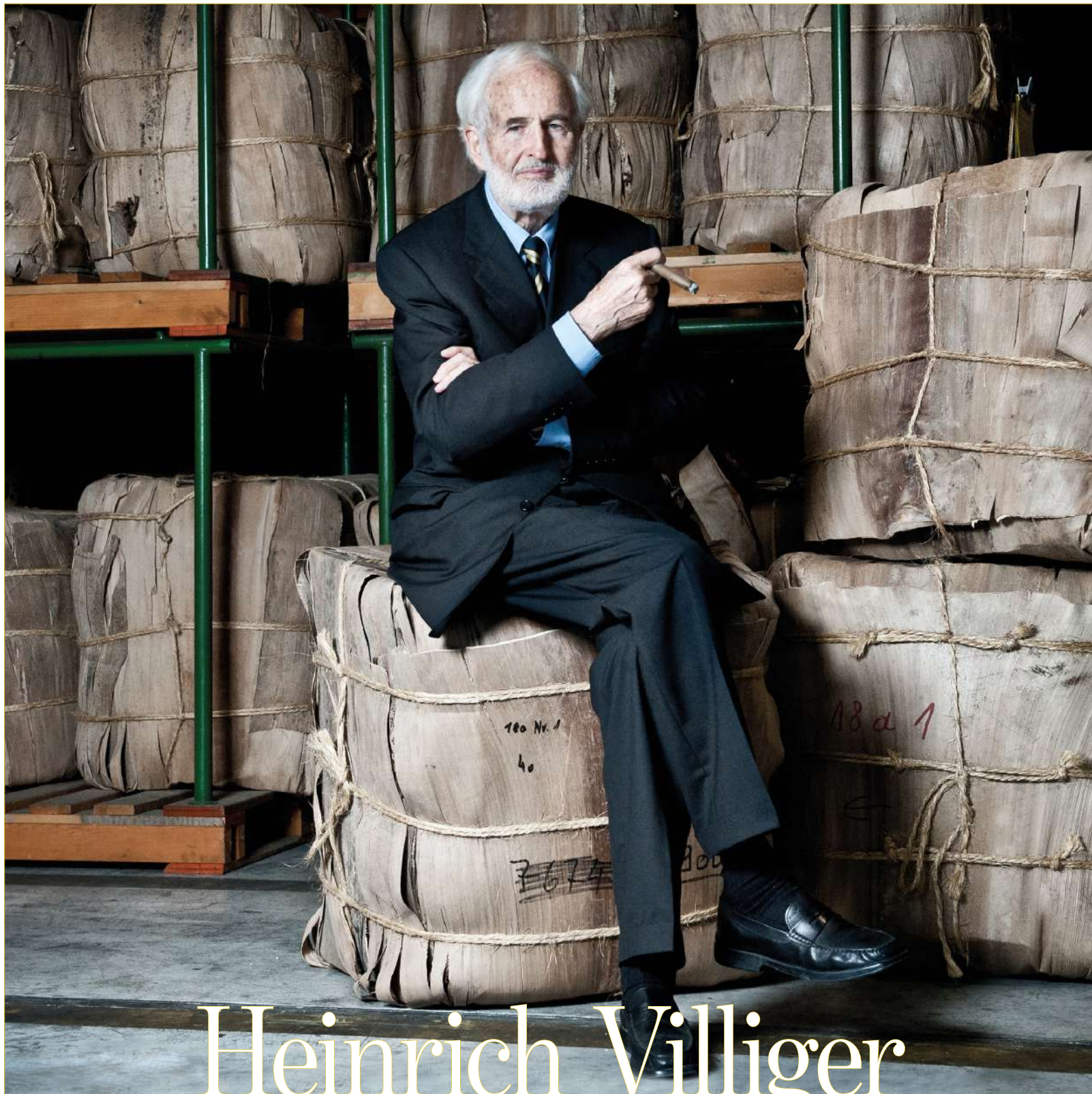


CigarsLover MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2020



Heinrich Villiger

- RH IN SUMMER - THE "SAVING" BLOW - PACHUCHE CIGARS - KAREN BERGER - HULK WRAPPER - THE TREASURE CHEST
- FLOR DE CAÑA - CUBAN SPIRIT: DRINKS & PAIRINGS - RESERVOIR: THE INTERVIEW - THE RETURN OF THE RYE
- BEER & BBQ: PAIRING THE BARBECUE - MEAT: HOLY TRINITY - THE MATERIALS OF WINEMAKING - SALT TO TASTE

CigarsLover MAGAZINE

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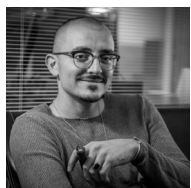
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Editor's thoughts

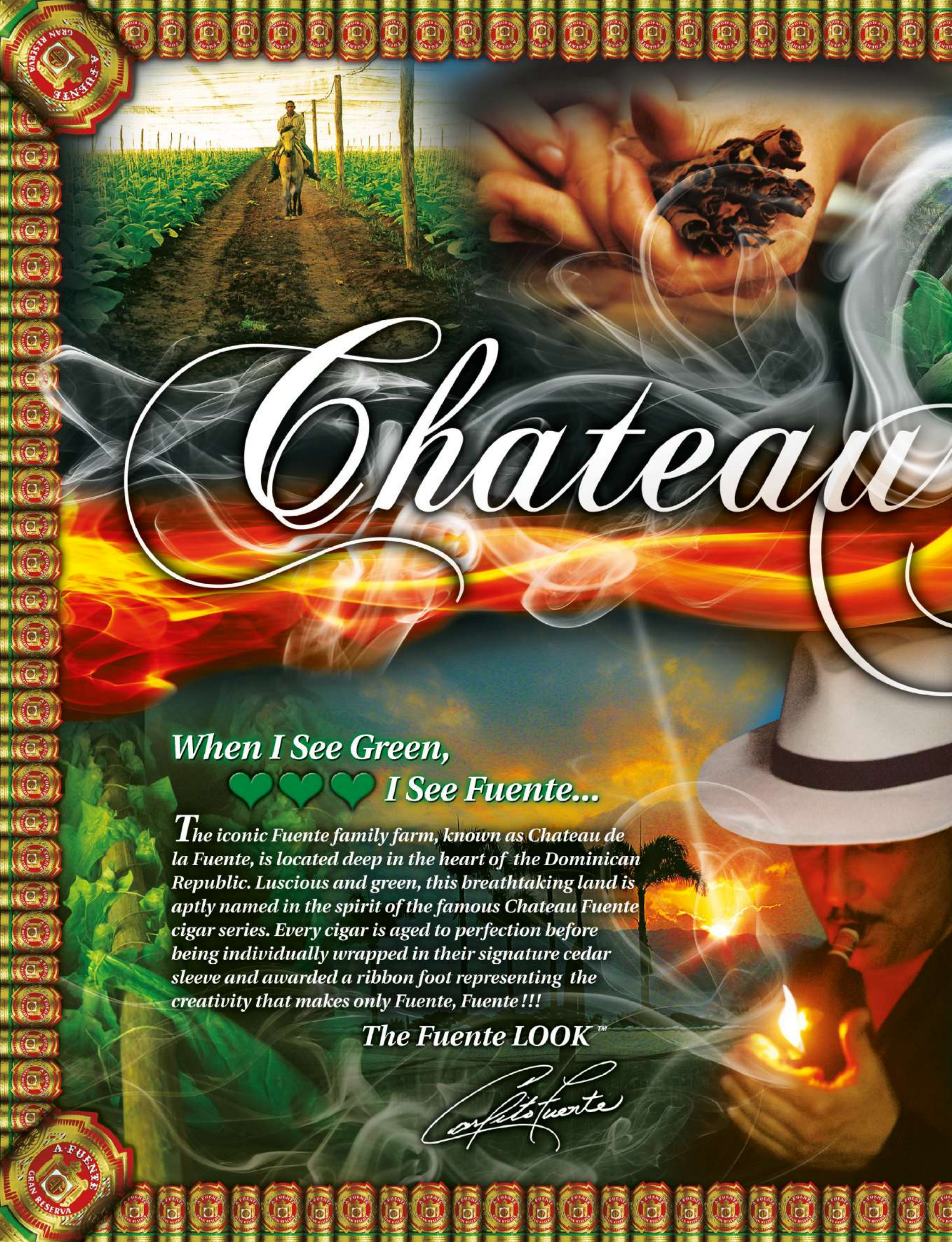
Summer 2020 is a special issue, which we publish in a period that will become historical, that of the Covid-19 pandemic. As I write these words, the situation is improving in many countries, while in others, the virus still represents an expanding threat. My thoughts and that of the whole CigarsLover team go to the families affected by this pandemic, both in terms of contagion and of repercussions at work.

We all have at least one anecdote to tell, which we will carry in our memories for the rest of our lives. I want to share mine. In February, as the Covid-19 still did not seem like a threat in Europe, I went on a planned vacation with my family for a few months. Everything ok in the first leg, everything ok the first few days, and then the infections took hold, causing Europe's lockdown. The difficulties were not few, despite being in the Philippines, a country that was hardly affected. However, the Philippine government rightly ran promptly for cover without waiting for the situation to deteriorate. This led to a forced quarantine and caused the cancellation of several return flights that we attempted to book.

In the meantime, albeit from afar, with my team, we had to cancel airline tickets and hotels booked for the cigar events that would host us, namely the PCA and Intertabac. We have slowly witnessed and written about factories closing, the logistical problems, and the cancellation of practically all the events related to cigars, as has also happened in other sectors. The difficulties in proceeding with the publication of this issue and the next one have not been small. Shipments containing samples of cigars and spirits have accumulated a lot of delays and, in some cases, have been blocked for too long, forcing us to use every resource available to complete this issue, confirming, as usual, the 72 products reviewed, including cigars and distillates. After four canceled reservations, after three more months than planned, the fifth time was the one going back to my little story. I am writing these letters right on the return flight, in a mighty Boeing 777, where there are only 87 people, a quarter of what it would be if fully loaded.

With the hope that this issue will brighten your time, and that everything can return to normal as soon as possible, a big #stay-strong to all our dear readers.

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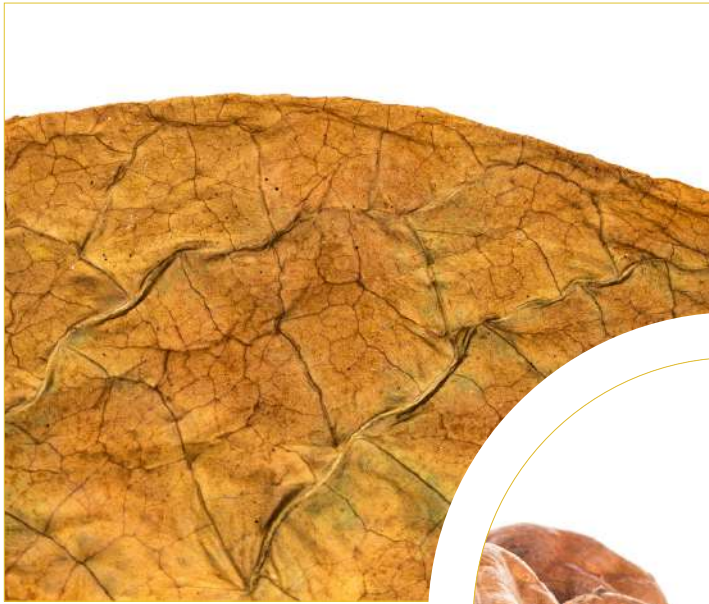
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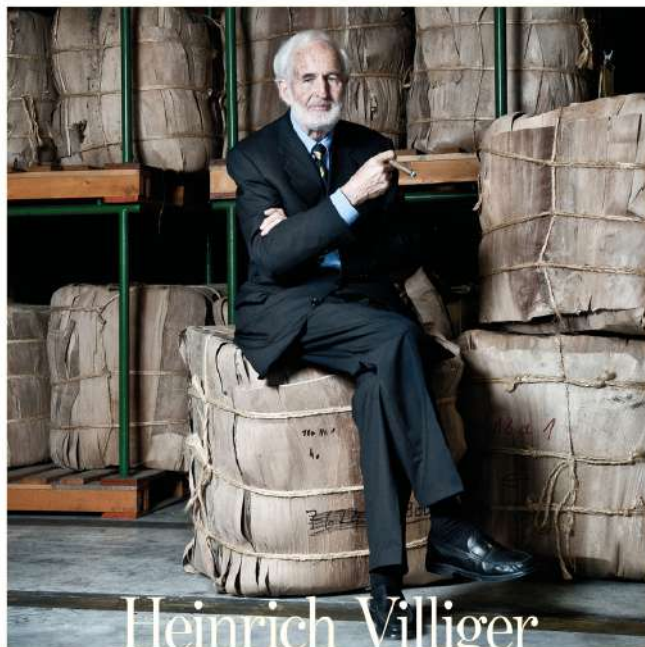
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Cigars Lover MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2020



Heinrich Villiger
2020夏季

SPIRITS

威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
你喝的是什麼

Federico Pasco

所有威士忌飲用者都會進行識別分析，標籤或熱情，孩子一直是標籤的主要吸引力，但是一個更精確的細節，必須加深，能與顯示許多有用的資訊：標籤。

無論是大的還是小的，有時用玻璃瓶裝，有時是雙面（正面和背面），有時在瓶蓋上，有時在瓶底，標籤屬於我們所有的信息，以了解更多的東西，而不僅僅是內容。它並不總是正確的，但一般的一些事情總是有效的。

空間產生產將其命名為威士忌，這同樣適用於英國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和非常其他地方，我們說威士忌，威士忌在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱獲得了嚴格限制。每一家蘇格蘭威士忌都保證了單一酒廠的產地。一些蘇格蘭威士忌則加了生產區域，以強調其地域性。

“歲月”之後標記出現的數字與產品的最低年齡有關，最低年齡因為，與蘇格蘭不同威士忌的混合相比，最年輕的數字是相等的。示例：使用三個標記分別標記8年，12年和20年的威士忌將顯示“8

歲”字樣，無論價格的市場情況如何，公司有責任報告其標記的年齡，但這不是強制性的。有時，您可以找到沒有年齡的威士忌：沒有恐懼，沒有擔憂或假冒產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低3年或5年的蘇格蘭威士忌。製片人選擇不標年齡，這仍然是未知的：它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉悅。

在標籤上，除酒精含量外，必須至少為40%。在這個數字下我們不能說威士忌。如果等號更高，有時公司會報告“Cask Strength”（英國世界）或“Full Proof”（美國世界）；我們在沒有用水稀釋的產品保存，因此，好像它們只是多餘中增加。然而，某些使用也可以使用高酒精度的威士忌的較低等級的木桶陳釀威士忌。



是，特別是如果前者有一定的年齡。

“Un-Chillfiltered”這個詞讓我們知道威士忌沒有被冷過濾，以及“沒有顏色”，或“沒有添加色素”（或具有類似的詞），解釋說沒有添加色素到正標位。

在特殊情況下，我們還可以找到所用桶的指示，甚至於桶/桶的數量。這種情況經常發生在非常特殊的威士忌中，或者在獨立裝瓶的情況下使其成為蘇格蘭的未來。此外，我們可以找到Single Cask或Single Barrel這兩種情況，它們強調了它的獨特性。另一個詞是Small Batch，它仍然是一個更廣泛的概念：你可以從兩個桶中取出，但仍比從一小桶（即一些例子）獨立的小桶裝桶的數量為自己的小批量結合了兩個或三個桶，而美

本小還沒有宣布使用的桶數量，但他們肯定會把更多的桶放在一起。

在特殊情況下，它們是發現精神和瓶蓋的日期，特別是當涉及到單個桶時：生產者需要強調精神在桶中花費的時間。

桶的組合符合精確的標準：您可以將兩個同一種酒廠，不同酒廠，甚至麥芽（大麥）和小麥（穀物）桶的麥芽威士忌混合在一起。在第一種情況下，沒有酒廠（這是一種常見做法），在第二種情況下，我們將混合麥芽威士忌（多年至它被稱為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合）。還有Clear Whiskies：這個術語與具有極低酒精度的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到與酒廠相關的各種詞語，或者使用的呢：穀物（黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌）。

我們試圖解釋各種標記上最常見的標籤，沒有標記的標記，每個製造商都做了自己的事情，但，遵循這些指導原則，在這個廣闊而獨特的世界中，您將更容易自給。

CIGARS

“I drink a great deal. I sleep a little, and I smoke cigar after cigar.
That is why I am in two-hundred-percent form.”

Winston Churchill



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RH in summer

*How to deal with
the high temperatures*

by **Luca Cominelli**

Very often the aficionados decide to invest in air-conditioned humidors or in devices that perform a control not only of the relative humidity rate but also of the temperature. The most popular have capacities that often reach a few thousand cigars. The prices of these pieces are not geared towards those who are taking their first steps in this wonderful passion and who still do not have a clear idea about how to store cigars. Air-conditioned cabinets are a storage solution that can effectively keep your cigars in a microclimate of your choosing. However, it is not mandatory to rely on these in order to guarantee the perfect aging for the cigars. The rule to keep in mind is very simple: If the cigars are always kept at the same temperature (in the case of walk-in humidors, cellars or areas that do not have a significant variation in temperature during the year), the only thing to do is to choose the relative humidity that gives you the greatest satisfaction in terms of smoke (the range is between 65 and 70% R.H. for preservations that range between about 65°F-18°C and 74°F-23°C). If you are not able to keep the temperature stable year round, the humidity must be adjusted for the climate and must be kept low as the temperature will be high.

For rooms that exceed 77°F-25°C, which often occurs in the summer period, the humidity in the humidor must be kept around 65% - 64% R.H., or lower. This is because the cigar absorbs more moisture at high temperatures. If you were to store cigars at 70% R.H. with a climate of 85°F-30°C, it would cause a swelling of the internal leaves which would end up breaking the wrapper.

In the opposite conditions, as can occur in cellars or in homes where we are not present all year round, if the temperature should drop below 65°F-18°C, care should be taken to set a higher humidity rate, closer to 70% R.H. and that it can also touch 72 percentage points in case of particularly low temperatures (57°F or 58°F - 14 or 15°C). A relative humidity level lower than those described in the case of low temperatures, would cause a slow loss of humidity in the cigars and consequent loss of oils and therefore aromas.

Keeping in mind these three situations, fixed ideal temperature, or variable temperatures in excess or in defect, there are now three ways to behave accordingly, always guaranteeing optimal conservation and therefore aging that will always and only lead to an improvement in smoking.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SESSION?



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PAGE



The “saving” blow

*When the cigar is about to go out,
blowing is the right choice*

by **John Jeremy**

The mechanics of combustion, as everyone knows, requires that the smoker draws air through the cigar from the side opposite to the burning end, bringing the smoke to the mouth. That said, there are cases and techniques where it is better to blow air rather than taking it. First of all, to cool the combustion temperature, and consequently, the one of smoking. Also, it can be used for the “cigar purge”, that consists of blowing while there is a flame on the cigar foot, in order to clean the cigar from elements that negatively influence the smoking. Sometimes, a blow can avoid the cigar from going out, as long as you pay careful attention. Very often, when the ember is about to die, the most common mistake you can make is to do some puffs, in a more frequent or powerful way than usual, that is going to have the opposite result than intended. This effect occurs because the ash, acting as a cap on

the ember, hinders the passage of the pulled air (or better, the oxygen). Moreover, the more you respire, the more the ash structure will micro collapse on itself, becoming even more compact. On the other hand, light blows inside the cigar, from where there is no ash resistance, will be sufficient to start the combustion once again. If you have a minimal camping experience on making a fire, you know that the flame is fed from below, with long and gentle blows.

