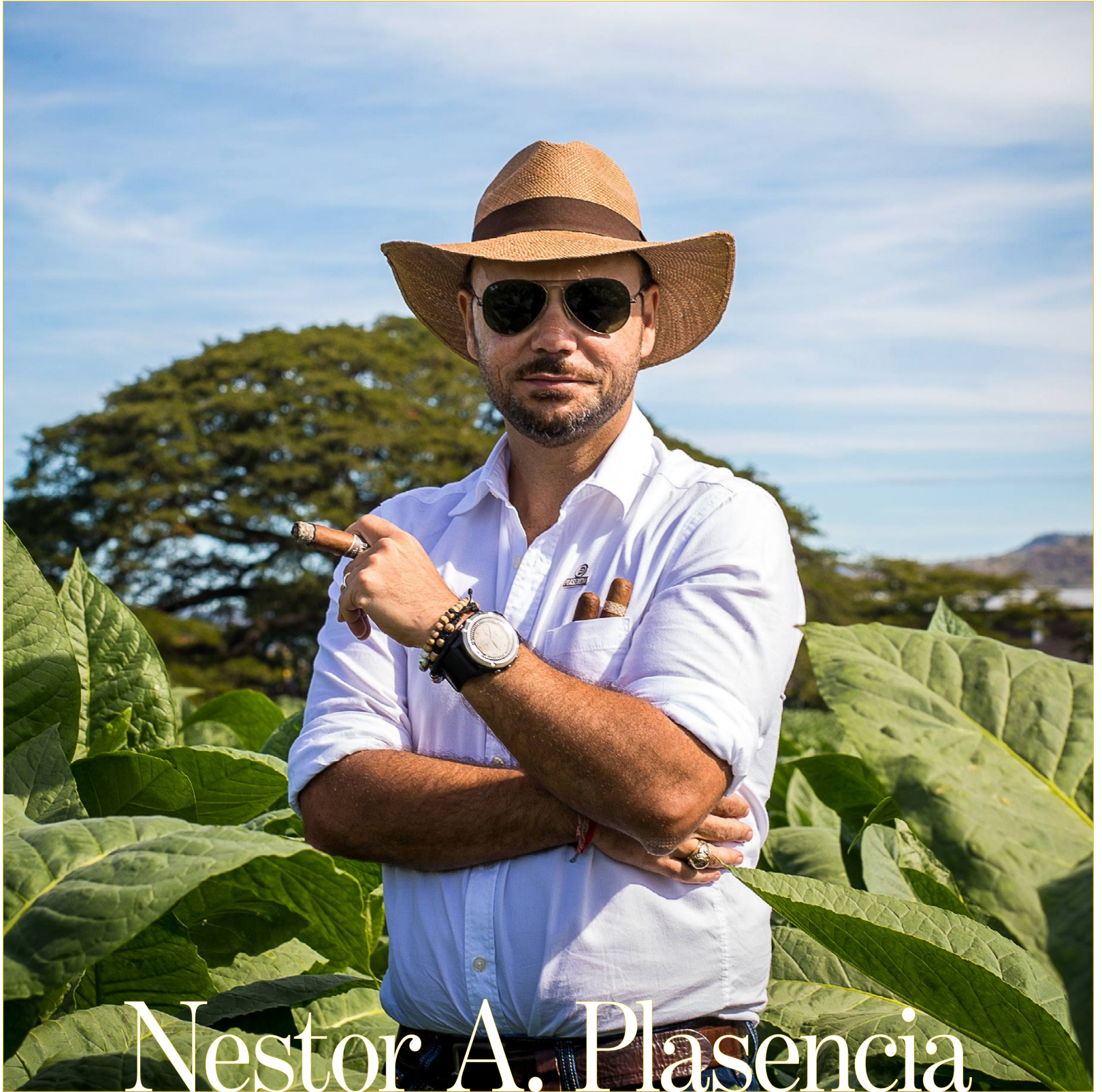


Cigars Lover MAGAZINE

AUTUMN 2020



Nestor A. Plasencia

- LIANA FLUENTE - DOUBLE PUFF - PUNCH - ANDULLO - THE CIGAR RING - MICALLEF CIGARS - LOUNGE: LISBONA
- GLENDALOUGH: THE IRISH DISTILLERY - DINING WITH WHISKY - TRIPPLE DISTILLATION - MORE THAN WINE
- THE EVOLUTION OF THE BEER - A TEA WITH A CIGAR - T-BONE - INDIGENOUS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

CigarsLover
MAGAZINE

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Editor's thoughts

After the Summer issue, with the first impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately, also the Autumn issue sees this severe global problem continue. In some countries, the situation is almost back under control. In others, the improvements are marginal. The world of cigars and spirits have had all events canceled, events that allowed fans to meet in person, to exchange their opinions and, which until recently was taken for granted, to exchange a simple handshake or a warm hug. Fortunately, the era we live in allows us to stay in touch, thanks to the technology that has been part of our life for over a decade.

The cigar market saw a decline in sales in the first quarter of the year, but the recovery then led to a marked increase in sales, many of which initially moved to online stores. Even physical stores, however, after a first decrease, have seen a sharp rise in sales, with consumers who have begun to buy a more significant number of premium cigars, so, given the period of few certainties, that they would have enough stored. All this made the productive world less hectic, which had had to face problems of a certain magnitude in the first months of the year.

The recommendations on the best performing cigars are confirmed in the blind tastings of this Autumn issue, which precedes the proclamation of the best cigars and spirits of 2020, which will take place in December. Many are already looking to next year, hoping that everything can return to normal, with smokes and drinks with friends.

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“If you can’t send money, send tobacco.”
George Washington - to the Continental Congress, 1776





Double puff

*A smoking technique for a tight draw
or for a more vigorous smoke*

by **John Jeremy**

You often hear about double puffs, booster puffs, or Cuban puffs. Let's make it clear that they are different names for the same smoking technique. It consists of following two draws very close to each other to make more smoke reach the mouth. With the first, a short and a little more decisive draw, air is drawn onto the burn (hence the name "booster puff") which will immediately flow out of the mouth, while with the second, a longer and gentler draw, the puff reaches the oral cavity where it will be savored. It is often a technique used when the draw of a cigar does not allow the passage of the right amount of air and is a bit too tight, which helps the burn to reach the right temperature.

It is a remedy that, however, does not work miracles if a cigar is rolled so tight that the draw is occluded. That said, it

is not only an remedy for a tight roll, since it is a smoking technique used by some aficionados. However, it must be considered that two close draws bring more air to the burn, and, due to the effect, the temperature will tend to increase, albeit slightly. This means that smoking will also be somewhat more vigorous, which is why it is not advisable to use it for the entire smoking duration if the cigar has a regular or especially a loose draw. Not only. It is a technique that should be avoided even in the presence of cigars with small ring gauges which are more likely to overheat with too many frequent draws.

In conclusion, the technique of the double puff is a method that can partially obviate a problematic draw. Still, it is good to use carefully and sparingly so as not to sacrifice the aromatic perception.

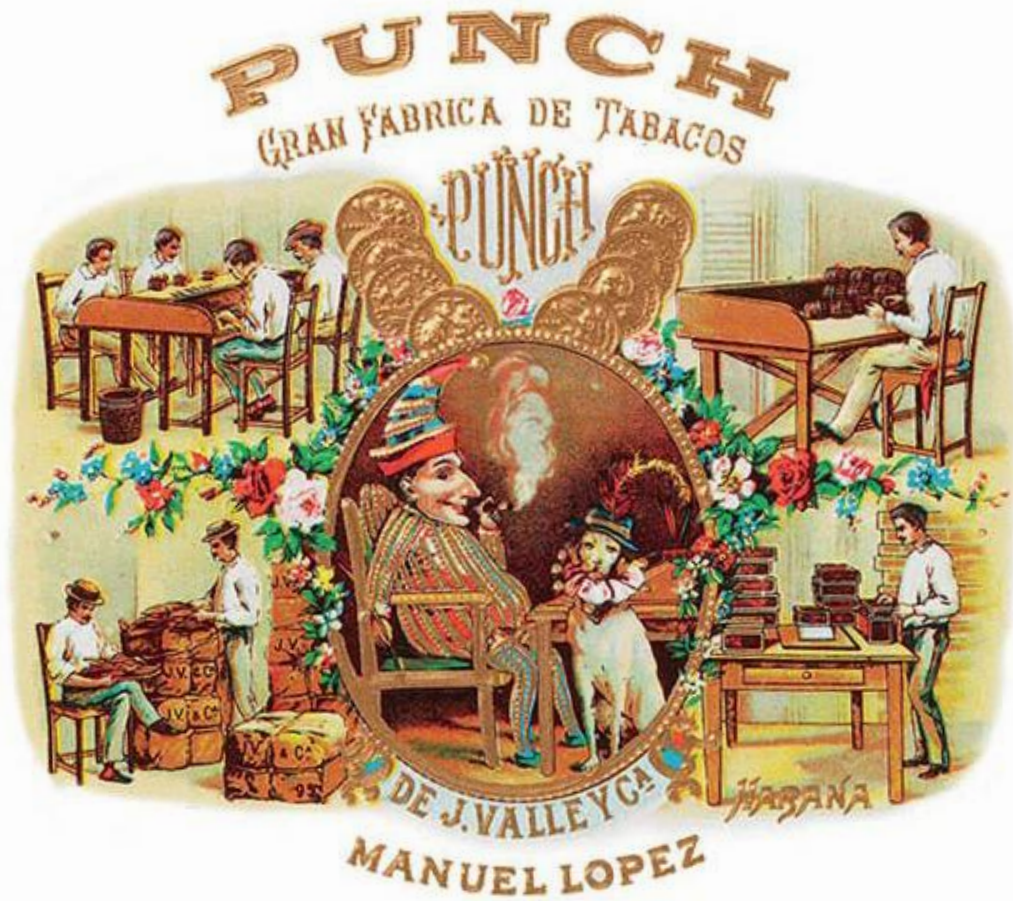
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Punch

*The history of the brand from the glorious but lost splendors,
today among the Value Brands of Habanos*

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

Amid the austerity of swords and shields, ancient Indios, lovers and warlords of the symbols of the most famous Cuban brands, the desecration of a puppet resists the passage of years and fashions.

Punch is one of the oldest brands in the tabacalera art production of the Isla Grande: its origins are to be found far back in time (according to Habanos SA, in the mid-nineteenth century) and the origin of the name too is closely associated to the year of birth.

In fact, there are two versions related to the early days of the brand. The first, more accredited, would place the registration of the brand to 1840, by a German named Stockmann, who then sold name and production in 1874 to Luis Corujo, already owner of several different, today disappeared,

brands (such as El Comerciante, Camarioca Flor de Corujo, Flor de J.C. Ruiz, Hija del Regimiento and La Sin Par), all produced at 38 Gervasio Street in La Habana. Ten years later (1884) the ownership of the brand passed to Juan Valles y Cia, of the Lopez y Fresquerez members, former owners of the La Camarioca brand. Later, between 1885 and 1902 the company would be run solely by Manuel Lopez Fernandez, who moved production to 28 Rayo Street.

According to other historical sources, however, the year of birth would be a few years more recent (1875, or so) and would mention Juan Valles y Cia, of Manuel Lopez Fernandez as the first owner of the brand.

What about the name Punch? Why was it born? The most common claim is that the brand, originally targeting the Bri-

tish market, had borrowed its name from that of a British satirical magazine "Punch". However, since the year of the founding of that newspaper has been fixed with certainty to 1841, that origin of the name of the brand would support the second version of the history of its birth.

Another reason, however, equally credible, would link the name to that of a puppet, very popular in the United Kingdom, which continues to show itself on the top of the boxes currently on the market. This would support both stories, but the fact that the image of a puppet is still linked to today's production, gives more credibility to its validity.

Back to the history of the brand, the two versions converge between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century and on the name of Manuel Lopez Fernandez, who remained alone at the helm of the factory at 28 Rayo Street. Manuel Lopez was a wealthy Spaniard with a long career in the tobacco industry, as in 1880 he already owned the brand La Vencedora. His ingenuity, as well as his resourcefulness and industriousness revived and gave new life to the Punch brand, which soon became highly appreciated among the English and Spanish aficionados of the time. His work left such an indelible and remarked sign on the brand that his name was kept under the brand symbol even in subsequent ownership passages (until 2009, for example, it was still present on the anillas). Manuel Lopez left the business in 1924 at Esperanza Valle

Comas, before dying the following year.

The economic crisis of 1929 then heavily affected the entire cigar market, bringing many factories to their knees. The Punch brand was also affected by this financial stock markets crisis, and in 1930 it was acquired by the company "Fernandez & Palicio y Cia, S. en C." by Ramon Fernandez Alvarez and Fernando Palicio Arguelles, who also produced the Belinda, Hoyo de Monterrey and La Escepcion de Jose Gener brands. The company maintained production of the brand throughout the '30s. We find a trace of the brand in 1940, when it reappears in the export register of Fernandez & Palicio y Cia, S. en C., based at 51 of Máximo Gómez Street, which exported the outstanding amount of 19 brands that year, including Punch.

The Cuban Revolution kept the brand alive and, in the 70s, the brand was among the most popular ones, soon after legendary brands such as Montecristo, Partagas, Romeo y Julieta and H. Upmann.

However, a long and inexorable decline awaited the Cuban puppet. In the '70s and '90s, in fact, its lush production of dozens of modules was slowly scaled down, and many vitolas were discontinued. At first disappeared (between the late 1970s and 1980s) the Petit Coronas and the Presidentes, sold in crystal jars, the Diademas Extra No. 1 and 2 (respectively, a diadema and a gran corona), packaging and



Standard Punch Band
Pre-1960s discontinued in 2009

"Manuel Lopez" written

Standard Punch Band
Since 2009 to nowadays
(Used in regional editions
since 2006)



The written "Punch" is the one
with bigger size.
The crown is slightly different.

The written "Manuel Lopez"
is now changed with "Cuba"



modules that not all Cuban brands can boast of have had at the same time in standard production. Another reduction was done between the 1980s and the late 1990s, but also after 2000.

The Punch brand is still famous today for having had in production seven Coronas Gordas (46 x 143 mm), a real signature of the brand:

- the Club Selection No. 1 (discontinued around 1979)
- the Nectares No. 2 (1980)
- the Selecccion de Luxe No. 1 (1980)
- the Black Prince (2002)
- the Super Selection No. 2 (2002)
- the Royal Selection No. 11 (2010)
- the Punch Punch, the latter the only one still in production.

Although it may seem like a secondary brand, Habanos SA has never considered it such. Proof of this is that Punch can count, to date, twenty-five Regional Editions, not forgetting that in 2005 it was this brand, together with Ramon Allones, that presented to the world for the first time the successful series of Regional Editions (with the Superfino for Italy and Robusto for Switzerland). More restrained, however, his presence among the Limited Editions, confined to only two years: Serie d'Oro n. 2 (2013) and the Regios de Punch (2017).

Currently the production is limited to six units, among which the latest arrivals on the market such as the Punch 48

and the Short de Punch, but also great classics such as the Punch Punch and the Double Corona.

The flavor profile is characterized by a medium strength and a sweet palatal imprint.

However, true brand enthusiasts and long-time smokers continue to regret the disappearance of glorious vitolas that have made the brand great, such as:

- the Ninfa (33 x 178mm)
- the Churchill (47 x 178mm)
- the Super Selection No. 2
- the Black Prince (46 x 143mm)
- the Margarita (26 x 121mm).

A story studded with ups and downs, which we would treat just like the vista that adorns the boxes: mocking as Punch's smile and resigned, but composed in his dignity, like the expression of his dog.

All the history of the Punch brand is summarized in what is called "vista" (page 12), where in the middle of it there is the puppet, sitting while smoking, with his trusty dog, dressed with a special flashy hat and collar. Around the central oval, from left to right and bottom to top, the four main stages of cigar manufacturing process can be identified: the selection of leaves, the torcida, the color selection and the boxing of the finalized cigars.



25 Punch Supremos
"Edición Regional Suiza 2015"



AWARDS 2020

soon in the next
Winter issue





Andullo

Compared to the traditional fermentation in “pilonos”, this Dominican method gives the tobacco a special aroma.

by **Luca Cominelli**

The term Andullo is often mistaken for a variety of tobacco. It is actually a method of tobacco fermentation, practiced in the Dominican Republic, which, although not widespread, has been used for centuries. Nowadays the tobacco used in premium cigars is mainly fermented in “pilonos”, which are stacks of tobacco, where the leaves collected in bunches are placed one on top of the other so that, by humidifying the whole “pilon”, the temperature and humidity will induce fermentation. With the Andullo method, tobacco leaves are placed on the “yaguas”, that are the leaves of the royal palm, which are perfect to act as a sort of wrapper, thanks to their long length of almost two meters. In addition to having the dimensions that allow to accommodate the right amount of tobacco, these leaves are then able to make the tobacco breathe, making the fermentation process possible. So, tobacco is placed on these leaves and is then rolled up with the palm leaf. Culinarly, it is as if you were preparing a Japanese maki roll, where the seaweed is the palm leaf and the filling is the tobacco leaves.

The wrapping process is carried out so that the leaves are rolled up in a particularly tight manner. To make this happen, ropes are used, which act as presses, wrapping around the leaves and keeping them compressed. During fermentation, the leaves are usually unrolled and re-rolled five times, always with the use of the ropes. Their palm leaves can also be replaced, as they get damaged during the process. The first unrolling usually takes place after about three weeks, and then the fermentation is watched more carefully as the humidity inside the leaves could create swelling, possible breakages and even spots on the tobacco leaves, which could no longer be removed. After the first unrolling, the next four are cadenced month by month, so as to be able to oxygenate the leaves and always keep them compressed. Once the fermentation phase is over, the tobacco can then be aged. The result is a tobacco with strong organoleptic qualities that can potentially create a very aromatic cigar.

