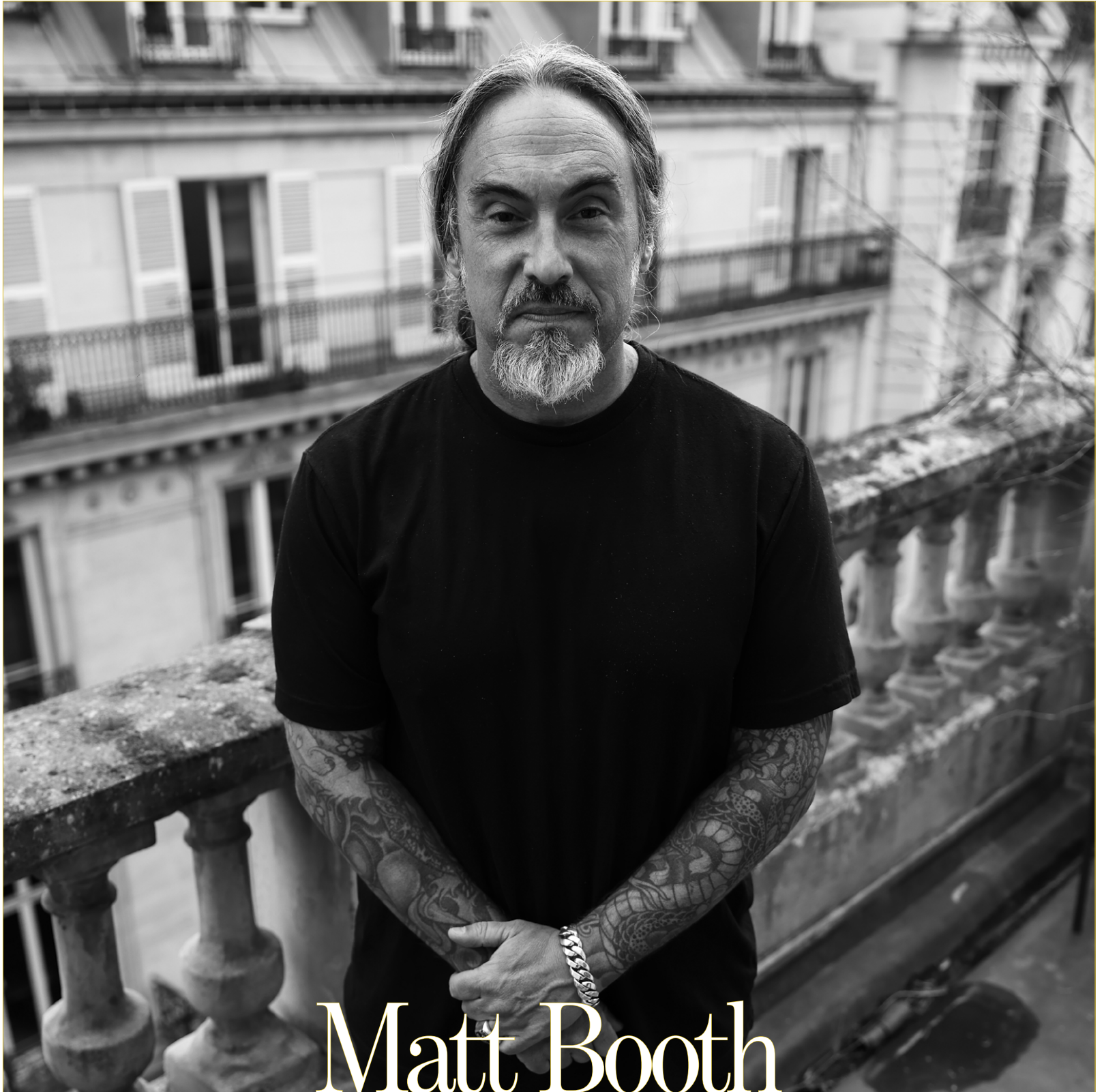


CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 3 - 2025



- THE EVOLUTION OF ROOM101 - TOSCANO MASTER AGED 5 - DON PALOMON CIGARS - CIGAR PAIRINGS - ACCESSORIES
- 15 STARS, THE INTERVIEW - CHOCOLATE & AMERICAN WHISKIES - CHINQUAPIN OAK - COCKTAILS: ESPRESSO MARTINI
- FOOD & WHISKEY PAIRING: BREAD - SLOW BREWED, TIME HONORED: INSIDE THE WORLD OF THE SLOWBREW® BEERS

**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

SURGEON GENERAL WARNING:
Tobacco Use Increases The Risk Of
Infertility, Stillbirth, And Low Birth Weight.



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

CigarsLover MAGAZINE

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Luca Cominelli
DEPUTY EDITOR Michel Arlia
SENIOR EDITOR Vincenzo Salvatore
ART & GRAPHICS Renz A. Mauleon
PHOTOGRAPHY Mario Amelio
PHOTO EDITOR Renz A. Mauleon
DIGITAL DEVELOPER Nicholas Ding

AUTHORS Austin Crowe
Michel Arlia
Norman Bliss
Simone Poggi
Vincenzo Salvatore
Zac Mitchers

COLLABORATORS Austin Crowe
Desiree Prieto
Emilio Garofalo
Francesco Floro
Mark Trumpet
Nelson Campos
Nicola Cima
Riccardo Noya
Tobias Hüberli
Vince Rubio
Vincenzo Scivetti

TRANSLATIONS Austin Crowe
Yongchao Chen
Minzhao Xie
Rachelle Mauleon

CIGARS TASTING PANEL	SPIRITS TASTING PANEL
Aaron Reddy	Ethan Smith
Austin Crowe	Kaarel Kluge
Daniel Hardinger	Lionel Smith
Dustin Wall	Luca Cominelli
Luca Cominelli	Michael Lamper
Mark Trumpet	Manuel Ramirez
Michel Arlia	Roger Miller
Nelson Campos	Simone Poggi
Norman Bliss	Vincenzo Salvatore
Ramon Bernard	Zac Mitchers

MARKETING & ADS:	CIGARISTA GMBH
office@cigarslover.com	Augiessenstrasse 13E, Widnau, Switzerland
+41 (78) 818 60 07	CHE-239.774.579



Editor's thoughts

The Art of Time and Taste: Cigars, Spirits, and Culinary Journeys

In this third issue, we begin with a feature on Room101, including an insightful conversation with its founder, Matt Booth. We also spotlight the Master Aged Series 5, an expression of extended maturation within the Sigaro Toscano tradition. Continuing, we introduce Don Palomon Cigars, and for those who value precision, we present our experience with the Haso Taiji Cigar Cutter.

Our Spirits section celebrates innovation firmly rooted in tradition. From the heritage-inspired excellence of 15 Stars to the refined interplay of Chocolate & American Whiskies, we explore the distinctive influence of Chinquapin oak and revisit a contemporary icon: the Espresso Martini.

On the culinary front, the dialogue between food and whiskey takes center stage in Bread, where we initiate a new conversation on pairings. A journey through Slow Brewed beers highlights the patience and precision that shape exceptional flavor.

Finally, we blind tasted more than 60 products, including whiskies, rums, and cigars.

This issue reaffirms our mission: to honor the disciplines of time, craft, and character that define excellence. Whether you're lighting a cigar, savoring a pour, or discovering a new culinary pairing, we invite you to immerse yourself and treasure that moment.

#refineyourtaste



KISS THE SKY.

INTRODUCING
THE WORLD'S
HIGHEST-ELEVATION CIGAR.

ALMA
DEL
CIELO

Its exposure to higher sunlight and
cooler climates captures a unique
flavor that captivates.




PLASENCIA
CIGARS

PLASENCIACIGARS.COM

[@PLASENCIACIGARS](https://www.instagram.com/PLASENCIACIGARS)

CONTENTS



14

1 ON THE COVER

14 Sam Reuter

4 Team

5 Editor's thoughts



22

10 CIGARS

14 Inside Room101: a chat with Matt Booth

22 Master Aged Series 5

26 Don Palomon Cigars

32 Haso Taiji Cigar Cutter

36 Cigars & Spirits



26

44 SPIRITS

48 15 Stars

54 Whisky and Chocolate: the basics

58 Chocolate & American Whiskies

62 Chinguapin

66 Espresso Martini



36

ISSUE #3 - 2025



48

68 TASTE

72 Food & Whiskey: Bread

78 Slow Brewed, Time Honored

84 BLIND TASTING

88 SPIRITS TASTING

90 Rum

96 Whisky

102 CIGAR TASTING

103 Lancero

106 Piramide

111 Robusto

116 Toro



72



78



84

119 CREDITS

CIGARS

“By the cigars they smoke, and the composers they love,
ye shall know the texture of men's souls.”

John Galsworthy, The Forsyte Saga





CALDWELL CIGAR CO.

Long live the Queen

MADURO



#2

CigarsLover
MAGAZINE

AWARDS 2024
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Inside Room101: a Chat with Matt Booth

*Creativity, Brand Evolution,
and Global Vision.*

by Michel Arlia



Matt Booth, the creative force behind Room101, has built a brand known for its bold style and unapologetic attitude. From premium cigars to lifestyle goods, his work blends artistry with edge. In this interview, Booth talks about the evolution of Room101, his creative process, and what's next after teaming up with the Scandinavian Tobacco Group.

Hi Matt. To kick things off, what exactly is Room101? How would you describe its essence today?

Room101 is a comprehensive collection of artisanal products reflective of the good life – built either by myself personally or under my direction – as I see appropriate. Essentially it is a collection of things that I enjoy, made my way.

When you first launched Room101, what was the vision driving it? And how has that vision shifted or stayed the same over the years?

As with any organism, maturation from its original state comes with flight time. Room101 remains true to my core vision of over twenty years ago – ever evolving along the way.

What's been one of the wildest or most unexpected challenges you've faced in building Room 101?

Every day is a new adventure – that is the only way to describe it.

Room 101 has always had a counterculture, rebellious vibe. How does that ethos influence your overall creative approach and direction?

My approach to the curation of our products is very simple (at least to me). Afford respect and observation to the craft foundation of each product while applying mischievous and progressive innovation wherever it can elevate the product without distorting or disturbing the artisanal roots of our products.

A couple of years ago, STG acquired the Room101 cigar brand. How did those conversations start, and what made the timing feel right?

STG had retained me for creative services related to the remodeling and revitalization of two of their company-owned brands. We were able to flush out what it was like to work together as a byproduct of that process. I think the timing was correct on both sides, and we seemed to share a good deal of vision related to brand building and caretaking. It felt right – so we went for it.

How has the transition been from running Room101 independently to now having the backing of a corporation like STG? What's changed the most for you?

This was my first exit and first creative director role as it relates to part of our brand family - built and sold. It has been the next level of my Jedi training as an entrepreneur and has been both challenging and rewarding. Not having to pull every lever every day to make our cigar business continue to spread globally is the largest shift in responsibility for me. This shift affords me more time to focus on creative direction and brand building on a global scale – empowered by one of the most prominent players in the space.

