

SNOWBIRDS REJOICE: MIAMI CITY GUIDE

VODKA & CAVIAR: PB&J FOR THE JET SET

20 TUBO STOCKING STUFFERS

HUMOR BY LARRY TRITTEN

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# The Tubo Report

**FOR THIS HOLIDAY** tasting go-round, we decided to try something a little different: Instead of smoking cigars of a specific size, we chose to focus on a specific packaging — tubos, the perfect stocking stuffer and corporate gift. We examined not only the smokes themselves, but also the sturdy, standout tubes that attract smokers to them in the first place.

Our cigar tastings proceed in two stages. For the first test, we assemble a panel of new and experienced palates at a cigar venue (in this case, Club Macanudo in New York City) and have them smoke several cigars over the course of an evening. Then the *Report* editors themselves smoke multiple samples of each cigar, and combine our opinions with those of the test panel.

In the end, each cigar is deemed **OUTSTANDING, SUPERIOR, WORTHY, MEDITOCRE** or **UNPALATABLE**. That's our opinion, though — in the end, the quality of every smoke is something to determine for yourself. **-THE EDITORS**



## **AVO ROBUSTO TUBO (CLASSIC BLEND)**

"Right out of the tube, the cigar shows well," one panelist commented. Indeed, the stick was generally thought "firm and beautiful." The dry draw was "sweet," with "a nutty hint" and a suggestion of "bark." The aroma was described as "mild, yet lets a bit of flavor into the air of nuttiness," with the medium-bodied flavor described as "nutty... with a little oil coming through." The tube with its distinctive Avo logo was thought "handsome" but uninspired: "Doesn't stand out, really, but you know what you're getting."

**WRAPPER:** CONNECTICUT  
**BINDER:** DOMINICAN  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN  
**\$8.10/STICK**  
**\$162/BOX OF 20**  
**CONCLUSION: WORTHY**



## **COHIBA TORO**

"Firm with a decent cap," "made well, but not a lot of heart put into it" — such were the impressions of the (Dominican) Cohiba's construction. It lit well, and cut well, with a "balanced draw with no tugging." The aroma, while fleeting, "was relatively pleasant, mild and sweet," followed by a flavor that had "paper and cardboard notes, likely due to the dryness of the smoke." A touch of spice — "thyme and white pepper" — came through, along with a hit of "leather." The brushed-steel casing — "retro and familiar," "distinctive" — was "one that really stands out."

**WRAPPER:** CAMEROON  
**BINDER:** INDONESIA  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**\$14.90/STICK**  
**\$149/BOX OF 10**  
**CONCLUSION: WORTHY**

### COHIBA SIGLO II (CUBAN)

“It’s a Cohiba,” one taster said; in other words, pretty near perfect. Construction-wise, it seemed a “bit light in weight,” its light-colored wrapper ridged with a few minor bumps. The dry draw was pure earth, with “hints of spice.” Once lit, the draw was “very Cuban,” “a little tight,” and produced an aroma “heavy on the cocoa,” with a flavor of “cocoa and green almonds.” Our tasters found this cigar to be “light/medium for a Havana” and “inconsistent” after trying a few samples – another hallmark of Cuban sticks (unfortunately). The aftertaste was “black pepper and dirty.” The tube was thought to be “stunning.”

**WRAPPER:** CUBAN  
**BINDER:** CUBAN  
**FILLER:** CUBAN  
**\$20/STICK**  
**\$61/BOX OF 3**  
**CONCLUSION: WORTHY**



### CUESTA-REY CENTRO FINO SUNGROWN

Enclosed within a dark, “well-made” wrapper, this “firm” cigar offered a “mild, dusty-dry draw” that was “virtually unnoticeable,” followed (after a somewhat difficult light) by a medium-to-full-bodied “harsh flavor with way too much oil” that was “overpowering, almost; more bark than bite,” and an aroma described as “strong.” Other reviews were considerably kinder, describing a “good” flavor of “aged leaves.” One panelist felt the aftertaste “leaves too strong a taste on the right/left sides of the tongue.” The glass tubes with their old-style labeling showed off the cigar to “handsome” effect.

