CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 4 - 2026



The Quiet Legend

- MACANUDO - CIGAR HEADS CLOSURES - VALENTINO SIESTO - CUABA & VEGUEROS: 30 YEARS - PAIRINGS: CIGARS & SPIRITS
- E. LEÓN JIMENES: FROM HERITAGE TO TERROIR - KOPKE: AGED PORT AND COLHEITA WITH CIGARS - THE NAVY GROG
- JACQUESSON: ONE YEAR, ONE BOTTLE - THE SCIENCE BEHIND BUBBLES AND HOW YOUR GLASS CHANGES EXPERIENCE



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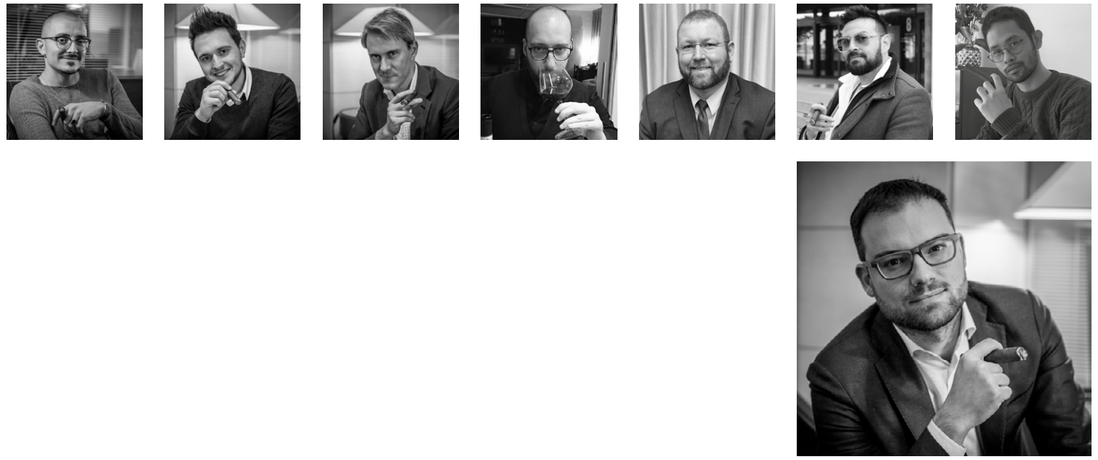
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Editor's thoughts

From Macanudo's legend to Jacquesson's cellar, it is all about the pleasures that reward patience.

This issue's cover story, The Quiet Legend, traces how Macanudo took a Cuban-sized name nobody owned and built it into the best-selling premium cigar in the United States for decades. Valentino Siesto introduces Orange Black, the maduro that completes his Black Family, a line built for the cigar you reach for every day. John Gaglio of E. León Jimenes takes us from La Aurora's 1903 roots to a rum made from fresh Dominican cane juice and designed to sit beside tobacco. Benjamin Vitrac of Jacquesson explains why a Champagne house known for breaking the blending rules now calls its nonconformity a search for consistency, and why a bottle forgotten in your cellar for ten years is the one to open with a cigar.

We also go back to 1996, when Habanos S.A. launched two brands with opposite reasons to exist. Cuaba revived the double figurado across its entire range. Vegueros brought the cigar the farmers of Vuelta Abajo rolled for themselves to an everyday price. Then we analyze the head of the cigar, from the triple cap to the pigtail, the flag tail, and the marble-shaped 109, where a roller's skill shows before you even cut. Our pairing section sets Kopke's 30-year-old white and tawny ports beside a range of cigars and finds its finest match in the Cohiba Maduro 5 Genios. The spirits pages sail back to Admiral Vernon and the Royal Navy rum ration that Donn Beach turned into the Navy Grog, three rums speaking with one voice. We close at the bottom of the glass, with the hidden science of bubbles and the tiny fibers that set them rising.

The thread through all of it is restraint. Macanudo built a legend on it, and Siesto builds an everyday cigar on it. Cuaba keeps its craft on the top shelf for whoever cares to look. Jacquesson defends restraint, and León Jimenes asks for it whenever rum meets tobacco, so neither one overwhelms the other. None of it is loud. All of it rewards the smoker who slows down to notice.

Light the cigar you know by heart, or the one you've never tried. Pour something with a few years behind it. Let it take its time.

#refineyourtaste

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TIME BEAUTIFULLY FILLED

PURO DOMINICANO

A GEM RAISED FROM THE GROUND

BURN BRIGHTER

AVO EXPRESIVO



CIGARS

"'You should hurry up...and acquire the cigar habit. It's one of the major happinesses. And so much more lasting than love, so much less costly in emotional wear and tear."
Aldous Huxley, Time Must Have a Stop



BORN OF THIS LAND

Xochilt Mayde Argueta Soza, Estelí, Nicaragua

As head of Pre-Industry, she faces every leaf and decides what each one is capable of becoming. Long before a cigar is rolled, she has already shaped it.

PLASENCIA
CIGARS

The Quiet Legend

How Macanudo evolved from a Cuban cigar designation into one of America's most enduring premium cigar brands, and why this historic brand still has something to prove.

by **Michel Arlia**

For decades, Macanudo was the cigar you reached for when you wanted something you knew you could rely on, and for a long time it was the best-selling premium cigar in the United States. Consistency has become its hallmark. Nevertheless, the brand's origin is storied and complex; like so many cigar tales, it starts with a revolution.

The Macanudo name's cigar history stretches back to 1868, when it was introduced as a frontmark of the Cuban Punch brand. During World War II, when Cuban cigars could not be sold in the UK, the makers of Punch moved their tobacco and cigar makers to Jamaica and began producing cigars under the Macanudo name instead of Punch. In 1968, General Cigar acquired the Macanudo brand and Temple Hall factory, and Macanudo was introduced in the United States in 1971.

Following General Cigar's acquisition of Macanudo, the blend was reworked for the American market. Under the guidance of experienced cigar makers including Ramón Cifuentes and Alfons Mayer, the Macanudo introduced in the



U.S. in 1971 combined Dominican, Jamaican and Mexican tobaccos with an aged Connecticut Shade wrapper.

Since the Cuban embargo was firmly in effect, Macanudo directed its efforts squarely at American smokers who suddenly could no longer obtain the cigars from Cuba regardless of price. What was rare in a business built on romance and reimagination was that Macanudo largely stuck to its original form. One size after another was added to the Café range. The cigar appeared in tobacco shops all over the country, making sure that the cigar you bought in Dallas smoked just as it did the one you purchased in Boston six months before.

General Cigar began producing Macanudo in the Dominican Republic in 1983. In 2000, production moved exclusively to the company's factory in Santiago, bringing the brand's long period of production at Temple Hall in Jamaica to a close.

Macanudo, now part of the Scandinavian Tobacco Group via General Cigar, has grown and diversified its portfolio tremendously. The Café still serves as the ambassador, with its creamy, restrained character. The Maduro suits those who prefer a darker, sweeter flavor. Gold Label offers a richer, more upscale take on the mild style. The most notable thing the brand has done is to push back on its own reputation for mildness. Its Inspirado range spans a broad spectrum of strength and flavor, progressing from White and Orange through Black and Green to the fuller-bodied Red. The rich Macanudo 1968 line was an earlier example of this shift. At the same time, the Emissary series takes the brand around the world in search of rare tobacco, including that grown in the wine regions south of Bordeaux. The brand also expanded its physical presence. Club Macanudo lounges put the brand's name on the door in cities across the country, and in early 2026 the concept made its first move into the Caribbean. This spring, the brand introduced two new lines, Macanudo Ecuadorian Shade and Macanudo Sumatra.

The cigar industry prefers a maximalist approach. Macanudo has always pursued a different and more gradual direction. For many, it was their introduction to premium cigars, and it remains one they continue to return to.

That gradual direction is not an accident of history, but a philosophy someone has to keep tending, release after release. To understand how Macanudo decides what to change and what to leave alone, it helps to hear from one of the people responsible for steering the brand's blends and releases. Matt Wilson, Senior Brand Manager of Macanudo, spends his days translating that hundred-year balancing act. We asked him what actually endures when the country, the factory, and the blend all change, why smooth was never a synonym for mild, and what he would hand a smoker who had never tried the brand.

How does a heritage cigar brand evolve without diluting what made it famous?

I think this is a challenge that many heritage brands face, not just within cigars but across a lot of categories. Balancing heritage and evolution is a delicate exercise, and in today's market it's something brands have to constantly manage. For me, the key is understanding the difference between changing a brand and expanding what a brand can mean. With Macanudo, evolution doesn't require walking away from the qualities that made the brand successful in the first place. It means finding new ways to express those qualities. Smoothness, balance, craftsmanship, and consistency remain central to the brand. But today those characteristics can be delivered across a broader range of flavors, bodies, tobacco origins, and smoking occasions. Café represents the iconic foundation, while collections like Inspirado and Emissary demonstrate how far the brand can explore without losing its identity. In my opinion, a heritage brand becomes diluted when it follows trends without a clear point of view. That's what I always come back to. Every new product should feel authentic to the brand and offer consumers something genuinely new. If it does both of those things, it strengthens the heritage rather than weakens it.



When Macanudo's production moved from Jamaica's Temple Hall to Santiago in 2000, the country, factory, and eventually elements of the tobacco blend changed. From your perspective today, what is the enduring Macanudo character, and where does it come from?

My perspective is that Macanudo's character isn't tied exclusively to any one country, factory, or tobacco. Those elements are certainly important parts of the story, but what has endured is the philosophy behind the brand. That said, I think it's impossible to discuss Macanudo's identity without acknowledging the influence of Café. Over decades, Café became almost synonymous with Macanudo. For many cigar smokers, it was their introduction to premium cigars, and the smoothness, approachability, and consistency that made Café successful became core parts of what consumers came to expect from the brand. To me, the enduring Macanudo character is really about balance. It's about creating cigars that are refined, approachable, and exceptionally consistent while still delivering complexity and flavor. Whether it's a classic Café, a richer Inspirado blend, or an Emissary release built around an unexpected tobacco origin, the objective remains the same: create a smoking experience that feels composed, intentional, and harmonious. I often describe Macanudo as having a certain quiet confidence. It doesn't have to shout to demonstrate quality. The flavors are meant to work together rather than compete with one another. That's what makes a cigar feel unmistakably Macanudo to me.

Macanudo has built its reputation on smoothness and balance. Now many consumers celebrate bolder blends.



How do you make them see smooth not as "mild," but as a deliberate choice?

I think one of the biggest misconceptions in cigars is equating smoothness with a lack of flavor or intensity. To me, smoothness is a reflection of blending discipline. It's about how the tobaccos work together and how the flavors are delivered, not about how strong or mild a cigar happens to be. A cigar can be rich, layered, and flavorful while still being incredibly smooth. In fact, maintaining smoothness often becomes even more challenging as you introduce more expressive tobaccos and fuller flavor profiles. A great example is Macanudo Inspirado Black. At first glance, people often assume it's going to be an extremely full-bodied cigar because of its darker appearance and richer profile. In reality, I'd describe it as more medium-to-full in body. What surprises many smokers is how balanced and refined it remains throughout the experience. That's a perfect example of smoothness being a conscious blending decision rather than an indicator of strength.

INTERACTIVE

PAGE

SILENCIO



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IS IN THE DETAILS

DISCOVER THE WORLD'S FINEST CIGARS

CALDWELL CIGAR CO.

