

Cigar Insider

INTERNET ONLY

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FEATURED CIGAR

COHIBA

1966 EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2011

CUBA ■ PRICE: £38.70 ■ BODY: MEDIUM

For a full tasting, see page two.



POINTS

BEST CIGARS THIS ISSUE

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100 YEARS OF A. FUENTE

FUENTE CELEBRATES A CENTENNIAL,

and to honor the benchmark *Cigar Aficionado* put the father-and-son team on the cover of our February issue. Learn about this cigar family's tumultuous past and how it became one of the most successful companies in the industry. For a sneak peek at the best cigars from the issue, see page two.



CIGAR AFICIONADO NAMES CIGAR OF THE YEAR

THE ALEC BRADLEY PRENSADO CHURCHILL was named *Cigar Aficionado's* Cigar of the Year for 2011. The unveiling occurred on Friday at cigaraficionado.com. The cigar, created by Alan Rubin and his team at Alec Bradley Cigars, is made at the superb Raices Cubanas Factory in Danlí, Honduras, which is producing stellar smokes. Rubin built the Prensado around a wrapper grown in the Honduran region of Trojes, near the border of Nicaragua, and it contains tobaccos from Honduras and Nicaragua. It is the first Honduran cigar to earn Cigar of the Year honors from *Cigar Aficionado*.



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TASTING REPORT: EXCLUSIVE FEBRUARY 2012 CIGAR AFICIONADO PREVIEWS



94

RING GAUGE: 52
LENGTH: 6 1/2"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

COHIBA 1966 EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2011

CUBA

Dark and gleaming with a pigtail cap, this large cigar starts with a core of earth, spice and coffee bean flavors that take on a profound cocoa and toffee character.

Box Date: July 2011

Price: £38.70 (U.K.)

Body: Medium



92

RING GAUGE: 42
LENGTH: 5 1/8"
FILLER: Cuba
BINDER: Cuba
WRAPPER: Cuba

COHIBA SIGLO II (TUBO)

CUBA

An elegant, medium-bodied corona that combines leathery, roasted meat intonations for a profoundly savory palate. Almond notes emerge on the finish.

Box Date: May 2010

Price: £16.06 (U.K.)

Body: Medium



92

RING GAUGE: 52
LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua

PADRÓN 1964 ANNIVERSARY SERIES TORPEDO MADURO

NICARAGUA

This box-pressed torpedo smokes with dead-even accuracy from draw to burn. The dense, chewy smoke sits on the palate, loading it with nut, nougat and cocoa bean flavor.

Price: \$15.80

Body: Medium to Full



92

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

SANCHO PANZA BELICOSO

CUBA

A sweet, honeyed aroma emanates from this belicoso as it burns. The honey recurs on the palate along with floral notes, coffee and pepper. The draw is lush.

Box Date: April 2010

Price: £14.88 (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 FEBRUARY 2012 CIGAR AFICIONADO PREVIEWS



91

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

CAMACHO COROJO GIGANTE

HONDURAS

A hefty, chocolate-brown toro whose creamy smoke underscores sweet cedar and coffee flavors that become more profound as the cigar progresses. Medium bodied and flavorful.

Price: \$7.35

Body: Medium



91

RING GAUGE: 50
LENGTH: 7"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Mexico

LA AROMA DE CUBA MI AMOR CHURCHILL

NICARAGUA

Softly box pressed with a round head. The cigar offers a complex set of flavors, with a sweet and salty opening that leads to floral, rock candy and coffee notes.

Price: \$7.85

Body: Medium to Full



91

RING GAUGE: 52
LENGTH: 6 1/8"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf

NESTOR MIRANDA GRAND RESERVE TORPEDO

NICARAGUA

A flatly pressed torpedo that produces a flaky ash as it burns. Lots of medium-bodied roasted nut, earth and coffee bean flavors come through with each puff.

Price: \$12.00

Body: Medium



91

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

SAINT LUIS REY REGIOS

CUBA

Dark and box-pressed with a matte, brown wrapper. The draw is slightly firm, but a lot of savory tobacco character comes through with each puff. Leathery, toasty notes are balanced by a minerality and a dried fruit aftertaste.

