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Ten Fascinating Tequilas.

Penton

Restaurant Hospitality; 2/1/2000;
Plotkin, Robert

In Mexico, it is referred to as **Tequila** Puro. In the United States, we know it as 100% agave **tequila**. These **tequilas** have captivated the imagination of the American drinking public, making them the fastest-growing category of spirits in the country. Interest in **tequila** has been nothing short of phenomenal. To meet demand, more than 30 new brands of **tequila** have made their way into the American market in the past eighteen months.

Premium, 100% agave **tequilas** are single-ingredient products. They essentially contain nothing but blue agave and a fractional amount of demineralized water. Contrary to several marketing campaigns, there are no closely held family recipes passed down from one generation to the next.

The differences between brands of 100% agave **tequilas** are years in the making. From the planting of the agave to unbarreling the anejo, the production cycle can take in excess of a decade to complete. Making great **tequila** is a labor-and time-intensive process. Agaves mature at their own pace irrespective of demand and taking short cuts during the process consigns a **tequila** to mediocrity.

So who's at the head of the class? With apologies to those who didn't make the cut, here's our list of the ten most fascinating **tequilas**.

* Chinaco Anejo. The **tequila** that sparked the boom, Chinaco Anejo is an ideal entree to the category. It's seamlessly smooth and exceptionally delicious. A classic.

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* El Tesoro De Don Felipe Silver. Handcrafted and estate-bottled, El Tesoro Silver is aromatic, peppery, and loaded with the robust character of agave. It is bottled unfiltered, unaltered, exactly as it came out of the still.

* El Tesoro PARADISO Anejo. Paradiso is an innovative, sultry style of **tequila**. It is a five-year-old anejo, a blend of El Tesoro silver and anejo **tequilas** carefully selected for their distinctive characteristics. The blend is aged further in A, de Fussygn Cognac barrels, You've got to try it to believe it.

* Herradura Anejo. Herradura was the first 100% blue agave **tequila** available in America. Herradura Anejo is a distinguished **tequila**, aromatic, herbaceous and characteristically dry. An unqualified masterpiece.

* Herradura Seleccion Suprema Herradura Seleccion Suprema Anejo is skillfully crafted from select reserve white oak barrels of well-aged **tequila**. Production is limited to 2,000 bottles, which accounts for the \$250 price tag.

* Jose Cuervo Reserva De La Familia Reserva de la Familia de Jose Cuervo is a limited edition anejo **tequila** aged three years in small oak casks. Highly aromatic and flavorful, it has the character and qualities of a fine alembic brandy,

* Partido Single Barrel **Tequila** The **Porfidio** Single Barrel **Tequila** is refined, highly aromatic and brimming with delicious nuances. Each bottle of **Porfidio** Single Barrel is an original.

* Sauza Hornitos Reposado. Sauza Hornitos Reposado has an attractive bouquet, a medium body, and a brilliant flavor. Its huge following of devotees rightly contend that Hornitos Reposado delivers the most **tequila** for the buck.

* Sauza Triada Anejo. Sauza's top-of-the-line is a three-year old anejo aged in two stages, the second being in small bourbon barrels with the char scrapped out. Sauza Triada is sensational; spicy, complex and expertly balanced.

* **Tequila** Patron Anejo **Tequila** Patron has quietly become the best-selling ultra-premium **tequila** in the world. The Patron Anejo is absolutely superb, with a spicy bouquet, an expansive palate and a long, silky finish.

Robert Plotkin is the president of the National Bar & Restaurant Management Association and author of numerous books including The Original Guide to Margaritas and **Tequila**. He can be reached at Barmedia, 1-800-421-7179.

TONS OF **TEQUILA**

In the past 18 months, more than 30 new brands of **tequila** have made their way into the American market. Herein, a list of the ten most fascinating 100% agave **tequilas**.

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