Long live the Queen

MADURO



The New Black

The Maduro That Joins the Black Family.

by **Mark Trumpet**

It has been three years since we last sat down with Valentino Siesto, and in that time he has been building the Black Family. Cigar by cigar, wrapper by wrapper, the Black Family has grown from the original Nero Black into a line built on a simple idea: a smoke you can reach for every day. Now comes Orange Black.

It has been a while since we last spoke, three years to be exact. What has happened in these past years?
First of all, I would like to extend my greetings and express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to speak with you again. Over the past three years, the brand's objectives, as well as our work and efforts, have focused on developing new cigars and new blends. We have dedicated particular attention to creating the Black Family. To summarize our work in just a few words, the purpose of the Black Family is to offer the market a cigar designed to be enjoyed every day. Thanks to the success of this line, we have also been able to enter and establish ourselves in new markets.

You've built the Black family piece by piece, from Nero Black onward, each with its own personality. When you sit with a new idea like Orange Black, how do you know it deserves to join the family?
It is true that I built the Black Family piece by piece. We



started with the original Nero Black: the Sun Grown Robusto and Toro. We worked for four to five months to create the first blend in the family, seeking the right flavors, balance, and strength, together with a perfect burn. After a year of strong sales, many of our customers asked us to offer the same Nero Black line, in both sizes, with a Connecticut wrapper. We therefore began developing the Nero Black Connecticut, which we completed after approximately three months of trials and adjustments. In the third year, we launched Yellow Black: two Sun Grown vitolas in 5 x 46 and 6 x 46. These cigars were created with the European market in mind, particularly for the winter season, when colder temperatures make it less suitable to smoke a cigar for a longer duration. Regarding the colors used for the Black Family, in my poetic interpretation, each color represents the cigar's personality. Nero Black expresses intensity of flavor with medium-to-full strength and persistent notes of coffee, hazelnut, wood, and pink pepper. The Connecticut version maintains this personality while introducing delicate grassy notes and a subtle saline character. Yellow Black has a completely different personality. Its flavors remain on the palate for a long time. There is no pepper, but instead clearly defined notes of cacao, fresh wood, and nuts, accompanied by a very delicate, smooth, creamy retrohale.

You chose a Maduro wrapper for this release, something new for the Black Family. What sparked the idea, and how did the blend come together?
To continue the growth of the Black Family, we decided to add something that had been missing from the line during these three years: a cigar with a Maduro wrapper.The inspiration for Orange Black, the Maduro Robusto, came to me one evening while I listened to classical music and smoked a Maduro box-pressed cigar. At that moment, I thought: "The time has come to create a Maduro Robusto for the Black Family." Like the other cigars in the family, it needed to be something you could enjoy every day. We worked on the blend for five months, through many trials, until we found its magic recipe. It is a cigar that makes you wish it would never end, with flavors of red fruits, wood, coffee, and nuts. It offers a perfect burn, white ash, and a uniquely persistent finish on the palate.



Orange Black is launching first in Europe in winter 2026. What draws you to the European smoker for this release, and what do you hope someone there feels the first time they light one?
With the European launch planned for winter 2026, my objective is for our enthusiasts to experience, from the first time they light an Orange Black Robusto, a Maduro that is smooth and enjoyable, with a perfect draw. As I mentioned before, I hope they will wish it would never end because of the intensity and persistence of the flavors they experience.

You talk about each cigar having a personality, which means that it also changes as it ages. When you release something like Orange Black into the world, do you think it will become something more in the humidors and hands of the people who smoke it?
A cigar lives in much the same way as a person. If we allow a cigar to age properly in a humidor, then with each passing year, when we smoke it, we will appreciate a greater concentration of flavor and more clearly defined notes.

Looking beyond Orange Black, what can we expect from you in the coming future?
Beyond Orange Black, you can expect me to create a special cigar every year and continually offer new experiences within the Valentino Siesto family.



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Cigar Heads Closures

From the most popular cigar heads to some lesser-known ones.

by **Mark Trumpet**

The head of a cigar, which is the end intended for cutting and smoking, serves a purpose beyond mere functionality. It reflects the roller's expertise and often signifies the cigar's stylistic identity. Although the standard triple-cap closure is most prevalent, various distinctive finishing techniques have developed over centuries of tobacco craftsmanship.

The Standard Triple Cap

The most prevalent closure consists of a piece of wrapper leaf applied concentrically and circularly, creating three layers and resulting in a smooth, dome-shaped head. This technique ensures structural integrity after the head is cut. The triple-cap method is the most widely used head-finish method.

Perfecto and Torpedo Caps

These pointed heads taper to a closed end, requiring the roller to gather and twist the wrapper into a tight cone. The distinctive shape of the perfecto requires precision: the taper must remain uniform, and the tip must be sealed precisely. Typically, only the very end is cut, resulting in a concentrated and intense draw. Another upside of this closure is that you can cut it a couple of times, depending on how tight or loose you like the draw.

Pigtail

The pigtail is a highly recognizable closure, characterized by a small twisted strand of tobacco leaf extending from the cap. Traditionally linked to Cuban cigars, this feature requires significant skill to execute. Some cigars display a single twist, while others incorporate a double pigtail for enhanced visual interest. A head made famous by the Cohiba Lanceros (generally used in the Long Panetela sizes), and also used in the Behike line, Tatuaje L'Atelier La Mission, and many others.

Flag Tail (Coleta)

The flag tail closure leaves a small rectangular flap of wrapper leaf extending from the head, resembling a flag. This rustic technique, once prevalent on Cuban cigars, reflects traditional rolling practices. Similar to the pigtail, it is primarily decorative. It is used in the Silencio Serie M, Drew Estate's Dirty Rat, and other brands.

109 (aka Marble Head)

The 109, also known as the marble head, creates a distinctively rounded, bulbous cap that resembles a marble. This closure requires skill, as the roller must form a perfectly symmetrical sphere to create a smooth, dome-like head. The 109 designation comes from Cuban factories, where the factory name (vitola de galera) of the shape is called 109. The marble head is less common today, but brands like My Father La Union and HR still use it.

Other styles

Beyond these five more commonly used heads, there are numerous other closure styles: the bun, the cinnamon roll, the shaggy head, the flat head, the chisel, and many more. In recent memory, the advent of all the Year of ... releases, dedicated to the Chinese New Year, has sparked new creativity inspired by the zodiac signs. For example, the VegaFina Year of the Snake 2025 head resembles a snake's tongue, and the Plasencia Year of the Horse features a long, braided head finish that resembles a horse's braided tail.

Although the closure style primarily influences aesthetics and cutting technique, it also conveys information about the cigar's heritage and the maker's philosophy. Ultimately, a well-executed pigtail or perfecto cap demonstrates and showcases the advanced skills of a cigar roller.


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30 Years Off the Beaten Path: Cuaba and Vegueros

In 1996, Habanos launched two brands that ignored the rules of the big six. One bet on the torcedor's hardest shape, the other on the farmer's everyday smoke.

by **Nelson Campos**

The 1990s were arguably one of the most transformative decades of the modern era. We saw the formal reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the launch of the Human Genome Project, the founding of Amazon and Google, and so much more that it would be exhausting to list everything. But let's focus on 1996, when Habanos S.A. was seeking to expand its portfolio of Cuban cigars with two very distinct Cuban brands, which have two separate "raison d'être": Cuaba and Vegueros.

Cuaba was launched in London on 19 November 1996 with an idea in mind, the revival of an old Cuban tradition, the double figurado, but for all the sizes of the brand. It's a particular shape of cigar that requires more attention and skill than the standard parejo and, as such, had almost disappeared. The brand in itself is that unique piece in exposition on the top shelf behind a craftsman. He has it there to showcase how skilled he is at his craft, at his art. He knows not everyone will look at it and not everyone will want to touch it, but it's there for those who do. If you know, you know. If you don't, you don't… and that's Cuaba in a nutshell.

The 1996 Cuaba vitolas:
• Divinos (43 × 101mm)
• Tradicionales (42 × 120mm) discontinued
• Generosos (42 × 132mm) discontinued
• Exclusivos (46 × 145mm)

The 2003 Cuaba Vitolas:
• Distinguidos (52 × 162mm)
• Diadema (55 × 233mm) discontinued
• Salomón (57 × 184mm)

Vegueros was soft-launched in 1996 and globally available in 1997. The name could be translated as "tobacco farmer." Historically, the tobacco farmers of the Vuelta Abajo region in Pinar del Río would produce cigars for themselves and the local markets. When visiting a small town in a foreign country as tourists, we like to enjoy the local food and other specialities, which can normally only be found in those specific regions. This local speciality is what Habanos S.A. is giving us with Vegueros, an affordable medium bodied cigar which takes its roots in the hands of the tobacco farmers for consumption by Cubans.

The 1996 Vegueros vitolas:
• Especiales No. 1 (38 x 192mm)
• Especiales No. 2 (38 x 152mm)
• Seoane (33 x 126mm)
• Marevas (42 x 129mm)



The 2013 Vegueros vitolas:
• Mañanitas (46 × 100mm)
• Tapados (46 × 120mm)
• Entretiempos (52 × 110mm)
•Centrofinos (50 × 130mm) 2019

In the past 30 years since their conception, both Cuban marcas have had a different approach to that of the six "Global Brands" (Cohiba, Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta, Partagás, Hoyo de Monterrey, H. Upmann). These classic brands of Cuban cigars have decades of accumulated brand reputation and recognition, whereas Cuaba puts its strength in "savoir faire" passed down by skilled "Torcedores", and Vegueros' strength is in affordability for the masses. Both brands have seen transformations in these past few years, Cuaba added a few sizes to its offering and a Limited Edition Cuaba Pirámides in 2008, while Vegueros had a complete revamping of its looks and vitolas in 2013, both have remained true to their spirit. Next time you visit your local cigar shop, be sure to pick them up and enjoy them for what they are: unique in every way.



Stogie Mag

A rifle magazine that feeds cigars instead of rounds. It's a clever bit of kit, for the right smoker.

by **Norman Bliss**



The Stogie Mag is a travel humidor shaped like an AR-15 magazine, and it works like one. A spring pushes each cigar up into the feed position. You slide it out, and the next one rises to take its place.

It holds six cigars up to 5.25 x 50, with a humidification pack in the follower and a sealing cover on top. It's made in the USA from injection-molded plastic and sells for $89.95. Limited-edition camouflage versions in M81 and Chocolate Chip cost $120.

The feed mechanism is its biggest selling point. Getting a cigar out takes one movement, and the cigars stay stacked and protected instead of knocking about in a pouch.

Each Mag ships with two humidification packs, and we suggest changing them about every three to four months, depending on where you live. Replacements are $4.95 for a three-pack on the Stogie Mag website, but other humidification packs fit as well.

Changing them is another matter. The floorplate comes off, but we found that fitting or replacing a pack means taking out the whole interior. That's a lot of dismantling for a case that holds six cigars, and you'll be doing it a couple of times a year.

Size is the other catch. Anything longer than 5.25 inches or thicker than a 50 ring gauge won't go in, so aside from a Robusto, every other vitola stays at home. Go too slim, and you hit the opposite problem. We found that smaller sizes move around inside and don't stack well in the magazine, potentially damaging your cigars.

Then there's the look. At the range or a hunting lodge, a gun magazine full of cigars is the whole point. Put it on the table in a cigar lounge or a hotel bar it will start a conversation, though maybe not the one you wanted. It's plastic, too. It's tough, but it won't wear in the way leather or cedar does.

