

Guide to Arizona-based tequilas

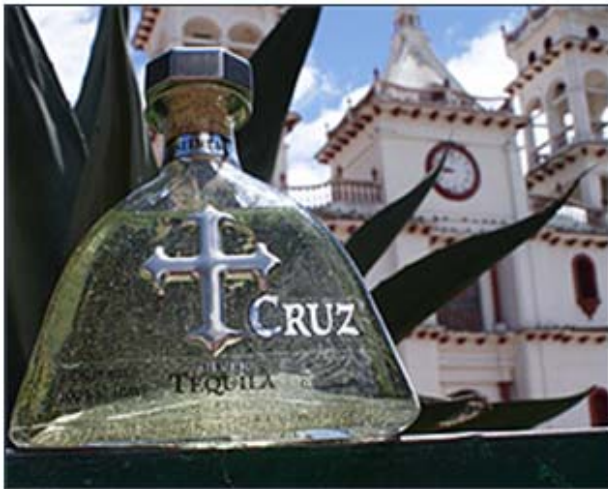
by *Kellie Hwang* - Apr. 11, 2011 02:51 PM
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With Cinco de Mayo coming up, tequila will be in high demand.

But before you grimace at the thought of shooting something that tastes like drain cleaner, consider the recent boom in boutique tequilas. These upscale brands boast 100 percent blue agave, distinctive flavor profiles and a smooth, "burn-free" taste. Several boutique tequilas have come out of Arizona, and are earning positive reviews.

For those still learning about tequila, the blanco, plata or silver varieties are un-aged, reposado has been aged for at least two months but less than a year, añejo has been aged for at least one year, and extra añejo has been aged for at least three years.

We break down the six different Arizona-based brands:



Cruz

What's the story: Arizona State University graduates, and brothers, Saulo and Joseph "Pep" Katcher, and friend Todd Nelson, launched Scottsdale-based Cruz Tequila in 2008. It's now a fixture in Valley bars, standing out on shelves with its signature pyramid-shaped bottle shining with a big silver cross on the front. Tequila lovers can find Cruz all over Arizona, as well as in Texas, Colorado and

Idaho.

Types: silver (\$40-\$45) and reposado (\$48-\$53).

Where to find it: Albertson's, BevMo!, Walgreens, Safeway, Royal Palms Resort in Scottsdale, The W Scottsdale Hotel and Residences, Macayo's Mexican Kitchens Valley-wide, the Vig and the Vig Uptown in Phoenix.

Website: cruztequila.com.