

CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1 - 2024



George Rico

- | GREAT WALL CIGARS - GROUCHO MARX - BOLIVAR: NEW GOLD MEDAL - CIGAR PAIRINGS - PROCIGAR FESTIVAL 2024
- | GLENALLACHIE: BILLY WALKER - A NEW PAIRING: CIGARS CHOCOLATE, THE BASICS - COCKTAIL: BOULEVARDIER
- | TOBACCO SMOKED HAMBURGER: THE NEXT FRONTIER - PEPPER X, THE HOTTEST CHILI PEPPER EVER



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Editor’s thoughts

New Year, more pairings!

In this first issue of 2024, we wanted to take a look back at the best products of 2023, and we decided to pair some of the best whiskies and cigars we had the pleasure of testing. The results are literally explosive. We had the pleasure of talking once again with George Rico, the man behind Gran Habano cigars. One of his cigars, the Connecticut #1 Gran Robusto, ended up winning the accolade of “the best cigar made in Honduras.” This was one among many other excellent cigars coming out from his factory.

Continuing with the interviews, in the following pages, we had the chance to talk with Billy Walker, the soul of Glenallachie whisky. And no, we didn’t talk only about whisky!

A piece on Great Wall will give you more information about the largest Asian cigar brand and Shifang County, the hometown of Chinese cigars that boasts a history of nearly 400 years in cigar tobacco planting.

A new series of articles is planned to be featured for the whole year, and it pairs all types of chocolates with all the main types of whiskies.

Enjoy the reading.

#refineyourtaste



CigarsLover MAGAZINE

Thank you for
TEN YEARS

CONTENTS



14

- 1 ON THE COVER**
- 14** George Rico
- 4** Team
- 5** Editor's thoughts



28

- 10 CIGARS**
- 14** George Rico
- 22** The mustache & the cigar
- 26** New Gold
- 30** Great Wall Cigars
- 36** Procigar 2024
- 42** Cigars & Spirits
- 52** It's a Boy; It's a girl



32

- 54 SPIRITS**
- 58** GlenAllachie
- 66** Whisky and Chocolate: the basics
- 70** Boulevardier



38

ISSUE #1 - 2024



44

- 74 TASTE**
- 76** Tobacco in the BBQ
- 80** Pepper X



58

- 82 BLIND TASTINGS**
- 86 SPIRITS TASTING**
- 88** Rum
- 96** Whisky



66

- 102 CIGARS TASTING**
- 103** Corona Gorda
- 106** Robusto
- 110** Shorts
- 113** Toro



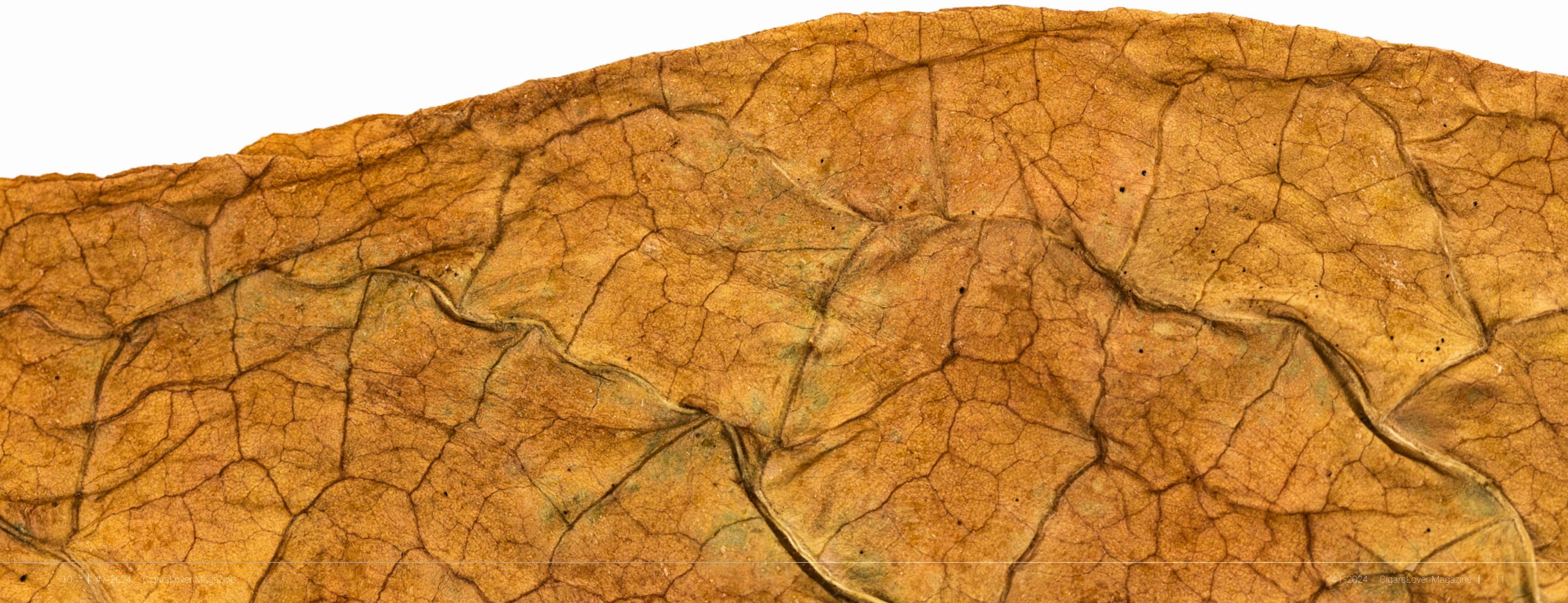
82

- 117 CREDITS**

CIGARS

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but a cigar is always a smoke.”

Groucho Marx





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George A. Rico

*"My goal is to expand the awareness
of our brand in the years to come."*

by **Michel Arlia**

The last time we spoke with George, he came fresh off the release of the XX Aniversario Edición Limitada launch. Since then, among other projects, he has been busy growing the Gran Habano brand internationally. We sat down and caught up with him for another interesting conversation.

It has been a short time since we last spoke. How have you been doing since then?

Hello! I'm doing well and excited about the new year. 2023 was such a wonderful year, personally and professionally. I am pleased with how it ended and looking forward to continuing the same success this year.





Last year, you attended the Intertabak fair in Germany for the first time. What are some differences that you noticed between American and European consumers?

Yes, I attended InterTabac for the first time last year. I was impressed by the overall size of the trade show. It was much larger than our traditional trade show here in the U.S., which I thought would be the opposite. But also, I was astonished by the differences between the two markets, where we here in the U.S. are a newer market that has been evolving since the 90s to today with new tobacco varieties in our blends, compared to what I perceived the European market to be, also known as 'Old World' cigars. I was pleased by the major shift in the demand for 'New World' cigars, as it was one of the reasons that I attended the InterTabac in the first place. It's gratifying that the European consumer has become more aware of the cigars sold here in the U.S. Overall, I think it was a fascinating experience and a great show. I look forward to attending this year once again.

What are the best sellers in these respective markets, and why do you think that is?

Although we have many brands and blends in our portfolio, the three best sellers to this day are the Corajo #5, Corajo No. 5 Maduro, and the Connecticut #1 from our original core lines in both markets.

What has been happening behind the scenes during this new boom that consumers are unaware of but should be?

(laughs) That is a loaded question. This has been an exciting time for the cigar industry, and we are experiencing a new cigar boom, especially in emerging markets like the European and Asian markets for traditional American-owned cigar manufacturers. There have been some issues, like always, with unexpected demands in the supply chain. Since we deal with a plant-based product, there is a lapse that occurs from the farming side to the manufacturing side and then to the sales side. This has been further exacerbated by the prolonged political and humanitarian issues we are experiencing in Central and South America, leading to an increase in cost along with a decrease in labor fleeing from traditional tobacco-growing countries like Nicaragua. The short answer to your readers is that, unfortunately, the trend of cigars increasing in cost will be the norm for a while until supply chain issues are corrected.

There are quite a lot of myths in the cigar world. But what are some that you can declare as mere and pure marketing stunts?

One of the biggest marketing myths is that all luxurious packaging reflects the quality of the cigars and the blend.

How have you guys handled the quite dramatic surge in sales and demand for cigars in the last couple of years?

We have managed the growth and demand well. We expected something like this to happen at some point over the years. One of our main focuses has been to farm tobacco to maintain our inventories, and that has allowed us to preserve the consistency of our blends over the years, but in addition to that, for any unexpected growth with the increase in sales. At the same time, it has been a new learning experience and one that has taught us to avoid future vulnerabilities in our supply chain.

You recently launched a new line called El Enemigo, and the story behind it is pretty interesting. How did the whole project come about?

The genesis of the El Enemigo project goes back to over 12 years ago, when I used to have a cigar factory in Miami. I was able to create small batch projects with all types of tobaccos I didn't typically use for our larger productions out of Honduras. It stuck with me after I closed the factory in 2015, that if I wanted to continue to evolve my blending techniques, I needed to work with other experienced cigar manufacturers that have great libraries of tobacco outside of my factory and explore other rolling techniques to allow me to continue to grow in my blending journey.

Since Davidoff makes El Enemigo, did you get a chance to dive into the vast tobacco library?

Being that it is my first project with Davidoff, I had the ability to explore some but not all their tobaccos, but I look forward to having more access with future projects with them.

There has been a trend of cigar makers releasing costly cigars recently, but contrary to that, you launched a wallet-friendly line called G.A.R American Standard. Which of these two segments do you see the most potential in?

The potential for each segment is equally strong. Although we started our brand as a wallet-friendly product, to use your words, I've always felt that our goal has been and always will be to provide the customer with a premium cigar for a fair price. We can do this because of our vertically integrated infrastructure since we are both farmers and manufacturers. Now that we have entered the ultra-premium market with our brand, I feel that we owe it to our loyal customer base to continue to provide them with the highest quality product for the lowest price. Last year's release of the G.A.R. American Standard is a continuation of that pledge. However,



we will continue to release more limited ultra-premium projects like the Corajo No. 7 later in the year that will be in the higher price segment of the industry.

Speaking of the new Gran Habano Corajo No. 7. How long have you been working on this, and what can we expect?

I've been working on this project since 2005 when the Corajo No. 7 was originally blended to be a stronger version of our Corajo No. 5, but due to the scarcity of the tobacco used for this blend originally, we have never been able to bring it to market. In the years since then, we have farmed more of this particular tobacco, with the strategy of using the tobacco once amply aged, to yield a more sophisticated version that was originally intended for a more complex blend.

How would you describe your process of blending tobacco, and what do you strive for in each blend?

I would consider my approach to blending as intricate, where I consider the following: the variety of the tobaccos, the placement of the tobaccos, and how the synergy of these elements will come together when smoking a cigar. My ultimate priority in blending is to achieve depth and complexity and bring out the nuances of flavors in all my blends.

What are some of your favorite tobaccos to work with, which do you stay away from, and why?

My favorite tobaccos to blend with are Nicaraguan, Costa Rican, Peruvian, Ecuadorian, and Colombian leaves. In the past, my least favorite tobacco was from the Dominican Republic, but to be fair, it was not because of the variety itself but due to the quality that I had access to before. My perspective changed entirely after working on the El Enemigo project using Dominican tobacco. Now I realize that every tobacco has to be tried and given a chance. I no longer have a tobacco I avoid working with and realized that there is no bad tobacco, there are just bad farmers.

What else do you have in store for us this year?

I am excited about the Corajo No.7 project, and the possibility of two limited-release projects being released later in the year.

Finally, are there any aspects of the company that you want to expand or focus on in the future?

Having attended the InterTabac Fair in Germany last year, in 2024, my goal is to expand the awareness of our brand in the years to come, and I look forward to taking Gran Habano to the next level as a globally recognized brand.

