CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 2 - 2026



Puro Dominicano

- TOBACCO IN PERFUMES - CONFIDENCIAAL CIGARS - NO TIME TO SMOKE - PAIRINGS: CIGARS & SPIRITS
- CHICHIBU DISTILLERY: THE INTERVIEW - JAPAN: FROM EMULATION TO IDENTITY - THE HURRICANE COCKTAIL
- WHERE BOTTLES REST: THE PERFECT WINE AND SPIRITS CELLAR - SMOKED SALMON: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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BY DREW ESTATE

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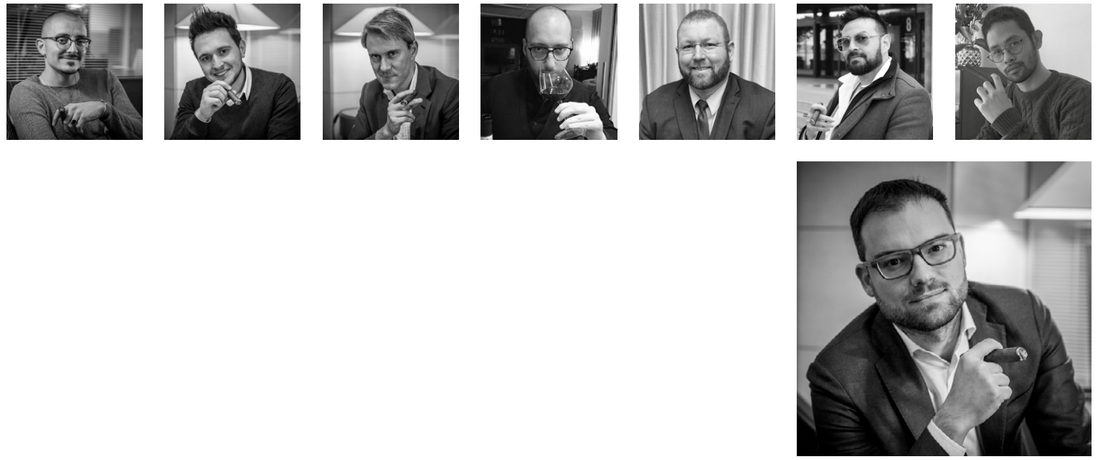

Editor's thoughts

From Dominican tobacco to Japanese whisky, an exploration of balance and character.

The new issue opens with Davidoff and the unveiling of Puro Dominicano, a line dedicated entirely to the richness and identity of Dominican tobacco. Our main feature explores how this release reflects Davidoff's pursuit of balance, refinement, and innovation while remaining deeply rooted in tradition. Alongside it, this edition's editorial reflection turns inward through Cigraal, examining the rituals and evolving culture that continue to shape the modern cigar world. We then turn to the enduring appeal of shorts and cigarillos, compact formats that prove complexity and satisfaction are not always tied to size.

Our spirits section begins with an exclusive interview dedicated to Chichibu, one of the defining names in contemporary Japanese whisky, before widening the lens to explore the philosophy and rise of modern Japanese whiskies as a whole. We also introduce a feature on pairings with whisky and tequila, examining how different spirits interact with texture, spice, sweetness, and smoke to create unexpected harmonies at the table.

Beyond smoke and spirits, this issue explores the pleasures of gastronomy and preservation. A feature on smoked salmon examines one of cuisine's most elegant ingredients, while our cellar guide highlights the importance of properly storing wine and spirits so they can evolve and fulfill their promise over time.

More than ever, this edition is an invitation to appreciate craftsmanship, embrace ritual, and find pleasure in every detail.

#refineyourtaste

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PURO DOMINICANO

A GEM RAISED FROM THE GROUND

AVO EXPRESIVO

COMING SOON



A Gem Raised From the Ground

Davidoff's Puro Dominicano marks the Swiss brand's boldest Dominican move in a generation and its first Black Band release in ten years.

by **Michel Arlia**

There are cigars that arrive, and there are cigars that declare something. The Davidoff Puro Dominicano falls into the second category. Ten years after Davidoff last introduced a black-banded line, the Basel-based premium brand of Oettinger Davidoff looks inward. Instead of turning to Brazil, Nicaragua, or the Honduran highlands, the brand focuses on the island that built its legacy. The result is a full-bodied, all-Dominican puro of uncommon depth. It includes six terroirs and a combined tobacco age of 32 years. The ambition is unmatched since the introduction of the Yamasá.





To understand what Davidoff has built here, you have to consider the numbers. Most premium cigars use tobacco aged for three to five years. A well-aged blend might contain tobaccos that are even older. Thirty-two years, spread across six Dominican growing regions, is a decision of great patience. Sam Reuter, Director and Head of Global Product Innovation, spoke candidly about how that patience shapes the product. The oldest leaf in the blend, a Hybrid 192 Visus from Villa González, Santiago, has matured for a decade. "The challenge for our Master Blenders was to design a blend that is complex and flavorful, but not dominated by intensity. This was despite the use of high-grade Dominican tobaccos," says Reuter.

Mapping the Republic

The blend is unusually detailed. Reuter gives insights on the tobaccos that are all grown in Dominican terroirs: a wrapper from Yamasá, a binder from Martín García, and fillers from Villa González, Mao, Piloto, Navarrete, and Yamasá again. "Each terroir benefits from its own microclimate," he explains. These range from the humid valleys of Yamasá to the warm highlands of Mao. The effect mirrors what the great Burgundy houses have done: combining micro-terroirs into a whole. None of the individual parts could achieve this on their own.

On paper, the Dominican Republic is not an obvious source for a full-bodied cigar. Its tobaccos are known for refinement and smoothness, not aggression. Reuter acknowledges the challenge. The Puro Dominicano's intensity comes not from typical regional character, but from selected varieties and terroirs. "We could have used milder Dominican tobaccos," he says, "but we wanted to underline terroir expression." The result is rare for Dominican puros: rich and present on the palate, but groomed rather than forceful—a distinction from the category's punishing outliers.

The tasting arc follows classic transitions in thirds: The opening brings dark chocolate, bread, nuts, and spice. The second third adds dried fruit, oak, earth, and nuances of vanilla and citrus. The finish turns into leather, mineral, and black pepper. The profile reads like a journey through the island: lush, then elemental, then dry and contemplative.

Three Formats, Three Philosophies

The Puro Dominicano launched in three sizes. The Short Robusto is the most immediate and delivers the faster flavor evolution Reuter describes. The blend is concentrated and suited to an hour, not an afternoon. The Corona Larga is the most conceptually loaded. Its narrow gauge nods to 1844 (44 ring gauge equals 1.8cm), the year of the Dominican Republic's independence. The slimmer format slows the experience and draws out subtler transitions from a blend that might otherwise reveal itself too quickly.

The third format, the Perfecto, may be the most technically demanding cigar in Davidoff's portfolio. A Figurado vitola requires skilled hands. Reuter notes the challenge. Rollers must balance symmetry, proportion, and wrapper tension so neither end is too tight. The narrow foot intensifies the binder and wrapper's impact on the profile. This makes it the most wrapper-forward of the three. Reuter believes it best honors the blend's agricultural nuances. "Only our most experienced rollers with more than 20 years of experience craft our Perfecto formats."

The Ghost of the Puro D'Oro

Long-memoried aficionados may raise a careful question, which Reuter addresses: What of the Puro D'Oro, Davidoff's earlier all-Dominican chapter? Launched in 2008, that cigar belonged to a different era. It came before the Black Band Collection and a market not yet ready for the intensity Davidoff now confidently demands. Reuter draws a direct line between the two releases, but does not conflate them. Some tobaccos are shared, but the Puro Dominicano uses other leaves, adding complexity and balance. The 32-year combined aging shapes its character. The Puro D'Oro was an exploration. The Puro Dominicano is a declaration.

Amber, Time, and the Yellow Band

The design language of the Puro Dominicano uses a local metaphor that is more than decorative. Dominican amber, rare and formed over millions of years in the mountains around Santiago, serves as the line's visual and philosophical anchor. The cabinet boxes are black with a striking yellow accent. The cigar bands carry that same amber gold. Reuter is clear about the connection. "Only by careful polishing by skilled artisans does the gemstone reveal its shine and radiant glow. That same care and respect for time guide our philosophy to tobacco aging." The metaphor earns its use because of the leaves' provenance.

In a quiet sustainability move, Davidoff has replaced the PET outer packaging with a carton alternative. Reuter insists there is no trade-off between humidity control and shelf-life protection, based on extensive testing. It is a detail most consumers will not notice. That is precisely the point.



What the Black Band Means Now

The ten-year gap between Black Band launches is not, Reuter says, a restraint for its own sake. It begins with consumer demand and the belief that a concept is both solid and well executed. This involves external tastings, market research, and a readiness to wait. The Puro Dominicano joins Escurio, Nicaragua, and Yamasá as the fourth regular production line in the collection. Each is defined by regional character and illustrates an intensity that Davidoff's core portfolio avoids.

The Puro Dominicano offers what its Black Band siblings do not: a homecoming. Nicaragua, Escurio, and Yamasá have looked abroad for intensity. The Puro Dominicano stays home, showing that the Dominican Republic achieves a richness its reputation has long undersold.

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Confidenciaal

How a French restaurateur's passion for cigars evolved into Confidenciaal, a brand redefining luxury through sustainability and affordability.

by **Zack Mitchers**

After three decades navigating the cigar industry, from establishing distribution networks across Asia to consulting with Cuban and New World manufacturers, Eric Piras has distilled his expertise into something deeply personal. Confidenciaal Cigars, born from anonymous tastings in his Hong Kong cigar lounge, challenges conventional luxury with recyclable packaging and accessible pricing. In this conversation, Piras reveals how a scuba diving instructor became one of Asia's most influential figures in premium tobacco, and why he believes the future of cigars lies in sustainable everyday indulgence rather than ostentatious presentation.

Hello Eric! Who was Eric Piras before getting into the tobacco business, and how did you get into it?

Straight out of university, I went to work as a scuba diving instructor in the Bahamas. I wanted to explore the world and didn't really have a career plan, so this was a perfect first job for me. Spending time underwater and on the Club Med beaches of this beautiful island was wonderful and led me to work as a diving instructor on private yachts and at other nice places. After a few years, though, I thought I should have a more 'serious' life and went to Paris, where I found a job as a waiter and worked my way up to being a restaurant director a few years later. Entrepreneurship kicked in, and I opened my first restaurant in Paris, which earned a 1-Michelin-star rating within 1 year. It was quite exceptional. I also worked at a few other restaurants and served as an F&B consultant on several projects for interesting clients, including President Mobutu in Zaire.

Around that time, I started getting interested in cigars, though I never expected it would later become my area of expertise. A project to open a hotel led me to Hong Kong, where I met Sir David Tang, who offered me the role of Business Development for The Pacific Cigar Co. (exclusive Habanos distributor) in 1996, and this is how the adventure began. Cigar was booming, and I set up PCC's network in Asian countries and Canada; I am proud to say that some of the team I employed at the time are still in place! In 1999, I became Vice-President for Altadis, opening their Asia-Pacific office and markets. It was my first deep connection with New World cigars, and this position allowed me to expand my network and experience towards both ends of the cigar business. I spent a lot of time in cigar factories developing new products for international markets, benefiting from the experience of true masters such as George Gershel and Jose Seijas.

Meanwhile, I also travelled the world to set the international distribution of Altadis brands, strengthening existing markets and opening many new ones, appointing distributors and creating new distribution networks. 2014 was the time to move on to the next chapter of my professional life. I opened my own company: Cigraal Ltd. Capitalising on my wide network and experience, Cigraal specialises in the distribution, marketing and promotion of cigar brands, and we're proud to count some nice names in our portfolio, such as Arturo Fuente, Ashton, Casa 1910, Eiroa, Flor de Selva, Joya de Nicaragua & Matilde. We also have direct contact with end consumers through Bertie cigar lounges in Hong Kong (opened in 2019) and Phnom Penh, Cambodia (opened in 2024). As a natural development, I launched Totem in 2019 (cigar accessories; the designs are a tribute to Native Americans), and then my cigar line, Confidenciaal, in 2022!



You have over 25 years of experience in the industry. What was the defining moment that led you to create your own cigar brand?

In the last 30 years, I have had privileged access to cigar blending and manufacturing, spending a lot of time on tasting committees where we try cigars in the morning when your palate is fresh, comparing and improving tobacco blends. After all these years of tasting and helping create limited editions for large brands, it was tempting to have a cigar line tailored to my own taste. I decided to 'jump' and create my own cigars in 2019, but they were not initially destined to become an actual brand. The production was intended solely for me, my family, and my close friends.

When I opened Bertie Hong Kong, I kept these cigars in my own private locker and naturally started sharing them with the lounge's regular clients, who really seemed to enjoy the blend. But I didn't want to rush into selling them; if my name was going to be on these cigars, they had to be vouched for by a large number of people who didn't know where the cigars were coming from, so that their comments could be totally genuine. For 3 years, we had these cigars in Bertie, tried and tasted by dozens of cigar passionados and passionadas, and the comments were always positive.

What inspired you to take the next step, but keep the cigars mysterious yet approachable?