If all this seems simple, the difficulty lies in recognizing the moment to blow. Two are the signals which can tell you that the ember is suffering: when the smoke cools down and when a smaller amount of it reaches your mouth. As soon as these two alarms are noticed, it is time for a light blow. However, this technique is not always enough, therefore it is sometimes necessary to reach for the lighter.

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Pachuche Cigars

*A brand from
father and son*

by **Michel Arlia**

The story of Pachuche Cigars started back in 2008, with Camillo Bazzell and his language studies in the Dominican Republic. On the beautiful island, he met the girl that would later become his wife, Heidi, and thanks to that relationship, he traveled back and forth from Switzerland to the Dominican Republic.

A couple of years later, in 2010, he decided to stay in the Dominican Republic permanently. His family was very supportive of his decision and now had a reason to visit the Dominican Republic.

Camillo's father, Christian, decided a year later to visit his son. Christian, a long time Cuban cigar smoker, asked his son, before his visit, to look for a cigar producer who would

produce a boutique cigar for him. Camillo, who until then only occasionally smoked cigars, asked his wife for help, and thanks to her cousin, they got the contact from Guzman, a small cigar producer from Navarrete, close to Santiago de los Caballeros.

Guzman produced a variety of samples for them, among which was a Maduro wrapped cigar. The Maduro cigars were not to Camillo and Christian's liking because Guzman worked with molasses, and that didn't fit their idea of a premium cigar.

After six months and some tweaks and changes, they finally arrived at a desired blend, an Ecuadorian Habano wrapper over Dominican fillers. It was eventually named "Liga Verde"



PACHUCHE

THE AUTHENTIC ONE



(the "Liga Verde" is not produced anymore). This process awakened Camillo's fascination for tobacco and cigars.

While father and son were working on the Liga Verde, Camillo, again with the help of his wife Heidy and her uncle, got to know William Ventura, who lived in Santiago. William, before opening his factory, Tabacalera William Ventura, was one of the first rollers at Davidoff and later their quality assurance manager. The vast knowledge of William helped Camillo and Christian find the next blends. He created the right blend to their tastes. Together with Christian, who enjoyed stronger cigars, they developed the "Liga Roja".

Camillo and William also created the "Liga Oro". Shortly after that, the "Liga Azul" followed. A full year passed until they had these blends ready. Their annually limited release, "Liga Platino", was born a little later. This limited edition comes in a single size, and William used for the blend very old and specially fermented tobacco. The blend is rounded off by a high-quality Brazilian Arapiraca wrapper.

While all this was happening, they had numerous lines ready, but they still had not found a name for their brand. Yet another of Heidy's family members happily helped with this decision as well. Tito Castillo mentioned the word "Pachuche", which originates from the Dominican Campesinos (farmers) and stands for a self-made cigarette, or cigar.

The word Pachuche, a term that nowadays is also commonly used by Dominican cigar rollers, is only known in the Dominican Republic. With this term tying everything together for Camillo and Christian, it only made sense to name the brand Pachuche Cigars.

Parallel to them searching for the right brand name, Camillo had started working on the logo of the brand. With an idea in mind, Camillo asked one of his best friends, Patrick Küng, for help. They have known each other since childhood and are like brothers. Camillo knew about Patrick's artistic talent, so it was natural for them to work together. Patrick drew up a couple of different design ideas, among which was also a "Días de los Muertos" inspired logo. The fresh and modern logo won over both Camillo and Christian.

While the first cigar bands were made by using cheap printing methods, Christian's company Bazzell AG, who manufactures printing machines, brought them to meet Albert Montserrat. The Spaniard owns the famous Cigar Rings company and had already bought two machines from Christian. Together with Albert, they started the production of their new bands, which use complex and high-quality processes such as spot varnish, blind embossing, and bronze powder for the main band. The bands located on the foot of the cigar that corresponds to the different "Liga" lines, use a colored foil embossing.

They originally planned to keep the Pachuche exclusive, but they are now also starting to be available in select stores. They are also working to make the brand better known. With all of this going on, they are enjoying every step.

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Supporting actor

A view among the most famous movies to understand how a cigar has enhanced characters, scenes and dialogues

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

Underworld bosses, politicians, wealthy brokers, gunmen, thugs, successful men. A non-exhaustive list of the characters who, during a specific or many movies, had a cigar in their hands. Who, instantly, conveyed to the public security, power, luxury, brazenness, overtness, status, affirming or remarkable traits of the character itself. For decades, especially those at the turn of the 2000s, the image of the cigar smoker was often associated with a wealthy, successful gentleman.

It is interesting, however, to dwell on certain appearances of our faithful smoking companion, not so much to compile another list but to understand how his presence was given a true "supporting actor" role rather than a mere tinsel.

From our analysis, we excluded the cinema transpositions of those people who habitually smoked cigars (one of them, Winston Churchill, has actually enjoyed many tributes on the big screen) and the characters of the TV series (as the popularity of those has significantly increased for the worldwide audience only in the last few years). Looking at different movies, we have taken note of common denominators with respect to the interactions of cigar-film, to be summarized in three different categories, which can sometimes even coexist in the same movie: the first, more classic, concerns the enrichment that the cigar can bring to a specific character; the second relates to the relationship it creates between two characters; the last one concerns the characterization of a particular scene.





Cigars in movies is a concept which can bring to mind great actors and great interpretations. Often this simple rolled-up tobacco leaves have been able to emphasize monologues, strengthen the character's merits or defects, giving the viewer a more amplified and convincing image of the stage representation.

Among the many examples to be cited is Tony Montana in *Scarface* (played by Al Pacino). The story of a Cuban exile craving for wealth and social redemption at all costs. His smoking cigars, in addition to an affirmation of his own self, is a constant reminder of his origin.

From one Hollywood legend to another, we move on to Robert De Niro in *Cape Fear*. The character he plays, the villain Max Cady, in some scenes smokes cigars of very generous size. In this film the intention is to emphasize the attitudes of the character (famous is his smoking in a cinema, without caring for the annoyed audience), such as his extravagance or his brazenness.

How would it be possible to not mention the saga of the most famous secret agent, 007. There are many actors who, when called to be the face of James Bond, have lit a puro, despite the tales of Ian Fleming wanted the British spy a smoker, but rather of cigarettes. Without wronging any of the performers, Roger Moore was the one who lit the highest number of cigars during his various interpretations. Their introduction usually emphasizes all the virtues of the

character: calmness, safety, amiable way of speaking, but it also offers hints of surprise (celebrate the witty ploy against a snake, in *Live and Let Die*). However, not only action movies are for our beloved smoky tinsel.

There are also less eventful movies, which are now difficult to imagine without cigars: two of them, *Dr. Strangelove* and *Barney's version*.

In Kubrick's immortal masterpiece, the psychopathic General Jack D. Ripper (played by Sterling Hayden) smokes long Lonsdales, which accompany his character's own life: during the monologue on "communist infiltration", the cigar is just lit and the puffs well intersperse the jokes and breaks; later, however, the cigar is shown consumed and extinguished, precisely to emphasize the personal defeat of the general. Of a different profile, however, is the use in *Barney's version*, played by Paul Giamatti. Barney Panofsky always smokes during the film, especially *Montecristo*, and this is to be interpreted as his true way to connect to the world, at least until Alzheimer's disease deprives him even of the typical gestures of the aficionado.

The second type of use of cigars within films is, perhaps, the one that comes closest to reality: creating a relationship between two characters, almost often unknown to each other until that particular, unique moment.

If the world needs superheroes, there is one of them that



needs his cigars: Hellboy. In the first movie of the series (whose interpreter, under the red costume, was Ron Pearlman) there is an exchange of jokes between the big and grumpy Hellboy, who throughout the film lights up his sticks with a gasoline lighter, and Tom Manning (Jeffrey Tambor), director of the paranormal investigation bureau. There is no good relationship between the two until Manning harangues Hellboy for the way he lights up his cigars: after suggesting to use a match to preserve the aroma and showing him the technique, Hellboy sucks and nods satisfied, almost to establish a point of respite between the minds of the two.

From the world of superheroes to the military one, the step is short. Here the anthology is vast, so we mention two movies on all the possible ones: *Crimson Tide* and *Black Hawk Down*. In the former, the conversation takes place between the commander of the submarine USS Alabama Frank Ramsey (Gene Hackman) and his second in charge Ron Hunter (Denzel Washington): against the backdrop of a sunset over the sea, the first offers a cigar to the second, asking him, after a few military chats, if the cigar was to his liking and if that was the first he smoked. In response to the affirmative answers, the commander sarcastically comments: "Do not like it too much, they are more expensive than drugs". The two officers do not know each other and the older one tries to soften the reverential fear of the youngest, breaking the ice with a cigar, the most talkative of the objects.

From the depths of the sea, to the sky of the "black hawks",

powerful military helicopters. In the 2001 movie *Black Hawk Down*, almost at the beginning of the film, there is an exchange of jokes between General Garrison (Sam Shepard) and Mr. Atto (George Harris), arrested by the U.S. Army. The latter, at the entrance to the room of the American general, seeing him with a cigar between his fingers, hands him a cigar holder with puros inside. The officer refuses, saying he has his own, but the arrested man insists that his are Cubans, "Bolivar Belicoso". Garrison, in order to keep his distance, points out that his own one is also Cuban, but the response he gets from the arrested man is rich in mocking sarcasm: "Miami, my friend, is not Cuba". In this case, although the cigar is used to create a corruption relationship, it is the exchange of jokes that embellishes the scene: the Somali criminal alludes to the dubious authenticity of Cubans available on U.S. territory because of the embargo, to push his interlocutor to accept the gift.

In another anthology film, *Papillon* from 1973, the eponymous character (played by Steve McQueen), who escaped from prison and was willing to do anything to find a boat, is challenged by a smuggler suffering from leprosy, who passes him his cigar. Papillon, fearful but firm in his intentions, grabs him and aspires, arousing perplexity in his interlocutor who asks him "How did you know that I have dry leprosy and it is not contagious?" "I didn't".

Going beyond the eventful atmosphere of action movies, even in more relaxed films we assist in personal interactions

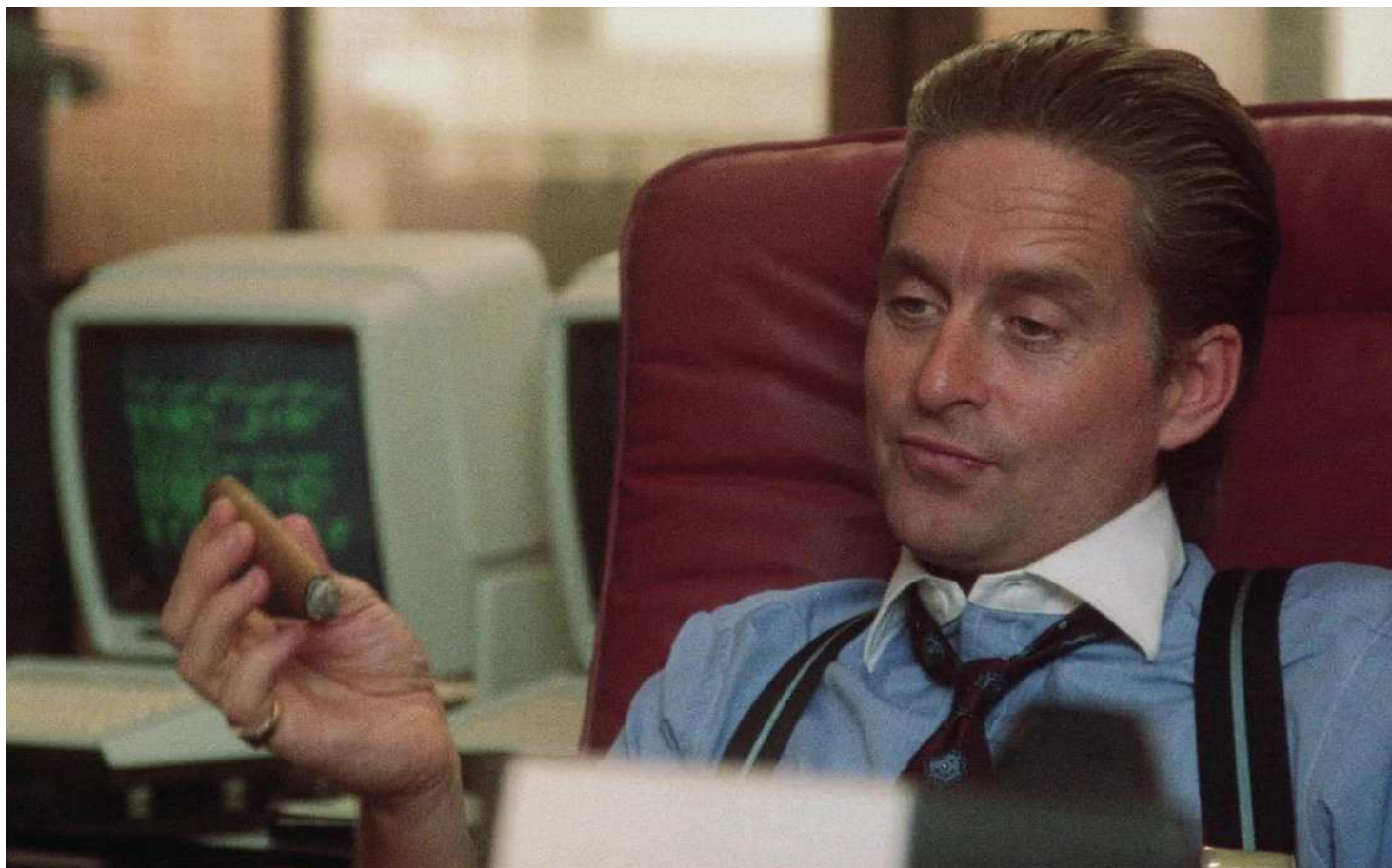
related to a cigar. In *Frankenstein Jr.*, the encounter between the blind hermit and the monster is quite a funny one, with the religious giving a cigar to his diner to celebrate the end of his solitude: a pity that, instead of lighting up the cigar foot, he will set *Frankenstein's* thumb on fire! Another example, "*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*": onboard the submarine, Captain Nemo offers a cigar to Professor Pierre Aronnax, who asks "Havana?" "Seaweed!" replies the captain.

The last strand of analysis, concerns the cigar as an object, capable of characterizing a scene. Quite famous is the "victory cigar" in *Independence Day* or in the first movie of the *Spider-Man* saga when director J. Jonah Jameson throws a butt of his cigar from the balcony and the same is returned back to him, thrown by Goblin, a moment before the attack to the newspaper headquarters. Well, these are the moments which, taken away the cigar, the resulting scene would lose much of its visual power. Another example is in the two *Wall Street* movies, played by Michael Douglas, called to play the shark of finance Gordon Gekko: in this case the protagonist smokes cigarettes, but in some scenes, where there is the need to emphasize his power, he is seen lighting up cigars. In *The Godfather Part I*, during the meeting between the various families, aimed at finding a truce between the several cross-revenges, at the table of appeasement, in addition to the bosses of the family, several cigars of various vitolas stand out. Although the atmosphere is tense and severe, there is still an air of easing of the ten-

sions, transmitted also by the slow aspirations of smokers puffing at their sticks. From one masterpiece to another: *The Untouchable*. Although the real Al Capone was a regular cigar smoker, and therefore should not fit into this review, there is one scene in particular that drew our attention, the one in which the villain (played by Robert De Niro) and Eliot Ness (Kevin Costner) face off on the hotel's staircase. The moment Capone, offended by the Prohibition agent Ness, loses patience, takes the huge cigar off his lips and grabs it in the palm of his hand, as if he were a club, gesticulating and brandishing it like a blunt weapon.

These three types of characterizations, as one can imagine, are not fixed categories, since the use of a cigar, within the film, can encompass two or more scopes. Only one, as a demonstration: the immortal masterpiece *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. The character of the Blonde (Clint Eastwood), without his ubiquitous cigarillo, would not have had his expressive power (it truly characterizes the personality); without the cigar abandoned among the fire of a bivouac, Tuco (Eli Wallach) would not be able to put himself on the trail of the Blonde (characterizes the scene); after Tuco and the Blond have tried to kill themselves several times during the course of the plot, it is the latter who offers him his cigarillo to overcome a moment of embarrassment of the swindler Tuco (characterizes the relationship).

Still convinced that a cigar can be only a simple cigar?



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Heinrich Villiger

A long interview with the oldest running cigar maker, during which he talks about his long history in the world of tobacco, lived between one nation and another

by Michel Arlia

Heinrich Villiger is an icon in the cigar world, he celebrated his 90th birthday on May 30th. The Villiger brand is known for a wide range of tobacco products that have been produced since 1888. Their products range from Machine Made Cigarillos to Premium Cigars. We had the chance to sit down with him and talk about his 70 years of tobacco experience.

Mr. Villiger, your family, has been in the cigar business since 1888. How was it growing up in such an environment? What were your earliest memories of cigars?

When a family, for two generations, has been committed to producing and selling cigars, well, the daily talks at the family table, the main topics, were tobacco and cigars. As

a little boy, I did not really, as the oldest child, realize that I belonged to the third generation, nor that one day, I had to follow my ancestors in the family business. And smoking and health was no problem, at least not with cigars. But one of my earliest memories was a remark from my teacher on my first school day, when I was seven years old: "What your father is producing is not worth more than to be burnt". How right he was, but I was strongly offended.

How was the company doing during the Second World War, and what impact did it have on the business and yourself?

As Switzerland was - fortunately - not involved in the war, our business in this market went on not quite as usual, but without significant turbulences, and we had sufficient





stocks in leaf tobacco. The situation was quite different in Germany, where my grandmother established a branch already in the year 1910. In Germany, we had three production locations and factories: head offices and a plant at the small town of Tiengen a few miles from the Swiss border near the Rhine river. Then a second one near Stuttgart, but the largest one in Munich (Bavaria) where we had a workforce of 2,000 at the beginning of the war and only a few people left at the end of the war. Shortly before the end of the war, the factory was bombed by the U.S. Air Force and the production (at that time all cigars were handmade) had to be stopped. Later we moved the Munich site to the town of Bünde (Westphalia). Born in 1930, I was too young for military service in Switzerland during world war two, but we had a pre-military-service in a cadet school with rifle shooting training and so on.

Was it a given for you to get into the family business, or did you have other plans in the beginning?

In 1950, after having graduated at the Superior Business College at Neuchâtel in the French Part of Switzerland, I started my cigar life at the age of 20. That was given to me without any discussion in the family. It was no problem for me as I did not have - at least at that time - any other projects. As I was fluent in German, French, and English, I decided, "let's do it".

After you graduated college in 1950, you went overseas for your first training period in the different raw tobacco pro-

cesses. You studied in the USA, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and also Europe, Brazil, and Asia. How were your experiences, and was there a common thread in the different countries and how they work tobacco?

