

Japanese RESTAURANT news

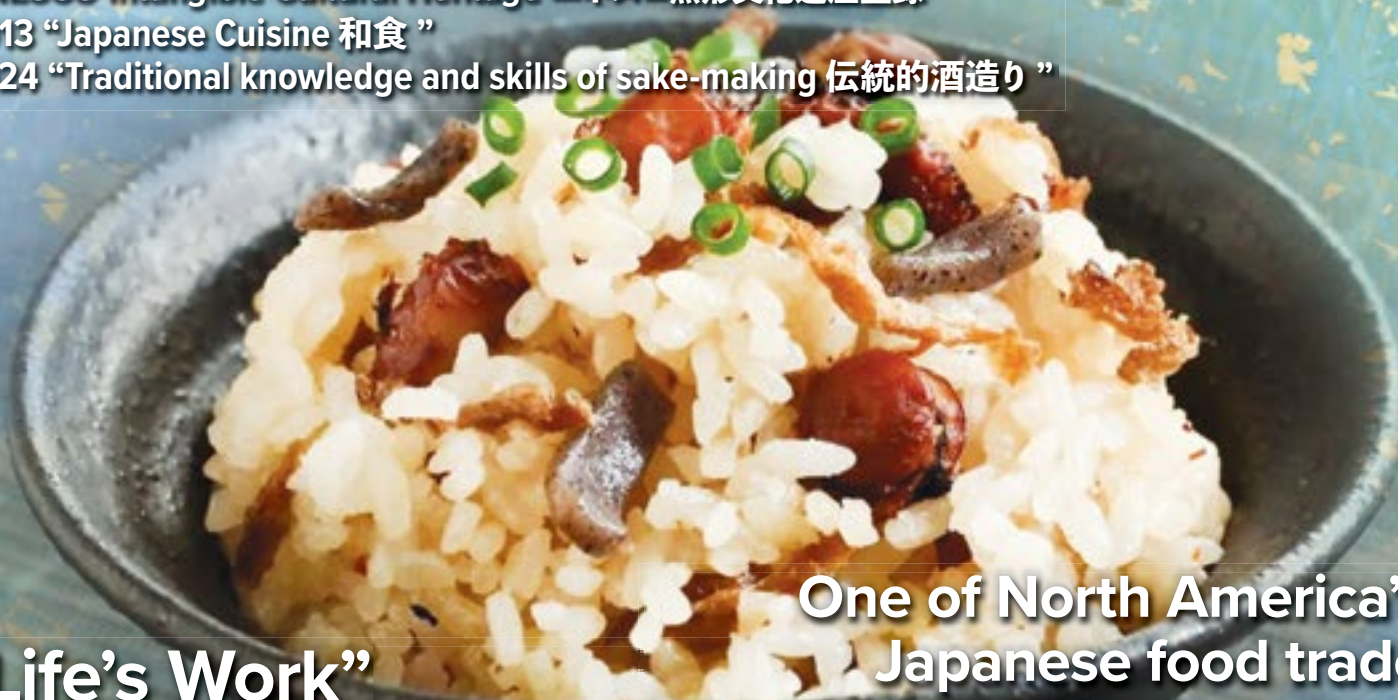
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2013 “Japanese Cuisine 和食”
2024 “Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making 伝統的酒造り”



“My Life’s Work”

-Seiwa Market Founder
Hidejiro Matsu Looks Back on
60 Years of Challenges and
Ahead to the Future of North
America’s Japanese Food Market-

「私の人生でした」

—セイワマーケット創業者松秀二郎氏
が語る、60年の挑戦と北米日本食
市場の未来—

One of North America’s largest
Japanese food trade shows,
“FOOD & SAKE EXPO,” was held

北米最大級の日本食商談会
「FOOD & SAKE EXPO」開催
JFCインターナショナルがフードと酒を
融合、1500人超の業界関係者が来場

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ジャパニーズ・レストランニュース

本誌はこの日本食レストラン業界にスポットをあて、何が流行っているのか、また繁盛店の紹介を通し、繁盛店のオペレーションや時代を生き抜くヒントを紹介し、最新の話題店舗や人気商品などを紹介し、日本食レストランの繁盛を応援します。また、アメリカの最新の食品衛生管理に関する情報なども提供し業界の発展に寄与します。

Mission of Japanese Restaurant News

This magazine spotlights the Japanese restaurant industry to introduce the latest trends and successful restaurants along with their operations to provide hints on how to survive the competitive restaurant industry. Further, this magazine introduces the latest restaurants garnering attention and popular products, along with the prosperity of Japanese restaurants. Lastly, this magazine also introduces the latest information on food sanitation and management to contribute to the development of the Japanese restaurant industry as a whole.



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A Night of Half-Priced Lemon Slices — The Quiet Happiness Drifting Through Keihin’s Beloved Izakaya, Akafudaya

- The Popular Tavern Culture I Encountered in a Seaside Town—Cheap, Delicious, and Free from Having to Worry About Anyone Else-

レモンスライス半減の夜——京浜大衆酒場「赤札屋」に漂う、静かな幸福
-海風の街で出会った、安くて旨くて誰にも気を遣わない大衆酒場文化-

On a personal note, I recently moved from the shadow of Shinjuku’s skyscraper district to the Keihin area. Although both are part of Tokyo, the atmosphere feels remarkably different. Around Shinjuku, people always seem to be moving at a brisk pace, as if the city itself never stops rushing forward. In the Keihin region, however, time appears to flow a little more gently. Perhaps it is the influence of the sea breeze, but there is a curious sense of calm that makes the passage of time feel slower and more relaxed. Compared with the Shinjuku area, the Keihin region also seems to have far fewer disappointing budget izakayas. Cheap and delicious establishments exist here as if they were the most natural thing in the world, and it is not unusual to find them already full by five o’clock in the evening. The drinking culture feels different as well. In Shinjuku, many bars and izakayas seem to attract people looking for company or conversation. In the Keihin area, by contrast, there appear to be more places where one can sit quietly and enjoy a drink alone without saying a word. Among these establishments—cheap, delicious, and requiring little in the way of social effort—there is one particular place in the Keihin region that I find myself returning to again and again.

When you visit on a weekday afternoon, you will find seasoned solo drinkers lined up along the counter, seated one seat apart from one another, quietly enjoying their drinks and snacks in complete silence. Inside the tavern, the only sounds that regularly break the calm are the electronic chimes signaling that an order has been placed. The Chinese staff members serve food and drinks with a matter-of-fact efficiency and little small talk, and somehow that

understated, no-frills style contributes greatly to the comfort of the place. What is truly remarkable, however, is the pricing. A glass of shochu highball or green tea highball costs just 100 yen, while a mega-sized mug is only 150 yen. The food menu is equally astonishing: nearly one hundred different dishes are available, with most priced between 300 and 500 yen. It is the kind of place that feels almost impossible to imagine in central Tokyo today—a tavern where abundance, affordability, and quiet solitude coexist with effortless ease. However, even this price-breaking izakaya has not been immune to the rising tide of raw material costs. When I first visited the place about ten years ago, a plate of tuna sashimi was only 190 yen. Sake was equally cheap at 190 yen per “go” (a traditional unit of measure). Today, however, the situation has changed. The tuna sashimi now costs 350 yen, and a “go” of sake has risen to 300 yen. Even in a place built on the idea of extreme affordability, the quiet pressure of inflation has inevitably made its mark. Even so, the place remains extremely cheap, so there is really no cause for complaint. However, on a recent visit, I ordered my usual mega mug of chūhai for 150 yen, only to notice something different. The lemon slice that usually floats coolly in the glass had been reduced—cut in half. I have to admit, I prefer the full “full-moon” slice of lemon, so I felt a slight sense of disappointment. Still, that feeling was quickly replaced by admiration for the effort of the shop. Even as other menu items have gradually increased in price, they continue to hold the line on the chūhai, keeping its price unchanged. In that small gesture lies a kind of quiet determination—an attempt to preserve something essential about the place,

even as the surrounding world grows more expensive. Perhaps it is because of that very spirit of perseverance that, despite being a down-to-earth, everyday izakaya, the establishment has even expanded overseas. It now operates several branches in Germany and United Kingdom, and is still in the process of steadily increasing its number of locations. It is somewhat astonishing to think that a humble neighborhood tavern culture, born from cheap drinks and unpretentious meals, has begun to take root far beyond Japan—continuing to grow, quietly but surely, across borders. Even as prices continue to rise, neither the stance of the establishment nor its regular customers seems to have changed in any significant way. It is the kind of place that, once visited, inevitably makes you want to return again. For anyone who enjoys a drink, I would strongly recommend paying a visit at least once to the popular izakaya chain Akafudaya.■



個人的な事であるが、新宿副都心の御膝下から、京浜地域に引越した。同じ東京ながら、新宿の周りは皆急ぎ足で動いているイメージだが、京浜地域は海風のせいか流れる時間が多少緩やかに感じるのが不思議である。そして新宿地域に比べて、安居酒屋のハズレが少ない地域でもある。安くて美味しい店が当たり前の様にあって、夕方5時にはもう満席だったりする。飲み方も新宿は人恋しい人達が集まる店が多いのに対し、京浜地区は無言で一人呑みが出来る店が多い気がする。そんな安くて美味くてコミュニケーション能力を必要としない京浜地域にて足繁く通う店がある。平日の昼間に行くと、一人呑みの猛者達が、カウンター席ひとつ飛ばしに横



