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CIGAR NEWS

OLIVA CIGAR COMPANY TO RELEASE STRONGER CIGAR

BY DAVID SAVONA

Oliva Cigar Co. is working on a stronger cigar that it intends to release to a limited number of retailers. A company representative will visit each store to give a personal overview of the philosophy of the cigar.

Called **Oliva Serie V Liger Especial**, the cigar will be made with top-priming Nicaraguan Habano-seed sun-grown wrapper, with binder and filler grown on company-owned farms in Nicaragua.

“We set out to make the fullest-bodied cigar we can make, while still keeping balance,” said Jose Oliva, vice president of the company, which rolls cigars in Nicaragua. The business, which is family-owned, is headquartered in Miami Lakes, Florida. “To get some additional body, we made the cigars in higher ring gauges.”

The cigars will come in five sizes, the thinnest of which will have a 52 ring gauge. Two sizes will also be made in a maduro version using Connecticut-broadleaf wrappers. Each will be made with a Cuban-style, three-seam cap, a first for the company.

The cigars will be released in June, prior to the annual industry trade show, which takes place in August this year. “We really want to take time on this cigar,” said Oliva.

The company is taking the unusual step of launching the cigar with events at cigar shops. Oliva said 42 tobacconists in the United States will initially carry the product, and events at those shops will begin in late June. Oliva will also hold dinners outside the United States to promote the cigars. The countries where those cigar nights will be held include the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Taiwan.

The line will also include a culebra size—a true rarity in the cigar world today—which will be available only at the store events. *Culebra* is the Spanish word for snake, and the culebra is a trio of intertwined panetela cigars that retain their crooked shape when unbound.

Oliva Cigars have done well in *Cigar Aficionado* and *Cigar Insider* taste tests. The company makes the current No. 11 cigar on *Cigar Aficionado’s* Top 25 list. ■