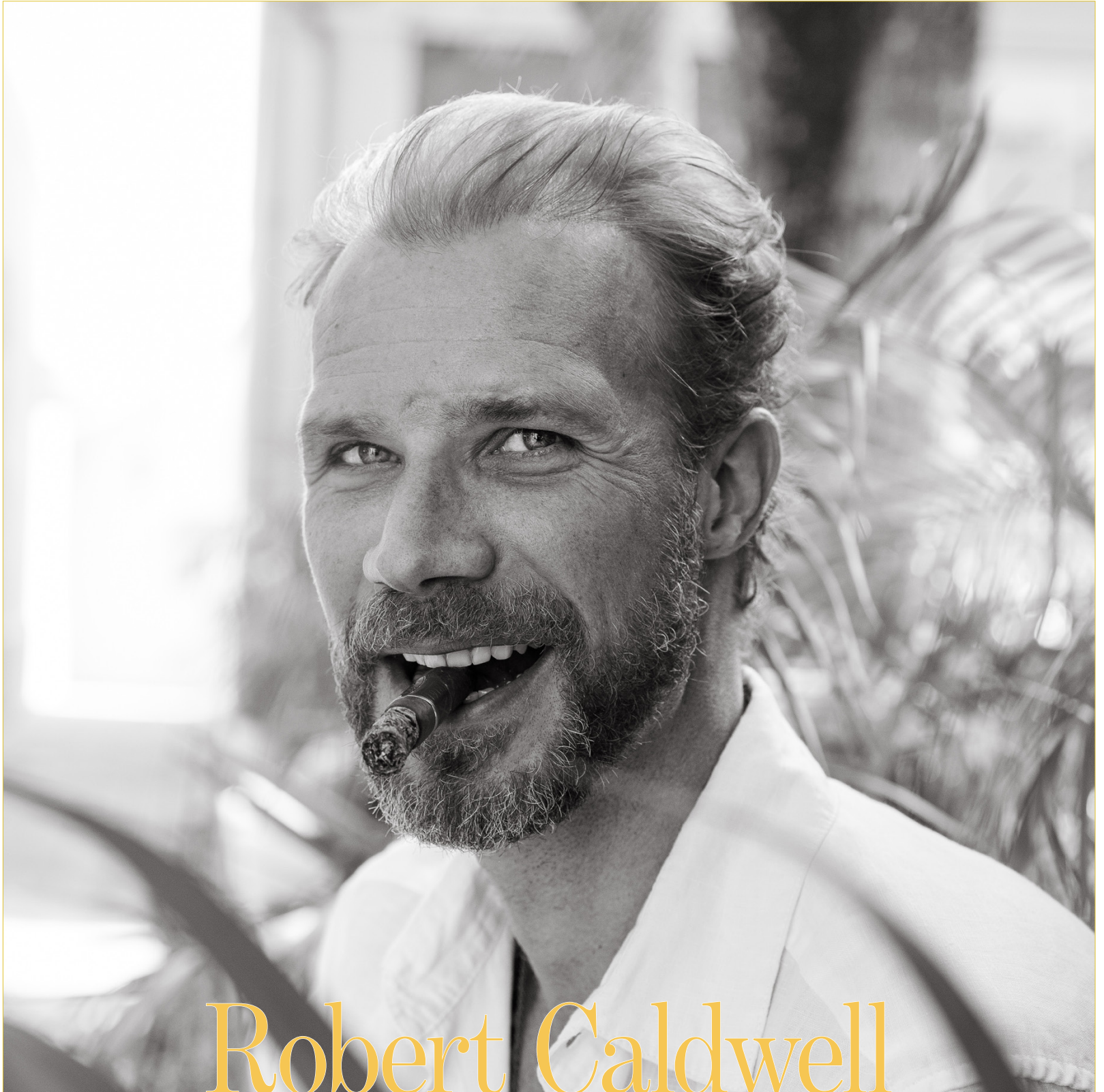


# Cigars Lover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 2 - 2022



## Robert Caldwell

- THE SLOW LIGHT UP - THE COMPLEXITY - FONSECA: CUBA - ROOM 101 - PRO CIGAR - PAIRINGS: THE PEAT DILEMMA
- KAMIKI: THE INTEVIEW - ALTERNATIVE ICE - PISCO: PERU OR CHILE? - COCKTAIL: THE PISCO SOUR
- THAT CERTAIN SPICE FLAVOR... - FERMENTATION IN FOODS - BEER: THE FOOD SMOKE



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# CigarsLover MAGAZINE

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## Editor's thoughts

*Six years ago, it seemed like yesterday.*

It was Autumn 2016 when we featured an interview with Robert Caldwell. Since then, his brand has kept on growing, and nowadays, it is a worldwide recognized brand. The brand's graphic makes it very easy to spot, but Robert was also the pioneer of another success in the cigar world: the "lost and found." We had another great talk with him, analyzing what changed in the past six years and what we could expect from him in the upcoming years.

On the spirits side, we had the pleasure to meet Taner Isiglam, the Yoshino spirits' European and African markets area manager, who matured fifteen years of experience in the premium spirits industry. We went through the Kamiki portfolio with him to better understand all the potential of this Japanese whiskey brand.

#refineyourtaste





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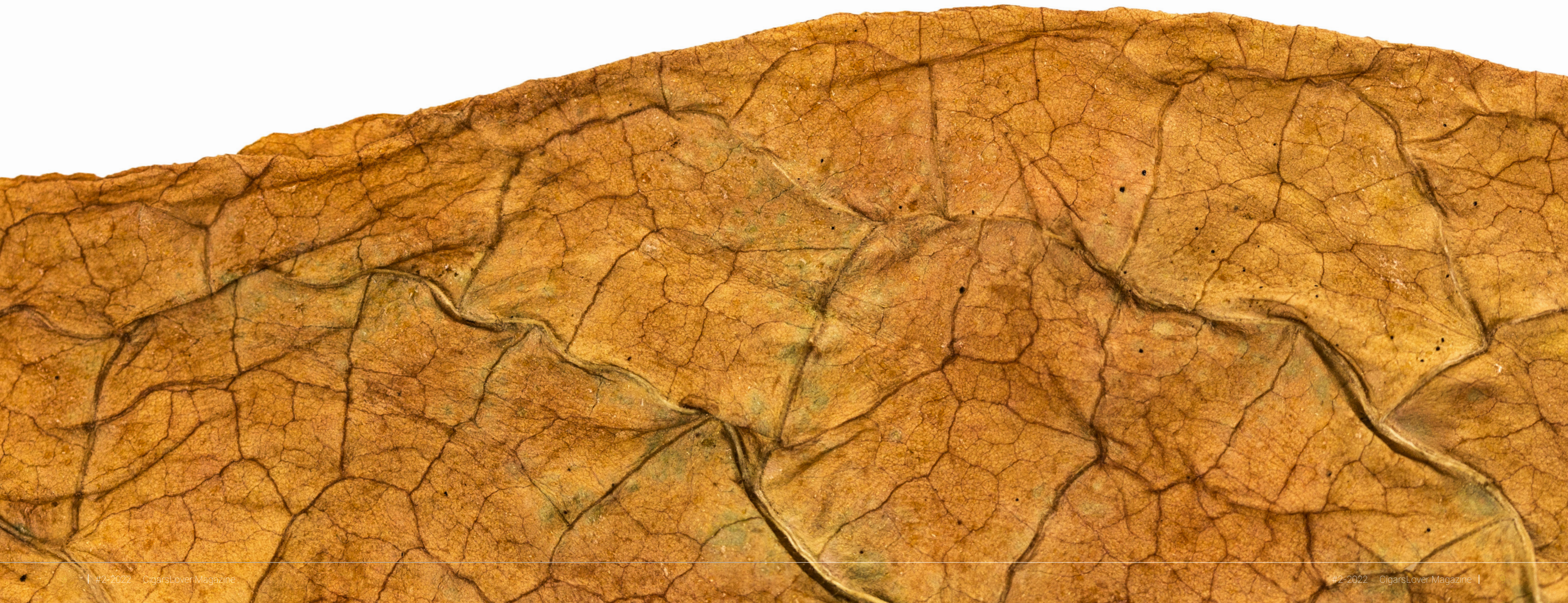
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# CIGARS

"A good smoker, like a good lover, always takes his time with a cigar."

*Guillermo Cabrera Infante*





# The slow light up

*Relegated to movie scenes or the prerogative of habanosommeliers, lighting with a cedar strip has an old-time charm that should be rediscovered and enhanced.*

by **John Jeremy**

In the cigar-loving world, we are living in "modern times", in which we are significantly changing the way we smoke: shorter and thicker cigars, increasingly oversized accessories, a rush to light up, with jet-flame lighters of two, three, or even four or more flames. Yet, speed should be a concept foreign to the cigar smoker, who should hold the slow gestures, free time, contemplation of the cigar, and more dear, in a word, the smoking ritual.

But how many, despite having favorable conditions (smoked in a closed environment or in the absence of wind), dedicated themselves to lighting a regular soft flame lighter, a match, or a strip of cedar with an open flame? The latter, in particular, requires patience, slowness, and practice. Patience in finding them. There are very few specialized shops that sell wooden sticks suitable for this purpose. Their cost is slightly higher than that of cigar-specific matches due to the superior quality of the wood used. However, if they cannot be found or there is not too much willingness to spend money on them, the cedar sheets in the boxes are perfect. Sure, it takes time to break them up and store them in a dry place, so they burn better, but not too fast. It is only necessary to pay attention to the strip's width being uniform to obtain a stable flame without flickering.

A slow light up. Even before choosing the cigar, we will have to prepare everything, from an ashtray to a lighter because, let's be honest, it will be necessary to light it with a jet flame or a soft flame. Then, the combustion of the strip creates incandescent solid residues that will be collected in an ashtray. It is then necessary to keep the tip of the flame at a distance from the foot of the cigar so that it does not carbonize the tobacco.

Practicing the technique. Although it may seem to have points of contact with the ignition with a soft flame, consider that the hand holding the strip is far from the foot of the cigar and that the latter is held with the other hand. It should also be considered that, with each variation of the

angle of the strip, there will be an acceleration or slowdown of the combustion, with an immediate flame peak that could create an unsightly black burn mark on the wrapper. To all this, then, is added the usual practice of lighting the cigar: rotation, first puffs, control of the uniformity of the combustion of the foot.

It is a technique that allows the cigar to heat up slowly, without sudden peaks of combustion. Personally, I find it perfect for lighting vintage cigars.



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# The Complexity

*Smoke and meditative drinking*

by **Luca Cominelli**

We often read about products, whether cigars or spirits, which return a meditative enjoyment. In these cases, we refer to something that prompts meditation and, therefore, concentration. This segment includes all those products capable of releasing a certain aromatic complexity, meaning that we have a series of characteristics that push the aficionado to pay particular attention to what he/she is doing to appreciate it fully.

In the case of cigars, this translates into a broad aromatic palette with aromas that blend well with each other. In distillates, we refer more to the aromatic bouquet's structure or depth, which is often but not as a rule, a sign of long maturation. So why search for this type of product? Why do they often receive higher ratings and are therefore more recommended? Because these are products that stand out and go beyond the standard. This does not necessarily mean a product suitable for everyone. For those who want a simple and undemanding smoke, this type of cigar or distillate will not hit the target at all. However, for an aficionado or for a smoke that is asked for more, this is the most suitable type of product.

So let's go back to the aromatic palette's subject in the cigar. Wanting to make a generic discourse, the formats that best lend themselves to re-entering the circle of meditative smokes have a certain length, which can guarantee a good evolution during use. Even a robust one can have a marked evolution, but formats such as the "Churchill", the "Double Corona" or the "Lancero", are certainly better suited, than-

ks to the generous length. When it comes to complexity in smoke, the strength is less characterizing, and even exceptionally light cigars, can be extremely complex. In addition to the vitola, in the case of non-Cuban cigars (since the Cubans are made exclusively with tobaccos grown in the country of production), there are also the tobacco blends, which nowadays are particularly popular, thanks to the access to numerous types of leaves, whether they come from different countries and/or from leaf levels and plantations with different microclimates.

Turning to distillates, the complexity is usually a sign of long maturation. The longer maturing period brings particular nuances to the bouquet, which often result in a greater depth of aromas, and at the same time, in a persistence or finish, which is decidedly prolonged. However, age is not a single variable. Nowadays, many producers who age in tropical climates have accustomed us to bottling that after a few years have characteristics attributable to much longer aging in colder climates. Even using particular barrels or more barrels then brings something extra in aromatic terms.

Therefore, various aspects contribute to a smoke or a meditative drink. There is no rule to create this type of product, but there are several precautions. What matters to us users is to count on these excellent products. A trained palate can appreciate every nuance, giving rise to memorable emotions and smokes/drinks. It does not come often, but each of us carries in his memory, but also in his heart, at least one of these products.







CALDWELL  
cigar co.



# Robert Caldwell

*Building towards his escape plan*

by **Michel Arlia**

Our first conversation with Robert Caldwell was some time ago, six years to be exact. During this time, Robert has grown his business immensely and turned it into a prominent and well-recognized brand worldwide. We caught up with Robert and talked about what he has been up to in the last couple of years.

The last time we talked with you was back in 2016. What has been going on with you and Caldwell Cigars over the last six years?

That's a broad question. I mean a lot. We launched a lot of products that were right around FDA times, and we did some collaborations that were included in those launches and kind of built our portfolio very wide. We had a lot of stuff that we kind of just brought in and commercialized to have it be here. That caused us a bit of issues because we had all these collaborative projects, and then we amplified our portfolios offerings and added some confusion. So then, from 2017 or '18 until 2020, we just pulled back on a lot of the stuff that we had. So we discontinued all of our collaborations. That doesn't mean that they went away, but we stopped selling them ourselves. Some we turned over to distributors, and some were discontinued like The King is Dead, Long Live The King by A.J., and All out Kings, pretty much as soon as the product came in. We started pulling back some of our SKUs





to have a lower amount of offerings. We spent probably again from 2017 through 2021, just building our core brands and really strengthening them. We were able to, through COVID, maintain all of our factory production, and we didn't want to mess with that. So we didn't add any new brands or any new lines, but we did make a couple of limited additions and specialty releases through COVID. Now we've started adding new products back in. So the first one is Blind Man's Bluff Nicaragua, and the King is Dead Escape Plan has just launched. So we've been kind of treading light when it comes to building out additional concepts for brands, but now's the time to start incrementally adding new concepts back to the portfolio, you know, to fill in what we took out. Because when we took out those facings, we eliminated about 50% of our portfolio. So there's a lot of room to build back. It benefited the brand very much because our sales kept growing higher and higher even by eliminating 50%. So now we're going to slowly be adding more concepts back in.

**You had a tremendous increase in your portfolio over the years. What lines out of the ones you have kept have done exceptionally well? And have you run into any issues with some of your stuff cannibalizing your other lines?**

Blind Man's Bluff has been a steadily growing brand the entire time. So I mean, that's been one that's performed very well. I think the surprise is the Long Live The King, the Mad MoFo, which is a very interesting brand because it's a 10-count box, and the regular Long Live The King is a 24-count box. So you would assume that you would have fewer sales than the 10-count box, just because it's more units, but those two brands sell exactly the same for the number of cigars sold. You'd expect to have maybe a 30, 40% lower number on the 10-count, but it's been exactly in place. I don't know if anything's cannibalized, anything else per se. We did have that issue with some of our collaborative stuff. When we had King is Dead, Long Live The King by A.J. and all those brands. Some of those brands took away from some of our core lines,

but then when we trimmed that stuff away and focused on the core, I think we've been steadily selling all those brands.

