



Vino Mex

More about Mexican Wines Opinion about Mexican wines (anonymous)

1. What about a bottle of Mexican Wine?

You'll find some, but not many in the US. Because of the heavy export duties to the United States, they haven't been recognized as they should. One suggestion is Duetto, made in both California and Mexico. It's made from two kinds of grapes grown in each place.

Connoisseurs of both domestic and imported wines will appreciate Sancho Panza Wine Bistro, hidden within Plaza Las Glorias Hotel. Owner Ron Kleist stocks 160 types of wine from South Africa to Chile. Bottles range from \$15 - \$200. Jazz musicians perform every night, and Wednesday is wine tasting night - for a nominal fee, you can have an appetizer and sample all the wines you want. "I was in a phone booth in Des Moines, Iowa, setting up a company there," says Kleist.

"It was snowing, and I said 'that's enough.'" He came to Cabo six years ago and named his restaurant after Don Quixote's squire. When it comes to Mexican wines, he recommends those from Valle de Guadeloupe, near Ensenada. Chateau Carmou is another good choice, he adds.

2. The Mexican wine industry

While you could say that Mexico has the oldest wine industry in the hemisphere, it is really a much younger industry than you might think. Most of Mexico's wine is made in Baja, but with the exception of Santo Tomas, none of today's wineries existed there prior to the early 1990s. Even Santo Tomas is a very, very different winery than it was 10 years ago -- they've updated techniques and modernized equipment. While there are really only a handful of small wineries in Baja today, the excellent growing climate of the Valle de Guadalupe could portend the growth of several more...if only Mexicans drank more wine. Mexico is not a wine-drinking country. People drink beer and they drink tequila. They might reach for a brandy, but very seldom do they reach for a wine. (Mexican per capita consumption is about 2 glasses per year, compared to about 10 bottles in the United States and about 60 bottles in France.)

Mexico is a country with a fascinating winemaking history and several young, energetic vineyards producing some interesting wines and even the occasional excellent vintage. An adventurous palate would do well to give them a try.

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