

## MONTECRISTO AND PARTAGÁS ARE THE CENTRE OF ATTENTION ON THE XV ANNIVERSARY OF THE HABANOS FESTIVAL

- Two new Montecristo *vitolas*: Petit No.2 and Double Edmundo, the first Partagás Gran Reserva, as well as the re-launch of the Vegueros brand focus the interest on the XV anniversary of the Habanos Festival.
- The attendance of personalities from various fields, such as tennis player Boris Becker, jazz musician Delfeayo Marsalis, the great singer Omara Portuondo, NBA player Gary Payton, Italian tenor Darío Balzanelli and the connection to the world of gourmet gastronomy, including the Alliance between Habanos and Rioja, are the main features in a highly exclusive Festival.
- Grupo Habanos sales had a significant 6% organic growth in 2012.

Havana, 26 February 2013 – The XV Habanos Festival has started, a must-go event which every year brings together Habano aficionados from more than 70 countries, as well as international personalities who love the best tobacco in the world. All of them will experience the main launches that Habanos s.a. presents in 2013, and enjoy the wide-ranging programme offered by the Festival until Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

Those attending the **XV Habanos Festival** this year include music, and gastronomy personalities: the former number-one tennis player in the world, **Boris Becker**; one of the best current jazz trombone players, composers, and producers, **Delfeayo Marsalis**; NBA star **Gary Payton**; Italian tenor **Darío Balzanelli**, widely regarded as Luciano Pavarotti's successor, who, together with the legendary Cuban singer **Omara Portuondo**, will act in the Gala Evening. Avant-garde Croatian chefs **Grgur Baksic**, **Zoran Simunic**, and **Pantelija Pekic**, members of Gastronomadi, will present their high cuisine creations, made using the best tobacco in the world. They may be sampled during the Cooking Show "**Tobacco and Gastronomy**" that will take place during the Festival. The Alliance between **Habanos and Rioja**, with a selection of the best pairings between both Denominations of Origin, will be another high point of the Festival.

The historical **Morro Fortress** will be today the exceptional stage for the **Welcoming Evening**. Attendees will be able to sample, exclusively during this night, the new *vitolas* in the **Montecristo** permanent range. The first one, **Petit No.2**, enriches the historic Línea Clásica after many years' wait, and make it possible to enjoy all the Montecristo flavour in less time, thanks to its innovative *figurado*-tapered at one end- format. **Double Edmundo** is the second launch of the brand, offering a larger Habano *vitola* to enjoy the aromas and flavours of the classic Línea Edmundo in a smoking time of approximately one hour. Both *vitolas* will carry the **new brand band**, in line with its simplicity and elegance.

On **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February** the **Vegueros Evening** will be held – a very special meeting to honour the hard work of the growers of the best tobacco in the world, without whose contribution the magnificent Habanos would not exist. This event, which will be held in El Laguito Protocol Lounge, will also include the re-launch of the **Vegueros** brand, whose new **Tapados**, **Entretiempos** and **Mañanitas vitolas**, all of them *Totalmente a Mano Tripa Larga* –Totally hand made, Long Filler- conceived for a more accessible segment and with a Medium to Full flavour, may be sampled, together with Habanos of the Edición Limitada 2013. The night will also reflect the relationship between Cuban tobacco and high cuisine, as one of the dishes served will include tobacco as an ingredients. Croatian chefs **Grgur Baksic**, **Zoran Simunic** and **Pantelija Pekic**, members of Gastronomadi, will supervise its preparation.

The XV Habanos Festival will end on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**, with the Gala Evening in honour of Partagás, a brand found in 1845, which this year presents its first Gran Reserva in its **168-year history**: **Lusitanias Gran Reserva Cosecha 2007**. These Habanos are *Totalmente a Mano Tripa Larga* -Totally hand made, Long Filler-, after a meticulous selection by **Ligador** -Master Blender- **Arnaldo Bichot**, of 2007 harvest leaves, aged for 5 years, from Vuelta Abajo, in the **San Juan y Martínez** and **San Luis\*** tobacco districts. During the night, Italian tenor

Dario Balzanelli, will sing the famous Cuban song 'La Comparsa', and the legendary Cuban singer Omara Portuondo will perform with Maestro Patterson's orchestra and Maestro Santiago Alfonso's dance troupe.