並びで鎮座し黙々と酒と肴を楽しんでいる。店内にはオーダーが通った時の電子音だけが響き、中華系の女性店員の愛想の無い淡々とした提供がとても居心地よいのだ。そしてその店の驚くことが、耐ハイ・緑茶ハイなどが1杯100円、メガジョッキ150円なのである。そして、大量の食事メニューが300円～500円を中心に約百種類もある。しかし、そんな価格破壊の居酒屋にも原材料高騰の波が押し寄せている。私が初めて10年くらい前にその店を訪れた際は、マグロの刺身が1皿190円だった。日本酒も1合190円と激安だったのだが、今はマグロの刺身が350円、日本酒も1合300円になった。それでも激安なので、何の問題もないのだが、先日訪れた際に、いつものように耐ハイメガジョッキ150円を頼んだところ、いつも涼しげな感じでジョッキの中に浮かんでいるレモンスライスがなんと半分になっていたのである。流石にレモンスライスは満月型が良いなと思っているので少しショックでもあったが、他のメニューの値上げが有っても、耐ハイの値段だけは変えずに頑張ってくれているお店の努力に感服した。そんな努力のお店だからか、大衆居酒屋なのに、ドイツやイギリスに数店舗、支店を展開していて、まだまだ店舗数を増やしている最中である。物の値段が上がっても、店のスタンスや常連客は大きく変わらず、一度行けば必ずまた行きたくなる店である。酒好きなら大衆居酒屋チェーンの【赤札屋】に是非一度は行ってみたい。

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轻松配对日本酒

这一次，我想教一些技巧，以提高日本酒和料理的配对能力。

首先，我想请你准备三个品牌的日本酒，其性质尽可能不同。

例如，找出完全不同的产地的純米大吟釀、特別純米、純米生釀。

三個品牌的酒必須使用相同的形狀的玻璃杯。同時儲存在冰箱中約3小時，並保持約55°F。

關於料理，有時間的人可以自己做，如果你想吃多種不同的料理進行比

Pairing of Sake

In this issue, I'd like to report on a secret to enhance pairing of Japanese cuisine with sake.

First, please have three brands of Japanese sake with very different properties.

For example, select Junmai Daiginjo, Tokubetsu Junmai, and Junmai Kimoto from different regions.

Glasses used for the three sake brands must have the same shape. Chill the sake in the refrigerator at approximately 55 degrees F for three hours

prior to serving.

As for the cuisine, they can be prepared in advance if time allows. If not, if you want to try several different dishes to compare, then take out is recommend. For example, trying Chinese and Italian cuisine (avoid foods strong in flavor or garlic) is fun.

For the order of sampling, be sure to start with sake made from rice with the highest milling: from Daiginjo – Tokubetsu Junmai – Junmai. The most important aspect of sampling sake is to

sip the sake, sample the cuisine, then drink the same brand of sake again.

If umami or a wide range of rich flavors are detected, then the pairing is considered a success. Also, if the appetite increases, this is also a good outcome.

Japanese sake goes surprising well with unexpected dishes (like cheese or steak), so please try pairing without biases for interesting discoveries.■

日本酒ペアリング

今回は、ちょっとした心がけで日本酒と料理のペアリング能力が上がるコツを教えたい。

まずは、なるべく性質の違う日本酒3銘柄を用意していただきたい。

たとえば、純米大吟釀、特別純米、純米生釀で全く違う産地のものを見つけてみる。

3銘柄の酒は必ず同じ形状のグラスを使うこと。その際、3時間くらい冷蔵庫に保存し、55度Fくらいになるように

しておく。

さて料理だが、時間のある人は料理を自分で作ってもいいし、違う種類のものを複数食べ比較したい場合はテイクアウトを勧める。何も日本食に限らず、たとえば、中華、イタリアンなど（あまりスパシーなものやニンニクの強いものは避ける）で試すのも面白い。

飲み食べる順番は大吟釀－特別純米－純米といった具合に高い精米歩合のものから飲んでいくこと。そして飲み方で一

番重要なことは、日本酒を一口飲んでから料理を食べ、またほんの少し同じ酒を飲むこと。酒だけで飲んだ時と食べた後に飲んだ同じ酒の口の中での変化を感じとっていただきたい。

旨みやコクの広がりを感じられればそのペアリングは良いと判断できる。また、食欲を増進させる感覚を与えてくれるものも良い。

日本酒は意外なもの（チーズやステーキなど）にも合うので決して偏見を持たずにペアリングしてみると面白い発見ができる。

較，建議外賣。不只限於日本菜，嘗試中國菜和意大利菜（避免太辣或大蒜味濃的食物）也很有趣。

飲酒吃菜的順序是大吟釀-特別純米-純米，是從高精米率的開始飲用。然後飲酒的人最重要的是，喝一口日本酒，然後吃一道菜，然後再喝少量同樣的酒。請你感受一下只喝酒時和吃完菜後喝的相同酒，酒味在口中的變化。

如果你感受到脂味道和濃厚的味道的傳播，那麼可以判斷配對的菜是好的。此外，促進食慾的感覺也是好的。日本酒也適合意想不到的東西（奶酪和牛排等），沒有任何偏見，如果你嘗試配對它，可以發現有趣的事情。

부담 없이 즐기는 일본술 페어링

이번에는 약간의 노력으로 일본술과 요리의 페어링 능력을 향상할 수 있는 비결을 알려드리겠습니다. 우선 가능한 한 성질이 다른 일본술 3종류를 준비해 주십시오. 예를 들어, 준마이 다이긴쵸, 도쿠베츠 준마이, 준마이 기모토 등 전혀 다른 산지의 술을 찾아보시기 바랍니다. 상표가 다른 3종류의 술은 반드시 같은 형태의 술잔을 사용해야 합니다. 이때 3시간 정도 냉장고에 넣어 55도 정도가 되도록 준비합니다. 요리에 대해서는 시간이 있는 사람은 요리를 직접 만들어도 좋고, 다른 요리를 여러 개 먹어 비교하고 싶을 때는 테이크 아웃을 추천합니다. 일본식에 국한되지 않고, 중화요리, 이탈리아 요리(매운 음식이나 마늘이 많이 들어간 음식을 피할 것) 등 어

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Brewery Owner



Kosuke Kuji
Nanbu Bijin Inc.
Fifth Generation
Brewery Owner

Timothy Sullivan
Sake Samurai



Takao Matsukawa
International
Sake Sommelier
Latin Region Specialist
Mutual Trading



Keita Akaboshi
Sake Sommelier
Kuramoto US Inc.



Michael John Simkin
MJS Sake Selection
Owner



Shigeto Terasaka
Sake Sommelier
President
Japan Hollywood Network



Sara Guterbock
International
Sake Sommelier
New York Mutual Trading

Sake Sommelier and Others



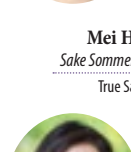
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Masato Kato
Sake Sommelier
Wismettac Asian Foods



Philip Harper
Tamagawa Hand Made
Japanese Sake
Master Sake Brewer



Mei HO
Sake Sommelier
True Sake



Mai Segawa
Advanced Sake
Sommelier
Tako Grill



Isao Kiyota
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Academia de Sake Mexico
Founder



Rachel Fiekowsky
International
Sake Sommelier
New York Mutual Trading



Joe Mizuno
Head of the "Regional
Sake Tasting Club"



Akira Yuhara
Sake Sommelier
Miyako Hybrid Hotel



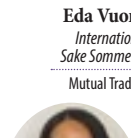
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Sake and Wine
Sommelier



Miyuki Yoshida
Sake Sommelier



Don Lee
Sake Sommelier
Yama Sushi
Owner Chef



Eda Vuong
International
Sake Sommelier
Mutual Trading



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Sommelier



Eduardo Dingler
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Kurtis Wells
Mixologist



Koji Aoto
Sake Sommelier
Savannah
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Eiji Mori
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Katana Restaurant



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Sake Sommelier
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酒豪大陸

California
SAKE
CHALLENGE

by Kosuke Kuji 225



Kosuke Kuji

Fifth Generation Brewery Owner
Nanbu Bijin, Inc.

Born May 11, 1972. Entered Tokyo University of Agriculture's Department of Brewing and Fermentation. In 2005 became the youngest person ever to receive the Iwate Prefecture Young Distinguished Technician Award. In 2006 was selected to be a member of the board of trustees of his local alma mater, Fukuoka High School. Currently is featured in a number of media outlets including magazines, radio, and television.

*Positions of Public Service:
Chairperson, Cassiopeia Corporation Youth Conference;
School Board Member, Fukuoka High School, Iwate Prefecture, Vice-Chairman, Technology Committee, Iwate Prefecture Brewers and Distillers' Association

Anime, Voice Actors, and Japanese Sake Part 2
アニメと声優と日本酒 その2

A collaboration project titled "Seijo" has launched, bringing together anime voice actresses and "Kokushu," Japan's traditional alcoholic beverages culture that has been registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. "Seijo" is a new project designed to share the appeal of Japan's traditional "Kokushu" — including Sake, Honkaku Shochu, Awamori, and Hon-mirin — through the voices of anime voice actors and comedians.

As the first event of the "Seijo" project, a special collaboration event featuring anime voice actors, comedians, and Japanese sake was held at Tokyo Station.

