

# CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1 - 2023



## The Difference.

- BLENDS & FORMATS - JRE CIGARS - PROCIGAR - FESTIVAL DEL HABANO - PAIRINGS - JAPAN & CAMEROON
- RUM: AGING BARRELS - SPEAKEASY, THE SECRET PLACES OF THE TIME ARE BACK IN FASHION - COCKTAILS: CAIPIRINHA
- CIGARS IN THE BBQ! - BEER TOURISM, THE COMPLEXITY OF THE WORLD BEER BY BEER - CHEESE



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## Editor's thoughts

*Ten candles.*

Year 2023 is a special one for CigarsLover Magazine. It marks the 10th anniversary of the magazine. Since its launch, we strongly believed that a digital publication would be the future. No paper, no need to wait for it to be distributed, no need to keep space. The magazine can be in everybody's pocket, where everybody keeps their phone. After ten years, and a pandemic that made digitalization a must for each person, our vision has been confirmed to be right.

To commemorate our anniversary, we decided to publish in each issue of 2023 one of the articles we think were the best among those released in the years past.

Thank you for ten years together.

Enjoy the read.

#refineyourtaste





# CigarsLover MAGAZINE

Thank you for  
**TEN YEARS**



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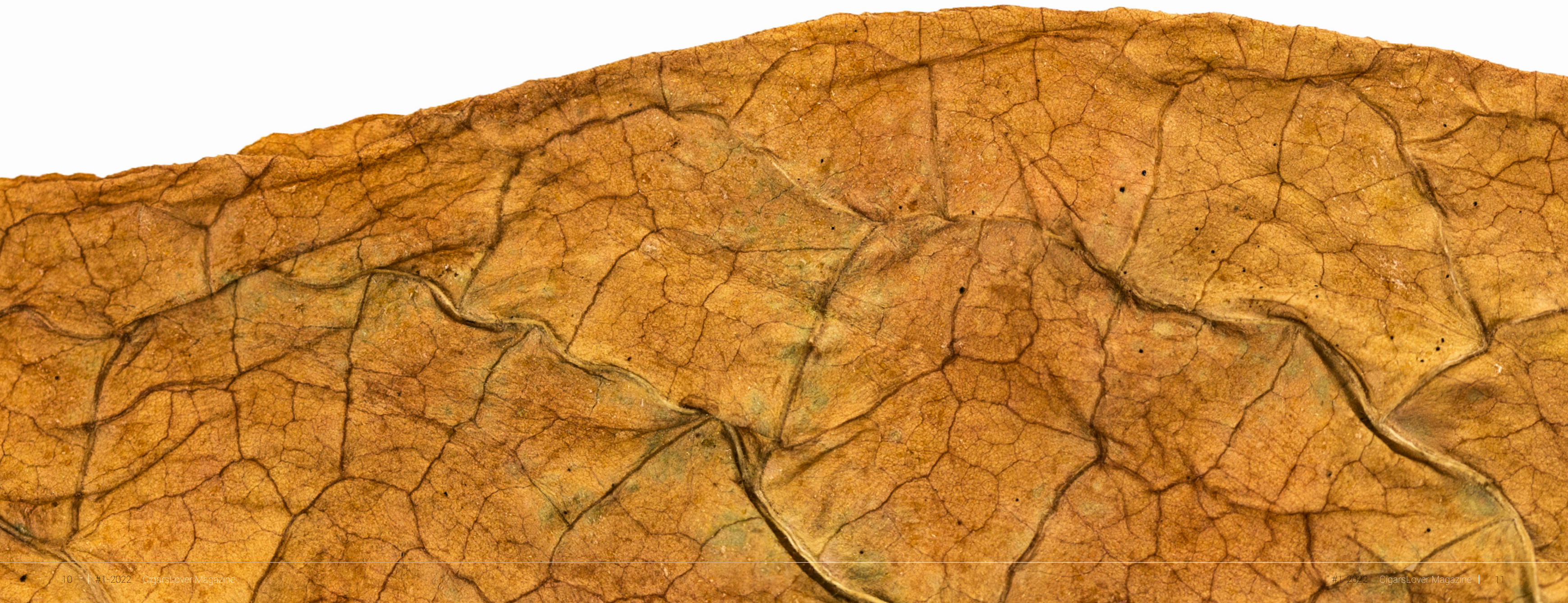
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# CIGARS

“If I had taken my doctor’s advice and quit smoking when he advised me to, I wouldn’t have lived to go to his funeral.”

*George Burns*





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# Blends & Formats

*Adapting the "receta" to the formats of a line is one of the master blender's many tasks.  
A talk with Claudio Sgroi into hidden blending scenarios.*

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

The process of making the cigar recipe or, as it is more commonly defined today "the blending," represents the crux of the whole process of making a product. Everything starts and ends at the exact moment in which the initial idea and the finished product coincide. Perhaps also for this reason, blending is a subject that never ceases to provide surprises and, for us technicians in the sector, offers continuous stimuli for further study.

To do this, we asked Claudio Sgroi, master blender and CEO of CST Consulting, some questions. However, do not fall into the illusion of reading a classic interview, because more than an exchange of questions and answers it was a discussion, during which we talked about everything,

from their respective personal projects to which were the best dishes to savor on a trip to Southern Italy. At the beginning we compared blending to a knot, which is created at the beginning of a project and unties when the concept cigar offers exactly the ideal envisioned smoke. But when developing a blending idea, do you think first of the filling or of the wrapper? "It depends" Claudio replies, in a drastic but amused way, not failing to argue. An uncertainty linked to many factors, both productive and non-productive. Sometimes it is necessary to produce a cigar that the market requires, therefore it is necessary to respond to a trend or to a specific request from a customer or an importer. Think, for example, of the need to recreate a given taste or to offer a product with a particular band or leaf of filling. Other times the master blender receives





a lot of tobacco that needs to be valued in a particular way. To summarize, it is possible to conclude that a new recipe was born between corporate decisions and the experience of the master blender. In fact, it is not enough to have the right intuition, since first of all it is necessary to verify the feasibility of the project. Such as, the production constancy for that particular leaf, offered by the grower (or company) from which the it will buy. Claudio's answer ends with the noise of the uncorking of a bottle of very fragrant Cerasuolo di Vittoria "Delle Fontane" of 2017, offered by our Sicilian friend.

While we appreciate the vividness of the color of the wine that flows languidly into the glass, I feel quite shameless towards the interlocutor, so much so as to ask him "But there are some types of leaves, wrapping or filling, which are simpler to insert in a blend?" While Claudio hands me the glass of wine, I get the equally cheeky answer (which I deserved): "Well, if you use a Havana Ecuador wrapper and the result is a horrible cigar, you were probably the master blender!" We laugh loudly together and, after a small sip of wine, just to prepare the palate for a second more attentive sip, the answer becomes more serious. Getting a blend wrong with such a versatile wrapper leaf is a difficult task, in which only a novice or inexperienced master blender (like yours truly) can succeed. In reality, the discussion becomes broader, like the vastness of the matter concerning tobacco. There are no "simple" or "difficult" tobaccos to manage in a blend. There are, rather, tobaccos that are more inclined or less, due to their peculiarities, to be combined with other tobaccos, and this is where the experience of the master blender comes into play.

For an easier understanding, at least for myself, Sgroi takes as an example two broadleaf leaves widely used in recent years: the Connecticut Broadleaf and the Connecticut Ecuador, the first has a strong, impetuous, decisive personality, the second is sweeter and meek. Broadleaf, therefore, seems on paper more difficult to manage, yet, if used in limited quantities, in a filler that leaves it room to express itself, a potentially interesting and balanced product will be obtained. The same goes for Ecuador: its sweet and soft characters will be overpowered if the filler is made up of tobaccos that are too spicy and pungent.

We therefore understand, once again, how much "balance" is the keyword of the master blender's art. Does the same apply to formats? Once the right blend has been identified, how does the recipe vary according to the various formats? It is easy to understand how the number of leaves used to build a toro is not the same as needed for a corona. It will therefore be necessary to vary and balance the number of leaves of the liga conceived, according to the various formats of the line, in order to offer a certain constancy of smoke, regardless of the size of the cigar. We cannot speak of the same smoke, since a longer format offers, at least mechanically, a more marked evolution than a shorter one.

All thoughts externalized to our interlocutor, while we correct the combustion of the brazier at our lonsdale. "That's





right, the blend must be balanced for each vitola" - Claudio Sgroi confirms, adding - "but don't imagine the blend as a mathematical formula, where you just need to reduce or increase the number of leaves proportionally and you're done". Let's imagine we have a toro with 2 seco leaves, 2 face leaves and 1 ligero. To adapt the same recipe to a corona, it will not be enough to halve the quantity of each type of leaf, on the contrary, it is possible in this way to create a completely different, if not downright wrong, blend. Also in this case, the experience of the master blender is decisive and Sgroi offers us an illuminating example. Let's say we have a blend, on a cepo 52, where we use 1 and ½ leaves of face, 2 leaves of seco and 1 of ligero. To adapt this blend to a cepo 46, the balance that would guarantee the constancy of the blend (the conditional is a must because, as mentioned, we do not use a mathematical formula) would be: 1 leaf of face, 1 and a half of seco and a half of ligero. The same goes if you want to get a cigar of a larger format than another. The adaptation of a blend, therefore, provides for an increase or reduction in the number of leaves within the recipe that is not necessarily proportional.

Speaking of formats and blends, sharing a glass of wine with Claudio Sgroi is the ideal opportunity to better understand a little-known research work, precisely linked to formats. Is there a "sample" format (or more modules) used by the master blender to test the recipe? The answer is affirmative and offers our interviewee a new field of discussion.

Each manufacturer and each master blender has reference formats which, roughly speaking, vary from cepo 44 to 50/52. It is surprising to note how, although the market requires cigars with a cepo greater than 52, those who design a blend do so starting from formats with an average circumference. According to Claudio Sgroi, the 5x50, 6x46 or 6x48 and 5½x48 formats are ideal, without however excluding others, perhaps specifically requested when designing the blend. In this case, however, more attention must be paid, because adapting the project becomes more complex. In the robusto format, the tips of the leaves are cut off, resulting in a more immediate but also more "incomplete" smoke. The pyramid shape deserves particular attention, because it offers a different evolution from the norm. Of obvious difficulty is also the adaptation of a receta in a lancero: in this case the quantity of tobacco used is less than that of a toro or a robusto, therefore it is necessary to pay close attention to the mechanics of smoking. Furthermore, in this format, the organoleptic impact of the wrapping leaf is very marked and therefore the risk is that it could unbalance the blend by covering the aromatic aspects offered by the filler.

We have reached the end of our chat and, looking at the empty glasses and the full ashtray, the occasion has given us cause for reflection on how much, behind simple explanations, smiles and cordial answers, there is a difficult job, made up of allowing an idea to take shape, and then decompose into pleasant blue and ash swirls.

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# The Difference.

*A look at the prestigious white-banded classics made by Davidoff.*

by **Michel Arlia**

Every cigar lover, seasoned or new to smoking, knows of Davidoff. But depending on who you ask, you will get a different answer on which “Davidoff” they know. Those who have been smoking for only a few years probably know the brand for the Black Band Collection, the Winston Churchill Collection, and other recent releases. The more seasoned smoker knows them for what made Davidoff what it is today, their White Band Collection. Davidoff has launched the “The Difference” campaign to shine a spotlight back on their prestigious white-banded classics. We sat down with Edward Simon, Senior Vice President and Head of Global Marketing of Oettinger Davidoff, and talked about what makes the difference at Davidoff.







**Hi Eddie, what did you do before getting into the cigar industry?**

I had a small recording studio, a record label as well as a streetwear clothing brand. The job has changed, but my passion to create has not.

**How did you get into cigars and working for Davidoff?**

I wanted to work with tangible products in the premium or luxury sector. The job ad at Oettinger Davidoff remains the only one I have answered since 2005. My dad was a big pipe and cigar enthusiast. This drew my attention to Oettinger Davidoff, a family-owned company located in my hometown of Basel, Switzerland.

**How has the company changed over the time you have been there, and what has been your most memorable experience to date?**

The company has dramatically changed from a wholesale-focused enterprise to a business that puts the consumer first in every sense. Certainly, my most memorable experience was when Dr. Ernst Schneider, the late founder of Oettinger Davidoff, called me into his office in my second week on the job to light a Davidoff No. 2 for him. What followed was a lively conversation during which we exchanged thoughts on cigars. This was definitely a highlight for me.

**Davidoff, as a brand, is one of a handful of brands that are regarded as super-premium. In the end, what does it take for a cigar to be a Davidoff?**

Our cigar creation process is shaped by the countless additional steps we take to always ensure the highest quality. We handle our seeds and our plants with utmost care and patience, meaning we only sow the ones that pass our strict quality control. We pre-grow them in our greenhouses and only later plant them into the fields when they have grown into seedlings. Our product is a natural one, and we treat the nature and the plants with respect. We save 80% of water through our drip irrigation system, and we slowly and carefully only harvest two leaves per plant per day once the plant starts bowing to the soil – a cue for us that it is ready to be picked. Our curing technique involves hand sewing, and we send our tobacco through an extra fermentation for perfection before we sort the leaves by size, color, and additionally by texture as well. Before rolling, we weigh every single one so we can ensure consistent ratio and thus taste in our blends.. Our rollers are all experts because we give them ten years of training before they start rolling Davidoff cigars. So you see, all these and countless more steps make our cigars so special.

**The brand has a certain prestige that only a few other companies boast. What has made it so iconic, and how have you stayed relevant over the decades?**

If you look back at our beginnings, you see that already then, Zino Davidoff deliberately built the brand in a way in which he could differentiate himself from his competitors. From a design point of view, he focused



on cigars with simple and elegant white and golden bands, and he inscribed our birthplace "Geneva" on them. In his store, he did not have customers. He only had guests. His passion for service and his hunger for innovation lives on in us today as we channel all our energy to achieving our goal of creating special cigar experiences for our aficionados through our cigars and their quality. We believe that this passionate spirit to innovate is our guiding light on the path that we are on. And we are confident that it is the right one.

**What was the driving force in putting the spotlight back on the classic White Band Collection?**

The White Band Collection is at the core of our brand. It has brought forth a considerable number of iconic cigars, which many connoisseurs call their all-time favorites. It also connects us directly to Zino Davidoff since he himself launched most of the cigars back in his day.

