

Cigar Insider

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FEATURED CIGAR

LA FLOR DOMINICANA 1994 CONGA

DOM. REP. ■ PRICE: \$7.50 ■ BODY: MED. TO FULL

For a full tasting, see page two.

90
POINTS

BEST CIGARS THIS ISSUE

Bolivar Super Corona Edición Limitada	Cuba	90
La Flor Dominicana 1994 Conga	Dom. Rep.	90
La Flor Dominicana Capitulo II	Dom. Rep.	90
My Father Connecticut Corona Gorda	Nicaragua	90
Rocky Patel Decade Cameroon Torpedo	Honduras	90



TOP 25 CIGARS REVEALED

THE SCHEDULE, THAT IS. Another edition of *Cigar Aficionado's* annual Top 25 Cigars of the Year list is almost ready, and the unveiling starts December 15. The countdown continues that week where we also reveal the 2014 Cigar of the Year. Go to CigarAficionado.com for the entire schedule.



BIG SMOKERS COME TO THE BIG SMOKE

THE BIG SMOKE LAS VEGAS BROUGHT THOUSANDS OF CIGAR LOVERS

from around the world to participate in the biggest cigar-centric good life celebration of the year. Lovers of the leaf from areas of the globe as far flung as Australia and the Himalayas traveled half the planet just for the opportunity to smoke premium cigars while meeting the men behind the cigar brands. Enthusiasts particularly steeped in the hobby were able to attend the Saturday and Sunday seminars, which are panel discussions and presentations by some of the biggest names in the premium cigar industry. For more Big Smoke coverage, turn to page four.

TASTING REPORT

LA FLOR DOMINICANA 1994

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Dominican Republic

Maker: Tabacalera La Flor S.R.L.

Distributor: Premium Imports Inc.

Filler: Dom. Rep.

Binder: Dom. Rep.

Wrapper: Mexico

Release Date: August 2014

CONGA

90 POINTS ■ 5" x 52 ■ \$7.50

Dark and rustic in appearance, this robusto is strong and hearty with licorice, coffee bean and cashew notes. Touches of earth and sweetness also emerge.

Body: Medium to Full

MAMBO

89 POINTS ■ 7" x 54 ■ \$8.20

A large Churchill with a dark, matte wrapper and round head. First puffs are nutty with coffee notes before taking on an herbal and licorice quality.

Body: Medium

ALDABA

88 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 58 ■ \$8.30

Though this dark cigar starts out charry and thin, it warms to show wheatiness and a toasted marshmallow sweetness before a finish smacking of hay.

Body: Medium

RUMBA

87 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 52 ■ \$7.80

Covered in a dark, veiny wrapper, this solidly rolled corona gorda imparts sweet molasses and mineral notes that lead to a charry, bittersweet finish.

Body: Medium to Full

BRAND SUMMARY: Litto Gomez has been making cigars for 20 years, and the new 1994 line commemorates this milestone. The blend contains all Dominican tobacco, save for the wrapper,

which is a dark leaf of San Andrés Negro from Mexico. The cigars rated in this test came from wooden slide-lid boxes. La Flor Dominicana has also created a single-size 1994 cigar that comes in a porcelain stein. That blend, however, is slightly different. The standout in this line was the Conga, which scored 90 points.

Average Rating: 88.5 points

LA FLOR DOMINICANA

NEW RELEASE

Country: Dominican Republic

Maker: Tabacalera La Flor S.R.L.

Distributor: Premium Imports Inc.

Filler: Dom. Rep.

Binder: Dom. Rep.

Wrapper: Nicaragua

Release Date: September 2014

CAPITULO II

90 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 58 ■ \$10.70

With its wedge-shaped head, this thick, box-pressed cigar resembles a railroad spike. It's a strong smoke full of saffron, rock salt and earth with hints of sweetness.

Body: Full

BOLIVAR

NEW SIZE

Country: Cuba

Maker: N/A

Distributor: Habanos S.A.

Filler: Cuba

Binder: Cuba

Wrapper: Cuba

BoxDate: July 2014

SUPER CORONA EDICIÓN LIMITADA 2014

90 POINTS ■ 5 1/2" x 48 ■ £19.73

The smoke of this dark, rustic cigar is dense and chewy, leaving earthy, espresso-like impressions on the palate. Clove and bittersweet chocolate notes appear as well.

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.*

MY FATHER CONNECTICUT

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Nicaragua

Maker: My Father Cigars S.A.

