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# THE CIGAR TIMES



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# THE CIGAR TIMES



*This is really the only time we've ever seen Peter without a cigar... and no moustache!... Which he promptly removed as agreed during the silent auction at City Cigar's Second Annual Golf Tournament. Congratulations to the highest bidder!*

## WINTER HOURS

**Monday-Saturday 9-7  
Sunday 11-6**



## MEMBER LOUNGE NEWS

## Open House Sundays in Our Member Lounge

**S**IMPLY A GREAT WAY TO SPEND A LEISURELY Sunday afternoon, relaxing with your friends and your favourite fine cigar.

Our Member Lounge is pleased to invite both Members and Non-members alike to enjoy our lounge on Sundays at no charge. Complimentary coffee and newspaper.

## FROM YOUR HOST

## Carpe Diem!

with David Kariotakis

**I** USUALLY KEEP MYSELF VERY BUSY, BUT recently I was walking near Kits Beach and decided to take a break from a hectic day.

I found a comfortable park bench with a great view and settled in. I then lit up a small but fine cigar. Over the

next half hour (I did say the cigar was small!) I soaked in the scenery: people walking their dogs or simply enjoying their leisure time; the rhythm of the ocean spilling onto the shore; the magnificent trees and the fragrant spring

[see SMELL THE ROSES, page 2...](#)

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## Thank You!

There are so many people to thank who made City Cigar's Second Annual Golf Tournament an absolute triumph! We couldn't have done it without all the amazing volunteers who dedicated many Thursday afternoons to ensure the Tourney would be as tremendous as it was. A thank you as well to all of those who offered us their relentless support and assistance throughout the tournament itself. Be sure to register well in advance for City Cigar's Third Annual Golf Tournament, as every year is sure to be better than the last!

### CITY CIGAR'S SECOND ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT RESULTS

#### The Winning Team Was:

Sultan Thiara  
Roy Toigo  
Kim Bortnack  
Charn Rai

Winning Score -10

#### Most Honest Team

Ted Loo  
Lianna Mah  
Karen Watson  
Ken Ilescas

#### Winner of Night at City Cigar:

Wayne Kennedy  
Jag Kathary  
John Helsing  
Brian Clarkson

#### ...SMELL THE ROSES from page 1

blooms; and the freighters in the distance, waiting their turn to unload their bounty.

It was great. This pause from my day certainly qualified as smelling the flowers.

But it was the cigar that really made me take notice—it truly did enhance my experience. Sure, whenever I smoke a fine cigar I really enjoy it, so naturally it would add to almost any moment. But without that cigar, I wouldn't have sat down at all, and certainly would not have stayed so long. And then, my mind wouldn't have had the chance to wander, to the point that when I left I felt refreshed and revitalized mentally, physically, and even in my soul. If I had spent that time in the office, I would have done some work. But I sure felt more productive when I returned.

This experience reaffirmed why I love cigars. They are a perfect match to many occasions, adding to the moment, and allowing that crucial time to ponder.

