

## Glossary of Cigar Terms

Cigars could be confusing but they are an enjoyable pleasure to some and a passion to others. We will do our best in helping you understand some of the terms that you will read on a box of cigars or hear in a general cigar conversation. Terms like Seco, Bunch or Ligerero? How is ring gauge measured? What is tunneling and how do we correct it?



We believe that if you learn a little bit about cigars, it should increase your pleasure and overall enjoyment.

### What is Maduro Wrapper Leaf

- Maduro is the Spanish word for "ripe or mature".
- Maduro wrappers are fermented longer and at a higher temperature.
- Not all tobacco leaves can be fermented into Maduro.
- The color of this tobacco can be achieved by sun exposure and or a prolonged fermentation.
- Some of the most common Tobaccos that are fermented into Maduro are:
  - Connecticut Broadleaf, Brazilian Mata Fina, Habano and Costa Rican.

## Cigar Sizes

**Ring Gauge**-- A measurement for the diameter of a cigar, based on 64ths of an inch. A 50 ring gauge cigar is 50/64ths of an inch thick.

**Vitola**-- A factory term for a cigar size. Robusto and Corona are two examples of Vitolas.

**Diademas**-- A big cigar with a closed tapered head. Generally about 8 inches long; the foot may be open, or closed like a perfecto.

**Gigante or Presidente** – These are some of the biggest cigars. The lengths can be as high as ten inches and their ring sizes can be up to 64.

**Corona** - The classic Corona, around 5 inches long and a ring size of 44.

**Churchill** -- A cigar that is traditionally 7 inches by a 50 ring gauge. This cigar was named after Sir Winston Churchill, because it was his favorite size.

**Rothschild** - Named after Baron de Rothschild. Its size is normally 4 ½ with a ring size of 50.

**Lonsdale** - Named after the Earl of Lonsdale. They have a ring size of about 40 and can

be as long as 7 inches.

**Parejos**-- Straight-sided cigars, such as Coronas, Robusto and Lonsdale.

**Perfecto**-- A distinctive cigar shape that is closed at both ends, with a rounded head; usually with a bulge in the middle.

**Panatela** - This cigar is long and thin. Its ring size is around 37 and its length is about 7 inches.

**Cigarillos** - These cigars are about the size of a cigarette.

**Culebra**-- Spanish for "snake." Culebras are cigars made of three panetelas braided and banded together; usually 5 to 6 inches in length, most often with a 38 ring gauge.

**Pyramid & Torpedo** – Sometimes these sizes are the same size and shape but called different names by the manufactures. These cigars are normally 6 inches long with a ring of 50 to 54.

**Belicoso** - Similar to the pyramid but unlike these are not pointy but rounded at the tip.

**Figurado**-- A Spanish term that refers to cigars with shapes, such as Belicoso, Torpedo, Pyramids, Perfectos and Culebras.

**Robusto**-- A substantial, but short cigar; traditionally 5 inches by a 50 ring gauge.

## **Cigar Terms**

**American Market Selection**-- Abbreviated AMS, a seldom-used term created by the major importer of Cuban cigars in the 1950s to designate claro-colored wrappers. (Also see English Market Selection.)

**Belicoso**-- Traditionally the head of this cigar is pointed but a little rounded.

**Binder**-- The portion of a tobacco leaf used to hold together the blend of filler leaves and the wrapper.

**Blend**-- The mixture of different types of tobacco in a cigar.

**Bloom (also called Plume)**-- A naturally occurring phenomenon in the cigar aging process, also called plume, caused by the oils that are released from the tobacco. It appears as a fine white powder and can be brushed off. Not to be confused with mold, which is bluish and stains the wrapper.

**Blue Mold**-- is a fast moving, airborne fungus that can ruin a tobacco field in just a few days. It flourishes in cool, cloudy weather with light rain and riddles tobacco leaves with small round blemishes.

**Book Style** (also, Booking)-- A rolling method by which the cigarmaker lays the filler leaves atop one another, then rolls them up like a scroll. Another style is called entubar (see entry).

**Bouquet**-- The smell, or "nose," of a fine cigar.

**Box-pressed**-- We have two main ways of Box Pressing, single and double. Single Box Press is more of a slightly squarish appearance, pressed from the top. Double Box Press is pressed on the top and bottom tightly in a box.

**Bulk**-- A large pile of tobacco leaves in which fermentation occurs.

**Bunch**-- Filler tobaccos that are together by the binder. Once the Bunch is created it then goes into the cigar molds for its shape.

