

Cigar Insider

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FEATURED CIGAR

DIPLOMATICOS NO. 3

CUBA ■ PRICE: £11.99 ■ BODY: MED. TO FULL

For a full tasting, see page two.



92 POINTS

BEST CIGARS THIS ISSUE

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MEET McCONAUGHEY

A HOLLYWOOD A-LISTER WITH A PENCHANT FOR CIGARS, actor Matthew McConaughey tells of his rise to stardom. Plus interviews with Habanos S.A. executives and a Q&A with Alan Rubin, owner of Alec Bradley Cigars. It's all in the April issue of *Cigar Aficionado*. For a sneak peak of the highest rated smokes, see page two.



CUBA'S NEWEST: LIMITADAS, A SERIE E, AND A GRAN RESERVA 2011 LOVERS OF CUBAN CIGARS ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION IN FEBRUARY.

That's when Habanos S.A. announces the new smokes that will trickle into the market throughout the year. For 2011 they are the Partagas Serie E No. 2 (pictured), which measures 5 1/2 inches by 54, the Partagas Serie D No. 5 (4 3/8 by 50), and the diminutive H. Upmann Half Corona. All three will become regular-production cigars. The 2011 Edición Limitadas will consist of the Cohiba 1966, a 6 1/2 by 52 cigar; the Hoyo de Monterrey Short Hoyo Pirámides, 5 3/8 by 46; and the the Ramon Allones Allones Extra, which measures 5 5/8 by 44. This year's Gran Reserva is the Montecristo No. 2. The tobacco is from 2005 and only 5,000 boxes will be produced. For more, see www.cigaraficionado.com.

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TASTING REPORT: EXCLUSIVE APRIL 2011 CIGAR AFICIONADO PREVIEWS



92

RING GAUGE: 42
LENGTH: 5 5/8"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

DIPLOMATICOS NO. 3

CUBA

This box-pressed corona has a notably firm draw, but nevertheless offers a complex abundance of coffee bean, ground pepper, earth and black tea notes. Impressive for such a small smoke.

Box Date: April 2009

Price: £11.99 (U.K.)

Body: Medium to Full



92

RING GAUGE: 47
LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: Peru, Dom. Rep., Brazil, Nicaragua
BINDER: Cameroon, Dom. Rep.
WRAPPER: Ecuador

GUILLERMO LEÓN CORONA GORDA

DOM. REP.

Solidly rolled with a richly colored wrapper and slightly uneven burn. It's a cedary cigar balanced by plenty of leather and spice on the palate.

Price: \$8.50

Body: Medium



91

RING GAUGE: 50
LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: Honduras
BINDER: Honduras
WRAPPER: Honduras

CAMACHO DIPLOMA DIPLOMA

HONDURAS

A well-made robusto with a slightly firm draw and very even burn. Cedar and leather are pleasantly balanced by woody notes and a tea leaf finish.

Price: \$10.10

Body: Medium



91

RING GAUGE: 54
LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua

CASA MAGNA COLORADO DIADEMA

NICARAGUA

This notably oily figurado draws and burns evenly. A panoply of cocoa bean, cedar and spices culminate in a savory, leathery finish.

Price: \$8.95

Body: Medium to Full

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 2011 CIGAR AFICIONADO PREVIEWS



91

RING GAUGE: 44
LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Ecuador

MY FATHER CEDROS DELUXE CERVANTES

NICARAGUA

Thin and solidly rolled with plenty of cedar and clear white pepper impressions on the palate. Robust coffee bean flavor resonates on the finish.

Price: \$9.00

Body: Medium to Full



91

RING GAUGE: 43
LENGTH: 6 3/4"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

PARTAGÁS 8-9-8 VARNISHED

CUBA

A nicely constructed lonsdale with a firm draw that eventually opens up. Earthy, coffee flavors are balanced by an array of citrus, cedar and vanilla notes.

Box Date: October 2009

Price: £15.99 (U.K.)

Body: Medium



91

RING GAUGE: 52
LENGTH: 5 1/2"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

SAN CRISTÓBAL DE LA HABANA LA PUNTA

CUBA

This peppery belicoso draws and burns consistently, offering some coffee bean flavor, nuts and citrus around the peppery core.

Box Date: August 2008

Price: £14.99 (U.K.)

Body: Medium to Full



91

RING GAUGE: 48
LENGTH: 5"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

VEGAS ROBAINA FAMOSO

CUBA

Slightly box pressed with a medium claro wrapper. A delicious, toasty smoke that opens to show tea and leather.

