

BALAM

Raicilla



Sotol

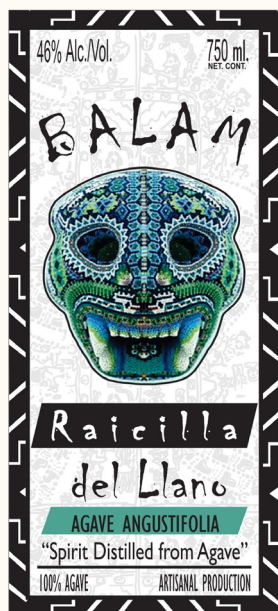
RAICILLA is a spirit made only in Jalisco state, from agaves distilled in remote areas. Raicilla is a mezcal – but not on the label, due to Mexican regulations. *Raicilleros* uses at least nine kinds of agave, all of them wild, several with differing local varieties. The main agaves are the large *agave maximiliana* (sometimes called *lechugilla*), several wild varieties of *angustifolia* (such as *chico aguilar*), *rhodacantha* (local varieties of the “*dobadaan*” used in Oaxaca), and *inaequidens* (also used to make mezcal in Michoacan), called *bruto* because its sap irritates the human skin. Mexican knowledge of distillation was brought from the Philippines in the late 1500s: **raicilla is the earliest mezcal**.

SOTOL is distilled from the desert plant *Dasylirion wheeleri* (sotol is its Spanish name) in Durango and Chihuahua, using the same artisanal methods as for mezcal. The plant is depicted in cave paintings dating to **7000 BC**.

Xavier Villagrán, whose family has worked in mezcal for three generations, founded BALAM fifteen years ago. Villagrán sources excellent artisanal spirits: mezcals in Oaxaca, raicilla in each of the three distilling regions of Jalisco (*costa, sierra, llano*), sotols from Chihuahua and Durango, and the rare *churique* from the tiny *agave lechugilla*.



Villagrán is also working hard at developing sustainable ways of cultivating silvestran agaves.



BALAM WON THE 2017 **GRAN ORO** AWARD AT THE PRESTIGIOUS CONCURSO NACIONAL OF THE ACADEMIA DEL MEZCAL Y DEL Maguey.