Of course, I love City Cigar as much for the people as the cigars. I have a great staff and so many excellent customers and members. I always look forward to coming into the shop, to visit with you, and play my part in sharing the cigar experience.

~~~

**MAXXIM**  
FINE WINES & SPIRITS CANADA

We would like express a heartfelt thank you to Maxxim for sponsoring, once again, such an amazing event. The Second Annual Scotch Tasting here at City Cigar was a huge success. Thanks Stephen!

**Tip: Machine made cigars usually burn hotter and quicker than hand made cigars, due to the short filler.**

We would like to welcome City Cigar's new members: David Tsang, Scott Todd, Amar, Daniel, Todd, and we'd like to welcome back Jamie. (Sadly, Jamie's return was short-lived. We hope to have the pleasure of welcoming him back again in the future - good luck with the UN in Afghanistan.)

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**Tip: Never put your cigars in the fridge or freezer. The only time you would is if you have a beetle problem.**

INVESTING

## Attention Lovers of All Things Cuban!

IF YOU LIKE THE CIGARS, YOU'LL LOVE the real estate. You can legally invest in Cuba through the public company Leisure Canada (LCN on the TSX-V). Leisure Canada is the leading developer of luxury resorts in Cuba, with multiple properties currently under development, including the right to develop 4200 five-star hotel rooms, timeshare condominiums and PGA championship golf courses.

What will be the value of these properties following the ending of the embargo? To find out more, please visit [www.leisurecanada.com](http://www.leisurecanada.com) or contact Investor Relations at (604)-990-9599.

**BACK TO INTRO**

## Limited Edition Cigars Released from Cuba

THIS WILL BE THE THIRD YEAR THAT Cuba has released limited-edition product. In the future there will be new product released annually, even though each year's production is controlled so that there are only a specific number of cigars released.

The distribution for these cigars is a little behind schedule. The first year, 1999 (actually released in 2000), saw Cuba release the Millennium Line of Cohiba Pirimides, Cuaba Distinguidos and Montecristo Robusto, all available in ceramic jars. The second year, 2000 (actually released 2001) included the Montecristo Robusto, RYJ Exhibicion No. 2, Partagas Pirimides and the Hoyo de Monterrey Particulares. All of these cigars had maduro wrappers, which was extraordinary as Cuba had not produced maduro cigars since before the revolution, over 45 years ago. The third year, 2001 (actually released this year, 2002), the Hoyo Particulares were re-released, as availability was all but non-existent in years previous. This year there is also Partagas Series D #3, RYJ Robusto and Cohiba Pirimides. All of these cigars also have a maduro wrapper.

Pricing for these cigars varies depending on which retailer you visit and quantities may be limited. City Cigar



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will list its pricing (see below) so you can make a fair comparison for yourself. The Hoyo Particulares itself is worth the visit. They come in a box of five, and each individual cigar is in a beautiful cedar box. Quite the sight.

How limited are the Limited Edition Cigars? It is hard to say, but judging from last year's release of particularly the Montecristo Robusto, supply will be tight as collectors jump at the opportunity to acquire cigars that won't be widely available. It has also been an exceptional year for the quality of tobacco in Cuba.

**COHIBA PIRIMIDES**  
**6 X 52**  
**\$44.95**

**HOYO DE MONTERREY PARTICULARES**  
**9 X 47**  
**\$64.95**

**PARTAGAS SERIES D #3**  
**5 X 45**  
**\$28.95**

**RYJ ROBUSTO**  
**5 X 50**  
**\$26.95**



*"There's something about smoking a cigar that feels like a celebration. It's like a fine wine. There's a quality, a workmanship, a passion that goes into the smoking of a fine cigar."*  
—Demi Moore



## What's in a Name?

**H**AVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY THERE is a Cuban Cohiba as well as a Dominican Cohiba? Most Cuban Brands have an equivalent non-Cuban counterpart. If it's not every single one, it's close. From what we understand, as it's been difficult to locate a definitive source, the trademarks owned by Habanos SA are what are recognized all over the world, with the exception of the United States. They do not recognize those trademarks.

Many of the people who fled Cuba went to the US and from there decided to begin their own lines of cigars, using Dominican and Honduran tobacco. They also chose to use the same brand names that they had used in Cuba. (It is also an important point to note that the Cuban and their non-Cuban counterparts bear little to *no* resemblance in flavour profile and characteristics other than their brand names and sometimes size). They went to the courts in the US, fought and won the right to use those brand names. Had they fled to any other country in the world, it would not have been possible to use those brand names.

