AGAVE

Alcohol from the indigenous Mexican plant Agave - a succulent member of the lily family of flowers - has existed in Central America as a fermented product for thousands of years. Immigrants and sailors from the Philippines introduced native Mexicans to distillation, leading to the first productions of Mezcal in the late 17th and 18th Centuries. By mid-1700, the highlands of Jalisco began producing unique agave distillates that would come to be known as Tequila.

In order to release the sugars necessary for fermentation, agave must be roasted. The first ways of doing this were to use pit ovens dug into the ground, inside which hot stones and a coal or wood fire would cook the agave plant. This long and laborious process was replaced by brick ovens and stainless steel autoclaves. Brick ovens are largely preferred for their ability to extract better flavors, though autoclaves (large, pressurized cooking vats) are quicker and more efficient. Brick ovens are commonly used for the production of high quality agave spirits and pit ovens can still be seen in the production of some Mezcal today.

There are 270 species of Agave plant. Only the Blue Weber variety may be used in the production of Tequila, but there are no limitations in Mezcal. Practically speaking, however, there are 11 Agave varieties that can be used as a varietal expression or used in combinations to make an Ensemble.

TEQUILA

• Amatiteña Blanco La Coronilla 2018 (Tequila, NOM 1477, Wild Fermentation, Tahona) — $23 — 84 proof / 42% ABV

• Amatiteña ‘Origen’ Blanco Las Tripitas 2018 (Tequila, NOM 1477, Wild Fermentation, Tahona) — $29 — 98 proof / 49% ABV
The Origen showcases Amatiteña’s dedication to traditional craft techniques with this more refined, higher proof blanco expression. The nose is complex with smoky roasted agave and vegetal, fresh hay notes with a melon sweetness and a subtle, bittersweet pepper. The palate is oily and mellow with more spicy, smoky agave notes and a minty, earthy minerality that compliments delicate vanilla sweetness and a hint of salinity. The finish is thin and peppery with a sweet, smoky undertone.

• Amatiteña Añejo ‘winter’ Las Tripitas 2017 (Tequila, NOM 1477, Wild Fermentation, Tahona) — $39 — 84 proof / 42% ABV

• Amatiteña ‘Extra Añejo el Novillero 2016 (Tequila, NOM 1477, Wild Fermentation, Tahona) — $45 — 84 proof / 42% ABV

Arette is an additive-free Tequila made by brothers Eduardo and Jaime Orendain in the town of Tequila, Jalisco (Los Valles). But additive-free (and very well priced) doesn’t mean you’re dealing with yet another small-time producer: on the contrary, NOM 1109 is one of the most modern facilities around. And yet, the Orendains manage to give their Tequilas a great character.

• Arette Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1109) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Arette’s signature double-distilled blanco presents an aroma with delicate citrus zest and black pepper woven coaxing out an aroma of herbal, earthy cooked agave. The palate is crisp and vibrant with lime and peppery agave with a gentle sweetness cut by the body’s mineral backbone. The finish is smooth and warming with white pepper and roasted agave.

• Arette Gran Clase Extra Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1109) — $42 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This artisan single-barrel expression is a limited release bottled from extra añejo tequila aged 4 years in an ex-bourbon barrel. The nose is defiantly well oaked with floral roasted agave complimented by barrel spice and a hint of tropical fruit. The palate is rich and unctuous with roasted agave and white pepper once again subdued by deeper barrel notes of cinnamon, caramel, and nutty cloves. The finish is bittersweet and creamy with a warm spicy pepper note.

Casa Dragones is the brainchild of Bertha Gonzalez Nieves, first woman to receive the title of Maestra Tequilera, who partnered with MTV founder and iHeart CEO Bob Pittman in 2009 to create the most exclusive Tequila available in the US market. They have succeeded for sure, but what got the brand famous for in its early days is the Joven, a blend of silver and añejo tequilas with an amazing silky texture! The distillery contracted for making it is Destileria Leyros located in Tequila, Los Valles (NOM 1489). Production adheres to the modern standards of efficiency: sulphuric acid to hydrolyze the inulin, diffuser, column distillation…

• Casa Dragones Añejo (NOM 1489, Tequila 'San Miguel de Allende') — $63 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This añejo expression fittingly sees Casa Dragones’ uber-filtered, pure tequila aged in a meticulously crafted selection of new American oak and new French oak barrels for 1 year, before carefully marrying and bottling. The resulting añejo emits an aroma of oaked agave and caramel. The palate is smooth and crisp with more oak spice notes harmonizing with white

pepper and roasted agave notes. The finish is herbaceous and spicy with a. delicate hint of spicy agave.

• Casa Dragones Blanco (NOM 1489, Tequila 'San Miguel de Allende') — $33 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
The flagship crystal clear blanco presents with a delicately bright aroma of grapefruit and green apple above an herbaceous undertone. The palate is clean and delicate with a semi-sweet agave character. The finish is crisp and bright with a lingering citric sweetness and a hint of toasted almond.

• Casa Dragones Reposado Mizunara (Tequila, NOM 1489, Mizunara Cask Matured) — $55 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This reposado expression was rested for nearly a year in custom Mizunara casks before bottling, earning a distinct sandalwood note on the nose that deepens complex notes of citrus and oak. The palate is smooth and floral with notes of apricot and butterscotch handily complimenting enduring oak-spiced agave. The finish is long and herbal with warm notes of woody roasted coffee beans.

• Casa Dragones Joven (Tequila, NOM 1489) — $123 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
The ‘original’ Casa Dragones, a blend of silver and extra añejo Tequilas, filtered to remove maturation color. Very elegant and a pioneer offering in the ultra premium Tequila landscape.

• Casa Noble (Tequila, NOM 1137) French oak barrels — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Cascahuin is a stop you want to make when leaving Guadalajara and heading to the town of Tequila! Your El Arenal break in Los Valles will reward you beyond your expectations: a sense of place (the agave is harvested right around there) at a very decent price! The company (NOM 1123) has 2 lines: one, produced in greater volumes, is made with modern equipments and efficiency in mind; the other, with a smaller output, is a reflection of the past, with traditional ways and equipments: brick ovens, tahona, roller mill…but both lines are worth the trip! The Rosales family is very active in the promotion of real, additive-free, terroir-driven (and sustainable farming practices) tequilas.

• Cascahuin Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1123) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
11 Brix is a unique tribute to traditional and conte portray tequila production that blends together blanco tequilas fermented in stainless steel, cement, and hand-crafted wooden fermentation tanks. The resulting blanco presents very strong agave notes on the nose that are complemented by fresh ground pepper and a hint of lemon peel. The palate is similarly dominated by roasted agave with sweet, caramelized fruit undertones and a slightly briny vegetal note. The finish is dry and spicy with a delicate wooded note and lasting mineral texture.

• Clase Azul — Gold (Tequila, NOM 1595) — $262 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Clase Azul's show stopping joven blends unaided blanco stock married with añejo stock aged in American oak and finished in PX sherry casks and reposado stock aged in French oak. The tequila has an aroma of its slow cooked agave roots and citrus peel with roasted nuts. The palate is decadent and smooth with dark chocolate tones and hints of orange marmalade with oak and ginger notes, with a subtle wisp of smoke on the finish.

