

## Celebrating 20 Years Of Additive-Free Tequila



An Interview with José Valdez, Master Tequilero, Tequila Partida



José Valdez

**EDITORS' NOTE** José Valdez earned a degree in industrial engineering from the Universidad Panamericana Campus Guadalajara. He holds a Global MBA degree from Thunderbird Business School (University of Arizona) and the ITESM campus Gdl where he graduated with honors. He also completed a business management course at IPADE Business School. He was named an “Expert in Tequila Production” by Cultura y Capacitación del Tequila A.C. In addition, he has the title “Tequila Technician” from the UAG Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara and the CRT Consejo Regulador del Tequila. He is certified as a Tequila Taster with Ana María Romera, author of the book *Los Aromas del Tequila*. Since 2008, he has been a member of the Mexican Academy of Tequila and Mezcal Tasters. He has collaborated with Tequila Partida since its creation in 2005 until today. In 2019 he became General Director. Valdez has been a key player in the strategic alliances that the American founders have entered into with Scottish partners Edrington, and with the current owners of the brand, Lucas Bols, a Dutch company based in Amsterdam that has presence in more than 110 countries. Valdez gives masterclasses, seminars, and courses related to the tequila and agave spirits industry and courses related to agave, production processes, aging and tequila tasting and pairing. Valdez has provided courses and seminars on management and innovation as well as strategy at his alma mater, Universidad Panamericana Campus Guadalajara, Jalisco, México.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Founded in 2005 and now owned by Lucas Bols ([lucاسبols.com](http://lucاسبols.com)), Tequila Partida ([tequilapartida.com](http://tequilapartida.com)) is an ultra-premium, additive-free tequila producer based in Jalisco, México. Inspired by third generation agave farmer Enrique Partida, it uses 100 percent blue agave harvested from volcanic soil in the Tequila Valley. Known for its “agave-first” approach, the brand is highly rated for purity.

### Will you discuss your career journey?

My background is in industrial engineering, which instilled in me a deep respect for process, precision, and measurable standards. But tequila has always been more than a product in my life – it represents culture, land, and identity. I am a firm believer in constant improvement – of myself and of every individual involved in the production, distribution, and marketing of Tequila Partida in every market where we operate. Excellence is not static; it demands discipline, education, and the commitment to evolve continuously.

I am certified as Maestro Tequilero and as an Expert in the Tequila Production Process, and I am a member of the National Tequila & Mezcal Academy. I remain actively engaged with innovations in agave cultivation and tequila production. Complementing my technical foundation, I completed a two-year Global MBA program between universities in the United States and México, strengthening my international strategic

perspective. Since 2015, I have taught business and strategy programs to both master’s degree and undergraduate students. Teaching reinforces my belief that leadership carries the social responsibility to share knowledge and develop future professionals.

Personally, I am a sports enthusiast and have completed several marathons and long-distance triathlons. Endurance sports reflect the same mindset required to build a lasting brand – preparation, resilience, long-term focus, and the discipline to improve every day.

I developed all the products of Tequila Partida and have overseen every batch produced since we founded the company in 2005. It was never simply about launching a brand; it was about challenging the accepted standards of the category. At that time, many producers operated comfortably within regulatory minimums. We asked a different question: What if we went far beyond them? What if we raised the quality standards?

Over the past two decades, I have worked across every aspect of the company – from production and supply chain to commercial strategy and international expansion. Today, as General Director and Maestro Tequilero, my responsibility is both operational and philosophical: to protect the integrity of every bottle and ensure that growth never compromises our principles.

### Will you highlight Partida Tequila’s history and heritage?

Tequila Partida is defined by precision and purity. From the beginning, the vision was to craft tequila that honored traditional methods while elevating standards within the premium category.

The Partida name itself honors Enrique Partida, a master agave farmer who refined agricultural practices to cultivate agave of exceptional quality. His commitment to excellence in the fields established the foundation upon which the brand was built.

Tequila Partida is produced exclusively from fully mature agave cultivated in the Tequila Valley and crafted in the town of Tequila, reinforcing both its authenticity and sense of origin. Every step – from harvest to fermentation to maturation – reflects disciplined production practices and meticulous barrel management.

The brand emerged during a pivotal moment in the evolution of high-end tequila, helping define what authentic premium tequila could represent globally. What makes its heritage meaningful is continuity – the original production philosophy remains intact, and the same standards that



Partida Tequila’s Roble Fino Series

defined the first batches continue to guide every bottle produced today.

### **What have been the keys to Partida Tequila's growth and industry leadership?**

For Tequila Partida, growth has never been about chasing trends – it has been about clarity of identity. The foundation is simple but disciplined: crafting a tequila that is clean, natural, and transparent, where the true protagonist is the agave – not additives. Respecting the raw material allows the purity and character of fully mature agave to express itself authentically in every bottle.

