

Newsletter

The “La Flor Dominicana” Factory Tour

**Chris Denbow**

Mar 17, 2024 · 3 min read



Hello and thanks for subscribing to the [newsletter](#)!

Because of recent news of events on the island of Hispaniola, I've recalled a lot of memories from a few years ago when I was invited to photograph, document and serve the ongoing Christian missionary works based in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic. Towards the end of the trip, I had an opportunity to head north to the Caribbean coastal town of Sosua for some R&R, but in-between the two cities were mountain jungles and tobacco plantations.

Welcome to the jungle

Our gracious host and founder of the mission insisted we stopped for a cigar factory tour, and of course, this was accepted!

The La Flor factory tour follows the path of the tobacco leaves from the fields to the packaging of handmade cigars. The first thing I noticed, was the aromatic tobacco in enclosed spaces. Then I noticed, but was not allowed to photograph, the floor announcer. His job is to simply read the newspaper and magazine articles into the factory microphone to entertain the workers. Imagine a news barker with a derby cap, smoking La Flor's finest with outstretched arms holding up the paper and talking through his cigar into the microphone.

I was then allowed to select from a stack of conditioned, classified, browned, aged leaves and then hand them off to the smiling worker. She then began the long process of turning a leaf into a freshly rolled cigar.

I followed my leaves around the various stages from station to station, watching and photographing workers as they blended, bunched, pressed, rolled, sealed and then allowed me to slide the La Flor Dominica ring around my fresh cigars. The entire process took about an hour to craft my box of the Caribbean's finest.

Uninformed individuals would say that Cuban cigars are the best, I disagree. Cubans are only sought after because they are illegal in the USA, and I think they smell and taste like Castro's dead feet. My clandestine incursion onto Cuban shores is a story for next time.

Oh, and because Haiti and the Dominican Republic are neighbors and both currently in the news, here is a young Haitian toddler playing in the road, on the Dominican side apparently abandoned, shortly before I snapped this photo. There are strong racial tensions between these two countries, and I found this to be the only fault I could find on the Dominican side of Hispaniola. I was blessed to see the missionaries find him shelter and food. Just look at that handsome face.

Until next week, - Chris



S.

My tsundoku keeps multiplying and I won't apologize for this self-infliction. I saw this beautifu...

Mar 15, 2024 · 1 min read

Ricoh GR

I know, I know. I can hear you bringing this up to me when I said "new year, no new gear." After weeks ...

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Photo Archive Site

This new website has been designated as a repository for a small set of images to be stored...

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