

# Cigars Lover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1 - 2026



## Sykes Wilford

- CALDWELL'S EVOLUTION - LANCEROS - BUNDLES VS. BOXES - THE YEAR OF THE HORSE - PAIRINGS: CIGARS & SPIRITS
- LA MAISON DU WHISKY: 70TH ANNIVERSARY - WHISKY & CHEESE: FIRST ROUND OF PAIRINGS - LAST WORD COCKTAIL
- THE CROWN CAP: THE STORY BEHIND ITS 21 RIDGES - ABBEY BEERS: BETWEEN HISTORY AND MARKETING



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# CigarsLover MAGAZINE

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## Editor's thoughts

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

The first issue of 2026 opens with Sykes Wilford on page one, in an exclusive conversation with Robert Caldwell, exploring how Laudisi's acquisition transformed Caldwell Cigars while preserving its artisanal soul. We then turn to the Lancero, slim in form yet expansive in flavor, a timeless vitola that continues to captivate cigar lovers around the world. Next, we examine alternative packaging through bundles and put a Xikar lighter to the test.

An interview with LMDW offers insight into curating fine spirits, while our cocktail feature revisits the classic Last Word, a masterpiece in balance and structure. A dedicated feature on building a proper cellar highlights the importance of storage: selecting and acquiring a bottle is only part of the journey; preserving it correctly ensures it fulfills its promise over time. We also launch a new series on pairing spirits and food, beginning with whisky and cheese, a duo capable of delivering remarkable pleasure.

Beyond smoke, we explore tobacco scents in modern perfumery, warm, nostalgic, and unexpectedly elegant. For this edition, our panel blind tasted more than 60 products, evaluating each with rigor and independence to bring you selections grounded in experience rather than hype.

This issue invites you to slow down, choose carefully, and savor fully.

#refineyourtaste



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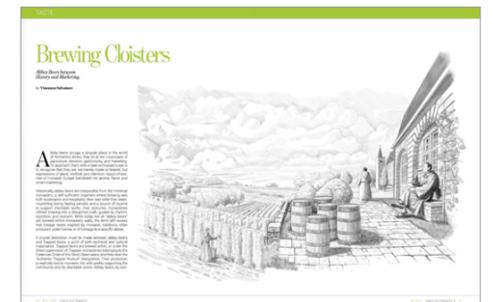
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# CIGARS

“Life's a cigar: the wasting body glows; The head turns white as  
Kosciusko's snows; And, with the last soul-fragrance still in air,  
The ashes slowly sink in soft repose.”

*George G. McCrae*





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#2

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10 MAGNUM  
60X 6

10 MAGNUM  
60X 6



# Caldwell's Evolution

*How Laudisi's acquisition transformed Caldwell Cigars while preserving its artisanal soul.*

by **Michel Arlia**

In an industry where heritage often collides with innovation, the 2024 union between Caldwell Cigars and Laudisi Enterprises represents a fascinating case study in strategic growth without creative compromise. What began as casual conversations between friends evolved into a partnership that would reshape both companies' trajectories in the premium tobacco world. In this wide-ranging discussion, Caldwell founder Robert Caldwell and Laudisi's Sykes Wilford discuss how their collaboration has strengthened the brand's creative vision while navigating an increasingly complex landscape of shifting consumer behaviors, regulatory challenges, and the delicate balance between artisanal authenticity and commercial scale. From the blending room to retail shelves, they reveal how two distinct tobacco cultures, one in pipes and the other in cigars, found common ground in their shared reverence for the leaf.



**Before we get to the nitty-gritty, Sykes, can you tell us a bit about Laudisi?**

**SYKES:** I founded the company in 2000 to launch Smokingpipes, which is still the largest part of Laudisi. I'd worked in a pipe and cigar retailer while also in college and had fallen head-over-heels in love with pipes, but was also an avid cigar smoker in those days. Over the years, Smokingpipes grew rapidly, and by 2012, we were getting requests to branch out of retail into other parts of the pipe and pipe tobacco world. We took over Savinelli's distribution in the US in 2012 and acquired Cornell & Diehl, a small tobacco company, in 2014. In 2018, we were approached to acquire Kapp & Peterson in Dublin, a manufacturer of Peterson pipes. Throughout this time, while Smokingpipes was very focused on pipes and tobacco, we did sell cigars on Smokingpipes and through our brick-and-mortar shop, Low Country Pipe and Cigar, in Little River, SC.

**How did discussions about the acquisition begin, and how do your companies' philosophies align?**

**SYKES:** I think the acquisition was really born out of Robert's friendship with Shane Ireland, Laudisi's VP for Retail. I think Caldwell was at an inflection point in their business, and Robert was at an inflection point in his career. For Laudisi, the obvious next step for us was to branch further into cigars, something we'd been increasingly emphasizing at the retail level for the previous five or six years. From Laudisi's perspective, the Caldwell brand identity was really compelling. It was distinct from our other brands. C&D is very artisanal and Americana-driven, and Peterson's identity is rooted in its history as an iconic Irish manufacturer. We felt that Caldwell shared the same clear, compelling vision for brand identity as our other brands. It checked the other boxes too: the cigars are amazing and were, and are, favorites among the staff. That and we thought the artwork was cool as shit.

**ROBERT:** We had a great working relationship with Laudisi for years and appreciated how they approached all things tobacco. In a casual conversation one day with Shane Ireland (Laudisi's VP for Retail), we started talking about the brand's future. We were approaching our 10th anniversary and thinking about the years to come. Through further conversations, we realized that Laudisi would be the ideal partner to carry us forward. The rest soon became history. From my perspective, the companies complement each other in several ways. We are both very serious about tobacco. We share and learn from each other in this department. Both were built and grew from the love of the leaf. Our team immediately found friendship with theirs. In addition to working well together, we laugh a lot and together enjoy many things outside of tobacco.

**Robert, how has Laudisi's team supported the brand?**

**ROBERT:** Before we joined Laudisi, we had momentum but weren't very organized and couldn't plan beyond a few months. Laudisi is a much larger company and excels in the areas that we did not. Being under the Laudisi umbrella has



allowed our brand to focus on what matters most: blending, quality control, and carrying the brand message forward.

**Caldwell's always been known for pushing creative boundaries in blending and branding. How does Laudisi's expertise support those innovations?**

SYKES: While deferent to Robert's vision for the brand identity, the big thing Laudisi brings is a substantial marketing department with significant in-house art resources. And while Laudisi didn't bring cigar blending or manufacturing expertise to the table, it has tremendous experience creating pipe tobaccos from the ground up. At the literal level of blending cigars, that's kind of useless: they're different enough that knowing one doesn't help much with the other. In a more abstract way, where we're supporting Rob's efforts, it helps: we do have a lot of folks with experience being part of a small focus group of tasters who can provide feedback.

ROBERT: Having a comprehensive in-house creative team has been great. We used to parcel projects out to a variety of people in different places, then had to put them back together. The flow at Laudisi is much more organic and fluid. It is also great to have timelines and deadlines, which we did not have before. Together, this makes the creative process flow seamlessly.

**Robert, developing new blends used to be all on you. Has that process changed?**

ROBERT: No, it is still just me developing new blends. I also share the blends and samples with various people at Laudisi. Even though they are primarily a pipe company, many of the people who work there love cigars and have great palates. The feedback that I receive from the guys at Laudisi is very helpful.

**Walk us through how a cigar goes from concept to retailer shelves now. Who handles what?**

SYKES: At this point, there are bits that Robert and Juan Jaramillo, his partner from pre-Laudisi days, mostly handle and there are other bits that are mainly handled in the distribution business or marketing department of the pre-Caldwell Laudisi, but really there's a whole lot of overlap and collaboration all over: Robert, Juan, Franklin Kleckner (LDG's National Sales Manager), Andy Wike (Laudisi's VP for Marketing), Shane Ireland (Laudisi's VP for Retail), and I talk weekly about Caldwell, and we're steering all the pieces at once, whether that's new products or launch plans or sales strategies. But, really, we're talking about cigars altogether with that group: how they taste, how we want them to taste, and how they should look.



ROBERT: Blending is just me. Marketing, branding, and packaging are my direction but collaborative with Laudisi. Sales are done through Laudisi Distribution Group.

**How do you maintain consistency across production runs while keeping that artisanal character intact?**

ROBERT: We have always had a great synergy with Tabacalera William Ventura. They respect all productions the same, regardless of size. They would not let a cigar out of the factory unless it was ready. In addition to the factory's support, we have always leaned towards older, more exotic tobaccos that have defined us as an artisanal brand.

**Your portfolio has grown quite extensively over the years. Any fears that newer brands of yours will cannibalize your tried-and-true classics?**

ROBERT: No, because few of our brands taste much like the other. The nice thing about our portfolio is that there are typically several different cigars that would appeal to the same smoker in terms of the way they hit their palate, but not in terms of flavor.

**You both bring different perspectives to the table. How have consumer preferences shifted recently, and how are you adapting?**

ROBERT: The big ring gauges and super-strong fads are slowing down. I love this. Not because we make neither, but because the best flavor is found in moderate to small ring gauges. In addition, we make very balanced cigars, which a super strong cigar cannot be. I feel like consumers are finally coming around to the good stuff.

**What trends are you seeing? Any generational shifts in how people discover and enjoy cigars?**

ROBERT: It seems like there are fewer brands being launched. COVID provided a huge boom to the industry, and a lot of products came out from everyone.

SYKES: I think we're seeing something in cigars that we also see in pipe tobacco, and in a lot of other consumer behavior. In general, consumers are far less brand specific, not that brand doesn't matter, and are more experiential explorers. They want to try a lot of different things. One definitely sees this in the explosion of beer and coffee culture in the US (and elsewhere), while our parents or grandparents drank Folger's and Budweiser (in the US) or Nescafé in parts of Europe. Consumer goods consumption is just more experiential than it used to be. Generations ago, cigar smokers had a cigar, maybe a specific Montecristo or Macanudo size, they smoked, and they rarely dabbled outside of that. The same was even more true for pipe smoking; you spent 20 years smoking Prince Albert, and that was your brand, a

few decades ago. These days, what I'm seeing for cigars, pipe tobacco, and lots of other consumer goods is that people are curious to try new things. The great consumer product question of the 2020s is not, as it was 30 years ago, how to get established consumers to try something new, but rather how to stay interesting and relevant when consumers are exploring lots of things all the time. I think it's even more extreme for tobacco products than for other categories of consumable products because of the shifting regulatory environment: specifically, if you can't smoke in your office or your home, your consumption looks different; we see many more connoisseur consumers and fewer habitual consumers as time goes on. That sounds like a negative, but I really think it's positive: for a guy that's been kicking around the premium tobacco industry for more than a quarter-century and is excited about variety and experiences in tobacco (and food and coffee, etc.) himself, I absolutely love being in a cultural moment where we're thoroughly engaging with the product.

#### How do you balance online sales with supporting brick-and-mortar shops?

ROBERT: Brick-and-mortar is the lifeblood of the industry. Online has grown into the oxygen. Before the pandemic, the online world was not as important as it is now. In addition to adding significant sales volume, our online partners help to market the brand and get new products out to many consumers. The entire industry is delicately balanced between online and brick-and-mortar. In 2026, you have to have both. SYKES: As a guy who spent the first 15 years of his career building an online retail business, I find this question challenging. If you'd asked me this in 1999, I was a gung-ho online retail evangelist. These days, I'll go with Robert: you need both. I also think there will be an increasing pivot back towards retailers, online or B&M, who do the hard work of providing good service and good product. We're on the eve of a rejection of the, to quote Cory Doctorow, "enshittification" of online services: consumers are going to say, 'screw this, I'm not a number you can dice into fifteen different marketing metrics, I want something authentic.' OK, so maybe I'm saying that about my own online retail experiences (outside of tobacco) and also thinking about Smokingpipes and not wanting it to feel like that. Still, I think it's a warning to our industry and others right now: people who do a good job, whether it's B&M or online, will be rewarded.

#### What are the biggest challenges facing the industry right now: regulatory issues, supply chain problems, market changes, and how are you tackling them?

ROBERT: Throughout 2024 and 2025, retailers in the US were working out excess inventory that they had accumulated out of fear from the supply chain shortfalls that had occurred during 2020-2024. I believe some other parts of the world faced the same issues. This seems to have

worked itself out late last year. Supply chain issues have and always will be a big issue for premium cigars. If it's not packaging, it's tobacco. If it's not tobacco, it's packaging. This is the great fight. Regulation is the same. We had an abatement in the US, but Europe is challenging due to track-and-trace. Even though all challenges are navigable, they still cause headaches and raise prices.

