INTERNET ONLY

Cigar Insider

NOVEMBER 23, 2010 ▪ VOL. 15, NO. 22 ▪ FROM THE PUBLISHER OF **CIGAR AFICIONADO** MAGAZINE

CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE

IN THIS ISSUE:

TASTING REPORT:

VERTICAL BRAND TASTING:

- Guillermo León [page 2]

NEW RELEASE:

- Tatuaje La Vérité 2008 [page 2]

NEW SIZES:

- Ramon Allones Gorditos de Allones Exclusivo Canadá [page 2]
- Bolivar Bolivar B-2 Exclusivo Canadá [page 3]
- C.A.O. LX2 Bam [page 3]
- C.A.O. Brazilia Corcovado [page 3]
- Litto Gomez Diez Lancero [page 3]
- Litto Gomez Diez Small Batch No. 3 [page 3]

CIGAR NEWS

- PARTY SEASON: Cigar Festivals Are Coming to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, More [page 4]
- Burn by Rocky Patel Opens in Florida [page 5]
- A Cigar With Swagger—New Swag Brand from Oliveros Makes its Debut [page 5]
- Minneapolis Cigar Shop Smoke Ban? [page 6]
- Branded Cigar Lounge for Pepin [page 6]
- Thousands Travel to Las Vegas for *Cigar Aficionado's* Big Smoke Weekend [page 7]
- New York Big Smoke Next Week [page 8]

FEATURED CIGAR

GUILLERMO LEÓN
BELICOSO
DOM. REP. ▪ **PRICE:** $9.25 ▪ **BODY:** MEDIUM
For a full tasting, see page two.

93 POINTS

BEST CIGARS THIS ISSUE

Guillermo León Belicoso	Dom. Rep.	93
Guillermo León Corona Gorda	Dom. Rep.	92
Tatuaje La Vérité 2008 Churchill	Nicaragua	92
Ramon Allones Gorditos de Allones	Cuba	92
C.A.O. Lx2 Bam	Honduras	91
Bolivar Bolivar B-2 Exclusivo Canadá	Cuba	91
Litto Gomez Diez Lancero	Dom. Rep.	91

PROCIGAR FESTIVAL 2011

DUELING CIGAR FESTIVALS

WORLD-CLASS CIGAR CELEBRATIONS are coming to the Caribbean in February: ProCigar Fest in the Dominican Republic and the Habanos Festival in Cuba. Both celebrate their respective country's cigars. Factory tours, field trips and gala dinners are only some of the activites. See page four for more details.



THE BIG SMOKE LAS VEGAS WEEKEND

THOUSANDS OF PASSIONATE CIGAR AFICIONADOS FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND AROUND THE GLOBE turned the Las Vegas Strip into Cigar City on November 12, 13 and 14. It was ***Cigar Aficionado*** Magazine's annual Big Smoke Las Vegas Weekend, two nights of Big Smoke evenings and two days of cigar-intensive seminars. Some of the biggest names in the premium cigar industry personally handed out smokes to the throngs of cigar lovers, who puffed away in peace, sipped adult libations and looked over luxury cars, fine watches and high-end cigar accessories as they walked through 80,000 square feet of ballroom space. For a complete writeup of the weekend's smoky festivities, see our coverage beginning on page seven.

TASTING REPORT

GUILLERMO LEÓN

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Dominican Republic

Maker: La Aurora S.A.

Distributor: Miami Cigar & Co.

Filler: Peru, Dom. Rep., Brazil, Nicaragua

Binder: Cameroon, Dom. Rep.

Wrapper: Ecuador

Release Date: October 2010

BELICOSO

93 POINTS ▪ 6 1/4" x 52 ▪ $9.25 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

Wrapped in a reddish cover leaf, this handsome, oily torpedo imparts a peppery, though creamy smoke with leather and cedar notes that continue onto the finish.

Body: Medium

CORONA GORDA

92 POINTS ▪ 6" x 47 ▪ $8.50 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

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.

