

#### ABOUT TEQUILA

By Mexican law, Tequila can be produced only from blue agave plants, and only from a few government-specified geographical areas, mostly in the state of Jalisco. The fermented juice must be twice distilled and must account for at least 51 percent of a Tequila bottle's content. The most upscale Tequilas are 100 percent blue agave distillates.

These laws, known as the *Normas*, are cited as evidence that Tequila enjoys the same state-sponsored and time-honored cachet as Cognac and Champagne in France. But the *Normas* date back only to 1978. At the time, Margaritas, mixed mainly from cheap Tequilas, were becoming very popular in the United States. The Mexican government wanted to ensure that this new source of export revenue wasn't threatened by adulterated or downright toxic Tequilas.

Nowadays, the publicity for superpremium Tequilas often suggest that they are rooted in an ancient, noble, even sacred past. It's true that before the Spanish Conquest, Tequila's predecessor, *pulque* (or *otli* in the Aztec language), a fermented agave juice, was consumed during religious rituals by priest and aristocrats. But for the most part, the Aztec ruling class preferred to drink chocolate, sometimes as a fermented brew. Illustrated histories handed down from the Aztec era include many complaints about widespread consumption of *pulque* among commoners.

It was the Spanish who introduced distillation into the New World, and turned agave juice into chest-thumping Tequila. According to Grassl, a collector of Tequila lore, the first mention of the distilled juice occurs in the 1600s.

#### TEQUILA PRODUCTION

Agave plant harvesters chop off the saw-toothed leaves, leaving the pineapple shaped core, or *piña*, which holds the juice. Each *piña* typically weighs more than 100 pounds. They are quartered and steamed for 12 hours in ancient ovens, then allowed to cool. The juice is filtered, and this *aguamiel*, or honey water, is allowed to ferment in metal vats. It is then heated in huge copper stills, where the vapors collect and condense in copper coils. The process is repeated, producing a colorless liquid more than 70 percent alcohol. distilled water is used to dilute it to 40 percent, or 80 proof, Tequila. It is aged two to four weeks in large oak vats.

Grassl's secrets in producing a superior Tequila include using agave plants more than seven years old, and letting the *aguamiel* ferment longer and at a lower temperature. Distillation is for two and a half hours, rather than the ordinary one hour, and a triple distillation removes the impurities that cause hangovers. He uses 100 to 200 liter barrels, rather than 500 liter barrels, because the more exposure the Tequila has to the oak, the better it will be.

Grassl prefers to buy his agave piñas on the open market rather than from specific growers. When he rents a distillery or bottling plant, he replaces the house workers with his own crew.

*"Grassl produces a Tequila that is much smoother than others on the market, and the quality can be compared to fine wines. But unlike wines, its flavor and weight make it strong enough to pair with any type of dish, without limitation."*

— Yujean Kang

#### Friday, October 16, 1998 Melrose Location PORFIDIO TEQUILA DISTILLERY DINNER



### Menu

Margaritas created with Porfidio Silver Tequila, Cointreau and fresh lime juice

BBQ Pork Pastries  
Rib Eye Steak Satay  
Crispy Scallop Dumplings  
Crispy Shrimp and Seaweed



One half shot of Porfidio Plata served chilled

Sauteed Prawns with Toasted Garlic in Szechuan Spicy Sauce



One half shot of Porfidio Añejo served room temperature

Sauteed Chicken Breast with Chinese Mustard Sauce



One half shot of Porfidio Reposado served room temperature

Sauteed Pork Chops with Crispy Seaweed



One half shot of Porfidio Single Barrel Añejo "Cactus" served room temperature

Lamb with Glazed Walnuts and Spicy Sauce



One half shot of Porfidio Barrique served room temperature

Fish with Kubocha and Parma Ham



Tea or coffee

Chinese Green Bean Pancake with Melon Tapioca Sauce and Tequila Sorbet



\$95.00 per person, plus tax and 17% Gratuity

As a courtesy for our guests, cab service can be arranged for an additional charge.