CigarsLover MAGAZINE

WINTER 2021



AWARDS 2021

Alec Bradley - 25th

- THE SMOKING JACKET - INTERTABAK: TONY HOEVENAARS - COHIBA/CORONA - DELAYED - PAIRINGS: CIGARS & SPIRITS
- BAR CORNER - RESERVOIR DISTILLERY - SOLERA: PLAYING WITH TIME - COCKTAIL: THE MOON WALK
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Editor's thoughts

A big end of the year and a bigger beginning for 2022.

2021 has been a year full of news for CigarsLover Magazine. The new pairings section was added, and the new website dedicated to spirits - spirits-lover.com - was launched. There are now all the tastings of whiskey, rum, cognac, and Armagnac in this new portal, published over the years. This has allowed us to separate the contents about cigars and spirits to make the articles related to the two worlds more accessible.

For 2022, there will be other good news. First of all the increase in terms publications, and therefore in the content, which will be published next year. An additional CigarsLover Magazine's issue will be released, and from four, there will now be five issues per year. This will give us the opportunity to increase the articles and the number of products reviewed, as there will be an additional blind tasting session.

As usual, about the current magazine, the winter publication contains all the best products that we tested during the year. There are the TOP50 cigars, with our classic focus on the TOP 5 divided by producing countries, the TOP10 whiskeys, and the TOP 10 rums, in addition to the awards for the "Best Brand, Best Boutique cigars, and Best Buy." The best of the best, divided into 82 products enclosed in the following pages.

#refineyourtaste

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CIGARS

"Smoking cigars is like falling in love. First, you are attracted by its shape; you stay for its flavor, and you must always remember never, never to let the flame go out!"
Winston Churchill



Smoking jacket

The style of the past, revisited in modern fashion, offers us an interesting question: refined luxury or useful accessory?

by **Simone Poggi**



As it is well known to everybody, no memorable evening is free from regrets the next day. Even smoking friends know something about it. Those who, after a pleasant smoke in company, perhaps in a very traditional cigar lounge (meaning not equipped with the latest ventilation systems) have to face their spouse, while they smell the elegant (and expensive) clothes inevitably impregnated with the smell of smoke and ash. If you are now close to divorce, or you fear the laundry bill like the fines delivered at home, an elegant habit of the past can come in handy to solve the problem.

Around 1850 the Gentleman's Magazine of London defined the smoking jacket as a "sort of short room dress, of velvet, cashmere, merino wool or flannel, in light colors, adorned with embroidered decorations and closed by buttons". Already in the seventeenth century the availability of silk imported from the East had increased, just as the Crimean War opened the doors to import into England, alongside the more sophisticated Central American tobacco that we all love.

The tradition of retiring to a separate room after dinner to sip brandy and smoke in a secluded place, where thoughts and business could also be shared in a more private way, became commonplace. In order not to soil with ashes or impregnate their formal clothes with the scents of extinguished tobacco or smoke itself, the gentlemen began to take off their jackets to wear a dedicated robe. Which, in the following years, was brought to the stage by elegant figures of the big screen such as Fred Astaire (who is said to have asked to be buried with this garment) Cary Grant, not to mention Playboy's pioneer, Hugh Hefner. The latter in particular has carefully and intentionally played with this element of clothing, carefully avoiding showing himself to the public in formal, business-style outfits, which would have been out of tune with the very nature of his publication, resulting at the same time an elegant but also relaxed persona and lifestyle which he advocated in his magazine.

To solve the problem with the spouses you can opt for one of the many models that are still available in the different stores of custom-tailored quality bedroom dresses. The jackets work wonderfully to protect your other garments from absorbing the scents that you love but your spouse and drycleaner despise. One precaution: avoid the red velvet model with black lapels, too many people associate this particular item of clothing with the imminent entrance of a playmate, in skimpy clothes, from a side door.

You can consider telling your spouse that in 2007 (not many centuries ago) Tom Ford, in his store on Madison Avenue in New York, sold an eau de toilette based on vanilla and tobacco, describing it as the scents that a smoking jacket developed after a long time spent in cigar lounge and men's club; a modern reinterpretation of what was considered masculine in the past.

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INTERTABAK

The situation of the Cuban cigar market told by Tony Hoevenaars, CEO of Intertabak AG

by **Michel Arlia**

The Intertabak AG, with its offices in Basel, Switzerland, has been the official and exclusive direct importer of Habanos S.A. products, for Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein, since it was founded in 1995. Early last year, the company announced Tony Hoevenaars as their newly appointed CEO. We had the chance to talk to Tony about the unique Cuban cigar market that is Switzerland and many other topics.

What did you do before becoming the CEO of Intertabak? Where did your professional career start?

After I finished University, I worked for a couple of years for a business consultancy firm in Rotterdam. My first job in Tobacco started in 1990, Brand Manager for the Royal Theodorus Niemeyer in The Netherlands. Since then I worked for a variety of Tobacco companies such as Rothmans, Reemtsma and Imperial Tobacco building experience with practically all kinds of tobacco products that exist. In 2004 I was approached for the position of CEO for the Habanos Importer in the Benelux, now called Cubacigar Benelux. With the career in tobacco products I had already behind me then, it felt like winning the Olympic Gold medal, so the answer was: YES.

You previously were in charge of Cubacigar Benelux S.A., the official distributor of Habanos S.A. products in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg. What are the differences between those markets and Swiss market?

To a certain extent there are many similarities in the sense, for instance, that the requirements for our customers, Tobacco Specialists, to be successful with Hand Made Cuban, Habanos, cigars are very similar and that the market for Habanos has very much become a global market. The main differences, I would say, are the fact that Switzerland has a longer and stronger tradition as an important market for premium longfillers and the fact that the Swiss law allows for so called parallel import whereas in the Benelux (and most other market) the official distributer has the exclusive rights to represent the Habanos brands. The existence of a parallel market means that we are not only competing with the importers of non-Cuban long fillers (and to a certain extent with producers and importers of other cigars as well) but that we also have to deal with competition offering the same products as we do. Moreover, the existence of Parallel import, unfortunately, also means that there are fake cigars amongst them. The challenges are therefore greater here, but that also makes the job more interesting

You are working on upgrading and integrating a new image for Intertabak. What is going to change?

How do you know that? (laughing). It's not that our image is bad but we think we can do better! As I said, we wish to be the preferred, and ideally the exclusive, supplier of Cuban cigar to all premium cigar stores in Switzerland and in order to make that happen we must give these clients the best possible service, the best possible offerings in terms of available products and competitive prices. We will invest in our stocks, in our team and whatever else that is required to achieve our objectives. We also expect something back of course; we will ask our clients to give our assortment the attention and presence it deserves in a partnership and in such a way that we maximize the potential, also for the retailer.



The Swiss market used to be one of the top 5 markets for Habanos S.A., famous for getting only the best quality of Habanos, but it has fallen off quite a bit. Why is that?
Switzerland is still one of the most important markets for Habanos, because of its current performance as well as the growth potential it has. Regarding the quality, it's all relative I would say. Cuba is going through a rough period right now with some bad harvest years in the recent history and the country is badly hit by the COVID-19 crisis as well, the result is that production capacity is down for the moment because of COVID related measures. Given all this, supply to us for the Swiss market is relatively spoken still very good and we're very happy with the support of Habanos in these difficult times. Going forward, we are optimistic and I'm convinced that we will rebuild our stocks during the coming years to a level that will enable us to generate the projected growth, securing and strengthening our position as one of Habanos' most important business partners and offering the best quality worldwide.

European cigar smokers have been lamenting the availability issues of Habanos. What are the problems, and what has Intertabak done to prevent this issue?
First of all, to respond to certain rumours, it's not true that the lack of availability in certain European markets is the result of a growing supply in other areas of the world. The current lack of availability is global. I already addressed some of the issues regarding availability already in my answer to the previous question. An additional issue is the availability of tobacco, produced in the famous Vuelta Bajo area of Cuba's Pinar del Rio province. The demand for Cuban cigars is enormous, and growing! Cuba's tobacco industry is working hard on providing the optimal conditions for the tobacco farmers to improve production in terms of quantity and quality and we expect to see the results during the years to come. From our side we are doing all we can to keep our stock levels as high as we can under the current conditions and in the years to come we will invest in our warehouse capacity to facilitate a significantly higher stock reserve.

Another issue has been the constant price increase, especially in the Swiss market. Will this trend continue?
No. We have not increased our recommended retail prices this year, whereas the average price increase in surrounding markets, and on a global level, was 3 – 4%. We will also hold our prices in 2022. The initiative to hold prices is a joint effort from Intertabak and our retail partners to bring to recommended retails prices on an internationally competitive level and to avoid discounting. Let's be clear about this, we're selling a handcrafted, premium quality, top cigar. Such a product should not be discounted at all, and certainly not under the current circumstances with a growing demand!



How has the growth of the Non-Cuban cigars in recent years impacted the Cuban market overall?
Purely look at the statistics, it is undeniable that the share of market for non-Cuban longfiller cigars has grown. Fact however is that there's a huge, unexploited, demand for Cuban cigars and that we could sell much more if we would have the supply. With supply on the required levels, the statistics would look entirely different. In all fairness however, I must also admit that there's been very strong growth of non-Cuban long filler cigars in the segment until, approximately, CHF 15'00 per cigar and this is a segment where we are not very competitive. Our strength is in the higher price segments and with brands like Cohiba, Montecristo, Trinidad, Romeo y Julieta, Partagas, etc., as well as the unique quality and character of the tobacco grown in the Vuelta Abajo, we have a strong potential to grow! That's the good thing about the market for long filler cigars. It's a market for real connoisseurs who enjoy smoking and one, if not the only, segment in the tobacco market that's growing. There's potential growth for all players.

Where do you see the trend of Habanos S.A. going in the next five to ten years?
If Cuba can increase the production levels, secure quality and deliver the right product-brand mix, there's a strong potential for growth, possibly even in the double digits!

With all the increasin legislation against tobacco, do you see people still smoking cigars in the future?
That's a hard one to answer, honestly. Given the fact that a handmade longfiller cigar is a product that distinguishes itself from almost any other product from smoking enjoyment in the sense that it is exclusively consumed by well informed, adult aficionados in relatively small quantities and for selected moments, I am of the opinion that there should be no legal restriction against it. In practice, however, there have already been many markets where cigars are treated the same as other tobacco products, with no exceptions, and that's a potential threat! For the time being however it's still possible to buy and enjoy fine cigars and I'm confident the possibility will always be there for the true cigar lover, even though certain restrictions may apply!





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Inspirado

Delayed

The problems the COVID pandemic has created are now slowly catching up to the cigar industry.

by **Michel Arlia**

COVID has affected everyone worldwide. Talking about its economic impact, the pandemic has made it difficult, if not impossible, for many industries to do business. While some sectors have struggled harder than others, they all were forced to adapt and change; if they managed to survive, that is. All of this might sound harsh, but in every crisis there are losers and winners, and, to a certain extent, the cigar industry belongs to the winning side.

The cigar industry, in terms of sales, is doing dandy. Due to the pandemic, cigar lovers were forced to stay at home and even work from home (some still are). This has meant that cigar smokers have more time at hand to enjoy a cigar. The result has been a boom of cigar sales that rival those of the 90s. Some countries had their factories shut down, and other distribution chains were interrupted. Still, the cigar industry ironed out some of the bumps created by the pandemic, and sales skyrocketed towards the end of 2020. Since then, the industry has managed to carry the momentum into the first half of 2021. Then things started to slow down, not because of the lack of consumer interest; quite the opposite is the case.

Demand for cigars has been very high, higher than the industry can support at the moment. Also not due to a lack of cigars on hand, but mainly because of what makes up the finished and saleable product. The pandemic created many problems that are now catching up to the industry. The biggest issue is procuring the raw materials, and tobacco isn't the biggest problem. Some of the larger factories have their own growing operation or an immense amount of tobacco stocked in their warehouse. Some companies even had the foresight to invest in buying more raw tobacco ahead of time. In contrast, others now face the problem of having to pay more for tobacco, especially for wrappers. For the most part, it is an issue that the companies can manage.

The biggest problem areas are materials such as wood, cigar bands, hinges, and even the tiny nails that close the lid. The price of lumber has increased significantly, which may force a company to look at other materials. The lack of wood has seen an increase in the popularity of paper bundles.If a company can find, or get, everything, the other significant problem that the pandemic created is the significant shipping delays attached to all those materials.
All cigar producing countries are suffering from these issues, but the country hit the hardest is Cuba. Adding a socio-economical crisis to the pandemic, Cuba is facing many challenges. While they manage to get some product out, most of that small quantity is going to the Chinese market. This has made it harder for the rest of Habanos distributors to keep a stocked warehouse. Some regular production/limited edition stuff has not been seen for months and probably won't be seen for a while.

You might be thinking, "some new releases managed to arrive". That is true, but the new releases that were supposed to be available shortly after they were announced were delayed due to the shortages of the materials mentioned above. Many new releases were ready and resting in the aging rooms, but no bands nor boxes meant no finished product to ship and sell.

Due to the delays, there have also been fewer new releases appearing this year than last year. The new releases that were able to make it to market are thanks to the planning of the company and factory.

Most of those new releases are limited editions or seasonal editions (for example, special cigars made only once a year) that are planned for much further in advance than the regular production products. Some stores haven't seen some regular production boxes from many brands in quite some time.

Many companies are now trying to get their products out before the holiday season begins. It is difficult to say if they will manage in the end. One thing is for sure, as the cigar industry adapted to working in the pandemic, it will also adapt to these issues and try to keep the upswing of the popularity of the cigar going.



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INTERACTIVE



Alec Bradley

A family business

by **Michel Arlia**

Alan Rubin moved from the family business that his father built to creating his own. With no background in the tobacco industry, he dove into the world of cigars and launched a brand dedicated to his two sons. Now, 25 years later, the Alec Bradley Cigar Co. has become a fixture in the industry, and the two sons have long since joined the company.

We interview the patriarch, Alan Rubin, and talk with him about the past, present, and future of Alec Bradley Cigar Co.

Celebrating a quarter-century in any industry is a monumental achievement. Tell us what Alan Rubin did before entering the cigar industry? When did your love for cigars start?

I came from the fastener business. I joined my dad after college- we originally sold fasteners to cabinet companies, but after Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida, I changed the direction of the company and started to sell hurricane fasteners. My love for cigars began in the Miami office of my best friend's father. He was a very successful businessman and had a beautiful humidor sitting in his office. On a visit, he noticed me admiring it and offered me a cigar. I fell in love with the history and tradition! That's when my love for cigars began.

Twenty-five years ago, you decided to sell your family's business and start your venture into the cigar world. What did your father think about the idea? And why did you choose to go into the cigar industry instead of another one?

I was always close with my dad, and he supported me in everything I did. When I decided to sell the company, I didn't really know what I wanted to do next. One of my employees pointed out that he always saw me with a cigar, and I should give that business a try. I took some time for myself and weighed all my options. I decided to ask my friend and tobacconist if there was an industry trade show- which I found out there was, at the time, the RTDA. He invited me to go, and unlike the fastener business, I saw an industry united together, where competitors were friendly to each other, and there was a general comradery.

Alec Bradley Cigars is named after your two sons. Was the name of the company clear from the beginning, or did you have other names in mind?

One thing my dad always told me was to start a company's name with the letter "A" because it's at the beginning of the Yellow Pages. When I was 10, I realized that my dad's delivery truck read "Gloria Alan Industries"- the Alan was me. I never forgot the pride I felt when I saw that, so I wanted my kids to have that same feeling. The name was always going to be Alec Bradley.

The company was founded back in 1996, towards the end of the cigar boom of the 90ies. How was the industry, and what were the first couple of years for the company like?

I came in at the tail end of the boom years, now known as the cigar bust, not the best time to start a cigar company. I sold my first cigars in '97, Bogey's Stogies, to golf courses. "The only bogie you'll ever enjoy on the golf course." I was also big on taglines at the time. As a Floridian, I thought that everyone across the country golfed 12 months a year, but that obviously wasn't the case. So I struggled but persevered for the first few years and realized that to be successful, I'd have to get Alec Bradley into premium cigar stores.

You had to learn every aspect of cigars from the ground up. Who were some of your biggest influences, and what life lessons have you learned through cigars?

I'm always learning, and I'll never stop learning about tobacco. My biggest influence on my dreams and career has always been my dad. As far as the cigar business, I can't say that I have many influences, but I can say that I surround myself with great people. My friend and VP, Ralph Montero, grew up in the cigar business. When we were both struggling, we had a happenstance meeting and eventually joined forces. He was close with Henke Kelner of Davidoff, and the Alec Bradley Occidental Reserve was created, the cigar that got us into premium cigar shops.

In 1999, your company was almost going out of business. What was the turning point, and what would you do if things wouldn't have worked out?

I had a partner that left in April of 1999. The company was about $80k in debt, and I had about $3000 in our company checking account. I told my wife that I didn't know if I could





get myself out of the financial mess but that I would stay in long enough to pay off my debts and then get out. The turning point happened when Hendrik Kelner (Henke) of the Davidoff brand got me some samples of cigars. Remember that it was the bust, so everyone was looking for any additional production. I got samples from Henke, thought I would give it one last shot, and created the Occidental Reserve line. Instead of sending salespeople out to pitch the product, we sent 500 tobacconists two samples each of the cigars, without pricing. We followed up with 500 phone calls to ask the retailers if they could sell it and at what price. We got about 300 customers from that.