If you are a gun nut, or you simply love a gadget, the Stogie Mag is neat. It's well made, and it has real personality, as long as you can live with the strip-down every few months. It only makes sense if Robustos are what you smoke, though. For any other size, a regular travel case will do more for you.













CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE
DISCOVER ALL ISSUES













PAGE

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 bet- ter 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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GRAN HABANO CONN. #1 GR. ROBUSTO

GREAT EVOLUTION AND INTENSITY

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$ 7.5 | € 10.5

DIMENSIONS
54 x 152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
Honduras

This creamy smoke delivers cedarwood, vanilla pod, and vegetal aromas, with a touch of hazelnut. Then white pepper and piquant spices. After the half, mineral notes and balsamic nuances. Wild pepper, nutmeg and cocoa in the sophisticated finale. We try to pair two Cristalino tequilas, which shine for their wide flavor profile, as well as for their cooked agave original quality flavors.



PUNCH PUNCH

BALANCED AND HARMONIOUS

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$- | € 20

DIMENSIONS
46 x 143 mm (5⅝")

COUNTRY
Cuba

It delivers a remarkable classy nuttiness and vegetal aromas, together with wood, distant earth, and some spices, mainly recalling white pepper. The base is sweet. In the second half, toasted notes are added. Two rather different spirits are paired: one refined, wide-flavor-profile Japanese single malt, and a flavorful aged rye, for a wide-spectrum analysis.



TATUAJE 7TH COROJO

COMPLEX AND NUANCED

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●	$ 9.5 | € 14.9

DIMENSIONS
46 x 143 mm (5⅝")

COUNTRY
Nicaragua

Wood, hay, and white pepper open the smoke. Nuts emerge with subtle balsamic sweetness, followed by caramel. Chili spice replaces pepper in the finale. It pairs with two different, high-ABV bourbons: a small-batch expression with traditional bourbon aromas upfront, yet refined and enjoyable, and a variation that uses several casks to add complexity. We will let the cigar develop before starting the pairing.



ESPOLÒN

Cristalino

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Mexico	40% - 80	$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	14 months	New Oak, ex-Bourbon

Smooth and refined, this impressive spirit pairs the vegetal cooked blue agave core with several layers of sweetness, with Navel orange, orange honey, and a light butterscotch. The texture is excellent, and the sip is very enjoyable. The tobacco adds several spice dimensions and a touch of dry wood to the silky spirit, which sweetens the overall impression with sugarcane, light caramel, and orange. Very nice when experienced together. On the palate, the Honduran cigar is quite rich, with the spices expressing nutmeg and baking spices, enveloping the orange like in a Middle-East dessert. On top of everything, a fresh and lively white pepper note. The tequila remains in the background, but with a nice sweet influence.

Pairing score	89



PATRÓN

Cristalino

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	12-15 months	4 types

This high-quality product packs tons of unmistakable cooked blue agave notes with an extra complex dimension of vanilla, toasty oak, and even a touch of pepper. There is a hint of bourbon present. A high-character sip, refined yet with bold personality. The Patrón flavor profile is more orange-centered than the Espolón. Yet the tobacco reacts even better, integrating the intensity more smoothly, with vanilla and a bourbon-style identity flanking the spices and the woody cigar. The vanilla in the sip envelops the palate, preparing it for the oak and cedarwood intensity of the tobacco, mellowing it and adding to the nutmeg and baking spices. The result is sweeter, but here the two products are equally intense, for a good joint enjoyment.

Pairing score	91





SAKURAO
Sauternes Cask Finish Lightly Peated

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	Ex-bourbon, Ex Sauternes

Very well-crafted, this product is centered on orange and orange honey, with a beautiful array of sweet spices. As expected, the peat hints are very minor, a refined, candle-style, classy smokiness. Very pleasant. On the noses, both products are delivering slightly different, yet sweet undertones of honey, sugar, orange, Middle-East pastry with a touch of nuts and minor woody and toasty notes. Very coherent, maybe slightly too similar and resonating. The palate is much richer and more varied, with black-and-white peppery notes that lean toward incense and a candle-wax sensation, which is rather sophisticated and classy. The finale delivers a medium persistency, dominated by nuts and a Middle East semi-sweet spice complexity. Excellent, if not for a rather overlapping nose.

Pairing score	90



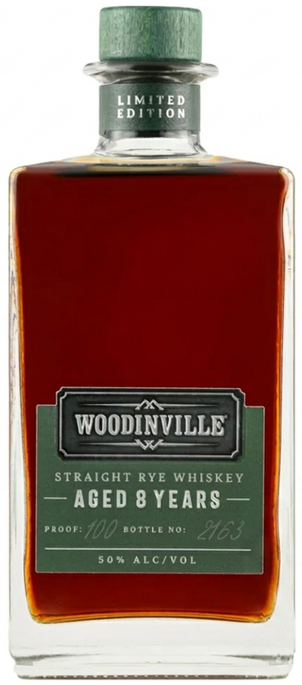
WOODINVILLE
Straight Rye Aged 8 Years

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Rye	8 Years Old	New

Dark molasses, brown melted sugar, fiery oak spices, and a burst of pecans, this rye is an ode to tasty, mellow yet powerful straight rye, where the balsamic, fresh components are almost silent thanks to careful and extended aging. Dense and chewy, rich and tasty. Probably a little too much for the subtle nuances and vegetal tobacco notes, the whiskey takes ownership from the first whiff, wrapping the nuttiness in dark molasses and burnt caramel. The added toasty character is very nice on the palate, where some hints of leather can be perceived, but a structured Nicaraguan puro would have been a better selection. With a double puff, spices increases, and the cranberry sweetness helps the overall fruitiness, mitigating the spice's intensity. A nice finale, it still suggests a spirit better suited for pairing with an older brother.

Pairing score	87





KNOB CREEK
9 Years Old

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	9 Years Old	New

Well-rounded and great value, a real classic among small-batch bourbons: aged oak, vanilla, and leather are upfront and are followed by a crush of black pepper and rye spice. A lingering oak and warming spice help to round things out. Very nice integration of the nose; the tobacco is lighter and mellow, on nuts and light wood, but it dissolves well into the caramel, the light, flowery vanilla, and the oaky profile of the bourbon. The palate is shifting gear, with the white pepper upfront and the highlighted balsamic finale paired with the oak, for a more intense finish. The finale adds a slightly bitter, satisfying note.

Pairing score	90



WHISKEY ACRES
Cigar Blend

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
U.S.A.	58.3% - 116.6	$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Bourbon	NAS	Ex-Sherry, Port, Brandy

A full-bodied release at a high ABV. The densely layered nose opens with spice cake, figs, stewed plums, baked apples, caramel sauce, and delicate vanilla. The palate focuses on baking spices, tempered by rich nuttiness, orange, maple, and dates. Oak and spice build in the finish with sweet caramel, brioche, and toasted oak. The aromas are less balanced here, as the whiskey is broad, nuanced, intense, and layered, while the cigar keeps a lighter, refined, soft profile. When the spices increase, the sherried notes help balanced them out. The palate's integration is totally different: the cigar has shifted towards a more robust flavor profile, with darker spices and balsamic hints, helped by the bourbon's red and dark fruity notes. The finale is even better: balsamic, spicy, dark, toasted. Perfect.

Pairing score	92



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SPIRITS

"The problem with the world is
that everyone is a few drinks behind."
Humphrey Bogart

Four Centuries in the Glass

From a Hamburg merchant family to the Douro, Kopke's aged ports meet the humidor.

by **Luca Cominelli, Marco Rizzetto**

Done right, port and cigars make one of the best pairings there is. Port is rich and intense, so the cigar has to be chosen with care. We paired three styles of port: a white, a tawny and a selection of historic Colheitas. We started with the oldest brand, Kopke.

Kopke's roots go back four centuries, to Nicolau Kopke, who came from a family of Hamburg merchants. To put that in perspective, Germany didn't exist yet, and Hamburg was part of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1781 the family bought an estate in the Douro, and the business shifted from trading wine to making it. Within a few years Kopke controlled the entire supply chain. In 1922 it acquired Quinta de São Luiz, which grew over the years as neighboring properties were added.

Kopke makes several kinds of port. The core range is produced every year, with aging from 10 to 50 years. The vintage ports come from a single harvest, spend no more than two and a half years in cask and then mature in bottle. The Colheitas are the house's pride. They are single-harvest ports aged in wood as long as possible and bottled to order.

From the core range we chose the middle of the lineup: a 30-year-old white and a 30-year-old tawny, both bottled at 20% ABV.







The White

The nose is structured and intense, with walnut and fig. The palate is velvety, with round tannins balancing the acidity. The finish is long and powerful.

We tried two approaches. The first drew a clear line between cigar and port, so each kept its own identity. The second looked for similar flavor profiles, so the wine and the tobacco could build on each other. The second approach won.

We picked light-medium and medium-full cigars with flavors close to the port's. With the lighter cigars, the flavors merged in the aftertaste and gave an incredibly long, intense finish, but the port dominated on the palate. With the stronger cigars, the tasting turned into a celebration. The standout was the Cohiba Maduro 5 Genios. Its sweetness and the 30-year-old white support each other, and its spice adds depth, lifting the pairing to another level as the port's walnut wraps around the cigar's cocoa. It's the perfect pairing. The white works best with medium-full cigars that have intense, sweet-leaning flavors. These gave us the most remarkable pairings: Cohiba Maduro 5 Genios, Orient Casablanca, Adventura Royal Return King's Gold Robusto, La Aurora 115th Belicoso, Todos Las Dias Thick Lonsdale and Alec Bradley Black Market Robusto.

The Tawny

The nose is deep, with dried fruit, vanilla and honey. The palate is harmonious and enveloping, and the finish is long and velvety. We used the same two approaches.

Once again, the best results came from cigars whose flavors complement the port's rich profile. This time, though, the key was spice. Strength mattered less, and even cigars that weren't very powerful paired well. What counted was spiciness, which suits this port beautifully. The Davidoff Puro Dominicano was excellent. Its coffee, earthy and woody notes match the port, and the pepper in the tobacco adds depth and complexity. Our top picks were medium and higher strength cigars with a spicy profile: Davidoff Puro Dominicano, Gran Habano Habano #3 Rothschild, Caldwell Long Live the Queen Queen's Court, and El Pulpo Robusto Grande.

The Colheita

With Colheitas, a lot can change depending on the vintage and the time in wood. The ones we tried were incredibly complex, rich and deep. We picked the 1976, bottled in 2025. The nose is mellow and remarkably complex, with rich vanilla and coffee. The palate brings cocoa, leather, wood and dates, with an unctuous texture over great structure. Everything is in balance, and the finish never ends.

All those years in wood call for a medium to full strength cigar. The only way to make the pairing work is to find a cigar that matches the port's intensity, and that takes both strength and body. The Partagás Serie D No. 4 was outstanding. Its pepper and wood pair perfectly with the port's aromatic palette, and its subtle acidic undertone brings the two profiles together in harmony. The Avo Expresivo was another exceptional match. Its spice blends with the port's aromas, and that harmony carries through into the aftertaste. Other great pairings: Plasencia Alma Fuerte Robustus I, Tatuaje Cojonú 2018, and Oscar 10th Anniversary Toro.

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From Heritage to Terroir

The Reinvention of Dominican Rum.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Founded on the legacy of La Aurora, established by Eduardo León Jimenes in 1903, E. León Jimenes brings together two deeply Dominican traditions: the cultivation and craftsmanship of sugar cane and the art of premium cigars. The rum project emerged from this heritage, with the ambition of creating a spirit that could stand on its own while also engaging naturally with the sensory world of tobacco.

