

The Robusto: A Modern Classic

With an immediately identifiable profile, the iconic robusto cigar holds its own as a modern classic produced by almost all cigar makers. Sought by aficionados around the globe, its dimensions are also the inspiration behind Astleys' Atlantic vape device. By Samuel Spurr

The classic robusto-sized cigar, which measures five inches or 127mm in length by 50 ring gauge, may not share the historical fame of sizes such as the Churchill (seven inches x 47 ring gauge), named after one of Britain's most illustrious leaders, or the Lonsdale (6 ½ inches x 44 ring gauge), named for Hugh Cecil Lowther, 5th Earl of Lonsdale, but it remains a size that both cigar manufacturers and consumers regularly seek out. Historically, there have been robusto-sized cigars on the market since the 1930s. However, the term "robusto" didn't enter the modern cigar lexicon until 1989, when Cuba launched the Cohiba Robusto as a cigar name. This was the first time a factory name for a "vitola", a term used to describe a cigar's shape and size, also became its market name.

Co-owner of boutique cigar company RoMa Craft Tobac, Skip Martin, fondly recalls the first robusto – a Cohiba Robusto – he enjoyed in the 1990s. The vitola is Martin's favorite size to make and is one that he will almost always reach for when trying a new blend. "The reason why manufacturers like the size is simple: they sell very well," says Martin. "From a blending perspective, it is big enough to hold a fairly complex blend of four different whole filler leaves without having to worry too much about the complications that come with making thinner cigars like lanceros, panatelas, and lonsdales."

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Darius Namdar, the current Habano Sommelier champion, names the Hoyo De Monterrey Epicure No. 2 and Partagas Serie D. No. 4 as classic Cuban robustos that amateurs and aficionados should seek. "I really love how complex the Epicure No. 2 is, but if I could only choose one robusto to ever enjoy again it would be the Ramon Allones Specially Selected," says Namdar. "The robusto attracts people because it gives the freedom to enjoy the full length of the cigar without too much time pressure, but also because it is now such a familiar dimension. Comfort is so heavily influenced by familiarity, and so choosing such a popular dimension also adds comfort to the smoker."

"The robusto is popular with smokers and manufacturers because it is the perfect size for trying a new blend," says Kevin Newman of El Artista Cigars. "The vitola offers a good ratio of wrapper to binder to filler and gives a real sense of what the tobacco blender intended when creating the blend." Australian cigar retailer Trent Firmin

identifies the Warped Cigars Serie Gran Reserva 1988, Illusione Cigars 88 Natural, and Leaf by Oscar Corajo Robusto as some of the most popular robustos among his customers. "The robusto embodies what a cigar should be in most people's eyes," says Firmin. "It's not too long, offering a perfect amount of time for relaxation and pleasure, and its girth is ideal too, being not too small to burn hot."

These perfect dimensions have not only made the robusto the ideal "go to" cigar size in the western world since the early 2000s but have created an iconic shape that resonates from the cigar sphere into the vape world with the Atlantic, Astleys' infinitely-elegant, robusto-inspired cannabis vape device. The same dimensions that make the robusto such an easy selection lend themselves to the Atlantic, which fits perfectly in the hand, rolls between the fingers, and slips into a jacket pocket seamlessly.

"The robusto was the obvious choice for Astleys as the Atlantic is, in many ways, the extension of this heritage, it's a luxury statement, a consummate companion, crafted for today's modern consumer," says Astleys' creative director Fred Kirby. The Atlantic is core to Astleys' initial launch range of luxury cannabis vape devices. ■



RoMa Craft Tobac's Wunder|Lust robusto is one of the company's more popular classic robusto sizes.



El Artista Cigars offers robustos across its Cimarron, Pulita 60th Aniversario, Puro Ambar, Exactus, and Got Your Six brands.