Distributor: My Father Cigars Inc.

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Ecuador

Release Date: August 2014

ROCKY PATEL DECADE CAMEROON

NEW RELEASE—VERTICAL BRAND TASTING

Country: Honduras

Maker: El Paraiso Factory

Distributor: Rocky Patel Premium Cigars Inc.

Filler: Nicaragua

Binder: Nicaragua

Wrapper: Cameroon

Release Date: October 2014

CORONA GORDA

90 POINTS ■ 6" x 48 ■ \$7.30

A well-made cigar with a three-seam cap and medium claro wrapper. The easy draw delivers a floral and balanced smoke with hints of chocolate and baking spices.

Body: Medium

TORO

89 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 54 ■ \$8.20

Covered in a splotchy wrapper, this toro has a perfect burn and draw. It starts a bit grassy but develops notes of cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla bean.

Body: Medium

TORO GORDO

89 POINTS ■ 6" x 60 ■ \$9.40

This hefty cigar is topped with a neat three-seam cap. There's lots of smoke on the draw, which leaves notes of almond and spicy gingersnap. The finish is a bit dry.

Body: Mild to Medium

ROBUSTO

88 POINTS ■ 5 1/4" x 52 ■ \$7.60

A predominantly woody-tasting smoke, this robusto also carries hints of toasted coconut and orange peel before a bit of toffee emerges on the finish.

Body: Mild to Medium

BRAND SUMMARY: My Father Connecticut marks the first time that a Connecticut wrapper has ever appeared on a My Father brand. The wrapper is grown in Ecuador from Connecticut seeds, and the entire line registered in the mild to medium-bodied range, but the standout was the Corona Gorda, which scored 90 points.

Average Rating: 89.0 points

TORPEDO

90 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 52 ■ \$11.25

Though first puffs of this dark pyramid are sweet with coconut and vanilla bean, the smoke picks up some savory elements of leather and a bit of earth.

Body: Medium

ROBUSTO

89 POINTS ■ 5" x 50 ■ \$9.75

Draped in a spotty, rustic wrapper, this robusto shows a sweet and floral profile balanced by notes of earth, minerals and leather. Tastes better than it looks.

Body: Medium

TORO

87 POINTS ■ 6 1/2" x 52 ■ \$10.75

The draw of this dark cigar could be more substantial, but delivers sharp, cedary notes that mellow out to convey hints of dried berries, fresh tobacco and dry wood.

Body: Medium

BRAND SUMMARY: When the box-pressed Rocky Patel Decade cigar first came out in early 2008, it was a critical success with *Cigar Insider*. Over the last five years, Patel has been developing the brand and adding to the line by way of new, trendy sizes and even a limited-edition cigar. But at this year's IPCPR trade show, Patel decided to reimagine the Decade. After removing its original Ecuadoran wrapper and replacing it with a dark Cameroon leaf, the Rocky Patel Decade Cameroon was born. Unlike its original predecessor, these cigars are not box-pressed but rolled in a traditional round parejo shape. The most impressive cigar of this line was the Torpedo, which scored 90 points. It struck a balanced mix of sweet and savory notes.

Average Rating: 88.7 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

THE BIG SMOKE LAS VEGAS

BY DAVID CLOUGH

A line started to form as early as 3:30 in the afternoon at the Mirage Hotel & Casino Event Center in Las Vegas. Some cigar lovers would be waiting for another three hours before the doors opened, but that kind of anticipation isn't at all uncommon to see at the Big Smoke Las Vegas, a cigar celebration that started on November 7 and spanned three days. When the ballroom doors opened at 6:30 p.m., thousands of cigar fans rushed in to kick off the evening.

"The thing to do is arrive three hours early," said Joe Salas, a cigar enthusiast from California. "Get at the front of the line, start early, make your rounds. Then spend the rest of your time enjoying the food, the people, the cigars."

This year's list of cigar exhibitors consisted of Boutique Blends, A.J. Fernandez, Alec Bradley, Arturo Fuente, H. Upmann, C.A.O., Casa Fernandez, Casino Gold, Drew Estate, Kismet, Cohiba, Cubanacan, Diamond Crown, Dunhill, Eiroa, E.P. Carrillo, Foundry, Gurkha, Joya de Nicaragua, Kristoff, La Aroma de Cuba, La Flor Dominicana, La Gloria Cubana, Macanudo, My Father Cigars, Nat Sherman, Nestor Miranda Collection, Oliva, Padrón, Partagás, Quesada, Rocky Patel, Romeo y Julieta, NUB, Sublimes, Ventura and Villiger.

