



CIGARS AND EXPERIENCES IN HONG KONG AT BERTIE CIGARS

July 16, 2020 | Samuel Spurr

Operating a successful cigar lounge is no mean feat at the best of times. Bertie Cigars Hong Kong, a finalist in the Cigar Lounge category of this year's Cigar Trophy, has continued to deliver warm hospitality and exceptional events to clientele all while Eric Piras, staff, and guests face ongoing political turmoil and the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

Operating for just over a year, Bertie Cigars has captured a swathe of regular guests who have formed a bond over sensory explorations of cigar terroirs combined with accompanying libations and live music entertainment.

"The idea is that guests will discover both new drinks and new cigars, which they might not think about," said Piras. Bertie Cigars' tasting events are held in the early evening when guests are the most available and Piras ensures there is always a brand ambassador to talk about the products tasted, with Piras talking about the cigars. "I always try to pair the cigars as best as possible with the whiskies/rum/ports/wines that we taste, in order to bring the best out of each other," said Piras. "Musical events are held later in the evening on Saturdays. There is usually a real party atmosphere, we move chairs and dance, it's a lot of fun."

According to Piras, these events set the lounge apart from the other lounges in Hong Kong and add a bit of fun for regular clients. "These events also enable us to welcome other clients who might not have come otherwise. They're brought in by friends and will later come back on their own. In addition, several of our clients have made good friendships during these events and they are very happy to see each other again at Bertie. It means a lot of work and investment for us, but they're becoming part of Bertie's DNA and we want to keep it this way."

To ensure guests' comfort, Bertie Cigars has never relaxed Covid-19 related precautionary measures, and so far, there has been no known cases of Covid-19 amongst the guests or the team. "All guests are asked to wear masks in the lift and lobby, have their temperature checked upon arrival, and use Bertie's numerous hand-sanitisers while at the lounge," said Piras. "Further, the lounge is regularly cleaned and disinfected, and does not accept anyone wearing a quarantine bracelet."

For the last few weeks, Hong Kong regulations had been a little more flexible and people have started coming out more notes Piras, but he has kept the same precautionary measures in place. "I think it's a good practice and it looks like we will need to do this for quite some time. This week the Hong Kong government has imposed a new regulation on restaurants and bars to close at 6pm."

Upcoming events showcase the breadth of events available to guests at the lounge including masterclasses, guided tastings, and contemporary and classical musical features.

UPCOMING EVENTS

(subject to change, following HK government guidelines)

- Glenfarclas 'From Grain to Glass' tasting on Thursday 30 July, led by Mr Alex Loisel and Mr Kevin Stephen focuses on Glenfarclas' 10 years, 12 Years, 21 Years, 105 Cask Strength and the 1992 25 Years Sherry Cask Strength iterations.
- 'Quintessential Whites' on Thursday 6 August, features Champagne Philipponnat and Maison Joseph Drouhin in a Champagne and White Burgundy tasting led by Brand Ambassador Mr Grégoire Bourrut Lacouture.
- 'La Notte Italiana' on 1 August, a mini-concert by Italian Tenor Elia Astorino.
- Chateau de Pommard tasting on 20 August, featuring five fantastic Chateau de Pommard wines paired with 2 cigars.
- 'Bertie Latino', live music with Chris Polanco and his band on 15 August.

BERTIE CIGARS

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