

AMAYA

BRAND OVERVIEW

Meet the Founders

Haley Rae Brenn / Founder, Chief Executive Officer

Born and raised in Oregon, Haley's adventurous spirit led her from USC and a career in entertainment to Oaxaca, where she discovered her passion for Mexican spirits. After working as Brand Director for Victorioso Mezcal, she moved to Mexico City to co-found Amaya with Erick—bringing together her love of storytelling, community, and great drinks.

Erick Castro-Diaz / Founder, Chief Commercial Officer

With over 20 years in the spirits industry, Erick is the co-owner of Raised by Wolves and Gilly's House of Cocktails, host of the renowned "Bartender at Large" podcast, and organizer of Bartender's Weekend — hosting over 3,000 bartenders annually. Named in Bar World's "100 Most Influential Figures" twice, Erick's lifelong craving for cacao in cocktails became the seed of Amaya.

Our Story

When Erick was 18, he crossed the southern border. Hitching rides and hopping busses, he explored Mexico and reconnected with his roots. Everywhere he went, he found comfort in a Mexican hot cocoa, with rich cacao and warm spices.

He returned to the US to become a prolific mixologist and spirits connoisseur. For 20 years, he longed for that flavor in his mixology, but it never arrived.

Meanwhile, Haley was on her own journey through Mexico—falling for mezcal, the vibrancy of the culture, and a Chilango. A film producer by trade, she had always felt a calling to create something more lasting, more sensory. She dreamed not of telling stories on screen, but of bottling one.

In a fated moment their paths crossed, and together they conceptualized Amaya. Inspired by the Mayans and Olmecs, Amaya is our own version of an ancient drink.



Erick in Oaxaca, 1996



Haley in Oaxaca, 2019

AMAYA

Amaya is the First Cacao & Spice Liqueur

Mexico is the birthplace of chocolate. Thousands of years ago, cacao was ground, spiced with botanicals and served hot. Chocolate has been reinvented in many forms, **yet the market lacks a quality chocolate liqueur.**

Imagined and produced in the mountains of Oaxaca, Amaya is entirely artisanal and unique.

We use only the highest quality ingredients available and are sweetened with 100% pure Agave.

You can see, taste, and feel our all-natural ingredients



Why Amaya?

Category White Space – The chocolate liqueur category is underdeveloped, dominated by outdated and artificial products. Amaya is positioned as the first artisanal cacao liqueur with modern consumer appeal.

International Distribution Strategy – Deep industry relationships and accessibility across key markets. With active expansion throughout Mexico and secured European distribution, Amaya is positioned for accelerated, global scale.

Founder Credibility – Co-founded by Erick Castro, an internationally recognized spirits' expert with deep industry influence; and Haley Brenn, with a background in storytelling, and brand direction. Steven Grasse, (Hendrick's Gin, Sailor Jerry Rum), serves as a strategic advisor, guiding Amaya's creative direction.

On-Trend Cocktail Opportunity – Crafted for the Carajillo (just coffee + liqueur), on track to be the next viral espresso martini (Vogue).



