



Cigar: Casdagli Cigars Cypher 3311 Needle
Vitola: Box-pressed Churchill
Dimensions: 190x48

Smoking time: approximately 90 minutes

Wrapper: Ecuador
Binder: Ecuador
Filler: Peru, Dominican Republic plus one undisclosed leaf

Presentation:

Needle is extremely molded with razor sharp edges. Looks rather like it is carved than box pressed is my first thought when I hold it in my hand. The tobacco must have been really moist when this cigar was put under pressure otherwise each stick would crack.

At a first glance, the cigar ring looks like a club emblem for a sports club, with symbols that feels very strange to find on a cigar. Now I am familiar with how Jeremy Casdagli thinks and therefore I realize that it all matters. Of course, I can try to google the answers, but since I know that Mr Casdagli is a real gentleman who does what he can to help out I decided to ask him in person. Everything on the girdle has a historical connection to the Casdagli family.

In fact, the model for the ring is a stitching that Jeremy's grandfather Anthony Theodore Casdagli embroidered while he was a prisoner of war during the World War Two. The image hung in his cell and the symbols in the four fields represent the following.

In the red field there are two crossed squash rackets which represents Anthony's victory in the Egyptian Squash championship.

The ship in the light blue field represents SS Pasteur which was a French-built ship but taken over by the British after Germany's invasion of France.

Pasteur sailed under the British flag and sometimes carried German prisoners of war with destination South Africa.

One of these transports became a hot diplomatic potato as the South African guards on board confiscated all personal possessions and hygiene items from the prisoners. In addition, all the recognition signs of rank were torn away from the German uniforms. This was yet another violation of the laws of war, stipulating that prisoners of war should be treated with respect. With that image, Anthony Casdagli certainly wanted to remind the German guards that he was entitled to proper treatment.

In the white field is the symbol of the major rank. The military title that this prisoner of war held.

In the green field there is a picture of a ladder. The symbol of The Ladder of Escape that communicates the will to freedom and survival.

The name of the Cypher 3311 cigar is obviously not taken out of the blue either. The number's are A.T Casdagli's POW-number and the word Cypher comes from the secret code that requires a key to be interpreted. Theodore was a member of the British MI9 which was a secret organization during the war with the task to gather and send information to London that could not be understood by the Germans.

A lot of history to be communicated in a cigar-band. Luckily I haven't seen the box 😊😊.

For those who buy one, there are even more secrets to interpret.

For those of you who want to dig deeper in the history of Jeremy's grandfather during the war I recommend the book A Stich in Time. God Save the King - Fu * k Hitler. It can be ordered via Casdagli's website.

Now let's move over to the most important thing. How does a 50 € plus stick taste?

I decide to cut a very small opening over the head of the Needle. Box pressed cigars tend to deliver a very open draw and this one is box pressed in absurdum.

The cold draw indicates that my decision was good and the tobacco tastes eucalyptus and pine forest as I feel the air flowing through the not yet lit cigar body.

I'm toasting the foot of Cypher outdoors, which bothers me a bit because I would really like to experience it without interruptions from any wind and other devilishness that the weather can put up with sometimes. Well, the sun is shining and a man's got to do what a man's got to do.

The first puffs immediately shows a whiff of quality. The tobacco chosen for this cigar is Grade A + if such a classification exists.

The flavors moves towards cedar and milk chocolate with a complex finish.

Soft and mild to the nose with juniper and salty licorice in the aftertaste.

Initially strength and body is medium.

After a while, the aftertaste increases and becomes unbelievable long with a flavor reminiscent of a candy accessible in Sweden that is shaped like a skull with half the surface black and the other half dark red. Up here they are called Raspberry Skulls I think. Anyway, that's how the finish tastes right now. Raspberries and licorice. I have never encountered that odd combination in a cigar before.

Nicely balanced amount of black pepper to the nose while cinnamon adds up to the earlier mentioned notes of cedar and milk chocolate in the taste profile. I have acidity, sweetness and salt at the same time and all that comes together in a good balanced way.

Cypher is so far really exciting and unconventional.

In the middle of the first third the strength is snapping up to medium, medium full.

Here I am offered an ounce of gun powder as icing on the cake.

Still salty licorice and raspberries in the aftertaste which feels like heaven to me since I absolutely love that combination.

In the attack, to borrow a term from the wine world, cinnamon, light woods and milk chocolate continue to dominate the flavor profile.

Yet a little more bite in the strength towards the second third.

The middle part is stronger and that is probably exactly what obscures a bit and makes the flavors tone down. Here the Needle is less superhero in the sense not quite that extremely complex anymore. Still a really high quality cigar but I hope the taste profile from the first third will have the opportunity to bloom again. Here the wood tones are darker and both cinnamon and chocolate have left the building.

Right after I pass the halfway point the aftertaste begins to gain position again.

My salty raspberry skull is back to make me happy. A part from that I'm mostly picking up black tobacco flavors for a while.

At the end of the second third the cigar's body is sturdy and solid with a strength that is very close to full. Also the cinnamon notes are back to my great joy.

For a short sequence down here the Cypher Needle reminds me of the Cuban brand Bolivar. That's certainly not a bad parallel in my book.

The taste of chocolate re-enters. The finish increases in length again. The last third is full bodied and voluminous in a really nice way. The flavors are still a bit low toned and subtle but Cypher breathes quality throughout.

Possibly the cigar feels a bit "to boku" for me to quote a scene in the movie Full Metal Jacket. The salt remains in the aftertaste but the berries are gone.

In the grand finale so to speak, I catch a creamier character with baking powder added on to the black tobacco and gun-powder notes.

The journey together with Cypher Needle has been really exciting and in summary this is an absolute top of the line cigar.

The blend is in every aspect fabulous and it would be exciting to try it again in a while. I guess this cigar has all that it takes to develop further an impress even more in future years. Is the Needle worth its money? I usually say that it's impossible to put a price tag on a great experience. And out of that aspect my answer would be - Yes.

Draw and combustion:

The Needle draws and burns phenomenally well.

Nice and straight burn-line.

Solid ash but at the same time easy to break off when that feels like the safest thing to do.

The glow cone under the ash is a well-formed and nicely rounded cherry.

I did one touch-up with my lighter towards the end. But I would blame that on the wind rather than on the Ligador or Torcedor.

Anders W Bengtsson