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The mustache & the cigar

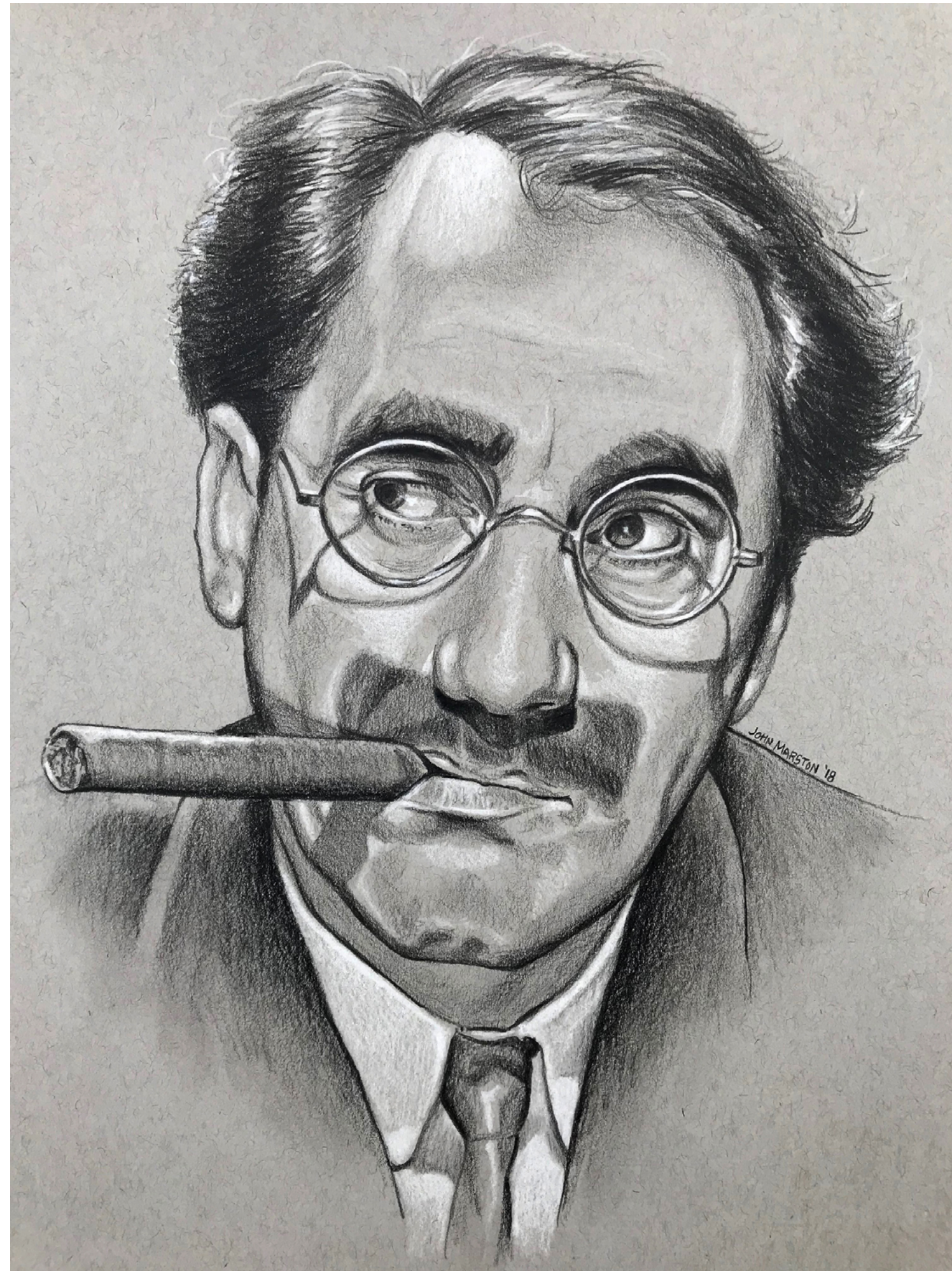
Groucho Marx's witty humor inspired generations of artists, elevating cigars beyond smoking companions.

by **Emilio Garofalo**

Can we determine a person's ability to confront life's dramas, tragedies, contradictions, and miseries by observing their ironic and mocking gaze or their habits? Yes, we can, if that person is Julius Henry Marx, better known as Groucho. His iconic mustache, mad scientist glasses, and a cigar between his teeth are well-known traits of his. The cigar, which he used frequently as the subject of his sharp jokes, holds a special place in my heart. In response to a lady who declared her love for her fiery husband to justify her numerous offspring, Groucho, the comedian, wittily replied that even he, despite his boundless passion for cigars, still had to "take it out of his mouth from time to time!"

The oddity of the man lies in his ironic and innumerable quotations. He trod the scenes of American theaters in the first decades of the twentieth century, and later moved on to the big screen, producing iconic films. Among them, "The Blitzkrieg of the Marx Brothers" is particularly memorable. He is remembered as a very talented showman, scathing, astute and often critical of power and the main established orders of contemporary society. His ruthless irony is a tool he used to express his opinions.

Groucho Marx was an eccentric actor who excelled in reading his maxims and telling jokes, puns, and nonsense humor on stage. He was part of a group of actors who were trained to deal with the difficulties of social and civ-



il precariousness in America during the late nineteenth century. Although he wasn't poor, he didn't have much money, which perhaps added depth to his ironic wit. Therefore, Groucho's humor was not solely about making people laugh at the right time; it also had a deeper meaning. This well-structured irony is brilliantly effective and can be used as a weapon to defend oneself as a man and an artist in a society that seems unable to appreciate one's talents.

Groucho Marx was not just a comedian or a theatrical performer; he was an all-around thinker. His intelligent laughter and incomparable, sensible illogic reflect his involvement in the world around him. He involved everyone in his amusing rants, from the poor bankrupt to the wealthy bourgeois, from the tireless worker to the crafty victim of his nonsense. It's one of the fascinating aspects of Groucho Marx. It is an unstoppable and irresistible comedy that has inspired subsequent generations of comedians. In Groucho, they saw a source of inspiration to continue using theater as a pulpit for rediscovered morality that is healthy and not self-righteous. Through his work, they were able to identify daily miseries and transform them into decorum and good taste. One cannot help but wonder if this was Groucho Marx's intended objective, but ultimately, the question is irrelevant. After seeing one of his films or reading some of his maxims, the result is still achieved: we find ourselves stripped and disarmed

in front of ourselves, amused, and perhaps even a little bitter. What made us laugh was just another contradiction, against which our logic had no power. As an actor he had the power to captivate the audience with his gestures. He arrived on stage in a shaky and frenetic manner, without asking for permission, and opened the door to the spectators' free time. He transformed it into a vortex of laughter, fun, and reflection. The actor was innovative and ingenious, as he transformed his cigar from a mere stage ornament to a smoky ploy to steal time on the stage. He used it to attract the audience's attention or to recall a momentary joke. He would stop and take his cigar out of his pocket, smell it, look at it, cut it, light it, and then suck in a few puffs. This gesture trapped everyone, even non-smokers, in anticipation of what he would do. Marx also used this technique to shift the audience's at-

tention from the jokes to the stage gestures, which, with those moves, condensed their meaning.

There is little information available about the smoking habits of Groucho Marx. While many photos depict him with cigars of various sizes, it's difficult to draw any conclusions from this. According to Groucho's son, Arthur Marx, his favorite cigar was the Dunhill 410, but he also enjoyed smoking La Preferencias and Belinda brand cigars. While he was not as prolific a smoker as Mark Twain or Winston Churchill, he still usually smoked two cigars a day. Arthur Marx, who wrote three books about his father, revealed that Groucho smoked a cigar after lunch and one after dinner. On occasions when he had late dinner guests, he would indulge in a third cigar, but only if he truly felt like it.

Groucho Marx's influence is still felt today. Despite his famous quip about not wanting to belong to any club that would have him as a member, many artists have been inspired by his comedy over the years. Some of these include Mel Brooks, Woody Allen (who once declared himself a "Marxist, tending towards Groucho"), and even Bugs Bunny with his iconic carrot between his teeth can be seen, in some ways, as a caricature of Groucho.

Groucho's impact extends beyond the world of comedy and into music as well. After the release of Queen's albums, "A Night at the Opera" and "A Day at the Races," which were inspired by Marx Brothers films, Groucho extended a friendly invitation to the band for a meeting. Queen in turn presented him with a framed gold record, "for providing inspiration and genius."

It is the way these myths pay homage to other myths that make Groucho an icon and as a point of reference for his own genre: comedy. Groucho was a master of creating crazy dialogues, complicated situations, light moments, and ironic dramas that made people both smile and reflect. His career began after a ballet performance where he made fun of himself and his unlikely dancing skills, making people laugh. From then on, Groucho knew that comedy would be his supreme genre, allowing him to perform on important stages in America and beyond. His ever-growing fame made him a beloved artist among fans and show business insiders alike.

Finally, I have one last question along with its answer: What is the significance of rediscovering Groucho, his career, and his artistic history? Groucho himself explains it to us in his final biting, melancholic, and comical joke, as he always did, "I started from nothing and now I am very poor!" By rediscovering him, we might become a little richer.



Long live the Queen
CALDWELL CIGAR CO.



New Gold

*The Bolivar New Gold Medal was one of Habanos S.A.'s 2023 new releases.
Will it also be able to win the hearts of nostalgic Gold Medal lo*

di **Giuseppe Mitolo**

The new releases have become the spearhead of the global cigar market. Although Cuban production boasts historical roots dating back the longest in history, Habanos S.A. has also allowed itself to be overwhelmed by this trend for about ten years now.

Leaving aside the usual Limited Editions and Regional Editions, for some years in Cuba, there has been a real ferment to be able to include new references in the portfolio (standard production and otherwise) capable of responding to this market demand and satisfying almost all palates. Often, those who pay the price are nostalgic aficionados who, despite smoking ordinary products, miss products that have been discontinued for some time.

A year ago, however, the trend was slightly upset with the presentation of the Bolivar New Gold Medal to the world. The name was great sounding, and smokers with a few years under their belt, in addition to immediately associating the Gold Medal with the famous cigar of the past, turned up their noses at that "New," which nevertheless suggested a different cigar. Time, however, managed to answer all the questions. So, after a few months, the Bolivar New Gold Medal was distributed in major markets, being appreciated by many cigar lovers and winning our prize of best Cuban cigar in the 2023 Awards.

Before presenting the new cigar, giving space and time to its glorious past is necessary. The very first edition of the Bolivar Gold Medal dates back to production

before the Castro revolution. For some reason, it was never disclosed that its circulation was always very "limited" despite the cigar being included in the brand's regular production portfolio.

The vitola de galera adopted was Cervante (42x165mm), the same as the Montecristo No. 1, while its packaging was unusual for that period: a golden aluminum foil covered the cigar for over half of its length, covering it from the head towards the foot, with the anilla placed at the end of the foil.

Even the packaging, a box of 10 cigars, was unusual in a period dominated by slide-lid boxes (even of 50-count cabinets). As already reported, the cigar was difficult to find even in the years of its production. So, in 1992, probably due to the difficulty in supplying the aluminum foil that covered them, it was discontinued.

In 2004, thanks to a specific request from the German importer 5th Avenue, the cigar was produced again, for the German market only, with the exact same aesthetic and packaging characteristics, in a limited edition of 1000 boxes. In retrospect, some defined this release as a precursor to the Regional Editions, which would

be launched the following year. It was a specifically requested product, in limited quantities, distributed and sold for one market only. Regardless of how we want to define it today, that special release caused a lot of discussion among enthusiasts of the time, so much so that, on the one hand, it triggered a "gold rush", and on the other, it put Habanos S.A. in the conditions to test the waters for a renewed relaunch of the product.

Just three years later, a new version of the Gold Medal was presented and distributed for the La Casa del Habano circuit, still faithful to its predecessor in size, box, and aesthetic appearance, with the only difference being the addition of the second red band with gold lettering of LCDH products. In 2009, for unknown reasons, the gold foil texture was replaced.

In 2011, although the product offered an interesting smoke, typically Bolivar but with a more elegant soul, which managed to conquer even the most demanding palates not fans of the brand, it was discontinued. In reality, already from the previous year the cigar began to reach retailers less and less frequently. The decommissioning triggered the usual effect: a feeling of dismay and a simultaneous rush to grab the last available boxes.



And finally, we reached February 2023, when the New Gold Medal was presented. The addition of "New" already suggested that it was not a revival of the Gold Medal but a new or, at least, updated product. At a glance, the new cigar is very reminiscent of the old one. Still, above all, it leverages the appeal of the past, such as the use of the inevitable golden aluminum foil, which, upon closer examination, appears slightly different because it features the embossed writing "Bolivar New Gold Medal".

