

July 9, 1982

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

ON

SALEM ULTRA LIGHTS PACKAGING

-Danbury, Connecticut
June 24, 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Purpose 1
Method. 1
A Word of Caution 2

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 3

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS. 8

DETAILED FINDINGS 11

PACKAGING DESIGNS 28

I N T R O D U C T I O N

PURPOSE

The goal of the Danbury research was to gauge reaction to three proposed package designs for Salem Ultra Lights, to find out what properties and characteristics of Salem Ultra Lights the designs suggested, and what image value they carried. In addition, the importance of a possible graphic device was to be determined, as were feelings about how the most successful of the proposed package designs might fit with current packaging for the other Salem family members.

METHOD

Three focus group sessions were held in Danbury, Connecticut, June 24. All respondents were ultra low tar smokers between the ages of 18 and 34 who smoked at least ten cigarettes per day. Two groups were composed of females, one of males.

A WORD OF CAUTION

As with all qualitative research, the indications are to be viewed as suggestive, rather than definitive. The emphasis in this project is primarily on the quality of what the respondents say and the implications of their feelings and emotions. The pertinence and importance of any comment and finding develop as the point comes up in various sessions, and is manifested in one way or another by the respondents in the different sessions.

Since we have too often been unwilling witnesses to the misuse of qualitative research in formulating marketing strategy, we feel obligated to inject a note of caution for the reader of this report. There are a number of clear-cut purposes served by qualitative research as well as a number of objectives that it cannot and should not attempt to meet.

Qualitative research can:

- Develop hypotheses about the subject.
- Obtain insights into the social processes of group interactions as they relate to the subject, as well as how they are discussed.

Qualitative research cannot:

- Quantify any of the above so that a "representative" picture is obtained.
- Determine how the market will react behaviorally to a subject that group participants have discussed.

S U M M A R Y O F F I N D I N G S

50302 5417

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The light green pack

- * Green of LG design is described as soft, pearly, luminous, moist, cool, minty, and soothing.
- * Color prompts thoughts of refreshing and cool taste and a medium level of menthol taste, a taste gentler than that of other Salems.
- * Some participants fear light green might betoken too little menthol or too little taste in general.
- * Starkness of white background of logo suggests to some a rather harsh taste promise.
- * Minty quality suggested by light green is pleasing to some, troublesome to others, who believe the mintiness would be related to the taste of candy.

Taste comparisons

- * For the most part participants cannot agree as to whether cigarette in light green pack is lighter or heavier than brand they currently smoke. Often when their brand is perceived as stronger, the cigarette in the light green pack is judged

possibly too weak. Those who already smoke Salem Ultra Lights say cigarette in light green pack would be smoother and mintier.

Light green pack imagery

- * Design sometimes prompts thoughts of outdoor scenes and outdoor people. At other times it evokes thoughts of young, inexperienced, first-time smokers. Most often, though, the image emerges as strongly feminine, urban, and sophisticated.
- * When the design is viewed negatively, the image involves an unassertive, retiring male or female.
- * When compared to images involving their own brands, the light green pack emerges as more feminine and sophisticated and sometimes as rather frivolous. This is especially true among current Salem Ultra Lights smokers.
- * Male Ultra Lights smokers believe light green design less feminine than current packaging.

The medium green pack

- * Color of MG proves far less pleasing to respondents, except to males who believe it hints at a

stronger, more definite taste and that this color relates better to traditional look of Salem.

Most, though, feel medium green means a cigarette that will be harsh and with too high a level of menthol. They find none of the moist, airy breezy properties they impute to the lighter green.

- * Participants usually believe cigarette in medium green package would be stronger than what they currently smoke.

Medium green pack imagery

- * MG image emerges as far older, less worldly, less upscale, and also less feminine than it does for the light green package.