Word started to spread in the Bertie Cigar Lounge that I had my own cigars, and they were very good. At the time, there was no cigar ring, no brand name. So clients were asking the team in Bertie for 'your boss' cigars' or 'the cigars with no name', and very quickly they became known as 'the secret cigars'. After 3 years of the clients' 'blind smoking' and positive comments, we thought we could take a chance and launch these cigars as an actual brand. The name 'Confidenciaal' did sound obvious, given the genesis of the brand. We spell it with 2 "A" s as a reference to the French word 'graal', which means the Holy Grail; it is also used in my company name, Cigraal. In line with the secret concept, we initially launched Confidenciaal without a cigar ring and without disclosing its origin. Because some markets' regulations impose a cigar ring, and also because the secret is now in the open, we added a cigar ring last year. Yet the ring carries the brand name only on the inside. Similarly, we are now announcing Honduras as the manufacturing country;



however, this is only the manufacturing country. Confidenciaal is a blend of the best aged tobaccos. Still, the secret of the tobacco itself is very well kept: only the master blender, Antoine Riberet (Cigraal's General Manager) and I know the exact origin of the tobaccos in Confidenciaal cigars!

The term "Luxury Bundles" is a bold redefinition in the cigar world. What does it mean to you, and how does it reflect Confidenciaal's ethos?

My main point when creating Confidenciaal was that I wanted a cigar that was "cuban-esque" in style (after all, when you create your brand, it's initially based on your own taste). Since I smoke a lot of cigars a day, it also made sense to create a brand that would be affordable. We all love the beautiful packaging of the best cigar brands. Still, when you smoke a lot of cigars, you can't help but be aware that it actually means a lot of material waste, in addition to being an essential part of the cigar's final price. Our idea was to create minimal packaging that would be easy to recycle and would not significantly increase the cost of the cigars. And since I spent a lot of time on the tobacco selection, I wanted the cigars to be visible through the packaging. Calamansi Designs (my wife Agnès Caër-Piras' design agency, which handles our branding, marketing & events) conceptualised a packaging design that is minimal while utilising high-quality paper and finishes. The concept? You buy a luxury product, but you can just throw the paper of the bundle once you've finished it, and you don't have to feel guilty about it. We first launched 'real' bundles with only a sleeve, but we quickly realised that it wasn't practical for retailers, so we've now remodelled them as half-boxes, which are easier to use in shops. Even the 20-cigar boxes are fully made from the same FSC paper; it took a long time to develop the right process, but I am proud to say they can be shipped and displayed with no squashing issues. When the box is empty, it can just be thrown into the recycling bin; even the window is made of PET, the most recyclable and recycled plastic. Since we're quite proud of our CSR, we have added a message at the bottom of the packaging so clients are aware they're purchasing a product made with the environment in mind, to be enjoyed daily with relish and no guilt!

Where do you see Confidenciaal Cigars in the future?

2026 will be an exciting year for Confidenciaal: we are now in 30 countries, and expansion continues: the brand has been in Germany since last year and has arrived in Switzerland. We're also expanding into Middle Eastern countries and selected African markets, as well as travel retail, and we're planning a foray into the US market this year. We aim to maintain the consistently impeccable construction and quality of the cigars, the affordable price, and the environmentally friendly concept of our packaging, so that everyone can enjoy the 'everyday luxury' that is a Confidenciaal cigar!

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NEW

No time to smoke

When time is short, what to pick?
A short cigar or a cigarillo?

by **Ramon Bernard**



It happens frequently. You'd like to light up something, but all you have is a short break. In this scenario, many smokers opt for a cigarillo, an affordable option for a quick smoke. But by choosing a cigarillo over a short cigar, you are going to lose quite a lot.

A short cigar, such as a short robusto, is generally 3.5 or 4 inches long, with a ring gauge usually between fifty and sixty. It is priced higher than a cigarillo, but it is a completely different experience. We are dealing with a long-filler smoke, capable of delivering quality aromas and, sometimes, despite its length, even a pinch of evolution. The difference is not merely one of size, but of construction. At its core, a cigar is composed of three elements: wrapper, binder, and filler. Each puff delivers a flavor profile shaped by the fermentation and aging of the leaves.

Cigarillos are generally smaller, thinner, and often machine-made. While there are premium exceptions, most cigarillos are constructed using short-filler tobacco, chopped leaves rather than whole ones, resulting in a more uniform but less nuanced profile. They are designed for convenience: quick to smoke, easy to carry, and affordably priced. The draw tends to be much more open, the burn faster, and the flavor more direct but less structured. The distinction becomes particularly meaningful when considering shorter cigars. A common misconception is that length equates to quality. In reality, a short, well-made cigar can offer a remarkably rich and satisfying experience in a more compact format. Because the smoke travels a shorter distance from the foot to the palate, it retains more aromatic compounds. The result is often a fuller, more immediate expression of flavor. The combustion is the same as in longer cigars. In contrast, the rapid burn of a cigarillo can lead to higher temperatures, which may flatten subtle flavors and introduce harshness.

In the end, the difference lies in intention. Cigarillos are built for speed and accessibility; short cigars are crafted for character. For those who value the purity of tobacco and the richness of its expression, the short cigar stands as a compelling reminder that size does not define substance.

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When you assemble a bourbon by hand, using the richest and rarest straight bourbons, but do it in Brooklyn of all places, you're bound to draw some attention. We don't mind. That's why we overruled the rule book. Then tossed it. We decided to grow our own corn. Heirloom style. We revived the art of blending. We proof our bourbons using mineral water from the Rosendale Mines of New York. It might not be how it's normally done; it might even raise a few eyebrows. But sometimes if you want to create the extraordinary, you can't be afraid to disturb the peace.



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Lotus Elite Punch Cutter

A Dual-Size Punch Cutter That Offers Utility and Portability.

by **Zac Mitchers**

The Lotus Elite Punch Cutter is a compact, all-metal dual-size puncher. Measuring 3.5 by 0.75 inches and available in black, chrome, and gunmetal, it offers both 8mm and 10mm cutting options, accessed by twisting the body. A keyring attachment and self-cleaning mechanism round out a feature set that positions the Elite as a considered, travel-ready tool. At $29.95, it sits in the mid-range of the standalone punch cutter market.

The two 8mm and 10mm punch sizes cover a large range from slender Lanceros and Coronas up to Toros, so there's no need to carry separate tools when switching between cigars. Twisting the body closed automatically removes the cut tobacco from the puncher, keeping everything ready to go for the next one.

It's a small but useful feature for everyday use. The all-metal construction adds a sense of durability that plastic cutters rarely match, and we found the finish holds up well even after daily wear when clipped to a keychain. Convenience aside, there are more advantages worth mentioning. Because it only pierces the center of the cap rather than slicing across it, the edges of the head closure remain completely intact, preventing the wrapper from unraveling. The narrower opening creates a tighter, more concentrated draw, and in some cases, using it has worked to the cigar's advantage.

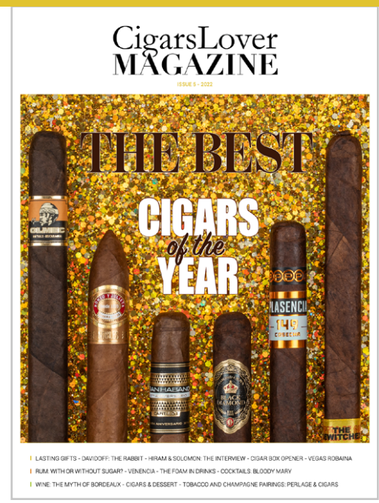
Punch cutters do have their limits, and the Elite is no exception. That limitation comes in the form of any Figurado-shaped (Torpedoes, Pyramids, Belicosos, Salomones, and so on) cigar that simply doesn't lend itself to a punch. If these are a regular part of your rotation, this tool won't cover everything you need. Ring gauge is another consideration. Despite the 10mm option, we found that toward larger vitolas at 56-ring gauge and above, some smokers may find the opening too small for those who like a certain amount of smoke output. You can try to compensate by overlapping punches, as we have, but that often results in more cracked cigar heads than a better draw.

The Lotus Elite Punch Cutter is well-made. It's compact, durable, and does its job. Where it falls short is versatility. Those who regularly smoke different vitolas or prefer a more open draw will likely find a straight cutter a better fit.















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PAGE

Sophisticated Rebel

From Controversial Note to Luxury Staple:
The Evolution of Tobacco in Fine Fragrance.

by **Michel Arlia**



A mahogany door opens to a room bathed in warm, amber light. Leather armchairs in deep brown gather around low tables, where crystal ashtrays reflect the soft glow of lamps. The air is rich with the scent of aged tobacco, mixed with traces of last night's cognac and the smell of old leather. Now imagine capturing that exact moment, an olfactory snapshot, and wearing it on your skin. This idea introduces us to tobacco in perfumery, where fragrances offer not just a scent but an entire aesthetic: a mood, a rebellion wrapped in sophistication.

To appreciate tobacco's place in fragrance, it's helpful to recall a time when it was viewed as too literal or rough for fine perfume. During much of modern perfumery, classic scents from the early and mid-twentieth century rarely used such realistic notes. Perfume aimed to suggest rather than state directly, and tobacco's presence was more common in air fresheners designed to cover up odors than in fine fragrance celebrations.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, this tension became a catalyst for change. As niche perfumery confronted the mass market's sweet, fresh predictability, daring perfumers asked: What if boldness itself defined a new sophistication? What if so-called challenging notes like tobacco became the new measure of individuality and taste? Enter tobacco. The breakthrough moment is often credited to Tom Ford's Tobacco Vanille, launched in 2007 as part of his Private Blend collection. Created by perfumer Olivier Guillotin, it became an instant benchmark that others would try to recreate countless times. Variations on this theme appeared in fragrances like Franck Boclet Tobacco, Phaedon Tabac Rouge, and Nikos Sculpture Homme God's Night, each attempting to capture that same addictive sweetness. However, Serge Lutens had already been changing the tobacco scene years before with fragrances like Chergui and Fumerie Turque. These scents were bold statements, showing that tobacco could be not just acceptable in fine fragrance, but also luxurious, sensual, and even addictive in a good way. Even earlier, Caron's Tabac Blond (often cited as one of the most famous tobacco fragrances) took a leather-forward approach, though it's perhaps more accurately described as leather in vanilla with hints of clove and iris rather than a pure tobacco composition.

Here's the paradox at the heart of tobacco in perfumery: the goal is rarely to smell like you've just walked out of a cigar shop. Instead, perfumers engage in a sophisticated form of abstraction, capturing the essence, the soul, the most beautiful facets of cigar tobacco while leaving behind the acrid, ashy, or overpowering elements. The note itself is remarkably complex, simultaneously leathery and sweet, reminiscent of dried fruits and hay, carrying hints of honey and a subtle bitterness that prevents it from becoming cloying. A well-composed tobacco accord might evoke the moment you first open a humidor, when the cigars are still pristine, and their natural sweetness dominates, before the match is struck.



Many people don't know that tobacco absolute, the material perfumers use, is very different from the romantic idea of tobacco. It is made from dried, fermented tobacco leaves, treated with solvents, then refined with ethanol. The result is a dark brown substance that smells strong and even unpleasant at first. Only when it is diluted does it reveal its sweet, herbaceous, and woody scent, with notes of hay, tea, honey, dried fruit, and hints of flowers, leather, and chocolate. This is where the perfumer's artistry truly shines. Tobacco absolute provides the foundation, with carefully chosen companions that highlight its personality. Vanilla amplifies natural sweetness, tonka bean adds creamy smoothness, and rum and cognac create a boozy richness. Spices like cinnamon, clove, and cardamom add warmth and nod to the spice notes found in premium cigars. Leather accords are perhaps tobacco's most natural partner. Both materials share a certain animalic quality, a sense of something aged and refined. Together, they create compositions that feel undeniably luxurious. In fact, tobacco absolute works harmoniously with sandalwood, castoreum, labdanum, sage, vetiver, cedar, and the violet-iris family. Combinations that add depth even to fragrances where tobacco isn't the star.

Tobacco's popularity in perfumery grew alongside a renewed interest in cigars. The image shifted from the stereotype of a businessman with a Cuban cigar to a more thoughtful, artisanal approach. Younger fans started to see cigars as craft items, learning about different tobacco types, how they are fermented, and how they are aged, much like wine collectors study vintages.

This change makes sense. Both trends move away from mass-market sameness and toward complexity, craftsmanship, and a taste for challenging flavors. They attract people who see their choices as a way to show their identity and taste, not just as products to use.

Vintage nostalgia also plays a role. Tobacco fragrances bring back the style of the golden age of men's fashion, the dandy, and the flaneur, people who cared about appearance and ritual. But modern tobacco scents are not just old-fashioned. They mix vintage glamour with a modern twist, adding new elements or taking the scent in fresh directions. This is why tobacco scents stand out: in an age obsessed with freshness and broad appeal, choosing a deep, rich tobacco fragrance signals a preference for complexity and individuality—a statement of refined rebellion. It announces that you embrace layered experiences and aren't afraid of a little darkness.

