

CARLOS SANTANA MUSIC ICON
TALKS TEQUILA AND NEW ALBUM RELEASE

CIGAR & SPIRITS

MAGAZINE

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Discover Casa Noble Tequila
with the international Superstar
Carlos Santana



INTERNATIONAL
SUPERSTAR
AND MUSIC ICON

CARLOS

BY JON SHAKILL

SAN
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CARLOS SANTANA

is one of those rare individuals who is larger than life. His name is instantly recognizable in almost any corner of the globe, and he has transcended the realm of mere mortals to become a living historical music icon. Even at the attempt of using hyperbole, he accurately fits the description. It's hard to overstate his accomplishments in the world of music and entertainment — which really isn't necessary because they speak for themselves.

Carlos Santana is not only accomplished in the world of music however. He is also a passionate social activist that utilizes his status to help the less fortunate. As a part owner and board member for Casa Noble Tequila, Santana's involvement is because of his love for the product, his cultural heritage and his passion for helping those in need.

Santana donates his Casa Noble profits to charity, to help underprivileged and underrepresented youth. In 1998, Santana founded The Milagro Foundation for this purpose — to further the areas of arts, education and healthcare for those in need. For his charitable efforts, Santana was awarded the UCLA Cesar E. Chavez Spirit Award for social engagement in 2001.

DECORATED IN ACCOLADES

Over the course of four decades, Santana has released the equivalent of nearly an album per year. He has released a top 10 album on the Billboard charts in each decade since the 1960s, becoming one of two musical acts to ever achieve this feat — the other is the Rolling Stones. He has sold over 100 million records, and played for more than 100 million fans worldwide. He has 10 Grammy Awards and 3 Latin Grammy Awards.

