

Las  
**PERLAS**  
de Jalisco®  
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## SINGLE BATCH RAICILLA

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, some with several 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.

Raicilla goes way back in time; its distillation was introduced in the 1600s from the Spanish colonies in the Philippines, which resulted in the common use of the primitive Filipino double-chamber clay still.



Each batch is 5-6 metric tons of agaves, resulting in about 660 bottles.

Las Perlas, a *raicilla de costa*, is distilled by 5th-generation *raicillero* Santiago Diaz Ramos from agaves *angustifolia* and *rhodacantha* harvested wild and semi-wild in the lush hills near the pueblo of Las Guásimos, above the Pacific coast south of Puerto Vallarta. Santiago uses a cylindrical below-ground masonry oven sealed with clay and introduces water during the second day to add steam to the roasting process. Wood *canoas* and *magos* (locally, *pitelas*) are used for a good part of the milling; a slow 3-week fermentation is by wild yeasts in a large rectangular vat. First distillation is in a 400-liter potstill; the second is in a small Filipino still whose bottom chamber is a clay-enclosed copper pot and whose top



*perlas* (pearls) are the tiny bubbles that form when you pour good mezcal into a cup, traditionally a small gourd (*xicara*).



Santiago trimming out a *pina*. Notice how close to the pina he cuts, avoiding the bitter flavors that come from the waxy surface of the spines.