Making great tobacco fragrances is not easy. Tobacco absolute is beautiful, but on its own, it can be a bit flat. It is also very strong, so using too much can overpower the whole scent. The chemistry of tobacco's scent is very complex. Its main aroma comes from carotenoids, including molecules like ionones, damascenone, and megastigmatrienone. These are also found in other favorite ingredients: damascenone adds rose-like notes, ionones bring violet tones, and theaspiranes, found in tea and osmanthus, add more depth. This is where synthetic molecules become important. Modern perfumery uses specialized chemicals to mimic or enhance various aspects of tobacco's scent. For example, Veltonal offers a strong violet-tobacco character with hints of raspberry and pomegranate. Amber-woody materials like kefalis, trimofix, and tobacarol (from caryophyllene oxide) add tobacco-like qualities. Compounds such as megastigmatrienone, marketed under the name Tabanon by some companies, contribute significantly to tobacco's distinctive fragrance, even in small amounts. The complex aroma of natural tobacco in perfumery is shaped by a variety of chemical constituents, including ionones, damascenone, edulane derivatives, theaspiranes, and safranal, which together create notes reminiscent of roasted, nutty, and smoky qualities. Coumarin gives a sweet hay scent,



and when mixed with benzaldehyde, it creates the familiar almond-cherry smell found in many tobacco fragrances. Amber compounds like ambroxan add warmth and depth. Different types of tobacco produce distinct perfume styles, just as wine grapes make different wines. Virginia tobacco is naturally sweet and is often used in tobacco absolutes, resulting in lighter, more approachable scents. Burley has its own profile, while Oriental or Turkish tobacco adds sun-cured complexity. Latakia, grown in Syria and Cyprus and fire-cured over aromatic woods, gives a smoky note—Serge Lutens and Christopher Sheldrake tried to capture this in Fumerie Turque. Other ingredients in tobacco fragrances matter just as much. Dry woods like cedar and sandalwood give structure and keep the scent from being too sweet. Amber adds warmth and depth. Incense can bring a meditative feel. Some perfumers use surprising contrasts, like mixing tobacco with florals for unisex scents, or with marine notes for a fresh twist. As a result of these developments, the tobacco fragrance category has expanded dramatically over the past two decades, offering interpretations for every taste.



Tom Ford Tobacco Vanille is still the standard, rich, sweet, and very luxurious. It's like tobacco turned into dessert, with vanilla and tonka making it almost edible and easy to wear, even though it's intense. Ford kept exploring this idea with Tobacco Oud and Tobacco Oud Intense, showing the concept could go even further.

Serge Lutens Chergui takes a different approach, emphasizing hay and honey alongside tobacco for a warmer, more rounded result. It feels like golden hour captured in a bottle, nostalgic without being dated. His Fumerie Turque represents an even more specific vision, an attempt to recreate the aroma of fire-cured Latakia tobacco with its distinctive smoky character.

Maison Francis Kurkdjian Tobacco Oud brings together two



of niche perfumery's most beloved notes, creating something opulent and Middle Eastern in inspiration, where tobacco meets precious woods and resins.

Maison Margiela Replica Jazz Club perfectly captures its namesake inspiration. the warmth of a basement jazz venue where cigar smoke hangs in the air and rum flows freely. It's tobacco rendered through the lens of cocktails and music, with boozy notes, pink pepper, and vanilla creating something that feels lived-in and authentic, like a well-loved leather jacket.

Besides these classics, there are many creative tobacco scents in new settings. Parfum d'Empire Tabac Tabou mixes tobacco with daffodil-honey and immortelle. Comptoir Sud Pacifique's Rhum & Tabac adds rum, cardamom, and cinnamon. David Jourquin's Cuir Tabac pairs tobacco with leather and lavender. Jo Malone's Tobacco & Mandarin connects tobacco, mandarin, and thyme for a unique harmony. Contemporary perfumers continue to push boundaries. Some are exploring tobacco with unexpected florals; imagine the contrast of rich tobacco against clean jasmine or fresh lavender. Others are taking tobacco in gourmand directions, pairing it with chocolate, caramel, or exotic fruits. Still others are stripping it back, creating minimalist compositions that highlight tobacco's natural complexity without heavy embellishment.

No exploration of tobacco in perfumery would be complete without acknowledging the romanticized pull of Havana, Cuba's capital and the spiritual home of cigar culture. The city's name has become shorthand for a particular kind of nostalgia. pre-revolution glamour, tropical heat, vintage Cadillacs, and of course, those legendary cigars rolled by expert hands. Several fragrances have explicitly invoked Havana in their names or inspiration, attempting to capture not just tobacco but an entire sensory landscape. These compositions typically layer cigar tobacco with rum or sugarcane notes, evoking the island's most famous exports. Honey appears frequently, suggesting both the sweetness of tropical flowers and the natural sugars in premium tobacco leaves. Spices like cardamom, cinnamon, and va-



nilla add warmth that feels sun-drenched and Caribbean. What makes these Havana-inspired fragrances compelling is their ambition to capture a time and place rather than just an ingredient. They're after the feeling of ceiling fans turning slowly overhead, mojitos sweating on bar tops, music drifting through humid evening air, and everywhere that distinctive aroma of hand-rolled cigars. It's nostalgia for a version of Havana that may be more imagined than real. A city frozen in amber, existing more powerfully in collective imagination than in present-day reality. This mythologizing tendency reveals something essential about tobacco in perfumery. These fragrances are rarely just about how tobacco smells. They're about the stories we tell ourselves, the fantasies we construct, the identities we try on when we choose what to wear. Havana becomes not just a place but a state of mind. sophisticated yet sensual, refined yet rebellious, vintage yet somehow timeless.

Return now to that cigar lounge, but with a new understanding. The appeal isn't really about tobacco itself. not literally, not entirely. It's about what tobacco represents, especially in cigars: a moment of pause in our accelerated world, an appreciation for things that improve with age, a willingness to embrace complexity rather than always seeking easy pleasures.

The best tobacco fragrances don't try to recreate the experience of smoking a cigar. Instead, they capture the aesthetic around it. They take something potentially challenging and reveal its hidden beauty. In this way, tobacco in perfumery has become more than just a note; it's become a philosophy. It represents niche perfumery's core promise: that smell can be art, that we don't have to choose mass appeal over individual expression, that there's profound pleasure in the complex and the carefully crafted. The cigar lounge, after all, was never really about the smoke. It was about creating a space removed from the everyday, where time moved differently, and attention could be paid to subtle pleasures. A great tobacco fragrance does the same thing.



PAIRINGS

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

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

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

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

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









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PAIRING Cigars & Spirits



CALDWELL LLTK M. MOFO HAB. S. TORO

BOLD & ROUND

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	$ 14.2 | € N/A

DIMENSIONS
54 x 152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
Dominican Republic

Complex flavors culminate in a long, satisfying finish. The cigar opens with notes of cappuccino, hazelnut, and white pepper over a creamy base, lifted by delicate herbal nuances. The second half intensifies, as cinnamon and wood emerge and the herbal notes turn balsamic. We pair this with two bold, long-lasting whiskeys: a surprising sherried release from Denmark and an exceptional American bourbon, both full of character and outstanding flavor.



MI QUERIDA GORILA GORDO

SATISFYING & RICH

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	$15.65 | €-

DIMENSIONS
60 x 152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
Nicaragua

A smooth, creamy, full-bodied smoke with earthy, chocolatey, coffee, and peppery notes. Its oily, dark USA Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper covers a Nicaraguan binder and filler, adding an extra kick to the blend. Two bourbons rise to the occasion: a soft and mellow yet high-quality wheated bottled-in-bond release, and a blend of well-aged whiskeys, both capable of standing up to this intense powerhouse while mellowing its profile with their sweet, generous character.



PLASENCIA RESERVA ORIGINAL CHURCHILL

BALANCED & COMPLEX

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$ 11.4 | € N/A

DIMENSIONS
48 x 178 mm (7")

COUNTRY
Nicaragua

It develops nutty aromas, with nuances of nutmeg and incense. These spices grow more pronounced as the smoke progresses, gradually giving way to roasted and earthy notes that take center stage in the finale. We have selected two tequilas aged in whiskey-style barrels: one in Mizunara oak, another in a combination of new French and American oak, to examine the varied influence of wood on the agave spirit.



THY

PX & Oloroso

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Denmark	51.5% - 103	$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	5 Years Old	Ex-Sherry (PX and Oloroso)

Surprisingly pleasant for such a young release. An oily mouthfeel sets the stage as Oloroso dried fruits marry the sweetness of Pedro Ximenez casks, with butterscotch rounding things out and an overall herbal, light touch of smoke keeping it grounded. Modern yet centered and balanced, with a touch of originality. On the nose, the suggestion is of cranberry in dark chocolate, a pairing so precise it feels invented for this moment. When puffing, the intense habano tobacco meets the sherry profile perfectly: the fresh, lively notes of the whiskey sharpen the peppery edges, while the leathery core softens some of the roughness of the young spirit. The woody smoke is restrained in the glass, more toasted in the tobacco, a natural and fitting evolution. Smooth, yet complex and dynamic.

Pairing score	90

MICHTER'S

Shenk's Homestead 2025

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	45.6% - 91.2	$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	New

Not an ordinary bourbon. This sour mash release captures deep sweetness and remarkable complexity, ranging from burnt sugar and pecans to maple syrup and honeyed French toast. On the palate and through the finish, the spicy components seem endless, always sweet yet full of character, with baking spices layering in added depth for an overall sensation of oriental pastry. The woody and leathery notes of the cigar are immediately met by an intense spiced honey, making the ensemble sweeter and more indulgent, a true revelation. On the palate, it is a clash of titans: the bourbon's bold spiced sweetness pushes against the tobacco's depth and mellowness, yet the tension resolves almost instantly into incredible richness and beautiful integration. The finish is simply endless. A fantastic contrast pairing.

Pairing score	93





HARD TRUTH
Sweet Mash Wheated Bourbon

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Wheated Bourbon	NAS	New

Soft and smooth yet robust, this bourbon opens with warm cornbread, vanilla cream, honeyed grain, and cinnamon-dusted apple. The palate follows with caramel, wheat bread, baked pear, and mellow spice, all anchored by well-integrated oak. The cigar's peppery nose is a challenge for any whiskey, but the bourbon's sweet vanilla cream aroma rises to meet it, gently mellowing the tobacco. As things settle, the chocolatey tobacco and creamy sensations weave together beautifully, elegant and interleaved at their very best. On the palate, the wheated bourbon's velvety texture provides the perfect canvas for the cigar's rich, chocolatey earthiness, resulting in an endless and deeply satisfying pairing. In the long finish, a hint of black pepper fades gracefully into the sweetness of the corn. Very nicely done.

Pairing score	92



CASA DRAGONES
Reposado Mizunara

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Blue agave tequila	NAS	Mizunara oak

Incredibly gentle and classy, this subtle and refined silky spirit evokes a rarefied Japanese atmosphere, with aromas of pear, honey, delicate florals, and a touch of green agave. The palate steps up slightly in intensity while maintaining its elegance, with a hint of salt weaving through the characteristic Mizunara incense and sandalwood, anchored by a core of light apricot. The marriage with the Nicaraguan tobacco is intricate and captivating, the two resonating in a dance of quality and balance: nutmeg, cardamom, incense, and a touch of salty cashews threading through both. On the palate, the pairing shifts up in intensity. The sip is fresh and velvety, with a touch of balsamic herbs helping the nutty tobacco come forward. A great and unique match.

Pairing score	92



15 STARS
Platinum

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	49% - 98	$$$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	Blend of 10, 15, 19 Years	New

A careful blend of aged bourbons, the nose opens with caramel, dark cherry, seasoned oak, toasted pecan, and baking spices. The palate is full and velvety, offering maple candy, vanilla bean, dried orchard fruit, and a touch of tobacco leaf. Opulent, polished, and impeccably balanced. On the nose, the pairing is dark, animal, intense, and sensual, with aromas fusing seamlessly into something deep and captivating: dark cherries draped in bitter chocolate, an intense and dripping earthiness, and the seasoned oak providing exactly the structure the cigar had been waiting for. On the palate, the dark cherry sweetness layers into the broadleaf tobacco, softening the black pepper and adding an entirely new dimension to the chocolate, reminiscent of a complex Mexican mole. Incredibly rich and expressive, creative and multi-faceted.

Pairing score	96





CASA DRAGONES
Anejo Barrel Blend

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Blue agave tequila	NAS	New French, American Oak

Initially somewhat closed, this velvety tequila opens up to reveal almond paste, while the palate offers darker notes of blackberry and dark cherry, leading to a nutty, dark chocolate finish that brings an intriguing new perspective. A subtle balsamic hint lingers throughout, though any green notes present in the other bottling are entirely absent here. On the nose, the spirit is perhaps too restrained to fully meet the intensity of the bold yet balanced Nicaraguan tobacco. The palate, however, tells a different story: the two come together very nicely, particularly in the late sensations and the finale, where light but persistent notes of chocolate and earth echo each other with quiet elegance. The overall impression is of a refined, lighter bourbon, enriched by balsamic hints and the early-stage extractions of quality oak.

Pairing score	88



SPIRITS

"The only thing better than a bottle of rum
is two bottles of rum."
Anonymous

From Emulation to Identity

The Evolution of Contemporary Japanese Whisky.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

The contemporary evolution of Japanese whisky is best understood not as a sudden boom, but as the gradual revelation of an identity patiently shaped by time, technique, and cultural intent. For much of its history, Japanese whisky existed in a space of quiet confidence: deeply respected at home, lightly exported abroad, and largely misunderstood by the global whisky community. When international recognition finally arrived in the early twenty-first century, it did not signal invention, but recognition—the unveiling of a tradition that had long mastered the art of balance.

