



XMAS, 2003

NEWS

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 4

SEASONS GREETINGS!

2003. What a year. A little nuts and crazy at times but certainly eventful. Here are some of the highlights;

- I got my first hole-in-one.
- You kept asking, so we kept providing. We hosted a ton of cigar events! We began the year with our winter dinner at Village Trattoria and raced through activities like our Pool Tournament, Retailers Golf Tournament, Scotch Tastings and Dinners at the Ontario Club, two outdoor cigars dinners at the Old Mill, two trips to Cuba, a fall Dinner at Village Trattoria and we close the year with our Annual Christmas Party at the Toronto Humber Yacht Club.
- Adam moved forward and onward. We miss him dearly but I think he misses us too – apparently a terrible day around here is nothing like the terror that Grade 8 Science students can cause on occasion. But he really enjoys teaching and the good news – he



is going to be married!! Plus he can't seem to shake off the Saturday Pipe get-togethers, which is where you can find him for most meetings. More good news – Shawn started full time in January as a very friendly, knowledgeable and helpful employee, and he just keeps on going and going.

- The cigar market saw more new product released in 2003 than in the 3 years combined before. More than 35% of our cigars and gift items are items we did not carry 3 years ago, this in response to consumer demand for innovation in both taste and strength.
- Business has been OK: not our best year but not our worst. 2003 started brutal as the War in Iraq, SARS, and a cold and wet April and May conspired to bring us a spring that really sucked. But the summer was very good and the rest of the year has been superb as this past September and October were the best comparable months we have had in 8 years – nothing like spectacular fall weather to keep us BBQ-ing, golfing and enjoying the outdoors.
- Did I mention I got my first hole-in-one?

All kidding aside, a very sincere “Thanks Everyone”! You helped make 2003 a very enjoyable and memorable year.

On behalf of Shawn and Adam, have a safe and Happy Holiday.

Jerry

Left:

The gang on the grand staircase in the foyer of El Laguita. This famous factory, which makes both Cohiba and Trinidad cigars, was one of many stops on our Havana trip in October. For a more complete picture essay of our trip, check out the events section of www.cigarstudio.com.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Cigar Friendly Bars and Restaurants

In the past year or so, the following has become one of our most frequently asked questions:

“Where is the closest bar that allows cigar smoking?”

The closest cigar friendly bar to our store – we are talking a 90 second walk here - is the Wembley Pub, 3073 Bloor St. For those of you who do not live in the area, it is just west of Royal York, on the south side of Bloor between the Church and Montgomery.

It is open 7 days a week from 4pm Monday-Thursday, and from Noon on every other day . So drop into the shop and pick up your favourite cigar, then walk down to Wembley say hi to Mark and the gang and have a pint.

There are several other local bars which also permit cigar smoking, as well as a bunch that are located in the City. Rather than list them all here, we have posted 18 that we know of and have enjoyed a cigar in. The list along with their phone numbers is at www.cigarstudio.com. If there are some that we have missed and that you know of, let me know.

LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND CIGAR NIGHTS

I am sure you all have your own favourite haunt in which to enjoy dinner, a drink or both. Ask them if they would like to host a cigar evening for

their customers. Cigar Studio will promote their event to our customers and help the bar out with the cigars they need for their evening. Just have the owner give us a call.

CIGARS SPARED TAX INCREASE IN THRONE SPEECH

Taxes were front and center throughout the Liberal Throne Speech in November. While cigars were left under the “No Increases For Now” category, pipe tobacco was not so lucky. Pipe tobacco taxes were increased 14% by the Liberals.

There is good news and bad news to this announcement. Frankly we were expecting cigar taxes to increase as well; that they were spared has more to do with the fact they are treated differently than cigarettes – as opposed to pipe tobacco which is categorized similar to cigarettes. The bad news is that the announcement means that pipe smokers will see an increase of about 5 -7% at retail. We are also concerned that the Liberals are not finished and that once their dialogue with Quebec and Manitoba is complete they

will harmonize tax rates at much higher levels than they are currently, and this time cigars will be hit as well. We hope not!

The other tobacco issue which we were expecting news on, relates to municipal smoking policies in Ontario. Currently each municipality sets their own rules with respect to smoking regulations in bars and restaurants. Toronto is supposed to go “smoke-free” on June 1 2004. The problem is that bars in surrounding municipalities which have different or no cutoff dates (Brampton for example goes smoke free in 2007) are deemed - by cross border bar owners - to have an advantage vis-à-vis their smoking policies. The province is expected to harmonize the date whereby all cities will be expected to go “smoke free”. This may be good news for Toronto, as Ontario will be forced to

pick the furthest date to accommodate businesses in municipalities that have invested in equipment expecting a 3-5 year payback on that investment. For example, should Ontario set a June 1, 2006 or 2007 date for a province-wide policy, this will not only be helpful to bars in municipalities which are expecting shorter cut-offs, but it would also be extremely helpful to Toronto’s economy and cigar smokers in this City. The hospitality industry, a huge economic engine in our city, which was hammered this spring and summer due to SARS, is now only beginning to recover. The last thing the industry needs is a pending 2004 date, which represents another obstacle to the businesses’ full recovery.