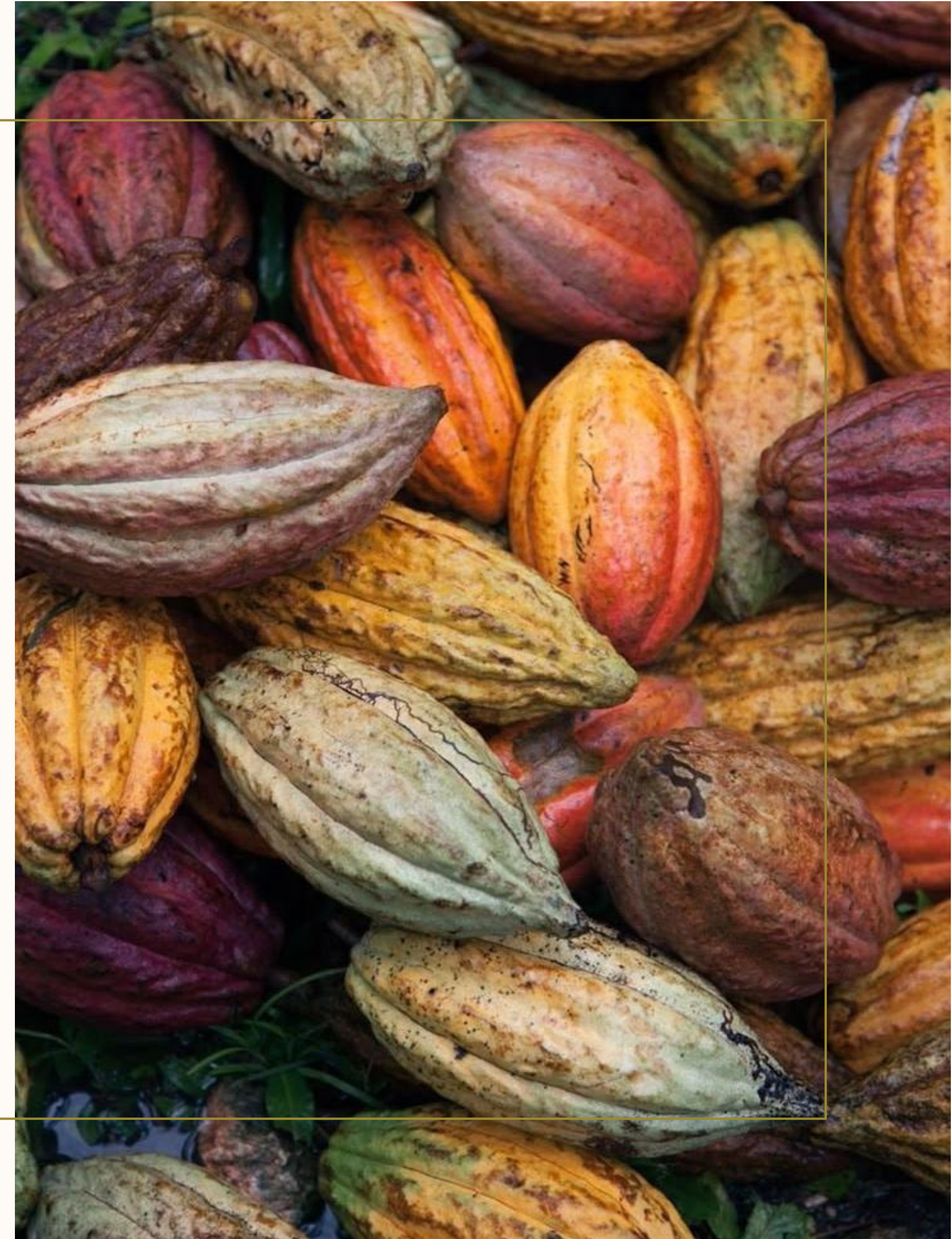
Cacao — A 4,000 Year Legacy

Long before chocolate became a sweet confection, cacao was sacred. **The Olmecs of southern Mexico were among the first to domesticate & cultivate cacao** as far back as 1,500 BCE. They consumed it as a bitter, fermented beverage, prized for its energy and spiritual significance.

The Maya elevated cacao into a cornerstone of their civilization. Used as currency, offered to deities, and consumed in rituals, **cacao was traditionally mixed with water, chili, and spices** to create a rich, complex drink reserved for the elite.

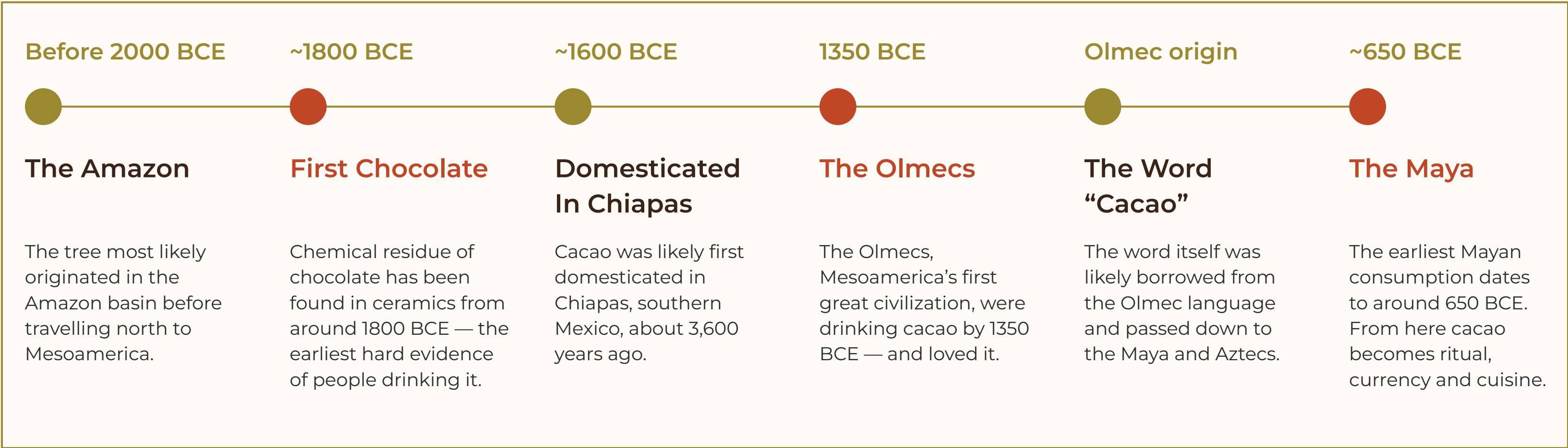
The Aztecs inherited and expanded on this tradition. Emperor Moctezuma was said to consume it in great quantities daily. **When Spanish conquistadors arrived in the 16th century, cacao traveled to Europe** — where sugar & milk were added, transforming it into the sweet treat the world now knows.