Big Smoke attendees came from as far as Australia, South Africa, Alaska, Montreal and even the Himalayas.

Provided by the Mirage Hotel kitchens, the food service was available all evening long, and is an integral part of the Big Smoke experience, as are the adult libations. The alcohol exhibitors were Bulleit Bourbon, Crown Royal Canadian whisky, George Dickel Tennessee whisky, Glenfiddich single-malt Scotch, Guinness beer, Jose Cuervo tequila, Ron Diplomatico and Ron Zacapa rums, Sledgehammer and Gabbiano wines, as well as Stolichnaya vodka and Carpano Antica Formula vermouth.

Cigar fans also took advantage of the opportunity to chat with exhibitors offering luxury gear, gadgets and getaways, including S.T. Dupont, Daniel Marshall Humidors, Rabbit Air, Craviotto Drums, Boveda, Upper Deck, destination resorts such as Casa de Campo, Casa Vieja Resort and Nizuc Resort and Spa, as well as gorgeous timepieces from BALL Watches, Carl F. Bucherer, Graham, Maurice Lacroix and Oris Watches.

"It's like being a little kid in a lollipop shop," said George Skiadas from Melbourne, Australia. This is his sixth Big Smoke Las Vegas weekend. "I'm just one of these guys who like cigars," he said. "This year I took the whole family—and I took the whole family to Havana as well."

Skiadas bemoans the strict smoking regulations in his



GIVING A LIGHT TO AN APPRECIATIVE FRIDAY NIGHT BIG SMOKER WAS JOSÉ ORTEGA (LEFT) AT THE MY FATHER BOOTH.

country. He says he can't smoke anywhere in Australia. For just this reason, many impassioned smokers were seen alongside the Cigar Rights of America booth—brushing up on cigar politics, impending legislation and the importance of getting out to vote.

Another densely populated area of the event showcased new muscle cars for 2015. The set-ups featured the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat, the 50th Anniversary Ford Mustang and the Nissan GT-R, each complete with promotional models and photo opportunities.

Though the Big Smoke evening was repeated the following night (and some intrepid cigar lovers attended both shows), the most sought-after tickets were for the cigar and lifestyle seminars, which took place during the day. Saturday morning was hosted by *Cigar Aficionado* executive editor David Savona and featured a presentation of the top three legal cigars of 2013 with representatives from Padrón, Davidoff and Boutique Blends sharing insights on their smokes to a crowd of about 500 enthusiasts. The morning continued with seminars on tobacco regions (which included panel speakers Carlos Fuente Jr., Rocky Patel and Alejandro Turrent); large ring-gauge cigar trends (joined by Matt Booth, Michael Herklots and Ernesto Perez-Carrillo); and tobacco seed varieties (with guest speakers Litto Gomez and Manuel Quesada). The seminars all concluded with a Big Smoke luncheon hosted by Alec Bradley Cigars.

Sunday morning began with a breakfast seminar led by chef Nicole Brisson of Carnevino restaurant, followed by a roll-your-own workshop hosted by La Gloria Cubana's Mike Giannini. Finally, a spirits segment allowed Big Smoke guests to the pair Quesada and Casa Magna Colorado cigars with a range of Canadian whiskies. This seminar was moderated by *Cigar Aficionado's* Jack Bettridge.

The sold-out event spread over three days and nights with more than 4,000 cigar lovers in attendance. For complete coverage of the Las Vegas Big Smoke weekend a photo gallery and in-depth looks at each of the seminars, visit www.cigaraficionado.com. ■

NEW DAVIDOFF TO RETAIL FOR \$500

BY DAVID SAVONA

Davidoff of Geneva has revealed the price of its **Davidoff Oro Blanco**, and it has shattered all records for a new-production cigar. The vintage smoke will sell for \$500, making it the most expensive non-flavored cigar on the market, Cuban or otherwise.

“This is going to be our most expensive cigar ever, and the most expensive in the market,” said Hans-Kristian Høejsgaard, chief executive officer of Oettinger Davidoff AG, the company that owns the **Davidoff** cigar brand.



The new smoke, which will be quite limited, will begin shipping at the end of this month.

