

Cigar Insider

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FEATURED CIGAR

PADILLA STUDIO TOBAC
SPECIAL EDITION FIGURADO

NICARAGUA ■ PRICE: \$14.95 ■ BODY: MED. TO FULL

For a full tasting, see page two.

93

POINTS

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PAISLEY LOVES CIGARS

COUNTRY SUPERSTAR BRAD PAISLEY

rarely sits still, but when he does he enjoys a cigar. The April *Cigar Aficionado* tells this young man's story. Also, read about Aganorsa S.A., an operation growing some of Nicaragua's best tobacco, the best luxe cars of the year and much more. For a preview of the issue's top cigars, see page two.



CIGAR INSIDER TOURS CIGAR LANDS

FEBRUARY IS CIGAR CELEBRATION MONTH AS BOTH CUBA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HOST CIGAR FESTIVALS.

From fields to factories to fancy gala dinners, both Cuba and the Dominican Republic will be hosting major cigar festivals this month, and *Cigar Insider* will be covering both. Whether you choose Cuba's Habanos Festival or the Dominican Republic's ProCigar, each outing guarantees sneak previews of new cigar lines and brand extensions scheduled for release later in the year. Retailers, distributors and enthusiasts from around the world will attend, taking trips to tobacco farms, touring cigar factories and attending seminars on the many aspects of cigar culture. See www.cigaraficionado.com and the next *Cigar Insider* for coverage.

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TASTING REPORT: EXCLUSIVE APRIL 2012 CIGAR AFICIONADO PREVIEWS



93

RING GAUGE: 54
LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

EDMUNDO DANTES CONDE 54 EXCLUSIVO MEXICO

CUBA

This rich, complex toro exhibits a profound and dynamic balance, starting with bottom notes of red meat and earthy truffles, a midrange of cashews and top notes of cinnamon.

Box Date: July 2011
Price: \$32.00

Body: Medium to Full



93

RING GAUGE: 60
LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador

PADILLA STUDIO TOBAC SPECIAL EDITION FIGURADO

NICARAGUA

A flawlessly contoured perfecto. It has an herbal start, then becomes richer and more complex with a mix of meat, minerals, baker's chocolate and Brazil nuts.

Price: \$14.95

Body: Medium to Full



93

RING GAUGE: 49
LENGTH: 7 5/8"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

PARTAGÁS LUSITANIA

CUBA

Between the gleaming wrapper, slight box-pressing and flat head, this gorgeous cigar tastes as good as it looks. The leathery flavors become more pronounced with roasted coffee bean notes and rich, creamy undertones.

Box Date: July 2010
Price: £22.23 (U.K.)

Body: Medium



93

RING GAUGE: 46
LENGTH: 5 5/8"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

PUNCH PUNCH (TUBO)

CUBA

Strikingly nutty and sweet, this exemplary corona gorda layers the palate with an uncommonly complex array of butterscotch, almond paste, walnuts and rich tobacco.

Box Date: November 2009
Price: £16.70 (U.K.)

Body: Medium

100 POINT SCALE

95-100: Classic ■ 90-94: Outstanding ■ 80-89: Very good to excellent ■ 70-79: Average to good commercial quality
 Below 70: Don't waste your money ■ N/A: Not Available *Note: Prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.*



TASTING REPORT: EXCLUSIVE APRIL 2012 CIGAR AFICIONADO PREVIEWS



92

RING GAUGE: 47
LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

COHIBA ESPLENDIDO

CUBA

There's a bit of resistance to the draw of this golden Churchill, but it still imparts a creamy, toasty smoke laden with marzipan and cedar flavor.

Box Date: August 2011

Price: £34.08 (U.K.)

Body: Medium



92

RING GAUGE: 50
LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: Dom. Rep., Peru, Nicaragua
BINDER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf
WRAPPER: Ecuador

JOSÉ SEIJAS SIGNATURE SERIES CHURCHILL

DOM. REP.