What differs from fermentation in “pilonos”? Usually, tobaccos that are processed “Andullo” have a greater sweetness, in addition to having a particularly dark color. Their scent is also very lively, incredibly rich and complex. Often this method is chosen for the fermentation of pipe tobacco, but it is not unusual that the technique is also used for cigar tobacco. Some examples are the ADN line of La Aurora, the Vegafina Fortaleza 2 Andullo or the Project 805 Andullo.

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Nestor A. Plasencia

*Interview with Nestor Andres Plasencia, history and innovation
of a family that made the Nicaraguan cigar great*

by Michel Arlia

He's the Vice President of one of the biggest tobacco families in the industry, with its history dating back to 1865. Now, run by the fifth generation, the enormous operation grows tobacco and produces cigars, not only for themselves but a plethora of famous brands, in Honduras and Nicaragua. Over the last couple of years, they have started focusing more on their own cigar brand. In this interview, Nestor Andrés Plasencia talks about his upbringing, his career, his passion and gives us an inside look into their enormous family owned tobacco operation.

Nestor, you graduated agricultural school back in 1998. Was it always clear for you to follow the family tradition and get into the tobacco business? Also, your family has been growing tobacco for five generations. What are your earliest tobacco memories?

I always wanted to follow the family tradition because I love the land and being in nature. I remember from a very young age feeling the sweet aroma of tobacco hanging inside the curing barns. I also remember seeing the people who enjoyed the cigars being very happy, and that caught my attention. The trips with my grandfather to the tobacco farms are also memories that I have engraved forever in my mind.

You own fields and factories in Honduras and Nicaragua. Can you give us an idea of how big the entire Plasencia operation is, and what is the percentage split between Honduras and Nicaragua?





We grow around 3500 acres in total with farms in both countries—around 55% in Nicaragua and 45% in Honduras.

With the number of people working for you, you have implemented Health and Social care for your employees. You built a church, a nursery with a doctor always available, and much more. How important is the responsibility of your workers and their families?

For us, that's everything. We are very proud of the team we have, and we work together with them. The most important asset that a company has is its people. And a company that has committed and motivated staff is a company that is always going to be destined to succeed no matter what situations may happen.

With tobacco taking the characteristics of the different soils that it is planted in, what are the unique characteristics of the Honduran and Nicaraguan soils?

I always say that we are blessed because we have the soil, the microclimate, and, above all, the people to be able to produce the best tobacco in the world.

The different characteristics of soils and microclimates, where we operate, give us a great diversity of flavors and strengths that help us a lot in making different blends for our cigars. For example, Esteli's tobacco is a tobacco that is known for its strength and rounds flavor. On the other hand, Jamastran in Honduras is a sweet tobacco with medium strength but both with great flavor.

One of the first projects you worked on was the Plasencia Reserva Organica, now called Reserva Original, which is an entirely organic cigar, made of only organically grown tobacco. How did this idea start, and how do the different processes, from field to finished product, differ from the regular steps to growing and making cigars?

For me, this is a special project. I had the opportunity of learning to do organic agriculture at my university, and, when I graduated, I wanted to put into practice what I had learned because it had never been done in cigar tobacco. It is a fascinating process where we work with the biology of ecosystems. We incorporate the Nitrogen that is in the atmosphere through some types of legumes that we put in the soil. Also, beneficial soil fungi, such as Trichoderma, help us to have a tobacco, free from Black Shank. We plant sunflowers around the crops to attract the beneficial insects that will eat the pests, and the most exciting thing is fertilization with the help of earthworms (vermicompost) who help us give the best that the land can produce. The result is an excellent quality tobacco, rich with nutrients and an immaculate taste on your palate that I love.

You make your fertilizer, by using earthworms in your compost. How did this come about, and how does that improve your crops? Also, have you carried over any of the organic processes to how you usually grow tobacco?

This is another fascinating process. Earthworms eat up all the organic waste we have on farms and turn it into a luxury organic fertilizer. This excellent material helps us that the





plant more quickly assimilates all the nutrients. In tobacco, it is essential because it is a plant that grows very violently, so it needs a lot of food and minerals. Only with that type of organic fertilizer could we get it after many tests. We have transferred much of what we have learned in organic agriculture to conventional tobacco growing, and we are still learning new ways of producing more sustainable. We are interested in taking care of our planet so that the next generations can continue in this wonderful industry.

How important is the research and development of new seeds, or hybrids? Which tobacco varietal, over the years, has been your favorite to work with?

It is crucial, as we work to develop varieties that best adapt to our conditions of soils and microclimates, and we also seek natural resistance to disease. The variety that we like to work with the most is the Habano seed but developed in our specific conditions.

You are a tobacco grower and a master blender. What difficulties do each have? Which one is more rewarding?

My heart is on the farms. I think it is impossible to create an excellent cigar without having grown the tobacco first on the farms. The fact of being vertically integrated, I think, helps us to know a lot about the tobaccos we produce and then have the ability to play with them to develop blends that we love. In the field, the biggest challenges are the changing weather conditions that we cannot control, and in

manufacturing, it is able to maintain the flavor of the blends over time. But those challenges are what makes this industry so special. What we have to do is learn the language of tobacco, as my father always says.

You have been in the business for many years and have witnessed the cigar business going through ups and downs. What has changed over the years, and is there something from back then that you still see going on nowadays? You also witnessed the first cigar boom in the late 90ies, early 2000. The cigars have gained in popularity again, over the past couple of years. How long will this new "boom" last, in your opinion?

I am convinced that there has been no better time for cigar consumers than in the present time. The amount of good cigars on the market is incredible. All manufacturers are trying to do their best, and that is very good for the long term success of this industry. In the previous boom, there was not this quality. So I think this is just the beginning for more people to enjoy great cigars.

With all the legislation against tobacco, being tougher each year, how do you think the cigar landscape will look like ten years from now?

I am in love with the human spirit, and I firmly believe that we help people to have incredible moments with the cigars we make. So I think consumers will look for ways to get them and we will do our best for them all the time.





Back in 2016, you rebranded Plasencia Cigars and introduced the first line of the Alma series. Why did you decide it was time to do it?

We decided that it was time to tell the story of my father, my grandfather, and all the members of the Plasencia family who, since 1865, have been protagonists of this story of love, passion, and resilience in this fascinating industry. With the Alma series, our greatest wish is that you can light up your souls with our products.

The whole operation, between tobacco cultivation and cigar manufacturing, takes up a lot of time. How does Ne-

stor Plasencia relax? Do you have any hobbies?

I have the great fortune to love what I do, and that makes hard work more enjoyable. But to relax and recharge, I love to ride horses on the farms and in nature. I find a lot of inspiration there. Also, spending time with my family who are my source of energy and motivation.

You are the fifth generation in the industry. What about the next one? And what are your plans for the future?

Many plans! There are already many members of the sixth generation with my children and nephews. With God's favor, this story is still missing many chapters to write.

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Liana Fuente

*The Head of Brand Developer for the Fuente Companies,
and the next face of Arturo Fuente*

by Michel Arlia



Liana has become a fixture in the cigar industry and the new face of Arturo Fuente Cigars. In this interview she sheds some light into who she is and how she has made a name for herself in the industry.

Tell us a little about your time growing up? What did ten-year-old Liana want to be once she was older?

When you're a 4th generation cigar maker in a family business that has been around for over 100 years, that's a tough question! I can't imagine doing anything else. But if I had to ask my ten-year-old self, it would definitely be a veterinarian or a professional dancer on Broadway. As much as I love people, especially those that make up our amazing cigar industry, I love animals, especially dogs. Those in my family who came before me, like my father and grandfather, Don Carlos, taught us the importance of always giving back. Indeed, even though I work full time in the family business, I try to feed this passion by volunteering at the Humane Society of Tampa Bay, so I guess that is where I would be.

You graduated from college with a Bachelor of Arts in Business. Was it clear for you to get into the family business, or did you have different plans after college?

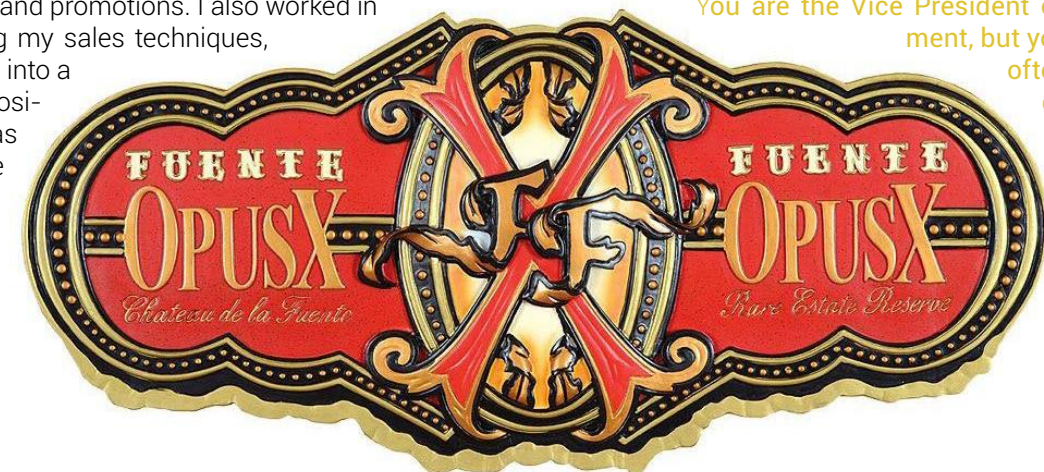
No, it was not completely clear to me at that time. I knew that the family business would always be open for the next generation, but my family had always instilled in us to follow our hearts, no matter the path we take. I wanted to bring knowledge and experience to the table before I came into the business. As an intern, I worked at a local radio station doing marketing and promotions. I also worked in retail, sharpening my sales techniques, and quickly grew into a management position, where I was able to travel the country to open and merchandi-

se different store locations. I even worked at several restaurants to sharpen my customer service skills. As a hobby, I continued dancing, which allowed me to travel the world and showcase my talent. So the road was long before I came into the family business, but it was a fruitful one full of fun times and great experience.

How was your first day working at Arturo Fuente Cigars? Did you feel any pressure of having to prove yourself?

I do remember my first day very well. Although you learn so much about cigars and the industry in this family as you grow up, this experience was completely different once I officially started in the company. I remember walking into the office with my grandfather, Don Carlos. As we walked in, he asked me, "Are you excited?" I quickly answered, "Of course, Abuelo!" Then he looked at me, quickly paused, and said, "Liana, God gave you two ears and one mouth, make sure you do twice the listening and less talking." Abuelo then took a puff of his cigar and said, "Your job is to be next to me at all times. If you do not see the smoke coming out of my cigar, or smell my aftershave, you are too far." At that point, I was both excited and scared out of my mind! The last thing I would ever want to do is disappoint my old man. He was and still is the light of my eyes and holds the key to my heart. Every single day that I walk into the office, farm, or factory, I know I have a huge responsibility. I must continue the family business, outshine myself, and raise the benchmark every single day.

You are the Vice President of Brand Development, but you also travel quite often. What was your experience like when you first attended a cigar event as the daughter of





Carlito Fuente? And what has changed over the years?

As a young child, I always attended all the cigar trade shows with my father and the rest of the family. It was all of us, grandparents, aunt and uncles, siblings and cousins. It was normal for us as it was a part of who we are. It was always fun dressing up and meeting new people and taking pictures next to my father. Today, my official title is Vice President of Brand Development, which means I oversee all of the marketing, social media, development of all point of sale, including cigar accessories, and advertising needs for Arturo Fuente cigars, but it wasn't like that in the beginning at all. I had to prove myself and earn my place in the business every day, even more so because I was Carlito's daughter. The truth is, I often wear several hats, as we all do in this family business. On the road, I work with our sales team visiting stores and doing events as one of the faces of the next generation. When I'm not on the road, I am busy working with local nonprofits and fundraising for the Cigar Family Charitable Foundation and the Fuente Family Foundation. On my off time, I am busy being a wife and happy dog parent. At first, I was known as Carlito's daughter, Liana. Today, I am known as Liana Fuente, the head of Brand Development for The Fuente Companies, and the next face of Arturo Fuente, who just happens to be Carlito's daughter.

Were you always into cigars, or was it something that you started appreciating over time?

I have always been into cigars because it is an integral part of my Cuban culture and heritage, and it is synonymous

with my family and its century-old history in Ybor City and West Tampa. I can honestly say that even if I wasn't a Fuente, I would still be enjoying the wonderful portfolio that is Fuente because, as we like to say, "Only Fuente is Fuente."

While there were always women present in the cigar world, there has been an increase in female cigar consumers over the years. What has changed, in your opinion?

In terms of women working in the cigar industry, not much has changed, and it is something I'm completely accustomed to. My family and our company has always had strong women in it. From my great-grandmother Cristina (Arturo Fuente's wife), my grandmother Anna (Don Carlos's wife), and my aunt Cynthia, the Cigar Queen, all of whom have helped make Fuente cigars what they are today. It just happens that now with social media, women are more visible in the industry, and I am very happy and proud to see that. As far as women as cigar consumers, I'm also happy to see that we have been able to overcome whatever societal or cultural norms that possibly impeded some women from enjoying a cigar in the past, and now we enjoy cigars as much as men and for some of us, even more so!

Have you thought about blending your own cigar? And if so, what would it taste and look like?

That and other projects are in the works, but I can't tell you my secrets just yet! Hopefully, soon I will be able to share with the world the things that we have been working on and showcase our continued dedication to quality and passion.





Last year you launched Arturo Fuente International. How much work has gone into that project?

Our family company was founded in 1912 and had been growing and evolving ever since. My great-grandfather, Arturo, launched his cigar company during the heyday of Ybor City when it was known as the Cigar Capital of the World. His clientele was therefore located mostly in the local neighborhood, a bustling early 20th-century scene of Cubans, Spaniards, and Italians, the core communities that created Ybor City. When my grandfather, Don Carlos, took over the company, he began to expand outside of Tampa in order to take the Arturo Fuente brand nation-wide. And as many of your readers know, my father Carlito has focused on taking the brand to new heights, working tirelessly to make it the world-wide brand it is known as today. We are always excited and honored when we see a Fuente cigar being smoked around the world because it shows that hard work and dedication pay off, that the years of sacrifice were well worth it, and it brings warmth to our hearts to know that a little-known Cuban immigrant named Arturo Fuente was able to launch, even if unknown to him at the time, a local cigar company in 1912 that would become a global brand decades later. So as you can see, the concept of Arturo Fuente International is the natural progression of our family business and passion for cigars, as we are constantly striving to provide the best quality premium cigars all over the world.

The world seems sort of against smoking, but what could the world actually learn from the cigar world?

The cigar world is amazing for several reasons. Historically, tobacco has been used as currency in trade, as medicine, and as part of spiritual practices. Today, a good premium cigar allows you to hit the pause button and take a moment for yourself. A cigar is made to enjoy, to relax, and to spend quality time with friends and family. When smoking a cigar with company, it opens the door to productive conversations and discussions with close ones or even complete strangers. It gives you a chance to learn from others and see where they are coming from - something we need in today's world. Not to be corny, but I truly believe that many of today's problems would be solved if we were able to get the opposing sides to sit, smoke a cigar, and simply talk. Anywhere a cigar is, that place is truly a wonderful place, and it can be a place full of love and harmony.

Your plans for the future? Where will you be in 10 years?

Well, it is always an exciting time at Arturo Fuente because we are constantly striving to do things the right way and keeping our quality standards as high as possible, whether it is for new cigar blends, new non-tobacco products or any other venture we take on. That is a commitment we have always made to our consumers by consistently sticking to our motto of "never rushing the hands of time". Speaking of time, we will celebrate 110 years in 2022, and I look forward to raising a glass as we hopefully have conquered the COVID-19 pandemic by then, not only in the US but all over the world. Finally, as everyone who knows Fuente can testify, my father, Carlos "Carlito" Fuente, is named the "Toy Maker" for a reason - he always has something exciting up his sleeve, so be on the lookout for some new cool stuff!

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The cigar ring

The historical evolution of a piece of paper, that from a distinctive element of a product, has become an essential part of brand marketing

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

Advertising, aesthetics, anti-counterfeiting, history. All this, and perhaps much more, are the reasons of the bands, the faithful companion of the cigar. However, even behind, what may seem like a simple tinsel, lies a history dating back a long time, which has evolved over time, becoming more and more detailed but also fulfilling multiple and ever new functions.