**Is there a specific line that you think should do better?**

Anastasia. Anastasia, I mean, we had 33 domestic retailers when we did the original green label. We sold a little bit to Switzerland and a little bit to Sweden. It did well, but it was very slow. And then when we added the Blue Label. It also did well, but it didn't do amazingly well. That's weird because that's our number one most requested and sought-after cigar. So I think it's going to do very well when it comes back out, and it will improve dramatically in the next release. And then Last Tsar and Savages, and those are two brands that were lost during when we brought out everything before the FDA deadline.

**You mentioned the COVID pandemic. Over the last two years, what have you seen change in the smoking habits of customers?**

There was a considerable increase in cigar smoking during the pandemic. So we saw a very big uptick in consumers and purchasing. The other change that I think is interesting is that many consumers spend a lot more time online, whether it is attending virtual events or researching brands. So I believe that the internet activity for consumers greatly increased in terms of getting to know the brands because brands weren't doing events and owners weren't traveling. On the retailer side, many U.S. retailers got used to not having reps, not having principles travel, and not having events. So I think it conditioned the retailers domestically differently. There's no longer an expectation for me to show up in their store along with a rep to talk about my brand.

**The pandemic has brought a lot of significant issues that can be felt now and that consumers are not all that aware of. What has been some of the biggest challenges, and what problems do you think will remain in the short term?**

I mean supply chain issues, first and foremost. In addition to that, you've had tobacco prices increased pretty dramatically through COVID. You've had additional packaging costs or transportation costs go up. We've had more consumption, but the production's been lower because a lot of the stuff is coming out of places that had significant shutdowns or multiple shutdowns. So you haven't been able to get as much. The whole thing just got kind of screwed up. What I think will continue from that are prolonged supply chain issues that are probably far greater than people assume them to be. There's no way that you can turn off global supply for six months and then turn it back on. We also had a price increase year. We haven't raised our prices very much over time. But we had a marginal increase this year. And then we expect to have another one at the end of the year. We did what we thought was a very fair number on our increase. You saw some brands do more, which I believe was intelligent, and you saw some brands do less, which I think was shortsighted. Because I think that when people started pricing these increases at the end of last year, they assumed that we would have the supply chain issues being solved now, and instead, they've gotten worse. That completely screwed up the entire ecosystem of cigars. So I think we will probably have a pretty substantial 12 or 18 months of price increases with brands going forward.





So I think that's going to be a lasting impact. In a perfect world, prices come back down, but in a real world, they never do.

Touching back on the King is Dead Escape Plan that you mentioned before. Is the wording hinting at something?

Matt Booth is a good friend of mine, and we always liked that name. We always talk about our future and our future's our escape plan. So I love the name and just never used it. To me, I'm building towards my escape plan.

Another project that is also a large part of your portfolio is Lost & Found. How did Lost & Found come to be, and what is it exactly?

When we started Lost & Found, it was entirely on accident. I was working on Caldwell, and I have a lot of companies that I work with and I've worked with over the years. I would always go to their factories, and usually, they had a cigar that I loved that you can't get anymore, whether they discontinued the size or discontinued the brand or something like that.

So I have a huge fascination with Aged Cigars. And so I'd always go down and say, "Hey, what happened to this cigar?" And then they'd usually give you a bundle when you're leaving, you know, as a courtesy or this type of thing. After one visit to the Dominican Republic, I brought a few bundles up to Havana House, which is Tony Bellato's (from La Barba Cigars) store and his father's. They smoked them, and they're like, "What are these cigars?" And I told them what

they were, and they said, "There's no way they don't make those cigars anymore." So then they asked me if I could get more, and I called the factory, and they said, "Yeah, we'll send you whatever you want of that stock." So we brought in those cigars and sold them as nude bundles, wrapped in paper. Tony had a girl working with him, Jacqueline, doing marketing designing, and she came up with a brand. So that was originally Pepper Cream Soda and One Night Stand, and they came up with packaging. So then it kind of grew into other micro-brands of just finding cool old things and then repurposing the packaging and bringing them in. Then it continued to grow and continue to grow, and we started sourcing a lot of stuff, and it became a proper brand. Over the last three or four years, it's grown, to where now Lost & Found is over 1 million cigars a year that we source and use. So the unfortunate thing is it was so successful that we just cleared every single aging room of every manufacturer we work with. We have about 100,000 cigars coming in that are aged and found products. We saw the writing on the wall where we realized we were going to work out of all that inventory. So we released the first manufactured project, which was called Instant Classic. Two years ago, we started heavily manufacturing cigars. So in the coming month or month and a half, you're going to see us rolling out brands manufactured by Lost & Found. So we'll have regular production brands going forward. And it's pivoting, you'll still have Found cigars, but it'll be pivoting very strongly towards manufacturing.



Something that Lost & Found made trendy was the unique bundle packaging that you guys thought of. Now you're switching some stuff to boxes. Why?

One of the reasons that we came out with paper bundles, in the beginning, was because trying to make 200 packs of cigars and paper is very easy. To make 200 boxes of one cigar is very difficult. We're going to switch everything to boxes for a couple of reasons. So first and foremost is that everybody copied what we were doing, to be honest. It is just too many out there now, and people started associating some of those to Lost & Found. To me, it's gotten cheap, and there's so much of that product out there. That's a sector of the market that's going to implode, in my opinion.

What is the feedback from Lost & Found compared to what you get from your Caldwell stuff?

There's some overlap, but you have guys who don't smoke Caldwell that only smoke Lost & Found and vice versa. In addition to that, you have retailers that only support Lost & Found or only support Caldwell, and then some support both. So it's two markets to it, maybe 40% overlap on consumers and re-

tailers, and then the rest is completely unique. Very weird.

Looking to the future a bit. In 2024 you'll celebrate your 10th anniversary. Do you have any special plans for that?

We're planning to do a big party in Miami, maybe a weekend. That'll be one component, and then we're going to have a special cigar, and we're going to do an anniversary edition cigar or a couple of them.

So we're going to have something as kind of a tribute cigar coming out at that point in time, and it might just be something special. We were looking at maybe doing some really nice ceramic jars made in Spain.

Would you have guessed that you would still be in business by now?

Honestly, no. It's a tough industry, and it is not getting easier.

Aside from the new releases, what are you focusing on?

We are working on having a more direct voice to the consumers globally. We're putting in a green room. We're going to start doing podcasts, different web events to try to speak



directly to consumers worldwide, because, through COVID, our domestic policy of traveling and events has ended. But we want to make sure that consumers know what the brand is about and what the products are about and have direct communication with us. So we're going to be lining up different web seminars, different videos on our products, why they exist, and what the blends are. That will be distributed via our website and social media and direct to consumers and retailers. Just general education, but making that more available to consumers and retailers, because I think that's very helpful. So our big focus is, really just speaking, letting our message and voice be heard direct from us.

**Lastly, where will Caldwell Cigars be six years from now, and where will you personally be six years from now?**

Six years from now, I will be 45 years old. And that is my deadline for gearing back in life, working less hard, and enjoying more in a very European type of way. You know, the Southern

Europeans work to live. Northern Europeans and Americans live to work. Maybe Europeans are a little bit more balanced than us, even Northern Europeans, but you know I want to enjoy my life. So, I'm working my ass off, and I have been for ten years. I hope to continue getting my business to a point where I am not necessary every single day. I can work four hours a day, five hours a day, four or five days a week, and work part-time in what is now much more than a full-time job. But that takes time, and people we have enough trust in that they will do what's in the brand's interest. Then I could effectively become a board member of my own business. So six years from now, that's me. As for the brand, hopefully, six years from now, we're a strong enough brand to where, when I want to put it in a higher gear or a little bit more cruise control, we have a team that's good enough to let that happen. And if not, we'll keep making cigars. Life's too short, man. I love smoking cigars. I love making cigars. I love selling cigars, but I want to enjoy this life.



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# Fonseca: Cuba

*Elegant, professional and philanthropic, the figure of Francisco Fonseca still strikes for its extraordinary contemporary profile and its futuristic intuitions*

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

In the panorama of Cuban brands, only one can boast the peculiarity of still retaining the name of its producer and his effigy as its vista: Fonseca. Francisco E. Fonseca, of Spanish origin, arrived in the island of Cuba in the last decades of the 1800s and, like many emigrants, he ended up doing various jobs.

Having spared a first somehow substantial capital, he decided to open his own chinchal (a small shop with very few torcedores, a very widespread type of business at the turn between the 1800s and the 1900s) in which he himself provided the indications of the torcida of tobacco. The year of opening of its first manufacture is reported in historical documents to be between 1891 and 1892, while in 1907 the registration of the name "Fonseca" as a brand is mentioned.

In less than twenty years, Francisco Fonseca not only became an expert in the cigar industry, but was soon recognized as an "artist" of his products. It is said that he possessed a real talent for organoleptic analysis, a skill that allowed him to identify particular leaves that soon became his signature on the brand's unique flavor. The reasons for its success, however, did not end there. His artifacts were individually wrapped in a papel de seda, a special Japanese rice paper, which gave them unparalleled elegance in the market. He is also still considered the inventor of aluminum packaging, since cigars were stored in metal containers, while the advent of aluminum tubos came only later, in the 40s.

The brand was soon appreciated outside Cuba, in Spain and in the United States. It is no coincidence, in fact, that

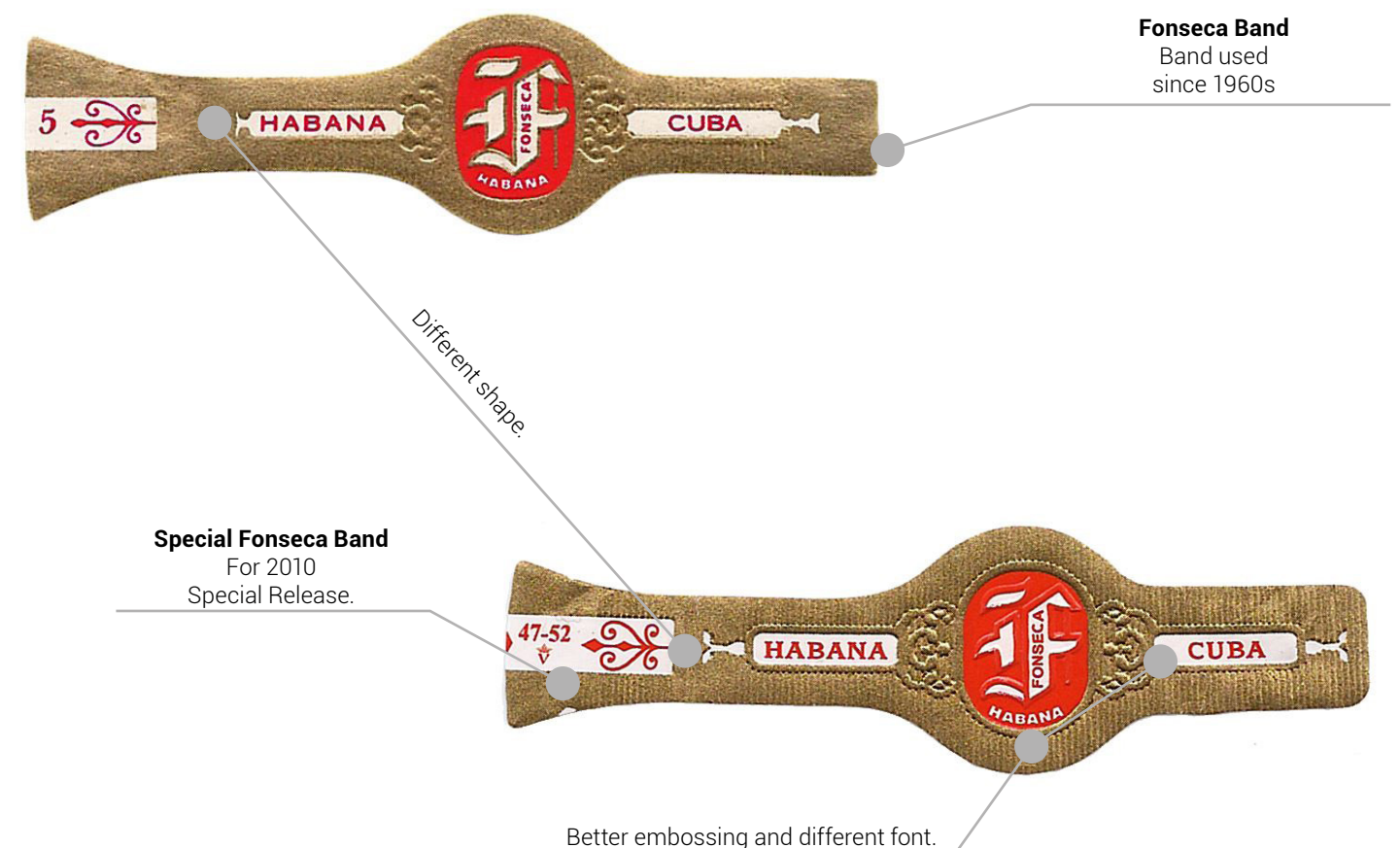
in the vista shown on the boxes, behind the elegant effigy of Francisco, the Morro castle of the port of Havana and the New York Statue of Liberty are depicted, as if to express how the owner could embody the trait d'union between Cuba and the United States of America.

Much of the brand's fortune was due to having provided a dedicated commercial response to an elite but still highly profitable market segment: special orders. In the first decades of the 1900s it was estimated that 60% of Fonseca's production was dedicated to requests for cigars specially made for cultural circles, conventions, banquets, souvenirs and commercial cadeau, adding to these customizations also personalized anillas. As a demonstration of the attention paid to these orders, Fonseca had set up, inside the manufacture, a living room where he personally received the clients, to listen to the needs, tastes and vitolas of the cigars requested by them and to support them as much as possible in the definition of the final product.

Business grew to the point that Francisco Fonseca registered in 1909 the brand "Hamlet" and in 1914 "La Flor de Fonseca". A few more years of glory, until the great crisis of '29 that began to put in difficulty the flourishing business of Francisco Fonseca. He himself could not enjoy

a new economic splendor since he died in 1930, leaving the widow Donas Teresa Boetticher to run the company. It was the latter, between the year of her husband's death and 1940, who founded, together with Tiburcio Castañeda and J. Montero, Castañeda, Montero, Fonseca S.A., which appears, for the first time in 1940, in the Registro de Fabricantes Exportadores of the Comision Nacional de Propaganda y Defensa del Tabaco Habano. With this new company the export boom grew to the point of justifying an increase in the brands produced by the company that became the quite impressive number of ten, including the original Fonseca and Hamlet.

Let's go back for a moment to the figure of Francisco Fonseca, a true nineteenth-century self-made man, one respected not only for his professional ability, but also for his personal attitudes. In private and social life Francisco was an elegant man, a lover of culture and well introduced to the high-ranking society of Havana, but who had never forgotten his past as an emigrant and friends who had not had the same social opportunity. He used to organize, in fact, at his home, parties during which he received many of his less fortunate acquaintances, to offer them banquets, with all sorts of culinary delicacies of the time. It is also said that he was often to be found in a corner of the house with a large humidor, inside which







cigars and money were placed: in the event that any of his guests, in a situation of strong economic restriction and in need of economic help, he could draw on it freely, in complete confidentiality and anonymity.