To much of the world, Mexico's original spiced recipe was largely left behind. *Amaya brings that recipe back.*



Cacao History • Origins & the Olmecs

Cacao is older than every empire that claimed it. It began as an Amazonian tree, was domesticated in southern Mexico some 3,600 years ago, and by the time the Olmecs were drinking it the word itself was already theirs.



Why it matters for Amaya: Cacao is Mexican before anything else. Amaya's beans come from Tabasco — Olmec heartland — and its base is grown and distilled a few hundred kilometres away.

Cacao History • The Maya

For the Maya, cacao was a drink with a vocabulary, a ritual, and a place in the afterlife. Ancient Maya texts read like a cocktail menu.

A DRINK WITH STYLE

Mayan texts describe many kinds of cacao — different flavourings, textures and temperatures — including “bitter cacao,” “foamy cacao,” “fresh cacao” and “fruity cacao.” Flavourings across the pre-Columbian world included magnolia, allspice, honey and vanilla.

WHO DRANK IT?

Cacao was mostly reserved for the elite, though common people drank it too, less often. The best beans were drunk on their own; lesser beans were mixed with corn into a drink much like atole. It was very often women who processed the cacao.

INTO THE AFTERLIFE

Elites were buried with elegant, prestigious cacao-drinking vessels: cacao was believed to sustain the dead in the afterlife. Many of the finest surviving Maya ceramics are chocolate cups.

HOW DOES IT GROW?

Cacao needs heat and humidity — yet the Maya grew it in the dry Yucatán by planting it inside sinkholes engineered to hold moisture. It also travelled: cacao reached the American Southwest, nearly 1,000 km from the nearest tree.

Why it matters for Amaya: “bitter,” “foamy,” “fresh,” “fruity,” spiced with vanilla and honey — the Maya were already building the flavour language Amaya lives in. Amaya is that tradition, in a bottle you can pour.

The Maya are also the inspiration behind our name, *Amaya*

Cacao History • Currency, Empire & The Aztecs

By the time of the Mexica (Aztecs), Cacao was currency, military ration and status symbol at once — and the Spanish who arrived to record it were told of cacao drinks that could intoxicate.

BEANS AS MONEY

Cacao beans made ideal currency: small, durable and good for years if stored well. Spanish scholars reported that Montezuma II’s warehouse held over 900 million beans.

An avocado	3 beans
A turkey egg	3 beans
A rabbit	10 beans
A turkey	100 beans

Prices as recorded in early colonial sources.

DRUNK COLD, AND REFINED

Most accounts say the Mexica drank their cacao cold, unlike the Maya. It was reserved for elites and tied to elegance and refinement — though some traditionalists sniffed at it as indulgent, not tough and masculine like pulque.

RATION AND INHERITANCE

Chocolate was issued in Aztec military rations, and the Aztecs believed their cacao legacy came down to them from the Toltecs.

CACAHUATL → CHOCOLATE

The Nahuatl word was cacahuatl — “cacao water.” Where the Spanish word chocolate actually comes from is still unclear.

THE INTOXICATING CUP

The priest Bernardino de Sahagún wrote that some cacao drinks could intoxicate — which can only have been true if alcohol or psychotropics were added.

Why it matters for Amaya: Sahagún’s “intoxicating cacao” is the oldest hint of a cacao spirit in Mexico. Five centuries later, Amaya is the first to bottle it — cacao and spice with a real Oaxacan base



Artisanal Recipe

Base: **Caña Rum**, sourced from a family distillery in Oaxaca, provides a complex base with notes of molasses and burnt caramel.

Body: **Cacao** of the highest quality and **Real Vanilla Bean** create a rich and warm body that lingers on the tongue.

Sweetener: Sweetened with **100% Mexican Agave**. We never use any artificial sweeteners. The result is a natural sweetness that tastes and feels better.

Botanicals: **Our proprietary blend of chili and herbs** add layers of complexity and mystery.

What "Hand-Selected" Actually Means

Every ingredient in Amaya is a whole, real ingredient chosen by the founders — never an extract, flavoring, powder or syrup. Here is what that means, ingredient by ingredient.

