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THE FIRST MONTECRISTO GRAN RESERVA CLOSURES THE XIII HABANOS FESTIVAL

- Habanos s.a. presents the first Gran Reserva of Montecristo, one of the most widely appreciated brands of Habanos, in the Vitola Montecristo No. 2, with a limited production of 5.000 numbered boxes of 15 units each
- The Grand Humidors Auction reached 827,000 Euro

Havana, February 26th, 2011.- The new Vitola Montecristo No. 2 Gran Reserva Cosecha 2005, the first Gran Reserva of the brand, could be tasted during the Gala Evening, event that closures a week plenty of activities related to the enjoy of the Habanos. During that night it was held the Grand Humidors Auction, which this year reached 827,000 Euro.

This new Gran Reserva digs deeper into the unique character of Habanos as Protected Appellation of Origin. For the production of this Gran Reserva of Montecristo, the best tobacco leaves were selected from Vuelta Abajo, Cuba, harvested in 2005. All the leaves that make a Habano, filler, wrapper and binder, were aged during a long and careful process of at least 5 years, and after this period, they get embedded of shape and taste in the master cigar rollers' hands of Montecristo at H. Upmann factory. Due to its own characteristics, the Gran Reserva Montecristo is a unique production, extremely limited to 5.000 numbered cases containing 15 units each.

The traditional Grand Humidors Auction was held during the Gala Evening, authentic handicraft works of art in precious woods with an exceptional assortment of Habanos, and as already traditional, the money collected from the auction goes to the Cuban Health System, which this year reached 827,000 Euro for seven Humidors of H. Upmann, Hoyo de Monterrey, Romeo y Julieta, Partagás, Montecristo, Vegas Robaina and Cohiba brands.

The *Habano 2010 Awards*, which this year celebrates its 15 anniversary, were conceded to Armando Trujillo González, in the Production category; to Dr. Maximiliano Herzog in the Business category; and to Adriano Martínez Rius in the Communication category. Marvin Shanken, first Habano Award in the Communication category in 1995, gave to Martínez Rius this prize together with Cuban actor Jorge Perugorría. Since its creation, in 1995, this award honors to all these professionals who have contributed to the improvement of the Habanos, to its distributions and to its acknowledgement.

Important personalities attended to the Gala Evening such as Cuban actor and painter already mentioned and the great Cuban artist Omara Portuondo, a myth of music and Cuban culture all over the world, sang exclusively for the attendants.

The Gala closures a week full of activities. This year it has been added the first Blind Tasting of Habanos, an activity that tests the expert smokers ability to identify the Habanos' Factory Name through the sense of touch and its brand through the flavor. In this first edition the winner has been Ana Isel Mederos.

Those taking part in the Festival have had the opportunity to visit the Real Fábrica de Tabacos de Partagás, the historic factory located next to Havana's Capitol, before the start of its restoration process.

The winner of the X Habanosommelier International Contest has been Juan Jesús Machín on behalf Cuba. Giving the growing number of aficionados that demands the professional advisory of a sommelier when choosing a Habano, this contest has a very good acceptance.

Corporación Habanos s.a.

Corporación Habanos s.a., world leader in the premium cigar market, 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.

Habanos s.a. currently distributes a range of products under 27 brand names, including 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.

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