



MEZCAL

(& LOS NAHUALES™)

THE LAST OF THE WORLD'S GREAT SPIRITS

Cognac, malt whiskey, corn whiskey, tequila: these all were once made by hand, distilled by craftsmen using hand methods on small pot stills. These craft methods – and the carefully-tended ingredients they were distilled from – were what made these spirits wonderful. It's all mostly gone, except for a few holdouts... and a few regions that have not undergone the fatal shift to shortcuts & industrial production.

THE REGION: Southwest Mexico



THE DISTILLERS: Artisans who avoid industrial production methods



SOME INFORMATION ABOUT MEZCAL



What's mezcal? A spirit distilled from the agave plant.

Is tequila a mezcal? Sure, but 1) almost all tequila made for export uses industrial short-cuts, and 2) tequila distillers filter out the agave solids. Oaxacan artisan mezcal is richer and more complex.

What's special about Oaxaca? It's a very old-fashioned place. The local mezcal distillers use time-consuming methods that go back for centuries.

What's special about artisan mezcal? A couple of things. The agave, the plant mezcal is made from, is an unusually complex, flavorful, and interesting form of life. There's a lot there, so a talented distiller has a lot to work with. Artisan mezcal is also special because of the way it's made: the process is slow and labor-intensive. The process is tied into the agave itself, tied into the pueblo where the mezcal is distilled, tied into local and regional traditions.



Artisan mezcal distillers really know their material: it grows nearby. Often it's from their family's agave planting, out in the mountains. Because the distilleries are tiny and because preparation and distilling are so much hands-on work, the distiller knows every step really well, can adjust his methods to the material in front of him, can best perform the magic inside his tiny pot-still: concentrating and purifying the flavors and aromas drawn from mature agaves.



Why Los Nahuales? It comes from the Destileria Los Danzantes, whom we represent because we believe in their products, in the way they distill, in how they think about their work. The concept came from two brothers who wanted to produce an extraordinary local spirit for their authentic-cuisine restaurants. They bought an old distillery near Oaxaca in 2001. The distiller is the talented Héctor Vazquez de Abarca. Like all the first-rate modern craft-method distillers, Hector learned how to think *INSIDE* the process. He sorted through the traditional methods, kept the meaningful, discarded the left-overs, made technical innovations. He's making a world-class spirit, great mezcal.

craft distillers®

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