As we were - at that time - also 50 % partners in a very profitable cigarette company in Switzerland, I started my tobacco life on the auction floors for Fire Cured cigarette leaf in the Southern States of the U.S. Later, I followed the auctions for Dark Fire Cured tobacco in Kentucky and Tennessee. When at the end of the year 1950, the period of the auctions finished, I moved for a couple of months to Connecticut and Massachusetts, to get some training in grading Connecticut Shade Grown and Broadleaf wrappers and binders. In spring 1951, I parked my car at one of the New York avenues, locked my luggage in the trunk, and left for three months to Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic to obtain knowledge regarding the cigar leaf grown in the Caribbean. In Cuba, we visited the farms on horseback. Back in New York, my car - a Plymouth - was still standing at the same spot, nobody had touched it, and I returned by boat to Europe with my car as "hand" luggage on the same passenger ship.

Then, after returning home at the end of the year 1951, followed the training with European, Asian, and Brazilian cigar leaves. I followed my father and our leaf experts to the wrapper auctions in Amsterdam, spent several months in Brazil with our leaf buyer and ended my "leaf studies" in Turkey in the IZMIR growing zone, the highest quality level of



so-called "oriental" cigarette leaf.

After this leaf training period lasting a little longer than two years, I started to work in our factories - at that time still cigars and cigarettes. I was mostly involved in techniques in converting the handmade mass production to mechanization. If I am not mistaken, we were the first cigar maker to modify a cigarette machine into a rod maker for cigar bunches. First with paper and later with homogenized tobacco binder - today, the standard method for machine-made mass-market small and large cigars. We were always striving for innovative products and progress: just one of more examples: we launched the first filter cigarette in Switzerland - the BOSTON FILTER. Today the "cigarette adventure" has finished, the company is liquidated, and we concentrate 100% on the cigar business.

You helped establish a particular tobacco culture in Germany and Switzerland, with your family's creations, such as the Villiger Kiel and Villiger Original Krumme. You also have other, more economical products and are not only limited to premium cigar products. How important is it for you to be present in as many different price segments?

It is not easy to describe the smoking quality of tobacco products. If one looks at the advertising and promotion, every producer simply manufactures the best of the best. And what happens with the lower unavoidable leaf grades? No tobacco leaf is thrown away. Somebody somewhere is going to smoke the lower grades. But the tobacco leaf

agriculture is a fascinating world. In my very long tobacco career, I have been purchasing tobacco not only in the "classical" cigar leaf production countries but also from Africa, in Congo Brazzaville, in Angola, in Malawi, in the Central African Republic and Cameroon. Even Switzerland has a tobacco leaf production. As we have quite a large scale of different cigar sizes and qualities and also unique shapes as the 'Villiger Kiel' with a yellow tip or the "Villiger Krumme", a twisted cigar, in Spanish "Culebra" (=Snake), we use cigar leaf from many countries around the world. In Europe, the whole production is machine-made, and all our handmade cigars are produced in Latin American countries.

Fast forward to 1989. You founded Fifth Avenue GmbH (exclusive Importer of Cuban cigars in Germany, Austria, and Poland), and you are also the Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Intertabak AG (exclusive Importer of Cuban cigars in Switzerland founded in 1995). What was the driving force for you to spread also the Cuban cigar, next to your own?

In 1976 I established the 5TH AVENUE TOBACCO GALLERY, a division for the promotion and advertising and sale of luxury products like imported Handmade cigars from Cuba, and other Latin American countries, spirits, pipe tobacco, pipes, Humidors, leatherwork, etc. by mail order. 1989, i.e., 13 years later, we established a joint-venture with Cubatabaco for the import and distribution of Cuban cigars in Germany. This was the birth hour of the 5th Avenue Products Trading Company, today the sole importer for Cuban cigars

in Germany, Austria, and Poland. Last year 5th Avenue Products Trading celebrated its 30th anniversary. Several years later, we became partners with the Swiss distributor for Cuban Cigars, the company INTERTABAK Inc. Needless to say that these commercial agreements with Cuba and the British Imperial Brands, i.e., HABANOS S.A., are non-political. The purpose of these investments was to have "a footprint" in the market of high-value luxury tobacco products.

The influence of Cuba also translates to your products. The Villiger Krumme is inspired by the Culebras. How would you describe your love for Cuba and its cigars?

Since my first visit to Cuba in the year 1951, a rather long time before the revolution, I have always been very much impressed by the professional capacities of the Cuban agri-

culture and cigar production and the friendliness of the Cuban people.

You also witnessed Cuba in different stages in history. How was the pre-revolution Cuba during your learning years, compared to afterward and today?

It is difficult to compare Cuba before and after the revolution. The country and the people have undergone a considerable transformation. Today, the big problems are not political but economical. The country doesn't have enough resources to feed its population. But this is not only a Cuban problem - similar situations exist in a large number of countries in Africa, South America and in the Far East. The future for the next generations will be more than challenging, not only in the Third world countries.







In the early 2000s, you founded Villiger Cigars North America. What are the differences between the U.S. and European markets, and what is the main focus of Villiger Cigars North America?

When we established for the first time a subsidiary in the U.S. - quite a long time ago - we underestimated the problems on the U.S. cigar market. On both continents we have a very important market of small size and low-priced machine-made products with a very tough competition between a few multinational producers. But the situation on the higher-priced handmade cigar market is not easier. Here we have a very large number of small manufacturers from half a dozen Latin American countries. That makes life interesting and has been the cause of a slightly growing business, in spite the attacks from the health organization. I believe very much in the further development of the Premium cigar business in the U.S., and also - to a smaller extent - in Europe. But we should not forget China, a fast-growing market for luxury products and Cigar brands like Cohiba and Behike. We will focus as well on machine-made as on handmade cigars of Premium quality.

In 2018, on the 130th anniversary of Villiger Cigars, you opened a new factory in Bahia, Brazil. You produce Brazilian Puros and control everything from seed to finished product. This has been a project long in the making. What does this mean to you, and what do you want the smoker to experience?

Besides the machine-made cigars from Europe, we are also focusing our efforts on the handmade cigars from the Dominican Republic, where we have a reliable production partner, Matias Maragoto, with his company ABAM, the only cigar factory in the capital Santo Domingo. In Brazil, we have our own company Villiger do Brazil, and in Nicaragua, we are just establishing the production unit Villiger de Nicaragua. We consider Villiger as an "all-round cigar producer", and only cigars and nothing else.

You are going to celebrate your 90th birthday this year. Looking back, is there something you would have done differently, and what are you going to smoke to commemorate this special occasion?

Well, in a few weeks, I will look back on a very long life and celebrate my 90th birthday. We will celebrate this day with the 110th year jubilee of Villiger Germany - this makes together 200 years. We will celebrate this event together with our business friends and family members. Looking back, what would I have done differently? Honestly, my answer is "nothing".

Have you ever thought about retirement, and what do you want your legacy to be, once all is said and done?

Also, looking back, I had never thought of retirement, quite evident if you own a business alone, i.e., all the shares. My children - they are quite numerous - will inherit the company: we have four children, nine grandchildren, and three great-grandsons who just started walking around. There is enough work for all those interested in tobacco and the art of cigar smoking.

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PAGE

Hulk

*The Candela
wrapper leaf*

di Luca Cominelli

If you are a watch enthusiast, "green hulk" will bring to your mind the Rolex Submariner, while most people will instead remember the Marvel character, the Incredible Hulk. If instead we talk about cigars, then the Candela wrapper comes immediately to mind, because of its green color that distinguishes it at a glance from all other types of leaves.

Widely known, however, it is appreciated only by few. There are not many aficionados who can claim to have tried it, even if this wrapper leaf has admirers who have appreciated

cigars dressed in green for years, who have become real regular consumers.

But how is a Candela leaf made? The process is similar to that used for the other leaves, although it has important differences. Specifically, the first one is that gives rise to the green color, which is none other than the chlorophyll present in the leaves: this must in fact literally "be fixed" and to do this, the process of curing the leaves (that happens in the "casa del tabaco", tobacco house) has some very different arrangements from what usually happens, precisely







because if on the one hand you want the color green, on the other hand this would be an indication of a non-optimal processing, which would lead to having speckles which would make the leaves (wrapper) quality far inferior. To create a Candela leaf you must act rather quickly, drying it in a short time, so as to keep the chlorophyll in the leaf. That's why in this process, the ventilation in the house of tobacco is maximum, and the propane cookers are also turned on to increase the air temperature. In the first instance, the external part of the leaf dries up, in the second the stem, which is more difficult to dry completely. If in the first phase the temperatures are slightly higher than 35-36 °, while in the second they also touch the 70 ° C. The first phase lasts about two days, the second one day. After this process the leaf has the typical green Candela color.

Another fundamental difference, is the one that for these leaves there is no aging, but above all there is no fermentation. A clarification, as for the leaves we see most often, the Candela ones also has chromatic variations. The difference in color is called yellowish green, green and dark green.

The next time you are in front of a wrapper leaf of this type, you will know that it is the favorite one of growers, due to the much less work it demands and to the shorter time the process to turn the leaf into the incredible Hulk takes.

CURIOSITY

The creation of the first Candela leaf, intended as 100% Candela and not with chromatic defects, is not something that happened after a research or the desire to give life to new aromas or colors, as often happens today, where experimentation never ceases and the manufacturers are always on the hunt for something new to bring to market, to further differentiate their product.

The first Hulk leaf was transformed by pure chance, as a result of an excess temperature in tobacco house, due to lack of experience while using for the first time heat sources, in order to better control the process of "cure" of the leaves. A simple mistake gave birth to a new variety of leaves.

FLAVOR PROFILE

The eye-catching color, which makes it so much easily recognizable, is also reflected in the flavor profile, and smoking a cigar wrapped up in a Candela leaf will deliver distinguishable aromas.

It is not madness to say that a smoker who has already had the opportunity to try some Candela cigars, can recognize the aroma of the green wrapper even blindfolded. This is because the flavor profile the Candela leaf gives off is particularly "green" also in terms of flavors, with pronounced vegetable notes, which often recall the grass.

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Antaño
CT

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Karen Berger

*Interview with the female cigar maker
turned entrepreneur and master blender*

by Michel Arlia

Karen Berger is one of the few female cigar brand owners (Don Kiki and K by Karen Berger) in the world, and she was born and bred in Esteli, Nicaragua. Growing up in what has become the cigar capital of the world, her journey took her from cigar roller to entrepreneur. We met with Karen in Esteli for and we had a nice conversation.

Tell us a little about yourself. Have you always been involved in the tobacco world?

I was born and raised in Esteli, Nicaragua. At the age of 18, I began to work for Esteli Cigars S.A. (Factory of Don KIKI) as a roller. This is where I met my husband. He was the owner of the farm and factory. He began to teach me all aspects of the business, pre-industry, packing, blending, harvest, etc.

You are a native of Esteli, and you witnessed first hand the change that the city, thanks to the cigar industry, has gone through. How was Esteli back then, compared to now? I'm really thankful for all these people who have been con-







tributing to the economy of Esteli because they are investments in my country. We are blessed because of our soil and the people who work hard to produce our cigars. Years ago, we didn't have many factories in the town; hence the unemployment rate was higher all over Esteli. Since those days, the economy is better, along with being much safer for the families.

You married Enrique "Don Kiki" Berger, in 1998, and together you built a business. How was it working with him?

When I married Don Kiki, my love for the leaf grew because through him, I learned about the passion of cigars, creating new blends, and enjoying smoking cigars. He was a master blender, he was my mentor, a good friend to everyone in town and involved in the industry. I'm here because of him, and because of him, I continue to grow.

In 2014 your husband passed away. Two years later, you release the K by Karen Berger. What made you decide to continue, and what does the K mean to you?

Since my husband passed away, my idea was to always keep his legacy alive through his brand "DON KIKI". Then I wanted to refresh our image as a company creating a new blend, so I blended the K BY Karen Berger. "K" means a lot to me, as it stands for both KIKI and me.

Not only is the K by Karen Berger a Nicaraguan puro, but it is also made only from tobaccos from Esteli. Why did you choose to go that route, and what can the smoker expect?

I made this decision to make a Nicaraguan puro to honor all these excellent manufactures that came to my country, for the full-flavored tobacco, which allows you to take in all aspects of the fertile volcanic soils of Nicaragua.

Over the last couple of years, the popularity of cigar has increased again, especially among females. What do you think has changed over the years?

Although it is presented as a male-driven business, women are, and always have been, a major factor in Nicaragua. What has changed for the better is the number of women enjoying premium cigars throughout the world has increased. I believe that comes from the wiliness to adapt and to create female-oriented places. I'm among a group of very talented female cigar brand owners.

What are your plans for the future?

My plans for the future are growing the company, as well as our brands. We are working on a new project and a new cigar for this year too. As well, focusing on the U.S. market, as well as the European market, where we already have a presence (Spain and Switzerland). Continue working to give our customers and friends a unique, exquisite, and quality taste in different desires of flavors so that we can please every palate. I own a 7000 square feet Cigar lounge in Daytona Beach, the "Don KIKI Cigar Superstore". I carry a lot of Premium and Boutique Cigars. It is one of the biggest lounges in Volusia County. I will continue to support Premium and Boutique Cigars.

The treasure chest

*The timeless charm of the cajón, a box containing one hundred, or more,
Dunhill English Claro Selección Suprema No. 110*

by **Luca Cominelli**

Before the 1960s, and therefore before the Cuban revolution, the cigar market was very different from what it is now. Fewer restrictions, which did not exist at the time, and fewer problems in transit, which today could be enclosed in the phrase "customs clearance".

At the time there were, in fact, no customs duties. Today it would be almost unthinkable to be able to enter the airport with a 100-piece cajón and go through customs, where the import limit is often 50 cigars or less. Try to imagine the astonished face of

the officer who would be in front of a treasure of this type and then think of yours, when the treasure was confiscated or the high tariff you may have to pay to be able to continue the journey with your prized cajón.

At the time, the cajón could be considered a status symbol among passionate smokers and collectors,



compared to occasional smokers who preferred 5 petacas or 25 count boxes (at that time the 10 count boxes were almost non-existent).

Regarding the piece in the picture, the Dunhill English Claro Selección Suprema No.110, it was not a limited production but at the time it belonged to the regular production portfolio. Although today practically non-existent due to lack of buyers, at the time they were instead requested and widespread, to the point of being standard production items for many brands (Hoyo de Monterrey, Por Larranaga, Punch, H. Upmann). If the 100 cajónes seem out of reach compared to what you are used to seeing today, it is interesting to know that there were even larger ones produced. Howe-

ver, these were no longer standard production but made on specific request by merchants and collectors of the time, who required cajónes of 250, 500 and even 1000 cigars. The latter were usually bought by merchants who kept them open in their store to sell single cigars.

Why have these boxes reached mythical status? How come they reach such high prices at auction and why do the most important collectors insist on fighting for them?

The cajónes house a considerably greater number of





cigars than the other boxes, which historically have seen the number 25 as the most common quantity of cigars placed in a box. Having to select 100 for these packages took place upstream, so as to also guarantee a color homogeneity that did not fail to the standards they had to reflect; they were still pieces of particular value and also of particular cost.

In so doing, the first cigars selected were the most beautiful ones, those free of defects and which today could be considered the *crème de la crème*. These were cigars chosen at the time specifically for the true connoisseur.

Let's talk about price now, something many of you may be wondering. So how much does a *cajón* of this type cost?

How much do you have to take into account to have one for yourself or to make a gift to a dear friend?

The pre-embargo boxes reach auction prices which are almost always considerable and not within everyone's reach. The *cajones* are usually for an elite level of collectors, a niche in the niche. These pieces have potential buyers who are very limited in number, due to the astounding prices that they usually reach during auctions or between private sales. There is no exact answer to the price. Each sale practically makes history in itself. Prices can vary a lot and usually this happens when two or more collectors are interested in the same *cajón*. In these cases, we talk about real fortunes, which can reach 6-digit numbers.



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PAGE

INTERACTIVE





Tel Aviv, Cigar Club

“Strange is the race, it is so tiring that it purifies you and helps you to connect together the hidden roots of the moments.” (David Grossman)

by **Simone Poggi**

After many evenings spent smoking in the most prestigious salons around the world, sometimes we encounter situations that bring us abruptly back to reality, less ceremonious and more prosaic. At times Tel Aviv is just like that, a celebrated business city, where the hippest hotels near the beach cost a fortune and famous DJs, who normally make their appearances only in Las Vegas and Ibiza, look like footballers on impressive billboard advertisements. Sometimes, however, you have to travel for tens and tens of minutes in congested traffic to reach less frequented areas of the city, reminiscent of less noble (but more true) Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cities with sinister, battered buildings, dirty streets, no bilingual writings, dubious characters sitting in front of not quite clear exercises, with soft lights alternating with blue and red neon, which in other cities promise forbidden pleasures

and that here instead look out from a pet shop. It is enough to turn a corner and the garages, complete with tires on display, give way to glasses of local rosé, whose color and bouquet resemble champagne of very different lineage and sea bream tartare that are actually marinated in excellent lemon and various spices, as only certain Latin American ceviche.

The last time we visited the city, the only very celebrated cigar lounge, the one in the Intercontinental hotel, home to important neurosurgical congresses and adjacent to the beach, was a major disappointment; few boxes of exorbitantly priced Cubans made solitary self-display near the bar, rare customers were there and the atmosphere was not inviting lighting up a puro. After some research, more based on social networks, which have largely replaced the “speak-easy”

where smokers are accepted, we found the Cigar Club Tel Aviv. The name is certainly ambiguous: is it a club for members only? Is it an online store that supplies smokers but has no smoking spaces? The website in Hebrew is certainly not helpful, but a phone call clarifies the arcane: you can smoke inside the room, but it closes at 8 pm.

As mentioned, the area is not that inviting, it does not give an aire of relaxation after work or break from the day's frenzy. The shop can be seen from the street, the taxi did not go wrong. What's waiting for us inside is a different story. The shop is very small, almost entirely dedicated to the walk-in humidor where very few Cubans and many Dominican, Honduran and Nicaraguan cigars of the best brands weewwaiting for us, but in an overly humid, almost wet condition. We selected a Balmoral XO Rothschild Gran Masivo. The staff is friendly, but to accompany the smoking enjoyment there is only coffee and water, the latter served in paper cups. The

armchairs are few, almost in front of the window, and the ashtrays bear the vestiges of a whole day of smoke, and the atmosphere suffers a lot. They explain that the owner is one of the largest importers of cigars in the country, and in fact a large storage room is right behind the counter, ventilated, but certainly not air-conditioned. There are magazines available, but only related to cigars. The cigar is excellent, made with really nice vintage tobacco, which immediately delivers notes of earth, cocoa, spices and a full aftertaste, slightly bitter and very satisfying.

It's just aperitif time, maybe the choice was not the happiest, and exactly on time, at 8 pm the place closes, leaving us with this excellent Robusto alone in the street. Fortunately, after a short and daring walk, a small place appears out of nowhere, in a nice and very bohemian area, refreshing our soul with the fish and bubbles. A real reward for adventurers. But this, as they say, is another story...



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EASY TO
FIND

CIGARS



FEW CUBANS, BUT OVERALL, GOOD
SELECTION. CIGARS ARE TOO WET.

SPIRITS

NO SPIRITS
AVAILABLE

SERVICE



BASIC

INFO

Cigar Club, Kibbutz Galuyot Rd 34 Tel Aviv, Israel

SPIRITS

“Always carry a flagon of whisky in case of snakebite, and furthermore,
always carry a small snake.”