Japanese whisky was born from study rather than rebellion. Masataka Taketsuru's apprenticeship in Scotland provided Japan with a technical grammar—malted barley, copper pot stills, fermentation discipline, oak maturation—but grammar alone does not create poetry. From its earliest expressions at Yamazaki and Yoichi, Japanese whisky demonstrated a distinct sensibility. Climate variability, soft water, diverse yeast selection, and an instinctive pursuit of harmony subtly reshaped imported models. Where Scotch often celebrates assertiveness—peat, power, oxidative weight—Japanese whisky pursued cohesion, clarity, and internal dialogue.

Throughout the twentieth century, this philosophy found its purest expression in blending. Unlike Scotland's open market of bulk whisky exchange, Japanese producers developed in relative isolation, forcing each house to cultivate internal diversity. Suntory, Nikka, and Mars all embraced this necessity, building multiple still shapes, manipulating fermentation lengths, and maturing spirit across a wide



spectrum of cask types. The Japanese blender emerged not as a corrective technician but as a creative architect, assembling whiskies designed for precision rather than dominance. Suntory refined blending into an aesthetic discipline. At Yamazaki and Hakushu, the aim was never maximal flavor, but equilibrium: malt, grain, wood, and alcohol coexisting in deliberate proportion. Hibiki stands as the clearest embodiment of this philosophy—a whisky defined less by individual components than by resonance. Nikka, by contrast, cultivated tension. Yoichi's muscular, coal-fired distillation and Miyagikyo's aromatic elegance allowed Nikka's blends to oscillate between structure and lyricism, often finishing drier, firmer, and more overtly "whiskylike" in the Western sense. Mars Distillery occupies a quieter but no less essential position in this triad. Operated by Hombo Shuzo, Mars has long embodied adaptability rather than orthodoxy. Its role in blending has been pragmatic, flexible, and regionally informed. With distilleries at Shinshu in the Japanese Alps and Tsunuki in southern Kyushu, Mars internalized climatic contrast as a blending tool. Shinshu's high-altitude maturation produces taut, mineral, orchard-driven components; Tsunuki contributes warmth, roundness, and spiced cereal depth. Historically, Mars preserved stocks through Japan's whisky downturn, later reintegrating aged spirit into contemporary blends, quietly maintaining continuity when others could not. In the blending discourse, Mars represents a third path—less polished than Suntory, less oppositional than Nikka, but deeply expressive of place and adaptability.

The global recognition of Japanese whisky in the early 2000s brought acclaim—and crisis. Sudden demand collided with limited mature stocks, forcing the disappearance of age statements and challenging producers to articulate quality without chronology. The resulting rise of NAS whiskies was not a retreat, but an inflection point. Blending



became more transparent, cask management more intentional, and stylistic consistency more openly discussed. Age ceased to be a proxy for quality; integration became the metric.

It is within this context that Japanese single malt achieved global prominence, though not without reinterpretation. Rather than positioning single malt as a purist endpoint, Japanese producers treated it as another expressive format. Yamazaki's single malts emphasized layered subtlety; Yoichi's highlighted structure and smoke. Mars's Komagatake and Tsunuki single malts revealed the same duality present in its blends—altitude versus latitude, tension versus generosity—underscoring that single malt, in Japan, is a lens rather than a doctrine.

The emergence of Chichibu in 2008 marked a philosophical expansion. Ichiro Akuto's approach was intimate, manual, and unapologetically spirit-forward. Chichibu rejected the assumption that Japanese whisky must be reticent, proving that intensity could coexist with precision: these whiskies foreground fermentation character, barley provenance, and youthful vitality, often allowing friction between spirit and oak to remain audible. Chichibu did not replace the classical houses; it reframed the conversation, legitimizing plurality. This pluralism now defines contemporary Japanese whisky. Distilleries such as Akkeshi, Kanosuke, Shizuoka, and revived Mars sites explore regional identity with unprecedented clarity. Wood management has become increasingly nuanced, particularly with mizunara oak. Once a technical liability, mizunara is now treated as an aromatic seasoning—incense, sandalwood, temple resin—used sparingly to evoke place rather than spectacle. The emphasis remains suggestion over saturation.

Equally significant is the renewed focus on fermentation.

Longer timelines, diverse yeast strains, and lactic textures bring Japanese whisky closer to sake and delicate white wine than to robust malt archetypes. Aromas of green apple, pear skin, white peach, yuzu, and fresh cereal dominate, while alcohol integration remains paramount. Even high-proof bottlings prioritize tactility over brutal strength. In the glass, contemporary Japanese whisky reveals its philosophical core. The nose is composed, layered, and contemplative. The palate values linearity and texture over amplitude. The finish is clean, resonant, and quietly persistent, embodying the concept of ma — the meaningful space between sensations.

Today, Japanese whisky stands fully self-aware. Regulations clarifying what may be labeled "Japanese whisky" formalize an identity long earned in practice. No longer defined by imitation or novelty, it embraces coexistence: blending and single malt, industry and craft, tradition and experimentation. The evolution of contemporary Japanese whisky is ultimately a story of restraint rewarded. From emulation to articulation, from silence to voice, it offers not spectacle, but precision. Like a carefully composed dish or a minimalist garden, its greatness lies as much in what it withholds as in what it reveals.

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Chichibu

Shaping a New Legacy:
Inside the Vision and Craft of Chichibu Distillery

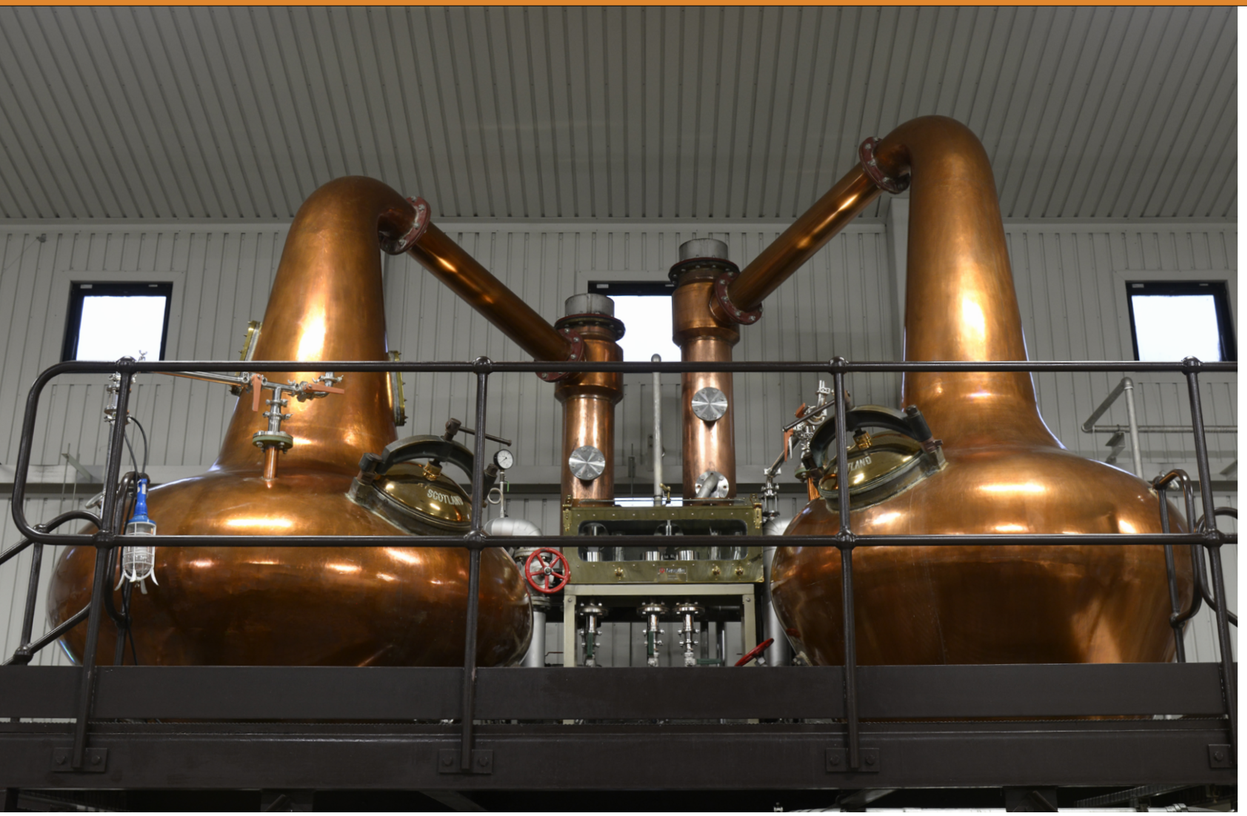
by **Simone Poggi**

Nestled in the mountainous region of Saitama, Japan, Chichibu Distillery has rapidly become one of the most respected names in modern whisky making. Founded in 2008 by Ichiro Akuto, it represents both a continuation of family tradition and a bold step forward for Japanese craft distilling. Despite its relatively young age, Chichibu has earned global recognition for its meticulous, hands-on approach and its willingness to experiment across every stage of production. In this interview with Yumi Yoshikawa, Global Brand Ambassador, we explore the philosophy, innovation, and future ambitions behind a distillery that is helping shape the next chapter of Japanese whisky.

What is the history of Chichibu?

Chichibu Distillery was founded in 2008 by Ichiro Akuto. Although relatively young, it is rooted in a long family background in whisky. Notably, it became the first distillery in Japan in 35 years to obtain an independent whisky production license, opening a new chapter for the Japanese whisky industry. Since its founding, Chichibu has focused on small-scale, hands-on production while developing its own distinctive style.





Chichibu offers numerous single casks and variations of recurring editions. Could you tell us more about your approach to releases?
As our distillery was established in 2008 and remains small in scale, we have not yet built up enough aged stock to consistently release single malts with age statements such as 10 or 20 years. In the meantime, as a dedicated whisky producer, we introduced these World blended and blended malt whiskies to showcase our house style. Looking ahead, as our Chichibu single malts continue to mature, we are considering releasing age-statement expressions as part of our core range.

Over the years, releases by independent bottlers have been very limited. What is the reason for this?
As our production volume is limited, and we also need to consider reserving casks for future maturation, the number of releases we can offer is naturally quite limited.

Could you elaborate on your approach to fermentation and how it has evolved over time?
As our distillery has only been operating for around 20 years, we are still very much in a trial-and-error phase, particularly when it comes to fermentation. There are many variables we can continue to explore—such as time, yeast, and temperature—so rather than committing to a single approach at this stage, we aim to remain flexible and keep experimenting while carefully observing the results over time.

Why did Chichibu decide to establish its own cooperage? How do you approach the use of Mizunara wood, especially considering that you use it for both marrying vats and washbacks?
Owning a cooperage was a very natural step for us. If you truly love whisky and are interested in every aspect of its production, it's only natural to become curious about cask making as well. Casks are an essential element in whisky making, and in order to manage them properly and maintain their quality over time, having our own cooperage was both a natural and important decision for us. Our use of Mizunara for both the marriage tank and Washback was largely down to chance. We had long been interested in Mizunara, and during the construction of the distillery, the company that built our Washback happened to have high-quality Mizunara on hand. Knowing of our interest, a friend there suggested we try using it. It was a great opportunity, so we did—and we also decided to use one of those vessels as a marriage tank.

What are Chibidaru casks? What makes them unique?
This is another example of something that came about by chance. We had a bourbon barrel that kept leaking from the head, and no matter what we did, we couldn't stop it. In the end, we cut off both ends and replaced them with new heads, which resulted in the 130-liter cask we now use. In terms of size, it's essentially a quarter cask, but in Japanese, “chibi” means small and “daru” means cask, so we decided to give it the nickname “Chibidaru.”

Could you share more about the thinking behind your visit to Crisp's Great Ryburgh maltings in Norfolk in 2007? Did it lay the groundwork for your decision to install a malting floor and kiln at Chichibu Distillery?
In 2007, we first visited Crisp's to source malt for production, and during that visit, we happened to come across a floor suitable for floor malting. As with cooperage, we are interested in every aspect of whisky making, so this naturally sparked our interest. We continued visiting Crisp's each year to learn, and eventually introduced our own floor malting facilities at the distillery.

What is the profile of The Floor Malted expression, made using barley malted by the Chichibu team? Are you proud of the final result?
Both Chichibu The Floor Malted 2012 and On The Way Floor Malted 2024 are made using 100% floor-malted barley produced by Ichiro and his team themselves during their training at Crisp's. It is difficult to fully express the difference compared to mechanically malted barley, but we find that it brings greater depth and complexity, along with a gentle, grain-forward character. We are very pleased with the results.

What inspired you to partner with local agricultural companies to cultivate local barley varieties such as Myogi Nijyo and Sai-no-hoshi? Have you released a bottling made exclusively from these varieties?
There were originally several buckwheat farmers in Chichibu, who typically grow their crops from summer to autumn. When they learned that we had started making whisky in the area, some of them approached us with the idea of growing barley for whisky during the winter to spring season. That's how our locally grown barley project began. Although it was released as a limited edition, we used this barley in our single malt, Chichibu Edition 2025.





