CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 2 - 2024

- VEGAFINA - INDEPENDET (POR LARRAÑAGA) - LES FINES LAMES - FROM LECTOR TO MP3 - PAIRINGS: CIGARS & SPIRITS
- THE MYSTERIES OF FLOCCULATION - WHISKY AND CHOCOLATE PAIRING: PEAT - COCKTAIL: COSMOPOLITAN
- BLUE CHEESE: THE VARIATIONS, THE METHODS AND THE TASTE - THE AGING OF PREMIUM SPARKLING WINES

UNDERCROWN MADURO
The original Undercrown blended and created on the factory floor at La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate, Undercrown Maduro is made from a San Andres (Mexico) wrapper; Connecticut River Valley Stalk-Cut and Stalk-Cured Habano binder; and filler tobaccos of select Brazilian Mata Fina and Nicaraguan Cuban seed tobaccos. Medium-plus, Undercrown Maduro is a bold, deep and textured cigar that offers an earthy, rich and smooth taste profile with a natural sweetness.

Wrapper: San Andres (Mexico)
Binder: Connecticut River Valley Stalk-Cut Habano
Filler: Select Brazilian Mata Fina and Nicaraguan

UNDERCROWN SHADE
Undercrown Shade is a significant shift away from the dark, bold Undercrown Maduro to the more mellow, yet equally expressive flavor of the Connecticut Shade varietal. Featuring a regal Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper, a luscious Sumatran binder and a filler blend of Dominican Criollo '98 and Nicaraguan Criollo '98 and Corojo '99 tobaccos, Undercrown Shade is medium-bodied and ultra-smooth offering notes of cream with lush hints of vanilla, caramel and pepper.

Wrapper: Ecuadorian Connecticut
Binder: Sumatran
Filler: Dominican and Nicaraguan

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- **W: Mex. Otopan Negro Ultimo Corte**
- **B: Connecticut Broadleaf**
- **F: Nicaraguan**

2021
91
CIGAR AFICIONADO
RATING

UNDERCROWN
NUESTROS PUROS ✦ BY DREW ESTATE

CigarsLover
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Editor's thoughts

Brands' histories and novelties.

For this second issue of 2024, we had the opportunity to discover many new products in terms of both cigars and accessories. We had the pleasure to see and try Davidoff's "Maduro" line, which the company has decided to revive, given the rising demand for darker dressed-up cigars in the super-premium market segment. We went through the story of Vegafina from its beginning until now, when it has become a fully established and recognized brand. Accessory-wise, we interviewed Pierre Jourdan, the founder and mind behind Les Fines Lames, who created one of the most requested cutter of recent times. Yet, we didn't forget about not-so-new things, such as the Por Larrañaga brand, which in 2024 turns 190 years old, and the history behind the lector in cigar factories.

The new section about chocolate and whisky pairings officially begins after the introduction was published in the past issue. The first chapter is probably challenging to approach: peat and chocolate. A journey among rum barrels and blue cheese anticipates the tasting of twenty-four premium spirits and forty cigars.

#refineyourtaste

CigarsLover
MAGAZINE

Thank you for TEN YEARS

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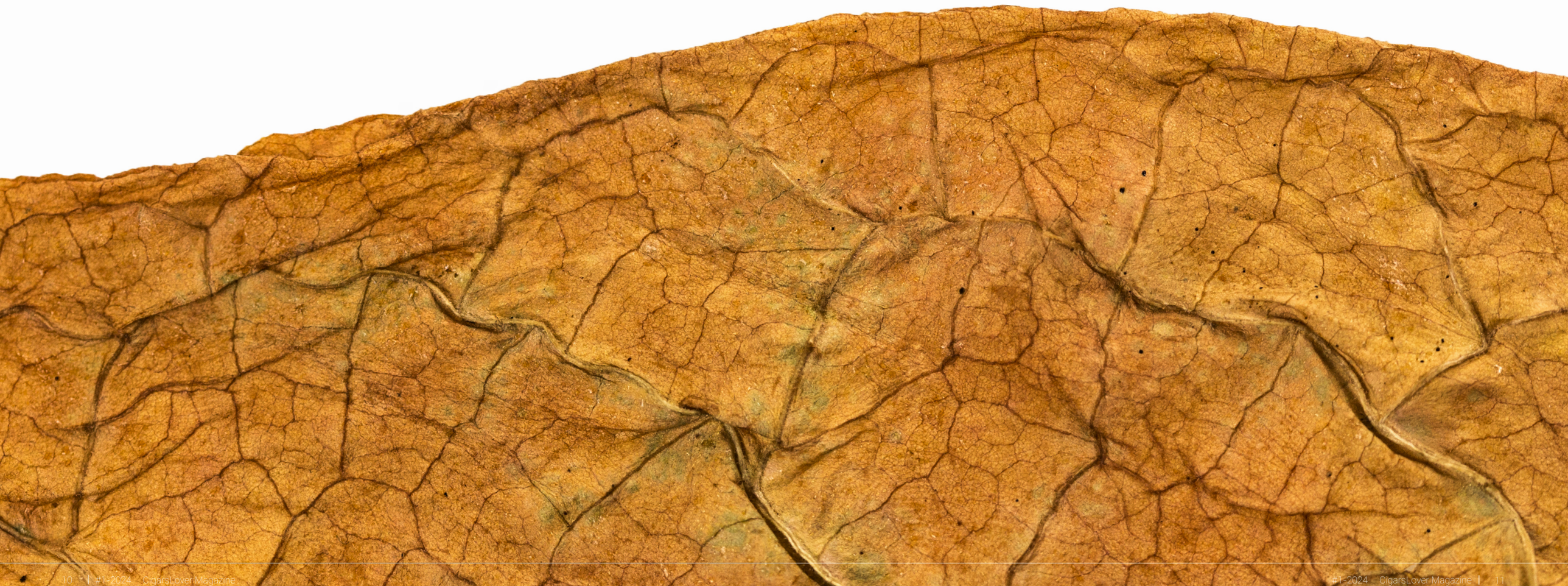
CIGARS

"If I had taken my doctor's advice and quit smoking when he advised me to, I wouldn't have lived to go to his funeral."
George Burns



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DISCOVER THE WORLD'S FINEST CIGARS

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Davidoff Maduro

Time is key in the new Davidoff Maduro

by **Michel Arlia**

Davidoff, the Swiss brand known for its premium handmade cigars, made waves in 2008 when it introduced the Maduro line to the market. This move surprised many cigar enthusiasts, as a Maduro wrapper was not something the company was known for. Despite this, the line received wide acclaim and became a fan favorite. However, after a decade, the company decided to discontinue the line in 2018.

But now, there's great news for cigar lovers. In March, Davidoff Cigars has announced the launch of the much awaited new limited-release Maduro line. This news has been met with great excitement and anticipation among cigar enthusiasts who are eager to get their hands on this exclusive and highly sought-after line.

Edward Simon, the Chief Marketing Officer of Oettinger Davidoff, has revealed that the company has decided to launch the new cigar in response to the growing demand for premium Maduro cigars in the super-premium market segment. The new Davidoff Maduro has been meticulously crafted to cater to consumers' evolving preferences, with a sweeter and creamier flavor profile that mirrors their taste. Simon explained that the blend's components, particularly the unique wrapper, are exceptionally rare, making it a limited-release cigar that will be available until supplies last.

"The process, extensive testing, and long aging has resulted in a wonderfully refined cigar with a flavor profile and body that will meet many aficionados' taste preference. I am sure that our new Maduro, in which we have invested so much dedication and knowledge, will fill our aficionados' time beautifully," concludes Simon.

The Wrapper

Simon explained that Davidoff used an Ecuadorian hybrid varietal that the agronomists expertly selected and planted specifically for this cigar. Getting to this stage took a lot of time, expertise, and testing. They also tried several other varieties, but they landed on this particular wrapper leaf to achieve the creaminess and sweetness you can taste in the Davidoff Maduro cigar.

All three sizes (Robusto, Toro, and Short Corona) are dressed in this dark Ecuadorian wrapper from the Corte #7 grade, which accounts for almost half of the overall aroma. This leaf grows on the upper part of the tobacco plant, where it receives the most sunlight, which results in a thicker and more robust structure.

The Process

Since the wrapper leaf is thicker, it takes much longer to ferment naturally. To achieve the sweet notes typical of a true Maduro taste experience, Davidoff invested 16 months of fermentation and 2 years of aging in this cigar.

The process of fermenting the wrapper for the Davidoff Maduro is a delicate and precise art. The time allows for a natural temperature increase inside the fermentation pile and is tailored to the leaf. As the temperature rises to up to 49°C (120°F), the leaves

undergo a transformative process that brings out the unique and distinct flavors of the cigar. The natural heat generated during fermentation is crucial to the creation of the exceptionally flavorful wrapper of the Davidoff Maduro. "We refrain from adding any external heat sources and allow nature and time to perfect the leaves in our expertly maintained fermentation pile." says Simon.

During this process, the piles are flipped 12 times. This labor-intensive process takes 32 hours and requires 4 to 5 experts to flip an entire Davidoff fermentation pile once. Experts test the Maduro wrapper extensively to determine when it will be ready. The first test is conducted after six months of fermentation. The experts examine the structure, combustion, and taste of the leaves. The second test is conducted after another six months. After that, they test it several times each month to ensure the perfect taste.

The Experience

To underline the sweeter and creamier flavors of the wrapper, a Mexican binder and fillers from the Dominican Republic round out the rest of the blend. "Time also applies to the creation of the blend. We spent several months developing it. Although this may seem like a long time, I think the result really pays off many times over," mentions Simon.

The start of the Maduro is characterized by a dominating sweetness, which is heralded by deep notes of dark chocolate and an overarching creaminess. Hints of nuts and dried fruits conclude the first third. In the middle part of the cigar, sweet flavors of honey take over. Complementing but never overpowering notes of oak wood make an appearance, all underpinned by the continued creaminess. In Maduro's last third, the previously prevalent sweetness makes way for a spicier stimulation. Dominating notes of roasted nuts and aromas of earth and white pepper add excitement and conclude this entertaining taste experience.

The Davidoff Maduro line boasts a luxurious presentation that will surely impress cigar enthusiasts. Housed in an exquisite wooden box with a loose-fitting lid, the box features a satin-lacquered finish that radiates an air of elegance. The cigars themselves are adorned with black and golden bands, adding to their premium quality and sophisticated character. Savor the rich and intense flavor of these cigars while indulging in an experience that epitomizes Davidoff's slogan 'time beautifully filled' to the fullest.

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VegaFina

Twenty-five years of innovation

by **Zak Mitchers**

It was 1998 when the VegaFina brand was presented to the world. Who would have thought that over the years, it would become the number one premium cigar brand in Spain, the market where it was launched, and one of the best-selling in the world, with a presence in more than 50 countries. Quite a success story.

From the beginning, the objective of the VegaFina brand was clear: to create a brand capable of competing in terms of quality and flavor in the demanding Spanish market with a complete range of formats. It was in the Tabacalera de García factory in La Romana, in the east of the Dominican Republic, where this new cigar began to be forged under the watchful eye of industry legends José Seijas and Benjamín "Benji" Menéndez. These two names are written in capital letters in the context of tobacco in the Dominican Republic and worldwide.

The name VegaFina comes from the Vegas Finas, or "fine plains" in English, land which offers the ideal combination of climate and soil for cultivating the finest tobacco varieties and producing the best cigars.

VegaFina was introduced to the market with a range of different and classic sizes with a balanced, but rich and flavorful blend. This balanced character has remained over the years, and the brand's Classic line continues to be highly appreciated today by those looking for an approachable smoke without sacrificing a wide variety of aroma and flavor nuances.

Over the last 25 years, VegaFina has been listening to its customers and keeping up with the latest trends in the market. In 2011, the brand decided to revamp its image, presenting a more modern and contemporary look. At the same time, it made a commitment to expand its reach globally, which proved successful, making VegaFina one of the most popular premium cigar brands in the international market. In the same year, VegaFina launched its second line, Fortaleza 2, targeting smokers who prefer a slightly stronger smoke than the Classic line.

In 2014, VegaFina continued its innovative spirit by introducing its Nicaragua line, which exclusively uses tobaccos from Jalapa and Estelí. These cigars are characterized by their medium to strong strength, and the aroma and flavor typical of tobacco from the region.