SYKES: I agree with Robert, but tariffs over the past year in the US have muddled and complicated supply chains even further. Whereas before we were collectively dealing with all the sorts of things Robert describes, now we're doing that while also being constantly conscious of an ever-changing tariff environment.

#### Where do you see the premium cigar industry in five years?

ROBERT: I've been in this industry for about 15 years, and I don't think anything has really changed. Some new regulations here or there; prices always tick up as these regulations kick in, and as tobacco and packaging prices drift higher. So I would guess in five years, there will be more of the same.

SYKES: I think there will be even further drift towards the sort of consumer behavior I described above: increasingly, it's about delivering interesting, new things to consumers. I'm not exactly sure what this will mean for the industry, but I can make some guesses. Tastes will fragment, and it will be less fashion-driven: there will be space for big ring gauges and small ring gauges; space for powerhouse cigars and mild, complex cigars. Whoever is good at picking up on micro-trends within the market and speaking authen-

tically to consumers will succeed, while those who don't, won't. I think this is a suggestion that there will be more of a movement toward smaller, boutique-y brands, but I'm not so sure. I think it will very much be an environment where doing good work, making good cigars, and forming real relationships with consumers will be rewarded.

#### What releases or projects are you most excited about? What should enthusiasts expect from you in the future?

ROBERT: Hands down, Anastasia Emerald. This is a redux of the original Green Label with a bit more kick. I've been working on this project for about three years, and we are getting really close. We've also got some killer Crafted & Curated drops coming very soon, including unique twists on Long Live the Queen, Savages, and Last Tsar.





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PAGE

# Lanceros: the Purest Expression of a Cigar

*From Cuban origins to modern revival  
the story of the cigar world's most elegant format.*

by **Luca Cominelli**



Even if overshadowed by fatter smokes among most consumers, the lancero remains beloved by seasoned connoisseurs. Today's market is oriented through heavy ring gauges, but nothing quite replaces the elegance of this classic format.

We commonly use lancero to refer to cigars measur-

ing around 178–194 mm (7 to 7½ inches) with a ring gauge of 38, occasionally up to 40, but never beyond. The name evokes the lance carried by medieval cavalry (lancero means “lancer” in Spanish), a nod to the vitola's long, slender silhouette. Some lanceros even feature a pigtail cap, reminiscent of the tied plume or braid worn by cavalry soldiers.

Many believe the Cohiba Lancero was the first, but that is not the case. A vitola called Delicados existed in Cuba long before the launch of the famed Laguito No.1, the Cuban format most people associate with lanceros. Delicados shared the same dimensions (38 × 192 mm – 7.5”) and appeared in two brands still available today: El Rey del Mundo Grandes de España and Partagás Serie

du Connaisseur No.1, both predating the 1960s. Unfortunately, these were discontinued in 2010. The difference between Delicados and Laguitos No.1? Only one: the pig tail finish.

The first Laguito No.1 released to the market, and still considered by many the undisputed king, was the Cohi-



ba Lancero, introduced in 1966 when the Cohiba brand became publicly available. Before that, Cohiba cigars were reserved as diplomatic gifts or for the private consumption of Fidel Castro himself. The first lancero was blended specifically for him by master torcedor Avelino Lara. Early Cohiba Lanceros were unbanded.

The vitola's popularity soon expanded beyond Cuba. The first brand to adopt it was Davidoff in 1969, when Davidoff cigars were still made in Cuba. After production moved to the Dominican Republic in 1991, the Davidoff No. 1 was discontinued in Cuba but retained in the brand's global portfolio. In 1976, the Diplomáticos No. 6 (Delicado) was introduced but lasted only five years. The Montecristo Especiales followed in the 1980s, marking the third Cuban Laguito No.1. Later came the Bolívar Especiales, a rare release from the same decade, and finally the Vegueros Especiales No.1, the last Cuban

lancero introduced in 1997 and discontinued together with most of the Cuban lanceros in 2010.

Outside Cuba, the lancero began slowly reappearing after the 1990s cigar boom. In addition to Davidoff's No. 1, several noteworthy examples emerged, such as the Fuente Fuente OpusX Phantom by Arturo Fuente, the Tatuaje Selección de Cazador Especiales, the Oliva Serie V Lancero, the Padilla 1932 Lancero, the Alec Bradley Tempus Creo, and the Don Pepin Garcia Blue Label Lancero.

A lancero's defining characteristic, its slim ring gauge, means fewer filler leaves. With less tobacco, each individual leaf has a stronger impact on the flavor profile. The length, meanwhile, allows for extended leaves that contribute to a more pronounced evolution throughout the smoke. The wrapper also plays a far more domi-

nant role than it does in thicker formats. Rolling a lancero is notoriously difficult. Overfilling can cause a tight draw, leading smokers to over-puff and overheat the cigar. Underfilling is equally problematic: too much airflow produces higher heat, resulting in bitterness and acrid smoke. Fast smoking exacerbates these issues; patience is essential. A practical pace is one puff every 60 seconds.

If the lancero delivers such refined, evolving complexity, why has its popularity waned? Two main factors contributed to its decline: the difficulty of construction, that caused many lanceros in the early 2000s to suffer from draw problems; and lifestyle changes, together with stricter smoking regulations and tighter schedules led smokers to prefer shorter, more convenient formats. Robustos and toros became the modern standards, often growing thicker over time.

Yet the lancero is experiencing a quiet renaissance. Many boutique brands now release limited editions in this vitola, and several have added lanceros to their regular production. For connoisseurs, this is a welcome return. In Cuba, however, the situation is quite different. Only two lanceros remain in the Habanos portfolio: the Cohiba Lancero and the Montecristo Especial. A bonus is the Trinidad Fundador, whose vitola de galera, Laguito Especial, is essentially a slightly thicker lancero with a 40 ring gauge instead of 38.

Since the early 2000s, Cuban lanceros, including Delicados and Laguito Especial, have appeared almost exclusively as Regional Editions. These include the Bolívar Especiales No.2 and the Diplomáticos Grandes for Germany, the El Rey del Mundo La Reina for the UK, the Juan López Lancero Adriático for the Adriatic markets, the Saint Luis Rey Adamastor for Portugal, and the

Sancho Panza El Rey for Asia. Six releases out of nearly 300 Regional Editions represent roughly 2%. Outside Cuba, though, the outlook is far brighter. Many brands now feature a lancero in their portfolios, and compared to 15 years ago, cigar lovers enjoy a far wider range of

options. The size has regained popularity, particularly for limited editions from boutique brands, and modern construction standards make lanceros less intimidating for newcomers. For aficionados, this resurgence is music to the ears.



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

# Bundles vs. Boxes

*Are paper bundles  
changing the game?*

by **Zack Mitchers**

Walk into any tobacco shop today, and you'll notice something different on the shelves. Alongside the traditional wooden boxes sits an increasingly popular alternative: premium cigars wrapped in simple paper bundles.

The emphasis is on premium cigars, not medium-filler or short-filler cigars that have traditionally come in bundles. This shift isn't about cutting corners. It's about making premium cigars accessible to everyone.

The economics are straightforward. A regular wooden box with brass hinges, decorative labels, and cedar lining can add \$30 to \$50 to the retail price of a 20-cigar box. If you consider the super-luxurious packaging of brands like Arturo Fuente, Davidoff, Plasencia, etc., that added price can reach the hundreds. Paper bundles eliminate these costs entirely, allowing manufacturers to redirect resources where they matter most: into the end product itself. The result? Smokers get premium cigars at prices that won't empty their wallets.

A whole new generation of cigar lovers cares more about what the cigar is than what it comes in. This change extends beyond price. Bundles appeal to any smoker who



enjoys a fine cigar and has only limited space in their humidor, since the bundle count can vary from five to ten, fifteen, or even up to twenty cigars. Smaller bundles are perfect to bring along and share at gatherings, to experiment with new brands, or simply to enjoy quality tobacco without the ceremony of cracking open a sealed box.

The shift also reflects the change in what the modern consumer considers important. Today's price-conscious smokers, especially younger ones, prioritize authenticity over presentation. For them, an honest paper bundle feels more genuine than marketing or storytelling-driven packaging.

Some manufacturers, especially boutique brands like Stole Throne, Valacari, and Lure, as well as larger brands like Gran Habano, have noticed. They now offer some of their premium blends in bundles as well. A number of them even offer retailers a tray to showcase bundles and cigars, which saves shelf space and resources and reduces waste. They recognize that some consumers understand that a cigar's value lies in the tobacco, not its container.

The wooden box isn't disappearing. Collectors still treasure them as gifts and display pieces. But paper bundles have carved out a space in the premium market, proving that great cigars don't need fancy packaging, just great tobacco.



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THE LATE HOUR SERIES

DISCOVER MORE



# Galloping into the Humidor

*Limited editions, rare finds, and standout blends shaping this year's zodiac releases.*

by **Ramon Bernard**

The Chinese zodiac has proven to be one of the most fertile creative territories in the premium cigar world. Each lunar year offers cigar makers a fresh narrative framework. Every year, cigar manufacturers saddle up with some of their most ambitious and collectible limited editions. Brands now distinguish themselves not only through blend complexity but also through presentation, unveiling intricately designed boxes, bespoke bands, and thematic storytelling that reflects the spirit of the zodiac animal. In 2026, the arrival of the Year of the Horse injects the category with a distinct energy. Traditionally associated with strength, elegance, freedom, and relentless forward motion, the Horse symbolizes momentum and ambition.

A thriving ecosystem of cigar brands has now developed around Chinese New Year releases, and the Horse inspired an especially spirited showing from across the industry. What was once a seasonal novelty has now become a cornerstone of the cigar calendar. Here's a comprehensive look at every Year of the Horse cigar released in 2026.





#### Davidoff Year of the Horse

Davidoff has significantly expanded its Zodiac Series with the 2026 edition, marking its 15th consecutive year. Unlike the 2014 version, which offered a single vitola, the 2026 release features three distinct expressions at varying levels of exclusivity. Year of the Horse: This Toro Especial, with 17,500 boxes produced, offers a blend of an Ecuadorian wrapper, Ecuadorian binder, and Dominican fillers aged for a combined 43 years. Flagship Exclusive Torpedo: Available only at Davidoff flagship stores, this limited Torpedo has just 600 boxes of 24 cigars. With fewer than 15,000 produced, it is a rare find. Masterpiece Humidor Gran Toro: The collection's pinnacle, each hand-crafted humidor contains 88 cigars and features exquisite artwork, making it a coveted piece for collec-

tors. Additionally, the collection includes a limited accessory set featuring a porcelain ashtray, cigar case, cutter, cigar stand, and a coin, part of a series planned for future Zodiac releases.

#### Plasencia El Año del Caballo Parejo Gordo

Plasencia found arguably the most creative way to honor the Horse among all 2026 releases. Called the Parejo Gordo, this behemoth features a distinctive braided strip of tobacco on the head of the cigar, crafted to resemble a plaited horse's mane or tail. It's a stunning bit of artistry that carries through to the box's outer lid. The blend is a robust Nicaraguan affair: Jalapa-grown wrapper, Nicaraguan binder, and a combination of Nicaraguan and Honduran fillers. Production is limited to 6,000 boxes of 10.

#### Trinidad Corcel

Habanos S.A. unveiled its Cuban Year of the Horse offering at a premiere party in Hong Kong: the Trinidad Corcel, a pigtailed vitola with one genuinely modern flourish, an NFC chip embedded in the box. Tapping the box with a smartphone provides product information and authenticates the cigar as genuine. Only 8,888 boxes were produced, with the number chosen specifically for its luck symbolism in Chinese culture.

#### Cohiba Short Year of the Horse

Another Habanos S.A. release offering under the iconic Cohiba banner. This release takes a clever approach, a humidor of 88 machine-made Shorts, which are smaller cigars made from short filler tobacco. The 88-count packaging is a direct nod to the lucky number, and only 8,000 boxes were produced worldwide.

#### Punch Egg Roll XL

General Cigar Co. has taken a delightfully unconventional approach to Chinese New Year cigars since entering the space in 2019, opting for packaging designed to look like Chinese-American takeout containers. For the Year of the Horse, they supersized their beloved Egg Roll: the original Short Robusto format has been bumped up to a hearty Gordo size. The blend remains the same, as does the cigar's signature shaggy foot.

#### La Galera Year of the Horse Limited Edition

Jochy Blanco's Tabacalera Palma delivered one of the more distinctive blends of the year with this Toro. The wrapper is a Brazilian Arapiraca leaf covering a fully Dominican blend of Criollo '98, Olor, Pelo de Oro, and Piloto Cubano fillers. The cigars are sold in boxes of 10 or as part of a gift set that includes a lighter, cutter, and a horse-shoe-shaped ashtray. A total of 2,026 sets were produced, a clever nod to the year.

