

PICK YOUR POISON:

Tequila

by A.M. Stofko

Tequila has come a long way from being the college party-shooter that leads to blackouts and next-day regrets. It's no longer licking the salt and slamming back a shot. Recently, tequila has become as refined as wine.

"I think tequila, in general, is going through a change whereby it's losing that stigma and is gaining a reputation for sophistication that it never had before in the United States," says Richard Poe of Dos Lunas Tequila. He adds that only recently has the full array of brands and quality of premium tequilas become available in the U.S. "[Premium

tequilas] have a different taste and a completely different result the next day. ...People are enjoying [tequila] in a much different way."

Tequila, or mezcals to be more accurate, remains North America's first and oldest indigenous spirit. "When the Spaniards invaded Mexico, they brought with them the distilling techniques they learned from the Moors," Barbara Sweetman of Caballeros Inc. says. "[The Spaniards] located local ingredients to use to make spirits and choose the agave plant, as the sugar content is extremely high."

For the record, all tequilas are a type of mezcal, but not all mezcals are tequila. Like most other spirits, such as

cognac or champagne, tequila's production is limited to specific regions and agave varieties. So, if given the right circumstances, you could grow agaves in your backyard and distill them in your basement, but by law, you wouldn't have tequila.

Plus, the region where the agaves are grown affects the taste. "There's a distinct flavor difference between the lowlands of Jalisco and the highlands," Poe says. "[Tequila] is very similar to wine, and that's what makes it so interesting. Like with wine, you can get a completely different taste just from where the grapes are grown. That situation is no different with tequila and agave." When tequila is produced with agaves from the highlands, it results in a sweeter taste, he says. Whereas agaves from the lowlands produce a dryer taste.

It should also be pointed out that you should, hopefully, never find a worm or any other type of critter for that matter, in a bottle of tequila.

Sweetman says the larvae of the butterfly, which lives in the agave, has been used as a seasoning and ingredient in Oaxacan cuisine for centuries. (Mezcals are produced in Oaxaca). "Typically an agave worm is placed in ... mezcal, which adds a distinctive flavor to the spirit."

The scene in "Pee-wee's Big Adventure" where he dances on the bar to The Champs's song where the only lyrics are, "Tequila!" wouldn't have been the same without it.

"My college years probably would've been a little different, but that's the fun answer," Poe says. "I think it's important for any country to have a true product that's the face of the nation for the rest of the world to enjoy. For Mexico, it happens to be tequila."

6 OF PARK CITY

HOLLYWOOD IS ALL ABOUT CONNECTIONS
HOLLYWOOD'S BEST ARE CONNECTED TO PARK CITY



BACKSTORY:

Before he was swallowed into the "CSI" franchise, **Gary Sinise** made it into Hollywood as the surly, Vietnam vet Lt. Dan in "Forrest Gump." Although the closest he's gotten to Park City was playing a show in Denver, he can find a few friends to hook him up

PHOTO CREDITS:
GARY SINISE: USED
WITH PERMISSION OF
FLICKR USER DBKING

HILL HARPER: BY DANIEL
C. HODGES

SERGEY BRIN: BY ALLEN
LEW AND EUGENE
CHUN

RANDY HEREMAN:
COURTESY OF RANDY
HEREMAN

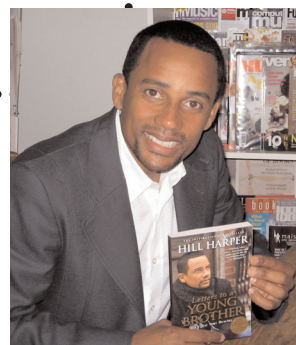
SKULLCANDY: BY SETH
"CHORAZIN" DODSON



Sergey Brin, one of the founders of Google. Brin enjoys kitesurfing, a sport that



Actress **Lori Petty** on an episode. She starred in "Broken Arrow," a movie produced by



Like **Hill Harper**, his co-star in "CSI: NY" who also worked with



Dutch kitesurfer **Randy Hereman** who's on the rise in it. He's sponsored by



Skullcandy, the Park City-based company that has been gaining popularity across the globe with their line of headphones and other fine products.

A/V PICKS

The blessing of the Internet is also its curse: the seemingly infinite amount of media out there.

We'll highlight a few gems you may have missed. Check out our blog for click-through links: myspace.com/flipsidemag

VIDEO PICK:

"Soulja Boy Pooh" by RastaBwoy

This video is absurd, surreal and ridiculous – which is precisely why it's hilarious to watch. Whoever decided it'd be a brilliant idea to dub over the audio of a Winnie the Pooh cartoon with Soulja Boy's "Crank Dat" is somewhere between madness and comical genius. (Rating: P G-13; some swearing in the song)

AUDIO PICK:

The Sound of Young America



A show that once described radio as the theater of the mind, The Sound of Young America has grown leaps and bounds. It originally started as a freestyle-variety college radio show with three hosts. The last host standing, Jesse Thorn, continues on with interview-based programming now. Past guests have included Henry Rollins, Brendon Small (Home Movies, Metalocalypse) and They Might Be Giants. (Rating: M; the show is uncensored and is recommended for an adult audience only.)

PHOTO BY NOË MONTES