

# Cigar Insider

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## FEATURED CIGAR

### ROMEO Y JULIETA EXHIBICIÓN NO. 4

CUBA ■ PRICE: £12.16 ■ BODY: MED. TO FULL

*For a full tasting, see page three.*

91 POINTS

## BEST CIGARS THIS ISSUE

|                                  |           |    |
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## MORE BANG FOR THE PESO

### CUBA CHANGED ITS STATE-MANAGED

currency exchange rate. Now the Cuban Convertible Peso, or CUC, will be equally valued with the U.S. dollar, reversing the 1.1 to the dollar rate that has been in effect since 2005. The change means dollar-weilding tourists buying cigars (or other items) will have to spend a little less. For more on pricing in Cuba, see our story on page four.



## COMING TO YOUR COMPUTER AND IPHONE: A CIGAR TASTING TEAM LA GLORIA WANTS YOU TO LOG ON AND LIGHT UP.

This Friday, cigar lovers around the United States can sign onto their computers and fire up La Gloria Cubana Serie N cigars along with fellow cigar aficionados from all around the United States. The simultaneous online cigar tasting, being described as a first of its kind, will combine smoking the cigar with the ability to query the men who make the brand in the Dominican Republic and those who develop the cigars that make up the line. This group, known as Team La Gloria, acts like a small corporation within the much larger General Cigar Co., one of the industry giants. To read more about the online tasting and La Gloria's Serie N day, turn to page four.

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## TASTING REPORT

### CAIN DAYTONA

#### NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

**Country:** Nicaragua

**Maker:** Oliva Cigars Inc.

**Distributor:** Tabacalera Oliva S.A.

**Filler:** Nicaragua

**Binder:** Nicaragua

**Wrapper:** Ecuador

**Release Date:** February 2011

#### 543

89 POINTS ■ 5" x 43 ■ \$4.70 ■ BEST BUY

Rolled in an oily, tawny-colored wrapper, this cigar smokes evenly, offering woody flavors with some walnut and candied notes.

**Body:** Medium

#### 660

89 POINTS ■ 6" x 60 ■ \$7.80

Thick but well made. Though the draw could be more substantial, it shows plenty of oaky, spicy notes with a touch of cinnamon. The finish smacks of minerals.

**Body:** Medium to Full

#### 654T

88 POINTS ■ 6" x 54 ■ \$6.80

A thick torpedo with a firm draw and even burn. Woody and spice notes carry a trace of sweetness. A simple but tasty smoke.

**Body:** Medium

#### 646

87 POINTS ■ 6" x 46 ■ \$5.50

Richly colored with an easy draw and even burn. Woody notes are accompanied by earth and mineral flavors. There are touches of sweetness as well.

**Body:** Medium

#### 550

87 POINTS ■ 5" x 50 ■ \$5.80

This solid robusto starts with heavy bread-dough flavors that give way to slight spice notes, before a vaguely green-tasting finish.

**Body:** Medium to Full

**BRAND SUMMARY:** Taking down the power a notch or two, Oliva Cigar Co. has released the Cain Daytona, a dialed-down line extension of the full-bodied Cain brand. Daytona is made with Nicaraguan tobacco from Jalapa, a region known for flavorful but not particularly strong tobacco. By contrast, last year's Cain F series set out to be a powerhouse. Each Cain Daytona comes with an orange foot band, and the brand was conceived by Studio Tobac, Oliva's creative team. We found the cigars to be, for the most part, medium bodied, and found the 543 and 660 to be the most flavorful.

**Average Rating:** 88.0 points

### SAN LOTANO MADURO

#### VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

**Country:** Nicaragua

**Maker:** Tabacalera Fernandez

**Distributor:** A.J. Fernandez Cigars

**Filler:** Nicaragua, Honduras

**Binder:** Nicaragua

**Wrapper:** Mexico

**Release Date:** August 2010

#### TORPEDO

88 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 52 ■ \$7.60

Near perfect in appearance, with quite a lot of tobacco stuffed into this solidly-pressed cigar. The draw is firm as a result, showing herbs, cedar and perfume notes.

**Body:** Medium

#### CHURCHILL

87 POINTS ■ 7" x 54 ■ \$7.60

Dark and box-pressed with an uneven draw and burn. The cigar has earth, wheat and charcoal notes, and become somewhat muddled.

**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.*

## ROBUSTO

87 POINTS ■ 5" x 52 ■ \$6.80

Dark and pressed with an even draw but blistery burn. Roasted coffee notes and nutty flavors turn charr-y tasting and linger on the palate.