The Fonseca brand has come down to the present day without too many production shocks, also considering the unscathed crossing of the Castro revolution. Six references were originally produced, four of which are still on the market (Cosacos, vitola de galera cosacos 42x135; Delicias, standard 40x123; KDT Cadetes, cadetes 36x115; Fonseca No. 1, cazador 43x162) while the Aroma (40x140) was discontinued in the 80s and the Invictos (especiales, 45x134), a parejo with a tapered foot, was withdrawn from production in 2002. All the cigars continue to be offered to the public in habilitada box of 25 pieces and wrapped in the special white rice paper, the only case in the whole Cuban vitolaria.

The organoleptic profile of the brand would seem to have remained somewhat true to itself over the decades. The flavor is well balanced between sweet and savory shades, with a rather contained strength, except for the Fonseca No. 1 which seems to be the outsider of the standard portfolio. Aromatically it expresses herbaceous and vegetable tones, but also of wood and with a slight spiciness.

Until a few years ago Fonseca was classified by Habanos S.A. as a "local brand" because its distribution was not widespread globally as it is the case for other brands. Despite this, Habanos S.A. has moved away from this classification, it still does not reach all the market points across the world. As for the special and commemorative editions, the brand has never enjoyed the prestige of the second anilla for the Edicion Limitada, while only two cigars have found a place among the Regional Editions (in 2010 a hermoso No. 4 for the BeNeLux area and the following year a gordito for France). Circumstance, the latter, which sounds a bit mocking if we consider that its founder, the first to have put his name and "face" on his cigars, had paid so much attention to private orders to create in the end a true core business out of this specific, customized market offer.



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# Room 101

*"Room101 has always been  
the anti-brand"*

by **Michel Arlia**

**M**att Booth is a man of many facets: a Marine Corp veteran, designer, jewelry craftsman, Gin producer, cigar maker, and the list goes on. He has been a fixture in the cigar industry for over a decade, and his unorthodox and non-traditional approach has made Room101 one of the more unique brands in the market. We had the pleasure to sit down and talk to the man himself.

## Who was Matt Booth before founding Room101?

Matt Booth was a lost kid that found a new beginning in the Marine Corps infantry. Once this reset was complete, the first destination was Hollywood CA, and so began the pursuit of the dream.

## What does Room101 mean exactly, and where was the idea of the brand born?

Room101, the brand was born in a small yet presentable apartment at the corner of Melrose and Genesee in Hollywood in 2003. My belief is that Room101 as a brand embodies us versus them – Room101 has always been the anti-brand. A brand project that should have never made it on paper – yet thrives fueled by our core believers as well as a never emptying tank of perseverance.

## You started with the brand in 2003 by making custom jewelry. In 2009 you added cigars under the Room101 banner. How were you introduced to cigars, and what sparked the idea to add cigars to Room101?

Inspired by Alfred Dunhill specifically, I have always dreamt that we will realize Room101 as a true multi-class luxury lifestyle collection – a collection built of an item line up of things that I love personally. As a cigar smoker, it was always

part of the dream to include cigars in our brand lineup.

## What were the early days of Room101 like, and was there a defining moment where you thought that you had made it?

Have I made it now? I was wondering about that – you know, if there is a plaque or lapel pin or something that I would receive. The early days were a fight, but then again, if you pilot your own business, every day is a fight. Over the years, the stakes get higher as you grow – some things get easier as others become more difficult. I know a good deal of people never make it half this far, so I suppose on that math, I have made it.

## Room101 has a unique look to it. Where do you take your inspiration from?

I draw inspiration from everything I come in contact with. I draw a great deal of savory flavors from my obsession with the cast of characters found within Japanese Buddhism and folk religion mythology. I also love the melting of cultures in Los Angeles that makes that city what it is – which has also influenced me greatly throughout my life. The mixture of these together, to include some additional proprietary seasonings create the foundation of what Room101 is – aesthetically.

## How was the learning experience with cigars and all its processes for you?

I found myself investing all very quickly. I was in a position

that if I wanted to deliver and to deliver authentically, I was to live and breathe at a factory level while simultaneously learning and endearing myself to (the best I could) to a new marketplace back in the states domestically.

## When it comes to new cigar blends/projects, how do you approach them? Do you have a set idea before starting to blend, vice versa, or is it a more organic journey?

I love creating and blending with my partners within the factories we work with. The process is truly collaborative and one of my favorite components of the work. I approach organically – and I believe this creates the most authentic outcome.

## What have you learned, working with tobacco and cigars that has translated into your personal life?

It has reinforced something I have believed for a good while – that there is beauty found in the perfect imperfection created by the human hand. The starting point for me is that cigars are handmade works of art. From that understanding, you can begin to discover the richness of culture and spirit that magically surrounds cigars and cigar making.

## With the advent of social media, the way brands and customers interact has changed quite drastically. What has changed for the better, and what for the worse?

I think social media has allowed for any brand, regardless of scale or financial position, to be able to reach the end con-





sumer in a far more effective and consistent way. Although I would argue that there is no replacement for the human handshake - the social touch is a daily "plug-in" with whoever is already watching you as well as a daily toss of the rod into the digital waters - fishing for new eyes and new connections.

**You have also further broadened your portfolio by introducing a Room101 Gin. What are the key factors that make you decide to go into a new venture with Room101?**

To add a new dimension to our brand line up by product – it has to be something that is on brand. An offering in spirits was, without question, correct for the Room101 brand. Gin

was what I deemed to be appropriate and correct for our brand, and it was written.

**Did you always have the vision of Room101 being an all-encompassing brand, and has it changed in the years?**

This has always been the dream – how we were to realize this was and is the perpetual challenge.

**What can we expect from Room101 in the future?**

You can be confident that you will continue to see an expansion of offerings – both within our current categories as well as those yet to come.



Foundation Cigar Company is dedicated to quality, consistency, balance, flavor, and building brands with heart and soul. With over 20 years of love and dedication for the industry, we merge old world traditions with modern day styles and customs to produce unique premium cigars.







# Pro Cigar

*This year's only festival  
was a huge success.*

by **John Jeremy**

After a year-long hiatus due to the COVID pandemic, the ProCigar Festival returned this year. After every other festival was canceled yet again, it was the only cigar-related festival in person this year.

ProCigar took place from the 22nd to the 25th of February, and it was the fourteenth time it took place. The event welcomed over 450 guests from all over the world to the Dominican Republic and celebrated the pride and passion of Dominican cigars.

On February 22nd, the participants were welcomed to Santiago, where they had the opportunity to attend a field day, an activity exclusively designed for one-on-one interactions with famous characters of the Dominican cigar industry. Other leisure activities, such as a gin and cigar pairing and a

Smoking Challenge, were offered in the afternoon.

The actual festival activities started on the 23rd, where attendees were able to part participate in guided tours to numerous factories and tobacco fields: Quesada Cigars, La Aurora, General Cigar Dominicana, Tabacalera Palma, De Los Reyes Cigars, Tabacalera A. Fuente, PDR Cigars, Tabacalera La Alianza – E.P. Carrillo, La Flor Dominicana, Montecristo, as well as a visit to the Chateau de la Fuente, Cigar Family Charitable Foundation and House of Dreams. The tours were held over the course of the three days, and throughout all of the days, attendees were showered with numerous cigars, boxes, and other unique goodies.

After the first day of tours, the Welcome Dinner Party was held at Parque Central in Santiago, where the guests







enjoyed Dominican fusion cuisine with live music by local performers. Hendrik Kelner, president of ProCigar, expressed his joy in celebrating this festival once again on the 30th anniversary of the founding of the association that unites the country's cigar producers. Additionally, he highlighted the strength of the tobacco industry, the contributions it makes to the enrichment of Dominican culture, the impact it has on the national economy, and the success of ProCigar's objective to turn attendees into ambassadors of goodwill for the country. He also emphasized tobacco's value to the Dominican Republic over the ages, being present in our culture for as far back as history can remember. A Bachata contest capped off the party.

As the tours continued on the 24th, the evening held the famous White Dinner Party at the Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración in Santiago, where attendees are asked to dress in white. The unique atmosphere and majestic se-

tup highlighted the city's beauty and paid tribute to the Dominican women working in the industry. The Dominican Illustrator, art director, and graphic muralist Evaristo Angurria debuted a portrayal of Dominican women inspired by "Doña Patria, Belleza Dominicana".

As is tradition on the last evening, the festival ends with the Gala Dinner Party, which was held at the Centro Español, a private club founded in 1965. The dinner was accompanied by live music and was closed out with the traditional auction of unique items, such as humidors especially made for the ProCigar Festival. The auction raised a total of \$350,000.00 (USD) benefiting the Voluntariado Jesús con los Niños (a non-profit organization for ill children), Sociedad San Vicente de Paúl (senior retirement home for low-income elders), and ProCigar's charitable initiative "A Home for My Family" (housing program for disadvantaged yet deserving employees of the member's companies).

# BALMORAL

SINCE 1895

*Añejo XO*

When was the last time  
you experienced something  
for the first time?



#### BALMORAL AÑEJO XO

Born from passionate curiosity, Balmoral invites you to discover the optimal balance of sophisticated complexity and smoothness. Each meticulously crafted, extensively aged Añejo XO cigar blend is the result of a relentless global search for the top 5% of select premium tobaccos available, including our exclusive, signature Brazilian Mata Norte. Crowned with an Arapiraca wrapper from Brazil, Balmoral Añejo XO provides a luxuriously rich experience that embraces your palate with complex wood tones but also peppery notes that finish with a smooth, underlying natural sweetness.

*#CuriosityDrivesDiscovery*



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Nestor A. Plasencia

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

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Alec Bradley - 25th

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

THE TOSCANA CIGAR - BOLIVAR - NICOTINE - LAURA CHAVIN - NIRKA REYES ESTRELLA - DOUBLE CUÑO - PAIRINGS  
READY TO DRINK - FAIR, ORGANIC AND ETHICAL - AMRUT: THE INTERVIEW - MONONGAHELA RYE - CANCHANCARA  
THE ACIDITY AND TANNICITY OF WINE - AGED BEERS - PIPPALI, THE INDONESIAN PEPPER - BBQ: SMOKY FLAVOUR

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SUMMER 2019



Carlito Fuente

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





# 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.





# The peat dilemma

*There is peat.  
and peat*

by **Simone Poggi**

Beyond the obvious consideration, a first approach could identify in the notorious ppm a reference scale. It might seem correct to postulate that only relatively low concentrations of polyphenols go well with the cigar, thus avoiding an overlapping effect of the peated and smoked scents. In fact, we know that ppm are only the starting point, not only because they are associated with freshly malted barley and not with bottled distillate, in which both distillation and aging play a fundamental role, but also because peated hints can be very different.

So let's start from the ppm and go step by step. In essence, the pairing between peated whiskey and cigar is a pairing in similarity; any tobacco in fact will return, at least at a specific time of the smoke, in particular at the end, toasted scents, and the ash, however fragrant, always remains burnt tobacco. As such, the

pairing must be modulated in a way as to balance the similar notes, without treading them too much. There are examples (or perhaps it is more correct to call them "experiments") in which peat and smoke are all-encompassing and unsettling, such as certain heavily Peated expressions of Kilkerran that we have tasted: to such distillates we would not approach any cigar, as no tobacco will allow to balance such a preponderant smoke indeed, it would exacerbate its impact. The Octomore themselves, although they can provide very varied, round and refined peat experiences, are in our opinion too intrusive. A very different story for many of Islay's products, or even non-Scottish peats such as Connemara, Yoichi and Amrut; on these distillates you can play, keeping in mind our limits; if already the peat of products like Ardbeg seems extreme, the pairing with the cigar can only exacerbate these sensations, probably moving the bar where it is no longer pleasant. In fact,

it is very difficult to combine very delicate cigars with peated whiskies, it will be necessary to select among the vitolas of greater character and intensity. However, even in this case a careful selection can be useful; if we want to go up with the ppm of the distillate, we discard a priori the most toasted and rough products (e.g., Romeo y Julieta Cazadores) and instead we embrace the more chocolaty and soft ones (e.g., Balmo-ral Anejo XO, Davidoff Nicaragua) or spicy but always creamy (e.g., Plasencia Alma del Campo, Arturo Fuente Hemingway Maduro, Joya Silver).

However, the fact remains that the very nature of the peat of various products is very different. The market offers products whose peat has marine and delicate characteristics and nuances, bonfires on the beach, which insist on decidedly creamy distillates and with fruity sides of great quality, such as Caol Ila, even in the independent expressions of Berry Bros or Wilson & Morgan bottlers. These spirits can be successfully combined with cigars that are not too bitter, with a barely sweet character, such as a CAO Pilon, a Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2 (even better if a Serie Le Hoyo Hoyo de Rio Seco) or a Dominican ADN from La Aurora. These cigars may appear as sweet as there is on the market, but the rationale behind this selection is a great attention to the salinity of the whiskey: if the sip precedes the puff, you get a real "hyper-sensitization" of the mucous membranes, which enhances the spiciness and sometimes enhances the bitter side of the fruition. A Nicaraguan puro like an AJ Fernandez, maybe a Last Call, or an Exclusivo of Nicaragua risk being excessively pungent if tasted together with the above mentioned Caol Ila or Bunnahabhain products, aged for no more than twelve years. The choice of a cigar that contains a fragrant and vanilla core appears instead capable of supporting this pairing in the ebst possible way. The Connecticut capa, on the other hand, does not seem as well centered; the nutty and herbaceous hints could go, but the black pepper that sometimes comes out so evident could be too marked. Better the Habano capa of a Casa Turrent 1880 Colorado, a Drew Estate Undercrown Sungrowth Belicoso or a Bolivar Belicoso, provided that the latter have rested for a long time, losing most of his roughness. Even very pushed and oily peats, almost of naphtha and smog, can be well considered, but carefully. Products such as Ardbeg, being them Corryvreckan or Ten, are not prohibited, but they require carefully considered pairings. The citrus side of the Ten supports cigars of good intensity such as the Davidoff Millennium Blend, refreshing it, while the sweet side of the "vortex" of Islay goes well with bitter sides present in products such as the Cavalier de Geneve Black Series or the Gatekeeper by Alec & Bradley, balancing and enriching them.

Much more complex is the topic related to the very strong medicinal and balsamic peats, Laphroaigh style, perhaps young-aged and cask strength, or the fishy notes of the recent 5-years old Wee Bestie. Frankly, these are two of the products about which we continue to have concerns and doubts, for which we have not yet managed to integrate cigars with interesting results. The discussion is still open for Laphroaigh, looking for a counterpart that can "tame" the notes more typically of disinfectant. For the Ardbeg maybe it's really the case to move on.... After all, there is always someone who will remember the saying: "Better alone than badly accompanied".





# NÚMERO UNO

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PAIRING

Cigars  
&  
Spirits



EPC SELECCION OSCURO ROBUSTO

SATISFYING

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 7   € 11.5
DIMENTIONS	
54 x 127 mm	
COUNTRY	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	

Cigar marked by an elegant, dark sweetness, releasing notes of fine spices, among which cinnamon stands out, along with black pepper and spicy hits. Cocoa, walnut and seasoned wood are added later, for a rich palette and a chewable smoke. The intense profile should support well a fruity yet fresh ex-sherry and a slightly peated ex-bourbon with a mineral character.