VegaFina 1998 is the most premium line of the brand, launched to celebrate its 20th anniversary. This line has significantly improved the brand's image and reputation. With VegaFina 1998, the brand consolidates itself as the one with the most comprehensive offerings, catering to enthusiasts who seek different moments of pleasure.

Now, after 25 years of brand history, the market has changed dramatically. There is a strong focus on innovation through strategic launches and limited editions. This emphasis reflects a growing demand among aficionados for differentiation, particularly in blends that offer greater complexity. As consumers become more discerning, there's a clear trend towards seeking products that offer unique experiences and deeper layers of flavor.

VegaFina manages to do so thanks to their famous and creative Grupo de Maestros, which spearhead all the brand's innovations. Such as the Year of Editions, which commemorates the Chinese New Year in their Classic line. Special releases in their Fortaleza 2 line featured unique raw materials like Rum Barrel Aged, Andullo, or even 10-year-old aged tobaccos. Their Nicaragua line has focused on specific growing regions in the country, like Ometepe, Jalapa, and most recently, Esteli. The prestigious 1998 line revealed its first limited edition with the Vintage 1 in 2021. In the same year, the company also introduced its unique Fusion Edition, which was a joint venture with the Chinese giant Great Wall Cigars.

As you can tell, even after 25 years, VegaFina still manages to surprise cigar lovers with its innovative products, and we are sure that it will continue to do so for another 25 years.

LEGENDS ARE NOT BORN, BUT MADE

VF
LA ROMANA
2023
25
1998
ANIVERSARIO

With a presence in more than 50 countries, VegaFina has celebrated its 25th anniversary as the No. 1 non-Cuban premium cigar brand worldwide. Synonymous of quality and excellence, VegaFina cigars are the result of a long and careful process that combines the selection of the best tobacco leaves with the expertise of the most expert Dominican cigar rollers. Thanks to this, today VegaFina is considered to be part of the best selections of premium cigars in the world.
The making of a legend.

VEGAFINA

Independent

The Por Larrañaga brand, despite its 190 years of history, has arrived today with all the signs of time and a worn royal cloak.

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

From a brand with almost two centuries of history, one would expect a compelling story, illustrious founders, a highly active production, and references so particular that they manage to resist fashions and times.

Sometimes not all fairy tales end with "happily ever after," as in the case of Por Larrañaga. Contrary to what one might expect, this is the oldest brand in Cuban production, at least if we limit our scope of attention to existing brands. Despite this, its portfolio is not exceptionally vast nor nor does it contain products that can play on par with other renowned and well-known products, such as a Partagas Serie D No. 4 or a Montecristo No. 4.

How did a brand with origins dating back so far back arrive in this condition at the present day?

We have to go back to 1834, when Ignacio de Larrañaga registered the brand, establishing the production headquarters at 94 O'Reilly Street, La Havana (other sources report the headquarters at San Miguel 58). According to the most accredited historical sources, Ignacio was a Spanish emigrant who arrived in the Cuban capital around 1825 and began his own cigar production in the brand's first headquarters a few years later. At the time, it was not unusual for the registered name to correspond to both the brand and the manufacturing company, within which, if business went well, other brands were then created. This was the case of the Por Larrañaga factory, which, during the 1800s, came to be very well known, particularly among the wealthy and celebrities, thanks to the offering of multiple brands that managed to guarantee both high-quality cigars for various palates and those of more budget manufacturing. It soon established itself in the US, European, and Asian markets. It is no coincidence that the English writer Kipling, born in India, paid homage to the brand in his poem "Betrothed" with the phrase "There is peace in a Larrañaga."

Between 1880 and 1885, the company was sold to Rivero, Martinez y Co, owned by Antonio Rivero, already the owner of other brands such as Flor de Rivero, Aromas de Cuba, Flor de Alvarez, La Gloria, and La Legitimidad. After the acquisition of manufacturing and the rights to the brand, Antonio Rivero chose to keep a large part of the production of his previous brands with other manufacturers. Business continued to record appreciable results for Rivero, at least until the last years of the 19th century when, with his passing, ownership passed to his wife Antonia Lopez, who transferred the manufacturing to Belascoain 2B. At this point, the brand's history is intertwined with Cuba's political and economic history.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Spanish domination of the Isla Grande seemed to have ended. Consequently, new American capital began to be invested in the country's economy, particularly in cigars, given that the States were the largest consumers of Cubans at the time. In 1899, the Havana Commercial Company (also known as the American Trust) purchased twelve factories producing approximately one hundred and fifty brands. In addition to this Trust, the ownership of the brands was also limited by English capital since even Her Majesty's subjects liked the Cubans so much that they invested the capital of the

Por Larrañaga Band
Band used since 1960s

Better refined font and printing

Por Larrañaga Regional Editions Band
Band used since 2006

Por Larrañaga UK Regional Editions Band
Band used in some releases

Por Larrañaga special Band
Introduced in 2014
for the Picadores No.1

consolidated wealthy bourgeoisie overseas. However, a small group of factories resisted the lure of foreign capital: La Escepcion, Partagas, Romeo y Julieta, H. Upmann, Por Larrañaga, and a few other smaller companies. Due to their character and independence towards foreign investors, they were nicknamed Las Marcas Independiente, which Por Larrañaga and the descendants of Antonio Rivero headed. He had worked hard to ensure that the manufacturing industry established itself among all the others while remaining extraneous to the American trust and its related capital. To underline this position of third party, the wording "independent brand" was proudly added on the face and on the ring of the brand, which continues to be reported today.

At the beginning of the 1900s, cigars from the Por Larrañaga factory were sold almost worldwide, preferring elite sales channels, such as luxury restaurants and prestigious hotel chains. According to the most reliable historical data, in 1910, ten million cigars were produced by five hundred workers in the factory. A decade later, the factory was the scene of a historic event, which is still remembered today as a "peculiarity" of the brand.In 1925, Enrique Berenguer, a shareholder of Por Larrañaga, obtained permission, following a regular contract, to introduce the first automatic rolling machines into the company. Although it divided public opinion between detractors and supporters, this important innovation was initially welcomed tepidly and with curiosity. However, the following year, probably fearing that machines could take over handmade production, the factory's torcedores went on strike. According to some sources, some workers threw the new machines out of the windows in heated moments of the protest. The strike ended only with the guarantee from the owners to the employees that the machine-made cigars would have a second band and a unique label on the box indicating that the machine made the product.

Regardless of the veracity or otherwise of the episode of the defenestration of the machines, since 1926, the Por Larrañaga factory became an authoritative voice in paying attention to the progress of automatic machines. In fact, from this moment on, a report was sent from the manufacturing offices every month to the Comision Nacional de Propaganda y Defensa del Tabaco Habano, in which the data on the reference market for mechanized cigars were reported. This information was transmitted at least until November 1936, when the attempt to include the machines in production can be said to have ended. The reasons for the failure of this first insertion (which will be resumed with new results after 1945) are broad and escape the history of the Por Larrañaga manufacture. To simplify, it was not so much (and not only) the workers' opposition that decreed the abandonment of mechanized rolling, but rather the high production cost of the machines themselves, which made the production of mechanized cigars uneconomical.

In 1937, Rivero's descendants sold the company to Compañia Tabacalera Nacional Habana S.A., who in the same years sold them to the Antilla Cigar Co., which was owned by the British company Morris and Morris based in New York. In those years, the factory has been located at number 225 Carlos III Street. A few years later, they resold the factory to a group of new shareholders, the most important of which was Gonzalo R. de Arellano, followed in importance by the Alonso brothers, together with José and Adolfo Menendez Garcia (the latter already owners of H. Upmann). In 1940, the factory was moved to number 713, still on Carlos III Street. After Rivero's death and the various changes of ownership, the constant that remained unchanged and which constituted an actual strong point of the brand was the advertising of the products, always original, clever, and practical, on which the focus was the most until the end of the 1950s.

Despite the 1968 Revolution, production and sales remained unchanged. However, with the government's nationalization, the factory's name changed from Por Larrañaga to Juan Cano Sainz. After 1980, however, there began to be a quantitative and qualitative contraction of the brand's cigars. Then, in 1990, due to trademark problems in some markets, the brand could only reach very few sales areas. In the early 2000s, the brand slightly regained its share, driven mainly through sales of mechanized cigars (the worst insult that the independent brand could suffer) and by a few handmade products, among which there was the Petit corona, produced before the revolution and remains unscathed by the passage of time. Between 2000 and 2005 almost all the products were discontinued, leaving the production of the Petit corona (mareva 42x129mm), the Montecarlo (deliciosos 33x159mm) and the Panetela (veguetitos 37x127mm) standing, with the latter two going

from machine made to hecho a mano. We had to wait until 2014 for the inclusion of a new reference in the brand's limited portfolio, with the presentation of the Picadores (hermoso no. 4, 48x127), which later became Picadores No. 1, distributed through the Habanos specialist channel and La Casa Del Habano. In a more recent era, 2019, the panetela was discontinued, and as a module, it no longer enjoyed the appeal of the general public. Lastly, in 2021, although announced in 2020, the Galanes (galanes, 52x120) was presented, a new product and a new vitola de galera, which aimed to restore prestige to the brand through a format very popular with the market. Currently, the production of cigars for this brand is divided between several factories.

Despite its minimal market presence Por Larrañaga was one of the first brands to be used to release cigars of the Regional Editions because, in 2006, the Lonsdale was released for the German market. This cigar already existed in the brand's portfolio but was discontinued in 2001. From 2006 to 2024, there were twenty-two ER releases of the brand, four of which (the most significant number) were destined for the United Kingdom. For the release of the cigars of this edition, various versions of the original anilla have been used over the years, including a more elaborate version, with a brighter yellow-gold background, sometimes with a darker background, and more pronounced raised characters. The historic wording "independent brand" has been removed in some cases.

From a more historical and bibliographical point of view, the view of the brand is very ancient, witnessing as it does a symbolism now outclassed by graphics and reliefs that today seem light years away. The pastoral scene is dominated by a woman with regal features (a scepter in her hands, bright robes, and a pompous headdress suggest this), sitting on a throne supported by two lions, a symbol of power and affirmation. Between the two felines, four children recall the four lands that emerged around the globe. Everything is surrounded by medals of recognition and prestige, and, on the bottom. The words “independent brand of tobacco products to go down."

A distinctive feature of almost all Por Larrañaga products is the extraordinary sweetness, accompanied by caramel-honey notes, which are very recurrent when smoked and particularly appreciated by smokers of this brand. The strength is never beyond the middle register. Cigars such as the Petit Corona and the Montecarlo also enjoy an appreciable production consistency, thanks to the fact that they are not particularly sought-after cigars on the market. The Montecarlo, then, is the only representative of the vitola delicioso and one of the few panetela in the vitolario of Habanos S.A.

After one hundred and ninety years, the history of the brand, despite having lost the luster it had, continues to testify to the determination and desire for redemption in that "independent brand" which, as lovers, we hope never to see disappear in favor of the latest fashion dictated by the market.

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Les Fines Lames

"Razor Sharp".

by **Michel Arlia**

The brainchild of Pierre Jourdan, Les Fines Lames, was launched in 2016 with the vision of creating an extraordinary cigar cutter that could also be used as an everyday object. The result was the l'Original, which quickly gained popularity and turned the brand into a startup success story. As the brand gained momentum, Les Fines Lames expanded its portfolio to include a range of cigar-centric accessories, including the newest addition, the LeTag. We talked to Pierre about all things Les Fines Lames and his passion for creating exceptional cigar accessories.

What was the decisive point that made you create a cigar accessory?

Like many great stories, Les Fines Lames began with passion and continues today with that same enthusiasm. It all started in July 2010, when I was introduced to the world of premium cigars at a wedding, where a friend offered me my first-ever cigar: a Romeo y Julieta. Instantly captivated by the aromas and the ritual of cigar smoking, I embarked on a journey that would shape my future. A few months later, I purchased my cigars and delved deeper into the world of cigars. What initially began as a hobby soon became a profound passion. Dissatisfied with my job, I sought solace and reflection in the ritual of cigar smoking. As I explored the subject online, the people and the culture surrounding cigars ignited my love for them. I was hooked, and I knew this was only the beginning. Over the years, my passion continued to grow as I simultaneously pursued my career in founding a Social Media Consultancy agency. However, the desire to turn my passion into a business became overwhelming. In 2016, fueled by determination, I took a leap of faith, invested all my savings, and founded Les Fines Lames in Marseille alongside two knife-maker friends.

What did the first drafts/samples look like, and was it always set to be a knife?

