Velara Velaqua Review

The Unit is VERY Large. How else can we say it? The Velaqua is the largest countertop water device we have ever seen! At a whopping 18.5" high x 11" deep x 10" wide the unit is a behemoth. In most areas of the country the standard cabinet height is about 18" from the counter top, so the Velaqua will not fit under your kitchen cabinets… nor on your counter if you already are tight on space. In fact, it would be the largest above counter appliance you have! To contrast, the UltraWater pHD countertop has a 4" diameter footprint and is only 12' tall. The UltraWater pHD pitcher is the same 12' tall by 4 inches at its widest point and about 11 inches long. The same size as almost any standard pitcher. We've always said, bigger is not better. The compact design coupled with the unmatched safety and performance you get with UltraWater backed by certified test results proves our point.

Where am I going to put it? It won't fit under my cabinets! Or in my refrigerator!

50% taller and 50% deeper than the largest ionizer ... and not nearly as modern looking.

The UltraWater pHD pitcher is much smaller, and only takes 3 minutes to make a liter of alkaline, CLEAN water.

Cheap Plastic. Poor Fit and Finish. The plastics used are thin gauge, low grade, flimsy, and cheap. Given the massive size of the unit, it should be made of sturdier plastic. Both of our units were broken on arrival – thin plastic combined with cheap packaging didn't stand up to the minimal stress of shipping . The plastic is rough in spots, indicating that the production mold was of poor quality. This means the fit between the pieces is not perfect. One look for most people confirms it is nothing more than a cheap, mass produced product. Not much pride or quality shines through. In contrast, the sleek-looking UltraWater pHD Countertop is made of 316 gauge Stainless Steel. The hard BPA-free acrylic UltraWater pHD pitcher is not only a thicker, sturdier gauge, but it outshines the cheap plastic Velaqua in looks, design, fit and finish.

Difficult to Fill Your Glass or Container. The design makes it tough to fill your glass or portable water containers. The dispenser is too small to fit a standard drinking water glass. A 16 oz glass won't even fit under the spout. You can fill a quart or liter bottle or container IF the unit is placed right next to your sink or on the edge of the counter and you angle the container under the spout. If not, the only way to fill it is if you tip the container at angle to get it to fit, which means you can't fill it all the way. You can easily and conveniently fill any size glass or container with both UltraWater pHD products.

Bacteria Nursery. The reservoir that stores the filtered alkaline, ionized water is a breeding ground. Here is a quote from the Velaqua manual: "*Do not place or expose unit under direct sunlight. Extended exposure to direct sunlight may result in in formation of moss / algae.*" The filter reduces chlorine, so there is nothing to prevent bacteria, mold, algae or other microorganisms from growing in the storage tank. Additionally certain forms of bacteria feed on calcium. The elevated pH increases calcium. Coupled with the

fact the water sits stagnant in the reservoir, the likelihood of growth increases exponentially. You will also have the added pleasure and hassle of frequently washing the reservoir.

With the UltraWater pHD Countertop, you have the convenience and safety of a flow-through device that produces clean, clear great tasting alkaline ionized water on demand, without the risk of growth. The UltraWater pHD pitcher reservoir holds approximately one third the water as the Velaqua, so the risk is proportionately less. It is also much, much easier to wash.

Inconvenient and Slow. This unit is what is known as a "batch processor" which means it processes the water in a finite amount. It does not give you water on-demand, once the reservoir is drained. After it drains, you have to fill the top reservoir and let it filter the water into the storage reservoir on the bottom - just like a Brita pitcher.

First you have the hassle of filling the top reservoir (1.5 gallons). You can remove it and fill it under the tap, however you must remove it with filter and hold the large reservoir while you fill it. Then you must carry and fit this reservoir back on top of the unit, which is no small task given the way the pieces join and the fact that the full reservoir weighs 12.5 lbs. The other way to fill the top reservoir is leave it in place and use a pitcher or other large container and fill it by hand. This would take multiple fillings.

The second issue is that the flow rate through the filter is extremely slow. Many people complain that a Brita-style pitcher is slow to filter. The Velaqua unit makes other pitchers look fast!

You do not have to fill any reservoir with the UltraWater pHD Countertop and the flow rate is three liters per minute. The UltraWater pHD pitcher reservoir is much smaller and can be filled under the tap. It filters at one liter every three minutes. ***The Velaqua is the tortoise; UltraWater the hare.*** And it provides much better filtration.

Loss of Potential Health Benefits. Given the hassle of filling the top reservoir and the slow fill rate, most users will be inclined to keep the storage reservoir full. That brings up a very critical issue. As water sits in the storage reservoir, the potential health benefits deteriorate because the alteration in pH and ORP is not stable. Over time, the water eventually returns to its original state. This is a critical point if you are buying the unit based on potential health benefits. The longer it sits, the more you lose the benefits of alkaline pH and negative ORP. Anyone who's been around ionized water knows that alkaline ionized water is best consumed fresh from the unit producing it. This is imply not possible with the Velaqua. In addition, it cannot be refrigerated where a cool, dark environment keep the pH and ORP stable.