The New Gold Medals are sold in Semi Plain Box of 10 cigars, with some slight aesthetic changes: the graphics of the cubierta and the vista have been replaced (respectively, the external and internal image present on the two faces of the folding lid) and a golden cardboard has been added inside the box which distances the ten cigars from the box.

The substantial difference or, better to say, the element of discontinuity with the past is centered on modifying the vitola de galera. It went from the Cervante (42x165mm) to the Partagas No. 15 (48x165mm), the size used in 2013 for the release of the Ramon Alonnes Replica del Humidor Antiguo and never proposed again. What might seem like a simple increase in the ring gauge alone, going from 42 to 48, is a real gear change. Consider that the 42 size is usually intended for formats such as the Corona or the Lonsdale, while the 48 is a diameter for the Churchill and the Toro. Therefore, this modification brings about a substantial change in the smoking mechanics. With the same filling, the oxygen supply becomes more significant, and the risks of the cigar going out due to distraction are reduced. For this reason, anyone looking for the opportunity to compare the Gold Medal and the New Gold Medal must necessarily overcome this technical limit and force their hand a lot for this operation.

The New Gold Medal offers a ready and satisfying smoke, aromatically rich (nuts, leather, spices, wood, but also mineral and coffee nuances), well balanced at a strength never above the medium register, capable of offering a truly noteworthy creaminess of the smoke on the palate. Wanting to find at all costs an element in common with the Gold Medal, the elegance is undoubtedly it. Bolivar's gold is back.



BACK TO OUR ORIGINS

1947 **ALADINO** 1961
BY JRE TOBACCO





Great Wall

*The past, present and future
of the largest cigar factory in Asia.*

by **Zac Mitchers**

The Great Wall Cigar is a renowned Chinese cigar brand founded by Mr. Wang Shuyan in 1918. He started "Yichuan Workshop" in Shifang, a small county in Sichuan Province, which became one of the first large-scale cigar manufacturers in China and led the development of the Chinese cigar industry. In 1958, Marshal He Long named the cigar as Great Wall and asked to "roll quality cigars in China." Great Wall Cigars were selected and smoked by many of the first-generation leaders of China, and Marshal He Long recommended them to Chairman Mao in 1964. Great Wall cigar factory was thereafter assigned to make cigars for national leaders. In 1972, Great Wall Cigars were presented as a gift to US President Richard Nixon when he visited China.

The factory developed 35 blends for national leaders, and No.1, 2, 13, and 33 were chosen. In 1972, a special cigar-making team was formed, known as "132 group". The name "132" is derived from blend numbers 13 and 2. The masters of the 132 group passed down their extraordinary cigar-making skills to four apprentices, "Hao Yue Chang Chun". Now the four masters have become a precious treasure of Great Wall. More masters have emerged, specializing in planting, fermentation, blending, and aging. All of them are live examples of the craftsmanship spirit of the Great Wall cigar. In 2019, they launched the "Mellow and Sweet" flavor style category of Great Wall Cigar, based on Chinese-style cigar products. The brand is embarking on a new journey to build a leading brand in China

and a renowned brand worldwide. Shifang County is the hometown of Chinese cigars, about 60 kilometers from Chengdu. It has a history of nearly 400 years in cigar tobacco planting. Daquankeng in Shifang is a small village renowned for its unique and excellent tobacco leaves. Great Wall Cigar makes cigars with a unique Chinese flavor by blending Shifang tobacco and selected quality tobacco from other countries.

Great Wall Cigar has formed three unique fermentation methods, including "Yichuan Cellar Fermentation," "132 Exclusive Fermentation," and "Oak barrel fermentation." Such fermentation methods improve the taste and flavor of tobacco and support the construction of the "Mellow

and Sweet" product category. To forge the Chinese cigar brand with international competitiveness, the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration of China launched the projects for the Cigar Fermentation Technology of the Tobacco industry and the Innovation Center for Cigar led by China Tobacco Sichuan Industrial Co., Ltd. (or CTS). They have established a Key Laboratory for Efficient Utilization of Cigar Tobacco with local government and universities. Furthermore, this year, an International Joint Lab for Cigar has been jointly operated by CTS and the Spanish cigar company Tabacalera.

The Great Wall cigar factory is the largest in Asia, with an annual production capacity of 5 billion cigars. They have



engaged in technology exchange and cooperation with world-renowned cigar enterprises such as Altadis USA, Royal Agio cigars of the Netherlands, Tabacalara of Spain, STG Group of Denmark, and Habanos of Cuba. Their products have been exported to Europe, Asia, and South America.

What differentiates the Chinese cigar industry from other countries is that China's tobacco industry adopts a management system of unified leadership, vertical management and monopoly. The State Tobacco Monopoly Administration and the China National Tobacco Corporation exercise centralized and unified administration over the "HR, financial, material, production, supply, marketing, domestic and international trade" of the tobacco industry throughout the country.

Chinese tobacco has come a long way and the current planting, curing and fermentation technology of Chinese tobacco for cigar has made great progress in recent years. The quality has also been greatly improved. Compared with Central and South American tobacco, the aromat-

ic richness is slightly decreased, with less strength, and more sweetness.

Last December, the opening ceremony of the Great Wall Cigar flagship lounge was held in Hong Kong. The event was organized by China Tobacco Sichuan Co., Ltd. and co-organized by China Tobacco International (HK) Co., Ltd.

The Great Wall Cigar Hong Kong flagship lounge is situated in the Fortune Metropolis mall in Hung Hom, next to the famous Victoria Harbour and Hong Kong Coliseum on the Kowloon Peninsula. The lounge spans nearly 200 and is divided into three sections - a brand culture and product exhibition hall, walk-in humidor, and a tasting area.

After the opening ceremony, Great Wall Cigar hosted a "New Product Launch Conference" in Hong Kong where they unveiled five premium cigar products. These included the "Great Wall (GJ 1984) Commemorative Edition", which is exclusively distributed by China Tobacco International (HK) Co., Ltd.

The GJ 1984 cigar was developed to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. It took the Great Wall Cigar Master five years to create. The cigars comes in a box with a ceramic ash-tray and lid. The front of the package features the pattern of the signature pen used in the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. This product is positioned as one of the flagship products of Great Wall Cigar, and the initial release of this Double Robusto is limited to only 500 cigars.

Great Wall Cigar also launched their Chinese zodiac limited edition Year of the Dragon cigar, which is exclusive to Hong Kong and limited to only 2000 boxes, each containing 10 cigars with a golden stamp footmark.

In addition, Great Wall Cigar released its super-premium line "Guo Jia" (GJ, meaning Cigar of the Nation in Chinese)

in Hong Kong, along with its first product in the line, "GJ 1918", which commemorates the foundation of Great Wall Cigar factory's predecessor in the year 1918. This cigar uses the special traditional craft of Great Wall Cigar, aged with high-quality Chinese liquor. The liquor is sprayed on the surface of the tobacco leaves during the fermentation and aging process.

Furthermore, Great Wall Cigar released its collector's edition of "Hao Yue Chang Chun" in Hong Kong. This cigar is named after the four master rollers in China who rolled each cigar in the box. The box also has the signature of all four masters.

Lastly, Great Wall Cigar released its "Añejados" edition of five different vitolas in Hong Kong, which have been aged starting from 2016 to 2022. The collection includes five vintage cigars carefully aged in Great Walls "Cigar Bank".





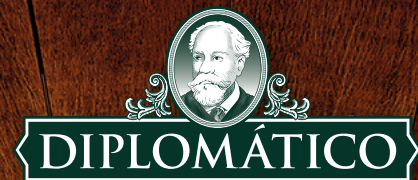
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Procigar 2024

The sixteenth Dominican cigar festival welcomed over a thousand guests for a memorable week!

by **Giovanni Trombini**

The Procigar Festival is a unique experience designed for cigar lovers around the world. The festival offers educational opportunities and tours of the Dominican Republic's renowned cigar factories, relaxing opportunities, and a series of events that will keep the participant enjoying from the first to the last day.

The 2024 Procigar was the sixteenth edition and welcomed over 1,000 guests from more than twenty countries.

The festival's first two days were dedicated to pure relaxation, with the arrival at the Casa de Campo

resort, one of the world's best golf destinations. During the festival, guests enjoyed various activities such as horseback riding in the countryside, soaking up the warm Caribbean sun on pristine beaches, and more. Attendees received a gift bag with limited-edition cigars and many accessories.

A sunset dinner at Minitas Beach Club caps off the day's festivities. On the second day, a catamaran trip to Catalina Island brought some attendees to see the famous white beach of the island.

The following day, after a tour to Tabacalera de García, the world's largest cigar factory, guests

then traveled to Santiago de Los Caballeros for three days of guided tours at cigar factories and tobacco fields. Among the possible destinations were Quesada Cigars, La Aurora, General Cigar Dominicana, Tabacalera Palma, Chateau de la Fuente, De Los Reyes Cigars, PDR Cigars, Casa Carrillo, La Flor Dominicana, Davidoff Cigars, Arnold André.

Among the tours we joined, we also had the chance to understand better what Procigar means to the companies involved. At General Cigars they told us that "the festival is a space where we celebrate cigar smoking as a lifestyle. Here, you interact in a friendly environment with our colleagues but, most importantly, with our beloved customers, learning about their culture, rituals, and what cigars add to their lives. Every year, more people enjoy visiting us because they learn so much about the cigar world and feel like they are part of a family. Also, the participation of women and young people has increased, and it has definitely amazed us. Our visitors interact closely with all the processes, not just as spectators but as actors."

On Wednesday, February 21st, right after the tours, the Welcome Dinner Party was held at the Parque Central, where all guests were given an exclusive

cigar box and enjoyed a culinary experience together with live music by local performers. Afterward, the traditional Dominican music contest occurred, and the winners received two special edition cigar boxes from Procigar.

The famous White Party followed at Santiago's Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración on Thursday, February 22nd. Attendees enjoyed a unique atmosphere with a majestic setup that highlighted the beauty and welcoming atmosphere of the city. Those at the event received a special cigar box and art piece manufactured by International Packaging.

The Gala Dinner Party on February 24th was celebrated at the Centro Español, a private club founded in 1965.

For the first time in the Procigar Festival's history, the President of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader, was present in support of the country's tobacco industry, together with other important state figures such as ambassadors, ministers, and senators, among others.

Among the enthusiasts was Usain Bolt, the great-



est sprinter of all time. On this night, guests were welcomed with a special cigar box manufactured by Vrijdag Premium Printing. The guests experienced a delightful dinner and another spectacular and engaging show.

The traditional auction of unique items filled with either special, rare, or Limited-Edition cigars raised over half a million dollars, setting a new record for the Procigar auction, 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), Procigar's charitable initiative "A Home for My Family" (housing program for disadvantaged yet deserving employees of the members companies), among others non-profit organizations.

The event culminated with an after-party featuring DJs, performances by dancers, and the official presentation of new passive and active members of the Procigar Association.

What a week full of exciting events, tours, and the chance to meet a lot of cigar lovers from all around the world, sharing their passion for cigars. Procigar confirms itself to be a very relaxing, and enjoyable event, with a great organization behind it.





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A MAN AND A CIGAR FOR ALL TIMES

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.





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PAIRING

Cigars
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GREAT COMPLEXITY AND EVOLUTION.

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ 14 € NA
DIMENSIONS	
52 x 127 mm (5")	
COUNTRY	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	

Best cigar of 2023 for CLM with 96 points, delivers complexity and evolution, packed with sweet spicy notes enriched by citrus aromas. Earth, leather and a nutty background are also present. The balance is great from the first puffs to the finale. For this masterpiece we chose two of the award whiskeys of 2023, a subtle and refined Japanese with different souls and a limited edition sherried Scotch.



PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE COL. SIXTO I

RICH & FULFILLING.

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 22 € 21
DIMENSIONS	
54 x 159 mm (6 ¼")	
COUNTRY	
NICARAGUA	

It develops a rich, complex and deep flavor profile, boasting a great balance and a never-ending persistence, centered on earth, white pepper, nuts and cinnamon, together with roasted coffee, a touch of chocolate and balsamic notes. This true powerhouse can be well paired with some masterpieces among American whiskies, a smooth wheat one and a deep, layered blend of several well-aged bourbons.