Box Date: February 2010

Price: £12.99 (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

MASTER BY CARLOS TORAÑO

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Nicaragua

Maker: American Caribbean Cigars

Distributor: Toraño Family Cigar Co.

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Ecuador

Release Date: September 2010

ROBUSTO

91 POINTS ■ 5" x 50 ■ \$5.60 ■ HUMIDOR SELECTION

Dark and oily with an attractive hue, this cigar starts out rich with earth and leather progressing to a cedary sweetness on the palate.

Body: Medium to Full

CHURCHILL

89 POINTS ■ 7" x 50 ■ \$5.80

A large, cedary tasting cigar with hints of toast, dried orange peel and tea. It's a bit firm on the draw, but pleasant overall.

Body: Medium

TORPEDO

87 POINTS ■ 6 1/4" x 52 ■ \$5.90

Rolled with an uneven tip, this torpedo burns a bit unevenly, showing a very woody character, some roasted nuts and a dry, wheaty finish.

Body: Medium to Full

BRAND SUMMARY: Created by Toraño's master roller, Felipe Sosa, Master comes out of a small factory in Estelí called American Caribbean Cigars. Master is intended to be a small production, medium- to full-bodied brand for retailers only and comes in three fairly standard sizes. The Habano seed wrapper is from Ecuador, the binder from Estelí, Nicaragua, and the filler tobacco from Estelí and Jalapa. This blend stayed in the medium- to full-bodied range, as the Toraños intended, though worked best in the Robusto size, which scored 91 points.

Average Rating: 89.0 points

CAIN F NUB

NEW SIZES

Country: Nicaragua

Maker: Tabacalera Oliva S.A.

Distributor: Oliva Cigar Co.

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Nicaragua

Release Date: February 2011

460

88 POINTS ■ 4" x 60 ■ \$7.10

Short, fat and oily with a firm draw and even burn. Heavy licorice flavors envelope a dense core of coffee and toast, though the finish is excessively tangy.

Body: Medium to Full

464T

87 POINTS ■ 4" x 64 ■ \$7.50

This ultra-thick mini torpedo is difficult to light and smoke. First puffs are strong and oily tasting but settle down to show minerals, cedar and burnt toast.

Body: Medium to Full

SCHRADER HISPANO

NEW RELEASE

Country: Dominican Republic

Maker: La Fabrica Para Ti

Distributor: Havana Cellars

Filler: Dom. Rep.

Binder: Dom. Rep.

Wrapper: Honduras

Release Date: September 2010

DOCO-EST MMIX-X

88 POINTS ■ 7 1/2" x 56 ■ \$26.95

A large, double-tapered figurado with an unusual shaggy foot. The initial harshness settles down, leaving concentrated black pepper and coffee notes on the palate.

Body: Medium to Full

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

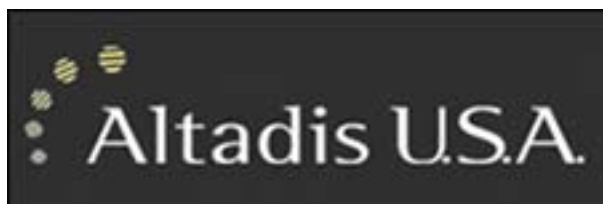
ALTADIS RESTRUCTURES—SPLITS PREMIUM FROM MACHINE MADE

BY DAVID SAVONA

Altadis U.S.A. Inc., a unit of the world's largest cigar company, Imperial Tobacco PLC, announced on February 18 it was changing the management structure of the company. Altadis has created a new premium cigar division in the United States, separating it from the company's mass-market division that makes cigars by machine.

Javier Estades, who has been the sales and marketing director for Imperial's European and international markets, has been named to the new post of general manager, premium cigars, U.S.A. Estades will report to Fernando Dominguez, the premium cigar director worldwide for Imperial Tobacco Group. The change is effective immediately.

The news of the restructuring comes a few days after Jim Colucci, the executive vice president of sales and marketing for Altadis U.S.A., announced he will retire effective July 31 (see following story.) Colucci has said he may stay on afterward as a consultant and also said he would work with Estades and Dominguez to help the transition.



"This allows Imperial to give focus to premium cigars, which are a unique product in their overall mix," said Janelle Rosenfeld, vice president of premium cigar marketing and communications for Altadis U.S.A.

