



The Strength of Camacho

By Sean Ballent

CAMACHO CIGARS, LED BY CHRISTIAN EIROA, IS GETTING READY TO RELEASE THE STRONGEST SMOKE ON THE MARKET.

Christian Eiroa was groomed for success at an early age. A third generation tobacco man, his childhood was spent listening to his father and grandfather discuss the ins and outs of the cigar business. The family has been involved in the art and tradition of cigar making since the early 1900s in Cuba, when Christian's grandfather, Generoso Eiroa, grew tobacco for the Cuban Tobacco Company.

Generoso's son, Julio, followed his father into the business, eventually setting up shop in Honduras after the U.S. embargo with Cuba. He founded Caribe Imported Cigars in 1987, a company that dealt with tobacco from farms throughout Central and South America. Though all signs indicated that cigars were Christian's destiny, he remained steadfast in his conviction that he wasn't interested in pursuing the family business. With a dream of joining the Air Force or flying Navy jets, Christian opted out of tobacco and instead chose to earn his master's degree in international business administration from Nova University. It wasn't until he returned to his birthplace, Honduras, that he finally felt compelled to claim his birthright.

He began the process of learning about leaf growing and cigar production and quickly found that his upbringing had already given him a lifetime of schooling. "I started working with my father when I was 23 years old," Christian explains, but that was the last thing I wanted to do. Four or five years later, I realized that from day one, my father was indoctrinating me to be in the business. He was teaching me about moisture, temperature, grow-


ing, and the seasons when I was seven and eight years old. A lot of things I ran into when I joined the business in my early 20s were things that he had already taught me when I was young. I knew the answers already. I realized my father had set me up to succeed from day one."

Christian fell into a rhythm at the factory and found that he thoroughly enjoyed the whole process. After only three years on the production side of the business, Christian had proven his abilities and was appointed as president of the established Camacho Cigars, Inc., which Caribe had acquired in 1995 from the family that founded it three decades prior.

Christian's business acumen combined with his seemingly inherent knowledge of the cigar industry meant that under his control, the company began to thrive. "It was an exciting time to be in the tobacco business," says Christian. "The explosive growth meant a lot of my time was needed." His main focus shifted from production to sourcing tobacco. "I began traveling to all kinds of interesting places, buying tobacco from rural areas in different countries," he recalls. A mixed bag of experiences, he encountered some seedy places and characters, but led the brand to expansion and global recognition.

In June of 2000, Christian and Julio launched the world's first authentic Corojo cigar manufactured outside of Cuba, the Camacho Corojo. Hailing from Honduras, where the brand gets most of its tobacco from the family farms, this innovation ini-

tiated a trend of a full-bodied, extremely flavorful cigar with little to no aftertaste. "We source about 80 percent of our tobacco from a farm my father owns in Honduras called El Corojo," Christian explains. "The authentic Corojo seed and the Corojo flavor are what makes our cigars so well known. It's been developed over generations, and we are the only company to have that seed." The other 20 percent is sourced from Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

The strength has become the defining characteristic of the Camacho brand, both in taste and in industry domination. So it is fitting that this summer, Christian is preparing to release what he is touting as the strongest cigar in the world, period. "That's what the Camacho brand is known for. We make strong cigars, now we've got to make the strongest." This release is set to trump the Camacho Diploma, which is currently the brand's strongest cigar. It will further cement the Camacho name amongst cigar aficionados as the strongest cigar brand around, both in terms of taste and in industry domination. 

TOP 5 CAMACHO CIGARS

1. CAMACHO COROJO
2. CAMACHO TRIPLE MADURO
3. CAMACHO 10TH ANNIVERSARY
4. LEGENDARIO BY CAMACHO
5. BACCARAT "THE GAME"