

Del Que Toma el Cardenal

Oaxaca, Mexico



Del Que Toma el Cardenal—or, “what the cardinal takes”, in English—was born in 2014 in response to industrial production of mezcal. With mezcal’s rise in popularity, more and more of this spirit is being produced in industrial-scale production, with the most modern technology; the major brands farm their agaves with little to no concern for sustainability, putting their economic interest above the detriment of smaller growers and the environment. In the distillery, all processes are automated, removing the human element from the process. The result from these large producers—while consistent—is essentially a 38° schnapps from agave, packed in a very elegant bottle.

A group of small producers, in partnership with entrepreneurs from the city of Oaxaca de Juárez, founded Del Que Toma el Cardenal in an effort to preserve the ancestral legacy of mezcal. The project is run strictly according to Mexican regulations and is guided by three principles:

- Sustainable cultivation of the agave;
- Fair pricing for the agave, to support the small producers that provide their source material; and
- Fair pricing for the consumer, as well as a guarantee that the spirit they are purchasing is a 100% handmade product that reflects the traditions of the region.

Their resident expert is Don Fortunato Santiago Pérez, the third generation of a family of distillate producers native to this region. It is families such as his who have passed down and preserved traditional practices, including organic farming, communal work, and the search for purity, quality, taste and texture in the final spirit.

Much like wine, these spirits reflect the place (terroir), the variety of agave (many are allowed), and the source of the water. The agaves are grown in the basin of the Río Grande, surrounded by high mountains where the temperate climate provides ideal conditions for the planting of high quality agaves. The purity and abundance of the water from the Santo Domingo, Santa Catarina and La Calavera rivers is an enormous factor in both the ability to grow agave well and the flavors of these spirits. They focus on two varieties of agave, Espadín and Tobalá. The agaves are roasted in traditional ground ovens lined with hot stones before fermentation in oak vats; the spirit is then fermented twice in a copper still to an alcoholic strength of around 50%.

The result? Spirits that reflect their terroir as clearly as they represent the culture from which they come. We are proud to welcome this singular producer to our portfolio.

“Before the Mexican government laid claim to the word “mezcal,” everyone in Mexico used that one word to describe the category of spirits made by fermenting and distilling agave. Now ... well, now they still use “mezcal” to describe those same spirits, whether those spirits have been certified with the Mexican government as mezcal or not. But if they use the term “mezcal” without certification, they’re putting themselves in legal jeopardy while simultaneously feeding the growth of the very same people who stole the word from them...” - Lou Bank

Espadín

Espadín— agave angustifolia— is one of the more commonly known varieties of agave, and is the source material of most mezcal available in the market-yet, this carnalized nectar is nothing like you have ever tasted.

Tobalá

The fruity balance of this Tobalá is absolutely exquisite, and is not even closely reflected in its price.