

# By the Numbers

A test of tap and designer waters produces some interesting results

The *Houston Press* sent samples of Ozarka, Dasani and tap water taken from the *Press* office to Houston's A&B Labs, which is certified by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

A quick look at the heterotrophic plate count — aka the concentration of bacteria in the water — inspires a gasp when you get to Houston's water. A tally of 310 cfu's (Colony Forming Units) as compared to Ozarka's 2? Dasani's 1?

Actually, all three water samples scored within the Environmental Protection Agency's regulatory or recommended limits, meaning they're all safe to drink. The tap water sample, however, had higher levels of some elements, including aluminum, iron, fluoride and chloride.

As for the city's significantly higher heterotrophic plate count, we called the city for its numbers when it releases the water. According to the city, it scores under a 2 in the bacteria category.

Which means the level may be higher in the *Press's* tap water sample because of a contaminated faucet. Which either makes you feel better or gives you something else to worry about.

	TAP	OZARKA	DASANI	EPA	CITY'S NUMBERS
Total dissolved solids (affects taste)	320 mg/L	86 mg/L	70 mg/L	500 mg/L	255 mg/L
Aluminum	.093 mg/L	< .01 mg/L	< .01 mg/L	.2 mg/L	.037 mg/L
Iron	.031 mg/L	< .02 mg/L	< .02 mg/L	.3 mg/L	< .03 mg/L
Flouride	.72 mg/L	< .1 mg/L	< .1 mg/L	2.0 mg/L	.87 mg/L
Chloride	41.6 mg/L	4 mg/L	4.46 mg/L	250 mg/L	34 mg/L
Heterotrophic Plate Count	310 cfu/mL	2 cfu/mL	1 cfu/mL	500 cfu/mL	< 2 cfu/mL