You are not able to purchase these non-Cuban cigars anywhere in the world except for the country of origin, and the United States. These cigars are manufactured in their home country in a designated zone, not for domestic consumption and are exported immediately.

There are exceptions mind you. Hoyo de Monterrey cigars that are made in Honduras have a line of cigars that can be acquired internationally, because they are only an extension of that line. They are the Excalibur cigars and people know these cigars because they were

initially introduced as Hoyo de Monterrey Excaliber. So when they wanted to go international, it was required to drop the Hoyo heading.

Also of note, House of Horvath (HOH, a Canadian distributor for non-Cuban cigars) owns the name Punch in Canada and has for some time, allowing them to import Punch cigars. But HOH cannot import any Cuban cigars as there is only one distributor of Cuban cigars for all of Canada. So they may only import the Honduran Punch. Since it is HOH that owns the Punch name in Canada, the sole distributor for Cuban cigars cannot import the Cuban Punch.

Cuba has begun to further detach itself from the confusion between brands and has established unique lines such as Trinidad, and recently San Cristobal, which Cuba solely owns and trademarks throughout the world.

It will be interesting to see the chain of events when the embargo gets lifted. If Cuban cigars are to be sold in the United States, either Cuba or the U. S. must pay money to the current owners

# TM

## Upcoming Events

**Come and discover Saint Luis Rey, a cigar that is all too often overlooked. That only adds to the experience for those who've come to appreciate SLR.**

**The less people know about these cigars, means all the more for those that do.**

of the brands, sell the rights exclusively and entirely or change the name of the cigar enough (i.e.: MC 1 instead of Montecristo #1) and import them that way.

Now, that's only to say if Cuba will even consider bringing Cuban cigars into the US. There are so many possibilities, that all we can do is wait and see. ■

**Tip: Any Cohiba Esplendido box with a glass top will be fake.**



*Mission Impossible:  
Smoke the biggest  
cigar you've ever  
seen, and survive to  
tell the tale.  
Mission accepted.  
Status: mission  
accomplished.  
Way to go Sean!*



## Getting to Know... David

HERE IS PART ONE OF A MULTI-PART interview with City Cigar owner, David Kariotakis:

### David Emmanuel Kariotakis Cigar Merchant

CC: How long have you been the owner of City Cigar?

DK: I've officially owned it for two years now, but it's been in the family since the beginning, and we just celebrated our fifth anniversary in October. My brother and his partners were the ones who originally got into this business — they were the entrepreneurs and originally built it as the import warehouse. You see, five years ago, there was really no central Cuban distribution up here, and this building was really ideal for that side of the business, because it was central to the market.

CC: Did they build the Members Lounge?

DK: Well, what happened was that they realized as the business grew that

**Tip: Try to use anything but a Zippo lighter when lighting your cigar. The lighter fluid will impart an unpleasant taste.**



this was not a big enough warehouse, so they looked for additional premises for the distribution. But they still had this location and they felt this was where all their friends came to smoke a cigar. So the lounge grew out of necessity — the need to accommodate their friends and family.

CC: And how did you feel about your brother's business?

DK: When I found out that they were in the cigar industry, I didn't get it, because I didn't smoke cigars five years ago. I just didn't know the world of cigars. My first cigar was actually given to me by a gentleman who had bought it from my brother. It was a Montecristo A and he presented it to me and said, "Here, this is for you." I didn't even really know which end to light — that's how naive I was about cigars. He explained to me a little bit of what I was supposed to do, so I went home, got out the scotch, sat down in front of the fireplace and thought, "Okay, I'm going to try this out." It took me three days to smoke the thing. I still didn't get it. I was thinking, "What on Earth is my brother doing in this business"? I just had no idea.

CC: And of course a Monte A is...?

DK: A Monte A is a celebratory cigar. It's a \$60 cigar — at that time close to a \$100 cigar — and I didn't realize the significance of the gift. Now I understand — if you're going to mark an occasion, I couldn't think of a better



cigar.

CC: Do you think it would have influenced your future if it had been a lesser cigar?

