BLINDFOX

CIGAR ROOM

FALL 2026



CIGARS
•
BOURBON
•
CONVERSATION

Inside the Cigar Room

RENT YOUR OWN CIGAR LOCKER

THE ART OF GOOD COMPANY

CIGARS BY TINDER BOX

KANNAPOLIS, NORTH CAROLINA

The Art of Gathering

Bourbon, cocktails, dining and conversation come together at The Blind Fox.





GOOD COMPANY. GREAT MOMENTS.







CIGARS BY TINDER BOX

Rent your own cigar locker

SMOKE & SPIRIT

THE ART OF PAIRING CIGARS WITH WHISKEY

A fine cigar and a carefully chosen whiskey share something uncommon: time. Tobacco is cured, fermented and aged; whiskey develops character through grain, distillation and years in oak. Together, their aromas can reveal new layers of cedar, vanilla, spice, cocoa and toasted wood.

Balance Comes First

The best starting point is body. A delicate cigar can disappear beside a powerful barrel-strength bourbon, while a robust cigar may overwhelm a gentle whiskey. Match light with light, medium with medium, and bold with bold. From there, look for flavors that complement or contrast.

Two Ways to Discover a Pairing

COMPLEMENT: A bourbon with vanilla and caramel notes alongside a cigar showing cocoa, nuts or toasted cedar. The shared flavors create a sense of continuity.

CONTRAST: A spicy rye beside a creamier cigar, or a sweeter bourbon beside a peppery smoke. The difference can make each flavor more noticeable.

The Ritual

Taste the whiskey and cigar separately before combining them. Take a small sip, allow the finish to settle, and notice how the next draw changes. A glass of water helps refresh the palate. There is no universal perfect pairing: personal preference is part of the pleasure.

A GOOD PAIRING IS A CONVERSATION, NOT A COMPETITION.

FIVE PAIRING IDEAS

A READER'S GUIDE TO THE GLASS AND THE LEAF

WHEATED BOURBON / MILD TO MEDIUM CIGAR

Softer vanilla, honey and baking-spice notes can sit comfortably beside a creamy Connecticut-style cigar. Consider a wheated bourbon such as Maker's Mark.

CLASSIC BOURBON / MEDIUM CIGAR

Caramel, oak and toasted nut flavors make a natural partner for cigars with cedar, cocoa or roasted-almond notes. A medium-bodied Nicaraguan blend is a place to begin.

RYE WHISKEY / SPICE-FORWARD CIGAR

Rye often brings pepper and baking spice. Pair it with a medium-to-full cigar with earthy or peppery character, or use a creamier cigar for contrast.

SHERRIED SCOTCH / RICH MADURO

Dried fruit, nuts and toffee in a sherry-cask-influenced Scotch can echo the cocoa and coffee notes of a darker-wrapped cigar.

PEATY SCOTCH / FULL-BODIED CIGAR

Smoky, maritime Scotch is assertive. A fuller-bodied cigar may hold its own; try a smaller pour and judge the balance for yourself.

THE TASTING TABLE

A CONVERSATION STARTER FOR FRIENDS

At The Blind Fox, the connection between bourbon and cigars is about more than what is in the glass or the humidor. It is the company, the stories, and the chance to slow down. Whether you favor a mellow pour or something with a long, spicy finish, the most memorable combination is the one you enjoy sharing.

A Simple Three-Step Tasting

01 NOTICE THE AROMA

Before tasting, look for vanilla, oak, fruit, spice or toasted notes in the whiskey; cedar, earth, cream, cocoa or pepper in the cigar.

02 COMPARE THE BODY

Is each one mild, medium or bold? Does one overpower the other, or do they remain distinct?

03 TALK ABOUT THE FINISH

Which flavors linger? Did the next sip bring forward sweetness, spice or wood? Compare impressions with a friend.

PAIRING NOTES

WHISKEY: _____

CIGAR: _____

FLAVORS TO REMEMBER: _____

Savor the craft. Share the moment.

From the Tar Heel State to an Island Hideaway

Two couples. Two states. A friendship brought together by cigars.



Jeffery & Sheila

Ash Street Cigars
Amelia Island, Florida



Ken (Tito) & Ashley

The Blind Fox Bourbon and Cigar Bar
Kannapolis, North Carolina

A connection worth the journey

Two years ago, a shared appreciation for cigars brought Ken (Tito) and his wife, Ashley, together with Jeffery and Sheila of Ash Street Cigars on Amelia Island. What began around a cigar became a friendship that continues to grow, connecting North Carolina with the Florida coast.