• Codigo 1530 Reposado (Tequila, NOM 1616) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Confianza is made at NOM 1414, the Feliciano Vivanco distillery in Arandas (Los Altos), Jalisco…the same facility where Siembra Azul and Yéyo are made, and this pedigree alone should give you enough 'confidence' to try it! Estate agave, traditional piña cooking in brick ovens, fiber-free wild fermentation, classical music…

• Confianza Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1414, Family-Owned) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Confianza's tequila is serenaded with classical music during its long 5 to 9 day fermentation period, vibrating the spirit to a frequency encouraging more efficient conversion of sugars to alcohol before double distillation. The aroma is dominated by roasted agave with a considered note of lime zest and a hint of jasmine. The palate is clean and smooth with a gentle sweetness and hint of pepper that gently underscore the mineral-lined agave-forward body. The finish shows delicate cinnamon and black pepper. One of the top 10 blancos available in the US! Very complex and intriguing nose with a delicate and bright palate. This is a blanco you sip, as mixing it in a cocktail or adding ice to it would prevent proper display of its great character.

Don Julio is Diageo's Tequila jewel since 2014 after giving up Bushmills Irish whiskey to Cuervo for the entirety of the Atotonilco el Alto-based Tequila maker! But before Don Julio got to be the #1 Tequila brand in value, it was just a great quality small time Tequila. Founded by Don Julio Gonzalez-Frausto Estrada in 1942 at age 17 as a small distillery that would eventually be called 'la Primavera', his Tres Magueyes brand turned into Don Julio when his sons convinced him to give his name to his Tequila as he was turning 60 in 1985! Almost 100 years after his birth, the Don Julio Tequilas are getting hard to come by as allocations have become the norm. Located in Los Altos of Jalisco, NOM 1449 is killing it!

• Don Julio Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1449) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
An icon of the tequila industry, this spirit reflects its prestige and heritage of double distilled, clean, unaged blanco tequila. The nose is bright and crisp with lemon peel and grapefruit informing the agave. The palate is oily and smooth with citric brightness sweetening the agave forward body. The finish is light and delicate with refreshing cucumber notes and a hint of tropical fruit.

• Don Julio Tequila Reposado (Tequila, NOM 1449) — $27 — 80 proof / 40% ABV NOM

1449

• Don Julio Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1449, 18 Months) — $31 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This añejo expression was aged for 18 months in an ex-bourbon barrel, earning a caramel-sweet note on the nose that complements the fruit-forward highland terroir agave aroma. The palate is creamy and silky with notes of pear and apricot that work with floral citrus notes to illuminate a complex and peppery roasted agave profile that mellows into a long oaky finish with a hint of cinnamon.

• Don Julio 70 Añejo Cristalino (Tequila, NOM 1449) — $39 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This special edition añejo was crafted to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Don Julio tequila distilling, and it was the very first 'Cristalino' tequila ever produced. The añejo aged 18 months in white American oak before being carefully charcoal filtered to remove impurities and restore the clean, crystal-clear hue of a blanco. The result is an impossibly smooth tequila with delicate vanilla and citrus on the nose before a rounded and rich body with notes of caramel and lemon with just a hint of oak spice. The finish is smooth and reserved with a hint of pepper and lemon zest.

• Don Vicente Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1579, Felipe Camarena, Los Altos) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
A contemporary blanco that takes pride in its traditional techniques, this spirit puts forward an aroma that brings mineral notes suggesting both fresh and roasted agave, with a grassy herbaceous quality and delicate sweetness. The body is roasted agave-forward with cracked peppercorns and a mingy vegetal quality shining through. Measured sweetness and citrus give way to a clean finish with lingering pepper.

• El Luchador Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1517, Los Altos) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
El Luchador’s blanco tequila is distilled from 100% organically grown agave and bottled in a uniquely textured recycled bottle. The aroma is herbal and peppery with a bright vegetal note evoking fresh agave. The palate is oily and rounded with a baking spice bittersweet quality and a hint of ripe pineapple. The finish is clean and mellow with pepper and a delicate hint of grassy salinity.

El Tesoro is a brand you can never go wrong with! Each mark is simply beautifully Made, and that’s because Carlos Camarena is the one crafting it, like Tequila Ocho and Tapatio! The estate grown agave is processed at la Alteña distillery at Los Altos in Jalisco (NOM 1139): traditional ovens, tahona-milled, fermentation with fibers in open air wooden vats, and always additive-free! Throughout the range, there is a sense of balance and precision, with just the right amount of everything in it…and at the right price. We’re so fond of el Tesoro, we got to pick a barrel when visiting the distillery right before Covid hit!

• El Tesoro Añejo 'Don Felipe' (Tequila, NOM 1139, 2–3 Years) — $32 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
El Tesoro ages their añejo for 2 to 3 years in ex-bourbon casks before bottling, imparting a measured oaky vanilla note on the nose that blends beautifully with floral jasmine and gentle pepper of the roasted agave. The palate is waxy and rich with sweet agave complimented by floral citrus and oak spice. The finish is light with floral tea and a hint of honey.

• El Tesoro Reposado 'Don Felipe' (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $29 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
El Tesoro Reposado rests 9 to 11 months in ex-bourbon casks prior to bottling, granting a smoky oak character that accents the roasted agave citrus notes with caramel, vanilla, and pepper. The body is robust as the smoky oak spice and clean, roasted agave notes battle for dominance. The finish is peppery and spicy with a subtle undertone of oak.

• El Tesoro Blanco 'Platinum' (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
A 'super' blanco, if you will, this tequila was bottled within 24 hours of distillation, offering an unadulterated window into unaged tequila. The nose is fittingly dominated by fresh agave with a minty herbal quality and a touch of lime zest. The palate is spicy and bold with a reserved minerality and a hint of sweetness adding complexity. The finish suggests roasted agave with a delicate, peppery undertone.

• El Tesoro Extra Añejo 'Don Felipe' (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $53 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This extra añejo expression spends 4-5 years maturing in ex-bourbon casks. The aroma is richly layered with bittersweet coffee and cinnamon notes paired with citrus and browned butter. The palate is complex with a delicate background of roasted agave letting through notes of dried fruit and rich dark chocolate. The finish is warm and oaky with a hint of fresh black pepper.

• El Tesoro 'Mundial Collection' Yamazaki Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $61 — 84 proof /42% ABV

• El Tesoro — Añejo Mundial Collection, Knob Creek Finish (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $40 — 40% ABV
This experimental, limited time release sees Tesoro’s premium añejo tequila finished with a full 12 month rerack in a charred, 7-year-seasoned barrel shipped from Knob Creek distillery. The aroma remains cooked-agave forward with a grassy, vegetal kick up front and a subtle note of oaky peach behind. The palate is creamy and lush with grassy agave complimented by black pepper and a delicate chocolate undertone amid a complex, oaky body.

• El Tesoro — Añejo Mundial Collection, Laphroaig Finish (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $40 — 40% ABV
This Mundial expression sees Tesoro’s añejo finished in a cask sent from Laphroaig Distillery where it previously aged the famed 10 year old single malt. The peated scotch-seasoned cask imparts a delicate smoke over the nose that shines in a complex aroma of agave and salty sea air with notes of caramel and cardamom. The palate is bold and layered, with sweet

butterscotch and vanilla notes paired with oaky cooked agave and peated salinity that lingers through a warm, aromatic finish.