#### Rocky Patel Year of the Horse Churchill

Rocky Patel's Year of the Horse iteration comes as a box-pressed Churchill. Unlike most brands that embrace red and gold packaging, Rocky Patel opted for sleek black, a "dark horse" in more ways than one. The blend is a Mexican San Andrés wrapper leaf, a Nicaraguan binder, and a combination of Honduran and Nicaraguan fillers. This is the brand's third zodiac release, and 4,000 boxes of 10 were allocated for the U.S. market.

#### Villiger Year of the Horse

Switzerland's Villiger has been quietly building a Chinese zodiac portfolio of its own, having released Year of the Rabbit (2023), Year of the Dragon (2024), and Year of the Snake (2025). The Horse continues that tradition. The Villiger Year of the Horse is a Torpedo. The blend is an





Ecuadorian habano oscuro wrapper over a Mexican San Andrés binder and Nicaraguan fillers, produced at the Villiger de Nicaragua factory. Production is limited to 1,000 boxes of 10 cigars. Like its predecessors in the Villiger zodiac series, the Year of the Horse is exclusive to Asian markets.

**Valacari x Lure Cigars Nereus**

The most conceptually inventive release of the entire Year of the Horse season belongs to two boutique brands: Valacari Cigars and Lure Cigars. Following their first collaboration, The Redfish, the two companies reunited for a Year of the Horse project with a genuinely creative twist. Instead of simply celebrating the Horse, they honored the hippocampus, the mythical Greek sea creature with the upper body of a horse and the lower body of a fish. The name Nereus (a Greek sea god) connects the maritime identity of Lure Cigars to Valacari's classical aesthetic, while the "Year of the (Sea)horse" concept ties both worlds back to the Chinese zodiac. The cigar itself is a soft box-pressed Gordito, a Nicaraguan puro from start to finish. Production is extremely limited: just 250 bundles of 10 cigars.

**Aladino Year of the Horse Torpedo**

Perhaps the most emotionally resonant release of 2026 came from JRE Tobacco Co. The Torpedo is a landmark

for the company, their first foray into the Chinese zodiac market, and the timing is deeply personal. The Horse is the zodiac sign of Justo Eiroa himself, who co-founded JRE with his father. The boxes feature the Chinese character "正" (meaning "just"), a quiet tribute to Justo's name and character. The cigar is a Honduran puro, and production is strictly limited to 600 boxes of 20.

**Maya Selva Flor de Selva Año del Caballo**

The company has celebrated Lunar New Year with a new limited edition since 2018, and for the Year of the Horse, the symbolism runs especially deep. In both Chinese and Mayan traditions, animal iconography plays a central role in spirituality and identity. The ancient Maya believed in the concept of the "nahual", a spirit animal guiding each person through life, making the Horse a natural bridge between the two civilizations. The Flor de Selva Año del Caballo is a Double Corona, and the wrapper and binder come from Honduras's Jamastran Valley, while the filler blends Honduran and Nicaraguan tobaccos. The packaging continues the brand's signature artistic fusion of traditional Chinese patterns and Mayan hieroglyphics. Production is capped at 20,000 cigars, sold in boxes of 10.

**VegaFina Year of the Horse**

VegaFina chose to honor a specific breed for their zodiac

entry, the Paso Higüeyano, a horse native to the Dominican Republic. The blend reflects an Ecuadorian wrapper, Nicaraguan binder, and fillers from both the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. This Toro is dressed in a golden foil and comes in 16-ct boxes.

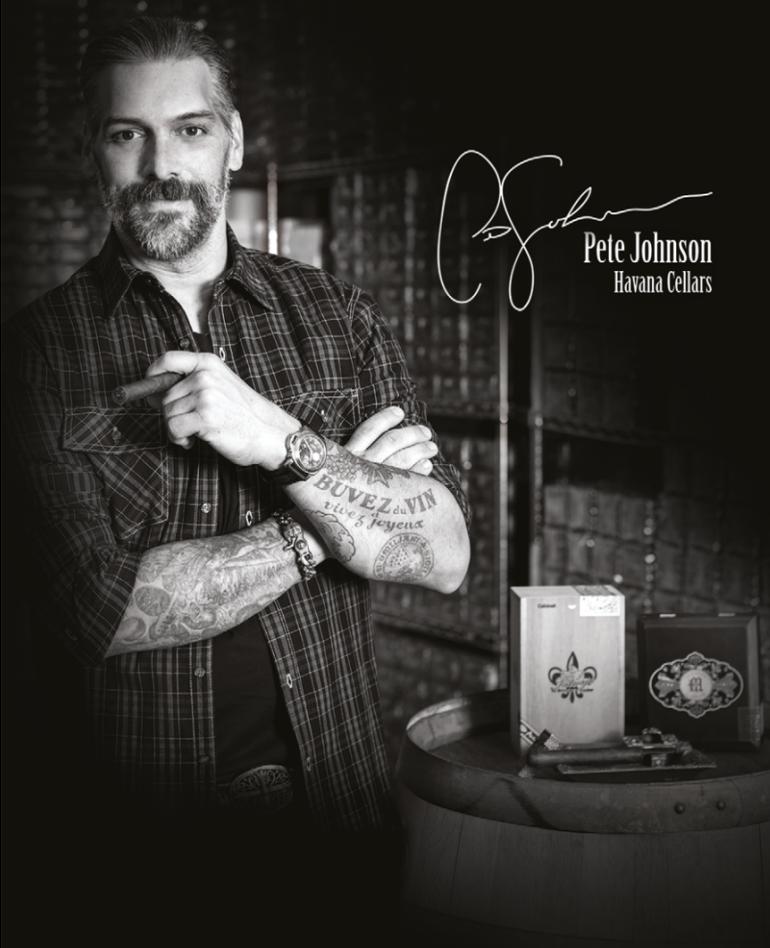
**Oliva Year of the Horse**

Oliva marked its third Chinese zodiac release with a Toro that, like its predecessors. The cigar is produced exclusively for Asian markets and Chinese duty-free shops. Production was limited to 2,000 boxes of 10, and the blend has not been publicly disclosed.

The cigar world has embraced Chinese New Year as a creative occasion, and for the Year of the Horse, the industry delivered one of its finest collections yet.



# tatuaje



Pete Johnson  
Havana Cellars



havanacellars.com



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**WIDOW JANE**  
BOURBON WHISKEY

widowjane.com

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MAGAZINE

BEST BRAND  
Dominican Rep.  
2025



Discover our secrets

# Xikar Ion

*One of Xikar's newest creations has been tested.*

by **Zac Mitchers**

The Xikar Ion Double-Jet lighter occupies an interesting position in the world of cigar accessories: compact, modern, and engineered with features that appeal to both casual and seasoned smokers, yet not without its quirks.

At first glance, the Ion stands out through its bold, ergonomic design. The large textured ignition trigger feels deliberate and confidence-inspiring, while the compact frame makes it highly portable (it measures 69.85 mm x 34.93 mm x 19.05 mm and weighs 113.40 g). Its angled dual-jet system produces a strong, concentrated flame even in breezy outdoor conditions, something many aficionados value in real-world use rather than in controlled environments.

Part of the Ion's appeal lies in its thoughtful practicali-

ty. The ample fuel tank, Xikar claims, is large enough to last for 80 cigars, paired with an easy-to-read viewing window, offering reassurance during longer smoking sessions or travel. The inclusion of a safety mechanism that locks the trigger when the cap is closed adds a subtle but meaningful layer of peace of mind. The flame adjuster makes getting the desired flame intensity as easy as possible, without the need for additional tools. It also comes in a variety of colors: Black, Black/Rose Gold, Blue, Gunmetal, and Red.

Yet even with these strengths, the Ion is not flawless. In real-world use, the fuel capacity proves more modest than advertised. Although the manufacturer suggests the Ion can ignite up to 80 cigars on a full tank, practical testing yielded a significantly lower figure. Even when counting the times the flame began to

weaken or sputter.

Ignition consistency also presented challenges earlier than expected. Even with a clearly visible amount of butane remaining, the lighter occasionally failed to produce a flame on the first press or would extinguish abruptly during use. While not constant, these irregularities were frequent enough to be noticeable.

Ultimately, the Xikar Ion lighter represents a blend of strong and user-focused design, but with its imperfections. For those who appreciate power, portability, and modern styling, it offers substantial value. However, the somewhat unreliable ignition can be a deal breaker for some. Adding to that is the retail price of nearly three digits, and for that, you can definitely find a better-performing lighter.





*Gilbert de Montsalvat*  
*Signature*



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.

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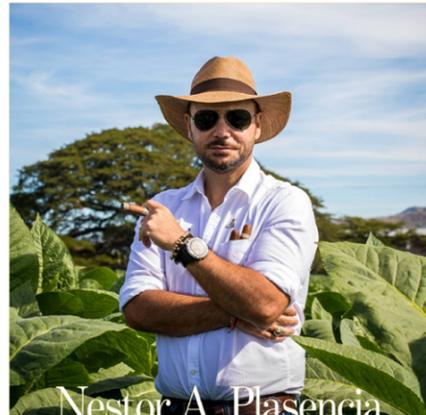
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George Rico

ISSUE 14 - J. O'GASS - OROUCHO BAFEX - BOLIGAR NEW 20.0JHEDL - CIGAR 76 P1-63 - PRO-CIGAR FESTIVAL 2024  
THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR - THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR - THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR  
THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR - THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR - THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR

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Nestor A. Plasencia

LIAMA FUENTE - DOUBLE PUFF - PUNCH - ANILLO - THE CIGAR RING - MICALLET CIGARS - LOUNGE LISBONA  
GLENDOUGH THE IRISH DISTILLERY - DINING WITH WHISKY - TRIPPLE DISTILLATION - MORE THAN WINE  
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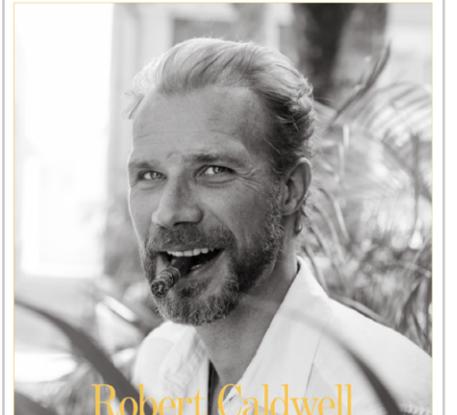
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Jonathan Drew

ALUMINIUM PACK - SILENCIO - FROM A TO ZINO - EL TITAN DE BRONZE - PAIRINGS: CIGARS AND SPIRITS  
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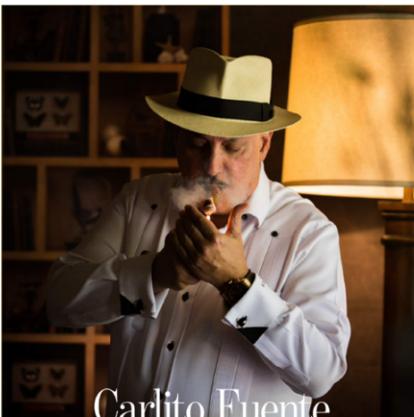
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Robert Caldwell

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Carlito Fuente

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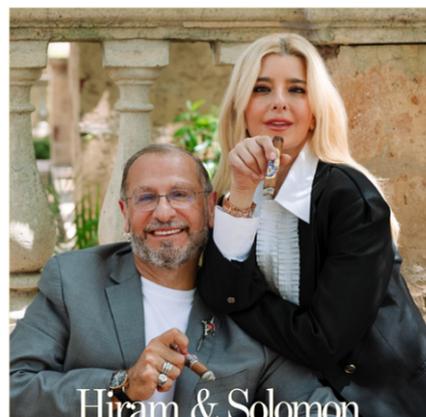
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The Difference

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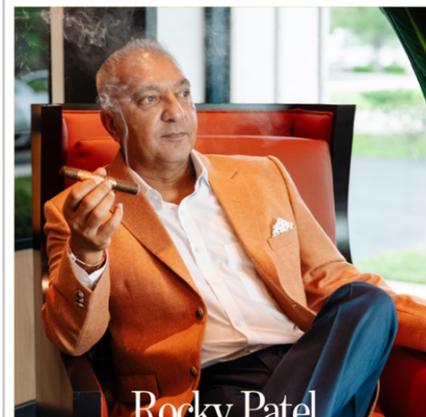
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Rocky Patel

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Ray Berna

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# PAIRINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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



Box-Pressed Toro 50x6"

AAA FULL

**A**  
ARTISTA  
FALU  
TORO

**A**  
ARTISTA  
ArtistaCigars.com



**HENRY CLAY**  
★  ★  
**WAR HAWK**  
SINCE 1840

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WHAT ELSE COULD ONE ASK FOR?