In 2019, Chichibu Distillery 2 was opened, featuring direct-fire stills. Could you tell us more about it?
When we first established the distillery in 2008, we had a strong interest in traditional direct-fire distillation. However, we were also concerned about the difficulty of controlling the heat. While it was important to explore this method, maintaining the quality of our whisky was our top priority, so we felt it was still too early to attempt it at the time. After 10 years of operating our first distillery, we finally felt ready to take on the challenge, and that's when we introduced direct-fire distillation.

What is the vision behind the new grain distillery in Tomakomai, on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, opened in 2026? When can we expect releases featuring this spirit?
Currently, we produce our world blends by maturing and blending whiskies from Chichibu, as well as Scotland, Ireland, the United States, and Canada, all in Chichibu. Combining whiskies with different characteristics requires a high level of skill, but Ichiro and our blending team have achieved a very well-balanced result. However, given the uncertainty in the global situation and the potential risk of not being able to source casks from overseas in the future, we believe that producing our own grain whisky is essential. That is why we have decided to move into grain production. While it may be possible to source grain whisky domestically, particularly from other craft distilleries, we felt that to create the style we are aiming for—one that truly enhances our malt whisky—it is important to produce it ourselves. We will determine the timing of release based on maturation, but we hope to present something by around 2030.

Do you think Japanese whisky reflects Japanese society, often described as striving for quality, harmony, and ultimately perfection?
That's a great question. Yes, I believe the flavor of whisky is influenced not only by ingredients, production methods, and facilities, but also by other factors. The way it is presented as a product—especially in the case of blended whisky—often reflects the culture and character of the country it comes from.

What does the future hold for Chichibu?
We are not aiming to become a large-scale producer. Rather than focusing on numbers or size, we want to continue pursuing what we can do—and what we truly want to do—as a dedicated whisky maker. While the industry will go through different phases over time, we will keep offering whiskies that people who love whisky can genuinely enjoy. We hope to contribute to making the future of the industry an exciting one.

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INTERACTIVE

PAGE



Hurricane Cocktail

A Storm of Rum and Tropical Fruit Born in the Heat of New Orleans.

by **Mark Trumpet**

The Hurricane cocktail is one of the most iconic tropical drinks to emerge from the vibrant drinking culture of New Orleans. Its origins trace back to the 1940s at Pat O'Brien's bar in the French Quarter, during a time when whiskey was scarce but rum was abundant due to supply imbalances caused by World War II.

According to popular accounts, bar owners were required to purchase large quantities of rum in order to obtain more desirable spirits, leading to the creation of a drink that could make generous use of this surplus. The result was the Hurricane, a bold, fruit-forward cocktail served in a distinctive curved glass resembling a hurricane lamp, from which it takes its name. Initially crafted as a way to move inventory, the drink quickly gained popularity among locals and tourists alike, becoming synonymous with the city's festive spirit and indulgent atmosphere.

Over time, the Hurricane evolved from a simple blend of rum and fruit juices into a more stylized cocktail, often associated with bright colors, large servings, and a sense of escapism. At its core, the Hurricane is built around rum, typically a combination of light and dark varieties that provide both sweetness and depth. The backbone of the drink lies in its generous use of passion fruit, which delivers a lush, tangy sweetness that defines its tropical character. Fresh lemon or lime juice introduces acidity, balancing the richness of the rum and fruit while keeping the drink lively and refreshing. Sugar or simple syrup enhances the natural sweetness, while grenadine is often added for both color and a subtle pomegranate note. Some modern interpretations include orange juice or additional fruit elements, though purists tend to favor a more focused profile centered on rum and passion fruit. What distinguishes the Hurricane is its unapologetic intensity. Unlike more restrained classics, it embraces bold flavors and generous proportions, creating a drink that is both refreshing and indulgent. Early versions were simpler and less sweet than many contemporary renditions, which have sometimes drifted toward overly sugary territory. Skilled bartenders often seek to restore balance by emphasizing fresh ingredients and moderating sweetness, allowing the rum and passion fruit to shine without overwhelming the palate. These refinements highlight the drink's potential beyond its party reputation, revealing a cocktail that can be both playful and well-constructed.

Presentation plays a central role in the Hurricane's identity. Traditionally served over ice in its signature glass, it is often garnished with an orange slice and a maraschino cherry, reinforcing its vibrant, tropical appeal. The visual impact is part of the experience, evoking images of warm nights, jazz music, and the lively streets of the French Quarter. Beyond its ingredients and appearance, the Hurricane reflects the resilience and creativity of New Orleans itself. It is a drink born of necessity, transformed into a symbol of celebration and cultural identity. To enjoy a Hurricane today is to take part in a tradition rooted in history, hospitality, and a touch of excess. With its rich blend of rum and fruit, it stands as a reminder that some of the most enduring classics are born not from precision alone, but from circumstance, ingenuity, and a willingness to embrace bold flavors.

PREPARATION

Chill a hurricane glass; then fill a shaker with ice, add the light and dark rum, passion fruit syrup, freshly squeezed lemon juice, and a touch of grenadine, shake well until properly chilled, strain into the prepared glass over fresh ice, and garnish with an orange slice and a maraschino cherry before serving.

ADVICE

For a more balanced and less sweet profile, reduce the grenadine slightly and rely on fresh citrus; if you prefer a richer and more indulgent version, increase the passion fruit component for added depth and tropical intensity.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz (60 ml) light and dark rum (combined)
- 1 oz (30 ml) passion fruit syrup or purée
- 3/4 oz (22 ml) freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 oz (15 ml) grenadine
- Ice
- Optional garnish: orange slice and maraschino cherry

GLASS

Hurricane glass.

TASTE

"A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook,
must bring soul to the recipe."
Thomas Keller





Smoked Salmon

A refined and historical way of tasting this popular fish features many hidden info which are interesting and good to know for a gourmand looking after the best possible experience.

by **Simone Poggi**

Salmon is somewhat misleading. Different species are often referred to as "Salmon". The Salmo Salar species, also known as Atlantic salmon, is primarily found in the North Atlantic. This is by far the most commonly available salmon.

The salmon present in the Pacific does not belong to the genus Salmo but includes several species of the genus Oncorhynchus (Nerka and Tschawytscha being the most popular, with common names such as king salmon, silver salmon, Coho salmon, and sockeye salmon). These salmon live from Alaska to California, from Japan to Russia, and are mainly leaner, more intensely colored, and more flavourful.

Salmon has been smoked for centuries, and for good reason. Smoking is an ancient food preservation technique: it is said that man discovered it by chance even in prehistoric times. According to some reconstructions, primitive men dried the hunted meat by hanging it in the caves where they lived; in doing so, they inadvertently exposed it to the heat of the fire they lit to warm themselves and to the smoke rising from it. Fish came immediately after.

Man began to appreciate the particular aroma this treatment imparted to food and, over the centuries, further refined the technique, culminating in the construction of dedicated smokehouses.

Today, many different preservation techniques can be applied to meat and fish, and it is fair to say that smoking is still used more for the final product's organoleptic characteristics than for its technical preservation capabilities. This does not mean that smoked salmon needs to necessarily taste or smell of smoke.

When it comes to sourcing, whether the fish is obtained by caught fishing (which is equivalent to wild) or farmed, it is mandatory to indicate on the label of the finished product, at least in Europe. Salmon has always been fished in the North Seas in Europe, but if we consume it in large quantities today, it is due to farming. The first experiments date back to the nineteenth century in Great Britain for the purpose of increasing wild populations for fishing, but it was in Norway that in 1964 the MOWI company, on the small and uninhabited island of Varaldsøy, developed floating cages for offshore farming, very similar to those still used today.



The system worked very efficiently. Production grew so much that, since the 1970s, the country has overproduced and thus turned to the largest consumers of fish, the Japanese, laying the groundwork for the very famous, yet recent, salmon sushi. Today, it represents the second-largest economy in Norway after gas and oil.

For most of the available products, the breeding areas are mainly Norway, Scotland, and Iceland -- where the methods are the same, as well as the species, mostly Salmo Salar (aka Atlantic salmon). Farms must comply with very strict national and European standards to meet requirements for the environment, food safety, and quality. Fish are fed with feed consisting of a good percentage, up to 70%, of flours of vegetable origin (soy, corn, etc.) and a smaller percentage of meal of animal origin (mainly fish meal and oil). The management of health-related aspects, including the use of drugs or disinfectant products, must comply with regulations, and there must be no residues in the final product. However, for many aspects related to animal welfare and environmental impact, there is no specific EU legislation on aquaculture. The most reliable farms in this sense are those in Norway, because this nation, which sees fish products as a fundamental resource, has adopted legislation on aquaculture that regulates aspects such as density (fish must not occupy more than 2.5% of the volume of cages) and other parameters useful for improving their welfare. The farms are monitored by fixed cameras; antibiotic use is reduced to minimal levels because the fish are treated with vaccines, and controls are rigorous. All activities are managed with great transparency. In the rest of Europe, only farms following the specifications of organic aquaculture are subject to sustainability controls, for aspects such as respect for animal welfare (considering, for example, the density of fish), that of the environment (distance between farms), and feed (of organic origin or deriving from certified sustainable fishing). Over the years, attention to the welfare of fish on farms has definitely improved because sensitivity to this aspect has grown, and it has also been recognized that fish raised without stress do not get sick, or get sick less often.

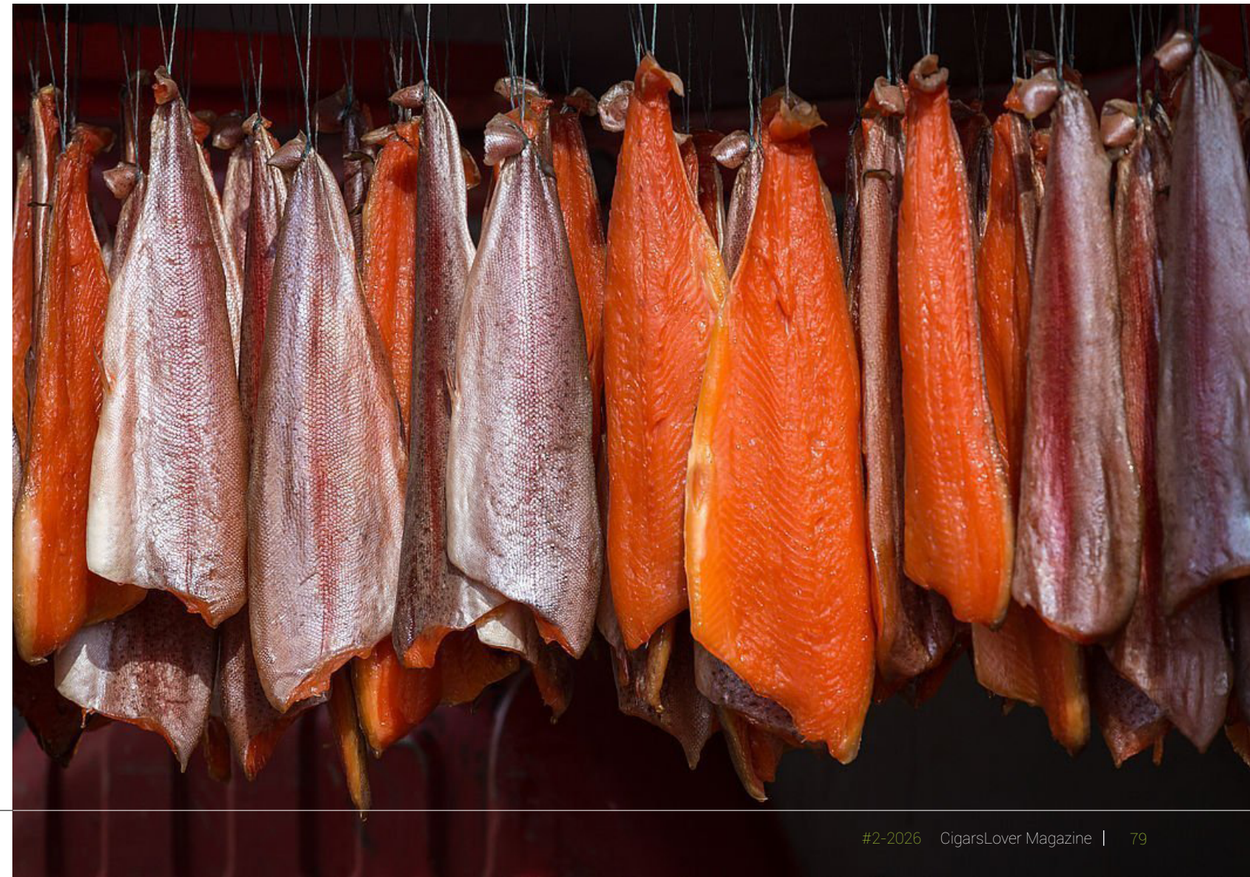
A little different is the approach of farms in Chile, where regulations differ from those of the European Union, and antibiotic use is said to be much more intensive. For specific reasons, wild salmon are mainly Pacific species, often fished in Alaska. Very few examples of wild salmon belong to the Salmo Salar species. Many photographs that compare farmed fish and wild fish therefore fail to consider that they are two distinct genera, and that each genus has its own distinctive flesh color, even among the same species.