Under the theme of "Giving Voice to Kokushu," a wide selection of Sake and Honkaku Shochu from across Japan gathered at the venue, showcasing the diversity and richness of the country's traditional alcoholic beverages. The featured performers included a wide range of today's leading anime voice actors and comedians, such as Kaede Hondo, Hantaro Tenshin, Mikako Takahashi, Risae Matsuda, Hotomi Sekine, Nana Hamasaki, Haruki Ishiya, as well as the manzai duo Nihonshu. Bringing together talents from across the anime and comedy worlds, they energized the special venue at Tokyo Station with their distinctive "voices," each adding their own color and

personality to the presentation of Japan's traditional "Kokushu."

Guests were treated to heart-felt expressions of deep affection for "Kokushu," along with unique personal insights and entertaining anecdotes shared by the performers.

When I closed my eyes and listened to the talk, it felt like scenes from that anime were coming back to me, and I truly felt that an anime world without visuals was appearing in my mind.

The activities will become more full-scale from here on. Events overseas are also planned, so please look forward to them. ■

アニメ声優さんと日本酒を含む、ユネスコの世界無形文化遺産に登録された「國酒」のコラボ企画「聲蔵」プロジェクトがスタートしました。

これは声優や芸人の声で日本酒・本格焼酎・泡盛・本みりんといった「國酒」の魅力を伝え、体験型イベントや音声コンテンツを通じて新たな酒文化を醸成するプロジェクトです。

第一弾のイベントとして、東京駅での声優さんや芸人さんと日本酒のコラボイ

ベントが行われました。

「國酒に聲を宿す」というテーマで、日本全国から多くの日本酒、本格焼酎などが集まり、その美味しさや魅力を声優さんや芸人さんが良き「聲」でファンの皆さんに語りました。

出演した声優さんや芸人さんは本渡楓さん、天津飯太郎さん、高橋美佳子さん、松田利冴さん、関根瞳さん、浜崎奈々さん、石谷春貴さん、漫才師「にほんしゅ」さんなど、今をときめくアニメに出演している声優さんや、芸人、漫才師など多

岐にわたり、東京駅の特設会場をその素晴らしい「聲」で盛り上げてくれました。國酒に対する愛の深さや、独自の想い、そして楽しい体験談などにお客さんは当日試飲できる國酒で酔いしました。

目をつぶって話を聞いていると、あのアニメのシーンが蘇るような感じで、本当にそこでは映像には無いアニメの世界が脳裏に浮かびました。

まだまだこれから活動を本格化させていきます。海外でのイベントも予定されていますので、楽しみにしててください。

日本酒 百味百題

Japanese sake generally sold is undiluted sake adjusted with water to the alcohol content of 15 ~ 16%. However, the alcohol content of squeezed sake mash itself is rather

美味しい酒を150種類
日本全国から輸入
全米のネットワークを通じて
皆様に直送中

Yoshihide Murakami
Master Sake Sommelier
Liquor Manager
JFC International Inc.



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Alcohol content of sake 日本酒のアルコール度

high, at approximately 20~22%, the highest alcohol content among brewed liquor worldwide (wine is between 9~14). While alcohol is generated from sugar broken down by yeast, for yeast to produce large amount of alcohol at once, high sugar content of approximately 40% in the sake mash would be required. However, if the sugar content is too high in the yeast, the production of alcohol would be inhibited due to osmotic pressure. Within high concentration of sugar, yeast cannot grow. Despite this fact, the secret behind the high alcohol-concentration in sake is in the brewing method.

Sake mash that creates Japanese sake is prepared by adding steaming rice, rice malt, and water to the yeast starter with large quantity of cultured yeast. Therefore, sake mash contains two parallel functions: to produce sugar by gradually breaking down steaming rice into glucose using yeast from the rice malt, and alcohol fermentation by breaking down the glucose into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas using the glucose. In other words, the glucose in the sake mash is always maintained at an appropriate concentration for the yeast. For this reason, yeast can generate large quantities of alcohol without exposure to osmotic pressure. In this way, the production of alcohol in the sake mash and alcohol fermentation occurring together is known as "parallel multiple fermentation." Also, it is known that alcohol tolerance is added to the yeast starter by a portion of the rice malt component, which generates high concentration of alcohol. On the other hand, grapes, the ingredient to produce wine, is a "saccharine food ingredient" that originally contains

abundant sugar content, thus there is no need to produce sugar during the production process.

However, in principle, smashing grapes and placing them in a container would allow the natural yeast on the grape skin to produce alcohol fermentation that produces wine. However, the alcohol concentration level will not be as high as Japanese sake. In this way, alcohol fermentation occurring independently is referred to as single fermentation. Also, in case of beer, since the ingredient is the same grain product (starch) as rice, it is necessary to convert the food ingredient into sugar during the production process. First, the saccharogenic amylase of the malt would break down into sugar, where the yeast proliferates for alcohol fermentation. In this way, the function to convert into sugar and alcohol fermentation that takes place independently is referred to as "fermentation after saccharification." However, since beer uses a large quantity of water, alcohol-level is rather low at approximately 5%.■

◆ ◆ ◆

般に市販されている日本酒は、
——原酒を加水調整して15~16%の
アルコール濃度に仕上げてある
が、もろみを搾ただけの原酒のアル
コール分は高いもので20~22%前後にも
なる。これは、世界中の醸造酒の中で最
も高いアルコール度数である(ワインは
9~14%)。アルコールは酵母が糖分を分
解することによって生成されるが、酵母
が一度にこれだけ大量のアルコールを造
り出すためには、もろみ中に40%近い
高濃度の糖分が必要になるという。とこ
ろが、酵母は糖分の濃度が高すぎると、

その浸透圧のために生理が抑えられてし
まう(濃糖圧迫)。ましてや、このよう
な高濃度の糖分の中では、酵母すら生育
できない。それにもかかわらず日本酒
のアルコール度数が飛び抜けて高い秘密
は、その醸造方法にある。日本酒を造る
もろみは、酵母を大量培養した酒母に、
蒸米と麴、水を添加したものである。し
たがって、もろみの中では、麴の酵素
によって徐々に蒸米がブドウ糖に分解さ
れる糖化作用と、その糖分を酵母がアル
コールと炭酸ガスに分解するアルコール
発酵とが同時進行していることになる。
つまり、もろみ中の糖分はつねに酵母に
とって適度な濃度に保たれているわけ
だ。そのため、酵母は濃糖圧迫にさらさ
れることなく、大量のアルコールを生成
することができる。このように、もろみ
の中で糖化作用とアルコール発酵とが同
時に行なわれることを「並行複発酵」と
呼ぶ。さらに、麴の成分の一部が清酒酵
母にアルコール耐性を付け、高濃度の
アルコールを生成することもわかってい
る。一方、ワインの原料であるブドウは、
最初から糖分が豊富に含まれている「糖
質原料」であるため、製造工程で糖化の
必要が無い。したがって、原理的にはブ
ドウを潰して器に入れておけば、果皮に
付着している天然酵母の働きでアルコー
ル発酵だけが行なわれて酒(ワイン)に
なるわけだが、アルコール濃度は日本酒
ほど高くない。このようにアルコー
ル発酵が単独で行なわれることを「単発
酵」という。また、ビールの場合は、原
料が米と同じ穀物(でんぷん質原料)な
ので、製造工程で原料を糖化する必要が
ある。まず麦芽の糖化酵素によって糖分
に分解し、そこに酵母を増殖させてアル
コール発酵を行なわせる。このように、
糖化作用とアルコール発酵とをそれぞれ
単独に行なうことを「単行複発酵」と
いう。しかもビールは水の使用量が多い
から、アルコール度数は5%前後と低く
なる。



SAKE SOMMELIER CLUB

Master Sake Sommelier

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Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America NPO法人 米国酒焼酎蒸留酒研究所

Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America was founded with the purpose to promote further understanding of Japanese sake, shochu and beer in a shared where 500 million people enjoy wine in North America. We strive to increase Japanophiles by furthering understanding of the sake culture through online Japanese sake and shochu colleges and books related to Japanese sake, shochu and beer, etc. Especially sampling parties directly approaches consumers and no doubt contributes to expanding the market. Also, our final purpose is to facilitate communication with sake breweries, sake producers, and distribution companies, etc., to introduce Japanese sake, shochu and beer to American consumers in a way that's easy-to-understand.

Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America 米国酒焼酎蒸留酒研究所

Japanese Sake Type Differ According to the Combination of Flavor and Aroma

In addition, Japanese sake type also differs by aroma and preparation method. The Sake Service Institute focused on the sake flavor and aroma to classify sake into four different types.

Sake type is classified by plotting the sake flavor onto the horizontal axis and sake aroma onto the vertical axis. Sake with concentrated flavor and aroma is designated as Mellow Sake, while sake with concentrated flavor but light aroma is Pure Sake, sake with subtle flavor but pungent aroma is Aromatic Sake, and sake with subtle flavor and light aroma is designated as Refreshing Sake.

Compatible cuisines and temperature are indicated for each sake type as reference to select your sake type for sampling.

Refreshing sake with no odd flavor is referred to as clean sake flavor. The lower the rice-polishing ratio, the cleaner the sake flavor. To the contrary, the higher the rice-polishing ratio, the more concentrated the umami flavor in the sake. Generally, aromatic sake is best served chilled, while rich sake is best served hot. Raising the temperature increases the umami and sweet flavors, mellowing the acidity of sake.