The cigar is historic for reasons that go beyond its high price. This will be the first vintage smoke for Davidoff, and it will be made entirely from tobacco that was harvested in 2002. Back then, Davidoff’s Eladio Diaz was impressed with the type of leaves he saw in that crop from a particular region of the Dominican Republic, where he makes his home and where Davidoff makes all of its cigars. Diaz set aside some leaves he felt were particularly lovely, and put them away for aging. Those leaves have been rolled into Davidoff Oro Blanco, which is Spanish for white gold.

The cigar is what Davidoff calls a grand toro size, measuring 6 inches long by 54 ring gauge. They will come in individual wooden boxes retailing for \$500 each, or in boxes of 10 selling for \$5,000 a box. Høejsgaard described the boxes

as “hand-crafted.” The new cigars will have bands featuring the signature of Diaz and will be sold in Davidoff flagship stores.

To put the price of the Davidoff into perspective, if you could purchase all of the Churchills and coronas that were rated in the December *Cigar Aficionado*—24 cigars in all—it would cost \$398.57, more than \$100 less than one of the new Davidoffs.

As pricey as the new Davidoff cigar is, there are comparably priced smokes. Gurkha makes a flavored cigar called the **Gurkha His Majesty’s Reserve**, and the company says each box of 20 is made using an entire bottle of Louis XIII de Rémy Martin Cognac, which is considerably expensive. The box has a suggested retail price of \$25,000, making each cigar retail individually for \$1,250.

The only non-flavored new cigar release that can compare in price to this Davidoff is the original **Cohiba Behike**, a Cuban cigar released in 2006. The cigars were presented in ornate Elie Bleu humidors, each containing 40 cigars. The price, humidor and all, was 15,000 euro (nearly \$19,000 in today’s U.S. dollars) making each cigar worth 375 Euro (\$468). But that comparison is difficult to make, given that the price of those original Behike cigars included 1/40th of an ornate humidor.

The Behikes sold today (a trio of Cuban cigars that carry the moniker **Behike BHK**) retail for as much as \$100 each in certain markets, far cheaper than the new Davidoffs.

Høejsgaard said that some people had already ordered the cigar, price unknown, after seeing news of the smoke break on cigaraficionado.com in October. Diaz, he said, would be making “very, very small batches” of the cigar, and while he said production would be limited, he wouldn’t say precisely how many cigars would ultimately be made.

Tomorrow, on the Davidoff website, interested parties can put their names on a waiting list for the cigar. ■

UNITED KINGDOM GETS ITS SECOND CASA DEL HABANO

BY GORDON MOTT

Cigar lovers in the United Kingdom have a new place to find their favorite Cuban cigars. A Casa del Habano opened last week in Chester, which is a city on the outskirts of Liverpool in the northwest of England. It is the second Casa del Habano in the United Kingdom; the first is located in Teddington, London.

“We are excited about the new shop in Chester,” said Jemma Freeman, the managing director of Hunters & Frankau, the U.K. importer of Cuban cigars. “The market here is buoyant. And, a new shop is a good reflection of just how vibrant the market is.”

The Casa del Habano in Chester is operated by Mitchell Orchant, the U.K. tobacco retailer who operates 11 cigar shops in the region, with a 12th to open in December. The shop represents a significant investment with a large walk-in humidor, a VIP locker section with approximately 24 private bins and a lounge with 22 seats where people can enjoy cigars and sample some of the wide range of whiskies that Orchant has stocked. Like all Casa del Habano shops worldwide, the cigar selection is limited to cigars produced by Habanos, S.A., the Cuban cigar monopoly, which today is a joint venture between the Cuban government and Altadis S.A, the global tobacco company.

“We have a tremendous selection of Havana cigars, with just about every one that is produced today,” Orchant said in a phone interview. “We also will be stocking all the regional and limited editions, and because of our existing stocks, we sell a number of discontinued cigars that can’t be found anywhere else.”

Orchant said he had been able to buy an adjacent space to his 10-year-old shop in Chester. “We were able to split the business, and move all our Cuban cigars into the Casa del Habano. And, we still have our traditional English tobacconist next door.” ■

PADRÓN HUMIDORS, COMING, WILL INCLUDE REFILL OPTION

BY DAVID SAVONA

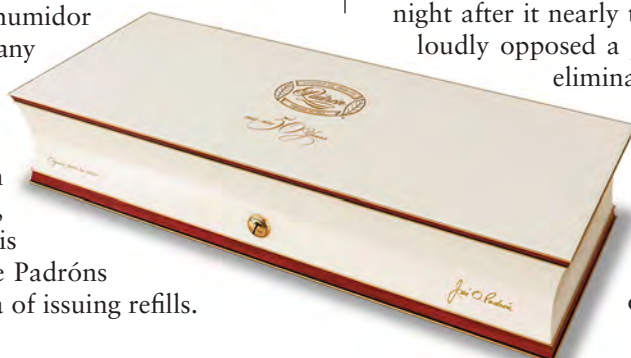
The Padrón 50th Anniversary humidor is scheduled to arrive within weeks, and Padrón Cigars Inc. has disclosed the new price and revealed previously unknown details about an unusual refill policy associated with the humidor.

