



Vino Mex

History of Mexican Wines

The wine industry got its start in Mexico in 1524, when the governor of New Spain, conquistador Hernando Cortes, ordered every Spaniard with a land grant from the crown to plant 1,000 grape vines for every 100 Indians in his employ, every year for five years.

In the 16th century, Spanish settlers and missionaries took Mexican vines with them to Peru, Chile and Argentina, and in the 17th and 18th centuries, to the Western United States.

Precolumbian and Spanish age

Chapter 1: The beginning and the development

The Mexicans are the oldest American wine producers. In the pre-Columbian age (before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors) the Indians used the vine to produce a drink to which they added other fruits and honey.

Nowadays, in some regions the wine of "acachul" is still produced with grapes and wild fruits. The wild vines called "cimarrones" carried heavy loads of grapes, but they were too acid to make wine with it. The first European vineyards in Mexico started with the Spanish conquerors and the beginning of the Missions.

The "conquistadors" found a lot of wild vines but no wine, a beverage which was desperately needed in order to celebrate mass and to wash down their meals. To satisfy these needs, in 1542 Forenoon Karats decreed that all the Spanish to whom native workers had been assigned (in effect as slaves) had to put down one thousand vines per hundred workers. This measure resulted in the planting of around 5,000 grape vines, which formed the basis of South America's first wine production

In the State of Baja California, the growing of vine followed their installation of the missioners. They transformed the local deserts in agricultural zones and vineyards.

The second generation of fathers even went to the US Californian State. Their leader brother Junipero Serra established 21 missions from San Diego to Sonoma, where they grew well known vines. The variety planted by the

fathers got even a special name: the mission grapes. Nowadays this variety still exists and is called "criolla" all over South America.

The first places where vineyards were developed, are Puebla (Tehuacan and Huejotzingo) followed by Queretaro, Aguascalientes, Coahuila and later in California and Sonora. Back to 1524, Hernan Cortes imposed by law the plantation of grapes from European origin in combination with local ones. This was the start of a hybrid culture of vines.

In 1593, a spanish captain, Don Francisco de Urdiñola started the first vineyards in the state of Coahuila at El Rosario Hacienda on the estate of Santa Maria de las Parras. On the coat of arms of Queretaro, which dates from 1660, some vineyards can be seen.

The oldest winery in the Americas was founded at Parras, at Mission Santa Maria in the north-central state of Coahuila in 1596.

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- <http://mexicanwines.homestead.com/HISTORY.html>