

# DON MATEO

---

# DE LA SIERRA

**‘With several other Mezcals from Siembra now appearing, the world of Mezcals has never been so exciting.’ - The Philadelphia Inquirer**

**Year Founded:** 1840

**Region:** Michoacán, Mexico

**Owner/Winemaker:**  
The Vieyra family

**Known for:** For 6 generations, this family is known for making Mezcal in Michoacán.

**Fun Fact:** Don Mateo is one of the few producers whose brands are certified ‘bat friendly’

-Sustainable-

The Vieyra family began their journey as maestro mezcaleros in 1840. The brand is not named after the first maestro, but the 3rd generation, Emilio’s great great grandfather Mateo Rangel. Don Mateo fought and died for social causes. In remembrance of him, the Vieyra family continues to fight for these causes and change the industry the only way they can, through their actions. The Vieyra family uses sustainable field practices, like using cows and chickens instead of herbicides and pesticides and leaving the land as untouched as possible. Trees from their property were never cut or moved and the agaves are spaciouly planted to avoid soil erosion in efforts to maintain a natural balance to the fields. The terroir of Michoacán is characterized by its rivers; the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt with many active, dormant and extinct volcanoes; and the variety of forests from conifer to tropical. The Vieyra Vinata is cut into the side of a hill in the steep highlands above Morelia in the Rio Balsas region surrounded by temperate evergreen forest.



## **Don Mateo de la Sierra 'Alto' Mezcal**

Made with agave Inaequidens or “maguey alto”. This species grows between 6000 and 8000 ft elevations. This is a stunning agave with a broad rosette of green leaves and a diameter of up to 10 ft. It prefers temperate climates and does well with cold and frost. Traditionally, this species of agave has many uses. This small-batch mezcal is pit roasted then chopped by hand and shredded. Using wooden fermentation and ambient yeast this mezcal truly captures the terroir of Pino Bonito. Distillation is done in the traditional, Filipino style. Pine and Oyamel stills with spring water for adjustments.



### Don Mateo de la Sierra Pechuga

This small-batch mezcal using Agave Cupreata is pit roasted then chopped by hand and shredded. Using wooden fermentation and ambient yeast, this mezcal truly captures the terroir of Pino Bonito. The 5-cut distillation is traditional to Michoacán; Filipino style with Pine and Oyamel wood stills where these 5 cuts are blended and a small amount of spring water is added for alcohol and flavor adjustments. Before the second distillation, the matriarch of the Vieyra family, Delia Vargas Vieyra, prepares her family recipe of ingredients, adding special characteristics to the body, aroma, and flavor of the mezcal. This recipe was a creation of her own, pulling from the experiences of growing up in a house of mezcaleros. Iguana, venison, and turkey (along with dried fruits and nuts) are hung inside the still, the vapors then produced interact and absorb the contents of the bag bringing the unique profile of aromatic roasted notes like guajillo chili, anchovy chile and roasted pineapple. It expresses the mineral notes reminiscent of spring water with an elegant note to moist earth and tropical fruits such as melon and mango. The taste confirms the notes of dried chiles and roasted ripe pineapple. A mezcal of good intensity of flavor and medium persistence, warm with alcohol.



### Don Mateo de la Sierra Cupreata

Don Mateo Cupreata is made with semi-wild agave Cupreata by maestro mezcalero Emilio Vieyra. The terroir of Michoacan is characterized by its rivers; the Trans-Mexican volcanic belt with many active, dormant and extinct volcanoes; and the variety of forests from conifer to tropical. The Vieyra Vinata is cut into the side of a hill in the steep highlands above Morelia in the Rio Balsas region surrounded by temperate evergreen forest. The high-altitude climate is characterized by sandy-soil and moderate rainfall. The forest floor is soft with pine needles, moss and a red sandy clay; all of which are influences in the flavor profile of Don Mateo Cupreata. The agave used in this mezcal begin life in the Vieyra agave nursery. Once they grow to a healthy size, they are replanted on the mountain slopes surrounding the Palenque and are left to grow undisturbed until reaching maturity. Once mature, the agave Cupreata are roasted in a pit oven, fermented using naturally occurring yeasts in Oak Wood tanks, and double distilled in a Filipino style still.

Conservationist Rodrigo Medellín's efforts to save the lesser long-nosed bat is tied to Mexico's blue agave plant



**About that bat thing:** Aside from consuming loads of crop-destroying insects, bats are plant pollinators, and Medellín's (see left) lesser long-nosed bat pollinates the cactus-like blue agave plant, the single plant species from which Mexican tequila is produced. Medellín was instrumental in persuading farmers to allow agave plants to flower. Previously, many farmers, seeking to boost the agave's sugar content, cut off the flowers before they could be pollinated, instead using mono-cropped agave. But after crops were decimated by disease caused by a mixture of fungus and bacteria, some farmers, on Medellín's advice, began setting aside 5 percent of their land for flowering agave. In 2014, Medellín hooked up with the nonprofit Tequila Interchange Project, an alliance of producers, scientists, and bartenders that advocates the preservation of traditional agave farming, more naturally pollinated wild agave, and other sustainable, environmentally friendly practices.