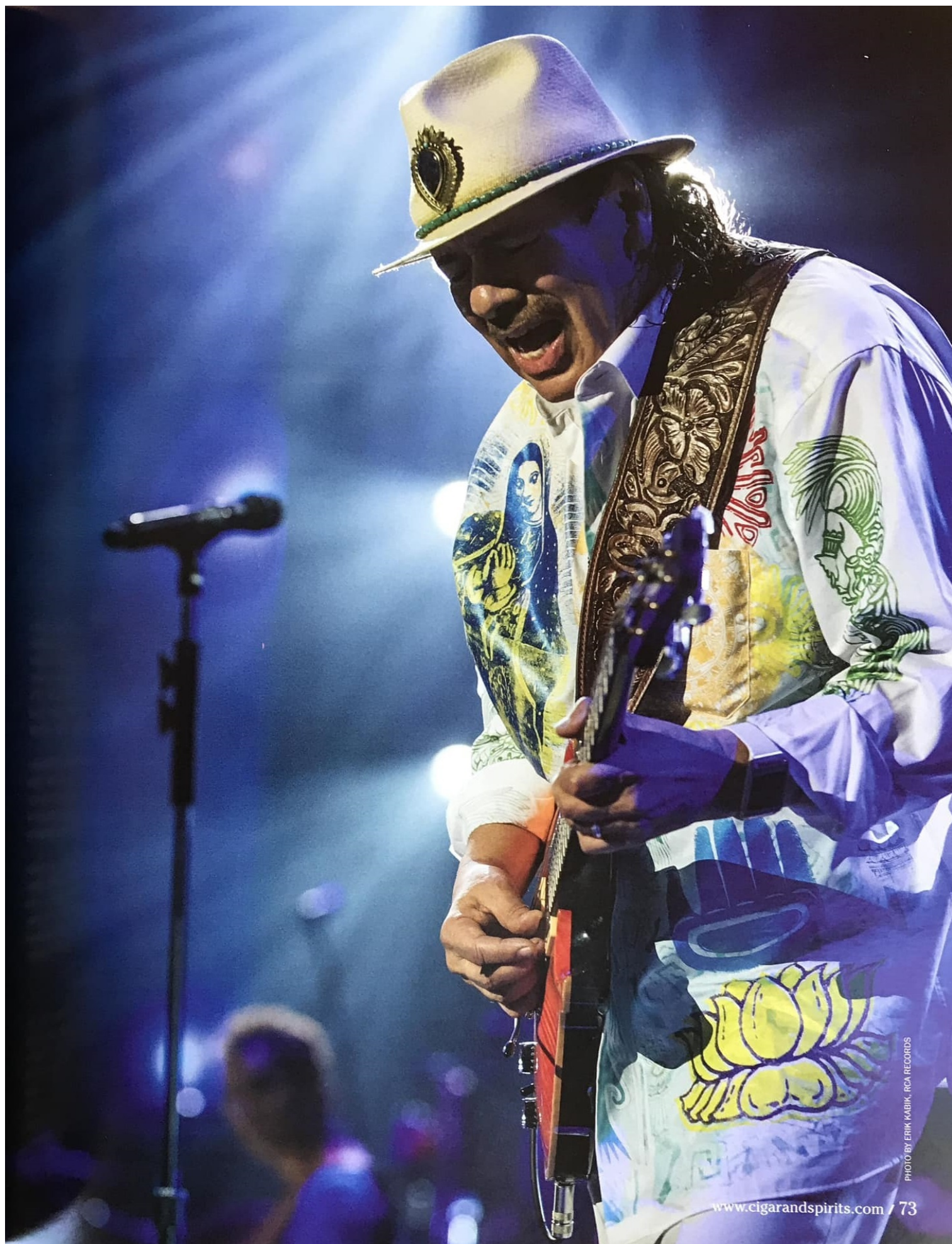


PHOTO BY ERIK KABIK, RCA RECORDS

COVER STORY



In 1996 he received the Billboard Century Award; in 1997 he got a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame; in 1998 he was inducted into the Rock 'N Roll Hall of Fame; in 1999 he was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame; and also in 1999 he released the album "Supernatural," 30 years after he first played the Woodstock festival. The album has sold over 30 million copies, went 15 times certified platinum and won eight Grammy Awards. In 2009 Santana received the Billboard Latin Music Awards Lifetime Achievement Award.

Among many other awards, Santana was recently designated as a recipient of the 2013 Kennedy Center Honors Award, which recognizes individuals for a lifetime of contributions to American culture through the arts. Each year, the award is presented by the President of the United States in the East Room of the White House, followed by a tribute gala event with start-studded dedication performances.

Considered to be among the top 15 guitar players of all time, Carlos Santana has risen beyond just being a guitar god. His passion, dedication, and belief in the power of helping people around the world, have made him an invaluable global citizen and good will ambassador.

NEW ALBUM — CORAZÓN

Even with every award imaginable under his belt, Santana is still driven by his passion to create music. His latest studio album, *Corazón*, is set for release this spring. In the familiar Santana way, the album is a compilation of musicians from around the world, many of whom are famous internationally. Familiar names like Gloria Estefan and Ziggy Marley make appearances on the record, as do several Latin music stars.

Part of what makes Santana great, is that he seamlessly incorporates so many different influences into his music, and the latest record is no exception. From rhythmic classical guitar, to the signature electrified guitar solos — elements of pop-rock, reggae and sexy swirling Latin samba and salsa intertwine into that recognizable Santana sound. It's the type of music that goes perfectly with a tequila and a cigar, evoking imagery of the places where these luxuries are produced.



Carlos Santana at the Casa Noble Distillery in Jalisco, Mexico. PHOTO BY HIRSH TRILLO

SANTANA & CASA NOBLE TEQUILA

A passion project that Santana holds close to his heart is his involvement with Casa Noble Tequila. Going back to his heritage, and his birthplace in Jalisco, Mexico, Santana was looking for something that could embody his integrity and passion, as well as his culture. That is exactly what he found when he approached Jose "Pepe" Hermosillo, the founder and CEO of Casa Noble.

According to Pepe, "we received a call from one of Carlos' people, and we got together in Vegas when he was playing at the Hard Rock. Carlos is such a humble and spiritual man, he is great to be around. So I took him through the whole tasting of the tequila and he really enjoyed it. We got along very well. The presentation I was giving was supposed to last for half an hour, but we stayed talking for two and-a-half or three hours. It was a lot of fun."

So after that fateful meeting initiated by Santana, Pepe points out that: "[Carlos] started learning more about the tequila, and he came down to see the distillery. We thought it was a perfect match. He is from a town that's very close to the distillery. It is a passion project for him and he's become part of the family now."

