



Chateau Diadem

*“Chateau Diadem is a fantasy of sorts,
a dreamlike beacon for cigar lovers.”*

by **Zack Mitchers**

The enjoyment of cigars can lead to unexpected connections and opportunities. Cigars can bring people from all walks of life together, even family. This was certainly the case for cousins Thierry Farah and Emily Sahakian.

Cigars were omnipresent in their childhood, in Geneva, Switzerland, where they grew up together. Their shared passion for cigars not only brought them closer together later in life but also inspired them to embark on a new, exciting journey together.

Their mutual love for cigars led them to co-create their own brand in 2020, Chateau Diadem, marking the beginning of a compelling new chapter in their lives.

What was your first cigar experience like?

TF: Between the ages of 12 and 14, my father would allow me a small puff from his cigar during our weekend drives together. These early experiences ignited a life-long passion for cigars that has grown over the years.

ES: A little over 20 years ago, I made a significant career shift—from delving into the world of wines at LVMH in New York City to embarking on a new journey in cigars alongside Thierry in Geneva. To mark my arrival, Thierry greeted me with a Trinidad Fundadores, a momentous gesture. The smoothness and elegance of this particular smoke captivated me, igniting my passion for cigars, with a particular soft spot for those long and slender formats. It's a memory I will never forget.

What triggered the decision to quit your day job and start a cigar brand?

TF: I've been involved in cigar trading for over two decades, and the aspiration to create my own blend and brand was always in the back of my mind. The turning point came during the COVID pandemic, which allowed me to fully immerse myself in learning and understanding this complex industry and finally develop our own project.

ES: Well, as Thierry mentioned, we have a longstanding history in the industry, spanning over two decades, albeit with a hiatus of ten years as we both pursued other endeavors. During the lockdown period, we shared countless cigars together, sparking a conversation where Thierry proposed the idea of crafting our own blend in the Dominican Republic. This invitation, reminiscent of our childhood bond when we used to play pretend tobacco plantation owners in his father's office, struck a chord with me. It felt like a natural progression of our shared journey. Since then, I've embraced this new venture wholeheartedly, and I'm grateful for the opportunity it presents us with on a daily basis.

What does Chateau Diadem stand for?

TF: Chateau Diadem is a fantasy of sorts, a dreamlike

beacon for cigar lovers. The word Diadem symbolizes the crowning achievement of our artisans' meticulous craftsmanship in cigar making - we materialize this achievement with an elegant band that we crown the cigar with to honor their work.

ES: Thierry beautifully captures the essence of Chateau Diadem with his description. Yet, there's another layer to our brand's story that he hasn't mentioned. You might recall that in the 1980s, Davidoff released a line of 'Chateau' cigars inspired by renowned vineyards. Each cigar in the Chateau series was named after a famous chateau, such as Chateau Lafite-Rothschild and Chateau Latour, reflecting Davidoff's commitment to craftsmanship and luxury. At this same time, little Thierry would excitedly accompany his father on their weekly outing to visit Zino Davidoff in his Geneva shop. This particular collection of cigars left a lasting impression on Thierry - a combination of a nostalgic souvenir of sentimental value and a profound connection to the heritage of cigar craftsmanship. This souvenir holds a deep significance for us as we grew up like siblings together.

How has working in the cigar business been so far?

TF: Honestly, it's like living a dream that simultaneously becomes reality. However, each day brings new





challenges. Passion is essential for thriving in this industry, as it fuels our daily dedication and drive toward excellence.

ES: I agree entirely. I find myself in the 'now' moments, where I pinch myself to see if this truly is my new reality. While we do have many challenges, we take them on with unwavering enthusiasm and determination to plow forth. We're distributed in over 20 countries, which isn't such a bad start for a new business. The hardest part is ensuring we maintain our standards without letting anything slip.

You also recently opened your own factory. Why take the step so early in the company's history?

TF: We initially started with a white-label agreement but soon found our visions misaligned with our manufacturer, leading us to part rather quickly. This decision propelled us to establish our own factory early on. While it introduced administrative, logistical, and human complexities, it was essential for achieving complete control over the quality of our cigars—from tobacco selection to rolling techniques and storage. Initially, we opened a small facility in Navarrete. After a year, we seized the opportunity to move to the Pisano Free Zone in Santiago de los Caballeros, where we have definitively established our factory. Surrounded by several cigar manufacturers, tobacco leaf traders, and exporters, what more could we ask for? This environment is exceptionally conducive to meticulous and high-quality work, perfectly aligned with our standards.

ES: I couldn't have explained it better. We didn't embark on this adventure imagining we'd be where we are today, but every day brings us new surprises, which are somehow always for the better. Life has a strange way of putting you on the right path.

Lastly, what are you working on at the moment?

TF: Currently, we're developing a "Half Corona" presented in a fun new packaging format that we can't wait to unveil at the Dortmund fair in September. Additionally, we're crafting a unique new blend for a single "vitola", which we will also plan to showcase at the fair this year.

ES: We've also just released the Lancero, which as you can imagine is a dream come true, especially for me as it was the tipping point that propelled me into this industry when Thierry welcomed me back to Geneva. We're also working on new packaging and accessories to include in Chateau Diadem's universe.