The Agave Landscape (Mexico)

No 1209

1. BASIC DATA
State Party: United States of Mexico
Name of property: The Agave Landscape and the Ancient Industrial Facilities of Tequila
Location: Valles Region, Jalisco State
Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 7 December 2004
Included in the Tentative List: 20 November 2001
International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination: No
Category of property: Cultural

Brief description:
Stretching between the foothills of the Tequila Volcano and the deep Rio Grande river valley are the expansive landscapes of blue agave, which since the 16th century have been used to produce tequila spirit. Within the landscape are working distilleries reflecting the growth in international consumption of tequila in the 19th century.

The agave plant has been used since prehistoric times to produce fermented drinks and for making cloth; the agave culture is now seen as part of national identity.

2. ACTIONS
Background: This is a new nomination. Supplementary information sent by the State Party has been received on 10 January 2006.
Date of the Technical Evaluation Mission: 3-8 October 2005
Dates of request for additional information and of receipt from State Party: ICOMOS has sent a letter on 24 January 2006 and the State Party has provided information on 20 March 2006.
Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Historic Gardens – Cultural Landscapes and TICCIH. IUCN has provided an evaluation of the natural attributes of the site.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 10 April 2006

3. THE PROPERTY

Description
The nominated area covers 34,658 hectares stretching from the foothills of the dormant Tequila volcano in the south-west to the canyon of the Rio Grande to the north-east. The river valley and volcano areas form a buffer zone on two sides of the nominated area. There are no buffer zones proposed to the south-east or north-west. The buffer zone covers 51,261 hectares.

The area nominated encloses a living, working landscape of fields cultivated with the blue agave plant together with four urban settlements, including Tequila, within which are large distilleries where the agave ‘pineapple’ is fermented and distilled into tequila spirit.

Agave cultivation is based on particular type of agave, Agave Azul Tequilana Weber, known as blue agave or maguey. The Agavaceae plant is native to the Americas. Its origin has been traced to the Rio Grande valley near Tequila. It has been cultivated for at least two thousand years and there are now no agave azul plants existing in the wild.

The agave plant has tall spiky leaves growing from a central base. Over a period of around seven to ten years, a ‘pineapple’ cone forms in the centre of the plant. This is harvested by cutting it away from the base. The pineapple is cooked in a closed oven, and then ground to release its sweet juices which are fermented and distilled in copper stills. Finally the liquor is bottled to sell as Tequila spirit after some has been aged in oak barrels.

The nominated area consists of the following:
- Agave fields;
- Distilleries and factories – active and redundant;
- Tabernas;
- Towns;
- Teuchitlan Archaeological sites;
- Agave associations.

Agave fields
The cultivated fields occupy the flattish lands between the base of Tequila Mountain which rises to 2,900 metres, and the edge of the Rio Grande canyon, up to 1000 metres deep. The semi-arid area is characterised by high altitude, being 1,800 to 2,200 metres above sea level, and poor soil, ideal for blue agave cultivation.

The agave plants are sown approximately four feet apart in parallel lines, a practice first recorded in the Florentine Codex of 1577. Sometimes the agave is undercopped with annual crops, corn, beans, squash etc, and many fields are dotted with occasional trees, such as fig, Parota or Camachines, to provide shade for those working in the fields. The fields of varying sizes are sometimes delineated by stone walls or lines of trees, cactus or other plants.

The sharp spiked leaves of the agave plants are trimmed periodically to encourage the sugar content of the plant. The tools used for this and for the eventual harvesting of the central pineapple fruit is the coa, a type of long hoe, with pre-Hispanic roots, depicted in a clay figurine some 1700 years old.
The agave pineapples, which form in the centre of the plant, are harvested when the plant is between seven and ten years old.

**Distilleries and factories – active and redundant**

Within the nominated area are active distilleries and redundant ones. These vary considerably in size and complexity but basically conform to similar layouts. Although the productivity greatly increased in the 19th century and again in the 20th century the various modifications to working practices have largely left the layout of the production processes unchanged. A feature of the large distilleries is the way successive changes have left the evidence for previous methods intact.

Most distilleries have a large portio or doorway onto the road. Behind this is an open unloading area for the pineapples. Next to this are found the ovens where the pineapples are cooked. Alongside are mashing areas to extract juices which are fed into fermentation tanks and then into the distillation area, containing one or more stills in a row. The storage cellars where the tequila is aged in oak barrels and the bottling plant make up the final production areas.