ROMEO Y JULIETA CAZADORES

INTENSE AND SATISFYING

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ NA   € 11.5
DIMENTIONS	
44 x 162 mm	
COUNTRY	
CUBA	

Cigar that stands out for its iconic masculinity, with notes of fresh wood, earth and a riot of spices, (cinnamon, black pepper and chili), on a woody base of great persistence.

The character of the cigar is such that allows to propose in combination two different peated products, both from Islay.



ALEC BRADLEY KINTSUGI

SATISFYING

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●●	\$ 8   € N/A
DIMENTIONS	
50 x 127 mm	
COUNTRY	
HONDURAS	

The cigar develops aromas of earth and nuts together with an intense spicy flavor dominated by black pepper. The aromatic palette gets enhanced by leather and camphor. The ending is elegantly woody.

We tried to pair two very different rums: a young spicy and balsamic agricole rum vs a traditional Spanish-style sweet and aged ron.



BOWMORE

Gold Reef

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	43% - 86	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	-	ex-bourbon

Release for the Travel Retail market, it develops notes of saline peat and tropical fruit (coconut, banana), in a soft, buttery and elegant profile. The palate is sweeter and rich in chocolate with salt crystals.

Pairing is unusual but persuasive to the nose, with butter soaked in piquant Indian spices and tropical fruit that becomes hyper-ripe. Evocative and almost sweaty. On the palate the sweetness of the ex-bourbon barrels integrates well the earthier, bitter sides of the cigar. Again leather. A higher ABV would have not done harm, quite the contrary. The ending is at times a bit dry, perhaps due to the important strength of the Dominican; only in rare moments return of savory notes can be felt.

Pairing score

87



KAVALAN

Triple Sherry Cask

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

New release of the Taiwanese brand, it combines the different souls of sherry in a fruity distillate, with raisins, strawberry and figs, a honeyed side and refreshing floral notes. Milk chocolate and light wood. The palate is a bit more bitter, with red fruit covered with caramel.

Excellent imprint of the sherry on the piquant spices of the cigar, with sensual and animalistic notes on a more fragrant side. Wood of good seasoning and complexity. On the palate one can find the sweetness that was sought after, enveloping but not heavy, with chocolate and earth, sophisticated spices and a very precious aged wood. The finish is medium-long, with a barely bitter character that gives depth.

Pairing score

90







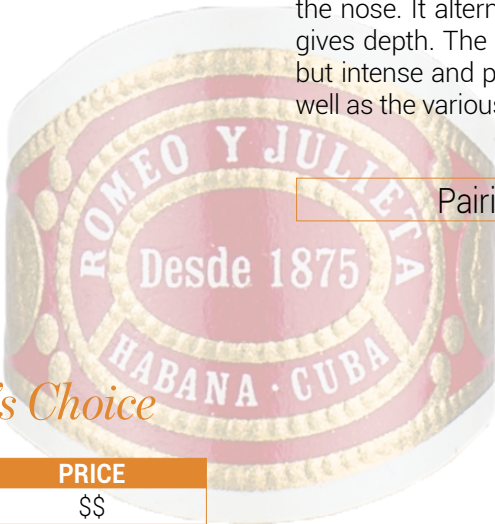
## ARDBEG

### Scorch

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% - 92	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	-	ex-bourbon

Release 2021 of the annual limited edition, it offers chemical and medicinal peat, sweetness of grilled pineapple, distant lemongrass and the creaminess of shortbread biscuits. On the palate it is herbaceous, even though Ardbeg's peat, between chemical and smog, is recognizable with bitter hints.

The pairing is interesting on the nose, with the young wood of the cigar and the intense pepper from the whiskey, joining the medicinal and the sweet character of the latter. The sip is moderately intense, less creamy and more herbaceous than the nose. It alternates a slightly sweeter background, which gives depth. The finish is long, sometimes in need of water, but intense and pleasant, with the marine side that lasts, as well as the various types of smoke and young wood burned.



Pairing score 90

## BUNNAHABHAIN

### 2008-2020 12yo Hepburn's Choice

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

Independent bottling of great quality-price ratio, well representing the character of the distillery, with a discreet salinity on more delicately sweet components of honey and peach, with tips of black pepper.

On the nose the two products evoke freshly tanned leather and spices. The sweetest fruity side of the distillate is mild, kept behind by the peppering and burnt wood of the cigar; only a stretch of honey appears. Powerful and of great appeal. On the palate the sapidity of the whisky allows you to appreciate all the leather, the nutty and spicy notes of the cigar. Surprisingly, bitter cocoa also increases. The ending is perhaps just unbalanced towards sapidity, as if the two products were resonating.



Pairing score 89



## RASTA MORRIS

### BIELLE AMBRÉ

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadalupe	52 % - 104	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Pure Cane Juice Rum	12 Years Old	-

This agricole rum from the isle of Maria Galante is aged for a few months in ex-bourbon cask and bottled unfiltered and without additives. It delivers notes of tropical fruits, varnish, orange zest, wax, and sugar cane, while the cigar answers with intense earthy notes of leather, bark, pepper, and wood.

Initially, the pairing seems a little off, but the effect is more than surprising thanks to the camphor vein of the Kintsugi. The pairing plays out on the fresh and balsamic flavor profile of both: more camphor, then herbs, and pepper for the cigar, while the rum moves on to tonka bean, thyme honey, and a stimulating visou elevated by brioche and patisserie notes. Despite the initial doubts, the finish leaves completely satisfied.



Pairing score 90

## MALECON

### Rare Proof 20 years old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Panama	48.4 % - 97	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Spanish Ron	20 Years Old	-

This single column ron was distilled in Panama in 1999 and aged for 20 years in ex-bourbon casks. It delivers sweet and woody aromas that soon evolve in aged leather, polish, caramel, and pecan nuts covered with maple syrup.

The cigar is drier with scents of earth, pepper, and toasted wood, suffering the spirit's sweet dominant profile. The ron's palatal evolution brings peanut brittle, red fruit chocolate, black cherries, and dried apricots, a bouquet that does not pair up well with the strong balsamic and herbal character of the cigar. The spirit's sweetness takes over and the smoke unavoidably gets affected by it. The finish is slightly better thanks to the ron's notes of aged tannins and mature fruit that works well with the noble wood and the toasted dry fruit of the cigar.



Pairing score 82



# SPIRITS

“It is true that whisky improves with age.  
The older I get, the more I like it.”  
Robert Black



# Kamiki

*The whisky from the  
Japanese city of temples*

by **Luca Cominelli**

**K**amiki is a well know Japanese whiskey brand available worldwide. Three are their products, created by blending rare Japanese malt whiskies and whiskies from the rest of the world, fusing this unique blend with the highest quality pure spring water from Japan.

We had the pleasure to have a talk with Taner Isiglam, the European and African markets area manager, who matured a fifteen years of experience in the premium spirits industry.





What's the story behind the brand Kamiki in Japan and Europe?

Kamiki is a new expression of premium Japanese style whisky blessed by Omiwa priests from Nara. Nara is the ancient capital of Japan and it holds many temples from Shinto and Buddhist religions, which makes Nara known as "The City of Temples". Kamiki is available in multiple countries across Europe.

What does your special relationship with the Shinto shrine in Ōmiwa entail in terms of whisky production?

Kamiki Whisky is blessed by Omiwa Temple priests. Omiwa is one of the oldest extant Shinto shrine in Japan that is over thousand years old. Since its founding it has been protecting local alcohol producers. Kamiki Whisky is part of this local legacy.

How did you create your blended whisky recipe? Is it

the same base whisky for all three releases? Do you source primary ingredients from local producers, or do you have a more global supply chain?

To celebrate the timeless alcohol tradition of the region, rare Japanese malt whiskies and the finest malt whiskies sourced from rest of the world are blended and later fused with the highest quality pure spring water. For each Kamiki variant, the same blend is used across three expressions.

Kamiki Original and all other variants uses a unique second maturation technique, while after oak aging the blend is rested for a second time in Yoshino Sugi – Japanese Cedar- casks to capture a perfectly smooth taste, a scent of sandalwood on the nose, and a zest of green tea in the finish.

Kamiki Intense is an exclusive version of Kamiki Origi-

nal. It has been aged in oak barrels and rested in local cedar casks longer than Kamiki ORIGINAL for a bolder taste. Kamiki Sakura is an exclusive version of Kamiki Original whereby the blend is finished in Sakura casks at the final stage after it is rested in Yoshino-Sugi / Japanese Cedar casks.

How difficult is it to make blended whisky in 2022? Many whisky producers lost interest in making blended, as the market started to prize more and more aged single malt. Does it make sense to compare the two types, or should we distinguish between two very different products more carefully?

Blending is an art form of whisky making, matching exact flavors to represent a certain profile over time. On the other hand similarly, single malt whisky is, as well, a marriage & blend of different casks from same whisky house that embeds the same art of blending

with the emphasis that the malt whiskies that goes into the single malt (blend) to be produced by at the same single distillery. The blending principles and art is present across both categories inherently.

How did you get to use Japanese cedar and Sakura trees casks for aging your whisky? What are the pros and cons? Do you think these casks could arouse the same interest of the now extremely sought-after Mizunara ones?

Kamiki brings local alcohol traditions in Japan to the whisky world. Hence, Kamiki uses a unique second maturation technique in Yoshino Sugi –Japanese Cedar- casks that had been used for centuries in Japan to age local alcoholic beverages. This second maturation makes Kamiki; "THE FIRST WHISKY BRAND IN THE WORLD WITH JAPANESE CEDAR CASK FINISH"! The maturation in these local casks has to be under





strict control since these casks have more dominant effect on the whisky than traditional oak casks, within the same period of time. We see increased interest in these local casks among consumers around the world. Mizunara – Japanese Oak is bringing to the whisky aged and/or finished in traditional oak casks brands' world with a twist of Japanese touch, which is seen at many popular deluxe whiskies and expressions across various brands.

**Which is your most successful product? Are there meaningful differences between the geographical markets?**

Western markets and Asian markets are on the rise. This gives us confidence for overall interest in our full range. In particular during Sakura – Cherry Blossom period, the sales of Kamiki Sakura is on a higher end.

**How are you planning to develop Kamiki's core range? Will there be special/limited releases or new core range additions?**

At this point, Kamiki has a wide range and our aim is to further increase availability across the world and raise awareness among whisky drinkers, rather than additions to existing range.



# INSPIRADO



## MACANUDO INSPIRADO

### EXPERIENCE A WORLD OF INSPIRATION

The Macanudo Inspirado line of premium hand rolled cigars features a multitude of unique blends that boast extraordinary tobaccos from across the globe, as well as distinct cigar-crafting techniques.



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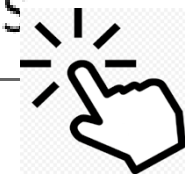
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# Alternative ice

*Plastic, stainless steel, or granite cubes and spheres enliven our drinks.  
Can they replace ice for our dram?*

by **Nicola Ruggiero**

An alternative way to cool our drinks is with cubes made of alternative materials, from the cheapest plastic to the most precious marble or stainless steel. It is an accessory that does not find significant application in the professional field of bartending since they cannot replace ice for their function.

Ice cools thanks to dilution, a fundamental aspect of a cocktail, while these products lower the drink's temperature (or keep it low) by simple induction. For this reason, their field of application is almost confined to the home: they can be kept for a long time in the fridge or freezer and are always ready to be dipped directly into the drink before serving. If all this may seem to discredit their use, in reality, the inalterability factor plays to their advantage: not offering dilution like ice, once inserted into any drink (even non-alcoholic) they

leave the flavor of the latter intact, from the first to the last sip. For this reason, their perfect use is in a distillate or a liqueur. Sometimes the classic ice cubes that we prepare in the home freezer are not "up to" to support our distillate, with the consequence of finding ourselves drinking something excessively diluted. The market offers different materials of these refrigerating accessories. Although I am not a lover of plastic, I would not discard it a priori: even if it does not cool much, with their cheerful colors, they are very functional at parties. Perfect for fizzy drinks or fruit juices. In the long run, however, they tend to wear out. The stainless steel cubes are congenial for undemanding and already cold drinks and allow, with their optimal conduction, to keep the drink cold for longer. Finally, the stone or marble cube, which I think is perfect for whiskey, both in terms of elegance and functionality: it cools less but maintains its temperature longer.



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# Pisco

*The birthplace of this distillate has long been disputed between Peru and Chile, despite very different production techniques and stylistic interpretations*

by **Vincenzo Scivetti**

It is not unusual, traveling around the world, to come across typical products whose birthplaces are disputed between multiple countries and even nations. Pisco, however, has always ignited the souls of Peruvians and Chileans, who play on an equal footing with the paternity of pisco, a distillate typical of both Countries of South America.

Pisco is obtained from the distillation of wine or partially fermented must, with very pleasant characteristics for its delicacy and typicality. If referring to Peruvian production, it is made according to the axiom: "no water and no wood" and with distillation in discontinuous still. On the other hand, the boisée character, the distillation in column still and the dilution with water, characterizes Chilean productions, more similar to European brandies. They are the products most consumed by the respective populations,

the one that in Chile determined phenomena of widespread alcoholism in the early twentieth century.

One could trace back the etymological root of the word pisco by pursuing research in the ancient Quechua language, the surviving language of the Incas. In the territory now identified as Peru, before the arrival of the Spaniards, lived perched in the mountains of the Andes the Inca populations who drank a fermented beverage of their creation, using corn as a raw material, the Chica de Ora, whose euphoric effects were interpreted as the means for priests and nobles to be able to get in touch with the gods and predict the future. In the Andes they were accustomed to the presence of huge birds such as condors; overlooking the coasts they met the small and numerous coastal birds that they called Pishkos or Pisqus. A word that became a

symbol of the territory and name of the river and the city built there, of its port and finally of its distillate. Most probably the same word was used to identify the terracotta containers "Piskos" in which they marketed the distillate. The Spaniards, accustomed to better quality fermented products, despised the chica, also because they did not appreciate that the grains of the raw material were chewed by virgin women and girls before being fermented in water (a technique identical to the first Egyptian brewing productions). But the need of the Spaniards, led by Pizarro, was to be able to obtain a fermented product necessary for the Court and for the Catholic Eucharistic celebrations, for which they planted vineyards in the territories closest to the coasts, where the climate was milder. First was in the fertile Valley of Cuzco, suitable for producing huge quantities but with low quality levels. The coastal areas were less fertile and certainly more suitable for producing a better quality wine.

It was not until 1613 that we can identify a documentary trace of the Peruvian existence of Pisco: Pedro Manuel died in the city of Ica and in his testament there is talk of the bequest to the heirs of the distillate and the stills of Spanish origin to produce it. Since 1630 the documentation has followed one another. For a long time the production of pisco remained a family legacy, with recipes and equipment that passed from father to son. Only after more than two centuries the productive development grew thanks to

some concomitant factors, including the arrival of Italian immigrants and the international appreciation that began to give the first signals, especially in America, while the mere wine productions were much appreciated for quality and low cost in Spain. But the secrets of success became the reasons for a great crisis. In fact, the massive imports into Iberian land from Peru led to a lowering of prices for the local product, to the point that the government had to curb this trend, protecting domestic productions with high taxes on imported wines. The resulting commercial stagnation created significant stocks of wine at risk of contamination and this led producers to increase distillation. Large quantities of pisco available, at a lower price, favored the spread and consumption among the population and guaranteed supplies to the port of Lima, the Peruvian capital, from where it was loaded to spread throughout the Americas. The sailors loved it for its ability to make drinkable the fresh water they kept in the vats on board, for its use as a disinfectant but, also, to console the hours of solitude and distance. It was the distillate symbol of the gold rush in California thanks to its availability and low cost.

