



# Robb Report

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## THE 12 BEST MEZCAL BRANDS TO DRINK RIGHT NOW, FROM ILEGAL TO LOBOS 1707

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When August Sebastiani, fourth-generation member of the noted Sonoma Valley wine family and president of 3 Badge Beverage Corporation tells you that his line of Bozal mezcals is now outselling his Pasote brand of tequilas, you've got to sit up and take notice. You might also have noticed that mezcal cocktails are appearing on more restaurant and bar menus. None of this is surprising; according to Impact Databank, mezcal has been growing at double digit warp speed during the past few years, and in the process, making the United States the world's largest market for what once was considered tequila's "bad boy" brother. No more. Mezcal has arrived big time, and tequila drinkers are now reaching up for this next rung on the agave ladder.

In addition, whiskey drinkers are finding familiarity in mezcal's varying nuances of smoke and oak, while bartenders have found that those same mezcal attributes complement certain cocktails, especially those incorporating bourbon or scotch. But because not all mezcals are the same, we have gathered 11 of the best, so you can decide which ones are right for you.

## 3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORPORATION

### **Best Vegetarian Mezcal: Bozal Guías de Calabaza Sacrificio**

For those vegetarians and vegans who may have felt left out by some of the other choices on our list, boy, have we got a mezcal for you. Sacrificial mezcals are typically produced in small batches for fiestas or local celebrations, often using pork, chicken or lamb in the final distillation.

However, August Sebastiani decided to go a different route.

During the second distillation of this double copper pot distilled mezcal, pumpkin stems, in addition to local seasonal fruits and grains, are suspended inside the still in a basket. This locally harvested produce often includes pineapples, plantains and oranges, along with pumpkin seeds and chepiche, an aromatic Mexican herb commonly used for seasoning. The chepiche rounds out the vegetal flavors from the pumpkin stems and plantains, and creates a perfumed smoky aroma laced with orange blossoms and marzipan. The earthy flavor is rich with citrus peel and herbal notes, with a touch of eucalyptus in the finish.

### **BOZAL / GUÍAS DE CALABAZA MEZCAL**