

FALL 2005

NEWS

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 3

NEWS FROM NEW ORLEANS

Retail Tobacco Dealers held their annual convention in New Orleans in early August. At that time there was lots of great news for members of the specialty tobacco industry, smiles all around in the Convention Centre and the buzz was all positive when we left the City August 9. No new what was coming or could predict what the end of the month would bring.

The premium cigar business is well into the 2nd year of a mini boom that began in the last quarter of 2003. (early 2004 for Canada as we got through the Sars and Mad Cow stuff). In New Orleans cigar manufacturers and suppliers reported difficulties keeping up with orders and in some cases had stock shortages (for the first time since 1997) of many key brands as the consumer rediscovers the joy of an occasional cigar. Like us here in Canada, US retail shops are thrilled as customer counts throughout the summer kept getting bigger. Certainly the summer of all summers has helped and kept us out doors for extended periods of time. But the mentality of the consumer has changed. There is no fad going on. As we have reported here several time based on what our customers tell us, consumers are finding time to make sure they make time for themselves - enjoying whatever simple pleasure they like. Whether it is time to read, take a walk or bike ride or enjoy a glass of wine or two. It is astounding how many of our customers enjoy the peace, quite and relaxation of an occasional cigar in their backyard or deck.

The cigar industry is much smarter than in 1997 and has totally stepped up to consumer demand for more

innovation in taste and flavor along with better quality and pricing. We smoked a lot of new cigars in New Orleans are can't wait for our orders of new product to arrive; the C10 from Cusano, the Edge from Rocky Patel, the Reserva 2005 from Macanudo, the Series 1945 from Aurora, as well as new blends of Leoninos and Ashton are all scheduled to be in store beginning September 12 or so. (some are in now). The trend of "smaller but stronger" is now mainstream and manufacturers are using tobacco from all over the globe and using totally innovative fermentation and aging processes that result in very flavorful cigars.

The gray clouds on the horizon on both sides of the border continue to relate to government anti-smoking activities. Smoking bans are popping up everywhere and are being challenged. And yet for many tobacco shops, including ours, in-door smoking related sales are of minimum consequence to their business. And there have been a number of battles won in high tax jurisdictions where some states have rolled back tax increase given higher smuggling activity. More on Bill 164 latter.

We are not sure when or if our conference will return to New Orleans. In 2006 we return to Las Vegas where there is no such thing as a "ban" on anything and everything including the weather will be smoking.



Joe Bondi and his family from Bondele Cigar at the Boat Cruise held August 24. A magic night of great cigars, companionship and spectacular weather.

CUBAN CIGAR REPORT

In July, we received stock of the latest Habanos 2005 Edicion Limitada product. The Romeo Y Julieta Petit Pyramide is a dark and shiny 5.5 x 48 torpedo that is one of the most aromatic cigars we have ever smoked and packed with Cuba's finest tobaccos. The H Upmann Magnum 50 is a big toro measuring 6.25 x 50 and is packaged in a cabinet slide box. Even though these 2 cigars are \$32.50 and \$47.50 respectively, they are getting very good sell-through from smokers who are willing to pay for the best of the best. Also released in August was the newest in their line of small cigars, the Montecristo Purito.

Notwithstanding these great cigars, Cuban product is flying off the shelves these days as consumers take notice of the tremendous improvement in quality coming from Habanos SA. Sales of such well known cigars like the Montecristo #4, the Romeo Tubo #2, the Partagas Mille Fleur and the Bolivar Belicoso Fino have never been stronger. So to celebrate the huge sales momentum of Cuban product and to encourage trial of some great Cuban cigars that you may not be familiar with, we are highlighting 6 special cigars in September.

These are cigars that have been available for years. In Canada, risk adverse that we tend to be, it is easy and convenient to keep reaching for the brand you smoke regularly – be it a Montecristo or Romeo Y Julieta – and as a retailer, I keep stocking the same. So Havana House and Cigar Studio are going to showcase these 6 with the view of getting fans of Cuban and non-Cuban cigars to try something different, by offering product that you may not have tried or seen before at unheard of regular prices. Our theme for September is “Try Em, You’ll Like Em”. The six are:

- Diplomatico No 3 \$14.50
- Fonseca Cosacos’ \$10.75
- H Upmann Super Corona \$18.50
- Juan Lopez Seleccion #1 \$17.50
- Romeo Julieta Tres Corona \$9.75
- Saint Luis Rev Regios \$15.50

So the next time you are in the store, try em, you’ll like em.

KINGSWAY PIPE CLUB NEWS

Saturday September 10 marks the day when we reconvene at the Crooked Cue for our regular monthly get together and smoke. Anytime after 12:30 in their DSR.

We are also pleased to announce that we will have a pipe buffing machine – and pipe repair expert - in the store that day. Stefan Seles who spent many years as the resident pipe guru at Brigham and now repairs pipes on his own, will be at Cigar Studio from Noon until 2PM. He is bringing his machine and will buff up your pipe and make it look almost new for the grand ‘ole price of \$5. Stefan is also able to look at any of your “broken” pipes if general repairs are needed and will be happy to give you a quote should you need a new stem or whatever on your pipes.

Saturday also marks the day we bring out the new Eric Nording Pipes we bought at the New Orleans show. Add in the Taste of the Kingsway, and you have a lot of reasons to drop into the shop that day.

We are also pleased to announce a new House Blend tobacco that we have added to our shelves. “Whiteoaks” is a blend of orange and red Virginias to which St James Perique is added to create a rich and dark tobacco. This is not a mild tobacco! It replaces our Anniversary #5 Blend that we launched to celebrate our 5th anniversary in 2001. However since next May is our 10th Anniversary, we are already developing plans for a special blend to mark that occasion.