American consumption collapsed with Prohibition and only thanks to the tensions between the United States and Mexico was there a happy return, especially for mixed consumption where pisco replaced tequila in sour drinks. Finally, with the new millennium, we are witnessing a gradual reappearance on international markets, with con-







sumers who appreciate the characteristics of the product and its very long history.

The Peruvian Pisco has been recognized as a protected designation with a disciplinary status. There are eight vines authorized for production, four aromatic (Torrontel, Moscatel, Albilla and Italia) and four less aromatic (Negra Criolla, Uvina, Quebranta and Mollar), the latter four defined as such for a legacy of the past linked to a drier taste. According to the Peruvian specification, the types of pisco recognized are three:

- Pisco puro: single vine obtained with one of the 8 types of vines.
- Pisco Acholado (blended): produced with two or more types of vines, used most often in mixology.
- Pisco mosto verde: pisco with incomplete fermentation. The characteristics of the individual vines remain the same but the aromas are more intense and the flavors more delicate and dense. It should be considered that for the production of this type of pisco is used a quantity of grapes twice as much as the types "puro" and "acholado".

As regards, instead, the vines and grapes used, with the help of Johnny Schuler, World Ambassador of Pisco, and Gloria Carpinelli, the voice in Italy of Pisco, we quickly review the eight varieties used, describing peculiarities and characteristics that are transmitted on the finished product.

**Albilla.** Large and conical bunches. Color from light green to yellow. Delicate taste and light aroma. In the distillate it gives aromas of peach and apple, with floral touches and honey. Generally intended for pisco "acholado".

**Italia.** Variety widespread in all regions of Peru. Grapes of green color tending to golden. It provides aromas of citrus, orange blossom and jasmine, sometimes even tropical fruits. Wonderfully aromatic piscos are obtained from this grape.

**Moscatel.** Reddish in color with blue shades. Delicate, requires special care, which is why crops are limited and the production of pisco is quantitatively lower. It gives the pisco hints of rose, peach and apple combined with vanilla, mandarin and jasmine.

**Torontel.** Green-golden bunches with yellowish shades and darker backgrounds. The produced with this grape is different because the alcohol is perceived together with hints of citrus and honey. The grapes give it notes of tropical fruits, raisins and a slight touch of jasmine.

**Negra criolla.** Small grapes with red and purple hues. With it a dry, clean pisco is produced, with intense aromas of fruits such as apple, pear, peach combined with chocolate, coffee and fresh grass.

**Quebranta.** Considered the native and exclusive grape of the Peruvian land. From it you get extraordinary piscos, with elegant aromas, austere with a good alcoholic perception, with fruity nuances of apple, banana and peach. It







is considered the queen grape among the pisqueras.

**Mollar.** Coppery red in color, it is believed to be a mutation of quebranta. It has large bunches with round grapes with a high concentration of sugar and has aromas and flavors reminiscent of apple, banana and pear.

**Uvina.** Small grapes of intense dark color with black and blue shades, cultivated, by regulation of designation of origin of pisco, only in the valleys of the rivers Cañete, Lunahuanà, Pacarán and Zuñiga (Lima). It is characteristic for the aroma of green olives with some notes of tropical fruits, apple and banana.

The production technique requires a lot of attention in the vineyard where quality is built thanks to nature and the work of man. The grapes require perfection in terms of health planning and a not too advanced ripening, to obtain delicately alcoholic wines. In winemaking it is important to prevent the contact of the must with the stalks and not to use sulfur in any form because it would give unpleasant hints to the distillate. Therefore, the speed of the operations is essential to reach the distillation with a fresh and delicate, technically impeccable wine. The need to speed up the processes has led to the creation of the Pisco Mosto Verde for which even a partially fermented must rich in pre-fermentation aromas is brought into the still. In general, the vinification is performed in stainless steel but often also in vitrified cement.

There are still pockets of tradition where the grapes are placed in the lagares: pools surrounded by a wall about 60/70 cm, in which the grapes are crushed barefoot by the members of the producers' family.

The Falcas are the Peruvian stills, partly in masonry and partly in copper, heated with the help of "algarrobo", a very particular aromatic wood. With these stills very sought after piscos are produced, characterized by the absolute delicacy of the aromas: the chicarrón (the heart of the distillation net of the heads and tails) is obtained with a slow distillation and at temperatures not too high to improve the extraction of aromas in the alcohol fraction, which normally results between 38 and 48% alcohol, thanks to very low cucurbits that favor the wide concentration of esters, at a temperature that is not excessively high and at the prolonged times to reach the height of the tails.

At this point, as mentioned earlier, there is no addition of water and no maturation in wood as well, thanks to the absolute softness of the spirit obtained, maximum an assembly step (the pisco goes on the market on average at 42%) and then the spirit is directly bottled with two / three months of aging before going on the market to delight the most demanding palates. Speaking of yield, however, from 100 kg of grapes you get 60 liters of wine from which just over 13 liters of pisco are obtained. If the distillation concerns the partially fermented musts of the Mosto Verde, the final alcohol yield barely reaches 6 liters.

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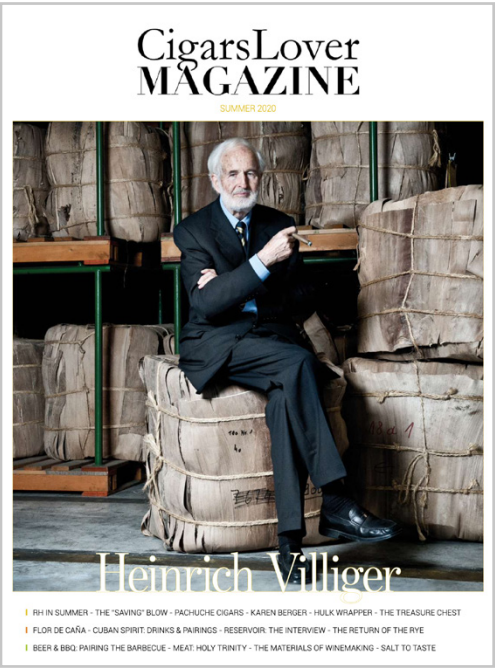
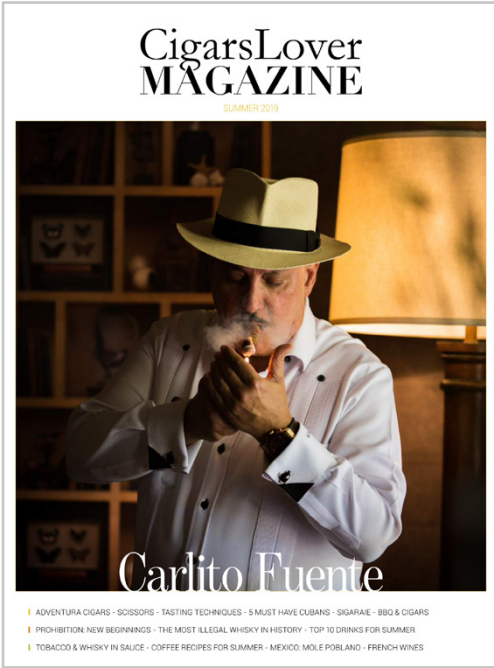
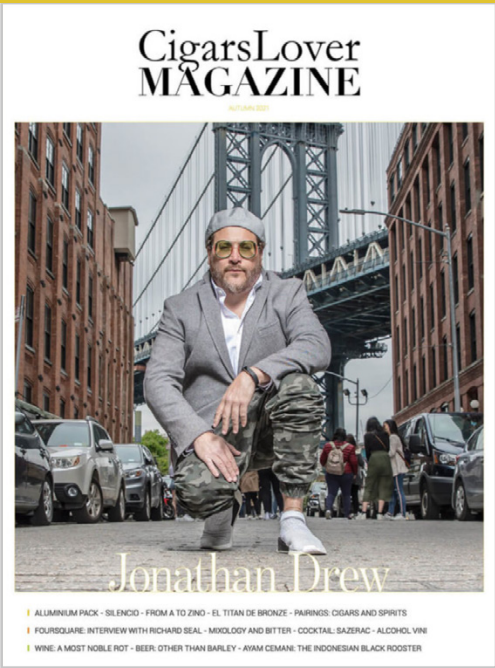
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# Pisco Sour

*Designed by an American based on the Whiskey Sour, it is the cocktail that embodies the most famous spirit from South America*

by **Davide Pertino**

Pisco is a South American brandy whose origins are disputed between the countries of Chile and Peru. In fact, in both countries, we find several cities that contain the word Pisco in their names, such as Pisco in Peru or Pisco Elqui in Chile. The two nations, both producers of Pisco, have been competing for the title of Country of Origin since the dawn of time. However, although the name identifies the same distillate, the product of the two South American countries differ in the aroma of the grape, in alcohol content, and, last but not least, in production styles.

The production technique of Chilean Pisco leads us to think of a methodology borrowed from the productions of southern Spain, imported at the time of the Spanish domination over those lands: the main use of an aromatic grape variety (Moscato in its various definitions), distillation with

gas-fired column stills with direct fire, the use (and sometimes abuse) of wood for aging. Moscato wine with low alcohol content is distilled in columns that automatically cut heads and tails, raising the alcoholic strength to very high percentages, such that it then needs cutting with distilled water before aging in wood, which is necessary to smooth the often aggressive edges of the spirit. The use of wood also leads to the use of caramel to standardize the color and often also of sugars to mildly sweeten the distillate. Therefore, a brandy-like liquid is obtained due to the evident similarities with Spanish styles.

The differences with the Peruvian Pisco, on the other hand, are substantial. For Peruvians, the raw material and the final result are of utmost importance; the distillate must not be contaminated by water, wood, or sugars.

Pisco can be drunk neat, and indeed, if you don't know it at all, it would be recommended. However, it is curious to highlight how to better appreciate the aroma of this distillate. There is a peculiar tasting technique, called "short tragus": it consists in sipping the distillate a few drops at a time, holding it in the mouth for a few seconds to allow it to warm up and release its flavor profile, which will be perceptible through the back of the nose.

On the other hand, if you know it neat or simply have the desire to try it in mixing, there are different versions of drinks that see Pisco as the protagonist. The least famous is Chalaquito, which consists of pouring Pisco, lime juice, sugar, angostura, and egg white into a shaker. It ends in a Collins glass with ice and soda. We could define it as the South American version of a classic drinks category such as the Fizz.

However, the most famous cocktail that uses this peculiar South American distillate has always been the Pisco sour. Its paternity is recognized in "El Gringo", registered in the US as Victor Morris, a native of Salt Lake City who decided, in 1913, to move to Lima to discover and learn about local products. A few years later he gave life to his Morris Bar, where he served a twist of the more common Whiskey Sour to a high-ranking and mostly American clientele who loved this spicier and more complex take on the sour. The Peruvian president Augusto Leguia y Salcedo grew the notoriety of this distillate and its cocktail version by advocating its qualities.

The drink, as mentioned, sees Pisco as the main ingredient. However, to obtain a cocktail, it is necessary to have other essential components. The acid note, for example, provided by the lime juice and the sweet taste given by the sugar; it also acts as a taste enhancer. Finally, egg white is used to create a soft texture and provide a body to the sip. It would seem the drink is complete but no! There can be no Pisco Sour without Amargo Chunco. Amargo Chunco is a bitter with a complex taste, comprised of over thirty different aromas, including peel, herbs, roots, bark, and flowers, including quina and serapia (represented on the flag of Peru). The mix is left to ferment in oak barrels for over six months and then bottled. The bitter takes its name from the indigenous group of Amazonian Indians who fought proudly for their land during the Spanish colonization. Due to its peculiarities, it is a drink defined as an "all-day" beverage, easy to drink, which can be enjoyed before or after a meal (better if not too lavish).

To prepare an excellent Pisco Sour, we need a few essential ingredients. A few words about the technique. Since this is a twist on the Whiskey Sour, it should be prepared in the most classic of ways which involves a first vigorous dry shake to whip the egg white, then the addition of ice for dilution and chilling. In South America, such as in Peru or Chile, the technique for preparing the drink differs considerably since it involves putting all the ingredients in a blender with a couple of ice cubes. The original technique is more in line with how "El Gringo" would have made the drink when he invented it but the result is outstanding either way.

## INGREDIENTS

- 50 ml of Pisco
- 30 ml of Lime Juice
- 20 ml of sugar syrup
- 15 ml of egg white
- 3 drops of amargo chunco

## GLASS

Cocktail glass or tall tumbler.

## PREPARATION

Pour the ingredients into a Parisienne or Boston type shaker, containers which, having more volume, allow you to take in more air. Once you have poured the ingredients, including the egg white, make a dry shake (a shake without ice) to ensure that the egg mounts to perfection. Then add ice, close the shaker again and shake for 30/40 seconds. Immediately pour the drink with the help of a strainer and a colander into a cocktail glass. Complete with three drops of Amargo Chunco on the surface of the cocktail.

## ADVICE

The passage of the shaken and poured drink must be swift because, as with all drinks that involve the use of egg white, there is a risk that the latter will remain attached to the walls of the ice if you let too much time pass before pouring the cocktail into the glass.



# TASTE

"I cook with wine, sometimes I even add it to the food."  
*W.C. Fields*







# That Spice Flavor

*Understanding the complex nature  
of spice flavors in wine tasting*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

The world of wine tasting is mostly (in)famous for the flourished descriptions of endless, exotic, and obscure aromatic palettes. Usually, spices are among the most favorite markers evoked to lusciously arouse interest about the exclusive quality of a tasted wine... but is that really the case? How can we be so sure about the presence of that spice in our wine? Indeed, it's not a simple answer. As this is the first article addressing the technical aspects of wine tasting, we'll need few technical notes before delving into the decadent realm of spices and other glorified wine flavors.

First, we should bear clear in mind that it is the olfactory perception, both through the nostril (orthonasal) and via the back of the throat (retronasal), that allows us to

distinguish, identify, and discriminate between general smells and more precise complex flavors. Aside from delineating the basic taste and the mouth-feel sensations, our mouth and tongue are mostly accessories in tasting flavors, in so far as they allow the wine to move around our palate where saliva and mucosa develop it into olfactory compounds that can be appreciated by our retronasal receptors. Second, only 30% of flavors are perceived orthonasally, while the bulk of the work is dependent on the retronasal examination. When we talk about flavors, we usually talk about the interactions of complex chemical compounds coming both from the grapes (thus, genetics, soil composition, and climate) and the wine-making processes (thus, fermentation, concentration, ageing, and so on). Even the most detailed chemical

analysis of a wine will simply give a list of constituents like alcohols, acids, phenolics, esters, and so on, but it will not tell us exactly what their combination will eventually be once tasted. This means that wine-tasting really boils down to our physiological receptivity and training in the interpretation of those compounds. Just like in perfumes, volatility is a most important attribute for wines, as only an appropriate evaporation rate allows the full appreciation of the aromatic palette. While perfumes can be perfectly engineered, wines are more subject to their natural compositions: a major hindrance for volatility is a high content of ethanol, meaning that wines with high alcoholic content tend to have heavier and less fragrant aromas due to how ethanol modifies the chemical behavior of the other aromatic constituents. Yet, other alcohols can enrich different aspects of the aromatic palette, and this explains why it's so important for winemakers to find the right balance between phenolic and alcoholic maturation before harvesting. Third, and a final technical note, our capacity to detect and recognize odors and aromas is also intimately connected to the way in which we stimulate our odor cognition and olfactory memory, which means that we can and must train ourselves to improve our detection skills not only in wine tastings, but also by changing our olfactory approach to things in general.