The silver pack

- * Some feel silver pack (S) is too flashy, but most say it looks old-fashioned and stodgy. They feel cigarette inside would be either tasteless or very harsh. Many object to contrast between white and silver.
- * A few like silver package because it is closest to current Ultra Lights packaging. For them, the silver means lightness, coolness, and freshness.

- * Current Ultra Lights smokers feel this silver package is not nearly as "classy" as current design.

Silver pack image

- * Person associated with silver pack is usually older, masculine, a businessman, remote, or perhaps some kind of social outcast. Males either feel image is somewhat blue collar or feminine because of associations with silver.

Graphic device

- * The three little lines, or "puff," usually prove extremely popular among respondents, who say it suggests breeziness, airiness, and sometimes also energy and pizzazz.
- * Current Ultra Lights smokers are not consistently aware of pine tree logo. Those who are say it reminds them of outdoor freshness, but many say they feel the puff would be more effective because the tree also reminds of winter or does not seem closely enough connected with tobacco. The tree is not seen as uplifting as the puff. Some feel both tree and puff should be used.

The family

- * Many believe the light green pack fits logically into the Salem family and would be comfortable as the Ultra Lights extension. These people say the softness of the green connotes a lighter smoking sensation than the starkness of white and also better balances the green of Full Flavor Salem.
- * Still, a number of panelists believe white best represents the lightest line extension and are uneasy with the return to a shade of green.
- * Female Salem Ultra Lights smokers feel light green does not go the whole distance toward an Ultra Light extension, certainly not as far as the current silver pack, which is considered modern, classy, and "ultimate." They are highly antagonistic to the idea of a design change, and some say they may switch brands if the design alteration goes through. Some also fear the design may mean a taste change. Others, though, say they feel they like the brand well enough to endure and overcome their displeasure with a different packaging.

MARKETING IMPLICATIONS

MARKETING IMPLICATIONSColor

- * It would seem that as a color the light green of LG is the most pleasing, the most conducive to ideas of softness, gentleness, freshness, and refreshing menthol taste.
- * There may be a danger, however, the light green, as it is now used, may also suggest to many a certain degree of weakness or even packaging associated with mint candy.
- * The light green seems capable of evoking a certain degree of natural imagery and yet also to signify sophistication and chicness. For the most part the color will be seen as one far more suited to female rather than to male taste, however, perhaps less so than the totality of current Ultra Lights packaging.
- * There may be a danger the light green will be seen as overly pretty, overly decorative. However, perhaps modifications that will cut down on suggestions of candy imagery could also counter thoughts of flightiness and frivolousness.

- * Medium green and silver of proposed design would probably be likely to prompt thoughts of harshness, strength, and dryness. Besides, imagery for both colors would tend to be older and less upscale.

Graphic device

- * The three-line "puff" would probably not only entertain consumers but also strongly serve to suggest desirable qualities of airiness, breeziness, and refreshment, as well as a certain amount of purposeful vigor. On the other hand, the tree is so much identified with traditional Salem imagery that it may be well worth conserving. Perhaps some way can be worked out so that both the tree and the puff will appear somewhere on the package.

The family

- * For the most part there should be little difficulty in gaining acceptance of the light green pack as a natural Ultra Lights extension for the Salem family. The prior acceptance of white as the mid-range Salem should in part take care of this as could also the fact light green seems to have

greater power than silver to evoke thoughts of mildness and airiness.

Current Salem Ultra Lights smokers

- * It would seem clear a good deal of resistance to a design change will be encountered from current Salem Ultra Lights smokers. They feel current packaging answers an aesthetic need for something very contemporary, very "classy," and very with-it. There can be little doubt a good number will see a light green package without a vertical line and with a different logo as a step in a traditional direction and away from a very much cultivated image of themselves..

DETAILED FINDINGS

DETAILED FINDINGSThe light green pack--the cigarette perception

The respondents in Danbury were shown a light green design for Salem Ultra Lights (LG and LG-1). They described the predominant color as silver green, sea-foam green, metallic green, pearly, soft green, luminous green, a toned-down green, and as a moist green. They said this color was cool, refreshing, minty, soothing, and soft to the eye. Many said the color made them believe the cigarette inside would also be cool and refreshing. They usually also decided the cigarette would have a medium level of menthol precisely because the green was not particularly heavy.

