CigarsLover MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1 - 2025

Hiram & Solomon

- ARTESANO DEL TOBACCO - GUILLOTINA DE SAKA - CASUAL CIGARS - ACRYLIC CIGAR HUMIDORS - CIGAR PAIRINGS
- MHOBA DISTILLERY: THE INTERVIEW - PAIRING CHOCOLATE & AMERICAN PAIRING - COCKTAIL: MARGARITA
- LITE BEERS: WHAT IS THEIR STORY AND WHY CIGAR SMOKERS SHOULD ENJOY THEM MORE

UNDERCROWN MADURO
The original Undercrown blended and created on the factory floor at La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate, Undercrown Maduro is made from a San Andres (Mexico) wrapper; Connecticut River Valley Stalk-Cut and Stalk-Cured Habano binder; and filler tobaccos of select Brazilian Mata Fina and Nicaraguan Cuban seed tobaccos. Medium-plus, Undercrown Maduro is a bold, deep and textured cigar that offers an earthy, rich and smooth taste profile with a natural sweetness.

Wrapper: San Andres (Mexico)
Binder: Connecticut River Valley Stalk-Cut Habano
Filler: Select Brazilian Mata Fina and Nicaraguan

UNDERCROWN SHADE
Undercrown Shade is a significant shift away from the dark, bold Undercrown Maduro to the more mellow, yet equally expressive flavor of the Connecticut Shade varietal. Featuring a regal Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper, a luscious Sumatran binder and a filler blend of Dominican Criollo '98 and Nicaraguan Criollo '98 and Corojo '99 tobaccos, Undercrown Shade is medium-bodied and ultra-smooth offering notes of cream with lush hints of vanilla, caramel and pepper.

Wrapper: Ecuadorian Connecticut
Binder: Sumatran
Filler: Dominican and Nicaraguan

DREW ESTATE
the Rebirth of Cigars

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

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

- **W: Mex. Otopan Negro Ultimo Corte**
- **B: Connecticut Broadleaf**
- **F: Nicaraguan**

2021
91
CIGAR AFICIONADO
RATING

UNDERCROWN
NUESTROS PUROS ✦ BY DREW ESTATE

CigarsLover
MAGAZINE

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Editor's thoughts

2025: updates and iniziatives

The first issue of the year provides an update on our spirits blind tastings. We have made the decision to streamline the tasting experience, offering a comprehensive description of the product without breaking it down into separate categories such as nose, palate, and finish. This approach now mirrors the structure of our cigar blind tastings. Additionally, we are launching a new series of articles dedicated to evaluating and identifying the best cigar accessories on the market. In 2025, we will introduce a new award to recognize the best new accessory tested during the year. We are also introducing an exciting update to our tasting section starting with the next issue, where a new type of pairing experience will be unveiled.

The content in this first issue celebrates the tenth anniversary of Hiram & Solomon, a brand that has garnered global recognition. Our engaging conversation with the wonderful Fouad and Romi provides an insightful look back at the journey since the brand's inception. We also spotlight another renowned brand, Artesano del Tabaco, alongside Mhoba, a distinguished rum producer from South Africa.

Finally, CigarsLover.com has undergone a website refresh to enhance both aesthetics and functionality. The update introduces new features designed to improve readability and accelerate page loading times, addressing the growing volume of content over the years.

#refineyourtaste

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INSPIRED BY NATURE:

THE HEXAGON

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

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

PLASENCIA CIGARS

HECHO A MANO EN NICARAGUA EST. 1865

ALMA FUERTE SIXTO I

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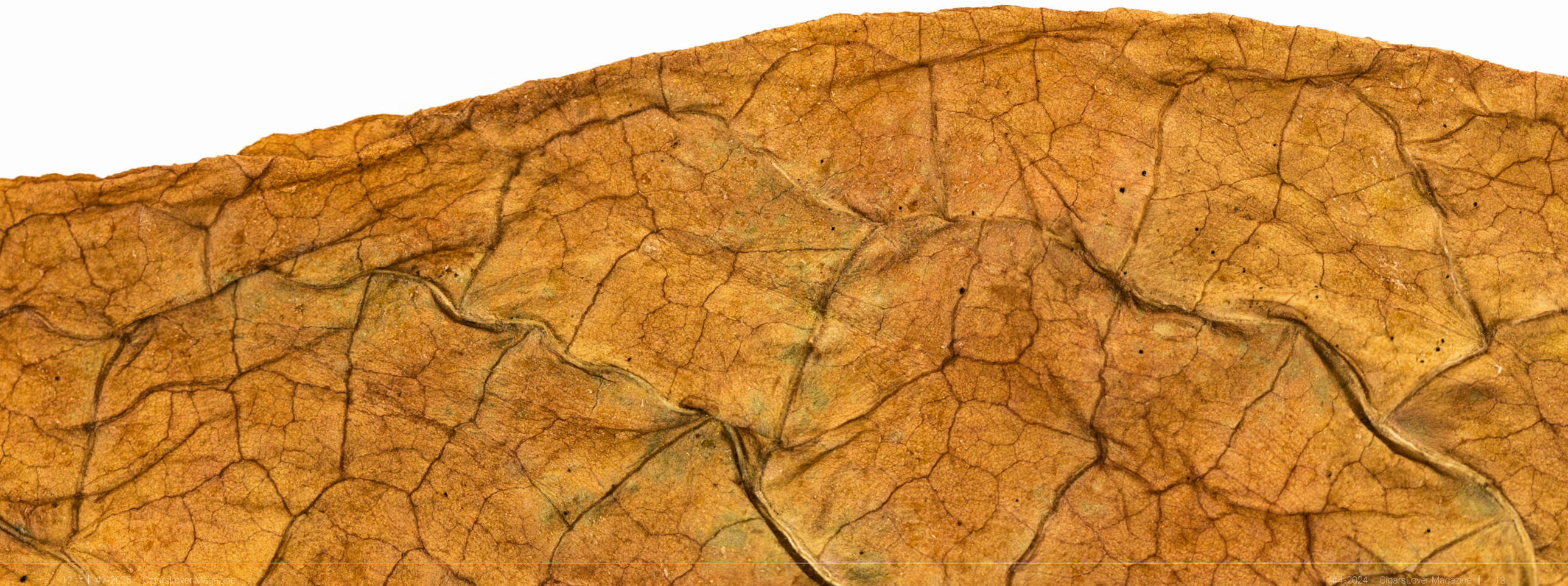
CIGARS

"The cigar smoker, like the perfect lover or bagpipe player,
is a calm man, slow and sure of his wind."
Marc Alyn



CALDWELL CIGAR CO.

Long live the Queen

MADURO

Ten Years

"Cigars are about more than just tobacco; they're about connection, stories, and shared moments."

by **Michel Arlia**

What began as a passion to share Masonic traditions and contribute to the community, Hiram & Solomon Cigars has made significant strides in the cigar industry over the past decade. Ten years later, they have transformed into a powerhouse brand, thanks to the relentless efforts of the couple, Fouad and Romy Kashouty. We spoke with this dynamic duo about their special milestone and more.

Hi Romy, and Fouad, you are celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the brand. Congratulations!

Fouad: Thank you! Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of our brand is truly a milestone, and we are incredibly grateful for the journey that has brought us here.

Did you have a goal in mind that you wanted to reach when you started?

Fouad: When we started, our goal was simple: to create high-quality cigars that embodied our passion for the craft and the values of brotherhood, integrity, and tradition. More than just great cigars, we wanted to build a brand that brought people together and gave back to the community. What started as a fund-raising passion project quickly grew into something much bigger than we anticipated. We saw how deeply our cigars resonated with people—not just within the Masonic communi-

ty, but across all cigar enthusiasts who appreciated the craftsmanship and meaning behind what we were doing. That fueled our drive to expand, refine our blends, and build a brand that could stand alongside the best in the industry. While our initial goal was to create a great product with purpose, our vision continues to evolve. Now, it's about building a legacy, expanding our reach globally, and ensuring that every cigar we create carries the same spirit of excellence, tradition, and connection that we set out to achieve from the very beginning.

What has been the most significant change you have seen in the business in the last ten years, both good and bad?

Both: Over the last 10 years, the cigar industry has evolved in remarkable ways—both good and challenging. One of the most significant positive changes has been the diversification of the cigar community. We've seen a growing number of younger smokers, more women embracing the culture, and a broader global appreciation for premium cigars. Social media has played a huge role in this, creating a vibrant space for cigar enthusiasts to connect, share experiences, and discover new brands. It has allowed brands like ours to reach a wider audience and build a strong community around our cigars.

On the flip side, the biggest challenge has been the increasing regulations and restrictions on cigars. Whether it's higher taxes, packaging laws, or smoking bans, the industry constantly faces new hurdles. The fight to educate lawmakers and preserve premium cigars as a cultural and artisanal tradition is ongoing. Additionally, supply chain disruptions, particularly after the pandemic, have made sourcing high-quality tobacco and maintaining production consistency more difficult at times.

Despite these challenges, the passion for cigars remains stronger than ever. The industry continues to grow, and the sense of community among cigar lovers is what keeps it thriving. As long as we stay committed to quality, tradition, and innovation, the future of premium cigars remains bright.

Many people might not realize it, but giving back to the community is an integral part of your brand. Can you talk a bit more about your efforts in that space and how it aligns with your values?

Both: Giving back to the community has been a core principle of Hiram & Solomon since day one. Many people know us for our cigars, but what truly defines our brand is the impact we strive to make beyond the smoke. The Masonic philosophy is deeply rooted in charity, brotherhood, and making the world a better place, and we've made it our mission to reflect those values in everything we do. A portion of our proceeds goes toward various Masonic charities, veterans' organizations, and community initiatives that support education, healthcare, and those in need. Whether it's helping fund scholarships or contributing to local lodges and philanthropic causes, we believe that success should always be accompanied by service. What makes this even more meaningful is that our customers are part of this journey. Every time someone smokes a Hiram & Solomon cigar, they're not just enjoying a premium blend but also contributing to something greater. This alignment between our brand and our values is what drives us forward. For us, cigars have always been about connection, tradition, and purpose. And if we can use our platform to give back and inspire others to do the same, then we know we're fulfilling the true spirit of Masonry and brotherhood.

Romy, you got more involved in the brand after a while. What prompted that shift, and how has adapting to your role been?

Romy: Initially, my involvement with Hiram & Solomon was more on the business development side, but as the brand grew, I found myself becoming more immersed in its vision, values, and potential. What really prompted the shift was seeing firsthand how deeply our cigars resonated with both Masons and non-Masons alike. The way our products brought people together, sparked conversations and embodied the spirit of brotherhood was truly inspiring. Adapting to my role has been both challenging and rewarding. The cigar industry is unique—it's not just about making a great product, but about building relationships, understanding market trends, and staying true to the brand's identity. Learning the nuances of blending, distribution, and brand positioning has been a continuous journey, but I've been fortunate to work with a great team and have the support of the Masonic community. At the end of the day, seeing the brand flourish and knowing we're making a meaningful impact makes all the hard work worth it.

There are not many couples in the cigar world who are involved in all aspects of the company. How do you manage to balance work and life?

Both: Being a couple deeply involved in every aspect of the cigar business is both a blessing and a challenge. We are constantly working together, whether it's blending, marketing, distribution, or events, so the line between work and personal life can sometimes blur. But what makes it work is our shared passion for what we do. One of the keys to balancing work and life is understanding each other's strengths and allowing space for both professional and personal growth. We've learned to set boundaries where needed, making sure that we still take time to enjoy cigars not just as business owners, but as two people who fell in love over them. At the same time, we embrace the fact that this isn't just a job, but rather a

lifestyle. The cigar world is built on relationships, experiences, and friendships, and we make sure to enjoy those moments rather than just seeing them as work. One of the things we look forward to every day is our smoking ritual—whether it's after long hours in the office, on a plane between destinations, or winding down after an event. That time is sacred for us. It's when we disconnect from everything else, share thoughts, reflect, and just enjoy the moment together. Ultimately, the balance comes from mutual respect, a shared vision, and knowing when to put the work aside and just enjoy a cigar, not as business partners, but as husband and wife.

How's the blending dynamic between the both of you? Do you have different approaches or philosophies when it comes to creating cigars?

Romy: The blending dynamic between us is a fascinating balance of our individual strengths and shared vision. Over time, I've become more involved in the blending process because my palate tends to pick up on more intricate nuances, which allows me to explore deeper layers of complexity in a cigar. I love experimenting with different tobaccos, fine-tuning blends, and crafting cigars that evolve with every puff, offering a memorable experience. My husband and I have different approaches; he's very methodical and precise, ensuring consistency, construction, and burn quality, while I approach blending more intuitively, focusing on how flavors interact and unfold throughout the smoke. I enjoy pushing boundaries and discovering new combinations that surprise and delight smokers. This contrast in our styles actually strengthens the final product. We challenge each other's ideas, refine blends through both technical precision and sensory exploration, and ultimately create cigars that aren't just well-made but tell a story. At the end of the day, our shared passion and complementary skills make the blending process a rewarding and exciting journey."

