

# For London's Richard Dunhill, Life's a Lovely Pipe Dream

By Fred Hauptfuhrer

Churchill, FDR and the Duke of Windsor smoked them. Frank Sinatra, Henry Kissinger, Sammy Davis Jr. and Anwar Sadat still do. In fact, pipes, cigars and cigarettes from Dunhill of London, the world's premier purveyor of "smokers' requisites," have been de rigueur among sophisticates since 1907. "It's easy to make a cheaper product," says chairman Richard Dunhill, "but the reason we're here today is that we resisted the temptation. Quality comes first."

Indeed, no bargains are to be found at any of the Dunhill outlets in more than 100 countries, including 10 in the U.S. The most recent opened in San Francisco last November, and Dunhill plans to launch up to 50 new boutiques in major department stores across the country during the next few months.

Dunhill has always blown smoke rings around its competitors, though for the past four years nearly half of the firm's \$150 million annual gross has been generated not by tobacco, but by an elegant line of menswear and accessories. At Richard's urging, Dunhill now sells everything from silk neckties (at \$35) to suitcases (\$135 to \$900) to gold-plated pens (\$167). Dunhill pipes fetch about \$225 apiece. The most expensive item is a \$150,000 walnut pipe chest containing 366 pipes—one for every day of the year, even in leap year. Something the firm doesn't sell in the U.S. is embargoed Havanas. Instead, Dunhill makes do with tobaccos grown in the Canary Islands and Jamaica.

A grandson of founder Alfred Dunhill, 54-year-old "Mr. Richard," as his British colleagues call him, is a walking advertisement. He owns 30 pipes and, much to the chagrin of his menthol-smoking spouse, Pat, puffs on a torpedo-shaped Don Alfredo Havana after dinner. "Cigars are a very

planned positive activity," he proclaims. Richard succeeded his Aunt Mary at the helm after she stepped down in 1976 at age 70. "He has my father's flair as a salesman and shopkeeper," she observes. "But my father was very trying. Richard is not nearly as bad. We're all a bit autocratic," she allows, "but it's got watered down with the generations."

Today Richard and Pat live on a 12-acre Buckinghamshire estate 26 miles northwest of London. They have three sons: pop guitarist Jonathan, 18, Oxford student Mark, 19, and sometime PR man Christopher, 26. Daughter Susan, 27, is married to a Las Vegas dental technician. A Mormon convert, she is the only nonsmoking sibling.

"It wouldn't have worried me if none of my children smoked," insists Dunhill. "But when they showed the inclination, I encouraged them." He himself began at 16. He finds anti-smoking pressure "depressing" and contends tobacco "is like salt. Too much will kill you, none at all is bad for you, and the right amount is beneficial." Although Rothman's International has owned a controlling interest in Dunhill's since 1965, the founding family continues to operate the business. None of the children is involved yet because, Pat explains, "Richard wants them to prove themselves elsewhere first."

The chairman got his first whiff of tobacco as a toddler, growing up down the street from Dunhill's London factory. When he was 11, his father, Vernon, died from complications following surgery for ulcers. After attending a Jesuit boarding school, Richard went to work "at the absolute bottom," sweeping floors and unpacking parcels for Woolworth's. He served a four-year hitch in the army and in 1948 joined Dunhill. He never had any doubts about someday being the boss. "I wouldn't have stayed otherwise," he declares. Richard now aims to double his U.S. volume in five years, but admits he has qualms about the American custom of giving away matches. "It hasn't," he sniffs, "helped our lighter trade."