Yes, it was always destined to be a knife! In my family, carrying a knife is a cherished tradition passed down from my grandfather. He worked as a gardener in one of Marseille's most beautiful parks, where his trusty knife was an essential tool. Having worked in the video game industry, I had some basics in 3D Modeling. I started with the first design that I showed to Yann, the knife-maker who started the company with me. It was pretty clear at that point that I knew 3D Modeling, but I had much to learn about the art of knife making. Yann refined my initial concept into the first version of our cigar knife, which we named L'ORIGINAL. Like all of our cigar knives, L'ORIGINAL was proudly made in Thiers, a town with a rich history of knife craftsmanship spanning over 600 years. This commitment to quality, rooted in Thiers' heritage, has been central to our company from day one. L'ORIGINAL quickly garnered attention from cigar lovers worldwide due to its unique design and sizable blade.

The LE PETIT has been a huge success ever since you launched. To what do you attribute that?

We credit much of our success to the power of friendships and innovative thinking, which we sometimes call our "French revolution in cigar accessories". Launching the company through social media opened doors to a community of passionate aficionados. As interest grew, I formed close bonds with many individuals who supported and guided me. From Tim & Sean at Boveda to Marko of the CSWC and the teams at Havana Club in France, as well as Antoine Bathie (director of Coprova) and Jeremy & Triine Casdagli, among others, each played a role in our journey. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they all shared the same passion and keen interest in the development of our company. Les Fines Lames quickly stood out with its innovative ideas, particularly with the success of LE PETIT. One memorable feat was sending the first three knives we produced into space to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the moon landing—an unprecedented

out-of-the-box idea for a cigar accessory launch! The arrival of Pablo Rodet in 2018 marked a turning point for Les Fines Lames. I was a good brand builder but lacked proficiency in sales and distribution. Pablo joined the company, bringing his fantastic set of skills to the table, and it's an understatement to say that the company really took off with his arrival. Initially, the L'ORIGINAL version of our cigar knife was priced too high for the market due to a misjudgment in selecting suppliers. However, we successfully introduced LE PETIT at a $150 price point while maintaining its production in France with new suppliers—a prowess we're both proud of.

With the cigar accessory market so saturated, how difficult is it to stand out and generate new ideas?

Perhaps the market needed fresh perspectives—there's always a way if you think outside the box. What sets us apart is our commitment to offering original products tailored to the new generation of cigar smokers, with wearable accessories, iconic designs, and clever digital communication. The cigar knife was a rarity in an industry dominated by double-blade cutters, so we decided to reinvent it. Similarly, our Punch Bracelet is a prime example of this innovative spirit—it's a simple idea, but someone had to think of it first, and that someone was us. The same can be said for LE TAG, a double-blade with a unique twist. Of course, like all successful companies, hard work is essential. Good ideas alone aren't enough; there's no secret formula for immediate success. We meticulously elevate Les Fines Lames step by step, ensuring that quality remains our top priority.

Speaking of the new LE TAG. How did the idea come about, and how long have you worked on it?

We always strive to draw inspiration from popular culture and familiar items when conceiving new accessories. Our journey began with a knife that evolved into a cigar cutter. As bead bracelets became a staple in men's fashion, we introduced the Punch Bracelet. With the same innovative spirit, we set out to revolutionize the double-blade cigar cutter by drawing inspiration from an iconic piece of pop culture: the Dog Tag. The concept originated during a bus trip at the ProCigar Festival in 2022, and we started prototyping LE TAG the same year. Tailored specifically for the US market, our latest innovation aligns seamlessly with our new partnership with Frederik Vandermarliere, owner of the Oliva brand. With Oliva Cigar Company handling distribution in the US, we're excited to offer this product in conjunction with our entry into the US market. It's a mutually beneficial synergy that benefits everyone.

Where do you want to take Les Fines Lames in the future?

Our next focus is to continue establishing the successful distribution of Les Fines Lames in the US. With a partner like Oliva Cigar Company and its sales force of 23 representatives at our side, we feel up to the challenge! As far as products are concerned, we have many other ideas to implement—ideas that will leave no one indifferent. As the designer of Nike's most iconic models, Tinker Hatfield, once said, "If people don't either love or hate your work, you just haven't done all that much." Be ready to discover LE FEU by Les Fines Lames, which will launch later this year. Some designs were already unveiled at this year's PCA, while others are still developing.

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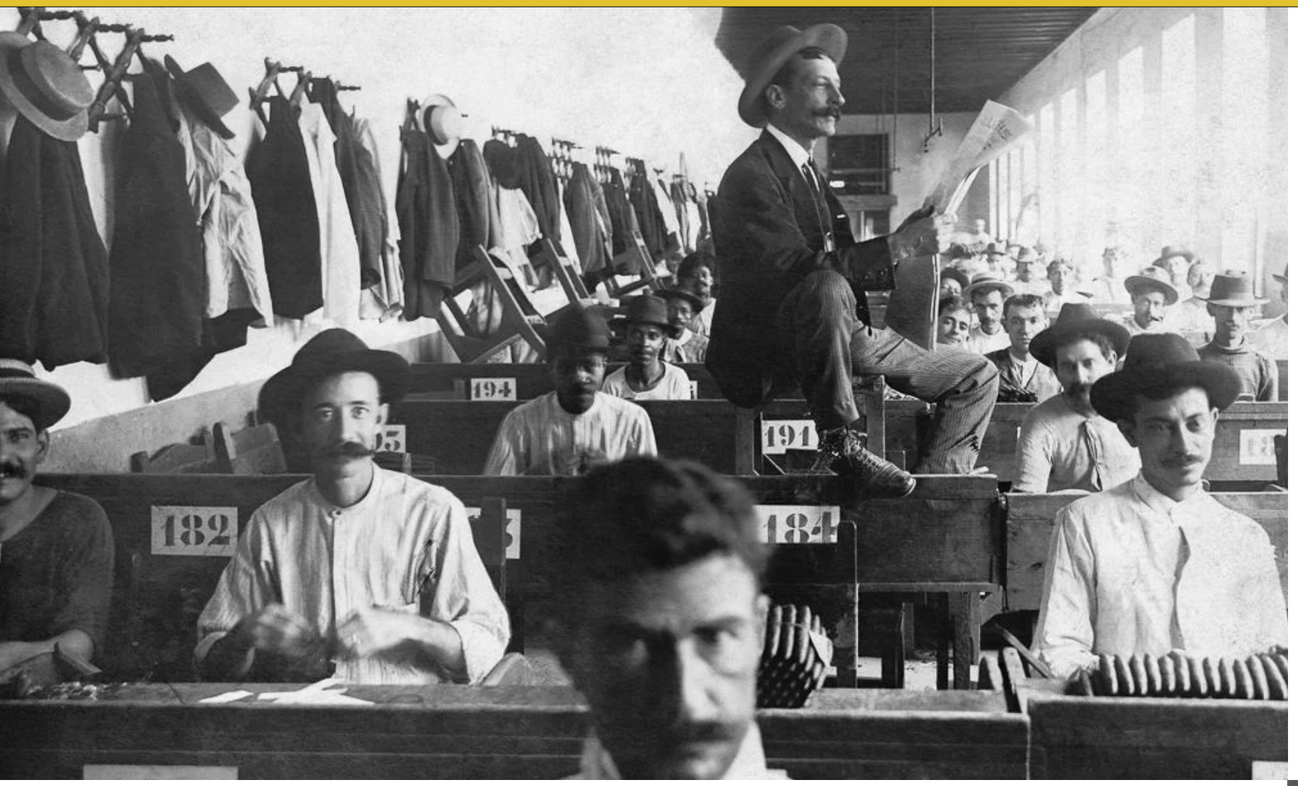

From lector to mp3

Over the decades, there have been different ways in which the silent hum of the time of "torcida" (cigar making) inside the factories has been filled and replaced.

by **John Jeremy**

The skills of the torcedores are often praised, and true masters in shaping a cigar start from a handful of tobacco leaves. With good reason, therefore, this work is framed as a form of art, a work of craftsmanship, of inspiration, of passion. One is almost inspired to imagine women and men overwhelmed by the passion for their work, which they face by responding to a daily production order with enthusiasm and passion. It is impossible to deny all this, except to forget, however, that the work of the torcedor is a very intense and, in some ways, also alienating job, which leads the worker to produce around four hundred cigars a day. Everyday.

Towards the middle of the 19th century, precisely in order not to lose the torcedores to the boredom of a job that could become too "mechanical," the role of the "lector" was established, a factory employee who would read aloud to the factory. For the benefit of all employees, the most famous novels of international literature and national newspapers were often chosen. This task, which today may seem trivial, contextualized in that historical period, in addition to not boring the torcedores, also contributed to their cultural growth in a period in which illiteracy was rampant. The lector became a real institution in factories and his role remained on the crest of the wave until a few decades ago.

In other factories, however, team spirit filled the work with torcida. In the Manifatture Sigaro Toscano factory, where historically the torcedores are exclusively women, the cigar makers invented rhymes to cheer up their work. In reality, some of these verses were cryptic and had the purpose of asking for and granting help: if a cigar maker was having difficulty reaching her daily quota of cigar making, she would sing a verse that contained the coded message "who can give me some cigars? " Then, someone responds to these verses with another verse, depending on whether or not she can accept her colleague's request.

And today, how are torcedores entertained in carrying out their daily work? Over the years, the factories have been modernized, and in the vast majority of them, there is a piped music system through which music or a local radio channel is broadcast. However, with the arrival of MP3 music players, this system was also overcome by personal preference and individualism. Nowadays, a simple smartphone is enough to have your favorite music or radio station within earshot. Obviously, for each of us, the music of our preference best influences the performance of what we are doing (work, gymnastics or study activity). Therefore it is quite common to find men and women in factories with headphones, intent on listening to what that can encourage one's work more. In fact, in a context where it is necessary to produce an average of 350-400 cigars per day, perhaps working in pairs (bonchero - rollero), with a daily wage paid on the number of products made, it will be easy to understand how there is very little room to lose time or to chat. There is certainly a working synergy for those who work in pairs, who, by necessity, must match their speed to that of their partner, and this requires a minimum amount of speaking. Yet, these few words serve to strengthen a working couple which, according to those who work in manufacturing, once it has been created, absolutely does not want to be divided, precisely by virtue of that speed-quality balance achieved, the true parameter for evaluating the work of a torcedor.

In conclusion, although we have moved from the figure of the lector to the use of a personal mp3 player, almost nothing has changed in the work of the torcedor over the course of these decades, if we consider that, from their point of view, it is a job like another, well paid (an average of $400 for Nicaragua, Honduras, Dominican Republic, while $30 in Cuba) if you are willing to carry out your task with speed and precision. The drive for some modicum of entertainment while performing a monotonous but critical task has remained consistent but as time as passed the medium for this entertainment has shifted from one which is provided by the employer to the workers as a group to one that is individualized and brought in by the employee.

Davidoff
CIGARS

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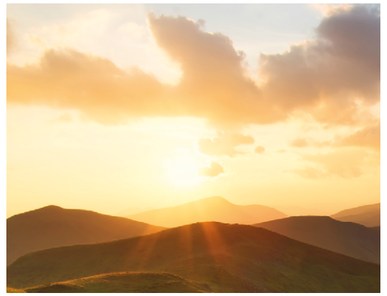

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PAIRINGS

From the moment CigarsLover Magazine defined its pay-off, "Refine Your Taste", starting to accompany the tastings of cigars to those of spirits such as Whisky and Rum, we have set ourselves the problem of addressing the issue of cigar-spirits pairing. It is a thorny field, and often the results achieved are not what we expected and the pairing can give as much emotion as dissatisfaction if something goes wrong.

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

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

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

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

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STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	$ N/A | € 14.5

DIMENSIONS
50x124 mm (4 ⅞")

COUNTRY
Cuba

Characterful and expressive Robusto on the Cuban scene, a riot of herbaceous aromas and toasted notes of espresso coffee. Very creamy, with a spicy and leather vein. Two very different Scotch expressions are paired. Both whiskies aged in wine casks, a sweeter Glenmorangie Sauternes cask finish, and a more balanced red wine exercise, investigating the different possibilities of this trendy aging.

GREAT WALL GL NO.3

COMPLEX, BOLD, ROUND AND SATISFYING.

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$ 32 | € 30

DIMENSIONS
54x156 mm (6 ⅛")

COUNTRY
China

This specially crafted module is a true powerhouse opening-up with roasted coffee notes, flanked by hazelnut and wood. The second half is dominated by leather and cream, with coffee returning with more spicy nuances. Two different American whiskeys are tested, a high quality 100% corn bottled in bond and a creative, complex bourbon finished in milk stout barrels.