Fouad: I couldn't agree with Romy's answer more, we both know that the combination of our strengths leads to a better product than we would make individially.

What does the blend for this special occasion represent for you both personally and for the brand's journey?

Both: For us, this blend is more than just a cigar—it's a reflection of our journey, our challenges, and our triumphs over the past 10 years. Every leaf in this cigar tells a story, much like our own. It represents the passion, resilience, and dedication that have gone into building Hiram & Solomon from the ground up. On a personal level, this cigar is a tribute to the sacrifices, late nights, and unwavering belief we've had in this brand. It embodies our commitment to excellence, to each other, and to the brotherhood that has supported us along the way.

The complexity of the blend mirrors the ups and downs of our journey—starting smooth, evolving with depth, and finishing strong, just like our path in this industry. In honor of our 10-year Anniversary, we proudly present Ashlar, a tribute to Masonic tradition, refinement, and excellence. Inspired by the journey from rough to perfect, Ashlar embodies the craftsmanship, dedication, and evolution that define both Masonry and our cigars. This cigar isn't just a celebration of our success—it's a symbol of transformation, progress, and the pursuit of perfection. For the brand, this cigar is a milestone. It signifies not just how far we've come but the legacy we continue to build. The balance of flavors represents the harmony we've found in our craft, our business, and our partnership. It's a blend that pays homage to our roots while looking ahead to the future. Ultimately, when people smoke this cigar, we want them to experience more than just exceptional tobacco—we want them to feel the story, the dedication, and the brotherhood that has fueled Hiram & Solomon for the past decade and will continue to do so for years to come.

What are you excited to explore in the next ten years of the brand?

Both: The last 10 years have been an incredible journey, but we're even more excited about what's ahead. As we look to the next decade, our focus is on expanding Hiram & Solomon's presence globally, reaching new markets, and continuing to innovate while staying true to our roots. We want to keep pushing the boundaries of blending, exploring unique tobaccos, and crafting cigars that not only deliver exceptional flavor but also tell a story and create an experience. Beyond cigars, we're eager to expand our impact within the community. Giving back has always been at the heart of our brand, and we want to find new ways to strengthen our contributions to Masonic charities and other organizations that align with our values. Additionally, we're excited to elevate the overall cigar lifestyle—whether it's through exclusive collaborations, unique cigar lounges, or events that bring people together. The cigar world is evolving, and we want to be at the forefront of that evolution, ensuring that our brand continues to inspire, connect, and bring people together just as it has since the beginning. Most importantly, we look forward to continuing this journey as a team, growing alongside the amazing community that has supported us. The next 10 years aren't just about business growth—they're about leaving a lasting legacy in the cigar industry and beyond.

Finally, is there anything you'd like to share with your supporters and customers who have been with you through this incredible journey?

Both: First and foremost, we want to express our deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported us on this journey. Hiram & Solomon started as a vision fueled by motivation and a love for cigars, but it became something far greater because of the incredible community that embraced us. To our customers, friends, and supporters, whether you've been with us from the beginning or just recently discovered our cigars—thank you.

Every cigar you light up, every message of encouragement, and every conversation shared over one of our blends means the world to us. You are the reason we continue to push forward, innovate, and refine our craft. This journey hasn't always been easy, but it's been worth every challenge because of the people who believe in what we do. Your loyalty, enthusiasm, and appreciation for our cigars inspire us every day. As we celebrate milestones like our 10th Anniversary and look toward the future, we promise to stay true to our values—delivering exceptional cigars, honoring tradition, and always giving back to the community. At the end of the day, cigars are about more than just tobacco; they're about connection, stories, and shared moments. We look forward to creating many more of those moments together. So, from the bottom of our hearts, thank you for being part of our journey. We can't wait to see what the future holds and to share a smoke with you all along the way.

HIRAM & SOLOMON

CIGARS

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

Celebrating our 10th anniversary

Artesano del Tobacco

"When you enjoy what you do, it never feels like work."

by **Michel Arlia**

Brothers Billy and Gus Fakih have always been on the pulse of the cigar world, be it from their days as retailers of the infamous Cigar Inn stores in New York or as cigar makers under the Artesano Del Tobacco brand. Their success in both ventures stands as a testament to their expertise, vision, and unwavering dedication to the craft. We sat down with them to discuss their journey, passion, and what's next for their brand.

What was your guy's first introduction to cigars?
It all began with our father and grandfather, who both enjoyed smoking cigars. Growing up, our household celebrated significant moments with cigars. These occasions were often filled with laughter and joy, creating lasting memories that we cherish to this day. The aroma of cigars became synonymous with family gatherings.

During our weekend barbecues and special celebrations, cigars were always present. They added a unique touch to our festivities and fostered a sense of connection

among family members. This tradition has been passed down through generations. Thanks to our dad and grandfather, we developed an appreciation for cigars from an early age. Their passion inspired us to explore the world of cigars further, understanding the nuances that make each experience unique.

Before creating your cigar brand, you were on the retail side of the premium cigar business. How did owning a cigar store come to be?

It's quite interesting how we started our cigar journey business; it all began in a quaint gift store located in the West Village of New York. Our evolution has been shaped by our customers' preferences and changing trends. One pivotal moment occurred when a client informed us about his transition from cigarettes to cigars. He expressed interest in purchasing cigars from us if we carried his preferred brand. This sparked our initial foray into the cigar market, starting with just a few boxes. As demand grew, we transformed our entire store into a dedicated cigar shop, ultimately leading to its sale.

In 1992, we relocated uptown and proudly opened New York Cigar Inn, featuring a walk-in humidor—a true milestone for us in creating an authentic cigar lounge experience. Our business continued to flourish, prompting us to expand further. In 2008, my brother Bass joined our venture, allowing us to establish a second location in Midtown Manhattan under the same name—New York Cigar Inn—strengthening our presence in the city. In 2015, Altadis USA approached us for a partnership and acquired both locations. This pivotal moment enabled us to shift our focus towards producing and manufacturing cigars, marking an exciting new chapter for our family business.

After spending more than 20 years in the retail side of premium cigars, you decided in 2019 to launch Artesano Del Tobacco. What changed to make you guys want to start making cigars?

We officially registered our corporation in 2012, marking the beginning of an exciting journey in the cigar industry. In the same year, we registered the name “Viva La Vida” and developed its schematic design. This initial groundwork laid a solid foundation for what would become a unique offering in the market. Our vision was clear from the start: to create exceptional cigars that stand out.

Our introduction to AJ Fernandez Cigars in 2013 was pivotal. We were captivated by his innovative approach and distinctive blends, which set his products apart from others. The refreshing quality of his cigars inspired us to explore new possibilities within our own creations. While our idea of making cigars began in 2012, it wasn't until 2015 that we fully committed ourselves to this passion. After selling our retail cigar lounges, we reached out to AJ Fernandez to collaborate on blending and manufacturing Viva La Vida Cigars, and in 2019, we felt the Viva La Vida blend reached its maturity and is ready for the market.

Were you able to apply anything you've learned on the retail end to making cigars, and what did you learn now that you own a cigar brand that you wished you would have known earlier?

What we were able to apply from our clients and for being in retail begins with the invaluable insights we gain from them. Their preferences and experiences shape our understanding of the unique blends we enjoy, guiding us in our pursuit of excellence. Initially, we focused on learning about the specific blends that resonate with them. Understanding their preferences for sizes, wrappers, fillers, and binders have allowed us to refine our offerings and cater and focus on tastes more effectively.

As we delved deeper into flavors, finishes, strength, and construction, we recognized that smoking cigars is a nuanced experience. This appreciation has been cultivated through conversations with them and our own experiences as cigar enthusiasts. What we learned is that the craftsmanship behind each cigar is a labor of love that demands time—time for curing and aging. Our commitment to quality means we understand that there are no shortcuts; great cigars cannot be rushed or hurried. The knowledge we've gained from our clients has been instrumental in creating exceptional blends. We remain dedicated to honoring this process while continuously striving to deliver products that reflect both the market and what our clients tell us through their passion for fine cigars.

A couple of things you have to get in line before you have a finished product, especially in the cigar business, is to know where to make the cigars and by whom. Was there a list of countries and producers you wanted to try, and how did you land with AJ Fernandez?

Our collaboration with AJ Fernandez began unexpectedly when his former partner introduced San Lotano Cigars at our New York stores in 2012. At that time, we were unfamiliar with AJ's work. As we sampled the San Lotano Cigars, we were captivated by their exceptional blend. This experience ignited our passion for AJ's creations, ultimately making us one of his most ardent supporters in the industry. Our enthusiasm for his cigars grew immensely from that moment.

When AJ decided to launch his new cigar, New World Connecticut, we proudly hosted its debut from our shops. We organized a sit-down dinner to introduce it to the entire U.S. market, showcasing our commitment to promoting quality cigars and supporting talented artisans like AJ. Collaboration deepened further when we embarked on creating Viva La Vida Cigars together. AJ expressed profound gratitude for our early support during his journey, stating that he would reciprocate our loyalty. His dedication and integrity have solidified a strong bond

between us. His blends resonated with us and aligned perfectly with what the market was seeking at that time. As we embarked on designing the Viva La Vida cigars, collaborating with AJ was an obvious choice. His innovative approach and dedication to crafting exceptional cigars made him the ideal collaborator for our vision. We sought specific flavors and notes that would set our line apart, and AJ rose to the challenge brilliantly. His ability to create unique blends with outstanding construction ensured that our expectations were not only met but exceeded.

The first line you launched was the Viva La Vida and, afterward, the El Pulpo. What's the story behind the names and the logos?

The name embodies the spirit of celebrating life's successes—be it birthdays, weddings, or graduations. We believe every day deserves recognition for your hard work. Viva La Vida cigars serve as a reminder that life is a series of celebrations. You don't need to wait for special occasions; each day is an opportunity to unwind and enjoy the fruits of your labor. We encourage you to take a moment for yourself and savor that well-deserved cigar.

To emphasize this celebratory spirit, we chose a jester design for our logo. The jester symbolizes joy and laughter, reminiscent of childhood visits to amusement parks where happiness was abundant. Our goal is to evoke those same feelings with every cigar you enjoy. Following the success of Viva La Vida, we proudly introduced EL Pulpo cigars. Inspired by the octopus's unique ability to adapt its shape, these cigars represent versatility in flavor and experience. Just like the octopus fits into any space, our blends cater to all preferences.

What is your vision for Artesano Del Tobacco, and what can we expect in the future?

As you know, Artesano Del Tobacco is a boutique cigar company that uniquely blends art and tobacco. Our vision is to honor the talented individuals who craft cigars in our factories and farms. At Artesano Del Tobacco, we believe that these cigar makers behind our products are true artists. Their dedication and craftsmanship inspire us to create exceptional cigars that reflect their skill and passion for the trade. We pride ourselves on using only high-quality, premium tobacco.

Our commitment to excellence ensures that every cigar we produce meets the highest standards of quality, catering to the discerning tastes of our consumers. Understanding market trends is crucial for shaping the future of our brand. We actively listen to consumer needs and preferences, allowing us to develop new products that resonate with cigar enthusiasts around the world.

RATED 91

VIVA LA VIDA 5TH ANNIVERSARY JESTER FLAT ROUND BELICOSO

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Guillotina de Saka

“A high profile cigar cutter."

by **Zac Mitchers**

It is a cigar cutter made with no compromises. The design was made by Steve Saka himself, the founder of Dunbarton Tobacco & Trust, and it is manufactured by Luigi Lucente of CigarMedics, in the US.

This cutter is made with custom milled 6061-T6 Aluminum Bolsters, featuring an OD Green Cerakote finish. The logo and writings are gold-filled. The body presents jimping for providing ergonomic grip. When it comes to the mechanism, this product is activated with a magnetic closure/opening, that works smoothly. It is assembled with custom blued screws heat treated to a straw gold color to accent the green hue of the Cerakote finish.

The blade is made of 420 stainless steel, and it can be changed without tools (every Cutter comes with a QR code to access a video on how to change it). The cutter comes, in fact, with an additional blade. The two sides of the cutter are different, offering dual Chamfered Sides, to better fit different ring gauge cigars: one works better with cigars up to 48, while the other with bigger ones. Steve told us he spent well over a year in prototype-making, ending up with testing 150 units to ensure their long-term functionality.

We've been testing this cutter for quite a few months. The design is original, and the product is well-made. It is solid and the blade well sharpened. The ergonomy is good and the finish make it very appealing to the touch. The mechanism that open and close the blade is extremely smooth and the feeling you have when “playing” with it is satisfying. You can tell this is a high end made product by keeping it in your hand. The weight is on point: solid, but not too heavy.

