

PR 3 – February 27th, 2012

## XIV HABANOS FESTIVAL BEGINS AFTER AN EXCELLENT YEAR OF HABANOS SALES IN THE WORLD

- Actor and musician Jim Belushi, guitarists Phil Manzanera of Roxy Music and Jack Bruce of Cream, and Michelin-starred chef Sergio Torres are among those attending the event which commemorates the 520 Anniversary of the Discovery of Tobacco in Cuba
- Cohiba Pirámides Extra, first figurado in the Línea Clásica of the premier Habanos brand, Romeo y Julieta Churchills Reserva 2008, and Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchills, are the main launchings that Habanos s.a. will present at the Festival
- Habanos s.a. sales of Cuban cigars have been impressive with near double digit growth (9%) in 2011 and with a turnover of \$401 million, following the trend of luxury goods

**La Havana, 27th of February.**- Today begins the Habanos Festival, an event that in its fourteenth edition brings together more than 1,500 enthusiasts of the best tobacco in the world, arriving in Havana (Cuba) from 70 countries. Attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy the major launchings that Habanos s.a. presents for 2012 and the many activities taking place at the Festival until Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> of March.

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> of February, during the Welcoming Night, **Phil Manzanera**, **Roxy Music** guitarist and renowned music producer, and **Jack Bruce**, *Cream* member, the group who also joined Eric Clapton and Ginger Baker, will perform with the Cuban singer **Augusto Enriquez** in a show called "ECLECTIC-US".

Among those who may attend the concert will be the American actor and musician **Jim Belushi**, **Blues Brothers** member and a great Habanos enthusiast, who will be all week enjoying the many cultural events offered by the Habanos Festival.

Subsequently, the attendees could enjoy **Cohiba Pirámides Extra**, a unique and exclusive vitola which expands the reach of this premier Habanos brand. This Habano, made with the "selection of the selection" of the best tobaccos of San Juan y Martínez\* (D.O.P.) and San Luis\* (D.O.P.), also includes a new ring and aluminum tube with innovative design and safety elements making identification easy for Habanos enthusiasts and enhancing the exclusivity of the Cohiba brand.

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> of February will be held the **Evening 520 Year Anniversary of the Discovery of Tobacco** at the Museo de Bellas Artes. Special guest, **Chef Sergio Torres**, from *Dos Cielos* restaurant of Barcelona, recently awarded a **Michelin star**, has designed one of the dishes to be tasted during the night, **based on gastronomic exchange that occurs with the discovery of the New World made in 1492**. The marriage of the best gastronomy and the best Habanos always occurs at the Habanos Festival and this time it is one of the highlighted moments of the event.

**Romeo y Julieta Churchills Reserva 2008** is the launch which will star the Habanos Festival Gala Evening. It is the first Reserve of the brand, founded in 1875 and produced in its most historic vitola, Churchills.

With a limited production of 5,000 boxes, this new Reserva plumbs the depths of the unique character of Habanos\* (D.O.P) Protected Denomination of Origin status and it could be tasted exclusively on Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, climax of the Habanos Festival.

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During this night it will be also presented **Romeo y Julieta Petit Churchills**, a new vitola with a format containing the characteristic Romeo y Julieta aromatic and balanced flavor to be enjoyed on any occasion.

The Festival will conclude with the **traditional Humidors Auction** in aid of Cuban Health System.

## Activities program

As a **novelty in this edition**, Corporación Habanos s.a. has announced the **International Contest Habanos in Images**, aimed at directors of audiovisual works related to the Habano. It is motivated by interest in promoting knowledge and the spreading of the selfless art of artisanal cigar makers, cigar rollers, and the many other people in Cuba who participate in the creation of Habanos.

Alliances between **Habanos (D.O.P) Protected Denomination of Origin - Vinhos do Porto (D.O.C.) -Port wines-**, two of the Protected Denominations of Origin most historic in the world will also take place with pairings between several of the most prestigious brands of both denominations such as Habanos Cohiba, Montecristo, Romeo y Julieta, Partagás, and Port wines Offley, Ferreira, Rozes, Warre's, Graham's and Dow's.

During the week it will also take place the Trade Fair, the International Seminar and the traditional visits to **tobacco plantations** (in **Vuelta Abajo\***, **Pinar del Río\***) and to the factories, where attendees could learn the Habano making process.

**El Laguito**, Cohiba Factory historic building only rarely visited, and **La Corona**, the Head of the Romeo y Julieta brand, are **the factories to be visited** this year.

In addition to the eleventh edition of the consolidated **Habanosommelier International Contest**, **second Habanos Blind Tasting** will be held. Participants will proceed to try 3 Habanos only through the senses of touch and taste.

The Festival then culminates with the **Gala Evening** where it will be held the **Habanos 2011 Awards** in its three categories, Production, Communication and Business and traditional **Grand Humidor Auction**, authentic handicraft works of art by most prestigious Cuban craftsmen, **which over the past 11 years has risen over \$9 million for the Cuban Health System.**

## Grupo Habanos 2011 Financial results

**Grupo Habanos** which exclusively distributes all 27 Habanos brands, all made "Totalmente a Mano" -Totally by Hand-, had a turnover of \$401 million in 2011, which means an **important near double digit growth (9%) following the world rising trend of luxury goods.**

The market share stood at **80%** market share in value worldwide, confirming its position as worldwide<sup>1</sup>, leader at the Premium market (cigars made Totally by Hand).

According to Habanos s.a. co-presidents Buenaventura Jiménez and Jorge Luis Fernández Maique: "**There are certain markets in the world who continue in a time of economic crisis and consumption thereby affecting our sales, mainly Spain and Greece, but European mature markets such as Germany, Benelux,**

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<sup>1</sup> \* (Excluding US Market): Habanos cannot be sold in the US because of the US Embargo. The US market is estimated to be the biggest market in the world for Premium tobacco (Hand Made cigars).

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Switzerland and United Kingdom have had a positive development. In addition, there are some good developments in emerging markets in Asia-Pacific and Middle East, Russia and Brazil to compensate the decrease of the above markets”.

## 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](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** 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](http://www.habanos.com).

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

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