**WRAPPER:** ECUADOR  
**BINDER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**\$7.70/SMOKE**  
**\$109.72/BOX OF 20**  
**CONCLUSION: MIXED (TRY IT, YOU MAY LIKE IT, OR YOU MAY NOT)**



### DAVIDOFF ANIVERSARIO NO. 3

This “Colorado-colored” cigar was “solid — rigid, even, and packed Tootsie Roll-thick” with a “oily, silky” wrapper and “heavy veins.” The dry draw produced hints of “fresh fruit and nectarine,” and (after some minor lighting issues) the medium-bodied cigar “drew with ease” with flavors of “leather and saddle soap,” and an aroma “like Grandpa’s beach house, with a dash of mildew.” The aftertaste was “oddly peppery.” A panelist termed this one “a pretty linear smoke that was quite enjoyable.” The “white and glossy” tube was “simple,” “elegant,” and “classy.”

**WRAPPER:** CONNECTICUT  
**BINDER:** DOMINICAN  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN  
**\$18.90/STICK**  
**\$378/BOX OF 20**  
**CONCLUSION: MIXED (TRY IT, YOU MAY LIKE IT, OR YOU MAY NOT)**



### DON TOMÁS CLÁSICO

From its “great cap” to its “tight roll,” this light- to medium-bodied cigar (in this case, the Allegro tube, 5½” x 50) showed obvious care in its construction. The “light suede-colored wrapper” and “tightly filled” body offered up a dry draw that was “light and complex” on first impression, and an aroma of “herbal and grassy notes,” paired with a “grassy and herbal” flavor that opened up into “charred, meaty steak.” The ash was sturdy, the aftertaste “pleasant” and “sweeter than the overall flavors.” The type and design on the yellow tube was “very sophisticated,” paired with a “great band” on the cigar itself.

**WRAPPER:** HONDURAS  
**BINDER:** HONDURAS  
**FILLER:** HONDURAS, NICARAGUA  
**\$4.31/STICK**  
**\$86.20/BOX OF 20**  
**CONCLUSION: WORTHY**



#### DUNHILL SIGNED RANGE

The Churchill proved pleasantly “solid yet spongy.” After a dry draw that was “a little tight, and reminiscent of fruit,” and a light that was “easy, but a little uneven,” the cigar had an aroma of “heavy honey, twined with a touch of fruit,” and a flavor that “starts off heavy fruit, moving onto woody and tobacco-y, before becoming more linear.” The ash was “white and firm as marble,” the aftertaste “faint but noticeable.” The glossy tube — “a long red bullet” — was distinctive in that it split apart into two long interlocking pieces.

**WRAPPER:** NICARAGUA  
**BINDER:** CAMEROON  
**FILLER:** NICARAGUA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**\$17/STICK**  
**\$51/BOX OF 3**  
**CONCLUSION: SUPERIOR**



#### FONSECA

Construction of this cigar was “remarkably solid” (although one taster’s stick was dry and started to peel). While the dry draw “doesn’t give you the taste that ultimately comes out,” once lit and smoked, it produced a “mild” and “musty” aroma and medium-bodied “smooth flavor” with “hints of nut and wood with an overture of berry.” Aftertaste was a bit “spicy” and held firm.” Aftertaste was a bit “spicy.” The tube itself “looked like an *Iron Man* prop” — straight-up bronze with the Fonseca logo.

**WRAPPER:** CONNECTICUT  
**BINDER:** MEXICO  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**\$7/STICK**  
**\$134/BOX OF 20**  
**CONCLUSION: WORTHY**



#### GOD OF FIRE BY DON CARLOS 2006

“Sturdy” construction with heavy double bands made this a “distinctive” robusto tubo, with a “beautiful dark Colorado color, oily and smooth — inviting.” The “sweet” dry draw had notes of “malt and molasses,” followed by a “perfectly smooth” draw once lit. The light/medium-bodied smoke was “flavorful muesli” and “oats and nuts with a touch of cinnamon,” and produced a “light” aftertaste. It also had “a spicy aroma that complemented the smoke very nicely.” A “visually arresting and gothic” tube that “seals well” and opens with a “pop.” The inscription on the inner tube was thought by one to be “a nice touch ... it got me excited to actually smoke the cigar.”

**WRAPPER:** ECUADOR  
**BINDER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**\$21/STICK**  
**\$168/BOX OF 8**  
**CONCLUSION: SUPERIOR/  
OUTSTANDING**



#### GURKHA BLACK DRAGON

This “dark” and “veined” cigar, with “slight bumps” and “perfectly firm and tight construction,” was “heavy but indefinable, almost musty,” with the faintest “hint of fruit.” It produced an aroma of “honey and hay ... surprisingly faint.” The flavor was full strength, as expected, with heavy hay and tobacco taste notes. The aftertaste was “sharp on the tip of the tongue, spreading to the back of the palate, and faintly woody.” Gurkha, known for its packaging prowess, and the Dragon doesn’t disappoint on that front: The smoked-glass tube, capped with glossy black metal on either end, is a showstopper.

