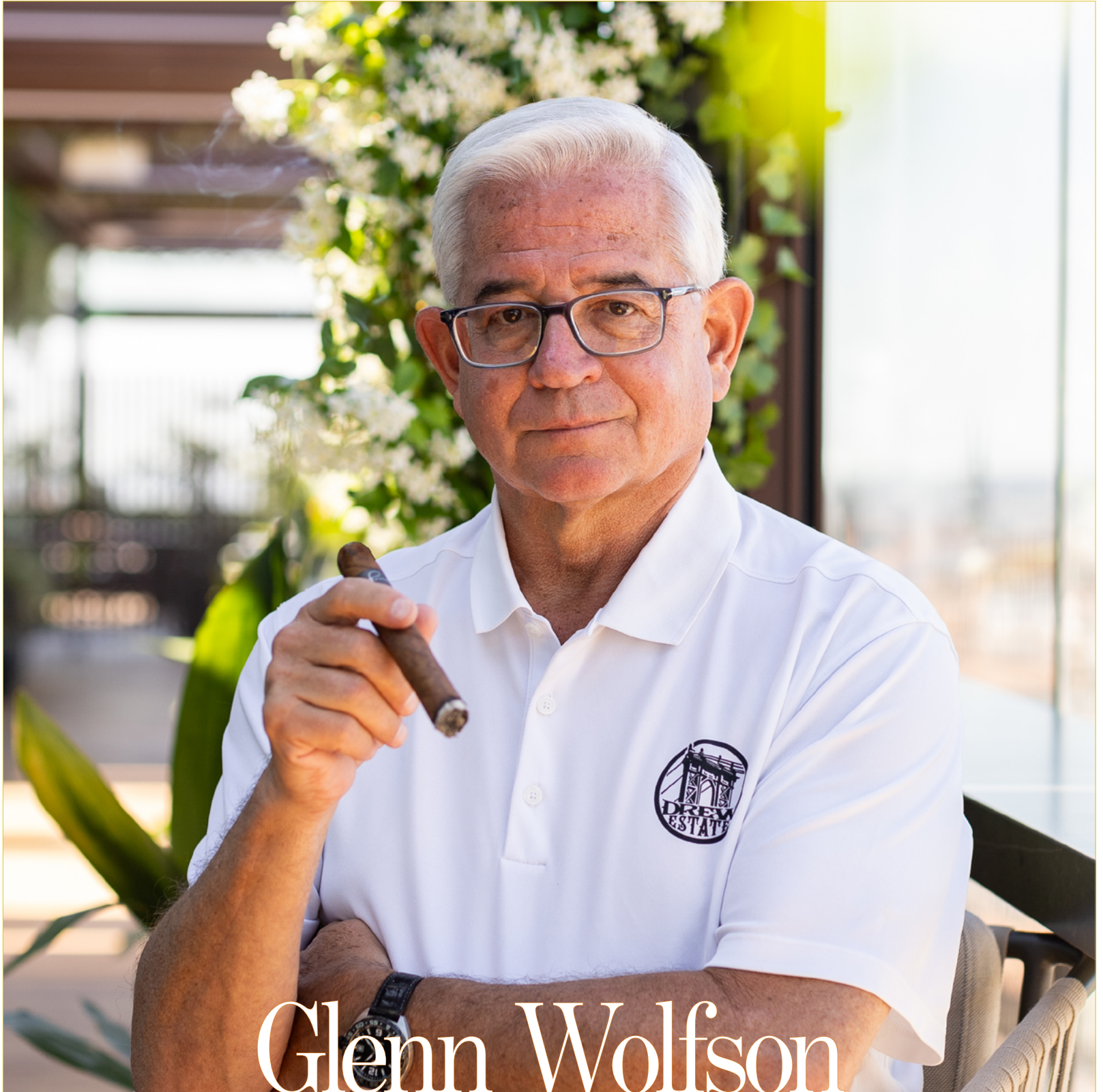


Cigars Lover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 3 - 2024



Glenn Wolfson

- WEST TAMPA TOBACCO COMPANY - CHATEAU DIADEM - DEFINING STRENGTH IN CIGARS - DIADEMA: THE LAST OF US
- WATERFORD & MARK REYNIER: THE INTERVIEW - PAIRING CHOCOLATE & UNPEATED SCOTCH - COCKTAIL: SPRITZ
- BEER: BOURBON BARREL-AGED BARLEYWINE - PORT: HISTORY, CHARACTERISTICS, AND PECULIARITIES



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Editor's thoughts

Four stories of success.

In the next pages, you are going to find quite a few interviews. We had the pleasure to flight to Madrid and have a talk with Glenn Wolfson, Drew Estate's CEO, at the Thompson Hotel, in Madrid. We enjoyed a Liga Privada 10 Selección de Mercado, a cigar they created for the International market. You are going to find the story of West Tampa, told by Rick Rodriguez and his daughter Sara, who are going to share their big passion for the tobacco world. Next is Chateau Diadem, a brand that hit the market recently and in a big way, and is represented by Thierry Farah and Emily Sahakian. In the spirit section, Waterford, the more and more known Irish brand, created by Mark Reynier in 2015. We talked with him about the past, present, and future.

The pairing section brings emotion, with the first 99 points pairing between a cigar and a bourbon. We continue to explore the combination of whisky and chocolate.

#refineyourtaste



CigarsLover MAGAZINE

Thank you for
TEN YEARS

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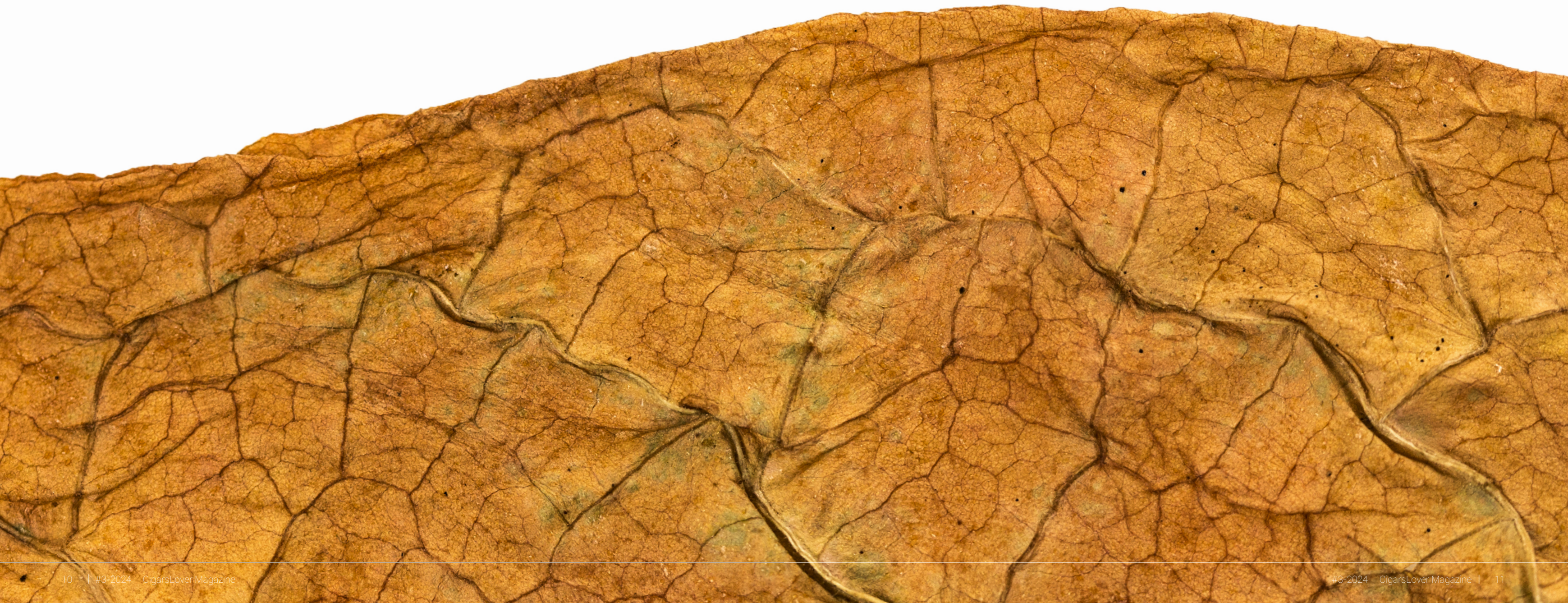
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CIGARS

“I drink a great deal. I sleep a little, and I smoke cigar after cigar.
That is why I am in two-hundred-percent form.”

Winston Churchill



**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



the Rebirth of Cigars

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Celebrating a decade of dedication, Undercrown 10 narrates a deeply passionate and spiritual brand journey, which we've entitled "All Dekk'd Out." From a truly humble and unanticipated beginning, the Undercrown frontmark has led a diverse squadron of new-wave cigar aficionados from all walks of life. Undercrown 10 is undeniably big and bold, yet subtly nuanced. Presenting a flavorful and complex smoking experience of Mexican Hot Chocolate, this expression transitions from earthy sweetness and waves of black pepper spice to notes of sun-dried cherries, raisins and cacao.

• W: Mex. Otopan Negro Ultimo Corte

• B: Connecticut Broadleaf

• F: Nicaraguan



UNDERCROWN
NUESTROS PUROS +  + BY DREW ESTATE

Glenn Wolfson

“The key to our success has been to, stay true to our Mission and core values.”

by Michel Arlia



As with any good success story, Drew Estate has had its many ups and downs. After Swisher International's acquisition in 2014, many cigar lovers thought it would be downhill from there on. Ten years later, it has been the contrary, and one of the driving people behind the continued success of the company has been the CEO of Drew Estate, Glenn Wolfson.

Were you a cigar smoker before becoming Drew Estate's CEO, and what was your first experience with cigars?

Yes, I was a premium cigar smoker prior to joining Drew Estate. I was also a diehard pipe smoker before smoking my first premium cigar. I was turned on to pipe smoking in 1973 by a gentleman named Donald Kayne, a renowned craftsman and pipe maker who had worked many years for Charatan. He made seven pipes for me and then actually taught me how to make one for myself, which I still have, and I smoke occasionally. My first experience with

premium cigars occurred in July of 1981, the day before I started my career as a management consultant. I had moved from Evanston, Illinois, which is where Northwestern was located, to what is known as Old Town, in the heart of Chicago. Three blocks away was a tobacconist named Up Down Cigar on Wells Street, and I walked in one day looking for a can of Balkan Sobranie white-label pipe tobacco. A woman greeted me when I walked in, pointed me toward the pipe tobacco I was looking for, and then she asked me whether I smoked premium cigars. When I said no, she encouraged me to try one, and I did. Little did I realize that she was Diana Silvius, a true titan in the world of premium cigars who exuded an infectious passion for the Fellowship of the Leaf. And that day began my journey into the world of premium cigars. During the mid-1990s, I spent significant time consulting with clients in Zurich, London, and Paris. So, of course, I started smoking Cuban cigars, including Monte #2, Partagas Lusitania, and Cohi-

ba Esplendidos. In 2012, during a business trip to NYC, I stopped at a cigar lounge after dinner, I think it was Club Macanudo, and smoked my first Liga Privada No. 9 Corona Doble. I absolutely loved smoking that cigar. Drew Estate had me at hello, and I became a very big fan of the brand.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your background.

I was born in New York City. I attended Union College in Schenectady, NY, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and history. While in college, I developed a keen interest in long-range strategic planning by chairing the college's Planning and Budgeting Priorities Committee for two years. I continued to pursue this interest in business school and then as a career. Then, I moved to Chicago in 1979 to attend Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, where I received my MBA in 1981 with concentrations in strategy and economics. Then, I joined Booz, Allen & Hamilton, the largest management

consulting firm in the world, which launched my 34-year career in consulting. I was attracted to the profession because of my love of solving problems, serving clients across various industries, and making a real difference in the lives of companies and their people. By the time I retired from consulting in 2014 to take on an operating role as EVP of a nutraceutical company, I had conducted over 700 consulting engagements for approximately 200 different clients—small/large, private/public, family-owned, and US/Int'l. Most of my work focused on strategic planning, turnaround companies, restructuring organizations, and developing leaders. I am married to Linda, my best friend and the most wonderful woman I have ever known. Together, we have five children and five grandchildren, most of whom live in Chicago. Linda and I reside in Davie, FL, a suburb of the Fort Lauderdale and Miami areas.

When did you get into the cigar business, and how?

In June/July of 2016, I decided to reactivate my consulting career while simultaneously searching for interesting senior-level operating positions in the corporate sector. In early May, I received a call from Peter Ghiloni, the CEO of Swisher and a former client of mine (Swisher had acquired Drew Estate in November of 2014), and he retained my services as an external consultant to assess the current health of Drew Estate and to make recommendations how to improve its performance markedly. Upon delivering the final presentation to Swisher and the family ownership, and I was asked, completely out of the blue, to join Drew Estate as its CEO to turnaround the company and reignite its profitable growth. And I did.

You have worked with some big brands in various industries. What have been the biggest differences between the cigar business and the others?

I did have the opportunity to serve some of the most iconic and renowned brands across many industries. These included Walt Disney Company, Zurich Financial Services, United Airlines, Sotheby's, Polo Ralph Lauren, McDonald's, SC Johnson, Kraft, Universal Orlando, and Swisher. Most of these companies were large, well-established businesses that possessed a ton of resources and capabilities and were quite advanced in the science of business. In addition, several of them possessed iconic cultures, Polo Ralph Lauren and SC Johnson being great examples, which were a major contributing factor to their long-term success. The premium cigar business is very different in many ways. There is a great deal of romance and passion in our premium cigar sector, both in terms of the products we make and the experiences consumers go through over the arc of their lifelong journey in our world. We make artisanal products and to do this well requires the blending of art and science. Consuming premium cigars is a highly collegial experience. The backbone of our industry on the retail side is comprised of mom-and-pop tobacconists scattered across Main Street America. On balance, the premium cigar industry is comprised of entities that are resource-constrained and well behind the curve in terms of infrastructure and organizational capabilities when compared to many other industry sectors. Many of the most well-known manufacturers and retailers are family-owned businesses like Swisher and Drew Estate. Perhaps the biggest difference between the premium cigar business and others is this interesting dynamic of the relationships various companies have with each other. For instance, Drew Estate is a pure manufacturer and distributor of premium cigars, and we compete with other manufacturers for the share of heart, mind, and wallet of retailers and consumers. Some of the brick-and-mortar and online retailers we sell to are owned by parent companies that own premium cigar manufacturers, which are direct competitors of ours. How one navigates through this interesting labyrinth



of relationships between supplier-customer and competitor-competitor is fascinating and challenging, to say the least.

