

PR 5 – March 3rd, 2012

THE FIRST RESERVA OF ROMEO Y JULIETA CLOSES THE XIV HABANOS FESTIVAL

- The Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchills was also presented. It has one of the most requested formats today thanks to its reduced size, Petit Robusto
- The annual Auction of Humidors has received more than 963,000 dollars which will be donated to the Cuban Public Health System

Havana, 3 of March, 2012.- The XIV Habanos Festival has ended after bringing together international personalities and lovers of Habanos. The Gala Evening, dedicated to Romeo y Julieta brand, closed the event.

During the Gala Evening, two new Habanos were launched and sampled by attendees. They were the **Romeo y Julieta Churchills Reserva 2008** -the first Reserva of the brand- and **Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchills**, a new vitola that will delight connoisseurs with its characteristic aromatic and balanced flavor, suitable for any occasion.

As one of the most historic vitolas, the Churchills have been chosen for this unique production and makes the first Reserva of this brand: Romeo y Julieta Churchills Reserva 2008.

This unique product demands the most stringent selection criteria in creating the Reserva. From the long, careful process of ageing the best tobacco from Vuelta Abajo* (D.O.P.) for at least 3 years, to the tasting committee comprised of more than 50 experts who have supervised the selected blend to guarantee a unique flavor that is harmonious, balanced, and aromatic.

The Reserva of Romeo y Julieta is a **unique product** with an extremely limited production run of only **5.000 numbered cases**, each containing 20 units.

The new Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchills vitola completes the current Romeo y Julieta offering by adding a format that is highly favored in recent years by Habanos enthusiasts and led to be smoked in twenty minutes.

Ahead of the dinner and the new Habanos tastings, the **traditional Auction of Humidors** took place. This year it raised 963,506 dollars. The six humidors auctioned feature artisan crafted designs of the most prestigious Habanos brands (**Cohiba, Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta, Partagás, Hoyo de Monterrey and H. Upmann**). Over **the past 12 years it has raised almost 10 million which is entirely donated to the Cuban Public Health System.**

The **2011 Habano Awards**, have been operating since 1995 and recognise those who have contributed to the product's improvement. This year the award has gone to tobacco farmer, **Armando Rodríguez Chill for the Production Category** and **Jemma Freeman**, Habanos distributor in the United Kingdom for the **Business Category**. **Jim Belushi, Phil Manzanera** and **Augusto Enríquez** presented the award for the **Communication Category** to **José Castelar Cueto**, who was awarded various Guinness records for making the longest Habanos in the world.

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This year's Festival has also introduced the **I International Contest "Habanos in images"**. This contest aims to raise awareness about the selfless art of artisanal cigar makers, cigar rollers, and the many other people in Cuba who participate in the creation of Habanos. Two participants have shared the prize: Patricia Pérez Pérez from Cuba with *Mujeres Cohiba y Habanos* and Patricia Sporn from America with *Con el Sonido de la Chaveta*. The jury has recognised their historical approach, the quality of the language used and the focus on women, essential element in the Habanos world.

During the final of the tasting between **Habanos* (D.O.P.) and Vinhos do Porto (D.O.C. – Port Wines)** the selected pairing in Tawny 20 Years Category was the Oporto Dow's with Montecristo Edmundo, and in Vintage 1994 Category, the Oporto Graham's with Romeo y Julieta Belicoso. The finalists for both categories were Ferreira and Warre's, respectively.

The winner of the **XI Habanosommelier International Contest** is Luis García from Mexico for his preliminary pairing of Tequila Centinela Extra Añejo 3 años with Wide Churchills of Romeo y Julieta and he has won the final with Petit Robusto of Hoyo de Monterrey and Edmundo of Montecristo. This 23-years-old Habanosommelier works at Vinoteca in Guadalajara (Jalisco, Mexico) and he advises at the best restaurants of Guadalajara city such as *I Latina*, *La Grelha* and *Anita Li*. This is one of the most awaited announcements of the Habanos Festival, because of the the growing interest in expert advice for the best Habano to taste.

Corporación Habanos s.a.:

Corporación Habanos s.a., is the world leader in the premium cigar market (Hand made cigars), 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, please visit: www.habanos.com.

Habanos s.a. currently distributes all 27 Cuban brands that belong to the **Habanos (D.O.P) Protected Denomination of Origin** with a range of products that includes all 27 premium Cuban Brands (made with the process Totalmente a Mano- Totally by Hand-, 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**, among others. For more information, please visit: www.habanos.com.

***(D.O.P.) Protected Denomination of Origin**

For press information:

Habanos S.A.: Daymi Difurniao (ddifurniao@habanos.cu, +535 279 46 45)
Ogilvy PR: Ana Martín-Cleto (ana.martincleto@ogilvy.com, +34 610 53 27 47)
Inmaculada Vela (inmaculada.vela@ogilvy.com, +34 620 81 31 39)