

# THIRTY

*South Florida*

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**CARS**  
DEALERS &  
COLLECTORS

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**CUISINE**  
IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

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*From Acting to  
Directing—Behind the  
Scenes with*

**JAMES  
FRANCO**





# Cigar AFICIONADOS

*The Oldest Cigar Company*



Danny Difabio at a tobacco field in Esteli, Nicaragua

With a rich family heritage, Danny Difabio, owner and operator of the Rodriguez Cigar Company, is continuing the tradition of his ancestors. Between 1947-1961, his grandparents began growing tobacco in central Cuba in the town of Siguaney. The Rodriguez family tobacco farm specialized in growing, harvesting and fermenting filler tobacco for numerous manufacturers.

Danny says, "In 1968, my grandfather, Angel Rodriguez, was assigned and spent two and a half years working for the government in a political camp. The program allowed political freedom, and in 1971 he got the opportunity to leave the country, and moved his family to Key West, Florida." In 1984 they re-established themselves as a manufacturer of cigars and have been producing cigars made of Nicaraguan fillers, Honduran fillers, and wrappers from Ecuador since then.

Most recently, the Rodriguez Cigar Company, the oldest cigar company in the Florida Keys, has partnered up with The Gates Hotel in Key West to create a cigar lounge, which allows guests to enjoy a premium cigar in the "old school Key West" environment. Danny said, "The amenity of a cigar lounge in a hotel is really special, because I don't think that's ever been done before in the Florida Keys. What we plan to do with this partnership is to be able to allow people to enjoy a piece of Key West history during their stay."

The Rodriguez Cigar Company began in the tobacco fields of Cuba and that feeling continues when guests visit The Gates Hotel. The experience will be incredible between the cigar lounge and Rum Row, The Gates' pool bar, where guests will capture a significant amount of history, as rum running and cigar making was a huge part of Key West. The Rodriguez Cigar Company preserves history, dating back to 1831, when the first cigar was ever made on the island, by being the oldest manufacturer of cigars. That historical tie is something very special that cannot be broken.

*Just the other day I went up to the lounge at The Gates Hotel and sat down and started smoking a cigar around sunset, and you just get out of your element and start relaxing...*

The music that is playing, the type of chairs, the environment and sunset, cool breezy air on the veranda, it's a really nice spot to smoke a cigar. I really think guests are going to have a good time with this great experience," Danny said.

For 31 years, The Rodriguez Cigar Company has been manufacturing cigars in Key West. As stated by Danny, "The type of vision I have for the company is simply this: I want to constantly create the best product I can possibly make with the materials that are available to us. I want to create a product to represent not only the history of the Rodriguez family but also the history of Key West, in regards to the industry of cigar making. I want to be able to produce some of the finest cigars in the world for cigar enthusiasts, and to be able to do that is why we show up to work every day." [RODRIGUEZCIGARSKEYWEST.COM](http://RODRIGUEZCIGARSKEYWEST.COM)