SILENCIO LOS RIOS TORO

BUTTERY AND FRAGRANT, AROMATIC AND CLASSY.

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●	$ - | € 15

DIMENSIONS
52x152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
Dominical Republic

Extremely creamy and buttery, entices the smoker with deep layers of custard, honey, fresh flowers and a pollen note reminiscent of chamomile. Balance is supreme, as well as the class of this smooth tobacco. The high complexity and the mild body ask for rich, yet not too intense or marked spirits, rich in orchard fruit and various nuances, such as the Taiwanese and the English selected products.

ABERFELDY
15yo Red Wine Cask Collection

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	15 Years Old	ex-bourbon/cabernet s.

Very fruity, the juicy character of honey, peaches and red apple are sided by a suadent, approachable note of red jam introduced by the finish in red wine casks. Spices are always present yet subtle, a very nice exercise of refinement. Since from the noses the pairing looks well designed, with the intense leather finding a more animal dimension thanks to the red berries of the whisky. Spices are dancing very nicely in both the products. On the palate the herbaceous character of the cigar disappears, leaving space to a nice spicy coffee with hints of dark berries. Alcohol is perfectly managed, enveloping the tobacco enriching its structure. The finale of ripe blackberries is a true resounding pleasure.

Pairing score	91

GLENMORANGIE
Nectar d'Or 12yo

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	12 Years Old	ex-bourbon/sauternes

Balanced between the fruity spirit and the sweet notes of Sauternes, the nose is slightly more vinous, while the texture of the palate is rich and mellow, with vanilla pod and chocolate. Citrus notes in the long finish. The noses play yet remaining quite distant; the robust burnt wood and black pepper of the cigar are only partially balanced by the vinous character of the spirit. Despite the good sweetness of the latter, the spices become almost pungent and herbaceous, maybe due to the lack of a creamy, dense structure of the spirit. The white chocolate of the Scotch is definitely better partner for the woody tobacco in the palate; the overall impression is the addition of sultanas and nuts, with a major vanilla pod, enriching the overall sensation, now truly velvety. Long-lasting finish, of white chocolate and leather.

Pairing score	88

MELLOW CORN
Straight Corn Bottled in Bond

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
100% Corn Whiskey	4 Years Old	New

Produced from a mash of at least 80 percent corn and aged for four years in a once-used Bourbon barrel, features a light, straw color, for a sweet, delicately spicy and oaky taste, rather rich in body and almost chewable. Toasty wood, honey and hazelnuts, with a sweet undertone; the noses are interesting together, a delicate boiserie in Spanish cedar, with orange honey, creamy cinnamon and mild banana hints. The palates are dancing together, with the toast of the cigar still expressed on the woody/nutty notes, and the creamy banana of the whisky adding nuances of sweetness and layers of custard cream; sweet, nice and velvety. A double puff helps bringing out the character, with a coffee-driven profile balancing the sweetness of the honey/cream. Sweet, quite long dessert finish.

Pairing score	90

RESERVOIR
Holland's MIlkman

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	53.3% - 106.6	$$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

Very special bourbon, with oak and vanilla as side notes of the main cherry flavor, pretty intense. The texture makes it a different experience; a unique, rarely perceived creamy sensation on the palate. A particular product with a high ABV, a true exercise of creativity. Noses depth is enhanced, with the sweet cherry of the spirit making the wood of the cigar different, like lacquered furniture with potpourri. Sugar crust and candies on grandma's desktop. Rather unique. The sip is probably too intense and extracted for the body of the cigar, which only adds some roasted coffee to the sugary cherry of the spirit. Even the creamy texture of the whisky is overwhelming. The finish is not unpleasant, but still unbalanced, with some bitter oakiness added to the candy sweetness, with some herbal nuances.

Pairing score	86

KAVALAN
Podium

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	American oak

Evocative and balanced, with a perfect ABV. Creates an intense bouquet of perfumed cedar, tropical and orchard fruit, great quality vanilla and caramel. Complex and very unique nose pairing; incense, sweet Cuban cedar, then a tropical excellent fruit with very rich, creamy custard. Never ending. On the palate the fruit of the spirit explodes, but the tobacco proves to be at the level, adding sweet leather and nuts. The finish is earthy, with the cigar moving away from its light profile and adding spices of great complexity.

Pairing score	90

THE LAKES
Whiskymaker's Equinox

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
England	46.6% - 93.2	$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	Ex-Oloroso, ex-Moscatel

Soft yet juicy, Equinox's bright taste of fresh apricots and orange are relatively fragrant. Warm apple, orchard fruits and sweet spices for a sophisticated sherried profile. Both on the nose and on the palate the marriage is bright and well crafted; the spirit is round and more intense than expected, with juicy orchard fruit and a clean sherry essence which helps bringing out the white pepper of the tobacco, in a rising intensity of the Dominican stick. Some of the dark raisins bring out earthy, deep notes not originally expected.

Pairing score	88

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INTERACTIVE

SPIRITS

"Alcohol may be man's worst enemy,
but the Bible says love your enemy."
Frank Sinatra

The Mysteries of Flocculation

A Journey into the Chemistry of Filtration.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

As with every product of agricultural transformation, all spirits contain natural residues invisible to the human eye but integral to the solution we enjoy sipping.

Depending on primary sources, distillation choices, cask maturation, and dilution, ethyl esters of long-chain fatty acids (LCFA) and larger alkyl esters will be more or less present in any spirit. These molecules are responsible for the phenomenon called flocculation – or floc – when spirits below 46% ABV undergo drastic temperature changes, like asuspended particles.

Thermic shocks, indeed, force these molecules out of the spirit's solution and let them aggregate into flocs that float around or precipitate at the bottom of a chilled bottle, as well as on the surface of a dram on the rocks. Normally, a simple swirl will let that haze disap-

pear, but it can be off-putting for the amateur punter. Chemical analysis proved that floc is not a byproduct of bad distillation; it does not alter the taste or the aroma and is just a matter of aesthetic pleasure. Nonetheless, considering how important the market has regarded the brilliance and the transparency of color for mass consumption spirits in the past century, most spirit-makers adopted chill-filtering techniques to clean the liquid of those particles and avoid the issue altogether.

Yet, over the past twenty years or so, many consumers started requesting a more “straight from the barrel” experience when enjoying their favorite spirit. The movement toward a more “authentic” product – either whisky, rum or the lot – brought along the questioning of chill-filtration as evidence of the inferior inherent quality of the industrially made products vs. the neo-traditional small-batch craft ones.

As stated, spirits above 46% ABV never suffer from flocculation, as the higher alcohol proof by volume permanently prevents it. Indeed, most small-batch or craft spirits presented from the onset had higher ABV percentages. Obviously, increasing the ABV was not simply meant to prevent the need for chill-filtration but to mainly offer a more robust sip, perceived as more authentic and old-style.

“Unnatural" color and transparency also came to be questioned as clear evidence (pun intended!) of industrial alterations to the nature of mass-marketed spirits. As with many other agricultural products struck by the “search for authenticity" turn, marketing strategies played a crucial role in spreading such aesthetic tendencies in the world of spirits. Chemical studies are still analyzing what changes when those ethyl esters of long-chain fatty acids and larger alkyl esters are filtered out of the spirits.

Putting personal preferences aside, chemometric studies illustrate that un-filtered spirits should offer more intense aromatic experiences, as “LCFAs alter the intermolecular interaction forces related to esters and ethanol, subsequently affecting the volatile profile and modifying flavor's sensory perception."

How does this translate to the human nose, though? Well, it is all but inherently evident. Blind tastings demonstrate that it is extremely difficult to distinguish between a chill-filtered and a non-filtered product. After all, one should compare similar products to have a definite perspective, but it is unlikely that a producer will bottle the same product in the two versions. Evidently, distillers make plenty of tests before opting between the two styles, but those tests usually do not arrive on the market. Many small-batch producers started to offer their products in multiple instances, from the new make to the final aged spirit. Yet, small-batch products are a different story (and pricing!) from mass-market ones.

Moreover, since all spirits must be developed according to their final intended form from the onset, it is not simply a matter of merely opting for chill filtration or not. There is undoubtedly more consensus about the negative abuse of colorants and chill filtration to correct low-quality products. Still, it is much more difficult to discern how much non-filtered spirits can genuinely offer to the smart consumer.

A turning-point event was Ian MacMillan's choice in 2010 to raise the strength of all Burn Stewart's single malts – Bunnahabhain, Deanston, Tobermory, and Ledaig – to 46.3% ABV while also discontinuing the practice of chill filtration. He was adamant in critiquing how much "matter" was wasted on filter plates, depriving his scotch of plenty of fats and oils rich in aromatic intensity and texture. Despite the massive costs for such a large distillery production, MacMillan defended his decision to improve the quality and valorize the malts and the aging techniques at length. Even if it took some time, the market seemed to have prized him for his bold choice. Yet, while most expert tasters agree that the new products offer an overall improved image, very few can frankly concur that it was due to the abandonment of chill filtration.

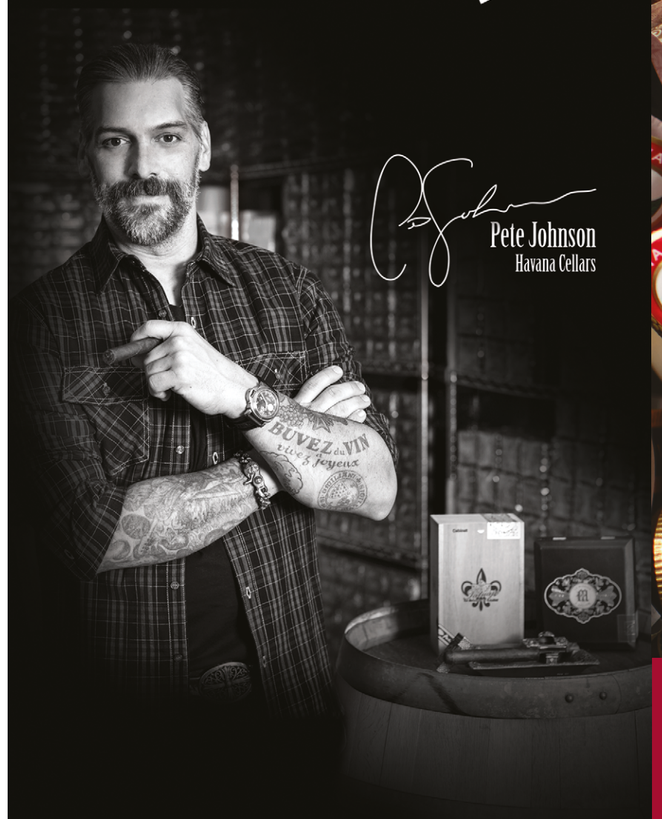
Considering how many factors are involved in whisky making, filtration is simply one of the many aspects that have been touched by a complex transformative process that has led most spirit-makers to revise their approach to premium products profoundly.

As is often the case, the truth probably lies between the two extremes or, instead, in how consumers eventually enjoy the products. The blunt truth is that it should be learned how to properly appreciate a certain product, regardless of personal tastes. For instance, certain spirits are not intended to be chilled, while others are explicitly made for that purpose.

The current market situation seems to be a win-win situation for everyone, offering plenty of "authentic" spirits for the enthusiast as well as dedicated bottles for mixology and other uses. The problem is that marketing is never fair: un-filtered spirits became synonymous with premium products regardless of their true productive quality, raising costs and filling the shelves with astute labeling and murky bottles (again, pun intended!).

The truth is that nowadays, it is getting increasingly difficult to discern between producers who authentically pursue the path of a small-batch, high-quality, non-filtered production and those who simply rebrand their image following the trend. As in this case, there is a fundamental productive difference; the only solution would be a general shift in regulations toward smart labels that honestly explain what is in a bottle and how it has been made.

tatuaje



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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).

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Chocolate & Peat

Different peats for surprising integration of tastes or major risks.

by **Simone Poggi**

Scotch whiskeys are capable of developing several different aromatic profiles and bodies and are presented with very different ABVs and age statements.

There is a true galaxy of available products, thus it is important to differentiate among the several different proposals. In the past it was possible to very coherently identify the aromatic profile of the spirit with the geographical region the whiskeys were produced and, in some cases, this is still reasonably true, as there are very few delicate and floral/herbal bottlings coming out of Islay. However, experiments (and trends) have created many bottlings which are released by distilleries coming from regions not truly famous for that specific aromatic profile. We will then try to identify the whiskies by the aging casks and the aromatic profiles rather than from the region they come from.