Before looking at how smoked salmon is made, it is worth understanding what happens to the fish before it even reaches the smokehouse. Several steps are involved in the preparation of smoked salmon, and the entire process -- including blast chilling and freezing -- matters as much as the smoking itself. The first important requirement is that the fish be free of parasites. Anisakis, in particular, is an intestinal parasite that affects fish that feed on other fish affected by the parasite and can be harmful to humans. As we have seen, salmon can be caught or farmed. There is no way to ensure caught fish are Anisakis- and other parasite-free; thus, the only way to ensure the product is healthy is to blast chill the fish when caught. All caught salmon is blast-chilled.

The situation is different for farmed fish. Farmed salmon do not feed on fish but on processed feed, so they cannot contract this parasite. It is thus not necessary to blast chill the fish. Some are, some are not. Norwegian salmon, in particular, is guaranteed to be free of the Anisakis parasite at the point of origin through feed control and genetic selection. One could spot this non-blast-chilled salmon by reading the label, which will indicate "Processed from Fresh Fish" or similar. Be reminded that there is no regulation forcing the mention of blast chilling on the label.

When the final product is ready and packed, another situation must be addressed. The demand for smoked salmon can vary over time. To cope with this, the final product can be frozen and defrosted as needed for longer-term storage. The indication for freezing (different from blast chilling, which can be done at the beginning of the process) must be present on the label.

The production process itself is complex, and to create a



quality product, many steps must be carefully controlled. To make the best smoked salmon, the freshest fish possible is needed; it is all about freshness. The purpose is to concentrate the flavor and preserve it. To preserve the fish, moisture needs to be removed because that is where bacterial activity occurs. This process starts when the fish is sliced and filleted. The fillets are skewered and hooked with a string to hang and air-dry after the curing process.

The salmon is then salted. The wording on the label "dry salted" means that sea salt has been sprinkled on the surface of the fillets as the traditional method requires. Cheaper methods that affect overall quality, such as salting by immersion or brine injection, are reserved for products with a lower final price. This results in a slightly slimy smoked salmon. No sugar is typically used in the curing process, though some lower-quality products may use it. After curing is complete, the fillets are rinsed, air-dried, and then placed in kilns for several more hours, where they lose an additional 10% of their weight. When the salmon's skin is tacky, that is when it is ready to be smoked.

The smoke consists of very fine dust particles that adhere to the outside of the salmon, forming a seal. This smoking process uses solid oak logs, which are burned by friction, allowing the smoke level to be controlled. "Wood smoking" or the indication "smoke" among the ingredients means that the product has been made using a traditional method by exposure to smoke produced by wood. Otherwise, the use of "smoke flavoring" should be indicated as an ingredient when the flavor has been conferred by means of liquid smoke (by spraying). The method is much cheaper, legal, and regulated, but it affects the taste, of course, and the price.

After smoking, the smoky crust and any imperfections are removed, and the pin bones are extracted from special products by hand, whereas in most of the industry these processes are now done by machinery. Some of the brown imperfections on low-quality products are there as extra weight. The salmon is then carefully sliced and packaged for dispatch. One final distinction worth understanding is

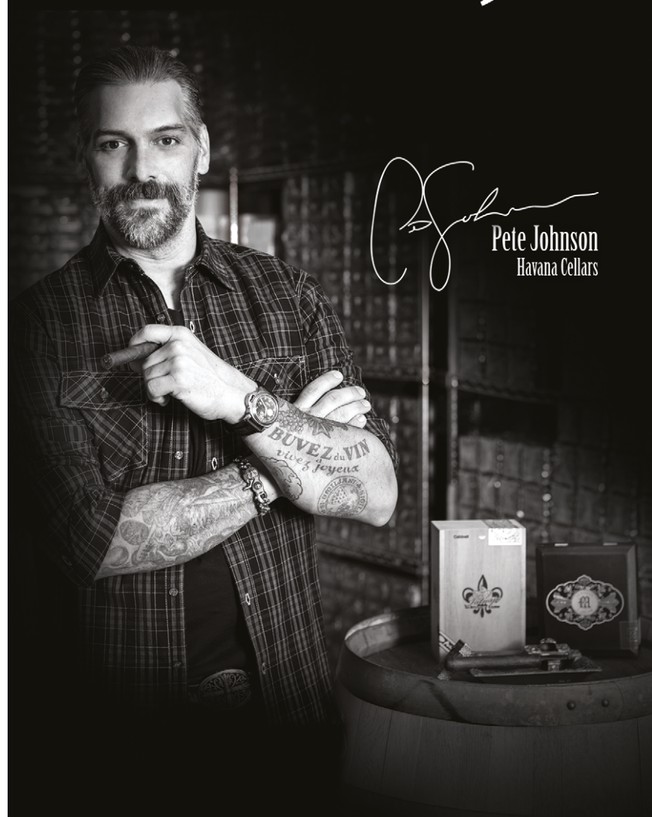
whether the smoked salmon is cold- or hot-smoked, as the two methods produce very different results. Cold-smoked salmon is smoked at 70-85 F, so it is not fully cooked. This results in a bright color, delicate texture, and bold flavor. Cold smoking is a method popular throughout the north-eastern United States, Scandinavia, and the British Isles. This method is often referred to as Nova smoked salmon in New York City and the surrounding regions. Smoldering wood is used indirectly in this process to keep the heat low during the smoke. In the modern process, large industrial fans are used in the cold-smoking ovens, which keep the air continually circulating. This is done to facilitate the removal of moisture from the fish, which is crucial for curing and can take up to 20 hours. For this reason, the salmon is not technically cooked, although it is cured in a way that makes it ready to eat. This low temperature ensures that the fish's proteins will not be denatured, as they would be at higher cooking temperatures. That is why cold-smoked salmon retains the smooth, silky texture of raw salmon, without technically being raw like sushi, for example. Cold smoking is not a cooking process but instead a curing process, a method much in the same vein as that used to produce certain fine charcuterie.

Hot-smoked salmon is similarly cured but is smoked at a temperature of 180-200 F until its internal temperature reaches 145 F. Because it is fully cooked, it has a firm, flaky flesh and a strong, smoky flavor. Hot smoking is a method popular in the northwestern United States, Canada, and Germany. The process involves higher heat, and more direct smoke contact is required. The hot smoking process necessitates an ambient heat of no less than 180 F within the ovens and requires a far shorter smoking time. When salmon is hot-smoked, the raw material is actually cooked in the same way one would cook a piece of salmon in the oven. The result is a deliciously flaky product, more like a roasted salmon fillet, with the added flavor of smoke. Hot-smoked salmon is often called kippered salmon or baked salmon.

Popular wood varieties for both smoking methods are cherry, apple, hickory, and oak.



tatuaje



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Where Bottles Rest

For those who genuinely keep bottles rather than merely owning them.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

A well-kept cellar is not a warehouse. It is a controlled environment designed to preserve time, not to defeat it. For the wine and whisky lover, the cellar is a quiet collaborator: it does not improve great liquids, but it allows them to become what they were meant to be. Getting it right requires understanding physics, chemistry, and a little humility.

Cellaring whisky and other spirits may appear counterintuitive, given the common assertion that spirits do not age once bottled. Chemically, this is correct: maturation driven by wood extraction and oxidation ceases at bottling. Yet cellaring is not about inducing change; it is about preserving integrity across decades. Alcohol is a powerful solvent, and aromatic compounds in whisky—esters, phenols, aldehydes—are volatile and sensitive to heat, light, and oxygen ingress. Poor storage accelerates evaporation, lowers fill levels, and flattens





aromatic definition, especially in high-ester or heavily peated styles. A stable, cool, dark cellar slows these degradative processes, ensuring that a 30- or 40-year-old bottling tastes as close as possible to the whisky the distiller and blender intended at release. Beyond preservation, cellaring spirits makes sense from a cultural and technical standpoint. Many historic whiskies, rums, and brandies were bottled with closures, glass compositions, and filtration standards inferior to those used today. Long-term upright storage in controlled conditions protects fragile corks from alcohol degradation while minimizing ullage and contamination risk. Moreover, spirits often gain contextual value over time: closed distilleries, discontinued marques, changes in peat sourcing, yeast strains, or distillation regimes all turn a well-cellared bottle into a liquid document. In this sense, the cellar functions as an archive rather than a laboratory. The goal is not evolution but fidelity—holding a spirit while the world around it changes, so that when it is finally opened, it offers not novelty, but authenticity.

Temperature is the single most important variable. For wine, the ideal range lies between 11 °C and 14 °C (52/57 °F), with 12 °C (53,5 °F) often cited as the point of equilibrium. More important than the absolute number is stability. Daily or seasonal fluctuations stress the liquid, causing expansion and contraction that can compromise cork integrity and accelerate oxidation. A cellar that drifts gently by one degree over months is far superior to one that swings five degrees in a week. Whisky is more forgiving but not indifferent. While it does not evolve in bottle the way wine does, excessive heat increases evaporation (the so-called “angel’s share” continues even after bottling) and can dull aromatic precision. A stable range between 15 °C and 18



°C (59/64,5 °F) is ideal, though whisky happily coexists in a wine cellar if heat spikes are avoided.

Humidity is not about the liquid; it is about the closure. For cork-sealed wines, 65–75% relative humidity keeps corks elastic and airtight. Too dry, and corks shrink, allowing oxygen ingress; too humid, and labels mold while capsules corrode. Whisky closures, usually synthetic or screw caps, are less sensitive, but long-term dryness can still degrade older corks found on vintage bottles. A hygrometer is not optional. It is as essential as a thermometer, and both should be checked periodically rather than trusted blindly. Ultraviolet light is destructive, particularly to wine. It triggers photochemical reactions that flatten aromas and can cause the infamous “light strike,” especially in delicate whites and sparkling wines. Darkness is not romanticism; it is necessity. Lighting should be low-intensity, preferably LED, and activated only when needed. Whisky is less vulnerable but not immune. Prolonged light exposure can bleach color and subtly alter volatile compounds. If bottles are displayed, rotation and shielding matter.

Wine bottles with natural corks must be stored horizontally to keep the cork in contact with the liquid. This prevents drying and maintains a tight seal. Whisky bottles, by contrast, should always be stored upright. High alcohol levels can degrade cork material over time, leading to crumbling or contamination if kept in contact. Shelving should be vibration-free. Constant micro-vibrations—from appliances, traffic, or poorly mounted racks—can disturb sediment in wine and accelerate chemical reactions. Concrete floors and solid wood or metal racks outperform decorative solutions every time. Wine and spirits can coexist, but high-value or particularly fragile bottles deserve separation. Old

Burgundies and peated Islay whiskies should not share cramped airspace if avoidable; aromatic cross-contamination is rare but not mythical. Fire resistance, flood risk, and power-failure contingencies should be considered in serious collections. Passive cellars outperform electric ones during outages. A cellar should smell of nothing. Mold, fuel, paint, or cleaning chemicals can all permeate corks over long periods. Good ventilation without drafts is ideal. Cleanliness matters not for aesthetics but for control: dust retains moisture, mold spreads silently, and pests find shelter where neglect accumulates.

A serious cellar is catalogued. Whether via specialized software or a disciplined spreadsheet, every bottle should be tracked by producer, vintage, bottling date, provenance, and optimal drinking window. This is not bureaucracy; it prevents the two cardinal sins of cellaring: opening bottles too early and forgetting them too long. For whisky, note fill level and bottling strength. Evaporation over decades can be significant, and ullage is a key indicator of storage quality. Building a cellar selection is an exercise in foresight rather than accumulation. For wine, this means understanding which bottles are structurally capable of aging—those with sufficient acidity, tannin, extract, or sugar to evolve rather than simply endure. Vintage charts and critics' scores are useful tools, but they are secondary to style and intent. A cellar benefits from verticals that reveal evolution, horizontals that compare terroirs or producers within the same year, and a deliberate mix of short-, medium-, and long-term bottles. This stratification prevents the cellar from becoming either a museum or a convenience store. Mature bottles should always be in dialogue with those still on their journey. For whisky and other spirits, selection is driven less by aging potential and more by historical, technical, and stylistic relevance. Bottlings that mark transitions—changes in ownership, distillery upgrades, shifts in cask policy, or the end of age statements—deserve priority. High-





strength releases, non-chill-filtered bottlings, and single-cask expressions often reward long-term storage by retaining aromatic precision better than heavily processed counterparts. Equally important is restraint: duplicates are justified only when one bottle is intended for near-term drinking and another for long-term preservation. A thoughtful spirits cellar, like a wine cellar, reflects a point of view. It is not defined by rarity alone, but by coherence, memory, and the quiet confidence that every bottle has earned its place.

A cellar is not about hoarding. It is about intent. Every bottle should have a reason to be there: to mature, to wait for a moment, or to tell a story. Wine rewards patience with transformation; whisky rewards patience with preservation. Confusing the two leads to disappointment. In the end, the best cellar is one you trust enough to forget about. When conditions are right, intervention becomes unnecessary. The bottles rest, time does its work, and when one is finally opened, it speaks clearly—not of storage mistakes, but of origin, craft, and the quiet discipline of having waited well.