The humidors, individually numbered and containing 50 numbered cigars, will sell for a suggested retail price of \$6,000 (not \$5,000 as the company originally thought). They could arrive at the end of this month or early in December, and production has been limited to 1,000 humidors.

But there will be more than just the 50,000 cigars inside all of those humidors—buyers of the humidors will be allowed to purchase refills, 50 cigars at a time, when they are made available by Padrón.

“The people that own the humidor have the right to the refill,” company president Jorge Padrón told *Cigar Insider*. “It’s never been done before.”

The detailed process had been debated by Padrón for some time, and after initially considering this strategy, then abandoning it, the Padróns have returned to their initial idea of issuing refills.



Each humidor will come with a plate describing the refill process, and detailing the serial number of the humidor. After receiving the piece, the owners will be directed to a dedicated website prompting them to register their humidor. There will also be a certificate loosely modeled after the title of a car; if someone were to sell their humidor, they sign it over to the next owner, transferring the rights of the refills.

When the refills are ready, customers will receive an email, asking them if they wish to make a purchase of the cigars. The refills will not be shipped directly from Padrón, instead the customers will be directed to the cigar shop where they bought the humidor.

“You can only get the new cigars from the original retailer,” said Padrón. A buyer doesn’t have to take the new cigars. “You have the right to refuse,” he said.

To distinguish between the original 50 cigars that come with the humidor and those that are shipped as refills, the refill cigars will have different colored bands from the originals. Also the numbers on the refills will be different, and not in the same order as the originals, although the blend will be the same.

The white humidors were designed by Nelson Alfonso and made by Golden Age.

The cigars packed in the humidor will measure 6 1/2 inches long by 52 ring gauge, longer than the other Padrón Family Blend 50 Years, which is sold in boxes and is made in far larger quantities than the cigars that will come in the humidor. The maduro version of the Padrón Family Blend 50 Years scored 92 points in the September 23 *Cigar Insider*. That smoke measures 5 inches long by 54 ring gauge, and retails for \$25. ■

MASSACHUSETTS TOWN LOOKS TO BAN TOBACCO SALES—LOCALS IN UPROAR

BY ANDREW NAGY

A monthly routine Board of Health meeting in the small Massachusetts town of Westminister was forced to shut down much earlier than expected last Wednesday night after it nearly turned into a riot. Townspeople there loudly opposed a proposed ban that would completely eliminate the sale of tobacco products within the municipality’s borders.

As more municipalities are passing laws that raise the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 21 years old, Westminister may go a step further, and by doing so, become the first one in the country to adopt a total ban.

The Board of Health of Westminister, Massachusetts, has posted on its website a proposed set of new rules that will ban the sale of all tobacco products in the town of a little more than 7,000 residents. The regulations would prohibit the sale of cigars, cigarettes, e-cigarettes and “any product containing, made, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption...” Additionally, no free samples of tobacco products will be allowed to be distributed. Though selling tobacco under the proposed law would be illegal, the actual act of smoking in Westminister would still be allowed.

In the state of Massachusetts, local health boards regulate tobacco sales and have the ability to legislate this issue outside the jurisdiction of local government.

Westminister health officials would be responsible for enforcing the new regulations. First time violators would be fined \$300, while second and third offense violators would also have any business permits granted by the Board of Health suspended, or possibly revoked.

Although the nearest cigar bar or dedicated tobacconist is about 20 miles from Westminister, local business owners like convenience and liquor stores that sell cigarettes and cigars, are infuriated by the proposal. Many are saying that the new rules would threaten their livelihoods and only cause customers to travel to other communities to purchase tobacco. In response, the business owners circulated a petition against the ban and have already collected 1,200 signatures at last count.

“I think people are really angry because they feel this is being shoved down their throats,” said Joyce McGuire, a Westminister resident and nonsmoker who opposes the ban, in one news report.