THE INTERVIEW

We sat down for an interview with Carlos Santana, taking a few minutes of the living legend's time in between recording sessions on his latest album. Despite his high-profile, he is very engaging and easy to speak with, and was happy to offer us some insights. His spirituality and passion are quite apparent when he speaks. He conveys a sense of keen self-awareness, while maintaining an easy-going and humble attitude.

Here is the interview as it happened:

Jon Shakill: *Let's get right into it with the new album Corazón. You've pretty much accomplished everything imaginable in the music business, so what inspired you to make this new record, and what is it like working with so many great musicians from around the world?*

Carlos Santana: Oh thank you for that! It's a real joy to work with so many great musicians. I think that on one level or another of evolution, we depend on trust. Trust gives you thrust. I have to trust that sisters and brothers will come from all over the world to participate in this CD *Corazón* — I



have to trust that their hearts, their minds, and the music that they're bringing is something that I can complement — and most of all, reach more hearts.

For example, like Bob Marley or Michael Jackson, I totally equate myself in that arena — with reaching to grandparents, parents, teenagers and children. It's very important to me that we play music that can bring all of the family together without any generation gaps. There are very few bands who bring it all together with that kind of commonality, and my band is one of them.

When we play music, the whole family literally can get together in celebration. In this space and time in the world, celebration is really important, let us celebrate blessings and miracles. Especially that we can make them, it's not just Jesus, or the Dalai Lama, or the Pope that can will blessings and miracles. All of us are given that type of energy and that type of faith and trust and belief. Because after all, you're still dealing with energy, but it's positive energy and vibration.

It inspires me when I look in the eyes of the artists — people came from Argentina, Brazil, Columbia, Spain, Miami — people came from all over the world to Las Vegas to record these songs with us. I look in their eyes — and I say this with humility — I see in their eyes feeling the same way for me, that I feel for Stevie Ray Vaughn or Marvin Gaye, musicians like that, or John Lennon or whoever — we're the same. When I see the eyes of people looking at me with that same kind of respect, it inspires me to go deeper into my heart and bring more energy.

JS: Is that energy and vibration part of what inspires you to do what you do?

Santana: Absolutely and totally yes!

JS: It sounds exciting to put together so many great minds with such love and passion into a project.

Santana: Yes, well we love making the women happy. Like with "Maria Maria" and "Smooth" — all of these songs make women extremely happy. And as you know, when women are happy, the economy goes up!

JS: Are you planning on a major tour along with the album release? Where can people expect to see you?

Santana: Absolutely. We're getting ready to finish up four concerts at the House of Blues [Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas] right now. Then we're going to Dubai; Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa; then we're going to do some concerts this summer with our brother Rod Stewart in the United States; and then later-on

South America. So yeah, it's wonderful to keep, maintain and sustain a flow of energy and inspiration.

Lincoln Salazar: Can you remember what it felt like the first time you were in front of thousands of people playing? Do you remember that first moment when you were there with the crowd — what was the energy like?

Santana: Well, it's an incredible validation. For me it wasn't anything to do with ego. If you're a child, and you're actually able to feel connected with God, whether it's a beam of light or a rainbow, like the first time you're discovering your first French kiss — on one hand it's metaphysical, and on the other hand it's very physical, you know? It's like that.

Being on stage and sharing music with people — to some people this may sound crass — but to me it feels like God and sex. Sex is something that God gave us as an incredible divine gift, not something to make you squirm or be shameful or be weird about. It's like air in your mouth.

So to me, music has been on those two dimensions: divinity and S, E, X — it's a gift. Enjoy it, celebrate it, honor it, and don't apologize for being totally in it with grace and elegance and integrity. That's what it's like for me to be on stage, it's a divine orgasm kind of thing.

JS: Very interesting. Let me switch gears now. This last December, you were honored by President Obama as one of the Kennedy Center Honorees. What was that moment like for you, and what does it mean, really, to be acknowledged as a living music icon?

Santana: Oh, thank you for that question! It means that America, the United States, has given me a big hug. And at the same time, by hugging me, you hug all those invisible ones. All the women and men who change sheets, clean toilets, babysit — the gardeners, dishwashers, cooks — all the people who we don't see, that are there every day doing things for the United States. Cooking up the food at really cheap prices — there's a lot of people who I call the "invisible ones." Every time I walk the red carpet, I always go to the kitchen, and the first people that I thank are the dishwasher, the chefs, the waiters and the waitresses, because I came from them. So when President Barack Obama honors me, he honors them.

