

Tso'ok



High mountain rum from the remote Mixe highlands distilled from fresh cane juice using traditional craft methods



TOTONTEPEC VILLA DE MORELOS

The Mixe is a remote mountainous region in the Sierra Norte, east of Oaxaca, whose indigenous people successfully resisted the Spanish conquest and have maintained much of their ancestral culture.

The local alcoholic beverage is not mezcal, but *aguardiente*. rum distilled from fresh sugar cane. High mountain cane is unusually flavorful, and distills into a beautifully clean and tasty rum.

Tso'ok comes to us from Read Spear, the founder of Cuentacuentos. The distiller is Carlos Mendez Blas of Totontepec Villa de Morelos at 6000 feet, a pueblo not easy to get to.



Freshly cut cane is pressed, then fermented with wild yeasts in an open *tina*. The fermentation includes the crushed cane stalks (held down in the photo by rocks to prevent foaming over), yielding a rich vegetal component missing in commoditized rums distilled from the by-products of granulated sugar production. The double distillation is by hand on a small copper potstill. This is very good rum.