ROMEO Y JULIETA WIDE CHURCHILL

SWEET AND CREAMY.

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ NA € 19.6
DIMENSIONS	
55 x 130 mm (5 ½")	
COUNTRY	
CUBA	

Its sweetness and creaminess are remarkable, and the smoke is intense and balanced. The evolution is quite perceivable. Vegetal, citrus, and wood notes are followed by coffee and spices. The finish is toasted and earthy. Despite the medium strength, its iconic spiced woodiness may pair with two difficult to pair Scotches, a high ABV Orkney and a balsamic herbs Islay, for two different peat interpretations.



ARRAN

17yo Limited Edition

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% - 92	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	17 Years Old	Ruby Port Pipes Finish

Sherry notes, with bloody orange and strawberry jam, ripe plums and raisins, butterscotch, toasted oak and creamy banana, with an acidic fresh ginger note. Rich and complex. Complex noses, maybe even overwhelming at times; the multitude of influences of the spirit flank the tobacco which adds leather and even more middle-east spices, yet the overall profile is changing, not truly set and defined. The puff after the sip is clearer; vibrant bloody orange juice notes are enveloping the leathery tobacco, for a mellow, fascinating mix of spices and animal hints. The sherried notes are now growing even at the nose, with a better marriage for the tobacco. Increasing creaminess from first-fill bourbon oak, very velvety pairing. Precious wood and pink peppercorn, a very sensual yet elegant mix, between sacred and profane.

Pairing score	96
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SHIZUOKA

United S First Edition

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	50.5% - 101	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	ex-bourbon

Centered on orange honey, apricots, butter and vanilla sponge cake with nice and mellow texture, this fruity spirit also releases a pinch of salt and a very distant hint of smoke. One of the most complex and refined combination of noses ever; the creamy, sweet nuttiness of the cigar is enriched by the orange honey of the spirit, with an overall impression of sweet spices poured on a ripe fruit basket. A hint of soft smoke is common and resounding. On the palate the pinch of salt increases the intensity of the spiciness, reaching a leathery background with fresh white and black pepper, with hints of pink peppercorn, continuing in the finish. Surprising and stimulating, both similitude and contrast pairing, multi-faceted and rich.

Pairing score	96
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BERNHEIM
7yo Kentucky Straight Wheat Whiskey

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Wheat Whiskey	7 Years Old	New

This release features medium intensity and a clean, approachable and balanced body. Main aromatic notes are orange honey, vanilla, fresh oak and a refreshing, slightly bitter herbal component with some sweet spices. In the pairing refreshing, velvety aromas of orange are enveloping the richness of the tobacco, whose chocolate emerges in a nice praline result, with a Madagascar vanilla core. However the chocolate is complex and nuances, with nutmeg and cinnamon. On the palate the clean spirit preps for the espresso coffee of the cigar, creating subtle nuttiness. The intense Nicaraguan tobacco is elevated and aspires to very high peaks. The finish is clean, sweeter, more noble and refined, on nuts and caramel, distant oranges and chestnut honey. Excellent.



Pairing score 93

GEORGE REMUS
Repeal Reserve Bourbon VI

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	50% - 100	\$\$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

Crafted with five bourbons from 2008-2014, it is deep, sophisticated and leathery, with a spicy note of nutmeg around the whisper of vanilla and the toffee /caramel core. The fruity aspect recalls fig and plums jam. A sort of miracle is immediately delivered: though the main aromas resonate on leather, many different nuances appear and morph at every sip/puff, moving from fresh leather to used saddles. Also the oakiness and the spices are complex and vivid, never too aggressive. Great continuity and inclusion. On the palate the intensity of the leaves has the perfect boost to shine, with a symphony of chocolate, high quality hazelnuts, leather, and dark, very sensual spices. The finish is a surprise of figs marmalade with dense oakiness with a touch of smoke. Almost perfect.



Pairing score 98



HIGHLAND PARK
Cask Strength Batch 1

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	63.3% - 126.6	\$\$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	Ex-Sherry

Never ending, rich and balanced, with warm, tangy spices, rounded and sweet, with a very nice intense orange, between Bloody and Navel. Brown sugar. A touch of toffee, burnt caramel and even a final coffee nuance. The noses are play very well together, a dance of burnt caramel, woody notes which become toastier, yet with a nice orange finish. The tobacco enriches the orange character, a sweet, spiced orange marmalade on toasted cereals bread. The whisky mouthfeel is a true bomb, rich as few, and the wood of the Cuban needs to do its best to add layers of precious furniture and a spicy touch. Maybe you need to let the cigar enter into the second third for the pairing to be more equal. The richest of the finale, where the coffee is boasted by some vegetal, green yet balanced notes, almost balsamic.



Pairing score 88

LAPHROAIG
10yo Cask Strength Batch 16

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.5% - 117	\$\$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	10 Years Old	Ex-Bourbon

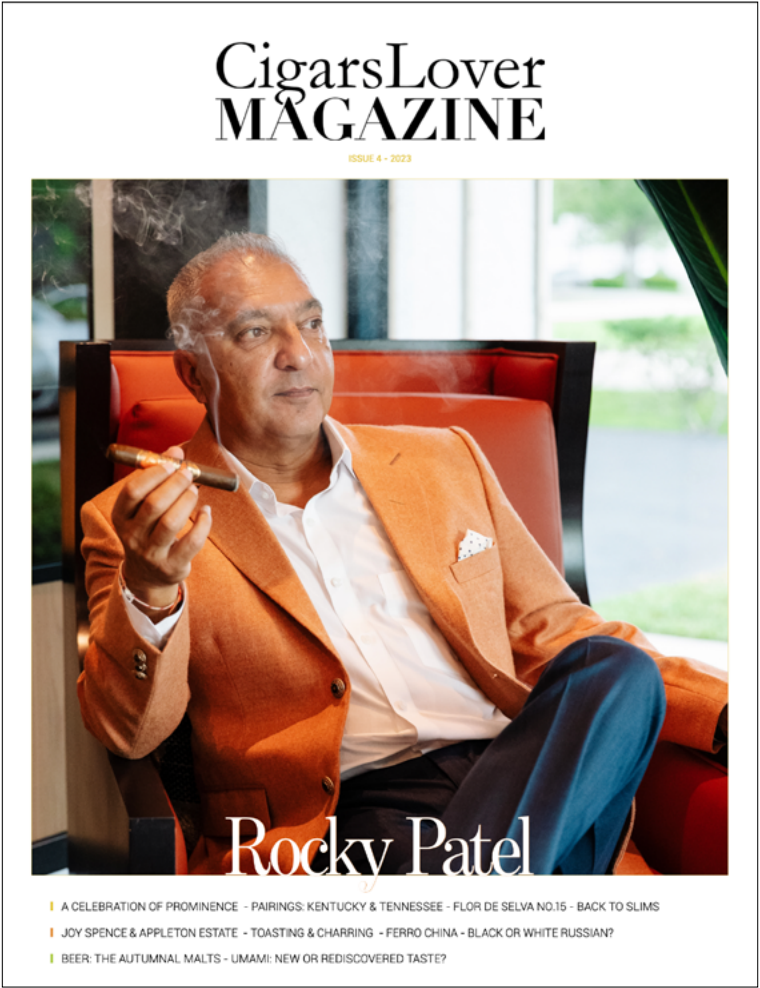
The true expression of the distillery, rich in medicinal herbs and herbal peat, a unique, recognizable powerhouse. Intense bonfire sensations, where resin wood is burning slow, almost dying. Cereal notes, warm bread and distant caramel, some herbal components, rosemary, thyme. A very coherent olfactory pairing. At the palate the Islay scotch provides tons of its character; it is sweeter, with a fondant style of sugar, while the herbs are more balsamic and medicinal. That proves to be a kick for the cigar, which becomes more masculine and peppery, almost chili spiced. At this moment the fondant sweetness is quite strange, maybe unbalanced or funky, a totally different pairing from the noses. The finish is balsamic, with freshly crushed black pepper.



Pairing score 85

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INTERACTIVE



It's a boy; it's a girl

Some advice on how to choose a cigar to celebrate the arrival of a child without ignoring the personalized ring.

di **Giuseppe Mitolo**

The true cigars lover celebrates every important moment of his life by lighting a cigar: a career achievement or success, graduation, a new house, an important purchase, and the list doesn't end there. In some of these moments, the occasion is momentous enough to celebrate it by donating cigars, such as, for example, the arrival of a baby.

For many years, celebrating the new arrival with the gift of a cigar became a very fashionable practice. Precisely to respond to this trend, many specialized shops offer bundles with personalized or customizable bands. They are often cigars that produce decent smokes, and there is no reason to regret this: very frequently, they are intended for those who, in the wake of fashion, give them as gifts and smoke them without real attention to the product, perhaps even by those who have never smoked before.

How do you orient yourself in choosing cigars to give as a gift for the arrival of a child, especially if you are an aficionado? First of all, we need to be very clear about who we are going to give them to: if our dearest friends are not cigar smokers, products already selected by retailers will be more than acceptable, or we can opt for references that are not too expensive (and this is not out of cheapness: many of those who receive this gift may choose to keep it that way).

Otherwise, if there are aficionados in our circle, giving a more refined cigar takes on greater value, even for the recipient. Being more sophisticated does not necessarily mean spending more money: the arrival of a child can be an opportunity for those who have had the chance to keep boxes of cigars to start a new box. Some have used a limited edition, an aged or vintage one, which has offered the possibility, when giving the gift, to also explain to the recipient the reason for this precise choice. The second step is to design a personalized band, for which you will need an average knowledge of some graphics program or the help of a more expert friend. The inclusion of light blue or pink among the ring colors is rigorous. It is also possible to contact specialized companies, but to obtain an embossed cigar band, it will be necessary to place a considerable order of bands. The personalized ring must be cut and glued (with a bit of glue and a lot of attention) to the selected cigars without removing the original cigar band. Finally, here are two pieces of advice. The first is to buy/make more cigars than expected: there is always the acquaintance who escapes the count. The second is to opt for the identification of two different cigars, one for the aficionado and the other for the acquaintance who is not. Even if he doesn't smoke, he will still be grateful for the gift.



SPIRITS

“Here’s to alcohol,
the rose-colored glasses of life.”
F. Scott Fitzgerald

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IS IN THE DETAILS

DISCOVER THE WORLD'S FINEST CIGARS

GlenAllachie

Interview with Billy Walker, the master distiller who has managed to completely revamp the distillery.

by **Zac Mitchers**

GlenAllachie was established in 1967, and for about 50 years, it has been an anonymous subsidiary distillery of major powerhouse properties such as Mackinlays, Invergordon, and, lately, Pernod Ricard. When, in 2017, GlenAllachie was bought by a new company led by legendary Billy Walker, the master distiller who had previously contributed to resurrecting BenRiach and GlenDronach, the whisky market reacted with quite a high degree of excitement and anticipation. Indeed, in the span of a few years, Mr. Walker has managed to completely revamp the distillery with a solid core range of Speyside Scotch whisky and some absolutely novel experiments. Even more praiseworthy is how GlenAllachie achieved its market success with a policy of affordable prices and complete openness with the public. Such a company policy of solid core range, controlled use of limited batches and limited editions, and a well-thought-out price positioning led GlenAllachie to become one of the most interesting and respected whisky brands on the market over the past few years.

From your perspective, what defines GlenAllachie's approach to whisky production? What did it take to transform a subsidiary distilling plant into a fiercely independent maker of innovative Scotch whisky from Speyside?

Our philosophy is quality over quantity. To this end, on completion of the acquisition, we introduced some key changes including targeted production at 900,000 litres of alcohol per annum (operating at approx. 25% of the distillery capacity). This allowed us to extend fermentation to 160 hours. In parallel, we made some adjustments to the spirit cut, and at the filling stage, we chose to fill to cask at 68.7% and 63.7%. In parallel, we carried out an intensive audit of the mature GlenAllachie stock that came with the acquisition to establish the personality and DNA of the inventory and determine our plans for formulate the personality of The GlenAllachie going forward. Our plan was and is to define GlenAllachie as a 'Sherry style' single malt,





and a huge amount of time was committed to re-racking the historic inventory in addition to laying down the new make in the correct casks.