Note to all Pipe Smokers – If you have not had a chance to drop into one of our meetings at the Cue, you may want to come out one day. It really is just an informal get together of normal guys, shooting the breeze about nothing in particular over a pint or two and some really good and cheap grub. There is always lots of pipe tobacco to share as our suppliers are very generous. The Fall Smokes are September 10, October 1, November 5 and December 3 and the Crooked Cue is a 1 minute walk from the shop.

UPCOMING CIGAR EVENTS

As the summer of all summers comes to an end, we start our Fall calendar with a number of events designed to appeal to all appetites, price ranges and levels of cigar smokers. From the casual to the formal, here is what is on tap for the next couple of months.

Happy Hour at the Old Mill Terrace – Thursday September 15

We are officially kicking off the fall season with an informal get together outdoors on the Terrace at the Old Mill. We are taking over a section of their spectacular patio where we can share a few great cigars over drinks and appetizers. Tickets are just \$30 and include a Fonseca Cosascos and a Saint Luis Rey Regio, and appetizers (served from 6PM to 7:00 PM). Cash bar. Reservations are necessary so we know how many are coming. Call us and grab a pal or two and drop in any-time from 6pm onward to help us start the Fall season.

The Punch Poker and Hold Em Night – Thursday September 29.

Our good friends at House of Horvath on Ossington Ave have cleaned up their meeting room and set up a recreation room for client and customer entertainment. Punch cigars will flow freely as we play a little Hold 'Em and enjoy sandwiches and a couple of pops. Tickets are only \$40 for 3 Punch cigars, dinner and 2 drinks. Details in store.

Cigar Dinners at Santamonica Restaurant

Paul Alic's restaurant on the Queensway is booming as he brings his 25 years experience to his newest establishment, Santamonica. We are hosting 2 dinners there this Fall, each of which will be themed and menued separately. The similarity between the two nights is that we will feature cigars from our fastest growing suppliers, Kretek International.

Dinner 1 - Mediterranean Grilled Seafood Night - Tuesday October 18. A seafood lovers delight, as we start with fresh grilled peppers and bread, grilled Santamonica Calamari served with a roasted red pepper and paprika sauce, before presenting seared scallops and shrimps along with roasted grouper in a demi glaze. All this will be accompanied with roasted potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

Dinner 2 - Santamonica Grilled Meat Evening – Tuesday November 1. If you are a carnivore book this night as we start with fresh grilled peppers and bread, bbq pork back spareribs served in a light spicy sauce, before enjoying pork tenderloin, steak, **and** leg of lamb. All this will be accompanied with garlic mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

Tickets for each evening are \$80 and include your first drink and 2-3 cigars from Kretek International. We are limiting space to 25 each night so reservations are a must.

Keep checking Upcoming Events at www..cigarstudio.com for the most up to date listings of cigars events we will host this Fall and Winter.

Taste of the Kingsway

The Annual Taste of the Kingsway festival will take place on Friday September 9th and Saturday September 10th. The streets will be packed with activities for both young and old. Make sure you bring an appetite and remember all side streets and Bloor Street will be closed to traffic.

NEW PRODUCT ARRIVALS

Our receipts of new fall merchandise has begun to flow into the shop. In New Orleans and the Toronto Gift Show we found a number of new items that have found space on our shop shelves.

- Comic Art from Forchino including The Chef and The Lawyer, The Fisherman and The Fire Engine. You've got to see these.
- Several new humidors from Traditum including 200 count pieces from their Heritage Collection.
- The new Boveda 2 Way humidification control
- The new Hammer Lighter from Prometheus (\$95), the Ultimo (\$95) and the Venom and Saddafire from Colibri (\$195)
- A complete new line of leather wallets, card cases and billfolds from LDG Leathers. The pricing on these 100% leather pieces are unbelievable.
- New flasks and cigar cases from our pals at Simran.

Plus the cigars and pipe tobacco mentioned earlier.

WILLIAMBAND JAZZ FESTIVAL

On Sunday, September 11, there is a full day of jazz music going on in Niagara on the Lake. It is a fundraising event for the School of Restoration Arts at the Willowbank Heritage Estate. The day starts at 11AM, goes to 6PM and features the Peter Appleyard Quintet, the Hot Five Jazz Makers, the Pyramid Street Stompers, and the the Cavallaro Dixieland Band. Tickets are \$40 and for sale in the store.

AND FINALLY...

- While your humidor may get a little less use as the weather gets a little colder in the fall and winter, don't forget that a little maintenance will insure your cigars stay fresh all year. If you need us to take a look at it, we can easily recalibrate hygrometers and season your humidor at no charge. There are also instruction to do it your self posted,

in the FAQ section of www.cigarstudio.com

- Sunday Super Specials - Remember Cigar Studio is open every Sunday from Noon to 5PM and we always make sure we have some sort of great deal or clearance on an item for Sunday customers. We never know what the deal will be until we close on Saturday, so surprise yourself and drop in.
- A number of you have asked about our annual Havana Trip in October. Because of our very busy event schedule over the next 8 weeks, and because we will going to the Habanos Festival this February, we are taking a pass this Fall. We will keep you posted as details, dates and prices for February roll in.
- Your last name is how we keep track of purchases on your behalf. It is a service to customers who want to know what they may have bought in the past or for friends and family to insure they buy your favourite brands. So we are not being nosy when we ask last names, we are being a little forgetful.

Business Hours

Mon – Wed: 10am – 7pm
Thu – Fri: 10 am – 8pm
Sat: 10am – 6pm
Sun: Noon – 5pm

WWW.CIGARSTUDIO.COM



Even our website is *smokin'*.