

Nicaragua factory rolls cigar of the year

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The best-tasting cigar in the world last year was rolled in the Padrón factory in Esteli in northern Nicaragua, according to the most recent rankings from Cigar Aficionado magazine.

The magazine named the Padrón Serie 1926 No. 9 the best smoke in 2007 in its most recent top-25 cigar ranking.

The cigar is rolled under the supervision of José Orlando Padrón, who started making cigars for fellow Cuban émigrés in Miami after fleeing his native Cuba. The Miami stogie guru began growing tobacco in Nicaragua in the 1960s when he couldn't find the blend he was looking for in the United States, says Padrón spokesman Cesar Gadea.

"It's the blend, the construction, quality control. That's what it is. There are a lot of other companies (in Nicaragua) that make cigars, but we're still the only one that has been chosen for the No. 1 cigar," Gadea said in a phone interview from the family-run company's Miami office.

The Padróns have never finished out of the top three in Cigar Aficionado's Top 25 tastings, and this is the second time one of their cigars has been named the No. 1 cigar of the year.

"They are clearly at the top of their game," Cigar Aficionado said of the Padróns.