How was your first day at Drew Estate, and in what state was the company when you got there?

My first day at Drew Estate was July 21st, 3-days before the IPCPR tradeshow in 2016. When I was introduced to the company as its CEO people were understandably very wary about me because I was the outside consultant dude who was now CEO of the company. While I had developed a clear picture of the opportunities and challenges that Drew Estate had in front of itself, it was clear that team members across the company were very concerned since they shared their perspectives with me about the state of the business during the consulting project. So, it was palpably clear that my number one immediate priority and focus was to earn their trust, one team member at a time. And that's what I did. What was the state of the company when I got there? Two words, very challenged. Drew Estate had grown to the point where its size and complexity required major changes to almost every facet of its business to compete successfully: go-to-market approach, account delivery model, technology systems, organization structure, business processes, and our talent. In addition, the premium cigar industry was going to be regulated by FDA in just 2 weeks so there was a frenzy of activity to commercialize new products into the market before that deadline occurred. So I spent those two weeks staying out of everybody's way and letting them work their magic. At the same time, I watched, listened, and further learned, now as an insider, about the premium cigar industry and Drew Estate's place within the sector.

What were the most significant challenges and changes so far as CEO of Drew Estate?

Preserving the culture while transforming and reinventing the company over the past 8-years, particularly since 60% of our total US-based employees were hired after I joined Drew Estate. Leading the company through all the uncertainties and uncharted terrain during the two years of Covid in a way that enabled us to be very agile, pivot to all things digital with only a moment's notice, grow our business as well as that of our retail partners, and keep our lifestyle brand alive in the hearts of minds of our consumers, customers, and Drew Estate team members. Fighting FDA's Deeming Rule and their Proposed Product Standards for regulating hand-rolled premium cigars which possess "characterizing flavors" out of existence at the federal level while working with lobbyists in the various states across the USA to fight overly burdensome taxation and flavor bans at the state and local levels.

When Swisher International acquired Drew Estate, con-



sumers were afraid of the effect that it would have on the company and its products. What have been the critical factors for the brand's continued success since the acquisition?

You are correct. In November 2014, consumers and retailers in the premium cigar industry were absolutely freaked out by Swisher's acquisition of Drew Estate. They feared DE would become "Swisherized" and would never be the same. Social media was lit up with a litany of concerns, all of which shared the common perspective that this signaled the impending death of Drew Estate. Twenty months later, when I was introduced as Drew Estate's CEO, the same reaction occurred. Numerous comments were made at IPCPR that demonstrated a real concern for the future of Drew Estate. The narrative was who is this consultant dude, he's not a tobacco or cigar guy, "what the hell does he know about running premium cigar company", and it reignited the fear that "Ah hah, we knew it was only a matter of time before Drew Estate would be corporate-tized or Swisherized." But those deepest, darkest fears were not realized. Why? Because from day one, it was crystal clear that while we needed to deconstruct and then reconstruct the company to turn around the business and chart our course for a successful run over the longer term, the one aspect of our company that would be preserved and nurtured at all costs would be our iconic culture along with our core values. We created a pathway that stimulated progress while preserving our core ideology, and we have sustained this journey through the present day. By being

a consumer-facing and consumer-first company, we enrolled consumers from all walks of life into the Drew Estate culture and immersed them into our lifestyle brand. We focus every day on cultivating a growing army of apostles for our lifestyle brand, Drew Estate - The Rebirth of Cigars, and we have earned a loyal following of consumers throughout the USA. Now we are setting our sights on building global brand awareness and achieving the same results in various international markets.

Drew Estate's unique look and mantra, "The Rebirth of Cigars," is a fundamental cornerstone of the company. How difficult is balancing growth with staying true to the company's base value?

Surprisingly, while this is a supremely important business goal, it has not been overly difficult to achieve. It starts with our rock-solid foundation - our team, our talent, and our culture. The key to our success has been to stay true to our Mission, Core Values, lean into our consumer-first mentality, and then leverage our core competencies of innovation, disruption, brand building, and consumer engagement to deliver high iconic products and experiential moments that, as Jonathan Drew often says, "makes the ladies dance."

You have also continued to grow the focus on international markets in the last few years. Are the approaches to global markets different from those to domestic markets, and how?



The approach is very different from that of the US, as our business model for international sales is to work with a distributor to represent us in a particular country. Therefore, it's critically important to partner with the right distributor whose organization has the capabilities, reach, and shared mindset to be our proxy. We are not experts in the nuances of marketing and selling cigars in these countries, so pairing our distributor partner's market knowledge with our unique Drew Estate marketing and sales expertise, is the very best way for the end consumer to enjoy the Drew Estate portfolio of cigars. The Drew Estate International team and I are here in Spain to continue the worldwide introduction of Liga Privada 10 Selección de Mercado, our first ever international exclusive Liga Privada expression. The Toro size was launched at last September's Intertabac trade show and is now available in 43 countries around the world. Building on the success of the Toro introduction, a Corona Viva, Corona Doble and Robusto size has been added to the Liga Privada 10 Selección de Mercado portfolio. We've just concluded two terrific trade and consumer events here in Marbella and Madrid Spain, where we had the great opportunity to share Liga Privada 10 Selección de Mercado with Spanish consumers and retailers, who really seemed to have taken to this new Liga, blended exclusively for the international palette.

Which international market, positively or negatively, has surprised you the most?

Since we're here in Madrid, I'll tell you about what we're doing in Spain. You're probably aware of the special relationship Drew Estate has with Joya de Nicaragua in the US. We've expanded that relationship to Spain, where Joya has created a new distribution company and will now be the official representative of Drew Estate for the Spanish market. It's a unique and mutually beneficial relationship where Drew distributes Joya in the US, and now Joya will distribute Drew in Spain. A re-energized and enlarged sales team with deep knowledge of the Spanish market will now give us the ability to bring our Drew Estate brands to the entire country, from Bilbao in the north to the Costa de Sol in the south.



Legislation has been a constant thorn in the cigar industry's side. In the US, it is the possible ban of flavored cigars, among others, and in Europe, the TPD 2 (Track & Trace). How do you navigate these problems to keep the company on track?

An important part of why I'm in Spain with the Drew Estate International team is to finalize plans for Drew Estate's first ever European warehouse right here in Madrid. This distribution center is a key piece of our new international strategy, enabling us to dramatically reduce order fulfillment lead times for our European (and beyond) distributors. Our loyal Drew Estate international customers should never face an out-of-stock situation again. This warehouse will also be fully compliant with Track & Trace, when that regulation comes into force in 2026.

How do you see the future of this industry if legislation continues to tighten?

The battle is to win the innovation race and constantly disrupt our industry by creating new ways to activate new adult consumers to trial, provide them with extremely pleasurable products, reach and then service consumers and retailers in unique-to-our-industry ways, and enlarge the army of Drew Estate apostles who advocate for and often actually become part of our brand.

Furthermore, it is very important to diversify our portfolio of products and business offerings to help mitigate the risk of adverse regulatory and legislative actions.

Lastly, what are your and Drew Estate's short- and long-term goals?

Transform the company again (Rebirth of Cigars 3.0), exploit our unique culture, evolve our go-to-market strategy to unlock value through the power of bundledness, and ensure that Drew Estate is always built to last. If we achieve the above, then we will deliver significant virtuous value to our Swisher family shareholders, remain a magnet for attracting top flight talent, and enjoy the royalty of loyalty along with all of the economic benefits it delivers. We have always set our sights on being the best, not the biggest, and it might be the case that we ultimately become both.

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The last of us

From being the king of formats, the Diadema has become the penance of market laws, falling into the deepest and most unjust oblivion.

by **Giuseppe Mitolo**

The arrival of milder temperatures constitute the most favorable conditions for outdoor smoking. If it is possible to add a few days of holidays from work to these climatic factors, the situation becomes even more favorable for long afternoons or evenings dedicated to lighting particularly generous formats. No, we are not referring to Gordos or even to Churchill or Prominentes, but to the king of sizes, the diadem, a Double Perfecto format measuring no less than 200 millimeters in length, also classified as "Giant Perfecto".

Since this format corresponds to an "international shape" (as for the Toro), its measurements are not standard, at least for all non-Cuban producers; however, in Cuba, the format has precise measurements of 233mm in length with a 55-ring gauge. Caribbean producers usually do not deviate much from this standard, which are often taken as a reference.

As history teaches us, a King has noble origins and ancient roots firmly ingrained in the country's history. Ours, however, is an ancillary king, of which there are no traces of historical glories. It is difficult to date his birth with certainty, which, becomes deducible by cross-referencing various historically appreciable and truthful data. As can be imagined, this is a format born in Cuba, probably by the Fernandez, Palicio y CIA S. en C. company, owner of Hoyo de Monterrey, La Escepcion, and Punch in the first decades of the last century. The first Diademas in circulation were precisely these brands: the Monterrey for Hoyo, the Gran Gener de La Escepcion, and the Diadema Extra by Punch. Instead of attempting to establish a birth period for this giant of tobacco production, it is necessary to rely on bibliographic sources and cross-reference the data. All the products just mentioned, produced by Fernandez, Palicio and CIA, were all wrapped in aluminum paper that was launched between the 1920s and 1930s. This innovation, which also brought

a significant benefit to cigars in terms of protection, should have found use on other high-end products, and what better products than Diademas. It is reasonable and inferable, therefore, to limit their entry into the market to the 1920-1930.

Over the years, however, the production of this format was gradually abandoned, and, one after another, all the products ended up being discontinued and, soon, even forgotten. Habanos S.A. left its latest Diadema, the Cuaba Diadema, in production until 2013, although a few years earlier, it had become very difficult to find them in tobacconists. Since then, the Cuban production panorama, right there where the Diadema was born, has remained orphaned of this cigar. Which, in addition to being such, was also considered the absolute work of art for the production chain and for the roller.

Outside Cuba, as mentioned, some manufacturers included Diademas in their portfolio, which, although not identical in size, maintained the idea of the Giant Perfecto. Many of the premium Dominican, Nicaraguan, and Honduran brands have produced this magnificent format for many years. However, over time, it has also lost the appeal of smokers, who are always looking for a quick smoke, too busy with new releases, too much in search of "everything and immediately". Buying Diademas has become difficult (it is easier to buy a Gran Corona) since only a few rollers with the skill and knowledge are left to make it.

However, the problem is not always and only attributable to the "fashion" of the smoker. To produce such a format, the blend must be studied very well from the start.

It is necessary to have tobaccos with good combustion, very aromatic, and not too heavy in terms of nicotine; add

to this, no less important, you must also have bands that, in addition to being perfect, must be extraordinarily large. At the end of our "blender's wish list", we will need to have leaves that have required and obtained the maximum possible care both in the agronomic field and in the subsequent step of the transformation of the leaf for the blend. This can also require years of tobacco storage, which, for a company, turns into immobilized (and uninvested) capital. Add to this, an element that is by no means negligible is the fact that the end user is not very interested in enjoying such long cigars. They very often require several minutes of a slow start and, sometimes, even a smoker willing to carve out a long period of time to dedicate to the cigar, so as not to fall into the cliché that "all long cigars lack in evolution". This is a statement that can certainly be true if you light any cigar and, in the meantime, dedicate yourself to other activities and, in the end, get angry at not having received a complex, multifaceted, and vibrant smoke. In light of all this, given the production conditions and the lack of interest from the end consumer, the producers have stopped making it or have greatly limited production, sometimes allocating the format to commemorative, celebratory, or, in any way, "limited" editions.

As life and the ancient Romans taught us, the truth is always in the middle: it is difficult to blame or grant grace to the parties involved. The Diadema remains and will always remain the cigar of otium, that is, of that time, not so much dedicated to idleness understood as "doing nothing" but to dedicating time to seeking pleasure in things that are unknown. What better opportunity to rediscover this format, perhaps drawing it from the bottom of our humidors, where it remains waiting for the right moment, if not on summer evenings, after a dinner that is neither too elaborate nor too heavy, where, in addition to the cigar, the presence of a friend can be appreciated... who perhaps is also looking for the right opportunity to light up a long and "meditative" format.



INSPIRED BY NATURE: THE HEXAGON

Plasencia **Alma Fuerte Sixto I** isn't just any cigar. It stands out with its unique hexagonal shape, drawing inspiration from the design of honeycomb cells crafted by bees. Much like the honeycomb, this natural shape allows for optimal storage and preservation of flavors. Wrapped in a Colorado Claro wrapper, the blend of aged tobaccos cultivated in top-quality soil results in a bold flavor profile.

This cigar pays homage to the ingenuity of nature's gardeners while delivering a rich and satisfying smoking experience.



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FUERTE**
SIXTO I

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West Tampa Tobacco Company

“At the end of the day, you can love our story, logo, or one of us, but it all comes down to a good cigar.”

by Michel Arlia

The announcement of Rick Rodriguez's departure from STG in 2022 surprised many cigar lovers. Uncertain about his next move, fans were surprised when Rick wasted no time revealing his new project, West Tampa Cigar Company, with his partner Gus Martinez and daughter, Sara Rodriguez. Since then, the brand has experienced tremendous growth in a short period. We sat down with Rick and Sara Rodriguez for a conversation.

When did the idea of West Tampa Tobacco Company sprout, and who approached who about getting involved in this new venture?

Rick: The idea for West Tampa came about when my daughter Sara informed me that she may be interested in getting into the cigar business. This was in 2020, and she was living in Nicaragua. She decided to come home and see if we could do something together. So, I reached out to one of my dear friends in the cigar business, Gus Martinez, to see what we could do. We had worked together at GCC when he was head of marketing and I was working with CAO. By the time that Sara made her way back to Tampa, we had created a business plan and formed West Tampa Tobacco Company. On May 2, 2022, Gus, Sara, and I launched West Tampa.





How has working with one another been so far, and who is involved in which part of the company?