CACAO

Whole cacao beans

Single-origin cacao from Tabasco, México — the state where cacao was first cultivated. Sourced as whole beans, ground and macerated in-house, never cocoa powder, syrup or “natural chocolate flavor.” This is Amaya’s deep, slightly bitter, dark-chocolate backbone.

VANILLA

Whole vanilla beans — never extract

Real vanilla beans from La Chinantla, the humid tropical region of northern Oaxaca. No vanilla extract, no vanillin, no “vanilla flavor.” This is where the round, warm finish comes from.

CHILI

Native Oaxacan Chile

Oaxacan chile with a warm, nutty heat. Rounded out with warm spices and our proprietary botanicals, all sourced locally in Oaxaca, dried at our own facility and macerated one by one.

AGAVE

100% Mexican agave nectar

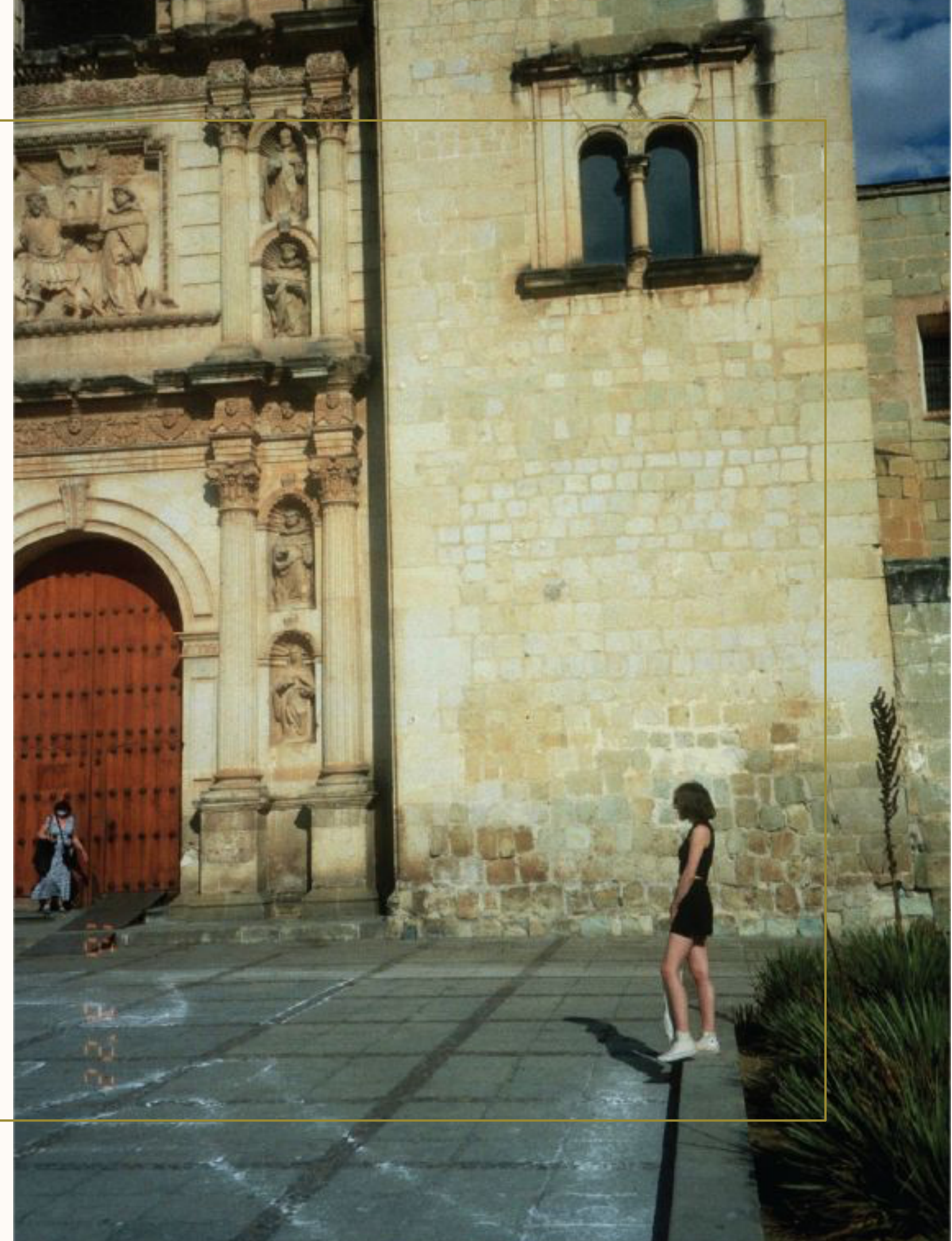
Medium-grade agave nectar is the only sweetener in the bottle, added at the very end of the process. No cane sugar, no corn syrup, no artificial sweeteners — which is why Amaya reads as naturally sweet rather than syrupy, and finishes clean.