For Ken and Ashley, owners of The Blind Fox Bourbon and Cigar Bar in Kannapolis, the connection reflects something at the heart of hospitality: the people you meet can become as memorable as the places themselves.

Professionalism and Elegance in a Small Town

ASH STREET CIGARS / AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA



Jeffery & Sheila at Ash Street Cigars

Where friendship takes root

At Ash Street Cigars, Jeffery and Sheila bring professionalism and elegance to a small-town setting. Their Amelia Island connection with Ken and Ashley grew out of a shared interest in cigars and the conversations that followed.

That friendship now forms a personal bridge between The Blind Fox in Kannapolis and Ash Street Cigars in Florida. The connection is about more than geography. It is about making time for one another and carrying those relationships forward.

The next chapter

Ken and Ashley join partners Kevin and Michelle in their next adventure: Plank and Barrel, a steak and bourbon restaurant on Amelia Island. Together, they bring a shared passion for hospitality to this new chapter.

Good company travels well.

From Kannapolis to Amelia Island, this is a story of cigars, conversation and a friendship still growing. The places may change; the pleasure of gathering with friends carries on.

CIGAR ROOM NOTES / 01

The First Cut

A quick guide to cutting a capped cigar.

SHALLOW CUT



The shoulder stays intact.

TOO DEEP



The wrapper can unravel.

01 Find the cap

Look for the seam around the rounded end that goes in your mouth.

02 Take a thin slice

Set a sharp cutter near the tip, on the tip side of the cap seam.

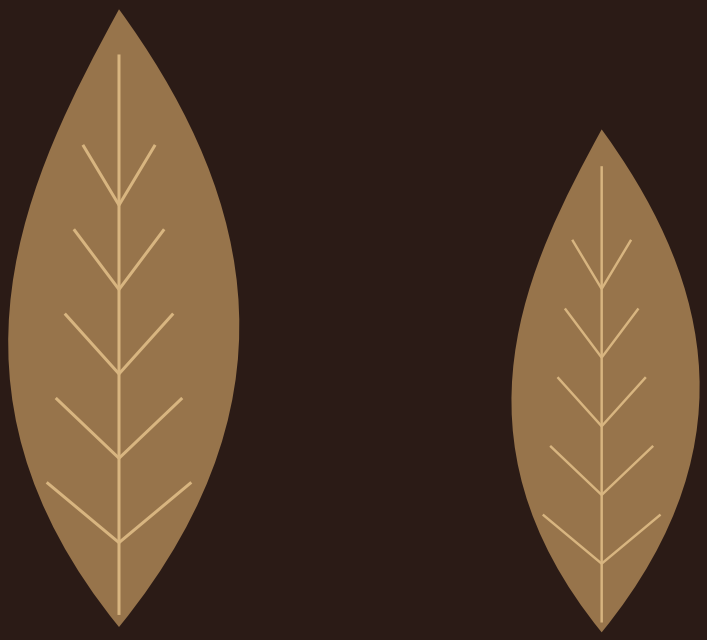
03 Check the draw

Before lighting, draw gently. If it feels tight, trim a little more.

FEATURE 01 / CRAFT

From Leaf to Legacy

The long journey behind a handcrafted cigar



A fine cigar begins in the field. Growers cultivate tobacco for its flavor, texture, and role in the finished blend. After harvest, leaves are carefully cured, fermented, sorted, and aged before a blender selects them for a particular character.

The work rewards patience. Climate, soil, leaf position, and the skill of the people handling each harvest all help shape the final result.

Editorial overview of traditional cigar craftsmanship.

FEATURE 01 / CRAFT

Three Leaves, One Story

The outermost leaf. Chosen for appearance, texture, and its contribution to aroma and flavor.

01 / WRAPPER

The leaf beneath the wrapper. Holds the filler together and supports an even construction.

02 / BINDER

The inner blend of leaves. Its varieties and proportions contribute to body, aroma, and character.

03 / FILLER



General cigar terminology; illustrations are original editorial artwork.

FEATURE 02 / HISTORY

The City Built on Cigars

Ybor City, Tampa, Florida

The first cigar factories helped transform a small Florida town into a world-famous center of hand-rolled craftsmanship.