You've cultivated a loyal and diverse following. What do you think draws people to the Room101 brand beyond the cigars themselves?

Individuals from all walks of life are compelled to come towards our brand because they are receptive to the frequency we are broadcasting. They feel an authen-



tic connection to the meat and substance of our brand, both in the product and in the philosophy. If someone is “our people”, we both quickly know it. Having a little magic in our back pocket never hurt, either.

How do you stay connected with your community—especially as it grows internationally?

Both physically in the “meat space”, as the kids are calling it these days, and through our dauntless efforts to reach our consumers, both established and potential alike, through social media.

I do believe nothing will ever replace the substance of the human handshake – but digitally and socially, we can fill a great deal of space/time between those handshakes, ensuring our connectivity to our brand family worldwide is as solid as it can be.

You're currently touring through Europe to connect with local markets. How's the reception been so far? Any standout moments?

Honestly – all of it. I have been overwhelmed with gratitude for how both our brand and I have been received throughout this launch tour evolution. For every country visited and making contact with the people there from both the trade and consumer side. I felt nothing but a warm reception for both myself and our products.

Of all your blends, which ones are you most excited to introduce to the international crowd right now?

If you're forcing me to select a favorite child – I would say Johnny Tobacconaut. Both the brand and the blend have magic on them that I believe to be the best calling card we could have for anyone to begin to get their head wrapped around what it is that we do and how that bleeds through in combustible form.

Lastly, what's cooking in the Room101 lab these days? Any projects or releases fans should be watching out for?

We always have new things in the works. – it is the nature of what we do for a living – create. Stay tuned; we're just getting warmed up.

INTERACTIVE



PAGE

INTRODUCING SILENCIO RIVIERA
TAKE IT ALL IN



The latest addition to our collection represents new territory for Silencio. It's the only box-pressed offering in our latest addition, as well as the only Silencio to feature an exquisite Mexican San Andrés wrapper.

Bask in luxury with the all-new Silencio Riviera.

SILENCIO

GRAN HABANO

COROJO N0. 7



GHCIGARS.COM

Sales only allowed in the United States Hand Made by Gran Habano.
For sale only to purchasers of legal age. 100% Imported Tobacco.



Master Aged Serie 5

Inside Manifatture Sigaro Toscano's most prestigious project.

by Michel Arlia

In the world of premium cigars, patience and precision are the marks of true craftsmanship. Manifatture Sigaro Toscano, has pushed both to new heights with its Master Aged Serie. The latest release, Toscano Master Aged Serie 5, showcases the pinnacle of this philosophy: an intense, meticulously crafted cigar born from over a year of attentive maturation and an exclusive micro-fermentation technique. In this interview, we explore what sets the Master Aged Serie apart.

What is the Master Aged Serie?

The Toscano Master Aged Serie is a new range of Premium cigars created by Manifatture Sigaro Toscano and available only in selected countries. Developed from an idea by the Toscano Master Blender, it introduces a unique process

that includes an extra aging period handled by a specialized 'affinatore' (refiner). Starting from the fifth day, the product is checked daily to ensure that specific humidity and temperature standards are met and maintained. The entire aging process lasts a minimum of 360 days, taking place in a specially designed aging room dedicated to these particular blends. This constant care ensures cigars of the highest quality, with a well-rounded, balanced, and unique taste.

What distinguishes the Toscano Master Aged Serie 5 from the previous editions in the Master Aged line?

The Toscano Master Aged Serie 5, launched this year, stands out for its impressive structure and intense smoke. Compared to the previous editions, Serie 5 offers a fuller smoke and a multi-layered smoking experience, thanks to

its larger dimensions and refined construction. Its Italian Kentucky tobacco wrapper undergoes an additional resting period in specially controlled rooms for ten days, which starts a micro-fermentation process. This enhances the cigar's body while maintaining a balanced taste. The signature Master Aged maturation process then elevates the aromatic profile of Serie 5.

How does the shape and size of the Serie 5 contribute to the smoking experience?

The Toscano Master Aged Serie 5 measures 5 inches in length, with a ring gauge of 50 at its widest point, tapering down to 38 at the tips. This particular structure allows for a greater flow of smoke, enhancing the intensity and complexity of the experience. Its generous dimensions deliver an immediate impact upon lighting, offering a satisfying and balanced smoke. The shape supports a dense and enveloping smoking experience, ideal for those seeking an uncompromising sensory journey.

What specific tobaccos are used in the wrapper and filler of the Toscano Master Aged Serie 5?

The wrapper is made of Italian Kentucky tobacco, meticulously fire-cured, and then stored in specially controlled rooms for ten days, which activates a micro-fermentation process. The filler is a refined blend of Italian and North American Kentucky tobaccos, sourced exclusively from the highest primings, where the concentration of essential oils ensures an intense and satisfying flavor.

What is unique about the aging process used for the Serie 5 cigars?

The Master Aged maturation process reaches its pinnacle in Serie 5. From the fifth day of maturation, cigars are checked daily to maintain specific humidity and temperature standards. Serie 5 adds a unique step: its wrapper is stored for ten days in controlled rooms, which activates a micro-fermentation that enhances the cigar's structure and aromatic profile. The cigars are then matured for a minimum of 360 days in dedicated maturation chambers, resulting in a balanced, aromatic and full-bodied cigar of extraordinary quality.

What are the plans regarding the Master Aged serie for the future?

Following the success of the first four editions, which continue to be embraced by an ever-growing number of aficionados, the launch of Serie 5 confirms Manifatture Sigaro Toscano's commitment to crafting premium-quality cigars. The brand aims to continue expanding the Master Aged line, offering unique smoking experiences that combine craftsmanship and innovation while remaining faithful to a tradition that has been shaping the art of cigar-making for over 200 years.



Don Palomon Cigars

"We've learned to be patient and focus on building something that stands on its own merit."

by **Mark Trumpet**

In a world where tradition and innovation often find themselves at odds, Don Palomon Cigars tries to strike a rare balance. What began as a frustration with the limitations of the Cuban cigar market evolved into a bold vision: to craft cigars rooted in authenticity, precision, and flavor without following today's trends. We spoke with the founders of Don Palomon about their journey from seasoned Cuban cigar specialists to creators of a brand that puts craftsmanship above hype.



Can you share the origin story behind Don Palomon Cigars and the inspiration that sparked its founding?

We started as specialists in Cuban cigars. That was our world for many years. But over time, we realized how limiting it had become. Quality was inconsistent, supply unreliable, and we couldn't always stand behind what we were selling. Don Palomon was born from the need to change that. We wanted to create cigars we could control from seed to box; cigars we could guarantee. The goal wasn't to copy the Cubans. It was to take all that knowledge and build something new, grounded in quality, consistency, and taste.

How do you continue to drive innovation while staying true to and preserving your heritage?

We don't take ourselves too seriously, but we take the product seriously. Many cigars today are built to sell on paper: big gauges, flashy names, and limited runs. We try to avoid that trap. Take our Royale, for example. At 9 inches long, it's a ridiculous cigar on paper. But when we started testing it, we noticed something surprising. Despite using the same blend, the smoke cooled differently, and that affected how the flavors developed. It brought out this long, elegant progression we hadn't expected. So, innovation for us comes from curiosity, not marketing.

What has been the most challenging and the most rewarding moment of Don Palomon Cigars so far?

The most challenging part has been breaking into markets where distribution is locked down, and relationships go back decades. But we've learned to be patient and focus on building something that stands on its own merit. Most rewarding? Probably seeing the first batch of boxes with our own branding in a shop window. That moment when it went from an idea to something real.

If you could share a Don Palomon cigar with anyone, ranging from novice to seasoned smokers, which cigar would it be and why?

Probably the Merchant Mariscal. It's short, flavorful, and doesn't waste your time. It delivers the full experience in under 40 minutes, which makes it approachable without being boring. A novice won't get overwhelmed, and a seasoned smoker will still appreciate the richness.

Looking ahead, what vision do you have for the future of Don Palomon Cigars?

We're focused on building quietly and sustainably. There's no need to rush. We want our cigars to end up in the hands of people who actually smoke and appreciate them, not just collectors or hype-chasers. That means better retail partnerships, thoughtful new blends, and staying true to what we'd actually smoke ourselves.



Davidoff
CIGARS

TIME BEAUTIFULLY FILLED

10TH
ANNIVERSARY



ESCURIO LIMITED EDITION

DISCOVER MORE



Habanos
DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN PROTEGIDA DOP



MARCA
LA DIFERENCIA



INTERTABAK
OFFICIAL HABANOS IMPORTER
SWITZERLAND

www.intertabak.com

Rauchen ist tödlich – hören Sie jetzt auf. Fumer tue – arrêtez maintenant. Il fumo uccide – smetti subito.

Haso Taiji Cigar Cutter

“Reliable and well designed.”

by **Zac Mitchers**

The Haso cigar cutter is a well-crafted accessory that combines thoughtful engineering with a clean, balanced design. Drawing inspiration from the Taiji philosophy, it symbolizes the harmony of complementary forces. When closed, the two blades form a circle, representing the balance of Yin and Yang—a subtle but meaningful touch that reflects the cutter’s underlying design principles.

What sets the Haso cutter apart is its slide-guided synchronized action mechanism. This system allows for smooth, one-handed operation without relying on springs or gears. The result is a simple and effective motion that minimizes jamming and wear over time, offering a reliable experience for regular use.

The cutter features an aluminum die-casted body and handles, which provide a solid feel and high durability. It weighs 94 grams, slightly heavier than many other cigar

cutters on the market. While this added weight may be noticeable, it contributes to a sense of sturdiness and substance in the hand, which some users may prefer. The 4130 stainless steel blades are sharp and corrosion-resistant, delivering a clean cut that preserves the integrity of the cigar. The cutter can accommodate cigars up to a 60 ring gauge, making it suitable for a wide range of sizes. Functionality is further supported by features that enhance ease of use. A slip-resistant button ensures controlled operation, while a dust-resistant band helps protect the internal mechanism from small debris. These details contribute to long-term performance and reliability.

The Haso cigar cutter offers several advantages. It’s built from quality materials, engineered with precision, and includes a user-friendly slide mechanism. The one-handed action is smooth and intuitive, and its understated design makes it both practical and stylish. It’s slightly

heavier build may appeal to those who value a more solid feel in their accessories. That said, it may not suit all preferences. Its premium price point might deter casual users, and the slide mechanism could require a brief adjustment period for those used to traditional cutters. Availability may also be limited to specialty retailers or select online stores.

Overall, the Haso cigar cutter is a reliable and well-designed tool that delivers on both performance and presentation. For cigar enthusiasts who value craftsmanship, function, and distinctive design, it stands out as a quality option.



CigarsLover MAGAZINE

Thank you for
TEN YEARS

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.





ALEC BRADLEY

UNLOCK THE
POSSIBILITIES



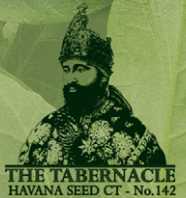
INTRODUCING
SAFE KEEPINGS

From deep within the founder of Alec Bradley's blend book
comes Safe Keepings — a newly discovered classic.