Body: Medium to Full

GRAN TORO

89 POINTS ▪ 6" x 58 ▪ $9.75

A massive cigar with a veiny wrapper. It draws and burns very evenly for its size, showing cedar, fruit and spice flavors along with some herbal notes.

Body: Medium to Full

CORONA

88 POINTS ▪ 5 1/2" x 42 ▪ $7.50

Dark, oily and solidly rolled with a lush draw for such a little smoke. It's spicy and wheaty with notes of oaky wine and other woody flavors.

Body: Medium

BRAND SUMMARY: Guillermo León, named for Aurora's cigar division head, combines an Ecuadoran Habano wrapper with two binders, Dominican Corojo for strength and Cameroon for sweetness. The Belicoso and Corona Gorda were the standouts.

Average Rating: 90.5 points

TATUAJE LA VÉRITÉ 2008

NEW RELEASE

Country: Nicaragua

Maker: My Father Cigars Inc.

Distributor: Havana Cellars

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Nicaragua

Release Date: July 2010

CHURCHILL

92 POINTS ▪ 7" x 47 ▪ $20.00 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

This Churchill has a slightly dry wrapper but is nutty and savory with hickory notes and profound coffee bean flavors. A subtle and complex cigar.

Body: Medium

L'ESPRIT DE VÉRITÉ

88 POINTS ▪ 5" x 50 ▪ $16.00

Covered in a sandy looking wrapper, this cigar burns well, starting off salty and offering a woody, herbal smoke with citrus notes a dry finish.

Body: Medium

RAMON ALLONES

NEW SIZE

Country: Cuba

Maker: N/A

Distributor: Habanos S.A. (via Havana House)

Filler: Cuba

Binder: Cuba

Wrapper: Cuba

Box Date: May 2010

GORDITOS DE ALLONES EXCLUSIVO CANADÁ

92 POINTS ▪ 5 1/2" x 50 ▪ C$29.83 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

The draw on this cigar is a bit firm, though initial puffs are salty and earthy, developing into a balanced array of leather, cedar and toasted nuts. Savory and tasty.

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.*

BOLIVAR

NEW SIZE

Country: Cuba

Maker: N/A

Distributor: Habanos S.A. (via Havana House)

Filler: Cuba

Binder: Cuba

Wrapper: Cuba

Box Date: April 2010

BOLIVAR B-2 EXCLUSIVO CANADÁ

91 POINTS ▪ 6 1/8" x 52 ▪ C$37.43 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

A lightly hued, golden torpedo with a fairly even draw and burn. It's a toasty, creamy smoke with orange peel notes and an underlying sweetness.

Body: Medium

C.A.O. LX2

NEW SIZE

Country: Honduras

Maker: C.A.O. Fabrica de Tabacos S.A.

Distributor: C.A.O. International Inc.

Filler: Nicaragua, Dom. Rep.

Binder: Honduras

Wrapper: Nicaragua

Release Date: September 2010

BAM

91 POINTS ▪ 4" x 45 ▪ $4.75 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

Short, box pressed and oily, this little cigar strikes a balance of nuts, raisins and sweet, chocolate notes. Sweetness lingers on the finish.

Body: Medium to Full

Cigar Insider subscribers have access to our entire cigar ratings database. View it at **www.cigaraficionado.com.**

C.A.O. BRAZILIA

NEW SIZE

Country: Honduras

Maker: C.A.O. Fabrica de Tabacos S.A.

Distributor: C.A.O. International Inc.

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Brazil

Release Date: September 2010

CORCOVADO

90 POINTS ▪ 4 1/4" x 60 ▪ $5.95

A nearly black, fat plug of a cigar that smokes unevenly. The first puffs are charry but warm to show chocolate, nuts and coffee flavor. A rich and hearty smoke.

Body: Full

LITTO GOMEZ DIEZ

NEW SIZES

Country: Dominican Republic

Maker: Tabacalera La Flor S.A.

Distributor: Premium Imports Inc.

Filler: Dom. Rep.

Binder: Dom. Rep.

Wrapper: Dom. Rep.