You work together with a couple of different factories, such as the Plasencia family (with factories in Honduras and Nicaragua), the Endemaño's Raices Cubanas in Honduras. In 2019, you also started working with the J. Fuego Cigar Co. de Nicaragua factory. How did you approach and decide which factory it was worth working with?
It's all about persistence and relationships. While everyone was getting out during the bust, I was the guy that kept going to cigar-producing countries and factories- so everyone knew I had skin in the game. Business aside, if I can connect with a person on a human level, have a drink with that person, and we can understand each other's needs and desires- that's the partner for me.

Wouldn't it be easier to have your own factory or fields? Is that even an option you have thought about?
I've thought about it, and I really don't need a building in Central America. As long as I continue to own the tobacco, I feel secure. I look at decisions by balancing risk with reward. Right now, the risks of owning anything other than the leaf, the lifeblood of my company, outweigh the possible rewards. Plus, we are highly vested with many of our partners.

Over this quarter-century, your portfolio has grown immensely, from the Trilogy (a triangular cigar), Tempus, Prensado, and many more, to the new Project 40. How do you approach making new lines from idea to finished product? Has that process changed over the years?
My process has changed many times over the years, but my goal is always to bring the best cigars to market while being creative and innovative. We are continuously blending throughout the year, and now that Alec and Bradley are also hyper-focused on blend and brand creation, there's always a lot of excitement about new potential projects to add to the portfolio. That being said, we are not a company that launches new products every year. We are very selective as to how our portfolio grows and how we can positively affect our consumers.

You discontinued the Mundial, Nica Puro, and Post Embargo lines early this year and other in the past . What makes you take the difficult decision to discontinue a line?
We rationalize lines for many reasons. The line may have been around for a while, and the packaging style no longer works within our marketing strategy, or one of the tobaccos needed for that blend is in shortage, or we want to replace that line with something new and don't want to saturate that segment of our portfolio. Sometimes the line just didn't perform to our expectations. When you put your heart and soul into each line, you don't want to see it go away, but sometimes it's necessary.

You have seen how the cigar retail has changed from Brick & Mortar to Online-Shops and how customers have become more interested in details. Are the B&M's absolute? How have the interactions with customers changed?
Both Brick & Mortar and online have their place for enthusiasts. There has been an increased consumer movement to Brick & Mortar tobacconists over the last few years, but consumers also want reliable information that is easily accessible. There is a lot of information out there, including the great format that Cigarslover provides, that enthusiasts want to know. They want to use that knowledge to maximize their experience. Being in a shop is where they can discuss cigars with their peers and engage with the tobacconist. Now that we're beginning to leave Covid behind, people just want to interact with people, and the role of the Brick & Mortar tobacconist will continue to be important to the cigar community.

With 25 years in the bag, how do the next 25 years for Alec Bradley Cigars look like? Do you have a goal in mind where you want to see the company before you retire?
The next 25 years look bright. Alec and Bradley are fully entrenched in the business and the industry. We continue to build and add to our Alec Bradley team and what I feel is the most dynamic group of passionate young professionals in the industry. I really have not set company goals based on me retiring, but annually, we do set direction, revenue, and philanthropy goals, and I don't expect that to change. I'm not sure I would necessarily retire, but I do see myself taking a lesser role over the next few years. I am truly blessed, so I don't know what retirement would look like or if it would look better than where I am today.



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Cohiba Corona

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by **Giuseppe Mitolo**



Among the Cuban global brands Cohiba has always been the most renowned. New releases, limited editions and super exclusive boxes have always enticed smokers from the world over and brand aficionados.

However, despite the continuous new references added to its porfolio over the years, Cohiba has never encountered any production cuts, with only one exception.

Analyzing the Cohiba production, from the official presentation in 1982 to the present day, we find a Corona made from 1988 until 1992.

Unfortunately, there is little information about it, considering the short life given to this cigar. The vitola de galera was a corona (42 x 5⅝" - 142mm) and the cigars were presented in painted 25-piece Semi Boite Nature boxes.

The peculiarity was the fact that each cigar was individually wrapped in cellophane, a very popular practice in Cuba between the seventies and eighties of the last century.

The reasons for its demise are obviously less certain than the information about its existance. It seems that this cigar was "sacrificed" to the imminent presentation of the Siglo Line, which took place in 1994.

This thesis is not without objective confirmation if we consider that the Siglo II is a "Mareva" (42 x 129), a size considered as the sister of the "Corona".
Today the Cohiba Corona is considered a real rarity; even in the collector's market. It is very difficult to find it auctioned, a circumstance that inevitably tends to raise its price.

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PAIRINGS

From the moment that CigarsLover Magazine defined its pay-off, "Refine Your Taste", starting to accompany the tastings of cigars to those of spirits such as Whisky, Rum, Armagnac and Cognac, we have set ourselves the problem of addressing the issue of cigar-spirits pairing.

The Rating Scale: 100 points. We have chosen to keep it in the pairings as well, to simplify the comparison of ratings. In this case, however, this scale only evaluates the pairing, and not the individual qualities of cigars and spirits. If you have both excellent products, for example, but an unbalanced and inconsistent pairing, the rating will be low. On the contrary, the excellent marriage of two products of decent quality could give rise to a very positive evaluation.

The Tasting: Nose, Palate, Finale. Since our goal is to explore the complexity of a pairing, we thought it was appropriate to decline the experience in the three areas, following what is usual with spirits and that is also made in the cigar tasting, with pre-lit scents, aromas during the smoke and the persistence.

The Comparison: 1 Cigar with 2 Distillates. We decided to start from the selection of a cigar, and ask specific questions such as: perhaps with this cigar is preferable a lower alcohol gradation? Maybe the ex-sherry oloroso barrels marry better than those moscatel with this cigar blend? Perhaps the excessive peat hides the more sophisticated notes of cigar? In order to answer the questions, we selected two spirits to investigate which one is the best cigar partner and why.

PAIRING Cigars & Spirits



DAVIDOFF WINSTON CHURCHILL

THE COMMANDER

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	$ 18 | € 21

DIMENSIONS
54 x 152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
DOMINICAN REP.

Medium-high strength cigar, which releases an intense and wide aromatic palette, focused on fine wood and white pepper, with cocoa and honey. The base is slightly sweet, the evolution marked and the balance excellent, as well as the creaminess. The combinations chosen are with an 18 yo, intense and animal whisky from Campbeltown and with an interesting and complex Australian whiskey aged for 15 years.



HOYO DE MONTEREY

EPICURE NO.2

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$ NA | € 10,4

DIMENSIONS
50 x 124 mm (4 ⅞")

COUNTRY
CUBA

Although the aromatic palette is not particularly wide, harmony and intensity are exceptional. Long persistence and great at balance. Initially it releases cedar wood and notes of white pepper, then paired with roasted aromas of coffee and spicy hints. Hints of cocoa do reach the palate too in the finish.
We paired it with two out-of-the-ordinary rums: an American solera rum aged in alligator casks and a extremely aged expression of the historical Jamaican estate.



JOYA DE NICARAGUA

ANTAÑO GRAN RESERVA BELICOSO

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●●	$ 6 | € 6

DIMENSIONS
54 x 152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
NICAGARUA

Cigar of high strength, balanced, with an intense and spicy aromatic palette, with cocoa, earth, leather and a freshly sweet background. It is paired with two bourbons with similar ABV and aromatic profile, slightly more delicate and floral the Elijah Craig, more intense and balsamic the Eagle Rare. Both hold up well to the impact with the leather, earth and spices of the deep and intense Antaño.



HELLYERS
Road 15yo

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Australia	46,2% - 92,4	$$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	15 Years Old	American Oak

Multifaceted product, with a nose of refined fruit pastry with honey and cream. The creamy palate and the finish are both more intense, spicier and almost balsamic, less sweet.

The pairing is immediately complex, with cocoa and wood on one side and custard and vanilla on the other; the only similarity is in honey, but the distant aromatic palettes integrate well into the creaminess and refinement of whiskey, on which the cigar stands out. On the palate explodes a sensation of vanilla-scented wood, with an enjoyable sweet and salty caramel character. In the second part the spices of the two products rival. In the long finish the sensations turn to slightly bitter yet satisfying notes, with a rich in spices dark cocoa, supported by the whiskey, that becomes less sweet.

Pairing score	89

GLEN SCOTIA
18 years old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% - 92	$$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	18 Years Old	ex-bourbon, sherry f.

Spirit well representing the aromatic complexity of Campbeltown products, with almost sulfuric peat, marked vanilla, panettone raisins and sometimes even black pepper. Spicier on the palate, with pepper and ginger on dark cocoa. The finish is of medium length, with walnut and licorice.

The intense and "farmy" character of the whisky transforms the class of the cigar, bringing it to a more intense and masculine register; the two products show muscles and animal scents. On the palate continues a coherent and intense experience, made of cocoa and pepper, with leather and caramel, really not a very sweet one. Just less complex than the previous fruition. The finish is drier, just less bitter but very long, on leather and cocoa with a multifaceted pepper.

Pairing score	88





A. H. RIISE
Non Plus Ultra Black

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
US Virgin Islands	42% - 84	$$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
English Rum	Solera Method	-

This limited edition of A.H. Riise top range thirty-year solera rum is aged in heavily charred casks that increase its darker and spicier profile. To the nose the combination between the dark sweetness of the rum and the intense spiciness of the cigar is convincing. In the mouth, the pairing is initially less satisfactory, as the more delicate palette of the Epicure does not match the heavy molasses of the rum that ends up taking over. When the Hoyo releases its full strength with notes of black pepper, cocoa, and roasted coffee, the pairing becomes much more convincing: loads of vanilla and notes of chocolate-covered cherries, candied strawberries, and cotton candy. The rums is sweet and dominant, but its finish of soft licorice manages to avoid the hardness of the Epicure by matching its aromatic harmony.

Pairing score	86



APPLETON ESTATE
21 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	43% - 86	$$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
English Rum	21 Years Old	-

This 21yo has become a sort of rarity. Only 12.000 bottles for a precious blend of old rums that mature together for another year before bottling.

The Appleton boasts a harmonic balance of woodiness, and a wide gradation of orange blossoms and candied citrus: the olfactory pairing with the Epicure is quite satisfying. To the palate the sip and the smoke must be carefully paced. The Appleton has a vivid freshness on the central part of the tongue that tends to take over all other scents, but it then moves to decadent notes of walnut, sweet almond, brown sugar, and noble wood for a very long finish. Thus, the combination with the toasted spices of the Epicure can be of great enjoyment if the puffs occur some time after the sip.

Pairing score	90





ELIJAH CRAIG
SMALL BATCH

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	47 % - 94	$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	Not declared	Virgin Oak

Bourbon with an intense sweetness of caramel and honey, with apple, wood and mild smoke; in the savory finish notes of leather and tobacco can be appreciated.

On the nose the whisky refreshes with floral and honey notes the dark and deep wood with leather and cocoa of the cigar, sweetening it. On the palate the pairing proves to be excellent, with the two products that seem tailor-made for each other. The spiciness of the entrance gives way to a quality sweetness, on which the most masculine notes of leather and land of Nicaragua are perfectly layered. In the finale the products are perfectly fused with quality tobacco, leather, herbs (which manage unsuspectingly to make themselves still recognizable) and hints of pepper.

Pairing score	90



EAGLE RARE
10 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	45 % - 90	$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	10 Years Old	Virgin Oak

Bourbon with remarkable aging, with notes of vanilla and wood on balsamic herbs and camphor. Wood spices are added to the palate. Herbaceous and camphor finish.

The comparison is very close; the Eagle Rare is more balsamic and camphor, just less delicate and graceful than the previous bourbon. On the palate the most herbaceous notes and the balsamic of the distillate bring out a character different from the cigar, which draws barely bitter notes, however pleasant, with a touch of indomitable black pepper. Pairing maybe more masculine and muscular. In the end the land of the cigar is dominant on the camphor of the distillate. Less integrated than the previous one, with the two products that rival to be protagonists.

Pairing score	87



UNDERCROWN

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#CuriosityDrivesDiscovery

SPIRITS

"A man's got to believe in something. I believe I'll have another drink."
W.C. Fields



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Bar Corner

Practical advice on how to select the first bottles to be stored in a man cave

by **Nicola Ruggiero**



After so much time spent designing it with a on all of the details, your smoking space is finally ready. Whether it is a corner of a room or a real man cave, now everything is in its place: the TV or the Home Sound System, the comfortable and enveloping armchair, the lights and of course your beloved humidors and related cigar smoking accessories.

Yet, one step to perfection is still missing. Because we love to pamper and spoil ourselves so much that we have to provide a small bar corner, a selection of alcohol and spirits that will accompany our smoke and, even more often, will be offered to friends or relatives who will be able to enjoy with us this special "corner of paradise"..

Where to start? Which are the bottles that should not be overlooked in the bar of an aficionado?

First of all, we specify that a bar corner is pleasant because it is varied and vast: in this last aspect we will let time take its course. With the passing of the months, each new purchase, dictated by a personal taste that evolves or by the simple desire to have more different products to choose from, will expand the offering of spirits. In addition, in a bar corner we will almost always find a place for the spirits that best satisfy the tastes of the owner, so there is no real list of products which is so universal as to satisfy everyone. However, we intend to suggest some spirits that, for a specific reason, we consider appropriate for a minimum initial selection from which to start to create your dream corner.

Rum, Ron and Rhum

Caribbean cigar and sugarcane (or molasses) distillate are close relatives. Deliberately leaving aside the producing countries and the associated peculiarities (terroir and production techniques) the suggestion is to never be without at least two bottles of this product: a white rum and a more aged reference. The first, in addition to finding some aficionados drinking it neat, is the basis of the easiest drinking cocktails that historically accompany the cigar smoking (two among many: mojito and daiquiri). Choose a basic one, of good quality, but one that is not too cheap. Also interesting is the pleasure that you can experience in drinking it cold with a lot of ice and a lemon zest.

The other bottle, as anticipated, will be of an aged rum. On this there is not much to suggest, except for orienting the purchase on the product that most satisfies your palate. However, if rum is to be offered and you do not know the taste of your smoking and drinking companion, opt for a product that is not too sweet, too dry, or with too distinct a finish.

Whisky

As was for rum, we have before us a world of choice between terroirs, characteristics and brands. However, having to narrow the field to a bottle, we suggest a product that is not too extreme: reasonable ABV, not too accentuated peat (even better if not peated), not too distinct a finish Possibly try a blended one. Perhaps the suggestions, although we wanted to narrow the field, did not circumscribe it that much. Yet, with features like those reported,

a wide range of choices opens up, including many terroirs and, above all, for very different budgets. The proposal of a bottle with these characteristics is not accidental: in addition to neat drinking, a whiskey can be used in mixology for many cocktails (Old Fashioned, Manhattan, Whisky Sour) and, especially in summer, with the addition of ice it can be sipped for a long time without experiencing the increase in body temperature which is often associated to alcohol consumption.

Grandfather's bottle

No, we do not allude to a bottle handed over by very old relatives or to an own-cellar distilled product. With this joke we mean to refer to the product (alcoholic or distilled) typical of your country. Because from time to time it is nice to come back to a corner of the world that we know well for its taste and its scents. In addition, our guest may like this spirit more than a more famous, international product, precisely because he may identify himself more easily in this type of drink. Thus the proposal is to never lack a bottle of the typical product of your area: sake, baijiu, bitter, grappa, cognac, pisco, cachaça, fortified wine and so on.

Are you lucky enough to be from a whisky or rum-producing country? I am sure that you will certainly have a very niche-production product to offer to your friends or to enjoy with the silent company of a cigar.

The special bottle

In this case, we do not narrow the field, rather the contrary. Choose a particular reference (for various reasons, such as a product belonging to a small batch, a very exclusive, pricy one, or one whose distillery has been closed, or a discontinued reference, etc.) to keep so in plain sight to stimulate desire.

Such a product will have its cost but be informed that this will be THE bottle. The one you will keep evident to all guests as well as yourself waiting for the special occasion to open it and enjoy. Maybe it will be the third bottle of rum or an extra bottle of whiskey? It does not matter, as long as you dedicate admiration and patience to leave it exposed, to open it only when the right time arrives.

In conclusion

The suggestions provided are a baseline to start creating a bar corner for your smoking paradise area. If there is still space left in your room, however, I would recommend a small fridge with freezer. The first will be used to store beers: what could be better than the combination of sport on TV-beer-cigar? The second would be intended for ice, an indispensable element for the creation of the vast majority of cocktails (of course, in addition to ice you also need much more!) and to be able to drink slightly cooled and diluted distillates, especially when temperatures are warmer. In the freezer, you can also store granite or stainless steel cubes, ideal for cooling alcohol without providing dilution.

Finally, even if it may seem obvious (but trust me, it is not!) try to have a sufficient number of glasses and of the right type: there is nothing worse than a distillate served in a single use, plastic cup!



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Reservoir Distillery

The women of Reservoir: Leslie Griles, Shelley Sackier, Mary Allison of Reservoir Distillery

by **Luca Cominelli**

Reservoir is a small craft distillery established in 2008 in Richmond, Virginia. From the get-go, they specialized in a core range of 100% single-cereal mash bills from locally grown organic rye, corn, and wheat. Their whiskeys are aged in custom-made small charred American white oak casks of only 5 gallons. They also have a range of experimental bottlings in collaboration with other artisanal producers. Everything is painstakingly handmade from pot-still distilling to small-batch bottling. They won dozens of prizes and accolades for the elevate quality and loving attention to the territory of Virginia. At Reservoir, we found three amazing specialists who contributed to change the imagine of women in the whiskey world. Get ready to meet them!