We tested it with a large variety of cigars, and it worked best with 44-plus ring gauge cigars, making clean and smooth cuts. With the smaller ring gauges, especially below 40-ring gauge, sometimes the cutter tends to rip a little the cap towards the end of the cutting motion, and a little more attention is required.

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Casual Cigars

"When cigars are not the focus."

by **Austin Crowe**

As humans we are not well equipped to divide our attention. So if our focus is on a particular activity we won't be able to fully take in things that are going on around us. When it comes to smoking fine cigars we often devote our focus and energy on the cigar; the process of smoking it, the flavors we can pick out, the appreciation for all of the hard work and hand labor that went into making the product. While there may be other things happening while smoking the cigar such as music, something on television, or a conversation with another cigar lover; these things are secondary to the cigar itself and meant to enhance the experience.

There are times when we want the cigar to be the secondary element that enhances our enjoyment of something else. We have all seen photographs of sports stars smoking cigars after a big victory. We may smoke cigars casually while doing something else, or at least know someone who does. Activities like golfing, having a barbeque, reading a book on the beach, or just taking a nice leisurely stroll. These times usually call for a different cigar that doesn't demand our focus and attention; a casual smoking cigar. While smoking an Opus X or a Behike after winning the World Cup might give the impression of an excellent combination; we all know that the nuance and excellent flavor will not be fully appreciated in the moment because the cigar is not the center of attention. It is times like these that call for a good casual smoking cigar. So how do we find a casual smoking cigar? First it is important to define what we are looking for; a cigar that we enjoy the flavors of, something that isn't so complex that it requires all of our focus; often times something more budget oriented, something that pairs well with the activity we intend to enhance, and a cigar that we can easily obtain.

Finding this cigar is as simple as keeping an eye out for it. Most cigar smokers branch out and smoke what is new or what is different but the focus is on finding that next "best" cigar; something that will sit in our humidor for the next special occasion or to impress our friends with all the amazing and rare cigars we have. Not everything you smoke is going to be a gem, usually people are looking for that amazing cigar with nuanced flavors and some complexity for the times in which the cigar is the main focus. A cigar that is reliable, enjoyable, yet not complex usually is not tipping the scales for those times when the cigar is the center of attention. So those cigars are often overlooked in the future. However, if you are on the hunt to develop your collection of casual smoking cigars you should be thinking about it when trying out new or different cigars. While you may be disappointed in a particular cigar after devoting your full attention to it only to discover that it was, "boring," you might also have just found one of your most treasured cigars. Ask yourself: Did I like the flavors of this cigar? Were there any flavors I didn't like? Did it take any of my attention to taste those flavors? Is this cigar at the top of my budget? With enough trial and error, you might just find a cigar that can enhance your enjoyment of other activities and life without distracting your attention; something that you can mindlessly smoke.

If you truly love cigars but find yourself thinking that you don't have time to dedicate to enjoying a nice cigar, then it might be time to find that cigar that can enhance your enjoyment of some other activity. A useful tip when searching for the right casual cigar is to look at cigars that are at a slightly lower strength than you normally gravitate to. You will probably find a cigar with flavors you like but without the evolution or complexity you think is required for a perfect cigar. Do you avoid trying the standard product lines of some of the major manufactures? Maybe it's time to reevaluate those cigars. Those companies wouldn't still be around if their main product line wasn't reliable and enjoyable to someone.

Our constant search for the best possible cigar might just be blinding us to the cigar that is best for us. What good is that Padron Limited Edition TAA Exclusive or that Cohiba Talisman Edicion Limitada 2017 if we don't have the time to devote to giving it our full attention? Are we missing out on the full enjoyment of the world of cigars by only smoking when we have time to make the cigar the center of attention? While it is nice to have a humidor full of those rare and special sticks, our lives might just be that much more enjoyable if we devote some humidor space to those cigars that aren't the center of attention but can instead be enjoyed more often and used to elevate other activities in our lives. Finding some casual cigars might just teach you that you love cigars even more than already do. Finally, if you have some casual cigars you smoke often it may help you appreciate how truly special those "best" cigars are in comparison.

Acrylic Cigar Humidors

A contemporary alternative.

by **Luca Cominelli**

As cigar lovers we understand the importance of proper storage to maintain our cigars in the best conditions. Recently, traditional wood humidors have not been the only option. Together with the old fashioned jars, a new type of humidor has been introduced to the market: the acrylic.

Acrylic humidors are typically made from polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA), a lightweight yet durable plastic known for its optical clarity and resistance to impact. The thickness of the acrylic walls varies depending on the model, but most high-quality humidors feature walls between 3mm and 5mm thick. These humidors often use silicone gaskets or precision-cut lids to ensure an airtight seal. The material's non-porous nature prevents the absorption of moisture, ensuring a consistent internal environment without the need for frequent adjustments.

Their advantages are much lower prices and the possibility to completely see through the humidor, even if the latter is something purely subjective. The main difference between the wooden humidor and the acrylic ones, lays in the way they interact with humidity.
A humidor made of wood can absorb moisture, while an acrylic one cannot. This could be a benefit if the humidor stays closed for longer periods of time, but it is not in the case of daily use, where the wood can reduce the humidity swings.

Due to the fact that acrylic humidors cannot absorb moisture, the humidification system should be chosen carefully (beads and humidity packs are the best options). It is fundamental to use a method capable of controlling humidity that won't only release moisture. It is basically the same principle used for jars.

Another consideration to not forget is to not place an acrylic humidor in direct sunlight, which will increase internal temperature, humidity fluctuations, and color discoloration of the cigar wrappers.

Acrylic cigar humidors offer a modern, low-maintenance alternative to traditional wooden humidors, making them an excellent choice for beginners and seasoned collectors alike. An acrylic humidor can effectively preserve your cigars' quality and flavor. Whether you are looking for a budget-friendly option or simply prefer a sleek, contemporary design, an acrylic humidor is a worthwhile investment for any cigar enthusiast.

PAIRINGS

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

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

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

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

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

PAIRING Cigars & Spirits

ALEC BRADLEY POST EMB. ROBUSTO

RICH AND FULFILLING

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$ 9 | € 11

DIMENSIONS
52x127mm (5")

COUNTRY
Honduras

Medium bodied smoke, with intense notes of toasted bread with hints of pepper and dark leather and musty wood. Some interesting background dark fruit notes. The investigation has been done with two different releases of American whiskeys, rye and bourbon from Reservoir Distillery.

DAVIDOFF ESCURIO 6X60

COMPLEX AND BALANCED

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●	$ 19 | € 19.5

DIMENSIONS
60x152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
Dominican Republic

This nuanced release starts with earthy and vegetal aromas, which are then enriched with spicy notes that recall green pepper. The spices become more marked in the second half, where they are flanked by notes of undergrowth. The chosen spirits are both 46% ABV and feature quite complex aromas bouquet, one more flowery and intense at the nose, while the second has some level of peat and nuanced spiciness.

GRAN HABANO COROJO N.7 GRAN ROBUSTO

BOLD & POWERFUL

STRENGTH	PRICE
●●●●●	$ 15 | € N/A

DIMENSIONS
52x152 mm (6")

COUNTRY
Honduras

A powerhouse balancing perfectly flavor and strength with earth, leather, black pepper, and hazelnut. There is also a perceptible sweetness in the background. The flavor profile adds cocoa and coffee. Balsamic aromas come through towards the end, and the finale is spicy. Two very risky pairings, one with a coastal highland whisky, mitigating the salty character with a rum finish, the second with a peated release, featuring a classy and sweet smoke.

RESERVOIR
Bourbon

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
100% Corn	NAS	New

Corn-centered, with the grain almost dominating the nose profile. The palate, on the opposite, is more nuanced, and takes the direction of nuts, with pecans and peanuts with a creamy profile. Nice, mellow and enjoyable. Smoking corn on cob directly on fresh wet wood; there are still vegetable hints coming from the corn, not 100% marrying the tobacco, especially the more subtle notes of pepper and leather. Palate is much better, with the peanut brittle becoming more caramelized, yet creamy, also covered in delicious dark chocolate, with the right sweetness, now finally balanced. Finish is on wet sweet tobacco, between the pipe one and the one of cigars with "cabeza dulce".

Pairing score	88

RESERVOIR
Rye

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
100% Rye	NAS	New

Nice product, surprisingly different from the balanced, smooth and caramel-driven nose to the spicy palate, which boasts a nice and powerful experience. The palette is rather ample and interesting, yet the power of true rye can be perceived. Tasty. The shy nose of the bourbon is yet capable of making the tobacco more gentle and mellow, thanks to the caramel well integrating with the roasted nuts and burnt wood. Some hints of freshness remind of resin. The palates are more robust, with the spices playing well together yet becoming more masculine; the cigar however seems to have found its real nature this way, with the minor Nicaraguan component coming upfront, earthier and bolder. Finish is not very long and not the cleanest defined one, yet on burnt tobacco and caramel.

Pairing score	90

MCNAIR'S
Lum Reek 12yo

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	46% - 92	$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Blended Malt	12 Years Old	Ex-Bourb., PX, Red Wine

Nice and a great value product, centered on rich, sweet-spiced butterscotch, with creamy and chocolaty tones, enriched by a subtle winey addition. The aromas are very nice and varied, lacking only some extra integration to achieve higher peaks. The PX deep structure of the spirit adds layers of gourmand chocolate and some animal aspects to the tobacco, which adds a warm earthy dimension for a sensual experience, all reconciled in a warm masculine perfumed leather glove. Subtle and well connected. The sip is more rounded, thus the cigar can re-discover its true earthy-woody character, darker than before, yet mellow and enjoyable. The spicy side is also darker, with toasted cardamom and cumin. Sophisticated, masculine, even middle-eastern at times.

Pairing score	90

KAVALAN
Podium

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Taiwan	46% - 92	$$

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	NAS	American oak

Evocative and balanced, stands out of the crowd with a special experience at the nose, rich in intense bouquet of perfumed cedar, tropical and orchard fruit. The palate is of great quality vanilla and caramel. A cedar-driven cigar would be the perfect similitude pairing, while here the earthy tobacco is contrasting, yet with grace and class, the enchanting flowery quality of the Taiwanese whisky. At moments the warm oak sensation fits very well with the spirit, reminiscent of a classy female boiserie. The palate of the single malt is creamier and vanilla-centered, and this sweet spiced ice-cream style fits well the cigar when it features a woody profile. It is also quite interesting the rise of more peppery spices. Overall the sip and the puff are not truly intense, so the two go very well together.

Pairing score	87

ARDNAMURCHAN
AD/Rum Cask Release

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	5 Years Old	Ex-bourbon, Ex-rum

The mineral, almost salty DNA of the distillery is mitigated by the sweetness and tropical fruit of the rum finish, adding demerara to the citrus zesty nature of the spirit. Balanced and rich, with a carefully managed ABV, yet intense body. The great leathery body of the smoke needs a flavorful spirit: the whisky pairs well thanks to the sweet tropical fruit, despite a minor zesty hint and some elevated highland nature. The sip is incredible: the salty component is pushing through the peppery spicy content of the tobacco, which is about to become wild, when the tropical and yellow fruit comes upfront balancing nicely the experience, enveloping the spices making them more complex and oriental (wild pepper, nutmeg, macis, chili). Very long finish, on chocolate and chili. Excellent, beyond rules.

Pairing score	91

ARRAN
Barrel Bonfire

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

TYPE	AGE	CASK
Single Malt	11 Years Old	Ex-bourbon

Intensely peated experience with a sophisticated array of flavors. Delightful balance between sweetness of quality vanilla, crème brulée, custard, butter biscuits, and an intense, dry, almost quenched fire peat, smoky yet cold and flavorful. A very distant floral hint, a citrus minor addition and some nuts dryness. The chocolate and leather of the smoke are welcoming the light, sweet peat of the whisky, which is capable of adding some thin floral notes. Vanilla and chocolate, like in home-made ice-cream. The palates are well integrated, pandoro cake on the grill, double toasted crème brulée, with dark chocolate shaves and some dry nuttiness. The finale is of vanilla sweetness, with dark chocolate hints, slightly dry.