**"The Difference," focuses on the flagship White Band Collection. What makes "the Difference" at Davidoff?**

Definitely all our colleagues around the world. Whether I go visit our production sites in the Dominican Republic, walk into one of our stores, or whether I speak to the teams around the world. We all share the same values of innovation, passion, and integrity. This is how we make The Difference day in and day out. I am immensely proud to be a member of this Davidoff family.

**What is the goal of "the Difference" campaign, and what do you guys have planned for it?**

We want to show the world who we are. We plan to surprise our aficionados with interesting facts and insights into our daily creation process, and we do so by releasing captivating imagery and holding consumer events worldwide over the next two years. Cigars are a passion business, and we want to ignite that spark of passion in our aficionados by showing them our behind-the-scenes. We therewith also give them a chance to get to know us better as a brand and assure them of the quality of our cigars. Within the framework of our campaign, we have also launched our "Cigar History Re-Rolled" concept, with which we bring back popular cigars of our past. Our Signature No. 1 Limited Edition Collection broke the first ground, and we look forward to another three releases.

**The original cigar was a highly popular smoke. Why did you decide to bring this specific size back?**

You are right. The Classic No. 1 was a beloved cigar for many aficionados, which is why we have brought it back as Signature No. 1. Like its predecessor, it is a long and elegant panetela larga with a pigtail. We update our portfolio based on our consumers' preferences. Since we anticipated increasing demand for such formats, we planned this launch now.

**One of your long-running slogans is "Time Beautifully Filled". How do you achieve that in a society that**



**sees having time as the ultimate luxury?**

Time is indeed the ultimate luxury, and that's why it pairs so well with our cigars. I will go one step further and say that filling time beautifully is our purpose. Everything we do serves this purpose. We aim at creating the best cigar experiences. We do so by applying the countless extra steps of quality control I described earlier. You could say that we take our time in making our cigars to fill our aficionados' time beautifully. A moment with our cigars should be spent savoring the cigar but also savoring the moment itself by attributing value to one's time.

**You are the first company to fuse Swiss precision and attention to detail with Caribbean flair and passion. How have you kept the balance between the two throughout the years?**

The Dominican Republic is the beating heart of our entire operation. Our partnership is symbiotic – one cannot exist without the other. This is why we call "Caribbean passion and Swiss precision" our secret recipe for success. Our long-standing relationship with our experts in the Dominican Republic is characterized by mutual respect, admiration, and a constant exchange of ideas and expertise. We share the same values, and all work towards the same goal – so the balance is rarely off.

**With your Crop-to-Shop concept, you can influence the product from the beginning (seedlings) to the end (the sale in the store). Can you explain what makes this concept such a big selling point for Davidoff?**

Quality and consistency are our highest priorities, and we hold them sacred. With our "crop to shop" philosophy, we can steer and control the entire value chain to always ensure the highest quality standard possible. Another advantage is the knowledge we can pass on from generation to generation, which enables us to constantly keep learning from our past while we develop new ideas.

**Davidoff has been a frontrunner for innovation since its inception. Why is innovation so important to you, and how difficult is that to achieve in such a traditional industry as cigars?**

Zino Davidoff's pioneering spirit is part of our DNA. But we do not rest on Zino's laurels. Yes, many aficionados love our brand, but we also continue to innovate to stay relevant. We like to challenge ourselves and do not shy away from the future. Even if the regulations on tobacco advertising and tobacco display become stricter, I trust that we will be able to adjust. People will go back to the brands they can identify with. So, I would not say it is difficult at this point, but we each take on the task of driving our brand every day.

**As a company, you are a well-oiled machine with every step perfectly optimized. Where do you see the potential for growth as a brand/company?**

Yes, indeed, for a global player in such a regulated busi-





ness, we are investing heavily in ensuring compliance to the ever-changing restrictions. Still, even within these restrictions, there is room to expand. At the moment, we have high expectations for sustainable growth in China, in the US, and in global travel retail.

**Which is your go-to cigar out of the Davidoff portfolio when it is time to wind down?**

My preferences change with the occasion and mood. I like to spend my Sunday mornings with a Signature No. 2. In the evenings, I often enjoy something a tad more intense, like the Winston Churchill «The Late Hour Series» Toro.

**With your long-running experience in the industry, where do you see the cigar world as a whole going in the future? Any trend predictions?**

I believe that products, as such, will become slightly less relevant than they are now. At the same time, brands and experiences will come into the limelight – the consumer will spend more time choosing a brand for an experience worthy of their time.

**What can we expect from Davidoff in the future? Any chance of getting a fifth White Band line?**

As briefly mentioned before, we will continue our concept "Cigar History Re-Rolled" and release another three limited-edition cigars that many aficionados will gladly add to their collection. Other than that, innovations across all product groups, which I cannot give away at this point. Concerning your question about a potential White Band Collection expansion: I take this as a compliment. Thank you (laughs). Let's see what the future holds.

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# The Second Row

*A technique for checking the second row of boxes without removing the cigars from the upper floor*

by **John Jeremy**

When purchasing a box with cigars arranged in two rows, as in the case of Cuban habilitadas, the sight is immediately drawn to the top row, the one closest to the opening of the box. The eye immediately sees all the mastery of the escogedor who has taken care not only of the selection by shades of color of the band, but the positioning of the products inside the box, from the lightest to the darkest. Subsequently we then move on to sniffing the cigars, sometimes even to picking up some, to check the foot, the filling, the manufacturing and the state of humidification.

Sometimes, wanting to check or even just take a look at the bottom row of the box, you could be in the difficult position of not knowing how to properly proceed, since it would be a matter of removing the whole top row,

without altering the order of the specimens which would ruin the color selection. One way to properly inspect the second row you should proceed by removing the first cigar from the box (to the right or left it doesn't matter) and moving all the other ones towards the center, so that on the right and on the left it is possible to reach the cedar sheet that separates the two floors. Once grabbed, just lift it, showing extreme caution in keeping the cigars still. This is an effective but extremely delicate procedure.

There is another way, certainly not simpler to perform, but at least safer for the integrity of the cigars since it does not involve taking even one from the box. Once the box has been opened and any bofetón has been tipped outwards, the lid is partially closed, leaving a gap of about an inch between the closure and the box. At this point, the hands

are positioned laterally and the grip is welded so that the crack remains open but blocked with that opening. Gently, the box is first turned over on the rear larguero, then on the lid of the box itself: in this way we will have the package upside down and we will feel that the cigars are now lying on the lid of the box and no longer on the bottom. Subsequently, after placing the lid on the support surface, we will be able to slowly tip the body of the box towards us, thus exposing the second row of cigars, which can thus be checked.

However, this is a delicate technique, which requires a certain level of practice and zero haste. The suggestion, therefore, is to try it several times on a box of our property, before implementing it in the point of sale and causing heartbeats or strokes to the retailer.





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# JRE Tobacco

*Bringing family tradition  
to the next generation*

by Michel Arlia

JRE Tobacco might be a somewhat young company, but the well-known family behind it boasts a long history in tobacco and cigars. The brand was founded by none other than industry legend Julio Rafael Eiroa and his oldest son Justo in 2016. Over the years, Justo's daughters have also joined the family business. With their recent introduction to international markets, the best-kept secret among cigar lovers is no longer a secret. We had a chat with Justo about everything JRE Tobacco.

**How were you as a kid growing up, and what are your earliest tobacco-related memories?**

Very healthy and pure growing experience, helping milk the cows, riding horses all day, and getting on the Steyer tractors. When that young, you are not sure what you will be doing in the future, but now that I look back and see the people that work with us at the farm, they are the kids I grew up with, and we also had their parents working with us.

**What was the deciding moment you realized your calling as a tobacco grower and cigar maker?**

It was 2015 when my father, Julio R. Eiroa, asked me to return to the family business. We are both very passionate about tobacco farming, and I also wanted to return to it.

**What did you see in the Honduran soil that the other countries don't have that made you decide to stay and continue to grow in Honduras and not move to other countries over the years?**

Honduras was where Jacinto Argudin sent the first Cuban seed in 1960 to start a pilot program in Honduras, and this was the first tobacco for cigars that was grown in the region with Cuban seed. Angel Oliva, a great visionary of Oliva Tobacco Brokerage Company in Tampa, saw the Cuban embargo problem on tobacco supplies for the factories in Tampa and sent my father, Julio, to do the sorting of that experimental plot. Mr. Oliva mentioned to my father that the Jamastran valley tobacco was equal and had as much aroma as the best from Cuba.

**While JRE Tobacco is a relatively young brand, your father is an industry legend. After selling the Cama-**







**cho brands and factory in 2007, you could have easily retired, but you and your father decided to build a new company from the ground up. What was the drive behind it?**

Growing tobacco and the farm are essential to our local community as well as a priority for us to keep employment. It's my father's passion, and he needs to be active. After we lost the supply contract with our raw materials vendor, we were forced to start from scratch.

**Compared to the past, the company is closely tied to you and your family. Why did you decide to put more emphasis on it this time around?**

With the new generation and interest in cigars, it all seemed to come together. It is an industry that requires human resources, and what could be better than that to have several generations involved.

**How is the dynamic between you and your father when it comes to working together and creating new blends, for example?**

My father Julio's palate and mine are very similar. We like medium-bodied cigars with lots of aroma and flavors. Most of our differences come when it is time to talk about packaging and presentation.

**What do the brands, such as Aladino, offer the cigar lover that separates them from other cigars?**

Today Aladino is a brand that offers many options to consumers. It is full of flavors and aromas to satisfy any palate, whether you are a beginner or a seasoned smoker. From mild and creamy to bold, there's something for everyone.

**You are a vertically integrated company. What is the most challenging part of an operation that oversees everything from crop to shop?**

Crops are always the most challenging since we are always exposed to natural climates that can bring us excess rain or drought. We are also facing many difficulties when it comes to box manufacturing since the supply chain and cost have been very challenging. Finally, we also have to train new rollers constantly.

**Over the last two years, you have started expanding to other markets outside of the US. Which market has surprised you the most regarding the reception of your brand, and why do you think that is?**

Vivi, who lives in London, has done a wonderful job in starting our international market. We had the opportunity to team up with Mitchell Orchant, who has been a wonderful partner in the British market. It definitely surprised me to see how quickly the brand has gained traction and popularity in less than a year. After the Intertabac trade show in Germany, Vivi has also opened up the Swiss, German, and Belgian markets – all of



which have also received the brand pretty well. I think our mild to medium blends, full flavor, and branding backed by heritage have been key to making Aladino a success in new markets.

**On the one hand, you have your traditional "authentic Corajo". On the other hand, you have experimental tobacco such as the Honduran-grown Cameroon-seed wrapper used for the Aladino Cameroon. How much do you tinker with different seed varieties or even hybrid creations? And how has the importance of innovation changed over the years?**

Innovation is part of the new dynamics in today's consumers, we are always looking for new varieties to try, and we are extremely happy with our Jamastran-grown Cameroon. We definitely try to innovate in how we process at our farms and factories to make our practices more sustainable and efficient. However, we do not grow or experiment with any hybrids as we prefer to keep tobacco varieties pure and close to tradition.

**You both have seen the industry go through many different phases. Where will you see your brand and the industry in the future?**

We are very optimistic about the industry, and we see Aladino becoming the brand of the new generation of smokers as well as a brand that will be capturing many palate of traditional smokers with our Cubanistic taste.

# BACK TO OUR ORIGINS

1947 **ALADINO** 1961  
BY JRE TOBACCO







# The Fifteenth ProCigar

*Celebrating the Dominican Cigar Culture*

by **Michel Arlia**

In the cigar world, the first couple months of the year are marked by the Festival season. Among the biggest is the Dominican ProCigar Festival which was held this year in February from the 19th to the 24th.

It draws numerous cigar lovers worldwide, and this year's attendance boasted over 1000 visitors from 20 countries—more than double the attendees from last year, which speaks to how popular the ProCigar festival is.

As has become a tradition for the festival, it kicked off with a first couple of days of relaxation at Casa de Campo. Attendees could enjoy the warm Caribbean sun, go for a tour of the spectacular countryside by horseback, relax on the beach—the list goes

on. The next day a catamaran to Catalina Island took place, followed by a sunset bonfire dinner at Minitas Beach Club hosted by Grupo de Maestros of Tabacalera de García.

On Tuesday, Tabacalera de García, the largest cigar factory in the world, hosted a tour with a guided visit to their facilities. In the afternoon, guests departed for Santiago for the primary three days of the festival. They were able to participate in guided tours of the most renowned cigar factories and tobacco fields in the world: La Aurora, General Cigar Dominicana, Tabacalera Palma, Tabacalera A. Fuente, Tabacalera La Alianza – E.P. Carrillo, Davidoff Cigars, and many more. Visits to the Chateau de la Fuente, Cigar Family Charitable Foundation, and the House

of Dreams were also scheduled.

Throughout the stay in Santiago, attendees had the opportunity to attend the ProCigar Field Day, an activity exclusively designed for one-on-one interactions with the icons and gurus of the Dominican cigar industry. Other activities were also offered in the afternoons, such as a rum and cigar pairing with Casa Brugal and a Smoking Challenge by the International Association of Cigar Sommeliers (IACS).

On Wednesday, after the tours, the Welcome Dinner Party was held at the Parque Central. All guests enjoyed a remarkable Dominican culinary experience with local performers' live music. Afterward, the traditional Dominican music contest took place, where the winners will get 50 cigars manufactured by one of the ProCigar members. Hendrik Kelner, president of ProCigar, welcomed everyone to the Dominican Republic, the country of open arms, where the affection and kindness of the Dominicans overflows, and encouraged each attendee to enjoy the best cigars in the world. He also emphasized tobacco's value to the Dominican Republic over the ages, being present in our culture for as long as history can remember.

Like last year, the famous White Party occurred at Santiago's Monumento a los Héroes de la Restaura-







ción. Attendees enjoyed a unique atmosphere with a majestic setup that highlighted Santiago's beauty and welcoming atmosphere.

As always, the festival culminated in the Gala Dinner Party on Friday, celebrated at the Centro Español, a private club founded in 1965. On this night, guests experienced a delightful dinner and a live music show.

The traditional auction of unique items benefiting 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), among others non-profit organizations, was the highlight of the night.

The unique and rare items included 25 lots and a record of \$440,000 were raised. The event continued into the wee hours with an after-party featuring DJs, performances by dancers, and the official presentation of new passive and active members of the ProCigar Association.

Once again, the ProCigar Festival monuments itself as a festival that can't be missed and the growing number of attendees underlines the fact. See you next year.