From the onset, one of the most important aspects of GlenAllachie's relaunch was an unprecedented attention to cask selection. How did the idea behind the Virgin Cask Series come to be? What are the major difficulties and advantages of working with mono-varietal virgin casks?

The Virgin Oak Cask Series was a project to showcase how virgin oak casks of different genera and origins can deliver a variety of different flavour styles. In our mind, this has worked well and has also reminded us of the importance of levels of toasting and charring, and the various flavour components which these create. This project demanded that we monitor closely the progress of maturation in these richly flavoured casks to ensure we do not overcook the experience.

What was the initial public reaction to the Virgin Cask Series, and what has changed over these years? Will the Virgin Cask Series also impact the future evolution of GlenAllachie's core range?

The reaction to the series was very positive and started some very interesting conversations around the flavour deliveries from the various different genera. In terms of what has changed over the past years, the availability of different styles of oak genus has presented the blender with some exciting new approaches to maturation, both in terms of the extraction process from the cask and the subsequent chemical reactions in the whisky.

Last year's most exciting launch was the Meikle Tòir brand of single malt peated whisky. How difficult was it to create a new brand of peated Scotch from scratch? What was the market reaction? How will you expand and refine the first batch of five-peated whisky?

The "Meikle Tòir" project was the result of some unfinished business with mainland peat. I was fascinated by the difference between Scottish mainland peat (St. Fergus) and Islay peat. Mainland peat is the end product of the degradation of trees primarily, while Islay peat is formed from different origins, often with a seaweed influence. This created significant differences in terms of flavour delivery in the malting process. Scottish mainland provides sweet, non-medical notes such as bog myrtle, while



Islay peat is a drier smoke style with medicinal and iodine qualities. So, the parameters were set, and our plans were to deliver a spirit with a phenolic content of around 30 PPM, so the malted barley had to have a phenol content of around 60-80 PPM. The next step was to determine the style of casks for maturation and the filling strength. From experience we knew that this peated spirit would insinuate well with Sherry casks, virgin oak (Chinquapin variety) and fresh American barrels. Patience was also crucial, as we wanted to bring Meikle Tòir to the consumer at the right point in the maturation development, capturing the right balance between spirit flavour, wood contribution and phenolic delivery. At five years, the spirit had delivered the expected flavour profile, and married nicely with a continuing vibrant smoky presence. The market reactions have been terrific and continues to excite the team at The GlenAllachie Distillery. Of course, there is a significant volume of Meikle Tòir, ageing and maturing in a variety of top quality oak casks, and for sure there will be older expressions released at some point in the future.

The growing success of MacNairs and White Heather dovetailed on the global rediscovery of blended whisky.

Why do you think it has taken so long to see, once again, high-quality blended Scotch? Why is it important to produce a blended Scotch for any distillery?

You raise an interesting question – "Why is it important to produce a Blended Scotch Whisky" for a distillery? My personal experience is that every Blender enjoys the challenge of creating a blended Scotch whisky. It tests the knowledge of the Blender in a variety of areas: available grains, available malts, the wood history and the future maturation plan. In the case of White Heather, this was a personal commitment to recreate this wonderful historical brand and showcase to a growing audience that blended whisky is fascinating territory. Of course, we chose to re-release White Heather as a 21-year-old and 15-year-old to tease the informed and inquisitive consumer. MacNair's Lum Reek, as a blended malt Scotch whisky also carried a fascination. It is an interesting (and maybe challenging) category, but I believe it is only in the foothills of its journey.

Another unprecedented novelty that GlenAllachie grew under the umbrella of MacNairs was a range of rums showcasing a surprising relationship between rum and

whisky making. Can you tell us what is the secret history behind this rum endeavor?

Personally, I always had a fascination about rum, and in particular the choice of casks for the maturation process, and indeed the effect of environment, and temperature and humidity on the maturation process. This started the journey into rum of origins: Panama, Jamaica and Guyana. The fascination continues, as we tease out the influence of maturation strength, cask types, and warehouse locations, as well as locations within warehouses. We are also filling at around 80% ABV for 2 to 3 years, and then reducing to c. 66% ABV for further maturation. From a scientific point of view, this allows the spirit to extract flavour components from the casks, based on two different solution characteristics. This journey continues and gets more interesting by the month.

What is happening to the Scotch whisky market? At the

last Islay Festival, we had the impression of a slowing down of exclusive and super-premium official bottlings as well as an even more meaningful decrease in independent bottlings, limited editions, and offerings from the secondary market. Setting aside the apparently never-ending hype raised by a few brands, is premiumization about to end, or is it just a momentary pause? How is GlenAllachie going to face these challenges?

While the market is constantly in a flux, today's consumer is incredibly well-informed about single malt Scotch whisky. The market reach is also amazing compared to 20 to 30 years ago. It's also worth remembering that around the millennium, there were a number of malt distilleries mothballed. The GlenAllachie plans are to continue to understand the market, be as proactive as we can be within the market footprint we inhabit, and to strive to be the best. Our strap line is "We do not pursue absolute consistency; we pursue absolute perfection".



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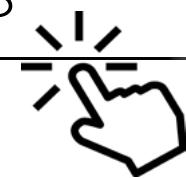
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Whisky and Chocolate: the basics

Chocolate and whisky share many characteristics and high proof spirits can be well enjoyed away from the meal table.

di **Simone Poggi**

Chocolate is probably the most important and the most discussed pairing with whiskey. When we started our journey of cigar and whiskey pairing, we found very few outside contributions on the complexity and difficulty tasting with tobacco, while on the contrary every respected whiskey expert and every blog has tried to express an opinion on enjoying this fantastic spirit with the (Maya) Food of the Gods.

We believe there are mainly three reasons associated to this pairing popularity.

First, the fatty structure of chocolate is capable of enveloping the mouth for the same to better "accept" the intense aggression of the alcohol, which in whisky is 40% or higher. This "primer" is one of the best strategies to make sure the sip sensations are more mellow and rounded compared to a "dry" sip, providing a more refined, silky texture which is characteristic of the best of the spirits.

Second, chocolate and whisky share many product characteristics; for both the human contribution transforms basic products such as fruits and grains into sophisticated, complex, epicurean pleasures of life. Many stories are told, complex recipes exist, recently different varieties and agronomical experiments have been tried.

Last, desserts and high ABV spirits can well be placed at the end of a formal dinner or, even better, can be enjoyed away from the meal table, in a more "relaxed" environment such as a sofa or a smoking lounge, a location where it is easier to enjoy very interesting pairing such as whisky and cheeses.

Among the several personalities who have written about whiskey and chocolate, I would like to mention a couple whom we found very interesting in terms of contribution. Martine Nouet is a very passionate food and spirit writer, born in France, who spent more than



16 years living in Islay (and now planning to go back to France). We loved her idea of sensory pairing. We found a rather old interview with Maitre Chocolatier Michel Richart who, on top of several other creations, several years ago deeply investigated the flavors of chocolate, creating a line evidently representing the main aroma of those chocolate bars, separating them into 7 different categories (spicy, herbal, balsamic, roasted, fruity, floral, citrus).

This subdivision would be the ideal starting point for a more analytical investigation, however we doubt an initial start of the pairing journey will include cardamom or mango flavored chocolate with the different peats of the various declinations of an Islay Scotch. Yet, it was very nice to hear them talking about "love" or "marriage" pairing.

Another exercise worth mentioning is the one of Iain Burnett, aka Highland Chocolatier, from Highland Perthshire, Scotland who, in his website, proposes several chocolate praline sets which are explicitly crafted to pair well with specific whiskies (e.g. a selection of Velvet Truffles and Pralines expertly chosen by the chef to pair perfectly with single malt whiskies from The Macallan including Macallan Amber, Macallan Gold, Macallan Sienna, and Macallan Ruby). The sets created by this awards winning expert are sold complete with pairing notes. We read the experience he proposed based on 4 Kilchoman whiskies, probably not the first ones we would select in terms of easiness of pairing.

We loved the complexity of the job of pairing highly aromatic and sophisticated pralines (lime, chilli, caramel, orange, clove and lemongrass are some of the aromas used in proposed Velvet Truffles), yet the most interesting aspect was the suggestion to go beyond the palatal part of the experience; though some chocolates are less aromatic to the nose compared to the normal whiskey experience, because of the difference in volatile aromatic compounds, it is very interesting



to investigate how the two products interact also from a nose perspective. We will try this approach.

Reading what is available in terms of pairing suggestions from experts, the impression we get is that this exercise has been mainly an analysis of the aromatic palette of both the products; though details and often well done, this has brought most of the writers to suggest similarity pairing. As we have done for cigars and whiskeys, we would like to go deeper in our analysis, as in most of the cases we have seen this as a limiting factor, a way to enhance the experience, yet restricted in providing new dimensions to our senses, when not even tiring.

Not necessarily, we want to follow the same identical aromas palette provided by the whiskey (e.g. to choose a lime aromatized chocolate for an Islay whisky which is providing a robust citrus profile with balsamic herbs and burnt herbs peat, a Caol Ila for example).

We are going to propose an integration, sometimes even a contrast pairing. This will result in the chocolate adding layers of complexity to the experience, not only enhancing and reinforcing the same aromas palette.

METHOD

1. Pour the whiskey, no ice, no water.
2. Nose the whiskey and detail your tasting notes.
3. Melt in the mouth a small amount of chocolate, covering the entire surface.
4. Nose the whiskey again, taking notes of the aromas evolutions / changes.
5. Drink a small sip of the whiskey and compare the tasting notes with the ones taken from previous experiences, indicating evolutions / changes.
6. Drink another small sip of the whiskey to determine how long lasting the effects of chocolate on whiskey are, before the whiskey goes back to standard aroma profile (baseline).

INSPIRADO



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Boulevardier

Two variations in terms of whiskey makes it a little flexible in taste.

by **Vincenzo Losappio**

One of the cocktails that has earned a prominent place in the history of mixology is the Boulevardier. Each sip of this drink will transport you to a bygone era, immersing you in the Parisian atmosphere of the Roaring 20s period.

In that period, an American journalist named Erskine Gwynne founded a magazine called "Boulevardier" dedicated to Parisian life and the culture of the time.

The name is derived from French and refers to a person who frequents the boulevards, the wide tree-lined streets that characterize many French cities.

Gwynne, a cosmopolitan man passionate about the

Parisian cocktail scene, set out to create a drink that reflected the sophisticated and lively atmosphere of the Parisian streets. Thus, Gwynne created the Boulevardier cocktail, inspired by another classic cocktail called the "Old Pal."

The latter was, in turn, composed of whiskey, dry vermouth, and Campari. However, in the Boulevardier, Gwynne replaced the dry vermouth with sweet red vermouth, adding sweetness to his drink.

The Boulevardier is closely related to another famous cocktail called the Negroni. Both cocktails share the same essential ingredients: vermouth and Campari—the main difference lies in the type of distillate used.

While the Boulevardier uses whiskey, the Negroni uses gin. This simple variation of spirit creates two cocktails with distinct tasting characteristics.

The whiskey adds a warm and rounded note to the cocktail, which pairs perfectly with the vermouth's sweetness and the Campari's bitterness.

The choice between bourbon or rye whiskey can slightly influence the final flavor profile, allowing for some flexibility in preparing the Boulevardier. The latter is often considered a cocktail for true connoisseurs.

Its combination of sweetness, bitterness, and complexity makes it an ideal choice for those who appreciate cocktails with character and personality.

Another consideration concerns the presentation of the Boulevardier. Traditionally, the cocktail is prepared in a chilled glass and is garnished with an orange peel. However, it is also often requested on The Rocks.

With a combination of whiskey, sweet red vermouth, and Campari, the Boulevardier offers a symphony of flavors, ranging from sweetness to bitterness, with a complexity that makes it a unique tasting experience.

Whether you are a cocktail enthusiast or a curious experimenter, the Boulevardier is worth trying and enjoying.

PREPARATION

Pour all the ingredients directly into the glass, starting with the ice first, and mix. Garnish with an orange zest.

