

Progress Report

CIGAR AFICIONADO RATES HUMIDORS WITH STAYING POWER By Stacey C. Rivera

As we forecasted in our previous humidior review, the cream has risen to the top. Fly-by-night humidior makers have dropped out of the market and the remaining companies are paying increased attention to quality.

In 1997, Cigar Aficionado rated 42 desktop humidors. At the time, it seemed that every company that could get its hands on Spanish cedar and a circular saw had a model on the market. Although some of the units we tested then showed promise, many were disappointing. In deciding to embark upon another humidior review, we wanted to focus on the best of the market, so we asked a select group of humidior makers to send us what they considered their best box.

We charged the humidification device in each humidior with distilled water and allowed it to sit in the box for a weekend. The devices were then recharged and left for several more days. Those that had dried out were filled again. The boxes were then loaded with 10 cigars and kept under the same conditions for six weeks. We checked humidity levels once a week using the same digital hygrometer and noted the conditions of the cigars. Ten more cigars were added if the humidior became too moist. Distilled water was added when the humidior was too dry. At the end of six weeks, a panel of editors evaluated each humidior based on construction, design, beauty and performance. We also rewarded humidors that performed well for a lower price.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DAVIDOFF, DANIEL MARSHALL, MANNING AND PROMETHEUS

DAVIDOFF

Number 1 Thuya

\$3,605 / (203) 323-5811

Capacity: 140-170

Interior: Mahogany

Humidification: Two large passive units proprietary to Davidoff

Details: Tray, dividers, lock and key, no hygrometer

Score: A+

This humidor lives up to the Davidoff reputation for top-quality craftsmanship and hardware and earned the highest rating in our test. It is a beautiful box with clean lines and an elegant lock and key. The lid is of good weight and sits solidly in place, attached with a durable, full piano hinge. The side handles are countersunk and perfectly flush with the box, allowing for function while not disturbing the form of the unit. During the six weeks of testing, the box required refilling only once and maintained humidity levels within the optimal range. The only flaw we could find, and we were looking for one, is that there is no hygrometer included with the box. The company philosophy is that such a device is unnecessary since its humidity regulator should achieve consistent levels without monitoring.

DANIEL MARSHALL

Daniel Marshall Series 1999/165 Cigar

Humidor in Vavona Burl

\$595 / (800) 923-2889

Capacity: 165

Interior: Spanish cedar

Humidification: One Credo 70 passive device made for Daniel Marshall

Details: Magnetic marking calendar, dividers, digital hygrometer, lock and key, brass plaque, distilled water and five Daniel Marshall cigars

Score: A

The best buy of the boxes we rated is the Daniel Marshall humidor. It achieves an elegant look while performing as well as, if not better than, the higher-priced units.

The box has a beautiful burl veneer. Inside, an attractive cedar container does an excellent job of dressing up the humidification

device. The hinges are durable and provide a whisper-soft seal when the lid is closed. A magnetic calendar inside the lid functions as a discreet reminder—one we find smokers need—to recharge the Credo. Some editors felt the handles and lock detracted from the look of the humidor. Thankfully, mounting and engraving the brass plaque is reserved as an option, as some would prefer not to ruin the look of the burl with a nameplate. Adding to the good value, Marshall even throws in five of his own premium cigars.

MANNING

Walnut & Myrtle Radius

\$1,350 / (800) 414-8522

Capacity: 100

Interior: Solid Spanish cedar

Humidification: One passive device, proprietary to Manning

Details: Tray, dividers, lock and key, no hygrometer

Score: A

Impeccable construction and craftsman-like details are the hallmarks of this humidor. The solid cedar box is covered in a beautiful, painstakingly matched inlay, and the formidable lid closes into two cedar seals. The Manning humidification system releases humidity through slits on the sides of the device rather than on the top, virtually insuring that water won't drip on the cigars and cause mold or worse. During the test the unit ran

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