

February  
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# Roleplayer®

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Number 13

The GURPS® Newsletter



Before there was *Pyramid*, even before there was a *GURPS*, there was *Roleplayer*. It was originally produced as a free supplement for *Man to Man* and as promotion for the soon-to-be-released *Generic Universal Role-Playing System, GURPS*. From there it grew to a newsletter, and then a full-fledged magazine, devoted to roleplaying, *GURPS*-style. And now, through the miracle of online technology, Steve Jackson Games brings back *Roleplayer* in all its mid-'80s to early-'90s glory! All 30 issues are here on e23 . . . so whether you're a completist, a collector, a *GURPS* fan of the first order, or you just want a look at the early evolution of one of the best roleplaying systems out there, *Roleplayer* has what you need – and it's only on e23!

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## Historical Alchemical Elixirs for GURPS Magic

by Steffan O'Sullivan

With the publication of *GURPS Magic*, the alchemy rules have been expanded. Most of the 52 elixirs were written as part of a Fantasy game-system — that is, they weren't copied from historical sources. Yet alchemical elixirs of many types were indeed sold throughout the centuries to the wealthier nobility and merchants. In the course of doing research for *GURPS Swashbucklers*, I came across many references to alchemical elixirs and talismans owned by various queens and powerful ministers, who usually had great faith in them.

It is not the intention of this article to give a history of alchemy, but it should be mentioned that for centuries, alchemical potions were touted as having magical powers. These elixirs are mentioned in letters, books and documents of the time, and some are presented here in *GURPS* terms.

The names of the elixirs have been brought into line with the names in *GURPS Magic*, and are not to be construed as historical. I've had to fiddle slightly with the descriptions to get them to fit game mechanics, but basically all are given as the alchemists who sold them represented them! All *GURPS Magic* rules apply, including the limitations on learning the more powerful elixirs. The GM does not have to allow the addition of any of these elixirs into the game.

### Animal Control

*Castor (Elixir of Horse Taming)*: Grants the subject a +4 to any Animal Handling roll specific to horses and their relatives (mules and donkeys). In addition, it grants a +4 to any Riding, Teamster or Packing skill roll made concerning horses in a *non-combat* situation. The effect will last for 2d hours. Unguent only — rub on hands. \$50 in materials, 2 weeks. Cost: \$250/\$500.

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This issue of *Roleplayer* features more elixirs to add to your magical bag of tricks. These are new, not included in *GURPS Magic*.

**High-Tech** updates for more of our worldbooks. See p. 4.

Other features include roleplaying Swashbuckling ladies, and more helpful hints on character design by playtester extraordinaire Walter Milliken.

### Hostile Elixirs

*Hecate (Elixir of Unluckiness)*: The subject has the Unluckiness disadvantage (p. B37) which will come to pass once within 24 hours and then expire. Potion or Powder only. \$400 in materials, 6 weeks. \$1,600/\$3,000.

### Magical Abilities

*Aphrodite (Elixir of Attractiveness)*: Grants one level of the Good Appearance advantage (p. B15). The subject's looks will improve one level — from Average to Attractive, from Beautiful to Very Beautiful, or from Hideous to Ugly, for example. Very Beautiful people will positively glow! The effect will last for 2d+1 hours. Potion or unguent only. \$100 in materials, 3 weeks. Cost: \$600/\$1,000.

*Moly (Elixir of Magic Resistance)*: Grants 5 levels of Magic Resistance (p. B21) to the subject for 1 hour. If taken by a mage, all of his spell rolls are at -5! All other Magic Resistance rules apply; see p. M13. Potion only. 5 weeks; \$500 in materials; -2 to skill. Cost: \$1,600/\$3,200.

*Hector (Elixir of Pain Resistance)*: Grants the High Pain Threshold advantage (p. B20) for 1 hour. Any form except pastille. \$200 in materials, 2 weeks. Cost: \$600/\$1,000.

*Kouon (Elixir of Gambling Luck)*: Allows subject a +3 on all gambling rolls for 1 hour. Use of this elixir is considered the same as cheating at gaming, and it is only available on the Black Market. Penalties if caught using it vary from a fine to a knife in the back, depending on the clientele of the game! This potion only affects games of chance — it will not confer a +3 to win a horse race or wrestling match just because there is a bet placed on it! Potion or powder only. 4 weeks; \$200 in materials; -1 to skill. Cost: \$900+ (whatever the market will bear).

### Medical Elixirs

*Athena (Elixir of Calming)*: Nullifies any extreme emotion the subject is under for 2d hours and allows rational thought. Specifically, this elixir grants a +3 to resist any spell or skill that works on the emotions, enabling the subject to reason something through rather than be swayed by passions or sentiment. In addition, it will calm any hysterical or enraged person, and grant a +3 to the IQ roll to overcome the Berserk or Bad Temper disadvantages. It has no effect on other disadvantages, however. Any form. \$100 in materials, 2 weeks. Cost: \$500/\$900.

*Aurora (Elixir of Awakening)*: Acts on the subject as the Awaken spell (p. M43). Any form. \$150 in materials, 3 weeks. Cost: \$500/\$900.

Continued on p. 2 . . .

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