A dark cigar whose richly hued wrapper foreshadows the rich flavors of coffee, earth, nougat and honey.

Price: \$11.55

Body: Medium to Full



92

RING GAUGE: 56
LENGTH: 4"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador

SAVINELLI DOS CAMPEONES SIXTO TRABAJADOR NICARAGUA

NICARAGUA

This cigar exudes a rich aroma as it burns and imparts a complex smoke. There are hints of wood, leather and salt as well as sweet cherry and dark chocolate.

Price: \$8.70

Body: Medium to Full



91

RING GAUGE: 54
LENGTH: 4 1/2"
FILLER: Dom. Rep.
BINDER: Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Shade,
 U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf

ARTURO FUENTE HEMINGWAY BETWEEN THE LINES

DOM. REP.

A barber-pole perfecto with a nipple foot. It's a bit difficult to draw until the cigar burns past the bulbous foot and then flavors are toasty and sweet with nuts and cocoa.

Price: \$14.10

Body: Medium

100 POINT
 SCALE

95-100: Classic ■ 90-94: Outstanding ■ 80-89: Very good to excellent ■ 70-79: Average to good commercial quality
 Below 70: Don't waste your money ■ N/A: Not Available *Note: Prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.*

TASTING REPORT

ROCKY PATEL FIFTY

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Nicaragua

Maker: Tabacalera Tavicusa Sociedad

Distributor: Rocky Patel Premium Cigars

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Ecuador

Release Date: October 2011

ROBUSTO

91 POINTS ■ 5 1/2" x 50 ■ \$19.00 ■ HUMIDOR SELECTION

Box-pressed with an oily wrapper and an even draw and burn. It's a peppery smoke with plenty of leathery undertones and a hint of mint on the finish.

Body: Medium to Full

TORO

90 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 52 ■ \$21.00

Flatly pressed with a full, open draw. The flavors strike a tasty balance between light chocolate, black pepper and coffee.

Body: Medium

TORPEDO

89 POINTS ■ 6 1/8" x 52 ■ \$22.00

A box-pressed torpedo with a very pointy tip and silky wrapper. Heavy, woody flavors come through as do some coffee notes and some flinty, earthy tones.

Body: Medium to Full

BRAND SUMMARY: It's easy to be taken by the box of the Rocky Patel Fifty. The lid is encrusted with amber crystals in relief against a brushed copper plaque, all set in a handsome dark wood-grain veneer. The brand came out late last year to commemorate Rocky Patel turning 50 years old. In celebration of this personal milestone, Patel created 2,000 numbered boxes of each size with each cigar bearing a dark Habano Oscuro Ecuadoran wrapper. Fifty is the most expensive brand Patel has ever released, and the standout here was the Robusto, which scored 91 points.

Average Rating: 90.0 points

ROCKY PATEL WINTER COLLECTION 2012

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Nicaragua

Maker: Tabacalera Tavicusa Sociedad

Distributor: Rocky Patel Premium Cigars

Filler: Nicaragua, Panama

Binder: Costa Rica, Mexico

Wrapper: Ecuador

Release Date: December 2011

ROBUSTO

90 POINTS ■ 5 1/2" x 50 ■ \$7.55

Spicy, cedary notes come through on the first puffs of this dark, box-pressed cigar, which goes on to show some molasses and pumpernickel flavor.

Body: Medium to Full

TORPEDO

90 POINTS ■ 6 1/8" x 52 ■ \$8.80

A coffee-like smoke comes through the even draw of this dark, pressed torpedo. Woody flavors and a touch of dried orange peel emerge as well.

Body: Medium

TORO

86 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 52 ■ \$8.55

Box-pressed with an airy draw, this cigar has a spice and acidity that hits the back of the throat. The acidity mellows, leaving an ashy aftertaste.