Its production philosophy is unusually explicit about raw material and maturation. E. León Jimenes uses fresh-pressed Dominican sugar-cane juice rather than molasses, ferments it shortly after harvest, and combines continuous column distillation with a measure of pot-still spirit. The resulting rums are then naturally aged, rather than produced through a solera system. The 110 Aniversario, created as an ultra-premium rum specifically conceived to complement the cigar-smoking experience, represents the most ambitious expression of this philosophy, while the more recent 1903 Rum returns to the founding year of La Aurora as both a historical reference and a statement of contemporary Dominican identity. Yet behind the language of heritage lies a more interesting question: what does it mean to build a modern luxury rum in a category increasingly concerned with provenance, transparency, raw materials and technical authenticity? In this conversation with Iturbi-



des Zaldivar, Director of Sales & Marketing at La Aurora and E. León Jimenes Rums, we explore the relationship between sugar cane and terroir, the challenges of tropical maturation, the evolving definition of premium rum, and the remarkable dialogue between rum and cigar.

Rum is perhaps one of the spirits categories in which the concept of "terroir" remains particularly controversial. Given that E. León Jimenes begins with Dominican sugar cane and fresh cane juice, how far do you believe the character of the Dominican agricultural landscape can actually be traced through the finished spirit? Could your experience with tobacco ultimately push you toward a more "terroir-driven" philosophy of rum, one in which the character of Dominican sugar cane becomes as important to the identity of the spirit as the origin of the tobacco is to a cigar?

Thank you for this question. It touches something very close to home for us. The first thing to settle is how we define terroir. But however narrowly or broadly you define it, my answer is yes. Even if we limit terroir to soil composition alone, it will influence the final product. As an engineer, I think of it as an input variable: change the input, and the output changes with it. For example, the sugarcane we use for 1903 comes from specific varietals known locally as the "Consuelo varietals," selected because they are well adapted to the microclimate of Consuelo, in San Pedro de Macorís, for the production of sugarcane juice. That juice is the base material for both 1903 and 110 Aniversario.

In rum, the base material is just as important as terroir, and the two cannot really be separated. Traditionally, it is the Agricole styles that are best known for using sugarcane juice instead of molasses. Roughly 95% of the world's rum is made from molasses or syrup. That is another differentiating factor for the E. León Jimenes portfolio when it comes to terroir. To your second question: rum is so important to our country that the Dominican Republic is actively codifying this through the National Intellectual Property Office (ONAPI), which in 2021 began determining who may and may not use the official Denomination of Origin label. The central requirement is that all the sugarcane used in the process must come from the Dominican Republic. Both 1903 and 110 Aniversario meet this requirement. I grew up here, where rum is part of the culture, so my instinct says the land is in the glass. My engineering training, however, makes me careful with claims I cannot measure. After fermentation, distillation, aging, and finishing, there are many variables between the field and the bottle, and I would not claim I can isolate one varietal grown in two different soils. But I have sat at the table with Dominican masters whose palates have been trained over generations, and I am convinced that some of them can.

Your use of guarapo places considerable emphasis on the freshness and intrinsic character of the raw material. Yet fresh cane juice is also considerably more perishable and technically demanding than molasses. How do you manage the tension between preserving the aromatic identity of the cane and maintaining the microbiological and fermentative control necessary for consistency at an international scale?

For us, the decision to use guarapo, fresh sugarcane juice, is first and foremost a cultural one. Sugarcane arrived on our island with Columbus at the end of the 15th century, and in the centuries that followed, the Dominican Republic developed their own ways of working with it. Also our Spanish influence shaped a more Spanish-style rum, built on barrel aging and finishes. You are right, however, that working with fresh juice is a much more demanding process, and from an operations standpoint, time is the critical variable. The cane must be pressed within 24 hours of being cut, or the quality of the juice declines. Fermentation must then begin immediately, and it lasts between 18 and 24 hours. This is where science and process control make the difference. Fermentation is driven by unique yeasts developed with propagators, through the adaptation of local and commercial strains, which gives us a controlled, repeatable result.

So, to answer your question directly: we preserve the identity of the sugarcane juice by controlling the process tightly, which allows us to meet the demands of a far less forgiving base material than molasses or syrup, at the consistency an international market requires.

Tropical maturation is often described simply in terms of accelerated extraction and evaporation, but the relationship between temperature, humidity, oak, and alcohol is considerably more complex. How do you determine the optimum point at which further tropical aging adds genuine aromatic and textural complexity rather than simply increasing wood influence and the so-called "angel's share"?

This is a question I enjoy, because it is essentially a question of chemistry and thermodynamics. We discussed it with the master blender behind 1903, who emphasizes that our tropical climate is key; he compares the barrels to "chemical reactors." Here in the tropics, we see regular temperature swings between night and day of up to about 5–6 °C (roughly 10 °F). Each cycle pushes the spirit into the wood and pulls it back out, which accelerates the interaction between the oak and the rum. According to our master blender, this makes it possible to achieve in just 2–3 years results that would take 8–9 years in temperate climates such as Scotland.

The optimum point for our rums is decided through teamwork between our master blender, Guillermo León, and his external tasting panel here in the Dominican Re-



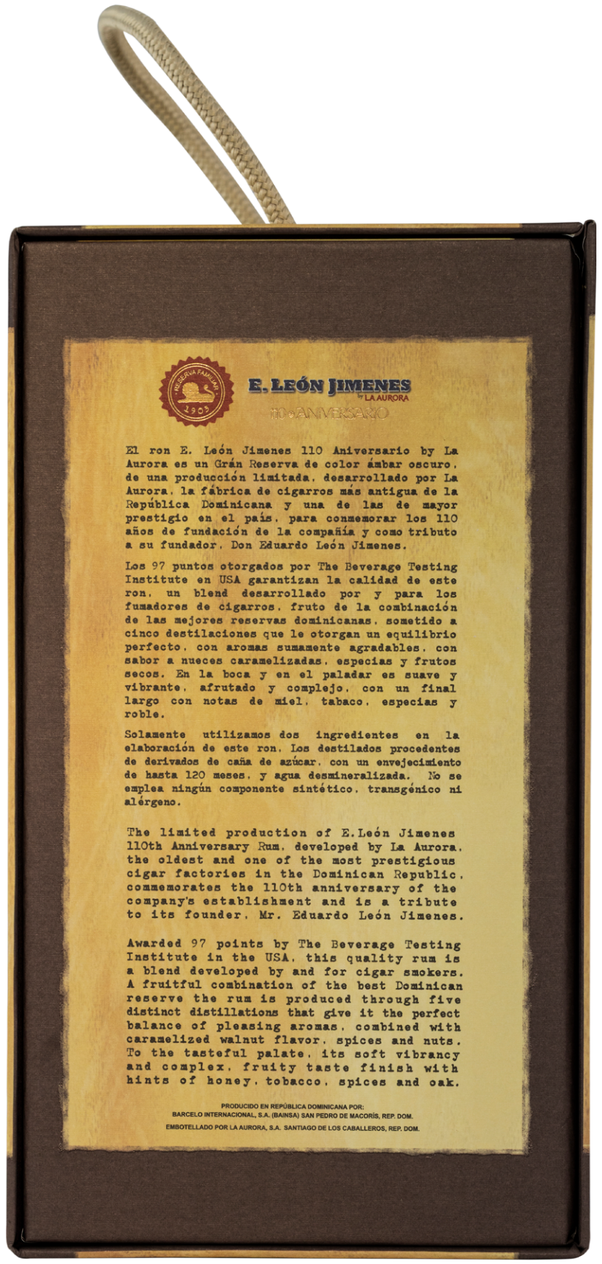
public. The deep sensory experience of our cigar industry, combined with our master blender's spirits expertise, allows us to define the aging and the flavor profile collaboratively. It is not a single number on a spreadsheet; it is a judgment made by trained palates.
As for the "Angel's Share" under these conditions, we do not yet have specific data, but we believe the loss during aging is significant because of these pronounced temperature swings. For that reason, you probably will not find a 20-year-plus rum in our portfolio any time soon.

The rum category is increasingly divided between highly polished, consistent blends and spirits that seek to emphasize fermentation character, distillation provenance, or individual cask identity. Where would you like E. León Jimenes to position itself on this spectrum? Is the future of premium Dominican rum, in your view, greater consistency—or greater transparency of production and variation?
Thanks to the government's role in the Denomination of Origin, I believe all three considerations, consistency, provenance, and transparency, are intertwined. From a strategic perspective, the clearest way to communicate all of this is a simple statement: our rums are Dominican. From there, we can speak to the other considerations, which matter differently to different audiences. What many people do not know is that the Dominican Republic is one of the top three rum exporters in the world, with a well-established distillation industry that produces sugarcane distillates for both national and international clients. Consistency has been part of Dominican rum for a very long time; it is built into our industry. With the Denomination of Origin, transparency is now receiving more attention. As our master blender reminds us, "according to norm 477 and the regulations of the Dominican Rum Denomination of Origin, the final product



is not allowed to contain more than 5% non-natural additions."
This is especially visible when you measure sugar content. For example, 1903 shows 4 g/L of sugar, which occurs naturally through the interaction between the barrel and the spirit during aging. So my priority as a leader is first to make clear that our rum is Dominican, and then to explain why that means greater consistency and transparency. We see ourselves as ambassadors, with the responsibility of educating and inspiring new generations of premium rum drinkers by sharing the best that the Dominican Republic has to offer.

The 110 Aniversario was the result of years of sensory experimentation, including extensive comparisons between rum and cigars. If you were to approach that project again today, with a decade of experience and a more sophisticated understanding of both spirits and tobacco, what would you do differently? Has your definition of the "perfect" rum-and-cigar pairing evolved?
That is a question best answered by Guillermo León. He is the mind behind 110 Aniversario, and he brings with him the more than 120 years of sensory experience that the La Aurora brand represents.
Speaking for myself, I would not change a thing. Here in the Dominican Republic, rum is part of everyday life; we grow up with it at family celebrations and at the dinner table. But when we take 110 Aniversario abroad, especially to the United States, we see something remarkable at our tastings. It turns the "Oh, I don't drink rum" drinkers into the "I didn't drink rum until I drank this" drinkers. People who have always gravitated toward bourbon and single malts try it and change their minds. I have seen it happen time and time again. There are excellent premium sugarcane spirits from all over the world, but I believe 110 Aniversario is a particularly effective "Trojan



horse" for the U.S. market, which is saturated with premium bourbon and American whiskey and looking for something new, at an incredible price point. Where I do see an evolution is in strength. Like bourbon and whisky, cigars went through a period of gravitating toward the fuller end of the spectrum. For me, a pairing is a question of balance; I do not want the cigar or the rum to overpower the other.

If you look at the search term "cask strength rum" in Google Trends, you will see interest peaking in 2026 after building since 2018. I think this reflects the broader trend, and in terms of pairings, it could be an interesting exploration, or "evolution," if you will, as we consider new additions to the portfolio.

Finally, premium Dominican rum is increasingly being judged alongside Cognac, Armagnac, whisky, and other great aged spirits rather than merely within the traditional rum category. What do you believe Dominican rum still needs to demonstrate, or perhaps to abandon, in order to be discussed on equal intellectual and gastronomic terms with the world's most prestigious spirits?