ADVICE

Cool the cocktail glass well, preferably stored in the freezer.

INGREDIENTS

- 30ml Campari
- 30ml red vermouth
- 30ml or 45ml bourbon whiskey

GLASS

Cocktail glass.

“If you can’t send money send tobacco”

-George Washington

“And Whiskey”

-Reservoir Distillery





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AWARDS 2022
BEST BOUTIQUE CIGAR

TASTE

"Beer, if drunk in moderation, softens the temper,
cheers the spirit and promotes health."
Thomas Jefferson





Tobacco in the BBQ

*Everybody knows the benefits of smoking in the Barbecue.
But what happen when you choose tobacco instead of wood?*

by **Vito Renna & Giuseppe Mitolo**

When we talk about American BBQ, we refer to a cooking technique that involves long time, low temperature and smoking with wood. Not all cuts of meat, however, lend themselves to the slow and low cooking: it is essential a high presence of collagen, a connective tissue protein that, at a certain temperature, begins to melt, turning into gelatin and giving the meat (pulled pork, brisket or ribs) that pleasant succulence that everyone loves. Said that, what truly makes the taste of the BBQ unique and unmistakable is smoking. This is not a habit or a "note": smoking is a real ingredient, an indispensable and irreplaceable added value.

The smoking procedure can be hot or cold. The latter is a process through which the food is exposed to smoking for a period of time ranging from a few minutes to a whole

day, maintaining a strict control of the time (the risk is the "oversmoke", that delete the aromas of the basic dish) and temperature (20° C must not be exceeded) as food must not be cooked. The hot smoking (another name of "barbecue"), however, is the technique through which large pieces of meat are cooked slowly in suitable cooking devices, called Pit, at temperatures that do not exceed 120 ° C and exposed to wood smoke for hours or until the temperature, at the heart of the meat, gets 55° C. It is scientifically proven, in fact, that beyond these values the exposure to smoking is completely useless, since the meat has already absorbed everything necessary. Usually, whether hot or cold, smoking is obtained with wood and the choice is not random: each wood has its own aromas and characteristics and each type can be more suitable for the cut of meat chosen. The smoking therefore can not be improvised, as it

requires knowledge of the technique and precise criteria to be followed.

Curiosity, however, has always pushed the human mind towards unexplored horizons. Hence the idea of trying to make the smoking using tobacco. If a wood can give character and aromas to a cut of meat, why could it not be the same with tobacco, perhaps with a cold smoking? After examining different alternatives, we narrowed down the field by choosing Caribbean (Cuban in particular) and Kentucky-grown tobacco (Italy). This to experiment with two different types of tobacco, in terms of both seed and terroir of origin. Therefore, two cigars were selected, to which 3 cm were cut from the foot, to then crumble the finest grained tobacco, to allow a better combustion with the smoking gun. As for the basic dish, the choice fell on a hamburger. The ingredients were: sesame buns, 220 gr beef patties grilled on beech embers, cheddar, crispy bacon, oxheart tomato, Roman lettuce and caramelized onion. Once the sandwich was assembled, it was smoked with the various tobaccos, for different times, just to evaluate the different yield. The final result was appreciated by both smokers and non-smokers. The smell of tobacco was felt even before the bite, as most of the fragrance had been absorbed by the bread. To the mouth, results were different depending on the smoking time and, of course, the tobacco used: the Cuban

gave a more delicate and structured impression, especially in the front of the mouth, while the aromatic contribution of Kentucky, albeit less variegated as the first aromas, gave a depth that was also felt in the retronasal area. More tests were also conducted on the smoking time. After a minute of exposure of the hamburger, the aromatic mark was very perceptible above all on bread, tomato and lettuce, because of their respective molecular structures (post-leavening air for the first, water for the latter) which were immediately absorbed the smoke. After ninety seconds of smoking, the smoky character took full possession of the overall taste of the sandwich, marrying it fully. With two minutes of exposure, however, the dish had reached the saturation limit, beyond which, as mentioned, we would have created an oversmoke, including the aromas of the hamburger and all its ingredients.

We have therefore concluded that the range recommended for smoking must be limited to a minimum of one and a maximum of two minutes, depending on personal tastes. Tobacco is without a shadow of doubt an added value to the preparations: it lends itself very well to cold smoking but is difficult to use for long and hot smoking where the good old wood continues to be the master. Whatever the use, it is a fact that those bewitching and smooth smoky notes create a pleasant addiction.





中国杂志

Available in:
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SPIRITS

威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
你喝的是什麼

Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用者經常進行類型分析，偶爾或熱情，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，有時用玻璃瓶裝，有時是雙面（正面和背面），有時是圓的，有時是方形的，標籤傳達給我們所有的信息，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。

雙面標籤通常其名字為威士忌，這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們討論沒有“e”的威士忌：在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱擴大了蘇格蘭威士忌，單一面蘇格蘭威士忌保證了單一產區的純正性。一些蘇格蘭威士忌增加了生產區域，以強調產品的地域性。

“歲月”之後經常出現由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，最低年齡的數字是相同的。示例：使用三個桶分別釀造8年，12年和20年的威士忌將顯示“8

歲”字樣，無論舊桶的氧化情況如何。公認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，沒有夢想或假冒產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低2年威士忌的標籤上。製片人選擇不標年齡，這仍然是未知的：它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉快。

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取出。然而，無夢飲水可以使用更多稀釋的威士忌的較低等級的木桶強度威士忌。



忌，特別是如果前者有一定的年齡。

“Un Chilled”這個詞讓我們知道威士忌沒有被冷過，以及“沒有顏色”，或“沒有添加劑”（或其他類似的詞），解釋說沒有添加劑修正顏色。

在特殊情況下，我們還可以找到所用桶的指示，甚至是桶桶的數量。這通常及經常發生在非常有趣的木桶中，或者在獨立裝瓶商的情況下使其成為驕傲的來源。此外，我們可以找到Single Cask或Single Barrel這兩種詞，它們強調了它的獨特性。另一個詞是Small Batch，它仍然是一個更廣泛的概念：您可以從兩個桶中取出，但仍比前邊小一些（舉一個例子：獨立和Cadenhead的裝瓶商為自己的小批量結合了兩個或三個桶，而奧

本小還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族的日期，特別是當涉及單個桶時：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，我們將有混合麥芽威士忌（多年混合或稱為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合），還有Grain Whiskies：這個術語是指所有種類的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到與威士忌相關的各種問題，或者使用的唯一一類：黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌。

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

Pepper X

*The new hottest chili pepper in the world:
Is it really useful or just a botany exercise?*

by **Francesco Floro**

August 23, 2023 was a special day for all lovers of the chili world because, after ten years of zenith, the Carolina Reaper handed over the scepter of the hottest chili pepper in the world to the lethal Pepper X.

This new chili pepper has been registered as belonging to the *Capsicum chinense* species; it appears wrinkled and has a mixed color between yellow ochre and acid green. Inside, it has a highly developed placenta rich in capsaicin, the alkaloid responsible for the burning sensation that we perceive when consuming spicy foods.

To record the degree of spiciness of a food the Scoville scale (SHU) is generally used worldwide, starting from a value of 0 SHU (as in sweet pepper) up to the maximum value of approximately 16×10^6 SHU for pure capsaicin (toxic to the human body).

The creator of the new Pepper X is the famed farmer, entrepreneur, and chili expert Ed Currie. He's considered the "father" of the Carolina Reaper ($1,64 \times 10^6$ SHU). After many long years of crossbreeding and testing, he has finally kept his promise to himself and the world of chili pepper fans by creating a new spiciest chili pepper in the world. Receiving the official status from the Guinness World Records, Pepper X takes first place in the ranking with an average spiciness value of approximately 2.69×10^6 SHU. These values are impressive if we think that we can



purchase pepper sprays for personal defense, which can have similar values in terms of capsaicin content.

The Guinness World Records certificate was delivered on October 9, 2023, during a well-known American show broadcast on YouTube, Hot Ones, during which interesting anecdotes about the creation of Pepper X were told.

Ed Currie himself told how the crossing was possible thanks to his previous "creature," the Carolina Reaper, and thanks to a gift from a friend from Michigan of a mysterious and scorching chili pepper. We are also informed that the singular name is nothing more than the provisional name with which it was registered and subsequently not changed, probably for a question of cost.

Ed tells us that his first experience with this pepper was incredible; he started to tear up, his skin became red, and he suffered cramps for hours, but during the broadcast, when the quartet tested the Pepper X live, he managed to maintain an impeccable calm, allowing only a few slight grimaces evidencing the momentary suffering.

In conclusion, with Pepper X, a new and fascinating horizon has been reached in the field of spices. Still, there is legitimate doubt as to the fact that these new "creations" could, in the future, become a mere scientific exercise that will force nature to create products at the limits of edibility.

Blind Tasting



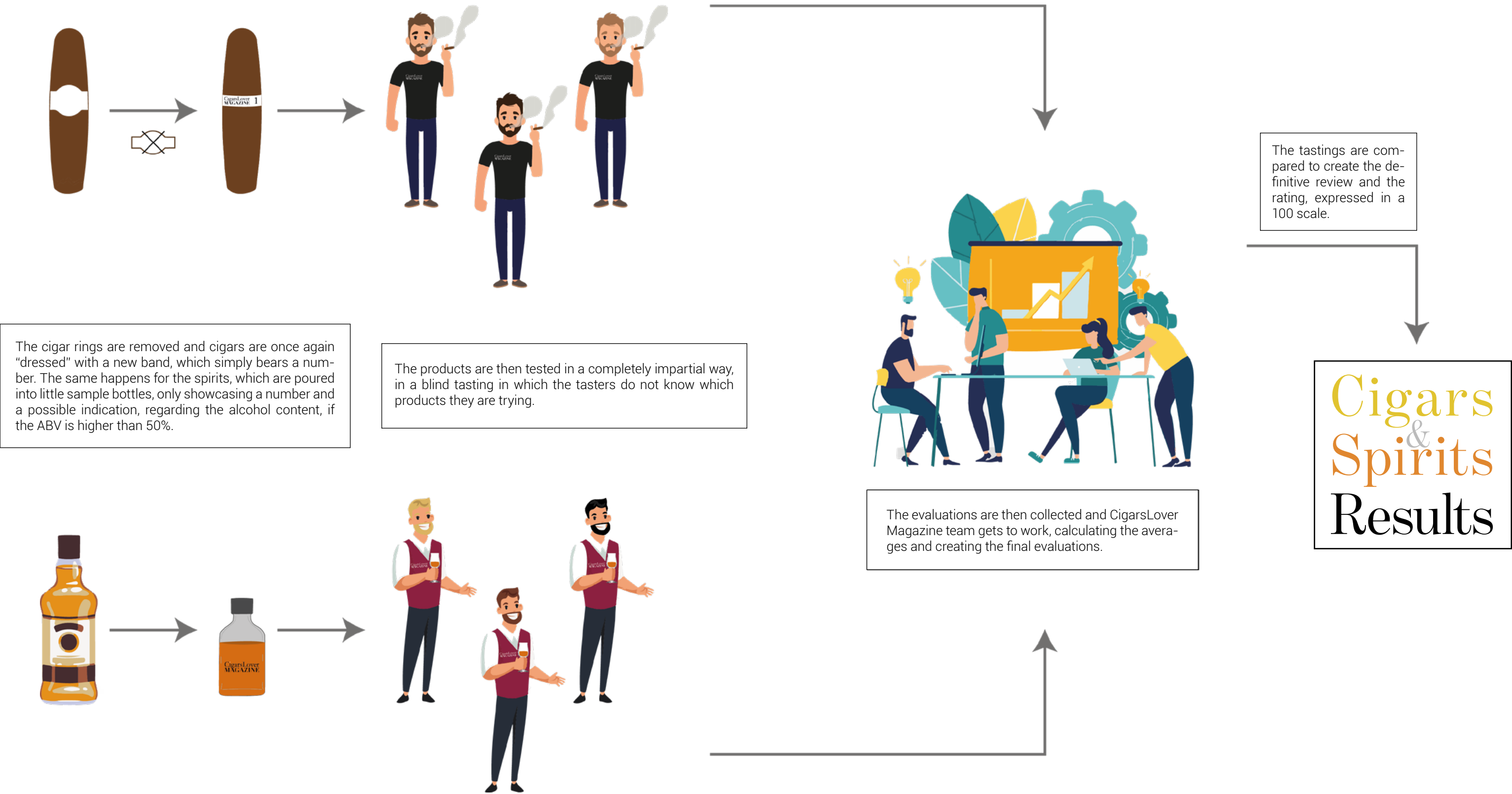
85 SPIRITS

- 88 Rum
- 96 Whisky

102 CIGARS

- 103 Corona Gorda
- 106 Robusto
- 110 Shorts
- 113 Toro

HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?