Now, what are the spice flavors we are talking about? There can be sweet spices like vanilla, anise, cinnamon,

cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, saffron, or more penetrating like curry, juniper, paprika, all sorts of pepper, as well as spice-related notes in the domain of toasted and balsamic flavors like cocoa, camphor, coffee, caramel, tarmac, eucalyptus, all sorts of dry fruits, licorice, tobacco, etc. How is that possible? As already pointed out, soil, climate, and fermentation techniques can heavily influence the final result by enhancing certain aspects or stimulating new combinations. Each grape has its own genetic, more or less pronounced, aromatic profile due to the natural skin concentration of chemical compounds called "terpenes" (there are three degrees: fully aromatic, semi-aromatic, and non-aromatic grapes). Yet, in terms of spice flavors, the most impacting wine-making process is certainly cask ageing. First, there is a marked difference in terms of flavors between the sweeter American Oak (vanilla, coconut, cinnamon, dill) and the darker French Oak (vanilla, hazelnut, clove, coffee), but toasting techniques can largely modify the wood. Second, and more important, wine ageing requires time to fully refine flavors, both inside the cask and after bottling. The immediate transfer of wood lactones and tannins will release flavors of vanilla and cinnamon, while the long-term wine-wood interaction and wine-oxygen reaction will develop over time the most impressive and complex tertiary flavors: honey, ginger, saffron, petrol, truffle, graphite, and so on.

Red grapes like Cabernet-Sauvignon, Syrah, and Zinfan-







del/Primitivo are renowned for their spiced-up profiles. Cabernet-Sauvignon is genetically marked by a series of aromatic compounds called “pyrazines” that develop a distinctive note of bell pepper, with pedoclimatical variations either enhancing or mitigating this innate vegetal vein. The best cask aged specimens from regions like Bordeaux, Napa Valley, and Tuscany offer complex wines replete with tertiary notes of eucalyptus, mint, tobacco, dark coffee, cocoa, and graphite. On the other end, Syrah boasts fierce flavors of black pepper thanks to the genetic presence of the “rotundone” aromatic compound. Even when young, it can develop intense notes of clove, licorice, and tobacco, especially if grown in the rich soils of Barossa Valley in Australia, the sweet hills of Cortona in Tuscany, or the volcanic lands around Etna in Sicily. The more refined and complex French syrah from the Rhone requires certainly more time to fully mature, but it repays the patience with fantastic flavors of bitter chocolate and evocative tarmac. Regarding our third example, there's a major geographical difference between the fresher Zinfandel from California and the more loaded Primitivo from South Italy (Apulia). In general, these wines have a soft and sweet profile played along the notes of mature fruit and sweet marmalade. On top of these, though, they tend to develop flavors of vanilla, cinnamon, milk chocolate, tobacco, and even balsamic when properly aged.

White grapes can offer incredible spice palettes too, like in the case of Gewürztraminer and Riesling. Indeed, as underlined by its very name, Gewürztraminer (Aromatic Traminer) is an intensely aromatic grape expressing a wide range of varietal flavors (rose, peach, mango, lychee). Depending on the style – if Alsatian, German, Austrian, or New World – this grape can also develop fresh spices like ginger and cedar, sweeter like cinnamon and honey, and even delectable flavors of cream and fruit cakes. Riesling is a grape that can produce a vast variety of different wines: from easy drinking simple ones to almost immortal wines of great complexity. The grape grows well in cool climate and tends to be acidic, flowery, fruity, and mineral. In Germany (especially in Mosel and Rhineland), Riesling becomes stronger, richer, and definitely spicier with intense petrol and kerosene to nose, anise and salmiac to the palate. If late harvested or botrytized, it gives incredibly rich dessert wines of the most refined acidity with amazing spice flavors of honey, caramel, nuts, herbs, and patisserie.

Of course, these examples illustrate only but a fraction of the possible spice flavors offered by wines. It's important, though, to consider these flavors also in terms of food pairing, as the full aromatic array is often revealed only in the wholesome combination of wine and food. A classic example is how a Gewürztraminer can transform the tasting experience when paired to Asian cuisine. Not by chance, “gastronomic” has recently become one of the most defining features for those excellent wines capable of exalting any given preparation thanks to their amazing aromatic profile, their balance between acidity and alcoholic strength, and the overall finesse.

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# Fermentation

*From an ancient conservation technique, through the rediscovery of modern cuisine, fermentation aims to become a nutraceutical future.*

by **Vincenzo Lopez**

**I**t could be defined as old as the world: fermentation is, in fact, one of the oldest and currently still well-established conservation techniques, playing the primacy, almost on a par with cereal hydrolysis, drying, and salting.

The first testimonies tell of a good process of transforming water into an alcoholic drink, thanks to the infusion of honey and salt. It was the mead, discovered more than 5000 years ago and linked to the myth of Dionysus. What has then considered the "magical" transformation of the dormant yeasts of the bees' nectar became the great teacher for the history of two other renowned fermented products: beer and wine.

However, to narrow down the field of our contemplation, without going too far into the terminological-scientific distinction, given the presence of different types of fermentation (malolactic, alcoholic, etc.), we will deal with the one of our interest, most commonly used in the world of cooking, i.e., lactic. Exemplifying the biochemical processes, this phenomenon is triggered by anaerobic bacteria (which live in the absence of oxygen within the tissues), which transform glucose or other sugars into lactic acid, with the associated production of carbon dioxide.

This biological transformation process, formerly used in food storage techniques, finds a broad spectrum in modern cuisine. The vision and research of the ingredient purely extracted and enhanced in its taste makes fermentation the right way for modern cuisine, always attentive to taste but also to the nutritional importance for well-being that comes from its intake.

Once the fashions of marinades and exasperated low-temperature cooking have been overcome, fer-







mentation allows us to obtain harmonious ingredients full of a unique, defined, but above all territorial flavor character. Given that the taste of a carrot from southern Sweden will never be the same as that of another cultivated in Sicily, since the pedoclimate and the chemical composition of the soil will make the vegetable peculiar, even if it was born from the same handful of seeds.

Therefore, it is fascinating to think that a conservation technique can express the territory, indissolubly tying it to a belief that will soon have to be a mantra, namely sustainability. Also, in terms of resource optimization, it is possible to ferment almost all types of food, from cheese to meat, but above all vegetables. In this way, small stocks are obtained that embellish the pantries, also favoring the non-seasonal use of products and reducing the consumption of energy for their transformation and transport from one part of the globe of non-seasonal foods to another. Just think that to obtain a fermented solanaceae, able to resist six months in the pantry, only the raw material is enough, 2% of its weight in salt, water, a jar with a bubbler, and a dimly lit place to store it. Riding the newfound fashion of fermentation preservation, it was inevitable that intuitive and technical solutions would be found, thus allowing the extraction of superb flavors full of character.

One of the most effective extraction techniques is cryo-extraction, preceded by fermentation with a slightly more accentuated saline solution. Exemplifying the process: imagine you have a pumpkin and want to extract its soul, making it bold and intriguing. First, the peel will be cleaned in a sterile environment and then cut into cubes that are easy to insert into the chosen jar. Subsequently, it can be roasted with olive wood, the time necessary for the scratches of the grill to create the seal of the infamous Maillard. From there, we move on to the fermentation process, immersing the cubes in a 3% saline composition (e.g., 3 g of salt in 100 g of water). Using a jar with a bubbler, it will not be necessary to move it for the next two weeks, after which it will be removed from the solution to dry, wrap it in parchment paper, and placed in the freezer for 30 minutes or so. The forced cooling of the vegetable will thus favor the vivid maintenance of the pumpkin's natural color. You will finally have an ingredient ready to be blended with almonds, extra virgin olive oil, and fennel to obtain a pumpkin pesto that will leave no room for further delay except to uncork a good chardonnay.

In the most modern and well-equipped kitchens, this will happen between vacuum packs, convection ovens, and precision blast chillers, but attempting home experimentation can make us feel part of an ancient technique that now turns its proud gaze to the future.

The main concept is that cooking and creation techniques for the pleasures of the palate must be concretely defined also for the nutritional vitality that derives from it.





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## SPIRITS

### 威士忌標籤

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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第一種酒類的原產地。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，最年輕的數字是相低的。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“0

歲”字樣，無論舊桶的老化情況如何。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年威士忌的標量上則。製片人選擇不標年齡，這仍然是未知的：它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉悅。

在標量上，始終報告酒精含量，必須至少為40%。在這個數字下我們不能說威士忌，如果等級更高，有時公司會標告“Cask Strength”（英國世界）或“Full Proof”（美國世界）：我們在沒有用水稀釋的產品存在。因此，好像它們只是從桶中直接。然而，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的更複雜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（今年精心標為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，我們經常遇到和流行飲用的各種酒類，或者使用的唯一穀物（黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌）。

我們試圖解釋各種標量上最常用術語，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。



# The Food Smoke

*The Renaissance  
of the Old-Fashioned Rauchbier*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

The technique behind smoked beers, namely fire drying germinating grain, dates back centuries. As a simple matter of fact, air drying grain in moist climates was not feasible without technological help, fire drying was the only viable option. Unavoidably, fire drying permeated the resulting malts with smoky flavors up to the point that all beers made in cold areas had to be smoked beers. However, only Germany and some other Eastern European lands were known to have a solid rauchbier tradition. It was this way until at least 1635 when Sir Nicholas Halse patented his smoke-free kiln in England. It was the first fuel-powered isolated oven that soon took over the traditional means of production pretty much everywhere in the world. At the beginning of the 20th century, smoked beers had pretty much disappeared, except for a few breweries in the Bavarian city of Bamberg, and they were considered an odd remnant from the past; regional touristic attractions of a quite outdated production technique.

Yet, over the past few years, the craft beer movement has rediscovered this forgotten jewel as a style for experimenting and innovating with flavor-enriching techniques. Many beer-lovers and professionals went to visit the two surviving breweries in Bamberg, Spezial and Schlenkerla, to discover their traditional production using fire drying kilns powered by beechwood. Still today, the most representative Rauchbier is probably the Aecht Schlenkerla Märzen, a rich pale lager beer in the traditional Bavarian style that showcases all the artisanal peculiarities of smoked malts. It has an ABV of 5,1% and boasts strong notes of smoked bacon, pork jerky, cocoa powder, as well as a noteworthy peated flavor that ranges



from ember ashes to medicinal, briny, and brackish scents. Despite its strong character and intense aromas, it is an extremely drinkable beer. Schlenkerla produces a wide variety of other rauchbier like a light weizen, a low alcohol beer, a strong doppelbock and many limited seasonal styles. In a similar vein, the other surviving brewery in Bamberg, Spezial, produces several rauchbiers. Their traditional one is a classic lager with a more moderate smoked aromatic palette and a lighter body than Schlenkerla's. It has an ABV of 4.9%, a grasser and sweeter taste, and a quite dangerous easy-going drinkability. For the daring ones, Spezial offers also Märzen and Doppelbock versions, as well as several seasonal stronger styles that are on the same level of complexity of Schlenkerla's beers, although Spezial always tries to pursue the milder way of the Rauch Gospel.

With the craft beer renaissance of smoked beers, there has been a significant change of the favored style to "smoke". Given their already smokey profile, porters became the new preferred style used by craft brewers to experiment with the rediscovered German techniques of fire-dried malts. Beside the typical German beechwood, new craft producers experimented fire drying kilns with cherry, oak, and even alder to see how different essences would impact the malts. They achieved interesting results with malts rich of mellow and syrupy notes of heavy molasses and fat bacon, thus particularly apt for the darker profile of porter-inspired beers. Higher in alcohol content (usually 7/9%), richer in body and intensity (given the varieties of roasted and fire dried malts, as well as other grains like oatmeal or rye), smoked porters conquered brewers and beer lovers everywhere in the world with their

unique mix of complexity, pleasantness, and bit of audacity. Moreover, most smoked porters, often also in the Baltic or Imperial version, are intended for year-long cellar aging before reaching their apex, a feature that is becoming more and more important for the top-level market. Their aromatic profile ranges from intense chocolate and dark roast coffee flavors to wilder leathery, meaty, peppery, nutty notes, with often also balsamic and mineral veins of licorice, anisette, chalk, iodine, and brine. Among the many interpretations we find the Van Viven Smoked Porter in Belgium, Birrificio Lambrate Ghisa in Italy, De Molen Bloed, Zweet & Tranen and Rook & Vuur in the Netherlands. In any case, it is in the US that the smoked renaissance achieved the biggest market success and recognition thanks to some wonderful interpretations like the now classic Stone Brewing Smoked Porter from California, the age-impressive Alaskan Brewing Smoked Porter, the more approachable Arcadia Brewing London Porter from Michigan, and the massive series of the Flynn on Fire Smoked Beer Initiative launched by the Switchback Brewing Company from Vermont, along with many others.

Finally, in terms of food pairing, smoked beers are less difficult to match than one might think. Their clean finish and salty & sweet character requires fatness and greasiness, making them particularly apt to pair with rich hard cheeses like cheddar and gouda, bitter-sweet coffee or chocolate desserts, and, of course, BBQ smoked meat or fish like ribs, brisket, and salmon. Yet, one must be careful in finding a complementary style of smokiness (remember the differences between the hardwood used during the fire drying process), otherwise the contrast might be unpleasant or overwhelming. Prost!