DK: You know — interesting point. I was in the food business then, operating a large catering company — which is still thriving today — and I remember being at a food trade show. I went to a big steakhouse in Chicago, and a cigar vendor came around and we thought, why not? It must have been a \$5 cigar, but the fusion of smoking a cigar after a wonderfully exquisite meal — it probably had more impact on me than the Monte A, at least in terms of my enjoyment of it. I wasn't ready for a Monte A then. But I smoked a cigar every day at that trade show — a different cigar

see DAVID, page 7...

Photos this page:  
"Making the rounds at work sure is rough..."



## Making a Cigar

**H**AVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT REALLY goes into the making of your cigars? The process might be a little more arduous than you may imagine. The list of tasks is long. So long in fact, we can simply attempt the most general of descriptions for each one.

The sequence of events will begin in July or August, when the *veguero* (tobacco farmer) plows vegetable matter into the soil several times to allow for the planting that takes place between September and October.

Then, from October until January, the plants are relentlessly checked for pests. The flower buds and side shoots are removed, and the plants must always be weeded.

This means that each plant is visited over 100 times while it is growing!

Finally the harvesting can begin. Each leaf must be picked at a very precise time. That means that harvesting can sometimes be spread over as many as 40 days. As the leaves are picked they are sewn together in pairs and hung over long poles and put into drying barns to prepare for the first fermentation process.

*A lector at one of the manufacturers, an effective voice for spreading new ideas since the 19th century.*



*Tobacco crops growing in Cuba.*

The first fermentation process will usually last about one month, and consists of reducing the resin content in the leaves. It also results in a more uniform colour. Once the first process is complete there are a few things that must be done before the second fermentation can take place. The leaves must be moistened and part of the stem must be removed. After that, the tobacco leaves are classified and bundled.

The second fermentation is more intense and will last roughly two months. This second step enhances flavour and aroma. It will also serve to remove the last of the impurities. The bundles are removed from the fermentation stacks at the end of the two months. They are dried for a few days before being packed in *tercios* (bales).

Once they are packed, they are taken to a tobacco warehouse where they are stored until required by a manufacturer. As the leaves are housed in the warehouse, they age. This improves flavour and aroma once more.

After the *tercios* arrives at the manufacturers, the wrappers are removed and moistened once again to restore that silky texture that wrapper leaves are famous for. The strippers then remove the leftover stem. They sort the leaves by colour, size and texture. Then they unpack the filler leaves and they are stored until they are fully mature. Afterwards, they are sent to be blended.

All of the different leaves are then blended into many different, very specific recipes, and bundled. Those bundles are given to the *torcedores* (rollers). *Torcedores* don't use much equipment. The skill is all in the hands of the *torcedores* themselves. They use only a wooden board, a *chaveta* (knife), a guillotine and a small bit of vegetable-based glue. On average each roller will produce 120 cigars a day. As they work, they follow an old tradition of being



*Tobacco leaves in the early stages of air curing.*

read to all day, either from the newspaper or a novel that has been voted on by the *torcedores*.

Each bundle they receive will produce 50 cigars. Once the cigars are rolled they are bundled and labelled with the name of the person who rolled them. The next step is the examination of the cigars. This ensures even construction, and length, shape, gauge and weight. All must meet the high standards that are set. If they don't measure up, they are rejected.

The cigars that pass the test are placed in a conditioning room with cedar cupboards so that they can release some of the moisture that they

[see MAKING A CIGAR, page 8...](#)



*Above: Pinar del Rio Province, Cuba. Harvested filler leaves called cujes, which are then raked in curing barns, below.*



## Announcing Guantanamera

ITS NAME COMES FROM A SONG TITLED “Guajira Guantanamera”, created in 1928 by Cuban signer and songwriter Joséito Fernández that gained fame during the 1940s.

The new brand differs from the traditional Habanos both in its product design and its commercialization: these cigars are manufactured in a modern facility belonging to the Cuban tobacco industry (ICT), using blends of leaves from Vuelta Arriba, the second most important tobacco-growing region in Cuba. “Guantanameras” are mild-bodied cigars.

With an original presentation, rigid packs and packs of 5 and 10 units, the new brand comes in four sizes and is reasonably priced.