**Bundle**-- A packaging method, designed with economy in mind, that uses a cellophane outer wrap instead of a box. Sometimes "Seconds or Short Filler" cigars are packed in Bundles. Recently we are seeing 100% long leaf filler that are good cigars packed in Bundles. These might be boxed in a factory made tray that holds 3 sizes and are usually less expensive than boxed cigars.

**Cabinet Selection**-- Cigars packed in a wooden box rather than the standard cardboard or paper-covered cigar boxes. These are preferable when buying cigars for aging. Most times they will not have Cello on them.

**Candela**-- A bright green shade of wrapper, achieved by a heat-curing process that fixes the chlorophyll content of the wrapper while it's still in the barn. Also referred to as "Double Claro".

**Cap**-- A circular piece of wrapper leaf placed at the head of the cigar to secure the wrapper.

**Capa**-- The cigar's wrapper.

**Carotene**-- A naturally occurring compound found in aged cigars.

**Cedar**-- The kind of wood that is used to make most cigar boxes and humidors.

**Chaveta** (roller's knife) -- The knife used in a cigar factory for cutting the wrapper leaf.

**Cigar Molds**-- The wooden or now plastic forms used in cigar making to give shape to a finished bunch. It has two parts, which, when assembled, are placed in a press.

**Claro**-- A light-brown wrapper leaf, usually shade-grown.

**Colorado**-- A medium-brown to brownish-red shade of wrapper tobacco.

**Cuban Seed**-- Usually refers to plants grown in non-Cuban countries with seeds from Cuba.

**Cubatabaco**-- Formerly the worldwide distribution company for Cuban cigars; now called Habanos S.A.

**Draw**-- The amount of air that gets pulled through a lit cigar. It can be too easy and they tend to get hot or too tight/plugged and air will not flow through the cigar.

**English Market Selection**-- Abbreviated EMS, a term used to designate a natural color wrapper, not claro or lighter shades, nor maduro or darker shades. In the United Kingdom, an EMS sticker found on boxes of Cuban cigars refers to inventory that has been vetted by Hunters & Frankau, cigar distributors. (Also see American Market Selection.)

**Entubar**-- A rolling method that originated in Cuba. Rather than booking (see entry above) the filler leaves, the roller folds each individual filler leaf back on itself, then bunches the leaves together. Proponents of this method say it creates superior air flow through the cigar, which results in an even draw and burn.

**Fermentation**-- A process of heat, moisture and pressure. Once leaf is picked from the field it goes to the "Curing Barn" for 60 days and turns from green to tan. After Curing the tobacco then goes through the fermentation process. All tobaccos are fermented differently and at different temperatures. Fermentation also releases ammonia and other impurities.

**Finish**-- A tasting term. It refers to the taste that lingers on your palate after a puff. Mild cigars have a short finish. "Full Body" cigars will have a longer finish.

**Flag Leaves**-- An extension of the wrapper leaf shaped to finish the head of the cigar. Flags are sometimes tied off in a pigtail or a curly head.

**Foot**-- The end of the cigar you light.

**Gum**-- A vegetable adhesive used to secure the head of the wrapper leaf around the finished bunch.

**Hands**-- Individual leaves of tobacco that are hung together after harvest and tied at the top. These hands are piled together to make a bulk for fermentation.

**Havana**-- Capital of Cuba. The traditional center of manufacturing of Cuban cigars for export, and a term widely used to designate Cuban cigars.

**Head**-- The closed end of the cigar; the end you place in your mouth.

**Homogenized**-- Pieces of chopped tobacco leaf and cellulose made into sheets.

**Humidor**-- A box designed to preserve the proper storage and aging of cigars by maintaining a relative humidity level of 65 to 69% percent humidity. And a temperature of approximately 65°F to 70°F.

**Hygrometer**-- A device that indicates the percent of humidity in the air.

**Lector**-- Traditionally, the person who reads to the cigar rollers while they work.

**Ligero**-- One of the three basic types of tobacco. The name means light in Spanish, but this aromatic tobacco lends body and strength to the blending of a cigar.

**Long Filler**-- Filler tobacco that runs the length of the body of the cigar, rather than chopped pieces found in machine-made cigars. Premium cigars use 100% Long Filler.

**Machine-made**-- Cigars made entirely by machine, using heavier-weight wrappers and binders and, frequently, cut filler in place of long filler.

**Maduro**-- A wrapper shade from a very dark reddish-brown to almost black. The word means ripe in Spanish. The color of this tobacco can be achieved by sun exposure and or a prolonged fermentation.

**Mold**-- A damaging fungus that forms on a cigar when it is stored at too high of a humidity.

**Oils**—Oils are found in all tobacco. Some have more than others. Connecticut shade leaf is low in oil and some Corojo tobaccos are high in natural oil.

