ESTTA Tracking number: **ESTTA1084991**
Filing date: **09/28/2020**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Proceeding	92025859
Party	Defendant General Cigar Co., Inc.
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Submission	Defendant's Notice of Reliance
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Signature	/Andrew L. Deutsch/
Date	09/28/2020
Attachments	GCC NOR Ex. 12 -- Thompson Cigar - September 2019 (Part 1).pdf(5487105 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 12 -- Thompson Cigar - September 2019 (Part 2).pdf(5498181 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 12 -- Thompson Cigar - September 2019 (Part 3).pdf(3671983 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 13 -- Cigar Aficionado - February 2017 (Part 01).pdf(5687578 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 13 -- Cigar Aficionado - February 2017 (Part 02).pdf(5707832 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 13 -- Cigar Aficionado - February 2017 (Part 03).pdf(5630615 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 14 -- Cigar Aficionado - April 2017 (Part 01).pdf(5706931 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 14 -- Cigar Aficionado - April 2017 (Part 02).pdf(1288924 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 15 -- Cigar Aficionado - June 2017 (Part 01).pdf(5759526 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 15 -- Cigar Aficionado - June 2017 (Part 02).pdf(5736541 bytes) GCC NOR Ex. 15 -- Cigar Aficionado - June 2017 (Part 03).pdf(3721194 bytes)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In the matter of Trademark Registration No. 1147309
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: February 17, 1981

AND

In the matter of the Trademark Registration No. 1898273
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: June 6, 1995

EMPRESA CUBANA DEL TABACO, d.b.a. CUBATABACO, Petitioner, v. GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC., Respondent.	:	Cancellation No. 92025859

<u>EXHIBIT 12</u>

<u>TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE</u>

THOMPSON CIGAR

Established 1915

SEPTEMBER 2019 | 1-800-237-2559 | THOMPSONCIGAR.COM

Oliva has created many highly praised blends that have placed in the Top 25 Cigars list from Cigar Aficionado many times and have won the Oliva brand a huge following. While blends such as the Oliva Serie 'V' and Serie 'G' tend to be fuller-bodied, Oliva has expanded their lines to include smoother smokes like the Oliva Connecticut Reserve and Gilberto Oliva.

Arguably one of Nicaragua's greatest exports, Oliva has more 90+ ratings than most companies have cigars. From the bold and powerful Cain to the ultra-exclusive Wrath, Oliva's repertoire of balanced, full-bodied blends is wildly consistent. Hellion currently leads the charge as Oliva's most affordable, yet elegant brands available at Thompson Cigar. Oliva's incredible cigar-making ability caters to all tastes and flavor preferences.

A. OLIVA MASTER BLEND III

FULL — Nicaragua — Sun Grown Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$221.72	$188.46	$168.46	OKA-PM-1008
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$289.52	$246.09	$226.09	OKA-PM-1010
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$266.92	$226.88	$206.88	OKA-PM-1009

B. GILBERTO OLIVA RESERVA BLANC

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$126.00	$107.10	$87.10	1OH-PM-1000
CORONA	(5-7/10" x 43)	20	$115.00	$97.75	$77.75	1OH-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$132.00	$112.20	$92.20	1OH-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$138.00	$117.30	$97.30	1OH-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$138.00	$117.30	$97.30	1OH-PM-1004

C. GILBERTO OLIVA ROBUSTO SUMATRA

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Indonesian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$116.00	$98.60	$78.60	1OG-PM-1000
CORONA	(5-7/10" x 43)	20	$105.00	$89.25	$69.25	1OG-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$120.00	$103.70	$83.70	1OG-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$128.00	$108.80	$88.80	1OG-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$128.00	$108.80	$88.80	1OG-PM-1004

D. GILBERTO OLIVA RESERVA NOIR

FULL — Nicaragua — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
550	(5" x 50)	20	$126.00	$107.99	$87.99	1OI-PM-1000
650	(6" x 50)	20	$138.00	$112.50	$92.50	1OI-PM-1001
652T	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$132.00	$112.50	$92.50	1OI-PM-1002
750	(7" x 50)	20	$138.00	$117.50	$97.50	1OI-PM-1003

E. OLIVA CONNECTICUT RESERVE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$142.62	$121.23	$101.23	9WB-PM-1010
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$169.76	$144.30	$124.30	9WB-PM-1026
LONSDALE	(6-1/2" x 44)	20	$135.12	$116.54	$96.54	9WB-PM-1023
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$197.04	$167.48	$147.48	9WB-PM-1011
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$197.04	$167.48	$147.48	9WB-PM-1012

F. OLIVA SERIE 'O'

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$131.40	$111.69	$91.69	1OA-PM-1011
PERFECTO	(5" x 55)	20	$166.26	$141.32	$121.32	1OA-PM-1017
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$143.44	$121.99	$101.99	1OA-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$152.90	$129.97	$109.97	1OA-PM-1012

G. OLIVA SERIE 'O' MADURO

FULL — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$157.98	$134.28	$114.28	6FA-PM-1009
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$177.08	$150.99	$130.99	6FA-PM-1013
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$169.44	$144.02	$124.02	6FA-PM-1010

H. OLIVA SERIE 'G'

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Cameroon Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/2" x 50)	25	$149.04	$126.68	$106.68	FBA-PM-1026
BELICOSO	(5" x 52)	25	$152.60	$129.71	$109.71	FBA-PM-1014
TORO	(6" x 50)	25	$156.06	$132.99	$112.99	FBA-PM-1021
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	25	$156.06	$132.65	$112.65	FBA-PM-1023
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$156.28	$132.84	$112.84	FBA-PM-1018

I. OLIVA SERIE 'G' MADURO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/2" x 50)	24	$146.60	$124.61	$104.61	FMA-PM-1012
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	24	$166.22	$141.29	$121.29	FMA-PM-1021
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	24	$159.42	$135.51	$115.51	FMA-PM-1022

J. OLIVA SERIE 'V'

FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
CORONA	(5" x 43)	24	$164.96	$140.22	$120.22	1OB-PM-1013
BELICOSO	(5" x 54)	24	$210.82	$179.20	$159.20	1OB-PM-1016
TORPEDO	(6" x 56)	24	$253.00	$215.05	$195.05	1OB-PM-1020
GORDO	(6" x 60)	24	$261.40	$222.19	$202.19	1OB-PM-1017
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	24	$269.96	$229.47	$209.47	1OB-PM-1019

OLIVA

K. OLIVA SERIE 'V' MELANIO

FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
PETITE CORONA	(4-1/2" x 46)	10	$86.10	$73.19	$53.19	10D-PM-1011
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	10	$102.24	$86.90	$66.90	10D-PM-1012
FIGURADO	(6-1/2" x 52)	10	$150.68	$128.08	$108.08	10D-PM-1014
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	10	$139.92	$118.93	$98.93	10D-PM-1013
FIGURADO	(6-1/2" x 54)	10	$150.68	$128.99	$108.99	10D-PM-1018
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	10	$139.92	$118.93	$98.93	10D-PM-1009

L. OLIVA SERIE 'V' MELANIO MADURO

FULL — Nicaragua — San Andres Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	10	$102.24	$86.90	$66.90	10E-PM-1007
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	10	$139.92	$118.93	$98.93	10E-PM-1008
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	10	$139.92	$118.93	$98.93	10E-PM-1006

M. NUB BY OLIVA

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
354 CONN.	(3-7/10"x54)	24	$158.88	$135.05	$115.05	NUB-PM-1027
358 HABANO	(3-7/10"x58)	24	$150.94	$128.30	$108.30	NUB-PM-1028
358 CONN.	(3-7/10"x58)	24	$174.82	$148.60	$128.60	NUB-PM-1029
358 CAMEROON	(3-7/10"x58)	24	$174.82	$148.60	$128.60	NUB-PM-1030
460 HABANO	(4" x 60)	24	$158.88	$135.05	$115.05	NUB-PM-1031
460 CONN.	(4" x 60)	24	$182.88	$155.45	$135.45	NUB-PM-1032
460 CAMEROON	(4" x 60)	24	$182.88	$155.45	$135.45	NUB-PM-1033
460 MADURO	(4" x 60)	24	$201.90	$171.62	$151.62	NUB-PM-1004
464 HABANO	(4" x 64)	24	$174.82	$148.60	$128.60	NUB-PM-1035
464 CONN.	(4" x 64)	24	$198.80	$168.98	$148.98	NUB-PM-1036
464 CAMEROON	(4" x 64)	24	$198.80	$168.98	$148.98	NUB-PM-1037
464 MADURO	(4" x 64)	24	$217.88	$185.20	$165.20	NUB-PM-1034
466 HABANO	(4" x 66)	24	$206.74	$175.73	$155.73	NUB-PM-1038
466 CONN.	(4" x 66)	24	$230.72	$196.11	$176.11	NUB-PM-1039

Nearly a Hundred 90+ Ratings to Their Name

N. NUB NUANCE SINGLE ROAST *(Formerly Cappuccino)*

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
PETITE CORONA	(4" x 38)	25	$118.74	$100.93	$80.93	NUJ-PM-1036
GORDITO	(4" x 60)	20	$158.32	$134.57	$114.57	NUJ-PM-1033
TUBOS	(4-7/10" x 30)	20	$79.14	$67.27	$47.27	NUJ-PM-1020
CORONA	(5" x 42)	20	$135.70	$115.35	$95.35	NUJ-PM-1032

N. NUB NUANCE DOUBLE ROAST *(Formerly Macchiato)*

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
PETITE CORONA	(4" x 38)	25	$118.74	$100.93	$80.93	NUJ-PM-1035
GORDITO	(4" x 60)	20	$158.32	$134.57	$114.57	NUJ-PM-1008
TUBOS	(4-7/10" x 30)	20	$79.14	$67.27	$47.27	NUJ-PM-1019
CORONA	(5" x 42)	20	$135.70	$115.35	$95.35	NUJ-PM-1012

N. NUB NUANCE TRIPLE ROAST *(Formerly Espresso)*

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
PETITE CORONA	(4" x 38)	25	$118.74	$100.93	$80.93	NUJ-PM-1037
GORDITO	(4" x 60)	20	$158.32	$134.57	$114.57	NUJ-PM-1031
TUBOS	(4-7/10" x 30)	20	$79.14	$67.27	$47.27	NUJ-PM-1021
CORONA	(5" x 42)	20	$135.70	$115.35	$95.35	NUJ-PM-1034

Delivering a diverse portfolio worldwide, CAO promotes a fun-loving lifestyle. With its roots focused in Nicaragua, CAO has now successfully garnered a global presence by utilizing tobaccos from all over the world.

A. CAO BRAZILIA

FULL — Honduras — Brazilian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
GOL!	(5" x 56)	20	$131.80	$99.00	OBA-PM-1024
		10	—	$50.13	OBA-PM-1023
BOX-PRESS	(5-1/2" x 55)	20	$153.80	$105.89	OBA-PM-1019
		10	—	$57.94	OBA-PM-1038
LAMBADA TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$143.80	$98.79	OBA-PM-1002
		10	—	$54.39	OBA-PM-1039
AMAZON GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$173.80	$120.09	OBA-PM-1007
		10	—	$65.04	OBA-PM-1040
SAMBA TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 54)	20	$153.80	$105.89	OBA-PM-1017
		10	—	$57.94	OBA-PM-1041

B. CAO GOLD MADURO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Brazilian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$147.80	$101.63	GMB-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$173.80	$120.09	GMB-PM-1005
		10	—	$65.04	GMB-PM-1018
CORONA GORDA	(6-1/2" x 50)	20	$157.80	$108.73	GMB-PM-1016
		10	—	$59.36	GMB-PM-1019
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$163.80	$112.99	GMB-PM-1012
		10	—	$61.49	GMB-PM-1020

C. CAO COLOMBIA

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TINTO	(5" x 50)	20	$139.80	$95.95	COL-PM-1004
		5	—	$33.95	5PF-PM-1176
VALLENATO	(5" x 56)	20	$153.80	$105.89	COL-PM-1013
		10	—	$57.94	COL-PM-1015
BOGOTA	(6" x 60)	20	$173.80	$120.09	COL-PM-1007
		10	—	$65.04	COL-PM-1016
MAGDALENA	(6-1/5" x 54)	20	$171.80	$118.67	COL-PM-1011
		10	—	$64.33	COL-PM-1017

D. CAO NICARAGUA

FULL — Nicaragua — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TIPITAPA	(4-4/5" x 50)	20	$135.80	$108.64	CNC-PM-1000
MATAGALPA	(5-3/5" x 46)	20	$131.80	$105.44	CNC-PM-1001
GRANADA	(6" x 50)	20	$139.80	$111.84	CNC-PM-1002

E. CAO GOLD

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$137.80	$94.53	ONA-PM-1005
		10	—	$52.26	ONA-PM-1019
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 42)	20	$129.80	$88.85	ONA-PM-1015
		10	—	$49.42	ONA-PM-1048
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$157.80	$108.73	ONA-PM-1009
CORONA GORDA	(6-1/2" x 50)	20	$147.80	$101.63	ONA-PM-1035
		10	—	$55.81	ONA-PM-1049
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$157.80	$108.73	ONA-PM-1027
		10	—	$59.36	ONA-PM-1050
DOUBLE CORONA	(7-1/2" x 54)	20	$169.80	$117.25	ONA-PM-1030
		10	—	$63.62	ONA-PM-1051

F. CAO AMERICA

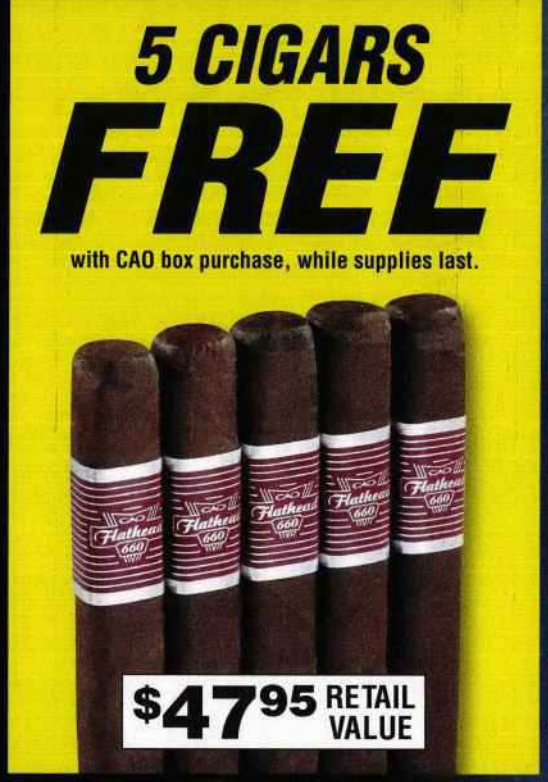
MEDIUM — Honduras — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
POTOMAC	(5" x 56)	20	$149.80	$103.05	AMB-PM-1008
LANDMARK	(6" x 60)	20	$173.80	$120.09	AMB-PM-1004
MONUMENT	(6-1/5" x 54)	20	$157.80	$108.73	AMB-PM-1006

G. CAO ITALIA

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Habano Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CIAO	(5" x 56)	20	$147.80	$101.63	IXA-PM-1012
PIAZZA	(6" x 60)	20	$173.80	$120.09	IXA-PM-1004
GONDOLA	(6-1/10" x 54)	20	$157.80	$108.73	IXA-PM-1010



H. CAO FLATHEAD

FULL — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
SPARKPLUG	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$155.80	$107.31	FLT-PM-1014
V554 CAMSHAFT	(5-1/2" x 54)	24	$206.16	$142.41	FLT-PM-1011
		10	—	$62.00	FLT-PM-1016
V660 CARB	(6" x 60)	24	$230.16	$159.45	FLT-PM-1010
		10	—	$70.00	FLT-PM-1012
V642 PISTON	(6-1/2" x 42)	30	$239.70	$165.23	FLT-PM-1015
V770 BIG BLOCK	(7" x 70)	24	$263.76	$183.30	FLT-PM-1013

I. CAO CONSIGLIERE

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Brazilian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ASSOCIATE	(5" x 52)	20	$155.80	$107.31	AMD-PM-1000
		10	$77.90	$58.65	AMD-PM-1003
SOLDIER	(6" x 54)	20	$175.80	$121.51	AMD-PM-1004
		10	—	$65.75	AMD-PM-1011
BOSS	(7" x 56)	20	$195.80	$135.71	AMD-PM-1007
		10	—	$72.85	AMD-PM-1012

J. CAO PILÓN

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$149.80	$103.05	PIL-PM-1000
		10	—	$56.52	PIL-PM-1003
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 44)	20	$137.80	$94.53	PIL-PM-1015
		10	—	$52.26	PIL-PM-1019
TORO	(6" x 58)	20	$165.80	$114.41	PIL-PM-1004
		10	—	$62.20	PIL-PM-1020
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$165.80	$114.41	PIL-PM-1012
		10	—	$62.20	PIL-PM-1021
TORPEDO	(7" x 54)	20	$171.80	$118.67	PIL-PM-1014
		10	—	$64.33	PIL-PM-1022

K. CAO MX2

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$165.80	$114.41	MPA-PM-1000
		10	—	$62.20	MPA-PM-1024
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$173.80	$120.09	MPA-PM-1007
		10	—	$65.04	MPA-PM-1023
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$193.80	$134.29	MPA-PM-1010
		10	—	$72.14	MPA-PM-1025
BELICOSO	(7" x 56)	20	$165.80	$114.41	MPA-PM-1018
		10	—	$62.20	MPA-PM-1026

RATED 92
B
RATED 92
C
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D
RATED 90
E
RATED 92
F
RATED 92
G
CAO
Gold
Madurá
COLOMBIA
NICARAGUA
AMERICA
ITALIA
RATED 95
H
I
RATED 90
J
K
Flathead
660
Pilón
6 X 58
TORO
BINDER: NICARAGUA
CAO

ROCKY PATEL

Rocky Patel is a prime example of the American dream. Rocky's products are a direct reflection of his passion and business savvy. With his main production hailing from Danli, Honduras, Rocky features a multitude of different and exotic tobaccos worldwide in his blends, including his 90+ rated Vintage Series. Anywhere from smooth to bold, to affordable and extravagant, the Rocky Patel brand has you covered. Having the strictest quality control standards in the business, Rocky has truly thrived "Against All Odds".

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A. ROCKY PATEL TAVICUSA

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — San Andres Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$211.00	$189.99	VKT-PM-1000
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$232.00	$208.99	VKT-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$217.00	$194.99	VKT-PM-1002

B. ROCKY PATEL ROYALE

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$202.00	$181.80	RPO-PM-1003
		10	—	$99.95	RPO-PM-1024
CORONA	(5-1/5" x 42)	20	$169.00	$143.99	RPO-PM-1011
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$232.00	$208.80	RPO-PM-1007
		10	—	$109.40	RPO-PM-1025
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	20	$240.00	$215.99	RPO-PM-1021
TORO	(6-1/2" x 54)	20	$211.00	$189.90	RPO-PM-1014
		10	—	$99.95	RPO-PM-1026
COLOSSAL	(7" x 62)	20	$270.00	$223.99	RPO-PM-1017

C. 20TH ANNIVERSARY

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$207.00	$129.95	RPY-PM-1013
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	20	$217.00	$195.30	RPY-PM-1012
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$240.00	$216.00	RPY-PM-1007
		10	—	$39.95	RPY-PM-1015
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$274.00	$246.60	RPY-PM-1008
LANCERO	(7-1/2" x 38)	20	$207.00	$176.99	RPY-PM-1010

20TH ANNIVERSARY MADURO *(Not Shown)*

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$207.00	$186.30	VKO-PM-1002
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	20	$217.00	$195.30	VKO-PM-1005
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$240.00	$216.00	VKO-PM-1006

Plus SAVE UP TO $27.40

D. 15TH ANNIVERSARY

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$213.00	$191.70	RPF-PM-1007
CORONA GORDA	(6" x 46)	20	$203.00	$182.70	RPF-PM-1016
XO	(6" x 60)	20	$270.00	$230.99	RPF-PM-1009
TORPEDO	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$243.00	$218.70	RPF-PM-1015
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$235.00	$200.99	RPF-PM-1008

E. VINTAGE 1990

MEDIUM — Honduras — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PERFECTO	(4" x 48)	20	$160.00	$143.99	VKI-PM-1025
PETITE CORONA	(4-1/2" x 44)	20	$160.00	$143.99	VKI-PM-1023
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$196.00	$175.95	VKI-PM-1006
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$241.00	$216.95	VKI-PM-1007
TORPEDO	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$213.00	$190.95	VKI-PM-1021
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKI-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKI-PM-1017

F. VINTAGE 1992

MEDIUM — Honduras — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PERFECTO	(4" x 48)	20	$160.00	$143.99	VKJ-PM-1026
PETITE CORONA	(4-1/2" x 44)	20	$160.00	$143.99	VKJ-PM-1024
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$196.00	$175.99	VKJ-PM-1006
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$241.00	$216.95	VKJ-PM-1007
TORPEDO	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$213.00	$190.95	VKJ-PM-1021
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKJ-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKJ-PM-1017

G. VINTAGE 1999

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Honduras — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PERFECTO	(4" x 48)	20	$160.00	$143.99	VKC-PM-1026
PETITE CORONA	(4-1/2" x 44)	20	$160.00	$143.95	VKC-PM-1024
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$196.00	$175.95	VKC-PM-1007
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	20	$241.00	$216.99	VKC-PM-1009
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$213.00	$190.99	VKC-PM-1006
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKC-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKC-PM-1018

H. VINTAGE 2003

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Cameroon Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$196.00	$175.95	VKE-PM-1006
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$241.00	$216.99	VKE-PM-1008
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$213.00	$190.99	VKE-PM-1005
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKE-PM-1004
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKE-PM-1016

I. VINTAGE 2006

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — San Andrés Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$196.00	$175.95	VKP-PM-1000
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	20	$241.00	$216.99	VKP-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKP-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$207.00	$185.95	VKP-PM-1003

COHIBA

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$79.95 RETAIL VALUE

COHIBA MINI CIGARILLOS

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Cameroon Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	ONLY	Item #
10 TINS	(3-7/10" x 24)	100	$134.42	CGA-PM-1044
SINGLE TIN	(3-7/10" x 24)	10	$21.59	CGA-PM-1041

New!

COHIBA CONNECTICUT

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CRYSTAL	(5" x 50)	10	$209.90	$167.92	CHT-PM-1000
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$399.80	$319.84	CHT-PM-1001
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	20	$459.80	$367.84	CHT-PM-1002
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$439.80	$351.84	CHT-PM-1003

COHIBA MACASSAR

MEDIUM / FULL	Dom. Rep.		Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORO GRANDE	(6" x 54)	10	$259.90	$207.92	CHI-PM-1006
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	10	$279.90	$223.92	CHI-PM-1009
DOUBLE CORONA	(7" x 49)	10	$299.90	$239.92	CHI-PM-1018

COHIBA

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Cameroon Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PETITE CORONA	(4" x 42)	25	$312.25	$195.67	CGA-PM-1046
ROBUSTO	(4-7/10" x 47)	25	$419.75	$263.93	CGA-PM-1036
ROBUSTO	(5" x 49)	25	$492.25	$309.97	CGA-PM-1037
		10	—	$110.57	CGA-PM-1042
CORONA	(5-1/10" x 42)	25	$419.75	$263.93	CGA-PM-1027
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 42)	20	$395.80	$249.24	CGA-PM-1012
TORO	(6" x 50)	10	$212.90	$134.14	CGA-PM-1015
LONSDALE	(6-1/5" x 47)	25	$504.75	$317.90	CGA-PM-1047
CHURCHILL	(7" x 49)	25	$554.75	$349.65	CGA-PM-1025

COHIBA NICARAGUA

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua		Honduran Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO TUBES	(5" x 50)	8	$127.92	$102.34	CHF-PM-1020
TORO	(5-1/2" x 54)	16	$271.84	$217.47	CHF-PM-1017
GORDO	(6" x 60)	16	$284.84	$227.71	CHF-PM-1012

COHIBA BLUE

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Honduran Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$189.80	$151.84	CGK-PM-1000
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$209.80	$167.84	CGK-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$221.80	$177.44	CGK-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7-1/2" x 50)	20	$235.80	$188.64	CGK-PM-1003

COHIBA BLACK

MEDIUM / FULL	Dom. Rep.		Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 42)	25	$419.75	$263.93	4XA-PM-1003
SUPREMO	(6" x 54)	25	$529.75	$333.78	4XA-PM-1013
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	20	$475.80	$300.05	4XA-PM-1008
CHURCHILL	(7" x 49)	25	$554.75	$349.66	4XA-PM-1015

PREMIUM CLONES

SAVE UP TO 86%

AS LOW AS $1.75 Per Stick

MONTECRISTO, HOYO DE MONTERREY, PUNCH, ROCKY PATEL, AND MANY OTHERS...

Nope, no guy in a lab coat needed to make these Clones. Just really talented tobacco crafters with a gift for creating blends that hold their own against some of the biggest names on the market. These are some quality, handmade smokes for a really reasonable price, hailing from the most fertile lands of Central America.

CLONES COFFEE

SMOOTH — Nicaragua — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$130.00	$34.95	CLF-PM-1000
TORPEDO	(6" x 54)	20	$135.00	$39.95	CLF-PM-1001

CLONES HOYO DE MONTERREY EXCALIBUR*

SMOOTH — Honduras — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$155.00	$49.95	CL7-PM-1000

CLONES MONTECRISTO WHITE LABEL*

SMOOTH — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5"x50)	20	$222.80	$39.95	CMW-PM-1001
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$310.60	$44.95	CMW-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7-1/5" x 54)	20	$259.20	$49.95	CMW-PM-1000

CLONES MACANUDO CAFÉ*

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$105.00	$34.95	CLO-PM-1000

CLONES MONTECRISTO*

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	10	$99.95	$29.95	CLP-PM-1000

CLONES ROMEO Y JULIETA 1875*

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
FIGURADO	(5" x 50)	20	$109.95	$39.95	CLO-PM-1000

CLONES ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE '99*

MEDIUM — Honduras — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$166.25	$47.95	CL8-PM-1000
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$173.25	$49.95	CL8-PM-1001

CLONES PARTAGAS*

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
SALOMON	(7"x62)	10	$200.00	$29.95	CL9-PM-1000

CLONES H.UPMANN*

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(3-1/2" x 46)	20	$172.80	$39.95	CLK-PM-1000

CLONES COHIBA BEHIKE*

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 54)	10	$100.00	$34.95	CBK-PM-1000

CLONES HOYO DE MONTERREY*

MEDIUM — Honduras — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/5" x50)	20	$99.90	$39.95	CL5-PM-1003
TORO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$121.80	$42.95	CL5-PM-1005
DBL CORONA	(7-1/5" x 54)	20	$151.80	$44.95	CL5-PM-1001

CLONES PUNCH*

MEDIUM — Honduras — Assorted Wrappers

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$99.90	$39.95	CPM-PM-1004
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$99.90	$39.95	CPM-PM-1003
ROTHSCHILD	(4-7/10" x 50)	20	$122.00	$44.95	CPM-PM-1000
TORO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$129.80	$42.95	CPM-PM-1006
TORO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$129.80	$42.95	CPM-PM-1005
DBL CORONA	(7-1/5" x 54)	20	$177.80	$44.95	CPM-PM-1001
DBL CORONA	(7-1/5" x 54)	20	$177.80	$44.95	CPM-PM-1002

CLONES ASYLUM*

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
GORDO	(6" x60)	15	$118.00	$39.95	CL1-PM-1003
GORDO	(6" x 70)	15	$123.00	$44.95	CL1-PM-1002

CLONES ROCKY PATEL EDGE MADURO*

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	25	$166.25	$69.95	CL2-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$139.00	$49.95	CL2-PM-1003
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	25	$181.25	$79.95	CL2-PM-1004
TORO	(6"x52)	25	$139.00	$59.95	CL2-PM-1002
DBL CORONA	(7-1/2" x 52)	25	$202.50	$79.95	CL2-PM-1000

CLONES ROCKY PATEL ROYALE*

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$188.00	$47.95	CL6-PM-1000
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$197.00	$49.95	CL6-PM-1001

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DON RAFAEL VINTAGE 2004

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Connecticut	Maduro
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$80.00	~~$39.95~~	$34.95	DF4-PM-1003	—
PETITE TORPEDO	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$85.00	~~$42.95~~	$37.95	DF4-PM-1004	—
TORO	(5-7/10" x 50)	20	$85.00	~~$42.95~~	$37.95	DF4-PM-1005	DF4-PM-1006
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$93.00	~~$49.95~~	$44.95	DF4-PM-1002	—
CHURCHILL	(7-1/2" x 50)	20	$90.00	~~$44.95~~	$39.95	DF4-PM-1000	DF4-PM-1001

Light up a star-power stogie
SONS OF ANARCHY™

You know the TV series. Now experience the excitement first hand in this official collaboration between the brand Black Crown and the hit show's makers. The Sumatra wrapper from Ecuador imparts a dark and handsome look while adding notes of spice and pepper. The Cuban-seed Dominican/Nicaraguan long fillers and aged Criollo binder pack a most pleasant punch. Profile is medium to full. So, while it's powerful, it's also very well balanced, rich, complex, and exceedingly smooth.

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SONS OF ANARCHY BY BLACK CROWN

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PROSPECT	(4-1/2" x 60)	20	$115.00	$84.99	BCS-PM-1022
		10	—	$31.36	BCS-PM-1023
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	20	$110.00	$79.99	BCS-PM-1020
TORO TUBED	(6" x 50)	10	$70.00	$49.99	BCS-PM-1015
		10	—	$70.00	BCS-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$120.00	$89.99	BCS-PM-1007
		10	—	$60.00	BCS-PM-1018
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$130.00	$99.99	BCS-PM-1010
		10	—	$65.00	BCS-PM-1017
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 54)	20	$130.00	$99.99	BCS-PM-1016
		10	—	$39.99	BCS-PM-1024

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with *SONS OF ANARCHY* box purchase, while supplies last.

$30 RETAIL VALUE

Thompson EXPLORER

Outstanding quality and value in everyday priced cigars that are handmade by a well-known and respected manufacturer. These smooth to medium-bodied Explorers are crafted with select Cuban-seed fillers and finished with old-school Habano wrappers.

THOMPSON EXPLORER

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Philippines — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	40	$89.00	$48.95	TCA-PM-1018
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 42)	40	$88.00	$44.95	TCA-PM-1006
TORO	(6" x 52)	40	$92.00	$49.95	TCA-PM-1021
LONSDALE	(6-1/2" x 44)	40	$89.00	$47.95	TCA-PM-1015
DOUBLE CORONA	(7" x 48)	40	$95.00	$49.95	TCA-PM-1009
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	50	$103.00	$57.95	TCA-PM-1000
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	100	$206.00	$104.95	TCA-PM-1001

THOMPSON EXPLORER FLAVORED CIGARILLO

SMOOTH — Philippines — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
GRAPE	(4-1/2" x 30)	60	$44.95	$32.95	TCD-PM-1001
2-FER	(4-1/2" x 30)	120	$89.90	$57.95	TCD-PM-1002
SWEET	(4-1/2" x 30)	60	$44.95	$32.95	TCD-PM-1003
2-FER	(4-1/2" x 30)	120	$89.90	$57.95	TCD-PM-1004

250 BONUS CLUB ELIGIBLE

40 Cigars AS LOW AS $1.13 Per Stick

THOMPSON EXPLORER COFFEE INFUSED

Made by a highly-regarded cigar manufacturer using hand selected combo fillers, the blend is delicately infused with coffee flavor for a smooth and aromatic smoke.

THOMPSON EXPLORER COFFEE INFUSED

SMOOTH — Philippines — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
CIGARILLOS	(4" x 26)	50	$47.95	$27.95	TCC-PM-1000
2-FER	(4" x 26)	100	$95.90	$44.95	TCC-PM-1001
LANCERO	(5" x 35)	30	$55.95	$27.95	TCC-PM-1011
2-FER	(5" x 35)	60	$111.90	$42.95	TCC-PM-1012
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	50	$84.95	$52.95	TCC-PM-1015
2-FER	(5" x 50)	100	$169.90	$84.95	TCC-PM-1016
CORONA	(6" x 42)	30	$59.95	$29.95	TCC-PM-1002
2-FER	(6" x 42)	60	$119.90	$52.95	TCC-PM-1003

EXPLORER ROBUSTO SAMPLER

20 Explorer Gold (5" x 50)
20 Explorer Black (5" x 50)
20 Explorer Red (5" x 50)
20 Explorer Green (5" x 50)

Compare $183.00

ONLY $84.95

TCAASST03-SP-1000

250 BONUS CLUB ELIGIBLE

80 Cigars SAVE $98

250 BONUS CLUB ELIGIBLE

50 Cigars ONLY $1.80 Per Stick

RG SANTIAGO

Dominican Handmade 7" x 50 Churchills

RG Santiago is a handmade, smooth to medium-bodied smoke that uses a very select blend of premium Honduran and Nicaraguan combo filler tobaccos. Given the price for these high quality cigars, they just might be one of the best cigar deals around.

RG SANTIAGO

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size	Wrp.	Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CHURCHILL	Connecticut	50	$118.00	$89.95	RGS-PM-1002
(7" x 50)	Maduro	50	$118.00	$89.95	RGS-PM-1005

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LA AROMA DE CUBA

Consistently HIGH Ratings by *Cigar Aficionado*

Handmade in Nicaragua by the Garcia family, the La Aroma de Cuba features gorgeous chocolaty wrappers and a rich, spicy blend of Nicaraguan tobaccos.

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on your ENTIRE ORDER with LA AROMA DE CUBA box purchase

A. LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua			San Andres Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	25	$187.50	$168.75	6BD-PM-1015
		10	—	$72.50	6BD-PM-1019
DUQUE	(5-1/5" x 56)	25	$200.00	$180.00	6BD-PM-1018
BELICOSO	(5-1/2" x 54)	25	$212.50	$191.25	6BD-PM-1014
		10	—	$81.50	6BD-PM-1020
MAGNIFICO	(6" x 52)	25	$206.25	$185.63	6BD-PM-1010
		10	—	$79.25	6BD-PM-1021
VALENTINO	(6" x 60)	25	$218.75	$196.88	6BD-PM-1008
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$212.50	$191.25	6BD-PM-1013
		10	—	$81.50	6BD-PM-1022

B. LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR RESERVA

FULL	Nicaragua			San Andres Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 54)	24	$240.00	$216.00	6BE-PM-1007
BESO	(5-3/5" x 48)	24	$222.00	$199.80	6BE-PM-1012
DIVINO	(6-1/5" x 52)	24	$252.00	$226.80	6BE-PM-1011
GORDO	(6-1/2" x 60)	24	$270.00	$243.00	6BE-PM-1010
ROMANTICO	(6-4/5" x 50)	24	$258.00	$232.20	6BE-PM-1008

C. LA AROMA DE CUBA EDICION ESPECIAL

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua			Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
MINUTO	(4-1/2" x 42)	25	$153.75	$138.38	6BB-PM-1016
NO. 2	(5" x 50)	25	$180.00	$162.00	6BB-PM-1011
NO. 5	(5-1/2" x 52)	25	$198.75	$173.99	6BB-PM-1014
NO. 1	(5-3/5" x 46)	25	$172.50	$150.99	6BB-PM-1013
NO. 55	(5-7/10" x 55)	25	$195.00	$177.99	6BB-PM-1017
NO. 3	(6" x 50)	25	$191.25	$172.13	6BB-PM-1010
NO. 4	(7" x 49)	25	$198.75	$178.88	6BB-PM-1012

D. LA AROMA DE CUBA

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua			Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(5" x 50)	20	$100.00	$88.99	6BC-PM-1009
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 54)	24	$138.00	$124.20	6BC-PM-1030
		10	—	$56.75	6BC-PM-1039
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 44)	25	$135.00	$121.50	6BC-PM-1029
BELICOSO	(5-1/2" x 52)	25	$156.25	$140.63	6BC-PM-1024
IMMENSA	(5-7/10" x 60)	24	$156.00	$140.40	6BC-PM-1022
MONARCH	(6" x 52)	25	$156.25	$140.63	6BC-PM-1014
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$167.50	$150.75	6BC-PM-1015
EL JEFE	(7" x 58)	24	$178.80	$160.92	6BC-PM-1031
DOUBLE CORONA	(7-1/2" x 54)	25	$173.75	$156.38	6BC-PM-1016

Plus SAVE UP TO $27

LA AROMA DE CUBA SAMPLER

- 1 La Aroma de Cuba Robusto Maduro (5" x 54)
- 1 Edicion Especial No. 5 Sumatra (5-1/2" x 52)
- 1 Mi Amore Magnifico Maduro (6" x 52)
- 1 Mi Amor Reserva Maximo Maduro (5-1/2" x 54)
- 1 Mi Amor Belicoso Maduro (5-1/2" x 54)
- 1 Red Torch Lighter

Compare $60.00

ONLY $54.00

6BBASST3-SP-1000

 1-800-237-2559 *California residents please see back page for Prop 65 Warning.* MON.-FRI. 7AM-10PM SAT.-SUN. 8AM-7PM E.T.

HOYO DE MONTERREY

A. HOYO DE MONTERREY

FULL	Honduras		Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5" x 40)	25	$87.25	$67.08	HMA-PM-1031
TORO	(6-1/10" x 50)	25	$159.75	$123.28	HMA-PM-1008
CHURCHILL	(6-1/5" x 45)	25	$154.75	$119.15	HMA-PM-1023
DBL CORONA	(6-7/10" x 48)	25	$167.25	$128.99	HMA-PM-1010
PRESIDENTE	(7-1/5" x 54)	25	$199.75	$154.71	HMA-PM-1047

B. EXCALIBUR DARK KNIGHT

MEDIUM / FULL	Honduras		Conn. Broad. Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$133.80	$98.45	H1B-PM-1011
TORO	(5-7/10" x 54)	20	$151.80	$122.75	H1B-PM-1010
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$155.80	$125.80	H1B-PM-1006

C. EXCALIBUR CONNECTICUT

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Honduras		Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 50)	20	$155.80	$112.34	HEA-PM-1021
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 50)	10	$89.90	$63.91	HEA-PM-1034
CORONA	(5-3/5" x 46)	20	$153.80	$111.07	HEA-PM-1060
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$179.80	$134.69	HEA-PM-1011
TORO	(6-1/10" x 50)	20	$167.80	$121.23	HEA-PM-1052
LONSDALE	(6-1/5" x 44)	20	$155.80	$112.34	HEA-PM-1029
CHURCHILL	(6-7/10" x 48)	20	$171.80	$124.27	HEA-PM-1049
PRESIDENTE	(7-1/5" x 54)	20	$175.80	$129.61	HEA-PM-1016

D. HOYO DE MONTERREY EXCALIBUR CAMEROON

MEDIUM	Honduras		Cameroon Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 50)	20	$155.80	$112.34	H1A-PM-1000
KING ARTHUR	(6-1/5" x 45)	20	$155.80	$112.34	H1A-PM-1013
GALAHAD	(6-7/10" x 47)	20	$159.80	$119.96	H1A-PM-1010
CHURCHILL	(7-1/5" x 54)	20	$175.80	$127.07	H1A-PM-1002

E. HOYO ICON

MEDIUM	Dom. Rep.		Corojo Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 49)	18	$138.60	$84.99	IC2-PM-1000

F. LA AMISTAD SILVER

FULL	Nicaragua		Ecuador Habano Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$147.80	$96.07	HMS-PM-1000
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$155.80	$101.27	HMS-PM-1001
CHURCHILL	(6-4/5" x 48)	20	$165.80	$107.77	HMS-PM-1002

G. LA AMISTAD BLACK

FULL	Nicaragua		Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	25	$182.25	$118.46	HMT-PM-1009
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	20	$169.80	$110.37	HMT-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$161.80	$105.17	HMT-PM-1002

5 CIGARS FREE

with HOYO DE MONTERREY box purchase, while supplies last.

$42.50 RETAIL VALUE

5-PACK FEVER

2-FER ~~$165.45~~
$29.98 Per 5-Pack — SAVE UP TO **64%**
10 Cigars - Two 5-Packs

3-FER ~~$238.95~~
$26.33 Per 5-Pack — SAVE UP TO **67%**
15 Cigars - Three 5-Packs

4-FER ~~$312.03~~
$23.74 Per 5-Pack — SAVE UP TO **70%**
20 Cigars - Four 5-Packs

MUST BE DIFFERENT 5-PACKS

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
ROMEO Y JULIETA
RESERVA REAL
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1313

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
PERDOMO
RESERVE CHAMPAGNE CONNECTICUT
Robusto
(5" x 54)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1059

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
MONTECRISTO
WHITE VINTAGE
Double Corona
(6-1/5" x 50)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1391

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
LA PALINA
NICARAGUA
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1048

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
CROWNED HEADS
LUMINOSA
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1272

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
BALMORAL
CONNECTICUT
Masivo
Rothschild
(5" x 55)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1062

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
ACID
KUBA KUBA
Robusto
(5" x 54)
Sumatra
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1317

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
ACID
DEEP DISH
Gordo
(5" x 58)
Sumatra
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1065

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
CAMACHO
CONNECTICUT
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1043

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
ROOM 101
FARCE CONNECTICUT
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1246

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
COOPERA BY HIROCHI ROBAINA
CONNECTICUT
Toro
(6" x 52)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1356

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
LA PALINA
RED LABEL
Toro
(6" x 50)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1103

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
LA PALINA
CLASSIC
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1306

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
NUB BY OLIVA
460
Rothschild
(4" x 60)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1211

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
NAT SHERMAN
HOST
Hobart
(5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1253

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
ESPINOSA
CREMA NO. 4
Robusto Grande
(5-1/2" x 52)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1087

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
NAT SHERMAN
STERLING
Robusto
(4-7/10" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1025

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
CAMACHO
SCORPION
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1041

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
ZINO PLATINUM
GRAND MASTER
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 52)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1191

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
PARTAGAS
NATURALES
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 50)
Cameroon
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1084

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
RECLUSE
AMADEUS
Toro
(6-1/5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1133

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
MACANUDO
CAFÉ HYDE PARK
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 49)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1082

SMOOTH / MEDIUM
OLIVA
GILBERTO RESERVA BLANC
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1257

DIESEL WHISKEY ROW
MEDIUM
Robusto (5-1/2" x 52)
Ecuador Habano Wrapper **5PF-PM-1089**

RATED 91

Flash back to low prices by picking two, three, or more different 5-packs. This ever popular combo gives you your choice of the best in-demand brands at the best possible prices. Rocky Patel. Perdomo. Alec Bradley. Top of the line. Hand rolled. Well built. And every one priced to move. Like our original offer, *the more you buy, the more you save!*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR HUNDREDS OF SELECTIONS
thompsoncigar.com/5pack

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — COHIBA
RED DOT
Robusto
(5" x 49)
Cameroon
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1032

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — MONTECRISTO
ESPECIALE NO. 3
Corona
(5-1/2" x 44)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1075

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — CAO
GOLD
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1033

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — PERLA DEL MAR
PERLA 'G'
Toro
(6-1/5" x 54)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1137

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — LA GLORIA CUBANA
SERIE R NO.5
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 54)
Ecuador Sumatra
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1336

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — ROCKY PATEL
EDGE LITE
Toro
(6" x 52)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1370

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — MONTECRISTO
CLASSIC
Toro
(6" x 52)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1363

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — EMPRESS OF CUBA
CONNECTICUT
Toro
(6" x 52)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1189

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — LA GLORIA CUBANA
SERIE R NO. 5
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 54)
Connecticut
Broadleaf
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1092

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — FRATELLO
ORO
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1239

MEDIUM — MONTECRISTO
RESERVA NEGRA
Corona
(5" x 44)
San Andrés
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1030

MEDIUM — ROOM 101
HIT AND RUN
Almost Robusto
(4-7/10" x 52)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1237

MEDIUM — ACID
TOAST
Toro
(6" x 50)
Cameroon
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1101

MEDIUM — ROCKY PATEL
20TH ANNIV.
Box-Pressed Toro
(6" x 52)
Honduran
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1347

MEDIUM — JAVA BY DREW ESTATE
MADURO
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 50)
Brazilian
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1328

MEDIUM — DREW ESTATE
UNDERCROWN SHADE
Gran Toro
(6" x 50)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1107

MEDIUM — ROMEO Y JULIETA
ANIVERSARIO
Robusto
(5" x 54)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1056

MEDIUM — PERLA DEL MAR
PERLA 'G' MADURO
Toro
(6-1/5" x 54)
CT Broadleaf
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1138

MEDIUM — LA PALINA
BRONZE LABEL
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 50)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1086

MEDIUM — BRICK HOUSE
BRICK HOUSE CONNECTICUT
Toro
(6" x 52)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1364

MEDIUM — ESPINOSA
REGGAE
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 54)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1334

MEDIUM — COHIBA
BLUE
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 50)
Honduran
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1178

MEDIUM — TATUAJE
HAVANA VI
Nobles
(5" x 50)
Corojo
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1038

MEDIUM — CAMACHO
SCORPION SUN GROWN
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1280

MEDIUM — FRATELLO
Corona
(5-1/2" x 46)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1080

Priced like the old days, these top brand 5 packs are the way to smoke and the way to save. In fact, the more you buy, the more you save. It's a great way to try Cohiba, CAO, Montecristo, Macanudo, and other huge sellers without much investment. Order two, three, or more 5 packs now. Like our original offer, *the more you buy, the more you save!*

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR HUNDREDS OF SELECTIONS
thompsoncigar.com/5pack

PUNCH
MEDIUM / FULL
Pita (6-1/10" x 50)
Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper **5PF-PM-1131**
RATED 93

MEDIUM
BALMORAL

AÑEJO XO
Masivo
(5" x 55)
Brazilian
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1318

MEDIUM
OLIVA CAIN

F 550
Robusto
(5-7/10" x 50)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1099

MEDIUM
BRICK HOUSE

BRICK HOUSE HABANO
Robusto
(5" x 54)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1057

MEDIUM
CALDWELL

EASTERN STANDARD
Dos Firmas
(4-7/10" x 52)
Ecuador CT
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1027

MEDIUM
OLIVA

SERIE 'G'
Robusto
(4-1/2" x 50)
Cameroon
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1019

MEDIUM
CALDWELL

LA BARBA PURPLE
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1179

MEDIUM
PARTAGAS

HERITAGE SAN AUGUSTIN
Rothschild
(4-1/2" x 50)
Honduran
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1021

MEDIUM
ROOM 101

HIT & RUN PART DEUX
Almost Robusto
(4-7/10" x 52)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1238

MEDIUM
MACANUDO

ESPECIALE
Toro
(6" x 52)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1360

MEDIUM
ACID

NASTY
Short Torpedo
(4" x 52)
Connecticut
Broadleaf
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1005

MEDIUM
RECLUSE

AMADEUS
Toro
(6-1/5" x 50)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1390

MEDIUM
AVO SYNCRO

FOGATA
Special Toro
(6" x 60)
Habana 2000
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1123

MEDIUM
ALEC BRADLEY

BLACK MARKET
Perfecto
(6-7/10" x 54)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1149

MEDIUM
MONTECRISTO

MONTE
Conde
(5-1/2" x 48)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1320

MEDIUM
JAVA BY DREW ESTATE

REDO
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 50)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1196

MEDIUM
CROWNED HEADS

LE CARÉME
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Connecticut
Broadleaf
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1200

MEDIUM
CROWNED HEADS

LAS MAREAS TEBERIA
Rothschild
(4-1/2" x 48)
Corojo
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1018

MEDIUM
LA PERLA HABANA

BLACK PEARL MORADO
Toro
(6" x 50)
Cameroon
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1343

MEDIUM
MAN O' WAR

LEGEND
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 52)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1090

MEDIUM / FULL
ROMEO Y JULIETA

1875 RESERVE NICARAGUAN
Toro
(6" x 50)
Nicaraguan
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1225

MEDIUM / FULL
CROWNED HEADS

JERICHO HILL JUÁREZ
Robusto
(4-7/10" x 52)
San Andrés
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1193

MEDIUM / FULL
CAO

COLOMBIA
Tinto
(5" x 50)
Nicaraguan
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1176

MEDIUM / FULL
CROWNED HEADS

FOUR KICKS
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1227

MEDIUM / FULL
PADRÓN

2000
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1282

MEDIUM / FULL
ALEC BRADLEY

PRENSADO
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Corojo
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1245

 1-800-237-2559 *California residents please see back page for Prop 65 Warning.* MON.-FRI. 7AM-10PM SAT.-SUN. 8AM-7PM E.T.

5-PACK FEVER

2-FER ~~$165.45~~
$29.98 Per 5-Pack — SAVE UP TO **64%**
10 Cigars - Two 5-Packs

3-FER ~~$238.95~~
$26.33 Per 5-Pack — SAVE UP TO **67%**
15 Cigars - Three 5-Packs

4-FER ~~$312.03~~
$23.74 Per 5-Pack — SAVE UP TO **70%**
20 Cigars - Four 5-Packs

MUST BE DIFFERENT 5-PACKS

MEDIUM / FULL
AVE MARIA
CRUSADER
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1197

MEDIUM / FULL
ROCKY PATEL
VINTAGE 1990
Churchill
(7" x 48)
Connecticut
Broadleaf
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1152

MEDIUM / FULL
ROCKY PATEL
ROYALE
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Ecuador Sumatra
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1312

MEDIUM / FULL
COHIBA
NICARAGUA
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Oscuro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1035

MEDIUM / FULL
JOYA DE NICARAGUA
CABINETTA
Serie No. 7
(6" x 52)
Connecticut
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1341

MEDIUM / FULL
CAO
CONSIGLIERE ASSOCIATE
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Brazilian
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1293

MEDIUM / FULL
ALEC BRADLEY
POST EMBARGO
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Honduran
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1308

MEDIUM / FULL
SAN CRISTOBAL
MONUMENTO
Double Corona
(7-1/5" x 49)
Nicaraguan
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1165

MEDIUM / FULL
BRICK HOUSE
MIGHTY MIGHTY
Gordo
(6-1/5" x 60)
Brazilian
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1139

MEDIUM / FULL
CAO
BRAZILIA
Go!
(5" x 56)
Brazilian
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1063

MEDIUM / FULL
ESPINOSA
LARANJA
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 54)
Brazilian
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1221

MEDIUM / FULL
ALEC BRADLEY
BLACK MARKET ESTELI
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Nicaraguan
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1194

MEDIUM / FULL
DREW ESTATE
UNDERCROWN
Gran Toro
(6" x 52)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1106

MEDIUM / FULL
ROCKY PATEL
20TH ANNIVERSARY
Toro
(6" x 52)
Oscuro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1350

MEDIUM / FULL
BLACK CROWN
SONS OF ANARCHY™
Robusto
(5" x 54)
Ecuador Sumatra
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1050

MEDIUM / FULL
ROMEO Y JULIETA
NICARAGUA BY AJ FERNANDEZ
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Nicaraguan
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1045

MEDIUM / FULL
CASA FERNANDEZ
MIAMI RESERVA
Toro
(6" x 54)
Maduro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1119

MEDIUM / FULL
ROCKY PATEL
VINTAGE 2006
Robusto
(5-1/2" x 50)
San Andrés
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1321

MEDIUM / FULL
PUNCH
DIABLO DIABOLUS
Robusto
(5-1/5" x 54)
Oscuro
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1074

MEDIUM / FULL
ALEC BRADLEY
PRENSADO LOST ART
Robusto
(5" x 52)
Honduran
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1307

MEDIUM / FULL
VILLIGER
LA VENCEDORA
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1279

MEDIUM / FULL
OLIVA
SERIE 'O'
Robusto
(5" x 50)
Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1034

MEDIUM / FULL
H.R.
BLUE
Toro
(6" x 50)
Ecuador Habano
Wrapper
5PF-PM-1345

FREE LIGHTER

with PERDOMO box purchase, while supplies last.

$75 RETAIL VALUE

A. PERDOMO 20TH ANNIVERSARY

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Connecticut	Maduro	Sun Grown
ROBUSTO	(5" x 56)	24	$210.00	$178.50	P20-PM-1016	P2N-PM-1016	P2M-PM-1016
EPICURE	(6" x 56)	24	$222.00	$188.70	P20-PM-1009	P2N-PM-1009	P2M-PM-1009
GORDO	(6" x 60)	24	$246.00	$209.10	P20-PM-1008	P2N-PM-1008	P2M-PM-1008
CORONA GRANDE	(6-1/2" x 48)	24	$204.00	$173.40	P20-PM-1019	P2N-PM-1019	P2M-PM-1019
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 54)	24	$234.00	$198.90	P20-PM-1015	P2N-PM-1015	P2M-PM-1015
CHURCHILL	(7" x 56)	24	$258.00	$219.30	P20-PM-1020	P2N-PM-1020	P2M-PM-1020

B. PERDOMO ARTESANAL

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Maduro	Sumatra
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$117.00	$65.95	PKC-PM-1001	PKB-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$115.00	$67.95	PKC-PM-1002	PKB-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6" x 54)	20	$119.00	$69.95	PKC-PM-1003	PKB-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$120.00	$69.95	PKC-PM-1000	PKB-PM-1000

C. PERDOMO BOURBON BARREL-AGED

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Connecticut	Maduro	Sun Grown
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	24	$192.00	$163.20	WGL-PM-1008	WGM-PM-1008	WGN-PM-1008
TORO	(6" x 54)	24	$204.00	$173.40	WGL-PM-1013	WGM-PM-1013	WGN-PM-1013
GORDO	(6" x 60)	24	$228.00	$193.80	WGL-PM-1009	WGM-PM-1009	WGN-PM-1009
TORPEDO	(6-1/2"x54)	24	$210.00	$178.50	WGL-PM-1014	WGM-PM-1014	WGN-PM-1014
CHURCHILL	(7" x 54)	24	$216.00	$183.60	WGL-PM-1010	WGM-PM-1010	WGN-PM-1010

D. PERDOMO FACTORY TOUR BLEND

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Connecticut	Maduro	Sun Grown
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	24	$162.00	$137.70	WGO-PM-1010	WGP-PM-1010	WGQ-PM-1010
TORO	(6" x 52)	24	$174.00	$147.90	WGO-PM-1007	WGP-PM-1007	WGQ-PM-1007
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 54)	24	$186.00	$158.10	WGO-PM-1011	WGP-PM-1011	WGQ-PM-1011
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	24	$198.00	$168.30	WGO-PM-1006	WGP-PM-1006	WGQ-PM-1006

E. PERDOMO LOT 23

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Conn. Shade	Maduro	Connecticut
GORDITO	(4-1/2" x 60)	24	$156.00	$132.60	IWA-PM-1023	IWB-PM-1020	IWC-PM-1020
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	24	$150.00	$127.50	IWA-PM-1011	IWB-PM-1010	IWC-PM-1009
BELICOSO	(5-7/10" x 54)	24	$168.00	$142.80	IWA-PM-1015	IWB-PM-1014	IWC-PM-1012
TORO	(6" x 50)	24	$162.00	$137.70	IWA-PM-1021	IWB-PM-1018	IWC-PM-1018
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	24	$174.00	$147.90	IWA-PM-1022	IWB-PM-1019	IWC-PM-1019

F. PERDOMO RESERVE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CHAMPAGNE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Connecticut	Sun Grown	Maduro
PURITOS	(4" x 38)	25	$98.75	$83.93	WGB-PM-1025	—	—
FIGURADO	(4-7/10" x 56)	25	$175.00	$148.75	WGB-PM-1028	WGD-PM-1029	WGC-PM-1028
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$200.00	$170.00	WGB-PM-1007	WGD-PM-1007	WGC-PM-1007
MAGNUM TUBO	(6" x 50)	12	$99.00	$84.15	WGB-PM-1026	WGD-PM-1027	WGC-PM-1026
EPICURE	(6" x 54)	25	$212.50	$180.62	WGB-PM-1017	WGD-PM-1015	WGC-PM-1014
SUPER TORO	(6" x 60)	25	$237.50	$201.87	WGB-PM-1008	WGD-PM-1008	WGC-PM-1008
CHURCHILL	(7" x 54)	25	$225.00	$191.25	WGB-PM-1029	WGD-PM-1030	WGC-PM-1029
TORPEDO	(7" x 54)	25	$231.26	$196.57	WGB-PM-1022	WGD-PM-1024	WGC-PM-1023

TORO 50-COUNT ASSORTMENT

Like a good deal on cigars and aren't too concerned with "big name" brands. Well, we got a deal for you. In this Toro 50 Count Wheel Assortment (6" x 50) you get all of these handmade cigars for a steal! They say variety is the spice of life, so spice it up a bit! You'll get five each of these handmades, including Thompson Explorer, Bagatelle, La Salle, La Favorita, 1898 Independencia, Tranquilo, Romantico, Match Play, El Gringo, and Toro Bravo, all crafted with premium combo fillers from exotic blends of Indonesian tobaccos, and each with its own tasty flavor profile. If you're a fan of smooth to medium-bodied Toros, get this 50 count wheel!

50 Cigars
ONLY $1 Per Stick

TORO 50-COUNT ASSORTMENT
(6" x 50) 8 Natural Wrapper
5 each of 10 brands (50 total)
Compare $100.00
ONLY $49.95
TCASST90-SP-1000

SHORT RUN RESERVE

BUY MORE, SAVE MORE

2-FER	3-FER	4-FER
$32.98	$29.98	$25.99
Per Bundle	Per Bundle	Per Bundle

The masterminds behind **HONDURAN Short Runs** are none other than the brazen wizards at Camacho. The **DOMINICAN Short Run** cigars are created by the hotshots behind Dolce Vita. The **NICARAGUAN Short Runs** are from the legendary Plasencia family, makers of some of Rocky Patel's and Alec Bradley's most beloved brands. Each of these tantalizing cigars feature tasty regional combo mixed fillers and binders that are shrouded in exotic wrappers.

HANDMADE BUNDLES From 3 Countries

HONDURAN

HONDURAN SHORT RUN RESERVE

MEDIUM — Honduras — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Maduro	Sumatra	Connecticut
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$46.95	$39.95	HD2-PM-1003	HD3-PM-1003	HD1-PM-1003
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$49.95	$40.95	HD2-PM-1004	HD3-PM-1004	HD1-PM-1004
CHURCHILL	(7-1/2" x 50)	20	$54.95	$42.95	HD2-PM-1000	HD3-PM-1000	HD1-PM-1000

DOMINICAN SHORT RUN RESERVE

SMOOTH — Dom. Rep. — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
GORDO SHORTY	(4" x 60)	20	$47.95	$42.95	TD5-PM-1000
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$45.95	$44.95	TD5-PM-1002
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$52.95	$44.95	TD5-PM-1001
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$44.95	$42.95	TD5-PM-1004

290 BONUS CLUB ELIGIBLE

NICARAGUAN SHORT RUN RESERVE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-7/10" x 50)	20	$70.00	$39.95	NSR-PM-1003
TORO	(6-1/10" x 50)	20	$70.00	$40.95	NSR-PM-1004
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$70.00	$42.95	NSR-PM-1000

JAVA

by DREW ESTATE & ROCKY PATEL

Uniquely infused with the rich flavors of cocoa & espresso...

JAVA BY DREW ESTATE

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Latte - Conn.	Mint - Mad.	Maduro	Red - Maduro
CORONA	(5" x 42)	24	$204.00	$182.95	JZA-PM-1021	JZB-PM-1012	JZA-PM-1024	JZC-PM-1000
		5	—	$42.50	JZA-PM-1007	JZB-PM-1005	JZA-PM-1020	—
GORDO	(5" x 58)	24	$259.20	$232.95	JZA-PM-1022	JZB-PM-1013	JZA-PM-1029	JZC-PM-1001
		5	—	$54.00	JZA-PM-1011	JZB-PM-1008	JZA-PM-1026	—
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	24	$226.80	$203.95	JZA-PM-1009	JZB-PM-1006	JZA-PM-1030	JZC-PM-1002
		5	—	$47.50	JZA-PM-1005	JZB-PM-1003	JZA-PM-1016	—
TORO	(6" x 50)	24	$240.00	$215.95	JZA-PM-1018	JZB-PM-1011	JZA-PM-1025	JZC-PM-1003
		5	—	$50.00	JZA-PM-1002	JZB-PM-1001	JZA-PM-1017	—

A. ROCKY PATEL OLDE WORLD RESERVE

MEDIUM — Honduras — Various Wrappers

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO COROJO	(5-1/2" x 54)	20	$184.00	$164.99	OOA-PM-1007
ROBUSTO MADURO	(5-1/2" x 54)	20	$184.00	$164.95	OOA-PM-1006
SIXTY COROJO	(6" x 60)	20	$225.00	$201.99	OOA-PM-1009
SIXTY MADURO	(6" x 60)	20	$225.00	$201.95	OOA-PM-1008
TORO COROJO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$205.00	$183.99	OOA-PM-1011
TORO MADURO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$205.00	$183.95	OOA-PM-1010

B. ROCKY PATEL HAMLET TABAQUERO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — San Andres Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$184.00	$164.99	RPZ-PM-1006
ROB. GRANDE	(5" x 54)	20	$189.00	$169.99	RPZ-PM-1012
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 42)	20	$171.00	$152.99	RPZ-PM-1010
BALA	(5-7/10" x 58)	20	$200.00	$179.99	RPZ-PM-1015
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$189.00	$169.99	RPZ-PM-1009

C. ROCKY PATEL HAMLET 25TH YEAR

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$184.00	$165.99	1RP-PM-1000
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	20	$210.00	$188.99	1RP-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$195.00	$175.99	1RP-PM-1002

10 CIGARS FREE

with ROCKY PATEL box purchase, while supplies last.

$89.95 RETAIL VALUE

Rocky Patel Premium cigars has distinguished itself as one of the most prestigious premium cigar boutiques in the world. Since 1996, Rocky has amassed nearly one hundred 90+ ratings, with Edge Habano receiving a 94-rating in 2015 among countless other Top 25 honorees over the years. The brand has an all-encompassing catalog, with a cigar to satisfy enthusiasts from all walks of life. One of the most popular is the Java series, a premium coffee infused line made in partnership with Drew Estate.

ROCKY PATEL

Countless 90+ Ratings

D. ROCKY PATEL DECADE

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$211.00	$184.99	ILB-PM-1005
LONSDALE	(6-1/2" x 44)	20	$211.00	$189.90	ILB-PM-1016
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$234.00	$210.60	ILB-PM-1021
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$244.00	$219.60	ILB-PM-1020

E. ROCKY PATEL SUNGROWN MADURO

FULL — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$193.00	$173.99	RP1-PM-1006
PETIT BELI.	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$198.00	$177.99	RP1-PM-1009
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	20	$234.00	$210.99	RP1-PM-1008
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$198.00	$177.99	RP1-PM-1007
LANCERO	(7-1/2" x 38)	20	$193.00	$173.99	RP1-PM-1012

F. ROCKY PATEL SUNGROWN

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$158.00	$141.99	RZA-PM-1005
		10	—	$72.50	RZA-PM-1022
TORPEDO	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$206.00	$184.99	RZA-PM-1018
		10	—	$93.20	RZA-PM-1019
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$182.00	$163.99	RZA-PM-1004
		10	$91.00	$65.00	RZA-PM-1012

G. PATEL BROS.

FULL — Nicaragua — Pennsylvania Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 44)	20	$135.00	$79.95	RPE-PM-1005
GORDO	(6" x 58)	20	$185.00	$104.95	RPE-PM-1011
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$165.00	$99.95	RPE-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$175.00	$99.95	RPE-PM-1006

H. ROCKY PATEL EDGE COROJO

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Corojo Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
MISSILE	(5" x 48)	25	$160.00	$144.00	EEA-PM-1012
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$139.00	$125.10	EEA-PM-1010
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$145.00	$130.50	EEA-PM-1009
BATTALION	(6" x 60)	20	$182.00	$154.99	EEA-PM-1011
HOWITZER	(7" x 70)	10	$109.50	$98.55	EEA-PM-1007

ROCKY PATEL EDGE MADURO (Not Shown)

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Habano Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
MISSILE	(5" x 48)	25	$165.00	$147.95	EEH-PM-1012
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$143.00	$127.95	EEH-PM-1009
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$149.00	$133.95	EEH-PM-1010
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$187.00	$167.95	EEH-PM-1011
HOWITZER	(7" x 70)	10	$113.00	$100.95	EEH-PM-1007

FOR SINGLE STICK SELECTIONS VISIT **thompsoncigar.com/singles**

ROCKY PATEL EDGE LITE (Not Shown)

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Honduras — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$141.20	$126.95	EWA-PM-1020
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$156.00	$139.95	EWA-PM-1021
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$161.00	$143.95	EWA-PM-1007
DBL COR.	(7-1/2" x 52)	20	$167.00	$149.95	EWA-PM-1002

ROCKY PATEL EDGE SUMATRA (Not Shown)

FULL — Honduras — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$145.00	$129.95	EEC-PM-1003
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	20	$151.00	$129.95	EEC-PM-1002

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H.UPMANN FUMAS

How can it be? A really good cigar backed by generations of tradition for as low as two bucks a stick? These Fumas are all the proof you need that you can smoke with the big boys without a big budget. Once you light up this Nicaraguan mixed long-filler cigar draped in an Indonesian Besuki leaf, you'll know why it's a top seller already. It's hand rolled, properly aged, and well balanced. It's mellow enough to enjoy any time of the day. Savor this stogie with a good burn and ample smoke production at a price that's hard to believe. But hurry. It'll be moving fast.

AS LOW AS $2 AND JUST TOO AMAZING

SAVE UP TO 44%

H.UPMANN FUMAS

MEDIUM	Nicaragua		Indonesian Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$71.50	$39.95	HUV-PM-1003
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$78.55	$44.95	HUV-PM-1004
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$85.70	$49.95	HUV-PM-1005

FROM THE CREATORS OF DIAMOND CROWN

2 NICARAGUAN PREMIUMS

A. BRICK HOUSE

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua		Habano Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5" x 42)	25	$123.75	$110.99	BKB-PM-1011
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$160.00	$144.00	BKB-PM-1004
SHORT TORPEDO	(5-1/2" x 52)	25	$160.00	$144.00	BKB-PM-1021
TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$167.75	$150.75	BKB-PM-1012
CORONA LARGA	(6-1/5" x 46)	25	$155.00	$139.50	BKB-PM-1028
MIGHTY MIGHTY	(6-1/5" x 60)	25	$185.00	$166.50	BKB-PM-1022
CHURCHILL	(7-1/5" x 50)	25	$185.00	$162.00	BKB-PM-1029

B. BRICK HOUSE MADURO

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua		Brazilian Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$160.00	$144.00	BKC-PM-1003
TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$167.50	$150.75	BKC-PM-1005
GORDO	(6-1/5" x 60)	25	$185.00	$166.50	BKC-PM-1009

C. BRICK HOUSE CONNECTICUT

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Nicaragua		Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$160.00	$144.00	BKD-PM-1004
TORPEDO	(5-1/2" x 52)	25	$160.00	$144.01	BKD-PM-1012
TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$167.50	$150.75	BKD-PM-1007
GORDO	(6-1/5" x 60)	25	$185.00	$166.50	BKD-PM-1013
CHURCHILL	(7-1/5" x 50)	25	$180.00	$162.00	BKD-PM-1015

D. PERLA DEL MAR

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Nicaragua		Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
GORDO	(3-7/10" x 56)	28	$158.20	$142.38	PDM-PM-1015
ROBUSTO	(4-7/10" x 52)	25	$151.25	$136.12	PDM-PM-1007
GORDO	(6" x 60)	25	$180.00	$162.00	PDM-PM-1004
TORO	(6-1/5" x 54)	25	$167.50	$150.75	PDM-PM-1014

E. PERLA DEL MAR MADURO 'M'

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Nicaragua		Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-7/10" x 52)	25	$151.25	$136.12	PDU-PM-1005
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 46)	25	$151.25	$136.12	PDU-PM-1009
GORDO	(6" x 60)	25	$180.00	$162.00	PDU-PM-1002
TORO	(6-1/5" x 54)	25	$167.50	$150.75	PDU-PM-1010

10 CIGARS FREE

with BRICK HOUSE or PERLA DEL MAR box purchase, while supplies last.

$65 RETAIL VALUE

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MON.-FRI. 7AM-10PM SAT.-SUN. 8AM-7PM E.T.

FREE SHIPPING

on your ENTIRE ORDER with AJ FERNANDEZ box purchase

A. RAMON ALLONES

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Oscuro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$240.00	$216.00	RAJ-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$260.00	$234.00	RAJ-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 54)	20	$300.00	$270.00	RAJ-PM-1012
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$280.00	$252.00	RAJ-PM-1003

B. LAST CALL HABANO *(Also available in Maduro)*

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CHIQUITAS	(3-1/2" x 50)	25	$125.00	$112.99	LCL-PM-1004
CORTICAS	(4" x 52)	25	$150.00	$134.99	LCL-PM-1008
CORONA	(4-1/2" x 48)	25	$137.50	$112.50	LCL-PM-1001
PEQUENAS	(5" x 46)	25	$155.00	$139.99	LCL-PM-1012
FLAQUITAS	(6" x 46)	25	$160.00	$143.99	LCL-PM-1016

C. NEW WORLD PURO ESPECIALE

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$166.00	$149.40	NWD-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 48)	20	$162.00	$145.80	NWD-PM-1001
GORDO	(6" x 58)	20	$190.00	$171.00	NWD-PM-1011
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$180.00	$162.00	NWD-PM-1002

D. NEW WORLD

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Nicaraguan Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 55)	21	$155.40	$120.60	NWB-PM-1008
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 55)	10	$63.81	$62.43	NWB-PM-1015
BELICOSO	(5-1/2" x 55)	21	$161.70	$143.53	NWB-PM-1007
GORDO	(6" x 58)	21	$174.30	$136.80	NWB-PM-1009
GORDO	(6" x 58)	10	$72.38	$70.14	NWB-PM-1016
TORO	(6-1/2" x 55)	21	$159.60	$124.20	NWB-PM-1010
TORO	(6-1/2" x 55)	10	$65.71	$64.14	NWB-PM-1017

E. EMPRESS OF CUBA MADURO

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	16	$108.00	$69.95	ENF-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 52)	16	$118.00	$74.95	ENF-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	16	$129.00	$77.95	ENF-PM-1000

E. EMPRESS OF CUBA CONNECTICUT

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	16	$108.00	$69.95	ENE-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 52)	16	$118.00	$74.95	ENE-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	16	$129.00	$77.95	ENE-PM-1000

E. EMPRESS OF CUBA HABANO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	16	$108.00	$69.95	ENG-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 52)	16	$118.00	$74.95	ENG-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	16	$129.00	$77.95	ENG-PM-1000

F. ENCLAVE HABANO *(Also available in Broadleaf)*

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$143.00	$128.70	ENC-PM-1002
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$146.00	$131.40	ENC-PM-1008
FIGURADO	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$152.00	$136.80	ENC-PM-1007
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	20	$148.00	$133.20	ENC-PM-1012

There's no comparison to the heavyweight champion of Nicaraguan cigars. AJ Fernandez is noticeably the hardest working man in the industry with his complete roster of numerous 90+ rated blends using the finest tobaccos aged to perfection. A master-blender in his prime, there is no better time to experience all that AJ has to offer...and his stable is stacked.

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A. CARLOS TORAÑO RESERVA DECADENCIA

SMOOTH — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PET. CORONA	(5" x 40)	20	$180.00	$107.99	RKA-PM-1005
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$275.80	$173.05	RKA-PM-1001

B. CARLOS TORAÑO EXODUS GOLD 1959

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Habana 2000 Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 50)	24	$206.16	$128.41	T8A-PM-1018
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 54)	24	$220.56	$137.55	T8A-PM-1016

C. CARLOS TORAÑO CASA TORAÑO

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Honduras — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-7/10" x 52)	25	$189.75	$117.88	85A-PM-1017
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 54)	25	$214.75	$133.76	85A-PM-1019
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	25	$199.75	$124.23	85A-PM-1008

D. CARLOS TORAÑO EXODUS 1959 '50 YEARS'

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Brazilian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	24	$203.76	$126.88	T8B-PM-1007

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$43.44 COMBINED RETAIL VALUE

SAVE UP TO $70

A. MACANUDO INSPIRADO ORANGE

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$149.80	$119.84	MA7-PM-1008
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	20	$153.80	$123.04	MA7-PM-1009
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$133.80	$107.04	MA7-PM-1007
ROBUSTO TUBO	(5-1/2" x 50)	20	$153.80	$123.04	MA7-PM-1022
TORO	(5-7/10" x 52)	20	$143.80	$115.04	MA7-PM-1013

B. MACANUDO INSPIRADO RED

FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	20	$153.80	$123.04	MAM-PM-1002
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$133.80	$107.04	MAM-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$143.80	$115.04	MAM-PM-1001

C. MACANUDO INSPIRADO WHITE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Honduras — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$149.80	$119.84	MAL-PM-1002
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$133.80	$107.04	MAL-PM-1000
ROBUSTO TUBO	(5" x 50)	20	$153.80	$123.04	MAL-PM-1010
TORO	(6-1/2" x 50)	20	$143.80	$115.04	MAL-PM-1001

D. MACANUDO INSPIRADO BLACK

FULL — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO TUBO	(4-4/5" x 48)	20	$163.80	$131.04	MAK-PM-1010
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$163.80	$131.04	MAK-PM-1002
ROBUSTO	(4-4/5" x 48)	20	$143.80	$115.04	MAK-PM-1000
TORO	(5-1/2" x 54)	20	$153.80	$123.04	MAK-PM-1001

E. MACANUDO CRÜ ROYALE

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO HABANO	(5" x 50)	20	$169.80	$135.84	MA3-PM-1004
		10	—	$72.92	MA3-PM-1012
TORO HABANO	(6" x 54)	20	$179.80	$143.84	MA3-PM-1005
GIGANTE HABANO	(6" x 60)	20	$179.80	$143.84	MA3-PM-1008
		10	—	$76.92	MA3-PM-1013

F. MACANUDO ESPECIALE

MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$153.00	$117.95	MAO-PM-1008
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$172.00	$122.95	MAO-PM-1000
		10	—	$49.95	MAO-PM-1001
TORPEDO	(6" x 54)	20	$197.00	$126.95	MAO-PM-1004
		10	—	$59.95	MAO-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	20	$176.00	$132.95	MAO-PM-1010

G. MACANUDO GOLD LABEL

SMOOTH — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ASCOT TINS	(4-1/5" x 32)	100	$204.90	$153.22	MA5-PM-1017
DUKE OF YORK	(5-1/5" x 54)	25	$232.25	$180.11	MA5-PM-1014
	(5-1/5" x 54)	10	—	$77.04	MA5-PM-1033
HAMPTON COURT	(5-1/2" x 42)	25	$237.25	$183.92	MA5-PM-1006
	(5-1/2" x 42)	10	—	$78.56	MA5-PM-1034
TUDOR	(6" x 52)	25	$244.75	$189.95	MA5-PM-1009
		10	—	$80.98	MA5-PM-1035
SHAKESPEARE	(6-1/2" x 45)	25	224.75	$174.08	MA5-PM-1019
		10	—	$74.63	MA5-PM-1036
LORD NELSON	(7" x 49)	25	249.75	$193.76	MA5-PM-1020
		10	—	$82.50	MA5-PM-1037

H. MACANUDO CAFÉ

SMOOTH — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
MINIATURE	(3-7/10" x 24)	80	$122.90	$91.88	MA1-PM-1061
ASCOTS TIN	(4-1/5" x 32)	100	$194.90	$148.02	MA1-PM-1053
LORDS	(4-7/10" x 49)	25	$167.25	$128.68	MA1-PM-1022
		10	—	$56.47	MA1-PM-1071
PETITE CORONA	(5" x 38)	25	$159.75	$122.96	MA1-PM-1023
DUKE OF YORK	(5-1/5" x 54)	25	$219.75	$170.27	MA1-PM-1024
		10	—	$73.10	MA1-PM-1072
DUKE OF DEVON	(5-1/2" x 42)	25	$189.75	$146.78	MA1-PM-1006
HAMPTON COURT	(5-1/2" x 42)	25	$199.75	$154.71	MA1-PM-1007
HYDE PARK	(5-1/2" x 49)	25	$207.25	$160.43	MA1-PM-1025
CLAYBOURNE	(6" x 31)	25	$154.75	$118.84	MA1-PM-1064
DUKE OF WINDSOR	(6" x 50)	25	$237.25	$184.24	MA1-PM-1018
BARON DE ROTHSCHILD	(6-1/2" x 42)	25	$207.25	$160.43	MA1-PM-1026
PORTOFINO	(7" x 34)	25	$209.75	$162.65	MA1-PM-1027
PRINCE PHILIP	(7-1/2" x 49)	25	$237.25	$184.24	MA1-PM-1028

I. MACANUDO MADURO

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Dominican Republic — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ASCOTS TIN	(4-1/5" x 32)	100	$194.90	$148.01	MA2-PM-1021
DIPLOMAT	(4-1/2" x 60)	25	$199.75	$154.74	MA2-PM-1009
		10	—	$66.89	MA2-PM-1028
HAMPTON COURT	(5-1/2" x 42)	25	$199.75	$154.71	MA2-PM-1003
		10	—	$66.88	MA2-PM-1029
HYDE PARK	(5-1/2" x 49)	25	$207.25	$160.42	MA2-PM-1014
		10	—	$69.17	MA2-PM-1030
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	25	$237.25	$184.24	MA2-PM-1004
BARON DE ROTHSCHILD	(6-1/2" x 42)	25	$207.25	$160.42	MA2-PM-1015
		10	—	$69.17	MA2-PM-1031
PRINCE PHILIP	(7-1/2" x 49)	10	$96.90	$75.22	MA2-PM-1013

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A. PAPPY VAN WINKLE

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — San Andrés Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONITA	(4" x 46)	10	$145.97	$138.67	PW1-PM-1010
BELICOSO FINO	(5" x 50)	10	$245.97	$233.67	PW1-PM-1003
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 54)	10	$215.97	$205.17	PW1-PM-1006
TORO	(6" x 50)	10	$235.97	$224.17	PW1-PM-1004

B. FLORIDA SUN GROWN

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Brazilian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	20	$222.00	$192.00	GWC-PM-1005
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$252.00	$208.00	GWC-PM-1006
LIMITED PRESS TORO	(6" x 54)	10	$146.00	$128.00	GWC-PM-1002
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	20	$292.00	$240.00	GWC-PM-1008
BELICOSO	(6-1/2" x 54)	20	$272.00	$217.60	GWC-PM-1009

C. HERRERA ESTELI

FULL — Nicaragua — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA EXTRA	(4-7/10" x 48)	25	$250.00	$198.90	HEN-PM-1045
ROBUSTO GRANDE	(5-1/5" x 52)	25	$228.00	$182.40	HEN-PM-1030
SHORT CORONA	(5-4/5" x 46)	25	$204.00	$163.20	HEN-PM-1034
LONSDALE DELUXE	(6" x 44)	25	$232.00	$185.60	HEN-PM-1031
TORO ESPECIAL	(6" x 52)	25	$242.00	$193.60	HEN-PM-1033

D. MUWAT KENTUCKY FIRE CURED *(Also available in Sweets)*

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Kentucky Fire-Cured Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(4" x 46)	20	$100.00	$81.96	J2H-PM-1028
ROBUSTO	(5" x 56)	20	$124.00	$101.64	J2H-PM-1029
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$144.00	$118.04	J2H-PM-1031

E. LIGA PRIVADA NO. 9

FULL — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	24	$314.34	$298.62	LPB-PM-1022
CORONA EXTRA	(6" x 46)	24	$290.34	$275.82	LPB-PM-1045
BELICOSO	(6" x 52)	24	$373.34	$354.67	LPB-PM-1029
TORO	(6" x 52)	24	$343.84	$326.65	LPB-PM-1019
DOUBLE CORONA	(7" x 52)	24	$403.34	$383.17	LPB-PM-1010

F. LIGA PRIVADA T52

FULL — Honduras — Habano Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #	Qty.	ONLY	Item #
LANCERO	(4-1/5" x 46)	24	$220.34	$209.32	LPC-PM-1039	—	—	—
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	24	$314.34	$298.62	LPC-PM-1012	10	$131.00	LPC-PM-1048
TORO	(6" x 52)	24	$343.84	$326.65	LPC-PM-1019	10	$142.00	LPC-PM-1052
BELICOSO	(6" x 52)	24	$373.34	$354.67	LPC-PM-1027	10	$147.82	LPC-PM-1050
DBL CORONA	(7" x 54)	24	$403.34	$383.17	LPC-PM-1014	10	$160.00	LPC-PM-1051

G. UNDERCROWN CONNETICUT SHADE

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PERFECTO	(3-9/10" x 60)	12	$157.67	$149.79	LPF-PM-1027
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$212.43	$174.19	LPF-PM-1009
CORONA	(5-3/5" x 46)	25	$206.43	$169.27	LPF-PM-1024
BELICOSO	(6" x 52)	25	$226.93	$186.08	LPF-PM-1025
TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$222.93	$182.80	LPF-PM-1014
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	25	$247.43	$202.89	LPF-PM-1016
DOUBLE CORONA	(7" x 54)	25	$261.93	$214.78	LPF-PM-1026

H. UNDERCROWN

FULL — Nicaragua — San Andrés Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #	Qty.	ONLY	Item #
PERFECTO	(4-1/10" x 60)	12	$157.67	$129.29	LPE-PM-1032	—	—	—
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$212.43	$174.19	LPE-PM-1030	10	$76.00	LPE-PM-1030
BELICOSO	(6" x 52)	25	$226.93	$186.08	LPE-PM-1027	—	—	—
TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$222.93	$182.80	LPE-PM-1015	10	$91.41	LPE-PM-1016
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	25	$247.43	$202.89	LPE-PM-1017	—	—	—
DBL CORONA	(7" x 54)	25	$261.93	$214.78	LPE-PM-1031	10	$94.00	LPE-PM-1028

I. UNDERCROWN SUN GROWN

FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PERFECTO	(3-9/10" x 60)	12	$157.67	$149.79	UC1-PM-1000
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	25	$212.43	$174.19	UC1-PM-1001
CORONA	(5-3/5" x 46)	25	$206.43	$169.27	UC1-PM-1002
BELICOSO	(6" x 52)	25	$226.93	$186.08	UC1-PM-1004
TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$222.93	$182.80	UC1-PM-1003
DOUBLE CORONA	(7" x 54)	25	$261.93	$214.78	UC1-PM-1006

DREW ESTATE

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A. PUNCH ESTATE COLLECTION

MEDIUM — Honduras — Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
SHORT ROB.	(4-4/5" x 48)	18	$135.00	$84.95	PUY-PM-1000
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 54)	18	$144.00	$119.95	PUY-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	18	$153.00	$100.95	PUY-PM-1001

B. PUNCH GRAN PURO

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Sun Grown Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
SANTA RITA	(4-1/2" x 52)	25	$152.25	$116.93	1ZA-PM-1013
RANCHO	(5-1/2" x 54)	25	$179.75	$138.52	1ZA-PM-1005
PICO BONITO	(6" x 50)	25	$177.25	$136.61	1ZA-PM-1006
SESENTA	(6-1/5" x 60)	20	$147.80	$114.12	1ZA-PM-1007
SIERRA	(6-1/2" x 48)	25	$177.25	$136.61	1ZA-PM-1014

C. PUNCH

MEDIUM / FULL — Europe — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Conn. Broad.	Ecu. Sum.
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	50	$254.50	$194.49	PUA-PM-1021	PUA-PM-1070
CHAMPION	(4-1/2" x 60)	25	$154.75	$118.84	PUA-PM-1016	—
LONDON CLUB	(5" x 40)	25	$84.75	$63.90	PUA-PM-1048	PUA-PM-1055
ELITE	(5-1/5" x 45)	25	$97.25	$73.75	PUA-PM-1017	PUA-PM-1056
MAGNUM	(5-1/5" x 54)	25	$179.75	$138.52	PUA-PM-1032	—
PITA MADURO	(6-1/10" x 50)	25	$167.25	$128.67	PUA-PM-1018	PUA-PM-1058
LONSDALE	(6-1/5" x 44)	25	$154.75	$118.83	—	PUA-PM-1038
DOUBLE CORONA	(6-7/10" x 48)	25	$177.25	$136.61	PUA-PM-1019	PUA-PM-1062
AFTER DINNER	(7-1/5" x 45)	25	$152.25	$116.93	PUA-PM-1065	—
PRESIDENTE	(8-1/2" x 52)	25	$224.75	$174.40	PUA-PM-1067	PUA-PM-1068

D. PUNCH RARE COROJO

MEDIUM — Honduras — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	50	$294.50	$230.05	POA-PM-1026
CHAMPION	(4-1/2" x 60)	25	$157.25	$127.09	POA-PM-1017
GUSTO TUBO	(5" x 52)	20	$147.80	$126.42	POA-PM-1044
MAGNUM	(5-1/10" x 54)	25	$184.75	$148.68	POA-PM-1019
ELITES	(5-1/5" x 45)	25	$112.25	$87.40	POA-PM-1021
EN CRYSTALE	(5-1/5" x 54)	20	$175.80	$139.26	POA-PM-1014
PITA	(6-1/10" x 50)	25	$177.25	$138.84	POA-PM-1022

E. PUNCH SIGNATURE

FULL — Honduras — Corojo Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/2" x 50)	18	$116.82	$72.30	PUS-PM-1013
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	18	$142.02	$88.30	PUS-PM-1015
TORPEDO	(5-7/10" x 52)	18	$145.62	$90.59	PUS-PM-1016
PITA	(6" x 50)	18	$140.22	$87.16	PUS-PM-1014
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	18	$154.62	$96.30	PUS-PM-1012

F. PUNCH DIABLO DIABOLUS SUMATRA

FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 54)	25	$194.75	$155.80	PUH-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/10" x 50)	25	$179.75	$143.80	PUH-PM-1002
GORDO	(6-1/5" x 60)	20	$163.80	$131.04	PUH-PM-1000

AVO

Inspired by the musical lifestyle of the late Avo Uvezian, the AVO brand captures the essence of a premium cigar. With blends hailing from the Dominican and Nicaragua, unexpected depth and complexity are present in every AVO cigar. Utilizing only the finest tobaccos in the world, AVO provides a luxury cigar smoking experience.

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A. AVO SYNCRO RITMO

MEDIUM / FULL	Dominican Republic			Ecuador Hab. Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$218.00	$196.20	AV9-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$238.00	$214.20	AV9-PM-1001
TORO LE 30 YEARS	(6" x 54)	20	$238.00	$214.20	AV9-PM-1012
TORPEDO	(7" x 54)	20	$278.00	$206.99	AV9-PM-1003

B. AVO SYNCRO FOGATA

MEDIUM / FULL	Dominican Republic			Habana Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORPEDO	(4-1/2" x 52)	20	$178.00	$160.20	AV7-PM-1011
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$198.00	$178.20	AV7-PM-1004
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$218.00	$196.20	AV7-PM-1005
TORO LE 30 YEARS	(6" x 54)	20	$218.00	$196.20	AV7-PM-1015
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$238.00	$214.20	AV7-PM-1008

C. AVO SYNCRO NICARAGUA

MEDIUM / FULL	Dominican Republic			Ecuador Conn. Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
SHORT ROBUSTO	(4" x 52)	20	$178.00	$159.99	AV6-PM-1011
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$198.00	$178.20	AV6-PM-1004
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$218.00	$196.20	AV6-PM-1005
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$218.00	$196.20	AV6-PM-1020
SPECIAL TORO	(6" x 60)	20	$238.00	$214.20	AV6-PM-1008

D. AVO HERITAGE

FULL	Dominican Republic			Ecuador Habano Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
SHORT ROBUSTO	(4" x 56)	20	$170.00	$147.60	AV3-PM-1012
ROBUSTO	(4-9/10" x 50)	20	$180.00	$162.00	AV3-PM-1013
TORO LE 30 YEARS	(6" x 50)	20	$196.00	$176.40	AV3-PM-1002
SPECIAL TORO	(6" x 60)	20	$210.00	$183.60	AV3-PM-1005

E. AVO CLASSIC

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Dominican Republic			Connecticut Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$190.00	$171.00	AV1-PM-1027
NO. 2	(6" x 50)	20	$210.00	$183.60	AV1-PM-1024
NO. 6	(6" x 60)	20	$220.00	$192.60	AV1-PM-1009
NO. 5	(6-9/10" x 46)	20	$200.00	$180.00	AV1-PM-1029
PIRAMIDES	(7" x 54)	20	$220.00	$198.00	AV1-PM-1022

F. AVO XO

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic			Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
NOTTURNO	(5" x 42)	20	$200.00	$180.00	AV4-PM-1023
INTERMEZZO	(5" x 50)	20	$220.00	$198.00	AV4-PM-1016
LEGATO	(6" x 54)	20	$234.00	$203.40	AV4-PM-1004
MAESTOSO	(7" x 48)	20	$244.00	$219.60	AV4-PM-1013

MAN O' WAR

A. MAN O' WAR

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua			Ecuador Habano Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	22	$175.00	$114.00	MWB-PM-1024
CORONA	(6" x 44)	22	$150.00	$97.50	MWB-PM-1025
TORPEDO	(6-1/10" x 54)	22	$220.00	$144.00	MWB-PM-1026
FIGURADO	(7-1/10" x 58)	10	$150.00	$80.00	MWB-PM-1023
DBL CORONA	(7-1/2" x 52)	22	$220.00	$144.00	MWB-PM-1028

B. MAN O' WAR LEGEND

MEDIUM	Nicaragua			Habano Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 52)	21	$170.00	$119.95	MWM-PM-1007
TORO	(6-1/2" x 54)	21	$190.00	$129.95	MWM-PM-1011
WAR HORSE	(6-1/2" x 64)	11	$115.00	$79.95	MWM-PM-1010

C. MAN O' WAR RUINATION

FULL	Nicaragua			Ecuador Sungrown Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO NO. 1	(5-1/2" x 54)	20	$200.00	$140.00	MWD-PM-1010
BELICOSO	(5-7/10" x 56)	20	$220.00	$160.00	MWD-PM-1017
ROBUSTO NO. 2	(6" x 60)	20	$220.00	$160.00	MWD-PM-1004
WAR HORSE	(6-1/2" x 64)	10	$120.00	$90.00	MWD-PM-1021

FREE LIGHTER

with MAN O' WAR box purchase, while supplies last.

$35 RETAIL VALUE

CHAVON

While it's true there are plenty of Dominican beauties out there, Chavon is an underrated stunner of a cigar and a Thompson Smokers "Top Five" favorite. Handcrafted with exceptional, three-year-aged Piloto Cubano long-fillers and Dominican Olor binder, with a smooth to medium-bodied personality.

10 CIGARS FREE

with CHAVON box purchase, while supplies last.

CHAVON

SMOOTH / MEDIUM

Shape/size		Qty.	Dominican Republic Compare	ONLY	Choice of Wrapper Connecticut	Maduro	Sumatra
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$132.00	$49.95	CVN-PM-1000	CVO-PM-1000	CVP-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$128.00	$54.95	CVN-PM-1001	CVO-PM-1001	CVP-PM-1001
CHURCHILL	(7-1/2" x 50)	20	$135.00	$59.95	CVN-PM-1002	CVO-PM-1002	CVP-PM-1002

DOMINICAN BROWN-BAG 50-COUNT SAMPLER

Maybe you like variety? Maybe you like to save big?

Then grab this bag of 50 premium assorted cigars and get both. They're handmade with quality Dominican filler, binder, and wrapper tobaccos so these smokes are first rate. You'll get five each of 10 different kinds including Connecticut, Java, Maduro, and Sumatra wrappers. What a total deal. Seriously.

DOMINICAN BROWN-BAG 50-COUNT SAMPLER

Variety of Wrapper

Compare $150.00

ONLY $64.95

TCASST28-SP-1000

ONLY $1.30 Per Stick

829

Straight from the factory, we bring you value – priced 100 count boxes of these tasty, everyday Dominicans. Handcrafted in Connecticut or Maduro wrappers and filled with an array of Dominican fillers, 829 boxes are a reminder that everyday pleasures are as satisfying to your taste buds as they are on your budget.

829

MEDIUM

Shape/size		Qty.	Dominican Republic Compare	ONLY	Connecticut Wrapper Item #
CHURCHILL NATURAL	(7" x 50)	100	$314.00	$129.95	829-PM-1000
CHURCHILL MADURO	(7" x 50)	100	$314.00	$129.95	829-PM-1001

Romeo y Julieta

RATED 90 — A

RATED 90 — B

C

RATED 90 — D

RATED 91 — E

F

G

H

Over 130 years of heritage...

250 BONUS CLUB ELIGIBLE

ROMEO Y JULIETA MINIS

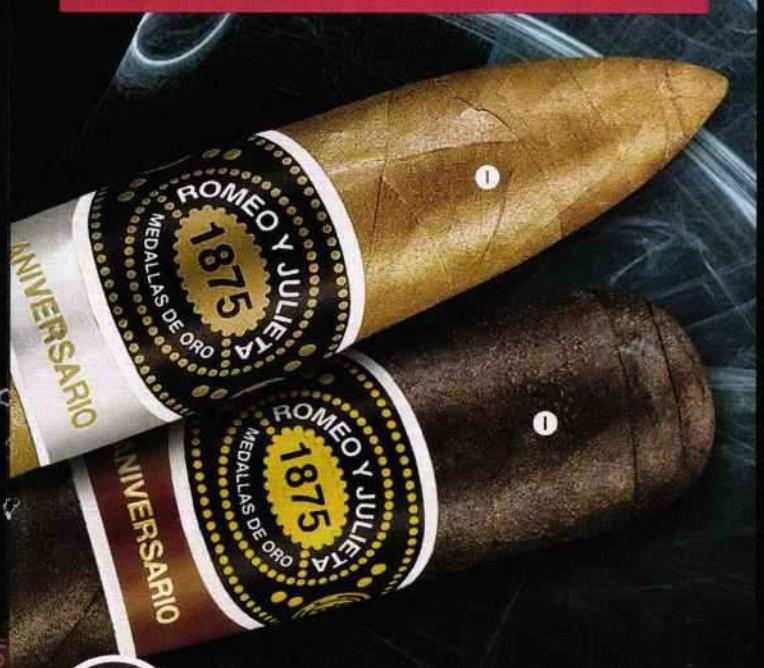
MEDIUM Shape/size	Dominican Republic	Qty.	Compare	Indonesian Wrapper ONLY	Item #
ORIGINAL CIGARILLOS	(3" x 20)	100	$59.25	$45.00	RJM-PM-1008
SMOOTH CIGARILLOS	(3" x 20)	100	$59.25	$45.00	RJM-PM-1007
AROMA CIGARILLOS	(3" x 20)	100	$59.25	$45.00	RJM-PM-1006

DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR FREE ITEM

ICONIC SAMPLER FREE

with ROMEO Y JULIETA box purchase, while supplies last.

Plus SAVE UP TO 38%



A. 1875 NICARAGUA

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua		Nicaraguan Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	25	$176.50	$127.00	ROU-PM-1013
TORO	(6" x 50)	25	$184.25	$132.75	ROU-PM-1014
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$165.00	$118.80	ROU-PM-1012
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	25	$192.50	$143.75	ROU-PM-1015

B. 1875

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Indonesian Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
BULLY	(5" x 50)	25	$176.00	$126.75	ROA-PM-1023
		10	—	$48.80	ROA-PM-1017
EXHIBICION # 3	(6" x 50)	25	$184.50	$132.75	ROA-PM-1021
MAGNUM GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$165.40	$119.00	ROA-PM-1076
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$199.75	$143.75	ROA-PM-1020
		10	—	$62.50	ROA-PM-1075

C. RESERVE MADURO

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
# 4	(5" x 44)	27	$175.23	$126.36	R3A-PM-1021
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	27	$207.09	$149.04	R3A-PM-1015
TORO	(6" x 50)	27	$225.18	$162.27	R3A-PM-1016
BELICOSO	(6-1/10" x 52)	27	$258.39	$186.03	R3A-PM-1017
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	27	$241.92	$174.15	R3A-PM-1022

D. RESERVE

MEDIUM / FULL	Honduras		Habano Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO HABANO	(5" x 54)	27	$171.99	$123.93	RHB-PM-1018
		10	—	$50.90	RHB-PM-1024
CORONA NATURAL	(5-3/5" x 45)	27	$149.05	$107.19	RHB-PM-1019
		10	—	$44.70	RHB-PM-1025
TORO HABANO	(6" x 56)	27	$177.12	$127.71	RHB-PM-1013
		10	—	$52.30	RHB-PM-1026
BELICOSO NATURAL	(6-1/10" x 52)	27	$192.78	$138.78	RHB-PM-1016
		10	—	$56.40	RHB-PM-1027
CHURCHILL NATURAL	(7" x 54)	27	$200.34	$144.18	RHB-PM-1020
		10	—	$58.40	RHB-PM-1014

E. RESERVA REAL

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	25	$195.25	$175.75	RFA-PM-1030
CORONA	(5-1/2" x 44)	25	$171.25	$154.25	RFA-PM-1037
TORO	(6" x 54)	25	$203.50	$183.25	RFA-PM-1014
NO. 2	(6-1/10" x 52)	25	$219.00	$197.00	RFA-PM-1015
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$207.50	$186.75	RFA-PM-1016

F. VINTAGE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
III	(5" x 50)	25	$234.25	$168.75	RVA-PM-1009
I	(6" x 43)	25	$209.50	$151.00	RVA-PM-1026
II	(6" x 46)	25	$223.00	$160.50	RVA-PM-1010
V	(7-1/2" x 50)	25	$260.25	$187.50	RVA-PM-1023

G. NICARAGUA BY AJ FERNANDEZ

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua		Nicaraguan Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$200.00	$129.95	ROV-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$205.00	$139.95	ROV-PM-1001
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$215.00	$159.95	ROV-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$210.00	$149.95	ROV-PM-1003

H. CLUB SELECTION

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Sumatra Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROTHCHILDE	(5" x 52)	20	$185.00	$114.95	ROZ-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$195.00	$119.95	ROZ-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$195.00	$124.95	ROZ-PM-1000

I. ANIVERSARIO *(Also available in Maduro)*

MEDIUM	Dominican Republic		Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	28	$263.20	$236.99	RON-PM-1010
TORO	(6" x 54)	28	$272.72	$245.56	RON-PM-1012
#2	(6-1/10" x 52)	28	$298.76	$268.99	RON-PM-1013
CHURCHILL	(7" x 54)	28	$308.28	$276.99	RON-PM-1014

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HEMINGWAY

THE SHORT STORY is a 4" x 49 Perfecto; smooth to medium-bodied Dominican cigar with a golden Cameroon or dark Maduro wrapper.

THE BEST SELLER combines select Dominican fillers with a silky Cameroon or sweet Maduro wrapper in a 4-1/2" x 55 variation of the classic Perfecto shape.

THE UNTOLD STORY uses a dark and toothy wrapper leaf giving way to a flavor that's rich, toasty, and spicy. Each cigar delivers a wide range of expertly balanced notes, as they burn down to the cool nub.

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY

FULL

Shape/size		Dominican Republic Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Choice of Wrapper: Cameroon	Maduro
SHORT STORY	(4" x 49)	25	$156.25	$135.93	AMA-PM-1031	AMA-PM-1032
BEST SELLER	(4-1/2" x 55)	25	$183.75	$159.87	AMA-PM-1035	AMA-PM-1036
		10	—	$68.95	AMA-PM-1060	AMA-PM-1061

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY

FULL

Shape/size		Dominican Rep. Qty.	Comp.	Various Wrappers ONLY	Item #
SIGNATURE CAM.	(6" x 47)	25	$207.50	$180.53	AMA-PM-1019
		10	—	$77.21	AMA-PM-1062
CLASSIC V CAM.	(7" x 48)	25	$227.50	$197.92	AMA-PM-1014
		10	—	$84.17	AMA-PM-1063
UNTOLD STORY MAD.	(7-3/5" x 54)	25	$353.75	$307.77	AMA-PM-1041

FREE SHIPPING

on your ENTIRE ORDER with ARTURO FUENTE box purchase

ARTURO FUENTE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM

Shape/size		Dominican Republic Qty.	Compare	Various Wrappers ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD NATURAL	(4-1/2" x 50)	25	$138.75	$120.71	AFA-PM-1033
ROTHSCHILD MADURO	(4-1/2" x 50)	25	$138.75	$120.71	AFA-PM-1071
CHATEAU SERIES NATURAL	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$114.00	$99.18	AFA-PM-1068
		10	—	$54.59	AFA-PM-1158
CHATEAU SERIES MADURO	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$114.00	$99.18	AFA-PM-1067
		10	—	$54.59	AFA-PM-1157
CIGARILLO NATURAL	(4-3/5" x 30)	50	$130.00	$113.11	AFA-PM-1086
CIGARILLO MADURO	(4-3/5" x 30)	50	$130.00	$113.11	AFA-PM-1085
PETIT CORONA NATURAL	(5" x 38)	25	$126.25	$109.84	AFA-PM-1051
PETIT CORONA MADURO	(5" x 38)	25	$126.25	$109.84	AFA-PM-1022
CUBAN CORONA NATURAL	(5-1/5" x 45)	25	$137.50	$119.62	AFA-PM-1052
CUBAN CORONA MADURO	(5-1/5" x 45)	25	$137.50	$119.62	AFA-PM-1011
BREVAS ROYALE CORONA NATURAL	(5-1/2" x 42)	50	$142.50	$123.98	AFA-PM-1030
BREVAS ROYALE CORONA MADURO	(5-1/2" x 42)	50	$142.50	$123.98	AFA-PM-1029
8-5-8 LONSDALE NATURAL	(6" x 47)	25	$150.00	$130.50	AFA-PM-1073
		10	—	$57.20	AFA-PM-1128
8-5-8 LONSDALE MADURO	(6" x 47)	25	$150.00	$130.50	AFA-PM-1072
		10	—	$57.20	AFA-PM-1127
SPANISH LONSDALES NATURAL	(6-1/2" x 42)	25	$136.25	$118.53	AFA-PM-1034
SPANISH LONSDALE MADURO	(6-1/2" x 42)	25	$136.25	$118.53	AFA-PM-1023
CURLY HEAD DELUXE NATURAL	(6-1/2" x 43)	25	$83.75	$72.86	AFA-PM-1064
CURLY HEAD DELUXE MADURO	(6-1/2" x 43)	25	$83.75	$72.86	AFA-PM-1074
CURLY HEAD CANDELA	(6-1/2" x 43)	40	$118.00	$102.66	AFA-PM-1083
CURLY HEAD NATURAL	(6-1/2" x 43)	40	$118.00	$102.66	AFA-PM-1084
CORONA IMPERIAL NATURAL	(6-1/2" x 46)	25	$150.00	$130.50	AFA-PM-1076
CORONA IMPERIAL MADURO	(6-1/2" x 46)	25	$150.00	$130.50	AFA-PM-1075
SELECCION D'ORO #1 CONNECTICUT	(7" x 46)	25	$150.00	$130.50	AFA-PM-1038
SELECCION D'ORO CHURCHILL CT	(7-1/5" x 48)	25	$167.50	$145.72	AFA-PM-1080
CHURCHILL NATURAL	(7-1/5" x 48)	25	$167.50	$145.73	AFA-PM-1082
		10	—	$63.29	AFA-PM-1138
CHURCHILL MADURO	(7-1/5" x 48)	25	$167.50	$145.73	AFA-PM-1081
		10	—	$63.29	AFA-PM-1137
CHATEAU ROYAL SALUTE MAD.	(7-1/2" x 54)	10	$83.00	$72.21	AFA-PM-1055
CANONES PRESIDENTE NATURAL	(8-1/2" x 52)	20	$166.00	$144.42	AFA-PM-1070
		10	—	$77.21	AFA-PM-1130
CANONES PRESIDENTE MADURO	(8-1/2" x 52)	20	$166.00	$144.42	AFA-PM-1045
		10	—	$77.21	AFA-PM-1129

California residents please see back page for Prop 65 Warning.

A·FUENTE

THE REIGNING FAMILY OF PREMIUM CIGARS SINCE 1912

MAKER OF CIGAR AFICIONADO'S 2017
#1 CIGAR OF THE YEAR!

ARTURO FUENTE DON CARLOS

MEDIUM

Shape/size		Qty.	Dominican Rep. Comp.	Cameroon Wrapper ONLY	Item #
#4	(5-1/10" x 43)	25	$211.25	$179.57	ADA-PM-1020
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 50)	25	$250.00	$212.50	ADA-PM-1018
BELICOSO	(5-3/10" x 52)	25	$276.25	$234.82	ADA-PM-1021
#3	(5-1/2" x 44)	25	$230.00	$195.49	ADA-PM-1017
DBLE ROB.	(5-7/10" x 52)	25	$268.75	$228.44	ADA-PM-1022

SAVE UP TO $45.98

DUE TO LIMITED AVAILABILITY FROM THE MANUFACTURER, CERTAIN SIZES MAY TAKE LONGER TO SHIP.

Arturo Fuente cigars are known the world over for their excellence, because no one cultivates cigar filler and wrapper tobacco more scrupulously than Fuente. The Arturo Fuente line offers a medium-to-full bodied taste, with the celebrated Arturo Fuente Hemingway cigar series revealing a profile that's a tad mellower. Many of the cigars feature superbly sweet Cameroon leaves with only the most top-quality Connecticut-grown leaf used for maduros. Not many manufacturers have as esteemed a reputation in the cigar industry as Arturo Fuente, and if you've landed on this page, you have the opportunity to try every reason why.

ARTURO FUENTE CHATEAU SERIES SUN GROWN

MEDIUM

Shape/size		Qty.	Dominican Republic Compare	Ecuador Sungrown Wrapper ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/2" x 50)	20	$114.00	$99.18	9XA-PM-1011
		10	—	$54.59	9XA-PM-1024
QUEEN B FIGURADO	(5-1/2" x 52)	18	$121.50	$105.70	9XA-PM-1016
		5	—	$31.86	9XA-PM-1003
CUBAN BELICOSO	(5-7/10" x 50)	24	$164.40	$143.03	9XA-PM-1014
DOUBLE CHATEAU TORO	(6-7/10" x 50)	20	$137.00	$119.19	9XA-PM-1017
		5	—	$32.30	9XA-PM-1022
KING T CHURCHILL TUBOS	(7" x 49)	24	$232.80	$202.53	9XA-PM-1018
		4	—	$35.81	9XB-PM-1037
ROYAL SALUTE CHURCHILL	(7-1/2" x 54)	10	$83.00	$72.21	9XA-PM-1015
		5	—	$38.60	9XA-PM-1008

SERIE 1926 4-CIGAR SAMPLER

1 No. 6 Robusto (4-3/4" x 50)
1 No. 2 Robusto (5-1/2" x 52)
1 No. 9 Robusto (5-1/2" x 56)
1 No. 1 Toro (6-3/4" x 54)

ONLY $74.00

Natural K9DASST1-M-SP-1000
Maduro K9DASST1-SP-1000

Not eligible for FREE Shipping

NO. 88 5-CIGAR SAMPLER

1 Padrón 1964 Exclusivo (5-1/2" x 50)
1 Padrón 5000 (5-1/2" x 56)
1 Padrón 4000 (6-1/2" x 54)
1 Padrón 3000 (5-1/2" x 52)
1 Padrón 2000 (5" x 50)

ONLY $42.50

Natural K9CASST2-SP-1000
Maduro K9CASST2-M-SP-1000

Not eligible for FREE Shipping

FREE SHIPPING

on your ENTIRE ORDER with PADRÓN box purchase

A. PADRÓN 1964 ANIVERSARIO NATURAL

FULL	Nicaragua				Nicaraguan Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Qty.	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(4-1/2" x 46)	25	$250.00	K9E-PM-1037	5	$50.00	K9E-PM-1022
BELICOSO	(5" x 52)	25	$370.00	K9E-PM-1018	5	$74.00	K9E-PM-1005
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	25	$307.50	K9E-PM-1020	5	$61.50	K9E-PM-1014
CORONA	(6" x 42)	25	$270.00	K9E-PM-1055	5	$54.00	K9E-PM-1050
TORO	(6" x 54)	25	$400.00	K9E-PM-1023	5	$80.00	K9E-PM-1008
SUPERIOR	(6-1/2" x 42)	25	$282.50	K9E-PM-1033	5	$56.50	K9E-PM-1019
TORO	(6-1/2" x 46)	25	$305.00	K9E-PM-1054	5	$61.00	K9E-PM-1030
PYRAMIDE	(6-9/10" x 52)	25	$387.50	K9E-PM-1070	5	$77.50	K9E-PM-1082
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$360.00	K9E-PM-1024	5	$72.00	K9E-PM-1006

B. PADRÓN 1964 ANIVERSARIO MADURO

FULL	Nicaragua				Maduro Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Qty.	ONLY	Item #
PRINCIPE	(4-1/2" x 46)	25	$250.00	K9E-PM-1038	5	$50.00	K9E-PM-1040
BELICOSO	(5-" x 52)	25	$370.00	K9E-PM-1053	—	—	—
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	25	$307.50	K9E-PM-1067	5	$61.50	K9E-PM-1036
CORONA	(6-" x 42)	25	$270.00	K9E-PM-1061	5	$54.00	K9E-PM-1080
SUPERIOR	(6-1/2" x 42)	25	$282.50	K9E-PM-1042	5	$56.50	K9E-PM-1043
TORO	(6-1/2" x 46)	25	$305.00	K9E-PM-1056	5	$61.00	K9E-PM-1057
PYRAMIDE	(6-9/10" x 52)	25	$387.50	K9E-PM-1071	5	$77.50	K9E-PM-1083
CHURCHILL	(7-" x 50)	25	$360.00	K9E-PM-1062	5	$72.00	K9E-PM-1032

C. PADRÓN MADURO

MEDIUM	Nicaragua				Maduro Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Qty.	ONLY	Item #
2000 MADURO	(5" x 50)	26	$158.60	K9C-PM-1051	5	$30.50	K9C-PM-1012
3000	(5-1/2" x 52)	26	$179.40	K9C-PM-1056	5	$34.50	K9C-PM-1085
5000	(5-1/2" x 56)	26	$208.00	K9C-PM-1059	5	$40.00	K9C-PM-1022
7000	(6-1/5" x 60)	26	$231.40	K9C-PM-1061	5	$44.50	K9C-PM-1026
4000	(6-1/2" x 54)	26	$210.60	K9C-PM-1063	5	$40.50	K9C-PM-1020
AMBASSADOR	(6-9/10" x 42)	26	$153.40	K9C-PM-1067	5	$29.50	K9C-PM-1090
CHURCHILL	(6-9/10" x 46)	26	$176.80	K9C-PM-1069	5	$34.00	K9C-PM-1091
EXECUTIVE	(7-1/2" x 50)	26	$213.20	K9C-PM-1071	5	$41.00	K9C-PM-1092
MAGNUM	(9" x 50)	26	$270.40	K9C-PM-1038	5	$52.00	K9C-PM-1100

PADRÓN NATURAL *(Not Shown)*

MEDIUM	Nicaragua				Nicaraguan Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Qty.	ONLY	Item #
2000	(5" x 50)	26	$158.60	K9C-PM-1050	5	$30.50	K9C-PM-1001
3000	(5-1/2" x 52)	26	$179.40	K9C-PM-1055	5	$34.50	K9C-PM-1084
5000	(5-1/2" x 56)	26	$208.00	K9C-PM-1058	5	$40.00	K9C-PM-1019
7000	(6-1/5" x 60)	26	$231.40	K9C-PM-1060	5	$44.50	K9C-PM-1015
4000	(6-1/2" x 54)	26	$210.60	K9C-PM-1037	5	$40.50	K9C-PM-1009
AMBASSADOR	(6-9/10" x 42)	26	$153.40	K9C-PM-1066	5	$29.50	K9C-PM-1089
CHURCHILL	(6-9/10" x 46)	26	$176.80	K9C-PM-1068	5	$34.00	K9C-PM-1029
EXECUTIVE	(7-1/2" x 50)	26	$213.20	K9C-PM-1070	5	$41.00	K9C-PM-1017
MAGNUM	(9" x 50)	26	$270.40	K9C-PM-1039	5	$52.00	K9C-PM-1101

D. PADRON SERIE 1926 NATURAL

FULL Shape/size	Nicaragua	Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Nicaraguan Wrapper Qty.	ONLY	Item #
NO. 35	(4-" x 48)	24	$288.00	K9D-PM-1008	5	$60.00	K9D-PM-1010
NO. 6	(4-7/10" x 50)	24	$336.00	K9D-PM-1004	5	$70.00	K9D-PM-1021
NO. 9	(5-1/5" x 56)	24	$480.00	K9D-PM-1041	5	$100.00	K9D-PM-1017
NO. 47	(5-1/2" x 50)	24	$384.00	K9D-PM-1007	5	$80.00	K9D-PM-1001
NO. 2	(5-1/2" x 52)	24	$432.00	K9D-PM-1006	5	$90.00	K9D-PM-1003
NO. 1	(6-7/10" x 54)	24	$528.00	K9D-PM-1044	5	$110.00	K9D-PM-1013

PADRÓN SERIE 1926 MADURO *(Not Shown)*

FULL Shape/size	Nicaragua	Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Maduro Wrapper Qty.	ONLY	Item #
NO. 35	(4" x 48)	24	$288.00	K9D-PM-1039	5	$60.00	K9D-PM-1032
NO. 6	(4-7/10" x 50)	24	$336.00	K9D-PM-1040	5	$70.00	K9D-PM-1029
NO. 9	(5-1/5" x 56)	24	$480.00	K9D-PM-1042	5	$100.00	K9D-PM-1049
NO. 47	(5-1/2" x 50)	24	$384.00	K9D-PM-1030	5	$80.00	K9D-PM-1019
NO. 2	(5-1/2" x 52)	24	$432.00	K9D-PM-1043	5	$90.00	K9D-PM-1033
NO. 1	(6-7/10" x 54)	24	$528.00	K9D-PM-1045	5	$110.00	K9D-PM-1014

E. PADRÓN DÁMASO

SMOOTH / MEDIUM Shape/size	Nicaragua	Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Connecticut Wrapper Qty.	ONLY	Item #
NO. 12	(5" x 50)	20	$270.00	K9J-PM-1004	5	$67.50	K9J-PM-1003
NO. 32	(5-1/5" x 52)	20	$275.20	K9J-PM-1017	5	$68.75	K9J-PM-1015
NO. 8	(5-1/2" x 46)	20	$250.00	K9J-PM-1016	5	$62.50	K9J-PM-1013
NO. 15	(6" x 52)	20	$300.00	K9J-PM-1008	5	$75.00	K9J-PM-1001
NO. 34	(6" x 54)	20	$290.00	K9J-PM-1005	5	$72.50	K9J-PM-1007
NO. 17	(7" x 54)	20	$350.00	K9J-PM-1011	5	$87.50	K9J-PM-1010

F. PADRÓN FAMILY RESERVE MADURO

FULL Shape/size	Nicaragua	Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Maduro Wrapper Qty.	ONLY	Item #
NO. 50	(5" x 54)	10	$258.00	K9H-PM-1022	5	$129.00	K9H-PM-1008
NO. 85	(5-1/5" x 50)	10	$212.00	K9H-PM-1020	—	—	—
NO. 46	(5-1/2" x 56)	10	$271.00	K9H-PM-1021	5	$135.50	K9H-PM-1025
NO. 45	(6" x 52)	10	$271.00	K9H-PM-1011	5	$135.50	K9H-PM-1027
NO. 44	(6-1/5" x 52)	10	$321.00	K9H-PM-1019	5	$160.50	K9H-PM-1029

PADRÓN FAMILY RESERVE NATURAL *(Not Shown)*

FULL Shape/size	Nicaragua	Qty.	ONLY	Item #	Nicaraguan Wrapper Qty.	ONLY	Item #
NO. 50	(5-" x 54)	10	$258.00	K9H-PM-1014	5	$129.00	K9H-PM-1002
NO. 85	(5-1/5" x 50)	10	$212.00	K9H-PM-1017	5	$106.00	K9H-PM-1004
NO. 46	(5-1/2" x 56)	10	$271.00	K9H-PM-1018	5	$135.50	K9H-PM-1024
NO. 45	(6-" x 52)	10	$271.00	K9H-PM-1009	5	$135.50	K9H-PM-1026
NO. 44	(6-1/5" x 52)	10	$321.00	K9H-PM-1015	5	$160.50	K9H-PM-1028

1964 ANNIVERSARY 5-CIGAR SAMPLER

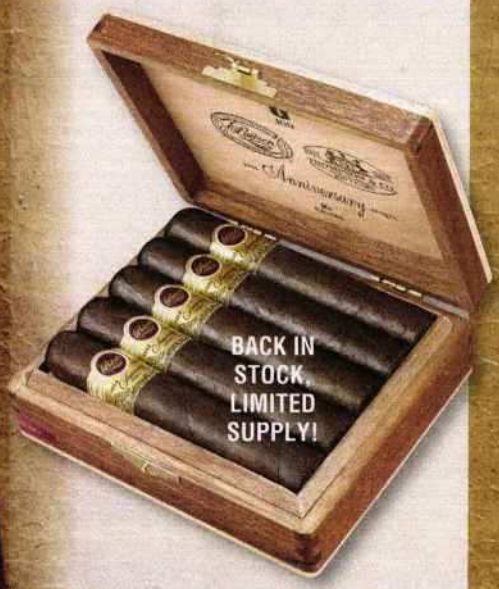
1 Padrón 1964 "A" (8-3/4" x 50)
1 Padrón 1964 Diplomatico (7" x 50)
1 Padrón 1964 Imperial (6" x 54)
1 Padrón 1964 Torpedo (6" x 52)
1 Padrón 1964 Exclusivo (5-1/2" x 50)

ONLY $94.10

Natural K9EASST1-SP-1000
Maduro K9EASST1-M-SP-1000

Not eligible for FREE Shipping

1964 CELEBRATES THOMPSON 100TH ANNIVERSARY



THOMPSON 100TH ANNIVERSARY

MEDIUM / FULL Shape/size	Nicaragua Wrp.	Qty.	Choice of Wrapper ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	Maduro	10	$169.95	K9K-PM-1000
(5" x 54)	Natural	10	$169.95	K9L-PM-1000

Eligible for FREE Shipping

LA GLORIA CUBANA

5 CIGARS FREE
with LA GLORIA CUBANA box purchase, while supplies last.

A. LA GLORIA CUBANA

FULL	Dominican Republic				Choice of Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Natural	Maduro
PETITE	(4-3/10" x 32)	100	$179.90	$136.20	LGA-PM-1107	—
WAVELL	(5" x 50)	25	$149.75	$115.02	LGA-PM-1038	LGA-PM-1026
		10	—	$51.01	LGA-PM-1056	LGA-PM-1018
CORONA GORDA	(6" x 52)	25	$179.75	$138.52	LGA-PM-1037	LGA-PM-1016
		10	—	$60.40	LGA-PM-1120	—
EXTRA	(6-1/5" x 46)	25	$167.25	$128.67	LGA-PM-1075	LGA-PM-1061
		10	—	$56.47	LGA-PM-1121	—
TORPEDO NO. 1	(6-1/2" x 52)	25	$232.25	$180.11	LGA-PM-1039	—
		10	—	$77.04	LGA-PM-1122	—
EN CEDRO	(6-7/10" x 48)	14	$111.86	$86.46	LGA-PM-1108	—
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$179.75	$138.52	LGA-PM-1060	LGA-PM-1023
		10	—	$60.40	LGA-PM-1102	LGA-PM-1123
CHARLEMAGNE	(7-3/10" x 54)	25	$207.25	$160.42	LGA-PM-1079	LGA-PM-1078
		10	—	$69.17	LGA-PM-1124	—

B. LA GLORIA CUBANA SERIE R

FULL	Dominican Republic				Choice of Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Natural	Maduro
NO. 3	(4-1/2" x 56)	24	$160.56	$127.79	LGH-PM-1026	—
NO. 4	(4-9/10" x 52)	24	$179.76	$145.78	LGH-PM-1028	LGH-PM-1027
NO. 5	(5-1/2" x 54)	24	$198.96	$161.63	LGH-PM-1029	LGH-PM-1008
		10	—	$72.34	LGH-PM-1037	LGH-PM-1003
BELICOSO	(5-7/10" x 56)	24	$215.76	$170.16	LGH-PM-1030	—
NO. 6	(5-9/10" x 60)	24	$215.76	$175.34	LGH-PM-1031	LGH-PM-1009
		10	—	$78.06	LGH-PM-1048	LGH-PM-1047
NO. 7	(7" x 58)	24	$251.76	$205.21	LGH-PM-1023	LGH-PM-1018
		10	—	$90.50	LGH-PM-1041	LGH-PM-1040

C. LA GLORIA CUBANA ESTELI

MEDIUM / FULL	Nicaragua		Nicaraguan Jalapa Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/2" x 52)	25	$124.75	$99.80	LGV-PM-1001
TORO	(5-1/2" x 54)	25	$149.75	$119.80	LGV-PM-1002
GIGANTE	(6-1/5" x 60)	20	$139.80	$111.84	LGV-PM-1000

D. LA GLORIA CUBANA COLECCIÓN RESERVA

MEDIUM / FULL	Dominican Republic		Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 54)	20	$155.80	$124.64	LG7-PM-1000
TORPEDO	(6" x 54)	20	$169.80	$135.84	LG7-PM-1001
PRESIDENTE	(7-1/2" x 54)	20	$185.80	$148.64	LG7-PM-1002

E. LA GLORIA CUBANA SERIE R BLACK

FULL	Nicaragua		Nicaraguan Jalapa Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
NO. 60	(6" x 60)	18	$134.82	$89.69	LGJ-PM-1004
NO. 64	(6-1/5" x 64)	18	$142.02	$95.45	LGJ-PM-1010
NO. 58	(6-7/10" x 58)	18	$140.22	$92.00	LGJ-PM-1011

F. LA GLORIA CUBANA SERIE N

MEDIUM / FULL	Dominican Republic		Oscuro Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
JSB	(5-1/2" x 54)	24	$191.76	$119.26	LGD-PM-1008
GENEROSO	(5-7/10" x 49)	24	$191.76	$121.39	LGD-PM-1011
ROJO	(6-1/2" x 46)	24	$203.76	$126.88	LGD-PM-1009
GLORIOSO	(6-1/2" x 58)	24	$220.56	$139.98	LGD-PM-1012

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Smooth Assortment of Churchills

This bulbous sampler offers you quality and freshness at a cost most can afford. Don't let the generous price point fool you, however. This assortment offers you premium Dominican smokes from five well-respected names that will satisfy bankroll and your taste buds. For those who enjoy quantity and variety, this sampler is perfectly tailored for the smooth to medium-bodied enthusiast.

