



22ND HABANOS FESTIVAL WITH A SURPRISE ENDING

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From February 24th to 28th 2,200 enthusiasts gathered in Havana to celebrate cigar culture. The Habanos Festival ended with a record breaking 4,27 million Euros raised at the traditional humidor auction at the Gala Dinner. All activities during the festival offered some surprises for the attendees from more than 60 countries.

On Monday, February 24th, Habanos presented their 2019 revenue numbers and **the new products** intended to be launched in 2020. Habanos reported a 2% sales increase in 2019 and a total of 531 million US-Dollars in revenues. Their top markets in sales volume are Spain, China, France, Germany and Cuba. By region, Europe remains the main market in sales (53%), followed by the Americas (18%), Africa and Middle East (15%) and Asia Pacific (14%).

After the press conference, the third edition of the Habanos World Challenge took place at the Convention Center where cigar enthusiasts from Brazil, Cyprus, Lebanon, Poland and the United Arab Emirates squared off presenting their knowledge on Habanos products.

The opening night was held at Club Havana where Habanos officially presented its first Bolívar Reserva Belicosos Finos. A woman in a balloon handed a box of the new Reserva to Leopoldo Cintra González, Habanos Commercial Vice President.

On Tuesday, participants went to the farms and plantations at San Antonio de Los Baños, responsible for the production of around 60% of all wrappers from Cuba.

Wednesday was the opening at the trade fair and the opening of the seminars at the Convention Center. Attendees could learn about the history of Habanos and how to roll their own cigar in a master class presented by Miguel Barzaga, Habanos Cigar Industry Specialist.

Thursday was reserved for a visit to the La Corona and Partagás factories where the participants learned about all stages of cigar production.

Friday the Habanos World Challenge finals took the main room at the Convention Center. The teams from Cyprus and UAE faced each other in a competition of knowledge with the UAE team (Tarek Gamaye and Fabi Hammad) ending up with the title of the 3rd edition of the competition.

The Gala Dinner put the icing on the cake with a night dedicated to the Romeo y Julieta brand and its new Linea de Oro line. The decoration, dancing presentation and art performances created the perfect atmosphere taking all the participants to Verona, where the love and tragedy novel of William Shakespeare took place. The night was also the stage of the announcement of the Habanos Man of The Year prizes with Servilio Jesús Córdova winning the production category, Jean Claude Reichling taking the Business prize and Alexandre Avellar winning the Communications award.

The traditional humidor auction closed with the Cohiba humidor auctioned with a bid of 2,4 million Euros. The other humidors auctioned were H. Upmann (270,000 euros), Partagás (400,000 euros), Montecristo (420,000 euros) and Romeo y Julieta (350,000 euros). A total of 4,27 million euros was raised with all the money going to the Cuban Public Health System. It was an outstanding end to the world's largest cigar festival.