PAGE



IN TRADITION.
CRAFTED FOR TODAY.



Store Locator

WWW.FOUNDATIONCIGARS.COM



Join Our List

PAIRING

Cigars
&
Spirits



CALDWELL LLTQ MADURO WILD CARD

STRUCTURED AND INTENSE

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 16.5 € 16
DIMENSIONS	
52x152 mm (6")	
COUNTRY	
Dominican Republic	

A blast of spices, along with hazelnut and earth, starts out the rather dry smoke, with leather joining later on. Complex cocoa and balsamic herbs notes are added in the second half, for a truly intense performance. We decide to pair two American whiskeys, a well-aged rye and a mellow bourbon from Kentucky, trying to explore the balsamic herbs resonance but also some sweeter components to mitigate the spices.



LIGA PRIVADA 10 SEL. DE MERCADO TORO

NUANCED & SMOOTH

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ - € 18
DIMENSIONS	
52x152 mm (6")	
COUNTRY	
Nicaragua	

Different from the standard Liga Privada, this sophisticated and evolving smoke starts with dusty chocolate powder and hazelnut cream, with light cinnamon spiciness; later on leather and light herbal aromas join the profile. Towards the end, it becomes spicier, and the herbs become balsamic. We decide to pair it with two low ABV spirits, rich in nuances and fruity notes, a more tropical one and a wine cask finish product.



THE WISEMAN COROJO ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 11.5 € -
DIMENSIONS	
50x140 mm (5 ½")	
COUNTRY	
Nicaragua	

This sophisticated Nicaraguan features nuts and wood in the beginning, with a zesty citrus nuance in the background. Later on, the citrus is substituted by balsamic herbs and black pepper. This complex palette and the present, yet overpowering intensity can be flanked by two Scotches of declared age, a blue chip, fruity and friendly, with some nice complexity, and a more intense and first-fill ex-bourbon centered 18yo release.



WHISTLEPIG

12 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	43% - 86	\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Rye	12 years Old	Madeira, Sauternes, Port

Very unique rye, with the freshness of mellow rye balsamic herbs and the special fruity, spicy and winey character due to the marriage of three finishes, each with their own distinctive flavor profiles. A symphony and a true ode to complexity. The noses reach new, unexplored peaks of layered richness: the chocolaty spices of the tobacco are wrapped around by the soft, intricate quality of the winey, yet fresh components of the spirit, for a very evocative complexity, never-ending and surprising, yet coherent. The palates resonate, with a wet, spicy, sweet and sensual leather. Extra dense smoke, intriguing sensations. The chocolate comes back very strong in the finale, with great balsamic herbs in the background. A masterpiece pairing.



Pairing score

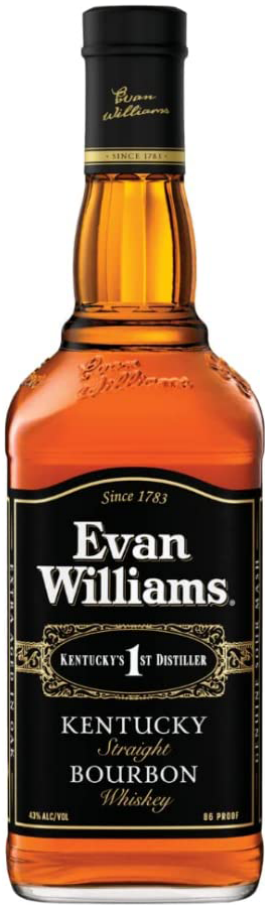
96

EVAN WILLIAMS

Kentucky Straight Whiskey

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	43% - 86	\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

A light yet balanced product with the main elements of a good bourbon for an incredibly low price. The experience is very pleasant, with nice cinnamon and sweet spices side flavors helping the classic vanilla and oaky profiles. The light nose of the bourbon helps mitigating the riot of spices and the intense leather of the tobacco; the final effect is of crème brûlée, a toasty sweetness and some apple compote with semi-sweet spices, milder but refined. In the palate the vanilla adds easily to the complex spices of the tobacco and the cereal notes with light apple are covered in nutty caramel chocolate. Creamy, with an acidic touch which refreshes the overall experience, without reaching the peaks of the other pairing.



Pairing score

90



RAMPUR

Double Cask

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	Bourbon, Sherry Casks

A very interesting product. The nose is more on ex-sherry casks, with a slightly mono-dimensional character. On the contrary, the palate is quite surprising for the accordance of ex-bourbon, ex-sherry and tropical fruit notes, with a symphony of flavors, with a deeper and richer finale of balsamic nature. The cigar profile starts with sweet leather, which is flanked by a light grilled pineapple note and some sherried sensations; uniquely, the cigar becomes slightly darker, with the Mexican tobacco of the binder giving off the spicy chocolate characteristics, paired well by the tropical fruit and creamy mouthfeel at the palate. A double puff is recommended. The finale is medium-long, on creamy chocolate and sweet spices, again with charred mango and pineapple, pleasant and refined.



Pairing score 90

MARS

Maltage Cosmo Wine Cask Finish

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Blended Malt	NAS	Red Wine Casks Finish

The traditional silky texture of Japanese blended malt is well-paired with a soft wine cask finish, which is adding red berries and some acidic components. The finale is enriched with some semi-sweet notes, one of the best aspects. The leathery cigar has some initial difficulties in matching the acidic component of the winy profile. However, the first impression fades quickly away, having some cherry sweetness helping the chocolate, which becomes darker. There are also some excellent semi-sweet burnt sensations. On the palate the low ABV helps the cigar to express its quality nuttiness, with the malt creaminess helping the mouth feel. The core becomes of sophisticated butterscotch with red berry hints, removing the acidic components. Coherent and layered, beyond the initial expectations, though not truly surprising.



Pairing score 88



BENRIACH

16 Years Old

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	16 Years Old	Bourbon, Sherry, Virgin oak

Intense and open, despite 43% ABV. Virgin oak creamy banana and apricot notes are boasting, bold and upfront, with biscuits and red berries, with some acidity. A touch of lemon, with some distant oakiness. Flavorful, relatively complex and refined, yet very constant. Noses are fuse together in the first moment: a never-ending mix of wood, honey, light custard, fresh yellow fruit, a spring late evening in an orchard garden. Wonderful, alluring and cheerful. Gentle and pervasive. The palates are different; rather than fusing, the fresh fruity sip is the prelude to a more intense, woodier, nuttier, slightly drier palette of the smoke, though the zesty citrus resonance is a leitmotiv. The finale is elegant and evocative, medium length, well balanced, a truly successful pairing.



Pairing score 92

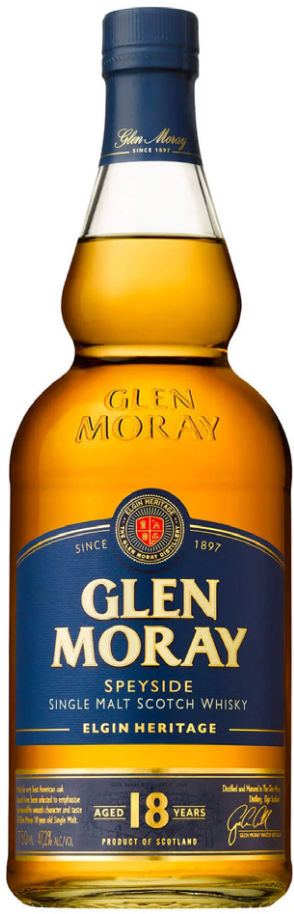
GLEN MORAY

18 Years Old

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	10 Years Old	Bourbon

First fill bourbon casks are centered on banana, yellow apples, unripe apricots, lemon and pineapple, with orange blossom. A major creamy component, lemony custard and a minimal mineral, chalky distant dimension. Nicely crafted, with a clean, rather intense profile. A mix of sensations as the noses come together: the spirit is very creamy and sweet, with a very rich banana upfront, enveloping the woody smoke and changing little bit its profile, which loses some of its cashew character. Good potentialities, just a little too much virgin oak for the tobacco. The sip helps; the light minerality increases the tobacco character, pushing its darker notes through. The creamy custard and the apricots quality are now helping quenching some spices. Despite a medium-long finish, again the spirit takes over the cigar, losing some complexity.



Pairing score 87

SPIRITS

“There is no bad whiskey. There are only some
whiskeys that aren’t as good as others.”
Compton MacKenzie



“A Decade
of Reflection,
Evolution,
and Impact.”

Celebrating our 10th anniversary



15 Stars

*Exploring the unique corn varieties,
and building whiskey grain by grain.*

by **Norman Bliss**

In a world where heritage often battles with innovation, 15 Stars Whiskey has found a way to honor both. Born from a deep respect for American history and a relentless pursuit of excellence, the brand stands as a tribute to the original 15-star flag of the United States.

What is the history of 15 Stars?

15 Stars was co-founded by a father and son team, Rick and Ricky Johnson. It began from a summer internship that Ricky engaged with in the summer of 2019. The project was to see if our unique heritage corn varieties, which we have long raised for their family popcorn company Black Jewell, would add flavor and complexity to bourbon. The idea was to build a business plan and get a great internship experience, not thinking that we might really do it. But in the end, it seemed like a good idea to give it a try, and we began distilling our signature small heritage black corn in a wheated bourbon mash bill in November of 2019. We were soon distilling our unique red, blue, white, and yellow corn too, with noticeable flavor differences from each variety, even in the initial white dog coming right off the still. Since we personally preferred to drink fully mature and high aged bourbon, we decided we needed to start sourcing great bourbon. That led us to blending, which we now know that if done properly is a huge advantage to producing the very best depth of flavor complimented with extra complexity in whiskey.



What are the characteristics of these corn varieties?

Each corn offers a different flavor in bourbon, with our red corn giving a bit of an earthy profile with deep rich flavors that are nothing like the flavors from red corn used in other bourbons today. Our blue is herbal and grassy and is going to be a great flavoring whiskey for our blends. While our white corn bourbon has an incredibly clean profile that is sweet, smooth, and pleasant that allows the flavoring grains to come through in unique ways. The black corn creates a very viscous and buttery bourbon with a little peppermint accent. And we are also blending these corns together in the mash to produce more unique flavors. We love them each individually, and they will be wonderful additions to add complexity in our final bourbon blends.

What does the art of blending bourbons mean to you?

Blending bourbon is how we fine tune the nuances of flavor and get to the very best in complexity and taste. Blending whiskey is essentially that art of finding the right balance. Our goal is to search out whiskeys that blend well together and balance them to the perfect ratio that allows each of the components to fully express themselves, without one dominating the others. This is how we can create a whiskey that is incredibly complex, deep in flavor, interesting, and unique. Finding this balance point is where the art of blending lies. We don't try to push the bourbons into something they don't want to be, but through our blending trials we help them lead us to where they show us the very best that they can offer. And when that passes our taste testing, we put it in a bottle. Another significant part of our blending process is proofing. We think it would be naïve to believe that you can find the very best flavor by blending and then proofing your final blend as an afterthought. The proof of a whiskey has a huge influence on mouthfeel and on which flavors are more prominent, so as we develop a product, we try our different blends up and down the proof range so that we can find a blend and proof combination that brings out the very best of each release.