**Body:** Medium

## TORO

87 POINTS ■ 6" x 52 ■ \$7.10

Covered in a dark, clean wrapper that is almost completely veinless. The draw is firm, but imparts chewy licorice flavors, herbal notes and a charred aftertaste.

**Body:** Medium to Full

**BRAND SUMMARY:** Cigar maker A.J. Fernandez has been making third-party brands for quite some time, but has now branched out on his own and started the San Lotano line, which he says is named for his family's brand in Cuba before the revolution. His factory is located in Estelí. The maduro series (one of three) is sharply box pressed and uses a dark San Andrés wrapper. The Torpedo was the most impressive, with a nearly veinless wrapper and plenty of flavor.

**Average Rating:** 89.0 points

## LA GLORIA CUBANA

### NEW SIZE

**Country:** Cuba

**Maker:** N/A

**Distributor:** Habanos S.A.

**Filler:** Cuba

**Binder:** Cuba

**Wrapper:** Cuba

**Box Date:** September 2010

## TRIUNFOS EXCLUSIVO SUIZA

85 POINTS ■ 6 1/4" x 50 ■ 20.00 Sw. Fr.

While this is a very oily cigar that smokes evenly, its flavors are inconsistent, with some tasters noting papery notes and considerable bitter flavors.

**Body:** Medium to Full

## ROMEO Y JULIETA

### CURRENT RELEASE

**Country:** Cuba

**Maker:** N/A

**Distributor:** Habanos S.A.

**Filler:** Cuba

**Binder:** Cuba

**Wrapper:** Cuba

**Box Date:** July 2008

## EXHIBICIÓN NO. 4

91 POINTS ■ 5" x 48 ■ £12.16 ■ HUMIDOR SELECTION

A full draw delivers some muddled salty and spicy notes that soon come together for a complex, milk chocolate and woody tasting smoke that hints of dried cherry.

**Body:** Medium to Full

## SAINT LUIS REY

### CURRENT RELEASE

**Country:** Cuba

**Maker:** N/A

**Distributor:** Habanos S.A.

**Filler:** Cuba

**Binder:** Cuba

**Wrapper:** Cuba

**Box Date:** December 2008

## SERIE A

90 POINTS ■ 5 5/8" x 46 ■ £13.60

Herbal notes get through the firm draw of this cigar, as do touches of leather and earth. The finish is slightly perfumed.

**Body:** Medium

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## 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

### CUBA DEVALUES PESO, PEGS IT TO DOLLAR

BY DAVID SAVONA

Cuba cut the value of the Cuban Convertible Peso by 8 percent on March 14, returning it to equal value with the U.S. dollar for the first time in six years. The change, effective immediately, is meant to boost the sagging Cuban economy, which depends heavily on income from tourists.

Cuban Convertible Pesos, also known as CUCs, are used solely in Cuba. They aren't traded freely on international markets, as are dollars, euros or yen, and their value is set by the Cuban government. It is the only currency that tourists are supposed to use in Cuba. (Cuban locals use a different currency, national Cuban pesos, or CUDs, which are worth about 25 times less than CUCs.)

Long pegged to the value of the U.S. dollar, in 2005 the Cuban government changed CUCs, putting them at 1.1 to the dollar. There is also a 10 percent fee people must pay when changing U.S. dollars into CUCs. The exchange fee remains after this devaluation.



The Central Bank of Cuba noted that the decision to return to parity with the dollar was based upon the woes of the Cuban economy, which have been "aggravated by the damage and losses provoked by the hurricanes of 2008, as well as the effects of the international economic crisis, characterized by much volatility on the monetary markets," said Ernesto Medina Villaveirán, minister-president

of the Central Bank of Cuba, according to *Granma*, the official newspaper of Cuba's communist party.

Tourists were once able to spend U.S. dollars in Cuba, paying for cigars, meals in restaurants, cab fares and even hotel rooms with greenbacks. (Credit cards backed by U.S. banks cannot be used in Cuba.) Beginning in November 2004, Cuba no longer allowed dollars to be used for payment, moving exclusively to the CUC, which had been created ten years earlier.

CUCs come in many forms, including bills worth 1, 3, 5, 10, 20, 50 or 100 CUCs, as well as 1 and 2 CUC coins.

Travel to Cuba is far from cheap. A hotel room at one of Havana's most modern hotels, such as the Melia Cohiba, is more than 100 CUCs per night. Lunch for two with beverages can be around 80 to 100 CUCs in a fine paladar, a half hour of computer use in the business center of a hotel runs about 10 CUCs, and all visitors must pay a tax of 25 CUCs when leaving the country.