JUST $1.25 Per Stick

DOMINICAN CHURCHILL SAMPLER

- 4 Don Osvaldo Maduro
- 4 Don Osvaldo Natural
- 4 Don Lugo Maduro
- 4 Don Lugo Natural
- 4 Don Elias Maduro
- 4 Don Elias Natural
- 4 Don Augusto Maduro
- 4 Don Augusto Natural
- 4 Don Churchill Maduro
- 4 Don Churchill Natural

Compare $135.00

ONLY $49.95

TCASST127-2-SP-1000

"I Make It a Rule Never to Smoke While I'm Sleeping"

Mark Twain once said, "It's not the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog." While this quote has nothing to do with cigars, it's a perfect adage in describing the success of the Mark Twain cigar brand. Relatively unknown upon its release, Mark Twain proved itself to be one of the most flavorful smooth-bodied cigars on the market. With its sibling, Mark Twain Memoir, making noise in the full-bodied spectrum as well, this brand is continuously picking up steam in the industry.

A. MARK TWAIN MEMOIR

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
NO. 2	(6" x 60)	20	$140.00	$59.95	MTX-PM-1002
NO. 3	(6-1/5" x 64)	20	$160.00	$64.95	MTX-PM-1005
NO. 1	(6-7/10" x 58)	20	$150.00	$69.95	MTX-PM-1006

B. MARK TWAIN

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
NO. 1	(7" x 50)	20	$140.00	$59.95	MTW-PM-1006
NO. 2	(7-1/2" x 52)	20	$150.00	$64.95	MTW-PM-1000
NO. 3	(8" x 54)	20	$160.00	$69.95	MTW-PM-1013

10 CIGARS FREE

with MARK TWAIN box purchase, while supplies last.

$70 RETAIL VALUE

ALEC BRADLEY

5 CIGARS & HUMIDOR FREE

with ALEC BRADLEY box purchase, while supplies last.

$124.45 COMBINED RETAIL VALUE

A. ALEC BRADLEY PRENSADO LOST ART

FULL — Honduras — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$198.00	$168.30	PRC-PM-1010
GRAN TORO	(6-1/5" x 52)	20	$219.00	$186.15	PRC-PM-1012
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$250.00	$212.50	PRC-PM-1014

B. ALEC BRADLEY PRENSADO

FULL — Honduras — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO COROJO	(5" x 50)	20	$198.00	$168.20	PRB-PM-1003
CORONA GORDA	(5-3/5" x 46)	20	$190.00	$161.50	PRB-PM-1016
GRAN TORO COROJO	(6" x 54)	20	$250.00	$212.50	PRB-PM-1004
TORPEDO COROJO	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$250.00	$212.50	PRB-PM-1017
CHURCHILL COROJO	(7" x 48)	20	$219.00	$188.70	PRB-PM-1015
		10	—	$112.52	PRB-PM-1021

C. ALEC BRADLEY TEMPUS

FULL — Honduras — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TERRA NOVA	(5" x 50)	20	$159.80	$143.82	TMP-PM-1006
CENTURIA	(7" x 49)	20	$184.00	$165.60	TMP-PM-1015

D. ALEC BRADLEY TEMPUS NICARAGUA

MEDIUM — Honduras — Nicaraguan Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TERRA NOVO	(5" x 50)	20	$159.80	$143.82	TMN-PM-1006
MEDIUS 6	(6" x 52)	20	$174.00	$156.60	TMN-PM-1007
CENTURIA	(7" x 49)	20	$184.00	$165.60	TMN-PM-1009

E. ALEC BRADLEY MAXX

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Nicaraguan Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
THE FIX	(5" x 58)	20	$136.00	$122.40	7YA-PM-1015
		10	—	$64.00	7YA-PM-1020
THE CULTURE	(6" x 54)	20	$142.00	$127.80	7YA-PM-1000
		10	—	$39.95	7YA-PM-1024
GORDO	(6-3/10" x 60)	20	$154.00	$138.60	7YA-PM-1016

F. ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET

MEDIUM — Honduras — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/5" x 52)	22	$172.62	$155.35	ABB-PM-1016
TORO	(6" x 50)	22	$194.06	$174.65	ABB-PM-1013
GORDO	(6" x 60)	22	$209.00	$188.10	ABB-PM-1014
TORPEDO	(6-1/10" x 54)	22	$198.00	$178.20	ABB-PM-1012
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	22	$198.00	$178.20	ABB-PM-1017

G. ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET ESTELI

FULL — Nicaragua — Nicaraguan Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	22	$172.62	$155.35	ABU-PM-1010
GORDO	(6" x 60)	22	$209.00	$188.10	ABU-PM-1012
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	22	$198.00	$178.20	ABU-PM-1014

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New! Bahia

A. BAHIA BLU

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Corojo Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
B500	(5" x 50)	20	$130.00	$44.95	BBB-PM-1008
E652	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$150.00	$49.95	BBB-PM-1010
L600	(6" x 50)	20	$140.00	$47.95	BBB-PM-1009
U700	(7" x 50)	20	$150.00	$49.95	BBB-PM-1011

B. BAHIA MADURO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PANCHOS	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$140.00	$49.95	BMB-PM-1007
NO. 2	(6" x 54)	20	$150.00	$54.95	BMB-PM-1006
CORONA GIGANTE	(7" x 54)	20	$150.00	$54.95	BMB-PM-1008

C. BAHIA BRAZIL

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Brazilian Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 56)	20	$140.00	$49.95	BBR-PM-1014
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$145.00	$54.95	BBR-PM-1009
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$160.00	$59.95	BBR-PM-1010
TORPEDO	(6-1/5" x 54)	20	$150.00	$59.95	BBR-PM-1011

D. BAHIA TRINIDAD

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Criollo Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PANCHO	(5-1/2" x 52)	20	$140.00	$49.95	BRB-PM-1007
NO. 2	(6-1/2" x 54)	20	$150.00	$54.95	BRB-PM-1004
CORONA GIGANTE	(7" x 54)	20	$150.00	$54.95	BRB-PM-1008

SAVE UP TO 67%

AJ Fernandez at his best

AVE MARIA DIVINIA

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Sun Grown Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
TORO TUBO	(6" x 54)	12	$228.00	$169.99	$159.99	AVD-PM-1003
TORO TUBO	(6" x 54)	4	—	—	$69.99	AVD-PM-1005

AVE MARIA

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
CRUSADER	(5" x 52)	20	$152.50	$119.99	$109.99	AVE-PM-1001
MORNING STAR	(5" x 58)	10	$102.50	$74.95	$64.95	AVE-PM-1037
LION HEART	(5-1/2" x 55)	20	$173.00	$129.95	$119.95	AVE-PM-1031
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR	(6" x 48)	20	$154.00	$119.99	$109.99	AVE-PM-1030
ST. GEORGE	(6" x 54)	20	$192.00	$149.99	$139.99	AVE-PM-1005
BARBAROSSA	(7" x 48)	20	$173.00	$134.99	$124.99	AVE-PM-1017
HOLY GRAIL	(7-1/10" x 58)	8	—	—	$79.95	AVE-PM-1039
CHARLEMAGNE	(7-1/2" x 54)	20	$218.00	$169.99	$159.99	AVE-PM-1018

AVE MARIA ARGENTUM

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-4/5" x 52)	10	$102.50	$79.99	$69.99	AVJ-PM-1018
MORNING STAR	(5" x 58)	10	$109.00	$84.99	$74.99	AVJ-PM-1015
DBL ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 54)	10	$115.00	$89.99	$79.99	AVJ-PM-1019
GORDO	(6" x 60)	10	$121.00	$94.99	$84.99	AVJ-PM-1007
GORDO EXTRA	(7" x 58)	10	$128.00	$99.99	$89.99	AVJ-PM-1020

AVE MARIA IMMACULATA

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	WAS	SALE	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$153.00	$119.99	$109.99	AVI-PM-1002
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$172.00	$134.99	$124.99	AVI-PM-1004
BELICOSO	(6" x 54)	20	$192.00	$149.99	$139.99	AVI-PM-1010
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$212.00	$164.99	$154.99	AVI-PM-1013
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$192.00	$149.99	$139.99	AVI-PM-1016

ACID

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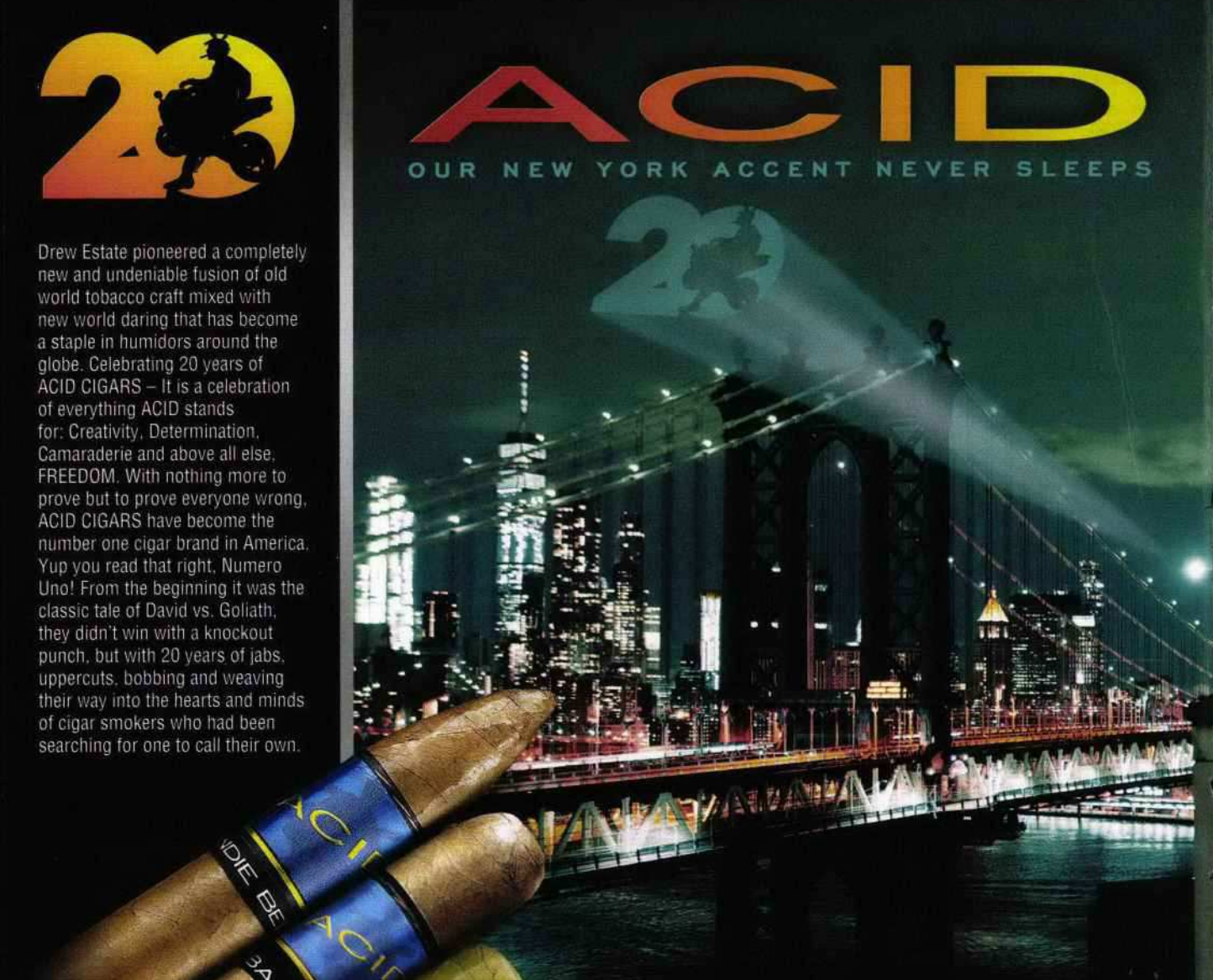


ACID CIGARS BY DREW ESTATE

SMOOTH / MEDIUM		Nicaragua			Assorted Wrappers	
Shape/size		Wrp.	Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
C-NOTES	(3-7/10" x 20)	Conn.	100	$127.74	$99.06	AIA-PM-1080
BLONDIE	(4" x 38)	Candela	40	$220.00	$180.32	AIA-PM-1079
		Conn.	40	$220.00	$180.32	AIA-PM-1077
		Maduro	40	$220.00	$180.32	AIA-PM-1076
		Sumatra	40	$220.00	$180.32	AIA-PM-1111
NASTY	(4" x 52)	Maduro	24	$178.32	$146.24	AIA-PM-1066
WAFE	(4" x 46)	Sumatra	28	$144.76	$115.81	AIA-PM-1108
EARTHINESS	(5" x 42)	Sumatra	24	$178.32	$146.24	AIA-PM-1068
1400CC	(5" x 50)	Natural	18	$204.84	$167.90	AIA-PM-1055
ATOM	(5" x 50)	Maduro	24	$230.40	$188.88	AIA-PM-1020
LIQUID	(5" x 50)	Conn.	24	$230.40	$188.88	AIA-PM-1021
		—	10	—	$81.80	AIA-PM-1035
BLONDIE BELICOSO	(5" x 54)	Conn.	24	$200.34	$164.28	AIA-PM-1072
ONE	(5" x 54)	Cameroon	24	$236.40	$193.80	AIA-PM-1069
KUBA KUBA	(5" x 54)	Candela	24	$236.40	$193.80	AIA-PM-1073
		Maduro	24	$236.40	$193.80	AIA-PM-1043
		Sumatra	24	$236.40	$193.80	AIA-PM-1070
DEEP DISH	(5" x 58)	Sumatra	24	$242.40	$198.72	AIA-PM-1074
TOAST	(6" x 50)	Maduro	24	$232.32	$190.52	AIA-PM-1058
		—	10	—	$82.45	AIA-PM-1001
KUBA DELUXE	(6" x 50)	Sumatra	10	$120.00	$98.38	AIA-PM-1062
KINDRED SPIRIT	(6" x 54)	Conn.	10	$125.95	$79.95	A5C-PM-1003
KINDRED SPIRIT	(6" x 54)	Maduro	10	$125.95	$81.80	A5C-PM-1001
EXTRA ORDINARY LARRY	(6" x 60)	Conn.	10	$132.00	$108.22	AIA-PM-1038
KUBA GRANDE	(6" x 60)	Sumatra	10	$132.00	$108.22	AIA-PM-1061
COLD INFUSION	(6-7/10" x 44)	Conn.	24	$204.24	$167.56	AIA-PM-1064
ROAM	(7" x 48)	Conn.	10	$126.00	$103.30	AIA-PM-1048

10 CIGARS FREE

with DREW ESTATE box purchase (on pages 40-41), while supplies last.

$103.70 RETAIL VALUE

TABAK ESPECIAL COFFEE INFUSED

is the Nicaraguan experience at its finest: a superior blend of premium Nicaraguan fillers infused with the essences of rich Nicaraguan fair-trade coffee. Available in Connecticut Shade (Dulce) or Maduro (Negra) wrappers.

TABAK ESPECIAL

MEDIUM		Nicaragua			Choice of Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Connecticut	Maduro
CORONA	(4-7/10" x 46)	24	$190.34	$156.08	TEB-PM-1016	TEB-PM-1029
BELICOSO	(5" x 54)	24	$222.34	$182.32	TEB-PM-1030	TEB-PM-1024
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	24	$218.34	$179.04	TEB-PM-1022	TEB-PM-1023
TORO	(6" x 52)	24	$232.34	$190.52	TEB-PM-1017	TEB-PM-1018

TABAK ESPECIAL LIMITED *(Not Shown)*

MEDIUM	Nicaragua		Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
RED EYE	(4-1/2" x 54)	21	$195.00	$149.99	TEC-PM-1006
CAFÉ CON LECHE	(5-1/2" x 54)	21	$195.00	$149.99	TEC-PM-1007

LARUTAN

cigars by Drew Estate are crafted using the finest Nicaraguan leaf combined with traditional black tobaccos from Syria, Turkey, St. James Parish and other exotic locales. They have their own distinctive blends of tobacco for a unique and satisfying cigar that is medium-bodied with a Natural wrapper.

LARUTAN BY DREW ESTATE

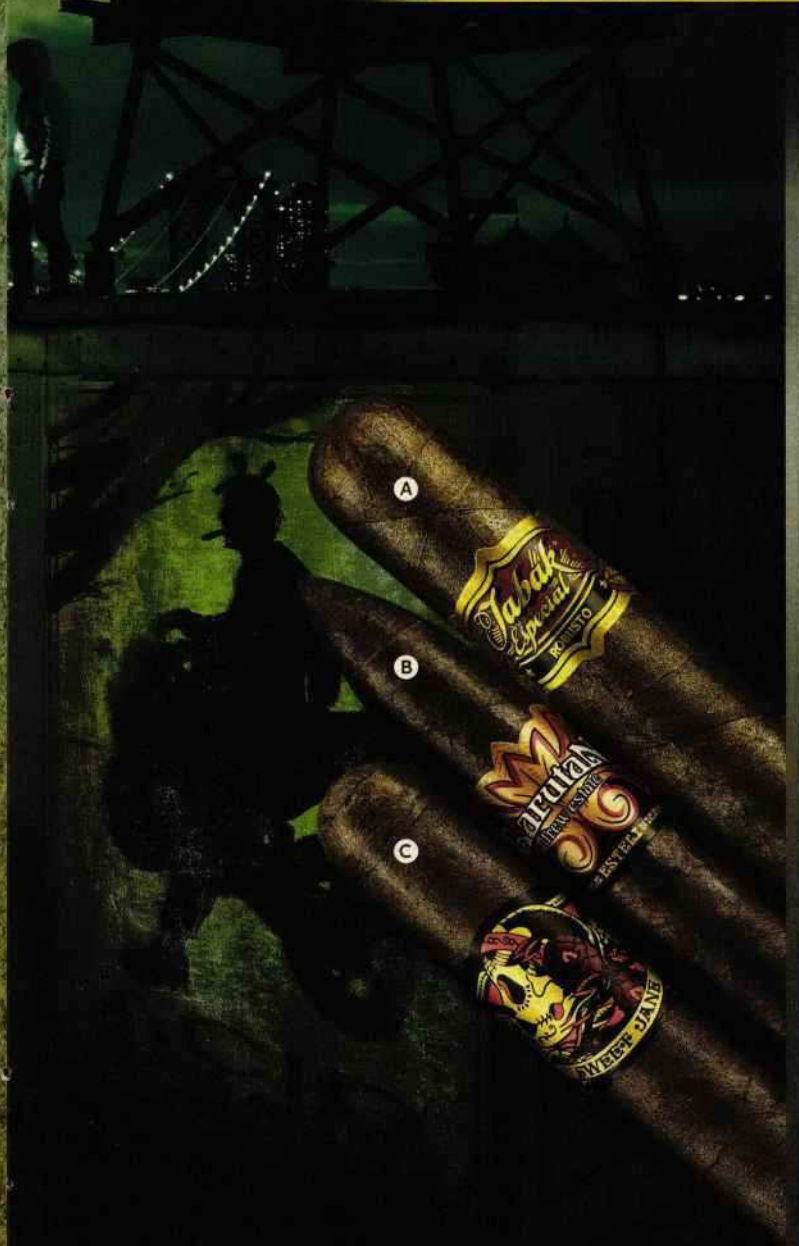
MEDIUM	Nicaragua		Cameroon Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
JUCY LUCY	(3" x 38)	40	$189.90	$155.72	A6C-PM-1021
CIGARILLOS	(3" x 38)	10	—	$42.00	A6C-PM-1035
DIRT	(4" x 43)	24	$158.40	$129.84	A6C-PM-1012
CORONA	(4" x 43)	10	—	$60.00	A6C-PM-1036
BIG JUCY	(5" x 46)	24	$178.34	$146.24	A6C-PM-1024
CORONA	(5" x 46)	10	—	$67.00	A6C-PM-1037
BIG DIRT TORPEDO	(5" x 54)	24	$194.34	$159.36	A6C-PM-1002
ROOT	(5" x 55)	24	$218.34	$179.04	A6C-PM-1018
NDB	(7" x 44)	24	$210.34	$172.48	A6C-PM-1015

DEADWOOD

Drew Estate has never been the type that settles for conventional. That's why they teamed up with Deadwood Tobacco Co. to release these medium to full-bodied cigars that are made by hand in Nicaragua using ultra-premium tobaccos.

DEADWOOD TOBACCO CO.

MEDIUM / FULL		Nicaragua		Maduro Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CRAZY ALICE	(4" x 52)	10	$77.50	$60.99	DW1-PM-1014
CORONA	(5" x 46)	24	$180.00	$159.36	DW1-PM-1008
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	10	$91.00	$73.78	DW1-PM-1006



FOR SINGLE STICK SELECTIONS VISIT thompsoncigar.com/singles

LIVE CHAT

NEED HELP? Go to thompsoncigar.com to chat live with us
Available MON.-FRI. 9AM-6:30PM E.T.

Double Down

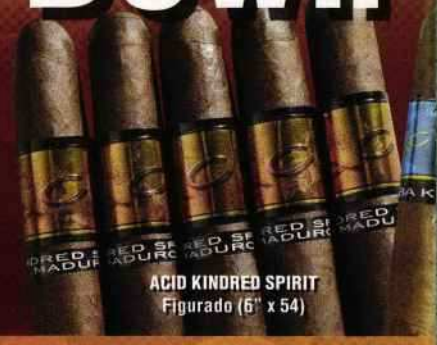
There's no way to discover your next favorite cigar unless you try something new, right? That's why Double Down is perfect. Thompson Cigar expertly pairs two different cigars so you can get what you know you love and try what may be your next new love. You'll receive two different five packs that complement each other and make an ideal combo. Come on... live a little. Branch out and make your next order a Double Down, only from Thompson Cigar.

MACANUDO GOLD
Crystal
(5-1/2" x 50)

MONTECRISTO WHITE LABEL
Especial No. 3
(5-1/2" x 44)

Connecticut Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $91.65
ONLY $49.95
DDASST01-SP-1000

90+ RATED CONNECTICUT COMBO



ACID KINDRED SPIRIT
Figurado (6" x 54)

OLIVA SERIE V MELANIO
Robusto (5" x 52)

ROCKY PATEL ROYALE
Toro (6-1/2" x 54)

Sumatra Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $101.45
ONLY $54.95
DDASST02-SP-1000

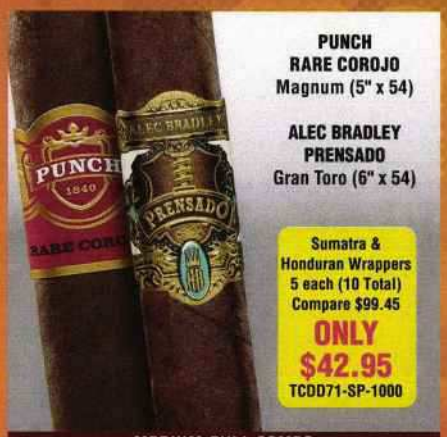
94-RATED SUMATRA COMBO

GURKHA TYPHOON
Gordito (4" x 60)

NUB BY OLIVA
Rothschild
(4" x 60)

Connecticut Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $92.91
ONLY $32.95
TCDD2-SP-1000

CONNECTICUT COMBO



PUNCH RARE COROJO
Magnum (5" x 54)

ALEC BRADLEY PRENSADO
Gran Toro (6" x 54)

Sumatra & Honduran Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $99.45
ONLY $42.95
TCDD71-SP-1000

MEDIUM-FULL COMBO

MACANUDO CAFÉ
Hyde Park
(5-1/2" x 49)

PERDOMO RESERVE CHAMP. CONNECTICUT
Robusto (5" x 54)

Connecticut Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $77.95
ONLY $42.95
TCDD5-SP-1000

CONNECTICUT COMBO

ALEC BRADLEY BLACK MARKET
Churchill (7" x 50)

LA AROMA DE CUBA
Robusto (5" x 54)

Maduro Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $69.47
ONLY $42.95
TCDD6-SP-1000

MADURO COMBO

BRICK HOUSE MIGHTY MIGHTY
Gordo
(6-1/4" x 60)

ONYX NIGHTFALL
Half Past (6" x 54)

Maduro Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $68.75
ONLY $42.95
TCDD7-SP-1000

MADURO COMBO

OLIVA CONN. RESERVE
Robusto (5" x 50)

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL
Robusto (5" x 52)

Connecticut Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $68.99
ONLY $47.95
TCDD17-SP-1000

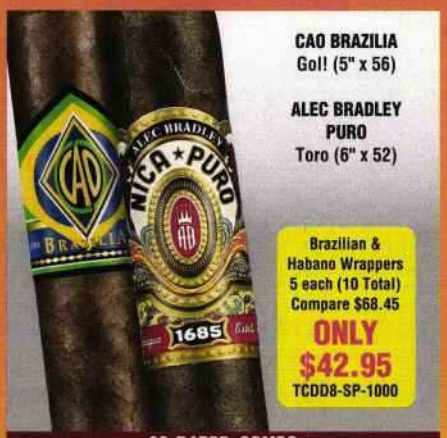
CONNECTICUT COMBO

MONTECRISTO PILOTICO
Toro (6-1/4" x 50)

COHIBA NICARAGUA
Robusto (5" x 50)

Ecuadorian & Nicaraguan Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $156.08
ONLY $52.95
TCDD22-SP-1000

MEDIUM COMBO



CAO BRAZILIA
Gol! (5" x 56)

ALEC BRADLEY PURO
Toro (6" x 52)

Brazilian & Habano Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $68.45
ONLY $42.95
TCDD8-SP-1000

90-RATED COMBO

 1-800-237-2559

California residents please see back page for Prop 65 Warning.

MON.-FRI. 7AM-10PM SAT.-SUN. 8AM-7PM E.T.

Battle of the Brands™

ACID EDITION COMBO

New!

Maduro & Sumatra Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $112.23

ONLY $39.95

TCDD78-SP-1000

ACID KUBA KUBA
Robusto (5" x 54)

New!

AB BLACK MARKET ESTELI
Robusto (5" x 52)

ROCKY PATEL 15TH ANNIV.
Robusto (5" x 50)

Nicaraguan & Ecuadorian Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $91.00

ONLY $47.95

TCDD76-SP-1000

TOP 25 OF 2018 COMBO

New!

OLIVA SERIE V MELANIO
Robusto (5" x 52)

MY FATHER NO. 1
Robusto
(5-1/4" x 52)

Sumatra & Habano Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $99.62

ONLY $54.95

TCDD79-SP-1000

BEST OF NICARAGUA COMBO

New!

MONTECRISTO PLATINUM
Toro (6" x 50)

ROCKY PATEL SUN GROWN
Toro (6-1/2" x 52)

Habano & Sumatra Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $98.60

ONLY $43.95

TCDD81-SP-1000

MEDIUM-FULL COMBO

New!

MARK TWAIN NO. 1
Churchill (7" x 50)

MARK TWAIN MEMOIR
No. 2 (6" x 60)

Connecticut & Maduro Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $70.00

ONLY $22.95

TCDD80-SP-1000

MARK TWAIN COMBO

New!

COHIBA RED DOT
Robusto (5" x 49)

MONTECRISTO CLASSIC
Toro (6" x 52)

Cameroon & Connecticut Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $162.95

ONLY $62.95

TCDD77-SP-1000

BEST OF 5-PACK FEVER COMBO

New!

5 VEGAS GOLD ANNIVERSARY
Robusto (5" x 50)

GRAYWOLF WHITE LABEL
Churchill (7" x 52)

Connecticut Wrapper
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $103.75

ONLY $39.95

TCDD82-SP-1000

CONNECTICUT KINGS COMBO

New!

CAO FLATHEAD
Carb 660 (6" x 60)

AVE MARIA
The Lion (6" x 48)

Connecticut Broadleaf & Habano Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $91.20

ONLY $34.95

TCDD83-SP-1000

BOX-PRESSED COMBO

New!

PUNCH DIABLO
Brute
(6-1/4" x 60)

MAN O' WAR RUINATION
Robusto #2
(6" x 60)

Sumatra Oscuro & Habano Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $68.79

ONLY $29.95

TCDD84-SP-1000

BIG & BOLD COMBO

New!

LA PALINA PALEY'S VAULT
Toro (6" x 50)

LA PALINA NICARAGUAN
Robusto (5" x 52)

Corojo & Oscuro Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $91.24

ONLY $34.95

TCDD85-SP-1000

LA PALINA COMBO

New!

CARLOS TORAÑO EXODUS 1959
Robusto (5" x 50)

DON PEPÍN GARCÍA BLACK LABEL 1979
Robusto (5" x 50)

Brazilian & Corojo Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $79.45

ONLY $37.95

TCDD86-SP-1000

BEST OF THE BOUTIQUES COMBO

New!

ROCKY PATEL DECADE
Robusto (5" x 50)

ALEC BRADLEY PRENSADO
Robusto (5" x 50)

Sumatra & Corojo Wrappers
5 each (10 Total)
Compare $102.25

ONLY $47.95

TCDD87-SP-1000

95+ RATED COMBO

5 Vegas offers an array of strengths and flavors suitable for any palate. From the smooth-bodied 5 Vegas Gold to the ultra-balanced 5 Vegas Classic, these cigars are championed by the skillful hands of industry legend Nestor Plasencia. With the Series 'A' leading the charge in the maduro spectrum as well, there's something for everybody when it comes to 5 Vegas.

A. 5 VEGAS GOLD ANNIVERSARY

SMOOTH / MEDIUM Nicaragua Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$190.00	$139.99	5GE-PM-1001
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$200.00	$149.99	5GE-PM-1002

B. 5 VEGAS CLASSIC

MEDIUM Nicaragua Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	25	$106.25	$74.99	5VA-PM-1019
TORPEDO	(6" x 54)	20	$108.00	$74.99	5VA-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	25	$125.00	$87.99	5VA-PM-1033

C. 5 VEGAS GOLD

SMOOTH / MEDIUM Honduras Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$95.00	$65.00	5GA-PM-1011
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$105.00	$69.00	5GA-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$110.00	$75.00	5GA-PM-1014

D. 5 VEGAS SERIE 'A' ARTISAN MADURO

MEDIUM / FULL Nicaragua Costa Rican Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ARTISAN	(5" x 52)	20	$115.00	$79.95	5XA-PM-1004
APOTHEOSIS	(5-1/2" x 55)	20	$115.00	$84.95	5XA-PM-1041
ARCHETYPE	(6" x 50)	20	$120.00	$84.95	5XA-PM-1006
ALPHA	(6" x 52)	20	$122.00	$84.95	5XA-PM-1019
APOCALYPSE	(6" x 58)	20	$130.00	$89.95	5XA-PM-1023
APEX	(6-1/2" x 52)	20	$122.00	$84.95	5XA-PM-1017
APOSTLE	(7" x 50)	20	$127.50	$89.95	5XA-PM-1018

VICTOR SINCLAIR Aged Dominican

One of the most popular handmades by master blender José Dominguez, Aged Dominican delivers a smooth smoking experience in two wrapper varieties.

VICTOR SINCLAIR AGED DOMINICAN

SMOOTH / MEDIUM Dominican Rep. Various Wrappers

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORO MADURO	(6" x 50)	20	$59.95	$49.95	VSM-PM-1001
TORO CONNECTICUT	(6" x 50)	20	$59.95	$49.95	VSN-PM-1001

PDR VALUE LINE RESERVE

SELECT FROM 4 DIFFERENT WRAPPERS

PDR owner Abe Flores knows you shouldn't have to refinance the mortgage to enjoy one of his premium handmade cigars. The PDR Value Line delivers exceptional quality at a working man's price point with a bevy of different sizes, strengths, and wrapper types. So whether you like a smooth and silky Connecticut, a hearty Habano, a slightly sweet Cameroon, or a bold Maduro, PDR Value Line has got you covered. Or if you are interested in giving them all a try, check out with the PDR Value Line Reserve Toro Sampler. Whichever way you choose, you'll have the option to buy more and save more!

BUY MORE, SAVE MORE

2-FER (50 Cigars)
ONLY $34.97 Per Bundle

3-FER (75 Cigars)
ONLY $32.98 Per Bundle

4-FER (100 Cigars)
ONLY $29.99 Per Bundle

PDR VALUE LINE RESERVE

MEDIUM		Dominican Republic			Choice of Wrapper			
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Cameroon	Connecticut	Habano	Maduro
TORO	(6" x 50)	25	$60.00	$39.95	PR8-PM-1002	PR7-PM-1004	PR0-PM-1002	PR9-PM-1002
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	25	$61.00	$39.95	PR8-PM-1003	PR7-PM-1002	PR0-PM-1004	PR9-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$62.00	$39.95	PR8-PM-1000	PR7-PM-1000	PR0-PM-1000	PR9-PM-1000

250 BONUS CLUB ELIGIBLE

PDR VALUE LINE RESERVE 20 TORO SAMPLER

5 PDR Value Line Reserve Toro Maduro (6" x 52)
5 PDR Value Line Reserve Toro Connecticut (6" x 52)
5 PDR Value Line Reserve Toro Cameroon (6" x 52)
5 PDR Value Line Reserve Toro Habano (6" x 52)

Compare $60.00
ONLY $39.95
PRASST01-SP-1000

PDR VALUE LINE RESERVE 20 TORO SAMPLER

BUY MORE, SAVE MORE

2-FER	3-FER	4-FER
Compare $54	Compare $162	Compare $216
$34.97	$32.98	$29.99
Per Bundle	Per Bundle	Per Bundle

Pay online with PayPal

MONTECRISTO

ICONIC SAMPLER FREE

with MONTECRISTO box purchase, while supplies last.

$69.99 RETAIL VALUE

Plus

SAVE UP TO 59%

RANK #10 Cigar Aficionado 2018 TOP 25

Montecristo is one of the great names in premium cigars. Some would say the greatest. And it's not hype. AJ Fernandez became famous by fulfilling carefully cultivated and aged tobaccos' the potential of extraordinary cigar making. This puro, the Nicaragua, is his fifth addition to the incomparable "Core Line" of Montecristos. It's exciting, sure. Premium, of course. Crafted in the Cuban tradition, absolutely. This baby is 100% pure Nicaraguan from the nearly vein-free wrapper to the impeccably aged inner long-fillers. It has classic Nicaraguan spiciness with alluring hints of coffee, caramel, and leather.

A. MONTECRISTO NICARAGUA

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Nicaraguan Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	20	$244.00	$219.60	MTD-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$254.00	$228.80	MTD-PM-1001
NO. 2	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$263.60	$237.20	MTD-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 56)	20	$284.40	$256.00	MTD-PM-1003

B. MONTECRISTO EPIC CRAFT CURED

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Nicaraguan Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	10	$122.10	$109.89	WMG-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 52)	10	$131.30	$118.17	WMG-PM-1001
BELICOSO	(6-1/10" x 52)	10	$135.40	$121.86	WMG-PM-1002

BUILT ON A CUBAN LEGACY.

C. MONTECRISTO ESPADA

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
RICASSO	(5" x 54)	10	$122.70	$110.40	MTJ-PM-1005
		5	—	$57.70	MTJ-PM-1002
GUARD	(6" x 50)	10	$128.00	$115.20	MTJ-PM-1004
QUILLION	(7" x 56)	10	$136.10	$122.40	MTJ-PM-1008

D. MONTE BY MONTECRISTO

MEDIUM / FULL — Dom. Rep. — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
CONDE	(5-1/2" x 48)	16	$166.88	$150.24	MTH-PM-1010
		10	—	$49.95	MTH-PM-1017
GORDO	(6" x 60)	16	$176.80	$159.20	MTH-PM-1009
TORO	(6" x 52)	16	$170.56	$152.99	MTH-PM-1011
JACOPO #2	(6-1/10"x54)	16	$172.32	$155.04	MTH-PM-1012
		5	—	$50.25	MTH-PM-1005

E. MONTECRISTO WHITE LABEL

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Ecu. Conn. Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROTHCHILDE	(5" x 52)	27	$312.40	$281.07	WMA-PM-1025
		5	—	$54.55	WMA-PM-1001
COURT	(5-1/2" x 44)	15	$163.50	$147.15	WMA-PM-1024
NO. 2	(6-1/10" x 52)	27	$435.51	$391.77	WMA-PM-1017
NO. 2	(6-1/10" x 52)	10	$161.30	$150.10	WMA-PM-1035
NO. 1	(6-3/5" x 44)	27	$291.33	$262.17	WMA-PM-1027

F. MONTE BY AJ FERNANDEZ

MEDIUM / FULL — Nica. — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-1/5" x 54)	20	$233.20	$209.80	MTR-PM-1003
CORONA	(5" x 44)	20	$226.00	$204.00	MTR-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 55)	20	$237.40	$213.80	MTR-PM-1001
BELICOSO	(6-1/10"x54)	20	$242.80	$218.60	MTR-PM-1002

G. MONTECRISTO CASINO

SMOOTH — Dom. Rep. — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	10	$195.00	$79.95	MTV-PM-1002
TORO	(6" x 50)	10	$205.00	$84.95	MTV-PM-1001
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	10	$215.00	$89.95	MTV-PM-1000

H. MONTECRISTO CLASSIC

SMOOTH — Dom. Rep. — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$244.60	$220.20	MTC-PM-1002
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$258.00	$232.20	MTC-PM-1005
TORPEDO	(6-1/10"x52)	20	$334.00	$300.60	MTC-PM-1012
CHURCHILL	(7" x 54)	20	$283.80	$255.40	MTC-PM-1013

I. MONTECRISTO CLUB SELECTION

MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$224.20	$154.95	MTZ-PM-1002
BELICOSO	(6" x 52)	20	$244.20	$159.95	MTZ-PM-1000
CHURCHILL	(7" x 54)	20	$249.20	$164.95	MTZ-PM-1001

J. MONTECRISTO EPIC

MEDIUM / FULL — D.R. — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	10	$150.40	$135.40	MTF-PM-1004
TORO	(6" x 52)	10	$161.40	$145.20	MTF-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 56)	10	$172.40	$155.10	MTF-PM-1008

K. MONTECRISTO

MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(4-7/10"x50)	25	$338.25	$243.50	MTA-PM-1020
NO. 3	(5-1/2"x44)	25	$271.50	$195.50	MTA-PM-1023
		10	—	$49.95	MTA-PM-1036
NO. 2	(6" x 50)	25	$457.25	$329.25	MTA-PM-1012
		10	—	$136.70	MTA-PM-1037
DBL CORONA	(6-1/5"x50)	25	$361.25	$260.00	MTA-PM-1024
NO. 1	(6-1/2"x44)	25	$311.25	$224.25	MTA-PM-1025
		10	—	$94.70	MTA-PM-1038
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	25	$380.50	$274.00	MTA-PM-1011
		10	—	$114.60	MTA-PM-1035

L. MONTECRISTO PILOTICO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Sumatra Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$312.00	$280.80	WME-PM-1005
		10	—	$145.40	WME-PM-1010
TORPEDO	(6" x 50)	20	$352.00	$316.80	WME-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/5"x52)	20	$332.00	$298.80	WME-PM-1006
		10	—	$154.40	WME-PM-1009

M. MONTECRISTO WHITE VINTAGE

MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Connecticut Wrapper

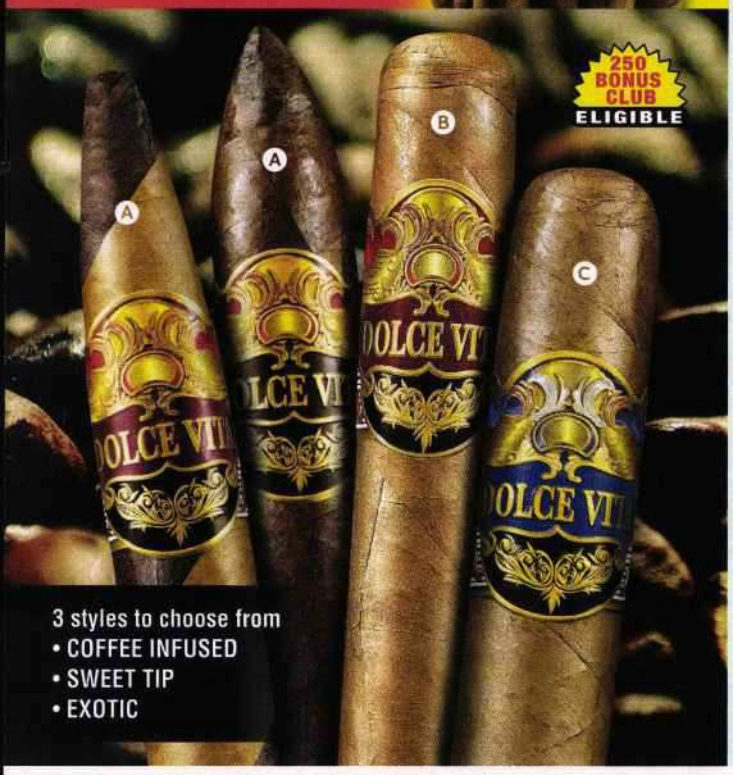
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
NO. 3	(5-1/2"x44)	20	$231.00	$208.00	WMC-PM-1005
NO. 2	(6" x 50)	20	$319.00	$287.20	WMC-PM-1001
DBL CORONA	(6-1/5"x50)	20	$275.00	$247.60	WMC-PM-1008

12 CIGARS FREE

with DOLCE VITA box purchase, while supplies last.

$50 RETAIL VALUE

Plus **SAVE UP TO $27**



3 styles to choose from
- COFFEE INFUSED
- SWEET TIP
- EXOTIC

DOLCE VITA

THE SWEET LIFE, GREAT PRICE!

Handmade with a unique blend of quality Dominican fillers and binder, this smooth bodied boutique factory beauty has a Connecticut blend that's akin to a light cup of coffee, while the Maduro is similar to an espresso. Torn between the two? Check out the dual wrapped medium roast. All three blends imbued with delicious coffee flavors, you won't find a better price on the market for premium flavor in a cup-a-Joe format.

A. DOLCE VITA CAFÉ

SMOOTH	Dominican Republic				Choice of Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Dual	Maduro	Connecticut
SHORT TORP.	(4-1/2" x 54)	20	$85.00	$49.95	DO6-PM-1006	—	—
FIGURADO	(4-1/2" x 54)	20	$79.00	$48.95	DO6-PM-1003	DO7-PM-1005	DO2-PM-1005
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	20	$85.00	$49.95	DO6-PM-1007	—	—
ROB. GRANDE	(5" x 54)	20	$81.00	$49.95	DO6-PM-1005	—	—
TORPEDO	(6" x 54)	20	$86.00	$59.95	DO6-PM-1008	DO7-PM-1007	—
FIGURADO	(6" x 54)	20	$77.00	$49.95	DO6-PM-1002	DO7-PM-1004	DO2-PM-1003
LANCERO	(7" x 39)	20	$86.00	$57.95	DO6-PM-1004	DO7-PM-1006	DO2-PM-1007

Sweet tips are made with a blend of Dominican tobaccos in a boutique factory, and finished off with a golden Connecticut wrapper, giving them a smooth, mellow flavor and just a hint of sweetness.

B. DOLCE VITA SWEET TIP

SMOOTH	Dom. Rep.		Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5" x 38)	20	$68.00	$49.95	DO5-PM-1006
FIGURADO	(5" x 54)	20	$72.00	$59.95	DO5-PM-1007
LONSDALE	(6" x 42)	20	$70.00	$51.95	DO5-PM-1009
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$72.00	$54.95	DO5-PM-1001
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$80.00	$59.95	DO5-PM-1008
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$74.00	$57.95	DO5-PM-1004

Exotic offers an infused line of cigars with unusual oils, unique herbs, and bodacious botanicals.

C. DOLCE VITA EXOTIC

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Dom. Rep.		Connecticut Wrapper		
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
PET. CORONA	(4" x 38)	20	$64.00	$49.95	DO3-PM-1001
ROB. GORDO	(5" x 54)	20	$84.00	$54.95	DO3-PM-1002

PALMA REAL

UNREAL SAVINGS!

The best cigars come from choice tobacco leaves gently coaxed from treasured Cuban seeds. Cuban seed Dominican Olor tobaccos form the long fillers and binder of these alluring sticks. They're then enrobed by hand in your choice of a prime Natural, Maduro or Candela wrapper. A top-of-the-line smoking experience at a fraction of its real worth.

PALMA REAL

SMOOTH / MEDIUM	Dominican Republic				Choice of Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Maduro	Natural	Candela
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	50	$120.00	$64.95	X7D-PM-1015	X7A-PM-1011	X7B-PM-1007
LONSDALE	(6" x 44)	50	$120.00	$64.95	X7D-PM-1016	X7A-PM-1018	—
TORO	(6" x 50)	50	$130.00	$64.95	X7D-PM-1005	X7A-PM-1012	X7B-PM-1003
TORPEDO	(6-1/2" x 52)	50	$140.00	$74.95	X7D-PM-1006	X7A-PM-1013	X7B-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 46)	50	$135.00	$74.95	X7D-PM-1017	X7A-PM-1021	—
PRESIDENTE	(7-1/2" x 50)	50	$140.00	[illegible]	X7D-PM-1008	X7A-PM-1016	X7B-PM-1001

 1-800-237-2559 California residents please see back page for Prop 65 Warning. MON.-FRI. 7AM-10PM SAT.-SUN. 8AM-7PM E.T.

New!

SHOGUN

by Room 101

Booth is back with a brand new Japanese-themed release! This triple threat, entitled Room 101 Shogun, comes in three wrapper varieties (Connecticut, Habano, and Maduro). Crafted with ultra-premium tobaccos, but priced right for everyday enjoyment, Shogun is for the aficionado who roams the path less traveled. Each vitola offers a decisive blow of flavor, while maintaining a meticulously balanced demeanor.

A. SHOGUN CONNECTICUT BY ROOM 101

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	10	$120.00	$59.95	R23-PM-1004
GRAN TORO	(6" x 54)	10	$125.00	$64.95	R23-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	10	$130.00	$69.95	R23-PM-1000

B. SHOGUN HABANO BY ROOM 101

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 54)	10	$120.00	$59.95	R24-PM-1006
GRAN TORO	(6" x 54)	10	$125.00	$64.95	R24-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 52)	10	$130.00	$69.95	R24-PM-1000

C. SHOGUN MADURO BY ROOM 101

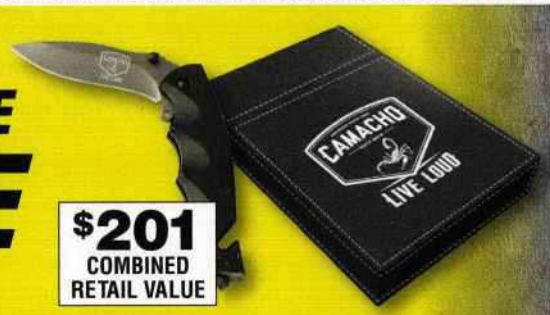
MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
GORDO	(6" x 66)	10	$135.00	$79.95	R25-PM-1000

KNIFE & TRAVEL CASE FREE

with CAMACHO box purchase, while supplies last.

$201 COMBINED RETAIL VALUE



CAMACHO LIVE LOUD

A. CAMACHO COYOLAR

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Honduran Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROTHSCHILD	(4-1/5" x 50)	25	$212.50	$191.25	BDA-PM-1004
SUPER TORO	(6" x 52)	25	$225.00	$202.50	BDA-PM-1000
TITAN	(6" x 60)	25	$237.50	$225.00	BDA-PM-1001

B. CAMACHO NICARAGUAN BARREL AGED

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Habana 2000 Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$200.00	$180.00	C74-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$220.00	$198.00	C74-PM-1002
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$240.00	$216.00	C74-PM-1003

C. CAMACHO COROJO

FULL — Honduras — Corojo Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$170.00	$153.00	C7F-PM-1002
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$190.00	$171.00	C7F-PM-1009
GIGANTE	(6-1/2" x 54)	20	$190.00	$171.00	C7F-PM-1019
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$180.00	$162.00	C7F-PM-1022

D. CAMACHO CONNECTICUT

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Honduras — Ecuador Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$165.00	$148.50	C7G-PM-1008
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$170.00	$153.00	C7G-PM-1002
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$190.00	$171.00	C7G-PM-1009
FIGURADO	(6-1/10" x 54)	20	$185.00	$166.50	C7G-PM-1019
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	20	$180.00	$162.00	C7G-PM-1016
	(7" x 48)	4	—	$32.40	C7G-PM-1030

E. CAMACHO TRIPLE MADURO

FULL — Honduras — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Comp.	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$205.00	$184.50	C7H-PM-1004
		10	—	$97.25	C7H-PM-1016
TORO 11/18	(6" x 54)	20	$215.00	$193.50	C7H-PM-1005
GORDO	(6" x 60)	20	$235.00	$211.50	C7H-PM-1008
		10	—	$110.75	C7H-PM-1017
FIGURADO	(6-1/10" x 54)	20	$225.00	$202.50	C7H-PM-1014

HUMI-CARE®

ADVANCED BEAD HUMIDIFICATION

The Authority on Humidor Maintenance

A. HUMI-CARE CIGARJUICE 16 oz. BOTTLE
This 50/50 mixture of propylene glycol and distilled water is perfectly calibrated to ensure a slow, steady release of 70% humidity.

Compare $15.00 **ONLY $11.99** HMC11-1000

B. HUMI-CARE HX10 CRYSTAL GEL HUMIDIFICATION
Inside the HUMI-CARE HX10 humidifier are specially formulated crystals containing propylene glycol to chemically balance the humidity level in your humidor. The gel crystals inside expand after absorbing distilled water and contract when it's ready for a refill! **6.5" x 2.5" x 0.75"**

Compare $20.00 **ONLY $7.95** HMC06-1000

C. HUMI-CARE POWER STICK HUMIDIFIER
The Power Stick humidifier from HUMI-CARE is refillable and humidifies up to 50 cigars with its compact design. Inside are specially formulated crystals containing propylene glycol to chemically balance the humidity level in your humidor. Perfect for small humidors and travel cases. **5.75" x 0.75" x 0.75"**

Compare $12.99 **ONLY $8.99** HMC15-1001

D. HUMI-CARE SEASONING WIPES 2-PACK
Simply use this cloth to wipe down and season the inside of your humidor. When you're done, give it the ol' heave-ho. These wipes have been manufactured with propylene glycol and distilled water to provide everything you need.

Compare $5.00 **ONLY $2.99** HMC14-2-1000

E. HUMI-CARE CRYSTAL GEL HUMIDIFICATION 4 oz. JAR
- 4 oz. jar of propylene glycol beads
- Holds moisture at 65-70% humidity
- Lasts 1 to 2 months per fill
- Ideal for 25-150 capacity humidors

2.5" H x 2.63" D

Compare $12.00 **ONLY $9.99** HMC04-1000

F. HUMI-CARE DIGITAL HYGROMETER
- AAA Battery compatibility
- Temperature and relative humidity display
- Fahrenheit or Celsius options
- Accuracy (RH) +/- 2%; Temp +/- 1° C/F
- Magnetic attachment

Compare $35.00 **ONLY $22.50** HMC20-1000

G. HUMI-CARE PORTABLE HUMIDIFICATION PILLOW 10-PACK
Simply dip a HUMI-CARE Portable Humidification pillow in distilled water. The pillow expands as water is absorbed, then slide pillow into its plastic sleeve and place in your humidor or travel box. Reusable 2-3 more times. Then toss and grab a new one.

Compare $25.00 **ONLY $12.50** HMC07-10-1000

H. HUMI-CARE BLACK ICE DIGITAL HYGROMETER
HUMI-CARE Black Ice's most advanced hygrometer yet. Accurate within +/- 2% RH, and ready to go out of the box, this unit makes monitoring your humidor's conditions a breeze. Displays in Fahrenheit or Celsius.

Compare $35.00 **ONLY $19.99** HMC19-1000

I. HUMI-CARE TURBO DIGITAL HYGROMETER *BY CIGAR OASIS*
- Thin, lid-mount design
- Thin, ribbon cable power cord
- Internal rechargeable battery
- Calibration adjustment

Compare $119.00
ONLY $99.99
HMC22-1000

HUMIDORS

ALL HUMIDORS FEATURE:
- HUMIDIFICATION SYSTEM
- REMOVABLE CEDAR TRAY AND/OR DIVIDERS
- SPANISH CEDAR LINING

A. OLD GLORY
Dimensions: 6-1/2"H x 15"W x 10"D
- Flag design with lock and key
- SureSeal technology

B. DARK KNIGHT
Dimensions: 10-1/2"H x 15"W x 7"D
- Glass-top and exterior hygrometer
- Pull-out divider tray

C. LUCKY 7
Dimensions: 11-3/4"H x 11-3/4"W x 15-3/4"D
- Exterior analog hygrometer
- Double humidification system

HOLDS 100 CIGARS — Compare $140.00 ONLY $119.95 USAHUM-1000

HOLDS 125 CIGARS — Compare $129.00 ONLY $89.00 DRKNTHUM-1000

HOLDS 200 CIGARS — Compare $99.00 ONLY $99.00 LUCKHUM01-1000

CIGAR ACCESSORIES

70 RING CREDO XXL CUTTER

- Ergonomic design
- Stainless steel blades
- Cuts up to a 70 ring gauge
- Biggest ring gauge cutter on the market

ONLY $5.50 CRCUT01-1000

BOVEDA HUMIDIPAK

- 2-way humidity control system emits only pure, flavorless water vapor
- Disposable after humidification is expended, lasts up to 60 days
- Easily transforms your humidor into a true cigar-aging vault

12 HUMIDOR PACKETS

Choose preferred level:

Humidity	*Item #*	
69%	BOV69-12-1000	**ONLY $44.95**
70%	BOV72-12-1000	
75%	BOV75-12-1000	

20 HUMIDOR PACKETS *(72% humidity only)*

ONLY $69.99 BOV72-20-B-1000

VILLAZON LIGHTER & CUTTER COMBO

A perfect add-on item, and a reliable set from Vertigo, these Villazon branded white cutter and lighter are reliable and affordable – just like their namesake blends.

Compare $30.00

ONLY $19.95

VL01-SP-1000

PERFECTO CIGAR HOLDER

A portable ashtray for one cigar. Simply squeeze (easily with one hand!) and attach to the console of your golf cart (or boat, deck or any other surface) and your cigar rest is ready.

Compare $25.00

ONLY $19.95 GC09-1000

THE DRAWPOKER

There's nothing more frustrating than having to toss out a perfectly good hand rolled cigar because it's too tight to draw.

Compare $24.95

ONLY $14.95

DRAWPOKER-1000

STINKY ASHTRAY

Tall, deep, high capacity ashtray with 4 cigar stirrups, perfect for Poker night with your buddies.

A. **STAINLESS STEEL**
Compare $37.50 **ONLY $19.99**
STKASH1-1000

B. **HAMMERED COPPER**
Compare $40.00 **ONLY $27.50**
STKASH11-1001

C. **HAMMERED STAINLESS STEEL**
Compare $44.00 **ONLY $27.50**
STKASH11-1003

HOLDS 125 CIGARS | Compare $154.00 ONLY $89.95 HUM125VII-1000

D. BALLY V-II

Dimensions: 6-1/2"H x 10"W x 13-3/4"D
- Exterior Analog Hygrometer
- Bubinga and Ebony Finish
- Lock and Key

HOLDS 40 CIGARS | Compare $139.99 ONLY $99.95 MERHUM-1001

E. MERGER II BURL-FINISH

Dimensions: 4-1/2"H x 10-1/4"W x 8-3/4"D
- Interior Analog Hygrometer/Humidifier
- High Gloss Burl Finish

HOLDS 40 CIGARS | Compare $129.99 ONLY $59.95 TIRHUM-1000

E. TIRET HUMIDOR

Dimensions: 4-1/4"H x 10-1/4"W x 8-1/2"D
- Interior Analog Hygrometer/Humidifier
- Walnut Finish

PREMIUM OVERRUNS

SAVE UP TO $139

GURKHA

When you're producing millions of cigars annually there will inevitably be leftovers and overproduction of certain sizes and styles.

GURKHA FACTORY OVERRUNS

SMOOTH / MEDIUM		Dom. Rep.		Maduro Wrapper	
Shape/size	Wrp.	Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	Mad.	16	$179.00	$42.95	GBF-PM-1001
(5" x 52)	Conn.	16	$179.00	$42.95	GGP-PM-1001
CHURCHILL	Mad.	16	$181.00	$44.95	GBF-PM-1000
(7" x 52)	Conn.	16	$181.00	$44.95	GGP-PM-1000

SAVE UP TO $160

JESUS FUEGO

Three beloved long-filler blends, Brazilian Maduro, Nicaraguan Criollo or Connecticut at a price you will cherish.

J. FUEGO FACTORY OVERRUNS CONNECTICUT

SMOOTH	Nicaragua			Connecticut Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CIGARILLO	(4" x 30)	50	$210.00	$49.95	JFS-PM-1001
GRAN ROB.	(5" x 52)	20	$110.00	$42.95	JFS-PM-1002
TORO	(6-1/2" x 50)	20	$120.00	$44.95	JFS-PM-1003
CHURCHILL	(7" x 50)	20	$165.00	$42.95	JFS-PM-1000

J. FUEGO FACTORY OVERRUNS MADURO

MEDIUM / FULL				Maduro Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$120.00	$44.95	JFT-PM-1001
COR. GORDA	(7" x 52)	20	$164.00	$39.95	JFT-PM-1000

SAVE UP TO $147

ROCKY PATEL SERIE S

FULL	Honduras			Sun Grown Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	15	$137.00	$52.95	K5A-PM-1002
SIXTY	(6" x 60)	15	$150.00	$64.95	K5A-PM-1000
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	15	$121.00	$59.95	K5A-PM-1001

ROCKY PATEL SERIES E CONNECTICUT

SMOOTH / MEDIUM		Honduras		Connecticut Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 50)	16	$108.00	$59.95	K5C-PM-1007
TORO	(6" x 52)	16	$108.00	$64.95	K5C-PM-1003
TORPEDO	(6" x 52)	16	$108.00	$67.95	K5C-PM-1005
GORDO	(6" x 60)	16	$123.00	$69.95	K5C-PM-1002
CHURCHILL	(7" x 48)	16	$108.00	$67.95	K5C-PM-1000
DBL CORONA	(7-1/2" x 52)	16	$113.00	$64.95	K5C-PM-1001

ROCKY PATEL SERIES E MADURO

SMOOTH / MEDIUM		Honduras		Maduro Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
TORO	(6"x52)	16	$106.00	$64.95	K5C-PM-1004
TORPEDO	(6-"x52)	16	$108.00	$67.95	K5C-PM-1006

ROCKY PATEL SERIES D

MEDIUM	Honduras			Sumatra Wrapper	
Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	12	$123.00	$62.95	K5B-PM-1002
GORDO	(6" x 60)	12	$123.00	$67.95	K5B-PM-1000
LONSDALE	(6-1/2" x 44)	12	$123.00	$59.95	K5B-PM-1001
TORO	(6-1/2" x 52)	12	$123.00	$64.95	K5B-PM-1003

ROCKY PATEL 90+ RATED SECONDS

FULL	Honduras			Choice of Wrapper	
Shape/size	Wrp.	Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO (4-1/2" x 50)	Cameroon	20	$135.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1005
CORONA (5" x 44)	Maduro	20	$135.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1001
ROBUSTO (5" x 50)	Habano	20	$191.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1004
	Maduro	20	$184.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1006
	San Andrés	20	$191.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1007
TORPEDO (5" x 65)	Maduro	20	$176.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1014
TORO (6" x 52)	Conn.	20	$191.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1008
	Habano	20	$104.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1013
TORO (6" x 54)	Habano	20	$162.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1009
TORPEDO (6" x 54)	Maduro	20	$69.95	$69.95	R9S-PM-1016
GORDO (6" x 60)	Maduro	20	$121.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1002
TORO (6-1/2" x 52)	Habano	20	$235.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1010
TORPEDO (6-1/2" x 52)	Maduro	20	$145.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1015
TORO (6-1/2" x 54)	Maduro	20	$176.00	$69.95	R9S-PM-1011

CALDWELL 90+ RATED SECONDS

MEDIUM — Dom. Rep. — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5-3/10" x 46)	15	$150.00	$59.95	C90-PM-1001
FIG.	(6" x 52)	15	$157.50	$69.95	C90-PM-1003
PAN.	(6-1/2" x 40)	15	$132.00	$54.95	C90-PM-1004
CHURCH.	(7" x 48)	15	$165.00	$69.95	C90-PM-1000

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY LIGA E MADURO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
CORONA	(5-1/10" x 46)	20	$112.49	$44.99	CB4-PM-1001
GORDO	(5-1/2" x 60)	20	$124.99	$49.99	CB4-PM-1002
TORO	(5-7/10" x 54)	20	$131.25	$52.50	CB4-PM-1000

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY LIGA V CONN.

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Connecticut Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$112.49	$44.99	CB1-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$137.49	$54.99	CB1-PM-1003
PYRAMID	(6-1/10" x 52)	20	$143.75	$57.50	CB1-PM-1004
CHURCH.	(7" x 50)	20	$149.99	$59.99	CB1-PM-1007

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY LIGA V HABANO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PET. COR.	(4-1/2" x 42)	20	$99.99	$39.99	CB2-PM-1000

CORNELIUS & ANTHONY LIGA V MADURO

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — San Andrés Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
PET. COR.	(4-1/2" x 42)	20	$99.99	$39.99	CB3-PM-1000
LONS.	(6-1/2" x 42)	20	$124.99	$49.99	CB3-PM-1001

NICARAGUAN 90+ RATED OVERRUNS

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$160.00	$39.95	YON-PM-1001
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$165.00	$42.95	YON-PM-1002
GORDO	(6-1/2" x 58)	20	$170.00	$44.95	YON-PM-1000

LA PALINA 90+ RATED SECONDS MADURO

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Maduro Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
DBL CORONA	(7" x 58)	20	$195.00	$59.95	9UM-PM-1000

LA PALINA 90+ RATED SECONDS CONN.

SMOOTH / MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Conn. Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
GORDO	(4" x 60)	20	$135.00	$59.95	9UN-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$180.00	$59.95	9UN-PM-1001

LA PALINA 90+ RATED SECONDS HABANO

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 50)	20	$165.00	$59.95	9UO-PM-1001
DBL ROBUSTO	(5" x 56)	20	$250.00	$59.95	9UO-PM-1000
TORO	(6" x 52)	20	$190.00	$59.95	9UO-PM-1003
DBL TORO	(6" x 54)	20	$195.00	$59.95	9UO-PM-1002

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Gran Habano in three unique wrappers: Corojo, Habano, or Connecticut. Save up to 57% off of MSRP! Churchill and Gran Robusto packaged in 18 count bundles. Imperial packaged in 15 count bundles.

GRAN HABANO FACTORY OVERRUNS

MEDIUM / FULL — Honduras — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size	Wrp.	Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	Hab.	18	$102.00	$47.95	GA7-PM-1005
(6" x 54)	Cor.	18	$102.00	$47.95	GA8-PM-1005
GORDO	Hab.	15	$111.00	$49.95	GA7-PM-1007
(6" x 60)	Conn.	15	$111.00	$49.95	GA6-PM-1007
	Cor.	15	$111.00	$49.95	GA8-PM-1007
CHURCHILL	Hab.	18	$105.00	$49.95	GA7-PM-1001
(7" x 48)	Cor.	18	$105.00	$49.95	GA8-PM-1001

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STUDIO TOBAC OVERRUNS

SMOOTH — Nicaragua — Choice of Wrapper

Shape/size	Wrp.	Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
358	Conn.	15	$105.00	$39.95	NUN-PM-1001
(3" x 58)	Hab.	15	$105.00	$39.95	NUO-PM-1000
	Cam.	15	$138.60	$49.95	NUO-PM-1003
460	Conn.	15	$109.80	$44.95	NUN-PM-1002
(4" x 60)	Hab.	15	$109.80	$44.95	NUO-PM-1001
	Cam.	15	$95.40	$44.95	NUP-PM-1001
464	Conn.	15	$119.40	$47.95	NUN-PM-1003
(4" x 64)	Hab.	15	$119.40	$47.95	NUO-PM-1002
	Cam.	15	$105.00	$47.95	NUP-PM-1002
	Mad.	15	$130.95	$39.95	NUQ-PM-1001
466	Conn.	15	$119.40	$49.95	NUN-PM-1004
(4" x 66)	Hab.	15	$138.60	$49.95	NUO-PM-1003
	Cam.	15	$124.20	$49.95	NUP-PM-1003
	Mad.	15	$130.95	$39.95	NUQ-PM-1001

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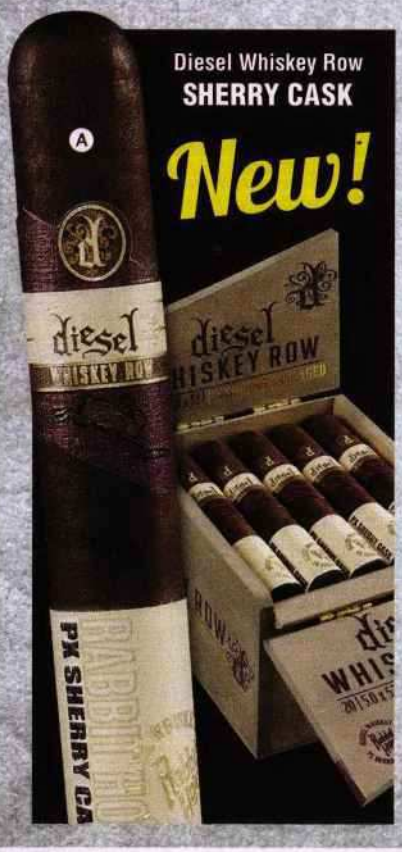

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A. DIESEL WHISKEY ROW SHERRY CASK

MEDIUM / FULL — Nicaragua — Connecticut Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5" x 52)	20	$159.80	$135.84	J65-PM-1010
TORO	(6" x 50)	20	$169.80	$143.84	J65-PM-1013
GIGANTE	(6" x 58)	20	$179.80	$151.84	J65-PM-1016

B. DIESEL

FULL — Nicaragua — Pennsylvania Broadleaf Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
SHORTY	(4-1/2" x 60)	24	$192.00	$109.99	J6B-PM-1019
ROBUSTO	(5" x52)	24	$156.00	$99.99	J6B-PM-1011
UNHOLY COCKTAIL	(5" x 56)	30	$210.00	$109.99	J6B-PM-1020

C. DIESEL WHISKEY ROW

MEDIUM — Nicaragua — Ecuador Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
ROBUSTO	(5-1/2" x 52)	25	$187.25	$149.80	J64-PM-1003
TORO	(6" x 54)	25	$199.75	$159.80	J64-PM-1004
GIGANTE	(6" x 60)	25	$224.75	$179.80	J64-PM-1005
CHURCHILL	(7" x 49)	25	$212.25	$169.80	J64-PM-1006

D. DIESEL UNLIMITED

FULL — Nicaragua — Habano Wrapper

Shape/size		Qty.	Compare	ONLY	Item #
D.4	(4-7/10" x 52)	20	$140.00	$59.99	J6C-PM-1006
D.5	(5-1/2" x 54)	20	$150.00	$84.99	J6C-PM-1022
D.X	(5-7/10" x 56)	20	$160.00	$94.99	J6C-PM-1041
D.7	(7" x 58)	20	$170.00	$99.99	J6C-PM-1033

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HOW TO SPEAK CIGAR

SIZES: Measuring system for cigars isdone with length being shown in inches and thickness (or diameter) of a cigar in units of 64 (64 is equal to 1 inch). Therefore, 5" x 48 cigar is, 5 inches long and 3/4" diameter (1/64in. x 48).

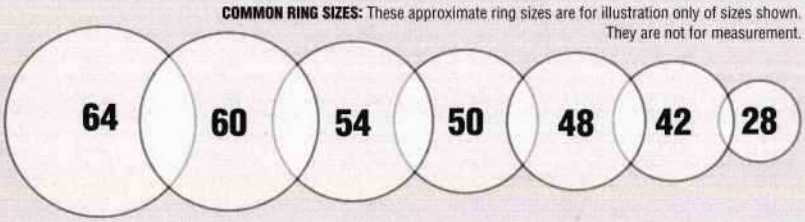
FILLER: Inner tobacco bulk of the cigar

BINDER: Leaf that holds the filler together

WRAPPER: The outer tobacco leaf covering of a cigar

WRAPPER COLORS: Colorado, Connecticut, Sungrown, Natural (Medium Brown), Maduro (Dark Brown), Rosado (Reddish Brown), Candela (Light Green), or Cameroon if grown in Africa

COMMON RING SIZES: These approximate ring sizes are for illustration only of sizes shown. They are not for measurement.



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(6-"x44)	Maduro	80	$119.90	~~$62.95~~	$42.95	DFO-PM-1001
	Conn.	80	$119.90	~~$62.95~~	$42.95	DFN-PM-1000

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In the matter of Trademark Registration No. 1147309
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: February 17, 1981

AND

In the matter of the Trademark Registration No. 1898273
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: June 6, 1995

EMPRESA CUBANA DEL TABACO, d.b.a. CUBATABACO, Petitioner, v. GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC., Respondent.	Cancellation No. 92025859

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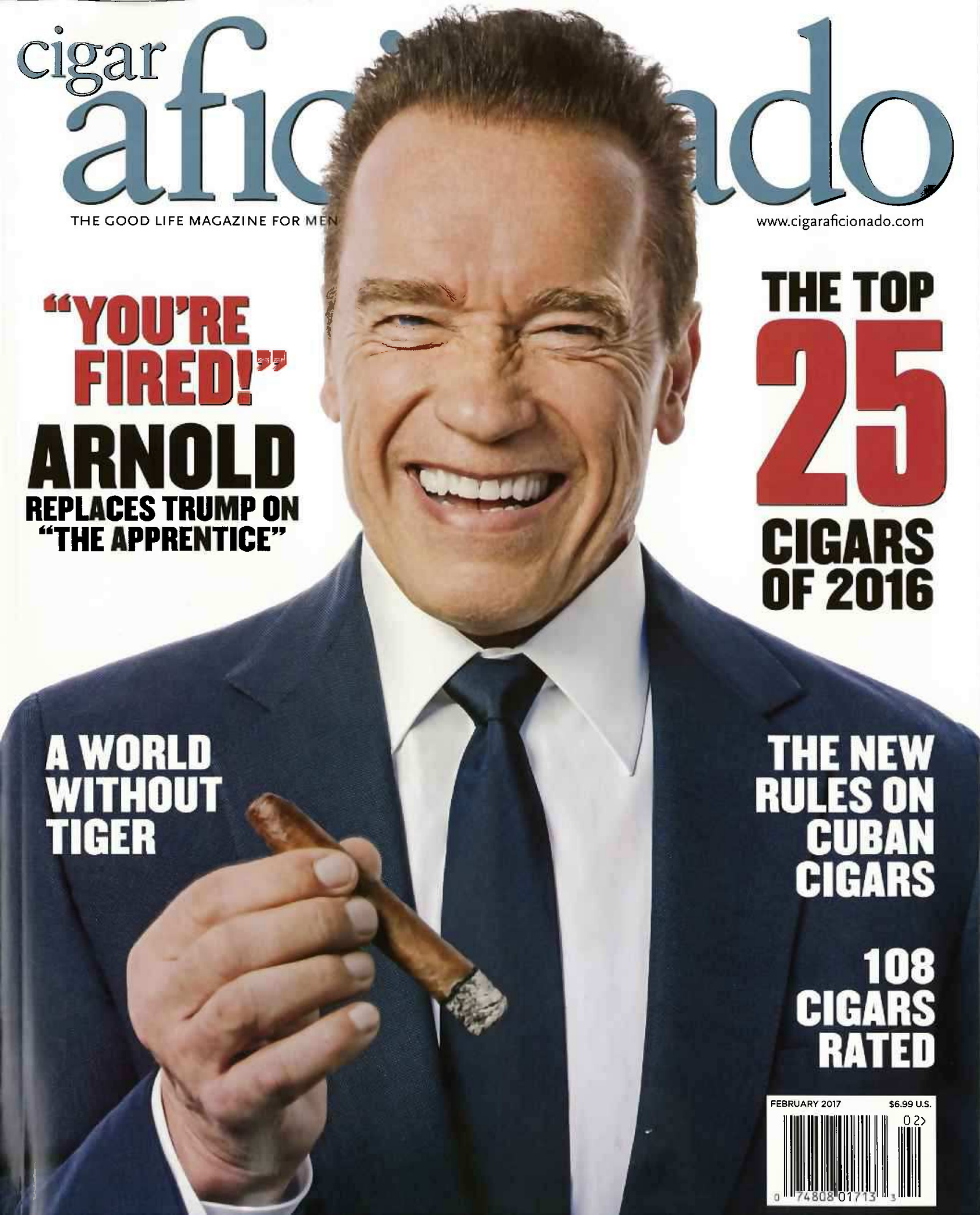

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january/february 2017

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photograph by Jim Wright

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TOP: JEFF HARRIS; CENTER: JAY LAPRETE / AP PHOTO; COVER: STYLING BY JANE ROSS / GROOMING BY JOANNEL CLEMENTE / HAIR BY ANGELA ROJAS / LOCATION MELODY RANCH STUDIO

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ROMEO Y JULIETA

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TOP: RICHARD BOLL, CENTER AND BOTTOM: JEFF HARRIS

highlights

Our top-scoring cigars in this latest taste test come from around the cigar world, and each of the industry's three largest handmade cigar-producing countries—the Dominican Republic, Cuba and Nicaragua—are represented here. The Ashton Symmetry Belicoso earned our highest score in this blind review, earning 93 points. It stands alone among Ashtons for its Nicaraguan tobacco, something Ashton says doesn't exist in its other blends. It's rolled by the Fuente family. A host of cigars scored 92 points, including a legendary Cuban Churchill, a newer Nicaraguan robusto and a well-known short smoke from one of the cigar world's most vaunted brands. Fat cigars continue to enthrall cigar consumers, and our Grande category of 60-ring-gauge smokes saw a four-way tie for top score at 91 points. For insight on fat cigars and their portly history, see our story on page 136.

TOP FIGURADO
ASHTON SYMMETRY BELICOSO — DOM. REP. — 93
The newest incarnation of the vaunted Ashton brand has Nicaraguan tobacco in its mix, which is blended by Carlos Fuente Jr.

TOP CHURCHILL
ROMEO Y JULIETA CHURCHILL — CUBA — 92
One of Cuba's most famous large cigars, the Romeo y Julieta Churchill sets the standard for cigars measuring 7 inches long by 47 ring gauge.

TOP CORONA GORDA
ESPINOSA HABANO NO. 4 — NICARAGUA — 92
Crafted in the small but standout La Zona cigar factory in Nicaragua, Espinosa Habano cigars continue to impress in our blind tastings.

TOP MISCELLANEOUS
PADRÓN SERIE 1926 NO. 35 MADURO — NICARAGUA — 92
Sometimes cigars are named after family members, important dates or heroes from history. This diminutive Padrón is named 35 for an intriguing reason: that's how many minutes it takes the company president to smoke one.

TOP ROBUSTO
CLE PRIETO 50X5 — NICARAGUA — 92
Christian Eiroa is one of the old-school names of Honduran cigars, but he took the operation to Nicaragua for his new CLE Prieto brand, which took top honors in our robusto category.

TOP GRANDE
UNDERCROWN SHADE GORDITO — NICARAGUA — 91
Drew Estate's milder version of Undercrown tied with a Nat Sherman Metropolitan Habano Selection, a Punch Signature and a La Galera for the best score in our category dedicated to 60-ring-gauge smokes.

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DAVID YELLEN

editors' note

Arnold—He's Back

There are plenty of celebrities around the world who love a great cigar. We challenge you to find one who enjoys them as much as Arnold Schwarzenegger. He began smoking cigars in the 1970s and he still adores them today.

He's a man of many nicknames. The Terminator. Conan. The Austrian Oak. The Governator. But for most people, and for us, he is quite simply Arnold. And he's back.

Arnold makes history with this cover appearance, as no other person has ever appeared three times on the cover of our magazine. (His first cover was Summer of 1996, when we were still a quarterly, and his second was August 2003.) He's not only back in our book, he's back in the limelight in a big way, stepping into the shoes vacated by President-elect Donald Trump in the network television series "The New Celebrity Apprentice," which debuts on NBC on January 2. Will he adopt the Trump catchphrase "You're fired," when dismissing a contestant, or will he go his own way, saying "You're terminated," or perhaps "Hasta la vista?"

Arnold has experience as a boss, for as you'll read in our cover story, beginning on page 72, he's a lot more than muscle and movies. He was a business success before his first hit, a millionaire before he was Conan the Barbarian. He's succeeded again and again, conquering the world of bodybuilding, then film and being elected governor of California, the biggest economy in the United States. And he's done it all while smoking cigars. When California law forbade him from lighting up in the statehouse, he built a cigar-friendly tent in the courtyard. That's thinking outside the box.

Also in this issue, we review the changes to U.S. law that finally allow Americans to legally bring Cuban cigars back into the United States, not only from Cuba but from London, Paris, Geneva and elsewhere. It's a change we have long lobbied for, and one we welcome, but it comes with important caveats. Restrictions still remain. Get informed with our important update on page 97.

This issue also contains our annual ranking of the best cigars of the year, the 25 finest smokes that have emerged victorious after our tournament of champions. Who survived the world's toughest taste test to be named Cigar of the Year? Turn to page 46.

There's much more to this issue. We imagine a golf world without Tiger Woods, and name the players who would have had far different careers had Tiger never teed it up as a pro. We bring you into the high-stakes world of baccarat and introduce you to the woman who won more than $70 million with her controversial technique. We look at the spiciest of whiskies, rye, and pair it with exceptional cigars.

Light up a cigar, sit back in your favorite chair and enjoy this issue.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

DAVID SAVONA
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

19 64
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Anniversary
1926
SERIE
FAMILY RESERVE
19 64

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BOUTIQUE BLENDS
From the makers
of Aging Room
No.2 Cigar of 2013
www.BoutiqueBlends.com

Dear Marvin,
It was sad for me to read your story about the passing of Carlos Fuente Sr. ["Death of a Legend," December 2016].

Back in the spring of 2011, my brother, my nephew and I took a mini trip to Tampa to celebrate my retirement from the fire service and to watch our beloved Chicago White Sox take on the Tampa Bay Rays. While down there, we went to the "Little Cuba" area of Tampa, Ybor City. We visited some small shops, ate local fare and went cigar shopping. My brother Tom said we need to check out this factory where cigar "seconds" are sold. Walking inside, up a flight of wooden stairs, we entered a small shop filled with many boxes of cigars. Inside were three people who turned out to be part of the Fuente family. They each helped us choose our cigars. I didn't know who it was at the time, but Carlos Fuente Sr. started asking me questions on my preferred taste in cigars. He also asked me why we were in Tampa and congratulated me on my retirement.

He noticed my Chicago sports clothing—a White Sox jersey and Blackhawks T-shirt—and asked me if I knew the man in the picture on the wall. It was a picture of Chicago Bears player and Super Bowl–winning coach Mike Ditka. Standing next to him in the photo was Carlos Fuente Sr.

Carlos Jr. suggested that the three of us take a picture. I am honored to have met these men and wish the family strength during this difficult time.

Please extend our sympathy to the Fuente family on the passing of their father.
Pat Trunda, Tom Trunda and Nicholas Heer
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Marvin,
Your enticing feature on greens of the Emerald Isle ["Ireland's Stunning Coast," October 2016], notes that farther out of the way, but perhaps worth the effort, is the Dingle Golf Club on the Dingle Peninsula. I can vouch that it is well worth the visit; not only because it is the westernmost course in Europe, but as a stiff challenge for the strongest of storm lighters in lighting a cigar and composing that moment to remember. For a unique pair of photographs, you need to travel 2,000 miles west before encountering the easternmost golf course in North America, the Terra Nova (Twin Rivers) on Newfoundland. Go to it readers!
Malcolm Watson
Welford, Newbury, Berkshire
United Kingdom

"I appreciate your carefully considered Editors' Note regarding new cigar brands and releases. Who is the government trying to protect?"
—Joe Calenda, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

Dear Marvin,
Thank you for another outstanding issue of CIGAR AFICIONADO. Receiving the magazine in the mail and reading it in my backyard villa while smoking a cigar is a luxury in my life; one for which I am very grateful.

I really enjoyed reading "Top Chefs Who Love Cigars" [December 2016]. I look forward to future issues featuring actors who love cigars, politicians who love cigars…And it got me to thinking. How about featuring ordinary Joe's who love cigars? These are regular people not necessarily celebrated beyond their local community, with a "common man/common woman" story that would be of interest to your readers.

By the way I appreciate your carefully considered Editors' Note regarding the introduction of new cigar brands and releases into the market. Who is the government trying to protect?
Joe Calenda
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

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E-MAIL letters@cigaraficionado.com • **LETTERS** 825 8th Ave., 33rd floor, New York, NY 10019 • **EDITORS' BLOGS** Find out what the editors of CIGAR AFICIONADO are thinking—and smoking—in our editors' blogs. David Savona, Gordon Mott, Jack Bettridge, Gregory Mottola and Andrew Nagy want to hear from you. The conversation is taking place on cigaraficionado.com.

cigar aficionado

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Dear Marvin,
A past issue of CIGAR AFICIONADO published a letter from a Canadian subscriber criticizing the diverse articles and non-cigar issues covered in the magazine. The response from the editors was respectful and deft. The kind, uplifting reply to an otherwise acerbic snip at the magazine galvanized my affection for CIGAR AFICIONADO.

The one- and two-page articles covering fine items and diverse locations from around the world go well with the exposés on fine cigars. Holding your upscale publication to single-subject entries would be a kiss of death to the publication.

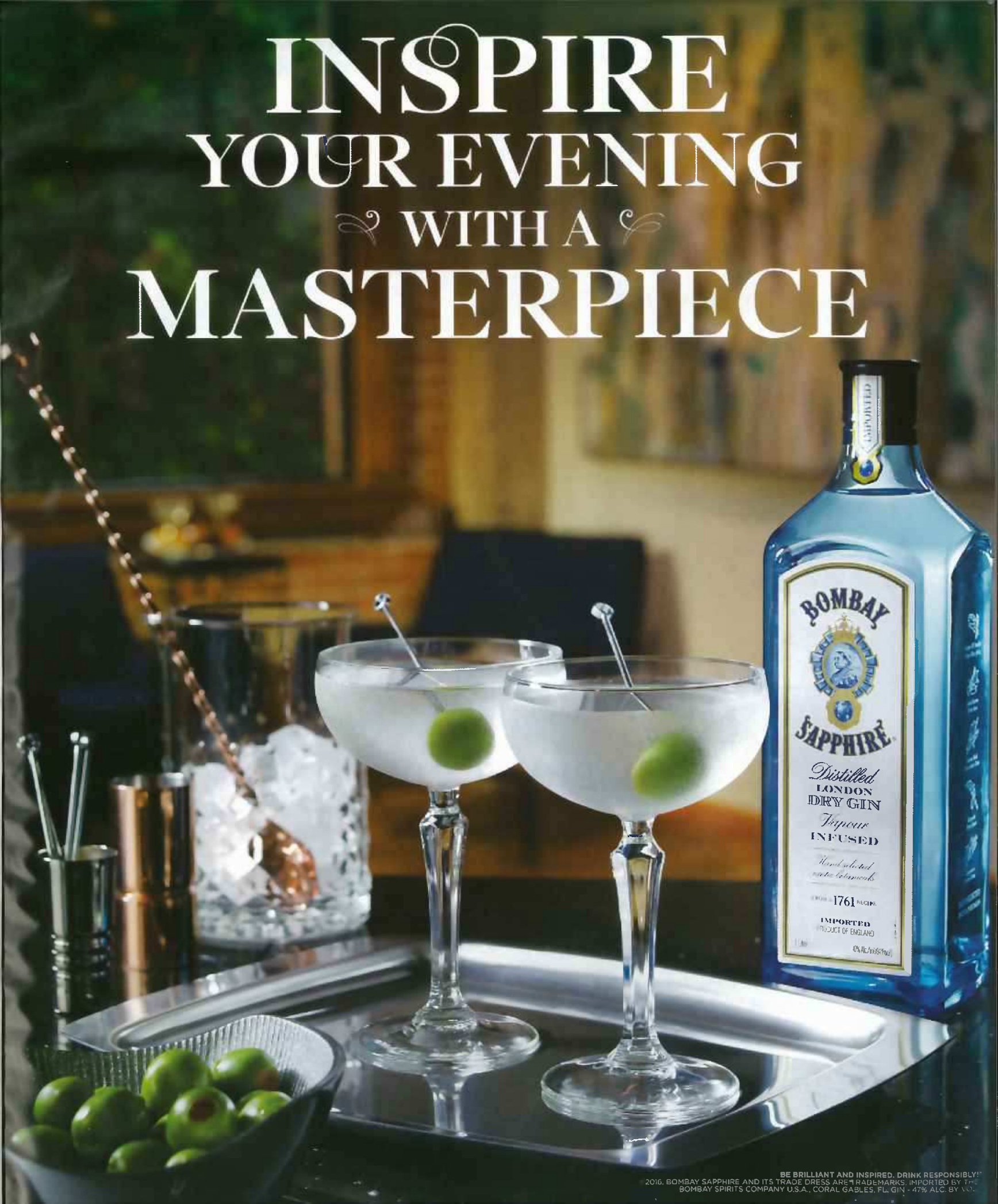
Seldom do we see or hear of a person that likes to sit in a self-imposed sequester isolated with a hand-rolled cigar and kept from other boutique items. In contrast: At times I personally have savored the draw of a handmade cigar in one hand and a shot of 100-year-old Grand Marnier in the other, watching the sun set across a Nassau beach (of Graycliff fame), with gratitude for those and other fine things in life. CIGAR AFICIONADO extends the exposure and thus awareness to even more abundant and boutique opportunities.

The cigar industry is rife with cross-business fertilization. Many do not travel as I do. Thus they are left with CIGAR AFICIONADO to fill the imagination. That we may further the joy of such learning, please keep the format and publication as it is.
J. Bradley Oakes
Milpitas, California

Dear Marvin,
Just wanted to personally thank you and the gang for putting on another great Big Smoke event in Las Vegas. My friends and I had a great time and enjoyed the company of fellow cigar enthusiasts. As I listened to the "Next Generation" panelists, and especially since two of them were women, I wondered: will the tagline of the magazine, "the good life magazine for men" soon be revised to "the good life magazine for cigar enthusiasts," or something along those lines?
Mark Sehgal
McAlester, Oklahoma

Editors' Response: Thanks for being part of the Big Smoke Las Vegas seminars. While we appreciate the many women who read our magazine and enjoy fine cigars, our tagline will remain unchanged. CIGAR AFICIONADO *is, and has always been, a men's magazine.* ❖

Clarification: In the profile of Mike Piazza [December], he and Tom Seaver were referred to as "the only Mets to enter the Hall of Fame as players." They are actually the only players who went into the Hall of Fame as New York Mets.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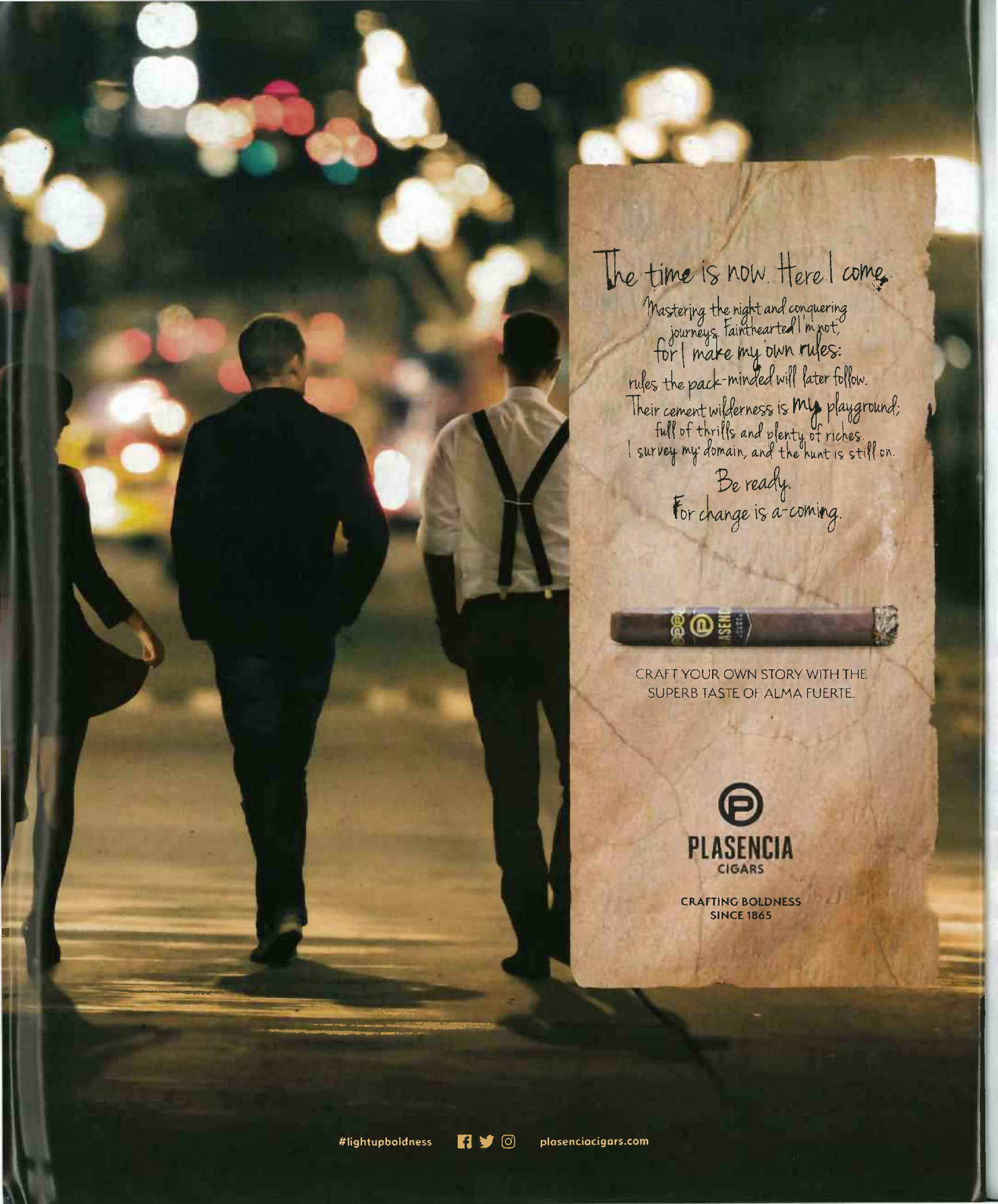
The time is now. Here I come.
Mastering the night and conquering journeys. Fainthearted I'm not,
for I make my own rules:
rules the pack-minded will later follow.
Their cement wilderness is my playground;
full of thrills and plenty of riches.
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For change is a-coming.
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good life guide

Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.

drink 23 TAWNY PORT
places 24 RITZ-CARLTONS OF NAPLES, FLORIDA
style 28 THE CAMEL HAIR JACKET
time 31 THE SWATCH REVOLUTION
wheels 35 ROLLS-ROYCE DAWN
gourmet 36 JAMON IBERICO
tools 38 FIRE IRONS
sport 41 YACHT-BASED HELI-SKIING
fun 44 LISTENING CLUBS

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1930
TIMELESS COLLECTION
4 CONSECUTIVE YEARS IN CIGAR AFICIONADO'S TOP 25
"A HANDSOMELY BOX-PRESSED TORPEDO OFFERING A RICH RANGE OF MOLASSES, OAK AND SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE."
CIGAR AFICIONADO - TIMELESS NICARAGUAN 652T
"A SIGN OF NEWFOUND ENERGY AND COMMITMENT NAT SHERMAN HAS MADE TO ITS CIGAR BRAND."
CIGAR AFICIONADO - TIMELESS DOMINICAN NO.2
NICARAGUA
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TIMELESS DOMINICAN DIVINOS 93 2013
TIMELESS DOMINICAN CHURCHILL 91 2014
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WARNING: Smoking cigars regularly poses risks of cancer of the mouth, throat, larynx, and esophagus similar to smoking cigarettes.

JEFF HARRIS

The Joy of Tawny Port

If your take on the classic combination of Port and a cigar includes only the thick, dark wine labeled as "vintage," you're not giving Port all the credit it deserves. It's time to consider tawny Port.

Each type brings its own charms to a cigar pairing. Richer in feel and flavor, vintage Port exudes notes like fruitcake, licorice, bramble and cobbler. Its racy sibling, tawny, emphasizes more elegant notes of caramel, hazelnut, almond, cinnamon and dried fruits and flowers.

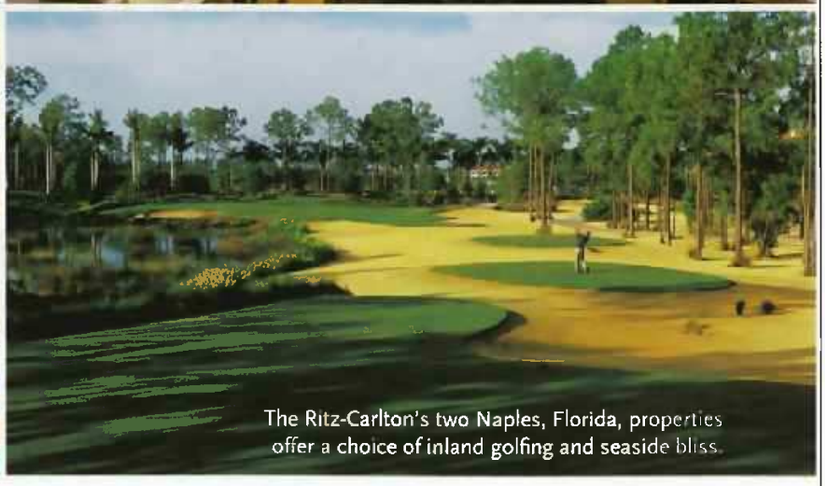
Both are fortified wines, born from the same process. During fermentation a neutral brandy is added to the grape must (juice, skins, seeds and stems), which stops the conversion of sugar to alcohol. The wines end up sweeter, but with more alcohol (about 20 percent, or 40 proof).

It's in maturation that the two Ports diverge. Vintage examples are aged in oak for just two or three years before being bottled and labeled by the year the grapes were grown. Buyers expect to squirrel them away for decades while they develop their potential. By contrast, tawny Ports stay in wood casks for one to three decades. The result is a lighter-colored wine that is ready to consume off the shelf. This long cask aging also means no sediment and a wine that will keep in the refrigerator for a month or two after opening. (Vintage Ports last only a week or so.)

Most tawny Ports are blended from a range of years and are labeled with age-statement averages of 10, 20 or 30 years. Wine & Soul Tawny Port 10 Years Old NV ($50), with its streamlined feel, showed birch beer, cinnamon, dried cherry and toasted raisin bread, while scoring 91 points in *Wine Spectator*, CIGAR AFICIONADO's sister publication. Churchill Tawny Port 30 Years Old NV (93 points, $110) married hedonism and intellectualism, with an array of nuts, bergamot and caramel.

A second tawny option is single-vintage wine—sometimes called *colheita*—which focuses on a particular year even while featuring extensive wood aging. Poças Junior Port Colheita 1997 (94 points, $75) is an energetic sweet wine from a powerful vintage, with notes of ginger beer, Earl Grey tea, toffee, singed sesame and salted caramel. Taylor Fladgate Port Single Harvest Very Old 1967 (98 points, $300) draws you in with a pistachio aroma before showering the palate with a spectrum of buckwheat, toasted sesame, walnut shell, menthol and licorice that has such viscosity and tension that it seems to cry out for a cigar partner.

—*James Molesworth*



The Ritz-Carlton's two Naples, Florida, properties offer a choice of inland golfing and seaside bliss.

Ritz-Carltons of Naples, Florida

For sand traps and sandy beaches, for scrumptious eats and opulent shopping, well-heeled northerners who would rather wear sandals in the winter have long gone to Naples, Florida.

Naples sings a song of casual affluence, and what better place for Ritz-Carlton to play a duet. It has two properties in Naples, the Ritz-Carlton Naples on the beach and the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort Naples at the upscale inland Tiburon development. The properties bring the world of Naples together with golf, tennis, surf and sun through a connection of a shuttle and sophistication.

The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort has the higher visibility of the two. The Greg Norman's Franklin-Templeton Shootout event held on the Gold Course has been a fixture for 15 years, and the LPGA's final event of the season, the CME Group Tour Championship has been there since 2015. Two courses designed by Norman, serving both the hotel and the Tiburon community as a private club, provide a clubby atmosphere often lacking in a purely resort setting. The golf pro shop has an impressive array of golf fashions over a wide range of lines.

The hotel has renovated its 295 rooms and club lounge and is reimagining its dining spaces. What it didn't need to reimagine were its levels of service and comfort, which are typically Ritz. You could always take the short walk to the golf clubhouse for lunch or a quaff, but just sitting on the back patio—the Bella Vista Lounge—outside the lobby bar gives you a view of the course and the tropical landscaping as well as a place to smoke a cigar, several brands of which are offered at the bar.

Pools and a small spa facility grace the golf resort, but if it's the beach or the full spa experience you want, you can hop the complimentary shuttle to the other Ritz, 10 minutes away. There, the full glory of the Gulf of Mexico can be yours, as well as a 50,000-square-foot spa that offers all manner of treatments and pampering. Plus, a full-service beach facility with lounges, drinks and dining services is at hand.

Most of the Ritz on the Gulf eateries, such as the casual Gumbo Limbo and adjoining Sand Bar, Terrazza, take advantage of the beach setting. For the Sushi lover there is Dusk, with outdoor seating and a 13-course menu is served *Omakase*-style, which translates to "I'll leave it to you," and in this case means being served the delights of chef Harunobu Furuta at his whim. A steakhouse, The Grill, offers more formal dining. And you are located a short drive or cab ride from 5th Avenue South, Naples' dining, shopping and cultural center.

So, if a Naples trip is in your plans, you can "put on the Ritz." In this case, two of them.

Visit ritzcarlton.com

—Jeff Williams

9
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- Jonathan Drew
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José Pepín García

TOP 25 CIGARS OF THE YEAR

2015: MY FATHER LE BIJOU 1922 - TORPEDO BOX PRESSED "CIGAR OF THE YEAR"

2014: MY FATHER #3 - CREMA

2013: MY FATHER LE BIJOU 1922 - TORPEDO BOX PRESSED.

2012: FLOR DE LAS ANTILLAS - TORO "CIGAR OF THE YEAR"

2011: LA RELOBA SELECCION SUMATRA - TORPEDO.

2010: MY FATHER #2 - BELICOSO.

2009: MY FATHER #1 - ROBUSTO.

2008: DON PEPIN GARCIA ORIGINAL - LANCERO.

2007: DON PEPIN GARCIA CUBAN CLASSIC - ROBUSTO 1979.

By cigar aficionado

No 1
CIGAR OF THE YEAR
RATED
96
Cigar Aficionado
2012

MY FATHER
CIGARS
Don Pepín García
FAMILY

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2015

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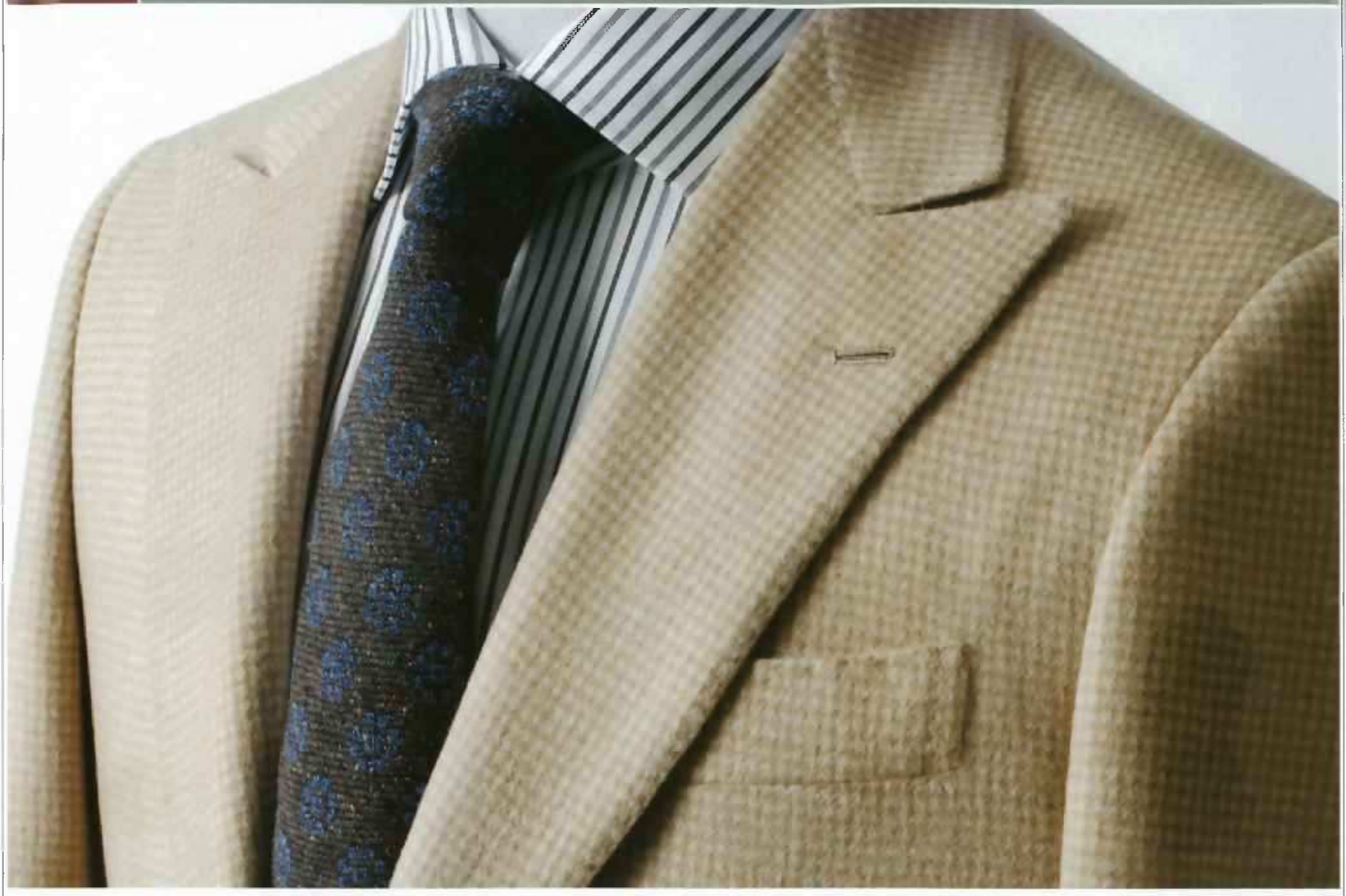

The Camel Hair Jacket

It's easy to think of camel hair strictly as the fabric for dowdy jackets or overcoats worn by the polo set. But take another look. The breathable winter fabric is getting more versatile. Once seen strictly in solid tan, camel hair jackets, like the one pictured from Kiton ($5,845), are sporting patterns and rakish peak lapels. Last year, Caruso took a bold step making an entire suit out of blue pinstripe camel hair. The fabric house Loro Piana further boosted camel hair's image by spinning from fibers as small as 17 microns, comparable to a Super 120 fabric.

Camel hair has always had its natural thermostatic properties, providing insulation in the cold and keeping its wearer cool in the heat. You can thank the Bactrian camel—from which hair is collected to make fiber—for these heat-regulating characteristics. This particular camel (two humps, not one) makes its habitat in a wide range of climates and altitudes across Central Asia. Its fine, soft undercoat is collected by shearing, combing, or simply waiting for the camel to naturally molt. Regardless, the camel is not harmed by sharing its coat with us.

Now a staple of luxury fashion, the camel look was imported by equestrian Brits in the 1920s and 30s. The fabric has remained in men's fashion ever since, though now it's used in everything from powerful-looking blazers and accessories to three-piece suits. It is most familiar in its natural golden-tan color, but camel hair can be dyed a range of colors or blended with other threads to create fabrics with extra softness, flexibility or shine. The fabric has a smooth hand like cashmere, but isn't as soft and delicate—a favorable quality if your clothes take a beating.

To stay warm this winter, consider Brooks Brothers Two-Button Camel Hair Sport Coat, with notched lapels, a center vent, flap pockets and leather wrapped buttons (the unattached sleeve buttons can be made functional, $698). You might also choose the Hickey Freeman Baby Camel Hair Jacket, a stylish two-button offering with notched lapels, side vents, and half lining for added mobility. This eye-catching garment is sewn from 100 percent baby camel hair—prized for its comfort and softness ($1,495).

Visit brooksbrothers.com, hickeyfreeman.com, kiton.it

—David Clough

JEFF HARRIS

Crown Royal
NORTHERN HARVEST
RYE

2017 CANADIAN WHISKY *of the* YEAR

SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS COMPETITION 2016 GOLD MEDAL

WORLD WHISKY OF THE YEAR — JIM MURRAY'S WHISKY BIBLE 2016 — Crown Royal RYE

CANADIAN WHISKY OF THE YEAR — JIM MURRAY'S WHISKY BIBLE 2017 — CROWN ROYAL NORTHERN HARVEST RYE

ULTIMATE SPIRITS CHALLENGE 2016 — 92 POINTS

"To say this is a masterpiece is barely doing it justice."
– Jim Murray, Whisky Bible

"It completely changes what we expect out of a Canadian whisky."
– Clay Risen, The New York Times

"This really is sensational stuff."
– Tony Sachs, Robb Report

"You simply cannot get more bang for the buck than this in the spirits world"
– Larry Olmsted, Forbes

"A great showcase of what Canadian whisky can be"
– Jake Emen, Eater

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

CROWN ROYAL Northern Harvest Rye Blended Canadian Whisky 45% Alc./Vol. ©2017 The Crown Royal Company, Norwalk, CT

601
FULL BODIED
#LAZONADEMI
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II-91-
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WARHEAD
ESPINOSA
93
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#6
CIGAR
ERIK
ESPINOSA
MOSTRO
601
ESPINOSA
601
601
601
601
601
EACH BRUISE WAS A LESSON, EVERY SCAR HAS A STORY.
ESPINOSACIGARS

The Swatch Revolution

The Swiss labeled it The Crisis. The Swiss mechanical watch industry was in a death spiral as cheap, highly accurate quartz watches from Asia had flooded the market during the '70s. Watch production dwindled, companies were shuttered, countless jobs were lost, and mechanical movements, considered worthless at the time, were reportedly dumped in lakes. But in 1983 Nicolas Hayek, who'd been asked to liquidate two ailing Swiss watch firms, had a genius vision: he would produce affordable, design-driven, plastic Swiss-made quartz watches that would compete by bringing a wow fashion factor to what were essentially commodity items.

Swatches were collectible, trendy and—thanks to their special editions and collaborations with artists, fashion designers and pop culture luminaries—expressive. The first Swatch/artist collaboration was with Kiki Picasso, and the 120 pieces from the 1985 edition are now the most valued Swatches in the resale market at $20,000 to $30,000. A 2015, auction of Swatches raked in $6 million for about 5,800 pieces.