Box Date: January 2010

Price: £9.00 (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

ARTURO FUENTE AÑEJO

VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Dominican Republic

Maker: Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia.

Distributor: Fuente & Newman Premium Cigars Ltd.

Filler: Dom. Rep.

Binder: Dom. Rep.

Wrapper: U.S.A./Conn. Broadleaf

Purchase Date: December 2011

NO. 77

93 POINTS ■ 5 7/8" x 50 ■ \$10.00 ■ HUMIDOR SELECTION
Only the lower half of this dark torpedo is box-pressed. The draw is full and lush with salty, nutty flavors that are balanced out by a pleasant sweetness.

Body: Medium to Full

NO. 60

92 POINTS ■ 6 1/4" x 49 ■ \$10.00 ■ HUMIDOR SELECTION
A cedary, peppery cigar that takes on molasses and nut flavors as it's smoked. The cigar is dark, robust and complex with a finish smacking of black coffee.

Body: Full

NO. 55

91 POINTS ■ 6" x 55 ■ \$10.75 ■ HUMIDOR SELECTION
Very dark in appearance with a matte wrapper and full draw. The torpedo smokes evenly, starting with coffee and pepper flavors before a sweet licorice aftertaste.

Body: Medium to Full

NO. 48

89 POINTS ■ 7" x 48 ■ \$9.75

Heavy hickory notes come through each puff of this large, dark cigar, which draws and burns evenly. Sweet tobacco flavor lingers on the finish.

Body: Medium to Full

NO. 49

89 POINTS ■ 7 5/8" x 49 ■ \$10.50

Black and splotchy, this cigar has a firm draw. Initial grassy flavors settle in to semisweet chocolate, cinnamon and a heavily roasted coffee character.

Body: Medium

NO. 46

88 POINTS ■ 5 5/8" x 46 ■ \$8.25

This maduro is solidly rolled but finished with a bumpy cap. It burns unevenly and has a difficult draw that imparts earth, minerals and some woodiness.

Body: Medium

NO. 50

88 POINTS ■ 5 1/4" x 50 ■ \$9.00

The draw is slightly firm on this near-black robusto, but hickory and nut flavors come through, as does a note of eucalyptus.

Body: Medium

BRAND SUMMARY: The story behind the Dominican Arturo Fuente Añejo brand is an interesting one. In September of 1998, Hurricane Georges tore through the Caribbean Sea, causing widespread destruction throughout the region, including the famous Chateau de la Fuente tobacco plantation, far in the Dominican Republic, where the wrapper leaf for the Fuente Fuente OpusX cigar is grown and harvested. Two years later, the storm's destruction resulted in a shortage of Fuente Fuente OpusX wrapper tobacco. But rather than halting production, Carlos Fuente Jr. ordered the use of a different wrapper, an aged Connecticut broadleaf, and the Arturo Fuente Añejo cigar was born.

The Fuente Añejo line is quite limited and tends to be released into the market around Christmas and Father's Day. It's been a while since *Cigar Insider* has done a vertical brand tasting of the Arturo Fuente Añejo series. The dark Connecticut-broadleaf wrappers are aged in Cognac barrels, adding a certain character to the leaf. Two sizes here turned in an exceptional performance—the No. 77 (also known as the Shark) and the No. 60, which scored 93 and 92 points, respectively. The No. 77 tends to do well on our tastings, as it was one of the highest achievers in our last Añejo vertical. But the No. 60 is the newest addition to the line. It was released in late 2010 and first tested by *Cigar Insider* in early 2011, scoring 90 points. A year later, it seems to have improved.

Average Rating: 90.0 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

GAME OVER FOR CAMACHO AND THE ORANGE BOWL

BY G. CLAY WHITTAKER

After an aggressive campaign from several health groups and three U.S. Senators, **Camacho** Cigars was removed from the sponsor list for the 2012 Orange Bowl. Members of the Orange Bowl Committee and the Pinellas Park, Florida, company (a unit of Switzerland's **Davidoff** of Geneva) agreed that it was the best decision in light of the circumstances.

"This is not what either of our organizations envisioned when we set up our partnership," said Dylan Austin, head of marketing for Camacho. "Our support for the decision that was ultimately taken was out of respect for the history and long-term community involvement of the Orange Bowl Committee."