1886 / A CITY BEGINS

In 1885, Vicente Martínez-Ybor and Ignacio Haya planned a cigar-manufacturing community near Tampa. Factories began operating in 1886, drawing skilled workers and families from Cuba, Spain, Italy, and beyond.

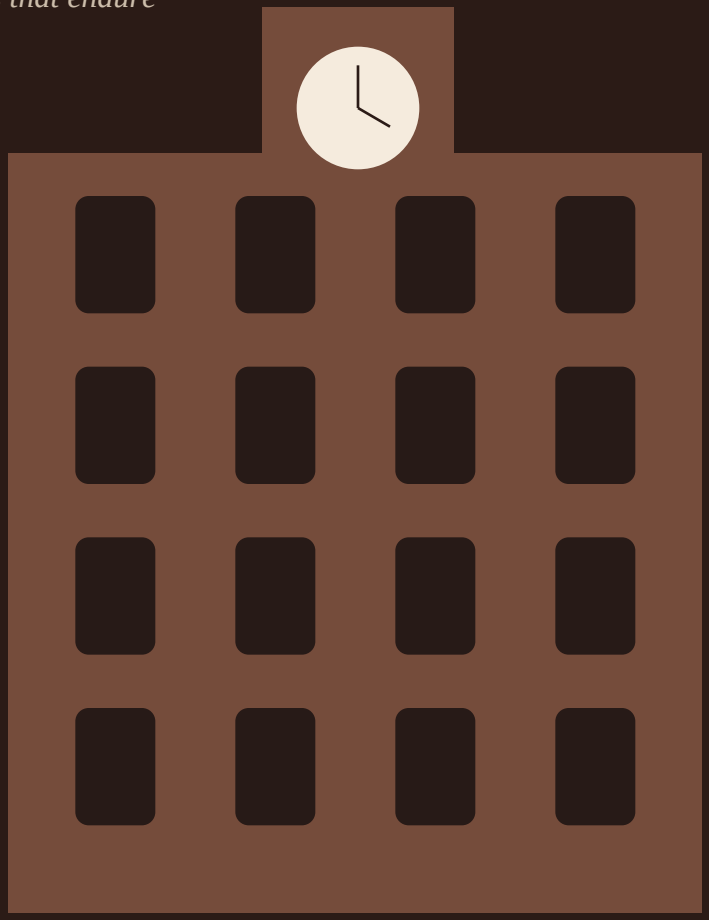
By the early twentieth century, Ybor City had earned the title “Cigar Capital of the World.” Its brick factories, social clubs, and neighborhood streets tell a story of enterprise and cultural exchange.

Sources: National Park Service, Ybor City Historic District; City of Tampa, Ybor City History.

FEATURE 02 / HISTORY

A Living Landmark

El Reloj and the traditions that endure



Built in 1910, the landmark El Reloj factory in Tampa is known for its clock tower. J.C. Newman Cigar Company moved its operations there in 1954, and the building remains part of the city’s cigar-making story.

Its preservation connects visitors with the people and skills that helped shape an industry—and the neighborhoods built around it.

Sources: Tampa Bay Chamber (2024); J.C. Newman history; National Park Service.

FEATURE 03 / GUIDE

Know the Language

A reader-friendly glossary of cigar essentials

VITOLA

The shape and size of a cigar.

RING GAUGE

A measurement of cigar diameter in sixty-fourths of an inch.

ROBUSTO

A familiar, relatively short and thick cigar format.

TORO

A commonly used name for a longer, medium-to-thick format.

HUMIDOR

A storage container designed to maintain suitable humidity.

DRAW

The airflow through a cigar during use.

Terminology varies slightly by manufacturer and cigar tradition.

FEATURE 04 / PEOPLE

Hands That Built a City

The enduring human story of cigar craftsmanship





The story of cigar making is also the story of families, neighborhoods, and knowledge shared across generations. In Tampa, immigrant workers helped create a thriving community of factories, shops, social clubs, and gathering places.

Factory life included an unusual tradition: lectores, readers hired to read newspapers and literature aloud while workers rolled cigars. Their voices made the workroom a place for news, conversation, and ideas.

Today, the surviving architecture and craft traditions offer a reminder that behind every industry are people whose work leaves a lasting mark.

Source: National Park Service, Ybor City Historic District (historical account).

The Chapter Begins

PLANK AND BARREL / A SHARED VISION



At the former Atlantic Seafood restaurant, a new chapter begins.

An Old Restaurant. A New Vision.