Swatch not only made quartz watches cool and coveted, but helped the Swiss mechanical watch industry survive—and thrive. By the '90s, high-end Swiss watch brands managed to reposition their products as badges of status and sophistication rather than mere timekeepers. By selling the sizzle as opposed to the steak, they appealed to aspirational emotions rather than utilitarian function. And the Swatch Group also acted as a dominant force in the resurgence, supplying movements and other essential components to the industry at large and scooping up such legendary names as Breguet, Blancpain and Omega along the way.

In 2013, Swatch introduced its own take on the mechanical movement with the Sistem51, powered by the brand's first in-house automatic movement, the first of its kind built entirely by machine. Sistem51's movement has only 51 parts, boasts 17 pending patents and a 90-hour power reserve, all in a watch that sells for about $150. Battery not required. You can even view the movement through the case back, the same as with pricey Swiss timepieces. And this year, the aptly named Sistem51 Irony ($195 to $235), steps it up in stainless steel and further scales up the collection with dials appointed with luminous SuperLuminova indexes, as well as straps made of rubber (instead of silicone) and padded leather.

For those collectors who demand more exclusivity, the Swatch Club offers special editions to members only. The latest Club design, Piolin's Time, took its inspiration from a colorful, hand-embroidered wall hanging, "Selva Blanca" by Argentinian artists Leo Chiachio and Daniel Giannone. Limited to 2,626 numbered pieces, the watch is embroidered with vivid motifs interpreted from the original work featuring the artists' pet Dachshund, Piolin.

Always count on Swatch to lighten the mood. While we still treasure our high horology masterpieces—and the niche isn't going anywhere—sometimes, we just want to have some fun.

Visit swatch.com

—Laurie Kahle

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Serie
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MELANIO
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V

#1 Cigar of the Year

2014

cigar aficionado RATED 96

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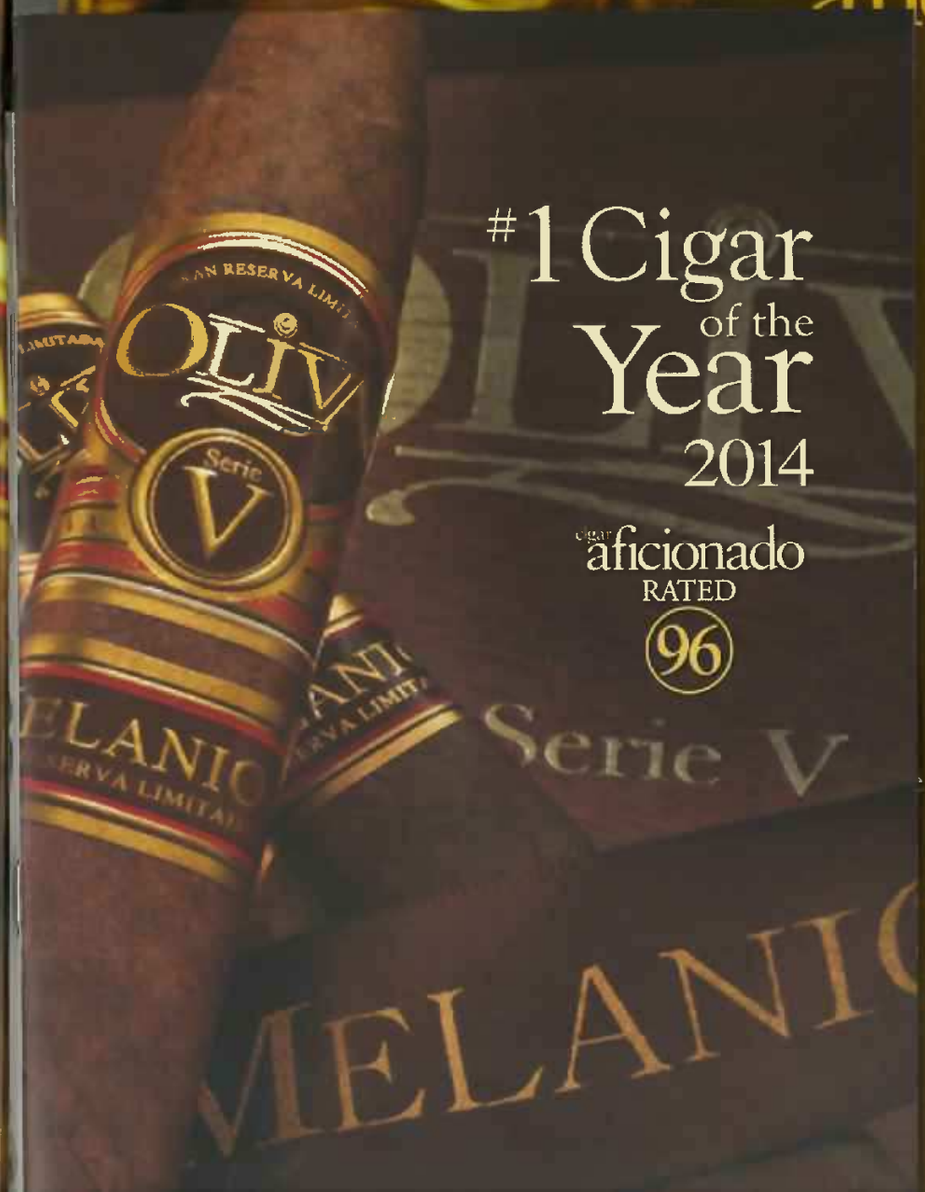

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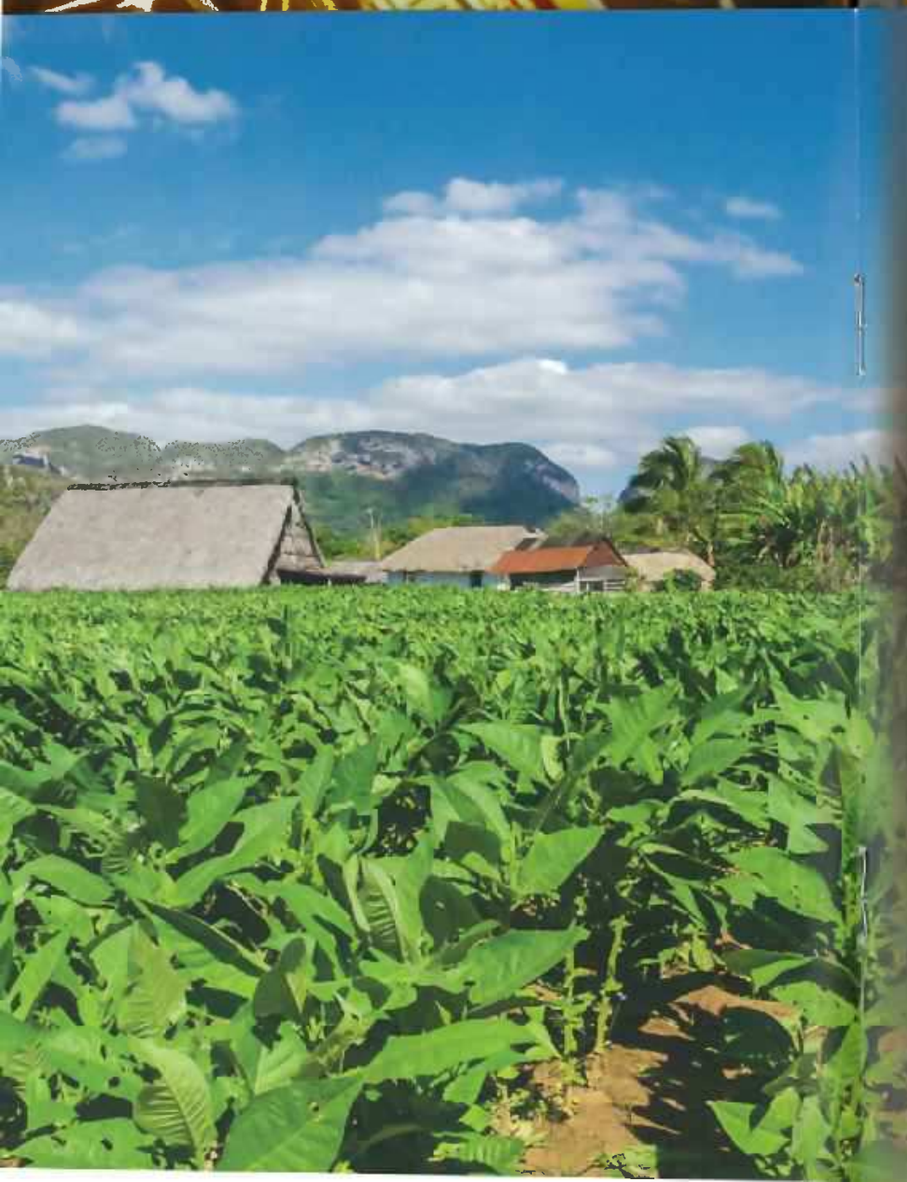
Oliva Cigar Co. 2016

The Oliva tradition of fine cigars

The Oliva family has a long and proud tradition of growing premium tobaccos and producing some of the finest premium cigars. The Oliva Serie V line of cigars are the finest the family has produced to date and are heralded as some of the most sought after in the cigar world. The latest addition to the Serie V line is the Oliva Serie V Melanio, named after the family's patriarch, Melanio Oliva.

Melanio Oliva first grew tobacco in Pinar Del Rio, Cuba in 1886. Over the years, he established a family tradition of quality that has echoed across the generations. Through challenges and changes, the Oliva family has proudly carried the standard of excellence and quality. Later, Melanio's grandson Gilberto re-established the business in Nicaragua.



Nicaragua: A natural and fertile tobacco climate

As the world has come to love Nicaraguan cigars, Oliva has emerged as a leader in the crafting of premium cigars. "I have grown tobacco in Cuba, Mexico, Honduras, Panama and even the Philippines," says family patriarch, Gilberto, Sr. "Nothing compares to Cuba like Nicaragua. Northern Nicaragua enjoys all the natural blessings for great Habano."

The Oliva Serie V Melanio is hand rolled using expertly fermented ligero fillers, leaves known for their robust and rich flavors. Five years in the making, this special cigar honors the family's founder, Melanio Oliva. The Serie V Melanio is sure to exceed premium cigar smokers' highest expectations.

7 X 50 Churchill 10/Box

6.5 X 52 Torpedo 10/Box

6.5 X 52 Figurado 10/Box

6 x 60 Double Toro 10/Box

5 X 52 Robusto 10/Box

4.5 X 46 Petit Corona 10/Box

Oliva Serie V Melanio Gran Reserva Limitada

After much work we arrived at a cigar that, like Serie V, is full flavored yet smooth. The long filler tobaccos are a blend of Oliva Nicaraguan habano that emphasizes tobacco from the Jalapa region, an area known for a more nuanced leaf than the Esteli or Condega regions. This carefully aged Jalapa blend produces a particularly flavorful smoke.

The wrapper is a proprietary seed grown by Oliva in Ecuador. The Melanio is a tremendously smooth cigar made up of hand picked, aged tobaccos that overflows with flavor.

As with all truly special blends, the Oliva Serie V Melanio is very limited. It is available in six sizes that best capture the essence of the blend: Churchill, Torpedo, Double Toro, Robusto, Petit Corona and the double-ended Figurado.

OLIVA
MELANIO
GRAN RESERVA LIMITADA
Serie V
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NEW RELEASES

LP Nicaragua | El Año | Illumination

LA PALINA
EST. 1896

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See what can fall into your life at: lapalinacigars.com

Rolls-Royce Dawn

If it hasn't dawned on you yet, there've been some big changes at Rolls-Royce in recent years. And one of the most obvious signs is the arrival of the new Rolls Dawn convertible. No, the staid British maker isn't about to move into the mainstream, and it isn't shifting gears to battery power—at least not immediately. But it is expanding its lineup with a series of new products that gives the elite marque a more modern look and feel while retaining that classic elegance and exclusivity that have made it an icon for more than a century.

Let's start by pointing out that the new Rolls-Royce Dawn is, in British lingo, a "drophead," or convertible. But for the fabric top, it shares most of its basics with Rolls's Wraith coupe. The British maker likes to call the new entry "the sexiest Rolls-Royce ever built," and if the looks and sighs it drew during several days of driving in and around Boston are any indication, that's clearly no exaggeration.

There's something more approachable about the Dawn than that classic Rolls-Royce flagship, the Phantom. And while at least some buyers may still prefer to luxuriate in the spacious back seat, letting the chauffeur negotiate traffic, there are plenty of reasons why they might also opt to take on driving duties.

Start with the 6.6-liter twin-turbo V-12 under that long and elegantly sculpted bonnet—sorry, hood—which makes an impressive 563 horsepower. That's the sort of number you might expect from an exotic supercar and, even with a mass of nearly three tons, you'll be in for a surprise the first time you mash the throttle and feel yourself sink into the plush, leather seats. Dawn's solid chassis and firm suspension delivered another surprise as we charged along some winding old roads outside of Boston. "Sporty" is not a term normally associated with Rolls-Royce, but Dawn could change that perception.

Of course, you can set the electronically controlled suspension to comfort mode and all but float over the roughest roads, the top down and the wind in your hair. There's something about the way the drophead has been outfitted: only the plushest of cowhides and the most elegantly hand-finished woods make it into the cabin. There are, of course, all the latest digital infotainment features, as well as the most modern electronic safety systems, such as active cruise control with automatic emergency braking.

The Rolls-Royce Dawn somehow finds a way to balance old-school and new while remaining true to the brand. And lest you worry about seeing too many of them on the road, it remains, at about $400,000, within reach of only the most elite of the one-percenters.

Visit rollsroycemotorcars.com

—*Paul A. Eisenstein*

The Truth About Jamon Iberico

If you've been underwhelmed after trying Spain's much-hyped Jamon Iberico, there's a reason: you probably weren't tasting the best. Banned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture until a decade ago, the luxury, free-range Iberian ham with the rich, nutty splendor was known here only by its reputation. What wasn't clear when the import floodgates opened was that it comes in several grades. Some are merely good. The utmost—those that exhibit a rare combination of breeding, feeding and curing—are exquisite and fetch prices of $190 a pound. To get the real deal you must learn to read the label or simply buy from brands like Cinco Jotas (aka 5J) that import only the top tier.

Spain designates the best as black label. It starts with a purebred Iberian pig, called *pata negra* for its black hooves. Lesser grades use crossbred pigs that are more prolific and earlier to develop. Another difference is diet. Optimally, the pig feeds exclusively on fallen acorns as it roams the Andalusian oak forests during the last three months of its life. This is how it gets its oily, nutty character. Such pigs will be stamped *bellota* (Spanish for acorn). However, red label pigs (crossbreeds) also share that designation. Green label indicates crossbred pigs fed with a mix of acorns and grain. White label hams are crossbred and never eat a single acorn.

Since 2010, the Spanish government has gotten much stricter with the labeling requirements of its Iberico hams. Manufacturers now have to specify the details of breeding and diet. Aging is also important. Ideally, these haughty hocks should spend three years in a curing facility.

To enjoy Iberico ham you can find a restaurant that serves Cinco Jotas Iberico. More involved is buying and cutting the whole leg, but you'll also need a ham holder, the right cutlery and lessons on the proper technique. Besides, that's a lot of ham for one household. Better to find a purveyor that sells it by the slice. Cinco Jotas hams are available in precut packets from such mail-order outfits as La Tienda and Hamlovers.com, which specialize in Spanish imports.

Served at room temperature, each glistening piece should pretty much melt in your mouth. That's not an opinion, it's actually scientific fact. Acorns are high in oleic acid, giving the pig fat not only a sublime taste, but a low melting point that results in a true porcine epiphany.

Visit cincojotas.com, tienda.com, hamlovers.com

—*Gregory Mottola*

LAURA LEON / THE NEW YORK TIMES / REDUX

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Fire Irons

Since the first time a caveman sharpened a stick and skewered his hunk of saber-toothed tiger because he wanted his meat dead-on medium rare—not bloody, but certainly not burnt—man has worked fires with tools. The instinct to poke at a blaze remains, but today's instruments are hardly as crude and far more effective.

Cooking in front of an open pit may have taken a back seat to sitting around enclosed flames, but every hearth deserves a sturdy, rugged set of fire irons. They should be handy and functional as well as attractive, quality tools that can stand up to a three-pound chunk of burning oak.

In managing a blaze, Job No. 1 is making adjustments to your fire as it burns. You move wood around the andirons to create precise air holes to feed the flame essential oxygen. For this, the poker is the indispensible tool you reach for most often. Its tip is used to ease logs back and forth, trying to find that little opening between stacked wood that optimizes air flow. The halberd-style hook is your friend for bigger jobs, best employed to pull wayward logs back into proper position.

The rake is a less common, but comes in handy after the early logs have been rendered to coals. Those glowing coals at the bottom of your fire will feed the flames for hours, if properly tended. An apparently dead fire can be rekindled simply by working the embers. The rake can also be used with the poker for major log rearrangement. Some sets include a pair of tongs for this.

The brush and the spade work in tandem, for cleanup. The spade can also be employed for moving coals around, should they need to be moved farther than the rake would allow.

Go cheap and you will be frustrated. The Leather Rivet Hearth Tool Set from Restoration Hardware ($325) is a fine example of quality; a masculine set crafted by California blacksmith Jefferson Mack and his team. Iron comes from the furnace blazing red, is slapped on the anvil and hand forged with hammers to take on the final shape. The set is hefty and well balanced, with a strip of leather for a handle to keep your hands cool as you channel your inner Prometheus.

Once your fire is set, you'll need a more fragile tool: a rocks glass. In the cold months we recommend a peaty single malt, a robust cigar and a good book to be your company in front of the fire.

Visit restorationhardware.com

—*David Savona*

JEFF HARRIS

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Yacht-Based Heli-Skiing

For avid skiers, heli-skiing is the sport's Holy Grail. It promises deep unbroken powder on every run, all day long as well as no crowds and no lift lines—in fact, no lifts. That means more time going down, less time going up, and even the time aloft is spectacular, something people pay top dollar to do all around the world just for the scenery—except skiers do it eight to 10 times a day in some of the most stunning settings on earth. Hardly anyplace has bad heli-skiing, but few destinations are more acclaimed than Alaska, with famously reliable snowfall, first-world safety and aviation standards and thousands of square miles of dramatic, varied terrain. It's all long descents and stunning vistas, from knife-edged peaks to glaciers to coastal fjords.

But even in this alpine paradise, some options stand above the others, and it is hard to beat the uniquely decadent yacht-based operation offered by Black Ops, a veteran outfitter headquartered in Alaska's heli-ski capital of Valdez. While most companies use remote mountain lodges or rustic cabins, this new package for 2017 includes accommodations aboard the 72-foot *Christian*, sailing on Prince William Sound. A seven-night private trip mixes incredible skiing with creature comforts, taking off directly from the yacht and returning guests to its deck—just steps from the open air aft hot tub, where tired legs can recover while watching the glaciers go by. The helicopter, a best of breed A-Star B-350, provides skiers and snowboarders access to the most remote slopes in the Chugach Mountains, 2,500 square miles of mountains and glaciated terrain which average more than 1,000 inches of snow each winter. Where you ski is customizable for your group's desires, with terrain suitable for intermediate to advanced skiers and snowboarders and runs ranging from 2,500 to 6,000 vertical feet.

The yacht has deluxe accommodations for up to eight people, and the package includes 14 hours of flight time, with additional hours available for purchase. Two professional heli-ski guides (some outfits use one, but front and back is safer) are always on hand. All other yacht-based activities, including fishing and kayaking, are included, as are all meals—such as fresh wild Copper River salmon—and all beverages. Cutting-edge safety gear including airbag packs, beacons, harnesses, shovels and probes are also provided. Rates start at $89,600 a week.

Black Ops also runs one of the poshest lodge-based heli operations in the state, Robe Lake Lodge, a log chalet built in 2008, complete with hot tub, sauna, Internet, satellite TV, private chef and panoramic views. With just six rooms, the lodge is ideal for six to 10-person private groups. For 2017 the company is adding a more adventurous option, a new remote helicopter accessed ski-touring basecamp in the Chugach outside Thompson Pass, using Arctic Oven heated tents, made in Alaska to withstand extreme conditions. Of course, there's always the yacht.

Visit blackopsvaldez.com

—Larry Olmsted

TIM BOUCHARD / BLACK OPS VALDEZ

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Listening Clubs

It's often said that it's better to have a friend with a boat than to own one. The same may apply to truly amazing sound systems: it's best to let someone else pay, because a planned $5,000 investment can quickly swell to 10 or 20 times that amount. And when system costs head toward half a million dollars as they have at Spiritland, a new café-bar in London's emerging King's Cross district, it's best left to the pros.

Spiritland is one in a spate of clubs and restaurants in London that devote themselves to the purity of sound. It's a bold effort to reclaim music quality that has been lost in the streaming, digital, just-play-it-from-the-iPhone era. While Spiritland operates as a café during the day and a bar at night, these new establishments are not about clubbing and dancing, they are about hearing music in a peaceful setting with almost unbelievable clarity.

The custom-built sound system here is remarkable: a handbuilt four-channel, 12-input rotary mixer by Isonoe, amplification from Atelier Du Triode and a towering Kuzma turntable used to play whole albums at a time. When the DJ deigns to play digital it goes through a dCS Vivaldi digital-to-analog converter. Some equipment is also offered for sale, if you should catch the audio bug.

It's not necessary to test the Spiritland system at loud volumes to understand what it offers. It's an intimate sound, with the timbre and emotion of a singer's voice heard as never before, and it's possible to hear a band gel because of the clarity offered each instrument. You never feel the system straining to pull its weight. There is ample, unused power in reserve, which makes the overall sound more assured.

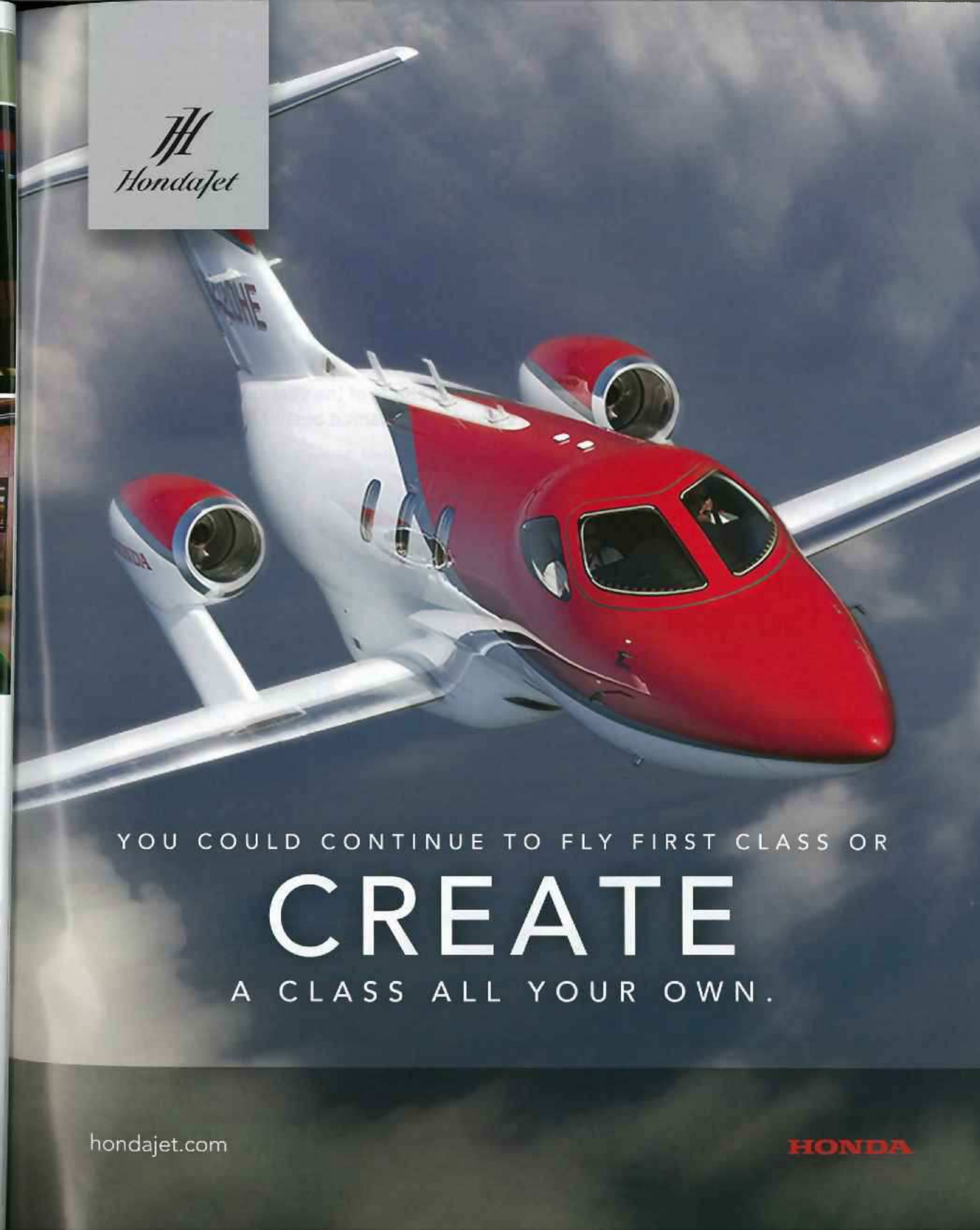
Artistic director Paul Noble says full-on rock like Led Zeppelin can be too intense in the relatively small space, while simpler recordings like Muddy Waters playing acoustic guitar can reveal incredible depth. Indeed, turning the volume up on Muddy's "My Home is in the Delta" gives listeners a chill—his voice and guitar shimmering with deep emotion. The system works great for dub, rhythm and blues, reggae and jazz, and sparkles with classical music, seen as the most demanding test.

"We're looking to put a lot of the love and detail and attention back into listening to music," Noble says. "We wanted to present the music with the best possible equipment, totally uncompromising, which allows a really deep exploration of all genres of music."

Visit spiritland.com

—Gregory Katz

ANDREW URWIN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TOP 25 CIGARS OF 2016

Our annual reassessment of the highest-scoring cigars of the year reveals the elite performers that were steadfast enough to be named best of the best

Distinction and consistency are the hallmarks of high quality in the cigar world. There are plenty of merely good cigars in existence. Many great ones too. But CIGAR AFICIONADO's list of Top 25 cigars showcases the exemplary—smokes that, even after multiple rounds of scrutiny and analysis, continue to produce one of life's finest experiences. Now in its 13th year, the CIGAR AFICIONADO Top 25 list is a tournament of sorts. First, we review the lineup of cigars rated throughout the year in CIGAR AFICIONADO and *Cigar Insider*—nearly 750. Then, we choose the cigars that scored 91 points or higher (but eliminate brand redundancies). After that, our tasting coordinator purchases those cigars at retail, strips the identifying bands and passes them out to our panel for an entirely new blind-tasting process. What remains after elimination are 25 of the most sublime, memorable and extraordinary smokes of the year.

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF HARRIS AND JOHN CURRY

andalusian ball

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1

La Flor Dominicana Andalusian Bull

Here is an unusual, perhaps unfamiliar cigar that gleams with distinction but doesn't have much market history, as it only came out last summer. The wrapper is a striking hue somewhere between red and brown and the beautiful shape is all curves and tapers. Salomones, as they're known in cigar factories, are far from an easy cigar to craft. Look closely at the band, which is a shade of emerald green, and you see the letters "LFD": La Flor Dominicana. The cigar is called the Andalusian Bull, and nothing about it is typical. But nothing about its creator, Litto Gomez is typical either. With Gomez, you'll find few of the tropes and stories typically associated with men in the tobacco business. No family history in tobacco. No Cuban lineage. No passed-down tobacco traditions. Born in Spain, but raised in Uruguay, Gomez came into the cigar industry in 1994 after a stint in the jewelry business went sour. His initial cigars were mild, but Gomez started getting the attention of premium smokers when he began producing stronger blends rolled in unusual shapes. Some will remember the El Jocko Perfecto No. 1 and all should know the wedge-shaped Chisel. Such odd shapes have become mainstays in the cigar world. Among serious smokers, the Chisel is now synonymous with La Flor Dominicana—which brings us to the Bull.

The La Flor Dominicana Andalusian Bull is a truly new concept within La Flor's portfolio of fine cigars. The size is based on that of an old cigar mold that Gomez found in Belgium. Naming it after Andalusia was a nod to Spain, the country where Gomez was born. And the silhouette of a matador on the band represents the celebrated history of the sport of bullfighting in Andalusia. That eye-catching shade of green is similar to that found on the Andalusian flag. But there's more to decode. The font on the band is based on Pablo Picasso's handwriting—he loved to paint bulls—and the scrollwork reflects patterns found on a bullfighter's uniform.

Fittingly, with this combination of heavy-handed and subtle symbolism comes a blend that is both bold and refined (like a bull and a matador). Gomez and his son Tony collaborated on the cigar and spent a fair amount of time fine-tuning the blend. The result was a cigar as intriguing in flavor as it is in appearance. It's a combination of Corojo-seed Ecuador Habano wrapper on a blend that consists primarily of Dominican Criollo '98 tobacco, a hybrid and a bit of Pelo d'Oro too. First impressions are bold and savory with strong notes of hickory and leather. But it continues to take on a complex spiciness of saffron and cumin as well as a slight tangy note that brings the strength and spice together quite gracefully—and it only gets better with every puff.

Gomez owns the brand and company with his wife, Ines Lorenzo-Gomez. This marks the first time that La Flor Dominicana has been awarded No. 1 Cigar of the Year.

96 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera La Flor S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS: 6 1/2" by 64 ring
PRICE: $15.00

LITTO GOMEZ

CIGAR: JOHN CURRY; GOMEZ: BETSY HANSEN

2

Rocky Patel Sun Grown Maduro Robusto

More than 10 years ago Rocky Patel put out a line called the Rocky Patel Sun Grown. Since then, it's become one of his staple brands, but it wasn't until last year that he decided to create a maduro version.

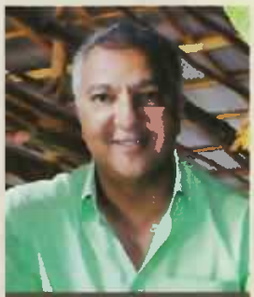
Unlike the original line, which is still made in Honduras, the new version is made in Nicaragua at Patel's TaviCusa factory. It's also rolled in a dark, Connecticut broadleaf wrapper. This new interpretation was dubbed the Rocky Patel Sun Grown Maduro, and the Robusto is a great representation of the full-bodied blends coming out of Nicaragua today.

The first Sun Grown was a dark cigar to begin with, but this more modern version has surpassed the original in every respect—it's darker, it's stronger and it's more complex. The cigars are also trunk-pressed, giving them an attractive appearance that hints at the bold blend of Nicaraguan tobacco under the broadleaf wrapper—and they harmonize beautifully, imparting earthy, nutty notes and bittersweet chocolate with the sweeter properties of the wrapper.

Astute observers will notice the new packaging as well. Both band and box have their own unique design to adequately give these cigars their own identity.

95 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera Villa Cuba S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5" by 50 ring
PRICE: $8.60


ROCKY PATEL

3

Partagás Serie E No. 2

The fattest Partagás in the regular-production Cuban portfolio is also the best Partagás that Cigar Aficionado smoked this year. At 54 ring gauge, it's clearly part of Cuba's recent initiative to make its cigars larger and fatter in general. Traditionalists might scoff at the beefed-up parameters, but it would be a mistake as Habanos has loaded this cigar with plenty of fine, complex tobacco.

The Partagás Alphabet Series dates back to the 1930s, when the brand first appeared on the British market. When it debuted, the line included Series A through D with four sizes assigned to each letter, for a total of 16 sizes. The brand was discontinued in the 1960s but brought back incrementally in subsequent years. All cigars in the letter series are dressed in a distinctive red-and-gold band that separates them from the core Cuban Partagás cigar line. For years, fans of the Partagás letter series only had the Serie D No. 4 to enjoy, but Habanos has taken a new interest in the Partagás sub-brand and added a number of new sizes over the last few years. The Serie E No. 2 was released in 2011, but the samples with a box date of August 2016 mark the most impressive Cuban of the year.

94 POINTS

MADE BY: N/A
FACTORY LOCATION: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/2" by 54 ring
PRICE: £26.78

HABANOS S.A.

CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; PATEL: RICHARD LEONARDI

4

E.P. Carrillo Selección Oscuro Piramides Royal

As a cigar-maker who has pretty much done it all, Ernesto Perez-Carrillo has little to prove. He started as a true boutique operation in Little Havana, then became nationally recognized, before eventually selling his operation to one of the biggest cigar companies in the world. After that, he started all over again. So what can someone like Perez-Carrillo give the cigar world that he hasn't already? The answer is the E.P. Carrillo Selección Oscuro Piramides Royal. It's dark and imposing, but don't let that scare you. The blend isn't as aggressive as one might think. While it's certainly full of assertive character, it's nuanced as well. This effect is produced by the creative blending of Mexican wrapper, Ecuadoran binder and Nicaraguan filler. Perez-Carrillo is always playing with different tobaccos and experimenting with blends, and he has the means to do so. He owns the Tabacalera La Alianza factory in the Dominican Republic and is very involved in the sourcing and blending of his tobacco. This cigar is not only full of dried-fruit notes and a chocolate-covered raisin sweetness, but is an exercise in restraint and balance. Perez-Carrillo has redesigned the band, which you will see in our online video, but there are still cigars in the market with the original band, like the one shown here.

94 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera La Alianza S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Ecuador
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring
PRICE: $8.25

ERNESTO PEREZ-CARRILLO

5

Padrón Serie 1926 No. 90 (Natural)

Whether it be an anniversary or an important benchmark, it seems that the Padrón family is always celebrating something. And when they do, smokers end up with a great new cigar. The Padrón Serie 1926 No. 90 is a perfect example. It celebrates the life of company patriarch José Orlando Padrón, who turned 90 in June and is still active in the company he founded. The cigar is Padrón in almost every way—it's dark (even this natural version), it's rich and it leaves the familiar bold impressions of cocoa, earth and coffee on the palate in the way that only a Padrón cigar can. But it's unlike other Padróns due to its shape. All other cigars in the Padrón Serie 1926 line are squarely pressed, giving the line its signature look. Not true of the No. 90. This one is in the round. It also comes packaged in a glossy tubo—another first for the company. If you're unfamiliar with José Orlando Padrón's history, you should know this: the man has paid his dues. Over his storied career, he's had his offices in Miami bombed, his factory in Nicaragua burned to the ground and even a tobacco warehouse set ablaze. Despite this, he persevered and created some of the best cigars the world has ever seen.

94 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacos Cubanica S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/2" by 52 ring
PRICE: $19.50

JORGE & JOSÉ O. PADRÓN

CIGARS: JOHN CURRY, PEREZ-CARRILLO: PERRY HELLER, PADRÓN: CARINA SALVI

6

Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R Vitola "Forty-Four"

The name is certainly long, but it tells you almost everything you need to know about this Fuente cigar. Rosado Sungrown indicates the color and growing conditions of the wrapper leaf. And Magnum refers to the sizes of the cigars in the line. When the brand was first released, all the cigars were fairly thick. But more importantly, this cigar also ran contrary to the industry trend. At the time, many manufacturers in the premium sector were releasing strong, full-bodied cigars. Carlos "Carlito" Fuente Jr. decided to go in the opposite direction and made a cigar that was medium bodied in strength, but still registered as full-flavored on the palate—not an easy task. He accomplished this by creating a particular blend of Dominican tobaccos and pairing it with a wrapper leaf from Ecuador that, according to Fuente, has almost a decade of age. You might assume the cigar is called Vitola "Forty-Four" for its ring gauge, but the "Forty-Four" denotes the number of cigars packaged per box. This cigar is still fairly slim at 47 ring, but it's a great size, and each puff compels the next with unrelenting layers of spicy cinnamon, dried fruit, nuts and maple.

94 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS: 4 7/8" by 47 ring
PRICE: $8.15

CARLOS FUENTE JR.

7

Norteño Robusto Grande

The packaging of this brand is not only attractive, but a foreshadowing of the cigars inside—dark, flat and compact. That's a fair way to describe the appearance of the Norteño Robusto Grande. What the packaging doesn't tell you is that each cigar in the box has a lush, substantial draw that layers the palate with copious amounts of dense smoke. The combustion and performance are exemplary. Norteños come off the tables of La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate and from the mind of Willy Herrera, Drew Estate's master blender. He took a Mexican San Andrés wrapper, a Honduran binder and integrated the two with a filler blend of well-aged Nicaraguan tobaccos. Great construction, however, is not the only hallmark of this cigar. It's also rich with notes of raw cocoa bean, refined milk chocolate and nougat, yet maintains its earthy qualities without becoming too sweet. The name, which translates to "northerner" in Spanish refers to those in Estelí, which is located in the northern part of Nicaragua and where the Drew Estate factory resides. It's also a nod to Herrera himself, who is from Miami. He may be considered from the south in the United States, but in Nicaragua, he's a northerner.

94 POINTS

MADE BY: Gran Fabrica Drew Estate
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Honduras
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/2" by 54 ring
PRICE: $12.00

WILLY HERRERA

CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; FUENTE: JEFFERY SALTER

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use mountain snowmelt water,
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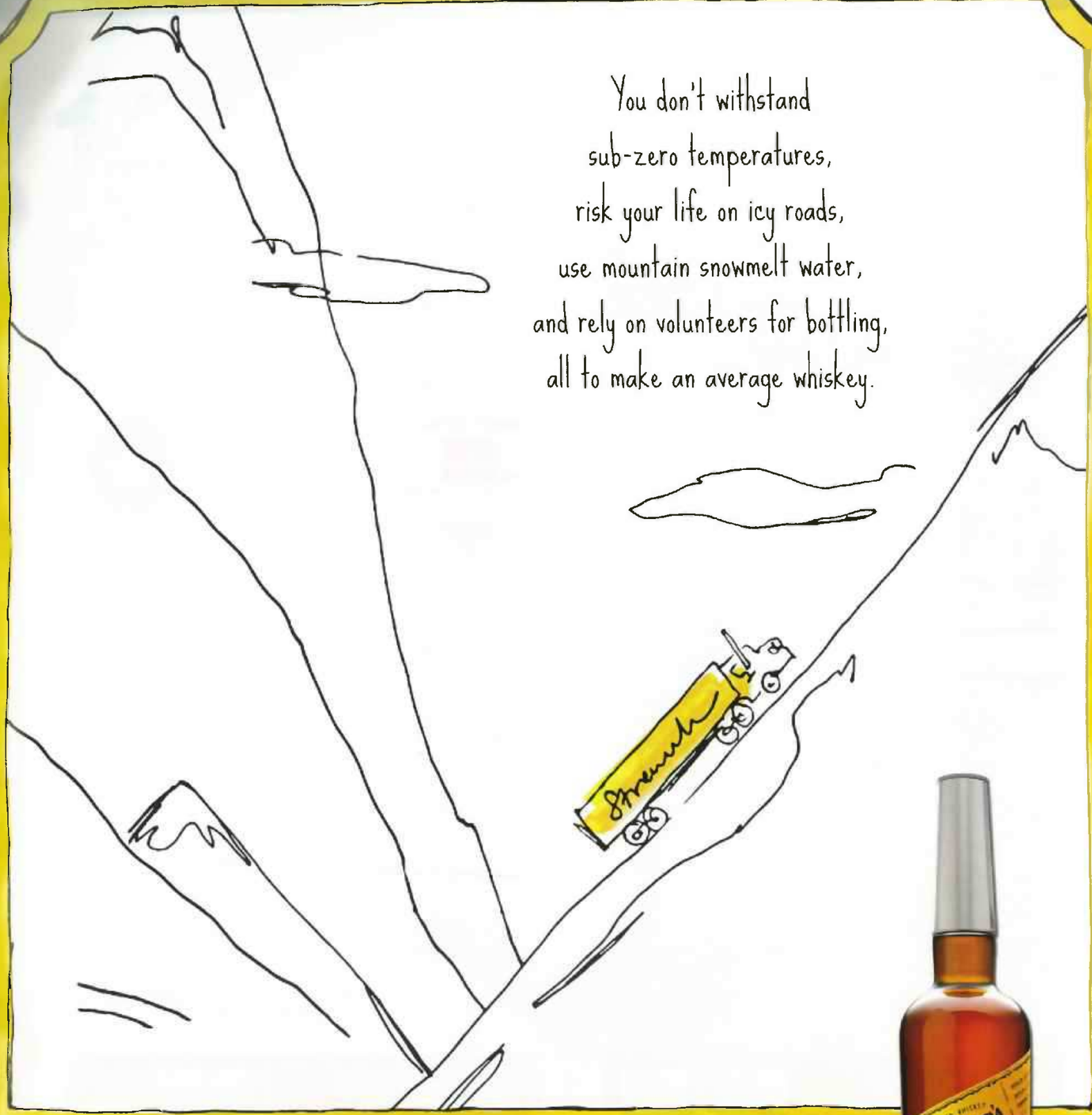

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8

Oliva Serie V Melanio Robusto

Many will remember that the Oliva Serie V Melanio Figurado was named Cigar of the Year in 2014. The brand continues its trajectory of excellence with the Robusto. It's a far more compact format, and perhaps more approachable, as not everyone is inclined to light up a large double figurado as their everyday smoke. The blend is centered around a Sumatra-seed wrapper grown in Ecuador paired with Nicaraguan tobacco. This combination isn't terribly common in the premium cigar world, but the Oliva Cigar Co. seems to understand the tobaccos and how they fit together for harmony and balance. Earlier in 2016, Oliva Cigar Co. was acquired by J. Cortez Cigars N.V., a Belgian tobacco company that wanted a premium cigar operation in its portfolio. Now they have one. Assurances have been made that nothing will change under the new ownership, and that J. Cortes will maintain Oliva's high standards. We certainly hope so. With the Oliva Serie V Melanio, they now have an extraordinary cigar blend on their hands. The smoke is silky, sweet and, at times intense with toast and cedar. The brand name commemorates Melanio Oliva, who first grew tobacco in Cuba in the 1800s.

94 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera Oliva S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5" by 52 ring
PRICE: $9.74

JOSÉ OLIVA

9

Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2

If there is a quintessential Cuban robusto, the Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2 probably holds that title. The size has been around for decades and is a favorite among fans of Cuban cigars for its delicate nuance, complexity and aroma. Not that this is a mild cigar. Subtlety and mild body aren't exactly the same thing, and the Epicure No. 2 is a case study in how a cigar can deliver layers of flavor while preserving delicacy and sophistication. The samples we smoked were from a February 2016 production date. Traditionalists should be happy that not too much has changed in terms of presentation over the years. The Hoyo Epicure No. 2 cigars still come packaged in wooden slide-lid cabinets, which are ideal for air-flow during long-term aging. They still come bundled with a ribbon, and the cigars are even offered in 50-count cabinets as an option to standard boxes of 25. The only major change has been the bands. Up until about 10 years ago, many cigars in wooden cabinets were packaged nude. Habanos S.A. changed that by putting bands on all cigars, cabinet or otherwise. Those who wish to pay homage to the past can simply remove the labels with ease.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: N/A
FACTORY LOCATION: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba
DIMENSIONS: 4 7/8" by 50 ring
PRICE: £16.95

HABANOS S.A.

CIGARS: JOHN CURRY; OLIVA: RICHARD LEONARDI

10

Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita

Consider the Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita a love letter to Honduras. It is composed of Honduran tobacco, made in Honduras and serves as a good example of how vibrant Honduran smokes can be. General Cigar Co. which manufactures this brand at its STG Danlí factory, grows a proprietary tobacco in the San Agustín area of Honduras near the Guatemala border, so this blend is a very quaint expression of a region-specific terroir. And with a suggested retail price of $5.29 (before local taxes), it's also a phenomenal bargain. Punch is a heritage cigar that's been in General's possession since 1997. While it parallels Cuba's Punch brand, these non-Cuban versions are only sold in the United States. This isn't the first time that the Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita has been on the CIGAR AFICIONADO Top 25 list—it made an appearance back in 2012. Over the last four years, the price increases have been minimal yet the quality has remained quite high. The brand debuted in 2003 when the demand for strong, full-bodied cigars had yet to reach its potential. Perhaps it was ahead of its time. It's certainly the most powerful of the Punches in General's portfolio.

To watch videos of the editors smoking the best cigars of the year, visit top25.CigarAficionado.com

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Scandinavian Tobacco Group, Danlí
FACTORY LOCATION: Honduras
WRAPPER: Honduras
BINDER: Honduras
FILLER: Honduras
DIMENSIONS: 4 1/2" by 52 ring
PRICE: $5.29

JHONYS DIAZ

CIGAR JOHN CURRY

TOP 25 AT A GLANCE

1	**La Flor Dominicana Andalusian Bull** Dom. Rep.	$15.00	6 1/2" by 64 ring	96
2	**Rocky Patel Sun Grown Maduro Robusto** Nicaragua	$8.60	5" by 50 ring	95
3	**Partagás Serie E No. 2** Cuba	£26.78	5 1/2" by 54 ring	94
4	**E.P. Carrillo Selección Oscuro Piramides Royal** Dom. Rep.	$8.25	6" by 52 ring	94
5	**Padrón Serie 1926 No. 90 (Natural)** Nicaragua	$19.50	5 1/2" by 52 ring	94
6	**Arturo Fuente Rosado SG Magnum R Vitola "Forty-Four"** Dom. Rep.	$8.15	4 7/8" by 47 ring	94
7	**Norteño Robusto Grande** Nicaragua	$12.00	5 1/2" by 54 ring	94
8	**Oliva Serie V Melanio Robusto** Nicaragua	$9.74	5" by 52 ring	94
9	**Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2** Cuba	£16.95	4 7/8" by 50 ring	93
10	**Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita** Honduras	$5.29	4 1/2" by 52 ring	93
11	**Casa Fernandez Miami Aganorsa Leaf Mad. Robusto Extra** U.S.A.	$9.00	5" by 54 ring	93
12	**Casa Turrent Serie 1901 Robusto** Mexico	$8.50	5 1/4" by 50 ring	93
13	**La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Belicoso** Nicaragua	$8.25	5 1/2" by 54 ring	93
14	**Aging Room Small Batch M356II Mezzo** Dom. Rep.	$9.32	6" by 54 ring	93
15	**CroMagnon Anthropology** Nicaragua	$7.50	5 3/4" by 46 ring	93
16	**El Centurion H-2K-CT Toro Box Pressed** Nicaragua	$8.10	6" by 52 ring	93
17	**Brick House Corona Larga** Nicaragua	$5.55	6 1/4" by 46 ring	93
18	**Alec Bradley Coyol Petit Lancero** Honduras	$6.95	6 1/2" by 41 ring	93
19	**Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo)** Cuba	£35.16	5 7/8" by 52 ring	93
20	**Enclave Churchill** Nicaragua	$6.70	7" by 52 ring	92
21	**Villiger San'Doro Colorado Robusto** Nicaragua	$8.00	5" by 50 ring	92
22	**Henry Clay Stalk Cut Toro** Dom. Rep.	$8.50	6" by 54 ring	92
23	**Casa Cuba Doble Cinco** Dom. Rep.	$11.90	5" by 50 ring	92
24	**Illusione mk** Nicaragua	$7.95	5 1/8" by 42 ring	92
25	**El Güegüense Corona Gorda** Nicaragua	$9.90	5 5/8" by 46 ring	92

11

Casa Fernandez Miami Aganorsa Leaf Maduro Robusto Extra

For many years, the name Aganorsa was known only to those in the tobacco industry. Aganorsa is an agricultural conglomerate and one of the largest growers and suppliers of Nicaraguan tobacco for the premium industry. The company is owned by Eduardo Fernández who started the Casa Fernandez and Casa Fernandez Miami brands. When it first came to market, Casa Fernandez was produced in Honduras. Years later, production was moved to Miami. The Casa Fernandez Miami Aganorsa Leaf brand was born in 2012. Fernández is able to supply the tobacco from his own company directly to these cigars, which are box-pressed and covered in a Mexican San Andrés wrapper, the only component that Fernández doesn't grow. Many companies use Aganorsa tobacco, but in this brand, and particularly this Robusto Extra size, the tobacco shows its own distinct style.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Casa Fernandez Miami
FACTORY LOCATION: U.S.A.
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5" by 54 ring
PRICE: $9.00

12

Casa Turrent Serie 1901 Robusto

The top growers of Mexican San Andrés wrapper leaf also produce an outstanding cigar—the Casa Turrent Serie 1901. It's named after the Turrent family, prolific producers of Mexican tobacco and creators of the Te-Amo brand, a value-cigar. Previous attempts by the Turrents to break into the upper echelons of the premium sector weren't terribly successful. That's changed. The Casa Turrent Serie 1901 launched on the international market in 2013, but didn't arrive in the U.S. until August 2015. Casa Turrent is the only cigar brand that carries the Turrent name in its title (in 2014, brand owner Alejandro Turrent discontinued all his other Turrent-branded lines). He aims to position Casa Turrent as his company's flagship premium brand. Judging by the performance of the Casa Turrent 1901 Robusto, he seems well on his way.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Casa Turrent
FACTORY LOCATION: Mexico
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua, Mexico
FILLER: Nicaragua, Mexico
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/4" by 50 ring
PRICE: $8.50

13

La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor Belicoso

The La Aroma de Cuba brand was put on the market by Ashton Distributors Inc. in late 2002. At the time, the cigars were made in Honduras. A few years later, production halted and the brand was in a temporary transitional phase. Today, La Aroma de Cubas are produced in Nicaragua at My Father Cigars. The brand is still owned by Ashton, but the company has expanded the La Aroma line by many degrees. Of all its different versions and extensions, Mi Amor has been a perennial high-performer within the pages of this magazine. The combination of dark, Mexican San Andrés wrapper with Nicaraguan filler has made it a go-to for fans of Nicaraguan cigars. The price is also attractive. Since the beginning, La Aroma de Cuba has promised to deliver the premium experience at a very reasonable price. This was Ashton's vision for the brand, and the company has kept its word.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: My Father Cigars S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Mexico
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/2" by 54 ring
PRICE: $8.25

JOHN CURR

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14

Aging Room Small Batch M356ii Mezzo

To understand the Aging Room Small Batch M356ii Mezzo, one must first look at the company's concept. Boutique Blends Cigars does not use the term "small batch" lightly. When brand owner Rafael Nodal finds a particular batch of tobacco, he creates only a finite amount of cigars. After the tobacco is finished, it's finished. No tobacco substitutions will be made over time to sustain the brand, no matter what the demand. Nor does he change the blend in hopes that no one will notice. The M356 was one of his first Small Batch releases, but the tobacco ran out, so Nodal created a similar blend called M356ii. This way, consumers know they're smoking something slightly different without being mislead. The Small Batch M356ii is a beautiful extension of the first blend, and the Mezzo scored 93 points for its savory, spicy qualities.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera Palma
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Dom. Rep.
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 54 ring
PRICE: $9.32

15

CroMagnon Anthropology

This marks the first time that a CroMagnon cigar has made it to the Top 25 list. Don't let the name fool you. The brand, owned by Skip Martin and produced in Nicaragua under the company RoMa Craft Tobac, does not make primitive cigars. Martin has paired a Connecticut broadleaf wrapper with a Nicaraguan filler blend. That, in and of itself, is not very uncommon in the premium world. But he's also incorporated a Cameroon binder, which isn't as orthodox. The result is a fairly bold smoke with earthy aspects of dark cocoa and nutty qualities that play off each other effectively. Perhaps the earth is the underlying theme here, between the character of the smoke and the anthropological motif. Named Anthropology, the relatively slim, 46 ring gauge cigar scored 93 points—a civilized smoke that evokes Cro-Magnon man.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Nica Sueño S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf
BINDER: Cameroon
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 3/4" by 46 ring
PRICE: $7.50

16

El Centurion H-2K-CT Toro

It isn't quite as dark as Connecticut broadleaf, and it isn't quite as light as Connecticut shade. Lying somewhere in the middle is the El Centurion H-2K-CT Toro, an intensely flavorful cigar with an unusual hybrid wrapper. You can ask the Garcia family exactly who it is that grows the Cuban-seed wrapper on the El Centurion H-2K-CT, but they're not likely to say. We know it comes from somewhere in Connecticut, we know it's a Havana 2000 seed hybrid and we know the wrappers are sungrown. Outside of that, the Garcias aren't talking. El Centurion started as a limited-edition release, but last year it hit the market as a full-fledged spinoff brand from the original with a different blend. The box-pressed H-2K-CT cigars are medium to full bodied and beautifully constructed at the My Father Cigars S.A. factory.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: My Father Cigars S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Habano
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 52 ring
PRICE: $8.10

JOHN CURR

17

Brick House Corona Larga

A reminder of the last economic recession, the Brick House brand was brought to market during the tough financial times when a value-priced cigar was most welcome. But there's history to the brand. Brick House was an old cigar named after the brick house in Hungary where company founder Julius Caeser Newman lived as a child. He eventually started his own cigar company in Cleveland, Ohio in 1895 and launched Brick House in 1937. The line was retired for decades, but resurrected in 2009. A few things have changed. Firstly, the economy has improved and secondly, it's now made in J.C. Newman's own Nicaragua factory. What hasn't changed is the value—Brick House is still a great bargain. The Corona Larga scored 93 points and retails for only $5.55. Think of it as a recession special—even in a positive economy.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Puros de Estelí Nicaragua S.A. (PENSA)
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6 1/4" by 46 ring
PRICE: $5.55

18

Alec Bradley Coyol Petit Lancero

In honor of a particularly fertile farm in Honduras, the Alec Bradley Coyol is named after a plantation of the same name. Brand owner Alan Rubin believes that the Coyol farm produces tobacco of distinction and found a way to incorporate its leaves into a tasty, dynamic blend that stays interesting with every puff. There are elements of Coyol tobacco in each part of the cigar. The wrapper is from Coyol, as is one of the binders and part of the filler. It makes sense that the Petit Lancero performed so well. The slim dimensions naturally emphasize the wrapper and give the smoker more of an estate tobacco experience, as opposed to merely a regional one. It's a great combination of Honduran and Nicaraguan tobacco, and scored 93 points for delivering an exquisite smoke. It's also the ideal cigar for those left who still enjoy slim sizes.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: Fabrica de Tabacos Raices Cubanas S. de R. L.
FACTORY LOCATION: Honduras
WRAPPER: Honduras
BINDER: Honduras, Nicaragua
FILLER: Honduras, Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6 1/2" by 41 ring
PRICE: $6.95

19

Cohiba Siglo VI (Tubo)

There are a lot of "firsts" surrounding the Cohiba Siglo VI. It was the first addition to the Linea 1492 (or Siglo Series) since the brand was released. It was the first Cohiba in a tube. It was the first tube with the two-part, pull-cap design to come out of Cuba. It was the first Cohiba to exceed a ring gauge of 50. And it was also the first Cohiba to be on CIGAR AFICIONADO's Top 25 list, making its inaugural appearance for the best cigars of 2004. Despite the long list of firsts, the Siglo VI is also a fantastic cigar. Many are made at El Laguito, which is Cohiba's mother factory, and even though the ring gauge is fairly heavy, Siglo VI cigars only have half a leaf of ligero tobacco in the blend, so the smoke has body, but isn't too powerful. Balance in blending is a difficult act, but necessary, especially with Cohiba—probably the most famous cigar name in the world.

93 POINTS

MADE BY: N/A
FACTORY LOCATION: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
FILLER: Cuba
DIMENSIONS: 5 7/8" by 52 ring
PRICE: £35.16

JOHN CURRY

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BEST CIGAR BUYS OF THE YEAR

Life seems to get more and more expensive each year, so it's comforting to know that you can still get a highly rated, handmade cigar for only a few bucks. In 2016 we rated nearly 50 smokes that scored 88 points or higher but cost $6 or less (before taxes). Our list includes offerings from the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, Cuba—even two of our Top 25 cigars. They come in a range of shapes and sizes, with a considerable number of familiar brand names. And while some of these cigars are small, like the 4-inch-long Arturo Fuente Short Story, there are a few large Churchills that made the grade, two from Alec Bradley Cigars and one from Oliva Cigar Co. Cigar fans on a budget, take notice: affordable luxury is alive and well. *—David Clough*

93 POINTS

Brick House Corona Larga
Nicaragua • 6 1/4" by 46 ring • $5.55

Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita
Honduras • 4 1/2" by 52 ring • $5.29

91 POINTS

Arturo Fuente Hemingway Short Story Maduro
Dom. Rep. • 4" by 49 ring • $5.60

La Libertad Churchill
Dom. Rep. • 6 1/2" by 50 ring • $6.00

Oliva Serie O No. 4
Nicaragua • 5" by 43 ring • $5.36

Padilla La Pilar Robusto
Honduras • 5" by 54 ring • $5.50

Saint Luis Rey Belicoso
Honduras • 6 1/8" by 52 ring • $5.48

90 POINTS

CAO Pilón Corona
Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 44 ring • $5.99

Casa Magna Colorado Pikito
Nicaragua • 4 3/4" by 42 ring • $5.40

Fonseca Nicaragua Toro
Nicaragua • 6" by 50 ring • $5.99

Heat Corojo by J. Fuego Robusto
Honduras • 5" by 50 ring • $5.50

Joya de Nicaragua Antaño 1970 Machito
Nicaragua • 4 3/4" by 42 ring • $5.40

Nica Rustica Short Robusto
Nicaragua • 4 1/2" by 50 ring • $5.95

Oliva Serie G Maduro Belicoso
Nicaragua • 5" by 52 ring • $5.93

Padrón 2000
Nicaragua • 5" by 50 ring • $5.50

Punch London Club
Honduras • 5" by 40 ring • $2.89

89 POINTS

7-20-4 Hustler Series Dog Walker
Honduras • 4 1/4" by 40 ring • $6.00

Alec Bradley American Classic Blend Churchill
Nicaragua • 7" by 48 ring • $5.90

Alec Bradley American Sun Grown Blend Churchill
Nicaragua • 7" by 48 • $5.90

Asylum Premium 44x4
Nicaragua • 4" by 44 ring • $5.76

H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon Petite Corona
Dom. Rep. • 5" by 40 ring • $5.70

H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon Lonsdale
Dom. Rep. • 6 5/8" by 44 ring • $5.81

Joya de Nicaragua Antaño Dark Corojo Peligroso
Nicaragua • 5" by 44 ring • $5.40

Joya Red Robusto
Nicaragua • 5 1/4" by 50 ring • $5.75

Nat Sherman Metropolitan Selection Habano Short Robusto
Dom. Rep. • 4 1/2" by 54 ring • $5.50

Oliva Serie G Maduro Robusto
Nicaragua • 4 1/2" by 50 ring • $5.56

Padilla Connecticut Short Robusto
Nicaragua • 4 1/4" by 60 ring • $6.00

Padilla Corojo '99 Robusto
Honduras • 5" by 54 ring • $6.00

Perdomo Small Batch Series Sun Grown Half Corona
Nicaragua • 4" by 46 ring • $5.00

Romeo y Julieta Reserve Corona
Honduras • 5 5/8" by 45 ring • $5.89

Vegueros Mañanita
Cuba • 4" by 46 ring • 3.70 Euro ($4)

Viva Republica Advanced Warfare Petit Corona
Dom. Rep. • 4" by 41 • $5.00

88 POINTS

Arturo Fuente Cuban Corona Maduro
Dom. Rep. • 5 1/4" by 45 ring • $5.65

Arturo Fuente Petit Corona
Dom. Rep. • 5" by 38 • $5.65

Brick House Robusto
Nicaragua • 5" by 54 ring • $5.75

Fonseca Nicaragua Petit Corona
Nicaragua • 5" by 42 ring • $4.99

Fonseca Nicaragua Robusto
Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 54 ring • $5.79

Kristoff Cameroon Matador
Dom. Rep. • 6 1/2" by 56 ring • $5.08

Last Call by A.J. Fernandez Geniales
Nicaragua • 4 1/2" by 48 ring • $5.00

Macanudo Cru Royale Poco Gordo
Dom. Rep. • 4" by 60 ring • $5.49

Nat Sherman Metropolitan Selection Habano Robusto Fino
Dom. Rep. • 5" by 46 ring • $5.00

New World Connecticut Corona Gorda
Nicaragua • 5 1/2" by 46 ring • $5.50

New World Connecticut Robusto
Nicaragua • 5" by 50 ring • $6.00

Neya F8 Patriot
Nicaragua • 5" by 52 ring • $6.00

Oliva Connecticut Reserve Petit Corona
Nicaragua • 4" by 38 ring • $4.93

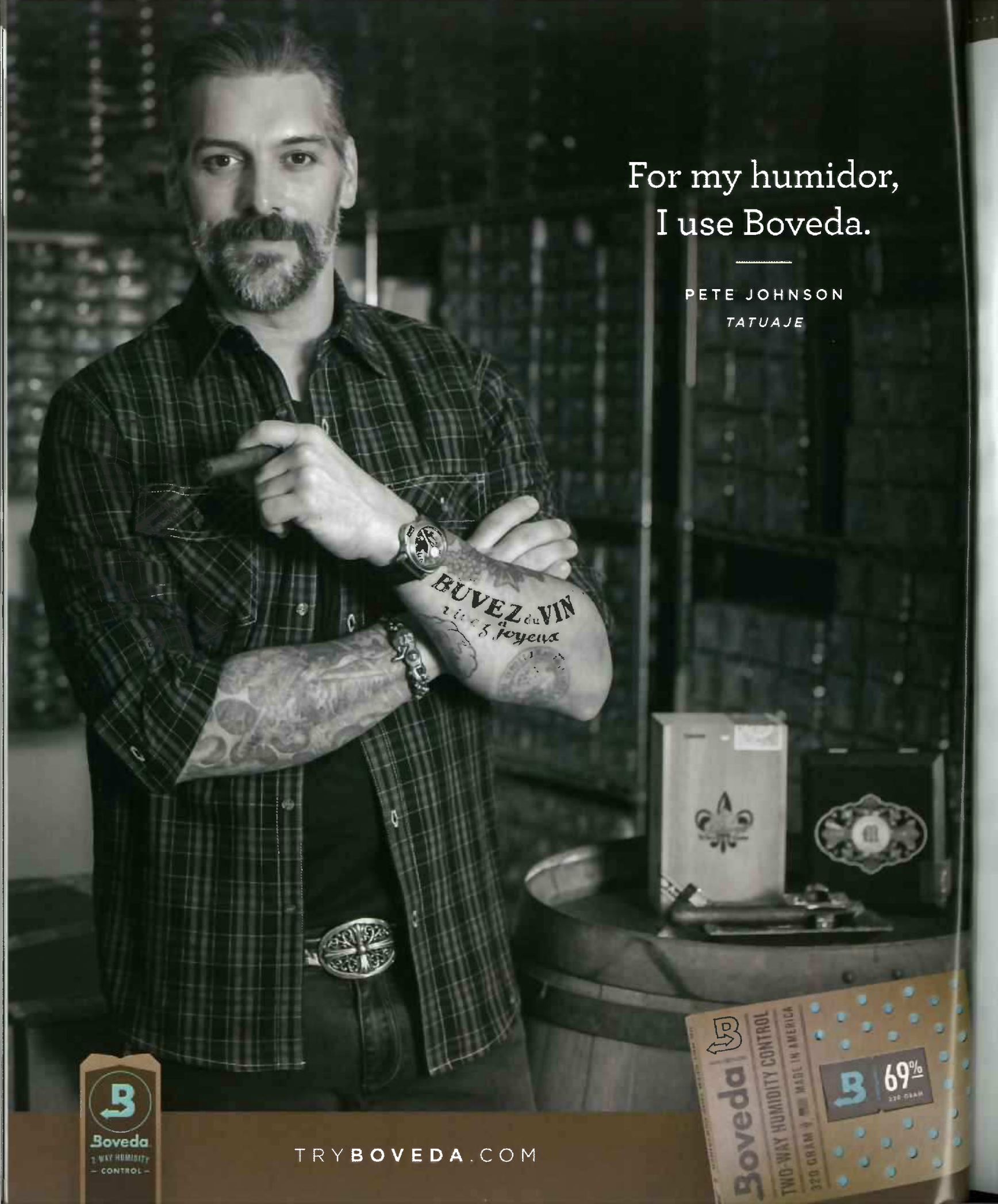
Oliva Serie G Churchill
Nicaragua • 7" by 50 ring • $5.84

Perdomo Small Batch Series Sun Grown Rothschild
Nicaragua • 4 1/2" by 50 ring • $6.00

Room101 The Big Payback Connecticut Chavala
Honduras • 5" by 50 ring • $5.90

JEFF HARRIS

Top-rated cigars that won't break the bank. At left, from bottom, the Neya F8, 7-20-4 Hustler Series and Nat Sherman Metropolitan Selection Habano. Above, top to bottom: Padilla La Pilar (on its box), Fonseca Nicaragua and Alec Bradley American Sun Grown Blend.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Enclave Churchill

Though A.J. Fernandez is a familiar name among cigar smokers, few realize that A.J. is part of a father-and-son team. He relies on his father, Ismael, to help run his huge operation, and Ismael is often instrumental in the blending process. Enclave is a cigar brand that Ismael created, so it's no surprise that the cigar is a little more old-fashioned, focusing less on strength, and more on flavor. Heavy-handed power is a modern trait of the premium market, but Ismael toned it down for the Enclave. The cigar is impeccably constructed, as are most cigars that come out of the busy A.J. Fernandez factory in Nicaragua. The pristine wrapper is beautiful to behold and the combustion is flawless. So is the draw. Each puff is a clear reminder that this cigar favors finesse over force. The classic Churchill format is an additional nod to tradition.

92 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera A.J. Fernandez Cigars de Nicaragua
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Cameroon
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 7" by 52 ring
PRICE: $6.70

21

Villiger San'Doro Colorado Robusto

Villiger is a company with a long tobacco history that dates back to the 1800s. The company's history in the premium sector, however, isn't quite as long—closer to 10 years. The company is based in Switzerland, and its premium products are distributed through Villiger Cigars North America, with the U.S. as its primary market. Efforts to infiltrate the high-end sector have resulted in an entire portfolio, and the most memorable is the Villiger San'Doro Colorado. The name pays homage to tobacco lore. According to Villiger, when Christopher Columbus brought tobacco back to Europe, it was referred to as the holy or sacred plant of India, also called San'Doro. The Ecuadoran and Nicaraguan tobaccos in this blend pair beautifully, and the San'Doro is a fine addition to the premium cigar world—even if it took Villiger more than a century to get there.

92 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera Oliva S.A.
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5" by 50 ring
PRICE: $8.00

22

Henry Clay Stalk Cut Toro

Altadis U.S.A. has revitalized this once sleepy cigar line, bestowing new packaging and a great blend on the heritage line. It started when Altadis collaborated with Tatuaje to make a one-off project called Henry Clay Tattoo. This sparked new interest in Henry Clay and Altadis took advantage of the buzz by creating the Henry Clay Stalk Cut. The name refers to the harvesting method for the aged broadleaf wrapper found on this cigar. Stalk cutting is the process in which the entire broadleaf tobacco plant is chopped at the base and hung by its stalk to cure in a barn. Altadis says that the wrapper is from a 2012 harvest and has vintage dated all the tobacco in the blend. The Dominican components are from 2012, the Nicaraguan tobacco from 2013. Each rich, ripe cigar is box pressed and rustically finished with an uncut foot.

92 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera de Garcia
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep., Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 6" by 54 ring
PRICE: $8.50

JOHN CURR

23

Casa Cuba Doble Cinco

Carlos "Carlito" Fuente is not only the president of A. Fuente y Cia., but also does most of the blending. For the Casa Cuba, he turned the blending over to his father, Carlos Fuente Sr., who died in August 2016. The blend, released in 2013, was the first cigar that the company patriarch had put together in decades. Fuente Sr. blended Casa Cuba using Ecuador Havana wrappers and a mix of Cuban-seed Dominican filler and binder. With this brand, Fuente Sr. aimed to recreate a taste of his early days in the cigar business when Cuban leaf was legally imported into the U.S. "I blended this cigar the way I used to blend Cuban tobacco," he said. The name Doble Cinco, is a reference to the game of dominos. Though fairly mild, this blend is full of life and character, and, more importantly could be regarded as a window to another era in cigar making.

92 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.
FACTORY LOCATION: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Ecuador
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
DIMENSIONS: 5" by 50 ring
PRICE: $11.90

24

Illusione mk

It's a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. And also a bit of fun. Many of Illusione cigars have hidden meanings encoded in the packaging and in the names. The "mk" printed on the black-and-white Illusione band, for example, stands for "mind kontrol." Brand owner Dion Giolito believes that the corona size, such as this one, serves as the best blending format when creating a cigar due to its proportions and ratios of tobacco. He who produces the best corona, his thinking goes, is the one who "kontrols" the market. If you're not one to mix riddles with your cigars, the data on this smoke is pretty straightforward. It's made in Nicaragua at the TABSA factory and is full of fantastic Nicaraguan tobacco. Substantial flavors of coffee and spice lead to a sweet note on the palate. For such a little cigar, the Illusione mk imparts big character.

92 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacos Valle de Jalapa S.A. (TABSA)
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 1/8" by 42 ring
PRICE: $7.95

25

El Güegüense Corona Gorda

Based on Nicaraguan folklore, El Güegüense translates to "the wise man," and is the debut brand from Foundation Cigar Co., a company launched in mid-2015 by cigarmaker Nicholas Melillo. He was perhaps best known in the industry for running production at La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate in Nicaragua, but Melillo has developed a fast and loyal following with this cigar line since he branched out on his own. This Nicaraguan puro has a Corojo 99 wrapper, Corojo '99 binder and fillers composed of Corojo '99 and Criollo '98 from Jalapa and Estelí. Melillo says that the filler leaves were harvested in 2011 and 2012. The combination of different varietals from different regions make this an interesting, tasty mélange of Nicaraguan tobacco. Thankfully, the El Güegüense Corona Gorda is a lot easier to smoke than it is to pronounce.

92 POINTS

MADE BY: Tabacos Valle de Jalapa S.A. (TABSA)
FACTORY LOCATION: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
FILLER: Nicaragua
DIMENSIONS: 5 5/8" by 46 ring
PRICE: $9.90

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NEW RELEASES OF 2016

Asylum 13 Connecticut An offshoot of Asylum 13 made with an Ecuadoran Connecticut-seed wrapper over tobaccos from Honduras.

Aurora Preferidos Double Barrel Aged The tobaccos in this limited cigar were aged inside rum barrels for three years, rolled into a perfecto and then aged some more inside those same barrels.

Bellas Artes Made by A.J. Fernandez, each of the sizes in this line are box pressed and covered in a wrapper referred to as "Rojita," a hybrid of Connecticut, Corojo '99 and Havana 2000 tobacco.

Big Papi Tabacalera El Artista teamed up with former Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz to create a limited, one-size cigar.

The Caleanoch 50 Part of the filler of this 6-inch-by-50-ring gauge cigar is rolled using tobacco cured with smoke from imported Scottish peat.

Casa Cuba Divine Inspiration This new size was the final cigar blend from legendary cigarmaker Carlos Fuente Sr.

Casa Turrent Serie 1941 Celebrating the birth year of Alberto Turrent, this brand comes in three box-pressed sizes and is wrapped in dark Mexican tobacco.

Charter Oak An homage to the cigarmaker's home state of Connecticut, this cigar is available in two different wrapper types, Connecticut shade and Connecticut broadleaf.

Cornelius & Anthony Vengaza It means "vengeance" in Spanish, and the gun on the box is indicative of its bold, spicy blend.

Davidoff Yamasá A Dominican wrapper and binder from the growing region of Yamasá anchors this new smoke, which is bolstered with a hearty blend of Dominican and Nicaraguan tobaccos.

Diamond Crown Black Diamond J.C. Newman and Fuente teamed up to make a darker Diamond Crown with Connecticut Havana wrapper.

El Trovador From PDR Cigars, this new line comes in four sizes, each box pressed and wrapped in an attractive wrapper that brand owner Abe Flores called Ecuadoran Rosado.

Espinosa Crema The first Espinosa branded cigar from La Zona Cigars to have a light, Connecticut-style wrapper comes in three sizes.

Flor de las Antillas Maduro The successor to the My Father brand that won Cigar of the Year in 2012 has a darker wrapper and a modified blend.

Fonseca Nicaragua The first-ever Fonseca made in Nicaragua features tobaccos from Estelí and Ometepe, a volcanic island in Lake Nicaragua.

Guardian Of The Farm This collaboration between Warped Cigars and TABSA is a Nicaraguan puro that comes in three sizes.

Gurkha Cellar Reserve 21 Year The latest addition to the Cellar Reserve series wears an Ecuadoran Connecticut wrapper.

Herrera Estelí Miami Drew Estate master blender Willy Herrera turned to El Titan de Bronze, his former employer, to roll this one-size line extension.

Illusione Garagiste This line is named in honor of a group of fringe winemakers in France.

Inch By E.P. Carrillo Colorado No cigar is thinner than 58 ring gauge in Ernesto Perez-Carrillo's Inch brand. Colorado is made only with leaves from the upper primings of a tobacco plant.

Kristoff Habano This cigar, which comes in three sizes, is draped in a Brazilian Habano wrapper, a Brazilian Sumatra binder and contains Cuban-seed filler.

La Flor Dominicana Salomon Único Artistic figurados made with designs and patterns cut from different wrappers, from light brown to green candela to dark maduro. No two boxes are alike.

Flor de las Antillas Maduro

La Galera 80th Anniversary Box Pressed Limited Edition All of the Dominican filler and binder tobaccos in this cigar were grown on owner José "Jochy" Blanco's Potrero Farm in the Dominican Republic.

La Palina Nicaragua Connecticut La Palina launched more than 40 new brands this year, including this cigar, the first Nicaraguan-made smoke from the company.

Macanudo Mao For this smoke, General Cigar Co. reached into its archival seed banks and regenerated an heirloom tobacco varietal said to be used in the original Macanudos from the 1960s. It comes packed in boxes of 10 in three sizes.

Midnight Express This maduro follow-up to Caldwell Cigar Co.'s lauded Eastern Standard line wears a dark, Ecuadoran Connecticut wrapper and comes in four sizes.

Montecristo 80 Aniversario Habanos S.A. originally debuted this commemorative cigar in 2015, but this pricey 6 1/2-inch-by-55 ring smoke didn't begin showing up in shops until summer of 2016.

Montecristo Pilotico Pepe Mendez A three-size line that is named for the rare tobacco rolled into its filler, a new hybrid of an old archived seed crossed with a heartier varietal to resist disease.

Nat Sherman Metropolitan Habano A bolder line extension crafted from Nicaraguan Habano wrapper and Nicaraguan binder and fillers.

Oliveros Gran Retorno Rafael Nodal has breathed new life into this once sleepy brand for a "grand return." It's been reblended and repackaged and comes in Habano and Maduro varieties, each in four sizes.

Padilla Anniversary This commemorative smoke, which celebrates Padilla Cigar Co.'s 14 years of business, wears a Honduran Habano wrapper over a Nicaraguan Corojo '99 binder and Nicaraguan fillers.

Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series Hermoso This short, fat cigar measures 4 inches by 56 ring gauge ships in 26-count boxes and can be found in both natural and maduro varieties.

Partagas Ramon y Ramon Part of the filler in this General Cigar Co. brand is a leaf that's a cross between an heirloom tobacco seed and a newer varietal. Additionally, the unusual wrapper comes from Cameroon's Belita region.

Plasencia Alma Fuerte The Plasencias are best known for growing tobacco, but the father-and-son team introduced six new cigar brands this year, including this brawny brand with three sizes.

Rocky Patel Dark Dominican The first Rocky Patel cigar to be rolled in the Dominican Republic wears a dark Connecticut broadleaf wrapper and is billed as a medium- to full-bodied cigar.

Romeo y Julieta Capuletos Cuba added this 6-inch-by-53 ring cigar, a relatively new format that's also known by its factory vitola name Sobresalientes, to its Edición Limitada lineup.

Romeo y Julieta Reserve Rare 11 Years Old This cigar has been aged for 11 years, retails for $11 and only 11,000 were made. It comes in one size, 5 3/4 inches by 48 ring gauge, and is packaged in 11-count boxes.

San Cristobal Quintessence This regular-production cigar from Ashton is rolled with an Ecuadoran Habano wrapper and binder, with filler tobaccos from the Garcia family farms in Nicaragua. It comes in four sizes, packed in boxes of 24.

Tatuaje Reserva Broadleaf Collection Pete Johnson took 10 sizes from his popular brown label line, replaced the wrappers with Connecticut Broadleaf and presented them in a stunning box.

Victor Calvo U.S. Shade Reserve Draped in a silky, light wrapper grown in Windsor, Connecticut, this three-size line is punched up with some Dominican and Nicaraguan ligero in the filler.

—Andrew Nagy

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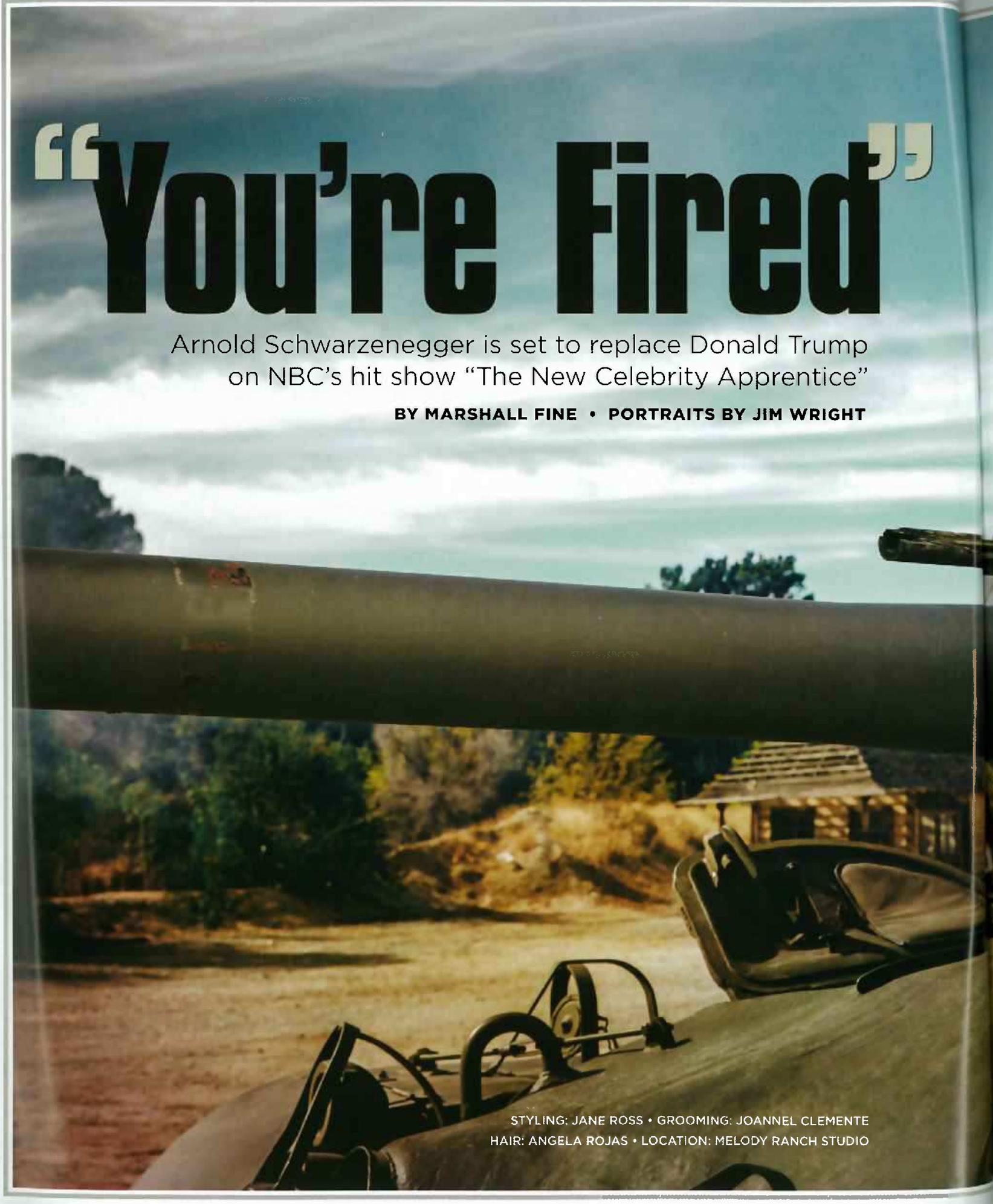
"You're Fired"

Arnold Schwarzenegger is set to replace Donald Trump on NBC's hit show "The New Celebrity Apprentice"

BY MARSHALL FINE • PORTRAITS BY JIM WRIGHT



STYLING: JANE ROSS • GROOMING: JOANNEL CLEMENTE
HAIR: ANGELA ROJAS • LOCATION: MELODY RANCH STUDIO

Arnold Schwarzenegger, ever-present cigar in hand, climbing into his own personal tank in Santa Clarita, California.

Arnold

Schwarzenegger, a cigar clamped between his jaws like a punctuation mark for his broad smile, climbs aboard a tank on a warm November afternoon. This is no movie prop, and it's not just any tank. The 46 tons of moving metal belongs to Schwarzenegger himself, the larger-than-life success story who has been everything from Conan the Barbarian to the Terminator, Governor of California to cigar-chomping icon. • Spend any time with Schwarzenegger and you quickly get the impression that this is his world. We're all just along for the ride. • "It drives as well today as it did when I was 18," he says. In his black, short-sleeved polo and black leather pants, he has a formidably muscular presence—not quite the perfection when he was dubbed "the Austrian Oak" as a young bodybuilder, but still extremely solid, his eyes glimmering with mischief beneath a head of preternaturally brown hair, his handshake firm but not aggressive.

He lowers his six-foot-frame through a hatch into the driver seat of the intimidating mass of metal. It's an M47 Patton, named after the bombastic and brilliant American general of World War II, and it's very likely the actual tank Schwarzenegger drove when he joined the Austrian army as an 18-year-old.

"From my youngest days, I wanted to drive tanks," Schwarzenegger says, "but when I got in the army, they told me, 'You're too tall.' My father had connections and so I got to go to tank-driving school." He presses forward, taking the beast on a rumbling spin around the property.

This is a man who gets what he wants, whether it's unmatchable fame, hundreds of millions in net worth or a vehicle that can crush SUVs for breakfast. When he heard in 1991 that the Austrian military was planning to retire an old group of tanks it had received from the United States in the 1950s, Schwarzenegger began making inquiries. He located what he says is the very machine he had driven back in his youth, the number 331 still painted on its steel hull. As chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports under President George H.W. Bush, he was able to pull a few strings via the Pentagon to buy the tank—its cannon disarmed, but its engine very much intact—and have it shipped to the United States, where it eventually made its way to Melody Ranch Motion Picture Studio in Santa Clarita in the San Fernando Valley.

He drives the behemoth as often as he can, sometimes crushing things for charity, but even at the age of 69 there just isn't that much free time. Like the Terminator, Schwarzenegger never seems to quit, and his schedule would flatten a younger man. He's been filming a movie (scheduled to hit theaters later this year) with Jackie Chan in China and he travels regularly on behalf of the USC Schwarzenegger Institute for State and Global Policy, addressing concerns about climate change and air pollution. "I make movies and commercials, I give speeches for my institute on the environment," he says. He's hands-on with After-School All-Stars, a program designed to channel at-risk youth into productive after-school activities.

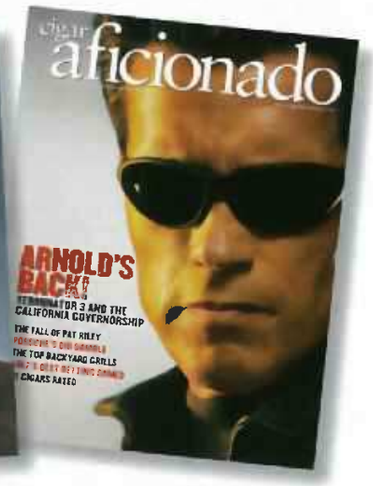
And now he has a new TV show.

Schwarzenegger is making his first foray into reality television, taking command as the mentor seeking a mentee in "The New Celebrity Apprentice." He is stepping into the shoes of the show's long-time host, President-elect Donald Trump, who uncorked the catchphrase "You're Fired" on a regular basis. Trump's tenure as host ended in 2015, right around the time he announced his presidential campaign, but he remains an executive producer of the show, as well as one of its owners.

The new show debuts on NBC January 2, though taping was done over the course of a month in early 2016. Schwarzenegger is impatient about the lag time: "You shoot something and it comes out a year later—but you wish it would come out right away," he says.

"I did the show for two reasons," he says. "I loved watching it. It was a great show that always sucked me in. I thought Trump did a great job with it. When I heard he'd been discontinued, I thought, 'There's an interesting show I could host.'

Summer 1996



July/August 2003

Arnold Schwarzenegger takes over "The New Celebrity Apprentice" boardroom with help from nephew Patrick Knapp Schwarzenegger and star model Tyra Banks.

LUIS TRINH/NBC

"Most people don't know that Arnold was a millionaire before he was cast in *Conan the Barbarian*." -Mark Burnett

"I had never done a reality show and I thought it would be interesting to try. As an actor, you train yourself in the other direction. To do a show like this, there are totally different skills you have to develop, though I'm naturally fast on my feet."

This new boss had been a business success even before he made a fortune in movies. "Most people don't know that Arnold was a millionaire before he was cast in *Conan the Barbarian*," says Mark Burnett, executive producer and creator of "The Apprentice." "Arnold had massive success not only in real estate but also in professional sports, acting and politics. He shares a great deal of his experience from all of them on the show."

The new season pairs Schwarzenegger with his nephew Patrick Knapp Schwarzenegger and super model Tyra Banks, and a host of competitors, from retired athletes such as Laila Ali, Eric Dickerson and Ricky Williams, rockers like Vince Neil and Boy George and TV personalities.

"Everyone was, in one way or another, surprising," Schwarzenegger says. "It depended on what the challenge was, which people would emerge with an interesting talent or connection. When you see a UFC fighter [Chael Sonnen], who is used to fighting and beating up on everybody, and he's very articulate and sensitive in the way he approaches a certain subject, it surprises you. It gives you a chance to look inside these famous people."

Misleading preconception is a two-way street. "I thought he'd be a jerk, even though I'd never met him," says contestant Lisa Leslie, a three-time WNBA MVP. "But at the end, we all went to his home for a barbecue and he was gracious and humble, kind and respectful. He did say that, during the show, he turns it on when he needs to. But I found him to be a very compassionate man."

"Arnold encourages contestants to take 'big swings,'" says Burnett. "He looks at things like energy, positivity, passion and hard work in making his decisions. And he loves people. He was a great leader on the set, and the cast and crew absolutely loved him…He spent literally hundreds of hours preparing for this shoot. He really wanted to understand what

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makes this series work, and made sure that he was prepared. His passion for whatever he does is infectious; it really comes across on television."

What makes a good boss? "Someone who is able to make people understand their vision," Schwarzenegger says. "Someone who can articulate what's expected, who can direct people to the ultimate goal, to bring everybody together to fight for that. You can have creativity; it's all part of teamwork. But you have to be firm and have a clear vision. If people don't follow you, there are consequences."

A promo for the show features a clip of Schwarzenegger being engineered, Terminator-style. At the end, a robot arm fires up his cigar, which has become as much a part of the Schwarzenegger image as his physique, his accent or his open-faced smile. When he first appeared on the cover of this magazine in Summer 1996—he's now the only man to appear on three CIGAR AFICIONADO covers—Schwarzenegger told the story about being introduced to his first cigar in the 1970s. Asked how many humidors he owns today, Schwarzenegger rolls his eyes.

"That's like asking how many shoes I have," he says. "I have some unbelievable humidors, a collection from around the world, 100 different designs. I have a lot of lighters, too. I very rarely buy a cigar because I get so many as gifts. I don't keep that many around, maybe 200 at any given time."

One-time box-office rival Sylvester Stallone, who Schwarzenegger joined on screen in *The Expendables* series as well as *Escape Plan* (2013), says there's a certain fastidious quality when Schwarzenegger sits down with a cigar. "Arnold is what I would call 'a neat smoker,'" Stallone says. "He doesn't demolish a cigar by chomping away on it. He savors it."

"When I worked with Arnold, he was totally into [cigars]," recalls Danny DeVito, who costarred with Schwarzenegger in the 1988 comedy smash *Twins*. "For a guy who was all about health and fitness, he was amazing. He's a friend and it's a cool thing smoking with a friend. You enjoy a good meal, a couple of drinks and a nice Partagás."

Schwarzenegger can also be an unapologetic cigar smoker, as actor Jim Belushi recalled in the film *Red Heat*.

"The fucker smoked a Montecristo No. 2 in a cop car with the windows closed," Belushi told CIGAR AFICIONADO back in 2010. "The car filled with smoke and I got sick to my stomach. Arnold says, 'What's the matter, Jim? Does a little cigar smoke bother you? Here—try one.'" Belushi is now a huge cigar fan himself.

"I used to smoke the extra-long ones," Schwarzenegger says. "I got off them because I smoke less now. Now I like smaller cigars." Of course, for a man like Schwarzenegger, small is relative. "I like the Partagás [Serie D] No. 4," he says, referring to Cuba's most popular robusto. "That's become one of my favorites. I like some of the non-Cubans, when they're good. But I love a Cuban cigar when it's good."

He smokes cigars while driving his Hummer around his Brentwood neighborhood, or while playing chess sitting outside at home. But he avoids cigar bars.

"I always go outside," he says. "At my house, I have a big fireplace and sit outdoors when I smoke. I won't smoke in the house."

As governor of California from late 2003 to early 2011, Schwarzenegger couldn't smoke in his Sacramento state house. Government regulations prohibited smoking anywhere in the capitol building, including the governor's office, and smoking was prohibited within 20 feet of the building. His solution? He constructed a tent within the capitol's large, open-air atrium, with no side of the tent closer to the building than 20 feet.

"It was like having an office outside," he recalls. "I had air-conditioning pumped in. It was my meeting place where people could come and smoke stogies."

But before there is a cigar—or work—there is always working out. Early one morning, he and two pals head for the gym. They come gliding out of the dawn fog on their mountain bikes, silent and imposing: large men in workout clothes and long-sleeve jackets, rolling quietly down Santa Monica's Main Street like an advance squad for the fitness army. A few pedestrians who are out this early call his name as he rides by—"Arnold!" He smiles broadly and gives a wave of acknowledgment, but he doesn't break the pace on his daily jaunt to the Gold's Gym in Venice. Though the building itself has moved, Gold's has been Schwarzenegger's home base since he arrived in California almost 50 years ago.

"I'm addicted—I have to do it," he says. "My day cannot start without doing something physically. And I work out at night before bed: cardio, weight-training. I want to stay in shape as long as I can."

Schwarzenegger and his small posse head back into an endless series of rooms filled with weight-resistance machines and free weights. He greets old friends but walks with purpose. Despite his fame and legend, his presence here is so regular that his movement through the large facility barely stirs a ripple.

His workout is compressed but purposeful: 10 reps on one machine, then 10 reps on another, back and forth until he's done 40 on each. He then moves to the next pair of machines, alternating sets with one of his biking companions, Ralf Moeller, a 6-foot-6 actor and retired bodybuilder who towers over Schwarzenegger like a joshing younger brother.

"You know," Moeller confides, "between Arnold and me, we have 14 titles."

"Yeah, but 13 of them are mine," Schwarzenegger says with a laugh.

It was the weight room where Schwarzenegger became a champion. His domination of the sport of bodybuilding—his empire during the 1970s—grew out of a youthful fascination with the films of Reg Park and Steve Reeves, bodybuilders who both played Hercules in films (a role Schwarzenegger also played in his first film, *Hercules in New York*). He went on to surpass them, winning five Mr. Universe and seven Mr. Olympia titles before retiring from bodybuilding competition. He keeps his hand in as an executive editor of a couple of bodybuilding magazines, and is still involved in the Arnold Classic, an annual men's bodybuilding competition in Columbus, Ohio.

"When I started in bodybuilding, I didn't think about becoming famous," Schwarzenegger says. "I didn't know anything about celebrity. I grew up so sheltered that I was not worldly enough to think about this stuff. When the first person asked me for an autograph, I had no idea what

The Evolution of ARNOLD

From bodybuilder to barbarian, from Terminator to governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger has been a dominant force since the 1970s

The Bodybuilder

Flexing biceps the size of cannon balls, Schwarzenegger commanded center stage in the bodybuilding world of the 1970s. He was named Mr. Universe in 1968 at the age of 20, and later went on to win seven Mr. Olympia titles—the top award in the sport—including six times in a row. *The Guinness Book of World Records* called him "the most perfectly developed man in the history of the world."

GEORGE LONG / SPORTS ILLUSTRATED / GETTY IMAGES

Total Recall, 1990

Conan the Barbarian, 1982

The Actor

Crafting his body with iron was only the beginning for Schwarzenegger. He brought the fantasy book antihero Conan the Barbarian to the screen in 1982, but it was his role as the murderous cyborg in James Cameron's *The Terminator* in 1984 that transformed him into the biggest action star in Hollywood. He went on to star in several sequels, and battled aliens, mobsters and even the devil himself in a host of films. He made several comedies and even a drama, and this January he stars in his first primetime show, "The New Celebrity Apprentice," on NBC.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day, 1991

California Governor, 2003-2011

The Politician

He had no political experience, but Schwarzenegger became governor of California, the largest economy in the United States, in the 2003 California governor recall election. He received 4.2 million votes, more than his three other opponents combined, and was reelected in 2006. He conducted business from an ornate tent on his patio where cigar smoking was encouraged and legal—unlike inside the capitol. He left office in 2011.

—*David Savona*

COLLAGE AND RIGHT: SCREEN PROD / PHOTONONSTOP / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; CENTER LEFT © AP IMAGES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; BOTTOM: KRISTA KENNELL / SIPA PRESS / AP IMAGES

When Schwarzenegger was governor of California, he faced a smoking ban in his Sacramento offices. To puff his beloved stogies while doing business, he created a comfortable smoking tent.

they wanted. I just wanted to be a bodybuilding champion and be in movies. I didn't look at that as being a star. To me it was a regular job, that happened to be seen by millions of people."

A large black-and-white photo of Schwarzenegger in his prime—the young colossus who helped push bodybuilding into the mainstream—adorns one wall of Gold's. While Schwarzenegger still sports biceps that look like they could crack walnuts, working out is a different sport today. "The muscles don't respond the way they did at 30," he says. "I've weighed 220 pounds for the last 25 years. I competed at 245—but my waist was much smaller then."

Asked what he sees when he looks at himself these days, Schwarzenegger grimaces.

"When I look in the mirror, I throw up," he says. "And I was already so critical of myself, even when I was in top physical shape. I'd look in the mirror after I won one Mr. Olympia after another and think, 'How did this pile of shit win?' I never saw perfection. There was always something lacking. I could always find a million things wrong with myself and that's what got me back into the gym—because I started out with that mentality."

He also had a curiosity and discipline, which helped him make the leap from being a bodybuilding champion to become one of the biggest movie action stars of the 1980s and 1990s. While competing he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration, investing his winnings and endorsement fees into real estate, as well as starting a bricklaying company staffed by himself and other bodybuilders.

"Arnold is 100 percent self-made," Burnett notes. "He's an immigrant who even had to learn the language when he came here in 1968. He's an embodiment of the American dream: that, through hard work and absolute dedication, anything is possible."

As a young man, Schwarzenegger used an outgoing, brash personality to draw focus; now he doesn't need to because the public's attention encircles him like a field of gravity. His sense of humor is still dry and ever-present, and he's happy and comfortable talking to all who approach. He strides through life, unafraid of being seen because he's had a talent for getting people to look at him for one reason or another for more than a half-century.

There is an ease and an air of confidence to Schwarzenegger that can be deceptive. The key, he says, is preparation: practice, practice, practice. Or, in gym lingo, he's "doing the reps," repeating a task until it becomes automatic.

"I do lack confidence," Schwarzenegger claims. "But I do the reps and do them enough that the thing itself will be doable when it's time. When I was competing at bodybuilding, I did so many hours of reps—on the weights, practicing the poses—that when I got onstage, I was comfortable and confident. The more reps you do, the more you look smooth and convincing. The more you do it, the better you get. That's my lesson from sports. It's the same with movies, the same with interviews. Practice, practice, practice, reps, reps, more reps. That's how you gain confidence."

The irony is not lost on Schwarzenegger that even as he, a former high government official, is making his debut in reality TV, former reality-star Trump will assume elected office for the first time. As it happened, both faced allegations of impropriety. In Schwarzenegger's case, he apologized publicly, saying, "Yes, I have behaved badly sometimes…I have done things that were not right, which I thought then was playful, but now I recognize that have offended people…I want to say to them, I am deeply sorry about that, and I apologize."

"If you run for office, they fling everything at you," Schwarzenegger says. "There is the media and there are the opponents' researchers—they all do it. Everyone is taking shots and you cannot be upset because that's what it is. What's the saying—if it's too hot, get out of the kitchen?"

As he talks, it is a week after the 2016 U.S. presidential election,

"When I look in the mirror, I throw up. The muscles don't respond the way they did at 30."

which has led to some concerns on his part about what direction the new administration will take on the environment. He was alarmed at Trump's campaign vows to hobble the Environmental Protection Agency, revive the coal industry and disavow the climate-change treaties signed by the Obama administration.

"That's why I did not vote for him," Schwarzenegger, a longtime Republican, says. "I'm hoping we can all work together to make America a leader in environmental issues. We have to look to the future to find new ways to produce cleaner, renewable energy."

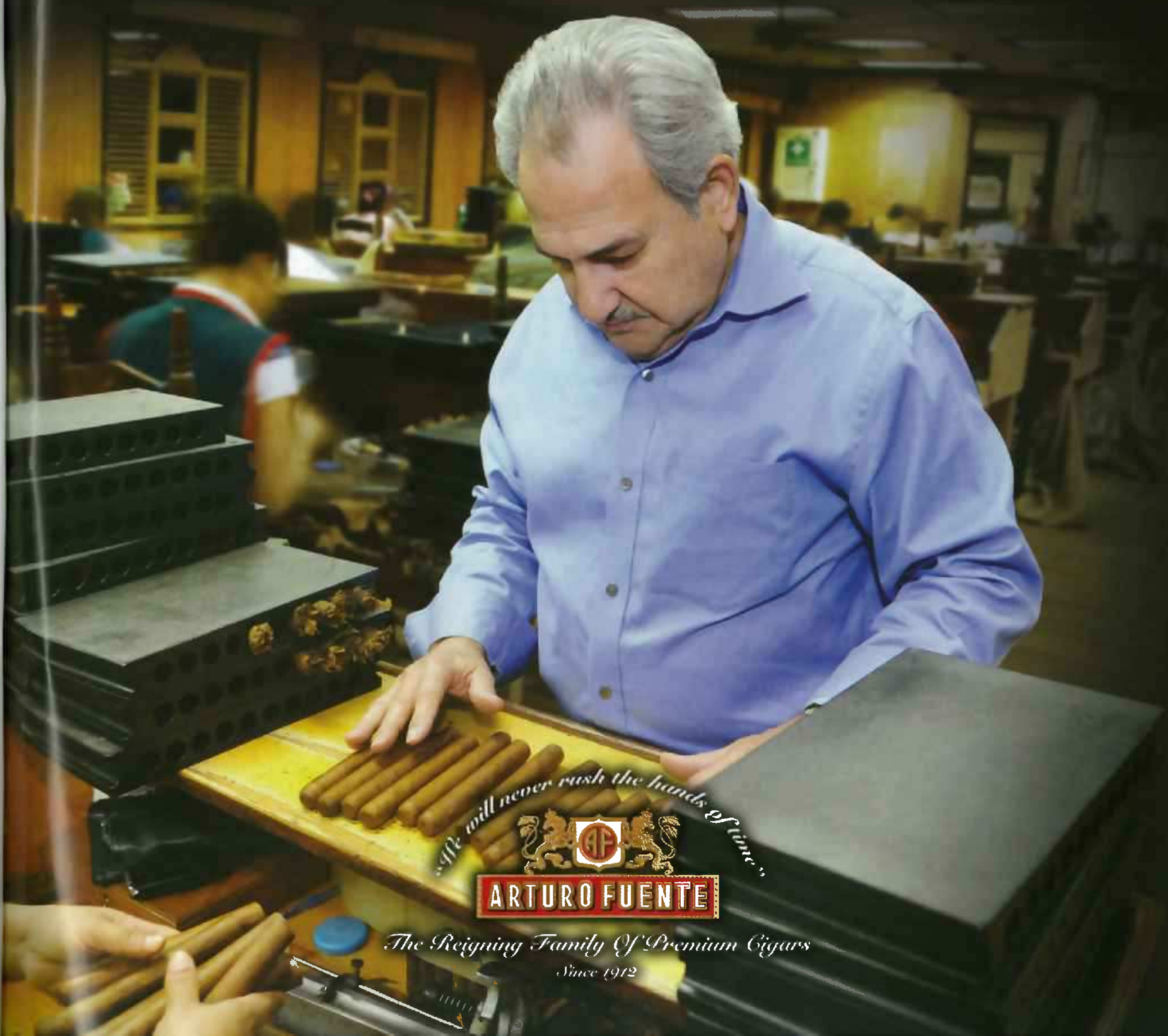
Ever the positivist, he adds, "We're going to support him. We all have to work together. As President Obama said, if he's successful, we all are. That is the key thing. We've got to move the country forward. That's the only way we stay No. 1."

CHARLES OMMANNEY / GETTY IMAGES

Arturo Fuente

DON CARLOS

One Man...One Amazing Story of Courage *and Dedication to His Craft*



is to be honest about the mistake and then put it behind him: "My rule of thumb about damaging accusations was that, if the allegation was false, fight vigorously to have it withdrawn; if the accusation was true, acknowledge it and, when appropriate, apologize," he writes.

Which is what he did after ex-wife Maria Shriver discovered in 2011 that Schwarzenegger had fathered a son with their housekeeper, Mildred Baena, 14 years earlier. When news leaked, he made a public apology, and he and Shriver divorced. He publicly acknowledged Joseph Baena as his son and continues to support him. Schwarzenegger remains a hands-on parent with his five kids: Daughter Katherine is following in her mother's footsteps as a journalist and writer; son Patrick is working as an actor; the youngest are still in college.

Schwarzenegger is not much given to reflection or self-analysis. His life has been dedicated to forward motion—to finding the next challenge and rising to it. When you make mistakes, you correct them and you move on.

"What makes you confident is having victories. But you also have to be comfortable with loss," he says. "It's not the end of the world. It's painful when you wipe out, or when your movie goes in the toilet. It's embarrassing when they throw dirt at you when you run for office. But how to deal with it is to not dwell on it. Anything big that you want to accomplish is always difficult. The bigger it is, the more risk there is. Being comfortable does not bring success or greatness—taking risks does."

His 70th birthday will be in July. With a list of career peaks that would fill the resumes of three lesser men, Schwarzenegger is still seeking new challenges.

"Retirement? That's not happening," he says, stirring fresh fruit and yogurt together with muesli for his after-workout breakfast. "That doesn't work for me because everything I do, I enjoy… I don't do anything that you'd consider a 'job' job. I go to China to work in a movie one day, to New York to present an award the next. I go to a few business meetings where I get together with friends and talk about how to make one dollar into many dollars. It's fun. Why would I retire from that?

That vision of America as No. 1 was what attracted Schwarzenegger to the U.S.A. in the late 1960s. At the time he was a poor teen from the small Austrian village of Thal, where he grew up without television or telephone. He turned a passion for bodybuilding into a business empire—then used that as a springboard to movie stardom and political office.

Now that his term in the statehouse is behind him, he keeps those years in perspective: "I don't look at it as my life 'after being governor,'" he says. "I took seven years out of my regular life and put it into public service. Then I continued on with everything else. The only thing that really changed is I'm more interested in public policy. I got hooked on environmental issues."

In his 2012 autobiography, *Total Recall: My Unbelievably True Life Story*, Schwarzenegger notes that, whenever he has stumbled in life, the solution

"I don't feel my age," Schwarzenegger says. "I do everything exactly the same as I did 20 years ago. You do have to be more careful not to injure yourself, more careful with the way you warm up. I'm a little bit more cautious when I ski, with not as much skiing through the trees. But I'm not old yet. When I get to be 90, then I'll be old.

"I don't think about mortality, except when I go for a physical. I live in denial. I just don't think about it. I thrive a little on danger or discomfort, on not knowing what's next and going into the unknown. Whatever happens, happens—and I'm ready. As the saying goes, you can only fall as far as the ground." ❖

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is critic-in-residence at The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham, N.Y.

"I wanted to produce something I remembered. I wanted to go back to my childhood. I wanted to go bac to the happiest moments of my life. I wanted my grandfather to be proud of me. I wanted my father to be proud of me and my children to someday be proud of me. It was something I had to do."
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What would have happened to the golf universe if Tiger Woods had never played the game?

BY JEFF WILLIAMS

On the 30th of December 1975, Eldrick Tont Woods was delivered into this world in Cypress, California. The son of a retired lieutenant Army officer and the Thai woman he met while on a tour of duty in Vietnam, Woods wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth, but he had a sensational swing, a precise putter and an insatiable drive in his DNA. He had the ultimate golf gene.

We all came to know him as Tiger, the nickname his father gave him. He was a product of his calculating father, Earl, and his passionate mother, Kultida, who nurtured their son with uncanny skill to become one of the greatest golfers to ever stride a fairway and lift a trophy, dozens of them. He won 14 majors and transformed the game.

For more than two decades Tiger Woods has been the story of golf, his every move, every stroke chronicled. There have been plenty of other great players during Woods' time— Ernie Els, Phil Mickelson, Greg Norman, Nick Faldo, Vijay Singh—though none with Woods' extraordinary candlepower. He has been his sport's supernova, its calling card, its driving force, its face.

Yet so often over the last few years, Woods' bright light has flickered, dimmed, gone dark. Injuries, the consequence of millions of violent swings since his early teenage years, have devastated his body and destroyed his game. Back surgeries kept him out of golf altogether for a year and a half, and he returned to play in early December, as this issue went to press. Scandal has tarnished his reputation as a one-time role model.

Despite all the spin to the contrary, the game hasn't been the same without him.

But what if the game never had him at all? What if Earl Woods hadn't cut down a golf club and handed it to his son before he was even two years old? What if Kultida Woods hadn't installed her young son's intense drive and singular purpose? What would golf have been like as it crossed from the 20th to the 21st century?

A WORLD WITHOUT TIGER

CHARLIE RIEDEL / AP PHOTO

Rivals Woods and Phil Mickelson square off at the Battle At The Bridges in 2003. Mickelson would have ranked No. 1 in the world without Woods.

"He is the only living player to win 79 times, and only one player has won more," said Tim Finchem, shortly before he stepped down as PGA Tour commissioner in October, whose reign corresponded with Woods' career. "He's the only active player to win 14 majors and only one player has won more. I love Jack Nicklaus beyond belief, but I have to put Tiger down as the greatest player to ever play.

"And the way he did it, and when he did it, when more and more good players were coming along, was incredible. It lifted all boats."

Tiger lifted, rowed and powered all boats. His was the hydroplane that rooster-tailed across the sports landscape and everybody and everything about the game of golf followed in his wake.

But suppose he hadn't come along at all. Suppose instead of a golf club he picked up a baseball glove or a tennis racket. Suppose instead of pounding the heck out of his fellow professionals on the course, he pounded the books and became a software engineer, a doctor, a lawyer, a poet. What would have the golf landscape been like?

So we're going to play what if, and take a look at what Tiger did, and imagine what might have happened had he not done it at all. It's not all that simple, taking Tiger out of the PGA Tour equation. Woods has won 79 official PGA Tour events, including his 14 major championships. Only Sam Snead has won more Tour events (82), and Jack Nicklaus more majors (18). No player has ever won more money than Tiger, who has career winnings of more than $110 million. No player has ever occupied the world No. 1 ranking for as many weeks as Woods, 683 in all.

So let's take all of these statistics out of his column, and see who would benefit. Let's imagine that Tiger never was Tiger. This is how the game might have played out.

Ernie Els

With no Tiger Woods, Ernie Els' sparkling career might have shown even brighter, potentially giving him six majors instead of four.

As Woods was thundering to a 15-shot victory in the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach in 2000, the most impressive performance in a major tournament in the history of the game, Els plugged along to finish second, tied with cigar-puffing Miguel Ángel Jiménez. With no Tiger, Els would have had a chance to win a playoff and his third U.S. Open title.

At the 2000 British Open at St Andrews a month later, Woods won his first Claret Jug by eight shots, the start of his Tiger Slam, where he won four consecutive majors, ending with the 2001 Masters. No Tiger, no Tiger Slam. But tied for second at St Andrews was Els and Thomas Bjørn. If Woods had not completely dusted the pair, Els would have gone into a four-hole playoff for the title and might have won his first Open Championship. (He did win two, in 2002 and 2012).

After that thumping, Els was philosophical. "I don't think if I had played my absolute best I could have beaten Tiger," he said at the time.

Els also finished second to Woods in three PGA Tour events, including a playoff loss in the 2000 season-opening Mercedes Championship.

Woods cradling the Claret Jug after winning the 2000 British Open on the Old Course at St Andrews. Thomas Bjørn, far left, and Ernie Els, who tied for second place, look on. Right: Chris DiMarco, who never won a major, finished second in two of them to Woods, including the 2005 Masters.

TOP: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN / AP PHOTO, BOTTOM LEFT: ADAM BUTLER / AP PHOTO, BOTTOM RIGHT: ELISE AMENDOLA / AP PHOTO

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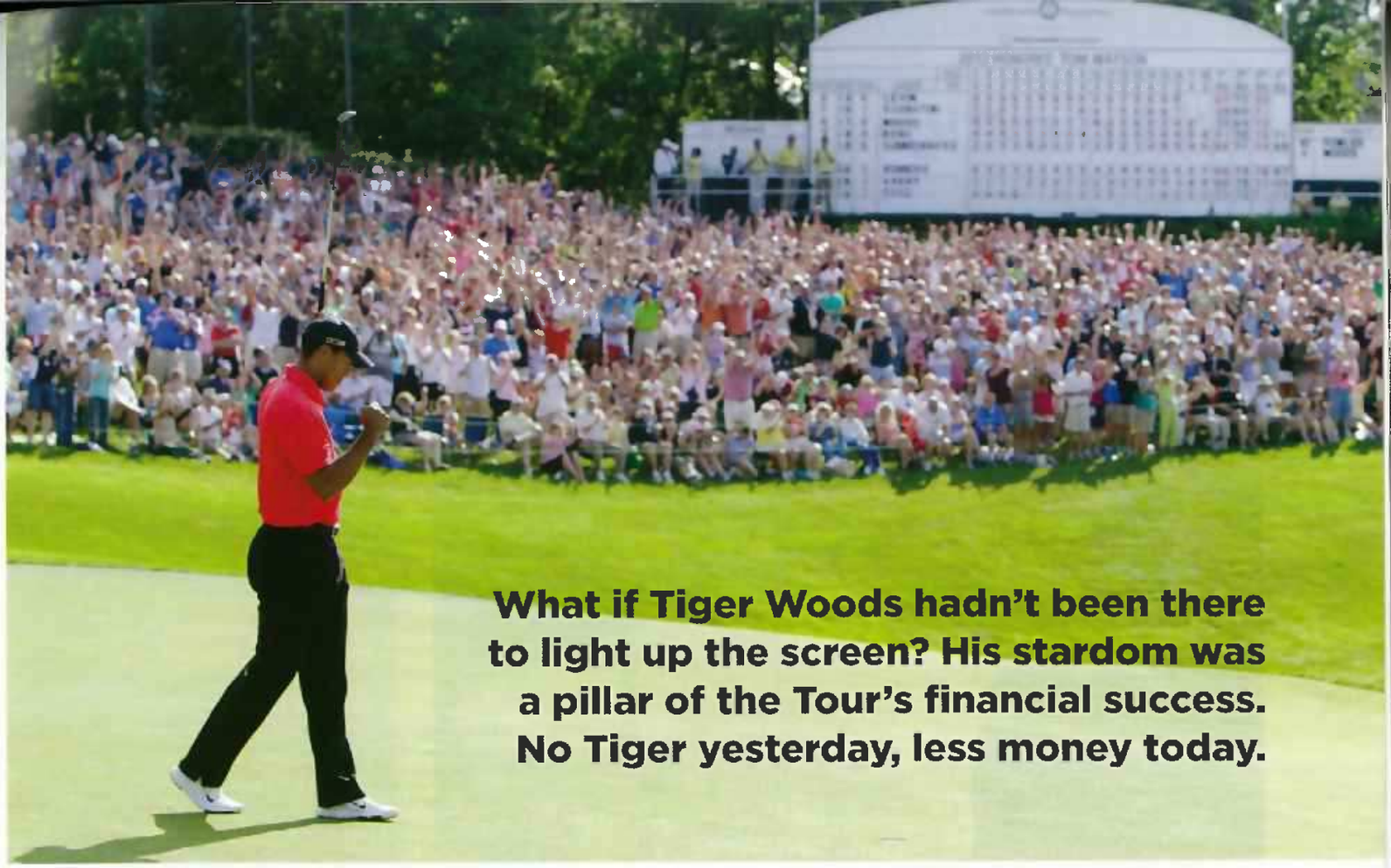


What if Tiger Woods hadn't been there to light up the screen? His stardom was a pillar of the Tour's financial success. No Tiger yesterday, less money today.

Woods pumps his fist after making a birdie to close the 2012 Memorial Tournament, when he tied host Jack Nicklaus with his 73rd PGA Tour win.

JAY LAPRETE / AP PHOTO

Phil Mickelson

No player spent more time in Woods' shadow than Phil Mickelson, who astoundingly has never been the No. 1 player in the world. Part of that is because he never played well enough at critical moments to seize the No. 1 ranking—even when Woods was missing from the game with injuries—but also because when he was playing well, Woods was right there, hovering above him. During 46 straight weeks from 2001 to 2002, Mickelson was No. 2 in the world, the first time he ever achieved that ranking. And who was above him the entire time? Tiger Woods. Without Tiger's presence, Mickelson would have been an unquestioned No. 1.

Mickelson turned pro in 1992, and it took 12 years for him to win the first of his five majors. He is one away from a career grand slam, needing only a U.S. Open victory, but he has fallen short again and again, holding a record six second-place finishes in the U.S. Open. One was to Woods, in 2002 at Bethpage Black. A world with no Woods could have meant a career grand slam for Mickelson, and six majors.

Lefty also finished second to Woods by one shot in three tournaments: the 1999 WGC Bridgestone Invitational, Arnold Palmer's Bay Hill tournament in 2001, and at Doral in 2005. To be fair, Mickelson won three majors during Tiger's era of dominance, The Masters in 2004 and 2006, along with the 2005 PGA Championship. By 2007, Woods' game began to deteriorate because of injury and his unfortunate sordid episode in 2009 involving his ex-wife, a car crash and a number of infidelities.