Release Date: September 2010

LANCERO

91 POINTS ▪ 7 1/2" x 38 ▪ $11.00 ▪ HUMIDOR SELECTION

Well constructed with a pigtail cap. The draw is a bit firm but this cigar immediately shows its exceptionally strong spice. It's balanced by a honey sweetness.

Body: Full

SMALL BATCH NO. 3

87 POINTS ▪ 6 3/4" x 52 ▪ $17.60

This dark, slightly mottled-looking cigar blasts the palate with hickory flavor and some oily notes, but settles down to be a woody smoke with some licorice.

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.*

CIGAR NEWS

MAJOR CIGAR FESTIVALS COMING

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

Habanos S.A of Cuba and ProCigar of the Dominican Republic are in the midst of planning the biggest cigar-awareness celebrations in the entire world—the Habanos Festival (to be held in Cuba, February 21 through 25) and the ProCigar Festival (coming to the Dominican Republic February 6 through 11).



THE GALA CIGAR DINNER CONCLUDING THE '09 HABANOS FESTIVAL.

The pair of festivals draw cigar enthusiasts from all over the world and are a means for each country to communicate the culture, agronomy and industry behind their national product—cigars. Both hospitality festivals revolve around cigar factory visitations, tours of tobacco fields, presentations by cigarmakers, gala dinners and sneak previews of unreleased cigars.

The first leg of the Dominican Republic's third annual ProCigar Festival begins on February 6 in La Romana, Dominican Republic. A bus will pick up attendees at their hotel and deliver them to the inaugural cocktail party at Altos de Chavon, followed by dinner at La Piazzetta restaurant. The next day, three options are available: a sporting day of golf at the Teeth of the Dog golf course; a leisurely day at the Casa de Campo hotel and Minitas beach; or a natural expedition of the Cuevas de las Maravillas ("cave of wonders") 25 meters underground. Day three brings guests to a factory tour of Tabacalera de Garcia Ltd., the gargantuan factory owned by Altadis U.S.A. Inc. and run by José Seijas. This is where the Dominican versions of **Montecristo** and **Romeo y Julieta** cigars are produced.

The second leg of the tour departs La Romana and continues in the mountainous regions of Santiago for the heart of the festival. There, festival-goers will see the La Aurora factory, producers of **Aurora** and **Guillermo León** cigars; the Cigars Davidoff factory, where **Davidoffs** are made; General Cigar Dominicana, the factory behind mega-brands such as **Macanudo**, and the Dominican versions of **Partagas** and **Cohiba**; and MATASA, where the **Fonseca** and **Quesada** brands are manufactured. Each day will feature lunches and blending seminars. Field tours to the tobacco farms of Mao and Jicomé will offer insights on crop cultivation, harvest, curing and fermentation. Every night ends with a gala cigar dinner where most, if not all the cigarmakers are present and approachable.

You can view the entire itinerary and register online now at www.procigar.org.

Ten days later, the Festival Habano XIII, Cuba's thirteenth Habanos fest, begins. This world-class event literally brings the entire world of Cuban cigar vendors, distributors and enthusiasts to Havana for an education and celebration of Habanos S.A.'s prestigious cigar brands and Cuba's venerable culture of cigars. The festival includes visits to cigar factories, cigar and spirits pairings, rolling seminars, press conferences, plantation tours, auctions, cigar tutorials by industry experts and gala dinners.

Although the official schedule has yet to be released by Habanos, factory tours have included La Corona and El Laguito, where the famed **Cohiba** brand is rolled. Field trips have covered the Vuelta Abajo and San Juan y Martinez plantations in Pinar del Río.

Perhaps one of the most anticipated aspects of the festival is getting an advanced look (and smoke) of the upcoming cigars scheduled for the year, giving guests the opportunity



THE QUESADA TRIBUTO LAUNCH AT THE 2010 PROCIGAR FESTIVAL.

to smoke Cuban vitolas months before they are released to the general market. Previous years have seen sneak previews of the **Cohiba** Behike, Cohiba Gran Reserva, **Romeo y Julieta** Short Churchill and other special anniversary smokes. To register, keep checking back to the Habanos website www.habanos.com.