Stay tuned...

THIS SEASON'S BEST GIFT IDEAS

Not to sure about what to put under the tree on December 25. Here are a few ideas across a wide variety of prices and gift categories.

✓	Chacom Briar Pipe	\$89 to \$169
✓	Macanudo - Tubo Petit Corona	\$14
✓	Blazer Torch "Chief"	\$99
✓	Cross Townsend Rollerball Pen	\$152
✓	Roots FOB Watch	\$40
✓	5 Pack Ashton Coronas	\$99
✓	Dunhill Travel Humidor	\$450
✓	Titanium Cigar Cutter	\$49
✓	Dupont Extend Torch Lighter	\$250
✓	Crystal Cigar Ashtray	\$90
✓	Smokers Candle	\$15
✓	R. Hammann Mens Manicure	\$55
✓	125gm Pipe Tobacco Sample Pack	\$35
✓	Wesley Bober Cigar Chest	\$750

These items can be viewed in the Christmas Idea Section of www.cigarstudio.com. But if you are still stuck, nothing says "Merry Christmas Sweetheart" better than a Cigar Studio Gift Certificate.

Another Successful Trip to Cuba

The seven us who spent 4 glorious days in Havana in October, are suffering from withdrawal.

And who wouldn't after 90° weather, great hospitality, lots and lots of cigars and a jammed packed, non-stop, itinerary which included; unlimited access tours of both the Cohiba (see photo on page 1) and Romeo Y Julieta factories; an all day trip into the tobacco capital of Cuba - the Pinar del Rio - where we spent 2 hours drinking rum with Don Alejandro Robaina on his porch before our driver took us to the Vinales Valley, (without a doubt one of

the most beautiful sites in the world).

We had a full day of seeing the sites with out friend and guide Bernardo Gonzales, who took us to Revolution Square, the National Cemetery, all throughout Miramar, the Capital Building and the main baseball stadium (Canada was playing Cuba later that evening).

We visited somewhere between 1 and 20 cigar shops – I lost count quickly; we spent the good part of an afternoon in the VIP lounge of the Partagas Factory; dinners and cocktails galore including an evening at

the Tropicana Nightclub and late afternoon drinks on the outdoor patio of the National Hotel.

Many thanks to our travel posse of David, Joe, Dan, Peter, Ray and Andy who made my job pretty easy, well at least most of the time. But most of all, thanks to our very good friend, Bernardo, who works in Havana for Habanos SA. There is no way we could have done all this without him and his connections.

Can anyone say Havana October 2004?

JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

The new Cigar Aficionado hit our shelves in early November. The cover story features a lengthy article on General Tommy Franks. Plus two of the world's cigar-making countries are also featured prominently. There is a great article on Nicaragua's cigar families. And once again, Cuban cigars claim more than half of the 90+ ratings. The Fonseca Cosacos, Romeo Y Julieta Exhibicion #4, and the Romeo Y Julieta Corona all were rated 90 or better! (And their respective costs are only \$14.90, \$18.90 and \$20.75). All this plus Life of the Caddy on the PGA tour, profiles on the Top 10 Basketball Players of All Time and a behind the scene look at ESPN's Sportscenter.

Email Addresses Wanted

From time to time, outside of the distribution of these newsletters, we get offers of supplier specials, or decide to quickly organize a low cost cigar event. When that happens we have no way to let you know about "what's up" unless you happen to be in the store that week. Why not send your email address to jerryh@cigarstudio.com? It will only be used to forward relevant and timely information to you when I can't do so with this newsletter.

CHRISTMAS ALONG BLOOR STREET

By the time this Newsletter arrives, all the Christmas lights and decorations should be up along Bloor Street. All the merchants are certainly decorated from head to toe. To make Saturdays a little more festive, the Business Association is sponsoring "Caroling in the Kingsway". Every Saturday from November 29 through December 20, carolers will be strolling the street from 1:30 – 3:30, jingle-jangling your favorite Christmas songs. Of course if you need a little extra, Shawn will be happy to sing "Jingle Bells" for you.

Business Hours

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

A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE

A friend sent this email to us this year. I am not sure why we didn't delete it but I'm glad we did not. Enjoy.

"The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers; wider freeways but narrower viewpoints; we spend more but have less; we have more degrees but less sense; more medicine but less wellness; we have multiplied our possessions but reduced our values; we have learned how to make a living but not a life; we have added years to life but not life to years; we can go to the moon and back but not cross the street to meet a new neighbor; we do large but not better; we have conquered the atom but not our prejudices.

These are the times of two incomes but more divorce, of big men of small character, of fancy houses but broken homes. Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that

take our breath away. Remember; spend time with your love ones because they are not going to be around forever. Remember; say a kind word to someone who looks up to you because that little person will soon grow up and leave your side. Remember; Hug a lot. Hugs are the only treasures that you can give that don't cost a cent.

Throw out all non-essential numbers like age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them, as that is what you pay them for.

Keep learning, always, about crafts, computers, gardening, whatever; never let the brain idle as an idle mind is the devil's workshop and the devil's name is Alzheimer's.

Enjoy simple things. Laugh often, laugh loud.

If you don't send this to at least 10 people, who cares?"

George Carlin

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