Mary, you told many times how you were quite fond of whisky well before working at Reservoir. In your opinion, what's the biggest difference between appreciating whisky as a drinker and appreciating it as a distiller? Does it become more difficult to fully appreciate other whisky? Can you still simply sit down, relax, and enjoy a dram of whisky?
I think making whiskey has allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for the spirit in general. I not only know the brands/types that I like, but I can understand some of the reasons I might prefer one to another. I can begin to identify the role that all the different parts play, be that grain type/mash bill, time or style of aging or any of the myriad other things that go into creating the final product. And I certainly have a greater respect for the amount of time and energy every company puts into crafting their final product. Working with the same product every day can skew your pallet a little, I think. When we taste for a bottling or just to see where some of the barrels are in the aging process, we are always looking for that distinctive Reservoir flavor. I must remind myself when trying other things that I am no longer looking for something that tastes like Reservoir! That being said, I will almost always opt to try something I have never tasted over an old standby. I like to see what is out there and continue to challenge my pallet and its preconceptions.



Shelley, your job is one of the coolest. There's often a sense of "secrecy" about distilling techniques and styles, especially in the Scotch's world, that makes us wonder if you are not sometimes considered as a spy. What does imply to be always updated about the latest resorts in whiskey making? Do you have any colleagues out there?
I wholly agree on the job description, and I pinch myself practically every day wondering if there's going to be a crushing "Damn, it was all a dream" reveal. And I'd also agree with the "secrecy" aspect of proprietary information. Donkey's years ago, as I traveled around Scotland and chatted with (read: plagued with questions) distillers and production operators, I found a consistent response: surprise that a woman wanted to understand the mechanical and substantive logistics of whisky making, and the eyebrow raising question of "who sent you?" Ultimately, I was typically fed some diverting but evasive answer. Cagey to be sure, but their reticence only fueled my appetite. Over the years, and certainly within the last decade, the world of sharing information and offering education has bloomed—somewhat due to the growing resource library the internet has provided. I definitely have a few "in the trade" doppelgangers out there, although the majority of individuals I work with outside of Reservoir that school me and help further the benefit of a distillery employing someone in a position like mine are chemists, biologists, engineers, and farmers. I will cold call anyone to find answers to my questions. And once I grasp the complexity of a subject, I'm able to optimize that information into useable data for either our team or for the public as I aim to educate.

Leslie, how you build up Reservoir's brand image? Did it come up naturally or did you struggle to position your name of "out-of-Kentucky bourbon" as a quality product?
As the third distillery outside of Kentucky making bourbon, Reservoir's story is what marketers dreams are made of – authentic, transparent, and true to its craft. So, my approach has always been the same – welcome people into the Reservoir family, tell our story, and get to know each other over pour or two. I think consumers are much more educated about the fact that bourbon does not have to come from Kentucky to be bourbon – it simply must be 51% corn. We really lean into the fact we are a Virginia-made product. It's a wonderful differentiator in a market that can be overwhelming. Our heritage and terroir are the foundation of everything we do – our grains come from within 45 miles of the distillery, the trees for our barrels come from within the state and we have incredible partners right in our own neighborhood. Reservoir is sold in Kentucky and the locals have graciously welcomed us.

Mary, Reservoir's relationships with surrounding farms and grain producers is a big part of your image. Can you tell us more? How do you select and distinguish quality of grain harvests and vintages? How do you see the concept of "terroir" developing in whiskey making?
We are fortunate to be based in an agriculturally rich area. Most of the time, we can get all the grains we need from within an hour or two of our facility. We have been working with Virginia grains exclusively for about five years now. There can be something of a balancing act when selecting grain varietals. It is exciting and positively challenging to work with heirloom grains, but they can be costly and often do not yield as much final output as some more standard varieties. At Reservoir, we have the good fortune to work with the best of both worlds. We have the grains we work with day-to-day which are more common, but still give a sense of place because they are all grown right here. But we can also branch out and try some fun side projects. I recently ran a couple of batches of an heirloom variety corn called Bloody Butcher in collaboration with some friends of ours at Autumn Olive Farm. The initial mash and distillate had significantly more earthy and floral notes than we see with our normal bourbon. It will be interesting to see where it ends up. "Terroir" has certainly become a more predominant concept, especially with the advent of so many craft distilleries. Everyone is looking for a way to set themselves apart, and working with what you are given, where you are is one of the easiest ways to get there. I think we have an extra leg up in "terroir" because we are sourcing everything as locally as possible, but we are also doing it while focusing on the single grain. With Reservoir, you are not only able to taste what "Virginia Whiskey" tastes like, you can taste what "Virginia Wheat", "Virginia Rye" and "Virginia Corn (Bourbon)" taste like.

Shelley, we like to imagine that the reason behind your "continuous education" is that you colleagues at Reservoir want more and more stimuli. What are the new techniques and developments you have been considering? How are you facing the growing challenges of climate change and ecological transition? How important is the balance between technology and tradition for Reservoir?
Curiously, I have not witnessed the phenomenon of ennui here at the distillery, and although I would love to attribute some of that to my efforts to help heighten our team's level of understanding their positions and the processes they're contributing toward, I think Reservoir totally lucked out by hiring incredibly creative and inquisitive people. A simple lunchtime conversation or a brief sidetracked tangent during a team meeting is where I often find direction when pursuing either a fresh take on an old technique, or the need to research innovative developments within our industry to determine if they might apply to our work. We're exploring and experimenting with everything from proofing techniques to stave aging, terroir-driven flavor (grain, water, wood) to taking advantage of seasonal meteorological changes within the warehouse. It's mind-blowing to realize the myriad opportunities we're presented with to create better whiskey. We've definitely faced climate change and environmental impacts over the most recent years, and they introduce a level of complexity to our operations that thus far have compelled the team to become more innovative. Everything from procuring Virginia grains—despite harvest hardships—to recognizing negatively impactful obstacles with our water are now cropping up with increasing frequency. One of Reservoir's principal goals is to provide the answer to the question "What does Virginia taste like?". Devising a method to produce that flavorful, physical response requires profound relationships with our farmers, foresters, and water chemists. The world is changing, and we all must appreciate our roles for conscious and responsive adaptation. The tricky parts are mindfully using our resources and still creating a beautiful spirit in a balanced manner that does not compromise our patch of earth or the flavor we acquire from it.

Leslie, Reservoir now has a strong and important brand image. What are the next challenges? Your core range is appreciated everywhere, but your top limited releases are still quite in a niche outside of the US. Are you going to expand to other markets as well? Did the global pandemics make it more difficult for you to reach other regions?
Thank you! And yes, our limited releases like Holland's Line (Holland's Ghost, Holland's Blade Rummer and Holland's Milkman) are less known but have a cult following for those in the know. We are hoping to start bottling more of them in the coming months. They will still be limited releases, but we may be able to start getting some of them to our distribution partners. The pandemic allowed us to look at what was working and what wasn't in terms of distribution. We brought in some new partners, launched domestically in Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and internationally in Australia and relaunched in Germany. There's a huge American whiskey boom happening is Australia and I am loving the creativity and energy coming from our distribution partners there! I'm not sure which market will be next but I have a few folks reach out every few weeks on Instagram asking when they can get Holland's Blade Rummer in Asia – I can't wait be able to give them a date.

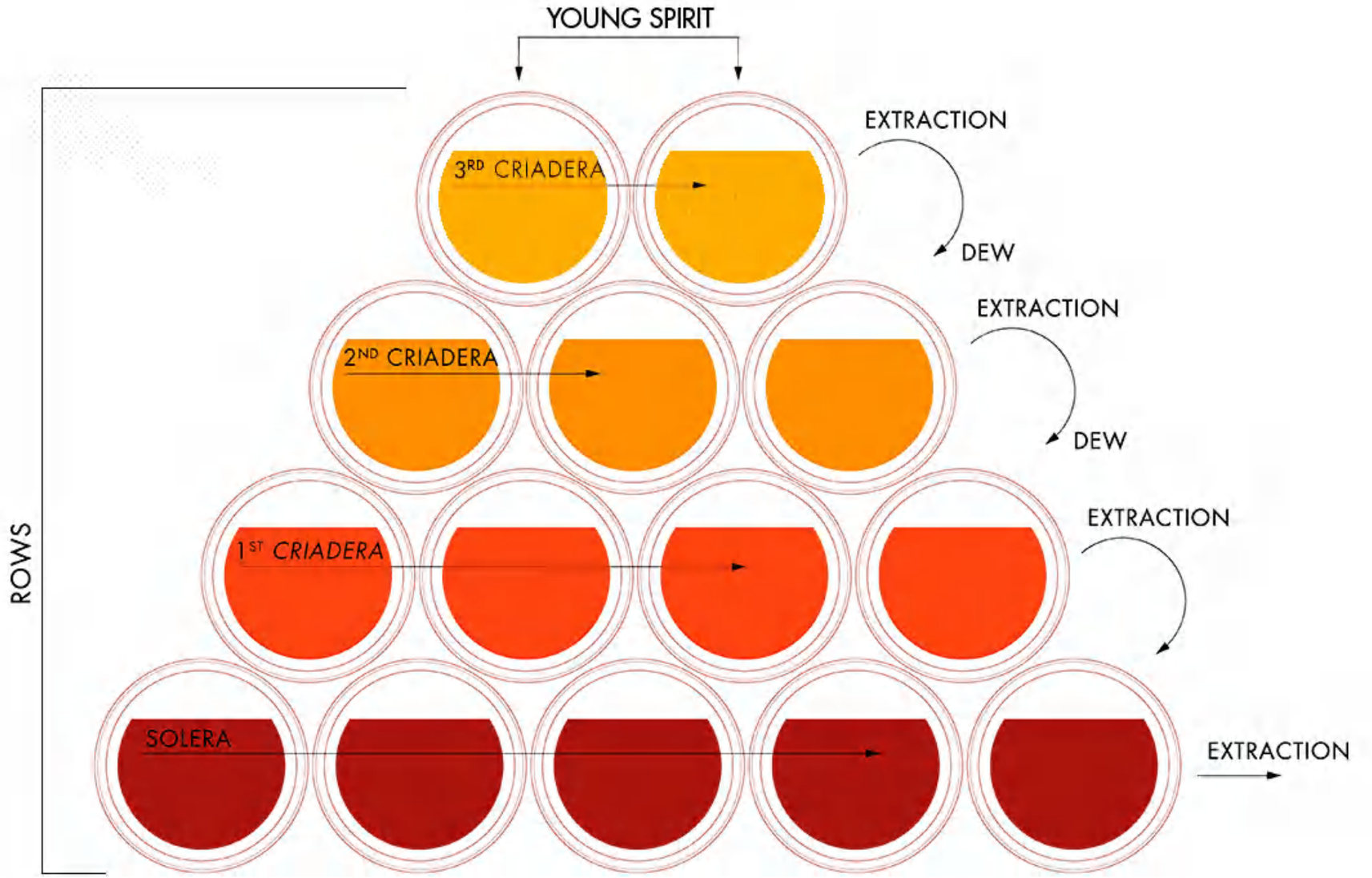
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Playing with Time

The Solera Method in Rum

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**



The Solera Method is an aging technique introduced by Spanish sherry bodegas in the late 18th century. Conversely, solera aged rums are a much more recent trend. A few producers from Latin America started to experiment with solera-aged rum in the 1990s and mass success arrived after the 2000s. Among the first and foremost prwusalem; more recently one can also find Quorhum, La Hechicera, Captain Morgan, Cartavio, Milionario, Cacique and many other brands offering some sort of solera-aged bottlings.

Solera means "soil" and stands for the bottom row of a cask pyramid sets for aging in a warehouse. The solera row contains the most aged spirit while the sobretabla row on the top contains the youngest spirit in the pyramid, in between you can find several criaderas rows that contain a blend of variously aged spirit. In fact, every time some liquid gets bottled from the bottom row, those casks are filled with less aged spirit from the row above, as the system lets the liquid cascading from the sobretabla down to the solera. Such a method allows for great consistency after a few years of aging (at least 3 years are required for using the solera label). Indeed, the spirit that every year gets ready for bottling in the solera row offers a perfect average of the years that have passed since the beginning of the pyramid.

In recent years, many aficionados began questioning solera rums since their labels can be misleading about their age expression for what sometimes are just mass-produced young spirits. Many producers label their bottles with numbers like 15, 1796, or 23 that have nothing to do with the rum's age but are simple marketing gimmicks. Other producers tweak the original solera system by changing casks every year to maximize wood extraction as well as to use a mix of ex-bourbon, ex-sherry, ex-wine casks to widen aromatic influence. At this point, we should be talking of blended rum rather than solera rum, just as in the whisky world, and there would be nothing wrong with it. Given the variety of producing countries and traditions, it is extremely difficult to set unified policies in rum making. Yet, as "solera rum" does not stand for a universally accepted production technique, producers and distributors should be more honest and open about how they make their products. Good products will always be praised, while dishonest practices will always be condemned. It matters only what is inside the bottle.

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Moon Walk

"One small step for man,
one giant leap for mankind."

by **Davide Pertino**

On July 20, 1969, the whole world was in suspense over the feat that led astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to set foot on the moon. Astronaut Michael Collins was also part of the three man crew but he never set foot on the moon because he was the pilot of the command module that obited the moon while the other two were on the surface.

What was a small step for a man became a leap for humanity, as Armstrong immediately commented, meaning that the limit of scientific exploration had been exceeded by the three astronauts and the whole globe, well aware that, from that moment on, space would never be the same again.

While the whole world was checking TVs and radios, there was a man who was mixing ingredients behind his counter: Mr. Joe Gilmore, head Bartender of the Savoy Hotel in London for over 30 years, a true icon of the world of mixing.

He created drinks to celebrate important events, he prepared cocktails for the whole English royal family, for historical figures such as Charlie Chaplin, for heads of state like Richard Nixon and for men who had entered in history, like the three astronauts who were on the Apollo 11 mission.

That evening Mr. Gilmore, born in Belfast in 1922, was on duty at the Savoy's counter. While mixing and pouring spirits to his customers, he decided to commemorate the most significant event of the time. At that moment, the Moonwalk was born, a cocktail of several ingredients, ranging from Champagne to Grand Marnier, passing through rose water, sugar, and grapefruit juice. These were the ingredients that led Mr. Gilmore and those who tasted his drink to spend a few seconds on the moon. It is a drink that, in the bartending sector, made history, just as Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins wrote it when their mission successfully landed on the moon.

However, a new idea born from a particular occasion was not enough, on its own, to consecrate a new cocktail in the world of mixology. And Gilmore knew it well. For this reason, he undertook to create a story for it. He then managed to send a flask of his Moon Walk directly to the three astronauts returning to earth. The cocktail reached its destination an hour before the end of their quarantine, and that was enough to make it the first drink that the three tasted after the space journey. Neil Armstrong appreciated the gesture so much, but even more, the cocktail, that he thanked Gilmore with a letter on NASA-headed paper, a message still exhibited today, as an heirloom, inside the Savoy Hotel.

A few days before Christmas 2015, Joe Gilmore will leave the counter at the age of 93, after about sixty years of mixing, thirty of which as head bartender of one of the oldest and most famous hotels in the world.

The Moon Walk is a fresh cocktail with a citric flavor, where champagne is the ingredient that enhances zall the notes of the drink: with its bubbles and pink grapefruit juice, it amplifies the strong taste of the Grand Marnier. Like all the most important recipes, this one too, has been the subject of several reinterpretations.

Over the years, the Savoy Hotel counter has seen iconic bartenders pass by, such as Daniel Bareuther. He adapted the Moon Walk (which is still a twist of the Champagne Cocktail) with grapefruit bitter instead of juice to accommodate the taste of an iconic drink to today's palates. Later, Erik Lorincz, head bartender of the Savoy hotel from 2010 to 2018, told the reason for this recipe change in the Savoy Book, written in 2011. The confirmation of the historicity and how a dish or a drink can mark so much the time, is given by customers who, even today, after more than thirty years from the removal of the Moon Walk from the Savoy menu, are still interested and fascinated by the taste and freshness of the drink.

To prepare the original Moon Walk cocktail, all you need is Champagne, Grand Marnier, rose water and pink grapefruit juice. Mr. Gilmore poured all the ingredients into a shaker (except Champagne) and served the drink in a flute, with a top of Champagne and a wedge of orange.

Today, the Moon Walk is not often present in the drink lists of most of clubs, but it remains a true legend of this world and one of the most requested and appreciated champagne-based cocktails in the world. And as always, tales never get old.

INGREDIENTS

- 30 ml of Grand Marnier
- 30 ml of pink grapefruit juice
- 2 drops of rose water
- Champagne top

GLASS

Flûte.

PREPARATION

Start by chilling a flûte. Put the Grand Marnier, grapefruit, and rose water in a shaker with lots of ice and shake. Pour the mixture into the glass with the aid of a strainer and fill with champagne.

ADVICE

I recommend filtering the drink with the double strain technique so that the ice that has broken into splinters during the shake does not end up in the drink. Another helpful tip is to pour a small dose of champagne into the bottom of the glass before pouring the shaken mixture. The rising of the bubbles gives an extra boost to the aromas of the other ingredients, thus avoiding mixing them, a practice that would risk damaging the bubble.

