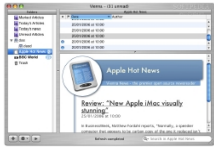


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Vienna: The Safari of RSS Viewers

Simple without being simplistic...

Aggregators are becoming more and more like web browsers. There are so many of them about, all touting their features and options, and graphics, that at times it is easy to forget that it isn't exactly a 'better mousetrap' sort of thing, and they are all good. This is perhaps why Safari has such a broad appeal. Sure, it might not be as feature packed as some of the other browsers, but it is simple and fast and easy to use and in 99% of the situations is all you need. Vienna is a RRS reader that is very much like Safari from this point of view.

Looks goodWhat can I say, Vienna looks like a crossover between iTunes, Safari and Mail. The distinct OS X look gives it the familiar interface of a program you are used to working with all the time. The window is very clean and uncluttered. The feed list on the right, which is also where the folders and smart folders are located while the news list and the reading pane are located on the right. The reading pane can be placed in one of two locations: you can either go for a Mail like approach with the news list on top and the pane on the bottom; or you can opt for a columns like view and have the news list in the middle, with the pane on the right. It all boils down to personal preference, and both modes have a certain appeal and familiarity to them, however, because vertical columns make for less readable text, the second viewing mode might be a bad choice if you are looking to keep the program in the form of a small window. The one thing I did notice is that if the window was made too small, certain elements would overlap in a horrible manner, and you can even resize it so that you lose certain fields. Not exactly very Mac-like for an application to behave, but at the mean time it is not exactly a major issue either. The Styles included with the application that you can choose from when viewing news are nice but some are just a bit too colorful for my personal taste. Though with knowledge of HTML and CSS it is easy to write your own. **All in one**The program can work with both RSS 2.0 and Atom Feeds, but you wouldn't know that unless you read up on it in the documentation. It deciphers the format it is working with and treats it accordingly, and it will handle everything automatically, displaying the information in a consistent manner, regardless of the original feed format. Another feature that is simply great is that it has an integrated web browser. More often than not, when you are browsing, you already have a ton of tabs open, and when you see that new news badge in the icon of the program you follow it and more often than not you end up opening even more tabs. This can get messy at times, especially if you follow links and seek out more background info. Whenever you click on a link, Vienna simply opens up a browser window in a new tab and opens the link for you. This way news related browsing stays within the application and doesn't mix with whatever else you are doing in the browser. The browser uses the same Engine as Safari, so pages displayed in it will look identical to the ones opened in Safari. No compatibility issues. The program even has a download window and an activity window, similar to the one in Mail. **Easy to organize**Vienna lets you create folders and smart folders to keep your feeds and news organized or simply to find something easy. Folder, or 'Group Folders' as they are referred to within the application can be placed inside other folders, giving you as many levels of hierarchy as you need. Folders can contain feeds, other folders and smart folders, letting you play with everything around as you see fit. Smart Folders are a familiar concept, and the implementation here is very much like the one in iTunes or Mail. The combination of criteria and the mark tool makes it easy to make a dynamic selection to suit almost any needs. **The Good**Familiar and simple without being simplistic. The Safari equivalent of RSS viewers. **The Bad**Some small issues with resizing the window that can result in strange overlaps and missing columns if the window is made too small. **The Truth**An everyday program that you can work with without it ever becoming

cumbersome. Definitely for those who want all the bells and whistles but perfect otherwise.
Here are some screenshots, click to enlarge: