

Cigars Lover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1 - 2022



Year of the Tiger

- WELCOME TIGER - AIR PURIFIERS - DRUNK CHICKEN CIGARS - STOLEN THRONE - PAIRINGS: CIGARS & SPIRITS
- SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED - WHISKY IN YOUR POCKET - RUM NATION - THE GLENDALOUGH VARIATIONS - BATANGA
- SUNSHINE DREAMING - PALATE, THROAT OR BELLY? - NOT THE USUAL SANDWICH

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Editor's thoughts

2022's novelties

The first issue of the year 2022 was published earlier than usual, about a month earlier than in previous years. As announced, 2022 marks the publication of one more magazine, and starting from this year, the numbers released will be five. All this will allow us to publish an even more significant number of contents and a greater number of products, both cigars, and premium spirits.

The most popular sections of the magazine are confirmed, such as the pink one dedicated to the ladies of tobacco and the pairings, tried and tested without hesitation, which often have given rise to results that are as unexpected as they are satisfying. During the year, we will review some of these results to describe what we have seen.

The magazine's structure remains unchanged, with the three sections (Cigars, Spirits, Taste) confirmed.

Enjoy the reading.

#refineyourtaste



CONTENTS



10



16



22



30

1 ON THE COVER

50 Year of the Tiger

- 4 Team
- 5 Editorial

8 CIGARS

- 10 Welcome Tiger
- 14 Air purifiers
- 16 Drunk Chicken Cigars
- 22 Air
- 26 Great Expectations
- 30 Stolen Throne
- 36 Pairings: Cigars & Spirits
- 40 Cigars & Spirits

46 SPIRITS

- 48 Shaken, not stirred
- 56 Whisky in your pocket
- 58 Rum Nation
- 64 The Glendalough Variations
- 66 Batanga

ISSUE #1 - 2022

68 TASTE

- 70 Sunshine Dreaming
- 74 Palate, throat or belly?
- 78 Not the usual sandwich

84 SPIRITS TASTING

- 86 Rum
- 92 Whisky

99 CIGAR TASTING

- 100 Piramides
- 104 Robustos
- 108 Shorts
- 112 Toros

116 CREDITS



36



46



62

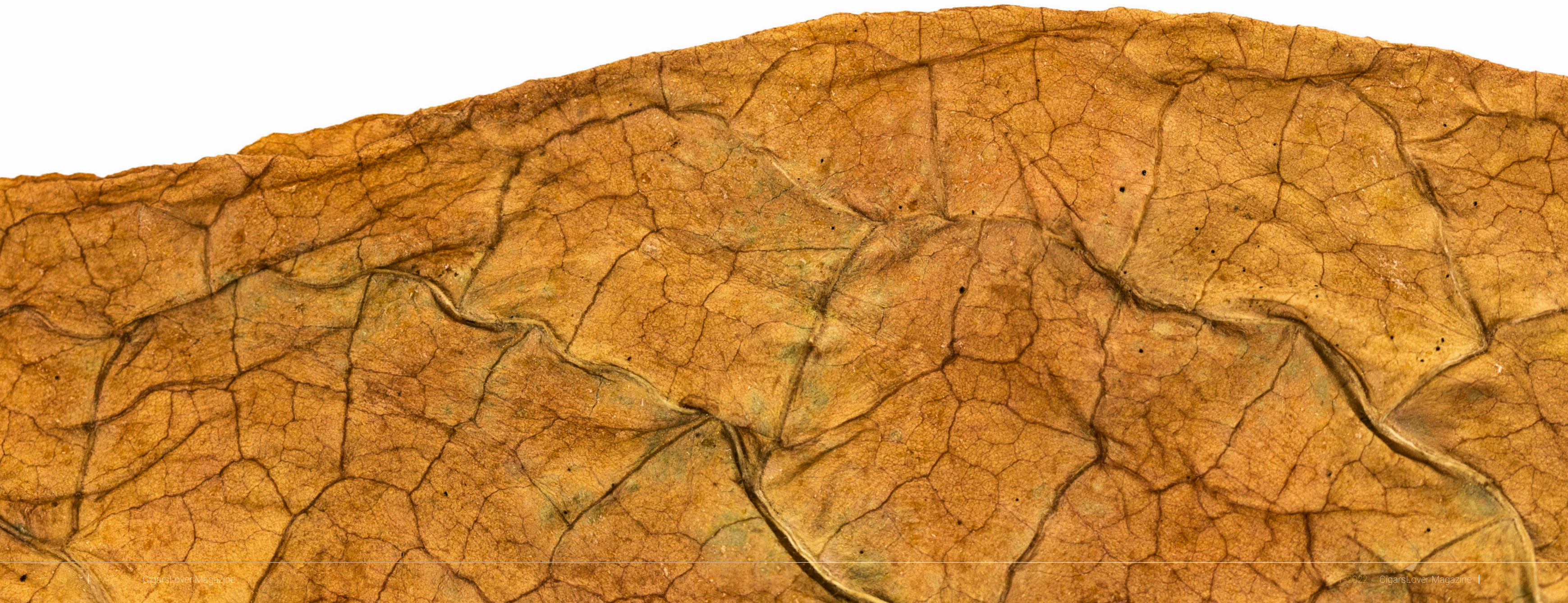


68

CIGARS

"Aficionado my ass...I just love to smoke cigars."

James Woods



2022

YEAR OF THE TIGER



Welcome Tiger

The year of the Chinese calendar, for several years, has attracted the attention of producers increasingly committed to celebrating it with refined and exclusive products.

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

On February 1st, the New Year of the Tiger (the Water Tiger, to be exact) was welcomed and celebrated in China and in all Chinese communities worldwide.

The Chinese calendar, of very ancient origins, comprises zodiacal - astrological elements and the classic elements of time measurement (days, months, and years, the latter of variable duration of 353, 354, or 355 days).

It is perhaps the most particular way in the world of cadencing the years, also considering that each of them is associated with one of the twelve zodiacal animals, which, in turn, are combined with one of the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) that distinguishes a

two-year period. For this reason, the year of the water tiger, to exemplify the current one will be repeated in sixty years. Precise characteristics are recognized for each animal and element, which would seem to reverberate on those born in the period in question. In this case, the tiger would bring courage, ambition for challenges, and success. Feline impetus blunted by the water element, capable of giving good learning skills, fluidity, wisdom, and listening skills.

It is difficult to establish how much affinity there can be between the Chinese calendar and the world of cigars. Perhaps the patience of waiting, the cycles of life and aging, or the constant and anxious wait for the new. However, whether there are similarities or not, for some time now, there have been many producers engaged in

celebrating the Chinese New Year by reserving an exclusive, limited, and, automatically, super sought-after production. 2022, however, will undoubtedly be remembered as the real boom of the "Year of ..." editions, with six brands celebrating the tiger and its peculiarities.

Of all the producers, it seems only fitting to start with Davidoff, the first brand to designate a celebratory reference for the Chinese calendar. In 2013, they celebrated the Year of the Snake with a 7 " x 48 Churchill, while the previous year, they assigned a cigar to the year of the dragon, without the official announcement that would follow in 2013.

This year, the Genevan brand, also thanks to the experience gained in recent years, has released a pyramid (5

½" x 52) unique of its kind: the wrapper leaf simulates the stripes of a tiger's fur. A result that was obtained starting from a very bright and smooth Ecuadorian Connecticut leaf, on which darker tobacco veins have been affixed.

The leaves were then pressed for forty-eight hours, at the end of which, with extreme delicacy, the veins were removed from the leaves. The rest of the blend is made up of Dominican tobacco, both for the Binder (Hybrid 257) and for the Filler (Hybrid 254 Viso, Hybrid 259 Seco, Piloto Ligero, San Vicente Mejorado Seco & San Vicente Mejorado Viso). The cigars are then sold in "scratchy" wooden and glass boxes of ten cigars.

Remaining in the Dominican Republic, VegaFina, which



has been involved in celebratory editions of the Chinese calendar for years, has also released its Year of the Tiger. A Toro size (6 5/8" x 52) was chosen to represent the tiger, sold in a vermilion red lacquered box with golden details containing sixteen cigars. The specially made blend includes a Nicaraguan and Dominican filler, a Nicaraguan binder, and an Ecuadorian wrapper.

Moving to the land of volcanoes, two Nicaraguan producers paid homage to the Year of the Tiger: Plasencia and Drew Estate. In the second year of this edition, Plasencia Cigars created a slightly large Toro (6 1/4" x 54) made of only Nicaraguan tobacco. Also, in this case, the cigars (eight in the box) are offered to the public in an elegant red-painted box with gold lettering, typical colors of the Chinese tradition. On the other hand, Drew Estate has released a Liga Privada Unico Year of the Tiger that will be distributed exclusively in some stores in Hong Kong. The blend features a U.S. Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper, a Brazilian Mata Fina binder, and a Nicaraguan filler and comes in a slim Toro size (6" x 48). Each cigar is wrapped in a sheet of gold paper for three-quarters of its length, while the eight-piece box recalls both the dominant red-gold colors and the Chinese ideograms.

In Honduras, only Maya Selva has released a product that she has chosen to call Año del Tigre. In this case, the size is a Toro (6" x 52) made with only Honduran tobaccos, sold in boxes of ten that recall the red-golden chromatic combination.

Also Habanos S.A. wasn't indifferent to the charm of the Chinese calendar. After making its debut in 2021 with the Hoyo de Monterrey Primaveras Year of the Ox, this year, Cohiba was the brand chosen to celebrate the tiger. For the most prestigious brand in Cuba, a box/humidor was created, black lacquered with golden details and logo, containing 88 Shorts (cigarillos). Considering the brand's luster, the charm of the Cuban cigar, and the importance of the celebratory edition, we probably expected a very different size than a cigarillo.

By reviewing all the Year of the Tiger produced, it is possible to outline traits that unite, if not all, most of the brands. First of all, the colors: all the brands, except Cohiba, paid homage to the Chinese year with the typical colors of the tradition, namely gold and red. Another almost always recurring element is the number 8, in its multiples and repetitions. In Chinese culture, the number 8, also due to its resemblance to the infinity symbol, is considered a bearer of prosperity and wealth.

However, if we want to be a little savvy, the only element of contact between all editions is the prestige related to their exclusivity. As with all limited edition products, the Year of the Tiger will also arouse the curiosity of smokers and the desire to buy for collectors from all over the world, triggering, in both cases, the race to buy these cigars, thus respecting the propensity to challenges typical of the Tiger sign.

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Smoking seriously harms you and others around you

Air purifiers

*Removing the smoke in the environment,
For a better and healthier experience*

by **Luca Cominelli**

Air purifiers have gradually become more and more present in daily life. The aim has always been to eliminate odors, pollution, and recently even viruses. However, what is most interesting for us is the smoke.

There are practically no odor problems if you smoke outdoors, but if you enjoy a cigar inside four walls, you have to deal with curtains, clothes, and often spouses. On the other hand, for those who smoke in the office, the spouses are the colleagues. In addition to all of this, the most important aspect to take into consideration, as the only one ever present, is the health of those who smoke the cigar, as even in the simplest case, being it a room with only one person inside, the concern of the cigar lover who breathes the smoke is always present.

The smaller the room, the faster the air saturation will be, which will be perceived unpleasantly, making the smoke less enjoyable. Even in larger rooms, the same problem occurs after a few more moments. Hence the need to find a solution if there is no ventilation system. The air purifier is the least expensive, simplest, and easiest to use. This is nothing more than a machine capable of absorbing the air, trapping pollutants, and re-introducing the purified air into the environment.

We had the opportunity to test a Dyson over the course of 2021, specifically the Pure Cool model. As soon as the cigar is lit, the purifier notices the presence of smoke and goes to maximum power. The negative aspect is the noise, while everything else the machine does is a positive. The reduction of smoke in the air is noticeable, causing the air you breathe becomes less heavy. The odor of the cigar is only partially resolved: the tobacco aroma remains perceptible, but it is less prone to contaminating clothes and curtains. The result is maximized if you smoke near the purifier or place the cigar on an ashtray near the machine. Additionally raising the purifier above floor level aids in effectiveness. In doing so, almost all of the smoke will be sucked in and promptly filtered. Therefore, this solution is effective and should be adopted indoors to appreciate our beloved cigar better.



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Drunk Chicken Cigars

Traveling the road less traveled

by Michel Arlia

There are so many cigar brands out there that many go unnoticed, but Drunk Chicken Cigars is not one of them. Drunk Chicken is a brand that is going the road less traveled, be it for their US-based production or unconventional name. We had the chance to talk to the founder and owner, Desiree Sylver, about her what Drunk Chicken is and much more.

Tell us a bit about yourself and what you were doing before launching your cigar brand?

Before launching, I worked full-time for the US federal government as a procurement analyst and working as a professor. I had a routine everyday life where my downtime was enjoying a cigar to relax or release all the stresses of work.

What was your first introduction to cigars, and how do you remember the experience being?

My first introduction to cigars was smoking with my significant other at the time (ex-husband) about twenty years ago at a cigar lounge. He went into the humidor, purchased cigars for us to smoke, and handed me a 6x60 cigar. I was very much in love with the cigar community and how open and friendly everyone was. I was one of the only females in the lounge but always felt welcome. I never really thought much about the brands I was smoking as long as it was a smooth cigar. The bands were removed and discarded most of the time. Now when I go into cigar lounges, I look for cigars I've never smoked and prefer the Toro/Robusto/Lancero vitolas.

You have a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership and were a professor at Strayer University. When did you decide that it was time to quit your job and follow your passion for cigars?

Well, I haven't made that decision yet. I am still working a full-time job and doing Drunk Chicken Cigars. I'm at a transition because I am close to retirement age, looking at early retirement versus going for the long term.

The company name is quite unique, to say the least. What is the background story behind it?

The birth of Drunk Chicken Cigars started with friends and family hanging out in the family backyard, living the dream, eating, drinking, and sharing cigars. This backyard oasis includes over a dozen chickens, dogs, and local wildlife that frequently visit. The "Drunk Chicken" name was established one evening as we enjoyed our typical Saturday festivities. The chickens were "going home to roost" and seemed to stumble as if they were drunk. The Drunk Chicken events grew, becoming the regular safe place to hang out. The notional entry fee was bringing a cigar to smoke and one to share. This quickly evolved into a quest of finding unique cigars none of us had previously smoked. While traveling, the exploration of various cigars bars and shops led to meeting many cigar enthusiasts, including shop owners, cigar diplomats, Cuban hand-rollers, cigar lovers, and junkies like us. The creative juices started to flow as they introduced us to freshly rolled cigars and different brands and flavors of cigars. To impress our friends, we decided to try our hand at having our favorite tobacco leaves blended and hand-rolled

to share back at the "Coop". They were instant hits. Thus Drunk Chicken Cigars "Chicks" were born.

Compared to almost everybody else, your cigars are made in the US. Why did you decide to make cigars in the States, have you looked into other countries as well?

Yes, I looked into manufacturing cigars in other countries and other manufacturers here in the US. Some of the key factors that played in this decision, when I spoke to other boutique lines, the company owners, their ability to actually be involved in the manufacturing process becomes very difficult when it's outside a country when they're having issues or problems, just being able to be there or go there, it was a major issue or concern. Price-wise was somewhat comparable. Yes, we do manufacture a tad bit more expensive, but we also factored in import/export taxes and shipping time to get it. Being here in the US, we don't have to wait for import/export shipping out of the country. So there is a much greater turnaround time that we have. And we really worked well with this manufacturer. We had great chemistry together. When we were blending together, it was just really easy and comfortable when we spoke. All those factors played a part in why we decided to manufacture in the US. Also, it's big on making sure that the US economy is doing well. So we wanted to employ people here in the US too. That was definitely part of our thinking when we started talking about manufacturing.

How did you approach the blends of the cigars, and what was the learning experience like?

Well, me being a little OCD, I have a spreadsheet of over 200 cigars that I've smoked, which tells you the wrapper, binder, filler for each one of those, and I rated them. I already knew that I loved Havana wrappers, and that was one of the key factors in that three of the cigars have Havana wrappers. We already knew that we wanted the cigars to be smooth. And because we were blending the original cigars for ourselves, it was just working with the manufacturer, sitting down with them, telling them what we wanted. We smoked some Puros; what did we like about it, what we didn't like about it. Then, we added other leaves to the blend. We went from all Ecuadorian/Dominican and just played around. We had a great time working with the manufacturer, trying new cigars, and talking about the differences and what we like. And so for us, the original cigars that we made were absolutely just made for what Rico and I liked in cigars. When we started blending the Homicidal Hen, that was our first cigar we blended for customers, not for ourselves. The Broadleaf was definitely on the list during the blending process, and we wanted to incorporate it, and we didn't see a need to at the time. So we started with the Broadleaf and some of the other blends that we worked out. We also test-marketed the blends with our local friends and local cigar lounges and had them smoke the cigar; what they liked about it, what they didn't like about it. So almost like market research. We received a lot of feedback from potential customers until we got to this blend, where everybody who smoked that cigar thought it was amazing. So as we approach adding new cigars to our line, our customers will definitely be part of our consideration. Also, I love smoking new cigars, so hopefully, you'll see lots of new tobacco, different tobacco, because that's definitely



something that I enjoy when I'm looking for a cigar is what I haven't smoked before and comparing the differences.

Due to regulations, you entered the market at an uncertain time for cigars. Were there any concerns prior the launch?

Major concerns were legal aspects due to changing and growing regulations. Much research was done to ensure no laws would be broken. We continue to follow the US federal regulations to see how it may impact Drunk Chicken Cigar's production and sales.

In the short time you are running your own business, what have you learned about the industry good or bad, that you didn't know before?

Every day I have to get up and give 110% no matter how I feel. There is always something that needs to happen. Owning my own business didn't create more free time, and it's the total opposite, a time stealer. Keeping things positive and laughing at myself helps on the days when everything seems overwhelming.

Smoking cigars has enjoyed something of a renaissance, especially among women. Being a cigar lover for two decades, you have seen the change first hand. What do you think was the catalyst for this newfound appreciation?

As a woman, cigar-smoking attracts attention from men and women, especially when I am not smoking in a cigar lounge. Male smokers are somewhat normalized, while female smokers are still uncommon unless you are in the cigar industry. Men tend to want to teach women how to smoke, assuming that they know best. Typically, they lead women to the flavored and mild cigar sections, as if women needs to start slow or have a flavor attached to their smoking experience. This is far from the truth in my experience (especially the last five years). Female smokers tend to have more refined palates than their male counterparts, meaning they can understand the complexity of a good cigar and can experience the hints of flavor that the tobacco absorbs for the soil. Fortunately, I have not experienced stigmatism as a women cigar smoker. Unlike cigarettes, cigars smoking seemed to be viewed as a luxury, classy, relaxing, social for both men and women.

What are the short and long-term plans for Drunk Chicken?

The short-term plans include shoring up the infrastructure, ensuring we have a good foundation/processes, how we sell, and SOPs (standard operating procedures). When new people come on board, there's training: how people come on board, how new clients/customers come on board. I want to make sure that we're a reliable company when we go into the following year. That is important to me, along with production, making sure that we can keep a steady production schedule, the quality of our cigars, ensuring that we can maintain quality, another one of those things want to put down in our policy, and when are we testing, how we are testing, and what are we looking for when we test, and customer service. I say customer service because I want to make sure that the sales reps are trained properly and understand that our customers are number one, and make sure that we understand their concerns when they have them.

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Air!

*In a humidor, a factor of considerable importance is the air.
It is too often forgotten but is crucial in humidification dynamics*

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

When using a humidor, it is customary to pay close attention to the humidity levels, the temperature, and the quality of the seal to keep that humidity level constant. All critical factors in the proper care of our beloved cigars. However, one factor that is often not considered is the air.

Air is the vehicle with which the humidity circulates and allows the tobacco to absorb more or less water as needed. What has been highlighted so far may seem trivial, but it is appropriate to start from a basic thought to ask ourselves: how much air is there in my humidor? Often we are inclined to fill the humidor as much as possible. We will have less space for the air by inserting more and more cigars. This means not having free circulation and, consequently, much more difficulty in humidification. This is a dynamic that affects both static and dynamic systems. On the other hand, if you think of the refrigerators in our homes, which cool food thanks to the recirculation of cold air, in the instruction manuals, it is always suggested never to fill the entire internal volume of the appliance. If you have never read this notice, you have undoubtedly happened to put a drink in an empty fridge and appreciate how little time it can cool down or, vice versa, how long it takes to cool drinks and food as the food increases—stored inside. The phenomenon we observe in the refrigerator is made more evident than in a humidor only because the air circulating in the former is very cold. At the same time, it is closer to an “ambient temperature” in the latter.

Therefore, in managing the humidification of our cigars, another consideration for proper cigar care will be to not completely fill the humidor, to leave room for the air and allow it to humidify in the right ways. In addition, where possible, another suggestion is to open the humidor at least once every two months to allow for a change of air. Added to this is the classic recommendation to rotate the position of the cigars precisely to allow all specimens to have the suitable air exchange and the proper humidity.





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Great Expectations

*Experiences and tips, surprises and disappointments,
from the spirits & cigars pairings diary*

by **Simone Poggi**

Starting in 2020 the adventure of pairings between distillates and cigars began to be followed in an analytical way by our Team. The aim was to match our beloved cigars with very different whiskeys and rums available in the worldwide market, each time asking us a specific question and demanding an answer. The following lines aim to report what we have tried during this investigation, what we liked and, on the other hand, the experiences that we have judged, at least, questionable.

Just one key clarification. We agreed that a pairing could be defined as successful when both products, in addition to maintaining their characteristics, were improved or otherwise transformed when enjoyed together. If you combine very dissimilar products, such as a triple distilled, 40% ABV whiskey with evanescent and fruity hints (e.g. a Tullamore DEW) to a Nicaraguan with a very marked strength and a very spicy character (e.g. a Plasencia Alma Fuerte), the pairing could be pleasant if your priority was to appreciate the cigar, but it would return almost exclusively the cigar itself, with minimal variations, as the distillate would disappear almost completely. This pairing, according to our parameters, would be considered unsuccessful. Each time a specific aspect will be examined, always a different one.

Part 1 - Strength, character, ABV.

In many "guides" to pairing and in the reviews of the combinations there are generalities, often spelled out in a superficial way; one of the typical assumptions to not recommend using any distillate of high ABV in pairings, but to direct ourselves mainly towards products with minimum alcohol content for the distillate (40% or similar). A first criticism that we would like to address to this simplistic statement is that no distinction is made between the various cigars that can be selected. It is out of tune, in our opinion, not to separate intense Nicaraguan tobacco (as is often found between the product lines of Padron, Joya de Nicaragua, Plasencia) from products such as a delicate Davidoff of the Classic Line. But let us go more in detail and give you what our experience has been. The selection phase of cigar and distillate is the one that requires the highest level of experience, but also an accurate analysis. The ideal would be to have already tested

both the products that you want to pair. If, however, this is not possible, CigarsLover and SpiritsLover offer, thanks to the numerous published reviews, a good reference database. Thus let us start with the cigar, and imagine having to select a whiskey that acts as a good match.

The factors to look at are first of all those concerning the "strength" of the cigar. It is of utmost importance to distinguish between strength and aromatic character: does the cigar have an intense aromatic profile, rich in well-defined flavors and aromas, or is it particularly strong (perhaps at the larynx) and nicotinic but not very aromatic? There are cigars that have a very rich and characterized profile, but whose strength is little more than average, such as an Opus X or a Highclere Castle Victorian. Other references are truly "full-bodied" ones, including Plasencia Alma Fuerte or The Wiseman Maduro. The reviews of the CigarsLover Team explicitly report in a table the strength of the cigar, not only the one declared by the producer, but rather the results of the cigar once tested in the field in blind tastings. The body of the review also allows us to understand what depth and richness distinguishes the aromatic palette. Now we come to the whiskeys to match.

Rather than just looking at the ABV as a limiting factor, our experience also recommends considering how much the distillate has been characterized by the barrel aging, that is, how intense it is in aromatic terms. You can meet whiskeys (especially products matured in ex-bourbon barrels) that have a high ABV, but are creamy and fragrant, velvety, which have different pairing potentials compared to young distillates totally characterized by the influence of first filling barrels, perhaps ex-sherry.

In our opinion, cigars of medium-high strength and good body allow you to experiment among spirits which are reasonably marked in terms of aromatic imprint, such as some Speysider of high ABV (Glen Elgin, Glenallachie, The Balvenie, Longmorn for example). In these cases, high ABV should not be an insurmountable problem in itself. Young and rather marked distillates, with high ABV, find excellent support in full-bodied tobacco. The pairing is often balan-





ced, each product is recognizable but changed and enriched, a result that would be impossible with light tobacco. On the other hand, triple distilled and minimal ABV whiskies would leave little or nothing to the cigar's smoke experience. Surely selecting a cask strength distillate we run the risk of having a very intense product, but a first filling ex-sherry product will be even more "overpowering" for the cigar, and will obscure it more easily.

Satisfying and very structured cigars, true full-bodied powerhouses, are instead seduced by whiskies whose sweetness is evident, such as bourbons or scotches that have benefited from a finish in virgin barrels, nowadays rather fashionable. Bourbon in particular has a real predisposition to attenuate sometimes rough notes of cigars without compromises, with its marked sweetness and intense caramel. Do you want to pair an Antaño by Joya de Nicaragua? Sherry monster (Kavalan, Glendronach or Glenfarclas), no matter if it is PX, Oloroso or Fino, bourbon or virgin barrels. Have you just opened a round and creamy Larceny, a delicious Uigedail, or a balsamic Eagle Rare 10yo? Opt for a Plasencia Alma Fuerte or a Bolivar Belicoso Fino, or a Balmoral Anejo. You will not regret it.

The only recommendation is instead to be made regarding cigars whose aromatic palette is deep, refined, sophisticated and at times almost "rarefied"; do you want to preserve the best vanilla notes of a Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No.2? Should the almost tea-leaf hints of a Por Larranaga Galanes continue to stand out? In our opinion, these intentions suggest it is better to select distillates not only of ABV 46% at most, but above all to avoid ex-sherry barrels if not refill and in products with long aging, as well as fashionable finishes in port or red wine. Better a traditional Highlander, whose mineral and herbaceous notes can bring out your favorite aromas from your beloved tobacco.

In essence, more than to ABV only, it is advisable to pay attention to how much the barrels are characterizing the spirit and how intense the aromatic imprint of whiskey is, since it is this that specific aspect which could cover and overshadow all the gustatory effects of tobacco.



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Stolen Throne

*Make your own seat
at the table*

by **Michel Arlia**

Stolen Throne is a very young brand that has generated a lot of buzz among cigar lovers. It has done so by smokers spreading the word the good old-fashioned face to face conversations. We talked to Lee Marsh, one of the founders, about the brand's success and much more.

How did you meet your business partner JR and how were you guys introduced to cigars?

JR and I met through work. We both worked for a local city organization and formed a bond over our love of cigars and sports. We both had that cliché family member that introduced us to our first cigar. JR spent time with his brother-in-law telling stories and enjoying cigars. Me, I had my uncle. Both JR and I never knew what that would lead to, but the fire was sparked (no pun intended) by loved ones.

Was there a specific moment when you decided that you wanted to create your own brand?

Over the years of our friendship, JR and I spent most of our time smoking cigars and making observations of what we liked and, more importantly, didn't like. That led to discussions of what we would do differently or how we would go about certain aspects of the business. Then, we started traveling to different factories and farms in the Dominican and Nicaragua just to learn the life cycle of the products we loved. So organically, that passion and urge to take a chance grew and grew, and finally, JR said, "It's time to get off your ass and make this happen". The next week we were on a plane to Texas, then Nicaragua.

Factoring in the looming FDA regulations at the time and the cigar industry already being a saturated market, did

you guys have any concerns regarding how you were going to do and stand out?

Absolutely! It's easy at this point to look back and say we knew it all along. That wasn't the case. We have always believed in what we were doing and how we were doing it but, with an elastic product, the biggest obstacle will always be getting your product into the hands of the consumer. That partnered with pending less than transparent regulations, we knew we were taking a risk, but there are a million reasons not to do something, and we are not people who allow what might happen dictate what we choose to do. The risk of what if we do was easier to live with than the potential guilt of what if we don't even try.

You guys officially launched the company in 2018. How was the journey up to that point, and what did you guys do leading up to that?

A LOT of preparation. As you stated, we started the company officially in 2018, but realistically the preparation started in about 2015. From being on farms to touring factories, the learning process started much earlier. We also spent a lot of time and effort developing legal strategies and making as many preparations as possible to ensure the company could be flexible and maintain operations no matter how the pending regulations would go.

All of your cigars are made at the Rojas Cigar Factory in Esteli, Nicaragua. What was the decisive factor that you chose to work with him?

It was very easy to choose Noel. We were lucky enough to have some options of who to work with, but our decision came down to one real factor, control. Noel was pretty much the only person we met with that was willing to let JR and I completely control our process from tobacco selection to blending, everything. That was non-negotiable for us. If we were going to take this risk on the company, we needed it to be something we created from scratch and believed in. We didn't want something that was pre-produced and slap our label on it and then push it to the consumer. That's not being different or authentic. More than just the production side, though, Noel has become my mentor in tobacco and cigar manufacturing, and that has become paramount to our success and how Stolen Throne got here and where it is going.

The theme of the brand has a medieval inspiration. What does Stolen Throne stand for, and what do each of the names of the lines (Crook of the Crown, Call to Arms, Three Kingdoms) represent?

Stolen Throne represents standing up for yourself and what you believe in—making your own place in this world. As we have covered multiple times in this interview, this cigar market is saturated and full of elastic products, but that is no reason not to make your own seat at the table. It's about being different and believing we could be successful by not following or copying what others were doing. As far as the production lines are concerned, the line names all mean something different, the Crook basically just rolled off the tongue, but the Call to Arms was kind of like us answering the call to how do we follow up the Crook that was so well received? The Three Kingdoms was our third regular pro-



duction offering, and we sourced tobacco from three different countries for the blend.

Retail stores that carry your brand get a wooden cigar tray to showcase the cigars. Aside from that, you only package in bundles, no boxes. Did you guys already decide not to do boxes from the beginning, or was the bundles aesthetic born out of necessity?

It was out of necessity for sure. It made us more attractive to retailers. In the beginning, no one knew who we were, and we showed up asking for the retailer's most valuable asset, shelf space. By utilizing the retail box, we could maximize their earnings per square foot and allow them to offer 40 cigars in the same space that they previously offered 10 or 20 cigars. The bundles also allow for easier storage for consumers and retailers alike, plus it has added benefits to the aging process.

You just released your third core line, the Three Kingdoms. How did you guys approach each blend, and what makes each blend unique? How long was the process from starting with an idea and getting to the finished product?

Great question! My creative process is kind of like a pinball machine, all over the place (laughs). We approach each blend the same way, letting the tobacco guide the blend. Out of fear of missing out on what could be, I never set a

goal of making a Habano, Maduro, etc. I look at what tobacco we have available and start building from the inside out. The process itself varies. Usually, after I finish a blend, JR, the other folks in the company and myself smoke it for at least a year and a half before it goes into production. Sometimes longer. We have been working on the Three Kingdoms for almost three years. This allows us to follow the transitions of that blend over time to guarantee that uniqueness. We never want to have a predictable profile or have our offerings taste the same.

While being a young brand, you guys managed to generate quite the following, without much of a marketing push, in the classic sense. What do you accredit your success to?

Consumers! Without the support of our consumers, we aren't here. We started as consumers, and we wanted to make the company reflect that in every way possible. From engagement to transparency, it is all about our consumers and the retail partners they visit. The majority of our new accounts are generated by regulars at cigar shops demanding our product. We owe a lot to these retail partners as well, especially those who took a chance on a new start-up and have supported us along the way. We are very lucky.

The term boutique gets thrown around somewhat loosely in the cigar industry. What do you define as a boutique brand, and what does it take to be an authentic boutique brand?

This is a question I get asked a lot. I think it really comes down to an ethos. It's the approach in the way the company goes about their product. For me, we are boutique not because of size or the youth of the company but because every decision we make is about the quality of the product. I have always said that the day I worry more about the bottom line over the quality of the product Stolen Throne is producing, we are no longer boutique, and I will most likely call it quits. In terms of authenticity, it's very simple: live your story. If you tell people you blended your cigars or are selecting and buying your own tobacco, then make sure that is true. The consumers in today's market are undeniably intelligent, and their thirst for knowledge grows every day, giving them the uncanny ability to identify those being less than honest.

You guys are based out of Virginia, a state that has a long history of cultivating tobacco. Did you ever consider using some Virginia tobacco in any of the blends?

We defiantly considered it. However, the varieties readily available here don't really line up with what we are trying to achieve. We are experimenting with some stuff, though, so you never know! I think it would be very cool to get to a point where we could utilize some Virginia tobacco.

What have you guys planned for the future, and how do you imagine the brand to be ten years from now?

The immediate plan is to take care of some items we had to delay due to the pandemic. Like distribution to the EU and the Middle East, also we have some limited editions we had on hold. As far as ten years from now, my vision is just to keep doing what we are doing, bringing some pretty cool stuff to consumers.



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you experienced something
for the first time?



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BAR CORNER - RESERVOIR DISTILLERY - SOLERA: PLAYING WITH TIME - COCKTAIL: THE MOON WALK
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TOBACCO & WHISKY IN SAUCE - COFFEE RECIPES FOR SUMMER - MEXICO: MOLE POBLANO - FRENCH WINES

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. It is a thorny field, and often the results achieved are not what we expected and the pairing can give as much emotion as dissatisfaction if something goes wrong.

Cigar size: Robusto/Piramide/Toro. These are nowadays the standard formats of the market, offering a representative smoking experience for the various producers and terroirs. Technically speaking, they do not present particular challenges, yet they still offer a satisfying aromatic experience and allow to appreciate the evolution of the smoke in parallel to the tasting of the spirits.

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.

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PAIRING

Cigars
&
Spirits



HIGHCLERE CASTLE EDW. ROBUSTO

CREAMY

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ 14 € N/A
DIMENSIONS	
50 x 124 mm	
COUNTRY	
NICARAGUA	

Intense aromas of cedar wood, black pepper and barnyard are the first to tease the palate. The bouquet is then completed with leather and roasted notes of coffee beans. Nuances of cappuccino are perceptible in some puffs. We tried the pairing with two NAS (No Age Statement) rums coming from unique geographical origins: a Mauritian blended rum finished in Bordeaux wine casks and a Japanese agricole rum aged in American Oak casks.



POR LARRAÑAGA GALANES

ROUND

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ NA € 10
DIMENSIONS	
52 x 111 mm	
COUNTRY	
CUBA	

A recent release of the Cuban brand that is experiencing new glory thanks to the Regional Editions. The cigar offers notes of cinnamon, wood and Graham cracker, later enriched with black tea and spices, all with a medium strength. We tested two single malts with relatively delicate profiles, a more fruity and surprising Finnish and a more vanilla-oriented Speysider.



EIROA DARK 50X5

RICH AND INTENSE

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 12.8 € N/A
DIMENSIONS	
50 x 127 mm	
COUNTRY	
HONDURAS	

Intensely aromatic and persistent cigar. The smoke is sapid, with notes of wood and walnut, supported by a spicy character, where the black pepper stands out as protagonist. In the second half, it turns to leather and vegetable notes. Two very different products are tested in combination, a lightly peated Scotch and an Irish with an original finish; both of them, however, should balance the spicy notes of the cigar with sweet components.



EMPEROR CHÂTEAU

Pape Clement

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Mauritius	42% - 84	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Blend	-	-

It's a blend of Mauritian rums aged from five to twelve years that gets a finishing of five months in casks of Château Pape Clement, Bordeaux's oldest winery from 1252. The pairing with the Edwardian seems immediately strong: the rum's peppery spices covered by a light tone of caramel meet wondrously the pepper and the cinnamon of the cigar, followed by milk chocolate and sugared walnuts. The Emperor raises its intensity to the palate with a swift mineral note and a caramelized dry fruit, noble wood, and sherried undertones, while the cigar matches them with a creamy smoke of lemon custard and a surprising combination of sweet and spices elevated on a base of roasted cashew. The finale is perfect with the rum and the cigar paired on notes of Irish coffee, toasted dry fruit, salted caramel, and hot chili chocolate.

Pairing score	95
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NINE LEAVES

Angel's Half American Oak Cask

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	50% - 100	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Pure Cane Juice Rum	-	

This rare Japanese rum comes from the small distillery in Otsu, near to Lake Biwa east of Tokyo, made from unrefined sugar cane juice and aged in American oak casks. The Nine Leaves is an agricole rum marked by Japanese minimalism with hints of peach flowers and vanilla that gracefully follow a light visou, while the Edwardian answers with pepper and light notes of milk chocolate that fill the senses without faults. To the palate, the pairing moves to notes of banana, cappuccino, and toasted dry fruit perfectly balanced by the slightly sulfurous character of the rum that evens out the sweetness in excess. Both products showcase long persistence that leaves a clean palate replete with memories of caramel chocolate, roasted peanuts, and tiramisù.

Pairing score	94
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TOMINTOUL

Tlath

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	40% - 80	\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	-	ex-bourbon

Recent release of great delicacy, with notes of toffee, vanilla, malt and butter biscuits. It adds a dimension of aromatic herbs that gives depth. The finish is just slightly spicier, but always elegant. The approach to the nose is gentle and successful; the sophisticated wood and the black tea of the cigar dance with the fresh side of aromatic herbs of the distillate, as if dehydrated fruit and a more citrus tone also appeared in the tea. On the palate the interesting combination continues; there is a freshness, again citrus, light and floral that envelops wood and tea, making it more sophisticated. Cinnamon plays with white pepper. The basic ABV allows the cigar to express its potential, losing a certain dryness. The finish is clean and very short, as expected, just a refined sigh.

Pairing score	90
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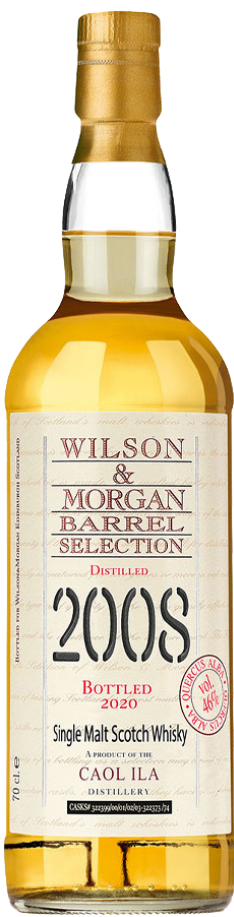
TEERENPELI

10 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Finland	43% - 86	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	10 Years Old	ex-bourbon, ex-sherry

Released in 2015, this single malt uses only Finnish barley, and returns a velvety aromatic profile with fruit and zest of lemon, malt and drop of honey. On the palate it is warmer, with white pepper and sweet spices, and then resumes the fruity character of the nose and concludes with a creaminess that turns on the finish in slightly more savory tones. The nose of the whisky is here more confident and bold, with the baked apple and apricot that spread on the wood, giving creaminess but pushing the refined black tea into the background. The palate is more enveloping and creamy, well integrated but less evocative; the fruit compote with vanilla of the whiskey enhances the white pepper of the cigar, still the tea is less evident. More anonymous than the previous one, yet enjoyable.

Pairing score	88
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WILSON & MORGAN

CAOL ILA 2008 “QUERCUS ALBA”

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46 % - 92	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	12 Years Old	ex-bourbon, virgin oak

A fresh, briny and mineral whisky, yet endowed with remarkable vanilla and banana on the nose. The palate has more fruity notes, like banana bread with burnt crust, and then adds pecan and a return of elegant and discreet peat. In the end, the dichotomy between sweetness and salinity reigns. Although distinct, the noses integrate well, with the creaminess to tie the whole, leather and black pepper on lemons that burn on embers. On the palate the composed sweetness makes the spiciness more sophisticated and deep. The freshness of lemon cleanses the palate. A very pleasant, leather background, with slight sapidity comes at last. Dissimilar, but complementary and stimulating pairing.

Pairing score	89
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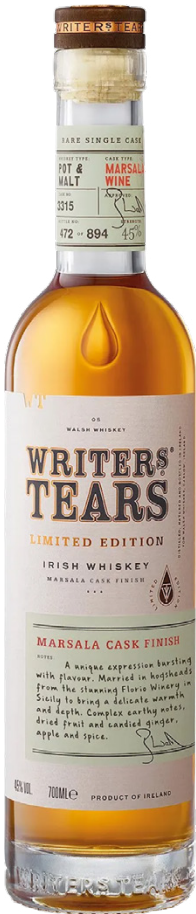
WRITER TEARS

Florio Marsala Cask Finish

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	45 % - 90	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Blend	-	ex-bourbon

Interesting finish, good aromatic intensity. Fairly deep dram, with very ripe fruit on the nose and sticky sweetness of caramel, vanilla and maple syrup. On the palate it envelops peppery and sapid, and then explodes in fruity tones slightly "dirty" but warm and tasty, honey and thick caramel. In the finish leather and cedar wood. Interesting pairing, with animal notes that marry well with the leather notes. Delicious semi-sweet raisins, like in a bakery product. On the palate the sweetness rounds the spices, giving an enjoyable caramel, at the price of covering the tobacco at times. Spices still sting, but only sometimes. Very clean finish, maybe too much. Spirit is more impactful on the cigar than with the Scotch.

Pairing score	88
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SPIRITS

“I miss being in Barbados in December,
That is a time I always remember,
The smell of varnish on the wooden floors,
And the smell of paint on the wooden doors
The crowds in the Supermarket,
Buying up the rum,
And the music blasting
Puh rup a pum pum.”
Charmaine J Forde

Shaken, not stirred

*From the iconic phrase by agent Bond,
to the drinks protagonists of the big screen.*

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**



real protagonists of the film.

Not just secret agents or daring bartenders have been the perfect partners of alcoholic beverages. In the history of cinema many have been the lady protagonists who find themselves sipping drinks without losing charm and femininity. Holly Golightly, protagonist of the 1961 movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, based on the 1958 novel of the same name by Truman Capote, starring Audrey Hepburn, is immortalized while drinking a White angel, an iced mix of vodka and gin in equal parts, served in a cocktail cup. If, on the other hand, you prefer blondes, let yourself be overwhelmed by the beauty of a woman with a Manhattan, a drink based on rye whiskey, red vermouth and bitter angostura. This is the drink served in a cold cup to Marilyn Monroe in *"Some Like It Hot"*, a 1959 movie directed by Billy Wilder, considered one of the best comedies in the history of American cinema. The film won an Oscar and three Golden Globes and several awards including the Golden Globe to Marilyn for Best Actress in a Comedy or Musical film. The Manhattan did not win awards but, while remaining an icon of world mixology, can boast of having been caressed by Marilyn Monroe's lips.

From great classics to true masterpieces of black and white cinema. *Casablanca* is one of the most famous movies in the history of Hollywood, a film that speaks



The construction of a literary or cinematographic character cannot be separated from the several different details and eccentricities, which are able to cast a particular spell on the audience.

While literary works allow the reader to spend considerable time imagining and dreaming about the protagonist of the events, in the world of cinema this imaginary space is much more limited in time and consequently the reasons of the success of that characterization changes dramatically. Since the time given to the audience to interpret and analyze a character is much shorter, bold characters are more frequent. In these cases, the details become even more than important: a particular slang, a typical piece of clothing, a cigar and, even, a drink... even better a cocktail.

In this last aspect, cinema has presented many characters in the act of sipping their own drink. "Their own" not because they drank it at a specific moment of the movie, but because, at times, it seemed like that specific drink was created precisely for that character, without which much of the charm of the protagonist would have evaporated.

Perhaps the most iconic could be the Martini cocktail drunk by James Bond, a British secret agent invented by Ian Fleming in 1953 for the first novel *Casino Royale*.

What agent 007 usually drinks is called a Vesper martini, the twist on martini cocktail (a drink created using solely gin and vermouth). The Vesper in the movie is made with London dry gin, vodka and Kina Lillet (fortified wine produced in France, currently no longer produced and replaced by the similar Lillet Blanc). In the novel the cocktail seems to be dedicated to the memory of Vesper Lynd, bondgirl with whom agent 007 had fallen in love. What arises the attention of the public, however, is the request for the mode of service of the drink, which has become an iconic phrase: "shaken, not stirred". A request, any experienced barman can confirm, somewhat bizarre, given that the tradition wants the Martinis to be strictly mixed in a mixing glass. But would it be prudent to correct a secret agent with a license to kill?

If we talk about love we cannot forget *Cocktail*, a movie directed by Roger Donaldson in 1988, starring Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown and Elisabeth Shue, a film that made one or perhaps more generations of bartenders fall in love. The protagonist, a young Tom Cruise, is a budding bartender, struggling with the experimentation of the first flair tricks, who began his career wearing the first classic bar shirt up to the first tiki shirts of the cinema. In this movie a series of cocktails are made famous, some that are still very often requested at the bar counter such as Bloody Mary, Gin&Tonic, Cuba Libre, Whiskey&Soda and Margarita, consecrating them as the





a table of a nightclub together with two policemen and, almost taking by surprise the diligent partners on duty, offers them Orange Whips. It is not yet certain whether the joke was included in the script or was an improvisation of Candy, the fact is that it comes at the right time, breaking the silence of the scene and tearing a smile from the viewer. The drink is based on vodka, rum, orange juice and liquid cream, prepared in a blender to mix the ingredients together, to be then served in a tumbler.

From the overwhelming blues atmospheres to the psychedelic frenzy of Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, starring a very young Johnny Deep, a partygoer and out of orbit as well as party-oriented and pseudo tropical is the Singapore Sling, the cocktail that delights Depp and Benicio Del Toro. The drink is based on gin, apricot brandy, triple sec, stretched with pineapple and lemon juice and a few teaspoons of grenadine syrup, all finished with angostura. Everything is then shaken and served in a high tumbler, garnished with slices of orange and maraschino cherry. In the 1998 film, Raoul Duke (played by Depp) demonstrates a strong inclination for Singapore Sling, whom he prefers to drink with Mezcal aside, distillate not present in the original recipe.

It is almost impossible not to mention the White Russian, more than a mere cocktail, without which the

character of The Dude in The Great Lebowski would not be the same. For Jeffrey Lebowski, called The Dude (played by Jeff Bridges), the White Russian is not a simple drink but a real lifestyle, "to toss down" in a night gown or to take with him as a companion of his own adventures or rather misadventures. Made with vodka, coffee liqueur and fresh cream it is served in an ice-filled tumbler. Also interesting is its alter ego "Black Russian" for which no cream should be added.

Modern and current is also the Cosmopolitan, a drink made famous by Sex and the City, directed by Michael Patrick King featuring Sarah Jessica Parker, Jason Lewis, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon. The Cosmopolitan in the movie and TV series is the favorite cocktail of the most fashionable girls in New York: Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda usually consume it during their meetings, not without indulging in a good dose of feminine gossip and confidences. The ingredients of the Cosmopolitan are vodka, triple sec, lime juice and a few drops of cranberry juice. To be served, of course, in the trendiest of glasses: the Martini glass.

The list of cocktails that have become famous thanks to movies or that have embellished the characterization of a protagonist is certainly wider than those reported here. Maybe it could be fun to find them all.



of love, sacrifice, war and hope and that, despite its years, still manages to conquer generations of cinephiles. A bit like the Champagne Cocktail, a drink that the two protagonists sip sitting at the table of a bar: drink based on brandy and champagne, with a slice of orange and a lump of sugar wet with a few drops of Angostura and ... "Here's looking at you, kid" (Cit. Rick).

From the refinement of the past to the ostentatious and more sumptuous one of The Great Gatsby, a 2013 film directed by Baz Luhrmann, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Carey Mulligan and Tobey Maguire. This movie can make you drunk even just for the rivers of champagne and Martini cocktail that you will see enjoyed, but it has two noteworthy drinks that stand out: the Gin Rickey (based on gin, lime and soda), (also a favorite drink of the author F. Scott Fitzgerald) and the Mimosa, based on orange juice, made in the film thanks to a huge citrus juicer that is filled with a champagne top.

Another leap in the history of cinematography: The Blues Brothers. Although it is remembered for an immortal soundtrack, for the illustrious participations of great musicians and for one of the greatest car chases in Hollywood, a small cameo was cut out for a cocktail, the Orange Whip. The scene is the one in which, during the stalking of the two Blues brothers, the police commander Burton Mercer (played by John Candy) sits at





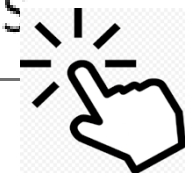
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Whisky in your pocket

In fashion between the 80s and 90s, this unique bottle is slowly coming back, and not only among smokers

by **John Jeremy**

Flasks were common to businessmen, professionals, lovers of good living, smokers, and non-smokers. They used to bring them full of their favorite spirits, for what today is usually defined as daily dram.

Over the years, however, its use has become less and less common for various reasons. Indeed the boom in lounges and cigar lounges made it redundant (for someone almost considered poor taste) to bring alcohol with you, which could still be bought at the same place. In addition, the daily frenzy, which had already reduced the time devoted to smoking (it is no coincidence that the cigars became smaller and fatter), almost canceled the time dedicated to having a quick drink, and especially the one for emptying and refilling the flask before leaving the house. In addition to this, drinking spirits far from meals or after meals did not put the holder

in a good light in some countries. However, we are seeing a resurgence of the spirits flask market. Several companies, including the ones in the cigar sector, offer this accessory especially to cigar lovers, also due to the pandemic time, that have drastically reduced the access and carefree use of cigar lounges. The flasks are usually in steel, and they differ in shape, size, and, obviously, by brand, with a consequent change in price.

Their use is undoubtedly a habit for those who do not intend to give up their daily dram, especially when you are away from home or from a place where you can taste an appreciable distillate. The only suggestion for purchasing concerns only the capacity: if you usually travel by plane, be careful to buy one that respects the limits imposed by airport regulations so as not to greet them at boarding.



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Rum Nation

*A talk with the team
behind the best rum of 2021*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Rum Nation is a brand we featured a few times in 2021 blind tastings, and each one of their products scored greatly. One of their bottlings, the British Guyana 7 Years Old Cask Strength, won the best Rum of 2021 Awards. We had the pleasure to talk with Mads Hviid Carlsen and Ole Izard Høyer, respectively Rum Nation's Director and Marketing Manager.

Rum Nation has more than 20 years of experience in the rum world. What were your major developments?

Mads Hviid Carlsen: Rum Nation was spawned in 1999, led on by the concept of bringing together a selection of the best rums from various countries under one new series. But leading up to that point required a series of major developments. Our founding father, Fabbio Rossi went to Scotland to visit whisky distilleries, sample barrels and strike com-

mercial agreements and during visits to whisky brokers' warehouses, he started to notice several old barrels of British Guyana and Jamaican rums, stacked near the single malt ones. Seeing and tasting those rum barrels sparked an idea that stayed in his mind since then. Years later, having never forgotten those tastings, Fabio Rossi asked Silvano Samaroli for advice, and Mr. Samaroli educated Fabio Rossi about the different rum styles and gave instructions as to how he should make his first steps into the rum business. This was how the first barrels were bought and bottled and due to the huge difference in geographical styles a different approach was required and Rum Nation was born.

How much did the rum world change? How have you been facing these changes over the past years?

Mads Hviid Carlsen: we have always sought out the highest

quality of barrels of rum, especially within our Rare Rums Series and our special limited editions, such as the British Guyana 7 Year Old Cask Strength. We continue to work hard to seek out and buy these casks whenever possible to remain consistent in the quality of rum that we produce. So, you could say, that since we started to introduce our rums to the market, the consumer awareness of this sort of quality was not as particular as it has become over the more recent span of our company's existence. In other words, for us the world of producing rum has not changed as we have always strived to produce rum of the highest quality, but for the rum consumer, the rum world has taken a turn towards higher awareness and appreciation for quality products – which for us is only a good thing, and we receive more and more positive feedback from consumers who enjoy the rum that we produce.

What changed after the establishment of Rum Nation International A/S? Do you have plans for a more global outreach?

Mads Hviid Carlsen: nothing but the ownership of the company has changed. Today Rum Nation is part of the Mac Y Group A/S, who purchased Rum Nation in November 2018, and Rum Nation International A/S was born. Both have long standing ties to Rossi & Rossi and have worked together for many years. Even though the company's ownership has changed hands, the partnership with Rossi & Rossi continues. Our rums are currently being sold in more than 40 countries, so for sure, having a global outreach is part of our strategy.



What's the process behind a Rum Nation product, from the primary ingredients to the final bottling?

Ole Izard Høyer: without going into too much detail about the process behind each Rum Nation product (because we don't want to give all of our company secrets away), this process consists of five main steps to obtain the highest quality possible. Sourcing the rum according to the style in question; choosing the best possible casks; tasting to get the profile we want; ageing the rum; quality check and analysis of the final product; and then finally bottling to get the finished product to the consumer.

You let the rums mature both in the country of origin and then in Europe. Do you follow these steps for all rums?

Ole Izard Høyer: the topic of maturation in two phases is very important for us. One, we mature our rums at sea level and tropical temperatures, thus very fast, and second in Europe (Britain or Italy according to the product) which is much slower. The first is more intense, it helps the distillate to lose the "young" notes and to take up sweetness and fruitiness (also thanks to a large percentage of ex-bourbon barrels). The problem is that after some years under the Caribbean sun, alcohol levels fall too low and the wood starts to dominate. Here the second phase comes to our aid, letting the subtler aromas come out slowly and allowing us better control of the flavour profile by means of different barrel sizes, smaller or larger according to how much we want to have oak influence on the rum or simply let it rest and soften up,



leaving time to work its magic on the distillate rounding it up with the elegance that only a long wait can give. In this second phase we can play freely, like tailors, to shape our bottlings according to our taste, and it's as important as the choice of distillate coming out of the stills. We are helped by our experience with whisky (since we were pioneers in wood finishes), and by the network of Spanish bodegas which has been supplying us for several years with used sherry and Pedro Ximenez barrels (expensive but of superlative quality) in which we often transfer our rums for this second phase in Europe. Finally, of course, there is another critical moment in which art and experience are required to create a balanced and aromatically complex rum: the blending. Having an array of barrels with different levels of maturation and kinds of wood from which to assemble the final blend, it's fundamental to taste and compare for weeks to end up with an optimal equilibrium in the bottle. We want to remain true to the spirit of the country of origin, and at the same time offer an exciting rum to our customers.

Can you tell us a bit about your best rare limited rums?

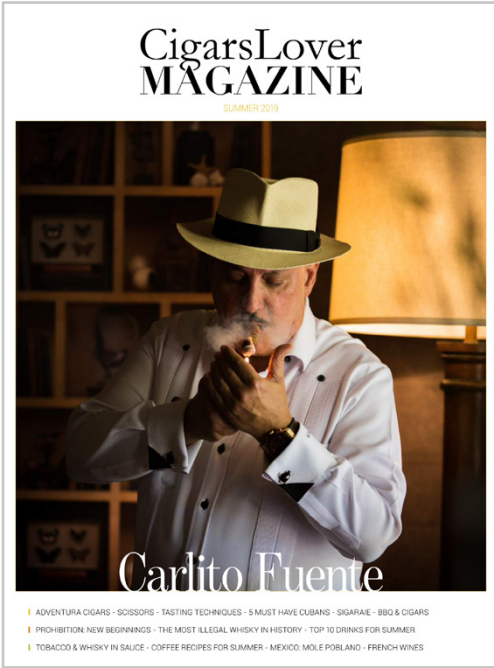
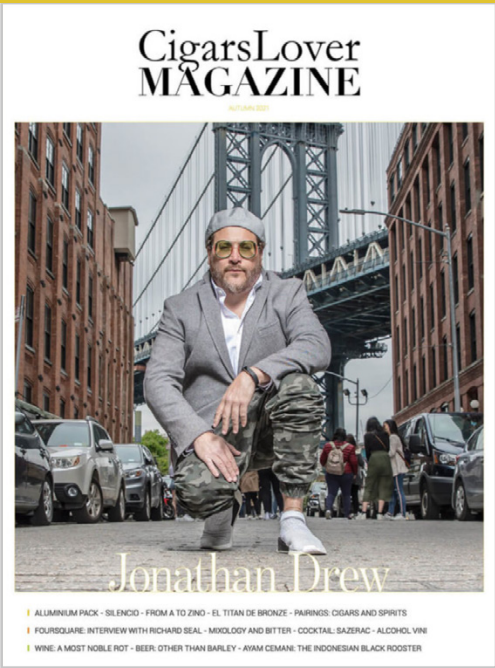
Mads Hviid Carlsen: first off, we have our Rare Rums series. Touching upon what has previously been mentioned about consumers becoming more and more particular when it comes to high quality level rums, connoisseurs are demanding to know more of the background of each bottle: to know the distillery, to be able to taste rums at cask strength and from limited batches, to have more and more rums which put the accent on 'being different' on top of being of the highest quality. Thus, our Rum Nation Rare Rums series was added in 2016. One very recent example of this that could be highlighted is our Versailles 30 Year Old 1990 – 2021. Its bottled at 56,8 % ABV and comes in a 50 cl bottle limited to 348 bottles in total. It's a wonderfully intense and heavy rum from a traditional single pot wooden still. It has a flamboyant nose full of funky esters, farmy notes and a slightly winery touch inherited by the short finishing in a sherry hogshead which had previously contained Scotch Whisky. It's a fat, wild and unruly rum, with the edges smoothed out by the age, but still quite unpredictable. The long influence from the oak is noticeable in the thick tannins, which nonetheless still allow the pungent style of the distillate to shine. Then we have our special limited editions. Here, our British Guyana 7 Year Old Cask Strength, which won your 2021 award is one very good example of this. Briefly aged in the Tropics and then in a



continental climate with the use of second fill sherry casks, this blend of fatter rums from a 250 years old wooden pot still and lighter ones from a double wooden column still retains all the richness of Demerara sugarcane: a nose of ripe dates, sweet tropical fruits, chocolate and cigar boxes. Dry and clean in spite of its raisiny richness and estery intensity, it's loaded with pepper and cinnamon: explosive and hot. winery touch inherited by the short finishing in a sherry hogshead which had previously contained Scotch Whisky. It's a fat, wild and unruly rum, with the edges smoothed out by the age, but still quite unpredictable. The long influence from the oak is noticeable in the thick tannins, which nonetheless still allow the pungent style of the distillate to shine.

Rum Nation developed a solid core range of young/middle-aged spirits. Can you describe how you have built it? Was it a matter of finding the right spirits or did you develop a more structured strategy with your suppliers?

Ole Izard Høyer: for us at Rum Nation, you could say that age is not important. This might sound like quite a controversial thing to say for a company that just explained the main process is that of sourcing, producing and ageing rum. To elaborate, for us making a particular rum is not about reaching a certain age. Instead, we want to get just the right flavour profile and some rums require a higher age to reach that profile and some require a lower age. This is also why in our portfolio of rums that you will find many younger aged rums, simply because we find that these rums are spot on at that age. Another important point to make here is the broad array of expressions, styles, and flavour profiles that we try to showcase with the Rum Nation range. The wide selection makes our rums appeal to more than just one key target market. Within the core range we have rums that are perfect introductions for people just starting out, and we have rums for the more experienced connoisseur – and on top of that we have our Rare Rums series that consists of very limited bottlings of the best of the best that speaks to rum aficionados and collectors alike. We believe that an increase in demand for higher quality rums will be a driving factor in growth on the global rum market, also within the Millennials key consumers across the globe. Here, pricing will also be a main factor as these are consumers that seek out budget drinks in the premium category, and we believe that many of our entry level products at the Rum Nation range will match this key target audience quite well.



CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE

DISCOVER ALL ISSUES



INTERACTIVE

The Glendalough Variations

Wild foraging and small batches mark the new wave of Irish Gin

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Since its foundation in 2014, the new distillery in the Irish Glendalough Valley established itself as an avantgarde gin producer. Against, what was back then, the common understanding of gin as a commercial product for fast consumption, their key marks were from the onset wild foraging, small-batch bottlings, and a painstakingly careful distilling process.

Their passionate dedication to primary ingredients is grounded in the amazing natural surroundings of the distillery, the Wicklow Mountains, rich in precious savory botanicals and fresh water. Working with local foragers, who intimately know the natural growth of the precious botanicals in those lands, Glendalough obtains only the best harvests.

To make the most of these amazing ingredients, they developed a slow-distilling process to tease out the best flavors in small batches of 250 liters in their Arnold Holstein pot still. Each run is immediately processed within the first 24 hours without any sort of timed automation. So far, their range includes the Wild Gin, four seasonally inspired gins, and the Rose Gin.

The latter is arguably one of the most interesting new releases on the gin market.

Made with three varieties of rose petals – the rare Wild Roses come from the Wicklow Mountains while the Heritage and the Damask Roses are grown in the distillery's Rosengarten, this uniquely pink-nuanced gin is based on their Wild Gin with a further twist on the botanicals to exalt the rose flavors.

The result is a nose rich in juniper, citrus, fresh wild berries, and, obviously, luscious rose petals. The taste is much sharper and brighter than one would have expected. Besides rose petals, there are a lot of other forest-related botanicals playing out an important role in the mouth: pine, angelica, watermint, woodruff, yarrow, bark, elderflower, red clover, ox eye, daisy, wild raspberry, and many more.

The density of the botanicals gives the Rose Gin a very layered and intense profile. Indeed, drinking it neat or on the rocks is probably the best choice to appreciate its specialty nuances. At the same time, its peculiar characteristics, especially the color, make it a great twist on some classic cocktails like Aviation, Gimlet, Martini, and Tom Collins.

The only risk is to overload the sensory experience in a clash of bright botanicals; thus, the Rose Gin probably shines the most in a simple Gin & Tonic with a light tonic water that can help opening the complex layering of the gin.





Batanga

Despite the kitchen knife in the serving glass, it is a cocktail that was created to celebrate hospitality

by **Davide Pertino**

The catering sector has always been linked to the concept of hospitality, customer focus, and service. This is because a good product is not enough to ensure the customer's return to the same place.

In the world, there are many restaurants or cocktail bars that reflect the sense of hospitality to the extreme, thanks to finely cared for and luxurious interiors, atmospheres that pamper the customer, making him feel important.

Yet there are also places that, without pretending to be comfortable, reflect the meaning of love and sacrifice to the fullest, capable of returning an engaging experience. One of these is "La Capilla," a Mexican bar that

has a cult following, is a sacred place, a place of pilgrimage, a place whose soul has been, for over 60 years, Don Javier Delgado Corona.

La Capilla, which means the chapel, is a bar that exudes history and happiness, with an atmosphere that is very reminiscent of a disengaged circle of friends: walls with photos of friends, dusty bottles, plastic chairs and tables, only one fan attached on the wall and a lot, a lot of culture for a distillate that is love for one's land: tequila.

Many have wondered what made this place a point of reference for all bartenders, barmen, barladies, restaurateurs, and customers. The answer has been kept for over six decades by Don J.

His idea of a bar has always been the same; it has never changed despite the fashions and the passing of the years. He has confirmed himself as an example for all those who intend to approach his sector, catering. A few simple rules: smile when someone enters, allow him to sit where he prefers, and bring him a clean glass of a cold drink because he will be very thirsty. Almost always in La Capilla, the clean glasses contained the batanga.

In the early 1950s, Don Javier Delgado Corona, the owner and barman of La Capilla, in a town called Tequila in the Jalisco region of Mexico, created the Batanga. A drink prepared as a ritual, with cola, salt, lime, tequila and ... a knife. Don Javier is also considered the putative father of the paloma, even if he has repeatedly denied his creation.

As in the Paloma, we find the way and the spirituality of creating a drink in the Batanga. In the paloma the knife with which the citrus fruits are cut is used to mix the ingredients in the glass, while in the batanga the knife serves as a real "stir", that is a real tool, left in the serving glass to allow you to mix the ingredients directly. The same knife was used to chop not citrus or fruit but to prepare guacamole, to chop the chili, garlic, onion, tomatoes, and all the ingredients beneficial for the local cuisine. Thanks to this, batanga will never be a tequila-based drink similar to Cuba libre.

Don Javier left this world on February 28, 2020, at 95. Today life is much more hectic than it was fifty years ago when he used to prepare drinks behind the counter. In a time when everyone knew and greeted each other. When only old friends came in. When La Capilla was an unpretentious place with tables and chairs that vibrated to the sound of the speaker with too much volume. People at Capilla come and go, and with batangas or palomas, they become much more friendly and talkative. This is the most incredible timeless legacy that Don Javier left.

Batanga is an easy drink to prepare and easy to drink. It has an alcoholic part provided by one of the typical Mexican distillates such as Tequila, Mezcal, Raicilla or Sotol, an acid part to enhance the distillate used, a sparkling component to make it fresh and thirst-quenching and finally the salt which, used as a flavor enhancer, enhances the drink, making it pleasant on the palate. Batanga can be drunk in any season, but being born in a tropical area is perfect as a refreshing drink for hot and humid days.

Now, after reading these lines, I am sure that a knife in the glass will no longer suggest shady intentions than the bartender but, on the contrary, it will indicate a spirit of welcome and trust, perhaps atypical, but no less meaningless. All that remains is to ask (or prepare) a batanga to toast the memory of a man who has dedicated his life to the land and to love for his neighbor.

INGREDIENTS

- 40 ml of blanco tequila
- 10 ml of lime juice
- Cola top
- Sea salt

GLASS

High tumbler or collins.

PREPARATION

Pour all the ingredients into a tall and spacious glass, where you will have previously created a rim with salt. Add the ice and the knife to mix with which you will have cut some fruit.

ADVICE

For the rim of the glass, it would be enough to "dirty" the rim of the glass with lime and place it upside down in a bowl full of salt.

For the knife, use a long one with a wooden handle and a serrated blade because it is the one that manages to keep all the scent of previously cut citrus fruits.

TASTE

"There's something about having a great bottle of wine
and a great cigar. Nothing compares to it."

D. L. Hughley



Sunshine Dreaming

*From the heart of winter,
the most refreshing saison beers*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Originated in Belgium, saison beers are a style of top-fermented beers made with a variety of local rustic ingredients and wild yeasts. Also known as farmhouse ales, these beers were traditionally made during wintertime to be consumed later in the year, when temperature would make very difficult to handle wild fermentation and when a lighter alcoholic content would have made no difference.

Today, even if there is no need to wrestle with climatic difficulties, saison beers are once again a quite successful style, mainly due to the wide success that Saison by Brasserie Dupont achieved after the 1980s in the US craft beer movement. A lot of small breweries experimented with this style to celebrate seasonal changes with their faithful clients, especially in places where harsh winters give way to particularly warmer springs and summers – probably, the most beloved example is the Michigan-made Bell's Oberon.

Indeed, it's difficult to classify all these different saison beers under a unique umbrella: saison is rather a brewing philosophy that suggests experiments and variations. The common trait among these beers is the penchant for using a variety of local and rustic ingredients such as herbs, honey, fruits, and spices along with many different hops (with respect to other less hopped Belgian styles). They also exhibit a discreet

acidity (either with a sour mash or some lactic component): the main characteristics are drinkability and bottle refermentation, which means carbonation and, above all, yeastiness (what after all gives to these beers the traditional cloudy and rustic appearance). Nowadays, saison beers tend to have a slightly higher alcohol content and often a more pronounced bitterness, thanks to the improvement in hop cultivation and the demands for stronger and more flavorful beers (average IBU of 20/50° and ABV of 4.5/8% have certainly increased from the old days).

First brewed in 1844, Brasserie Dupont's Saison is still to this day the most representative beer of this family. Fresh, zesty, carbonated from the bottle refermentation, at 6.5% ABV, it is the quintessential saison beer for its perfect balance, exquisite drinkability, and tasty aromatic traits. This beer offers a lot of citrus notes (lime, orange zest, cedar), spring flowers, humid grass, and hay, that complement a dry and slightly sour profile characterized by the presence of Kent Golding hops in fermentation and of wild yeasts in the bottle. This beer is traditionally paired to hard Belgian cheese such as the Moinette Vieux but also to fatter ones like Italian taleggio or French brie. In any case, Dupont's Saison is so versatile that can perfectly pair any fish or meat dishes; bouillabaisse, moules, as well as steak & fries or the delicious spicy meals of Thai and Vietnamese cui-





sine. It's also a great beer to be enjoyed on its own, the characteristic that made it the reference of this style.

Another interesting Belgian example is Brasserie Dubuissin's. This beer was created in 2009 to capitalize on the popular student cocktail based on mixing the very strong Bush Caractère (12% ABV) with a rustic peach geuze. Using their heritage knowledge, Dubuissin came up with the strongest Belgian fruit beer (8.5% ABV) made with the same base of the Caractère with fresh peach juice and natural peach aromas. The result is a great combination of peach juiciness and sweetness, funky wild-yeast aromas of mango, citrus zest, and banana, a surprising palate-cleaning hoppy-bitterness, and a very strong and creamy body given by the high alcohol content. As always with Belgian beers, the traditional pairing is with cheeses (blue or sheep cheese, in this case), but the brewery suggest trying it with rare beef like a steak tartare, as the beer's peachy flavor is able to magnify the sauces that accompany the meat.

A third example the travelling brewery The Flying Dutchman recently brought forth a "winter saison", Never Eat the Yellow Snow. Inspired by Frank Zappa's song, this beer was developed to be enjoyed in cold weather rather than the summer heat, hitting stores usually around every November. Brewed with Mosaic, Centennial, and Citra hops, this beer is spiced up with lemon grass, orange zest, and coriander. Despite the light 5.3% ABV that doesn't seem particularly apt for cold weather, its flavorful character and dark color makes it extremely convenient for digesting the huge amount of food usually consumed during winter holidays while goofing off with friends and family in the warmth of the house.

These are just few examples of the variegated market of saison beers. As the market demand seems impossible to satisfy, the offerings grow constantly with daily additions from craft and industrial breweries that issue new products and try new experiments (from alternative cereals like rye, rice, or gluten free, to funky fruits that cross the line with sour fruit ales) to find that perfect balance so much treasured by the enthusiastic aficionados of this style. All in all, the keyword is always drinkability and freshness, so if your preferred beer should have these features, look for a saison!



CHOOSE WHO TO BELIEVE.

A MIRACULOUS LIE

*Inspired to the miraculous
and fraudulent remedies
sold by charlatans
in the 1700s.*

A BITTER TRUTH

*A craft amaro bitter,
made by infusion and
distillation of herbs,
spices and barks.*



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DRINK RESPONSIBLY



Palate, throat or belly?

*Eating something before smoking is always a good practice,
but it is necessary to avoid foods that are badly reconciled with smoking cigars*

by **Vincenzo Lopez**

It will have happened to everyone, to enter a place (bar, lounge, etc.) just to have a coffee or something quick to take away and be struck by the idea of indulging in a snack. Maybe you hadn't even thought about eating something, at least not before having caught your eye on a compelling display case full of small pastries, which even leaves you indecisive in the choice you didn't expect to be making.

The trigger, the fuse of our memories, and palatal associations often drag us away from the right "service" rules. The excessive supply of products of any shape and taste available at every juncture of the day allows us to discuss an important dilemma. What should be given preference when we decide to savor something before a smoke? To the explosive desire for taste bud satisfaction, the intense, salty rush, or the pampering of a sweet that we are fond of, even if we are about to sit down for lunch shortly after. On the other hand, "love, like gluttony, are pleasures of great satisfaction".

A little attention should be given to our belly, the real engine of our days. It depends on well-being, serenity, and the success of a working day spent in front of a laptop and driving, between hairpin bends and gear changes. Well-being, therefore, far-sighted thinking for the immediate future.

That same well-being that we should consider when we decide we want to associate food with smoking. It is well known that our much loved fermented and rolled leaves are a reason for great commitment for our gastric system, just as it is not recommended to smoke throughout the meal: a food and wine tasting with an attached cigar will hardly leave a trace in memory of one of the two experiences. Therefore a question must be addressed: is there a dish or food whose consumption is highly discouraged before smoking? As always, given that every time one ventures into the field of tasting, the different sensitivities and subjectivities make it difficult to generalize; I shall report mine as a chef (and aficionado) obsessed with

good cooking and the vitality of food. Excellent food benefits from a good assimilation of nutrients through the most appropriate choice of foods, based on availability and time. The first step to building an idea of what to avoid before smoking is exemplified in a straightforward formula: Acidic foods such as grapefruit, lemon, citrus juices in general, often used in aperitif drinks, heighten the perception of the mucous membranes with consequent alteration of the perception of the taste buds (think brushing your teeth after drinking orange juice). While the sugary delights, such as chocolate, which contains caffeine (albeit in a minimal part), the marzipan and refined sugar glazes, etc., can irritate the walls of the stomach causing a sense of gastric irritation. To illustrate, the enveloping taste of the sweet that we indulged in together with the first puff, perhaps with a sip of sparkling water in order to cleanse the palate, unfortunately, they are the decidedly wrong choice. As are hot and spicy foods, they will overburden the stomach which may not combine well with the addition of nicotine, not to

mention the strong and lasting impact spicy foods have on the palate. Our body needs to be warmed up before any specific activity. As for an engine, our "gears" should be oiled if possible with linoleic acids, fibers, cereal biscuits, noble dairy fats, and fermented by vegetable curds, all valuable allies for our smoke. A walnut kernel, almonds associated with fresh vegetables or kefir with sparkling water or an earl gray with foamed plant milk pave the way and prepare our "engine" for a smooth start. I must express a very personal choice, halfway between gluttony and well-being, easy to find and prepare; I love a clove of brie, perhaps accompanied, with organic pear jam made with unrefined sugar and peeled walnuts. I find this kind of combination ideal for a pre-smoke snack satisfying for the palate and "engine".

In essence, greater well-being and greater attention to the oldest and simplest associations are the most suitable choice, leaving the richest tastings of refined foods to other moments.



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SPIRITS

威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
你喝的是什麼

Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用名經常進行激烈分析，偶爾或熱情，幾乎一直是購買的主要吸引力。但足有一個更精確的細節，必須加深，能夠揭示許多有用的新聞，標量。

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

雙層單生產商以威士忌命名為威士忌這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們談論沒有“e”的威士忌：在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱擴大了蘇格蘭威士忌。雙層單威士忌也保留了單一威士忌的標量。一些蘇格蘭威士忌增加了生產區域，以強調產品的地域性。

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

歲”字樣，無論舊桶的劣化情況如何。公司有責任報告其他桶的年齡，但這不是強制性的。有時，您可以找到沒有年齡的威士忌：沒有恐懼，沒有修改後假單產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低3年威士忌的標量上。製片人選擇不掛年齡，這仍然是未知的：它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉悅。

在標籤上，始終報告酒精含量，必須至少為40%。在這個數字下我們不能說威士忌，如果等級更高，有時公司會報告“Cask Strength”（英國世界）或“Full Proof”（美國世界）：我們在沒有用水稀釋的產品存在。因此，好像它們只是從桶中直接。然而，無助使用也可以使用多種稀釋的威士忌的較低等級的木桶強度威士忌。



忌，特別是如單前者俱有一定的年齡。

*Un Chilled威士忌這個詞讓我們知道威士忌沒有被“冷過”，以及“沒有顏色”，或“沒有添加防腐”（或其他類似的詞），解釋說沒有添加防腐劑正顏色。

在特殊情況下，我們還可以找到所用桶的指示，甚至單桶桶的數量。這種情況經常發生在非常有限的版本中，這是在獨立裝瓶商的情況下使其成為購物的來源。此外，我們可以找到Single Cask或Single Barrel這兩種詞，它們強調了它的獨特性。另一個招牌是Small Batch，它仍然是一個更廣泛的概念：您可以從兩桶中取出，但仍比兩桶小一些（但一些例子：獨立桶Cadenhead的更嚴格為自己的小批量結合了兩個或三個桶，而與

本小灣沒有宣布使用的桶數量，但他們肯定會把更多的桶放在一起）。

在特殊情況下，它總是發現精神和強烈的日期，特別是當涉及到單個桶時：生產者想要強調精神在桶中花費的時間。

桶的組合符合精確的標準：您可以將來自同一釀酒廠，不同釀酒廠，甚至麥芽（大麥）和小麥（穀物）桶的麥芽威士忌混合在一起。在第一種情況下，沒有標籤（這是一種常見做法）。在第二種情況下，我們將有混合麥芽威士忌（今年將以標稱為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合），還有Grain Whiskies：這個術語是指由各種穀物生產的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到與流行飲料相關的名稱詞語，或者使用的唯一穀物（黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌）。

我們試圖解釋各種標量上最常見的術語，沒有絕對的紀錄。每個標量都與自己的事情。但是，遵循這些指導原則，在這個廣闊而獨特的世界中，它將更容易自找。

Not the usual sandwich

*Pastrami is a very popular sandwich in the States
but it has ancient European origins*

by **Vito Renna**

Without being cinephile fans or having seen "When Harry Met Sally...", the scene in which Meg Ryan, sitting at a table of the famous Katz's Delicatessen, simulates an orgasm so noisy that it attracts the attention of all the other visitors, remains iconic. At the end of her "performance" a customer tells the waiter, "I'll have what she's having". There is a sandwich with a sumptuous, delicious, and very inviting filling on her plate. Impossible to hold back the salivation watching that scene. It makes you want to teleport to New York and devour that preparation without even wondering what it is called or what it is. That red-colored, juicy, and melt-in-your-mouth meat is the infamous pastrami that in the States they serve with rye bread, a veil of mustard, and pickled gherkins on the side.

A sandwich so widespread in the States can make you think we are in the presence of one of the typical dishes of the American BBQ. Yet, although pastrami is a gastronomic specialty that has become a huge hit since it arrived in American cities, New York being the first place, with the migration of Romanian Jews in the second half of the nineteenth century, its history is very ancient and is to be found in another continent. The origins, in fact, can be identified first in the Middle Eastern and Turkish countryside, then in the Romanian ones, among the Jewish populations and kosher butchers.

The Jewish faith is famous for having very strict rules, even with food. The dishes must be prepared following very precise methods that allow the starting food to be cleaned. After this process, the food can be defined as kosher (or "kashèr" in Hebrew pronunciation). In Anatolia, today's Turkey, pastirma was prepared following the Kosher rules, with a method that allowed the meat to be prepared without cooking it but still allowing it to be preserved for a long time. That recipe later spread also among the Jews of Romania, changing the name to pastrama, which was made from goose meat.

Finally, it arrived in the USA, between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, at the height of the period of the great immigration to the New Continent. Many Romanian Jews settled in New



York. To revive their typical recipes, they had to revise their traditional recipe since geese in the States were not as common as in the Old Continent. The migrants were thus forced to adapt, replacing goose meat with the more readily available beef. It was at this precise historical moment that, perhaps due to assonance with American "salami", pastrama became today's pastrami.

Although consuming it in a sandwich may lead one to think that it is a simple and quick dish, in reality, pastrami has one of the longest and most complex barbecue preparations. Like any recipe, it is essential to start from a high-quality raw material: the ideal piece is the brisket, or rather, the part of the flat. It is necessary to start the preparation with a long brine in which to dip the flat. To prepare the latter, you need 2 liters of water, a 5 percent salt solution, to which black pepper, cinnamon, and fennel seeds must be added. Considering the long brine times and the related risks, the curing process is generally carried out, during which, with surgical precision, preservatives are added to the brine. If this is not already complex, it is also necessary to consider important factors such as the weight of the meat, the time of the brine, and the amount of water. Also, for this reason, there are ready-to-use preparations, such as, just to mention the most famous one used, the instacure # 1, based on salt and sodium nitrite.

After the days in the brine (from three to seven), the flat is immersed in water to allow dispersion of the excess salt. Immediately after, mustard is spread on both sides, and spices are applied. As a rub, you can opt for a mix of black pepper, pink pepper, and coriander, all in grains, which must first be toasted in a saucepan and then reduced to a very coarse powder. The cooking then takes place in a smoker, setting a temperature of 120/130 degrees and smoking with hickory chunks. When the bark is formed, the meat goes into the foil phase. Once it has reached 93 degrees, the critical rest phase starts. After the temperature has reduced, the piece is cut into slices of about one centimeter thick and then served with rye bread, a veil of mustard, and pickled gherkins on the side.

You won't be in New York, but Meg Ryan's simulated orgasm is guaranteed.

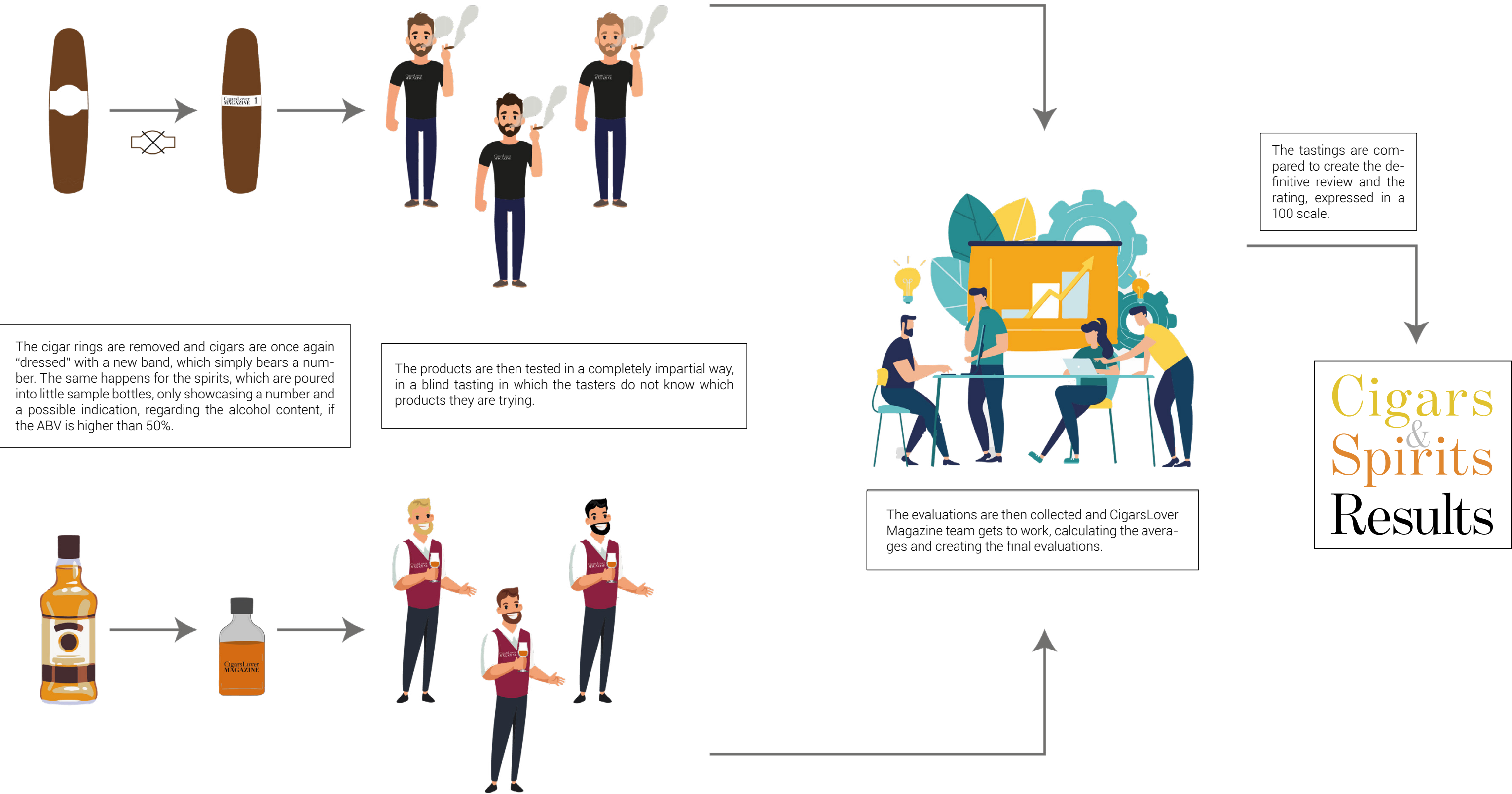
Blind Tasting



- 82 SPIRITS
 - 84 Rum
 - 90 Whisky
- 97 CIGARS
 - 98 Piramides
 - 102 Robusto
 - 104 Shorts
 - 108 Toro



HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?





1

KAVALAN
Solist Fino Sherry

2

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Taiwan	57.8% 115.6	\$\$\$\$

3

— NOSE —

Ripe fruit, with rich plum notes, together with honey and a mix of exotic fruit, including coconut. Then cocoa.