W.C. Fields



Cuban spirit	50
Flor de Caña	56
Empire Rye	62
Sometimes they come back	64
Reservoir	70
Quarter cask	75



Cuban spirit

*The stories of the most famous Cuban cocktails in the world
along with a pairing suggestion with the puros par excellence*

by **Nicola Ruggiero**

“My mojito in La Bodeguita, my daiquiri in El Floridita”. What better way than Ernest Hemingway’s words, still readable on one of the walls of La Bodeguita del Medio, to start a journey through the origins of the cocktails that saw the light of day in Cuba? As it is said, it was the winner of the 1954 Nobel Prize for literature to reveal when telling the genesis of one of his favorite cocktails. It would have been Sir Francis Drake, a corsair in the service of Elizabeth I, and one of the first men to circumnavigate the globe, the creator of what we might call the ancestor of the Mojito. It was called El Draque and the recipe (said to be developed during the siege of Havana, in 1586) was based on brown sugar, lime juice, hierbabuena leaves (Cuban wild mint), water and aguardiente. The latter was a brandy distilled from sugar cane that did not only perform as “liquid courage” for sailors but also that of preventing the drinking water, filled into barrels for sea trips, from deteriorating. Lime, with vitamin C, instead helped to combat scurvy, a disease that was very common on ships at the time. In the following centuries, El Draque (or Draquecito) was transformed: the aguardiente was replaced by rum, becoming the mojito as we know it today, one of Ernest Hemingway’s favorite cocktails. The writer, as everyone knows, was in love with Cuba, where he stayed several times between the early thirties and fifties of the twentieth century, and it does not seem far fetched to

hypothesize that Angel Martinez contributed to this falling in love, since 1942 he was the bartender of La Bodeguita del Medio, where Hemingway used to consume his “special” Mojito, with white rum and dark rum mixed together.

As mentioned, however, the Nobel Prize winner also had another great passion: the Daiquiri. The origins of this cocktail are much more uncertain: there are even three legends handed down about it. According to the first, in 1898 a young American marine, who survived the sinking of his ship in the port of Havana, was wrecked in the small village of Daiquiri (today known as Playa Daiquiri) and rushed to the first bar on his way which, however, could only offer rum. The soldier asked the barman to lengthen it with lime juice and added sugar and here is the daiquiri..! There is a second version of the story: also 1898, American troops land on Daiquiri beach to start the war against the Spanish colonial army and free Cuba. The U.S. troops were led by General Shafter, who soon began to taste the drink spread among the allied Cuban guerrillas, the Cancháchara: 2/3 of rum, 1/3 of lemon and a little sugar. The drink was missing only one thing in the opinion of the leader in stars and stripes: ice. And here is the first Daiquiri! The latest legend pushes the birth forward to 1905, by Italian mining engineer Giacomo Pagliuchi. At the end of the day, the engineer used







to meet with his American colleague Jennings S. Cox, who worked at an iron mine in Daiquiri bay. At the end of the working day, when it was time for a drink, there was only rum, sugar and lime in the house. The two friends did not lose heart and, by shaking the three ingredients with ice, decided to baptize this mix as "Daiquiri", in honor of the beach on which they were located.

These are the legends linked to the birthplace of the Daiquiri, but if we go from myth to history, the birth of this cocktail must be placed in Havana, more precisely in El Floridita, a place located at 557 Calle Obispo in Habana Vieja since 1817, known first by the name of La Piña de Plata, then with that of La Florida, transformed into its diminutive by the patrons. Here, in 1914, the Catalan Constantino Ribalaigua Vert, called Constante, arrived as a waiter, who would soon become perhaps the most famous of the Cuban barmen. In 1918, with the accumulated savings, he bought that anonymous bar to transform it into a legendary place, also thanks to his daiquiri. The first prepared exactly as we know it today. The variations of the Daiquiri are numerous and often linked to the introduction of a fruit, to make this typically summer cocktail more refreshing: some examples are the Strawberry Daiquiri and the Banana Daiquiri. Of course, the version of the esteemed Hemingway could not be missing: the Papa Doble (from the writer's nickname), or the Hemingway Special. This drink was developed by Hemingway together with Constante. The writer was convinced that he had diabetes and therefore wanted to avoid sugar (but not alcohol), but he could not do without a good Daiquiri. Thus was born the Daiquiri with Maraschino (a liqueur of Dalmatian origin) and a double dose of rum. After Constante, it was Antonio Meilan who continued the tradition of the Daiquiri in La Floridita and revisited the recipe of the Papa Doble, adding grapefruit juice to it.

Those described are the two most famous cocktails, but the Cuban offerings are much broader, so as to suggest a vast paring with the best cigars of the Isla Grande.



PAPA DOBLE

INGREDIENTS

- 8 cl of Cuban Rum
- 3 cl juice of two limes
- 1 cl juice of half a grapefruit
- 1 cl maraschino

Put all the ingredients in the electric blender with crushed ice. Blend for 10/15 seconds and serve in an old fashioned glass.

Garnish with a grapefruit wedge on the rim of the glass and two short straws.

PAIRING:

Hoyo De Monterrey Epicure No.2



SAOCO

INGREDIENTS

Cuban rum to taste
Coconut milk

Perforate the coconut in such a way as to insert Rum. the drink should be drunk directly from the coconut.

PAIRING:

Cuaba Divinos



CANCHANCHARA

INGREDIENTS

Cuban Rum to taste
Juice of two limes to taste
Honey to taste

The drink should be prepared inside an enameled terra cotta bowl, into which all ingredients and ice are poured. Stir for a few moments.

PAIRING:

H.Upmann Magnum 46



MARY PICKFORD

INGREDIENTS

5 cl of Cuban Rum
3 cl of Pineapple juice
1 cl of grenadine (preferably pomegranate syrup)
Lime juice to taste (optional)

Pour all the ingredients into a shaker and shake. Serve the drink inside a cocktail glass. Garnish with a small piece of pineapple.

PAIRING:

Bolivar Royal Coronas



MULATA

INGREDIENTS

5 cl of Cuban Rum
3 cl of Lime juice
2 cl of Sugar syrup
2 cl of dark cocoa cream

Pour all the ingredients into a shaker and shake. Serve the drink inside a cocktail glass. Decorate with a lime wedge.

PAIRING:

Partagas Maduro No.1



DAIQUIRI

INGREDIENTS

5 cl of Cuban Rum
2,5 cl of Lime juice
Granulated sugar to taste (or 2 CL of sugar syrup)

Insert granulated sugar and lime juice into a shaker and mix until the sugar dissolves. Pour the rum into the shaker and shake. Serve the drink inside a cocktail glass. Decorate with a lime wedge.

PAIRING:

Montecristo Petit Edmundo



MOJITO

5 cl of Cuban Rum
3 teaspoons (ca.) of brown sugar
2 cl of lime juice
Hierbabuena (or mint) leaves
Sparkling water

Place the sugar, lime juice and sparkling water in a tall tumbler and dissolve the sugar with a teaspoon. Then add the mint leaves, the rum and mix. After creating the mixture, add the ice and a final spray of sparkling water. Decorate with a sprig of mint and a slice of lime.

PAIRING:

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A MAN AND A CIGAR FOR ALL TIMES

Flor de Caña

*A sustainable and naturally aged
Nicaraguan rum*

by **Luca Cominelli**

Flor de Caña is one of the oldest and most important rum producers in the world. Since 1890, the company has been carefully controlling the entire production cycle from the fields to distillation, aging, and bottling of their rums in the Chichigalpa headquarter. Every year, six column stills fill thousands of ex-bourbon barrels that will slowly age in a natural and sustainable way. The company boasts one of the biggest reservoirs of aged rum with more than 150,000 barrels in their warehouses. Fundamentally bounded to the imagery and values of Nicaraguan culture, Flor de Caña recently revamped the whole range to highlight the elegance and quality of their products. We visited Flor de Caña and met with Mauricio Solórzano to learn the history and technique of this Nicaraguan rum.

Flor de Caña has a long history that dates back to 1890. What were the biggest difficulties the company encountered in all these years and what were the milestones?

This story began 1875 when Alfredo Francisco Pellas Canessa, a young adventurer from Genoa, Italy, risked everything by leaving behind his family and the comforts of the old continent to travel to the exotic Nicaragua.

In 1890, he found the perfect setting for the Flor de Caña







distillery at the base of the San Cristóbal volcano, the tallest and most active volcano in Nicaragua. The fertility of its surrounding lands, the enriched water and the hot volcanic climate proved to be instrumental in forging the rum's unique and distinguished character. The volcano is our laboratory, our natural ally.

Trough its 130-year history, the brand, the company and the family have lived through a plane crash, a civil war, confiscations, hyperinflation, a fire at the distillery, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Throughout all this, and against all odds, the company has also been able to remain a family business for five generations: only 3 in 10,000 family businesses make it to the 5th generation!

What has changed from 1890 to nowadays? Is the production still made in the same way? What has been improved over the years?

Although some parts of the production process have been modernized, the barrels in which the rum is aged are still hand-assembled in the same artisanal way as back in the early days of the distillery. Also, the aging process has remained unaltered. The rum is naturally aged without sugar or artificial ingredients in large, naturally ventilated warehouses. The main ingredients for Flor de Caña are: five-times distilled rum, bourbon barrels and time.

How is Flor de Caña rum spread worldwide?

Flor de Caña is present in over 70 countries around the wor-

ld, including countries like United States, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Peru, Colombia, Bolivia, France, UK, Italy, Spain, China, and Australia.

Your rum is made without adding sugar and you are very proud of this. How can you produce such a good product in a completely natural way?

Flor de Caña follows an artisanal production process and nothing is added during the aging process, resulting in a natural rum that truly reflects its age and maturity. No added sugar is used. In 2017, the quality and excellence of its products earned Flor de Caña one of the highest distinctions within the global spirits industry, being named "Global Rum Producer of the Year" by the International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC) in London.

Talking about Flor de Caña premium range, you have 12, 18 and 25 years old rums. How does the aging work on your distillate?

Flor de Caña rums are aged in premium ex-bourbon barrels and during that process, the rum acquires unique organoleptic properties from the barrel. The result is an exceptionally smooth rum with a beautiful amber color.

During the aging, especially the long ones, you refill the casks with other distillate. When we were visiting your facilities, we apprehended that you only use Flor de Caña that have same age, or that it is older enough for this process. Can you explain this process? Why do you follow it





and how much important is it?

Given the angel's share, which is a percentage of rum that naturally evaporates every year as part of the aging process, barrels are refilled only with rum from the same batch (which means the same age). In other words, we don't age a blend of rums of different ages.

Are you going to release new bottlings soon? Can we also expect something more aged than the excellent 25YO?

In 2019, Flor de Caña introduced "V Generaciones", a 30-year old, ultra-luxury rum aged in a single barrel since 1988. This release, ahead of Flor de Caña's 130th anniversary in 2020, is a special tribute to the passion, dedication and commitment to excellence of the thousands of workers and the five family generations who've been part of the brand's journey since 1890.

Flor de Caña's V Generaciones is more than just an exceptionally rare liquid in a beautifully packaged bottle, it features the signatures of the five family generations behind Flor de Caña, a bottle cap made from volcanic rock and a replica of the iconic 1902 volcano postal stamp of Nicaragua. The individually numbered bottles, complete with a fine metallic label and a certificate of authenticity, are presented in a sleek black leather case, boasting an avant-garde and minimalist style.

During our visit we tasted a cask strength single barrel

older than 35 years old. Do you plan to introduce to the market a cask strength version of Flor de Caña for the most demanding customers?

Innovation is one of Flor de Caña's core values and therefore the brand is focused on studying and understanding what consumers are expecting from spirit brands these days.

Flor de Caña is constantly developing unique products for a wide array of consumers, all the way from beginners to rum connoisseurs. Stay tuned...

What is next for Flor de Caña?

One of Flor de Caña's biggest differentiators is the brand's historic commitment to sustainability. Flor de Caña is a sustainably produced rum, from field to bottle, and one of the first global spirits to become Fair Trade certified. This certification ensures consumers that the rum is sustainably produced in compliance with over 300 rigorous labor, social and environmental standards.

For over a hundred years, the company has provided free health care and education to employees and their families, the rum has been distilled with 100% renewable energy for over a decade and since 2005, the brand has planted 50,000 trees annually. As such, the Flor de Caña will continue relentless in its commitment to sustainable practices and ensuring a better future for its employees, the community and the environment.

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Empire Rye

*First attempts at promoting
the territories of American Whiskey*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

After the boom of rye whiskey over the past decade, a growing number of small craft producers began to recreate ancient local recipes using modern and high-quality products strongly connected to the territory.

In 2015, six distilleries in New York state established a consortium for preserving their operations of an old local tradition: The Empire Rye Whiskey (Empire State is the New York State's nickname). Black Button, Coppersea, Finger Lakes, Kings County, New York Distilling, and Tuthilltown Spirits – later joined by Van Brunt Stillhouse, Yankee Distillers, Stoutridge, to which many others will follow – shared resources and skills to safeguard this particular style of rye whiskey.

Their regulations prescribe that the mash bills must be

composed by at least 75% of locally grown rye, as well as the remaining 25% of other allowed grains. The spirits cannot go above 160 proof in distilling and 115 proof when they start aging for minimum two years in charred new casks.

The entire production must take place at a single distillery within New York state, except for the Blended Empire Rye that is created by the cooperation of the distilleries in the consortium. Many producers decided to adopt classic pot-still distilling and unique casks custom-made in collaboration with local cooperages (like the wineries in the Finger Lakes region).

The result was a series of impressive bottles: classic bold spicy and toasted rye profile there are also notes of red apples, dry fruit, nutmeg, candied ginger. Cheers!



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Sometimes they come back

Decline and Rise of Rye Whiskey

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

In the 1980s, rye whiskey had basically disappeared from North American and international liquor stores, except for few limited editions released in the recent past years. By the early-2000s, the production of rye spirit reached its historical low, used only as it was for anonymous mass-produced mash bills.

Then, suddenly, rye whiskey made an impressive comeback over the past decade with a surprising high-quality offering. Mass-market brands like Bulleit Rye found also a huge success in the cocktail world, giving even new strength to classics like Old Fashioned and Manhattan that had lost a bit of their edge. The true revolution actually took place in the activity of the many American and Canadian small craft distilleries that made of rye the main ingredient in an amazing series of high quality bottlings.

The history of rye whiskey is strongly intertwined with the historical events of the 19th century in the United States. Born in the widespread home-distilling habits of the Central European immigrants who were well-acquainted with rye; rye whiskey dominated the domestic market for quantity and diffusion until the beginning of Prohibition. The two main areas of production were Pennsylvania, where the vast number of German immigrants had perfected the strong and spicy Monongahela, and Maryland, where from the get-go the warmer climate had suggested a smoother and cheaper 35% mash bill with corn. This bourbon-style mash spread also to the Midwest and the West Coast becoming de facto the American standard style.

After Prohibition, the rye industry never managed to fully recover to its previous levels. Thanks to federal programs,



corn farmers had developed cheaper and more resistant varieties that made investing in rye not profitable. While rye distillers had completely depleted their reserves and were unable to face the new fierce competition from bourbon and foreign producers. The mass mobilization and war re-conversion of the main rye distilleries during World War II gave the final blow to these historical traditions that fell into disregard in the post-war years. Driven by the new jet-set fashion, bourbon took over the domestic and international market and rye became just an auxiliary ingredient. Later on, even bourbon lost its ground to other trendier drinks like rum and vodka, and only in the 1990s did it arouse a newfound interest.

Beyond cocktail fashions, many experts believe the comeback of rye whiskey signals a new physiological change

in taste from the smoothness of bourbon to the boldness and spiciness of rye. Yet, in many mash bills the difference between bourbon and rye lies only in few percentage points, and even maturation happens in the same kind of charred new casks. For example, the famous Van Winkle, the legendary Sazerac Rye, and the Rittenhouse Rye, as well as most of rye whiskeys from historical producers like Wild Turkey, Jim Beam, Heaven Hill, Woodford Reserve, and Buffalo Trace, are only few points above the minimum of 51% rye required by American regulations. Moreover, there are only two main industrial distilleries of rye mash bills, MGP in Indiana and Alberta Distillers in Canada, and they supply all big successful bottlers like Bulleit, George Dickel, and Templeton. Although these producers tailor a specific recipe for every brand. In general, distilled rye has certainly a bolder and more assertive profile than corn, but it is necessary to ack-



knowledge that the most successful brands on the market basically offer a stronger and more spicy bourbon. That is only but one of the endless possibilities offered by this cereal, whose true extents are still to be fully explored.

Recently, following a similar trend in Scotch whisky production, there started to be a lot of discussion both about the different distilling yields of the many heirloom varieties of rye and about the characteristics of the territory where these are grown. Indeed, over the past decade, the American craft distillery movement has shown how the making of a great rye whiskey is grounded in the very quality of the primary ingredients and in a strong connection to the territory. Today, all producers of the most important craft bottlings, like Reservoir, Koval, Kings County, base their products on a tight relationship with farmers to select the best rye variety for the style of distilling and aging they have in mind.

Also, they cannot obviously stress enough the great advantage of personally following the entire distilling process, mostly in pot-still distillers, and the maturation, which often takes place in small quarter casks that allow to speed up aging schedules and to express more particular aromatic profiles. Noteworthy are also the attempts by small producers like Old Potrero and Old Pogue that, way ahead of their time, dared to create 100% malted rye whiskeys; or like Balcones in Texas and Wood Creek in Colorado that rediscovered rare heirloom rye selections; or like Sonoma County Distilling of the West Coast that use alternative woods to

give a unique touch to their productions.

Most of these experiments combined historical traditions and modern insight to create new products that are firmly rooted in the past and strongly projected into the future. Other instances are the Empire Rye cru, a consortium of rye whiskey producers in New York State that recovered a century long tradition, or Dad's Hat and the other Pennsylvania's distilleries that resurrected the Monongahela whiskey style (95% rye, 5% barley). Indeed, the idea behind these attempts is more market-oriented than archeological: it has become more than ever fundamental to study a convincing marketing campaign in order to stand out on the shelves amidst the endless number of bottles that followed the trend set by Bulleit & company. It should suffice to look at the incredible success of the reissue of Sazerac Rye that immediately achieved a strong market placement thanks to the undoubtedly good work made with the bottle design and heritage marketing.

The production of Canadian rye whisky (note the different spelling) followed a very different path. Rye has always been a fundamental ingredient in Canadian mash bills, but the tendency to mainly produce blended whisky for the mass market never allowed to the top-level quality products from those latitudes to really make it the fore. Yet, with the massive demand of rye whiskey over the past years, big and small Canadian rye whisky producers saw an impressive increase in order requests from the American neighbors. In fact,

besides the competitive benefit saw by certain low-cost rye-based blended whiskies like Canadian Club, which once again became an essential staple on most bar shelves – Canadian whisky industry has been quite wary of this boom and preferred to simply sell part of its excess reserves to the demanding bottlers across the border. Certainly, the complex Canadian commercial regulations at state and federal level made it particularly complicated for the industry to readily modify production. Recently, though, there started to be a decisive improvement in the offering of top-level 100% rye whisky (or, rather, flavoring whisky as Canadians call it): Lot No. 40, Whistle Pig, Lock & Stock, Hochstadter's are absolute masterpieces, though they are extremely expensive and scarcely present on the international market.

