

“THE LITTLE HAMMER”

A story

José O. Padrón

JOSÉ ORLANDO PADRÓN

In 1962, I arrived in Miami, an unknown city in a foreign land. I had to start from zero. At first, I received \$60 monthly, as government aid given to Cuban refugees. I was thirty six years old, strong, and in good health. Every time I cashed that check, I felt like a burden on the country that had taken me in. For many days, I looked for a job and did not find one. Every night, I went home and thought of the future. I was determined to do something so that I could support my family. ☞ One day, Raul Fernandez, a friend who worked in the Cuban Refugee Office asked if I had any carpentry skills. I said I did. He gave me a gift – a small hammer – which he asked me to put to good use. The hammer made me feel I had the necessary tool to become self-sufficient and not depend on a government hand-out. During the days, I worked as a gardener. At nights, I did carpentry with the hammer. ☞ My dream was to save enough money to open a factory to make great cigars, like the ones we used to smoke in Cuba. Through a lot of sacrifice and hard work, I managed to save \$600 - money I made working with the hammer. With that, I made my dream come true and opened Padrón Cigars in 1964. ☞ I still have the hammer as a reminder of how it all started. More than forty years later... The hammer is still here and so is Padrón Cigars, the brand the hammer helped build.

As a boy, my father would show me a small, old hammer and tell me how it had changed his life. We, his children, grew up hearing the story of *el martillito*, the little hammer. It became a tradition which we now tell our children. The hammer represents the dedication and hard work that went into building Padrón Cigars.

It reminds us of our roots

and humble beginnings. It stands for tenacity, integrity, perseverance, loyalty, commitment to quality... and much more. The hammer helped lay the foundation for what we are today. The hammer has a deep and special meaning for the Padrón Family. This is why we are sharing the story with you.

J.P.
Jorge Padrón