Pairing score	89

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COROJO N0.7

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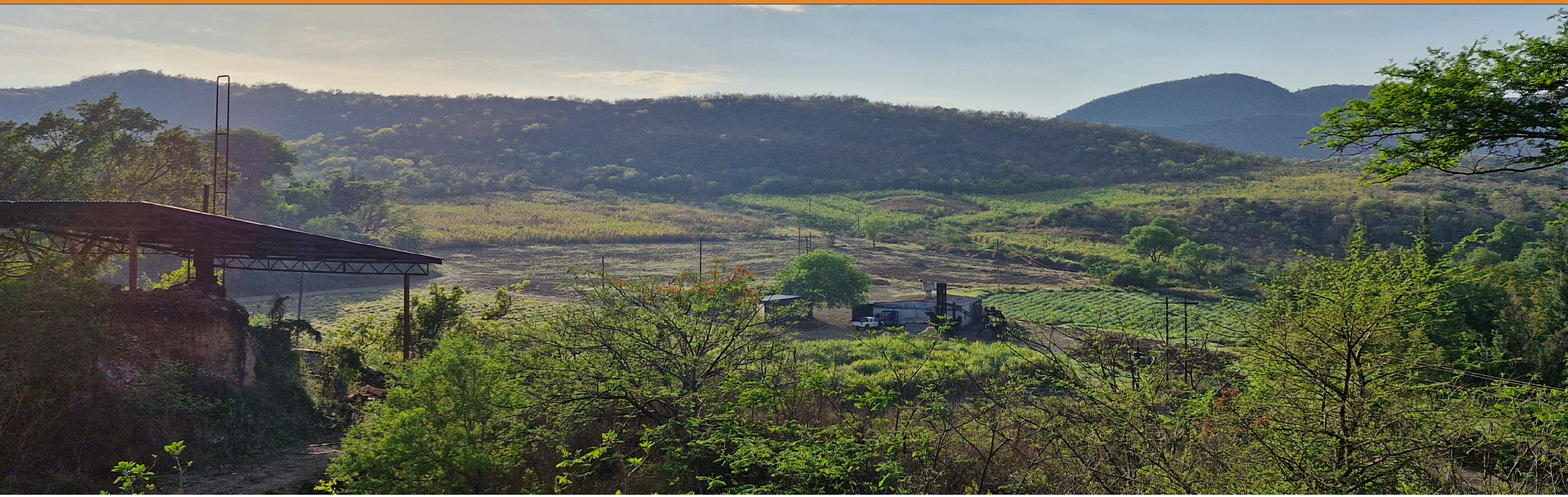
SPIRITS

“I wonder whether they have rum and Coke in Heaven? Maybe it's too mundane a pleasure, but I hope so -- as a sundowner.
Except, of course, the sun never goes down there.
Oh, man, this heaven is going to take some getting used to.”
Desmond Tutu



Mhoba Distillery

The pioneering story behind the South African Rum maker.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Mhoba Distillery, located in Malelane, South Africa, is a craft distillery renowned for producing single estate rum from locally grown Nkomazi sugarcane. Founded by Robert Greaves, who engineered much of the distillery's equipment himself, Mhoba emphasizes a hands-on, artisanal approach. Their rums are crafted in the agricole style, utilizing pure sugarcane juice, and are free from additives, reflecting a commitment to purity and authenticity.

Quite a lot has happened from the first time we read about Mhoba in 2018. Can you tell how you got to this point and how much has changed from those early days?

Mhoba Rum was started by experimenting with the fermentation, distillation and maturation of our sugarcane juice rums. We don't come from family or business with a history or pedigree in rum-making. We started from nothing and read and experimented a lot. I have always loved and been fascinated by flavour in food and drinks more than most people I know. When I decided to start making a spirit from our sugarcane, I built a small press to extract sugarcane juice and a small pot still and started distilling on a very small and experimental scale. I started trying different things in terms of fermentation and distillation and I learned a lot just by trying different ferments, distillations and still designs. We have also experimented with maturation in several different cask types, with particular focus on casks which have previously been used to produce great South African products. Over the last ten years we have discovered and continued with several methods and techniques which produce rums we really like and those have formed what is now our core range of products. Although we already have a fairly wide range of rums, we are still a young distillery, and we still have a lot to learn and experiment with. I think we will always try new things and with time our core range and limited releases will continue to evolve as we discover new things, and we learn which rums appeal most to our market of rum and spirits fanatics.

Mhoba now has a solid core range with regular small-batch and limited releases. How have you been developing your bottling strategy?

Experimentation has always been a major part of what we do. I feel continued experimentation keeps the creative aspects exciting but the ultimate main aim behind this experimentation is to try to enhance the intense and nectareous flavours of our rums. Through this experimentation we have already learned a lot and found several staple production methods. Examples of these distillates are our Select White marque which has been a part of our catalogue for quite some time as white rum and remains the backbone of many of our maturations. Similarly, our original high ester marque – GHE – also remains an integral part of our production. We have had great success with maturing our French Cask Rum in ex-red wine casks which we purchase from one of the oldest wine estates in South Africa. Our philosophy has, and always will be, to try new things and to learn as much as possible to produce the most authentic, exciting and intense rums that we can make using only our own sugarcane. As such, we have a basic foundation from which we hope to continue our growth into new and exciting things as we develop a more precise plan with regards to our

bottling and production. We still have quite a few lessons to learn regarding our bottling strategy, and there are many inefficiencies when we bottle for large orders for clients such as La Maison Du Whisky. However, as we learn from these problems, we are getting closer to a system that works well and allows us to give our clients some great Mhoba as quickly as possible.

Mhoba's white rums are impressive. What is the most difficult aspect about making white rum and how did you manage to make it so special? What was the market response and how did you choose to communicate the value of your white rum vis-à-vis your equally unique aged rum?
Initially, our focus was entirely on producing the best distillate we could make but our white rum was much milder as we focused on appealing to the local market. We are very lucky to have a growing export market for our rums and as my palette and our understanding of rum evolves, so too does the rum we make. Our white rum is a great representation of our sugarcane, particularly the Select White marque. This is due to our limited intervention in the natural fermentation of cane juice. We do not use any commercial yeast, nor any other additives in our rum making. Our fermentations are composed entirely of pure cane juice pressed from our own cane or a combination of pure cane juice, plus cane vinegar or vinasse which also results from our own cane juice. In other words, there is nothing else in our fermentations aside from cane juice or cane related products stemming from our own fields. As such, everything is derived from our sugarcane, making it a wholly unique and authentic single estate rum. Without doubt the most challenging aspect of procuring a great pure juice rum is the farming portion of the process. Very few people appreciate the difference in the expense and the amount of work required to produce a small scale, pure juice, single estate rum compared to producing a rum from purchased molasses. We have for some time now been using organic farming practises which also makes the growing of healthy sugarcane with high sugar content more expensive and labour intensive. Another critically important part of the making of really good rum is the understanding and natural ability to taste, select and blend specific cuts of different batches of rum to produce a blend with a certain style or profile. The overseas market response to our rums was and still is very positive, and many see our rum as a unique product with a general flavour profile somewhere between the character found in many Rhum Agricole's and the more robust and intense nature of heavy Jamaican rums. Being such a small distillery, we treasure our white rum, which is very much in demand by our clients and very much needed by us for the filling of casks to grow our maturation stocks. As such, we have placed quite a high value on our unaged liquid, because each drop is special and highly valuable to us.

What's Mhoba relationship to cask aging? Which were the most surprising casks you happened to use? How relevant is the peculiar South African climate of Mhoba's aging warehouses? Do you prefer to work on an impactful single cask or to build a more balanced cuvèe?
We practised very limited cask ageing and we matured our first rums in glass demijohns with charred American Oak staves. This "Glass Cask" maturation is what inspired our Glass Cask expression which is still a staple in our core-range of products. Once I had built larger pot stills in 2016, we started traditional cask maturation. Our emphasis was and still is to prioritise the use of high-quality casks which have previously been used to produce great South African products. A natural source of casks is from our world-class wine industry in the Western Cape. Consequently, our most used casks would be ex-red wine casks from the Vrede en Lust Wine Estate. We also extensively use ex-whisky casks from the James Sedgewick whisky distillery which produces South African single malt and single grain whisky. We also have number of ex-Van Ryn's pot stilled brandy casks. In contrast to these local casks, we also use a good portion of ex-bourbon casks from the United States from distilleries such as Woodford Reserve, Jim Beam, and Wild Turkey. We also have some interesting and less conventional casks from various sources, such as ex-Ardbeg peated whisky casks, ex-marula brandy casks, and even some ex-rhum casks from the Caribbean. We are always on the hunt for something unique which we feel will marry well with our unique rums. Since we are very small, we can be very hands-on and give each cask specific attention when it is filled. Each cask is a creation of its own, filled with specific cuts or portions of distillate batches. Each fraction of our distillate gets tasted by either Shaldon (Engelbrecht, Distiller and General Assistant to the CEO) or myself in order to decide which cask or blend it should go into and in what quantities in order to create a very specific expression. Of course, we fill some casks in a similar fashion to create a foundation for our core expressions such as French Oak, Bourbon Cask, and so forth.

Mhoba is a "farm to table" distillery. Do you think that terroir is a fundamental concept in spirit-making? Do pedo-climatic differences really impact on sugarcane to a point you can genuinely appreciate? How much does it matter to have full control over production?
We do indeed practice a very hands-on method of creating rum, and most of what ends up in the glass we do ourselves – from farming the sugarcane, harvesting, juicing, fermentation, distillation, maturation, and finally bottling. I think the term and concept of terroir has certainly been misused by some spirit producers mostly for marketing purposes. I do also believe that a product which is produced purely from a near-naturally grown crop and contains no additives will have a natural character and flavour profile that is determined largely by many natural input factors that influence crops growth and how it transforms into the final product. This link between the genuine character of the product and the place in which it was made is terroir. As an example, we are the only farmers in our area applying only organic farming practises to sugarcane. This is essential because of the more natural growth of the sugarcane itself but even more critical because of its influence on the natural microbes that live on the sugarcane and are responsible for the natural fermentation of our sugarcane juice. During the juicing process the microorganisms that live on the outside of the sugarcane stalks are mixed with the juice released from

the sugarcane and natural fermentation begins. If chemical herbicides and pesticides were applied to our cane and fields, it would dramatically affect the yeasts and bacteria that naturally live on our sugarcane and our fermentations would not be natural. If applied, organic farming coupled with wild or natural fermentation, generates a wholly unique experience which allows one to appreciate the products true provenance and genuine flavour, created by its source. As mentioned before, we are young and as such we are still experimenting with sugarcane planted in different fields and harvested at different times in the year. However, from what we have experienced small differences in the field can have notable differences on the final rum. Things such as climate and crop health obviously play a massive role, however even smaller differences between varieties of sugarcane can sometimes be noticeable. For us, having full control over production is also important in terms of principle. My core belief is to create a product that is entirely authentic. To achieve this, we keep our hands on the entire process so that we can ensure everything we do will create a product that can be appreciated as a true representation of its origin.

Mhoba has experimented with wild yeast fermentation for some years now. How difficult is it to manage that level of artisanal craft? Can it become a trend as in natural wines? Do you fear that it could actually turn more into a marketing strategy rather than a real innovation?

We have been practising only wild fermentation since 2021, and we have entirely omitted the use of commercial yeasts since then. We are quite fortunate that the wild yeast growing on the sugarcane that we harvest readily ferment the juice when it is made available. Often, fermentation can begin within 30 minutes from the point where the juice was crushed out of the cane stalks. We also have a great climate for fermentation, and things can happen quickly here. Thus, I cannot say that it has been particularly difficult to apply wild fermentation, the largest challenge would be the variability between batches. However, we see this as a good thing, since it allows for the opportunity to create new and interesting blends for casks and white rums. Yes, I surely believe that wild fermentation can become quite a large thing, particularly in the rum industry where intense and vibrant flavours are more welcome. There is a growing appreciation for things that are unique, and things that follow natural processes without intervention. For some it may be twisted into a marketing gimmick, but for small boutique producers it is a natural and authentic process which if used correctly can only add to the authenticity and uniqueness of a product. Wild ferments will not work for big brands that want repeatability to efficiently produce massive quantities of the same product. We produce very small quantities of a variety of different rums, so we are able to celebrate the uniqueness and difference between batches and use different batches in different products. This again requires intense personal input to the rum making process to taste the different cuts of different batches and decide which distillates are best suited to which ageing or white rum project. Using the process for the love of the process itself and the expression it produces will always result in a higher quality product, which is what we will always practice here at Mhoba Rum.

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Whisky and Chocolate: the basics

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

by **Simone Poggi**

Chocolate is probably the most important and the most discussed pairing with whiskey. When we started our journey of cigar and whiskey pairing, we found very few outside contributions on the complexity and difficulty tasting with tobacco, while on the contrary every respected whiskey expert and every blog has tried to express an opinion on enjoying this fantastic spirit with the (Maya) Food of the Gods.

We believe there are mainly three reasons associated to this pairing popularity.

First, the fatty structure of chocolate is capable of enveloping the mouth for the same to better "accept" the intense aggression of the alcohol, which in whisky is 40% or higher. This "primer" is one of the best strategies to make sure the sip sensations are more mellow and rounded compared to a "dry" sip, providing a more refined, silky texture which is characteristic of the best of the spirits.