Originally the ovens were of a pre-Columbian type, wood-fired and built of brick or stone and clay in the shape of an open hemisphere. A few of these are still used. Some factories installed cast-iron ovens imported from the United States or United Kingdom in the 19th century, and these were heated by hot air from boilers, built with tall brick chimneys. Some still exist, although are no longer in use. Most working factories now use steel pressurised ovens.

The earliest arrangement for mashing the cooked pineapples consisted of circular horse-drawn stone mills, several of which survive, although not still used.

In the simplest distilleries, the fermentation process took place in underground stone tanks, several of which are still in situ. These were succeeded by large oak tanks and then more recently by steel.

The distillation stills were at their simplest made of clay. Larger ones of copper were introduced in the 19th century; the ones now used are nearly all of stainless steel.

Only in recent years has the tequila been aged in oak barrels. This gives the spirit a brown colour as opposed to the clear liquid of the un-aged tequila.

Many distilleries are next to extensive haciendas, consisting of a house built round one or more courtyards with arched verandas, sometimes a chapel and large walled gardens adorned by specimen trees, fountains, and paths. The one main entrance gate leads to both factory and hacienda. The whole complex is surrounded by tall almost defensive walls, often bordering the narrow town streets.

The architecture of both factories and haciendas is characterised by brick and adobe construction, plastered walls lime-washed in ochre colours, stone arches, quoin and window dressings, and formal neo-classical or baroque ornamentation.

The following ex-haciendas (with redundant plant) are included in the nomination:

- Hacienda la providencia, El Arenal
  Successively built between the 18th century and the 1930s, the factory fittings survive.
- Hacienda La parrena, El Arenal
  The buildings mostly date from the early 1800s but the chapel was re-fitted in Art Nouveau style. The factory fittings survive.
- Hacienda de La Calavera, El Arenal
  The house has been separated from its factory, little of which now survives. On one of the house wall is a 19th mural depicting a port in Spain.
- Hacienda de Santa Quiteria, El Arenal
  Dating from the end of the 19th century, the factory fittings and water supply arrangements survive.
- Hacienda de San Antonio, Amatitan
  Situated in the depths of the Rio Grande canyon, the hacienda dates from the mid 19th century. Its fittings including reservoir, original carpentry and iron work, still survive. The chapel retains its 1920s decoration.
- Hacienda of San Martin de Canas, Tequila
  This hacienda was mainly directed at livestock and agriculture and did not produce tequila. It has an unusual two-storey bell-tower and arcades of gothic style arches.
- Hacienda of San Juan de Dios de las Chorreras, Tequila
  Only the house remains dating from the 18th and 19th centuries.
- Hacienda de San Martín de los Sandovales, Tequila
  Ruined remains of an 18th century complex.
- Hacienda of la Estancita, Tequila
  18th century factory and hacienda in need of restoration
- Rancho San Nicolas de los Sandovales
- Hacienda de Santa Teresa, Tequila
- Factory of la Castellana and la Morra, Tequila
- Hacienda of Huitzilapa, Magdalena
  The following active installations are included in the nomination:
- Hacienda de San José del Refugio, Amatitan
  This is one of the most comprehensive and best preserved complexes in the region. All the individual components are present including the housing for workers immediately inside the main gates. The large house around a central patio has a chapel on one side. The extensive original processing equipment is intact – underground tanks, circular mill, ovens, copper fermentation vats and stills. The buildings are grandly proportioned and finely detailed.
- Distillery of La Rojena, Tequila
  This complex was founded in 1795 and is now one of the most important in the world. Its main entrance is at the end of the main street in the town. It includes a neoclassical chapel and large gardens. The buildings display formal
elements for a wide range of styles: Baroque, neo-classical, neo-colonial and contemporary.

- Taberna of José Cuervo, Tequila
  Situated next to La Rojena, this distillery containing examples of the simplest equipment, has been restored as a museum.

- Distillery Villa Sauza, Tequila
  Built in 1893, this complex, containing the house, factory, stables, stockyards and worker’s housing, is surrounded by a high adobe wall, and incorporates several ancient caves used as stores.

- Distillery La Cofradia, Tequila
  Recently constructed distillery.