Heating both Mellow and Pure Sake produces more full-bodied flavors.

Rich sake refers to Japanese sake light and refreshing in flavor, while sweet Japanese sake is heavy and strong in flavor.■

日本酒のタイプ

—味や香りの組み合わせによって異なる

このほかにも香りや作り方で分けることも出来る。そんな中、味わいと香りに注目して考え出されたのが、日本酒サービス研究会による4タイプの分類である。

味わいを横軸から、香りを縦軸として、分類し味も香りも強いものを熟酒、味は濃い香り控えめなものを醇酒、味は軽やかで香りが強いものを薫酒、味も香りも控えめなものを爽酒としている。

各タイプごとに合わせやすい料理や温度が示されているので、飲みたい日本酒を探したい時の参考になる。

雑味がなくさっぱりとした酒はきれいな酒と表現される。精米歩合が低い米で作る酒ほどきれいな酒になる。反対に精米歩合が高い米で作ったお酒はうまみが強くなる。

一般に香りが高い酒は冷やして、コクのある酒は燗にして飲むと美味しくなると言われる。温度を上げることで旨味や甘みが増し、酸味がまろやかになる。

熟酒や醇酒は燗にすることで、より膨らみのある味わいになる。

コクのある酒とは、日本酒の味を表す表現言葉として、淡麗辛口や濃醇は甘口と言う表現がある。

**ONLINE
SAKE Class**

Sake Navigator

Presented by Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America



Hidejiro Matsu, Seiwa Market Founder

“My Life’s Work”

-Seiwa Market Founder Hidejiro Matsu Looks Back on 60 Years of Challenges and Ahead to the Future of North America’s Japanese Food Market-

「私の人生でした」

—セイワマーケット創業者松秀二郎氏が語る
60年の挑戦と北米日本食市場の未来—

Since establishing a Japanese food import business in Hawaii in 1965, Matsu has been at the forefront of promoting Japanese cuisine in North America, dedicating more than half a century to its growth and evolution. By steering the company from wholesale distribution to a membership-based retail business, he helped build it into a powerhouse of the Japanese supermarket industry.

Even after selling the business he had led for decades in 2013, Matsu’s entrepreneurial journey was far from over. In 2015, he founded Seiwa Market, embarking on a new chapter in his mission to expand the reach of Japanese food culture. Today, with operations based in California and Texas, he continues to explore new opportunities and push the boundaries of the Japanese food market. We spoke with Matsu, whose career has been defined by a willingness to embrace change and evolve, and with Haseda of Seiwa Market Houston, who is leading reforms on the ground, about the transformation of North America’s Japanese food market and their vision for its future.

Evolving for Our Customers

Seiwa Market traces its roots to Marukai Corporation U.S.A., an importer of Japanese products and food established in Hawaii in 1965 by the Matsu brothers. At the time, the company primarily served Japanese immigrants and expatriates, supplying them with familiar products from home. Yet even in those early years, Matsu recognized that the market was beginning to change. As the Japanese community in North America expanded throughout the 1970s, demand for Japanese food products surged. However, in 1978, the exchange rate shifted dramatically, with the U.S. dollar falling from around ¥300 to ¥180, sharply increasing import costs and putting significant pressure on the wholesale business. Faced with this

challenge, Matsu made a bold strategic move, pivoting from wholesale distribution to retail.

He developed an innovative business model that enabled products to be sold at prices more than 40 percent lower than those of competitors and launched the membership-based Marukai Wholesale Mart. The concept proved an immediate success, attracting strong customer support and setting a new standard for Japanese food retailing in North America. “We wanted to provide quality products at the lowest possible prices. That’s why we chose the membership model,” Matsu recalls. The strategy proved highly effective. Membership grew rapidly, and at its peak, the company attracted more than 170,000 members across Hawaii and California, establishing itself as a major force in the Japanese retail market.

Matsu describes this principle as the foundation of his management philosophy. “The most important thing in business is to think about your customers,” he says. It is a belief that has remained unchanged since the day he founded the company and continues to guide its direction today.

From Recreating Japan to Experiencing Japanese Culture

In the past 20 years, the Japanese supermarket landscape in North America has changed dramatically. Where Japanese customers once formed the core clientele, today Asian communities and local shoppers have become the primary drivers of sales, reshaping the market’s identity in the process. Haseda provides the following perspective on today’s market landscape.

“The business has shifted from a model that recreates Japan to one that offers an experience of Japanese culture,” he says.

In the past, the focus was primarily on seasonings and ingredients used to recreate traditional Japanese home cooking. Today, however, ready-to-eat items such as sushi, bento, prepared

foods, and ramen have become key drivers of sales.

“The industry has now entered a new era”—one in which stores must be designed so that even those unfamiliar with Japanese cuisine can shop with ease and confidence.

Refining the “Seiwa Identity” Amid Intensifying Competition

While the boom in Japanese cuisine has driven market expansion, it has also significantly reshaped the competitive landscape. “High costs, delays, instability, and unpredictability,” says Haseda, describing the current state of the logistics environment.

Rising procurement costs, supply chain instability, and labor shortages—amid these mounting challenges, Seiwa Market has focused its strategy on two key differentiators: authenticity and responsiveness to local markets.

In the fresh produce section, post-purchase handling is rigorously managed. “Freshness and product selection are no longer differentiators. The real difference lies in how we handle the ingredients,” he says. Equally notable is the company’s philosophy of focusing not only on what to carry, but also on what to exclude. By streamlining its assortment, Seiwa Market has struck a balance between freshness and profitability.

Winning Customers in the Age of Social Media

Reaching younger generations and non-Japanese customers has also become a major focus. At Seiwa Market, efforts are underway to deepen understanding of Japanese food through multilingual product descriptions, tasting events, and sampling programs. “It’s not enough to simply put products on the shelves—we need to make them understandable through experience,” he says. At the same time, the company acknowledges that there are still challenges in fully leveraging social media as a marketing tool.



© Seiwa Market

“We are no longer in an era where people come to a store just because the products are available. Today, they decide to visit after seeing it on social media,” he explains.

This shift has made it essential to design stores that are appealing in advance—from their overall atmosphere to cleanliness and presentation—so that they are chosen before customers even arrive.

Building Quality Through Systems, Not Individuals

In the retail industry, securing talent has become one of the most critical management challenges. At Seiwa Market, the company is driving a shift from an era in which “people create quality” to one in which “systems create quality.”

Key priorities include task division, standardization, visualization, structured task management, and continuous feedback. In workplaces with a diverse, multinational staff, the company is committed to bridging cultural differences through clearly defined standards. Instead of tailoring operations to individuals, it focuses on building systems that allow anyone to deliver the same level of performance. This is the Seiwa Market approach to organizational design.

A Community-Based Hub for Spreading Japanese Food Culture

Connections with the local community are also a key role for Seiwa

Market. Over the years, the company has built strong relationships through catering orders for sushi and bento boxes for Japanese-American organizations, as well as large-scale orders from institutions such as Rice University. At the same time, the company deliberately chooses not to participate in large public events. “We want to prioritize the in-store experience and the customers who actually visit us,” he explains. Seiwa Market’s ambition goes beyond being a grocery retailer. It aims to function as a local hub for Japanese food culture. The vision is not to let interest in Japanese cuisine fade as a short-lived trend, but to embed it into everyday life. This is the future the company is working toward.

The Vision for Five to Ten Years Ahead

Seiwa Market’s ambition goes beyond being a grocery retailer. It aims to function as a local hub for Japanese food culture. The vision is not to let interest in Japanese cuisine fade as a short-lived trend, but to embed it into everyday life. This is the future the company is working toward.

Five Strategic Priorities

1. Positioning Seiwa Market as a Hub for Japanese Food Culture in Local Communities
2. Expanding Ready-to-Eat Products as a Core Growth Driver
3. Establishing a Strong Private Label Strategy
4. Building a Multinational Operational Structure
5. Driving Long-Term Engagement with Local Customers

The penetration of Japanese food culture is accelerating in Texas. At the same time, the entry of local supermarket players is intensifying competition across the market. To succeed in this increasingly crowded landscape, the key, he notes, lies in authenticity, clarity, and flexibility. “Greater competition is also an opportunity for growth,” he says, maintaining an optimistic outlook on the future of the Japanese food market in North America.

Never Give Up

Matsu cites Kazuo Inamori, founder of Kyocera, as the person who has most influenced his thinking. “Was my motive good, and was there any self-interest?” Inamori’s belief in prioritizing moral integrity over profit has served as a cornerstone of Matsu’s management philosophy. His journey has also included life-threatening experiences, including an encounter with an armed robbery, moments that

left a lasting impression on him.

Still, he has pressed on, overcoming one challenge after another. Asked what message he would like to pass on to younger generations, he answers without hesitation: “Never give up. In business, many things will happen—but opportunities will surely come.” And when asked what Seiwa Market represents to him, Matsu replies calmly, yet with quiet strength: “It was my life.” In that single sentence lies the weight of more than 60 years of trials and perseverance.