Equally important has been surrounding the brand with the right people and strategic partners across the entire value chain. From careful agave selection and disciplined distillery production, to aligned distribution partners, committed retailers, and ultimately educated consumers – growth is the result of coherence throughout the system.

Premium brands are not built by accident. They are built by consistency, by long-term relationships, and by protecting quality at every step. That alignment across agriculture, production, and market execution has been essential to strengthening Partida's positioning globally.

### **Will you provide an overview of Partida Tequila's offerings?**

The portfolio of Tequila Partida reflects a disciplined and elegant house style across expressions, including Blanco, Reposado, Añejo, Cristalino, limited releases, and high-proof selections. Each expression is built from the same foundational formula I originally created, with aging designed to enhance – never overshadow – the purity and character of the agave. Our core range showcases balance and structure, while Roble Fino – “The Single Malt of Tequila” – represents one of our most distinctive innovations. The concept celebrates the meeting of México's tequila



*José Valdez extracting a sample from a barrel*

heritage with the influence of the finest sherry-seasoned single malt Scotch casks.

When I first visited Scotland, I recognized a shared respect for craft and maturation. That experience inspired a vision: to create an exceptionally rich tequila that unites our acclaimed liquid with the depth and complexity of sherry-seasoned single malt casks. From that vision came Roble Fino – meaning Fine Oak.

- Roble Fino Reposado (43 percent ABV) begins with our Reposado aged a minimum of six months in ex-bourbon barrels, followed by finishing in ex-single malt, sherry-seasoned casks. Bottled at a higher proof to enhance structure and mouthfeel, it offers layered notes of cooked agave, vanilla, maple, anise, quince, and dried fruits.

- Roble Fino Añejo (45 percent ABV) develops additional depth before its finishing in sherry-seasoned single malt casks. The elevated proof accentuates richness and complexity, delivering refined notes of agave sweetness, dried fruits, toasted oak, spice, and subtle nutty undertones.

- Roble Fino Cristalino Reposado undergoes double aging and natural filtration to remove color while preserving body and complexity, revealing notes of dried fruits, toasted oak, vanilla, almonds, and cooked agave.

At the pinnacle of the portfolio is Elegante Gran Reserva Extra Añejo, aged a minimum of 48 months. Deep amber in color and rich in texture, it presents layered aromas of toasted oak, dark chocolate, coffee, and ripe banana, followed by a complex palate of agave, caramel, vanilla, maple, nuts, spice, and delicate floral tones. For connoisseurs and collectors, we offer Single Barrel Reposado and Single Barrel Añejo High Proof, bottled at barrel strength – up to 110 proof. Each barrel is individually selected and approved, showcasing natural maturation nuances while preserving the signature balance of elegance and intensity.

Across all expressions, the philosophy remains constant: innovation grounded in tradition, precision in execution, and unwavering respect for the integrity of the liquid.

### **How ingrained is Partida Tequila's commitment to sustainability as part of its culture and values?**

Tequila Partida is guided by one fundamental principle: respect. First and foremost, respect for nature – especially the agave plant and the land that sustains it. We harvest only fully mature agave, allowing the plant to reach its natural peak of development rather than accelerating cycles by cutting younger agaves, as is common in large-scale mass production. Patience in agriculture translates directly into depth, structure, and authenticity in the final spirit.

Second, integrity in production. Tequila Partida is an original additive-free brand – we have never used artificial flavorings, coloring agents, sweeteners, or chemical enhancers in our process. Our tequila is crafted using only agave and volcanic water sourced from a deep well at our distillery. What you taste is the natural expression of the plant, the fermentation, and the barrel – nothing more.

Finally, responsibility. We treat our production by-products to generate compost and support a more sustainable agricultural cycle, reinforcing



our commitment to environmental stewardship and long-term sustainability.

In a category that continues to grow rapidly, true differentiation comes from discipline – respecting the land, respecting the plant, and respecting the consumer.

### **How important has it been to build the Partida Tequila team?**

At Tequila Partida, people are our most important asset. At the end of the day, the reason we exist is to bring people together – to enjoy, with moderation and responsibility, a spirit that represents a millenary culture and centuries of tradition. Tequila is not simply a product; it is a cultural expression meant to create connection and memorable moments. Behind every bottle, there are many hands and countless hours of dedication. From agave farmers who patiently cultivate the fields, to distillery teams, barrel makers, bottle manufacturers, drivers, warehouse operators, distributors, retailers, bartenders, servers, and liquor store professionals – each person contributes to the integrity and success of the final product. Premium tequila is never the work of one individual; it is the result of collective discipline and pride.

Our growth has also been driven by global partnerships with people from different countries and cultures who share one common vision: excellence in crafting premium tequila and creating meaningful experiences in people's lives – celebrations, milestones, and everyday moments of connection.

When you respect the land, the plant, and the process, you must also respect the people. That philosophy is what truly sustains Tequila Partida. ●