• Espolón Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1440, Destiladora San Nicolás) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Espolón Reposado (Tequila, NOM 1440, Destiladora San Nicolás) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Espolón matures their reposado in custom virgin American oak barrels that are lightly charred before the tequila rests for 3 to 5 months. The aroma is decadently complex with spicy cinnamon clashing with fudge and caramel over a mellow roasted agave hue. The palate is balanced and light with citrus and caramel again washing over a cooked agave body. The finish is dry with warming pepper notes.

• Espolón 'Cristalino' (Tequila, NOM 1440, Destiladora San Nicolás) — $26 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Esplolón Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1440, Destiladora San Nicolás) — $26 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Esplolón Extra Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1440, Destiladora San Nicolás) — $29 — 80 proof 40% ABV

Fuenteseca is unlike any other Tequila brand: you're dealing with aged agave spirits, but not just for a couple of months…some are aged over 20 years! The story goes like this: Enrique Fonseca and his father were supplying large Tequila makers with the agave they grew as farmers, but when the contracts ended, they found themselves with a lot of piñas on their hands…hence the purchase of La Tequileña distillery in 1990 (NOM 1146) from Bacardi, featuring an unusual column still along with a more traditional pot still. From then on, a dual profile was created and Enrique decided to apply the fine spirits (Scotch, Cognac) technique of long aging to his Tequilas. With an underground facility to guarantee a slow maturation process, his babies have been reaching great ages, and to the contrary of what Tequila purists think of non-blancos, they are purely astonishing! And additive-free.

• Fuentesca 'Reserva' Extra Añejo 7 year (Cosecha 2014, NOM 11467) year — $90 — 83.4 proof / 41.7% ABV

• Fuentesca 'Reserva' Extra Añejo 9 year (Cosecha 2011, NOM 11467) year — $108 — 84.6 proof / 42.3% ABV

• Fuentesca 'Cosecha' Blanco Huerta Singular (Cosecha 2018, NOM 1146) — $45 — 89.6 proof / 44.8% ABV

• Fuenteseca — Reserva, 15 Years (Cosecha 1998, NOM 1146) — $190 — 40% ABV
This expression features Fuenteseca's premium spirit rested in a cooled aging room with an earthen floor for 15 years in a combination of about 73% ex-bourbon barrels, about 24% casks used to mature California red wine, and about 3% dark French oak, with a single Chardonnay cask rounding out the lineup. The agave was harvested in 1998 following pronounced rainfall from El Niño the prior year, producing a low sugar content agave grown in water-logged soil. This perfect storm of craft production and natural phenomena produced a one of a kind spirit with a peppery, agave forward aroma deepened by oak spice, subtle citrus, and caramel. The palate is spicy and complex with cooked agave complimented by notes of dried cherry and a subtly minty earthy quality amid a chocolatey body. The finish is long and warm with oaky caramel and spice and a subtle minerality.

• Fuenteseca — Reserva, 9 Years (Cosecha 2003, NOM 1146) — $135 — 43% ABV
This delectable extra añejo showcases Fuenteseca's dedication to craft agave distillation and aging. A unique experimental expression making use of double-column stills left over from the site at NOM 1146's 1980s tenants, Bacardi, and traditional pot stills used for agave. The combination of clean, creamy spirit produced by the rum stills and the earthy agave-forward profile produced by the pot still allows a refined tequila suitable to long cask aging. This tequila utilizes 80% stock distilled in Coffey double column stills vatted with 20% pot-distilled agave before aging. Matured in a cool, subterranean room at Fuenteseca distillery, 85% of the tequila was aged in American white oak casks that previously held red wine, with the remaining 15% aged in dark French oak, married after 9 years' maturation. The nose is peppery and sweet with notes of caramel and allspice. The palate creamy and smooth, with an agave throughline informed by delicate fruit and caramel, and hints of vanilla and woody pipe tobacco. The finish lingers with a measured mineral quality.

• Fortaleza Blanco tahona ground (NOM 1493) —$25— 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Fortaleza Blanco Still Strength tahona ground (NOM 1493) —$29— 92 proof / 46% $37

• Fortaleza Reposado tahona ground (NOM 1493) —$31— 80 proof / 40% ABV

Herradura is Brown-Forman's Tequila venture since 2007 and has a rich history going back to 1870. In Mexico, its other brand, el Jimador, is #1. The distillery is located near Guadalajara, in the little town of Amatitan, Jalisco, but the agave is sourced from Los Altos and Los Valles alike. Traditional clay ovens and wild fermentation may explain the specific flavor profile of Herradura. The 'horseshoe' distillery (NOM 1122) might bring luck to those who indulge in the brand…especially the Seleccion Suprema!

• Herradura Añejo (25 Months, Tequila, NOM 1122) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Herradura's añejo is aged a full 25 months in American white oak barrels, practically doubling the industry standard for añejo expressions. The nose is dominated by slow cooked agave, with layered toasted oak caramel, and dried fruit notes arising. The body is smooth and silky with a delicate sweetness that coats the palate ahead of pronounced, peppery oak spice and bittersweet herbal tea notes. The finish is long and creamy with lingering oak tannins and clean agave.

• Hornitos Añejo reserve (Tequila, NOM 1102) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Jose Cuervo…most Tequila aficionados will shun the brand (in spite of how Steely Dan or the Dexter show might make you feel about it), and rightfully so! It is associated with wrong decisions, bad hangovers following rounds and rounds of shots (salt and skin licking added), and behaviors we would otherwise never have…but the Cuervo brand now includes high quality sippers and deserves our attention. As opposed to the 'especial' line, which is not 'real' Tequila ('mixtos') to most of us as it includes 49% of sugar cane spirit and lots of additives, the 'tradicional' and 'reserva de la familia' lines are legit Tequilas. The Beckmann family (Proximo Spirits) owns Jose Cuervo, with a distillate made in the town of Tequila (Jalisco) at La Rojeña (NOM 1122).

• Jose Cuervo Platino 'Reserva de la Familia' organic (Tequila, NOM 1122) — $29 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Jose Cuervo's premium blanco tequila is rested for 60 days in stainless steel tanks, allowing a gentle, brief aging period without any cask influence. The aroma is peppery with a lime juice note and a hint of coconut. The palate is smooth and layered with a key lime sour-sweetness and notes of baking spice, white pepper, and herbal lemongrass, finishing clean and smooth with a lingering agave note.

• Jose Cuervo Extra Añejo 'Reserva de la Familia' (Tequila, NOM 1122) — $75 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This extra añejo is aged for at least three years in a combination of American and French oak barrels. The nose is welcomed by warm wood spice and caramel-informed agave. The palate is again initially dominated by barrel spice, with cooked agave and dark caramel toffee bringing undertones of anise and black pepper. The finish lingers with aromatic caramelized sugar notes.

• LALO Blanco (Los Altos, Tequila, NOM 1468) — $28 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
LALO bakes their fully matured agave in traditional brick ovens and ferments their spirit using champagne yeast, imbuing the spirit with a delicately complex aroma of cooked agave cut with sweet potato and minty, earthy minerality. The body is light and crisp with notes of green apple, blooming lilies, and peppery, spicy anise. The finish is dry and clean with lingering citrus and agave.