# Blind Tasting



**82 SPIRITS**

- 84 Rum
- 90 Whisky

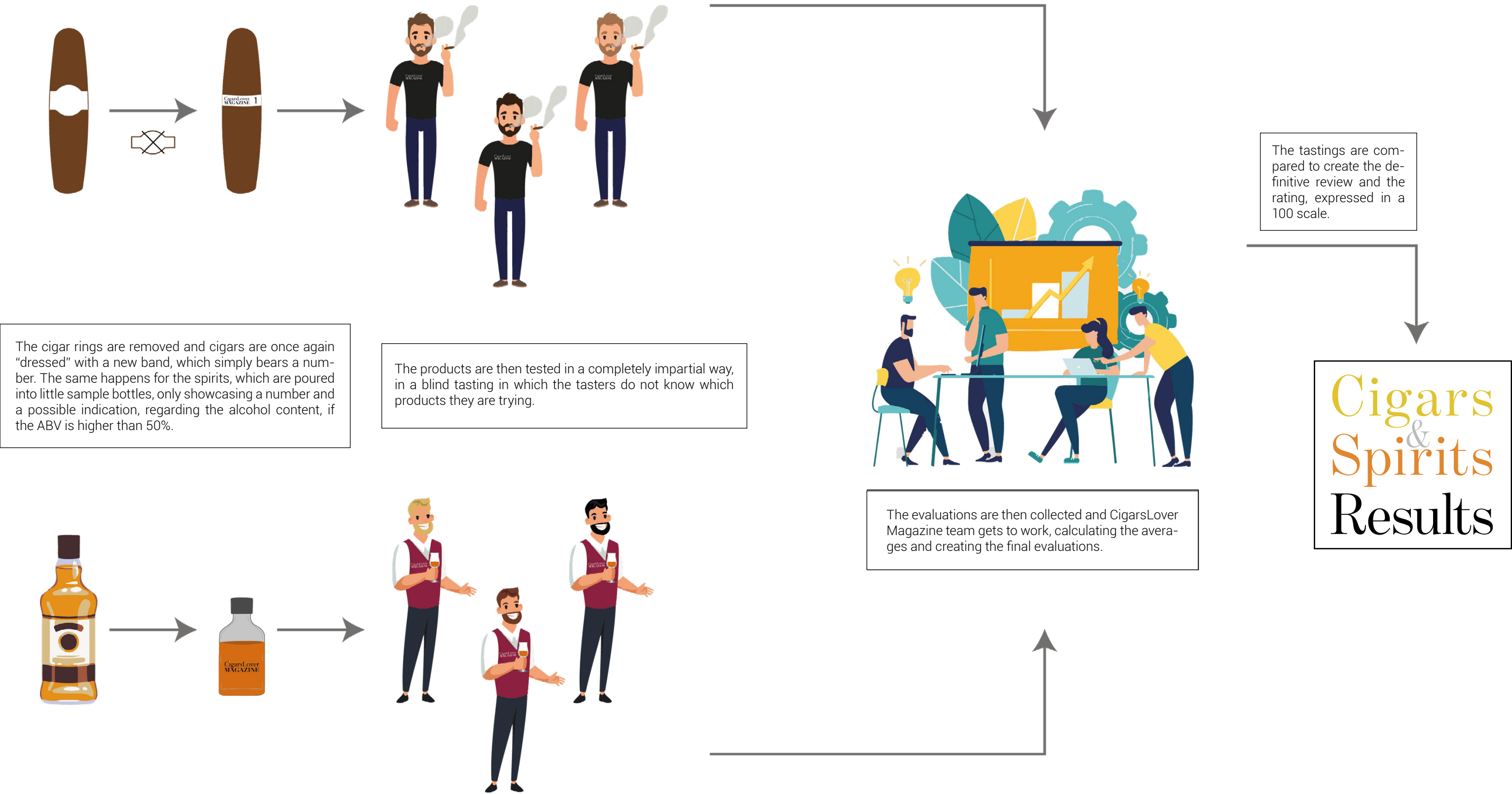
**97 CIGARS**

- 98 Piramides
- 102 Robusto
- 104 Shorts
- 108 Toro





# HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?







KAVALAN  
*Solist Fino Sherry*

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

— 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

# Legend

*All the information in the blind tasting*

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

- 1 Spirit image.
- 2 Name of the spirit reviewed.  
  
“yo” means “Years Old” and indicates how many years the product has been matured. If there is no indication of that, it is because the producer didn't declare it.
- 3
  - 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 in three parts: what is perceived to the nose, to the palate and in the finish. The final rows describe the overall experience that brought to the rating.
- 5 Rating scale: **95-100** memorable and excellent in every detail. **90-94** great quality and highly satisfying. **86-89** high quality and very pleasant. **81-85** decent, delivering a good dram . **Less than 80** not recommended.

# SpiritsLover MAGAZINE

350+  
SPIRITS  
TESTED  
YEARLY



# Rum



## The chosen 12

Ten country producer are present in this blind tasting, featuring very different products. All the rums are commercialized for a price below a hundred dollars.

## Results

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



## NAVY ISLAND JAMAICA RUM *Navy Strength*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	57%   114	\$\$

— NOSE —

Intense notes of green olives, together with vegetal nuances are followed by gooseberries, and beeswax.

— PALATE —

Vegetable, green olives and brine, with a peppery touch. By adding some water, shades of caramel appear.

— FINISH —

Medium-long, with green olives and salted caramel.

Direct and without frills, it has a prolonged persistence. Fulfilling.

92



## HAMPDEN *Pure Single Jamaican Rum*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	60%   120	\$\$

— NOSE —

Wood, green olives, brine, balsamic nuances of menthol, a hint of licorice, and raisins. Mandarin peel.

— PALATE —

Explosive, with sweet notes of raisins and spices enriched with pepper, leather, and dark chocolate.

— FINISH —

Long. Spices and pepper, vegetable flavors, and menthol.

Intense, direct, and explosive, with a persistence that never seems to end.

92



## ENGLISH HARBOUR *5 Year Old rum*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Antigua	40%   80	\$

— NOSE —

Maple syrup, toasted hazelnut honey. After a few moments in the glass, rhubarb. A touch of vanilla.

— PALATE —

Honey and maple syrup, now enriched with dark chocolate and light vegetal hints. Nuances of ripe fruit.

— FINISH —

Medium-long, with dark chocolate, honey, and a hint of spice.

Smooth and round, as well as balanced. Easy to drink.

90





PUSSER'S  
15 Year Old

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

— NOSE —  
Black cherry, raisins, and plum. Rancio. Green olive and a sweet hint of spice. After a few moments, cocoa.

— PALATE —  
Plums and raisins, with candied fruit. A light vegetal note, together with a hint of spice.

— FINISH —  
Long, with notes of candied fruit and spices.

Deep and fairly broad bouquet. Masculine and direct.

89



CIHUATÀN  
12 Year Old Cinabro

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
El Salvador	40%   80	\$\$

— NOSE —  
Aromas of spices and floral notes, accompanied by fine wood. Hints of vanilla and cinnamon.

— PALATE —  
A mix of spicy and caramel notes, along with aromatic herbs and edible flowers. Hints of orange peel.

— FINISH —  
Medium, with orange zest and vanilla.

Easy to drink and easy to appreciate. Balanced.

89



PIRATE'S GROG  
No.13

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

— NOSE —  
Hints of star anise, bubble gum, and a mix of spices. Nutmeg and vanilla.

— PALATE —  
Vanilla, wood, a hint of ginger, and then balsamic nuances. A touch of leather and coffee beans.

— FINISH —  
Medium long. Spices and vegetal and balsamic hints.

Unconventional and somewhat unique profile. Easy to drink.

88



BUMBÚ  
XO

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Panama	40%   80	\$

— NOSE —  
Caramel and wood varnish. Nuances of toasted wood and hints of coffee.

— PALATE —  
Caramel and wood varnish. The coffee is now accompanied by balsamic hints that refresh the profile.

— FINISH —  
Medium. Caramel and menthol nuances.

The bouquet is not the broadest. Easy to appreciate.

87



MINOKI  
Mizunara

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	40%   80	\$

— NOSE —  
Fragrant scents of fine wood and wood varnish. Then ripe tropical fruit, with dates and raisins.

— PALATE —  
It confirms the wood, now enriched with notes of vanilla pods and a touch of spice.

— FINISH —  
The persistence is medium-long, with vanilla and spices.

Round, with a balanced profile, the flavors are well defined.

86



RYOMA  
7 year old Japanese rum

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	40%   80	\$

— NOSE —  
Aromas of vanilla, followed by beeswax, vegetal and floral nuances, and a hint of solvent. Rather fresh.

— PALATE —  
Floral notes at first, followed by aged wood and a hint of white pepper. Slightly astringent.

— FINISH —  
Medium short. Slightly dry. Wood and hints of spices.

Rather contained flavor profile. It makes elegance its main virtue.

86





MILIONARIO  
 15 Year Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Peru	40%   80	\$

—NOSE—  
 Hints of caramelized plantain, honey hazelnuts, cloves, and cinnamon.

—PALATE—  
 Sweet and soft, with banana, salted caramel pecan nut, fig jam, and spices, with cinnamon, vanilla, and pepper.

—FINISH—  
 Medium persistence. Bananas and walnut.

Fresh and balanced profile that is easy to appreciate.

86



TIKI LOVERS  
 Dark Rum

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Caribbean	57%   114	\$

—NOSE—  
 Wood, spices, a hint of brine, wood varnish, vanilla, and notes of toasted hazelnut. Cedar peel and kumquat.

—PALATE—  
 Notes of Kumquat, spices, wood varnish, brine, and vanilla. Mineral tips.

—FINISH—  
 Medium-long, with spices and brine.

Direct and intense, it's unfussy and flavorful.

86



NEPTUNE  
 Gold

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Barbados	40%   80	\$

—NOSE—  
 Hints of ripe fruit, where peach and plum stand out. Then sugary and caramel notes.

—PALATE—  
 Cotton candy, caramel, and a touch of wood. Sugared almonds and a hint of green olives.

—FINISH—  
 Medium short. Sugary.

Rather contained flavor profile. Delicate.

85



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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# Whisky



## The chosen 12

Five producing countries have been selected for this blind tasting, including some new releases, some core range bottlings and some not that easy to bottles.

## Results

Two Scotch and a Japanese whisky reaches 90 points and scores higher than all the other products. Fourth and fifth places are also very interesting.



## BEN NEVIS 10 year Old

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

— NOSE —

Ripe red fruit (strawberry, peach, apricot), flanked by orange peel, spices, and hazelnut.

— PALATE —

Red and orange fruit are confirmed, with spices and an intense note of milk chocolate.

— FINISH —

Medium persistence. Spices and hazelnut are perceived.

Velvety and deep flavor profile, as well as round and balanced.

91



## ARDNAMUR- CHAN AD/07.21:05

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46.8%   93.6	\$\$

— NOSE —

Smoky and mineral aromas, together with citrus peel and a mix of spices, with a hint of peppery notes.

— PALATE —

Savory and spicy, with mineral notes and slightly smokey, refreshed by lemon zest.

— FINISH —

Medium-long persistence, with fresh hints of lemon and mineral notes.

Clean and creamy, as well as intense and structured.

90



## KAMI KI Intense Wood

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	52.7%   90	\$\$

— NOSE —

Precious wood, enriched with vanilla and a mix of spices, where cinnamon and nutmeg stand out. Black currant.

— PALATE —

The wood is confirmed, now accompanied by a mix of nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, and cardamom. Tobacco.

— FINISH —

Medium persistence, with notes of wood and spices. A touch of honey.

Unique and structured flavor profile, with rich wood and spices.

90





RESERVOIR  
*FV Cask Experience*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	43%   96	\$\$\$

—NOSE—  
Ripe red fruit, dark chocolate, spices, and a touch of wood varnish. Pecan nut and maple syrup. Fresh.

—PALATE—  
Young wood, spices, coffee beans, and a hint of dark chocolate. Ripe fruit and pecans. Honey

—FINISH—  
Medium-long persistence, with spices, coffee, and peppery notes.

It releases a marked flavor intensity. Direct and rewarding.

89



THE LAKES  
*Whiskymaker's Reserve No.4*

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

—NOSE—  
Aromas of sherry, with sultanas, figs, and strawberries, all enriched with hints of hazelnut.

—PALATE—  
Sweet, with notes of strawberry jam and sugary tips. Peppery, with sweet vegetal nuances.

—FINISH—  
Medium-long persistence, with spices and hazelnuts.

It releases a marked flavor intensity. Direct and rewarding.

89



LAGAVULIN 12 YO  
*Special Release 2021*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	56.5%   113	\$\$\$

—NOSE—  
Aromas of vanilla and wood varnish, along with medicinal herbs and spices. Smoked and peaty hints.

—PALATE—  
Spices, ash, smoky notes, and bacon. Medicinal herbs and peat.

—FINISH—  
Medium long. Smoky and marine notes. Peat.

Intense and powerful, but with a balance at times on the razor's edge.

88



ARDBEG 19 YO  
*Traigh Bhan Batch 3*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46.2%   92.4	\$\$\$\$

—NOSE—  
Mild mineral peat, accompanied by citrus notes, smoky aromas, vanilla, and a hint of licorice.

—PALATE—  
Peat along with spices and black pepper. Licorice is confirmed. Medicinal herbs, vanilla and cedar peel.

—FINISH—  
Medium long. Smoky notes, followed by cedar peel and vanilla.

Compost, balanced, and of good intensity. Good structure.

87



THE WHISTLER  
*7 Years Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	59%   118	\$

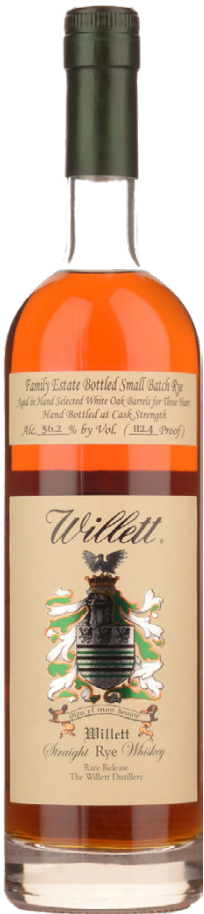
—NOSE—  
Malt and cereals, accompanied by mandarin, salted caramel, and fresh notes of cloves. Grand Marnier.

—PALATE—  
Fruity and toasted notes. Mandarin and cereals. The balsamic component is more marked, and a walnut tip.

—FINISH—  
The finish is long, with rich balsamic and mandarin notes.

Marked flavor intensity. Warm and satisfying, with a long finish.

88



WILLET'S 3 YO  
*Family Estate Bottled Rye*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	53.7%   107.4	\$\$

—NOSE—  
Wood varnish, lemongrass, beeswax and a mix of balsamic herbs (eucalyptus, rhubarb, cloves). Fernet Branca.

—PALATE—  
Balsamic herbs and wood varnish, now accompanied by spice.

—FINISH—  
Long, with balsamic herbs, now the rhubarb stands out, and beeswax.

Complex and powerful. The balsamic component is multifaceted.

85





INCHMURRIN  
*Madeira Wood Finish*

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

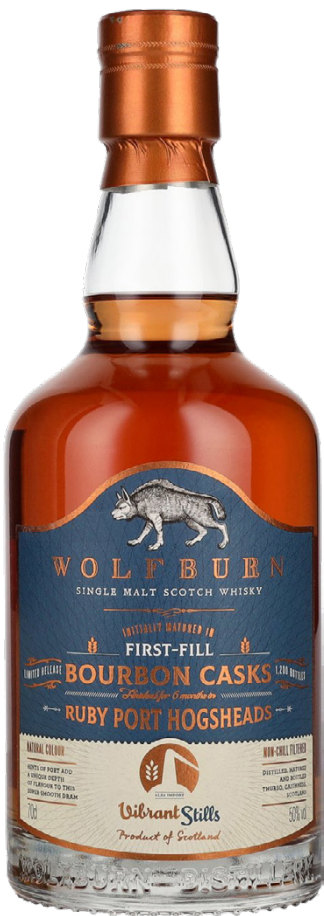
—NOSE—  
 Wood and red fruit (cherry) and hints of spices. Then sandalwood and cardamom, with honey and vanilla.

—PALATE—  
 Round and honeyed. Cherry and sandalwood are confirmed, followed by spices and honey. Slightly dry.

—FINISH—  
 Medium-long. Spices, sandalwood, and vanilla. A peppery tip.

Balanced and round. Discreetly structured.

86



WOLFBURN  
*Vibrant Stills  
 Ruby Port Finish 2014*

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

—NOSE—  
 Cotton candy, ripe fruit, where grapes and plums stand out. Followed by orange peel and wood spices.

—PALATE—  
 It confirms the ripe fruit, supported by intense peppery and leather notes.

—FINISH—  
 The finish is medium. Orange peel, cotton candy, and peppery hints.

Intense and with a unique and not pronounced bouquet.

