

Habanos Festival kicks off in Havana

By **Hibah Noor** on February, 6 2018 | Industry News



Havana is getting ready to host the XX **Habanos Festival**, which will celebrate its **20th anniversary this year**. The biggest international event for the world's best tobacco lovers, the Habano, will be held from **February 26 to March 2**. Enthusiasts of this unique product from all around the world will participate in a Festival that will highlight **Cohiba** and **Partagás** brands. They will both present important new launches in their portfolios.

Attendees at the XX Habanos Festival will enjoy a comprehensive five-day program full of activities designed to explore the origin, production and other aspects of the Habanos culture. The entire week will be devoted to the knowledge and enjoyment of Habanos and other exclusive products. The Festival includes tours to plantations in Vuelta Abajo*, in the Pinar del Río* region, considered to be the best land in the world for growing tobacco, as well as visits to the factories responsible for producing this year's biggest launches. Other highlights include three evenings of the best live music from renowned international artists, the finest gastronomy in Cuba, Habanos tastings and a wide range of beverages from different corners of the world.

The **Trade Fair** and, particularly, the **Welcome Evening**, will mark the start of the Habanos Festival on February 26. The Trade Fair is the meeting and interchange point for professionals in the tobacco industry worldwide, exhibitors from other luxury goods manufacturers, as well as craftspeople, artists and manufacturers of smoking paraphernalia and gourmet products. The Welcome Evening will be held in a unique and exclusive space, at the El Laguito Protocol Hall on the city's west coast, where guests will be able to enjoy the launch of the Reserva Cosecha 2014 from the Cohiba brand.

The program will also feature master classes and keynote speeches, led by recognized experts in the world of Habanos at the **International Seminar**, to be opened on Wednesday, February 28. Another traditional activity during the Habanos Festival is the **International Habanosommelier Contest**, with the 17th Contest being held this year. As is customary, outstanding Habanosommeliers from all 1

around the world will take part in this opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and receive this prestigious award.

This year, for the first time, the inaugural edition of the **Habanos World Challenge** will be held with two different phases. During the first stage, each country will organize a local contest to select a winning couple that will represent them. In the second stage, a panel of judges will choose the winners amongst all the contestants that reach the big final in the Cuban capital, therefore becoming the first ever twosome of Cuban Habano lovers to win the Habanos World Challenge.

The XX Habanos Festival Tribute Evening will be held at the *Teatro Martí* and at the *Gran Teatro de la Habana* on Wednesday February 28, with an evening event dedicated to the history and success of these Festivals.

On March 2, the **Gala Evening** will be the grand finale to the XX Habanos Festival and will be dedicated to the Partagás brand, specifically to the presentation of the Línea Maduro. This will be an evening full of surprises, with an outstanding musical line-up. The event will conclude with the **2017 Habanos Awards** and the traditional **Humidors Auction**, with all proceeds going to the Cuban Public Health System.