Nicaragua held its first cigar festival in December 2009, and was expected to hold its second in the spring. At press time, representatives of the festival were unable to provide us with specifics. Honduras also has plans to get into the cigar festival game with the country's first cigar festival, called the Humo Jaguar Festival. It is scheduled to take place February 13 through 17. ■

ROCKY PATEL OPENS LUXE NEW CIGAR LOUNGE IN FLORIDA

BY DAVID SAVONA

Burn by Rocky Patel, a spacious, luxurious cigar lounge featuring a wide variety of premium cigars and spirits, opened in Naples, Florida last week. Rocky Patel was on hand last Tuesday with a packed crowd of cigar retailers and cigarmakers from around the United States to open the new bar in style.



THE EXTERIOR OF BURN. IMAGE BY JWKPEC PHOTOGRAPHY.

Patel called Burn a two-year project that cost some $2 million to create. He was visibly proud as he gave a tour of the space, which features 3,500 square-feet of interior space and another 1,300 square feet of patios. He said he was inspired to decorate Burn with a mixture of old- and new-world designs, evoking Havana, India and Morocco.

Burn is elaborate. Inside the eye is immediately drawn to the very large L-shaped bar, which appears to be granite until it lights up from within in reds, oranges and yellows. Ornate lights hang from the ceiling, most of the walls are dark wood, save for one done in gold with insets featuring candles, and the spacious walk-in humidor has a wall of red, smoky glass, hinting at the contents inside.

"It's been my dream and my goal to have a signature showcase lounge to represent everything we do with our brand: lifestyle, elegance and perfection," said Patel. "We wanted a place where we could relax, enjoy and show the style we share. It's my baby."

What sets Burn aside from some branded cigar lounges is that it carries all manner of cigars, not just those owned by Patel. There is the full library of Rocky Patel brands, including **The Edge**, **Rocky Patel 15 Anniversary** and **Rocky Patel Decade**, but on opening night the humidor was also stocked with cigars made by Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia. (such as **Arturo Fuente Hemingway** and a box of **Fuente Fuente OpusX**), all varieties of **Padróns**, **La Flor Dominicanas**, **C.A.O.s**, **Illusiones**, **Ashtons** and many others. The opening party had several cigar luminaries on hand, including Nestor Plasencia from Central America (who makes many of Patel's cigars); José "Pepin" Garcia and John Gonzalez of My Father Cigars Inc.; Ashton's Sathya Levin and Manny Ferraro; Marvin Samel of Drew Estate; Paul Palmer of Tabacalera Tropical, Eddie Ortega and Erik Espinosa of United Tobacco, owners of the **601** and **Cubao** brands (a company now 50 percent owned by Rocky Patel); Tony Gonzalez of **La Flor Dominicana** and Glynn Loope of the Cigar Rights of America.

Patel is also interested in having friends in the cigar industry make him cigars. The first, made by Dion Giolito of Illusione at Fabrica de Raices Tobaccos, was on sale, called **Burn by Illusione**. Patel hopes for more.

Patel opened Burn with partner Rich Castiano, who owns World Famous Cigar Bar, which has two locations in Fort Myers, Florida. Patel hinted at other locations during a speech at the Big Smoke Las Vegas. Burn is located at 9110 Strada Place in Naples, Florida, and is open seven days a week from 11 am to 2 am. ■

A CIGAR WITH SWAGGER

BY DAVID SAVONA

Rafael Nodal, owner of Habana Cuba Cigar Co., the maker of the **Oliveros** brand, was eagerly handing out his cigars to a group of rappers at an after party for the Grammys. He was surprised at their feedback.

"They thought the cigars were old fashioned," he said. The smokers didn't enjoy the traditional packaging of his cigars, and challenged him to do something new.

Inspired by the criticism, Nodal turned to the drawing board to come up with something new. Taking the name of the bags at such events that get stuffed with all manner of free goods, Nodal named his new smoke **Swag**.