Lunazul is Heaven Hill's partner distillery in Mexico, and a very impressive facility, both quite modern and attached to sustainable practices. Tierra de Agave (NOM 1513) is located right outside of the town of Tequila, Jalisco and was founded by Francisco Beckman (of Cuervo fame) in 2002. Hands down the best value Tequilas on the market. Lunazul translates into 'blue moon' and the howling wolf on the bottle refers to the partnership Tierra de Agave has with the non-profit organization Naturalia, which amongst many other projects, works at protecting the Mexican Grey Wolves population.

• Lunazul Blanco 'To the Spirit of the Wolf' (Tequila, NOM 1513) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Founded by Francisco Beckmann Sr. following his selling his stake in Jose Cuervo, Lunazul's commitment to artisan excellence is visible through their expert jimadores select the NOM's choicest blue weber agave plants and hand sculpt the piñas before baking, mashing, distilling, and hand sealing this blanco bottle. The nose offers roasted peppers and almonds with a citrusy, fruity undertone with a mellow fresh agave hint. The agave is more pronounced on the palate with green apple and mineral notes accented by a white pepper kick. The finish is dry with lingering agave and lime.

• Lunazul Tequila Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1513) — $27 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Mayenda Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1440, Casa San Nicolás) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Mayenda sets itself apart through experimental techniques for amplifying agave flavor without introducing additives or artificial flavorings. This is achieved through a unique intervention between the first and second distillations, adding a mash of miel and roasted agave back to the distillate before final distillation. The result is a complex aroma of honeyed cinnamon and orange blossom and an impossibly rich, silky body. The palate is layered with bittersweet baking spice and herbal pepper informing a robust, caramelized agave note that mellows into a gingery, citrusy, dry finish.

• Patrón Reposado (Tequila, NOM 1492) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Patrón is an icon of clean, crisp, traditional tequila; baking in traditional clay ovens and blending separate mostos utilizing both a traditional Tahona and modern rolling mills to crush their agave (only the highest sugar content-yielding agave grown at NOM 1492 are selected), marrying only after double distillation in Patrón's meticulously designed copper stills. The reposado is rested in ex-bourbon casks, French oak, and Hungarian oak for at least 4 months, the aroma adopting a sweet vanilla stone that deepens the earthy agave and delicate crushed pepper notes. The palate is peppery and intense with a leading note of slow roasted agave, opening up to delicate hints of ripe orchard fruit and buttery citrus notes. The palate is clean and measured with a lingering white pepper note.

• Patron Añejo Tequila Sherry Cask (Tequila, NOM 1492) — $27— 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Patron Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1492) — $30— 80 proof /40% ABV

• Patron Extra Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1492) — $37— 80 proof / 40% ABV

San Matias (NOM 1103) is a Highland Tequila made in Ojo de Agua in Los Altos de Jalisco by the Gonzalez family. Responsible for making Corazon for Sazerac and the easy-to-love Pueblo Viejo, San Matias is not only one of those old (Don Delfino Gonzalez started it in 1886) distilleries anchored in tradition, but also still highly praised and consumed by Mexican connoisseurs back there.

• San Matías 'Gran Reserva' Extra Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1103) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

This celebrated expression was released as an extra añejo before the Consejo Regulador del Tequila recognized extra añejo as a category of tequila. A pioneer of aged agave spirits, San Matías aged their blanco for 36 months in French oak barrels, earning a vanilla-caramel sweet note on the nose that deepens into plums, cinnamon, and agave earthiness. The palate is silky and light with prevalent barrel spice and black pepper notes underscored by toasted walnut, dried fruit, and roasted agave before a brief, nutty finish.

• San Matías 'Rey Sol' Extra Añejo (French Oak, Tequila, NOM 1103) — $103 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

This ultra-premium expression sees San Matías' tequila aged at least five years in French oak, the aroma leads with barrel spice but underneath are complex notes of dried cherry and chocolate pudding. The palate is luxurious and balanced with notes of dark plum and honeyed fresh pastry amplified by subtle black pepper and buttery vanilla. The finish is long and warm with oaky spice complimented by butterscotch sweetness.

• San Matías — Añejo, 135 Year Anniversary — $162 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

The very first blend in its history was composed to celebrate 135 years of distilling at Casa de San Matías. This limited edition, ultra-premium tequila is a vatting of Rey Sol Extra Añejo, Tahona Añejo, Gran Reserva Añejo, Pueblo Viejo Añejo, and the very last barrel of the discontinued Orgullo line añejo. The nose features notes of vanilla, dried fruit, toasted nuts, and a hint of pepper, ahead of a buttery smooth palate with sweet notes of caramel and cherry accenting a decadent cooked agave note with a rich, chocolatey body. The finish is warm with gentle oak spice and a delicate, complex cinnamon sugar note. The bottle is hand crafted with 135 gems placed on the neck by Czech jewelers Preciosa.

Santanera is a Tequila brand that wants to make a splash: Kosher certified, organic, sustainable and additive-free. This is not the only one on the market, but when you know it is made in collaboration with Tres Mujeres (NOM 1466) and Cascahuín in el Arenal (NOM 1123), it adds to the pedigree! Pablo Lara founded the Santanera brand with one clear goal: sustainable farming practices, i.e. doing

it like it was done before Tequila became so popular in the US! Until his own distillery is ready to go, the agave plants he's been tending to are processed by 1466 and 1123 when fully mature.

• Santanera 'Tahona' Blanco (Kosher, NOM 1123) — $35 — 82 proof / 41% ABV
Master distiller Pablo Lara set out to produce a Tequila that honored traditional tequilero techniques and the natural terroir of Jalisco, while simultaneously engaging in ethical, sustainable, renewable agriculture and cultivation practices. To that end, Casa Santanera is the first geothermally heated distillery as they utilize gravity-fed rainwater collection to limit energy use, strictly follow the lunar cycle for the most optimal watering and growth periods to further limit water consumption, and they have committed to exclusively grow and distill from wild foraged seed-grown agave plants by the year 2050, a particularly costly and singular decision as cloned agave seeds become increasingly standard. This expression utilizes a traditional Tahona in the milling of the agave, preserving the agave's fibrous structure while crushing. The aroma is dominated by roasted agave with mineral undertones and a slight briny hint. The body is lush and creamy with sweet roasted agave and black pepper notes cut by baking spice and a delicate olive note. The dry finish warmly carries these aromas through with a lingering emphasis on agave and black pepper.

• Santanera 'Organic Terroir Siembra' Blanco (Kosher, NOM 1123) — $49 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
For this expression, Santanera planted a yard of organically grown agave in 2016 and set it aside for a single jima, harvested and distilled in batches 2 to 3 times in 2022 with just 1,886 bottles released. The aroma is earthy and peppery with a refined fresh agave note. The emphasis on mature, double distilled agave creates an opulently thick body with notes of cardamom spice and green tea seasoning the agave spine. The finish is velvety and dry with a refreshingly earthy vegetal note.

