

MEXICO

SPECIFICATIONS (What you have to know)	DISTRICTS, COMMUNES AND VINEYARDS Baja California
HISTORY	Americas' oldest wine industry From the 1960s onwards: - Demand for base wine for distillation into brandy (Mexico is a huge producer) and cheap, often sweet, still and sparkling wine - Foreign investment (e.g. Domecq, Martell etc) - Protectionist duties on imports of wines and spirits
CLIMATE & WEATHER	- Mediterranean climate - Cold Alaska current causing morning fogs, and providing useful humidity for the vines - Rainfall very low at around 250 mm
GRAPE VARIETIES	- European black varieties: e.g. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Nebbiolo, Syrah and Carignan - Varieties found in California: e.g. Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and Ruby Cabernet - Some American hybrids - White varieties, e.g. Colombard, Trebbiano and Palomino (also used for brandy production) and Chenin Blanc
VITICULTURE	- Strong Californian influence especially from UC Davis - Use of the AXR1 rootstock, which succumbed to phylloxera - Irrigation used whenever possible from underground aquifers - Salination problems - Espalier training widely used - Still some ungrafted vines
WINE STYLES	- Best wines full-bodied reds, with Petite Sirah and Zinfandel particularly successful - Petite Sirah makes dark, well-balanced, tannic wines, not particularly distinctive in flavour but certainly agreeable and drinkable
PRODUCTION & BUSINESS	- 4th largest wine producer in Latin America (Brazil is 3rd), with some 50,000 ha of vineyards - Only 10% of vineyards produce grapes destined to be made into wine for drinking; the rest = grapes for distillation into brandy, or table grapes and grapes for drying - Around 1 million hl of wine produced in an average year Producers 3 major producers and a small number of boutique wineries, mainly producing Bordeaux- style blends Mexico has a tradition of blending imported wine. There is now a requirement that a wine bearing the mention Hecho en Mexico on the label must be made entirely from Mexican grown grapes.