Never in the bottle: dairy · cane sugar or corn syrup · artificial sweeteners · artificial flavorings · anything we can’t name. *If a bartender or buyer asks “is it real vanilla?” — the answer is yes, whole beans, and you can say so with confidence.*

Why Oaxaca?

Oaxaca is Mexico's spiritual and culinary heartland. It is home to some of the world's finest cacao-growing regions, extraordinary mezcal and rum traditions, and a deep indigenous food culture that has preserved ancient techniques for centuries.

It is also where Haley Rae Brenn and Erick Castro-Diaz found each other — and where Amaya was born.



The Base: Oaxacan Caña Rum

Most liqueurs — including nearly every chocolate liqueur — are built on neutral spirit. Amaya is built on a real Mexican spirit with a character of its own. That is why Amaya drinks like a spirit, not a syrup.

WHERE IT'S MADE

Our rum is made by a family distillery in northern Oaxaca. The rum comes off the still at 60–65% ABV, varying batch to batch, and is brought down to 40% before Amaya's ingredients are macerated in it.

WHAT IT GIVES AMAYA

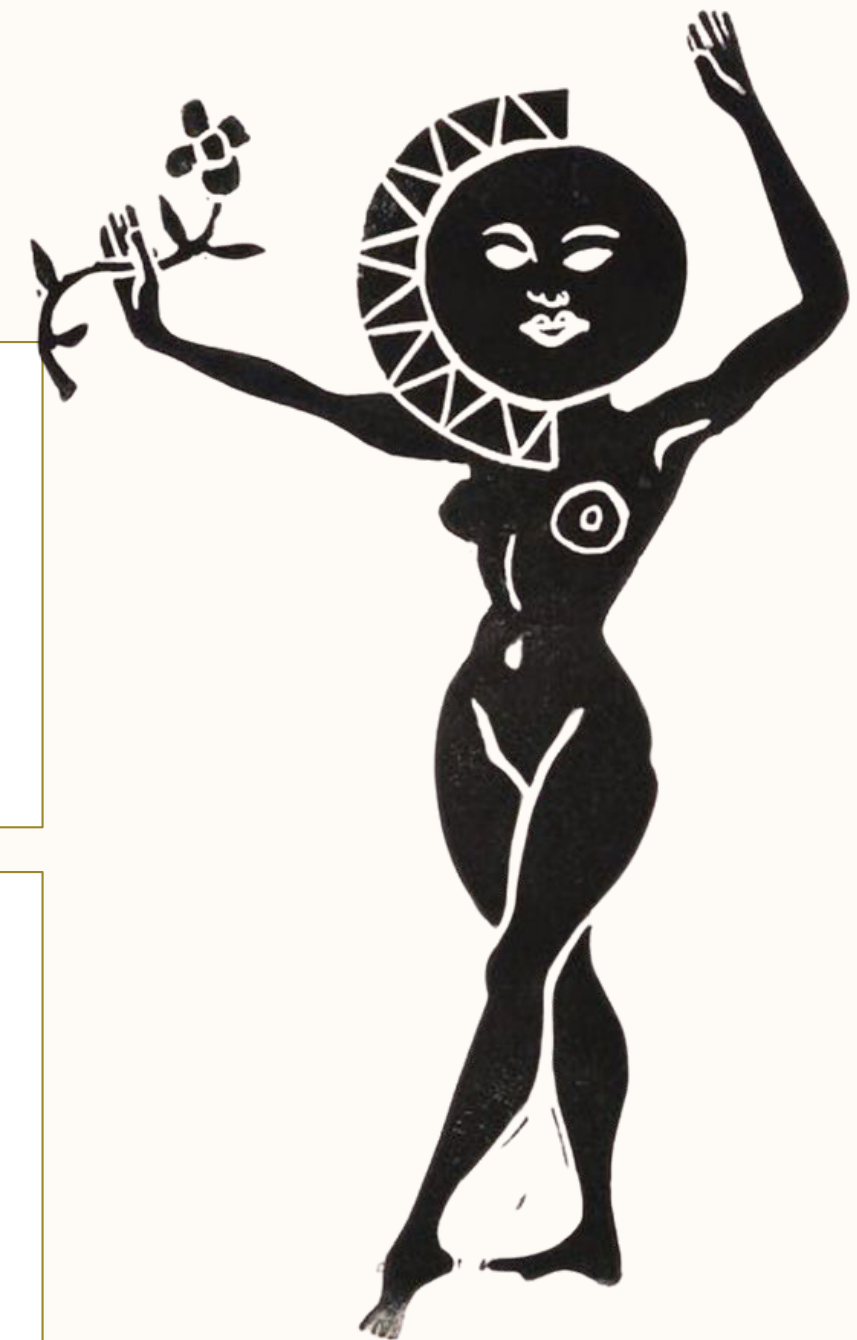
Notes of molasses, burnt caramel and a green cane brightness that carry the cacao and chili and keep the finish long and warm. It is the reason Amaya works stirred with mezcal or gin, not just shaken with espresso.