Peated (intensely, in sherry casks, Bowmore 10yo Aston Martin, Ardbeg Uigedail) - this is a great opportunity to explore dark chocolate pairing, as even high % of cocoa (70-90%) ones are well-suited, with the red berries capable of enriching the roasted, bitter profile, and the peaty smoke adding similarity aromas. A burnt, over-cooked red-fruit jam is the natural, nice, final result. PX maybe preferrable rather than Oloroso when growing in percentage of cocoa, with the raisins, cake and gourmand sensations better supporting the dry sensations of very bitter chocolate rather than the nutty dry essence of Oloroso.

Just a warning: as all the similarity pairings the taste buds can saturate quite quickly, quantities are necessarily limited for this attempt…
Peated (intensely, in bourbon casks, many Islay 10-16 yo products) – the common peat intensity can help pairing with dark chocolate in a similarity attempt, thus 60-80% cocoa content products can be selected.
Unfortunately, Islay whiskies have their own different characteristics, and not all of them are easy to pair. A caramel-centric, butterscotch Lagavulin 16yo can better support 80% cocoa chocolate, while fresher, coastal and citrusy Caol Ilas may be more complex as the citrus and acetic, tannic content may become more pungent with time; in the latter case we would opt for a lower cocoa percentage, or even for a more rounded product (milk chocolate with nuts as an example). Laphroaigs are complicated, with medicinal herbs reaching bitter hints at times, requiring more buttery products to balance the aromatic profile, such as a mixed chocolate ganache, a velvet truffle, maybe even with some fruity components, such as berries.

Peated (mild, in bourbon or sherry refill casks, Highland Park 16yo Wings of the Eagle, Bunnahabhain 12, Bowmore Golden Reef) – delicately peated Bunnahabhain, with its animal, leathery dna and Bowmore, with its tropical fruit at best, or even islandic whiskies such as HP ones, featuring a delicate, candle style smokiness can be paired with great results with several different chocolate styles. Milk chocolate is always a win, for a similitude pairing based on the nice creaminess of both the products. However, we could even test dark chocolate with cocoa percentages up to 75%, adding layers of roasted and burnt sensations, increasing the peaty smoke, and transforming the aromatic profile in darker ones.

Attention: some peated whiskies are very complicated pairing exercises, such as Ardbeg Wee Bestie, Ardbeg 10yo, and some more extremely earthy, marine, coastal, "fishy" products. The extremely citrusy element of Ardbeg 10yo makes it complex to pair with chocolate, if not with white chocolate or truly complicated mixed chocolate ganache, as any other pairing maybe very unbalanced towards lemon essence, which pairs only rarely with cocoa. The "fishy" anchovies style of aromas of the Bestie are not only very difficult for the tobacco marriage, but also for chocolate, as very few cuisine recipes are including fish and cocoa…

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Cosmopolitan

A Deep Dive into the Icon of Urban Sophistication.

by **Zac Mitchers**

In the realm of mixology, few cocktails evoke the same level of sophistication and allure as the Cosmopolitan. With its striking pink hue, tantalizing blend of flavors, and storied history, it stands as a timeless icon of urban elegance. From its mysterious origins to its enduring popularity, the Cosmopolitan has left an indelible mark on cocktail culture worldwide.

The exact origins of the Cosmopolitan are shrouded in myth and mystery, adding to its allure and mystique. While multiple origin stories exist, one prevailing narrative traces the cocktail's roots to the vibrant cocktail scene of 1970s San Francisco. Legend has it that bartender Cheryl Cook created the original Cosmopolitan at The Strand, a popular gay bar in the city. Another account attributes the drink's invention to bartender Toby Cecchini at The Odeon in Manhattan during the 1980s. Regardless of its precise origins, the Cosmopolitan quickly gained popularity, particularly among the fashionable crowds of New York City. Its signature combination of vodka, triple sec, lime juice, and cranberry juice captured the imaginations of cocktail enthusiasts, paving the way for its ascent to iconic status.

As the Cosmopolitan gained traction, bartenders and mixologists began to put their own spin on the classic recipe, resulting in a plethora of inventive variations and adaptations. Some opted to substitute the traditional vodka base with alternative spirits such as gin or tequila, while others experimented with different fruit juices and liqueurs to create new flavor profiles. One notable variation is the Elderflower Cosmopolitan, which replaces triple sec with elderflower liqueur for a delicate floral twist. Another popular adaptation is the Cosmopolitan Martini, which swaps cranberry juice for pomegranate juice, adding depth and complexity to the drink. In recent years, craft cocktail bars and mixologists have taken the Cosmopolitan to new heights of sophistication, utilizing fresh, high-quality ingredients and innovative techniques to create artisanal interpretations of the classic recipe. These modern twists on the Cosmo emphasize creativity, flavor balance, and presentation, appealing to a new generation of cocktail enthusiasts.

The Cosmopolitan holds significant cultural symbolism, representing luxury, glamour, and urban sophistication. Its association with high fashion, celebrity culture, and upscale nightlife has made it a favorite among trendsetters and socialites.

In conclusion, the Cosmopolitan cocktail stands as a symbol of urban sophistication and refinement, captivating drinkers with its vibrant colors, tantalizing flavors, and rich cultural history. From its humble beginnings to its status as a global icon, the Cosmo has left an indelible mark on cocktail culture, inspiring countless imitators and enthusiasts along the way. Here's to the Cosmopolitan – may it continue to delight and enchant for generations to come. Cheers!

PREPARATION

Add vodka, triple sec, lime juice, and cranberry juice to the shaker. Shake the ingredients vigorously for about 15-20 seconds until well-chilled. Strain the mixture into the glass.

ADVICE

Cool the cocktail glass well, preferably stored in the freezer. Garnish with a lime twist or wedge.

INGREDIENTS

- 40 ml vodka
- 15ml triple sec
- 15ml fresh lemon juice
- 30ml cranberry juice

GLASS

Martini glass.

"If you can't send money send tobacco"

-George Washington

"And Whiskey"

-Reservoir Distillery

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TASTE

"There comes a time in every woman's life when the only thing that helps is a glass of champagne."
Bette Davis

Blue Cheese

A short journey to discover a very particular category of cheeses,. whose peculiar flavor is given by the action of selected strains of mold.

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

Although the frontiers of taste have long been overcome and explored and are still the subject of continuous experimentation today, personal "limits" are often dictated by one's gastronomic culture. What some may consider a delicacy may disgust others, and there could be many examples. In some Asian areas, cooking insects or pets is an ancient practice, but no one would ever taste canine soup in Europe or America. Then try handing a blue cheese to an African: it will be unthinkable for him to eat spoiled food. Yet the latter is a product resulting from a dairy technique refined over time, whichonly sometimes manages to conquer everyone's palate: in fact, only some of those who love cheese like blue cheese.

The term blue cheese or fromage bleu (in French) indicates a category of cheeses which, although made starting from the usual three ingredients (milk, rennet, salt), involves the addition of particular molds responsible for the physical and gustatory alterations of the final product. What today appears to be a food technology was born by chance hundreds of years ago, when it was customary to leave the cheese to mature in caves and cellars, where mold often attacked the cheese

altering the taste and appearance. And, consequently, compromising its salability. However, in various parts of Europe and at different times, it was realized that not all molds made a cheese inedible; on the contrary, sometimes they made it sweeter and more aromatic, developing entirely new aromas. Today however, thanks to the necessary and rigorous compliance with the hygiene standards imposed by the various national and non-national legislations, nothing is left to chance, and even the molds are selected and inoculated precisely to guarantee both safety for the consumer and productive constancy.

Let's start with molds, or rather fungi, multicellular microorganisms belonging to the ascomycetes, which are heterotrophic. That is, they cannot synthesize independently and form other inorganic molecules, but all the organic molecules they need are available from the object they attach themselves to. Therefore, molds need nourishment and oxygen to live, which is why food becomes moldy from the outside. Let's leave aside the modes of action of a mold momentarily to focus on its biological profile.

As already mentioned mold contamination is a severe problem for the food industry, however, we have learned to manage it over the years. Through a rigorous scientific selection study, we have identified certain harmless strains for the food industry and used them as starters. In the dairy sector, to obtain products classifiable as "blue cheese," molds of the penicillium genus are used, usually of the Roquefort or glaucoma species, depending on the specific product and any specifications that regulate its production. These molds are added to the milk in the boiler before obtaining the curd, which will then be roughly broken to get a very soft starting dough. In order not to delve too much into the dairy technicalities (which vary between the various products and could never be correctly summarized), we need to know that once the starting shape has been obtained, the cheese undergoes an initial maturation, usually in a humid environment. very high (over 85% R.H.) and generally cold (10-15°C) to allow a minimum hardening of the rind, such as to enable good maturation. With this term, we return to "mechanics," that is, how molds operate once grafted into milk. As anticipated, any mold requires oxygen to survive and, closed in a wheel of cheese, would have little chance of developing or developing in the way the producer desires. For this reason, each wheel is pierced with needles to allow air to enter inside the cheese, provide sufficient oxygen for the proliferation of mold, and enable the carbon dioxide by fermentation to escape. If you analyze a wheel of any blue cheese cut in half, you will notice that the typical greenish-blue stripes

follow precise lines, i.e., the channel dug by the needles. The "puncturing" operation, therefore, is not carried out immediately after the mold has been made. Still, when the external paste (zest) begins to thicken, this prevents a paste that is soft from closing the holes created, nullifying the operation.

After providing the raw material (milk) and the oxygen necessary for their survival, we try to understand better how penicillium works. First, molds carry out a vital deacidification action by attacking lactic acid, which also involves softening the product. In addition, they deconstruct the cheese paste through the combination of a lipolytic activity (digestion of fat) and proteolytic activity of casein (an action of conversion of a protein - in this specific case, casein - into more straightforward elements). These two actions of lipolysis and proteolysis are responsible for developing the typical aromas of blue cheese. With these actions, molds significantly degrade proteins and amino acids with molecules of thiols (which return sulfurous aromas), amines (which provide fishy notes), and ammonia scents. This is the crucial action that, to generalize just as an example, narrows the aromatic spectrum of blue cheeses, allowing the perception of an aromatic range that ranges from the undergrowth to mineral, from truffle to actual mold, from wet wood to smoky hints. Aromas are so intense that they eclipse the intrinsic aromatic components of the starting milk, eliminating them in favor of aromatic nuances, which, otherwise, in other dairy products not classifiable as blue cheese, would indicate a production defect due to contamination.

In light of what has been reported so far, it is clear that it is not possible to provide an exhaustive image of products that, although niche, fall into a very broad product category. Add to this how the stories, the typical features, the production methods, and the maturing times vary so much from country to country, as well as within the same production specifications, that a general description of blue cheeses is not easy.

We, therefore, offer a quick overview of the most representative blue cheeses worldwide, providing minimal information that can tickle the curiosity of testing products that are as particular as they are unique in taste.

ROQUEFORT's first traces of existence date back to the 8th century AD. According to the production specification (it currently enjoys the French AOC), it is obtained from sheep's milk using spores of penicillium roqueforti (which acquired its name from the cheese), and it must mature for between 90 days and nine months in typical caves of the Roquefort-sur-Soulzon area.

BLEU D'AUVERGNE is another great French cheese that enjoys the AOC. It is obtained by inoculating penicillium glaucum into cow's milk. In the past, it was obtained by placing the wheel in a bag together with slices of rye bread. Maturation can vary from 2 weeks to 4-6 weeks.

FOURME D'AMBERT is a cheese with historical roots in the times of the Gallic druids and currently enjoys the DOP recognized by the European Union. It is produced in the Forez mountains area (France). The milk used is cow's milk, fed with grass from pastures and fodder and enriched by penicillium roqueforti. It requires a minimum maturation of 28 days. By many, it is considered the sweetest of the blues.

GORGONZOLA: Another cheese with roots dating back to the year 1000. Currently protected by the European Union's DOP mark, it is produced in the Italian regions of Lombardy and Piedmont from cow's milk. The specification does not establish a particular penicillium: although roqueforti is much more widely used, some producers also use chrysogenum. It is available in two versions, for which different maturation times are foreseen. For sweet Gorgonzola, a time between 50 and 150 days is expected; for spicy Gorgonzola, the range is between 80 and 270 days.