- El Martino Distillery, Tequila
  A neo-classical complex constructed in 1870, the factory still contain old boilers and copper stills.

- Distillery of La Escondida, El Arenal
  This is a modern complex within an old surrounding wall.

**Tabernas**

Scattered across the site are the remains of several small illicit distilleries known as tabernas, created in response to periodic prohibition of New World alcohol. These include:

- Taberna de Los Tepetates, Amatitan
- Taberna de Rancho de la Cofradia, Amatitan

**Towns**

The three towns in the nominated sites are Tequila, El Arenal, and Amatitan. Their main buildings are the distilleries and churches. Besides these, one-storey houses with painted plastered facades line up along the narrow streets in the centres of the towns. At the heart of Tequila is a town square: the other towns are more irregular in plan. In Arenal the church was remodelled by Luis Barragan in 1940 and he also partially remodelled the church in Amatitan at the same date.

**Teuchitlan Archaeological sites**

Between around 200 and 900 AD the Tequila area was shaped by the Teuchitlan culture when extensive landscaping created terraces for agriculture, housing, temples, ceremonial mounds and ball courts, reflecting spatial organisation on a grand scale.

Included in the site is the Teuchitlan site of Guachimontones. This consists of the ruins of a large residential complex dating from between 400 and 700 AD and contains ceremonial patios and platforms with houses or temples. In the centre is an extant multi-layered circular pyramid with four staircases, and nearby is one of the largest ball courts in Mesoamerica.

The nominated area also includes three other sites of ceremonial plazas, and intersecting circular complexes: Huitzilapa-Magdalena, Santa Quiteria-Arenal and Las Pilas-El Arenal.

**Agave associations**

Tequila first became associated with a regional identity in the 18th century – see below. In the 19th century exports brought the drink to the attention of a wider community and gradually tequila came to be associated with Mexico as a whole not just the Jalisco region. After the Mexican Revolution, the drink achieved significant prestige through a national popular arts movement promoted by the new regime. Certain types of music and tequila were seen as part of patriotic identity. Films of the 1930s and 40s further strengthened this association and contributed to a more widespread international idea of what is “Mexican”. The agave landscape and the architecture of its haciendas and factories stimulated many cultural expressions which have been promoted round the world.

**History**

The domestication of wild agave seems to have begun around 3,500 years ago. The wild plant may have originated in the Rio Grande canyon. The agave plant is ideally suited to the poor soil and rough terrain of the Tequila area.

Agave was extensively cultivated by the Teuchitlans and served to provide many basis necessities: its fibres were used for fabric, rope and paper, the flower stem provided wood for construction, the fleshy leaves were used as roof tiles and fuel, the spines for needles and arrow heads, the sap produced a type of honey and its juices were used for medicinal balm and fermented to produce an alcoholic drink. The leaders of the complex, stratified, Teuchitlan society created wealth from their apparent monopoly of the agave resources.

To transform the starches in the plant to sugar, for eating and fermenting into alcohol, the pineapples need cooking. There is archaeological evidence from nearby Lake Sayula (outside the nominated area) that the practice of cooking agave pineapples in open, conical ovens, made of volcanic stone, existed around 400 BC. These ovens were pre-heated with wood and the pineapples covered with branches and clay.

The Spanish priest, Friar Francisco Ximenez, wrote in 1615 how juice from the cooked plant was fermented to make wine flavoured with orange and melon rinds.

In the 16th century the area was conquered by the Spanish who established the town of Santiago de Tequila. The Caxcanes who were living in the areas gradually assimilated with the Spanish. In order to mitigate shortages of spirits from Europe, the Spanish experimented with local beverages and began to distil the agave fermented juice to make vino de mezcal. At the same time rum was being developed in the Antilles and so the necessary equipment for the new agave spirit was introduced from the rum making areas.

The taxes levied on the new spirit produced a significant income for the Spanish government of Guadalajara. It funded a water supply and the government palace of Jalisco in Guadalajara.

At the end of the 17th century the first formal distilleries were established and the first intensive agave plantations created. During the course of the 18th century industrial
facilities begun to be established within haciendas, and gradually agave cultivation spread out across the plain.