The issue came to a head just before Christmas, when several health organizations, including some aimed at preventing childhood tobacco use, sent an open letter to both the Orange Bowl Committee and the NCAA asking them to remove the sponsorship and cancel the three-year agreement.

Senators Dick Durbin, Frank Lautenberg, and Richard Blumenthal, all Democrats, joined in the call to remove the sponsorship from the January 4 college football game. The organizations claimed Camacho's sponsorship would be seen as an NCAA endorsement of smoking, and that children would associate the brand with role models in the collegiate athletics community.

Camacho was disappointed to see the partnership go. "Whenever a company like ours gives up the opportunity to promote a legal product, which is manufactured, marketed and sold exclusively for and to adults, it is unfortunate. It is also unfortunate that we have forfeited an opportunity to contribute, through our partnership, to a first class south Florida organization that is highly regarded and very proactive in the community," said Austin.

Under the agreement, Camacho would have had a presence for the Orange Bowl at Sun Life stadium last week that would have included smoking lounge areas open to fans during pre-game events. Lounges would have been constructed in areas already designated for smoking this year, and for the 2013 and 2014 bowls as well. Camacho Cigars was among more than 50 partners in a sponsor list that included Stella Artois and Bacardi, two brands that produce adult, alcoholic beverages. ■

BOUTIQUE BRAND VIAJE TO LAUNCH SHOTGUN SHELL CIGARS

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

After a day of shooting clay discs during target practice, **Viaje** brand owner Andre Farkas was inspired to create a shotgun themed cigar called the **Viaje Super Shot**. It's a short, squat cigar intended to be smoked in short intervals and packaged to look like live shotgun ammunition.

"I recently took up clay shooting and I noticed something," Farkas said. "The cigars I brought weren't short enough to enjoy between rounds. I'd start smoking and before it was finished it was my time to shoot again, so the smoke kept going out."

As a result, Farkas created a smoke that he could enjoy during breaks in clay shooting and called it **Super Shot**. The smokes come in two sizes: 12 Gauge, measuring 3 1/4 inches by 52 ring, and 10 Gauge, measuring 3 1/2 by 54.

"The sizes are virtually identical to the actual shotgun shells," said Farkas. "But it isn't just for a day out shooting clay. It's designed to be smoked when time is a factor or while doing any sort of work."



The cigars themselves are rolled with an unfinished foot and are made entirely of Nicaraguan tobacco. Produced in Honduras at the Raices Cubanas factory, the two **Super Shot** sizes retail for \$6 and \$6.40 respectively. (There is a discount of one dollar per cigar when buying by the entire box.) They come in rugged cardboard boxes of 25 and should be out by late January or early February. ■

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



LA FLOR DOMINICANA RELEASES NEW CIGARS

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

As 2011 came to a close, **La Flor Dominicana** released new smokes that have now reached retailers' shelves across the country: The La Flor Dominicana Small Batch IV, the Factory Press IV and the distinctive Chisel, packaged in a Cameroon wrapper.

Every year and a half for the past three years, brand owner Litto Gomez has released a Small Batch line. This year's Small Batch IV uses all Dominican tobacco and features a Pelo de Oro seed wrapper grown on Gomez's La Canela farm.



"It's the first time I've used this wrapper," said Gomez. "The Pelo de Oro is two years old and adds a lot of sweetness to the older tobaccos in the blend, which are from a 2006 crop."

These 7 inch by 52 ring cigars come packaged in crates of 105 and retail for \$19 each. Only 240 boxes were made.

For a chunkier smoke, the Factory Press IV is a square pressed 6 1/2 by 60 cigar that comes neatly presented in slotted trays, each cigar secured in its own slat in order to retain the pressed form. Factory Press IV's blend includes a Mexican wrapper to complement its all-Dominican binder and filler tobacco.

"I bought this wrapper a few years ago and it has been fermenting and aging for awhile," Gomez said. "Now, I like the flavor and it blends well with the tobacco from La Canela."

These smokes come in large boxes of 120 that hold 10 trays of 12 pressed cigars, which retail for \$11 each. Only 300 cases were made.

