH 128k

## 40 ounces of heaven

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Problem: Tuition bills and a habit of buying post-ironic t-shirts at Target have weakened your bank account, yet your desire to risk serious liver damage remains strong.

Solution 1 (impractical): Quit drinking; consider (but do not commit to) a rigorous exercise regimen.

Solution 2 (practical): Buy a 40-ounce bottle of beer.

Solution 2 addendum (even more practical): Buy two.

### Top 40 moments in pop culture

1. Martha Stewart sips from a 40 of Olde English on an episode of Late Night with Conan O'Brien
2. "We could go out and get forties, fuck goin' to that party..." The Strokes, "12:51."
3. Spoofing Jay-Z's business endeavors, Dave Chapelle pours a 40 on a Roc-A-Fella tampon to demonstrate its absorbing power in a fake commercial on his show
4. In a season one Family Guy episode, Peter and his friends drink 40-ounce bottles of Pawtucket Patriot beer
5. In an ATandT commercial, buff doofus Carrot Top stands in front of a bar filled with 40s that read "1-800-CALL-ATT"

Source: 40ozmaltliquor.com

Cheap and totemic, the 40 offers an evening of drinking that's easier on the wallet than nearly everything else available in the liquor store (Franzia boxed wine being the only notable challenger). The beer available to buy in the 40-ounce, glass-bottled format is of two types: regular beer (generally domestic) and malt liquor, the latter being the more celebrated of the two. Malt liquor is brewed somewhat differently from beer (less hops, more corn and fermentable sugars) and has a higher alcohol percent by volume, generally between 6 and 9 percent.

While the 40 does suffer from a decidedly negative image (well-documented in the Wayans brothers' 1996 neo-classical semi-hit Don't Be a Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood), its comparative advantages are undeniable. With a standard market cost of between \$2 and \$3 depending on the brand, 40s are about as cheap as a gallon of gas.

"It's a lot of booze for not a lot of money," says Jon Franklovigli, Aberdeen, S.D., senior.

And though there is no statistical evidence, 40s may confer an elevated social status and an increased sense of self-worth on

those who drink them.

"It's pretty impressive to be walking around with a big bottle of beer," says Alex Herman, Hays junior. "It makes you feel more manly" than people who drink their beer from a tiny 12-ounce can or bottle.

Similar to their imposing size, 40s possess a greater novelty than most regular beers. With their flamboyant label designs and (usually) animal-based nomenclature, such as King Cobra and Pit Bull, 40s are as good for a laugh as they are for a hangover.

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Pete 'Bruz' Brusyo, a mortgage broker from Basking Ridge, N.J., enjoys 40s and their novelty so much that he began collecting them when he was a student at Rutgers University. His collection is now the world's largest and includes more than 400 unique brands and varieties.

"It's been the largest for a while and it's only getting bigger," he says.

Brusyo says many of the bottles in the collection were originally purchased during road trips in college, as 40s vary in availability by region. As his collection grew, he began browsing Web sites to seek out more unique bottles but found the sites to be of little help.

So he started his own, 40ozmaltliquor.com, now the Internet's largest site dedicated to 40s and malt liquor. The site has more than 1,200 registered members, collectively known as the "40-ounce Crew," who help Brusyo add to his collection.

If forced to say something negative about the 40, one could concede that its taste isn't all that spectacular. At first taste, malt liquor can be called mildly revolting at best. But in the end, results are results.

"At the beginning it's OK because it's cold, but when it's warm it gets kind of skunky," says Herman, "by the end you can't taste it because you're kind of drunk."