Body: Medium to Full

BRAND SUMMARY: It has been three years since Rocky Patel released a Winter Blend series of smokes. The last line featured an unusual broadleaf wrapper from Pennsylvania and was an exceptionally powerful cigar. This year, the Winter Blend has been changed. Like the last release, Rocky Patel intended this brand to be powerful, but it no longer uses tobacco from Pennsylvania. Instead it has a Habano-seed wrapper from Ecuador and two binders: one from Costa Rica, the other from Mexico. The filler is Nicaraguan and Panamanian. Only 6,000 boxes total were made (2,000 boxes of each size) and the band's color scheme is now purple and silver. While not as strong as the 2009 Winter blend, the Torpedo and Robusto both scored 90 points.

Average Rating: 88.7 points

100 POINT SCALE

95-100: Classic ■ 90-94: Outstanding ■ 80-89: Very good to excellent ■ 70-79: Average to good commercial quality
Below 70: Don't waste your money ■ N/A: Not Available *Note: Prices are manufacturers' suggested retail, before taxes.*

CIGAR NEWS

GOING MILD: LA FLOR DOMINICANA LIGHT

BY DAVID SAVONA

Litito Gomez has built a reputation for crafting some of the strongest cigars on the market. His **La Flor Dominicana Double Ligero** Chisel, a thick, long powerhouse that can bring a tear to the eye, is not to be smoked on an empty stomach. But Gomez also makes a number of milder cigars, and he feels he has neglected that part of the business, so he has renamed and redesigned his mildest line and added a pair of sizes to boot.

La Flor Dominicana Premium is being renamed **La Flor Dominicana Light**, and the newly packaged cigars will debut next month. The blend remains the same: Connecticut-Shade wrapper from the United States, Dominican Olor binder and a filler blend of tobaccos grown on Gomez's farm in La Canela, Dominican Republic.

"Most people don't know that we make milder cigars," Gomez told *Cigar Insider*. "We didn't focus a lot on our original line. It was the same sizes forever. The presentation was not shelf friendly—they were very wide boxes."

Gomez took his old boxes of **La Flor Premium** (thin, wide boxes packed with 13 cigars on top and 12 on the bottom) and remade them into more retail friendly boxes that are tall and narrow, with five rows of five cigars.

Gomez is keeping all of his old sizes, which maxed out at 48 ring gauge, and is adding a pair of thicker cigars to the **La Flor Dominicana Light** line. There will be a **Governador** measuring 6 1/4 inches by 60 ring, as well as a **Maximo** (pictured) measuring 6 by 54.

The other sizes consist of the **Alcade** (6 1/2 inches by 44, suggested retail price \$6.62); **Insurrectos** (5 1/2 by 42, \$5.02); the tiny **Demitasse** (5 inches by 30 ring, \$3.44); **Maceo** (5 by 48, \$7.68); **Macheteros** (4 by 40, \$4.52); and **Mambises** (6 7/8 by 48, \$8.16). Gomez hasn't set a price for the two new sizes, but he expects them to sell for somewhere between \$6 and \$8 apiece.

"I'm very excited about this change," said Gomez. "This line of cigars means a lot to me." ■



PUNCH RARE COROJO BRAND COMING BACK IN MARCH

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA



March will kick off the shipping date for **Punch Rare Corojo**, an annual limited-edition line made by General Cigar Co. set to be available from March 1 to May 31. The brand is defined by an Ecuadoran Sumatra wrapper that General says is grown in limited quantity.

The **Punch Rare Corojo** line has eight sizes, seven of which use the rare Ecuadoran wrapper. But a special 10th Anniversary blend is the only size in the series to incorporate an unusual Connecticut Corojo wrapper. Measuring 5 inches by 50 ring, the 10th Anniversary debuted last year and is back for a 2012 encore with a retail price of \$6.99. (It scored 88 points in the

June 7 issue of *Cigar Insider*.)