As technology and communication make our world smaller, I believe we are seeing a flattening of pretension in food and beverage. That said, we are very proud that premium rums are now mentioned in the same breath as Cognac, Armagnac, and single malts. Good rums work well in cocktails, but great rums are meant to be sipped, and the same can be said of the spirits you mention. Culturally, intellectually, and gastronomically, Dominican rum stands on its own, and it is exciting, and for us as Dominicans, a source of real pride, to see it finally recognized as such. In summary, Dominican rum brands must continue to educate the world on how special these premium spirits can be.





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The Navy Grog

Three Rums and a Royal Navy Legend.

by **Mark Trumpet**

The Navy Grog is not a drink that was born in Manhattan. Its origins trace back to Don the Beachcomber, the restaurant opened by Ernest Raymond Beaumont Gantt, also known as Donn Beach. The name “Grog”, however, reaches back two centuries earlier to the Royal Navy, to Admiral Edward Vernon, nicknamed Old Grog for the grogram cloak he wore on deck.

Edward Vernon (1684–1757) was a British admiral known for his sharp tongue and for his victories at sea. As a Member of Parliament, he once claimed that Porto Bello, a heavily defended Spanish port in what is now Panama, could be captured with just six ships. In 1739 he proved it. Britain celebrated him as a national hero, and London's Portobello Road is named after that victory. In 1741 Vernon led a large expedition against Cartagena, the main Spanish stronghold in present-day Colombia. After a long siege the British withdrew, as tropical disease spread through the troops. Early reports of success had reached England before the outcome was known, and commemorative medals were struck in his honor. Today they are prized by collectors as a curious record of the campaign. Getting back to the Navy Grog, here is another if his lasting legacy, came from something far simpler. Back in the days, sailors received a daily ration of straight rum, that created drunkenness among the crew and was a constant problem. In 1740 the Admiral ordered the rum to be mixed with water, allowing men to add lime and sugar to improve the taste. Since his crews already called him "Old Grog" after the grogram cloth coat he wore, the new drink became known as grog. Two centuries later, that sailor's ration inspired the Navy Grog.

Donn borrowed the “recipe” and turned a sailor's ration into a sophisticated blend. Unlike many tropical drinks that lean on heavy sweet fruit juices, the Navy Grog is about depth and balance rather than simple sweetness. At its foundation lies a trio of rums, typically a rich Demerara, a funky dark Jamaican, and a clean light Puerto Rican, each contributing its own texture. Fresh lime juice and white grapefruit juice supply the necessary acidity, cutting through the richness of the honey syrup that rounds out the drink. The defining touch, however, comes from a splash of soda water, which keeps the drink lively. This combination creates an evolving experience that begins bright and tart before deepening into something darker and more complex. The genius of the Navy Grog lies in the way three different rums come together as a single voice. Few tiki drinks showcase so much spirit, sweetness, citrus, and spice while still feeling refreshing. By tempering the rums with honey and grapefruit, the Navy Grog makes a robust blend approachable without sacrificing its character.

Presentation has always been part of the Navy Grog's appeal, and Trader Vic made it famous. His version was served in a double old fashioned glass around a cone of shaved ice frozen around a straw, an icy sleeve that kept the drink cold and looked unmistakable. Many bars today use crushed ice and fresh mint, but the cone remains the most traditional one.

PREPARATION

Fill a shaker with ice, add the Demerara rum, dark Jamaican rum, light Puerto Rican rum, fresh lime juice, white grapefruit juice, and honey syrup, shake well until properly chilled, strain into a double old fashioned glass of crushed ice or over a shaved ice cone, top with the soda water, and garnish with a sprig of fresh mint before serving.

ADVICE

For a lighter, more refreshing profile, increase the soda water slightly and let the drink rest a moment so the ice can soften the rums; if you prefer a richer, bolder version, swap the light rum for a second Demerara for added depth and warmth.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 oz (30 ml) Demerara rum
- 1 oz (30 ml) dark Jamaican rum
- 1 oz (30 ml) light Puerto Rican rum
- 3/4 oz (22 ml) fresh lime juice
- 3/4 oz (22 ml) white grapefruit juice
- 1 oz (30 ml) honey syrup
- 1 oz (30 ml) soda water
- Ice
- Optional garnish: fresh mint sprig

GLASS

Double old fashioned glass.

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INTERACTIVE



TASTE

"Wine and friends are a great blend."
Ernest Hemingway





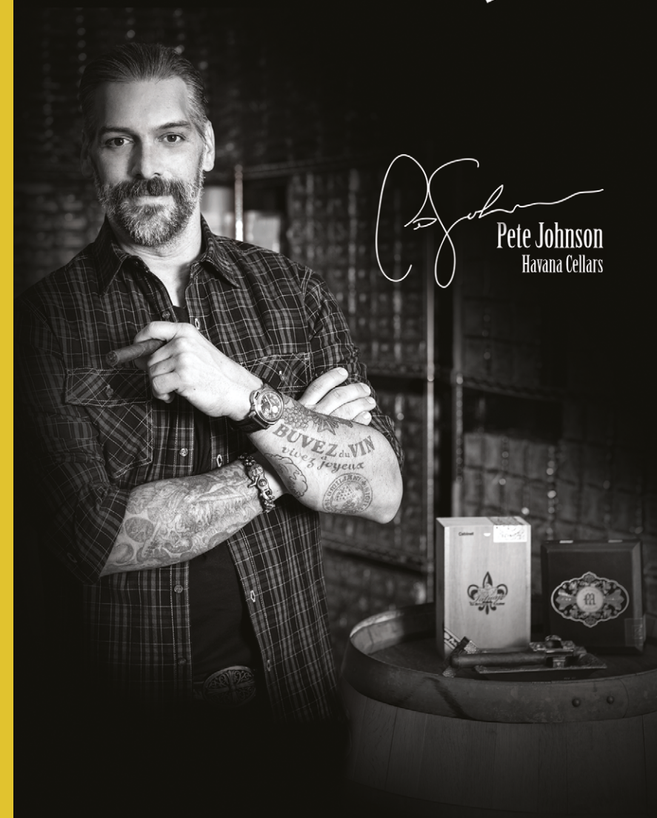
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The Science of Bubbles in Your Glass

Why bubbles rise where they do, what shapes their size and rhythm, and how the glass change the experience?

by **Marco Rizzetto**

When we admire the thin, rising threads of bubbles in a glass of sparkling wine, we are watching a small piece of physics and chemistry in action. The French call this display perlage. It looks effortless, but it seems to depend on a delicate interplay between the makeup of the wine, dissolved gas, tiny imperfections in the glass and its shape.

So, where bubbles come from? Before the bottle is opened, the wine holds a large amount of carbon dioxide dissolved under pressure. Once the cork is out and the wine is poured, the liquid becomes supersaturated: it holds more gas than it can comfortably keep. The excess gas escapes in two ways. Much of it simply diffuses out





through the surface, but a share of it gathers into bubbles at special spots known as nucleation sites. Contrary to a common belief, a scratch in the glass does not seem to be the main culprit.

Researchers who have studied the phenomenon closely point instead to tiny, hollow cellulose fibers, often left behind by a cloth used to dry the glass or floating in the air. These fibers can trap minute pockets of gas, which then grow and detach as bubbles, again and again, forming the characteristic chain. Other microscopic particles on the glass wall may play a similar role, and some glasses have small etchings at the bottom designed to encourage a steady stream. This also explains an apparent paradox. A spotless glass is not necessarily the best for bubbles: if it is too perfectly clean and smooth, there may be few places for bubbles to start. At the same time, traces of detergent or rinse aid can weaken or suppress them, so the ideal glass is probably one that is well rinsed and not too "polished."

What may influence size and rhythm? Several factors seem to shape how bubbles look and behave:
• **Dissolved gas.** The more carbon dioxide the wine contains, the more vigorous the bubbling tends to be.
• **Temperature.** In a warmer wine, gas is generally less soluble and escapes more readily, so bubbling is often livelier but fades sooner.
• **Composition.** Sugars, alcohol and other compounds change the wine's viscosity and surface tension. Proteins, polysaccharides and other surface-active substances tend to gather around bubbles, which may help explain why they rise as small, fairly rigid spheres and why a "foam collar" forms at the surface.
• **Number of nucleation sites.** More active sites usually mean more bubble chains. As the wine slowly loses its gas, the bubbling gradually calms down, which is why the first minutes after pouring are often the most spectacular.

Does the shape of the glass matter? Probably yes, though less for the bubbles themselves than for what happens around them. The flute, tall and narrow, lets each bubble travel a long way, so the chains look long and elegant, and the small surface area may help the wine stay lively for longer. Its narrow opening, however, can limit how well you perceive the aromas. The tulip, with a wider bowl and a tapered rim, is often seen as a good compromise: it keeps a decent stream of bubbles while giving the aromas some room to gather. The coupe, wide and shallow, offers a large surface from which gas escapes quickly. It has a certain historic charm, but it tends to lose its sparkle sooner and to disperse aromas. Rising bubbles also stir the liquid and carry small aroma molecules toward the surface, where they burst and release them. In a well-shaped glass, this tiny "fountain" may contribute to the wine's fragrance as much as to its looks.

A few practical hints. If you care about a nice bubble stream, rinse the glass well and let it air-dry rather than wiping it with a cloth. If you care about aromas, a tulip or a generous white-wine glass may serve you better than a flute. If a thin line of bubbles starts from the middle of the glass, it is more likely a fiber or a speck on the bottom than anything in the wine itself. Ultimately, a good stream of bubbles is not only a property of the wine. It is the result of the wine, the glass, the temperature and even the way you cleaned it.

A simple home experiment: pour the same wine into two different glasses, one dried with a cloth and one air-dried, and compare.



Jacquesson

Inside the house that broke with non-vintage tradition to chase consistency.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**





Founded in 1798, the maison Jacquesson occupies a singular position within the Champagne landscape, both for the longevity of its history and for the clarity of its contemporary philosophical stance. Acquired by the Chiquet family in the late 20th century, the estate underwent a decisive intellectual and stylistic reorientation, moving away from conventional non-vintage assemblage toward a more transparent articulation of harvest identity.

Central to this transformation was the development of the now-iconic numbered cuvée system (beginning with the 700 series), which redefined the maison's relationship to blending, reserve wines, and vintage expression. Rather than pursuing a fixed house style, Jacquesson instead privileges a form of calibrated non-standardization, where each release functions as a precise snapshot of a given year, shaped by site-specific fruit from villages such as Aÿ, Dizy, Avize, and Hautvillers.





Among its most celebrated recent references are the cuvées of the 700 series—particularly those widely regarded as benchmarks of balance between tension and breadth—as well as select lieu-dit bottlings from its historic parcels in the Vallée de la Marne and the Côte des Blancs. These wines have often been cited for their structural rigor, pronounced vinous character, and restrained dosage philosophy, positioning Jacquesson at the intersection of grower-led precision and intellectual winemaking. To find out where Jacquesson is headed, we sat down with Benjamin Vitrac, the house's Commercial Director.

The Manifeste des 700 has been a cornerstone of your identity for over a quarter of a century. In retrospect, how would you characterize the intellectual and viticultural evolution of those founding principles since the abandonment of traditional non-vintage blending conventions?

The Manifesto of the 700 remains at the heart of our identity. Its goal is to make each release more faithful to the dominant harvest. Over time, the idea has become more precise with the addition of our reserve wines, to refine the complexity and style of Jacquesson. Just a reminder, we keep about ten older vintages to craft our Cuvées 700, and it's time and patience that have allowed us to build this true treasure, which will grow richer year after year!