• Santanera 'Seleccion de Bosques' añejo (Kosher, NOM 1123) — $61 — 87.4 proof / 43.7% ABV

Siembra Azul is the brainchild of David Suro, a Philadelphia restaurateur with Mexican roots and a true passion for agave spirits. David pioneered the interest we have in the US in 'real Tequilas', those that speak of a place they come from and the people who made them. With a focus on terroir and sustainability in agricultural practices, Siembra Azul (spanish for 'blue sowing') and its Lowlands sibling Siembra Valles (Siembra Metl for Mezcal) have brought upfront key topics we need to pay attention to when consuming Tequila: proper compensations for the farmers, natural pollination, tamed oak influence during maturation, additive-free process, the importance of tradition…In the hands of the Vivanco

family, the distillery making Siembra Azul in Arandas (NOM 1414), uses classical music and Champagne yeast for fermentation! Kosher certification is a plus.

• Siembra Azul Blanco (Tequila, Kosher, NOM 1414) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
A premium Alto Highland tequila, the aroma is earthy with notes of grapefruit and mint accentuating pronounced cooked agave. The body is rounded and smooth with melon and baking spice contrasting with softer notes of cream soda and fresh grass against peppery roasted agave. The finish is light and sweet with a lingering licorice note.

• Siembra Azul 'Suro' reposado 10th anniversary (Tequila, Kosher, NOM 1414) — $32 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

Siembra Valles, part of the Siembra Spirits group held by David Suro, is dedicated to showing the best Tequilas the Lowlands can produce, under the mantra 'let mother nature do it'. Actually, Siembra Spirits has for umbrella motto 'the future of tradition'...David Suro works with the Rosales family of Cascahuin fame - NOM 1123 - to make incredible Tequilas from agave plants grown on the volcanic soils of el Arenal.

• Siembra Alteño Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1139) — $25 — 82 proof / 41% ABV

Siete Leguas is one of the few great Tequilas that can serve as a benchmark for the whole industry…true old fashioned process from harvest to bottling via classic 'orno' and 'tahona' and two runs in the copper pot still. The distillery is located in Jalisco, in 'los Altos' (NOM 1120) and has been a favorite of agave connoisseurs in the US for some time. Actually, there are two distilleries, this 'old school' one and a more modern facility, with a careful blending of both spirits before bottling or maturation. Unlike other star brands endorsed by celebrities and built up with flavorings and sweeteners, Siete Leguas remains family owned and additive-free. The brand takes its name from the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa's favorite horse 'Seven leagues', and is known by the previous generation of Tequila aficionados as being the distillery where Patron used to source its spirit…

• Siete Leguas Blanco (Tequila, NOM 1120) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Siete Leguas blends their tequilas from blanco produced at two distilleries, one with a traditional, mule pulled Tahona, and another with contemporary rolling mills. This results in a blanco benefiting from both old-style velvety texture and a clean, crisp new-school consistency that shines through with an aroma of orange blossoms and fresh agave with subtle fresh cut grass and rose perfume. The palate is silky and creamy with a drying effect and notes of cooked agave undercut by cooking herbs and a minty vegetal note. The notes continue revolving around a lingering, dry finish.

• Siete Leguas Reposado (Tequila, NOM 1120) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Rested at least 8 months in an ex-bourbon barrel, this reposado boasts an aroma of fresh and cooked agave with herbal tea and fresh fruit notes seeping through with a gentle hint of barrel spice. The body is warm and delicate with notes of caramel and prune adding depth the the agave backbone with a delicate touch of orange peel. The finish lingers with a slight drying quality and aromatic agave and prunes.

• Siete Leguas Reposado French Oak single barrel (Tequila, NOM 1120) — $29 — 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Siete Leguas Añejo (Tequila, NOM 1120) — $27 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
The Añejo expression is aged in white oak ex-bourbon barrels for at least 2 years, earning a rich caramel-vanilla tone that adds a complex sweetness to the aroma of barrel spiced roasted agave. The palate is warm and rounded with toasted oak, black pepper bite, and grapefruit acidity layered throughout the vanilla-sweet oaky agave. The finish is clean and sturdy with dominant black pepper harmonizing the complex flavors of the palate.

• Siete Leguas 'De Antaño' Extra Añejo (5 Years, NOM 1120) — $82 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This decadent extra añejo expression ages no less than 5 years in ex-bourbon casks. In spite of such aging, cooked agave remains the dominant aromatic note with considered barrel spice, honeyed fruit, and raisin notes. The palate is spicy and sweet with oaky caramel countering earthy black pepper and agave. The finish is warm and drying with a lingering wood spice and chalky mineral quality.

Tequila Ocho was created in 2008 by two of the most important people in the quality Tequila business: Carlos Camarena (Tapatio, el Tesoro) and Tequila Ambassador Tomas Estes. These passionate folks wanted to take the notion of Terroir to its full potential within the agave world. They work with ‘ranchos’ (fields/estates) and their rancheros who tend the blue agave fields in the Highlands of Jalisco, to bring single estate Tequilas that shine by their personalities and are the true reflection of the soil, the climate of this particular harvest year, and the unique ways these farmers handle the fields! NOM 1474; additive-free; matured in ex-Bourbon barrels.

• Tequila Ocho Plata (NOM 1474) — $23 — 80 proof / 40%ABV

Tapatio is yet another legendary Tequila brand! NOM 1139 is responsible for giving us such beauties as el Tesoro and this Tapatio! Behind the brands is the distillery itself, La Alteña in Jalisco, founded by Don Felipe Camarena. 80 after his great grandfather’s humble beginnings, Carlos Camarena works at maintaining the highest standards for Tequila possible, for the delight of our taste buds. Tapatio

was only a general hit in Mexico, but is increasingly being appreciated in the US, mainly since Excelencia was made available.

• Tapatio Blanco (NOM 1139) — $23 — 80 proof / 40%ABV

• Tapatio Reposado (NOM 1139) — $25 — 80 proof / 40%ABV

• Tapation Añejo (NOM 1139) — $29 — 80 proof / 40%ABV

• Volans Blanco (Additive-Free, NOM 1579, Los Altos) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Volans uses not two but three water sources for their distillery, acquiring a refreshing minerality unrivaled among distilleries, as well as a bespoke push led mechanical 20,000 LB Tahona to mill their roasted agave. The blanco expression presents an aroma of earthy cooked agave, fresh hay, and orange blossom. The palate is smooth and rounded with black pepper and sweet agave cut by gentle brine and herbal mint. The finish is robust and dry with sweet agave and black pepper accented by lime zest.

• Volans Reposado (Additive-Free, NOM 1579, Los Altos) — $31 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This reposado expression was rested for at least 10 months in ex-bourbon casks, casting a light caramel-baking-spice tone over the agave and ripe pear notes. The body is silky and peppery with notes of stone fruit and oaky, bittersweet coffee. The finish is smooth and round with a wooded honey note.

• Yéyo Blanco (Champagne Yeast, NOM 1414) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
This champagne yeast-fermented blanco demonstrates Yéyo's craft distillation techniques with an aroma that suggests roasted agave and strong citrus notes, with a body that is silky and peppery, seasoned by cinnamon and nutmeg. The finish is buttery with an oily texture and a refreshing mineral quality.

