

# Luxury Experience and Cigar Enthusiasts

By Luxe Beat

**W**hat do you get when you cross a rare, high-end blend of tobaccos with an award-winning 7-year aged rum from Panama? A luxury experience for spirit and cigar enthusiasts called, Private Select. We recently tested the products and were very pleased.

The Private Select cigar was released in October, and is a collaboration from Ron Abuelo and Gurkha. It is “infused with the oak-aged Ron Abuelo 7 Años rum. Hand-made, hand-rolled with a Maduro Broadleaf wrapper, which was selected to complement the warm caramel, dried fruit, and spiced notes of the 7-year-old Panamanian rum.” The cigar is presented in a red wax-dipped, sealed glass tube and can be stored without a humidifier for up to three months.

We spoke with both collaborators and learned more about the project.

#### **How did the collaboration come about?**

We are always interested in finding new ways to introduce consumers to our products. Cigars and fine, oak-aged rum are a natural combination. We know that the rums from Ron Abuelo are a great complement to fine cigars, so it

made sense to partner with the finest cigar producer in the world, Gurkha, to create a next level experience for spirit and cigar enthusiasts. Our companies are like minded – quality and heritage are paramount and we believe this shines through in the collaboration.” Ron Abuelo tells us.

#### **How did you determine which cigar to be paired with which rum?**

Gurkha felt that a maduro cigar would best complement the Ron Abuelo 7 Anos. The sweetness of the wrapper is well matched to sweet and spiciness of the aged rum.

#### **What is it like working with a multi-generational, family owned company?**

The beauty of working with a family-operated business is that the sky is the limit. The decisions are made by the families rather than through a long process or even a board vote, for example. This means we can focus on ideas that we are passionate about from an artistic, creative and quality perspective. Private Select is a passion project that both families believed in and wanted to bring to fruition.

#### **How would you describe the experience of smoking the Private Select?**

It’s a wonderful experience. The

pairing of the Abuelo-infused tobacco really highlights the quality and depth of flavors. Gurkha is known throughout the world for producing the finest cigars, and the new Private Select will not disappoint cigar enthusiasts.

#### **What is involved in the crafting process of this cigar?**

It was a meticulous and labor intensive process. Gurkha invested a lot of time in tasting different blends of tobaccos from around the world and testing them alongside the Ron Abuelo 7 Anos to find the best match for the infusion.

#### **With such a luxurious product, how do you appeal to the everyman (if you do)?**

Luxury lives at many price points. Both Gurkha and Ron Abuelo produce products in a range of prices. Small luxuries, like perhaps enjoying a Private Select with the Ron Abuelo 7 Anos can be just as wonderful as the experience of pairing the cigar with Ron Abuelo Centuria, which is exponentially more expensive. We believe in creating experiences and focusing on quality.

#### **What was the biggest challenge with this creative collaboration?**

Gurkha spent a lot of time and effort ensuring that they infused the right amount of time into the



# ence For Spirit nusiasts



cigar to maximize the taste, aromatics and balance. Their goal was to have the rum and tobacco complement one another, we believe they did so beautifully!

**What type of quality inspection do Gurkha cigars go through before they are ready for to be put on the market?**

At Gurkha every cigar is put through a draw test before it is approved at the factory. Once the cigar arrives in the U.S. We then test it internally and with our master blenders until we are positive we have the perfect blend.

**What can we expect from Gurkha in 2015?**

Right now the focus is on the new Private Select. We want customers and enthusiasts to discover the brands' new partnership and appreciate the artistry of the pairing before we introduce anything else to the line.

**About Ron Abuelo**

Ron Abuelo is produced from estate-grown sugar cane in Panama by the family-owned Varela Hermanos. The company dates back to 1908 when Don José Varela established the first sugar mill in the recently-formed Republic of Panama, the San Isidro Sugar Mill. Almost 30 years later, the family began the distillation of alcohol from their sugar cane crop in 1936. Currently run by the third

generation, Varela Hermanos has approximately 2000 hectares of land devoted exclusively to the cultivation of sugar cane. Today, the range is composed of four award-winning dark oak-aged rums: Añejo, 7 Años, 12 Años and the limited edition Ron Abuelo Centuria. Ron Abuelo is imported from Panama exclusively by Van Gogh Imports. For more information, please visit [www.ronabuelopanama.com](http://www.ronabuelopanama.com) or [www.vangoghimports.com](http://www.vangoghimports.com).

**About Gurkha Cigars**

Steeped in legend and rich in history, Gurkha Cigars were named after Nepalese warriors whose bravery impressed the British soldiers. Kaizad Hansotia purchased the company in 1989 with the intention of giving the cigars as unique gifts to customers of his family's watch business. As a result, the company was reborn and has since become one of the most famous luxury cigar brands in the world. Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Carlos Slim and an assortment of global dignitaries, world leaders, government officials, and celebrities as well as the Special Forces and Seal Team Six are all clients. Extraordinary quality combined with premium blends of tobacco, and a reputation for unparalleled excellence, Gurkha offers numerous distinct brands of cigars. For more information on Gurkha, please visit [www.gurkhacigars.com](http://www.gurkhacigars.com).