As the liquor became better known in the 18th century, so demand increased. Its growth was greatly helped by the creation in 1758 of the commercial route known as the Camino Real connecting Tequila to the port of San Blas on the Pacific Ocean, to Guadalajara and to Mexico City. The wine was transported by mule teams and donkeys along the new road and became the first export product from the region. The significant increase in production and consumption of this drink contributed to the development of a clear regional identity.

Overuse of the spirit became at times a cause for concern amongst the civil and religious authorities, and there were periodic, but ultimately unsuccessful, attempts to ban the drink, in spite of the loss of revenue, but these merely resulted in clandestine activity developing in remote areas.

In 1795, after almost three centuries of Spanish colonial rule, a regional producer, José María Guadalupe Cuervo received the first licence permitting the legal establishment of a mescal distillery.

In the mid 19th century, with the growth of the export trade, large distilleries were established in the towns, separating the production of liquor from the growth of the raw materials. This led to the decline of some rural distilleries and their haciendas began to concentrate instead on producing raw materials for the urban distilleries, resulting in a rapid increase in land under agave cultivation.

The second half of the 19th century saw consolidation amongst the urban distilleries and the introduction of more efficient machinery, such as enclosed steam heated ovens and mechanical mills.

The Mexican Revolution in the third decade of the 20th century led to a temporary decline of the tequila production process as land attached to haciendas was reallocated to workers on a communal basis or became private property.

Today measures have been put in place, such as the renting of land, and the advance purchasing of the agave plants, to try and ensure continuity in production to meet the continuing high demands.

Protection and Management

Legal provision:

About 22% of the nominated area is owned privately; 44% is common land; the remainder, 34% is what is called mixed productive associations which is private investment on common land.

Most of the factories still in production are in urban areas. Those in rural areas belong to private owners. Altogether there are 60 factories in the nominated area.

Legal protection applies at Federal, State and Municipal levels.

Federal level


Geographical Denomination Decree for Tequila. October 13, 1977
General Law in Human Settlements.
General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection.

Federal protection applies to historical monuments before the 20th century, designated towns and villages, archaeological and industrial sites and the relationship between natural sites and cultural ones. Within the designated area this covers the core of the towns and nominated factories and haciendas

State level

Rule for the Cultural Patrimony of the State of Jalisco and Municipalities.
Organic Law of PRODEUR.
Decrees of Natural Protection Areas.

State protection applies also to the preservation of both cultural and natural patrimony and people’s culture. The State has responsibility for the preservation and restoration of historical, architectural and archaeological sites, urban and territorial development and the delineation of settlements. In particular it is responsible for the protected Tequila landscape through the Tequila Master Plan.

Municipal level

Rule for the Protection and Improvement of the Urban Image of Tequila, Jalisco.
Partial Plan of Urban Development on the Historical Center of Tequila, Jalisco.
Partial Plan of Urban Development for the Conservation of the Urban and Architectural Patrimony of the Historical Center of Amatitán, Jalisco.
Plan of Urban Development of the El Arenal, Jalisco.
Model of Territorial Ecological Classification of the State of Jalisco, Region Valles.

At Municipal level there is control over 20th and 21st century buildings in the nominated area of patrimonial value.

Management structure:

The nomination provides details of responsibilities at Federal, State and municipal levels and these include:

The National Institute of History and Anthropology (INAH), through its regional centre in Jalisco, are responsible for conservation and protection of archaeological sites and ancient tequila buildings.

The Federal Ministry of Education issues permits for the restoration of historical property with work carried out through State and Municipal authorities, such as the Department of Urban Development at State level.

The Federal Bureau of Tourism is responsible for the programme of Magical towns of which Tequila is part.
The department of Sustainable Development is responsible for regulating the sustainable development of Jalisco State.

The following development plans are relevant to the nominated site: Partial Plans for the urban development of Tequila, Amatitan, and El Arenal. These plans aim to control and regulate growth and development, define the limits of protection and set out an inventory of protected cultural property. For Tequila, in order to counter the pressure of development, new regulations have been introduced for preservation or improvement to regulate the growth of the town and protect valued buildings.

The dossier states that a Management Plan is in the course of production and gives a list of contents. A first draft was submitted in January 2006 in Spanish, and in March in English. This covers in detail the attributes of the nominated site, the threats impacting on it and sets out strategies for addressing threats. These cover both the built and natural environment and also intangible heritage.