中国杂志

Available in:
ENGLISH
CHINESE





Blind Tasting

98 SPIRITS
100 Rum
106 Whisky

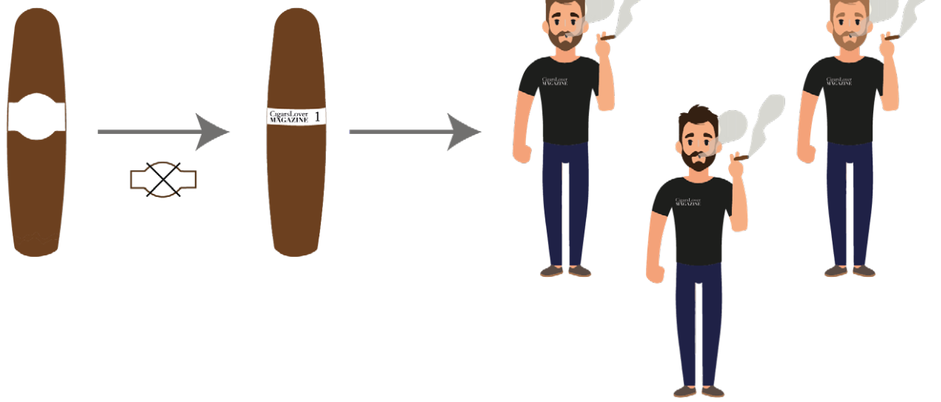
112 CIGARS
113 Double Corona/Churchill
116 Gordo
121 Robusto
125 Toro





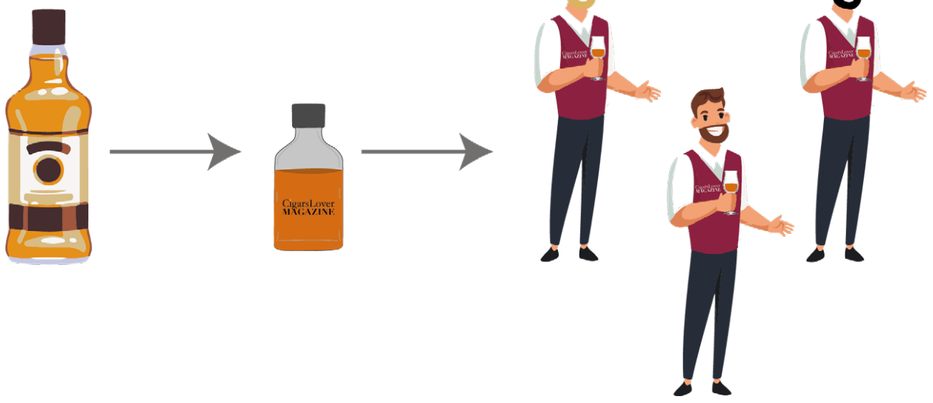


HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?



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

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





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

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

Cigars & Spirits Results



1

KAVALAN
Solist Fino Sherry

2

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

3

INTENSE AND COMPLEX

4

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

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

94

5

Legend

All the information in the blind tasting

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

1 Spirit image.

2 Name of the spirit reviewed.

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

3

• COUNTRY: where the spirit is made.

• ABV-PROOF: percentage of alcohol contained in the spirit.

• PRICE:
$ less than $50
$$ between $50 and $100
$$$ between $100 and $250
$$$$ above $250

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

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



Rum



MHOBA
Umganu

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
South Africa	64.9% | 129.8	$$

HEADY AND UNTAMED

Vanilla, lime, jasmine, and warm sugarcane opens the nose, with an impressive intensity. White flowers and fresh grass emerge on aeration. On the palate, lively, with spearmint, anise, ginger, liquorice, and honeyed depth. Agave, lemon, and earthy notes linger long on the finish.

A singular and bold rum. The flavor profile delivers a unique character. Complex and deep.

92



BIELLE
Brut de Fût 2016

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Marie-Galante	54.2% | 108.4	$$$

BOLD AND STRUCTURED

Candied citrus, orange oil, marzipan, and sponge cake are followed by vegetal nuances. On the palate, vibrant visou, salty and peppery notes, and a quiet mineral depth. The finish is very long, with orange peel, patisserie, crème brûlée smoke, and toasted almonds.

Rich and nicely structured, with a wide flavor profile that delivers genuine depth and character.

92



PLANTERAY
Paraguay 2014
Cask 14/20

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Paraguay	46.5% | 93	$$

TROPICAL AND FRAGRANT

Citrus, green mango, and pineapple open the nose with vivid tropical freshness, followed by a hint of cardamom. On the palate, round and rich, with fragrant tropical fruit, vanilla, oak, and a touch of roasted notes, slightly dry. The finish is medium-long, with pepper, oak, and vanilla.

A singular rum mixing tropical sweetness and spices in a bold and structured flavor profile.

90



CHALONG BAY
Lunar Series
#4 – Snake

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Thailand	67.8% | 135.6	$$

SILKY AND LUMINOUS

Baked apple and sweet caramel open the nose with delicate refinement. On the palate, silky and beautifully layered, with yellow stone fruit, brioche, and vanilla on a lightly sweet base. The finish is woody, well-integrated, and persistent, closing with depth and finesse.

A refined and elegant rum of complex, evolving character, with a remarkable structure.

90



ISAUTIER
Antoinette

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

RICH AND RESOLVED

Stone fruit, pastry, and vanilla are followed by richer notes of spice, dark chocolate, and cigar box. On the palate, rich and creamy, with stone fruits, chocolate, ginger, and beeswax. Vanilla, warm wood, and cocoa linger on an expressive, long finish.

A deep and characterful rum of considerable poise, where maturation deliver intensity and complexity.

89



HABITATION VELIER
Hampden HES 2019

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	60.5% | 121	$$$

POWERFUL AND ZESY

Plantain banana and fresh cane sugar open the nose with remarkable elegance, followed by exotic fruit and heady floral notes. On the palate, distinguished and fleshy, with greengage plum, vanilla, cut hay, cinnamon, and a bright citrus lift. Long and rich on the finish.

A vibrant and expressive rum, where a high ester character deliver, layered complexity.

89



PAPA ROUYO
Jénérasyon Doilo
5 Year Old

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

PROMISING AND FRAGRANT

Honeyed pastry and mandarin orange peel are rounded off by cinnamon and clove. On the palate, jammy fruit and buttery pastry emerge mid-palate, with clean cane juice and caramel. The finish is pleasant and clean with a hint of anise, though shorter than the nose suggests.

Better performing on the nose, the palate thins and stops short of fully delivering the opening's promise.

88



DILLON
Canne Bleue

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	50% | 100	$

EARTHY AND CANDIED

Fresh sugarcane and citrus open the nose, with dry, peppery vegetal notes and a roundness from the candied cane. On the palate, natural cane juice leading into spice and earthy, slightly farmy depth. The finish is long, round, and vegetal with pleasant persistence.

A rustic character, where cane variety and volcanic soil express themselves with authenticity.

88



DEPAZ
L'Âme de la Montagne

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	50.5% | 101	$$

PURE AND MINERAL

Ripe sugarcane, lychee, forest honey, and gingerbread open the nose with rich delicacy. On the palate, silky and mineral, combining roundness and freshness, with a lovely interplay of cane juice and terroir. The finish is long and vibrant, marked by a persistent freshness.

A mineral character, where altitude and volcanic soil deliver a pure and refined sense of place.

88



SAVANNA
L'Absolu 2025

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Réunion Island	58% | 116	$$$

BOLD AND HARMONIOUS

Candied fruit, red berries, and a touch of rancio open the nose, enriched with hazelnuts and elegant woody notes. On the palate, full-bodied and lively, oscillating between fruity sweetness, vanilla, and woody finesse. The finish is long and balanced, subtly harmonising fruit and oak.

A rich, and expressive rum, delivering a nicely structured and harmonious flavor profile.

87



KARUKERA
L'Empyrhum #4

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadeloupe	47.5% | 95	$$$

FRESH AND CONTAINED

Fresh oak and spice open the nose with a distinctive brightness, alongside light vanilla and nutty undertones. On the palate, dry and round, with wood, spices, caramel, and a citrus lift growing as the tasting progresses. The finish is medium-long, peppery, and toasty.

A rhum with an individual oak character, though complexity and depth remain somewhat restrained.

86



DBM
VO

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Seychelles	43% | 86	$

WARM AND ACCESSIBLE

Honey, acacia blossom, vanilla, and pastry flan opens with gentle warmth. Toasted wood and salted caramel add depth. On the palate, fatty and round, with caramel, pear, and fruity undertones. The finish is pleasant and warm, though somewhat brief and less structured than expected.

A smooth and inviting rum of honest, accessible character, though it leaves you wanting a touch more depth.

84

DIPLOMÁTICO
— The Heart Of Rum —
MANTUANO
RESERVA EXCLUSIVA
PLANAS

Whisky





GLENMORANGIE
The Altus
25 Year Old

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

OPULENT AND HONEYED

Rose petal and orange blossom open the nose, joined by ripe peach, vanilla, dark honey, and almond. On the palate, it is oily and generous, layered with mandarin, pear, butterscotch, and a lift of gooseberry brightness. Orchard fruit, honeyed oak, and powdered sugar linger on the finish.

It delivers a remarkable depth, where fruit and honeyed sweetness intertwine with grace. Incredibly smooth.

93



GLENFARCLAS
25 Year Old

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

RICH AND SATISFYING

Dark dried fruits and orange peel open on the nose, with vanilla, nutmeg, and sherry-soaked oak. Fruitcake and hazelnuts follow, with a lift of mint. On the palate, full and chewy, layered with oily citrus, stewed fruit, gingerbread, and dark chocolate. Dry oak and spice mark the finish.

It boast a deep and structured flavor profile, where fruit and wood find natural balance.

92



THY WHISKY
PX & Oloroso

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Denmark	49.5% | 99	$$

COMPLEX AND BOLD

Dried figs, pecan nuts, panforte, and gooseberry open the nose, followed by dark fruit, earth, and vegetal depth. Leather and a hint of smoke add intrigue. On the palate, bold dark fruit, dried fruit, and chocolate carry through. The finish is medium-long with dark fruit and vegetal nuances.

A bold and rich expression with a layered profile that rewards patience with complexity and character.

90



PUNI
Arte Limited Edition No. 4

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

WINEY AND VELVETY

Gently winey on the nose, with petrichor, a whisper of smoke, and soft malty aromas. On the palate, it is round and smooth, with cereal biscuits and grapefruit on a lightly sweet base. Chocolate completes the profile. Smoky notes and fine spices linger on a medium-long finish.

A Well-balanced whisky, where complexity and integrated aromas come together with effortless ease.

90



KILCHOMAN
Sanaig

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

SMOKY AND ABUNDANT

Heather, raisins, and ripe plums open the nose, joined by orange peel, earthy peat, and coastal freshness. Dark fruit and espresso add depth. On the palate, barbecue smoke, toffee, dark chocolate, and citrus peel. Brown sugar and cinnamon carry through a long peat-laced finish.

A rich and warming whisky, where smoke and dried fruit intertwine, creating a rich flavor profile.

89



SANTA FE
Original Mesquite

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

SMOKY AND SINGULAR

Vanilla, oak, and spice open the nose, alongside citrus peel and warm baking spices. A dry character runs quietly beneath. On the palate, it is vibrant and slightly dry, with wood, cereals, smoke, and a touch of cocoa. Warm smoke and smoky wood linger on a medium-long finish.

A bold and distinctive malt, with a unique flavor profile, boasting complex and lingering aromas.

89



WHISKEY ACRES
Rye Bottled in Bond

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

CREAMY AND VELVETY

Cereals, vanilla, and baking spices open the nose with quiet simplicity. On the palate, incredibly smooth and well-integrated, with white pepper, malt, cereal biscuits, a touch of oak, and toasted notes. The finish is long, creamy, and buttery, where the whiskey finds its fullest expression.

A buttery and velvety rye, with a round and creamy depth that confidently takes centre stage.

88



GLENDALOUGH
Single Cask Madeira Cask Finish

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	42% | 84	$

LIGHT AND GRACEFUL

Exotic fruits, wood resin, orange zest, and a touch of nutmeg open the nose. On the palate, it is smooth and light, with vanilla, ripe plums, gentle wood, and a barely perceptible touch of black pepper. Soft oak and vanilla carry through the medium-short finish.

Light, balanced and elegant, this whiskey delivers a refined and easy-to-appreciate character.

88



THE ENGLISH
Sherry Cask Matured Single Malt

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

ROUNDED AND INVITING

Beeswax, vanilla pod, berries, dates, and oak open the nose, with a touch of cloves. On the palate, it is smooth and round, with vanilla, toasted notes, biscuits, rich oak, and a hint of cocoa. A gentle mix of spice and a whisper of cocoa carry through a medium finish.

An approachable profile, delivering a smooth and easy-drinking character with a nicely broad flavour range.

87



CALLINGTON MILL
El Sol

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

WARM AND PROMISING

Dried fruits and crème brûlée open the nose, joined by coffee, cacao, and quiet vanilla from the Jerez casks. On the palate, smooth and rounded, with dark chocolate and dried fruit, though the texture falls slightly short of the depth the nose implies. The finish is warm but brief.

A likeable dram that holds together well on the surface, though it lacks the depth to fully satisfy.

85



GALAAD
Origine Millésime 2020

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

ELEGANT AND SHALLOW

Vanilla cream, dry biscuit, and nougat open the nose, with salted caramel on aeration and a subtle floral lift. On the palate, ample but somewhat one-dimensional, with roasted cereals, honey, and a quiet iodine thread. The finish is pleasant but shorter and simpler than the nose suggests.

