

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Mezcal, Liqueur and Tequila Tasting

Fest USA Spirits of Mexico!

If you couldn't be in Mexico for Cinco de Mayo, the best place to celebrate was at the **Fest USA Spirits of Mexico. The Polished Palate, LLC** (www.polishedpalate.com) created the perfect party at Charlie Palmer's restaurant Metrazur (www.metrazur.com), in Grand Central Terminal, New York City, on May 5, 2004.

Spirits of Mexico, a night of mezcal, liqueur and tequila tasting, benefited **The Sky Ranch Foundation** (www.skyranchfoundation.org). **Mariachi Estrella Juvenil de Jorge Jr.** (mariachistars@aol.com), in authentic costumes, sang such favorites as "Besa me Mucho" and "La Cucharacha". **Metrazur** provided a selection of quesadillas, guacamole, and corn bread with chilies, corn relish, and other delicious Mexican goodies.

There were more than 30 tequilas for tasting, including Sauza, Corazon, El Tesoro, Oro Azul, Herencia, 1800, Gran Centenario, Mico, and of course, Patron. There were 25 mezcals from Caballeros, Conquistador, Don Juan Escobar, Embajador, Joyas, La Reliquia, Mistique, Ora de Oxaca, Scorpion, Tehuana, Don Ausencio and Gustavo Rojo. Under Liqueurs and Brandy, there were tastings of Gran Gala Triple Orange Liqueur, Kahlua, Kahlua Especial, Tia Maria, and Presidente Brandy.

Although there were some excellent tequilas offered, I think true tequila aficionados will appreciate the **Herencia Historico 27 de Mayo Solera 1997** tequila añejo, aged in oak casks, and at \$200 is definitely sipping tequila, not created for mixing up a batch of margaritas. Herencia (www.herenciadeplata.com) is a relatively new product in the United States, available for the past 15 months.

Two premium mezcals that I enjoyed were the **Tehuana Añejo Mezcal**, \$55, in a beautiful embossed bottle with Aztecs on it, and the **Scorpion Mezcal 3 Year old Añejo** \$65, from Oaxaca, Mexico (www.mezcals.com), in a well-dressed bottle with a little Scorpion Mezcal sombrero, and a scorpion in it! When asked why the scorpion, Doug French of Caballeros, Inc. replied, "worms are for wimps." In addition to mezcals, Doug also brought a little something extra to go with the shots of mezcal – worm salt, (a mixture of powdered worm, chili and salt), and roasted grasshoppers. Yes, you heard right! Both the Tehuana Añejo Mezcal and the Scorpion Mezcal Añejo 3 year old are really very smooth, and definitely worth trying. (**Read our Scorpion Mezcal article in our Spirits section for more tasting notes.**)

Kahlua lovers will be interested to learn that in addition to **Kahlua**, the company has introduced a new product, **Kahlua Especial** (www.kahlua.com), made of 100% Arabica beans, and at 70 proof, has a higher alcohol content than regular Kahlua, with 30% less sugar, making it delightful for sipping over ice.

The Polished Plata, LLC will host several "spirits" festivals in the United States throughout the year. Check their website at (www.polishedpalate.com) for more festival information. For Mexico information: visitmexicopress@bm.com.

© June 2004. Luxury Experience www.luxuryexperience.com All Rights Reserved.