What is your idea behind finishing American Whisky in very creative types of casks?

Cask finishing is an excellent way to impart additional flavor and depth into whiskey, just like we do with our blending process. With each of our cask finishes, our goal is not to create a flavored bourbon that is overwhelmingly finished, but to create an outstanding bourbon that is carefully accented by the flavor of each finishing cask. We always start with a blend of bourbons that we love and place them into our finishing casks so that with the addition of the finish, or most likely for us a blend of multiple types of finishing casks, we can add more layers of complexity onto an already complex and wonderful whiskey. Most of our finished bourbons are what we call "double blended" as we first blend to get the best bourbon possible and then finish in multiple cask types, before we blend those casks back together at the ratios that produce the very best flavor.



When do you expect your own distilled bourbons to be ready for the market?

We will be using our own distillate for the first time in an extension of 15 Stars that we are releasing in July, called First West. The First West product lineup will feature a Small Batch release that is a blend of 5, 6 and 7 year old bourbons, a Toasted Oak version of our Small Batch, and Extra Aged, a blend of 8 and 9 year old bourbons. The Small Batch and Toasted Oak will contain our red, white, and blue corn bourbon.

How challenging will it be to maintain a specific, coherent image of 15 Stars Whiskey when your own distilled product is released, matching extensively aged blended American Whiskeys?

We will do this by creating a new lineup by 15 Stars in a unique package with a leading brand name of First West which also celebrates Kentucky as America's first concept of the American west in the late 1700's. We will follow each and every core tenet that we follow with our current 15 STARS releases except for the very high ages. Each product will go through our extensive blending process and will be "flavor proofed" which is our trademarked phrase that certifies our process of identifying the proof at which the very best flavors are expressed in each whiskey. The only difference will be that First West will feature slightly younger whiskeys and will be in reach for those interested in a more approachable price point. The core 15 STARS line won't use any of our own distilled products until they reach high ages.

Browsing the 15 Stars website is like embarking on a journey in history to rediscover the legacy of the United States' first years. Can you tell us something more?

Our brand name, 15 Stars, celebrates the spiritual home of bourbon, Kentucky, as the 15th state of the United States. The second US flag, authorized by George Washington in 1795, had 15 stars and 15 stripes also recognizing Kentucky as the 15th state. During the time of the 15 stars flag which lasted until 1818, Kentucky was a rapidly developing state and teemed with skilled artisans that included silversmiths, furniture makers, gunsmiths, and distillers making premium goods that have stood the test of time. It's this idea of the long history of dedication to artisanship in Kentucky that inspires us to work tirelessly to craft the very best bourbons, with no effort or expense of time or money spared. The artisanship and hand craftsmanship of the past is a guiding inspiration for the work that we do today.

What is the future of 15 Stars?

That's the 15 million dollar question! But what we are sure of is that with 15 Stars we will continue to keep our standards at the very highest level. We will only release whiskey that we think compares favorably to the very best in the market, and which we think is at a level that can potentially win a best-in-class award at the major whiskey competitions. We are committed to taking our time and doing our very best, and it will be fun to see where the exploration of crafting great whiskey takes us as a family.

CAPITOL SWING

ELEGANCE IN A NEW FORMAT

Inspired by Art Deco, **Capitol Swing** offers a sophisticated blend designed for the most experienced aficionados, with notes of toasted coffee, subtle spice, and a long-lasting sweet aftertaste. Now presented in an elegant fine-gauge format (40 x 130mm), it is the most awaited invitation to experience the rhythm of Capitol.



NEW FORMAT CAPITOL



**THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS
ENOUGH CIGARS. IT'S LIKE
COLLECTING TRADING CARDS,
BUT YOU SMOKE THEM.**

#AshDrop



FOR THOSE IN THE KNOW

FOR MORE #ASHDROP FOLLOW @JOYACIGARS

Whisky and Chocolate: the basics

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

by **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).



Chocolate & American Whiskies

Some of the best and some of the most dangerous cocoa pairings.

by **Simone Poggi**

A wide variety of products, several different grains in the recipe and an overall sweetness to balance out the intense, bitter aspects of some types of chocolate: American whiskeys are excellent candidates to flank perfectly the different styles of the food of Gods. Yet, several simple mistakes can be done, making the overall experience unbalanced and ultimately unpleasant. Let us look into one by one, the great moments we had, but also the moments we had to change something in the mix.

Bourbons (Eagle Rare, Woodford Reserve Double Oaked) – though many variations are available, these products feature a vanilla, caramelized sweetness, which can be thought of as being a great pairing with dark chocolate to balance with some roasted, slightly bitter aromas. Also toasted oak components may be present in both products. However, we recommend looking for alternatives for these American whiskeys, as the darker the chocolate, the more tannic notes it develops, making a similarity pairing with the slightly alcoholic acetone note of some of these products. We believe a better pair could be presented by milk chocolate, fatty yet not too sweet.

Pure Corn American Whiskeys (Balcones Baby Blue, Mellow Corn) – although still with some varnish notes as in bourbons, the intense sweetness of these products can flank intense and bitter dark chocolate of up to 90% of cocoa. Creating a rewarding and complex pairing, where the sometimes simple aromatic profile of the whisky is integrated and enriched by the complexity of roasted, burnt, bitter and sharp hints of the cocoa.

Wheated Bourbons (Larceny Kentucky Straight Bourbon Small Batch, Bernheim 7yo) – for us, this is one of the best selections to start from in terms of chocolate pairing. The creamy

texture, the intense aromas of ripe cherry and sweet corn, with the major contributions of oakiness and demerara sugar are nice to pair with virtually any type of milk or dark chocolate, underlining this or that aroma in the wide palette. The only suggestion is to avoid the extremes, as in white chocolate and extra dark (90%-99%) which may result into bad, one direction only results.

Rye (Michter's 10, Reservoir Rye) - the high balsamic content, as in some high rye bourbons, make it complex to pair with dark chocolate, as both products may deliver hints of acetic, dry and pungent aromas, which in similarity are for sure, yet may tire and exhaust the mouth. Much better to look for mellow and richer chocolate styles, to support an integrate the wild profile of the rye grain, such as a fatty, rich, creamy milk chocolate. A great opportunity could be salted caramel chocolate, as the caramel aroma, very intense in several scotches, is not the primary aroma in many rye whiskeys, with a great sweet, mellow integration on top of the herbal, fresh aromas; the touch of sea salt makes the pairing even more dynamic and more enjoyable the spicy touch of the rye.





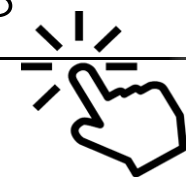
Spirits Lover MAGAZINE

FIND YOUR
DISTILLATE.

SEARCH FOR
THE BEST SPIRITS.

spirits-lover.com

FIND SPIRITS



Chinquapin

*A different oak
for whiskies.*

by **Zac Mitchers**

The most known wood for whisky is American Oak, and by that, we refer to the white oak *Quercus alba*. It is the most common oak species used to make whisky barrels, thanks to its characteristics in terms of durability and resistance. There is also another Oak species that is garnering more and more attention: the *Quercus muehlenbergii*, commonly called Chinquapin oak. Both white oak and Chinquapin oak are closely related members of the white oak group native to North America, yet they present distinct botanical profiles. White oak is a towering species, often reaching heights of 80 to 100 feet, characterized by its broad, rounded lobed leaves and adaptability to a wide range of upland habitats with well-drained soils. In contrast, Chinquapin oak tends to be more modest in stature, typically growing between 40 and 80 feet, and is easily recognized by its narrower, sharply toothed leaves reminiscent of the chestnut tree, which inspired its common name. Ecologically, Chinquapin oak prefers rocky, limestone-rich soils and calcareous environments, often occupying niches less favored by its taller cousin. These differences in growth habit and leaf morphology influence the properties of their wood, and in terms of flavors released when it comes to whisky maturation. Structurally, Chinquapin oak offers the tight grain essential for holding spirits, yet it's the oak's unique chemistry that captivates. Once shaped into casks, it reveals a rich and different flavor profile, nuttier and spicier compared to the traditional white oak. Also, not being as commercially harvested as *Quercus alba*, Chinquapin grows across a wide native range. Its rise in whisky-making supports biodiversity in cooperage—a small but meaningful shift away from monoculture oak sourcing.

Some whiskies aged in Chinquapin oak: Bomberger's Declaration Bourbon, Balcones Chinquapin Oak Finished Whiskey, Old Elk Chinquapin Oak, The GlenAllachie 10, 12 and 13 Year Old Chinquapin Virgin Oak.



Subscribe to the newsletter

Stay tuned and don't miss any new
CigarsLover Magazine issue.



LASTING GIFTS - DAVIDOFF: THE RABBIT - HIRAM & SOLOMON: THE INTERVIEW - CIGAR BOX OPENER - VEGAS ROBAINA
RUM: WITH OR WITHOUT SUGAR? - VENENCIA - THE FOAM IN DRINKS - COCKTAILS: BLOODY MARY
WINE: THE MYTH OF BORDEAUX - CIGARS & DESSERT - TOBACCO AND CHAMPAGNE PAIRINGS: PERLAGE & CIGARS



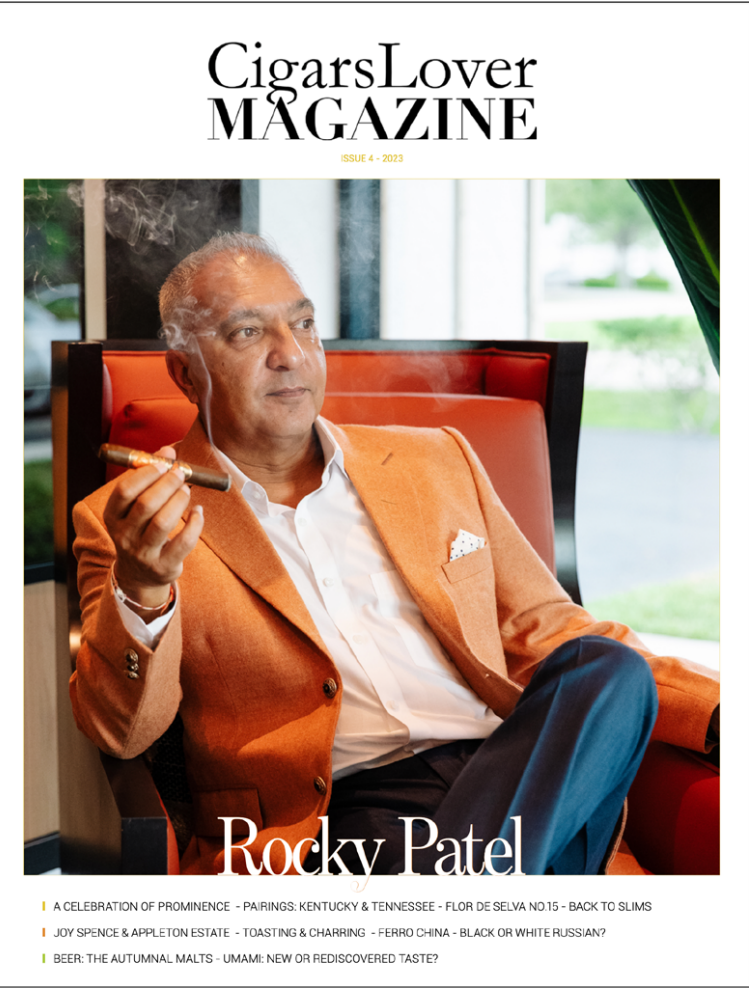
LIANA FLUENTE - DOUBLE PUFF - PUNCH - ANDULLO - THE CIGAR RING - MICALLEF CIGARS - LOUNGE: LISBONA
GLENDA LOUGH: THE IRISH DISTILLERY - DINING WITH WHISKY - TRIPPLE DISTILLATION - MORE THAN WINE
THE EVOLUTION OF THE BEER - A TEA WITH A CIGAR - T-BONE - INDIGENOUS IN THE SPOTLIGHT



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



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



A CELEBRATION OF PROMINENCE - PAIRINGS: KENTUCKY & TENNESSEE - FLOR DE SELVA NO.15 - BACK TO SLIMS
JOY SPENCE & APPLETON ESTATE - TOASTING & CHARRING - FERRO CHINA - BLACK OR WHITE RUSSIAN?
BEER: THE AUTUMNAL MALTS - UMAMI: NEW OR REDISCOVERED TASTE?

