



48 CONSUMER  
RATED CIGARS

BLOGGERS  
CORNER

2011 FORD  
TAURUS SHO

CROWNED HEADS'  
JON HUBER

CIGAR 101 WITH  
MATT BOOTH

BLUE COLLAR COMEDY

**BILL ENGVALL**

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Once upon a time...  
Long, long ago  
in a galaxy far, far away...

You're traveling through another dimension ~ a dimension not only of sight and sound, but also of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are only that of one's imagination. There's a signpost up ahead: your next stop: the Cigar Zone....

# Cigar 101 with Matt Booth



I must admit, I am beyond honored that DC Cheboygan would ask me - of all people, to pen the first ever Cigar 101 section within his new publication. In addition, I feel it is only appropriate to begin by extending the ultimate respect and acknowledgement to all those that have and do operate within this little industry we know as the "Cigar Business." Individuals whose knowledge, ingenuity, and aptitude in this craft have laid the foundation that made it possible for me, and will make it possible for those that will ultimately come after me, to introduce new brands into the marketplace and contend with the big boys straight out of the gate. It is due to this key element that I have come to know the cigar business as an industry that embodies the quintessential "American Dream."

My intrigue with premium tobacco began long before the release of our cigar. I can attribute my introduction to the pleasure one derives from cigar smoking to my Uncle Leroy. My uncle (undisputedly one of the coolest mofos on the planet) debuted cigar smoking to me in such a way that it romanticized the act of smoking itself. Leroy just so happens to live in a much cooler climate these days, and his dedication to smoking is readily apparent. Leroy's stock of cigars swells within his garage throughout the winter months slated for some backyard smoking in the substantially more comfortable summer months to come. The fact that I can now send him cigars that bear my brand name is a tremendous source of pride that I find to be one of the personal benefits that I receive from this industry directly.

August 2009 was the month that I "officially" entered this business as a brand owner. Although we had been operating Room101 within the accessory and fashion markets since 2003 - this was our cigar industry debut, and I was nothing short of ecstatic. We were taking my brand into an entirely different industry, offering an entirely different classification of goods - and it just so happened that we were one of the most anticipated releases in the business that year. I met a slew of brand owners, company owners, distributors and wholesalers, retailers and end user consumers - and of course the multitude of industry bloggers and writers. I talked so much my voice was beginning to fail me, I answered



the same questions so many times it would have annoyed most anyone, I slept no more than two to three hours a night if I was lucky. I was exhausted, getting sick from the stress on my body, and I was loving every second of it.

As with any industry there are always going to be elements of business that are just that - business. To my pleasant surprise I have found the cigar industry to be a place where likeminded spirits can thrive, even as competitors and business can be conducted on a much more comfortable plane. When I step onto the battlefield of the cigar business I put down the knives and grenades and reach for the cognac and Anejos. I greet people - associates and competitors alike - with a genuine smile and warm handshake. I must reiterate the words genuine and warm as my experiences in business in the past could be best illustrated with the image of a man swimming in a shark tank with raw steaks strapped to his body. Although, if one is to let their guard down completely in business, it is at this exact moment that the dagger is swiftly inserted into the tender meat in the lower back region. It is for this reason that I am always watching - forever vigilant. With that said, I am elated to let you know that I have truly found what I feel to be a home here in the cigar industry, alongside likeminded weirdos. In a time and place in life that I felt it was past the point of acquiring new friends the cigar industry has afforded me the luxury of new friends - true friends - which I believe under any other set of circumstances, and in any other industry for that matter would be, simply put, an impossibility. For that I am thankful.

Two and a half years after the release of our initial cigar is a good time to recap. I find myself far more entrenched within this industry (pleasantly so) than I ever imagined I would be. Lessons have been learned, deals have been made and my brand continues to grow within the premium tobacco market. 2010 saw the release of the second installment of the Room101 tobacco collection - our LTD/Conjura blend. Not only did I feel this blend was a wonderful cigar, and something I was greatly proud of - the consumers agreed as well. It even received a 93 rating in Cigar Aficionado, and was one of the highest rated series for last year (shameless plug). The Conjura cigar was a benchmark for myself and the



Camacho family as it displayed our growth as a team, as well as my personal growth in regards to premium tobacco.

On my last mission into the Hondo (a term of endearment for Honduras used by those "in the know") I traveled with an A-team of tobacco enthusiasts – Cigar Commandos, if you will. I took several close friends with me that I wanted involved in the blending of our next cigar. At this stage of the game I felt sharing that experience together was only appropriate considering this group was comprised of several individuals that have supported my brand since its inception. To describe the experience as fantastic would be an insult to how fantastic it truly was. Not only did this motley crew and I come up with some great things in regards to my next project – we came up with some amazing blend pilots that I believe we will ultimately release together as collaborative cigars. Again my business model in tobacco evolves. I can offer the same level of intimacy and exclusivity I do with my premium jewelry product with my premium tobacco line.

As I sit here on a rainy day in Los Angeles and take a moment to reflect, I find myself inspired. To find my way into this industry was clearly part of the master plan – and the cigar business has become nothing short of home for me in every sense of the word. For those of you that know me personally – you know this came straight from the heart, and for those of you that I have yet to



meet – I am looking forward to it so much so that the anticipation is palpable. I feel nothing short of blessed to be living the dream here in the Tobacco Zone....and I am looking forward to what is yet to come, as I am just getting started.