*Adventure  
rolled into perfection*

**HENRY CLAY EXPANDS INTERNATIONALLY**

Created in the mid-19th century, the Henry Clay brand is named after the legendary U.S. Senator. The "War Hawk" line honors the famous term coined by Henry Clay, a great orator and a very popular character of his time.

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



# PAIRING Cigars & Spirits



## A. BRADLEY SAFE KEEPINGS CORONA

*HARMONIOUS AND SMOOTH*

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ 11   € 11.5
DIMENSIONS	
46x142mm (5 3/8")	
COUNTRY	
Nicaragua	

Leather and a subtle sweetness open the smoke. The profile broadens in the second half with the addition of herbs, white pepper, nuts, and wood. Two Scotches are chosen for their quality, yet for their contrasting profiles and cask usage: one matured in traditional ex-bourbon barrels, using a legacy and flavorful barley variety; the other a sherry-finished release from a famous distillery known for the meaty character imparted by worm tubs.



## DAVIDOFF GRAND CRU DIADEMAS FINAS

*RICH AND CREAMY*

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	\$ 57   € 57
DIMENSIONS	
50 x 172 mm (6 3/4")	
COUNTRY	
Dominican Republic	

This extremely complex, rich, and creamy profile is enhanced by balanced strength. The sweetness on the retrohale keeps things interesting, allowing aromas of peanut butter and toasted bread to flank notes of hay, oak, nutmeg, light mushroom, and white pepper. This luxurious tobacco pairs beautifully with two high-ABV bourbon-cask releases—one more overtly fruity, the other more elegant and subtle.



## UNDERCROWN 10 CORONA VIVA

*BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL*

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	\$ 12   € 12.5
DIMENSIONS	
43x127mm (5")	
COUNTRY	
Nicaragua	

Black pepper is the undisputed dominant aroma of this powerful smoke. The profile is rounded out by notes of coffee, leather, and hazelnut, which help the development in the second half. Chili spice closes out the final third. This particularly pepper-forward cigar pairs well with two notable bourbons, quite similar in terms of aging and complexity, yet rather different in their aromatic palettes—a true exploration of subtle integration. The differing ABVs also play a role.



## ARDNAMURCHAN *Heritage Barley Release*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	59.2% - 118.4	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	7 Years Old	Ex-bourbon barrels

A high-quality release, where the demerara sugar undertones and earthy profile of the Heritage Barley can be fully appreciated. The core is fresh and fruity, with a hint of salinity for which the coastal distillery is known. The soft leather of the cigar is enhanced by the rounded sweetness of the spirit, creating a pleasant interplay. The overall impression is reminiscent of warm fruit compote with vanilla ice cream and tobacco flakes. On the palate, some of the integration is lost; the juicy yellow fruit notes begin to dominate, overtaking the leather and coffee. The herbal components mix nicely, evoking an Ethiopian herbal coffee sweetened with demerara sugar. The pinch of salt, however, creates a rather unusual effect, almost “enhancing” the darker aspects of the tobacco and bringing out slightly bitter notes.

Pairing score **88**

## WILSON & MORGAN *Glen Elgin 15 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	57.1% - 114.2	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	15 Years Old	Ex-bourbon and Oloroso

Fresh, mineral, and citrus-driven on the nose, with hints of beeswax and plenty of orange. On the palate, it remains mineral, fresh, dry, and vibrant. There is a touch of tea-like tannin from the wood, but it is largely dominated by notes of orange, bergamot, and tangerine. A warm and elegant nose pairing, with a touch of sensuality that never becomes excessive. A hint of orange honey plays beautifully with the cigar’s leathery character. The palate explodes into a rainbow of flavors: blood orange, nuts, refined spices, and rounded sweetness with touches of brown sugar and a dark, toasted backdrop. The finale is slightly drier, like a fine tea left to infuse just a moment too long, yet remains very pleasant.

Pairing score **91**





## HIGHLAND PARK *Freya*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	51.2% - 102.4	\$\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	15 Years Old	First-fill bourbon casks

This release offers notes of salted butter, delicate aromatic smoke, and creamy yellow fruits (apple, apricot, toasted coconut). The fruit is expressive without being overly juicy, resulting in a refined and elegant profile. The overall impression evokes peanuts and warm salted butter, accented by herbal nuances and a light, flavorful smoke with toasted coconut flakes. The palates approach perfection: the delicate yet expressive yellow fruit of the Orkney whisky is beautifully balanced by the woody profile of the tobacco, rich in refined white pepper. A touch of honey elegantly offsets the dryness. The persistence is remarkably long, despite the roundness and finesse of the aromas. The most aristocratic of the pairings, two bodies belonging to the same soul, like true love.

Pairing score **97**

## CHICHIBU *10 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	50.5% - 101	\$\$\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	10 Years Old	Ex-bourbon barrels

Extremely fruity (ripe peach, apricot, melon, gentle pineapple, and a touch of ripe orange) and velvety, it opens to more complex notes of orange honey and a warm, suave spiciness reminiscent of a well-worn handmade winter blanket. A true ode to Japanese whisky craftsmanship. On the nose, great elegance emerges, where silky woody smoke with a touch of nutmeg intertwines with intense, juicy fruit. On the palate, the whisky's rich profile is joined by a sophisticated array of spices (white pepper, nutmeg, mace, even pink pepper). The overall impression is more expressive than the refined nose suggests, with precious wood layered over the other sensations. The finish mirrors the palate's richness, unfolding like a fresh fruit basket intertwined with woody and spicy elements, all fused into a kaleidoscopic impression. Truly excellent.

Pairing score **94**



## WIDOW JANE *10 Year Old*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	45.5% - 91	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	10 Years Old	New Oak

Fresh, oaky, and well balanced in its woody spices, this mellow and creamy bourbon is an ode to quality. The palate is slightly sweeter, offering notes of sugar-coated apple, cherry candy, vanilla, and sweet baking spices. The finish leans toward almond paste and remains very clean. On the nose, the pairing feels slightly unbalanced, with the peppery intensity of the Nicaraguan cigar taking over. The creaminess of the spirit complements it, and the freshness is appreciated, but the ABV and overall aromatic density may not be quite sufficient. The integration improves on the palate: the sweetness envelops the darker tobacco notes with baked cinnamon apple and overripe cherry. The finale is somewhat unusual, reminiscent of a dark-roasted coffee bean dusted with black pepper and coated in a sugary crust.

Pairing score **87**

## FIRST WEST *Extra Aged*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	57.1% - 114.2	\$\$
TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	8 Years Old	New Oak

Warm and rich, heavily centered on caramel and orange zest with a touch of high-quality vanilla, this Kentucky straight bourbon offers a delightful array of complex spices that maintain a pleasing freshness. The palate and finish are more balsamic, creating a semi-sweet impression with a gentle, pleasant bitterness. The orange dimension of the bourbon plays beautifully with the powerful smoke, giving it a deeper fruity character—like burnt zest over light caramel, reminiscent of well-caramelized crème brûlée of moderate sweetness. An excellent array of rare and complex spices emerges in the palate integration, where the higher ABV enhances the match. The finish resonates with balsamic hints and leather, very long and outstanding in quality.

Pairing score **91**



# SPIRITS

“Always carry a flagon of whiskey in case of snakebite  
and furthermore always carry a small snake.”  
*Johnny Carson*



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# La Maison du Whisky: 70th Anniversary

*Seventy years of shaping the spirits conversation, from single malts and tropical rum to sustainability and the future of maturation.*

by **Norman Bliss**

**F**ounded in 1956, at a time when whisky remained a niche curiosity in France, La Maison du Whisky was built on a simple but bold intuition: spirits deserved to be curated, explained, and elevated. Rather than follow prevailing tastes, it chose to educate consumers, champion single malts, and build direct relationships with independent producers. Over the decades, that pioneering spirit expanded to Japanese whisky, character-driven rums,

sake, and emerging categories, always with the same commitment to authenticity, typicity, and transmission. This interview with Thierry Bénitah, CEO at LMDW, looks back at the early choices that shaped its identity and examines how the company continues to navigate a rapidly evolving global spirits landscape.

**Looking back to 1956, what was the original intuition**

**behind La Maison du Whisky, and which early choices proved decisive for the company's long-term identity at a time when the mainstream understanding of spirits was completely different?**

The original intuition behind La Maison du Whisky was deeply rooted in introducing French consumers to a world of spirits they barely knew at the time. Whisky in post-war France was still a niche curiosity and the early ambition

was to educate and elevate perception rather than follow prevailing tastes. From the outset, the decision to open a dedicated shop in Paris in 1961 was crucial: it shifted the business from simple importation to a retailer and curator of global spirits, creating direct contact with connoisseurs and curious drinkers. Early choices, such as introducing single malts long before they were mainstream in France and building direct relationships with independent produ-

cers helped shape LMDW's long-term identity as a specialist, committed to quality and discovery. This pioneering role in accompanying new categories has remained a defining driver ever since. La Maison du Whisky was among the first to introduce emerging categories to the French and European consumers, including Japanese and other new world whiskies, as well as premium rums that focused on strong character for sipping rather than cocktails. More recently this same approach has been extended through TAG — The Avant-Gardists, our platform dedicated to innovative distilleries and brands that are shaping the future of spirits, alongside a growing focus on sustainability, notably through ecoSpirits.

**How has your internal evaluation grid changed when assessing spirit quality ever since the market boom? How have your technical positions on productive transparency, dilution strength, chill filtration, natural presentation, as well as cask provenance, seasoning, refill cycles, and active versus passive maturation, hardened or softened? Are there non-negotiable practices?**

Over the years, La Maison du Whisky's evaluation grid hasn't fundamentally "tightened" or "loosened", it has matured. The market boom has certainly increased the number of releases, the pace, and sometimes the level of marketing noise. But our core criteria remain unchanged: taste first, authenticity, and character. We still are only interested in spirits that meet our palate standards because at LMDW, selection must always reflect genuine quality and a true sense of identity whether it be influential, historic distilleries, or small, up and coming projects that challenge the status quo. At the same time, being a selector also means being a prescriber and a discoverer. We don't believe in closing the door to everything that doesn't fit a single rigid definition of "purism". We want to remain open-minded and curious, because categories keep evolving — new producing countries, new distilling cultures, new technical approaches, and new profiles are emerging, and they can be extremely exciting when done with integrity. This is also the spirit behind our



platform TAG. We don't impose one single formula, but we do expect producers to make choices that are coherent with the intended style and the spirit's personality. Cask provenance, seasoning, refill cycles, and maturation strategy — whether more "active" or "passive" — are all legitimate tools, as long as they serve balance and complexity rather than masking flaws or manufacturing shortcuts.

**La Maison du Whisky has been instrumental in promoting rum and other spirits alongside whisky. What guided these expansions, and how did you identify categories with long-term cultural value? How important has been the relationship with the francophone rum-making territories? Which production variables—fermentation ecology, distillation proof, still type, or aging environment—do you consider most decisive in defining typicity and long-term aging potential?**

La Maison du Whisky's expansion beyond whisky has always been driven by curiosity, passion for remarkable products, and trusted relationships with producers. We never diversified because it was trendy, but because we identified categories with depth, heritage, and genuine cultural value, particularly rum, which shares with whisky a long tradition of craftsmanship and a strong connection to terroir. Today, our portfolio embraces a broad range of spirits from around the world. We continue to work closely with francophone territories as well as with producers expressing distinctive regional identities, and technical approaches. Our role is not only to distribute, but to curate, champion and prescribe — to help build categories over time, not simply follow what is already established. This "prescriber" approach is also exactly how we developed sake. We didn't just add it to the portfolio — we invested in it, learned it, travelled, tasted extensively with our teams, in order to build a true platform around it. Ten years ago, we partnered with La Maison du Saké, at a time when sake was still largely unfamiliar to many consumers in France. Today, it has earned its place on some of the greatest gastronomic tables — and we're proud to have contributed to that evolution. When it comes



to defining typicity and long-term aging potential, we do not believe in a single decisive factor. Fermentation ecology, distillation proof, still type, and aging environment can each be fundamental — and it's precisely their interaction that shapes identity. Extreme climates, such as those found in Taiwan or India, give local whiskies their distinctive character and have brought a new dimension to single malt. Conversely, a more terroir-driven approach can be observed in French whisky, an emerging category in which we strongly believe.

