



Mezcal, hispanic origin, not spanish

Writer by Karina Aviléz | La Jornada Newspaper

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FURNACES ARE LOCATED IN TLAXCALA, BY ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALOGY, VERY SIMILAR TO EXISTING FURNACES USED IN THE COOKING OF Maguey FOR PRODUCING MEZCAL

The trace led to the year 400 BC. Found pots, pans, ovens, ie a form of social organization, and then the real story: mezcal distillation of Spanish not introduced to our lands, as has been done since colonial believe, but it is a process performed much earlier, since pre.

Evidence: the ovens found containing residues of maguey. And it seems incredible now there are still indigenous groups that perform the production of mezcal as their ancestors. In fact, these communities are located in areas mezcateras highest in the country, like in ancient times.

Research by anthropologists from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mari Carmen Serra Puche, Jesus Lazcano Arce and Carlos Manuel de la Torre, under the direction of the first, is demonstrating this knowledge that, if confirmed, would establish that does not distilling mezcal in 1650, as indicated by the first reports, but 400 years before Christ. It would bring down a belief that has existed for nearly four centuries.

Survivor all kinds of efforts to stifle the same, since the colonizers "banned the production" of mezcal, the old way of ma-

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king the drink is part of the cultural heritage that is disappearing. Today we have our "own colonizers" who, regardless of ancestral heritage, the disdain and try to kill him. So the research of academics is also proposed rescue this activity, which has stood some 25 centuries.

THE ROUTE OF MEZCAL

At first not imagine that his excavations in the residential area of Nativitas, Tlaxcala, would lead to other routes. They found house foundations, mud flats, but there was more to be explained: the presence of ovens outside the homes.

"We put in doubt that these furnaces for ceramics serve, as indicated earlier reports, and established the idea that there could have been cooked agave pineapples in order to produce, in principle, which is now known as tepache" Lazcano Arce account.

Later, he says, found lots of pots and hypothesized that had been used for distilling mezcal. It began in 1998, the mezcal Route Project.

The journey has been intense, says anthropologist. To date we have visited about 35 indigenous communities" to search producers having a rustic activity in the production of mezcal, allowing us to see what working tools used, what is their form of organization, which would help to establish whether the distillation has a pre-Hispanic "he says.

The findings are striking: "The archaeological furnaces are located in Tlaxcala, by ethnographic analogy, very similar to existing furnaces used in the cooking of maguery for producing mezcal."

But their findings beyond localized instruments. The foundations of housing units Nativitas can observe that the houses are associated with the furnaces. The analogy is that indigenous groups today mezcal made in a rustic home also have associated with mezcal production, and "their communities are in high places, which is the same as we found in the site prehispánico Nativitas".

Also, note that in colonial times "mezcal wine he competed. Then colonial authorities banned the production of mezcal, which led to underground again. Produ-



Agave fields

PUENTE WITH THE OTHER WORLD?

Lazcano Arce points out on a crucial point: the specialized production of the drink and other items located in this area, such as jadeite accounts, establish that that had a Hispanic community organization for such products. In other words, there was already division classes.

In principle, states that one of its assumptions is that mezcal was a product of distinction in these societies: "not everyone could have access to him. IE has to do with certain hierarchies and rituals that were made in the ceremonial area Xochitécatl (part of the same set where is Nativitas, the residential area, and Cacaxtla, the administrative center)."

Current Indigenous communities, explains, also use the mezcal for performing rituals "that we assume have remained since pre-Hispanic times." For example, produce the drink during the dry season and the spread in their villages to make the request of rain.

The Huichol of Guadalupe Ocotán, Nayarit, use it as "a process of initiation for children from three years, which means passing a level, which has to do with age and role in society, to another stage of adult life," he says.

In the universe there is another possibility prehispanic use mezcal: altered states of consciousness of the rulers to come into contact with other worlds. Manuel de la Torre, one of the researchers involved in the project, recalls that in the Maya area is documented "the use of substances that alter states of consciousness, used by religious and political elites to enter into communication with other levels of reality.

"There are vessels in the Maya area showing enemas practices, which is inserted rectally a hallucinogen and this allows the rulers to contact ancestors. This is shown in the wakes with marvelous figures such as snakes copal smoke form.

"In general, altered states of consciousness allow leaders to contact the other world to return after this and tell his constituents what they said ancestors. Mezcal, then, could have served as a bridge to the world supernatural, which would also explain that not everyone can consume that product," he reflects.

THE EVIDENCE

The results are positive: the analysis of residues on prehispanic Nativitas ovens, made by specialists and Alba Zea Raymundo Barrios at the Institute of Chemistry, UNAM, confirm the presence of maguery and fuel used for cooking pineapples.



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Atemporal, northeast mexican cuisine.