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# Back in Cuba

*Aficionados from all over the world made the pilgrimage to Havana for the 23rd Festival del Habano. They came to a country in which a lot has changed.*

by Tobias Hüberli



At the end of February, the international tobacco scene met in Havana to celebrate the 23rd Festival del Habano. A lot has changed on the island since the pandemic. For example, in 2021, the dual currency system with the Pesos Convertible linked to the euro was abolished. The real purchasing power of Cubans has drastically decreased ever since. While the exchange rate was initially 24 Pesos Cubanos to one euro, by the beginning of March, it rose to 170 Pesos per euro from the illegal money changers – they are also new to Cuba.

In stark contrast, the Cuban cigars, at least the top brands, have further firmly established themselves in the luxury market over the past two years. This has been caused by two significant price increases and a noticeable shortage of Cuban cigars worldwide. For 2022, Habanos SA announced sales of 545 million dollars,

claiming that it should correspond to an increase of two percent. However, Habanos SA already reported sales of 568 million dollars in 2021. Even a third-grader would notice that this does not add up. What is even more critical, however, is that the price increases took place between these two fiscal years. The similarly high turnover at higher prices suggests that the number of cigars produced must have fallen sharply.

There was no talk of that at the Festival. The opening night took place at Club Habana, which opened in 1928, and was all about the Montecristo Open sub-brand. The speeches were given by Co-Presidents Luis Sánchez-Harguindey Pardo de Vera and Maritza Carrillo González. Each guest received a box containing two cigars from the new Montecristo Open Slam line. The 152-millimeter-long vitola, with a 52-ring gauge, is the fifth size of the Montecristo Open and, like its predeces-

sors, Montecristo Eagle or Montecristo Master, builds a bridge to golf. In the evening, visitors could also try their hand on a putting green.

A big question at the Festival was how the current harvest is doing. In Pinar del Rio, damage from Hurricane Mitch is still visible. Curing barns are being rebuilt everywhere. In fact, the farmers are in a race against time. The storm came at a time when sowing was imminent. 1750 curing barns were lost; these are central to the further processing of the harvest. Normally, the tobacco seedlings must be in the ground by January 15 at the latest. Many farmers were a little late this year. The tobacco plant takes 70 to 90 days to be ready for harvest, so the curing barns must be ready for use by then at the latest.

On the Wednesday of the festival, the people in charge of Habanos SA presented the Bolívar New Gold Medal cigar,

which will be exclusively available in La Casa del Habano shops and on the El Laguito site. The original Bolívar Gold Medal was made well into the 1990s. This was followed by a relaunch as a La Casa Del Habano exclusive. The New Gold Medal is the same length as its predecessor (165 millimeters) but slightly thicker with a 48-ring gauge. After a successful show in the pool, the moderator announced that you could buy the Bolívar New Gold Medal yourself that evening. A premiere – and a disaster for the event that ran with it. A long line formed immediately that didn't break up for hours. Each guest could buy two boxes. There was only a single card machine to payment. The organization of the sales was as bad as the crowd was big. Nobody took any notice of the band playing or the food. At times there were tumultuous scenes.

There were other cigar innovations to admire at the fair, held during the week of the festival at the Palacio de





Convenciones de La Habana, where the seminars also take place. For example, the La Gloria Cubana Turquinos, a Robusto Extra format, similar to a Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure Especial. Or the Cohiba Espléndidos Gran Reserva Cosecha 2017, a classic Churchill format rolled from five-year-old tobacco.

The gala evening was all about Partagás' new Línea Maestra line. As usual, a high-class program was offered on stage. After each course, guests enjoyed a cigar from the new line: Partagás Línea Maestra Origen (46 x 154 mm), followed by Rito (52 x 168 mm) and Maestro (56 x 132 mm). The traditional auction of humidors then dragged on quite a bit, mostly because the prices achieved were higher than in years prior. H. Upmann's humidor went

under the hammer for 980,000 euros, Romeo y Julieta's furniture piece filled with exclusive cigars was sold for 1.2 million euros, the Partagás humidor 2.6 million euros, and the Cohiba humidor, autographed by president Miguel Díaz-Canel, was sold for a whopping 4.2 million euros. The auction raised a total of over 10 million euros.

The contrast between the luxury product and the economic realities of the Cuban people is likely to increase in the near future. One thing is certain: The worldwide demand for Cuban cigars is unbroken. The specialist dealers are having record sales if they have the product in stock that they can sell. It is hoped that the annual production of 70 million cigars targeted for 2023 will be achieved... I wouldn't bet on it.



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# PAIRINGS

From the moment CigarsLover Magazine defined its pay-off, "Refine Your Taste", starting to accompany the tastings of cigars to those of spirits such as Whisky and Rum, 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 most common formats, 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, Finish. 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, tasting aromas and 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.





# Japan & Cameroon

*Japanese blended whiskies  
and new cigars with Cameroon wrapper.*

by **Simone Poggi**

After exploring the most classic and traditional variations of Caribbean whisky and tobacco, the time has come (finally) to feel more fashionable and wink at the trends of the moment, which certainly make the prices of the products we love so much higher, but which also give rise to an exponential growth of products of a specific type, with a certain advantage from the neophyte who can easily procure such products without having to rely on online auctions or push the small trusted store owner mad. So here we are talking about the highly sought-after Japanese blended whiskies and the new wave of cigars dressed in Cameroon wrappers.

Our goal is instead to combine the two products and evaluate how well (and if) they marry together. The aromatic profile and structure of Japanese blended products is varied, but common traits can be identified: fruity, delicate and soft structure is very frequently predominant, often yellow and ripe fruit, which is flanked by a very intense creaminess, given by the wheat component. The spiciness is composed and never too invasive, sometimes more complex than average, especially if the product has enjoyed an aging in Mizunara Japanese oak barrels. Peated releases are rather rare, often limited to single malts, which for the moment we elect to exclude from the analysis. The alcohol content is affected by current fashions, abandoning the minimum 40% to place itself stably in the 43%-46% range,

with peaks over 50% quite rare. Although many of these products are born for Highball drinking, the current trend is to offer them neat, which rewards with undisputed high drinkability.

Many aficionados have loved, since the first smokes, cigars dressed with wrappers from Cameroon such as the Arturo Fuente Don Carlos, soft and aromatic cigars, with a complex sweetness and a unique, sophisticated spiciness, without overpowering the experience with a very full body. Often the products with this wrapper were associated with fillers consisting mainly of Dominican tobacco, also soft and warm, avoiding adding the strength and exuberant character of tobaccos originating from other countries; the strategy was perhaps to allow the wrapper to express itself at its best and not to lose its unique character. A first successful pairing with this type of cigar is the one between Don Carlos (maybe a Robusto) and Akashi Meisei, a creamy and fruity blend that allows the cigar to stand out with its complex spicy notes, refining the sweet part with notes of fruit without being too intrusive. Arturo Fuente's proposal has also evolved

in the Hemingway series, cigars of very varied sizes all of which feature a tapered shape and for this reason characterized by a slow start in terms of smoke volume and aromatic intensity, and then go into crescendo during the smoke. With these products, although they vary from puff to puff, we would feel like daring something more, perhaps at the level of ABV, to better support the crescendo of the senses involvement; whether they are Short

Story (always strictly with "Natural" wrapper) or Work of Art, we would like to recommend a great product from the Rising Sun country, the Akkeshi 2021, rich in nuances, from wood spices to citrus fruits, from wooded notes to caramel, up to a breath of distant smoke. Very high complexity, which marries a cigar of the same degree, for a pairing among the best. Lately the classic combinations between Cameroon wrapper and Dominican tobacco filler have been flanked by more innovative and creative uses of Nicaraguan and

Honduran tobacco, which instead of distorting the African wrapper have wisely emphasized its qualities. To these products, born to experiment, it is permissible to approach products with greater freedom.

With an AJ Fernandez New World Cameroon, where Nicaragua embraces Cameroon, with sometimes incredible results in terms of balancing sophisticated sweetness and strength of the aromas of cocoa, coffee and black pepper, you could try a combination of the highest level with a Mars Komagatake Yakushima Aging 2021, also a product of great balance despite the high ABV, which unfolds a whole range of aromas of very ripe yellow fruit, with an intense honey that completes the profile of the cigar very well. A powerful Aladino Cameroon stick could find a good partner in a Nikka from the Barrel whisky, with its 51.4% ABV, but also its clean and fruity, mellow structure endowed with a certain intensity featuring a certain "kick". The wallet then thanks, since at least in this pairing the bottle (yet a small one) is around 50 euros.

In conclusion we could even propose an exercise to the reader who wants to experiment: to combine a Romacraft Baka, with medium strength but very intense and characteristic aromas, better a Kamiki Intense Wood, normally very difficult to approach because of the unique, special woody aromas it offers, or a Kaiyo Mizunara The Peated, which adds the complexity of Japanese oak to a marine and subtle peat? We look forward to your comments, which are now the ones of experts.





# GREAT WALL

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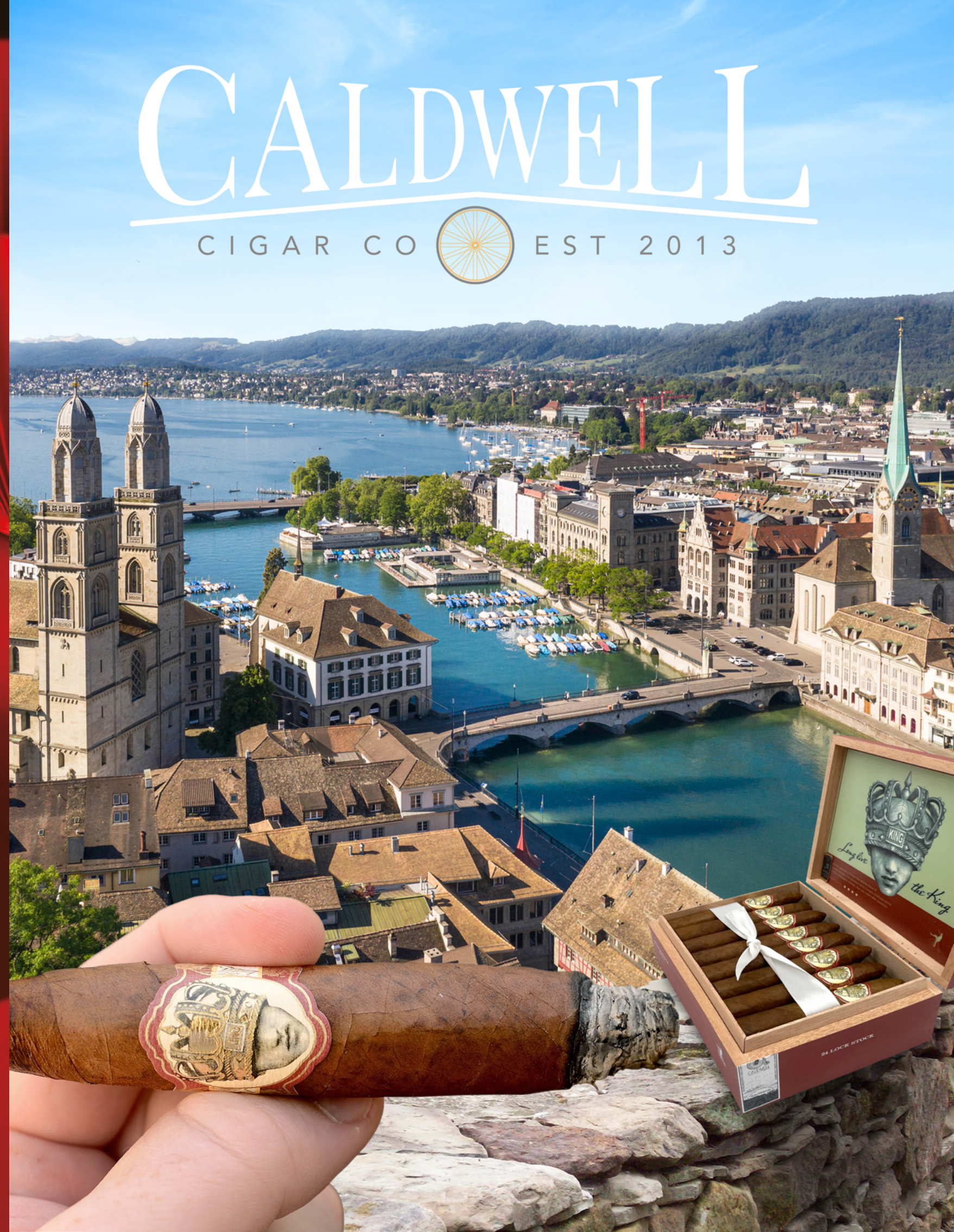
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# CALDWELL

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PAIRING

Cigars  
&  
Spirits



DAVIDOFF NICARAGUA BOX PRESSED

*RICH. BROAD FLAVOR PROFILE.*

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 16.5   € 16
DIMENSIONS	
48 x 127 mm (5")	
COUNTRY	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	

Wide flavor profile that provides great satisfaction: aromas of nuts, spices, leather and cocoa, together with mineral hints. A real powerhouse of evolution and intensity.

Two bourbons of different character are paired, one more camphorated and balsamic, the other creamier and richer in dark fruit. Two different experiences.



LAURA CHAVIN VIRGINY

*CREAMY AND SMOOTH.*

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ -   € 25
DIMENSIONS	
54 x 140 mm (5 ½")	
COUNTRY	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	

The cigar opens with notes of wood, nuts, and aromatic herbs. There is a delicate undertone of citrus zest. In the second part it moves to a slightly sweeter profile enriched with spices.

We suggest the pairing with a two smooth and rounded rums of different aging and finish.



MI QUERIDA TRIQUI TRACA N.552

*INTENSE AND REWARDING..*

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 11   € N/A
DIMENSIONS	
52 x 127 mm (5")	
COUNTRY	
NICARAGUA	

The cigar releases notes of wood, cocoa and earth, enriched with a spicy component of black pepper on a savory and mineral base.

It is paired with two whiskeys with a marked sweetness to balance the tobacco character, a bourbon centered on sweet spices and caramel and a single malt that uses a finish in barrels that have contained Sicilian Marsala fortified wine.



LEGENT  
*Bourbon*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	47% - 94	\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Kentucky S. Bourbon	4 Years Old	New

Original product that combines the traditional Kentucky Straight Bourbon with the creaminess of a Japanese blended and the complexity of the finishes in red wine, for a deep and complex dram with vanilla, brown sugar, pecan, leather and milk chocolate and a touch of red/dark.

Intense combination of aromas, with the notes of cocoa of the cigar that resonate in the spirit, which adds a deep yet balanced vinous quality. Extremely well-integrated. Even on the palate it continues with good complexity, as if a wine of the highest quality were enriched with tobacco, dark and deep spices, ancient leather. Really sophisticated and rich. The finish is pretty long.