WHAT "CAÑA" RUM IS

Caña Rum is Oaxaca's traditional sugarcane spirit — the cane cousin of mezcal, made small-batch and hands-on. It is used white (unaged), so the cane character stays bright and the cacao, chili and vanilla — not oak — define the flavor.

HOW TO SAY IT IN ONE LINE

"Amaya starts as real Oaxacan cane rum from a family distillery in La Cañada — everything else is added to that, not to a neutral base."



How Amaya Is Made

*From family distillery to bottle, every step happens in Oaxaca.
Nothing is outsourced, and every ingredient is macerated on its own.*

We start with the whole ingredients and macerate them.
The liquid then gets filtered twice to achieve the silky viscosity.

Why separate maceration matters: each ingredient is extracted at its own strength and ratio, so nothing gets over- or under-steeped — the blend is built, not brewed. Nothing artificial is added at any step.

Talking point: “Nothing about Amaya is outsourced or industrial — the rum, the maceration and the bottling all happen in Oaxaca, in small batches, by hand.”





AMAYA

CACAO ELIXIR



AMAYA

SIP YOUR SPIRIT



AMAYA

MADE IN OAXACA



AMAYA

SIP RESPONSIBLY



AMAYA Speaks to Today's Evolving Market

Young consumers are looking for brands that align with their values and offer something unique. They are more conscious about their consumption.

Amaya plays into these current alcohol trends:

- Mexican-Born Spirits
- Ethical Brands
- Health Conscious Choices
- Artisanal, Premium products
- Low-ABV

Commercial Overview

- ABV 22 %
- 700 ml bottles in 6-pack cases
- Competitive margins
- Premium yet accessible price strategy
- Production capacity for quick order turnaround



Tasting Notes & How to Describe It

Aroma: Rich dark chocolate on the nose with a hint of warm cinnamon.

Palate: Smooth and silky entry with deep cacao, followed by a gentle heat from chili and spice.

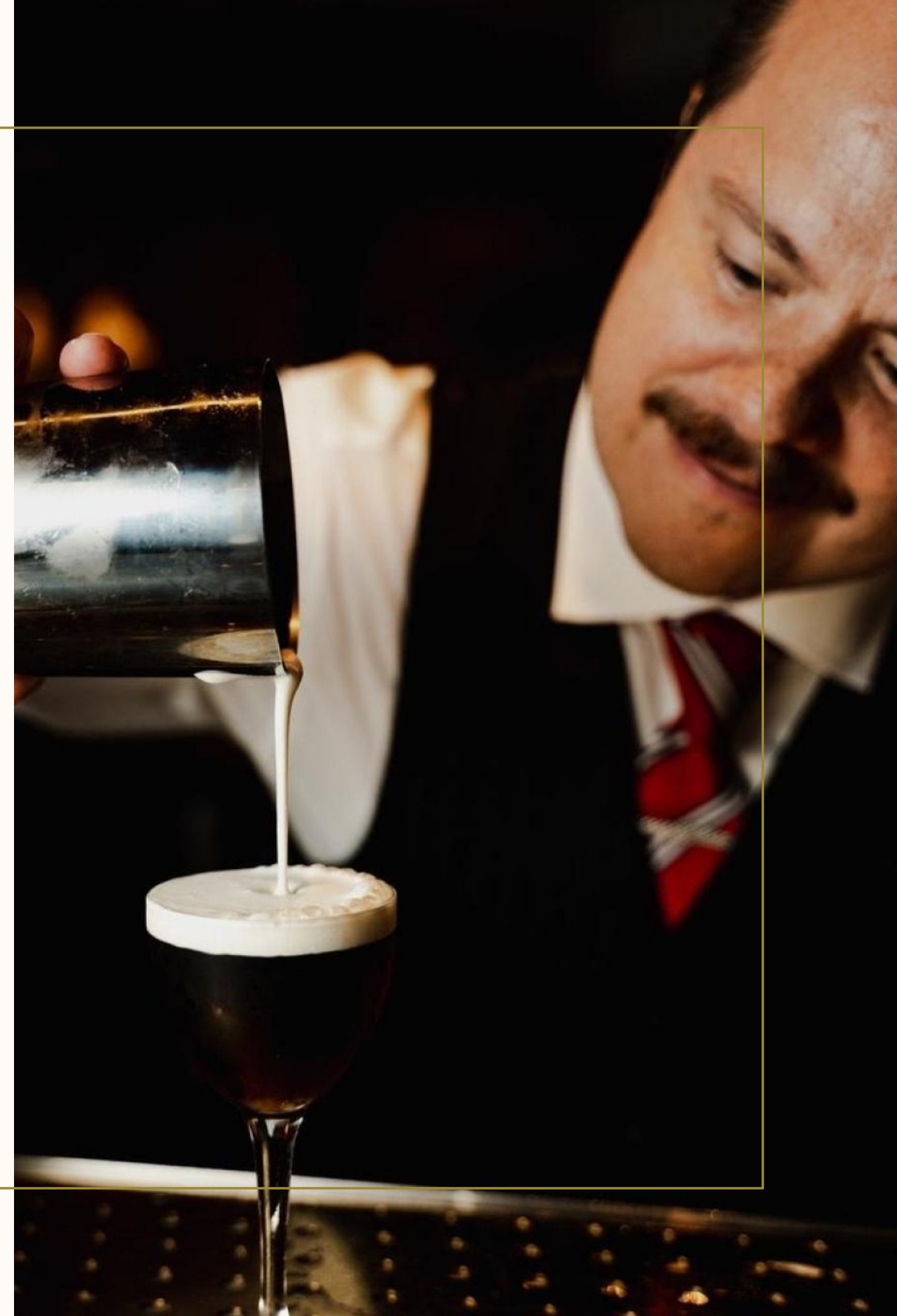
Finish: Long, warming finish with vanilla and lingering earthiness.