"Until I started to play my game better, Tiger owned me," Mickelson has said. There is no question that without Woods, Mickelson would have been the Tour's No. 1 star.

Chris DiMarco

Chris DiMarco could have emerged in the upper echelon of the game. Instead, he had to be satisfied with relative anonymity and zero majors after his encounters with Woods.

He came tantalizingly close. In 2005, DiMarco led The Masters for the first two rounds, but lost in a playoff for the green jacket to Woods, who won the last of his four times at Augusta National. Who can forget Woods' chip-in on the 16th on Sunday, the ball posing for a photo op with its Nike swoosh in full display before falling into the hole for a birdie? Woods won the playoff by draining a long putt for birdie.

A year later, DiMarco finished second to Woods by two shots in the British Open at Royal Liverpool, in part because Woods had holed a shot from the fairway for an eagle two on a par 4.

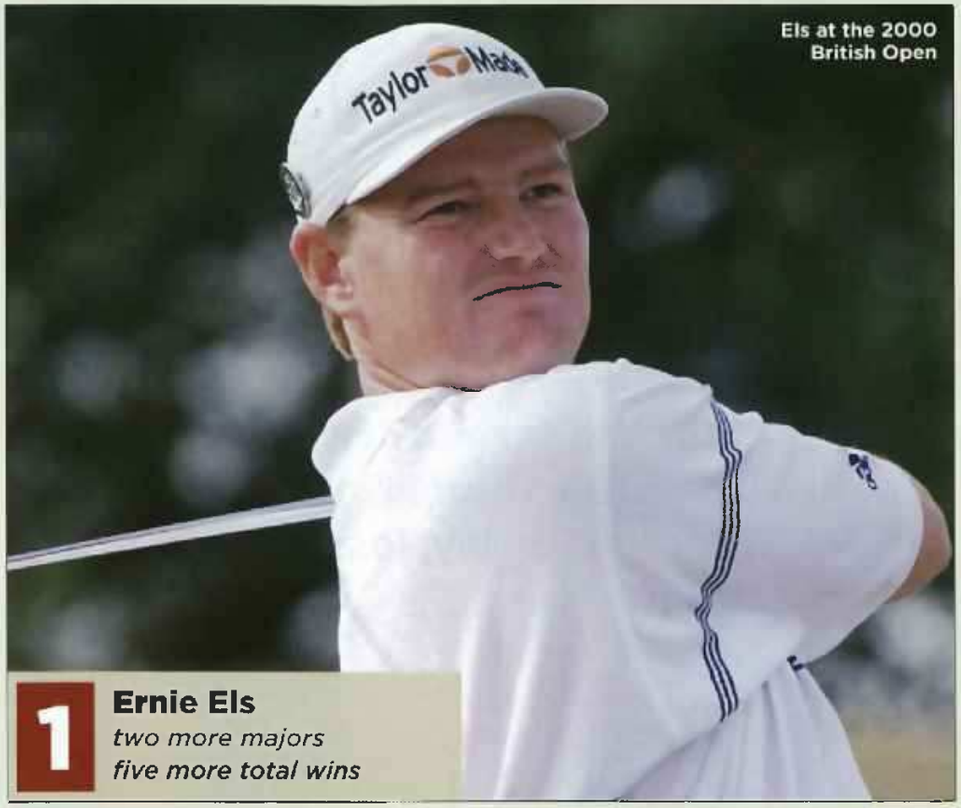
DiMarco also fell victim to Woods in regular PGA events, finishing second to him by a shot in the 2005 Bridgestone Invitational, a tournament Woods owned in his career with eight total victories.

So just think what the career consequence might have been for DiMarco if Woods had not been there to thwart him. He would have had two major victories and a WGC victory to tack on to his three career PGA Tour wins. And his confidence level in winning those events might have propelled him to several more victories. Hall of Fame career? Possibly.

"There are a lot of guys who'd love to have some putts back or who kick themselves about bogeys and doubles down the stretch," said DiMarco a couple of seasons ago. "But I always made birdies coming in and just got beaten…by the best in the world."

Without Tiger, Who Wins?

Tiger Woods has won again and again in the world of golf, but who would have won without him? We analyzed his victories to see who would have finished first if he didn't play.



Els at the 2000 British Open

1 Ernie Els
two more majors
five more total wins

THE MAJORS
Who would have won?

Masters
1997 *Tom Kite*
2001 *David Duval*
2002 *Retief Goosen*
2005 *Chris DiMarco*

U.S. Open
2000 *Ernie Els/ Miguel Ángel Jiménez*
2002 *Phil Mickelson*
2008 *Rocco Mediate*

British Open
2000 *Ernie Els/Thomas Bjørn*
2005 *Colin Montgomerie*
2006 *Chris DiMarco*

PGA Championship
1999 *Sergio Garcia*
2000 *Bob May*
2006 *Shaun Micheel*
2007 *Woody Austin*

Mickelson at the 2002 US Open

2 Phil Mickelson
one more major
four more total wins

DiMarco at the 2005 Masters

3 Chris DiMarco
two more majors
three more total wins

Singh at the 2006 Deutsche Bank Championship

4 Vijay Singh
no more majors
five more total wins

TOP: CHRISTINE NESBITT / AP PHOTO; BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: KATHY WILLENS / AP PHOTO; CHRIS O'MEARA / AP PHOTO; CHARLES KRUPA / AP PHOTO

PGA Tour Wins

1996
Las Vegas Invitational *Davis Love III*
Walt Disney World Classic *Payne Stewart*

1997
Mercedes Championship *Tom Lehman*
Byron Nelson Classic *Lee Rinker*
Western Open *Frank Nobilo*

1998
BellSouth Classic *Jay Don Blake*

1999
Buick Invitational *Billy Ray Brown*
Memorial Tournament *Vijay Singh*
Disney Classic *Ernie Els*
Tour Championship *Davis Love III*
Motorola Western Open *Mike Weir*

2000
Mercedes Championship *Ernie Els*
Pebble Beach *Vijay Singh/Matt Gogel*
Bay Hill *Davis Love III*
Memorial Tournament *Ernie Els/Justin Leonard*
Canadian Open *Grant Waite*

2001
Bay Hill *Phil Mickelson*
Players Championship *Vijay Singh*
Memorial Tournament *Sergio Garcia/Paul Azinger*

2002
Bay Hill *Michael Campbell*
Buick Open *Fred Funk/Brian Gay/Mark O'Meara/Esteban Toledo*

2003
Buick Invitational *Carl Petterson*
Bay Hill *Stewart Cink/Brad Faxon/Kenny Perry/Kirk Triplett*
Western Open *Rich Beem*

2005
Buick Invitational *Luke Donald/Charles Howell III/Tom Lehman*
Doral *Phil Mickelson*

2006
Buick Invitational *José Maria Olazábal/Nathan Green*
Doral *Camilo Villegas/David Toms*
Buick Open *Jim Furyk*
Deutsche Bank Championship *Vijay Singh*

2007
Buick Invitational *Charles Howell*
Wachovia Championship *Steve Stricker*
BMW Championship *Aaron Baddeley*
TOUR Championship *Mark Calcavecchia/Zach Johnson*

2008
Buick Invitational *Ryuji Imada*
Bay Hill *Bart Bryant*

2009
Bay Hill *Sean O'Hair*
Memorial Tournament *Jim Furyk*
AT&T National *Hunter Mahan*
Buick Open *Greg Chalmers/John Senden/Roland Thatcher*
BMW Championship *Jim Furyk/Marc Leishman*

2012
Bay Hill *Graeme McDowell*
Memorial Tournament *Rory Sabbatini/Andrés Romero*
AT&T National *Bo Van Pelt*

2013
Farmers Insurance Open *Brandt Snedeker/Josh Teater*
Bay Hill *Justin Rose*
Players Championship *David Lingmerth/Jeff Maggert/Kevin Streelman*

World Golf Championships

Bridgestone Invitational
1999 *Phil Mickelson*
2000 *Justin Leonard/Phillip Price*
2001 *Jim Furyk*
2005 *Chris DiMarco*
2006 *Stewart Cink*
2007 *Justin Rose/Rory Sabbatini*
2009 *Robert Allen/Pádraig Harrington*
2013 *Keegan Bradley/Henrik Stenson*

WGC American Express Championship
1999 *Miguel Ángel Jiménez*
2002 *Retief Goosen*
2003 *Stuart Appleby/Tim Herron/Vijay Singh*
2005 *John Daly*
2006 *Adam Scott/Ian Poulter*

Accenture Match Play Championship
2003 *David Toms*
2004 *Davis Love III*
2008 *Stewart Cink*

CA Championship
2007 *Brett Wetterich*

Cadillac Championship
2013 *Steve Stricker*

Singh, Furyk and Love III

Three of the Tour's most accomplished players felt the heat of Tiger's exhaust over the years, finishing second to Tiger repeatedly, but never in a major championship. Vijay Singh finished second to Woods five times, including the 2001 Players Championship that featured Woods' "better than most" 40-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole at TPC Sawgrass. Jim Furyk finished second to Woods four times, with a playoff loss in the 2001 Bridgestone. Davis Love III also had four second-place finishes to Woods, and had the privilege of seeing his talent up close and personal in Tiger's abbreviated rookie season of 1996. Love lost a playoff to Woods in the Las Vegas Invitational, Tiger's first win as a professional. Love finished second to Woods three more times.

Sergio and Monte

Two players who have long lived with the moniker "best player never to win a major" were denied by Woods. Sergio Garcia was only 19 when he burst onto the scene at the PGA Championship at Medinah in 1999 and found himself in a back-nine duel with Woods on Sunday. It was at the par 4 16th, after his ball came to rest at the base of a tree, that Garcia hit one of the most memorable shots in the game, closing his eyes as he struck a 6-iron, then running up the rise of the fairway to watch the ball come to rest on the green. It was exciting, but it wasn't enough. Woods came away with the first of his four PGA Championships, and Garcia is still searching for his first major.

Colin Montgomerie had already lost a playoff to Els in the 1994 U.S. Open, finished second two other times and lost a playoff to Steve Elkington in the 1995 PGA when he played the final two rounds of the 2005 British Open with Woods. He lost by three shots. A major eluded Montgomerie for his entire career.

The Journeymen

There are journeymen who, had they not had to overcome the game's most accomplished player, could have found themselves with more accomplished careers. By 2000 Bob May was a kick around pro, bouncing between tours, and was having a decent season that earned him entry into the PGA Championship at Valhalla. May was just an enlisted man in the PGA Tour army while Woods was the five-star general. Yet they went toe-to-toe with spectacular shotmaking one Sunday nearly 17 years ago, with Woods eventually winning in a playoff. May missed out on a five-year exemption on the PGA Tour. With no Woods, May could have had a real PGA career.

Shaun Micheel wasn't quite a nobody when he finished second to Woods in the 2006 PGA Championship. Micheel had won the 2003 PGA but then steadily slipped off the radar until he shot up the leaderboard at the 2006 PGA. By then Micheel was three years into his five-year exemption for winning that 2003 tournament. Another major victory—and the five-year free pass that comes with it—would have done wonders for his career. But Woods pulled away at Medinah, and Micheel eventually went away, relegated to the pile of firewood that Woods had chopped in his remarkable first decade as a pro.

Throw Woody Austin as yet another one of the logs in that cord of wood. Austin was a legendary self-deprecating pro who always admitted it was his head that held him back from being one of the game's more accomplished players. The one time Austin had a chance

Woods exulting after a clutch shot, wearing his trademark Sunday red and black. A world without Tiger would have been far different indeed.

to win a major, the 2007 PGA, Woods was there to confirm that Austin just wasn't quite good enough. Austin finishing second, a mere two shots behind, leaving him forever consigned to the Woods pile of victims.

A golf world without Tiger Woods would have meant more than just the impact on these many individual careers. He forever altered the mindset of the modern golfer with his athletic approach to the game. He worked out religiously, carved himself into a physical specimen. Only Gary Player had ever earned a reputation as a fitness freak before Tiger came along. Once other players saw Tiger's extraordinary success, and linked some of that to his extraordinary body, they followed him into the gym like lemmings. And mentally, he walked right on to the Tour in 1996 expecting to win. He combined his athletic physique with a steely pysche, the platform of success for today's players.

"I think he changed the way young players approached the game and came to the Tour," says Jim Nantz, the CBS broadcaster who has chronicled Woods' career with both passion and admiration. "The way he built his body, the way he played without any fear, I think that's how Rory McIlroy, Jason Day, Jordan Spieth play. And how they play, and the rest of the newest generation plays, has Tiger's fingerprints all over it."

Woods also impacted and influenced the scope of the game in the television age. No player since the late, great, incomparable Arnold Palmer drew so much attention to the sport. The television camera loved him, though in truth he didn't love it back nearly as much as Palmer.

When Woods played, ratings soared. In research provided by CBS for regular PGA Tour events from 2003 to 2010, Tiger's presence in a tournament could as much as double the viewing audience. When he wasn't in the field, the ratings plummeted. And golf's all-time highest rated tournaments all occurred as Tiger was in the hunt, and usually winning.

Those ratings led to revenues. The cost for golf's television rights soared during the Woods era, climbing from about $80 million in 1997, Woods' first full season on Tour, to $280 million by 2011. That year, new nine-year agreements were reached with CBS and NBC that have a combined worth in the billions of dollars, and they were inked when Woods' game had gone south. But through the shrewd financial maneuverings of the PGA Tour, led by commissioner Tim Finchem, television ponied up, and in turn purse money skyrocketed.

What if Woods hadn't been there to light up the screen? His stardom was a pillar of the Tour's success. No Tiger yesterday, less money today.

And it's a stunning coincidence that the Golf Channel, the first single-sport cable television outlet, began in 1995 as Woods was in the midst of a dominating amateur career. With Palmer as an original backer of the 24-hour channel devoted to what was often considered an elitist sport, the Golf Channel had the benefit of Woods' beacon. It isn't too much of a reach to say that without Woods, the cable network's chances of success would have been considerably less. Without Tiger, you wouldn't be turning it on at 2 a.m. to watch a tournament in Dubai.

"He was the reason for the explosive increase in ratings that we saw for golf and a significant part of the increase in rights payments that we all paid," says Sean McManus, president of CBS Sports.

The rise of Tiger also corresponded to the reign of Finchem as the tour commissioner. He did an outstanding job in taking over from Deane Beman and growing the tour by leaps and bounds; and leaping and bounding that he had Woods in the driver's seat.

"I'll take another Tiger Woods tomorrow to dominate for 20 years, and hopefully he'll come back," says Finchem.

But there is a downside to having such a huge star in the golf galaxy. "He takes all the air out of media. He becomes the entire focus," said Finchem at the time. "It's understandable, but the one negative about it is that it is very difficult to create new stars in that environment. That last two or three years it's been easy: a lot of that is because of the quality of the players and how they handle themselves so well. A lot of it has to do with media exposure they can generate now."

The same question was asked about golf's all-time major leader when he left the game. "When Jack Nicklaus won his last tournament in 1986, and I became commissioner in 1994, the questions were what are you going to do now because you don't have a Jack Nicklaus?" says Finchem. "They may have glossed over Greg Norman, who was No. 1 in the rankings for more than 300 weeks."

Some asked Finchem how can one man dominate when he is only part of the fabric for 18 or so tournaments a year. "Tiger comes along in the fall of 1996 after turning pro after his second year and he dominates," he says. "All of these tournaments...have grown in almost every category year to year. The lesson is that fans love golf."

And they needed someone to love. If Woods wasn't as lovable as Palmer, he certainly was exciting. He was the Tour's raison d'être.

If he had stayed at Stanford to get a business degree, the PGA Tour and its players wouldn't have been counting nearly as much money as they do today.

In his prime, Tiger Woods beat up on every single player, but at the same time he lifted them all up.

The Tour without Tiger? It would have just been golf. ❖

Jeff Williams is a contributing editor to CIGAR AFICIONADO.

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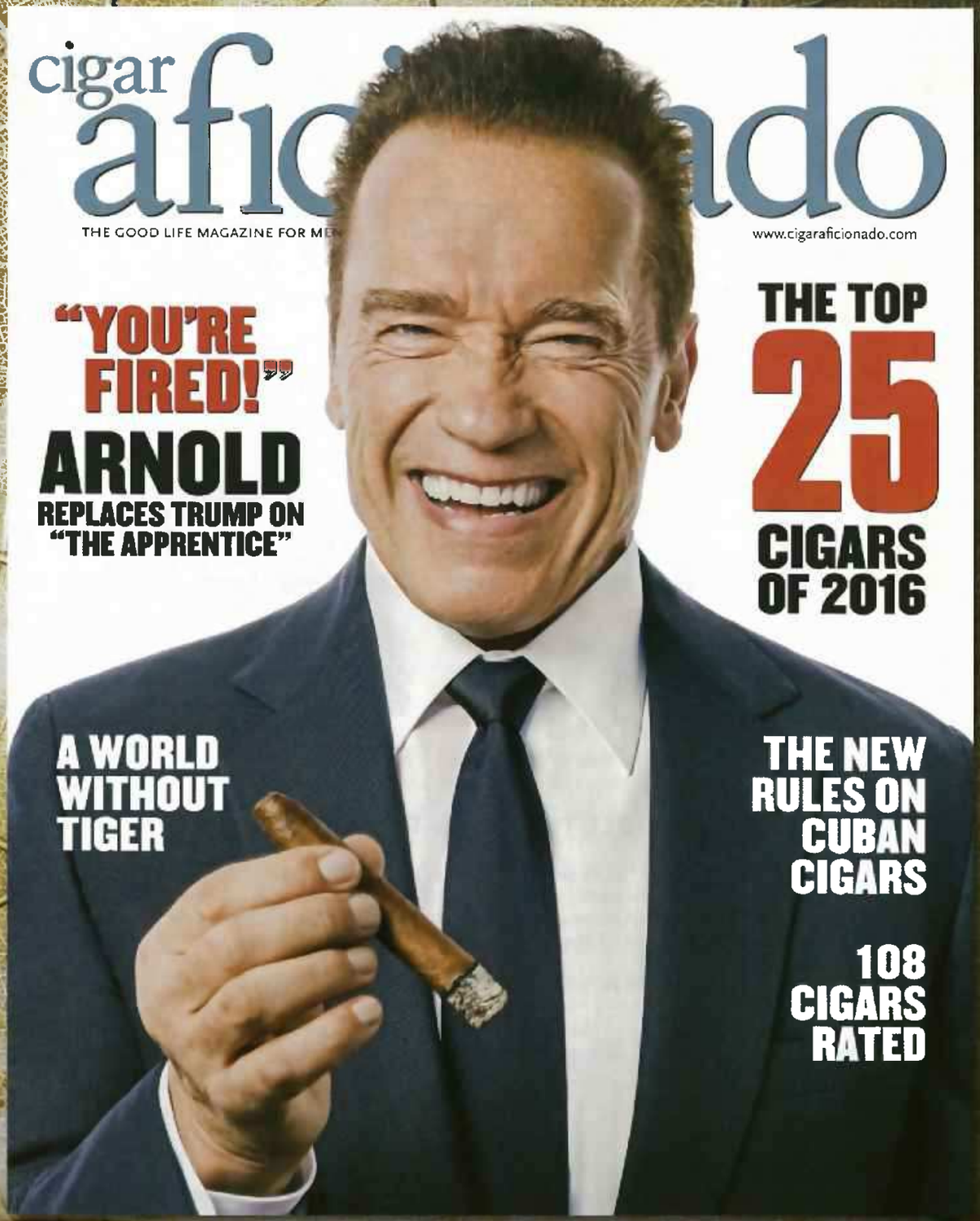

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THE NEW RULES ON CUBAN CIGARS

It's now legal to bring Cuban cigars back to the United States from anywhere, but restrictions still apply and some questions remain unanswered

BY GORDON MOTT

RICHARD BOLL

The traveler stood in line at JFK. In his bags, he had $2,000 worth of Cuban cigars that he had purchased in London. His arrival was a week after the U.S. Treasury had further loosened the rules for American citizens importing Cuban cigars and rum into the United States. Still there were limits: $800 worth or 100 cigars to come in without duty. The traveler was honest. He declared everything, expecting to pay a four-percent duty on the cigars in excess of the limits. "Have a nice day," said the customs agent. "We're giving you a holiday on the extra duty."

Just a few weeks later, I stood in the Global Entry customs line in Dallas. For the first time since I began working at CIGAR AFICIONADO, I carried in my bag Cuban cigars—four sticks purchased in Mexico. Now understand, this scenario used to set off a routine that went something like this: I would approach the customs counter, hand over my passport and wait for the inevitable question: "So, Mr. Mott, which magazine do you work for?" My response was always to cut to the chase: "I don't have any cigars, sir." This time, no one even asked me if I had cigars, but rather, I got a perfunctory, "Welcome to the United States."

Each example illustrates how customs greetings have changed in a few short years for Cuban cigar enthusiasts returning to the United States. The shift began on December 17, 2014, when President Obama announced that he was moving toward normalizing relations with Cuba, and was committed to finding ways to allow more U.S. travel to Cuba without violating the parameters of the Cuban trade embargo, which is subject to Congressional oversight. Since then, significant moves have been made: restrictions on people-to-people tours have been loosened; scheduled air flights now fly between a number of U.S. cities and several destinations in Cuba, including Havana; and U.S.-flagged cruise ships regularly dock in Havana's harbor. In addition, the U.S. Interests Section in Havana was upgraded to a full-fledged embassy last summer and earlier in 2016, President Obama visited Cuba with his family.

Still the rules governing importation of Cuban cigars and rum were fairly restrictive: $100 worth of one or the other or both products combined, and only for those who were travelling between Cuba and the

THE NEW RULES IN BRIEF

YOU CAN NOW BUY CUBAN CIGARS when traveling anywhere outside the U.S. and bring those cigars back. You are allowed as many as 100 cigars, worth up to $800, without duty.

NO MORE $100 LIMIT for those traveling to Cuba. You can bring back far more cigars than before, so long as they are for personal consumption.

YOU CAN'T RESELL THE CUBAN CIGARS upon your return to the United States. The new rules only allow you to bring cigars in for personal consumption.

BUT YOU CAN GIVE THEM AWAY. You are allowed to give away Cuban cigars you bring back as gifts. Your friends will appreciate this gesture.

NO INTERNET, NO MAIL ORDER. It remains illegal to buy Cuban cigars from abroad via the phone, Internet or catalog and have them sent to the United States.

YOU WON'T SEE CUBANS IN YOUR LOCAL BRICK AND MORTAR. Cuban cigar sales in the U.S. remain banned under the embargo. Your local store still cannot sell cigars from Havana.

THE RULES REMAIN VAGUE when it comes to total quantities. Our rate of personal consumption is likely much, much higher than what a U.S. Customs agent would believe. There is no formal definition to the upper limits of "personal consumption." If you stick to the 100 cigars/$800 value limit for duty-free import you can be extra certain you are within your rights.

United States, with no purchases allowed in other countries. Even then, only authorized travelers to Cuba could take advantage of the privilege to return with barely a handful of cigars. But on October 14, 2016, the rules changed in ways that no one had anticipated. Suddenly, U.S. citizens were allowed to legally buy Cuban cigars or rum in any country, including Cuba, and bring them back to the United States under the same limits applied to all tobacco or alcoholic beverages: $800 worth or 100 cigars (whichever is less) to come in without fees; and one liter of alcoholic beverage. Prior to that new rule, Americans could not buy Cuban product anywhere in the world without breaking the law.

Here is how the regulations apply in general. Any traveler returning to the United States is eligible for a personal duty-free exemption on most goods. If you have been out of the country for more than 48 hours, and have not been out more than once in the previous 30 days, the amount is typically $800. The same limits now govern Cuban tobacco products. Any tobacco product exceeding the limit is subject to a 4-percent duty. Alcohol has long been an exception. Most departure points are limited to one liter regardless of price. Although certain Caribbean nations are granted a two-liter limit, Cuba is not one of those.

Sounds simple, right? Well, the law gets a little vague, if you want to extend the limit by paying duty. The law states very clearly: "Authorized travelers may also return to the United States with alcohol and/or tobacco products acquired in Cuba as accompanied baggage for personal use." (The same language applies to cigars bought in other countries.) The phrase "personal use" means that any customs agent is within his or her rights to question your intentions if you return with, say, a suitcase filled with 50 boxes of cigars. While the regulations also make it very clear that you may give your cigars to a third party, if you sell them or receive any kind of compensation in return for them, you are breaking the law.

Another issue that remains problematic is whether or not cigars acquired during the last 50 years and kept in storage outside the United States, are now eligible to be repatriated under the current regulation. The question was put to four different agencies: the U.S. Treasury, the Office of Foreign Assets Control, Customs and Border Patrol and the Department of Homeland Security. One office replied, "This response is off the record. I have no further guidance to give you on your subject." This may be an overthinking of the issue, but it is possible that a product purchased while it was illegal to do so might be subject to a different, perhaps stricter, interpretation of the law and confiscated if you tried to enter the country with it. Until there is a better answer, I would remain cautious bringing home boxes of 30-year-old Cuban Davidoffs.

Another point: If you are leaving Cuba with more than 50 cigars, or two boxes, be sure to have the invoices handy to show Cuban customs officials you purchased them from an official source, and are not trying to smuggle out contraband. One traveler in November had 450 cigars, some unbanded and others in boxes, and he was asked to produce documentation. But he also received the duty waiver in Miami at U.S. Customs.

Even as the rules have made it easier for individual Americans to acquire and return home with Cuban cigars, the prohibition remains in place on importing those same cigars for commercial use. Craig Cass, a retailer in North Carolina, says he has been getting frequent questions about "why aren't you selling Cuban cigars?" He has to explain that the trade embargo with Cuba is still in effect. Another retailer, Curt Diebel, of Kansas City, reported that same situation in his stores, but also added that no one is coming in waving their Cuban cigar around saying they bought them on their last trip out of the country.

There's also another reality for everyone to consider. As this article goes to print, the United States is less than a month away from President Donald Trump taking office, and he promised on the campaign trail to undo all of President Obama's executive orders. Presumably those orders that changed the rules on travel to Cuba would be included. Trump also promised in November to get tough again on Cuba. Presumably, if he does repeal those orders, then the rules will revert back to the previous administration's guidelines regarding purchases of Cuban products, including cigars and rum. It could mean a complete prohibition on cigars and rum or perhaps the lower $100 limit allowed for authorized travelers to Cuba. Third-country purchases would probably be eliminated too.

If that happens, American cigar smokers will have only enjoyed a brief window when it was legal to bring significant quantities of Cuban cigars into the United States. Stay tuned. ❖

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THE BACCARAT MACHINE

CHEUNG YIN SUN CLEANS OUT CASINOS AROUND THE WORLD USING ACUTE SKILL AND INTUITION

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN

PORTRAITS BY TOMAS MUSCIONICO

I knew there would be shoes. No woman wins tens-of-millions-of-dollars from casinos without treating herself to a few nice rides. But I was unprepared for the sheer quantity, quality and acquisitional gusto. Cheung Yin Sun, who goes by the name Kelly, has walk-in closets overflowing with heels, flats, pumps and wedges. Jimmy Choo, Christian Louboutin and Manolo Blahnik are all represented. There are enough sneakers to outfit an NBA team and loads of boots reside in the garage—right alongside her new BMW.

Then, in the midst of our leather-themed tour, she moves on to handbags, showing off limited-edition models from Louis Vuitton, Chanel and Hermès. Most striking of all is a money-green pocketbook made from reptile skin.

"It's crocodile!" Kelly enthuses. "That one was a gift from Phil."

The "Phil" she refers to is none other than poker legend Phil Ivey. He made headlines in 2012 when Crockfords Casino in London refused to cash more than $11 million in chips that he won playing baccarat. Ivey sued the refined gambling-den and Crockfords steadfastly maintained that Ivey had won by deceptive means. (Ivey and his lawyers did not respond to repeated requests for comment.) A recent appeal failed to pan out, a bid for a U.K. Supreme Court hearing is in the works and the pair remain in the hole on their profits from there. Though Ivey might be a card-playing genius, in the case of this baccarat caper all he had to do was bet. Kelly did the heavy lifting. The brains behind the operation, she brought Ivey along on a casino spree that generated more than $30 million.

The pair won their money by employing a technique known as edge sorting. It involves capitalizing on casinos that use playing cards in which the edges on either side are unevenly cut by fractions of an inch. In the game of mini-baccarat, in which players do not touch their cards, Kelly employed social engineering techniques to convince Chinese-speaking dealers to turn certain cards "for good luck." It allowed her to set the decks so that she could recognize the game's key cards: sixes, sevens, eights and nines. Winning millions becomes a foregone conclusion when you play the Kelly way.

Sitting in her high-ceilinged living room in Las Vegas, with a golf course on the gated grounds and a gorgeous pool out back, Kelly is petite and pretty and easy with a laugh. For the first time, she is welcoming a journalist into her home. Historically, she dodges reporters and dons enormous sunglasses in order to frustrate paparazzi. They snapped photos of her outside of the London courthouse where she and Ivey litigated in an attempt to get their winnings. On a warm summer afternoon, Kelly provides CIGAR AFICIONADO with an exclusive deep-dive into her life and world.

Cheung Yin Sun, or "Kelly" as she prefers to go by, has made millions outsmarting and outplaying casinos.

One of the most fascinating people in casino gambling, she seems surprisingly blasé in describing what she does to drive casino personnel crazy. "I'm very happy to beat the casinos, but not excited," she says. "I feel satisfaction but not necessarily joy. This is work and I am a professional. It's what I have trained myself to do. I do not feel bad if I lose and I do not feel emotions if I win."

She has a nickname that is well earned: Baccarat Machine.

Kelly is also an automatic teller machine—one that pulls money out of casinos and puts it in her own coffers. It's a life for which she seemed to not be remotely destined. Currently 40 years old, she was born in Northern China where her father's family had made fortunes in banking. She should have indulged herself in a life of ease and wealth, but it did not work out that way after her father fell victim to China's Cultural Revolution. Mao Zedong's thugs imprisoned the wealthy and took away their belongings. Her father ranked among of them.

He was sent to a work camp during the last years of Mao's reign. "Until I turned seven [in 1983] I was very poor," Kelly tells me. "You know how I like shoes now? When I was a little girl, I had no shoes. We were so poor that my mother had to make shoes for us. She cut out pieces of cardboard from cartons and those were our shoes. My feet got very cold in winter. It was a terrible time. We had to grow our own vegetables. I lived like a country girl."

Following Mao's passing, and more capitalist-oriented leadership in China, her father was released and regained his wealth through the launching of a factory that produced wooden products. "He got rich again; he got very rich," Kelly says with a smile. "He sent me to Shanghai for school. I went to Hong Kong. I got nice clothing. I had a nice life."

She also indulged a passion for gambling. By the age of 15, Kelly was putting up money to play a Chinese version of poker. She used a fake ID to go on gambling cruises out of Hong Kong and made her way to Macau while still underage and flush with family money. "I had about $1,500 on me and won $150,000 playing baccarat," she says, admitting that the seminal experience hooked her on casino gambling. "I bought myself a nice Rolex. Later, when I went to Paris to study French and fashion design at the Sorbonne, somebody told me I had a nice watch. I said, 'Okay. Gift to you.' I gave that person my watch."

Kelly thinks about it for a beat, maybe considering whether or not generosity provides a karmic return. "Now my favorite watch is Hublot. I have a lot of watches."

Though her father was not particularly interested in gambling, he willingly funded Kelly's predilection for financial risk. She spent her 20s as a kind of high-stakes jet-setter, going to posh gambling spots around the world and blowing money like it didn't matter. She played blackjack, baccarat, slot machines, video poker, craps, even a bit of Texas hold'em. Kelly never met a casino game that she didn't like and casino bosses loved her for it.

In Monte Carlo, Las Vegas and Macau, she received the total red carpet treatment. "They would give me penthouse suites, send me bottles of Champagne, comp my dinners, pay bills at the nightclub; I got promotional chips and money for shopping," she remembers, acknowledging that her hemorrhaging millions of dollars correlated with the fancy perks. "I lost $3 million at Palms and stayed in a suite with a pool looking out on the Strip."

Calm and focused, Kelly (top) sits at a Poker table at London's Grand Connaught Rooms during the European Poker Tour. Kelly and gambling partner Phil Ivey (above) on their way to London's High Court.

In 2006 she checked into Wynn Las Vegas and put $200,000 on deposit to fund her gambling. As usual, most of the bankroll was rapidly decimated. Left with just $4,000, she wandered the rows of slot machines, hoping to get lucky. Kelly was still enough of a casino denizen to rely on fortune and believed in the possibility of randomly striking it rich.

She came across a man working the slots with fleet-fingered speed. "He played the dollar machines and I thought, 'Oh, he must be a professional,'" she remembers, ignoring the fact that she had no idea what a professional slot machine player really was. "I went up and asked him to teach me how to play. He looked at me and said, 'Oh, you're a very pretty girl. I'll teach you to play.'"

The man was indeed a professional gambler. He goes under the name Steven Black and makes a living by finding various, unmined edges in casinos. Formerly a successful car salesman, Black derives profits from rebates that casinos give to losing players, he's expert at advanced blackjack moves such as ace sequencing and shuffle tracking, he has impeccable vision and an uncanny memory. As put by the talented sports bettor Bill "Krackman" Krackomberger: "He's the sharpest of the sharp."

Black took Kelly under his wing. They hit casinos in California, New Orleans and Tunica. Kelly was a quick study and she recognized that this was more apprenticeship than money-making endeavor. "We won like $600,000 in Palm Springs," she remembers, citing a faulty machine mis-wired to deal blackjacks every time a player split Aces. "That day, Steven gave me $1,200.

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For the most part, though, he paid me $20 per hour. I was, like, 'Okay, I'm learning.'"

Despite Black's best efforts to turn her from a sucker to a stone-cold advantage player, Kelly could not completely shed her old ways. One night in 2006, she and friends from Shanghai were gambling it up at MGM Grand in Las Vegas. A pal had dropped $500,000 and asked to borrow $100,000. Kelly didn't have the cash on her but she signed a marker for her friend. Aware that in Las Vegas, markers are the equivalent of checks and that an unpaid marker is no different from a bad check, she trusted the friend who promised to pay it back and had the means to do so. "I went to Paris for six months and she told me that she had paid it off," says Kelly. "But, on my way back to Vegas, I entered the U.S. in Philadelphia and something happened." She didn't even get the opportunity to pass through immigration. "Police came on the plane and handcuffed me. They said that I owed $93,000 on an unpaid marker."

"THIS IS WORK AND I AM A PROFESSIONAL... I DON'T FEEL BAD IF I LOSE AND I DO NOT FEEL EMOTIONS IF I WIN"

Kelly wound up spending 21 days in downtown Las Vegas's Clark County Detention Center. It took that long before her father could fly to Vegas and pay a total of $104,000—there were additional fees—to straighten things out. "Jail was terrible," she remembers. "At 3:00 in the morning they had hounds sniffing for drugs. I thought the underwear was dirty and would not wear it. For that I was put in solitary confinement and slept on the floor. Steven came to visit me and I told him I was very hungry. I asked for $50. He said, 'No. Don't eat. It will make you sleepy.' Instead he gave me a deck of cards and told me to work on my card counting. I practiced every day and got good. I wanted to beat MGM [because of what had happened]."

What she would eventually come up with, of course, proved way more profitable than card counting. She taught herself to edge sort and devised an ingenious technique for applying it to mini-baccarat, a game where the casino does not blink at bets of $50,000 or more. Here's how baccarat gets played: In the game of baccarat four cards get dealt onto the table, two for player and two for banker. The object is to bet on the two cards for player or the two cards for banker and hope that your pick gets closer to a total of nine than the other. Aces count as one, 10s and picture cards are zero, everything else is face value. If a total comes to 15, it counts as five; 18 counts as eight and so on.

Kelly is not the first person to leverage the move known as edge sorting—finding games that use cards, such as a type made by Gemaco—and take advantage of unmatched edges. Her breakthrough resides in her technique. After a few test runs in the fall of 2011—"Small money," she says, "we made $200,000 at Palms, $300,000 at MGM"—she put the big play into action inside the Salon Privé private gaming room at Aria. Kelly and three collaborators established themselves as losing players by dropping $100,000 playing the game straight and losing it all. The next day they came back, deposited $500,000 and asked to play "Macau style." The casino acquiesced. Four cards were dealt before Kelly and crew made their bets. They played through one shoe and lost $175,000 while having the dealer turn key cards—sixes, sevens, eights and nines—so that the short trims faced her.

On the next shoe, Kelly was able to read the cards and know when it would be advantageous to bet player or banker. The game may as well have been dealt face-up. "Every hand, I bet $40,000," recounts Kelly, adding that she and her partners emptied the chip tray of all $5,000 and $25,000 chips. They got replenished; the game got destroyed. "The pit-boss and casino manager came over to watch. Before the shoe was finished, we had won a million dollars. I said, 'Okay. Let's go.' We cashed out, left through the front door and drove to Caesars Palace. We already had a big suite there—no regular room for me—and put $300,000 on deposit."

They repeated the play at Caesars and won $200,000. Next stop was Treasure Island for a take of $300,000. After that they flew to Connecticut and played Foxwoods. The wins were big and audacious and impossible to keep on the down-low. A posting on the Internet by a casino security specialist limned the strategy for gaming insiders. "A week later I saw Steven at Treasure Island," says Kelly. "He had read about what we did. He said he knew, 100 percent, that it had to be me."

Impressed but recognizing that Kelly had a short shelf life without the right person to do the betting, he asked, "You want to play for big money? I'll introduce you to Phil."

In January of 2012, at the Aussie Millions poker tournament, held in Melbourne, Australia, Phil Ivey won the $200,000 buy-in high-roller event and took down more than $2 million. News filtered to Black that Ivey had some $6 million on him. He was able to bet as much as $300,000 per hand at baccarat. It seemed like an opportune moment. Kelly and Black boarded a flight from Vegas to Melbourne.

The deal was that in exchange for the introduction, Black would receive 10 percent of their winnings. Additionally, he had been working on a way of controlling dice thrown in craps. He wanted to partner with Ivey on exploiting that as well. As Kelly remembers things, "Steven and Phil played craps and lost $3 million. Phil only had half his money left and was very upset. They lost the money in just an hour after Steven said he could control the dice. He came to me and said, 'Please, play baccarat so Phil can win back the money. Otherwise I will lose a friend.'"

Operating with Ivey's bankroll, they bought in at the baccarat table and proceeded to lose another $500,000. "I didn't know those cards!" Kelly says as way of explanation. Ivey was less than understanding. "He called me a hustler and told Steven that he is unprofessional. He had only $3 million or so left. I asked Phil to give me one night to figure it out. Steven went online and printed out copies of the card-backs being used."

Overnight, Kelly studied the cards and devised a technique for reading them. The next day, she says, "In one hour we won the money back plus $3 million. The casino gave the money to Phil and asked how he knew me. Somebody from the casino told him that I was internationally famous [for doing the baccarat play]. Phil told them that I had just come into the poker room and that I wanted to play baccarat."

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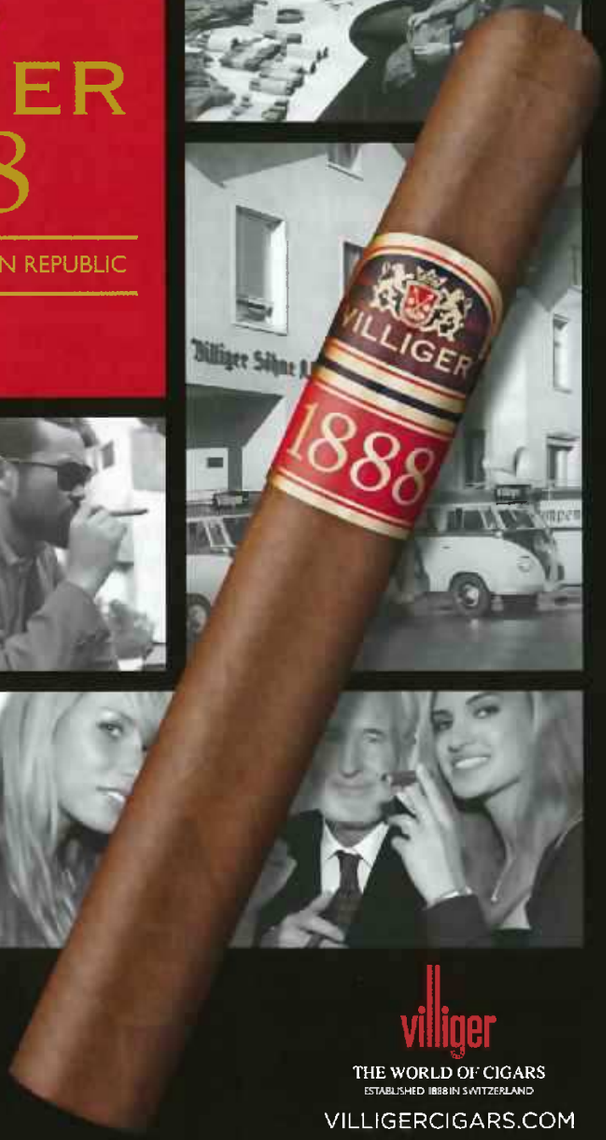

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In short order, Ivey became a believer. Kelly, Ivey and Steven hit the road and ravaged casinos. They played Montreal, Singapore, Macau, Monte Carlo. She wore elegantly cut designer-clothing in overseas high-limit rooms, reprising the role of the globe-trotting action-lover she had once been. They established a routine. After arriving at a gambling spot, Kelly says, "We'd spend the first day relaxing, then we'd go to the nightclub, followed by two or three days playing in the casino. One day we lost $3 million. Phil was not upset then. We went back and won $5 million the next night."

Her birthday in 2012 was a raucous affair. "We went to XS at Wynn," Kelly remembers. "Phil had girls all around him. I was so drunk. I checked into a room at Wynn instead of going home. The next morning Phil called and I did not answer the phone. Steven came up and started kicking the door. He said, 'Let's go, let's go, the private jet is waiting. We're going to Borgata [in Atlantic City] to win money.' I had no clothing or makeup or luggage. I had to buy all new stuff at Borgata. Steven and Phil did not want me eating or sleeping. They only wanted me to be playing. That's why they called me Baccarat Machine. One time we played 24 hours. Phil slept on the floor [of the high-limit room]."

Everything was going great for the group until an ill-fated London trip in August of 2012. Ivey was in town for a poker tournament and had dropped a bundle. He hoped to win it back at baccarat. Kelly flew in and they hit Crockfords, a venerable casino in the exclusive Mayfair neighborhood. In just six or so hours, over a two-day period, they managed to score the U.S. equivalent of some $11 million. Kelly says that she suggested stopping at $5 million, fearing that the casino would balk at them cashing out for an eight-figure sum. Ivey, she says, wanted to keep going. Winning so much so quickly, she says, "We got very lucky."

After their play wound down, it appeared that Kelly was being overly cautious. "Phil spoke with the casino people, then he came back and showed Steven and I the order for a wire transfer," she says, explaining that the $11 million payday from Crockfords appeared to be approved for shipping. With things on track, Ivey quickly returned to Vegas so he could deal with an unexpectedly ill family member. Three days later, the money had yet to land in Kelly's bank account. She says she called Ivey to ask where the cash was. Either the casino reneged or Ivey still had all the winnings. "He said he did not receive the money. I told him that I did not believe him. After a week, I said, 'Phil, you don't need to give me the money. It's okay. It is only $11 million. It's fine. You keep it.'"

Soon after, Kelly was hanging out with friends in France. She made her way down to Nice with the intention of playing in a poker tournament. "I saw Phil," she remembers. "He told me not to play. Reporters were there and they knew about London. At that point I realized that Phil had been honest about the money not arriving. We wound up leaving France and flying to Atlantic City to play Borgata. Phil and I split the cost of a private jet."

Not surprisingly, Crockfords refused to cash them out. And while their trip to Borgata was a profitable one—$9.6 million won over the course of 100 or so hours—legal troubles struck again in The Garden State. The Borgata sued to recoup its baccarat losses. A federal judge sympathized and recently ruled that Ivey was "in breach of his contract" with the casino for playing at an advantage. Now Borgata is trying to get $15.5 million from Ivey by factoring in comps and the casino's expected win if Ivey and Kelly had played the game like suckers. The two are appealing.

The headlines were big enough that Kelly is now easily spotted and 86ed from most casinos in Las Vegas. She can't even play to help an out-of-town buddy. During our interview, Kelly stops chatting with me to take a call and speaks in rapid-fire Chinese. After hanging up, she tells me, "That's my friend from Macau. He just lost $6 million at MGM. He wants me to play with him, but I can't. I cannot go into MGM, Wynn or Caesars. Downtown I'm good. But those casinos' limits are too small. How do you win big money?"

Kelly's penchant for shoes and fashion is matched only by her exacting skill as a player. She's as comfortable in the casino as she is here in her Vegas home.

Maybe the extra attention contributed to Ivey having cooled on playing baccarat with Kelly. He turned down an offer to join her on a repeat rampage through Macau. "He said that everywhere is no good for us to play, but it's not true. I won $2 million at Galaxy casino there."

Ivey or no Ivey, Kelly has no interest in giving up. She's turned down offers to provide consulting services to casinos, continues to play in Asia and is teaching her techniques to students—which may result in the casino nightmare: An army of mini Kellys infiltrating mini-baccarat tables.

As for her herself, Kelly plans on stepping up her poker playing and looks forward to transforming her look and staying below the radar. "I never thought about being famous," she says. "I am very quiet. I don't say anything. I just want to beat casinos." ❖

Michael Kaplan is a CIGAR AFICIONADO *contributing editor.*

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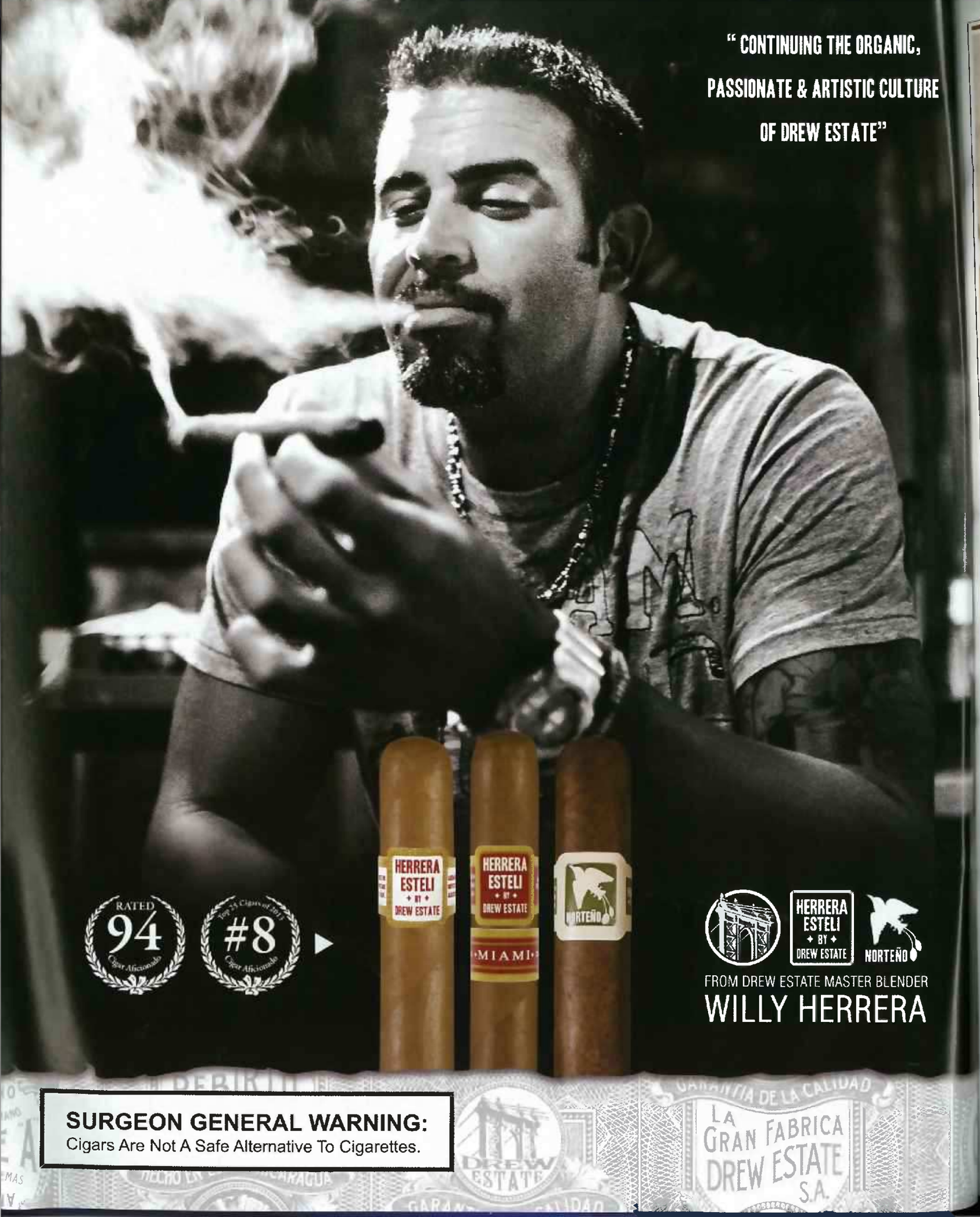
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Rye and Cigars

The revival of this spicy whiskey brings on perfect cigar pairings

BY JACK BETTRIDGE PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

The biggest surprise of the already startling whiskey boom is the rye revival. Long ago it was America's most popular pour, but it became a dusty afterthought on liquor store shelves in the wake of Prohibition. Yet when the current cocktail revival surged, bartenders with historical bents discovered its importance in classic mixology. By then the choices were few. Most straight ryes were made at Bourbon distilleries that devoted little time to rye production. Furthermore, they tended to be made close to the minimum amount of the spicy grain allowed by law: 51 percent. Burgeoning demand has brought broad diversity and flavorful ryes boasting 90 to 100 percent rye in their mashbill, as well some rye-forward entrants from Canada.

Like its Bourbon cousin, rye is a natural cigar partner—but tangier and not as sweet. We sampled a spectrum of ryes ranging in price from $19 to $300 per bottle with two contrasting cigar profiles. The Inch Natural by E.P. Carrillo No. 60 (5 7/8" by 60 ring gauge, $8.75) was meant to complement spice with its maple, coconut and oak notes. We chose the Rocky Patel 55 Robusto (5 1/2" by 55, $10.30) to go right after the zesty ryes with its notes of licorice, mint and dark toast. We were quite pleased with the results.

Booker's Rye The Big Time Batch

This rye was made using the uncut/unfiltered ethic of Booker's Bourbon. It was laid down by the legendary Jim Beam distiller Booker Noe and selected by his son Fred when the whiskey was 13. You may want to tame its scorching proof with some water, but the sensation is a roller coaster from sweet to spicy to toasty notes in the form of red berries, red pepper and rye bread. The Inch smoothed out the rye, while becoming bolder itself. The Rocky Patel 55 was the winner, eliciting licorice and cedar where there previously was none. (136.2 proof, $300)

The E.P. Carrillo Inch Natural No. 60 (left) and Rocky Patel 55 Robusto provided a wide flavor spectrum to pair with ryes.

Bulleit Rye

Rye whiskey was a natural progression for Bulleit, which debuted as a Bourbon high in rye content (28 percent). The version labeled "rye whiskey" amped the spice quotient up to 95 percent. After a vanilla and candy nose, its rye tang meets the palate with cinnamon, licorice and clove. With the Inch, Bulleit achieved a friendly give-and-take, where the maple candy reached accord with the whiskey's cinnamon. The Rocky Patel 55 got toastier in the exchange and gave the whiskey hearty, nutty flavors. (90 proof, $27)

Canadian Club 100 Percent Rye

During Prohibition, Americans developed a taste for the high-quality, but illegal, Canadian rye blends that served as a substitute for straight American rye. Now some Canadian producers are feeding our demand for spice with high-rye whiskeys. Canadian Club has gone all-in with 100 percent. Despite explicit nutmeg and cinnamon, it manages delicate honey and vanilla, too. The Inch expanded the CC's softer, barrel notes and benefited from its cinnamon. The Rocky Patel 55 matched it for spice and took some sweetness from the CC. (80 proof, $20)

Crown Royal Northern Harvest Rye

This Canadian also emphasizes rye grain, this time with 90 percent. The Crown Royal's name showcases the importance of the Canadian climate on rye. The grain is planted in the fall and lies dormant under snow in the winter before fully maturing through summer. The whiskey's palate is fruity, with hard candy, apple cider and caramel. Some white pepper on the finish came on even quicker when paired with the Inch. With the Rocky Patel 55 there was a good balance of sugar and spice and everything nice. (90 proof, $30)

George Dickel Rye Whisky

If you taste similarities between this rye example from George Dickel (known for its Tennessee sour mash whisky) and the Bulleit rye (above), note that both are owned by Diageo and made by the same third-party distiller. The Dickel difference is that the rye goes through the signature charcoal chill filtering of a Tennessee sour mash to burnish the rough edges and release a creamy, orange menthol note. This suited the Inch well as it became supremely smooth and heartier. The Rocky Patel pairing was a bit flat. (90 proof, $28)

Knob Creek Straight Rye

This rye is a sibling to Knob Creek Bourbon, and its deep barrel charring gives it orange notes, and the heavily rye mash bill adds notes of rye bread,

The Rye Manhattan

Sorry Martini. The Manhattan is the king of the cocktails. Invented as a rye drink, its combination with sweet vermouth and bitters succinctly conveys the energy and sophistication of the New York borough for which it is named—and it's a savory, complex drink ideal for chilly afternoons or evenings. Historically made by combining two parts rye, one part sweet vermouth and a generous dash or two of Angostura bitters, it can be endlessly adjusted. Change the ratios, vary the brands, or even mix the Perfect Manhattan, blending sweet and dry vermouth. The classic preparation is stirred, but we also enjoy it shaken, which adds froth and bits of ice. Some even serve it with ice in a rocks glass. —*JB*

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pepper, berry, breathy mint and eucalyptus. Its sweetness brightened the Inch, making it fuller bodied, but the tannins in the rye proved a jarring match with the Rocky Patel. (100 proof, $39)

Lot No. 40

Hard to find, but well worth the trouble, Lot No. 40 was one of the flag bearers in the charge of extremely high-rye content (100 percent in this case) Canadian whiskies. Hiram Walker distillery makes Lot No. 40 in a copper still. Though it shows lots of anise, it's not biting at all as it produces honey, molasses, sloe berries and cinnamon as well. The sweetness backed off in the Inch pairing, while the cigar got leathery. However, it created sweetness and toasty woods on the Rocky Patel. (86 proof, $40)

Michter's Barrel Strength U.S. 1 Rye

The forebear of Michter's was Shenk's, built in 1753 in eastern Pennsylvania. Several owners later it shuttered in 1989, but a new owner sourced whiskey elsewhere to bottle under the label. Now the company has its own Kentucky distillery. The barrel-strength version is notable for its range of orange peel, vanilla, cinnamon graham cracker, mint and toffee. The Inch's coconut bloomed in the pairing. Michter's drew fruit notes from the Rocky Patel and developed its own licorice. (113 proof, $80)

Old Overholt

Old Overholt has survived the many travails of rye whiskey since its inception in 1810. During Prohibition, it sold for medicinal purposes only. Its plant shuttered during World War II. In the 1980s it moved from western Pennsylvania to Kentucky. Still it remains as one of rye's best buys, with its surprising range of blackberries, cherries, marzipan, cinnamon, licorice and toast with jam. It balanced delicately with the Inch, showing white pepper and giving up fruit to the cigar. The RP's spices contrasted well with the berries. (80 proof, $19)

Pikesville Straight Rye

Originally made in Maryland (and now at Kentucky's Heaven Hill), Pikesville is the exemplar of the mild, eastern style. The rye portion of the mashbill just clears the minimum 51 percent standard. This superpremium version is six years old. Along with rye toast and clove, it features rich, gooey caramel with a topping of raspberry jam. Its caramel filled out the Inch, while pairing the Pikesville with the Rocky Patel smacked of cinnamon toast. (110 proof, $50)

Redemption Rye

Among a spate of non-distilling producers who source their rye from the MGP distillery in Indiana, Redemption is refreshingly the most transparent about it. This two-and-a-half-year-old is an interesting mix of sugar, menthol, herbs and spices, topped with flowers. It drew fuller body from the Inch, but received little in return. The Rocky Patel combination was quite spicy and a good backdrop for Redemption's flowers. (90 proof, $30)

Rittenhouse Bottled In Bond

Rittenhouse was founded in Philadelphia in 1934 to slake the nation's thirst at the end of Prohibition. Starting as a two-year-old, it gradually grew up to its four-year, bottled-in-bond status. With notes of toffee and vanilla, fruit flavors, mint, pepper, rye bread and cloves, the whiskey suffuses the Inch with sweetness and gets added spice in return. With the Rocky Patel, the two become a spicy mint gumball. (100 proof, $25)

Russell's Reserve 6 Year Old Rye

This is the product of the Wild Turkey distillery, more famous for Bourbon. The name refers to the father-and-son distilling team of Jimmy and Eddie Russell who created this small-batch whiskey. The flavors are a crisp balance of honey and tang, with caramel, butter rum, cinnamon, rye bread and slight fruits. It brought depth and pleasant bite to the Inch and found itself filling the Rocky Patel with hearty sweetness. (90 proof, $35)

Sazerac Rye

The emblematic New Orleans cocktail, the Sazerac, was named for a Cognac brand. Rye replaced brandy in the recipe, but the Sazerac name stuck. It was even applied to a coffeehouse, which grew into a spirits giant that now makes Sazerac Rye, a very zingy whiskey. It tussled a bit with the Inch, but had a happy boost of spice with the Rocky Patel. (90 proof, $27)

Templeton Rye 4 Years Old

Fans of "Boardwalk Empire" may recognize Templeton from its cameos on the HBO series set in Prohibition. The whiskey has been made in Indiana since its introduction, but a distillery is being built in the Iowa town it is named for. It shows mint, dill, clove, rye toast and plums. The Inch drew butterscotch from the whiskey and got roasty. The Rocky pairing was neutral, with the Inch cigar getting rough with the rye. (80 proof, $30)

Whistlepig The Boss Hog Independent

This Whistlepig has it backwards. Lots of Scotch ages in American casks. This is whiskey sourced in Canada and finished in Scottish hogsheads. The whiskey, with a 100-percent-rye mashbill, shows fruit, spice and menthol, with gingerbread, fruitcake, minced pudding and licorice. It was a bit too tannic for the Inch, though it lent spice. With the Rocky Patel, it found superb balance, each filling in spice notes for the other. (120.6 proof, $300) ❖

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118 BLIND TASTING
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136 CIGARS GET EVER FATTER
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For much more on cigars, see our Top 25 coverage beginning on page 46.

churchills

Stately Churchills are fine smokes, with approachable ring gauges and considerable length, which combine for a cigar experience that lasts and satisfies. The Cuban standard calls for a ring gauge of 47 and a length of 7 inches, but non-Cuban Churchills can be fatter. Our top score went to the cigar that has long defined the category, the Romeo y Julieta Churchill. While some RyJ Churchills from the early 2000s were disappointing, recent examples have been stellar. A second Cuban Churchill, the H. Upmann Sir Winston, was among our 91-pointers, joining a Foundry and a Dominican Montecristo. This was a strong category—no cigar scored lower than 87 points.

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JULY 2015

ROMEO Y JULIETA CHURCHILL
Draped in a golden-brown wrapper, this cigar weaves delicate notes of orange peel and almond with floral intonations and a touch of chocolate. An elegant cigar.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.26

92

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

FOUNDRY TIME FLIES 54725
A dark, beautiful Churchill with a gleaming, reddish-brown wrapper. It has a rich, bold core of coffee bean character framed by sweet touches of caramel, cinnamon and licorice.
U.S.: $8.50 U.K.: N/A

91

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: OCTOBER 2013

H. UPMANN SIR WINSTON
Rich and refined, this cigar elegantly layers notes of nutmeg and clove with sweet spices and graham cracker. All come together for a delicious Christmas-cake effect.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £30.15

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO WHITE CHURCHILL
Sweet and mild with a creamy smoke redolent of honey, ginger and freshly ground pepper. Its wrapper is yellowish in color and the cigar burns and draws evenly.
U.S.: $12.53 U.K.: N/A

91

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS, DOM. REP.
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

CAMACHO CRIOLLO CHURCHILL
A tawny-colored Churchill with a lush draw that imparts salty, briny smoke accentuated by notes of earth and black pepper. The finish carries fruity, mineral qualities.
U.S.: $7.75 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

H. UPMANN 1844 RESERVE CHURCHILL
An earthy, savory cigar with notes of rock salt that become toasty and nutty before a slightly dry finish.
U.S.: $7.79 U.K.: N/A

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

OLIVA SERIE O MADURO CHURCHILL
Draped in a dark and streaky wrapper, this Churchill offers primarily cedary impressions with a touch of apple and caramel. The finish is short and woody.
U.S.: $8.07 U.K.: N/A

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: MEXICO

PADILLA VINTAGE RESERVE CHURCHILL
A dark, neatly pressed Churchill wearing a three-seam cap. Notes of coffee and wood underscore sweeter impressions of vanilla and maple syrup. A medium-bodied cigar.
U.S.: $7.75 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., MEXICO
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

PARTAGAS FABULOSO
An oaky, woody Churchill whose lush draw also imparts herbal notes and a dried-pear sweetness. A medium-bodied smoke from first to last puffs.
U.S.: $8.99 U.K.: N/A

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ROOM 101 DARUMA SUCIO
This well-made cigar burns evenly, showing notes of earth, honey and a touch of green tea. There are hints of peppermint on the finish.
U.S.: $10.40 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DIAMOND CROWN MAXIMUS
CHURCHILL NO. 2
A dark Churchill with a veiny, streaky wrapper and even draw. It's an earthy, zesty cigar that delivers a dense, chewy smoke. The finish is woody with a touch of anise.
U.S.: $16.60 U.K.: N/A

88

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVE CHURCHILL
The tawny wrapper of this Churchill is devoid of oils. Its airy draw brings notes of earth and pepper with hints of vanilla on the short, charry finish.
U.S.: $6.86 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., BRAZIL
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

1907 BY DUNHILL CHURCHILL
A bit rumpled in appearance, this cigar is notably woody with an underlying bitterness. Hints of nuts, earth and floral notes also come through.
U.S.: $10.80 U.K.: N/A

87

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

LA AROMA DE CUBA CHURCHILL
The porous wrapper gives this dark Churchill a slightly gritty appearance. It's a woody, earthy smoke with some faint leathery notes and a raw cacao finish.
U.S.: $6.50 U.K.: N/A

87

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corona gordas

Corona gordas, also known as toros, have soared in popularity in recent years, especially in the United States. Every cigar brand seems to include one in its portfolio. We were quite impressed by a newer toro, the Espinosa Habano No. 4, made at the small but noteworthy La Zona Cigars factory in Nicaragua. It scored 92 points, the best score in the category. Close behind, at 91 points, was one of Cuba's Edición Limitada cigars for 2016, the Romeo y Julieta Capuletos, followed by a trio of 90-pointers, including the very late and long-awaited Montecristo 80 Aniversario from Cuba. Note the price on the Fonseca Nicaragua. It's a 90-point cigar that retails for a mere $5.99 before taxes.

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: ECUADOR
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ESPINOSA HABANO NO. 4
Complex, elegant notes of tea and caramel mingle on the palate with touches of black pepper before a creamy, vanilla bean finish that hints of orange peel.
U.S.: $6.75 U.K.: N/A

92

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 53 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2016

ROMEO Y JULIETA CAPULETOS EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2016
Enrobed in a reddish-brown cover leaf, this cigar's creamy smoke shows elements of wood, spice and cocoa powder, buttressed by a floral undertone.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £30.50

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

FONSECA NICARAGUA TORO
There's an oily wrapper on this dark, well-made cigar. Notes of toast and hickory are complemented by touches of tropical fruit and red wine.
U.S.: $5.99 U.K.: N/A

90

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 55 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2015

MONTECRISTO 80 ANIVERSARIO
Rolled with a toothy wrapper and a three-seam cap, this large cigar shows an oaky quality that leads to notes of black tea, spice and a toasty finish hinting of licorice.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £40.00

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

ROMEO BY ROMEO Y JULIETA **AGING ROOM SMALL BATCH F25** CAPRICCIO
Dark and veiny on the surface, this cigar draws and burns evenly, offering notes of saffron, coffee bean and spice before a predominantly oaky finish. A bold smoke.
U.S.: $12.25 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS, BRAZIL
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BELLAS ARTES ROBUSTO EXTRA
Softly pressed with rounded edges, this cigar smokes evenly, delivering woody, nutty impressions with touches of dried strawberries before a nougat finish.
U.S.: $8.75 U.K.: N/A

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

L'ATELIER CÔTE D'OR LA TÂCHE 2016
Dark and oily in appearance with a chocolate-hued wrapper. Initial toasty, nutty notes take on a cocoa, mineral character before an earthy, gritty finish.
U.S.: $16.00 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

FUENTE FUENTE OPUSX ANGEL'S SHARE FUENTE FUENTE
A tawny cigar with a triple cap. Its lush draw shows big notes of cedar and spice that mingle with hints of graham cracker and dried fruit. The finish is a bit tangy.
U.S.: $11.70 U.K.: N/A

88

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI TORO (TUBO)
An attractive toro with a clean, matte wrapper. It smokes evenly, offering a bright smoke full of citrus and minty notes. The finish is short and woody.
U.S.: $11.50 U.K.: N/A

88

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE 2003 TORO
Wearing a rustic brown wrapper, this long cigar shows notes of caramel, coffee and a hint of spice before leading to a dry, woody finish.
U.S.: $10.10 U.K.: N/A

88

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VILLIGER SAN'DORO CLARO TORO
A yellowish toro whose wheaty, straw-and-hay character picks up intensity to show floral notes, some spice and a coconut finish. Mild and easygoing.
U.S.: $8.50 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: MEXICO

HAMMER + SICKLE TRADEMARK SERIES MADURO TORO
Though the draw is slightly firm, this cigar burns evenly, producing a salt-and-pepper ash. Its tangy, woody notes have a raisin sweetness that lead to a musty finish.
U.S.: $8.99 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: BRAZIL, DOM. REP.
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF ESCURIO CORONA GORDA
A dark and oily corona gorda crafted with a flat head. The cigar burns a bit hot at times as notes of wood, coconut and licorice emerge before a bitter finish.
U.S.: $15.90 U.K.: N/A

86

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

HENRY CLAY BREVAS FINAS
The smoke from this veiny and rustic-looking cigar layers the palate with impressions of bread, charcoal and bitter woods. Off notes and a very dry finish affected the score.
U.S.: $6.25 U.K.: N/A

84

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figurados

Our top-scoring cigar in this blind tasting is the Ashton Symmetry Belicoso, a sweet and complex smoke crafted by the Fuente family in the Dominican Republic. It sits atop a particulary impressive group of shaped cigars, 10 of which scored 90 points or higher. (The highest scorers, no doubt, will qualify to compete in 2017's Top 25 Cigars of the Yearcontest.) A second Fuente smoke was right behind the Ashton, the Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R Vitola "Fifty-Eight." Both of those smokes are made with Ecuadoran wrappers. Cuba's near-identical twins, the Diplomaticos No. 2 and Montecristo No. 2, scored 92 points, as did a newer Joya de Nicaragua cigar.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ASHTON SYMMETRY BELICOSO
First puffs of this attractive figurado deliver big notes of black cherry and spicy cinnamon. The smoke takes on toastier elements, with impressions of almonds, vanilla and coffee bean.
U.S.: $12.25 U.K.: N/A

93

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ARTURO FUENTE ROSADO SUNGROWN MAGNUM R VITOLA "FIFTY-EIGHT"
A fat torpedo wearing a chocolate-colored wrapper. Its chewy smoke delivers a cedary core layered with molasses and honey over hearty wood. Rich and balanced.
U.S.: $8.95 U.K.: N/A

92

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2016

DIPLOMATICOS NO. 2
Floral and woody, this torpedo that becomes rich with nuttiness and vanilla notes. The draw and burn remain even throughout.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £20.50

92

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

JOYA DE NICARAGUA CUATRO CINCO RESERVA ESPECIAL TORPEDO
Box-pressed with a full draw and wavy burn that evens out. The cigar starts sweet with hints of molasses that segue into spicier elements and big notes of hickory.
U.S.: $12.50 U.K.: N/A

92

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JULY 2015

MONTECRISTO NO. 2
A gorgeous torpedo that leaves bold, precise impressions of hickory, leather and earth, balanced by touches of peppermint and an oaky, chocolatey finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £24.70

92

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 55 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SUBLIMES TORPEDO
A figurado with a slightly tight draw and even burn. Leather and coffee notes are supported by hints of nuts and orange peel with a touch of chocolate on the finish.
U.S.: $9.50 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

DAVIDOFF YAMASÁ PIRAMIDES
Wearing a dark and alluring wrapper, this torpedo burns evenly. Earthy, woody impressions are balanced by a toasty quality and cocoa powder sweetness.
U.S.: $23.00 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA AROMA DE CUBA EDICION ESPECIAL NO. 5
This dark figurado has a firm draw that delivers lots of smoke. Bold notes of leather and anise are interwoven with spicier impressions of pepper, cardamom and sassafras.
U.S.: $7.75 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MATILDE QUADRATA TORPEDO
This box-pressed belicoso smokes well, offering bold notes of coffee and toast with cayenne spice and a toffee sweetness. The finish has a touch of acidity.
U.S.: $9.00 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO PILOTICO PEPE MENDEZ NO. 2
A box-pressed pyramid draped in a medium claro wrapper. Roasted coffee notes and woody intonations carry a slight molasses sweetness before the charcoal finish.
U.S.: $17.60 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF COLORADO CLARO SPECIAL T
The pointy head of this figurado has a dramatic taper. First puffs are intense with damp mushroom notes that dissipate to show coffee, earth and a hazelnut finish.
U.S.: $22.50 U.K.: N/A

88

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: FEBRUARY 2015

SANCHO PANZA BELICOSO
A slightly pressed torpedo rolled with a rough and veiny wrapper. The cigar smokes well, offering sweet and nutty notes that meld with herbal elements before a dry, woody finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £18.56

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., BRAZIL, ECUADOR
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

LA AURORA PREFERIDOS 1903 EDICION **SAPPHIRE** PERFECTO
Shaped like a classic perfecto, this well-rolled cigar draws and burns evenly. It's a salty smoke, with notes of dry wood and a light, tea-like finish.
U.S.: $20.00 U.K.: N/A

87

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 7 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

NICA RUSTICA BELLY
An unusually long torpedo with an uncut foot and soft spots throughout the cigar. Though there are some hints of sweetness, a bitter finish and serious combustion issues hurt the score.
U.S.: $8.18 U.K.: N/A

84

grandes

Every trip into your corner brick-and-mortar cigar shop is a reminder that cigars are getting fatter. This category shows that fat cigars can sometimes be great cigars. Our tasting of 60-ring smokes delivered a half dozen ratings of 90 points or higher. At the top of the category we had a four-way tie for best score with 91 points. Familiar names Punch Signature, Undercrown Shade and Nat Sherman Metropolitan were joined by a newcomer, La Galera, which is rolled in the Dominican Republic. You'll note the absence of Cuban cigars from this review, as for right now, only the extremely limited Cohiba 50 Aniversario meets these dimensions. For more on fat cigars, turn to page 136.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA GALERA HABANO PILONES
A fat cigar with a lush draw and even burn. Profoundly nutty impressions are balanced by touches of sweet nougat, cedar and coffee. The finish hints of licorice.
U.S.: $8.20 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

NAT SHERMAN METROPOLITAN SELECTION HABANO GORDO
Draped in an oily wrapper, this fat cigar has a lush draw that offers big notes of roasted nuts, coffee bean and caramel. The finish is toasty and leathery.
U.S.: $7.25 U.K.: N/A

91

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PUNCH SIGNATURE GIGANTE
The leathery, cedary aspects of this dark, fat cigar are balanced by sweet notes of dried fruit and chocolate. The draw is a bit firm. The wrapper on the cigar is striking, and gleaming with oil.
U.S.: $7.69 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

UNDERCROWN SHADE GORDITO
A very fat cigar wrapped in a clean cover leaf. It's a bright and creamy smoke, zesty with touches of lemon peel and dried orange. It's also sweet, with a very prominent note of honey on the palate.
U.S.: $10.55 U.K.: N/A

91

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY TEMPUS NICARAGUA MAGNUS
Big earthy and woody notes underscore pleasing touches of mint, walnut and root beer candy. The finish of this fat cigar is clean.
U.S.: $9.85 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

FLOR DE LAS ANTILLAS TORO GRANDE
A chunky, box-pressed cigar with plenty of rich coffee and fresh tobacco intonations. There's a bit of spice and sweetness as well, though the draw is a bit firm.
U.S.: $9.20 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

BRICK HOUSE MIGHTY MIGHTY
This fat, hefty cigar delivers a meaty smoke with some warm, nutty qualities and a touch of tart fruits. The finish is a bit gritty.
U.S.: $6.75 U.K.: N/A

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

H. UPMANN RESERVE MADURO TITAN
Very rustic in appearance, this thick cigar produces a flaky ash as it burns. It's a primarily nutty smoke with touches of black pepper, cola and a mesquite finish.
U.S.: $8.13 U.K.: N/A

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

MACANUDO INSPIRADO ORANGE GIGANTE
Sweet and fruity with rich tobacco notes, this thick cigar imparts an underlying toastiness, but an airy draw and thin smoke affected the score.
U.S.: $7.19 U.K.: N/A

88

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA **COLORADO** TORITO
A dark, fat robusto with earthy, floral qualities and a woody finish. This medium- to full-bodied cigar draws and burns evenly.
U.S.: $7.15 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINCAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

KRISTOFF CONNECTICUT 6X60
Large and imposing, this cigar is crafted with a pigtail cap and uncut foot. Impressions of vanilla, cream and a tangy fruit emerge before a finish that hints of raisins.
U.S.: $9.20 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PDR 1878 **CAPA SUN GROWN** DOUBLE MAGNUM
There's a slight musty note pervading this reddish, oily cigar, which also shows intonations of earth, wood and vanilla. The draw is open, but the burn, uneven.
U.S.: $7.43 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 5 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

INCH COLORADO BY E.P. CARRILLO NO. 60
A plump cigar with a neat three-seam cap. Initial notes are a bit soapy before turning herbal and musty with a damp-tasting finish.
U.S.: $9.10 U.K.: N/A

86

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

ROCKY PATEL VINTAGE CONNECTICUT 1999 SIXTY
This lightly hued cigar is as mild as it looks, delivering an herbal smoke with faint hints of sugar and tangy wood. The draw is a bit firm.
U.S.: $11.75 U.K.: N/A

85

miscellaneous

Some cigars just don't fit into Cigar Aficionado tasting categories. Some are too fat, others are too short, and some are just . . .odd. For that we have our "miscellaneous" category, which we bring out on occasion. At the very top of the list is the consistently superb Padrón Serie 1926 No. 35 Maduro. Don't let its diminutive four-inch length fool you—this cigar pops with distinctive notes of coffee and chocolate, and it's designed to be puffed for about a half an hour, perfect for when time is short. The 1926 in the brand name is for the birth-year of José Orlando Padrón, the company founder, and the No. 35 comes from the amount of time his son Jorge takes to smoke one. An even shorter cigar comes to us via Cuba, the Montecristo Media Corona. It's a mere 3 1/2 inches long, but it earned a score of 90 points, with a pleasant profile. It's among the newer Montes, and it began appearing in the summer of 2015. This is its second time being tasted in Cigar Aficionado magazine, and its second time scoring 90 points. Scores of 90 also went to boutique producers Caldwell, makers of Midnight Express, and Tatuaje.

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN SERIE 1926 NO. 35 MADURO
Smoking this stout, box-pressed cigar is like chewing on chocolate-covered espresso beans—strong, earthy, coffee-like, with a hint of fruity sweetness.
U.S.: $11.70 U.K.: N/A

92

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 3/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS CORONA
A dark and oily corona topped with a near-perfect pigtail cap. The cigar's easy draw delivers salty, brawny notes of walnut, earth and coffee bean.
U.S.: $10.00 U.K.: N/A

90

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 3 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: DECEMBER 2015

MONTECRISTO MEDIA CORONA
Enrobed in a veiny, wrinkled wrapper, this small corona offers a salty, nutty smoke fortified with notes of coffee bean and earthy underpinnings. It tastes better than it looks.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £10.83

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 3/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

TATUAJE 10TH ANNIVERSARY BON CHASSEUR
Notes of dark chocolate abound in this robusto, which has a closed, uncut foot. Hints of walnut, caraway and raisins precede the mesquite finish.
U.S.: $10.00 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ASYLUM PREMIUM 44X4
This dark, short little cigar is full of woody and red wine notes that lead to a sweet licorice and maple finish. Medium to full bodied.
U.S.: $5.76 U.K.: N/A

89

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 33 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2015

COHIBA EXQUISITO
Though a bit rough in appearance, this gnarly little cigar imparts a creamy, nutty smoke rich with notes of almonds and salt. Tasty and medium bodied.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £13.92

89

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JANUARY 2016

ROMEO Y JULIETA PETIT CHURCHILL
A squat little cigar crafted with a three-seam cap. Leathery and salty notes are layered with touches of licorice and minerals, but the finish is short.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £16.35

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

CAO BRAZILIA CORCOVADO
Dark and oily in appearance, this short plug of a cigar is nutty and floral with chocolate-like undertones and a slightly bitter finish.
U.S.: $5.99 U.K.: N/A

88

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 3/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2015

PARTAGÁS SERIE D NO. 5
Dry and woody at first, this short robusto takes on an earthy quality with some light touches of sweet vanilla. A mild to medium-bodied smoke.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.55

88

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY NICA **PURO** BAJITO
The draw of this robusto is open and substantial, showing a spicy smoke that takes on notes of tart wood, cocoa powder and a touch of licorice.
U.S.: $6.80 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 38 LENGTH: 8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

NAT SHERMAN 1930 SUPER LANCERO
Long and dark, this oily lancero shows a toasty, anise character with hints of fresh tobacco, but the finish is a bit muted.
U.S.: $15.00 U.K.: N/A

87

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

NUB HABANO 460
A short, fat plug of a cigar with an even, open draw. Initial notes of perfume become woody and sweet, before the dry, nutty finish.
U.S.: $6.80 U.K.: N/A

87

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PERDOMO SMALL BATCH SERIES CONNECTICUT HALF CORONA
This blond, short robusto has a mild straw-and-hay character that leads to a notably papery finish.
U.S.: $5.00 U.K.: N/A

85

robustos

Robustos remain the king of the cigar world. The cigars are short but stout, a size that's more popular than any other, although corona gordas/toros are making a challenge. Our latest review has several robustos that impressed our panel of tasters. The CLE Prieto, from Christian Eiroa, took the top score with 92 points thanks to strong notes of earth and coffee, as well as an even burn and fine draw. Illusione and Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series, two brands that seem to always deliver top marks in our blind tastings, were close behind with 91-point scores. Cuba's Cohiba Robusto, once dubbed "the ultimate power-lunch cigar," scored 90, tying with a Nat Cicco from Nicaragua.

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

CLE PRIETO 50X5
Powerful first puffs of this robusto show a strong earthy and coffee character that mellows a bit to a sweet and nutty smoke. The draw and burn are even.
U.S.: $7.26 U.K.: N/A

92

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ILLUSIONE GARAGISTE ROBUSTO
Rolled with a three-seam cap, this cigar leaves pleasing notes of juniper, fresh tobacco and spice on the palate. There is a touch of brown sugar sweetness on the finish.
U.S.: $8.95 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES MADURO TORO
The easy draw of this toothy, box-pressed cigar delivers woody, peppery notes, coupled with touches of coffee bean, cocoa and nuts. A rich and complex smoke.
U.S.: $15.30 U.K.: N/A

91

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2015

COHIBA ROBUSTO
This well-made robusto has a good draw and dead-even burn. Notes of spice, herbs and gingersnap cookie layer the palate before a rich, chocolaty finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £27.76

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

NAT CICCO HHB HABANO GOLD ROBUSTO
Crafted with a nipple tip and closed foot, this cigar smokes well, offering sweet and nutty notes that build to bolder impressions of cocoa, coffee bean and a touch of wheat.
U.S.: $7.00 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

EL GALAN RESERVA ESPECIAL AIROSOS
Topped with a three-seam cap, this box-pressed robusto shows notes of earth and coffee with hints of dark chocolate that recur on the finish. Strong but balanced.
U.S.: $6.67 U.K.: N/A

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER CONNECTICUT ROBUSTO
Draped in a tan wrapper, this cigar smokes well, delivering strong impressions of cedar, toast and pepper. There are touches of coffee bean and peppermint on the finish.
U.S.: $7.70 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

AGING ROOM SOLERA DOMINICAN **SUN GROWN** FESTIVO
An oily robusto with a fat pigtail cap. It starts earthy and chalky, hinting at hibiscus tea. Earthiness recurs on the finish with bitter touches of baker's chocolate.
U.S.: $6.95 U.K.: N/A

88

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

GUARDIAN OF THE FARM JJ
This predominantly woody robusto imparts peppery notes as well with a muted graham cracker sweetness. The cigar is made with a flat head and uncut foot.
U.S.: $8.50 U.K.: N/A

88

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2015

EL REY DEL MUNDO CHOIX SUPREME
Covered in a spotty wrapper, this is a primarily salty robusto with floral undertones that become a bit perfumey. There's a touch of sweetness on this finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: **£14.86**

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A/CONN. BROADLEAF

LA GLORIA CUBANA SERIE R MADURO NO. 4
Near black and topped with a lopsided cap, this cigar shows impressions of earth, licorice and charcoal. The finish is dry, and hints of oak and minerals.
U.S.: $6.79 U.K.: N/A

88

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JUNE 2014

VEGUEROS TAPADO
This small robusto has a firm draw and somewhat blistery burn. Woody notes of hickory and oak emerge, with hints of nuts and briny olive. A medium-bodied cigar.
U.S.: N/A ITALY: 4.80 **EURO**

88

U.S.A.
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA PALINA ILLUMINATION ROBUSTO
This oily robusto has an open draw but burns a bit unevenly, showing earthy, leathery impressions with hints of peanut and pepper. The finish is charry.
U.S.: $11.50 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

LA FLOR DOMINICANA CAMEROON CABINET NO. 5
Woody and muted with vague hints of salt and spice that struggle to emerge. The draw of this medium-bodied cigar is firm.
U.S.: $8.80 U.K.: N/A

86

tasting summary

RATING SUMMARY BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 136

Cigars are listed first by country and then by score. Please refer to the main tasting pages for notes and prices.

CIGAR AFICIONADO'S 100-POINT SCALE

Classic
95–100

Outstanding
90–94

Very good to excellent
80–89

Average to good commercial quality
70–79

Don't waste your money
0-69

Not available
n/a

Note: all prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.

CUBA

92 Diplomaticos No. 2
92 Montecristo No. 2
92 Romeo y Julieta Churchill
91 H. Upmann Sir Winston
91 Romeo y Julieta Capuletos Edición Limitada 2016
90 Cohiba Robusto
90 Montecristo 80 Aniversario
90 Montecristo Media Corona
89 Cohiba Exquisito
89 Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchill
88 El Rey del Mundo Choix Supreme
88 Partagás Serie D No. 5
88 Sancho Panza Belicoso
88 Vegueros Tapado

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

93 Ashton Symmetry Belicoso
92 Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R Vitola "Fifty-Eight"
91 La Galera Habano Pilones
91 Montecristo White Churchill
91 Nat Sherman Metropolitan Selection Habano Gordo
90 Davidoff Yamasá Piramides
90 Matilde Quadrata Torpedo
90 Midnight Express Corona
90 Romeo by Romeo y Julieta Aging Room Small Batch F25 Capriccio
89 H. Upmann 1844 Reserve Churchill
89 Montecristo Pilotico Pepe Mendez No. 2
89 Partagas Fabuloso
88 Aging Room Solera Dominican Sun Grown Festivo
88 Davidoff Colorado Claro Special T
88 Diamond Crown Maximus Churchill No. 2
88 Fuente Fuente OpusX Angel's Share Fuente Fuente
88 La Gloria Cubana Serie R Maduro No. 4
87 1907 By Dunhill Churchill
87 Hammer + Sickle Trademark Series Maduro Toro
87 Kristoff Connecticut 6x60
87 La Aurora Preferidos 1903 Edicion Sapphire Perfecto
87 Nat Sherman 1930 Super Lancero
87 PDR 1878 Capa Sun Grown Double Magnum
86 Davidoff Escurio Corona Gorda
86 Inch Colorado by E.P. Carrillo No. 60
86 La Flor Dominicana Cameroon Cabinet No. 5
84 Henry Clay Brevas Finas

HONDURAS

91 Punch Signature Gigante
90 Alec Bradley Tempus Nicaragua Magnus
90 Camacho Criollo Churchill
89 H. Upmann Reserve Maduro Titan
89 Padilla Vintage Reserve Churchill
89 Room 101 Daruma Sucio
88 CAO Brazilia Corcovado
88 Macanudo Inspirado Orange Gigante
88 Rocky Patel Vintage 2003 Toro
88 Romeo y Julieta Reserve Churchill
85 Rocky Patel Vintage Connecticut 1999 Sixty

NICARAGUA

92 CLE Prieto 50x5
92 Espinosa Habano No. 4
92 Joya de Nicaragua Cuatro Cinco Reserva Especial Torpedo
92 Padrón Serie 1926 No. 35 Maduro
91 Foundry Time Flies 54725
91 Illusione Garagiste Robusto
91 Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series Maduro Toro
91 Sublimes Torpedo
91 Undercrown Shade Gordito
90 Flor de las Antillas Toro Grande
90 Fonseca Nicaragua Toro
90 La Aroma de Cuba Edicion Especial No. 5
90 Nat Cicco HHB Habano Gold Robusto
90 Tatuaje 10th Anniversary Bon Chasseur
89 Asylum Premium 44x4
89 Bellas Artes Robusto Extra
89 Brick House Mighty Mighty
89 El Galan Reserva Especial Airosos
89 L'Atelier Côte d'or La Tâche 2016
89 My Father Connecticut Robusto
89 Oliva Serie O Maduro Churchill
88 Guardian of the Farm JJ
88 Herrera Esteli Toro (Tubo)
88 Villiger San'Doro Claro Toro
87 Alec Bradley Nica Puro Bajito
87 Casa Magna Colorado Torito
87 La Aroma de Cuba Churchill
87 Nub Habano 460
85 Perdomo Small Batch Series Connecticut Half Corona
84 Nica Rustica Belly

U.S.A.

87 La Palina Illumination Robusto

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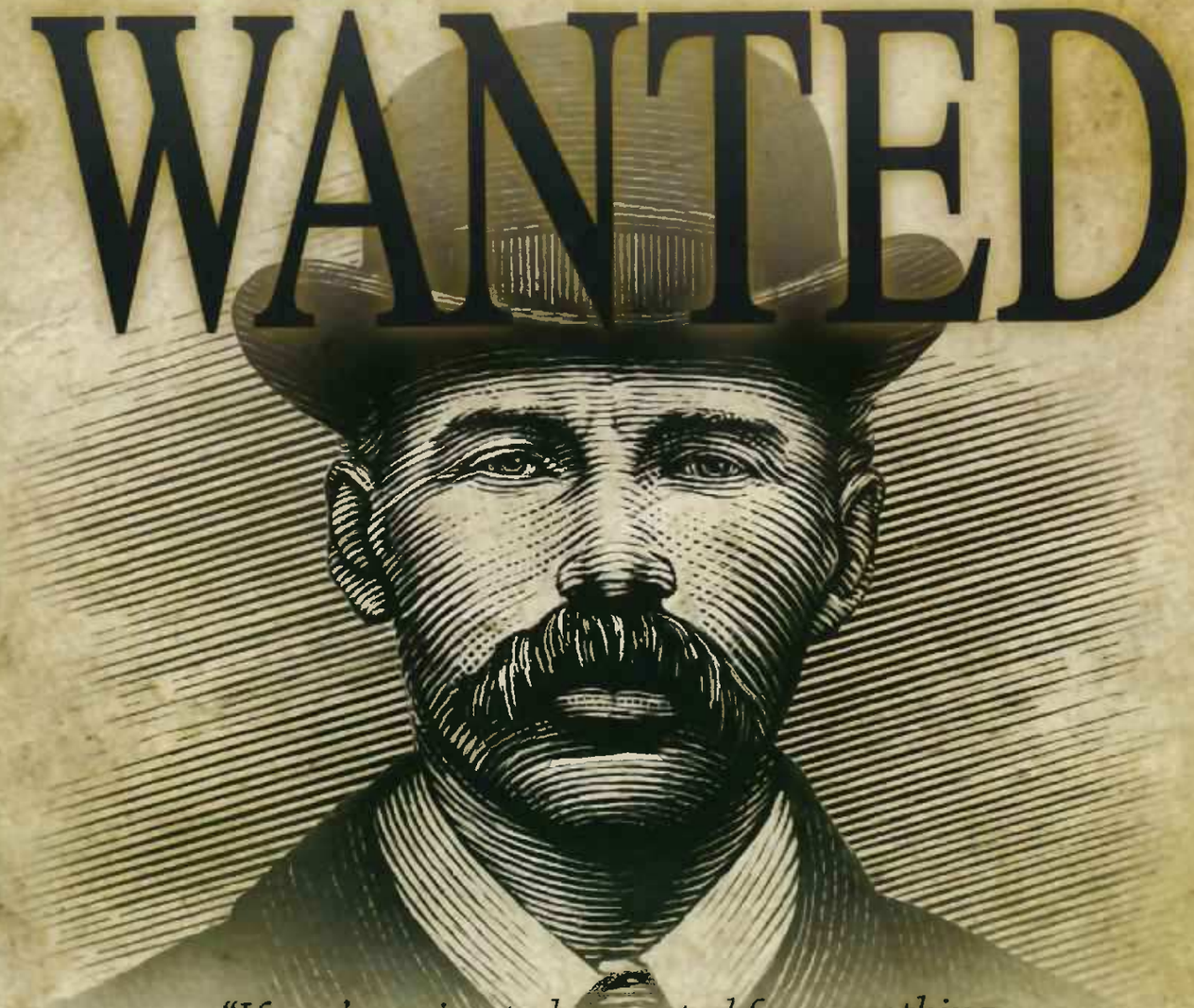

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connoisseur's corner

From slim to fat, from short to extra long, this edition of Connoisseur's Corner covers the size extremes of the cigar world. The Sancho Panza Sancho is an "A," Cuba's longest standard cigar size. The smoke measures 9 1/4 inches long by 47 ring gauge, and it can easily take more than two hours to smoke it entirely. It's one of three classics, joining the ultra-slim Partagás Serie du Connaisseur No. 3, which measures 5 5/8 inches by 35 ring, and the Romeo y Julieta Cazadores, 6 3/8 by 44. Each cigar was quite different, but each showcased the aging potential of great Cuban tobacco. The oldest cigar in the list, a pre-Castro H. Upmann, exhibited a delicate array of sweet spices. And the shortest, the corona-sized Cohiba Siglo II, had wonderful notes of coffee beans.

PARTAGÁS SERIE DU CONNAISSEUR NO. 3 (1993) **97**

A wonderful short and slim cigar from the heyday of Cuban tobacco. This sample was taken from its original cedar cabinet box, and the leathery notes of the tobacco have blended perfectly with the light sweet cedar notes. There is a long, light and earthy finish that keeps lingering on the palate. Plenty of years left on this great smoke. —*Gordon Mott*

ROMEO Y JULIETA CAZADORES (1994) **96**

Rolled with an incredible flat head, this relatively skinny smoke gives a blast of black pepper on the first puff and an aroma of molasses cookies baking in the oven. Delicate notes of allspice and mace appear before ceding to rich, bold leather with some orange peel, almonds and lingering spice. There's plenty of power left in this one. —*Andrew Nagy*

SANCHO PANZA SANCHO (1995) **95**

This immense "A," more than nine inches long and nearly 22 years old, takes greedily to the flame. It's an easygoing cigar that slowly builds in flavor as it goes, taking on considerable notes of baking spices, gingerbread and coffee bean, with honeyed wood on the finish. Lovely, balanced, elegant smoke. —*David Savona*

H. UPMANN NATIONALES EMS (CIRCA 1950) **94**

This pre-Castro cigar comes from a box bearing the "EMS," stamp meaning English Market Selection. It has a slightly tapered belicoso tip and natural colorado wrapper. The well-aged cigar is rich, with an easy, light draw. There are plenty of sweet spices on the palate, with clean nutmeg notes and copious amounts of cinnamon. —*Marvin R. Shanken*

COHIBA SIGLO II (1995) **92**

This corona, slim and somewhat wrinkled, dark but not extremely so, is all about the wood early on, with little other flavors joining in for quite some time. It takes its time waking up, but after a solid inch, notes of tea emerge, and then a faint but welcome sweetness. The finish smacks of coffee bean and slate, with that persistent dry wood note. —*David Savona*

LA GLORIA CUBANA MEDAILLE D'OR NO. 2 (1995) **92**

You don't see many lonsdales like this anymore—dark, oily and solidly rolled. The draw is substantial and lush, the combustion perfect. It's certainly a slow starter but after a few nondescript puffs, it becomes bright and zesty with almond notes and lemon-scented nougat. The creamy smoke envelops the palate. —*Gregory Mottola*

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SUPERSIZE *My Cigar*

Anything but a fad, the fat cigar trend seems destined to stay

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA
PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARRIS

Everything in America is bigger. Our heavy-handed culture of size is either expressed as a badge of honor or rebuked as a gaudy sign of excess. McMansions, Big Gulps, Hummers and Mega-churches are all oversized emblems of American appetites. And now, in keeping with this American tradition, premium cigars have become thicker, fatter and larger than ever.

Over the last 10 years, many premium cigar manufacturers have stopped producing coronas, lanceros and other slim sizes formerly associated with the gentlemanly art of smoking. Outside of niche markets, they simply don't sell like they used to. Today, the consumer's preference for heft has forced every cigar manufacturer to make thick, fat cigars in sizes and proportions that would have been laughable a few decades ago.

Although self-styled connoisseurs will never miss an opportunity to disparage this fairly new trend, these disgruntled smokers are now nothing more than the vocal minority. They can protest all they want—the trend is only growing and it's probably here to stay.

If you go back 20 years, a cigar with a ring gauge of 46 was considered on the larger side. This is no longer the case. By today's standards, 46 is a small smoke. Even robustos, which tend to have ring gauges of 50, look diminutive compared with today's giants. Many companies won't even produce a cigar with less than a 50 ring gauge, and the reason for this is simple—consumers are focusing on ever fatter cigars.

"You can't give panetelas away," says Jeff Borysiewicz, owner of Corona Cigar Co. in Orlando, Florida. "Coronas and lonsdales sell, but slowly. When we look at bringing a line of cigars in, we are going to stock the top five sizes and coronas and lonsdales usually won't make that cut."

What does make the cut is a format that's been dubbed the "6 by 60," which measures 6 inches by 60 ring gauge, making it close to one inch in diameter. Most new cigar lines include at least one cigar with a 6-by-60 dimension, and some cigars are even fatter. A few cigarmakers have gone as large as 70 ring gauge, and a few more are pushing the fat cigar category into 80 ring territory—that's about as thick as the cardboard tube you'd find inside a roll of paper towels. Standard toros and robustos start to look much smaller by comparison.

These cigars are untraditional, so there is no official name for the size from the history books. When Cigar Aficionado added the 6-by-60 category to its tasting format in the December 2012 issue, it dubbed the size "Grandes." The popularity has continued, and now these fat smokes are familiar sights in humidors.

The trend didn't happen overnight. But one could point to a few cigarmakers who quietly ushered in the big cigars over the last 20 years, bringing the huge smokes into the mainstream without knowing it would affect the market in years to come.

If there is a godfather of large-ring-gauge cigars, it has to be Ernesto Perez-Carrillo, the owner of EPC Cigar Co. and the former owner of the La Gloria Cubana brand. Sure, large ring gauges existed before he came to prominence, but Perez-Carrillo was the first to normalize the 6 by 60 with La Gloria Cubana Serie R, a nationally recognizable brand created in the late 1990s that enjoyed broad distribution and respect among serious smokers.

"I created the Serie R in 1997 or 1998 after I moved my operation from Miami to the Dominican Republic," recalls Perez-Carrillo. "The Serie R came in two sizes, a 52 ring gauge and a 54. During a meeting back in 2000, I said, 'Why don't we come out with a 60 ring gauge?' I got the idea from some old cigar molds I had laying around the factory. Some were 58 and some were 60. First we put out the Serie R No. 6, which was 6 by 60. And then the No. 7, which was 7 by 58. Big cigars."

The way Perez-Carrillo remembers, the new, huge cigars were an instant success, surpassing the previous sizes almost instantly.

"The consumers fell in love with these sizes," he says. "I think that they were ready to accept a 6 by 60."

The Serie R wasn't Perez-Carrillo's first foray into large ring gauges. In his earlier days, when he made all of his La Gloria Cubanas in a small, cramped shop in Miami, he was dabbling in the strange art of bulky vitolas for his custom clients.

"We had customers that would ask for big ring gauges," he explains. "We wouldn't make La Glorias in that size—the biggest La Gloria at the time was 52—but we had a house blend that we'd use for the custom jobs. There were these bikers that wanted us to make a 666 cigar—6 inches with a 66 ring gauge. I even made a 9 by 70 for someone. That was in 1980 or '81."

If Perez-Carrillo is responsible for bringing the bulky dimensions to the premium cigar mainstream, the seeds were sown years before by Rolando Reyes Sr., who once owned and ran Cuba Aliados Cigars.

The sadistic and unapologetic Max Cady, played by Robert De Niro in 1991's *Cape Fear*, was an early adopter of the fat cigar trend.

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Some may recall the gargantuan proportions of a cigar named The Chief. Made by Puros Indios in the 1980s, the hulking cigar measured 18 inches long, needed two wrapper leaves to cover its enormous form, and was rolled with a 66 ring gauge. The size first appeared under the Cuba Aliados brand as The General. It wasn't the only massive smoke made by Reyes, who also had a 7 1/4-by-64-inch figurado called Piramide No. 1, and the 10-by-60 Grand Victoria.

"In the old days, our big cigars weren't really big sellers, with the exception of the Piramides, The Chief and The General," says Carlos Diez, grandson of the late Reyes and now the president of Reyes Family Cigars (formerly Puros Indios). "The Chief and General were always big sellers because of the novelty aspect. In the early 2000s, my grandfather Rolando Reyes Sr. let me come up with different variations of large ring gauges like the Gordo (6 by 60), Bronco (6 1/2 by 54) and the Corona Gorda No. 5 (5 1/2 by 64)."

54

Other big cigars existed in the years before the modern-day cigar boom. Matasa Cigars (today known as Quesada) has long made a gigantic cigar known as the Casa Blanca Jeroboam, measuring 10 inches long by 66 ring gauge. Robert De Niro's character puffed on the "smaller" version in a movie theater in the 1991 remake of *Cape Fear*, the 5 inch by 66 ring gauge Half Jeroboam. But those cigars were still regarded as a novelty with a niche following.

60

The late Stanford Newman of J.C. Newman Cigar Co. had a more subtle approach to bringing larger ring gauges into the mainstream premium cigar market. In 1995, he created a line of cigars called Diamond Crown, which celebrated the company's 100th anniversary—and every size had a 54 ring gauge. The lengths differed, and the blend wasn't particularly strong, but every cigar in the line was thick and weighty with a lot of tobacco. By Newman's thinking, the relatively large 54 ring gauge would allow for blending six or seven leaves, ensuring that the blend was full of flavor. The cigars were made by the Fuentes in the Dominican Republic. In 1995, a 54 ring gauge wasn't very common.

"Everyone thought my father Stanford was crazy to create such a large cigar," recalls Eric Newman of J.C. Newman. When the brand debuted in Beverly Hills, it was only available on the West Coast as a sort of regional specialty. It eventually spread east.

"Shortly after we released our Diamond Crown cigars, the trend for big ring gauges started to catch on," says Newman. As Diamond Crown grew in popularity, it also grew in girth. J.C. Newman expanded the line with the No. 8, a torpedo that upped the thickness to 58 ring gauge and a shapely figurado that bulged out to a 60 ring gauge at its fattest point near the foot.

70

Oddly enough, J.C. Newman never released Diamond Crown in a standard 6-by-60 format. Rather, the company turned to Nicaragua in 2009 after the trend clearly started to take hold.

"Our first 6 by 60 was the El Baton Double Toro, which was a hit from the start," Newman explains. Made in Nicaragua, El Baton was originally one of J.C. Newman's vintage nickel cigar brands from 1914, handmade at the company's Cleveland, Ohio factory using Cuban tobacco. The Newmans resurrected the brand giving cigar smokers another line of plump smokes (nothing under 54 ring gauge), but at a value price.

"We put out our second 6 by 60 in the Brick House line," he says. Released in 2010, it was called Mighty Mighty. "It's still the best-selling

A TIMELINE OF **FAT RING GAUGE CIGARS**

1987

Honduran brand Cuba Aliados releases a novelty cigar called The General, an 18-inch-long, 66-ring-gauge cigar.

1994

Puros Indios, a subsidiary of Cuba Aliados, creates The Chief, which is the same size as The General. It's still largely a novelty cigar but develops a following.

1995

J.C. Newman celebrates the company's 100th anniversary with a regular-production brand called Diamond Crown. Every size in the line is a minimum of 54 ring gauge—thick for the time.

1997

Ernesto Perez-Carrillo rolls the La Gloria Cubana Serie R, a two-size line with cigars in 52 and 54 ring gauges.

2001

La Gloria Cubana Serie R becomes the first major, nationally distributed premium cigar brand to release a 6-by-60 ring gauge cigar, the No. 6. This marks the normalization of the 6-by-60 format. Puros Indios begins to produce non-novelty cigars that reach or exceed 60 ring.

2004

Tatuaje adds the 60 ring Gran Cojonu to its Miami-made cigars.

2005

A brand with the curious name XL For Men by Oliveros is dedicated to large ring gauges: 52, 55 and 60.

2010

By the end of the millennium's first decade, many major brands, both traditional and modern, have a 60 ring gauge cigar.

2011

Drew Estate dedicates an entire line to 60-ring-gauge cigars called MUWAT, an acronym for My Uzi Weighs A Ton.

2012

Cigar Aficionado adds a new category to its tastings called "Grandes" to accommodate and rate 60 ring-gauge cigars.

2013

The Asylum 13 brand pushes the trend further by releasing a 7-by-70, and then an 8-by-80 format.

2014

The Big Payback by Room101 Cigars follows the growing trend with 7-by-70 and 8-by-80 cigars in its repertoire.

2016

For the first time in history, Cuba produces a commercially available 60-ring-gauge cigar, the Cohiba 50 Aniversario. The limited-edition cigar is packaged in a commemorative humidor.

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"There's so much that can be done with large ring gauges . . . blends you couldn't do in smaller ring gauges." —Ernesto Perez-Carrillo

Brick House cigar size to date. I'm glad there are people who want to purchase these cigars. As a manufacturer, it allows for more creativity in the blending process and complexity of flavor."

Perez-Carrillo agrees. "There's so much that can be done with large ring gauges," he says. "So many different types of tobaccos. The format lets you come up with very interesting blends that you simply couldn't do in smaller ring gauges."

Not everyone in the industry is enamored of the trend. Hendrik "Henke" Kelner, who's the tobacco guru for Davidoff of Geneva, acknowledges the blending possibilities, but personally finds the size to be awkward.

"I remember in the '90s, a ring gauge of 50 was considered large," he says. "For me, the maximum ring gauge to enjoy comfortably is 54. With larger ring gauges, you have the possibility of using many different tobaccos for complexity, but it requires more care and control in the blending to maintain consistency, especially when the cigar is long. A cigar works like a filter. You need tobaccos of greater strength and adequate distribution."

Davidoff was not one to dive into the trend. The Swiss company's large portfolio encompasses many classic sizes that the rest of the premium industry has seemingly marginalized. Coronas, panetelas, lonsdales and lanceros within Davidoff's repertoire coexist harmoniously with robustos, pyramids and toros. The company has been cautious in regards to the trend, and is not one to load its Davidoff lines with heavy ring gauges. Occasionally, the ring gauge of a Davidoff cigar will make it to 60, but these are restricted to limited-edition releases. Most of Davidoff's core lines do not exceed 54.

While the vaunted Swiss company won't allow its Davidoff branded smokes to get too fat, it does loosen the tape measure for its edgier, subsidiary brands like Camacho and Room101. Nearly every Camacho comes in a 6-by-60 format and Room101 has taken the large-ring-gauge trend to exaggerated heights. Forget, for a moment, its brands like Daruma and Namakubi, which both have 60-ring-gauge varieties. Instead, consider a brand called Room101 The Big Payback—a brand dedicated to extreme parameters. It starts off normal enough with a 50-ring-gauge robusto, but then expands to a size called the Culero, which measures a whopping 7 by 70. If that wasn't extreme enough, it gets even bigger. The Jaquemate weighs in at 8 by 80.

"This is the super-sizing of the cigar world," says Room101 owner and creator Matt Booth. "A good deal of our consumers want what they perceive to be more cigar for their money. You will notice that the price point on such sizes is quite affordable. This is what makes for the ultimate success of an oversized cigar. The taste has to be there, but equally important—if not more so—is the price."

For Booth, the philosophy was easy: he identified a demand in the market and satisfied it. And he isn't shy about sharing his personal opinion on the smokes: "they are a perversion of the premium cigar."

Tom Lazuka isn't as harsh in his judgment. His Asylum brand, which debuted in 2013, is made in an 80 ring gauge as well. "Just like there are people who enjoy lanceros, there are plenty of guys who enjoy our 70- and 80-ring-gauge cigars," he offers. "I truly believe it's a mix of quality and price that drives Asylum and big-ring sales."

Asylum 13 is offered in sizes so monstrous that a 6-by-60 cigar seems normal by comparison. There's the 680, which is 6 inches by 80 ring; the 770 (7 by 70); the Super 11/18 (8 by 70) and the 880, which is 8 inches long and 80 ring gauge. One would think such a massive rolling of tobacco might cost a fortune, but the suggested retail price for the 880 is only $10.43. For an 8-inch cigar as thick as a tailpipe, that's a lot of tobacco for your money.

Not every heavy-ring-gauge cigar was a hit. Recall a brand called Oliveros XL For Men, which was created by Rafael Nodal and Hank Bischoff of Boutique Blends Cigars (formerly known as Oliveros Cigars). When XL For Men hit the market in 2005, the 6-by-60 format wasn't quite as common as it is today. The line came in ring gauges of 52, 55 and 60. It was a good cigar, but, in retrospect, the timing wasn't optimal.

"There are many reasons why XL For Men didn't catch on," says Nodal. "First it was way ahead of its time and we did not do a good job marketing the cigar. Also, production wasn't consistent."

Like Room101's The Big Payback, XL For Men was a small cigar line dedicated to only heavy ring gauges, but according to Nodal, the bad timing was the major reason for its demise.

"Imagine in 2005: big ring gauges, a five-country blend, painted boxes and a funky name. That might seem completely normal today, but back then?"

In 12 years, Nodal has come to better understand the market and has more strategically placed his large-ring-gauge cigars within his most successful brands. Cigars such as Aging Room M356ii, La Bohéme and Swag all have 60-ring-gauge sizes, and in some cases, 70-ring-gauge cigars within the line.

Of course, a few other producers nudged along the trend. Recall in 2004 Tatuaje's Gran Cojonu, which was a 60-ring-gauge smoke before

Portly cigars are being rolled all across the cigar globe. From left, the Dominican Inch by E.P. Carrillo, Cuba's Cohiba 50 Aniversario and the Nicaraguan MUWAT by Drew Estate.

The CAO Flathead V770 Big Block from General Cigar Co. makes 60-ring-gauge-cigars look small with its massive 70 ring gauge dimensions—more than one inch in diameter.

the trend took hold. And in 2011, Drew Estate came out with MUWAT, a cigar line of mostly 60-ring-gauge smokes. Then in 2014, the trend reached surreal proportions. A small company called RomaCraft unveiled a cigar called The CroMagnon Femur. It's 10 inches long by an absurdly large 133 1/3 ring gauge and weighs nearly half a pound. Femurs were intended to be more of a showpiece than anything—a novelty—but a few thrill-seeking smokers lit them up anyway.

Rumors throughout the industry tend to circulate regarding the quality of tobacco stuffed into a 60-, 70- or even 80-ring-gauge cigar. Critics and skeptical smokers believe that cigar makers can get away with sneaking subpar tobacco into a heavy-ring-gauge cigar by masking it with stronger tobaccos. In other words, there's plenty of room in a wide cigar to skimp on quality and nobody's going to notice. At least, that's the thinking behind the suspicion. But the scores of heavy-ring-gauge cigars at Cigar Aficionado don't confirm that theory.

The most notable example is the CAO Flathead V660 Carb, which measures 6 inches by 60 ring gauge. It was the No. 3 cigar of 2015, scoring 95 points. And to accentuate its thickness, the cigar is seriously box pressed, which makes it appear even more massive. Of course, CAO Flathead comes in a 70 ring gauge as well, making the Carb's blocky proportions seem almost unapproachable. It's a gutsy blend that starts with a dark Connecticut broadleaf wrapper, a Cuban-seed binder also grown in Connecticut and a combination of Nicaraguan ligero and Dominican Piloto Cubano tobacco. The right combination of blend and girth made it the highest scoring 6-by-60 cigar ever awarded by this magazine.

The CAO brand is owned by General Cigar Co., which is one of the largest premium cigar companies in the world, and also owns an extensive portfolio of heritage brands like Partagas, Cohiba, Macanudo and Punch that it produces for the U.S. market with non-Cuban tobacco. General doesn't need to be convinced that big cigars are big sellers—all of its major brands now have at least one 6-by-60 cigar within the size chart. Altadis U.S.A., the other cigar behemoth, makes a 6 by 60 in its heritage brands like Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta 1875 and H. Upmann. Like General, these were originally Cuban brands that have parallel counterparts made in the Dominican Republic without any Cuban tobacco. But even Cuba has joined the trend.

Perhaps the slowest entity to give in and make heavy ring gauges, Cuba's Habanos S.A. has spent the last 10 years slowly discontinuing its smaller ring gauges a little bit at a time. To the chagrin of traditionalists, Cuba's selection of lonsdales and panetelas have been severely diminished in favor of ring gauges that reach 54, 55 and 56 diameters. Each year a few slim cigars disappear, some thicker ones take their place.

Recall how Habanos beefed up its H. Upmann line by eliminating so many diminutive cigars and slowly added smokes to the regular rotation like the Connoisseur A (52 ring gauge) Magnum 54 (54 ring gauge) and even a limited-edition Magnum 56 (56 ring gauge). Or how about Cohiba? The brand was born as a slim-sized panetela at 38 ring gauge for Fidel Castro and his diplomatic guests. When Cohiba went commercial in 1989, all the sizes, save for one, were thinner than 50 ring. Granted, Habanos still keeps its skinny Cohibas in production, but who would have thought that subsequent additions would be so bulky? Cohiba Behike, the most expensive Cuban cigar brand, ranges from a ring gauge of 52 all the way up to 56. The Siglo VI has a 52 ring gauge, the Pirámides Extra is 54 ring and the limited-edition Robustos Supremos is 58 ring.

Other new Cubans are also fat, such as the Romeo y Julieta Wide Churchill, rolled in a ring gauge of 55, and the fairly new Partagás Serie E No. 2, with a 54 ring gauge.

But the most prominent fat cigar example out of Cuba is another Cohiba, the Cohiba 50 Aniversario. The 7-by-60 smoke comes in a special-edition humidor created last year in celebration of the brand's 50th birthday. For now, it's Cuba's only 60-ring-gauge parejo (or straight-sided) cigar.

"I'm not sure what's driving the popularity," says Mitchell Orchant, who owns 12 cigar shops across the United Kingdom, including a Casa del Habano, "but I think it may be a younger generation of cigar smokers enjoying the greater volume of flavor from a larger ring gauge, rather than slender more concentrated strength found in more traditional sizes like coronas and lonsdales that an old boy like me prefers."

The biggest Cuban smokes have emerged as some of his best sellers. "Large format Havanas are becoming super popular in London and the U.K. Romeo Wide Churchills have entered our top-10-selling Cubans and demand for Behike 54 and 56 is insatiable."

In 2012, as the trend was starting to normalize, Perez-Carrillo started a brand called Inch by E.P. Carrillo. Not one size is thinner than 60 ring gauge, and the fattest is 70 ring. The entire line is a tribute to girth.

It's called Inch for a simple reason: the 64-ring version of the cigar measures a full inch in diameter. According to Perez-Carrillo, the Maduro No. 64 is the most popular cigar in the line.

"When I left General [Cigar], everybody wanted me to come out with the same brand as La Gloria, but I wasn't going to do that," Perez-Carrillo says. "Inch was based on tobaccos from growing zones and seeds that weren't available in the past."

Perez-Carrillo has been making cigars for more than four decades, and he has seen trends come and go. He feels this one has legs. "At this point, there's still a strong appetite for big cigars," assures the godfather of large-ring-gauge cigars. "It's not a fad. It's here to stay." ❖

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FEATURED CIGAR

ASHTON SYMMETRY BELICOSO

DOM. REP. • PRICE: $12.25 • BODY: MEDIUM TO FULL

For a full tasting, see page two.

93 POINTS

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TOP 25 CIGARS OF 2016

THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR will be showcased in the February issue of *Cigar Aficionado* along with the top-rated Best Buys and most exciting New Releases of 2016. But don't forget the regular tasting section, where we also rated 83 cigars. For a preview of the issue's top-scoring smokes, turn to page two.

FIDEL CASTRO: 1926–2016

THE ASHES OF CUBA'S FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO were interred on Sunday in a tomb that reads "Fidel" on a plaque. He died on November 25 and was cremated before his ashes were brought to Santiago de Cuba, 540 miles southeast of Havana and the birthplace of Castro's Revolution. He ruled Cuba for decades after overthrowing the previous Batista regime in 1959 and has been widely regarded as a controversial figure ever since. Many mourned Castro's death as the passing of a benevolent leader. A few hundred miles away in Miami, others saw him as an oppressive dictator and celebrated his death in the streets. Turn to page five for the obituary.

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CIGAR WATCH

FROM THE EDITORS OF CIGAR AFICIONADO

SEPT. 27, 2016 | SIGN UP

COHIBA MACASSAR

FEATURED CIGAR

Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita (91 Points)

The Punch Gran Puro line came onto the scene in 2003 as General Cigar's only Honduran puro, meaning that it uses only tobacco from Honduras. The Santa Rita size (4 1/2 inches by 52 ring gauge, $5.29) recently impressed our tasting panel with notes of cashew, hints of fresh coconut and a toasty finish, earning a score of 91 points in August's *Cigar Aficionado*.

