



THE NEW STAR

by Eric Maynard

Everyone is acquainted with standard margaritas, but tequila has taken on a much needed spotlight! Most of us would be lying if we denied making the pilgrimage to Mexico during our early twenties and overindulging in cheap tequila and all-you-can-drink margaritas. Despite its reputation, tequila can be refined, cutting edge, and enjoyed in a variety of ways. This is your guide to understanding the basics of this libation and becoming more educated when ordering off the menu.

The aging process of tequila can be used to classify its categories. The first, and least expensive as White, Silver or Gold tequila. Aged for no more than 2 months in white oak barrels, this type is commonly mixed into sugar and lime margaritas. If this is your preference, pair with a citrus-flavored tilapia or chicken dish. The next type is aged longer, tastes smoother, and should be consumed without mixers. These are identified as Reposado or Añejo tequilas, and they are great with entrées. Cajun-inspired plates or meals spiced with garlic match well with Reposados, and the Oak flavor in the tequila enhances the meal's flavors and spiciness.

The final category pairs perfectly for dessert and can be enjoyed as an after dinner drink. Classified as Extra Añejo, it is aged at least six years and can be sipped with chocolate or coffee influenced desserts. Extra Añejo is the most refined and most expensive type of tequila available, and it can be a pleasing substitution for traditional cognac or Scotch drinks.

THIS *with* THAT

TEQUILA	AGE	MIXER	PAIRING
WHITE, SILVER OR GOLD	LESS THAN 2 MONTHS	SUGAR MIXES AND MARGARITAS	CITRUS-FLAVORED TILAPIA OR CHICKEN
REPOSADO/ANEJO	MONTHS TO 6 YEARS	STRAIGHT UP	CAJUN, SPICY, OR GARLIC-SEASONED PLATES
EXTRA ANEJO	MORE THAN 6 YEARS	STRAIGHT UP	CHOCOLATE OR COFFEE-INFLUENCED DESSERTS