TEQUILA APPRECIATION

ESCAPE TO JALISCO

Patricia Richards, voted askmen.com’s #1 Female Bartender, talks the Tequila Interchange Project and the creation of specialty cocktails.

HERRADURA TEQUILA

NEVER COMPROMISE.™

Enjoy with uncompromised responsibility.

Tequila, rich in cultural tradition and quality: a synonym of Mexico, and a category that is here to stay.

Harnessing tequila’s potential

Tequila has become the center of attention for leading mixologists, the hottest nightlife establishments, world travelers, and spirits connoisseurs worldwide. The emerging trend in America's cultural hubs is the absence of white spirits in lieu of the Mexican Agave—from this birthed the tequila cocktail, tequila as a premium sipping drink, and a growing interest in meaningful appreciation of the spirit.

With tequila production reporting a growth of 3.5 percent in 2010 (257.5 million liters), exports increasing by 12 percent, a boost in sales of tequila in the USA of nearly four percent (11.6 million cases) and high-end tequila category unveiling a great performance (up by 17 percent), there is much future for tequila.

The National Chamber for the Tequila Industry has partnered with Mediaplanet and some of the world's most dedicated experts to educate readers and liquid enthusiasts on the category’s unique potential, and to encourage pairing the spirit with the appropriate dishes, highlighting its place in Mexican cuisine. Tequila has much to offer in the way of culture, passion and complexity, and this report is designed to capitalize on the industry’s movement, by encouraging sophisticated tasting while paying homage to the masterful processes and care behind its production, distillation, aging and bottling in Jalisco.

Ensuring quality

The tequileros are proud of the heritage and history of tequila; we feel tequila represents Mexico and, in that regard, we have taken a number of steps to ensure the quality of products in the market. To bear the nomenclature of ‘tequila’, the drink must fall under one of two qualified classes: 100 percent agave (distilled with 100 percent blue agave) or tequila (manufactured from 51 percent blue agave), using Agave of the species Tequilana Weber Blue variety.

The industry has achieved astounding developments in recent years with the introduction of a new category in 2006, “extra añejo” or “ultra-aged” which must be aged a minimum of three years.

“The tequileros are proud of the heritage and history of tequila; we feel tequila represents Mexico and, in that regard, we have taken a number of steps to ensure the quality of products in the market.”

Francisco Gonzalez
President of the National Chamber for the Tequila Industry (CNIT)

The spirit’s growth is not limited to premiumization, as tequila continues to develop with more classes, infusions, brands on the market and advancements in production, distillation and aging.

The industry will continue to work with the agave growers, master distillers, exporters, distributors and connoisseurs alike, riding on the industry’s momentum, to bring meaningful appreciation of tequila to the world.

While in Mexico the most traditional way to drink tequila is sipping it (maybe chasing with sangria or lime juice), there is much more to ‘Tequila Appreciation’ that the world should know. The National Chamber for the Tequila Industry is excited to work with Mediaplanet to educate and hone true tequila aficionados, who can taste, distinguish, appreciate and share all the category has to offer. We encourage you to use these tips to explore the complexities tequila has to offer, understand the passion and history behind the spirit, and drink responsibly to truly learn the art of ‘Tequila Appreciation’.

The National Chamber for the Tequila Industry is the Tequila producers’ association.

**CHALLENGES**

“BEST OF SHOW OUT OF 153 TEQUILA ENTRIES – CHINACO REPOSADO.”
- The Polished Palate Spirits of Mexico

“95 POINTS – EXCEPTIONAL – CHINACO AÑEJO.”
- Beverage Testing Institute

“NO. 1 OF 10 MOST INFLUENTIAL SPIRITS BRANDS OF THE PAST 25 YEARS.”
- Wine & Spirits Magazine

“A BENCHMARK TEQUILA.”
- New York Times

**WE RECOMMEND**

**CHINACO Tequila**

3rd Place, Mini Mezcal, 2011 San Francisco World Spirits Competition

Top 25 Tequila Bars
- p. 16

Imbibing hot spots you won’t want to miss

**TEQUILA APPRECIATION, 1ST EDITION, APRIL 2011**

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100% AGAVE SILVER TEQUILA
UNLEASH THE SPIRIT OF 1795
Question: What is the most important thing to keep in mind when sipping tequila?
Answer: Given each category’s unique aging and distillation process, each has a different taste, aroma, and pairing.