Altadis has a considerable mass-market business, and previously that part of the industry was run in tandem with the premium business. Theo Folz, the former chairman and chief executive officer of the company, oversaw both sides of the business. Upon Folz's retirement, Gary R. Ellis was named his successor, and was put in control of machine-made and premium cigar operations. The release made no mention of Ellis, who presumably will now oversee Altadis's machine-made operations. Rosenfeld had no comment on Ellis's responsibilities, only saying that he remains president and chief executive officer of Altadis U.S.A.

Altadis U.S.A. makes a host of premium cigars, including the non-Cuban versions of **Montecristo**, **H. Upmann**, **Romeo y Julieta** and **Trinidad** cigars. ■

JIM COLUCCI RETIRING FROM ALTADIS U.S.A. INC.

BY DAVID SAVONA



Jim Colucci, a 37-year veteran of the cigar industry and the executive vice president of sales and marketing for Altadis U.S.A. Inc. is retiring from the company at the end of July. The news broke last week via an email announcement from Altadis U.S.A. president and chief executive officer Gary R. Ellis.

Colucci turns 65 on July 6 and intends to leave ten days after the tobacco industry trade show at IPCPR in Las Vegas concludes on July 21. Colucci said he may do some consulting with the company after his departure.

"I'm not retiring—I'm just ending my career here," said Colucci in a phone interview. "I still love the company. We had a great run. It will be almost 35 years [at Altadis] when I leave."

Colucci said, "I have the golden numbers," as he's turning 65 this year and has been at Altadis U.S.A. (which was called Consolidated Cigar Corp. when he began working there) for 34 years.

Colucci said he has a non-compete clause in his contract prohibiting him from working on the cigarmaking side of the business for a year, but no such prohibition on cigar retailing. "You might see me in the retail side real quick," he said.

Javier Estades will be taking over Colucci's role, said Colucci, and will take on the new title of general manager, premium cigars U.S.A. Estades is currently stationed in Madrid.

Colucci joined the cigar industry after working for General Foods and Kraft. His first job was assistant eastern manager for Consolidated Cigar Corp. (which later became a part of Altadis U.S.A. Inc.). He originally only worked on Consolidated's mass-market cigars and was brand manager for the famous **El Producto** brand, as well as a small machine-made brand called **La Palina** (which is no longer owned by Altadis and is now made by hand.) He later moved into the premium cigar segment, and was involved with all of Altadis U.S.A. Inc.'s brands.

"During the past years Jim has been a wonderful boss, unparalleled mentor and valued friend," wrote Janelle Rosenfeld, vice president of premium cigar marketing and communications for Altadis U.S.A. in an email. She and Ellis both wished Colucci the best in the future. ■

FIRST LOOK: NEW LA GLORIA

BY DAVID SAVONA

The La Gloria Cubana brand, one of the best-known names in Dominican cigars, is coming out with a cigar shape that takes a different look at lanceros. The La Gloria Cubana Rabito de Cochino, a long and slim smoke with an uncut foot and twisted pigtail, will go on sale next month.

“We wanted to take a twist on the lancero concept,” said Michael Giannini, director of marketing for El Credito brands.

Rabito de cochino is a Spanish term used inside some cigar factories to refer to a pigtail cap. In this case, the pigtail is long and quite twisted and it sits almost like a thick braid atop the head of the cigar. The cigar also has an uncut tuck, so the wrapper extends over the foot of the cigar, letting smokers taste only the wrapper when lighting.

La Rabito de Cochino measures 6 1/2 by 42, shorter and thicker than traditional lanceros, which are 7 1/2 by 38.

Typical La Gloria Cubana cigars are made with Ecuadoran Sumatra wrappers, Dominican binders, and a mix of Dominican and Nicaraguan filler tobaccos. The Rabito de Cochinos has “a little more Nicaraguan ligero,” said Giannini. “We wanted to tweak it just a hair.”

The Rabito de Cochinos come in packs of three, wrapped in a ribbon and packaged inside a small coffin-style box. “Most guys come in [to cigar shops] and buy two, three cigars—why not give them an entire selling unit?” said Giannini. The cigars have suggested retail price of about \$15 for the three pack, or around \$5 per cigar.



The cigar will first go on sale at La Gloria Cubana events held around the United States beginning in mid-March. The cigar will go to cigar shops later.