Its sets out key objectives for the conservation of the landscape related and includes a detailed Action Plan for regeneration, sustainable development of the landscape, water quality, and cultural tourism activities and encouraging appreciation of the value of the landscape. It puts in place arrangements for involving the various layers of authorities.

**Resources:**

Resources for implementing the Management Plan are set out in the plan.

**Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value by the State Party (Summary)**

Agave cultivation over hundreds of years, coupled with industrial compounds and traditional processes producing tequila, has given the region its unique and exceptional character.

The Tequila region has stimulated countless cultural expressions linked to the landscape and architectural elements related to tequila production. These have contributed significantly to Mexico’s image around the world.

The agave plantations of Tequila form a living testimony to the ancient culture of agave that spread throughout Mesoamerica.

The Tequila landscape reflects the cultural mixing of pre-Hispanic fermentation processes and Spanish distillation, and of local and Spanish architectural styles.

**4. EVALUATION**

**Conservation**

**Conservation history:**

The buildings in the nominated area have only very recent conservation histories reflecting regulations imposed on archaeological sites and historic monuments in the past decade. Most conservation work is indirect, as the buildings are nearly all in private ownership. The large distilleries and haciendas in Tequila still in productive use and owned by large commercial companies are very well maintained, and their conservation respects the historic fabric. Many of the factories no longer in production are also very well preserved. Some of the smaller haciendas, however, are in a less good state of repair. The Management Plan addresses this issue. The completion of a survey of all the old industrial facilities in the Tequila Region, carried out between 2003 and 2004 and developed into a national Catalogue, will underpin this conservation work.

The state of conservation of the older buildings in the towns is good. In the margins of the towns repair and conservation is less good and this is acknowledged and addressed in the Management Plan.

The overall state of management of the cultivated landscape is good; however the intensity of cultivation in places and the implications for the environment are issues to be addressed in the Management Plan where a key aim is sustainable cultivation that protects environmental resources.

**Protection and Management:**

The Tequila nominated landscape is large and complex and combines small scale farmers with multinational companies, who run some of the large distilleries. It is also subject to considerable development pressures. If the values and significances of the landscape are to be sustained and if the designation of World Heritage status is going to involve all key stakeholders and to deliver benefits to local communities, there will be a need to ensure that change is managed through the Management Plan in a collaborative way.

IUCN undertook a desk review of the nomination and notes a number of concerns relating to the maintenance and restoration of the natural values of the nominated property. For instance a descriptive biological inventory of the area was not provided in the nomination document nor was the conservation status of the remaining isolated forest remnants, especially on Mount Tequila explained. The impact of the extensive use of herbicides and insecticides within the property is not insignificant. Reductions in the habitats for nectar-feeding bats and hummingbirds require management actions that would improve the environmental and aesthetic integrity of the area.

IUCN recognises that the importance of the interplay between nature and culture is a major rationale underpinning this nomination, and needs increased attention in the management plan for the property.

IUCN suggests that the State Party be requested to recognize and respond to the above concerns in the future management and monitoring of the property.

**Boundaries:**

The main core area covers the whole of the Tequila valley between the Volcano and the river gorge, both of which form buffer zones, to the south-west and north-east. There are no designated buffer zones to the north-west and south-east. Within the Volcano buffer zone is a small second core area of 360 hectares which covers Los Guachimontones Archaeological Zone.

The boundaries are geographically satisfactory, encompassing a defined area and coinciding with the area of control for tequila production. ICOMOS considers
however that it would be desirable to protect the setting with buffer zones on the two sides not so far protected, particularly as the town of El Arenal lies close to the south-eastern border.

Risk analysis:

The main threats to the nominated site result from the increased demand for tequila, and thus the agave plant, and increases in urbanisation and tourism.

- Intensification and extensification of cultivation:

This is manifested in the extension of cultivation to previously non-agave areas, more intensive cultivation within fields, using non-organic fertilisers, and planting down the contours. This is to be addressed through territorial plantation policies and the establishment of legal and financial mechanisms to guide the use of land and its market, as well as through the Ecological Model of Territorial Ordering which has established policies and criteria to address planting models, the use of organic fertilisers and residual water.

- Diseases to agave plants:

In recent years some agave plantations have been less fertile than others. A recent study of the pollination of the agave plants has led to an understanding of the role of bats in pollination and a programme to conserve the bats’ habitats will be put in place.