After this historical overview, let's summarize the main characteristics of rye whiskey in terms of the flavors and the aromas valorized by these recent productions. In simple terms, what do these rye whiskeys offer if compared to other whiskey-like spirits? Usually, a bolder and more spicy profile, marked by lot of cinnamon, Cayenne pepper, charred oak notes of vanilla and caramel, some smokiness and oiliness to the tongue, and a dry warm finish. With a bit of patience, aged spirits allow wood invasiveness to fade out and develop citrusy notes of caramelized orange peel, herbal flavors (sometimes green and tannic, sometimes balsamic and mentholated), and sweet spiciness of candied ginger and fruit mustards. The older versions add also rich tones of chocolate, black tea, and blackberries jams.

Hence, if in theory the aromatic profile of rye whiskeys offers the same wealth of possibilities of the other illustrious colleagues, the problem is that the unexpected success of these past years caused a shortage of aged spirits, which in turn led to skyrocketing prices for the few still available on the market, like the amazing Sazerac 18yo. Currently, Bulleit alone can afford to sell a 12yo rye at a decent price tag – and it definitely shows a much more mature and structured profile than the standard version. Conversely, the smaller brands must necessarily target the premium sector, given also their scarce availability on the international market. Alas, to satisfy the current overwhelming demand, most brands decide to bottle young spirits just slightly above the minimum year of aging (only Straight Rye Whiskey prescribes at least two years). Similarly, craft distilleries keep pursuing the solution of "work in progress" limited releases that do not really give the possibility to fully appreciate the actual quality of a product supposed to be fully mature by now.

In conclusion, setting aside some noteworthy exceptions, most rye whiskeys on the market have expensive price tags for what actually are very young spirits, dominated by wood and alcoholic strength, and still way ahead of showing their full potential. The real concern here is that such a strategy seems to be dependent on the fleeting fashion of the market, and this could jeopardize the efforts of producers and connoisseurs that are patiently waiting for time to do its magic course and provide drinkers with high quality rye whiskeys at a fair price, eventually balanced by a more sustainable product availability.



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The CigarMate is composed of several collectible pieces.

Reservoir

*CigarsLover Q&A with Dave Cuttino
Co-Founder of Reservoir Distillery*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**



Reservoir is a small craft distillery established in 2008 in Richmond, Virginia. From the get-go, they specialized in a core range of 100% single-cereal mash bills from locally grown organic rye, corn, and wheat. Their whiskeys are aged for at least two years in custom-made small charred American white oak casks of only 5 gallons, less than a tenth of the customary 53-gallon barrels. Everything is painstakingly handmade from pot-still distilling to small-batch bottling at 50% ABV. Over the past decade, their core range won dozens of prizes and accolades for the elevate quality and loving attention to the territory of Virginia, making of Reservoir one of the top-tier craft distilleries in the world.

How did your adventure start? Did you all have previous experiences in distilling?

My best friend, Jay Carpenter, and I decided to start Reservoir after a rather spirited time at a Virginia Tech football game. He and I were both looking for a new adventure and we decided to start a business and create a product that we'd really love. Neither of us had any experience in distilling. In fact, we were only the fourth distillery outside of Kentucky so small, craft distilleries definitely weren't a thing. With the creation of Reservoir, we set out to honor our southern heritage, but we were also determined to shake up what we knew of the whiskey world and be the risky catalysts of fresh, innovative ideas. We knew if we focused on quality rather than quantity, we could craft an unparalleled whiskey.

What does it mean to make American craft whiskey these days? As a small batch distillery, do you think that the market is tougher today or when you started in 2008?

For us at Reservoir, making American craft whiskey means we are doing things the same way today as we did when we started making spirits nearly 12 years ago -- from grain to glass. The market is far more crowded than when we started back in 2008 so from that standpoint, it is more difficult. However, competition also allows great distilleries to shine and showcase how great whiskey makers can create new products and traditions.

You have a unique core range of 100% integral mash bills. Was it your decision from the onset or did you get at it via trials and errors?

Jay and I set out to create three single grain mash-bill products – 100% wheat, 100% corn and 100% rye. I had learned how to make whiskey weighing out 2-ton mashbills and thought to myself “wouldn't this be easier if it was just one grain?” We call them our Founding Bottles.

Can you tell us a bit about your extremely precise distilling processes? What do open-top fermentation and pot-still distilling allow you to do?

Considering all the variables that can come into play during production it's amazing to think that we make the same thing over and over again. Open-top fermentation can be a boon or bust for a distiller because it adds character specific to the distillery, but it can also add variability. We use very specific processes when we are pitching our mash to







control the profile of what we are making. One of the distillery-specific attributes open top fermentation adds is that local yeast comes in and interacts with our process. We have eight breweries, three cideries, one meadery and a distillery in our Scott's Addition neighborhood. That's a lot of extra yeast floating around not to mention wild yeast. We have an ongoing project where we are tracking reference barrels over the years to see where you can tell when a new brewery opened up in the neighborhood.

Pot distillation allows us greater control over where we make our cuts. Translating that into normal speak we can make higher quality juice that reflects what flavors we want to express from the fermentations. The trade-off is that we just can't make as much as a big column still out of Kentucky, but we can make it better. That's part of the beauty in being a small batch distillery.

Why did you opt for quarter cask aging? How do you select the casks and what kind of charring do you prefer for your various whiskeys?

Quarter cask aging has been around as long as whiskey making itself. We began with Quarter Casks because we could make a very specific profile in a certain amount of time. Depending on the size of the quarter cask the shortest we would do is 2.5 years but that would be comparable to about 15 to 20 years in a 53-gallon barrel. In order to make that happen you have to utilize a specific process including pot distillation and know your barrels. At Reservoir,

we will go as far as taking down trees in Virginia and working with coopers to use our seasoned wood. Every barrel we use has a custom Alligator char which is about a # 5 or 6 on the scale. This is hugely important in conjunction with our production process to create Reservoir Whiskey – we even created a special VIP club named after our char, The Alligator Char Society.

What is your relationship with your place in Virginia? Can a distillery effectively valorize local expertise and excellence? Virginia has a long history of agriculture and spirits. The first Bourbon was distilled about 40 miles away from Reservoir along the James River in the early 17th Century. We lean on the farmers, the metal workers, the loggers and all the craftsmen to create a uniquely Virginian product. To that end, the support we feel from our local community and on a state level is significant.

What should we expect from Reservoir in the future? Maybe a new core range? What do you think of the possibilities to use other grains like oat and millet?

The future of Reservoir is an ongoing refinement of our processes in constant search for perfection while we express our need for innovation through our Grey Ghost and Limited Release programs. Our limited release offerings can include different finishing techniques, different oaking combinations or even different grain types like oat or millet.

Personally, I would love to make a Pechuga whiskey.



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**Port Pipe**

650 l - 172 gal.

Quarter Cask

*10 gallons vs
44 gallons*

by **Luca Cominelli**

The quarter casks are nothing but barrels of lower capacity than those usually used for the aging of whiskey. Specifically, they are able to accommodate 10 gallons of distillate (about 45 liters), which is a much lower quantity than the traditional 44 gallons (about 200 liters). We are talking about almost one-fifth of volume, not something that can pass unnoticed.

At first glance, using smaller barrels could be something more expensive and more complex to inspect during the aging, given that about 5 quarter casks are needed for each "traditional" barrel. Then why should this system be used?

The answer lies in the wooden surface in contact with the distillate, which in the case of quarter casks is way more. This allows a greater exchange between wood and distilla-

te and consequently a greater contribution from the wood, which gives aromas in less time than traditional ones.

Often these barrels are also chosen to make the "finish": after the distillate has already been aged in a traditional barrel, it is moved to the quarter cask for the last part of its maturation, where the producer tries to "inject" even more aromas into the distillate. It is a practice in use especially for NAS products (i.e. not particularly aged – No Age Statement), as it is unlikely that long aging is ended with "finishings", which could prevail over the character of the distillate developed after a very long rest in the barrels.

The best known Scottish whisky where these barrels are used is the Laphroaig Quarter Cask. In the US, however, a producer who makes extensive use of it is Reservoir.

TASTE

“Life is a combination of magic and pasta.”

Federico Fellini



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Beer & BBQ

*A great beer to pair
with your summer barbecue*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

A great BBQ is probably the first thing that comes to mind when one thinks about lovely weather and nice ways to spend quality time with family and friends. Depending on personal preferences and BBQ style, people might prefer drinking beer or wine. Still, we often settle for easy drinks that can go with pretty much anything. However, these drinks don't exalt any of our carefully cooked and seasoned pairings. Here some ideas for choosing the best beers that will make stand out our flavorful barbecue servings.

The first piece of useful information is that there should be a directly proportional relationship between the complexity of the culinary preparation and the beer we would like to pair it with. Yet, we also must distinguish the typologies of barbecue between generally grilled food (meat, fish, or ve-

getables) and the proper BBQ, such as the American and the Korean ones. For instance, the American BBQ entails a much richer and more intense cooking style than the classic flip on the grill. Thus, in this case we cannot simply pick the beer with the highest ABV or the more robust body; instead, we must carefully consider the aromatic palette. Only with a certain caution can we suggest that the stronger, slow-cooked or intensely smoked, pieces will require beers as much as complex and elaborate, while easier and essential preparations will find their best pairing with fresh and easy-to-drink beers. Indeed, the two basic characteristics of beer – effervescence and bitterness – are a great point of departure to delineate a first pairing scheme. In general, high-quality breweries always indicate the IBU scale of their products, which is the content of “bitterness” in the final product according to the amount of malt and hop used to

make the beer. Yet, this is a completely relative indication, as the bitterness perception must be balanced according to its relationship with the alcoholic proof: a strong but lightly hopped beer could appear more bitter than a light but strongly hopped beer due to the higher malt content. Thus, as usual, the key is to experiment. Yet, there are some other aspects that can help in the initial selection.

Usually, good lagers, pilsners, and kölschs pair well with pretty much everything, but they will really stand out with white meat like chicken, even if smoked, with classic sausage (but not too spiced), obviously with German wursts and American hot dogs, but also with some BBQ staples like turkey breasts and burnt ends. Also, don't forget about the Schwarzbier, the dark lagers, that can be awesome with more demanding food like back ribs, where rich fattiness and taste overload require an intense aromatic pairing but with a light body, just to help the tongue recovering before the next bite. Finally, grilled vegetables like zucchini and eggplants will find a perfect partner in these beer styles.

Regarding strong Lagers, Doppel/Bocks, and other high-alcohol Lagers, their best pairing is with the royal cuts of BBQ. Their combination of alcoholicity, body, and effervescence is perfect for succulent beef cuts like a T-bone, a rib-eye, and a tomahawk. The quality of meat is paramount: hanging, marbling, and cooking precision must be top-level to really make the most out of these preparations (and pair-

rings). The thicker and more demanding the cuts are, the more necessary it is to carefully set up the BBQ for perfectly melting down collagen before charring the sides with the chemistry of Maillard's reaction. Otherwise, the first thing you'll get from drinking a beer over an undercooked or overcooked steak will be an unpleasant metallic and bitter taste.

Lovers of dark malts, stouts and porters must-go with all the classic BBQ preparations due to the load of toasted and smooth tastes combined with a medium body and a dry profile. For instance, they can be tested with roasted entrails like lamb rolls, whose bitter base gets well balanced by a sweeter beer. Also, high-alcohol and sweeter dark beers, like an oatmeal stout or vanilla porter, are best to be paired with BBQ preparation of the same kind: a barbecue sauce made of the same beer is great for accompanying chicken wings, back ribs, and beef sirloins, especially if sided by buttery cheeses, while a stout mayo can perfectly top spicy black bean veggie burgers. Finally, you could test yourself with an ambitious pepper stout beef by choosing a wonderful shank or chuck roll. Careful with nitro variant (like Guinness) and sourish porter that move the pairing towards more particular contrasts like fish or seafood. If you really love the Flemish-style sour porter, you could try an asado de tira, where the acidity of the mandatory chimichurri could offer a nice counterpoint. Let's set aside the high-alcohol imperial versions for refined cheeses and delectable desserts instead.







Those who like red and amber beers will have plenty of choices. Try them with the classic beef burgers accompanied by cheese (cheddar and aged gouda slices, or a spicy blue cheese crumble), caramelized onions (possibly in a similar beer), lettuce and tomatoes. They are the best partners of one of the top BBQ preparations, the beloved pulled pork. Many recipes for cooking this classic smoked pork shoulder roast use red ales, and a similar but slightly stronger beer will wonderfully match the intensity of taste. For the same reasons, beer can chicken and roasted vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, and Italian pepper will perfectly work with amber beers.

Today, pale ales are among the most beloved beers by many aficionados, and their optimal combination of freshness, aromaticity, and intense hopping finds interesting applications in the BBQ world. Both Indian and American variations are to-go beers for classic preparations: seasoned sausages, spicy hot dogs, burgers, back ribs, chicken wings, lamb, but also leaner cuts of beef and veal, and marinated pork loins and chops. Remember always to accompany meat with fresh seasonings to avoid contrasting these characteristic beers with heavy and overloaded flavors. Otherwise, one might opt for stronger imperial and double pale ales that can easily match even the most formidable preparations like the phenomenal slow-cooked brisket. In general, one should avoid drinking them over extremely smoked pieces to avoid adding too much to the already powerful clash of bittering hardness.

Regarding wheat beer, whether Weizen, Witt, or Blanche, grilled meat fans might shake their heads, but, undoubtedly, these beers open an interesting wealth of combinations with fish. Their typical aromas of banana, cloves, and citrus, their lightness, frothiness, and delicate fizz, make them the perfect pairing with fat fishes like grilled salmon and stone bass as well as more delicate pieces like sea bass, orate, and snapper, always adequately seasoned to exalt their marine character.

The world of Belgian beers deserves a separate mention. There is plenty of possibilities that it's really had to offer even some general mentions. A general advice is to avoid those overt sugar- and spice-loaded Trappist and abbey beers that can easily overwhelm any course, except for few gourmet-level preparations like briskets, ribs, and roasts accompanied by rich sauces made with those same beers. Conversely, sour styles like gueuze and lambic are great with certain fish, vegetables, and white meat preparation, if marinated with vinegar or other similar fresh condiments.

As a matter of fact, the traditional pairing of Belgian beers is with fried potatoes, but this is material for another article.

These few suggestions simply cover the tip of the iceberg of the possible pairings. Only experimentation will help you in finding your favorite pairings and the best combinations for properly enjoying one of the most pleasing gastronomic occasions of the summer season.

Holy trinity

*The three BBQ dishes of the U.S. tradition,
between sacred and profane*

by Vito Renna

There is no doubt, in the United States barbecue is a serious thing, a real culture, a rite that is impossible to escape. Gathering around the fire, chatting for hours, drinking beer, enjoying a cigar and discussing the best sauce to use, is a precious and untouchable habit.

There is one state in particular where all this is accentuated, a real mecca for pitmasters and professional grillers: Texas. In Austin, a city among many, barbecue joints can be found on every corner. For comparison, we could imagine pizzerias in Italy. Everyone has their own specialty, their own secret recipe, their own very personal BBQ sauce.

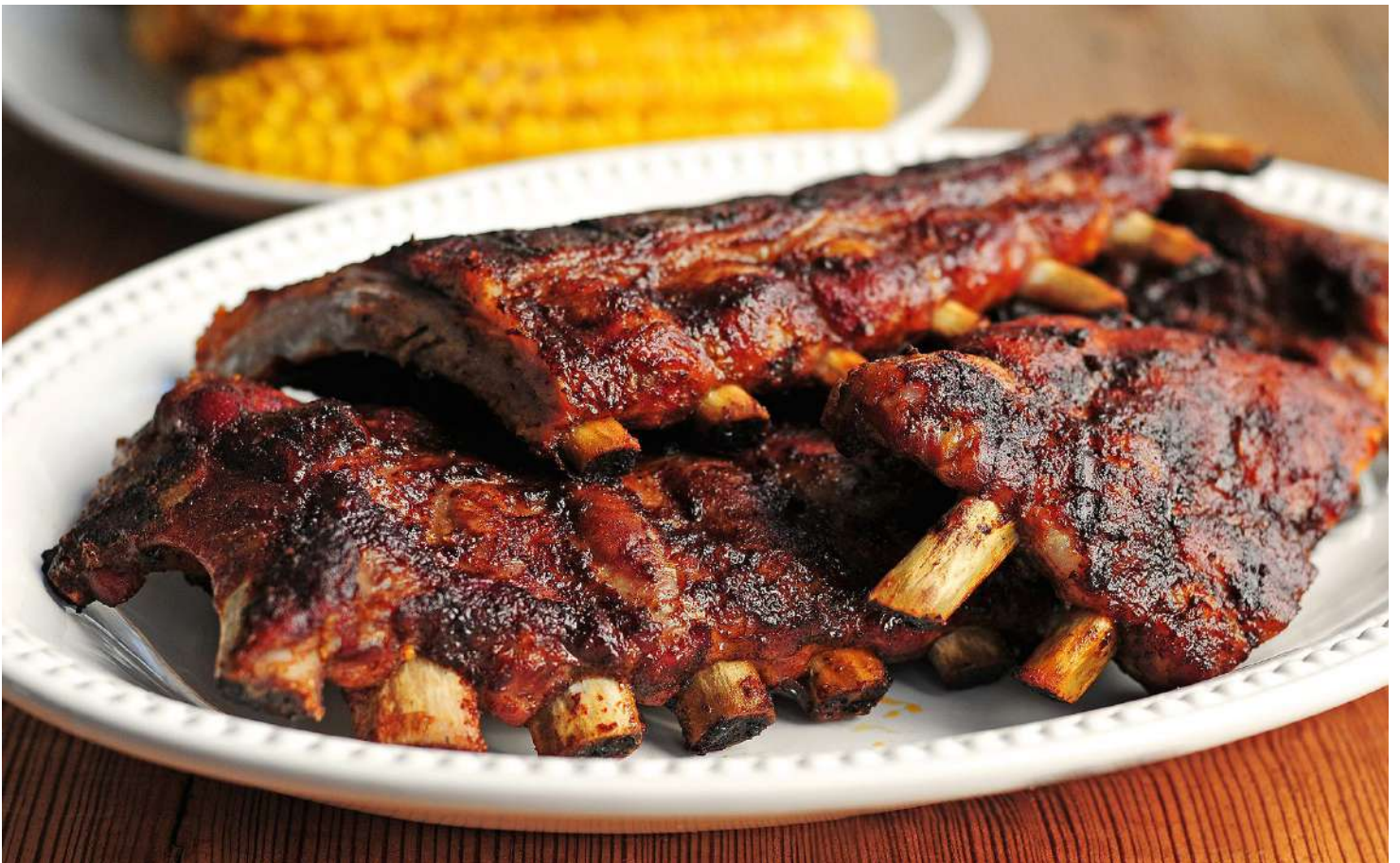
This is where a term containing the three most famous and well-known barbecue preparations has been produced: Holy Trinity: Brisket, Pulled Pork, Ribs. These are three traditionally secondary and cheap cuts. However, when cooked properly, gives flavors so unique that they conquer anyone. The preparation and cooking technique is very similar in each dish and here we want to offer you a quick detail. They are all cooked slowly at low temperature with the use of smoke.