Pairing score

91

EAGLE RARE  
*10 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	45% - 90	\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	10 Year Old	New

The notes of vanilla and wood are flanked in this intense bourbon with those of aromatic balsamic herbs. The entrance is spicier, while in the finish the main herbaceous notes and camphor return. On the nose the pairing is intriguing: the fresh notes of the spirit give a new dimension to the depth of the cigar, enhancing the balsamic herbaceous notes, and making the spices greener and more delicate, like green curry. Even the woody tones are ennobled. On the palate the flavors intertwine well, and the ABV is perfect; less caramel, leather and cocoa, but a suggestive spicy wood dimension, changing every sip. The finish is clean, reminiscent of green curry sprinkled with nuts with earthy tips. Very good and never tiring, almost refreshing.

Pairing score

90







## FLOR DE CAÑA

### 20yo 130th Anniversary

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Nicaragua	45% - 90	\$\$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Spanish Ron	20 year old	-

This classic Flor de Caña is presented in a special version dedicated to the 130th anniversary of the foundation. It is a blend of highly selected rons aged for twenty years in ex-bourbon casks.

A great match between the sweet and citrusy character of the cigar with the ron's spiced notes of cinnamon and orange zest. The creamy smoke is well supported by the alcoholic intensity of the sip. The opening of the cigar in the second part of the smoke perfectly meets with the bitter finish of the ron among echoes of noble wood spices and dried fruit cakes. Perhaps, a fresher hint in the ron would have helped to clear the palate, but the pairing is overall excellent.



Pairing score

93

## OPTHIMUS

### 25yo Single Malt Whisky Finish

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Dominican Republic	43% - 86	\$\$\$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Spanish Ron	25 Year Old (Solera)	-

Oliver y Oliver distills this ron from sugar-rich molasses and then age it in ex-bourbon casks for 25 years using the solera method. The rum is then decanted in Single Malt Whisky casks for a few more months. The ron's sherried profile is loaded with liquorish and waxy scents that do not find enough support in the drier notes of the cigar. The smoke is creamy but relatively fresh, while the ron starts with a fattier sip to develop a drier character marked by the peculiar Single Malt Whisky finish. Initially, the pairing is overabundant, a weird mix of sweetish and bitterish notes that result quite unbalanced to the palate. In the second part, the cigar develops a wider aromatic palette with sweeter and more citrusy notes that are better accompanied by the ron, but the match was not made in heaven.



Pairing score

81



## GLENMORANGIE

### A Tale of Winter

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	13 Year Old	New

Single malt quite sweet on the nose, while on the palate, it is rather intense and varied, with a non-trivial spicy character. Extra notes of coconut and the finish of orange peel contribute to making the fruition more dynamic. On the nose, the impetuous bitter cocoa and the dark burnt wood of the cigar dominate, with at most a slight note of caramelized fruit that is added. Peppering is always in the foreground. The palate is better integrated, orange peel soaked in extra dark chocolate, with thick caramel, over freshly ground black pepper. In the finale, an almost balsamic vein rises, not present in any of the products, between bitter and vegetable. Even the orange of the whiskey becomes more bitter, almost essential oil. Less kind to each other than expected.



Pairing score

85

## SMOOTH AMBLER

### Old Scout 7 Year Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	49.5% - 99	\$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	7 Year Old	New

Bourbon with interesting notes, free of pronounced woody components, in favor of a sweet, fruity profile with sweet spices (cinnamon). The palate is centered on caramel, orange, and vanilla. The intensity gives good persistence. The vanilla, the intensity of the orange, the present yet not too invasive alcoholic side: everything seems to be created on purpose to balance the exuberant wood and black pepper of the Nicaraguan, a duet of great intensity. Even on the palate, the spices turn to more centered and less piquant tones, the vanilla blends with the cocoa, and the orange is grilled on bright coals. Very rich and well-integrated. The Finish shows a good persistence, sweet and bitter, butterscotch and bitter cocoa flakes. Made for each other.



Pairing score

91



# SPIRITS

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





# Aging Rum

*A brief history of the love story  
between rum and wood.*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

While in the past rum aficionados were not so invested in the casks used for maturing their favorite aged spirit, today premium rums are all about cask aging and special finishes.

The love affair between rum and wood is as old as in whiskies, but the mass success of different styles of rum made it slower for aged rum to emerge as one of the most recognizable premium products. Even in rum's case, it was well known that the prolonged aging enhanced the spirit by bringing in aromas from the wood, but also and above all by developing new ones through specific chemical reactions: coloration, oxidation, and esterification are the three most important features brought by cask aging. Obviously, the choice of the cask greatly influences the final aromatic profile. For the greatest

part of the past century, the two most widely available types of casks were American white oak bourbon cask and French Limousin oak Cognac cask, because both spirits require virgin casks that after one use get disposed of on the secondary market. More recently, the success of sherry flavors in the whisky world led many rum-makers to experiment with sherry butts which, in turn, opened rums to a whole new realm of experiments with alternative woods and casks.

The ratio between the quantity of liquid and the contact surface with the wood is another important variable. Different types of casks have different capacities and characteristics. For example, the standard size of an American oak barrel is 200 liters, while that of a Cognac barrel is 300 liters and that of a sherry butt 500

liters. Furthermore, in making a cask, the cooperage regulates all aspects according to the planned purpose. For instance, the thickness of the staves can be varied, influencing in a subtler way the rum's contact gradient with wood and oxygen. By the same token, both the grain of the wood and the toasting it undergoes are important as well. American oak has a rather coarse, uneven, and tight grain. It contains a lot of vanillin and lactones. Limousin oak is coarse and uneven too, but it also has very large pores that facilitates oxygenation and the chemical interaction between spirits and wood tannins. These days, toasting is one of the most important aspects in defining the flavor profile of a new cask: the various degrees of toasting and charring impact on the wood/liquid exchange, develop (or inhibit) certain aromas, and provide an active carbon that filters

out certain substances such as sulfur. It is also partly responsible for the darker or lighter color of the rum. A light toasting develops fresh and spicy notes by releasing the vanillin contained in the oak. A more intense burning stimulates nuances of nuts. If the wood's surface is properly charred, it will add a lot of color and notes of caramel, smoke, and roasting.

The nature of the wood essence and the preparation of the cask determine the molecular composition of what will interact with the rum. Among the most important elements we can find hemicellulose, lignin, tannins, and lactones. Hemicellulose is a polysaccharide that undergoes the Maillard reaction when heated above 140 °C: that is, the caramelization of superficial wood sugars that can later release aromas of nuts, butter, maple syrup,



and caramel to the contained liquid. Lignin is an organic polymer that can help develop aromatic compounds either sweet and spicy or smoky and meaty, depending on the degree of burning. Tannins are the most important polyphenolic compounds released by wood during aging. Their effect on rums can be wide ranging, from adding flavors to preservation from excessive oxidation. Finally, lactones are esters that can bring in the funkier and most interesting notes into rums: from tropical fruits to scents of hydrocarbons and intense vegetal resins.

The extraction of different flavors from the cask depends also on the rum's alcohol content: each substance is soluble at different alcohol levels, and master distillers know how to exploit such a feature by wisely balancing the usage of virgin, second passage, and exhausted casks to obtain the desired effect on the aged rum. Another important aspect is the temperature which cask aging happens. The angel's share, the amount of liquid lost to evaporation (almost 8% per year at tropical climates), indicates also the pace of the exchange between wood and liquid (the speed of maturation, basically). At colder climates the loss is inferior, but the pace is much slower, which means that aging will take more time and the final effect will be less perceivable. Thus, cellar masters have been experimenting at length with different aging temperatures and conditions to find the best balance for their products. By the same token, rum makers need to know how to dose the various types of woods and casks in complete or partial maturation: a rum is often a blend of several differently aged spirits, which spend together only a fraction of the whole maturation process. Conversely, a recent trend is the rise of special "cask finishes". This practice means to mature a rum for a brief period in a very marked cask to bring in an additional intense trait like sherry, port, wine, calvados, peated whisky (or, vice versa, a rum cask finish for a peated whisky). The public seems to favor these rums for what seems to be their more "comprehensible" pro-



file, but many critics are skeptical about the true extent of such a "ready-made" practice when compared to the long and difficult magic of traditional cask aging.

Indeed, when correctly performed, cask aging is a natural process that can save more than a surprise to cellar masters and curious drinkers. Each cask can react differently depending on the position in the warehouse and on the climatic atmosphere, and cellar masters must carefully monitor the evolution of every single cask to spot the best ones for the most exclusive single cask bottlings. In terms of bottling, the major development in taste over the past few years has been the interest sparked by brut de fût (cask strength), unfiltered, and uncolored bottling. The evolution towards a more aware consumption of artisanal products has led to considering those rums that are not reduced in alcohol proof by dilution, do not undergo any kind of intensive carbon filtering, and offer their natural post-aging color without added caramel or preservatives as being the best. In fact, these are not so much quality traits, rather they indicate a more radical approach to taste: a cask strength unfiltered and uncolored rum will offer an original profile, for better or worse. Its taste and aromas will certainly be less smooth and cruder, with rough edges and funky notes, but the idea is indeed to offer that kind of authentic experience to aficionados. In general only the best selection of rums are offered cask strength and that's why we can most often trust that we will be drinking something very interesting.

The rum market is growing fast and wide, with more and more high-level bottlings for all tastes and interests (and prices). Traditional blended smooth rums will certainly never fade out of the market, but the shrewder drinkers can now find exceptional bottles that can give a very good idea of what it means to consider rum as an artisanal product whose character is firmly grounded in a specific territory and depends on a wealth of traditions and knowledge, such as cask ageing.

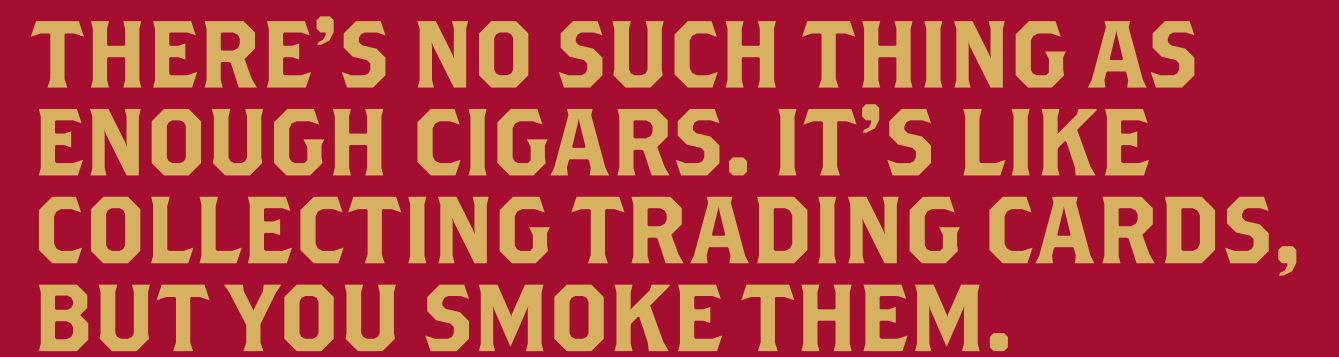


MANY THINGS MAKE OUR CIGARS EXQUISITELY DIFFERENT •  
YET THEY CAN ALL BE HELD INSIDE A CIRCLE ONLY A FEW MILLIMETRES WIDE •  
A SIMPLE WHITE BAND •



THE DIFFERENCE

SIGNATURE    GRAND CRU    ANIVERSARIO    MILLENNIUM



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# Speakeasy

*Directly from the years of American prohibition, the secret places of the time are back in fashion.*

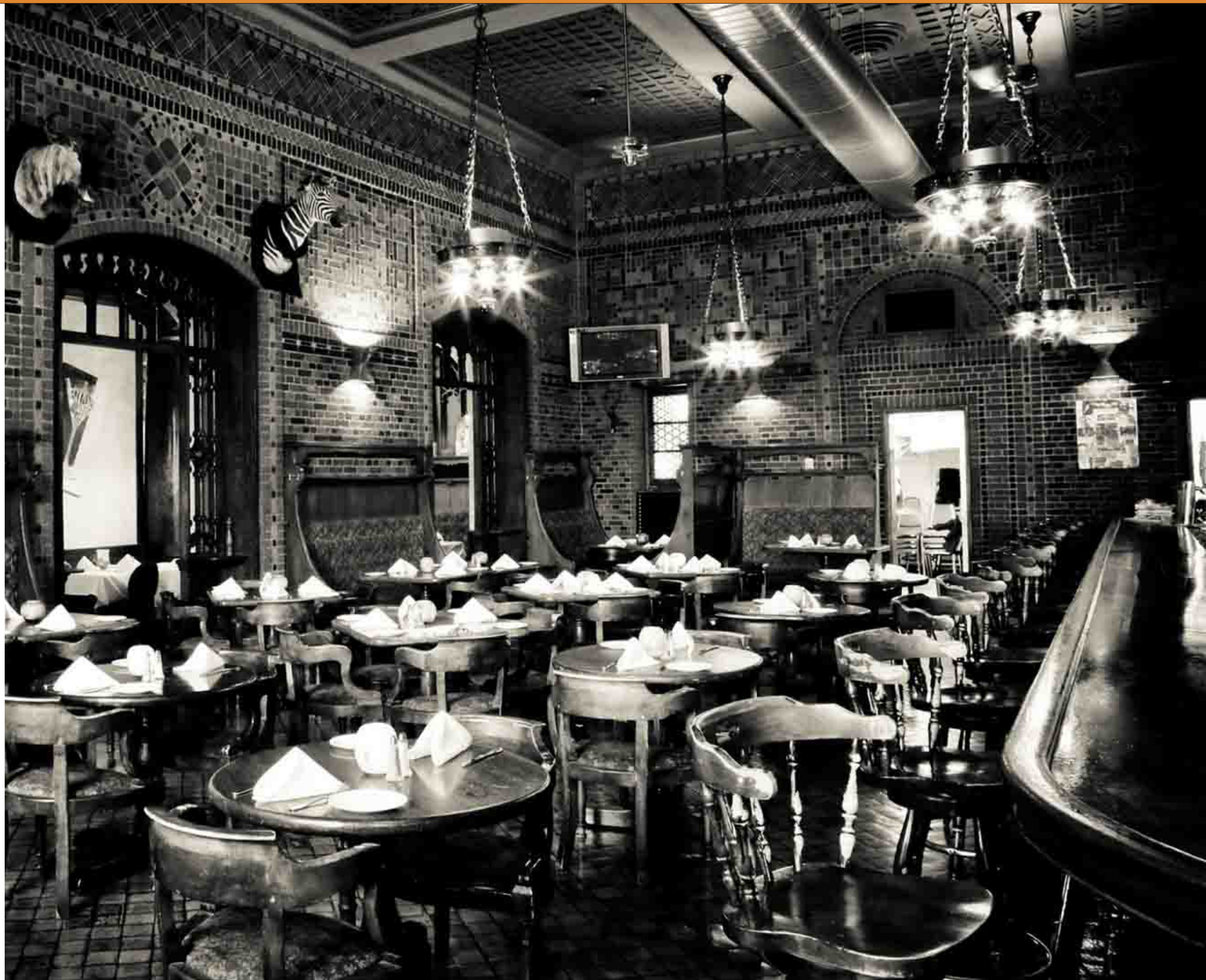
by **Nicola Ruggiero**

Soft light, jazz music, and the clinking of ice in the shaker, in the historical setting of the years between 1800 and 1900. Here is a photograph of today's speakeasies, the trend of the moment in terms of clubs and lounge bars. The term's etymology is linked to the era of prohibition, a historical period between 1919 and 1933, during which the total ban on the manufacture, importation, marketing, administration, and transport of alcohol was sanctioned in the United States.

