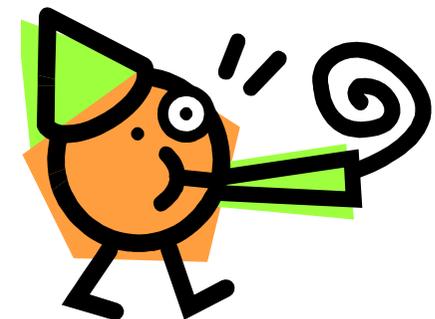


fig. 1

The bucket bong (see fig. 1) is an example of the strong NZ DIY ethic. This really hits the spot. When combined with some particularly strong pot, this brings on a totemic dog-like experience. This technique involves, obviously, a bucket into which is placed water. Into this goes a large 1.125L Coke bottle with its bottom cut off. A cone is attached to the screw-off bottle top. You put pot in the cone and the bottle is submerged in the water. Light the cone and lift the bottle out of the water but not right out. The chamber fills up with smoke. Then unscrew the top of the bottle with the cone in it and then suck on bottle while pressing the bottle down. The smoke is forced into the lungs in one god-almighty rush. For serious smokers only. For the inexperienced smoker this could bring on even hours of potentially fearful helplessness.

Put that
in your pipe
and smoke it
a traveller's
guide to pot
smoking in
New Zealand



Where do I get it?

There is very little on-the-street dealing in Aotearoa, Land of the Long White Cloud (of dope smoke). Pot is most commonly scored through social associations. So the best way to achieve this is to go and make friends with people who look like they like to smoke pot. Go to bars, clubs, bands, record stores, dopey looking cafes and head shops and try to make a connection. The main drag about this is that it takes forever to score and you have to be overly polite and grateful to people you may not otherwise want to hang with. They will probably expect you to blow them out too. Probably a good idea. Factor this into the amount you buy.

What is a finny house?

Smaller quantities of pot are sold in tinnie houses – gang-funded rented properties are used short-term to peddle pot to people anonymously and quickly. The location of these changes rapidly and spreads by word of mouth. Money is passed through a hole in a gate and pot wrapped in tin foil is passed back. All going well. Do not wear nice sunglasses or you may be asked to hand them over. Pot is usually OK quality but relatively expensive.

How do you know if you got a good deal?

Buying in larger quantities is better, but then you have to carry it around with you which can be risky – you may get ripped off or snapped out. A healthy ounce of pot ought to cost you about \$500. A reasonable tinny \$25. A tinny will only yield you a couple of joints. People scoring for you will often add a toll on top of the price – just pay it unless the total price is a ridiculous amount of money. As anywhere else, cheaper drugs are the privilege of

good connections. And as a visitor you simply have not put the time into this to expect cheap drugs as a right. No matter how cool you think you are.

Pitfalls.

The main thing to avoid is parting with money. Someone will say that they are going to score for you and will be back shortly. Insist on going too, or refuse to hand the money over. Better to try again with someone else. Unless you are sitting in their car, and it is a long way from where they live. Get them to give you their wallet or cellphone or somesuch. It is hard to be assertive like this as the scorer does have you over a social barrel. But if you appear to be a push over you are more likely to be ripped off.

As with all drug scoring it is best to conduct business at the other person's place – this way you avoid getting ripped off and you can get rid of them when you want by leaving.

Try to avoid conducting any sort of business with people who seem a bit sweaty and whose eyes seem to be open a bit too wide and who talk very quickly and fidget a lot and are skinny and a bit tweaky. They may be meth users, or in the local vernacular, “on the P”. This will not be a pleasant experience and might get very weird and scary. Don't go there.

The best deals are of course from growers themselves, but because much of NZ pot is hydroponic these days, particular geographic areas are less relevant than they used to be. Although the main outdoor dope-growing areas are still the South Island's West Coast, and the Nelson/Takaka/Buller areas. And in the North, Northland and the Coromandel peninsula. Harvest is in autumn and there are very good deals to be got at this time. Going to the source has its benefits for sure.

How do we smoke pot here?

Please note that mixing tobacco with pot is disdained in NZ. Pipes and bongos are really the sparrows of the dope world. Joints are traditional, and also common are the small skinny “racehorses”. “Shotguns” are where one person will put the joint backwards in their mouth and blow the smoke into another's mouth. This is surprisingly fun, effective, ice-breaking and libidinous, and is recommended.

Are there any special vernacular technical features to look out for?

Spotting: For stronger pot – and there is some very strong pot – spotting is common. This is done in kitchens. The pot is rolled into tiny spots – about the size of a pinhead – and put on a wooden chopping board or the enamel of a stove-top. Two flat flexible knives – the bone-handed Sheffield stainless steel ones that nana would have used are very popular for this – are stuck in the elements of a stove on a high heat. Prepare the thing you will catch the smoke with. Most use a bottle with the bottom taken off – this used to be a glass milk bottle, but more common these days is a plastic 1.125L soft drink bottle that has been sawed in half. Holes are put in the base and the base is then turned around and placed into the top of the bottle. When the knives are hot, take the plastic thing into your mouth, and take one knife in each hand. One knife is pressed onto the spot to which it will stick. The other knife is placed beneath and quickly, as the spot burns and smoke curls up, lifted beneath the plastic thing. Let the smoke gather and then when the spot is burned, breathe in the whole lot in one go. Sometimes people will put ice between the two plastic layers, or anything else frozen at hand, like peas.