
Subject: inFOH April Edition

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A word from El Pres...

Tough month! The proverbial bottom of the wrapper barrel has been scraped more than once if early 2017 stock (2nd half 2016 codes) is anything to go by. As I pointed out in the thread "First Quarter 2017 wrap-up", I am witnessing the poorest quality wrappers since 99/00. More worrying still is the level of underfilling on display across multiple lines. There are still plenty of brilliant cigars coming out of Cuba but take a look at the photos and you will see some worrying signs. Let's hope that they have enough quality leaf to hold on until this year's excellent crop is ready (2018 for the wrapper).

Cheers,

Rob.

Blind Tasting Competition:

Cigar Number One

Contestants did damn well on this one with some 33% of tasters nailing it!

That is the highest blind tasting success rate in the history of the comp!

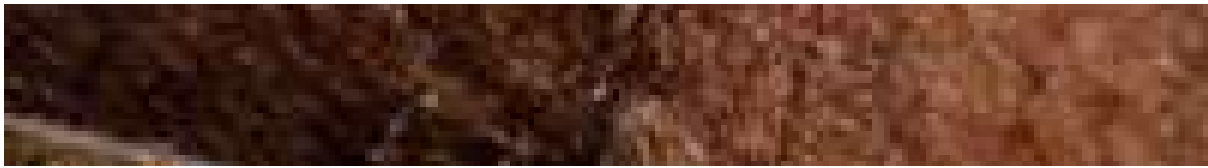
The cigar at play is a personal favourite and has been since quality returned in mid-2013 onwards. Welcome to the Punch Punch.

Yep, the same cigar where in Havana, 28 of our 36 FOH blind tasters (Santy's restaurant) preferred the Punch Punch over the Diplomatico Excelencia Cuba Regional 2015.

Talk about a cigar batting above its pay grade. What a magnificent reminder of how good regular production cigars can be and how they can hold their own against the double banded dollar gobblers.

The Punch Punch is that good that it risks being on the Habanos s.a discontinued list. Kidding.....only kidding people :-)





Mould Testing Underway

Our Mould study is underway with our spore samples bagged up and off to the scientists for testing. Again, many thanks to all who have helped out with samples here. Let's see if we can break down what types of moulds we are dealing with in the world of cigars as well as finding any definitive examples of "plume". The end game (for me) is to identify what "plume" is and what brings it about.

Cuba Travel Forum

Member demand has forced our hand and we have started our Czar Travel Forum. The sole aim for the Cuba Travel Forum is to use our members collective experience to provide relatively up to date Cuba travel accommodation.

From accommodation to emergency medical, let's see if we can give you the lie of the land.

Jump on in and help us out!



The greatest cigar party in the Southern Hemisphere takes place at FOH central on Saturday the 28th of October 2017 (with some warm up drinks on the deck Friday afternoon the 27th).

Due to the demand, personal invitations will be e-mailed out to our Aussie brethren this week. International members need only contact myself for an invitation as you are more than welcome.

For those that have been before, you know what you are in for. For those new to Havanathon.....good luck!

CIGAR OF THE MONTH

Romeo y Julieta Capuleto &
Vegas Robaina Don Alejandro



It was tight call this month. It was so damn hard to split the Romeo y Julieta Capuleto and the Vegas Robaina Don Alejandro in terms of the best tasting cigars of the month. In terms of quality, the Capuleto wins hands down but the video review of the Don Alejandro detailed how good this cigar can be. There is a link at the bottom of the newsletter to both reviews. If you have time to waste....you might as well waste it watching those reviews!

Top 5 for the Month

(BASED ON QUALITY COMING THROUGH)

1 Romeo y Julieta Capuleto

2 Hoyo De Monterrey Epicure number 1

3 Juan Lopez Seleccion number 2

4 Bolivar Royal Corona

5 H. Upmann Magnum 48

Top Ten Threads

OF MARCH

- Blind tasting Cigar Number One.
- Quick Report From Habanos Festival.
- First quarter 2017 wrap-up.
- Ran out. The one cigar you miss.
- Box you just can't crack.
- Email of the month and why we don't discuss other vendors.
- Passing of a member.
- That Unique flavour nuance you can find in no other cigar.
- Music to smoke by.
- I despise you. Double banded dollar gobbler.

Made in Heaven... or Hell

The art of matching cigars and liquor by Ken Gargett.
March 2017



If you think that it is tough to arrive at a consensus on a cigar, it is many more times so to form any sort of agreement over matching a cigar with a drink, but that is half the fun. First, select your cigar. Then, depending on the circumstances, time of day, weather, company, music and a great many other variables, pick a drink (or not if you prefer).

Personally, I struggle with red wines and cigars, notwithstanding the very many times I have given them a chance. Rum, some malt whiskies, port, an occasional cognac, very often champagne, some whites – all work better than reds. Others disagree.

Some time ago, on a trip to Spain, I had a chance to go to the famous Mugaritz, in San Sebastian, for dinner (don't miss it – truly mindbogglingly good. Most critics seem to have it in their top two or three in the world, although the Michelin people have it only as a two-star, suggesting that they are way out of touch). I was keen to have a chat with their sommelier, Nicolas Boise.



Nicolas is a young Frenchman, though you'd never know from the accent (Burgundian, actually). He has worked in the Fat Duck, and for me, was as good a sommelier as I've ever encountered. Knew his stuff thoroughly and, unlike so many that one comes across, especially here, no airs and graces or poncy superiority (no screenplays in the bottom drawer). Just a bloke who loves doing what he does and who is extremely good at it. He really is prepared to think outside the box. Some combinations (and at this stage, we are talking food, not cigars) involved things like a spicy beer, a particular sake or even just water.

Needless to say, I asked about matching cigars.

His first suggestion, and obviously all this is dictated by exactly which cigar one is smoking, was rum. So, we were immediately on the same track. I had intended to return to rum and discuss it in more depth but we got sidetracked on so many other topics.

His view is that a refreshing drink is usually the better match. He considers that many cocktails work extremely well but again, which cigar and which cocktail could probably earn someone a Ph.D.