

Not Just Your Typical Tequila

BY HOLLY RIDDLE

Kevin Hart is on a mission to make luxurious tequila accessible —and do some good at the same time.

Unless you're an avid tequila fan—like Kevin Hart—you might think tequila is tequila is tequila. It's a spirit that's great in your margarita or on Taco Tuesday, but is there really that much difference from brand to brand?

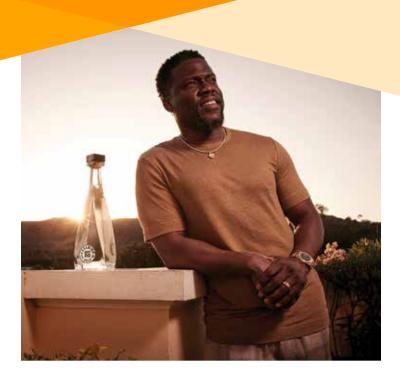
Well, if you're Hart, the answer is a resounding 'yes' and he's pretty confident that you'd agree that his new brand, Gran Coramino Tequila, now approaching its first birthday, is not just your average same ol'-same ol'.

The difference is, in part, thanks to Hart's partnership with Juan Domingo Beckmann, whose family is responsible for a name that you likely already know: José Cuervo.

"I have always had a passion for tequila and wanted to create my own brand for years, but was looking for the right person to partner with. When I met 11th-generation tequila maker Juan Domingo Beckmann, I knew we could create something really special," said Hart. "I've been a huge tequila fan for many years, and I knew exactly what I wanted Gran Coramino to taste like. Juan and I worked tirelessly to create the perfect Reposado Cristalino and Añejo and I am so happy with the result. I created Gran Coramino for my fans, for my culture—a tequila that could be presented to my generation correctly."

Made with 100% blue agave and crafted at the oldest distillery in Latin America—La Rojeña Distillery in Tequila, Jalisco, Mexico—Gran Coramino's Cristalino tequila may be somewhat unfamiliar, but Cristalino is growing in popularity.

Hart explained what to expect. "A Cristalino is an aged spirit, in our case a Reposado, that is then charcoal-filtered to create a clear and very smooth tequila. You



can expect bright notes of a silver tequila, but with a smooth, sophisticated flavor of toffee, berries, and light spice. It's the perfect choice for the tequila novice or an experienced connoisseur."

It's both these tequila novices and experienced connoisseurs that Hart was thinking of when he designed the brand. He explained he wanted to create a tequila that was premium and luxurious, but still easily accessible. His recommendation for giving Gran Coramino a try? A Cristalino Highball, though he admitted the tequila is "perfect on the rocks."

In addition to producing amazingyet-accessible tequila, though, the Gran Coramino team, including Hart and Beckmann, also has another goal in mind: making a difference.

"We've been working with [Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)] to create the Coramino Fund, a give-back program providing \$10,000 grants to Black and Latinx-owned small businesses all over the country," said Hart. "I know that pursuing the path of entrepreneurship is hard work. I also know that some of our best and brightest have historically been excluded from opportunities or lacked the resources to pursue their

entrepreneurial dreams. As entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds, Juan and I know the importance of bringing financial resources and learning opportunities to these communities. The Coramino Fund helps these small businesses make strides towards their goals and solidify their place in the world of entrepreneurship."

In other words, treating yourself to a bottle of Gran Coramino this weekend is an indulgence that you can feel good about.

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Check Out This Month's Recipe



The Bluebonnet

INGREDIENTS:

| 1.5 oz | Tequila blanco |
|--------|-------------------------|
| 1.5 oz | Fresh lime juice |
| .75 oz | Orange-flavored liqueur |
| 1.5 oz | Simple syrup |

Dash of blue curaçao and

grenadine

PREPARATION:

- **1.** Combine all ingredients and shake with ice.
- **2.** Pour over ice into a rocks glass and garnish with lemon wedge.

*Optional – garnish with a slice of jalapeño.



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Breaking Down the Complex World of Tequila



Tequila is one of the most beloved spirits in the world. Whether you're sipping it straight or mixing a margarita, there's no denying that the tequila we enjoy is only getting bigger and better. So grab a glass, put on your sombrero, and let's dive into the world of tequila!

Let's keep it simple

Tequila's history dates back to 16th century Mexico. The drink was first produced by the Aztecs, who fermented the sap of the agave plant and called it "pulque." Later, when the Spanish arrived in Mexico, they introduced distillation techniques, which led to the creation of what we now know as tequila.

The town of Tequila, located in the state of Jalisco, became the epicenter of tequila production, and the drink gained popularity throughout Mexico and beyond. Much like Champagne's strict geographic standards, tequila can only be produced within five Mexican states—Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Nayarit, and Tamaulipas—and must include a minimum of 51 percent blue agave (but ideally 100 percent) to formally be considered tequila.

Five types of Tequila

Blanco (silver): This is the purest form of tequila, bottled immediately after the distillation process without any aging in oak barrels. Blanco tequila has a strong, pure agave taste and is usually quite herbal and mineral, making it perfect for mixing into cocktails like margaritas or palomas.

Reposado (aged): Reposado tequila is aged in oak barrels for anywhere from two to twelve months. This aging process gives the tequila a smoother, more complex flavor that is still light, with notes of vanilla and caramel. It's a great choice for sipping on its own or mixing into cocktails and tends to be many bartenders' favorite.

Añejo (extra-aged): Añejo tequila is aged in oak barrels for at least one year, giving it a deeper, richer flavor profile with notes of honey and vanilla. This type of tequila should be enjoyed neat or on the rocks, as the complex flavors are best on their own and will be lost with other mixers. It can also be used in place of whiskey in cocktails such as an Old Fashioned.

Extra añejo (ultra-aged): Extra añejo tequila is aged in oak barrels for at least three years and sometimes up to ten years or more. This type of tequila is often considered the luxury variety and has a rich, dark color and a smooth, velvety texture with oak-forward, more intense notes than its siblings. It's typically reserved for sipping straight.

Cristalino (filtered-aged): Cristalino tequila is a relatively new type that has recently gained popularity and is currently the fastest-growing category in Mexico. It is an añejo tequila filtered with activated charcoal to remove the color but keep the flavors from the barrelaging process. It's a good choice for those who enjoy sipping tequila but find the traditional añejo too strong or are looking to add something new to their usual rotation.

There has been a growing trend of sipping tequila straight rather than mixing it into cocktails in recent years. This can be partially attributed to the increased interest in the quality and authenticity of what we consume. Many people are now seeking out high-quality, artisanal tequilas that are made using traditional methods and pure, natural ingredients. With quality continuously improving, sipping tequila straight allows people to fully appreciate these premium spirits' complex flavors and aromas.

Not to mention, there may even be a few health benefits. The agave plant is rich in natural sugars and antioxidants. Some studies have even suggested that tequila can help lower blood sugar levels and aid digestion due to its natural probiotics (pure 100% agave only, though). So does an ounce of tequila a day keep the doctor away? We'll leave that up to you to decide.

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| Bannuhabhair. | Bunnahabhain Toiteach Single Malt | Scotch | 750mL | \$71.99 | Code 7772 |
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Stag's Leap Napa Artemis

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