INTERACTIVE





Espresso Martini

*Sleek, sophisticated,
and with a caffeine boost*

by **Mark Trumpet**

No, there is no Martini in it. The name of this cocktail comes from the glass used to serve it. It first appeared in the early 1980s, by legendary British bartender Dick Bradsell at London's Soho Brasserie.

The cocktail was born out of a nowadays world-famous model, that asked for a drink that would "wake me up and then mess me up." Bradsell created the drink with a combination of vodka, freshly made espresso, coffee liqueur, and sugar syrup. Fundamental thing: he served it in a chilled martini glass.

Initially this cocktail was named "Vodka Espresso," but it then evolved into "Espresso Martini," exclusively than-

ks to the type of glass, with no use of the famous vermouth. Since then its popularity grew more and more.

Recently, following the rise of the craft coffee culture, a good number of variations have been created, using different blends of coffee but also different types of coffee. Bartenders are experimenting with cold brews, alternative sweeteners, and even infusions such as vanilla, hazelnut, or chili. Some variations incorporate flavored vodkas, while others introduce unconventional ingredients like coconut milk or amaro to add complexity. Others opt to use nitro espresso for a smoother texture and richer foam. What all the variations have in common is the deep color, the creamy head, and of course the Martini glass.

PREPARATION

Brew a fresh shot of espresso and allow it to cool. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice, then add vodka, coffee liqueur, espresso, and syrup if desired for added sweetness. Shake vigorously to chill the drink and create a rich foam. Strain into a chilled Martini glass using a fine mesh strainer, and garnish with three coffee beans placed in the center of the foam.

ADVICE

Use fresh, strong espresso for a richer flavor. Shake hard to achieve that signature creaminess on top. A cold brew could be used instead of espresso. The flavor profile will be different, depending on your taste you could appreciate it more or less, but the cream on top is going to be less pronounced.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz (60 ml) vodka
- 1 oz (30 ml) freshly brewed espresso (preferably cooled)
- ¾ oz (22 ml) coffee liqueur (e.g., Kahlúa or Mr Black)
- ¼ oz (7 ml) simple syrup (optional, adjust to taste)
- Ice for shaking
- 3 coffee beans (for garnish)

GLASS

Martini glass.

About the combination of ingredients used for this cocktail, the vodka serves as a neutral spirit that allows the coffee flavor to dominate.

In the original recipe, the freshly poured espresso is the soul of the cocktail, providing intensity and depth. The coffee liqueur, typically Kahlúa, adds sweetness and roundness, while the sugar syrup (optional) is used to tailor sweetness to the drinker's taste. The garnish is traditionally made with three coffee beans, symbolizing health, wealth, and happiness or simply luck.

Shaken vigorously and strained into a chilled martini glass, the cocktail is topped with a creamy layer of foam, an aesthetic hallmark that is as pleasing to the eye as

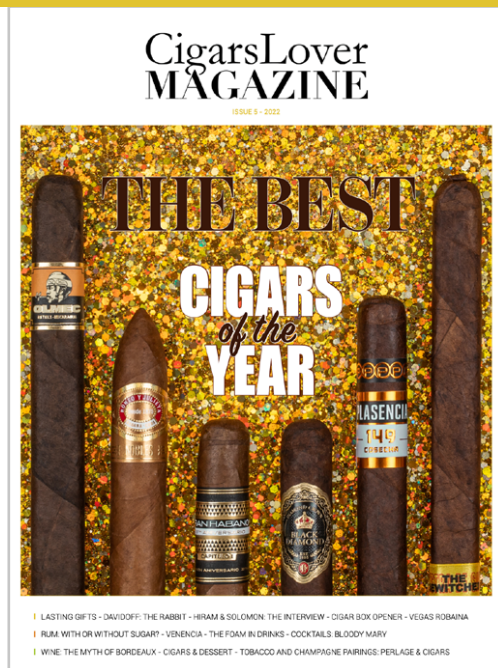
the flavor is to the palate. The rich aroma, velvety texture, and balanced bitterness make the Espresso Martini a favorite not just after dinner, but also as a sophisticated pick-me-up for cocktail lovers. Its versatility and appeal have turned it into a staple on cocktail menus across the world, from high-end bars to trendy coffeehouses.

From its somewhat cheeky origin story to its polished present, the Espresso Martini remains a shining example of cocktail craftsmanship. It is a drink that energizes the senses while indulging the taste buds, a timeless creation that continues to evolve with the era. Its enduring charm lies in its balance between elegance and energy, tradition and innovation, making it a true modern classic.

TASTE

"Good food is the foundation of genuine happiness."
Auguste Escoffier





CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE

DISCOVER ALL ISSUES

Food & Whiskey: Bread

*A Grain-to-Grain Connection,
Pairing whiskey with bread.*

by **Simone Poggi**

The thunder strike arrives in the well-attended saloon of Whisky Live in Paris, where the CigarsLover Team is tasting the most recent products for the Awards to be published in the latest issue of the Magazine.

After so many samples, many review notes, and due to the tendency of ABV to become higher and higher, the tasters wander across the booths to find something that can help facing the next sip. And, like an oasis in the desert, a small desk with a bowl of free bread samples arises from a multitude of people. These small pieces of baguette taste quite well with the last 50% bourbon we

tasted. However, is American whiskey best sipped when receiving a fresh from the bakery, crunchy, nutty French bread? Or will you order a high rye German country style bread, intended to last for months and months and be tasted with cold cuts and maybe even leberkase?

Whiskey is a spirit obtained from several different types of grain and the same ingredients are found in bread; this means that the two products are expected to develop very similar aromas, despite the different techniques involved in the creation of the final products. It is in fact true that whiskey, for which many aromas are involved by tasting experts in romantic and narrative ways, can very



frequently be reconducted to the primary aromas of the cereals involved in its creation; malted barley, wheat, corn or rye. This is the main reason why a pairing between different styles of bread and whiskey can be technically considered as the sincerest of the similitude pairings, where side and secondary aromas create very nice sensations around the central theme of an overlap of the primary aromas.

We decided to have an experimental setup and supply different types of breads to be matched with whiskies. The notes below are the impressions we put on paper during this first journey into the new adventure of CigarsLover Magazine, pairing food and whiskey.

- Sasayaki Pure Malt with standard baguette – this malt from Japan is aged for only a limited number of years, however the aging is sufficient to develop sweet notes of golden plums with a hint of the famous Mizunara incense and sophisticated spices, which go very well with the nutty, crispy character of the traditional recipe of the French specialty. Both products are kind to the palate, with each one trying to help the other in finesse and nuances.

- Bowmore 10 years old Aston Martin Dark & Intense with whole grain baguette – the 10yo Bowmore is not the most intense of the sherry-aged products, yet delivers enjoyable jam sensations of light red berries, with minor winey notes. What can be better than a whole grain baguette with a light veil of butter to enjoy these jammy sensations? The decision to go whole bread reminds of higher quality butter, richer and deeper in taste. Gourmand and deep.

- Yoichi Single Blended with Rice Bread - though in a blend, the mineral essence of the Yoichi distillery can still be perceived even in this release, joined by a light body, making easiness of drinking the highlight of this product. We selected a particular kind of bread for this blend, mixing conventional wheat with rice, light and fragrant, with a tender external crust. The light aromas combine well with the saltiness of the whiskey, helping to go beyond and explore the texture of the creamy blend.

- Yoichi Single Malt with Shalom bread with sesame seeds – for this deep, intensely mineral and coastal Japanese a tastier bread is required, at least to make an impact. The choice

is not simple, and we need to search with fervor. After many samples, we opt not to go the direction of a whole grain bread, which could contrast the minerality with sweetness, however going against the nature of the similarity pairing. We selected a special bread from the Middle-East with crunchy crust baked in a totally kosher compliant style, with tasty sesame seeds added on top. The soft part is dense and thick, matching perfectly the body of the whisky, while the sesame seeds add to the spices of the spirit. A true rich pairing, quite surprising.

- Whistlepig 10 years old with Rye German country bread – for one of the best ryes on the market we have chosen to go full speed with the most typical similitude pairing, and enjoy a full rye bread originally from Germany. The two products resonate in their sweet and at times spicy rye, with a riot of spices and great balsamic notes given off by both the products. Maybe less creative than other pairings, however one of our favorite ones during the tasting, and a true way to enjoy more a type of bread which at times may appear little rustic.

- Chorlton Ledaig 18 years old with whole grain bread

– probably the best of the pairings we tried in this session. The sophisticated sweetness and the maturity of the spirit are perfectly matched by the richness of a well-baked, hand-crafted whole grain bread, with a symphony of sweet-savory spices which are given off by biting the external crunchy crust and sipping the whisky. The soft portion is sweeter, perfectly helped by the several types of yellow fruit released by the spirit for an intense, integrated pairing.

- Koval Single Barrel Bourbon with 8 cereals bread – bourbon is not an easy choice in terms of the pairing bread; many types of bread may prove to be quite shy when flanked by the intensity and the immediate open taste of an American whiskey. For this reason, we first selected a mellow, gentle product like Koval and, resisting the temptation to pair it with another Kosher product like the Shalom bread, we used the highest intensity quality of bread we had in the array, obtaining excellent results. The rich variety of sensations of the bread make the bourbon deeper and more complex, and the deep, dark sweetness sensations of the bread help the structure of the bourbon. A difficult mission accomplished.