For a profile of Giannini and the other men behind Team La Gloria, see the February issue of *Cigar Aficionado* magazine, on newsstands now. ■

JON HUBER, FORMERLY OF C.A.O., CREATES NEW CIGAR COMPANY

BY DAVID SAVONA

Jon Huber, the former director of lifestyle marketing for C.A.O. International Inc., has formed a new cigar company with three other former employees of C.A.O. The new venture is called Crowned Heads LLC.

Headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, where C.A.O. was located until it was moved to Virginia, Crowned Heads consists of Huber, Mike Conder, formerly C.A.O.’s senior VP of marketing; Michael Trebing, who served as C.A.O.’s creative media manager, and Nancy Heathman, who was C.A.O.’s graphic designer.

“It’s going to be very different from what we did at C.A.O.,” said Huber, who said Crowned Heads would be a boutique



JON HUBER

company that eschews titles, offices and cubicles. The company has begun to meet with tobacco brokers to develop a brand and by year’s end it hopes to have a cigar with five sizes on the market. Huber said that having a cigar ready for the industry trade show in July was a “possibility, but not a probability,” and said he would try to take cigar smokers “behind the scenes” to see how the company develops its products along the way.

C.A.O. was founded in Nashville by Cano Ozgener in 1964, then was acquired by the ST Cigar Group Holdings (part of the original Scandinavian Tobacco Group) in 2007. At the end of 2010, Scandinavian merged cigar operations with Swedish Match AB, becoming the new Scandinavian Tobacco Group, and C.A.O. was relocated to Richmond, Virginia, home of General Cigar Co., the primary U.S. cigar assets of the former Swedish Match. ■

DOMINICAN CIGAR FESTIVAL

BY DAVID SAVONA

For the fourth year in a row, some of the major cigar-makers of the Dominican Republic welcomed international cigar retailers, distributors and some passionate cigar aficionados to their tropical country to showcase the world of Dominican cigars. A group of more than 220 toured cigar factories and tobacco fields, tasted Dominican culture and met with some of the famous names of the premium cigar world.

The ProCigar Festival was thrown by the association of Dominican cigarmakers known as ProCigar, which consists of General Cigar Dominicana (the makers of **Macanudo**, **Partagas** and **Cohiba** cigars, among others); Tabacalera de Garcia Ltd. (**Montecristo**, **Romeo y Julieta**, **H. Upmann**); Tabadom Holding (**Davidoff**, **Avo**); La Aurora S.A. (**Guillermo León**, **Aurora**, **León Jimenes**); Manufactura de Tabacos S.A. (**Quesada**, **Fonseca**) and Tabacos Quisqueya (**Juan Clemente**).

The event concluded with a gala Friday night dinner at the private Santiago Club Centro Español. There were free flowing cigars and a charity auction benefiting the Voluntario de Jesus con los Niños, for ill children, and Hospicio San Vicente de Paul, for the poor and elderly.

For more detailed coverage of the festival, visit David Savona's blog at www.cigaraficionado.com. ■

120TH ANNIVERSARY FONSECA COMING FROM MATASA

BY DAVID SAVONA

“Fonseca has been our main product for many, many years,” said Manuel Quesada, standing in his Manufactura de Tabacos S.A. factory in Santiago, Dominican Republic. He and his daughters, nieces and nephews (Matasa's Fifth Generation) were there to jointly announce the creation of the Fonseca 120—or Fonseca CMM, in Roman numerals—an anniversary cigar celebrating the origin of the brand.

Fonsecas were created in Cuba, and Matasa has rolled the Fonseca brand since it opened in the Santiago Free Trade Zone in 1974. The brand was relaunched in 1988.

The new line, which is being made in three sizes, will be initially limited to 120,000 cigars, 40,000 of each size. There's a corona measuring 6 3/8 by 46 ring (\$6.95), a robusto 5 7/8 by 52 (\$7.50) and the Gordo, 4 7/8 by 60 (\$7.95). All have pigtails. They should be on the market in late April.

The cigars are made with a wrapper grown in the open sunlight of the Dominican Republic, a Dominican binder and a mix of Dominican and Nicaraguan filler tobacco. ■

BIG FUENTES FOR CHARITY

BY DAVID SAVONA

The Fuente Fuente OpusX BBMF cigar is a big, rare and powerful smoke that's not part of the standard Fuente Fuente OpusX portfolio. The complex figurados have crazy heads known as Cuban ticklers, pointed feet wrapped with a strip of leaf different from the rest of the wrapper, and are only sold on special occasion, or in very limited form.