As Japanese cuisine continues its evolution from a “special-occasion cuisine” to an everyday part of life, Seiwa Market’s ambition extends beyond retail. It aims to function as a platform that roots Japanese food culture in local communities. A willingness to embrace change, while remaining close to both customers and store operations, is what will drive its next chapter of growth.■



1965年、ハワイで日本食品の輸入事業を立ち上げて以来、半世紀以上にわたり北米における日本食文化の普及に携わってきた松氏。卸売業から会員制小売への転換を進め、後に日系スーパーマーケット業界を代表する存在へと成長させた。

2013年に長年経営してきた事業を売却した後も、その挑戦は終わらなかった。2015年、新たにセイワマーケットを創業。カリフォルニア、テキサスを拠点に、日本食の新たな可能性を切り拓いている。変化を恐れず進化を続けてきた松氏と、現場改革を推進するセイワマーケット・ヒューストンの長谷田氏に、北米日本食市場の変化と未来への展望を聞いた。

お客様のために変わり続ける

セイワマーケットの原点は、1965年ハワイで松兄弟が始めた日本製品・食品の輸入事業法人マルカイコーポレーションUSAにある。当時は日本からの移住者や駐在員向けの商品供給が中心だった。しかし、松社長は早い段階で市場の変化を感じ取っていた。

1970年代から日本人コミュニティの拡大とともに日本食品への需要は急増する。しかし、1978年にドルが300円から180円に大暴落し原価が大幅に上がり輸入卸のビジネスが困難になり、卸売中心だった事業を小売へ転換。他社より40%以上安く売れるシステムを開発し会員制マーケット「マルカイ・ホールセール・マーケット」をオープンさせ大好評を得る。

「できるだけ安く、良い商品を届けたい。そのために会員制を選びました」と

松氏は当時を振り返る。結果として会員数は急増し、最盛期にはハワイとカリフォルニアで17万人を超える規模へと成長した。松氏は経営の原点をこう語る。「経営で一番大切なのは、お客様のことを考えることです」その姿勢は創業以来変わることがない。

「日本を再現する店」から「日本文化を体験する店」へ

北米の日系マーケットは、この20年で大きく姿を変えた。かつて主な顧客だった日本人だけでなく、アジア系やローカル顧客が売上の中心を担うようになっていく。長谷田氏は現在の市場をこう分析する。「日本再現型のビジネスから、日本文化体験型のビジネスへ変わりました」。従来は日本の家庭料理を再現するための調味料や食材が中心だった。しかし現在は、寿司、弁当、惣菜、ラーメンなどの即食商品が重要な売上の柱になっている。「日本食を知らなくても買える」そんな売場づくりが求められる時代になったのである。

激化する競争の中で磨く「セイワらしさ」

日本食ブームは市場拡大をもたらした一方で、競争環境を大きく変化させた。「高い、遅い、不安定、予測困難」と長谷田氏は現在の物流環境をそう表現する。仕入価格の高騰、物流の不安定化、人材不足。こうした課題に直面する中、セイワマーケットが差別化の軸としているのが、「本物感」と「ローカルへの対応」である。特に生鮮部門では、仕入れた後の取り扱いを徹底している。「鮮度や品揃えはもはや当たり前です。私たちは食材をどう扱うかで品質差を作っています」と語り、さらに特徴的なのは、「何を売るか」ではなく「何を売らないか」を重視している点だ。商品を絞り込み、鮮度と利益率の両立を実現している

SNS時代の集客戦略

若年層や非日系顧客へのアプローチも大きなテーマとなっている。セイワマーケットでは、商品説明の多言語化、試食イベント、サンプリング企画などを通じ、日本食への理解を深める取り組みを進めている。「商品を並べるだけではなく、体験で分かりやすくすることが重要です」一方でSNS活用については課題もあるという。

「今は商品があるから来店する時代ではありません。SNSで見てから来店する時代です」店舗の雰囲気や清潔感も含め、来店前に選ばれる店舗づくりが求められている。

人ではなく、仕組みで品質を作る

小売業界において人材確保は最大の経営課題の一つである。セイワマーケットでは、「人材が品質を作る時代」から「仕組みが品質を作る時代」への転換を進めている。

重視するのは、作業分担、標準化、視覚化、タスク管理、フィードバックである。さらに多国籍スタッフが働く環境にお

いては、「文化の違いを基準でカバーする」ことを徹底している。人に合わせるのではなく、誰でも同じ結果を出せる仕組みを作る。これがセイワマーケット流の組織づくりだ。

地域に根差した日本食文化の発信基地へ

地域とのつながりもセイワマーケットの重要な役割だ。日系団体向けの寿司や弁当の受注、ライス大学からの大型注文など、地域社会との関係を築いてきた。一方で大型イベントへの出店は「現場と来店されるお客様を最優先したいから」行わないと語る。目指すのは単なる食料品店ではない。地域における日本食文化の発信基地である。日本食への興味を一過性のブームで終わらせず、日常生活に定着させること。それがセイワマーケットの描く未来だ。

5年後、10年後に目指す姿

今後の事業展開については、まず既存店舗の安定化を最優先に挙げる。目指す将来像は明確だ。

5つの重点目標

- 1、地域における日本食の拠点化
- 2、即食商品の主力化
- 3、PB商品の確立
- 4、多国籍組織による運営体制構築
- 5、ローカル顧客の定着

テキサスでは日本食の浸透が加速している。一方でローカルスーパーの参入も増え、競争はさらに激化する。その中で勝ち残るために必要なのは、「本物志向・明確性・柔軟性」だという。「競争が激しくなることは成長の機会でもあります」と北米日本食市場の未来を前向きに見据えている。

絶対にあきらめない

松氏が最も影響を受けた人物は、京セラ創業者の稲盛和夫氏だ。「動機善なりや、私心なかりしか」利益よりも、人として正しいかどうか。その教えを経営の軸に据えてきた。これまでは拳銃強盗に遭遇するなど、命の危険を感じる経験もあった。しかし数々の困難を乗り越えながら歩み続けてきた。若い世代へのメッセージを尋ねると、迷うことなくこう答えた。「絶対にあきらめてはいけません。経営をしているといろいろなことが起きます。でも必ずチャンスは巡ってきます」そして最後に、「松氏にとってセイワマーケットとは何ですか」という問いに対し、静かに、しかし力強く語った。「私の人生でした。」その一言に、60年以上にわたる挑戦の歴史が凝縮されていた。

日本食が「特別な料理」から「日常食」へと変化する時代。セイワマーケットが目指すのは単なる小売業ではなく、日本食文化を地域社会へ根付かせるプラットフォームである。変化を恐れず、顧客と現場を見続ける。その姿勢こそが、次の時代を切り拓く原動力となるだろう。



Beyond Bitter:

The Rise of Fruity Japanese Ji-Beer

苦味のその先へ： フルーティーな日本の地ビールの台頭

Ji-Beer: “Local Beer”, artisan craft brew, reflecting unique characters has long leaned into bold hops, bitterness, and high-alcohol experimentation. But consumer preferences are shifting toward beverages that feel lighter, smoother, and easier to enjoy casually.

This change is especially noticeable among younger consumers.

Gen Zs came of age on flavored beverages. Yuzu. Lychee. Matcha. Mikan. These flavors are no longer unfamiliar or niche. They already exist across cocktail menus, sparkling beverages, desserts, and snack culture. The question is no longer whether consumers are interested in fruit-forward or tea-infused drinks. The question is whether restaurant beverage programs are offering them in beer form.

That shift creates new opportunities for Ji-Beer.

Unlike many Western craft beer styles built around hop intensity, Ji-Beer often emphasizes balance, seasonality, and compatibility with food. In many ways, it reflects the broader philosophy of Japanese cuisine itself: harmony over dominance.

For foodservice operators, fruit and tea-forward Ji-Beer offers something increasingly valuable: approachable flavor profiles that appeal not only to beer drinkers, but also to cocktail, wine, and hard seltzer consumers looking for something refreshing, flavorful, and new.

Many restaurants already feature specialty cocktail sections to showcase signature beverages and create a stronger sense of identity. Ji-Beer can serve a similar role within the beer category. A dedicated seasonal or specialty beer section featuring fruit and tea-forward Ji-Beer can help differentiate a beverage program while creating opportunities for featured pours, pairing menus, and stronger guest interaction.

*“Citrus brightens. Floral notes lift.
Tea adds depth without heaviness.”*
Universal pairing principles presented through a distinctly Japanese lens.



As younger consumers gravitate toward lighter, fruit forward flavors, Ji-Beer is emerging as a refreshing new direction for beverage menu.

Fruit and tea inspired Ji-Beer offers restaurants an approachable, versatile option that appeals beyond traditional beer drinkers.

