Centuries of tradition paired with a passion for innovation is helping Tequila Corralejo spread the word about the quality of 100% blue agave Tequila

KEEPING ONE eye firmly on the past while continuing to innovate and reinvent itself, Tequila Corralejo has built a brand rooted in its Mexican origins, but one that is intent on pushing the image of Tequila in a modern direction. Located on the edge of the Jalisco hills in Guanajuato, Hacienda Corralejo was founded in 1755 by Don Pedro Sánchez de Tagle. The brand’s modern era began in 1994, when current owner, Leonardo Rodríguez Moreno, bought the property and restored it to its former glory. With this renaissance came a drive to produce a range that not only met, but exceeded the quality requirements for denominación de origen Tequila.

Another element setting Corralejo apart is the unique wood combination used in its barrels, which balance the various influences of American/Canadian, French and Mexican oak. In addition, Corralejo seeks out Canadian and French barrels formerly used by US whiskey producers to add a further layer of complexity to its Tequilas. Building on this quality-focused base, Corralejo continues to innovate via new releases and marketing initiatives. In the 77 countries Corralejo is exported to, sales have been steadily rising.

“Agave, like Tequila Corralejo, was born from the stunning majestic mysticism of the Mexican lands. The bottle represents Tequila as a high-quality nectar that embraces legends, culture and traditions,” enthuses Raffaele Berardi, CEO of
Fraternity Spirits, Tequila Corralejo’s global marketing arm. He adds: “For those who like to squeeze every last drop of enjoyment from their lives, and who measure their success through their experiences, Tequila Corralejo is a bringer of joy and fun that allows consumers to expand their horizons.”

REPOSITIONING THE BRAND
New for this year will be a revamping of Corralejo. “We’re working on repositioning the Tequila Corralejo brand to create a fresh, contemporary image that reflects its Mexican heritage, the history behind the brand and the pride we have for our bottle shape,” says Berardi. He adds: “We’ve also created a new ‘100% de Agave’ logo to highlight the fact that our Tequila line isn’t moving to the mixes category.”

ProWein, which took place in Düsseldorf in March, was an important date in the company’s calendar, with Fraternity Spirits receiving “amazing feedback” about its brands, proving that the European market is starting to show more interest in 100% agave Tequilas.

With the ultra-premium Tequila category hotter than ever, Fraternity Spirits is due to add three new luxury SKUs to its agave offer. The importance of premiumisation is not lost on Berardi. “Premium and ultra-premium products are vital to a brand’s portfolio,” he says, adding, “Having a breadth of price points and quality to offer our costumers is essential to ensure that we have products that suit every location and demographic of traveller.”

As such, the Mexico-based company has launched a trio of 100% blue agave ultra-premium expressions, elevating the Tequila Corralejo brand into the upper echelons of the category: Corralejo Silver 1753, Corralejo Reposado 1810, and Corralejo Extra Añejo 1821. Berardi admits that Tequila remains a niche proposition, which has forced the company to defend its ground. “Sales are slowly growing – there is an increasing awareness among consumers about the quality of 100% agave Tequila,” Berardi says.

He adds: “The appreciation is there but from a small base. We’re spending a lot of time communicating the quality message so consumers get closer to the product.”

Keen to provide a diverse portfolio, the company is aware of the need to offer products outside of Tequila, which has led to the creation of both Prohibido rum and Boker vodka. Ron Prohibido 12 and Gran Reserva 15 are premium artisanal rums produced via a solera system, which utilises a series of oak casks arranged in three tiers. The barrels on the top contain the youngest rums, those in the middle tier contain older rums and the barrels on the bottom are filled with the oldest liquid.

This Mexican rum was forbidden from being produced by the King of Spain in the early 18th century, as he viewed it as a threat to local spirits production. Known as Habanero rum, La Havana was the last port of call for the rum barrels on the way back to Spain from the New World.

Prohibido rum pays homage to the historic drop and the battles it faced. According to Berardi, it boasts “silky dry-fruit flavours with accents of vanilla, chocolate, coffee and a touch of caramel, alongside sweet notes of raisins”.

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**The Tequila Corralejo range**

- **BLANCO**: bottled directly from the copper still to show the purest expression of Blue Weber agave
- **REPOSADO**: aged for four months in French, American and white oak
- **ANEJO**: aged for 12 months in new, toasted American oak barrels
- **TRIPLE DESTILADO**: while most quality Tequilas undergo double distillation, this is triple distilled
- **GRAN CORRALEJO**: reserve style, matured in barrels for at least two years
- **99,000 HORAS**: limited-edition añejo expression

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