The Board of Health will be accepting written testimony from proponents and opponents of the ban until December 1. A vote date has not been specified. ■

NEW DAVIDOFF FLAGSHIP STORE COMING TO ATLANTA, GEORGIA

BY DAVID CLOUGH

A new Davidoff lounge and retail location is slated to arrive in the upscale shopping and dining district of Atlanta, Georgia, known as Buckhead.

Set to open in the Spring of 2015, the 3,000 square foot flagship store will be divided into five separate areas and feature interior and architectural design inspired by the Dominican Republic.

“We are delighted to open up a new ‘Davidoff of Geneva—Since 1911’ flagship store in Buckhead,” said Jim Young, president of Davidoff of Geneva North

America in a recent press release.

Young described the massive construction project: “This new store will feature a sizeable walk-in humidor, a beautiful retail space where we will display a selection of the finest accessories, and an inviting 1,000-plus square-foot cigar lounge, all brought together through our new global retail design concept. It also includes a VIP member’s lounge and a conference room for clients wishing to conduct meetings in a premium cigar environment.”

Davidoff partnered with private real estate firm Oliver-McMillan to make the luxury-smoking destination a reality. The firm is the driving force behind the Buckhead Atlanta development, which spans six city blocks.

Beset on all sides by high-end shopping, dining, residential and entertainment facilities, the new Davidoff flagship store is positioned to become the primary cigar-smoking destination for the affluent Buckhead community. ■

DREW ESTATE LAUNCHES PAPPY VAN WINKLE CIGARS FOR WHISKEY PAIRING

BY DAVID CLOUGH

Drew Estate Inc., recently acquired by tobacco giant Swisher International, announced a new partnership and cigar line with Pappy & Company called **Pappy Van Winkle’s Family Reserve**. The cigars are designed to be paired with whiskey.

The line debuts in two sizes, Robusto and Toro, and is made in conjunction with the family-owned merchandise division of Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery, which is known for producing premium, small-batch whiskies such as Pappy Van Winkle Bourbon.

“We’re extremely happy to be working with Drew Estate on this project, as both of our companies are known for their high quality, handmade products,” said Carrie Van Winkle. Van Winkle is the great granddaughter of the titular Pappy Van Winkle.

“When we approached Drew Estate with the idea of working together on a premium cigar, we knew we’d made the right choice,” she said. “The finished cigar is the perfect pairing for our family’s whiskeys.”

Pappy Van Winkle Family Reserve is made at La Gran Fabrica Drew Estate in Estelí, Nicaragua, and features an Ecuadoran Habano wrapper and Nicaraguan filler. The Robusto measures 5 1/4 inches by 52 ring gauge and retails for \$13. The Toro is 6 by 54 and retails for \$15. Both come in packages of 10 and are available for pre-order on the Pappy & Company website, though Van Winkle told *Cigar Insider* that they’re not expected to ship until approximately mid-December. ■



GURKHA REDSIGNS PEDRO MARTÍN BRAND

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

When Maria Martín launched her **Pedro Martín** brand back in 2011, she intended it as a tribute to her father, the late tobacco luminary who founded Tabacalera Tropical. But last year, production of the line was temporarily halted before Gurkha acquired the Pedro Martín brand (and hired Maria) with plans to completely overhaul the cigars from packaging to end product. Today, the new Pedro Martíns have been consolidated to two regular-production lines, and the packaging has been redesigned.



The new boxes, Gurkha believes, are a better reflection of Martín's storied history in the business. Each inner lid is emblazoned with a central monogrammed crest and symbolic illustration. Flanking the "PM" monogram are two landscapes. On the right is the Castillo de Jagua, a castle that protected the Cuban city of Cienfuegos, close to where Martín was born. On the left is Cuba's famed tobacco growing region of Pinar del Rio. While the decorative gold filigree represents tobacco flowers, the dates 1920 and 2010 are the birth and death year of Martín.

The boxes, which used to be laquered, are now made of unvarnished cedar with the same type of decorative trimwork along the edges found on traditional dress boxes.

The two Pedro Martín brands, **Ruby** and **Maduro** are made with Corojo and Mexican San Andrés wrappers, respectively, though both otherwise contain all Nicaraguan tobacco. A Robusto, Toro and 6 by 60 called the XO are available. While the Rubies retail for \$7.50 to \$9.50, the Maduros are priced a little higher. ■

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