- The cigarette would be mild, fresh, and flavorful. It would be cool and refreshing. You'll feel it going down. There'll be taste but there will also be less tar. It will be low tar, but you'll still get that Salem taste. You wouldn't have to puff hard on this cigarette because the color is so gentle.

Many indeed said the cigarette in the new light green Salem Ultra Light pack would be gentler than other Salems.

- This is a toned-down cigarette because the green is toned down. It would be less harsh, cool and mild. The green is mild. It would be as refreshing as being outside, a light and moist cigarette.
- You wouldn't feel this when you inhaled. It wouldn't be a heavy smoke. There would be more naturalness in this cigarette.

- The menthol here would be middle of the road. There would be no harsh bite, no surge of menthol as you draw in.

There were some respondents, however, who believed perhaps there would not be enough menthol taste. They said they preferred a stronger menthol sensation than what they believed the light green signified. They very often also believed in general the cigarette might not have enough taste.

- The menthol would be light, maybe too light. I like to feel a lot of menthol when I smoke.

One or two people occasionally were heard to remark that the green here made them think of a lot of menthol, perhaps too much. A few even went on to say the lettering led them to believe the cigarette could have harsh properties or that this idea of harshness was engendered by the strong contrast between the white background behind the logo and the overall green.

Several asserted the green of the light green pack suggested a minty quality. A great number felt this could be considered an asset.

- The color is minty, minty fresh. Mint has a refreshing, nice taste. The cigarette would be more desirable with a minty taste, cooler.

However, perhaps more of those who said this green conveyed a minty message believed this not to be an asset. Some

associated mintiness with harsh methol, but the principal objection to mintiness was that it was linked with a sweet, candy taste.

- I'm negative to mint. The cigarette would be too sweet.
- It's crème de menthe or lime sherbet, a kid's cigarette.
- The pack is too minty and green. The cigarette would have too much menthol. It might be overpowering, like it could also be too sweet and sugary a taste.
- The color kind of reminds you of food, like maybe chocolate mint.

Still, it should be noted a good number of those who said they were prone to think of a minty or even a candy taste later declared this to be a secondary observation concerning the properties of the Salem Ultra Lights that could be inside this pack.

Taste comparisons

Further perspectives as to the nature of the cigarette in the light green pack were revealed when respondents were invited to compare it with their current brand. There appeared to be no strong thread of agreement. For example, some of the True smokers said they thought the Salem Ultra Lights in the light green package would be lighter than True, while others said it would be stronger. The same split occurred when the

packaging was compared to Merit Ultra Lights. Very often when it was said the new Salem Ultra Lights might be lighter than what was currently smoked, the implication was clear the level of lightness was too great.

- It would be fresher and lighter than True.
- It could be stronger than True.
- True is harsher. The light green means it will be softer and mintier.
- It could be lighter than True, but it might not have enough taste because of the light green. True looks like it might be more satisfying, especially when you really need a cigarette. The light green would be okay when you don't really need one that much.
- I think this might be stronger than Merit Ultra Lights. It would have a lot of taste. It might even be too strong, although I like the idea of more taste.
- I think this could be lighter than Merit Ultra Lights in a negative way.
- This might give you more of a lift than Merit Ultra Lights.

A Kool Ultra Lights smoker said he thought the light green Salem Ultra Lights would not be as light because his pack was all white. He said he wanted that assurance of less harshness. Another, however, claimed he felt the light green Salem Ultra Lights might be too weak, and this seemed to come from the notion the dark green lettering used on the Kool pack was a sign of stronger taste.

A Now smoker said she thought the light green Salem Ultra Lights would be lighter but still provide a good menthol taste. A Barclay smoker said she felt there would not be as much flavor as in Barclay. A Carlton smoker said these Salem Ultra Lights would be smoother and mintier.