Second, chocolate and whisky share many product characteristics; for both the human contribution transforms basic products such as fruits and grains into sophisticated, complex, epicurean pleasures of life. Many stories are told, complex recipes exist, recently different varieties and agronomical experiments have been tried.

Last, desserts and high ABV spirits can well be placed at the end of a formal dinner or, even better, can be enjoyed away from the meal table, in a more "relaxed" environment such as a sofa or a smoking lounge, a location where it is easier to enjoy very interesting pairing such as whisky and cheeses.

Among the several personalities who have written about whiskey and chocolate, I would like to mention a couple whom we found very interesting in terms of contribution. Martine Nouet is a very passionate food and spirit writer, born in France, who spent more than

16 years living in Islay (and now planning to go back to France). We loved her idea of sensory pairing. We found a rather old interview with Maitre Chocolatier Michel Richart who, on top of several other creations, several years ago deeply investigated the flavors of chocolate, creating a line evidently representing the main aroma of those chocolate bars, separating them into 7 different categories (spicy, herbal, balsamic, roasted, fruity, floral, citrus).

This subdivision would be the ideal starting point for a more analytical investigation, however we doubt an initial start of the pairing journey will include cardamom or mango flavored chocolate with the different peats of the various declinations of an Islay Scotch. Yet, it was very nice to hear them talking about "love" or "marriage" pairing.

Another exercise worth mentioning is the one of Iain Burnett, aka Highland Chocolatier, from Highland Perthshire, Scotland who, in his website, proposes several chocolate praline sets which are explicitly crafted to pair well with specific whiskies (e.g. a selection of Velvet Truffles and Pralines expertly chosen by the chef to pair perfectly with single malt whiskies from The Macallan including Macallan Amber, Macallan Gold, Macallan Sienna, and Macallan Ruby). The sets created by this awards winning expert are sold complete with pairing notes. We read the experience he proposed based on 4 Kilchoman whiskies, probably not the first ones we would select in terms of easiness of pairing.

We loved the complexity of the job of pairing highly aromatic and sophisticated pralines (lime, chilli, caramel, orange, clove and lemongrass are some of the aromas used in proposed Velvet Truffles), yet the most interesting aspect was the suggestion to go beyond the palatal part of the experience; though some chocolates are less aromatic to the nose compared to the normal whiskey experience, because of the difference in volatile aromatic compounds, it is very interesting

to investigate how the two products interact also from a nose perspective. We will try this approach.

Reading what is available in terms of pairing suggestions from experts, the impression we get is that this exercise has been mainly an analysis of the aromatic palette of both the products; though details and often well done, this has brought most of the writers to suggest similarity pairing. As we have done for cigars and whiskeys, we would like to go deeper in our analysis, as in most of the cases we have seen this as a limiting factor, a way to enhance the experience, yet restricted in providing new dimensions to our senses, when not even tiring.

Not necessarily, we want to follow the same identical aromas palette provided by the whiskey (e.g. to choose a lime aromatized chocolate for an Islay whisky which is providing a robust citrus profile with balsamic herbs and burnt herbs peat, a Caol Ila for example).

We are going to propose an integration, sometimes even a contrast pairing. This will result in the chocolate adding layers of complexity to the experience, not only enhancing and reinforcing the same aromas palette.

METHOD

1 . Pour the whiskey, no ice, no water.

2. Nose the whiskey and detail your tasting notes.

3. Melt in the mouth a small amount of chocolate, covering the entire surface.

4. Nose the whiskey again, taking notes of the aromas evolutions / changes.

5. Drink a small sip of the whiskey and compare the tasting notes with the ones taken from previous experiences, indicating evolutions / changes.

6. Drink another small sip of the whiskey to determine how long lasting the effects of chocolate on whiskey are, before the whiskey goes back to standard aroma profile (baseline).

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American Whiskies

100% Corn, Wheated and Creative Bourbons.

by **Simone Poggi**

Before entering into more complex nuances and palettes, let us start from the most extreme of the products in terms of composition of the mash: the 100% corn products, dominated by the sweet quality of its base component, maybe of good and controlled quality such as a Bottled in Bond Mellow Corn. As expected, this highly rated whisky can be paired with tobaccos developing for the entire fruition dark, toasty, intense chocolate or even charcoal flavors, such as Cromagnon from RomaCraft, Reserva Privada, Double Connecticut from Alec Bradley or a Maduro by Maya Selva. This indication is however not an absolute truth. Sometimes balanced, creamy cigars such as the Great Wall GL3 N.3, a medium-bodied smoke centered on wood and coffee, allow the honey sweetness of the Mellow Corn to shine and create a jazz-style dance, with nuts drowned in orange honey and the elegant sensations of a cedar boiserie. Also in this case, experimenting may provide very interesting opportunities, beyond the limits of mere assumptions.

Hudson Baby Bourbon is another 100% corn based whisky, this time with very unique impressions of coconut and menthol freshness on top of the conventional bourbon aromas; its sophisticated yet pronounced sweetness does not fear dark Broadleaf powerhouses, rich in spices and pepper, such as a good Nica Rustica El Brujito, for a complex, mellow integration still making the single parts very coherent. Balcones has several 100% corn releases, however we feel suggesting the Baby Blue Corn for cigar pairing, as the 46% ABV proves to be very efficient in quenching some of tobacco burnt notes with marshmallow and toffee notes, without being too aggressive.

A different chapter is represented by the very famous, classy, velvety wheated bourbons, one of the Holy Grails of pairings. For the moment we will leave aside very expensive and difficult to get releases such as Pappy Van Winkle series, as the age and the intensity of these products will be a tough match for any tobacco and, in addition, we are not sure any aficionado indulging into a glass of such would be in favor of enjoying it with anything else other than good company (book or friend). Some bargain deals are indeed available, such as a Larceny, or a Maker's Mark: these are not by mistake renown as some of the most successful pairing opportunities. Pick your favorite stick of great quality, a Cohiba of old batches, a Serie D N.4 from Partagas, a Plasencia Colorado Claro, and the spicy, woody and leathery components will shine on top of a perfect silky background, rich in butterscotch and demerara sugar.

Finally, in our analysis of American whisky we would appreciate to provide the right appreciation to the modern

creativity of some Reservoir products which can test your limits, especially if they have some milky character such as a Holland's Milkman, but may well quench the fire of a piquant smoke such as the first releases of some Joya de Nicaragua Red, or the darkness of a Jose' Pepin Garcia Blue Label, up to some of AJ Fernandez sticks. Beware! This is a truly extracted spirit, with an intense and characterized taste and, even though the nose can pair well even with medium bodied tobaccos, the palates will not give off the same balance, with a very straight forward dominance of the whisky, which is exactly what we try to avoid. Much better to stick to Nicaragua and avoid sweet Dominicans...Inner Circle by Cavalier Geneve Figurado has been tested with the Reservoir Holland's Ghost, another rather unique release. The tobacco developed notes of hazelnut and wood, leather and herbs, sour cream, white pepper, for sure quite difficult to match the cherry candy aroma of the whisky. Did we find a true integration? Not really, the noses are complex yet disjunctive, sugar crust on hazelnuts and cherries on top of burnt wood. Palates are helped by the velvety texture of the spirit with strength added to the medium intensity tobacco profile, like red fruits added to the tobacco leather. The only warning we would appreciate to provide is that the usage of experimental, very extracted products in pairings is a true expert exercise; get first used with more traditional sensations before starting the journey into this post-modernism fractal potpourri of aromas... A few words on the millet-based products, such as Koval Bourbon, which features a quite high 49% of this grain. Get a good medium bodied cigar, with cedar and some level of freshness, helped by nuts and sweet spices. There are several products which are in line with this profile, from most of the modern Cubans to several Habano wrapper based recent productions. The overall fruition will be coherent and integrated, assonances will prolong the taste in your mouth, with a true reinforce of the pleasure.

Let us close the journey of the American whisky pairing with a product we have a true soft spot for: Legent Bourbon. This is a very unique spirit, resulting from the collaboration between two legendary figures such as Fred Noe, Jim Beam's master distiller, and Shinji Fukuyo, chief blender of Suntory. Fred has developed the mash recipe that first matures in toasted virgin barrels and then is divided for the finish between Californian red wine barrels and ex-sherry barrels. Finally, Shinji takes care of the blending process, bottling at 47% ABV. It pairs magnificently with different styles of aged tobacco, from a vintage Royal Corona of Bolivar, to a Davidoff Nicaragua Box Pressed, to several powerhouses by Fuente (an Opus X, a Don Carlos). However, despite the creativity, can this be considered or even called “bourbon” or even “American whisky"? We decided to leave the question with no answer, and sip & puff again...

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Margarita

A Timeless Celebration of Flavor

by **Mark Trumpet**

The Margarita is a cocktail that has secured its place in drink history as one of the most iconic and beloved concoctions worldwide. Whether enjoyed at a sunny beach resort, a cozy bar, or during a festive gathering, the Margarita's crisp and refreshing flavors, along with its vibrant history, make it a favorite among many. Its balance of sweet, salty, and sour elements appeals to a wide range of cocktail enthusiasts.

The origins of the Margarita is a subject of uncertainty. While no individual can conclusively claim to have invented the Margarita, several theories regarding its creation have emerged. One widely accepted narrative dates the Margarita to the late 1930s or early 1940s in Mexico. According to this account, a socialite by the name of Margarita Sames hosted a gathering at her vacation residence in Acapulco, where she mixed a combination of tequila, lime juice, and triple sec for her guests. The drink garnered immediate popularity and rapidly spread in acclaim. An alternative narrative attributes the creation of the Margarita to a bartender named Carlos "Danny" Herrera, who purportedly devised the cocktail in 1938 at his establishment, Rancho La Gloria, situated in Tijuana, Mexico. In this version, Herrera developed the Margarita specifically for a patron named Margarita Samest. Another interpretation connects the drink's origin to bartender Francisco "Pancho" Morales in the early 1940s. Morales is believed to have prepared the first Margarita in his bar located in Juárez, Mexico. Certain historians suggest that the Margarita may have its roots in the "Daisy," a cocktail composed of brandy, lime juice, and grenadine, which was favored during the 1930s and shares several characteristics with the Margarita. American tourists in Mexico reportedly substituted tequila for brandy, thus giving rise to the "Tequila Daisy" (or "Margarita" in Spanish). While the debate over the Margarita's true birthplace continues, one fact is unequivocal: the cocktail was born in Mexico, and its ties to tequila are undeniable. The Margarita is typically made with three simple ingredients: tequila, lime juice, and orange liqueur (such as triple sec or Cointreau). These components combine to create a harmonious blend of flavors: the tangy zest of lime, the sweet citrus notes of orange liqueur, and the earthy warmth of tequila. This balance is key to its widespread popularity. When serving Margaritas, presentation plays an essential role. The cocktail has been featured in numerous movies and scenes, making it instantly recognizable. It is often served in a distinctive Margarita glass, which has a wide, shallow bowl and a long stem. One of the most recognizable features of a Margarita is the salted rim. The salt, which is typically applied to the rim of the glass before pouring the drink, enhances its flavors. The saltiness balances the drink's sweetness and acidity, creating a pleasing contrast to the tartness of the lime and the earthiness of the tequila. Garnishes can also vary depending on the Margarita variation. A lime wedge or slice is the most common garnish. Over the years, the Margarita has become a staple of cocktail culture. It's simple yet flavorful ingredients make it a versatile drink that can be enjoyed year-round. The Margarita's enduring popularity is a testament to its timeless appeal—a cocktail that is as refreshing as it is rich in history. The next time you raise a glass of this iconic drink, take a moment to appreciate its storied past.

PREPARATION

To prepare the cocktail, begin by moistening the rim of a glass with a lime wedge, then proceed to dip the rim into a plate of salt to create a coated edge. Next, fill a shaker with ice and incorporate the tequila, lime juice, and orange liqueur. Shake the ingredients vigorously until the mixture is sufficiently chilled. Subsequently, strain the cocktail into the prepared glass over fresh ice and garnish with either a lime wheel or wedge.

ADVICE

Use Fresh Lime Juice for a vibrant, fresh flavor. Quality Tequila, ideally a blanco or reposado, delivers a smoother taste.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oz tequila
- 1 oz lime juice
- 1 oz triple sec or Cointreau
- Salt for rimming the glass

GLASS

Margarita glass.

CIGARSLOVERS MAGAZINE
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PAGE
INTERACTIVE

TASTE

"Wine improves with age. The older I get, the better I like it."
Anonymous

Lite Beers

What is their story and why cigar smokers should enjoy them more.

by **Vincenzo Salvatore**

Cigar lovers are constantly looking for the perfect pairing of a fine smoke with the best drink. In recent years, a surprising contender has entered the realm of cigar pairings: low-alcohol beers. Once dismissed as a ridiculous niche, these beers now represent a sophisticated category of beverages that offer complexity, craftsmanship, and balance—traits that can enhance a cigar-smoking session without overwhelming the palate, as they neatly pair up with flavors while cleaning the mouth with adequate carbonation.