MEZCAL

Amarás, or 'Amores' as it is known outside of the US, seems to be a declaration of love to the mexican culture of mezcal production…dedicated to preserving the ancient traditions and guaranteeing the sustainability of agave farming for the next generations. Strongly anchored in Oaxaca, the company (NOM-0239X) plants 5 baby agaves for one that's harvested for Mezcal processing, and each bottle tells who made it and where. Traçability, Mexican heritage, organic farming…hard to not indulge!

• Amarás Espadín Joven ‘Invierno 2026’ (Mezcal, Espadín, Oaxaca) — $23 — 82 proof / 41% ABV
Mezcal Amarás is committed to artisanal, traditional mezcal production and sustainable agave cultivation practices, partnering with the WWF for conservation and water retention programs that led to Amarás being named the first carbon neutral mezcal in 2021. They utilize a variety of stills, mills, and Tahona in their expressions produced with artisanal and rigidly prescriptive techniques from cultivation to distillation, partnering with over 20 maestro mezcaleros to produce a line of spirits that exemplify the breadth of flavor and historical practices that mezcal offers. This expression is distilled from Tahona-milled, mesquite-roasted Espadín agave that was harvested after at least 8 years of cultivation. The aroma is delicately smoky with a vegetal mintiness. The body is soft and sweet with notes of brown sugar and orange zest accentuated by a delicate peppery bite and fresh agave. The finish is smooth and warm with a lingering mesquite note.

• Amarás Cupreata Joven ‘Primavera 2026’ (Mezcal, Cupreata, Oaxaca) — $23 — 86 proof / 43% ABV
This novel expression highlights the rare Cupreata agave, found only at particular elevation on mountainside slopes in the Rio Balsas basin, distinguished for its remarkably low sugar content. The aroma is smoky and sweet with a dominant mesquite note that is underscored by delicate corn and apricot. The palate is robust and slick with peppery smoke and a citrusy papaya note cut by a minty fresh vegetal kick. The finish is earthy with a smoked paprika note.

• Amarás Espadín Reposado ‘Otoño 2025’ (Mezcal, Espadín, Oaxaca) —$24— 80 proof / 40% ABV

• Cinco Sentidos 'La Colección Mixteca' Blanco Edición 4 (Agave Spirit, Mixteca region Oaxaca/Puebla) — $51 — 94.4 proof / 47.2% ABV
Cinco Sentidos is celebrated for their curated selection of mezcals bottled from independent distillers employing timer honored production methods to produce premium mezcals. This expression from the line’s Mixteca region series, comes from mad scientist/maestro mezcalero Delfino Tobón Mejía’s massive, 15 year old agaves known as Blanco, and this batch was his first attempt at fermenting and distilling this species in his custom, handmade three plated still, exponentially intensifying distillation. The aroma is decadent and robust with earthy notes of smoky roasted agave and fallen leaves accented by pickled berry sour sweetness. The body is light and balanced with the agave core accented by tart cherry and sweet candied grape notes with a measured, smoky finish.

• Cinco Sentidos 'La Colección Mixteca' Pizorra Edición 4 (Agave Spirit, Mixteca region) — $51 — ~93.4 proof / approx. 46.7% ABV
This Mixteca release is distilled from wild cultivated Pizarro agave, slow roasted over tlahuicole firewood in an underground conical pit oven for four days and distilled in maestro mezcalero Delfino’s bespoke triple-plated still. The aroma is fresh and floral with delicate undertones of cherry candy and peppery cinnamon. The palate is chalky and rounded with light acidic notes

of grape soda and gingerbread with a reserved smoky note and a sharp peppermint undertone.

• Cinco Sentidos Pechuga de Mole Poblano (Agave Spirit, Mixteca region) — $51 — 100.2 proof / 50.1% ABV

Del Maguey started it all! What was a California-specific curiosity until the early 2000's turned into a general north American love affair. Granted it started with Tequila, and Mezcal followed, but it did thanks to Ron Cooper, a lucky TriBeCa artist who fell for this wild spirit when passing through Mexico in the early 90's. Before selling his Del Maguey brand (NOM-041X) to Pernod Rocard, he opened the routes to remote villages and their mezcaleros for the delight of distributors, brand creators, but above all, ourselves! These 'single villages' from Oaxaca where the Zapotec culture remains strong, were put forward on the front label and made the whole world realize how authentic, terroir driven and more specifically micro climate-focused an agave eau-de-vie could be.

• Del Maguey San Luis del Rio Espadín (Mezcal, Espadín, Oaxaca) — $32 — 94 proof / 47% ABV

For over 30 years, Del Maguey has been sharing their 'single village mezcals' with the world, each release is distilled by individual family producers is Oaxaca and Puebla that have been making mezcal for centuries. This mezcal was distilled from Espadín agave grown in the valley above the Rio Hormiga Colorada in San Luis del Rio. The aroma is bright, citrusy, and tropical with a faint smoky fog and an earthy mineral hint of rain washed stone. The palate is heavy and layered with notes of roasted pepper and sweet-salty roasted nuts with a smoky backend and a hint of lime.

• Del Maguey 'Pechuga' — Santa Catarina Minas (Mezcal Artesanal, Espadín Pechuga, Oaxaca) — $67 — 98 proof / 49% ABV

This expression, distilled from Espadín in Santa Catarina Minas, is a pechuga distilled with a skinless chicken breast. Pechuga is traditionally a celebratory spirit, with fruits and spices added depending on the occasion or holiday, and a distillation period where meat, usually poultry but contemporary mezcalero are increasingly exploring the boundaries of tradition, is suspended above the boiling spirit, filtering out harsher flavors white the steaming distillate escapes to the condenser, being passing through the meat with portions rendering back out as it cooks. This process not only smoothens the mezcal's wild array of tastes, but imparts an unctuous mouthfeel as the distillate separates from the collagen produced by cooking meat. Del Maguey's mezcal presents an aroma of barbecue grilled banana and a drying tarragon note. The palate is decadent and spicy with notes of prosciutto and roasted pine nuts. There is a delicate orange cream pop sweetness with a faint bittersweet licorice note.

• Del Maguey 'Papalomé' — Fernando Caballero Cruz, NOM-0120X (Mezcal Artesanal, A. potatorum, Puebla) — $45 — 90 proof / 45% ABV

This expression is produced from wild foraged Papalomé from the outskirts of Puebla, distilled by maestro mezcalero Fernando Caballero Cruz in his proprietary steel still and clay condenser with bamboo piping. The aroma is leathery and peppery with a delicate sweetness and a hint of clay fired corn tortilla. The palate is rich and layered with meaty black olive umami notes mellowed by gentle smoke and herbal, earthy rosemary. A hint of ripe blueberry arises before a mellow, ashy finish with another whisper of smoke.

• Don Mateo Cupreata Blanco 'el Limón' (Mezcal Artesanal, Michoacán) — $25 — 92 proof / 46% ABV
This expression is distilled from agave carefully cultivated in the Vinata Don Mateo's agave growing room before being supplanted into the mossy, sandy, clay-lined soil of the forested Rio Balsas highlands. The aroma portrays fresh agave with grapefruit citrus and a bittersweet sambuca note. The palate is dry and herbal with woody pine needles and cooked agave contoured by baking spice and sweet caramel.