**With climate change accelerating maturation and globalized supply chains standardizing raw materials, how do you assess authenticity and long-term balance in spirits that reach maturity earlier than historical norms? Furthermore, in a global market facing standardization, climate change, and accelerating maturation, what are the main challenges for a distributor committed to diversity and typicity?**

Climate change and accelerated maturation create new dynamics for aging across categories. While traditional norms may shift, we believe that authenticity and balance are judged by the harmony of the final spirit, not just by age statements. In that sense, climate change doesn't automatically mean "less authenticity" — it simply forces the industry to rethink what maturity means. We have long seen this in tro-

pical aging, particularly in rum, where shorter aging can still deliver remarkable depth when the balance is right. Some of our selections developed under specific conditions— including certain Shakara expressions — are a good reminder that typicity and quality can come from very different aging environments.

**To what extent does a distributor with La Maison du Whisky's reach influence production decisions upstream, and where do you draw the line between constructive dialogue and stylistic interference?**

Going beyond distribution, we also act as independent bottlers. Our role is to engage constructively, to help bring attention to distinctive spirits, and to support producers' visions. We leverage decades of relationships in the industry to advocate for quality and authenticity, but we do not intervene in the creative or technical design of products, except when it comes to creations/partnerships.

**From tastings and boutiques to Whisky Live Paris, how important has education been in shaping both professionals and consumers, and how has your approach to transmission changed over time? What forms of technical knowledge, particularly those related to fermentation management, slow distillation, or traditional maturation, do you believe are most at risk of being misunderstood,**

**and how can a distributor help clarify them?**

Education has been at the heart of La Maison du Whisky's mission for 70 years. From early tastings in our Paris boutique to large-scale events like Whisky Live Paris — launched in 2004 — our goal has always been to give both professionals and enthusiasts the tools to understand and appreciate spirits. In 2025, nearly 25,000 visitors attended Whisky Live Paris exploring a unique selection of 300 brands and 201 distilleries from 34 countries. We've developed dedicated spaces for sake and NoLo spirits, alongside the Pavillon France highlighting French whisky; as well as a programme of masterclass designed to deepen knowledge. These initiatives show that when categories are supported through education and long-term commitment, they gradually take their rightful place in the market. In addition, each year we produce our Creations collection presenting carefully selected exclusive expressions and offering in-depth context on the products and distilleries behind them. This editorial approach helps consumers better understand each spirit within its own ecosystem. We are also one of the only in France to offer spirits certifications at the highest level, with the WSET, as well as dedicated guided tastings hosted in its own spaces. Knowledge and expertise is not something that should be closed off internally, rather shared and spread throughout the industry.

**After decades of educating the public on whisky and rum through concepts such as fermentation length, distilla-**

**tion regimes, and maturation, do you feel that this shared technical vocabulary has made consumers more capable of critically understanding other spirits?**

Over the years, consumers exposed to rich discussions around fermentation length, distillation regimes, and maturation through our tastings and content have become more curious and technically literate. This shared language undoubtedly helps when exploring other spirit categories — like gin, tequila, mezcal, Cognac, or Armagnac — because it encourages drinkers to look beyond labels to production stories. While we began as whisky specialists, our deep understanding of spirit categories, combined with our role as expert curators, now makes it easier for consumers to explore a wide range of spirits.

**What values, skills, or knowledge should define La Maison du Whisky in the decades ahead, and what legacy do you hope to leave to the next generation of spirits lovers?**

As we look ahead, La Maison du Whisky should continue to embody values of curiosity, respect for heritage, rigorous curation, and a passion for discovery. These values will ensure that the spirits world remains rich with stories, diversity, and craftsmanship. The legacy we hope to leave is one where future generations of spirits lovers approach each bottle with understanding, discernment, and a sense of wonder — and where the distributor's role remains a bridge between exceptional producers and curious drinkers worldwide.





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# Whisky & Cheese

*Cheeses are often indicated as the best possible pairing with sophisticated, high level of complexity wines; can the same be said for whiskeys?*

by **Simone Poggi**

Cheeses are often indicated as the best possible pairing for sophisticated, highly complex wines; can the same be said for whisky? During several months of tastings, we deeply investigated the excellent pairing of chocolate with whiskey, moving from different cocoa percentages to special varieties of the fruit of the gods, up to different types of truffles and chocolate creations. When thinking about the foundations of that pairing, it becomes evident that the high fat content in chocolate helps mitigate the alcoholic component of contemporary spirits, whose ABV levels have been steadily increasing.

Along the same lines, cheeses should come immediately after. They feature several different varieties, from rather fresh ones to more intensely sapid and well-aged examples, to blue cheeses providing a unique array of complex, creamy, and at times pungent and salty flavors.

The common theme, however, is the rich fat content and creamy texture, which coat the palate and provide the perfect preparation for even the most intense





spirits. We decided to create an experimental setup and supply different types of cheese to be matched with our current whisky range. Cheese, like bread, plays a central role in national culinary traditions, and each country can count on several different products, making it very challenging to test all available varieties.

We started with Italian, French and English specialties, available in most countries worldwide, for an international experience. In addition, the main focus was to combine different types of milk (cow, goat, and sheep) and different styles of preparation and aging. We also tried to exclude products that are too rare to find, as well as those enhanced with specific added ingredients or flavors not truly associated with the milk content (black pepper, chili pepper, herbs, and so on).

We also avoided truly fresh cheeses such as mozzarella, burrata, and stracchino, since their milky character is so overwhelming that it can make each pairing a very basic, one-dimensional experience, reducing everything to spirit and milk — a rather uninteresting combination. The notes below are the impressions we put on paper during this second journey into the new adventure of Ci-

garsLover Magazine, pairing food and whiskey.

**Berry Bros & Rudd Orkney 2006 with Parmigiano (aged 20 months)** – Probably one of the most successful pairings. The complex honeyed character of this very well-crafted Highland Park expression perfectly suits the sapid profile of the Italian cheese, further enriched by a touch of peat made gentler by the fatty component. As with other products, the age of Parmigiano is crucial, as an overly aged version (36 months or older) can bring forward a strong mineral component — too much for a lightly peated spirit. The yellow fruit notes of this bourbon-aged release make it perfect for rendering the cheese milder and slightly sweeter.

**Kamiki Blended Malt with Brie** – This Japanese release is less gentle than other expressions from the same country, with an oaky profile that can at moments become slightly astringent, sometimes calling for a drop of water. The French cheese is perfect for enveloping the woody side in a fatty layer, quenching the astringency and adding a creamy texture that is somewhat lacking in the whiskey. This is a similarity pairing from an aromatic perspective, with the nutty notes of the cheese aligning

perfectly with the almonds and walnuts of the spirit.

**Koval Single Barrel Bourbon with Stilton** – Another winner, with the intense notes of the cheese — complex, earthy, sapid, and boasting remarkable creaminess — perfectly matched by the sweet, vanilla-forward profile of the bourbon. The layered flavors of the cheese are able to shine alongside a well-balanced whiskey with an appropriate ABV.

**The Lakes Equinox with fresh caprino** – One of the true surprises of the exercise, with the fatty, milky profile of caprino cheese not expected to match easily. On the contrary, this rather young cheese proved to be one of the best at absorbing some of the pungent citrus hints of sherried releases, making these whiskeys more balanced and integrating their high ABV very well. The sal-

ty aspects of certain caprino cheeses somehow — and unexpectedly — become more mellow and sophisticated thanks to the red berry and sultana notes of the spirit.

**Chorlton Benrines 14 years old with creamy gorgonzola** – One of the most complex and difficult pairings to dissect, yet a very interesting one. The Italian blue cheese is famous for its creaminess, but also for its complex profile of rich, unique flavors that are sapid and spiced. The Speyside distillery is known for a meaty spirit rich in distinctive funky notes that remind one of brass and stock cubes. The mix resembles a cheese sauce spread over a slowly cooked meat dish, where at moments the intense dark sherried notes add a pudding-like dimension. Awkward to describe, perhaps, but a testament to the high complexity and an ode to the satisfaction of this pairing.



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INTERACTIVE





# Last Word Cocktail

*Four Distinct Ingredients for the Return of a Herbal, Citrusy Jewel from America's early cocktail history.*

by **Mark Trumpet**

The Last Word cocktail is a Prohibition-era gem that has experienced one of the most remarkable revivals in modern mixology. Like many classics, its precise origin is somewhat obscured by time, though its earliest documented appearance is in the 1916 menu of the Detroit Athletic Club.

Some accounts suggest it was created by a bartender seeking something bold and unexpected, a drink whose balance of sweet, sour, and herbal flavors would stand apart from simpler highballs and sours of the day. Whatever the truth, the Last Word enjoyed a brief moment of fame before fading into obscurity for decades, only to be rediscovered in the early 2000s by bartenders exploring forgotten cocktail manuals. Its return was swift and enthusiastic,

with modern palates embracing the drink's unusual profile and symmetry. The name "Last Word" suggests finality and confidence, a fitting title for such a distinctive, assertive drink. Built on a foundation of equal parts, the cocktail follows a formula that is deceptively simple yet surprisingly complex on the palate. Gin forms the backbone, bringing botanicals that shape the drink's intricate flavor structure. Green Chartreuse, the famed French herbal liqueur made by Carthusian monks, adds spice, herbs, and subtle sweetness, creating depth unmatched in cocktails. Maraschino liqueur contributes delicate cherry sweetness and faint almond-like dryness, acting as a bridge between the gin and Chartreuse. Fresh lime juice provides bright acidity, cutting through the richness and tying everything together with refreshing clarity.

What makes the Last Word so fascinating is the harmony achieved through these equal proportions. Each ingredient is potent alone, but when shaken together they produce a flavor that is unified, vibrant, and unmistakable. Early recipes relied on the equal-parts template, and most bartenders remain loyal to this balance.

Some modern variations nudge the ratios slightly toward a more gin-forward profile or reduce the maraschino for a cleaner finish. These adjustments are subtle, yet the essence of the Last Word is its equilibrium, challenging the notion that strong personalities cannot coexist in a single glass. As with many classic drinks, presentation matters. Shaken with ice and strained into a chilled glass, the Last Word reveals a soft, luminous green hue, a hint of the herbal brightness wi-

thin. No garnish is required, though a lime twist or brandied cherry may add flair. Its minimalist approach remains part of its charm: nothing distracts from its bold flavors.

Beyond its ingredients, the Last Word embodies the adventurous spirit of the early twentieth century. Its rediscovery mirrors renewed appreciation for craftsmanship and cocktail history. It bridges Prohibition glamour with contemporary creativity. To order or mix one today is to join a story spanning more than a century, linking pre-Prohibition clubs with modern craft bars. With only four ingredients in perfect balance, it proves that complexity does not require complication. The Last Word stands as a reminder that sometimes the boldest statements come from the simplest formulas.

## PREPARATION

Chill a glass; then fill a shaker with ice, add the gin, green Chartreuse, maraschino liqueur, and freshly squeezed lime juice, shake vigorously until well chilled, strain into the prepared glass, and serve without garnish or with a simple lime twist if desired.

## ADVICE

If you want a slightly drier, more botanical expression, increase the gin just a touch; for a brighter and more refreshing version, use a slightly heavier hand with the lime juice.

## INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 oz (22 ml) gin
- 3/4 oz (22 ml) green Chartreuse
- 3/4 oz (22 ml) maraschino liqueur
- 3/4 oz (22 ml) freshly squeezed lime juice
- Ice
- Optional garnish: lime twist or brandied cherry

## GLASS

Coupe glass.