Click For More Punch Gran Puro Ratings

11 Cigars You Should Be Smoking Right Now

Cigar Aficionado's 133rd blind tasting, which appeared in our August 2016 issue, is now live on our website. Of the 82 cigars rated by our panel of editors, 11 non-Cuban cigars scored 91 points or higher. These cigars are considered outstanding on our 100-point scale. So if you're heading to your local brick-and-mortar, here are a few cigars that are sure to please right now.

Read Full Story

La Palina Launches Value-Priced Goldie

La Palina Cigars has shipped a modified version of its popular Goldie blend called Illumination. The cigar features the same component tobaccos as Goldie minus the rare and expensive medio tiempo leaf that's nestled inside the limited-edition line of Goldie cigars.

Read Full Story

La Palina Cigar Ratings

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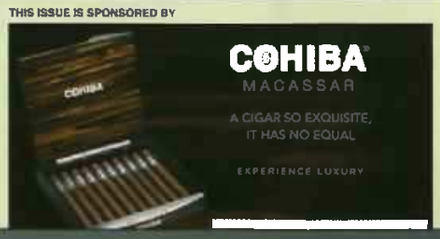

cigar aficionado

Attendees hold up their coupon books while anxiously awaiting the start of Friday's Big Smoke Evening event.

CAMILLA SJODIN

Big Smoke Lights Up Las Vegas for 21st Year

For more than two decades, cigar fanatics from across the globe have made a pilgrimage to the sun-roasted streets of Las Vegas. They arrive by airplane, bus and car, landing on the hot pavement of Sin City with a shared goal in mind: to smoke handmade cigars, drink fine spirits and attend educational tobacco seminars. For these cigar devotees, all roads lead to CIGAR AFICIONADO'S annual Big Smoke weekend.

Nearly 4,000 people trekked out to the event in November, which kicked off with a traditional Friday evening celebration. The audience embraced friends and loved ones, shook hands with their favorite cigarmakers and collected a lion's share of smokes from more than 35 premium cigar brands. For the first time in Big Smoke history, a special VIP ticket was offered that allowed patrons access to the event an hour earlier—meaning more time for participants to smoke, relax and take pictures with cigar icons such as Carlos Fuente Jr., Rocky Patel, Litto Gomez, Manuel Quesada, Ernesto Perez-Carrillo, Jonathan Drew, José "Pepin" Garcia, Rick Rodriguez, Rafael Nodal, A.J. Fernandez, Nestor Andrés Plasencia, Pete Johnson, Bill Paley, Jochi Blanco and many more.

The next morning brought a series of educational seminars. Executive editor David Savona introduced the top three legal cigars of 2015 and invited audience members to light up the award-winning smokes throughout the program. Smoke began to fill the room, and the first panel took off with senior editor Gregory Mottola and associate editor Andrew Nagy speaking to three cigar family heirs; Tony Gomez of La Flor Dominicana, Raquel Quesada of Quesada Cigars and Liana Fuente of Arturo Fuente Cigars. The three discussed their experiences growing up in a cigar family, and their future plans for each respective company. At the next panel, three cigar industry veterans took to the stage to speak at length about the anatomy of a cigar. Perez-Carrillo, Litto Gomez and Plasencia expressed their views on what they look for when evaluating tobacco.

The morning continued with a discussion on Cuban cigars. Savona and senior contributing editor Gordon Mott conversed about the new, legal ways to bring Cuban cigars back to the U.S. Next, a panel on Honduran cigars followed, with experts Joel Alvarenga from Altadis U.S.A., Christian Eiroa of CLE Cigars and Patel. After, there was a seated lunch hosted by José Oliva, president of Oliva Cigar Co.

Another Big Smoke Evening took place Saturday night, and the seminars resumed the following morning, starting with breakfast by chef Nicole Brisson of CarneVino Steakhouse. The famed 'Roll Your Own' cigar seminar followed immediately afterwards, and the seminars wrapped up with a series of Scotch and cigar pairings, during which senior features editor Jack Bettridge and David Savona led a raucous question-and-answer session, bringing Big Smoke Las Vegas to a spirited end. ❖

—David Clough

For complete coverage of the Las Vegas Big Smoke, go to *CigarAficionado.com*

Cigar Aficionado executive editor David Savona welcomes guests to the Saturday seminars.

The Honduran Cigars seminar hosted by Cigar Aficionado senior editor Gregory Mottola featured Rocky Patel of Rocky Patel Premium Cigars, Christian Eiroa of CLE Cigars and Joel Alvarenga of Altadis U.S.A.

Joe Paller from Los Angeles, California, celebrated his eighth year attending the Big Smoke Las Vegas with a stop at the Crown Royal booth on Friday night.

The Big Smoke is famous for bringing cigar-loving friends and family together. This year, Dominic and Dante Cipponeri bonded over fine cigars and spirits.

Maria and David Gonzalez, who traveled from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to attend their first Big Smoke, found out cigar rolling isn't as easy as it looks.

Raquel Quesada of Quesada Cigars, Liana Fuente of Arturo Fuente and Tony Gomez of La Flor Dominicana were featured on the "Next Generation" panel.

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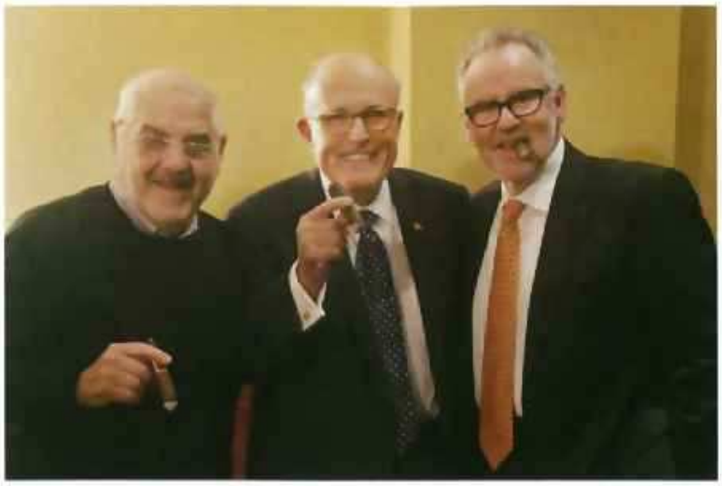

Cigar Aficionado editor and publisher Marvin R. Shanken takes in a fine November evening at New York City's Grand Havana Room by enjoying premium cigars alongside friends Rudolph Giuliani and Wayne Suarez.

Craig Miller, Gillis Poll, Congressman Peter T. King, Bert Brodsky and Joel Robinson gather to celebrate camaraderie by indulging in a couple of savory smokes at Havanas Cigar Club at The Carltun in East Meadow, New York.

The Luzzi family savors fine Montecristo and Cohiba cigars at the wedding of their youngest brother Nicholas at the Litchfield Inn in Litchfield, Connecticut.

Krasdale Foods hosts its annual cigar dinner, where Liga Privada and Padrón Anniversary cigars are enjoyed at F&J Pine Restaurant in the Bronx, New York.

A round of golf and a couple of premium cigars fit the bill for Bob Castelli, Rob Bain and Ted Sheridan as they hit the links at The K Club in Kildare, Ireland.

Members of the Ohio State University Rugby Football Club recall their glory days over fine cigars at their 50th anniversary dinner in Columbus, Ohio.

Joe Held, Anders Larson and Tim Held gather to celebrate the good life by enjoying premium cigars and Scotch at "Al's shack" in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Esteemed members of the Kappa Alpha Order gather to indulge in Oliva Serie V Churchill Extra cigars at their office in Mulberry Hill in Lexington, Virginia.

Fathers and sons Ben and Steve Adler and Howard and Jesse Blumenau enjoy Montecristo No. 2 cigars during family weekend at The University of Arizona.

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On a beautiful day in La Romana, Dominican Republic, Brad Vassar and Wayne Chaplin from Southern Wine & Spirits tee it up at Casa de Campo's Teeth Of The Dog course with Cigar Aficionado editor and publisher Marvin R. Shanken and Jim Clerkin of Moët Hennessy.

David Parmentier celebrates his graduation from Winona State University by smoking cigars with his parents Dave and Karen, brothers Jake and Alex, Bryanna Koehnle and Gina Molinaro.

Lou Genovese, his father Louis Genovese Sr. and brother-in-law Teddy Koulouris always have a smoke at Cuesta-Rey Cigar inside Tropicana Field before their Tampa Bay Rays take the field.

No wedding day is complete without cigars! These esteemed groomsmen light up a couple of savory smokes with Taylor Heffner on the day of his spring wedding to Helen Edgar at the beautiful Fleur De Lis Mansion in the Lower Garden District of New Orleans, Louisiana.

Andrew Zublionis celebrates his wedding day by savoring Oliva Serie O cigars with his father Bill and stepfather Vic Tolomei at the Santa Barbara Hosteria Hacienda in Gualaceo, Ecuador.

Marking a milestone with fine cigars, Dominic Persino celebrates his 90th birthday with his son Jimmy by savoring Romeo y Julietas at the Cigary International lounge in Wilmette, Illinois.

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Friends and family help bride and groom Lacy and Jace Leggett from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, celebrate their August wedding by savoring premium cigars in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Bejan Makarechian and Llinedy Almanzar celebrate their wedding with a giant cigar party alongside friends and family at the Jellyfish Restaurant in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

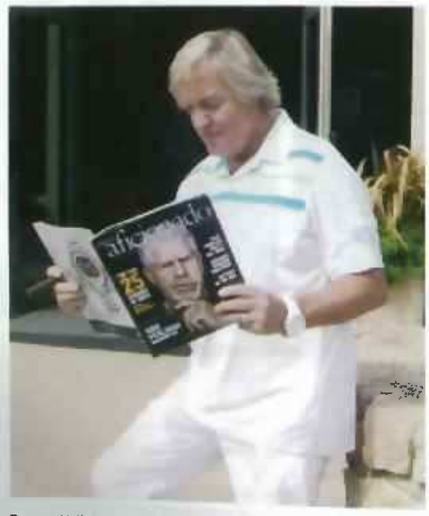
A group of cigar-loving friends known as The Royal and Ancient Cigar Society join together for an afternoon of fine cigars and libations at the Mariner Sands Country Club in Stuart, Florida.

Father and son Jeff and Spencer Viening tailgate with cigars before a Michigan State football game in East Lansing, Michigan.

Friends Jason Cross and John Garcea indulge in a post-meal cigar while walking back to the Aria Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Members of the Honolulu-based cigar club Beef Jerky Time pose, and smoke, alongside Andre Farkas of Viaje Cigar Co. and Abe Flores of PDR Cigars at a joint event in Waikiki, Hawaii.

Rick Brannan and Darrin Morris savor a visit to Don Lucas Cigars in the Dominican Republic.



Barry White catches up on some reading before teeing off in Pebble Beach, California.

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Let's go Cubs! Father and son Gary and Cam Thompson smoking fine cigars before game 3 of the 2016 World Series at Wrigley Field in Chicago, Illinois.

Grandpa, son and grandson. Three generations, all named George Sella, all enjoying their leisure time with a premium cigar in Waxhaw, North Carolina.

John Doerich of Rochester, New York, pays a visit to his son Robert in Tokyo, Japan, where they share a Cuban cigar at Le Connaisseur cigar bar in Roppongi.

Michael Diane and Jerry Keehn celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary by smoking premium cigars at The Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida.

Dave Patterson of Miami, Ohio, shares a birthday cigar with his two sons Ryan and Andrew Patterson, his friend Doug Fisher and his father Bob Patterson.

Congratulations to the happy couple! Alison and Nathan Russell and their wedding party hoist cigars on their special day in Paso Robles, California.

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In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

1 PERSONAL DOCUMENTARY—STORYKEEP

Ever admire the work of people like Ken Burns and think, "That's great, but I'd like something a bit more close to home?" That's the concept behind StoryKeep, the ultimate family selfie in which the Brooklyn-based production company produces a documentary of your family. Using historians, archivists, a producer, cinematographer, and an interviewer, StoryKeep delves into your family's past and poignant stories to create a modern heirloom. Founded by NYC radio reporter and TV host Jamie Yuenger, StoryKeep can produce a book (starting at $20,000) or film (starting at $40,000) project. *storykeep.com*

2 BESPOKE PICNIC—ROLLS-ROYCE

Call it the Rolls-Royce of picnic hampers—literally. The leading name in luxury motoring has set its sights on the outdoor luncheon niche with this custom fine-dining set. The Rolls-Royce Picnic Hamper features crystal glassware from the Ajka Crystal factory in Hungary, stainless steel cutlery hand-made in England and porcelain plates from Wedgwood, the renowned fine-china factory that dates back to 1759. The picnic hamper, which accommodates four diners, retails for $30,000. Choose your guests accordingly. *rolls-roycemotorcars.com*

3 SNAZZY GOLF BALLS—SNELL

The name Dean Snell might not ring familiar, but his 25-year résumé is impressive. He worked on two of the golf world's most storied balls, the Titleist Pro VI and the TaylorMade Penta. Snell is out on his own now, and his Snell Golf aims at selling tour-level products directly to amateurs at a reasonable ($32 per dozen) price. Snell's My Tour Ball is a three-piece golf ball, with a soft urethane cover for feel and a low compression core for reduced driver spin. *snellgolf.com*

4 MUDDLERS WITH A TWIST—CORK POPS AND RABBIT

The new age of classic drinking has put figurative stress on the need to muddle fruit in your cocktail (even as it puts extra literal stress on your arms as you relentlessly crush ingredients). Accordingly, the Old-Fashioned just met the new-fangled with two modern spring-loaded tools: the Giovanni Action Muddler (pictured) and Rabbit Push Muddler (not shown). You use them like a pogo stick, pushing down into the glass, and the contraptions add a twisting motion to the process. *corkpops.com* and *rabbitwine.com*

5 IF THE SHOE FITS—BLUPRINT

The design principle that drives shoemaker Bluprint is simple: style matters, but fit and comfort matter more. Each of the company's superlight silhouettes, from its plimsoll canvas sneaker to its chukka-style boot, feature 4 mm of proprietary foam and 2 mm of "slow recovery" memory foam in a sole that conforms to your foot. Combine this soft tech with a shape that allows your foot to flex, splay, balance and propel as nature intended, and you have one seriously comfortable piece of footwear that will feel as though it is custom-made with your feet in mind. *bluprintcomfort.com*

6 STEAMY STYLER—LG

What? You don't have a gentleman's gentleman to look after your wardrobe. Harnessing the chemical-free power of steam to refresh your garments and free them of wrinkles (and cigar smoke), the new LG Styler ($1,999) can help. The slim appliance stands about 6 feet tall and does not require a water hook-up. Simply hang your suit or shirts inside, press a button on the door's full-touch panel and the TrueSteam technology, which operates at only 40 decibels, will do the rest. *lg.com*

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BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

In the matter of Trademark Registration No. 1147309
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: February 17, 1981

AND

In the matter of the Trademark Registration No. 1898273
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: June 6, 1995

EMPRESA CUBANA DEL TABACO, d.b.a. CUBATABACO, Petitioner, v. GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC., Respondent.	:	Cancellation No. 92025859

<u>EXHIBIT 14</u>

<u>TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE</u>

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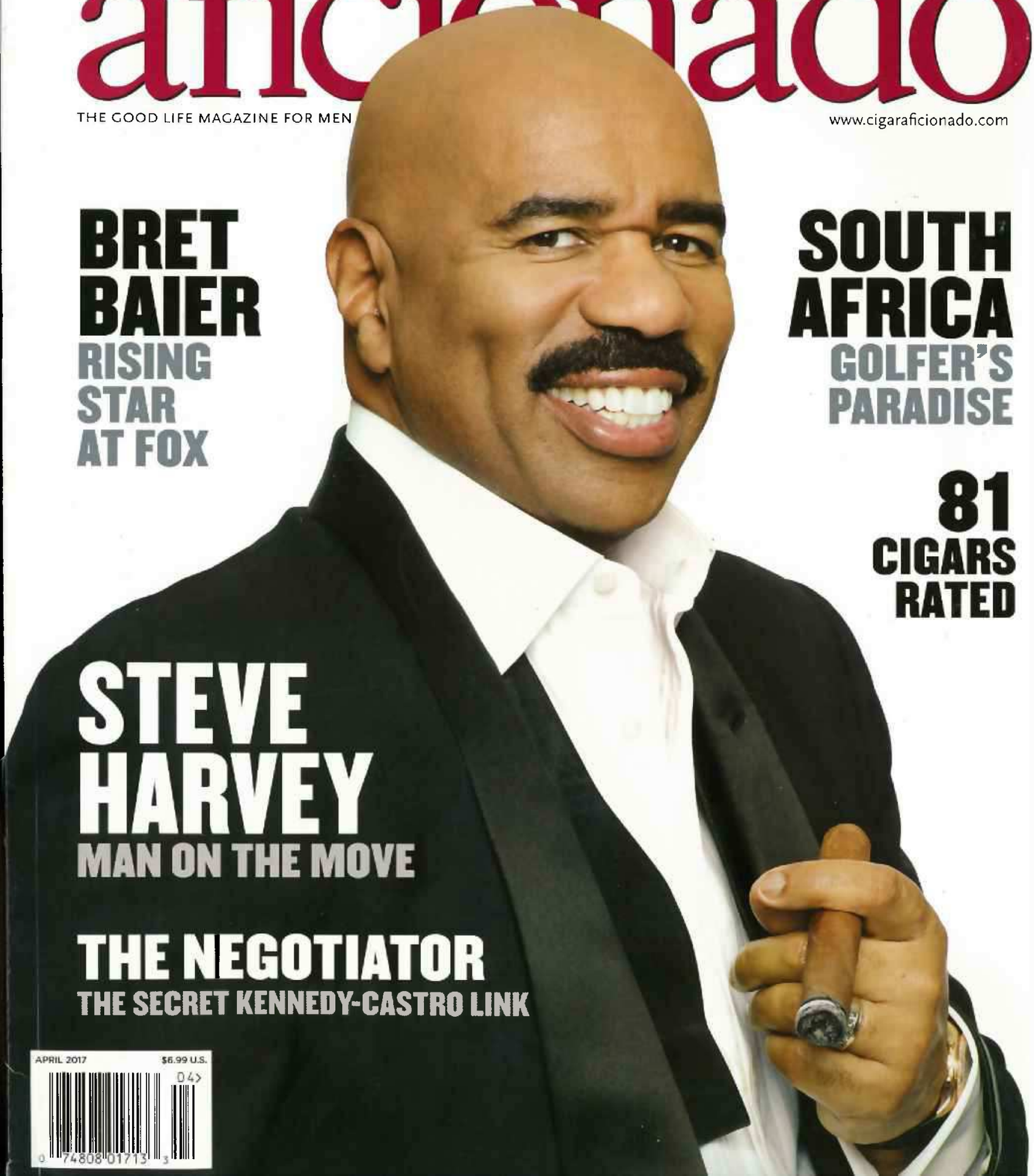

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1 ORANGE PEEL

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THE BACARDÍ MAESTRO COLLINS

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1 PART FRESHLY SQUEEZED LEMON JUICE

2 1-OF FINE WHITE SUGAR (CASTER SUGAR)

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[illegible]

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march/april 2017

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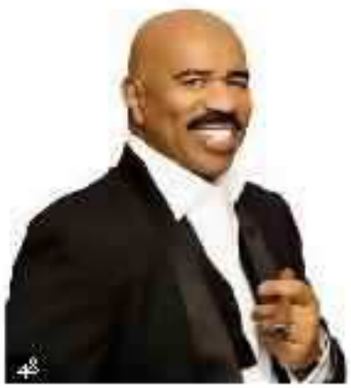

ON THE COVER
Steve Harvey turned a knack for humor into a vast career photograph by David Kellen

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After you've seen the wildlife, take a tour of South Africa's golfing delights, which include a green shaped like the continent itself.

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highlights

Many believe that there is no better time than now to be a cigar lover, and with 30 cigars scoring 90 points or higher in our most recent taste tests, it's hard to argue against this sentiment. One smoke, though, stood out: Cuba's Cohiba Esplendido, which rated a whopping 95 points in our blind review—a classic score for a classic brand. If you can't get your hands on the famous Churchill, plenty of smokes from other countries scored well in this tasting. Two 93-pointers from Nicaragua topped the figurado and corona gorda categories, while three cigars, one Honduran and two Cubans, tied at 92 points to lead the robustos. Meanwhile, six cigars in the panetela group scored 91 points. If you enjoy data, check out our story that breaks down all of the cigars we rated in 2016 on page 111.

TOP CHURCHILL
COHIBA ESPLENDIDO
One of Cohiba's earliest commercial sizes, this Churchill is said to use tobaccos from the island's Vuelta Abajo growing region.

CUBA 95

TOP CORONA GORDA
JOYA DE NICARAGUA BLACK NOCTURNO
This blend features a Mexican San Andrés wrapper, marking the first time ever that the oldest Nicaraguan cigar manufacturer has used such a leaf.

NICARAGUA 93

TOP FIGURADO
PADRÓN 6000 MADURO
It may be hard to spot this dark torpedo in a crowded humidor, but with a retail price of less than $10, the hunt is worth it.

NICARAGUA 93

TOP ROBUSTO
CAO ITALIA CIAO
The filler of this smoke includes leaf from Italy, a rarity in premium, hand-made cigars.

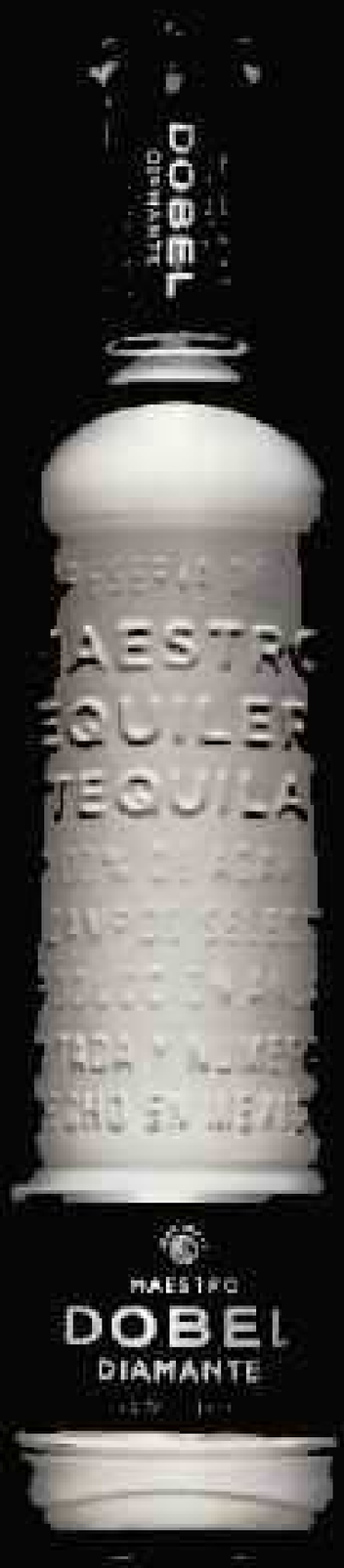
HONDURAS 92

TOP LONSDALE
ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL LONSDALE
This slim smoke is covered in a gorgeous, tan Connecticut seed wrapper grown in the fields of Ecuador, and is stronger than it looks.

DOM. REP. 91

TOP PANETELA
LA PALINA ILLUMINATION LANCERO
Made in Miami's El Titan de Bronze factory, this cigar incorporates high priming tigers in its blend. It tied with five other panetelas.

U.S.A. 91



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editors' note

Choosing a Cover

Selecting who goes on the cover of CIGAR AFICIONADO is a task we take quite seriously. The cover image is the flag we fly on newsstands, and the person (or people) we put on that cover becomes our ambassador for two months. With only six issues a year, there aren't many opportunities to be on our cover.

The ideal candidate is someone who enjoys fine cigars. Sometimes our cover subjects puff on occasion, and once in a while we find someone who smokes cigars as often (and with as much passion) as we do.

Inspiration comes in all forms. We seek out many people. Others seek us out. Some we know. And there are those whom we pursue aggressively. The man on the cover of the issue you are reading—Steve Harvey—came to us in the strangest fashion of all: via another magazine that no one would ever confuse with CIGAR AFICIONADO.

People magazine.

We came across a video posted on People's Facebook page last summer, made when Harvey was due to appear on the June 6 cover of that magazine. Harvey and his wife, Marjorie Bridges Woods, are seen giving a tour of their palatial house in Atlanta. As they show off a grand outdoor kitchen, Harvey mentions cigars. "Usually this is happening with a cigar," he says. Soon, he's puffing away on one. He talks about cigars again and again throughout the video and takes the viewer on a tour of his closet, which is loaded with golf clubs, plenty of clothes and an array of humidors brimming with his favorite smokes, Cuban and non-Cuban alike.

And then came the line that we couldn't ignore, uttered without his trademark smile, his brow furrowed and his attitude clearly one of disappointment:

"Can't get on the cover of CIGAR AFICIONADO," he mutters.

We had put Steve Harvey on the inside of the magazine in August 2005. Never on the cover. His people had reached out recently, but it just didn't work out. Now the man was spending his time being interviewed by another magazine, but lobbying to be on the cover of ours.

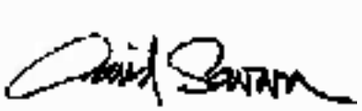
It was time.

Harvey is a busy man, hosting several TV and radio shows and criss-crossing the United States to keep up with his schedule. Cigars are his constant companion. He made headlines in January when he met with President Donald J. Trump (who was then president-elect), when he was asked to lead a band with problems facing American inner cities.

Harvey is a man of wealth and fame today, and he owes his success to a great bag of faith he made many years ago when he quit his job after winning a comedy competition. He was so enamored of being on stage and making people laugh that he left a paying job behind after winning all of $90. No one but his family believed in him, and times were so hard at one point that he was living in his car and bathing in public pools. His story of extraordinary drive and success begins on page 48.

So Steve Harvey, welcome to the CIGAR AFICIONADO cover club. You've earned it.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN
EDITOR & PUBLISHER



DAVID SAYNA
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Rocky Patel

SPECIAL RESERVE

SUN GROWN

MADURO

Thank you,

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#2 CIGAR of 2016

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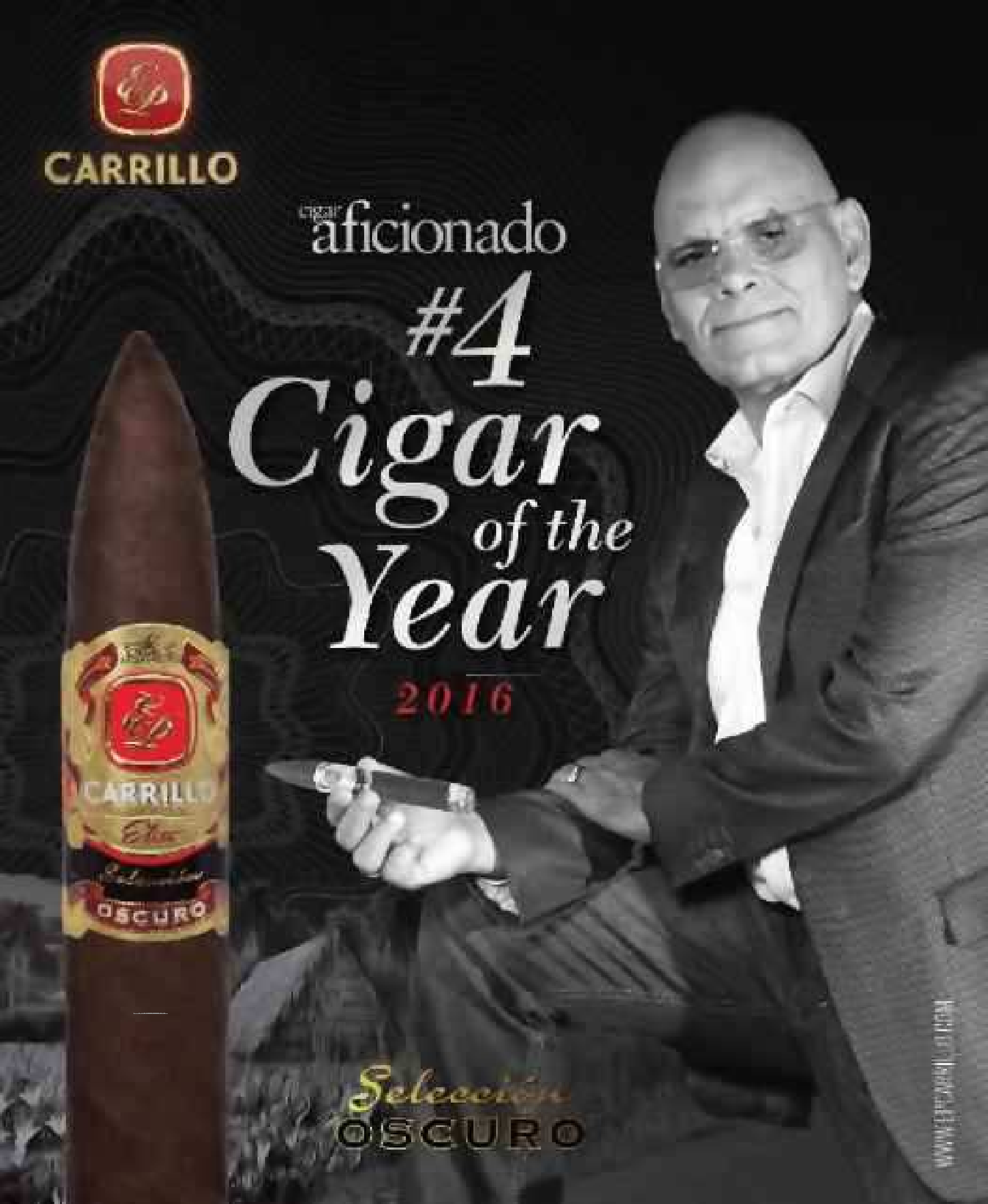
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#4
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of the
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Dear Marvin,

As a charter subscriber to CIGAR AFICIONADO in 1992, I've observed over the past quarter century that Cuban cigars have become less dominant in the top ratings every issue, mainly due to product from Nicaragua and/or the Dominican Republic. The best-tasting cigars I ever purchased were a box of Cuban H. Upmann No. 2 in 1994 from the Davidoff store in London. Some of the most mediocre to awful cigars I've ever purchased have also been Cuban Upmann No. 2 over subsequent decades from Davidoff's stores in Canada and Mexico. I'd like to think they weren't counterfeit, given my medium of expertise as a consumer and Davidoff's reputation.

So part of me had hoped that Gordon Mott's article in the February 2017 issue, "The New Rules on Cuban Cigars," was going to be a primer on which Cuban cigars were now worth the premium price. After reading it, I understand the thrust being the recent relaxation of import rules for U.S. citizens bringing Cuban cigars purchased abroad into this country.

That said, and given the incomparable experience that CIGAR AFICIONADO has on the quality of Cuban cigars, it occurs to me that you would be doing your readers a tremendous service with an article chronicling the evolution and quality of Cuban cigar tobacco over the past 20 or so years. My experience has led me to the theory that a declining Cuban economy over this period, combined with the need to provide government-subsidized cigarettes to the Cuban populace, has resulted in more tobacco being diverted to cigarette production and less for higher-quality cigar manufacturing. Bolstering this theory is the Castro-mandated cessation of subsidized rations to those citizens born after 1956 in the past few years.

Whatever the case, my question (and request for insight from your publication) becomes: Does the average Cuban cigar today remain the Holy Grail for smokers of fine cigars, thereby justifying the continued mystique and premium price?

David B. Kee Jr. M.D.
Pinehurst, North Carolina

Editors' Response: A superb question. If you turn to Greg Moncada's analysis on page 133, you will see how Cubans stand out daily as a country against cigars from Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic and elsewhere in our 2016 blind tastings in CIGAR AFICIONADO and Cigar Insider, our twice-monthly newsletter about cigars. The short answer is: quite well. However, there are great Cuban cigars, there are good Cuban cigars and there are poor Cuban cigars. A cigar smoker would be misinformed indeed if he or she thought that picking up any cigar of Cuban origin would guarantee a great smoke. Just because a cigar is Cuban doesn't mean it will be of high quality.

"Does the average Cuban cigar today remain the Holy Grail for smokers of fine cigars, thereby justifying the mystique and premium price?"
David B. Kee Jr. M.D., Pinehurst, North Carolina

Dear Marvin,

Thank you for the Editors' Note "Government Meddling at Its Worst" (December 2016). The abusive burden placed on many businesses by the outgoing U.S. federal administration is only one reason for the result of the 2016 presidential election. As with the abuse of Gibson Guitar Co., the overreach by meddling administration ministers crippled many hard-working business owners and their families for years to come. Now it is the agribusiness of cigar manufacturing that is being targeted by the outgoing abusive socialists. One address to the abusive burden is noted in the Declaration of Independence: "He has erected a

cigar aficionado

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multitude of New Offices, and eat bitter swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance." In CIGAR AFICIONADO we read the cry of a free business republic resulting the declaration so noted more than 200 years ago. Such rejection of administration socialist overreach is now made witness with the county-by-county majority vote of the republic. We see this past vote unveiling dozens and dozens of tax-spend-and-regulate socialist politicians in D.C. and across the United States.

Remember, without protected open economic commerce there can be no other freedom; because the fortification of free conduct is in the financial ability of the individual to act upon a desire.

To enjoy a fine cigar is an opportunity for repose. Hand-rolled cigars made by hard-working members of the business community need not be vilified by federal or state administration. Such jackboated conduct by the outgoing administration is a reminder of those words so stated in the Declaration of Independence. Yes, in the 2016 elections U.S. citizens rejected the abusive communist platform in favor of freedom. At hand is the freedom of those boutique businesses and the unfettered opportunity for the inalienable right of the individual to go about enjoying life in even the most simple of things as a good hand-rolled cigar.

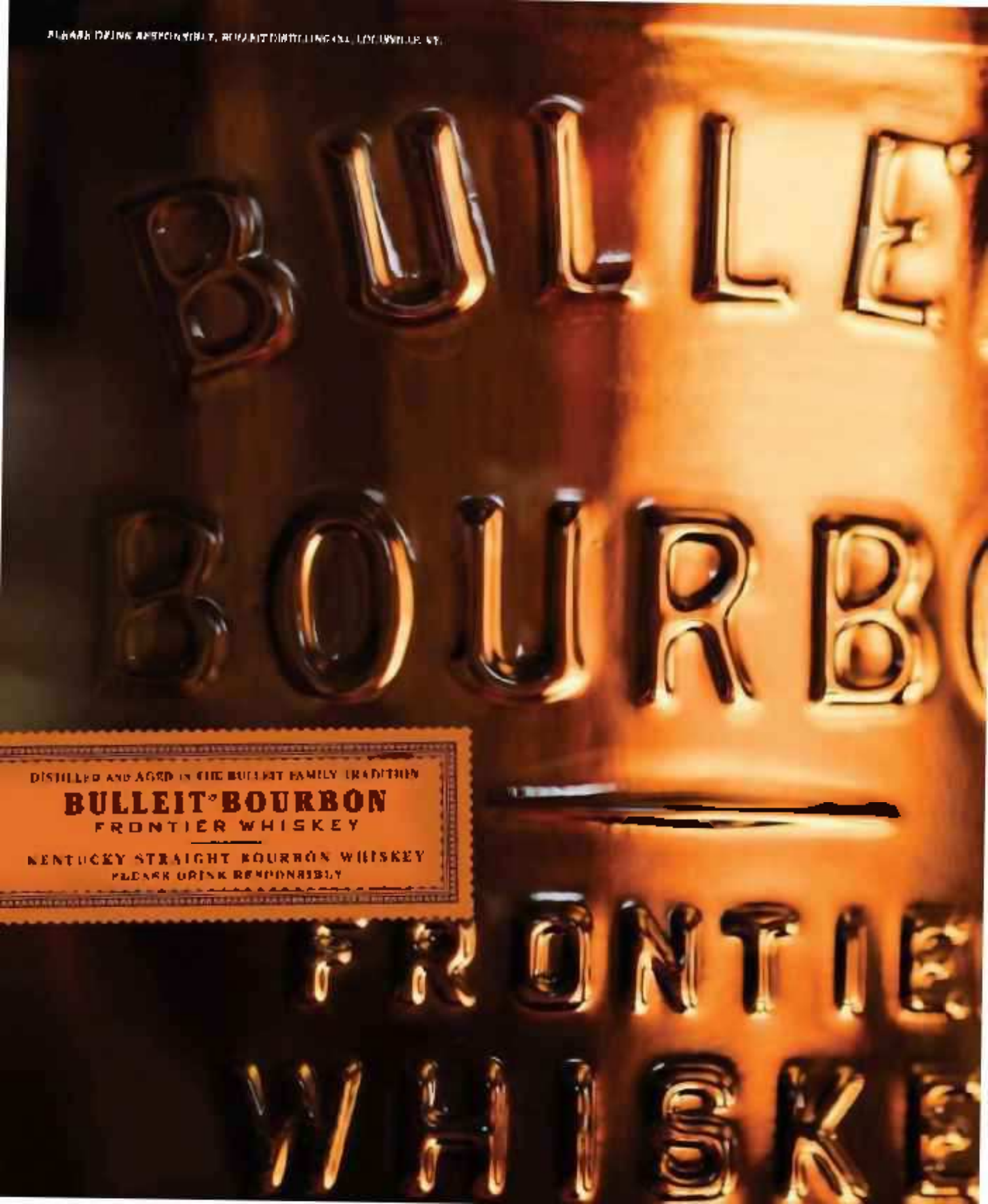
To that end, many rejoice for the rejection of the communist abuse. Rejection now is enforced by a peaceful voting process and not a second bloody blood sacrifice like that paid more than 200 years ago. On a personal note, I am grateful CIGAR AFICIONADO continues to champion the simple pleasure of an individual to select and enjoy a fine cigar.

J. Bradley Oates
Milpitas, California

Dear Marvin,
The only way I (or Arnold Schwarzenegger photo shoot) would get any better ("You're Fired," February 2017) is if he was holding a rifle in one arm, flexing the bicep with the other arm while on the task, with the cigar in his mouth. That would be just too much.
Joshua Hoover
Via Facebook

Dear Marvin,
Your December issue was exceptional, covering all the bases: travel, cigars, chefs, etc. Good work!
Fred Rondeau
Hammond, Louisiana

Corrections: The Q&A with Fernando Domínguez published in the December 2016 issue listed the incorrect headquarters for Imperial Brands PLC. The company is headquartered in Bristol, United Kingdom.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Patriots' owner Robert Kraft offers a Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series cigar to receiver Chris Hogan after New England's historic Super Bowl win.

Victory Cigars For Patriots After Super Bowl

What do you do when your team converts a come-from-behind victory in one of the greatest games ever played? If you're Patriots' owner Robert Kraft, you hand out great cigars.

Super Bowl LI certainly qualified for such a cigar moment. Tom Brady cemented his standing among the NFL's greatest with a stunning second-half comeback and a game-winning drive in overtime to claim his fifth Super Bowl ring and fourth MVP accolade. Records abounded. It was the first Super Bowl to go to overtime, the greatest comeback ever staged in the NFL's biggest game, a record for most rings by a starting Super Bowl quarterback (Brady earned one for the thumb) as well as for head coach Bill Belichick, New England's fearless leader.

Kraft has more than his share of Super Bowl experience, so it should come as no surprise that he came to Houston's NRG Stadium with a well-deserved victory cigar: the Padrón 1964 Anniversary Series. Padrón has won CIGAR AFICIONADO's Cigar of the Year award a record three times.

A video posted to Twitter by NFL.com's Dan Hanzus showed a jovial Kraft handing out the Padróns in the locker room. The final visit on his walk was to step up to Brady, who threw for 466 yards (yet another record) and two touchdowns. The star QB embraced Kraft, but he seemed more concerned with his missing Super Bowl jersey than picking up a cigar.

Blake Dworsek

Tom Brady led his New England Patriots in the biggest comeback in Super Bowl history, throwing for 466 yards and two touchdowns.

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good life guide

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Adorini Travel Humidor Cedro

Long gone are the days when all men traveled in style. Some may have ditched their sport coats and loafers in favor of sweatshirts and flip-flops, but that doesn't mean cigars should have to slum it. These are handmade indulgences—crafted with meticulous attention to detail—so why would you choose to encase them in a travel humidor that has the aesthetic appeal of a Tupperware container?

That's why humidor crafters like Germany's Adorini create scaled-down versions of larger designs. Its Travel Humidor Cedro ($1,210) is made especially for on-the-go use. Adorini's Cedro collection strays from the lacquered finishes found on most humidors, instead using a natural Spanish cedar veneer. Most cigar smokers favor Spanish cedar for its appealing aroma and ability to hold moisture, which make it a popular choice for humidor linings. The Cedro humidor also takes advantage of the wood's low density and resistance to weathering with an exterior that is lightweight and durable—ideal features in a travel humidor.

But one does not create a functioning travel humidor simply by downsizing. Subtle reinforcements must be made for extra protection and accessibility. On the outside, Adorini has added a gold-plated button lock that ensures a firm seal and obviates the key-lock feature present on the larger Cedro designs.

Open the humidor and you will find two snug foam inserts designed to keep your cigars in place during transit. The inserts can hold 13 cigars—one mold fits eight cigars vertically, the other holds five longer smokes horizontally. While some travel humidors employ foam padding in a way that significantly restricts space, the Adorini humidor has some added depth to the inside lid, so both inserts can be used at the same time.

Should you no longer require the reinforcements once you've arrived at your destination or if you fancy a certain stick that doesn't fit the mold (some long and thin cigars don't), simply remove them and place your cigars directly on the cedar interior. Without the foam inserts, the capacity is roughly 12 to 15 cigars, depending on size.

The Travel Humidor Cedro measures 10 1/4 by 7 1/4 inches, with a depth of about 1 1/4 inches. It is the smallest in the Cedro collection, which has three other sizes with capacities between 30 and 150 cigars.

Visit adorini.com

Blake Gossett

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2017 Lincoln Continental

Few automotive brands have taken a harder fall than Lincoln. Once a force to be reckoned with, Ford's high-line marque has been little more than an asterisk on the sales charts in recent decades. The arrival of the compact MKC crossover, a couple years back, showed there's still some life left, but the real test is about to begin with the rebirth of the brand's flagship, the once venerated Lincoln Continental.

The 2017 model year marks the first time the Continental nameplate has been seen in a Lincoln showroom since 2002. It also marks a shift away from forgettable alphanumeric designations like MKX, MKT and MKS (with the new Continental replacing the latter model). The 2017 sedan is more than just an MKS update — it's a complete makeover. True, it shares the same basic architecture as the mundane, midsize Ford Fusion, but it's longer, wider and loaded with the sort of luxury features you'd expect. This includes the sophisticated infotainment and safety technologies that are today as much the definition of luxury as natural-finish woods and plush, semi-anilline leather seats, as well as a 30-way heated and cooled driver's seat.

The Continental made its debut in stunning concept form at the 2015 New York Auto Show. The production model isn't quite as exotic, but it's still a handsome vehicle with a more formal presence than other recent Lincoln offerings, that means you'll get noticed, with an all-new grille design, distinctive electric door handles and Bentley-esque rear fenders.

Lincoln has taken its from some reviewers who can't seem to take a front-wheel-drive luxury car seriously. Like Audi, Ford engineers work around that problem by offering the all-wheel-drive option, we drove paired with a 400-horsepower twin-turbo V-6, one of three available powertrains. It's not the fastest car off the line, but performance is nonetheless impressive, hitting 60 in barely five seconds. Handling is solid, especially considering the Conti's nearly 4,000-pound mass. No, it's not a BMW, but it does have its advantages.

Lincoln execs like to call it "Quiet Luxury," and that's more than a marketing slogan. The Continental may be understated, but it delivers what many high-line buyers want. That's especially true with the Black Label model we drove. It's tomb-quiet until you turn up the studio-quality Revel audio package. There's also the latest Sync infotainment system, which includes Alexa, the Amazon digital assistant. Use it to open the garage door, turn on your house lights or check weather and sports scores. The Black Label badge gets you more than just upgraded seats and finishes. You also get a suite of services, including an at-the-ready concierge, along with free pickup and delivery, as well as a loaner, when you need service.

All in all, the 2017 Lincoln Continental is an impressive piece of machinery that will no longer get lost in the crowd or have you apologizing for your choice in luxury sedans. With a price starting around $45,000 — but pushing up to $79,000 in loaded Black Label trim — it's the sort of flagship that should help put Lincoln back on the radar after years in limbo.

Visit lincoln.com/continental

Paul A. Eisenstein

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The Classic Jean Jacket

It's called the trucker jacket, but it might just as well have been dubbed the biker, the rebel, the protester, the hippie, the rocker or any other name that says counterculture chic. The Levi's denim jacket was born as work wear, but found its true niche when worn by such brooding antiheroes as James Dean, Steve McQueen and the Marlboro Man. They made it a permanent part of the American wardrobe by exuding cool (not chores) and hinting at danger (not drudgery).

The first Levi's jacket evolved from denim work shirts manufactured by the San Francisco company that made rugged jeans popular in the Old West. In 1905, Levi's debuted a boxy jacket, with one breast pocket and a belt in the small of the back to cinch it. Minor changes followed until, in 1953, a second coming brought two breast pockets and button adjusters at the waist in place of the back belt. Bar-tack stitching had by then replaced rivets on the pockets. More form-fitting, this was the jacket first associated with motorcycle clubs and cinematic juvies.

A scant 10 years later the design would near its fashion zenith with a slimmer version. The trucker — collar turned up and the sleeves slightly rolled — became a go-to rebel garment. Not only was it our tighter, but details like chest seams that descended from the pockets to the waist in a V-shape, as well as pointed flaps, accentuated the trim lines. The material was a bit heavier and made of preshrunk denim, meaning you could wash it over and over to get the lived-in look.

If there was any way to give this jacket more attitude, Levi's found it in the '80s when it added hand pockets just above the waist. Now you could tuck your digits away and affect total indifference.

Not that Levi's has a monopoly on the look. Plenty of designers have even sent denim jackets down the runway, either in the classic form or with variations. (Probably the most disturbing are the suit jackets made of denim. Levi's itself made a tuxedo version for the very uncool Bing Crosby.) If you're considering alternatives don't forget that details like sturdy stitching and copper thank buttons with working holes — not snaps — make this look. While you can get it in colors other than the classic indigo blue, a time-worn way to make the look your own is to personalize it with tie-dye or embroidery (a la the hippie culture) or, at the other end of the spectrum, Hell's Angels patches. Bruce Springsteen styled them as vests by ditching the sleeves. The look never suffered in the least.

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Burr Coffee Grinders

You call yourself a coffee connoisseur yet you're still slashing away at your gourmet beans with a blade grinder? Time to abandon the coffee guillotines and step up to a burr grinder.

It's not coffee hubris or snobbery that demands the change, but a couple of very compelling reasons that dictate the quality of your brew. Firstly, coffee from a burr grinder tastes better because it's actually ground, not hacked. A blade grinder doesn't really grind so much as it slices and chops each roasted bean over and over again. This creates lots of heat and alters the taste of your coffee considerably. Burr grinders, by comparison, operate on steel burrs, bladed rings that rotate in opposite directions to quickly crush and grind each coffee bean with minimal friction. This milling method will release complex flavors that you've been missing all these years – everything from caramel and fruit to cocoa and fudge.

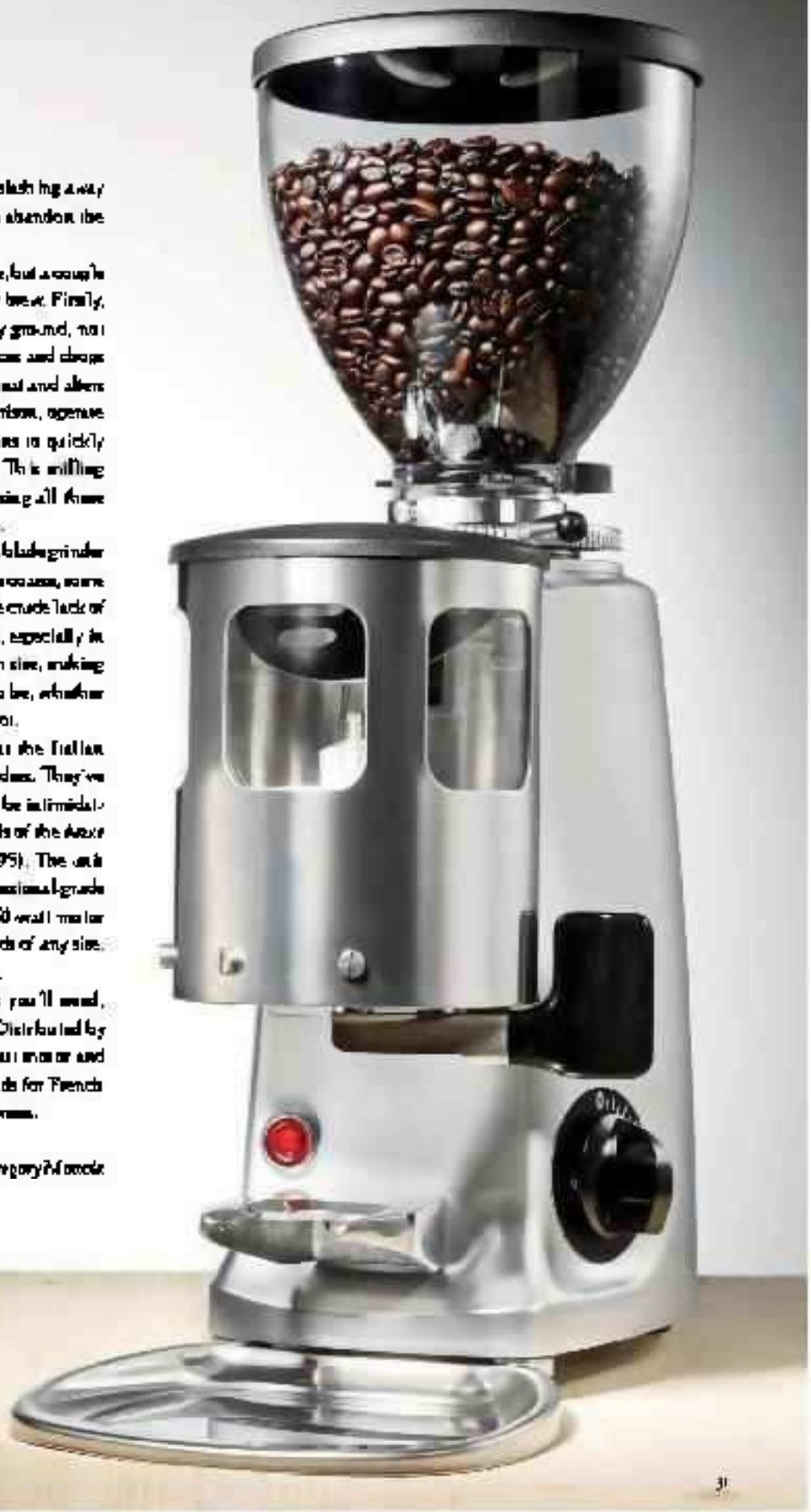
The other issue is granular consistency. On its best day, a blade grinder will still give you a mixed range of grounds – some fine, some coarse, some medium, all in the same tablespoon. You don't want that. The crude lack of consistency can seriously affect water flow during extraction, especially in espresso machines. Burr grinders produce grounds of uniform size, making espresso extraction the smooth, rich process it's supposed to be, whether you're using a high-pressure machine or a stove-top mocha pot.

It's common knowledge among coffee aficionados that the Italian company Mazzer manufactures the Rolls Royce of burr grinders. They've been doing it for almost 70 years, but most of their units can be intimidating, as they're intended for industrial use. To satisfy the needs of the *serious* home brewer, Mazzer created the Mazzer Mini (pictured, $695). The unit fits on to any kitchen counter, yet still delivers all the professional-grade precision required to make a respectable cup of coffee. Its 250-watt motor can spin its burrs at up to 1,600 rpm for quick, uniform grinds of any size. Stepless adjustment means a near infinite amount of settings.

If the Mini is still more performance than you think you'll need, consider the Capresso Infinity conical burr grinder ($190). Distributed by Jura Inc., this ultra-compact machine is powered by a 100-watt motor and calibrated with 16 factory settings ranging from coarse grinds for French press to ultra fine for Turkish coffee, with everything in between.

Visit capresso.com and mazzer.com

Gregory Monroe



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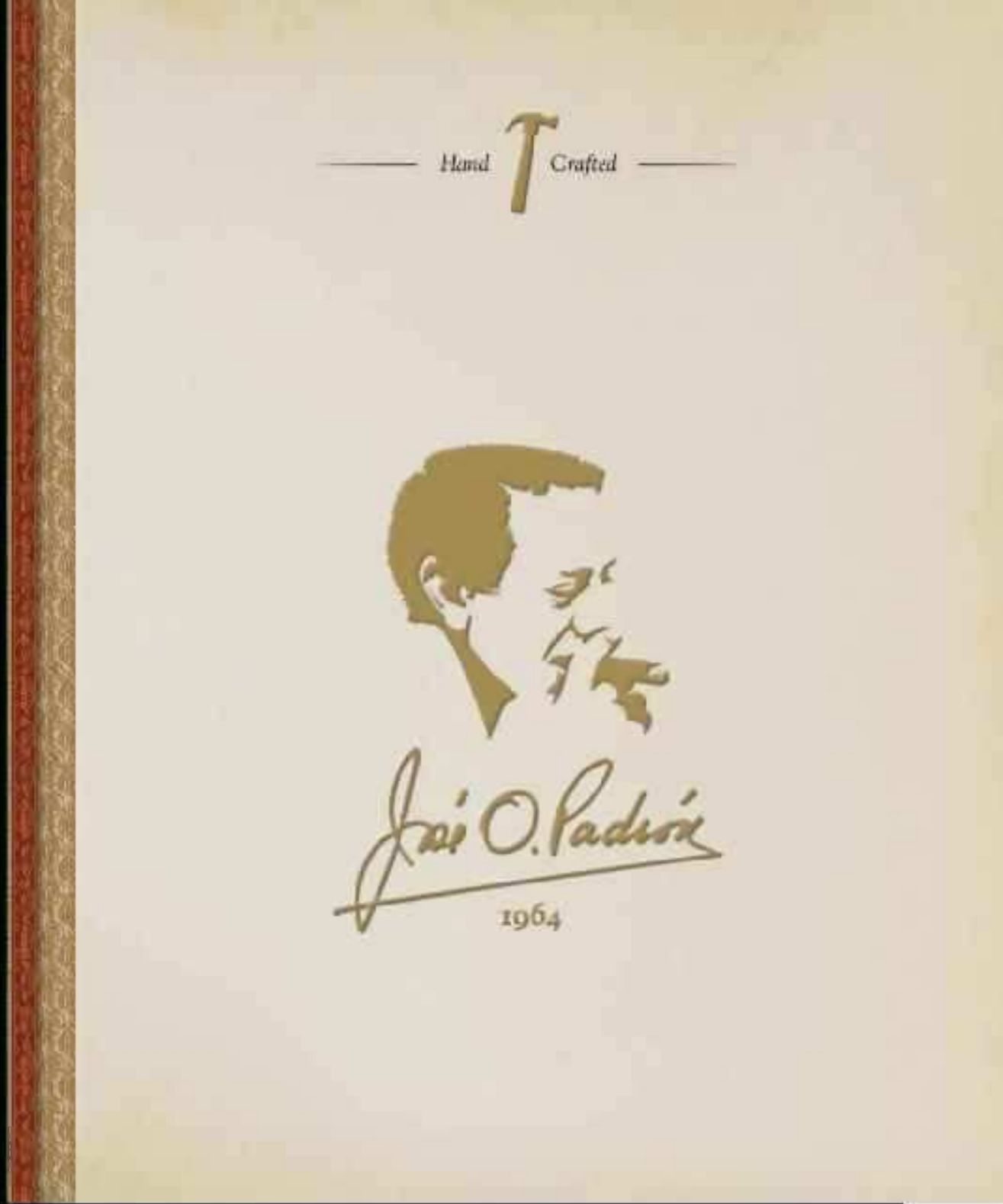

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Rome Cavalieri Hotel

Fewer and fewer places truly put out the welcome mat for lovers of us who love cigars. Thankfully there is Rome, where the sight of a cigar coming from its case brings more smiles than frowns. And when in Rome, it's hard to find a more cigar-friendly place than the Rome Cavalieri, a gorgeous hotel with stunning views, superior service and a terrific restaurant complete with its own cigar lounge.

The Cavalieri, which is part of the Waldorf-Astoria group of hotels, has a Rome address, but is located outside the ancient walls that defined the city back in the days of the empire. Its location — near the peak of Monte Mario, the tallest hill in the Italian capital — affords a jaw-dropping view of the city's many sights. Ask for a room with a city view and you'll see Rome in all its splendor, from the Pantheon to the Colosseum and the spire of St. Peter's Basilica in nearby Vatican City. The view comes with a trade-off — you'll need to ride 15 or 20 minutes to get to the city proper, and getting a cab or Uber may take some time — but being up and away from the bustle of the city center is a welcome blessing.

The Cavalieri features amenities: several pools, a spa with Roman-style baths and steam rooms, even a collection of more than 1,000 pieces of fine art dating back to the 16th century. The grounds are dotted with mature stone pines, towering trees bare of branches up to the canopies that seem sculpted by an artist. The Imperial Club offers a quiet and relaxing place for breakfast, a snack or a glass of prosecco before dinner.

Among several restaurants, the hotel's signature eatery is La Pergola, which holds a Grand Award from *Wine Spectator* magazine (Cigar AFICIONADO's sister publication) and is the only restaurant in Rome with three Michelin stars. Executive chef Heinz Beck offers two tasting menus, one with 11 courses, the other seven, with such intriguing dishes as John Dory with citrus fruit cream and fillet of venison with chestnut cream. (For a shorter meal, the hotel's L'Olivetto serves an outstanding dish of sector pipe, the Roman pasta made with Pecorino Romano and copious amounts of black pepper). When you finish your meal, adjourn to the adjacent Cigar Lounge (pictured, top left), which is decorated with 19th-century paintings and features a humidor with a selection of handmade Cubans.

Should you stay at the hotel in August, when La Pergola and its Cigar Lounge are closed for the holiday, simply take your cigar to the balcony (such room at the hotel has one) with a bottle of wine or a cocktail from the well-appointed lobby bar. Light your Cohiba as the moonlight reflects off the stunning white marble fa ade below, puff and contemplate the glory that is Rome.

Visit romecavalieri.com

David Savona

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Wireless Chargers

My iPhone is a child of the 21st century with one 20th century vestige: the power cable. Despite all of Apple's promises of a wireless future—unfettered Internet, payments and headphones—at the end of the day (or before) I find myself scavenging for power outlets, a caveman in Wingtips.

A new generation of wireless charging devices promises to oust the cable. Instead of tethering your phone to an outlet, inductive chargers allow you to rest a receiver on a charging pad. Some phones already include the tech, but most don't, which means you'll need to cobble together the add-ons. Once you have the necessary accoutrement, you'll be wireless—for all of five millimeters, the width of a couple of nickels. Suffice it to say, I was a wireless charging skeptic.

Mophie changed my mind. The California-based company, which makes an array of iPhone cases, jumped into wireless charging last year with an inductive charging case and a series of charging pads for the home, office and car. I got my hands on the Juice Pack Wireless & Charging Base Charging Case ($99.95) and Charge Force Desk Mount ($59.95, pictured bottom right), both of which are revelatory, though not in the ways I had anticipated.

The Juice Pack Wireless & Charging Base includes everything you need to inductively charge your iPhone or Samsung Galaxy. The size of a small book and powered by a standard micro USB cable, the charging pad is well-suited for travel. Meanwhile, the charging case adds a little heft to your phone. Charging is simple: you place your phone screen-up on the charging pad, and it magnetically locks into place. Options include a desk mount for easy access and a vent mount for the car.

Still, inductive charging can seem like just a clever party trick. What sold me on Mophie's approach is that it actually extends your phone's wireless capability. Integrated in the case is a small battery that the company claims will add another five to seven hours of usage. I don't know about all of that, but the case did boost my battery life by about 60 percent, which meant that I could get through a day without charging. I was also pleased that I could charge my phone at my local Starbucks, which has adopted the same Qi wireless charging specification.

If you just want inductive charging, affordable alternatives abound. The DockForce Qi Wireless Charging Kit Bundle (top right) comes with everything you need to wirelessly charge an iPhone, including an adhesive receiver and charging pad. The receiver looks like something MacGyver would have cooked up, but it's about half the price of a Mophie Juice Pack. The Hillkin N-JARL Wireless Charging Leather (middle right) integrates an inductive receiver into a leather case for about $10 out the door; the one hitch is that you'll need to purchase some kind of Qi receiver separately.

Inductive charging may not be Star Trek tech, but if it can spare me lugging a power adapter and a tangle of cable, then beam me up.

Visit dockforce.com, mophie.com and hillkin-case.com.

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NATO Straps

As with so much men's wear (and as the name suggests) the NATO-style watch strap traces its casual yet utilitarian roots to military use. Its cold-war debut came in 1973 as the standard-issue strap of the British Ministry of Defence (MoD). Soldiers first dubbed it the G10 after the form used to requisition it. However, the more popular term NATO, referencing the strap's NATO Stocking Number (NSN), stuck.

The original 20-mm-wide woven nylon straps were rather sober, coming only in Admiralty grey. They evolved with stripes as soldiers adopted their regimental colors. The common element was that rather than attaching to the case with spring bars between the lugs, NATO straps passed through the spring bars and under the case, so if one bar failed the watch stayed on the wrist. Extra security came from an additional piece of nylon attached to the buckle. It passed through two metal keepers and then folded back over and tucked under a keeper.

Naturally, designers played with variations on the theme, and NATO has become something of a moniker for the strap style, with some staying true to the originals and others simply channeling the spirit.

For example, the alternate jacquard strap for Tudor's Heritage Black Bay Bronze dive watch ($3,975, pictured at left) is technically not a NATO, yet it does reference military watches that the brand produced without straps for the French Navy in the 1970s. Navy divers would fit them with straps made from parachute belts, as evidenced by a 1977 model that inspired the brown and beige color scheme. The design is derived from Tudor's first dive watch, 1958's Ref. 7924, nicknamed Big Crown for its prominent winding crown. The MT5601 movement, the brand's first in-house caliber, beats inside the 43-mm case made of an aluminum/bronze alloy that will develop a distinctive patina over time.

Similarly, Oris' retro Divers Sixty-Five ($1,990 on NATO, center) traces its lineage to a 1965 dive model, one of the brand's first. The collection, launched in 2015, is updated with a handsome deep-green dial and four strap and bracelet options, including a black rubber strap borrowed from Oris' early divers, distressed leather, and a green-and-black-striped NATO.

Meanwhile, Blancpain keeps it real with its latest Fifty Fathoms Bathyscaphe Flyback Chronograph Blancpain Ocean Commitment II ($20,100, right), an homage to the original 1953 Fifty Fathoms diver. The brand's Blancpain Ocean Commitment initiative, supports marine preservation and exploration while working to raise awareness by sponsoring scientific projects, oceanographic explorations and more. For each watch sold, Blancpain will earmark 1,000 euros to support scientific marine exploration. Limited to 250 pieces, the watch pairs a 43.6-mm satin-brushed blue ceramic case with a subtle dark gray NATO strap, for a handsome watch that looks sharp while on a mission.

Visit tudorwatch.com, oris.ch and blancpain.com.

Lauria Kahle

MILAGRO MEANS MIRACLE

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BioMech Acculock ACE putter

That Frank Fornari holds a PhD in molecular pharmacology and toxicology, trained in neurophysiology, clinical medicine, biophysics, mathematical biology, genetics and industrial chemistry, and came up with what might be your next best putter should come as no surprise. He's founded a number of companies that develop motion analysis systems across a number of disciplines for physical therapy and fitness. His BioMech Golf does the same for golf equipment. Like the BioMech Acculock ACE putter.

Fornari recounts: "We decided to take a crack at modeling the putting stroke. What's the ideal way to make a putter go through the impact zone with the proper physiology and physics given USGA regulations and the way your body is built and how it should move. Out of those series of equations and studies came this device as the most efficient solution."

The Acculock ACE is both a putter and a putting system. Its mallet style has the shaft in the back of the club head. More importantly, the shaft bias is 12 degrees toward the face of the putter. That puts the shoulders in a 12 percent bias from the lead shoulder to the trailing shoulder – optimal for the rotation of the body's core. The club is designed as an "arm-lock" putter – the shaft leaning against the lead forearm. In that style the core muscles do the work.

Fornari had determined that the conventional putting stroke and stance were unnatural, didn't allow for a shoulder turn that would incorporate the core muscles and didn't allow a position the proper over the ball and down the line. He felt that incorporating the core muscles of the body and relying less on the arms and hands would make for a more repeatable and accurate stroke.

The Acculock system calls for a stance that is quite narrow and slightly open, with the head directly over the ball and the eyes looking directly down the intended line, automatically (well, with some practice).

"The hands and arms connect the club to the core. The putter is designed so that the core movement of the body and not so much the hands and arms can determine the stroke length," says Fornari. "Not only will you make more putts, but your misses will be better."

And, ergonomically, the $200 putter is designed to be better for you physically. "The traditional putting stance is a terrible position for your body to be in constantly, especially while practicing," says Fornari. "Our putter puts you more upright in a healthier position for your back."

Make more putts and feel healthier doing it? According to Fornari, the science (and a trial study of players) say "yes."

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Jeff Williams

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Man on the Move

Steve Harvey seems to be everywhere—on television, radio, in books and more. He only slows down for a fine cigar

BY MARSHALL FINE

PORTRAITS BY DAVID YELLEN

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It's

ALMOST 4 P.M. ON A mid-January Wednesday in Chicago—which means Steve Harvey has been up and working for about 12 hours. So far. • "My goal is to be done by 6:30 p.m.—instead of 8," he says, picking at a plate of nachos on the conference table in front of him. "Then at least I might get to go home for 10 hours." • Even as he takes his lunch break, he's working, having discussions with various members of the staff of "Steve Harvey," his daily talk show, about taping his second show of the day and budget issues with one of his other TV shows that he hosts in Atlanta and Los Angeles.

Tall and burky, with the build of a onetime athlete, Harvey chats easily, even as a makeup person swabs his imposing shaved dome in broad, even strokes with a small, soft sponge. The rush to get extra shows in the can is necessitated by the fact that Harvey's wife is whisking him away for an uncharacteristic week off to celebrate his impending 60th birthday. The week after that will be devoted to hosting the Miss Universe Pageant in the Philippines. (Yes, they invited him back, despite what Harvey calls one of the hardest moments of his life.) As a result, the normally busy Harvey is downright swamped.

"Everything I do, I have to do something else at the same time," he says. "If I don't multitask, it's impossible to get to everything. I'm an expert at time management. I have a very simple philosophy: I spend all my time building dreams so that when I get time, I can live them."

It's already been an eventful week. He made headlines after a meeting with President Donald Trump (then president-elect) who put him on the phone with Dr. Ben Carson to discuss the problems of inner-city housing, a cause Harvey supports. Harvey, who is friends with former President Barack Obama, appeared on his own radio show a few days afterward to acknowledge the unhappiness that many fans expressed about his meeting with Trump. "The transition teams on both sides asked me to meet, and I'm glad I did," he says. But he was being true to himself in taking the meeting, in his hopes of being able to make a difference in creating programs and facilities for inner-city kids.

"You have to take a seat at the table when you're invited," he says. "Change can only happen when we sit at the table. If you're not at the table, you can't refuse the menu, or suggest what you should be eating." Afterward, he told reporters: "I walked away feeling like I had just talked with a man who genuinely wants to make a difference in this area."

The same week, his staff had surprised him with an early birthday show with singers Stevie Wonder and former CIGAR AFICIONADO cover subject Usher as the special guests. And on this day he is still shaking his head at a guest from the show he just taped, a fellow named Chad Bernstein, whose organization, Guitars Over Guns, had convinced 500 kids to give up gangs in favor of music. On Bernstein's previous visit to Harvey's show, Harvey had arranged a $5,000 donation for the group. Bernstein had returned to tell Harvey that the donation paid to build a recording studio, which meant dozens more teens had set gangs aside to make music instead.

"He said 50 kids were working there—the price of two of my suits opened a recording studio," Harvey marvels. "That's what it cost: the

Harvey meeting with President Donald Trump (who was then president-elect) on January 13

"The transition teams on both sides asked me to meet, and I'm glad I did. You have to take a seat at the table when you're invited."

price of two suits in my wardrobe budget for the show. I don't buy two suits, I can open a recording studio for these kids."

Harvey has his share of suits. "What do I have – 250, 300 suits?" he asks his assistant. Nearby his wardrobe hangs in order of hue, golds fading into rusts, blues moving to gray and black. "I ain't cute, so I might as well have something nice for them to look at. I'm comfortable in a suit. I like a tie. When I've got one on, I'm comfortable, not uptight. I like to dress to impress." His long-time pal, Cedric Kyles, better known as Cedric the Entertainer, was mentored sartorially by Harvey. "He was the first dude who told me, 'Dress like a professional. You've got to be somebody people wanna come see,'" says Kyles.

Along with the suits, there are cigars – many of them. He has a collection of humidors scattered between his offices and homes in Chicago and Atlanta, enough to make sure he never gets caught short without a fine cigar within easy reach.

"I've got five humidors in my office in Atlanta, including one Daniel Marshall made me," he says. "In my office here in Chicago, I've got five more humidors, all with different things in them: Cubans, OpusX. One just has a collection of Acid cigars, because I like those flavored ones once in a while. Some of my traditionalist friends don't like that, but what do they know? I've got another one with nothing but Davidoffs. I've got a Vigilant inside my wine cellar, with some very rare things – and another big one in my man-cave in my basement. It's so big that, when you turn the lights on in it, it looks like a store."

Harvey is sitting atop a career that spans a radio show, a new book and a nearly endless TV schedule that keeps him moving. He triangulates his commute between his home in Atlanta, where he shoots "Family Feud" in the summers; Chicago, where he has shot his talk show for five years, and Los Angeles, where he shoots "Little Big Shots" and "Celebrity Family Feud." The man doesn't slow down.

Harvey learned his work ethic growing up poor but churchgoing in Cleveland, where his father, a coal miner, moved Steve and his four older siblings from West Virginia. The first in his family to attend college, Harvey went to Kent State University (where he was classmates with Arsenio Hall) to major in advertising, but wound up flunking out. He spent years doing a variety of jobs, everything from cleaning carpets to selling insurance.

Harvey, who has a memory for significant dates, can pinpoint the moment his life changed.

"It was October 8, 1985. A girl I knew invited me to a comedy club

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Harvey took "the worst walk of my life" when he hosted the 2015 Miss Universe contest and mistakenly named Miss Colombia (top) the winner — Iswar Miss Philippines. He was asked back.

in Cleveland," Harvey says, his warm eyes twinkling a bit at the memory. "I had been writing jokes for a comedian I knew, who needed help. I was getting $50 a month and thought that was great. This girl told me, 'You should stop writing for someone else and do them yourself.' So we're at the comedy club and I signed up for the next week's open mic, because they only had room for 10 that night.

"Nine guys got up there and everyone was laughing. I was mesmerized. I thought, 'That is what I want to do.' Then the 10th guy for the open mic didn't answer when they called his name and the emcee said, 'OK, let's go to next week's list. Is Steve Harvey still here?' So I ran up onstage. At the end of the night, I won amateur night."

He was paid $50, and he was off and running. "I went to work the next day and quit my job. I told my ex-wife that I'd found what I want to be. I'm gonna go be famous. The only person who believed me for a whole year was my father. He said, 'If you're funny, go ahead.' He believed in me."

Making that decision came easy. Making the grade proved more challenging. What got him through — from living in his car and bathing surreptitiously at public swimming pools in his tough, early days — was a belief in himself and a taste for hard work that stays with him to this day.

"When I met him around 1988, he was already a big road comic — he was one of the few black headliners working clubs in the midwest," his fellow comedian Kyles recalls. "His work ethic was amazing. It took him years to become a headliner. So that multitasking? It's nothing new. When we were doing 'The Steve Harvey Show' sitcom, we would shoot the show during the week. Then we'd go out and do shows on the road during the weekend and be back in time for the show's table read on Monday morning."

"He has the busiest schedule of anyone I know," says Alex Duda, executive producer of "Steve Harvey," a show that has won Harvey a pair of Daytime Emmy awards, in addition to People's Choice and NAACP Image awards. "He always has so much going on."

It doesn't end with work. His meeting with President Trump to help inner-city children speaks to the values embedded in him by his mother at an early age. "My mother said things to me as a kid, like, 'God blessed you to become a blessing,' but I didn't get it at the time," Harvey says. "When I had successful shows on TV, she would tell me, 'Don't forget, God ain't made you famous just so you can be famous.' She made me think all the time about who am I helping. She would say: 'You were less fortunate — now what have you done for somebody less fortunate than you?' And so I started mentoring kids, going to youth detention centers to talk to the kids there."

Harvey's message is almost always the same: No matter the mistakes you may have made, you can build a better future if you have faith. As he says at a number of different points during this day, "If you change your attitude, you change your altitude." He offers those exact words to his audience after the first taping wraps, going on to express feelings so heartfelt that his voice cracked briefly with emotion.

Which fits with the persona that Steve Harvey has always presented: the commonsense approach, supported by his faith. At the height of his popularity as a stand-up comedian, playing to packed arenas, he would begin each show with the same invocation: "To me, God is everything. Everything I have, everything I am, I owe to God." Granted, he usually followed that with a sly smile as he added, "Can' be some times tonight when it sounds like I don't know God. But I do."

Age hasn't slowed Harvey down. Indeed, Harvey can't quite believe he's reached this particular peak. "Man, 60 seemed so far away when I was 30 — but then, when I was 30, I was living in my car," he says. "What I am

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today almost seemed unthinkable. I didn't even have an image of 60 when I was 30. Back then, I was so consumed with right now, with the next gig, and how am I going to make that $1,000 I need, and if I could just make this $175 over here. Do I have to work this hard? Yeah, I do, to get where I want to. I'm trying to get in a position where, when I'm gone, my children's grandchildren know my name. That might sound strange, but that's important to me."

Whether chatting with a guest on his talk show or acting as moderator to gameshow contestants, Harvey brings the same down-to-earth sense of the absurd that marked his stand-up work. He's a slow-burn reactor, wielding his athletic eyebrows and aggressive mustache to draw the maximum laughter as he lets some moment of unexpected hilarity sink in. YouTube is rife with such encounters, including Harvey's reaction to the "Family Feud" competitor who answered the question, "Name something that follows the word 'pork'" by saying, "cupine." Harvey stares at the camera, incredulous. "What," he says, "is cupine? This is the greatest answer I've ever heard!"

His stand-up was built on Harvey's similar amazement at both the mysteries and ridiculousness of life. He turned perspicacity into a comic style.

"I found out that common sense was not that common," he says. "I thought, Hmm, I can make a career out of this, because too many people ain't got it. I'm not Dennis Miller. I don't say anything heavy. It's about a unique phrasing, the unique way I say it. I like jokes that go over the plate and just as you swing, it makes a hard left."

His physicality and use of voices, his sense of observation about the community in which he was reared may spark memories of legendary comedian Richard Pryor. It's no accident.

"In college it was Richard Pryor, Richard Pryor, Richard Pryor," Harvey says. "He was the whole reason I got into comedy. But when I was a kid, I loved Jonathan Winters, Red Skelton, Jackie Gleason, Dick Van Dyke."

His stand-up material, drawn from his own life, often centered on the differences that men and women found hardest to bridge. He made it funny, but realized he was thinking more deeply about the subject as his own daughters began to mature. Which led to his first book, *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, which spawned his talk show.

"The show came from the book, which he wrote for his daughters," Dada says. "He realized after the response to the book that he had millions of daughters. That's what drives the show, which is about relationships and everyday people."

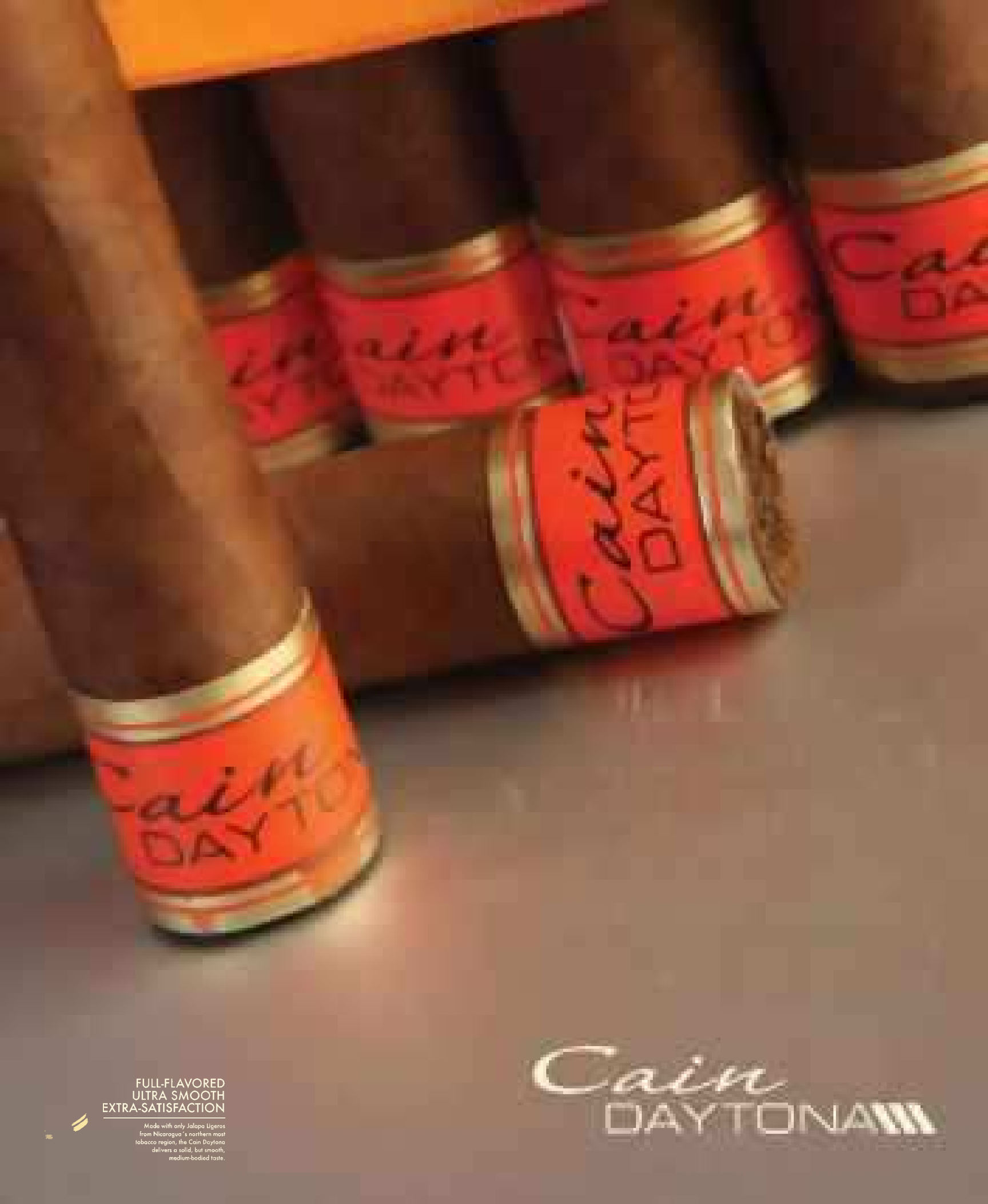
Harvey subsequently has written several more books, the most recent of which, *Jump*, is subtitled, *Take the Leap of Faith to Achieve Your Life of Abundance*. Harvey himself married for the third time in 2007 and uses his own experience as he counsels others. His one indispensable piece of advice to about-to-be-married men?

Harvey is a cigar collector, with humidors located in the many spots where he works and lives. He has 50 humidors (above) in Chicago and Atlanta, to ensure a great smoke is never far away.

"I tell every man who gets married, 'You can be happy — or you can be right.' You make that decision everyday," he says. "If you're in a relationship and your goal is to be right, understand that you're going to be arguing with a person who is an expert at arguing. You have to understand what you're up against: You're arguing with someone who knows everything about you. I learned after two marriages that I'd rather be happy.

"The mistake women make is thinking 'I can change him.' You keep thinking that but, ladies, we are how we are. We are all basically the same. You can't change us. But you can persuade us, get us to do things we don't want to do. For example, my wife likes Broadway shows. And I don't like musicals at all. But, because we sleep together, I sit there and try to find something I like about it. She walks out after and she's in a great mood: 'Let's go back to the hotel and sleep together.' Jackpot."

As with his comedic success, Harvey's considerable love for cigars didn't happen overnight. "The first meaningful cigar I smoked was 20 years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"I have a very simple philosophy: I spend all my time building dreams so that when I get time, I can live them."

Harvey was an outstanding stand-up comedian (left, in 2001), but he quit that medium in 2012. Today he shines it up on radio and television, especially when hosting "Family Feud" (above).

ago, the night my son Wyatton was born: July 18, 1997," he says. "It was so cool. I smoked an Ashton Maduro. I'd tried cigars before and it hadn't really worked for me. I smoke a lot of different cigars, but that was the first one that mattered. It was in my backyard, and I smoked it with my two best friends at the time."

As hectic is a busy man, Harvey selects his cigars based upon the time he has to smoke. "These days, I've got short cigars for when I've only got 30 minutes and nice big ones for when I've got an hour and can sit with it. My go-to cigar is an CoroX, at the end of the day. But my all-time favorite is a Cohiba Siglo VI." He has learned to be discerning. "I used to pick my cigars by the way they looked, if they had a pretty wrapper or band," he says. "Little did I know."

Harvey prefers mild-to-medium cigars and wants to hold on to something solid when he's smoking: "All the cigars I like have to have a nice ring gauge. If I'm going to smoke something, it has to look like a cigar from across the street. No thin ones, nothing that looks like a cigarette."

If Harvey hit his stride as a stand-up comic in the mid-1990s, he moved to the next level with the "Original Kings of Comedy" tour, which ran from 1998–2000. Teaming Harvey with Cedric the Entertainer, D.L. Hughley, and the late Bernie Mac, it was the highest-grossing comedy tour of its time, selling out arenas and bringing in $18 million and $19 million respectively in the first two years on the road—and that was before it pulled in almost $40 million more at the box office, from Spike Lee's 2000 concert film of the tour.

"The 'Original Kings of Comedy' tour, professionally and goal-wise, cemented my faith in everything that was happening to me," Harvey says. "Nobody had sold that many tickets to a comedy show. We sold out the MCI Center (in Washington, D.C.) on back-to-back weekends. That's 64,000 people in four shows. And that was all without a single newspaper article about the tour. There was no Facebook, no Twitter or social media. No newspaper printed a single story about the tour until the third year, when they found out we were going to do a movie. It was my greatest accomplishment as a stand-up to that date. We were like rock stars. There's nothing like that."

Harvey recognizes the power of the experience that comes in being able to get a room packed with thousands of people to rock with laughter. He also knows that power goes both ways.

"When you're out there, you're a doctor," he says. "You produce a laughter that releases endorphins, a chemical that makes you feel good and it's free. It not only gives you a euphoric feeling, but it comes with one of the most basic human emotions, one that produces hours of laughter.

"On the 'Kings of Comedy' tour, I could hear the audience when I was in my dressing room, when Bernie was onstage—that feeling of laughter just washing over the stage. You know you're killing it, but it's very, very humbling. Those laughs are bigger than you and your talent. And the moment it goes away, you're not the same."

Commanding laughter from a mass sized crowd is a powerful stimulant, Harvey admits. He was filling those arenas by himself, at the point he decided to retire from stand-up.

"It was August 2, 2012, so it's creeping up on five years," he says. "Fortunately, I get to be funny on every show I do—my radio show, my talk show, the game shows. I'm able to be funny on all of them. But nothing can ever come close to what it feels like when you're onstage and it's 12,000 people and it's you and a spotlight, a bar stool, a glass of water and a microphone. There's nothing like that. It's the basis of everything I am."

Leaving stand-up, the career that made him famous, was a tough call for Harvey. "It was a heartbreaking decision. I tried so hard of reward. I was on my knees. It was crazy to walk away from something that meant so much to me.

But if I hadn't, I would have had no time for my life. Touring takes all your time. In 32 years, I missed my call-time twice. And one of those was when my mom passed. I'm a show-up guy. If I sign a contract, I show up."

He's also a stand-up guy, one who was willing to take his lumps for a very visible mistake, perhaps his greatest public embarrassment: the December 2015 Miss Universe pageant, in which Harvey mistakenly read the name of Miss Colombia as the new Miss Universe, only to return a few minutes later to explain that there had been an error — and that Miss Philippines was, in fact, Miss Universe instead.

"In the Philippines, they love me — but I can't go to Colombia," Harvey says with a wistful smile. "I'll tell you something: That was the worst walk of my life, to go out and say we'd made a mistake. The only walk that was harder was the one to sit in the front row at my mama's funeral. But I went out and I ate it. I didn't call the telepromptER guy and the cue card guy and the director under the bus. It was on me."

As bad as it was in the moment, he finds it now worse. "It was a disaster, but I didn't know how big a mistake it was until the next day. The next morning, there was this massive crowd, all around my car outside the hotel — all these Colombians giving me hell. My Twitter and Instagram blew up and I got called every name in the book. I got cussed out in Spanish so bad that I know profanity in Spanish now.

"I live on a dead-end street and it got real when things started coming over the gate. Empty boxes with bows and pictures of bombs. And these death threats on social media that would pop up from false IP addresses. I wound up with 24-hour armed security at my house. I have two armed guards there full-time to this day. What can you do?"

The mistake finally ran its course, and Harvey was even able to turn it into a positive. "I made fun of it with the T-Mobile Super Bowl commercial," he says, talking about the spot where he apologizes for the "wrong" numbers that start the commercial. "They came to me with the idea of spoofing the Miss Universe thing and I said no. Then they offered me complete creative control and I still said no. Then they told me how much money they were offering — and I did it. It was a pretty good one, too."

The always-moving Harvey will move his "Steve Harvey" show to Los Angeles in the fall, limiting his commuting to cross-country jumps. So why not just move to L.A.?

Harvey gives a "happy wife, happy life" shrug of the shoulders: "I don't move to L.A. because my wife won't let me. Our kids and grandkids live in Atlanta. Two years ago, my wife and I didn't have any grandchildren; now we have four. So she's got to be able to fly home; that house has to stay there."

Given the career peaks he's surmitted and his urge to spend time with those grandchildren, Harvey would hardly be blamed for thinking about easing back.

"When I hear the word retirement, I start laughing," he says. "I can't imagine doing nothing. When I walked away from my act, I knew I've got to do something to stay mentally sharp. I can't do the crossword. That's more stressful than going to work."

Still, he may finally have given himself permission to actually slow down and recharge for the first time in decades.

"We were on vacation in France last summer and I ran into Dr. Phil on the way back," Harvey says. The two TV hosts started chatting about work. "I asked him when he was going back to work and he said, 'September. How about you?' And I told him I was going back to work as soon as I got back. He said, 'You work in the summer?'"

Harvey realized he was an outlier for working year-round, and crafted a plan to take off this upcoming summer season. "It will be the first summer I haven't worked since I was 19. I'm gonna play with my grandkids, sit in the grass and throw a ball."

If he gets performing aside, he has plenty of other ventures to pursue. He and his wife have built the Steve and Marjorie Harvey Foundation, creating mentoring programs for inner-city boys and girls: "My goal is to send 10,000 inner-city kids to college," Harvey says. "So far, we've sent about 70. I need a lot more money. It's just kept growing and growing. Now I understand something I heard an old guy say one time: 'Your career is what you're paid for. But your calling is what you're made for.'"

To begin the dark outside, as Harvey readies himself for the briefing for his second TV show of the day, in his ongoing quest to get home from work at a reasonable hour. But his mind flashes back to the kids from Cutters Over Guns and the effect of the recording studio funded by his donation.

"If I'd 20 suits out of the budget, what I'll that do?" Harvey hypothesizes. "Let's open 10 more recording studios, save a couple of hundred kids. I gotta lot of suits." He pauses, then chuckles: "So I wear one of those black suits over — if I change the shirt and tie, no one's going to notice." ✧

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is a frequent contributor at The Review Review. Reported from Cinema in Pelham, NY.

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THE BIG BEAR OF FOX

Cigar-loving anchor Bret Baier of Fox News hosts one of the most popular programs on cable TV

BY MERVYN ROTHSTEIN PORTRAITS BY DEVID YELLEN

It's 5:15 p.m. on a dark and freezing Friday in January, and Bret Baier is standing by his desk in the fifth floor offices of Fox News in Washington, D.C., a 10-minute walk from the United States Capitol. He's typing on his computer keyboard as he watches four TV screens simultaneously, preparing for his hour-long "Special Report," which will air live in just 45 minutes. The screens are busy with who is happening right now on CNN, Fox Business, MSNBC and his own top-rated cable news channel. Just like Fox, Baier is king — an average 2.4 million regularly tune in to his show, the most popular cable news program in its time slot, weekdays from 6 to 7 p.m. It's consistently one of the top five shows in cable news.

Bret Baier, who is watched by millions every night on Fox News, taking a rare moment off at Shelly's Back Room in Washington, D.C.

At age 46, Baier — Fox News Channel's chief political anchor and a longtime cigar smoker — resembles more than anything a blue-eyed, dark-haired and very gentle bear. He is wearing his customary uniform of blue pinstripe suit, white shirt and red patterned tie, and his conversation affirms his reputation for hard work. "I refused to allow myself to be outworked by anyone," he once said, explaining his rise to the pinnacle of TV news over his more than eight years in the anchor seat.

He has frequently reported from Iraq and Afghanistan, and has interviewed U.S. Presidents Donald Trump, Barack Obama and George W. Bush, as well as Vice President Dick Cheney, Hillary Clinton and the Dalai Lama. His nightly signated slogan of "fair, balanced and still unafraid" is a goal many say he has achieved, making his annual salary of more than $1 million a worthwhile investment for the conservative news channel.

Baier, joined by Chris Wallace and Megyn Kelly, moderated the first debate of Republican presidential hopefuls on August 6, 2015. A record 24 million tuned in to watch.

"Over time, you build trust," Baier says. "That's why I think 'Special Report' has built this viewership. If you build it, they will come."

He gets in at 9:30 daily, and at 10 there's a meeting to plan the program. That plan is fluid. "Most days," he explains, "especially good news days, the initial meeting changes eight times before the show." The walls of his office are full of family photos and souvenirs of golf, one of his prime passions. There's a photo of Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, two of the best to ever play the game, embracing, and in a glass case, a signed putter and a letter from Palmer. "I won it in an auction," Baier says, "and two weeks later Palmer died. I got a call from the auction company that the putter was among the last things he signed."

He's out of his chair as he's on his computer, reading through the scripts his staff of writers has generated for him on all the news stories of the day. "I switched to a standup desk a year ago," he says. "I realized that standing makes me more energized throughout the day. That and coffee. There's also a treadmill under here, so if I feel ambitious I can walk a lot too. I also write scripts myself. I go through everything with a fine-tooth comb, refining and refining, adding new content when I get new information. And then I write it as I'm going to say it."

When the clock hits 5:30 he is in the studio, sitting at the anchor desk with a lit-up Capitol Building sign in the window behind him. It's a busy evening, and tonight the show will be seen by 1.5 million viewers — a gunman has killed five and injured eight at the Fort Lauderdale airport in Florida; the U.S. Intelligence community has issued a report declaring that Vladimir Putin attempted to influence the American election; the Dow has almost made it to 20,000 and Congress has officially confirmed Donald Trump as the 45th president. All through the newscast, the Fox control booth, 11 staffers strong, with 24 computer screens at their desks, makes things go smoothly. And, as usual, the words "fair, balanced and still unafraid" end the hour.

When his work is done, Baier is sitting at a table in Shelly's Back Room, an F Street D.C. retreat for cigar lovers a short walk from the White House. "I smoked a little bit in college, but when I came to Washington I really met people who smoke cigars.

"It's a luxury for me to sit around and smoke a cigar," he says. "You can talk to other people. There's a bunch of guys smoking cigars, and it seems like it's an icebreaker, not only with news sources but friends of mine who are cigar smokers."

He pairs his smokes with a glass of wine, or a glass of 18-year-old single malt Scotch. "There's nothing like a cold night, a fire, a cigar and a Macallan with one ice cube in it," he says.

After meeting cigarmaker Rocky Patel, the cigars made by Patel rank among his favorites. "I met him down in Florida and fell in love with a couple of his cigars. The Decade. I like a more elegant kind of cigar, and I smoke the smaller ones or the medium-sized ones. The Sun Grown Maduro. It's fairly mild but it's got complexity. There's chocolate flavor, white pepper flavor."

Baier was born in Rumson, New Jersey, and grew up in Dunwoody, Georgia, an Atlanta suburb. "I always wanted to be a journalist," he says. He was the sports editor of his high school paper, and interned at a local TV station for Ernie Johnson Jr., who went on to call NBA games on TNT. When Baier shadowed him for a week, he took note of the news people working around him and changed his focus to news.

After DePauw University in Indiana he took a job at WTWO-TV in Beaufort, South Carolina, starting with far more modest subjects than presidents, terrorism and world economics. "I covered loggerhead sea turtle nesting and what colors the zebras would be in the median that year," he says. He moved from small station to small station, then snatched by Fox in 1997, a year after it was created, as the first reporter in the Atlanta bureau. "When I started, the bureau was in my apartment, with a fax machine and a cell phone. Those were the early days. No one knew who we were. When I called for an interview, they said, 'Is this the Simpsons network?'"

He covered the Southeast, and Central and South America, for Fox News for four years. "Hurricanes and tropical storms," he says, "and the

"When you see those images of your child, you want to be the person on the operating table. You want to say, 'Don't do that, I'll do it.' It's not something you can control."

Elián González case," the story of child custody that stretched between Florida and Cuba. "I went to Cuba six times," he says, and he gaffed Castro in Havana.

As with so many Americans, 9/11 changed Baier's life. "Then 9/11 happened," he says. "I was called to back up, originally in New York, and I was rerouted to Washington when the plane hit the Pentagon. I started doing live shots for Fox affiliates around the country. A few weeks later they asked me to be the Pentagon guy. Soon after, I was on an overseas trip with then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. I never went back to Atlanta."

After covering the Pentagon, Baier became White House correspondent for Fox, and on January 5, 2009, took over the 6 p.m. "Special Report" from Brit Hume. "When I was in the Southeast, I covered the Florida recount in Tallahassee of the 2000 Gore-Bush presidential election, and I filed all kinds of stories for Brit. We hit it off, and he wanted to figure out a way to get me up to Washington. Fast forward to 9/11."

Baier calls Hume his mentor and good friend. "I learned a lot from Brit," he says, "and I credit him with making me a much better writer and correspondent."

Baier lives in the Georgetown section of Washington with his wife, Amy, and their two sons, Paul and Daniel. Paul was born in 2007 with several major congenital heart defects, and he had three open-heart surgeries, eight angioplasties and a stomach surgery unrelated to his heart condition. Baier wrote about his son's health struggles in *Special Heart: A Journey of Faith, Hope, Courage and Love* (written with Jim Millé), which in 2014 became a New York Times best-selling book.

But right now Paul is "doing great," Baier says. "He's the tallest kid in his class. On the playground, you wouldn't know about his problems. He's got more challenges ahead. We probably have an angioplasty sometime next year, and another open-heart surgery, when he's 13, 14, 15. Hopefully that's the end, but there may be more after that. But he's a trooper. His little brother, Daniel, beats him up; he beats up his brother. It's a normal existence. Which is all we hope for."

The many operations and battles have left Baier with a positive attitude.

"I feel amazingly blessed. I feel so fortunate. I feel like it gave me a perspective on life that changed me forever. It made me a better anchor, a better reporter, a better father, a better husband, a better person. When you see those images of your child, you want to be the person on the operating table, you want to say, 'Don't do that, I'll do it,' and it's not something you can control. I'm big about control, and making deadlines. So it changed us as a family. We appreciate the moments that we have together. It makes vacations and birthdays and Christmas richer and more rewarding." He and Amy spend time helping the Children's National Medical Center in Washington, which is responsible for Paul's successful story.

In *Special Heart*, Baier makes clear how much he feels the role of religion in their lives helped him and Amy cope. "It was a big part of how we got through it," he says. "We're Roman Catholic, and our faith is important to us, as is prayer. I don't have a problem talking about it. I'm a believer. I don't wear it on my sleeve, but I'm not afraid to say it affects me. And we believe it helped us get through the darkest moments of the surgeries.

"So every night that I can put him to bed I pray with Paul. Every night he prays for the people still in the hospital, so that they can get out like he did."

Baier's new book, which came out earlier this year, is about a very different subject: President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The book, *Three Days in January: Dwight Eisenhower's Final Mission* (written with Catherine Whitney and published by William Morrow), deals with Eisenhower's career in the military and in the White House, his farewell address in 1961, and the transition to his successor, John F. Kennedy, as well as between him and his predecessor, Harry S. Truman.

Baier was inspired to write the book after a special golf trip. "I was invited to Augusta National — the Holy Grail of golf invites," he says. "I'd never played there before. And when I got there they told me I was staying in the Eisenhower cabin. I was thrilled. It's right there on the 10th tee. I was so excited I couldn't go to bed. I poured myself a glass of wine, and suddenly I had this sense that I didn't know as much about President Eisenhower as I should have. I had a sense that history essentially started for my generation and younger ones with Kennedy."

He booked a trip to the Eisenhower Presidential Library, in Abilene, Kansas. "He's underappreciated," Baier says of the 34th American president. "When people look back at that time, they think of a sleepy time, a happy time. But the truth is it was a really dangerous time, when nuclear war could've happened, a number of times. That was always hanging over Ike's shoulder. Yet he didn't lose a single U.S. soldier in eight years. He created the National Highway System, with bipartisan support. He had the first civil rights legislation since reconstruction. He had this air about him that was leadership."

Eisenhower, Baier says, also gave Kennedy a smooth transition, unlike the one Harry S. Truman gave Ike. "From Eisenhower's perspective, Truman never treated him well. They had a very icy turnover in 1953, in hospital where the Eisenhowers stayed in the run-up to inauguration morning. They didn't go into the White House for the traditional cup of coffee. When the Truman's got in the car it was a silent ride to the Capitol. Imagine how awkward that would be."

Baier was attracted to golf at an early age. "I played on my high school team, and we won the state championship my final year. And I played NCAA golf at Delaware. I really love the game. It's my escape. When I'm walking down the fairway, there's something about it that really relaxes me. So when anybody is concerned about how much golf a president plays, I never worry about it, because I think it's a great thing for the mind, for the ability to think. I know the peace that it gives me, so I hope our commander in chief gets that same feeling."

He carries a four handicap now, but discounts that ranking. "I'm playing four, a walking walker with my friends. I was a scratch player, but elections schedules make the handicap go up."

When he sees it up, the cigars come out. "Cigars have a common place on the golf course a lot of times. So after a round, we'll end up at some watering hole, and I get an appreciation for them."

Americans' feelings about Fox News are even more complex than a good cigar. Some people scream by Fox and praise its coverage, while others scream at the channel. What does Baier say to those who criticize his employer?

"Most of the most vocal critics of Fox News don't watch Fox News," he says. "Or they don't watch my show. And they have a perception of the conservative leanings of the opinion shows. So I tell them, watch 'Special Report' for three nights and then come and tell me, get back to me. I do that to the most vocal people from Twitter or Facebook, and I will say, give me a shot. And a lot of times, they come back and say, 'O.K., yeah, that was fair.'" Fox News, he says, is "like a newspaper. We have a news section and an opinion section. And some people can't distinguish, because it's painted with a broad brush. But on the news side, we break a lot of stories, we cover stuff better I think than a lot of the national news programs that don't get as much attention as we do.

"Fox News is a wonderful place to work. I've been here almost 20 years and I'm proud of my time here and I'm proud of our news product and I'm proud of our network."

He does acknowledge that the state of journalism in the Internet age, especially with the proliferation of fake news that may have influenced the election, is troublesome. "I think it's serious for organizations that don't take the time to really go back and look through what they're getting before they put it out there. The words 'reports say' don't cut it anymore, because you get a lot of fake stuff. I spend a lot of time responding to viewers — on email and Facebook and Twitter. They'll say, 'Why are you not looking at this, why are you not doing it?' And I'll respond, 'Because it's not true.' We could spend every day running down a million not true stories because of the proliferation on the Internet.

"So it makes our job tougher. But it also makes it more important, because you can go to some place that you trust — and feel that what you see on that show you can trust. And I want to be that place. And if we make a mistake, we get out there and correct it. We apologize and make sure that we get it right. That's what my show has always done, and will continue to do. And fortunately we don't make many mistakes."

One highly publicized mistake Baier did make, just a few days before the November 8 presidential election, was saying that an indictment was the "likely" outcome of the FBI investigation of the Clinton Foundation's connection with the State Department when Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State. There was in fact no such "deal hard," as Baier ruefully acknowledges.

"It was a line that I agreed to do with my friend and mentor Brit Hume right after my show ended," Baier says. "I was over in this studio, and in the Q & A he asked: Would the investigations continue even if she's elected? And I said our sources said yes. And at the end, instead of saying investigations would continue to make their case, to bring it to a prosecution, I said yes, and it could go likely to an indictment. Well, that is obviously not the process. That's not what I meant to say. But it's how I ended the live shot. And because it was so close to the election, it got picked up, as that was the phrase, 'likely indictment.' And you can't use the 'I' word anywhere near an election. It became an issue, and immediately I addressed it. Got off the air, typed an email to everybody in Fox, said I screwed up, don't use this, this is what I meant. The next day on air I did it twice, and then finally did a formal apology the next day because it was really important to get out there and clarify that our original reporting was what it was. It was unfortunate because we had had such a great run covering the election and I didn't want to screw up that moment. But words matter. I've learned from that and I won't be doing any more live shots right after my show, off-the-cuff."

Baier, who has been to Cuba six times, pulled Cohibas on the island. He pairs cigars with wine, sing a malt Scotch or a round of golf.

In the final weekend of the campaign, Trump and his vice presidential running mate, Mike Pence, as well as conservative commentators and websites, focused on the "likely" indictment and ignored the retraction. Does Baier think his mistake affected the election outcome? "No," he says. "We corrected it. It was clearly corrected in the record. And there were many other things that were factors in this election, that affected it. It was unfortunate, but we moved on, and I think we did a pretty great job on election night."

What does he think of President Trump? "I think in his heart, having interviewed him numerous times, that he really wants to make America succeed. But he does it sometimes in a way that really angers people, he does it sometimes in a way that people question what's really going to happen.

"But he is a unique figure in history — he is a billionaire who tapped into blue-collar worries and fears about the future of the country. I think it's so fascinating covering him. He's managed to figure out how the U.S., in a time when there's unprecedented reach in things. He won an election, and nobody saw it coming. He surprised everybody. Will he surprise people now and be a better president than his critics say he will be? I think we have yet to see the answer to that."

What we have seen the answer to, though, is the quality of Baier. "Sometimes the show isn't sexy. Sometimes it's like eating chicken and broccoli. But we are going to give you the news. And then we're going to analyze the news, and what it means to you. And that equation has worked, from Brit Hume to me. I think we do it every day, and I hope to continue doing that.

"I have an amazing staff, a stable of correspondents. Just amazing. I stand on their shoulders. I'm really happy at 'Special Report,' I'm really happy at Fox News. I think the future is bright for our network, and it's going to be an exciting time."

It's a daily mission for Bret Baier — fair, balanced and still unafraid. In fact, a decade from now, he says, he's still hoping to be in the anchor chair. And when it's time to relax, he'll be doing it on his golf course with a fine cigar. ◆

Mervyn Rothstein is a frequent contributor to Cigar Aficionado.

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The Negotiator

The inside story of **James Donovan**, who sat face-to-face with Fidel Castro, negotiated the release of hundreds of prisoners and opened the door to diplomacy between the U.S. and Cuba

BY PETER KORNBLUH

Fidel Castro and a New York insurance lawyer named James Donovan stood together on the tarmac of San Antonio de los Baños Airfield in Cuba and watched as hundreds of just-released prisoners of war boarded a caravan of planes bound for Miami. It was December 23, 1962. Only the night before, Castro had given Donovan an ornate humidor filled to the brim with 200 cigars—a gift to celebrate the successful culmination of a long, continuous set of negotiations to gain the freedom of the CIA-led exile invasion force defeated and captured at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961.

Donovan was the most famous international negotiator in the United States, if not the world. In early 1962, he had arranged a prisoner exchange with the Kremlin—the release of Francis Gary Powers, a CIA U-2 pilot shot down over Russia while on a reconnaissance mission, for veteran KGB spy Col. Rudolf Abel, captured by the FBI in New York. With all the drama of a Hollywood thriller, the Cold War spy swap took place in the middle of the Glienicke Bridge connecting West Berlin to Potsdam. Donovan's secret negotiations with the Russians were immortalized in Steven Spielberg's Oscar-nominated movie, *Bridge of Spies*, starring Tom Hanks as Donovan.

Donovan's dramatic negotiations with Castro are equally worthy of a major Hollywood film. They marked the first serious dialogue between Washington and Havana, and led to the first serious discussions of improving U.S.-Cuban relations. In many respects,

James Donovan (right) freed many prisoners held in Cuba's prisons. At left, a Donovan family photo of the negotiator with Fidel Castro. Upper left, Donovan with U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

President John F. Kennedy in 1961 after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion.

James Donovan's face-to-face talks with Fidel Castro set the historical stage for former president Barack Obama's rapprochement with Cuba more than 50 years later. As the United States and Cuba enter the post-Obama/post-Fidel Castro era, the story of Donovan's historic negotiations with the Cuban *commandante* provides a historical parable for successful diplomacy — one that carries important implications for the future of relations between Washington and Havana.

PROJECT MERCY

The CIA-sponsored paramilitary invasion at the Bay of Pigs remains the most flagrant symbol of U.S. intervention in the long and dark history of conflict between Washington and Havana. From that disastrous act of aggression, however, evolved the first significant opportunity for serious negotiations between the two countries — and the first sincere effort to improve relations.

John F. Kennedy inherited the CIA's plan to invade Cuba from the Eisenhower administration. To maintain a veneer of deniability of a U.S. role, the president pushed the CIA to change the landing site from the populated city of Trinidad to a remote location where the invaders could establish a beachhead before being discovered by Castro's forces. But Cuban militiamen on guard at the Bay of Pigs in the middle of the night spotted the beacon lit by a CIA operative to guide the exile brigade from the dark waters to the beach on April 17, 1961; the element of surprise was lost. Within 72 hours, Castro's forces defeated the CIA's exile brigade. "They busted me. And they are in prison now because I fucked up," Kennedy told his White House aide, Richard Goodwin. "I have to get them out."

Castro promptly offered Kennedy a way to barter the release of the brigade: 500 Caterpillar tractors and spare parts as "indemnification" for the death and destruction caused by the invasion. To avoid direct negotiations, the president secretly established the "Tractors for Freedom Committee," recruiting four American luminaries (including former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt) to lead it. But their negotiating strategy with Fidel — a take-it-or-leave-it approach of dictating terms and deadlines — failed, and the Committee disbanded only six weeks after it was created. Over the next year, Castro put the captured soldiers on trial, and announced that fees for their crimes amounted to $62 million — the price of their freedom. In June 1962, Attorney General Robert Kennedy secretly recruited Donovan to re-open talks with the Cuban leader.

Publicly, Donovan represented the Families Committee of the Bay of Pigs Prisoners. Privately, he would be negotiating on behalf of the White House, with active CIA support. "Every attempt to extricate ourselves from this whole Bay of Pigs episode has failed," the attorney general told Donovan at their first meeting on July 3, 1962. CIA director John McCone instructed Donovan to "immediately proceed to attempt to open negotiations with the Castro government, with the twin objectives of 1) lowering the minimum amount demanded by Castro and 2) arranging that a substantial part of the sum would be payable in food and medicine."

McCone authorized the creation of a secret CIA task force, code-named "Moses," to support Donovan's efforts. Agency officials set up a safe house in Miami for Donovan with a wiretap on it to use on his way to and from Havana. They gave him special communication devices and a code sheet to use when calling his CIA handlers from Cuba. Fidel would be referred to as "Erle," according to CIA codes; Che Guevara's designation was "Fulton." The code word "Hamilton" meant that negotiations were "difficult, progressing" but had "something for a settlement." The CIA's code-name for Donovan's special rescue mission was "Project Mercy."

Donovan quickly received an invitation to travel to Havana. On August 31, 1962, he sat down with Castro for the first time. "Met at Presidential palace with C," reads Donovan's personal chronology of the talks. "Offered: drugs and baby food for men. But no cash or tractors. 4 hrs."

During this first negotiating session, Castro treated Donovan to two lengthy diatribes about the historical atrocities committed against Cuba by the United States. But Donovan maintained a gracious and solicitous tone. He referred to Fidel as "Dr. Castro" — Castro returned the favor by calling him "Dr. Donovan" — and generally accepted his demand for U.S.

Fidel Castro, a cigar clamped in his jaws, talks to reporters on June 14, 1962, after increasing his demands for ransom prisoners captured by his forces in the Bay of Pigs invasion.

TOP: BETTMANN/CORBIS; BOTTOM: SHADOW AND CLAW, 1963

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"indemnification" for the human and material damages caused by the invasion. How much and in what form that "indemnity" would take was the focus of their negotiations. Donovan explained congressional restrictions on cash payments to Cuba, and stressed, according to his notes, that it would be better for Cuba's image not to "sell humans." Castro could gain the sympathy of U.S. citizens by releasing the prisoners. "Two peoples can work together to solve a problem, you know," he told Fidel.

By the end of the first session, Castro and Donovan had arrived at a general framework of an accord. Cuba would accept a cash payment of $62.9 million for 60 prisoners who Fidel had already allowed to return to the U.S. for health reasons. The rest of the indemnity would be paid with foodstuffs, medicines and related pharmaceutical supplies whose retail value, rather than wholesale value, approximated $60 million. Castro commended Donovan on his attitude and approach, in contrast to the Tractors for Freedom Committee. "Things would have been very different then," Castro said, "if we would have been treated in another manner."

Donovan returned to Cuba on October 3 to meet Castro at the Duport mansion on Varadero Beach. This second round of negotiations did not go as smoothly. Castro challenged the calculations for the retail values of the goods; more importantly, the Cuban leader refused to agree to Donovan's request that all prisoners be released after the first shipment. Over Donovan's objections, Fidel wanted to release them in stages as each shipment arrived. In a message to Castro drafted before he returned to Florida, Donovan dangled better relations as the ultimate reward for quickly releasing the prisoners: "the happy termination of this negotiation in good faith could create a bridge between the United States and Cuba," he wrote, "favorable for each in the current international situation."

These issues remained unresolved when Donovan returned to Havana a week later. By then, details of the proposed accord had leaked to the *New York Herald Tribune*, bringing unwanted publicity to the effort to finalize the deal. When Fidel reopened discussions on the pricing and types of materials and medicines Cuba wanted, Donovan forcefully reminded him that his proposal was Cuba's only option to dispose of the Bay of Pigs prisoners. "You can't shoot them," Donovan noted. "If you want to get rid of them, if you want to sell them, you have got to sell them to me," Donovan declared. "There's only one market for your prisoners of war and I'm it!" On October 11, he returned to Miami empty-handed, still hoping that the talks would be finalized within a few days.

Only four days later, a CIA analyst reviewing reconnaissance photos of the Cuban countryside identified Soviet intermediate-range missile sites under construction. As the dangerous superpower showdown known as the Cuban Missile Crisis unfolded, CIA director John McCone convinced President Kennedy to suspend the Donovan-Castro talks. "If definitive news of the secret talks came out," McCone argued, "public reaction could be severe and make resolving the missile crisis harder." Even after the missile crisis ended, McCone lobbied the White House against giving Donovan the green light to restart the prisoner negotiations. If the secret White House-CIA role leaked, he told Robert Kennedy, the American public "and many others" would be "confused and disenchanted" to learn that the U.S. was conducting

Donovan in Cuba (above) during his talks with the Cuban government for the release of the prisoners. His one on one negotiations with Castro (top photo) ultimately led to the release of more than 1,000 people. Castro also sent Donovan home with a humidor filled with Cuban cigars.

back-channel talks with the Cuban revolutionary who had just placed the fate of the entire world in jeopardy.

On November 20, however, Donovan informed the attorney general that Castro was ready to make a deal. Castro's interest, and increased public pressure from the relatives of the prisoners, prompted Robert Kennedy to assign one of his top aides at the Justice Department, John Nolan, to assist Donovan in bringing the brigade members home by Christmas. Within only a few weeks, they finalized an arrangement with a number of major pharmaceutical companies, among them Merck and Eli Lilly, and food companies to contribute shiploads of supplies from their older inventories in return for tax breaks. President Kennedy was so anxious to see the negotiations completed that he floated the idea of his brother taking a secret trip to Havana to finalize the accord. "The President wants the Attorney General to go down [to Cuba] because he now has

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"You can't shoot them. If you want to sell them, you have to sell them to me. There's only one market for your prisoners of war, and I'm it!"

—JAMES DONOVAN

commitments to cover the Castro list," CIA Director McCone reported to State Department officials on December 14, 1962.

Fidel gave Donovan and Nolan the red-carpet treatment when they returned on December 18. As the final negotiations began, according to a detailed book, *After the Bay of Pigs*, Donovan set the stage with some humor. "The main problem now is that I have decided to ask Santa Claus to join our working team in the United States," Donovan told Castro. "But we must recall that he goes out of business after December 25th. We should therefore take advantage of the holiday spirit in the United States and attempt to conclude negotiations now. Time is of the essence because of political opposition within the United States and within the Cuban community in the States."

Substantive obstacles remained. Castro was so distrustful about the quality and contents of the initial shipment that Donovan arranged for a clandestine night time trip to Miami for three of his aides to inspect the medicines being loaded onto the cargo ship, the S.S. *African Pilot*. Castro also refused to accept additional drugs in lieu of the $2.9 million promised him by the Families Committee for the earlier release of 60 prisoners who needed medical attention; he threatened to keep the leaders of the exile brigade in jail unless the money was delivered. Robert Kennedy was forced to raise the funds from private donors at the last minute to secure their freedom.

