

FEATURED PAIRINGS

PERFECTO PAIRINGS TO EXPAND YOUR PALATE

by Greg Mays

AGIO CIGARS BALMORAL DUETO GARRISON BROTHERS SMALL BATCH BOURBON

Balmoral's Boris Wintermans collaborated with E.P. Carrillo to create the Dueto line—a partnership blend that makes for a beautiful, flavorful cigar. The figurado size of the Dueto (called the Ovación) has a slightly rounded cap and tapered foot, double-banded by ornate red embellishments with Carrillo's name.

The smooth wrapper has a scent of earthy spice, a tad herbal, and on light, the herbs pronounce themselves more. Immediately, I note the massive smoke output from the Dueto, which is accented by a mild flavorful taste that is both nutty and herbal. This stick is not a flavor-bomb, but the interplay of the earth Brazilian and the spicy Nicaraguan tobacco is so well balanced, it's a real pleasure to smoke.

For a cigar with some milder flavors—and strength—I poured a glass of Garrison Brothers Small Batch Bourbon on the rocks. At 47% ABV, this taste of their 2019 bourbon bottling starts with notes of orange and plum, then finished with a big, long wood char spice. The cigar's herbal notes accent the whiskey's fruit and citrus and the balance of pairing here is phenomenal. The underlying common note is spice, though the lightness of both makes for an excellent pairing even midday on a Saturday.

**SIZE: Ovación 5.5 x 50 (Figurado) | Wrapper: Nicaraguan
Binder: Nicaraguan | Filler: Nicaraguan and Stalk-Cut Brazilian Mata Norte
MSRP (cigar) \$10 | MSRP (whiskey) \$100**



FALTO VEJIGANTE INFUSE SPIRITS HERESY RYE

Falto has over a dozen vitolas in their lineup, most sporting Dominican filler, but with a wide variety of wrapper and binder options. Last year, I enjoyed smoking the DelRio, a Lonsdale with mostly Dominican tobacco. This month, I smoked the Falto Vejigante, which weighs in at a hefty 6"x58. The tobacco from wrapper to filler is quite varied in this stick: an Ecuador wrapper, Dominican binder and a blend of Dominican, Nicaraguan and Cameroon fillers.

I couldn't put this cigar down. The Vejigante starts with scents of damp hay and earth in the wrapper, with an earthy sweetness. The veins are prominent and travel the length of the wrapper. On light, there is an initial nutty spice on the palate, followed by a chocolate mint profile that may just be the result of the Cameroon filler.

At the halfway point, the sweetness faded from the Vejigante and cedar became the prominent taste profile, following the cigar to the nub, with continued minty sweet hints. I paired the Vejigante with Infuse Spirits "Heresy" Rye. Distilled in Kentucky, Heresy Rye is aged in barrels with broken staves from Bourbon casks, virgin French oak and Sherry casks. Running at a big, bold 52.5% ABV, I served a neat pour with the Vejigante. Tasting notes of burnt butter, spice, mesquite smoke, macadamia, with a continued lingering buttery-ness added sweet creaminess to the Vejigante pairing and both together served as a rich, flavorful after dinner treat.

**SIZE: 6 x 58 Grand Corona | Wrapper: HVA (Habana Vuelta Arriba Ecuador)
Binder: Dominican | Filler: Dominican, Nicaraguan, and Cameroon
MSRP (cigar) \$13 | MSRP (whiskey) \$30**