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*Chris Radomski's La Adelita Tequila
Shines at the 2019 Food & Wine Classic
in Aspen, Colorado*

STORY BY JONATHAN CRISTALDI / PHOTOS BY DEVIN BERKO

Chris Radomski can't stop reinventing the wheel. He did it with wine, having developed both world-class cult expressions and luxury value brands. Then he did it again with whiskey, joined by Ethan Wayne, son of the late John Wayne: After they unearthed the legendary actor's personal recipe for bourbon, buried among his memorabilia, they went all in on a collaboration that brought the recipe to fruition in the form of Duke Spirits.

Now, never one to rest on his laurels, Radomski is at it again. I caught up with him at the Gorsuch Ski Cafe in Aspen, Colorado, to get the scoop on his latest and greatest effort—La Adelita Tequila.

"I am fortunate to have a partner who is the proprietor of Hacienda la Capilla, a boutique distillery in the Los Altos region of Jalisco just east of Guadalajara," he said. "It has its origins in the late 19th century; its first owner was Don Antonio 'El Amo' Aceves, who devoted his life to cultivating agave and tequila production. Here, we oversee the farming and harvesting of agave that averages seven to eight years in age. The rich, red, high-altitude soils are among some of the best terroirs in Mexico, which allows us to farm and harvest in a method akin to cult wineries in Napa." In order to ensure optimum sugar levels and ripeness, he added, "We pick piña by piña and take only the best."

Once harvested, the piñas are taken to the distillery, cut in half, and steamed to convert the starchy sap into fermentable sugar. After the piñas are crushed and shredded, the sugary juice is fermented. Distillation is performed by hand in small copper pot stills originally acquired from pre-Castro Cuba and brought to Mexico.

"In Mexican history, Adelita was the woman who pioneered and led the women's fighting forces for their rights in the Mexican Revolution," explained Radomski. "The bands of women that fought became known as the 'Adelitas,' and their struggle, strength, and perseverance were legendary. We wanted to pay homage to them: in short, a renegade persona representing some truly exceptional tequilas."

The La Adelita portfolio includes five labels, all texturally rich and beautifully balanced: Blanco (\$44); Reposado (\$49), which is barrel-aged for nine to 12 months; Anejo (\$55), typically aged two years; Extra Anejo (\$120), a blend of three- to five-year-old barrel-aged tequila; and, lastly, Anejo Cristalino (\$73), a two-year-aged Anejo whose color is removed via filtration. For more information, visit laadelitatequila.com. ■■



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