BRISKET

The king of the sacred trinity. Let's talk about the beef brisket tip. A tenacious cut, very large and rich in fat and connective tissue. Here it is a must to start with quality raw material. It is of paramount importance that the cut is very tidal, therefore







it has a high amount of intramuscular fat and that there is a minimum of hanging. In America, the quality of meat cuts is distinguished into three different grades, from the most valuable USDA PRIME to the intermediate USDA CHOICE to the less valuable USDA SELECT. The brisket consists of two parts, flat (thinner and with less fat) and point (thicker and with more fat). Preparation starts with trimming, that is, by cleaning the cut through the removal of excess fat. At the end of this phase we move on to the rub. The meat is sprinkled with an oil-based or mustard-based sort of "paste" and covered with a spice mix. The Texas-style includes a SPOG (i.e. salt, pepper, onion and garlic) powder. After preparation we move on to the first cooking phase.

Once the smoker is stabilized at 125 degrees centigrade we insert the cut inside and let it cook. In this cooking phase one of the fundamental ingredients of American barbecue is used, the note that distinguishes it from every other dish: aromatic wood. Whether it's the intense Hickory or the characteristic Mesquite or the sweeter cherry, it is essential for the dish to have a bold smoky flavor. The second phase of cooking involves foil. Once bark, a solid and flavorful crust, is obtained from proper smoking the brisket is wrapped in two narrow sheets of aluminum. The goal is to raise the temperature at the heart of the piece of meat. After about 10/12 hours we will have exceeded 92 degrees centigrade and we can remove the brisket from the smoker. The last and very important phase, resting. A long rest in an insulated box to allow the temperature to subside slowly and the connective tissue to turn into melting jelly. It is served in slices.

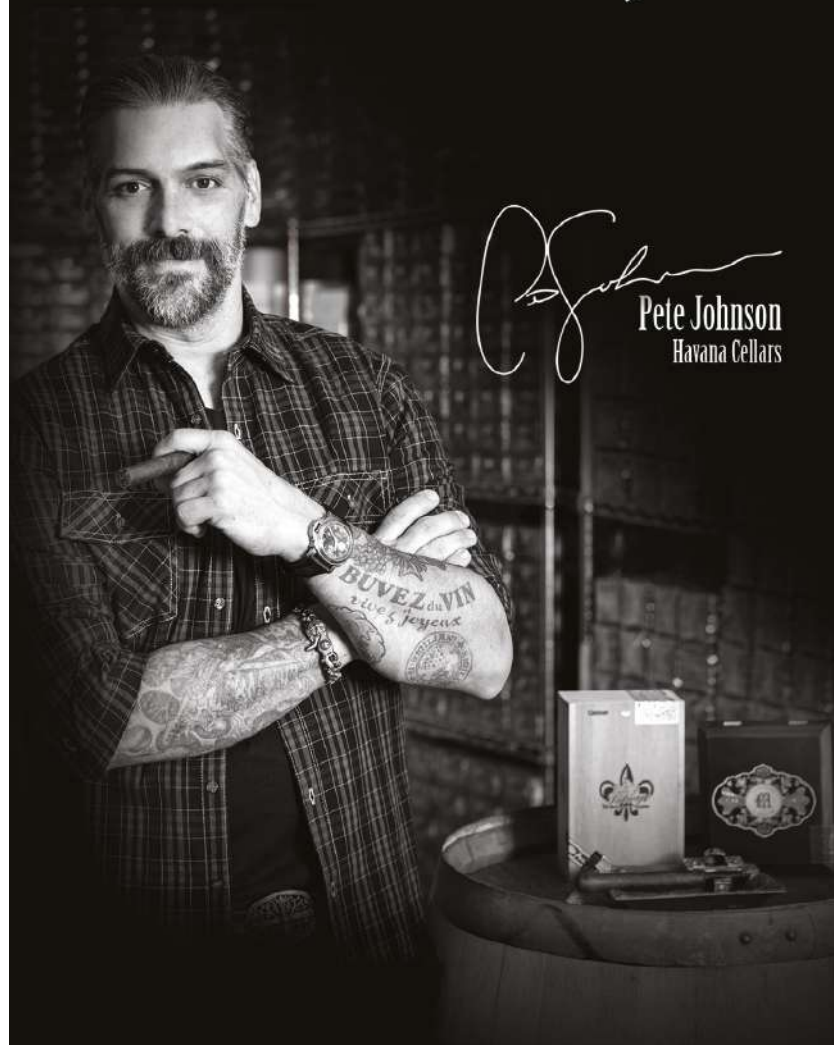
PULLED PORK

The most commonly used cuts are the pork shoulder, the neck or the more suitable Boston butt, that is, shoulder with part of the pig's neck. Just like the brisket we start from trimming, followed by rubbing and then smoking. Once bark is obtained, also here we proceed with foil. A Texas crutch is more suitable in this case, which means to place the pig in an aluminum tray that we are going to seal with foil. Our shoulder will be ready around 98 degrees Celsius at the heart of the product. The resting phase will also be important to get our sought-after collagen and will be ready to "pull." The tenacious fibers of a few hours earlier will be so tender that they will fray and create the well-known pulled pork. In Texas it is a must to serve it in sandwiches with coleslaw (a cabbage salad).

RIBS

Whether they are made out of pork or beef meat, ribs are always present in the bbq joint menu. Pork or beef ribs are created using the same basic ritual as the previously described. Unlike brisket or pulled pork it is important to dry the ribs after the foil by replacing them in the smoker. This step is used to regenerate the bark. If beef ribs, they are ready to be eaten after this stage, the most eclectic pork ribs can be glazed with barbecue sauce to obtain some shiny Kansas City Style ones. You cannot state you know the authentic American bbq if you haven't tasted one of each of the Holy Trinity's preparations at least once in your life.

tatuaje



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The materials of winemaking

*The influence of wood, steel, cement,
and amphoras on wine maturation*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

As illustrated in the previous article (CigarsLover Magazine Spring 2020), over the past several years worldwide winemaking has found a new productive dimension thanks to the development of alternative agricultural approaches and to the rediscovery of older traditions. Another serious revolution happened with the materials of wine tanks for fermentation and aging. From the steel/wood duality of the past we have today a wide choice of possibilities allowing not only to better manage the variety of grapes and styles, but also to face the particularities of any vintage and harvest.

After the harvest, grapes are crushed and destemmed in the cellar. Depending on productive choices there might be

other intermediate steps, but the most important thing is to decide where to ferment the must, that is the fundamental process for transforming grape juice in wine. From the 1970s on, the standard fermenting tanks have been made of steel. Steel is a resistant and relatively inert material, and it allows to concentrate primary aromas and to obtain stable wines. Moreover, steel tanks are easily upgradable with many technological tools like thermostats, valves, fullers, and so on, things that granted reliable results to an industry that needed productive regularity to face the demands of the mass market. Lately, though, producers have returned to more carefully considering the possibilities offered by different and "living" materials. Many winemakers rediscovered wood: its variety of essences combined to modern tech-





nologies of construction allows as much precision as steel but with a higher degree of personalization in winemaking processes like fermentation. Wood tanks also allow making more efficient the passage from fermentation to aging and storage by using the same containers. Moreover, they are necessary for medium-long aging wines or for extremely concentrated grapes that require more oxygenation from the onset. Yet, steel tanks are still the way to go for most of ready-to-drink wines and for those typologies that rely on the primary and varietal aromas developed during fermentation and that might get dispersed by a premature oxygenation or after the influence of wood. Obviously, all Charmat pressure tanks are also made of steel.

With the mass diffusion of steel, cement was almost considered a remnant of the past, but recently some producers realized that this material still offers certain advantages. First of all, cement tanks are inexpensive, and they can be adapted to all cellar shapes (though they cannot be moved). In production, cement allows both an optimal temperature control like steel - with less reduction and flavor sharpening, and a gradual oxygenation like wood - without the elevating transfer of essences and relative oxidation. This provides young wines with enough concentration without risking excessive reduction and medium-long aging wines with tranquil stabilization before being moved to wood casks. In many cases, though, cement tanks are internally covered with glass tiles or resins, if not a fiberglass coating, to abide by certain productive standards or to simplify the maintenance of the most used tanks for decanting that cannot develop a natural coating of tartaric sediments over the longer periods of storage.

Over the past few decades, 100% fiberglass tanks had large emergence too, but they were later abandoned due to certain health safety concerns. Modern productive technologies allowed to winemakers to rediscover this material for extremely cheap and light tanks that can be shaped in all sorts of ways, giving the possibility to experiment with smaller lots of production or with slower diversified fermentations. This material is completely neutral and sealed off from oxygen, but its low-temperature control and the impossibility to connect tools for pumping, fulling, and decanting makes it less apt for integrated winemaking processes. Amphoras are another type of container that became extremely successful over the past years. Archeologists found that the ancient Georgian qvevri dating back to more than 6000 years ago are the oldest wine tanks ever used by humanity. Even the Spanish tinajas boasted a long and esteemed enological tradition over the past centuries, while in South Italy is still alive to these days the ancient tradition of the capasuni of Grottaglie, in Apulia. More recently, some visionary winemakers (for example, Joško Gravner who started in 2001 in Gorizia) experimented with these suggestive tanks for creating long-aged macerated white wines with great oxidative complexity. The worldwide success of these first exclusive wines brought to the amphora boom of the past few years. Today, producers all around the world are experimenting with the most diverse red and white grapes, which in turn led to the definitive establishment of "ampho-

ra wines" as an acknowledged standalone typology. Amphoras found a particularly vast application in the world of natural winemaking, where producers are less concerned with industry standards and typified profiles. Indeed, amphoras allow extremely long maceration, fermentation, and aging periods, which can give wines of great character and complexity, despite the unpredictable and uncontrollable results.

Yet, if we move from winemaking processes to aging, wood still retains its dominant position among all other materials. The most remarkable change was probably the decrease in the use and abuse of barriques (the small 225-8l casks) that in the 1990s marked the mass production of convenient wines with a smoother and more immediate profile, despite the disputable invasiveness of wood scents. In this sense, today, steel has regained its dominant role in the production of ready-to-drink wines, followed by cement and fiberglass for certain peculiar varieties that require smoother materials. Medium and large wood casks are a different matter: their comeback is partly due to the fundamental aesthetic role in the setting of every winery (that now have undoubtedly become important touristic attractions between wine tasting and gastronomic entertainment), but it is also, and more importantly, due to the rediscovery of a slower and less invasive approach to wine maturation, where wood has simply to be a vector for aging through time and not the dominant marker for standardizing taste (it should suffice to think about particularly austere grapes like Nebbiolo or Cabernet Franc).

Thus, the evolution of contemporary enology offers today a wider and more dynamic range of materials and solutions to the advantage of the different necessities of producers and territories. Such a situation was not simply due to the fact that technological development has allowed to overcome past limitations: over the past several years there was also a cultural opening in the minds and tastes of producers and consumers that lead to a major attention and investment in bringing to the forefront the differences and the typical characteristics of certain wines over the needs of industrial standardization. The result is the current growing availability on the global market of noteworthy products for all tastes and pockets.





Salt to taste

*From a common spice in every kitchen
to a refined taste enhancer*

by **Elisabetta Stella**

Salt has been universally acknowledged as a precious good since antiquity, and it was even used as a currency for buying and bartering. Still today, salt ingots are used in Ethiopia as a form of money. The common denominator among all peoples and eras is its usage as a food preservative, for which the precious substance was needed in vast quantities, especially when perishable goods had to travel across long distances. Moreover, even manufacturing shops needed salts for activities like tanning or dyeing.

Technically, the term salt identifies a substance consisting of at least 97% sodium chloride. Sodium chloride is abundant in nature, mainly in marine water, but also in smaller fractions as a mineral ore in inland mines (in this case it takes the name of "halite" or "rock salt"). Production pro-

cesses can be extremely different according to the available form of sodium chloride sourced for culinary purposes. This definition is important to avoid mixing up market categories: smoked or aromatized salts, with fruits, spices, or other substances, are usually considered condiments by the legislations of many countries and they cannot be individuated as salts. Its main feature is the ability to enhance taste, which does not mean simply adding saltiness. Just one example can suffice: custard requires some salt to enhance its whole taste, and not simply to increase saltiness.

There are many different types of salts, and over the past years top-level chefs became extremely interested in its more precise and variegated culinary usage. A first fundamental distinction is the division between white and colored salts, provided that they share the same salting power, i.e.



sodium percentage. Among white salts, we have many shapes (coarse, refined) and types (Maldon salt, Cervia sweet salt, Motia salt, fleur de sel, etc.). Among colored ones, there are all those types that have a particular color or are dyed such as the Hawaiian red salt, the Himalayan pink salt, the Cyprian black salt, and the Guerande grey salt. So-called "raw" salt is another matter: these salts are purposely not refined up to maximal purity and left coarser and damper. These type os salt are usually employed for marinating or preserving food in long-term salting conserves.

Cyprian Black Salt

This salt is extracted from the coastal lakes in the Larnaca region of Cyprus and enriched with activated charcoal from the combustion of softwood (birch, willow, limewood) that adds the typical black color.

Cyprian Black Salt is usually paired with fish, fried eggs, and sweet potatoes. Technically, it does not add anything in terms of aromatic value, but the chromatic contrast of the black charcoal enveloping the clear crystals certainly offers a wonderful aesthetic effect.

Himalayan Pink Salt

This is probably the most famous variety of salt easily available in worldwide markets. Pink salt comes from a 250 million years old mineral formation distributed inland mines that once were ancient marine water and now became mountains due to tectonic movements. About 300 kilometers from the Himalaya, Khewra, in the Punjab region of Pakistan, is the most famous pink salt producer in the world.

For this reason, its name is mainly a commercial brand ra-

ther than a geographical denomination. Its natural state are large rock salt blocks or grains, and its color comes from peculiar oxidative phenomena.

Hawaiian Red Salt

This type has a reddish hue similar to the Himalayan one. Nevertheless, its origins are different. During the evaporation processes, the volcanic clay in the mineral lodes gets attached to the salt grains donating the classic color of iron-rich salts.

It is suitable for fish and meat, as well as for decorating various courses, and it is the main ingredient for Hawaiian preparations such as the Poke and the Kalua Pig. In ancient times, it was also extremely important in the Hawaiian shamanist rituals.

Guerande Grey Salt

Also known as Celtic salt, it comes from the south of Brittany, on the French Atlantic coast, along massive clay shores. This clay gives the typical grey hue to the salt.

It gets mainly used with boiled vegetables.

Maldon Salt

Known as English salt, Maldon is a salt region in Essex County, south-east of London. It is probably the most world-famous white salt. Its peculiar characteristic comes from

the flake shape of its crystals. These flakes are formed during the production process of crushing the typical hollow pyramidal crystals that are extremely crumbly, so much that they can be hand crushed. Its notoriety comes from the false assumption that it has a higher salting power than other varieties. Actually, its characteristic shape simply occupies a larger area that is obviously more easily capable to stimulate human tongue receptors. Its main advantage derives from its extremely elegant crunchiness, perception, and softness to the palate.

It is recommended with rare-cooked red meats like steaks, sirloins, filets, that have to be salted only before serving.

The tasting value of salt derives more from a mechanical perception than from the actual content of sodium: the shape of crystals that enhance the palatal perception. A faster solubility in the mouth offers a more intense gustative perception that should not be confused with a higher saltiness.

The price of salts can vary from few cents up to dozens of euros per kilo (for instance, Maldon salt costs more than 30 €/Kg), according to their availability, provenance, and productive process.

Regardless of its price, the most important thing is to properly understand when and how to use these salts to actually enhance the food preparations we are going to serve.



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Spirits Blind Tasting



Rum 99

Whisky 105



HIBIKI

30 yo

43% | €€€€€ | Japan

NOSE: rich fruity notes, together with some cinnamon and plum cake hints. Some light nuances of wood.

PALATE: mellow. It develops a fine wood note, together with cinnamon and nutmeg. Some rich caramel hints are perceivable as well.

FINISH medium-long persistence. Mellow and woody, delivering an interesting spicy note.

Equipped with an excellent harmony, it results very balanced and complex. A meditative dram, capable of being incredibly satisfying.

94

Legend

All the information in the blind tasting

To place the spirit inside of an ample rating scale, we adopt a scoring system made of 100 points. The rating of each spirit is made by the average given score by the reviewers. Blind tasting means every spirit is tested without knowing what it is. No information about the brand, ABV or origins are given. This is the only way to evaluate spirits objectively.

1

Spirit image.

2

Name of the brand and name of the reviewed spirit in the blind tasting.

"yo" means "Years Old" and indicates how many years the product has been matured. If there is no indication of that, it is because the producer didn't declare it.

3

• Percentage of alcohol contained in the spirit (Alcohol By Volume).

• Price:
€ less than 50€
€€ less than 100€
€€€ less than 250€
€€€€ less than 500€
€€€€€ more than 500€

• Country producer.

4

The tasting is divided in three parts: what perceived to the nose, to the palate and the finish. The final rows describe the overall experience that brought to the rating.

5

Rating scale: **95-100** memorable and excellent in every detail. **90-94** great quality and highly satisfying. **86-89** high quality and very pleasant. **81-85** decent, delivering a good dram. **Less than 80** not recommended.



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Rum



The 12 chosen

The twelve chosen rums for this blind tasting come from various production countries, some of which are not well-known for the production of rum. There are both long aged rums and less matured ones.

The results

Some products shone less than expected, while others turned out to be a real surprise. The winner of this blind tasting was a superlative under many aspects, but there were other rums scoring more than 90 points.



A.H. RIISE

Frogman Danish N.

58% | €€ | U.S.A. Virgin Island

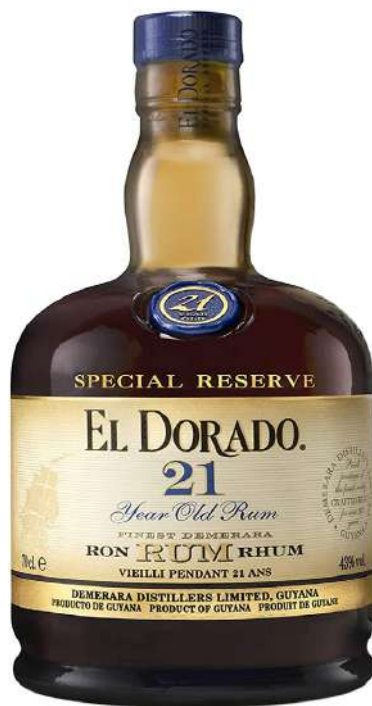
NOSE: maraschino and a mix of balsamic herbs, where cloves, cinnamon, star anise and a hint of licorice stand out. Fresh.

PALATE: the intense mix of balsamic herbs is confirmed, enriched with citrus fruits, allspice and a strong resemblance to English soup.

FINISH: long persistence, with spicy notes and balsamic herbs

Unique and ample flavor profile. Great complexity and intensity.

93



EL DORADO

21 Years Old

43% | €€€ | Guyana

NOSE: Vinous, with notes of cherry in alcohol, chocolate, red fruits and floral references. Wood and balsamic herbs are also perceptible.

PALATE: Warm and enveloping, with aromas of ganache, hazelnut and wood, all supported by suave peppery spices.

FINISH: Long. Mildly sweet, spices and chocolate. Cinnamon.

Complex, very structured and balanced. Full.

91



QUORHUM

30 Years Old

40% | €€ | Dominican Rep.

NOSE: caramel, honeydew honey and spices, followed by wood, dried orange and floral and balsamic nuances.

PALATE: wood, caramel and cocoa, supported by sweet peppery notes. Then almond and orange zest. Rather vinous.