中国杂志

Available in:
ENGLISH
CHINESE



Slow Brewed, Time Honored

*Inside the World of
the SlowBrew® Beers.*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

In a world driven by speed and convenience, the craft of traditional brewing is undergoing a quiet, time-consuming renaissance. At its heart is a small but influential organization nestled in the Austrian Alps: the Slow Brewing Institute. Founded in 2011, the Institute emerged as a counterpoint to the industrialization of beer, advocating for a return to patience, purity, and process. Its hallmark, the SlowBrew® certification, is not just a label – it's a philosophy, a technical standard, and a seal of integrity in an era of artificial acceleration.





While many beer drinkers have grown used to mass-market lagers that ferment in under a week and taste indistinguishable from one another, SlowBrew beers are built differently. They rest longer, ferment cooler, and remain untouched by chemical shortcuts. The certification isn't handed out lightly. It's awarded only to breweries that meet stringent requirements across brewing technique, environmental sustainability, and ethical business practices. And unlike many greenwashed certifications, SlowBrew's standards are backed by microbiologists, brewing scientists, and sensory experts who ensure each beer doesn't just follow tradition – it improves upon it. At the heart of the SlowBrew method is time. Where industrial lagers might ferment for a few days and be shipped in less than two weeks, a certified SlowBrew lager may spend six weeks or more in cold maturation. This allows the beer to naturally clarify, mellow, and develop depth. No need for filtration or pasteurization, these beers stabilize the old-fashioned way: by waiting. It's a process that recalls the golden age of Bavarian and Austrian brewing, but with 21st-century quality control.

Take Augustiner Helles, for example, one of the shining stars of Munich's beer scene and a SlowBrew certified classic. Brewed with soft Munich water, German noble hops, and Bavarian barley, this lager undergoes a fermentation process at 9°C for nearly two weeks, followed by over a month in lagering tanks near freezing. The result? A flawlessly balanced beer with soft bready malt, subtle floral hops, and a finish so clean it feels like it was carved from ice. You can't rush that kind of finesse – it's earned with time and skill. Or consider Trumer Pils, brewed in Salzburg. This Austrian pilsner, sharp and grassy with a mineral edge, is cold-fermented and naturally carbonated, resting over five weeks

before packaging. Unlike commercial pilsners, it offers structure without harshness, bitterness without bite. It's proof that restraint – when combined with the right ingredients – yields elegance. But SlowBrew isn't only about lagers. The certification includes breweries experimenting with organic malts, ancient grains, and wild fermentation. Gusswerk's Jakobsgold, an amber-hued Märzen brewed with spelt, is one such beer. It's unfiltered, unpasteurized, and matures slowly in tank to develop a complex malt profile without the use of artificial stabilizers or clarifying agents. It tastes like honeyed toast and alpine air; it feels like a love letter to traditional Austrian brewing. Then there's Schlägl Bio Zwickl, a cloudy, bottle-conditioned kellerbier from Upper Austria. Brewed with mountain spring water and organic malt, its yeast is still active in the bottle, lending the beer a natural effervescence and ever-changing character. Sip it slowly and you'll notice aromas of lemon zest, clove, and fresh grain. It's a beer that breathes, evolves, and never tries to hide behind processing.

From the Alps, the slow brewing philosophy expanded in Central Europe, to Switzerland and the Netherlands, and especially to Italy. Rooted in the historic brewing traditions of Trieste, Theresianer is more than just a brewery – it's a revival of a legacy. The name itself harks back to the Theresianum, the original brewery founded in the 18th century during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. What sets Theresianer apart is its strict adherence to the "Rule of 7", a brewing protocol that encapsulates their devotion to time and quality: 7 days for malting, ensuring a uniform grain modification; 7 hours for brewing, allowing for slow lautering and hop additions that preserve aromatic compounds; 7 days for primary fermentation at cool temperatures, fostering a clean yeast profile; 7 weeks for lagering, a prolonged





cold maturation that develops clarity and smoothness without mechanical filtration. This slow and deliberate process results in beers that are refined, balanced, and refreshingly unhurried. Theresianer Premium Lager is pale lager that defines balance and precision. It pours golden with a tight white head, delivering floral and herbal hop aromas. The palate is soft, lightly bready with a mild bitterness, finishing clean and crisp. Unlike mass-market lagers, its depth reveals itself sip by sip.

Established in Padua in 2013, Birrificio Antoniano brings together Italy's agricultural heritage and a modern commitment to sustainability. Founders Sandro and Michele Ceccato, who came from the grain milling industry, built the brewery on the principle that "good beer starts in the field." Their beers are made with 100% Italian barley, much of it sourced from their own certified organic fields in the Veneto region. Antoniano's SlowBrew® certification isn't just about production time, it's a reflection of their entire value chain. From crop rotation and soil management to low-intervention brewing and community involvement, every aspect of their operation is geared toward sustainable excellence. Their beers undergo natural fermentation and long maturation cycles, typically 5 to 6 weeks, ensuring flavor integration and stability without needing artificial preservatives or filtration. Unlike many contemporary craft breweries chasing extreme flavors, Antoniano embraces subtlety, balance, and drinkability – hallmarks of the Slow Brewing philosophy, and a nod to both Austrian brewing influence and Italian terroir. Antoniano also emphasizes transparency: their bottles feature traceability details about the barley and hops, reinforcing their commitment to ethical, traceable agriculture. They are among a new wave of Italian brewers who see beer not just as a beverage, but as a product of place, tradition, and time.

What sets these beers apart isn't just their flavor: it's the meticulous process that goes into them. Slow-Brew-certified breweries must undergo annual testing and unannounced quality checks. Their beers are sampled in blind sensory panels, evaluated using a scoring system akin to wine competitions. In the lab, they're tested for dissolved oxygen, residual sugars, microbial stability, and chemical purity. Add to that a requirement for environmentally friendly operations, local ingredient sourcing, and fair labor practices, and you have one of the most comprehensive beer certifications in the world. Yet for all its rigor, the Slow Brewing Institute remains a niche movement, mostly known within Central Europe. It has room to grow. Outside Austria and Germany, only a handful of breweries even qualify. The certification's strict rules on ownership – only independent brewers can apply – exclude conglomerates and multinational brands, intentionally keeping the focus on small-to-mid-sized operations that are deeply rooted in their local communities.

That exclusivity, however, is part of its appeal. In a marketplace flooded with labels and puffery, SlowBrew is refreshingly uncompromising. It doesn't chase trends or sell hype, it quietly champions beer that's honest, patient, and profoundly well made. It's for drinkers who care where their beer comes from, how it's made, and what values stand behind it – possibly with a science-based certification assuring the whole process.

So, the next time you are choosing a beer, look for the SlowBrew seal. It might not scream for your attention from the shelf, but behind that quiet emblem lies a world of brewing knowledge, sensory pleasure, and ethical craftsmanship that speaks volumes. It's beer the way it used to be, and the way it should be again.



Four blends One legend

Blind Tasting

88 SPIRITS

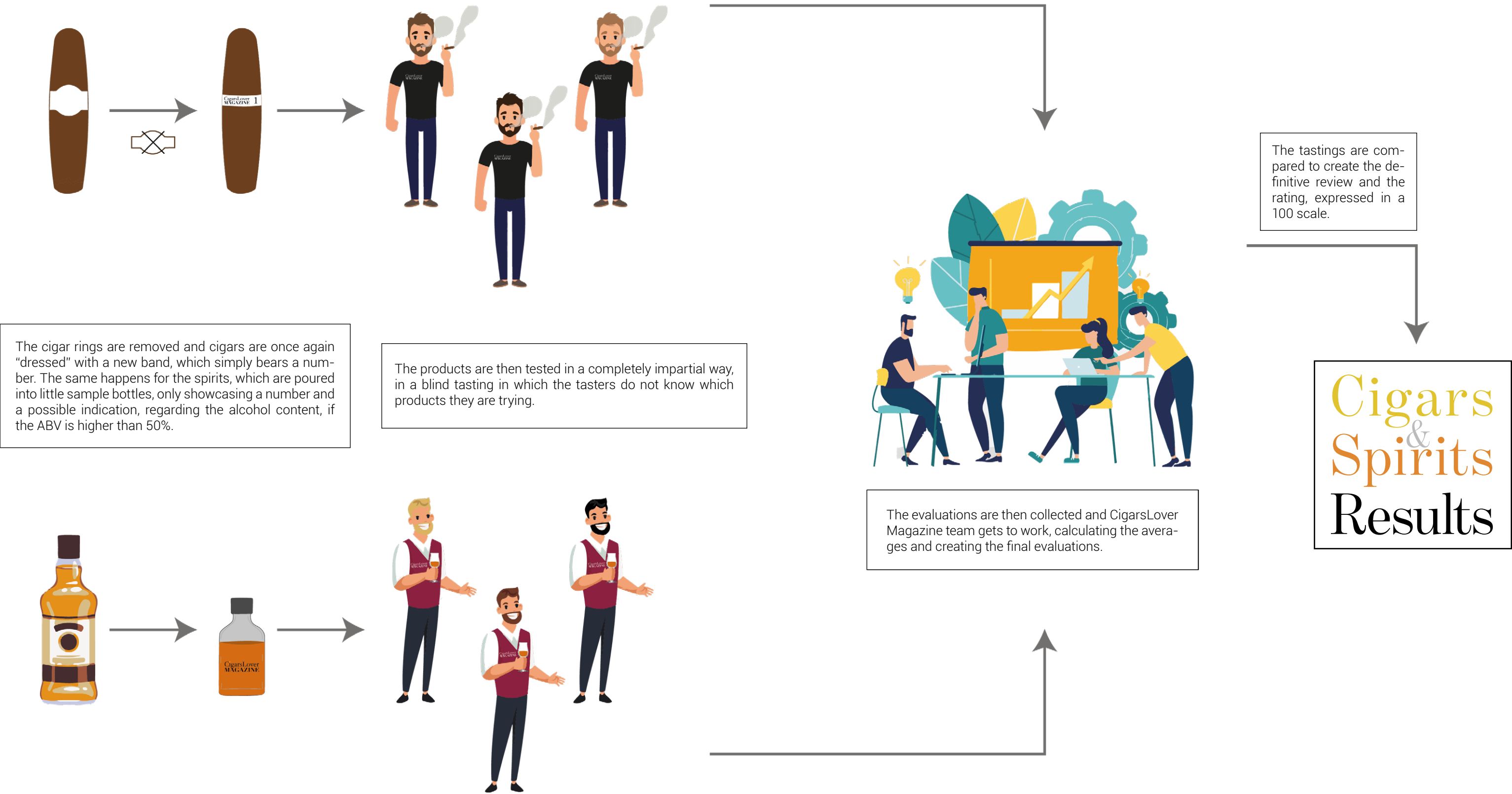
- 90 Rum
- 96 Whisky

102 CIGARS

- 103 Lancero
- 106 Piramide
- 111 Robusto
- 116 Toro



HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?





1

KAVALAN
Solist Fino Sherry

2

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

3

INTENSE AND COMPLEX

4

On the nose, ripe fruit, with rich plum notes, together with honey and a mix of exotic fruit, including coconut. Then cocoa. On the palate, exotic fruit, caramel and honey, along with rich white pepper notes and orange zes. The persistence is long. There are white pepper, cocoa and walnut notes, with a touch of orange peel.

