

Clip it, Warm it, Savor it

Whoever said enjoying a fine cigar is just for the rich and famous is blowing smoke. A new generation of cigar aficionados has come on the scene and select Grand Rapids establishments are welcoming them. Connoisseurs can enjoy a good smoke at more than a dozen locations in the Grand Rapids area.

When The Chop House opened its doors in downtown G.R. last April, it included a lounge in the lower level offering gourmet desserts, after-dinner drinks and cigars. With a capacity of 110, the lounge, called La Dolce Vita, offers an inviting atmosphere with leather seating and rich wood tones. A floor-to-ceiling humidor displays more than 20 varieties of cigars, ranging from \$6.95 to \$28.95. Females are the fastest growing target market of cigar smokers and La Dolce Vita hopes to capture that audience with a variety of flavored cigars. A series of cigar dinners — where tips on pairing, cutting, lighting and savoring cigars are offered — are planned for this year.

The bar area of Louis Benton Steakhouse is an ideal setting to indulge yourself with a fine cigar. Belly up to the Brazilian granite bar, order a scotch on the rocks, light up that Churchill and enjoy the company that surrounds you. There are about a half-dozen cigar options at Louis Benton and the "menu" suggests drink pairings.

At the Cambridge House, one can savor a cigar while sampling flights of cognac, scotch and brandy. The English pub-style setting makes for a relaxing smoke. Seating areas offer intimate gathering spots for groups of two to 12, depending on your mood.

Those looking to enjoy the company



of other cigar enthusiasts may be interested in Club Stogie. The group meets the first and third Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. at locations throughout Grand Rapids. Details are available at Buffalo Tobacco Traders on East Fulton, where you'll find one of the area's largest cigar selections. You'll also find a selection of more than 100 cigars at Martha's Vineyard on Union Avenue NE. G.B. Russo and Son on 29th Street carries a selection as well. —DIANNA STAMPLER

GRAND RAPIDS ESTABLISHMENTS THAT ALLOW CIGAR SMOKING:

48 West
Bar Divani
Cambridge House*
Chaps*
The Chop House*
Flannigan's Irish Pub
The Intersection
J. Gardella's
Louis Benton Steakhouse*
Monkey Bar at The BOB
One Trick Pony
The Spinnaker
Three Crowns Bistro
Tiki Bob's Cantina
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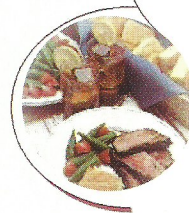
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