The UltraWater pHD countertop produces the water on demand with all the potency of alternation intact. Since the UltraWater pHD pitcher reservoir is approximately one third the size of the Velaqua, you're more likely to drink the water fresh, especially since it takes so little time to make a liter or two. Importantly, it can also be kept in the refrigerator, where the cool dark environment helps preserve alteration in pH and ORP.

Untested Filter Performance and Filtration Media. The filtration leaves a lot to be desired ... or a lot of stuff in your water. The system uses a gravity-feed system, coupled with various undocumented filtration media, as well as standard granular carbon. Filter replacement is recommended at 500 gallons. We cannot at this time find a replacement price.

Deconstructing the filter, here's what we know:

• **Stage 1:** The first stage filter is a ceramic disc. Ceramics can act as a great sediment filter, removing fine particulates from water. In our industry the most common use of ceramics is to remove biological contaminants. However the reduction capability depends on the micron rating and unfortunately none is given. Ceramic DOES NOT not filter chemicals, pharmaceuticals, heavy metals, pesticides, and many other common drinking water contaminants. Nothing dissolved in water will be removed and the majority of contamination found in fresh water supplies is dissolved. Ceramics also create a major drawback in gravity-fed systems – it reduces the flow rate dramatically. In fact, the first two times we filled it took over 3 hours to produce a gallon of water. It took just over an hour for a gallon from then on. Compare this to the UltraWater pHD pitcher that produces a liter in 3 minutes with far better filtration!

• **Stage 2:** The second stage of the filter contains three different types of filtration media: a hexagonal shaped bead that looks like a ceramic nut, some form of ceramic balls (these could be impregnated with any number of things), and something that looks like gravel and is most likely *maifan stone*. There is no information on the Velara web site regarding what components have been used, and there is certainly no way knowing the quality, make up, capabilities, or if they came from a respected, verified source. Velara does not offer any test results, nor do they offer any track record in the water products industry. Officially they will not even suggest what contaminants their filters are capable of reducing or how much. Rather, they ask customers to buy based solely on a sales person's representation that the water is "purified naturally".

• **Stage 3:** Stage 3 is a mixed bed of CaSO3, granular activated carbon, and magnesium balls that are used to create ionization. There is no information on the type of carbon, the quality of the carbon or the level of activation. Carbon is a commonly used filtration media, and works well to reduce taste, odor, chlorine, and organics [VOCs] and some heavy metals. It's the same as what you find in Brita, Pur or other pitchers or faucet filters.

Bottom line, the Velaqua filtration system is a mystery at best. It will achieve some reduction in chlorine, organics, some amount of heavy metals and create good pH and ORP. However, it offers the risk of bacteria growth, a sure-fire deterioration of pH and ORP and won't touch fluoride, arsenic, VOCs, THMs, pharmaceuticals. There's nothing new or special here ... and no results of any kind to back it up.

Ionizing Performance.

Velara claims that their secret to creating ionized water is that magical ceramic disc we mentioned in Stage 1. While we do know that measurable electron energy can stored in ceramics, there is no proof that this electron energy is transmitted to water creating ionization. In fact, we tested it. The water achieves the exact same -ORP with or without the magical disc. So how are they creating ionized water? With ionizing media – a common, passive method of creating ionized water. That said it does a good job in this department.

It's Your Choice. Do you want a Velaqua dominating your kitchen counter space? It's very large, very slow, very cheap looking, flimsy plastic unit. It is inconvenient, difficult to use, has the potential to produce bacteria. The potential health benefits or alkaline pH and reduced ORP deteriorate after the water is produce, and there are no verifiable test results of any kind.

OR do you want a well designed, well engineered, small and super efficient, easy to use and convenient UltraWater product backed by EPA-certified lab tests that provide proof of up to 99.9% reduction in a vast array of contaminants?

Electrically Ionized Water vs Non-Electric. There are a number of pros and cons when considering electric versus non-electric ionizers. The biggest pro for a non-electric ionizer is obviously cost. That low cost does not come with out giving up some things. The biggest drawback with a non-electric ionizing product is have little or no option in relation to what type of water you get. A non-electric ionizer produces a set pH and ORP. You also have no acidic water option and all the benefits that offers. With an electric ionizer you get to select the level of pH and ORP. You also get all the benefits offered by the acidic water. With our premium ionizers, you can also customize the performance to your local water. You get supreme functionality and convenience in an electric ionizer, with more choices and options. Finally, all the verifiable science and research available on alkaline, ionized water was performed using electric ionizers, so the documented science all points that way. As for non-electrics, anecdotally we know that similar alterations in pH and ORP – albeit not as much change in ORP – and that we can demonstrate some of the same effects, like decreased surface tension as shown with the tea bag test. How it actually functions in the human body is a question for which no science exists. The jury is still out.