Packed in dark wood boxes with metal nameplates (see image, next page), Swag cigars have more edgy packaging than Nodal's other brands, which include **King Havano**. Each cigar is wrapped in heavy paper, which originally occurred by accident. Nodal was handing someone one of the cigars, and didn't have a bag to hold the smoke, so he rolled up the thick paper used to cover cigars in the box. The smoker loved the look, and so did Nodal, so now each Swag is rolled in the paper, again giving it a more trendy look.

Nodal made the cigars in the Dominican Republic in a partnership with Jochi Blanco, a cigarmaker located in Tamboril who co-owns the La Flor de Palma farm in La Canela, Dominican Republic, with cigarmaker Litto Gomez. The Swag cigar is made entirely from Dominican tobaccos from Blanco. "I discussed with him at the end of 2008 my intentions of doing a different type of Dominican cigar with tobacco from a single farm," said Nodal. "We

decided to work not only in a new single farm blend, but also in a modern look, attractive to a new generation of smokers that were not interested in the same old brands and create a new brand with a new style."

Swag comes in six sizes, each with an interesting name: Quickie is a 5 1/2 by 42 corona; Lavish is a fat robusto that measures 5 by 54; Elite is 7 by 38; Infamous is a 6 by 54 toro; Fierce is a 6 1/2 by 53 torpedo and Ego comes in the increasingly popular 6 by 60 size.

Despite the name, Swag cigars are priced reasonably.



Suggested retail prices range from $4.70 for the Quickie to $5.92 for the Ego.

Nodal has also created a Swag card allowing consumers who buy enough Swag cigars at retail shops to enter a raffle to receive merchandise. The grand prize is a trip to a beach resort in the Dominican Republic.

Nodal has owned Oliveros since 2001. The brand was previously a flavored cigar, and for the past nine years Nodal has been reinventing Oliveros as a more premium product. "Flavors were 100 percent when I took over the company, now it's 40 percent," said Nodal.

Nodal has cigars made in Dominican Republic, Honduras and Nicaragua, making him one of few companies to have cigars made under his name in all three of the major cigar producing countries outside of Cuba.

For a tasting see a future issue of ***Cigar Insider***. ■

Have a comment about ***Cigar Insider?*** We'd like to know what you think. Email us at **insidermail@mshanken.com.**

MINNEAPOLIS MULLS BAN ON CIGAR SHOP SMOKING

BY ANDREW NAGY

Lawmakers in Minneapolis have been asked to consider a proposal that would, if passed, prohibit customers from smoking in any of the city's tobacco shops.

According to a Fox9.com report, the amendment proposal is meant to close a legal loophole and combat businesses that are applying for tobacco-only licenses but are not necessarily cigar retailers; city licensing manager Grant Wilson told Fox 9 this type of action goes against the spirit of Minnesota's Clean Indoor Air Act.

The Cigar Rights of America has called upon its members to sign a petition that fights the proposal, and there will be a hearing on the proposed ordinance next week.

To sign the petition, go to www.cigarrights.org/petition_MinneapolisMN001.php. ■

MY FATHER CIGARS BRANDED LOUNGE OPENS IN ARIZONA

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

If you are a fan of José "Pepin" Garcia's cigars then you might have a reason to trek out to the middle of the desert: The first My Father Cigars branded lounge located in Cave Creek, Arizona, a small town north of Phoenix.

After opening the Mojito Cigar Lounge in Cave Creek, shop owner Bill Niederer approached José Ortega, vice president of sales of My Father Cigars Inc. with the idea of opening a lounge dedicated to Garcia's brands, which include **Don Pepin Garcia**, **La Reloba** and **My Father**. On October 30th, Niederer celebrated Mojito's two-year anniversary by making it the home of the My Father Cigars branded lounge.

"It carries the entire Pepin line of cigars," said Ortega. "You'll find all the limited editions here as well as exclusive Pepin product that only the lounge will have."

Ortega said that the lounge will be decorated with branded My Father items such as wooden signs, ashtrays and photos of the cigar factory in Nicaragua.

This is the same retrofitted, lounge-within-a-lounge arrangement that has become so popular between cigar makers and supportive cigar shops.

