



Vino Mex

History of Mexican Wines The modern era

Chapter 4: After the second World War

Only in the period of stability post-1940 did a modern winemaking industry emerge, helped by rigorous protectionism. There was revived interest in table wines in the twentieth century.

After World War II the government quadrupled tariffs on imported wines, and when the 1970's brought a fad for sweet, light, often sparkling bulk wines, the domestic market grew to about two million cases per year. But there were further setbacks though when the deregulation of imports in 1982 brought competition from cheap, junk quality foreign wines which forced many estates out of business.

Thanks to large investments and the work of capable foreign technicians, including many Italians, the few surviving wine estates turn out products today which compare extremely well to those from other countries with more illustrious reputations. This has led to the increased reputation of Mexican wines, undoubtedly helped by the popularity of Mexican cuisine all over the world but due also to the pleasure given to connoisseurs by the discovery of good quality wines with lots of personality.

But in 1989 free trade arrangements with the European Union caused the bottom to fall out of the domestic market. Prices and production fell by nearly ninety percent under competition from inexpensive, particularly German and Chilean, imports.

Mexico's economic crisis and devaluation of the peso in 1994 caused unemployment and other economic hardships from which the country has yet recovered. Competition from low-priced imports however is still a serious factor for developing wineries.

Nowadays the growing of grapes has three purposes: eating and wine making, production of raisins and industrial use (e.g. distilling). The end of the XX th. century has seen major changes resulting in greatly improved wines.

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