### CRISTALES ~ ( 5 7/8" X 41 )

This is the largest size (150 mm long and 16.27 mm in diameter). It comes in a protective transparent tube and is the perfect gift for a good friend. It is also presented in boxes of 25's.

Priced at \$6.95 per cigar.

## Thank You!

**We'd all like to thank Aldo Montegudo for the amazing cigars that he rolled while he was visiting City Cigar. It was incredible to watch, almost like going back in time.**

**Thank you as well to Havana House and Primero for making it possible to have someone like Aldo to demonstrate the timeless art of rolling cigars.**



*Happy Holidays!*

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### DECIMOS ~ ( 5 1/4" X 38 )

It is named for the ten-line verse form in which the song “Guajira Guantanamera”—the source of inspiration for the name of this brand—was written.

Priced at \$4.50 per cigar.

### COMPAY ~ ( 4 7/8" X 40 )

Its name is typical Cuban expression used informally in eastern Cuba to mean friend or pal.

Priced at \$4.50 per cigar.

### PURITOS ~ ( 4 1/8" X 29 )

This is the smallest size (106 mm long and 10.32 mm in diameter) which is why cigars of this size are called “little pure ones”. It joins the family of small-sized cigars which Habanos' s.a., began to introduce in its portfolio of sizing last year, and is proving very popular for an alternative to the cigarillo smoking market.

Priced at \$2.75 per Cigar.

The new cigars are wrapped in cellophane thus allowing a better preservation. Tips are already cut to facilitate lighting.

As a new product, Guantanameras are sure to be given a warm welcome in those market segments where Cuban cigars have not been present so far. ■

***“A good humidor is not just another box.”***  
**—Zino Davidoff**

***Box Pressed: An old Cuban tradition of pressing or squaring off cigars so they are not round, that is now very popular with many cigar manufacturers. Originally, it was practised so that cigars would not roll off the table.***

...DAVID from page 5

every day. When I got back to Vancouver, I realized the significance of timing, and time. It was about three years between my first cigar to when I finally “got it.” So now, I'm very conscious when a customer walks into the shop who is new to cigars. My advice is to start off with a more modest cigar.

CC: *Tell us some of the changes you've implemented at City Cigar since you took over.*

DK: We worked on the membership lounge and today, it's full with a waiting list. Some cigar companies out there cater pretty exclusively to the US market, whereas we've tried to create a place for the local market—and our market is probably a lot more locally based than many others. We've discovered that we have a unique situation here—we have a cigar culture—and if anything, we try to focus on the culture.

*Getting to Know David con-*  
*tinues next issue.*



## Rafael Lopez-Ramos

CITY CIGAR IS PLEASED TO BE PROFILING the artwork of Rafael Lopez-Ramos.

Rafael was born in Sancti-Spiritus, Cuba in 1962 and grew up in La Habana, where graduated from the San Alejandro Academy of Art (1985) and finished four years of a Master of Fine Arts at Instituto Superior de Arte (1987-91).

His works has been exhibited at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes (La Habana), Elaine Benson Gallery (New York), Ateneo de Caracas (Venezuela) and many other venues around the world. He is invited to participate in the Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea City of Florence (De-



cember 6–14, 2003) where he will be representing Canada as well as his native Cuban heritage.

Since March 1997, Lopez-Ramos has lived in Vancouver with his wife Natasha Perdomo (also an artist) and their cat Betty María de la Caridad Valdés. ■

**Tip: Cohiba and Montecristo #2 are the most counterfeited cigars. Buy from a reliable source.**



...MAKING A CIGAR from page 6

have acquired during rolling. That room is kept between 16 and 18 degrees Celsius, and humidity is maintained between 65 and 70%, as cigars are kept there for anywhere from 3 weeks to 8 months.

Next, the cigars are taken to the *escogedor* (colour grader), one of the highest paid workers in the factory. They will sort the cigars into over 60 different shades. Once that job is complete, another *escogedor* then puts the cigars in a temporary box so that the finest tones are arranged from dark to light, and left to right. They also make sure that the best face of the cigar is showing. That temporary box is given by the *escogedor* to the *anilladora* (*bander*) who places the band on the face of the cigar chosen by the *escogedor*. The cigar must also be replaced in the prearranged order.

Finally, the final touches are made to the boxes, and the government warranty seal is put into place. Several years after the seeds are planted; the cigars are ready to be released.

That, my friends is what it takes to make a cigar. ■



**Tip: Any Cuban cigar wrapped in cellophane will be machine made.**



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