1

Kavalan
Solist Fino Sherry

2

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

3

— NOSE —

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

— PALATE —

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

— FINISH —

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

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

4

94

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.

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JAMAICA RUM



Rum



THE ROYAL
CANE
Fiji 2004

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Fiji	60.2% 12.4	\$\$\$

— NOSE —
Rich vanilla pod scents, honey, petri-chor, and toffee, together with a bal-samic touch.

— PALATE —
A riot of ripe fruits, toffee, wood, wood spices, balsamic notes, Ginger. A hint of cinnamon.

— FINISH —
Long finish. Wood spices, ginger, and balsamic notes.

Rich, bold and complex. Wide and deep flavor profile.

95



FOURSQUARE
Touchstone

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

— NOSE —
Winey. Scents of dark chocolate, cherry on liquor, and some minor ve-getal hints. Vanilla. Ripe dark fruit.

— PALATE —
Rich ripe fruit, dark chocolate with raisins, toasted aromas, black pep-per, and some vegetal hints.

— FINISH —
Long, with spices and vegetal notes.

Tthe palate is glorious, due to a rich and structured flavor profile.

93



HAMPDEN
*HLCF
Classic Overproof*

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

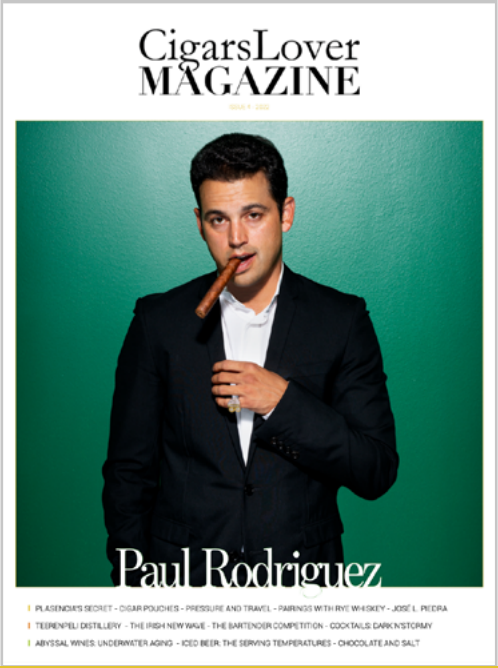
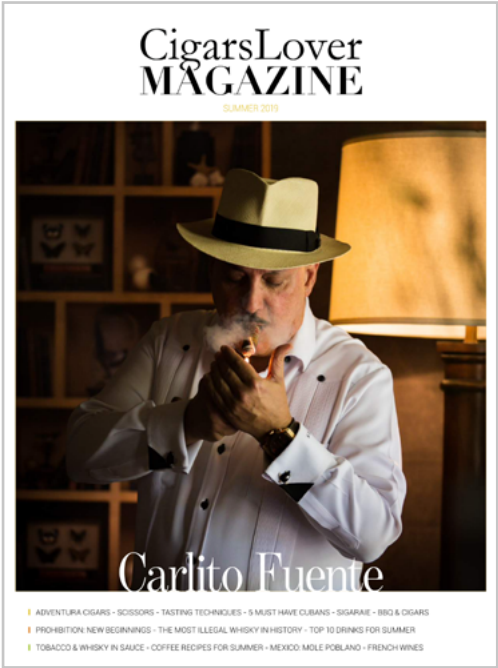
— NOSE —
Rich scents of exotic fruits, recalling mainly jackfruit, then molasses, bit-ter orange and a touch of vanilla.

— PALATE —
Explosive, with rich bloody orange notes, together with vanilla, exotic fruits, and a riot of spices.

— FINISH —
Long, with ripe exotic fruits and tons of spices.

Powerful. The persistence seems to be everlasting. Satisfying.

92



CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE

DISCOVER ALL ISSUES



INTERACTIVE



SIXTY SIX
Family Reserve
 12 yo

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

— NOSE —

Wood and wood varnish, together with rich dark chocolate scents. There are also some tangerine nuances.

— PALATE —

Chocolaty notes, recalling dark chocolate, together with some vanilla and raisins. Some tangerine.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Dark cholate and ripe fruit, together with a tangerine note.

Intense and round, delivering a fulfilling and deep flavor profile.

90



LONGUETEAU
Genesis Vieux
 Batch 2

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	71.4% 142.8	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Rich sugarcane, a mix of vanilla and ginger, and aromatic herbs, with anise nuances. A hint of licorice.

— PALATE —

Warm and round. Sugarcane, wood, a mix of fruits, a touch of licorice and vegetal hints.

— FINISH —

Long, with sugar cane ad fruit, recalling now the pear.

Powerful and deep. More interesting to the nose, where it is more complex.

89



TROIS RIVIÈRES
Rhum Vieux
de l'Océan

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	54% 108	\$

— NOSE —

Mineral and salty, with nuances of lemon peel and some citrous. Then honey and a touch of wild peppers.

— PALATE —

Wood, wild pepper, oak, vanilla and sugar cane. A little salty. Iodine and some roasted aromas.

— FINISH —

Medium-long, with oak and mineral notes. A little bit on the dry side.

Rich and savory flavor profile, definitely uncommon.

89



SIETE VILLAS
 1511

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Blended	40% 80	\$

— NOSE —

Fruity scents, together with vanilla, hints of honey, toffee, and a touch of oak. Then plums and raisins.

— PALATE —

Smooth, with toffee, plums, raisins, vanilla, and honey. The oaky notes are confirmed.

— FINISH —

Medium-long, with a mix of spices, toffee, and oak.

Well-balanced. It delivers a smooth, elegant and variegated flavor profile.

89



KIRK AND SWEENEY
Gran Reserva Superior

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

— NOSE —

Almonds, caramel, and a touch of milk chocolate, followed by pecan nuts and then vanilla.

— PALATE —

Round and sweet. Dried fruits, vanilla, some wood, and honey.

— FINISH —

Medium. Fruit with some spices and vanilla notes.

Easy to appreciate rum. The flavor profile boats a nice balance.

86



SAMPAN
Blanc
Overproof

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Vietnam	54% 108	\$

— NOSE —

The sugar cane is the protagonist, accompanied by black pepper. A vegetal touch.

— PALATE —

The sugarcane is confirmed, together with licorice and black pepper.

— FINISH —

Medium. Sugar cane and vegetal notes, with balsamic nuances.

Simple flavor profile, but at the same time elegant and balanced.

85



CAMIKARA
Indian Rum 12yo

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

—NOSE—
 Mixed and well-integrated aromas, recalling Overripe fruit, candied fruit, and a hint of orange zest.

—PALATE—
 Smooth to the palate. Overripe fruit, caramel, wood.

—FINISH—
 Medium finish. Caramel and a pinch of spices.

Rather contained flavor profile, in terms of depth and structure.

85



ISAUTIER
Rhum Vieux 7yo

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Reunion Island	40% 80	\$\$

—NOSE—
 It exhibits ripe fruit scents, together with molasses, honey and a hint of iodine.

—PALATE—
 Wood, molasses and a hint of petrichor. There is a note of yellow fruit as well, recalling apples.

—FINISH—
 Medium, with yellow fruit and petrichor note.

Delicate and balanced. The flavor profile is contained but enjoyable.

85



WOOD'S
100 Old Navy

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guyana	40% 80	\$

—NOSE—
 Scents of coffee beans, vanilla and wood. Then licorice, and some vegetal nuances.

—PALATE—
 It is sharp and pungent, with acidic flavors, burnt coffee, seasoned wood, some varnish, and vanilla,

—FINISH—
 Medium-long, with coffee and licorice, together with vegetal hints.

Limited balance, due to the pronounced alcohol and the acidic flavors.

81



CHOOSE WHO TO BELIEVE.

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 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

Whisky



TAMDHU
18 yo

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

— NOSE —

Rich and deep dark chocolate scents, together with dark red fruits, a touch of licorice.

— PALATE —

Rich. Winey, with wood, dark chocolate, hints of dates, and vanilla. Smooth.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Wood spices, vanilla, stewed apple.

Rich, balanced, and smooth. The flavor profile is broad and complex.

91



NIKKA
The Grain Whisky
2023

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

— NOSE —

Fresh yellow fruit, some smoky hints, mineral scents, vanilla, oak, and lemon zest. Clean, fresh and inviting.

— PALATE —

It is rich in smoky notes, enriched by oak, vanilla, and some ripe fruit sweetness. Smooth and round. Warming.

— FINISH —

Long. Aroomas oak and vanilla, with smoky notes.

Round, balanced, and with an harmonious flavor profile.

90



EDRADOUR
12 yo
2011-2023

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	57.8 115.6	\$\$

— NOSE —

Wood polish, dark chocolate, balsamic and fresh herbs. Then cranberries, a touch of sherry under spirit.

— PALATE —

It delivers an explosion of wood, dark chocolate, toffee, wood spices, and raisins.

— FINISH —

Medium-long finish. Wood, dark chocolate, wood spices. Some herbs.

It is well-balanced and structured. Rich and explosive flavor profile.

89



LAPHROAIG
*10 yo Cask Strength
 Batch 16*

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

— NOSE —

Peat, aged oak, some mineral hints, sea breeze, a pinch of licorice, and some orange peel. Oily.

— PALATE —

A peat bomb, together with pepper-corn, oak, medicinal herbs, iodine, and smoke.

— FINISH —

Long finish. Peat, smoke, and oak.

 Intense and fulfilling. The peaty and smoky flavors are the protagonists.

89



BALLECHIN
*18 yo
 Cask Strength*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	50.9% 101.8	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Smoky and peaty scents, lemon zest. Then, hints of petrichor, together with some yellow fruit.

— PALATE —

Smoke and peat, vanilla, and hints of wood spices and nutmeg. Lemon zest and some medicinal herbs.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Smoke and vanilla.

 Smooth, rich and intense. The flavor profile is fairly broad.

88



TALISKER
Wilder Seas

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	56.6% 113.2	\$\$

— NOSE —

Peat, sea breeze, mineral hints, hints of licorice, and toasted wood.

— PALATE —

Peat, bonfires on the beach, and some red fruits. Smoky and just a little bit dry.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Peat, wood spices, with peppery notes. Smoky.

 Intense and with a balanced flavor profile. It lacks in terms of depth.

88



KAVALAN
Triple Sherry

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

— NOSE —

There are scents of cocoa, together with red ripe fruit, sherry under spirit, plums and ripe fruits. Vegetal hints.

— PALATE —

Warm and on the dry side. Ripe fruit, cocoa and candied fruit. Toffee and a touch of cinnamon.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Ripe fruit and red fruit. Spices and balsamic nuances.

 Satisfying and easy to enjoy.

87



BENROMACH
Triple Distilled

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% 92	\$

— NOSE —

Oak, vanilla, yellow fruits, apple, and some minor mineral scents.

— PALATE —

Apple, yellow and ripe fruits, wood spices and a light touch of licorice. Clean and a little salty.

— FINISH —

Medium. Vanilla, oak and wood spices.

 Decently wide flavor profile, with a nice structure. Easy to enjoy.

86



GOLDWAESCHER
*Pure Malter Rye single
 cask - cask 41*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	52.5% 105	\$\$

— NOSE —

Sweet cereals scents, enriched with petrichor, toffee, wood polish, cotton candy.

— PALATE —

It delivers toasted wood, cereals, butterscotch, toffee, and nuances of cotton candy.

— FINISH —

Medium. Oak, wood polish and a touch of wood spices.

 Funky, with out-the-line aromas. It is intense and rich.