BLUE STILTON Cheese of English origin, born in the 18th century. To be regulated, it must be made starting from pasteurized cow's milk, with a graft of penicillium roqueforti, and ensuring that it matures for between 3 and 6 months. To obtain the PDO it must be produced in the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire. Curiously, the town of Stilton, which gave its name to the cheese, is outside these counties (Cambridgeshire), so the cheese made there, although respecting the production specifications, cannot be called "blue stilton".

QUESO DE CABRALES It is produced in the Spanish region of Asturias, using a mix of cow's, sheep's and goat's milk, processed raw and with the addition of peniciullium roqueforti. The maturation, which varies around 5 months, must be carried out in the natural caves of the Picos de Europa, where the humidity is very high. This production is also protected by the European Union PDO.

DANABLU was born between 1920 and 1927 in Denmark, but only in 1996 did it obtain recognition of the PGI mark by the European Union. It is obtained from cow's milk by inoculation of peniciullium roqueforti. The expected maturation is 3 months and this gives a particular softness to the consistency of the pasta.

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威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
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Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用者經常進行激烈分析，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，能夠幫助許許多多用戶的散開：標籤。

無論是大的還是小的，有時用玻璃挑剔，有時是雙面（正面和背面），有時完整的巴克，標籤傳說給我們許多的信息，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用的。

愛爾蘭生產將其瓶子命名為威士忌;這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們說沒有"e"的威士忌;在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱讓大了蘇格蘭語。單一麥芽蘇格蘭威士忌保證了單一釀酒廠的原產地。一些蘇格蘭釀酒廠增加了生產區域，以做調產品的地域性。

"歲月"之後經常出現的數字與產品的最低年齡有關。最低年齡因為，與釀暖不同桶的混合相比，最年輕的數字是指您的。示例：使用三個桶分別裝盛8年，12年和29年的威士忌將顯示"8歲"字樣，無論舊桶的老化情況如何。

公司有責任報告其他桶的年齡，但這不是強制性的。有時，您可以找到沒有年齡的威士忌：沒有追憶，沒有陳假或假冒產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中通用於最低3年表示的混釀之則。製片人選擇不提年齡，這仍然是未知的；它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉悅。

在標籤上，始終報告酒精含量，必須至少為40%;在這個數字下我們不能設威士忌。如果等級更高，有時公司會報告"Cask Strength"（英國貝芽）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提取。然而，某發使您可以使用用水稀釋的威士忌的較低等級的木桶強度威士忌，特別是如果前者備有一定的年齡。

"Un Chillfiltered"這個詞讓我們知道威士忌沒有被冷過濾，以及"沒有顏色"，或"沒有添加焦糖"（或其他類似的詞），解釋說沒有添加焦糖到以顏色。

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

桶的組合符合精確的標準：您可以將來自同一釀酒廠，不同釀酒廠，甚至蘇格（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，沒有界線（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（參午前它被稱為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合）。遇书Grain Whiskeys；這個術語是指用各種穀物生產的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到風盛行穀物裙圍的各種詞語，或者使用的唯一穀物（果膠威士忌，玉米威士忌）。

我們試圖解釋各種標籤上最常用的術語;沒有絕對的紀律，每個製酒商都做自己的事情，但是，遵循這些指導原則，在這個瘋閒而獨特的世界中，您將更容易自拔。

本小週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）。

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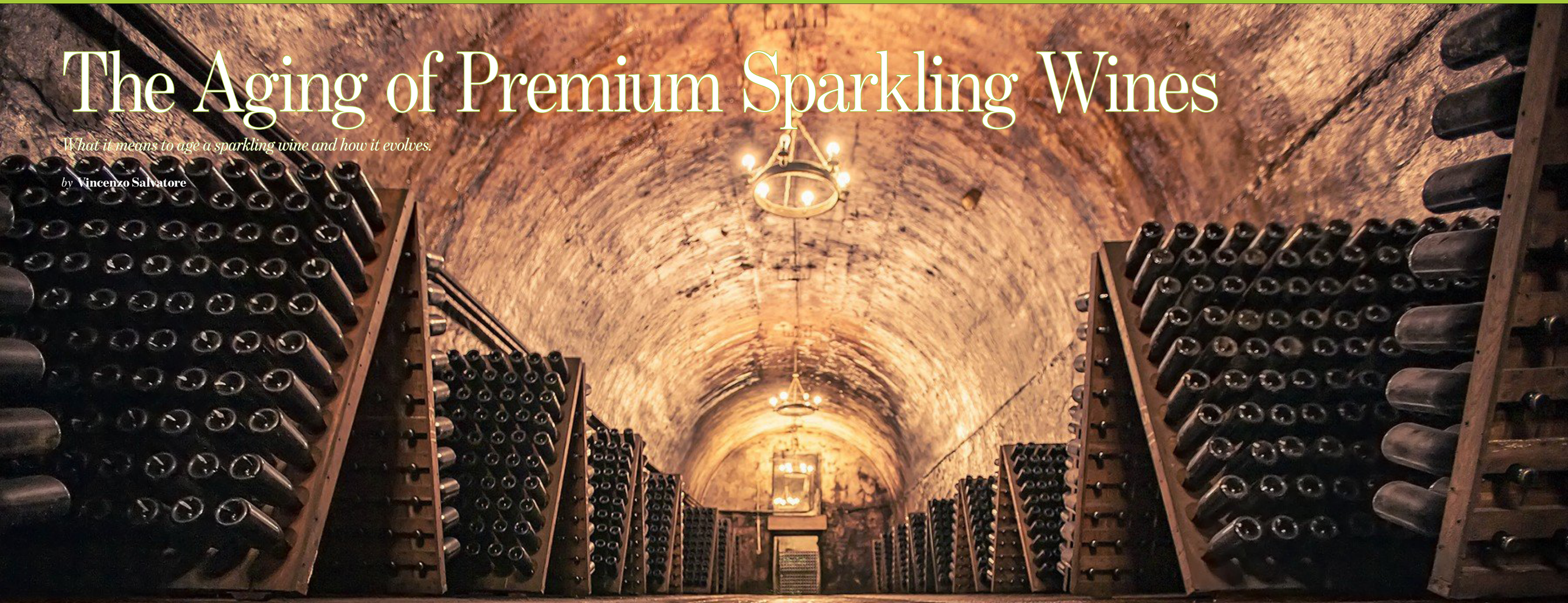
The Aging of Premium Sparkling Wines

What it means to age a sparkling wine and how it evolves.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**



Premium sparkling wines like French champagne, Italian spumante, Spanish cava, and other similar high-quality products are made following the méthode champenoise or traditional method winemaking technique.

The main feature of the traditional method is that the base wine must be harvested and fermented with the goal of undergoing a second fermentation in the bottle to develop bubbles. This means the grapes must be harvested earlier in the season, when they still have higher level of acidity and an aromatic palette that will benefit from the second fermentation. The tirage (or second fermentation) happens in the bottle by adding a special liquer de tirage (a mixture of special yeasts, sugars, and wine) that reenacts the condition of fermentation under the pressure of crown-capped bottles. The carbon dioxide developed by this second fermentation gets trapped in the bottle and creates the fascinating bubbles and unique fizzy taste we all love. Furthermore, there is a second important chemical process happening right after involving the yeast autolysis. When the yeast cells consume all fuel under the high pressure of a closed bottle (at more than six atm), they die becoming inert lees. During the prolonged contact between the wine and the lees, the wine enzymes start to break down lees into mannoproteins (mannose-containing glycoproteins) and polysaccharides that will enhance the aromatic profile. While the prise de mousse (the formation of bubbles) can be quite fast, the proper blending of the autolysis byproducts into the wine can take many months, if not years: standard traditional method requires at least 15 months of resting sur lie (with the lees), while premium wines spend at least 36 months resting and much longer (from 5 to even 12 years). Each wine designation (French AOC, Italian DOC, German Predikat, etc.) prescribes a minimum aging time for the various predetermined sparkling wine types, but the common aspect is that sparkling wines are de facto already aged during this phase.

Moreover, base wines for making sparkling wines can either come from a single harvest (millésimé or vintage) or can be a blend of multiple harvests that can undergo aging for a number of years in steel tanks or oak casks (cuvée or multivintage). The reasons behind such a choice can vary. Refermenting a single-vintage base wine is more expensive and difficult: the harvest must be exceptional and must be elaborated to develop a base wine that can improve with aging, thus offering more enthusing possibilities to the autolysis happening in the sur lie resting. In theory, vintage sparkling wines can offer higher quality, but multivintage wines are easier to construe and develop, as winemakers can rely on multiple combinations to obtain the best bases wine for their various needs. In any case, both ways are integral to traditional method sparkling wines, as they showcase the wide variety of possibilities of this peculiar productive style.

Now, in the case of millésimé sparkling wines we can have a final wine that has already been aged for an even longer minimum time (at least 1+3 years for Champagne, for instance). What can be the purpose of bottle aging such a wine? Several years were already necessary to develop bubbles and to let the wine blend in with the lees' proteins into a more complex product, but the fresh notes of the refermentation must still be there to balance the final profile. Yet, many of the exceptional traditional method sparkling wines, made with vintage harvests and long sur lie resting, do require some more time in the bottle to perfect their expressiveness. In-

deed, once the master cellar determined that the right amount of time has passed, they start performing remuage (or riddling): the bottles rest with a 35° degree angle to let the inert lees slowly posing down behind the crew caps, and the remuage consists in slowly rotating the bottles and reducing the inclination to allow all lees to precipitate. This ulterior phase can last from few days to several weeks, depending on the previous duration of the sur lie resting. Once ready, the disogorgement can happen: the caps with the lees are frozen so that, in opening the bottles, the carbon dioxide will propel them out, cleaning the wine from all residues. The inescapable loss of volume is usually filled with a liquer d'expedition (a special mix of more base wine and a fixed amount of sugar) to properly "dose" the sparkling wine according to the various categories: pas dosè, brut, extra brut, dry, demi sèc, etc. The disgorgement is unavoidably traumatic for the wine and more time is needed to let the liquer d'expedition blend in with the sparkling wine. How long can it take?

Surely, some professionals deem that sparkling wines should not sit too long in shelves or cellars. One or two years should be more than sufficient to allow a great sparkling wine to showcase its true character, but is it enough? To be fair, many other experts are adamant in waiting at least several years. A more proper question should be to ask oneself what kind of sparkling wine one wants to drink: something fresh and reinvigorating with a vigorous character or something soothing and nuanced with a multifaceted character? Sparkling wines can do a lot, depending on the productive path they followed. As a matter of fact, top champagne bottles like Dom Pérignon Vintage, Louis Roederer Cristal, Veuve Clicquot La Grande Dame, Pol Roger Sir Winston Churchill (not to mention the even more exclusive bottlings), or spumante bottles like Giulio Ferrari Riserva del Fondatore and Ca' del Bosco Annamaria Clementi, etc. end up requiring more than a few years to fully disclose themselves. In fact, depending on how the original vintage was, they usually reach their best shape after at least five years from disgorgement. It is not a fixed rule for sure, as each vintage of these incredible wines can vary quite a lot: that is the beauty of the game!

