

# U.S. News & World Report

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By Paul Bedard

### Secret to Smoking Like a President

It was election night 1992, and the popular Georgetown Tobacco shop was busy with political aides looking for one stogie brand: Paul Garmirian, a fave of former Presidents Bush and Clinton. "The Democrats were buying them to celebrate," recalls Garmirian, "and the Republicans for consolation." Never heard of "P.G.'s"? Count yourself lucky: We're letting you in on a secret that Washington and Hollywood big shots have kept for 16 years. Aficionados consider P.G.'s vintage Dominican cigars better than Cuba's storied Cohibas.

"Muy bueno," says former CIA Director George Tenet, who used to chew the P.G. Churchill. Garmirian, a regal Lebanese native who literally wrote the book on cigars (*The Gourmet Guide to Cigars*), tells how a client once offered Clinton a P.G. in a greeting line but Bubba walked past. That is, until he heard, "but it's a P.G." The current prez is a fan, as are California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and David Letterman. "It's a nonpartisan cigar," says Garmirian, who offers cigars, chat, and espresso at his McLean, Va., store. His string of presidential smokers might continue in 2008: Republican Rudy Giuliani likes to chat Armenian affairs with Garmirian over P.G.'s, and Democratic Gov. Bill Richardson recalls talking cigars with the maker at Georgetown Tobacco. "Paul is a master cigar maker," he says, "but an even better raconteur."