However, the history of these establishments seems to have more roots in the late 1800s, when Pennsylvania was involved in a 900% increase in the tax on saloons, which led to several legal establishments having to close to the public, thus favoring the proliferation of clandestine ones. The secret places were hidden behind various types of activities: from the back rooms of shops to butchers or drugstores up to barbers and often private homes. Any place, apparently normal, could hide a secret passage to a world made of alcohol and music, access to which was possible only after pronouncing a password. In one of the rooms, housed in the basement of a hotel, legend has it that the owner ordered turbulent and harassing customers to lower the volume of their voices, using the iconic phrase «speak easy, boys!», for fear that the shouts could alert the authorities.

The Speakeasies were, however, places reserved exclusively for the highest social classes who could pay to enjoy the best service: and it is precisely in these elite secret bars that innovative recipes and preparation techniques originated which, later, would mark not only the history of mixed drinking but would also inspire modern mixology as well. New cocktails were born made both with the use of smuggled distillates (remember that due to the prohibition law, there was an absolute ban on the importation of alcohol from abroad) and with poor-quality alcoholic products: in both cases, it was necessary to mix them with something else, in order to mask the flavor, making it more drinkable.

The alcoholic component has always been a fundamental







actor in the success of these establishments. In many speakeasies today, the most classic American drinks are offered, made with selected ingredients and then enriched with unconventional proposals to create drinks of the highest quality in a clear vintage mixology style. We can mention the Sidecar, made from the union of Cognac, Cointreau, or Triple sec and lemon juice, in the right balance between sweet and sour taste, or Mary Pickford, a rum-based drink created as a tribute to the American star of silent cinema. Even the old-fashioned has very

ancient origins and became popular during those years, always with the same function of masking poor quality whiskey with soda, sugar, and bitters. Sometimes, again with the aim of disguising qualitatively unconvincing products, slices of orange or other citrus fruits were also pounded together with the sugar cube. Some also argue that the invention of Long Island Ice Tea is to be placed in these times and precisely by the speakeasies because, given its color, it could easily be mistaken for a simple iced tea. Currently, however, there are no histori-

cally reliable sources capable of confirming this thesis.

In recent years, the international scene has been enriched with numerous venues inspired by the period of American Prohibition, but its own peculiarities characterize each. These locations are fashionable places, and they still retain that aura of mystery and secrecy. Inside it is possible to sip drinks of the highest level, immersed in that typical vintage atmosphere that distinguishes them, in perfect Great Gatsby style.

To recreate a speakeasy venue, nothing should be left to chance. Very precise rules must be followed, both as regards the choice of the place, usually accessible to a small and selected public, and for the furnishings and the menu proposals, which must follow the style of the prohibitionist period. Usually, specific rules are followed even to access them, but, contrary to the past from which they draw inspiration, today it will be possible to get to know them both through the classic word of mouth and thanks to the digital world of social networks.





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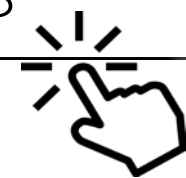
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# Caipirinha

*“Se a vida lhe der um limão,  
faça dele uma caipirinha.”*

by **Davide Pertino**

Our journey among the most iconic cocktails ever stops in South America, in Brazil. A country where cheerfulness and the wit to improve situations are common characteristics of Brazilians.

The drink in these lines, the caipirinha, is also a fervent example of this. It is enough to know that an ancient Brazilian proverb reads, "If life gives you a lemon, make a caipirinha", to underline how much the philosophy of "never giving up" has been rooted in these people since time immemorial. To research information of a historical nature on the caipirinha, which is sometimes superimposable and parallel to the cachaça, it is necessary to leap back almost five hundred years. We are in Brazil, around 1532, the year of the beginning of the colonization by the Portuguese and, with it, the diffusion of sugar cane cultivation.

Like any other colonization, the people who suffered it were enslaved and exploited for the economic purposes of the dominating nation. Soon the peaceful Brazilians found themselves being enlisted as laborers, exploited daily for a minimal meal and waste from sugar production, mostly molasses, exhausted and undrinkable on its own. The Brazilian farmers, however, from this waste obtained an unfermented sugar cane juice, the garapa. The drink, not very pleasant if drunk alone, was enriched with garlic, honey, and lime, to become a tonic for exhausting days or, when needed, a powerful medicine to heal flu, sore throat, cough, and cold. A similar story to that of some other cocktails, we might argue.

The garapa, therefore, is the ancestor of the famous cachaça, and was also the classic home distillate of the pe-

asants or Caipiras, which was a derogatory name with which the colonials called the peasants. The garapa was refined by the Caipiras, thanks to the fermentation of the sugar, to have a distillate which, although not easy to drink, was certainly more pleasant on the palate. Thus was born the cachaça, a distillate of fermented sugar cane.

All this "do-it-yourself" but, above all, the skill in spreading this "noble" distillate by the Brazilians made it possible to attract the attention of the Portuguese government, especially those of a tax nature. Starting from 1660, increasingly heavier taxes were imposed on the product, leading to a real Portuguese prohibition of cachaça. After various revolts (the first in 1660) against the Portuguese system of repression and prohibition, it was only in 1822, with the independence of Brazil, that the natives were able to reappropriate their distillations without any more oppression or exaggerated taxation. It was the year in which the Caipiras recovered their memory and their roots. They remembered where it all started from, also regaining possession of a drink produced clandestinely for centuries, the Caipirinha (farmer's drink).

Let's go back to the drink. Another Brazilian saying goes "Quanto pior a cachaça, melhor a caipirinha" or "the worse the cachaça, the better the caipirinha". Obviously, in the world of mixing, there is no race to find the worst cachaça to use as a basic ingredient, just as the original recipe, which included the presence of garlic, is no longer followed. In fact, around the 1930s, the recipe was revised to make it more appealing to the general public.

Even today, the caipirinha is seen, by the "Western" world, as a beach cocktail to be drunk in the sun and without too many frills in addition. However, in real Brazilian traditions, it is almost like wine in American and European cultures: although with a higher alcohol content than that of wine, the caipirinha is often enjoyed with typical Brazilian dishes based on fish or cheese. The most classic and popular combination is the one with feijoada, an authentic bean soup with pork, beef, and spices, accompanied by white rice and salad with orange.

A few but very important ingredients are enough to prepare this drink, even at home. Pay attention to the sugar: in Europe and America, it is customary to use the brown one, but it is a mistake not to be made, given that the sweetening power is very different from the white one of beetroot. It would go to alter the taste of the drink. As for the lime, one half is enough; cut into four pieces. Last but not least, the cachaça remains: it's up to you to choose to use a good quality one or the other way around if you intend to respect the famous Brazilian saying. Finally, the various alternatives to the classic caipirinha remain to be mentioned. In the famous Brazilian batidas, juices or fresh fruits, such as strawberry or passion fruit, are added to complete the caipirinha. Over the years, variations on the basic recipe have also made their way, with the use of different distillates: vodka is used in the Caipiroska, while in the Caipirissima, white rum is used.

## INGREDIENTS

- 6 cl of Cachaça
- Half lime into four wedges
- Two teaspoons of white sugar

## GLASS

There is not one in particular, but the one for the Old Fashioned is perfectly fine.

## PREPARATION

In an Old Fashioned glass, muddle the lime with the white sugar. Once the sugar has completely dissolved in the lime juice and essential oils, add the cachaça and ice, preferably crushed.

## ADVICE

For the historical version, add equal amounts of lime and honey to the glass, with two cloves of garlic.



# TASTE

"To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art."  
*François de la Rochefoucauld*







# Cigars in the BBQ

*Dining with cigars,  
using their boxes to boost dishes flavors.*

by **CigarsLover Magazine 10th Anniversary**

For many people all around the world, when warmer weather comes, it is barbecue time. But for some others, those who really love BBQ, there is no real season for it; there is just one: it starts on January 1 and ends on December 31. Bad weather? Forget it. That's no excuse! And the same goes for cigar lovers. We don't just smoke when the weather is good.

The first recipe is a meat dish: Coq au vin. You need to marinate some chicken thighs with salt, black pepper, and red wine. Keep the marinade when you remove the meat from it. The sauce we suggest it can be made in a regular pan: you need to melt the butter, chopped onions, mushrooms, and rosemary. You have to cook it for 8-10 mins and then you need to add the marinade and some meat broth. When it gets to a

boil, just let it thicken a little bit. Next you will put the chicken thighs on the grill, and you have to make them crispy. Then you place them into a cigar box (don't use varnished boxes), and you will finish them to cook here; you just need to add the sauce and close the lid. After 25-30 mins, they will be ready.

The second recipe is really simple, and it's a side dish, which is really good with a meat BBQ: beans. The preparation is easy: chopped onion and jalapeños, a bit of olive oil, and tomato sauce (or BBQ sauce) all mixed up. The magic comes now: we are not going to use a normal pan, but a cigar box! In this specific case, we used a Ramon Allones Estupendo (Regional Edition for Asia from 2007). This box was made for 25 cigars, Churchill size, and so it has a nice capacity (circa 1 kg). After having



left the box for at least one hour, the wood scents get really intense. We take our mix, put it in the box, and we top it with some bacon. Now it's time to close the box and let it cook for 30-40 mins. Then we need to remove the lid and keep cooking for another 40 mins. This will transfer the wood and tobacco aroma to the beans, making flavors unique. And all this without mentioning that you are going to serve the beans inside the cigar box, opening the lid in front of the other diners! The cigar to pair it with? Well, the cigars that were in the box are a good choice. We served the beans with brisket beef and polenta pancakes.





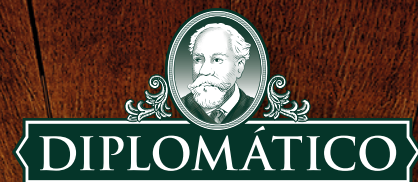
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# Cheese

*Far from culinary preparations or laden with food tables, what tasting space can be cut out for a product apparently so "poor"?*

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

Wine and cheese constitute a culinary duet among the most classic and dating back in time, prior to the birth of the very concept of "pairing", which has become very trendy only recently. Both are products that derive from the transformation of a raw material on which human know-how has major impact and on both it is not necessary to add many other "ingredients" to obtain a very enjoyable finished product. Yet, they do not appear to have equal dignity in common feeling.

Wine seems to have redeemed itself from its strong agricultural origin: today it is possible to buy bottles of hundreds of euros / dollars and some products are even the subject of auctions or private sales among collectors. A true oenological culture has risen, creating literature, experts and connoisseurs. Not to mention the champagne that, with a different production technique, brings to the table a grape juice ennobled by soft and refined bubbles.





Cheese, on the contrary, is perceived by the vast majority of consumers as a cheap supermarket product, maybe only useful (and sometimes even indispensable) to prepare various dishes, some of which are very popular (two among all the others: pizza and lasagna). And nothing else. However, there are very valid reasons that should be taken into account to re-evaluate this food, even to elevate it to the prestige that other foods have long boasted. Before analyzing the reasons why cheese should have a greater and more important place in the "taste" modern world, we will quickly review crucial production aspects, useful to present and support our thesis.

Almost all cheeses in the world are produced with only three basic ingredients, which are milk, salt and rennet. In addition to this basic recipe there is also the crucial knowledge and experience of professionals who developed in the years the dairy technology. Almost every country in the world or geographical area has its own peculiar products. In many of these geopolitical areas, actual regulations have also been created, which detail every step of production, from the type of feed allowed for dairy animals, to the minimum and maximum seasoning / aging of the finished product. Very often compliance with these parameters involves the recognition of certain quality certificate for the product: in the European Union, for example, compliance with the regulatory prescriptions results in the recognition of the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI). This is enough to explain how much attention to production processes is behind the scenes of dairy production.

The starting raw materials, as for both wine and cigars, of course, can make the difference. There is milk and milk, just as there is cow's milk and cow's milk, which is why animals and their daily diet are also given strict rules and major attention in the production regulations. In addition, cheese can be obtained, mainly, from cow's, sheep's, goat's and buffalo's milk. Therefore, starting from the raw material and, even considering further upstream opportunities, from the biodiversity of breeds and farms, there is a remarkably wide range of possibilities.

Once the milk is collected and arrives at the dairy companies, it is sterilized and brought to the most suitable temperatures with respect to the final product to be made. After a short "rest" stop (which allows the milk to spontaneously trigger both partial acidification and hydration of casein, facilitating the subsequent coagulation process, whey (the equivalents of wine yeasts), consisting of generally lactic bacteria, is added to the milk, an indispensable step to obtain cheeses that start from pasteurized milk. Subsequently, milk is added with rennet (a substance either obtained from the gastric tissue of suckling calves or sheep or goats or of microbial or vegetable origin), which is the substance capable of triggering coagulation (i.e. the gelling of milk). In this phase the casein molecules, at a temperature between 25 ° and 30-35 ° C, create chemical bonds between them (also called gelatinous



reticulum) which incorporates most of the substances contained in milk: fats, minerals, vitamins and part of the water. In this way the curd is obtained. The latter, after a variable rest period (in terms of hours), is split and separated from the liquid part. Depending on the breakage of the same (in pieces from 40-50mm up to 3-4mm), soft or hard cheeses are made. However, this is still not enough to obtain our cheese, because cooking the curd will be essential to obtain certain cheeses. Finally, the curd is put into shape, salted on the surfaces and left to rest to purge excess water. A possible aging period will follow before the sale.

