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Bei einer Malt Whisky-Habanos-Verkostung in Salzburg: 'Mr. Whisky' Christian H. Rosenberg (Balantines), Noelle Lévy, Dr. Dieter Kiener, Besitzer der Stiegl Brauerei Salzburg (v.l.)

Tasting Malt Whiskies and Habanos in Salzburg - from left: 'Mr. Whisky' Christian H. Rosenberg (Balantines), Noelle Lévy, Dr. Dieter Kiener, owner of Stiegl Beer, Salzburg

The Cigarlady from Geneva

Luckily there are quite a few women in the international cigarbusiness. Although e.g. Monika Villiger or Gisela Suerdieck drew back from day to day business - Marie-Louise Bots from Consolidated, Cynthia Fuente-Suarez or Maya Selva are frontrunners in one of the last pure male domains. Not to mention the resolute directoresses of Habanos S.A. And this is good - why really half of man (woman) - kind should be excluded from the pleasures of a cigar. Noelle Lévy of Geneva is one of the lucky girls which grew up with the smell and aroma of Havannas.

In their lovely book 'Habanos mi Amor' by Ingrid and Peter Meraner (Ingrid Meraner KEG Verlag, A-5020 Salzburg) Noelle Lévy describes her first childhood impressions at the side of her father Raphael Lévy, who used to smoke six Havanas a day. We often remember the smells of our childhood better than pictures - so one of the first memories which accompany Noelle Lévy since decades is the aroma of her father's Montecristo No. 3. Raphael Lévy patriarchal head of his family emigrated in 1956 during the Suez crisis like his King Faruk from Cairo to Geneva and built up a successful company in cotton, still his core business now managed by his son Louis. In Raphael Lévy's office in Geneva (also financial investments and real estate are among his activities) one can see a big cotton plant. Already in the fifties of now the last (20th) century he developed a strong affinity to cigars, especially to Havanas - a passion he also learned to commercialise successfully. He was good friend with another famous emigre in the small Jewish community of Geneva, Zino Davidoff, actually originally it was Raphael Lévy's idea, to make more out of Zino Davidoff's little cigarshop in the rue des Rives. The Lévy family stayed with Havanas and so they now supervise a small of-