A bit of history

"The band was born so as not to dirty the white gloves of nineteenth-century noble smokers". Let's debunk a legend. For a long time, this thought has cloaked itself in a capacity of authoritativeness, so much as to become almost irrefutable to all historical investigations. In reality, like all legends it could be partially true, but the historical fact is simpler and more similar to today that you may think. The first historical

traces report the birth of this paper band in the mid-1800s, between 1850 and 1870, certainly after the birth of habilitaciones. The habilitaciones are the decorations that embellished the wooden boxes (just to name a few: vista, cubierta, filete, bofetón, etc.) and which constituted a certification of the authenticity of the product. However, after a few years, it was realized that this was not enough: the habilitaciones certainly guaranteed the box, but inside the cigars continued to remain anonymous, and often it was necessary to distinguish a cigar of one brand from another, also to avoid scams. Gustavo Bock and Ramon Allones were the first to invent a simple but effective solution: to adorn each cigar with a piece of paper bearing the name of the manufacturer, to characterize and distinguish them. It was in this era that lithography entered the cigar manufacturing industry. It consisted of a printing technique with which, by means

of an engraving on large stone slabs (the term derives in fact from the ancient Greek lithos, "stone" and graphein, "to write") and by putting pressure on a sheet of paper, it was possible to imprint the groove drawn. Until the first decades of the twentieth century, lithography was used massively and with extraordinary results, even with customizations for the client of the cigars. Jose Rodriguez Fernandez, the "Don Pepin" owner of the Romeo y Julieta brand, was one of the first to believe in this new advertising tool, to the point that it is estimated that there were around two thousand personalized brand rings, all different from each other. The brand was so attentive to this possibility of branding (and customer loyalty) that it was also able to print the photo of Don Pepin, or the clients, directly on the ring. Given the refinement, and the attention in the realization, for the collectors of anillas, the height of lithographic printing was that

between 1870 and 1920. Between 1920 and 1930, next to this process, they began to explore more modern printing techniques and, particularly in Cuba, since the sixties of the last century, lithography was overcome, because it was deemed obsolete and especially onerous in terms of cost and working hours. Nowadays, the advanced printing techniques allow to obtain a detailed job with an infinitesimal margin of error, even if the production steps are not very different from those used at the end of the nineteenth century.

The lithographic process

It is impossible to deal with a topic as that of the cigar band, without dwelling on the lithographic process, the progenitor of each subsequent graphic process. The refinement of lithographic printing is recognized by Alois Senefelder, who lived in the 1700s, although the more rudimentary tech-



nique was already known a couple of centuries earlier. As said, to obtain a print with this procedure, it was necessary to engrave a stone with the design that you wanted to impress on paper and fill the grooves with colors. Senefelder was responsible for using porous lithographic stones: after filling the sulcus with the greasy color, water was poured to eliminate all impurities. While the porous stone absorbed the water, the greasy colors were not washed off. The pressure, then, allowed the deposit of the color on the paper. If this procedure may seem simple, consider that for each color and for each drawing, the lithographic printing was different: imagine, to exemplify, several overlapping layers, each for the color and the design that you wanted to have in the finished product. It is easy to understand how long and meticulous the work was entrusted to a lithographic painter, a real artist, therefore, in charge of taking care of both the delicate phase of drawing and that of coloring. Immediately after these first stages, many others followed, depending on whether the manufacturer wanted bronze or golden characters. Then, satin finishing or painting was applied. Subsequently, it moved on to the delicate phase of embossing, with which that characteristic three-dimensional relief was created, that is so pleasant to the touch. The result is obtained through two plates, a male and a female, which through the pressure, deform the printed paper inside them. Then, through the final steps, the bands were shaped and cut.

The printing process today

Although the evolution of printing has greatly exemplified

the passages, some of these retrace the steps of the old lithographic process. We had the opportunity to let us illustrate the passages from Henk Nota, Managing Director of Vrijdag, a Dutch company that since 1905 has specialized in making bands for the biggest brands in the world.

Design

Here the project is developed: the wishes of the cigar manufacturer meet the technical knowledge of the graphic studio. It is a very long phase because the initial project has to be reworked several times before being deemed feasible with the provided quality criteria.

Prepress and printing

It is the first time that the band begins to take shape, but we are still very far from the final product.

Bronzing-Varnish-Hotfoil

These are unnecessary steps, but if you want a band that transmits quality to the cigar, they become essential processes. They are respectively the processes with which the bronze-gold finishes are applied, the painting (to obtain an effect that ranges from satin to glossy), and the metallic foil (in many different colors, or even holographic).

Embossing

Much of the charm of an anilla is in its embossed finishes. The bronzing process, or the shiny effect, may be missing, but the three-dimensionality is the feature that undoubtedly



embellishes the cigar itself, immediately giving it a premium product appeal. This is the most delicate and complex phase because everything must perfectly match the design made up to now.

Cutting and die-cutting

All the processes described so far involve the use of large sheets of paper on which all the rings are printed in series. However, it is necessary to cut out the sheets and each individual band, so that they are perfectly equal to each other. To do this, we use the die-cutting that involves the use of a metal profile, previously created, exactly the same as the finished cigar band. The bands are then rechecked, packed, and sent to the client company. After each processing step, an intermediate quality check is necessary in order to identify a problem or error and take immediate action to resolve it. Although there are several steps and not all of them are necessary to obtain a cigar band (unless sacrificing the quality of the finished product), the final price is influenced both by the presence of passages such as bronzing, varnish and hot foil and by other aspects (materials, insertions of holographic details, number of rings commissioned, etc.). "The printing process for cigar rings has developed considerably," commented Henk Nota, "not only from stone to offset printing, but the keywords were digitization, automation, and development of materials. All this has led to an increase in the quality of the product we supply, with a drastic reduction in the margin of error on prints of hundreds of thousands of pieces."

The value of the cigar band

If, in the last twenty years, there has been a particularly propitious season for the birth of new brands and new cigar manufacturers, the cigar band has also evolved hand in hand, even changing its meaning. While retaining its original purpose of presenting the product, or brand, to the eyes of the aficionados, it has changed dimensions and materials and has enriched itself with previously unimaginable details. Think, for example, of the anti-counterfeiting holographic inserts (first of all the Cohiba brand), or of the bands that become increasingly larger, covering even more than half of the cigar itself. On materials then, a separate chapter would open: rice paper, recycled, filigree, satin, but also soft metal (Viking to mention one) and even tobacco (CAO Amazon). The band is also used to present the country of realization, it can show the blend used for that cigar, or narrate a story, perhaps taking up typical elements of the lithography of the past (animals, ribbons, crowns, medals, flags, and so on). And in the eyes of the graphic laboratories, how has it evolved? "In recent decades," Henk Nota added, "the size has grown and not only because the cigar ring gauge is increasing. From an aesthetic point of view, however, despite the popularity of ancient or historical designs, modern designs make their way. Even the holographic inserts seem to attract the consumer even more". Ultimately, how important is the value of a well-designed band today? "I'm biased," Henk notes, "but I think that a band influences consumer preferences a lot. A well-designed band will sell more cigars because it is able to attract the attention of the beholder."

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MICALLEF
CIGARS

Micallef Cigars

*Cuban heritage
meets the Texan way of thinking*

by **Michel Arlia**

Everything started with a chance encounter between a Texan and two Cubans. The Texan is Al Micallef, and the two Cubans are the brothers Edel and Joel Gomez Sanchez.

Al Micallef is a successful entrepreneur, originally from Michigan, but now residing in Fort Worth, Texas. Over the years, he started and built over 25 companies in different industries, such as silicon rubber companies, ranch land development, restaurants, to name a few. Cigars were always a passion of his, and after spending numerous hours and conversations in Fort Worth's Silver Leaf Cigar Lounge, his interest in the tobacco industry and how it works awakened. Edel and Joel have a long-running family tradition, in the cigar world, that dates back to their grandfather. Their grandfather, Pedro Fidel Gomez, started in the tobacco business

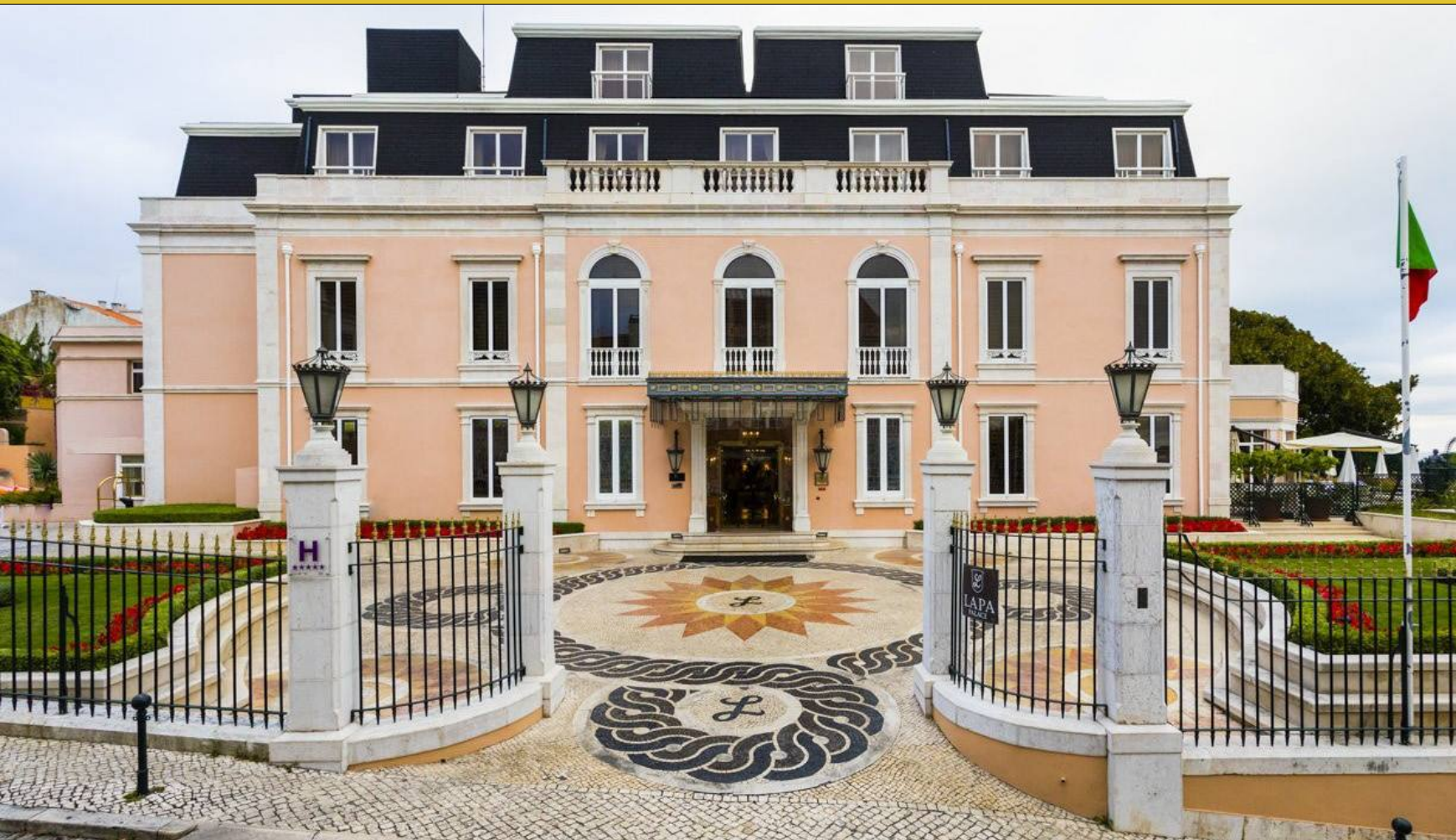
in Cuba back in 1934. Pedro began working as an apprentice at a local factory at the tender age of 11. After moving to Havana and working in various factories, he began handcrafting cigars at the H. Upmann Factory and later on at the La Corona Factory. Over the years, he worked in different factories in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Miami, Nicaragua and ended up in Mexico.

Edel and Joel's mother, Migdalia Sanchez, is also well known in the cigar world. She started her studies at the School of Tobacconists, in Havana, at 16 years old. Afterward, she worked at the Partagas Factory, where she quickly became one of the best cigar rollers. She represented Cuba in various international expositions and worked in many different countries such as Spain, Chile, Peru, Sweden, and many more. In her career, she won the award for the best

cigar roller in Cuba multiple times. The third generation has also devoted their life to tobacco and cigars. Joel and Edel both began their apprenticeship, although at different times, at the Partagas Factory and later worked at the H. Upmann Factory. Joel left Cuba first, in 1994, and moved to Miami. He joined his grandfather in Mexico the same year. Edel did the same in 1998, as did their mother later that year. They then opened their Gomez Sanchez Family 1934 Factory in Esteli, Nicaragua.

Back to the encounter of Al and the Gomez Sanchez brothers; the brothers, who were on their way to Florida, had some car issues when they were driving through Texas. They stopped at the lounge that Al frequented and offered to roll cigars for the owner. Their cigars were so popular that they stuck around for three days. Al approached the

brothers to make a cigar for him and the rest is history. The brand launched in late 2016 and has garnered a tremendous reputation in a short period of time. Their portfolio has grown rapidly to a quite impressive number of different offerings. The company has grown so big that Al now has a factory as well, called Micallef Cigars S.A. The different blends are categorized in Legacy Line and the Grande Bold. The Legacy line is made up of the Reserva Privada, Leyenda, Leyenda Special Edition, Reata, Herencia Habano, and Maduro, Experiencia La Crema, Experiencia Prominente, Connecticut, Migdalia, and Torcedores. All the Legacy Line cigars are made at the factory of the Gomez Sanchez family. The Grande Bold blends, which were released in 2018, include Maduro, Ligero, Nicaragua, Sumatra, and Mata Fina. All the Grande Bold are made at the Micallef Cigars S.A. factory in Nicaragua.



Lisbona, Olisippo

“The journey never ends. Only travelers end. And they too can be extended in memory, in remembering, in storytelling.” (Jose’ Saramago)

by **Simone Poggi**

There is something special about slapping up and down in taxis on Lisbon's hills, especially when the wind blowing from the Atlantic reaches the outstanding temperature of twenty-eight degrees in October. The taxi driver's hair is too long and grey, the clothes of passers-by too overused, the azulejos neglected, the marbles no longer as white as they used to be in the past, the facades not all properly restored. 21st-century Portugal is only what remains of a commercial and conquering power, a narrow strip of land in which many of the dreams of the limelight have now disappeared. But precisely because of this conflict between past and present, dreams and realities, ambitions and disappointments, between the call of the Ocean and the brute concreteness of the earth, it fascinates like few other places. You perceive a melancholy tone, airy and rich in philosophy, something just whispered, of which

you can talk for a long time without ever really capturing it in depth, as the aroma of an excellent cigar that escapes definitions, one you can only continue to taste, hoping that this dreamy atmosphere won't fade too soon.

For many years the Portuguese have been heavy smokers and it is not uncommon to come across businessmen or young well-dressed ladies who are enjoying a break with a cigarette outside an office or a hotel, gifting themselves with time in a city that certainly does not run like modern times require. However, as throughout Europe, anti-smoking laws are now quite strict and exceptions are rare and complicated to assess. There are many websites not updated since 2008, boasting lounges in towers no longer accessible to the public; a noble game that however has little to do with our concept of slow smoking.

Only with careful and meticulous research we understand our real destination is the Olisippo Lapa Palace, a luxury and traditional hotel, with an elegant pink facade, reminiscent of the glorious Portuguese colonial past, one of the eras of greatest pomp for this country. The livery butler, who opens the door of the battered taxi, seems to witness such a return to ancient luxuries, and the halls confirm the impression of an elegant and bon-ton environment, where marbles dominate unchallenged. The music of a non-intrusive piano soon calls us to the bar on the ground floor, which overlooks the terrace. It's not a panoramic extension of the hotel but rather a part of the bar in a small garden with a fountain, intimate. Nearby you can see the smoking room, a large and well-appointed environment, with comfortable sofas and tables where to support the objects of our desire. Here winter does not come unpleasant, denying the possibility to enjoy a good cigar. But it is still late summer and outdoor smoking is a luxury that you can still afford.

The bar does not sell cigars, as the competent and gentle Paulo tells us, also showing the gifts shop that is located inside the hotel, closing at 8 pm. We reach it only to see a small, air-conditioned, humidified glass closet, where some of the most famous Cuban petacas await the aficionados. No problem, smokers must always organize themselves ahead of time, and we have not forgotten our faithful Partagas Short, which we try in pairing with a Hibiki 12 years old. The small Partagas is known for its production consistency and intense strength, which gives thirty minutes of marked and typical flavors of the brand. And this stick certainly does not disappoint. The Japanese whiskey envelops some puffs providing extra sweetness and roundness, a very special combination. Hibiki's last sip is with us in the taxi back, like the warm Lisbon wind, which seduces talking about a city that does not shine like other modern and rich capitals, but that has much truer and more heartfelt stories to tell. And not all great stories are clean, bright and happy.



POSITION	REACHABILITY	CIGARS	SPIRITS	SERVICE
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VERY CENTRAL	HIGH	LIMITE CHOICE. ONLY A FEW CUBANS	EXCELLENT SELECTION	CAREFUL AND GENTLE

INFO
Olisippo Lapa Palace, Rua do Pau de Bandiera 4, Lisbon, Portugal

SPIRITS

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More than wine 58

“I would have preferred whiskey. There’s nothing like its bold flavor and strong burn to remind you that you’re alive. And then quickly dull that feeling.”
Melanie A. Smith - Everybody Lies





Dining with whisky

*Some general ground rules for a satisfactory food-spirit pairing
beyond fleeting fashions*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Over the past decade, the growing success of high-quality whisky and craft distilleries, as well as the new fashionable trend of mixology, has brought into the spotlight a growing interest in food-spirit pairings, where the distillate is the protagonist.

The first experiments were proposed by whisky enthusiasts that managed to involve exalted chefs in special events, where spirits or cocktails were paired to haute cuisine preparations. Later on, as big and small distilleries became sort of touristic attractions with state-of-the-art visitor centers, marketing directors realized the value of offering wholesome gastronomic experiences along with classic bar food like barbecue, cheeses, and desserts (sometimes in combination with local producers, to strengthen territory collaborations).