# TASTE

"Cooking is an art, but all art requires knowing something about the techniques and materials."  
*Nathan Myhrvold*



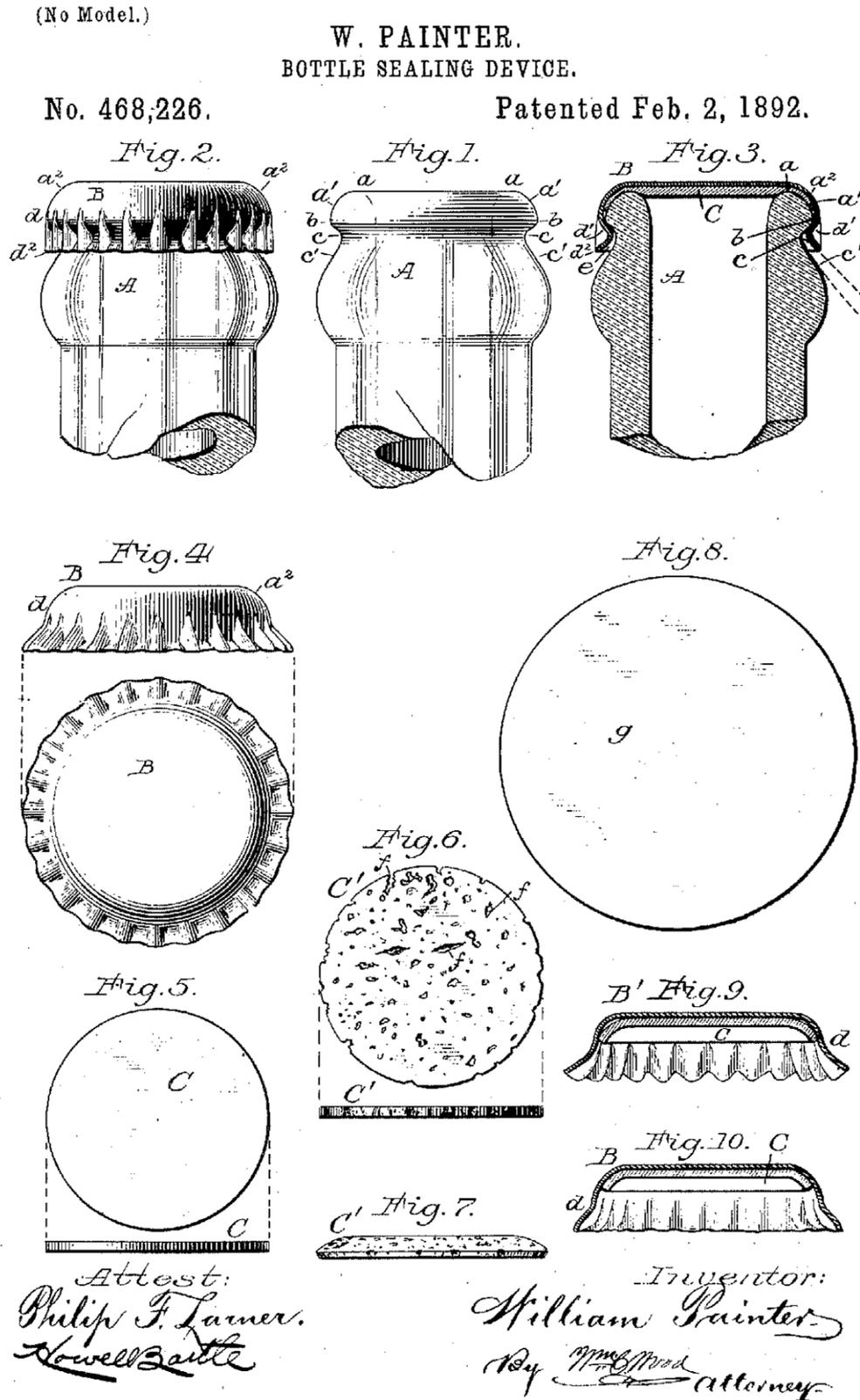
# The Crown Cap

The Engineering Logic Behind the Crown Cap's 21 Ridges.

by Zak Mithcers

Often overlooked and rarely celebrated, the crown cap is one of the most successful pieces of packaging designs ever created, appearing atop billions of bottles worldwide and quietly combining simplicity, efficiency, and reliability. It was formally introduced in 1892, when American inventor William Painter patented the design as a solution to the growing challenges faced by the beverage industry at the time. As bottled drinks, particularly beer and carbonated sodas, became more popular in the late nineteenth century, existing closures struggled to maintain carbonation, prevent leaks, and ensure hygiene during transport and storage.

The crown cap transformed bottling by addressing these issues through a crimped metal seal paired with a thin cork liner, later replaced by modern polymer materials. Its design allowed bottles to be sealed securely, opened easily, and, crucially, produced at scale. This made it ideal for industrial bottling, supporting the rapid expansion of global beverage distribution in the decades that followed. While materials, coatings, and branding techniques have evolved significantly since its introduction, the geometry that defines the crown cap has remained remarkably consistent. Most notable is the presence of 21 evenly spaced ridges around its perimeter. These ridges are not decorative; they are the result of deliberate engineering decisions intended to ensure uniform pressure distribution during the crimping process. This even distribution creates an airtight seal capable of withstanding the internal pressure



generated by carbonated beverages over long periods. The number itself is the outcome of practical optimization. Too few ridges would concentrate force unevenly, increasing the likelihood of leaks or seal failure. Too many ridges would weaken the metal edge and complicate tooling and production. Through refinement and testing, 21 ridges proved to be the optimal balance between strength, flexibility, and manufacturing efficiency. From a production standpoint, this design supports modern high-speed bottling lines, where thousands of bottles per hour can be capped in fractions of a second with minimal material usage. The ridged structure adds rigidity to thin metal, allowing the cap to maintain its shape under pressure while remaining easy to remove. Even the familiar, satisfying sound released when a bottle is opened is directly tied to the synchronized release of these ridges, providing an audible signal of freshness and quality that consumers instinctively recognize.

Breweries and beverage companies use its compact surface as a branding canvas, while collectors value caps as memorabilia. Yet despite changing aesthetics, sustainability improvements, and advances in materials science, the fundamental design remains unchanged. In an age driven by constant innovation, the enduring use of the crown cap and its 21 ridges stands as a testament to the power of refined engineering. It demonstrates that when a design achieves near perfection early on, progress is measured not by reinvention, but by longevity.

# Brewing Cloisters

*Abbey Beers between History and Marketing.*

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Abbey beers occupy a singular place in the world of fermented drinks: they sit at the crossroads of agriculture, devotion, gastronomy, and marketing. To approach them with a beer enthusiast's eye is to recognize that they are not merely styles or brands, but expressions of place, method, and intention—liquid chronicles of monastic Europe translated into aroma, flavor, and smart marketing.

Historically, abbey beers are inseparable from the medieval monastery, a self-sufficient organism where brewing was both sustenance and hospitality. Beer was safer than water, nourishing during fasting periods, and a source of income to support charitable works. Over centuries, monasteries refined brewing into a disciplined craft, guided by rhythm, repetition, and restraint. While today not all "abbey beers" are brewed within monastery walls, the term still evokes that lineage: beers inspired by monastic traditions, often produced under license or in homage to a specific abbey.

A crucial distinction must be made between abbey beers and Trappist beers, a point of both technical and cultural importance. Trappist beers are brewed within, or under the direct supervision of, Trappist monasteries belonging to the Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance, and they bear the "Authentic Trappist Product" designation. Their production is explicitly tied to monastic life, with profits supporting the community and its charitable works. Abbey beers, by con-



trast, may be brewed by commercial breweries, often under license from an abbey or as an homage to monastic tradition, without direct monastic involvement. From a sommelier's standpoint, Trappist beers often show a more austere, introspective profile, while abbey beers tend toward polish, accessibility, and stylistic consistency—differences of intent more than of quality.

From a sensory perspective, abbey beers are defined less by rigid stylistic boundaries and more by a shared aromatic and structural grammar. The heart of this grammar is fermentation. Belgian yeast strains, often proprietary and carefully preserved, are the true authors of abbey beer character. They generate a spectrum of esters and phenols that recall ripe pear, baked apple, banana bread, clove, white pepper, and, at times, a subtle incense-like or medicinal nuance. In a glass of Affligem Tripel, for instance, these traits appear with striking clarity: a luminous golden color introduces aromas of banana, citrus zest, fresh dough, and white pepper, followed by a palate that is expansive yet dry, its warmth carried effortlessly by fine carbonation.

On the palate, abbey beers privilege roundness and depth over sharpness. Even when technically dry, they rarely feel austere. Malt bills tend toward complexity: pale malts provide a honeyed base, while Munich and specialty malts add layers of biscuit, toasted bread, caramel, and light toffee. This profile is immediately evident in a beer such as Grimbergen Double, where amber hues precede notes of caramelized sugar, toasted crust, dried plum, and nutmeg. The sweetness is present but measured, counterbalanced by gentle bitterness and a softly spiced finish that keeps the beer gastronomic rather than cloying.



The use of sugar, most traditionally Belgian candi sugar, is a defining technical and sensory choice. Fully fermentable, it lightens body while amplifying aromatic expression, a strategy familiar to sommeliers who appreciate tension between richness and drinkability. In stronger, darker abbey beers, this technique allows for impressive depth without heaviness. St. Bernardus Abt 12 offers a textbook example: dense aromas of fig jam, date, brown sugar, dark chocolate, and subtle licorice unfold over a velvety palate that remains remarkably poised. Alcohol is generous, yet never aggressive, acting instead as a carrier of aroma and length.

Alcohol, indeed, is another defining element. Ranging commonly from 6.5% to well above 10%, it contributes warmth, viscosity, and structural breadth. In a beer like Rochefort 8—earthier and more restrained in character—alcohol supports notes of dried cherry, leather, toasted malt, and damp cellar rather than dominating them. The finish is dry, savory, and quietly persistent, underscoring the contemplative dimension of the style.

Bitterness plays a supporting role throughout the category. Hops are traditionally European—Styrian Goldings, Saaz, Hallertau—and are used with discretion. Their contribution is herbal, floral, sometimes faintly spicy, never assertive. In a classic blond abbey beer such as Leffe Blonde, this balance is immediately apparent: acacia honey, ripe pear, and vanilla are gently framed by soft herbal bitterness, resulting



in an approachable yet unmistakably “monastic” profile.

Texture is central to the experience and often underestimated. Bottle conditioning, a hallmark of the tradition, lends natural carbonation that feels creamy and fine-grained. It lifts aromatics, refreshes the palate, and gives even the richest beers a sense of movement. In the glass—ideally a chalice or goblet—abbey beers show dense, persistent foam, a visual promise of both abundance and care.

Abbey beers also reward cellaring, a trait that resonates deeply with wine professionals. With time, youthful esters soften, phenolic edges round out, and tertiary notes emerge: walnut, leather, dried herbs, and sherry-like oxidation. Strong examples such as St. Bernardus Abt 12 or similar dark abbey ales can evolve for years, trading exuberance for layered, oxidative complexity. Vertical tastings reveal transformations as compelling as those found in wine, with yeast-derived aromas slowly reshaped by oxygen and time.

At the table, abbey beers display remarkable versatility. Blonds and tripels pair naturally with washed-rind cheeses, roast poultry, and creamy sauces, their sweetness and spice echoing the dish. Darker doubles and quadrupels excel with braised meats, game, blue cheeses, and desserts built around dried fruit or chocolate. Unlike many wines, abbey beers can bridge savory and sweet courses, acting as a connective thread rather than a boundary.

Ultimately, the appeal of abbey beers lies not only in their sensory profile but in their marketing philosophy. They embody patience, continuity, and authenticity—values increasingly rare in a market driven by novelty and immediacy. To taste an abbey beer attentively is to slow down, to listen to layers rather than chase impact. For the beer enthusiast, they offer a reminder that complexity does not require aggression, and that depth is often born from repetition, tradition, and quiet confidence.

In this sense, abbey beers are less about doctrine than devotion: devotion to craft, to balance, and to the idea that a drink can nourish both body and mind. They stand as liquid architecture—arched, resonant, and enduring—inviting us to taste history not as a relic, but as something still alive in the glass.