In recent years, the rise of the so-called “natural” winemaking movement has introduced a parallel discourse around intervention, reduction, and stylistic authenticity. How do you position Jacquesson within this evolving landscape, and to what extent do you see your own low-intervention philosophy as convergent with—or fundamentally distinct from—these approaches, particularly in relation to precision, stability, and vintage expression?

We share with low-intervention winemaking the desire to avoid any unnecessary handling. However, precision, stability, and control remain essential for us. The goal is not an ideology, but a wine that expresses its vintage and origin with balance. We claim no label, but our SO2 levels are among the lowest. This is simply explained by the fact that we make no compromises on the quality of our process; to have beautiful wine, we need the best quality grapes and juice!

Climate evolution in Champagne is now unequivocal, with recent extreme heat events underscoring the urgency of structural adaptation in viticulture and vinification. In your view, will the region be able to preserve its stylistic and cultural identity while responding to such





profound environmental constraints?
2026 is the best example; we have never experienced such an early harvest. Champagne will inevitably have to adapt to climate change. Preserving its identity doesn't mean copying the past, but protecting what matters most: freshness, tension, finesse, and length. Adaptation will be essential. We will gather the first experiences from it this year.

Global warming extends its influence well beyond the vineyard itself. In what ways do you anticipate that Jacquesson's approach to extended lees aging will need to evolve in response to shifts in phenolic ripeness, acidity profiles, and overall base wine structure?
Extended aging on the lees will remain important because it enhances the quality of our wines and prepares them for the long term. The work therefore needs to be done beforehand and must be adapted to each vintage. We are currently working on tests with wooden tronconique tanks for our reserve wines, which will help bring back more freshness if the wine needs it. We continue to experiment in order to adapt as best as possible to these changes.

To what extent is it still meaningful to speak of terroir fidelity in an era increasingly characterized by climatic volatility and vintage discontinuity? Do you continue to regard your wines as inherently terroir-driven across all millésimes, or is a more contingent, adaptive interpretative framework now required?
The terroir is still relevant, but its expression is less predictable in a changing climate. Terroir isn't a fixed taste; it's a place that responds every year. Our role is to reveal that response as clearly as possible, especially in great vintages! This is, for example, the case with our Lieux-dits, which aren't produced every year. Sometimes we may wait 2 or more vintages to get back the identity of the terroir we want to have in a wine.

Your maison has long been associated with a form of



constructive "anti-conformism" within Champagne. How would you articulate Jacquesson's philosophical trajectory over the coming decades of climate uncertainty, particularly in relation to the tension between typicity, transparency of vintage expression, and stylistic continuity?
Our nonconformity is mainly a search for consistency. In the future, we'll need to stay flexible while keeping a clear identity. Typicality, vintage transparency, and continuity should be balanced rather than opposed. We're confident about the future thanks to our experiences and the ones we're preparing for.

After so many serious reflections on the future of Champagne, weather adaptation, stylistic evolution, and philosophical positioning, what about the more celebratory side of the journey: which Jacquesson series give you the greatest sense of satisfaction in hindsight? Are there particular releases that you feel most vividly capture the maison at its most successful, expressive, or simply most enjoyable moment?
In hindsight, the greatest satisfaction comes from the releases that best reflect both the character of the year and the spirit of the house, like Cuvée No. 740 or Cuvée No. 747, for example. Some series can be more immediately striking, others more subtle, but the most successful are



those that feel complete, balanced, and true to their origin. We also get a lot of pleasure rediscovering our Cuvées in their DT (Dégorgement Tarif) version, or some Cuvée with a very long time after disgorgement, because sometimes we can be pleasantly surprised.

Finally, moving from philosophy to sensory pleasure: have you ever explored, either personally or in a more informal context, pairings between your Champagnes and cigars? If so, how do you approach such an encounter in terms of balance, texture, and aromatic interplay—and do you see any cuvées within Jacquesson's range that are particularly suited, or conversely resistant, to this type of pairing?
With older Champagnes, subtle notes of tobacco can sometimes become noticeable, especially as the wine develops more mature aromas. Ideally, I would wait at least five years after disgorgement to see these evolving notes appear. Champagne and cigars aren't an obvious pairing at first, but they share that moment of relaxation and sharing where time can sometimes stand still. I would avoid very young vintages and rather choose a Champagne where the texture and complexity can stand up to the cigar without being overwhelmed. In short, a bottle that's been forgotten in your cellar for a good ten years will be perfect!

中国杂志

Available in:
ENGLISH
CHINESE



2023, 4 号刊



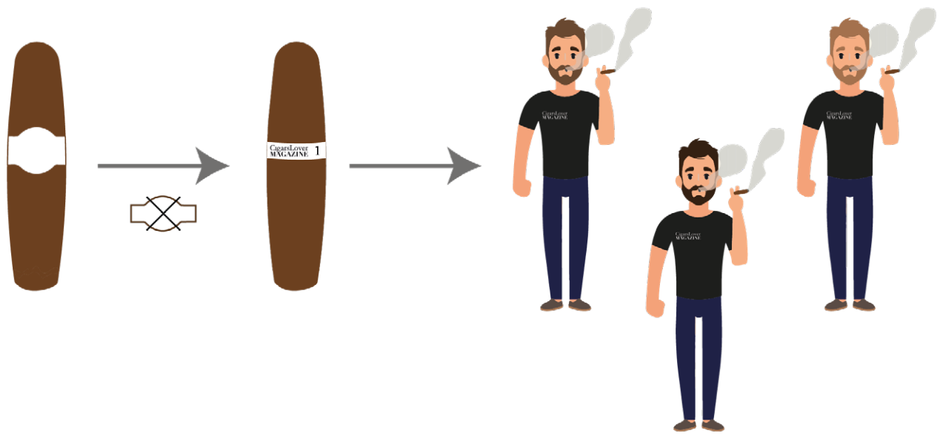
Blind Tasting

96 SPIRITS
98 Rum
104 Whisky

110 CIGARS
111 Corona
114 Lonsdale
117 Robusto
122 Toro

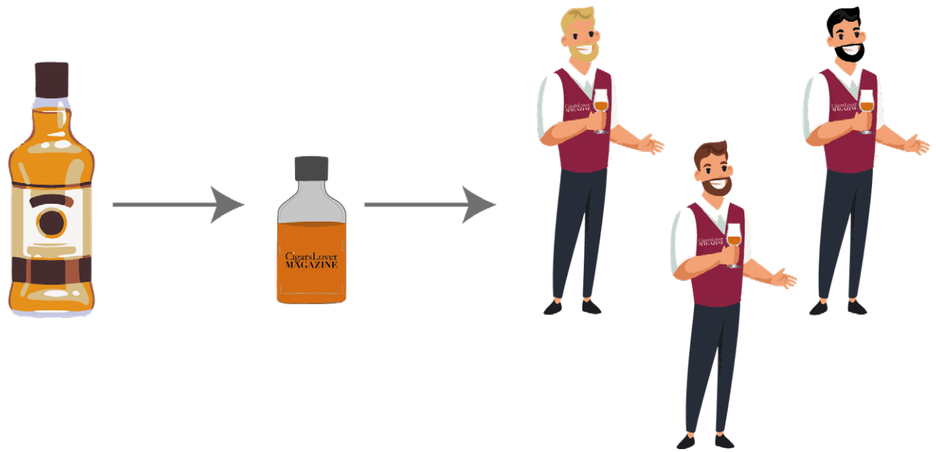


HOW ARE THE BLIND TASTINGS MADE?



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





E. LEÓN JIMENES
110 Aniversario

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

LAYERED AND REFINED

Toffee and dried figs open the nose, followed by vanilla, orange peel, and a hint of cedar. Caramel and roasted nuts fill the palate, joined by oak, cinnamon, cocoa, and a light cigar-box note. Oak and sweet baking spice carry the long, warming finish.

Rich yet balanced, with sweetness kept in check by oak and spice. Excellent depth, harmony, and length.

92



KARUKERA
Christophe Colomb 1493

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

ELEGANT AND SPICY

Fresh cane and toasted oak greet the nose, trailed by vanilla, candied citrus, and a delicate floral touch. Cane juice and spice lead the palate, framed by honey, nutmeg, dried apricot, and soft tannins. Oak and cracked black pepper extend the long, dry finish.

A textbook rhum with finesse, where cane character and wood stay in balance. Lively, precise, and persistent.

91



PLANTERAY
Mister Fogg Navy Rum

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Blend	55.7% | 111.4	$

BOLD AND DARK

Molasses and dark brown sugar dominate the nose, trailed by raisins, clove, and a whiff of tar. Treacle and dried fruit coat the palate, framed by licorice, bitter cocoa, oak, and a salty, maritime edge. Spice and burnt sugar shape the long, robust finish.

A classic navy profile, dense and warming, with enough structure to balance the sweetness. Full-bodied and satisfying.

90



PÈRE LABAT
Canne Bleue

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Marie-Galante	52% | 104	$$

PURE AND VIBRANT

Fresh-cut cane and green herbs fill the nose, lifted by lime zest, white flowers, and a mineral edge. Sweet cane juice coats the palate, backed by pear, white pepper, anise, and a hint of brine. Pepper and bright citrus drive the long, lively finish.

A vivid expression of the cane, powerful yet clean despite the high strength. Remarkable freshness and purity.

90



J. BALLY
1997 Millésime

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

MATURE AND DRY

Polished oak and dried apricot lead the nose, joined by leather, vanilla, and a hint of pipe tobacco. Cane and toasted wood frame the palate, with bitter orange peel, clove, walnut, and firm, drying tannins. Oak and baking spice mark the very long finish.

Austere and well-aged, showing the dry, woody side of Martinique agricole. Serious, structured, and rewarding with patience.

90



SAINT JAMES
1997 Single Cask

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	42.7% | 85.4	$$$

WOODY AND DELICATE

Old oak and leather open the nose, followed by dried plum, cinnamon, and a faint note of beeswax. Cane sweetness and polished wood share the palate, framed by tea, cocoa, candied orange, and fine tannins. Oak and soft spice gently close the medium finish.

Long years in cask show, but the low strength leaves it lighter than expected. Refined, if restrained.

89



RIVIÈRE DU MÂT
Ex-Cognac Finish

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

FRUITY AND ROUND

Raisins and vanilla rise from the nose, followed by dried apricot, grape skin, and toasted oak. Caramel and stewed fruit fill the palate, framed by cinnamon, wildflower honey, a touch of dark cocoa, and mild spice. Oak and creamy vanilla carry the medium finish.

The cognac cask adds a grape note and roundness without masking the rhum. Smooth and balanced.

88



MARLEY MORTON
Aged 12 Years

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

WARM AND MELLOW

Brown sugar and oak greet the nose, with banana, vanilla, and a hint of baking spice behind them. Toffee and dried fruit lead the palate, framed by orange peel, nutmeg, light roasted coffee, and soft wood. Spice and caramel shape the gentle medium finish.

Well integrated, with 12 years of aging showing in roundness rather than heavy oak. Easygoing and pleasant.

88



NEISSON
Profil Équilibre 2026

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Martinique	52.5% | 105	$$

BALANCED AND BRIGHT

It delivers cane juice and lemon zest lead the nose, joined by vanilla, white pepper, and a light woody note. Sweet cane and pear meet on the palate, framed by honey, ginger, toasted oak, and mild tannins. Pepper and fresh cane mark the crisp medium finish.