Scottish and American distilleries were among the first to launch these new tasting formats: among the first distillery restaurants there were Malt Barn Restaurant at Glenfiddich, Old Kiln Café at Ardbeg, Casks Café at Arran, Fred's Smokehouse at Jim Beam, Star Hill Provisions at Maker's Mark, and Glenn's Creek Café at Woodford Reserve.

The food-spirits pairing trend quickly spread from distilleries to the most forward-thinking and fashionable bars and restaurants, from there it finally made it into the domestic setting bringing along though a series of hazardous pairings and problematic results.

After all, it took decades to build up a minimum food-wine pairing culture in the mainstream public, and there are still many stereotypes, idiosyncrasies, and fixations claimed as

personal taste and custom that are usually forgiven to avoid angering customers even if they end up being not pleased, if not disgusted, by the final result. Professional journalists, tasters, and chefs try hard to work out menu ideas, courses, events, and published dozens of articles on specialized as well as generalist magazines, but there still is a certain lack of understanding. Indeed, the major difficulty is to let the daring customers learn about the fundamental need to set some ground rules before emptying their series of drams, unless they want to get drunk after the starters or to lose the sense of taste after the second sip (especially if they planned to drink multiple and varied spirits throughout the duration of the dinner).

Thus, as always, the first general ground rule is to look for harmony. In this case, though, is extremely important to un-

derstand the implications of the alcoholic proof in terms of a harmonic food pairing, especially if one would like to work by contrast. To understand what harmony really means in whisky, one must start from the main aromatic features of the given spirit.

The general characteristics of a whisky are usually marked by the cask where it was aged: for example, bourbon casks give undoubtedly a dry, spicy, and toasted profile, while sherry casks offer richer, more intense, and more winery scents. Peat gives its best with cheeses, charcuterie, sea food, and desserts, but even peated whisky can be quite different according to the aging cask type. Bourbons and triple-distilled whiskeys are definitely smooth and sweet, so they find their best pairing with desserts or sweet preparations. One must also consider that often spirits go through



multiple cask passages and pairing with food such a stratified flavor profile can be quite a challenge.

A second ground rule is that one cannot find the perfect pairing for every whisky or food. This also means that there are limits to tweaks and dilutions one can try for easing up pairings. Indeed, dilution with ice or water is another highly discussed topic. Yet, it is often the only way to find a viable pairing. True, ice and water will weaken the whisky, but they will also allow to widen its flavor spectrum beyond the dominant scents. Moreover, lowering the alcoholic proof can give the possibility to pair any whisky with more delicate and aromatic preparations. A solution quite appreciated by the most discerning chefs is to serve whisky as highball cocktails, that is in a tall glass with a lot of ice and a splash of soda, which allows to enhance their main flavors and reduce their strength.

Obviously, a third ground rule regards the style of the food preparations for the pairing. One should avoid extremely spicy, salty, and hot dishes, vinegar marinades, as well as extremely simple preparations that would be completely dominated even by the least complex whisky. Due to their infinite combinations of fattiness, sweetness, saltiness, and spiciness, cheeses can often be the perfect pairing to whisky and other spirits. From buffalo mozzarella to tender goat cheeses, from the most aged sheep cheeses to the fattest brie and camembert, as well as the craziest aged blue cheeses, pairing possibilities are really limitless. Fur-

thermore, the risk of finding a bad pairing is simply not a problem, as one can just move to the next cheese until the ideal one is found.

In the American food-whisky pairing style, one has to deal with classic USA preparations like BBQ and sauces (often whisky-based). As a matter of fact, the idea is that meat, especially red meat, is better suited to stand against the strength of whisky and that the typical roasted and smoked meat flavors are a perfect match to those of many spirits. It is not always that easy, and even bourbon, usually sweetened and tamed to be more drinkable, can be quite a match to harmonically pair with meat. Besides the olfactory profiles, these difficulties derive from the way in which the sugar components of whisky interact with salted food. In a different vein, for example, Scotch whisky lovers recovered traditional Scottish preparations (lamb, salmon, sea food, and the many type of pies), which use little salt, to marry the salty oceanic scotches or the elegant and fruity Highlands and Speyside whisky.

In conclusion, a general recommendation is always to experiment before serving a whole feast based on food-whisky pairings, especially if your guests are not adequately prepared. Try to carefully study first preparations and spirits, do not snub whisky dilution, do not underestimate alcoholic strength, and above all do not exaggerate doses. Finding the right measure will help both the success of the pairing and the discovery of new gustative frontiers in the enjoyment of your favorite spirit.

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Glendalough

Whiskey, gin and other projects, all with great attention to raw materials, territory and environmental sustainability

by **Luca Cominelli**

Over the course of the past decade, Glendalough has stood out as one of the most interesting names in the new wave of European craft distilleries. They started out by reinventing a modern version of the traditional Irish poitin and can now boast a very wide range of products, among which there are some really precious pot still single-malts and an impressive series of gins made with locally sourced ingredients. The success of their products and their active engagement in sustainable productive practices build up a solid image for the offspring of these five guys from Dublin. As we of Cigar-Lover fell in love with their wonderful 13yo Mizunara Cask, we decided to contact them for a special interview that turned out to be a great occasion to discuss the present and future of Irish whiskey making.

Can you tell us a bit about your history and how you set up the distillery?

Five of us founded Glendalough in 2011. We all had jobs in Dublin City, but wanted to break out on our own and do something more meaningful for ourselves. We had talked a lot about starting a distillery, and eventually we did it near to one of our favourite places just south of the city in the mountains near Glendalough.

What about your fascinating logo of St. Kevin?

We had named the distillery Glendalough, and he was the man who had built the original settlement at Glendalough in the 6th century. We saw a little of our own story in his - leaving Dublin and heading off into the mountains on an adventure full of uncertainty and possibility. So we admired that about St Kevin. And of the many stories about him, the one where he held blackbird eggs until they hatched seemed most fitting as it reflected the time and dedication we knew we'd need to put in ourselves. That's how his image ended up on the front of the bottle.

How would you describe your approach to the Irish tradition?

At the moment, we are trying to make whiskey that tastes of where we're from - using only what's around us in the mountains. We have planted organic barley and oats, we of course use the crystal clear mountain water, we fell our own trees in the surrounding forests for casks, and we're even working on isolating wild yeast now. So we're hoping to get to have whiskeys that are completely made within a few miles of the still.

What did you decide to innovate and what to keep?

The previous answer may have already answered this. But in the past, other innovations were things like being the first Irish whiskey aged in Japanese mizunara oak. We also released the first ever Irish single malt aged in Irish oak. But rather than rest on these laurels, we're very much looking to the future and to see what we can achieve making our "wild mountain single malt pot still whiskey"

You make an impressive selection of gins and, above all, you recovered an ancient recipe for poitin. Can you tell us more about these products?

Our gins are made from the wild plants that grow around us in the mountains. We think we may be the only distillery in the world that has a full time forager bringing us fresh wild plants every day to distil with. The flavour and essential oils we get with fresh plants is really on another level to what most people are used to with a gin. The poitin was originally made from sugar beet and barley. This was an old recipe from rural Ireland where sugar beet was a "break crop" used to rest land and feed livestock. We've since changed the recipe to essentially make it an un-aged single malt, simply because we liked it better. We're changing it again soon - to using our pot still mash bill. It'll be a nice way to deconstruct our new pot still whiskey and give people a purer taste of the distillate.



How important is the place where you operate?

We think place is very important. For example our latest pot still project is hyper-localised. The barley grows at a higher altitude than most, so it has different weather conditions, growing season and soil. The trees for our casks are from the valley next door and have only ever held our whiskey. The water of course runs off the granite mountains around us and the last piece of the puzzle yeast - we are only finding out the effect on flavour with this component. These are all tiny incremental effects, but they add up to a unique taste of a place.

How do you make the most of the amazing natural resources surrounding Glendalough?

Sustainably. We want our beautiful home in the mountains to stay that way. We want to leave it better than we found it for our children. That's why we plant many more trees than we fell for our casks using a continuous coverage forest management system. It's why we are very careful to forage lightly and spread the net widely and encourage growth rather than just decimating patches of plants we use. It's more than sustainable, it's creating the conditions for our surroundings to flourish.

What can you tell us about the special casks you use?

We've used an array - from Mizunara we source from Hokkaido in Northern Japan, to beautiful, juicy Oloroso casks we source in Montilla in Spain (home of the Pedro Ximenez grape). Most of our whiskey starts its life in alli-

gator-charred first fill bourbon casks. This ensures it has a solid flavour foundation before we move it into "more adventurous casks" let's say. We have some lovely Burgundy, Calvados, and Madeira casks, which we've released as single cask whiskeys so that you can really get under the skin of the predecessor liquid as well as those complex wood spices you get from French and Spanish oak. But by far our most special casks are the ones made from the trees we've felled ourselves in the surrounding mountains. For one, Irish oak is only coming back into use after hundreds of years, so we're only really discovering the flavour profile, but also, there is of course huge satisfaction and pride involved in going into the woods, finding a suitable tree, and taking that process right through to a bottle of whiskey. We, of course, number our Irish oak whiskeys by bottle, cask and even back to the tree.

Do you already, or would you like to, control the whole production process from the grain to the cask cooperage?

We have begun to control that process. And only for some of our whiskey - the pot still. We would love to control it for all of our whiskeys and we're working towards that. But like everything to do with whiskey - it's a process, and it takes more time than you think it will.

Do you think that is a fundamental factor for quality?

Control, while nice to have, doesn't equal quality. If you can be safe in the knowledge that the barley was grown, malted and milled the way you wanted it, that's almost as good as





control. The same goes for sourcing liquid - you can source good quality new-make, or young whiskey, and take it from there. Or if you're buying a cask - you want to know as much as you can about that cask. So knowledge can work as well as control in these situations. Having said all that, complete control allows you to turn the dial a little further, to add ideas of your own, and nuance to the liquid. I suppose complete control of everything is the holy grail.

Let's talk about the 13yo Mizunara Oak Finish. How did you get the idea? How different is it from the 13yo?

It was Donal, one of our founders' idea. We all loved Japanese whiskey, but never thought of using mizunara, we didn't think it would be possible, mostly because of the price (they're about €3,000 a cask vs about €100 for a bourbon cask) and we were still a young start-up, or up-start if you prefer! But Barry, one of our other founders, found a way to make it work. I was then sent over there to get the casks and learn as much as possible about the wood and the cooeping of it - mizunara is very different from American and European oak. The difference it brought to our 13yo old single malt (which had already won best Irish whiskey in the world at San Francisco World Spirits) was to add much more vanilla, exotic fruit flavours, marmalade, layers of sandalwood and incense spices, and most remarkably, a lovely long milk chocolate finish. My mouth is watering just thinking of that.

And how difficult is it to handle Mizunara casks?

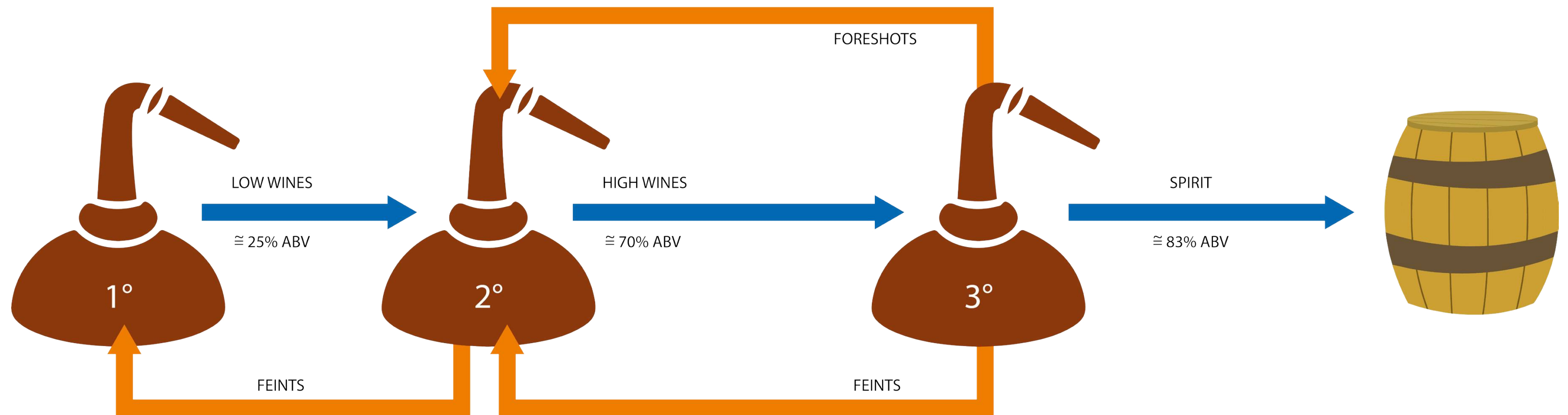
Very. They're coopered by the oldest cooper in Japan, who says himself that he's still learning how to work it. The wood is brittle and hard to cooper. The trees must be 200 years old (vs 100 for American for example) so they can be quite twisted - you'll only get one cask from each tree (vs 2/3/4 or maybe 5 from more familiar oak). Mizunara actually means "water oak" so they take 3 years to dry before it can be coopered. It takes a month to test them - A bourbon barrel could be tested in minutes. Then they leak a lot, and not just through the joins but right through the wood because it's so porous. So they need to be checked and tended often.

How are you building up your current range?

We have some exciting and interesting releases coming up - a single cask collection of three finishes, some aged malts, and even another little world's first in the pipeline. We actually have a lot of variety ready to release, so we're just trying to decide how and when. But our experiments with pot still are really what's getting us out of bed lately.

What's next for Glendalough?

We're about to really push our Rose Gin - a gin vapor distilled with fresh rose petals. Our head distiller Rowdy had first made it as a tribute to his mother, Rose, using flowers from her rose garden. We now manage that rose garden to ensure we have roses from it in every batch. It's an intensely layered liquid with a lovely back story, so we want to tell everyone about it. At the same time, we are rolling out our single cask Irish oak pot still whiskey world wide. We launched it to great success in Ireland, but we haven't shouted a lot about it internationally yet. After that... well, there's plenty of good stuff coming.



Triple distillation

*One more step involves a greater investment of time.
Is the whiskey you get better though?*

by **Luca Cominelli**

It is not rare to come across whisky labels that carry the wording "Triple distilled", or distilled three times. In Scotland, as in America, there are not many distilleries that use this process, but in Ireland it is considerably more widespread.

Two distillations are necessary in order to obtain a distillate that has an alcohol percentage of about 75%. The first distillation is where a low alcoholic distillate is obtained (about 25% ABV – 50 proof), while in the second one the desired 70% (140 proof) is reached. To understand the usefulness of the third distillation, it is necessary to analyze first what happens during the second one.

The spirit from the first distillation is heated, to make the alcohol evaporate, and to collect it. In this phase, the selection

of what will become the final distillate happens, through the so-called "cutting of the heads and tails", which represent the first and last vapors that are discarded. They are not collected because the heads (very first part of the evaporation) contain toxic substances, while the tails (the last) have a low alcohol percentage, since in the final part of the evaporation, the water also begins to evaporate. The cuts made lead to aromatic differences.

If it is decided to opt for the third distillation, this is a second distillation technique is repeated. It should be borne in mind that the starting point of this third phase is already a distillate with an alcohol content of about 70% (140 proof), and the result will produce a product with an even higher percentage, of about 80-83% (160-166 proof). Using the third distillation, the cutting of heads and tails in the second pha-

se becomes optional, but if it is carried out, there is a double cut, or a sort of "double selection".

Objectively, it is therefore a purer distillate with a higher alcohol content. The alcohol content, however, should not be taken into consideration, as the alcohol percentage of the distillate is still reduced before it is placed inside the barrels.

In the case a double cut of heads and tails is performed (which happens in most cases), something in terms of flavor profile get lost. As it is true that the distillate is purer, it is equally true that the aromatic component given by the raw materials is less impactful. So why choose a third and more expensive distillation? There must be a reason if you invest more time, and so more money, into the process. The reason lies precisely in what is lost, as the distillate will be

aromatically sweeter, obtaining a product that will have all the credentials to be more elegant and refined than its twice distilled brother. However, this does not mean that the final result is better, since aging always plays a fundamental role in the creation of a whiskey.

If you want to try a Scotch whiskey distilled three times, Auchentoshan produces exclusively with this method. Other brands offer "triple distilled" bottling, such as "Benromach Triple Distilled" or "Benriach Horizons 12 year old". In Ireland, almost all distilleries go through a triple distillation process. Here are some brands: Bushmills, Jameson, Midleton, Redbreast Tullamore D.E.W. and many others. In the United States? Woodford Reserve has always used triple distillation. However, there are also other brands, such as Andalusia Whiskey (Texas).



More than wine

Sherry, porto, madeira, marsala: fortified wines that can offer a viable and original alternative for different cocktails

by **Nicola Ruggiero**

Liquor wines, also called fortified wines, are produced through a process called fortification, which consists of the addition of alcohol, brandy or mistelle (composed by a must which, thanks to the addition of alcohol, cannot any longer ferment) to a fermented must or a fully fermented base wine. Fermentation is the process that, through the work of yeasts, allows the transformation of fermentable sugars into ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide. Yeasts are present on the peel and stalks of the grapes, or you can add selected yeast strains, as it is preferred by most of the large producing companies.