FINISH: medium long. Spices, caramel and cocoa.

Structured and complex. Elegant and balanced.

90



PLANTATION *152003 C.T.C. '19*

59,8% | €€€ | Cuba

NOSE: mineral, with hints of flint. Then cotton candy and a touch of wood, just mentioned. Chilli pepper to complete the profile.

PALATE: particularly spicy, with pepper and cumin, it also releases exotic fruit and wood varnish. Caramel.

FINISH: medium-long persistence. Spices and cloves.

Complex, rich and surprising, despite the alcohol content, it is easy to drink.

89



MALTECO *25 Reserva Rara*

40% | €€€ | Panama

NOSE: wood paint and spices, including cinnamon and nutmeg. Then vanilla, leather and caramel hints.

PALATE: intense notes of coffee, nuances of caramel and cocoa. There are also hints of hazelnut and honey perceptible.

FINISH: medium. Suave spices, wood and coffee.

Interesting and with good complexity. Harmonious and balanced.

89



FOURSQUARE *Sagacity*

48% | €€ | Barbados

NOSE: honeyed, with notes of ganache, caramel and lemon zest. Hints of earth and wood. Then almond and a touch of caramel.

PALATE: Warm, enveloping and sweet. Notes of wood, ganache, hazelnut, spices and caramel are perceptible.

FINISH: long. Caramelized almonds, honey and dried figs.

Intense and structured, it boasts a marked balance. Easy to drink.

89



RYOMA 7 Years Old

40% | €€ | Japan

NOSE: mineral and smoky scents, together with vegetal notes and citrus. Then yellow fruit, where the apple stands out.

PALATE: yellow apple, wood, spices and vegetal notes. The mineral aroma is confirmed. Lastly, a touch of crème caramel.

FINISH: medium-long. Mineral, spices, cocoa and licorice.

Intriguing and with a unique finish. The flavor profile is simply great.

88



RUM NATION 8 Years Old Peruano

42% | € | Perú

NOSE: hints of brine, vegetable nuances, spices and vanilla. There are also some shades of apple and hints of cinnamon.

PALATE: a mix of brown sugar, pear, floral aromas and vegetal notes. A touch of brine follows. The base is mildly sweet.

FINISH: medium persistence. Nutmeg and spices.

Easy to drink and with a fairly elegant flavor profile.

84



CUBANEY Centenario

41% | €€ | Dominican Rep.

NOSE: cherry liqueur, cherry and cocoa. Sugary, with hints of honey. After a few moments in the glass, seasoned wood.

PALATE: balanced and harmonious. Rather sweet. The cocoa and caramel aromas are confirmed. Then, notes of raisins.

FINISH: medium. Cocoa and wood, then hints of caramel and spices.

Not much intense, but very balanced and harmonious. Good complexity.

83



DON PANCHO

Origenes 18 Years Old

40% | €€ | Panama

NOSE: rich scents of vanilla and balsamic herbs, where menthol stands out. Very fresh.

PALATE: rather oily and honeyed. Sugared almonds, sugary notes, wood varnish and then vanilla. Fresh wood and hints of nuts.

FINISH: medium persistence. Rich spices, chili spice, wood and a touch of vanilla.

Simple and straightforward. Fairly balanced flavor profile.

83



BOTRAN

18 Years Old

40% | € | Guatemala

NOSE: it releases hints of cocoa, caramel, ganache, seasoned wood and sugared almond. Cardamom tips.

PALATE: the alcohol component is slightly perceptible. Caramel, seasoned wood and cocoa are confirmed. Hints of vanilla.

FINISH: Medium-short persistence. Spices, wood and caramel.

The flavor profile is on a limited size. Balanced, but not too structured. The alcoholic component is perceptible.

79



MEDELLIN

12 Years Old

38% | € | Colombia

NOSE: the alcoholic component is rather evident. Caramel and citrus nuances are followed by brine and hints of vanilla.

PALATE: on the bland side. There are brine, wood, cherry liqueur and spices notes. Lastly, green olives.

FINISH: short persistence. Spices and brine.

Not particularly structured. The sweet-salty contrast perceptible on the palate is interesting.

78

imported by



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ADVenturacigars.com



Whisky



The 12 chosen

The whiskies selected for this blind tasting do not follow a particular orientation in terms of aging or price. The choice fell on products that we thought were particularly interesting, in various aspects.

Top 2 & Top3

The top two whiskies of the podium, the highest ones, are made in the U.S., while the third place is taken by a European whiskey, made in Switzerland. In the following positions, there are products from which expectations were higher.



COLONEL TAYLOR

Small Batch

50% | €€ | U.S.A.

NOSE: sweet notes of wood and caramel, then intense spices and cocoa. Hints of wood polish, pecan nut, and barely mentioned nuances of balsamic herbs.

PALATE: sweet, it releases rich notes of caramel, vegetal nuances, and spices. Pecan nut is confirmed. Then aromas of ganache.

FINISH: long. Balsamic herbs, vegetal notes, and spices.

Pronounced intensity and structure. Explosive and of great balance.

91



BALCONES

Baby Blue Corn

46% | € | U.S.A.

NOSE: sweet and inviting, particularly fruity. There are aromas of wood, cereal biscuits present, followed by freshly baked bread, as well as hints of butter.

PALATE: a large mix of honey, cereals, wood, leather, cocoa and yellow fruit. Then intense citrus notes, where the lemon zest stands out.

FINISH: medium-long. Wood, cereals, caramel, and spices. Citrus fruits.

Balanced and intense, with a broad flavor profile and good complexity.

90



SANTIS

Dreifaltigkeit

52% | €€ | Switzerland

NOSE: intense, with notes reminiscent of barbeque sauce, honey, malt, and an important smokey aroma. Vegetal nuances.

PALATE: very smokey, with caramel notes, honeydew honey, and spices, where black pepper stands out. Then coal and soot, followed by cereals hints, that complete the bouquet.

FINISH: very long-lasting. Intense spicy notes and smoke. Cereals.

Rich and intense. Equipped with a unique flavor profile.

90



LAGAVULIN *10 Years Old*

43% | €€ | Scotland

NOSE: peat and marine nuances, followed by citrus, where the lemon zest stands out. There are also medicinal hints and rich spices perceivable.

PALATE: mineral peat, marine notes and iodine. Medicinal herbs and citrus fruits are confirmed, the latter is now less pronounced.

FINISH: medium persistence. Peat, citrus and smokey notes.

With a good structure, it is very intense and satisfying.

87



TIMOROUS *Beastie*

46.8% | € | Scotland

NOSE: intense citrus aromas, where the lemon zest and then lime stand out. Green apple and nail polish shortly follow.

PALATE: slightly peated, with spices, cereals, and a mineral touch. There are also some smokey nuances.

FINISH: medium-long. Spices, black salt, and cloves.

The profile has distinct aromas, not that common. It is very fresh and decently structured.

87



ISFJORD *No.2*

42% | €€ | Denmark

NOSE: it releases suave smokey scents, together with some sweet notes of honey, followed by a light touch of caramel.

PALATE: light peated aromas are enriched with smoky notes, as well as a fruity touch of apple.

FINISH: medium persistence. Spices and fruity notes of apple.

Equipped with a not that common flavor profile, it is elegant and balanced. Slightly peated.

86



KINGS COUNTY

Barrel Proof Bourbon

62% | €€ | U.S.A.

NOSE: a touch of caramel is then followed by aromas of vanilla, spices and spices, where the white pepper stand out.

PALATE: warm and round, with peppery and spicy notes, that culminate with hot spices. The caramel aroma is confirmed.

FINISH: medium-short persistence. Sweet and peppery.

Equipped with a good structure and a nice balance balance.

85



THE CORRIEMHOR

Cigar Reserve

46% | € | Scotland

NOSE: scents of red fruit, ginger, and spices, are joined after a few moments by a woody aroma. Then the balsamic notes emerge as well.

PALATE: hints of mineral peat, citrus (rich lemon zest), ginger and yellow fruit, are followed by spices. The woody component is still present.

FINISH: medium-long. Wood, spices, and yellow fruit. A touch of vanilla.

Intense but not particularly structured, nor deep.

85



MATSUI

Mizunara cask

48% | €€€ | Japan

NOSE: an almost pungent spiciness, with notes of cereal biscuits. Rather limited flavor profile to the nose.

PALATE: rather dry, with balsamic and herbal notes. There are also mineral nuances and a lot of spices.

FINISH: medium persistence. Licorice root and anise. Sapid.

Not common flavor profile, but at the same time made of delicate nuances and great alcoholic strength. The result is a not too balanced whiskey.

83



WHISTLEPIG *15 Years Old*

46% | €€€€ | U.S.A.

NOSE: very citrusy, with lemon zest and candied citron. Medicinal nuances and with the alcohol content is barely perceptible.

PALATE: fresh. Citrus is confirmed, both fresh and candied, and it is now followed by a light peatiness.

FINISH: medium-short. Sapid, mineral, citrus, and clove.

Fresh and easy to drink. It is pleasant and refreshing.

83



GLENFIDDICH *Winter Storm (Batch 2)*

42% | €€€ | Scotland

NOSE: citrus fruits, where lemon zest stands out, are followed by wood and a touch of vanilla. Then yellow fruit. Rather fresh.

PALATE: round. Wood, spices, vegetal notes, and a touch of fruit. The base results slightly bitter.

FINISH: medium-short persistence. Spices, yellow fruit, and vanilla.

More performing to the palate than to the nose, is equipped with a somewhat limited finish. Not very complex, nor structured.

82



TENJAKU *Japanese Whisky*

40% | € | Japan

NOSE: fruity, with Williams pear followed by flint. The alcoholic component is well perceptible.

PALATE: a mix of spices, among those the white pepper stands out, followed by unripe pear and licorice root. Rather sapid.

FINISH: shortish. Evanescent peatiness, cloves, and anise.

Not that structured, and not deep, both to the nose and to the palate. The whiskey shows all its youth.

81

CigarsLover MAGAZINE

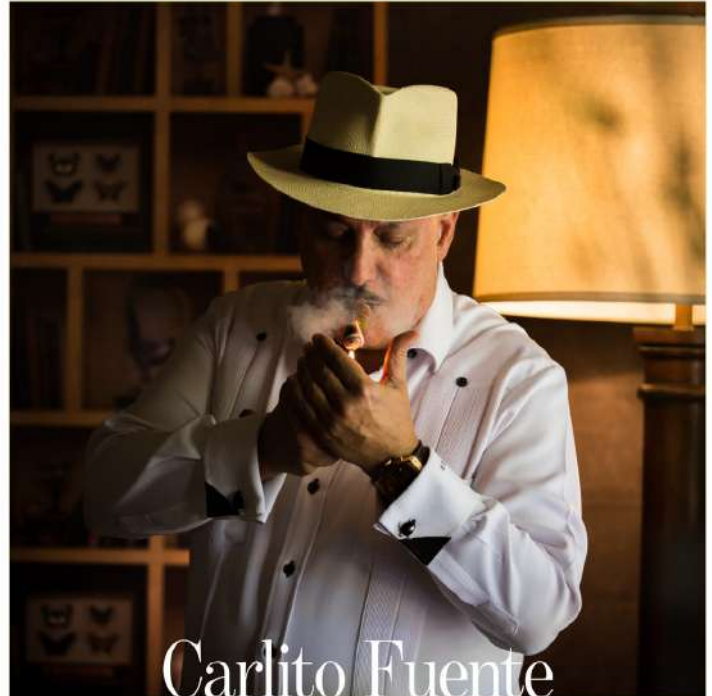
SPRING 2019



- DAVIDOFF: THE QUALITY - PETE JOHNSON - CAVALIER GENEVE - SAN CRISTOBAL DE LA HABANA - CIGAR FESTIVALS
- HOW TO STORE SPIRITS - THE BEST QUALITY/PRICE BOURBONS - LOWLANDS: THE SOUTHERN PART OF SCOTLAND
- COOKING AND PAIRING WITH TOBACCO - THE COFFEE JOURNEY - BOLGHERI D.O.C. - DETOX - SNAKE HEAD FISH SOUP

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Carlito Fuente

- ADVENTURA CIGARS - SCISSORS - TASTING TECHNIQUES - 5 MUST HAVE CUBANS - SIGARIE - BBQ & CIGARS
- PROHIBITIONISM: A NEW BEGINNINGS - THE MOST ILLEGAL WHISKY IN HISTORY - TOP 10 DRINKS FOR SUMMER
- TOBACCO & WHISKY IN SAUCE - COFFEE RECIPES FOR SUMMER - MEXICO: MOLE POBLANO - FRENCH WINES

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Mombacho & Diplomatico

- CIGARS & GOLF - HUMIDITY IN CIGARS - BEYOND THE NOSE - COI IIBA ROBUSTOS - NO LIGERO, NO PROBLEM - FQ CIGARS
- KAVAN - MOSCOW MULE - THE OLDEST WHISKIES EVER - CARAMEL, SWEET TRICK - SPIRITS & CINEMA - BAR SPOON
- THE COFFEE JOURNEY: FROM THE BEAN TO THE CUP - TEA IN MARRAKECH - CERVICHE IN CHILE - THE PERFECT PIZZA

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- POKER AND CIGARS - BARREL AGED - VIKINGS CIGARS - SMOKE PERCEPTION - COI IIBA TALISMAN - DAPPER CIGARS
- THE AGING OF WHISKY IN SHERRY CASKS - VERMOUTH: WINE AND COCKTAILS - FALSE BELIEFS OF WHISKY
- CAVIAR: LUXURY DELIGHT - TRAINING THE SENSES TO ENJOY COFFEE - TARTARE AND CARPACCIO - HUMMUS

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MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2020

Heinrich Villiger

RU IN SUMMER - THE "SAVING" BLOW - PACHUCHE CIGARS - KAREN BERGER - HULK WRAPPER - THE TREASURE CHEST

FLOR DE CAÑA - CUBAN SPIRIT: DRINKS & PAIRINGS - RESERVOIR: THE INTERVIEW - THE RETURN OF THE RYE

BEER & BBQ: PAIRING THE BARBECUE - MEAT: HOLY TRINITY - THE MATERIALS OF WINEMAKING - SALT TO TASTE



Cigars Blind Tasting



Corto	112
Gordo	116
Robusto	120
Toro	124

Legend

All the information inside the blind tastings

To place cigars inside of an ample rating scale, we adopt a scoring system made of 100 points. The rating of each cigar is made by the average given score by the reviewers. Blind tasting means every cigar is smoked without knowing what the cigar is. No information about the brand, blend or size are given. This is the only way to evaluate cigars objectively.

	THE WISE MAN <i>Maduro Corona Gorda</i> <i>EXPLOSIVE. A VOLCANO OF FLAVORS.</i> An explosion of cocoa beans and black pepper starts off the smoke. Then rich roasted notes of coffee reaches the palate, together with earth and wood. In the last part, balsamic herbs get delivered. The finale is made of dark chocolate and nuts.	95 4 STRENGTH: ●●●●● COUNTRY: Nicaragua SIZE: 46x143mm (5,6") PRICE: 10\$ - /€ WRAPPER: Mexico BINDER: Nicaragua FILLER: Nicaragua
--	---	---

1

Cigar picture.

2

Cigar tasting notes. Here are written the aromas and the flavors delivered during the smoke.

3

- country: where the cigar is made.
- size: ring gauge (1/64 of inch) and length, written in both millimeters and inches.
- blend: wrapper (the external leaf), binder (the leaf under the wrapper) and filler (the leaves inside the cigar).
- cigar strength: described on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the lightest and 5 is the strongest.

4

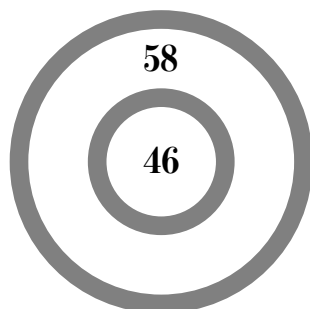
Rating scale: **95-100** memorable and excellent in every detail. **90-94** great quality and highly satisfying. **86-89** high quality and very pleasant. **81-85** decent, delivering a good smoke. **Under 80** not recommended.

Corto



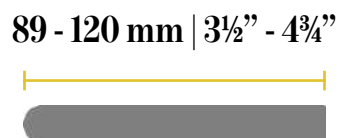
Cepo

it is the ring gauge of the cigar,
written in 1/64 of an inch



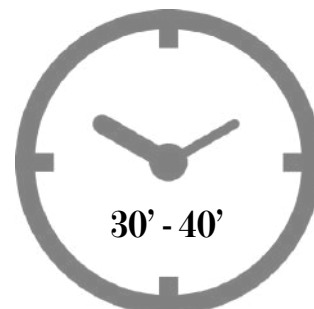
Largo

it is the cigar length,
written in millimeters (and inches)



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes





BALMORAL *Añejo XO Oscuro Gordito*

A GREAT LITTLE CIGAR.

The smoke opens with notes of hazelnut, leather and a mix of spices, in which black pepper and cinnamon, with hot spices, stand out. In the second half, coffee is added, while in the finish the bouquet is completed with vegetal nuances.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 58X102MM (4")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 8 €

WRAPPER: MEXICO

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: BRAZIL, DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



ROMA CRAFT *Baka Pygmy*

EVOLUTIONARY AND STRUCTURED.

The smoke opens with notes of earth, hazelnut and black pepper. Intense earthy notes are added and in the second half, wood aromas, followed with walnut nuances, reach the palate.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 46X102MM (4")

PRICE: 9 \$ - N/A €

WRAPPER: CAMEROON

BINDER: N/A

FILLER: N/A



A. FLORES *Gran Reserva Corojo HC*

BALANCED AND EASY TO APPRECIATE.

The smoke revolves around notes of coffee beans, nuts (hazelnut stands out) and wood. The base is pleasantly bitter. In the second half, toasted notes are added.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 46X89MM (3½")

PRICE: 4.5 \$ - 5.5 €

WRAPPER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



ARTURO FUENTE *Gran Reserva Rothschild*

EVOLUTIONARY AND INTENSE.

It releases notes of black pepper, bread and cedar wood, which are enriched with toasted nuances of coffee and herbs. The base is sweet and recalls molasses. In the final part, mineral hints appear as well.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50X114MM (4½")

PRICE: 6 \$ - 8 €

WRAPPER: CAMEROON

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



EL VIEJO CONTINENTE *Brevium*

BALANCED AND HARMONIOUS.

The smoke opens with notes of wood, cocoa and coffee, which make their way on a sweet base. Halfway through, the flavor profile is completed with notes of wood. Sweet until the last puff.

90

STRENGTH: ●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

DIMENSIONI: 56X120MM (4¾")

SIZE: N/A \$ - 6 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



ADVENTURA *The Explorer Short Robusto*

CREAMY.

Wood, hazelnut and peppery nuances open the smoke, which is then joined by herbs. In the second half, black pepper and herbs become more frequent, closing the smoke as the main flavor.

89

STRENGTH: ●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50X102MM (4")

PRICE: 10 \$ - 13 €

WRAPPER: MEXICO

BINDER: INDONESIA

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., ECUADOR



HVC *Black Friday 2019*

INTENSE.

The flavor profile revolves around notes of wood and cocoa, followed by a mix of spices, in which cinnamon stands out. The base is pleasantly bitter. In the finish, toasted and mineral notes are added.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 52X114MM (4½")

PRICE: 6.5 \$ - N/A €

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



MADRIGAL *Picador Short Robusto*

ROASTED AND SPICY.