Learn to talk and pair tequila

Blanco
Blanco tequila (a.k.a. plata, platino, crystalino, platinum, silver, and any other term meaning clear), is usually unaged and bottled straight from the still. It is tequila in its truest form.

Flavors and scents can range from floral (blossoms, roses) to spices (anise, pepper, cloves, cinnamon) to fruits (plantains, olives, citrus, pears, and apples) and herbs (spearmint, rosemary). Baked or raw agave should be the most prominent.

It is best paired with fresh ceviche, seafood, sushi, fruit (apples, pears, pineapple and oranges), green vegetables (cucumbers, celery), and jicama.

Reposado
Typically, reposado tequilas are barrel aged from two months to less than one year. New or used, the type and size of barrel will vary from distillery to distillery and from recipe to recipe.

Colors can range from a pale straw, light yellow, gold, honey, and light amber.

Flavors and scents can range from whiskey, oak, toasted almonds, nuts, baked agave, vanilla, and honey.

Due to its versatility, reposados can be paired with virtually anything: Mexican cuisine, Italian food, Spanish dishes, chicken, fish, cheeses, nuts, crackers, and even fruit.

Añejo
Añejo tequilas must be aged in barrels from one year up to three years. Again, the type of barrel will vary, but the combination of scents and flavors can seem never-ending.

Colors range from deep gold, amber, honey, bronze, and caramel.

Flavors and scents can range from nuts, oak, whiskey, cognac, bourbon, vanilla, cinnamon, chocolate, coffee, and slight agave.

Usually served as an after dinner sipper, some añejos can be paired with chocolate, desserts, flan, cookies, oranges sprinkled with cinnamon, and even poured over vanilla ice cream.

Extra Añejo
Extra añejos are tequilas aged three years and over. Distillers who produce these special tequilas consider them their masterpieces. They are the most labor intensive, time-consuming, costly to produce, and are the most expensive and often most rewarding of all the categories. Rich amber, dark bronze, molasses, coffee, and maple syrup characterize these inspired blends.

Depending on the types of barrels used to age these tequilas, the flavors and scents can pack a powerful punch. Rich vanilla, dark chocolate, raisins, dried cherries, sherry, coffee, smoke, leather, tobacco, and more can be experienced in this exquisite varietal. No need to pair extra añejos at all. Just pour and enjoy!

Mike Morales

Pour 1 oz. into a slender, stemmed tequila glass or a snifter.

Some achievements are worth celebrating.

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TEQUILA CORAZÓN – 40 PERCENT ALC BY VOL (80 PROOF) – IMPORTED FROM MEXICO BY GEMINI SPIRITS & WINE CO., NEW ORLEANS, LA
*PRODUCT TASTING SCORE BY BEVERAGE TASTING INSTITUTE, AS POSTED ON WWW.TASTINGS.COM 12/2010 – PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY
By the time agave is ready to be harvested, it has been lovingly aged eight to 10 years in the rich soil of the Highlands or Lowlands of Jalisco, or any of the other four states designated by tequila’s Denomination of Origin.

Once the pencas (leaves) have been removed by the jimador (harvester), they are brought to the distillery to be cooked in stone ovens or steam autoclaves. Whether shredded or stone ground to release its aguamiel (honey water), it is fermented and then distilled twice by law.

Tequila is bottled from the still, or patiently rested in barrels to be appreciated later.
The Story of Tequila

1758
In 1758, Don Jose Antonio de Cuervo obtained the first license to commercially produce tequila, a point that marks the birth of the tequila industry.

1795
Don Jose Antonio de Cuervo obtains the first license to commercially produce tequila, agave mixed with other sugars for a blander, sweeter taste, and the margarita is invented. It’s now America’s most popular cocktail—about 60 percent of all tequila sold in the U.S. goes into margaritas.

1840
Mexican distillers create mixtos (51 percent agave tequila), agave mixed with other sugars and flavorings.

1900
Patrón begins expansion into international and duty free markets.

1974
Regulatory Council (CRT) is formed.

1987
To celebrate the 45th anniversary of the year when Don Julio began creating his tequilas, Don Julio González releases an ultra-premium tequila to bear his name. First released only in Mexico, Tequila Don Julio Reposado was the first tequila brand to be sold in short, square bottles, the signature bottling for the personal reserve tequila that Don Julio González would distribute to friends and family.

