

UPTOWN

RICH TOBACCO FLAVOR. SMOOTH MENTHOL TASTE.

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WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. -- Uptown, a premium menthol cigarette that provides a distinctive balance of menthol and tobacco taste, will be introduced by R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. into test market in Philadelphia on Feb. 5.

"We expect Uptown to appeal most strongly to black smokers," said Lynn B. Beasley, vice president of strategic marketing for Reynolds Tobacco. "Black smokers show a strong preference for menthol brands. Our research leads us to believe that Uptown's blend of both traditional tobacco taste and refreshing menthol flavor will be an appealing alternative to smokers currently choosing a competitive brand," Beasley said.

"The development of a cigarette that is designed to meet the taste preferences of black smokers is a clear example of how segmented the consumer products industry has become," Beasley said. "Increasingly, consumers have come to expect products to meet very specific requirements, and manufacturers have to respond to remain competitive.

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"Look at athletic shoes -- we now have walking shoes, running shoes, basketball shoes, tennis shoes, and countless others. In the food industry, we've got categories for sugar-free, microwavable, single-serving, shelf-stable and thousands of other 'niche' products," Beasley said.

"In the case of Uptown, we have developed a product based on research that shows that a significant percentage of black smokers are currently choosing a brand that offers a lighter menthol flavor than our major menthol brand, Salem," she said.

"Most smokers are probably not aware that the level of menthol in a cigarette brand is something that can be changed," Beasley said. "Not all menthol brands have the same amount of menthol taste. Uptown has a lighter menthol flavor than many brands on the market, allowing more traditional tobacco taste to come through. We think it offers the best of both worlds -- a happy medium."

Uptown, a standard-priced brand, will be available in menthol boxed and soft-pack styles of 20 cigarettes. It will be supported in Philadelphia by newspaper, magazine and out-of-home advertising, as well as a full range of promotional activities.

Uptown's distinctive gold and black packaging was designed by Trone Advertising of Greensboro, N.C. Leber Katz Partners of New York is the advertising agency for the brand. The ads depict people enjoying a city's nightlife, and the copy in the ads reads, "Uptown. The Place. The Taste."

The brand has 19 mg. "tar" and 1.3 mg. nicotine.

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. manufactures and markets one of every three cigarettes sold in the United States. The company's major brands are Winston, Salem, Camel, Vantage, Doral, More, NOW, Century and Ritz.

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