The tradition of brewing low-alcohol beers dates back centuries. In medieval Europe, beer was often consumed instead of water due to the latter's contamination risks. These brews, known as "small beer" or "table beer," had low alcohol content (typically between 0.5% and 2.8% ABV) and were staples in households, consumed by both adults and children. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as brewing technology advanced, beer styles diversified. Low-alcohol beers found a niche among laborers and the working class, providing refreshment without causing intoxication. The demand for these beers surged during Prohibition (1920–1933) in the United States when breweries pivoted to producing "near beer"—a malt beverage with less than 0.5% ABV—to stay afloat. Following the repeal of Prohibition, low-alcohol beers faded from the spotlight, overshadowed by full-strength lagers and ales. However, the category saw a resurgence in the late 20th century as health-conscious consumers sought lighter alternatives to traditional brews. With the craft beer revolution of the 2000s, innovative brewers began refining low-alcohol options, transforming them from bland substitutes into flavorful, well-crafted beverages.

Today, low-alcohol beers are experiencing an unprecedented renaissance. Advances in brewing technology, including vacuum distillation and controlled fermentation, allow brewers to produce full-bodied, flavorful beers without the high alcohol content. These modern brews retain the rich aromas, mouthfeel, and complexity of traditional styles while offering a refreshing alternative for those seeking moderation. For cigar smokers, this presents a new world of pairing possibilities. Unlike high-proof beers, which can sometimes overpower the nuances of a cigar, low-alcohol beers can provide a more subtle complement to tobacco's intricate flavors, especially in case of light-bodied cigars. Many of today's best low-alcohol beers offer robust malt profiles, balanced bitterness, and layers of fruity, spicy, or smoky notes—all of which can interact beautifully with medium to mild cigars.

Pairing cigars with low-alcohol beers requires a thoughtful approach. Here are a few excellent pairings to consider:
Dark Lagers & Maduro Cigars – A rich, malty low-alcohol dark lager like Small Beer Brew Co Dark Lager complements the earthy, chocolatey notes of a Maduro-wrapped cigar. The beer's mild sweetness balances the cigar's natural spice, creating a smooth and cohesive experience.
Hoppy Session IPAs & Habano Cigars – Session IPAs, known for their lower alcohol content and pronounced hop character, pair well with medium-bodied Habano cigars. The floral and citrusy hop notes of an Athletic Brewing Co Run Wild IPA contrast beautifully with the cigar's peppery profile, enhancing both elements.
Wheat Beers & Connecticut Shade Cigars – A crisp, slightly sweet wheat beer, like an alkoholfrei Erdinger Weissbier or Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier, with its hints of citrus and spice, pairs excellently with a mild Connecticut Shade cigar. The beer's effervescence cleanses the palate, allowing the cigar's woody nuttiness and herbal freshness to shine through.
Smoked Beers & Full-Bodied Cigars – Rauchbiers or other smoked low-alcohol beers, like the surprising Dovetail Brewery Grodziskie, can amplify the leathery and woody notes of a bold, full-bodied cigar. This pairing creates a synergy that enhances the smokiness of both the beer and the cigar.

Once a market laughingstock, these beers today have evolved into a respected category that caters to discerning drinkers, including cigar enthusiasts. With today's advancements in brewing, low-alcohol beers now provide a sophisticated and flavorful alternative to traditional pairings, allowing cigar smokers to explore new depths of taste without the weight of high alcohol content. For those who enjoy the artistry of cigars, the world of low-alcohol beers is well worth exploring. With careful selection and thoughtful pairings, these brews can enhance and elevate the cigar experience, proving that refinement and complexity are not solely the domain of spirits and full-strength beers. The next time you light up, consider reaching for a well-crafted low-alcohol beer—you may be pleasantly surprised by the synergy it creates.

Blind Tasting

82 SPIRITS
84 Rum
92 Whisky

100 CIGARS
101 Corona Gorda
104 Robusto
110 Shorts
113 Toro

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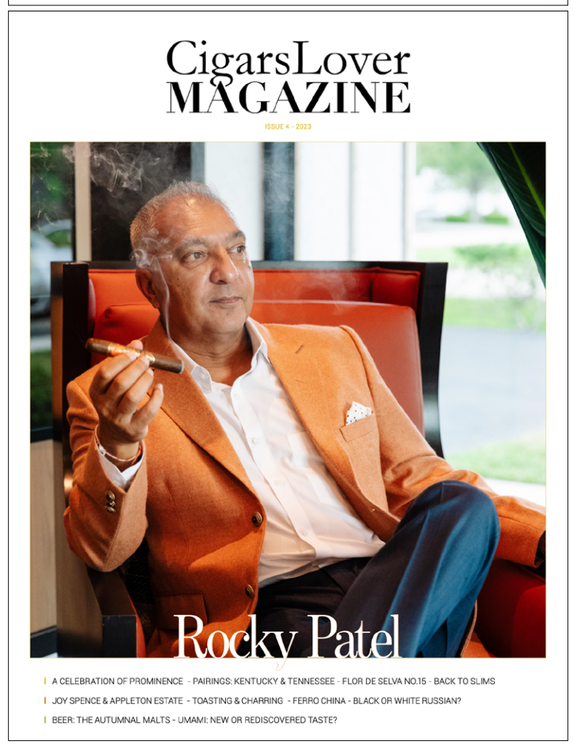
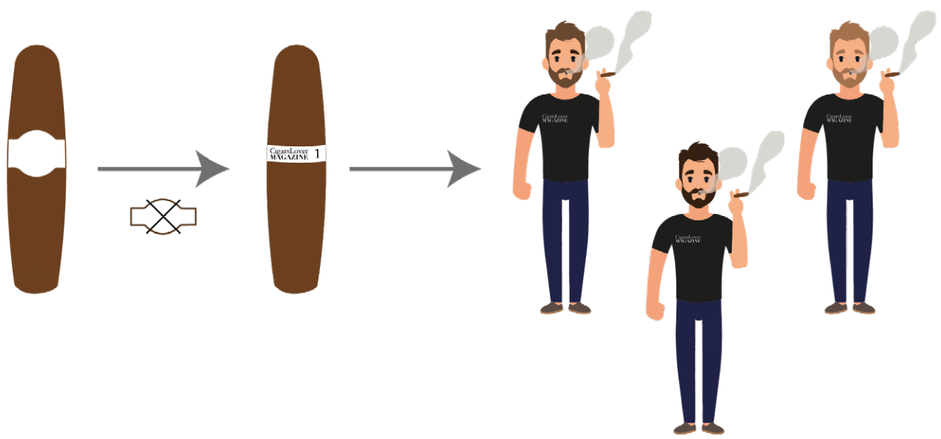


INTERACTIVE

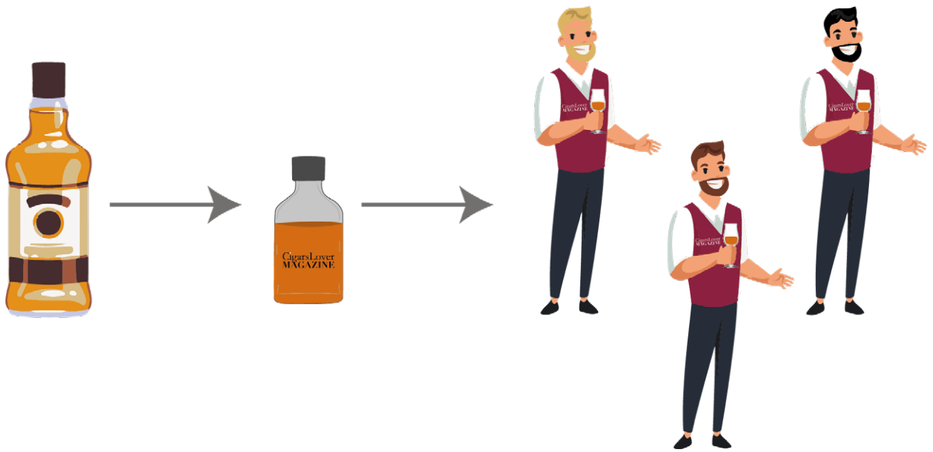
PAGE

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

SAINT JAMES
Quintessence

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

COMPLEX AND VELVETY

Scents of wood, cherry, and coffee beans are followed by vegetal and rancio notes, enriched by a touch of prune and nutmeg. The palate delivers spicy notes, dates, orange peel, and chocolate, with a hint of licorice.

A smooth and well-balanced product boasting a long finish. A great Agricole rhum.

91

APPLETON ESTATE
1993 Heart's Collection

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

POWERFUL AND COMPLEX

Dried apricot, caramel, molasses, some vegetal nuance, fresh cut sugar cane, a hint of vanilla, and then nutmeg. To the palate, dried fruit, oak, vanilla, roasted aromas and a mix of nutmeg, cinnamon and menthol.

The flavor profile is structured and deep, exhibiting an interesting and large number of aromas. The complexity is remarkable.

91

ISAUTIER
Apollonie 2023

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

HARMONIOUS AND RICH

On the nose, wood, and a mix of pastry scents, with butter and brown sugar. On the palate, it delivers exotic fruits, recalling mainly banana and pineapple, together with wood and chocolate. There is also a touch of sugar cane.

It boasts a noble finish with a harmonious and wide flavor. Despite the ABV, it is well-balanced.

91

CLAIRIN
Sajous 2021

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Haiti	54.2% | 118.4	$$

INTENSE AND FULFILLING

The nose delivers fresh vegetal and herbaceous scents, together with balsamic aromas and brine. The palate exhibits notes of herbs, licorice, and anise, with a touch of resin. It confirms the brinw. Then spices and pepper.

Despite the high ABV, it is round and well-balanced. The flavor profile is wide and structured.

91

HAMPDEN
The Maverick

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	58% | 116	$$$

POWERFUL AND FULFILLING

Intense cane sugar and ripe tropical fruits, together with orange peel, and balsamic herbs. A hint of cocoa. To the palate, a mix of spices, with black pepper, cardamom and anise, followed by licorice and charred oak.

Rich, and satisfying, boasting an intense and satisfying flavor profile. A true powerhouse.

90

MHOBA
Bushfire

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
South Africa	55% | 110	$$

LONG FINSH

Ripe cane, brine, smoked wood, vegetal and resin scents. On the palate, the flavor profile is confirmed, enriched by an earthy touch. The smokiness is now more pronounced, but without overwhelming the other aromas.

An harmonious rum delivering a well balanced and easy to appreciate flavor profile. The finish is remarkable.

90

DEPAZ
Les Millesimes 2010

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

COMPLEX AND RICH

Woody and peppery scents, together with yellow fruit, recalling apples and pear. A touch of sugar cane. On the palate, it blasts exotic notes enriched by spices and a touch of berries. Tannins are well present and the sip is a little on the dry side.

A structured rhum delivering a rich flavor profile that is somehow limited in the number of aromas.

89

EQUIANO
Original

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Barbados	43% | 86	$

ROUND AND WARM

A lot of fruit scents, with apricot, passion fruit and sultanas, enriched by a wood and toffee, with a touch of orange peel and vanilla. The palate delivers oaky notes, vanilla, and butterscotch, follow by raisins, that complete the bouquet.

A very well-balanced rum, boasting an easy-to-appreciate and smooth flavor profile.

88

PAPALIN
5 years Jamaica High Ester

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Jamaica	47% | 94	$

BALANCED BUT LIMITED

Scents of sugar cane, vanilla, and lemon peel are followed by balsamic hints and touch of field flowers. The palate delivers a mix of vegetal notes, together with vanilla and lemon zest, enriched by fruity aromas, recalling pineapple.

A nicely balanced rum, easy to appreciate but at the same time with a limited structure.

88

DIPLOMÁTICO
Reserva Exclusiva

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Venezuela	40% | 80	$

ROUND AND SMOOTH

It delivers scents of caramel, vanilla, toffee, and hints of dried fruit. On the palate caramel and vanilla are the protagonists, together with honey and a hint of spices. A touch of oak completes the flavor profile.

A round and very easy to enjoy ron. The flavor profile is imprinted on the sweetness.

86

AH RIISE
Non Plus Ultra La Galante

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Saint Croix	43.4% | 86.8	$$$

THICK AND SWEET

To the nose, a riot of orange peel and orange oils, together with vanilla, citrus, butter, and baking spices. The palate is sweet, with orange oils, toffee, baking spices, vanilla. A hint of cardamom.

The flavor profile is mellow and particularly sweet oriented. It is easy to appreciate.