86



PUNI
Aura 03 Virgin Oak

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

- NOSE—
 Cereal biscuits, vanilla, fresh floral notes, a hint of pecan and then roasted scents. Apple.
- PALATE—
 Vanilla is confirmed, accompanied by roasted aromas, an almost nutty note and wood spices.
- FINISH—
 Medium-long. Vanilla, oak, wood spices and a roasted touch.
- Better performing on the nose, where the flavor profile is deeper.

85



HATOZAKI
Blended

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	40% 80	\$

- NOSE—
 Light and fresh. Quite unripe fruit, light flowers, yeasts, and candied fruit. Earth and incense nuances.
- PALATE—
 Less intense compared to the nose. Unripe fruit, some acidic aspects, and mild violet.
- FINISH—
 Rather short. Flowers hints.
- Balanced and boasting a decent structure.

84



ARDBEG
Heavy Vapours

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

- NOSE—
 It appears a little on the sour side, with smoke, mineral scents, and a touch of oak.
- PALATE—
 A little lighter compared to the nose. Mineral and smoky aromas, with an almost unperceivable citrus hint.
- FINISH—
 Medium. Smoky notes.
- Contained flavor profile. Aromas are richer on the nose.

83

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.

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



Mozambique



Mexico



U.S.A.



Costa Rica



Italy



Philippines



Cina



Haiti
- 5

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

Corona Gorda





AJ FERNANDEZ NEW WORLD
DORADO CORONA

BROAD AND FLAVORFUL

The smoke starts out with a mix of wood, nuts, and black pepper. Further into the smoke, aromas of leather and herbs join. It turns balsamic towards the end.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ 10 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



PUNCH
PUNCH

BALANCED AND HARMONIOUS

It delivers vegetal aromas, together with wood, earth and spices, mainly recalling white pepper. The base is sweet. In the second half, toasted notes are added.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ - € 12.7
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



GRAN HABANO COROJO NO. 5
MADURO CORONA

INTENSE AND POWERFUL

It delivers notes of earth and coffee beans, flanked by wood resins, rich black pepper and piquant spices. Nuances of nutmeg.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x152mm (6")	\$ 7 € 9.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



LOST & FOUND 22 MIN. TO MI-
DNIGHT H. DE ORO C. DELUXE

ROUND AND SMOOTH

It delivers aromas of walnut, wood, and cinnamon to the palate in the first half. The smoke becomes creamy and a leather note is added later on.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x140mm (6 1/2")	\$ 18 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	N/A	N/A



FOUNDATION CHARTER OAK
PASQUALE

BALANCED WITH A LONG FINISH

Earth, cinnamon, and wood give way to the smoke. Further into the cigar, leather, and hazelnut aromas are added to the profile. The finale is spicy.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	48x140mm (6 1/2")	\$ 13 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



LA MADRINA NATURAL
CORONA GORDA

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

Cocoa, paired with coffee and leather, opens up the smoke. Aromas of almonds and black pepper are added in the second half. The smoke is creamy.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ - € 17
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A.4



SKELTON LIVE YOUR DREAMS
CORONA

FLAVORFUL AND INTENSE

Notes of wood, earth, and leather, followed by nuts, are present in the first half of the cigar. White pepper and balsamic herbs join in the second half.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	44x152mm (6")	\$ - € 7.3
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP., HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



WILDFIRE WANDERER
CORONA GORDA

LIMITED FLAVOR PROFILE

It develops cedarwood aromas, together with a touch of acidic fruits and spices.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ 9.99 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, PARAGUAY, U.S.A.

Robusto



TATUAJE COJONU 2018

DEEP AND COMPLEX

A riot of cocoa beans, earth, and spices, with a rich black pepper aroma is enriched by a tangerine vein. Then herbal and a touch of tree nuts.

94 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ 13 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE C. CLARO ROBUSTUS II

BROAD AND FLAVORFUL

It opens with white pepper, wood, walnut, and earth. Later on, aromas of herbs and coffee are added. The smoke is creamy and the finale is spicy.

91 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 21.5 € 24
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



GEORGE RICO EL ENEMIGO EL INSULTO

WELL BALANCED AND RICH

It delivers notes of wood, earth and vegetal aromas, together with spices. Then, walnut and balsamic aromas.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x121mm (4 3/4")	\$ 15 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	COSTA RICA, DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



QUAI D'ORSAY NO.54

RICH AND FLAVORFUL

It develops three nuts aromas, cedarwood and a mix of ripe fruits and citrus. There are spicy hints perceivable in some puffs.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x133mm (5 1/4")	\$ - € 16
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



WEST TAMPA
RED ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND ROUND

Hazelnut and wood, are joined by black pepper and leather in the first half of the cigar. Aromas of earth and espresso follow in the second half.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 8.9 € 9.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ARTISTA
HARVEST ROBUSTO

ELEGANT AND REFINED

Aromas of earth are followed by wood and nuances of coffee. Later on, nuts and spices are added in the second half of the smoke.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5 ")	\$ 10.2 € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	CAMEROON	DOMINICAN REP.



VILLIGER
MIAMI ROBUSTO

COMPLEX AND BROAD

The cigar opens with notes of sour cream, coffee, and leather. Balsamic herbs and black pepper aromas are added in the second half.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 15 € 15
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



EP CARRILLO
SHORT RUN 2023 ROBUSTO

LINEAR AND FLAT

The core of the flavor profile is made up of nuts, coffee, and herbs. There are some sweet hints perceptible from time to time.

85



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 10.75 € 12
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



LOS STATES DELUXE
ROBUSTO

CONTAINED AND LINEAR

A mix of coffee and herbs make up the main flavors throughout the smoke. Accompanied by leather and some spice in the retro hale.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 8.79 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., HONDURAS



CAPITOL
JACK

BALANCED BUT STATIC

It develops notes of earth, together with vegetal aromas and spices, recalling black pepper and nutmeg. There are some balsamic notes as well.

84



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x120mm (4 ¾")	\$ - € 9.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



THE OSCAR
CONNECTICUT ROBUSTO

AROMATIC AND CONSISTENT

Grassy and woody nuances give way to the smoke, joined by hazelnut and light pepper aromas. A herbal component is added in the second half.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 11.8 € 12.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	NICARAGUA, HONDURAS



LA GLORIA CUBANA
TURQUINOS

LIMITED INTENSITY AND EVOLUTION

It delivers cedarwood, acidic fruits, and rich black pepper notes. In the second half involves to toasted notes.

83



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x140mm (5 ½")	\$ - € 18
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

Shorts



NESTOR MIRANDA SPECIAL SEL. HABANO COFFEE BREAK

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

It delivers aromas of nuts, together with leather and white pepper. Then earth, cocoa, and coffee are added. The base is sweet and creamy.

92 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x114mm (4")	\$ 7.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



DREW ESTATE LIGA PRIVADA H99 PAPAS FRITAS

BOLD AND FLAVORFUL

It opens with leather, earth, and nuts. Later on, aromas of black pepper, and wood join the flavor profile and the finale is spicy.

91 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x114mm (4 ½")	\$ 7.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	MEXICO	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



MONTES SERIE O MISISIPI

COMPLEX AND FULL

An interesting mineral note, together with white pepper and wood give way to the smoke. Hazelnut and herbs are added in the second half.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	44x101mm (4")	\$ - € 8.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, N/A



PADRÓN 1964 HERMOSO NATURAL

INTENSE AND PRONOUNCED

Earth and coffee give way to the smoke and are the dominant flavors throughout the smoke. They are later followed by black pepper and cocoa.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	56x101mm (4")	\$ 15.6 € 21.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



*PARTAGAS
SERIE D NO. 6*

BOLD

It exhibits aromas of wood, earth and spices, mainly black pepper. There are also vegetal nuances, together with piquant peaks. The ending is balsamic.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x89mm (3 ½")	\$ - € 12.3
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



*LATELIER
ROXY MADURO*

AROMATIC AND DISTINCT

Earth and herbs are joined by white pepper, wood, and nuts. The flavor profile becomes fuller in the second half of the smoke.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x89mm (3 ½")	\$ 8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



*VEGUEROS
CENTROGORDOS*

LIMITED FLAVOR PROFILE

It brings to the palate notes of earth, hazelnut and some vegetal aromas.

85 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x101mm (4")	\$ - € 9.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



*CASA TURRENT 1880
ROSADO GORDITO*

HARSH FIRST HALF

It delivers burnt coffee and wood resin, followed by woody notes, earth and some vegetal nuances.

83 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x101mm (4")	\$ - € 8.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO

Toro





CALDWELL LONG LIVE THE
QUEEN QUEEN'S CROWN

COMPLEX AND SMOOTH

Nuts and cinnamon give way to the smoke, accompanied by wood, leather, and coffee. Balsamic herbs are added in the second half. The smoke is very creamy.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 15 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CAMEROON	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



ALADINO
LIMITED EDITION

FLAVORFUL AND HARMONIOUS

Wood, citrus, and nuts appear in the first half. Later on, aromas of herbs, leather, with a hint of spices, are added. The smoke is creamy.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 16 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



JOYA DE NICARAGUA
CINCO DE CINCO TORO

BALANCED AND FULL

Earth, leather and nuts make up the core of the flavor profile, supported by herbs, black pepper and mineral nuances throughout the smoke.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 20 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



AGANORSA LEAF
ANIVERSARIO MADURO TORO

AROMATIC AND BOLD

Intense black pepper and leather notes, followed by hazelnut appear in the first half. Coffee and earth aromas are added in the second half.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 13.8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



HIRAM & SOLOMON
CURAMUS

BOLD AND RICH

It delivers a broad4 mix of spices, with the black pepper being the protagonist, together with earth and cocoa.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 10 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., U.S.A.



CAVALIER
DOMAINE ROUGE TORO

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

The cigar opens with notes of cinnamon, hazelnut, and wood, followed by herbs and cream. Black pepper and balsamic herbs appear later on.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152m (6")	\$ 15.1 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, PARAGUAY



MATILDE LIMITED
EXPOSURE NO. 2 TORO

CREAMY AND FLAVORFUL

The cigar opens with nuts and evident cream notes, accompanied by cinnamon and coffee. A light pepper nuance and balsamic herbs are added later on.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 10.5 € 10.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



PARTAGAS
VALLE VERDE TORO

BOLD AND RICH

Earth and a touch of wood, together with coffee notes and with a little spiciness of black pepper in the background. Vegetal and balsamic aromas appear in the last part.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 8.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	CAMEROON	MEXICO, NICARAGUA



HOYO DE MONTERREY
LE HOYO DE SAN JUAN

SMOOTH AND REFINED

It delivers notes of cedarwood, vanilla and spices, recalling mainly white pepper. There are some bal-samic aromas joyning the flavor profile in the se-cond half, together with toasted nuances.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x150mm (5 7⁄8")	\$ - € 19.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



OSCAR 2012
SUMATRA TORO

CONSISTENT AND INTENSE

The cigar opens with cinnamon, coffee, and wood. A vegetal aroma, together with nuts and herbs, are added halfway through the cigar.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 9.3 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



1502
ANIVERSARIO 10

ROUND AND SMOOTH

A mix of spices and coffee give way to the smoke, joined by wood, and hazelnut aromas. Later on, the profile becomes fuller and a cream note is added.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 14 € 16
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	NICARAGUA



EL GAUCHO
PREMIUM TORO

INVOLVING IN THE SECOND HALF

It delivers hazelnut and peppery notes, together with toasted wood. A little on the dry side.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●	54x150m (5 7⁄8")	\$ 18 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

Credits

Cover page

picture by: Desiree Prieto

George A. Rico

picture by: Desiree Prieto

The mustache & the cigar

picture by: Behance, Fine Art America

New Gold

picture by: Intertabak AG

Great Wall

picture by: Great Wall Cigars

Procigar 2024

picture by: Procigar

Pairings

picture by: Mario Amelio

It's a boy; it's a girl

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Cigars & Spirits

picture by: Mario Amelio - Renz A. Mauleon

GlenAllachie

picture by: GlenAllachie Distillery

Whisky and Chocolate: the basics

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Boulevardier

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Tobacco Hamburger

picture by: Meateatingmilitaryman.com, Mario Amelio

Pepper X

picture by: Motosdidac

Blind tasting - Spirits

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Blind tasting - Cigars

picture by: Mario Amelio