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TASTING REPORT:

PREVIEWS FROM THE DECEMBER 2009

CIGAR AFICIONADO:

■ Oliva Serie O Torpedo



91

RING GAUGE: 52
LENGTH: 6"
FILLER: Nicaragua
BINDER: Nicaragua
WRAPPER: Nicaragua

OLIVA SERIE O TORPEDO

A well-formed torpedo with a beautifully colored wrapper. The even draw imparts a soft, flavorful, balanced smoke full of leather and fruit. Subtle tea notes emerge on the finish.

Price: \$5.60

Body: Medium

NICARAGUA

NUB CREATOR RELEASES TRIPLE FERMENTED CAIN CIGAR

BY GREGORY MOTTOLA

Sam Leccia, the creator of the curious and popular NUB cigar, has released **Cain**, a more orthodox style smoke whose claim to fame is a “straight ligero” blend that underwent “triple fermentation.”

Leccia said he has already sold more than 30,000 Cains since the brand was introduced at this year’s International Premium Cigars and Pipe Retailer trade show, and he recently spoke to *Cigar Insider*, explaining his goal with creating the cigar.

“I wanted a cigar that was made of straight ligero,” said Leccia, referring to the most powerful leaves of the cigar tobacco plant. “The palates of people have changed. They’ve matured and people want a full-bodied cigar, but it is difficult to make something so strong that isn’t harsh. The only way to make so much ligero tobacco smokable is to triple ferment it.”

Although Leccia would not specify exactly how long triple fermentation takes, he did indicate that it can last anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. After the first fermentation, he said all of the tobacco is brought back down to room temperature, as fermenting tobacco releases heat. It is then tested and smoked, before being reassembled and put back into piles known as *pilons*, where the process starts all over again. “This process is done a total of three times,” said Leccia, “which opens up the ligero taking off its harsh edge, and brings out the flavor and complexity of the leaf.”

Cain is made at Tabacalera Oliva S.A. in Nicaragua and comes in two varieties, Habano and Maduro. The Habano version is billed as “straight ligero” although Leccia admits that the blend is not entirely ligero.

“The binder isn’t ligero due to the burn issues. There’s even half a leaf of seco and volado in the blend for better combustion, but I list the proportions and identify the growing regions on the box. No one has ever done that before.”

The Habano is entirely Nicaraguan. Each slide-lid box of 24 reads: “25% Estelí, 27% Condega, 30% Jalapa,” the remaining 18% allowing for the aforementioned non-ligero tobaccos.

The Maduro box reads identically, but the wrapper is grown in Mexico’s famed San Andrés Valley instead of in Nicaragua.

Leccia first intended to

use Brazilian wrapper on the Maduro. “I wanted to use the same Brazilian wrapper that I use on the NUB Maduro, but it didn’t pair well with all that ligero,” explains Leccia. “Instead I needed a wrapper with more body and I found it in San Andrés.”

Both versions come in three sizes: 550, measuring 5 3/4 inches by 50 ring; 654T, a 6 by 54 torpedo; and 660, 6 by 60. They retail in the \$6.00 to \$8.00 range.

A promotional blend exists as well, called the Cain F, which stands for Fuerte. Leccia says it is his most powerful cigar, using a greater percentage of strong Estelí ligero in the blend. This comes in small wood boxes of five and might become a regular-production brand in the future.

For ratings, see an upcoming issue of *Cigar Insider*. ■