中国杂志

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TASTE

"I'm a man of simple tastes.
I'm always satisfied with the best."
Oscar Wilde



Oysters & Whisky

As in the biblical clash between David and Goliath, two different products that are enhanced when combined

by **Vincenzo Lopez**



"Why did you go out and take sides in battle? Am I not a Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man to come down against me, if he takes me down we will be your servants. If, on the other hand, I will prevail over him, and bring him down, you will be our servants and you will serve us."

From the first book of Samuel in the Bible. I chose to start with this quote to ignite the interest of you lovers of good taste, because in this round of gustatory rodeo, the game, the peculiarity of organoleptic associations, will require all the attention of the case. Oysters, the little David, slender but superb bivalve. Whisky, the fully armed Philistine giant, ready to make you desist, due to its confidence and strength, from the journey into an extraordinary tasting.

Pay attention to the specifications that will follow: open mind and fibrillating senses must be the imperatives. I imagine the skepticism of many of you in the juxtaposition between whiskey (especially if peated) and oysters, both for cliché and for standard habit. But what if I told you that you only need a key to open this door, the last obstacle between you and a room full of smoked facets, complex salinities, mineralities such as to make the tasting buds vibrate like wheat sprouts in the wind?

A small analysis of the case is necessary for a correct and definitely unusual tasting, starting from the oyster. I would like to recommend an oyster of 3° or 2° size, therefore of medium size and age, since the smallest would be extremely saline while the largest excessively loaded with essential oils. Those indicated, on the other hand, will guarantee fleshiness and strong character.

For the quality, the fine de claire, I find them to be the ideal compromise: their strict aging in "Claire", that is a well-e-

stablished and mandatory period of aging in clay salt pans, loads the mollusk with sweetness, medium flavor and its classic hazelnut aftertaste, which is a very traditional and renown character in to the world. Clearly, if you opt for a Gillardeau, as well as for a San Michele del Gargano, no one will be able to condemn you.

The whisky... peated please! Let yourself be carried away by the centuries-old wisdom of the master distillers who smoke malt with peat, a vegetable residue that layers down 1 millimeter per year. This is already an important first landing point, if you consider that the whiskey in your glass has been smoked with a meter of peat, it means that a thousand years of smoke will have indelibly imprinted soul and character to the distillate. How to avoid stating "amazing"! Also for this product I would recommend an intermediate reference, well-structured with soft and delicate notes. I find the Port Charlotte 10yo the ideal compromise, with its 40 ppm (an Octomore would in fact be unmanageable with its almost 158 ppm) leaving room for mineral, saline, peppery and decidedly less aggressive notes than the other Islay. The final note of cinnamon and orange complete the aromatic palette, gifted with great balance.

Let's recap. On our mahogany table we will have on the one hand an extraordinary saline and mineral power, flavor, while on the other we will have structure, the classic notes of peat and an immense persistence. But as mentioned we have to open this unknown door and to do it we need a combination, because yes, this is a Milton-Cronhauser Mark 3 and needs a combination made of numbered rings, to be turned in the exact order. Temperature, cleanliness, taste, temperature, cleanliness, taste, breath, ecstasy. This is the exact combination.

It is therefore essential to respect this schedule: a generous sip of sparkling ice water before the oyster, followed by the oyster (lemon and other correctives are absolutely forbidden).

Now savor.

Let the salinity and minerality be confirmed in their fleeting arrogance. Still a small sip of sparkling ice water. Now the small sip of the whiskey, pushed between tongue and palate, to distribute the distillate in the lateral part of the tongue where sapid and acidic sensations can be perceived in the most efficient way. Now breathe with your mouth open after swallowing, the air will not only enhance the organoleptic perceptions, it will reveal above all the tail notes that the tip of your tongue, receptor of the sweet, had hidden from you, intimidated by the alcohol percentage of the Islay whisky. The notes of hazelnut will be definitively showed, between orange and spicy, all harmoniously paired between salt and peat, immense construct of man and nature.

SpiritsLover
MAGAZINE

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Perlage & Cigar

Five great champagnes to celebrate and five great cigars to enjoy them to the fullest

by **Giuseppe Mitolo** & **Luca Cominelli**

In all cultures, celebrations during winter holidays always regard a conception of time: some celebrate the end of the year with all its past moments of joy and tension, others prefer to welcome the new year hoping it will be better than the past one.

The most traditional way for an aficionado to bid farewell to the past year or to welcome the new one is to light "the" cigar that has been lingering in the humidor for a long time now, waiting for the right moment. Even more often, this celebratory moment is not a technical tasting, but a moment of maximum relaxation, maybe in good company and almost always paired to something to drink or eat.

This year, the staff of CigarsLover selected five important champagnes and paireding them to the most suitable cigars. We chose a prestigious rosé, a newcomer blanc de blancs, an exalted prime minister, an ambitious noir, and an out-of-the-ordinary cuvée. We will let you discover them one by one, so you can savor the childlike spirit of surprise for the best presents.

BOLLINGER
Special Cuvée

GRAPES
Chardonnay 25%, Pinot Meunier 15%, Pinot Noir 60%

DOSAGE
8 g/l

AGING
At least 3 years

PRICE
$ 55 - € 50

Perhaps the most important reference of the French production house, the Special Cuvée, was born in 1911. Today it is characterized by an assembly of about one hundred and thirty wines, of which over 50% are reserve wines, stored in Magnum bottles closed with a cork and scrupulously classified by year and cru. The nose is immediately captivated by toasty notes that also leave room for mineral, ripe fruity characters (peach, melon, and apple), with pastry nuances. In the mouth, it is sapid and enveloping, with a fine and lively bubble. The finish is long-lasting and of great satisfaction. The Cohiba Piramides Extra, with its base sweetness, the aromas of hazelnut, fine wood, and ripe fruit, perfectly marries the character of this Bollinger. Furthermore, with their finesse and vivacity, the bubbles will reinvigorate the spicy perceptions of the central and last third of the smoke. Both are endowed with a lengthy finish, and they will make the combined experience unforgettable.









G.H. MUMM
Grand Cordon

GRAPES
Chardonnay 30%, Pinot Meunier 25%, Pinot Noir 45%

DOSAGE
8 g/l

AGING
At least 30 months

PRICE
$ 35 - € 35

The company was founded in 1827, still recognizable today by the oblique red band on the bottle, a choice by Georges Hermann Mumm. He intended to decorate his products with the red silk ribbon recalling the Grand Cordon Rouge, an honor recognized by the officers of the Legion of Honor. The nose is vibrant, with citrus and yellow fruit notes enriched with mineral and hazelnut nuances. On the palate, it is balanced, between a delicate minerality and citric components, not without the sweetness, absolutely peculiar in this product—long and satisfying finish.

The Joya De Nicaragua 1970 Antaño Lancero is the perfect Nicaraguan for this Mumm. The delicate minerality of the champagne will meet the more lively one correlated to the notes of earth, walnut, and coffee of the cigar, enriching itself with the typical body of the Land of Volcanoes. The typical harshness of tobacco will be mitigated by the delicate sweetness of the Grand Cordon.

HENRI GIRAUD
Fût de Chêne MV13

GRAPES
Pinot Noir 80%, Chardonnay 20%

DOSAGE
7 g/l

AGING
5 years

PRICE
$ 180 - € 175





Henri Giraud boasts ancient origins, producing champagne since the first half of the 1700s. It is managed by the 12th generation of the family. The Fût de Chêne ferments in barrique barrels, and the 2013 harvest is enriched with a 30% wine from 2000, managed as a solera.

The bouquet is rich ranging from fruity (apricot, citrus) to honey, spices (thyme, pepper), and pastry. The palate is rich and well-balanced, creamy, balsamic, with perfect acidity and a characteristic minerality of chalk. The aromatic finish recalls citrus and pastry components. It boasts an extraordinary character.

The Adventure Royal Return King's Gold Robusto shares the honey and spicy notes with this Henri Giraud. However, the two products manage to find a balance between the sweetness and the fruity notes of champagne with the vibrant flavor profile of the King's Gold, dominated, in addition to honey and spices (white pepper among all), by cocoa, citrus fruits, earth and nuances of incense.

PALMES D'OR
Rosè Intense 2008

GRAPES
Pinot Noir 100%

DOSAGE
0 g/l

AGING
10 years

PRICE
$ 180 - € 120





A Champagne comes from the Pinot Noir grapes from Riceys (for its fruity components) and Bouzy (for its spicy character). It is then left to age for ten years before being bottled and distributed on the market.

On the nose, the component of red fruit is the progragonist, with intense notes of undergrowth, where the currant stands out, together with herbal aromas as well. It is incredibly rich and elegant on the palate, where what perceived on the nose is confirmed. It is very fresh and sapid, decisive in tones but elegant in substance. Amazing.

The Arturo Fuente Angel's Share Perfecxion X, with its spicy notes of leather, hazelnut, and earth, finds the right balance with this Palmes d'Or rosé with a broad flavor profile, dominated by nuances of red fruit. The complexity of the cigar will find the perfect match in the freshness and flavor of the Palmes D'Or, which will allow it to express new and more enveloping aromas.

POL ROGER
Blanc de Blancs Vintage 2013

GRAPES
Chardonnay 100%

DOSAGE
7 g/l

AGING
6 years

PRICE
$ 150 - € 85

The Maison was founded in 1849 by Pol Roger and is still owned today by the family's descendants. Strongly linked to the use of Chardonnay, capable of giving structure and aging capacity, the company chooses 100% of these grapes to produce its Blanc de Blancs.

The olfactory examination reveals an elegant and complex product, with aromas related to yellow fruit (including tropical), floral, dried fruit, sometimes with hints of pastry. In the mouth, it is vibrantly fresh, with minerality and sapidity in perfect harmony—great elegance and very enjoyable.

The Plasencia Alma del Campo Madroño, with its contained strength and refined aromas, is the most suitable combination with this great label. The spicy characters and those of leather and wood will be made softer by the fruity notes of champagne. The refinement and freshness of the bubbles will make each puff less sour but aromatically more faceted.





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A MAN AND A CIGAR FOR ALL TIMES

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Beyond the 4th Color

The Difficult Beginnings and the Contemporary Success of Orange Wines

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

White grape dry macerated wines, or orange wines, might be a recent market trend, buy they are not a new development. Archeologists have found ancient traces of their production in the Caucasian region of Georgia dating to 8000 and more years ago. Georgian producers still make them today with the typical qvevri, buried clay amphoras, and call them amber wines. Yet, they have never achieved global recognition, and, until few years ago, remained one the best kept secrets in the wine world. Indeed, the radical winemaking division between white and red grapes in terms of maceration and prolonged skin contact between the grape and the must, is a modern concept. Until the 1950s, most of white wines could not possibly achieve the same brilliancy and transparency of contemporary wines due to environmental and technological limitations: thus, a minimum skin contact was necessary to extract useful tannins to preserve the wine and help it last longer, especially after bad vintages, considering how often even white wines had to be preserved for several years. Moreover, prolonged maceration allowed certain weaker grapes to produce richer and more complex wines that would require even some years, if not decades, to reach their peak drinkability, just like it was customary with Georgian amber wines. After the 1960s, with the diffusion of steel tanks and thermal control, technological advancement and marketing made of fresh white wines the champions of the market. Except for certain exalted exclusions, consumption of white wines had to be quick, immediate, and bottles should not last more than a year on shelves. This trend made macerated wines impossible to sell, both because of the color turbidity and of the extremely longer time requested to get ready. Furthermore, safety regulations and productive standardization forced producers to abandon such “unreliable” techniques and switch to the new ones. Despite these massive transformations, orange wines would eventually make an incredible comeback at the turn of the millennium.

In the border area between Slovenia and Italy, white macerated wines, also known as ramato wines, had already a century-long history when two enlightened producers, Stanislao Radikon and Josko Gravner, rediscovered the maceration technique following the principles of natural winemaking to rejuvenate the fading traditions of their territories. In 2000, Gravner would eventually travel to Georgia to acquire some qvevri, and the first Ribolla Gialla he made after that trip changed the history of macerated wines forever. About a decade later, the bourgeoning trend of natural wines started to present macerated wines as their most representative style, the truest to the natural intentions of the producers, and soon made them ubiquitous from the Mediterranean to the Pacific and the Atlantic, bridging countries and traditions in a new vein of experimenting with traditional and rediscovered white grapes. In 2004, the name orange was coined by the British importer David Harvey of Raeburn Wines, who needed to find a catchier category for the peculiar wines he was selecting from Italian natural wine producers ranging from Friuli Venezia-Giulia to Sicily. Today, one can see how almost all producers, natural and conventional, have an orange wine in their range, as the market seems to have an endless crave for this fascinating hue. Yet, few consumers still fully understand the unique chemistry that make it possible.

In winemaking, the color depth is given by the longer contact between grape juice and the grape skin (as well as often the seeds and the stalks) during maceration, which is the typical process that red wines undergo to achieve their intense gradation of color. Maceration does not simply allow more color extraction, but also tannins, polyphenols, and anthocyanins. These elements – that usually distinguish the aroma, taste, and body of red wines – are present in white grapes too: orange wines, thus, have a completely different profile than unmacerated white wines. Some common aromatic denominators developed by prolonged maceration of white grapes are dried apricots, orange zest, damp grass, thyme, rosemary, a certain minerality of limestone, and beeswax. In any case, as every white grape reacts to maceration in different way, the various ranges of maceration (from few hours to several months) offer a wealth of possibilities, especially in the more radical productions. Maceration is just the first step in their productive process to which must obviously follow fermentation and ageing that can happen in steel, cement, fiberglass, wood, or amphoras. Each type of conditioning technique develops different flavors, so it is up to the winemakers to find the best combination to represent their visions and their territories. Many critics complain about the fact that macerated wines are less representative of their terroir and its environmental specificities, as maceration supposedly covers their primary aromas; yet, analytic analyses show that orange wines are extremely faithful to the effect of the vintage and the features of the soil, thus also challenging our preconceived notions about wine identity and terroir (often created by further technological manipulation). Their intensity of





taste and acidity can often be difficult to handle for first-time drinkers, particularly if the wines did not have enough time to age. Not by chance, historical producers like Radikon and Gravner waited up to seven years to send their orange wines to the market for the first time. Just like red wines, macerated orange wines require time to perfectly integrate their profile.

It would be easy to simply say that orange wines occupy a gap between red, rosé, and white wines, but the fact is that their peculiar profile make the distinction between the genre much more difficult to maintain, especially in terms of food pairing. In general, people tend to pair meat- and tomato-based preparations with red wines, and fish- and other vegetable-based ones with white wines, with rosé wines for those who cannot decide between the two. In technical terms, though, the problem lies in the physical and chemical structure of the wine/food pairing. Orange wines showcase great aromatic complexity along with the typical acidity of white wines and the tannic structure of red ones: their versability appears immediately evident to anyone trying them over meals that involve a wide array of different preparations from meat to fish and vegetables, especially if inspired by oriental and spicy variations. The global diffusion of orange wines made such simplifications quite redundant, as today we can find all sort of possibly style, from the now "classic" complex and age-oriented orange wines to the new youthful, fresh, funky, if not even sparkling, interpretations. We already mentioned Italo-Slovenian grapes from the Oslavia region like Ribolla Gialla, Pinot Grigio, and Friulano, but we can find surprising producers also in Alsace, Austria, and Germany that make incredibly gourmet wines from Gewürztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Auxerrois, Sylvaner, and Kerner. Spain and Portugal house a wide array of autochthonous white grapes that are particularly apt for maceration: Airèn, Macabeu, Xarello, Muscatel, Arinto, and many others. Finally, one can find the infinite possibilities offered by international grapes like Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, grown everywhere in the world from the US to Australia and New Zealand through France and Italy, that are now used also for delightful orange wines. Today, one must acknowledge that the global success of orange wines has brought to the market a lot of "simpler" and "ready-to-drink" versions that are drastically changing the market and the taste of the consumers. The old-style "strong" versions are becoming more and more rare and expensive due the high demand, so even historical producers are presenting lighter versions to satisfy the voracious curiosity of new consumers. Although one could be tempted to suspect that this could be a similar case to the pink-mania of few years ago, orange wines have so little in common in terms of taste and acidity with mass market wines (natural productions are a different matter) that we can hope that orange wines are getting official recognition on their own terms. Of course, this will mean that rules and regulations will be written, with new appellations and standardizations.

Hopefully, this will help producers to sustain their most authentic approach while facilitating consumers in choosing the right wine for their taste. In any case, this will be a great opportunity for all wine-enthusiasts to discover old and new orange-colored gems from the world!

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PAGE

INTERACTIVE

AWARDS 2021

At the end of the year, it is time for the big rankings, those collecting the best products tested during the year in blind tasting, combined with the latest news that have recently entered the market.