Rick: Anytime you can work with friends and family. It's great! It can be a challenge sometimes, but at the end of the day, you can trust they will always be there for you. I am involved with blending the cigars and the creative ideas behind the stories and the design. I am also still involved with events. We have Sara engaged in events, social media, marketing, and keeping me alive and organized (laughs). Gus is the backbone of the business; he handles everything: numbers and organization. Rami Dakko is our National Sales Director, and Stijn Elbersen is our International Sales Director. They are both great friends who I have had the pleasure of working with for a long time in the cigar industry. And, of course, Jose and Angelica Garmendia, who own and run the factory that produces West Tampa Tobacco's core lines. It's a great little family.

Rick, now that you have control over every aspect of the company, has anything changed in your work process/blend process compared to your time at STG?

Rick: The biggest change in my work process has been learning to divide my time. With this new role, I am seeing every part of the company and business. When I worked with STG, I was a part of such a big team. There were people taking care of things I never had to deal with. I want to ensure I am giving my time to the right things and people to ensure this company and team succeed. I would say with my blending, again, I oversee every part of this process. I will always keep my fan base in mind when developing new cigars, but now I have access to a smaller amount of tobacco. Before at STG, I had access to any and every tobacco in the world. Now, I am working with fewer ingredients but still trying to create the same results, and it is working. I am learning more than before because a good chef can make a 5-star meal with basic ingredients, and that feels like where I am.

Sara, you have heard countless stories about your father and the cigar world. Have your experiences been as you have imagined, and does one stand out?

Sara: I definitely have heard plenty of stories about and from my dad (laughs). My experiences have been better than I could have imagined. Not only have my dad and I grown closer and even grown up from this experience, but all the other people involved have also grown. I have learned so much about the business side from Gus Martinez, the sales side from Rami Dakko and all our amazing reps, and the ins and outs of events from my dad. And of course, working with the shop owners and meeting so many customers worldwide have been highlights! I have felt so welcomed, not only as a woman but even as a non-smoker, which I didn't know would be possible. I would say the experience that stands out the most has to

be my time in the Garmendia Factory and learning how to roll cigars. That's where it really changed for me. I knew I wanted to be in the business, but also knew I wasn't a smoker. So seeing that side of the industry; from farming to fermentation to rolling to packaging, made me develop a new respect and love for cigars.

Although the company is in its sophomore year, you have already experienced immense growth and success in the past two years. What has been your biggest satisfaction so far?

Rick: Great question. Most of us involved in our small team had left great jobs and other opportunities to be a part of West Tampa. It was definitely a risk, and I am so happy to see it working out better than we could have expected. What we have been able to accomplish in the short period of time, we can all be proud of! That's not to say it's not a little overwhelming at times, but at the end of the day, it is very exciting. We have learned so much, and I hope to continue to grow and learn. I wouldn't change one thing or person I'm doing it with. I am so happy for and proud of the Garmendia Family/Factory. They have been a real blessing for our company. At the end of the day, you can love our story, logo, or one of us, but it all comes down to a good cigar. And Garmendia has given us some great cigars to be able to exceed all of our goals.

You produce most of your lines in Nicaragua at the Garmendia Cigar Company factory. Still, your newest line, Circle of Life, is made at Casa Carrillo in the Dominican Republic. How do the processes working with different factories differ from one another?

Rick: Our plan's always been to work with 2 to 3 separate manufacturers. Why? Every manufacturer offers you something different, such as tobacco or techniques to create a different cigar. It was natural for me to want to work with Ernesto Perez-Carrillo first on Circle of Life. Ernesto was the first master blender who taught me about tobacco and the cigar industry. We had worked together at La Gloria and that time really shaped my life into what it is today. So, with the Circle of Life line, I want to share my story about my circle of life in this industry, and Ernesto plays a massive role in that. I am incredibly grateful to still be able to work and learn from some of the best in the industry.

Lastly, where do you want to take yourself and West Tampa in the future?

Rick: As far as the fan base of West Tampa will allow us to go! I believe you have yet to see our best. The future looks bright and exciting for West Tampa, and I'm so happy to be a part of this ride. I'm working with people I respect and love dearly. I'm one lucky guy. I want to say thank you to everybody for allowing me to reach for my dreams. I could not do it without all of you supporting me. Thank you!!



PASSION WITH PURPOSE.



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Defining strength

How strong is the cigar you are smoking, really?

by **Michel Arlia**

Strength is a term that echoes through the halls of the cigar world, yet it's shrouded in a veil of confusion. Especially when trying to objectively identify the strength level of a cigar while smoking it. Why is this? To delve into this enigma, we embarked on a simple survey, posing two pivotal questions to a multitude of cigar makers and manufacturers: What defines strength in a cigar, and how is the strength level of a cigar objectively discerned?

Before we delve into the survey results, let's dispel the common confusion around the term 'strength'. It's often used interchangeably with terms such as 'body' and 'flavor' when describing a cigar, leading to a blurred understanding. For instance, a full-bodied and full-flavored cigar does not necessarily equate to a strong cigar. The

strength level can influence a cigar's body and flavor to a certain extent, but let's set the record straight. Body does not equal strength. The body refers to the sensation, density, weight, and texture of the smoke the cigar imparts on the palate, enlightening our understanding of the nuances of a cigar. Flavor does not mean strength. While this may seem obvious to some, it still gets thrown into the mix when discussing an intense flavor profile.

Now that that is out of the way let's get to the responses to the question. The first question, "What defines strength?" was universally answered by industry experts similarly. It is the nicotine level in the tobacco. While the nicotine level varies from plant to plant and even from varietal to varietal, it becomes more concentrated the higher up a plant you go and the more sunlight the leaves receive. So, even

each single leaf can vary in nicotine content. All these factors create many different variables, which is also the main reason the nicotine content in cigars can't be measured precisely (like in cigarettes). That is also why when cigar makers talk about the strength level of a blend, you will usually get a ballpark range (like mild-medium).

One more point that I would like to make is that you can differentiate the term in pleasant and unpleasant strength. Pleasant strength supports the intensity of the flavor profile and can make a blend feel lighter than it is on paper. Unpleasant strength overshadows the flavors and makes for an unbalanced and scratchy smoking experience. The second question, "How is the strength level of a cigar discerned?", was where the responses diverged. Some described how the nicotine level of the

cigar affects them, the so-called nicotine kick (a topic we explored in issue II—2023). While not a wrong answer per se, this is an entirely subjective response because nicotine tolerance varies from smoker to smoker and is something that you can get acclimated to the more experienced you become. Fortunately, a large majority responded similarly. To objectively detect the strength of a cigar while tasting it, you need to retro-hale the smoke. Aside from revealing more nuances to the flavor profile, retro-haling will give you a general idea of the strength level of the cigar. The smoother it is through the retro, the lower the strength level; the sharper (i.e., eye-watering) the smoke feels, the higher the strength level is. This should clear the fog around the vague definition of strength and give you a clear idea of how to gauge your favorite smoke's strength.

HENRY CLAY



WAR HAWK

SINCE 1840

INFLUENTIAL, ADMIRER, RESPECTED

WHAT ELSE COULD ONE ASK FOR?

Henry Clay begins international expansion

Created in the mid-19th century, the Henry Clay brand is named after the legendary U.S. Senator.

The "War Hawk" line honors the famous term coined by Henry Clay, a great orator and very popular character in his time.



Handmade in Honduras, it offers a complex blend of unique flavours: toasted and woody.

A blend that is as interesting, admired and respected around the world as the famous politician.



Corona
44x127 mm.

Robusto
54x127 mm.

Toro
50x152 mm.

Magnum
60x152 mm.

Lonsdale
42x171 mm.

Churchill
56x178 mm.



Chateau Diadem

*“Chateau Diadem is a fantasy of sorts,
a dreamlike beacon for cigar lovers.”*

by **Zack Mitchers**

The enjoyment of cigars can lead to unexpected connections and opportunities. Cigars can bring people from all walks of life together, even family. This was certainly the case for cousins Thierry Farah and Emily Sahakian.

Cigars were omnipresent in their childhood, in Geneva, Switzerland, where they grew up together. Their shared passion for cigars not only brought them closer together later in life but also inspired them to embark on a new, exciting journey together.

Their mutual love for cigars led them to co-create their own brand in 2020, Chateau Diadem, marking the beginning of a compelling new chapter in their lives.

What was your first cigar experience like?

TF: Between the ages of 12 and 14, my father would allow me a small puff from his cigar during our weekend drives together. These early experiences ignited a life-long passion for cigars that has grown over the years.

ES: A little over 20 years ago, I made a significant career shift—from delving into the world of wines at LVMH in New York City to embarking on a new journey in cigars alongside Thierry in Geneva. To mark my arrival, Thierry greeted me with a Trinidad Fundadores, a momentous gesture. The smoothness and elegance of this particular smoke captivated me, igniting my passion for cigars, with a particular soft spot for those long and slender formats. It's a memory I will never forget.

What triggered the decision to quit your day job and start a cigar brand?

TF: I've been involved in cigar trading for over two decades, and the aspiration to create my own blend and brand was always in the back of my mind. The turning point came during the COVID pandemic, which allowed me to fully immerse myself in learning and understanding this complex industry and finally develop our own project.

ES: Well, as Thierry mentioned, we have a longstanding history in the industry, spanning over two decades, albeit with a hiatus of ten years as we both pursued other endeavors. During the lockdown period, we shared countless cigars together, sparking a conversation where Thierry proposed the idea of crafting our own blend in the Dominican Republic. This invitation, reminiscent of our childhood bond when we used to play pretend tobacco plantation owners in his father's office, struck a chord with me. It felt like a natural progression of our shared journey. Since then, I've embraced this new venture wholeheartedly, and I'm grateful for the opportunity it presents us with on a daily basis.

What does Chateau Diadem stand for?

TF: Chateau Diadem is a fantasy of sorts, a dreamlike

beacon for cigar lovers. The word Diadem symbolizes the crowning achievement of our artisans' meticulous craftsmanship in cigar making - we materialize this achievement with an elegant band that we crown the cigar with to honor their work.

ES: Thierry beautifully captures the essence of Chateau Diadem with his description. Yet, there's another layer to our brand's story that he hasn't mentioned. You might recall that in the 1980s, Davidoff released a line of 'Chateau' cigars inspired by renowned vineyards. Each cigar in the Chateau series was named after a famous chateau, such as Chateau Lafite-Rothschild and Chateau Latour, reflecting Davidoff's commitment to craftsmanship and luxury. At this same time, little Thierry would excitedly accompany his father on their weekly outing to visit Zino Davidoff in his Geneva shop. This particular collection of cigars left a lasting impression on Thierry - a combination of a nostalgic souvenir of sentimental value and a profound connection to the heritage of cigar craftsmanship. This souvenir holds a deep significance for us as we grew up like siblings together.

How has working in the cigar business been so far?

TF: Honestly, it's like living a dream that simultaneously becomes reality. However, each day brings new





challenges. Passion is essential for thriving in this industry, as it fuels our daily dedication and drive toward excellence.

ES: I agree entirely. I find myself in the 'now' moments, where I pinch myself to see if this truly is my new reality. While we do have many challenges, we take them on with unwavering enthusiasm and determination to plow forth. We're distributed in over 20 countries, which isn't such a bad start for a new business. The hardest part is ensuring we maintain our standards without letting anything slip.

You also recently opened your own factory. Why take the step so early in the company's history?

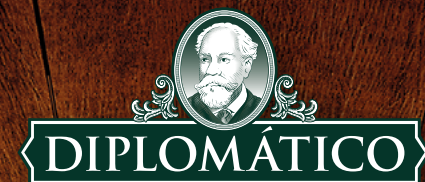
TF: We initially started with a white-label agreement but soon found our visions misaligned with our manufacturer, leading us to part rather quickly. This decision propelled us to establish our own factory early on. While it introduced administrative, logistical, and human complexities, it was essential for achieving complete control over the quality of our cigars—from tobacco selection to rolling techniques and storage. Initially, we opened a small facility in Navarrete. After a year, we seized the opportunity to move to the Pisano Free Zone in Santiago de los Caballeros, where we have definitively established our factory. Surrounded by several cigar manufacturers, tobacco leaf traders, and exporters, what more could we ask for? This environment is exceptionally conducive to meticulous and high-quality work, perfectly aligned with our standards.

ES: I couldn't have explained it better. We didn't embark on this adventure imagining we'd be where we are today, but every day brings us new surprises, which are somehow always for the better. Life has a strange way of putting you on the right path.

Lastly, what are you working on at the moment?

TF: Currently, we're developing a "Half Corona" presented in a fun new packaging format that we can't wait to unveil at the Dortmund fair in September. Additionally, we're crafting a unique new blend for a single "vitola", which we will also plan to showcase at the fair this year.

ES: We've also just released the Lancero, which as you can imagine is a dream come true, especially for me as it was the tipping point that propelled me into this industry when Thierry welcomed me back to Geneva. We're also working on new packaging and accessories to include in Chateau Diadem's universe.

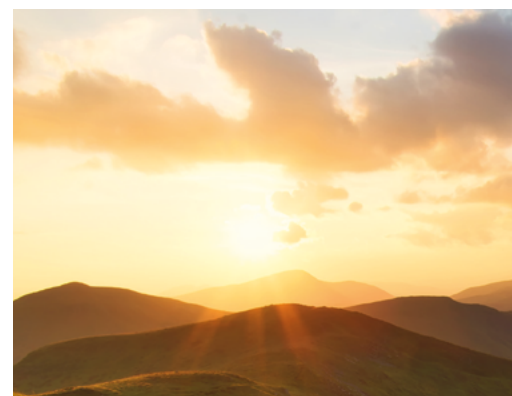


— THE HEART OF RUM —





TIME BEAUTIFULLY FILLED



A TRUE MADURO IS MADE OF TIME



PAIRINGS

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

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

The Rating Scale: 100 points. We have chosen to keep it in the pairings as well, to simplify the comparison of ratings. In this case, however, this scale only evaluates the pairing,

and not the individual qualities of cigars and spirits. If you have both excellent products, for example, but an unbalanced and inconsistent pairing, the rating will be low. On the contrary, the excellent marriage of two products of decent quality could give rise to a very positive evaluation.

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

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





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PAIRING

Cigars
&
Spirits



DAVIDOFF MADURO ROBUSTO

RICH AND COMPLEX

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 50 € 50
DIMENSIONS	
50x127mm (5")	
COUNTRY	
Dominican Republic	

New release from the famous brand, a complex and rich smoke centered around dark cocoa and spices, mainly recalling black pepper, with walnut hints coming on stage and then in background. Honey notes are giving off extra class. This level of intensity of aromas as well as the chocolate profile could well pair with some high ABV bourbons.