For those who remember a La Flor Dominicana cigar sampler that had a Chisel with a Cameroon wrapper, Gomez decided to release it as its own limited-edition brand this month.

"We did a Chisel sampler that had one cigar with a Cameroon wrapper and it was very popular. A lot of requests came from retailers and consumers, but I didn't want to go into regular production with it, so I made only 500 boxes for December," Gomez said.

The Cameroon Chisel is actually blended off La Flor Dominicana's Cameroon Cabinet line and although it isn't intended to be as full bodied as the Double Ligero Chisel, it isn't supposed to be mild either. They come in boxes of 20 and retail for \$8 each. ■

REGISTRATION OPENS TODAY FOR HABANOS FESTIVAL

BY DAVID SAVONA



The annual Festival del Habano, the world's biggest cigar festival, begins late next month in Havana. Registration for the weeklong event, a celebration of all things related to the Cuban cigar, opens today.

The event, which is also known as the Habanos Festival, begins on February 27 and concludes with a gala dinner in Havana on March 2. This will be the 14th time it has occurred. Retailers, distributors, journalists and lovers of Cuban cigars from all around the world will attend—participants from more than 60 different countries are expected this year by host Habanos S.A., the distributor of all of Cuba's cigars.

Expect several new cigar releases to be unveiled at the show, as this is the traditional time for Cuba's cigar industry to show off its latest products, which will come to market later in the year. At last year's festival, the Cubans unveiled the **Montecristo** Gran Reserva, the **Partagás** Serie E No. 2 and Serie D No. 5, the **H. Upmann** Half Corona and Royal Robusto, the **Cohiba** 1966 Edición Limitada 2011 (which scored 94 points in *Cigar Insider*), and various other cigars.

This year's festival is centered around two of Cuba's biggest brands, Cohiba and *Romeo y Julieta*, so expect new versions of those brands. The festival will include trips to Cuban tobacco farms and cigar factories, seminars and contests, including a how-to on cigar rolling. The final dinner will include the traditional auction of large humidors, and the proceeds will benefit the Cuban public health system.

Cigar Insider will be in Cuba the entire week of the Festival, and you can follow our editors' blogs at www.cigaraficionado.com.

To register for the festival, visit www.habanos.com. ■



NEW FUENTE 44 MAGNUM

BY DAVID SAVONA

Arturo Fuente has added a thinner size to its popular and value-priced **Arturo Fuente Rosado Sungrown Magnum R** line of cigars. The Vitola Forty-Four is the fifth size in the brand and went on sale in recent weeks with a suggested retail price of \$6.75 each.

The cigar's name refers to the number of cigars in the box—44—which is very unusual for the cigar industry. The other cigars in the line come packed 20 to the box.

This is a departure for Fuente, as the four other sizes in the line are named for their ring gauges—Vitola Fifty-Two, Fifty-Four and Fifty-Six, which are parejos, and the pyramid-sized Vitola Fifty-Eight.

The Vitola Forty-Four is not only the thinnest Rosado Sungrown Magnum R, but also the shortest. It measures 4 7/8 inches long by 47 ring gauge.

The entire line consists of well-aged Ecuadoran wrapper leaf taken from the middle part of a tobacco plant, giving the line a more medium-bodied character. The brand has done quite well for Fuente, both in terms of sales and in critical acclaim. The larger Vitola Fifty-Four was just named *Cigar Aficionado's* No. 11 cigar of 2011, scoring 92 points in the February issue.

Look for a tasting in an upcoming *Cigar Insider*. ■

ILLUSIONE ULTRA CIGARS COMING SOON

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

The strongest cigar in **Illusione's** portfolio, appropriately dubbed Ultra, should be available by the end of this month. Originally slated for release last fall, the Illusione Ultra was introduced last summer at the IPCPR tradeshow. Since August, only one cigar in the Ultra line has made it to retail shops—the corona-sized mk—and the three other sizes have yet to hit the market. According to brand owner Dion Giolito, the delay was caused primarily by a backup of orders in the factory.

“By the fourth quarter I already had a huge back-order situation from the factory with my regular product,” Giolito said. “What’s the point of putting out something new if you can’t even get your regular product out to retailers?”