2005
Tequila prices hit an all-time high.
LOVE S
BLINDFOLDS

A blind taste test never lies.
Proud Winner Double Gold San Francisco World Spirits Competition
As demand for tequila surges, sustainable practices follow

Greenovations, eco-friendly, sustainability: These are not just fancy buzz words any more.

Consumers are not only demanding more bang for their buck in this current economy (and getting it) but social responsibility, and “green” or sustainable practices by spirits companies are quickly becoming part of their buying decisions, as they have been for years in Europe.

With the mass production of whiskey, beer and rum to quench the world’s growing thirst, multinational distillers have seen the benefits of constructing new state-of-the-art breweries and distilleries that convert the leftover solids from their products into energy that electrically powers not only their factories, but the surrounding communities in which they’re located, as well.

But converting the wastewater and solids from the blue agave plant into a source of energy has proven to be more of a challenge for the tequila industry. For every liter of tequila distilled, ten liters of wastewater (vinazas) is produced and up to six kilograms of agave solids (bagasse or bagazo).

A fuel for the future

Various multinational corporations who own tequila distilleries have invested heavily in constructing wastewater processing plants to neutralize the vinazas and to turn the bagazo into compost rather than clandestinely dumping them into streams and rivers causing highly dangerous pollution and contamination of the water supply.

For those small to medium-sized distilleries who are responsible for up to fifty percent of the tequila production and who don’t have the resources to dispose of their agave waste properly, there is another answer.

In January of 2011, Greenhouse Holdings, Inc., a leading provider of energy efficiency solutions, partnered with ten of these small to medium-sized tequila distillers to remove up to 2,100 tons of solid waste daily and convert it into compost fertilizer for agave producers and other farmers.

Scientists in the field are also studying the possibility of using different types of agave (not just blue) in the production of biofuels. One expert calculates that enough biomass could be produced by existing wild agave in the millions of arid hectares of Mexico to meet the fuel needs of the United States.

Some brands go a step further in their sustainability efforts by bottling their tequila in recycled glass bottles and using labels, neck tags and packaging made from agave paper, as well as using real cork which is a renewable resource.

Much work remains for most of the tequila industry to become compliant with the Mexican laws governing environmental issues.

Mike Morales
Intimate Tequila Tastings

“One expert calculates that enough biomass could be produced by existing wild agave in the millions of arid hectares of Mexico to meet the fuel needs of the United States.”
A new frontier of USDA certified organic tequilas

Dr. Adolfo Murillo, the man who singlehandedly spearheaded the resurgence of organic agave farming in the tequila industry, says proudly, “I have been given the opportunity to devise and teach the return to basic farming methods that will bring back the productivity of the earth.”

“As my grandfather used to say, ‘Respect the earth and it will produce for us.’”

Dr. Murillo and other organic agave growers, through the use of natural composted fertilizers and taking advantage of all green matter, have enriched the soil of their plantations to where the agave has developed its own natural defenses against pests and diseases eliminating the need for toxic pesticides.

A combination of beneficial insects to fight off the few predators that might attack the agave, as well as constant soil and plant monitoring, crop rotations, and allowing the fields to lie fallow after harvesting, have allowed these organic farmers to grow record-sized agave that yield some of the finest tequila produced today.

Small batch, micro-distilled organic tequilas

Currently, there are only a handful of USDA certified organic tequilas on the market, but there is a burgeoning interest by tequila producers in this yet-to-be officially recognized category. Once thought to be just a slick marketing ploy to charge higher prices for tequila, in reality, earning USDA organic certification is like jumping through flaming hoops.

The USDA is the only agency that can certify organic products in the United States. They license certification agencies to collect and verify all documentation of the organic process from a given applicant (agave grower and/or brand owner). The agency then conducts an extensive physical inspection to make sure that what is actually going on in the fields corresponds with the claims on the application.

A secondary inspection and certification can also be done at the distillery for the processing and handling of that particular brand’s agave and tequila so that no cross-contamination occurs with non-organic agave and tequila.

If that’s not enough, the USDA requires yearly physical inspections for recertification. That means that the applicant has to jump through those flaming hoops again next year!

While these organic certification processes are more costly and labor intensive, the resulting quantity of the tequila is more ecologically friendly, and the quality of the juice is “tequila as intended.”