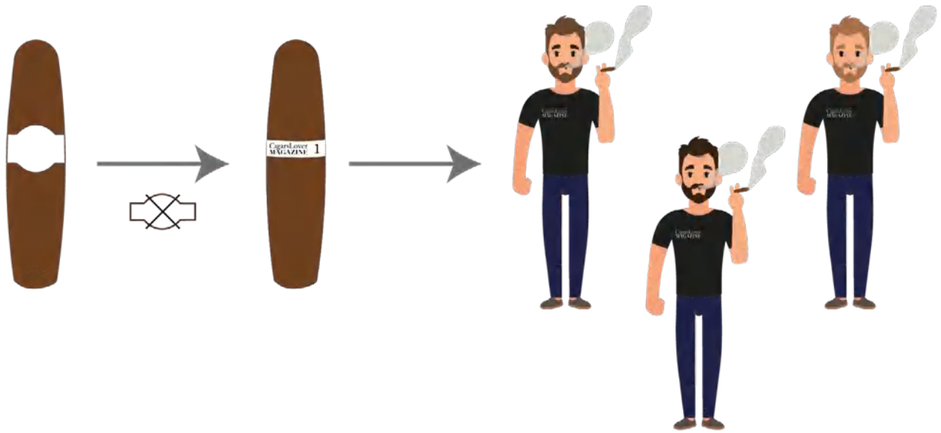
Since 2015 CigarsLover Magazine has divided cigars into five terroirs, to showcase the best products each country offers. Since 2018, the TOP50 has also been added to the Awards, the all-inclusive list without distinction of territory. This is accompanied by the Best Brands, Best Buys and the best Boutique Brands. Regarding the Spirits, two are the lists: the 10 best whiskies of the year, and the 10 best rums of the year. The next pages collect the best of the best, the products that have thrilled us the most, the ones we recommend to end 2021 with a bang, and at the same time start 2022 in the best way!



CALDWELL

cigar co.

HOW ARE THE AWARDS MADE?



The cigar rings are removed and cigars are once again "dressed" with a new band, which simply bears a number. The same happens for the spirits, which are poured into little sample bottles, only showcasing a number and a possible indication, regarding the alcohol content, if the ABV is higher than 50%.

The products are then tested in a completely impartial way, in a blind tasting in which the tasters do not know which products they are trying.



The evaluations are then collected and CigarsLover Magazine team gets to work, calculating the averages and creating the final evaluations.



BEST 50 CIGARS of the YEAR

Only the best products, those that registered the best scores, are included in the 2020 Awards list.

BEST RUM & WHISKY of the YEAR

TOP 10 RUMS


A.H. RIISE
NON PLUS ULTRA
Black Edition
BRITISH GUIANA
MOUNT RORAIMA
POSTAGE & REVENUE
LIMITED EDITION
BRITISH GUYANA
RUM
7
YEARS OLD
RUM NATION
SINGLE DOMAINE RUM
RUM
Flor de Caña
Family 1890 Legacy
Centenario
12
SINGLE ESTATE
40% ALC/VOL. 750ml
DIPLOMÁTICO
RON ANTIGUO
SELECCIÓN DE FAMILIA
PRODUCT OF VENEZUELA · PRODUIT DE VENEZUELA
ESTABLISHED 1749
1749
APPLETON ESTATE
CRAFTED AND AGED IN THE HEART OF JAMAICA
AGED A MINIMUM
21
OF 21 YEARS
NASSAU VALLEY CASKS
JAMAICA RUM
70cl
43% VOL.

1

Rum Nation
British Guyana
7years old cask strength

WOOD,
CHOCOLATE
AND SEALING WAX.

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
British Guyana	59% - 118	$ N/A - € 65

After a life spent between wines and whisky, Fabio Rossi set himself up to make rum by establishing Rum Nation in 1999, today one of the most important European bottlers of quality rums from the Caribbean and Latin America. Attention is mostly given to the specificities of the territory (as shown by the post stamps that embellish the labels) and the local climate that have to be magnified by aging and maturation.

This rum is made from molasses distilled with classic pot stills, it's aged initially in ex-bourbon casks kept in the tropical climate and then moved to ex-sherry casks in a continental climate.

The nose boasts intense scents of seasoned wood, sealing wax, luscious grass and tropical fruit. After a few instants, there's a lot of cacao. The sip is loaded with tropical fruit, wooden spices, and raisins. Then dark chocolate with a dash of spirited cherries. It's almost explosive, but the high abv does not end up limiting drinkability. The finish is endless: sugared almonds, vanilla, herbs, and cacao rests on an aromatic bed of wooden spices, leather, and toasted dry fruit. A powerfully structured rum with deep aromas and a seemingly infinite persistence. Extraordinary.

96



2

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	56.4% - 112.8	$ N/A - € 100



Saint James
Brut De Fût 2003 Batch 2

EXOTIC FRUIT, CACAO AND BALSAMIC.

The great estate in Sainte-Marie came up with an AOC Martinique aged for 15 years in French oak casks and completed in cuvée for 2 more years before being marketed as a limited edition of 2.100 bottles.

The nose is deep and layered. Wood spices, varnish, marasca cherry, licorice, balsamic herbs. An intense note of blackcurrant jam completes the bouquet. The palate is warm, dry, intense: behind the strong alcohol there are plums, exotic fruit, and cacao scents. The finish is long with notes of mountain pine, more wood spices, juniper, raisin, and candied red oranges. A classy and powerful rhum, almost tannic, to drink with attention and patience.

95

3

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	41.3% - 82	$ N/A - € 150



La Favorite
Cuvée Privilège Pour Lulu

VISOU, BLACK CHERRIES AND BRINE.

The historical distillery of Martinique presents a blend of five vintages (1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2008), aged between 20 and 10 years in oak casks, and further matured for another 18 months before being bottled in 2020.

The nose is almost pungent, herbal, intense visou, banana leaf, humus, black cherries, licorice, myrtle, honey, wood spices and candied orange. The sip is luscious, peppery and mineral, the strong visou is balanced by wood spices, vanilla, citrus, and strong salty flavors. The finish is dominated by vegetal and briny veins followed by hot spices. It's a unique rhum made out of love for the traditional local style and ingredients.

94

4

COUNTRY
Barbados

ABV - PROOF
56% - 11

PRICE
$ N/A - € 100



Foursquare
Shibboleth

PLANTAIN, TOBACCO AND PAPRIKA.

Owned by the Seale family, Foursquare is one of the most prestigious traditional and independent distilleries in Barbados. With sixteen years of maturation in ex-bourbon casks, this Shibboleth is the most aged product ever presented by Foursquare.

The nose is elegant, spiced, scents of plantain, roux, caramel, and something dusty. The sip is mellow, sweet spices, caramel, blueberry chocolate, a spicy touch, paprika. The finish is long, a lot of spices, vanilla flavored orange, cacao, tobacco, and leather. It's a mature and refined rum that relies mostly on elegance rather than special effects.

94

5

COUNTRY
Japan

ABV - PROOF
50% - 100

PRICE
$ N/A - € 75



Nine Leaves
Angel's Half American O.C.

VISOU, SPICES AND DRY FRUIT.

This Japanese rum comes from a small distillery in Otsu, near Lake Biwa east of Tokyo. It's made from unrefined sugar cane and aged in American oak casks.

The nose is intense but clean, the visou is informed by Japanese minimalism, hints of peach flowers, vanilla gracefully follows. The mouth is elegant, reminiscent of Japanese whisky, warm, spiced, vanilla, white pepper, toasted cereals, and plantain. Good persistence with nuances of caramel chocolate, cappuccino, toasted peanuts, and a dash of sulfur. It's a very elegant rum that avoids the usual clichés and returns all the magic of Japan.

93

6

COUNTRY
Dominican R.

ABV - PROOF
65% - 130

PRICE
$ N/A - € 75



Ron Esclavo
Xo Cask

CITRUS, BALSAMIC AND CARAMEL.

Another fruit of the partnership between 1423 SBS and Oliver & Oliver. It's a blend of ron from Trinidad and Panama aged for 23 years in ex-bourbon casks with a solera method.

It boasts a fierce nose of sweet spices, citrus zest, maple syrup, bark, bread, leather, and balsamic scents. The taste is warm, embracing, spicy, but also sweet, with patisserie, cocoa beans, and caramelized pecans. It has a long finish of candied orange, cloves, trifle, cocoa and caramel. It's a powerful and comforting ron with medicinal hints and decadent patisserie notes.

92

7

COUNTRY
Venezuela

ABV - PROOF
43% - 86

PRICE
$ 70 - € 50



Diplomático
Selección De Familia

HONEY, TOFFEE AND VANILLA.

The Venezuelan producer added this new premium ron in the past months. This blend is 90% made from cane honey (the more delicate and aromatic state that precedes the crystallization of sugars in molasses) and aged for 12 years in ex-bourbon and ex-sherry casks.

The nose offers honey, toffee, and raisins, along with seasoned wood and vanilla scents, a hint of orange zest. The sip is dominated by wood, honey and vanilla surrounded by a bouquet of sweet spices. The finish is average with herbal hints and a touch of tobacco. Rounded, velvety, and of great harmony.

91

8

COUNTRY
Panama

ABV - PROOF
48.4% - 97

PRICE
$ 120 - € 85



Malecon
Rare Proof 20 Years Old

DRY FRUIT, SWEET SPICES, CHOCOLATE.

The Italian bottler presents a ron from Panama made from molasses and single-column distilled before aging for twenty years in ex-bourbon casks.

The nose is dominated by noble wood, old leather, wax, caramel, and hazelnut. The sip is warm, rich with sweet and complex tastes, brittle, chocolate, ripe fruit, black cherries, canned peaches. Great persistence of red licorice, sweet spices, wood tannings. This aged ron has a very peculiar but harmonic profile.

91

9

COUNTRY
U.S.A.

ABV - PROOF
53.9% - 108

PRICE
$ 55 - € 70



Privateer
Navy Yard

LEATHER, PEPPER AND HONEY.

This American rum is made in Massachusetts with molasses from Guatemala. It's distilled in column stills and aged more than 2 years in alligator charred virgin American barriques.

Its intense nose is reminiscent of a bourbon whiskey with oak, dust, leather, then hot spices, paprika, and lastly a sweet scent of cinnamon cookies. Warm and dry sip, mineral, quite spicy, ginger, balsamic honey, then oak with vanilla, tobacco, and cookies. The finish is sweet and toasted at the same time, pancakes, maple syrup, cinnamon. It's a young but interesting rum that moves between intensely spiced scents and sweeter and mellower ones.

90

10

COUNTRY
Thailand

ABV - PROOF
40% - 80

PRICE
$ 45 - € 40



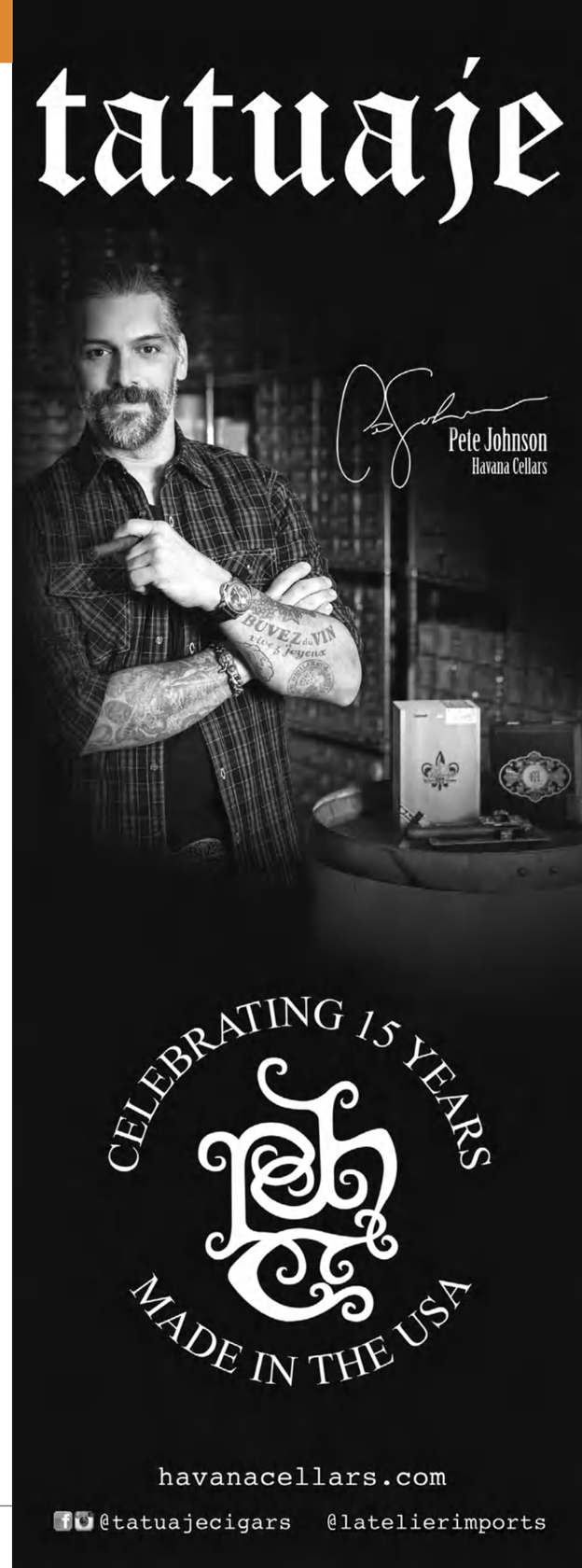
Phraya
Deep Matured Gold

FRUITY, SPICED, HERBAL.

Top rum in the Sangsom's range, it comes from molasses of local sugarcane and it's a blend of 7-to-12-year-old spirits then matured in heavily toasted casks and lulled by tropical temperatures.

The nose is rich with ripe exotic fruit like plantain, mango, and starfruit. There's a bit of salty brine with aeration, along with greasier notes of coconut oil, sugarcane syrup, and young wood spices like vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg. On the palate is crisp: plantain, almond, citrus essential oil, cloves, green pepper, and edible flowers. A bitter note prolongs the finish with more spices covered with molasses and a fresh mineral hint. It's a surprising rum for intriguing profile.

90



TOP 10 WHISKIES



1

Kavalan
Solist Oloroso Sherry Cask 285/38

DATES,
MANGO
AND DARK CHOCOLATE.

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Taiwan	59.4% - 118.8	$ 400 - € 150

The Taiwan distillery boasts an enviable trajectory. Since the first release of the Solist line in 2009, its spirits soon established themselves on the international scene. Thanks to both the raw material, such as the water from Mount Xue-shan and the Scandinavian distic barley as well as the steel tanks specially designed for fermentation. The particular subtropical microclimate, with a strong impact on aging, which gives whisky great complexity in just a few years, is of considerable importance.

This expression is presented with a very dark tone, rich in garnet shades. In the glass one can perceive intense aromas of ripe fruit, with black cherry, mango, peach and raisins. Pecan nuts are also present, along with dark chocolate and hints of marzipan. On the palate it is sticky, with rich notes of ripe and tropical fruit, where dates and mango stand out. Then follows the dark chocolate, enriched with quinine hints. The finish has a very prolonged persistence, with notes of dark chocolate and earth.

Excellent, satisfying and structured, extremely intense. Among the sherried whiskies is one of the most complete expression in terms of intensity, freshness, quality of fruit, wine character, class and integration of the alcoholic component.

96



2

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	56% - 112	$ N/A - € 179



Mars Komagatake
Yakushima Aging 2021

FRUITY AND MINERAL.

The now classic Mars core range receives a particular three-year aging on the humid island of Yakushima. The 2021 version is surprising in terms of roundness and structure.

The nose is delicate and fragrant, with orange zest, gooseberry, yellow fruit and white flowers. Hints of honey and vanilla, together with a mild costal peat. The palate is more intense, with peaty notes that intertwine with floral and citrine ones in a persuasive texture of orange cream with sweet spices and licorice. The meditative finish has notes of cayenne pepper, honey and a touch of brackish frost. It embodies all the complex Japanese elegance in a kaleidoscope of fruity, floral and peated hints.

95

3

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	61.2% - 122.4	$ 62 - € 60



Balcones
True Blue Cask Strength

PECAN, BUTTERSCOTCH AND BALSAMIC.

Cask strength edition of the most widely spread version bottled at 50%. The raw material is toasted blue corn. It is matured in Virgin American barrels.

On the nose hints of caramel, with wood spices, cinnamon and butter biscuits. Then intense aromas of vanilla and butterscotch. A touch of pecan nut, followed by pine needles. On the palate it is rich and round, warm and spicy. There are pecans, brown sugar, butterscotch, cinnamon, apricot and seasoned wood. To complete, maple syrup. The finish is long and toasted, with notes of cinnamon, wood spices and hints of coffee, along with a balsamic touch. Powerful but balanced. The bouquet is intense and the finish is long.

94

4

COUNTRY
Finland

ABV - PROOF
50.7% - 101.4

PRICE
$ N/A - € 87



Teerenpeli
Kulo 7 Years Old

WOOD, SMOKED AND SALTED CARAMEL.

Teerenpeli started producing whiskey in 2002, in the city of Lahti. Kulo is obtained from slightly peated local malted barley, aged in ex-sherry barrels, and bottled without chill filtration or artificial coloring.

On the nose there are sherried notes, enriched with cloves, caramel chocolate, tobacco and licorice. On the palate slightly peated scents with mineral tips emerge, paired by salted caramel and crispy bacon, sweet and salty. The finish is average-long, with a gentle return of peat, smoky notes and a fine seasoned wood, with tobacco and licorice. Intense and full-bodied, of good structure. The fruition is satisfying.

94

5

COUNTRY
Jpaan

ABV - PROOF
48% - 96

PRICE
$ N/A - € 175



Akkeshi
Blended Whisky Usui

RIPE FRUIT, CITRUS AND SMOKED.

Blend containing 50% of Japanese peated malt aged in Mizunara barrels and 50% Scottish cereal aged in a mix of sherry, bourbon and wine barrels.

