

2011 BALKAN Sobranie Throwdown

Hosted by the Seattle Pipe Club and the New York Pipe Club



Welcome letter and contest rules

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

Gentlemen,

Greetings! With the receipt of this letter and tobacco, the Great Balkan Sobranie Throwdown is now officially underway. Thank you for accepting the challenge to enter this exciting competition. It is the first of its kind. You have been invited to compete because of your extraordinary skills in the blending of exquisite pipe tobaccos. You and your fellow competitors are being asked to blend a duplicate copy of Balkan Sobranie 759.

- **This is your assignment:** come as close as you can to the original sample (enclosed) in taste, look, aroma and overall smoking qualities.

We acknowledge the limitations to recreating a legendary old blend such as Balkan Sobranie 759. The sample you have is aged, the exact tobaccos may not exist and you don't have the precise recipe. Nevertheless, the blender who solves the puzzle and gets the closest to the original Balkan Sobranie 759 will be proclaimed the Grand Prize winner in Chicago on May 14, 2011.

Please use all your skills and resources. **Following are the Rules and Participants**

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The Competitors:

1. Mr. Mike McNeil, McClelland Tobacco
2. Mr. Russ Ouellette, Hearth & Home
3. Mr. Carl McAllister, Altadis

The Judges:

1. Mr. Rick Newcombe
2. Mr. Joe Harb
3. Mr. Neill Archer Roan

The Rules:

1. You must produce a blend of your own making. The ingredients used are totally up to each competitor.
2. You have received 14 grams of original Balkan Sobranie 759 from an unopened 200 gram tin purchased from Mr. Fred Hanna in January of 2011. This tin and tobacco were produced in the late 1980's and was originally distributed by James B. Russell, Inc. The sample has not been rehydrated. How you prepare it is up to you.
3. Contestants are to submit 3 pounds of their contest matching blend
4. The one blend that, as decided by our judges, most closely matches the original '759' sample will be declared the Grand Prize winner.
5. Judges will rate each blend on a scale of 100 points. The blend that earns the highest point score wins.
6. The next most close entries, as decided by our judges, will be declared 2nd and 3rd place winners
7. This will be a blind contest: all blend entries will be submitted to the judges unlabeled so that they will not know the name of each contestant until the final judging on May 14th
8. Final judging and Awards ceremony will take place before a live audience in the Smoking Tent at the Chicago International Pipe Show at 5:00pm
9. Contestants may not contact the judges regarding this contest for any reason whatsoever. All questions should be directed to Throwdown Chairman Matt Guss.
10. Your 3 pounds of contest blend must be received by the Seattle Pipe Club no later than midnight April 20th

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11. Blind (labeled only A, B, C) contest blends and baseline samples of original '759' will be shipped to the Judges on April 23rd
12. Samples of all 3 Throwdown (labeled only A, B, C) blends will be given free of charge to show attendees. These recipients will be asked to blind taste test the blends and vote for their favorite among the 3 contest blends. The winner of this vote will be the People's Choice Winner. The People's Choice Award will be announced during the same ceremony Saturday afternoon.
13. Judges and Contestants must be present for final judging, reviews and awards presentation 5:00 pm Saturday May 14, 201.

Again, if you have any questions or need clarification please contact me directly.
Welcome to the competition and good luck to you. May the best blender win!

Sincerely,

Matt Guss

Throwdown Chairman for the Seattle Pipe Club