JS: What can you share about how you've made it to where you are today? What do you think has made you different than the "average" person?

Santana: I'm not a shuck and jive guy. I don't make excuses.

TALKING TEQUILA WITH JOSE "PEPE" HERMOSILLO FOUNDER AND CEO OF CASA NOBLE TEQUILA

Jon Shakill: Where is Casa Noble made?

Jose "Pepe" Hermosillo: The distillery is in Tequila, Jalisco, Mexico. The history of the distillery dates back to late 1700s, in the most recognized area for tequila production.

JS: What makes the production process special?

JPH: There are two keys: one is patience and the other is that every single step should be done the best way possible. We spend a lot of time building aromas and trying to create the best tasting tequila. We let the agave plants mature for 10-12 years, which gets rid of any bitter notes. We really stress the quality of the agave. We cook the agaves very slowly for 36 hours, instead of 8 or 12 hours. Our process is a commitment to quality and integrity to what we are doing. That is the basis of Casa Noble through the whole process.

JS: What are the main differences between the various types of Casa Noble tequila? Can you explain some of the process into making each type?

JPH: Normally to be called reposado, a tequila is aged for 2 months. Because we use French white oak casks, we let the reposado age for 364 days — one day shy of becoming an añejo. So we really have patience, and the aromas are very delicately and slowly introduced to the tequila.

For the añejo, which is normally aged for 1 year, we age for 2 years in French white oak. With the single barrel — we were the first to create a single barrel in the tequila category. We worked with the CRT to develop the system. The timing of outside factors is very important, so it's a very small batch of only 300 bottles made at a time. We age it for 5 years in French white oak.

JS: How do you and Carlos Santana work together for the brand?

JPH: We are in contact constantly. We have not done a large campaign like some companies choose to do with celebrities. We take an organic approach and believe in word of mouth. We work together for designs and lot of things like that. We love talking about the brand and discussing our efforts towards it — doing

Santana with the CEO of Casa Noble Jose "Pepe" Hermosillo, joining a jimador in harvesting some agave plants.



things like this interview, rather than doing a simple commercial.

JS: It sounds like your marketing strategy goes along with the way that you make the tequila. You have patience and it's a slow process that you let grow organically over time.

JPH: Yes, completely. We don't want to be a shooting star. We want something for the long-term. It's part of our family and we want something that's really worth it.

JS: Can you tell us about the single barrel reserve?

JPH: Carlos just received the first bottle of his single barrel reserve, which was from his favorite barrel. There are only 500 individually numbered and signed bottles. It will be going out to the market around April.

Casa Noble Tequila is certified organic by the USDA, and is the first tequila company certified. They were one of the first distilleries to become "green" in December 2012. No synthetics, fertilizers or pesticides are used in growing the agaves. Everything used at the distillery has to be organic or natural.

understand you're doing it for charity?

Santana: Yes. Pepe's eyes and heart, and his devotion with his family — he has impeccable integrity. I think it's an honor to be part of his family. And yes, I do pledge 100% of this energy to youth alcohol abuse, and I also give this money to students in university in Guadalajara or Tijuana who need help.

Just before I leave, I'll say it like this: Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Richard Branson, George Lucas and many, many, many other rich brothers have pledged 95% of their money to charity. They project that in the year 2035 that there will be virtually no more poor countries. So I'm with them in my own way. I don't have as much money as they do, but I have just as much passion and willingness to help alleviate the conditions of humans on this planet. Thank you so much!

Jon Shakill: Thank you so much for your time.

Carlos Santana: Take care man! 

and I do believe immensely in God's grace. I believe it's important to put your backbone into whatever you're going to do, and trust that God will honor you by giving you possibilities and opportunities.

All of us are born the same. I think that what makes me different, maybe than a lot of people, is that I don't let someone else dictate to me what my successes should be, I follow my heart. Something I can say with a lot of clarity is that, I listen very closely to my inner and outer support system. You and I — everyone has a support system. It's important to listen, confer and defer to the Holy Ghost. I listen to the Holy Ghost inside me, and therefore I am able to go further than a lot of men.

JS: I will wrap up with one last question. I spoke with Jose "Pepe" Hermosillo from Casa Noble, and he told me that you approached the tequila as a passion project. What attracted you to the brand, and what is your goal? I