This quick analysis has allowed us to ascertain, at least superficially, how much the production steps have many similarities with those of wine. As for the oenological world, the use of dairy products can take place both in the conviviality of meals and in a tasting moment. In addition, a piece of certain cheeses can be a valid and protein-rich snack, even for athletes before a specific performance.

Leaving aside the convivial aspect and technical tasting (yes, in some countries this practice exists), its use as a quick pre-smoke snack is interesting and well-spread, provided certain precautions are respected.

First of all, it is understandable that it is better to avoid cheeses with a too pungent flavor: we therefore exclude blue cheeses (such as Bleu d'Auvergne, Gorgonzola, Blue Stilton, Queso de Cabrales, etc.), and very seasoned products. Their persistence is so marked and aromas are so intense as to overshadow or otherwise compromise the aromatic perception of the most subtle notes of the smoke. We prefer, rather, soft products, fresh or slightly seasoned, maybe even with soft texture, as long as they are not seasoned. No particular indication should be provided on the milk used, so we can choose the one that best suits us. Consider, however, that the products obtained from the processing of goat's milk, among all the richest in terms of water, are characterized by an aromatic structure that tends to be smoother, while fresh and soft texture products, such as mozzarella, are slightly more acidic on the palate.

With regards to the quantity, it should be noted that the suggested dose for a dessert course based on cheeses, on average composed of six products, is 180 grams. Considering that this amount is suggested for the final moment of a meal and that our intent is a snack to fill the stomach before a smoke, I personally believe that 180-200grams is an adequate reference dose. Avoid stuffing yourself, because cheeses are rich in fat and tend to weigh down our digestive system.

Finally, although it may seem obvious, it is advisable to temporally separate the consumption of cheese from the moment of enjoying a cigar, as well as to drink fresh sparkling water to clean up the palate. Because cheese can be noble, but not to the point of being proposed in combination with any tobacco product.





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## SPIRITS

### 威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來  
你喝的是什麼

Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用者經常進行激烈分析，偶爾成熱情，瓶子一直是購買的主要吸引力，但是有一個更精細的細節，必須加深，能夠揭示許多有用的新聞：標籤。

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

雙面標籤生產將其命名為威士忌，這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們說沒有“e”的威士忌：在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱擴大了蘇格蘭語，單一麥芽蘇格蘭威士忌保證了單一釀造廠的來源地，一些蘇格蘭釀造廠增加了生產區域，以強調產品的地域性。

“歲月”之後經常出現的數字與產品的最低年齡有關。最低年齡因為，與標籤不同桶的混合相比，最年輕的數字是相等的。示例：使用三個桶分別釀造8年，12年和29年的威士忌將顯示“8

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，沒有擔保或假冒產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低3年威士忌的國際標準。製片人選擇不報年齡，這仍然是未知的：它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉悅。

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



忌，特別是如果前者具有一定的年齡。本小邊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，它總是發現精神和龍蝦的日期，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造廠，不同釀造廠，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，我們將混合麥芽威士忌（多年自釀製為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合），還有Grain Whiskies：這個術語是用於各種穀物生產的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到與流行飲料相關的各種問題，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籤上最常用的術語，沒有絕對的紀律，每個製造商都做自己的事情。但是，遵循這些指導原則，在這個廣闊而獨特的世界中，您將更容易自說。



# Beer Tourism

*Exploring the complexity of the world  
beer by beer*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

After decades on the sidelines of touristic attractiveness – if not for few famous pubs in Ireland, Belgium, Germany, and Czech Republic – the rise of the craft beer movement has recently been expanding in an unthinkable way the horizons of enogastronomy, that sweet tooth for food and wine delicatessens that drives the interest of tourists travelling in search of the authentic experience of traditional cuisine.

Yet, it is not just gluttony that leads thousands of people to visit less frequented and less touristic-oriented places. Neolocalism, a cultural movement aimed at preserving the identity of a community and promoting aspects that make it unique, had a strong influence on people

who love to travel, but hate finding themselves in the-me-park-areas that feel like plastic diorama and have no soul. The idea behind enogastronomical tourism, and especially beer tourism, is to live authentic experiences in the places of production and invention of those ingredients and traditions: you go there only if you want to discover a different local culture, which means learning how things are brought from land to table. Beer, of course, has the great capacity to allow people to overcome cultural and even linguistic barriers thanks to its easiness and spontaneity.

True, the big numbers in the beer tourism industry – also known as beerocations – are still made by big players like the Guinness factory in Dublin (more than a million visitors every year), the famous Belgian producers or the German Oktoberfest (more than six million visitors) and the historical Brauhaus in Munich and Cologne. Yet, more and more tourists are choosing to visit unlikely touristic destinations just because an interesting new microbrewery or gastropub opened. No matter how small and apparently unattractive those places can be – say a former industrial city in the American Midwest or an almost abandoned old town carved in the mountain stone of the Apennine in rural Italy: the true attraction becomes the possibility of an unmediated and really authentic gastronomical experience, lived next to where a certain cheese is made, a wine is fermented, or a beer is brewed.

Microbreweries, which by definition are the heart and soul of the craft beer movement, were also born out of the longing for a bygone era of a truer and more direct relationship between producers and consumers. It is the local aspect of a craft beer production, as the sourcing of raw ingredients from local suppliers that bear the unique mark of the geographical area where they are grown, that usually drives the interest of the beer aficionado. This aspect has always been quite strong in the wine industry, with the concept of terroir and the charm of the winery as a place of great craftsmanship, deserved to be visited in order to fully understand the secret behind that special bottle. Microbreweries added an even stronger connection to their milieu and community: often, one cannot find their production elsewhere, as it can be extremely limited or the sales can be restricted to the brewery pub. Drinking a beer in place like these means to get in touch with the community that made the effort to imagine a different present for them: microbrewers are often experts who travelled the world, learned the ropes elsewhere, and then decided to come back to their birthplaces to contribute to their renaissance from abandonment and disrepair.

In certain places, like rural Europe, microbreweries are located in amazing natural areas that were left behind by modernity and industrialization, but now can redeem themselves through a combination of enogastronomical offerings and natural scenery. But it is not always the case, as shown by the phenomenon of many famous







area) Birrificio Rurale in Desio (Monza), Extraomnes in Castellanza (Varese), Toccalmatto in Fidenza (Parma), Fabbrica della Birra in Torgiano (Perugia), B94 in Lecce, and many others, became unmissable sanctuaries in the off-the-beaten-track pilgrimages of beer aficionados. Another famous example is the small town of Apecchio, nestled in the hills between Pesaro and Urbino in the Marche region, that launched the Associazione Nazionale Città della Birra (National Beer Town Association), grouping more than twenty local microbreweries and brewpubs across many other smaller towns under a common banner for craft beer production and touristic promotion. A project that was later emulated by many other regions in Italy and abroad.

Nowadays, there are dozens of craft beer festivals and events that lure tourists with the promise of great beers and lot of fun activities, but the most surprising aspect of beer tourism is that it also leads people to discover the original places of production. Just like in the case of wine and whisky, beermaking stimulates a strong interest in learning the actual practices and specificities of production, not simply in drinking and socializing.

People want to be involved in the productive cycle, they want to go beyond the bottle and the can, and even the beer itself, to discover the passion that made possible what today might have seemed an apparently impossible achievement: creating something authentic!

microbreweries established in formerly industrial towns, like in US or Great Britain. These places are rooted in a decade-long history of affection between the working class and the local pubs and historical breweries. Even if most of these places ended up being scraped off the maps by the development of global beer industry, that love affair was still strong.

Producers like BrewDog in Scotland, Bell's and Founder's in Michigan or Lagunitas and Sierra Nevada in California, which now are globally recognized craft beer brands, were all born as microbreweries out of the love for the local milieu as well as for quality brewing. In many ways, American beer tourism was primarily born as a city affair: Portland (OR), Portland (MA), Denver, and San Francisco were the holy cities of the original craft beer movement, with thousands of corner pubs and microbreweries that created a network of touristic offerings to stimulate the growth of visitors and of the whole local industry. They offer guided facility tours to discover the complexity of beer making and experimentation, city beer tours to try as many different beers as possible in a safe way, and beer gardens where to enjoy drinking in combination with live local music and arts.

The most famous names are Great Divide Brewing, River North Brewery and Wynkoop Brewing Company in Denver; Cascade Barrelhouse, Level Brewing, and Ecliptic Brewery in Portland (OR); Bissell Brothers Brewing

Company, Allagash Brewing, and Novares Bier Café in Portland (MA); 21st Amendment Brewery, Magnolia Brewing Company, Cellarmaker Brewing Company, and Anchor Brewing Company in San Francisco.

In Europe, and Italy in particular, microbreweries are more a rural affair, probably under the influence of the never-ending lore of Belgian Trappist breweries. In any case, local administrators and communities of rural areas have found in beermaking a terrific way to relaunch their territory and their economy together. Lower prices and abundance of quality raw ingredients made it easier to establish a microbrewery in a rural area.

Often, the establishment of a microbrewery also involved a pilot project with regional development funds behind. The touristic aspect came later, when the craft beer movement exploded worldwide, and people really started to travel miles and miles for trying a new beer place. After that, having a good craft beer labeled with the name of your small town made it for the best possible advertisement whatsoever!

Today Italy boasts more than seven hundred microbreweries, and almost two hundred brewpubs. Most of them are located in small towns and rural areas: Birrificio Italiano in Lurago Marinone (Como), Birrificio Baladin in Piozzo (Cuneo), Loverbeer in Marentino (Torino), Birrificio Lambrate (a small town in the Milan metro





# Blind Tasting

**84** SPIRITS

- 86 Rum
- 94 Whisky

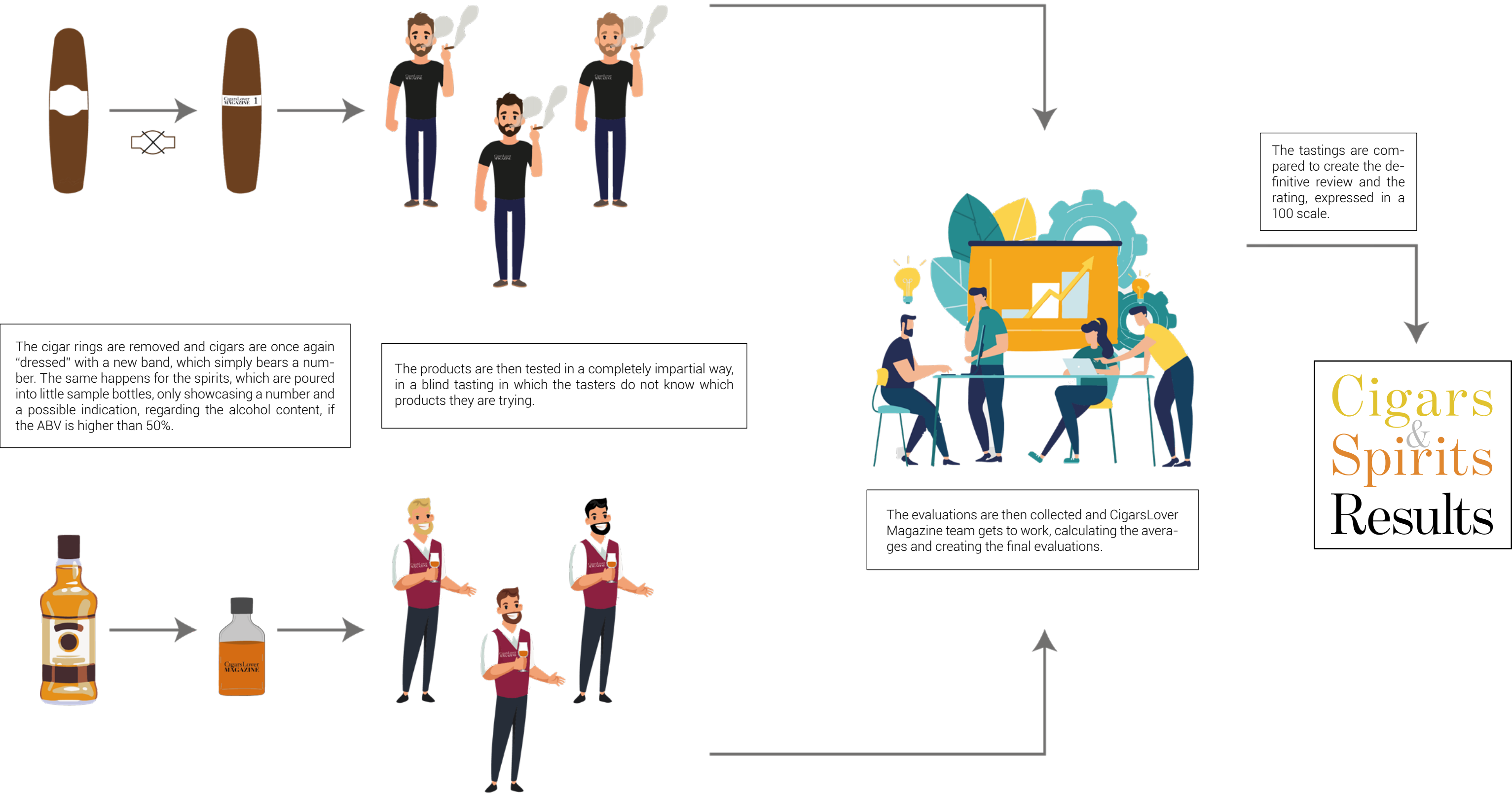
**100** CIGARS

- 101 Gordo
- 104 Toro
- 111 Lonsdale
- 114 Robusto





# HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?







1

KAVALAN  
*Solist Fino Sherry*

2

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

3

— NOSE —

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

— PALATE —

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

— FINISH —

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

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

94

4

5

# Legend

*All the information in the blind tasting*

To place the spirit inside 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.

# Spirits Lover MAGAZINE

400+  
SPIRITS  
TESTED  
YEARLY



# Rum



HAMPDEN  
*Pagos*

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

— NOSE —  
Molasses, cocoa, and ripe exotic fruit, with passion fruit and pineapple. Then white pepper and green olives.

— PALATE —  
Explosive and round, with red fruit, seasoned wood, spices, exotic fruit, and cocoa. A touch of leather.

— FINISH —  
The finish is long, with tobacco, cocoa, and leather. Peppery.

Intense, satisfying, and balanced rum. Well structured.