地ビールは「ローカルビール」として地域に根ざし、醸造家たちの個性を反映しながら、これまで、力強いホップ感やしっかりとした苦味、高アルコール度数を特徴とする個性的なスタイルの発展を遂げてきました。しかし近年、消費者の嗜好は、より軽やかで、まろやかな飲み口を持ち、気軽に楽しめる飲み物へと移り変わっています。

この変化は、特に若い世代の消費者の間で顕著に見られます。

Z世代は、フレーバー飲料に囲まれて育った世代です。ゆず、ライチ、抹茶、みかん——これらのフレーバーは、もはや珍しいものでもニッチな存在でもありません。すでにカクテルメニュー、スパークリング飲料、デザート、スナック文化の中に自然に溶け込んでいます。今や問われているのは、消費者がフルーツやお茶を取り入れた飲料に興味を持つかどうかではなく、レストランのドリンクメニューが、それらを“ビール”という形で提供しているかどうかです。

この流れは、日本の地ビールに新たな可能性をもたらしています。

ホップの強い個性を軸にした多くの欧米型クラフトビールとは異なり、日本の地ビールは、バランス、季節感、そして料理との相性を重視する傾向があります。それはある意味、日本料理そのものに通じる哲学——「主張」よりも「調和」を重んじる考え方——を映し出しているとも言えるでしょう。

飲食業界にとって、フルーツやお茶を活かした地ビールは、ますます価値の高まる存在となっています。それは単なるビール愛飲家だけでなく、カクテル、ワイン、ハードセルトザーを好む消費者にも受け入れられやすい、親しみやすい味わいを提供できるからです。爽やかで、風味豊かで、新鮮さを感じさせる——そうした魅力を備えています。

多くのレストランではすでに、「スペシャルティカクテル」コーナーを設けて、シグネチャーカクテルを紹介し、店舗の個性を演出しています。地ビールもまた、ビールカテゴリーの中で同様の役割を果たすことができます。フルーツ系やお茶系の地ビールを中心とした季節限定・特別セクションを設けることで、ドリンクプログラムの差別化を図ると同時に、おすすめドリンクやペアリングメニューの提供、さらにはゲストとの会話のきっかけづくりにもつながります。

.....OPERATORS' TOOLKIT HOW TO TALK TO GUESTS



KYOTO PEACH WEIZEN

“Soft and summery.
Like a peach Bellini, but made for food.”



KYOTO WHITE YUZU ALE

“Bright Japanese citrus with a clean finish.
Great if you like gin & tonics.”



WAKAYAMA BREWERY MIKAN BEER

“Light, easy, and slightly citrusy.
A lot of guests who don't usually drink beer love this one.”



WAKAYAMA BREWERY YUZU BEER

“Fresh and zesty.
Think yuzu lemonade with more depth.”



WAKAYAMA BREWERY LYCHEE BEER

“Floral and delicate.
Surprisingly great with spicy dishes.”



YUZU WITBIER

“Crisp, citrusy, and very easy-drinking. A Japanese take on a summer classic.”



KYOTO MATCHA IPA

“Matcha softens the IPA bitterness. Earthy, clean, and really good with grilled foods.”



OOLONG ISLAND ALE

“Brewed with oolong tea. Smooth, lightly roasted, and unlike most beers people have tried before.”

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..... OPERATORS' TOOLKIT

Fruit-Forward Ji-Beer

PRODUCT	OPERATOR NOTES	PRODUCT	OPERATOR NOTES
 KYOTO PEACH WEIZEN #54567	Soft, ripe white peach on a gentle wheat base. Perfect for brunch, patio, and daytime menus. Strong crossover appeal for guests who usually order rosé.	 WAKAYAMA BREWERY YUZU BEER #23573	Bright and zesty with more pronounced yuzu intensity. Works across sushi, izakaya dishes, and grilled seafood applications.
 KYOTO WHITE YUZU ALE #2997-1	Floral yuzu citrus with a clean finish. A food-first beer that pairs naturally with oysters, crudo, sashimi, and lighter seafood dishes.	 WAKAYAMA BREWERY LYCHEE BEER #28139	Delicate floral sweetness that pairs especially well with spicy dishes and lighter desserts.
 YUZU WITBIER #18747	Belgian witbier structure with Japanese citrus character. Familiar enough for beer drinkers while still offering something distinctive.	 WAKAYAMA BREWERY MIKAN BEER #10551	Mild Japanese mandarin character with a highly approachable finish. Excellent gateway beer for guests who enjoy hard seltzers or canned cocktails.

Tea-Forward Ji-Beer

PRODUCT	OPERATOR NOTES	PRODUCT	OPERATOR NOTES
 KYOTO MATCHA IPA #9651	Matcha's gentle bitterness and umami round out the hop profile beautifully. Excellent with yakitori, grilled meats, and charred flavors.	 OOLONG ISLAND ALE #10860	Roasted oolong aromatics with a smooth, lightly tannic finish. Pairs naturally with karaage, fried foods, and savory small plates.

EXPANDING BEYOND THE BEER LIST



Summer Beer Fligh

Three fruit-forward Ji-Beer pours served with simple tasting cards. Ideal for omakase, prix-fixe, and seasonal tasting menus.



Brunch Anchor

KYOTO PEACH WEIZEN in place of the mimosa. Same occasion, stronger story. Pairs naturally with egg dishes, smoked salmon, and lighter brunch fare.



Spice Pairing

LYCHEE BEER with spicy dishes. Floral sweetness cools and contrasts beautifully across Japanese, Korean, Southeast Asian, and even Mexican-inspired menus.



Yakitori & Tea Beer Night

KYOTO MATCHA IPA with skewers.
OOLONG ISLAND ALE with karaage. Excellent as limited-time pairing features or seasonal promotions.



Dessert Finish

LYCHEE BEER paired with mochi or panna cotta creates a lighter, cleaner finish to the meal. Southeast Asian, and even Mexican-inspired menus.

For operators thinking beyond traditional beer categories, Ji-Beer may become less of a niche offering and more of a modern menu advantage.

従来のビールカテゴリーにとらわれない発想を持つ飲食店経営者にとって、地ビールはもはや単なるニッチな商品ではなく、現代的なメニュー戦略の強みとなるかもしれません。

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20 Gold Prize-Winning Sake Brands from Fukushima Prefecture at the 2026 Annual Japan Sake Awards

- Back on Top in Japan: Fukushima's Sake Brewing Showcases the Enduring Strength of Craftsmanship and Terroir-

2026年全国新酒鑑評会 福島県金賞受賞20銘柄

-再び日本一へ、福島の酒造りが示した“技と風土”の底力-

The results of the 114th edition of The Annual Japan Sake Awards were announced on May 20, 2026. This year's competition once again highlighted the remarkable quality of Japanese sake from Fukushima Prefecture, with 20 local labels earning the prestigious “Gold Prize” distinction.

The Annual Japan Sake Awards is Japan's largest and most prestigious sake competition, jointly organized by the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB) and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association. Widely regarded as a benchmark for excellence in Japanese sake, the annual event brings together breweries from across the country to showcase the highest levels of brewing artistry and quality. First launched in 1911, the competition has a long and distinguished history and is held annually with the aim of improving the quality of Japanese sake and advancing brewing technology. Breweries from across Japan submit newly brewed sake produced that year, which is rigorously evaluated for aroma, flavor, balance, and overall character. Today, it stands as the only nationwide sake competition in Japan and occupies an exceptionally important position within the sake brewing industry.

At the 2026 competition, judging was conducted for newly brewed sake produced during the 2025 brewing year (July 2025 to June 2026). The preliminary round took place in late April, followed by the final round in early May, with a large number of entries submitted by breweries from across the country. In the judging process, not only the elegance of Ginjo aroma but also the harmony of flavor and the quality of the finish are evaluated. Among the award-winning entries, only the most outstanding are selected as “Gold Prize sake,” making a Gold Prize one of the highest honors for a sake brewery. A total of 793 sake entries were submitted to this year's

competition, compared with 809 entries the previous year. Among them, 411 labels were selected as award-winning sake, while 217 entries—recognized as particularly outstanding—were chosen as Gold Prize sake, up from 202 the year before.

Among these, Fukushima Prefecture secured 20 Gold Prize-winning entries, earning the top position nationwide for the second consecutive year. Since the 2010s, Fukushima has demonstrated overwhelming strength at The Annual Japan Sake Awards, once setting an unprecedented record of nine consecutive years at No. 1. Although it fell short of the top position in 2023 and 2024, it returned to the national lead in 2025, and in 2026 further increased its number of award-winning entries to successfully achieve back-to-back victories at the top.

At the announcement of this year's results, voices of celebration were also heard from officials of the Fukushima Prefecture Sake Brewers Cooperative. On the day of the announcement, a loud cheer rose the moment the number of award-winning breweries was confirmed, and with the words “20 breweries achieved,” sake industry stakeholders across the prefecture shared in the celebration. In Fukushima City, a commemorative ceremony was also held, and a tasting event featuring Gold Prize-winning sake was organized at the local tourism and product center. The sight of residents and visitors celebrating while sampling what is widely regarded as “Japan's finest sake” symbolized the depth and richness of Fukushima's sake culture.

Kenji Suzuki, Special Advisor to the Fukushima Prefecture Sake Brewers Cooperative, notes that the cost of procuring sake rice has skyrocketed in certain regions, with prices climbing to more than twice their level of two years ago. The surge is largely attributed to growing demand for rice for everyday consumption, which has intensified competition for supplies and pushed up

costs for brewers. In addition to soaring sake rice prices, breweries were also hit by higher costs for heavy fuel oil used to power the boilers that steam rice during production. With brewers facing mounting financial pressures, Suzuki commended their achievements, saying that “brewing conditions were tougher than in any recent year, yet the quality produced was outstanding.” He described the result as “a testament to the industry-wide commitment to improving brewing techniques,” adding that Fukushima's brewers are determined to maintain their momentum and continue their winning streak in the years to come.

This year's results are also expected to have a significant impact on the regional economy and tourism promotion. A Gold Prize at The Annual Japan Sake Awards not only enhances the visibility of individual breweries, but also contributes to strengthening the overall brand value of sake produced in Fukushima Prefecture. Governor Masao Uchibori praised Fukushima sake as “a leading force in the prefecture's recovery efforts” and described its achievement of being named Japan's top-performing region at the Annual Japan Sake Awards as “a tremendous source of pride.” Commenting on Fukushima's second consecutive year at the top, Uchibori said the accomplishment reflects “the cumulative efforts made since the Great East Japan Earthquake” and serves as a powerful demonstration of the exceptional quality of sake produced in Fukushima. He also expressed hopes for continued promotion of Fukushima sake both domestically and internationally, along with further growth in exports to overseas markets.