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# Blind Tasting

**94 SPIRITS**

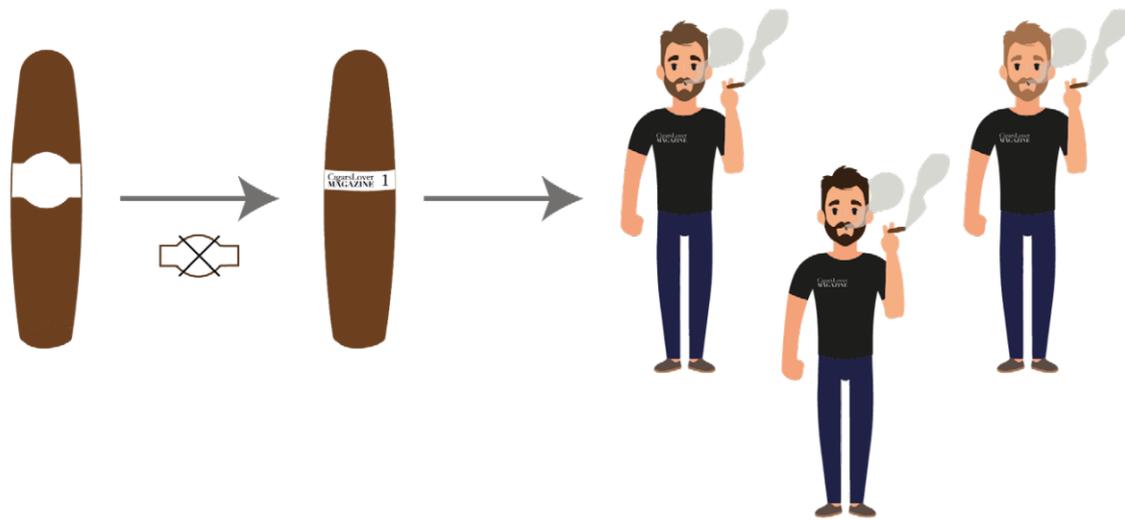
- 96 Rum
- 102 Whisky

**108 CIGARS**

- 109 Corona Gorda
- 112 Robusto
- 118 Shorts
- 121 Toro

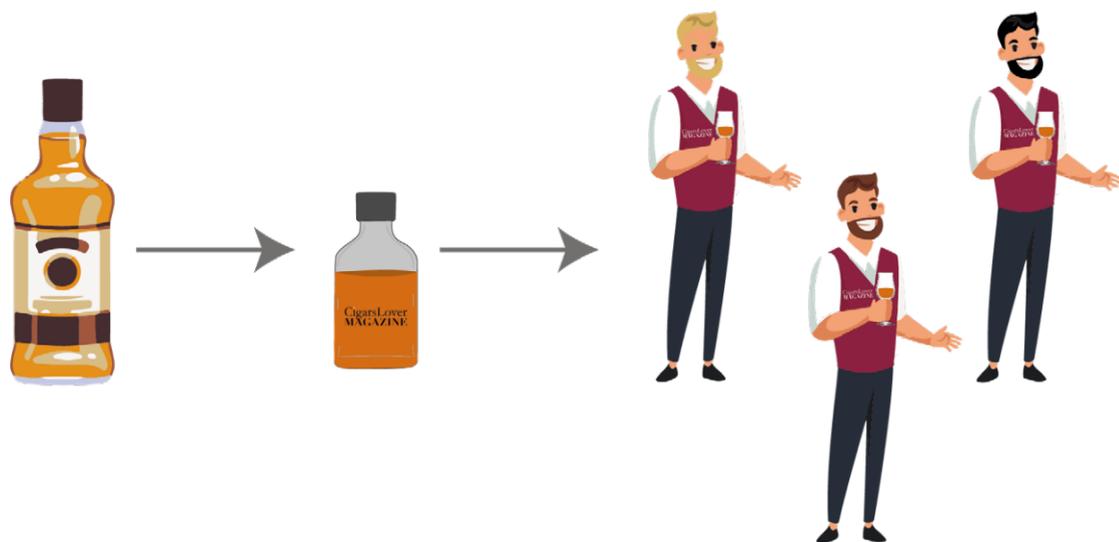


# HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?



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

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



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

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

**Cigars  
& Spirits  
Results**



1

# 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.

## 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

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# Rum



**NEISSON**  
*L'Empyreumatique*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	50.8%   101.6	\$\$\$\$

*SMOKY AND INTENSE*

Candied fruit and banana rise first, accompanied by honey, eucalyptus, burnt sugarcane, and orange peel, with a touch of vanilla. To the palate, it is smooth, layered with apricot, stone fruit, gentle spice, and subtle medicinal tones. Pepper, clove, grapefruit, and licorice linger on the finish.

A broad flavor profile and seamless balance deliver remarkable depth and refined structure.

**93**



**RIVIÈRE DU MÂT**  
*Single Cask Vintage 2004*

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

*RICH AND WARM*

Dark caramel and baked tropical fruit rise first, accompanied by vanilla, leather, and toasted oak, together with hints of molasses and warming spice. To the palate, it is full and concentrated, balanced by dried fruit and subtle citrus lift. Oak tannin and warm spice carry through the finish.

Single-cask intensity and mature structure project impressive weight and sustained depth.

**90**



**OXBOW**  
*Barrel Aged Straight Rum*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	47.5%   95	\$\$

*BOLD AND BALANCED*

Dark chocolate and oak rise first, accompanied by wild berries, plum, and vanilla, together with subtle depth and ripe fruit tones. To the palate, it is smooth and expressive, layered with orange zest, cherry, toffee, and gentle oak spice. Bright citrus and oak linger on the finish.

A bold rum, offering balanced richness, clear structure, and an engaging, easy-drinking character.

**90**



**SAINT JAMES**  
*Single Cask 2003*

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

*DEEP AND REFINED*

Ripe cane and dried apricot rise first, accompanied by baking spice, orange peel, and seasoned oak, together with subtle herbal notes and cocoa. To the palate, it is structured and composed, balanced by caramel and gentle bitterness. Soft tannin and sweet spice shape the closing notes.

Aged agricole character and careful maturation reveal refined harmony and layered refinement.

**90**



**PÈRE LABAT**  
*Clos Parcellaire*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	53%   106	\$\$

*LUSH AND INTENSE*

Fresh sugarcane and white flowers rise first, accompanied by citrus zest, green herbs, and mineral tones, together with light pepper and ripe tropical fruit. To the palate, it is lively and focused, balanced by grassy sweetness and bright acidity. Gentle spice and cane purity define the finish.

Terroir expression and natural intensity highlight remarkable clarity and focused precision.

**90**



**DILLON**  
*XO 9 An*

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

*VELVETY AND CANDIED*

Cane sugar and dried fruit rise first, accompanied by vanilla, toasted almond, and gentle oak, together with subtle spice and citrus peel. To the palate, it is smooth and rounded, balanced by caramel and light citrus. Soft wood and mild spice remain evident through the finish.

Mature agricole structure and steady integration provide lasting balance and composed depth.

**89**



**PROVIDENCE**  
*3 Year Old*  
*2022*

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

*FRESH AND VIBRANT*

Green banana and fresh cane rise first, accompanied by citrus zest, herbal tones, and light esters, together with subtle spice and grassy undertones. To the palate, it is vibrant and bright, balanced by fruit sweetness and cane freshness. Pepper and herbal notes frame the finish.

Youthful Haitian character and lively structure deliver remarkable clarity and authentic expression.

**88**



**J.BALLY**  
*Art Déco Batch 3*  
*Vintage 2003*

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

*SOPHISTICATED AND COMPLEX*

Dried fig and orange peel rise first, accompanied by vanilla, cocoa, and seasoned oak, together with soft spice and earthy cane notes. To the palate, it is elegant and layered, balanced by caramel sweetness and gentle bitterness. Warm wood and spice persist gracefully.

Vintage agricole maturity and refined oak integration offer distinctive depth and lasting elegance.

**88**



**STADE'S RUM**  
*Old Gregg Fusion*

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

*PLAYFUL AND ROUNDED*

Caramel and tropical fruit rise first, accompanied by vanilla, toasted oak, and light molasses, together with hints of spice and dried banana. To the palate, it is mellow and rounded, balanced by ripe fruit and soft sweetness. Warm oak and gentle spice round out the finish.

Blended tradition and modern accessibility create balanced depth and smooth cohesion.

**88**



**BARBANCOURT**  
*Blanc*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Haiti	55%   110	\$

*BRIGHT AND POWERFUL*

Fresh cane and citrus rise first, accompanied by floral notes, green herbs, and subtle pepper, together with mineral freshness and light grassiness. To the palate, it is bright and lively, balanced by sweetness and gentle acidity. Herbal tones and clean cane linger briefly.

Unaged purity and vibrant cane expression define remarkable freshness and structure.

**87**



**THE DEMON'S SHARE**  
*12 YO - Chianti Finish*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Panama	41%   82	\$\$\$

*VELVET AND OAK-RICH*

Ripe mango and caramel rise first, accompanied by vanilla, toasted coconut, and oak spice, together with dried fruit and warm molasses. To the palate, it is rich and textured, balanced by tropical sweetness and gentle citrus lift. Warm spice and oak influence extend the finish.

Rich island fruit intensity and firm cask influence shape a medium-long finish.

**85**



**TAKAMAKA**  
*Kreol Cask*

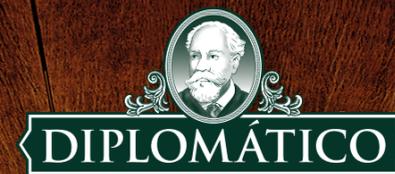
COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Seychelles	40.3%   80.6	\$\$

*TROPICAL AND SMOOTH*

Red berries and caramel rise first, accompanied by vanilla, toasted oak, and subtle wine notes, together with soft spice and dried fruit. To the palate, it is rounded and smooth, balanced by fruit sweetness and light tannin. Gentle spice and warm oak carry forward.

Wine-finished richness and integrated sweetness offer a kind of unique flavor profile.

**84**



— THE HEART OF RUM —



# Whisky



HOUSE OF HAZELWOOD  
*Spirit of Scotland 46 YO*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	43.4%   86.8	\$\$\$\$

*REGAL AND HARMONIOUS*

Honey and beeswax rise first, accompanied by toffee, baking spice, petrichor, and hints of clove, together with a gentle earthy depth. To the palate, it is smooth and elegant, layered with lemon tart, smoke, soft spice, and a touch of licorice. Lemon, smoke, and leather linger on the finish.

An unconventional profile and cohesive balance deliver notable complexity and structured character.

93



CHICHIBU  
*Distillery II*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	55.5%   111	\$\$\$

*STRUCTURED AND BOLD*

Honeyed malt and orchard pear rise first, accompanied by citrus zest, vanilla cream, and sandalwood, together with white pepper and gentle smoke. To the palate, it is lively and precise, balanced by apple and lemon curd. Toasted barley and delicate spice echo through the finish.

Precision craftsmanship and vibrant structure converge, revealing clarity and disciplined distillery character.

92



WHISKEY THIEF  
*Aged 5 Years*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	57.7%   115.4	\$\$

*RICH AND SATISFYING*

Aged wood and vanilla pod rise first, accompanied by floral notes and gentle sweetness, together with a soft oak depth. To the palate, it is rich and rounded, layered with spice, pepper, cinnamon, and hints of biscuit. Oak, vanilla, and warm spice linger on the finish.

A bold yet approachable bourbon, offering balanced richness, clear structure, and a rewarding character.

90



**MARS**  
*Komagatake*  
*2025 Edition*

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

*POISED AND ELEGANT*

Orchard apple and pear rise first, accompanied by vanilla sponge, clean malt, and alpine freshness, together with soft oak and gentle spice. To the palate, it is elegant and balanced, framed by honeyed cereal and citrus peel. Subtle smoke and polished wood remain delicately intertwined.

Alpine freshness meets refined construction, offering purity, balance, and poised integration.

89



**HELLYERS ROAD**  
*Aurora Australis*

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

*BRIGHT AND COMPOSED*

Mineral notes and petrichor are accompanied by floral hints, vanilla custard, and tropical fruit, together with a gentle freshness. To the palate, it is smooth and rounded, layered with apricot, mango, pineapple, and a delicate peppery touch. Vanilla, oak, and soft spice linger on the finish.

A balanced and easy profile, delivering bright fruit, soft structure, and a smooth, accessible character.

89



**TEERENPELI**  
*Soidin*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Finland	40%   80	\$

*SUBTLE AND BALANCED*

Raisins and sweet malt loaf rise first, accompanied by light toffee, cocoa, and gentle oak, together with nutty sherry tones. To the palate, it is soft and rounded, balanced by dried apple and caramelized sugar. Mild spice and toasted grain settle quietly at the close.

Subtle sherry influence and gentle grain texture present harmony and restrained Nordic elegance.

89



**M&H**  
*Apex Terroir*  
*Dead Sea*

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

*BOLD AND INTENSE*

Oak and cereals rise first, accompanied by floral notes, mint, dark fruit, honey, and petrichor, together with a subtle earthy sweetness. To the palate, it is bold, enriched by caramel, smoke, and a vibrant mix of pepper and star anise. Warm spice and gentle sweetness linger on the finish.

A broad flavor profile and solid integration deliver impressive depth and structured intensity.

89



**REDWOOD EMPIRE**  
*Pipe Dream*

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

*SMOOTH AND INVITING*

Oak and vanilla rise first, accompanied by butterscotch and biscuit notes, together with a soft cereal sweetness. To the palate, it is smooth and rounded, layered with gentle oak, vanilla, light vegetal tones, and a touch of pepper and cinnamon. Soft oak and vanilla linger on the finish.

An approachable and elegant bourbon, offering balanced softness, and a refined, easy-drinking character.

88



**BALCONES**  
*Baby Blue Corn*

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

*RICH AND TEXTURAL*

Roasted blue corn and vanilla fudge rise first, accompanied by cinnamon sugar, toasted oak, and caramel sweetness, together with smoky warmth. To the palate, it is bold and textured, balanced by sweet maize and roasted nuts. Baking spice and charred wood deepen the lasting impression.

Distinct grain-driven identity and textured weight create depth and unmistakable character.

87



**GALAAD**  
*Prélude Sherry Cask*

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

*INTEGRATED AND POLISHED*

Sultanas and toasted walnut rise first, accompanied by orange peel, vanilla, and seasoned oak, together with soft cocoa. To the palate, it is rounded and composed, balanced by raisin and caramel. Warm spice and gentle wood sustain the closing notes.

Measured sherry maturation and careful integration express fruit depth and refinement.