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

94

5

Legend

All the information in the blind tasting

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

1

Spirit image.

2

Name of the spirit reviewed.

“yo” means “Years Old” and indicates how many years the product has been matured. If there is no indication of that, it is because the producer didn't declare it.

3

- COUNTRY: where the spirit is made.
- ABV-PROOF: percentage of alcohol contained in the spirit.
- PRICE:
\$ less than \$50
\$\$ between \$50 and \$100
\$\$\$ between \$100 and \$250
\$\$\$\$ above \$250

4

The tasting is divided in three parts: what is perceived to the nose, to the palate and in the finish. The final rows describe the overall experience that brought to the rating.

5

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



中国雪茄领军品牌

国潮新典范
GREATWALL CIGAR

Enjoy This Cigar, Everything Is Spectacular!

Great Wall Spectacular No.2 Gran Robusto



世界的味道

中国的长城

The Taste of the World, the Great Wall of China.

Rum



MHOBA
Glass Cask Strength

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
South Africa	60% 120	\$\$

RAW AND EXPRESSIVE

It delivers intense scents of sugarcane, wood varnish, and overripe tropical fruit, backed by funky esters and a hint of charred wood. The palate is wild and oily, delivering burnt sugar, citrus peel, and spices.

Untamed and powerful. A bold, high-proof rum with a rich and complex flavor profile.

91



HABIT. VELIER
Providence 2020

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Haiti	55% 110	\$\$

ELEGANT AND VIBRANT

Fresh sugarcane, olive brine, and light spice on the nose, with floral and mineral notes layered with subtle grassy accents. The palate is crisp, with cane juice, citrus, and a touch of white pepper on the finish.

Clean and vibrant. A sophisticated rum with clarity and structure.

90



SAINT JAMES
7 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	43% 86	\$

STRUCTURED AND REFINED

Aromas of oak, nutmeg, and dried fruit unfold with subtle grassy notes and a touch of vanilla. The palate is layered and a little on the dry side, featuring toasted wood, baking spice, and molasses, with a firm backbone of earthy depth.

Classic and firm. Refined, with bold character and balanced warmth.

89



HAMPDEN
Pagos

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

BOLD AND DEEP

Aromas of pineapple and caramelized banana mingle with sherry richness and underlying balsamic tones. The palate brings dried fruit, spice, and sherried notes over structured funk and toasted oak.

Dense and evolving. A bold Jamaican with sherry influence and a lasting finish.

89



ISAUTIER
Agent Double Fusion

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Réunion Island	55% 110	\$\$

VIBRANT AND UNIQUE

It exhibits scents of citrus, candied ginger, together with nuances of wood smoke, with hints of fresh herbs. The palate reveals exotic fruit, herbal freshness, and a salty nuances, carried on a creamy texture.

Rich and intense. A fusion with tropical flair and aromatic complexity.

87



OPTHIMUS
25 Malt Whisky

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

BOLD AND RICH

Aromas of dark toffee, dried fruit, and vanilla bean unfold over layers of oak, caramel, and malted cereal. Hints of cocoa and toasted spice follow. The palate delivers brown sugar, stewed figs, and polished oak, with a soft wave of warming spice.

Elegant and full-bodied, exhibiting a nice balance.

87



LA HECHICERA

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

SMOOTH AND TROPICAL

Aromas of ripe banana, toffee, and oak mingle with subtle spice and hints of dried mango. The palate is well-rounded, with caramel, dried fruit, and a whisper of vanilla that lingers gently.

Polished and easygoing. A rum delivering warmth, balance, and charm.

87



SIX SAINTS
Oloroso

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Grenada	41.7% 83.6	\$\$

RAW AND EXPRESSIVE

Nose of vanilla, molasses, and floral scents. The palate brings dried figs, toffee, and cinnamon with aged oak and a touch of clove.

Warm, but limited in complexity and not that structured.

86



KIRK & SWEENEY
Reserva

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

BALANCED AND EASY

Aromas of vanilla, caramel, and dried fruit lead into a soft palate of molasses, oak, and baking spice, rounded by a touch of dark sugar.

Smooth. It is easy to appreciate, but it lacks complexity and structure.

85



MINOKI
Mizunara

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

EXOTIC AND SILKY

The nose reveals sandalwood, coconut, and spice over gentle sugarcane and a faint trace of incense. On the palate, soft fruit, vanilla, and toasted wood from Mizunara casks bring depth and complexity.

Refined and harmonious, but with a limited flavor profile.

84



JM
Épices Créoles

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

ZESTY AND SPICED

It opens up with aromas of ginger, clove, and wood resin, layered over cane and citrus, with undertones of fresh herbs. The palate exhibits wood, vegetal notes, and roasted wood aromas.

The flavor profile is not common, but at the same time is contained.

84



HEE JOY
VSOP
Dominican Republic

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

SOFT AND ACCESSIBLE

Aromas of vanilla, almond, and orange zest, with a hint of spice and a trace of dried flowers. The palate is mellow, with dried fruit, soft oak, and honey.

Gentle and smooth, but with a contained flavor profile. Easy to enjoy.

83



Whisky



GLENDALOUGH
Peated

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

BUTTERY AND MELLOW

It delivers scents of plums, paired with custard and a balanced toffee flavor, along with notes of vanilla, malted barley, yellow orange, golden plums, and cream. Buttery and mellow.

Sweet, gentle, and warm. It is a rich and classy whisky, with an intense and balanced flavor profile.

90



WIDOW JANE
*Aged 10 Years
Batch 852*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	45.5% 91	\$\$\$

REFINED AND RICH

Dried figs and raisins, dark chocolate and a touch of tamarind, are wrapped in a warm sherry embrace. The palate reveals sherry under spirit, orange peel, balsamic herbs and vanilla, carried on a silky, full-bodied texture.

Rich, and layered. Deep sherry influence and a perfectly balanced intensity. Fulfilling.

90



MICHTER'S
US-1 Sour Mash

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

VIBRANT AND HARMONIOUS

It opens with bright aromas of lime zest and fresh orchard fruits, followed by hints of mint and marzipan. On the palate, notes of caramelized apple, vanilla, and raisins mingle with soft oak and baking spice.

Fresh and refined. Well-balanced flavor profile that lingers with soft sweetness and subtle warmth.

90



TEERENPELI
Aged 10 Years

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

MELLOW AND BALANCED

Aromas of cereal biscuit, vanilla pod, and honeyed oak rise gently from the glass. On the palate, soft yellow fruit, butterscotch, and pepper weave through creamy malt.

Smooth and approachable. A round, easy-drinking whisky with understated charm.

90



RAMPUR
Double Cask

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

WARM AND EXOTIC

Opens with aromas of mango, vanilla, and sandalwood, followed by a hint of nutmeg. The palate shows dried apricot, honey, and soft spice, framed by silky oak.

Rounded and rich. A mellow Indian malt with fruity charm and gentle spice.

89



LARCENY
Kentucky Straight Bourbon Small Batch

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

SOFT AND SWEET

Aromas of baked bread, caramel, and cinnamon swirl into the glass. The palate brings honeyed corn, vanilla custard, and toasted nuts with a hint of spice.

Smooth and approachable. A wheated bourbon with easy charm and comforting warmth.

89



GLENFARCLAS
Swiss Edition 2025 "Glen & Peak"

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	53.1% 106.2	\$\$\$

BOLD AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

Opens with aromas of vanilla, sherry, and roasted malt, backed by oak and caramel. The palate is assertive with black pepper, toasted nuts, and a faint herbal edge.

Rich and intense. A no-nonsense dram with lasting spice and classic Speyside depth.

88



MARS
Maltage Cosmo Wine Cask Finish

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

FRUITY AND INTRIGUING

Nose of red grapes, plum, and cocoa with a trace of sandalwood. The palate shows black cherry, soft malt, and wine tannins with a touch of baking spice.

Expressive and layered. A bold blend with Japanese poise and vinous flair.

87



WILSON & MORGAN
Glenlossie 2010 Whisky

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

A LITTLE TOO EASY

It opens up with notes of green apple, lemon curd, and grassy malt, edged with vanilla and white pepper. The palate offers orchard fruit, cereal, and light floral spice.

Bright and balanced. A clean, elegant dram with youthful charm and gentle complexity.

87



KOVAL
Rye Bottled In Bond

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

CRISP AND BOLD

Bright aromas of fresh dill, white pepper, and citrus zest, with underlying vanilla. The palate reveals cracked rye, honey, and herbal spice with clean grain character.

Lively and modern. A fresh, precise rye with a punchy, dry finish.

87



YOICHI
Single Malt

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

BALANCED BUT CONTAINED

Peat smoke, briny sea air, and charred oak greet the nose, followed by citrus peel and spice. The palate is structured, offering coal smoke, green tea, and umami-rich malt.

Focused and firm. A classic Japanese malt with bold peat and refined balance.

85



FILLIERS
10 Years Old

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

BOLD BUT RAW

Aromas of orange peel, nutmeg, and toasted oak rise with soft vanilla. On the palate, baking spices, butter-scotch, and dried fruit are wrapped in silky grain warmth.

Smooth and composed. A well-crafted Belgian whisky with depth and continental flair.

84



DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN PROTEGIDA
 Habanos
 DOP



INTERTABAK
 OFFICIAL HABANOS IMPORTER
 SWITZERLAND

www.intertabak.com

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.

Lancero





EL PULPO
THE EEL

BOLD AND RICH

A blast of spices, pepper, cardamom, and nutmeg, along with earth. Wood, walnut, and vegetal aro-
mas are added later on, with hot spices closing out
the smoke.

93



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	38x178mm (7")	\$ 16.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ARTURO FUENTE OPUSX 20 Y.
CELEBRATION PHANTOM

AROMATIC AND STRUCTURED

Creamy nuts and leather give way to the smoke,
with a citrus nuance also present. There is also a
pepper note coming through. Pleasant bitter herbs
appear in the second half.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	41x190mm (7 ½")	\$ 200 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



DAVIDOFF
YEAR OF THE SNAKE 2025

COMPLEX AND NUANCED

A mix of leather and wood is joined by nuts and
coffee. An earthy component follows further into
the smoke. The finale adds balsamic herbs and
cinnamon.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	43x178mm (7")	\$ 62 € 62
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., MEXICO



PUNCH
GOLDEN ERA LANCERO

BALANCED AND RICH

A mix of earth, wood, and black pepper opens up
the smoke. Vegetal notes, mushroom, and walnut
aromas are added in the second half of the smoke.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38x178mm (7")	\$ 11 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



TRINIDAD
FUNDADORES

REFINED AND DEEP

Cream, wood, and hazelnut give way to the smoke.
Nuances of honey and coffee follow, with some
faint spicy notes emerging as well towards the end.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x190mm (7 ½")	\$ - € 64
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



JOYA DE NICARAGUA
CABINETTA LANCERO

FLAVORFUL BUT LINEAR

The cigar opens with aromas of pepper and herbs,
followed by notes of coffee and nuts. In the second
half, the herbs become balsamic.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	38x190mm (7 ½")	\$ 10 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR, NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



PLASENCIA
YEAR OF THE SNAKE

ELEGANT AND ROUND

The opening reveals earth and deep vegetal notes.
Later on, the profile is enriched by walnut. A mix of
spices, with chili, black pepper, and white pepper,
is added in the second half.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x178mm (7")	\$ 49 € 49
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



EPIC
LANCERO HABANO

BALANCED AND ROUND

Wood, citrus, and herbs are the dominant flavors
in the first half. Earth, sour cream, and faint aro-
mas of coffee joined the profile in the second half.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	40x178mm (7")	\$ 10 € 8.1
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	CAMEROON	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA

Piramide



CigarMate

*Handmade CigarMate
for handmade cigars*



The CigarMate is a cigarholder created to let your cigar lay on a smooth surface of wood, providing the best natural support.

