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TEQUILA!

How hot is too hot? At Mercadito, there's no limit

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Seeking a Cinco de Mayo that's a little more sizzle than fizzle? Mercadito Midtown has your fix. Miami's newest Mexican resto-lounge is daring patrons to try the "Hottest Drink on Earth," the *Vato Loco*. Concocted by Tippling Bros. -- a beverage company in charge of creating cocktails for all Mercadito Cantina locations -- the tequila-based cocktail is so spicy that the restaurant makes you sign a waiver before you give it a try.

"Once you sip it," says Tippling Bros. beverage director **Paul Tanguay**, "you get this intense fruitiness and green flavors from chile and pineapple, then these subtle smoky notes and . . . a warming sensation going down your esophagus and throat. It's definitely intense."

To celebrate Cinco de Mayo, Mercadito guests who try the *Vato Loco* (Crazy Dude) will have their photo posted on the restaurant's Facebook page (facebook.com/Mercadito.Restaurants) the next day.

The cocktail was set to be featured on NBC's *Today* show on Wednesday morning. Mercadito (3252 NE First Ave, Miami; 786-369-0430) will offer a \$40 sharing menu, \$5 tequila shots and a Mariachi band to celebrate May 5, but it's definitely the drink which will have everyone talking the next day.

For the full interview with Tanguay, go to Miami.com.

-- AURORA L. RODRIGUEZ



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