• Don Mateo Pechuga — Cupreata (Mezcal Artesanal, Michoacán) — $35 — 90 proof / 45% ABV
This special release masterminded by maestra mezcalera Delia Vargas Vieyra sees mezcal fermented in oak vats distilled in pine and Oyamel (Mexican fir) stills with mashed Tejacote crab apples, cinnamon, cloves and almonds added, and venison, rabbit, turkey breast, and Iguana meat suspended before the condenser. The nose is slightly sweet with a delicate citrus tone and a hard-to-place roasted meat note. The palate is silky and smooth with bright, ripe pineapple and smoky grilling notes that texture and shape but never overtake a strong roasted agave body. The finish is delicate and peppery with a lingering cinnamon note.

• Del Maguey Minero Santa Catarina Minas —100 proof / 50%ABV $28

• Del Maguey Chichicapa — 96 proof / 48%ABV $28

• Del Maguey Tobalá — 90 proof / 45%ABV $28

El Jolgorio, which translates in 'revelry', refers to the many festivals taking place in the remote mountain villages of Oaxaca. The brand works with a multitude of families to source true mezcals, the most limited quantities of which end up in black glass bottles. Generally speaking, el Jolgorio (NOM-098X) releases small amounts in limited batches and connoisseurs jump on them. Each bottle gives you all the info you need to get acquainted with the liquid and identify the family behind it.

• El Jolgorio Ignacio Parada Karwinskii — $59 — 105 proof / 52.5 %ABV

• El Jolgorio Pablo Vasquez Garcia Barril — $51 — 95.8 proof / 47.9% ABV

• Fidencio Pechuga de pollo — Espadín, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) NOM 015X — $32 — 95.6 proof / 47.8% ABV

Los Amantes is part of the first generation of Mezcales to be widely available in the US, and more specifically in the east coast. In a way, the brand paved the way for these Mexican beauties to be accepted as high quality spirits; the designation of NOM-O01X speaks for itself. They were also amongst the first ones to dare aging them too! And what a success…even purists recognize their reposado and añejo are really well made. Made from 100% espadín the old fashioned way with a tahona for crushing the traditional pit oven cooked piñas and distilled in copper stills by Eric Hernandez in Tlacolula.

• Los Amantes Joven — Espadín, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $23 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
Los Amantes is a stalwart of the Oaxacan mezcal scene, with 100% of their mezcal produced from Espadín agave grown on the grounds of Los Amantes Distileria, cultivated and distilled by hand. The joven is a uniquely triple distilled expression, earning a clean, smoky aroma with citrus and cinnamon, and a smooth, creamy body dominated by caramel spiced agave. The finish is lush with delicate fruit and smoke.

• Los Amantes Reposado — Espadín, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $25 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
The reposado expression sees double distilled Los Amantes mezcal rest at least 6 months in french oak casks, earning a golden hue and smoky vanilla tones and honeyed sandalwood on the nose. The palate is buttery and smooth with sweet smoky agave and notes of cardamom and cinnamon. The palate is peppery and dry with barrel spice.

• Los Amantes Añejo — Espadín, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $31 — 80 proof / 40% ABV
The añejo expression is aged for at least 18 months in lightly toasted American white oak and French oak barrels. The aroma is complex with a prevalent white pepper note that weaves through toasted coconut, violets, roasted agave and a mellow vanilla sweetness. The body is thick and smooth with peppery baking spice complimented by smoky oak and candied orange peels. The finish remains peppery with a warming gingerbread note.

Los Nahuales (or ‘Los Danzantes’ as it is known outside of the US) is made in Santiago Matatlan at Déstileria Los Danzantes (NOM-O14X) just south of Oaxaca city by Karina Abad and Joel Antonio in the most traditional way possible, with the ground pit oven (mesquite wood used), the horse-drawn tahona milling process, classical music-augmented fermentation in pine vats, and double distilled in copper pots…The brand is responsible for getting a lot of people excited about Mezcal 20 years ago in the US!

• Los Nahuales Añejo — Espadín, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $34 — 92 proof / 46% ABV
Though they have begun cultivating agave on their own distillery's grounds, only the choicest, mature agave purchased from jimadores in adjacent campos del agave are roasted once a week at the petite distillery's conical earthen pit oven and milled with a tahona. This añejo expression is distilled from roasted Espadín agave and aged at least 16 months in a combination of majority French oak barrels, with less than 20% of the mezcal aging in white American oak. The aroma has spicy notes of clove and cinnamon rounded by smoke and sweet caramel. The palate is smooth and decadent with sweet agave and rich, caramel sweetness in a custardy body with a warm, peppery, smoky finish.

• Los Nahuales Joven — Espadín & Coyote, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $23 — 94 proof / 47% ABV
This unique release is a blend of 70% Coyote agave and 30% Espadín agave, the nose is peppery and sweet with a cinnamon candy note and mellow roasted agave. The body is slick and dry with lemony-sweet sour notes and a peppery smoke note that continues through an astringent finish. The mellow background of Espadín allows the rarely utilized Coyote agave to shine through.

• Los Nahuales 'Método Antiguo' — Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $25 — 104.8 proof / 52.4% ABV
This expression honors the 'ancient' methods of mezcal distillation, namely the reintroduction of 'tails,' nutrient and ethanol rich mash beer that was separated between distillations, used rather than water to dilute the mezcal before the final distillation, gently increasing the spirits proof and adding natural compounds rarely utilized in modern mezcal production. The nose is sweet and bright with candied cherry and earthy clay notes reigning over a faint mesquite smoke. The body is rich and light with notes of freshly baked cake and ripe apple beautifully paired with a peppery kick and herbal spearmint bite. The finish lingers with a hint of smoke and lime zest.

Los Vecinos del Campo is a young brand (2018, NOM-O96X) involving 2 big names of the spirits world: the Sazerac company (you know, the the great whiskeys and so many other good things) and Casa San Matías of Tequila fame, under the expertise of Carmen Villarreal of CSM. Quite traditional in its approach of production, the brand uses the distillates of 10 mezcaleros from the Valles Centrales region of Oaxaca.

• Los Vecinos Joven — Espadín, Oaxaca (Mezcal Artesanal) — $23 — 90 proof / 45% ABV
Distilled from Espadín agave roasted underground, this mezcal opens with a vegetal aroma that quickly rolls into fiery mesquite smoke with a hint of rhubarb. The palate is clean and smooth with bright mango cut by smoky agave and faint brine. The finish is dry and crisp.

Leyendas, or rather 'Mezcal de Leyendas' (NOM O117X) features agave spirits from

several states and has a clear goal: improving marginalized communities throughout these regions with the best fair trade mechanisms available. Sustainability and terroir seem to be the two guiding principles of the company, which also sells the Peloton de la Muerte brand. While most Mezcals you find in the market are coming from Oaxaca, Leyendas offers the possibility to discover what other states have to offer and discover the amazing variety of flavor profiles throughout Mexico!

