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WHY THIS ONE PIECE OF INFORMATION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ON YOUR BOTTLE OF MEZCAL

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Making better mezcal cocktails starts with reading the bottle a little more closely.

For all the brands of tequila on the market right now, the basics of the category are relatively straightforward, especially when it comes to the raw materials that the spirits are based on: By law, tequila can only be produced from the Blue Weber agave — full stop. With mezcal, however, that rule doesn't apply: There are many different types of agave that the great spirit can be crafted from. This is where the confusion starts seeping in, since the intersection of agave variety,

3 BADGE BEVERAGE CORPORATION

micro-climate, terroir, and production decisions all play a role in the final liquid in the glass. Yet according to some experts, few things matter more than the agave itself, and where it's grown.

August Sebastiani, founder and president of 3 Badge, which produces Bozal Mezcal, likens the interplay between agave and terroir to the ways in which grape variety and vineyard characteristics affect one another. "Each agave is unique in flavor profile and taste," he notes. "And having come of age in wine, it's fascinating to see the parallels between agave and wine grapes. For instance, there can be a significant amount of terroir influence whether it be more minerality, fruit, or vegetal notes. The variety of agave itself also has common descriptors that you can find among various mezcals."

Then there are mezcals that have terminology on the label that has nothing to do with the type of agave used. Del Maguey, for example, famously highlights individual villages. Fósforo Mezcal has an expression that's labeled both with the agave variety (Tobalá) as well as the word "penca," which indicates that it's been aged (in this case for three months) with a cooked agave leaf. Bosscal has an expression called Conejo, whose vapors from the third distillation passed through a rabbit breast, which in turn flavored the liquid. **Bozal** recently released a bottle called Cempasúchil that was distilled with marigolds.

For now, however, it's the variety of agave that is getting much of the attention, and with good reason: They are a great point of entry for exploring all that this incredible spirit has to offer.

BOZAL MEZCAL