The cigar opens with roasted and wooden notes. Then coffee and black pepper are delivered. The flavor profile is also confirmed in the second half, with the aromas becoming richer.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: MESSICO

SIZE: 50X83MM (3¼")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 3 €

WRAPPER: MESSICO

BINDER: MESSICO

FILLER: MESSICO



ONEOFF *Cartuchos*

MASCULINE.

The smoke revolves around three aromas, which become evident immediately and stick around until the end of the smoke: earth, black pepper and toasted notes of coffee. Strength tends to overshadow the flavor profile at times.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: NICARAGUA
SIZE: 52X98MM (3⅞")
PRICE: 12 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
FILLER: NICARAGUA



COHIBA *Medio Siglo*

CREAMY.

It releases notes of wood and toasted shades of coffee. In the second half of the smoke, notes of balsamic herbs reach the palate, reminiscent of cloves and which gradually become more pronounced as they approach the finish.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: CUBA
SIZE: 52X102MM (4")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 20 €
WRAPPER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
FILLER: CUBA



PARTAGAS *Serie D No. 6*

SIMPLE TO APPRECIATE.

The opening is particularly spicy and the smoke immediately develops intense notes of black pepper, followed by hazelnut and leather. Then wood and coffee appear. In the second half, the spicy component becomes less pronounced.

86

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: CUBA
SIZE: 50X89MM (3½")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 8 €
WRAPPER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
FILLER: CUBA



SAGA *Short Tales of High Priming*

EXCELLENT PERSISTENCE.

It releases roasted notes of coffee and cedar wood, which are supported by a spiciness of black pepper which becomes more pronounced in the second half of the smoke.

84

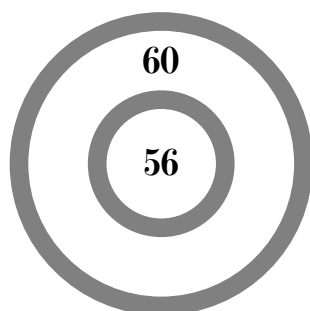
STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: REPUBBLICA DOMINICANA
SIZE: 58X102MM (4")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 3 €
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: INDONESIA
FILLER: REP. DOMINICANA, USA

Gordo



Cepo

it is the ring gauge of the cigar,
written in 1/64 of an inch



Largo

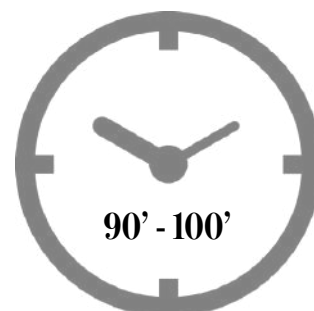
it is the cigar length,
written in millimeters (and inches)

152 - 165 mm | 6" - 6½"



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes





CAMACHO

Liberty Series 2020

BALANCED AND CREAMY.

The smoke opens with roasted notes, wood and white pepper, followed by nuts, mainly hazelnut. Halfway through the smoke, the cigar becomes creamy, and rich herbaceous notes are added.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: HONDURAS

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 13 \$ - 15 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: HONDURAS

FILLER: R. DOMINICANA, HONDURAS



BALMORAL

Serie Signaturas Dueto Gordo

VELVETY AND PERSISTENT.

The flavor profile revolves around notes of cedar, earth and nuts, where the hazelnut stands out. There are also hints of leather present. Coffee beans are added in the final part.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 12.5 \$ - 13 €

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: BRAZIL, NICARAGUA



A.J. FERNANDEZ

New World Cameroon Gordo

INTENSE BUT RATHER LINEAR.

It releases a sweet smoke, with aromas of wood and spices, where pink pepper stands out. In the central section, nuances of caramel and sweet tobacco are added, which makes the base of the cigar even sweeter.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 7.5 \$ - 8 €

WRAPPER: CAMEROON

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



BRUN DEL RE

1638 Episodio 2 Supremo

COMPLEX AND CREAMY.

It initially releases notes of wood and a mix of spices, in which cinnamon and turmeric are perceived. It is then the turn of toasted notes of coffee and leather, while towards the end it moves to a mix of balsamic herbs (anise) and black pepper.

88

STRENGTH: ●●

COUNTRY: COSTA RICA

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 10 €

WRAPPER: COSTA RICA

BINDER: COSTA RICA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



DAVIDOFF *Escurio Gran Toro*

BALANCED AND COMPLEX.

It starts with earthy and vegetal aromas, which are then joined by spicy notes of green pepper. The spices become more pronounced in the second half, where they are joined by notes of undergrowth.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 58X140MM (5½")

PRICE: 19 \$ - 19.5 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: BRAZIL

FILLER: BRAZIL, DOMINICAN REP.



PSYKO 7 *Nicaragua Gordo*

STRUCTURED.

It releases notes of black pepper, leather, earth and walnut. In the central part, a note of herbs is perceived, which recalls anise. In the final part, a espresso coffee peeks through, with hints graphite.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 9.5 \$ - 10.5 €

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



BRICK HOUSE *Mighty Mighty Maduro*

SOMETIMES SWEET.

It outlines notes of wood and earth, with shades of cocoa. In the central section, the flavor profile features the addition of roasted notes of espresso coffee, which are refreshed by sweet citrus aromas. The base is sometimes sweet.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 60X159MM (6¼")

PRICE: 7.5 \$ - 6.5 €

WRAPPER: BRAZIL

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



GURKHA *Ghost Gold Exorcist*

LONG PERSISTENCE.

The smoke revolves around nutty notes, where walnut stands out, followed by earth and wood. Coffee comes through in some puffs. In the final part, balsamic herbs are released, which gradually become the main flavor.

86

STRENGTH: ●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 10.5 \$ - 12 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, USA



ALEC & BRADLEY *Gatekeeper Gordo*

BALANCED BUT LITTLE EVOLUTION.

It develops notes of bread, leather and spices, where black pepper and ginger stand out. The base is at times pleasantly acidic. In the second half, notes of licorice are perceived in some puffs.

85

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 12 \$ - 13 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



CALDWELL *Long Live The King Marquis*

IRREGULAR BURN.

The whole smoke revolves around notes of leather and white pepper, which are supported by earthy aromas. In the second half, notes of balsamic herbs also reach the palate in some puffs.

84

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 60X152MM (6")

PRICE: 12 \$ - 10 €

WRAPPER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: NICARAGUA, PERU



E.P. CARRILLO *Inch Ring Master No.6*

LINEAR.

It releases notes of wood and suave spicy aromas. Nuts are outlined in the central section, which mainly recalls hazelnut. There are also shades of nutmeg perceivable. Coffee appears towards the end.

84

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 64X165MM (6½")

PRICE: 14.5 \$ - 18 €

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



QUESADA *Reserva Privada Gran Toro*

LIMITED EVOLUTION.

The flavor profile mainly revolves around notes of wood, pepper and earth. The smoke is creamy. In the second half, bitter notes are delivered as well, which gradually tend to prevail.

84

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: REPUBBLICA DOMINICANA

SIZE: 56X165MM (6½")

PRICE: 15 \$ - 11 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: REPUBBLICA DOMINICANA

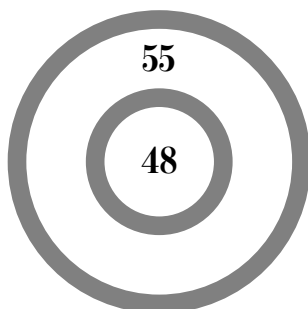
FILLER: REP. DOMINICANA, USA

Robusto



Cepo

it is the ring gauge of the cigar,
written in 1/64 of an inch



Largo

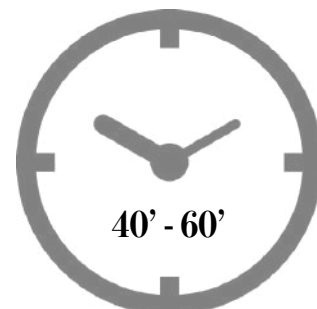
it is the cigar length,
written in millimeters (and inches)

120 - 140 mm | 4¾" - 5½"



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes





LA AURORA *115 Anniversary Robusto*

INTENSE AND COMPLEX.

It opens with spicy notes, coffee beans and leather. There are also shades of bread, followed by seasoned wood and nuts, where peanuts stand out. The finish becomes more spicy, with earthy nuances.

92

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50x127mm (5")

PRICE: 9.5 \$ - 9 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: BRAZIL

FILLER: BRAZIL, DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



LA ESTANCIA *Edicion Exclusiva EE52*

RICH AND CREAMY.

The smoke revolves around ripe fruit and spices, which are enriched first by black pepper and leather, then by coffee, nuts and wood. The spicy component is broad: first black pepper, then cinnamon and finally chili spice.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: HONDURAS

SIZE: 52x149mm (5 7/8")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 25 €

WRAPPER: N/A

BINDER: N/A

FILLER: N/A



MACANUDO *Maduro Hyde Park*

SATISFYING AND FULL-BODIED SMOKE.

It initially releases toasted, earthy and spicy notes. Then it turns to coffee beans and cocoa, joined by the omnipresent spices, which recall black pepper and cumin. The finish is intense, with a blast of espresso and earth.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 49x140mm (5 1/2")

PRICE: 8.5 \$ - 9 €

WRAPPER: USA

BINDER: MEXICO

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., MEXICO



PLASENCIA *Reserva Original Robusto*

INTENDED AND PEPPERED.

The first puffs are a blast of black pepper, which is soon followed by aromas of earth and cocoa. There are also notes of seasoned wood. Leather also appears in the second half. The finish is rewarding and earthy.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 52x120mm (4 3/4")

PRICE: 8.5 \$ - 7.5 €

WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



EDITION ONE

Cloud Hopper No. 485

HARMONIOUS AND BALANCED.

The smoke revolves around notes of wood, cocoa and leather, which are first followed by coffee and then by floral nuances. There is also a spicy component of black pepper, which remains in the aftertaste throughout the smoke.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: NICARAGUA
SIZE: 48x127mm (5")
PRICE: 7 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
FILLER: NICARAGUA



JUÁREZ

OBS

INTENSE AND CREAMY.

It releases notes of cocoa and ripe fruit, which are joined first by spicy aromas, where black pepper stands out, and then by a woody component. The finish sees the spices becoming more pronounced, until they become the main flavor.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: NICARAGUA
SIZE: 52x152mm (4¾")
PRICE: 8.5 \$ - 7.5 €
WRAPPER: MEXICO
BINDER: ECUADOR
FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



MI QUERIDA

Triqui Traca 552

MASCULINE, BUT LINEAR EVOLUTION.

The flavor profile revolves around notes of earth and spices, which recall black pepper. Wood is also perceived in the first half, while leather and coffee emerge in the second half.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: NICARAGUA
SIZE: 52x127mm (5")
PRICE: 11 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: USA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



JUAN LOPEZ

Seleccion No. 2

SATISFYING AND BALANCED.

Slightly sweet, releases notes of hazelnut, earth and cedar wood. In the second half herbs take over, which gradually become more pronounced. There is also a spicy component of black pepper present, which followed each puff.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: CUBA
SIZE: 50x124mm (4⅞")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
FILLER: CUBA



PACHUCHE *Liga Azul Robusto*

CREAMY AND BALANCED.

It releases notes of herbs and coffee beans. A hint of cappuccino is also perceptible. In the second half, the herbs become more pronounced and are brought to the foreground.

88

STRENGTH: ●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50x127mm (5")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 14 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



CAPA FLOR *Habano Robusto*

MILDLY DRY.

The flavor profile revolves around toasted notes, earth and coffee. There is also a nutty component present, which recalls the walnut. In the second half, the spices peak through, where black pepper stands out.

87

STRENGTH: ●●

COUNTRY: MEXICO

SIZE: 50x127mm (5")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 6 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: MEXICO

FILLER: MEXICO, NICARAGUA



ROMEO Y JULIETA *Wide Churchill*

RICH AND REWARDING.

Intense notes of earth and black pepper, are enriched with nuts. In the second half, toasted notes of coffee beans and cedar wood are added. The spices intensify as they approach the end.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: CUBA

SIZE: 55x130mm (5½")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 12.5 €

WRAPPER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

FILLER: CUBA



ROOM 101 *Farce Robusto*

RATHER STATIC.

The smoke opens with toasted notes and cellulose, the latter is more pronounced. Vegetal aromas are also perceptible. From the middle onwards, the flavor profile expands with a spicy component of black pepper.

85

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 52x127mm (5")

PRICE: 11 \$ - 11.5 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: INDONESIA

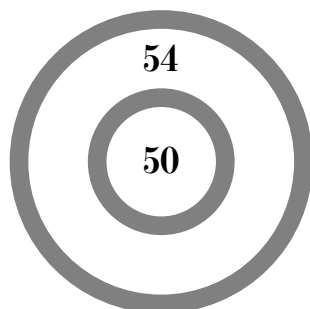
FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, USA

Toro



Cepo

it is the ring gauge of the cigar,
written in 1/64 of an inch



Largo

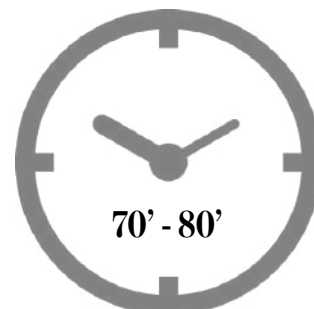
it is the cigar length,
written in millimeters (and inches)

152 - 165 mm | 6" - 6½"



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes





JOYA DE NICARAGUA *Cinco Decadas Fundador*

EXCEPTIONALLY BALANCED.

It releases a mix of walnut and hazelnut, as well as intense earthy and spicy notes, where black pepper stands out. In the second half, the profile is enriched with notes of cocoa, while in the finish there are vegetal nuances present.

92

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: NICARAGUA
SIZE: 54x152mm (6")
PRICE: 20 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: N/A
BINDER: N/A
FILLER: N/A



DAVIDOFF *Year of the Rat*

COMPLEX AND CREAMY.

The smoke revolves around nuts, where the walnut stands out. There are also seasoned wood and black pepper present. In the second half, earth, cocoa and wood resin are added. Mineral hints can also be perceived.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
SIZE: 54X152MM (6")
PRICE: 39 \$ - 36 €
WRAPPER: ECUADOR
BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



VIKING *Valhalla Toro*

STRUCTURED AND INTENSE

The cigar opens with an explosion of pepper and leather, followed by a mix of nuts and cocoa. Intense notes of coffee follow, which become the protagonists of the second half.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
SIZE: 54x165mm (6½")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: ECUADOR
BINDER: N/A
FILLER: N/A



VILLIGER *Do Brasil Maduro Toro*

EVOLUTIONARY AND STRUCTURED.

The smoke opens with roasted notes of coffee, earth and spices, where cinnamon stands out. Then wood and cashews follow, with peppery nuances. In the last part, the wood becomes more pronounced and vegetal aromas appear.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: BRAZIL
SIZE: 50X152MM (6")
PRICE: 9.5 \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: BRAZIL
BINDER: BRAZIL
FILLER: BRAZIL



FLOR DE SELVA *Year of the Rat*

INTENSE AND REWARDING.

It releases notes of cedar wood, white pepper and earth, reminiscent of clay. In some puffs, there are also shades of hazelnut perceivable. Leather appears halfway through the cigar. Citrus notes reach the palate towards the end.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: HONDURAS

SIZE: 52X152MM (6")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 19 €

WRAPPER: HONDURAS

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



DIAMOND CROWN *Maximus Toro No.4*

INTENSE. GREAT PERSISTENCE.

Cocoa, earth and black pepper kick off the smoke. Followed by toasted notes and a mix of walnut and hazelnut. In the second half, walnut becomes the main flavor, together with hot spices and black pepper.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50X152MM (6")

PRICE: 15 \$ - 20 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

FILLER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



ROCKY PATEL *Prohibitor Mexican*

WELL STRUCTURED.

Wood, black pepper and leather are the main aromas of the first half, which well intertwine with each other. Then, rich earthy notes join and complete the flavor profile.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: NICARAGUA

SIZE: 52x165mm (6½")

PRICE: 12.5 \$ - 8.5 €

WRAPPER: MEXICO

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: NICARAGUA



AVO *Improvisation 2020*

RATHER STATIC.

The entire smoke revolves around herbal notes, wood and nuts, where mainly the hazelnut stands out. In the second half, the base becomes slightly bitter.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50x165mm (6½")

PRICE: 16 \$ - 16 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: ECUADOR

FILLER: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



CORLEONE *Rispetto*

RATHER LIMITED PROFILE.

It releases spicy notes of black pepper, joined by roasted aromas of coffee and leather. In the second half there are balsamic herbs present, which gradually become more pronounced as the cigar approaches the end.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: COSTA RICA

SIZE: 52x156mm (6½")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 14 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: ECUADOR

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, PERU



HOYO DE MONTERREY *Epicure Especial*

BALANCED BUT NO EVOLUTION.

The smoke opens with intense earthy notes, supported by a veiled spiciness and aromas of cedar wood. Leather and vanilla hints are added during the course of the smoke.

86

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: CUBA

SIZE: 50x140mm (5½")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 13 €

WRAPPER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

FILLER: CUBA



VEGA FINA *Gran Reserva 2020*

CONTAINED PROFILE.

The entire smoke revolves around notes of wood and nuts, where the walnut stands out. A veiled spiciness of pink pepper follows, which completes its limited flavor profile.

85

STRENGTH: ●●●●

COUNTRY: DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SIZE: 50x156mm (6½")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 11 €

WRAPPER: ECUADOR

BINDER: NICARAGUA

FILLER: DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



MONTECRISTO *Open Eagle*

CONSTRUCTION ISSUES.

It releases cedar wood and black pepper, enriched with coffee and hints of walnut. The spices become more intense, culminating in chili spice. There are also leather notes present. There are several problems in the burn and the combustion.

84

STRENGTH: ●●●

COUNTRY: CUBA

SIZE: 54x149mm (5⅞")

PRICE: N/A \$ - 16 €

WRAPPER: CUBA

BINDER: CUBA

FILLER: CUBA

Credits

Rh in summer

picture by Mario Amelio

The "saving" blow

picture by Mario Amelio

Pachuche Cigars

picture by: Pachuche Cigars

Supporting actor

Movies: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1966), Scarface (1983), The Untouchables (1987), Wall Street (1987)

Heindrich Villiger

picture by Villiger Söhne AG

Hulk

picture by Mario Amelio

Karen Berger

picture by Mario Amelio

The treasure chest

picture by Mario Amelio

Tel Aviv, Cigar Club

picture by Tel Aviv, Cigar Club website

Cuban spirit

picture by Simona Carbone

Flor de Caña

picture by Mario Amelio

Empire Rye

picture by Empire Rye website, <https://www.empirerye.com/>

Sometimes they come back

picture by pixy.org

Reservoir

picture by Reservoir distillery

Quarter Cask

picture by Mario Amelio

Beer & BBQ

picture by Simona Carbone, [pinterest.es](https://www.pinterest.es)

Holy trinity

picture by Warosu.org, Delish.com, Maudesalabamabbq.com

The materials of winemaking

picture by [ravagochemicals.com](https://www.ravagochemicals.com), www.winesurf.it, giare.terracotta-artenova.com

Salt to taste

picture by [Pinterest.ca](https://www.pinterest.ca), [Pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)