

Patterson's The Tasting Panel

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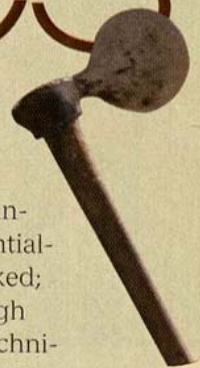
THE TASTING
PANEL

Five Days, Five Distilleries

CamperEnglish
discovers
five unique
experiences
in
Tequila

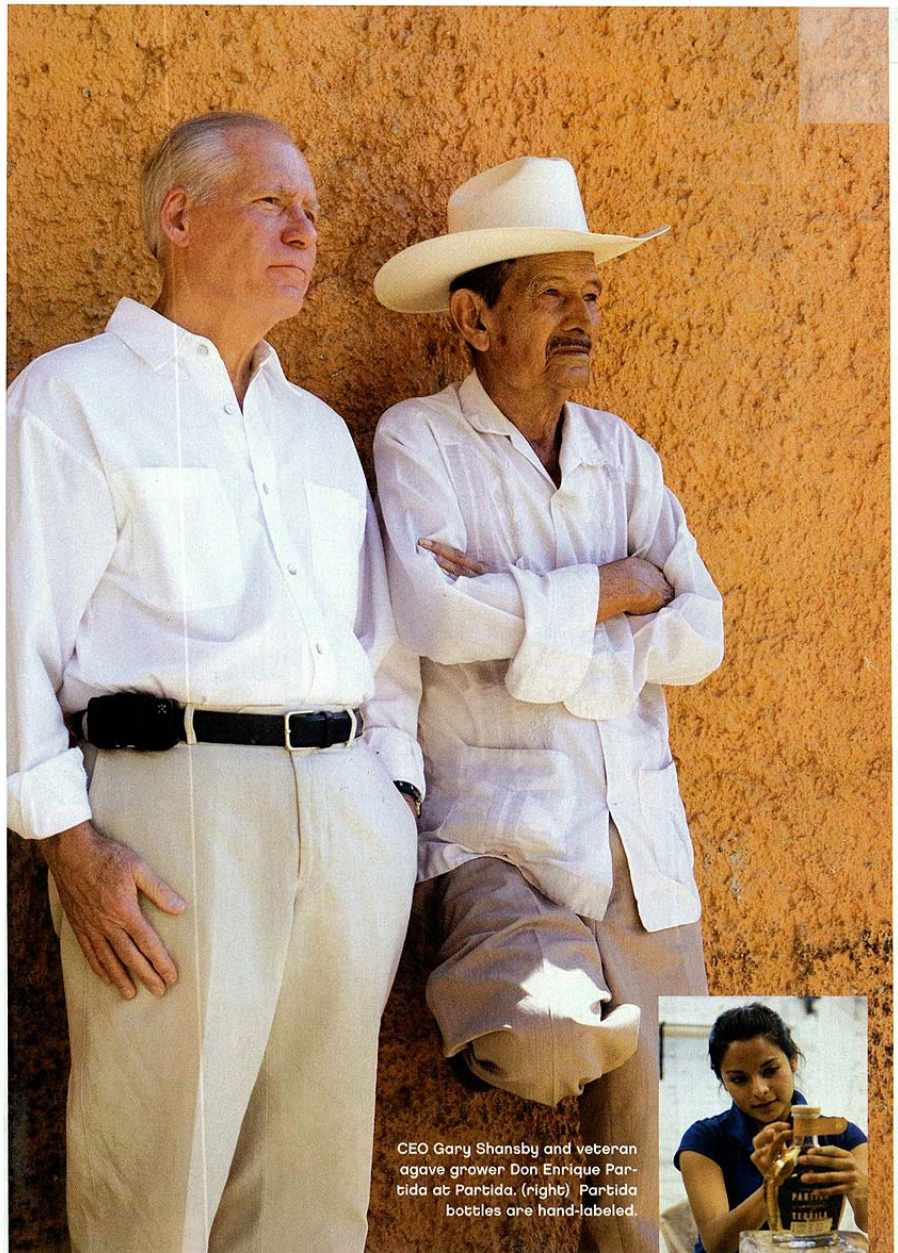
Recently I traveled to Mexico to learn more about the country's native agave spirit. The production process is essentially the same at all distilleries: Agave is harvested and baked; then the sugar is extracted, fermented and distilled. But through five back-to-back distillery visits, I was able to absorb many technical details and understand the subtle differences in production at each site. Even more important, each stop on the tour revealed a different overriding philosophy that guided production, promotion and branding.

photos by Jenn Farrington



Hands On

Boutique producer **Partida** demonstrated a personal, hand-made touch to production that's not immediately apparent in the brand's sleek and refined packaging. Estate-grown agave is baked here in modern autoclave ovens, but it's fed by rustic pitchfork into the shredding and pressing machine that removes sugar from the agave fibers. They even put me to work. An agent for the CRT (the Consejo Regulador del Tequila, the Mexican body that oversees and regulates tequila) was on hand to open a special 27-month aged barrel of tequila, which I was assigned the job of pouring, capping and sealing on the Partida bottling line.



CEO Gary Shansby and veteran agave grower Don Enrique Partida at Partida. (right) Partida bottles are hand-labeled.