- Urban areas:

Urban expansion has led to change to traditional vernacular traditions. In Amatitan relatively recent buildings on the outskirts have not respected the towns’ simple low, historical character. Its urban growth is now regulated by the Partial Plan of Conservation

In Tequila the development has taken place over several decades, and is particularly noticeable in new housing in the eastern part. A major plan to improve the urban landscape is being undertaken through a ‘magical towns’ programme, involving the City Council, the National Institute of Anthropology and History, and the State and Federal Bureaux of Tourism, which will reinforce the local architectural character of the town and improve urban spaces.

The Management Plan has as a key objective sustaining traditional architecture in the population centres.

Authenticity and integrity

Authenticity:

In terms of the cultivated landscape, haciendas, distilleries and the centres of the urban settlements, there is no doubt of their authenticity as reflecting the way the landscape has been used and still is used to grow and process the agave plant and distil tequila.

The methods of cultivation and processing both retain their authenticity and there is still a defined link between where the agave plants grow and the distilleries to which they are sent: only tequila processed from agave pineapples grown in the area nominated is eligible for a Declaration of Origin.

The outskirts of the urban areas have been subject to recent development and change and there is less well defined local building traditions and authenticity. In these areas positive programmes will be needed to manage change in a beneficial way. The Management Plan addresses this need.

Integrity:

The nominated area is large and encompasses the whole of the core of tequila growing landscape. The area also includes all aspects of the tequila growing and distillation process, and the haciendas and factories and associated towns, thus encompassing an economic and cultural area.

Comparative evaluation

Within Mexico, agave plants have been extensively grown in other areas, but in most instances these agave landscapes have in recent decades been much reduced. For instance agave as grown to produce maguey in the high semi-arid plains of Apan of Mexico and for fibres in the Yucatan peninsula.

In the Apan area production of maguey, the pre-Hispanic drink fermented from agave pineapple juice, created great wealth for their owners in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From the 1920s the maguey drink as declined in popularity until now there are few plantations surviving. In Yucatan the fibre from agave was a highly profitable business until its monopoly was broken by growers in Brazil, Cuba, The Bahamas and Hawaii. Today the industry is almost extinct.

From the 16th century the distilled drink, mexical wine, was made from many varieties of agave. Over time the name tequila has been given to liquor produced only from blue agave around the town of Tequila and this process is now controlled. Other types of mexical wine are still produced from different varieties of agave on a small scale, for instance Bacanora is produced in Sonora; sotol is produced in Chihuahua from agave gathered in the wild; in Apango, Oaxaca, Jalisco and many other areas local mescal is produced from semi-cultivated plants reproduced by runners or seeds. None of these areas have such a well-defined cultural traditions, nor the range and scope of surviving distilleries and haciendas as in the Tequila area, nor the degree of control of the production process.

Comparing the tequila landscape to other types of cultural landscapes, the most relevant comparisons are with vineyard landscapes and particularly with those that produce spirits. The Tokai landscape, Hungary, was inscribed by the World Heritage Committee in 2002. There the nominated landscape reflect an area where the production of wine has been undertaken for a thousand years, and controlled for three hundred years, thus giving the area a specific character and linking a famous wine to a locality.

The Tequila landscape can be thought of as the equivalent landscape for Central America. The tequila drink has become known around the world and the heart of its production can be linked to one area where its production is now tightly controlled. This production has shaped a landscape whose attributes as well as its products have generated many cultural responses linked to the way the Mexican identity is perceived around the world.
Tequila is a product of a traditional human settlement and land-use which is outstanding example of the cultivation of agave and its distillation. The overall landscape of fields, plantations were created and distilleries first started cultivation since the 17th century when large scale agave plant is cultivated and then processed and has been processed over the past three hundred years.

The Tequila landscape has generated many cultural responses that play a crucial role in Mexican identity as perceived around the world.

The agave plant and its cultivation and processing are a link with pre-Hispanic culture: tequila bears witness to the merging of pre-Hispanic traditions with those brought in during first years of New Spain. The drink itself combines local wine with imported distillation processes and the architecture of the distilleries and haciendas reflect both European and American origins.

