

Central Vacuum users provide excellent reasons to purchase central vacuums instead of upright and canister vacuums despite reports.

MD Manufacturing has conducted extensive studies of its buyers and obtained amazing results, including a 100-percent satisfaction rating, with respondents describing their central vacuums as wise investments. Ninety-nine percent of MD users report their homes are cleaner, and 87 percent report they use their vacuums more often due to their ease of use, power, and versatility.

Even though national magazines attempt to rate central vacuums, their knowledge of the central vacuum industry is limited. Yes, central vacuums are a bit pricier, and often require professional installation, but end users report their value far outweighs any extra cost.

Even Consumer Reports confirms, in its July 2004 issue, that central vacuums are more convenient. The magazine observes central vacuums need to be emptied far less often, and trail no loose cords to trip over. The article also admits that not having to pull or push around a portable vacuum may be worth the central vacuum's extra expense.

Although the editor's state central vacs tend to be quieter because the units are out in the garage, Consumer Reports did not compare noise levels at the power units, but inside homes, far from the noisy motors.

The editor's emissions test was conducted in vacuumed rooms, as if the vacs in question were portables. But this has absolutely no bearing on the performance of actual central vacuums, which are outside the vacuumed areas.

Consumer Report's testing also provided strange results because it really did not compare apples to apples. For instance, the MD vacuum unit scored the highest of all systems in all categories, except for carpet and bare floor cleaning. This is likely due to the fact MD is the only manufacturer to offer a 14-inch wide floor tool, significantly wider than the standard 12-inch floor tool used on all the other nine competitors. Similarly, MD employs a wider carpet brush.

The Consumer Reports article is also confusing because it introduces portable vacuum comparisons in the middle of central vacuum discussions. Consumers might easily misinterpret the inconveniences of portable vacuums as also applying to the central vacuum sections. The article addresses inconveniences and poor emissions, but is actually referring to portable vacuums when it does so, not central vacuums.

The Nutone vacuum is praised for being the quietest in the room, but the Nutone's power unit was almost the loudest of all those tested. The Beam unit is recommended for carpet performance, but was the loudest in the room and did not have manual height adjustments.

Not surprisingly, all 10 central vacuums were rated Very Good, with the top five models (including MD's) rated practically identical, overall. Nutone, Beam, Vacuflo, Eureka and MD all earned very similar ratings. MD was actually surprised that its "Bare Floor" ratings weren't astronomically higher. Our products perform excellently in this category, and we can only wonder whether the second intake port on the power unit was properly closed. (MD is the only central vacuum maker to offer dual intake ports on the vacuum unit. If one were left open, it would have severely affected the results.)

MD was also greatly disappointed with the emissions test procedure. Because emissions were one of the main judging criteria, the editors should have evaluated the emissions on the exhaust of the central vacuums. MD vacuums use the most extensive filtration system available to insure that all dust is captured. To make it fair,

editors should have compared exhaust emissions from the vacuum motors because many of the higher rated units expel a tremendous amount of debris from the exhaust.

The article rated a few portable vacuums as having better filtration than central vacuums — which is impossible. The test method was flawed and, as a result, all central vacuums were given the same emissions rating of Very Good. Because central vacuums do not emit ANY air back into a room, they inherently have far better filtration than portable vacuums, which send their exhaust back into the same room being vacuumed.

The article warned consumers that if they use a cyclonic filtration system, a mask should be worn when emptying the tank. The cyclonic units created more dust than the bag-type. Four of the units had practically the same motor yet, oddly, the weakest motor tested provided the “Best Buy”.

Overall, the article rates as “Best Buys” the two least-expensive products with the fewest features. It then contradicts itself by asserting that “upgrades are particularly worthwhile.” It suggests buyers invest in a muffler, but fails to indicate which units require a muffler. MD’s SilentMaster, which does not need a muffler, was penalized for not being the least expensive product — even though it was more powerful, and performed better than the designated “Best Buy”.

Nearly every MD Central Vacuum user and dealer will tell you, as confirmed by our survey, that purchasing an MD Central Vacuum System was a wise investment, and that MD vacuums are superior products within the industry.

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