A malt of pastry character, that lacks in terms of complexity and depth. The finish is rather short.

84



AMRUT
Bagheera

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
India	42% | 84	$

BASIC AND LIMITED

Toasty cereals get developed, followed by berries, raisin and stone fruit. A hint of sandalwood is perceivable. On the palate, citrus peel and orchard fruit alternates, followed by raisin and leather. Ginger close on a rather short finish.

An approachable malt, with a sherry influence that feels restrained and the profile lacks structure.

82

Habanos
DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN PROTEGIDA
DOP
INTERTABAK
OFFICIAL HABANOS IMPORTER
SWITZERLAND
www.INTERTABAK.com

Legend

All the information inside the blind tastings

To place cigars inside of an ample rating scale, we adopt a scoring system made of 100 points. The rating of each cigar is made by the average given score by the reviewers. Blind tasting means every cigar is smoked without knowing what the cigar is. No information about the brand, blend or size are given. This is the only way to evaluate cigars objectively.



ADVENTURA
Royal Return King's Gold Robusto

COMPLEX AND RICH

It releases cocoa and citrus, enriched with earth and a touch of incense. The base is honeyed. Then, it continues with spicy notes of white pepper, which gradually become more intense, culminating in hot spices.

3 95 4

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

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

1 Cigar picture.

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

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

4 Flag identifying the country where the cigar is made.

Cuba · Dominican Rep. · Nicaragua · Honduras · Mozambique · Mexico

U.S.A. · Costa Rica · Italy · Philippines · Cina · Haiti

5
- STRENGTH: described on a scale from "●" (lightest) to "●●●●●" (strongest).
- SIZE: ring gauge (1/64 of inch) and legnth, written in both millimiters and inches.
- PRICE: cigar price in US Dollar and Euro.
- WRAPPER: the external leaf.
- BINDER: the leaf under the wrapper.
- FILLER: the leaves inside the cigar.

Churchill/Double C.





TATUAJE THE MUMMY REDUX

NUTTY AND HARMONIOUS

Fine wood, nuts, spices, and a citrus hint are present in the beginning. Walnut and vegetal nuances develop later on. Balsamic aromas emerge in the finale.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	47×190mm (7 ½")	$13 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



DAVIDOFF W. CHURCHILL LATE HOUR CHURCHILL

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

Pepper, wood, spices, and a mineral nuance lead the way. Subtle sweetness and earthy notes emerge alongside nuts. Earth, nuts, and spices are confirmed in the finale.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	48x178mm (7")	$31.2 | €33.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



RAMON ALLONES GIGANTES

CREAMY AND REFINED

Roasted notes lead the opening, joined by hazelnut and fine wood. Gentle spices emerge over a lightly sweet base, while a touch of cocoa rounds out the finish.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	49x194mm (7 ⅝")	$ 26.1 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



VIVA LA VIDA CONNECT. CHURCHILL

FLAVORFUL AND BALANCED

Pepper and baking spices lead the way alongside citrus. Walnut develops through the smoke, with creamy nuances rounding off the flavor profile.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x178mm (7")	$16 | €-

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



STOIC WISDOM

CREAMY AND SMOOTH

A creamy start with white pepper and walnut. The profile stays balanced and smooth throughout, delivering a refined and nuanced experience from start to finish.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	48x178mm (7")	$14 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., U.S.A., N/A



LA CAPITANA CHURCHILL

NUANCED AND SUBTLE

Faint spices and cream lead the way, followed by faint citrus. Paprika develops alongside lemon zest. Cream and paprika persist, closing on a faint mineral note.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x178mm (7")	$12.5 | €12

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



PEREZ CARRILLO LA HISTORIA E-III

DARK AND HARMONIOUS

Light pepper and earthy nuts start off the smoke, joined by oak. A dried fruit sweetness emerges. Dark chocolate and espresso develop in the second half of the smoke.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x175mm (6 ⅞")	$14.8 | €15.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



ELADIO DÍAZ LXXII AN. NORTH AND SOUTH ED.

EARTHY AND NUANCED

Earth and florals lead with moderate pepper and fine cedar. Toast, coffee, nuts, and dried fruits enrich the profile later on. Mineral nuances appear towards the end.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x165mm (6 ½")	$25 | €17.9

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

Gordo



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.



PLASENCIA ALMA DEL CIELO AMANECER

COMPLEX AND BALANCED

Fine wood and white pepper open. Earth joins as pepper intensifies. Nutmeg and vegetal nuances enrich the middle. Balsamic hints close out the smoke.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	$30.5 | €29.50

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ORIENT SAMARCANDE

LAYERED AND RICH

Cocoa and toasted notes lead the way alongside nuts. Leather and a distinct walnut note develop later on. Balsamic, coffee, and subtle creaminess round off a rich finale.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	$ - | €29

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	PERU	COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



MI QUERIDA GORILA GORDO

BOLD AND FLAVORFUL

Pepper, leather, earth, and nuts define the profile from start to finish, delivering a straightforward yet satisfying combination throughout.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	$15.65 | €-

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



HR BLUE GORDO

INTENSE AND EVOLVING

Cedar, roasted nuts, and spice set the tone. Cocoa, coffee, and caramel deepen the profile later on. Earthiness and a mineral nuance close out the cigar.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	60x152mm (6")	$ - | €20.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



LONG LIVE THE QUEEN FORBIDDEN FRUIT CLARO

NUANCED AND SMOOTH

Honey, nuts, and citrus take the lead in the opening. Cedar wood is added further in. White pepper adds a gentle spiciness in the second half of the smoke.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	$16.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



TATUAJE FAUSTO FT187

BOLD AND SPICY

Spice and leather lead the way. Earth and wood develop further into the smoke. Balsamic nuances emerge before the spice surges again, closing the smoke boldly.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	60x187mm (7 ⅜")	$13 | €17.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ZINO NICARAGUA GORDO

BALANCED AND CREAMY

Pepper and cedar lead the opening, followed by coffee. Nuts, leather, and cream develop as pepper fades. Milk coffee and cocoa close out the smoke.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	60x152mm (6")	$8.7 | €9.7

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



RAÍCES CUBANAS GRD3 660

BOLD BUT CONTAINED

Herbs and mild spices lead a muted start. Citrus and black pepper develop alongside baking powder. Later, it changes to damp wood and mineral notes on an acidic base.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	60x152mm (6")	$10 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS

1000+ CIGARS TESTED EVERY YEAR

PAGE

FIND CIGARS

Robusto





LA AURORA DOMINICANA ROBUSTO

93

BOLD AND SPICY

Black pepper, nutmeg, and cloves burst onto the palate. Piquant peaks and vegetal nuances follow. Licorice adds depth. Earth joins later, completing a bold and spicy profile.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x136mm (5 ⅜")	$ - | €13.7

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



HORACIO MADURO HM V

91

DARK AND INTENSE

Charred wood, black pepper, and licorice lead boldly. Cream and caramel develop alongside one another. Espresso and cedar deepen the profile towards the end.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x120mm (4 ¾")	$ - | €12.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



PEREZ CARRILLO ENDURE ROBUSTO

91

FLAVORFUL AND UNIQUE

Citrus, hazelnut, and cinnamon lead the way. Herbal notes and a creamy nuance develop through the second third. Cinnamon gives way to black pepper in a flavorful finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$18 | €19

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CAMEROON	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



ROCKY PATEL THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY ROBUSTO

90

BOLD AND DEFINED

Black pepper and earth take the lead alongside wood and walnut. A mineral hint creeps in the second half. The profile intensifies and grows spicier towards the finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x136mm (5 ⅜")	$ 18 | €-

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



DAVIDOFF GRAND CRU ROBUSTO

90

CREAMY AND ELEGANT

A well-defined creaminess leads the way, with nuts and a hint of chocolate alongside. Baking spices and wood develop. Elegant floral tones round out the smoke in the end.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	52x133mm (5 ¼")	$27.9 | €24.2

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



RAÍCES CUBANAS CLÁSICO ROBUSTO

89

HERBAL AND EVOLVING

Nuts, herbs, and vegetal notes set the tone with a light sweetness. Black pepper moves to the foreground. Herbs turn balsamic, rounding off a well-layered finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$7.3 | €8.1

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS



CIGARKINGS MADURO ROBUSTO

88

DARK AND EVOLVING

Earth and dark berries lead the opening. Vegetal and balsamic notes take over as the cigar progresses. Black pepper returns late. Dark berries resurface in the finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ - | € 9.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	N/A	NICARAGUA



GILBERT DE MONTSALVAT CLASSIC ROBUSTO

87

HERBAL AND MILD

Green tea, grass, and bread set a delicate tone. Faint spice lingers in the background. Floral notes emerge later on. A mineral note rounds off a subtle finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x127mm (5")	$ - | €6.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA, PANAMA



PARTAGAS Y NADA MÁS SANTIAGO ROBUSTO

87

CLEAN AND STRAIGHTFORWARD

Hay and white pepper set the tone. Nuts follow with a woody presence. Leather adds a touch of depth to a clean and straightforward profile.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$8 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	N/A	N/A , ECUADOR



LA FLOR DOMINICANA SUAVE MACEO

87

NUANCED AND SUBTLE

Sour cream, nuts, and wood set the tone in the beginning. Subtle sweetness and light spices linger in the background. Spices gradually pick up through the second half.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	48x127mm (5")	$8.4 | €9.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.



MEERAPFEL BEHIND THE SCENES I

87

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

Cappuccino and wood lead the way. Subtle sweetness and nuts develop alongside. Caramel nuances emerge, adding a pleasant richness to a smooth and balanced profile.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ - | €8.1

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
DOMINICAN REP.	N/A	DOMINICAN REP.



FRATELLO ORO ROBUSTO

85

CONTAINED AND LINEAR

Vegetal and woody notes set the tone softly. Spices linger early in the background. White pepper emerges later. Wood and balsamic notes close the finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50x127mm (5")	$11 | €13.5

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

Toro





QUAI D'ORSAY ESPECIAL D'ORSAY

92

BALANCED AND REFINED

Roasted nuts, white pepper, wood, and cappuccino lead the way. Hazelnut and honey develop early. Sour cream joins as pepper intensifies. Balsamic herbs and black pepper close the smoke.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	53x152mm (6")	$ – | €59

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



BLACKENED M81 TORO

91

BOLD AND FLAVORFUL

Cocoa, earth, and black pepper lead the way. Leather and nuts join later on. Balsamic herbal notes and a light sweetness develop in the second half of the smoke.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$10.8 | €16.4

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



HIRAM & SOLOMON REVIVAL

90

WELL-BALANCED AND EVOLVING

Earth, seasoned wood, and peanut lead the way, with a subtle vegetal note in the background. Balsamic hints and cayenne pepper enrich the mid section. Hazelnut and spices close the smoke.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	$14.50 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	U.S.A., DOMINICAN REP.



ADV BARBARROJA'S INVASION TORO

90

EVOLVING AND COMPLEX

Spices and herbs lead, followed by ripe fruit on a sweet base. Mineral notes, caramel, and cedar emerge in the second half before black pepper closes out the smoke.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	15 | € 15

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



DAVIDOFF SIGNATURE TORO

89

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

Delicate coffee, earth, and nuts lead the way. A slight peppery spice lingers in the background. Creamy and smooth throughout, with a milk coffee note in the second half.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x152mm (6")	$28.7 | €26.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.



DON PALOMÓN SMOKE SMUGGLERS TORO

89

SPICY AND BOLD

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

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x165mm (6 ½")	$ – | €12.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA



ROJAS 10TH ANNIVERSARY TORO

89

BOLD AND CREAMY

Pepper leads boldly before leather and wood join later. Coffee and cream aromas develop through the second half. Spicy and balsamic notes appear toward the end.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	$15 | €12.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



CONFIDENCIAAL FIFTYFOUR

88

SMOOTH AND EVOLVING

Wood and hay set a mellow tone. Hazelnut emerges early. Black pepper and earth develop further into the smoke. Wet earth and piquant spices round out the profile in the end.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x144mm (5 ⅝")	$ – | €9.5

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



LA BUCANERA TORO

88

EARTHY AND SMOOTH

Wood and earth lead the way. Faint vegetal notes join with white pepper and vanilla in the background. Earth intensifies in the second third. Vegetal notes return in the finale.

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

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



JOYA DE NICARAGUA ANTAÑO CT TORO

87

BALANCED AND INTERESTING

Hay, citrus, and wood set the tone in the beginning. Herbal and nutty notes emerge further into the smoke. Spices appear and grow toward the end of the cigar.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	$12 | €9.3

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



KNUCKLE SANDWICH PURO NICARAGUA TORO

87

BOLD AND LINEAR

A peppery and nutty start, somewhat sharp. Leather joins further into the smoke. Espresso and wood develop later on. Spicy notes come through towards the finale.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	$14.50 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



LA LIBERTAD GRAN TORO

86

HERBAL AND AROMATIC

Red pepper, dark chocolate, black tea, and oak give way to the smoke. Leather and citrus follow. Wood, graphite, and char overwhelm the remaining flavors in the end.

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	$10 | €9.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP.	NICARAGUA

Credits

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A Gem Raised From the Ground
picture by: © Oettinger Davidoff AG 2026

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No time to smoke
picture by: Mario Amelio

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Sophisticatd Rebel
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