

Graphic (Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA)

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Revamped Spray Offers Style and Protection

By Karee Maxson, Staff Writer



Senior Paloma Clark lives alone in Santa Monica and often runs in the early morning hours. Aware of the dangers of the area, her parents suggested she carry some form of protection.

“I thought they were being typical overprotective parents,” she said. “Physically, I think I can protect myself.”

Despite her confidence though, Clark agreed to carry the pepper spray her older brother gave her as an additional form of self-defense.

But Mladen Djankovic recognized the need to make self-defense devices more desirable to carry and appealing to women by making pepper spray bottles fun and decorative. When a friend of his was attacked by a taxi driver and had no means to protect herself, Djankovic said he understood the importance for women to have some form of self-defense. He felt compelled to act and started a company devoted to raising awareness for domestic and sexual violence against women — Pepperface.com.

As a result, he designed a product that would not only increase awareness for the issue, but was lightweight and stylish enough for women to want to carry.

Every year 90,000 forcible rapes are reported in the United States. In a single haunting act of violence, the lives of those women are changed forever. According to areaconnection.com, in 2005 there were 21 reported rapes in the Santa Monica area. Three rapes were reported in Malibu.

Statistics from the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (NCDSV) show that one in four college women are victims of rape or attempted rape, one in

three women will be attacked with the intent of sexual assault in her lifetime, and on average, every minute a woman in the United States is raped.

With those numbers in mind, women across the Pepperdine campus, as well as women across the nation, are searching for ways to protect themselves. In the past, options for self-defense have been limited to bulky cans of pepper spray, tasers, and stun guns. Some of these options are even illegal in certain states.

But with the help of the fresh, creative ideas of Djankovic, his new and innovative product from the growing company Pepperface LLC. is bringing a sense of fashion to the women's self-defense world.

The Pepperface.com Edition Palm Defender may contain the basic components of an ordinary can of pepper spray, but the new, sleek design is hardly mundane. The aluminum body of the canister can be custom designed by its purchaser. The standard Pepperface devices usually cost around \$35. More extravagant designs are pricier.

Many young women say its stylish, customized design and convenient size make this form of self-defense more desirable.

"It's cute, I would buy it. I probably wouldn't have to use it, but it offers a certain sense of security that's nice to have," said freshman Marwa Katbi.

Freshman Alexandra Goodrich has different views on the device, "I don't think a lot of people will be very receptive to the idea because personal safety isn't always on everyone's mind." She said, "If I were living in certain parts of Los Angeles, I might invest in one. But in Malibu, I don't see the immediate need."

Most pepper spray containers spray much like a regular can of hair spray, and often in the panic of the attack, victims incidentally spray themselves in the face. Sometimes the attacker is even able to take the device away because the victim's arm is extended when aiming.

But Pepperface fires from the end of the container unlike normal sprays allowing the victim to aim quickly and efficiently, while its thin design also allows the victim to maintain a secure grip on the device, making it more difficult for attacker to take it away.

To see the complete effects of the improvements, one might venture to Youtube.com to witness these self-defense devices being put to the test.

The Pepperface.com Edition Palm Defender's appearance is captivating, however, it is more than just a product. The Palm Defender is a tool to raise awareness for domestic and sexual violence against women, according to the product's website.

“There are 100,000,000 women in this country, and we would like to educate all of them,” said Keith Puckett, partner at Pepperface.com. “Our job is to highlight the need for protection, whether they buy our product or another product. We want to explain to women that they have options for protection.”

Many celebrities are teaming up with Pepperface.com to bring publicity to this issue that is in need of recognition. Some of these familiar faces include Hillary Duff, Gabrielle Union, Kelly Ripa and Paula Abdul. These individuals along with other entertainers are involved in an event called Prevention Purple Celebrity Auction, where they put their touch of creativity on Palm Defenders and allow them to be auctioned off to the public.

Some celebrities even use precious jewels such as rubies, sapphires, and diamonds to decorate their Palm Defenders. All proceeds from this auction are donated to the NCDSV.

Djankovic has captured the public’s hearts and imaginations by creating a contemporary product that inspires confidence and consciousness of young women across the country.

For information about this product visit pepperface.com.

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