On December 21, Donovan and Castro representatives finally signed a "Memorandum of agreement between the Government of Cuba and the Cuban Families Committee for the Liberation of the Prisoners of War." The accord allowed 1,113 Bay of Pigs prisoners, and eventually thousands more of their relatives, to leave in return for multiple shipments of goods valued at $53 million that began arriving on December 23. To celebrate, Castro presented Donovan with the cigars and Donovan shared a prayer of St. Francis. "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace," the prayer read in part. "Grant that I may so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand."

As they watched the former prisoners depart two days before Christmas, Donovan spoke to Castro. "I want you to know that I appreciate your cooperation in many things throughout our negotiations," he said. "You have been very correct in your dealings with me." Castro returned the compliment. Donovan, he said, had been a skilled negotiator from whom Castro had learned many things. Castro invited Donovan to bring his family back to Cuba for a vacation at a state-provided villa on Varadero Beach, so they could "discuss the entire future of Cuba and Latin America and their relations with the United States."

CIA DIRTY TRICKS

Among the materials the United States began shipping to Cuba to complete the accord were hygienic supplies. A U.S. official, Col. Edward Lansdale, who was in charge of the sinister set of covert actions known as Operation Mongoose, saw an opportunity for creative psychological warfare against Cuba. In a proposal to the office of the CIA director, Lansdale suggested that the CIA print Fidel's image on the inside sheets of the rolls of toilet paper included in the shipments. The "earthy appeal of this is in tune with the Cuban sense of humor," Lansdale advised in a secret memo, "and they'd really get to laughing at Fidel." But his proposal to mount a "black propaganda" operation against Castro by doctoring the toilet paper was denied.

The toilet paper caper would not be the last time officials in charge of the dirty war against Cuba tried, and failed, to appropriate Donovan's work for aggressive purposes. In early 1963, a group of CIA officials devised a plot to turn his unique access to Castro into an opportunity to assassinate the Cuban leader. Their plan, a CIA internal history later reported, called for Donovan to become "the unwitting purveyor" of a poisoned scuba diving suit as a gift for Castro.

This scheme, according to a top-secret CIA report on plots to assassinate Fidel Castro, "progressed to the point of actually buying a diving suit and readying it for delivery." That meant "dusting the inside of the suit with a fungus that would produce a disabling and chronic skin disease (Madura foot) and contaminating the breathing apparatus with tubercle bacilli" — the bacterium that causes tuberculosis — said Sidney Gottlieb, then the head of the CIA's famous Technical Services Division (TSD).

But the operation was shelved after Donovan's CIA handler, Milan Miskovsky, learned of the plot and made sure the contaminated suit never left TSD's laboratory.

December 20, 1962. Long shoremen in Florida on old food and medicine bound for Cuba, part of the $53 million worth of U.S. goods sent for the release of the prisoners of war.

On Christmas Eve, 1962, Donovan and Castro watched as the former prisoners climbed into planes in Cuba that would take them to the United States and freedom. A former prisoner hoists his daughter on his shoulders (right) upon his homecoming in Homestead, Florida.

Donovan obtained his own scuba diving suit for Castro—purchased at Abercrombie & Fitch—as a confidence-building gesture for new negotiations with Castro. But he and Miskovsky took steps to secure the gift from any tampering by the so-called "executive action" team at the CIA. "I was in the business of negotiation," Donovan would later explain, "not assassination."

FIRST TALKS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS

Incredibly, the assassination planners sought to sabotage Donovan's negotiations as he worked to obtain the freedom of three of their CIA colleagues. The three operatives had been caught in September 1960 placing eavesdropping devices in a Havana building that housed the Chinese News Service. To obtain their release without acknowledging their covert operations, CIA director John McCone asked Donovan to request "a Christmas present" from Castro—the release of all U.S. citizens in his jails along with the hundreds of Bay of Pigs exiles who were boarding planes on December 23, 1962. "Jesus Christ," Donovan exclaimed at the time. "I did the loaves and fishes, and now they want me to walk on water, too."

Castro pledged that if the delivery of the food and medicines continued smoothly, he would review the cases of U.S. citizens "in the near future." When Donovan returned a month later Fidel readily agreed to his proposal for a prisoner swap: four Cubans who had been arrested in the United States on various charges—one of them had accidently shot a nine-year-old girl in New York City during a brawl over Castro's visit to the United Nations in September 1960—for all the Americans in Castro's jails. He invited Donovan to return in March to finalize the exchange as well as to "talk at length" about the future of Cuba and international relations. When Donovan returned to the United States he reported to the CIA and the State Department that Castro's aide-de-camp, Rene Vallejo, had "broached the subject of reestablishing diplomatic relations with the U.S."

PORCUPINES

To Donovan, Fidel Castro had found the first U.S. interlocutor who he trusted enough to open the discussion about a rapprochement with the United States. Given the rapport Donovan had established with the fiery Cuban leader, the Kennedy administration realized that Donovan could use his diplomatic skills to negotiate better relations with Cuba. Since President Kennedy believed that Castro's desire for talks "looked interesting," in the spring of 1963, U.S. officials undertook the first internal debate over whether, and how, to use Donovan to lead the U.S. and Cuba to normalized relations.

"There seems to be some possibility that Castro might be weaned away from the Communists if his idealism, his nationalism and his vanity are catered to," CIA officials wrote in a secret set of proposed negotiating instructions. "This is where Donovan comes in." The CIA wanted Donovan to set preconditions on Castro, among them to force the Communists out, "lock, stock, and barrel." If Castro did not agree to all U.S. demands, Donovan should "paint for Castro ... the permanently black picture that

will prevail — with only one ultimate result — if Cuba continues to make the United States her enemy." Over at the State Department, officials concurred. Donovan should "take a wedding walk on the beach" with Castro, stated one secret memo, and tell him "only two things are nonnegotiable, 1) Cuba's ties with the Sino-Soviet Bloc and 2) Cuba's interference with the hemisphere."

President Kennedy, however, took a far more careful position. "We don't want to present Castro with a condition that he obviously cannot fulfill. We should start thinking along more flexible lines," he instructed his national security adviser, McGeorge Bundy. In a top secret/eyes only memorandum of conversation dated March 4, 1963, Bundy reported that "the President, himself, is very interested in this case."

Donovan returned to Cuba on March 14. He "was given the red-carpet treatment and had several long, cordial talks with Castro," according to a secret report prepared for President Kennedy. When Castro raised the issue of future ties to Washington, Donovan told him "better relations would probably result if Castro would just send in his own letting." As a gesture of goodwill, Castro released two American women, imprisoned as counter-revolutionaries, to accompany Donovan back to Miami.

On April 5, Donovan flew back to Havana to seal the deal. He brought three diplomatic stage-setters: a new Polaroid camera as a gift for Castro; the page proofs of a forthcoming article in *The Nation* magazine that highlighted the potential for the prisoner exchange to open the door

"Do you know how porcupines make love?" Donovan asked Castro. The Cuban leader said no. "The answer is, very carefully."

to more normal relations, titled "How Meta-Diplomacy Works: James Donovan and Fidel Castro;" and Donovan's immigration, John.

Bringing his son along was "the ultimate in gamesmanship," according to Phillip Bigger's biography, *Negotiator*. "I hoped that the presence of my 18-year-old would inspire confidence and make a favorable impression on Castro," Donovan remembered. Indeed, Castro took Donovan and his son on a day-long fishing expedition to the Bay of Pigs, gave them a tour of a new crocodile farm, and took them to a baseball game. "A powerful key in my father's negotiating style was his tendency to bring it from the bureaucratic level to the human level," John Donovan recalled years later. In a subsequent interview with *The New York Times*, his father noted that "it was largely because I had brought the boy along that I was able that weekend to persuade Castro to release 35 American prisoners."

The prospect for better U.S.-Cuban relations was the real reason Castro was persuaded to release the prisoners. The article in *The Nation*, along with major coverage in *Look*, *Life* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, Donovan told him, reflected a shift in American attitudes toward the Cuban revolution in the aftermath of the missile crisis. The average citizen, Donovan said, didn't want Cuba to become a Soviet satellite, but "so too I didn't think that the people in the U.S. were intent on his being a satellite of the U.S.; that the integrity of the revolution would be respected as long as his sole effort was dedicated to the betterment of the Cuban people." Once the prisoner exchange was completed, Donovan argued, Washington and Havana could turn to bigger and more important issues. Castro conceded that holding the Americans as "a bargaining asset" was not in Cuba's interest because "perhaps it's preventing something more constructive from being accomplished." Castro promised that "I'll release all of them to you" on April 22.

Their talks evolved into the very first serious conversation between Castro and a U.S. representative about how to normalize relations. Fidel posed the question: "If relations were to commence between the U.S. and Cuba how would it come about and what would be involved?" In his debriefing with the CIA, Donovan recounted his colorful response to Castro: "Are you familiar with porcupines? So I said, 'Now do you know how porcupines make love?' And he said, 'No.' And I said, 'Well, the answer is very carefully, and that's how you and the U.S. would have to get into this, but on the specifics this would have to be left to common sense diplomatic discussions.'"

COMMON SENSE DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS

More than half a century later, Donovan's prediction finally became a reality. Drawing on the legacy of Donovan's "common sense" approach to negotiating with Cuba, the Obama administration quietly, and "very carefully" held back-channel talks with representatives of Raúl Castro, arriving at an "accommodation of views" to, once again, swap prisoners — three Cuban spies imprisoned in the U.S. since 1998 for a CIA mole and a USAID contractor imprisoned in Cuba — and then move toward normalized bilateral relations. Both presidents simultaneously announced the historic rapprochement on December 17, 2014.

Before Obama left the White House, Washington and Havana were able to fully restore diplomatic relations, reopen embassies, initiate direct mail services and direct commercial air routes, as well as significantly expand economic, cultural and political interaction. In his very last days as president, Obama took steps to normalize migration between the two nations, and sent his top negotiator, deputy national security advisor Benjamin Rhodes, to Havana to sign a new bilateral agreement on counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and money laundering prevention programs, among other collaborative law-enforcement operations.

The Donovan-Castro talks not only set a historic foundation for the normalization of relations, they also provided historical lessons for successful dialogue and negotiations with Cuba. Unlike the Tractors for Freedom Committee, which imperiously sought to bully Castro into an agreement, Donovan approached the Cuban leader with respect and civility, along with a persistence, candor and true commitment to discourse. "This is work requiring great patience," he told *The Nation*. The profile in the magazine described Donovan as the "most successful American practitioner of meta-diplomacy — higher diplomacy" — with Cuba.

"He used the art of negotiation as his weapon of choice," Donovan's daughter, Mary Ellen Fuller, recounted in *Time* magazine when *Bridge of Spies* premiered in 2015. "He felt that a person simply wants to be respectfully heard, and that it is only when you listen well that you can reach the most just results. History taught him that," she concluded, "and we could stand to use this weapon today." ⊕

Peter Kornbluh writes frequently for Cover. Aaron Coyne on Cuba.

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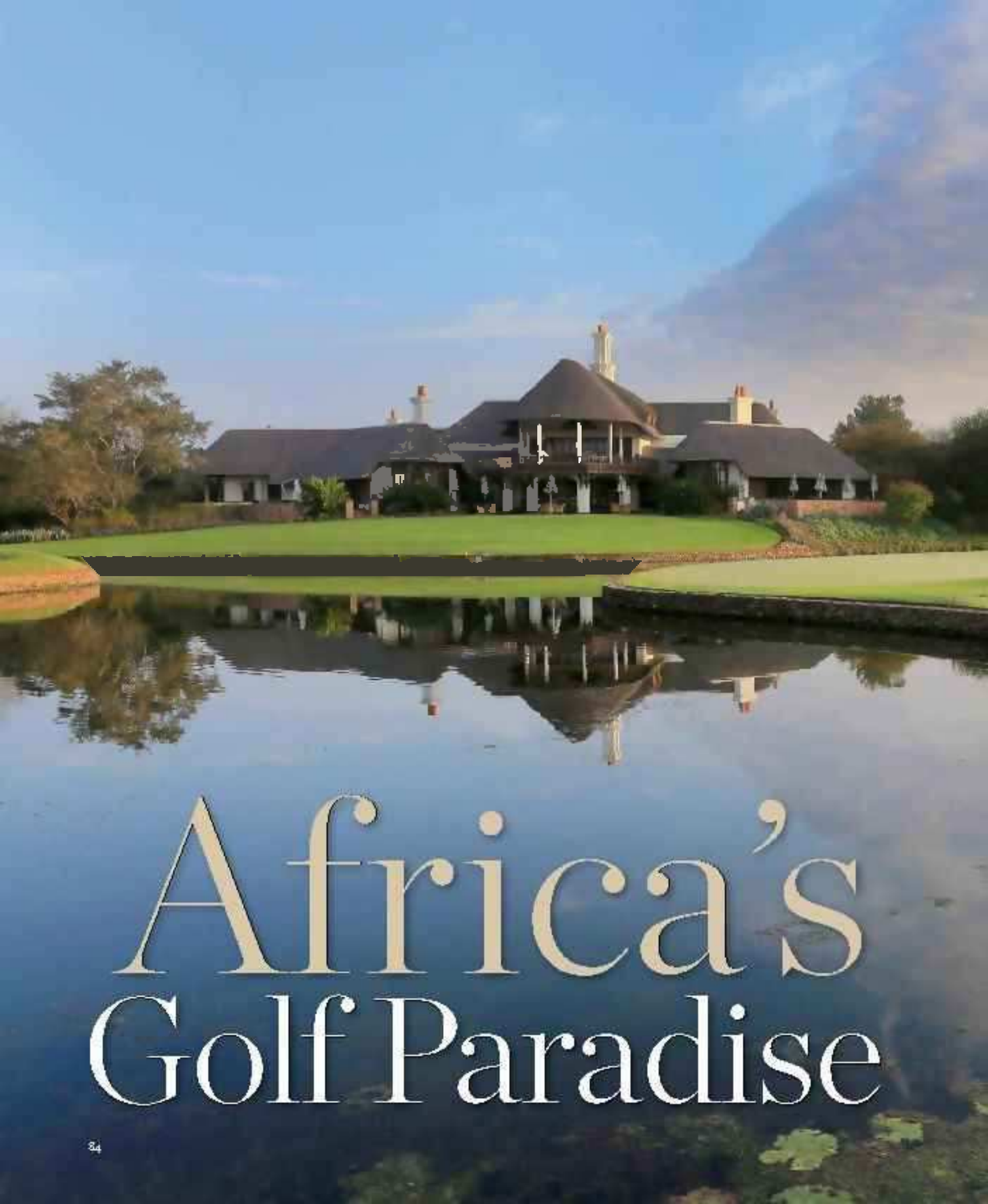

Africa's Golf Paradise

Leopard Creek, Gary Player's finest design, is the most luxurious golf course in South Africa, a country with an abundance of stunning golf

South Africa has become one of the world's premier golf destinations, with more than 500 courses, top-tier resorts and a unique backdrop of stunning wildlife BY LARRY OLMSTED

LEGEND GOLF

At Legend Golf & Safari Resort, each hole has been designed by a top golfer. The 19th hole requires a helicopter ride to the 1,300 foot high tee box, where you take aim at the world's longest par 3 (above right) and its Africa shaped green. The $1 million jackpot for a hole in one remains unclaimed.

As the helicopter climbs sharply, you see Africa spread out below you, literally and figuratively. Giraffe are tall enough to stand out, even from this height, and the landscape is a tapestry consisting of thick stands of forest, open grasslands, and the manicured fairways and greens of Legend Golf & Safari Resort. But most of all, you see the world's most unusual par-3, its huge green shaped as a perfect outline of the African Continent.

Today, the pin placement is benign, right around the centrally located spot where you'd find Victoria Falls, one of the modern Seven Wonders of the World. "That is one of the easier placements," remarks Pete Richardson, Legend's director of golf, his voice crackling through our headphones. "You don't want to play it when the hole is near the Ivory Coast." Before boarding the helicopter, we got the usual safety briefing with one odd twist — the pilot double checked to make sure all of us had our clubs.

We are on our way to play the world's highest and longest par-3, and the only one that requires a flight to reach the tee box. Dubbed "Extreme 19," it has a single tee perched on the edge of a cliff near the summit of Hanglip Mountain, 1,300 feet above the Africa-shaped green below. The 10-minute drive from the golf clubhouse to the jungle helipad is a mini-safari of its own, with views of zebras, sable and even the occasional leopard. The package to play the 19th is an add-on to the regular green fees, but just about every visitor does it because, like most things in South Africa, it is spectacular. (It's also a bargain, less than $150 a head, including flight, pro and forecaddie). We bring only drivers, as this par-3 stretches 400 yards. Thanks to the elevation — a drop about equal to the height of the Empire State Building — you need only drive it about 235 to put it in play, and 260 to hit the green. Anyone who can manage to make par on their first ball (you get six tries) gets the experience for free and has their name added to an honor roll begun by three-time major winner Pádraig Harrington, the first to make a three. The $1 million jackpot for first hole-in-one remains unclaimed.

If you decide to go on an African safari, you have lots of tough decisions to make, because opportunities are vast and varied. However, if you decide to go on an African golf trip, there is only one reasonable choice — South Africa.

The wildlife is certainly the country's calling card, but even if you never set foot in a Land Rover for a game drive, the golf alone is worth while and world-class. After the United States, the British Isles, Australia and Japan, it vies with France as the world's most premier golf destination, home to more than 500 courses — more than Ireland, Spain or even China. Many of them are standout sports, and there is a litany of top-tier luxury resorts, hotels and game lodges unrivalled anywhere in the world. Four courses have made either Golf or Golf Digest's World Top 100. South Africa also has amazing wine country, beautiful beaches, luxury trains, incredible food, unique culture and one of the world's greatest tourism cities, Cape Town. With inexpensive internal flights, and the rand, its currency, at near historic lows compared to the U.S. dollar, it is also one huge bargain, whatever your budget or style.

"Playing in South Africa is an extra special experience," says golf-centric luxury travel agent Chad Clark, of Chad Clark Travel Ventures in Phoenix. "Not only are you able to play top-rated courses, but combine the African sun, the wildlife and the coastal views, and you'll quickly see why it is one of the world's greatest golf destinations."

"You don't need to fly 17 hours to play golf," says Lloyd Martindale, general manager of golf operations at Fancourt, South Africa's top resort. "But there is no other place you can play great golf with the kind of wildlife we have."

Some courses in South Africa are wilder than others, and you certainly will not see giraffe, zebra and hippo everywhere you tee it up, but wildlife is pervasive. The chances are good that you will glimpse monkeys, birds and antelope such as impala pretty much wherever you go.

With a lot of coastline, and every imaginable inland terrain, from vineyards to mountains to desert, South Africa accordingly has every kind of golf. But a few things are common to every course in the country, things that are unique among the world's top golf nations. First, no course is so private that it is more than minor hassle to get on. Second, even the very best golf, along with similar quality food, drink and lodging, is relatively inexpensive, with greens fees averaging $120 (or less) at top-tier courses. Third, everyone you encounter on and off the courses is almost unfailingly friendly, and there is a huge sense of welcome wherever you go. Fourth, and most odd, is the local insistence on a full meal but even mine, a lunch known as "Ha'Penny House," that is never skipped, even if it falls well outside lunch time.

"Americans can come here, play all the best courses, live like kings, and feel like it cost nothing," says Richardson of Legend. "The only golf club in the whole country that is remotely difficult to get on is Leopard Creek, and still, any top tour operator can do that."

There are two main ways to plan a golf trip to South Africa. Avid golfers or course collectors can move around and cherry pick the nation's top-rated courses, which are geographically diverse, while those seeking a more varied South African golf vacation with other sights will want to focus more on a few key areas that also allow access to other top attractions. So while Durban offers the nation's best urban golf, Cape Town is its most alluring city, and has more than satisfactory golf offerings close by. Which one you visit depends on your priority: the very best golf or the very best vacation experience. Fortunately you do not have to make many of these compromises, as the nation's foremost visit golf resort, Fancourt, is centrally located and easily accessed, and the most seemingly remote pilgrimage course, Leopard Creek, lies in beautifully with what is far and away the country's top safari destination, Kruger National Park, and its surrounding bevy of ultra-luxury private reserve game lodges.

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LEOPARD CREEK

LEOPARD CREEK

RATING: A

Thanks to its dramatic setting abutting Kruger National Park, this is the best known course in the country after the Links at Fancourt, and it hosted the European Tour's 2016 kickoff event, the Alfred Dunhill Championship. It is also the most expensive and difficult to arrange a tee time on. Nine-time major winner and South African Gary Player, the only non-American golfer to manage a career Grand Slam, has designed more than 300 courses worldwide in the past 30 years, but this is arguably his best. For five straight years *Golf Digest South Africa* rated it the nation's No. 1, and also gave it tops for conditioning, while most impressively, London's *Telegraph* rated it the fourth best course on earth. It has what is easily the fanciest clubhouse in the nation, GPS-equipped carts, high-end rental clubs, and its unique and memorable signature, different large bronze leopard statues at every tee, which, when taken in sequence, represent a day in the animal's life.

The manicured course starts slowly with wide, tree-lined fairways, helping golfers who have traveled a long way get their rhythm, and then really hits its stride on the fifth hole, after which it just keeps getting better and better. The front closes strongly with a par-4 to a peninsula green from which you might see crocodiles in the water. The front nine has a parkland feel, carved beautifully from open land, while the back side is wilder, following the contours of the untamed river, all that separates the course from world-famous Kruger National Park. The signature hole, 13, is a 530-yard par-5 that plays down to a green complex set dramatically at the edge of the river, and while approaching or putting you can often see hippos, and in many cases elephants on the other side of the water. Player keeps the drama and eye candy building right to the end, finishing with another stunning par-5 featuring an island green. Despite its impeccable and award-winning grooming, one big allure of Leopard Creek is that

Leopard Creek is a stunning course that hosted the 2016 Alfred Dunhill Championship (above). The signature 13th hole (top) is a par-5 that plays down to a river, where hippos and elephants are often seen.

Player carved the course from the wilderness, and managed to retain an ambiance of someplace that feels truly wild.

There is no better combination of great golf, great lodging and great wildlife viewing on earth than Leopard Creek. The club has partnered with 15 prominent safari lodges in and around Kruger, including the most luxurious and world-renown dream destinations (Royal Malaxana, Singita, Londolozi) to offer guests golf privileges here. As a result, a day at Leopard Creek is no ordinary round of great golf; the most typical way to play Leopard Creek is during a stay at one of these luxe lodges, and while some guests charter helicopters, most have a ranger drive them to the course through the National Park and private wildlife reserves in game vehicles, with an extensive safari opportunity in both directions, for a unique golf day unlike any in the world. Leopard Creek also works with tour operators and will entertain direct requests from members of top-rated private clubs.

FANCOURT

FANCOURT RESORT

RATING: B TO A+ (MULTIPLE COURSES)

This is the Pebble Beach of South Africa, the most storied and full-service luxury golf resort in the land, with the nation's most desirable course and a number of very good ones. The resort famously hosted the Presidents Cup, and the lodging built for the event, villas for the small golfing guests, are now available to everyone. There's a lavish spa, full golf academy, four-hole practice course (pars 3, 4 and 5), extensive kids' facilities, pools, shops, several bars and restaurants, but most of all there is the Links at Fancourt (A+), which vies only with Leopard Creek as Gary Player's top design in the world. It is an inland links in the mold of the Kings and Queens courses at Gleneagles, Scotland, or the Straits course at Wisconsin's Whistling Straits, but better than all those. It is quite simply the best links course in the world that is not on the water. Fancourt is in George, which has a convenient airport and sits on the 250-mile Garden Route, a famous scenic drive along the coast of the Western Cape that is in turn one of South Africa's biggest tourist attractions. Within easy striking distance of the resort are safari game lodges, coastal cruises and whale watching.

TIPS ON GOLFING IN SOUTH AFRICA

GETTING THERE: South African Airways flies non-stop to Johannesburg daily from New York (JFK) and Washington (with a stop in Ghana) from Washington, D.C. The airline also has a vast domestic route network. Flights within the country and as a Star Alliance member are quick and seamless with United. You'll find the best premium-class service on European carriers such as British Airways and Virgin, but those require a change in London or another European hub, though this can make it possible to fly direct from Cape Town.

BRING THE STICKS: It's highly recommended that you bring your own clubs. While the finest courses have modern club rentals, even at many upscale sports stores, tend to be less well-stocked than. However, if you are combining a high-end safari with golf, many of the top lodges are accessible only by small planes with stiff weight limits and tiny baggage allowances. For this reason, if your trip is more complex than Cape Town and a single golf resort visit, it is easier to plan on your own. It is highly advisable to avoid the services of a specialty golf tour or safari operator or an experienced travel agent at home. Only a few top courses have caddies; cubs are very professionally run and welcoming and better courses have practice facilities, full pro shops and good driving ranges.

DINE AFTER HIKE: When you golf in South Africa you'll be out after nine holes for a meal. Hack to the clubhouse at one of fast-paced 36-hole per day courses. It is generally not acceptable to go from the ninth green to the tee without this break—even if you are not hungry. The 20 to 30 minute gap is quick and is a good time to stop the group ahead while they have a hearty English-style breakfast or lunch. Avoid the greens food at the outdoor tee at Leopard Creek; it's a dreadful lunch.

BANG FOR YOUR BUCK: Prices for playing here are startlingly low. At the standout Fancourt, it costs greens fees between $150 and (about $130) including which will be at the clubhouse and Johnnie Walker Blacks and a draught beer cost a fraction of eight bucks. That's high-end at the Legend. Rounds without cart and caddie cost than $45 and dinner at the best restaurants of Cape Town or wine country are a fraction of the regular costs in the United States.

CHOOSE A LOCAL TOUR OPERATOR: The major US-based companies that handle the UK do not for the most part do South Africa so go with a local specialist. The big names are Ascot Golf Travel, Pro Golf Africa Safaris and Golf in South Africa. Ozzies Golf Guide specializes in just the greater Cape Town region. Bigger safari specialists also frequently add on golf courses and are also very well-versed and have frequently visited to supply safaris including wine country, urban hotels and restaurants. The best are the US-based Safaris, generally owned by Kiwis, most have magazines and industry awards.

EXPECT A LONG TRIP: Pack for at least a dozen days to do it right. The sweet spot is a 12-day stay with three days in Cape Town and Winelands, the Garden Route and safari. Always Car Rentals of Pro Golf Africa Safaris. For first-time visitors this suggests four days in Cape Town, a safari followed by the Garden Route and Fancourt. Seeing the animals is a must, which means those visit to Kruger or safari at the Eastern Cape. For safari veterans who want more golf, start in Johannesburg first, before heading on to Cape Town.

—L.D.

THE LINKS AT FANCOURT

and numerous wineries. There are also several more notable golf courses nearby, all rated in the country's Top 30, including St. Francis Bay (B+), a Jack Nicklaus Signature course; dramatic Pinnacle Point (B+), a breathtaking though convoluted peninsular course similar in New Zealand's Cape Kidnappers; Oubaai (B), a coastal Ernie Els design famed for its island green par-3 set against the Indian Ocean; Pezula, a beautiful coastal modern links that was named Best New Course in the country when it opened in 2001; and the venerable George Golf Club (B), known locally as "The Old Course" after nearly eight decades of play.

On the first tee of the Links, a starter takes your lunch order to be enjoyed at the halfway house (you won't return to this spot until 18), you greet your caddie, and start the round with a ceremonial toast of whisky from a crystal decanter. The walking-only layout is the sole certified Audubon Sanctuary in the country, complete with resident mongoose and caracal, a rare small member of the big cat family. Because the kind of surf that lines the walls of Scottish golf bunkers doesn't exist here, Mayer used traditional walls made with shaped tubes of sand stacked on top of one another, making a stunning – but when viewed from the tee box. These memorable hybrid pot/fairway bunkers are everywhere, the course's defining characteristic, and while very scary, are also surprisingly playable. The signature hole, 15, wraps around a lake and has gorgeous bunkering bleeding right into the water. It is the top-rated course in the country by South Africa's *Golf Digest*, and justifiably so. "Three years ago we had this group of American golfers come, they had booked to play all these other courses around, but they played the Links their first day, then cancelled everything and just played it four more days in a row," says Martindale.

Fancourt has six other courses. The Montagu (A+), ranked sixth in South Africa, was extensively redesigned eight years ago by David McLay Kidd of Bandon Dunes and the Castle Course at St Andrews fame, and is an excellent parkland course, very playable, impeccably maintained, extensively planted with flowers, and built around several water hazards – in short, it is the Augusta of South Africa, with very strong par-3s and a dramatic par-5 finishing hole over water. The Outeniqua (B) is designed and promoted as an easier to play "introductory" golf experience, but it is a legitimate 18-hole course ranked in the Top 30 in the country.

MONTAGU

Fancourt Resort is touted the Pebble Beach of South Africa for its wide array of fine courses. The Links at Fancourt (top) may be the best inland links course in the world. Montagu (above) was recently redesigned.

Durban Country Club & Zimbali Golf Club

RATING: B TO A (MULTIPLE COURSES)

While Durban Country Club (A) is generally considered the nation's second or third best course – and it's better than ever after recent renovations – this gem is often overlooked simply because Durban itself is often overlooked. From the coastal setting to the dues to the social clubhouse, its walls lined with lists of past champions, DCC evokes the most Scottish feel in the country, and has a rich history: opened in 1922, it has hosted the South African Open 17 times, more than any other course. Gary Player won his first (and seventh) Open here, with the Ernie Els win his third (and fifth). The signature hole is the risk/reward drivable par-4 16th, and one foursome memorably closed by making scores of one, two, three and four, something that has likely never occurred in any other round of golf

FAIRMONT'S ZIMBALI RESORT

LEGEND SAFARI

The Fairmont Zimbali Resort (top) features accommodations and a golf course designed by Tom Weiskopf. A safari (above) is part of the charm of Legend, where you can see rhino, lions, leopards and more.

ever played. Its rolling seaside dunes are covered with thick tropical vegetation, unusual for a links-style layout, and with swirling winds and pot bunkers, hitting fairways is essential. The city has enveloped the course over decades, so you hear traffic on the beach and a busy motorway during a round, and since the 2010 Soccer World Cup, several holes have prominent views of the architecturally impressive Moses Mabhida Stadium, which hosted the finals. In the 1990s, DCC took over the adjacent Beachwood (B) golf course, now its second 18, ranked in the nation's Top 30. This hidden gem is overshadowed by its big sibling, but is more of true links, on the coast, and uniquely situated at the end of a small airport with planes landing and taking off almost directly overhead. It's worth playing after or before the main event if you have the time for 36.

The Fairmont's Zimbali (B+) is one of the few top courses in South Africa designed by an American other than Jack Nicklaus. British Open and South African PGA Champ Tom Weiskopf. A hilly course set just inland, Zimbali is carved through really thick African bush, but its elevation offers some exceptional views of the Indian Ocean. Designed more like a private club than resort course, it has lots of elevation change, a fair amount of water, more than a few blind shots and enough natural real estate where you can easily see another hole from the one you are playing, for a nice escapist feel. It's an upscale, well-maintained facility, and conveniently within the grounds of the deluxe Fairmont Zimbali resort. While this is an easy turnkey choice for golfers visiting Durban, it is worth noting that the city's finest lodging choice is the Oyster Box, a world-renowned gourmet boutique beach resort where the Princess of Monaco held her wedding reception.

Legend Golf & Safari Resort

RATING: B+

This is a one-of-a-kind property. In addition to the helicopter Extreme 19 par-3, it also is the only course on earth designed by 18 different legendary professional golfers, representing 16 countries. The design is excellent but the maintenance not up to snuff. It's the rare golf resort that is also a full-blown safari property with its own on-site game drives and the most desirable animals, including rhino, lions, elephants, giraffes, zebras and leopards. There are guided bush walks, hot air balloning, stargazing and more, with rooms laid out in cottages across the vast property. Legend is located within the vast Entabeni Game Reserve in Limpopo, South Africa's northernmost province, a 35-minute flight or easy 2 1/2-hour drive north of Johannesburg.

SOUTHERN WINE

A golf trip to South Africa calls for a detour at one of the country's outstanding wineries BY JAMES HOLESWORTH

Ignore doubts you managed to keep your eyes on the ball during your drive from Cape Town—South Africa is one of the most visually stunning countries you'll ever visit. After your round, you may want to take a sense of that beauty at a different kind of leisure: a winery.

South Africa's wine industry dates back to the 17th-century colonization of the Cape by European settlers—mainly Dutch and French. They came with a hodgepodge of grapes, and it took quite a long time for the country to develop a thriving wine industry. Whole regions were uprooted by phylloxera around the globe. They quickly rebounded and today their industry is world-class.

The main hub of South Africa's wine country is a little more than a short drive from Cape Town. Six miles north of Somerset West, you'll see a turnoff from the N1 highway that leads to the town of the same name. Its signature is a wine. There's also a large array of options.

Among the best is Rust En Vrede, which was recently ranked by Wine Spectator as South Africa's top producer. A visit here will have you taking in the breathtaking scenery of California's Napa Valley while being treated to guide you through the winery's easy Cabernet Sauvignon-based reds. Owner Jean Engelbrecht is a forever legacy star and an engaging host who expertly will lead outdoor tours while you enjoy a cigar during one of his tours. His gorgeous restaurant serving dinner only, soon closed among the leading spots in all of the country. Six-course meals will set you back R450 (a $69) per person.

Right next door is golfing legend Ernie Els's namesake winery, which sports stunning views of the vineyards, a delicious tasting room and some serious golfing memorabilia on display inside. Accolades for the Big Easy's Signature red, a Cabernet Sauvignon-based blend, that scored 95 points from Wine Spectator.

Heading out towards Somerset West, you'll come across 96 Winery Road, the tasting room and restaurant run by Ken Forrester. Forrester's eponymous winery has made a name for itself with wine made from the white Cape Chenin Blanc grape, along with a handful of other bottlings. The setting is rustic and charming, and right in view of Forrester's old vine vineyards. In particular, the staff is have an twice-weekly tasting on Saturday, a session more modern style tasting room and restaurant at Tokara Estate, a top producer of reds and whites from a state-of-the-art winery such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay.

Also worth a visit are the tasting rooms at Constantia, a vineyard in the suburb of Cape Town. Top estates include Klein Constantia and Buitenverwacht, big sets of which emphasize fresh, zesty whites.

A tasting tour of these wineries can take you a week, and showcase some of the world's most stunning vineyards.

James Holesworth is a senior editor of Wine Spectator magazine.

Arabella, designed by Jack Nicklaus, is the best golf course in Cape Town. It is set next to a lagoon so large it resembles an ocean.

ARABELLA

Cape Town & Wine Country

RATING: B TO A- (MULTIPLE COURSES)

Sandwiched between Table Mountain and the coast, with a gorgeous peninsula drive to the south, an infamous former island penitentiary turned top tourist site in its harbor, and the nation's premier wine regions just inland, the comparisons between Cape Town and San Francisco are obvious, except Cape Town has much better weather and beautiful beaches. Most first-time visitors consider a stay here de rigueur, and while it is entirely possible to visit the two major wine towns, South Africa's Napa and Sonoma, Franschhoek and Stellenbosch, for the day, many find it preferable to overnight in the vineyards, home to many luxury resorts. The same goes for golf: Cape Town's best courses are sufficiently far from town (90 minutes) to bring overnighting into consideration, though the city's sightseeing charms are many.

The top Cape Town area course is Arabella (A-), set at the foot of the impressive Kogelberg Mountains and overlooking a lagoon so vast it appears ocean-like. On just about everyone's Top 10 list for the country, it is part of a full-service luxury resort, the Arabella Hotel & Spa. The other lagoon pick is the Nicklaus Signature Pearl Valley (B+), which has hosted the South African Open three times and was inaugurated with a friendly match between the Golden Bear and longtime friend Gary Player. A parkland course with an imposing amount of water hazards set in a valley beneath the Drakenstein Mountains, it too makes most national Top 10 lists and is also part of an exceptionally luxury wine country resort. A third self-contained resort of note is Steenberg (B), closest to the city (just 30 minutes) and the most wine-centric, with an onsite tasting room and several fairways flanked immediately by grape vines. While less highly ranked, it is a fun and good-looking course with a memorable peninsula-style island green hole, towering mountain panoramas, and a welcoming joviality that extends to the gracious resort and fine dining eatery.

Other top area choices include Erinvale (B) and Royal Cape (B), the nation's oldest club since 1885. Ebrahim "Ozzie" Osman, a licensed South Africa tour operator, runs Ozzie's Golf Guide, specializing in day play around the city, complete with transfers, rental clubs and introductions to playing with members, perfect for business travelers or vacationers looking to sneak in one round. Ozzie says, "We've got 66 golf clubs around the city, and 10 are within six miles." Within Cape Town, the top hotel choices are the downtown Taj, the waterfront One & Only and the boutique suburban Ellerman House, a sort of combination luxury resort and art museum.

Sun City

RATING: B TO A- (MULTIPLE COURSES)

Many top travel agents shy away from Sun City in favor of more luxurious resorts because it has an artificial, Disney-esque feel, similar to the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas, including a vast waterpark. But it does offer a casino and lunatic convenience with four hotels, tons of restaurants and bars, extensive outdoor activities, two nearby safari reserves with game drives and two notable golf courses. The walking-only Gary Player Country Club (A-) is one of the nation's very best, on par with Leopard Creek, and hosts the annual Nedbank Challenge, a big tournament. At nearly 8,000 yards it is one of the longer courses in the world, and the parkland design setup offers panoramic mountain views, lots of water and very good conditioning. The Lost City course (B), also by Player, is more resort style, allows carts and has more varied terrain, with elevation changes and desert stretches. Its signature is a truly hazardous water hazard on 13 — it's home to Nile crocodiles.

"I've always loved The Lost City Golf Course, and with it being the venue for our charity tournament that has done so much good over the years," says Player. Like Legend, Sun City is a 2 1/2-hour drive from Johannesburg, but there is no flying option.

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STETYN CITY

Johannesburg is a seasoned first stop for Americans traveling to South Africa, as the city provides the easy nonstop service from North America. The Stetyn City course (above), designed by Jack Nicklaus, is reminiscent of Shadow Creek, with streams, waterfalls and top-tier amenities.

Stetyn City, Johannesburg

RATING: 8

Because it is the sole nonstop gateway from North America, most U.S. visitors arrive via Johannesburg, giving them a big time savings over changing in Europe. While it is neither the golf nor tourism attraction that Cape Town is, it does boast the Cradle of Mankind, a World Heritage Site that has yielded some of the most important discoveries in the study of human evolution, and is one of the nation's most popular attractions. Stetyn City is a new upscale suburban mixed-use residential community anchored by a top-flight golf course that opened in 2015, and is the top choice in the area. Another Nicklaus design, this is an American-style course with the highest maintenance standards, lots of rock-strewn streams and waterfalls, reminiscent of Las Vegas gem Shadow Creek, with first-rate clubhouse and amenities all around. It makes an especially comfortable welcome into South African golf for playing on day of arrival. The course is conveniently owned by the developer of the Saxon Hotel, the city's finest, complete with butlers, in the posh Sandton suburb, and the Saxon makes transfers and tee times easy for its guests, who have included President Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, Sir Paul McCartney and the late Nelson Mandela, who stayed in the presidential suite (which now bears his name) long enough to write his entire memoir. ◆

Larry Olmsted is a Golfweek contributing editor.

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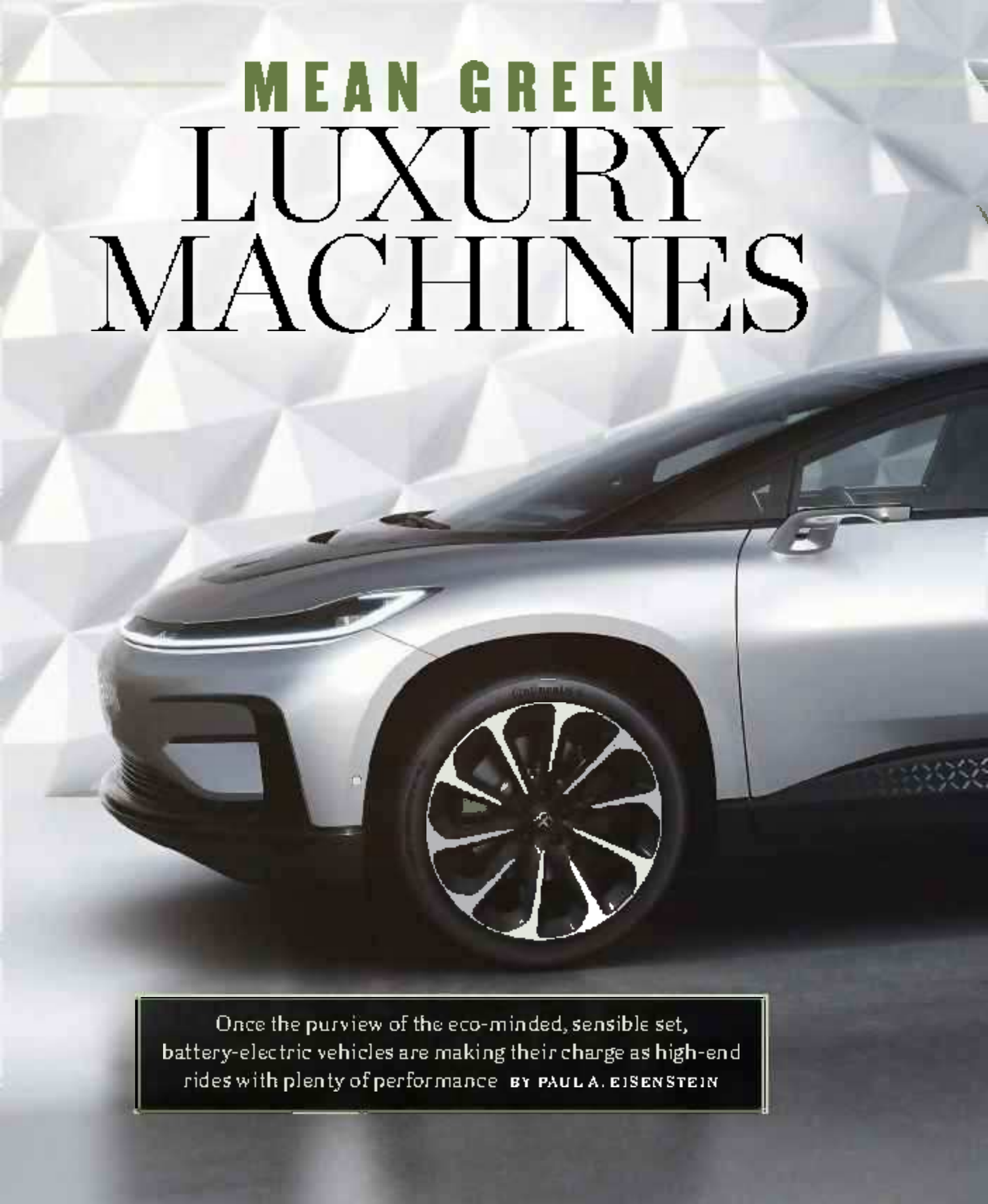


Once the purview of the eco-minded, sensible set, battery-electric vehicles are making their charge as high-end rides with plenty of performance BY PAUL A. EISENSTEIN

The Faraday Future FF91 packs 1,000 horsepower to propel it all the way at neck-snapping speeds. And all the beast's brawn is generated by two electric motors.

BMW's i brand includes this i8, a plug-in, hybrid sports car, and the i3, a city car. More models are on the way.

Blink and you're likely to miss it. Pumping out a jaw-dropping 1,000 horsepower, the new FF91 is not only one of the world's most powerful automobiles, but it's also the fastest. Launching from 0 to 60 in a blistering 2.39 seconds, it will have even the Ferrari 488 GTB eating its dust. That's all the more impressive when you realize the first production model from the California-based, Chinese-funded Faraday Future is powered by two electric motors.

If your idea of a battery-electric vehicle is a slow, boring economy car that can barely get you to work and back without running out of juice, you better think twice. Products like the Faraday Future FF91, Tesla Model S P90d, Porsche Mission E, Karma Revero and BMW i8 are among a growing list of electrified automobiles that are mean, as well as green. The idea of using electric propulsion in luxury and performance cars might seem a contradiction. But it is quickly becoming the rule, rather than the exception. That's due, in part, to ever-tougher emissions and fuel economy standards. Automotive engineers have also discovered that battery drivetrains can deliver tremendous amounts of power to go with their improved mileage and reduced emissions.

You might not glimpse the future by looking at the current numbers. Add up all the conventional hybrids, plug-in hybrids and pure battery-electric vehicles — HEVs, PHEVs and BEVs — sold in 2016 and they accounted for barely 3.5 percent of the total American new car market. (The story isn't much different in Europe or Japan.) Yet, industry analysts predict that a decade from now, electrified models could account for as much as a third of global vehicle sales, while dominating the luxury and performance segments. When Ford Motor Co. is planning a hybrid Mustang and Aston Martin is readying an all-electric version of its four-door sports car, to be called the RapidE, you know the industry is getting turned on.

Anyone who thought battery power is just for a select niche of techies and greenies would have clearly come away with a very different opinion after touring last autumn's Paris Motor Show. All they had to do was ask Daimler AG Chairman and CEO Dieter Zetsche, who assured a media audience that the Mercedes-Benz brand is moving electric vehicles "into the fast lane."

The German automaker had already committed to putting 10 plug-in hybrids and several pure battery-electric models into production over the next several years. But at the Paris show, Zetsche lifted the covers off the Mercedes Generation EQ concept, a show car that will make the transition into a production model before the end of the decade. And it will anchor an entirely new brand within a brand called Mercedes EQ. "The emission-free automobile is the future," Zetsche announced.

Mercedes EQ is far from unique. Its Bavarian archrival actually got there first with the launch of its own sub-brand, BMW i. It currently offers several different electrified options: the $141,000 plug-in hybrid i8 sports car and, for those on a tighter budget, the $42,000 all-electric i3 city car. "A new era of mobility is about to begin," the CEO Harald Krueger said during a media roundtable in Los Angeles a few months back that followed the unveiling of an assortment of BMW show cars. While there are no immediate plans to build the BMW Vision 100 concept, the i3 brand will get at least two more models over the next few years, including a roadster version of the i8.

Mercedes looks to an emission-free future with its EQ, a concept car planned for production. It will anchor the company's electric brand within a brand.

European automakers were initially slow to embrace electrification—largely due to their historical focus on high-mileage diesels—but that's rapidly changing, and for several reasons. Battery technology improvement is one factor. Increasingly stringent global emissions and mileage standards is another. There's also the backlash from Volkswagen AG's costly and embarrassing diesel emissions scandal. The automaker had long promised its newest "bit burners" could deliver solid mileage, great performance and extremely low emissions. But, in a word, it lied, resorting to highly sophisticated software code that could detect when one of its VW, Audi or Porsche diesel models was undergoing emissions tests and briefly modify engine settings to meet U.S. standards. Otherwise, the engines would spew out as much as 40 times the mandated pollution limits.

While VW is struggling to find a fix, company officials also announced in Paris that they will launch a battery-based sub-brand, VW I.D., with at least 30 plug-based models set to reach market by 2025. And that doesn't include the various plug-ins and BEVs coming from the German giant's numerous upscale brands. Bentley, for one, is about to launch a PHEV version of its new Bentayga sport-utility vehicle, and even Lamborghini will have a plug-in option for the Urus SUV it is developing.

Then there's Audi, which already markets an assortment of PHEV models, such as the A3 e-tron. The mid-range luxury marque has even bigger plans in the works. The brand's CEO Rupert Stadler recently forecasted that 25 to 30 percent of Audi's sales will come from electrified models by 2025. He hinted that at least three models are already in the works, including an all-electric midsize SUV. Due to market in 2018, it will serve as an alternative to the popular Q5 ute and likely be called the Q6 e-tron.

Many of the new plug-based models are utility vehicles, perhaps no surprise, considering that in the U.S. market SUVs, pickups and vans now account for nearly two-thirds of all new vehicle sales, with demand growing in overseas markets as diverse as Berlin and Beijing. Alternative power sources can help SUVs and other light trucks, with their large sizes and poorer aerodynamics, meet increasingly stringent government mileage and emissions mandates. Jaguar's new F-Pace has been on sale for less than a year, but it's already the brand's best-seller. So, it seems logical that the British marque's new I-Pace concept is also an SUV—in this case, however, one powered by a twin-motor electric driveline. While similar in overall size to the F-Pace, the prototype has a decidedly different look and proportions. Its distinctive cab-forward design is meant to maximize the benefits of battery propulsion. That means neck-snapping acceleration as well as the passenger and cargo space usually found in a size class above it.

"Electrification gives us the opportunity to tear up the [design] rulebook," said Ian Callum, Jaguar's design director, during a media background briefing ahead of the official I-Pace debut at November's L.A. Auto Show. Like almost all of the latest battery-electric vehicles, the I-Pace—which will go into production in two years—uses a platform that's something like a giant skateboard. Its batteries are integrated into the vehicle load floor, with the motors mounted onto the front and rear axles. Without a big engine under the hood, much of that space can be repurposed, yielding a cavernous interior despite the concept's modest exterior footprint.

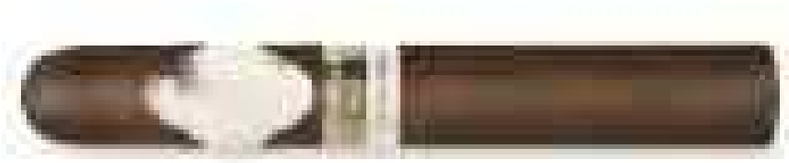
It's a layout you'll be seeing more frequently in the future and, with automakers also rushing to put autonomous technology into production early in the next decade, it will make it possible for passengers and drivers alike to swivel seats and transform their vehicles into living rooms on wheels.

Expect to see virtually every major, high-line automaker add new plug-based models, as well as conventional hybrids, to their lineups by the end of the decade. You'll also see a lot of new names enter a business that had been all but closed to start-ups since the end of the Second World War. None is as ambitious as Tesla Motors, founded by the visionary South African entrepreneur Elon Musk—who also started up the private SpaceX rocket service. Musk was intent on building a rocket on wheels, starting with the limited-production two-seat Tesla Roadster. It's pushing the performance envelope even further with its two current product lines, the Model S sedan and Model X utility vehicle. Equipped with the optional Ludicrous Mode—the name lifted from the Mel Brooks movie *Spaceballs*—they can speed from 0 to 60 in less than three seconds. In fact, with that optional performance package, the Model S is so fast that it's the first production car ever to generate more than one full G of acceleration—in other words, it could out-accelerate the force of gravity.

Jaguar's I-Pace mimics its popular new F-Pace as an SUV, but with a different shape that maximizes its battery propulsion and cargo space.

But an assortment of new rivals want to topple Tesla from its performance perch. That includes the likes of Faraday Future, which is building a new factory near Las Vegas to start building its FF91 hypercar in 2018. With about 60 percent more power than the Model S with Ludicrous Mode, it's several tenths of a second faster off the line. Another promising start-up is Lucid Motors, which is billing its $140,000 Lucid Air as a "private jet on wheels." It not only matches the FF91's 1,000 horsepower, but equips its cabin with Bentley-esque features, such as rear seats that can fold nearly flat.

Performance is one thing, but the plug-in vehicles now coming to market aim to overcome another serious obstacle to consumer acceptance: dreaded "range anxiety." There are several ways to accomplish this. One is the plug-in hybrid—sometimes known as an extended-range electric vehicle. The new BMW 530e, which comes to market by the middle of this year, is a good example. It pairs a turbocharged four-cylinder engine with an electric motor, drawing power from a modest-sized lithium-ion battery pack able to yield about 30 miles per charge. Studies show that's enough for the typical American worker's daily commute. But for longer drives, the gas engine takes over when the battery runs down. The combination powertrain requires little to no sacrifice, notes Ludwig Willisch, the CEO of BMW's North American operations, delivering the same performance as the pure, gas-powered 530i model.



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Tesla Model S 100d is the current mileage-range champ at 300+ miles. The plummeting price of kilowatt-hours makes it possible.

"We think plug-ins will be the most popular solution," at least in the near-term, for most buyers, says Willisch, and most of BMW's key competitors seem to agree, considering there will be north of 30 and possibly as many as 40 luxury plug-in hybrids on the market by the beginning of the coming decade.

But some green car proponents contend that PHEVs are just a stop-gap solution. Count Tesla's Musk among them. His answer to range anxiety is to pack more and more powerful batteries into his products. The new Model S 100d is the current mileage champ, the first production electric vehicle to top 300 miles a charge. But, again, rivals aren't ceding that title to Tesla. Audi is aiming for as much as 400 miles in range with its Q6 e-tron, and the FF91 and Lucid Air are targeting similar numbers. There's a good shot we'll see battery cars soon hitting 500 miles, or double what a typical car can deliver today on a tank of gas.

Only a few years ago, that would have priced electric vehicles out of the hands of all but the most affluent motorists. But there's a revolution underway with lithium-ion technology. Batteries are not only becoming smaller, lighter and more powerful, but far more affordable. When Nissan launched the world's first mass-production battery-electric vehicle, the Leaf, in 2010, a kilowatt-hour of lithium cells cost about $1,000. Its 24 kWh pack — barely good enough for 100 miles a charge — cost the factory $24,000. While most manufacturers treat battery costs like a state secret, General Motors has revealed it is paying less than $150 a kilowatt-hour for the cells in its new Chevrolet Bolt EV. Its 60 kWh pack, capable of 238 miles per charge, costs less than $10,000.

That still must come down. The Boston Consulting Group estimates batteries eventually will need to drop below $100 per kWh to make EVs cost-competitive with conventional gas models. But that could be reached before the end of the decade.

There's yet another challenge to widespread acceptance: keeping your EV charged. When the Leaf hit market just seven years ago, there were only a few thousand of the faster, 240-volt Level 2 public charging facilities across the entire U.S. But as of late last year, the U.S. Department of Energy counted 14,349 of them, capable of handling more than 36,000 vehicles at a time — and that doesn't include the tens of thousands of chargers EV owners have installed. While many of these are publicly operated, there's growing corporate support, with a number of private ventures, such as ChargePoint, expecting to tap into a lucrative business opportunity in the coming years. "It won't be long before drivers start suffering from 'gas anxiety,' not range anxiety," says ChargePoint CEO Pasquale Romano.

The numbers are expected to continue to grow. In some communities, new housing and commercial projects must add chargers. But, equally important, there are starting to be more super-fast, Level 3 chargers that can give a Tesla Model S P100d an 80 percent top-off in 30 to 60 minutes. (Tesla itself is setting up a proprietary network of high-speed Supercharger across North America.) That means you can now travel from San Francisco, say, to Los Angeles, make a lunch stop along the way and have your car ready to go before you're done eating. In Europe, meanwhile, a public-private consortium that includes BMW, Daimler, Ford and the various Volkswagen AG brands will soon begin rolling out ultra-fast Level 4 chargers. A Chevrolet Bolt could get an 80 percent recharge in 30 minutes or less.

Not everyone is convinced the technology will carve out a significant niche — never mind completely supplant the time-tested internal-combustion engine. The challenge remains to drive down costs and install enough fast chargers to satisfy a growing universe of plug-in models.

And automotive engineers making on gas and diesel powertrains are not throwing in the towel. An assortment of promising technologies could yield significant improvements in fuel economy while delivering still better performance and emissions numbers. Mazda is expected to launch one such breakthrough late next year in the next-generation Mazda3 model. Dubbed the homogeneous-charge compression ignition, or HCCI, it has many of the positive attributes of the diesel engine — using compression, rather than spark plugs to ignite the air/fuel mixture — but runs on gasoline. HCCI should boost fuel efficiency by 30 percent compared with traditional gas engines.

Then there's Achates, a San Diego-based research and engineering firm, which has contracts from seven different automakers to develop something called the opposed-piston engine, or OPE. It uses two pistons per cylinder and also relies on compression, rather than spark, ignition, doubling the mileage of a conventional gas engine. Nissan's next-generation QX50 SUV will, for 2018, mark the debut of the Variable-Compression

Turbo engine, which can adjust its compression ratio from 8:1 to 14:1, responding upon demands for power and fuel economy. Cheap fuel and high-efficiency engines could set a tough hurdle for electric vehicles to clear.

Major automakers like VW, Toyota, Nissan and General Motors are straining their budgets trying to cover all the possible bases. The challenge could prove especially tough for start-ups like Tesla and Faraday Future. Musk and company have only rarely turned a profit — though they hope to get solidly into the black with next year's launch of the mid-priced Model 3 sedan. Faraday, meanwhile, has temporarily halted work on its Nevada assembly plant while it raises new capital.

Eco friendly autos: the (clockwise from top left) the Karma Revero, the Porsche Mission E concept and Lucid Motors' Air demonstrate the industry's faith in the green segment.

No one knows more about the financial challenge of launching a new battery-car company than Henrik Fisker. The Danish car designer and entrepreneur's promising Fisker Automotive had a spectacular short circuit, declaring bankruptcy in 2013. Its assets, however, were purchased by China's Wanxiang Group, which recently renamed the company Karma, and Fisker's plug-in hybrid model is itself now called the Revero. The name is new, as are a few subtle details, such as the grille and badge, but "The vehicle... is largely the same" as the old Fisker, says Jim Taylor, the longtime General Motors executive who is now serving as the COO of California-based Karma. Karma was the original name for the four-seat plug-in hybrid. Despite Fisker's financial problems, the sleek sports car received widespread praise for its styling and unique drivetrain. And so, with a few tweaks to bring it up to date, the new owners have brought it back.

On the outside, the Revero gets tweaks to the original "mustache" grille, as well as new wheels and eight new paint colors. There's also a new solar roof capable of producing enough power each day to travel another 1.5 miles in electric mode.

Interior electronics have all been updated. Like the original plug-in, Revero uses two electric motors, along with the gas engine. Karma is reportedly looking to replace that General Motors-sourced 1.4-gallon engine with a more sophisticated BMW engine. Even six years after it was first introduced, the sport car remains one of the sexiest vehicles on the road.

For all the technical challenges, politics are also likely to play a role in determining how big the battery-car market grows. America's new President Donald Trump has shown plenty of skepticism, among other things, about global warming, something he has labeled a Chinese "hoax." He is giving strong consideration to rolling back the 54.5 mpg CAFE (corporate average fuel economy) standard, as well as the $7,500 federal tax credits for qualifying electric vehicles. Those moves, some worry, could cause the American market for green vehicles to collapse.

"The brief answer is that we don't know what will occur with a Trump administration and electric vehicles," says David Reichmuth, an executive with the Union of Concerned Scientists. But not everyone is quite so worried. "I don't think people are choosing electric cars only because of subsidies," says Annette Winkler, a senior executive with Daimler AG, and head of the German maker's Smart brand.

She also believes that even if the new administration pulls the plug, demand for electrified models will continue to grow in other markets where governments are far more committed to the technology. China is aggressively encouraging a switch to electric propulsion as an answer to its endemic smog problems. In some cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, there are monthly limits on new vehicle registrations — restrictions that don't apply to electric vehicles. In 2015, China became the world's largest market for plug-in models. Europe, meanwhile, is also encouraging electrification and a number of cities, such as Paris, are considering restrictions that might bar anything but zero-emissions vehicles. Germany, home of the Autobahn, has gone so far as to lay out preliminary plans to ban all internal combustion engine vehicles within the next two decades.

So, despite the challenges they still face, the future is looking increasingly positive for plug models, says Jaguar design chief Callum. "Our view is that electric cars are here to stay." ✦

Paul A. Eisenstein is publisher of the website TheDetroitBureau.com.

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Chime Time

INNOVATIVE MINUTE REPEATERS REVIVE WATCHMAKING'S ULTIMATE COMPLICATION: A FUNCTION THAT ANNOUNCES TIME WITH SOUNDS

BY LAURIE KAHLE

For centuries, ancient clock towers in European villages have marked the passing of time with the ringing of bells. In the 15th and 16th centuries, early watchmakers sought to replicate this ritual by producing timepieces with small bells in the movement. Technology advanced, and the first minute repeaters—watches that tell the time with music—emerged in Germany in the 1720s. Sixty years later, the visionary watchmaker Abraham-Louis Breguet advanced the art of striking watches by replacing bells with steel blades curved around the movement to produce a thinner watch with clearer sound. That paved the way for the modern minute repeater, which is widely considered watchmaking's ultimate complication. Minute repeater mechanisms eventually made their way into wristwatches in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

When activated, a minute repeater will chime the time to the nearest minute on demand. Tiny hammers strike finely tuned wire gongs, allowing you to count the hours, quarter hours and minutes, to discern the time musically rather than visually, which was helpful in the pre-electric age—or even today at times when it's inconvenient to view the watch dial. Not surprisingly, carrying a miniature version of a clock tower in your pocket, and later on your wrist, has always been a privilege of the very, very wealthy. Today's minute repeaters, especially when combined with other grande ultra complications, such as tourbillons, frequently climb into the mid-six figures and well above. But you don't have to be able to afford a minute repeater to appreciate the art form.

In recent years, even as the luxury watch market has suffered a lull, precious minute repeaters have undergone something of a renaissance, with both old guard and younger brands stuffing their technical stuff while bringing the traditional minute repeater into the 21st century with unconventional, even avant-garde, designs and space-age materials, such as titanium and sapphire crystal. Computer technology is being leveraged to analyze the tones for purity and test for sound quality, and the old-world complication is being paired with contemporary practical functions such as GMTs and power reserves. Dials are opened up to reveal the mechanism in operation and to allow the sound to travel, and cases are also being tweaked to amplify sound. Overall, a number of innovations have advanced the minute repeater to become more reliable and less delicate, so it can be worn daily, rather than stored in a safe for a special occasion.

Arguably the most romantic and poetic watch complication, a minute repeater is a testament to the mastery of the watchmaker who produces it. And while they are now aided by modern technology that can scientifically test various parameters of the watch's performance, the beauty of the song is in the ear of the beholder, so the human element remains essential. Because each piece is painstakingly assembled and tuned by ear, each minute repeater is unique, like any other handmade musical instrument.

Patek Philippe, historically one of the most revered makers of minute repeaters, staged an event recently in which a number of its minute repeaters were tested side by side for comparison. To evaluate a minute repeater, you

AUDEMARS PIGUET

PANERAI

BULGARI

CHOPARD

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listen for certain qualities, such as a harmonious tone with a warm full pitch, rather than thin, metallic or sharp/flat notes. The volume and tempo should also be steady and consistent through the longest chime—12:59—which ideally lasts 18 to 20 seconds, per Patek Philippe. And the buzz created by the centrifugal governor mechanism that drives the hammers should be minimal so as not to distract from the song.

Achieving these goals requires a rare and studied expertise. For a watchmaker to know how to make a single gong correctly, he will have to make about 100 gongs in training. Then he must select the individual gongs for each watch, choosing from Patek Philippe's 21 different classes of gongs of differing diameters and lengths. Then the gongs must be soldered to the main plate correctly to avoid vibration that can spoil the sound. Fine-tuning follows, as the watchmaker trims the length of the gongs to produce an ideal sound.

In 2003, the brand, which produced its first minute repeater in 1845, was the first to use computer analysis of the notes to get an objective measure of the quality of the sound. Once the watchmaker is satisfied, they place the watch in a safe-like box fitted with two microphones that feeds into a computer to create a "sound picture." If the watch passes the analytics, it progresses to the head of the grand complications department for approval, and from there, the watchmaker who produced it presents it to Thierry Stern, Patek's president, who personally tests and approves each minute repeater before it leaves the factory. The song of each watch is stored on a computer so when the watch comes back for servicing or repair, they can test it to make sure its original sound is preserved before it is returned.

Purchasers of Patek minute repeaters go through an application process designed to thwart speculators. "I want to...make sure they are being worn and not being used as baseball cards."

If you want to purchase this year's resolutely classical Ref. 5539G Minute Repeater Tourbillon (price upon request, patek.com) with seconds sub-dial and blue enamel dial, or any other Patek minute repeater for that matter, you must first be approved by the brand, which initiated an application process to thwart speculators. "A few years back, people were buying these pieces, and they were not even being opened—they were stuck in a vault, and people were using them as speculative watches," explains Larry Pettinelli, the brand's U.S. president. "Mr. Stern said, we're making so few of these, I want to know my customer and make sure they are being worn and not being used as baseball cards."

Vacheron Constantin, another historic brand, also stayed true to aesthetic traditions with this year's Traditionnelle minute repeater tourbillon powered by the new hand-wound Caliber 2755 TMR, which was designed, developed and produced in-house in keeping with strict quality standards of the Hallmark of Geneva, or Geneva Seal, ensuring excellent finishing and performance criteria have been met. Available in rose gold ($482,000, vacheron-constantin.com), considered superior for sound propagation, and platinum ($536,000), the watches' dials are engraved with a pattern exclusive to the brand using the 18th-century technique of hand-guilloché.

Despite a long history in the niche, Audemars Piguet took an avant-garde approach with the record-breaking Royal Oak Supersonnerie ($520,000 Swiss francs, audemarspiguet.com), which debuted as a concept piece last year and became available this year. Hailed as the loudest minute repeater ever produced, the Supersonnerie can be heard from across the room, while most repeaters require listeners to crane their ear to the wrist.

Even with its laundry list of patents, design innovations that amplify sound and a high-tech aesthetic, the Supersonnerie traces its origins to a 1924 watch in the brand's archive. Brand ambassador Claudio Cavaliere points out that during the 1920s and '30s, more people sang and played musical instruments for leisure, perhaps explaining why minute repeaters from that period were exceptional. "They were quite good at tuning

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musical instruments and good at tuning minute repeaters as well," he says. "Like monks in the Middle Ages making good wines who had no idea why the wine was good, those watchmakers were capable of properly tuning the sound, but did not know exactly how."

Now armed with modern technology, the brand could enlist engineers, musicians and acousticians to define 200 parameters that were influencing the sound, both technical and subjective, to replicate the tones of the vintage watch. "If you tune a piano just with a machine that measures the frequency, it doesn't sound so good," Cavaliere explains. "You need someone to tune it in a human way, where our brains perceive the frequencies the best. You can make a very pure sound technically, but if perception of that sound is ugly for the human brain, it's not a good sound." So while the machines can provide the watchmakers targets to measure up against, they still require the soulful qualities of the human ear and brain to complete the final tuning.

Aside from unprecedented volume, Audemars also sought to produce a minute repeater rugged enough to wear every day. And the Supersonnerie's 44 mm titanium (a material hailed for sound-propagation qualities) is water-resistant to 20 meters, should you decide to take a dip with a half-million dollar watch strapped to your wrist.

Cartier also chose titanium for the latest version of its Rotonde de Cartier minute repeater flying tourbillon (price upon request, cartier.com) powered by the manual winding 9402 MC in-house movement, which is individually numbered and certified with the Geneva Hallmark.

For their first forays into the minute repeater field this year, Bulgari and Panerai took audaciously modern approaches to create stylish, contemporary repeaters that are robust enough to stand up to everyday wear and tear.

Bulgari's Octo Finissimo Minute Repeater ($155,000, bulgari.com) went a step further, claiming the record for the world's thinness minute repeater at 6.85 mm thick. "We wanted the minute repeater to be worn on the wrist, not stay in the safe," says Guido Terreni, managing director of Bulgari Watches, who points out the bold, faceted case imparts a disruptive attitude that contrasts with the dial's rather understated appearance.

JAEGER-LECOULTRE

BREGUET

A watchmaker proves the minute hammer into the movement of a Chopard L.U.C. Fair Strike, the company's debut minute repeater.

"You bring it to life when you activate it," he explains. "But when it is not functioning, it can seem an ordinary watch, and that's part of the beauty of it."

Sound propagation is a challenge in the compact confines of an ultra-thin case, which is the reason why they selected titanium for the metal. Bulgari's engineers also opened up the dial, laser cutting the brand's stylized numeric and stick indexes in the thin wafer of titanium to allow the sound to travel through the case. And like the aforementioned brands, Bulgari also tests the sound for intensity, tempo and the purity of the notes, among other parameters.

Panerai also focused on the case to enhance the sound of its Radiomir 1940 Minute Repeater Carillon Tourbillon GMT (price upon request, panerai.com), which is the most complicated watch the brand has ever built. Inside the red-gold case, which is constructed of two soldered halves, they hollowed out a channel to create an acoustic chamber that serves as an amplifier. The 5Npt alloy includes platinum, which adds density and weight to the metal, further enhancing resonance. Clients can also choose white gold and possibly even titanium down the road. The skeletonized movement imparts an edgy aesthetic to the Radiomir design, whose case proportions pay tribute to the brand's original tool watches produced for the Italian Royal Navy in the mid-20th century. And in a modern twist, you can customize various elements including the case metal, finishes, bands and even the color of the luminous SuperLuminova markings.

The addition of a GMT (tracking two time zones) makes a contemporary statement, and, in an unprecedented flourish, the watch can chime both home and local times by manipulating the crown. The Radiomir is designed with four barrels, two dedicated to the time and the 30-second tourbillon, and the other two work the chiming mechanisms. Thanks to this, says Frederic Dreyer, Panerai's director of research and development, "you can play with the chiming mechanism and you will never reduce the four-day power reserve of the movement, which is really nice."

As Panerai prides itself on reliability, the team developed layered security systems to protect the movement from damage caused by unintended user error. Therefore, it is impossible to activate the repeater while you are setting the time and vice versa. "We have expertise in long power-reserve movements and chronographs, so the goal was the same: to make a reliable minute repeater," says Dryer. The watch must pass shock tests as well as sound tests, and, it is water-resistant down to 30 meters.

In another break from tradition, the Panerai has a decimal chiming sequence rather than the typical quarter format. In a melodic flourish, it is equipped with three hammers and three gongs, endowing it with the term carillon, a reference to a musical instrument with numerous bells. The chiming sequence allows you to determine the time in a format that parallels a digital watch. When you activate the push piece at 8 o'clock, the watch strikes a single low note for hours, each 10-minute segment is marked with a three-note high-to-low melody, and a single high note counts off the minutes. "The 10-minute chime pattern makes it easier to understand the time when you hear the song," says Dreyer.

You cannot replace everything with technology. Machines cannot measure emotion. It's like a sports car: you can measure the power, but you cannot measure the smile it puts on your face.

A. Lange & Söhne's director of product development Anthony de Haas agrees, which is why last year's Zeitwerk Minute Repeater ($467,700, alange-soehne.com) is equipped with a decimal chime sequence. "We wanted to create a modern interpretation of a classical complication," says de Haas. "A decimal system is more modern."

Using a push button rather than a typical slide lever to activate the chiming sequence, Zeitwerk is also equipped with safety systems that prevent you from setting the time while the striking system is activated. Another feature disables the power-hungry repeater when power drains below 12 hours, which preserves time-keeping accuracy. A patented delay-of-time setting compensates for when the chiming sequence is started at the turn of the hour. For example, if you activate the repeater at 12:59, the hands will stay in place until after the sequence finishes, then they will instantly snap to the correct time.

De Haas points out that while it would have been expected for the German brand to launch its first striking watch in the über-classical 1815 range, he relished the element of surprise generated by introducing the Zeitwerk striking watch. "That's the thing you should always try," he says. "Because, to be honest, how many hundreds of years have mechanical watches been made? You have to be different, take a different approach, otherwise no one has a reason to buy your watches."

Chopard debuted its first minute repeater, the L.U.C. Full Strike (price available on request, chopard.com) this year to mark the 20th anniversary of its manufacture in Fleurier, Switzerland. Chopard spent more than six years developing the showpiece that employs sapphire crystal—rather than metal—gongs to attain the acoustic quality of a silver spoon tapping a crystal goblet. The 42.5-mm case is made of the brand's proprietary Fairmined rose gold, which is ethically sourced in South America. The clear sapphire gongs are connected to the dial crystal creating the effect of a loudspeaker to amplify the sound, and an aperture at 10 o'clock provides a window into the mechanism.

The calibre 08.01-L movement is the result of almost 15,000 hours of development. Like in other next-gen minute repeaters, the movement features security systems to prevent you from unintentionally damaging it. Move the crown in one direction to wind the movement and in the other direction to wind the striking mechanism, which has the energy capacity to strike 12:59–12 times. The dial features a double power reserve indicator at 2 o'clock with superimposed bands that display the energy remaining in the strike mechanism's reserve as well as the main movement's reserve.

Jaeger-LeCoultre pioneered the concept of integrating gongs with the watch's crystal to amplify sound, dubbing it "crystal gong." The heel of the gong is soldered to the crystal that spans over the dial to magnify the sound created by two trebuchet hammers. The regulator that controls the energy delivered to the barrel of the minute repeater is nearly silent at 20 decibels, so nothing interferes with the pure sound of the notes. This year, Jaeger introduced the now-evolved technology in its first automatic minute repeater, the 39mm Master Grande Tradition Minute Repeater ($180,000, jaeger-lecoultre.com), which pays homage to 19th-century pocket watches. The mechanism is activated with the push of a button with its own built-in security system: if you push the button accidentally while the chime is ringing, it will not start again, preventing damage to the movement. The 22-karat pink gold oscillating weight bears the brand's logo.

Breguet also took a novel approach to the development of the gongs in its Tradition Répétition Minutes Tourbillon ($460,700, breguet.com), which debuted in 2015 and became available to order this year. Intending to rethink the minute repeater, which its founder Abraham-Louis Breguet played an integral part in developing, Breguet started with a blank slate. They sampled about 100,000 synthesized tones to choose two and then built the watch to reproduce them.

They also took a radical approach to the gongs, which spread horizontally across the dial—rather than encircling the movement—and attach to the bezel, which is designed to project the sound. The hammers of the striking mechanism, activated by a push button, strike the gongs vertically from beneath. Breguet even took poetic license with the classical minute repeater melody, rewriting the quarter-note chime to play low to high, instead of vice versa. The watch's peripheral winding system provides you with an unimpeded view of all the mechanics at work.

While technology may have ushered in a new golden age of minute repeaters, it is still one of the hardest complications to industrialize, because the quality of the song relies on how it is perceived by people rather than machines. "The minute repeater was the last complication that was not, in a way, industrialized," says Audemars Piguet's Cavaliere. "You need specific know-how to make the finest tuning of the gongs. You need to get this balance with the technology helping the man to be better. You cannot replace everything with technology, specifically with sound. Machines cannot measure emotion. It's like a sports car: you can measure the power, but you cannot measure the smile it puts on your face when you drive it." ⊕

Laurie Kahle writes regularly about timepieces for Clear Arctonaco.

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cigars

116 CIGAR REVIEW
Our expert tasting panel reviews 81 cigars from around the world to judge their quality. One emerged as a classic, rating 95 points on our 100-point scale.

130 VINTAGE TASTING
A trip back in time as we sample two pre-Castro cigars, several vintage Cubans and a Miami-made La Gloria Cubana rolled in 1993.

133 RATINGS ANALYSIS
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139 CUBA'S BLEND MASTERS
We look at the organization in Cuba that ensures consistency of the country's famed cigar blends.

churchills

It's the Churchill chacra. Churchill is a name to be, and the cigar that a connoisseur hopes to smoke at least once in their life. The Cuban Cohiba Esplendidos, it comes in 95 points, which is a score that Cuban Affectionados 100-point scale, and is by far the most complex, sophisticated cigar of the review. These panoramic Esplendidos didn't come from wooden boxes, but from a simply elegant pack made of heavy card-stock paper. Some say that it is not put in fancy cigars in the smaller packages because the consumer can't appreciate them for quality. This point seemingly debunks that notion. There's a very well-priced pick for a cigar such as this one, but with a score of 95 points, who cares?

CUBA
RING GAUGE 47 LENGTH 7"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE AUGUST 2015

COHIBA ESPLENDIDO — **95**

Both measured and bold, this refined cigar leaves very precise impressions of smoky peanuts, leather and roasted coffee beans on the palate. Sweeter notes of candied citrus and dried fruit balance the savory components. Complex and harmonious.

US$ N/A U.K.£ £62.48

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 49 LENGTH 7 1/4"
FILLER NICARAGUA DOM REP
BINDER ECUADOR
WRAPPER CUBA/JOHN BROADLEAF

E.P. CARRILLO MADURO CHURCHILL ESPECIAL — **91**

A toasty, oily smoke that resonates with sweet cocoa bean notes and a touch of coffee on the finish. It's a dark, oily cigar with even combustion.

US$ 67.20 U.K.£ N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 49 LENGTH 7"
FILLER NICARAGUA HONDURAS MEXICO COLOMBIA
BINDER COSTA RICA
WRAPPER BRAZIL

7-20-4 CHURCHILL — **89**

A piguated Churchill cooked in a very dark wrapper. It's rich and earthy with sweet notes that range from cocoa and pecan to molasses. The finish leaves a dry minerals aftertaste.

US$ 66.35 U.K.£ N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 49 LENGTH 7 1/4"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE CHURCHILL — **89**

Slim and squeezy pressed, this Churchill starts with sweet dried berries, ginger snap and cocoa bean qualities before taking on flinty notes and a vaguely sulfury finish.

US$ 66.25 U.K.£ N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 7"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER CUBA/JOHN BROADLEAF

LA GLORIA CUBANA CHURCHILL MADURO — **89**

Nearly black in appearance, this imposing Churchill has some light vanilla-accented dark chocolate. Initial notes of leather and earth carry a chewy note of burnt toast, wheat and a minerals finish.

US$ 66.59 U.K.£ N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 7"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

SAN CRISTOBAL REVELATION TRIUMPH — **89**

There's an underlying sweetness to this woody, oily smoke. A touch of light chocolate complements the cedary finish.

US$ 28.50 U.K.£ N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 48 LENGTH 7"
FILLER HONDURAS DOM REP
BINDER HONDURAS
WRAPPER ECUADOR

CAMACHO CONNECTICUT CHURCHILL 88

Draped in a ocean wrapper, this yellowish Churchill starts with a light, straw and hay character before building to heavier notes of wheat and graham cracker.
US$:68.75 UK:N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 6 5/8"
FILLER NICARAGUA HONDURAS
BINDER HONDURAS
WRAPPER HONDURAS

CASA MAGNA OSCURO CHURCHILL GORDO 88

A tightly packed cigar with a firm draw that delivers a leathery, cedary smoke that also smacks of pine and eucalyptus.
US$:[illegible] UK:N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 47 LENGTH 6 7/8"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER MEXICO
WRAPPER ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF WINSTON CHURCHILL CHURCHILL 88

Musty and damp, this cigar picks up touches of ginger and wood. The finish is sweet with caramel notes, but the underlying mustiness persists.
US$:[illegible] UK:N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 7 1/4"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

DIAMOND CROWN JULIUS CAESER CHURCHILL 88

There are some soft spots on the body of this cigar, but it smokes evenly. Raw cocoa notes become a bit more refined before a boozy note of bitter herbal liqueur emerges. The finish is minty.
US$:[illegible] UK:N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 48 LENGTH 6 3/4"
FILLER NICARAGUA HONDURAS
DOM REP
BINDER USA JOHN SHADE
WRAPPER USA JOHN SHADE

HOYO DE MONTERREY EXCALIBUR NO. II 88

Though floral and herbal at first, this lightly colored Churchill shows some distinct notes of leather and nougat, before a mild, tea like finish.
US$:[illegible] UK:N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 7"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER INDONESIA

ROMEO Y JULIETA 1875 CHURCHILL 88

A grayish Churchill with a dead even draw and burn, initial broadly yeasty notes become warm and toasty. Some woody notes emerge as well before the faintly fruity finish.
US$:67.40 UK:N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 7"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER USA JOHN SHADE

MONTECRISTO CLASSIC CHURCHILL 87

As mild as it looks, this lightly hued Churchill offers a woody, herbal smoke with hints of vanilla and a nutty touch of pecan on the finish.
US$:[illegible] UK:N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 58 LENGTH 7"
FILLER HONDURAS NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

SAINT LUIS REY CHURCHILL 84

Though dark, attractive and gleaming with oil, this cigar is muddled and unfocused, with scattered notes of salt and leather turning both sweet and bitter on every other puff. The aftertaste is sour.
US$:69.40 UK:N/A

corona gordas

Joya de Nicaragua may not be the oldest or so-called "boutique" rolling factory in Nicaragua. But it has a few things in its favor: [illegible] of aged tobacco. A [illegible] together a most potent [illegible] which the Joya de Nicaragua Black Nocturno, which scored 93 points, the best score in this category. A [illegible] per cigar [illegible] 90 points. The [illegible] 93 points. The [illegible] to say you can't have a great smoke in a thicker size. The Cohiba Nicaragua N54 and Espinosa Habano No. 5 both [illegible] 91 points and both [illegible] 90 points. A [illegible] Nicaragua tobacco.

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 1/4"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER MEXICO

JOYA DE NICARAGUA BLACK NOCTURNO — 93
This corona gorda leaves precise impressions of black cherry and cocoa nibs on the palate, which are enriched by notes of leather, nougat and a hint of peppermint.
US: $5.95 UK: N/A

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 54 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER HONDURAS

COHIBA NICARAGUA N54 — 91
Notes of white pepper and cumin lead to a bold coffee bean character before the sweet, fruity finish. It's a dark and oily cigar that draws and burns evenly.
US: $14.00 UK: N/A

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 6"
FILLER ECUADOR
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

ESPINOSA HABANO NO. 5 — 91
There's a solid draw to this well-made corona gorda. Sweet notes of brown sugar and molasses are complemented by a spicy, minerals finish.
US: $8.50 UK: N/A

CUBA
RINGGAUGE 50 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE MARCH 2016

HOYO DE MONTERREY EPICURE ESPECIAL — 90
An easy, cedary cigar with a touch of sweetness and fresh tobacco underpinnings. The cedar notes gain intensity, and resume on the finish.
US: N/A UK: £22.00

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 6"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

ILLUSIONE GARAGISTE TORO — 90
The draw and burn of this cigar are even and consistent. Notes of roasted cashew and orange tea are balanced by earthy undertones and a unique pecan sweetness.
US: $8.85 UK: N/A

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 55 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

AGING ROOM PELO DE ORO SCHERZO — 89
This dark, velvety cigar wears a pigtail cap. Its easy draw imparts notes of dry woods, dark chocolate and a touch of fruit before a dry finish with a hint of eucalyptus.
US: $13.50 UK: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 47 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

CASA CUBA DIVINE INSPIRATION 89
A slim, softly pressed cigar draped in a pale wrapper. Notes of cinnamon and nutmeg are balanced by hints of nougat, minerals and faint char. The finish is chewy.
US$ 69.00 U.K.: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE DECEMBER 2015

H. UPMANN CONNOSSIEUR A 89
Two prominent, gnarly veins stretch along the wrapper of this tawny colored toro, which burns evenly. It's earthy and floral, but also imparts notes of salt with a touch of sweetness and an underlying spice. Medium to full bodied.
US$: N/A U.K.: £28.48

U.S.A.
RING GAUGE 43 LENGTH 5 3/4"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER ECUADOR
WRAPPER ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI MIAMI TORO 89
Earthy, cocoa notes are joined by a sweet and nutty raisin bread quality. The finish leaves a chalky aftertaste.
US$: £18.00 U.K.: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 6 1/4"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE OCTOBER 2015

MONTECRISTO DOUBLE EDMUNDO 89
Covered in gnarly veins, this toro is topped with a very flat head. It's a predominantly nutty smoke with floral and peppery qualities and a woody finish.
US$: N/A U.K.: £24.88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 6"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER CAMEROON

PARTAGAS RAMON Y RAMON MAXIM GRANDE 89
Draped in a veiny wrapper, this corona gorda has a lush, even draw that delivers notes of wood, dry almonds and a touch of spice before an herbal finish.
US$: 67.99 U.K.: N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 6"
FILLER HONDURAS NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVE TITAN (TUBO) 89
Gleaming with oil, the reddish brown toro begins herbal and spicy before delivering notes of earth and leather. A touch of graham cracker sweetness precedes the wheat like finish.
US$: 67.65 U.K.: N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 6 1/4"
FILLER NICARAGUA HONDURAS
BINDER NICARAGUA HONDURAS
WRAPPER HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY POST EMBARGO TORO 88
Streaky, oily and box pressed, this toro imparts a sweet honey and wood quality with touches of toast and nuts, but the flavors disappear rather quickly for a short finish.
US$: £8.10 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 6"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF SIGNATURE TORO 87
A tan toro covered in a pristine wrapper. Initial puffs are grassy with touches of slate and pine needles. Hints of coffee add sweetness before the slightly metallic finish.
US$: £21.50 U.K.: N/A

figurados

Any cigar that scores 93 points yet retails for less than $10 belongs in your humidor. Consider that simple cigar [illegible]. Now consider the Padrón 6000 Maduro, which scored 93 points and has a suggested retail price of $8.10. True, Padrón's core line is sometimes overpolled for the fancier 1964 Anniversary Series or the Serie 1926, but Padrón has never been [illegible] cigar. In the case of this 93-point Padrón 6000, the reward could [illegible] have been better. Between its cocoa powder [illegible] of sweetness, this cigar [illegible] another Padrón—rich and delicious. Made by the Fuentes in the Dominican Republic, the Ashton Virgin Sun Grown Belicoso No. 1 scored 92 points. Its blend of fancy fillers and Dominican tobacco [illegible] and finished by the dark Sumatra-seed wrapper grown in Ecuador. As with most Ashton Virgin Sun Growns, the Belicoso has a savory [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible]—[illegible] interesting [illegible] cigars.

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 6000 MADURO
Delicious yet easy, this slightly pressed torpedo has an underlying toastiness complemented by notes of cocoa powder and a sweet, nougat finish.
US$: 8.10 U.K.: N/A

93

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER DOM. REP.
BINDER DOM. REP.
WRAPPER ECUADOR

ASHTON VIRGIN SUN GROWN BELICOSO NO. 1
Crafted with a rounded tip, this figurado showcases notes of spicy leather, chocolate-covered raisins and sweet tea. There is a pleasant minerality on the finish.
US$: 677.20 U.K.: N/A

92

CUBA
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE AUGUST 2016

BOLIVAR BELICOSO FINO
An attractive belicoso that balances clear, perfumed notes of nuts, graham cracker and salt with hints of chocolate and cedar. A sweet and savory smoke.
US$: N/A U.K.: £18.50

91

CUBA
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE SEPTEMBER 2016

EDMUNDO DANTES CONDE BELICOSO EXCLUSIVO MEXICO
This chocolate brown belicoso has a bold, zesty character that hints of orange-cream ice, hickory wood and honeyed tea. A pleasant minerality dominates the finish.
US$: 626.50 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 52 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER DOM. REP.
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

H. UPMANN 1844 RESERVE BELICOSO
The visible pores give the wrapper of this dark belicoso a toothy appearance. It has a cedary sweetness, also showing notes of toasted marshmallow, leather and an earthy finish.
US$: 67.29 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 6 1/4"
FILLER PERU DOM REP BRAZIL
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER DOM REP

FERNANDO LEÓN FAMILY RESERVE BELICOSO 89

A sweet and spicy torpedo with notes of mesquite and black pepper underscored by pleasant nutliness. Spice recurs on the finish.
U.S.: £8.50 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

NEW WORLD ALMIRANTE 89

As bold as it appears, this dark, box pressed belicoso delivers a strong, salt and pepper quality with hints of cocoa and coffee, that turn a bit acidic.
U.S.: £6.50 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 5 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER COSTA RICA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

ROCKY PATEL FIFTY-FIVE ROBUSTO 89

This oily figurado smokes well, delivering notes of rich woods, roasted coffee and earth. There is a pleasant charriness and a hint of baking spice on the finish.
U.S.: £10.30 U.K.: N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 6 3/4"
FILLER HONDURAS NICARAGUA
BINDER HONDURAS INDONESIA
WRAPPER MEXICO

ALEC BRADLEY TEMPUS MADURO MAGISTRI 88

A long figurado with a taper at the head and foot. It's a tangy, woody smoke that shows notes of earth and pepper before a minerals finish.
U.S.: £9.95 U.K.: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 41 LENGTH 4"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE JULY 2016

CUABA DIVINOS 87

Covered in an unattractive wrapper, this mini perfecto is fashioned with a flat head and nipple foot. It's an earthy smoke with hints of wood and spice. A simple smoke overall.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £9.92

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 44 LENGTH 4"
FILLER NICARAGUA DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER U.S.A./CONN BROADLEAF

DEBONAIRE MADURO FIRST DEGREE 87

A bit rumpled in appearance, this little perfecto is full of herbal, floral notes that take on a minerals quality and save the finish.
U.S.: £8.00 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 5 15/16"
FILLER U.S.A./CONN BROADLEAF
U.S.A./PENN BROADLEAF HONDURAS
BINDER U.S.A./CONN BROADLEAF
WRAPPER U.S.A./CONN BROADLEAF

CAMACHO AMERICAN BARREL-AGED PERFECTO GORDO 86

Musty from start to finish, this near black perfecto also hints at mint and earth. The draw and burn are full and even.
U.S.: £12.00 U.K.: N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER HONDURAS

PADILLA ANNIVERSARY TORPEDO 86

First puffs of this pointy belicoso are herbal with juniper like notes that become dusty and earthy. The finish is dry.
U.S.: £10.50 U.K.: N/A

lonsdales

As often as we bemoan the lonsdale's decrease in popularity, we appreciate the companies that still produce these elegant smokes and commend the cigar makers who make them well. The Romeo y Julieta Reserva Real Lonsdale scored 91 points achieving top marks in the category. This cigar teaches the smoker some important lessons in preconceived notions. By appearances, one might think that it is a tapa cigar—it isn't. The wrapper may not be dark, but the cigar is loaded with complex flavors that unfold with each puff. Another thing to remember, large cigar companies can make great cigars. In the case of the Romeo y Julieta, the largest cigar company outscored the smaller producers. However, calling Norteño a small producer would be a misnomer. The Lonsdale scored 90 points. Norteño is a small-production brand made in Nicaragua by Drew Estate's high-volume factory. The Tatuaje Cabinet Havana Cazadores also scored 90 points, and is made in Dora, Florida, at El Rey de Los Habanos. La Flor Dominicana's Cameroon Cabinet No. 1 is an especially unusual smoke—it's a lonsdale and it's wrapped in Cameroon.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 5/8"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

ROMEO Y JULIETA RESERVA REAL LONSDALE

Deceptively compact for a cigar with such a tan wrapper, this medium bodied cigar imparts a rich, nutty smoke over aid with spicy cinnamon, crushed walnuts and a creamy café-au-lait finish.

U.S.: £7.27 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER CAMEROON

LA FLOR DOMINICANA CAMEROON CABINET NO. 1

The large, visible pores of the wrapper give this lonsdale a rustic, toothy appearance. Initial bring-o-ive notes segue into a sweet and sour smoke repeat with nutliness and a spicy cinnamon finish.

U.S.: £8.70 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER HONDURAS
WRAPPER MEXICO

NORTEÑO LONSDALE

A flat cigar with rounded edges, this dark cigar delivers a dense, chewy smoke sweet with caramelized bean and a nutmeg finish.

U.S.: £11.00 U.K.: N/A

90

U.S.A.
RINGGAUGE 41 LENGTH 6 3/8"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

TATUAJE CABINET HAVANA CAZADORES

Rolled with a dark brown wrapper, this long, skinny lonsdale has a substantial draw that imparts a leathery, oaky smoke with a touch of red wine. A balanced cigar.

U.S.: £11.00 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 3/8"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER U.S.A./CONN BROADLEAF

ASHTON AGED MADURO NO. 30

A near black lonsdale that forms a very white ash. Big initial saffron notes remain on the palate along with spicy cocoa bean and wood. The finish is flinty.

U.S.: £10.00 U.K.: N/A

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 43 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA DOM REP
BINDER U.S.A./CONN HABANO
WRAPPER U.S.A./CONN BROADLEAF

CAO FLATHEAD V642 PISTON 89

Rolled with an abrupt flat head, this dark cigar has an exemplary draw and perfect burn. The smoke is dense with coffee bean and black pepper yet sweetened with notes of ripe apple and molasses.
U.S.: £7.10 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 43 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES SUPERIOR 89

This pressed lonsdale draws and burns perfectly. It's a bit herbal at first but develops a hickory and mosquito character with a light, vanilla bean finish.
U.S.: £11.00 U.K.: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 43 LENGTH 6 3/8"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE SEPTEMBER 2016

ROMEO Y JULIETA CAZADORES 89

A dark, oily, slim cigar with a simple palate of earth, leather and minerals that lead to a tangy finish. Medium to full bodied with a firm draw.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.13

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 5/8"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER U.S.A./CONN SHADE

DON DIEGO LONSDALE 88

Tangy puffs of citrus and cedar become earthy with faint traces of nutmeg. A mild to medium bodied smoke with a muted finish.
U.S.: £5.14 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 1/4"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

OLIVA CONNECTICUT RESERVE LONSDALE 88

Herbal and floral, this yellow lonsdale also imparts some grassy notes with consistent nutiness. The mild, creamy textured smoke finesses the palate.
U.S.: £6.12 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 41 LENGTH 7"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

THE GRIFFIN'S NO. 200 86

The bright, lemony citrus notes of this cigar become dry and leafy with a papery quality and a balsa wood finish. A mild cigar.
U.S.: £11.20 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 45 LENGTH 6 3/4"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

FONSECA VINTAGE LONSDALE (TUBO) 85

This lonsdale exhibits a textbook draw and perfect combustion. It's a mild, salty smoke with touches of slate and a chalky finish.
U.S.: £8.00 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 44 LENGTH 6 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

FOUR KICKS SELECCIÓN NO. 5 85

The woody and citrus notes of this lonsdale eventually warm to a wheaty, salty character, but the finish is dry and acidic.
U.S.: £7.70 U.K.: N/A

panetelas

No other section in this issue turned up as many go-to-pass cigars as the panetela category. A handful of the cigars we rated 91 points, which is 40 percent of the 91 cigars here, turned up in our go. Compare this with other categories within our tasting pages and you'll see that's an unusually high percentage of outstanding performers. And it gets the prize. With a few exceptions, those found in the $10 range, either a bit over or a bit under, it's too early to declare a panetela renaissance, but it's safe to say that there are great im cigars on the market. Half of the cigars in this section rated 91 points were made in Nicaragua. Both the Liga Privada and My Father Le Carbet are made at the My Father Cigars factory. These particular Bol La Bomba Warhead III cigars were produced at La Zona. Two Dominican panetelas—the Aging Room Bin No. 1 and the La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero—both rated 91 points and were remarkable in their ability to temper strong spiciness with a balancing sweetness. In the case of the La Paluna Illumination, the interplay was more dramatic, as it was produced by topica. The cigar is made in the U.S.A.

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 55 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER U.S.A./COOKH BROADLEAF

601 LA BOMBA WARHEAD III
Slightly pressed with a pigtail cap, this smoke draws beautifully. It's an earthy, nutty smoke balanced by graham cracker and vanilla sweetness.
US$:$10.00 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 55 LENGTH 7"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

AGING ROOM BIN NO. 1 D MINOR
A skinny panetela with a loose draw is full and begins with spicy, strong first puffs that smack of red and black pepper, leavened by coffee notes and is nutty and toasted caramel finish.
US$:$10.50 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RINGGAUGE 55 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

L'ATELIER LAT LANCERO
Though the draw is a bit firm, it imparts plenty of earthy, semisweet chocolate notes along with heavy toasted elements and a prominent cinnamon finish.
US$:$8.50 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RINGGAUGE 55 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

LA FLOR DOMINICANA DOUBLE LIGERO LANCERO
Bracingly spicy from the first puff, this strong smoke balances its piquancy with leather and coffee notes, though the finish is sweet with honeyed wood.
US$:$11.20 U.K.: N/A

91

U.S.A.
RINGGAUGE 55 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER ECUADOR
WRAPPER ECUADOR

LA PALUNA ILLUMINATION LANCERO
An attractive cigar with a tissue-seven cap, it's easy to draw and delivers sweet notes of honey and vanilla coupled with spicier touches of fresh ground white pepper.
US$:$11.50 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 48 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

MY FATHER NO. 4 LANCERO 91
There's a four-seam cap topping this distinct, pigtail-adorned, Fairly puffs are strong and peppery with food notes of wood and smoked meat. Nutty coffee notes emerge on the finish.
U.S.: $10.10 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 48 LENGTH 7"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

OLIVA SERIE V LANCERO 90
There's a pleasant balance in this cigar between bright acidity and sweetness. Roasted coffee bean notes and touches of tart green apple dominate a ripe fruit and fresh tobacco finish.
U.S.: $7.14 U.K.: N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 48 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA COSTA RICA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER HONDURAS

ROCKY PATEL SUPER LIGERO LANCERO 90
The cute Lancero draw of this dark-wrapped cigar makes the puffing with a strong, heavy smoke whose notes of black cherry are punctuated by spicy notes of cinnamon red and black pepper.
U.S.: $8.00 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 40 LENGTH 7"
FILLER HONDURAS NICARAGUA
BINDER MEXICO
WRAPPER USA/CONN BROADLEAF

THE TABERNACLE LANCERO 90
The dark, oily wrapper of this panetela is a sexy back. It's rich and hearty with a chocolate and vanilla quality enhanced by spicy notes and an oaky finish.
U.S.: $12.50 U.K.: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 40 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE SEPTEMBER 2016

TRINIDAD FUNDADORES 90
Long and slim with a tight draw. The smoke begins light with sweet tea and a bit of gingersnap before chewier notes of molasses and cinnamon emerge.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £7.50

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 40 LENGTH 7"
FILLER HONDURAS NICARAGUA
BINDER BRAZIL
WRAPPER USA/CONN HABANO

LIGA PRIVADA ÚNICO SERIE L-40 89
Upon first puff, this dark cigar immediately imparts an earthy smoke with licorice-like notes of anise. Some woody, fruity elements also come through, especially on the finish.
U.S.: $15.75 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 48 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

JOYA DE NICARAGUA ANTAÑO 1970 LANCERO 88
A rustic-looking smoke with a matte wrapper and pigtail cap. Its firm draw offers some woody, oaky notes, touches of sweet taffy and a bit of roasted coffee bean. The finish is dry and grassy.
U.S.: $7.84 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 40 LENGTH 7 1/2"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER HONDURAS

KRISTOFF MADURO LANCERO 85
A rustic-looking panetela with a pigtail head and uneven foot. Earthy and toasty, the panetela delivers some grassy coffee notes, but oily pockets in the draw cause some bitterness.
U.S.: $6.50 U.K.: N/A

robustos

The ever-popular robusto category continues to deliver exemplary smokes. These cigars scored 92 points. While the CAO brand was first to do the Honduras Wrapped Cigars, and then do Gurkha Cigars, CAO's first were also the best by world diameter. The flavor can be pure cohesion, as seen with the CAO Italia Ciao. At 92 points, it's the highest score that the cigar earned. The Ramon Allones Specially Selected was distinctly a good cigar for smokers of stronger Cuban tobacco. While the Special Selected was a powerhouse, it was balanced and classy. The Cuban Trinidad Topes Edición Limitada 2016 is a fitting example of how the check cigar brand has matured towards.

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 5"
FILLER HAITI NICARAGUA PERU
BINDER HONDURAS
WRAPPER HONDURAS

CAO ITALIA CIAO — **92**

There's a reddish, coarse and uneven gourmet to this dark cigar, whose creamy smoke is rich with fruity, ripe apple notes, molasses and brown sugar. The finish is long and spicy. Tasty and bold.
US: $8.00 UK: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 4 7/8"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE APRIL 2016

RAMON ALLONES SPECIALLY SELECTED — **92**

Toasty and leathery, this velvety robusto draws and burns evenly, showing the nutty qualities of roasted chestnut and a sweet nougat finish.
US: N/A UK: £7.00

CUBA
RING GAUGE 56 LENGTH 4 7/8"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE SEPTEMBER 2016

TRINIDAD TOPES EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2016 — **92**

Crafted with a pigtail cap, this fat robusto has a fine draw that delivers rich and woody smoke with hints of black pepper, sweet almond and a touch of earthy spice.
US: N/A UK: £11.50

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 5"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

HOYO LA AMISTAD ROBUSTO — **90**

Rolled with a toothy wrapper, this cigar has a full, even draw that shows notes of leather, cocoa powder and fruit before a big walnut finish.
US: $7.50 UK: N/A

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 5"
FILLER HONDURAS
BINDER HONDURAS
WRAPPER HONDURAS

ALADINO ROBUSTO — **89**

This cute robusto is wrapped in a matte cover leaf. The draw and burn are notably even. Heavy minerals and flavors dissipate to show leather and sugar.
US: $10.00 UK: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 5"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

DON PEPIN GARCIA CUBAN CLASSIC 1979 — **89**

Rolled with a tidy three seven cap, this cigar burns evenly, forming a solid, stable ash. Initial spiciness becomes sweeter with raisins before a lighter patch of tea notes and zesty cedar. Flavors go back and forth.
US: $7.40 UK: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 5"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER ECUADOR
WRAPPER USA/CONN BROADLEAF

E.P. CARRILLO DUSK ROBUSTO 89

Besides one large vein, this dark robusto is pristine in appearance. Its ripe tobacco notes start with earth and fruit, drawn up into molasses and culminate in a minerals finish.
U.S.: £8.80 U.K.: N/A

CUBA
RING GAUGE 54 LENGTH 4 3/4"
FILLER CUBA
BINDER CUBA
WRAPPER CUBA
BOX DATE SEPTEMBER 2016

H. UPMANN MAGNUM 54 89

This cigar exudes a pleasant, toasty aroma as it burns. Flora, mild intonations segue into strong peanut character with touches of cinnamon, woodiness and a minerals finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £22.52

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 52 LENGTH 5"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER BRAZIL

PDR 1878 CUBANO ESPECIAL CAPA MADURO ROBUSTO 89

Topped with a knotted pigtail style cap, this dark robusto is a primarily sweet and woody smoke with a coffee note and toasty finish.
U.S.: £8.11 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 49 LENGTH 4 3/4"
FILLER DOM REP MEXICO
BINDER MEXICO
WRAPPER USA/CONN SHADE

MACANUDO CAFÉ LORDS 88

Covered in classical light, claro wrapper, this cigar is mild and woody with a citrus character, touches of salt and a sweet note of nougat.
U.S.: £8.18 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 5"
FILLER NICARAGUA DOM REP
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO PILOTICO PEPE MENDEZ ROBUSTO 88

Wearing a coarse, rustic colorado wrapper, this robusto shows notes of cumin and leather before a slightly acidic finish that hints of dried fruit.
U.S.: £15.60 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 5"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER NICARAGUA

PERDOMO HABANO BOURBON BARREL-AGED MADURO ROBUSTO 88

This cigar begins with initial notes of earth, coffee beans and spicy cocoa. The smoke turns woody later on, and it loses some depth of flavor.
U.S.: £7.75 U.K.: N/A

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 4 3/4"
FILLER DOM REP NICARAGUA
BINDER DOM REP
WRAPPER HONDURAS

NAT SHERMAN TIMELESS COLLECTION ROBUSTO 87

A medium bodied, earthy smoke redolent of minerals and cedar. The finish is flora with notes of tea.
U.S.: £7.80 U.K.: N/A

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE 50 LENGTH 5"
FILLER NICARAGUA
BINDER NICARAGUA
WRAPPER ECUADOR

VILLIGER SAN'DORO CLARO ROBUSTO 87

An attractive robusto whose lush draw delivers a creamy smoke spiced up with notes of black pepper, though the finish is notably dry.
U.S.: £8.00 U.K.: N/A

tasting summary

RATING SUMMARY BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 137

Cigars are listed first by country and then by score. Please refer to the main tasting pages for notes and prices.

CIGAR AFICIONADO'S 100-POINT SCALE

Classic
95-100
Outstanding
90-94
Very good to excellent
80-89
Average to good commercial quality
70-79
Does not make your money's worth
Not rated 1-69
N/A

Note: all prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes

CUBA

95 Cohiba Esplendidos
92 Bolívar Churchills Specially Selected
92 Trinidad Topes Edición Limitada 2006
91 Bolívar Belicosos Fino
91 Edmundo Dantes Condé Belicoso Exclusivo Marca
90 Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure Especial
90 Trinidad Fundadores
89 H. Upmann Connoisseur A
89 H. Upmann Magnum 54
89 Montecristo Double Edmundo
89 Romeo y Julieta Coronas
89 Cohiba Siglos

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

91 Arturo Fuente Virgin Sun Grown Belicoso No. 4
91 Aging Room Blend No. 4 Dimar
91 E.P. Carrillo Madura Church Especial
91 La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero Lancero
91 Romeo y Julieta Reserva Real Lonsdale
90 H. Upmann 1844 Reserva Belicoso
90 La Flor Dominicana Cameroon Colorado No. 4
89 Arturo Fuente Church
89 Arturo Aged Madura No. 90
89 Casa Cuba Divine Inspiration
89 E.P. Carrillo Dark Robusto
89 Fernando Lozano Family Reserve Belicoso
89 La Gloria Cubana Church Madura
89 Partagas Bonsai y Bonsai Maxim Grande
89 PDR 1878 Cubano Especial Capa Madura Robusto
88 Davidoff Winston Church Church
88 Diamond Crown Julius Caesar Church
88 Don Diego Lonsdale
88 Macanudo Café Lonsdale
88 Montecristo Platino Pepe Mendez Robusto
88 Romeo y Julieta 1875 Church
87 Davidoff Signature Toro
87 Debonaire Madura Five Degrees
87 Montecristo Cazador Church
87 Nat Sherman Timeless Collection Robusto
86 Camacho American Barrel Aged Perfecto Corona
86 The Griffin's Nicaragua
85 Fonseca Vintage Lonsdale (Tubo)
85 Fuente Fuente Selección No. 5
85 Ikonoff Madura Lancero

HONDURAS

92 CAO Black Cuba
90 Rocky Patel Super Ligero Lancero
89 Church
89 Madura Robusto
89 Romeo y Julieta Reserve Toro (Tubo)
88 Alec Bradley Post Embargo Toro
88 Alec Bradley Tempus Maduro Magnum
88 Camacho Connecticut Church
88 Casa Magna Oscuro Church Corona
88 Hoyo de Monterrey Excalibur No. II
86 Prometa Anniversary Torpedo
86 Saint Luis Rey Church

NICARAGUA

93 Joya de Nicaragua Black Nocturno
93 Padron 6000 Maduro
91 Joya La Bomba Warhead III
91 Cohiba Nicaragua Rhe
91 Espinosa Habana No. 1
91 Liga Ei LATE Lancero
91 My Father No. 4 Lancero
90 Hoyo La Amistad Robusto
90 Luciano Corona Toro
90 Nicaragua Lonsdale
90 Oliva Serie V Lancero
90 The Tabernacle Lancero
89 Aging Room Red de Oro Solterito
89 CAO Flathead Vaqueros Punch
89 Don Pepe Garcia Cubas Cassicigg
89 Liga Privada Única Serie Lago
89 New World Americana
89 Padron 1964 Anniversary Series Superior
89 Rocky Patel Fifty Five Robusto
89 San Cristóbal Revelation Triangle
88 Joya de Nicaragua Antaño 1970 Lancero
88 Oliva Connecticut Reserve Lonsdale
88 Perdomo Habano Bourbon Barrel Aged Maduro Robusto
89 Viaje Six Days Corona Robusto

U.S.A.

91 La Flores Lumina Lancero
90 Drew Estate Cuban Habana Cazadores
89 Herrera Estelí Urban Toro

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Managing Director
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connoisseur's corner

In 1959, a box of diminutive Montecristo No. 4 cigars left Havana, bound for the short journey to the United States. When the cigars were rolled at the factory owned by Alonso Menendez and Pepe Garcia, they were one of many, with little to set them apart. But one year later, the factory was nationalized by Fidel Castro, and in 1961 President John F. Kennedy signed an embargo banning the cigars and other Cuban goods from U.S. soil. Today, that box of cigars has aged into masterful smokes, pecc coronas with a sweet, spicy character that scored 98 points in this special catting. The little Monty was one of two smokes to achieve "classic" status on our 100-point scale, joining a much larger and far younger Punch Churchill presented in a tube.

MONTECRISTO NO. 4 (1959) 98

A pale brown wrapper covers this little cigar, which was rolled by the Menendez y Garcia family in Cuba and has been aging in a humidor for 58 years. It's elegant and quite mild, with an earthy quality to the smoke as well as a prominent note of cinnamon. Delicious.
Martin R. Shanken

PUNCH CHURCHILL (2002) 95

This beautiful cigar, preserved in a tube, has a superb draw and burn. It begins with notes of cocoa powder and pencil shavings, then develops some leather and Middle Eastern spices, and grows bolder and more present as it burns. Notes of dark chocolate emerge on the finish, which is long and luxurious. A wonderful smoke that is far from its peak.
David Savona

HOYO DE MONTERREY CHURCHILL (2008) 94

This lovely cigar is no longer made, which is a shame, for it's pleasant and easygoing. The first taste is of stirred almonds, vanilla and plenty of cedar, with a touch of cinnamon. It's a delicate, elegant smoke, with a fine draw and dead even burn. It grows slightly more intense in the second half, but it's not a strong cigar, mild to medium in body. An idea breakfast smoke. *David Savona*

LA GLORIA CUBANA TORPEDO NO. 1 (1993) 94

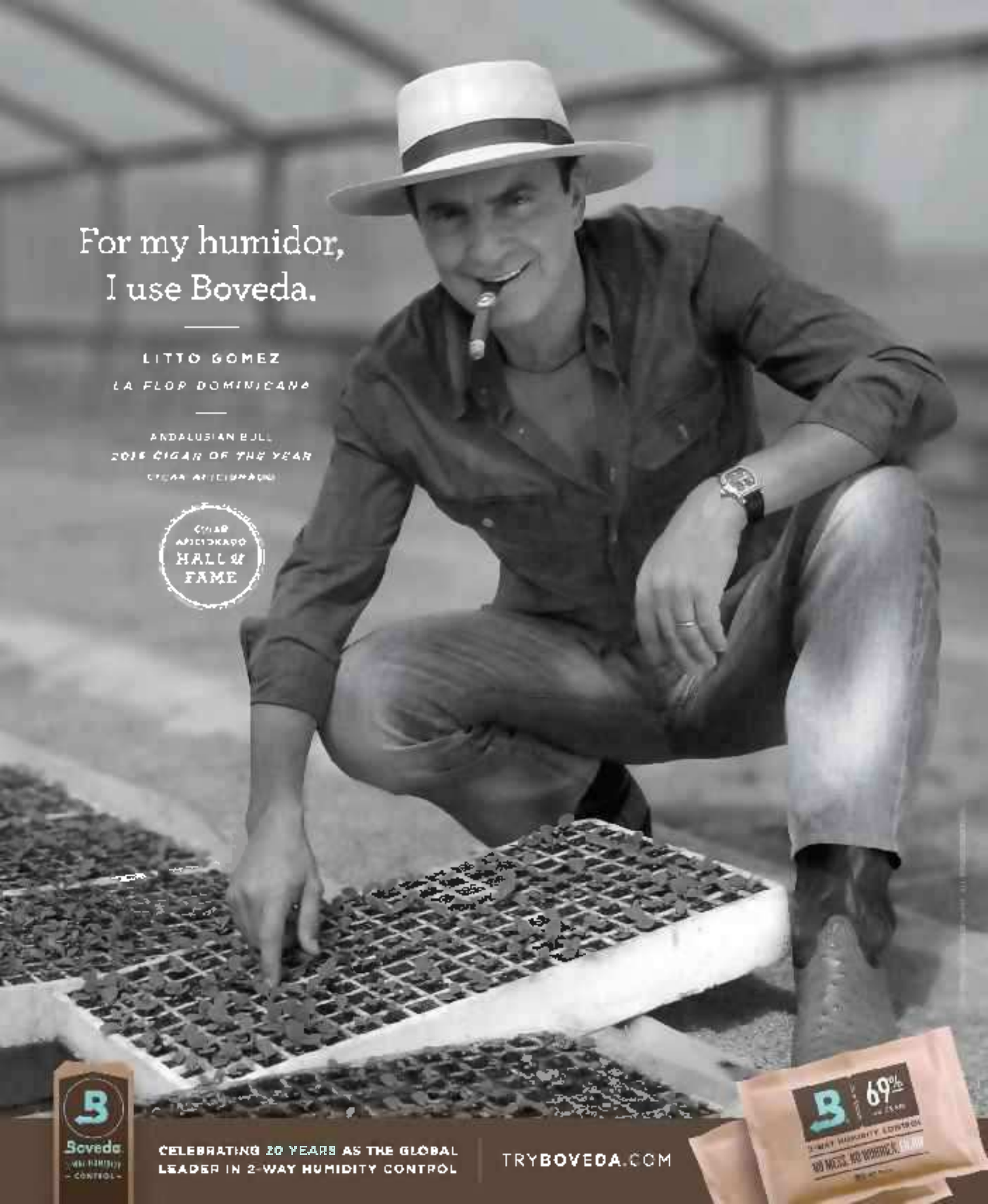
The yellowed cellophane of this cigar speaks to its age. These were made in Miami by Ernesto Perez-Carrillo just after the word discovered his brand in the pages of this magazine. Plenty of oils seep through the supple wrapper, and there's still lots of life to this smoke. It starts with sharp, woody notes that segue into black pepper before setting into a sweet, nutty smoke redolent of almond paste and marzipan. *Gregory Mallada*

RAMON ALLONES SELECTION DE LUXE NO. 2 (CIRCA 1950) 94

A small figurado with a dark brown wrapper. The draw has some resistance, and the taste is tart, showing its considerable age. But it's still a fine, with plenty of flavor left to enjoy, especially given its age of more than 60 years. *Martin R. Shanken*

PUNCH PUNCH (2006) 93

This box pressed corona gordo comes from the brief period when the gold details on Cuban Punch bands were printed with flat dyes rather than metallic finishes. There's some slight resistance to the draw, but it's open enough to let through a satisfying amount of toasty, chewy smoke with sweet and nutty elements and a flowery finish. *Gregory Mallada*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MOMENTO
BUCHANAN'S
BUCHANAN'S
DELUXE
12

Padron Serie 1926 No. 90 Naturals (box, left) and E.P. Carrillo Selection Oscuro Piramides Royals (box, right) were among the highest scoring cigars of 2016.

Cigars by the Numbers

A detailed analysis of the cigars we rated in 2016, including the best (and worst) sizes, countries of origin and more

BY GREGORY NOTTOLA • DATA COMPILED BY DAVID CLOUGH

Arguing taste is usually a pointless exercise. Making your case with numbers, on the other hand, can be far more convincing. With that in mind, we at CIGAR AFICIONADO took a long, hard look at our numbers from 2016 to answer major questions concerning the premium cigar industry: which countries delivered the best cigars of 2016? What sizes outperformed the others? Who gave the best value for your dollar? We were as curious about the answer as you, and to get to the root of the issue we stripped away the subjective elements to bring you some objective answers — and we have both the qualitative and quantitative data to support it. The answer is in the scores.

