

# Patterson's The Tasting Panel

Sherman Oaks, CA  
September 2008  
Circulation: 30,000



Agave awareness is the theme at tequila-savvy bars in two thirsty American towns

## San Francisco: On A Mission at Elixir

story and photos by Deborah Parker Wong

At his Elixir saloon in San Francisco's Mission District, H. Joseph Ehrmann is on a mission: to get consumers "over the psychological hump" of their first and often painful experiences with tequila. At his popular Thursday night Cocktail Club at Elixir, Ehrmann (aka "H") might begin by introducing his audience to tequila in its purest form with the beautiful, complex aromas and flavors of 100 percent blue agave blanco. "I demonstrate the effect that barrel aging has on distilled spirits and illustrate how the flavors of agave progress with age," he explains, referring to the blanco, reposado, añejo and extra añejo expressions evaluated. Ehrmann points to Partida tequila for these lessons.

Partida's state-of-the-art distillery is built around vast agave plantations that thrive on the red volcanic soils of the Amatián valley floor. Much of the Partida estate is farmed organically, and for Elixir, the first bar in San Francisco to be a Bay Area Certified Green Business, Ehrmann places a priority on products that are produced with respect for the environment. "Being green is a way of thinking as much as it is a way of doing business; we've established a model that bars can use to lessen their impact on the environment." Ehrmann, who has visited the Partida estate and seen firsthand the care and dedication it takes to cultivate agave destined for the production of ultra-premium products, keeps an updated list of "green" drinks—beer, wine and cocktails made with organic produce, spices and spirits—on his website.

With dozens of tequilas on his historic mahogany bar and new brands being launched almost daily, Ehrmann is quick to point out that the segment "is quickly becoming saturated" and notes that companies such as Partida that make superior products and are eager to partner with him on events, rise to the top. Ehrmann knows his reputation as a consultant, educator and mixologist has hit the mainstream when consumers make long treks to taste signature and updated classic cocktails from his innovative list. "Whenever I talk about a cocktail in print or on the radio, we stock up in anticipation of the requests."



**H. Joseph Ehrmann of Elixir, one of the oldest continuously-operating saloons in San Francisco.**