"Mojito Cigar Lounge's new status will prove to be a boon to our community as well as to our business," said Niederer. The My Father Cigar Lounge is outfitted with leather chairs, flat-screen TV, and is open to all

customers. According to the website, the private club members enjoy "even comfier chairs, an even bigger TV, 60 private humidity and temperature-controlled cigar-storage lockers, poker table, and private kitchenette."

My Father cigars is one of many cigar companies co-opting with brick and mortar cigar shops to brand lounges across the country, including **Diamond Crown**, **Arturo Fuente**, **Camacho**, **Montecristo**, **Romeo y Julieta**, **Macanudo**, **Cohiba**, **La Gloria Cubana**, **Avo**, **Rocky Patel**, **Toraño**, **Perdomo**, and **La Flor Dominicana**. ■

THOUSANDS ATTEND LAS VEGAS BIG SMOKE WEEKEND

BY ANDREW NAGY

Thousands of cigar enthusiasts came from all parts of the United States and the world to the Venetian Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas to be a part of ***Cigar Aficionado's*** 15th annual Big Smoke Las Vegas Weekend, the largest cigar celebrations in the world, held November 12 through November 14.

They saw many things, including more than 30 cigarmakers passing out premium cigars to eager attendees, along with a dozen or so spirits makers pouring top-shelf drinks and eight of Sin City's restaurants serving samples of their food.



"We came to play golf and smoke cigars," said Phil Gruidl, a patrolman from Sacramento, California, nearing retirement. "Oh, and the pretty women," he added with a wink. Gruidl was with his friend Steve Harris on their sixth trip to the Vegas Big Smoke. Another friend, Brian Curry, was accompanying them and it was his first taste of a Big Smoke evening party. "Yeah, they dragged me out here with them," he joked with a deadpan face.

All night the crowd was buzzing as people walked from cigarmaker to cigarmaker to fill up their official ***Cigar Aficionado*** tote bag with premium smokes. The line at the **Alec Bradley** booth was particularly long as Alan Rubin was not only passing out his Prensado and Vice Press, but also raffling off a year's worth of premium cigars to one lucky winner.

Competing for longest line of the night were also **Rocky Patel**, who was offering attendees a choice of his cigars, including his 1961 blend, and the **Padrón** booth, manned by Jorge Padrón himself.

Rounding out the list of cigarmakers passing out their premium smokes were: Carlos "Carlito" Fuente Jr., giving out his **Arturo Fuente** Sun Grown line; Carlos Toraño, who was handing out **Carlos Toraño 1959 Exodus 50 Years** cigars; Ernesto Perez-Carrillo, with his **E.P. Carrillo** "core" line; Pepin, Jaime and Janny Garcia of My Father Cigars, with **La Reloba** cigars; Litto Gomez of **La Flor Dominicana**, handing out his Ligero; Robert Levin of **Ashton** passing out **La Aroma De Cuba**; Alejandro Turrent handed out **A. Turrent Triple Play**; Paul Palmer and Eduardo Fernandez gave away **Casa Fernandez**; Manuel Quesada gave both a **Quesada Tributo** and a **Casa Magna Colorado** cigar; Joe Chiusano handed out **Cusano** cigars and Bobby Newman gave out **Diamond Crowns**.

Other cigars included: **Avo**, **Room 101** by **Camacho**, **La Gloria Cubana**, the new **Hoyo de Monterrey Reposado en Cedros** and **Macanudo Crü Royale**, **C.A.O. La Traviata Maduro**, **Cuba Aliados**, **Hammer + Sickle**, **NUb**, **Oliva Serie G**, **Panter**, **Puros Indios**, **Villiger 1888**, **H. Upmann Sun Grown** and the new **Warlock** brand.

There was also a handful of cigar accessories companies displaying products. Cutters and lighters were put on display by Colibri and Xikar; Liebherr educated attendees on the benefits of cigar refrigeration while Rabbit Air displayed its MinusA2 Air Purifier; Diamond Crown had a table of humidors as did Daniel Marshall, who personally signed one of his humidor designs.

