



In the mid-'60s, Arturo Fuente purchased his family's first "real" factory: the Ybor City building that formerly housed the Charles the Great cigar operation.

Tabacalera A. Fuente opened with just seven employees.

Within a stable political climate, the Fuentes slowly began to rebuild. Working 18-hour days soon paid off as Carlos and Carlito gradually saw increasing sales. Then, in 1983, the company introduced the Arturo Fuente Hemingway in the Perfecto shape, a style that was once extremely popular but had since faded into obscurity. Carlito loved the idea of keeping the past alive and convinced his father to scour their Ybor City warehouse for molds to use on this type of cigar. It was fortunate that Carlos had been taught to roll these special smokes (once called "Fancy Tails" by Arturo) because none of the

modern *torcedores* knew how. He trained his master roller, who then educated the rest of the team. Due to its unique status as one of the only shaped cigars on the market, the Hemingway was a hit. Of course, this brought some well-deserved attention to the Fuente family.

In 1986, Carlito wanted to do something special for his father. Using a Cameroon wrapper, the family launched the Don Carlos, primarily in the European market but eventually everywhere after it became recognized as one of the finest Fuente cigars. At the same time, Carlos hoped to expand sales while simultaneously lowering costs. His brother Arturo Oscar was in Tampa, where the machine made operation was becoming too much. Carlos approached longtime colleague Stanford Newman to request that the J.C. Newman Cigar Company manufacture the Fuentes' machine made smokes. Stanford agreed and then asked if the Fuentes could, in turn, make handrolled premium cigars for J.C. Newman. "In 1990, Carlos and I expanded our relationship," the late Stanford Newman once said. "He'd continue to make our handmades and we'd sell and distribute his Fuente and Montesino cigars. At that time, he only used brokers and we had a large-selling organization, so we got together and started distributing Arturo Fuente." Since then, the families' bond has grown, and the Newmans now represent Fuente all over the world.

By 1992, Carlos's daughter Cynthia, who'd carried a dual major of marketing and business at the University of South Florida, joined her family in Santiago to help with

administration. Her timing was perfect; the Cigar Boom was just beginning and the Fuentes found that they couldn't keep up with demand. To complicate things further, new factories were springing up in Santiago... and stealing rollers from Fuente.

Throughout this very hectic time, something chewed away at Carlito—the fact that there was no wrapper leaf being grown in the Dominican Republic. He vowed to change that and, by 1993, experiments were begun on the farm that would eventually become Chateau de la Fuente. The first crop was a good-looking sun-grown Piloto

A Century of Fuente

1960s

The Fuentes purchase the four-story Charles the Great operation in Ybor City.

1970s

The Fuente family creates the 8-5-8, named in honor of Arturo, who passed away at the age of 85.