On the nose, ripe fruit, citrus and vanilla are excellently mixed. In the background an elegant herbaceous smoke. On the palate it is equally complex, with hints of cocoa, intense citrus notes (orange, lime, cedar) and mineral tones that take up the peat with a touch of vanilla. The finish boasts white pepper, a mix of spices and reconfirms the citrus and a puff of smoke. From the encounter between Scotland and Hokkaido a fascinating blend is born, round and harmonious, which needs attention to grasp every nuance.

94

6

COUNTRY
U.S.A.

ABV - PROOF
55% - 110

PRICE
$ 52 - € 80



Pikesville
Straight Rye

HONEY, VANILLA, VEGETAL NOTES

Produced in Maryland since the 1890s, it is now made in Kentucky at the Heaven Hill distillery.

On the nose sweet aromas of honey, vanilla and pecans, enriched with vegetal hints of rosemary and thyme. Then rich notes of butter and crème caramel. Fresh. On the palate it is sweet (muscovado sugar) and round, with woody notes, apricot, honey and vanilla. Vegetable aromas now have a nuance of balsamic herbs. The finish is of medium duration, honeyed, with again a balsamic touch and a sweetness with flashes of cinnamon. Overall, a round and balanced spirit, equipped with great harmony. Satisfying and easy to appreciate, it boasts a structured and unusual aromatic profile.

93

7

COUNTRY
U.S.A.

ABV - PROOF
50% - 100

PRICE
$ 121 - € 180



Reservoir
Maison De Cuivre

WINY, DARK CHOCOLATE AND HONEY.

Limited edition for a bourbon which experienced a particular finish in barrels that contained Merlot French.

The nose is winy, with rich hints of resin, enamel, maple syrup, beeswax and pecans. After a few moments, a deep aroma of seasoned wood also appears. Warm and silky at the entrance, with a hint of tannins. Notes of red fruits, maple syrup, honey and extra dark chocolate. The finish is medium-long, with dark chocolate, wood spices and maple syrup. Deep and rich, warm and silky. Very satisfying, well balanced and velvety. The aromatic profile is rich and complex. A whisky that skillfully combines the woody aromas of bourbon with an important winy character.

93

8

COUNTRY
Scotland

ABV - PROOF
46% - 92

PRICE
$ 175 - € 80



Kilkerran
16 Years Old

GENTLE PEAT AND CITRUS.

Expression with longest aging from Glengyle distillery. In the 2021 version it experiences the influence of two types of barrels (bourbon and sherry), unlike the 2020 version, aged only in ex-bourbon barrels.

On nose, herbaceous and mineral aromas, with a delicate peat, on which notes of pastry, vanilla, marzipan and candied citrus are added. The palate is more impetuous, with herbs (rosemary, thyme) and fresh cedar and bergamot. Hints of salted butter and propolis. The finish is elegantly smoky, with dried fruit, potpourri of citrus peels and mineral hints. Delicate and balanced on the nose, it is more dynamic on the palate, with an elegant and structured finish.

92

9

COUNTRY
Scotland

ABV - PROOF
57.8% - 115.6

PRICE
$ 86 - € 66



Glenallachie
10 Years Old Batch 6 C.S.

RIPE FRUIT AND SPICES.

The small Speyside distillery has reached the sixth release for this natural version, expertly blended by Billy Walker.

Rich notes of sherry (black cherry, figs, raisins), along with exotic ripe fruit, with walnut and seasoned wood. A touch of ganache, leather and a slight vegetal scent. The palate entrance is spicy, then becomes juicier, with ripe fruit, candied orange and vanilla. Dark chocolate persists. The finish is long, intense, oriented on rich sherried notes; vanilla, wood spices and butterscotch stand out. Rich, soft and intense whiskey. The aromatic profile is deep, especially on the nose. The palate is rich and satisfying. It provides a very tasty fruition.

91

10

COUNTRY
India

ABV - PROOF
50% - 100

PRICE
$ 138 - € 95



Amrut
Kadhambam

PLUMS, SPICES AND TOASTED AROMAS.

Kadhambam stands for per "combination"; vatting (90% single malt from and 10% peated single malt from Amrut) aged in ex-sherry, ex Amrut brandy, ed ex Amrut rum barrels.

On the nose varied scents of wood, with intense sweet spices, where cinnamon, vanilla, cloves stand out. There is Dried fruit is also present, a spicy tip (paprika, cumin, ginger) and toasted hints. On the palate it is round, with plums and chocolate with black cherries, followed by wood spices, seasoned wood and toasted notes. Later fruit becomes more tropical and butterscotch is added. The finish is medium-long, with butterscotch, toasted notes and a mix of spices. Intense and bold. Complexity is appreciable.

90

PAGE

350+
SPIRITS
TESTED
EVERY
YEAR

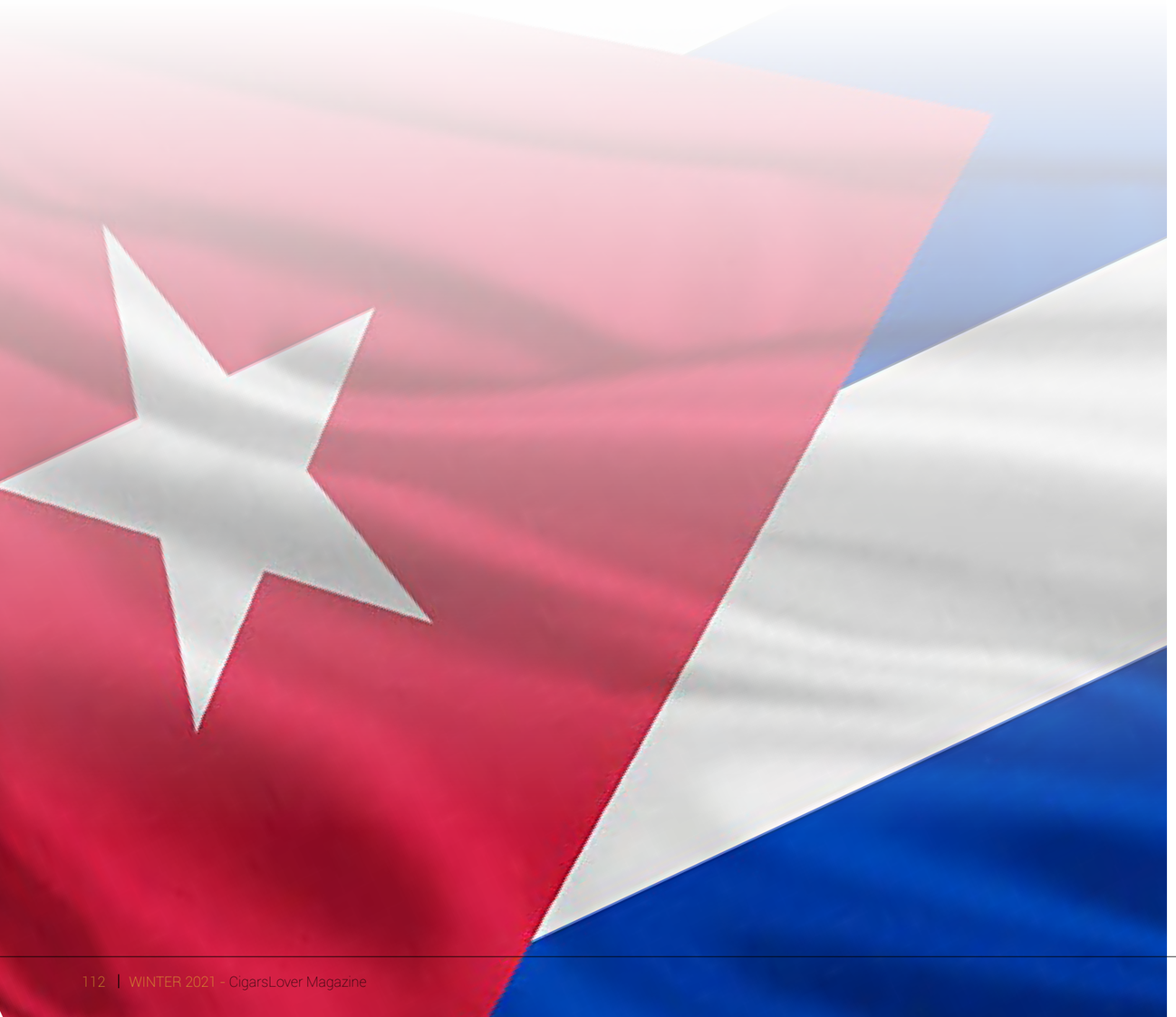
FIND SPIRITS



TOP 50 CIGARS



CUBA



1 H. Upmann
Connossieur No. 2

CREAMY AND BALANCED.
WOOD, HAZELNUT, COFFEE, CINNAMON.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	SMOKING TIME
●●●	51 x 134mm (5 ¼")	N/A $ - 14€	1h

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

The Connossieur No. 2 was introduced in 2020, but only this year has it reached the market, unlike the Connossieur No. 1, which has been in production since before the Cuban Revolution. As all the cigars of the "Connossieur" line, they are sold in a 25-count Slide Lid Box, a packaging much appreciated by aficionados that has the advantage of preserving the products in a perfectly cylindrical way and which allows, thanks to the arrangement in the mazo, excellent aging margins. Another element in common with the line is the band.

Once lit, it develops an exceptionally creamy smoke in the mouth, sometimes greasy and buttery. The flavor departure is entrusted to intense notes of wood and hazelnut that are enriched with shades of leather and roasted coffee. During the smoke, a subtle and persistent spiciness also appears, in which cinnamon stands out. The finish is a crescendo of coffee and nuts, with spices that are invigorated by expressing, in addition to cinnamon, also strong hints of black pepper. Strength grows from medium-light to medium.

The result is a smoke that satisfies and convinces, with lively and intense aromas, played on a noteworthy evolution. Even if the finish is not pronounced, it manages to leave its traces both on the palate and in the memory of the aficionado.

93



2

Romeo y Julieta
Cazadores

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●●	43x162mm (6⅜")	N/A $ - 12€	1h 15min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



RUSTIC BUT BALANCED. BLACK PEPPER, WOOD, EARTH AND GOUDRON.

Despite a fluctuating constancy of production, the cigars of recent years have shown to be ready-to-smoke. Resting time in the humidor will give even more elegance and balance to the Cazadores.

With its sustained strength and its very rustic flavor profile, the Cazadores is the outsider of the Romeo y Julieta brand.

You can perceive mineral aromas, black pepper, wood, earth, and nuances of goudron and coffee. The strength passes from the medium-full register, in the beginning, to become full-bodied starting halfway through the cigar.

92

3

Partagas
Serie E No. 2

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	54x140mm (5½")	N/A $ - 14€	1h 10min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



FULFILLING. WOOD, EARTH, AND COCOA NUANCES.

Launched precisely ten years ago, the Serie E No. 2 Series seems to have found new heights, thanks to a greater production consistency and a more generous filling that allows for a longer smoking time.

It is a cigar that, with its size, is perfectly in line with the preferences of today's smokers while maintaining a traditional Partagas profile.

From the very first puffs, it expresses itself with spicy, earthy, and woody notes, that are enriched with cocoa nuances. The strength remains sustained for the whole duration of the smoke, but it is never overwhelming.

91

4

Montecristo
Especial

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	38x192mm (7½")	N/A $ - 16,50 €	1h 20min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



ELEGANT, FLAVORFUL. PEPPER, HAZELNUT, WOOD AND VANILLA.

It is one of the last bastions of the Laguito No. 1 size. Still, it is far from retirement because it continues to excite and offer widely contemplative smokes and characteristics of the brand.

Provided you show the due attention and respect that the size demands, it returns a full-bodied smoke with extraordinary elegance.

The opening reveals notes of black pepper, wood, hazelnut, and spicy tips. The evolution is vast but gradual, and gradually, aromas of leather, walnut, and vanilla nuances also reveal themselves. Strength is medium—a satisfying smoke.

90

5

Juan Lopez
Seleccion No. 1

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	46x143mm (5⅝")	N/A $ - 11,20 €	1h

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



CREAMY. EARTH, BLACK PEPPER, LEATHER. BALSAMIC.

The Seleccion No. 1 is one of the two representative cigars of the brand's portfolio. Despite the continuous discontinuation, for Juan Lopez, the constancy of quality has always remained high, and this Corona Gorda is proof.

The cigar releases a straightforward and creamy smoke, with well-defined aromas and a long finish.

Flavorwise, it reveals notes of wood, earth, leather, and black pepper, with the latter two being better structured towards the second third. Hints of nuts and balsamic herbs also appear with a strength that never goes over past medium.

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



1 Perez-Carrillo

La Historia Parientes

INTENSE AND BALANCED.
BLACK PEPPER, WOOD, EARTH, AND LEATHER.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	SMOKING TIME
●●●●	43x165mm (6½")	10.5 $ - N/A €	1h 10min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	MEXICO	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA

The Perez-Carrillo La Historia line was presented, for the first time, at the IPCPR (now PCA) trade show in 2014. The La Historia pays homage to the Perez-Carrillo family history in the cigar business and specifically to the women, namely Ernesto's mother and his daughter. Both of them are depicted on the elaborate band. One is pictured in the fields of Cuba and the other in Ernesto's adopted home of Miami. At this year's PCA, the company introduced a new Lonsdale size called Parientes (Spanish for Parents), which brings the line to a total of five sizes.

This box-pressed Lonsdale comes in an opaque Mexican San Andres wrapper. The dark Maduro-colored wrapper makes the color scheme of the bands especially pop. Under an Ecuadorian Sumatra binder is an all Nicaraguan filler. It develops notes of coffee, black pepper, wood, earth, and leather. Further into the smoke, the black pepper becomes spicier and sweet nutty, and herbal aromas are added to the broad profile. The profile becomes more intense toward the end with a spicy and balsamic finale.

The Parientes is both full in body and flavor, with a broad and intense yet balanced and complex profile. The blend shines in this size.

94



2

Caldwell
Blind Man's Bluff
This is Trouble

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	52x127mm (5")	10 $ - 10.5 €	50min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, NICARAGUA



BALANCED AND RICH. WOOD, LEATHER, AND SPICES.

Caldwell Cigars introduced the Blind Man's Bluff line back in 2015. Six years later, they launched the brand's first limited edition called "This is Trouble."

The cigar is far from trouble and reveals a well-balanced and rounded smoke, paired with a rich flavor profile and an enjoyable evolution.

Wood, leather, and walnut are supported by black pepper. Cocoa, cinnamon, and vegetal notes are added in the second half of the smoke.

93

3

Davidoff
Year of the Tiger

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	52x127mm (5")	42 $ - 39 €	50min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



STRUCTURED. HAZELNUT, WHITE PEPPER HERBS, CITRUS.

Davidoff's yearly release Zodiac Series is highly sought after, and the Year of the Tiger is no exception. The wrapper of this release was treated naturally as to resemble the fur markings of a Tiger.

This uniquely looking Piramides presents a complex and smooth smoke that is structured and full in flavor.

The Year of the Tiger starts out with notes of creamy hazelnut, wood, and white pepper. White pepper, herbs, and citrus notes join the flavor profile in the second half.

93

4

Arturo Fuente
Rare Pink
Happy Ending

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	53x140mm (5½")	12 $ - N/A €	1h

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



COMPLEX. SWEET AND SPICY, HAZELNUT AND SPICES.

A cigar with an uncommon size, to which, in true Fuente tradition, a lot of attention to detail is paid.

The strong point of this cigar is the contrast between the sweet taste and the spicy aromas that also culminate in hot spices.

It develops a remarkable flavor profile, starting from initial earth and wood notes with peppery touches. It then turns to toasted aromas, among which hazelnut stands out, and closes with balsamic and leathery nuances. Strength is always under control.

92

5

Silencio
Red Dot
Churchill

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	49x178mm (7")	N/A $ - 11 €	1h 30min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	CAMEROON	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



FULFILLING. SPICES, WOOD, AND LEATHER

The Silencio Red Dot line was launched during the summer and is blended for the European cigar smoker. The cigar features a rare Cameroon wrapper.

This classic Churchill size develops a complex and balanced smoke, paired with an evolving and structured flavor profile.

The cigar opens with notes of wood and earth, which are then joined by a mix of spices (cinnamon, pepper, and chili). Vanilla and leather are added in the second half.

91

HONDURAS



1 Alec & Bradley

Kintsugi

Corona Gorda

INTENSE AND ROUND.
BLACK PEPPER, WOOD, CITRUS AND VEGETAL.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	SMOKING TIME
●●●●	46x143mm (5⅝")	7 $ - 8 €	1h

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA

Alec & Bradley Cigars, founded by brothers Alec and Bradley Rubin in 2018, announced today their third full line release, Alec & Bradley Kintsugi, in early 2020. Still, due to delays, the cigars didn't reach retailers until the end of the year.

Kintsugi is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold. The legend of the Japanese artform states that a 15th century Japanese Shogun dropped his favorite vase, shattering it to pieces. He then ordered artisans to reconstruct it with gold or silver lacquer making it even more beautiful. Alec & Bradley's Kintsugi also references the fractured state that the industry is in, and they would be better off if they all came together. The gold lacquer that binds the broken pieces represents the passion for premium cigars. Kintsugi is produced at the famous Raices Cubanas Factory in Danli, Honduras.