Those who already smoked Salem Ultra Lights said that they expected the cigarette in the new light green pack would be sweeter and mintier. One or two added they believed this increase in mintness would make the cigarette harsher. Others said the increase in green on the pack meant to them Salem Ultra Lights had become lighter and acquired a milder menthol.

Imagery and the light green pack

When first faced with the light green design, many said they were most prompted to think of outdoor scenes and outdoor people, usually women.

- I think of a beach or a field. It's cool and there's a spring breeze. People are having a picnic in a valley. There's a flowing brook or a lake and grass with clover. Young people are there, a group of friends in their early twenties.
- It makes me think of an outdoor person and a raft. The pack has simplicity, and the green is an outdoor color. It's a color for an easy-going, calm person.
- If this pack were a person, she'd be physically fit and a warm-weather fan.

- I see a younger woman in California, someone in her twenties and into windsurfing.

A few declared the only personal image they could derive from the light green pack was that of someone young, pretty, and feminine and rather innocent, someone who would probably be a beginning smoker. On the other hand, the personal image often came out as closely connected to a more urban and even a more sophisticated female.

- She would be feminine, some kind of office worker, a secretary or a junior executive. She could also be a telephone operator. She's in good shape, slender, likes tennis and discos. She's not a real smoker, just a social smoker. She's definitely not a factory worker.
- I see an elegant woman, someone who lives in the suburbs and has a good deal of money. She's chic and neat, cosmopolitan. This looks like a sophisticated cigarette for a sophisticated woman. There's a silky look about her. She's cool and confident. She knows what the current sophisticated colors are. She's aware of fashion. She's up on things.
- She's in her mid-thirties and drives a sports car. She's well groomed and has a good figure, but she's not really into sports. She goes with someone successful.

Once in a while the respondents saw the image of the light green pack as involving someone rather shy and uncommitted about life, someone not wishing to give offense or even someone trying to hang onto youth.

Sometimes the respondents said they might even be able

to link specific people to their image of the light green Ultra Lights pack, such people as Victoria Principal, Jacqueline Onassis, Sophia Loren, Stefanie Powers, the Princess of Wales, Mary Tyler Moore, and Loni Anderson. The cigarette definitely was not Billie Jean King or Mama Cass. In the rare case when it was a man it would have to be someone like Oscar Madison. This went with the above-mentioned perception the packaging image involved someone shy and retiring, possibly slightly anonymous.

- This could be the local IBM salesman. It's not someone who wants attention. He's not a go-getter. He's calm, not overly powerful, probably cutting back on his smoking.

Only a few of the women thought that if the light green pack could be translated into a masculine presence a sophisticated, very individualistic male might result.

Image comparisons

How did the light green Ultra Lights pack compare in image associations with the respondents' current packs? Often it seemed more sophisticated, other times merely more feminine, and still other times a good deal less serious.

- True is bold. It's a take-charge person. It's someone more solid. This Salem is flighty. True is male, Salem Ultra Lights female.

- True is boring, Salem Ultra Lights is the advertisement for a hit movie. If True were a movie it would be a flop.
- Merit Ultra Lights is more masculine. Salem Ultra Lights is more interesting and stylish. Salem Ultra Lights is for the evening, Merit Ultra Lights for the day. Salem is more luxurious, Merit is hard hat. Merit is a house-cleaning product. Salem Ultra Lights is going out to dinner.
- Kool Ultra Lights is plain, clean, and simple. Salem Ultra Lights looks junkier, more frivolous. Kool Ultra Lights is more elegant. (One person strongly disagreed, though, and remarked that, in comparison, Kool Ultra Lights packaging reminded of no-frills generics.)

Several of the current Salem Ultra Lights smokers commented adversely on the image comparison between what they now had in hand and the light green pack. They felt the present design to be indicative of a responsible, contemporary person while the proposed light green seemed far more frivolous and, often, at the same time, too traditional.