Like your favorite “throw back” jersey, think of these small-batch, micro-distilled organic tequilas as a celebration of the past.

Mike Morales
editorial@mediaplanet.com
those who know

HAVE FOUND KNOWLEDGE COMES IN MANY FORMS,
INCLUDING: BLANCO, REPOSADO, AñeJO AND EXTRA AñeJO.

KNOW YOUR TEQUILA

Don Julio

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

**The recent economic downturn** was a learning experience for the tequila industry. Watching consumers trade down to value priced tequilas but still demand quality juice caused it to take notice and to fill that void.

**Five tequila trends to watch**

**As the country emerges out of the recession, so does a more resilient tequila industry and several exciting tequila trends.**

**Mixology leads the way**
Part of tequila’s effective image repair can be traced to the modern mixologist and his best friend, the chef.

More tequila bars and restaurants are springing up around the country enveloping customers with a complete sensorial experience. Foods prepared and carefully paired with tequila and tequila cocktails have accelerated the acceptance of quality tequila by the masses.

**Women in the industry**
More women will join the ranks of tequila brand owners bringing a fresh perspective to an otherwise male dominated industry.

In particular, Hispanic women with a family lineage of agave growing and tequila producing will become more involved in their family businesses.

“Millennials (a.k.a. Gen Y), the new wave of tequila enthusiasts, will turn to their older family members, most likely Baby Boomers who have been exposed to quality tequilas for years, to help them navigate through the marketing hype and the same tired tequila myths and misinformation.

Intergenerational sharing will not only ensure that they establish solid tastes and preferences for traditionally made 100 percent agave tequilas, but also strengthen family ties just as it has for decades in Mexico.

**Organic tequilas**
As quickly as mass produced tequila has exposed the world to this magnificent spirit of Mexico, so will handcrafted, old-style certified organic tequilas expose the next generation of aficionados to its traditional methods and processes.

This awareness will preserve and transform the essence of tequila’s Denomination of Origin into one that works the way all geographical indications should.

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**Recipe: The Luxury Drop**

Brian Van Flandern
Global Brand Ambassador, Tequila Don Julio

The Luxury Drop, the new innovative cocktail concept from Tequila Don Julio that’s catching on nationwide, enables bartenders and consumers to experience the versatility of tequila while maintaining its authentic roots and rituals. The Luxury Drop combines the concepts of shots and high-end mixology in a unique hybrid, creating a premium specialty cocktail in a smaller, more responsible portion. Six of the world’s most acclaimed mixologists helped to develop the concept, including Salvatore Calabrese (UK), Dale DeGroff (US), Peter Dorelli (UK), Gary Regan (US), Simon Difford (UK) and Hidetsugu Ueno (Japan).

Luxury Drops can contain no more than four ingredients (including Tequila Don Julio) plus a garnish, and each Luxury Drop must have a name and a ritual associated with the drinking experience. The Luxury Drop combines the fun and ritual of a shot with the fundamental principles of mixology, providing tequila and spirits enthusiasts with an outlet to think about tequila differently.

**The Agave Drop**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 1/2 ounces Tequila Blanco
- 12 ounce agave nectar
- 12 ounce fresh lime juice
- Lime wedge for garnish

**Preparation:**
1. Combine Blanco, agave nectar, and fresh lime juice into a shaker filled with ice. Shake well.
2. Strain into a shot glass.
3. Garnish with lime wedge.
4. Ritual: Participants clink glasses and say “Viva Don Julio!”

**Ideal Serving Glass:**
Shot glass

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Photo: evan travels

**Perfect pairings in nightlife culture.**

PHOTO EVA TRAVELS PHOTOGRAPHY

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**Tip 3**

**SMELL THE TEQUILA FROM AN INCH AWAY. IT IS 60 PERCENT OF THE TASTE**

**TEQUILA MIXOLOGY**

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**Mike Morales**
Owner, Intimate Tequila Tastings

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**Mike Morales**
editorial@mediaplanet.com
SIMPLY PERFECT.

Hand-selected 100% Weber blue agave. The world’s finest ultra-premium tequila.
simplyperfect.com

The perfect way to enjoy Patrón is responsibly. © 2011 The Patrón Spirits Company, Las Vegas, NV. 40% Alc./Vol.
Tequila grows up with infusions

If tequila makes you think of slushy margaritas and twenty-somethings trading shots, you haven't met real tequila. And these days real tequila means hand-crafted 100 percent agave tequila, often infused with other traditional Mexican flavors.