Prometheus International Inc. has released a batch for charity, and the company says they are still available. They are part of the 2010 Limited Edition Fuente Fuente OpusX



for Cigar Family Charitable Foundation Humidor by Prometheus, which went on sale at the very end of 2010.

A box of 22 cigars—half maduro, half natural—come with a Prometheus humidor. Each humidor is serial-numbered and comes with a certificate of authenticity. All Fuente Fuente OpusX cigars have age on them, but these are particularly old, having been made in 2007. The MSRP of the total package is \$1,995. All net profits from the sales proceeds are donated to Cigar Family Charitable Foundation, which helps the impoverished children in the Bonao region of the Dominican Republic. ■

AVO TURNS 85, CELEBRATES WITH DOMINICAN PURO

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

Pianist and Avo brand ambassador Avo Uvezian turns 85 in March, and Davidoff is commemorating the milestone (and continuing its trend of birthday Avo cigars) with the new 2011 limited edition Avo 85th.

This year, the cigar will be a double-tapered diadema shape that measures 6 5/8 inches by 50 ring gauge, and for the first time the release will be all Dominican. The Dominican wrapper is from Henke Kelner; there's an olor binder; and a filler blend of San Vicente and piloto Cubano tobacco.

The Avo 85th will retail for \$17.50 each. Only 10,000 boxes (each containing 10 cigars) were produced.

The first event is on March 23—the day after Uvezian's birthday—at the Grand Havana Room in New York City. Uvezian is scheduled to tour the country until April 14. ■



A LESS EXPENSIVE LA PALINA

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

When Bill Paley resurrected his family's old **La Palina** cigar brand last year and introduced it to the cigar world, it was met with a nationwide tour. Now, Paley is releasing his first spinoff: **La Palina El Diario**. It will be a less expensive alternative to the core La Palina line and will be made at Fabrica de Tabacos Raices Cubanas S. de R.L. in Honduras, unlike the core line, which is made by Graycliff in Nassau, the Bahamas. According to Paley, the new El Diario is in no way intended as a replacement for the original La Palina line, but as a complement.

"This is going to be an everyday cigar," said Paley, "something you don't have to think too hard about when you smoke it, but something with lots of flavor."

The name El Diario, which translates to "the diary," or "the Journal," is a common name for the daily newspapers in Spanish-speaking countries.

While the regular La Palina line retails in the \$18 to \$23 range, El Diario will sell for around \$9 to \$10. There will be six sizes. Paley would not comment on the blend, but said that the final specifications will depend on which six sizes he ultimately decides on. Some pre-release cigars will start hitting selective markets in late May or early June, though the official launch will be at this year's trade show.

La Palina first appeared in 1896 via the Congress Cigar Co., an American cigarmaker founded by Paley's grandfather, Samuel. The brand was sold to General Cigar in the 1920s, before ending up with Consolidated Cigar Corp.—now part of Altadis U.S.A. Inc.—which turned it into a machine-made smoke. Paley bought the rights in 2009.

"Every year or so I'd like to work with a different cigarmaker to make different blends for different palates," said Paley. "I want to highlight short runs." ■

LA RELOBA BRAND EXPANDED

BY DAVID SAVONA

José "Pepin" Garcia's new **La Reloba** brand now has a third wrapper option—Mexican. The brand, which debuted almost a year ago, is already available in two types of wrappers: Ecuador and Sumatra.

Garcia already uses Mexican wrapper, most notably on **La Aroma de Cuba Mi Amor**, a high-scoring brand for Ashton Distributors. This wrapper comes from the same seed, but a different priming.

La Reloba Selección Mexico comes in four sizes, which are identical to the other sizes of La Reloba: Corona, Robusto, Toro and Torpedo. The cigars have suggested retail prices from \$4.50 to \$6. ■

CIGAR AFICIONADO "BIG SMOKE"

For coverage of the 2010 Big Smokes, including an extensive photo gallery and coverage of our Las Vegas Weekend, visit: CigarAficionado.com

2011 SCHEDULE COMING SOON

IN THE NEXT CIGAR INSIDER

Coverage from Cuba as the *Cigar Insider* team returns from the Habanos Festival, the inside story on Oliva's Studio Tobac, plus our blind tastings. You'll read about it first in *Cigar Insider*.

👉 Your Next CIGAR INSIDER Arrives on Tuesday, March 8.

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