

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!

2004 has been a very positive year for our industry, and many thanks to all of you for making 2004 a very good year for Cigar Studio. On behalf of Shawn and I, the very best of the season to you and a very Happy New Year.

CUBA - THE TIMES... THEY ARE CHANGING

October 21 – 24 saw us back in Cuba for our annual 4-day trek into cigar paradise. As always the trip was a blast as we visited with many old friends and experienced the right balance of “cigar info” with Cuban hospitality. Within an hour of landing we were at the Cohiba factory, robustos in hand.

Here are a few observations we took away from this trip:

- There is an incredible amount of new construction and infrastructure being built now in Cuba. While the re-juvenation of Old Havana has been going on for several years, we saw more new buildings and construction going on than we have in the past 6 years. But will it continue?
- To live the life of an average Cuban citizen is very hard, the result of decades of an old style economic system introduced following the revolution in 1958 and made harder when the USSR pulled out in 1986. And still, there remains a

spirit within people that is hard to describe but one that makes the country very endearing to visitors. It's not “happy” or “satisfied” by any means – maybe barely content is a better descriptor - but this spirit does provide visitors with a feeling they are welcome. Perhaps this is just a function of the spectacular growth in tourism and hospitality in Cuba in the past 25 years. Poverty (within our standards) in the cities and rural areas remains very high and everyone is trying to provide themselves and their families with extra income, often on the backs of tourists. But their pride is undeniable and their love of music and culture as strong as in any other country.

- The cigar industry remains very healthy and Habanos SA continues to release new sizes and shapes in response to changing consumer demands. We are not sure why Cigar Aficionado ratings of Cuban cigars in the October and December issues were so low. We saw no evidence of a pull back in quality control and saw some excellent tobacco being

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Brian Murphy (left) and Bruce Melanson. Brian won the Peterson Pipe at our Fall Pipe Sale. The Remembrance Day event raised \$350 for the Juno Beach Memorial Center in France. Bruce is a WW II veteran and accepted our cheque on behalf of Canadian veterans. Looks like he wants Brian's pipe too!

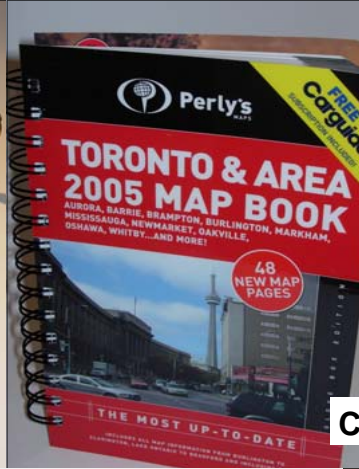
HERE ARE A FEW CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR 2004



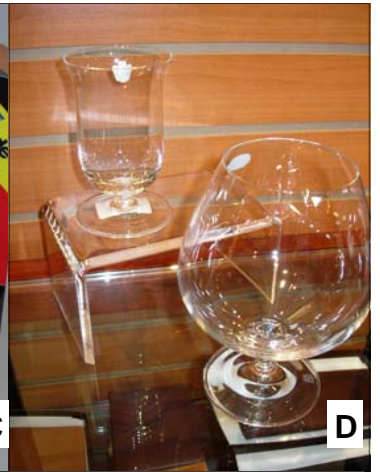
A



B



C



D



E

A For the golfer who needs another golf bag to carry his cigars and accessories. The Burlington Bag comes with 4 cigar tubes, a torch lighter and a cutter, all for \$49.

B Languiole hand forged knives from France. – there are no finer anywhere. \$89 – \$229.

C Go ahead, make his day and night and put this in his glove box. Perly's map books of Toronto and Ontario.



F

D Cognac and single malt scotch glasses. 2 glass sets at \$25 and \$29 respectively.

E For him or her. The Zippo Candle Lighter. \$27.75

F Personal Valet from Kent of England. Brushes, combs and shaving sets.

G Eeany, meany, miney, moe... Cigars from

Camacho, Macanudo, Joya Nicaragua, La Flor Dominicana, Ashton, Cusano 18, and Hoyo D Monterrey. We stock another 100 brands so there is something for every Christmas stocking.

H From Prometheus – Torch Cigar Lighters (\$89 - \$159), and Cigar Cutter/Lighter Set (\$99).

I Spirit of St. Louis Military Compass. \$39



G



H



I



J

J Handwriting never looked so good than when it is done with a Cross Pen.



K

K Roots Rechargeable Radio (\$45), Binoculars (\$60), Adler Tool (\$20) and Key/Watch Set (\$40)



L

L Rumor has it that Phil Mickelson used this set to practice the night before he shot his 59... \$99



M

M Pipes from Peterson, Calich, Stanwell, Nording, Brigham, BC, and Savinelli



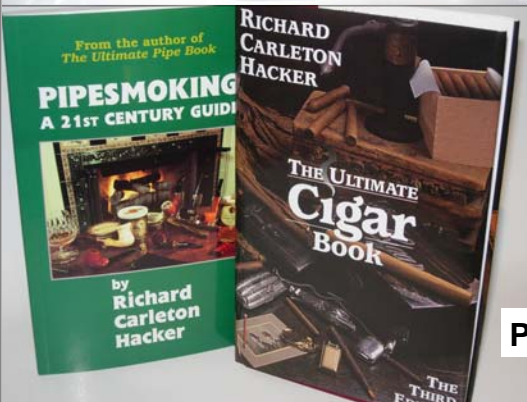
N

N Men's manicure sets and clippers from Germany. \$79 - \$199.



O

O Just open the case and watch the "Hold 'Em" game start. 100 and 300 Chip sets with 11.5 gm chips.



P

P Richard Hacker's books on pipes and cigars are recognized as authoritative information sources.



Q

Q Read 'em and weep. Playing Cards Set from Caesars Palace

And remember, nothing says "Merry Christmas Honey" like a box of cigars under the tree...

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prepared for cigars. And Cigar Studio customers have embraced Cuban cigars, especially with the price drop this year. We are confident that the ratings will be right back where they have been for the past 2 years.

For those who would like to see more, our trip photos are posted on www.cigarstudio.com in Past Events. And for those who want to experience Cuban directly, 2005 plans call for a visit to the festival in Havana in February and our annual 4-day junket in October.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Winter Cigar Dinner – Wednesday
February 2 – Details by New Years on
www.cigarstudio.com**

4-3-2-1

**Tuesday, March 8.
Details to follow in store.**



LEFT:
Our gang on the receiving dock at the RYJ factory in Havana where bundles of wrapper leaf had just been unloaded. The aroma was incredible.



RIGHT:
We can't leave Cuba without a visit to the Pinar Del Rio and the farm of Don Alejandro Robaina. His hospitality remains incredible as we sipped rum on his porch and smoked his cigars for a couple of hours. 2 days after we left, his workers began the task of planting over 1 million seedlings on his land. 80 to 90 days from now, these seedlings will have become some of the best wrapper leaf in the world.



ABOVE:
Having just finished our visit to El Laguita, we had a great chat with Osmar Fuentes (on my left). Osmar is the new manager of the legendary Cohiba factory. Those are 50-cigar bundles of the Cohiba Robusto. Nice gift to a bunch of visitors from Canada!

Business Hours

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

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9 out of 10 Secret Santas agree!**