- The new pack doesn't look like a cigarette for a responsible person. It has a young, irresponsible image. It's attractive but flighty. It would give me no edge or credibility, especially in the office. I'd want it only when I wore green. The old pack is more sophisticated and it's quieter, too. It doesn't hit you in the face. It has a quiet elegance.

The male Salem Ultra Lights smokers suggested current packaging was more feminine because of the vertical line, but they also said it was a more unusual design, adding that the proposed light green pack potentially could relate more closely

to the bulk of other Salem packaging. They also stated that after initial confusion about brand identity they would buy Salem Ultra Lights in the new format. In contrast, a good number of the female Salem Ultra Lights smokers were not nearly so complacent about a change to light green.

The medium green package--the cigarette

When the participants saw the medium green package (MG), they generally said they did not care for this tonality as much as they did for that of the light green pack. It must be admitted, however, several could find little difference between the two. Those who did commented they thought the darker green conveyed the impression the cigarette inside the pack would be stronger. Most said they were not interested in a stronger flavor.

- This cigarette would be too harsh. It would be stronger--stronger menthol and stronger tobacco. It wouldn't be as smooth. The pack doesn't look as soft. It wouldn't be as refreshing.
- This green is a turnoff. It's a thick color, kind of ominous. The light green is more genuine and sincere. This is dark, ugly, and anti-septic. It makes a cold impression. I can't identify with it. It's oppressive, kind of a down--boring and dry. It doesn't look right. It's not airy and sleek. It's too middle of the road to be the right green for an ultra.

Some believed the darker green might even signify more of a minty taste, a taste that would go with a heavier menthol.

Some, though, insisted the lighter green was mintier while the medium green was more like the green of a medicine.

- This is a heavy mint. There's no lift to it. There's more mint than tobacco. The menthol is heavy. It's kind of a bland, harsh, metallic, cheap green.

A few, though, said they thought the darker green connoted a promise of taste they did not find in the light green.

- I prefer this because it will have more flavor. It will have more menthol, and I like a lot of menthol.

The male respondents were as a rule more enthusiastic about the medium green package than were the females. They termed the green richer-looking, and they predicted the cigarette inside would provide greater menthol delivery.

Brand comparisons

Usually the participants felt the Salem Ultra Lights in the medium green package would be stronger than what they were currently smoking.

- It would be stronger than Merit Ultra Lights. (One or two, though, thought the medium green Salem Ultra Lights would still be lighter than Merit Ultra Lights.)
- It would not be as minty or as refreshing as True. It would have more menthol.
- It would be harsher than Kool Ultra Lights. (One or two thought it would be the same or even

lighter, but these were males who also smoked Kool Milds.)

- It would be harsher than Now, have stronger menthol. It would be heavier.
- The menthol would be sweeter than it is in Triumph.

The Barclay smoker in one group said she thought the two cigarettes would have just about equivalent menthol levels. The Carlton smokers divided, some feeling the medium green Salem Ultra Lights would not be as good, while others believed it would offer more taste.

Some of those who already smoked Salem Ultra Lights said that in comparison the brand in the medium green pack would be tasteless, heavy, and dry. These tended to be the same people who said light green prompted thoughts of sweetness.

The medium green image

The person smoking Salem Ultra Lights in the medium green package usually turned out to be older, less sophisticated, less upscale, less often a female than the person associated with the light green package.

- I see an older person, someone not in as good shape. He might be a salesman with unpolished shoes. He's not that much concerned with his appearance. He's less sophisticated, maybe a construction worker.
- It could be an older married man in a singles bar.

- I see a middle-aged housewife with no children. She might also be a middle-class woman bored out of her mind. She's frumpy, old, and dull, with no energy.
- It's some kind of office worker, either male or female.