GEORGE RICO EL ENEMIGO EL INSULTO

WELL BALANCED AND RICH

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ 15 € -
DIMENSIONS	
50x127 mm (5")	
COUNTRY	
Dominican Republic	

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.



HIRAM & SOLOMON CHABAL

BALANCED AND NUANCED

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 14 € -
DIMENSIONS	
52x152 mm (6")	
COUNTRY	
Dominican Republic	

A medium body cigar with earthy and slight sweetness on the cold draw, cedar, dark chocolate with natural sweetness citrus notes that grows into more of a citrus peel in the second third with a finish of nuts and spice notes. Two different bourbons have been selected, a wheated creamy one and a more traditional heavily corn-driven one with the special contribution of millet.



BLANTON'S
Straight from the Barrel

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	63.3% - 126.6	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

A masterpiece of a bourbon. The palette is extremely wide, with dark roasted notes of deeply charred oak, chestnut honey, with nuts and leather, even very dark cocoa ribs and buttery pancakes. Alcohol is incredibly silent. Powerful, bold, evocative. The noses are pairing very well: the spirit is less assertive than the previous one, yet more subtle and dressed with a great quality leather and a superb chestnut honey dimension, with is excellent with the dark chocolate of the cigar. Wonderful, yet balanced and nuanced. The palates enjoy the beautiful sweetness of the bourbon, which is refined and again honeyed, enriching the oakiness and giving the impression of salted nut bar with dark honey. Eternal duration, for one of the best pairings ever.

Pairing score 99

ELIJAH CRAIG
Barrel Proof

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	61.1% - 122.2	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

Excellent product with right intensity and warm aromas of toffee, candied apples, toasted oak, sweet spices. The sip has some alcoholic hints, but also great nuts, toasted oak and spices aromas. The noses are perfectly matched, with intensity over intensity, yet in nice concerto: dark chocolate is fusing into oakiness, still with a riot of nuts and spices, rich and multi-layered. The vegetal hints of the maduro are present and very pleasant. The sips are also excellent: the minor alcohol is enveloped by the dark, yet creamy chocolaty character of the cigar. The sweetness of the spirit is quenching the minor dark, bitter notes developed by the cigar with time. The finale has some mix of sweet and dark toasted notes, very pleasant.

Pairing score 92

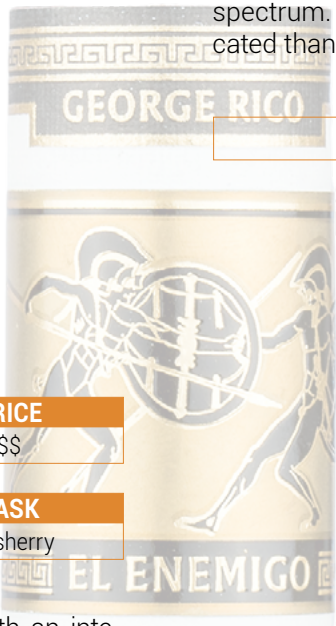




ARDNAMURCHAN
AD/10:22 Madeira Cask Release

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.2% - 116.4	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	ex-bourbon/Madeira

Well-crafted product, expressing variations on a solid core of fruit salad (apple, peaches) with a fresh citrus touch. Creamy vanilla and honey are added in the nose, while the palate features an increasing intensity. Enjoyable, a fresh spring drink with a slightly high ABV. Noses is an amazing and unique mix of salted honey dripping from slightly toasted wood, a pecan crumble with honey and sea salt. Creative dessert, excellent. The suadent apple intensity of the spirit helps quenching the roasted coffee beans of the tobacco, until the moment the mineral side kicks in, pushing a crush of fresh black pepper on top of the woody sensations. Very complex, nuanced, providing notes on the entire aromas spectrum. The finish is balanced, nuttier and more sophisticated than expected. Brilliant.



Pairing score	92
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YUSHAN
Signature Sherry Cask

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Taiwan	46% - 92	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	ex-sherry

This tropical whisky features a fruitier nose, with an interesting mix, fresh and pleasant, with hints of chalk and minerals. The palate and the finish continue on this plot, yet evolving it into some darker and slightly bitter components of rhubarb and mixed herbs. Dark wood and roasted coffee undertones play very well with the delicate, expressive fruity notes of the whisky, for a nice dance of the noses; it is not as sensual as other sherried products with Nicaraguan tobacco pairings, a more delicate and "high" performance of styles. The palates are the natural continuation, the sensation of fruit salad welcomes the toasted wood of the tobacco, yet the darker sides of the sip are adding layers on top of the puff, going deeper into pleasant burnt, dark sweet spices. Complex and very enjoyable, not as contrasting as expected.



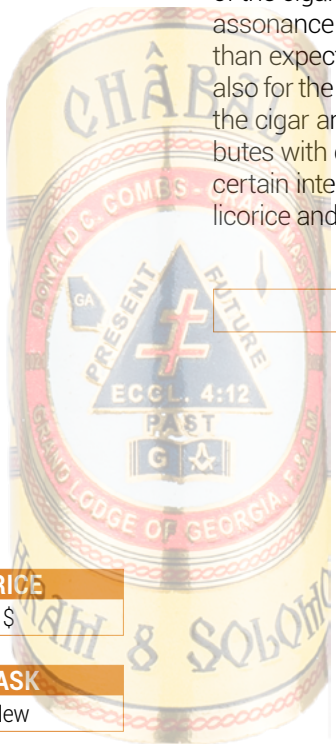
Pairing score	90
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KOVAL
Single Barrel Bourbon

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	47% - 94	\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

Kosher bourbon produced from a mash with 51% corn and 49% millet. Of good intensity, features oak and cinnamon, with a minor fresh balsamic herbaceous note. Palate is spicier at the beginning, with a marked sweetness that is a counterpoint to the initial spices. Orange juice, very ripe apricot. At times semi-sweet licorice. The noses are convincing together; the earthy cedar of the cigar pairs well with the sweet toasty oak of the spirit, an assonance rich in mellow tones and burnt sugar. Less sweet than expected, very pleasant. The intensities are well designed also for the palate integration, where the dark and bitter tones of the cigar are properly quenched by the bourbon, which contributes with dark fruit and some remote herbal tones. There is a certain interplay of pleasant bitter aftertastes with semi-sweet licorice and earth. Spices are complex, for a long finish.



Pairing score	90
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LARCENY
Whiskymaker's Equinox

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	46% - 92	\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

Velvety bourbon, features a mash including corn, wheat and malted barley. The nose is played on butterscotch and a touch of spicy oak. The sip is more oriented to vanilla and toasted caramel with chocolate and demerara sugar. A touch of coconut. The noses are developing very intriguing aromas, where the dark fruit and butterscotch are enveloping the burnt wood of the cigar in a rich chestnut honey. Probably extra sweetness would help the balance, yet the integration adds to both. Palates are darker and deeper, with ripe black cherries adding on top of burnt wood and spicy chocolate. The mouthfeel is of great texture, the rougher sides of the cigars are perfectly balanced. Maybe some freshness is lacking, in favor of a truly long-lasting dark sensation.



Pairing score	89
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INTERACTIVE



SPIRITS

“A good gulp of hot whiskey at bedtime
– it’s not very scientific, but it helps.”
Alexander Fleming

Waterford & Mark Reynier

*Waterford Whisky CEO
Chemistry of Filtration.*

by **Mark Trumpet**

Mark Reynier comes from a family that imported wine into the UK. In 1980, he began bottling and distributing fine French wine and later started an independent bottling company for whisky. In 2001, he resurrected the Islay single malt distillery Bruichladdich. He then established the original Renegade to bottle other rums, created Waterford Distillery in 2015, and finally built Renegade Distillery in 2019.

You have been involved in a famous Islay distillery before (Bruichladdich). What are the differences and similarities about that journey to the one at Waterford?

Both distilleries were state-of-the-art, both inspirational and radical technical marvels: the former in Victorian times, 1881; the latter 21st Century. I had the privilege to resurrect the mothballed distillery of Bruichladdich, on the Hebridean island of Islay, back in December of 2000. It was one of the first purpose-built distilleries along with Bunnahabhain, benefitting from improved transport and subsequent economics, of the steam “puffer”, or commodity shipping. There I had the chance to reintroduce barley farming, absent for a century, reconnecting the present with the island’s whisky heritage and culture; and of course, terroir.



What would be three words to describe Waterford Distillery today?

I can do it in two: Natural Flavour.

"Natural flavour, farm by farm". There - that's five words.

Terroir, biodynamic, organic, and cuvée are often used at Waterford. Can you elaborate on the differences between wine (where these terms are more often used) and whisky?

They mean the same thing for wine as for whisky: biodynamic and organic are deep rooted farming methods, essentially everything before WW1 was by definition organic; and biodynamic practices go back to the last ice age - 16,000 years ago. So nothing new. Frustratingly 'terroir' does not have an appropriate English language translation, but it is what nurtures a plant - any plant - and its fruit: the 3-dimensional interaction between microclimate, soil and topography on the growth of a plant; your ma calls it gardening. Sure, a cuvée is more a wine term than whisky. Literally it refers to the contents of a cuve or tank, and therefore a unique bottling. Furthermore, in Champagne, it has a more creative association around marrying terroir-derived flavours to create something where the whole is even greater than the sum. Think Cuvée Grand Siecle, Cuvée Louise, or Grande Cuvée from Laurent Perrier, Pommery or Krug etc.

Do you think terroir in whisky is more of a dream of yesterday, a contemporary solid fact, or a future bet?

We know it is a fact. Some folk get their knickers in a twist about this French word, terroir. They really shouldn't, it's not complicated nor new. Any agriculturist, land labourer, farmer or gardener has worked terroir to their advantage; otherwise we would all be dead. The French, for over 1000 years of monastic observation and ecclesiastical recording, have registered the effects and built walls to protect it. The market, that greatest of capitalist weather vanes, distinguished between the good, the bad and the ugly. Then the legal bods confirmed it with the appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC). The price per acre or case demonstrates it. Hell, the whole Cognac appellation was predicated on terroir. Waterford too, has played its part with a groundbreaking study in conjunction with Oregon State University and Dr Dustin Herb, peer reviewed and published in Foods. 60% of barley's remarkable 2000 flavour compounds are influenced by terroir.

How important is educating consumers on crafting whisky and about the origin the of ingredients?

When I started Bruichladdich on Islay distilleries were out of bounds. They were referred to industrially as 'plants'. Access verboten. So we opened the doors and let everyone in; we shared how whisky was made. At waterfordwhisky.com we have webcams too - you can see which single farm we are distilling as it happens. Sometimes the farmer him-



self will appear to check on how his barley is performing. The connection between field and farmer; distiller and distillate - is to me what it's all about. It all starts with that minuscule package, the barley grain, packed with 2000 flavour compounds, the most flavoursome cereal in the world! The flavour of single malt whisky is barley, the produce of agriculture, and we rediscover that to make something really authentic, honest, and true.

What is the Waterford bottling you are more passionate about or satisfied with?

The Arcadian series is something close to my heart. It's often said that things were better in the old days, and for some time I have felt that for whisky it really is the case: better barley, brewing and barrels. In a chase for the cheapest litre of alcohol the very origins of whisky, an agricultural produce, have been forgotten. Usurped by efficiency and uniformed by industry. Going back to an Arcadian era, a more innocent time, before barley flavour had been homogenised when there were more expansive flavours; when organics and biodynamics were the pastoral norms; the quality of casks as exciting as the origin; the distilleries as individual as they were artisanal. At Waterford we go back to how it used to be. That wasn't the original idea by the way, our curiosity has led us there.

Where do you see yourself and Waterford Distillery in five years? And what about Irish whiskey?

These days it's hard enough to see a year at a time! When one has a vision and the chance to make that vision come to life it's a very special thing that coalescing of people, finance, ideas, dreams and aspirations. With whisky it takes a long time, that inevitable gap between the idea and the real thing; concept and delivery; youth and maturity. It's not exactly a quick buck, is it? One is building, layer by layer, brick by brick, something that one day will hopefully be an epic, enjoyed by connoisseurs and cognoscenti around the world. And knowing 'I made that' is a special feeling, to have created such pleasure from scratch, from what is essentially a type of grass, some bacteria and water. There's great pride in that. It's a mighty motivating force. One's creating a history. And then there is our legacy, our own barley variety that we are cultivating, a sort of cereal greatest hits...

How similar and how different is your Rum adventure at Renegade?

The philosophy is identical. Connecting distillery with agriculture, rum drinker with the ingredient from which their drink is made. In this instance, pure sugar cane juice (eschewing molasses which, don't forget, is merely the waste byproduct of sugar refinery). Renegade Rum has been an even greater logistical challenge; establishing the farms, reintroducing sugar cane cultivation at scale to Grenada, building the distillery from the ground up. But it was this



very blank slate that attracted us to Grenada – along with the island's supreme terroir mosaic; a veritable kaleidoscope of microclimates, soil types, geologies and aspects. The differences we find in the spirits we distil from different terroirs – even single fields within the same farm – could not be starker. The feedback we have had from the world's most respected connoisseurs and awards bodies has been hugely gratifying, and the new suite of Single Farm Cuvées and All-Island Cuvées mark the next level of the Renegade Rum project.

Is it true you sometimes enjoy a good cigar? Do you think high-quality, hand-rolled tobacco can also share terroir, cuvée, organic, and biodynamic aspects?