**84**



**CARPATHIAN**  
*Burgundy*

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

*COMPOSED AND WINE-INFLUENCED*

Cherry and raspberry rise first, accompanied by vanilla, malt sweetness, and soft oak, together with subtle wine nuance and gentle spice. To the palate, it is smooth and defined, balanced by cocoa and baking spice. Light tannin and toasted wood maintain steady structure.

Wine-cask nuance and firm malt backbone create structure and poised complexity.

**84**



**P&M**  
*Single Corn*

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
France	42%   84	\$

*CREAMY AND ROUND*

Vanilla and corn rise first, accompanied by toasted almond, light oak, and clean grain freshness, together with soft caramel. To the palate, it is mellow and approachable, balanced by honeyed cereal and gentle warmth. Toasty wood and grain sweetness remain harmoniously aligned.

Creamy grain sweetness and rounded texture combine for warmth and inviting drinkability.

**83**



DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN PROTEGIDA **Habanos** DOP

**INTERTABAK**  
OFFICIAL HABANOS IMPORTER  
SWITZERLAND

[www.intertabak.com](http://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 through 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 length, written in both millimeters and inches.
  - PRICE: cigar price in US Dollar and Euro.
  - WRAPPER: the external leaf.
  - BINDER: the leaf under the wrapper.
  - FILLER: the leaves inside the cigar.

# Corona Gorda





### NOTORIOUS CORONA GORDA

*RICH AND EVOLVING*

Roasted coffee opens with nuts and leather. Ripe fruit and white pepper add complexity. Dark chocolate emerges in the second half as pepper intensifies.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x133mm (5 1/4")	\$ 13   € 15.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



### MAYFLOWER DUSK CORONA GORDA

*RUSTIC AND EVOLVING*

Earth, nuts, and cappuccino alternate in the opening. Vegetal nuances join later with piquant peaks in the aftertaste. The finale turns vegetal and balsamic.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x140mm (5 1/2")	\$ 13   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	NICARAGUA



### TATUAJE 7TH COROJO

*COMPLEX AND NUANCED*

Light wood, hay, and white pepper open the smoke. Nuts emerge with subtle balsamic sweetness. Caramel nuances join. Chili spice replaces pepper in the finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ 9.5   € 14.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE NO. 1

*SMOOTH AND BALANCED*

Balsamic herbs and wood open with sweetness and latent earth. Hazelnut joins later as the sweetness fades. The flavor profile grows in intensity toward the end.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ -   € 21
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



### H. UPMANN MAGNUM 46

*SMOOTH AND REFINED*

The opening is smooth and creamy. Spice emerges mid-smoke. Rich wood dominates the finale, delivering an excellent and satisfying conclusion to a refined smoke.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 5/8")	\$ -   € 20
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



### VILLA CASDAGLI CORONA GORDA

*BALANCED AND FLAVORFUL*

Hazelnut and leather open with coffee and vegetal notes. Herbs are added later, along with a mix of spices. There is also a subtle sweetness present in the background.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x140mm (5 1/2")	\$ 14.4   € 12
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., ECUADOR, PERU



### CALD. THE KING IS DEAD ESCAPE P. SHORTCUT

*STRAIGHTFORWARD AND BALANCED*

Vegetal and balsamic notes with earth. A mix of backing spices lingers in the retrohale. The intertwined flavor profile makes for a straightforward but linear smoke.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	46x140mm (5 1/2")	\$ 16.8   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, PERU



### PADRON DAMASO NO. 8

*RUSTIC AND BALANCED*

The smoke opens with wood and green pepper. Hazelnut emerges further into the cigar. The profile maintains the same flavors throughout as the strength builds steadily.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x140mm (5 1/2")	\$ 15   € 24
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

# Robusto



## 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  
H99 ROBUSTO**

*EARTHY AND INTENSE*

Earth and undergrowth open with vegetal notes and black pepper, chili, and incense. Roasted aromas join in the second half with balsamic notes intensifying steadily.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x127mm (5")	\$ 17.25   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	MEXICO	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



**HORACIO  
HERITAGE I**

*SMOOTH AND EARTHY*

Vegetal and wood notes dominate the initial draw. Leather and honey emerge at mid-palate, creating a rounded profile with gentle sweetness throughout.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x127mm (5")	\$ -   € 16.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



**1502  
NICARAGUA ROBUSTO**

*COMPLEX AND SUBTLE*

Green peppercorn and bread open with cream. White pepper joins mid-smoke. Hay, earth, and faint charred wood finish with delicate caramel notes throughout.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 10.4   € 10.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



**BOLIVAR  
ROYAL CORONA**

*FULL-BODIED AND EVOLVING*

Black pepper and wood open with minerality. Earthy tones join mid-smoke with cocoa. The finale turns bitter, with hints of nuts and minerals.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	50x124mm (4 7/8")	\$ -   € 17.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



**DOMAIN  
NEUTRON ROBUSTO GORDO**

*BALANCED AND BOLD*

Rich notes of black pepper, wood, and earth give way to the smoke. Roasted coffee, hot spices, and vegetal notes join in the second half of the smoke.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	56x127mm (5")	\$ 12   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



**SANS PAREIL  
RED ROBUSTO**

*WELL-BALANCED AND SATISFYING*

Black pepper and incense open with chili. Rich earth and cocoa beans emerge in the finale as pepper retreats, transforming the experience significantly.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 31   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP.



**MONTES  
SERIE N VICTORIA**

*NUTTY AND BOLD*

Roasted nuts and leather open with chili, black pepper, and cinnamon. Sour cream and earth appear later on. Cedar and espresso are added in the finish.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ -   € 9.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	ECUADOR	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



**BRIBÓN  
ROBUSTO**

*SWEET AND CREAMY*

Sweet, light wood once lit. Cappuccino notes emerge alongside milk chocolate, creating a smooth profile. Sour cream rounds out the experience with gentle acidity.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ -   € 8.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	COLOMBIA	COLOMBIA



**MY FATHER  
BLUE ROBUSTO**

*BALANCED AND COMPLEX*

Pepper opens with mineral and leather. Herbal sweetness follows with wood, nuts, and earth. Citrus brightens mid-smoke. Balsamic herbs and espresso finish with white pepper.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x133mm (5 ¼")	\$ 10.5   € 14.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



**ALADINO 85  
ANIVERSARIO RESERVA**

*AROMATIC AND LAYERED*

Citrus, leather, and nuts give way to the smoke. Cedar wood emerges as well. Ripe fruit brightens the second third. Cinnamon spice and metallic notes finish the experience.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	\$ 17.5   € 26.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



**CHARATAN  
CLARO ROBUSTO**

*COMPLEX AND BALANCED*

Vegetal notes open with sour cream and balsamic herbs. Mineral notes and herbs emerge with persistent spice. The profile remains steady throughout.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	\$ -   € 11.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



**AJ FERNANDEZ DIAS DE  
GLORIA BRAZIL ROBUSTO**

*LINEAR AND STATIC*

Cocoa, leather, and nuts dominate throughout, delivering a straightforward profile with consistent flavors from start to finish. No significant evolution.

87 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x140mm (5 ½")	\$ 14.5   € 14.6

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

1000+  
CIGARS  
TESTED  
EVERY  
YEAR

FIND CIGARS



# Shorts



## FAUSTO FT110

*RICH AND BOLD*

Vegetal notes and earth open with medicinal spices. Black pepper and cardamom in the first half. White pepper and incense dominate the finish with piquant peaks.

91 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x111mm (4 3/8")	\$ 11   € 15.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



## LOST AND FOUND LAYOVER

*CREAMY AND REFINED*

Very creamy opening with nuts and subtle sweetness. Herbal nuances linger in the background. Espresso and pepper join in the second half, adding depth.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x108mm (4 1/4")	\$ 12.6   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



## LA BUCANERA GORDITO

*RICH AND BOLD*

Earth opens the smoke, enriched by licorice and pink pepper in the first half. Black pepper takes over with vegetal nuances and piquant peaks, creating a lasting finish.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x102mm (4")	\$ -   € 15
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



## EL PULPO THE FRY

*EARTHY AND LAYERED*

Earth, cocoa, and black pepper dominate with vegetal and balsamic notes lingering in the background. A layered profile delivering a balanced intensity.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	48x102mm (4")	\$ 12.4   € 19
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



**GURKHA FAT BOY  
HABANO 4X60**

*BALANCED AND INTENSE*

Toasted bread opens with black pepper and faint lemon zest. Herbal and floral notes emerge with ripe fruit notes. The finish delivers floral, toasted, and mineral tones.

90 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x102mm (4")	\$ 9   € 9.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



**ALTURA  
PETIT ALTURA**

*SPICY AND LAYERED*

Pepper, hazelnut, and wood open the smoke. Chili spice emerges with ripe fruit joining in the second half. The finale intensifies with pronounced spice.

89 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	39x102mm (4")	\$ 9.5   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



**GREAT WALL  
FLOURISHING AGE NO. 6**

*BOLD AND RICH*

Wood and nuts are followed by notes of espresso and baking spices. There are also ripe fruits present. The profile builds intensity toward the finish, becoming noticeably spicier.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x90mm (3 1/2")	\$ -   € 4.5
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
INDONESIA	INDONESIA	CHINA, DOMINICAN REP.



**RAÍCES CUBANAS  
GRD3 460**

*FLAVORFUL AND BOLD*

Leather and black pepper open with cream and herbs. A faint wood note emerges later on. Hazelnut, with lingering herbal and peppery tones in the second half.

87 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	60x102mm (4")	\$ 9   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS

# Toro





### DUNBARTON OVERSEAS NO.1

*BALANCED AND COMPLEX*

Nuts, wood and spices open the smoke. Dark chocolate joins with cinnamon, leather and hazelnut, creating a rich and rounded profile.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 20.8
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



### CONFIDENCIAL CAÑONAZO

*SPICY AND BOLD*

Pepper and chili dominate with wood and nuts providing structure. Coffee rounds out the profile, delivering a straightforward and intense smoke.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x149mm (5 7/8")	\$ -   € 9.2
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	N/A	N/A



### EP CARRILLO ESSENCE HONDURAS TORO

*DEEP AND STRUCTURED*

Vegetal and coffee notes open the smoke. Dark chocolate and earth emerge further into the smoke. The profile is enriched by cinnamon later on.

92

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



### VALACARI THE MESSENGER TORO

*SMOOTH AND CREAMY*

Cappuccino and cream dominate with leather providing structure. Herbs and hazelnut round out the profile, delivering a mellow and balanced smoke.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 11   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### DAVIDOFF YEAR OF THE HORSE

*BROAD AND COMPLEX*

Cream, leather and herbs open the smoke. Nuts, cocoa and earth emerge with white pepper nuances. Espresso joins before pepper intensifies in the finale, with an earthy base.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	55x165mm (6 1/2")	\$ 65   € 65
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.



### HR WHITE TORO

*LIGHT AND FLORAL*

Subtle wood and delicate floral sweetness open the smoke. Pronounced wood emerges with floral notes throughout. Earth appears with slight pepper in the second half.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	\$ -   € 23.9
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



### H. UPMANN MAGNUM 50

*INTERESTING AND NUANCED*

Balsamic notes open with spices, wood and leather. Earthy tones join mid-smoke with marked walnut emerging. Wood intensifies in the finale as strength builds throughout.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x160mm (6 ")	\$ -   € 24.4
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



### ARTISTA COLORADO TORO

*COMPLEX AND CHARACTERFUL*

Earth opens with roasted notes and cream. White pepper and baking spices emerge further into the smoke. The finale turns to pleasant bitter notes of dark chocolate.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 9   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	N/A



**NICA RUSTICA  
CONNECTICUT SHADE TORO**

*SMOOTH AND ROUND*

The cigar opens up with black pepper and coffee. Later on, wood and walnut notes are added to the profile. The smoke is very creamy throughout.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 8   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A.



**LA GLORIA CUBANA  
LOS GLORIOSOS TORO**

*FLAVORFUL AND RUSTIC*

Salted nuts, leather and wood open the smoke. Cream emerges in the first third. Coffee joins mid-smoke with faint black pepper building toward a spicier finish.

88 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	\$ 8.99   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



**GURKHA  
MARQUESA TORO**

*HERBAL AND AROMATIC*

Herbs open with vegetal sweetness and faint licorice. Floral notes and spices join later on. A mineral nuance is added in the second half of the smoke.

87 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	\$ 9   € 11
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
INDONESIA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



**VICENTE  
HONOR TORO**

*BALANCED BUT LINEAR*

Green pepper and vegetal notes open with herbal aromas. Earth and undergrowth emerge as spices recede to the background. The profile remains unchanged throughout.

86 

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x149mm (5 7/8")	\$ 42   € -
WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP.

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