Rich citrus notes join hazelnut, wood, and black pepper in the first half. A vegetal aroma is added later on, and the flavor intensity increases. The blend shines in the Corona Gorda size and highlights the complex, round and exciting flavor profile.

94



2

Aladino
Vintage Selection
Elegante

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	38x178mm (7")	8 $ - N/A €	1h 20min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



COMPLEX & DEEP. CEDARWOOD, BALSAMIC, AND HAZELNUT.

In this Aladino line, the word Vintage is not a marketing strategy: the cigars have been resting in the factory's aging room for a period of four to five years after the cigars were rolled.

The cigar offers an incredibly rich and complex smoke. The evolution is constant and continually kept alive by a rapid alternation of aromas.

The opening is dominated by intense notes of cedarwood, hazelnut, and earth, with nuances of coffee beans. Later on, aromas of black pepper, chili, and walnut appear, with balsamic hints closing out the smoke.

93

3

C.L.E.
25th Anniversary
50X5

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	10.5 $ - 14 €	50min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



BOLD & RICH. EARTH, NUTS, AND PEPPER.

While CLE Cigars was founded in 2012, the CLE 25th Anniversary celebrates Christian Eiroa's twenty-five years in the cigar industry.

The box-pressed Honduran Puro is a full-bodied, bold, and rich smoke that boasts an intense yet complex flavor profile.

It delivers earth, walnut, and black pepper notes, soon joined by seasoned cedarwood and a vegetal touch. In the last part of the smoke, a hint of espresso appears as well.

92

4

Cavalier Genève
Limited Edition
2021

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	54x152mm (6")	12 $ -14 €	1h 15min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	N/A	N/A	N/A



BALANCED & COMPLEX. WHITE PEPPER, NUTS, AND WOOD.

It is the fourth iteration of the Cavalier Genève Limited Edition cigars. The blend remains undisclosed, but the production increase of this year's release speaks to the popularity of this Limited Edition.

The cigar showcases an elegantly balanced and complex flavor profile that is broad and has a nice evolution.

Cocoa, hazelnut, and wood are the primary flavors in the beginning. The base is sweet. As the intensity increases in the second half, notes of pepper and balsamic herbs are added to the flavor profile.

92

5

Saint Luis Rey
Carenas
Belicoso

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	54x155mm (6⅛")	8 $ - N/A €	1h 15min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



RICH AND SATISFYING. WOOD, PEPPER, LEATHER, AND COFFEE.

Homonym of the Cuban brand, this brand is sold only in the U.S. However, its distinctive personality does not intend to emulate any other product.

Despite being medium-full in strength, it is a cigar that showcases a perfectly enjoyable profile.

Once lit, notes of hazelnut, wood, and spices are perceived changing, with a slow and progressive evolution, to aromas of leather, coffee, earth, and black pep. The bold and balanced flavor profile makes this cigar more than satisfying.

91

NICARAGUA



1 Aroma de Cuba

Pasión

Robusto

RICH AND BALANCED.
PEPPER, WOOD, AND LEATHER.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	SMOKING TIME
●●●●	50x140mm (5½")	10 $ - N/A €	1h

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Ashton does not often release new lines, and years can pass before they introduce a new brand. Five long years after their last release, Ashton announced the Aroma de Cuba Pasión (Spanish for passion) mid-year. The Pasión, like all the other Aroma de Cuba lines, is made by the Garcia family at their My Father Cigars factory in Nicaragua. Ashton, together with the Garcia's, worked on the blend for two years, and the reason it took so long is that the Levin family (owners of Ashton) wanted to wait for the wrapper to be ready. Specifically, it is a shade-grown Cuban seed wrapper grown by the Garcia's on their farm in Namanji, Nicaragua.

The color scheme of the band was slightly altered from the normal Aroma de Cuba bands. Instead of having the classic yellow background, the base color of the Pasión is mint. The wrapper on this Nicaraguan Puro is of an oily Colorado Maduro hue that has a bit of tooth to it. The cigar opens with a mix of wood, nuts, herbs, coffee, and black pepper, on a sweet base. Halfway through the cigar, leather and hot spices are added, and the smoke becomes creamy. Balsamic notes are joining towards the end of this medium-full smoke.

Ashton stays true to their formula of taking their time to create something special, and it has paid off.

95



2

Plasencia
Alma Fuerete Sixto I
Hexagono Colorado Claro

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	60x152mm (6")	21 $ -21 €	1h 30min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



FLAVORFUL. LEATHER, WOOD, AND BLACK PEPPER

The second Sixto-sized cigar in the Alma Fuerte line was introduced late last year. This new cigar features a ten-year-old Colorado Claro wrapper that is grown by the Plasencia family themselves.

This hefty hexagonal-shaped cigar reveals a flavorful and, despite the generous size, complex smoke.

Leather and wood open the smoke, with coffee and vegetal notes that are perceptible as well. Black pepper and hazelnut appear later on, joined by aromas of cream.

93

3

Joya de Nicaragua
Dos Cientos

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	54x152mm (6")	23 $ - 20 €	1h 20min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOM. REP., HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



ELEGANT, COMPLEX. HAZELNUT, LEATHER. WOOD AND COFFEE

The Joya de Nicaragua Dos Cientos is a celebration of the 200th anniversary of Central America's independence from the Spanish empire. The blend includes tobaccos from five different regions.

This Gran Toro sizes smoke presents a surprisingly smooth, elegant, and complex flavor profile with a reduced strength level for the region.

The cigar begins with aromas of hazelnut, wood, leather, and coffee. The smoke is creamy, and later, notes of white pepper, cocoa, and herbs are added.

93

4

Tabernacle
Havana Seed CT No.142
David

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	54x157mm (5")	8 $ - N/A €	50min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	U.S.A.	MEXICO	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



RICH AND INTENSE. BLACK PEPPER, EARTH, LEATHER AND WOOD

The Tabernacle Havana Seed CT No. 142 line was launched back in 2018 and got the name from a specific seed grown in the Connecticut River Valley. The David size was released this year, next to the Goliath. Both are a Perfecto shape.

A masterfully constructed cigar. Once passed the tapered foot, it reveals a flavorful and intense smoke.

The first half reveals notes of black pepper, wood, and leather. Halfway through, herbs, earth, and nuts are added. The finale turns balsamic.

92

5

Tatuaje
Cojonú 2021

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	58x178mm (7")	14 $ - N/A €	1h 40min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



BOLD AND FLAVORFUL. BLACK PEPPER, EARTH, AND WOOD.

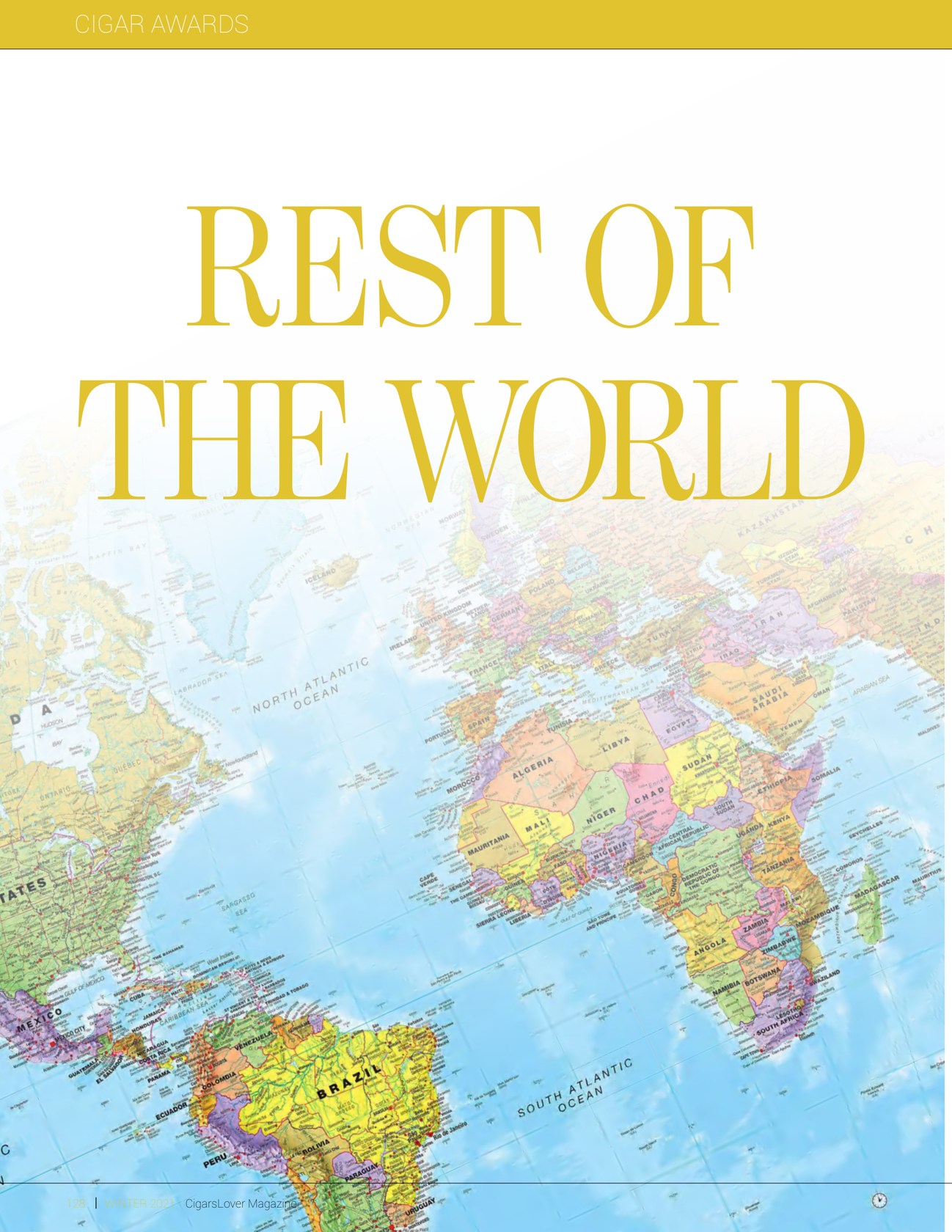
Tatuaje's Cojonú line is a stronger version of the Selectón de Cazador (aka Brown Label) blend. The last regular production addition to the line dates back to 2012.

This generously sized cigar is both full in body and flavor, and while being a strong smoke, it still manages to be well balanced.

Dark chocolate and earth give way to the smoke, followed by black pepper and seasoned wood. Balsamic herbs and vegetal notes are added along the way, and chili joins towards the end.

91

REST OF THE WORLD



1 Cohiba

Serie M

ELEGANT AND STRUCTURED.
WOOD, LEATHER, AND CITRUS.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	SMOKING TIME
●●●●	54 x 152mm (6")	30 $ - N/A €	1h 20min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, NICARAGUA

General Cigar Co. announced the Cohiba Serie M early in the year, and the cigar represents a couple of firsts for General. The most prominent news is that the cigars are manufactured in the U.S. for the first time, and they are produced at the famous El Titan de Bronze factory in Little Havana, Miami. The M in the brand name stands, in fact, for Miami. The Cohiba Serie M only comes in a single Toro size. A lot of attention to detail has been paid to this release, from the black lacquered box with a golden pattern highlighted on the lid to the holographic bands.

The blend of the Serie M showcases another first for General's Cohiba brand, the Nicaraguan Corojo wrapper. The remainder of the blend uses a Nicaraguan binder over a Dominican (Piloto Cubano) and Nicaraguan (tobaccos from the Esteli and Jalapa regions) filler.

This luxurious-looking Toro, finished in a fantail cap with a closed foot, is an eye-catcher. The reddish Colorado Maduro wrapper is oily and slightly rough to the touch. Once lit, the cigar reveals notes of seasoned wood, delicate spices, and pepper in the beginning, followed by citrus notes. A sweet base supports the profile. Later on, honey, leather, and chili are added. The pepper note increases in intensity and closes out the smoke in a satisfying fashion.

94



2

Casa Turrent
1880 Maduro
Lancero

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●●	40x190mm (7½")	17 $ - N/A €	1h 20min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO



BALANCED AND RICH. EARTH, WALNUT, AND SPICES.

Casa Turrent revealed many new sizes throughout the four blends of the 1880 line in the summer. The Lancero is the first of the new sizes to make it to the market this year.

This Mexican Puro delivers a balanced and rich smoke, with a flavor profile that changes in each of the three thirds, delivering an interesting evolution during the whole duration.

The Lancero starts out with rich earth, wood, and vegetal notes supported by peppery nuances. Walnut, incense, and hot spices are added later on.

93

3

La Palina
Goldie
Laguito No.6

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	56x165mm (6½")	13 $ - N/A €	1h 30min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, NICARAGUA



COMPLEX. NUTS, WOOD, AND WHITE PEPPER.

The La Palina Goldie Series was launched in the summer of 2012. All the cigars are rolled by a single master roller and are an annual release. The Laguito No. 6 is the 9th size in the series, inspired by a famous Cuban cigar.

This very opulent format boasts a complex and balanced smoke with a marked flavor profile.

The cigar starts with nuts, wood, and white pepper, joined by herbs, leather, and cinnamon. There is a subtle creamy sweetness supporting the flavor profile throughout the smoke.

92

4

VegaFina
Fusion Edition
Piramides

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	52x152mm (6")	N/A $ - 15 €	1h 15min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CHINA	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	BRAZIL, DOM. REP., INDONESIA



SMOOTH AND ELEGANT. HERBS, WOOD AND HAZELNUT.

The Vega Fina Fusion Edition Piramides is a collaboration between Tabacalera S.L.U. and the Chinese Great Wall Cigars. Tabacalera S.L.U. supplied the raw materials, and the Piramides were then produced at the Great Wall Cigar Factory in Shifang, China.

The cigar is masterfully constructed with a generous filling. While the cigar might be light in body, it is still flavorful and complex.

This Piramides begins with light vegetal aromas, herbs, wood, and hazelnut. Further into the cigar, notes of cream and white pepper are added to the flavor profile.

91

5

Casa 1910
Cuchillo Parado

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE	TIME
●●●	50x127mm (5")	15 $ - N/A €	50min

COUNTRY	WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO



RICH AND BALANCED. EARTH, WOOD, AND PEPPER.

Casa 1910 is a new Mexican brand that premiered their first cigar called Cuchillo Parado, named after the city famous for starting the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

This Mexican Puro delivers a rich flavor profile, both in terms of intensity and structure, paired with a noticeable evolution.

The cigar opens with earth and seasoned wood, together with pepper in the background. Later on, the profile turns to balsamic and vegetal notes with a touch of nut.

90

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NOBILE



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BEST 50 CIGARS *of the* YEAR

SCORE	NAME	COUNTRY	SIZE	STRENGTH	PRICE
95	1. Aroma de Cuba Pasión Robusto		50 x 140 mm (5 ½")	●●●●	$$
94	2. Perez-Carrillo La Historia Parientes		43 x 165 mm (6 ½")	●●●●	$$$
	3. Alec & Bradley Kintsugi Corona Gorda		46 x 143 mm (5 ⅝")	●●●●	$$
	4. Cohiba Serie M		54 x 152 mm (6")	●●●●	$$$$
93	5. Caldwell Blind Man's Bluff This is Trouble		52 x 127 mm (5")	●●●	$$$
	6. Davidoff Year of the Tiger		52 x 127 mm (5")	●●●	$$$$
	7. Plasencia Alma Fuerte Sixto Colorado		60 x 152 mm (6")	●●●	$$$$
	8. Joya de Nicaragua Dos Cientos		54 x 152 mm (6")	●●●	$$$$
	9. Aladino Vintage Selection Elegante		38 x 178 mm (7")	●●●●	$$
	10. H. Upmann Connossierur No.2		51 x 134 mm (5 ¼")	●●●	$$$
92	11. Tabernacle Havana Seed CT No.142 David		54 x 157 mm (5")	●●●	$$
	12. CLE 25th Anniversary 50x5		50 x 127 mm (5")	●●●●	$$$
	13. Romeo y Julieta Cazadores		43 x 162 mm (6 ⅜")	●●●●●	$$$
	14. Arturo Fuente Rare Pink Happy Ending		53x140 mm (5 ½")	●●●	$$$$
	15. Casa Turrent 1880 Maduro Lancero		40 x 190 mm (7 ½")	●●●●	$$$
	16. Cavalier Genève Limited Edition 2021		54 x 152 mm (6")	●●●	$$$
	17. La Palina Goldie Laguito No. 6		56 x 165 mm (6 ½")	●●●	$$$
91	18. Silencio Red Dot Churchill		49 x 178 mm (7")	●●●●	$$$$
	19. Laura Chavin Concours Corona		43 x 140 mm (5 ½")	●●	$$$$
	20. Vega Fina Fusion Edition Piramides		52 x 152 mm (6")	●●●	$$$$
	21. Tatuaje Cojonú 2021		58 x 178 mm (7")	●●●●	$$$
	22. StllWell Star Navy No. 1056		52 x 152 mm (6'')	●●●●	$$$
	23. Partagas Serie E No.2		54 x 140 mm (5 ½")	●●●●	$$$
	24. Saint Luis Rey Carenas Belicoso		54 x 155 mm (6 ⅛")	●●●●	$$
	25. CROWNED HEADS MIL DIAS MAREVA EL XX		42 x 130 mm (5 ⅛")	●●●●	$$
	26. HIGHCLERE CASTLE VICTORIAN PETIT CORONA		42 x 127 mm (5")	●●●●	$$$
	27. Chinchalle Robusto		50 x 127 mm (5'')	●●	$$$
	28. Stolen Throne War Council		46 x 152 mm (6'')	●●●●	$$
90	29. Undercrown 10 Robusto		50 x 127 mm (5'')	●●●●	$$$
	30. Davidoff Dominicana Short Robusto		50 x 102 mm (4")	●●●	$$$$
	31. A.J. Fernandez Enclave Connecticut Figurado		52 x 165mm (6 ½")	●●●	$$
	32. Adventura Royal Return Queen's Pearl Lancero		40 x 178 mm (7'')	●●●	$$$
	33. Montecristo Especiales		38 x 192mm (7 ½")	●●●	$$$$
	34. CHC Serie E Hermoso No.2		48 x 155 mm (6 ⅛")	●●●●	$$
	35. CLE Signature THT-EKE 03/17 11/18		48 x 152 mm (6")	●●●	$$$$
	36. Bock Y CA. Panetela		35 x 146 mm (5 ¾")	●●●	$
	37. AVO SYNCRO CARIBE Robusto		50 x 127 mm (5")	●●●	$$$
	38. Oliva Serie V Melanio Toro		52 x 152 mm (6")	●●●●	$$$
	39. RomaCraft Baka Hunter Gatherer		54 x 152 mm (6")	●●●●	$$$
	40. Montosa Toro		50 x 150 mm (5 ⅞")	●●●	$
	41. Juan Lopez Seleccion No.1		46 x 143 mm (5 ⅝")	●●●	$$$
	42. Casa 1910 Cuchillo Parado		50 x 127 mm (5'')	●●●	$$$
	43. ROJAS BLUEBONNETS LANCERO		38 x 178 mm (7'')	●●●●	$$
	44. Fiat Lux by Luciano Insight		46 x 143 mm (5 ⅝")	●●●	$$
	45. Balmoral Añejo XO Nicaragua Petit Robusto FT		48 x 143 mm (4 ¼")	●●●●	$$
	46. Casdagli Villa Casdagli Corona Gorda		46 x 140 mm (5 ½")	●●●●	$$$
	47. Furia Megaera		54 x 140 mm (5 ½")	●●●●	$$$
	48. Joya de Nicaragua Clasico Medio Siglo Toro		50 x 152 mm (6")	●●●	$
	49. Tatuaje Cabaiguan No.5		54 x 112 mm (4 ⅝")	●●●	$$
	50. Por Larranaga Galanes		40 x 110 mm (3 ⅜")	●●●	$$