Tequila sales quadrupled during the last decade. While much of the increase was knocked back as shots or stirred into cheap margarita mixes, the U.S. cocktail culture is discovering what Mexicans and spirits aficionados have long known: Good tequila is a delightful sipping spirit as well as an essential ingredient of many high-end cocktails. A good tequila is rich and distinct with layers of flavor that typically include plenty of fruit up front and a nice, peppery bite on the finish.

**Hecho a mano**
A new generation of hand-crafted tequilas is responding to the new food culture with the same attention to detail in our glasses that we've come to expect on our plates. Small distilleries provide top-quality, 100-percent agave tequilas infused with locally-sourced ingredients. These small-batch infusions contribute subtle flavors of Mexico, such as jalapeño and cocoa, to the already intriguing taste of tequila. They offer new taste experiences while remaining true to the romanticism and requirements of genuine Mexican tequila.

**Real ingredients**
These artisanal tequilas are infused with subtle and complex layers of flavor—not simply topped up with flavorings. Tequila is steeped in macerations of real fruit, peppers, or other ingredients, with the maker tasting and adjusting along the way. The process is painstaking and time-consuming, from field to barrel. The result is unique and satisfying. While these infusions are delicious for sipping, they are also excellent in a wide array of cocktails, margaritas included. But please, don’t waste them on shots.

**PREPARATION OF TROPICAL FRUIT.** Tequila is steeped in macerations of real fruit, peppers, or other ingredients. Photo Credit: Tanteo Tequila Distillery

**TANTEO INFUSES ultrapremium 100% agave tequila with fresh, all-natural ingredients for a completely new tequila experience. Try Jalapeño, Cocoa or Tropical and taste the tantalizing world beyond ordinary tequila.**

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Agave Loco® Tequila with peppers added. 35% ABV. 80 Proof. © 2007 Agave Loco Branda, Highland Park, IL 60035.
**Italian sunset punch cocktail**

1 ¼ oz. Milagro Reposado
½ oz. Lillet Rouge
½ oz. Solerno
0.75 oz. Lime juice
½ oz. Agave nectar
1 oz. Blood orange juice
3 Basil leaves
2 Dashes rhubarb bitters
½ oz. Water
1 oz. Ginger beer

- Mix in punch bowl.

**Platino fresco**

1 oz. Jose Cuervo Platino
½ oz. St. Germain
2 Slices of cucumber
3 Mint leaves
1 oz. Grapefruit juice

- Combine the cucumber, mint and St. Germain into a mixing glass and muddle. Add the grapefruit juice and Jose Cuervo Platino.
- Fill with ice and shake. Strain into a rocks glass filled with ice.
- Garnish with a cucumber slice.

**Organic blueberry & basil margarita**

1 ½ oz. Fresh organic blueberries (approx. 20-23 each)
2 Large organic basil leaves
2 ½ oz. Organic Casa Noble Reposado Tequila
½ oz. Fruit Lab Citry, organic orange liqueur
½ oz. Organic light agave syrup
1 oz. Freshly squeezed, organic lime juice

- In a bar mixing glass, muddle the basil leaves and the blueberries. Add the remaining ingredients and shake well with ice to chill. Strain over fresh ice into a highball glass.
- Garnish with a fresh basil top and a few whole blueberries and serve.

**Spicy margarita**

2 oz. Tanteo Jalapeño Tequila
1 oz. Fresh lime juice
¼ oz. Agave nectar (or simple syrup)

- Combine ingredients in a shaker with ice.
- Shake well and pour into a rocks glass (salted rim optional).
- Garnish with a lime wedge.
TOP 25 TEQUILA BARS IN AMERICA

Got the itch to ditch the same ol’ dive bar? More tequila bars and restaurants are springing up around the country enveloping customers with the complete sensorial experience. Escape to Jalisco and visit our top picks around the country that boast the largest tequila selections and the best Mexican eats. Jump on the nation’s hottest nightlife trend and visit a tequila bar!