91



CHALONG BAY  
*Double Barrel*

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

— NOSE —  
The visou is predominant. There are also brine, mineral scents, and vegetal notes, with a touch of chamomile.

— PALATE —  
Warm and viscous, with notes of salty licorice, sage, thyme honey, and white pepper.

— FINISH —  
Long and intense finish. Visou, peppery spices, and salty notes.

Rich and fulfilling, with decent complexity.

90



KIRK & SWEENEY  
*Gran Reserva Superior*

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

— NOSE —  
Sweet scents of almonds, honey, caramel, and a touch of milk chocolate. Some pecan nuts and vanilla.

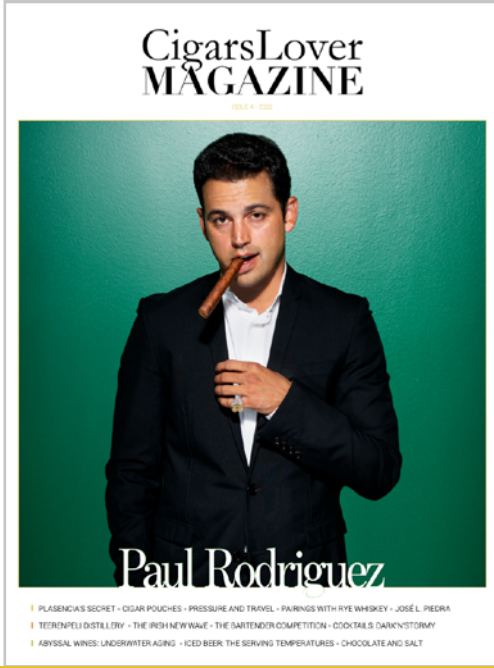
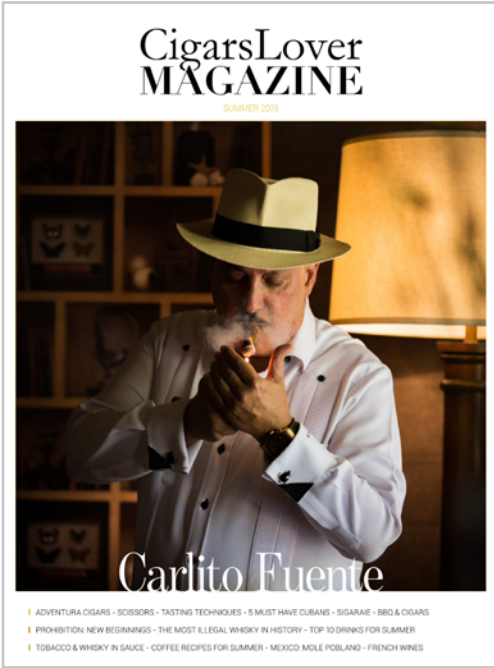
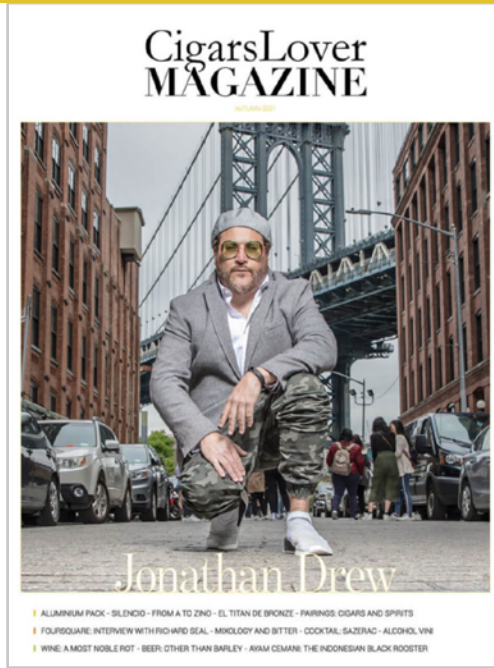
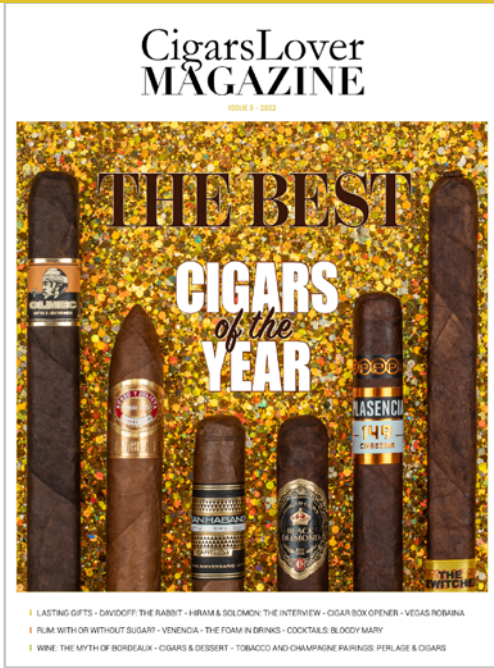
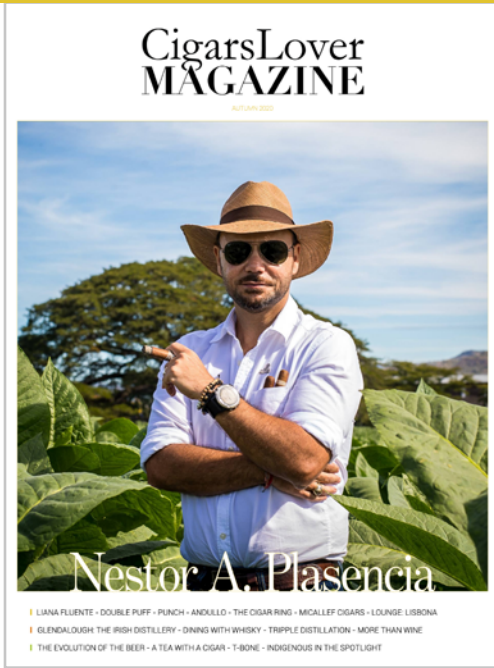
— PALATE —  
Dried fruits, which recall plums, raisins, and a touch of mango, with vanilla, wood, and honey.

— FINISH —  
The finish is medium. Dried fruit, wood spices, and vanilla.

Well balanced and very enjoyable and easy to appreciate rum.

90





# CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE

## DISCOVER ALL ISSUES







LES FRÈRES DE  
LA CÔTE  
*Barbade Foursquare*

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

— NOSE —

The high ABV dominates. There is exotic fruit, coconut, candied mango, coffee powder, and chocolate.

— PALATE —

Candied mango, coffee milk, dried coconut, and Moscatel's delicate sweet and sour.

— FINISH —

The finish is long and spicy. Mango and wood spices.

Warm and powerful, with a sophisticated balance.

90



KILL DEVIL  
*Navy Style*

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

— NOSE —

On the nose aromas of toffee, cocoa, ripe exotic fruit, and a touch of olives.

— PALATE —

Ripe tropical fruit (papaya), honey, pecan nut, toasted notes, olives, and toffee. An intense licorice note.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium-long, with licorice, ripe fruit, and toasted notes.

Intense, deep, and fulfilling. The flavor profile is broad and structured.

88



DILLON XO  
*9 years*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	43%   86	\$

— NOSE —

Fresh and fruity, with rich and candied scents, notes of tobacco and dried figs.

— PALATE —

On the palate it is dry, intense, peppery, devoted to noble wood notes.

— FINISH —

Long. Brown sugar, slightly tannic vegetal hints, wood spices and menthol.

A solid agricole rum, with an interesting price point.

88



BIELLE  
2014  
*Brut de fût*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	57.4%   114.8	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

It needs a few moments in the glass to releases vegetal scents, a hint of cocoa, wood and wood varnish.

— PALATE —

Wood and wood varnish, accompanied by molasses, honey and medicinal herbs. Then toasted notes.

— FINISH —

Long. Wood, toasted and vegetable aromas. A touch of black pepper.

Shy on the nose, but explosive on the palate. Remarkable persistence.

88



SIX SAINTS  
*Grenada Oloroso*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
West Indies	41.7%   83.4	\$\$

— NOSE —

Fruity, trifle, maraschino, candied fruit, with mainly pear and citrus, and flambéed banana.

— PALATE —

Candied fruit, mineral, vanilla pod, and a touch of white pepper. On the dry side.

— FINISH —

Medium finish. At first sweet and then peppery spices.

Simple to appreciate and with a good intensity. Not that structured.

87



HARDY  
*Xo*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	42%   84	\$\$

— NOSE —

Visou, together with notes of citrus and fruit such as plums, figs, and stewed apples.

— PALATE —

Dry and very spicy, with hints of coffee, tobacco, toasted almonds, mentholated, and resinous.

— FINISH —

Medium. Herbaceous visou, and elegant woody notes

A nicely balanced rum, with a decent structure.

86





SAVANNA  
 Edition Bois Rouge  
 1992/2022

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

—NOSE—  
 Vegetal scents, olive brine, leather and herbal notes. After a few moments, pastry and some citrus.

—PALATE—  
 A bomb of spices, with wild peppers, and some piquant peaks. Olive brine, leather, and some bitterness.

—FINISH—  
 The finish is long. Olive brine, spices, and leather. Intense and rich.

It a nice complexity, with some bitter notes. Not for every consumer.

86



DON Q  
 Gran Reserva  
 Añejo XO

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Puerto Rico	40%   80	\$\$

—NOSE—  
 Wood spices, rich cinnamon and cloves, then cooked apples, orange with honey, and toasted dried fruit.

—PALATE—  
 Soft and round, dominated by sweet hints and a light bittering background. Toasted hazelnut.

—FINISH—  
 Medium. White pepper, hints of orange peel, and honey sweetness.

Simple to appreciate. It's equipped with a discreet flavor profile.

85



MHOBARUM  
 Strand 101

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
South Africa	50.5%   101	\$\$

—NOSE—  
 Scents of nail polish, match sulfur, flint and petrichor. Mineral notes. Then plum, leather, and earth.

—PALATE—  
 Leather, flint, mineral aromas, and earth. A vegetal vein enriches it.

—FINISH—  
 Medium-long. Slightly bitter. Vegetal, earth, leather and black pepper.

Intense but a little on to the bitter side.

84



Make a Difference - Carrillo Cares  
 Raised over \$46,000 so far this year  
 More Campaigns Coming Soon





# Whisky



KAVALAN  
*Solist Manzanilla*

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

— NOSE —

Fruity scents, nail polish, wood and wood spices, and citrus peel. Then intense notes of toffee and sea breeze.

— PALATE —

Wood spices, ginger, toasted notes, toffee and balsamic nuances. Then fruity notes, with bitter orange.

— FINISH —

Long. Wood spices, ginger and balsamic notes of mint.

Incredibly long finish. Complex and deep. Meditative.

92



ARDNAMURCHAN  
*AD/10:22 Madeira  
Cask Release*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.2%   116.4	\$

— NOSE —

Seasoned wood, vanilla pod, peat, sandalwood, and a balsamic touch. Then licorice and peppery notes.

— PALATE —

Rich aromas of cocoa, roasted notes, coconut oil, licorice, and a touch of spices.

— FINISH —

Long. Seasoned wood, peppery notes, and coconut.

Intense and harmonious. Satisfying and with a broad flavor profile.

91



PORT ASKAIG  
*28 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
New Zealand	45.8%   90.6	\$\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Peat, lemon zest, and custard. Smoky. Sprinkles of black pepper. Then sea breeze.

— PALATE —

Soft, with peat, lemon zest, seasoned wood, smoky notes, and diesel aromas. Saline and sea breeze.

— FINISH —

Long. Peat, lemon zest, and smoky notes.

Balanced and well structured. Deep flavor profile.

90





BALVENIE  
 16 Year Old  
 French Oak

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46.9%   93.8	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

A mix of yellow fruit, with apple and pear, vanilla, wood spices, and a hint of cinnamon.

— PALATE —

Yellow fruit, with intense notes of vanilla, wood and wood spices. There is also a touch of white pepper.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium-long, with yellow fruit and wood spices.

Soft and round, with a good structure to it.

89



TEERENPELI  
 10 Year Old

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

— NOSE —

Fresh and herbaceous. Scents of salty licorice, candied citrus fruits, vanilla biscuit, and barley malt.

— PALATE —

Salmiac licorice, slightly salty and mineral, then sweet shortcrust pastry with candied citrus fruits.

— FINISH —

Long. Sweet spices, noble wood, and a slightly bitter salmiac.

It is a well-balanced and harmonious whiskey.

88



ROUGHSTOCK  
 Montana  
 Straight Bourbon

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

— NOSE —

Woody and smoky, with a touch of charcoal, wood varnish, ripe fruit, and pecan nuts. Balsamic nuances.

— PALATE —

Wood varnish, young wood, roasted notes, and some cinnamon. The pecan nuts are still perceivable. Oily.

— FINISH —

Medium long with notes of young wood, cinnamon and wood varnish.

Rich and intense. The flavor profile is easy to appreciate.

87



KIRIN  
 Fuji Sanroku

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	50%   100	\$

— NOSE —

Fresh, with notes of vanilla and butterscotch. Hints of red apple and a touch of cereals.

— PALATE —

Intense honey and vanilla notes, together with wood and a touch of spice.

— FINISH —

The persistence is medium, with wood spices, wood and vanilla.

Nice harmony and good intensity. Easy to appreciate.

86



STARWARD  
 Ocrave Barrels

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Australia	48%   96	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Yellow fruit, malt, vanilla, toasted wood, resin, and a touch of wood varnish, that gradually gets richer.

— PALATE —

It is honeyed, with toasted notes, wood, and malt. Followed by cereal biscuits and smoky nuances.

— FINISH —

Medium. Wood and toasted notes, malt, and cereal biscuits.

Good intensity, although not that structured. Decent harmony.

85



GLEN MORAY  
 Sherry Cask Finish

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	40%   80	\$

— NOSE —

Wet sultana, strawberry jam, oak, and blood orange. Milk chocolate. Some minor balsamic notes.

— PALATE —

Balsamic notes backed up by a solid sweet, and salty mix of spices. Orange and butterscotch.

— FINISH —

Medium to long. Orange and butterscotch are confirmed.

Well-crafted and balanced. Decent structure.

84





MACALLAN  
*A Night on Earth*

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

— NOSE —  
 Notes of orange peel, pastry, honey nuances, and toasted notes are perceptible on the nose.

— PALATE —  
 The palate is soft and round. The orange peel is confirmed, enriched by toasted wood.

— FINISH —  
 The finish is short. Toasted wood and hints of yellow fruit.