The one thing in Cuba that is relatively inexpensive is a fine cigar. A diminutive **Montecristo No. 5** costs about 3.60 CUCs, a Churchill-sized **Cohiba Esplendido** runs around 18 CUCs, and a Montecristo No. 2 pyramid is some 9.60 CUCs, or 240 CUCs for a box of 25. ■

### ONLINE CIGAR TASTING FOR LA GLORIA CUBANA SERIE N

BY ANDREW NAGY

Almost everything in today's world, from shopping to doing your taxes, can be done via the Internet. Now you can add tasting cigars to the list.

On Friday at 6 p.m., the ambassadors for General Cigar Co.'s **La Gloria Cubana** brand will direct a nation of cigar enthusiasts armed with La Gloria Cubana Serie N cigars to light up together and kick off the industry's first-ever online cigar tasting. Participants watching at [www.lagloriacigars.com/serieN](http://www.lagloriacigars.com/serieN) will be able to question members of Team La Gloria via Twitter and Facebook.

In addition to being streamed on the web, selected retailers will also be participating in a live, open forum chat. The first broadcast will start at 6 p.m. at three Eastern time zone locations: Tampa Humidor in Tampa, Florida; Klafter Inc. in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and The Tobacco Company in Lemoyne, Pennsylvania. Retailers in



the Central and Pacific timezones will also participate. Details can be found at the brand's website.

An advertisement featuring a coupon good for one free Serie N cigar appears in the April issue of *Cigar Aficionado* featuring Matthew McConaughey, now on newsstands.

In addition to good old-fashioned marketing, Team La Gloria has also been running a series of social media promotions via its Facebook page and Twitter feed to promote the tasting. One called "I Spy the Letter N" (now ended) asked fans to send in photo submissions of creative ways the letter N appears in our daily lives. Another promotion asked those who follow La Gloria Cubana to snap a picture of themselves smoking a Serie N.

While this is the first-ever virtual cigar tasting, it's not the first "same-time" mass cigar tasting. When the Cigar Family Charitable Foundation from the Fuentes and Newmans families its first Toast Across America, participants were scheduled to light up cigars at the same moment. ■

## SMALL BATCH BLENDS FROM CAMACHO

BY DAVID SAVONA

The newest thing from Camacho Cigars is small, expensive and old. Christian Eiroa, president of the Miami-based company, which makes all of its cigars in Honduras, has shipped **Camacho Super Limitados**. This release is going to be limited to only 6,000 cigars, and it's expected to be the first in a series of short-run smokes.

Shipped isn't the proper word—Eiroa literally hand delivered the cigars on March 10 to the first store to sell them, New York City's Nat Sherman. He intends to travel personally to any store that will carry these particular cigars so he can present them to cigar smokers and tell some of the story behind the creation. "We're hand picking the stores," he said. "It's all private distribution." He's first offering the cigars to the 40 original customers of the **Camacho Corojo** brand.

The Super Limitados, which come in black, ultra glossy triangular boxes, were rolled in 2007, using an experimental wrapper grown on the Eiroa farm in Jamastran, Honduras. The seed variety was named after Eiroa's grandfather Generoso. While the wrapper tasted great, Eiroa said, its poor yield made it unfeasible for Camacho to grow it again. So they sat on the wrapper.

He happened on the idea of releasing it as a small batch, ultra-rare cigar, but the poor economy held the release. Now Eiroa thinks this is the time. The cigars, which are made in Camacho's curious 11/18 perfecto shape, will

retail for about \$350 for the box of 18 (making them about \$20 apiece).

The cigars are meant to be bought as a box purchase. "I don't want people to sell it in singles," said Eiroa. He's so serious about this, he's made it difficult to open the box. The cigars require a screwdriver to remove four screws securing the lid in place.

Eiroa said he will make other blends in the same manner as this Super Limitado. He has about 24 in mind, and might do three to four per year. ■

## ROCKY PATEL OFFERING LIMITED RUN OF DECADE

BY DAVID SAVONA

Rocky Patel Premium Cigars, the Naples, Florida, company that sells cigars made in Honduras and Nicaragua, has released a limited run of its **Rocky Patel Decade Edición Limitada**. The cigars shipped to retailers the first week of March.