### Other activities of interest

The wide-ranging programme of this XV Festival, on such a special occasion, places particular emphasis on the Habano as a symbol of tradition, exclusiveness, and know-how which has captivated men and women for centuries.

The **Alliance between Habanos D.O.P.-Rioja D.O.Ca.** will be a high point of the XV Festival: two great historical Denominations of Origin which however remain trendsetters. The selection stage prior to this alliance was held in January in Spain, with the participation of a jury of **oenologists, journalists, gastronomy experts, and sommeliers**, all of them Habanos smokers, who made a first selection of 12 wines, 6 for each category, which will go on to a first preliminary stage on 26<sup>th</sup> February, and then to the grand finale to select **the 2 best pairings between Habanos and Rioja**. This event will be held in the Palacio de Convenciones on **Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February**.

The **XII Habanosommelier International Contest** will also be held, as well as the **II International Contest Habanos in Images**, which this year will focus on photography, and the **III Habanos Blind Tasting**, all of which activities are warmly received by the audience.

The Habanos Festival could not but include **Lectures**, this year given by Messrs **Fernando Dominguez Valdés-Hevia, Simon Chase, and Eumelio Espino**, the **Master Class on the cigar rolling technique**, and the traditional visits to the **best tobacco plantations** in Vuelta Abajo\*, Pinar del Río\* and the historical **Habanos\* factories**. This year, we will be visiting the **Partagás Factory**, as well as **H. Upmann**, the factory where the Montecristo brand was created in 1935, **both in their temporary locations** due to restoration work. (Please verify the location of the factories in the press dossier and programme in case of doubt).

\*(D.O.P.) Protected Denominations of Origin.

### Grupo Habanos 2012 Financial results

In 2012, **Grupo Habanos**, which markets worldwide and in exclusive the 27 Habanos brands, all of which are made *Totalmente a Mano* –Totally hand made- had a **turnover of 416 million dollars**. This amounted to an **organic growth -taking the constant exchange rate into account- of 6%**. This is a positive trend that shows the company's strength as a global leader despite the difficult economic and legal environment.

As stated by **Luis Sanchez-Harguindey**, Co-president of Habanos s.a.: *"The results of our strategy development are really positive and very encouraging for the future. In this way, throughout 2012, and despite the difficult environment, Grupo Habanos increased its sales, at a constant exchange rate, by 6%"*.

**Walfrido Hernández Mesa**, Co-president of Habanos s.a. said that *"despite the economic crisis, which had a particularly strong impact on our Southern Europe markets, we had a good evolution, thanks, to a large extent, to our activity in emerging markets, particularly Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe (mainly Russia), as well as to the good behaviour of some of our mature markets, such as Germany, France, and Switzerland"*.

## About Corporación Habanos s.a.

**Corporación Habanos** is the world leader in the Premium cigar market (Hand made cigars). Habanos s.a. sells Habanos in both Cuba and the rest of the world. To this end it has an exclusive distribution network, with presence in more than 150 countries across the five continents. For more information, visit [www.habanos.com](http://www.habanos.com).

Habanos s.a. currently distributes all 27 Cuban brands that belong to the **Habanos\* (D.O.P) Protected Denomination of Origin** made with the process *Totalmente a Mano*- Totally hand made-, (a process only applied in Cuba today, that was used for the first time almost 3 centuries ago in the island). Some of the most important Habanos brands are **Cohiba, Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta, Partagás, Hoyo de Monterrey, H. Upmann, Punch, San Cristóbal de la Habana, Trinidad and Bolívar**. For more information, visit [www.habanos.com](http://www.habanos.com).

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