— PALATE —

Exotic fruit, caramel and honey, along with rich white pepper notes and orange zest.

— FINISH —

Long persistence. White pepper, cocoa and walnut. A touch of orange peel.

Complex and incredibly rich, it is a very satisfying whisky.

94

4

5

Legend

All the information in the blind tasting

To place the spirit inside an ample rating scale, we adopt a scoring system of 100 points. The rating of each spirit is made by the average given score by the reviewers. Blind tasting means every spirit is tested without knowing what it is. No information about the brand or origins is given. The reviewers only know if the spirit is above 50% ABV.

- 1 Spirit image.
- 2 Name of the spirit reviewed.

“yo” means “Year Old” and indicates how many years the product has been matured. If there is no indication of that, it is because the producer didn’t declare it.
- 3
 - COUNTRY: where the spirit is made.
 - ABV-PROOF: percentage of alcohol contained in the spirit.
 - PRICE:
\$ less than \$50
\$\$ between \$50 and \$100
\$\$\$ between \$100 and \$250
\$\$\$\$ above \$250
- 4 The tasting is divided into three parts: what is perceived to the nose, palate, and finish. The final rows describe the overall experience that brought to the rating.
- 5 Rating scale: 95-100 memorable and excellent in every detail. 90-94 great quality and highly satisfying. 86-89 high quality and very pleasant. 81-85 decent, delivering a good dram. Less than 80 not recommended.

SpiritsLover MAGAZINE

350+
SPIRITS
TESTED
YEARLY

Rum



The chosen 12

Seven country producer meet theirselves in this blind tasting, which includes cask strength rums that ranges from below 50 dollars to well above 250.

Results

Four of the twelve rums tested registered 90 points or above score. Two of them, both cask strength, distinguish themselves from the rest.



RUM ARTESANAL *Fiji 2001-2021*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Fiji	62.8% 115.6	\$\$

— NOSE —

Ripe tropical fruit (banana, carambola, pineapple), together with beeswax, vegetal tones, resin, and leather.

— PALATE —

Oily, sweet, and toasted, with candied tropical fruit, tobacco, mineral nuances, pepper, leather, resin, and balsamic notes.

— FINISH —

Long. Cocoa, coffee, mint, licorice.

Impressive in terms of strength and intensity.

93



FOURSQUARE *Sassafras*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Barbados	61% 122	\$\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Molasses, acacia honey, and ginger. After a few moments, hints of cocoa and orange peel.

— PALATE —

A riot of orange peel, cocoa, ginger, and spices. It turns out warm and balanced.

— FINISH —

Long, with notes of honey, cocoa, and orange peel.

Full-bodied and structured, with a well-defined and intense flavor profile.

92



MONTEBELLO *Zenga Vieux 6 Years Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	46% 92	\$

— NOSE —

Citrus, vegetal, fresh, mentholated notes, and a light visou. Spices and exotic candied fruit.

— PALATE —

Ripe sugar cane cloaked in smoky and herbal notes, marjoram, and candied citrus.

— FINISH —

Fresh and long with bitter orange, herbs, candied fruit, and cane juice.

The mix of herbal freshness and ripe tropical fruit makes it satisfying.

90



RASTA MORRIS
Bielle Ambre

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	52% 104	\$\$

—NOSE—
 Sweet aromas of raisin wine, honey, vanilla, and wood spices, together with a touch of cedar peel.

—PALATE—
 Enveloping with notes of wood and turmeric. Then spices, a hint of black pepper, and pan brioches.

—FINISH—
 Long, with spices, cinnamon, and turmeric.

Complex and endowed with a varied flavor profile, decidedly uncommon and structured.

90



HABITATION VELIER
Hampden 5yo 2016 H

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	62% 124	\$\$\$

—NOSE—
 Sponge cake, orange zest, and a hint of camphor. Herbal and floral.

—PALATE—
 Warm, dry, and spicy, with white pepper, noble wood, sour fruit, and balsamic candy.

—FINISH—
 Long. Orange, noble wood, custard, and balsamic notes.

Powerful and intense, it should be tasted carefully due to the high alcohol content.

89



DAMOISEAU
2008 Subprime Cuvée

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	47.9% 115.8	\$\$

—NOSE—
 Vegetal and herbal notes, with pine, resin, and olive brine. Then anise, cinnamon, and candied red fruit.

—PALATE—
 Peppery and spicy, with a bitter note of licorice. Spices, cumin, cinnamon, and herbs.

—FINISH—
 Less intense, with flavors of licorice, dried plums, and herbs.

Good elegance. Particular and interesting bouquet.

87



WORTHY PARK
4 vins 2013

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	52% 104	\$\$

—NOSE—
 Vegetal notes, followed by a mix of spices, cinnamon, and ginger. An echo of candied fruit. Gunpowder.

—PALATE—
 Seasoned wood and intense vanilla aromas. Candied fruit is confirmed, now flanked by honey. Then cereals.

—FINISH—
 Medium-long, with notes of seasoned wood and vegetables. A hint of leather. Slightly dry.

Rich and intense. Complex bouquet.

87



BOTRAN
Guatemalan Oak Rare Blend

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guatemala	40% 80	\$\$

—NOSE—
 Aromas of vanilla, caramelized nuts, noble woods, raisins, and sweetened strawberries.

—PALATE—
 Soft and drinkable. Candied red fruits, noble wood, and spices.

—FINISH—
 Balanced finish, dried fruit, citrus notes, caramel.

A gastronomic rum of excellent balance and a pleasant drink.

86



KIRK & SWEE-NEY
12 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Dominican Rep.	40% 80	\$

—NOSE—
 Hints of vanilla sugar, apple pie, sweetened almonds, and caramelized peanuts.

—PALATE—
 Sweet, very soft, dense, vanilla creme brûlée, honey almonds, and a vegetal touch.

—FINISH—
 Medium. Vanilla, almond paste, candied cherries.

Sweet, tasty, and well-balanced.

85



LA HECHICERA
Solera 21

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Colombia	40% 80	\$

—NOSE—
 Hints of marshmallows, together with scents of vanilla, cinnamon, nuts, and a touch of milk chocolate.

—PALATE—
 Round, with a delicate woodiness dominated by vanilla and caramel.

—FINISH—
 Medium. Toasted nuts, vanilla, and wood notes.

An easy to appreciate, velvety and straightforward, rum.

84



HEE JOY
Vsop Dominican Republic

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Dominican Rep.	41.6% 83.2	\$

—NOSE—
 Mineral and citrus notes, followed by vanilla and fruity aromas.

—PALATE—
 Caramel, vegetal notes, and a fruity touch. Then wood and orange zest. Rather dry.

—FINISH—
 Medium-long and confirms the wood, caramel, and spices.

Good intensity and good finish. Bouquet is not among the largest.

83



FLOR DE CAÑA
14 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Nicaragua	43% 86	\$

—NOSE—
 Spicy and roasted peanut hints, along with maple syrup and coffee.

—PALATE—
 The spices are confirmed with hot peaks, toasted nuts, wood, and molasses.

—FINISH—
 Caramelized nuts, spices, and toasted wood.

Traditional in its roundness and spiciness.

82

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Whisky



The chosen 12

Four producing countries have been selected for this blind tasting, including some new releases and some core range bottlings.

Results

A Scotch whisky reaches 90 points and scores higher than all the other products. It is a 2021 release, bottled cask strength, and with a 15-year-old maturation.



BENRIACH
15 Years Old 2005
Oloroso Sherry Butt

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	59.8% 119.6	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Fruity, with candied fruit, plums, and cherries in alcohol. Then ganache and a hint of petrichor.

— PALATE —

Clean and warm, with spices, licorice, red fruit, and petrichor. A touch of dark chocolate.

— FINISH —

Long persistence. Licorice, leather, and butterscotch.

Elegant and round, with a structured flavor profile.

90



COOPER'S CHOICE
Bunnahabhain Apple Smoke

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	56% 112	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Aromas of mineral peat, medicinal herbs, matchstick, and smoke. After a few moments, it is enriched with floral nuances.

— PALATE —

Peat stands out, with sweet notes of wood and pepper, cinnamon, and wood spices—smokey and salty.

— FINISH —

Long. Smokey and peaty. Toasted wood. Cinnamon.

Satisfying, with a large flavor profile. Intense.

89



DEANSTON
12 Yo 2008
Oloroso Cask Matured

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	52.7% 105.4	\$\$

— NOSE —

Rich aromas of sherry and red fruit, together with dark chocolate and a touch of mineral and orange peel.

— PALATE —

Sweet, with honey, figs, and orange peel, together with a spicy mix of cinnamon, ginger, and cloves.

— FINISH —

Medium long. Sweet, with figs, marzipan, and ginger biscuits.

Intense and structured.

88



REDBRESAT
 12 Cask Strength

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	57.6% 115.2	\$\$

— NOSE —

Yellow fruit, dehydrated apricot, and floral scents. Then nuances of cherry, wood spices, and balsamic herbs.

— PALATE —

Orange peel, seasoned wood, vanilla, and balsamic herbs. Honey. Enveloping.

— FINISH —

Medium-long, with wood, balsamic herbs, and honey.

Intense and satisfying, it is well structured.

87



STARWARD
 Fortis

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Australia	50% 100	\$\$

— NOSE —

Hints of red fruit, vanilla, and wood. Then cereal and malt biscuits. A touch of spice. Candied mandarin.

— PALATE —

Ripe tropical fruit and a mix of cinnamon, quince, and forest honeydew honey. Hints of vanilla. Toasted nuances.

— FINISH —

Medium long. Spices, vanilla, vermouth, tangerine zest. A hint of ginger.

Rather large flavor profile. Intense and satisfying.

87



GLEN SCOTIA
 2015/2021 Cask #871

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.1% 116.2	\$\$

— NOSE —

Cereal biscuits, together with fresh wood, vanilla, and spices. A balsamic touch and a hint of kirsch.

— PALATE —

A riot of spices, ginger, honey, and lemon zest. The vanilla is confirmed.

— FINISH —

Medium long. Spices, vanilla, and lemon zest.

Intense and masculine, but at the same time not that structured.

86



ABERFELDY
 15 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	43% 86	\$\$

— NOSE —

Fruity, with carambola and melon, together with a floral touch. After a few moments, raisins.

— PALATE —

Fruity notes with a good acidity, custard, yellow apple, and pineapple. Hints of ginger.

— FINISH —

Medium. Shades of lemon and a hint of sapidity.

Persuasive and round, with an original flavor profile.

86



SONOMA
 Cherrywood Bourbon

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	47.8% 95.6	\$

— NOSE —

Smoky scents, wood varnish, and vanilla. A touch of honey and pecan. Then red fruit and maple syrup.

— PALATE —

Wood varnish, fresh wood, vanilla, and butterscotch. Oily and spicy.

— FINISH —

Medium long. Fresh wood and varnish. A touch of cinnamon.

Intense and with a rather large bouquet, especially on the nose.

85



KINAHAN'S
 10 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	46% 92	\$\$

— NOSE —

Hints of vanilla, fresh wood, and banana. After a few moments, toasted shades are added.

— PALATE —

Grain and oak wood, followed by notes of banana and cinnamon.

— FINISH —

Medium. Cinnamon and wood.

Balanced but with a relatively limited bouquet. Well-defined aromas.

85



LAPHROAIG
QA Cask

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	40% 80	\$\$

— NOSE —
 Herbal and medicinal peat, together with hints of herbs.

— PALATE —
 Peaty, but not overwhelming. Herbal and medicinal notes are confirmed.

— FINISH —
 Short and toasty, with a sweetness that seems almost artificial.

It strongly contrasts the medicinal and pungent peat and the sugary side.

85



GLEN MORAY
Port Cask Finish

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	40% 80	\$

— NOSE —
 Lemongrass and mineral nuances. Sour and not very ripe fruit.

— PALATE —
 With a marked sapidity and an acidic touch that recalls unripe fruit, kiwi, and carambola. Sometimes herbal.

— FINISH —
 Medium-short. Distinctly mineral.

It is contained on the nose, but better performing on the palate. Not that structured.

84



FLÓKI
*Icelandic Young malt
 Sheep Dung Smoked*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Island	47% 94	\$\$

— NOSE —
 Vegetable hints of cucumber, celery, and green tomato. Intense acetone and strong smoky notes.

— PALATE —
 Resinated and balsamic, rather rough. The alcohol component is not well integrated.

— FINISH —
 Medium persistence. Vegetable and balsamic.

Not very balanced. A little too sharp.

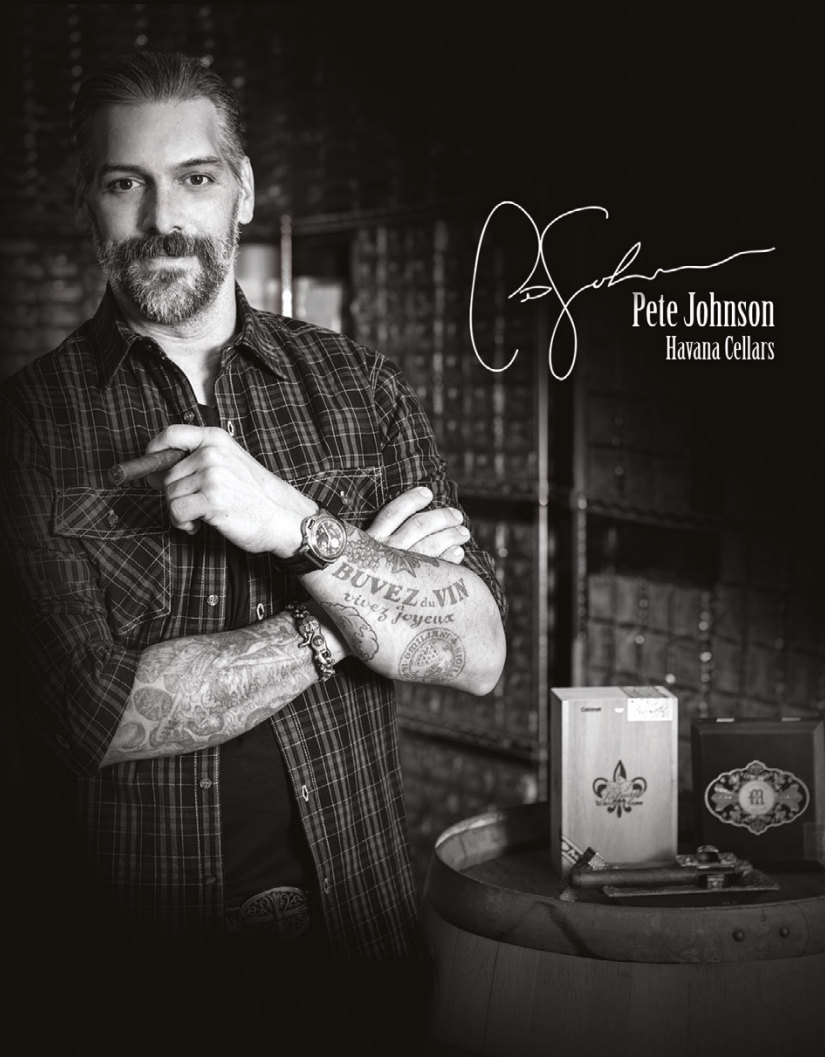
82



Discover
 Our
 Secrets

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PAGE

1000+
CIGARS
TESTED
EVERY
YEAR


FIND CIGARS



Legend

All the information inside the blind tastings

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



ADVENTURA
Royal Return King's Gold Robusto

COMPLEX AND RICH

It releases cocoa and citrus, enriched with earth and a touch of incense. The base is honeyed. Then, it continues with spicy notes of white pepper, which gradually become more intense, culminating in hot spices.