Atemporal

A new restaurant has been added to the already wide array of wonderful restaurants here in Oaxaca. The name of this establishment is Atemporal, which translates into English as Timeless. What sets it apart from other eateries is the uniqueness of its cuisine. Atemporal specializes in food from the Northeast of Mexico. Luis Prestamo, who is the owner and who offers you a warm handshake as you enter his very nicely appointed candlelit restaurant explains it this way, "We are working with the Northeast Mexican cuisine which has its own special flavors and preparation techniques. It's hard for people to go up to the North to try the food which is excellent and comes from the states of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and Coahuila so we brought a little piece of the North down to Oaxaca. Variety is the spice of life." Atemporal specializes in flavorful meat dishes of the region.

Marination and expert use of the grill is the key and chef Ricardo Ramirez oversees the kitchen with pride. The results are delicious. The menu, which offers a wide variety of grilled meats such as Back-rib, Arrachera out-side, Rib-eye, Cowboy and Parrillada also offers chicken (TRY THE DELICIOUS POLLO VIOLADO COOKED IN SPICES AND BEER), fish, salads and tacos along with an appealing variety of appetizers and side dishes. GOAT AND PORK, PREPARED IN THE NORTHEAST STYLE, ARE A HOUSE SPECIALITY.

In addition to the tastefully decorated dining rooms there is a lovely terrace where diners can enjoy their meals in a garden setting. The charming bar is fully stocked and will soon carry a line of mescals especially made for Atemporal by local artisans. A portion of the profits will revert to the producers of the mescal to be used on issues of sustainability and local economic growth which are important factors in Luis's business philosophy of giving back to the community. Atemporal is also great for large parties on the terrace and can offer special menus of both traditional and contemporary fare. Portions are quite large and prices moderate. Come and enjoy the food of Northeast Mexico with Luis and his family in a wonderful, 'timeless' setting.

ATEMPORAL / CALZADA PORFIRIO DIAZ NO. 187, Col. Reforma / Phone - 044-951-120-1782 / Hours - Daily 1pm until midnight. Sundays 1pm until 7pm. Closed Tuesdays.

Experiencing the arts in Oaxaca

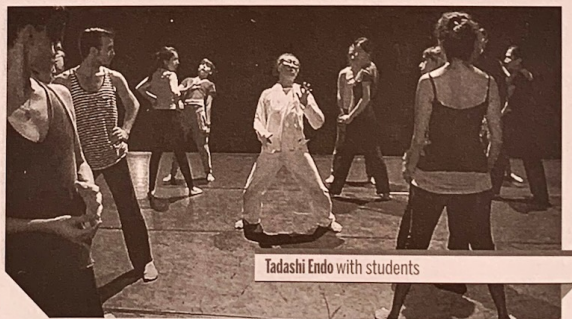
Studying Butoh dance

Oaxaca never fails to amaze given the wide array of art, theater, film, music and, of course, food that is available to experience (and eat!) on a daily basis. We are blessed here with the presence of Oaxaca Cine which presents world-class film festivals at the beautiful Macedonio Alcalá Theater. Curated by Isabel Rojas, Oaxaca Cine brings world film to a venue which boasts a state of the art projection and sound system. The presentation and variety of films offered rival any I've experienced in Paris, London, Los Angeles and New York. Many times filmmakers are present to discuss their work. It is an experience not to be missed. Numerous music venues abound and one can on any given night be exposed to cumbia, jazz, dixieland, progressive and many other music genres. One of my favorite places is La Nueva Babel in the center on Porfirio Díaz. Recently, I delighted there in the music of a touring dixieland band from New Orleans. Opportunities to engage in and experience THE ARTS in Oaxaca are boundless.

Arts calendars are available online but one of the best ways to gain information on what's happening is to read the posters which appear throughout the center. Recently, I

observed a poster advertising a workshop in butoh dance at Teatro Juárez. The workshop was to be taught by Tadashi Endo, a very well known dancer and teacher of the art of Butoh, a dance form originating in Japan after World War Two, which typically involves playful and grotesque imagery, taboo topics, extreme or absurd environments, and is traditionally performed in white body makeup with slow hyper-controlled motion.

I was curious and signed up for the course. A group of thirty students met for a week to learn from and be inspired by Tadashi's artistry. We danced, improvised and delighted in the course for four hours daily and at the end of the day were exhausted and inspired. Tadashi presented a program at Teatro Juárez culminating his time in Oaxaca that left the audience uplifted and in tears. Rosario Ordóñez brought Tadashi to Oaxaca for the workshop and performance. Like Isabel Rojas, she is one of many artists here who strive to expand our consciousness of the world arts scene. We benefit from their dedicated efforts. So, keep your eyes on those posters and review the calendars on a daily basis. You just might find yourself dancing your heart out on the stage of Teatro Juárez with a Japanese master!



Tadashi Endo with students

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