I certainly do enjoy a good cigar, on the right occasion: I need to be in the right mood and I find these days that is often outside on the river bank or the fishing hut - early to mid pm. For me it's either highly personal, even selfish dare I say, or for sharing with a like-minded companion. And the size matters - I'm no good at those huge coronas - I go blue. I prefer the coolness of a Petit Robusto style like Partagas Series D Number 4 or a wee Hoya de Monteray, that slim panatella traditionally smoked during the break between the acts of a play. It's all about time and place, which for me, is just like whisky. Terroir could apply to cigars too - tobacco, after all is like any other plant, nurtured and nourished by where it grows, influenced by the microclimate, the soils, the topography. A while ago I recall an article proposing that terroir applied to whole countries of cigar production, but that premise is more a case of wishful thinking. It is a word that is as misunderstood as it's misappropriated. Yet terroir is about precision of place, it's microclimate (the emphasis on the word micro) not macro. Entire geographic zones, regions, countries are too widespread and generic for the focused distinctions of terroir. For example, Cuban tobacco, they say, is more aromatic and longer tasting because of its ferruginous soils. The climate and landscape prevailing over 42,000 square miles is rather more generic than that of Romanee Conti's 5 acre slope. A man who knows a lot more about the cigar industry than I is cigar, whisky and rum expert Jochen Klenk of Bad Wimpfen. Enjoying a drum (and the odd dram) we considered the modern Cuban factories, their brands and any connection with the land. Understandably the larger the scale, the greater the necessity to homogenise. But what if a small, maverick manufacturer, using his own tobacco grown on one hillside, on various soil type of a secluded valley could be separated from field to factory? Perhaps it is happening already like the vegueros (farmers) of the past, curious to explore the character of cigars made from their own land. Or like us at Waterford fascinated to explore 'how it used to be. A terroir-derived cigar, with a Waterford whisky or Renegade Rum, sharing the same agricultural provenance individuality and precision of place. Now that would be interesting.

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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

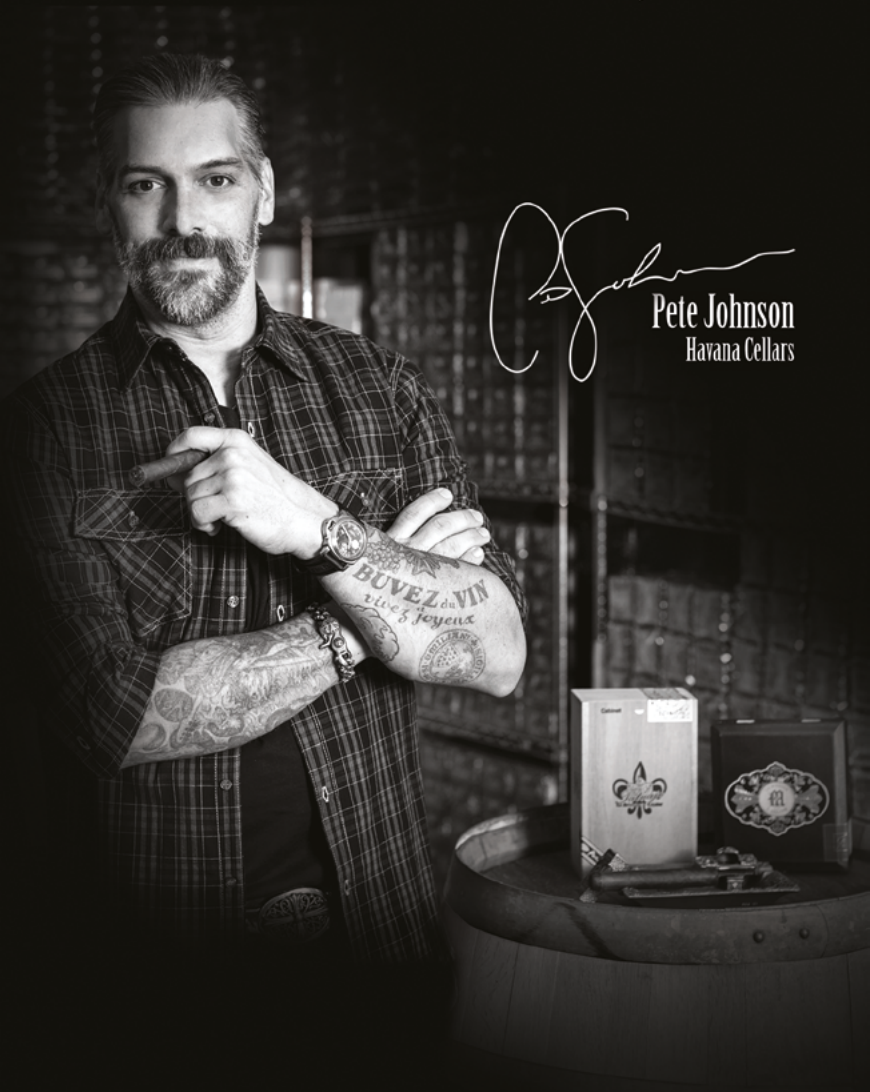
1. Pour the whiskey, no ice, no water.
2. Nose the whiskey and detail your tasting notes.
3. Melt in the mouth a small amount of chocolate, covering the entire surface.
4. Nose the whiskey again, taking notes of the aromas evolutions / changes.
5. Drink a small sip of the whiskey and compare the tasting 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).

BACK TO
OUR ORIGINS

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Chocolate & Unpeated Scotch

A world of opportunities.

by **Simone Poggi**

Scotch whiskeys are capable of developing several different aromatic profiles and bodies and are presented with very different ABVs and aging 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 coming from 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.

Sherry Monsters (Glendronach, Glenfarclas, Aberlour 18yo, Tamdhu 18yo) or Port Wood (Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban) – many considerations can be reproduced from the part of highly peated products in sherry casks. However, since the marriage is less similar due to the lack of peat in this case it is possible to further explore high cocoa percentage dark chocolates, raging from 70% to 90%, with slightly longer time before the taste buds saturate. Enjoy the animal and decadent sensations when red and black fruit pair with dark cocoa for bitter, mellow, extremely intense pleasure, truly sensual and tactile. Keep some high notes from oranges and balsamic herbs not to exaggerate the sugary content.

Marine such as some Islands whiskeys (Ardnamurchan, but also some from Islay such as Kil-

choman and Bruichladdich) – these products are some of the most difficult to pair, as the extremely intense salty perception start immediately stimulating the salivation, and acts as an activator of taste buds; when paired with a dark chocolate, it may intensify the acetic, strong note, making it even more acute and bitter. Much better to select a good-quality white chocolate, which can balance the mineral content with its high sugary content and cover the mouth in sweetness before the salty pinch. The neutralization may help secondary notes to shine, citrusy, stoney, herbal or delicately fruity as in some of these products.

Virgin Oak, First-fill Bourbon casks (Deanston Virgin Oak, several Glenallachie releases, Balvenie 12 Year Old - The Sweet Toast of American Oak) – another excellent opportunity to explore balan-



cing with dark chocolate the sweet yellow fruit notes provided by the intense esters generated by this popular aging; banana, yellow apples, rich vanilla and creamy texture are all aromas which pair well with 70-80% cocoa chocolate.

Refill Bourbon/Sherry Casks (many many products) – this is more of a creative suggestion than a true pairing recommendation. This type of whisky is the most common of Scotland, and many products feature both types of aging, mainly with a first (longer) maturation in ex-bourbon and a (shorter) finish in ex-sherry casks. One of the best similarity pairings which can be suggested is of course with milk chocolate, and this is a no brainer. However, variations and nuances of these whiskies are fine and mild and, to some, tasting experiences may prove to be slightly too similar to each other, not to say repetitive and boring. If this is the case, why not give chocolate the task to surprise and provide that unexpected element which can boost the experience? A set of different praline, even complex ones with creative infusions and aromas can do the job quite well.

Stoney, mineral, chalky (Clynelish, Oban, Balblair, Wolfburn) Highlanders can be very refined and severe, with sensations of cold river stones, ironing shop and mineral, almost chalk-like hints (Clynelish, Wolfburn, Oban). Despite the creaminess and buttery style of some of these releases (Balblair, some Wolfburn), milk chocolate is the most indicated to contrast the mineral content and the sharp peaks in a rounded, mellow palate.

Herbal/floral/farmy (Auchentoshan, Glenkinchie, Littlemill, Daftmill) delicate profiles featuring freshly cut herbs, flowery aromas, with some of them even triple distilled and with contained aging may enjoy a very discreet pairing with nuts and chocolate; almonds and roasted hazelnuts may be the most conservative, yet satisfying selection, with the soft aromas of the whiskies fully preserved, yet helped by a delicate oakiness and slightly roasted profile, for a gentle marriage.

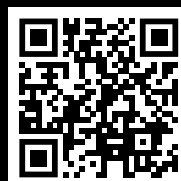
Attention: so far we have not been very successful in pairing wine-cask aged whiskies with chocolate, probably due to the intense tannic contribution provided by these barrels. This is probably worth some further attempts, but so far we recommend to be careful, and possibly start from other aromatic profiles.

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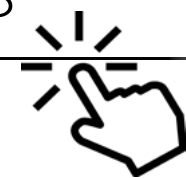
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Spritz

*Campari or Aperol?
Sparkle or still?*

by **Mark Trumpet**

The Spritz cocktail is as a quintessential Italian aperitif that has charmed countless palates with its refreshing and bittersweet flavors. It originated in the Veneto region of Italy, particularly in Venice, and has a rich history dating back to the 19th century.

This iconic cocktail, with its vibrant colors and effervescent nature, has transcended borders and become a popular choice on cocktail menus around the globe. It quickly gained popularity in the past years.

The origins of the Spritz cocktail can be traced back to the time when the Veneto region was part of the Austrian Empire.

Austrian soldiers and officials stationed in this area found the local wines to be too intense for their taste. To make the wine more palatable, they started diluting it with water, creating what was known as a "spritzen" in German, which means "to spray" or "to splash." This practice of spritzening wine eventually evolved into what we now enjoy as the Spritz cocktail.

The Spritz started as a simple mix of white wine and water but evolved over the years to include a variety of ingredients, such as different types of liqueurs and sodas. The classic recipe for a Spritz typically includes a base of white wine or prosecco, a splash of bitter liqueur such as Aperol or Campari, and a top-up of soda water. This combination of flavors creates a har-

monious balance between sweetness, bitterness, and effervescence that has captivated cocktail enthusiasts for generations.

While the traditional Spritz cocktail follows a specific recipe, there is ample room for creativity when it comes to variations and adaptations. The bitter liqueur is a key component, adding depth and complexity to the drink. Aperol and Campari are two popular choices for the bitter element in a Spritz, each offering a distinct flavor profile. Aperol, with its orange hue and slightly sweeter taste, creates a light and refreshing Spritz, while Campari, known for its intense bitterness and vibrant red color, adds a bold kick to the cocktail.

In addition to the classic Aperol or Campari Spritz, there are numerous variations of the Spritz cocktail that cater to different tastes and preferences. Some popular variations include using elderflower liqueur for a floral twist, adding fresh fruit purees for a fruity punch, or incorporating herbal liqueurs for a more aromatic experience. The versatility of the Spritz cocktail allows mixologists and home bartenders alike to experiment with different ingredients and create unique flavor combinations.

The Spritz cocktail is not just a drink; it is a cultural icon that embodies the spirit of Italian aperitivo culture. In Italy, the ritual of enjoying an aperitivo, typically in the early evening before dinner, is a social tradition that brings people together to unwind, socialize, and savor the moment. The Spritz cocktail plays a central role in this ritual, serving as a symbol of leisure, conviviality, and joie de vivre.

The popularity of the Spritz cocktail has extended beyond Italy and has become a global phenomenon, with bars and restaurants around the world featuring their own unique takes on this classic drink. Whether sipped on a sun-drenched terrace overlooking the Grand Canal in Venice or enjoyed in a bustling cocktail bar in New York City, the Spritz cocktail evokes a sense of sophistication and relaxation that transcends cultural boundaries.

In summary, the Spritz cocktail is a testament to the rich history, cultural significance, and tantalizing flavors of Italian mixology. Its rise to fame as a beloved aperitif can be attributed to its timeless appeal, refreshing taste, and versatility. Whether enjoyed on a sunny afternoon in a bustling piazza or savored as a prelude to a sumptuous meal, the Spritz cocktail continues to captivate cocktail enthusiasts with its alluring charm and effervescent personality.

PREPARATION

Fill a wine glass or a highball glass with ice, and add the Aperol or Campari to the glass. Then pour in the white wine or prosecco. Top up the glass with soda water. Stir gently to combine the ingredients and garnish with a slice of orange or an olive.

ADVICE

When serving a Spritz cocktail, it is essential to garnish it with a slice of orange, as this not only adds a touch of visual appeal but also enhances the overall flavor profile.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 oz white wine or prosecco
- 2 oz Aperol or Campari
- 1 oz soda water
- Orange slice or olive for garnish
- Ice

GLASS

Wine glass.



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TASTE

"Wine is sunlight,
held together by water."
Galileo



Port

History, characteristics, and peculiarities of a sumptuous and rich wine which often lends itself well to pairings with cigars and gastronomy.

by **Vincenzo Scivetti**

Vinho do Porto is, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the greatest-known wines. It owes its fame to its undoubted characteristics and to the product's narrative, which over the years has been able to tell it well to the world.

Between myth, legend, and reality, the history of the Port is fascinating and can be described as a discovery. It is not possible to precisely date the beginning of this story, which is lost to time among stories that are sometimes a little adventurous.

It was in the years of the second half of the 17th century, around 1670. The English now in conflict with the French, whose wines had become difficult to import due to exaggerated taxation which even resulted in the embargo, turned their commercial attention to other territories of Europe. Yet, a few decades earlier, the need to load drinking water onto their vessels for transoceanic routes made it a consolidated practice for English traders to stop at the Port of Bordeaux. There they could also select and purchase wines to be able to sell them both at their destination and upon return to English ports. The interruption of relations with the French had brought those same traders to other ports, and the Port of Porto, Portugal, certainly represented a tempting opportunity.



This was also an area of extensive wine production, although the quality standards were far from equaling Bordeaux wines, but was attractive due to their very low prices. The frustration of the traders was such that it led them to explore the territory even on more arduous paths, including by navigating the Golden River, the Douro, which with its estuary forms the Port of arrival. This is located in the village of Vila Nova de Gaia.

A story that has no certain origin tells of a couple of English merchants who received news. Among the slate mountains of the Upper Douro Valley, about 70/80km from the sea, there was an abbey where an absolute quality wine was produced. They decided to venture upon the long and perilous journey. It seems that the religious were the only ones who guaranteed sanitary and impeccable production to obtain drinkable wines. The landscape was very particular, these rounded hills of slate crushed by hand by the farmers who thus obtained land for cultivable vineyards. A unique panorama of reliefs that seem combed with perfectly parallel terraces that follow the isobars generating a unique view. These territories are now declared UNESCO heritage sites. Once they reached the Abbey of Llamego, they were welcomed by the abbot, refreshed, and, last but not least, taken by the throat. At the end of their dinner, they were served a divine nectar, a sweet, persuasive, alcoholic wine with celestial aromas: gentlemen, here is the Port!