The rest of the line consists of a **Double Corona** (6 3/4 by 48), **Pita** (6 1/8 by 50), **El Doble** (6 by 60), **Magnum** (5 1/4 by 54), **Elite** (5 1/4 by 45) and **Champion** (4 1/2 by 60). They retail for \$3.59 to \$6.49 per cigar, and are made in Honduras at the Honduras American Tabaco S.A. factory.

The brand, which was once made sporadically, became a consistent annual release in 2001, starting with three sizes: the **Double Corona**, **Pita** and **Rothschild**. The **Magnum**, **Doble** and **Champion** sizes were subsequently released as the brand became more popular. The **Crystal**, a 5 1/2 by 54 torpedo that came in a glass tube, hit the market in 2007 but is no longer offered. With the exception of the perfect-shaped **Champion**, all **Punch Rare Corojo**s are box-pressed.

General would not comment on exactly how many boxes of the **Punch Rare Corojo** it produced this year, but assured *Cigar Insider* that it is indeed a limited release and will not be available after the end of May. ■

For the latest from *Cigar Aficionado*, follow us on Twitter:
twitter.com/CigarAficMag



SAN LOTANO OVAL MADURO COMING SOON

BY DAVID SAVONA

The San Lotano Oval from A.J. Fernandez Cigars, a Nicaraguan cigar brand with an unconventional oval box-pressing, is being expanded with the introduction of a maduro version.

San Lotano Oval, made by A.J. Fernandez in Estelí, Nicaragua, has a Ecuadoran wrapper grown from Habano seed, Nicaraguan binder and a mix of Honduran, Dominican and Nicaraguan filler tobacco. They sell for \$9 to \$12 a cigar. The maduro line will have the same binder and filler, but with a Habano maduro wrapper.

The cigar will come in five sizes, including the new Oval Gordo, which measures 6 1/2 inches long by 60 ring gauge. The odd pressing of the Oval line makes this 60 ring appear somewhat thinner than other cigars with similar girth. Clay Roberts from A.J. Fernandez says the size is already the company's best selling Oval.

Roberts said that the company is in expansion mode, and is working on a large new factory in Nicaragua that should be ready by the end of 2012. Another line called Pinolero will be launched at the trade show in July. ■

REGIONAL LA GLORIA CUBANA SHIPS

BY DAVID SAVONA

The La Gloria Cubana Belux No. 1, a 2011 regional edition Cuban cigar created for Belgium and Luxembourg, went on sale last week.

The cigar is a Genios size, measuring 5 1/2 inches by 52 ring gauge. The only other Genios in the Cuban cigar portfolio is in the Cohiba Maduro 5 line.

These new La Glorias come in boxes of 10 cigars, and the run is limited to 3,500 boxes, or 35,000 cigars. They retail for 15.30 euros each (about

\$20) in Belgium, or 153 euros per box (\$200), and about 15 euros each in Luxembourg.

The cigar has the colorful La Gloria Cubana band, and

beneath it a secondary band reading "Exclusivo Belux."

Belux refers to Belgium and Luxembourg, and is not as common a term as Benelux, the grouping of Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg, countries in Western Europe that have close economic, geographic and cultural ties. Holland, part of the Netherlands, has its own regional edition, the El Rey del Mundo NL No. 1, which is already on sale.

For details on the 26 Cuban Regional Edition cigars for 2011—some of which still have yet to reach their markets—see Gordon Mott's Cuba Report in the February *Cigar Aficionado*, on sale now. ■

FIFTH SIZE ADDED TO FOUR KICKS

BY DAVID SAVONA

A new, thinner size is being added to the Four Kicks brand. The small production line, made for Nashville, Tennessee's Crowned Heads LLC, by Ernesto Perez-Carrillo in the Dominican Republic, debuted late last year with a quartet of sizes. Crowned Heads co-founder Jon Huber recently visited the *Cigar Insider* offices for a first taste of the new size, called Selección No. 5.