In recent years, Fukushima Prefecture has been actively promoting “Fukushima sake” both domestically and internationally, with a strong focus on sake-related events and overseas exports. This consecutive victory

TOP 3 PREFECTURES

for number of gold prize received

これまでの金賞受賞数の上位県

Brewing year number of gold prize in parentheses

2025	1st	20 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	16 新潟 Niigata
	3rd	16 長野 Nagano
2024	1st	16 兵庫 Hyogo
	2nd	15 新潟 Niigata
	3rd	12 長野 Nagano
2023	1st	19 兵庫 Hyogo
	2nd	18 福島 Fukushima
	3rd	14 山形 Yamagata
2022	1st	20 山形 Yamagata
	2nd	19 兵庫 Hyogo
	3rd	17 長野 Nagano
2021	1st	17 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	13 秋田 Akita
	3rd	13 兵庫 Hyogo
2020	1st	17 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	17 長野 Nagano
	3rd	13 秋田 Akita
2019年酒造年度はコロナ禍で鑑評会中止 Contest canceled due to pandemic		
2018	1st	22 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	18 秋田 Akita
	3rd	16 兵庫 Hyogo
2017	1st	19 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	19 兵庫 Hyogo
	3rd	14 新潟 Niigata
2016	1st	22 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	20 宮城 Miyagi
	3rd	16 秋田 Akita
2015	1st	18 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	17 山形 Yamagata
	3rd	17 兵庫 Hyogo
2014	1st	24 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	15 山形 Yamagata
	3rd	15 新潟 Niigata
2013	1st	17 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	17 山形 Yamagata
	3rd	16 宮城 Miyagi
2012	1st	26 福島 Fukushima
	2nd	17 兵庫 Hyogo
	3rd	15 秋田 Akita
2011	1st	24 新潟 Niigata
	2nd	22 福島 Fukushima
	3rd	20 兵庫 Hyogo

has provided an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the high quality of Fukushima-produced sake to audiences not only across Japan, but also around the world. Reflecting on the results, Kenichi Watanabe, President of the Fukushima Prefecture Sake Brewers Cooperative, said he was “extremely proud” of the achievement, describing it as “the result of the hard work and passion of the region’s brewers.” Watanabe noted that the accomplishment was the product of a collective commitment among Fukushima’s breweries to continually improve quality. “Achieving the nation’s top ranking for a second consecutive year is a tremendous source of encouragement for everyone involved,” he said.

He also highlighted the industry's ongoing efforts to enhance brewing expertise and nurture the next generation of toji (master brewers), emphasizing that these initiatives are now bearing fruit. Looking ahead, Watanabe expressed his determination to work closely with breweries across the prefecture to maintain the momentum and ensure that more than 20 breweries continue to earn Gold Prizes in future competitions. He added that the achievement will further strengthen the reputation of Fukushima sake and provide new opportunities to promote the region’s products both across Japan and in international markets.

The Annual Japan Sake Awards is not merely a judging competition, but an important stage that supports sake culture itself in Japan. The dedication and passion of brewers who continue to refine traditional techniques are embodied in every single glass of sake. The achievements demonstrated by Fukushima Prefecture at the 2026 competition once again left a strong impression nationwide of the depth and complexity of Japanese sake, as well as the power of regional culture. Going forward, Fukushima’s sake brewing is expected to continue evolving and to play a leading role in driving Japanese sake culture forward.

Quality sake from twenty sake breweries in Fukushima prefecture won the “Gold Prize” at The Annual Japan Sake Awards
KINSUISHO
Kinsuisho Brewery Shiki-gura
KISSUIHIDARIUMA
Ariga Jozo Inc
SENKOMA
Senkoma Shuzo
HIROTOGAWA
MATSUZAKI SYUZO Co., Ltd.
SASANOKAWA
Sasanokawa Shuzo Co., Ltd.

AZUMA-TOYOKUNI
Toyukuni Shuzo
OKUNOMATSU
Higashi-Nihon Shuza
KYONOHANA
Tatsuizumi-shuzo Limited Partnership
AIZUCHUJO
Tsurunoe Sake Brewing
HARUHANA
Hanaharu Sake Brewery
NAGURAYAMA
Nagurayama Sake Brewery Co., Ltd.
AIZU YOSHINOAWA
Yoshinogawa Co., Ltd.
KITANOHANANA
Kitanohana Shuzo Ltd.
AIZUHOMARE
Homare Sake Brewery Co., Ltd.
KOKKEN
Kokken Shuzo Co., Ltd.
TAJIMA
AIZU SHUZO Sake Brewery
GAKKIMASAMUNE
Oki Daikichi Honten
GENSAI
Suehiro Sake Brewery Co.,Ltd.
Hakasegura
BANDAIHO
Shirai Shuzoten
MATABEI
Shuke Shuzo

“The Annual Japan Sake Awards”
“The Annual Japan Sake Awards” is an annual sake contest held in May since 1911, organized by the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB), a national research institute for sake; and the Japanese Sake & Shochu Makers Association. The national sake contest, the most prestigious in the sake brewing industry, targets Ginjo sake produced with the highest sake brewing skills. Serious dedication by sake breweries that continue to submit entries and technical experts help to improve the quality of sake.
The Annual Japan Sake Awards was held for the 113th year in 2025. The “Gold Prize” is awarded to sake entries of especially notable quality among the new sake brewed and submitted for that year, for which sake breweries nationwide compete for the honor.■

◆ ◆ ◆
2026年で114回目を迎えた「全国新酒鑑評会」の審査結果が、5月20日に発表された。今年の鑑評会では、福島県の日本酒が高い評価を受け、県内20銘柄が「金賞酒」に選ばれた。福島県は前年に続き、金賞受賞数で全国トップとなり、「日本一の酒どころ」としての存在感を改めて示した。
全国新酒鑑評会は、独立行政法人酒類総合研究所と日本酒造組合中央会が主催する、日本最大規模の清酒鑑評会であ

る。1911年に始まり、長い歴史を持つこの鑑評会は、日本酒の品質向上と醸造技術の発展を目的として毎年開催されている。全国の酒蔵がその年に醸造した新酒を出品し、香りや味、バランスなどが厳しく審査される。現在では、全国規模で行われる唯一の清酒鑑評会として、酒造業界において極めて重要な位置を占めている。
2026年の鑑評会では、令和7酒造年度（2025年7月～2026年6月）に造られた新酒を対象に審査が行われた。予審は4月下旬、決勝は5月上旬に実施され、全国から数多くの銘柄が出品された。審査では、吟醸香の華やかさだけでなく、味わいの調和や後味の良さなども評価対象となる。入賞酒の中でも特に優秀なものだけが「金賞酒」に選ばれるため、金賞受賞は酒蔵にとって最高の栄誉の一つである。今年度の鑑評会には793銘柄（前年809銘柄）の出品があり成績優秀な411銘柄が入賞酒、うち特に優秀な217銘柄が金賞酒（前年202銘柄）に選ばれた。
その中で、福島県は20銘柄が金賞を受賞し、2年連続で全国1位に輝いた。福島県は2010年代から全国新酒鑑評会で圧倒的な強さを見せており、かつては9年連続日本一という前例のない記録も打ち立てた。2023年と2024年には首位を逃したものの、2025年に再び全国トップへ返り咲き、2026年はさらに受賞数を増やして連覇を達成した。
今回の結果発表では、福島県酒造組合の関係者からも喜びの声が上がった。発表当日は、受賞数を確認する瞬間に大きな歓声上がり、「20歳達成」の言葉とともに、県内の酒造関係者が喜びを分かち合ったという。福島市では記念セレモニーも行われ、観光物産館では金賞受賞酒の飲み比べイベントが開催された。県民や観光客が「日本一の酒」を味わいながら祝福する様子は、福島の酒文化の厚みを象徴していた。
福島県の日本酒アドバイザーを務める鈴木賢二県酒造組合特別顧問によると、主食用米の需要増などを背景に酒米の仕入れ値が産地によっては2年前の倍以上に急騰。酒米を蒸すボイラー用重油なども値上がりした。蔵元が苦境に立たされただけに「醸造環境は例年以上に厳しかったが、品質は素晴らしかった」とたたえた。また、「蔵元一体となった技術向上の成果」と語り、今後の連覇への意欲を強調した。
また、今回の受賞は地域経済や観光振興にも大きな影響を与える。全国新酒鑑評会での金賞受賞は、酒蔵の知名度向上だけでなく、県産日本酒全体のブランド力強化につながる。内堀雅雄福島県知事は、福島県産日本酒について「福島の復興を支えるトップランナーであり、全国新酒鑑評会での日本一は大きな誇り」と評価した上で、今回の2年連続日本一について「震災以降の努力の積み重ねが形となったものであり、福島の酒の品質の高さを広く示すものだ」と述べ、今後も国内外へのPR強化や輸出拡大への期待を示している。

