

The Davidoff Lounge
at The Tobacconist
of Greenwich, run
by Mike Cafagno
and Michael Stelluti

WHERE *Elegance* MEETS *Perfection*

words ANTOINE REID

A look at the award-winning Tobacconist of Greenwich and its owner, Mike Cafagno



Cafagno accepts the Davidoff Appointed Merchant of the Year Award at the 2015 Golden Band Awards in New Orleans.



Jacqueline Lacerra, co-owner of Tobacconist of Greenwich, with Mike Cafagno, at the 2015 Golden Band Awards.

INSIDE THE TOBACCONIST OF GREENWICH



Owner **Mike Cafagno** gives you a personal look at the Tobacconist of Greenwich, the 2015 Davidoff Golden Band Award winner for Davidoff Appointed Merchant of the Year.

On what you can expect from the store as a new and returning customer:

"A new client can expect my guarantee that anything he or she buys is kept in the most ideal and proper conditions. We back everything we sell. I embrace new business and new relationships because my relationships with my clients often prove to blossom into either great conversation or great friendships."

The store's motto:

"Where Elegance Meets Perfection."

On what sets the store's lounge apart from others:

"Our lounge is a one-of-a-kind place. We offer incredible ventilation, high-speed Internet, a 2,600-square-foot smoking space, a private smoking country club experience, and tasteful design elements with nods to France, Switzerland, Italy, and the United States. I tell our clients and members that the lounge is your blank canvas. We can accommodate any request you may have, and we always execute our members' requests above and beyond their expectations."

On what he's learned from working with Davidoff:

"I have learned that they stand behind what they say. Hans-Kristian Hoejsgaard, Jim Young, Tom Ryhiner, Johan Zwaan, Courtney Connelly, Richie Krutick—these people are the best people in the world to work with. I truly feel their enthusiasm through their commitment to their retailers. They aren't out to make the most money when they release something. They are out to make the most money the right way, the traditional way, the smart way—through storefronts and brick and mortar. Davidoff is the classiest cigar company in the business."

On the most popular cigars sold in the store:

"The most popular cigar in my store is probably Davidoff's Royal Salomones and Royal Robusto: two of the best cigars in the world without a doubt!"

THE TOBACCONIST OF GREENWICH

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DAVIDOFF LOUNGE BY THE TOBACCONIST OF GREENWICH

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The Tobacconist of Greenwich is an award-winning tobacconist and cigar lounge located in Greenwich, Connecticut. Over the past few years, Davidoff has recognized the lounge for its outstanding performance and customer service. While the store's Davidoff Lounge and impressive inventory of premium cigars is reason enough to make a trip to the picturesque community north of Manhattan, it's owner Mike Cafagno and his dedication to providing the store's patrons with the ultimate cigar experience that sets the Tobacconist of Greenwich apart from other stores like it.

Mike's history with Tobacconist of Greenwich began long before he became owner, and before the awards started piling up. At age 19, Cafagno first visited the store, which was then owned by Jimmy Lacerra, who he credits as having changed his life. "When I walked into The Tobacconist of Greenwich as a



19-year-old kid and met Jimmy 'Cigars' Lacerra for the first time, I met my guardian angel. This was the man who would pave the road for me and renew my passion in life to succeed, and he did it through the cigar industry," explained Cafagno. "I wanted to be like him—I wanted to be successful like he was. So in order to achieve the traits he had, I realized that he got all of them by being honest and not putting up with any nonsense."

For some, a wayward youth finding his way in a tobacconist store may seem strange, but Cafagno sees this as the norm for the industry he works in.

He sees cigars as the unifying factor that brings together everyone who walks through the doors of his store. "The greatest thing about my store, and the cigar industry in general, is the fact that cigar smokers immediately have something in common with the other people who they are smoking with: a cigar. We are a luxury tobacco products retailer. We offer the best smoking goods and accessories the industry has to offer, and we are in the center of the financial world,

Greenwich, Connecticut, so we see a lot of business men [and] women, unique sports figures, and successful entrepreneurs."

Just as he learned years ago when visiting the store as a customer when he was 19, there are many who could learn a lesson or two from the customer-turned-owner. When asked what advice he'd give to his younger self, Cafagno took a moment before reflecting on his past and sharing, "I would tell my younger self to make the same mistakes he made, because my past made me who I am today. I would tell my younger self to not make my family so crazy, but other than that I can't say I would have changed much. I had my first child when I was 18 years old, and she became my motivation to grow up fast because I had something more important than myself to take care of."

Cafagno noted that although he's faced challenges in life, those challenges and events lead him to the Tobacconist of Greenwich, where he met his mentor, Jimmy, and started on the path that's been marked with awards and recognition from one of the leading premium cigar brands in the world.

"How could I have asked for anything better?" asks Cafagno as he pridefully looks over the store and its content customers. With worldwide attention and accolades coming in from across the cigar industry, It's clear that he has made peace with his past and only has his sights set on what's ahead. ■