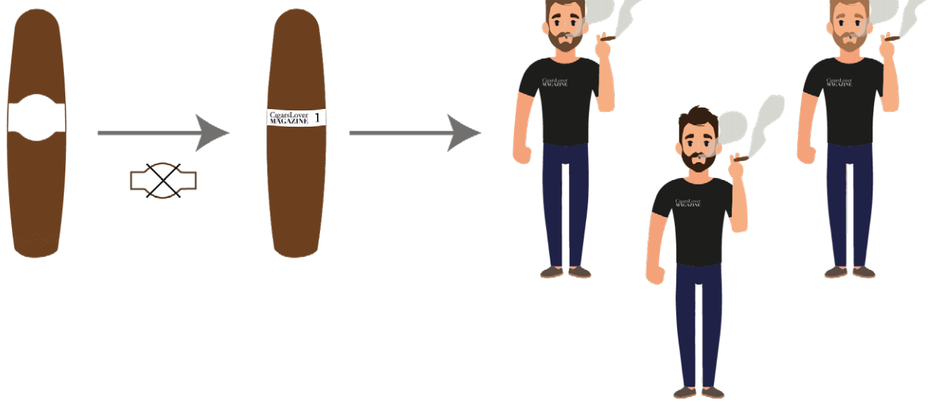
What happens to them during this time? They certainly lose out in freshness but gain in aromatic complexity and width. These sparkling wines are not intended to play along the notes of immediate drinkability and freshness, but along those of layered textures and elaborated nuances. If drank too close to disgorgement, they will boast such a vigor that will hide their true incredible profile. With time, part of that bubbliness and juvenile minerality will fade away to let notes of concentrated fruit, patisserie, toasted dry fruit, biscuit, and truffle to phase in. These are utterly unique wines for sure, but is such an option valid for less exceptional and expensive sparkling wines too? Well, as we saw, millésimé are intended to offer sparkling wines with a wider aromatic profile, so waiting at least few years can always be a good option. How long one should wait is a different matter. Not all premium sparkling wines can withstand more than five years of cellar aging, and certainly even less are capable of further developing after ten or more years (very few can reach twenty and more, but that is a treat for the luckiest people out there!). Finally, one should never forget that cellar aging a premium sparkling wine requires even more care than with standard wines. The proper cellar conditions are necessary to avoid ruining them: temperature must be between 10 and 12 °C to avoid thermic shocks, humidity must be around 70% to preserver the cork, light and noise must be absent. These are not easy conditions to meet even for the most fervent aficionado, and obviously vintage bottles of premium sparkling wines are rarer and unavoidably expensive. A good place to start for discovering the secret world of aged sparkling wines is to attend thematic tastings: these can be wonderful opportunities to better understand the complexity of a mature sparkling wine at a fraction of its cost and without the risks of the wait. From there on, with time and patience (and money, alas!) one has the possibility to decide what is the best personal path to enjoy what will always be the most seductive wine out there: prost!

Blind Tasting

88 **SPIRITS**
90 Rum
98 Whisky

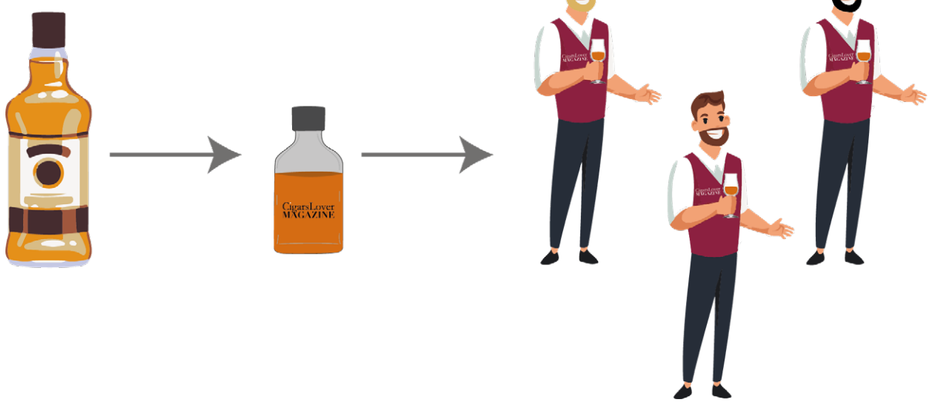
104 **CIGARS**
105 Churchill
108 Piramide
111 Robusto
115 Toro

HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?



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

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



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

The tastings are compared to create the definitive review and the rating, expressed in a 100 scale.

Cigars & Spirits Results

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.

4

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

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

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.

Rum

EL DORADO
Rare Collection Albion 2004

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guyana	60.1% | 120.2	$$$

—NOSE—

Scents of banana, caramel, oak, a mix of nuts, and rich roasted coffee beans aromas.

—PALATE—

Deep aromas of dark chocolate, dried fruits, coconut, and oak.

— FINISH —

Long. Dark chocolate, dark fruits, and a mix of exotic spices.

Rich, deep and complex. The flavor profile is wide and satisfying.

95

APPLETON ESTATE
17 Year Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	49% | 98	$$$$

—NOSE—

Scents tropical fruits, including banana, leather, a touch of licorice, and some nail polish.

—PALATE—

A little on the dry side. Oak, tropical fruits, some spices, recalling nutmeg and bitter orange peel.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium long, with some medicinal herbs, tea, and leather.

A complex and structured rum, with a nice depth.

91

DICTADOR
Aurum

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Colombia	40% | 80	$$

—NOSE—

Deep notes of vanilla, gingerbread, dark chocolate. After a while, salted caramel, and roasted coffee.

—PALATE—

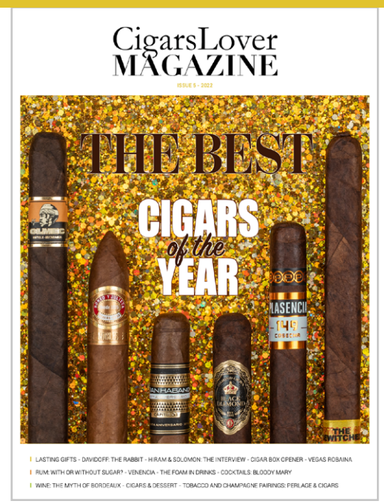
Warm, with rich roasted coffee beans notes, oak, licorice, and honey.

— FINISH —

The finish is long. Spices, and roasted coffee aromas.

Deep and round, with a long finish. Complexity and smooth.

90



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PAGE
INTERACTIVE

MONTEBELLO
Rhum Vieux 3 Year Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	42% | 84	$

—NOSE—
Scents of sugar cane, vesou, licorice, and candied fruits scents. Then fresh balsamic notes.

—PALATE—
Sugar cane, a mix of spices, including pepper, star anise, and nutmeg. Then some brine and candied fruits.

— FINISH —
Medium long finish. Candied fruits, pepper, balsamic notes, and licorice. A little on the dry side.

A young rum boasting great richness
.

90

WAREHOUSE
#1 nye/WK Blanc

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	63% | 126	$$

—NOSE—
The alcohol is pretty evident. Scents of nail polish together with an intense passion fruit aroma.

—PALATE—
Warm and fruity, with exotic fruits and a sugary flavor to it. Oily.

— FINISH —
Medium long. Brine and exotic fruits.

Funky, yet boasting a nicely structured flavor profile. Complex.

88

BOLOGNE
Le Distillat

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	75.5% | 151	$$

—NOSE—
The sugar cane is the main protagonist, with a rich and thick aroma. Then petrichor, and a floral hint.

—PALATE—
Almost round to the palate Despite the huge ABV. Sugarcane and berries, together with peppery hints. A little dry.

— FINISH —
Long, with sugarcane, a pinch of pepperiness, and juniper berry.

Thick, with a nice mouthfeel, and fulfilling. Fairly complex flavor profile.

88

SAMPAN
Cellar Series Cask Strength Barrel N.11

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Vietnam	55.5% | 111	$$

—NOSE—
Scents of oak, sulfur, and mineral aromas, together with a touch of brine, wood spices, and winey hints.

—PALATE—
Direct, with oak, vanilla, and rich fruity notes, with a nice tangerine note to it.

— FINISH —
The persistence is long. Oak, raisins, and wood specs.

The flavor profile is built on strength and intensity, less on complexity.

88

KIRK AND SWEENEY
12 Year Old

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

—NOSE—
Scents of apple pie, a little wood, sugar-coated pecans.

PALATE
On the palate, the sugar-coated pecan nuts are still present, joined now by vanilla beans, rich balsamic aromas, and molasses.

— FINISH —
The finish is medium, with sweet vanilla and caramel notes.

A sweet and easy to enjoy rum. The flavor profile is smooth and round.

87

EMINENTE
Reserva

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Cuba	43.5% | 87	$

—NOSE—
Sherry under spirit, a little oak, roasted coffee beans scents. A hint of vanilla and a touch of mint.

—PALATE—
Oak, honey, a mix of spices with peppers, dried fruits, mainly recalling apricot.

— FINISH —
Medium long. Oak, caramel, and a hint of pepper.

Well balanced and round. The flavor profile is fairly wide.
.

87

EL RON PROHIBIDO
XO

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Mexico	40% | 80	$$

—NOSE—

Scents of gooseberry, wood resin, nettle, chestnut honey, toasted oak.

—PALATE—

A mix of sugar cane, oak, caramel, and vanilla. Floral hints. The base is sweet.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium, with caramel and vanilla.

Much more ample and complex to the nose. A little too much sweet.

86

DIPLOMATICO
Planas

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Venezuela	47% | 94	$

—NOSE—

A mix of nuts and molasses, together with oak and a hint of vanilla.

—PALATE—

Fresh. There are toasted aromas of coffee, together with a nice fruitiness to it.

— FINISH —

Medium. Smoky, with a mix of vanilla and caramel.

Balanced and fresh. It is an easy to appreciate ron.

85

DEPAZ
Blanc

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	45% | 90	$

—NOSE—

Scents of cane juice are predominant, accompanied by fresh herbs.

—PALATE—

It is on the dry side. The cane juice aroma is still the protagonist, now with peppery notes, and vesou.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium. Sugar cane juice, herbs and some lime zest.

It boasts a nice intensity without being rough. Decent balance.

85

RIMEDI CIARLATANI

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A BITTER TRUTH

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

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DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Whisky

BLANTON'S
Straight from the Barrel 2024

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	63.1% | 126.2	$$$

— NOSE —

Oak, vanilla, a pinch of ginger, a mix of spices and caramel.

— PALATE —

Oak and vanilla on top, accompanied by a mix of spices, with black pepper and cinnamon.

— FINISH —

Long. An intense mix of vanilla, oak and spices aromas.

Fulfilling, with a flavor profile delivering rich aromas. Structured.

93

TEELING
15 YEar Old Mugi Shochu Japanese Edition

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

— NOSE —

Lychee, vanilla, pastries, and some tropical fruits. There is also a mix of spices, with pepper and nutmeg.

— PALATE —

Round and mellow, with notes of lychee, honey, spices, tropical fruit and some ginger.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium long. Dried fruits, spices and oak.

Complex, rich and deep flavor profile. Round and smooth.

90

GORDON & M. BUNNAHABHAIN
10 YO Heavily Peated

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	43 | 86	$$

— NOSE —

Coastal peat, medicinal herbs, a touch of licorice, iodine, and sea breeze. A citrous touch, with a peppery note.

— PALATE —

Tons of peat, petricohr, char, vanilla, citrus, and some iodine. A little on the dry side.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium long. Pepper, peat, and petrichor.

Rich and satisfying, with a nicely deep flavor profile.

89

BENRIACH
Smoke Season

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	52.8% | 105.6	$$

— NOSE —

Fresh. Red apples, apricots, canned peaches. Gentle herbal and earthy smoke. Grilled pineapple and vanilla.

— PALATE —

Tangerine, pineapple, sweet lemon, and peat, featuring a slight kick with an herbal character. Sweet spices.

— FINISH —

Medium. A touch of peat, on herbal and sweet fruity notes.

A truly enjoyable release, buttery and balanced.

88

AMAHAGAN
World Malt Peated Edition

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	50.9% | 101.8	$$$

— NOSE —

Fresh and zesty. The peat is flanked by lemon, grapefruit, unripe orange fruity character. A touch of ginger.

— PALATE —

Grapefruit and sweet lemon, with a more creamy. Peat is probably more intense, between brine and smog.

— FINISH —

Medium. Sweet/citrusy fruity components and intense peat.

Nice and balanced, as a true Japanese product should be.

88

NIKKA
Discovery Yoichi Aromatic Yeast

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	48% | 96	$$$$

— NOSE —

Oak, white pepper, orange zest, iodine, and smoky scents.

— PALATE —

Orange zest, some citrus, iodine, sea breeze, and floral aromas. There are also some tropical hints.

— FINISH —

The finish is medium. Licorice, tropical fruits.

Rich and well-balanced, with an ample flavor profile.

88

RAMPUR
ASAVA Cabernet Sauvignon

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
India	45% | 90	$$

— NOSE —

Dark chocolate, apricot and plum, floral scents, wood, and some spices. A touch of Grand Marnier.

— PALATE —

Smooth, roasted wood, vanilla, honey, dark chocolate, and orange zest nuances. A little bit on the dry side.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Black pepper, some chili, and hints of roasted wood.

It is a rich whiskey, and it boats a wide flavor profile.

87

GLENDRONACH
CaskStrength Batch 12

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.2% | 126.4	$$

— NOSE —

The alcohol is a little perceivable. It delivers ripe plums, sultanas, chocolate ganache and strawberry jam.

— PALATE —

A quite remarkable nuttiness, deep sherry, with red ripe fruit and chocolate, now between dark and nougat.

— FINISH —

Quite long, very enjoyable, one of the reasons of the high ABV.