Evaluation of criteria:

The property is nominated on the basis of criteria ii, iv, v and vi:

Criterion ii: The cultivation of agave and its distillation have produced a distinctive landscape within which are a collection of fine haciendas and distilleries that reflect both the fusion of pre-Hispanic traditions of fermenting mescal juice with the European distillation processes and of local and imported technologies, both European and American.

The landscape exhibits this interchange of ideas and values in technology and architecture: the whole tequila growing and distillation process has contributed to the shaping of the landscape in the nominated area. ICOMOS considers that the property meets this criterion.

Criterion iv: The collection of haciendas and distilleries, in many cases complete with their equipment, and reflecting the growth of tequila distillation over the past two hundred and fifty years, are together an outstanding example of distinct architectural complexes which illustrate the fusion of pre-Hispanic culture with the European distillation processes and the architecture of the distilleries and haciendas reflect both European and American.

Criterion v: The agave landscape exemplified the continuous link between ancient Mesoamerican culture of the agave and today, as well as the contours process of cultivation since the 17th century when large scale plantations were created and distilleries first started production of tequila. The overall landscape of fields, distilleries, haciendas and towns is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use which is representative of a specific culture that developed in Tequila. ICOMOS considers that the property meets this criterion.

Criterion vi: The Tequila landscape is now tied firmly to Mexican national identity not just as perceived in Mexico but also how Mexicans are seen in the rest of the world. The tequila landscape has generated literary works, films, music, art and dance, all celebrating the links between Mexico and tequila and to its heartland in Jalisco. The Tequila landscape is thus strongly associated with perceptions of cultural significances far beyond its boundaries. ICOMOS considers that the property meets this criterion.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

The Tequila landscape combines small scale farmers with multinational companies who together harvest the landscape to produce a product that is now in world-wide demand. The Management Plan sets out strategies which combine to create a vision for the future of this dynamic landscape as an exemplar for sustainable development, through strengthening the links between heritage, community involvement and development.

Success of the tequila crop in the long-term depends on sustaining the blue agave plants. To achieve this will mean more attention being given to the interplay between nature and culture in order to achieve sustainable production. In line with IUCN’s recommendations, the State Party is requested to reinforce objectives to improve the environmental integrity of the property.

The Tequila landscape grows a crop that is given high added value through the international demand for tequila spirit. In delivering the Management Plan, it would be desirable if the involvement of all stakeholders could deliver benefits to local communities, and particularly farmers, through the traditional processes that have shaped the landscape.

The collection of distilleries, with in many case their original equipment is a collection of industrial archaeology of major significance, set in many cases within architecturally distinguished buildings. ICOMOS congratulates the State Party on documenting these properties and setting in place plans for their conservation in situ.

The nominated property is large and the boundaries reflect a coherent geographical zone. The buffer zones on two sides are necessary to protect the dramatic visual setting of the landscape given by the volcano and the deep river gorge. On the remaining two sides where the land is flatter, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party define buffer zones to protect against development immediately outside the boundaries.

Recommendation with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Agave Landscape and the Ancient Industrial Facilities of Tequila, United States of Mexico, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria ii, iv, v and vi:

Criterion ii: The cultivation of agave and its distillation have produced a distinctive landscape within which are a collection of fine haciendas and distilleries that reflect both...
the fusion of pre-Hispanic traditions of fermenting mescal juice with the European distillation processes and of local and imported technologies, both European and American.

**Criterion iv:** The collection of haciendas and distilleries, in many cases complete with their equipment and reflecting the growth of tequila distillation over the past two hundred and fifty years, are together an outstanding example of distinct architectural complexes which illustrate the fusion of technologies and cultures.

**Criterion v:** The agave landscape exemplified the continuous link between ancient Mesoamerican culture of the agave and today, as well as the contours process of cultivation since the 17th century when large scale plantations were created and distilleries first started production of tequila. The overall landscape of fields, distilleries, haciendas and towns is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement and land-use which is representative of a specific culture that developed in Tequila.

**Criterion vi:** The Tequila landscape has generated literary works, films, music, art and dance, all celebrating the links between Mexico and tequila and its heartland in Jalisco. The Tequila landscape is thus strongly associated with perceptions of cultural significances far beyond its boundaries.

ICOMOS, April 2006
Map showing the boundaries of the property
Agave fields

Hacienda de La Rojefia
City of Tequila

Archaeological area of Los Guachimontones