**Olor**-- A variety of Dominican cigar tobacco known for its big leaves; mainly used for filler and binder tobacco.

**Oscuro**-- A black shade of wrapper leaf, normally darker than Maduro. It is not Maduro, it is a Sun-Grown tobacco that should be a medium body.

**Plug**-- A blockage that sometimes occurs in the tobacco that can prevent a cigar from drawing properly. You can sometimes work through a plug by slightly biting down on the head to create an air chamber.

**Plume (also called Bloom)**-- A naturally occurring phenomenon in the cigar aging process, also called plume, caused by the oils that are released from the tobacco. It

appears as a fine white powder and can be brushed off. Not to be confused with mold, which is bluish and stains the wrapper.

**Pre-Castro Cigar**-- A Cuban cigar made before Fidel Castro's rise to power in January 1959.

**Pre-embargo Cigar**-- A Cuban cigar made before President Kennedy enacted the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba in 1962.

**Primings**-- The rows of leaves on a tobacco plant. The number of primings varies, but six is average. The first priming is closest to the ground, the sixth is near the top. The higher the, priming the stronger the tobacco.

**Puro**-- A Spanish term used to distinguish a cigar from a cigarette. Modern usage refers to a cigar blended with tobaccos from a single country. (All Cuban cigars use 100 percent Cuban tobacco, so all Cuban cigars, according to modern usage, are Puros.)

**Ring Gauge**-- A measurement for the diameter of a cigar, based on 64ths of an inch. A 50 ring gauge cigar is 50/64ths of an inch thick.

**Rosado**-- A Spanish term that means "rose-colored." It is used to describe the reddish tint of some wrapper leaf.

**Seco**-- The Spanish word for dry, seco is a type of filler tobacco. It often contributes aroma and burn qualities.

**Shade-grown**-- Wrapper leaves that have been grown under a cheesecloth tent, called a tapado. The filtered sunlight creates a thinner, more elastic leaf.

**Shoulder**-- The area of a cigar where the cap meets the body. If you cut into the shoulder, the cigar will most likely unravel.

**Short Filler**-- Used mainly in machine-made cigars, it consists of chopped scraps of leaf. Short filler burns quicker and hotter than long filler.

**Special Solution**-- A solution of 50 percent water, 50 percent propylene glycol. Added to your humidification device every three to six months.

**Spill**-- A strip of cedar used to light a cigar when using a candle or a fluid lighter, both of which can alter the taste of the cigar.

**Sugar**-- Sugars occur naturally in tobacco. Darker wrappers, such as Maduro, contain more sugar, making them sweeter.

**Sun-grown**-- Tobacco grown in direct sunlight, which creates a thicker leaf with thicker veins.

**Tooth**-- The grain pattern characteristic of less smooth wrapper leaf, such as leaf from Cameroon Africa.

**Torcedores**-- Cigar rollers.

**Totalmente a Mano**-- Made totally by hand; a description found on cigar boxes. Much better than "Hecho a Mano" (made by hand, which can mean it is filled with machine-bunched filler), or "Envuelto a Mano" (packed by hand).

**Tubos**-- Cigars packed in individual wood, metal or glass tubes to keep them fresh.

**Tunneling**-- This will happen to a cigar for a few different reasons.

1. When smoking the cigar and you don't puff on the cigar for a while the wrapper leaf stops burning. The filler keeps burning. At this point you should tap off the ash and relight.
2. Some wrapper leaves have a lot of natural oil. This oil sometimes has trouble burning. So puff and relight if needed, but enjoy those oils because they are flavor. This cigar might take a little extra work.
3. Improper rolling of the cigar could also cause Tunneling. This you will not find out until after you light up. Sometimes slightly bighting down on the cigar will create an air chamber. If the cigar has a pointed head like a Torpedo, you could clip off a little more of the head to give it a bit more air flow.
4. If all that doesn't work, they are handmade cigars and sometimes we will get a plugged cigar.

**Vega**-- A tobacco plantation.

**Vintage**-- When a vintage year is used for a cigar, it usually refers to the year the tobacco was harvested, not the year the cigar was made.

**Viso**-- A glossy wrapper leaf grown under cover.

**Vuelta Abajo**-- The famed valley in Cuba that produces the best cigar tobacco in Cuba.

**Volado**-- A type of filler tobacco chosen for its burning qualities.

**Wrapper**-- This Tobacco leaf is normally found in the middle of the plant. This is the most expensive leaf on the plant so they treat it like gold.

**Wedge Cut**-- A V-shaped cut made in the closed end of a cigar.