Currently, Giolito expects a small shipment of the Ultra

line to arrive by the end of the month. The small initial order will allow Giolito to more closely monitor quality and make any adjustments should the need arise.

In addition to the mk, Ultra will be offered in three box-pressed sizes: Op. No. 1, which measures 6 3/4 inches by 56 ring; Op. No. 4, 4 3/4 by 48 and Op. No. 9, 5 1/2 by 56. The all-Nicaraguan blend is covered with a Corojo-seed wrapper and is Illusione's most full-bodied commercial release. The cigars are made in Honduras at the Raices Cubanas factory and retail from \$7–\$12.

“With all of my new releases, I like to monitor them in small batches,” Giolito explained. “We’re trying to get it done without sacrificing quality.” ■

GOD OF FIRE SERIE B HITS SHELVES, WITH MORE SIZES TO COME

BY G. CLAY WHITTAKER

The God of Fire Serie B has started to hit shelves after a November 2011 official release, and more sizes will be added in 2012.

The Serie B line currently comes in two sizes, the Robusto Gordo 54, and the Gran Toro. The Robusto Gordo 54 measures 5 1/2 inches by 54 ring, and retails for \$22 per stick. The Gran Toros are 6 inches by 56, and they will cost \$24 each. Both are made with Dominican binder and filler tobaccos, and as with all God of Fire cigars they are made for Prometheus International Inc. by Tabacalera A. Fuente y Cia. in the Dominican Republic.

Even though these cigars are part of the same line, there's a slight difference in the tobacco inside each cigar. While the Robusto Gordo 54 will have an Ecuadoran sungrown wrapper, the Gran Toro will actually be finished with a maduro Connecticut broadleaf, making the two very different smoking experiences.

To understand why, you have to look back to two previous releases from God of Fire: The God of Fire by Don Carlos and the God of Fire by Carlito, both first released in May 2007.



Brand owner Keith Park says the Serie B smokes are descendants of these previous releases. Park calls the Serie B spicier than the original blends.

“It’s something you can really enjoy, and you won’t be bothered by the power.”

Each size is being released in 750 boxes of 10. They’re also making 75 limited-edition jars for each size, which will hold 24 cigars each. The total production for each size will be about 9,300.

Park says that they are working on two additional sizes for the line which could hit shelves in the fall. They are planning another robusto at 5 1/4 by 50, and a double robusto at 5 3/4 by 52. He says we could see a preview of the line at this year’s IPCPR. ■

UNIVERSITY BANS SMOKING ON ENTIRE CAMPUS

BY G. CLAY WHITTAKER

Smoke a cigar and get kicked out of college? This could conceivably be the case as students of Florida’s Nova Southeastern University are facing a comprehensive, campus-wide smoking ban set to take effect in six months. The *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* reported over the weekend that Nova’s new anti-smoking measure will prohibit puffing in all campus buildings, outdoor areas and even inside vehicles on campus grounds. Repeated violations could result in dismissal from the college.

“We’re not making the penalties for smokers any worse than other policy violations,” said Tom Vitucci, director of campus recreation for Nova. According to Vitucci, the university plans on treating infractions of the smoking ban in the same manner as it would treat any other violation of university regulations, so multiple offenses could in fact lead to expulsion for students or termination of faculty staff.

The Fort Lauderdale university told the *Sun-Sentinel* that about 75 percent of surveyed students and employees support the ban, and 9 percent called themselves smokers.

“We tried the smoking zone concept and we found that it wasn’t working,” Vitucci said. “A total ban was more manageable and more impactful.”

This is just one example of a rising trend. According to the American Nonsmokers’ Rights Association, over 200 schools join the wave of universities banning smoking in just the last year. ■

CIGAR AFICIONADO “BIG SMOKE”

For coverage of the 2011 Big Smokes, including an extensive photo gallery and coverage of our Las Vegas & New York events, visit:
CigarAficionado.com

2012 SCHEDULE COMING SOON

IN THE NEXT CIGAR INSIDER

Breaking news from around the cigar world, along with ratings on hot new cigars. Read about it first in *Cigar Insider*.

➔ Your Next CIGAR INSIDER Arrives on Tuesday, Jan. 24.

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