The cigar comes in three sizes, all of them made in ring gauges of 52. The Robusto is 5 1/2 inches long, the Toro is 6, and the Torpedo is 6 1/4. They will retail for \$10.60, \$11.60 and \$12.10, respectively. The smokes are made with Pennsylvania broadleaf wrappers, somewhat unusual for the premium cigar industry, and the new wrappers have fuller flavor than the Ecuadoran leaves used on the original Decade, according to the company. There's also more power in the blend, as the Limitada has one more leaf of ligero, the type of filler tobacco), adding body to the cigar.

Production of the Decade Edición Limitada will be restricted to 500 boxes of each size, which are packed 20 the the box, for a run of 30,000 cigars. ■



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## PADILLA FORMS VENTURE WITH STUDIO TOBAC, LAUNCHING NEW BRANDS FOR SPRING

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

Padilla Cigars has collaborated with Oliva Cigar Co.'s Studio Tobac for a single-size, limited-edition cigar scheduled for an August release. Before that, Padilla will release two brands in the near future, the wallet friendly **La Terraza**, due out in the next few weeks, and the box-pressed **Artemis**, scheduled for a late-spring launch.

"I've been very impressed with NUb, Cain, and Studio Tobac's general ability to bring real, lasting innovation to the premium cigar industry," said Ernesto Padilla in a press release. For now, the Studio Tobac project is only in conceptual form and Padilla does not expect to be smoking prototypes until April. So far, however, a few details have been established: It will be a figurado (though the exact shape is



undetermined), it will be a Nicaraguan puro, it will be blended as a full-bodied smoke, and only 1,000 boxes of 10 will be produced.

Said Oliva Cigar president José Oliva: "Ernie Padilla approached the Studio Tobac Executive Board to collaborate on a limited release Nicaraguan Habano. After much deliberation, The Board approved the release of a figurado limited to 10,000 cigars. I'm excited to work with Padilla. I consider him to be one of the pioneers of the full-bodied, Cuban-style cigar."

While the Studio Tobac Padilla will be a one-shot deal, La Terraza and Artemis will be regular-production lines.

"La Terraza is a medium-bodied cigar designed as an everyday smoke," said Padilla. "A lot of retailers and consumers have asked for this price point. It was a challenge to come out with a really good cigar around \$5, but I think I have achieved this."

Using only Nicaraguan tobacco, La Terraza will be offered in five sizes: Robusto, 5 inches by 50 ring (\$4.90); Toro, 6 by 50 (\$5.02); Churchill, 7 by 40 (\$5.10); Torpedo, 6 1/4 by 52 (\$5.15); and Toro Grande, 6 by 60 (\$5.47). The cigars, available in Habano seed or Maduro, are made in Fidel Olivas's San Rafael factory in Nicaragua.

The box-pressed Artemis brand is also a Nicaraguan puro, but is priced higher, and is made with Cuban-seed corajo and criollo tobacco grown by agricultural conglomerate Aganorsa. The line is produced in Honduras at the Fabrica de Tabacos Raices Cubanas S. de R.L. factory and comes in four sizes: Robusto, 5 by 54; Torpedo, 6 1/4 by 52; Toro, 6 by 54; and Double Torpedo, 6 3/4 by 56. It will retail for around \$9 per cigar. ■

## CALIFORNIA LAW WOULD BAN SMOKING IN CIGAR SHOPS

BY ANDREW NAGY

The Cigar Rights of America is calling upon members to help fight a California Senate bill that includes a clause that would prohibit smoking in retail tobacco shops.

"[The petition] is not an assault on tobacco, but an assault on small business," said Glynn Loope, CRA's executive director.

Senate Bill 575 was introduced by Senator Mark DeSaulnier, D-Concord, with the intention of tightening up the state's strict Smoke-Free Workplace law by expanding the current workplace prohibition on smoking to include owner-operated business, and eliminate the specified exemptions found in the current Smoke-Free Workplace law. The bill also seeks to clarify "confusion and hardship that can result from enactment or enforcement of disparate local workplace smoking restrictions."

California law presently allows smoking in certain workplaces, including tobacco shops, hotel lobbies, some bars and taverns, banquet rooms, warehouse facilities and employee break rooms. The bill would eliminate all of these exemptions.

"California workers should not be exposed to second-hand smoke and the health risks associated with it," said DeSaulnier, in a press release.

Senate Bill 575 also alters the legal definition of an "owner-operated business" so that it would be illegal for sole proprietors to enjoy a cigar at their place of work.

In other words, a business owner who works alone inside an enclosed workspace could not legally smoke if this bill were passed as written.

California is the third largest cigar market in the United

States (New York and Florida are one and two, respectively) and has historically been the nation's trendsetter in regards to smoking legislation. Knowing this, the CRA has prepared an online petition to fight the legislation, and is ready to continue the fight on this.