The fortification owes its origins to the need to ensure the preservation of wines during long voyages by ship, from their place of origin to the final sale market, most of the time England. The addition of alcohol to the wine, thanks

to its antibacterial function, was blocking the fermentation process and stabilizing it, the same effect that works for other wine-based spirits, such as brandy, cognac, armagnac. Depending on the different fermentation stage in which the fortification is carried out it is possible to obtain a product of different sweetness and with an alcoholic percentage varying between 15% and 22% ABV. The fortification, in fact, can take place before, during or after the alcoholic fermentation of the must or the pressed grapes: those wines which have been fortified at the beginning of the fermentation process will be sweeter, while those fortified at the end will result to be drier. If the fortification blocks the action of yeasts, in fact, there remains a certain amount of residual sugar that gives sweetness to the wine. Sweet fortified wines obtained by this method include French vin doux naturel, some types of port wines and sweet madeira.

In addition to stopping fermentation, the production of fortified sweet wines can also take place with the addition of the aforementioned mistelle, which, being a mixture of unfermented or only slightly fermented grape juice and alcohol, has the ability to increase both the alcoholic percentage and the sweetness of the wine. In dry fortified wines, such as Jerez Fino and Manzanilla or Marsala Vergine, the fortifying agent is added at the end of fermentation, which happens as with the normal production of a dry wine, until you get an alcoholic level of about 12% ABV. The addition of alcohol then allows to reach the desired percentage, varying between 15% and 22% ABV, thus determining the beginning of a new phase of production. The subsequent aging processes will be later on the ones giving character and complexity to the final product. Many of the organoleptic qualities of fortified wines, in fact, are the result of extreme alterations. The

presence and preservative capacity of alcohol allows these wines to improve through processes that would be lethal to any other wine, such as oxidation or strong thermal excursions. The maturation of the fortified wines takes place in barrels filled up to four-fifths of their volume, in this way favoring a rather relevant oxidation process, which gives the wine its particular sensory qualities. The sherry (Jerez) has a further peculiarity: the surface of the wine that comes into contact with the air develops the so-called flor, a veil composed of a particular variety of yeasts also belonging to the Saccharomyces group, which performs the double task of releasing in the wine the sensory qualities of yeasts and protecting it from the excessive effects of oxidation.

Following what has been reported so far in this article, it is clear that the maturation of fortified wines is one of the



most complex and delicate operations of winemaking: it is a work perfected over several years that allows you to obtain absolutely unique products.

Despite their diversity, liqueur wines have transversal, common characteristics. As for color, for example, in white fortified wines varies from straw to topaz yellow, while for red fortified wines from dark red to amber. The variation of the colors in the just indicated range obviously depends on the grapes and production technique used. The scents, like the flavors, are always very complex and varied; often, in addition to the alcoholic component in the foreground, several background notes can be easily distinguishable, such as nuts, especially almonds, but also candied citrus, honey, spices and caramel. The oxidative note is characteristic of liqueur wines which have been aged in casks filled only to 75%, in order to allow oxidation, or stabilized by heating.

The liqueur wines are decisive and velvety on the palate and always have an excellent taste-olfactory persistence. Alcohol or the fortifying agent has its own aromas and therefore enriches the olfactory bouquet of the base wine. Being products traditionally intended for export, the most important and worldwide famous liqueur wines are still produced for the most part near the sea. Among them the port, coming from the Douro area in Portugal, obtained by fortifying musts of local red wines with wine spirits. Sherry, on the other hand, is obtained by fortifying with alcohol the sweet wines of the Jerez de la Frontera area in southern Spain. Madeira is produced on the Atlantic island with a fortification process involving the use of sugarcane alcohol. The marsala, on the other hand, was born in Sicily (Italy), in the port of the city of the same name. Its history is linked to the production of Perpetum, a Sicilian wine with an already very high alcohol content between 17% and 19% ABV. It was an English merchant who added more alcohol to this wine, in order to fortify it and then ship it by sea, renaming it with the name of the port of departure.

All these products are consumed as they are born, but they can also offer valid alternatives and enrichments to the cocktail world.

A first alternative, simple but interesting, is to replace with sherry the rum present in Mojito, so as to get a less alcoholic but at the same time very refreshing drink; or by replacing with madeira the vodka found in a Bloody Mary. Another option may be to add 1.5 cl of marsala to your Negroni or cut the part of the vermouth with 1.5 cl of vermouth and 1.5 cl of marsala.

If you prefer an exclusive cocktail, we suggest Sherry Cobbler, a recipe based on sherry. The ingredients are: one slice of orange, one slice of lemon, 2 cl of sugar syrup, 9 cl of amontillado sherry. For the preparation it, put lemon, orange and sugar into a mixing glass and crush everything. Add the sherry and the ice and mix the ingredients for a long time. Pour crushed or broken ice into a tall tumbler. Pour the drink into the glass with the help of a strainer to filter everything. Decorate abundantly with the fruit at your disposal.

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BY DREW ESTATE

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“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if not has not dined well.”
Virginia Woolf





The evolution of the beer

*Market developments and transformations amidst colossal mergers
and the microbrewery boom*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Over the course of the past two decades, the world beer market has been going through a radical transformation. On the one hand, there were major consolidations among the biggest industrial producers: the 2008 massive AB-InBev merger, the 2016 dismemberment of SABMiller between ABInBev and Asahi (which also led Peroni, Grolsch, and Pilsner Urquell to the Japanese group), the 2019 Asahi's acquisition of Fuller and Carlton, Heineken's acquisition of FEMSA, Lagunitas, Kirin Brasil, and CRE, as well as Carlsberg's acquisition of Scottish & Newcastle, to the name just the current major world groups. On the other hand, thousands of micro and craft breweries have been springing up like mushrooms everywhere (almost 9000 in the US, more than 700 in Italy, as well as in France, UK, and Germany), a phenomenon that has eventually split the market between industrial and craft

beers. A micro or craft brewery is usually defined as a producer that is small, independent (meaning not connected to other brands), dedicated to traditional or experimental recipes, or to the valorization of local source ingredients. In fact, the world legislation about craft beer is still quite vague.

The regulative gap allowed big groups to occupy the niche market with acquisitions and participations that for some brands led to a productive strengthening (the already mentioned Lagunitas, DogFish Head, and Founders in the US, BrewDog in the UK, Chimay and Duvel in Belgium, or Birrificio del Ducato, Birra del Borgo, and Hibu in Italy), but also to a more structural transformation of some originally small producers in giants of the craft beer with relevant market share numbers and revenues rivalling the major names (for instance, Boston Beer Company and Sierra Nevada in the

US, Amarcord and Baladin in Italy). Besides production indexes, the most important revolution perhaps happened in terms of the variety of beer styles now easily available on the market. Undoubtedly, from the unchallenged reign of low fermentation beers, there is nowadays a more complex landscape of high fermentation peculiar productions, IPAs, refermented and spontaneous fermentation beers, as well as aromatized porters (coffee, chocolate, etc.) and nitro-stout, which earlier were produced only in small numbers by local producers like Belgian abbeys and handled by specialized dealers.

Probably, a large part of the craft beer industry boom derives from the cultural change happened in the mid-90s vis-à-vis the quality and sustainability of food and beverages, particularly after certain scandals in large distribution

and industrial production (like methanol in wine). Moving past lagers and pilsners, a certain part of beer aficionados started to explore different styles, particularly those who look for more comprehensive gastronomic experiences in restaurants and specialized bars. Initially, gastropubs and beershops became the best advocates of this new beer culture not only by offering a safe and educated space for curious drinkers, but also by creating a privileged space for new micro-producers to operate outside the direct control of the industrial majors. As a matter of fact, this was just a transition phase, as the rapid increase in craft beer sales share forced a major reorganization of the distribution network, with the subsequent need to set new economies of scale to face the rampaging demand. Indeed, the craft beer market share is about 25% of the US market, and even in Europe the numbers are impressive, though it's slightly

more complicated to clearly delineate the numbers of the craft beer market from those of the Belgian and German traditional local productions. Craft beers and microbreweries are not simply buzzwords, but a well defined and consolidated market factor. Unfortunately, as international legislation has still been unable to clearly delineate the productive sector, a major problem still lies at what is probably the most delicate level, that is the direct sales to the final consumers. As specialized stores operated with an adequate selection and correctly advising their faithful customers, the large distribution was overwhelmed by small and big industrial producers who developed their own "artisanal or craft" beer brands to ride the wave (for example, the many raw, prime brew, unfiltered, and pseudo-locally inspired beers flooding the shelves). The biggest worry is that these micro-producers, who are now constantly animating the market and supporting the boom, would not be able to resist systemic market shocks. Given the major structural transformations described above, the crisis of the craft beer sector would lead to a dramatic domino effect that could plummet the whole beer market, including major groups and distributors.

Writing these lines during the days of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a lot of fear about the possible damages to the market, particularly to what is going to happen to the excellent producers already ruined by the forced lockdowns and destabilization of the global economy. The only hope is that the international food & beverage authorities would be quick to develop relief plans to support the hard work of those small producers that have been sustaining this extraordinary beer renaissance over the past few years.

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A MAN AND A CIGAR FOR ALL TIMES

T - Bone

*From the Porterhouse to the Fiorentina
When bone and size make the difference*

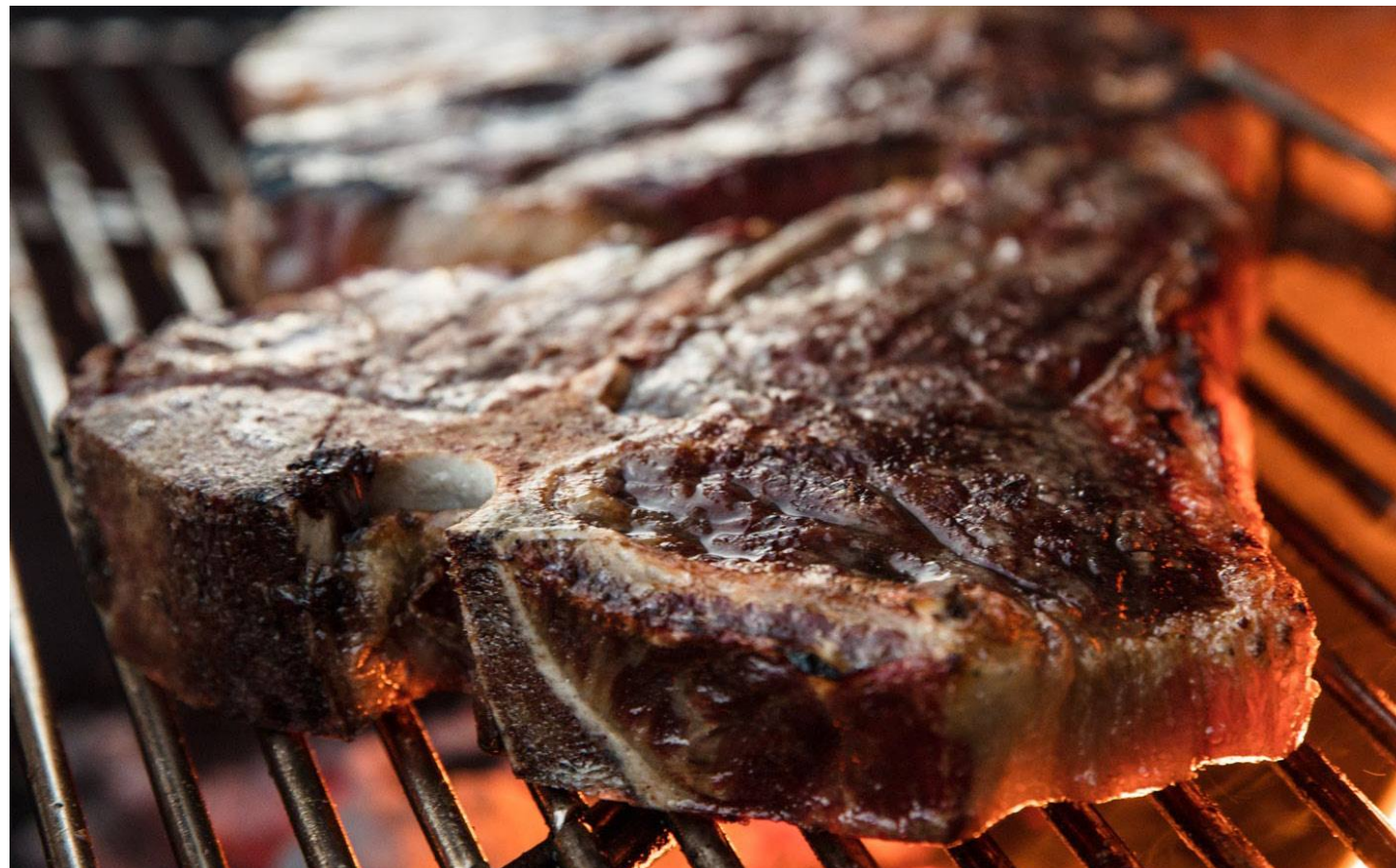
by **Vito Renna**

The world of grilling has constantly grown to make way for a wide range of possibilities and challenges to face on coals. Yet there are some dishes that will remain forever the cornerstones of the classic concept of cooking over fire. Among these there is without a doubt the beef steak.

A real cult, each with its incontrovertible opinion, often personal, about cooking and cutting. Although there are many facets of the term steak, it is often limited to three cuts, all noble: fillet, sirloin and rib.

A "convenient" choice, as the noble cuts are also the most tender ones, which also allow errors in cooking as well as the use of basic techniques.

It is therefore necessary to specify that the steak is not only and exclusively the cut in the shape of a "T" bone but includes a very large amount of cuts from the whole beef. And so we can have a real steak or a priest's hat but also a diaphragm. It is no coincidence, in fact, that in a classic American steakhouse you will find a wide range of steaks on the menu, all different.



We focus our analysis on the most cleared cuts, that is the steaks coming from the sirloin. T-Bone, Porterhouse and Fiorentina, three different names but one thing in common: the inverted "T" shaped bone.

This cut in the United States is rationally divided into two sections. The first, the cheapest one, with less presence of the tenderloin in favor of the sirloin, is the famous T-Bone. The second is the one in which the incidence of the fillet becomes more prominent, not cuttable according to the provisions of the USDA to a thickness of less than 1.25 inches (about 3.17 cm) and is the least famous and the irrepressible Porterhouse.

As for cooking, the embers are the masters. Breed, marbling, hanging and weight are important parameters for deciding whether to use the classic method (direct cooking on hot embers) or the New York style (grill and finishing it in the oven) or the reverse searing or Finney method (a first phase in the oven and a final on the grill) for a perfect and fragrant Maillard reaction.

The portion of beef loin including tenderloin and sirloin in Italy is called "Fiorentina".

When we talk about Fiorentina we must leave aside technicalities and scientific methods, professional grillers must close their eyes and accept that a Tuscan will never barter the perfect cooking technique with worship and tradition.

The Accademia della Fiorentina is undoubtedly one of the most authoritative sources out there to talk about the topic. It is an official organization based in Florence, with a Statute and which (from their website) has as its "primary purpose the study and celebration of Fiorentina as a gastronomic creation is an expression of the most genuine Florentinità, fruit of the careful and professional work of Breeders, Beccai and Cooks.

The Accademia della Fiorentina therefore has the aim of appreciating the rib of the adult veal, cut in the manner of the Florentine Beccai according to the canons of the most authentic tradition; cooked on the grill on hot coals of oak in respect of Florentine gastronomic art ". The "Beccai", in the Florentine slang, are the butchers.

According to the Academy, in order to be defined "Fiorentina", a steak must come from "Cattle aged between 15 and 18 months", it must have "a nice pink color". They are strictly steaks with bone, in which there are fillet and sirloin, weighing at least 800 gr, at least 5cm thick and must come from the Chianina loin. As for cooking times, a Tuscan knows and applies only one method: 5 minutes per side and 15 on the bone ("T" shape) with all due respect to all other professional techniques.

Needless to say, despite the cooking method, it is a cut you should try if you visit Florence, or Tuscany, perhaps followed by a Toscano Originale, an Italian cigar par excellence.

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A tea with a cigar

From the history of the most famous infusion in the world to the types of classification, finally focusing on the principles and attentions for a correct pairing to cigars

by **Claudio Giuliatti**

The cigar-tea pairing, even though cited by many sources, is still to be considered as an underexplored area. However, for a perfect combination, as in all fields, you need to know very well the peculiar characteristics of each product. So let us get to know the world of tea by tiptoeing, aware that its history, its characteristics and its rituals are the result of a thousand-year-old experience and culture, like the Asian one.

The tea plant, named *Camelia Sinensis*, is native to south-central China (some historians speak of Yunnan province, from which it later spread), where it has been used for at least 3000 years, initially as a drug. It was subsequently introduced in many areas of the Asian continent, India and Africa. Today, in addition to China, tea is grown in more than 40 countries, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Indonesia,

Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Japan and Kenya, with obviously very different results.

In China the name of this drink is “Cha”, a term that was widely adopted only centuries after the discovery of this plant, since in its early days it was recognized in each region by different names. It is worth mentioning how in Europe this denomination persists etymologically only in Portugal, one of the first countries to import it, in the 1600s, along with the Netherlands, England and France.

It has been shown that the intake of medical infusions containing extracts of *Camelia Sinensis* leaves began in remote eras, attributing to this plant beneficial health properties. In the oldest treatises of traditional Chinese medicine, the drink obtained from these leaves is defined as “bitter”: quite

different from the taste known to us nowadays (provided that the tea is prepared in the right way, otherwise bitterness is not so unlikely).

The oldest written quote of the use of tea as a drink dates back to 297 A.D., in Chen Shou’s “Sanguo zhi”. It was necessary to arrive at the T’ang era in order to finally have what remains today as the most important work ever dedicated to this drink: “The Canon of Tea” (or “Chajing”), by Lu Yu, presumably lived between 733 and 834 A.D. Lu Yu was the first true master of tea, meaning he was the first absolute connoisseur of everything related to this world, from sowing to production, service and perfect tasting. For enthusiasts, it is an indispensable reading to fully understand the passion behind this small ritual, although considering that much has changed in these centuries.