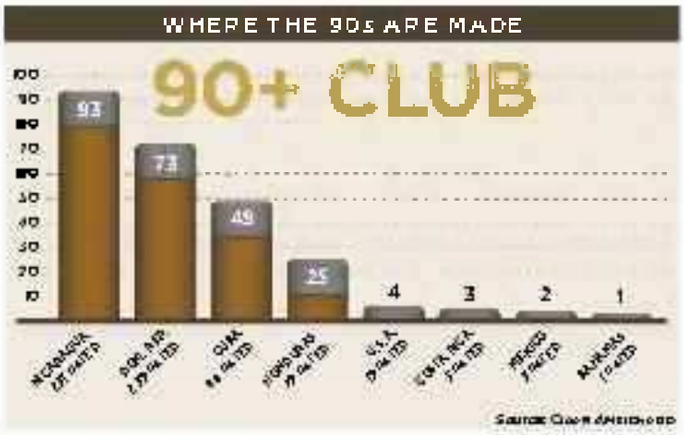
And there were a considerable number of scores, 665 of them, all the cigars we rated in 2016 in the pages of CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine and Cigar Insider, our twice-monthly, ratings-based newsletter. A year's worth of scores is a large brick of information to digest. That's why we've broken down the data.

High scores are, of course, a reflection of high quality, but our numbers alone aren't as meaningful without context or perspective. To offer a comprehensive evaluation of the premium cigar industry, we presented the results in a few different ways: By brand, by country and by size. We also looked at prices. Which country produced the most expensive cigars? And do the most expensive necessarily have the highest scores? The answer is in the info.

All the cigars we rate undergo a thorough blind tasting process. In our view, tasting cigars blind is the most honest, accurate and impartial method for evaluating a cigar. By "blind," we don't mean that we smoke cigars blindfolded. A full-time tasting coordinator goes out into the market and purchases cigars from high-end, reputable brick-and-mortar

tobacconists. He then removes the identifying cigar bands and replaces them with generic numbered labels. These coded cigars are passed out to our panel of tasters. (And the coordinator is not a member of the panel, to avoid the possibility of him recognizing a cigar he coded.) When the band is removed the taster has no choice but to review the cigar at face value. Any preconceived notions that are often associated with a brand name — good or bad — are gone. All that's left is the cigar and its taster. Scores are based on performance and quality: appearance, draw, combustion, complexity and harmony.

As it turns out, 2016 was more than just a pretty good year. Of the 665 cigars we rated, 250 (or 38 percent) scored 90 points or higher on our 100-point scale. That means that a cigar smoker walking into the local brick-and-mortar shop has a good chance of finding a cigar that isn't merely decent, but outstanding.



Within the 90-plus-category of cigars lies an even more exclusive, elite grouping. Of the 250 cigars that scored 90 points or higher, 61 scored at least 92 points, but only 22 cigars scored 93 points or higher. These 22 smokes are the crown jewels of our yearly tastings. Nicaragua makes eight (36.4 percent) of the cigars within this covered bracket, Cuba makes seven (31.8 percent) and four (18.2 percent) are from the Dominican Republic. Mexico, Honduras and the U.S. had one apiece.

Only six cigars scored 94 points, and these were the highest-rated cigars that the magazine smoked in 2016, many of which went on to make it onto our Top 25 Cigars of 2016. (Note that cigars on the Top 25 list were rated via a separate tasting, and the Top 25 scores were not factored into this year-end report.)

Of the six cigars to score 94 points, two were Cuban — the Romeo y Julieta Belicoso and the Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2. The Romeo y Julieta Belicoso is one of the more obscure Cuban cigars, and is frequently forgotten in favor of Romeo's Churchill series (Churchill, Wide Churchill, Short Churchill, Petit Churchill). The Belicoso outscored them all. Seeing how the Belicoso is becoming a forgotten size in the Habanos portfolio in lieu of new releases, there's a chance it could be discontinued in the near future.

The Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2 is in no foreseeable danger of deletion. It's a classic staple in the Habanos portfolio, and one of CIGAR AFICIONADO's Star Cigars of Cuba. It placed No. 9 in CIGAR AFICIONADO's Top 25, so it is not only excellent, but consistently so — and Cuba produces plenty of them.

The top score bracket of 2016 was dominated by Nicaraguan cigars. Two Rodríos and one Oliva. This comes as no surprise. Rodríos usually excel in our blind tastings, and the Oliva Serie V Melanio has collected many accolades from this magazine since it was released. Both have been former Cigars of the Year. The Casa Turrent Serie 1901, on the other hand, has broken new ground. It's the first Mexican cigar to ever score 94 points in this magazine.

When we look at the scores on a country-by-country basis, the cigars from Cuba truly stood out. We rated 88 Cuban cigars last year, and 49 of them — an impressive 56 percent — scored 90 points or higher. This is more than a positive statistic. Amid poor crops and a recent shortage of tobacco, Cuba's cigar industry still managed to produce no shortage of high-scoring smokes. While this sample of 88 Cuban cigars included a few special releases like Edición Limitadas and Regional Editions, the majority were regular-production smokes such as Hoyo de Monterrey Epicures or Partagás cigars from the latter series.

The average rating for a Cuban cigar in 2016 was 89.8 points, making it the country with the top relevant average. Though Mexico and the Bahamas have higher average scores of 91 and 90, too few of the cigars were smoked to consider those numbers statistically relevant. In 2016, CIGAR AFICIONADO only rated three Mexican cigars and only one from the Bahamas. Costa Rica was close behind with an average score of 89.4, but only five cigars were rated, so again, it isn't very telling of the

country's capability on the whole. For all meaningful purposes, Cuba produced the highest average score of any country.

Nicaragua is a different story. We rated 231 Nicaragua-made cigars in 2016, and they scored an average of 88.97 points with 40.3 percent scoring 90 points or higher. The number is not quite as high as Cuba's, but once you consider the high volume of Nicaraguan cigars scored last year, the average score becomes more impressive.

Nicaragua has grown into one of the largest producers of premium cigars for the United States, in terms of both volume and quality. Most of the country's cigar-manufacturing takes place in the city of Estelí, now a boomtown thanks to the growing demand for premium cigars. And, despite the rapid growth, Nicaraguan cigars show no sign of deteriorating in quality. They performed quite well in CIGAR AFICIONADO's Top 25 of 2016, occupying nearly half the list with 12 spots, including the No. 2 Cigar of the Year, the Rocky Patel Sun Grown Maduro Robusto.

Only slightly behind by fractions of a point were cigars from Honduras and the Dominican Republic. The 79 Honduran cigars we rated scored an average of 88.57 points while the 231 Dominican cigars averaged 88.38 points—a marginal overall difference. As far as the 90s go, Honduras had 31.6 percent of its cigars rate in the 90s, and the Dominican Republic had 30.5 percent. Averages were similar, but the difference in volume of cigars rated between Honduras and the Dominican Republic was quite large, 79 to 239, respectively.

It's more telling to compare Nicaragua to the Dominican Republic. Both are vying to be the No. 1 supplier of premium cigars to the U.S. and we rated a comparable amount of smokes throughout the year (231 Nicaraguans to 239 Dominicans). Nicaragua came out ahead by less than a point. In other words, very close. And this neck-and-neck outcome is also reflected in terms of units. Each year, Nicaragua comes closer and closer to matching the Dominican Republic's export numbers to the U.S.

Only six cigars scored 94 points, and these were the highest-rated cigars that the magazine smoked in 2016.

Regardless of the close rivalry between Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, all countries (excluding Mexico and The Bahamas on account of the small sample) fell within two points of each other. This is very good news for the consumer. It indicates that the premium market in general is not only delivering high quality overall, but that the playing field remains quite level.

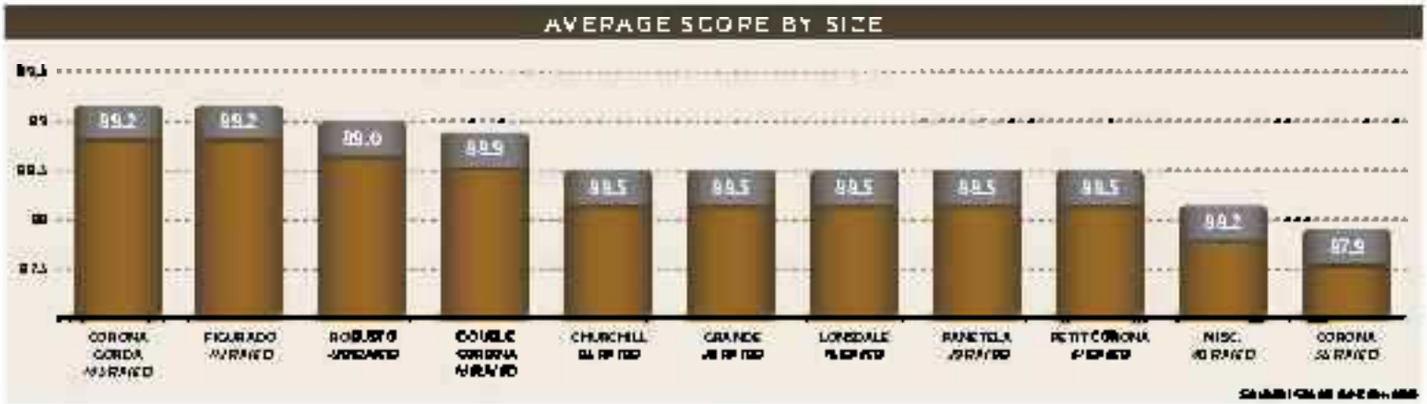
We rated 19 cigars that were rolled in the United States, and they fared worse than any other country, by average, scoring 88.06 points.

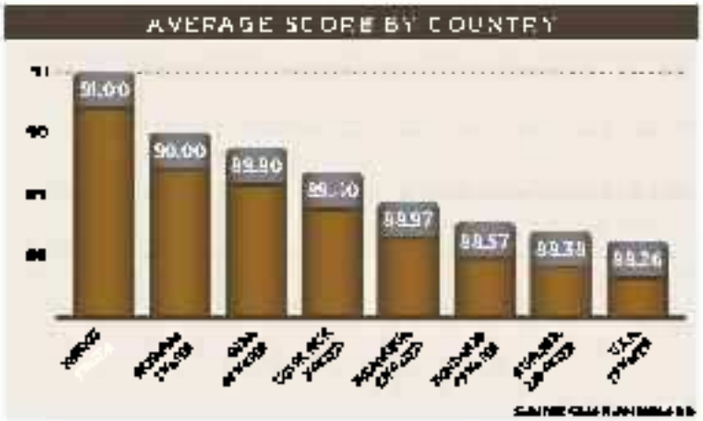
Turning to cigar sizes, the cigars that scored the best in 2016 were corona gordas, sometimes referred to as toros. These cigars are the true middle-ground of the size chart—not the shortest, not the longest, not the fattest and not the thinnest. We rated 145 corona gordas (21.8 percent of the year's total) and they had an average score of 89.2 points. The cigars are not only superb in quality, but consumer favorites. Our annual poll of retail tobacconists conducted by *Cigar Insider* newsletter consistently ranks corona gordas as one of the top-selling sizes in cigar shops.

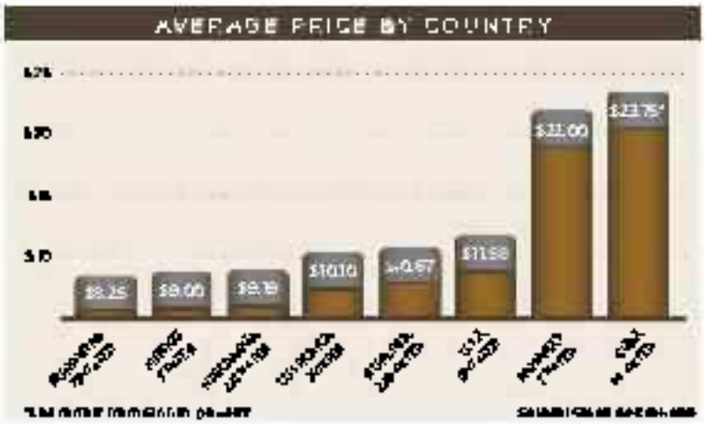
TOP SCORES OF 2016

94	Casa Fernandez Serie 1901 Robusto	Mexico
94	Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2	Cuba
94	Oliva Serie V Melanio Robusto	Nicaragua
94	Padilla 50th Anniversary Limited Edition Natural	Nicaragua
94	Padilla Serie 1926 No. 90 Natural	Nicaragua
94	Romeo y Julieta Belicosos	Cuba
93	Arc Bradley Cayo Perico Lancero	Honduras
93	Ashton Symmetry Prestige	Dom. Rep.
93	Bolivar Coronas Gigantes	Cuba
93	Casa Fernandez Miami Aficionado Half Maduro Robusto Extra	USA
93	CLE Cain Selección Oscura Puro de Boyd	Dom. Rep.
93	E. Carrillo Ion H-2K-CT Tiro Box Pressed	Nicaragua
93	Fuente Fuente Opus X Lost City Piramide	Dom. Rep.
93	Joya de Nicaragua Black Maduro	Nicaragua
93	La Flor Dominicana Andes Oscuro Belicoso	Dom. Rep.
93	Montecristo Open Master	Cuba
93	Moreno Robusto Grande	Nicaragua
93	Padilla 1964 Anniversary Series Maduro Maduro	Nicaragua
93	Padilla 50th Anniversary Limited Edition Maduro	Nicaragua
93	Partagás Serie E No. 2	Cuba
93	Por Larrañaga Prodigios	Cuba
93	Romeo y Julieta Wide Church	Cuba
92	Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R Wide "Fifty-Eight"	Dom. Rep.
92	Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R Wide "Forty-Four"	Dom. Rep.
92	Ashton Heritage Petit Corona Churchill	Dom. Rep.
92	Ashton Virgin Sun Grown Belicoso No. 1	Dom. Rep.
92	CAO Colombia Bogota	Nicaragua
92	Cohiba Esplendidos	Cuba
92	Cohiba Siglo V (Tubo)	Cuba
92	Colmenares Amazonology	Nicaragua
92	Dunbar Maduro Red Label Torpedo Box-Aged 1 Year	Nicaragua
92	Davidoff Winston Churchill Petit Corona	Dom. Rep.
92	Don Pepin Garcia Cuban Classic 1970	Nicaragua
92	E.P. Carrillo New Wave Reserva Belicoso d'Oro	Dom. Rep.
92	E.P. Carrillo Short Run 2016 Super Robusto	Dom. Rep.
92	E. Carrillo Ion H-2K-CT Corona Box Pressed	Nicaragua
92	Executive Churchill	Nicaragua
92	Espinosa Habano No. 4	Nicaragua
92	Fuente Fuente Opus X Double Corona	Dom. Rep.
92	Henry Clay Tattoo Toro	Dom. Rep.
92	[illegible]	Nicaragua
92	[illegible] Fumed Amour Jeroboam	Nicaragua
92	[illegible] Ultra Op No. 4	Nicaragua
92	Joya de Nicaragua Black Toro	Nicaragua
92	La Aurora 107 Maduro Belicoso	Dom. Rep.
92	La Gloria Cubana Reviva de Exclusivo Aria Nacional	Cuba
92	La Flor Dominicana Red Label Toro	Dom. Rep.
92	Lusanne Reserve Cave	Nicaragua
92	Las Calenas Edición Limitada 2016 LC90	Nicaragua
92	Hilombay Cuban Perfecto	Costa Rica
92	Montecristo No. 2	Cuba
92	My Father No. 2 Belicoso	Nicaragua
92	Padilla Serie 1926 No. 55 Natural	Nicaragua
92	Partagás Serie P No. 2	Cuba
92	Punch Petit Coronas (Tubo)	Dom. Rep.
92	Rocky Patel Sun Grown Maduro Robusto	Nicaragua
92	Romeo y Julieta Cedros de Luxe	Cuba
92	Romeo y Julieta Churchill	Cuba
92	Romeo y Julieta Primeros Anejados	Cuba
92	Tabaq Vacas Gordas	Nicaragua

Source: Cigar Aficionado







Figurados also scored quite well. These shapely cigars tied with corona gordas for top scores by average. The size category encompasses any cigar with tapered ends, torpedo tops, pointed heads, bulbous feet or contoured shapes of any kind. We tested 112 figurados last year. They're difficult to produce, require more time and could be intimidating to a casual smoker, but cigarmakers are still including figurados in their portfolios, and obviously producing them with plenty of high-quality tobacco.

Most notable among figurados was the La Flor Dominicana Andalusian Bull, a double tapered salomon with striking contours that could be regarded with fear or awe, depending on your outlook. Either way, most connoisseurs have no choice but to respect it. Look at the Andalusian Bull's enormity. The form requires unusual rolling skill to create; the cigar scored 93 points when first reviewed in Cigar Insider, and the smoke went on to become CIGAR AFICIONADO's No. 1 cigar of 2016 at 96 points in the special Top 25 tasting.

If you're not sold on salomones and are a die-hard robusto guy, this shorter, simpler format continues to be a very strong category. At only 2/10 of a point behind corona gordas and figurados, robustos ended up with an average of 89 points over 120 cigars. The appeal of short, squat cigars like robustos lies in their ability to deliver large volumes of smoke in short periods of time.

We tested few double coronas last year, as it's one of a few dying size categories and difficult to find in the market. Unlike robustos, double coronas require a much longer commitment, but the 14 we rated had an average of 88.9 points.

Five sizes scored 88.5 points: Churchills, grandes, lonsdales, panetelas and petit coronas. Of this five-way tie, the Churchill category was the most impressive due to the 86 cigars far more than the other three categories. Grandes are a fairly new size. CIGAR AFICIONADO gave this format its own tasting section back in 2012 when the trend started to pick up and it was clear that enormously thick ring gauges were going to be part of the cigar retail portfolio. Grandes are defined as any cigar rolled with a 60 ring gauge or fatter. With an average of 88.5 points, cigarmakers are clearly putting good tobacco in their grande sizes and taking these cigars seriously. CIGAR AFICIONADO rated more robustos and corona gordas this year than any other cigar.

The size you ought to avoid? Coronas. These somewhat short and downright slim smokes (the Cuban standard is 5 5/8 inches long by 42 ring gauge) scored an average 87.9 points.

Do you have to spend a lot to get a great cigar? Not at all. Cubans, turned out to be the most expensive smokes of 2016, and by no small margin. Our tasting of 88 Cuban cigars produced an average price of $19.04 (about $23.75) judging from prices on the U.K. market. Buying American might be patriotic, but American labor doesn't come cheap. Cigars made in the U.S. have an average suggested retail price of $11.58 per cigar. Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic are a little gentler on the wallet, averaging $9.19 and $10.67 per cigar, respectively. Honduras comes in at the least expensive at $8.25 per smoke.

Judging by the numbers of 2016, the news is quite good: you don't have to pay a lot for a great cigar. You can get a great cigar from any country, and you don't need to carry out a worldwide search to obtain them, as great cigars are, for the most part, widely available. No single country has the monopoly on high-quality smokes. Smokers are entitled to their preferences, but, statistically speaking, there is no justifiable reason to be a snob. ❖

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Behind the Cuban Mystique

An extensive infrastructure of scientists, growers, rollers and tasters oversees tobacco from fields to consumers' hands BY GORDON MOTT

Cuban cigars evoke vivid images. Upon lighting a Partagás Lusitania, a Montecristo No. 2, a Cohiba Esplendido or something more obscure, one might imagine waving fields of green tobacco, hear the click-clack of hunters in a rolling factory or have visions of a Havana nightclub. Few, however, will think of a panel of specially chosen tasters evaluating and discussing cigars in a conference room.

That decidedly unromantic picture is nevertheless a vital part of the process that leads to the creation of new Cuban cigar expressions and ensures continuity of flavor in your favorite brands. Behind the legendary cigars of the Caribbean's largest island is Habanos S.A., the monopoly that oversees the process from seed to store shelf.

"We sit around the room, all 15 to 30 of us, talking and discussing whether or not the cigar is producing the tastes that we have been asked to create by Habanos," says Amaury Borges, trying to explain how new brands are created in Cuba. "It's a very interesting process because everyone is used to smoking particular cigars, of lines from the factories where they work," he adds, "but when we are together we have to use criteria established for all Cuban cigars."

Borges, one of Cuba's leading tobacco scientists at the Instituto de Investigaciones del Tabaco (Tobacco Research Institute), explains that the institute has detailed records, with some information dating back to before the Cuban revolution, of the physical and chemical composition of tobacco grown on every principal farm in Cuba. "We know the sensory qualities of tobacco grown in every specific location in the country," he says.

As a result, when the marketing department at Habanos comes up with a proposed brand, and outlines the tastes and flavors they want in the cigar, the institute has a good idea of where they need to go to find tobacco for that type of cigar profile. Next comes a rigorous and long process of testing different blends, testing them, making sure the blend is right for each vitola, or size, being created for the new brand. Then, for the final test, the best rollers in the factory where it will be produced are chosen to create a test batch for the panel.

But Borges' and the institute's role in the creation of Cuba's famous cigar brands goes beyond knowing where the best tobacco is grown in the country and testing cigars. They are part of a large apparatus that determines everything from the seeds authorized for each tobacco-growing season, to taking part in the taste tests for the final product, including the top export brands. The process carefully determines if exacting standards are being maintained for "tabaco negro" or the black tobacco that serves as the foundation for Cuban cigars.

Getting Borges to talk about how Cuban cigars are created stems from a simple, straightforward question: Does Cuba try to maintain a specific flavor profile for each of the country's major export brands?

Cuba's Tobacco Research Institute, known as Instituto de Investigaciones de Tabaco, controls the seeds used by the farmers and conducts research to improve seed strains via natural methods of crossing and selection.

In the past, seasoned smokers claimed they could tell a Montecristo from a Partagás, or an H. Upmann from a Romeo y Julieta. They assigned the major Cuban brands distinct characteristics: Hoyo de Monterrey was a medium-to-light blend with some herbal notes; Montecristo had a touch of coffee and spice; H. Upmann was a lot like Montecristo (perhaps with less power but more finesse); Romeo y Julieta produced a medium-bodied cigar, with cocoa-bean flavors in its benchmark Churchill; and Partagás (especially in the Serie D No. 4 and Lusitania sizes) presented power and spice with long, earthy finishes. Other brands, such as Bolívar and Ramón Allones, were often called out as very powerful cigars.

But today, many smokers think those distinctions have been lost, and Cuba's tobacco monopoly, Habanos S.A., has homogenized all the brands toward a common flavor profile.

Borges doesn't know how or why that perception exists today. "We are trying to perfect the selection process of tobacco for each brand," says Borges. "We try, and have always tried, to keep track of the farms that have traditionally supplied tobacco to each brand. We do select tobaccos specifically for each brand. We have a standard of quality that is always sought, of course with variations season to season." As diplomatically as possible, he says, "If a person doesn't have a scientific or objective basis for their perception, I'm not sure there is any reason to believe them."

Using the example of Cohiba, Cuba's most prestigious brand, Borges says that the tobacco for Cohiba's filler blends comes from a very specific region and certain farms, and provides continuity in the production and taste of that brand. "It is the same for other brands too," Borges says.

"It may have great characteristics, like yield or resistance to disease so we may fall in love with it in the field, but if it doesn't have the sensory characteristics of Cuban tobacco, it won't get approved."

A cigar roller (left) arranges tobacco leaves in precise order. To assure quality, a taster, or cosador (right), tests the blend for draw, burn, aroma and flavor.

To ensure that continuity, he explains that samples of every brand from every factory's production are sent to the National Commission For Tasting, a panel made up of a few dozen tasters, all skilled tobacco industry officials and experienced smokers of Cuban cigars. The commission also includes the top tasters from each factory's tasting panel, usually made up of 10 to 15 persons, according to Borges. The tasters on those factory panels are constantly evaluated, and the best are sent to the national commission. The tasters gather once a month to taste together, discussing and debating the characteristics of each cigar. Sometimes the cigar is a new brand but more often it is a review of each major brand from each factory's production. Borges says the panel also judges any new tobacco seed variety that is being developed for commercial use.

One reason for the change that Cuban brands are becoming homogenized may spring from the fact that since nationalization of the cigar industry in the early 1960s brands are not necessarily made in one factory, but production may be spread across a few facilities.

However, one independent taster, who asked to remain anonymous, is adamant that Cuban brands have identifiable flavor profiles. "When you smoke them side by side, you see that Habanos is still preserving the taste of each brand," the taster says. And, reporters visiting factories also have seen bales labeled with the names of specific farms and regions, supporting Borges' contention that factories receive specific leaves for the cigar brands that are rolled in that factory.

The institute's work begins long before the taste tests, with the choice of seed varieties that will be used in each planting season, and for each region where cigar tobacco is grown. Borges says that the current seeds being planted are derived from a core of four seeds, what he called the industry's "battle horses": Havana 92 and Havana 2000 (the first hybrids developed for use in 1992 to fight blue mold outbreaks in Cuba), and from the subsequent hybrids, Criollo '98 and Corojo '99. According to one of Borges' retired colleagues, Eurelio Espino, some subsequent hybrids have been based on those four seed types. But Borges declines to identify the new hybrid approved for the 2016-17 season or the seed it had been derived from. Nor will he describe any specific seeds from previous years.

"What I can tell you is that we have studied which seeds do best in which parts of the country, based on the climate and soil factors, and for which type of cigar leaf we are trying to produce, filler or wrapper," Borges says. He adds that the institute has direct contact with tobacco growers through an extensive network of the institute's agricultural extension offices spread throughout the tobacco growing regions. "We also discuss with the grower what he needs so that he is comfortable with the seeds he is going to be asked to use."

Borges compares the study of which seeds to use in which areas to the genetic studies that produce new seeds. Since Cuba only uses traditional methods of hybridization and cross-pollination, it can take 10 to 12 years to create a new seed variety. But there is an additional two years of testing the seed in the fields around the country. The aim is to identify which seeds produce the best yield and taste in each region. Then, the national commission, or the "inquisition panel" as it is called, judges whether a seed meets the criteria for Cuban black tobacco. Borges says, "It may have great characteristics, like yield or resistance to disease so we may fall in love with it in the field, but if it doesn't have the sensory characteristics of Cuban tobacco, it won't get approved."

Borges says one of the current focuses of the Tobacco Research Institute is to create male sterile varieties of the major hybrids being planted in Cuba. "You can see what advantage that would have for us because there would be no seeds produced by people who are not authorized to have seeds. So, it would be easier to keep the strain of tobacco only there in Cuba," he says.

While he might be secretive about many specifics of his job, Cuba's top tobacco scientist is forthcoming about his favorite cigar: a Montecristo No. 4. He says that he doesn't really like the current trend to bigger, fatter ring gauge cigars. He also says it is always a good idea to age cigars. The institute's studies, he says, have shown that cigars reach their first optimal stage for smoking, when the flavors have all blended together and the cigar acquires a "rounder" taste, after five to eight years. ✦

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Luke Donald, CIGARAFICIONADO Editor & Publisher Marvin R. Shanken, Bee Bee, Becky Pine and B. Terino make humidor in Burn in Naples, Florida

Friends Noel e Medagna, Adrienne Tovre, Michele Cano and Daniela Cicoria enjoy a couple of premium cigars at a wedding in Gloucester, Massachusetts

Joaquin Saladrigas, Ryan Leeds, cigarmaker Rep in Cincin, Tony Guerra, Gardner Burdon and Fiore in Bloomingdale Zafra Rum and My Father cigars in Miami, Florida

The D. Blase family poses a single dec cigarmakers Jorge and José Orlando Padron during our pricelike Padron Cigars headquarters in Miami, Florida

Stephanie Pariano and Stacy Mirz of Omaha, Nebraska, take a break from fishing to mess with a Macanudo cigar during a jacky in pine Ontario, Canada

Bride and groom Pier and Tony Moreno Ferrara savor a picturesque moment with friends, family and premium cigars at their wedding in Tavernier, Florida

Charles Jose from San Francisco, California, pays a visit to the Hotel Nacional in Havana, Cuba, where he sampled the local fare alongside a Cubanic garrotier.

Louis Scarrone, CCAP/ACONADO's David Savona and Tech Outpost's right-up-My Fairbanks gars after a round at The Loxahatchee Club in Jupiter, Florida.

Cuts Vann and Howard Garrison celebrate 38 years of friendship by enjoying a couple of premium cigars on a beautiful day in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Newyweds Dustin and Mary Bingaring in their wedding day by indulging in a couple of San Cristobal Colosoic gars at The Gastonian in Savannah, Georgia.

Smoking cigars on the water friends Michael McColdrick and Barry Abrams savor the good life off the coast of Long Island on a warm summer's day.

B. Mission celebrates his birthday by smoking a Padron Serie Gold at The Oliver Cigar Co. in Kansas City, Missouri, alongside his son Mark and wife Sara.

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Gary Lake, Chris Olsen and John Dooley pause for a cigar break on Lake Winnipesaukee while traveling on their Harley Davidsons to Laconia, New Hampshire for Laconia Bike Week

Friends to get a bit happy at [illegible] Grant Jackson, Charlie Bedford and Forrest Goodwin [illegible] Colorado

Friends Eric Zeitoune, Steve Sharab, Brian Marcus, Abe Lee, Eric Brahe, E. Zubay and Moe Maya enjoy their annual booker weeks and cigars dinner at Club Macanudo in New York City

Friends and family gather to celebrate the wedding of Ashley Dubin and Chris Marinaro by sharing libations and fine premium cigars at the Omni Hotel in New Haven, Connecticut

Bride and groom Kristin Beck and Luke Freeven mark their wedding day by sharing ascetic Cuban cigars with fine company at Sparkling Hills Resort in Vernon, British Columbia, Canada

Andrew Hoffman, his father-in-law Tom Smith and Tom's brother David Smith, puffin' a few Cohiba Edicion Limitadas while on vacation in George Town, Cayman Islands

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Shane Hess, David Stewart, Michael Soper and Jeremy Pascoe savor My Father LeBijou cigars while watching the pros at the Waste Management Phoenix Open in Scottsdale, Arizona

While on vacation in the Republic of Panama, friends Mike Pendergrass and Geoff Gaugenreis at the Balboa Yacht Club enjoying fine cigars and watching the ships pass through the canal

Dr. Michael Hogg and friends celebrate his marriage to Roxanne Falzone with premium cigars and libations during their September wedding at Appleford Estate in Villanova, Pennsylvania

Ken Perrin and Ken Perrin Jr. savor fisher and some more premium cigars while vacationing on St. George Island, Florida.

Mark and Mark Harris rate in opening day at the races with a couple of fine cigars at the Del Mar Racetrack in Del Mar, California.

Steve Horwood, Dana Carranza, Frank Nelson and Mark Congdon relax with premium cigars in hand at the craft annex, Cigar Bash sponsored by Tampa Humidor in Tampa, Florida.

Larry Eurey spends some quality time with his sons, Andy, Jonathan and Rich with an assortment of fine premium cigars on Andy's wedding day at the Summit Inn in Farmington, Pennsylvania.

VICTOR CALVO
★U.S. SHADE RESERVE★

[illegible] the season for [illegible] and fine cigars. Friends and coworkers celebrate the holidays at an ugly sweater themed office party in Washington, Canada, cut

Mother and son Maria and Logan Cruz celebrate campaign [illegible] by puffing on Cuban cigars on a summer afternoon in Alberta, Canada.

Lieutenant Barry Dunbar, Jonathan and William Monson celebrate the eighth anniversary of the United States Marine Corps by lighting up H. Upmann Magnum 46 cigars.

Father and son Lee and Marc Weissman spend quality time together in Hollywood Beach, Florida, while smoking cigars of Padron Anniversary cigars.

While enjoying a Cuba, Ralph Fiske and his wife, Lynn, share Cohiba cigars in front of the classic car that was the dad of Ernest Hemingway's home.

These generations of friends and [illegible] Joseph H. Pruser III, Joseph H. Pruser IV and Joseph H. Pruser Jr. savor smoke cigars together in Beaufort, North Carolina.

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3 STAY-ING PREPARED—EXUVIUS

The ad copy says, "Does anyone have a screwdriver, floss, a pen or a hand cuffs?" Pull MacGyver, grab James Bond, you're prepared. Exuvius Tool Kit Go Go Stay from your shirt cuff and hand cover. Not only are they handy devices that double as watching implements, but because they are made of titanium, they are also airport security friendly. Other Exuvius products include cuff links that hide spare batteries and playing cards that nurture you on the many ways you can a game with scarce cover.

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5 MANTIQUE-ING—M.S. RAU AND JEFF BRIDGMAN ANTIQUES

Because man does not live by big screen TVs and fancy stacked home theaters alone, you might want to consider a less genteel option for outfitting your man cave: man-quiring. Not your run-of-the-mill decorations, the classic XIV figure, antiques are regarded as a rich, unique reflection. For instance, M.S. Rau offers gaming tables used to be used in the palaces of the Sun King, French foosball, to be and a horse racing game. Jeff Bridgman American Antiques specializes in American flags, folk art, and American heritage paintings, as well as card games and game boards. jeffbridgmanantiques and msrauantiques.com

6 HANDMADE SHADES—STATE OPTICAL

Sunglasses are a staple accessory on your man's and a fashion-forward way to protect your eyes from the sun. State Optical's collection of shades, such as the Bunker Frames from Chicago-based State Optical, provide the highest quality and comfort. The renowned eyewear designer Bobbie Hawthorne conceives each piece before a team of craftsmen and women carefully hand-fit the frames. The lightweight frames are made of acetate and Zeiss lenses. These sunglasses not only look and perform better, they last and are comfortable. stateoptical.com

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BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

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Date registered: February 17, 1981

AND

In the matter of the Trademark Registration No. 1898273
For the mark COHIBA
Date registered: June 6, 1995

EMPRESA CUBANA DEL TABACO, d.b.a. CUBATABACO, Petitioner, v. GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC., Respondent.	:	Cancellation No. 92025859

<u>EXHIBIT 15</u>

<u>TO RESPONDENT GENERAL CIGAR CO., INC.'S NOTICE OF RELIANCE</u>

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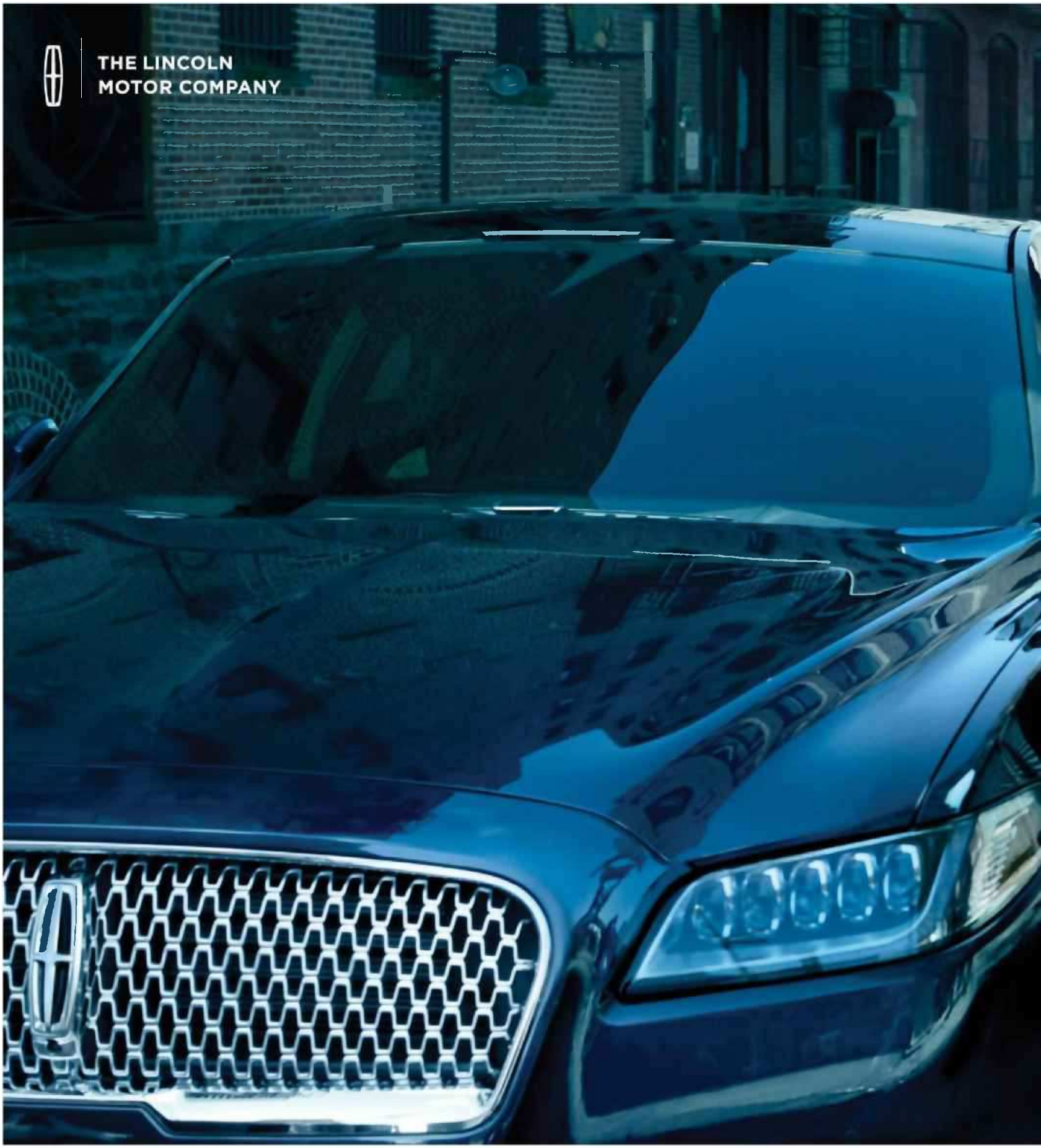

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photograph by Jeff Lipsky

TOP: DAVID YELLEN; CENTER: BRENT HOFACKER / ALAMY; COVER: SUITS BY ISAIA / SHIRTS, TIES AND POCKET SQUARES BY BROOKS BROTHERS / WATCH BY PANERAI

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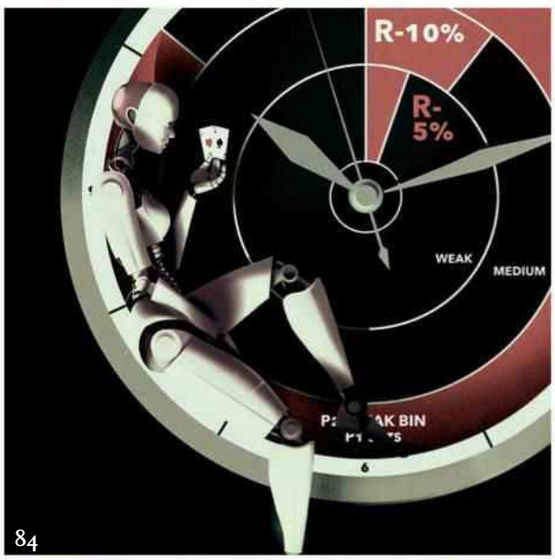

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TOP: CHRIS CONDON / PGA TOUR; CENTER: RIKI BLANCO; BOTTOM: JEFFERY SALTER

highlights

This issue's tasting shows how non-Cuban cigars can stand toe-to-toe with cigars from Havana. All of our 93-pointers are made outside of Cuba. Macanudo's Inspirado Orange, which is made in Honduras, led all Churchills. Nicaragua's Plasencia Alma Fuerte Generacion V, a box-pressed Salomon, tied with the Dominican-made Ashton Heritage Puro Sol Belicoso No. 2 for tops in the figurado group. Nicaragua's My Father The Judge Grand Robusto sits alone atop the grande category. Guardian of the Farm Apollo Selección de Warped, which is also from Nicaragua, stood out as the best corona with a score of 92 points. Two Altadis-made cigars, the Montecristo Artisan Series Batch 1 Toro and Romeo y Julieta Rare 11 Years Old Toro, led the corona gordas with scores of 92 points, while another Altadis smoke, the Romeo Añejo by Romeo y Julieta Robusto, led all robustos with 91.

TOP CHURCHILL
MACANUDO INSPIRADO ORANGE CHURCHILL
Initially released in Europe, this brand arrived in the United States last year and is draped in a Honduran wrapper grown in the San Agustín valley of Olancho.

HONDURAS

93

TOP FIGURADO
PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE GENERACION V
The Plasencias, best known for their tobacco-growing talents, reached into their vast library of aged Nicaraguan leaf to blend this cigar, which tied with an Ashton for best figurado.

NICARAGUA

93

TOP GRANDE
MY FATHER THE JUDGE GRAND ROBUSTO
This thick smoke is wrapped in Sumatra-seed leaf grown in Ecuador and includes filler tobaccos that were grown in Nicaragua by the Garcia family.

NICARAGUA

93

TOP CORONA
GUARDIAN OF THE FARM
APOLLO SELECCIÓN DE WARPED
A collaboration between Warped Cigars and Casa Fernandez, this Nicaraguan puro is covered in a Corojo '99 wrapper grown in the Jalapa Valley.

NICARAGUA

92

TOP CORONA GORDA
MONTECRISTO ARTISAN SERIES BATCH 1 TORO
This limited-edition cigar, blended by members of Grupo de Maestros, tied with the Romeo y Julieta Rare 11 Years Old Toro for best corona gorda.

DOM. REP.

92

TOP ROBUSTO
ROMEO AÑEJO BY ROMEO Y JULIETA ROBUSTO
Wrapped in dark, oily broadleaf grown in Connecticut, this cigar is said to only use vintage tobaccos from bumper crops in its blend.

DOM. REP.

91

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DAVID YELLEN

editors' note

The Cigar Industry's Day in Court

Mark August 30 on your calendar. That's when the American cigar industry will get its day in court.

On that day, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia is scheduled to hear the lawsuit filed by The Cigar Rights of America, Cigar Association of America and the International Premium Cigar and Pipe Retailers Association against the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These three organizations—which represent cigar smokers, cigar companies and cigar retailers—have taken up the fight against the FDA to oppose its Final Deeming Rule, which places severe limits on how cigars are made and sold in the United States.

The people who champion the cigar industry claim—accurately—that the FDA's Rule threatens the livelihood of cigar companies, imposes unreasonable demands and violates the First and Fifth Amendments.

The court date is an important one, for the FDA rules as they are written place handcuffs on cigarmakers, limiting their ability to function as normal businesses. The limits include severe restrictions on creating new products, the upcoming requirement to place onerous warning labels on cigar packaging and advertisements and draconian limitations on how cigars can be sold. Creating new cigars used to be limited only by the creativity of the maker and the desires of consumers. Now new product creation lies in the hands of the U.S. government, which requires hefty regulation fees and long testing protocols before a new cigar can come out.

And as bad as it is for existing companies, it's even worse for anyone wishing to enter the business. Due to the FDA restrictions, any entrepreneur wanting to start a cigar brand would face costly and time-consuming restrictions on getting that cigar brand on store shelves. The rules were created by politicians without a clear vision of how premium cigars are made or enjoyed, and without any idea of how many of the companies making such products are small and entrepreneurial.

These FDA regulations simply cannot continue. The premium cigar business has too much to lose.

The court date has been a long time coming—this lawsuit was filed in July 2016. Originally the court date was set for July of this year, but in March the date was pushed back. The reason, according to court documents, was to give the new management of the FDA time to get accustomed to the issues about the case.

Our hopes are that this lawsuit succeeds—or that the cigar industry's request for a Motion for Summary Judgment, made in February, results in the elimination of these FDA restrictions, and the much-needed exemption for premium, handmade cigars.

The people who make handmade cigars are the living embodiment of the American dream, hardworking individuals who have toiled to create products that we all enjoy. The law allows them to make and sell cigars. They pay more than their share of taxes. The only risk they should face is that of free and fair competition from other companies—not from their own government.

That's the very least any business owner in the United States can ask.

We look forward to August 30.

MARVIN R. SHANKEN
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

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ROMEO Y JULIETA

Dear Marvin,
It is with great pleasure and happiness that I received my first edition of CIGAR AFICIONADO here in Qatar. The information mentioned in this valuable magazine is of great importance, keeping us updated despite being on the other side of the world. We had a big cigar-puffing event around the pool reading the news in February's edition and sharing our knowledge.
Hady Sam Peter Aouad
Doha, Qatar

Dear Marvin,
The story about James Donovan ["The Negotiator," April 2017] was downright fascinating until the last section. Here President Obama's surrender to Cuba was extolled as something positive, the result of expert negotiation and somehow a great step forward in something or other. The U.S. got nothing out of this: the path to freedom for Cuban refugees was cut off, the communists got trade, food, money, everything their own failure of an economy can't produce, and we got nothing.
Charles Knapp
Traverse City, Michigan

Dear Marvin,
As always, I enjoyed your journal, and was impressed by Steve Harvey's philanthropic bent ["Man on the Move," April 2017]. He's doing two things absolutely right to ensure success—having a clear sense of what he wants to do and acting from strong, compelling values. As someone who's spent the past 35 years advising people of wealth on wise giving, I have a few observations.

The first is to pass along the knowledge of Dr. Buster Alvord, the late, admired Seattle philanthropist and nationally known pathologist. When he received a regional award for his giving, he said, "I've done more than 3,000 autopsies, and I think I can say with assuredness that you can't take it with you." The second is that extensive research shows that people who give generously are happier and live longer than others.

Some specific advice for Mr. Harvey:

Develop a clear vision of what his giving can do—the actual outcome of his giving. For example, "If I succeed, every young man will have the resources to make good decisions ensuring a successful and productive life." Think big, but within reality.

"I was impressed by Steve Harvey's philanthropic bent. He has a clear sense of what he wants to do and is acting from strong, compelling values."
—Stuart R. Grover, Tacoma, Washington

Figure out the most cost-effective way to structure his giving—what is the most good he can do with the money he gives?

Stop equating suits passed up with the good he does. Think of what is needed to achieve the goals he has set for himself, without regard for the sacrifices he makes.

Enlist others to help. He can't do it alone. He has friends and contacts to amass a substantial fund. And ask big—to become part of his 'team,' the entry level should be high—like $1 million.

Get advice from great mentors—the Bill Gateses and Warren Buffetts of the world.
Stuart R. Grover
Tacoma, Washington

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Dear Marvin,
I am a longtime subscriber and love your magazine. The articles are generally well written and informative (full disclosure: my brother is a frequent contributor) and I also enjoy the artwork contained in the advertisements.

As for some of the politics: not so much. A case-in-point is the decision to publish the letter from a certain Mr. Oakes in the April edition where said individual insulted the prior president and typed the words "socialist" three times, and "communist" twice, all in a diatribe against efforts by the federal government to regulate the cigar industry.

When someone abuses a political term, he or she cheapens oneself.

Just as President Trump is not a fascist, Obama is not a communist/socialist.

One also insults the memories of the countless and faceless and nameless souls who perished under the yoke of totalitarianism when words are carelessly and thoughtlessly used.

As I believe Freud once said: Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar.
Kevin J. Rothstein
Oceanside, New York

Dear Marvin,
As a fan of this magazine and an appreciator of fine cigars, I was surprised to read the fact-challenged broadside attack on President Obama in the April 2017 letters section from J. Bradley Oakes of California.

I read CIGAR AFICIONADO for the thoughtful interviews, insightful cigar reviews and informative new product features. I don't read it for hyper-partisan takes on politics. While I also enjoyed your Editors' Note on government meddling, I found it gratuitous to print Oakes' letter. But since you opened the door, I thought I would provide a reasonable response.

If readers of this magazine have one common denominator it is the love of a good cigar. And for American cigar aficionados, the last frontier of cigar nirvana is Cuba. The "outgoing administration" has done more to open this market to American cigar enthusiasts than any other administration. For that alone, readers of this magazine should be respectful, if not thankful.

On the domestic economic front, the "abusive communist platform" Oakes rails against provided years of steady economic growth including the creation of 11.3 million jobs, a bull market where the Dow increased 140 percent and a revitalization of the American auto industry and the financial system.

To claim "socialist overreach" you'd have to ignore this reality.
David Di Martino
Silver Spring, Maryland

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Former New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, pro Branden Grace, radio star Rush Limbaugh and Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of CIGAR AFICIONADO, puffing cigars at Old Palm in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. They shot 16 under to win the ninth annual Els for Autism Pro-Am by one stroke.

BENJAMIN RUSNAK

Golfing For A Fine Cause

SUPERSTARS OF GOLF STAR IN $1 MILLION ELS FOR AUTISM PRO-AM

BY DAVID SAVONA

Rory McIlroy strode across the practice green, a compact vision of muscle and sinew in a red and black shirt. He clasped hands warmly with Ernie Els, the legendary South African golfer who seemed twice his size, three major championships shaking hands with four. Around them were golfers whose names were familiar to any fan of the game—Rickie Fowler, Camilo Villegas, Louis Oosthuizen, K.J. Choi. And there stood the grandest golf champion of all, Jack Nicklaus, the owner of a record 18 major championships. He was chatting with Justin Thomas, one of the hottest young players in the game, who was a month shy of his 24th birthday at the time. Nicklaus made a swinging motion as he chatted, rotating his hips, giving some instruction to the attentive and young Thomas, lessons of the master being handed down. Old school talking to new school.

This assembly of golf royalty was the gathering at the start of the ninth annual Els for Autism Pro-Am, held on March 13 at Old Palm Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Twenty-five teams of amateurs, many of them top executives of some of the largest spirits concerns in the United States, were preparing to take to the course, each team paired with one of the professional golfers. The event raised $1,015,000 for the Els for Autism Foundation.

The Pro-Am, which was founded by Els and Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of CIGAR AFICIONADO and *Wine Spectator* magazines, has funded a modern school for autistic children, in Jupiter, Florida, called the Els Center of Excellence. The site is not only a school, but a hub of education and information for autism, one of the most serious disorders affecting children in the world today.

The Pro-Am has raised more than $8 million in its nine-year history, including a dramatic $1 million netted in one stroke in 2016 when Rickie Fowler smacked a hole in one at the course's 19th hole. That jackpot helped spur the expansion of the Center, and

Shanken and a large crowd watch as Els tries to make a $2 million hole in one at Old Palm.

Golfing legend Jack Nicklaus on the course.

Rory McIlroy striping a shot during the tourney.

Hazel Shanken getting a high five from Cameron Tringale after a shot during the Els for Autism Pro-Am.

BENJAMIN RUSNAK (4); TIMELINE BOTTOM: DAVID CANNON/GETTY IMAGES

ELS FOR AUTISM TIMELINE

March 2008
Ernie Els, after winning the Honda Classic, reveals publically for the first time that his son Ben has autism.

April 2008
Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of Cigar Aficionado, reaches out to Els with the idea of creating a pro-am to raise money to fight autism.

March 2009
The first Els for Autism Pro-Am is held with a star-studded field of players including Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Greg Norman and Raymond Floyd. The event raises more than $500,000.

March 2014
The Shanken and Els families break ground in Jupiter, Florida, on the Els Center of Excellence. "It's been a long journey," said Ernie Els at the time. "Last year I said we have to show these people who are giving so much that this thing is a reality."

August 2015
The first students are welcomed to the Els Center of Excellence.

March 2016
Rickie Fowler hits a hole in one on the 19th hole at Old Palm Golf Club to win $1 million for the Els for Autism charity. The money allows for the funding of the upper school at the Els Center of Excellence. "I can't put into words how much it means," says Liezl Els at the time.

March 2017
The ninth annual Els for Autism Pro-Am raises more than $1 million, bringing the total funds raised by the event in its lifetime to more than $8 million.

Twenty five teams, each with a golf star and three amateurs, ready themselves for a day at Old Palm Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida on March 13.

The Pro-Am has raised more than $8 million for the Els Center of Excellence in Jupiter, Florida.

The creation of the Upper School (above), which will admit students in September.

beginning in September, 300 special needs children (increased from the previous 120) will be attending the Center.

This year the hole-in-one contest returned at the end of the match, but the rules had been changed. The insurers, who had paid the $1 million in 2016, wanted to make a repeat tougher, so this year they allowed only five golfers to take a shot at the prize, which was doubled to $2 million. The five attempts, made against a hefty breeze, failed to find the pin.

But the lack of another miracle shot couldn't cloud a day of high spirits, great golf shots and good fun. The course was covered with drink and cigar stations, ensuring the golfers wouldn't go thirsty or without a fine cigar. Drinks were provided by Bacardi, Brown-Forman, Campari, Ketel One, Moët Hennessy and Pernod Ricard, with cigars by Alec Bradley, La Flor Dominicana, My Father Cigars and Padrón.

The event was won by the team led by Marvin R. Shanken, pro golfer Branden Grace, former New York City Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and radio personality Rush Limbaugh. "I had one of the best times I've ever had in a golf tournament," said Limbaugh. "Sometimes things go your way," said Shanken, who joked that Limbaugh hit the ball so well that "he can give up radio and turn pro."

Second place went to the team with golf legend Nicklaus, as well as Larry Schwartz, Steve Rust and Jeff Ivey. "I haven't held a trophy in 10 years," said Nicklaus.

Third place went to Charl Schwartzel, who played with Wayne Chaplin and John Esposito.

The star golfers who played were Branden Grace, Rory McIlroy, Rickie Fowler, Cameron Tringale, Camilo Villegas, Louis Oosthuizen, Justin Thomas, Jack Nicklaus, Thomas Aiken, Andrew Johnston, Jamie Lovemark, Ernie Els, Brooks Koepka, Ian Baker-Finch, Alex Cejka, K.J. Choi, Daniel Berger, Bryson DeChambeau, Luke Donald, Ken Duke, Tony Finau, Keegan Bradley, Charl Schwartzel and Kylie Reifers.

Among the teams were executives from Bacardi, Brown-Forman, Charmer Sunbelt, Deutsch & Sons, Diageo, Moët Hennessy, Pernod Ricard, Republic National Distributing, Richemont Group, SAP, Southern Glazer's and Stonehage Fleming.

To find out more about the Els for Autism Foundation, visit elsforautism.org ❖

BENJAMIN RUSNAK

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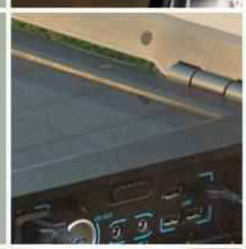
good life guide



Living well demands that we indulge in things that are of superior quality and excellent origin. This guide aspires to find and recommend the best of everything to aficionados of the good life.

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JEFF HARRIS

Soft-Flame Lighters

In the age of indoor smoking bans, the outdoor utility of windproof, jet-flame lighters is undeniable. But the 21st century aficionado would be mistaken to overlook situations in which the soft-flame variety can add a degree of accuracy—and style—to the cigar-smoking experience. It also avoids the undesirable charred notes of a torch gone wrong. Thankfully, the cigar accessories market is ripe with a range soft-flame lighters with designs fit for any occasion.

Take, for instance, Caseti's Lumos (center, $75), an ultra-slim soft flame designed for mobility. Less than one-eighth of an inch thick, the Lumos slides easily into trousers of even the slimmest cut, but still produces a robust yellow flame capable of lighting large-ring-gauge smokes. The one-press igniter has an easy-action trigger, which means you can take your time slowly roasting the foot of your premium hand-rolled without straining your thumb. The flame is sparked by an electro-quartz ignition that—unlike a flint lighter—does not need to be replaced.

Several soft-flame designs have proven durability for puffing in the elements. The Colibri Julius (right, $125) lighter is all about power—even when compared with jet-flames. Made of tough metal alloy with an easy-grip diamond pattern exterior, the effortless roll bar ignites a double-flame that's sturdy enough to compete with gusting winds on the beach or golf course. For added range, the Colibri positions one flame upright and the second at a 45-degree angle, which combine to generate a large, all-encompassing flame.

If the elements aren't a factor and the intention is simply to impress, the quintessential Ligne 2 lighter from S.T. Dupont is never a bad choice. The Parisian company has been producing luxury goods since the late 19th century and has become a symbol of quality with its sturdy and dependable lighters. But the real showcase here is the exuberance of elegance displayed by the Ligne 2's classic precious-metal finishes, available in silver, palladium and gold (as pictured, left, $950). There's also, of course, the unmistakable "ping" of an S.T. Dupont lighter when it's flipped open and ready for ignition. Beyond the standard finishes, the Ligne 2 line is also popular with collectors for its special-edition offerings. Designs have been inspired by the likes of Leonardo da Vinci, The Rolling Stones and James Bond.

Visit colibri.com, st-dupont.com and visolproducts.com

—Blake Droesch

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Aston Martin DB11

Much like the State of California, the drought at Aston Martin is finally over, something we discovered while taking the long-awaited DB11 for a drive through the rain-soaked mountain passes east of San Diego. The British maker, long known as the ride of choice for superspy James Bond, has gone through some tough times in recent years, but with substantial new funding in hand, the all-new DB11 marks the start of an unprecedented product assault that will see at least seven new products roll out in the years ahead. If the DB11 is any indication of what's coming, Aston is in for a glorious future.

Visually, the new coupe is a stunner. Of course, there's that classic, yawning Aston grille that anchors a sculpted body that is both sensuous and sinister, much like so many of the *femmes fatale* James Bond has faced off with over the decades. The car's predecessor, the DB9, has been hailed as one of the most beautiful sports cars ever, but we'd argue that the DB11 (starting at $214,820) is even more of a stunner. The luscious look carries into the cabin, with its supple blend of leather, wood and metal finishes. The instrument panel is anchored, meanwhile, by a new infotainment display that is far easier to use than in previous Aston offerings. Credit the new relationship between the British maker and Germany's Mercedes-AMG.

Going forward, Aston will use the Mercedes electronic "architecture," a definite step forward. It will also start sharing V-8s designed and built by the high-performance AMG brand. But in the DB11, the engine is gloriously all Aston, a silky smooth twin-turbo 5.2-liter powertrain that explains why everyone, at some point in life, should own a V-12. It responds readily to the foot, so intuitively that you might think it is wired directly to your brain. Flatten the foot to the floorboards and you'll hit 60 in less than four seconds. The 2017 Aston Martin DB11 tops out at just slightly faster than 200 mph, but don't be surprised if you look for opportunities to drift off onto winding back roads, at the very least, to hear the guttural roar of that engine under wide-open acceleration.

You'll be in for another thrill as you dive into the first corner. We wondered what to expect when advised that this would be the first Aston Martin to trade classic hydraulic power steering for more energy-efficient electric assist. In many cars, that's a recipe for numbness. Not with the DB11. All the right road sensations passed through to our palms and fingertips, and the car responded with aplomb as we swerved and maneuvered up towards Mount Palomar and then back down again, occasionally having to make a quick adjustment to avoid gravel and dirt that had washed off the hills during a week of heavy storms.

With a car like this, dodging and darting, feeling the surge of power at our command, it's easy to imagine leading the double life of a Double-0 agent. The new Aston Martin DB11 is a car that anyone can bond with.

Visit astonmartin.com

—Paul A. Eisenstein

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Renogy Phoenix Generator

I'm in a park a quarter mile from the nearest power outlet working from a laptop with two percent remaining on the battery, and I'm not the least bit concerned. I plug my power cable into an outlet in my briefcase, and, eureka, I have enough juice to charge my laptop five times over. And when that's tapped, I can get more power without moving.

The Renogy Phoenix Generator isn't just a 13-pound battery pack disguised as a briefcase. It's a mobile solar power station. Unhitch two latches and the briefcase opens like a clamshell to reveal two panels capable of siphoning 20 watts of solar power into a 16-amp hour (about 250-watt) lithium-ion battery.

Before I started using the Phoenix, I couldn't have told you the first thing about watts or amp hours. Now that I've used it some, let me state the obvious: the Phoenix isn't going to power your home. Heck, it probably won't power your hair dryer. But it provides more than enough juice to charge all of your gizmos through the unit's AC outlet, 12v lighter outlet and four USB ports.

Imagine you're at the beach, and, like me, can't refrain from checking your email. With the Phoenix, you can text and email with abandon while your kids try to drown each other. The unit is even water resistant, should you catch a splash. Or perhaps you're camping for some reason, and, naturally, ill-suited for any permutation of wilderness. You can plug in a portable radio and drown out the impending dangers with the reedy voice of Ira Glass. If you find yourself in the dark, the unit even includes a surprisingly bright flashlight.

The Phoenix requires a full day of direct sunlight to completely charge, though I got mine to 35 percent in a few hours by a window. (The unit includes a handy LCD panel that indicates remaining power and output usage.) Furthermore, because it supports external solar panels, you can go full survivalist and create your own mini solar array. (Renology even sells a compatible 100-watt foldable solar suitcase for $255.) If you max out solar capacity, you can charge the Phoenix in just a couple of hours of daylight. Procrastinators, don't fret. You can always charge on before reaching your destination by either plugging the unit into a traditional power outlet or your car's cigar lighter, both of which will cut the charge time in half.

At $700, the Phoenix isn't inexpensive, especially when compared with other battery packs. But the Phoenix is much more than a battery pack. It's a solar power generator, which, unlike a gasoline generator, will never run out of fuel, so long as the sun rises. It's simple to use, compact, and it won't leave your clothes smelling like petrol.

Visit renogy.com

—*William Fenton*

Hamilton Princess & Beach Club

"Bermuda skipped a generation, so we need to reintroduce it to a whole new group of people," says Allan Federer, general manager of the newly renovated and renamed Hamilton Princess & Beach Club (formerly the Fairmont Hamilton Princess). Following its "Mad Men"-era heyday, which peaked in the 1980s, Bermuda's allure lagged despite its pristine pink-sand beaches, scenic golf courses and British charm and sophistication. But the island, which is only a short flight from East Coast hubs, is looking to reclaim its place on top destination lists, and the updated "Pink Princess" is poised to cater to the next generation of travelers with contemporary design and hotspot culinary venues.

The island's Green family who purchased it in 2012, have invested $100 million in upgrading the historic grande dame on the harbor in the capital city. Originally built in 1885, the property, with 400 rooms (from $399) including 45 suites and 13 junior suites, has been launched into the 21st century with fresh, modern interiors. Museum-worthy contemporary artworks by Andy Warhol, Damien Hirst, Banksy, Takashi Murakami and Philippe Decrauzat hang throughout the public spaces and restaurants.

The new full-service marina is a social hub for guests as well as locals, who gather for cocktails at the al fresco 1609 Bar & Restaurant. The marina is also a popular spot for Marina Nights with music, tapas, cigars and whiskey flights. "Cigars are big in Bermuda," says Federer, who notes that the Greens are cigar lovers. "Our guests like that they can come here and get Cubans and other great cigars."

Celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson was tapped for the hotel's premier dining venue, Marcus', which is modeled on his popular Harlem restaurant Red Rooster. Capitalizing on a network of local producers—including organic farmers and fishermen who deliver fresh-caught wahoo, bonito, snapper, amberjack and octopus right to the marina dock—the culinary concept fuses Caribbean, Portuguese and Asian influences. Highlights include fish chowder croquettes with black rum aioli; shrimp and pork belly hot rice with jerk glazed pork belly, shrimp fried rice, kimchi and grilled pineapple; duo of crudo with local fish tartar, radish, jalapeño, crispy rice, apple wasabi, and beet cured salmon; and Aleppo-honey-glazed salmon with shiitake mushrooms, kale and roasted turnips.

Samuelsson also designed the menu at the hotel's private beach club on Sinky Bay, a cove on the island's south shore. The Princess Beach Club helps broaden the hotel's business image by catering to guests who want to lounge on pink sands, swim and snorkel in crystalline turquoise waters.

Those waters and the natural reef that surrounds the island are a major draw for divers, who can explore hundreds of shipwrecks. Meanwhile, golfers can choose from seven courses on the island, which boasts the highest concentration of golf courses per square mile in the world.

The Hamilton Princess' rejuvenation is perfectly timed for a Bermudian renaissance, which is expected to get a considerable boost as the island hosts the 35th Louis Vuitton America's Cup this summer.

Visit thehamiltonprincess.com

—Laurie Kahle

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P3 Sunglasses

The perfect pair of sunglasses can pull your entire getup together, and this season the style to wear is a classic design called the P3. Although the name sounds state-of-the-art, the shades are nearly as retro as they come—based on military-issue eyeglasses from the 1930s, but modernized with a few interesting twists.

"The hottest look is what's called a P3 shape, sort of a drooping circle that many consider the most classic frame style in eyewear. It has also been called the Preppy in the past," says James Spina, editor in chief of *20/20*, a trade magazine for the optical industry.

Originally manufactured in wire frame, the military specs were designed to fit comfortably under gas masks. But much as with combat boots, peacoats and leather bomber jackets, the public caught on to the style and wore them even when out of uniform. When the eyeglasses were later crafted with thicker frames, the P3 took on a scholarly, owlish look (Reference Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*).

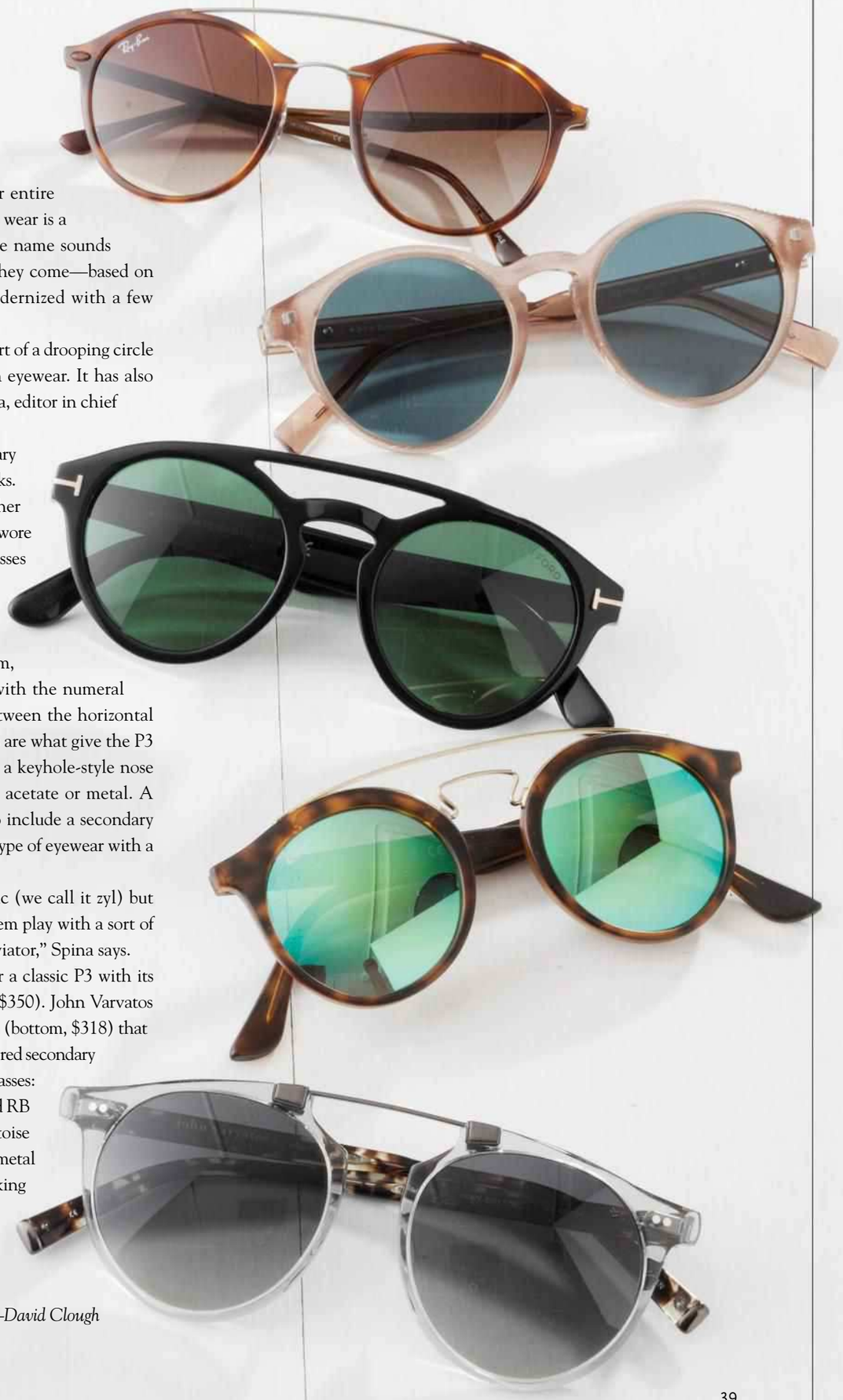
The P3 derives its name from the optician's term, pantoscopic, which refers to the tilt of the lens, with the numeral three referencing the difference in millimeters between the horizontal and vertical lens measurements. The measurements are what give the P3 lenses their unique, round shape. Most P3s feature a keyhole-style nose bridge and the frames are typically made from zyl acetate or metal. A popular trend among P3 sunglasses these days is to include a secondary bridge over the two lenses, reminiscent of another type of eyewear with a military origin—aviator sunglasses.

"The new sun[glass] versions are mainly plastic (we call it zyl) but there are metal versions as well and nearly all of them play with a sort of double-bridge design element borrowed from the aviator," Spina says.

This summer, check out Ermenegildo Zegna for a classic P3 with its Champagne Chevron Sunglasses (second from top, $350). John Varvatos delivers an interesting take on the P3 called Sullivan (bottom, $318) that eschews the traditional nose bridge for an aviator-inspired secondary bridge. Ray Ban showcases two varieties of P3 sunglasses: RB 4266 (top, $215), with brown gradient lenses; and RB 4256 Gatsby I (second from bottom, $175), in tortoise shell with green mirrored lenses. Both pairs feature metal double-bridges. Lastly, Tom Ford offers a powerful-looking P3 called Clint (third from top, $395), in black acetate with green lenses.

Visit johnvarvatos.com, ray-ban.com, tomford.com and zegna.us

—David Clough



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THINK **INSIDE** THE BOX

Automotive Design Watches

Because gearheads intuitively grasp that a mechanical watch movement is essentially a fine-tuned miniature engine, scores of watch brands have tapped the marketing potential of partnering with automobile marques to design watches that allude to a car's signature motifs. But a few have revved up the relationship with genuine collaborations between designers and engineers from both disciplines.

Porsche Design, founded in 1972 by Ferdinand Alexander Porsche, has the most authentic connection between the two. Heeding Porsche's mantra of form strictly following function, designers and engineers from Porsche Design Timepieces in Switzerland, Studio F. A. Porsche in Austria and Porsche Development Centre in Germany came up with the new Monobloc Actuator collection (left, $6,350 to $6,850).

To create a purer chronograph design, they eliminated the push buttons and seamlessly integrated a pressure-operated rocker switch on the side of the case to activate the chronograph, powered by an automatic Calibre ETA Valjoux 7754. The engine of the new Porsche 911 RSR racecar inspired engineers, who referenced the camshaft and valve tappets. Porsche's team devised an articulated case that remains hermetically sealed when you move the rocker arm, even underwater.

Like all Porsche Design watches, the 45.5 mm Monobloc Actuator GMT-Chronotimer is constructed from lightweight titanium, which is available in natural silver or blackened finishes with your choice of a titanium bracelet or rubber strap and two dial colors—blue or matte black.

Bovet partners with the famed Italian automotive studio Pininfarina, responsible for such classic designs as Ferrari and Maserati. Their latest collaboration is Tourbillon Ottanta Sei (center, $173,300 in titanium; $189,000 in rose gold).The watchword of this Ottanta project was "light," leading designers to construct a see-through case from four panes of clear sapphire crystal, etched with the Pininfarina logo and showcasing the movement from all sides. The 44-mm weighs just 15.54 grams in titanium. Three circles highlight the movement's single barrel: a 10-day power reserve display at 10 o'clock, the hours and minutes display at 2 o'clock, and an airy flying tourbillon at 6 o'clock.

This year, Baume & Mercier built on its partnership with the Carroll Shelby Company with the Clifton Club Shelby Cobra Limited Edition collection. A 1,964-piece chronograph pays tribute to the first official race of the legendary Daytona CSX2299 Coupe. A 196-piece CSX2299 fly-back chronograph marks the car's 196-mph speed record at Le Mans in 1964. A driver and designer of racecars, Peter Brock worked closely with Alexandre Peraldi, Baume & Mercier's design director.

The CSX2299 (right, $7,960) borrows numerous elements from the sleek car. The striking bi-color blue and silver dial evokes the Daytona's tail. Chronograph pushers echo the car's foot pedals. The red chronograph hand is tipped with Brock's rising Cobra logo. The winding rotor recalls mag wheels. "Function first, aesthetics second," says Brock. "Make the shape work. Then make it look beautiful. Light and fast."

Visit baume-et-mercier.com, bovet.com and porsche-design.com

—Laurie Kahle

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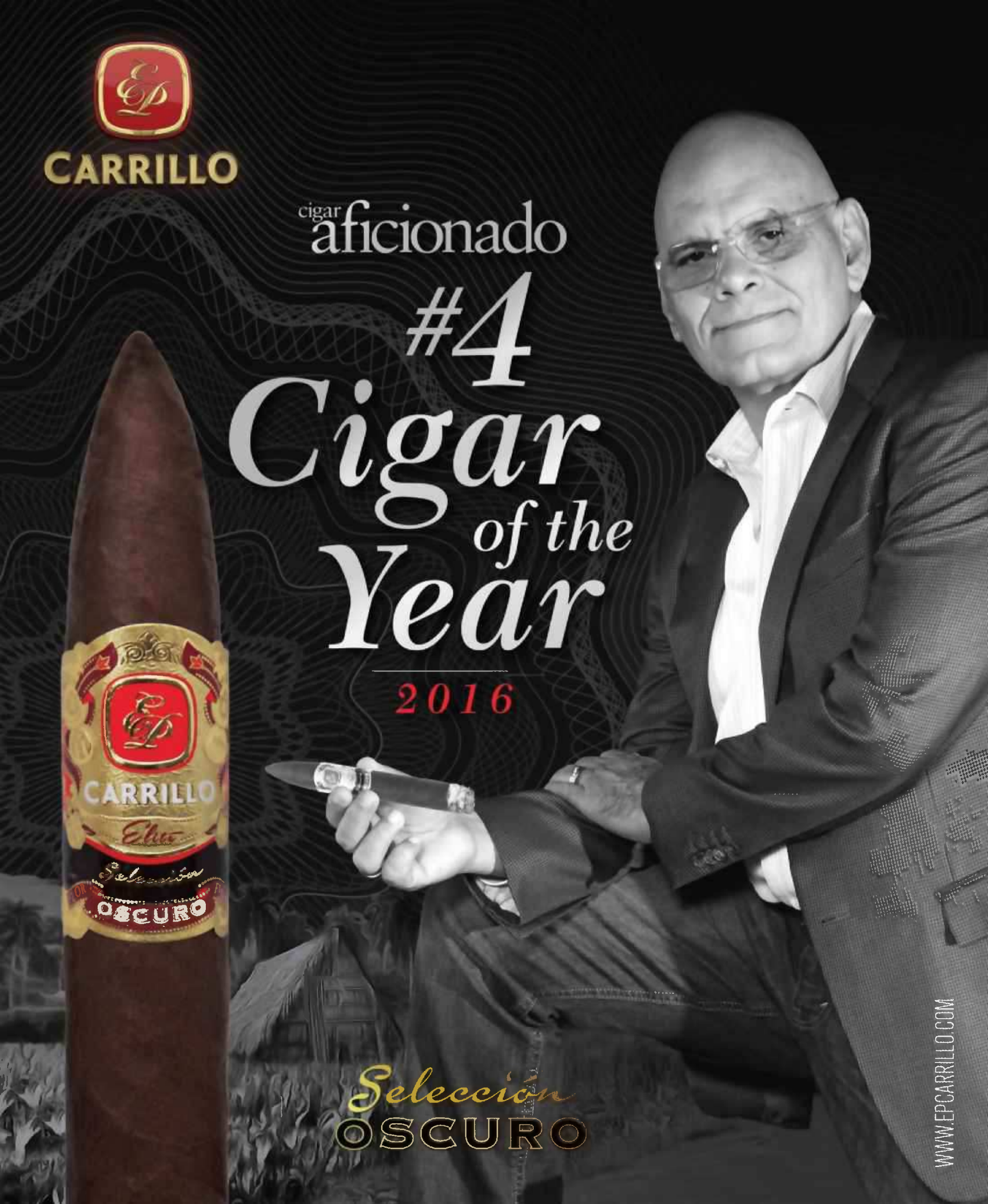
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But the way to speed up personalization is to buy custom. Scott Carpenter, of Carpenter Trade LLC, located near the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, makes custom gloves—based on six hand measurements—for people the world over. Models include fielding gloves and catcher's mitts ($499), extra-wide knuckleball-catching mitts ($549) and ambidextrous gloves (symmetrical with six fingers, $599).

Starting with custom sneakers in 1999, Carpenter decided to apply his skills to baseball and moved to Cooperstown to study gloves. "There's no better resource to study the evolution of gloves than the Hall of Fame." He says no steadfast rules define the best glove. "It ultimately comes down to personal preference for many players. In my opinion, you want the lightest—and widest—glove possible that is still strong enough to do the job. A lot of defense comes down to how fast your glove is. When you get a bad hop or a line drive and you have to make a split-second reaction to it, the only feature of the glove that is going to locate the pocket of the glove in front of the ball in time, is going to be lighter and faster versus heavier and slower." For that reason, his gloves are made of microfibers, which weigh on average 5 to 8 ounces less than the usual steer hide models.

Carpenter says the word "custom" is sometimes loosely used to describe mass-market gloves personalized for baseball stars. "Major leaguers do get small bits that are customized," Carpenter says. "They may get their name on the glove. Other touches might include the color of a web." So red, blue, green, gray—and multiple shades of brown—are now commonplace. "Otherwise it's the standard model made with dies, identical to those you buy in the store."

By contrast, Carpenter takes glove orders through the Internet. "People measure their hands at home and enter that data through one of our order forms," he says. "I start with that information to make a custom glove." And even though he pays no endorsement fees for players to wear his gloves, some 30 professional players wear the Carpenter model.

Visit carpentertrade.com

—Kenneth Shouler

Summer Bourbon Cocktails

When May rolls around it is hard to ignore the quintessential event drink: the Mint Julep. Tankers' loads are poured at the Kentucky Derby each year because they celebrate the springing of mint and the state's native spirit: Bourbon. (To consider substituting another whiskey in this drink has been likened to putting scorpions in a baby's bed.) Southern plaints to the contrary, even Yankees can make it: muddle six mint leaves with bitters and simple syrup in a glass or metal cup, fill with Bourbon over crushed ice and garnish with more mint. But while the Julep is a great refresher, warm weather enjoyment of Bourbon doesn't end there.

You may remember the Whiskey Sour as the drink the forever over-heated (in more ways than one) protagonist of *The Seven Year Itch* claims as a breakfast beverage. Perhaps if you're making it from frozen concentrate with crushed ice, but if you prefer to fully appreciate this tangy quencher all day long, mix it with fresh ingredients: an ounce of lemon juice, an ounce of simple syrup, two ounces Bourbon and an egg white shaken vigorously over ice to a froth and strained into a cocktail glass with cherry and lemon garnish. If you really want to trick it out, make your own simple syrup, heating equal parts water and sugar and muddling in fresh basil leaves as it melts together.

Among the windfalls of the recent Negroni renaissance has been the attendant rediscovery of its whiskey-based cousin, the Boulevardier. When made with Bourbon in place of rye, it has all the same bitter, bracing qualities as the gin-based Negroni, but lots more grit and some welcome sweetness. Make it on the rocks and it will stay cool longer. Mix equal parts Bourbon, Campari and vermouth over ice in an Old-Fashioned glass, stir and garnish with orange peel.

A new-fangled way to make an Old-Fashioned during barbecue season is to add some smoke to the mix. Start by fashioning an Old-Fashioned: muddle a teaspoon of simple syrup, two dashes bitters and an orange wedge in an Old-Fashioned glass, add two ounces Bourbon, stir and add large ice cubes. The smoke can get into the glass in several ways. One is to rest the ice in a smoking barbecue for a minute. Another is to char a wood plank with a blowtorch and cap the resulting smolder with another Old-Fashioned glass. Then simply pour the contents of the first glass into the second. The last method is to blow cigar smoke into a bell jar and then place the container over your drink for a minute or two. We think you'll agree that one's the most fun.

—*Jack Bettridge*

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Indoor Skydiving

If you've always wanted to skydive but can't get past the part where you're clinging to the threshold of the plane with your instructor shouting, "What are you waiting for?" there's a simple, safe and relatively terror-free alternative. It's indoor skydiving with iFly, a company with dozens of vertical wind tunnels in the U.S. and abroad (two of them on cruise ships). The experience involves floating on a fan-generated column of air, or rather hurricane force winds.

People who have tried both say it's a reasonable facsimile of free fall, the most important difference is that you don't have to worry about your parachute—or manhood—failing you. I first flew with iFly, because who hasn't dreamt of being Superman? I went back to see whether I could relax enough to enjoy the scenery, limited though it is in a wind tunnel.

First-timers watch a brief training video to learn hand signs—fan noise makes voice communication nearly impossible—and then don a jump suit and helmet. You're accompanied at all times by an instructor who makes sure you keep your chin up—and not just metaphorically. The breeze is so strong that even minor adjustments to arms, legs and chin can send you off course.

My first instructor took me on a high-speed ride to the top of the tunnel and back again—three times. I had no regrets when my second teacher, Nico Gonzalez, didn't interrupt my peaceful sightseeing tour.

The average flight takes a couple of minutes and is the equivalent of 1.5 skydives. An entire course of instruction helps you progress to doing back flips. However, getting as good as Gonzalez—being able to soar and scamper around the tunnel walls like Spider-Man—requires dozens of hours of training and experience.

Children as young as three have suited up. And iFly is understandably popular for kids birthday parties (as the average 10-year-old suffers from fewer pangs of mortality than a middle-aged person) and a lot more memorable than a pony ride. It's also in demand for corporate team building exercises.

At the location I visited in Westchester, New York, a two-flight package (including a personalized flight certificate) costs $89.95 (prices vary by location). But you'll probably want to spend a little more to bring home photographs and videos of yourself floating on a column of air in your flight suit, your cheeks puckered by the wind. You can post them to Facebook and prove to your friends you're not half the wimp they think you are. That souvenir alone seems worth the effort.

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—Ralph Gardner Jr.

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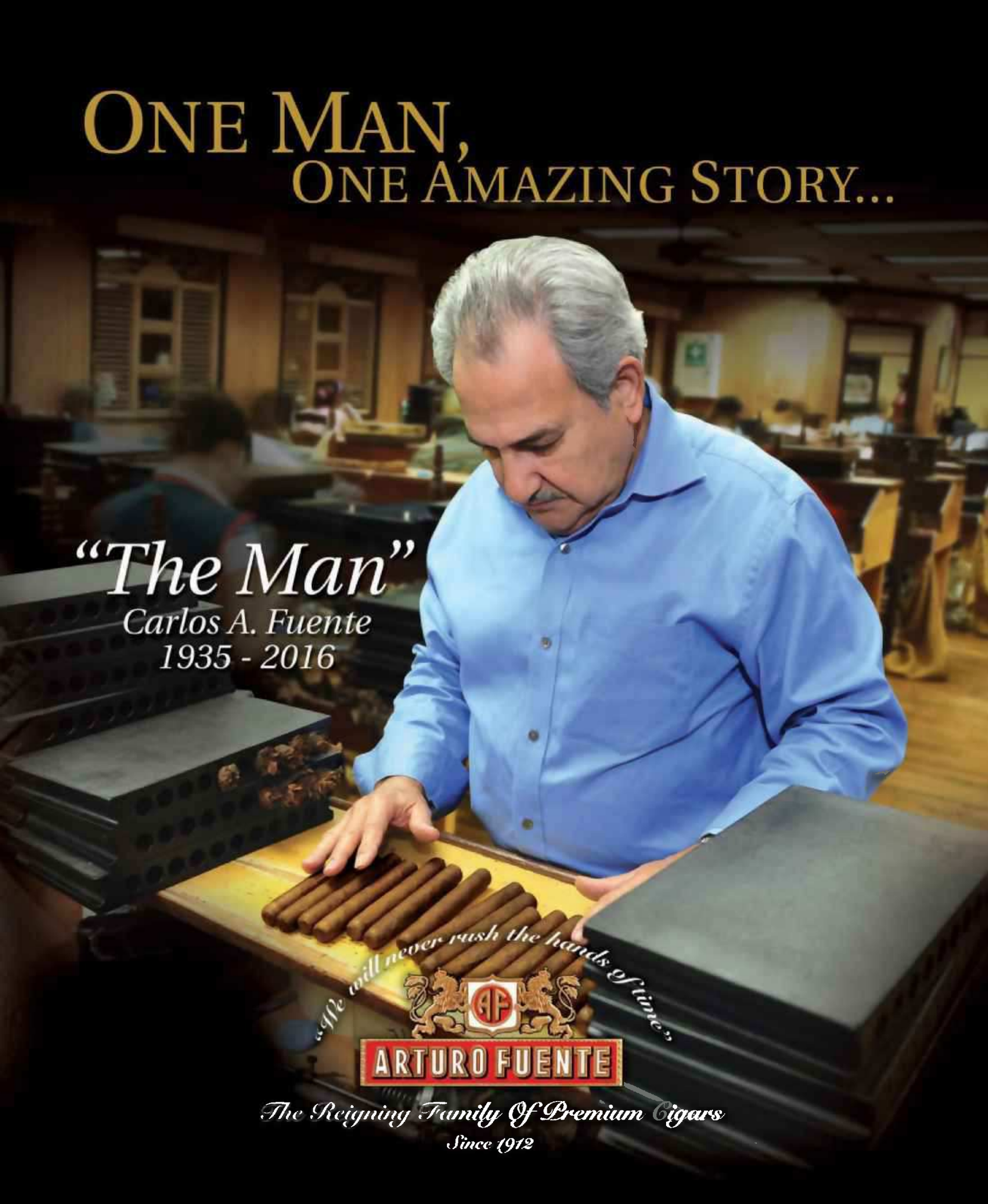

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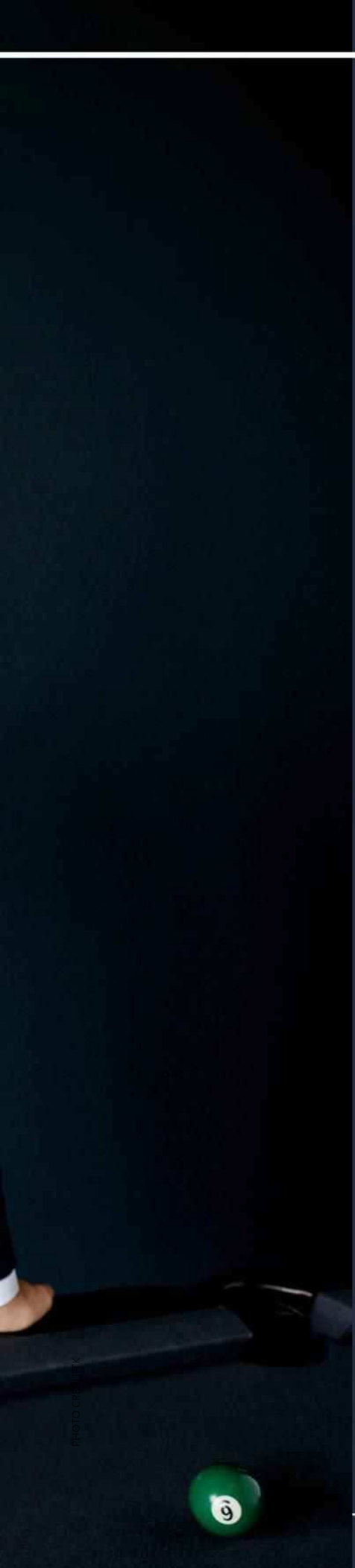

The Odd Couple

by Marshall Fine

portraits by Jeff Lipsky

Actor Chris Pratt and director James Gunn of *Guardians of the Galaxy* forged a bond of friendship over cigars

STYLING BY ANNIE PSALTIRAS
GROOMING FOR CHRIS PRATT BY BRIDGET BRAGER
GROOMING FOR JAMES GUNN BY LOUISE MOON

Chris Pratt starring in, clockwise from above: *Jurassic World;* the 2016 remake of *The Magnificent Seven* and *Passengers*, with costar Jennifer Lawrence.

THE QUESTION WAS ABOUT GOALS: At this stage in his young and highly successful movie career, what is there that Chris Pratt still wants desperately to do?

The answers, which came as he smoked cigars on a Hollywood Hills patio, were part personal, part professional, and then, well, weird.

"I want to do a comedy," says Pratt, speaking during a 72-hour furlough in Los Angeles from filming in London. "I want to flex my muscles as a collaborator, so that I have more creative control."

The 37-year old actor, who mixes Midwestern good looks with the physique of a tight end, takes a puff of his cigar, a Hoyo de Monterrey Epicure No. 2. "I want to catch a world-record large-mouth bass—a 25-pounder. I'd love it if my son became a professional bass fisherman and I was his sponsor and we could go fishing together everyday. That would be awesome." Then Pratt turns on the comedic charm that has made him a star. "Oh, and I'd like to fight an animal in self-defense."

This answer catches the attention of his smoking companion James Gunn, the writer and director of *Guardians of the Galaxy*, which earned more than $770 million worldwide and made Pratt an A-lister. The sequel reaches theaters May 5, and it's expected to be one of the biggest moneymakers of the year. "I think an ostrich-human battle might be good," jokes Gunn. "And a badger would make a good match."

"A badger could definitely kill you," Pratt observes.

Gunn drops his voice to a comic sotto voce: "You can't just go waltzing into the ring against a badger. You've got to do your research."

Then the pair, who have turned an underdog entry in the Marvel Universe into an unexpectedly successful comic book movie franchise, burst out laughing. Which is business as usual for when the two get together, whether over cigars or while on the set of a movie. Despite the fact that Gunn initially resisted the idea of casting Pratt in the original *Guardians of the Galaxy*, which came out in 2014, the pair have become fast friends and enthusiastic collaborators.

"I remember that he saw a lot of people—and he wasn't interested in seeing Chris, who he thought of as just the funny guy on 'Parks and Recreation,'" says Sean Gunn, James' brother and lifelong collaborator. "But when he heard Chris read, he knew within seconds that this was the guy….A lot of the comedy in these movies comes from James and Chris just trying to crack each other up. The cast in general has a nice, familial feel, but James and Chris set the tone. And they're both very funny."

LEFT: CHUCK ZLOTNICK / ©UNIVERSAL PICTURES/EVERETT COLLECTION; TOP RIGHT: SCOTT GARFIELD /© COLUMBIA PICTURES / EVERETT COLLECTION; LOWER RIGHT: PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY; PREVIOUS SPREAD: SUITS BY ISAIA / SHIRTS, TIES AND POCKET SQUARES BY BROOKS BROTHERS / WATCH BY PANERAI

Chris Pratt by the Numbers

Chris Pratt has starred in some of Hollywood's biggest movie moneymakers over the past three years. Here are his biggest hits, by worldwide box office.

Jurassic World (2015)
$1.67 billion

Guardians of the Galaxy (2014)
$773 million

The Lego Movie (2014)
$469 million

Passengers (2016)
$299 million

The Magnificent Seven (2016)
$162 million

SOURCE: BOX OFFICE MOJO

Pratt leading the *Guardians of the Galaxy*, including Zoe Saldana (far left) and Dave Bautista (far right).

WALT DISNEY STUDIOS MOTION PICTURES / PHOTOFEST

Gunn still cannot quite believe his luck, as he and Pratt relax and smoke on a patio that offers a panoramic view of downtown Los Angeles and everything west to the Pacific Ocean. Gunn is puffing one of his favorites, a Trinidad Topes Edición Limitada 2016.

Gunn is 46, an emphatic sort with spiky reddish-brown hair and horn-rimmed glasses to match. "You're the greatest actor collaboration I've ever had," he says to Pratt. "You come in with ideas that I'm able to reshape. Then you take it and we toss it back and forth and work on it. Now, for this second film, I knew your voice—all your voices—and could hear them as I wrote the script."

Pratt offers Gunn praise of his own: "When you've got someone writing for your voice, it's like trying on clothes that were tailored for you."

Millions await the release of any film about Spider-Man, Captain America or the Avengers. But the Guardians of the Galaxy comic books were a fringe hit of the Marvel Universe, a cult favorite at best, and the movie had zero buzz. Beyond the Marvel label, there was little that would call attention to the first film: a minor comic book franchise, a little-known director with two (little-seen) films to his credit, and a leading man who was a featured player (and not the star) on a network sitcom. Sure, the cast list featured the names of Bradley Cooper and Vin Diesel—but they wouldn't actually be seen in the movie. Instead, they voiced digitally animated characters: a talking raccoon named Rocket (Cooper) and a sentient tree named Groot whose vocabulary was limited to the words "I am Groot" (Diesel). With a release date in August, often a summer dumping ground, it was anything but an obvious blockbuster.

Instead, the dark horse exploded out of the gate into the summer of 2014, taking in more than $330 million in the United States (making it the third biggest movie of the year) and $770 million in worldwide grosses. The film turned Gunn into a filmmaking force and made Pratt a known commodity. Coming a few months after the $469 million take for *The Lego Movie* (for which Pratt voiced the lead character), *Guardians* completely transformed Pratt's status. The following year he starred in the *Jurassic Park* reboot *Jurassic World*, and it reaped $1.67 billion worldwide—No. 4 all time. Pratt was now a seismic box-office force, which carried over to his 2016 roles in *The Magnificent Seven* and *Passengers*.

By the time he reunited with Gunn and castmates Cooper, Diesel, Zoe Saldana and Dave Bautista to make *Guardians Vol. 2*, Pratt had become a full-fledged movie star.

"There was this moment when I was at a party and Barbra Streisand and Jim Carrey both came up to me to tell me they loved what I'd done," says Pratt. "Streisand asked me, 'How does it feel? You're this year's big thing.' Jim Carrey told me the same thing. That was when those people stopped being my icons and became my peers."

"As we've gotten more money and more success, he's become this movie star simultaneously," Gunn says. "But he also made huge strides as an actor. Hopefully, he'll get more attention for that because he may be a star, but he's also an actor. There was a huge shift from the first film to the second, in terms of his knowledge of the craft. He was more confident and thoughtful."

Pratt wasn't seeking stardom so much as a steady paycheck as an actor

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when he arrived in California. A native of Virginia, Minnesota, who grew up in Washington State, he was a 20-year-old college drop-out, working in a restaurant in Hawaii. One day he waited on actress Rae Dawn Chong, who was directing a low-budget horror film. She cast him and brought him to Los Angeles and, within a couple of years, he had a featured role on the long-running TV series "Everwood," transitioning from that to a recurring part for a season of "The O.C."

"To me, success meant not having to have another job besides acting," Pratt says. "It meant having enough money to pay the bills and feed yourself and survive, really. A roof over your head, food on the table, gas in the car and the ability to create opportunities: If I was just a working actor without having to wait tables, I considered myself living the dream."

He was getting small movie roles and, on one, *Take Me Home Tonight*, he met his future wife, actress Anna Faris. After they married, he worked steadily, though he was still relatively unknown, while Faris' career took off. Before he landed the role in "Parks and Recreation," Pratt had worked himself up to a level where he was being considered for starring roles—as Jake Sully in *Avatar* and as the new James T. Kirk in the *Star Trek* reboot—but those roles went to other actors.

Nick Offerman, who costarred with Pratt in "Parks and Recreation," remembers meeting Pratt at a party a couple of years before the series.

"I knew his wife, who had a reputation for being smart and funny, and I was talking to her, when this Adonis sat down next to her," Offerman recalls. "And I thought, 'Of course, this lovely young woman has got some big meathead for a boyfriend.' But Chris almost immediately established himself as hilarious, smart and a real sweetheart. These are not qualities you often see in people as physically attractive as Chris."

Pratt has a blend of boyish good looks and athleticism, quick wit, smart-aleck charm and small-town humility. His sunny good humor is reminiscent of the young Kevin Costner or Jeff Bridges; at other times, he brings to mind Harrison Ford. Pratt has been mentioned often (and, so far, without basis) as a contender to play younger versions of two of Ford's most iconic characters—Han Solo (a role that actually went to actor Alden Ehrenreich) and Indiana Jones.

His costars certainly admire him. "On a movie set, the star sets an atmosphere and I've never seen Chris in a bad mood," says Dave Bautista, the professional wrestler who plays Drax the Destroyer in the *Guardian* films. "He's aware of that; he knows there are going to be some long, uncomfortable days. That turned us into a family."

"I was at a party and Barbra Streisand and Jim Carrey both came up to me to tell me they loved what I'd done." —Chris Pratt

Pratt is a genuinely funny actor, after seven seasons playing the not-quite-bright Andy Dwyer weekly on "Parks and Recreation," a show loaded with comedic talent, including Amy Poehler, Rob Lowe, Aziz Ansari and Offerman. The character wasn't even supposed to survive the first season, but Pratt was so winning in the role that his character wound up as a regular for the show's seven seasons.

Nick Offerman (left), who spent seven seasons with Pratt on "Parks and Recreation," calls Pratt "hilarious, smart and a real sweetheart."

CHRIS HASTON / NBC / NBCU PHOTO BANK

"Watching him refine his comic skills in the middle of that A-team of comedy talent was a true joy," Offerman says.

Back in those days, Pratt's weight tended to yo-yo. He'd let himself go for "Parks and Recreation," then shed weight and get in shape for movie roles, like *Moneyball*. When he had to sweat off pounds and bulk up to play a member of Seal Team 6 in *Zero Dark Thirty* he decided to keep the weight off for good.

"I've learned not to overestimate how deep the audience is—that, as an actor, a big part of it is looking as good as you can," Pratt says.

"There was a point in his early 30s where he looked more husky," Offerman notes. "But then he got into amazing shape. At one point, I looked at him and said, 'You ought to be playing a superhero.' I have a pretty open man-crush on him."

Along with the look of a hero, Pratt also brings real emotional depth to his roles. While *Guardians*' Peter Quill is quick with a quip, Pratt can tap into obviously deep feelings in a moment of silence. Gunn is convinced that Pratt's access to those emotions and the *Guardian* films' willingness to reach for them is one the movies' greatest strengths.

"I want it to be deeper and more emotional," Gunn says. "We want to give people what they liked about the first one—and something more. The second film has to fulfill the promise of the first. You have to continue to give people the unexpected, to take them to new worlds they haven't imagined."

Adds Pratt, "It's that sweet spot where you give people what they want but not what they're expecting. Comedy, emotion and action form this triangle. And it's about bringing it to an even better level."

The original *Guardians* introduced audiences to Pratt's Peter Quill, a rakish half-Earthling space-scavenger who has christened himself Star-Lord. Quill was kidnapped and raised by a group of intergalactic pirates shortly after his mother's death when he was 12, and the first film's plot centered on Quill's search for something called an Infinity Stone, a source of cosmic power. By the end of the film, Star-Lord had banded with a group of his former competitors, aliens all, to save the universe from being destroyed.

Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2 will pick up a few months later and will include Peter's search for his long-lost father. It will also delve into the backgrounds of the other members of the still-nascent Guardians of the Galaxy—Cooper's Rocket Raccoon, Diesel's Groot, Bautista as the blue-skinned Drax and Zoe Saldana as green-skinned Gamora—in their quest to protect the universe. And that's as much as Gunn, Pratt or Marvel will say.

"Comedy, emotion and action form this triangle. And it's about bringing it to an even better level." —Chris Pratt

There is one fact they've let out: Peter does find his father, and he's named Ego the Living Planet, a talking planet whose human form will be embodied by Kurt Russell. That casting choice was suggested to Gunn by Pratt, a long-time admirer of Russell's.

"I didn't know anything about it, really, so when I started talking to them, I had to see the first movie—and I really liked it," says Russell, who appeared on the cover of Cigar Aficionado in 2006. "It was an exciting opportunity to play a character I'd never done before—or will probably play again."

Pratt's Quill character reminds Russell of one of his own roles, as trucker Jack Burton, battling kung-fu ghosts in *Big Trouble in Little China*, John Carpenter's mid-1980s action-comedy. "Jack was a guy who thought he was on top of things when he wasn't really on top of things," Russell says. "I could feel some of those same things that James was drawing from for Chris."

Russell and Pratt connected over a shared love of the outdoors, including hunting and fishing. Russell chuckles at reports in the press that Pratt wants Russell to adopt him: "We had a good rapport—I could easily see Chris folding into our clan," Russell says. "I definitely could have had a boy like that."

Friends and collaborators today, Pratt and Gunn barely knew each other when they started the first film. They bonded over cigars during filming the original Guardians movie in London, getting together at least weekly to enjoy a cigar together.

"I found a shop in London, run by Ajay Patel, where I would go every Thursday night and smoke," Gunn says, talking about the Casa del Habano in Teddington, United Kingdom. "I met Ajay about 15 years ago; he's sort of the Cigar Whisperer. He can meet you for two seconds and tell you what cigar would be best for you. I felt like I'd reached some new cigar-smoker's nirvana. When you're making a movie, you're surrounded by film-industry people. This was a time where we could sit and smoke that would get us out of talking about the industry."

Gunn introduced Pratt to Patel: "I hung with Ajay and found these breakfast cigars, La Flor de Cano, that I just loved," Pratt says. "I started smoking them on the set."

Pratt laughs and gets a mischievous gleam: "The Brits are so polite. There I am, smoking these little cigars on the set and it is, in fact, illegal. But they were so reluctant to finally say, 'I'm very sorry, but I'm afraid it's against the law.' And I said, 'No, no, that's cool—just tell me when the cops come.' Hey, I show up on time, I know my stuff. It's like, my one diva thing."

Gunn chuckles: "I've worked with diva actors. He's no diva."

Their evenings together in London helped Pratt hone his taste for cigars, Cuban and non-Cuban. Pratt still enjoys the Flor de Canos, as well as Rocky Patel Vintage 1990. Pratt has a humidor at his Hollywood Hills home, and at a place he has in Washington State.

"I like a cigar I can smoke in the middle of the day," says Pratt, who is a former cigarette smoker. "I'm a little quantity over quality, I'm afraid. But I like that smoking a cigar takes so long. You light it and it's a social thing. We're smoking cigars, let's sit and talk. In a way, it's like fishing."

Still, Pratt is conscious of not smoking around his young son, Jack, 4: "My rule is I don't let my son smell it on me," he says. "So I only smoke when I'm on the set or after he goes to bed."

Gunn, a true aficionado, has a standing humidor at his office and a walk-in humidor at home: "His humidor is so huge and great," Pratt says admiringly.

"My go-to cigar over the years has been a Partagás D4—or a Lusitania, depending on how much time I have," Gunn says. "Aside from Ajay, I'm a bit of an autodidact about cigars. I started out with full-bodied cigars and very quickly that became all I smoked. But over time I found an appreciation for a blend of medium and lighter cigars.

"I smoke a cigar almost every night. I kick back and relax; I think that's a healthy thing. I have an active brain and this is a high-stress occupation. So I'm allowed to smoke a cigar, relax and do nothing for a little while each day. I have a smoking room at home with proper ventilation. I rarely smoke the same cigar two nights in a row. I try to strike a balance between Cubans and non-Cubans.

"I don't drink. I don't do drugs," says Gunn. "I hang out with the guys and smoke cigars."

Gunn, 46, has been making movies since he was a 12-year-old in his native St. Louis, says brother Sean, who plays one of the galactic pirates in the *Guardians* films and stands in for the digital character, Rocket Raccoon, during filming. "He made his first one in Super-8. I was always in them, usually killing someone—or getting killed."

After getting an MFA in writing at Columbia, Gunn went to work for schlock-horror purveyor Troma Films, creator of the *Toxic Avenger* films: "I was paid $150 to write a script and I got to make a movie. I learned every single practical thing there is to know about making a movie, including choreographing sex scenes. It gave me much more pragmatic approach than going to film school."

Says Sean Gunn, "My brother always had a great imagination for building worlds and a storyteller's eye. Everything in his life and career led him to direct *Guardians*. He's perfectly suited to that story and those

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characters. That's one of the reasons I was less nervous that the movie would be a success."

"For me, the important thing is the conversation with the culture," James Gunn says. "It doesn't need to be permanent. Everything we do is sand castles. So what can I create in the here-and-now that's interesting, that will affect people's lives in a positive way? Hopefully, people walk out of *Guardians of the Galaxy* loving someone a little more; I want to make the world a better place for an hour or two."

But making a better world comes with a price. Pratt, open and funny in conversation, with manners that would make a mother proud, has had to ratchet down his natural accessibility, because his visibility as a mass-market movie star makes it almost impossible to go out in public otherwise.

"It's tough sometimes, the amount of management you need to do on things you used to do spontaneously," Pratt says. "I miss that but, in a healthy way, I'm able to unpack it. What I really miss is sitting down and talking to strangers who don't know me, so we can discover each other. I'd say the majority of the people I meet have an idea about me before they meet me. There's something nice to being able to surprise somebody."

Gunn puts in, "I miss being able to go out to dinner with you. Do you remember that dinner in Atlanta [where they shot *Vol. 2*] where a woman came and sat down at our table? Neither of us knew her and we were having a conversation, but she just started having a conversation with you."

Pratt nods, noting, "Obviously, it's not as bad as having to worry about paying the bills. I've always been a pretty deferential, go-with-the-flow guy. But now I have to be economical with my time. If I go out and want to do normal things, I have to be comfortable disappointing people. So I just don't take pictures with people. Because that's not about enjoying the moment; it's about stealing the moment to brag about later. So I say, 'Would you settle for a handshake?' And then they take the picture anyway."

Gunn is convinced that the new *Guardians* will be a turning point for Pratt: "He's very vulnerable in this film. The more vulnerable and real that Chris Pratt is in the film, the better it will be."

ON PRATT, JACKET, SHIRT, TIE AND TROUSERS BY TOM FORD / WATCH BY CARTIER / SHOES BY TOD'S; ON GUNN, SUIT BY ISAIA / SHIRT AND TIE BY BROOKS BROTHERS / SHOES BY TOD'S

Pratt sees himself at a cusp. Having reached a commercial pinnacle, he understands that the next phase of his career offers more and better choices. It's also given him the financial freedom to take time off, instead of worrying about whether the next job might be the last, the actor's perpetual fear. He makes a point of using that freedom to focus on family and to give something back.

"I'm determined to take three or four months off each year so I can be home and just be present," he says. "The money thing gets rid of a lot of anxiety that's a lot of stress for a lot of people. But fans, success, accolades—what's really fulfilling is if I go to a Ronald McDonald House and spend some time there. I can give a kid 15 minutes when he's not thinking about the fact that he's terminally ill, or take a sibling aside and spend a few minutes with them and give them a bit of a distraction from what's going on in their family. Those are hard things to deal with. I walk out after that and I feel great. To me, that's what feels good about the fame and success. The rest of it feels just north of exciting." ❖

Contributing editor Marshall Fine is critic-in-residence at The Picture House Regional Film Center in Pelham, N.Y.

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A SHARK WITH Style

BY KENNETH A. SHOULER
PORTRAITS BY DAVID YELLEN

Daymond John, a star panelist from TV's "Shark Tank," fashioned a garment business from his interest in music

Daymond John is sitting, pitched forward at the waist. His face rounded by that boyish smile he flashes on the television show "Shark Tank," he listens keenly. The tilted, eager posture suggests that what lies ahead of him is the only direction he considers worthwhile. He sports his signature diamond earrings, blinking above a gray, pinstriped wool suit, accented with French cuffs and massive gold cufflinks. "It's a Brioni tie," he volunteers, "with a little pop of orange." Indeed, the orange, set against the pinkish background of the tie, makes for his boldest fashion statement. "And I always wear some sort of boot, because I am a short guy."

His size is inversely proportionate to his achievements. His is a rags to riches tale—or a Queens to universe tale if you want the true scale of it—from selling hats from a garbage bag in New York to selling globally.

Looking back on how it all began, he recalls smoking a Romeo y Julieta, as he is now. "It was the first cigar I had that I really liked," he says. "So there is sentimental value there. We smoked them on a guys' night out. We were all just smoking and sitting around." He then recites a litany of anti-skills: "Can't dribble a basketball, can't sing, can't draw, didn't know anybody, didn't go to college—but that didn't stop me at all."

Nothing has. Aside from being a venture capitalist on the riveting, follow-the-dough reality show "Shark Tank," John, 48, was selected by former President Barack Obama as a Presidential Ambassador for Global Entrepreneurship. He is a three-time author and ubiquitous speaker, who espouses an unpretentious, pragmatic, and sensible business philosophy. Lately he has launched blueprint + co., an open workspace for like-minded entrepreneurs. Investing in more than 60 companies, he gives new meaning to the word "busy."

Daymond Garfield John was born on February 23, 1969. His mother, Margot, and father, Garfield, who was born in Trinidad, were divorced after John's 10th birthday. An only child raised by his mother and grandmother in Hollis, Queens, he recalls his mom working multiple jobs—ranging from an executive assistant at Lehman Brothers to the luggage department at American Airlines—to make ends meet.

Daymond was fortunate to be in a co-op program at Bayside High School that allowed him to work full-time and attend school on an alternating weekly basis. "And you would get the same kind of credits for it," he recalls. "Now, knowing I was dyslexic, I know that the job was my workaround for not wanting to go to school. But it was also my fascination for making money and also my love for actually being able to go to New York City every single day of the work week. I was a foot messenger for First Boston, a private banking firm. I could support myself and I didn't have to be another burden to my mother. I always wanted to help my mother instead of being a burden to her."

Though he didn't know it then, the job lit an entrepreneurial fire beneath him. "It taught me discipline, it taught me about having a job. It also exposed me to Lehman Brothers at 53rd and Park Avenue. Every time we had a package delivery that was over 10 blocks long, you would get $2, one for the train up and one for the train back. I would walk and save the fares. By the end of the

Daymond John in New York City, wearing the logo of his latest business venture, blueprint + co.

day I would have eight extra dollars. By Friday I would go upstairs to the dining room at Lehman and treat myself to one of those steak lunches for $15. I was just 17. I was hearing these guys complaining that they couldn't buy the new Ferrari that was coming out, or that they were going through a divorce and it cost millions of dollars. They were private bankers, and they were stressed and always intense and so miserable."

Hip-hop music was emerging at the time, and it was a seedbed for creativity. "Russell [Simmons] discovered all of them," John says. "Salt-N-Pepa, Run DMC, LL Cool J, and then the rest came from my neighborhood: Ja Rule, 50 Cent, there's a bunch of them because of Russell. They started to influence everything—the way you walked, talked." John took notice, and saw opportunity. "I saw a De La Soul video and they were wearing a cap that looked like a ski cap. But instead of a ball on the top, it had a string an inch down from the top and it's tied and hangs there."

John believed he could make a better hat. So it was off to Jamaica, Queens, to buy fabric. "Because there is a heavy Caribbean influence in my neighborhood, and a lot of Caribbeans are tailors, they sewed and mended their own clothes. I bought a bolt of fabric, a big roll; it looked like a big old candy cane." It cost $40. His mother taught him to sew, and he made 80 hats. "I folded them and put them all in a garbage bag. And I stood on the corner and pulled one out, two, four at a time. And people are walking by. I sold them at the Colosseum Mall at 165th Street in Jamaica, Queens." He saw a competitor on a different corner selling for $22, so John sold his for $10. "I had to undercut him to get rid of these hats."

As his peers found their voice in musical cadence and rhymes, John's creativity filtered out through fashion. "It actually hit me; it wasn't a conscious stream of thought. I always loved fashion, and I always loved music. I never thought you could make money doing something you loved. Many of us were taught that we had to grow up and go to work in a factory until 60 years old and retire. And coming from a middle-class place like Hollis, Queens you either worked at Aqueduct Race Track, or Belmont, or LaGuardia Airport or Kennedy. But when I saw a couple of designers in urban clothing, I realized that we had the power and we could make our own clothes, we didn't have to be dictated to by someone in Italy. You always hear that someone else is so much greater. That's when I realized that this can be our culture making for us. We don't have to let these Italian designers tell us, "Hey guys, wear this on the street." And that was the genesis of For Us, By Us (FUBU). People have often mistaken it for a color. But it was actually about a culture that anybody of any color would love hip-hop."

"Many of us were taught that we had to grow up and go to work in a factory. I never thought you could make money doing something you loved."

Now he turned to creating and marketing different products. "I was 21 or 22. I started bringing on friends. We were doing it because we loved what we were doing. We were going to expos, flea markets. And why? Because we were selling it and we were feeling pretty good about what we were doing. And girls were out there, too, and we were talking, hanging out. I thought maybe we can make hats, sweatshirts. With sweatshirts you have screen printed and you have embroidered. So you had about six types of items in the line.

"FUBU came about right after I sold about 800 hats. I paid some money to a friend who drew up a logo for me, and that was what separated my hats from other people's hats." John had made his first foray into branding. "I went to all the video sets I could, and I would put it on a rapper if they allowed me to. All of a sudden people recognized the name, FUBU. To make ends meet, I was working as a waiter at Red Lobster, and working on FUBU as I found time. [In 1992] we decided to go to a trade show in Las Vegas. And we wrote $330,000 of orders." The order eventually secured a contract with Macy's in New York. Daymond soon sewed his logo onto hockey jerseys, sweatshirts and T-shirts. Then, in 1993, LL Cool J, a neighborhood friend of Daymond's, agreed to wear one of Daymond's shirts in a picture that became the centerpiece of his promotional campaign. Then, during a 30-second commercial spot for The Gap, LL Cool J wore a FUBU hat in the commercial and incorporated the line "for us, by us" in his rapping.

John was in direct competition with Donna Karan and Tommy Hilfiger. "It was amazing—when you are on the floor and Macy's puts you on the floor that is right next to these companies." It is hard not to be big-headed. "But being big-headed hurt us. The way that it hurt us was that we were so hot, that when you sell to the large stores, you sell them what is called a prepack, with 12 pairs of jeans: two size 32s, two 34s, two 36s, all the way to 42s. We'd say, 'you can't break it up, take it the way it is.' Why? Because we were too lazy to go and say, 'I'm sorry, how many of each do you want?' We were doing prepack and the store would want to break it up and we would say, 'No, take it, take it.' So what happened is that we made them take it so much like that, so what happens? You're a store. You just bought $100,000 worth of jeans. 32 through 36 sold out, but 38 to 42 didn't. So now in every box you have extra jeans at 38 and 42, and so what do you do? Instead of the jeans being $60, you've got to discount them at $30 to get rid of them. It starts to corrode the line, because now the kid who comes in to buy the jean at $32 or $35 says, 'why are those over there worth $60?' And that was us being [inflexible]."

Despite such early setbacks, some would come to refer to John as "a branding genius." John laughs at the label. "I don't know what it means to be a branding genius, because I am not," he says. "That may be another way that people want to describe me for sizzle. If I was a branding genius, FUBU would be Apple. My understanding of branding is a 'mark' that is identified with a story or a promise of something or of ownership. People confuse branding and marketing. They are two separate things. Branding is the mark on something."