• Leyendas 'Puebla' — Pichumel (Mezcal Artesanal, Puebla) — $33 — 94 proof / 47% ABV

• Leyendas 'Guerrero' — Ancho (Mezcal Artesanal, Guerrero) — $32 — 93.8 proof / 46.9% ABV
This expression was distilled from Cupreata agave in alambic copper stills after an oak-vat fermentation period, imparting a melon-sweet aroma atop the refreshing cucumber and white pepper notes. The body is smooth and fresh with grassy vegetal notes leading papaya, roasted agave, and black pepper, ahead of a drying, smoky finish.

• Leyendas 'Oaxaca' — Tobala (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $33 — 98 proof / 49% ABV

• Leyendas 'Oaxaca' — Madre Cuishe (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $37 — 97.6 proof / 48.8% ABV

Marca Negra is Pedro Quintanilla's Mezcal brand that you would recognize amongst many: it's the square-ish green glass bottle with the black hand marks. He founded the company in 2010 with a very sensible approach: bottle the Mezcal the way the mezcaleros want it, i.e. at the alcoholic strength they think is best (versus what the market would command) and made in a way that reflects the local ways of making Mezcal. The whole portfolio speaks of the purity of each production while pushing the diversity card, but the releases are pretty small and vary a lot, so, stay alert!

• Pierde Almas Joven — Espadín, NOM-0120X (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $23 — 98 proof / 49% ABV
This joven mezcal Espadín is fermented naturally in oak vats and fermented in copper stills, imbuing a rustic campfire aroma underscored by notes of saline and spicy green peppers. The body is robust with a smoky bite that gently rolls into a lime-forward citrus bouquet sweetened with a powdered sugar note. The finish is warm and lingering with sweet agave and spicy mesquite notes.

• Rey Campero Joven Tepeztate La Candela NOM-AMMA3 (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $38 — 96.2 proof / 48.1% ABV

• Rey Campero Joven Madrecuishe La Candela NOM-AMMA3 (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $31 — 96.8 proof / 48.4% ABV

• Rey Campero Joven Tobala La Candela NOM-AMMA3 (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $37 — 97 proof / 48.5% ABV

• Sanzekan Papalote Joven 'Javier Barranca' Guerrero destilado de agave — $43 — 104 proof / 52% ABV

Siembra Metl is David Suro's Mezcal love story: after anchoring Siembra Azul and Siembra Valles in bars, restaurants and liquor stores throughout the US, the mexican native and Philadelphia restaurateur took the logic of origin+transparency+sustainability to the 7500 ft high hills of Michoacán…Don Mateo de la Sierra (in honor of Mateo Rangel NOM-M218C) is the main producer of the Siembra Metl line, under the direction of Emilio Vieyra. Besides the traditional Pechuga, each release is agave variety specific and all deserve your attention.

• Siembra Metl 'Ensamble' — Cupreata & Inaequidens, Familia Pérez, Michoacán (Mezcal Artesanal) — $47 — 96 proof / 48% ABV
Siembra Metl released this unique expression blended from Cupreata and Inaequidens agave cultivated, harvested, and distilled at the Vinata Don Mateo in Michoacán. The aroma is earthy and smoky with delicate undertones of sweet citrus and peppery agave. The palate is robust and peppery with notes of fresh lemon and a smoky burn. The finish is warm and lingering with a hint of roasted agave.

• Tlamati Pechuga Rooster Guava 'Buried Series' (Mezcal Artesanal) — $72 — 92.8 proof / 46.4% ABV

Vago…if Del Maguey planted the seed of the Mezcal craze in the USA, Vago is certainly the brand that took this general enthusiasm to the next level, by giving proper credit to the mezcaleros and their palenques, along with providing us consumers with all details of origin, production, agave type, etc, and giving us additive-free spirits. Different releases show the variety we can all enjoy in the world of agave spirit: locations, still types, wild plants, water sources, batch sizes…a true example of what terroir is for real! After a humble beginning through Texas (2013), Vago has now got to the level where a wide distribution allows most big American cities to get their share of these beauties through a strategic investment from Samson & Surrey (Widow Jane, Tequila Ocho, Brenne, Few).

• Vago 'Ensamble de Barro' — Tío Rey (Mezcal Artesanal) — $39 — 97.8 proof / 48.9% ABV

Mezcal Vago is a young mezcal brand aiming to kill two birds with one stone by improving America’s palate for mezcal through releasing expressions from independent palenques, boosting small-scale mezcal production in the process. This truly unique release comes from maestro mezcalero Salomón 'Tío Rey' Rodriguez’ palenque, who produced this mezcal from an incalculable blend of Espadín, Arroqueño, Mexicano, Coyote, Sierra Negra, and Tobalá agaves, harvested after cultivating between 5 and 25 years, and distilled using uber-traditional technique. The nose is earthy and funky with an acidic edge, fruity tobacco, and freshly fired clay pots. The palate is buttery and balanced with black licorice and sweet agave notes weaving toward a dry finish with a grilled pineapple note.

• Vago Elote Hijos de Aquilino Garcia (Mezcal Artesanal) — $23 — 100 proof / 50%ABV

• Vago Arroqueño Emigdio Jarquin (Mezcal Artesanal) — $41 — 101.6 proof / 50.8% ABV

• Vago Pechuga Emigdio Jarquin Espadín (Mezcal Artesanal) — $68 — 103.2 proof / 51.6% ABV

• Wahaka Joven Jabali — Espadín, NOM-0148X (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $48 — 94 proof / 47% ABV

• Yola 'Pechuga' — Espadín, NOM-0524X (Mezcal Artesanal, Oaxaca) — $35 — 90 proof / 45% ABV

Yola’s pechuga is muddled with guava, orange, lime, tangerine, tejocote crab apples, and pineapple before its 3rd distillation, when an turkey breast is placed above the distillate before the condenser. The resulting pechuga projects guava and candied mandarins orange ahead of a smoky bonfire hue. The palate is full bodied and balanced with vibrant mesquite folding in an assortment of fresh fruit and gentle cracked pepper. The finish is long and meandering with a lingering smoky sweetness.

• Kilinga Bacanora — Agave Angustifolia Pacifica, Sonora (Bacanora, NOM-168) — $23 — 84 proof / 42% ABV

The family that owns and operates Kilinga on their family home’s plot has been producing bacanora, the regional mezcal of Sonora, exclusively made with Pacifica agave, since for generations (so long that they were distilling bacanora before, during, and after it was made illegal for the better part of 8 decades). This blanco selection presents an aromatic nose of earthy vegetal tones with a delicate fruity sweetness. The palate is rich and and grassy with caramelized agave rounded by gentle smoke and an ashy quality that lingers through a dry finish.

• Lamata Bacanora de Barranco Familia Encinas, Sonora — $52 — 102 proof / 51% ABV

• Estancia Raicilla Pechuga agave Maximiliana (NOM-239-SE-2020) — $25 — 96 proof / 48% ABV

• Flor del Desierto Sotol — Dasylirion Wheeleri, Chihuahua (Sotol, NOM-159-SCFI-2004) — $26 — 96 proof / 48% ABV

• Lamata Sotol Familia Flores — Dasylirion Wheeleri, Durango — $47 — 97 proof / 48.5% ABV

• La Higuera Sotol — Dasylirion Wheeleri, Chihuahua (Sotol, NOM-159-SCFI-2004) — $26 — 88.8 proof / 44.4% ABV