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Mexican soap opts for PV locations

By Grady Miller

The taping of the telenovela (soap opera) "Pasiones" in Puerto Vallarta is expected to begin August 10 and continue for six months. "Pasiones" is only the latest on a long list of film and TV productions to have come to Vallarta, starting with John Huston's "Night of the Igloo" in the early 1960s.

"One of the great things about Vallarta is the variety of natural settings," says Cynthia Green, a liaison for many U.S. film companies shooting in Jalisco. "It is one of the two places in Mexico that has real jungle, the other is Veracruz. And in Vallarta you're not really

out in the jungle; it has all the infrastructure, the hotels, the nightclubs and actors like this."

A big part of Puerto Vallarta's appeal for movie productions is that it can be reached with a 3-hour direct flight from Los Angeles.

Video productions are not governed by union regulations, although motion picture producers must deal with Mexican guilds. In any case, crews in Mexico only need to be about half U.S. size, so filming south of the border has many economic advantages.

According to producer Alejandro Bracho, 120 people will be involved in the Televisa America production of "Pasiones."

Bracho says that actors from Puerto Vallarta will have major roles in the story.

A local toddler and a 12-year-old have already been cast to play the lead character as a child; their involvement in the project is expected to last about two months.

Bracho says 100 percent of the locations will be in Puerto Vallarta and one of the aims is to make its cinema as a tourist resource throughout Mexico.

Money-making brew



SWEET SUCCESS—Sales of the \$100-dollar bottle of tequila, Puerto Barrique de Ponciano (seen above), have exploded since last year, and demand for the newly added exceeds the production rate, says Martin Gravel (above).

6 crocs come out to play in the rain

Six crocodiles were picked up by Fire Department personnel last week and relocated to a safer area near the Mascota River at Boca de Tomatlan.

Locals are not sure if the curious crop of crocs is due to the heavy rains or the beginning of construction work at El Salado estuary.

Martin Contreras reported that he encountered a crocodile on Arroyo Los Camaceros between coffee Guatemala and Paraguay in Colonia 5 de Diciembre on Wednesday, July 21. Fisherman Romeo Mondra Lorenz and two others captured the 50-centimeter-long reptile at 8:15 a.m., took it to the relief of neighbors. At 10:30 p.m. the same day police received a call.

Crocs on 2

500-dollar tequila is selling well

By Rosalva Drey

Why would someone be crazy enough to spend over 400 pesos on a bottle of Puerto Barrique de Ponciano tequila, one of the local supermarkets?

According to Martin Gravel, owner of Puerto Barrique de Ponciano tequila distillery, many factors contribute to the success of his tequila, he regards his tequila as the best and why he believes a bottle of it is worth the 500 dollars.

Tequila añejo (aged) is the best tequila you can buy, because it must be aged a minimum of one year. Puerto Barrique is aged for two years in oak barrels imported from the same vineyard Valley wine age their best Chardonnays, the additional two years gives them smoother taste.

Vallarta allows for the extraction of natural sugars from the agave (which tequila is produced).

Tequila on 7



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500-dollar tequila is selling well

By Rumina Daya

Why would someone be crazy enough to spend over 4,000 pesos on a bottle of Porfidio Barrique de Ponciano tequila when they can go to the local supermarket and pick up a bottle of Herredura for 90 pesos?

According to Martin Grassl, creator and owner of Porfidio, Puerto Vallarta's first tequila distillery, many factors constitute why he regards his tequila as the best in the world, and why he believes a bottle of Barrique is worth the 500 dollars.

Tequila *añejo* (aged) is the best tequila you can buy, because it must be aged a minimum of one year. Porfidio Barrique is aged for three years in oak barrels imported from Kentucky -- the same ones Napa Valley wineries use to age their best Chardonnays. Grassl says the additional two years gives Barrique a luscious smoother taste.

The heat of Vallarta allows for the extraction of more natural sugars from the agave plant (from which tequila is produced).

Grassl says he does not use any chemicals to enhance the flavor of his tequilas, as some other distilleries do.

Barrique is also 100 percent pure blue agave. Most tequilas are *mixtos*, meaning they contain the minimum agave required by law which is 60 percent. The uncommon 100 percent pure blue agave tequilas have a sleeker, velvety taste that is sweet, not bitter.

At Grassl's distillery, the fibers from the agave plant are stone pressed; the machinery resembles the old fashioned ox and horse hook-up. He points out that the stone press enables him to squeeze the maximum juice from the agave.

After the juice is extracted,

it is fermented for three days in stainless steel tanks that are completely sealed in order to prevent contamination. Most distilleries use open tanks.

By law, all tequila must go through two distillation processes. Barrique goes through three distillations. Grassl explains that with the third distillation, the impure alcohols from the sides of the agave are discarded and used for less expensive brands, while the extractions from the core are used for his expensive elixirs.

The alcohols that are produced from the sides of the agave are the ones that are responsible for that hole in the stomach feeling you get after a night of hard drinking and

partying.

You can drink a bottle of Porfidio Barrique and never experience a hangover, Grassl claimed.