84

LONGUETEAU
La tradition

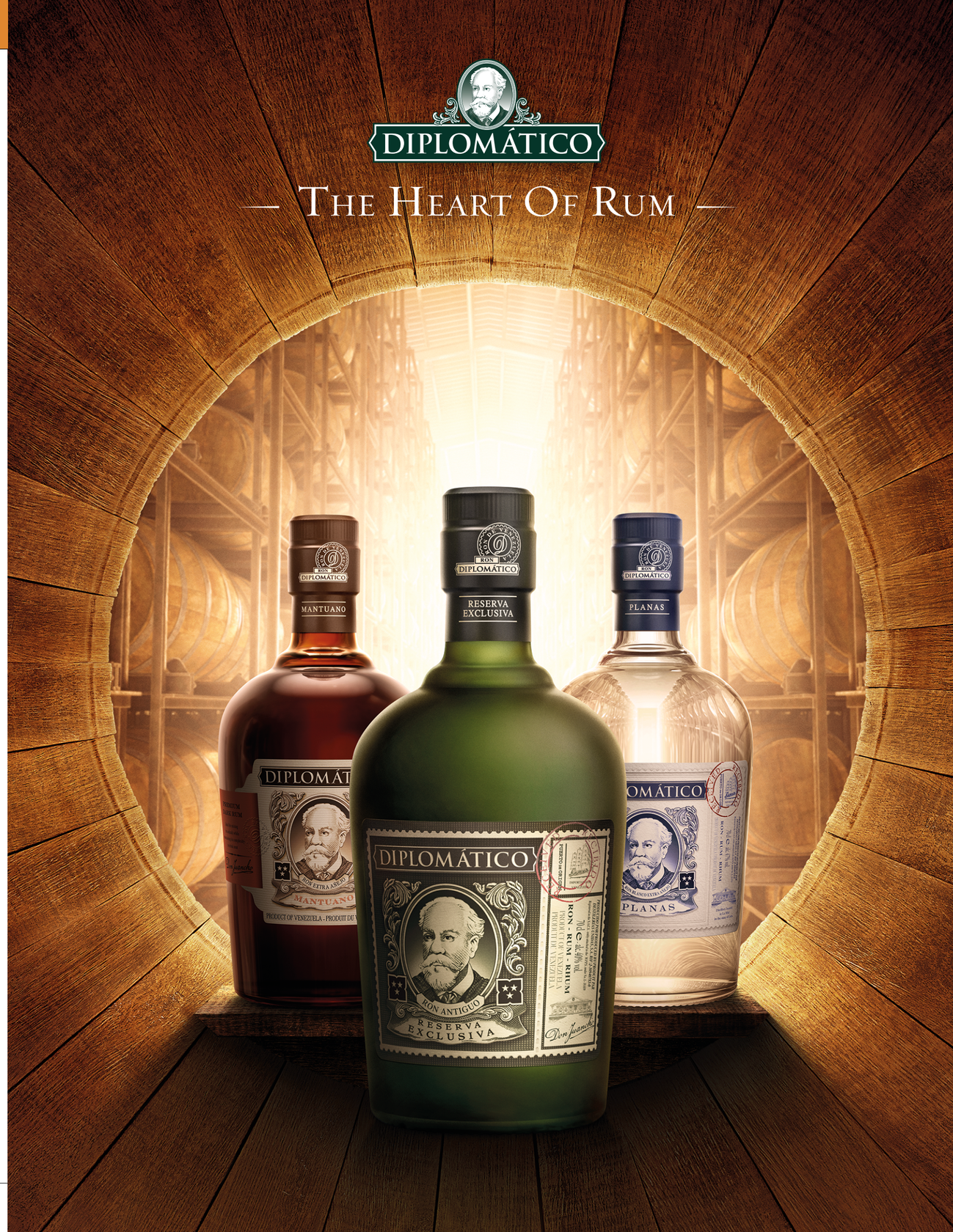
COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Guadalupe	45% | 90	$$

LIMITED FLAVOR PROFILE

It delivers scents of wood, caramel, and some brown sugar and vanilla hints. There is a suggestion of toastiness. There are fewer aromas to the palate: wood, and caramel, with a touch of vanilla.

A rhum with a contained flavor profile and complexity. It is easy to enjoy but it lacks in depth.

84



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Whisky

COMPASS BOX
Celestial

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	50% | 100	$$$$

RICH AND COMPLEX

Marine scents, peat, and fruit moving from the citrus/yellow dimension to a riper, almost tropical side. On top a grain's warm note. To the palate rich peat, marine and iodine, and a mix of spices, together with fruit hints. The grain has a minor polish note.

Silky, almost chewy, dense, rich, and full-bodied. Spectacular.

92

BERRY BROS & RUDD
Orkney 2006-2024

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	56.3% | 112.6	$$$

CLASSY AND SMOOTH

Ripe yellow apple, apricot, peaches, and a nice sensation of toffee and caramel. Spices are mellow and sweet. To the palate, a riot of toffee and butterscotch, with warm and sweet spices, followed by yellow fruit and patisserie.

A great release. The flavor profile is complex and creamy, boasting a long persistence.

90

GLENMORANGIE
18 Years Old
The Infinita

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

ELEGANT AND CLASSY

Fruity scents of orange oil, apricot, pink grapefruit, and a touch of sweet lemon. The palate is less intense and delivers caramel aromas, light toffee, and caramelized figs that pair well with the fruity side, more on apricots and candied oranges.

Excellent release, especially for the nose experience, which is "high" and pure. Classy and elegant.

90

SAKURAO
Single Malt Sauternes Cask Finish

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

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

Sophisticated spices scents, incense, sandalwood, nutmeg, and ripe fruit, together with chestnut honey on top of a slight sweetness. The palate confirms the spices and the fruity side with custard. A winy touch completes the flavor profile.

It boasts a long-lasting persistency. The bouquet is well-balanced and complex.

89

LAPHROAIG
10 Years Old Cask Strength Batch 16

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.5% | 117	$$

INTENSE AND FULFILLING

Gentle herbal scents, followed by iodine, a medicinal smoky peat, fresh sea breeze, sweet lemon, and vanilla. The palate is salty, with seaweed, shells, and fresh yellow fruit, with lychee, again sweet lemon, and grapefruit. Spicy.

A well-crafted release, respectful of the distillery's DNA. The ABV pushes tastes and intensity to nice levels.

89

EDRADOUR
2011 Oloroso Sherry Butts 12 Years Old

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Scotland	58.6% | 117.2	$$

RICH AND ROUND

Scents of rancio, winey hints, cloves, seasoned sultanas, and dark chocolate. The palate is a riot of strawberry, cherries, and blackberries, followed by toasted oak with warm wood spices, and again cloves and cinnamon.

Refined and classy, yet compact and intense, with a fruity side which is very well put together and some extra sophisticated spicy notes.

89

ARDBEG
A Unicorn Tale 14 Years Old

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

INTENSE AND COMPLEX

Scents of petrol and peat are accompanied by apples, candied grapefruit, and banana, together with toasted wood and spices. To the palate, it is sweet, balanced by a zesty note of orange and lemon. Herbs and sweet spices complete the flavor profile.

A rich and rather complex release, which mixes the distillery's DNA with sweet fruit, herbs, and wood.

89

RAMPUR
Barrel Blush

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

COMPLEX AND UNIQUE

An interesting mix of mango, guava, and ripe pineapple, sophisticated vanilla hints with intense red berries in dense jam is perceivable to the nose. To the palate, a mix of oriental and salt/pepper spices with an unbalanced mix of red and tropical aromas

Interesting, rather complex, and enjoyable to palate, while straight-forward to the nose.

87

ISLE OF HARRIS
The Hearach 1st Fill Oloroso Cask Matured

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

A LITTLE TOO EASY

Blood oranges scents, together with strawberries, and redcurrant, followed by wood, spices, and a touch of lemon. To the palate, it is clean, with toffee, nutty notes, and walnuts. Hints of peat, almost untraceable. A little on the dry side.

It is a well-crafted sherried product that is also easy to enjoy. Pleasant and harmonious.

87

TEELING
Crystal Single Malt

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Ireland	46% | 92	$

CREAMY AND SMOOTH

On the nose it delivers scents of stewed pears, milk chocolate, brown sugar, and a mix of patisserie. It is creamy and sweet to the palate, where it exhibits notes of chocolate, sponge cake, fruit jam, and custard.

A dessert-style whisky, boasting a creamy and rich texture. It lacks in terms of depth.

87

FILLIERS
Sherry Cask
Cask Strength

COUNTRY	ABV - PROOF	PRICE
Belgium	58.5% | 117	$$

SHERRY BOMB

It delivers a riot of ripe fruits, raisins, charred wood, and cocoa beans. On the palate, there are rich raisin notes, sherry, and a mix of balsamic nuances, recalling juniper and pine essence. A touch of cinnamon and roasted nuts.

A bold sherry bomb, exhibiting a nice persistency. It lacks in terms of depth.

86

KAVALAN
Lan

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

LIMITED FLAVOR PROFILE

Intense flowery flavor profile to the nose. The palate is slightly "watery". The fruity side is much less evident, while a nutty minor astringent note reminds of the port casks. The chocolate note, rather fondant, is the better expressed.

Better performing on the nose, the flavor profile is limited in depth and complexity, especially on the palate.

85

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.

Legend

All the information inside the blind tastings

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

1 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 Gorda

ROCKY PATEL NUMBER 6 CORONA

BALANCED AND COMPLEX

It develops black pepper, earth, and nuances of incense. The spices become more pronounced. Then, walnut and roasted notes become protagonists in the finale.

93

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	44x152mm (6")	$ 10.9 | € 11.7

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA

AKSUM CORONA GORDA CLARO

BOLD AND RICH

Rich earthy aromas are supported by wood and black pepper. Hot spices, with vegetal and balsamic notes are added in the second half of the smoke.

93

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	48x140mm (5 ½")	$ 14.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	U.S.A.	NICARAGUA

DAVIDOFF ESCURIO CORONA GORDA

COMPLEX AND ROUND

Wood, coffee, and white pepper give way to the smoke, followed by cocoa and salted nuts. The white pepper intensifies, and a vegetal note is added. A balsamic vein is added towards the end.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x152mm (6")	$ 19.1 | € 21

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	BRAZIL	DOMINICAN REP., BRAZIL

ADVENTURA BARBARROJA'S INVASION CORONA

FLAVORFUL AND SMOOTH

A mix of earth, leather, and black pepper give way to the smoke, later joined by coffee and cream notes. Nuts and balsamic flavors are added in the second half.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	44x152mm (6")	$ 13.2 | € 13.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

H. UPMANN MAGNUM 46

BROAD AND HARMONIOUS

It opens with vegetal notes along wood, walnut, and cocoa. A white pepper spice joins later one and a fresh roasted coffee aroma appears as well towards the end.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x143mm (5 ⅝")	$ - | € 17

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

POWSTANIE CONNECTICUT CORONA GORDA JUSTICE

RICH AND SWEET

Notes of honey, cinnamon, and leather are revealed in the opening, followed by nuts. The smoke is creamy. A herbal aroma is added, and the base becomes sweet.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x140mm (5 ½")	$ 13.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	U.S.A.	NICARAGUA

CRUX DU CONNAISSEUR NO. 4

LINEAR AND STATIC

The cigar opens with a mix of pepper (mainly white pepper), wood, and vegetal nuances. Further into the smoke, a nutty component is added. In the finale, it becomes spicy.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	46x137mm (5 ⅜")	$ 11.4 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	HONDURAS

PUNCH PUNCH 48

CONTAINED AND LINEAR

Wood and cinnamon aromas can be made out in the first half, next to faint nuances of hazelnut. A milk coffee note appears in the second half, but the smoke becomes increasingly bitter.

84

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	48x140mm (5 ½")	$ - | € 19.4

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

Robusto

Habanos
DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN PROTEGIDA
DOP
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Desde 1875
HABANA
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HEMMY LINEA SECRETA MONTESCOS

COMPLEX AND NUANCED

It starts with notes of cappuccino and peanuts flanked by wood and faint nuances of pink pepper. Nuances of herbs and toasted bread are added later on. Leather and white pepper in the finale.

93

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	55x140mm (5 ½")	$ - | € 19.9

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

ADVENTURA BLUE EYED JACKS REVENGE ROBUSTO

COMPLEX AND INTENSE

The cigar opens with strong notes of black pepper, cocoa, leather, and wood. Further into the smoke, walnut, and earth are added. It becomes spicier and fuller towards the finale.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x127mm (5")	$ 14.2 | €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

DON PEPIN VINTAGE EDITION ROBUSTO

BOLD AND COMPLEX

A vegetal note in the opening is followed by a blast of black pepper, wood, and walnut. Leather and herbal aromas are added later on, with the smoke becoming more balsamic and spicy in the end.

90

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

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

ELADIO DIAZ BEFORE AND AFTER MY FAMILY

COMPLEX AND DEEP

Wood and roasted nuts are revealed in the first few puffs, joined by vegetal notes later on. The base is sweet. Pepper and earth aromas are added in the second half of the smoke.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 15 | € 12.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUAODR	DOMINICAN REP.	DOMINICAN REP.