Bartender Pitch: *The rich flavor of cacao is non-seasonal and works on menus year-round.*



Cocktail Program

- Versatile in classic cocktail styles
- Exclusive cocktails designed for easy preparation at the bar
- Development of custom cocktails tailored to clientele needs



AMAYA



Caramaya Signature Cocktail

2oz Espresso

2oz Amaya

METHOD: Shaken with ice until foamy

GLASS: Old Fashioned

GARNISH: Coffee bean

AMAYA



Roma Spritz

Refreshing, effervescent, and unexpected

2oz Amaya

2oz Champagne or Prosecco

2oz Club Soda

METHOD: Build in Glass & Stir

GLASS: Wine Glass

GARNISH: Orange Wedge



AMAYA

The One & One

Easy to drink for Mezcal beginners

.75oz Mezcal (Espadin or other variety)

.75oz Amaya Liqueur

METHOD: Build in Glass

GLASSWARE: Shot Glass

GARNISH: None

AMAYA



Alamo River

Spirit-forward and sophisticated riff on an old fashioned

2oz Bourbon

.5oz Amaya

2 dashes Orange Bitters

METHOD: Stir

GLASSWARE: Double Old-Fashioned

GARNISH: Lemon Twist

AMAYA



Amaya Daiquiri

For our Tiki bar lovers!

1.5oz Worthy Park Silver Jamaican Rum

.75oz Lime Juice

.75oz Amaya

.5oz Simple Syrup

METHOD: Shake

GLASSWARE: Coupe

GARNISH: Lime Wedge

AMAYA



Paloma Amaya

1.5oz Mezcal Nuestra Soledad

1oz Amaya

.75oz Lime

.75oz Grapefruit

.5oz Simple Syrup (or Agave Syrup)

METHOD: Shake ingredients & splash soda

GLASSWARE: Collins

GARNISH: Tajin & grapefruit (or lime) wedge

AMAYA



Passion Project

1oz Mezcal
1.5oz Amaya
.75oz Lime Juice
.5oz Honey Syrup
.25oz Passion Fruit Syrup

METHOD: Pebble Ice

GLASSWARE: Collins

GARNISH: Lime Slice

Amaya at Home

The off-premise selling story: one bottle that turns the espresso machine, the prosecco in the fridge or a mug of hot cocoa into a cacao cocktail.

THE OCCASION

Coffee culture has moved home — the espresso machine and the cold brew are already on the counter. Add the dessert-drink moment after dinner, the host pouring “something interesting,” and gifting. Cacao never goes out of season.

THE PROBLEM

Cacao cocktails at home have meant artificial crème de cacao, chocolate syrup, or a viral recipe with more steps than anyone will do twice. None of the competition features real cacao, spice, and a good base spirit in one bottle.

THE SOLUTION

Amaya is the cacao cocktail in one pour. Every signature serve is two or three ingredients, no measuring precision required — and it works neat, over ice or in hot cocoa. It is the bottle a guest asks about, and the one a shopper can easily use at home.

THREE AT-HOME SERVES — THREE INGREDIENTS OR FEWER

CARAMAYA AT HOME

2 oz espresso or cold brew + 2 oz Amaya.
Shake and serve up or over ice; orange peel if you have it.