Measuring 6 1/2 inches long by 44 ring gauge (which would make it a lonsdale in our taste tests), the cigar is made from the Four Kicks blend of Ecuadoran Habano wrapper, Nicaraguan binder and Nicaraguan filler.

Despite only being rolled a few weeks ago, the young smoke burned beautifully, with just a small blister, and had an almondine character with a touch of cedar and nutmeg. As it burned, it grew earthier, and remained very balanced and easygoing.

The smoke is the thinnest so far in the line. Four Kicks had a strong debut in the December 6 *Cigar Insider*, with an 88, two 90s and a 91 point score for the Corona Gorda.

Huber described the philosophy behind the brand as making "old-fashioned sizes," without cellophane and in plain wooden boxes.

The gold and red bands, which are printed by Vrijdag Premium Printing in Eindhoven, Netherlands, look old school.

Huber also told *Cigar Insider* Crowned Heads would come out with a new brand at the International Premium Cigar and Pipe Retailers trade show this summer. Unlike Four Kicks, this brand will be a limited



edition, with only 1,000 boxes of 25 cigars the first year. The only details he would share about the new smoke were its wrapper (Ecuador Sumatra), its strength (stronger than Four Kicks) and the manufacturer, Perez-Carrillo.

Four Kicks is the only contract brand rolled at Perez-Carrillo's Tabacalera La Alianza factory, where Perez-Carrillo rolls his various **E.P. Carrillo** cigar brands. The factory makes cigars via the entubado bunching method, with Cuban-style heads.

For a video of Huber smoking and describing the cigar, see the editors' blogs at www.cigaraficionado.com ■

AVO UVEZIAN CELEBRATES 86th BIRTHDAY WITH LIMITED EDITION CIGAR

BY G. CLAY WHITTAKER

Cigar icon Avo Uvezian is about to turn 86 years old and to commemorate the occasion, Davidoff of Geneva will be releasing a cigar called **La Trompeta**: this year's limited-edition Avo.

Following the ongoing Avo theme of music, each 6 1/2 inch long, 54 ring gauge torpedo-shaped Trompeta has a dark Ecuadorian Sumatra wrapper decorated with three circles of lighter Ecuadorian Connecticut-seed tobacco affixed to the cigar's cover leaf to represent the three valves of a trumpet, hence the name. Inside, a Dominican Piloto binder holds together the blend of Dominican Criollo ligero, Piloto Cubano viso, San Vicente ligero, Dominican olor and Peruvian seco. The Trompetas are being rolled at the OK Cigars factory in the Dominican Republic.

Davidoff hasn't confirmed a price point for the cigar or production numbers yet, but told **Cigar Insider** that 5,000 boxes of ten will be made available to the U.S.

This is the 11th year that Avo has done a birthday release. The tradition began with the Avo 75th Anniversary in 2001.

Scott Kolesaire, brand manager for Avo, says the Trompeta will be in stores in late March. Avo himself is scheduled for an eight-city tour which will begin March 22 in New York City at the Grand Havana Room, where attendees will be among the first to sample the smoke. ■



COMPANIES SUE TO HALT BAN ON FLAVORED TOBACCO

BY ANDREW NAGY

The Cigar Association of America has taken part with a group of tobacco companies and the National Association of Tobacco Outlets Inc. in filing a federal lawsuit in Rhode Island to stop a set of regulations that would, among other things, restrict flavored tobacco sales in the capital city of Providence.

Signed into law by Providence mayor Angel Taveras on January 12, the ordinances ban coupon and price discounts on cigarettes and prohibit the sale of non-cigarette flavored tobacco products such as cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco and snus. While menthol, mint and wintergreen flavors are exempt, fruity flavors, chocolate, vanilla, cocoa, herb and a host of others were not so lucky. The new laws, however, exempt cigar bars and hookah bars.

The new regulations are scheduled to take effect on March 1, but Craig Williamson, president of the CAA, said that is not likely to happen.