UMBAGOG BRONZEBACK

FULL AND INTENSE

A mix of spice, black pepper, and cinnamon opens up the smoke followed by earth and cocoa. There is a subtle sweetness present as well. Coffee and leather close out the cigar.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	48x127mm (5")	$ 9.75 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
U.S.A.	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

GREAT WALL TUTOR NO.2

HARMONIOUS AND INTENSE

The first half delivers aromas of earth, roasted nuts, and hints of spices. An undergrowth note is added in the second half of the smoke. The flavor profile grows in intensity towards the end.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x124mm (4 ⅞")	$ - | € 13.23

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	CHINA, NICARAGUA

YORKTOWN FLEET ROBUSTO

BOLD AND RICH

Earth, wood, and black pepper give way to the smoke. A hot spice aroma is then added, followed by dark roasted coffee nuances. In the second half, a nutty flavor, mainly walnut, joins the profile.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 10.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

BOLÍVAR REGENTES EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2021

APPROACHABLE AND FLAVORFUL

Coca and earth give way to the smoke, joined by leather and pepper in the retro-hale. A nutty component is added in the second half, and the smoke becomes spicier towards the end.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x130mm (5 ⅛")	$ - | € 35

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

VILLA ZAMORANO DANLÍ ROBUSTO

STRUCTURED BUT LIMITED

The smoke is dominated by aromas of leather and hazelnut on a sweet base throughout the whole duration. A minty herbal aroma comes through from time to time.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x127mm (5")	$ 8.5 | € 8.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS

BELLEAU WOOD MADURO ROBUSTO

FLAVORFUL BUT LINEAR

Notes of earth and wood give way to the smoke, with a perceptible spiciness in the background. A nutty aroma is added in the second half of the cigar without much change towards the end.

85

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x127mm (5")	$ 4 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

CARLOS & MARIA AMORIO ROBUSTO

ONE-DIMENSIONAL

The flavor profile consists mainly of wood, nuts, light spices, and vegetal aromas, which remain unchanged throughout the whole duration of the smoking experience.

85

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

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	DOMINICAN REP., ECUADOR, NICARAGUA, N/A

CARLOS ANDRÉ CAST OFF ROBUSTO

STRAIGHTFORWARD BUT CONTAINED

Wood, earth, and spicy nuances are the core flavor in the first half. The smoke is quite sapid. A vegetal note and a pleasant bitterness are added in the second half.

84

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	48x130mm (5 ⅛")	$ - | € 15

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP., BRAZIL

Shorts

DAVIDOFF MADURO SHORT CORONA

BOLD AND COMPLEX

Toasted aromas of coffee and cocoa give way to the smoke. There is also an ample black pepper note present, especially in the retrohale. Leather and woody aromas are added in the second half.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	43x101mm (4")	$ 43 | € 43

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	MEXICO	DOMINICAN REP.

GREAT WALL TUTOR NO.7

BOLD AND SPICY

Fine wood and nuts aromas are joined by a light cinnamon nuance in the background. A chili spice is introduced, next to the cinnamon, in the second half, with a subtle sweetness perceptible.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	42x110mm (4 ⅓")	$ - | € 6.6

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP.	CHINA

CHATEAU DIADEM CONVICTION HALF CORONA

INTENSE AND SATISFYING

Nutty and woody aromas are revealed in the opening. White pepper notes follow later on, joined by a sweet herbal nuance. The smoke becomes spicier in the second half and fuller in the finale.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	42x101mm (4")	$ 9 | € 7

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

DON PALOMON MERCHANT MARISCAL

BOLD AND RICH

The opening delivers herbal and vegetal notes. Aromas of earth are added later on. Black pepper and hot spices are added in the second half, with chili spice towards the end.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	56x101mm (4")	$ - | € 10.45

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

CONFIDENCIAAL CORTO

FLAVORFUL AND ROUND

Vegetal notes, hazelnut, and wood give way to the smoke. Aromas of coffee follow, and there is also a hint of pepper present in the retrohale. A herbal nuance is added in the second half.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x102mm (4")	$ - | € 13

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

PARTAGAS SERIE D NO. 5

RICH AND SATISFYING

Black pepper, wood, and earth reach the palate in the first half of the smoke. It becomes spicier with the spices changing from black pepper to chili pepper.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	50x110mm (4 ⅓")	$ - | € 12

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

2012 BY OSCAR CONNECTICUT SHORT ROBUSTO REDONDO

FLAVORFUL BUT UNBALANCED

A mix of cream, white pepper, and hay appears in the opening. There is a slight herbal nuance present in the background. The pepper becomes spicier in the second half.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	50x101mm (4")	$ 6.8 | € 9.9

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
HONDURAS	HONDURAS	HONDURAS, NICARAGUA

PADRINO MADURO SHORT ROBUSTO

FLAVORFUL BUT CONTAINED

A mix of wood, hazelnut, and pepper notes is are perceived in the first half. A balsamic herb aroma is added in the second half.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	52x110mm (4 ⅓")	$ - | € 8.55

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	CUBA, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA

中国杂志

Available in:
ENGLISH
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SPIRITS

威士忌標籤

怎麼找出來
你喝的是什麼

Federico Bosco

所有威士忌飲用者經常進行激烈分析，偶爾或熱情，旨在一直是購買的主要吸引力。但是有一個定精確的細節，必須加深，能夠幫助許許多多用的飲酒：標籤。

無論是大的還是小的，有時用玻璃挑剔，有時是雙面（正面和背面），有時完整的信息，有時更簡潔，標籤傳說給我們許多的信息，以了解更多的東西，而不僅僅是內容。它並不總是正確的，但一般的一些事情總是有用的。

愛爾蘭生產將其瓶子命名為威士忌;這同樣適用於美國世界。相反，在蘇格蘭和世界其他地方，我們說沒有"e"的威士忌;在蘇格蘭的情況下，名稱讓大了蘇格蘭語。單一麥芽蘇格蘭威士忌保證了單一釀酒廠的原產地。一些蘇格蘭釀酒廠使加了生產區域，以強調產品的地域性。

"歲月"之後經常出現的數字與產品的最低年齡有關。最低年齡因為，與換種不同時的混合相比，最年輕的數字是很低的。示例：使用三個桶分別裝盛8年，12年和29年的威士忌將顯示"8歲"字樣，無論舊桶的老化情況如何。

公司有責任報告其他桶的年齡，但這不是強制性的。有時，您可以找到沒有年齡的威士忌：沒有追憶，沒有撤假或假冒產品，它們是所謂的NAS（無年齡聲明），其中適用於最低3年歲末的按單法則。製片人選擇不提年齡，這仍然是未知的；它將由我們的口味來驗證味道和愉悅。

在標籤上，始終報告酒精含量，必須至少為40%;在這個數字下我們不能設威士忌。如果等級更高，有時公司會報告"Cask Strength"（英國貝芽）或"Full Proof"（美國世界）；我們在沒有用水稀釋的產品存在，因此，好像它們只是從桶中提取。然而，某發使您可以使用用水稀釋的威士忌的較低等級的木桶強度威士忌，特別是如果前者備有一定的年齡。

"Un Chillfiltered"這個詞讓我們知道威士忌沒有被冷過濾，以及"沒有顏色"，或"沒有添加焦糖"（或其他類似的詞），解釋說沒有添加焦糖到以顏色。

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

桶的組合符合精確的標準：您可以將來自同一釀酒廠，不同釀酒罐，甚至是單（大麥）和小麥（穀物）桶的麥芽威士忌混合在一起。在第一種情況下，沒有界限（這是一種常見做法），在第二種情況下，我們將有混合麥芽威士忌（參年前它被稱為Vatted），第三種情況是混合威士忌（或混合）。遵守Grain Whiskeys；這個術語是指用各種穀物生產的威士忌，在美國世界，我們經常遇到與盛行穀物相關的各種詞語，或者使用的唯一穀物（黑麥威士忌，玉米威士忌）。

我們試圖解釋各種標籤上最常用的術語;沒有絕對的紀律，每個製酒商都發自己的事情，但是，遵循這些指導原則，在這個瘋閒而獨特的世界中，您將更容易自拔。

本小週沒有宣布使用的桶數量，但他們肯定會把更多的桶放在一起）。

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Gilbert de Montsalvat
Signature
Gilbert de Montsalvat
Signature

Toro

Long live the Queen
35th Anniversary
THE WISE MAN

CALDWELL LONG LIVE THE QUEEN MADURO WILD CARD

DEEP AND RICH

A blast of spices, black pepper, and chili gives way to the smoke, joined by earth and toasted wood aromas. A fresh balsamic vein is added in the second half of the cigar.

93

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

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

HR BLACK EXTRA TORO

BOLD AND RICH

The first half reveals vegetal notes, followed by earth and roasted coffee. The base is slightly sweet. In the second half, a mix of spices, earth, wood, and walnut is added.

92

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	55x149mm (5 ⅞")	$ - | € 26

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUAODR	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

THE WISE MAN MADURO TORO

FLAVORFUL AND INTENSE

The smoke is marked by intense aromas of black pepper, earth, and cocoa. Later, a coffee aroma joins, alongside leather and balsamic nuances towards the end.

91

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	52x152mm (6")	$ 11.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

CROWNED HEADS LA VEREDA NO. 54

ROUND AND SMOOTH

The cigar starts with nuts (mainly hazelnuts), leather, and cinnamon. The smoke is creamy. Later, a balsamic note and black pepper appear, and the finale is spicy.

90

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x143mm (5 ⅝")	$ 20.6 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA

WEST TAMPA CIRCLE OF LIFE TORO

NUANCED AND HARMONIOUS

The first half of the cigar reveals roasted coffee beans and leather. The base is sweet. In the second half, cocoa, pepper, and walnut are added.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●	54x152mm (6")	$ 13.99 | €

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	ECUADOR	DOMINICAN REP., NICARAGUA

LA SIGUA SEDUCCIÓN MADURO GRAN TORO

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

Roasted coffee and hazelnut give way to the smoke. A vegetal note is added later on. The base is sweet. Milk chocolate and wood aromas join in the second half.

89

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	54x152mm (6")	$ 14 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
EL SALVADOR	EL SALVADOR	EL SALVADOR

GURKHA 35TH ANNIVERSARY TORO

BALANCED BUT LINEAR

Rich black pepper notes are joined by charred wood and earth. Then, a roasted coffee bean aroma is added in the second half of the smoking experience.

88

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	54x152mm (6")	$ 10.95 | € 18

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	INDONESIA	NICARAGUA

BYRON 21ST CENTURY DISTINGUIDO

BALANCED AND SMOOTH

It opens with earth, vegetal nuances, and pepper spice. An incense note appears further into the smoke. Chili spice comes through in the second half of the smoke.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	55x152mm (6")	$ 39 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
ECUADOR	N/A	DOMINICAN REP., PERU, N/A

AGANORSA LEAF ARSENIO TORO

NUANCED AND ROUND

White pepper, wood, and coffee give way to the smoke. Hazelnut aromas join later on while the smoke becomes creamier. A balsamic nuance is added towards the end.

87

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●	52x152mm (6")	$ 16.99 | € 12.5

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

MONTECRISTO DOUBLE EDMUNDO

LIMITED AND STATIC

It delivers notes of earth and cedar wood, together with roasted aromas, the latter mainly perceivable in the background. A hint of coffee is added in the last third of the smoke.

86

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●	50×155 mm (6⅛")	$ N/A | € 21.4

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
CUBA	CUBA	CUBA

HOF BY DAVID ORTIZ TORO

STRUCTURED BUT LINEAR

Nuts, white pepper, and vegetal notes give way to the smoke. An espresso note joins the profile later on. The second half sees the addition of sweet herbal aromas and wood.

86

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

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
MEXICO	INDONESIA	N/A

KRISTOFF NICARAGUA TORO

BROAD BUT UNBALANCED

Aromas of wood and hazelnut, with nuances of white pepper, are followed by earth, together with hints of coffee and cocoa. Unfortunately, it becomes bitter after the second half.

84

STRENGTH	SIZE	PRICE
●●●●●	54x159mm (6 ¼")	$ 10.5 | € -

WRAPPER	BINDER	FILLER
NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA	NICARAGUA

Credits

Cover page
picture by: Desiree Prieto

Ten Years
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Artesano del Tobacco
picture by: Artesano del Tobacco

Guillotina de Saka
picture by: Mario Amelio

Casual Cigars
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Acrylic Cigar Humidors
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Pairings
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Cigars & Spirits
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MHOBA Distillery
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Whisky and Chocolate: the basics
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American Pairing
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Margarita
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Lite Beers
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Blind tasting - Spirits
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Blind tasting - Cigars
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