

More than 1.2 million euros
raised for Cuba's public health
system



19TH HABANO FESTIVAL

Juan Diego Nusa Peñalver

• THE 19th Habano Festival (February 27 - March 3), the largest gathering of its kind, concluded brilliantly in Havana with the raising of 1,255,000 euros for Cuba's public health system, thanks to the successful auction of seven beautiful humidors containing a selection of the country's most renowned cigars, enjoyed around the world.

Beyond the precious hardwoods adorning the unique, hand-crafted humidors, most valuable was the exquisite treasure inside: vitolas from each one of the country's emblematic brands (H.Upmann, Hoyo de Monterrey, Romeo y Julieta, Partagás, Montecristo, Cohiba), as well as one exclusively by the Bolivar house, which is celebrating its 115 anniversary this year, and opened the bidding.

All of the cigars included in the auction were rolled by the best artisans in the home factories of each brand, under the supervision of experienced quality specialists from the Habanos S.A. company.

"I think the money will go to a good cause, so we're happy to spend it," Canadian Leander D'Silva told AFP, after acquiring the Cohiba humidor with 20 drawers and 580 cigars, for 380,000 euros.

AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING

The closing gala held at the Pabexpo fairgrounds, in the

Havana neighborhood of Miramar, provided more than 2,000 international guests from 50 countries the opportunity to participate in the launching of Montecristo's most exclusive, premium cigar, the 1935 line, with its Maltés vitolas (53 x 153 mm), Dumas (49 x 130 mm) and Leyenda (55 x 165 mm). The first two are unprecedented in the Habanos S.A. portfolio, while the third takes the place and format of the special, limited edition "Montecristo 80 Aniversario" launched in 2015 to commemorate the brand's 80th anniversary.

Cigars from this brand are differentiated, and one with strong flavor has been included for the first time, rolled with an exquisite selection of wrapper, binder, and filler leaves from the best plantations in Vueltabajo, located in the western province of Pinar del Río, where the world's best tobacco is grown.

Also announced during the evening gala were winners of the 2016 Habano Prize which recognizes individuals who have played an outstanding role promoting Cuban cigars around the world. The deserving winners this year included Cuba's Josefa Acosta Ramos (in the category of Production), Edward Sahakian from Britain (Business), and from the United States, Gordon Mott (Communication).

The winner of this year's Habanosommelier international competition, in the pairing of cigars with spirits, was Chilean Felipe Rojas, in a tight race with colleagues from Cuba, United Arab Emirates, the UK, and Italy.

Likewise awarded were prizes for participation in the Commercial Fair, which included 65 exhibitors from 11

ALEXANDRE MENEGHINI/ REUTERS



The 19th Habano Festival concluded with a glamorous evening gala featuring music by violinist Ara Malikian and his ensemble.

countries. Recognized as Best Designed Stand was Brascuba S.A., while the prize for Best Designed Modular Stand went to BONGHAB-ITALIA which crafts *guayaberas* to represent the luxury brand Cohiba Atmosphere. The corporate group Cimex-Cuba was recognized as the most visited stand, while Havana Club International won the fair's coveted Integrated Communication Prize.

The glamorous evening gala's most spectacular moments were provided by violinist Ara Malikian of Spanish, Armenian, and Lebanese heritage with his ensemble, along with Cuban stars like Haila María Mompíe, Vania Borges, and David Torrens, plus the quartet A otro tiempo and Miguel Patterson's band, accompanied by choreographies from the Litz Alfonso and Santiago Alfonso dance companies. •

3 D
Tour a
Hotel with History

Hotel Nacional de Cuba
Historical tower of the Hotel-Museum,
national monument and
world heritage site,
a worthy emblem
of our culture
and Cuban identity.

Visit the Tapananas Caves
and the tunnels
used as shelters during
the missile crisis.

The Hall of Fame
honors hundreds
of world-renowned
cultural, artistic
and political figures who
have been guests
of the Hotel Nacional.

**Heritage, Monument
and Hotel-Museum**

Calle O esq. a 21, Vedado, Havana
E-mail: reservas@gnacio.gca.tur.cu
www.hotelnacionaldecuba.cu
www.hotelnacionaldecuba.com