The amazement was enormous, and the curiosity was even greater to learn how a wine like this could be created and preserved. With extreme availability and humility, the abbot briefly explained the production processes: a few bunches of grapes per plant of the most disparate varieties, well ripe or rather almost dried, were collected and pressed with the feet in low square tanks called lagares. Once the very sweet must was collected and fermentation started, the mysterious and innovative operation took place that makes this wine a gem: before the end of fermentation, when the product is still sufficiently sweet, it is integrated with Aguardiente. The alcohol from wine or pomace blocked the fermentation, leaving the wine pleasantly sweet. It also guaranteed its resistance to pathogens such as acetic bacteria or others thus creating an unusual longevity of the end product.

Imagine the amazement of those merchants who in one fell swoop discovered an oenological jewel and at the same time solved the problem of refermentation that wines underwent during ocean transport to warmer places. And so it was, that the English merchants themselves began to produce this nectar, with these technical precautions, bringing Porto Vinho to the English and international markets. Within a few years there were several



merchants who built their cellars in the area. They were essentially what the French call negociants, they bought the wine from the Alto Douro area and stored it in their own aging warehouses which were erected on the quay of the Port of Vila Nova de Gaia.

The wines were loaded from the Quintas, the farmers' cellars, into pipas (the particular 550-litre Port barrel) and transported by river on the Barcos Rabelos, small sailing boats, to the warehouses at the Port. A continuous procession of Barcos on the river lasted until the mid-1980s, and then a motorway facilitated land transport. From 1926 until 1986, only wine produced by companies that had a refinement warehouse in Vila Nova de Gaia could be called Port, an important advantage for large companies, especially English ones, but penalizing for small producers.

The English market was fascinated by this wine, which, being mostly produced by English families, was considered their national wine, even the favorite of the Royal House. The early legend, however, leaves room for another story that sees the knowledge and diffusion of Port only from 1820, a year that produced very concentrated and sweet wines thanks to the excellent climatic conditions that favored the perfect ripening of the grapes. An unparalleled result in the following years led producers to resort to Aguardiente (77% for a final result of 18/20% in the bottle) to obtain a similar result in terms of sweetness and alcoholic warmth.

Time and technique have made it possible to obtain better wines, which have made this wine's fame universal. Currently, the Porto vineyards are widespread in the areas of Baixo Corgo, the westernmost and lower area of the river, the traditional area of Cima Corgo, and the area proper of Douro Superior, the last in terms of development. The climate is Mediterranean. The vineyards are divided into six categories, which refer to limited yields, altitude, and type of soil.

There are fifty-one vines authorized for cultivation for the production of Port, but fewer of these are actually used. The most common are the Touriga Nacional; the main grape, with very intense colors and a rich taste. The Tinta Barroca; bearer of alcohol, aromas and structure. The structured and fruity Tinta Roriz (Tempranillo). The Tinta Cao with its spicy verve. All of grape varieties are very intensely rich in coloring substances but also in sugars and acidity.

When we talk about Port we are actually referring to a wine offered in different declinations, with different characteristics and different qualities.



We often find bottles of Port on supermarket shelves at cheap prices, of the types Bianco (very little identity), Ruby (ruby color obtained with minimal aging in the bottle), and Tawny (oxidative brown color aged in small barrels): these are entry-level products that convey a very marginal idea of the greatness of this wine but represent the first steps of the different categories.

The premium production is characterized by two different styles: Vintage and aged Tawny. In the production of aged Tawny, the wines can remain in a barrel for a period of 10 to 40 years. At the time of bottling, a blend of different vintages is usually opted for, the youngest age of which is indicated on the label. The evolutionary progression in the wood produces a loss of color and a captivating olfactory complexity with hints of red fruit in alcohol, spices, and dried flowers. The aroma is richer and more intense with the older blends, a unique whirlwind of ethereal sensations. Sometimes, the wines can remain in wood for over forty years even if they generally prefer to decant it into carafeiras (demijohns) at that point; these wines are used in blends very sparingly but have an extraordinary effect due to the very strong personality they have. If the Tawnys are from a single vintage (particularly favorable), this can be indicated on the label with the term Colheita.

The Vintage is not produced every year. The harvest

must have produced excellent grapes to obtain this precious bottling, which bears the year of harvest on the label. They are extremely concentrated wines whose production involves a short period of maturation in wood and is immediately bottled and destined to mature in the bottle for a very long time. Very rich in color and even astringent when young, over time, it reaches equilibrium by causing part of the coloring substances to precipitate into the bottle. The taste of a long-aged Vintage Port is shocking for its expressive richness: intense and non-ethereal fruity tones, vivid spices, florality and a magical finish in the mouth.

A separate category is the Port LBV or Late bottled Vintage: the wine is given a longer maturation in wood (at least four years) and then it is bottled for a result that is not up to the standards of either the great Vintages or the Tawnys but It still represents a great tasting.

Some may wonder when and how to drink a Port. Despite the reputation of a great wine for special occasions, in reality, any occasion can be propitious for opening a bottle: in front of the fireplace when the temperatures are harsher, or by the sea as a meditation wine. With the appropriate precautions, it can certainly be combined with great cigars but also on the table, where the combination with mature cheeses and, sometimes, even with some blue cheeses is a winning one.



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SPIRITS

威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
你喝的是什麼

Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用者經常進行類型分析，偶爾或熱情，瓶子一直是購買的主要吸引力，但是有一個更精細的細節，必須加深，能夠揭示許多有用的相關：標籤。

無論是大的還是小的，有時用玻璃瓶裝，有時是雙面（正面和背面），有時是圓的，有時是方形的，標籤傳達給我們所有的信息，以了解更多的東西，而不僅僅是內容。它並不總是正確的，但一般的一些事情總是有效的。

雙面標籤通常其名字為威士忌，這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們說沒有“e”的威士忌：在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱擴大了蘇格蘭威士忌，單一蘇格蘭威士忌保證了單一蘇格蘭的產地，一些蘇格蘭威士忌增加了生產區域，以強調產品的地域性。

“歲月”之後經常出現由數字與產品的最低年齡有關。最低年齡因為，與標籤不同桶的混合相比，最年輕的數字是相關的。示例：使用三個桶分別釀造8年，12年和20年的威士忌將顯示“8

歲”字樣，無論舊桶的氧化情況如何。公認有責任報告其他桶的年齡，但這不是強制性的。有時，您可以找到沒有年齡的威士忌：沒有恐懼，沒有夢想或假貨產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低2年威士忌的標籤上。製片人選擇不標年齡，這仍然是未知的：它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉快。

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

“Un Chilled”這個問題我們知道威士忌沒有被冷過，以及“沒有顏色”，或“沒有添加劑”（或其他類似的詞），解釋說沒有添加劑糾正顏色。

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

本小還沒有宣布使用的精確量，但他們肯定會把更多的桶放在一起。

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

桶的組合符合精確的標準：您可以將來自同一釀造廠，不同釀造廠，甚至麥芽（大麥）和小麥（穀物）桶的麥芽威士忌混合在一起。在第一種情況下，沒有標籤（這是一種常見做法）。在第二種情況下，我們將有混合麥芽威士忌（今年自釀造稱為Vatted）。第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合），還有Grain Whiskies：這個術語是指所有穀物生長的威士忌。在美國世界，我們經常遇到與威士忌相關的各種問題，或者使用的唯一一類：黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌。

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

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Bourbon Barrel-aged Barleywine

How to innovate an old-fashioned style in a sustainable and innovative way.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**





One can safely state that barrel-aged beers, and barleywines in particular, are not the easiest beers to drink. They can be potent and surly, intense and decadent, impetuous and overwhelming, and above all quite expensive.

Furthermore, they require years of proper bottle-aging to get in their best shape and they need to be paired with a seriously rich meal. Yet, their popularity is steadily increasing thanks to the successful versions of a couple of brewers that nailed the right combination of marketing, quality, price, and opportunity. Of course, we're talking about the guys at the Chicago-based Goose Island Beer Co. that have been revolutionizing the craft for the past thirty years with their fantastic Bourbon County Stout. Moreover, barrel-aging can be quite risky in terms of production. It requires a lot of time and investments (barrels means space and proper warehouse conditions), while adding a whole series of unknown complications in achieving a satisfying result. Every barrel is different, so it takes a lot experimenting with the malts, the hops, and the yeasts, to find the right combination for a product that can age consistently in wood. Yet, the idea of using bourbon barrels for aging beer is a brilliant solution of efficient recycling and reciprocal product valorization. By law, all bourbon in the US must be aged in new American white oak casks for minimum two years. This means that hundreds of thousands of barrels a year are forced into early retirement, despite being in perfect working condition. Once they serve the original purpose, bourbon casks happen to be replete of useful chemical compounds for beer aging: lactones yield floral aromas, phenolic aldehydes provide vanilla, and simple sugars impart caramel. As new casks are much more difficult to manage in beer aging, while other spirit casks can be more expensive due to availability and different regulations, bourbon casks represent the perfect choice for brewers who want to start a range of barrel-aged beers. Thus, over the past decades, barrel-aged stouts and imperial stouts have become a standard offering as yearly special release by many brewers. High prices and ABV percentages don't scare the true beer-aficionado anymore, who on the contrary is constantly preaching the virtues of "drinking less, drinking better".

Yet, barleywines are a slightly different matter. While barrel-aged stouts can nowadays almost be considered "comfort beers" for some, barleywines present a more complicated profile. Let's skip the annoying "barleywine vs. old ale" debate and jump ahead to the point where we agree to use the term "barleywine" to effectively indicate all those barrel-aged top-fermented beers that do not fall into other specific styles such as stout, porter, IPA, etc. True, there can be huge differences in taste and aromatic profile among golden, pale, and dark barrel-aged strong ales. But

to be fair, barleywine was, and still is, more a commercial name than a technical term, and as such it fits the purpose: we are talking about beers with elevated gravity, high ABV percentage, an aromatic profile strongly marked by wood aging, and a long span of life ahead. Now, if we consider the lasting influence of the historical English brands survived from the old days – Bass No. 1, Marston's Owd Rodger, Fuller's 1845, Robinsons Old Tom, Thomas Hardy's Ale, Gale's Prize Old Ale, Whitbread Gold Label and few others – the true difference in modern barleywines is between the English and the American style. Fundamentally, while the former is all about maltiness and more rounded profiles, the latter is all about hoppiness and extremely high ABV percentages, as embodied by the famous Sierra Nevada Bigfoot ever since 1983. Obviously, the English vs. American approach is more a matter of style, rather than geographic provenance, as many producers outside of the UK and the US opted between one of the two approaches. Yet, particularly in the US, the American-style barleywine producers, certainly influenced by the success of the above-mentioned bourbon barrel-aged stouts, started to experiment with bourbon casks to further characterize their product image.

Let's have a look at beers like AleSmith Old Numbskull from California, Central Water Brewer's Reserve Bourbon Barrel Barleywine from Wisconsin, and Tröegs Flying Mouflan Bourbon Barrel-Aged from Pennsylvania. These beers, among the most beloved representatives of the modern bourbon barrel-aged barleywine style, are real powerhouses of mellow flavors. Their extreme richness in malts and hops dovetails with the bourbon casks to develop a smoother and rounded profile. In a way, bourbon barrel-aging acts as a sort of taming of the bold American hops that so strongly characterize the classic examples of the genre (the above-mentioned Sierra Nevada Bigfoot, as well as Dogfish Head Olde School and Lagunitas Olde GnarlyWine). The wood, heavily marked by the bourbon, helps in uncovering layers above layers of big chewy malts, decadent chocolate, salted caramel, pecan pie, toffee, dark cherries, rum raisins, marshmallow, figs, dates, and more. Of course, all these marvelous flavors are subjected to the tyranny of time: barleywines can vary quite a bit depending on when and how they are consumed. As with aged wines, it is not easy to guess the right moment for consuming them. Despite what producers and experts can reliably state, it is not always the case that barrel-aged barleywines are bottled as ready-to-drink, as well as further bottle aging does not automatically improve them. Often, bad storage, or wrong service in terms of temperature and pouring, can do damage beyond repair. These are styles that must be carefully understood and studied before cracking the bottles. It takes time and effort to understand these peculiar beers, and the best recommendation is to always drink responsibly both in terms of amount and dedication!



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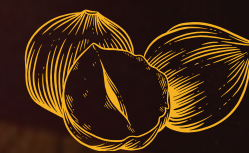


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AGING

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HAZELNUT



VANILLA



SPICES



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Blind Tasting

96 SPIRITS

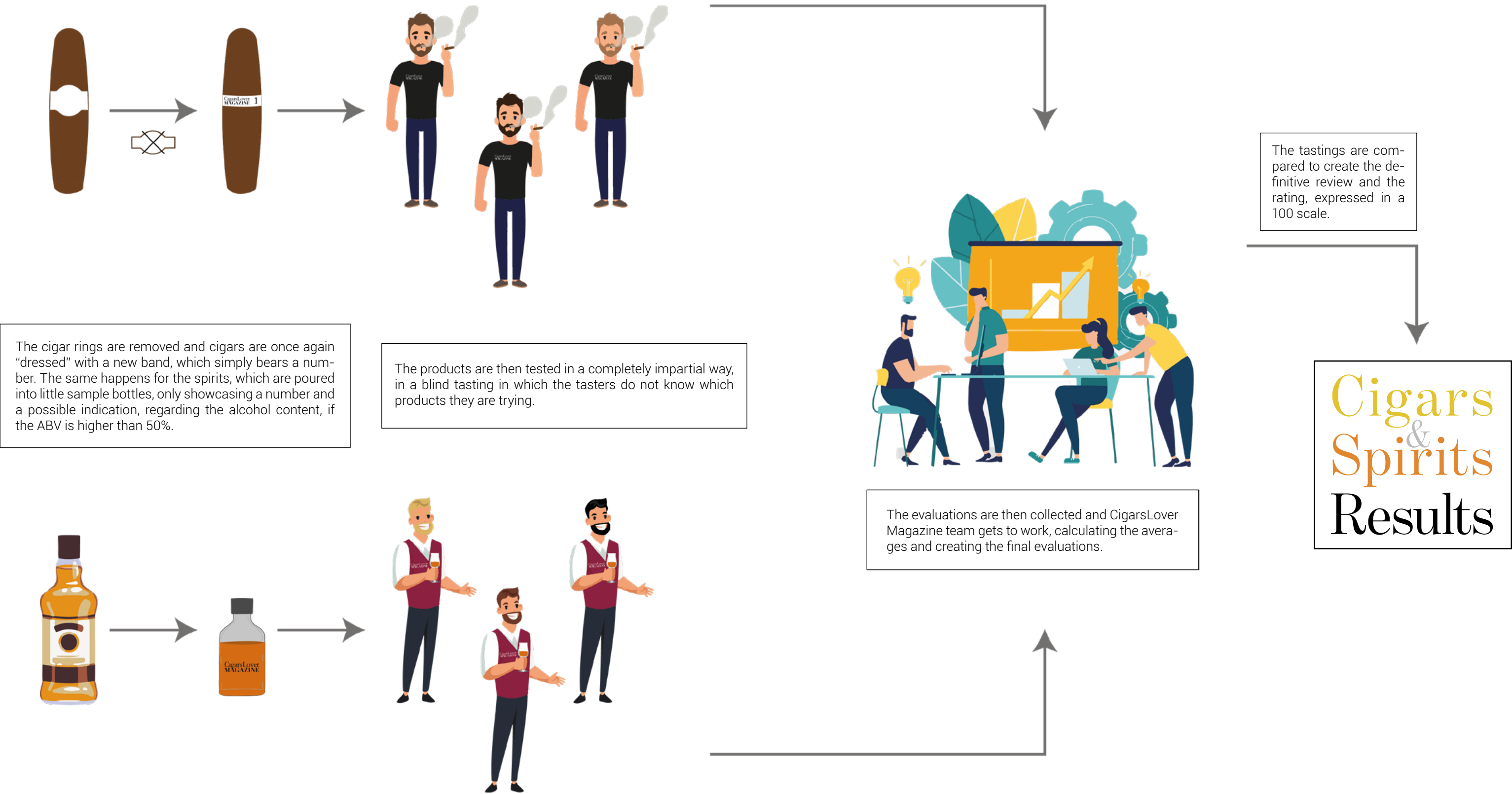
- 98 Rum
- 104 Whisky

112 CIGARS

- 113 Gordo
- 116 Lancero
- 119 Robusto
- 123 Toro



HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?