John can, at times, seem unimpressed, even self-effacing, in describing his own abilities. But it seems rare that others underestimate him. Now, with an Alec Bradley Prensado sending off smoke from his left hand—an "amazing" cigar, he says of the Honduran—he recalls the genesis of his participation in "Shark Tank." John relates how in 2009 producer Mark Burnett was launching the new reality-based television show as a franchise of the Japanese show "Dragon's Den," which had premiered eight years before. John was skeptical of its chances. "There was a Skype-type of interview. The producers were telling me how great the show was and all the people they were going to have on it. I laughed at them. I told them they were full of crap, and that 'You guys around

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The sharks, from left, Barbara Corcoran, John, Mark Cuban, Kevin O'Leary, Robert Herjavec and Lori Greiner.

COURTESY OF ABC

John wasn't sold on "Shark Tank" when he was first approached by the show's producers. "No one wants to see this crap," he said. The show became a hit.

Hollywood are just crazy and that no one wants to see this crap.' They told me Mark Cuban was going to be on the show, and I told them they were full of it. I didn't know Mark then, but I said, 'The crazy guy who throws chairs on the court—the billionaire who's on TV more than he needs to be? Why the hell would he ever do your stupid show?' I guess that really turned them on. I guess they said 'I really like this guy, he doesn't give a shit.'"

The rest is history. Last year the ABC show had more than 7 million viewers, and it's now in its eighth season. The success owes to a real-time, horse-trading feel as entrepreneurs compete for investments bestowed by venture capitalists. John often sees something in the contestants that goes beyond what can be tabulated on a spreadsheet.

In one dramatic episode, a woman from Oregon named Kristina Guerrero was pitching Turbopup bars for dogs. She sought $100,000 for 20 percent of her company—a $500,000 valuation—for a company that made what was essentially a pocket-sized 250-calorie bar equivalent to a whole meal. The Sharks dove in. "What makes this different than the other 5,000 dog treats on the market?" said Kevin O'Leary, known for his nasty streak. "That's exactly what makes it different; it's not a dog treat," she replied. Now peeved, O'Leary sassed her: "What is it, a sandwich?" Unfazed, she held to her script: "It's a complete meal—250 calories." Mark Cuban inquired about the price. She distributed the bars, so the Sharks could feed her dog. Cuban stayed with the numbers: "What are the sales?" In 2015 she had $7,000 in sales. No sooner did her cause appear lost than Lori Greiner set up a tee shot by asking about her background.

Kristina was a medaled pilot, having flown three deployments with C-130s, one for Operation Iraqi Freedom. While she was making the bars in her kitchen, Turbopup became the official dog food for the National Association of Search and Rescue. She also outran the competition by getting her bars in ski and bike shops. The sharks now praised her for her service, but one by one they bowed out, Robert Herjavec applauding her sideways strategy, but saying her sales needed to go from $7,000 to $100,000 before he would wet his beak.

Only one remained: John. But he was on the fence, because of her ungrounded valuation of $100,000 for 20 percent of her company. "The problem is you're asking so much, I would have to take so much."

"What would you ask as far as your equity?" she asked.

"The gamble I will take with you is because of your tours and everything else—you must be disciplined; you obviously don't sleep, just like me. So here's my offer: I will go $100,000 for 40 percent." O'Leary needled John. "The company isn't worth $500,000," he said. John countered: "The company is scaling fairly quickly with no help."

Kristina asked John if he would take 30 percent. "It's not worth it for me," John said, softly and regrettably. "That's why they call it the Shark Tank," snapped Herjavec. "That's why you didn't have enough meat on the bone to prove its value," O'Leary added, twisting the knife. "Kristina, he's offering you $100,000 at 40 percent," said Herjavec. "Do you really want to counter at 30?" She heeded the advice, saying "35? Is that fair?" A dramatic pause ensued before John said "35—you got it." As Kristina left, O'Leary, AKA "Mr. Wonderful," couldn't resist one last dig, turning

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in John's direction and saying, "That was a mercy financing." John replied, "I think she's got it all together to this point, and a woman who did three tours for our country is not gonna go to sleep." Herjavec agreed: "There is no doubt she is the real deal."

"It's always the person," John says, reflecting on that investment. "I saw that she had fought for our country. She flew bombers operating multimillion-dollar equipment, so she can handle selling dog bars.

"And then she had this energy that lit up the room. You want to call an entrepreneur who, even when it's a bad day, will say, 'Hey, it's just one of those tough days, I always expected it.' You want to have a conversation. You don't want to go, 'Damn, I don't want to call that person. Because that person is going to be depressing.' Right? Anyone can lift you on a great day. Kristina does that on bad days. She hasn't let me down; she's doing over a million dollars in business."

He also likes entrepreneurial ventures with causes attached. He invested $500,000 for a 17.5 percent share of Elephant Pants, where 10 percent of every purchase of the pants is donated to saving elephants from poachers.

Now, as a Presidential Ambassador for Global Entrepreneurship, John says he gets to use "my passion to share entrepreneurship with as many people as I can to hopefully empower them. My manager Eric Ortner connected me with [Obama's] Secretary of Commerce, Penny Princeton. We saw eye to eye and she thought it would be an honor for me to represent the White House. The plan was for me to talk about entrepreneurship domestically and internationally. So I accompanied the president and the White House staff to Kenya, Cuba, San Francisco. The idea was to share entrepreneurship. There were three pillars to it: one, to educate people on entrepreneurship; two, to educate them on how to get access to capital; three, to educate them on how to scale the businesses. We've seen that the No.1 reason for domestic violence has been the lack of capital in a home. And the reason that President Obama wanted to do this is when people don't have resources to feed their families or take care of themselves or feed themselves, then they are susceptible to people who have alternative motives. But if somebody in Kenya realizes that it takes a dollar to heat their home in a week, and they can open up their cell phone and make $5 a week on their phone, then they are less likely to pick up a weapon or less likely to do something else not in their best interest."

With a hand in about 60 small businesses, John seems every ready for a new deal. And, he often observes, some of the best ones didn't grab much of his attention when FUBU was absorbing his time. Bubba Q's Boneless Ribs is one example. Now he's into blueprint + co. "We are in a shared economy, as we know. Whether you are sharing a car called Uber, whether you shared a house, people do now share open office space like this, usually start-ups share those things." Located on 38th Street in Manhattan's garment district, blueprint already hosts representatives such as Leesa, a direct-to-consumer mattress company; a woman's plus-sized clothing company, Ashley Stewart; and a private jet ride-sharing company, JetSmarter. People who share this space also end up sharing ideas.

Daymond John is always open to the new experience, the next idea, the new venture, the next smoke. Now he is multitasking, talking alternately about his favorite cigars and cigar rituals. "I like to smoke with people who are real cigar smokers, because they tell me what cigars are the best or what I would like," he says, now taking a draw on an Aging Room 356ii. He also enjoys Padrón Anniversaries.

"I mostly like to smoke after an event is done and when I can

decompress with people I know to discuss what we are going to do in the future for some of our businesses," he says. In his new book, *The Power of Broke*, John argues for the counterintuitive idea that you don't need start-up money or contacts to make a buck. Rather, starting from nothing—with only desperation, hope and hunger coursing through your veins—forces you to think more creatively and marshal your resources more efficiently. There is some support for this notion, since in 2014, 275 of the wealthiest Americans on the *Forbes* 400 list were self-made entrepreneurs, which means they started out with nothing and made use of the "power of broke."

What will be the fourth book? It's unknown for the time being. Right now, John would rather think about the next great smoke. "I still want to smoke a real Cuban Cohiba," he says. "To me, it has always been an iconic cigar so I am going to have to make that happen."

It should be easy, considering everything else that's happened. ❖

Kenneth Shouler is a frequent contributor to CIGAR AFICIONADO, *and an associate professor of philosophy at the County College of Morris in Randolph, New Jersey.*

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The distinctive and explosive swing of Justin Thomas, which lifts his shoes nearly off the ground.

Swinging Out of His Shoes

With a swing belying his size, Justin Thomas rockets up the PGA Tour

By Jeff Williams

MIKE EHRMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Justin Thomas dropped to the practice green at Riviera Country Club, rolling around in hysterics, flabbergasted that Jordan Spieth's caddie Michael Greller had missed a putt (and missed it badly) during a drill. It was the eve of the Genesis Open, and in a sport where silence and seriousness often reign, the 24-year-old from Kentucky was acting his age, his smile extending from his face to the sparkle in his eyes. He was acting out the sheer joy of how far he had risen in the game of golf.

And why not? As the newest generation of players ascends to the summit of golf's mountain, led by Rory McIlroy and Spieth, Thomas has joined the climbing party in an impressive manner and has fulfilled the imperative of his golf DNA. With a powerful swing that literally takes his shoes off the ground, sending the ball to extreme distances and making him one of the top 10 drivers on the PGA Tour, he's done what he's expected himself to do—be a PGA Tour winner, throw himself into the conversation about major championships, vault into the top 10 of the world rankings.

His start to the wraparound 2016-17 PGA Tour season was sensational, first winning the CIMB Classic in October in Malaysia where he defended his first ever Tour title. In January he took Hawaii by storm, winning the SBS Tournament of Champions and following it up with a victory at the Sony Open on Oahu that was punctuated by becoming the youngest player in PGA Tour history to shoot a 59. He also posted the lowest 72-hole score in PGA history.

So here is Thomas getting himself ready for one of the Tour's most prestigious tournaments, soaking in the L.A. sunshine and having a right old cracker of a time with one of his best buddies. Riviera will see a lot of Thomas over the years, and had seen him as a college player in the past. "I love this place, I really do," says Thomas.

He came to this famous track full of confidence and, more importantly, full of great expectations. Yes, the three Tour wins to start the season are great, going into the record books with a 59 is great, being a top-10 player is great, but there is so much more. "It's definitely the best of my career," Thomas says of his recent play. "I definitely haven't shown the world my best golf. I haven't even shown the world great golf, or consistent great golf."

He says these words matter of factly, sitting in the player lounge at Riviera. All the great players have played and won here, and Thomas expects to count himself among them one day. His words come out of his round, bright face not so much as self criticism, but self belief. He's confident going on cocky but all athletes need a substantial ego to succeed.

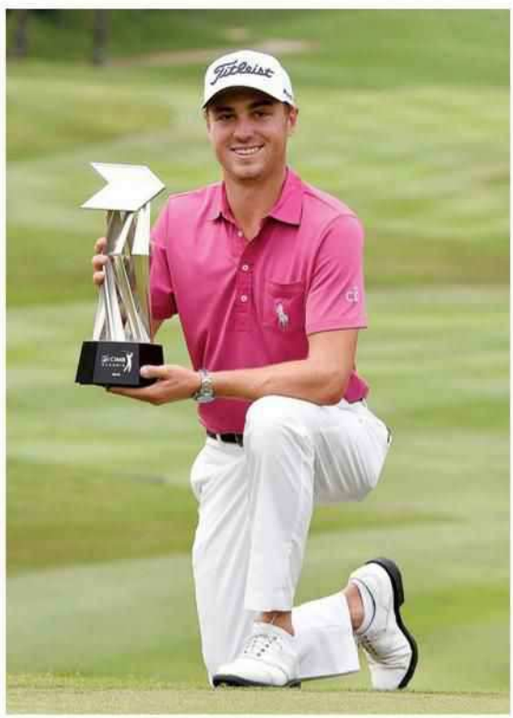
The confidence, and the seeds of his talent, are in his blood. His father Mike, who is also his coach, is a PGA of America master professional at the Harmony Landing Country Club in Goshen, Kentucky. His grandfather Paul was head professional at the Zanesville Country Club in Ohio, and played in the 1962 U.S. Open at Oakmont.

Justin had a club in his hand by the age of two—his father cut down a persimmon 2-wood—and he has whaled away at the ball with a vengeance ever since. By the family calculation he has won at least 125 tournaments starting in his junior years, flowing through a successful college career at the University of Alabama where he won the national title, turning pro and stepping up to the Web.com Tour where his success gained him entry to the PGA Tour.

There were also many national and international appearances on the Walker Cup team, the Palmer Cup team, the World Amateur team, the Junior Ryder Cup team. In 2009 at the age of 16 he got a sponsor's exemption into the PGA Tour's Wyndham Championship and shot a 65 in the first round, going on to make the cut.

There is a display of his accomplishments in the pro shop at Harmony Landing which includes a ball from each of his tournament victories. All the memorabilia goes to underscore the golf DNA that courses through the family.

Standing on the Riviera putting green as his son takes a few strokes, Mike Thomas can't explain why his son got the deep end of the gene pool, he's just darn proud that he does. "If you knew what the difference [between his son and him] was, you could clone it for sure," says Mike, a soft-spoken, modest man with a regal bearing. "He's always been very driven, he's blessed with talent, blessed with more talent than my father and I."



Thomas holding the CIMB Classic trophy in Malaysia in October. He won the same tournament in 2015.

Thomas has recorded several 400-yard drives on the Tour, hit a measured 3-wood in Hawaii at 357. He was ranked in the top 10 on Tour in driving distance through the first third of the season, averaging around 308 yards. All this accomplishment springs from a mighty-mite body of five-feet, 10 inches in height, and maybe 150 pounds.

Rory McIlroy, a bomber himself, isn't much bigger than Thomas, but through strenuous workouts he's become a hunk. Thomas? He's a muffin. He's trim and toned and works out, more for injury prevention than to develop a set of guns. He's not physically impressive, isn't the athletic monster of a Dustin Johnson or a Jason Day, or even as big as his buddy Spieth. Rickie Fowler is ripped by comparison.

Not looking like the Hulk doesn't matter on the teebox. When Thomas takes a swing with his driver, it's "Kaboom."

Even he doesn't fully understand where his length comes from. "It doesn't make a lot of sense, looking at my stature and my frame," says the young golfer, stealing a glance at his biceps, which don't exactly ripple. "A lot of it is technique, of how I deliver the club to the ball and using the ground force, as it's called. I'm basically in the air when I hit it, up on my toes and hitting it solid is the most important thing. I feel like the greatest thing about the driver for me is that I can hit a lot of shots. I feel like if I have to hit the fairway I can hit it low and fly it 270-280 and if it's firm it will roll out to 320. If I have bunker at 310 and it's a little downwind, I can put it up in my stance and carry it."

His dad watched his son explode into the ball from the very beginning and realized that was what Justin needed to do. "I was very short and he was very short until like his senior year in high school," says Mike. "Because he

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"Because he was so small he swung really hard at it. We have videos of him coming off the ground. His feet coming off the ground swinging as hard as he could when he was 8, 9 years old." *—Mike Thomas*

Thomas teeing off at the Sony Open in Honolulu, Hawaii, in January. He won by seven strokes, shot a 59 in the opening round and set a record for lowest 72-hole score in PGA history. The week before, he won the SBS Tournament of Champions by three strokes, giving him a blazing-hot start to 2017.

CHRIS CONDON/PGA TOUR/GETTY IMAGES

was so small he swung really hard at it. We have videos of him coming off the ground. His feet coming off the ground swinging as hard as he could when he was 8, 9 years old."

While he's glad to have the length, and length is an extremely important component of the modern game, it's the development of the short game that has accelerated Thomas' rise to the top. "If it's driving it another 15 yards or making one more 30-foot putt every round, I'll take the putt," says Thomas. "Hey, that's four shots better over the course of a tournament. That goes a long way up the leaderboard."

The short game takes patience, in practice and practicality. The game itself takes patience on the day-to-day level. Patience and youth aren't necessarily a harmonious blend, especially when Thomas saw Spieth win the Masters and U.S. Open and rocket to the top. Spieth, among others, has been an inspiration of sorts to Thomas, his success making him feel as if he had underachieved.

"I think it drove me a lot," Thomas says. "It's weird, I mean, I wasn't mad, but it was maybe a little frustrating sometimes seeing some friends and peers my age do well. Not because I wasn't cheering for them, because I feel like I was as good as them. It's just immature of me. I mean, the fact of the matter is, over the course of a long career, we're going to beat each other. That's just how it is."

So he struggles with patience while embracing its necessity. "I think I've gotten better at it every year. My rookie year I struggled with it a little bit. Last year at points I would struggle with it," he says. "I think at this game, it doesn't matter who you are or how long you've been out, you have to be very patient and there are going to be times where you struggle with it. It's about managing it and still figuring out a way to get it done. And that's why I've done so well out there this year. You just have to realize there are days when things aren't going to go your way, you are not going to be playing well and you just have to enjoy the grind of shooting the best number you can when you aren't playing well."

Part of that goes to a conversation he had with golf legend Jack Nicklaus, who had reached out to him and told him that if he ever wanted to talk about the game, his door was open, literally. Nicklaus invited Thomas to his home in Palm Beach, Florida, and the two talked for nearly three hours.

One Nicklaus remark stood out. "I had the same game plan during a tournament when I was playing bad as when I was playing good: being just as aggressive, hitting at every pin," says Thomas. In response, Nicklaus said, "When you're hitting it bad, you can't do that. When I'm playing bad, I need to just hit the green. I remember that talk a lot."

While there have been plenty of talks over the years, his father has always stressed that Justin needed to know his own game, and be able to fix or alter it as he went along. "I'd watch him hit a few balls and ask him what he thought was causing the ball to do what it did," says Mike. "I'd tell him, 'What are you going to do, call me when you're on the 15th hole of a tournament?' Because of that, he knows his own game.

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"I teach all my kids, when they first come to the club, your goal is not to need me. You can come out and show me how great you are hitting it or ask any questions. I always taught Justin that way. You have to know your own game and how to make a fix on the fly. The part you can't figure out how or why he could fix himself and create shots long before we talked about the fault or the fix. He figured a lot of that out on his own."

So much of success on the Tour comes from the short game—getting the ball into the hole. Putting, chipping and pitching isn't as adrenalin inducing as bombing the driver 350 or sticking a 5-iron 220. But when it comes down to the show and the dough, the short game is the payoff, and Thomas knew he had to get better.

"I had to work a lot on my short game. That was the biggest difference between college to Web.com to PGA Tour," says Thomas. "Chipping and putting, patience and acceptance is the biggest thing. It's not one tournament, it's a long year, it's the money list, it's the Fedex Cup points list. If you miss a cut or finish 40th or 50th, you just have to take the positives from the week and build on the negatives, which is what I've done a pretty good job of."

Thomas is the youngest golfer to ever card a 59 in a PGA event. In the first round of the Sony Open in January, he opened and closed with eagles. He also had eight birdies.

He certainly did a record-book job of it when he shot the 59 at the Waialae CC in Honolulu. And he did it with an early bogey. The score was 11 under par on a par 70 course.

"I fully had faith in myself that I could shoot a really low number, shoot in the 50s," says Thomas. "It's nice to have that in my record that I have actually done it. I hope to have plenty more chances in my career. You obviously don't know if that's going to happen or not, but I have always felt like I have been a person that can get pretty hot, and when I get it going, I can shoot some low scores. I guess it just kind of validated that a little bit."

The round and the victory validated a lot about his talent and fortitude, something that Spieth knew well. They had been bumping up against each other in junior and college events, had been teammates on international teams for more than a decade. At the Tournament of Champions at Kapalua, Spieth finished third and was there to congratulate Thomas on his win when he came off the 18th hole.

"Yeah, I think it's potentially floodgates opening for him," said Spieth at the time. "The guy hits it forever. He's got a really, really nifty short game. He manages the course well. He used to hit more drivers, and he's dialing back a bit now and hitting like a trusty 2-iron out there that he can still hit 285 yards, you know, with a little bit of roll. So, really excited for him. It's awesome. It's awesome to see. He's going to be tough to beat next week, too."

And he was, especially when he started with a 59. Daniel Berger, another longtime rival and friend, played with him the first two rounds. "That week at the Sony Open, I've never seen a guy play like that," says Berger. "Like, he didn't even know what he was doing. He would just hit the ball and it would be 10 feet and would make the putt." By the way, Berger shot 65-67 in those first two rounds and was nine shots behind Thomas.

After his Hawaiian wins, Thomas headed to Augusta National for a casual round with his dad. Masters invitees get to play the course in advance of tournament week. Thomas played in the Masters for the first time in 2016 and now because of his additional Tour wins and high world ranking, Thomas was at Augusta this year with high hopes for his first major victory. But even in the casual round with his dad, he was nervous on the first tee. "Yeah, I think of anywhere to be nervous, it's Augusta National," says Thomas. "But I also think it's perfect for more. I can take advantage of my length there and if I get my putter going, I can score there."

While it is sometimes difficult to come down off a golf high, Thomas knows that he needs to get away from the game, get the thoughts of drives and putts and strategies on the back burner. He shares a house in Jupiter, Florida with former Alabama teammates Bud Cauley and Tom Lovelady, both trying to achieve what Thomas has on the PGA and Web.com tours.

So what does Thomas love to do when he's off from golf? "Absolutely nothing," he says. "I can sit on a couch an entire day, watch movies, watch TV, hang by the pool. We will go out in the boat sometimes, do some fishing."

He remains a huge fan of Alabama football and all the other sports at the SEC powerhouse. His favorite athletes are Kobe Bryant and Sidney Crosby. He's a fan of the Boston Red Sox, Cincinnati Bengals, Pittsburgh Penguins and Golden State Warriors. He's played with Warrior superstar Steph Curry and teammate Andre Iguodala and is impressed with their golf games.

After achieving great success in AJGA tournaments in Kentucky, Thomas returns there to work with the Boys and Girls Club of Kentucky and to host the Justin Thomas Junior Championship.

"These young players have it all," says Ernie Els, who was joined by Thomas at the annual CIGAR AFICIONADO/*Wine Spectator* Els for Autism Pro-Am in March (see page 20 for details.)

"They are talented, smart, good people," Els says. "They know how to give back. Justin is playing in my event and I really appreciate how this young man gives back. With players like Justin and Jordan, and there are a lot of others, too, the game is in good hands."

Thomas noted at the Honda Classic about how much confidence he sees in the walk of Dustin Johnson and Rory McIlroy, who have both held the crown of No. 1 player in the world, and how they exude confidence and a winning attitude. With his multiple Tour wins and a 59 in his pocket, Justin Thomas can walk the walk, talk the talk and plant a flagstick on the summit of the game. ❖

Jeff Williams is a contributing editor of CIGAR AFICIONADO.

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robotic poker

In the heyday of online Texas Hold'em, one man assembled a team of pros so successful they were flagged as robots

IN THE DRIVEWAY OF A HILLTOP HOME in Brentwood, California, the Tesla is charged and loaded. A bottle of 12-year-old Hibiki Whisky resides in the trunk alongside a six-pack of good Bordeaux. Arturo Fuente Hemingway Short Story cigars top the console. Big band and classic rock have been programmed on the sound system. Professional gambler turned hedge-fund whiz Rob Reitzen is driving. I'm riding shotgun. His company's CEO Larissa Posner has the backseat all to herself.

The plan sounds simple: Road trip to Vegas, eat and drink well, make a little money at blackjack, revive PokerGirl. The latter is the real order of business, but it's also the diciest part of the trip. Beating blackjack and dining out are easy. "Ramping up PokerGirl," Reitzen says, "may present a problem."

PokerGirl is a relic from the glory days of online Texas Hold'em. It is the name under which a protégé of Reitzen's won hundreds of thousands of dollars by playing the game like a computer. She was in her early 20s, had previously been a waitress at Arnie Morton's steakhouse in Los Angeles, went by the name Lary Kennedy in real life and learned to crush online poker games the Reitzen way. Then she was accused by Full Tilt Poker of actually being a computer. Her account was frozen, $80,000 was seized by the website and TMZ actually did a story on the imbroglio. Lawsuits ensued and things got ugly amid accusations that she played under multiple identities.

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN
ILLUSTRATION BY RIKI BLANCO

She filed a lawsuit against Full Tilt in 2009, claiming, among other things, fraud, libel and unjust enrichment. At the time, it seemed that Full Tilt could deem any player a "bot" and withhold winnings at will. The case was eventually dismissed and she never refiled.

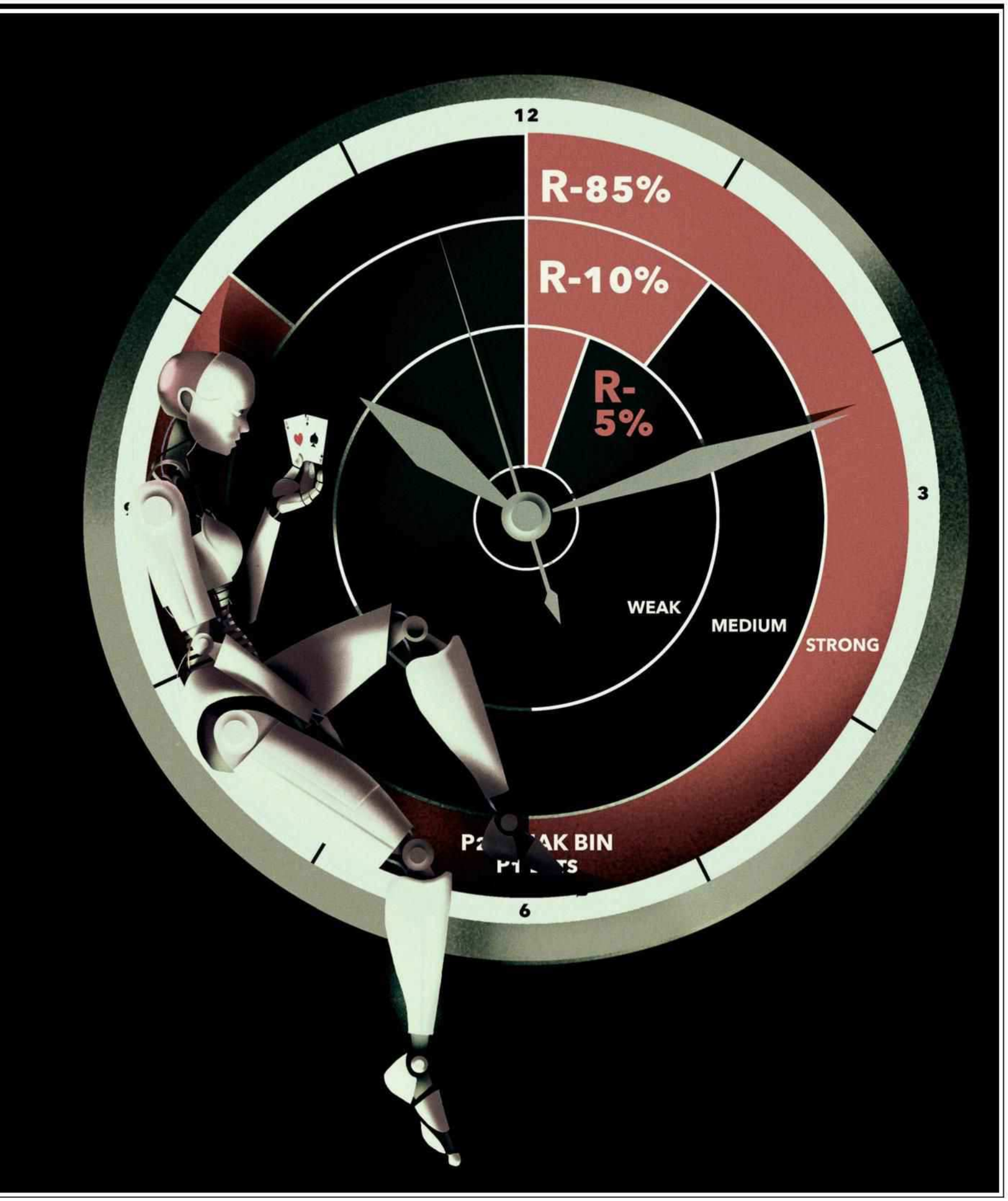
This was before Black Friday in 2011, the outlawing of online poker in much of the United States and Full Tilt's ultimate insolvency.

But it's nine years since PokerGirl bet her last street and the online landscape has changed dramatically. Reitzen isn't even sure if we will find a suitable game to play on the screen of my MacBook Pro. "There's a chance that we'll be stuck buying in for dinky stakes," he says. "We won't have a decent sample size [because we're not in town for very long] and we may not win."

Is he concerned that her long, profitable approach to poker won't work under today's conditions? "No," he says. "That'll be fine. The math remains the same. And it's perfectly sound."

But, as we prepare to pull out, Reitzen is not focused on any of that. He's leaving behind three computer engineers who'll spend the weekend programming strategies for his fund, Time Series Solutions. They'll work on ways of beating Wall Street by finding quantifiable patterns in the markets and capitalizing on them. He gives his guys hugs and marching orders. Then we pile into a car that practically drives itself.

As he hits Interstate Highway 15 and noses his automobile toward the Mojave Desert and Las Vegas, Reitzen explains that he spent a couple of lackluster years as a math and probabilities major at UCLA. Along the way, he found *The Cincinnati Kid* to


12
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3
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STRONG
6

be inspiring and nurtured a natural fondness for poker. So much so that, in 1979, he asked a girlfriend's Hold'em-playing roommate to loan him a book that would help improve his game. The notions of training neophyte players and leveraging the game into a high-volume business were the furthest things from his mind. Reitzen just wanted to play smarter at the L.A.-area poker clubs.

Due to a mix-up, though, he received a volume called *Playing Blackjack as a Business* by Lawrence Revere. "I thought it was interesting and learned to card count," says Reitzen. "I started making trips to Vegas, improved my skills and built my bankroll. Eventually I joined a team."

During those nascent years of the home computer, a teammate of Reitzen's got his hands on one of these seemingly miraculous machines. That man would go on to create the brilliant computer system that yielded hundreds of millions of dollars for a group of horse bettors in Hong Kong. But back in the early '80s, he and Reitzen were happy to create plays that paid off with far less remuneration in blackjack. They refined strategies that decimated games in Las Vegas and beyond.

Reitzen and his partner invented custom counting systems, devised methods for cutting to certain cards that would be advantageous to players or disastrous for dealers, improved techniques for memorizing sequences that could be recognized in future shuffles. They racked up their share of million-dollar weekends and terrorized casinos around the world. It was a good time to be playing blackjack. Profits rolled in.

THEY REFINED STRATEGIES THAT DECIMATED GAMES IN LAS VEGAS AND BEYOND.

The promise on the back of Revere's book—that if the reader learns these strategies, he will be able to fly around the world for free, stay in fine hotels, eat gourmet meals and come home with a profit—was being realized by Reitzen. He remembers a particularly colorful few hours of playing in Amsterdam. "It was an underground gambling club in every sense of the word: situated behind a pharmacy and down a flight of steps, so the place was literally subterranean," he remembers. "There was craps and blackjack and a sign on the wall with various exchange rates. Then they had another room where people were fucking on stage."

Reitzen did his best to focus on the cards. He was there to play, and play he did, tidily winning some $20,000 without breaking a sweat. Then he heard one partner say something to the other. "He spoke Italian and I asked the guy I was with—who was backing the play—what had been said," relates Reitzen. "I was told that he asked if I was card counting. Then I wanted to know how the other answered. My backer said that he replied, 'The American ain't counting shit.'"

Nevertheless, the next day, when the casino owners offered to send a limo for Reitzen, he refused. Much to the consternation of the backer, Reitzen did not play the underground den again. Soon after, though, he had more of a life-changing blackjack experience in the men's room of a small Nevada casino where he and another player, not known to him, were both counting the decks.

Stepping away from a urinal, Reitzen whispered, "The big C."

He saw it as a subtle way of signaling that he realized they were both counting cards.

Surprised, the player replied, "Oh, you're using one, too?"

Reitzen remembers being a little puzzled by the comment but he was shocked a second later: "The guy pulled down his pants, showing a jockstrap with batteries and wires running out of it. He was all wired up with a small computer inside the jockstrap. Wires ran down to his toes where there were switches that allowed him to tap in the cards as they were dealt. Then he had sensors attached to his genitals; the sensors gave off pulses, signaling him on how much to bet and the plays to make. It was completely amazing! I told him I was just counting in my head and he nodded. He told me he wondered why I made a few mistakes."

The trip turned out to be a losing one for Reitzen, but he left with something more valuable than cash. "I headed home enthralled with the computer. Not long after, in like 1982, I got one for 10 grand, but we eventually had the sensors moved to just above our ankles."

Without knowing it, Reitzen had stepped into the golden age of what would become known as "computer play." Casinos had not yet thought to make the use of computers illegal and a former Raytheon engineer hated casinos enough to outfit players with machines that allowed for perfect counting and shuffle tracking. The builder was Keith Taft, a born-again Christian who found gambling joints to be evil. Reitzen is agnostic where religion is concerned, but, as far as computers went, he became an instant believer. In fact, it would be fair to say that he went computer crazy.

Reitzen and his forward-thinking partners recognized that computers could be used to leverage their advantageous gambling operation and turn it into a real business. "We had a slot-machine team that played in a profitable way derived on the computer," he says. "People were wearing computers to beat blackjack and there was work being done on roulette. We were beating sports and the stock market. Then there was poker. . .We figured out that, pre-flop, people fold more often than they should," Reitzen recalls. "So we came up with optimal betting strategies for every street of Limit Hold'em. Another system helped us to beat lowball."

Technology made gambling into a profitable blast throughout the 1990s. Reitzen stocked up on collectible wristwatches, he joined the Beverly Hills Grand Havana Room and drove around in a Bentley. He and his group bankrolled blackjack games in California casinos—state law once mandated that third-parties serve as the house in casinos that have certain types of licenses—and that provided a giant windfall. At some point they had 300 people playing and scouting and beating games around the globe. "Everyday I'd get reports on how we were doing," he says. "And let's just say that we were doing pretty well."

Then online poker hit, PokerGirl served him a steak at Arnie Morton's and things really blew up.

Hours after arriving in Vegas, we're showered, changed and crowded around a table at the Sin City version of New York's Carbone restaurant. Eighties music plays from the speaker system, waiters in retro uniforms take orders, a rum cart makes the rounds and the place feels transported from the set of *Goodfellas*. At the table are Posner and Reitzen; Hein Hundal, an engineer who worked for Reitzen on the poker project; a mathematician who goes by the name Duke and another engineer known as The Kid. Guest of honor is Lisa Arnold, a diminutive Chinese woman with oval-framed eyeglasses, a baggy sweater and a scarf around her neck.

Patience has been awarded.

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She looks harmless now, but 10 years ago, you would not have wanted to confront her across an online heads-up poker table. She logged in under the name RedGard1 and ranked among the game's deadliest assassins, playing heads-up limit poker for stakes as high as $100/$200. When she first met Reitzen, she barely spoke English and knew nothing about the game. Between 2002 and 2010 (playing the last of those years in London after online poker was outlawed in the U.S.) she won nearly $8 million.

A 1990s émigré from China, Arnold was originally put in touch with Reitzen via a mutual friend. Reitzen hired her to work on his slot-machine team, beating progressive slots by playing them just as they were mathematically poised to pay off. Eventually casinos got wise to the ploy and rousted her from the premises.

Arnold thought she was out of a job, but the opportunity was actually shifting into high gear. Since the earliest days of online poker, Reitzen and his team had been using hundreds of non-cheating, game-theory-programmed computers to beat humans on various sites. Site owners knew this wasn't good for business. They designed software for sniffing out the bots and, by 2002, began to shut down their accounts.

Undaunted, Reitzen decided to turn humans into computers. "That's when Rob told me to learn poker," Arnold says, sipping wine and working through an enormous slab of veal parmigiana. "He gave me a machine to play against. It told me when I made mistakes and showed me the game. Then, when I got good, Rob tested me."

REITZEN MADE IT EASY FOR ANYONE TO PLAY LIKE A COMPUTER.

RedGard1 crushed poker. Sharp as she was at the game, however, Arnold could not have realized that the strategy she employed cost Reitzen millions of dollars to create. It was designed over the course of decades, with loads of engineers.

But the real ingenious part of the whole thing was how Reitzen made it easy for anyone to play like a computer. "I had 20 clock faces that were labeled for every possible Hold'em situation," he says. "The faces were made of cardboard and fit under the hands of standard-size clocks. All you had to do was find the clock that described your situation"—say, a big pair in the small blind—"and make whatever play the second hand told you to make. That moving hand provided randomization. You always made a correct decision and played with enough variation that opponents could not figure out what you were doing. We turned the seemingly intuitive game of poker to the totally rote game of blackjack."

Things were going fabulously well for Reitzen and for more than 100 players employed on his poker team. They worked from home, video-cameras monitored their play, Reitzen backed them and they kept percentages of their winnings. Then something unexpected happened: Full Tilt began accusing the players of being bots. Their accounts got shut down. "I reached out to a Full Tilt partner and tried proving to him that my players were human," says Reitzen. "I sent in the clock dials and explained how they played. I even offered to show videos. He didn't care. He said they played like computers, so they were computers."

Arnold had some $80,000 confiscated from her account and Reitzen had enough. Soon after all of this, he mothballed the poker enterprise and focused his attention on Wall Street. Arnold continues to find poker profitable, but now she antes up in Pacific Northwest casino poker rooms, near where she lives, and plays face to face with humans. Lawsuits designed for recouping money came to nought and the operation completely ceased. "I always had a soft spot for our poker team," Reitzen says, calling for a check and last pours of rum. "I do miss it a little."

An afternoon later, we convene in a room at the Cosmopolitan. Reitzen has brought his clocks. My laptop is open. Lisa Arnold is aboard for coaching. The idea is to log onto a legal online poker site in Nevada, register myself as PokerGirl, deposit money and rev up the old engine. The intention: profit at poker. However, there is a problem. Heads-up Limit Hold'em, which this system is specifically designed for, is a ghost town. There is no one to play against. We're sitting alone at a virtual table, feeling a little bummed.

Then we devise a workaround for playing on a site that might have the appropriate action.

"Because your bankroll is so small, we have to play cheap," Arnold says.

"No problem," I tell her. "This is not about making money, it's about winning something by playing the Reitzen way. It's proof of concept."

There are plenty of tables with stakes of 10-cents/25-cents. It'll be a gas just to deploy the strategy. My avatar settles down at a heads-up table and another player immediately joins us. I prepare to wipe him out. Then something strange happens. The player is remarkably good. He bluffs at all the mathematically correct times, he traps when he should and rarely folds. "He's playing close to game-theory optimal," Reitzen marvels.

Several hands in, my opponent leaves the table and is immediately replaced by another one who also never misses a beat. "They're world class," says Lisa. "They're too good to be playing at these low stakes."

"They're bots," Reitzen declares. "We're playing against computers. The site is infested with them."

We stick around for a while before agreeing that it's useless. The game has changed. Bots have taken over the tables that Reitzen's humans once dominated. There's a lot of chattering, reminiscing and passing of the Hibiki. Reitzen gets quiet and watches a bit of the higher stakes, no-limit ring games. "There are definitely no bots there," he says. "We made it halfway to finishing a no-limit program and never managed to get it done."

Soon my computer is shut down, the clocks are packed up and the air hangs heavy with resignation. But just for a while. By nightfall, all of those feelings are shaken off. We're in a private dining room at an off-strip casino with some high-roller friends and a couple of card-counters. We eat too much, drink too much, laugh too much, take advantage of casino largesse and make many toasts to PokerGirl and RedGard1.

Things proceed to get rowdier in another casino where we commandeer a blackjack table, count cards blatantly and puff away on cigars. Maybe it's thinking about old times, but Reitzen verbally replays a few hands from the no-limit games he saw online. He points out mistakes that had been made and wonders when the U.S. will legalize the Internet iteration of poker. "I think I'm going to finish working on no-limit poker," he says suddenly, putting up a purple chip for the next hand of blackjack. "I'm sensing an opportunity. I think we can make some real money again."

The sentiment warrants yet another toast. ❖

Michael Kaplan is a CIGAR AFICIONADO *contributing editor.*

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cigars

94 BLIND TASTING
Our panel of cigar-smoking editors assesses the quality of 80 cigars, some of which are classic mainstays while others are modern interpretations of classic brands.

110 VINTAGE TASTING
Cohibas of old tend to keep a good amount of their power, especially Lanceros from the '90s. Our vintage tasting puts a number of rarities to the test and shows how aged tobacco can truly evolve.

112 THE CREATIVE POWERHOUSE OF DREW ESTATE
Cult brands and an edgy urban sensibility have put Drew Estate and its cofounder Jonathan Drew on the cigar map. His quasi hip-hop style might have older smokers scratching their heads, but Drew's story is an inspiring one.

121 CIGAR PARTY IN HAVANA
The annual Habanos Festival is the highlight of every Cuban cigar-smoker's year. Those who couldn't make it can live the festivities vicariously through Gordon Mott's reporting of Havana's biggest cigar celebration.

125 PROCIGAR'S 10TH FESTIVAL
In what is perhaps the warmest, most convivial cigar party in the world, the ProCigar Festival, held in the Dominican Republic, treats every guest like family. This is the Festival's 10-year anniversary.

JEFF HARRIS

churchills

The Macanudo Inspirado Orange line was originally released for Europe in 2014, but happily, General Cigar decided to bring it to the United States last year. Scoring 93 points, the Churchill is the highest-scoring Macanudo of the last decade. Many offshoots of the core Macanudo line have come and gone throughout the years, some concepts working better than others, but none has been as successful as the Inspirado Orange Churchill. While the blend may have been formulated for European palates, the Churchill is both a technical and artistic masterpiece that will be a welcome addition to any humidor in any country, especially at its low suggested retail price.

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

MACANUDO INSPIRADO ORANGE CHURCHILL
The thick, buttery smoke of this sophisticated Churchill enriches its leather and mesquite qualities as well as the bright, resonant notes of almonds, citrus and black pepper. A complex and harmonious cigar.
U.S.: $6.99 U.K.: N/A

93

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: MEXICO

OLIVA SERIE V MELANIO MADURO CHURCHILL
This box-pressed Churchill delivers a pleasantly toasty, nutty smoke finessed by hints of espresso, cloves and a floral, honey finish.
U.S.: $13.99 U.K.: N/A

92

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ILLUSIONE 888
A rich and earthy cigar whose chewy smoke is accentuated by notes of roasted arabica beans, baking spices and a savory, leathery finish.
U.S.: $9.20 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

NAT SHERMAN PANAMERICANA JULIETA
Zesty and sweet, this dark Churchill weaves earth and black pepper notes with cloves and cinnamon. A touch of cocoa comes through on the finish.
U.S.: $12.00 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 56 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA ANTIGUEDAD SUPER TORO
Box-pressed with rounded edges, this large Churchill starts strong and spicy but mellows out to show light woodiness and a floral finish.
U.S.: $8.90 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

E.P. CARRILLO CORE PLUS CHURCHILL ESPECIAL NO. 7
Covered in a beautiful, medium claro wrapper. It's a woody, cedary smoke with hints of graham cracker and peanuts, but the finish is a bit chalky and dry.
U.S.: $7.70 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA FLOR DOMINICANA DOUBLE LIGERO OSCURO NATURAL ESPECIALE
An inky oscuro topped with a large, knotted pigtail. It's earthy smoke is redolent of minerals, black licorice, and a boozy, vermouth finish.
U.S.: $10.50 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

LA AURORA 100 AÑOS CHURCHILL
Copious amounts of smoke come off the easy draw of this tawny-colored Churchill. It has an earthy, coffee-bean character that hints at caraway seeds and leather, but the finish is a bit chalky.
U.S.: $14.00 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

THE LAST TSAR CHURCHILL
Woody and grassy with underlying nuttiness that comes and goes before a tangy finish. The Churchill is rolled with a tight, knotted pigtail cap.
U.S.: $15.50 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

A. FLORES 1975 SERIE PRIVADA CAPA MADURO SP 58
A chunky, box-pressed Churchill with a dark wrapper and a musty cold draw. Notes of slate and minerals are answered by a bit of anise sweetness and a dry finish.
U.S.: $12.75 U.K.: N/A

87

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ALEC BRADLEY NICA PURO CHURCHILL
Oily and dark, this cigar burns a bit unevenly, but imparts a heavy barnyard character of earth, hay and wheat. A bit of cedar precedes the charcoal finish.
U.S.: $8.55 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, PERU
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

H. UPMANN VINTAGE CAMEROON CHURCHILL
An earthy-tasting cigar with some tangy mineral notes and a charred oak quality. The draw and burn are even.
U.S.: $6.73 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

AVO XO MAESTOSO
The draw and burn of this yellowish Churchill are even and full, but the smoke is papery and thin with vague hints of leather and light, balsa-wood finish.
U.S.: $11.80 U.K.: N/A

85

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

KRISTOFF CAMEROON CHURCHILL
Rolled with a pigtail and uncut foot, this cigar exhibits an earthiness combined with some damp mushroom notes and a barnyard, straw-and-hay finish.
U.S.: $9.80 U.K.: N/A

85

coronas

While many brand owners contract factories to produce their cigars, there isn't much collaboration. Not so in the case of Guardian of the Farm. The Apollo Selección de Warped scored 92 points and was indeed a collaborative cigar blended by both Kyle Gellis (owner of Warped Cigars) and Max Fernández, owner of the Guardian of the Farm brand and operations manager for his father's TABSA factory. The name is a playful nod to the cigarmakers' pet dogs, as well as the idea of protecting the traditions of farming and blending. The cigar serves as a showcase for tobacco grown by Aganorsa, an agricultural company in Nicaragua also owned by the Fernández family.

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

GUARDIAN OF THE FARM
APOLLO SELECCIÓN DE WARPED
This corona is crafted with an uncut foot and a three-seam cap. Its lush draw delivers notes of nutmeg and cinnamon interwoven with hints of almonds and oats.
U.S.: $8.00 U.K.: N/A

92

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA PALINA RED LABEL PETIT LANCERO
An attractive corona with a three-seam cap. First puffs impart notes of molasses and cinnamon before a bit of spice and a bready, toasty undercurrent.
U.S.: $7.99 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO WHITE ESPECIAL NO. 3
Each puff of this tan corona layers the palate with a dense, creamy smoke redolent of graham cracker, nutmeg and a spicy cinnamon finish. Stronger than it looks.
U.S.: $8.90 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 43 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP.
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

VILLIGER 1888 CORONA
Long and skinny with a flat cap, this cigar is a melange of black tea, nuts and cinnamon intonations that usher in a dry, floral finish hinting of spice.
U.S.: $5.70 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 45 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: CAMEROON

ARTURO FUENTE CUBAN CORONA
An unusually shaped corona with a blunted belicoso cap and tapered foot that flares out. It's sweet and spicy with notes of raw cocoa bean, cinnamon and a charred finish.
U.S.: $5.05 U.K.: N/A

89

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: OCTOBER 2015

H. UPMANN CORONA MAJOR
Strong and spicy with dried red- and black-pepper qualities that lead to a charry finish. It produces a flaky gray ash with some resistance on the draw.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £15.40

89

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 40 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2014

ROMEO Y JULIETA ROMEO NO. 1
A malty, leathery-tasting corona that imparts notes of oak and graham cracker before the grassy finish. It's made with a tawny-colored wrapper and flat head.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.80

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: HONDURAS, DOM. REP., BRAZIL
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: MEXICO

CAMACHO TRIPLE MADURO CORONA
There are some soft spots along the length of this dark, near-black corona. Earthy, acidic notes segue into woody qualities with touches of anise and raisins.
U.S.: $9.50 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., MEXICO
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. SHADE

MACANUDO CAFÉ HAMPTON COURT
As light in body as it looks, this corona shows a woody character, citrus tang and hints of minerals and grass.
U.S.: $7.19 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

NAT SHERMAN 1930 CORONA
Solidly rolled in a wrapper that gleams with oil. It's a woody smoke up front that develops citrus intonations in the form of dried orange peel and fresh lemon zest.
U.S.: $8.95 U.K.: N/A

88

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: JULY 2016

TRINIDAD COLONIALES
Initial saltiness becomes earthy with intermittent notes of graham cracker and floral elements. The finish is a bit dry.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.70

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

VEGAFINA NICARAGUA CORONA
A notably veiny cigar that draws and burns evenly. Hints of mustiness and sharp woods become earthy touches of licorice, a bit of caramel and a charry-tasting finish.
U.S.: $5.78 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 44 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MATILDE SERENA CORONA
Herbal and tangy, this tan corona shows notes of minerals and citrus before a faint butterscotch finish. A mild cigar.
U.S.: $7.20 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 42 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

QUESADA SELECCIÓN ESPAÑA CORONA
A dark tan corona with a notably firm draw. It produces an earthy smoke with a gritty texture along with some woodiness and a charry, peppery finish.
U.S.: $7.25 U.K.: N/A

87

corona gordas

Altadis U.S.A. is the maker and producer of two major brands in the premium cigar industry—Montecristo and Romeo y Julieta. Of course, these are the non-Cuban versions created for the U.S. market, but Altadis is ceaselessly reinventing these storied lines, creating modern interpretations and new blends that will appeal to today's smoker, but still pay homage to the history of both brands. That is always the goal and Altadis has succeeded with the Montecristo Artisan Series Batch 1 and the Romeo y Julieta 11 Years Old, both of which scored 92 points. The Montecristo was named on account of its blend being selected by specific members of the company's "artisans." The Romeo y Julieta gets its name from a number of factors. According to Altadis, the cigar was aged for 11 years before it was released, only 11,000 of these smokes were created and, to complete the theme, retails for $11. The Brick House Maduro is owned by Tampa's J.C. Newman Cigar Co. It was intended to be a premium cigar at a reasonable price and the Toro, which scored 91 points, lived up to the brand's mission.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., HONDURAS
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MONTECRISTO ARTISAN SERIES BATCH 1 TORO
Wearing a dark and oily wrapper, this cigar burns evenly, offering sweet and malty impressions with bright notes of cinnamon and honeyed wood on the finish.
U.S.: $18.00 U.K.: N/A

92

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5 3/4"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ROMEO Y JULIETA RARE 11 YEARS OLD TORO
A solidly rolled cigar crafted with a three-seam cap. Its full draw offers big notes of leather, almonds and dark chocolate interwoven with hints of jalapeño and spice.
U.S.: $11.00 U.K.: N/A

92

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: BRAZIL

BRICK HOUSE MADURO TORO
Strong and earthy, this dark, attractive cigar also has a salt-and-pepper quality that becomes lighter and floral. The finish is bready with a hint of caramel.
U.S.: $6.30 U.K.: N/A

91

COSTA RICA
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP., PERU, ECUADOR, PARAGUAY
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

GAAJA TORO
An attractive box-pressed corona gorda with a full, even draw. Elements of nutmeg, wood and tea are supported by touches of honey and a Port wine finish.
U.S.: $15.50 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HOYO LA AMISTAD TORO
This cigar is crafted with an excellent cap and head. Earth and nougat notes are interspersed with touches of peanut shell before a charry finish that hints of anise.
U.S.: $7.79 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, DOM. REP., PERU, U.S.A./PENN. BROADLEAF
BINDER: MEXICO
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

PSYKO SEVEN CORONA
A richly hued corona with a streaky, oily wrapper and even burn. This is a full-bodied, meaty smoke with plenty of spice, black pepper and dried-fruit sweetness.
U.S.: $7.29 U.K.: N/A

90

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: FEBRUARY 2016

COHIBA SIGLO IV
Wrapped in a bright, medium-claro cover leaf, this corona gorda is fashioned with a flat head and three-seam cap. The draw is firm but offers a medium-bodied, almond-and-citrus smoke with a woody finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £29.00

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

JOYA DE NICARAGUA ANTAÑO 1970
ROBUSTO GRANDE
The rich, woody notes of this corona gorda become earthy. The cigar also has hints of black pepper on the palate and ends with an herbal finish.
U.S.: $7.70 U.K.: N/A

89

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: AUGUST 2016

JUAN LOPEZ EMINENTES
EXCLUSIVO SUIZA
Light impressions of nutmeg and floral notes take on a honey quality before a grassy, gummy finish. It's a fairly large toro with a three-seam cap and flat head.
U.S.: N/A Switz: 24.00 Sw. Fr.

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: HONDURAS, NICARAGUA
BINDER: BRAZIL
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

LIGA PRIVADA NO. 9
TORO OSCURO (TUBO)
The visible pores on the wrapper of this solid cigar give it a rustic appearance. It's a woody and spicy smoke with plenty of earth and an herbal finish. Not as strong as it looks.
U.S.: $16.00 U.K.: N/A

89

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 5/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: AUGUST 2016

PUNCH PUNCH
First puffs of this softly pressed cigar are floral and cedary. Richer notes of leather and nuts become slightly metallic on the finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £19.03

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: ECUADOR
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

ESPINOSA ALPHA DAWG
CORONA GORDA
An attractive corona gorda crafted with a three-seam cap. Notes of cinnamon and bread combine with slight touches of cedar and fruit.
U.S.: $8.00 U.K.: N/A

88

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PATORO GRAN AÑEJO RESERVA
NO. 4 TORO
Reddish in appearance, this cedary smoke has an earthy, minty characteristic with a peppermint tea finish.
U.S.: $18.36 U.K.: N/A

88

For my humidor, I use Boveda.

JAVIER ESTADES
PRESIDENT,
TABACALERA USA

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figurados

Figurados were by far the most remarkable category in this issue, as nearly every cigar scored higher than 90 points. The shapes encompass everything from double-tapered Salomones to standard pyramids to more unorthodox forms. The Ashton Heritage Puro Sol Belicoso No. 2, scored 93 points. This brand doesn't seem to get as much attention as Ashton's other lines, and it's unfortunate. The short torpedo is loaded with flavor and is a lot more full bodied than its wrapper suggests. Also scoring 93 points was the Plasencia Alma Fuerte Generacion V. It's full of alluring tapers and plenty of strong tobacco that makes as much of a bold statement as the cigar's appearance.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 49 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ASHTON HERITAGE PURO SOL BELICOSO NO. 2
Robust and earthy with a leathery quality spiced up by notes of cardamom, cinnamon and a minty finish. A medium- to full-bodied cigar.
U.S.: $9.85 U.K.: N/A

93

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PLASENCIA ALMA FUERTE GENERACION V
A large Salomon wearing a toothy wrapper. The cigar burns evenly, offering big notes of cocoa powder, leather and toast. There is a pleasing minerality on the finish.
U.S.: $22.00 U.K.: N/A

93

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA COLORADO DIADEMA
Beautiful to behold with perfect tapers, a dark, reddish-brown wrapper and a knotted pigtail cap. Earthy, oaky underpinnings are overlaid by notes of nuts, coffee and vanilla.
U.S.: $10.12 U.K.: N/A

92

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: COSTA RICA

THE EDGE MADURO MISSILE
A mini torpedo with a strong earthy, salt-and-pepper smoke that also leaves notes of hickory and molasses on the palate.
U.S.: $6.40 U.K.: N/A

92

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 39 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

FUENTE FUENTE OPUSX PETIT LANCERO
A long, thin cigar that resembles a spike with its abruptly pointy head. Its even draw and burn offers a strong spicy smoke sweetened by hints of dried berries and maple.
U.S.: $11.50 U.K.: N/A

91

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

H. UPMANN NO. 2
The light cocoa notes of this good-looking piramide become heavier and more medium bodied with a cappuccino character and an earthy finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £23.21

91

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 4 3/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MAY 2016

MONTECRISTO PETIT NO. 2
A mini torpedo with a gorgeous wrapper. The smoke is dense and chewy showing contrasting, yet substantial notes of almonds, earth and white pepper that become more profound with each puff.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £20.00

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PADRÓN DÁMASO NO. 34
A very pointy torpedo covered in blond Connecticut-seed wrapper. It's a predominantly nutty smoke with spicy hints of clove that lead to a toasty almond finish.
U.S.: $14.50 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 4 3/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

ASHTON VIRGIN SUN GROWN ENCHANTMENT
The muted woody notes of the squat perfecto become more pronounced after the cigar burns past the nipple foot, along with touches of coconut, cocoa and saffron.
U.S.: $12.50 U.K.: N/A

90

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 47 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: NOVEMBER 2016

HOYO DE MONTERREY ELEGANTES
Slender and tapered at both ends, this figurado forms a flaky ash as it burns. The smoke is floral and woody with light notes of cocoa and graham cracker that lead to a sweet, s'mores-like finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £21.30

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

LA FLOR DOMINICANA RESERVA ESPECIAL FIGURADO
Rolled with a thin, elongated torpedo head, this cigar shows a green-apple fruitiness before taking on bold, full-bodied notes of pepper, minerals and leather.
U.S.: $9.50 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

GURKHA CELLAR RESERVE 21 YEAR KRAKEN
Crafted with a blond wrapper and a coiled pigtail cap, this fat figurado shows a lemony, zesty character with hints of fruit and nuts but the finish is slightly papery.
U.S.: $16.50 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 52 LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: DOM. REP.

LA PALINA EL AÑO 1896 OSCURO BELICOSO
This dark, box-pressed torpedo has an even draw and burn that shows earthy, toasty notes with hints of chocolate and raisins. The finish is short and a bit chalky.
U.S.: $9.99 U.K.: N/A

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 58 LENGTH: 5 3/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: BRAZIL, MEXICO
WRAPPER: MEXICO

TABAQUERO HAMLET PAREDES BALA
A dark figurado with an unusual, closed foot that's been prepunched. It's fairly bold and earthy, imparting hints of citrus and a charry, mineral finish.
U.S.: $10.00 U.K.: N/A

88

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grandes

It's time for traditionalists to accept reality: 6-by-60 cigars are here to stay. Every major brand produces at least one, and most of them are outselling the classic, thinner sizes. That's not necessarily a reason to fret. Some huge cigars are packed with fantastic tobacco, and cigarmakers seem to be getting better at blending in such hefty proportions. The My Father The Judge Grand Robusto is a perfect example. It scored 93 points for a rich, memorable performance that stimulated the entire palate from the sweet to the savory. Its blocky trunk-pressing only serves to accentuate the cigar's thickness. The box-pressed CLE Prieto 60x6 scored 91 points and has the same chunky appearance but a different flavor profile—notes of exotic spices are brought together by a foundation of earth and chocolate.

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MY FATHER THE JUDGE
GRAND ROBUSTO
Pressed and blocky, this big robusto is topped with a three-seam cap. Notes of chocolate and gingersnap play off each other with hints of red pepper and almonds.
U.S.: $12.40 U.K.: N/A

93

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

CLE PRIETO 60X6
Exotic herbs of saffron and cardamom are fortified by toasty earthiness and a sweet, chocolate and coconut finish. A medium- to full-bodied smoke that stays interesting from first puff to last.
U.S.: $9.36 U.K.: N/A

91

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CASA MAGNA JALAPA CLARO GRAN TORO
This tawny-colored toro draws and burns evenly, delivering notes of toast, nuts and wood woven with touches of spice and fruit. The finish hints of graham cracker.
U.S.: $7.65 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

FOUNDRY TIME FLIES GIGANTE
A dark log of a cigar with a dead-even draw and burn. It's bracingly strong and earthy with a touch of acidity that calms down to show some fruit and more earth.
U.S.: $9.00 U.K.: N/A

90

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, DOM. REP., BRAZIL
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

MACANUDO CRÜ ROYALE GIGANTE
All the earthy, nutty and woody notes of this large, girthy cigar lead to a notably floral finish that resonates on the palate. A medium-bodied smoke.
U.S.: $7.79 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6 1/4"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

PADRÓN 7000
Rich notes of cedar and hard woods set the underlying tone for this leathery, peppery cigar. A medium- to full-bodied smoke.
U.S.: $8.40 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

SAN CRISTOBAL QUINTESSENCE MAJESTIC
This fat cigar is rolled with a pristine wrapper and topped with a three-seam cap. Notes of leather and oak are underscored by touches of walnut and pistachio.
U.S.: $9.50 U.K.: N/A

90

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: BRAZIL, NICARAGUA
BINDER: ECUADOR
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MY UZI WEIGHS A TON 5X60
Earthy and oaky, this fat cigar gives off a faintly metallic aroma as it burns. There are hints of brown sugar and touches of spice as well.
U.S.: $8.50 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

RAMON ALLONES HERITAGE SERIES 660
An earthy smoke with initial acidity that dissipates to show a toastier side with sweet hints of toffee. The finish is short and light.
U.S.: $7.49 U.K.: N/A

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: COLOMBIA, NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
BINDER: COSTA RICA
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

ALEC BRADLEY SANCTUM GORDO
A fat, tan log of a cigar with bready notes of nutmeg and cinnamon that dissipate for an airy finish.
U.S.: $8.95 U.K.: N/A

87

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 60 LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

CAIN F 660
Thick and hefty, this cigar offers a mostly toasty smoke elevated by sweet nuttiness but offset by persistent acidity.
U.S.: $9.67 U.K.: N/A

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 62 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

INCH COLORADO BY E.P. CARRILLO NO. 62
Short, squat and veiny with many soft spots. The draw is airy, imparting earthy, woody notes, a touch of damp mustiness and a semisweet chocolate finish.
U.S.: $8.00 U.K.: N/A

87

robustos

The two top-scoring cigars were achieved by two of the most high-profile brands in the cigar industry: Romeo y Julieta and Montecristo. They are the flagship lines of Altadis U.S.A., the company responsible for creating the non-Cuban versions of these heritage cigars for the U.S. market. The Romeo Añejo by Romeo y Julieta Robusto scored 91 points and, according to Altadis, was made with vintage-specific tobaccos. The broadleaf wrapper is from a 2010 vintage, the olor binder from a 2008 crop and the filler tobacco harvested in 2009. Añejo literally translates to "old" in Spanish, but the connotation implies that the tobaccos are aged for refinement. The Montecristo Platinum may not be one of Montecristo's newest versions, but the Robusto scored 90 points for its steady, balanced performance that began savory and ended sweet. The surprise here is the wrapper—it's Mexican San Andrés. Most tend to think of dark maduros whenever this particular wrapper is mentioned, but the Platinum's Mexican San Andrés is far lighter in appearance than normal. The bit of Peruvian tobacco within the filler also adds some distinction.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 54 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA, HONDURAS
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

ROMEO AÑEJO BY ROMEO Y JULIETA ROBUSTO
Creamy and cedary with a gingerbread sweetness and an underlying earthiness. The draw of this full-bodied smoke is even and effortless.
U.S.: $9.48 U.K.: N/A

91

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA, PERU
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: MEXICO

MONTECRISTO PLATINUM ROBUSTO
The toasty, almond-like smoke of this dark, oily robusto becomes earthy with raw cocoa bean notes that build to a finish of honey and wood.
U.S.: $9.02 U.K.: N/A

90

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

BOLIVAR ROYAL CORONA
A softly pressed robusto with rounded edges. The draw is a bit firm but still imparts a floral smoke that becomes richer with pistachio notes, earth and black pepper.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £18.11

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: DOM. REP.
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

DAVIDOFF 702 SERIES ANIVERSARIO SPECIAL R
Tightly packed and symmetrically rolled with a round head. It's a combination of big woody notes, sweet raisins and a reedy finish.
U.S.: $21.40 U.K.: N/A

89

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: HONDURAS
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

HERRERA ESTELI SHORT CORONA GORDA
The draw of this attractive, three-seam robusto is lush and flawless. Sweet almond notes are balanced by earth and leather, though the finish is dry and woody.
U.S.: $8.08 U.K.: N/A

89

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NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 46 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

LAST CALL MADURO BY A.J. FERNANDEZ PEQUEÑAS
Bready and yeasty with a sweet combination of chocolate and toffee and a dry, woody finish. It's made with an uncut foot and forms a flaky white ash.
U.S.: $5.70 U.K.: N/A

89

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: DOM. REP.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./CONN. BROADLEAF

OLIVEROS ALL STARS SMALL BATCH DUET NO. 5 ARIA
Wearing a dark, oily wrapper, this cigar has a lush draw that delivers leather and black pepper notes balanced by hints of chocolate and a touch of raisins.
U.S.: $8.50 U.K.: N/A

89

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5 1/4"
FILLER: HONDURAS, DOM. REP., NICARAGUA
BINDER: U.S.A./CONN. HABANO
WRAPPER: HONDURAS

HOYO DE TRADICIÓN EPICURE
Topped with a notably sloppy cap, this tan, box-pressed robusto is a combination of rich oakiness and sweet nutty notes that turn charry.
U.S.: $6.39 U.K.: N/A

88

HONDURAS
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

PADILLA CONNECTICUT ROBUSTO
A bit spotty and dirty in appearance, this blondish cigar draws and burns evenly, offering a mostly woody character with a bit of fruit on the finish.
U.S.: $6.25 U.K.: N/A

88

NICARAGUA
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: ECUADOR

EL TRIUNFADOR NO. 4
A box-pressed robusto with a dark, reddish wrapper. It's an earthy, woody smoke with hints of pistachio and Mideastern spices, but persistent damp notes affected the score.
U.S.: $7.50 U.K.: N/A

87

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 4 7/8"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: SEPTEMBER 2016

PARTAGÁS SERIE D NO. 4
Toasty and woody, this robusto takes on tangy, lemon and gingersnap qualities, but the finish is a bit gritty in texture. A low score for this particular cigar.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £19.35

87

CUBA
RING GAUGE: 48 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: CUBA
BINDER: CUBA
WRAPPER: CUBA
BOX DATE: MARCH 2016

VEGAS ROBAINA FAMOSO
The visible pores and gnarly veins of the wrapper give this cigar a very rustic appearance. Some nutmeg and walnut notes are discernible, but muted, as is the herbal finish.
U.S.: N/A U.K.: £17.82

87

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
RING GAUGE: 50 LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: NICARAGUA
BINDER: NICARAGUA
WRAPPER: NICARAGUA

DAVIDOFF NICARAGUA ROBUSTO
A woody, salty smoke with mineral notes and a short, dry finish. It's an oily robusto with a round head and even draw.
U.S.: $15.60 U.K.: N/A

86

tasting summary

RATING SUMMARY BLIND TASTE TEST NO. 138

Cigars are listed first by country and then by score. Please refer to the main tasting pages for notes and prices.

CIGAR AFICIONADO'S 100-POINT SCALE

Classic
95–100

Outstanding
90–94

Very good to excellent
80–89

Average to good commercial quality
70–79

Don't waste your money
0-70

Not available
n/a

Note: all prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.

COSTA RICA

90 Gaaja Toro

CUBA

91 H. Upmann No. 2
91 Montecristo Petit No. 2
90 Hoyo de Monterrey Elegantes
89 Bolivar Royal Corona
89 Cohiba Siglo IV
89 H. Upmann Corona Major
89 Juan Lopez Eminentes Exclusivo Suiza
89 Punch Punch
89 Romeo y Julieta Romeo No. 1
88 Trinidad Coloniales
87 Partagás Serie D No. 4
87 Vegas Robaina Famoso

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

93 Ashton Heritage Puro Sol Belicoso No. 2
92 Montecristo Artisan Series Batch 1 Toro
91 Fuente Fuente OpusX Petit Lancero
91 Romeo Añejo by Romeo y Julieta Robusto
90 Ashton Virgin Sun Grown Enchantment
90 La Flor Dominicana Reserva Especial Figurado
90 La Palina Red Label Petit Lancero
90 Macanudo Crü Royale Gigante
90 Montecristo Platinum Robusto
90 Montecristo White Especial No. 3
90 Psyko Seven Corona
90 Villiger 1888 Corona
89 Arturo Fuente Cuban Corona
89 Davidoff 702 Series Aniversario Special R
89 E.P. Carrillo Core Plus Churchill Especial No. 7
89 Gurkha Cellar Reserve 21 Year Kraken
89 La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero Oscuro Natural Especiale
89 La Palina El Año 1896 Oscuro Belicoso
89 Oliveros All Stars Small Batch Duet No. 5 Aria
89 Ramon Allones Heritage Series 660
88 La Aurora 100 Años Churchill
88 Macanudo Café Hampton Court
88 Nat Sherman 1930 Corona
88 Patoro Gran Añejo Reserva No. 4 Toro
88 The Last Tsar Churchill
88 VegaFina Nicaragua Corona
87 A. Flores 1975 Serie Privada Capa Maduro SP 58
87 H. Upmann Vintage Cameroon Churchill
87 Inch Colorado by E.P. Carrillo No. 62
87 Matilde Serena Corona
87 Quesada Selección España Corona
86 Davidoff Nicaragua Robusto
85 Avo XO Maestoso
85 Kristoff Cameroon Churchill

HONDURAS

93 Macanudo Inspirado Orange Churchill
92 Romeo y Julieta Rare 11 Years Old Toro
92 The Edge Maduro Missile
88 Camacho Triple Maduro Corona
88 Hoyo de Tradición Epicure
88 Padilla Connecticut Robusto
87 Alec Bradley Sanctum Gordo

NICARAGUA

93 My Father The Judge Grand Robusto
93 Plasencia Alma Fuerte Generacion V
92 Casa Magna Colorado Diadema
92 Guardian of the Farm Apollo Selección de Warped
92 Oliva Serie V Melanio Maduro Churchill
91 Brick House Maduro Toro
91 CLE Prieto 60x6
91 Illusione 888
91 Nat Sherman Panamericana Julieta
91 Padrón Dámaso No. 34
90 Casa Magna Jalapa Claro Gran Toro
90 Foundry Time Flies Gigante
90 Hoyo La Amistad Toro
90 La Antiguedad Super Toro
90 Padrón 7000
90 San Cristobal Quintessence Majestic
89 Herrera Esteli Short Corona Gorda
89 Joya de Nicaragua Antaño 1970 Robusto Grande
89 Last Call Maduro by A.J. Fernandez Pequeñas
89 Liga Privada No. 9 Toro Oscuro (Tubo)
89 My Uzi Weighs a Ton 5x60
88 Espinosa Alpha Dawg Corona Gorda
88 Tabaquero Hamlet Paredes Bala
87 Alec Bradley Nica Puro Churchill
87 Cain F 660
87 El Triunfador No. 4

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connoisseur's corner

There was no shortage of classic ratings in this exceptional group of vintage cigars. Standing at the top is a well-aged Cohiba Lancero. In its 25th year, the smoke remains powerful, full of the hearty flavors that made Cohiba one of the world's most famous brands. Right behind is a Montecristo No. 2 of similar age, another cigar that has aged very well and remains vibrant, with plenty of promise to come. The oldest cigar in the bunch, a 52-year-old Punch that was one of the house smokes of Dublin/London retailer J.J. Fox, was far more delicate, showing flavors of honeyed dessert wine on the finish. And in case you think only Cuban cigars age well, look at the score for the 2003 Tatuaje, which was rolled in Miami. It has aged just as well as the smokes from Havana.

COHIBA LANCERO (1992)
One of the original Cohiba sizes, and the favorite of former Cuban President Fidel Castro. This smoke is a nearly perfect version of the panetela. It is still a powerhouse. The smoke exhibits a mouth-filling combination of coffee beans and earthiness, with black pepper on the long finish, and just a touch of leather. A great cigar. —*Gordon Mott*

98

MONTECRISTO NO. 2 (1991)
Just a completely different smoke from current production Montes. This cigar had a natural box press on it from its long aging. The wrapper was oily to the touch, and dark and glistening to the eye. There was a smooth pencil lead mineral note that evolved into a dark earthiness and cocoa bean flavors. Plenty of life left. —*Gordon Mott*

97

PUNCH NÉCTARES NO. 2 (1965)
A cigar of this age needs some time to warm up. It's delicate to start, but about one inch in it starts to open up and show off its former majesty. Almond paste, buttered nuts, honey and vanilla show up on the palate, along with a touch of earth. The cigar's sweetness increases as it burns, giving it a finish reminiscent of a Sauternes.
A delightful taste of history. —*David Savona*

96

ROMEO Y JULIETA CHURCHILL (2010)
This classic cigar had a beautiful colorado wrapper. There were strong nut and coffee bean notes trending toward espresso on the mid-palate. There was also a lush sweetness on the long finish, almost like papaya; interesting and delicious. —*Gordon Mott*

96

TATUAJE UNICOS (2003)
Time may have toned down this tightly packed figurado, but it still offers plenty of flavor and pop. The cigar burns razor sharp, showing soft earth notes up front with a pleasant raisin sweetness. The nose offers a distinct cinnamon spice and faint almond notes. Citrus and leather come in at the midpoint, followed by a chewy nougat finish. Simply delicious. —*Andrew Nagy*

96

H. UPMANN MAGNUM 46 (2005)
A sharp-eyed friend found these in the corner of a Havana cigar shop not long ago. The cigar has a delicate, nutty start, then blossoms to showcase café au lait, light cinnamon and salty pretzel notes. A balanced and wonderfully elegant cigar with a brown-sugar finish that should remind you to always poke around when you're cigar shopping. —*David Savona*

94

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DOVETALE
RUM

The Brand Man Returns

Jonathan Drew, a little older and a little wiser, is back as president of Drew Estate

BY ANDREW NAGY
PORTRAITS BY JEFFERY SALTER

Sixteen square feet.

That was all the space Jonathan Drew had to work with when he opened a cigar kiosk in The Mall at the World Trade Center back in 1995. Little did he know how much that kiosk would alter the course of his life, as he would forgo a career in law and build such popular cigar brands as ACID, Liga Privada, Herrera Esteli and Undercrown.

But on this day, an unseasonably warm February morning in Lower Manhattan, Drew stands beside the manmade waterfalls of the 9/11 Memorial, where the Twin Towers once stood. Wearing whitewashed jeans, a graphic T-shirt and a stark white sport coat, topped with a matching white winter hat and blue-tinted glasses, his outfit would stick out in the typical cigar shop. But on the streets of New York City, he is just another disparate soul in the throng. It's been more than a decade since he's been back in this area, and he fondly remembers the time when he was "the cigar guy" in the North Tower.

"I called my kiosk QC Cigar Company. I told everyone it stood for quality control," he says, "but really it was Queen's Counsel." This was a nod to the fact that, while he was running the kiosk, he was also studying at Brooklyn Law School to become an attorney.

Originally, he had planned to open a cigar shop near home in Brooklyn Heights, but he got a lead that the World Trade Center was looking for vendors to populate its newly rebuilt concourse level. He seized the opportunity and signed a $2,200-a-month lease for the prime retail spot, with the cigar boom in full swing. The kiosk sold brands such as H. Upmann, Macanudo, Flor de Florez, La Gloria Cubana, Fonseca and Davidoff. "Ninety-five percent of my leads as to who to call to buy cigars from came from Cigar Aficionado," he says. "The ads at the bottom would always have a telephone number to call. Back then there were no websites, but everyone had a telephone number."

Jonathan Drew grew up on Long Island before he pursued his cigar dreams all the way to Nicaragua. Today, he calls Miami's modish Wynwood neighborhood home.

At over 96,000 square feet, La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate is the largest factory in Nicaragua, producing an estimated 170,000 cigars per day, entirely by hand.

Drew's phraseology is unique in the cigar industry. At times he sounds more like he's performing a braggadocio rap in a hip-hop song than answering a question or marketing a new product. Hidden underneath the verbal onslaught are the workings of a highly intelligent businessman who is not afraid to loudly share his opinions, even if he sometimes refers to himself in the third person.

"J.D. had an office at 196 Broadway. I had a dolly that I'd stack with cigar boxes and bundles," he says, pantomiming the laborious process with exaggerated movements and a smile. "Then I'd walk down Dey Street, or sometimes past the [St. Paul's Chapel] graveyard. I'd dump it out, right in the middle of the Trade Center, slice the boxes and restock the kiosk."

On Saturdays Drew would boost his income by hawking wares that weren't selling at his parents' Long Island antique shop at a street fair in Manhattan. "On Sundays, I would sleep sometimes for 24 hours. So, my work ethic—that's when it really kicked in."

His hustle paid off as his tiny kiosk did roughly $580,000 in sales in the first year. "Cigars were so hot at the time that I had lines like McDonald's." But Drew wanted his own brand. "The antiques, I knew that wasn't going to be my path forward. The law? I absolutely hated that stuff, but I did it for the cash."

In came Marvin Samel, who had attended the State University of New York at Oneonta with Drew and was working as a mortgage broker at the time. The pair had become fraternity brothers while in school, with Samel graduating a year behind Drew. Samel helped Drew to buy out an early investor in the kiosk, and the pair formed Drew Estate Inc. in 1996. He finished his legal studies that year, choosing to attend his graduation only for five minutes ("I had work to do.") The duo then enlisted La Rosa Cigars, an old-time chinchalle located on Sixth Avenue in Manhattan, to create their first brand: La Vieja Habana. Drew says he named it for the city-center of Old Havana, which in Spanish is *Habana Vieja*. To better appeal to customers, though, he switched the order of the Spanish words to mimic one of his favorite brands at the time: La Gloria Cubana.

At this point, Drew also became an independent sales representative for Nick Perdomo of Nick's Cigar Co. (now Perdomo Cigars). His territory included 15 states, and he hired a team to help visit cigar shops. He instructed the sales reps to also sell his La Vieja brand. While the strategy boosted La Vieja's reputation, finances were spread thin. "I had all these people working for me; that's why I was losing money," he says.

In the second year, the kiosk did more than $810,000 in sales, but much of that was done wholesale to other cigar shops. "When we added up all of our costs, we were actually losing money by selling wholesale to other shops," Samel told Cigar Aficionado in 2010.

To keep the La Vieja brand, production was moved to Perdomo's Tabacalera Perdomo factory in Nicaragua. The brand received critical praise, scoring 89 points in a May 1998 *Cigar Insider* tasting, and sold well. But as it was taking off, Hurricane Mitch hit Central America, and production halted.

"I had a transitional moment—it wasn't even a tipping point," he says, delving into his signature circular reasoning. "Because when you think of a tipping point, you kind of think of a line in the sand. But that line in the sand is very blurry, brotha. It's like falling in love with a woman. It's not like you fall in love with a woman and say, 'That's it!' Falling in love with being a manufacturer of something, back when I got into it, in a world where there were no gringo guys making cigars. It was really mind warped."

Determined, he borrowed $100,000 and headed to Nicaragua to learn as much as possible about cigar production.

Jonathan Drew was born Jonathan Sann on July 5, 1969 in Babylon, Long Island, New York. Growing up in Suffolk County, he went to school in Southampton, while his parents ran their antique store. Throughout his childhood, the household was filled with aged wares.

"It was packed to the rafters," he says. "[My parents] kept all their antiques in banana boxes. Chiquita banana boxes, stacked up to the ceiling. You'd have a line from the kitchen to the living room; kitchen to the stairway. So, there was nowhere to move in my house. I hated those banana boxes."

His parents' collection of antiques may have hindered his youthful mobility, but he believes they taught him to not only appreciate history, but to understand "the moment in time when something was created and why it was created and what was the lineage behind the product."

A self-described "thrasher kid," Drew was a fan of heavy metal music at a time when it began to converge with hip-hop. While the lyrics, the bravado, the feuds and the rawness of hip-hop spoke to him, Drew also had great admiration for the producers behind the artists and how they distributed and cross-promoted musicians.

After high school, Drew headed to SUNY Oneonta as a political science major with a minor in business. In the final semester of his senior year, he landed an internship working under then New York Sen. Alfonse D'Amato in Washington, D.C. "[His staff] used to call me 'Baby Alfonse' because they said I looked a lot like him," recalls Drew.

One night, as he was waiting for the Senator outside a function, D'Amato's driver reached into the politician's stash of cigars. He handed Drew his first cigar, a Partagás Serie D No. 4, and the two lit up. It was love at first puff.

"The first cigar was beautiful," says Drew. "That's the thing: If you start off with a good stick that isn't overpowering, doesn't knock you on your ass—you know, turn you off—the chances of you becoming a cigar enjoyer is higher."

Drew envisioned himself entering politics and enrolled in law school. He worked on D'Amato's 1992 reelection campaign, and as a legal assistant from 10:30 at night to 7:30 in the morning, three or four nights a week. "It was going to be a career job. I got $15 an hour and $18 a night for dinner," he says. "I opened the kiosk to be able to pay for law school, which is expensive. Plus, I needed cash in hand, because I always liked the ladies and I liked to go out and I liked to have fly gear." He winks.

And, of course, he continued to smoke cigars, everything from H. Upmann Lonsdales to Cuban Davidoffs. But he wasn't just a casual smoker, but a lover of the leaf who had a deep interest in learning about the stories behind the cigars.

"Brands excite me. Brands get into me. I would walk into the stores and pepper the owner or the manager or whoever was in the store, with so many questions about the history of the brand," Drew says. "I was really bombarding them with questions that were not so much about how does the cigar taste. I was more interested in the who and the why. I valued [a brand owner's] lineage. I valued their journey. I valued their results."

At this time another medium also caught his eye: graffiti. Drew would puff a cigar and walk through Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood, craning his neck to see the intricate tags, murals and stencils of various street artists. Some of the art resonated deep with Drew. "There's a rawness to graffiti that I need," he says.

Today, Estelí, Nicaragua is a thriving municipality, teeming with dozens of cigar factories surrounded by tobacco fields. In 1998, when Drew arrived, it was a vastly different landscape, with only a few cigar companies that called it home, almost all owned by expatriate Cubans. "I was the only gringo out in Estelí," Drew says, proudly. "Go out to Estelí today, and you bump into this guy or this gringo guy. Back then, there was nobody."

Drew proved himself through hard work and dedication, at times even sleeping on a mattress on the floor of a room in the Tabacalera Perdomo factory as he worked to develop a cigar brand that combined his affinity for hip-hop and street art: ACID. He had conceived the brand with Samel and friend Scott "Acid" Chester, a New York-based designer.

ACID cigars are infused with essential oils, herbs and botanicals, but unlike a typical flavored cigar, they are handmade and use long filler tobaccos. The various lines are adorned with brightly colored bands reminiscent of graffiti. When ACID debuted at the 1999 cigar trade show, it was an immediate success. Many millions of ACID cigars have been sold since, and it is fair to credit the brand with making the infused cigar market as large as it is today.

"At first I didn't think it would sell," says Jeff Borysiewicz, who owns four cigar retail stores in Florida, including the enormous Corona Cigar Co. in Orlando. "I just didn't know about the name. But it sells phenomenal and is popular with all kinds of smokers, young guys to middle-aged men."

Housed within the La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate is Subculture Studios, headed by Jessi Flores (top photo, center). The studio employs dozens of local graffiti artists to design cigar packaging, accessories and point-of-sale concepts, and even tag the occassional wall.

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Philadelphia Country Club	Gladwyne, PA	7/10/2017	$975
Chambers Bay	University Place, WA	8/8/2017	$600
TPC Boston	Norton, MA	8/21/2017	$700
Liberty National Golf Club	Jersey City, NJ	8/28/2017	$1500
Silver Creek Valley Country Club	San Jose, CA	8/31/2017	$600
Baltimore Country Club	Lutherville, MD	9/11/2017	$900
Harbour Town Golf Links	Hilton Head Island, SC	9/11/2017	$600
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In 2005, Drew and his company decided it was time to dive into the traditional cigar market. "We were known as the ACID guys, or the infused guys. We wanted to be the Drew Estate cigar company. People wondered why we didn't just make ACID. Less inventory, less problems," he says. "But it wasn't fun just to make that. I have a lot of things I got to make. If you're an artist, you're not doing only one show. You want to get to the next thing."

The following year the company debuted Château Real, an eight-size line that averaged 87 points in a May *Cigar Insider* vertical tasting. However, it was not the mega-hit Drew had hoped for, and he refers to it as "a total failure."

Drew believes Château is a good cigar (the company still makes it), but that it was too safe a bet when it debuted. It didn't possess any swagger or style, two attributes that Drew sees that help define part of the core values of Drew Estate. He learned from the experience.

"You could make the best tasting cigar on the planet, but if your aesthetics aren't right—packaging, graphics, the boxes and the place that it takes you to, if that ain't right, no matter how good the cigar, it's just probably not going to be a super successful brand. The trifecta is when you make a cigar that tastes really great, package it and position it well, and you make the cigar a winner, meaning great construction."

Drew and his team hit a trifecta with the brand they released in 2007: Liga Privada No. 9. While many companies were touting puros, Liga was a four-country blend that included Brazilian Mata Fina (rarely used at the time) wrapped in expensive, tantalizingly dark, broadleaf tobacco grown in Connecticut. It debuted in one size, a 6-inch-by-52-ring-gauge parejo. The bands appeared to be handwritten and resembled labels found in distillation plants or tasting laboratories. The brand quickly became a cult hit.

"We grew so fast that we didn't have certain stability factors behind us to withstand a trial. And that scared me."

"Guys that smoke ACID don't just smoke only that brand," says Borysiewicz. "They trust Drew Estate, and many will plunk down the money to give Liga a shot."

Even more importantly, Liga's success demonstrated to the cigar industry that Drew Estate could compete in the traditional market. Drew sees Liga Privada No. 9, which he estimates sells about 500,000 each year, as the company's "OpusX." Fans eagerly await new shipments of Liga Privada and its offshoots, T52 and the Único Serie. In 2013 and 2014, Liga Privada topped *Cigar Insider's* retailer survey when it was named Hottest Brand in the United States. Additionally, the cigar continues to score well within the pages of Cigar Aficionado, earning a spot in the magazine's Top 25 Cigars of the Year list in 2014 and 2015.

The same year that Liga Privada hit the market, Drew Estate consolidated its cigar production when it moved into a new production facility named La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate, which today is the largest handmade cigar factory in Nicaragua, if not the world. In the years to follow, Drew Estate would build on Liga Privada's success with a slew of brands that stand out in their own ways.

While most cigar blends are conceived by a designated blender, a team of blenders or a brand owner, Undercrown started off as a cigar that the factory's rollers created for themselves. It has many of the same tobaccos found in Liga, but replaces the wrapper with Mexican San Andrés.

In 2011, the company launched My Uzi Weighs a Ton (MUWAT), named after a lyric from a Public Enemy song. The line debuted in three lengths all at 60-ring gauge and packed in plain brown paper. "People freaked out about the idea," says Drew. "It was a cool brand and it's still out there. It's not our biggest brand, but it was never meant to be."

That same year, Drew Estate brought in Willy Herrera, the former cigar blender from Miami's El Titan de Bronze factory, to create a signature, "Cubanesque" blend. Herrera, who is of Cuban descent, made the Herrera Esteli brand, which included a figurado called Piramide Fino that was named Cigar Aficionado's No. 8 Cigar of 2013, a first for Drew Estate.

Next Drew extended MUWAT with Kentucky Fire Cured in 2013. The blend contains Kentucky and Virginia tobaccos—normally used for dry and moist snuff—that have been fire cured over hickory, maple and oak woods. This method infuses it with a smoky quality, similar to a peated Scotch.

By 2014, Drew Estate was producing roughly 25 million handmade cigars per year and had amassed an inventory of more than $20 million worth of tobacco. Across from La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate, the company opened a new 61,000-square-foot warehouse solely as a tobacco storage and sorting facility for leaf from Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Brazil, Mexico, Cameroon and Indonesia. Herrera, now officially its master blender, released Norteño. (The Robusto Grande would later become the No. 7 Cigar of 2016, scoring 94 points.)

Additionally, the company mastered the art of the in-store event, employing teams of sales reps who didn't just sell cigars but established a connection with customers and created a loyal fan base.

"We've learned to value our consumers in a very unique way, and it's noticeable," says Drew. "If you take for granted the people who enjoy your products, you don't get to learn from them and you don't get to share the experience with them. For God's sake! We're all numbers now. You walk into a bank, they don't care what your name is. You call a big company and you're only a number now. So, when you can turn around and J.D. can remember a person and take a moment and actually dedicate some of your time back to him. That's a really big thing."

And then Drew Estate dropped another bomb on the cigar industry, only it wasn't a new brand.

About 30 months ago, Drew Estate announced that it had been acquired for an undisclosed sum by mass-market behemoth Swisher International Inc., best known for making Swisher Sweets and other machine-made cigars.

The move caught loyal fans of Drew Estate and its retail partners by surprise. For Drew, who owned a majority stake in Drew Estate along with Samel, the time had come to sell.

"It was the time because the company had grown so big that I couldn't finance the damn thing anymore. We grew so fast over the last 20 years that we didn't have certain stability factors behind us to withstand a trial such as a natural disaster or fire. And that really scared me because I don't like risks, unless it's creative risk," says Drew.

According to Drew, a few companies had approached him with offers to buy out Drew Estate, including another premium cigar company and a

large cigarette company. But Drew felt that the Swisher deal not only had good timing financially, but that the organization, which is privately owned by the Ziegler family, shares a lot of the same attributes, chiefly provocative brands. "I think that [Swisher] really fought for us because Drew Estate felt good to them," he says. "They love the company and don't want to 'Swisher-ize' it."

After the sale, Drew stepped back in his leadership role, becoming more of a brand ambassador, traveling the country and engaging consumers at cigar events. It was during this time that he also "took a deep dive," as he puts it, into the spirits industry, studying the intricacies of the marketplace and working on making connections. Spirits, particularly Bourbon, had always been dear to Drew, and he had envisioned himself entering that industry. He purchased 10 acres in Orlando, Florida, with the hopes of building a distillery on it. Last April, he debuted three spirits brands under the company John Drew Brands. One expression in particular stands out. Dubbed Brixton Mash Destroyer in honor of London's bohemian neighborhood, the liquid is a blend of Kentucky Bourbon and rum made from Florida-grown sugarcane.

Following the sale of Drew Estate to Swisher International, Drew took to the road as a brand ambassador for the company, educating consumers about its products at various events.

In his absence, a shakeup was happening for Drew Estate. In July 2016, on a day that most of the premium cigar industry was traveling to the annual trade show, the company announced that Glenn Wolfson had been hired as the company's new chief executive officer, replacing Michael Cellucci, who had been at the company for 16 years.

While Drew doesn't offer any specifics as to what happened, his overall thoughts are that Drew Estate post sale to Swisher had become complacent. "Our aspirations became a little bit focused off of the core characteristics of what distinguished our brands from others. When you have brands like Drew Estate that are so engaging that people believe that they are their brands," says Drew, passionately. "When we sold Drew Estate [our customers] took it personally. The Drew culture was no longer driven with the hard iron fist of Jonathan Drew. It just was not unified. We were in the state of utter chaos, and we weren't even Drew Estate for the last two-and-a-half years. It was some concoction."

Herrera believes Drew Estate strayed from its roots "and what makes us different. Stemming from camaraderie within all the way to the execution of events. The ball was getting dropped a lot and there wasn't enough communication between teams. Also, egos started getting in the way."

In January, the company announced that as part of a multiyear deal, Drew had been named president, charged with overseeing the company's entire portfolio of brands.

Herrera is excited to see Drew return to the company and has great respect for Wolfson. "The biggest thing about Glenn is he's transparent. There is no more guessing and wondering. Now I know where I stand and what I need to do," he says. "With Jonathan, his strengths are his marketing ideas and new concepts, along with the execution of those ideas."

Drew is quick to say that there were some good things to happen in his absence, such as streamlining back-end software for improved efficiencies. "But now we are returning to our core, which is brands, brands, brands!" he says, slamming the bottom of his fist into his open palm.

After much probing, Drew does offer this nugget: "We are considering buying land and farming imminently in our core component areas, which are Nicaragua, Brazil, Connecticut and Mexico." Growing its own tobacco would be a new—and potentially significant—venture for Drew Estate, which is one of the largest buyers of premium tobacco in the cigar industry.

One plan is for certain: In honor of Liga Privada's 10-year anniversary, Drew Estate plans to release its "best Liga yet," says Drew, a Liga Privada Sungrown Aniversario covered in Ecuador Sumatra wrapper. Instead of Liga blue, the color scheme will be mainly black. The idea was to create "something a little milder than Liga Privada," says Herrera, "because not all smokers can handle the original Liga No. 9 and T52."

Two sides of Jonathan Drew are immediately evident: the marketing genius and the quirky personality whose unusual antics come off as brash to some. But if you hang around Drew for long enough, a third side emerges. Underneath all his swagger is a compassionate man who knows how to listen and genuinely cares not only about his customers, but about people. It's as if he plays a character when talking about cigars, simultaneously an enigma and an open book.

He sits in the offices of Cigar Aficionado, his legs bouncing rapidly up and down. He's searching through his iPhone for a note he calls "The Forgotten," a list of his brands that he feels have failed for one reason or another. It includes brands like Kahlua, Nosotros, Cigar Repair, Mayorga, Château Real and numerous others.

"If you can't connect to your pain, if you can't connect to your loss, if you can't connect to your failure, then you can't stay raw and you can't keep it real," says Drew. "It's a reminder that you ain't shit. It's about the team with me. Bringing the brands to life is illustrating the details. I'm going to help the creative forces at Drew Estate have fun again. No one makes cigars better than Drew Estate. I really mean that." ❖

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FEATURED CIGAR

ASHTON SYMMETRY BELICOSO

DOM. REP. • PRICE: $17.25 • BODY: MEDIUM TO FULL

For a full tasting, see page two

93 POINTS

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TOP 25 CIGARS OF 2016

THE BEST CIGARS OF THE YEAR will be showcased in the February issue of *Cigar Aficionado* along with the top rated Best Buys and most exciting New Releases of 2016. But don't forget the regular tasting section, where we also rated 83 cigars. For a preview of the issue's top-scoring smokes, turn to page two.

FIDEL CASTRO: 1926–2016

THE ASHES OF CUBA'S FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO were interred on Sunday in a tomb that reads "Fidel" on a plaque. He died on November 25 and was cremated before his ashes were brought to Santiago de Cuba, 540 miles southeast of Havana and the birthplace of Castro's Revolution. He ruled Cuba for decades after overthrowing the previous Batista regime in 1959 and has been widely regarded as a controversial figure ever since. Many mourned Castro's death as the passing of a benevolent leader. A few hundred miles away in Miami, others saw him as an oppressive dictator and celebrated his death in the streets. Turn to page five for the obituary

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CIGAR WATCH

FROM THE EDITORS OF CIGAR AFICIONADO

SEPT. 27, 2016 | SIGN UP

COHIBA

FEATURED CIGAR

Punch Gran Puro Santa Rita (91 Points)

The Punch Gran Puro line came onto the scene in 2003 as General Cigar's only Honduran puro, meaning that it uses only tobacco from Honduras. The Santa Rita size (4 1/2 inches by 52 ring gauge, $5.29) recently impressed our tasting panel with notes of cashew, hints of fresh coconut and a velvety finish, earning a score of 91 points in August's Cigar Aficionado.

Click For More Punch Gran Puro Ratings

11 Cigars You Should Be Smoking Right Now

Cigar Aficionado's 133rd blind tasting, which appeared in our August 2016 issue, is now live on our website. Of the 82 cigars rated by our panel of editors, 11 non-Cuban cigars scored 91 points or higher. These cigars are considered outstanding on our 100-point scale. So if you're heading to your local brick-and-mortar, here are a few cigars that are sure to please right now.

Read Full Story

La Palina Launches Value-Priced Goldie

La Palina Cigars has shipped a modified version of its popular Goldie blend called Illumination. The cigar features the same component tobaccos as Goldie minus the rare and expensive medio tiempo leaf that's nested inside the signature Goldie cigars.

Read Full Story

La Palina Cigar Ratings

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The Big Show

Cigar lovers and industry heavyweights gathered in Havana in March to celebrate the best of Cuba, its tobacco and its culture BY GORDON MOTT

The annual Festival del Habanos is not just about new cigar releases, like the Montecristo Linea 1935, right. The event showcases local performers. At the closing party David Torrens, Haila, Vania, the group A Otro Tiempo and the outstanding rock violinist Ara Malikian (on stage left) kept guests enthralled.

(LEFT) LAZARO LUIS; (RIGHT) HABANOS S.A.

Is it the gala dinners? Is it the lively entertainment? Is it the daily seminars and trips to the Vuelta Abajo and cigar factories? Is it the launches of new brands and cigars? For most attendees, the annual Festival del Habanos never comes down to a single choice, but a combination of those attractions. The 19th edition, held February 27 to March 3, was no different.

Cigars always lead the way. The 2017 lineup was an interesting combination of an ultra-premium addition to Montecristo (Cuba's biggest-selling brand), a reconceived global strategy for Quai d'Orsay and the anticipated release of individual, special production cigars.

Montecristo will come to market with the Linea 1935, a nod to the year the brand was founded. The cigar will be released initially in three sizes: the Leyenda, in factory jargon, a Montesco No. 1 (6 1/2 inches long by 55 ring gauge); the Maltes, or Sobresalientes (6 by 53); and the Dumas, or Prominente Corto (5 1/8 by 49). According to Habanos S.A., these new cigars are designed to have a fuller flavor profile and more power than the standard Montecristo brand, which is generally considered a medium-bodied smoke. A test smoke of the Dumas certainly lived up to the description, and it should age extremely well.

Quai d'Orsay was also reintroduced with a new marketing strategy. What was once primarily a French market cigar will now become one of Cuba's global brands. The new concept debuts in three sizes. Two are new additions to Quai d'Orsay: the No. 54, or Edmundo Grueso, (5 3/8 by 54); and the No. 50, or D No. 5, (4 3/8 by 50). The third cigar, a Corona Claro, or Corona, (5 5/8 by 42), is part of the existing Quai d'Orsay brand. In an interesting note, Habanos handed out one of the old sizes of Quai d'Orsay, the Churchill-sized Imperiales, at the Wednesday night dinner honoring the brand. That smoke is not part of the new lineup of sizes in the new look and taste of Quai d'Orsay.

The next big news was the 2017 Edición Limitadas, an annual release of three cigars from the best-known Cuban brands but in vitolas, or sizes, not usually associated with the brands. The Cohiba Talismán, or

Gordon Mott Named Habanos Man of the Year

Gordon Mott, a 27-year veteran of M. Shanken Communications Inc., the publisher of CIGAR AFICIONADO magazine, was named Habanos Man of the Year in the communications category on March 3 in Havana in front of some 1,200 cigar retailers, distributors, executives and cigar lovers from around the world.

Mott was formerly the executive editor of CIGAR AFICIONADO, having been there at the beginning, assisting editor and publisher Marvin R. Shanken on the creation of the magazine, which has been published continuously since Autumn 1992. He ran CIGAR AFICIONADO for Shanken until 2014, when he moved to Mexico and took on the new role of senior contributing editor. He has traveled to Cuba more than 20 times covering the island nation for the magazine. His work on Cuba—particularly the extensive and illuminating reviews on Cuba's top hotels, restaurants and music clubs in the cover stories on Havana published by CIGAR AFICIONADO in December 2011 and June 2015—has been among the more popular features published in the magazine's recent history.

"I'm deeply honored to have won this award, and to join some of the greatest men in the cigar business who have received it before me," said Mott. "After 25 years reporting and writing about cigars, I know the special nature of the people in the industry, and I'm grateful to be a part of it."

Habanos names three categories of Man of the Year at the Habanos Festival: production, business and communications. The production award was given to Josefa Acosta Ramos, a factory worker. The business award went to London retailer Edward Sahakian, who has owned the Davidoff shop on St. James Street for years and is one of the world's most experienced and learned tobacco retailers.

Marvin R. Shanken, editor and publisher of CIGAR AFICIONADO, was the first person to be named Habanos Man of the Year, in 1995.

—David Savona

Cañonazo Doble, (6 1/8 by 54), led the way for the 2017 ELs. The others were the Partagás Series No. 1, or Nobleza, (5 1/2 by 52) and a Punch Regios de Punch, or Hermoso Especial, (4 3/4 by 48). None of those cigars were given out during the Festival, which is somewhat unusual. If past years are any indication, it may be the end of 2017 before the Edición Limitadas reach the world's retailers.

Habanos S.A. also announced the upcoming Romeo y Julieta Petit Royales, a 3 3/4 by 47 cigar also called a Capricho. Two cigars will be sold only as Casa del Habano exclusives: a 6 1/2 by 52 Trinidad La Trova (Cañonazo Especial), and a 6 by 54 H. Upmann Connoisseur B, or a Geniales.

The Festival also saw the release of the 2017 Gran Reserva, an H. Upmann Sir Winston Gran Reserva 2011, known in factories as a Julieta No. 2. The cigar will have classic Churchill dimensions (7 by 47). It will be released in 5,000 numbered boxes of 20 cigars each. Many Festival goers were disappointed not to get one, because the opening night festivities, when it was handed out, had been almost washed out by rain. Many were erroneously told the event had been called off and so didn't attend.

The full Festival included a visit to tobacco fields in Pinar del Río, which were in the final stages of the harvest. Another day was devoted to educational and historical seminars, and this year's topics included cigars and the arts, a cigar-rolling session taught by a master roller from El Laguito, the mother factory of Cohiba, a history of the Quai d'Orsay brand and a tasting of Spanish brandy with select Cuban cigars. There were also guided tours of two Havana cigar factories, La Corona and H. Upmann, but many people (including the team from CIGAR AFICIONADO) spent that day exploring Havana's best Casa del Habano cigar shops, and savoring some vintage cigars. Friday brought the close of the festival, with the finals of the Habanos Sommelier contest, won this year by Felipe Rojas, of Chile.

The closing dinner Friday night brought together 1,200 people, including the Festival attendees, leading Cuban cigar-industry figures and government officials, as well as other invited guests. They were treated to an evening of nonstop entertainment from top Cuban artists and limitless Montecristo cigars.

The highlight of the evening was the annual live auction of extra-large, custom designed humidors from seven of Cuba's top cigar brands, each one stuffed with cigars. The auction raised 1.265 million euros ($1.34 million) for Cuba's public health system. The Cohiba humidor was the star of the night, and it brought in 380,000 euros ($403,000). It was purchased by Leander D'Silva of Apéro, a Canadian company.

D'Silva also bought the Hoyo de Monterrey humidor for 100,000 euros ($106,000) and the Bolivar humidor for 90,000 euros ($95,000). Mohamed Mohebi, of the United Arab Emirates, placed the winning bid of 220,000 euros ($233,000) for the Montecristo humidor, and an H. Upmann humidor sold for 200,000 euros ($212,000) to Dag Holmboe, the CEO of Pacific Cigar Co. A Romeo y Julieta humidor went to Ricardo Cases, of Andorra, for 150,000 euros ($159,000) and a Partagás humidor was acquired by Peter Giannoulis from Vancouver, Canada, for 115,000 euros ($122,000).

D'Silva, the managing director of Apéri, a private members club, revealed that he bought the three humidors for resale to his members. "But the Cuban public health system is a good cause to support," D'Silva added. "It's money well spent." ❖

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Left: ProCigar's White Party is one of the nightly gala celebrations of the Festival. It's held at the Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración.
Right: Illuminated for the Festival, the hilltop Monumento gleams in the night and can be seen from almost anywhere in Santiago.

MICHELLE ESTEVEZ /PROCIGAR

ProCigar Holds 10th Festival in the Dominican Republic

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

It's like Graceland for fans of Dominican cigars, only with better taste. Or like a Napa Valley of sorts for cigar smokers, only not nearly as expensive. Better yet, the ProCigar festival can be easily described as a Mecca. Field trip by day and party by night, ProCigar is a nearly week-long excursion to the Dominican Republic where cigar fans fly from all over the world for unprecedented access to the buzzing cigar factories and picturesque tobacco fields you only see in cigar ads.

Unlike Graceland, you get to actually meet the people who make your favorite smokes—rock stars for sure in the world of tobacco—and they'll give you more than just an autograph. They'll give you cigars.

In perhaps one of the largest national showings of Dominican pride and cigar solidarity, ProCigar held its 10th festival in the Dominican Republic this year and raised more than $150,000 with a charity auction. According to the ProCigar organization, the festival hosted around 800 people from more than 20 countries.

The festival is broken up into two parts: Punta Cana and Santiago. The former is the less regimented part of the festival, which plays out more like a beach vacation than a cigar tour. There aren't any strict schedules (save for dinner), and it doesn't become particularly educational until the guests are rounded up and bussed over to Altadis's Tabacalera de Garcia in La Romana—the largest cigar factory in the country.

Afterward, attendees drive across the country to Santiago for the festival's second leg. This is where true cigar immersion begins.

Luckily, most of the Dominican Republic's premium cigar industry is localized in Santiago. If planned properly, one can see a tremendous amount in three days, but multiple tours happen simultaneously, so you have to make a choice. That's not always easy. How does one choose between the grandeur of the Davidoff factory or the history of La Aurora? How can one fully enjoy a day with La Flor Dominicana knowing that they're missing time with the Quesada family or vice versa? There's only one tour per day, so the cigar enthusiast might find himself in a difficult position. General Cigar, Tabacalera Palma, PDR Cigars—it's impossible to see them all. Even smaller, quaint factories like De Los Reyes and Tabacalera La Alianza take up an entire morning and afternoon.

Altadis and General were more than happy to show off their lush tobacco plantations to the agri-curious, but you get the most for your money on tours where you see both a farm and factory on the same day.

While Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia. did not offer a factory tour, Fuente did showcase its Chateau de la Fuente tobacco farm along with its Cigar Family Charitable Foundation facilities in Bonao.

Various members of ProCigar spoke about the state of the cigar industry at the press conference on the opening day in Santiago. It's always controversial when someone claims to be No. 1 in any field, and usually disputed. But ProCigar's president Henke Kelner was not at all shy about making this assertion.

"In 2016, the Dominican Republic exported 149 million premium cigars to the United States, making us the world's largest exporter of cigars to the U.S.," said Kelner, president of ProCigar and general manager of Tabadom Holding Inc. "If you count our machine-made cigars, the Dominican Republic is the biggest producer of cigars in the world."

The strong sentiment of Dominican cigar exceptionalism was reaffirmed every night with loud music and lots of cigar smoking. Wednesday's evening dinner took place in the gardens of the Gran Teatro del Cibao. Thursday night's White Party (pictured) was held near the marble steps of Santiago's Monumento a los Héroes de la Restauración and the formal closing ceremony was celebrated at the Centro Español where a charity auction of unique humidors raised $150,000 for the elderly and impoverished citizens of the Dominican Republic. ❖

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The Vadas family of Hunting Valley, Ohio, celebrate Simon's graduation from Princeton University by savoring a couple of fine Cohiba Esplendido cigars.

Michael Goldstein and John McMillan meet Cigar Aficionado editor and publisher Marvin R. Shanken at Smoke Inn in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Kristy Cameron celebrates her wedding day by sharing fine cigars with her mother Jacqueline aboard their "Cigars & Bourbon Bus" in Toronto, Canada.

Ron Berkowitz, Brian Axelrod, Los Angeles Rams running back Todd Gurley and Evan Lazarus light up Cohibas at Nizuc Resort & Spa in Cancún, Mexico.

The Miller family savors a beautiful March afternoon, enjoying each other's company and pairing libations with fine Drew Estate cigars in Denver, Colorado.

David McLay Kidd marks his wedding day by enjoying a Plasencia Reserva Organica cigar with friends and family at the Mukul Resort in Nicaragua.

Brendan Childs, Brian Rismiller, Greg Rismiller and Geoff Wheeler celebrate camaraderie with good beer and great cigars at the Das Best Oktoberfest in National Harbor, Maryland.

Doctors Francesco and Jen Worley mark their wedding day by enjoying cigars alongside Stephen Worley, Tyler McLurg, Robert Ciucevich and Lisa Worley in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Edwin Lowrick, Richard Gondosch, Gary Becker and Randy Gondosch don matching shades while lighting up premium cigars outside Grumpy Gringo Fine Cigars in Tubac, Arizona.

Alexandre Avellar, José Miguel Salvador and a group of cigar-loving friends savor handmade Cuban smokes and good company at La Casa del Habano in Santiago, Chile.

Larry McKivigan, Randy Dvorak, Bob Chambers and Ernie Peters hit the links at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio, with a few Oliva Serie V Melanio cigars to puff while they play.

Mickey Katchmer, Dan Welsh, Brian Smaldino, Mike Herman, Bob Simerlink, Bill Culp and Todd Schuller celebrate Steve Zawrotuk's nuptials with Scotch and cigars in Youngstown, Ohio.

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The Willson and Ware families celebrate the purchase of a new property in southern Colorado by smoking Arturo Fuente cigars. The families have since built a vacation home upon the land.

Friends Jason J. Lukawitz of Smyrna, Tennessee, and Tony Hasselman of Warren, Pennsylvania, catch up over beer and cigars at BLEND Bar with Davidoff Cigars in Nashville, Tennessee.

There's no better way to spend a warm day than with a cigar outside. Rick and Allan Rosenberg savor a 65-degree afternoon in February by puffing on the patio in New Rochelle, New York.

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Captain Paul Kozick and his bride Cassandra enjoy their first cigars as newlyweds alongside their wedding party, family and friends at the Olde Towne Athletic Club in Marietta, Georgia.

Ron Davis finds no better way to celebrate his graduation from Towson University in Towson, Maryland, than by lighting up a premium cigar alongside his mother Beahta and father Ron Sr.

Mike Edwin, Steve Seybold, Jim Fett and Arnie "AT" Thorson share a special round of fine cigars during a memorable fishing trip at Nungessor Lake Lodge in Red Lake, Ontario, Canada.

Howard Hockenberger of Kingston Springs, Tennessee, shares a premium cigar with Rick Rodriguez of CAO Cigars in Estelí, Nicaragua.

Dick Fisher celebrates his 68th birthday by indulging in premium cigars alongside his wonderful family in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Michael Cohen celebrates his wedding to Lindsey Cohen by lighting up fine Montecristo No. 4 cigars with friends and family at the Belle Island Castle in Lisbellaw, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

Sunny Moon and his father Joseph enjoy time together over fine cigars in Calgary, Canada.

Patrick Franco and brother-in-law Andrew Crea savor an Army victory in West Point, New York.

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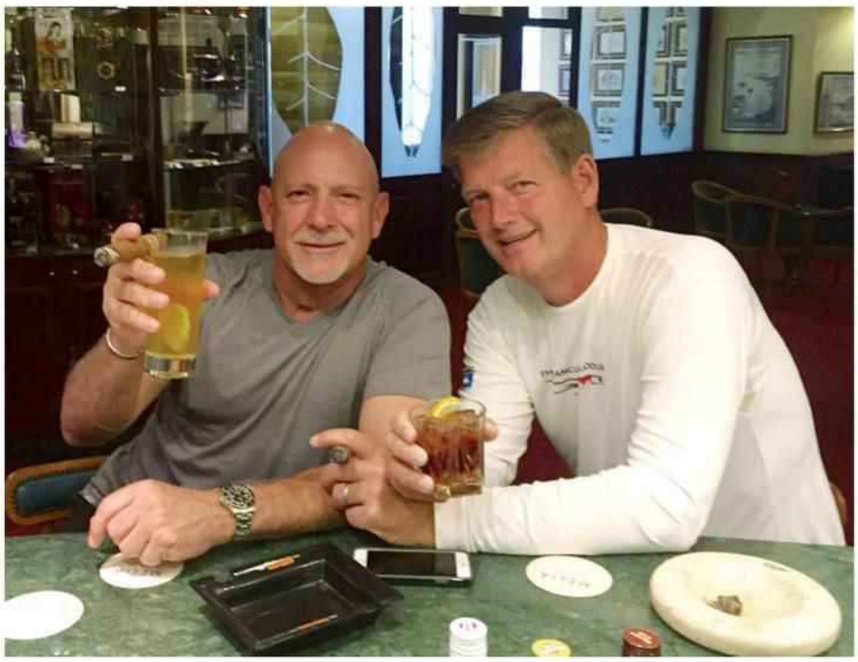

Don King and Bryan Gentry immerse themselves in the local culture by puffing Cohibas and sipping Havana Club cocktails at the Meliá Cohiba Hotel in Cuba.

Mike Irby, Jeff McGlashan, groom Blake Rogers, Dan Mallon, Steve Rosenfeld and Eric Immerman puff on post-wedding cigars in Loch Ness, Scotland.

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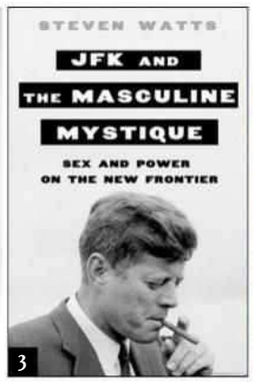

In a world of fast food and one-size-fits-all sensibilities, how often does something feel made especially for you? The "Made for You" section celebrates those items that are created with such high quality of hand workmanship and degree of customization that they become individual to you. In each issue, our editors will endeavor to bring you special things from anywhere on the globe, choosing them solely on the basis of outstanding quality. Our goal is to give you guidance on the best of everything.

1 CIGAR JACKET—DUCA SARTORIA

Suitmaker Max Girombelli loves cigars, but he hated the way a cigar case would bulge in a suit pocket. So he created the Cigar Jacket, with a leather cigar holder built into the breast pocket. Should you prefer it even more cigar oriented, opt for an inner lining of cigar-band images. As Girombelli works in full custom "Every little detail is possible," he says. He's been in New York for 25 years, and operates from a small, well-appointed nook near Grand Central Terminal with a lovely bar and fully stocked humidor. *ducausa.com*

2 SPECTACULAR SPEAKERS—SONUS FABER

Everyone wants music of the highest fidelity, but without proper speakers, even the most advanced stereo components are wasted. In an ambitious reach for sonic perfection Sonus Faber has released its new Homage Tradition series, a complex line of speakers with technological updates and design elements that make them as beautiful as they are resonant. Three models have been engineered to fill your room with clean, detail-rich sound: the 2-way Guarneri (bookshelf, $15,900), the 3.5 way Serafino (80W–350W, $21,900) and the powerful, 3.5 way Amati (100W–500W, $29,000). *sonusfaber.com*

3 PRESIDENTIAL APPEAL—JFK AND THE MASCULINE MYSTIQUE

Just in time for his 100th birthday, a new book on John F. Kennedy takes a no-more-tears look at the tragic president, focusing instead on how he changed the cultural landscape with a wink and a swagger. Author Steven Watts argues in *JFK and the Masculine Mystique* (Thomas Dunne Books/ St. Martin's Press, $29.99) that JFK gave new hope to the emasculated suburban man. Bed hopping, Rat Pack parties, boyish pursuits and a kinship with James Bond were all part of his appeal. *us.macmillan.com*

4 COUNTER-TOP BEER—PICOBREW

Home-brewed beer sounds great—unless you're strapped for space. PicoBrew, the company that gave us the more formidable Zymatic brewing system, has shrunk the concept to a size that even apartment dwellers can justify. Not much bigger than a coffee maker, the Pico ($799) fits on a counter top and is fed by prepackaged ingredients that mirror existing craft beers from throughout the world. Still won't give up precious kitchen space for a hobby? Did we tell you it doubles as a sous vide machine? *picobrew.com*

5 COCKTAIL PAY DIRT—FILTHY FOODS

Filthy Foods, the not-so-appropriately named purveyor of gourmet cocktail garnishes, is now taking its wares nationwide. The Miami company lifted the status of drink adornments behind the logic that if you're making your cocktails with the finest spirits and fresh ingredients, why plop in a sad olive or iridescent cherry when you can make the garnish a featured ingredient? Now a store near you should offer an array that includes plump black cherries, and huge olives overstuffed with things like pimentos and blue cheese, as well as pickles, onions and peppers. *filthyfood.com*

6 HIGH STEAKS BEEF—CHIANINA

Discerning meat-lovers have undoubtedly known terms like Wagyu and Kobe, but one rare choice has eluded much of the dining world—Chianina. The beef comes from the white Italian cattle of the same name, boasting intense flavor without the fatty marbling. Though few ranchers breed them in the U.S., Chianina Steakhouse in California has direct access. Four classic cuts range in price from $130 to $200. The standout steak is the classic Bistecca Fiorentina—a Tuscan-style delicacy finally served the way it was intended. *chianina.com*

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