The silver pack--the cigarette

The initial reaction of most respondents to the silver pack was that it was either flashy and overly sophisticated or that it reminded them of someone old and stuffy. This translated into perceptions of either tastelessness or into no feelings at all about taste. Once in a while it was heard the cigarette might be very harsh.

- This is tasteless, a boring cigarette. White and silver together are harsh. It's like a slap in the face. The design looks like a mistake. It's annoying.
- This makes me think of a harsh charcoal filter. There wouldn't be enough menthol in this cigarette. You get a blah tobacco taste. You need to see more green.

Some, though, said they liked the silver design because it was close to current Salem Ultra Lights packaging. They also said they believed they might get more taste from this cigarette because there would be a good balance between menthol and tobacco. Still others felt this packaging promised a mild, cool, pleasant, light, and fresh taste sensation.

Some of those who already smoked Salem Ultra Lights said

this cigarette looked harsher. Others thought perhaps it might taste the same, but they felt the design did not convey the same degree of distinction.

- This takes the class right out of it. This is basics and generics.

The silver package image

The person who went with the silver package was usually not someone the panelists would describe as particularly appealing. He--or occasionally she--belonged to another, somewhat remote segment of society.

- This is someone snotty and sophisticated.
- It's an old guy in wing-tipped shoes. He's unapproachable. He's a boring guy, a cold person, a businessman.
- He's a hard-core gay or someone out of work.
- He's opinionated, a guy in a pinstripe suit, an executive. Everything is straight on this design. Nothing flows. So the guy is older and conservative. He could be some kind of middle-aged professional type.

Some of the men thought the silver package had a stronger, more masculine, perhaps blue-collar image, even a slightly pugnacious one. Others among the males insisted the image was feminine because of the lack of decisive color and because of associations with silver.

The graphic device

The respondents also saw a version of the light green pack that incorporated a graphic device (LG-P, LG-P1) consisting of three lines. Very often the respondents referred to this as a puff and said the device said to them the cigarette was even airier and fresher than it might be without the lines. They were reminded of a breeze, of waves, and they liked the lines very much. Most said the graphic device should be included in any new package design.

- It's lively and airy. It's cool. It has pizzazz and energy. It's exciting. It makes what's already good better.

Some said they might not ordinarily notice the three lines, and a few suggested perhaps a leaf would be more appropriate. Most of the female Ultra Lights smokers did not recall the pine tree logo, but the male Salem Ultra Lights smokers did remember it. They were of the opinion the tree signified cool refreshment. Which did they prefer, the tree or the puff? Those who said they preferred the tree said it was directly connected with cool menthol and a natural, refreshing taste. Those who said they preferred the lines claimed the tree could also make them think of winter and the extreme cold, or they could not make a connection between pine trees and smoking. In contrast, the lines were airy, breezy, and "uplifting." Some urged that both the tree and the puff

should be used.

One group also said they preferred to have silver rather than a green bundle. Those who said they preferred the green were women who described the green bundle as an aquamarine they found more feminine than the silver.

The family

The participants were next queried as to how the mostly successful light green Salem Ultra Lights package design would fit with existing designs of Salem family members. Several said they thought the progression from Full Flavor green to Lights white to the proposed Ultra Lights light green was logical and convincing.

- This flows from the stronger to the lighter. The light green is the lowest tar because it's cooler than white, which is stark and bright. The light green is softer and newer. The Full Flavor green is definite, the Lights white is definite, and the light green Ultra Lights is soft.

Some also said the progression was logical because the two greens represented two extremes while the white was in between and not definitive.

Several of the male respondents felt medium green made a more consistent family member because it was closer to the original Salem color. Many of them, however, believed white should

be the color of the Ultra Lights pack because white signified the lightest taste available. Many of the female respondents also agreed with this observation.

- White should be the lowest. White is cleaner. It's the logical Ultra Lights color.

The female Salem Ultra Lights smokers also disagreed with the progression, but mostly because they did not like the idea of the current pack being replaced by the light green design. They felt, in fact, that silver, as it was seen in the current package, indicated an absolute not approached by the proposed design.

