



Photo: AG Wedding Cinema

Local Tequila Business Begins a New Chapter

BY RENEE BRINCKS

At Monterey Bay Tequila and Cuisine you can meet industry professionals such as Emmanuel González, Juan De León and Adolfo Meza from Juan De León Tequila.

Fifteen years ago, Crystal Mercado Murphy and her brother started hosting some small-scale tequila tastings for young professionals. Mercado Murphy wanted to change tequila's reputation as a party drink.

"We wanted to inspire a deeper appreciation of tequila, of the spirit itself, and also the people behind it," she says.

Those tastings grew into Monterey Bay Tequila & Cuisine, a festival that celebrates its final presentation on October 21. The upscale event gives enthusiasts one-on-one access to master "tequileros" and distillers from Mexico and beyond, complete with tequila samples, food from local purveyors, cultural performances and more.

"This event is about community, culture and

connection, and the agave is what brings us together," says Mercado Murphy.

After the festival closes, Mercado Murphy will continue hosting private tastings and special events through her business, The Tequila People. She'll keep fostering authentic connections between brands, makers and consumers, too.

"We've had people propose at our events. We've had people create businesses. So many beautiful relationships have come out of this," she says. "Tequila is a sacred spirit, and it's one that's best had with friends."

The Monterey Bay Tequila & Cuisine Farewell Tour takes place at the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel & Spa on Saturday, October 21. For more information, visit www.thetequilapeople.com/monterey.