Editor’s picks
1. Ofrenda
   www.ofrendanyyc.com
   113 7th Avenue South, New York

2. La Velvet Margarita Cantina
   www.velvetmargarita.com
   1612 North Cahuenga Blvd., Hollywood

Baltimore
Blue Agave Baltimore
www.blueagavemexicancantina.com
1032 Light Street, Baltimore

Chicago
Masa Azul
2901 W. Diversey Avenue, Chicago
Salud Tequila Lounge
www.saludlounge.com
1471 N. Milwaukee, Chicago
Depot Nuevo
www.depotnuevo.com
1139 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette

Dallas
Iron Cactus Mexican Grill & Margarita Bar
www.ironcactus.com
1520 Main Street, Dallas

Los Angeles
Las Perlas Bar
www.lasperlas.la
107 E. Sixth Street, Historic Downtown LA
Malo
www.malorestaurant.com
4326 W. Sunset Blvd., Silverlake
El Carmen
www.elcarmenrestaurant.com
8138 W. 3rd Street, Los Angeles
Red O
www.redorestaurant.com
8155 Melrose Avenue, Hollywood

Houston
Anvil Bar & Refuge
www.anvilhoustontx.com
1424 Westheimer Road, Houston
TQLA Houston
www.tqlahouston.com
4601 Washington Ave., Houston

Las Vegas
Tacos & Tequila
www.tacosandtequilalv.com
3900 Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas
Agave Las Vegas
www.agavelasvegas.com
10820 Charleston Blvd., Las Vegas

Minneapolis
Barrio Tequila Bar
www.barriotequila.com
925 Nicollet Avenue, St. Paul

New Orleans
Rita’s Tequila House
www.ritastequilahouse.com
419 Bourbon Street, New Orleans

New York
Dos Caminos (4 locations)
www.doscaminos.com
675 Hudson Street at 14th Street

Teqa NYC
www.teqanycc.com
443 3rd Ave., New York

La Biblioteca de Tequila
www.richardsandoval.com/labiblioteca
622 3rd Ave. at 40th Street, New York

Agave NYC
www.agavenyc.com
140 7th Ave. South, New York

Mayahuel
www.mayahuelny.com
304 E. 6th Street, New York

Philadelphia
Tequilas Restaurant
www.tequilasphilly.com
1602 Locust Street, Philadelphia

Cantina Dos Segundos
www.cantinadossegundos.com
931 N. 2nd St., Philadelphia

Phoenix
Blue Agave Mexican Cantina
www.blueagavemexicancantina.com
7000 E. Mayo Blvd., Ste. 1056, Phoenix

San Francisco
Tommy’s Mexican Restaurant
www.tommysmexican.com
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INTRODUCING 901. MIXES WELL.

901 Silver Tequila is a proud recipient of the Double Gold medal from the 2011 San Francisco World Spirits Competition.
A top mixologist takes tequila from farm to bar

“Americans are developing more sophisticated palates, and that extends to cocktails,” says mixologist Patricia Richards. “If you are eating great food, why not have a great cocktail as well? People increasingly are looking for globally inspired flavors and ingredients made from natural, artisanal products.” This approach works just as well in the bar as in the kitchen. And there may be no better way of satisfying these desires than with a well-crafted tequila.

The new food and drink culture does not stop with the desire for better tasting food and drink. It’s about knowing the story behind your food and drink, where it comes from, how it was grown and produced. It’s about being responsible, without sacrificing pleasure.

Richards, master mixologist at the Wynn and Encore resorts in Las Vegas, is widely considered one of the top mixologists in the country. In addition to creating new cocktails, developing recipes, and supervising 25 different bars, Richards is responsible for sourcing ingredients. This last task led to her being invited to serve on the Tequila Interchange Project (TIP), a prestigious group of professionals dedicated to exchanging knowledge and ideas about tequila production and marketing. After visiting agave farms and distilleries in Mexico as a part of the TIP, Richards made several suggestions for ways Mexico’s official national standards for tequila could make tequila production both more sustainable and more socially responsible.

**From farm to bar**

These suggestions stem directly from what Richards calls her “Farm to Bar” philosophy. Like Farm to Fork, the goal of Farm to Bar is to shorten the journey from the farm to your glass, explains Richards. “Food just tastes better and is often better for you when it is produced with love by the farmer down the street,” she says. While tequila is not exactly just down the street for most of us, by developing relationships with the farmers who grow the agave and the local distillers who make the tequila, Richards brings that connection home. “A lot of love goes into spirit making,” Richards notes. And when you have that kind of respect for your ingredients, a lot of love goes into making, as well as enjoying, cocktails.

AVERY HURT
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