



# TEQUILA

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## Men In Tequila: Martin Grassl Speaks Out

May 11, 2018 by M.A. "Mike" Morales

**International Man of Mystery**



Throughout his **checkered career** in the Tequila world and beyond, **Porfidio's** Martin Grassl has been largely viewed by the general public as an “international man of mystery.”

Disrupting a Mexican Tequila Industry that doesn't take kindly to outsiders telling it how to make its own emblematic spirit, Grassl's vintages of tequila in the iconic cactus bottle has been sought after, stashed and hoarded by collectors for its unique flavors and aromas.

In hindsight, one could argue that since 1991, Grassl had single-handedly established what is now the fastest growing segment of the Tequila market—

The **Super-Premium** category.

### Grassl's Reinvention

Now, along with **Desmond Nazareth**, an Indian-American computer whiz of Silicon Valley fame, and originator of **DesmondJi Premium Spirits, Liqueurs and Cocktails**, he has reinvented himself, again.



**Single Agave(R) 100% Agave Americana Edition (S3xA)** is one of a series of three planned releases by Grassl using different agave plants cultivated in different countries. This one, a joint venture with Nazareth, is harvested and distilled entirely in India.

Bane or blessing, innovator or interloper, prophet or pariah, Profidio's Martin Grassl has been perceived as all of these, and more.

In the next few paragraphs, Martin Grassl—in his own words—discusses his global views about the future of agave spirits.

### Marching Forward

History moves forward. Agave spirits are going international.

It happened to the Europeans in the wine industry: no one could stop grapes travelling!

When California and Australia, not to mention Chile and Argentina, joined the premium wine world half a century ago, initially it drove the French in Bordeaux crazy. But over decades, it made important contributions to California's and Australia's economy and provided a much respected delightful alternative enjoyment for consumers.



Today, both Australia and California, not to mention Chile and Argentina, are wine superpowers, equivalent, if not superior to, their European ancestors.

How dreary the world would be with only French wines!

# Single-Agave® 100% Agave Americana

Single-Agave® 100% Agave Americana, an agave spirit proudly made in India from 100% Indian-grown mezcal [agave] *pinas*, is history on the march.



It is the first in a Porfidio-initiated series of international single-varietal agave spirits; soon to be followed by the second release, a single variety agave spirit from Venezuela (100% Agave Cocuy).

## Cultural (Mis-)appropriation

The CRT’s recent national press campaign in Mexico honored the Indian agave spirit with full page articles in every major newspaper, but was typically inaccurate.

Contrary to its spurious claims, “agave” is a botanical term like the word “grape,” or “barley” and, like them, cannot be claimed under A.C. status (A.C = D.O.) [Denomination of Origin].

**Lidera Malasia con 14 productos**

# Piratean al tequila en países asiáticos

**Detectan 17 marcas que se hacen pasar por la bebida mexicana sin serlo**

**Presumen agave**

**Amador González Director del CRT**

Es una práctica que detectamos en los últimos tres años (...). Para nosotros Asia se convirtió en un problema.

no fueran tequila, sino que los consumidores como algunos ingredientes, pues, no pueden entender como aquella, sino que también que ostentase como bebidas de alta graduación”, comentó Rodolfo Villareal, director de la oficina del área de Asesoría Internacional del CRT.

De acuerdo con el Consejo, esta modificación no solo serviría para que las 14 agaves falsas que se venden en Malasia sean modificadas o retiradas del mercado, sino que evitara que se integren nuevas producciones.

“Esta modificación nos ayuda a tener un gran problema porque no podemos establecer la distinción para hacer la demanda porque en ciertos Estados se ha modificado el problema de raíz”, expresó González.

Siempre se le respetan los derechos de los productores del extranjero porque el etiquetado de los productos mexicanos es mejor planificar desde ahora.

**A TRAZAR EL RETIRO**

¿Ha pensado en que un día será anciano mayor y tendrá que vivir de lo que ahorró? Aunque su retina parezca ligero es mejor planificar desde ahora.

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It is as if Peru tried to trademark “*potato*.”

The plant’s original name, *Mezcal*, is the name Mexicans used, and the term “*Agave*” was invented by a Swedish botanist based on the observations of a German researcher.

So the allegations of cultural (mis-)appropriation make hardly any sense, since if equally applied on both sides, the Old World could claim property in the origins of the donkey, distillation, stainless steel, invention of electricity, and indeed, to the very oak barrels, all of which were “(mis-)appropriated” by Mexico from abroad, and without which tequila would have hardly existed.

### The Colombian Exchange

The key concept is “*The Colombian Exchange*” which brought horses, donkeys, wheat, stills and oak barrels to the Americas in return for the potato, corn, tobacco and agave that went to the rest of the world.

We should not forget the royal role of Queen Victoria, who so greatly continued Columbus’s work across her Empire when the British planted agave in all her various dominions where it would grow.

Some claim that this product was created as a response to the present Blue Agave shortage in Mexico. However, Single-Agave®100% *Agave Americana* is not made from the Blue Agave, but *Mezcal Americana*, a different variety of agave that is indeed used to make Mezcal, but not Tequila®, under the CRT’s own rigorous definition.

Single-Agave®100% *Agave Americana* is NOT made from the Blue Agave

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### Bored Consumers





More importantly there are signs that consumers are actually bored with the limited palate of the Blue Agave, which is, after all, the dull chardonnay of agave spirits.

They are ready to move on to other agave varieties—

“Vino de Mezcal,” the new darling of agave spirits lovers.

Made in India, *Single-Agave®100% Agave Americana*, caters precisely to these bored consumers who expect more from life than just another boring chardonnay; and let alone just another 100% Agave Tequila® made from cloned plantation-grown Blue Agave.

“Vino de Mezcal” is the new darling of agave spirits lovers

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