KAVALAN
Solist Fino Sherry

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

— NOSE —

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

— PALATE —

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

— FINISH —

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

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

94

Legend

All the information in the blind tasting

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

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

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

APPLETON ESTATE®
JAMAICA RUM



Rum



SAINT JAMES
15 year old

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

— NOSE —

Wood, honey, and pecan nuts, with a fruity vein and notes of raisins. A roasted coffee beans touch.

— PALATE —

Wood, a vegetal touch, and sugar cane, followed by a rich spiciness. Tropical fruit.

— FINISH —

Long finish, with notes of wood spices, and sugar cane.

Deep and structured, with a harmonious flavor profile.

91



OPTHIMUS
*25 year old
Malt Whisky*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Dominican Rep.	43% 86	\$\$

— NOSE —

Ripe fruit, with plum and dates, orange oils, wood and toasted nuts. Nuances of cereals and dark chocolate.

— PALATE —

Round, with notes of raisins, plums, dates, and panforte, followed by dark chocolate and wood spices.

— FINISH —

Long. Dark chocolate, wood spices, hints of cloves and a touch of malt.

Structured and balanced. A ron boasting a nice persistence.

91



HAMPDEN
*State HLCF 2017
Classic Overproof*

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

— NOSE —

Tropical fruits, recalling jackfruit, vesou and sugar cane nuances. After a while, cherry in spirit.

— PALATE —

Spices, cocoa, coconut, and roasted notes, together with tropical fruit nuances.

— FINISH —

Long. Tropical candied fruit.

Long lasting and bold. A true bomb of flavors.

90



DEPAZ
VSOP

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	42% 84	\$

- NOSE —
 Rich notes of vesou, wood, sugar cane, and spices, together with a touch of vanilla.
- PALATE —
 Vesou, wood, together with sugar cane and a vegetal note. A little on the dry side.
- FINISH —
 Medium. Vanilla and wood, with orange nuances.

 Rich and balanced.

89



WAREHOUSE
#1 John C Edition
DOK Blanc 6

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

- NOSE —
 Rich notes of vesou, wood, sugar cane, and spices, together with a touch of vanilla.
- 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.

89



HAVANA CLUB
15 year old

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

- NOSE —
 Scents of wood, cocoa, wood spices and leather, together with vanilla and vegetal nuances.
- PALATE —
 Wood varnish notes, wood and caramel, followed by earthy and vegetal nuances. Honey.
- FINISH —
 Medium. Caramel and balsamic nuances (cloves).

 Well balanced. The flavor profile boasts a nice harmony.

87



DAMOISEAU
Millésime 2009
Cask Strength

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	66.9% 133.8	\$\$\$

- NOSE —
 Walnut, orange, lemon peel, and roasted wood. There is also a vanilla note, together with a vegetal touch.
- PALATE —
 Orange peel, roasted notes of wood, and vegetal aromas, with balsamic vein. A little sharp.
- FINISH —
 Long. Intense balsamic notes.

 Rich and intense.

87



JM
XO

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	45% 90	\$

- NOSE —
 Candied plum and citrus, followed by vanilla and lemon cream. Then, oak, white pepper, potpourri, and tobacco.
- PALATE —
 Soft entry, with intense notes of wood spices, pepper, and tobacco. Sugar cane follows.
- FINISH —
 Medium-long persistency. Spices and vegetal nuances.

 Elegant nose and very well balanced.

85



MONTEBELLO
6 year old

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

- NOSE —
 A riot of sugar cane scents and pepper, followed by brine, ripe tropical fruits, and olives.
- PALATE —
 Sugar cane, green olives, brine and some peppery notes. A little salty.
- FINISH —
 Medium finish. Brine together with green olives.

 Intense. The flavor profile performs better to the nose.

85



MINOKI
*Mizunara Cask
Finished*

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

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

— PALATE —
Wood, topped by notes of vanilla pod, and a touch of wood spices.

— FINISH —
Medium long, with notes of vanilla and wood spices.

Smooth and balanced.

84



BAYOU
*Single Barrel Red Wine
Cask Batch 2*

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

— 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.

84



ZACAPA
El Alma

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

— NOSE —
Caramel, toffee, and roasted coffee are followed by balsamic notes, recalling star anise. Then molasses.

— PALATE —
Sweet. Caramel, toffee and hints of oak, together with raisins.

— FINISH —
Short finish. Caramel and toffee.

Overall, a rum that exhibits a very sweet base. The flavor profile is not among the widest.

83



CHOOSE WHO TO BELIEVE.

A MIRACULOUS LIE

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

A BITTER TRUTH

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



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DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Whisky



ELIJAH CRAIG
Barrel Proof
Batch May 2023

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	66.5% 133	\$\$

— NOSE —

Ripe fruit, caramel, oak wood, vanilla pods, and cherries in alcohol. Then pecan notes.

— PALATE —

An explosion of wood and caramel, enriched with spices. Buttery. Then, oak and cherries in alcohol.

— FINISH —

Long. Vanilla pods, menthol, and a riot of wood spices.

Bold and structured, with a remarkable intensity.

92



MARS
The Y.A. #02

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	49% 98	\$\$\$

— NOSE —

Fruity notes of bloody oranges and peaches are immediately boasting. The texture is neat and crisp, classy.

— PALATE —

Elegant, with fruit, ripe pink grapefruit, and peaches with a tangy minerality giving depth and complexity.

— FINISH —

Medium. Neat, classy, and refined.

Elegant and classy. Nicely structured and complex.

92



ICHIRO'S
Malt & Grain Japanese
Blended Whisky

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

— NOSE —

Vanilla, pastry, and custard. Then-red fruits, some fresh citrusy scents, lime peel, and a hint of herbs.

— PALATE —

Smooth and round, with smoky notes, yellow fruits, vanilla, spices and a touch of petrichor.

— FINISH —

Medium-long. Smoky nuances, yellow ripe fruits and hints of licorice.

Incredibly smooth. Structured and deep, with a nice complexity.

91



ARRAN
*Remnant Renegade
Signature Series*

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

— NOSE —
Sherried and mineral. There is cinnamon, a touch of vanilla, and, after a while, orange peel.

— PALATE —
Smooth. Almonds, cinnamon, and some balsamic herbs.

— FINISH —
Medium. Balsamic herbs and some vanilla.

Easy to enjoy and smooth, but it lacks structure and depth.

90



ISLE OF HARRIS
*The Hearach Peated
Edition*

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

— NOSE —
Smoke, fruity notes of ripe peaches, red apples, and floral honey. Fresh.

— PALATE —
Sherry. Creamy and fruity, Malaga ice cream, and fresh chopped summer peaches with a nutty finish.

— FINISH —
Long, on nuts and a minor smoke.

Rather complex and elegant, despite the short aging, it shows an interesting flavor profile.

89



GLEN MORAY
18 year old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	47.2% 94.4	\$\$\$\$

— NOSE —
Smoky scents, together with vanilla, yellow fruits, mainly apple, toasted wood, and a hint of petrichor.

— PALATE —
Vanilla and smoky aromas are now richer. There are raisins, some peppery nuances, malt, and oak.

— FINISH —
Medium-long. Oak, vanilla, and peppery notes.

Rich and well balanced, boasting an intense flavor profile.

88



HEAVEN'S DOOR
*Straight Rye Whiskey
Vosges Cask Finish*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	43% 86	\$\$

— NOSE —
Vanilla bean and a collection of sweet spices. Herbal components, butterscotch and aged cigarbox wood.

— PALATE —
Aromas of spices and oak, together with some sweet and bready component. Creamy.

— FINISH —
Medium. Gentle yet rich in flavors.

Surprising. Sweet and rich in aromas, with a great vanilla and a very pleasant array of spices.

87



GLENFARCLAS
105

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

— NOSE —
A little winy, with toffee and a mix of apple and pear notes, followed by balsamic scents.

— PALATE —
Notes of spices, cinnamon and pepper, toffee, sherry, oak, vanilla, and some balsamic nuances.

— FINISH —
Medium long finish, with more spices and ripe fruits.

Rich and bold, delivering a pleasant flavor profile, despite the high ABV.

87



OAKPACKER
The Air Edition

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	46% 92	\$\$

— NOSE —
Rich vanilla pod, oak, nutty notes, toasted wood, vegetal scents and roasted coffee beans. Citrus peel. Fresh.

— PALATE —
Smooth and round. Vanilla, oak, honey, lemon zest, and toasted aromas. A little on the dry side.

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

Silky and well balanced. Structured and easy to appreciate.

87



GLENALLACHIE
8 year old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% 92	\$

— NOSE —
 Oak, ripe banana, intense sherried flavors of raisins, cherries, and strawberries, fresh yet juicy.

— PALATE —
 Dark sherried notes, with some slightly bitter hints of rhubarb, over dark cherries and raisins. Herbs.

— FINISH —
 Medium finish. Sherry together with notes of herbs.

Intense and fairly structured.

86



INDRI
Trini The Three Wood

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
India	46% 92	\$

— NOSE —
 Red currant and red berries. Fresh apples, grapefruit. Some light exotic fruit notes. Baking spices.

— PALATE —
 Spicy aromas. Two fruity dimensions are fighting: a fresh citrus one and a more exotic.

— FINISH —
 Medium, still rather complex.

Interesting and boasting a nicely complex flavor profile. The alcohol is not completely integrated.