**WRAPPER:** CONNECTICUT  
**BINDER:** CAMEROON  
**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
**[NOT SOLD BY INDIVIDUAL STICKS]**  
**\$275/BOX OF 20**  
**CONCLUSION: SUPERIOR**



#### LA AROMA DE CUBA MARQUIS

“Very dark and oily,” “well wrapped,” “tightly constructed” all describe this stick. Despite the dark color, our panel felt this cigar was more on the light-to-medium strength side: The “very mild and sweet” dry draw expanded, once lit, into a “smooth,” “tobacco-y” flavor paired with “a little oil on the back of the tongue.” The aroma was “very strong and full,” with an aftertaste was “light” for some, “unpleasant on the middle of the tongue” for one. The tube looked “like it came direct from the 19th century”; that “helped it really stand out.”

**WRAPPER:** HONDURAS

**BINDER:** HONDURAS

**FILLER:** HONDURAS

**\$7.20/STICK**

**\$129/BOX OF 20**

**CONCLUSION: WORTHY**



#### LA AURORA PREFERIDOS EMERALD

The “smooth” and “very firm” smoke produced “a faint honey aroma” and a flavor that was “slightly effervescent,” “very tobacco-y,” that evolved “into hay and toast as it progresses and mellows out.” The ash started out firm, becoming flakier as the cigar progressed. Aftertaste was “slight,” a “faint tinge on the top of the mouth.” This “great little lozenge” of a tube seemed almost Space Age despite the “old-school” La Aurora lion label.

**WRAPPER:** ECUADOR

**BINDER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, BRAZIL  
NICARAGUA

**\$18.45/STICK**

**\$442.70/BOX OF 24**

**CONCLUSION: SUPERIOR**



#### LA GLORIA CUBANA GLORIAS EN CEDROS

A “handsome” and “respectable” construction, although a member found the wrapper “dry and vein-y, spotty with color ... ugly.” The dry draw was “berries,” and this Churchill lit right up, with a smooth draw and a light-bodied “understated” flavor “with a hint of hay,” followed by a “burnt marshmallow” aftertaste. “La Gloria Cubana was a favorite in the mid-90s,” reminisced one taster. “Now it’s less than special.” The tube “wasn’t exactly impressive” — “boring.”

**WRAPPER:** ECUADOR

**BINDER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,  
NICARAGUA

**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,  
NICARAGUA

**\$5.55/STICK**

**\$77.70/BOX OF 14**

**CONCLUSION: MEDIOCRE**



#### MONTECRISTO EDMUNDO (CUBAN)

This iconic-looking Cuban felt “balanced and compact to the touch,” with a perfect “matte and oily” wrapper. The smoking didn’t disappoint, starting with a dry draw with “creamy and honey flavors,” an “easy” light, a surprisingly (for a Cuban) loose and open draw, a “rich and creamy” aroma, and a “oak/woody flavor that opens up to ... blackberry sweetness.” “Smooth and easy on the palate,” according to one. The aftertaste was “subtle,” with a hint of “tangerine.” The tube was “beautiful,” relying on the “classic Montecristo colors and design,” in which the cigar “fit nicely.”

**WRAPPER:** CUBAN

**BINDER:** CUBAN

**FILLER:** CUBAN

**\$23/STICK**

**\$70/BOX OF 3**

**CONCLUSION: OUTSTANDING**



#### MONTECRISTO PLATINUM

The aesthetic presentation was “handsome” and the construction “smooth, with lack of veins and bumps ... and a seamless cap.” The wrapper was “darker, very firm, contrasting nicely with the two silver bands.” The pull was easy, complete with plumes of white smoke. The aroma was “sweet” and heavy on the “honey/fruit,” while the light-to-medium flavor was “heavy hay” and “approachable for the neophyte, but complex enough for the vet.” The aftertaste had a “hit of hay, high on the palate.” The solid-silver tube was both striking and hefty, but had no discernible “pop” when opened.

**WRAPPER:** MEXICO

**BINDER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**FILLER:** DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,  
NICARAGUA, PERU

**\$10.50/STICK**

**\$136.50/BOX OF 15**

**CONCLUSION: SUPERIOR**