Balanced in terms of aromas, but less in terms of ABV and flavors.

87

BELLEVOYE
Vert Triple Malt Finition Calvados

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
France	43% | 86	$$

— NOSE —

Light scents of cinnamon and nutmeg, together with vanilla.

— PALATE —

There are aromas of oak, vanilla, and yellow fruit, together with a nice touch of sweetness.

— FINISH —

Medium-short. Yellow fruit, accompanied by seasoned wood.

Balanced. The flavor profile boasts a nice harmony. Easy to enjoy.

86

WOLFBURN
Small Batch N.177

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

—NOSE—

Yellow fruits such as apples and pineapple in melted butter, caramel, and demerara sugar. Orange cake.

—PALATE—

Demerara, slightly acidic notes on the yellow fruit. Baked apples, custard, crème brulee.

— FINISH —

Medium-short. Slightly bitter aftertaste, on fresh spices.

It delivers a nice creaminess. It lacks in terms of structure.

85

MAKERS'S MARK
101

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	50.5% | 101	$

—NOSE—

Oak, wood polish, cherry under spirit. Then caramel and a mix of spices.

—PALATE—

A mix of oak and vanilla, with rich caramel and spices, recalling black pepper and nutmeg. Buttery.

— FINISH —

Medium. Oak and wood polish, with a hint of spices.

Easy to enjoy, with a very approachable flavor profile.

85

CEDAR RIDGE
Iowa Bourbon

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	40% | 80	$

—NOSE—

Light scents of vanilla, yellow fruit recalling apple, some cinnamon and hints of oak. Cereal biscuits.

—PALATE—

Delicate to the palate, with cereals, vanilla, oak and some spices.

— FINISH —

Short. There are notes of vanilla, together with cereals.

Delicate, with a simple flavor profile. It is an easy-to-approach whiskey.

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.

2

3 95 4

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	$ 13.5 | € 13.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A.

5

1 Cigar picture.

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

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

4 Flag identifying the country where the cigar is made.

Cuba · Dominican Rep. · Nicaragua · Honduras · 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 millimiters 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.

Churchill

DAVIDOFF ANIVERSARIO DOUBLE "R"

HARMONIOUS AND ROUND

The cigar opens with grassy and smooth aromas of cream and hazelnut, which are joined by nuances of wood and pink pepper.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x190mm (7 ½")	$ 42.1 | € 43.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

LA AURORA 120 ANNIVERSARY CHURCHILL

BOLD AND SMOOTH

Black pepper, hazelnut, and wood give way to the smoke. Earth and herbal aromas follow, with light cream nuances coming through. Spicy towards the end.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	47x178mm (7")	$ 16.1 | € 16

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

LA PALINA WHITE LABEL CHURCHILL

BALANCED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

Once lit, the smoke is immediately creamy, accompanied by white pepper and citrus. Herbal and earthy flavors are added in the second half.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x184mm (7 ¼")	$ 12 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., MEXICO

ROMEO Y JULIETA CHURCHILLS

RICH AND FULFILLING

It delivers aromas of earth, black pepper, and undergrowth, together with nutty notes. The second half becomes more spicy, and the finale is slightly balsamic.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	47x178mm (7")	$ - | € 22

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

ZINO PLATINUM CROWN SERIES DOUBLE GRANDE

BALANCED AND CREAMY

It exhibits nutty and vegetal notes, enriched by wood and cappuccino. In the second half, roasted coffee beans and walnut are added, together with a balsamic touch.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	48x1478m (7")	$ - | € 21m

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., PERU

FREUD LIMITED EDITION: SIGMUND

LIMITED EVOLUTION

It delivers black pepper, roasted wood, vegetal notes, and a mix of spices, including nutmeg, ginger, and star anise. Then, vegetal and wood notes.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x190mm (7 ½")	$ 42 | € -

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

OLIVA SERIE O CHURCHILL

LIMITED FLAVOR PROFILE

It delivers notes of earth and black pepper, accompanied by roasted coffee notes. In the final part of the smoke, balsamic notes are added.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x178mm (7")	$ 9.7 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

LA AROMA DEL CARIBE PASIÓN CHURCHILL

BALANCED BUT STATIC

It alternates aromas of hazelnut together with some earthy notes. The flavor profile doesn't change for the whole duration of the smoke.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	49x178mm (7")	$ 12 | € 11

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Piramide

LIGA PRIVADA NO. 9 BELICOSO

COMPLEX AND INTENSE

Earth, dark chocolate and wood are revealed in the first half, followed by pepper and a light sweet creaminess. Herbal and nutty flavors appear in the second half.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$ 18.5 | € 18.1

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	BRAZIL	DOMINICAN REP., HONDURAS

DAVIDOFF MILLENNIUM PIRAMIDES

RICH AND ELEGANT

It delivers wood, honey, and spices, together with rich roaster coffee beans aromas and just a touch of earth.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x156mm (6 ⅛")	$ 32.7 | € 32.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.

VIVA LA VIDA 5TH ANN. JESTER FLAT BELICOSO

BALANCED AND INTRICATE

The smoke opens with leather, earth, wood and coffee, which are later joined by black pepper and mineral nuances. A nutty component is added towards the end.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x140mm (5 ½")	$ 19 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

ASHTON VSG BELICOSO NO. 1

BOLD AND DEEP

It delivers a mix of earth and cocoa, followed by cocoa beans, vegetal notes, earth, and some nutty aromas. In the last part, balsamic notes are added.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x133mm (5 ¼")	$ 14.6 | € 13

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

EL LOCO LA VIUDA

ROUND AND INTERESTING

Ripe fruits, herbs and toasted bread are followed by sour cream. In the second half, aromas of pepper and mineral are added, with floral hints coming through occasionally.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$ - | € 16.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO, NICARAGUA

FLOR DE SELVA NO. 15

NUANCED AND RICH

Wood, coffee and hazelnut give way to the smoke, accompanied by a mineral nuance. Cocoa is added in the second half and the finale is spicy.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x140mm (5 ½")	$ 13.5 | € 12.2

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS

HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 3

LIMITED BALANCE

Cappuccino and wood open the smoke, flanked by espresso and walnut. Black pepper and chili appear in the second half. An unpleasant bitterness is perceptible throughout.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x124mm (4 ⅞")	$ - | € 20

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

OLIVA SERIE V TORPEDO

A LITTLE UNBALANCED

The opening is vegetal and grassy. It then alternates roasted wood, and rich black pepper. The spices becomes more pronounced in the second half.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	56x152mm (6")	$ 13.4 | € 13.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Robusto

MATILDE QUADRATA ROBUSTO

HARMONIOUS AND EVOLVING

Cappuccino, nuts, and cream are revealed in the first half, supported by white pepper. The second half turns to cocoa, leather, and chili pepper.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5 ¼")	$ 10.2 | € 9.2

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

KRISTOFF GUARDRAIL ROBUSTO

BOLD AND DARK

Ripe fruits and espresso are followed by molasses, wood, and earth in the first half. Later on, black pepper and licorice are added to the profile.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x140mm (5 ½")	$ 6.8 | € 8.7

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

GREAT WALL CIGARS 132 MIRACLE

COMPLEX AND RICH

The first part delivers a blast of spices, with black pepper, chili, nutmeg, and some citrus aromas. Then roasted wood, nutty notes, and some minor vegetal hints.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	55x130mm (5 ⅛")	$ - | € 28

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP., CHINA

RODRIGUEZ PRIMERA CLASE ROBUSTO

DARK AND FLAVORFUL

Black pepper and leather give way to the smoke, joined by hazelnut and earth. Dark chocolate, and coffee notes are added in the second half.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 8.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

HERRERA ESTELI ROBUSTO GRANDE

LAYERED AND FLAVORFUL

The cigar opens with aromas of cappuccino, almonds, and light spices. Further into the smoke, mineral notes, leather, and white pepper with a light creaminess are added.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	$ 10.45 | € 7

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HONDURAS	NICARAGUA

ESPINOSA KNUCKLE S. MADURO ROBUSTO J

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")	$ 13.9 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

TOREO NICARAGUA ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND INTERESTING

Ripe fruit, wood, and floral notes give way to the smoke, with leather in the background. In the second half, a sugary sweetness appears together with pepper.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x140mm (5 ½")	$ - | € 11

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA

FREUD ALTEREGO ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND RICH

It exhibits vegetal and woody notes, followed by rich spices, including black pepper and some piquant peaks.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 26 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP.

COHIBA AMBAR

BALANCE ON THE RAZOR'S EDGE

Nuts, honey and wood make up the core of the profile. There are hints of herbs coming through, but the strength overshadows most of the flavors in the second half.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	53x130mm (5 ⅛")	$ - | € 86

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

ROOM 101 JOHNNY TOBACCONAUT ROBUSTO

SMOOTH BUT STATIC

Once lit, the cigar opens with light floral and wood aromas, with a subtle sweetness present as well. Peppery nuances and citrus notes are added in the second half.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 9 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	NICARAGUA

INCH NICARAGUA NO.62

BALANCED BUT NOT EVOLVING

It delivers notes of earth and some vegetal aroma, together with a slight nuttiness, which gets richer getting closer to the final part, joined by peppery nuances.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	62x127mm (5")	$ 11 | € 12.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

ARTISTA PURO AMBAR ROBUSTO

OVERWHELMING STRENGTH

The smoke opens with white pepper and wood, accompanied by vegetal aromas. The smoke becomes creamy in the second half and citrusy nuances come through.

83

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 6 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

Toro

PLASENCIA ALMA DEL FUEGO CONCEPCION

INTENSE AND FULFILLING

Earth and mineral notes open up the smoke, followed by a blast of spices with piquant aromas. There are also coffee beans, leather, and balsamic herbs.

93

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	$ 17.6 | € 18.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

GREAT WALL GJ1918

RICH AND STRUCTURED

It delivers notes of earth, nuts, and back pepper. Then, licorice and vegetal hints, together with a mix of black pepper and nutmeg. In the last part, walnut and chili are added.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x160mm (5 ⅛")	$ 199 | € 187

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	CHINA, DOMINICAN REP.

CASA TURRENT 1880 COLORADO DOBLE TORO

BALANCED AND EVOLUTIVE

Woody notes, together with black pepper, earth, and vegetal hints. There is also a nice mix of spices, with nutmeg, cinnamon, and black pepper, with a pinch of ginger.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	55x165mm (6 ½")	$ 20 | € 11.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO

VALENTINO SIESTO SUN GROWN GRAN TORO

FLAVORFUL AND ROUND

Hazelnut, wood, black pepper, and leather are present in the first half. The smoke becomes creamier in the second half and a balsamic aroma is added.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	$ 11.5 | € 18.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF TORO DELUXE GOLD WHITE ED.

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.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	$ 10.4 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

RED MEAT LOVERS RIBEYE

INTENSE AND SATISFYING

It brings to the palate notes of wood, nuts, and earth, together with nuances of coffee. In the second half, cocoa is added as well.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$ 15.45 | € -

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

DON PEPIN GARCIA 20TH ANNIVERSARY LIMITED ED.

RICH BUT LIMITED EVOLUTION

It brings to the palate a mix of earth and vegetal notes, followed by black pepper and a hint of nutmeg. Then balsamic hints, nutmeg and some piquant peaks.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x165mm (6 ½")	$ 40 | € 60

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

UNDERCROWN 10 TORO

INTENSE AND BALANCED

It delivers aromas of peppermint, charred wood, black pepper, cream, coffee, roasted beans, and cocoa. Some smoky flavors are perceivable as well.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	$ 13.25 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	U.S.A.	NICARAGUA

LA PALINA NICARAGUA OSCURO 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
●●●●	50x152mm (6")	$ 10.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

EL REY DEL MUNDO ROYAL SERIES

SMOOTH AND FLAVORFUL

Cappuccino and hazelnut give way to the smoke, joined by wood and herbs. A light sweetness is present in the background and a white pepper note appears later on.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x155mm (6 ⅛")	$ - | € 39

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

ARTURO FUENTE ROSADO MAGNUM R 54

BALANCED

It exhibits seasoned wood, some spices, including nutmeg, and roasted notes. In the second half the spices become milder.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x165mm (6 ½")	$11.3 | € 18

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

BOHEKIO COLORS TORO

ONE-DIMENTIONAL

The smoke is very green and centered around fresh wood, grass, and herbs. There are hints of sour cream and earth coming through but only occasionally.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●	50x152mm (6")	$ 4 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HAITI	HAITI

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