"Our attorneys and the [Phillip Morris] attorneys are working on a stay with the city and it appears the city will agree to it," he said. While the stay would not become official until some time closer to summer, Williamson is confident flavored tobacco products will still be on store shelves come March 1.

The companies involved in the suit, which was filed last week, are R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. and American Snuff Co. (both units of Reynolds American Inc.); Altria units Philip Morris U.S.A. Inc., U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Manufacturing Co. LLC, U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Brands Inc. and John Middleton Co., the maker of **Black & Mild** and other machine-made cigars; and Lorillard Tobacco Co.

The lawsuit argues that the ordinance related to flavored tobacco violates retailers' and manufacturers' First Amendment right to freely describe the taste or aroma of tobacco. The suit contends that the right to Free Speech extends to commercial speech such as the type found in advertising.

Williamson added that the city failed to give proper public notice that the ordinances were adopted. "They basically did it in the dead of night," he said.

If the laws do take effect, first time offenders would be fined \$250 with the fine increasing after each subsequent offense. Vendors with three or more offenses could even lose their tobacco license. ■

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REYES TEAM TO LAUNCH ENORMOUS SMOKES

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

If you have five hours to smoke a cigar, then the Rolando Reyes team has the perfect size—an 18 inch long by 70 ring stick that is part of their new **Mutineer** brand of huge vitolas.

Veteran cigarmaker Rolando Reyes Sr. and his son, Rolando Reyes Jr., teamed up two years ago to form Father & Son Cigars, a Westley Chapel, Florida-based cigar distributor that sells cigars made in Honduras and Nicaragua. The company debuted with the launch of a limited-edition line called **Rolando Reyes Sr. Limited Edition**, and now produces a small-batch brand called Mutineer, a Nicaraguan Habano wrapped cigar with an Indonesian binder, and filler tobacco from Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

This year, the company will be releasing a large-format offshoot of the Mutineer line that promises colossal cigars with thicknesses up to 70 ring gauge.

“The cigar line uses an Ecuadoran Sumatra maduro wrapper,” said Reyes Jr., who began working in the business in 1959, and has been absent from the cigar industry for some time. “It doesn’t have any Nicaraguan tobacco in it like the regular Mutineer, and is aromatic and sweet.”

While the core Mutineer line is made in Nicaragua at the American Caribbean Cigars factory, the new, beefed-up line is made in Honduras at the Puros Indios factory and will come in six sizes: Toro, 6 inches by 60 ring; Churchill, 7 1/4 by 53; Diadema, 7 1/2 by 60; a huge Pyramid, 7 1/2 by 70; an even bigger 10 inch long by 70 ring Diadema, and a monumentally gargantuan 18 inch by 70 ring cigar that Junior says should take at least 5 hours to smoke. ■

UPDATE ON ROOM 101 DARUMA LINE

BY G. CLAY WHITTAKER

Though scheduled to hit the market in late 2012, more details have been established concerning the **Room 101 Daruma** line, a medium- to full-bodied cigar made by Camacho in Honduras for brand owner Matt Booth and distributed by Davidoff of Geneva.

Davidoff’s Head of Marketing Dylan Austin told *Cigar Insider* that the new line will have a Nicaraguan Habano wrapper, Honduran and Nicaraguan fillers, and a Mexican binder. Five sizes will be available: Churchill, lancero, 6 by 60, short robusto and a petit corona, however official names and prices have yet to be finalized.

The Daruma brand is named after the Zen talismans for good luck found in Japanese Buddhist culture. ■

CIGAR AFICIONADO’s “BIG SMOKE” 2012 SCHEDULE

November 9-11

LAS VEGAS • THE MIRAGE

Big Smoke evenings scheduled on Friday and Saturday, as well as cigar and lifestyle educational seminars on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

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IN THE NEXT CIGAR INSIDER

A Q&A with Bill Paley, owner of the La Palina brand, coverage of the cigar festivals in Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and ratings on hot new cigars.

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