3

95

4

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 13.5 € 13.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A.


5

- 1 Cigar picture.

2 Cigar tasting notes: the flavor profile delivered throught the smoke.

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


4 Flag identifying the country where the cigar is made.




Cuba




Dominican Rep.




Nicaragua




Honduras



Brazil




Mexico




U.S.A.




Costa Rica




Italy



Philippines



Peru



Panama

5

 - STRENGTH: described on a scale from "●" (lightest) to "●●●●●" (strongest).
 - SIZE: ring gauge (1/64 of an inch) and length, written in both millimeters and inches.
 - PRICE: cigar price in US Dollar and Euro.
 - WRAPPER: the external leaf.
 - BINDER: the leaf under the wrapper.
 - FILLER: the leaves inside the cigar.
- #1-2022 CigarsLover Magazine | 99

Piramides



The chosen 12

New releases and core range produts take part in this Piramides blind tastings.

Results

Only onw cigars reaches the 90 points level and it is a Cuban cigar, a classic one, in production since beore the Cuban Revolution.



MONTECRISTO NO. 2

ROUND AND BALANCED

The smoke revolves around notes of cedarwood, which are flanked by white pepper and a hint of leather. The aftertaste is toasted.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x156mm (6 1/8")	\$ - € 16.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



ROMEO Y JULIETA LINEA ORO NOBLES

REFINED AND ELEGANT

It releases notes of fine wood and citrus, with hints of white pepper in the finish. The latter becomes more pronounced in the central section, where milk chocolate and hazelnut are added.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x135mm (5 3/8")	\$ - € 16
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



GILBERT DE MONTSALVAT REV. STYLE BELICOLISSIMO

BALANCED

It reveals notes of aged wood and black pepper, with leather hints. In some puffs, you can also perceive nuances of graphite. Balsamic hints appear in the final part.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x140mm (5 1/2")	\$ - € 6.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	NICARAGUA



CHINCHALERO TORPEDITO

INTENSE AND FULFILLING

The cigar outlines notes of leather, cedarwood, and black pepper in the first half and then turns to earthy notes, of dark chocolate and toasted aromas, in the second.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	43x127mm (5")	\$ - € 2.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



*PARTAGAS
SERIE P NO. 2*

SATISFYING

The smoke revolves around earthy notes and black pepper, which in some puffs reach spicy levels. In the central part, intense notes of leather are added, while the finale is balsamic.

87 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x156mm (6 1/8")	\$ - € 14.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



*ASHTON VSG
BELICOSO NO. 1*

ONE-DIMENSIONAL

It releases notes of earth, aged wood, and toasted aromas. In the second half, black pepper is added, with the spices becoming more pronounced, reaching spicy peaks.

86 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x133mm (5 1/4")	\$ 12.5 € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



*MONOVARIETAL
COROJO PETITE BELICOSO*

CONTAINT PROFILE

It releases vegetal and spice notes where white pepper is the protagonist. The spicy component becomes more pronounced in the central section, while walnut is added in the last third.

85 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	44 x 152mm (6")	\$ 8.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



*LA MADRINA
SHADE BELICOSO*

LIMITED EVOLUTION

The flavor profile is made up of a mix of hay, hazelnut, and a touch of white pepper. In some puffs, notes of wood are also perceptible.

85 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
	52x159mm (6 1/4")	\$ 12.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOM. REP., U.S.A., NICARAGUA



Robustos



The chosen 12

The cigars featured in this blind tasting come from six different producing countries.

Results

Three of the cigars tested scored at least 90 points. One stands above all the others, and it is made in the Dominican Republic.



AVO SYNCRO CARIBE ROBUSTO

ROUND AND BALANCED

The smoke revolves around fine spices and cedarwood, with a hint of vanilla and vegetal notes in the aftertaste. In the second half, the spices become intenser, with hot spices.

92 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 11 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



PLASENCIA ALMA DEL CAMPO TRIBU

INTENSE AND COMPLEX

Aged wood, hazelnut, and toasted notes open the smoke. Balsamic herbs and cocoa tips follow, along with a hint of cinnamon.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 15 € 15
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



UNDERCROWN 10 ROBUSTO

SATISFYING AND FULL

It starts with a blast of black pepper, together with balsamic notes. Then, seasoned wood, together with hot spices, is perceived.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 11.8 € 13
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	U.S.A.	DOMINICAN REP.



EPC SELECCIÓN OSCURO ROBUSTO GORDO

SATISFYING

Notes of fine spices are released, where cinnamon stands out, together with black pepper and hot spices. Then, the profile turns to earth, cocoa, walnut, and seasoned wood.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 7 € 11.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA



HOYO DE MONTERREY
EPICURE NO. 2

BALANCED AND EVOLUTIVE

The smoke releases intense notes of cedarwood, the undisputed protagonists flanked by white pepper and leather. The spices become more intense in the second half.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x124mm (4 7/8")	\$ - € 12
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



VEGUEROS
CENTROFINOS

RUSTIC

Notes of crackers, along with coffee aromas, and a peppery hint are present. In the final part, the flavor profile turns to wet wood and walnut.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x130mm (5 1/8")	\$ - € 8.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



A.J. FERNANDEZ
ENCLAVE CONN. ROBUSTO

ROUND AND BALANCED

It releases notes of wood, followed by white pepper. In the central section, the hazelnut is added, and the smoke becomes creamier. In the final part, it turns to herbal notes.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ - € 7.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



INCA
PERU ROCA

BITTER IN THE LAST PART

The first half is marked by notes of walnut and wood, along with herbal and spicy nuances. In the central section, roasted coffee notes are added and the last third becomes bitter.

84



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ - € 6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
PERU	PERU	PERU



PLATINUM NOVA
CLASSIC

CREAMY

It releases notes of hazelnut and wood, along with herbal hints and a touch of white pepper. In the central part, the herbs become balsamic, while leather is added in the last third.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x140mm (5 1/2")	\$ 14 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



DONA FLOR PURO
MATA FINA ROBUSTO

INVOLVES IN THE SECOND HALF

It starts with spicy notes, wood, and pepper. In the central section, the profile undergoes an involution, and only the wood note is present.

83



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ - € 7.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	BRAZIL	BRAZIL



LA MIRADA
ROBUSTO DESEO

MUTED BUT PERSISTENT

The profile is composed of notes of wood and intense floral aromas. A prolonged spicy aroma is perceived in the finish.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



UMNUM HONDURAS
ROBUSTO

RATHER RUSTIC

The flavor profile is limited and consists of pecans and cardboard. In the central section, toasted nuances are perceived.

82



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ - € 2.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	MEXICO	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA

Shorts



The chosen 12

Four are the countries involved in the production of the Shorts featured in this blind tasting—a size which is getting more and more popular year after year.

Results

Two products stand out: one is made in Cuba and the other one in Nicaragua. Both are rich and bold, both deliver a full-filling smoke.



PARTAGAS SHORT

INTENSE AND SATISFYING

Peppery and hazelnut notes open the smoke, which continues on a more varied range of spices. Intense aromas of leather are also added in the second half.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	42x111mm (4 3⁄8")	\$ - € 7
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



TATUAJE T110 CAPA ESPECIAL

AN ALMOST CHEWABLE SMOKE

The cigar opens with notes of wood, walnut, black pepper, and a touch of citrus, reminiscent of lemon zest. As you advance, herbal notes, and wood are added.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x111mm (4 3⁄8")	\$ 10 € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



CROWNED HEADS CHC SERIE E PETIT EDMUNDO

SATISFYING AND INTENSE

Green pepper, vegetal, and wood resin notes, all accompanied by a background that recalls undergrowth and mushrooms. In the second half, the pepper turns black, and leather notes are added.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x111mm (4 3⁄8")	\$ 11 € 12
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ADVENTURA THE EXPLORER SHORT ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND ROUND

The smoke opens with notes of coffee beans, followed by a mix of fine woods, where oak, and cedar stand out. The bouquet is completed by intense hints of black pepper.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x101mm (4")	\$ 9 € 12.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., ECUADOR



LAURA CHAVIN
CONCOURS PERFECTO.

INTENSE

It releases notes of earth, peanuts, and a hint of spice. As you advance in the smoke, the spicy component increases and culminates with hot spices.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	51x101mm (4")	\$ - € 16
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



ARTURO FUENTE
RARE PINK SHORT STORY

WELL BALANCED

The flavor profile revolves around aromas of wood, hazelnut, and black pepper, followed by leather and creamy notes. In the second half, herbal nuances are added.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	49x101mm (4")	\$ 14 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



BRUN DEL RE
RAINFOREST SHORT ROBUSTO

ENJOYABLE

The flavor profile revolves around notes of cedarwood, black pepper, and leather, accompanied by splashes of earth. Balsamic nuances are added in the second half.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x89mm (3 ½")	\$ - € 6.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
COSTA RICA	COSTA RICA	COSTA RICA



OLIVA SERIE V
MELANIO MADURO NO. 4

INTENSE BUT ONE-DIMENSIONAL

Earth, aged wood, and black pepper open the smoke, to which hints of walnut are added. It proceeds without variations for the entirety of the smoke.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x114mm (4 ½")	\$ 9 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

CigarMate

Handmade CigarMate
for handmade cigars



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

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

The CigarMate is composed of several collectible pieces.

Toros



The chosen 12

Coreline products and new releases are featured in this Toros blind tasting. Three are the producing countries involved in the tasting.

Results

Two cigars score reach the 90 points level. One is made in Honduras and the other in Nicaragua.



PLASENCIA COSECHA 149 AZACUALPA

BOLD AND RICH

It opens with roasted and spicy notes, mainly cardamom. Sweet nutty aromas are also present. Dark chocolate and wood are added later on, with the spices becoming fuller towards the end

92 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 14.5 € 14.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



STILLWELL STAR AROMATIC NO. 1

VERY FLAVORFUL

Sweet earthy and nutty notes kick off the smoke. Vegetal flavors are then added, which gradually become balsamic, and are enriched with peppery nuances.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 15.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	NICA, BURLY, BLACK CAVENDISH, GOLDEN VIRGINIA



ALEC BRADLEY TRILOGY EXOTIC MADURO

BALANCED

The smoke opens with notes of aged wood and a mix of walnut and hazelnut. Then earth and black pepper are added, together with spicy hits, which become intenser in the final stretch.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 9 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



CAVALIER GENEVE BLACK SERIES LL VIS JALAPA TORO

CREAMY

Notes of hazelnut, wood and herbs start the smoke. Soon, light spicy notes also develop, reminiscent of white pepper.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 9 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



CLE SIGNATURE
THT-EKE 03/17 54X6

RICH AND BALANCED

It releases walnut and wood aromas, followed by white pepper and herbal notes; the latter turn bal-samic in the second half of the smoke and beco-me the primary flavors in the finish, supported by black pepper.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (5")	\$ 17 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	-	-



MONTOSA
TORO

BALANCED

Earth and vegetal notes open the smoke, soon en-riched by nuances of leather and undergrowth. In the central section, a hint of white musk is added.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	48x165mm (6.5")	\$ - € 4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.



OLIVA SERIE V
MELANIO MADURO TORO

INTENSE

It releases notes of earth, cocoa and spices, where black pepper stands out, the latter is the main fla-vor of the first and last thirds of the smoke. In the second half, toasted notes are added.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 14 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ROOM 101
FARCE CONNECTICUT TORO

BALANCED

The smoke releases notes of walnut and herbal aromas, followed by toasted hints that at times re-call cappuccino. In the last part, nuances of leather are added.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	56x152mm (6")	\$ 12.5 € 13.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	-	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



FRATELLO NAVETTA
INVERSO TORO GRANDE

ELEGANT

The flavor profile revolves around notes of wood and white pepper, joined by nuances of white tea and vanilla. Floral hints.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x159mm (6 ¼")	\$ 12.5 € 11.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



RITMO
BOLERO

BALANCED AND ELEGANT

Notes of hazelnut and cedar wood are flanked by notes of coffee first and then cappuccino.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



CAO
ZOCALO TORO

PERFECT CONSTRUCTION

Earth and aged wood kick off the smoke, followed by vegetal notes and hints of walnut. In the second half, spicy notes are added, which recall cinnamon and ginger.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
-	54x159mm (6 ¼")	\$ 8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



PADILLA
FINEST HOUR SUNGROWN

PEPPERY

The cigar opens with black pepper, which is the undisputed main flavor throughout the smoke. Some nutty aromas, together with light herbal no-tes, which turn balsamic towards the end.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 9.5 € 7.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Credits

Cover page

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Welcome Tiger

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Air purifiers

picture by: Dyson

Drunk Chicken Cigars

picture by: Kristen Gonzalez

Air

picture by: Mario Amelio

Great Expectations

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Stolen Throne

picture by: Kevin Snapz

Pairings

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Cigars & Spirits

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Shaken, not stirred

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Sunshine Dreaming

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Palate, throat or belly?

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Not the usual sandwich

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Blind tasting - Spirits

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Blind tasting - Cigars

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