- The current pack is sharp and it says ultra. The silver is quiet and the design is modern and sophisticated. It's slender. It kind of reminds you of a silver Corvette. It says it's the ultimate. When you change the silver to light green it looks like you could go farther, that you haven't reached the ultimate.

These Ultra Lights smokers sometimes admitted they would probably stick with the brand even if the design were changed in a way they did not approve.

- I'd still buy the cigarette. It has proved itself to me, but I'd think they were stupid to change the package. Why do they want to go from a modern, with-it package to something that looks like mouthwash?

A few, though, asserted they might not buy Ultra Lights in the future because the package design, for them, could indicate a

change in cigarette properties. And one or two simply stated they would definitely switch because of the aesthetic and, for them, image change.

PACKAGING DESIGNS

LG-B



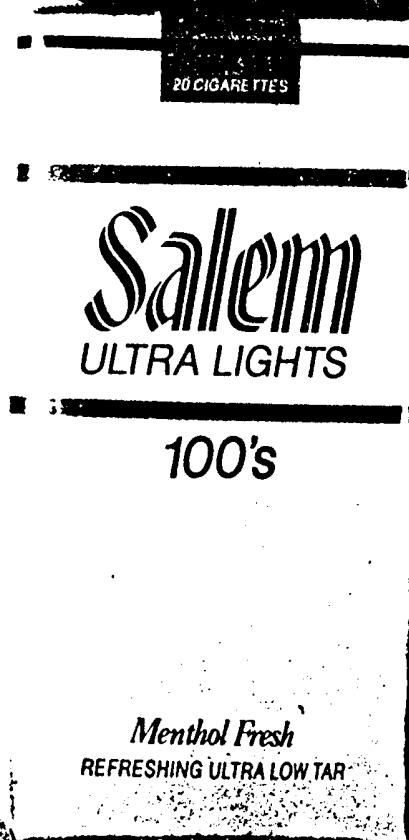
LG



20 CIGARETTES



20 CIGARETTES



LG-P1

LG-1

50302 5446

NR

MG-P1

Salem
ULTRA LIGHTS

100's

Menthol Fresh
REFRESHING ULTRA LOW TAR

MG-1

Salem
ULTRA LIGHTS

100's

Menthol Fresh
REFRESHING ULTRA LOW TAR

Salem
ULTRA LIGHTS

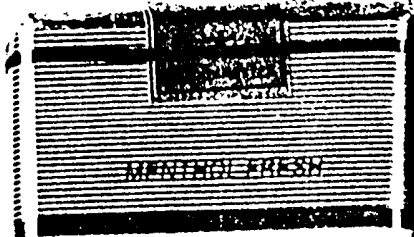
MG-P

Salem
ULTRA LIGHTS

MG-

50302 5447

S



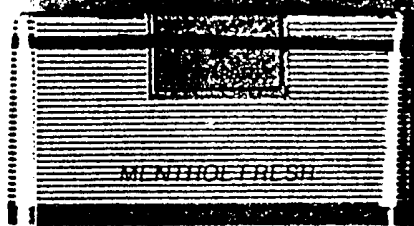
MENTHOL FRESH



Salem
ULTRA LIGHTS



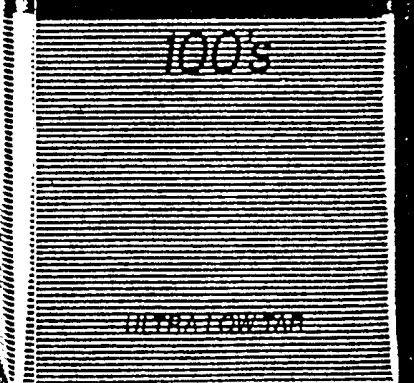
ULTRA LOW TAR



MENTHOL FRESH



Salem
ULTRA LIGHTS



100's

ULTRA LOW TAR

S-1

50302 5448

INR