The design is completely studied in Italy and the production is entrusted to the most experienced woodworkers of the Philippines. Each CigarMate is completely made by hand, starting from a block of mahogany wood and slowly giving it size and shape. At the end of the process the cigarholder is lacquered manually with a brush. Each one has small differences from the others, which make it unique.



LIGA PRIVADA T52
BELICOSO

POWERFUL AND RICH

Black pepper and chili lead the way, followed by earth and wood. A walnut note, along with incense, joins in the second half of the smoke.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 19 € 19
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	BRAZIL	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



CHARTER OAK
HABANO TORPEDO

INTENSE AND ROUND

The smoke opens with well-defined aromas of cappuccino, joined by notes of leather and nuts. The smoke is creamy, with some white pepper notes and herbs also coming through.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 7.7 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



COHIBA
PIRAMIDES EXTRA

BOLD AND INTENSE

Sweet notes of dried fruit, vanilla, hazelnut, pink pepper, fine wood, and balsamic herbs in the first half. It evolves into ripe fruit with bold, spicy intensity.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x158mm (6 ¼")	\$ - € 110
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



BOLIVAR
BELICOSOS FINOS

BALANCED AND STRUCTURED

Hazelnut and wood are the protagonists, supported by leather and earth. A white pepper note joins the profile later on, along with coffee and cream nuances.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x140mm (5 ½")	\$ - € 19.4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



ROCKY PATEL
DECADE TORPEDO

COMPLEX AND EVOLVING

Baking spices, herbs, and wood are joined by coffee aromas in the beginning. Roasted nut, citrus peel, and earth appear in the second half of the smoke.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x165mm (6 ½")	\$ 14.9 € 14.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



CALDWELL LLTK MAD MOFO
HABANO BELICOSO

BOLD AND LAYERED

Cappuccino, bitter almonds, and faint pepper aromas give way to the smoke. The cappuccino note morphs into an espresso aroma along with a bitter herbal note.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 15.8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	N/A	DOMINICAN REP, NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



SIN COMPROMISO
SELECCIÓN NO. 2

HARMONIOUS AND SMOOTH

A mix of herbs and pepper gives way to the smoke, accompanied by hints of citrus and mineral. A vegetal note is added in the second half. The base is sweet.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 20.5 € 17.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA



DON PALOMON
MERCHANT TORPEDO

COMPLEX AND SPICY

A mix of spices, chili, cumin, and herbs is revealed in the first half. Later on, nutty and vegetal notes. An earthy component appears towards the end.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x165mm (6 ½")	\$ - € 14.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ESCOBAR
MADURO BELICOSO

INTENSE AND RICH

Earth, black pepper, and wood give way to the smoke. A vegetal nuance appears in the back-ground later on. The finale is spicy.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 14 € 16.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



GURKHA ROYAL
CHALLENGE TORPEDO

NUANCED AND ROUND

Baking spices and ripe fruits give way to the smoke. Later on, earthy and woody nuances join the profile, with a balsamic note appearing towards the end.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	53x152mm (6")	\$ 9 € 11
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HONDURAS	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



HEMMY'S
PIRAMIDE

BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL

Intense aromas of leather, coffee, and white pepper give way to the smoke. A mix of wood and nuts is added in the second half. Balsamic notes appear towards the end.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ - € 9.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	PERU	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



SAN CRISTOBAL DE LA
HABANA LA PUNTA

SMOOTH BUT LINEAR

The flavor profile of this cigar mainly centers around a balanced combination of aged wood, white pepper, and earth throughout the whole duration of the smoke.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	53x140mm (5 ½")	\$ - € 12.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

Robusto





GRAN HABANO
COROJO 7 ROBUSTO

BOLD AND INTENSE

Coffee, leather, and wood, on a peppery base, give way to the smoke. Dark chocolate and balsamic herbs aromas join in the second half.

93



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 14 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



MAYFLOWER
DAWN ROBUSTO

EVOLVING AND ROUND

A mix of herbs, wood, and nuts is revealed in the opening, on a honeyed base. Cappuccino notes follow further into the smoke and close out with intense leather aromas.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 12 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	CAMEROON	NICARAGUA



PLASENCIA
ALMA DEL CIELO CELESTE

RICH AND EVOLVING

Flavors of white pepper, earth, and roasted nuts give way to the smoke. Dark coffee and deep, spicy characters, mainly chili, are added in the second half.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x124mm (4 7⁄8")	\$ 25 € 26.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



PATINA
HABANO RUSTIC

FLAVORFUL AND SPICY

Once lit, it starts out with aromas of nuts, baking spices, and leather. Cedar wood appears later on, and the baking spices are replaced by a marked chili spice towards the end.

90



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ 10.5 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



HR
BLACK SMALL TORO

COMPLEX AND INTENSE

Black pepper, coffee, and cocoa are joined by ripe fruit and baking spices in the first half. A citrus and charred wood combination is added later on.

92



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	55x121mm (4 3⁄4")	\$ - € 15.4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



EL REY DEL MUNDO
APPOINTMENT ROBUSTO

BOLD AND INTENSE

Black pepper, herbs, and nuts open up the smoke. A citrus note appears later on, with a sour cream nuance in the background. The finale is spicy.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 8.8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	U.S.A.	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



1502
BLACK GOLD ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

The smoke begins with notes of pepper, cocoa, and wood, which are followed by espresso and ripe fruit nuance. An earthy component is added later on.

91



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 9.9 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ROCKY PATEL
DARK STAR ROBUSTO

HARMONIOUS AND SMOOTH

Wood, pepper, and faint earth give way to the smoke, followed by mineral notes. Citrus nuances, along with herbal aromas, are added in the second half.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x140mm (5 1⁄2")	\$ 10.5 € 12
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



*ROMEO Y JULIETA
EXHIBICION NO.4*

CREAMY AND BALANCED

Vegetal notes, joined by piquant spice, earth, and wood reach the palate, followed by hints of balsamic herbs and cappuccino. Then toasted coffee notes toward the finale.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	48x127mm (5")	\$ - € 16.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



*67 BY VALENTINO SIESTO
NERO BLACK*

APPROACHABLE AND CONSISTENT

Nutty and spicy start, evolving into earthy notes, aged wood, and subtle black pepper. The finish is a bit on the dry side, with mellowed spices towards the end.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 11.5 € 9.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



*CASA TURRENT
1880 DOBLE CLARO ROBUSTO*

LINEAR AND UNBALANCED

Earthy flavors dominate from the start, with hints of barnyard and black pepper. The smoke is dry, resting on an acidic base with subtle lingering spice.

84

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	55x133mm (5 ¼")	\$ - € 16
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	MEXICO	MEXICO



*PLATINUM NOVA PLATINUM
BATCH NICARAGUA ROBUSTO*

CONTAINED AND LINEAR

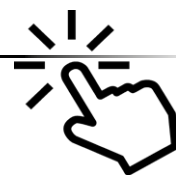
The cigar opens with faint wood, nuts, and vegetal notes. Coffee, vegetal, and grassy flavors hold steady throughout the smoke, with a slight bitterness toward the end.

82

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 16 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

1000+
CIGARS
TESTED
EVERY
YEAR

FIND CIGARS



Toro



DAVIDOFF MILLENNIUM TORO

BALANCED AND RICH

Rich flavors of earth, aged wood, black pepper, and walnut notes evolve on a creamy base. There is also a subtle roasted nuance present in the background.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 33 € 31
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



RED MEAT LOVERS FRITANGA

FLAVORFUL AND ROUND

Earth and leather are the main flavors, supported by black pepper and wood. Hazelnut and cocoa join the profile in the second half, with balsamic herbs closing the smoke.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 16.3 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



REBELLION SCREAMING SKULL

BROAD AND COMPLEX

A mix of leather, nuts, and baking spices gives way to the smoke. Sour cream and herbs are added later on. There is also a citrus nuance perceptible in the background.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	56x152mm (6")	\$ 13.8 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	INDONESIA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



VEGAFINA INMENSOS EXCLUSIVO SUIZA

RICH AND BOLD

Earth, cocoa, and black pepper lead the profile, joined by roasted wood and a touch of piquant peaks. Vegetal and balsamic notes emerge in the second half.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x162mm (6 3/8")	\$ - € 13.4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



UNDERCROWN
SHADE GRAN TORO

HARMONIOUS AND SMOOTH

The opening brings aromas of earth, wood, and white pepper to the palate. Vegetal nuances are added later on, together with some walnut towards the end.

89



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 10.3 € 10
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP. NICARAGUA



ALADINO
CAMEROON RESERVA

CREAMY AND BALANCED

It delivers aromas of cedarwood, white pepper, and then a touch of earth. There is a gentle nuttiness perceivable in the background. The base is slightly sweet.

88



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ 22 € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



MACANUDO
INSPIRADO WHITE TORO

BALANCED AND ROUND

A cigar with vegetal and walnut notes in the opening on a honeyed base. Ripe fruit aromas emerge in the middle, accompanied by a woody, mellow finish.

87



STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x165mm (6 ½")	\$ 9 € 7.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	MEXICO, NICARAGUA



GURKHA NICARAGUA
COLECCION ESPECIAL TORO

INTENSE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

The cigar opens with intense notes of dark chocolate and earth. A combination of walnut, wood, and black pepper aromas joins the profile in the second half.

87



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

Credits

Cover page

picture by: Billy The Kid

Inside Room101: Chat with Matt Booth

picture by: Billy The Kid

Don Palomon Cigars

picture by: Florence Ezanno

Master Aged Series 5

picture by: Manifatture Sigaro Toscano

Haso Taiji Cigar Cutter

picture by: Mario Amelio

Pairings

picture by: Mario Amelio

Cigars & Spirits

picture by: Mario Amelio - Renz A. Mauleon

15 Stars

picture by: 15 Stars

Whisky and Chocolate: the basics

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Chocolate & American Whiskies

picture by: Mario Amelio

Chinquapin

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Espresso Martini

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Food & Whiskey: Bread

picture by: Mario Amelio

Slow Brewed, Time Honored

picture by: Mario Amelio

Blind tasting - Spirits

picture by: Renz A. Mauleon

Blind tasting - Cigars

picture by: Mario Amelio