

how to spend it

Swellboy on... Fallon cigar cases

Where would our man be without magical pocket humidors?



Image: Brijesh Patel

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I am determined to fight the onset of age, not least the truism about getting old that stipulates that one needs less. I do not like to think of myself as being too superficial, but knick-knacks, bibelots, gimcracks, gewgaws – let's just say stuff in general – are a powerful distraction from contemplation of the futility of human existence.

Thus, one off the great benefits of smoking cigars is the vista of accessories that such a pastime opens up. I am forever being entranced by a new lighter, cutter, ashtray or, as happened recently, cigar case. My latest discovery is the Fallon. I was introduced to these cigar cases by Edward Sahakian, the panjandrum of Davidoff, who explained their almost magical properties.

While made of buffalo hide, ostrich, alligator and so forth, they are so well put together that they form a virtually airtight seal, preserving cigars for days on end. Edward's son, Eddie, tried it and the cigars lasted for over a month and emerged in perfect condition. As well as maintaining the right microclimatic conditions, the Fallon cigar case is also apparently water-resistant. When Mr Fallon visited Davidoff to demonstrate the efficacy of his invention, he poured water all over it and then, after a little while, simply shook the moisture off.

Patrick Fallon sounds like one of those craftsmen with which France seems to abound (viz Henri Zaks of Seraphin and Pierre Corthay of the eponymous shoemaker): cheerfully irreverent yet deadly serious about their métier, and possessed of skills that show why France can still do luxury like no other country on earth. Had cigars been knocking around the court of the Sun King, then Louis XIV and his cronies would have been using Fallon cases.

Fallon worked for Hermès before opening a workshop in Annecy 30 years ago and his independent spirit is to be congratulated. As he says in his brochure: "If I had let a marketing study guide my decisions, our precious pocket humidors would never have existed." It seems that Monsieur Fallon is also a bit independent in his choice of holiday destinations. Whereas you and I might find nothing wrong with a week or two at the Hôtel du Cap, Monsieur Fallon turns out to be an amateur adventurer as well as an amateur of cigars, so he tests his inventions himself, journeying to deserts and rainforests where he subjects his cases to roasting heat and immersion in piranha-infested waterways.

There is even a special Alpine case called the Yeti, which is covered in fur, a sort of cigar-smoking riposte to the fur-covered moonboots that appear to be coming back into fashion. I have yet to find a cigar that tastes as good several thousand metres above sea level as it does on the Malecón

in Havana. However, now that I know of the existence of the Yeti, I am inspired to renew my studies of high-altitude cigar smoking. It is the sort of thing that gives one's life purpose and meaning.