84



THE  
 GLENROTHES  
*12 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	40%   80	\$

—NOSE—  
 A mix of apple and vanilla, along with hints of tropical fruit.

—PALATE—  
 Candied fruit and cinnamon. Leather and vegetable shades. Fruity shades.

FINISH  
 The finish is medium. Ripe fruit and spices.

Of good intensity and balance. Simple to appreciate.

82

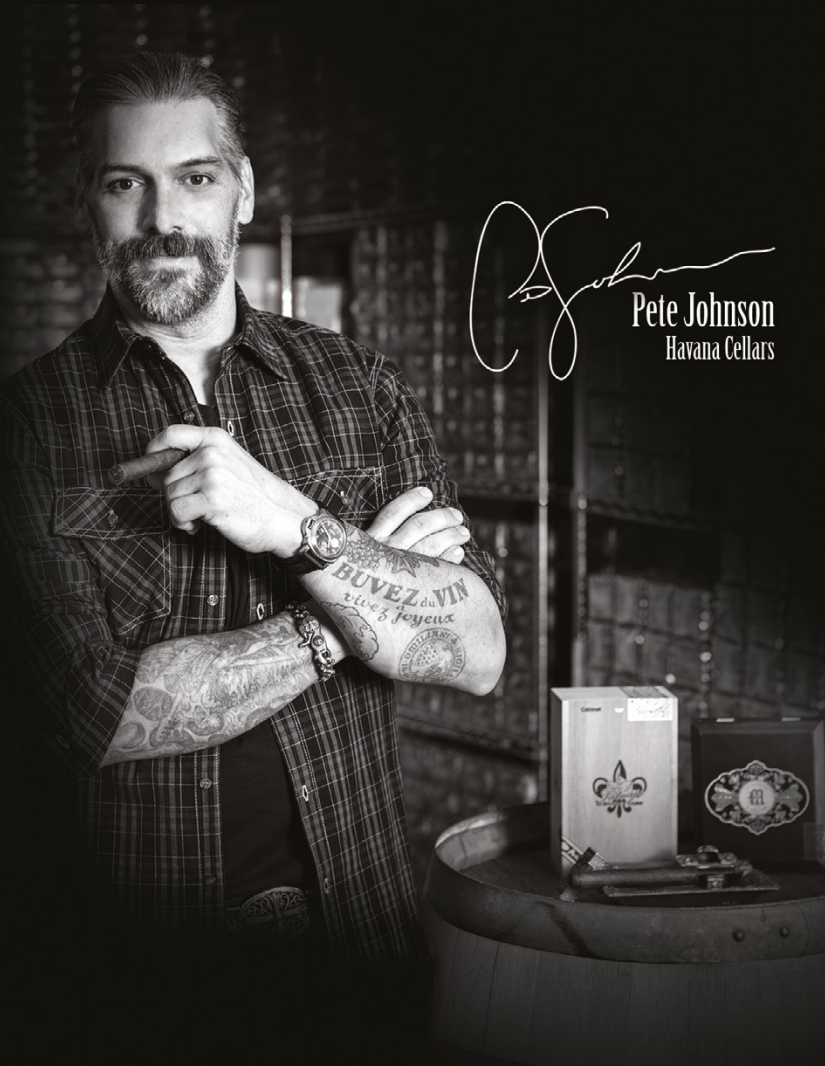


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 Havana Cellars



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# Legend

All the information inside the blind tastings

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



**1**

**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.

**2**

**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



Cina



Panama
- 5**

- STRENGTH: described on a scale from "●" (lightest) to "●●●●●" (strongest).
  - SIZE: ring gauge (1/64 of inch) and legnth, 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.

# Corona Gorda



## The chosen 12

New releases and core range produts take part in this Corona Gorda blind tasting. Four are the producer countries involved.

## Results

Two cigars reaches the 90 points: a Dominican and a Co-starican. One is a classic, the other a little more of a niche, close to a boutique brand.





ASHTON HERITAGE  
PURO SOL CORONA GORDA

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

The cigar starts with oak wood, pepper, and floral notes, and they are later joined by leather, bread, and nuts. There is also a meaty sensation present in the background.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x146mm (5 ¾")	\$ 13.5   € 12.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



FIAT LUX  
INSIGHT

COMPLEX AND INTENSE

Pepper, wood, and walnut make up the core of the profile, supported by herbal aromas. The smoke becomes creamier in the second half and spicier towards the end.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 ⅝")	\$ 9   € 8.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



VILLA CASDAGLI  
CORONA GORDA

BALANCED AND STRUCTURED

Hazelnut and leather open the smoke, joined by coffee, white pepper, and vegetal aromas. A herbal freshness appears in the second half together with cinnamon.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 13.5   € 12
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	PERU, DOM. REP., ECUADOR, NICA.



WILDFIRE THE RIVAVELIST  
CORONA GORDA

LIMITED EVOLUTION BUT WELL BALANCED

It delivers earh and roasted notes, together with seasoned wood. Later on, rich aromas of black pepper complete the flavor profile.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 ⅝")	\$ 10   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	INDONESIA, NICARAGUA



H. UPMANN  
MAGNUM 46

FLAVORFUL AND INTENSE

A mix of black pepper, leather, coffee, and hazel-nut make up the profile in the first half. Aromas of herbs are added in the second half, and the finale becomes spicy.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x143mm (5 ⅝")	\$ -   € 13
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



UNDERCROWN  
SHADE CORONA

LESS PERFORMING SECOND HALF

It develops seasoned wood, earth, and nutmeg notes, with some floreal nuances. White pepper and piquant spices are then added. Wet cardboard in the last third.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	46x143mm (5 ⅝")	\$ 8   € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOM. REP., NICARAGUA



LARANJA RESERVA AZULEJO  
CORONA GORDA

FULL-BODIED AND INTERESTING

Leather, black pepper, and earth, with bitter herbs in the background, are revealed in the first half. A hazelnut aroma joins the profile in the second half, and the pepper becomes spicy.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x152mm (6")	\$ 11   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	BRAZIL	NICARAGUA



HOYO DE MONTERREY  
EPICURE NO. 1

FLAT AND ONE-DIMENSIONAL

The profile is limited to faint wood and hay notes with some light spices in the first half. The flavors are light, and the strength covers the entire profile for the remainder of the cigar.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x143mm (5 ⅝")	\$ -   € 2.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



# Lancero



## The chosen 12

Three are the countries featured in this blind tasting—a size which is coming back, with more and more producers having it back in their portfolio.

## Results

Three products stand out and all of them are made in Nicaragua, which dominates this Lancero blind tasting round.



### WARPED LA RELATOS

COMPLEX AND ROUND

Roasted espresso aromas, white pepper, and leather are present in the beginning. Cream, hazelnut, and a vegetal nuance appear in the second half, with the finale becoming spicy.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x111mm (4 3⁄8")	\$ 9.5   € 9.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### PLASENCIA ALMA DEL FUEGO FLAMA

SPICY AND RICH

It develops intense pepery notes, that often culminate in piquant peaks. There are also earth, some vegetal nuances and a seasoned wood.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38x165mm (6 1⁄2")	\$ 17   € 17
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### ROJAS BLUEBONNET LANCERO

FLAVORFUL AND SMOOTH

Leather and nuts are followed by earth and black pepper aromas. Espresso notes and balsamic herbs are added further into the cigar, with the black pepper becoming spicier towards the end.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38x178mm (7")	\$ 10   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### POR LARRANAGA MONTECARLOS

SMOOTH AND CREAMY

Rich cappuccino notes, together with cedarwood and white pepper. Advancing, nuances of earth and hazelnut are added, together with a vegetal aroma in the background.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	35x159mm (6 1⁄4)	\$ -   € 5.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA





DREW ESTATE LIGA PRIVADA  
UNICA SERIE L40

A LITTLE DRY

The flavor profile is made of earth, incense, black pepper and roasted coffee notes. In some puffs there are some leather notes as well.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x178mm (7")	\$17.5   € 16.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	BRAZIL	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



CASA TURRENT  
1880 COLORADO OSCURO

NICELY BALANCED

The cigar flavor profile is made of earthy aromas, together with nutty notes and dark chocolate, the latter turning then to milk chocolate in the second half of the smoke.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	40x190mm (7 ½")	\$ 17   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO



LUCIANO  
THE DREAMER

BOLD AND WITH A GOOD EVOLUTION

Vegetal and nutty notes open up the smoke, together with some smoky nuances. Later on, green pepper and chili spices are added. In the last part, the spices cover the main role.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	38x190mm (7 ½")	\$ 15   € 15
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA, PERU



EL VIEJO CONTINENTE  
MADURO LANCERO

LIMITED EVOLUTION AND FLAVOR PROFILE

The flavor profile is made of earthy notes, together with a touch of incense and some roasted aromas.

85



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38 x 190mm (7 ½")	\$ 7   € 6.5
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.



# Robustos



## The chosen 12

The cigars featured in this blind tasting come from five different producing countries. There is also a cigar made in China.

## Results

Four of the cigars tested scored at least 90 points. One stands above all the others, and it is made in Honduras. The Chinese brand is in the 90s as well.



### BLIND MAN'S BLUFF NICARAGUA ROBUSTO

*RICH AND SATISFYING*

Black pepper is the prominent flavor of the profile, joined by leather, wood, herbs, and hazelnut. The pepper becomes spicier, and the herbs balsamic in the second half.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 8.7   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### LAMPERT 1675 EDICION AZUL ROBUSTO

*CREAMY. VERY LONG PERSISTENCE*

It delivers milk chocolate and nutty notes, enriched by white pepper and a touch of ginger. In the second half, ripe fruit and leather. Vegetal hints.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 10   € 8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA, PERU



### STOLEN THRONE THREE KINGDOMS ROBUSTO

*ROUND AND INTENSE*

Wood, mainly oak, and black pepper are the prominent flavors, supported by nuts and bread. The black pepper evolves into cinnamon spice toward the end.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 10   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### REINADO GRAND APEX

*FLAVORFUL AND RICH*

The profile revolves around rich aromas of earth, leather, wood, and black pepper, supported by herbs and a subtle sweetness. It becomes spicy and balsamic towards the end.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 12   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA





GREAT WALL  
40TH

RICH AND SATISFYING

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

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x135mm (5 ¾")	\$ -   € 14
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	INDONESIA	CHINA, DOMINICAN REP.



CUMPAY  
MADURO ROBUSTO

RICH AND BOLD

A lot of spices, mainly black pepper and chili, are followed by walnut and vegetal aromas. In some puffs there is a touch of leather.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x121mm (4 ¾)	\$ 10.5   € 8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



AGING ROOM  
RARE COLLECTION FESTIVE

BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL

A combination of wood and walnut opens the smoke, with light nuances of pepper in the back-ground. Meaty and herbal notes are added further on.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x114mm (4 ½)	\$ 15   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ROCKY PATEL  
WHITE LABEL ROBUSTO

ONE DIMENSIONAL

The profile is dominated by wood, with spices and nuts following behind it. There is a pleasant sour-ness perceptible as well. Halfway through the ci-gar, the profile becomes a little bitter.

85



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 19   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



RAMON ALLONES  
SPECIALLY SELECTED

BALANCED AND RICH

Black pepper, nuts, and leather open the smoke and are later joined by aromas of espresso and herbs. The finale is spicy and flavorful.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x124mm (4 ⅞")	\$ -   € 11
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



CINQUE TERRE  
STATELESS

UNBALANCED SECOND HALF

The smoke starts creamy, with hazelnut notes and herbs, together with coffee and light pepper nuan-ces. Bitter notes appear in the second part, becom-ing more and more intense.

83



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 15   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	U.S.A.	DOM. REP., HAITI, NICARAGUA



LA PALINA  
KB SERIES PART THREE

UNCOMMON FLAVOR PROFILE

It develops herbs, graphite, white pepper and char hints. There are also some metallic nuances. In the second part, notes of coffee complete the flavor profile.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 10   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	NICARAGUA



CASA MAGNA  
LIGA F ROBUSTO

LINEAR

The profile is limited to nuts, herbs, and mineral aromas. There is a notable astringent sensation present throughout the smoke.

83



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 9   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



# Toros



## The chosen 12

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

## Results

Three cigars score reach the 90 points level. Two of them are made in Nicaragua, the other in Cuba, the latter being now one of the most representative of its brand..



### A.J. FERNANDEZ ENCLAVE CONNECTICUT TORO

COMPLEX AND EVOLVING

The flavor profile is made up of a mix of cedarwood and spices, with white pepper and nutmeg. All is enriched by honey, leather and bread notes, the latter mainly present in the background.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### MONTECRISTO EDMUNDO

BOLD AND STRUCTURED

Rich aromas of earth, wood and leather are enriched by black pepper. There are also some roasted notes of coffee beans. Hints of walnut.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x135mm (5 3/8")	\$ -   € 14.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



### JOYA DE NICARAGUA CLASICO MEDIO SIGLO TORO

SMOOTH

It develops rich woody notes, together with black pepper, leather and earth. In the second part, nuts and coffee beans complete the flavor profile.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 5.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



### ALEC BRADLEY TRILOGY AUTHENTIC COROJO

SMOOTH AND BALANCED

It develops earthy notes, together with toasted aromas. There are also wood, and spices, mainly black pepper.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 15   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA





HOYO DE MONTERREY  
HOYO DE SAN JUAN

FLAVORFUL AND SMOOTH

The cigar opens with aromas of wood and hazelnut, which are later joined by earth and leather. The smoke is creamy, and there is also a subtle sweetness present in the background.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x149mm (5 7⁄8")	\$ -   € 16.3
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



AGANORSA LEAF  
ANIVERSARIO COROJO TORO

STRUCTURED AND FLAVORFUL

Leather and white pepper are the prominent flavors, supported by hazelnut, herbs, and wood notes, that are added throughout the smoke.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x159mm (6 ¼)	\$ 14   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ADVENTURA  
THE NAVIGATOR CABRAL

SATISFYING

It exhibits rich dark chocolate, coffee beans and wood, together with hints of earth. In the second half citrus notes is added.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 12   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	INDONESIA	DOM. REP., ECUADOR, NICARAGUA



ILLUSIONE 2021  
TAA ESCLUSIVA

BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL

Cocoa and oak wood give way to the smoke. Black pepper and leather are added later on and the pepper becomes spicier towards the end.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x159mm (6 ¼")	\$ 15   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ROMEO Y JULIETA  
LINEA DE ORO DIANAS

ELEGANTE

La paletta aromatica ruota attorno a note di legno e pepe bianco, accompagnate da delle sfumature di te bianco e vaniglia. Sfumature floreali.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x145mm (5 ¾")	\$ -   € 20
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



BUFFALO TEN  
NATURAL TORO

BALANCED

It exhibits notes of wood, together with nutty aromas. There is also a touch of leather. In the second half, roasted notes of coffee are added.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 5   € 5.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	DOM. REP., U.S.A., NICARAGUA



MOMBACHO  
DIPLOMATICO TORO

SMOOTH AND BALANCED

It delivers aromas of coffee beans, leather and earth, enriched by black pepper and rich nutty notes. In the second part, the earth becomes more intense.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 15   € 13
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



LA GALERA  
ANEMOI ANEMOI

GOOD INTENSITY. LIMITED EVOLUTION

The flavor profile is made of vegetal and herbal notes, together with leather and earth. In some puffs, there are walnut hints.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x162mm (6 ¾")	\$ 12   € 11
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



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