Beyond these very short and non-exhaustive historical notes, known to the past, we try to understand the present. Tea is universally classified according to two large systems, the eastern and the western. The first recognizes six varieties, identifiable by colors: green (lu cha), red (hong cha), blue or green-blue or wu long (qing cha), white (bai cha), yellow (huang cha), black or Pu’er tea (hei cha). Next to these are the fragrant teas (Hua cha). The western system, while taking up some varieties of the first, inserts others: green, black, Pu Erh (or Pu’er), white, Oolong (in China Wu Long), yellow, scented and mixtures.

They all derive from *Camelia Sinensis* and it is only the processing that differentiates them (as for all agricultural products, variations of terroir have also to be taken into proper account). As for the types of classification, all are generally identified according to the type of oxidation: not oxidized, oxidized, semi-oxidized and fermented (the latter are Pu’er, also called “The real black tea” but, commercially speaking, black tea means a multitude of teas whose leaves sometimes also have even greenish shades).

From an organoleptic perspective we can say with good approximation that the intensity is proportional to the tone of the color: the darker the color, the more intense the taste. There are exceptions, however, as in the case of the unpacked Pu’er, whose “strength”, to paraphrase the world of cigar, is equal to or less than certain types of “black” teas (such as Darjeeling or Oolong).

Here are some of the best known and most popular teas, which are worth knowing.

BLACK TEAS

- **Keemun**: produced in Anhui, high quality;
- **Orange Pekoe**: produced only by the last two leaves and the apex gem (Pekoe comes from Pak ho, “white hair”, from the silver hair of the still closed shoots);
- **Pu’er**: reserved for true fans of this strong tea. To be aged





for years, like cigars

- **Lapsang Souchong:** an very intense smoked tea;
- **Assam:** a beloved Indian tea, of high quality and of great pleasantness, of purely English taste.
- **Earl Grey:** it has to be cited, as perhaps it is the most widely known Tea in the world, named after Charles Grey, British Prime Minister from 1830 to 1834. Bergamot flavored.
- **Darjeeling:** fine black tea, elegant and appreciated, "the Champagne of Teas".

GREEN TEAS

- **Gun Powder:** Chinese, takes its name from the shape of the tea leaves which are rolled up like small balls of gun-powder;
- **Lu Mu Dan:** Chinese product in the Anhui region, means "Green Peony";
- **Lung Ching:** Chinese, one of the most famous and appreciated green teas in the world, comes from Zhejiang, considered Imperial tea since the 1600s.

In the type of Green Teas, it represents a micro universe that deserves a particular deepening, for which drawing up a synthesis would not do justice.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Teas that deserve both tasting and pairing attention are the unpacked ones (compressed, for the Pu'er which are suitable for aging), with special attention and preference for organic ones, since in the East unfortunately, the rules concerning agriculture still allow the use of pesticides which can turn to be harmful to humans and the environment.

Each type of tea requires a special temperature for water and an infusion time that can range from a few seconds to several minutes. The manufacturer indicates on the package temperature and infusion times. The best water is the low residual one: the too hard waters are less pleasant. If you want to use mineral water, it is good to use the ones using glass bottles. In addition, it is a good idea to pre-wash for a few seconds with the same hot water, throw it away and then make the real infusion with the leaves: this helps to eliminate, even if partially, any residues not appreciated by our organism.

Speaking of black tea and especially Pu'er, it is good to pre-wash for a few seconds the leaves with the same water (possibly at 90 degrees Celsius) in a small container with the same filter to be used for the infusion; throw the water away and then move the filter with the leaves into the teapot and leave it there for the indicated minutes (usually about three minutes for black teas, while a few seconds for The Pu'er).

It should also be kept in mind that organic teas do not contain preservatives, so during smoking (which lasts longer than the time to consume this drink) they can oxidize (becoming darker) and become more bitter, as well as cool, if

you do not resort to teapot covers (Nordic style) or thermos.

Finally, let us not forget that tea contains caffeine, a notoriously exciting substance (among the first consumers of this drink were Buddhist monks, who drank it to keep themselves awake during long meditation sessions). Nicotine itself also has exciting effects. It is easy, therefore, for the effects of the two alkaloids to add to each other, altering or disturbing the sleep or the reactive state of our organism.

WHICH ONES TO PAIR

We have finally reached the moment of discussing cigar pairing. Of the six types of tea, not all are suitable to be a good partner of a smoke: some are too delicate (whites, for example) or, on the contrary, too fragrant (the Oolongs - or Wulong - are too floral, some even remember orchids or similar fragrances). However, these examples do not completely exclude the possibility of pairing but, due to their characteristics, they have more limited pairing opportunities. From green to black, through yellow and red (the latter what we Westerners call "Black Tea"), many can be suitable.

How suitable are they?

The answer becomes rather subjective, in view of the fact that not everyone rates the same product with the same intensity value, so the result can be variable. In addition, an essential factor should be considered: the habituation to the intensity of the cigar. This also has a match with tea, as each type of tea has a different intensity, both in aromas and in the body. The principle of principle to be respected in the pairing is basically that of the respective intensity of taste and body. For this reason, as in all fields, experience and practice refine one's sensibility. That said, it's good to know the cigar you want to pair.

So let us try to combine initially cigars that are not overly strong or spicy, with the types of teas previously indicated. However, if you love spicy cigars, there are still smoked teas, such as some Russian ones or the Chinese Lapsang Sou Chong with its very marked aroma, which will be perfect for you. Leaving aside the types of whites and green-blue, but also some yellow teas, the choice can be directed towards the green, red and black ones. Among the green ones, especially Chinese but not only, there are several products valid for the purpose. One of the most famous Chinese green teas is the so-called Gun Powder, which is carefully packaged in rolling the leaves in the form of small balls and have a particularly strong aroma without having enough intensity to cover that of the cigar. China is a very strong producer of green teas and there are many not too delicate ones that could be enjoyed in combination with cigars.

SUGGESTED TEXTS FOR FURTHER STUDY:

- Lu Yu "The canon of Tea" (Chajing)
- Okakura Kakuzo "The book of Tea"
- Yasushi Inoue "Dead of a Tea master" (Honkakubo ibun)





中国杂志

Available in:
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SPIRITS

威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
你喝的是什麼

Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用名經常進行激烈分析，偶爾或熱情，瓶子一直是購買的主要吸引力，但足有一個更精確的標籤，必須加深，能夠顯示許多有用的新聞，標量。

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），有時在瓶蓋的信息，有時更簡單，標籤應該給我們所有的信息，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。

雙面單生產商以瓶子命名為威士忌這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們談論沒有“e”的威士忌：在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱擴大了蘇格蘭威士忌。雙面單威士忌也保留了單一產區的標識。一些蘇格蘭威士忌增加了生產區域，以強調產品的地域性。

*歲月之後經常出現的數字和產品的最低年齡有關。最低年齡因為，與陳釀不同桶的混合相比，最年輕的數字是最低的。示例：使用三個桶分別釀造8年、12年和29年的威士忌將顯示“0

歲”字樣，無論舊桶的氧化情況如何。公司有責任報告其他桶的年齡，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，沒有修改後假單產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低3年或5年或10年威士忌。製片人選擇不顯示年齡，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，始終報告酒精含量，必須至少為40%。在這個數字下我們不能說威士忌，如果等級更高，有時公司會標告“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存在。因此，好像它們只是從桶中直接。然而，幫助您使用可以使用的多種威士忌的較低等級的木桶強度威士忌。



忌，特別是如單前者俱有一定的年齡。本小灣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，它總是發現精神和強烈的日期，特別是當涉及到單個桶時：生產者想要強調精神在桶中花費的時間。

桶的組合符合精確的標準：您可以將來自同一釀酒廠，不同釀酒廠，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，沒有標籤（這是一種常見做法）。在第二種情況下，我們將有混合麥芽威士忌（今年將以標籤為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合）。還有Grain Whiskies：這將將這些由各種穀物生產的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到和盛行飲用相關的各種酒類，或者使用的唯一穀物（黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌）。

我們試圖解釋各種標量上最常見的標量：沒有絕對的紀錄，每個製造商都擁有自己的事情。但是，遵循這些指導原則，在這個廣闊而獨特的世界中，您將更容易自認。

仍然是一個更廣泛的概念：您可以從兩桶中取出，但仍然比兩桶小一些（但一些例子：獨立桶Caskhead的更複雜為自己的小量結合了兩個或三個桶，而奧

Indigenous in the spotlight

The success of newly found and rediscovered grapes sustains a stronger idea of terroir-driven wines

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

No other producing country can boast the symbolic power of French indigenous wines. If elsewhere Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon are considered as international grapes In France, for example, the name Chardonnay derives from the eponymous town of the Mâconnais in Burgundy.

The wine that comes those grapes and those territories is a product intimately and symbolically connected with the gastronomic history of the whole country. Thanks to its adaptability, Chardonnay grapes found great expressions also outside French borders, for instance in the valleys of California, in the far away Australia and New Zealand, as well as in Italy and the Balkan Peninsula.

Nevertheless, it was extremely long and difficult to connect these excellent non-French Chardonnays to a similar symbolic capital, until they were included under the umbrella of international



wines connected to the modern and technological enology supported by the guru Robert Parker (which meant selected yeasts, different pedoclimatic conditions and maturation regimes, and so on). One had to wait that another key French concept, terroir, became not only a buzzword but a real dealbreaker on the international wine market. Terroir stresses the strong connection between the microclimatic and historical specificity of a territory that can be expressed by a wine, up to the point that there can be multiple different but similarly valuable expressions of any grapes, even if this grape is not indigenous to the said territory. The success of terroir as a touristic concept has also contributed to a renaissance of the so called autochthonous or indigenous grapes, whose deep connection with their territories becomes a gastronomic seal of excellency.

There are many thousands of different wine grapes in the world, but only a fraction have been adequately catalogued (1368 according to the gigantic volume *Wine Grapes* by J. Robinson, J. Harding, and J. Vouillamoz), and even less gets regularly bottled as certified quality wines. Partially, this movement was strongly connected to the natural and organic wine movement, which has been devoted to a more sustainable and ecologically respectful viticulture, as well as interested in preserving local traditional techniques of production.

Recently, though, even bigger producers rediscovered the market value of these minor grapes, capable not only of offering original and distinctive wines, but also a different gastronomic model, more "slow", more typical, and definitely more intriguing. It is not simply a matter of saving grapes from extinction, but also to valorize extremely interesting wines whose quality derives from the specific characteristics of some very small lots of land on our planet.

Over the past decade, big and small producers from Italy, Spain, Portugal, as well as Austria, Germany, Greece, Georgia, Slovenia, and Croatia, without forgetting also France, have been patiently offering to the market excellent wines coming from obscure or neglected origins (even though sometimes it was the long awaited comeback of wines that were once extremely famous like the Italian Lambrusco). Under the terroir flag, the marketing development of the indigenous wines niche allowed producers and sellers to build up an even stronger relationship between wines and origins: beside highlighting small artisanal excellencies, the adequate marketing of terroir allows to connect indigenous wines to a touristic territory, to a lifestyle, to a culture, and to what they can suggest to the mainstream public in terms of symbolic expectations.



The indigenous wine movement found large success in Italy, where there is one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the wine world. Not only each region lobbied to valorize its acknowledged local jewels like Sangiovese, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Aglianico, Moscato, and Garganega within the European protected designations of origin, but they also begun to advertise their own forgotten or newly found grapes deemed capable to offer extremely interesting wines.

Among the most famous we can certainly list Lambrusco from Emilia and Ribolla Gialla of Friuli, but also Timorasso, Ruché, Grignolino, and Freisa from Piedmont, Nosiola and Teroldego from Trentino, Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio from Sicily, Pallagrello e Casavecchia from Campania, and Cannonau from Sardegna.

Among the big novelties we must name Pignatello and Fogliatonda from Tuscany and Minutolo from Apulia, grapes discovered after many decades of analyses and experiments by brave enologists and producers. In the Iberian Peninsula, producers and consumers rediscovered white grapes like Albariño, Verdejo, Macabeo, and Parellada (the grape of the much beloved Cava sparkling wines), and red grapes like Garnacha, Bobal, and Monastrell from booming wine regions like the Utiel-Requena and the small autonomous communities of Murcia like Yecla and Jumilla. In Portugal, the country with the highest ampelographic variety of single grapes (more than 340), producers are developing amazing versions of Verdelho and Arinto (especially on the Azores) as well as Tinta Barocca, Tinta Carvalha, and Touriga Franca (from the Douro) that have finally managed to show to the larger public what Portugal has to offer beside Porto, Madeira, and Vinho Verde. In Central Europe, a number of indigenous German and Austrian grapes finally made a breakthrough in a market dominated by Riesling and Gewürztraminer: now one can find white grapes like Sylvaner, Kerner, Grüner Veltliner, and red grapes like Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch, Trollinger, and Portugieser.

It goes without saying that this is only a shortlist of the most successful grapes. Some of these wines have had such a remarkable international success that almost single-handedly managed to develop new forms of gastronomic tourism in territories that once were completely neglected by the enological world routes. The value of these indigenous grapes is twice as fundamental: on one hand they allow to stimulate the socio-economic development of high quality producing districts, on the other they can also stimulate the curiosity of the mainstream public leading to more aware and informed forms of consumption, and ultimately to a general qualitative improvement of wine culture.



Spirits Blind Tasting



Rum	85
Whisky	92



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.



INTERTABAK AG

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Rum



The chosen 12

The selected rums represent a varied selection, in terms of aging, type, and price range. The comparison then touches the most disparate producing countries, looking for new products, but at the same time for confirmations.

Results

Two brackets have been created, which divide this blind tasting in half, giving rise to a part of rums that approaches and exceeds the threshold of 90 points, and to another one, which scores between 80 and 86 points.



DIPLOMATICO
Single Vintage 2005

43% - 86° | €€€ | Venezuela

NOSE: chestnut honey, caramel and a hint of cocoa. Almond and light spices follow. Then red fruit, to which a mineral hint gives greater depth.

PALATE: soft, with red fruit and raisins, followed by fine wood. Then honey and caramel. together with some spicy nuances.

FINISH: medium long. Wood, raisins and precious wood. Then spices.

Complex and structured, soft and satisfying. A complete rum, with a pronounced balance.

92



FAIR RUM
Belize 8 Years Old

53.8% - 107.6° | €€ | Belize

NOSE: fresh, with mentholated balsamic herbs, marzipan and ginger. Floral. Leaving it to rest for a few moments in the glass, you can perceive the spices and cocoa.

PALATE: sweet and floral, with balsamic highlights. Then wood and cocoa, along with a hint of orange peel.

FINISH: medium long. Orange peel, cocoa, wood and spices, with a balsamic hint.

Balanced and intense, it is a warm and harmonious rum.

92



DEP AZ
2005 Brut de Fût No.502

58.2% - 116.4° | €€€ | Martinique

NOSE: unripe banana, vanilla and honey, followed by raisins, candied fruit and mentholated balsamic nuances. Lastly, licorice root.

PALATE: sweet, with notes of cocoa, raisins and ripe fruit. Plum is also present. The balsamic herbs, mainly menthol, are confirmed, now accompanied by pine needles. Honey.

FINISH: long. Spices, cocoa, citrus and ginger.

Intense and with a broad and structured profile. Complexity is also good.

91



HABITATION
Velier Monymusk 2010

62% - 124° | €€€ | Jaimaca

NOSE: dark chocolate, wood spices, cotton candy, raisins and then citrus fruits, which refresh the flavor profile. Honey and vanilla pods also emerge. With a drop of water, floral aromas are outlined.

PALATE: spices, wood and red fruit, followed by dark chocolate and hints of dates.

FINISH: long. Dark chocolate and spices. Caramel.

Structured and complex. The flavor intensity is considerable.

91



GELAS
9 Years Old Cask S

49.9% - 99.8° | €€ | Panama

NOSE: caramel and raisins, with nuances of wood and spices, the latter just barely perceptible. It takes a few minutes for cinnamon and tropical fruit to emerge.

PALATE: round. Caramel and tropical fruit are confirmed, along with spices and raisins.

FINISH: medium-long. Tropical fruit and spices.

It is equipped with a remarkable balance. Round, with a broad profile and good structure. Fulfilling.

91



BERCLOUX
Rhum de Molasse

45% - 90° | €€ | France

NOSE: hints of calvados and cereals, followed by iodine and biscuits, along with a touch of cinnamon. Then notes of particularly ripe apple.

PALATE: fruity, with hints of banana, a touch of vanilla and hints of honey. Cinnamon and marine echoes.

FINISH: medium. Spicy, with smoke and licorice notes.

Equipped with a decidedly unique and unconventional flavor profile. It is satisfying and of good complexity. Very Interesting.

89



EL DORADO
15 Years Old

43% - 86° | €€ | Guyana

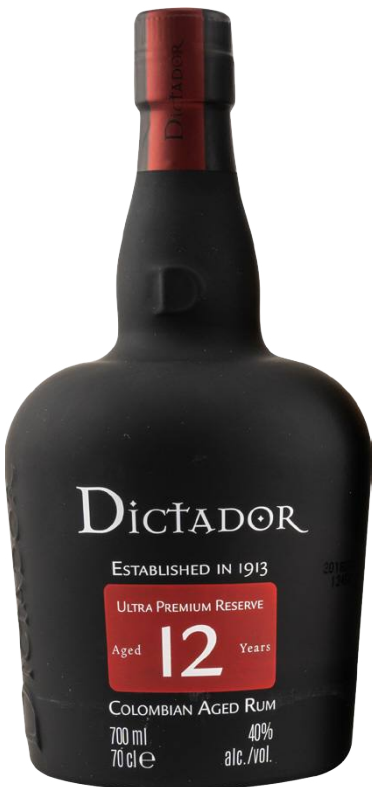
NOSE: panforte and caramel, with a touch of brine, followed by an intense vein of citrus, where the orange peel stands out. Hints of spices.