Two gentlemen who traveled from Montreal, Quebec, Eric Gaudreault and Karl Frigan, were particularly excited for the spirits selections, as they were unaware the offerings were going to be of such high quality. "I got a Zacapa rum right now," said Frigan. When told that Macallan single-malt Scotch also had a booth and they were pouring 12- and 15-year expressions, a smile appeared on his face. "Guess I know where I'm going next."

Scotch whisky producer Glenmorangie also had a booth, as did Tullamore Dew Irish whiskey and Crown Royal Canadian whiskey; tequila brands Patrón and Milagro were served; as were Ron Abuelo and Appleton rums; Cognac was provided by A. de Fussigny and Courvoisier; and Bombay Sapphire gin and vodkas from Crystal Head, Hammer + Sickle and Ultimat were available. Foster's beer and Sledgehammer Wines provided lighter alternatives.

The Casa Fuente "booth" was decked out with bamboo chairs and wooden tables, essentially doubling as a lounge.

CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE

A bartender offered samples of Don Q rum to sip while boothgoers enjoyed the moment of rest. Four cars were on display, including a Neiman Marcus Edition Camaro Convertible that was the color of Bordeaux and a stately sky blue Corvette ZR1.

Some chose to take a load off at the Team La Gloria Cubana booth, albeit not necessarily a relaxing one. There Master Roller Leo Peraza, who has rolled cigars for 53 years, could be seen putting attendees through a crash course in how to roll their own cigar.

A particularly notable moment occurred on Saturday night when famed jazz trumpeter Arturo Sandoval played an impromptu jam at the Arturo Fuente cigar booth. Sandoval's brass playing stopped conversations and encouraged a large crowd to form around the four-time Grammy winner.



And of course, there was the food. Andre's Restaurant & Lounge at Monte Carlo, started by Chef Andre Rochat, offered perhaps the most creative sample to attendees: a chocolate cigar. Charlie Palmer's Aureole was serving barbecue chicken spring rolls with avocado and sriracha mayonnaise. Carnevino Italian Steakhouse had pastrami with butternut squash, julienned scallions and a roasted vinaigrette. Emeril Lagasse's Delmonico Steakhouse was plating samples of chicken étouffée, Texas de Brazil offered Brazilian sausage and churrasco, Tao had spicy pork dumplings on hand, while Bruce Becker's Max & Mina's Ice Cream served a cold-treat alternative.

Hundreds gathered on Saturday and Sunday mornings for the sold-out seminars. The Saturday seminars revolved around the cigar world, with executive editor Gordon Mott and senior editor David Savona leading presentations with cigarmakers and tobacco growers, and showing the audience how to spot a counterfeit cigar. The attendees smoked *Cigar Aficionado's* Nos. 1, 3 and 4 cigars of the year, presented by the cigar stars who made them. On Sunday, the seminars resumed with a lifestyle theme, concluding with a tasting of single-malt Scotch and cigars.

For a detailed account of the seminars, and to view an extensive photo gallery, visit www.cigaraficionado.com. ■

2010 CIGAR AFICIONADO "BIG SMOKE" LINEUP

December 1
NEW YORK CITY • PIER 92

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TICKETS, VISIT:
CigarAficionado.com

IN THE NEXT CIGAR INSIDER

Counterfeit Cuban Behike BHK 52s appear for the first time, plus breaking news from around the cigar world, along with ratings on hot new cigar brands. Read about it first in *Cigar Insider*.

Your Next CIGAR INSIDER Arrives on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

Cigar Insider

Editor and Publisher	**Marvin R. Shanken**
Executive Editor	Gordon Mott
Managing Editor	David Savona
Director of Research	Frank C. Walters
Tasting Coordinator	Gregory Mottola
Editorial Assistant	Andrew Nagy
Art Director	Chandra Hira
Senior Designer	Jackelyn Navarro

© 2010 M. Shanken Communications, Inc. All rights reserved.
Materials may not be reproduced without permission.

Questions about your subscription?
Email: caonline@mshanken.com.