85



THE KYOTO
Murasaki-Obi

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

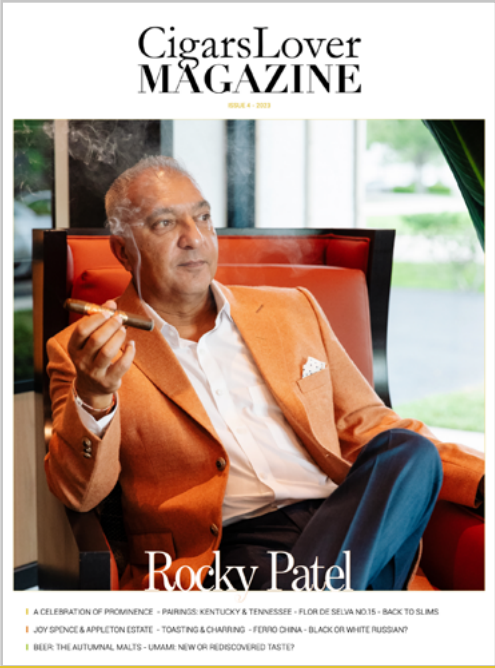
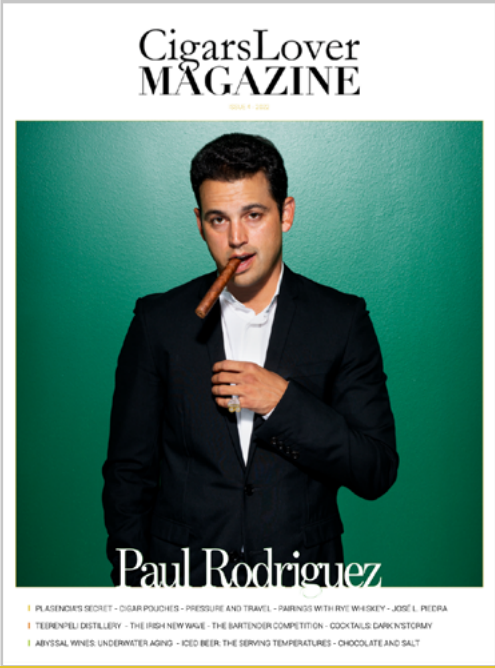
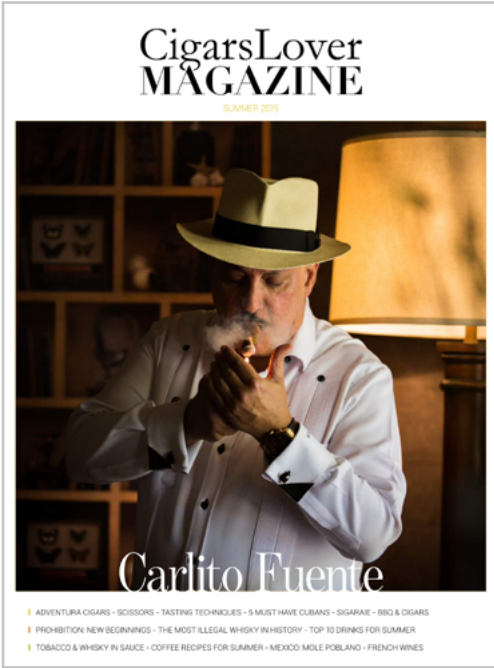
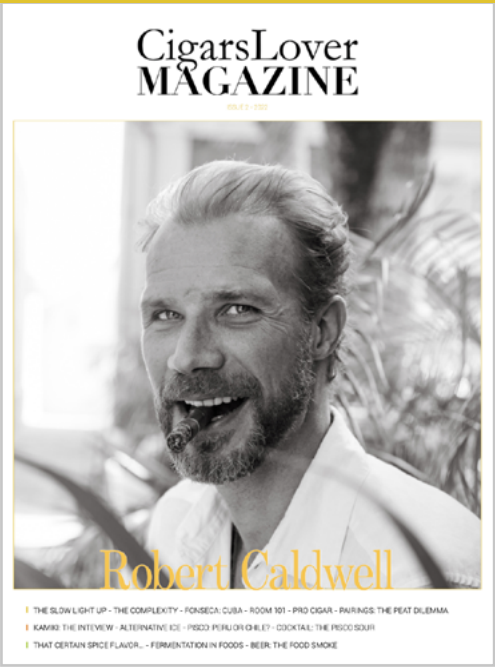
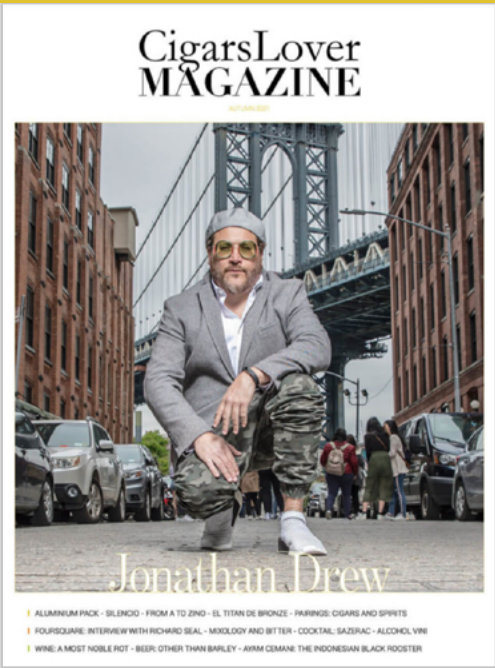
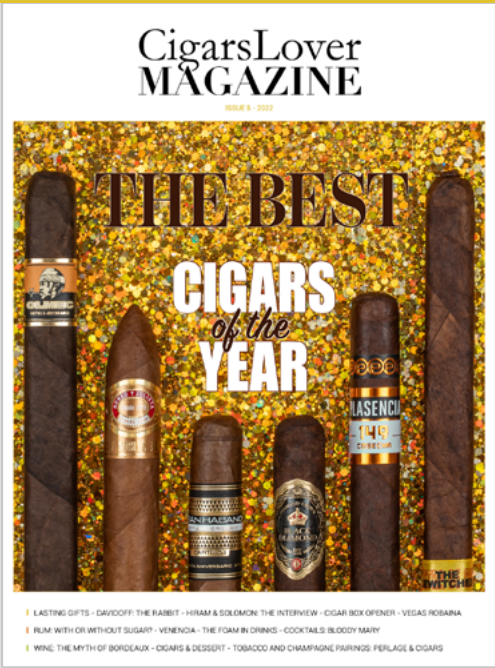
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 for handmade cigars*



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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.



CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE

DISCOVER ALL ISSUES



INTERACTIVE

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 millimeters and inches.
 - PRICE: cigar price in US Dollar and Euro.
 - WRAPPER: the external leaf.
 - BINDER: the leaf under the wrapper.
 - FILLER: the leaves inside the cigar.

Gordo





PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE
SIXTO II HEXAGONO

FLAVORFUL AND SATISFYING

Cocoa, earth, and black pepper give way to the smoke, accompanied by vegetal nuances. Woody and balsamic aromas are added in the second half.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 24.5 € 24.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



FLOR DE SELVA ANIVERSARIO
TIEMPO

BALANCED AND CREAMY

It delivers notes of cedar wood, white pepper, and roasted coffee beans. There is also a light vegetal touch in the aftertaste, together with vanilla.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 17.8 € 14.6m
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



VALENTINO SIESTO ANN.
CRAZY HOUR MADURO

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

Hazelnut and wood are accompanied by leather and clean tobacco notes in the beginning. Light red pepper nuances and espresso notes are added in the second half.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 24 € 39.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



WEST TAMPA CIRCLE OF
LIFE GIGANTE

LINEAR AND CONTAINED

The profile, which remains unchanged throughout the smoke, is made up of light aromas of cocoa, wood, leather and pepper.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 14.99 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	N/A	N/A



GRAYCLIFF BOSS OF THE
BLOCK BIG BOSS

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.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 47 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA, COSTA RICA, HONDURAS



A BRONX TALE CALOGERO
GORDO

ROUND BUT STATIC

Leather, coffee, herbs and mineral notes make for an interesting flavor profile, that stays unchanged throughout the whole duration of the smoke.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ 13.2 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	NICARAGUA, DOMINICAN REP.



GILBERT DE MONTSALVAT
SIGNATURE GORDO

BALANCED AND HARMONIOUS

It brings to the palate notes of earth, hazelnut, and vegetal notes. There is a light spiciness to it, recalling white pepper and nutmeg, together with some vanilla nuances.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ - € 14.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



MONTES SERIE O
AMAZONAS DOBLE TORO

A LITTLE TOO STATIC

The opening is earthy and nutty. Then wood notes together with a vegetal touch are followed by roasted aromas.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	\$ - € 11.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, N/AV

Lancero



ADVENTURA ROYAL RETURN QUEEN'S PEARLS LANCERO

RICH AND VELVETY

Cream and wood open up the smoke. They are joined by hazelnut, white pepper and citrus nuances. The pepper becomes intenser towards the finale.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x178mm (7")	\$ 15 € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., ECUADOR, NICARAGUA



WEST TAMP WHITE LANCERO

BOLD AND SATISFYING

Hazelnut and leather give way to the smoke. Balsamic and woody aromas join later on. A chili spice appears in the last third of the smoke, making for a spicy finale.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	40x178mm (7")	\$ 11.19 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



CALDWELL GIRLS GUNS GOLD LANCERO

CREAMY AND SMOOTH

The cigar opens with a very creamy smoke and reveals aromas of wood and walnut, followed by cappuccino and herbs. White pepper notes join in the second half.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38x184mm (7 ¼")	\$ 12 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	N/A	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



CHATEAU DIADEM LANCERO

RICH AND BOLD

It delivers a riot of spices, recalling a mix of chili and black pepper. The flavor profile is soon enriched with aromas of walnut and earth, together with wood and roasted nuances.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	42x178mm (7")	\$ - € 13.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



COHIBA RIVIERA
LANCERO

INTENSE AND BALANCED

It boasts aromas of earth, roasted coffee beans, and leather, followed by seasoned wood and vegetal hints, the latter becoming more pronounced towards the ending.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38x178mm (7")	\$ 14.9 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



AGANORSA LEAF ANIVER.
COROJO LANCERO

COMPLEX AND FULL

A mix of earth leather and pepper, followed by herbal nuances, is revealed in the first half. A nutty aroma joins later on and the finale becomes spicy.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	40x190mm (7 ½")	\$ 15.75 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



EPIC
HABANO LANCERO

CONTAINED EVOLUTION

It delivers roasted aromas, together with earthy notes. There is also a black pepper touch, mainly in the aftertaste. In the last part, balsamic nuances complete the flavor profile.

84 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x178mm (7")	\$ 10.1 € 8.1
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



CASINO REAL
LANCERO

CONTAINED INTENSITY

It brings to the palate light roasted and woody notes, followed by earth and some spices, mainly recalling black pepper. Some balsamic nuances are added in the finale.

84 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x190mm (7 ½")	\$ 6.19 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Robusto





DAVIDOFF
MADURO ROBUSTO

RICH AND COMPLEX

It delivers notes of dark chocolate, walnut, and roasted notes. Then the flavor profile is enriched by honey, and a riot of black pepper, piquant peaks, nutmeg and cinnamon hints.

93

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



HERRERA ESTELI BRAZILIAN
MAD. ROBUSTO GRANDE

BOLD AND INTERESTING

Once lit, the cigar opens with ripe fruits, earth, and herbs. Black pepper and lemon zest are added and round out the profile in the second half.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x133 mm (5 ¼")	\$ 10.45 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	U.S.A.	NICARAGUA



MACANUDO EMISSARY
ESPAÑA ROBUSTO

DISTINCT AND INTERESTING

The first half is marked by cream, salted nuts and mineral notes. Cocoa, leather, and cinnamon follow in the second half and the finale is spicy.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 6.8 € 8.7
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	COLOMBIA SPAIN, DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



AVO
HERITAGE ROBUSTO

CREAMY AND BALANCED

Notes of walnut and wet earth, together with some piquant spices. There is a balsamic touch as well, recalling juniper. Advancing into the smoke, dark fruity aromas are added.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x124mm (4 7⁄8")	\$ 10.9 € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



JOYA DE NICARAGUA
CINCO DE CINCO ROBUSTO

INTENSE AND STRUCTURED

It delivers notes of earth, black pepper, and some roasted aromas, followed by walnut and rich piquant spices, the latter mainly in the aftertaste.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 16 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



67 VALENTINO SIESTO
CONNECTICUT ROBUSTO

HARMONIOUS AND ROUND

The opening is marked by a creamy note of cappuccino, which is later on supported by aromas of white pepper, hazelnut, and wood.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 9.7 € 14.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



GRAN HABANO
BLACK DAHLIA ROBUSTO

STRUCTURED AND INTENSE

It delivers rich spices, recalling black and white pepper, together with a pinch of star anise. Then earth, together with some roasted notes. In the second half, coffee and vegetal hints are added.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 9.5 € 13.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



THE WISE MAN
COROJO ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL

Nuts and wood give way to the smoke, with a zesty citrus nuance in the background. Later on, the citrus is substituted with balsamic herbs and black pepper.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 11.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



*POR LARRAÑAGA
PICADORES*

STRAIGHTFORWARD

A mix of honey, nuts (mainly walnut) and wood open up the smoke, with a hint of citrus added later on. There is also a subtle sweetness perceptible.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	48x127mm (5")	\$ - € 12.2
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



*VILLIGER 1888
NICARAGUA ROBUSTO*

NUANCED AND SMOOTH

It delivers a combination of earth and vegetal notes, flanked by white pepper, in the first half. Wood and herbal aromas are added in the second half.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 8 € 8.6
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



*ROCKY PATEL
GOLD LABEL ROBUSTO*

BOLD

It exhibits earthy and roasted notes, together with seasoned wood. In the second half, a vegetal vein appears and becomes more and more pronounced towards the end.

86 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 11 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR, MEXICO	NICARAGUA



*OLIVA
SERIE G 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.

84 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	50x115mm (4 ½")	\$ 7.6 € 6.2
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CAMEROON	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Toro





BLACKENED
S84 SHADE TO BLACK TORO

BROAD AND ROUND

In the beginning, a mix of cream, nuts, herbs, and leather is perceived. Later, white pepper and coffee aromas are added to a sweet base. The finale is spicy.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 10.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	U.S.A.	NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



QUAI D'ORSAY
NO.52

NUANCED AND SMOOTH

Once lit, it reveals notes of cream, cappuccino, hazelnut, and wood. An herbal note joins further into the cigar and a subtle sweetness is also perceptible in the background.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x155mm (6 1/8")	\$ - € 18
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



HIRAM & SOLOMON
HEART AND SOUL

SMOOTH AND COMPLEX

It delivers nutty notes, wood and vegetal nuances, together with white pepper. Then a touch of cinnamon is added, with roasted coffee beans.

92



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



LOST & F. FOREVERFRESH
DARK BROADLEAF TORO

COMPLEX AND EVOLVING

Cream, black pepper and molasses give way to the smoke, joined by herbs and wood. Coffee aromas appear later on. There is also a subtle sweetness present throughout.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 9.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



SOBREMESA
SOLITA TORO

DEEP & COMPLEX

It delivers a mix of white pepper, nutmeg and incense, followed by earth and wood. In the second half, vegetal and balsamic begin to appear in the aftertaste.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 14.45 € 12.4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



HVC SELECCION NO.1
CONNECTICUT PODEROSOS

FLAVORFUL AND HARMONIOUS

Hazelnut, pepper and sour cream open up the smoke. Transitioning to aromas of wood with herbal nuances. The profile becomes spicier towards the end.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 10.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



VEGAFINA
1998 VF54

RICH AND BALANCED

Earthy and chocolaty aromas, together with black pepper and piquant peak. In the second half, a vegetal vein and roasted note appear, enriched by nutty notes, with rich walnut.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x155mm (6 1/8")	\$ 10.49 € 8.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	COLOMBIA, NICARAGUA, DOMINICAN REP.



DAVIDOFF WINSTON
CHURCHILL TORO

INTENSE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

Vegetal and toasted notes give way to the smoke, accompanied by fresh wood. Earth and a mix of spices are added in the second half of the smoke.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 23.8 € 29
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	NICARAGUA, DOMINICAN REP.



ALADINO FUMA NOCHE
SUPER TORO

BOLD BUT LINEAR

The flavor profile reveals notes of black pepper, earth and leather, with a nutty component in the background. There is also a light balsamic nuance appearing later on.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x159mm (6 ¼")	\$ 15 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



TATUAJE 20TH
GRAND CHASSEUR

CONTAINED INTENSITY

It delivers light earthy notes and roasted nuances, followed by nutty notes, incense and a balsamic hint.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x162mm (6 ¾")	\$ 14 € 16
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



GURKHA
DRAGONFLY TORO

LIMITED EVOLUTION

It brings to the palate notes of earth, together with walnut aromas. In the background a light spiciness is perceivable.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 13.25 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, PERU



CAO
FASA NOCHE TORO

CONTAINED FLAVOR PROFILE

It exhibits notes of earth, together with nutty aromas, mainly recalling hazelnut. In the second half, some wood nuances are added to the flavor profile.

86



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 6.99 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	CAMEROON	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA,

Credits

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Blind tasting - Spirits

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Blind tasting - Cigars

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