PALATE: honey, wood and a hint of cocoa. Then, spices and citrus fruits are confirmed, the latter less marked than what was perceived on the nose.

FINISH: medium. Caramel, spices and a touch of white pepper.

Good flavor intensity and good structure. Simple to appreciate.

86



DICTADOR
12 Years Old

40% - 80° | € | Colombia

NOSE: hints of plum and ripe fruit, followed by coffee beans. Then caramel. Not particularly deep or structured, but pleasant.

PALATE: the fruity notes are confirmed, where plum and raisins stand out. Then, hint of spice. Finally, a touch of licorice

FINISH: medium short. Some spice and caramel.

Simple to appreciate and quite drinkable, but not particularly structured or complex.

84



BERRY BROS.
Classic Range Guatemala

40.5% - 81° | € | Guatemala

NOSE: rather shy, with hints of citrus and spices. After a few moments in the glass, vegetal and herbal notes are released.

PALATE: notes of wood, spices and vanilla, together with hints of chestnut honey are delivered.

FINISH: medium. There are spicy notes and chilli peaks, together with some wood.

Little structured and of limited intensity. However, the flavor profile is fairly balanced. Simple.

83



PENNY BLUE
Batch # 5

43.1% - 86.2° | €€ | Mauritius

NOSE: a mix of wood, vanilla and spices is perceived.

PALATE: round and rather “buttery”, it delivers notes of vanilla, wood and spices. Then, citrus fruits are added, where the cedar peel stands out. Hints of sulfur.

FINISH: medium. Spices followed by mineral hints.

It is equipped with an elegant flavor profile, but it is not particularly structured. More performing on the palate than the nose.

83



TRES HOMBRES
Agricole Rhum Vieux

43% - 86° | €€ | Martinique

NOSE: muted, with hints of hydrocarbons, followed by a mix of vegetal and floral notes, which need a few moments to take shape.

PALATE: distinctly vegetal and herbal. There is also an earthy nuance present. Rather dry.

FINISH: medium-long. There are some vegetal and herbal notes, together with a touch of caramel.

Average intensity. The profile is not particularly structured and the number of aromas is also quite limited.

83



PYRAT
XO Reserve

40% - 80° | € | Guyana

NOSE: caramel and spices. Then citrus fruits, where the orange peel stands out, together with the cherry. In the background, a mix of ripe exotic fruit. The alcoholic component is felt a little too much at times.

PALATE: sweet, with intense notes of bitter orange and chinotto, together with mineral nuances.

FINISH: medium short. Bitter orange and spices.

The complexity is contained and the rum is rather flat.

79



PAGE

300+ SPIRITS TESTED EVERY YEAR

FIND SPIRITS



Whisky



The chosen 12

We gave space to "classic" bottling, some of which feature a new packaging, closer to the modern times. As interesting and tantalizing the desire to try numerous whiskeys is, one must not forget the bottlings that created a myth.

Results

A varied hat-trick, where a Scotch, an Irish and an American stand out. The winner belongs to a distillery that is nothing short of historic, which in the last decade has been renewed with products worthy of note.



GLEN GARIOCH
15 YO Sherry Cask

53.7% - 107.4° | €€ | Scotland

NOSE: burnt matches, wood and a hint of red fruit. With a drop of water, floral and nutty scents emerge.

PALATE: intense spices. The sherry character emerges, with berries, ganache and a mineral hint. Then a profusion of cocoa.

FINISH: medium long, with notes of red fruits and spices. There is also a mineral touch.

Warm and enveloping, it has a flavor profile of good structure and complexity. Very balanced.

90



BUSHMILLS
21 Years Old

40% - 80° | €€€ | Ireland

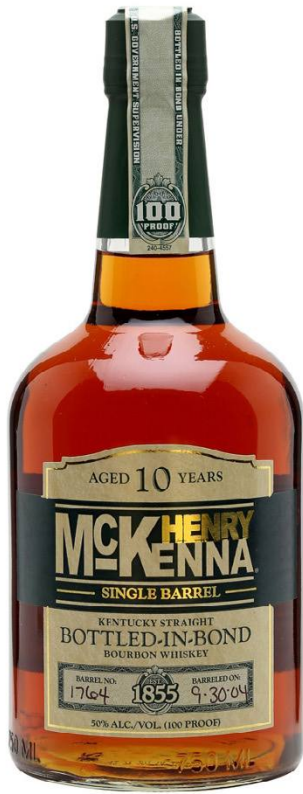
NOSE: seasoned wood and red fruit, followed by chestnut honey, cocoa and caramel hints. Sugary.

PALATE: wood and cocoa are confirmed, supported by spices and cocoa tips. The base is sweet and rather round.

FINISH: medium-long, with rich aromas of wood and spices. together with cocoa.

Good persistence. Intense and structured, especially on the nose, where this whisky is multi-faceted.

89



HENRY
MCKENNA
10 Years Old

50% - 100° | €€ | USA

NOSE: wood, banana and caramel, accompanied by resin and spices. Toasted hints of coffee beans.

PALATE: wood and spices, supported by a hint of balsamic herbs, where mint stands out. Cinnamon, cocoa and honey follow.

FINISH: medium long. Wood, spices and cinnamon.

Intense and full-bodied, it is round and structured. Particularly satisfying and with an interesting finish. Broad flavor profile.

88



HIGHLAND
PARK
18 YO Viking Pride

43% - 86° | €€€ | Scotland

NOSE: mineral peat, cedar peel, and tips of medicinal herbs. The peaty component is structured. Then oak wood and spices.

PALATE: peat is confirmed as the protagonist. Then, wood, spices and a hint of cocoa. There is also a touch of honey.

FINISH: medium long. Wood, spices and peat, with balsamic nuances.

Good structure and intensity. The peat is well balanced and does not cover the rest of the aromas.

88



ARRAN
21 Years Old

46% - 92° | €€€ | Scotland

NOSE: vanilla pods, lemon zest, custard and a touch of wood. Honey and with floral nuances. Intense and of great elegance.

PALATE: lemon zest, spices and a hint of vanilla. Honey and with shades of oak. A hint of cocoa.

FINISH: medium long. Spices, honey and vanilla.

Elegant and equipped with a flavor profile of great harmony. Round and well structured.

87



COLONEL E.H.
TAYLOR
Bottled In Bond

50% - 100° | €€ | USA

NOSE: an intense mix of wood and spices, enriched with hints of vanilla and honey

PALATE: vanilla and wood, with intense notes of spices. Honey is also present on the palate. There are also shades of ripe fruit.

FINISH: medium. Wood, spices and vanilla. Honey.

Balanced, round and easy to appreciate. It is not particularly complex, but the balance is strong.

86



MACKMYRA
Brukswhisky

41.1% - 81.2° | € | Sweden

NOSE: sweet peaty mineral notes, together with citrus, licorice root and a hint of vanilla. After a few moments, medicinal herbs.

PALATE: peat is confirmed, which accompanies the wood and the spices of the wood. Particularly harmonious, but less intense than the nose.

FINISH: medium. Spices, wood, peat and vanilla.

It releases a peat note that does not cover the other flavors, which is easy to appreciate. Calm and balanced.

84



THE HAKUSHU
Distiller's Reserve

43% - 86° | €€ | Japan

NOSE: smoky notes, followed by hints of green apple, citrus and Gran Marnier. Orange peel. Rather fresh.

PALATE: spices, with rich white pepper notes, young wood and hints of citrus. Licorice root.

FINISH: medium. Citrus fruits, where the orange peel stands out, wood and licorice.

Although it is not particularly structured, it boasts a pronounced balance, especially on the palate, while on the nose it is not as round.

84



LANGATUN
Old Bear

40% - 80° | €€ | Switzerland

NOSE: mineral peat and citrus, with smoky nuances. In the background there are also some herbal hints present. A touch of coal.

PALATE: smoky and peaty notes. Coal is confirmed. Herbal notes are present but definitely less pronounced compared to the nose.

FINISH: medium short. Peated. Quite drinkable, although not particularly structured or deep.

The peaty note is present overbearing. Good balance.

84



RESERVOIR
Bourbon

50% - 100° | €€ | USA

NOSE: young wood, wood resin and pecans. Then caramel and honey. After a few moments, an intense note of vanilla appears as well.

PALATE: young wood, wood resin, spices and varnish. Toasted shades. Lastly caramel. Slightly dry.

FINISH: medium. Wood, caramel and intense notes of wood varnish.

Shallow but drinkable. The finish is the least performing part, with the solvent note that tends to cover the flavor profile.

84



COTSWOLDS
Single Malt

46% - 92° | € | England

NOSE: a mix of balsamic herbs, where anise and cloves stand out. Floral. Young wood to complete the flavor profile.

PALATE: floral notes and balsamic herbs are confirmed, with anise and now menthol notes. Wood and wood resin. Of rather low intensity. Shallow.

FINISH: rather short persistence. Wood and floral notes.

It is equipped with a rather contained intensity and with a limited flavor profile, but it is easy to appreciate.

82



SUNTORY
Toki

43% - 86° | € | Japan

NOSE: hints of solvent and wood resin, together with a floral hint. Sugary, which at times recalls syrup. No deepness in flavors.

PALATE: very limited in terms of aromas, depth and structure. There are some notes of solvent and vanilla.

FINISH: short persistence, with notes that recall once again solvents.

Good for mixing. The flavor profile is somewhat limited and contained, as well as decidedly shallow.

80



Ashton Artisan's Blend

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: keine
Schnitt: Loose cut

Der Hauptbestandteil dieses würzigen Tabaks ist Latakia, welcher mit einem kleinen Anteilen von Virginia, dunkel gebranntem Kentucky, Black Cavendish und Perique abgerundet wird.



Ashton Gold Rush

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: keine
Schnitt: Mixture

In dieser Mischung verschmelzen reife, natürlich süsse Virginia-Tabake in verschiedenen Schnitten und Breiten sowie Virginia Cube Cuts.



Ashton Consummate Gentleman

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: keine
Schnitt: Loose cut

Zu gleichen Anteilen werden Virginia, Black Cavendish und Latakia in dieser Mischung gemischt.



Ashton Guilty Pleasure

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: Mango | Vanille | Walnuss
Schnitt: Loose cut

Grundlage dieser Mischung ist eine Auswahl reifer Virginia-Tabake, verfeinert mit Black Cavendish und einem Hauch von Burley.



Ashton Smooth Sailing

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: keine
Schnitt: Loose cut

Der Hauptbestandteil dieses würzigen Tabaks ist Latakia, welcher mit einem kleinen Anteilen von Virginia, dunkel gebranntem Kentucky, Black Cavendish und Perique abgerundet wird.



Ashton Winding Road

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: Karamell | Aprikose | Honig
Schnitt: Loose cut

Diese Mischung besteht aus Virginia-Tabaken verschiedener Provenienzen in Kombination mit Burley und Black Cavendish.



Ashton Rainy Day

Aromatisierung	1	2	3	4	5
Stärke	1	2	3	4	5
Raumnote	1	2	3	4	5

Aromatisierung: Hickory-Nuss
Schnitt: Loose cut

Eine Mischung aus tiefschwarzem Cavendish kombiniert mit goldenem Virginia und aromatischem Burley.

Bezeichnung	Verpackung	UVP CHF
Ashton Artisan's Blend	50 Gramm Dose	12.50
Ashton Consummate Gentleman	50 Gramm Dose	12.50
Ashton Smooth Sailing	50 Gramm Dose	12.50
Ashton Rainy Day	50 Gramm Dose	12.50
Ashton Gold Rush	50 Gramm Dose	12.50
Ashton Guilty Pleasure	50 Gramm Dose	12.50
Ashton Winding Road	50 Gramm Dose	12.50

Cigar

PARADISE.ch

WORLDWIDE SHIPPING

Cigars Blind Tasting



Churchills / Double Coronas	100
Coronas Gorda	104
Robusto	110
Toro	114

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.



1

THE WISE MAN
Maduro Corona Gorda

EXPLOSIVE. A VOLCANO OF FLAVORS.

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.

2

3

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

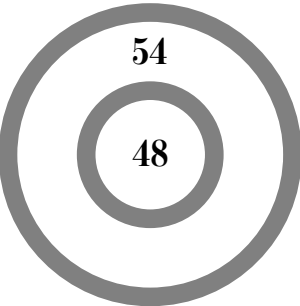
Rating scale: **95-100** memorable and excellent in every detail. **90-94** great quality and highly satisfying. **86-89** high quality and very pleasant. **81-85** decent, delivering a good smoke . **Under 80** not recommended.

Churchills / Double Coronas



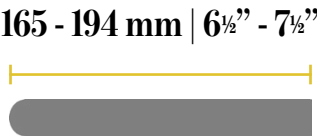
Cepo

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



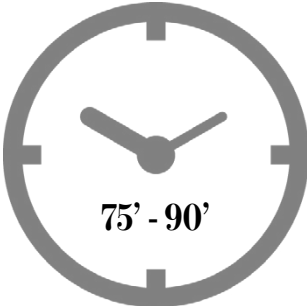
Largo

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



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes



PUNCH DOUBLE CORONA

SWEET AND CREAMY

Fine wood and citrus fruits open the smoke, supported by a suave note of white pepper. Continuing, cocoa and hints of coffee come through. The base is sweet and the smoke is particularly creamy.

93

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Cuba
SIZE: 49x194mm (7⁵/₈")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 18 €
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba



ASHTON SYMMETRY PRESTIGE

EXCELLENT EVOLUTION

Initially muted, it develops floral and peppery notes. Then the register expands with cappuccino and cedar wood, followed by intense aromas of caramel, coffee beans and cinnamon. Very creamy.

92

STRENGTH: ●●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 49x172mm (6³/₄")
PRICE: 14 \$ - 16 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep., Nicaragua



LIGA PRIVADA T52 CORONA DOBLE

GREAT HARMONY

It releases notes of cocoa, wood and incense, which make their way onto a honeyed base. Then a spicy vein of black pepper is added, together with toasted notes of coffee beans. The finish is enriched with vegetal aromas.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 54x178mm (7")
PRICE: 17 \$ - 20 €
WRAPPER: USA
BINDER: Brazil
FILLER: Honduras, Nicaragua




PLASENCIA RESERVA ORIGINAL CHUR.

GREAT BALANCE

The smoke opens with notes of undergrowth and seasoned wood, to which intense spicy notes are added, where black pepper stands out. It is then the turn of coffee and seasoned wood.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 48x178mm (7")
PRICE: 9.5 \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



*RAMON ALLONES
GIGANTES*

EVOLUTIVE AND ROUND

It releases vegetal and toasted notes, joined by earth and nuts, where hazelnut stands out. Cedar wood is also present, along with nuances of balsamic herbs.

90

STRENGTH: ●●
COUNTRY: Cuba
SIZE: 48x194mm (7⁵/₈")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 17 €
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba




*VILLIGER
LA MERIDIANA CHURCHILL*

VERY CREAMY

It releases nutty notes, where peanut stand out, followed by white pepper and leather. In the central section, notes of roasted coffee are added. The smoke is creamy and vanilla comes through in some puffs.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 48x172mm (6³/₄")
PRICE: 8.5 \$ - 6 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




*TATUAJE
ME II CHURCHILL*

GREAT BALANCE

Notes of earth and spices open the smoke, flanked by wood and toasted nuances. Halfway through the cigar, an intense aroma of walnut enters. The final part turns to undergrowth and vegetal notes, with a balsamic touch.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 48x165mm (6¹/₂")
PRICE: 10 \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




*ILLUSIONE
CRUSADO CHURCHILL*

MORE PERFORMING IN THE FIRST HALF

Leather and spices, where pink pepper stands out, open the smoke. This is followed by leather, earth, espresso and cocoa. In the second half, the base becomes slightly bitter.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 48x172mm (6³/₄")
PRICE: 11 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




*DIAMOND CROWN
MAXIMUS CHURCHILL NO.2*

GREAT PERSISTENCE AND ELEGANCE

Spices, incense and black pepper open the smoke, which has a marked persistence in the aromas. In the central section walnut is added, which becomes the protagonist, followed by nuances of unripe hazelnut.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 50x178mm (7")
PRICE: 17.5 \$ - 24.5 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep.




*E.P. CARRILLO
ENCORE EL PRIMERO*

LIMITED EVOLUTION

The entire smoke revolves around notes of seasoned wood and toasted notes. There are also hints of nuts, where walnut stands out, and earth present, which remains faint in the background.

85

STRENGTH: ●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 54x175mm (6⁵/₈")
PRICE: 13 \$ - 14 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



*FLOR DE SELVA
CHURCHILL*

ELEGANT AND REFINED

The smoke opens with toasted and bread notes, joined by a touch of hay. In the background, a veiled pepperiness is perceptible, mainly white pepper. The smoke is particularly creamy.

88

STRENGTH: ●●
COUNTRY: Honduras
SIZE: 48x175mm (6⁷/₈")
PRICE: 14 \$ - 9 €
WRAPPER: Honduras
BINDER: Honduras
FILLER: Honduras



*SIN COMPROMISO
SELECTION NO. 7*

PARTICULAR PROFILE

The first puffs release a mix of cedar wood, black pepper and spicy tips. Then earth and notes of balsamic aromatic herbs appear, which recall anise. In the final part, licorice and black tea are added.