SCORE	NAME	COUNTRY	SIZE	STRENGTH	PRICE
95	1. Aroma de Cuba Pasión Robusto		50 x 140 mm (5 ½")	●●●●	$$

RATING ON A 100 POINTS SCALE

POSITION, BRAND, LINE AND CIGAR NAME

RING GAUGE AND LENGTH

PLACE WHERE THE CIGAR IS MADE

- *CHINA*
- *CUBA*
- *HONDURAS*
- *MEXICO*
- *U.S.A.*
- *COSTA RICA*
- *DOMINICAN REP.*
- *ITALY*
- *NICARAGUA*

- ● *LIGHT*
- ●● *LIGHT TO MEDIUM*
- ●●● *MEDIUM*
- ●●●● *MEDIUM TO FULL*
- ●●●●● *FULL*

- $ *BELOW 6*
- $$ *FROM 6 TO 10*
- $$$ *FROM 10 TO 15*
- $$$$ *ABOVE 15*

Best BRANDS

Best Brand
Cuba

The roots of the brand date back to 1844, the year it was founded by the brothers Hermann and August Hupmann. The brand name would play on the use of the letter "H" in the Spanish language: for some historical sources, this would recall the "brothers" (hermanos in Spanish) Hupmann, syncopating the first letter of the surname.

Years later, Hermann's grandchildren founded a bank in Havana, thus linking the fame of the factory to the image of the family banking institution. After a period of crisis and two ownership changes, in 1937, H. Upmann was taken over by Menendez, Garcia & Co., a company that had recently launched the Montecristo brand. With the purchase of the H. Upmann brand, the work in the factory was reorganized, reconsolidating the finances to the point of having to expand production and, consequently, move the headquarters to 405 Calle Amistad, a location that has remained unchanged until today.

H. Upmann is one of the current global brands of Habanos S.A., and its production has always been of excellent quality on most of the products. However, recently there has been a relaunch of the brand's image thanks to the inclusion of products that have enriched the portfolio, like the Magnum 54 (released in 2017), the Connossieur B (2018), the Magnum 56 in a ceramic jar (2020) and finally the Connossieur No. 2 released in 2021 but announced last year. The Connossieur No. 2 recorded high ratings, both in the blind tasting and in the regular reviews, placing itself in the first place of our Top 5 Cuba.

Although counted among Habanos' "global brands", H. Upmann seems to be playing in the second line. However, this semblance of less luster is attributable to a sort of austerity typical of the brand. Despite this, the brand continues to charm smokers looking for products with a never-over-the-top strength and a refined and balanced flavor profile.



Best Brand
Honduras

Christian was born into the cigar industry and started working in the family business in 1995. Working next to a living legend, his father Julio R. Eiroa, Christian learned the craft from the best. Since his introduction into the industry more than 25 years ago, he has become a prominent fixture in the business.

After the Eiroa family sold Camacho and a short-lived retirement from the cigar industry, the CLE company (which stands for Christian Luis Eiroa) was launched in 2012. Since then, the brand has become a mainstay in the cigar world, as has Christian himself.

In 2020, Christian celebrated his 25th year in the industry and introduced the CLE 25th Anniversary for the occasion. Like most of his cigars, the 25th Anniversary is made in Honduras at the homonymous factory, and the Honduran puro has been a success.

2021 was an even busier year for the brand. At the PCA trade show, he introduced five new lines. Three of those (Asylum PCA Exclusive, Asylum Friday The 13th 2021, and Asylum 9) are for the Asylum brand, which he also makes. The other two are the Eiroa PCA Exclusive and the cryptic CLE Signature THT-EKE 03/17. Both of the releases focus on their family-grown Honduran Cameroon wrapper. All the delays that have been going on this year, thanks to COVID, have made it difficult for everybody in the industry. In Christian's case, he also had to deal with his warehouse in Miami being robbed. Despite all the hurdles, Christian has still managed to deliver without compromising the consistency that the company is known for. Not only are the new releases great smokes, but CLE has managed to place well in numerous blind tastings throughout the year. Christian has also managed to consistently rank in our Awards and, including this year, he has made the cut five times out of seven, a feat only achieved by a select few.

C.L.E.
CIGAR COMPANY

Best Brand **Nicaragua**

Pete Johnson, the founder of Tatuaje Cigars, went from Rock and Roll bass player to working retail (including the famous Grand Havana Room in Los Angeles) to creating the difficult to pronounce Tatuaje brand. Before the brand's inception in 2003, Pete had already looked for someone that could make his cigars, but nothing worked out until he had a chance encounter with José "Pepin" Garcia. The rest is history.

Tatuaje has grown from a small brand to a large company with a cult-like following over the years. Along the way, Pete, with the Garcias, has created an impressive portfolio with classic blends, such as the Selección de Cazador (Brown Label) and Havana VI (Red Label) Cabaiguan, Fausto, Black Label, and many more. He is also one of the catalysts behind the boutique craze and small-batch releases. Many of these releases are highly sought after, like the Monster series, the T110, the Pork Tenderloin, and many more.

Pete has always been one of the busier brands, and each year he announces numerous new products that range from new lines to line extensions and limited releases. This year, some of these cigars are the Cojonú 2021, a Toro Sampler, and the Monster Mash Sampler. He also brought back some of those highly sought after releases from the past, like the T110 (in three wrapper variations: Habano, Sumatra, and Broadleaf), the LLE Capa Especial (known in the past as the NHC Selección Limitada Capa Especial), and the Frank Redux 1 (re-release of the first Monster of the series). Both regular production and limited releases did well throughout the year in blind tastings and reviews, with the Cojonú 2021 also placing in the Top 5 of Nicaragua, underlining a fantastic year for the brand.

Pete's Tatuaje brand still manages to stay relevant and fresh but remains true to itself, and after almost twenty years in the business that is not easy to achieve.

tatuaje

Best Brand **Dominican Rep.**

Robert Caldwell, the man behind the brand, has always been an avid smoker and entered the industry in 2008. He created a hospitality cigar distribution company. From there, he started manufacturing private label brands for numerous hotels and restaurants and shortly after opened The Wynwood Cigar Factory in Miami.

All these experiences led him to the Dominican Republic, and everything took off from there.

Caldwell Cigars was founded in 2014 and has taken the industry by storm, becoming one of the hottest brands and has stayed in high demand ever since.

What started out with the Caldwell Collection, which includes lines such as Eastern Standard, Midnight Express, The King is Dead, and Long Live the King, has grown to a broad portfolio that now also includes brands like the Blind Man's Bluff, The Last Tsar, Savages, and many more.

Robert is also the man that made collaborations trendy with releases like the T, All Out Kings, Hit & Run, and two Nicaraguan interpretations of Long Live the King and The King is Dead by AJ Fernandez.

This year Caldwell Cigars focused on one of their best-selling brands, Blind Man's Bluff. The line received a limited edition release called "This is Trouble" (our No. 2 cigar in the Dominican category of our awards) and also announced the Blind Man's Bluff Nicaragua scheduled to be released at the end of the year.

With all that going on, Caldwell Cigars also underlined the quality and consistency of their regular production lines by scoring high throughout the year.

CALDWELL cigar co.



Best Brand
Rest of the world

Casa Turrent has been the face of the Mexican cigar industry for decades and has solidified its presence on the international level. The Turrent family history in the cigar trade dates back to 1880.

They are the biggest growers of cigar tobacco in Mexico and the largest cigar manufacturer in the country. There is no way around the Turrent family when talking about Mexico and tobacco. They also play a big part in bringing Mexican cigars and their tobacco to prominence today.

The mastermind behind Casa Turrent is no other than Alejandro Turrent. After the revamp and change to the Casa Turrent name in 2014, he has been the driving force in bringing the cigar brand to the level it is today.

After the successful launch of the four different Casa Turrent 1880 Series blends, Alejandro kept the momentum rolling and presented a plethora of news this year.

The biggest news was the addition of four new sizes (Lancero, Short Robusto, Perfecto, and Robusto) for all the blends of the 1880 Series. Later in the year, he announced three more line extensions to the 1880 Series planned for next year: the 1880 Doble Claro, 1880 Doble Maduro, and the 1880 Rosado. Each of them will get the exact five sizes that are shared throughout the 1880 Series and are all Mexican puros. This will bring the 1880 Series to a total of thirty-five cigars in seven different blends.

Another noteworthy news that has not made it to the market yet is the A. Turrent 60 Cosecha, dedicated to Alberto Turrent's, Alejandro's father, sixty years in the tobacco industry, which he celebrated last year. Adding the fact that the brand has made it into our awards five times out of seven, there is simply no stopping Casa Turrent.

CASA TURRENT

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BEST BOUTIQUE cigars



LAURA CHAVIN
Concours Corona Edition 2020

CREAMY AND BALANCED

After some tumultuous years and a recent change of ownership, the Concours (des meilleurs Connaisseurs) line was created to celebrate the brand's 10th anniversary. The blend was purposely kept a secret. The Corona develops a sweet and creamy smoke, with aromas of hazelnut, wood, and ripe fruit, enriched with peppery notes and herbs.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	43x140mm (5½")	91

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●	50min	$ N/A | € 16

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	N/A	N/A



STOLEN THRONE
War Council

FULL AND FLAVORFUL

The War Council is the first limited edition release from Stolen Throne Cigars. They are made at the Rojas Factory in Esteli, Nicaragua. The cigar starts out with notes of pepper, oak, and nuts, and the smoke is sapid and creamy at the same time. A dominant citrus aroma is added in the second half, joined by hints of espresso.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
NICARAGUA	46x152mm (6")	91

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●●	1h 20min	$ 10 | € N/A

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



STILLWELL STAR
Navy No. 1056

FULFILLING AND COMPLEX

The StillWell Star line features four identical Toro-sized cigars that only differ in the filler, with each features a different mix of pipe tobaccos. The cigar opens with notes of earth, incense, undergrowth, and vegetal nuances. Leather and black pepper are added later on and hot spices appear in the finale.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
NICARAGUA	52x152mm (6")	91

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●●	1h 20min	$ 15 | € N/A

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NAVAL ROTATIONS, VIRGINIA, LATAKIA, ORIENTALS	MEXICO



ADVENTURA
Royal Return Queen's P. Lancero

CREAMY AND BALANCED

The Royal Return from Adventrua Cigars was introduced last year with two different lines: the King's Gold and the Queen's Pearls. In the second half of this year a limted edition Lancero size was added to the Queen's Pearls line. The cigar reveals notes of wood, hazelnut, white pepper and citrus on a creamy base.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	40x178mm (7")	91

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●	1h 20min	$ 15 | € N/A

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN. REP., ECUADOR, NICARAGUA	ECUADOR



CHINCHALLE
Robusto

FLAVORFUL AND ELEGANT

The new Chinchalle brand comes in a single Robusto size, blended and produced in a collaboration between Warped Cigars and Tabacalera La Isla. The name is a term used for small cigar factories. It develops nuts, wood, and white pepper aromas, with a herbal note that becomes more and more balsamic towards the end of the cigar.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	50x127mm (5")	91

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●	50min	$ 15 | € N/A

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



CHC SERIE E
Hermoso No. 2

INTENSE AND SATISFYING

This new series from Crowned Heads, inspired by a solo by Eddie Van Halen, was released in September in four sizes. The cigar opens with vegetal aromas, mainly green pepper, wood resin, and undergrowth. Halfway through the cigar, chili, pepper, and leather are added with a balsamic finish. A rich and intense smoke that is creamy on the palate.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
NICARAGUA	48x155mm (6⅛")	90

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●●	1h 20min	$ 10 | € 10

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

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The Explorer

Swiss Precision, Dominican Passion

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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.



BOCK Y CA
Panetela

INTENSE WITH A GREAT FINISH

Originally an old Cuban brand, founded by Gustavo Bock (the inventor of the cigar band), the Bock y Ca, recently got a packaging update. Spicy notes on a slightly acidic base open the smoke, soon followed by intense aromas of wood, cappuccino, and cinnamon. The profile is then enriched with notes of seasoned oak wood.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	35x146mm (5¾")	91

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●	50min	N/A $ - 5 €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA	INDONESIA



MONTOSA
Toro

SWEET, ELEGANT AND CREAMY

The Arnold André Cigar Company, the largest cigar producer in Germany, worked over three years on this blend of the Montosa before releasing it to the market. It reveals aromas of wood, cappuccino, and white pepper. The flavors are supported by a sweet base and a creamy smoke, with a good complexity.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	50x152mm (6")	90

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●	1h 20min	N/A $ - 4 €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



BRICKHOUSE
Teaser

BOLD AND SATISFYING

The Brick House brand pays homage to the founder Julius Caeser Newman's childhood home in Hungary. After decades of retirement, the brand was resurrected in 2009. This stumpy cigar delivers notes of espresso, cedar, and pepper, together with nuances of walnut. The second half of the smoke becomes earthy.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
NICARAGUA	56x89mm (3½")	89

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●●	40min	6 $ - 5 €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



JOYA DE NICARAGUA
Clasico Medio Siglo Toro

FULL AND ROUND

The Joya de Nicaragua Clásico marked its fiftieth anniversary this year. To celebrate Nicaragua's first premium long-filler cigar, Joya presented the Clásico Medio Siglo (Spanish for half a century). The cigar opens with notes of wood, earth, and leather. Pepper, nuts and coffee aromas follow later on.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
NICARAGUA	50x152mm (6")	90

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●	1h 20min	N/A $ - 5.5 €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



EL ARTISTA
Buffalo TEN Natural

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

El Artista's single-sized Buffalo TEN line was extended late last year with a Natural version. The box-pressed Toro uses a blend of all proprietary tobaccos from five different countries. Notes of cocoa, earth, and pepper are revealed initially, with nutty and woody notes joining in the second half.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	50x152mm (6")	90

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●●	1h 20min	5 $ - 5.5 €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOM. REP., U.S.A., NICARAGUA	INDONESIA



LA AURORA
Principes Claro Toro

SMOOTH AND BALANCED

The Principes Claro line is made at the oldest cigar factory in the Dominican Republic, the La Aurora factory. Despite the very competitive price the cigar is a long filler and made by hand. The profile of this Toro reveals flavors of wood, earth, nuts and pepper. The smoke is creamy with a light sweetness to it.

COUNTRY	SIZE	RATING
DOMINICAN REP.	50x152mm (6")	89

STRENGTH	TIME	PRICE
●●	1h 20min	N/A $ - 2.5 €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	INDONESIA

Credits

Cover page
picture by: Desiree Prieto

Smoking Jacket!
picture by: Pinterest.com

Intertabak
picture by: Intertabak AG

Delayed
picture by: Mario Amelio

Cohiba Corona
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Pairings
picture by: Mario Amelio

Pairings: Cigars & Spirits
picture by: Mario Amelio, Renz A. Mauleon

Bar Corner
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Reservoir Distillery
picture by: Reservoir Distillery

Playing with Time
picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Moon Walk
picture by: Nicola Cima

Oysters and Whisky
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Perlage and Cigars
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Beyiond the 4h Color
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Awards 2021
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