Faithful to its name, with cane freshness and wood in neat balance. Clean and easy, if less complex.

87



COMPAGNIE DES INDES
Fata Morgana

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

TROPICAL AND EASY

Vanilla and caramel fill the nose, backed by ripe banana, toasted coconut, and a soft touch of cinnamon. Brown sugar and tropical fruit lead the palate, framed by orange zest, clove, light oak, and gentle pepper. Sweet spice lingers on the round medium finish.

Easy and generous, built for pleasure more than depth, with a tropical streak. Simple but well made.

87



HAMPDEN
Fresh

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	42% | 84	$

FUNKY AND YOUNG

Overripe banana and pineapple burst from the nose, with nail polish, green apple, and a grassy edge. Pungent esters and tropical fruit drive the palate, framed by lime, white pepper, licorice, and a light sweetness. Fresh fruit and spice fade on the short-medium finish.

Loud and fruity, though its youth shows in a sharper, thinner texture. Lively, if one-dimensional.

85



RON TEPUY
Destino

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Venezuela	40% | 80	$

SWEET AND SIMPLE

Caramel and vanilla dominate the nose, backed by brown sugar, dark raisins, and a faint woody note. Syrupy sweetness coats the palate, with toffee, cinnamon, dried fruit, and a little toasted oak in the background. Vanilla and cane sugar mark the short, candied finish.

Pleasant and approachable, but sweetness overwhelms structure, leaving little room for complexity.

84

DIPLOMÁTICO
— The Heart Of Rum —
MANTUANO
RESERVA EXCLUSIVA
PLANAS
DIPLOMÁTICO
RON ANTIGUO
RESERVA EXCLUSIVA
RON · RUM · RHUM

Whisky





KNOB CREEK
12 Years

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

DEEP AND LAYERED

Dark cherry and mint chocolate open the nose, joined by raisins, baking spice, black tea, and dried tobacco leaf. The palate is chewy and full, with cinnamon, ginger, and allspice over berry compote, caramel, and cocoa. Chocolate and pepper carry the very long finish.

Twelve years bring real depth and integration without tipping into heavy oak. Rich, layered, and superb value.

91



SANTA FE
Sherry Cask Finished

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

SHERRIED AND SMOKY

Ripe plums and orchard fruit greet the nose, backed by walnut, leather, molasses, and candied ginger. The palate is rich and rounded, with baked apple, caramel, and raisins before a thread of mesquite smoke appears. Dried fruit and gentle woodsmoke close the medium-long finish.

A standout single malt, where smoke and PX sweetness find real harmony. Characterful and generous.

91



ARDBEG
Dolce

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	47.8% | 95.6	$$

SWEET AND SMOKY

Apricot, dates, and orange marmalade meet peat smoke on the nose, with stewed apple and a briny edge. The palate is oily and rich, showing honeycomb, walnut, and dark chocolate before star anise, licorice, and lemon rind. Sweet smoke lingers through the long finish.

Marsala sweetness and Ardbeg peat strike a balance, neither one masking the other. Bold and memorable.

91



WILSON & MORGAN
Mannochmore 15

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	55% | 110	$$$

FRUITY AND MALTY

Honey and ripe pear open the nose, joined by vanilla, green apple, and a waft of cereal. The palate is oily and bright, with orange peel, golden syrup, and malt before white pepper and oak build. Fruit and spice fade on the medium finish.

A superb showcase of an underrated Speyside distillery, clean and beautifully matured. Balanced, elegant, and deeply satisfying.

90



SWEETENS COVE
Dunwoody 6 Years

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

SOFT AND SWEET

Vanilla and toffee lead the nose, followed by fresh bread, dried fig, and a light touch of toasted oak. The palate is round and mellow, with caramel, honey, and dried fruit framed by gentle cinnamon. Oak and brown sugar shape the warm medium finish.

A polished wheated bourbon, generous at 95 proof. Smooth, rich, and satisfying.

90



MIDDLE WEST
Michelone Res. Straight Wheated Bourbon

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

NUTTY AND SWEET

Toffee-coated nuts and caramel corn lead the nose, followed by banana, coconut cream, and soft baking spice. The palate is silky and warm, with maple, brown bread, and dried fruit before cocoa, clove, and black pepper appear. Toffee and spice shape the medium finish.

Four grains add depth, though a slight youthful edge remains. Flavorful and well made.

89



TORMORE
Timeless

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

LIGHT AND FRUITY

Vanilla and lemon zest lift from the nose, joined by green apple, honeysuckle, and soft oak. The palate is bright and medium-bodied, with pear, apricot, and yellow plum over custard and gentle baking spice. A light, sweet finish recalls peach tea and vanilla fudge.

A clean introduction to the revived distillery, bright and easy, though it lacks depth. Fresh, if simple.

88



KILCHOMAN
Rockside 11 Years Old

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

BRIGHT AND SMOKY

Gentle peat smoke drifts over the nose, with mango, lemon zest, toffee apple, and barley beneath. The palate is lively and balanced, showing salted caramel, sweet citrus, and walnut before mixed spice and a coastal edge. Light smoke and fruit carry the long finish.

Lightly peated and barley-driven, a gentler side of Islay, though the smoke feels thin. Fresh, if restrained.

88



TAKETSURU
Pure Malt Essentials 2026

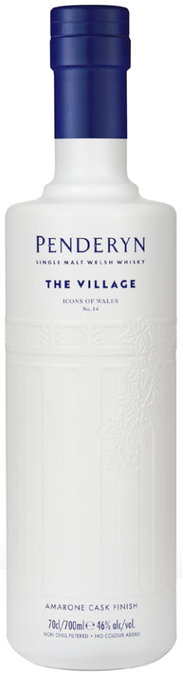
COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Japan	43% | 86	$$$

TOASTY AND DEEP

Toasted malt and soft peat lead the nose, joined by baked apple, honey, vanilla, and gentle cask notes. The palate is rich yet delicate, with malt sweetness, dried fruit, and a light smoky depth before dark chocolate appears. Bittersweet oak frames the long finish.

Yoichi's coal-fired depth leads, though the blend plays it safe for the price. Refined, if somewhat reserved.

87



PENDERYN
Icons of Wales #14
The Village

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

FRUITY AND POLISHED

Dark cherry and plum lead the nose, backed by cocoa, vanilla, honey, and a sprinkle of oak spice. The palate is supple, with raisin and red berries from the Amarone cask before cinnamon and milk chocolate. Dried fruit and spice close the medium finish.

The Amarone finish adds fruit and polish, though it overshadows Penderyn's lighter house style. Pleasant, if predictable.

85



TEELING
Master Blenders

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

SMOOTH AND FRUITY

Red berries and vanilla rise from the nose, followed by dried fruit, honey, and a soft touch of oak. The palate is silky and light, showing raisins, red grape, and toffee before cinnamon and clove appear. Spice and wine fruit close the short finish.

The red wine cask adds fruit, but the blend stays light and rather short. Pleasant, if simple.

84



COMPASS BOX
Hedonism 2026

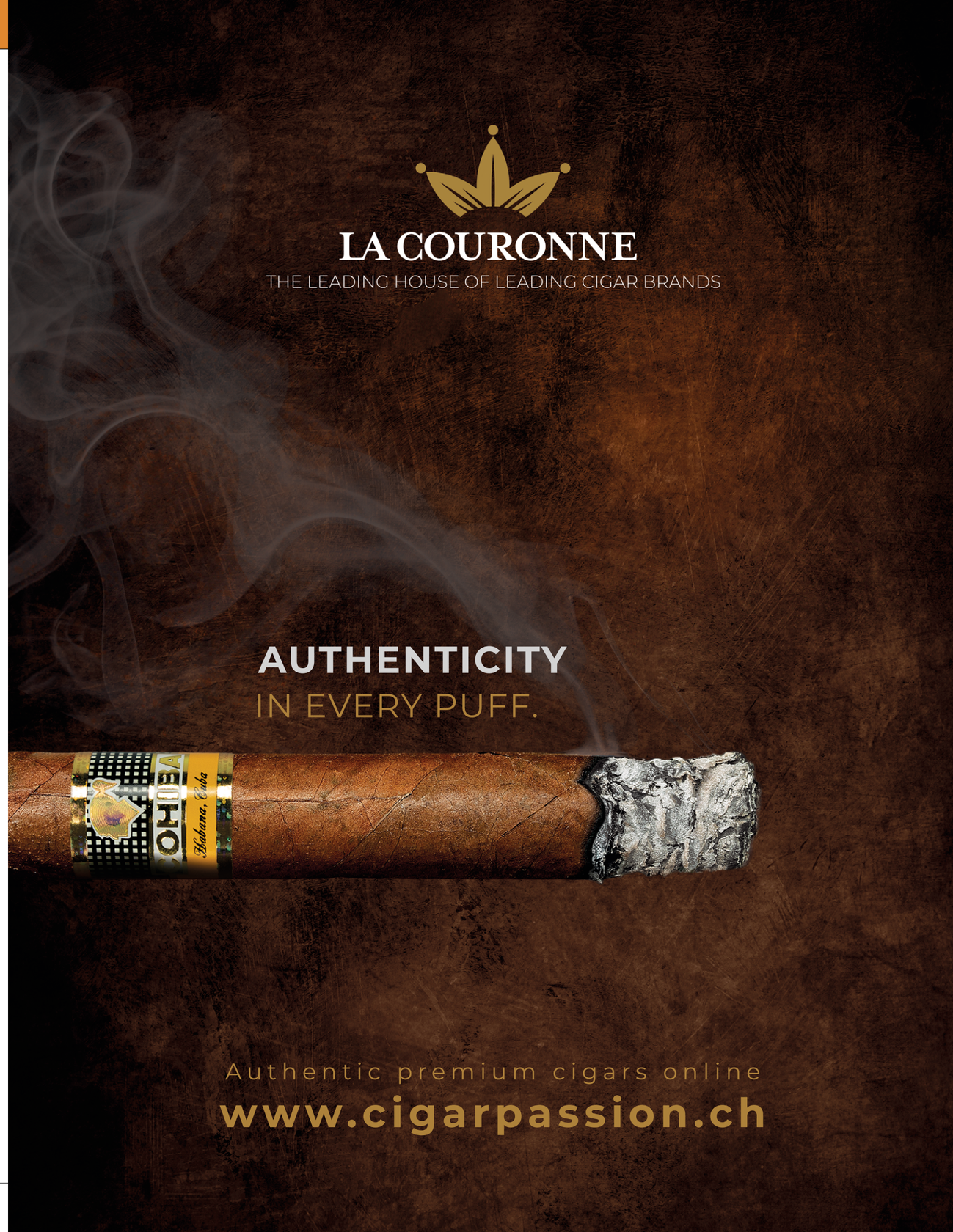
COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% | 92	$$$

CREAMY AND RICH

Butterscotch and vanilla custard open the nose, followed by orange cream, coconut, and a dusting of cocoa. The palate is silky, with milky coffee, nougat, and toasted hazelnut before sherried dried fruit and wood sugars emerge. Milk chocolate lingers on the long finish.

Old grain whisky at its most indulgent, but sweetness and wood sugars mute complexity.

84



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.