"Right now our petition gets sent to each member of the committee," said Loope, referring to the California Senate Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations, the entity where the bill has now been assigned. DeSaulnier is a member of that committee.

Loope says the CRA online petition has been fairly successful attracting support and collection names, but Loope admits the fight to protect California's tobacconists could be a long and tough battle.

"A petition won't necessarily change anyone's mind," said Loope. "But it will make them think twice about the issue."

The bill is also co-sponsored by the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association.

New fine rates included in the bill are \$100 for a first-time violation, \$200 for a second and \$500 for a third and each subsequent violation. ■

## GENERAL CHANGES TOBACCO HANDLING IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

BY DAVID SAVONA

General Cigar Dominicana, the major premium cigar factory for the new Scandinavian Tobacco Group, is taking a close look at how it handles tobacco, and is implementing changes meant to reduce the number of leaves that are broken as it processes the tons of tobacco necessary to produce millions and millions of cigars.



"This is a process that's worked for 100 years," said Dan Carr, president of General Cigar, during a tour of the massive General Cigar Dominicana facility in February. "We just see a way to make it better."

"The idea is to reduce breakage," said Edmundo Garcia, tobacco operations manager for General, standing before towering, ancient tobacco conditioning machines. These 20-foot-tall devices (see below left) consist of conveyor belts that move hands of tobacco around and within the machines, adding moisture to the leaves gradually. The tobacco is held in place by straps, and makes several turns as it moves up and around. In the past, tobacco was put into the straps in a very dry state, straight from a bale, but now the people at General are allowing the leaves to moisturize a bit while still in the carton, before being put into the machine.

The small change has increased General's yield. "We reduced breakage by 75 percent," said Garcia. ■

## SECOND REGIONAL CUBAN CIGAR ARRIVES IN ASIA PACIFIC

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

Pacific Cigar Ltd., the Habanos S.A. distributor of Cuban cigars for the Asia Pacific region, has finally received its second 2010 regional-edition release: the **Por Larrañaga Encantos**. While most cigars in the entire regional-edition program have historically been on the thicker side (50 to 54 ring gauge), the Encantos is a slim vitola measuring 6 3/4 inches by 43 ring gauge, which is known as a *dalia* in Cuban cigar factories. It shares its dimensions with the better-known **Partagas 8-9-8**.



According to Pacific Cigar's official press release, a Por Larrañaga has never been rolled in this particular size, though Germany's 2007 Por Larrañaga Lonsdale came close at 6 1/2 inches by 42 ring.

The Encantos comes in slide-lid boxes of 25 cigars and retails for HK\$193 (about \$25) per cigar. Although the smoke was released in early March, this cigar is part of the last year's regional-edition program. The **Juan Lopez**

Selección No. 4 came to market last October. Asia Pacific has two entirely different regional-edition cigars scheduled for release this year—the **Punch Pirámides**, which will measure 6 1/8 inches by 52 ring, and the **Quai D’Orsay Robusto** at 4 7/8 by 50.

For a rating of the Por Larrañaga Encantos, see an upcoming issue of *Cigar Insider*. ■

## PAUL GARMIRIAN EXPANDS 20TH ANNIVERSARY LINE

BY DAVID SAVONA

**P**aul Garmirian Inc., a small McClean Virginia company that has sold **Paul Garmirian** (or PG) brand cigars for more than 20 years, has added a pair of sizes to its **Paul Garmirian Limited Edition Symphony 20** line.

The Salomones measures 6 7/8 inches long with a very thick 57 ring gauge. They retail for \$21 per cigar, and come in boxes of 10. The Short Robusto measures 4 1/2 by 52, and has a suggested retail price of \$13.00. It comes in boxes of 25. Both sizes are firsts for the company.

The original PG Symphony, released a year ago to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the PG brand, is the six inch long, 52 ring gauge Connoisseur. It rated 88 points in a blind tasting in the October 2010 *Cigar Aficionado*.

The company says the Symphony 20 is its richest blend. The cigars are made in the Dominican Republic by Hendrik “Henke” Kelner, and have Ecuadoran wrappers, Dominican binders, and a mixture of filler grown in Honduras as well as the Dominican Republic. ■



## CIGAR FESTIVAL RETURNING TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN 2012

**F**or you long-term planners, mark your calendar for the 2012 ProCigar Festival in the Dominican Republic. It will take place February 19 through February 25. Registration doesn’t begin until July. ■

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