ROMA SPRITZ

Equal parts Amaya, prosecco and sparkling water over ice. Lime Wedge.

AMAYA, STRAIGHT

It's easy to pull out and serve over ice! Neat, on the rocks, or stirred into hot cocoa or coffee — the Mexican hot chocolate that started the brand.

- Retail talking points:**
- Cross-merchandise with coffee, cold brew, mezcal and prosecco
 - Giftable bottle, year-round with a holiday peak
 - Non-dairy, agave-sweetened — a “better-for-you” liqueur story
 - Recipe neck-hanger or shelf talker: “Carajillo in 2 ingredients”

Amaya at the Local Bar

The casual on-premise story — sports bars, pubs, college bars and neighborhood spots that pour decent cocktails but don't specialize in them. Amaya has to work here without a jigger, a craft bartender or a menu rewrite.

THE OCCASION

High-volume and well-priced. The cocktail list is well drinks, margaritas, shots and easy to make classics. Bartenders are fast, not fussy, and guests order what they already know — so the way to achieve depletions is with a familiar drink, made better.

THE PROBLEM

The back bar is Kahlúa, Baileys and Fireball. Anything “craft” reads as extra steps, extra spillage and a bottle that gathers dust. A new liqueur has to earn its slot by moving on a busy Friday and being easy to sell.

THE SOLUTION

Amaya slots into drinks the bar already makes: a vodka pour, a tequila or mezcal marg, an easy-to-pour shot. Build or shake, no house syrups, nothing to batch. It upgrades the call without slowing the rail — and gives the bar a spiced chocolate Margarita that the guest doesn't need a glossary to understand.

THREE BAR SERVES — THREE INGREDIENTS OR FEWER, NO SPECIAL TOOLS

RUSSIAN BEAR

1.5 oz vodka · 1 oz Amaya

Build in glass · Double old-fashioned
Float of cream

THE ONE & ONE

.75 oz mezcal · .75 oz Amaya

Build in Glass · Shot Glass · No Garnish

AMAYA MARGARITA

**1.5 oz tequila blanco or mezcal · 1 oz Amaya
.75 oz lime**

Shake · Double old-fashioned · Salted rim

Bar talking points:

- Sits on the rail next to the vodka and tequila it pairs with
- Every serve is three touches or less and doesn't need precision of fancy ice to be delicious
- In addition, these are all drinks that work with well-spirits yet can be leveled up with Amaya.

Amaya at Craft Bars & Restaurants

The serious-program story — cocktail bars, chef-driven restaurants and hotel bars where the beverage team builds its own menu. This is Amaya’s home turf: a modifier with a real base spirit, a real origin and a flavor no other bottle on the back bar has.

THE OCCASION

Menus turn seasonally, bartenders want ingredients with a story, and guests expect a drink they can’t make at home. The bar is judged on originality — and on being the first to a flavor before it goes mainstream.

THE PROBLEM

For too long the cacao category was lackluster: most crème de cacao are artificial and cloying, chocolate bitters are a whisper, and house-made cacao syrups are labor and consistency headaches. Nothing delivers cacao and spice with this depth of a real spirit.

THE SOLUTION

Amaya is a cacao modifier built on Oaxacan cane rum, sweetened only with agave. It works beautifully in all styles of cocktails all year long. Plus the flavors mixes with every major spirit category. Just hand a bottle to your favorite bartender and watch them create a new cocktail on the spot.

THREE PROGRAM SERVES — SPLIT BASES, LAYERED MODIFIERS, BARTENDER-FORWARD

CACAO COLADA

.75 oz mezcal · .75 oz Jamaican rum .5 oz lime juice · 1 oz pineapple juice 1 oz Amaya · .75 oz coconut cream

Pebble Ice · Hurricane glass · Grated cinnamon & pineapple slice

ALMOND JOYA OLD-FASHIONED

1 oz aged rum · 1 oz Planteray Cut & Dry coconut rum · .5 oz Amaya · 2 dashes orange bitters

Stir · Double old-fashioned · Grated nutmeg

CARAMAYA

2 oz espresso · 2 oz 60ml Amaya

Shake with ice · Old Fashioned Glass
Orange peel

- Program talking points:**
- Founder credibility — Erick Castro’s specs are already on menus and in famous cocktail books
 - An easy to used modifier that is priced for cocktails
 - Origin story for the server: Mexican grown cacao, real vanilla family-distilled rum from Oaxaca
 - Non-dairy and agave-sweetened for the dietary-restriction guest

SALUD



Erick Castro, Founder & CCO Haley
Brenn, Founder & CEO

erick@amayaelixirs.com
haley@amayaelixirs.com

AMAYA

SALUD



AMAYA



B A C K B A R P R O J E C T

Proudly imported by Back Bar Project LLC.