85

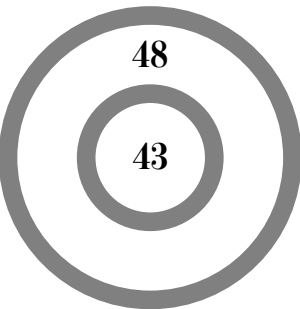
STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 56x178mm (7")
PRICE: 18.5 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Nicaragua

Coronas Gorda



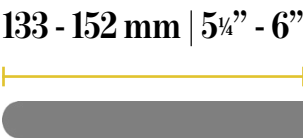
Cepo

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



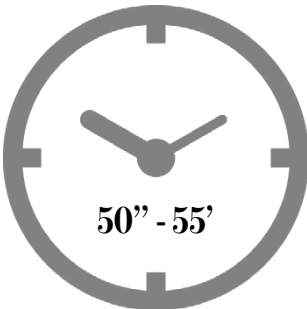
Largo

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



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes



KRISTOFF PISTOFF CORONA GORDA

INTENSE AND SPICY

The smoke opens with an explosion of earth and spices, where black pepper and hot spices stand out. Then wood is added, joined by a vegetal vein. The finish is intense, spicy and satisfying.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 48x146mm (5¾")
PRICE: 9 \$ - 8 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Indonesia
FILLER: Nicaragua



TATUAJE BLACK LABEL C.G.

STRUCTURED. TOASTED

It starts with toasted notes of coffee, which are soon followed by a mix of nuts, where almond stands out. In the final part, the flavor profile expands with wood.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 46x143mm (5⅝")
PRICE: 10 \$ - 12.5 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



FLOR D'CROSSIER SELECTION 512 MAD. C.G.

BALANCED WITH A LONG FINISH

It reveals earthy notes, along with a mix of black pepper and hot spices. Wood and leather are also perceptible, but to a lesser extent. Walnut is added in the final third. The finish is dominated by spices.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 46x140mm (5½")
PRICE: 6 \$ - 6 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep., Nicaragua




FRATELLO NAVETTA INVERSO C.G.

BALANCED AND EVOLUTIONARY

It releases notes of wood, earth and white pepper, enriched by coffee and cocoa, with a hint of ripe fruit. The spicy component becomes more pronounced in the finish, with rich notes of black pepper.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 46x149mm (5⅞")
PRICE: 9.5 \$ - 9.5 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Dominican Rep., Nicaragua



*CROWNED HEADS
FOUR KICKS MADURO C.G.*

INTENSE, WITH A PLEASANT BITTER TOUCH

Vegetal notes, spices and earth open the smoke. The spicy component is pronounced and recalls black pepper, with nuances of chili, which diminishes in the second half. The base is pleasantly bitter.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 46x143mm (5⅝")
PRICE: 9 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: USA
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




*H. UPMANN
MAGNUM 46*

EXCELLENT PERSISTENCE

Cedar wood and mineral notes open the smoke, joined by vegetal aromas. Then there are notes of leather and a suave spiciness, mainly perceptible in the aftertaste.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Cuba
SIZE: 46x143mm (5⅝")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 12.5 €
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba




*JOYA DE NICARAGUA
AÑTANO CT C.G.*

SATISFYING AND BALANCED

It releases notes of cellulose and white pepper, along with vegetal and vanilla nuances. The profile is then enriched with a mineral note. The last third changes completely to notes of earth and walnut.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 46x133mm (5¼")
PRICE: 7 \$ - 6.5 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



*ILLUSIONE
EPERNAY LE GRANDE*

BALANCED

The smoke opens with cedar wood, hazelnut and a touch of white pepper, which remains in the background. In the central section, a roasted notes of coffee beans is added.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Honduras
SIZE: 46x152mm (6")
PRICE: 10 \$ - 13 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




*QUESADA
RESERVA PRIVADA OSC. D.C.*

INTENSE AND BALANCED

It develops notes of seasoned wood and earth. In the background, a note of wood resin is also outlined. In the second half, a veiled spiciness appears as well. The smoke is quite dry.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 46x165mm (6½")
PRICE: 13 \$ - 6 €
WRAPPER: USA
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep., USA



*LA GALERA
MADURO PEGADOR*

BALANCED AND SPICY

Spicy aromas alternate, where black pepper stands out, and earth. There are also vegetal nuances, followed by herbs, which at times resembles anise.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 46x152mm (6")
PRICE: 5.5 \$ - 7 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep.




*BOCK Y CA.
CORONA*

DELICATE AND ELEGANT

It releases notes of cedar wood and white pepper, followed by hints of cocoa and floral nuances. There is also a touch of cinnamon present. Advancing in the smoke, the floral component becomes the main flavor.

87

STRENGTH: ●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 43x152mm (6")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 5 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Indonesia
FILLER: Dominican Rep., Nicaragua



*PUNCH
PUNCH*

SWETT AND REFINED

It releases aromas of wood and white pepper that make their way on a sweet base. As the smoke progresses, earthy notes, nuts and herbs appear.

87

FORZA: ●●●
PAESE: Cuba
DIMENSIONI: 46x140mm (5½")
PREZZO: N/A \$ - 12 €
CAPA: Cuba
CAPOTE: Cuba
TRIPA: Cuba



CigarMate

*Handmade CigarMate
for handmade cigars*



The CigarMate is a cigarholder created to let your cigar lay on a smooth surface of wood, providing the best natural support.

The design is completely studied in Italy and the production is entrusted to the most experienced woodworkers of the Philippines. Each CigarMate is completely made by hand, starting from a block of mahogany wood and slowly giving it size and shape. At the end of the process the cigarholder is lacquered manually with a brush. Each one has small differences from the others, which make it unique.

The CigarMate is composed of several collectible pieces.

1000+ CIGARS TESTED EVERY YEAR

FIND CIGARS

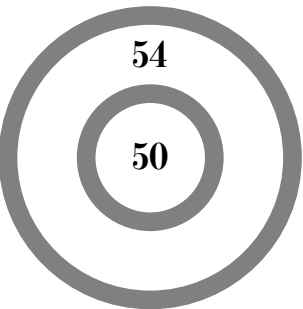


Robusto



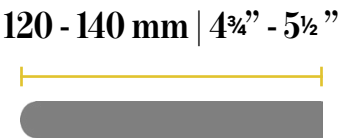
Cepo

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



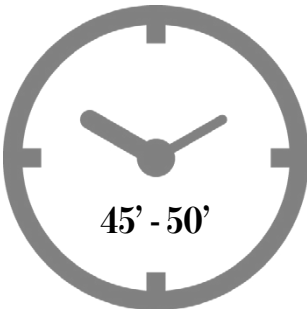
Largo

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



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes



CASA TURRENT ORIGINS CARIBE

INTENSE AND FULFILLING

The smoke revolves around notes of wood and hazelnut, enriched by a spicy vein of black pepper in the background. The base is sweet and coffee and earth appear in the second half of the cigar.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Mexico
SIZE: 54x140mm (5½")
PRICE: 8.5 \$ - 5.5 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Mexico
FILLER: Mexico, Nicaragua



CAVALIER CIGARS BLACK SERIES ROBUSTO

CREAMY WITH GREAT HARMONY

The smoke opens with notes of wood, joined by white pepper. The smoke is creamy, almost buttery. As you progress through the smoke, leather and coffee beans appear as well. There is also a suave pepperiness present.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Honduras
SIZE: 50x127mm (5")
PRICE: 10 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Brazil
FILLER: Honduras, Nicaragua



DIAMOND CROWN JULIUS CAESER ROBUSTO

SATISFYING WITH A LONG FINISH

It releases earthy and spicy notes, where black pepper and hot spices stand out. There are also mineral aromas present. In the second half, the profile is enriched with cinnamon and balsamic herbs.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 52x120mm (4¾")
PRICE: 12.5 \$ - 16 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep.




LA AURORA 107 NICARAGUA ROBUSTO

GREAT BALANCE

White pepper, coffee and vegetal notes open the smoke. The base is slightly sapid and soon an important vein of seasoned wood is added. In the final part, the profile is rounded out by cocoa.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 50x127mm (5")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 8 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



OLIVA
SERIE V MELANIO MADURO

INTENSE AND SPICY

Incense, black pepper and earth start the smoke. Halfway through, the spices take center stage, culminating into hot spices. In the final part, roasted coffee aromas are added as well.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 52x127mm (5")
PRICE: 10.5 \$ - 12 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




ROCKY PATEL
LB-1 ROBUSTO

MASCULINE AND SPICY

Earth and toasted notes kick off the smoke, which is enriched with white pepper and hot spices. In the second half, the earth gives way to leather, supported by notes of balsamic herbs.

87

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Honduras
SIZE: 50x140mm (5½")
PRICE: 0 \$ - 0 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Honduras, Nicaragua




COHIBA
ROBUSTOS

BALANCED

Notes of earth and spices are perceptible, where black pepper is also present. Then aromas of cedar wood and leather make their way. The smoke is creamy. In the end, the earth becomes the main flavor.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Cuba
SIZE: 50x124mm (4 ")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 23 €
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba




GURKHA
NICARAGUA SERIES

LINEAR AND BALANCED

The flavor profile revolves around notes of wood, earth and black pepper, joined by vegetal nuances. A note of black tea is also perceptible. Coffee is added in the second half.

86

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 52x127mm (5")
PRICE: 10 \$ - 11.5 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




VILLIGER
DO BRASIL CLARO ROBUSTO

HARMONIOUS

The smoke opens with crackers, seasoned wood and a hint of spice, along with vegetal nuances. Then it is the turn of citrus and clay notes. In the background a note of red fruit emerges.

89

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Brazil
SIZE: 50x127mm (5")
PRICE: 9 \$ - 9.5 €
WRAPPER: Brazil
BINDER: Brazil
FILLER: Brazil



MY FATHER
LA PROMESA ROBUSTO G.

BALANCED BUT A LIMITED PROFILE

The flavor profile is composed of notes of earth, spices, followed by vegetal nuances. In the final part, the vegetal aromas come through.

85

FORZA: ●●●
PAESE: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONI: 52x140mm (5½")
PREZZO: 8.5 \$ - 10.5 €
CAPA: Nicaragua
CAPOTE: Nicaragua
TRIPA: Nicaragua



DIPLOMATICO
ROBUSTO

INTENSE AND BALANCED

Earth and black pepper are followed by a nuance of hazelnut. There are also toasted notes present. In the second half, the spicy component becomes more pronounced, culminating into hot spices.

88

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 50x127mm (5")
PRICE: 13 \$ - N/A
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



BLACKBIRD
UNKIND ROBUSTO

ROUGH AND UNBALANCED

The smoke opens with notes of earth and black pepper, with a rather pronounced spicy component, which tend to cover the rest of the flavor profile. There are also vegetal nuances perceptible.

80

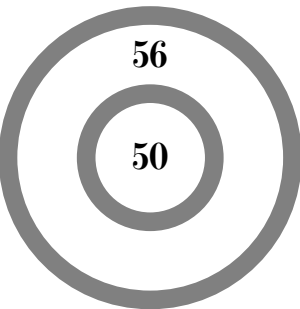
STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep
SIZE: 50x127mm (5")
PRICE: 7.5 \$ - 9 €
WRAPPER: Brazil
BINDER: Dominican Rep
FILLER: Dominican Rep., USA

Toro



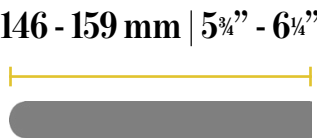
Cepo

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written in 1/64 of an inch



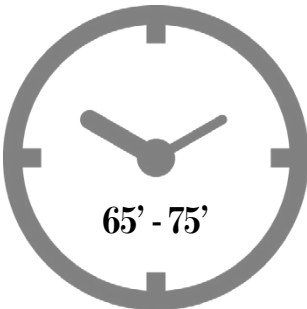
Largo

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



Tiempo

smoking time
in minutes



PERDOMO
RES. 10TH AN. CHA. CONN. EP.

REFINED, COMPLEX. GREAT PERSISTENCE

The smoke releases a blast of cedar wood and citrus fruits, enriched by nuances of white pepper. Then earth and ripe fruit are added, together with hints of cocoa. Very creamy.

92

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 54x152mm (6")
PRICE: 9 \$ - 11 €
WRAPPER: USA
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



DAVIDOFF
MILLENIUM BLEND TORO

FULFILLING AND COMPLEX

Cocoa and coffee beans, together with a touch of black pepper, open the smoke. In the central section, the spiciness expands, with aromas of cardamom and mace, which alternate until the end of smoke.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 50x152mm (6")
PRICE: 26 \$ - 23 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep.



MACANUDO
INSPIRADO BLACK CAÑ.

INTENSE AND BALANCED

The smoke presents a sweet base. Toasted notes, earth and black pepper develop. There is also an intense cocoa aroma, with hints of leather, present in the central section.

91

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 52x146mm (5 3/4")
PRICE: 8 \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: USA
BINDER: Dominican Rep.
FILLER: Dominican Rep., Honduras, Nicaragua



PSYKO SEVEN
MADURO TORO

COMPLEX AND INTENSE

Intense notes of wood and leather open the smoke, supported by a suave spiciness, which recalls black pepper. Then leather and coffee beans, enriched with hints of cocoa. Walnut is also perceptible.

90

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep.
SIZE: 48x159mm (6 1/4")
PRICE: 8 \$ - 9.5 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Dom. Rep., Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, USA



*FOUNDTION THE WISE MAN
MADURO TORO HUACO*

BALANCED

It releases notes of earth, hot spices and a mix of walnut and hazelnut. Balsamic nuances are also perceptible, which remain in the aftertaste. Toasted aromas are added in the second half.

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 56x152mm (6")
PRICE: 12 \$ - 15 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



*BALMORAL
AÑEJO XO NICARAGUA G. T.*

GOOD INTENSITY

Notes of earth and hot spices open the smoke. Cocoa is added later on. Nuances of oak can be made out in some puffs, together with hints of walnut. The smoke is quite dry.

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 52x152mm (6")
PRICE: 11 \$ - 9 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Brazil
FILLER: Brazil, Dominican Rep., Nicaragua



*ANTIGUA ESTELI
SEGOVIAS MADURO*

INTENSE AND PERSISTENT

Intense spicy notes of black pepper are perceived, together with hot spices. Toasted aromas are also perceptible, as well as seasoned wood. The finish is earthy and spicy.

STRENGTH: ●●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 56x152mm (6")
PRICE: 14 \$ - 9 €
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



*DOMINUS
MMXX ANKERKREUZ*

SUAVE AND DELICATE

It releases notes of seasoned wood, which alternate with toasted aromas. In the central section it turns to cellulose, followed by spicy nuances, where white pepper stands out.

STRENGTH: ●●
COUNTRY: Costa Rica
SIZE: 53x140mm (5.5")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 10 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Costa Rica, Dominican Rep., Nicaragua, Peru




*TRINIDAD
ESMERALDA*

MASCULIN AND HARMONIOUS

The smoke opens by alternating toasted and spicy notes, enriched with hints of white pepper and nuances of hot spices. Vegetal notes are added in the central section. The last couple puffs turn to earth.

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Cuba
SIZE: 53x146mm (5¾")
PRICE: N/A \$ - 17 €
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba



*ILLUSIONE
FUME D' AMOUR CAPI.*

BALANCED BUT CONTAINED EVOLUTION

The smoke revolves around aromas of leather and damp wood, together with a mix of spices, where pepper and a hint of cinnamon stand out. Nuances of coffee complete the flavor profile.

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 56x152mm (6")
PRICE: 11 \$ - 14 €
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua




*SERINO
THE WAYFARER THE 109*

GREAT BALANCE

Earth and black pepper open the smoke, together with an important note of wood resin. In the central section, the earthy component becomes the main flavor, while in the final part the wood resin returns to the foreground.

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Nicaragua
SIZE: 50x159mm (6¼")
PRICE: 10 \$ - N/A €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua



*AVO
SYNCRO RITMO TORO TUBO*

NOT VERY COMPLEX BUT BALANCED

The smoke is creamy, with hints of pepper and leather. In some puffs, notes of burnt coffee come through as well.

STRENGTH: ●●●
COUNTRY: Dominican Rep
SIZE: 54x152mm (6")
PRICE: 13 \$ - 11.50 €
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Mexico
FILLER: Brazil, Dom. Rep., Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru

Credits

Double puff

picture by: istockphoto.com

Punch

picture by: Habanos.com - Cubancigarwebsite.com - tx.nextcigar.com - Intertabak AG

Andullo

picture by: Pinterest.com

Nestor A. Plasencia

picture by: Mario Amelio

Liana Fuente

picture by: Arturo Fuente - Mario Amelio

The cigar ring

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Micallef Cigars

picture by: Micallef Cigars

Lisbona, Olissippo

picture by: Olissippo Lapa Palace

Dining with whisky

picture by: Pinterest.com

Glendalough

picture by: Glendalough

Triple Distillation

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

More than a wine

picture by: Simona Carbone

The evolution of the beer

picture by: presshub.brewdog.com - m.8desk.com

T-Bone

picture by: braciamiancora.com - Pinterest.com

A tea with a cigar

picture by: Pinterest.com - Pxhere.com

Indigenous in the spotlight

picture by: Wine.com

Blind tasting - Spirits

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Blind tasting - Cigars

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