Harmonious but it develops a contained flavor profile.

84



HINCH  
*5 Year Old Double Wood*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	43%   86	\$

— NOSE —  
 Notes of gooseberry and pine needles, together with menthol and honeydew honey. Wood resin.

— PALATE —  
 Vanilla and toasted wood, accompanied by wood resin and a honeyed undertone.

— FINISH —  
 Short. Notes of wood, vanilla, and toasted notes.

Contained intensity and flavor profile, which is not very incisive.

82



WEST CORK  
*10 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	40%   80	\$

— NOSE —  
 Floral scents and milk chocolate, followed by white grapes, camphor, and nuances of candied fruit.

— PALATE —  
 There are aromas of camphor, oak, and vegetal notes.

— FINISH —  
 Medium-short. Oak and vegetable notes.

Not very structured and with a rather contained flavor profile.

81



CHOOSE WHO TO BELIEVE.

A MIRACULOUS LIE

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

A BITTER TRUTH

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



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DRINK RESPONSIBLY



# 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.

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.

# Coronas







CALDWELL E.S. MIDNIGHT  
EXPRESS THE FORTY TWOS

RICH AND FLAVORFUL

Leather, nuts and wood give way to the smoke. Earth, herbs, and white pepper are added, with the later turning into black pepper in the second half. There is also a subtle creaminess present.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x133mm (5 ¼")	\$ 9   € 1-
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



VILLIGER 1888  
NICARAGUA CORONITAS

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

Wood and herbal notes are revealed in the opening, with white pepper notes following. A marked hazelnut aroma is added in the second half and the smoke becomes creamy.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	43x133mm (5 ¼")	\$ -   € 7
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ALADINO  
COROJO RESERVA NO.4

BROAD AND INTENSE

Walnut is the undisputed prominent flavor throughout the smoke, supported by coffee, black pepper, wood, and vegetal notes. The smoke becomes balsamic and spicy in the finale.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x127mm (5")	\$ 10   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



MAESTRANZA  
BARON

RICH

The smoke starts with black pepper and piquant spices. There are also earthy, together with leather and vegetal nuances.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	42x110mm (5 ½")	\$ -   € 10
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	COSTA RICA	NICARAGUA



TATUAJE  
HAVANA VI ANGELES

BALANCED AND FULL

The Angeles opens with aromas of leather, earth, and pepper, followed by wood. The smoke is smooth, with a subtle sweetness present.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x117mm (4 ⅝")	\$ 6.75   € 5.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ESTEBAN CARRERAS  
DEVIL'S HAND BOOLIT

STRUCTURED

The first few puffs bring aromas of wood and black pepper to the palate. Later on, distinct flavors of leather and hazelnut are added, with a hint of herbs toward the end.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x120mm (4 ¾")	\$ 7   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



JOYA DE NICARAGUA  
NUMERO 1 L'ATTACHE

FLAVORFUL AND SMOOTH

Cream and spice, mainly black pepper, give way to the smoke. Wood and walnut aromas are added later on, with the spiciness picking up toward the end.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 13.5   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



PARTAGAS  
MILLE FLEUR

A LITTLE FLAT

It delivers earthy and vegetal notes, together with some peppery hints. In the second half, the vegetal component becomes richer as well as the spices.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x117mm (4 ⅝")	\$ 6.75   € 5.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



# Gordos



## PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE SIXTO I HEXAGONO C. CLARO

*HUGE PERSISTENCE*

Earth, white pepper and nuts. There are also some piquant peaks, that intensify more and more advancing in the smoke. The second half adds cap-puccino, coffee beans and chocolate.

93 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 21.6   € 21.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



## ROCKY PATEL DISCIPLE SIXTY

*BOLD AND FULFILLING*

Leather, black pepper and piquant peaks kick off the smoke. The aftertaste is earthy, with roasted coffee beans, and a touch of cocoa. Balsamic note in the finale.

92 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 13.6   € 15.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



## CHARTER OAK SHADE GRANDE

*RICH AND EVOLVING*

It develops rich peppery notes, accompanied by seasoned wood and a touch of leather. In the second half, piquant notes, earth, and leather are added, with a balsamic touch.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 6.9   € 9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	INDONESIA	NICARAGUA



## ALADINO CONNECTICUT GORDO

*HARMONIOUS*

It exhibits peppery notes, together with leather and wood. The aromas well intertwine with each other for the whole duration of the smoke.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x165mm (6 ½")	\$ 10   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HONDURAS	HONDURAS





CHATEAU DIADEM  
GORDO

WELL BALANCED

It delivers roasted coffee notes, enriched with aro-  
mas of earth and nuts. The flavor profile is confir-  
med for the whole smoke.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 17
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



ZINO  
NICARAGUA GORDO

BALANCED BUT LIMITED EVOLUTION

The cigar delivers earthy and creamy notes, with  
vegetal nuances in the background. In the final  
part of the smoke, nutty aromas and vegetal notes  
alternate.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 11
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., HONDURAS, NICA.



WEST TAMPA  
BLACK GIGANTE

BALANCED BUT STATIC

It develops aromas of leather and earth, together  
with a hint of black pepper. In the second half, the  
flavor profile adds roasted aromas.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 11   € 11.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ESCOBAR  
DOUBLE TORO GORDO

LAYERED BUT CONTAINED

Bitter almonds and wood give way to the smoke.  
Herbal hints and pepper notes follow, with the  
herbs becoming balsamic in the second half.  
The finale is spicy.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x152mm (6")	\$ 14   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	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



## ADVENTURA BARBARROJAS INVASION ROBUSTO

*ROUND AND SMOOTH.*

It delivers aromas of earth, leather, and coffee. Getting through the second half, balsamic and spicy notes are added, the latter becoming more rich towards the finale.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 14.2   € 14.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



## PARTAGAS SERIE D NO. 4

*RICH AND BOLD*

Vegetal aromas open the smoke. Then notes of earth, wood and spices are developed. The latter become more pronounced in the second half, where some piquant peaks are perceptible.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ -   € 14.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



## PDR EL TROVADOR ROSADO ROBUSTO

*EVOLUTIVE AND RICH*

A mix of leather and seasoned wood opens up the smoke. The notes of licorice and hickory are enriched by a smoky aftertaste. The finale gets spices and there is a hint of char.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x133mm (5 ¼")	\$ 10   € 8.4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



## BELLATTO KNOCKAROUND ROBUSTO 550

*COMPLEX AND WELL BALANCED*

The opening is a little salty, with notes of cookies and a hint of cinnamon. Wood and a peppery vein are soon added, followed by leather and undergrowth.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 7   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.





ROJAS STREET TACOS CARNITAS ROBUSTO BOX PRESS

COMPLEX AND FLAVORFUL

The smoke opens with an evident citrus note, followed by hazelnut, wood and white pepper. Herbal notes are added in the second half and the finale is spicy.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 8.5   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



BALMORAL PURO NICARAGUA

CREAMY AND ROUND

Nuts, mainly hazelnut, and wood are revealed in the opening, with leather and white pepper joining further into the smoke. A light pleasant bitterness is also perceptible.

88



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



PLASENCIA COSECHA 149 LA VEGA

FULFILLING AND DEEP

It develops earthy notes, with some vegetal nuanced and rich aromas of roasted coffee brands. The aromas well intertwine for the whole duration of the smoke.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 13   € 13
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



JC NEWMAN DIAMOND CROWN NO. 4

ROUND AND SMOOTH

Aromas of coffee, cocoa, and cedar wood are revealed in the beginning. Leather and earth are added later on, with a hint of ripe fruits coming through at times.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 13.75   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



PADRON FAMILY RESERVE NO. 95 MADURO

GREAT INTENSITY BUT STATIC

It develops black pepper, leather and roasted coffee notes. In the background, there are some light vegetal aromas.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	60x121mm (4 ¾")	\$ 30.5   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



STALLONE ALAZAN COROJO ROBUSTO BOX PRESS

BALANCED BUT NOT EVOLUTIVE

The first few puffs delivers notes of leather with some nutty flavors. In the second half, aromas of earth and some vegetal hints are added.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 12.4   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA



GREAT WALL SPECTACULAR NO. 3

FLAVORFUL AND FULL

Once the cigar is lit, it starts with vegetal and wood aromas, which are later joined by a marked black pepper note. A nutty flavor is added along the way, and the finale becomes spicy.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50 x 124 mm (4 7⁄8")	\$ 11.5   € 11
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., CHINA



DRUNK CHICKEN LIVING THE DREAM ROBUSTO

CONTAINED INTENSITY

It develops aromas of cinnamon, leather, and tea. In the second half, a nutty aroma is added and getting closed to the ending, a vegetal note of grass is delivered.

85



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 12   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.



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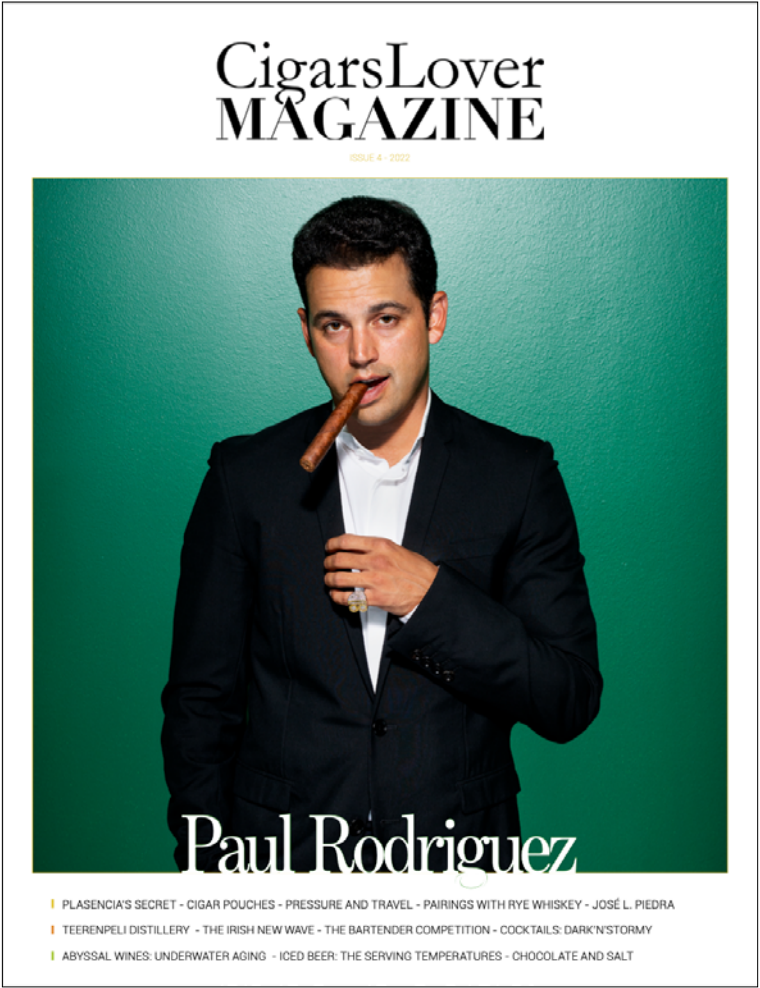
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# Toros



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WEST TAMPA  
WHITE TORO

BUTTERY AND CREAMY

It delivers an ample flavor profile, made of cinnamon, white pepper, mineral notes, hay and a touch of coffee. In the second half, nuanced of citrus, peanut and white pepper.

93

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 10   € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



SILENCIO  
BLACK SUPREMO

COMPLEX AND FLAVORFUL

Vegetal and leather notes open the smoke. Nuts, cocoa, earth, and wood are revealed further into the first half. There is also a well-defined cinnamon spice present.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 11.5-
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., MEXICO, NICA.



GREAT WALL  
GL NO. 3

COMPLEX AND ROUND

The cigar opens with roasted coffee notes, joined by hazelnut, and wood. Leather, cream and pepper are added in the second half, with a herbal and spicy finish.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x156mm (6 1/8")	\$ 45   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., CHINA



AJ FERNANDEZ NEW WORLD  
DORADO TORO

INTENSE AND SPICY

Wood, nuts and black pepper open the smoke, followed by herbal nuances and light hints of cream. Leather is added later on, and the profile becomes balsamic and spicy in the finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 12   € 15.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



GRAN HABANO XX ANIVER-  
SARIO E.L. EL DESAFÍO

RICH AND STRUCTURED

It delivers aromas of seasoned wood and spices, together with rich coffee beads, earth and black pepper. In some puff there are some piquant peaks as well. In the finale, a cocoa vein is added.

90

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



FLOR DE SELVA  
ANIVERSARIO NO.20 TORO

SMOOTH AND ROUND

The cigar starts out with aromas of leather and bitter almonds. Wood and white pepper flavors are added in the second half. The smoke is creamy.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 11.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



LAURA CHAVIN  
LA LIGUE DES DIVINS TORO

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

A mix of nuts and wood open the smoke, supported by an evident creaminess. Leather and cappuccino are added later on, followed by delicate spices, mainly cinnamon.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x149mm (5 7/8")	\$ -   € 32
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



LAMPERT 1593  
EDICION OSCURA

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

The first third brings a mix of earth, leather, and black pepper to the palate. Woody aromas are added later on, with the profile becoming increasingly spicier toward the end.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 16   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP.





## CAVALIER INNER CIRCLE TORO

### COMPLEX

It develops notes of hazelnut and wood, together with leather and herbs. In the second half, sour cream is added, joined by white pepper. The herbs get balsamic reaching the finale.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 13.9   € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	DOM. REP., U.S.A., HONDURAS, NICA.



## MY FATHER LA GRAN OFERTA TORO

### COMPLEX AND BALANCED

In the first half, the flavor profile consists of mixed nuts, coffee, and pepper aromas. Cereal notes are added later on and joined by leather nuances towards the end.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 8.5   € 11.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



## HOYO DE MONTERREY LE HOYO DE SAN JUAN

### BALANCED

It delivers aromas of cedarwood and nuanced of white pepper. A touch of leather and vegetal notes are added in the second half.

87 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x150mm (5 7/8")	\$ -   € 19.2

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



## ASYLUM SCHIZO 50X6

### A LITTLE ON THE FLAT SIDE

It develops notes of roasted coffee, together with wood and a touch of pepper, the latter getting more present in the last part of the smoke.

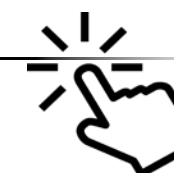
86 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 4.4   € 3.3

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

1000+  
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EVERY  
YEAR

FIND CIGARS





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