Corona





HR SIGNATURE CORONA

SMOOTH AND EARTHY

Wood and earth set the tone. White pepper adds a gentle spice alongside leather. Espresso develops throughout the smoke, with balsamic notes rounding off the profile.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x127mm (5")	$ - | €13.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



CALDWELL LLTK MAD MOFO HABANO CORONA

RICH AND EVOLVING

Wood and earth establish the early profile. Vegetal notes and black pepper join in the second third. Walnut and toasted aromas complete a well-structured finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	43x146mm (5 ¾")	$14.7 | € -

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



BLACKENED M81 CORONA

FLAVORFUL AND INTENSE

Earth, cocoa, and black pepper define a rich profile from start to finish, delivering bold flavors through a linear and consistent evolution.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	43x127mm (5")	$10 | €11.8

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



JAMM PETIT LONSDALE

FLAVORFUL AND STRUCTURED

Pepper and wood appear alongside nuts in the opening. Coffee and leather develop later on, adding depth to a bold yet balanced profile from start to finish.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	41x140mm (5 ½")	$ - | €7

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
BRAZIL	BRAZIL	BRAZIL



LURE FISH STIX

CREAMY AND BALANCED

Black pepper opens with a creamy character. Hazelnut and wood develop further into the smoke, rounding out a straightforward profile.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x108mm (4 ¼")	$8.4 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



MONTECRISTO NO. 3

WELL-DEFINED BUT CONTAINED

Wood and earthy notes take the stage with nuttiness alongside. Leather develops in the second third. Pepper emerges later on to close the smoke.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x142mm (5 ⅝")	$ - | €19.2

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



LEAGUE OF FAT BASTARDS SKINNY BASTARDA

NUANCED BUT UNBALANCED

Leather and wood set a solid tone alongside nuts and black pepper spice. Espresso joins to deepen the profile before harshness takes over in the finale

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x133mm (5 ¼")	$8 | € -

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



ILLUSIONE MK ULTRA

BOLD BUT LINEAR

Spice and leather take the stage alongside wood and cocoa, delivering a bold and straightforward profile from start to finish.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	42x130mm (5 ⅛")	$ 12 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Lonsdale





NOTORIOUS UNAPOLOGETIC CORONA LARGA

DEEP AND COMPLEX

Cocoa, earth, and black pepper take center stage alongside nuts. Molasses, leather, and coffee develop as pepper mellows. Balsamic and spicy notes close out the smoke.

93

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	46x159mm (6 ¼")	$17 | € -

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



DAVIDOFF PURO DOMINICANO CORONA LARGA

LAYERED AND SPICY

Hay and honey precede pepper, mineral, and leather. Espresso and wood join, with a sweet retrohale. Hazelnut comes through as well before chili spice returns towards the end.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x149mm (5 ⅞")	$23.3 | €23

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



ADVENTURA BLACK FINS PARLAY CORONA

BRIGHT AND INVITING

Hay and clean tobacco precede a nutty, peppery opening. Wood, citrus, and white pepper are added later on. Cinnamon and creamy nuances join before a spicier finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x152mm (6")	$13.8 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.



DON PALOMÓN HERENCIA DE REVOLUCIÓN CORONA

ELEGANT AND NUANCED

Cream, dry herbs, and cinnamon start off the smoke. Lilac and faint sweetness develop later. Orange zest and pepper emerge towards the end of the experience.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	42x152mm (6")	$ - | €13

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



ROMEO Y JULIETA CAZADORES

VIBRANT AND RUSTIC

Black pepper and woody notes burst onto the palate with a hint of sweetness. Earth and mineral notes develop alongside coffee. Cocoa and balsamic notes close the smoke.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x162mm (6 ⅜")	$ - | €19.1

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



PARTAGÁS 8-9-8

ELEGANT AND STRUCTURED

Subtle spice, cedar, and earth are revealed in the beginning. Cocoa and roasted aromas develop with delicate sweetness. Leather and coffee deepen the profile towards the end.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	43x170mm (6 ¾")	$ - | €31.2

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



FLOR DE COPÁN 1795 REALES

CREAMY AND SMOOTH

Clean tobacco and vegetal notes set the tone in the opening. Wood develops alongside. Faint white pepper lingers in the background, with a creamy character throughout.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x157mm (6 ⅛")	$ - | € 9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



EL TRIUNFADOR CAZADORES

RICH AND EARTHY

Earth and cocoa beans set the stage. Vegetal notes and roasted aromas develop alongside, building a thick, rich, and satisfying profile throughout.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	43x162mm (6 ⅜")	$12 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Robusto





TATUAJE HVI SERIES E

INTENSE AND COMPLEX

Toasted notes, cappuccino, and earth come first. Cinnamon, wood, and spices build intensity. Walnut, roasted coffee, black pepper, and nutmeg deliver a thunderous finale.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	52x137mm (5 ⅜")	$11 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



AGANORSA LEAF ANIVER. COROJO ROBUSTO

DEEP AND COMPLEX

Cocoa beans and earth take center stage with black pepper. Toasted notes and vegetal nuances develop. Walnut, pepper, and nutmeg round off a deep, rewarding finale.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x127mm (5")	$15 | € 13.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



AVO EXPRESIVO ROBUSTO

FLAVORFUL AND EVOLVING

Cream, nuts, and black pepper take the stage. Cappuccino joins as pepper retreats to the retrohale. Leather and balsamic develop. Sour cream and spice return boldly to the fore.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	$16 | €15.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



ORIENT ISPAHAN

DARK AND INTENSE

Wood, vegetal notes, and roasted nuts give way to the smoke. Hazelnut and creamy aromas develop. Earthiness and black pepper join the flavor profile towards the end.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	$ - | €19

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	PERU	COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



GURI GODS OF OLYMPUS ATHENA GRAN ROBUSTO

BOLD AND FLAVORFUL

Dark chocolate, pepper, and cinnamon set a bold tone. Roasted nuts follow alongside cream and herbs. Vegetal and earthy notes close out the smoke.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	56x127mm (5")	$ - | € 8.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	INDONESIA	NICARAGUA



OLIVA SERIE V MELANIO ROBUSTO

FLAVORFUL AND RICH

Wood, earth, and black pepper define a bold profile. Vegetal nuances weave throughout, adding a subtle layer to the profile. Spicy towards the end.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	$15.1 | €16.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



EL REY DEL MUNDO CHOIX SUPREME

ELEGANT AND EVOLVING

Floral notes and herbs set the stage. Pepper grows increasingly pronounced. Seasoned wood and intense honey notes join, with a sweet base in the background.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	48x127mm (5")	$ - | €14.3

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



HORACIO JACQUES CHANCEL

CREAMY AND DARK

Vegetal, cream, and roasted coffee set the tone. Leather and smoked nuances develop alongside dry wood later on. Faint ripe fruit notes close out the smoke.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	55x130mm (5 ⅛")	$ - | €13.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA



MACANUDO SUMATRA ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND LAYERED

Clean tobacco transitions to wood and cinnamon spice. Walnut joins through the smoke. Citrus zest brightens the profile before chili spice closes out the cigar.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$7 | € -

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



ARTISTA CIMARRON ROBUSTO

FRESH AND HERBAL

Vegetal and herbal notes define a sharp opening. Sour cream and black pepper emerge further into the smoke, while leather joins toward the end.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x127mm (5")	$ 8.2 | € 9.8

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	COLOMBIA, DOMINICAN REP., USA



RAÍCES CUBANAS 1941 NUEVO COMIENZO ROBUSTO

STRAIGHTFORWARD AND LAYERED

Nutty and creamy aromas emerge softly. Wood and earth form the core, with pepper adding a touch of spice to a straightforward and balanced profile.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	$13 | €13.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



JOYA DE NICARAGUA ROSALONES. CON. ROBUSTO

BALANCED AND LINEAR

Cream and grass, along with vegetal notes, make up the profile. A faint spice accompanies steadily. A light sweetness is also perceptible throughout the smoke.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$7 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

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.

Toro





HIRAM & SOLOMON ASHLAR

REFINED AND PERSISTENT

Fine wood, cedar, and white pepper set the tone with vanilla in the aftertaste. Piquant peaks build with persistence. Nutty notes and earth join to close.

94

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x152mm (6")	$32 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
N/A	INDONESIA	N/A



LA AURORA FAMILY CREED FUERTE SOL TORO

COMPLEX AND STRUCTURED

Earth and cocoa come first, with a gentle honey nuance. Black pepper and chili peaks develop. Toasted notes, nutmeg, cinnamon, and balsamic notes complete a rich finale.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x146mm (5 ¾")	$18.5 | €19.2

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



HOYO DE MONTERREY LE HOYO DE SAN LUIS

DELICATE AND SPICED

Cedar and a peppery touch set a mild tone alongside vegetal notes. White pepper gradually builds through the second third, adding gentle warmth to a light and refined profile.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x160mm (6 ¼")	$ - | €25.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA



ARTURO FUENTE OPUS X 20 YEARS FATHER & SON

COMPLEX AND HARMONIOUS

White pepper and wood open the smoke. Star anise and toasted notes develop. Spices intensify with chili. Aged wood, dry earth, and black pepper close out the smoke.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	49x159mm (6 ¼")	$50.4 | €49

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



RED MEAT LOVERS SPICY BEEF STICK

RICH AND INTENSE

Cocoa, wood, and earth establish the core profile. Leather joins with a light spice in the retrohale. The profile holds steady before intensifying in the finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	48x152mm (6")	$17 | € -

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



ALEC BRADLEY 30 YEARS TORO

FLAVORFUL AND EVOLVING

Wood, hay, and light spice give way to hazelnut and leather. Baking spices and wood deepen the profile. Nuts make a welcome return before a creamy and spicier finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	$11.7 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA



VALACARI NOBILITY TORO

BALANCED AND REFINED

Cocoa beans take center stage alongside earthy, nutty nuances and vegetal hints. Earth and cocoa balance evenly, while walnut and toasted notes round out the finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$13 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



UNDERCROWN EL TIGRE DOMINICANO TORO

INTENSE AND FLAVORFUL

Earth and black pepper define the profile from the start. Vegetal nuances accompany throughout. Piquant peaks and balsamic notes emerge in the second half.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x152mm (6")	$13 | € -

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



PEREZ CARRILLO ENDURE TORO

BOLD AND RICH

Black pepper and piquant peaks burst early alongside aged wood, nuts, and earth. Spices mellow as the smoke advances. Earth, wood, and nuts alternate to the finish.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$20 | €21

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CAMEROON	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



GURKHA TRES DECADAS TORO

NUANCED AND LINEAR

Earth and hazelnut define the early profile alongside vegetal nuances. Roasted aromas develop through the second third. Green pepper adds a welcome touch in the finale.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x152mm (6")	$ 12.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



H. UPMANN BY AJ FERNANDEZ SUNRISE TORO

SMOOTH AND BRIGHT

Citrus and cream set a fresh tone alongside wood and cappuccino. Light spice emerges in the retrohale, adding subtle warmth to a smooth, well-rounded profile.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	$13.8 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA



EGM ESCUDO

SMOOTH BUT CONTAINED

Cappuccino marks a rich, creamy opening. Sour cream and nuts develop alongside a light bitterness. Gentle spices round off a contained profile.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x144mm (5 ⅝")	$33 | €24.4

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

Credits

Cover page
picture by: Mario Amelio

The Quiet Legend
picture by: Scandinavian Tobacco Group

The New Black
picture by: Valentino Siesto

Cigar Heads Closures
picture by: Mario Amelio

30 Years Off the Beaten Path: Cuaba and Vegueros
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Four Centuries in the Glass
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The Navy Grog
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The Science of Bubbles in Your Glass
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Jacquesson
picture by: Jacquesson Champagne

Blind tasting - Spirits
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Blind tasting - Cigars
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