CREATING PLANK AND BARREL | AS TOLD BY KEN “TITO”



WHERE IT BEGAN / The former Atlantic Seafood restaurant on Amelia Island, before its transformation into Plank and Barrel.

Every new gathering place begins with a possibility. For Ashley, Kevin, Michelle, and me, that possibility was the former Atlantic Seafood restaurant on Amelia Island, Florida.

Together, we purchased the building with a shared ambition: to create something new and distinctive for the island. But our story began long before that purchase. It began with bourbon, hospitality, and a friendship that grew into a partnership.

A Friendship Becomes a Partnership

FROM SAND BAR AND KITCHEN TO A NEW ISLAND OPPORTUNITY

Several years earlier, Kevin and Michelle had renovated Sand Bar and Kitchen on Amelia Island. In a remarkable oceanfront location, they created a successful restaurant that brought together a beautiful setting and thoughtful hospitality.

Michelle's professionalism and attention to detail helped make the restaurant run efficiently and become a sought-after destination for corporate events and private parties. She understood how much the details matter, from a guest's first welcome to the way an entire evening unfolds.

Kevin brought extensive knowledge of whiskey and bourbon. His collection grew to approximately 1,400 different selections, drawing bourbon enthusiasts from across the country. That shared interest in bourbon is how we met. Over time, our connection grew into friendship, and eventually we began discussing what the four of us might create together.

After many hours of sharing ideas and talking about the island's dining needs, we agreed on a vision: an elegant restaurant with a relaxed, open atmosphere where the whole family could feel welcome. A spacious main dining room would bring people together, while a separate bourbon room would offer a more intimate evening for bourbon enthusiasts and wine lovers.

Michelle found the location while out on her morning walk and brought it to the team. We agreed unanimously. The former Atlantic Seafood property had five hotels within walking distance and the beach just a block and a half away. We could picture visitors strolling over for lunch, then returning to enjoy the afternoon by the ocean.

The building gave us a starting point. Our conversations gave it a new purpose: a place that could welcome a family at lunchtime and host a memorable celebration that evening.

The Name. The Experience.

PLANK AND BARREL TAKES SHAPE

The name came naturally as we discussed the menu and the rooms around it. We pictured a beautifully prepared entrée served on a wooden plank, and bourbon barrels bringing warmth and character to the private bourbon room. Those two images came together: **Plank and Barrel.**

The main dining room will feature 18-foot ceilings and garage doors that can open when the weather allows. A 23-seat bar will provide a place to meet friends, enjoy lunch, and watch a favorite game on television. The space is designed to feel airy, welcoming, and full of life.

The separate bourbon room will offer a different pace. Available for reservations, corporate events, family gatherings, and special occasions, it will pair an intimate setting with an extensive bourbon collection, wine, and special menus created to enhance the evening.

A chef from New York will lead the kitchen, bringing experience and creativity to a menu highlighting great steaks and a farm-to-table approach with ingredients grown in the region.

People ask me, “What will Plank and Barrel be like?” My answer is simple: **a casual experience in a fine dining atmosphere.** Walk over from the beach, sit at the bar or one of our tables, and enjoy a fish sandwich or a steak for lunch. Relax and feel comfortable in a beautiful setting.

Then, after a long day at work or a day enjoying your vacation, head home, shower, and return with a reservation in the bourbon room. Settle in for dinner, a wine-tasting evening, or a bourbon flight, and enjoy another level of the experience.

As we unveil the photographs and designs, you’ll see how these ideas come together. This is the beginning of that story: four partners turning an old restaurant into a place for new traditions.

The People Behind the Vision

FOUR PARTNERS / ONE SHARED VISION



Left to right: Ken (Tito), Ashley, Michelle, and Kevin.

The partners bringing Plank and Barrel to life on Amelia Island.

Great Friends. Great Times.

THE ART OF GATHERING / PLANK AND BARREL



Good company and memories worth keeping.

The Journey Together

FRIENDSHIP / SHARED MOMENTS / PLANK AND BARREL



Good friends. Shared adventures. A new chapter together.

THE BLIND FOX MAGAZINE

Good Company. Great Moments. Lasting Friendships.

Stay Tuned for our Next Issue!

More great stories, exceptional cigars, premium spirits, and unforgettable moments are on the way.

Until then...
keep the good company close,
the cigar lit, and the spirit high.



The Blind Fox Magazine
COMING SOON