



Belgian cigar manufacturer J. Cortès reconfigures cigar landscape with American Oliva Cigars acquisition

Belgian family business J. Cortès recently signed an agreement for acquisition of the USA-based Oliva Cigars family business with branches in Miami and Nicaragua. With this acquisition, J. Cortès aims to diversify its product portfolio and further establish its position in the worldwide market. The combined annual turnover equals 100 million dollar. A family business firmly branching out in two continents, is unprecedented in the cigar industry.

When you hear CEO Fred Vandermarliere, you hear a driven entrepreneur, a man passionate about his trade, running his business with respect for the products and the people making them.

This acquisition is so much more to him than a straightforward business transaction. It is the culmination of the story of two families, running businesses for generations in an authentic market. Two businesses that complement each other so much that you could call it a perfect match. Because complementary they are, on so many fronts. J. Cortès cigars are manufactured on a production line, whereas Oliva cigars are still rolled by hand. Where J. Cortès is mainly active in Europe, Oliva plays an important role in the American market. What they do have in common? Strong family ties and the way these businesses are being run: with passion, craftsmanship and humility.



Vandermarliere underlines the fact he deliberately chose to maintain Oliva as a business, including the brands it currently runs and its current management team, describing this approach as the only way these two companies can really support and strengthen each other.

Oliva Cigars is a fantastic, well-run business with strong brands and plenty of future opportunities. This acquisition allows us to further strengthen both businesses' strategy and to stay focused on brands, people and dedication to great products for cigar lovers.

— Fred Vandermarliere - CEO J. Cortès

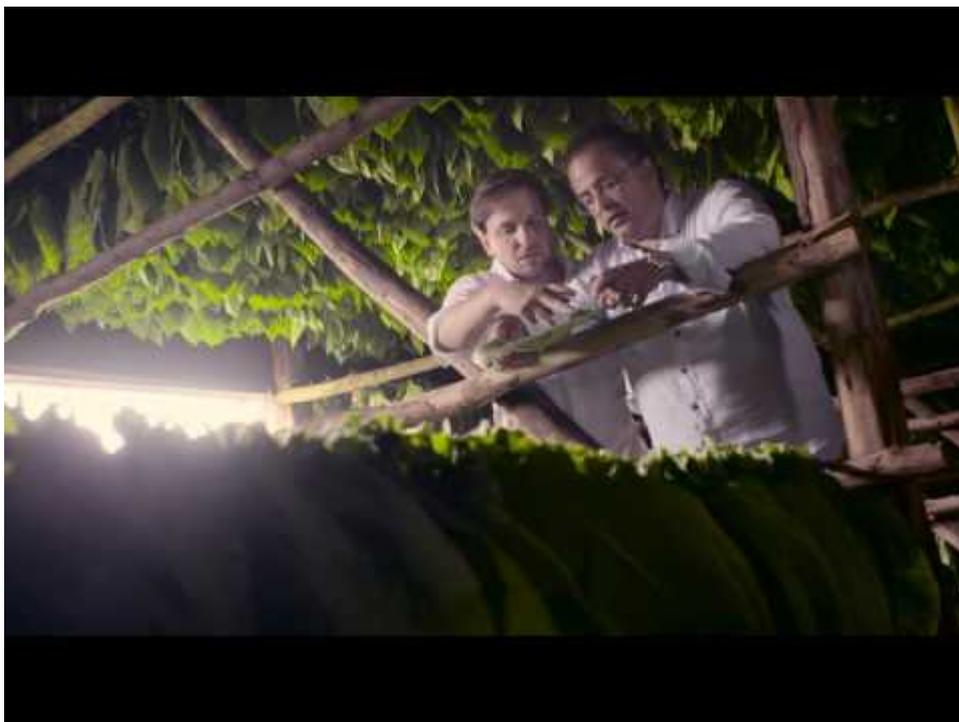
José Oliva, CEO of Oliva Cigars, also describes this acquisition as an all-in win-win. He will keep on running the business, with guaranteed continuity in both brands and workforce (1,115 people).

As a family, it was important to us to be part of a company who's spirit and culture is much like our own. A company that appreciates and wants to continue working with our entire team. It is a new and exciting chapter for our company."

— José Oliva - CEO Oliva cigars

Fred's father, Guido Vandermarliere, who's also chairman and has already been active in the cigar sector for over 50 years, is proud about this acquisition. He summarises that working in a society that stigmatises tobacco is no easy task, but he also believes in the possibilities. *“In the long run, we can only survive as a cigar manufacturer by being active in all continents, by choosing 100% tobacco products, made to enjoy, and by putting quality over quantity.”*

The deal closes on June 30th, and is effective immediately on July 1st, 2016.



[More images](#)

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About J. Cortès group

J. Cortès Cigars has been in the hands of the Vandermarliere family since 1926. This West-Flemish company holds a very strong position in the European market, producing 100% machine made cigars, and is active in 80 countries worldwide. Core activities are brands such as J. Cortès, Neos and Amigos. Its passion for cigars and tobacco is emulated by 2,250 employees worldwide.

Figures

- Total annual production of 500 million cigars
- Production in Colombo (Sri Lanka), Handzame and Zwevegem (Belgium)
- Over 2,250 employees



About Oliva Cigars

Oliva Cigars is a family business based in Miami and Nicaragua, renowned for its high quality cigars having earned them several awards and nominations. Thanks to solid growth over the past 10 years, Oliva now has a strong position in the American market of 'premium hand rolled' cigars, branded Oliva, NUB and Kaïn.

Figures

- Total annual production of 15 million handmade cigars
- Headquartered in Miami
- Production units in Esteli (Nicaragua)
- 1,115 employees



ABOUT J. CORTÈS

J. Cortès is a family run company with a passion for cigars. Cigars in all shapes and sizes. It's a never-ending story of dedication and craftsmanship that started in 1926. Don't smoke but enjoy! Our prime brands are J. Cortes,

Country, Neos and Amigos. For the major European countries we have strong in-house sales teams; for other markets our brands are in the hands of our export managers and sold over 80 countries globally.

Don't smoke but enjoy!



J. Cortèsnewsroom