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OLIVA CIGAR COMPANY ADDS CONNECTICUT BLEND

BY DAVID SAVONA

Oliva Cigar Co., maker of a host of top-rated cigars, is coming out with a mild version aimed at entry-level cigar smokers. The **Oliva Connecticut Wrapper Reserve** will be out in February. It will be the company's only boxed cigar that wears a Connecticut-seed wrapper.

"We do over 500 events a year," said Jose Oliva, vice president of the family-run company, which makes all of its cigars in Nicaragua. "At these events people would say, 'I've heard of Oliva cigars—do you guys have anything light?' We said, 'Maybe there's a market for this, an entry point.' Hopefully they'll smoke this and want to graduate [to our other cigars]."

The new brand comes in five sizes: Churchill, Torpedo, Toro, Robusto and Lonsdale, and will range in price from \$4 to \$7. The wrapper is grown in Ecuador from Connecticut seed. The filler and binder blend is all-Nicaraguan tobacco, but it's devoid of ligero, and made only with the lighter viso and seco tobaccos.

"We're not trying to overpower the wrapper," said Oliva, adding that the Connecticut Wrapper Reserve has become his regular first cigar of the day, which he pairs with a cup of espresso.



"Ironically, our first cigar was a Connecticut."

The cigars were rolled in October, and are almost ready to ship. "Connecticut doesn't need six months [of box age] in my opinion," said Oliva. ■