



FIDENCIO MEZCAL



Story of Fidencio

The Fidencio story has two parts: the history of Fabrica de Amigo del Mezcal and Fidencio Spirits.

Fabrica de Amigo del Mezcal is the name of the distillery that produces Fidencio Mezcal. Fidencio Jiménez, the namesake for Fidencio Mezcal, started making mezcal over 100 years ago when he moved to Santiago Matatlán, Oaxaca. He began to live the life of a Mezcalero, learning from peers and by trial-and-error. He worked closely with his son Enrique to perfect their craft and to pass down their knowledge to the next generation. In those days, even the equipment was from the land: clay pots for fermentation, distillation & storage and river reeds for tubing.

When Isaac Jiménez, Fidencio's grandson, became the mezcalero, there were a number of technological improvements that were adopted. In the 1930's the introduction of copper greatly improved the efficiency and safety of the still. In 1943 the Pan American Highway came through Oaxaca and left its mark on mezcal. The first major impact was on transportation which became faster and cheaper. Around this time oak barrels replaced clay pots for storage. This resulted in the second major impact of this time: aging. In those days, a batch of mezcal was loaded on a truck and sold, town by town, sometimes taking months to sell through a batch. As the mezcal spent time in the oak barrels, it took on additional characteristics, and it was good.

In the 1950's business was good and profits were used to buy land and expand the agave fields. This allowed total control of quality and production. By the 1980's The Jiménez family was aging, bottling and exporting mezcal. The torch was then passed to the fourth generation of Jiménez mezcaleros, brothers Octavio and Enrique. While learning the craft throughout his youth, Enrique left to attend university in Oaxaca. He graduated with a degree in Industrial Chemical Engineering. Enrique could not resist the call of his roots and returned to the family business, but not without many new ideas. In 1993 Octavio and Enrique began bottling under their brand Mezcal del Maestro.

In 1995 COMERCAM, the agency responsible for quality assurance of the DO Mezcal, successfully petitioned the government to establish the Denomination of Origen of Mezcal. In 1998 the geography was improved and in 2003, the rules of the DO became law. Fabrica de Amigo del Mezcal has always been a supporter of COMERCAM and is member #3.

Enrique, always the innovator, dreamed of a mezcal that was the purest expression of espadín. In 2006 Enrique branched out on his own and began construction of a new distillery and a dream. This new distillery was designed from top to bottom by Enrique and incorporates all the features found in traditional mezcal palenques, all except for one, the radiant heat oven. This oven is the first of its kind in Oaxaca and is the defining force behind the creation of Fidencio Mezcal.

Fidencio Spirits founders, Amy Hardy and Arik Torren, met ten years ago tending the bar of one of NYC's great restaurants. They shared a passion for wine and food and became fast friends. A few years later Amy was traveling through Puerto Escondido, Oaxaca and came across Villas Carrizalillo, a beachside hotel that was in disrepair. Since then Amy and her partner, Edward Mitchell, have transformed "The Villas" into one of the finest hotels on the Oaxacan Coast.

During the summer of 2007 Amy and Arik took a trip to Oaxaca City to taste and learn more about mezcal. During this incredible experience, they were bitten by the mezcal bug. Through friends of Amy, they had the good fortune to be introduced to Enrique, who was still building out his new distillery. Amy and Arik knew that this was the right fit and decided to pursue a partnership with Enrique before the first drop of Fidencio was made. Edward was on board as the angel investor. So, with a hunch and a handshake, Fidencio Spirits was born.