



# ERSTWHILE MEZCAL

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## HENEQUÉN 2018 LIMITED EDITION

**Master Mezcalero:** Juan Hernández Méndez

**NOM:** NOM-0496X

**Agave Varietal:** Henequén

**Scientific Name:** Agave fourcroydes

**Town / Municipality:** Santiago Matatlán

**State:** Oaxaca

**Fermentation:** Natural, Open-Vat Fermentation in Wood

**Still Type:** Copper Alembic

**Dates of Distillation:** December 2017

**Number of Liters in Distillation:** 397

**ABV:** 45%

**Tasting Notes:** Mineral and saline notes of clay and wet earth. Reminds us of the smell of fresh rain in the Oaxacan countryside. Also the subtle fragrance and sweetness of corn meal, evoking fresh atole and tamales. It is a smooth easy sipper, so the finish may surprise you: slightly spicy, with a tingly numbness that lingers on the tongue and reminds us of Sichuan peppercorns.



### Backstory

A must-have for any serious mezcal collector. Erstwhile Mezcal is the first and only mezcal brand to launch an artisanal Henequén in the US market. This distillation, made from cultivated Henequén piñas, is a small-batch limited edition of only 397 liters. Master mezcalero Juan Hernández Méndez made this rare distillation for his own personal collection, until his recent decision to transfer ownership to Erstwhile.

Henequén, an agave plant native to the Yucatán Peninsula, once ruled and transformed the region's economy to such an extent that it came to be known as "green gold". It is not native to, and thus rarely seen in, Oaxaca and other mezcal-producing regions of Mexico.

These Henequén piñas were harvested in the Yucatán and originally bound for Jalisco, apparently intended as some sort of industrial mezcal (or possibly faux tequila?!) experiment. However, the piñas were so tough that they broke the shredder, and had to be sent back. Somewhere along the way, master mezcalero Juan Hernández Méndez intercepted and purchased this lot of Henequén piñas. Henequén may be tough, but ultimately no match for Juan's moxie and stone mill!