



**MIKE SMITH** OWNED AND OPERATED CIGARISTA CIGAR SHOP AT THE BEACH IN REDINGTON SHORES, FLA., FOR FOUR YEARS. HE HAS SMOKED CIGARS FOR MUCH LONGER AND HAS WRITTEN ON MANY TOPICS FOR TOBACCO RETAILER AND ELSEWHERE. IF YOU HAVE ANY CIGAR SUGGESTIONS OR QUESTIONS, SEND AN E-MAIL TO [JOEMIKESMITH@EARTHLINK.NET](mailto:JOEMIKESMITH@EARTHLINK.NET).

## Post-Holiday Cigars



It's that time of year when the holidays are over and you're looking for a warm place indoors to smoke your stogie. This is the perfect time to grow your customer list as people come in to have a cigar when they might not ordinarily. The manufacturers have been off their holidays for a month and can ship what you need again. Make the new customers feel particularly welcome so they might be enticed to return. Maybe make them some kind of deal that lets them know the Internet is not the only reasonable supplier for them. If nothing more, make their visit personal and let them know how much you appreciate them coming by. The web has a hard time doing that.

The three cigars covered in this issue are the VegaFina Seijas 2011 - Jose Seijas, the Torano Exodus 59 - 50 year, and the Camacho Havana.

The VegaFina Seijas 2011 is a cigar from AltadisUSA blended by Jose Seijas, who presides over the famous Tabacalera de Garcia factory in the Dominican Republic, where he is the vice president and general manager. José is a master blender with nearly 35 years of experience, responsible for creating some well-known premium cigars including Montecristo, H. Upmann, Romeo y Julieta, Trinidad, Onyx Reserve, Playboy, the Cabinet Selección, and the elite Edición Limitada. These are only the more well known of his creations. This is a limited edition release and only comes in one size. The cigar looks well made with a great draw and ash, along with a nearly perfect wrapper. Like all VegaFinas, it's on the mild side but this one shifts a little toward medium body and taste. The flavors are subtle and might make it a better morning cigar. It starts with a promise of something more but quickly drops back to mild and mellow.

The new VegaFina's fuller-bodied blend consists of a rare San Andrés Criollo (Mexico) wrapper, a premium Dominican binder and choice Dominican fillers. The VegaFina Jose Seijas is offered as a 5" x 56 Gran Robusto and sold in boxes of 10. The price runs about \$6.50 before state and local taxes.

Toraño has a new tag line that's "Make Time to Burn." That's not all that's new there. They have announced several new blends since then. Some of them are leaning toward more full-bodied smokes than some they've had in the past. One of those is the Toraño Exodus 59 - 50 Years and it is an amazing smoke, one of their best in a long time for

those looking for richness, smoothness and great taste.

This cigar has a bold, spicy Brazilian Arapiraca sun-grown wrapper. The binder comes from Honduras. The filler tobaccos from the Nicaraguan regions of Esteli and Pueblo Nuevo have a natural sweetness. The blend is intense and rich, yet balanced. Sweet and spicy with some subtle kick hidden by the smoothness from beginning to end makes this a truly fine cigar. The flavor is full and the strength is medium to full with no harshness.

The smoke rates as high as a 93 and it well deserves it. It rated number 12 in the top 25 cigars of 2010.

Sizes include the Robusto, 5x50, Box Pressed, 5x55, Torpedo, 5.5x52, BFC, 6x60 and Short Churchill, 6x48. All sizes are packaged in boxes of 24. Prices are in the \$7 range before state and local taxes.

Since October 2008, Camacho Cigars has been part of the Swiss Oettinger Davidoff Group. Most of the cigars produced by Camacho are full bodied and powerful. The Havana is no exception. It is produced in Danli, Honduras and is a Honduran puro, with Havana seed Corojo fillers. The oily wrapper is a Jamastran Habano Criollo. Camacho does tend to favor the puros. These sticks produce plenty of thick, rich smoke and contain plenty of spice, especially at first. The sharpness quickly mellows out and while staying strong and full, the taste gets smoother, still with some spice. The draw is good and the ash doesn't hang around long. The final third of the cigar is a bit harsher than the rest and the spice starts to fade.

Quite a few sizes exist for the Havana with all but the Diadem, H1, H2 and H3 being packed in boxes of 20. The Hs come in 50s and the Diadema in boxes of 10. The sizes are the Cetro, 6.5x44, Churchill, 7x48, Figurado, 7x54, H1, 8.5x52, H2, 4.5x50, H3, 4.25x44, Monarca, 5x50, Nacionales, 5.5x44, Petit, 5.5x42, Toro, 6x50, and the Diadema, 8x48/60. The Diadema packaging resembles something that might be seen at New Years. The sticks come wrapped in tissue and then a "marbleized" gold gift-wrap. The prices of these fall in the \$4-\$6 range before state and local taxes.

I look forward to reviewing these smokes for you and have written this column for over nearly five years now. If you have any suggestions or questions, send an email to [mike@gulfshorewriter.com](mailto:mike@gulfshorewriter.com). Long ashes, dear readers. **TR**