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Coffee inhaler strives beyond the daily grind

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If \$3 for a coffee inhaler hits you where you breathe, don't worry. David Edwards, the inventor of [Le Whif](#), told

WalletPop that the price will go down eventually.

In the meantime, Le Whif intends to capitalize on its novelty as the first Joe you drag like a cigarette — followed by a calorie-free, caffeine buzz. It also sells a [chocolate](#) inhaler.



Sam Mazzarelli

Le Whif reps wandering the launch party Thursday at Dylan's Candy Bar in Manhattan said that they expect the product to flourish as an impulse buy, perhaps displayed near the cash register. Edwards called it the perfect on-the-go alternative to a cup of coffee, and better-tasting than a caffeine pill.

Only two stores carry Le Whif: Dylan's and Cardullo's Gourmet Shop in Cambridge, Mass. More will follow, the company says. You can also order from the [Le Whif web site](#). A pack of three runs \$7.99.

One lipstick-size dosage delivers about 20 milligrams of caffeine, about half the kick of one espresso, according to Edwards. You're supposed to get about 10 gentle sucks per Le Whif, Sam Mazzarelli of Marlo Marketing told me. But I'm thinking more like five.

I pulled apart the mini-canister, put it to my lips, and inhaled. Dissolving coffee grains hurtled at the roof of my mouth. Then a dusty after-tickle of sugar settled on my tongue. Not bad. I gagged slightly the first time because I apparently bogarted Le Whif, but it got easier as I took smaller puffs. I did feel a tiny rush, man.

Le Whif is the brainchild of the brainy and ascot-wearing Edwards, a Harvard professor of biomedical engineering who has worked with inhalable vaccines. He laughed when I suggested that he's not exactly saving the world with this pursuit. He said he got the idea while in conversation with Michelin-endowed French chef Thierry Marx, and then blurted out, "Wouldn't it be interesting to breathe food?"

Edwards introduced his concept in the keynote address at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Le Whif released an inhalable chocolate first (1 calorie) through Edwards' ArtScience Labs Network, selling it online. But it's the coffee (0 calories, by the way) that is getting the full advertising blitz.

A French laboratory is cranking out 100,000 hits of the stuff a week, so if it takes a while for interest in Le Whif to percolate, that's fine, he said.

You want science? Well, Le Whif's particle engineering renders the grounds into ingestible particles that are small enough to become airborne yet too big to enter the lungs. The taste buds can enjoy the tasting while the tummy doesn't have to worry about the digesting, Edwards explained to WalletPop.

"I was interested in creating a new way of eating," he said.

Whatever you say, Professor. Now give me another hit of that coffee.

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