

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

TEQUILA.NET HOSTS FIRST AGAVE SPIRITS CHALLENGE IN CANCÚN, MEXICO

Judges From Three Countries Review More Than Eighty Spirits of Mexico

DENVER, Colorado (February 19, 2008)—Six expert judges from three different countries spent seven days looking for Agave spirit excellence. Judging took place at **Royal Resorts Club International** and **Hacienda Sisal Restaurant** between February 2nd and February 8th, 2008. The judges blind tasted over eighty Agave spirits and rated them in six categories: aroma, initial taste, body, finish, smoothness, and quality for price. Agave spirits from all over Mexico were eligible to compete in this inaugural Agave Spirits Challenge and dozens of Tequilas, Mezcal, Sotols and Agave based liqueurs took up the challenge.

Darin Jones, owner of **Tequila.net** was pleased with the number and quality of entries for this first competition. “The final results say it all: There are enjoyable premium spirits produced throughout Mexico, and it was exciting to see Tequila, Mezcal, and Sotol products at the top of the final ratings.”

Tasting three flights a day, each flight comprised of six to eight entries, it took a full week to complete the tasting competition. The final rankings produced the top six spirits, which were then tasted blind, head to head for the final grand tasting held on February 8th. The finals included three Tequila products, two Sotols and one Mezcal.

Winners were announced at the live event held at Hacienda Sisal Restaurant which hosted a buffet of Mexican delicacies, a mariachi band and a free public tasting of all the entries. The top Tequila, **Tequila El Gran Jubileo Extra Añejo** also captured the Top Agave Spirit award. **Mezcal El Zacatecano Añejo** was named top Mezcal and **Hacienda de Chihuahua Sotol H5 Extra Añejo** received the top Sotol award. **Hacienda de Chihuahua Sotol** also captured the “Top Spirit Family” award, given to the highest rated brand with three or more entries.

The judging committee was a who’s who of the world’s Agave experts. **Ricardo Cisneros** is Master Tequilier and professor at University of Caribe. **Elena Gamarra** is a sommelier and professor at the same university in Mexico. **Lance Cutler** is a winemaker and author of *The Tequila Lover’s Guide to Mexico and Mezcal*. **Shawn Soole** is a sommelier and associate editor of *Chilled Magazine*, and was named one of Australia’s Best Bartenders of the year in 2006. **Mark Cannon** is a Tequila historian and artist who owns PocoTequila.com. “**Tequila Joe**” **Horrigan** is a spirit educator, writer, and owner of TastingAficionados.com.

“It is wonderful to see this kind of attention focused on the various Agave spirits of Mexico,” said Ricardo Cisneros. “Agave spirits are the flavor of Mexico and as such they reflect directly upon our culture and heritage.

Shawn Soole commented, “I know a lot about cocktails, but this tasting opened my eyes to the length and breadth of variety in Agave spirits. I had no idea of the complexity they offer. I feel like I’ve discovered a whole new world of aroma and flavor.”

All entries competed for Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum medals along with “Best in Category” for designated categories. These best of category winners included **Tequila Arette Blanco, Vida Tequila Reposado, Tequila Tres Mujeres Añejo, El Gran Jubileo Extra Añejo and Reserva del Señor Premium Almendrado.**

Local Cancún artists and designers were present for the Bottle/Packaging design competition held Friday evening at the final tasting. The “Best Overall Presentation” was awarded to **Partida Elegante Tequila**, “Best Label Presentation” went to **Jose Cuervo Platino Tequila**, “Best Bottle Design” went to **Tequila Rey de Copas**, “Most Creative” went to **5150 Tequila**, “Most Unique” went to **Tequila Sol Azul**, and “Most Artistic” was awarded to the family of **Del Maguey Single Village Mezcal**s. Final awards for both the tasting and bottle design competition are available for viewing on the event web site, www.AGAVE.net.

“We want to thank the participants, our judges, and our sponsors,” Darin Jones concluded. “Everyone involved assisted in making our inaugural event a huge success. The Agave Spirits Challenge is unique compared to other tasting competitions, as we take the time to taste the spirit, allowing a complete rating which includes the spirit’s finish and enjoyability, and the fact that it is only open to the wonderful Spirits of Mexico.”

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Contacts:

Darin Jones, AGAVE Spirits Challenge Director
303-868-8248

Veronica Rivera, Event Coordinator
(Para información en Español) 303-204-0541

<http://www.Agave.net>
<http://www.Tequila.net>

TEQUILA.net is a community web site for Agave products, with a database of over 500 reviewable listings, Agave news and new brand announcements, web links to distillery and brand web sites, and member forums.

Event Location / Sponsors:

Royal Resorts – Club International de Cancun – www.RoyalResorts.com

Hacienda Sisal Mexican Grill – www.haciendasisal.com

Event Photography – www.VistaImagery.com