福島県では近年、「ふくしまの酒」を国内外へ積極的にPRしており、日本酒イベントや海外輸出にも力を入れている。今回の連覇は、福島県産酒の品質の高さを全国、そして世界へ示す絶好の機会となった。福島県酒造組合渡部謙一会長は、今回の結果について「蔵元の努力と情熱が実を結んだ成果であり、大変誇らしい」と語り、「県内の蔵元が一丸となって品質向上に取り組んできた成果であり、2年連続で日本一を達成できたことは大きな励みになる」と評価し、各蔵の技術力向上と若手杜氏育成の取り組みが実を結んだ点を強調。次回は金賞受賞20歳以上を維持できるように協力して励みたい」とコメントしており、県産酒のブランド力向上と国内外への発信強化にもつながる成果と位置づけている。
全国新酒鑑評会は、単なる品評会ではなく、日本酒文化そのものを支える重要な舞台である。伝統技術を磨き続ける蔵人たちの努力と情熱が、一杯の酒に込められている。2026年の鑑評会で福島県が示した成果は、日本酒の奥深さと地域文化の力を改めて全国に印象づける結果となった。今後も福島県の酒造りが進化を続け、日本酒文化を牽引していくことが期待されている。

全国新酒鑑評会で特に優れた「金賞」に選ばれた福島県の20の酒蔵
「金水晶」金水晶酒造株式会社 四季の蔵
「生粋左馬」有賀醸造合資会社
「千駒」千駒酒造株式会社
「廣戸川」松崎酒造株式会社
「笹の川」笹の川酒造株式会社
「東豊国」豊國酒造合資会社
「奥の松」東日本酒造協業組合
「京の華」合資会社辰泉酒造
「会津中将」鶴乃江酒造株式会社
「花春」花春酒造株式会社
「名倉山」名倉山酒造株式会社
「会津吉の川」合資会社吉の川酒造店
「きたのはな」合資会社喜多の華酒造場
「会津ほまれ」ほまれ酒造株式会社
「國権」國権酒造株式会社
「田島」会津酒造株式会社
「楽器正宗」合名会社大木代吉本店
「玄宰」末廣酒造株式会社 博士蔵
「萬代芳」合資会社白井酒造店
「又兵衛」合名会社四家酒造店

「全国新酒鑑評会」とは
「全国新酒鑑評会」とは、明治44年に初めて開催した日本酒に関する国の研究機関である酒類総合研究所と日本酒造組合中央会が、毎年5月に開催している日本酒のコンテスト。全国規模で開催されている新酒鑑評会で、最高の酒造技術を持って製造される吟醸酒を対象とし、酒造業界では最も信頼性のある鑑評会として有名。出品する蔵元や技術者の酒質向上への真摯な姿勢により支えられ、2025年の開催で113回目を迎える。
その年に造られた新酒のなかで特に優れているとされたものに贈られるのが「金賞」で、全国の酒蔵たちが蔵の威信をかけ、金賞受賞を目指して競い合っている。

Report: Sales to hit \$1.55T in 2026 despite challenging business environment

-Success will hinge on operators' ability to 'get the math right.'-

厳しい事業環境にもかかわらず、
2026年の売上高は1兆5500億ドルに達する見込み

-成功は、事業者が「数字を正しく把握できるか」にかかっている-

Despite a projection for cautious optimism amid modest sales growth, restaurant operators will need to demonstrate resilience and innovation to manage the restrained spending of their guests while meeting their heightened demands at the same time, the National Restaurant Association's 2026 State of the Restaurant Industry reports. The industry will again face numerous challenges—as it did last year—including higher operating expenses, such as increased food and labor costs, evolving immigration policies and shifts in consumer behavior, says Dr. Chad Moutray, the Association's Chief Economist and Senior Vice President of Research.

“Success in 2026 will hinge on the ability of operators to get the math right in a still-challenging economic environment,” Moutray said. “Following a year when 60% of operators reported decreased traffic, there is cautious optimism for improvement. At the same time, however, they'll have to remain laser focused on controlling costs while also delivering value and providing satisfying menu innovation that resonates with consumers.”

While the economic pressures will persist, the report also forecasts more positivity, fueled by the U.S.

consumer's desire to partake in the flavors, convenience, and social experiences that restaurants provide.

Annual industry sales in 2026 will reach \$1.55T, although real (inflation-adjusted) sales growth is expected to remain relatively modest at 1.3%, and the total number of employees will grow by 100K to reach 15.8M.

Addressing the challenging business environment

The report focuses on three main areas affecting the current business environment.

- Operating conditions will remain difficult: Uneven traffic and rising costs will continue to strain revenue and profitability, and those elevated expenses will reinforce the need for operational efficiency and creativity.
- Profitability will be challenging: According to the data, 42% of operators said their restaurants were not profitable in 2025, and that they had limited ability to raise menu prices. As a result, margin pressures will remain a concern in 2026.
- Resilience and creativity will be essential: Technology is becoming an essential tool for managing operations



costs, while delivering the value and experiences customers want and the research shows that customers now expect technology will be a part of their restaurant experiences.

The report also examines how low- and middle-income consumers are dealing with lingering inflation and the cooling labor market that's tightening their household budgets. Currently, higher-income households and consumers with investments are the ones driving much of the spending of disposable income. This will challenge operators to attract a broad range of customers by delivering meaningful value that resonates across different budget levels.

As the job market impacts spending power, the Association will continue to watch for changes in hiring. But the potential for increased economic growth later this year could bolster confidence and support additional spending.

When it comes to how consumers spend at restaurants in 2026, the majority (61%) say they still consider restaurants essential to their lifestyles and will continue prioritizing dining out. However, they also note that value offerings, like discounts and daily specials, and loyalty programs will influence their restaurant choices, both on- and off-premises.

Some of the most crucial information surrounds the industry's acceptance

and deployment of workforce development and technological improvements. According to the report, this includes:

- * Creating a future-ready workforce
- * Investment in training and tools that equip employees for evolving roles
- * The ability to blend hospitality with technology-driven efficiency.

Operators also say they intend to cultivate the next generation of talent by ensuring they develop a skilled, adaptable workforce that delivers exceptional service.

When it comes to increasing their use of technology, 60% of operators say their restaurants are in the technology mainstream, while nearly 3 in 10 think they're lagging, and only 1 in 10 consider themselves to be at the forefront of technological innovation compared to their peers.

Topping the list of areas impacted by technology are on-premises ordering and payment, marketing/advertising, customer feedback, and back-office functions.

Many operators also say they're planning to utilize breakthrough efficiencies, such as digital ordering, automation, and data analytics, to streamline their operations, reduce costs, enhance the customer's experience, and drive long-term competitiveness. ■

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全米レストラン協会の「2026年レストラン業界の現状」報告書によると、売上は緩やかな伸びを見込むものの、慎重な楽観論が示されているにもかかわらず、レストラン経営者は、顧客の支出抑制に対応しつつ、高まる顧客のニーズにも応えるため、強靱さと革新性を発揮する必要がある。同協会のチーフエコノミスト兼調査担当上級副社長であるチャド・モートレイ博士は、業界は昨年と同様に、食料費や人件費の高騰といった運営費の増加、移民政策の変化、消費者の行動様式の変化など、数多くの課題に再び直面することになると述べている。

「2026年の成功は、依然として厳しい経済環境下で、事業者が適切な経営判断を下せるかどうかにかかっている」とモートレイ氏は述べた。「事業者の60%が客足の減少を報告した1年を経て、状況の改善に対する慎重な楽観論が広がっている。しかし同時に、事業者はコスト管理に徹底的に注力しつつ、価値を提供し、消費者の共感を呼ぶ満足度の高いメニューの革新を実現しなければならないだろう。」

経済的な圧力は今後も続く見通しだが、同報告書はレストランが提供する味、利便性、そして社交的な体験を楽しみたいという米国の消費者の欲求に後押しされ、より前向きな見通しも示している。

2026年の業界の年間売上高は1兆5500億ドルに達する見込みだが、実質（インフレ調整後）の売上高の伸びは1.3%と比較的緩やかな水準にとどまると予想され、従業員総数は10万人増加して1580万人に達する見込みである。

厳しいビジネス環境への対応

本報告書は、現在のビジネス環境に影響を与える3つの主要分野に焦点を当てている。

- ・経営環境は引き続き厳しい状況が続く見込み：需要の変動やコストの上昇は、



今後も収益と利益率に圧力をかけ続けるだろう。また、こうした経費の増加は、業務効率化と創意工夫の必要性を一層強めることになる。

- ・収益性の確保は困難となる：データによると、事業者の42%が、2025年には自店のレストランが黒字化しておらず、メニュー価格を引き上げる余地も限られていると回答した。その結果、2026年も利益率の圧迫が懸念材料となりそうだ。
- ・回復力と創造性が不可欠となる：テクノロジーは、顧客が求める価値や体験を提供しつつ、運営コストを管理するための不可欠なツールとなりつつあり、調査によると、顧客は今やレストランでの体験にテクノロジーが組み込まれていることを当然のこととして期待していることが明らかになっている。

また、本報告書では、低・中所得層の消費者が、家計を圧迫し続けるインフレや冷え込む労働市場にどう対処しているかについても分析している。現在、可処分所得の支出の大部分を牽引しているのは、高所得世帯や資産を保有する消費者である。この状況は、事業者にとって、さまざまな所得層に響く実質的な価値を提供することで、幅広い顧客層を取り込むという課題となるだろう。

雇用情勢が消費者の購買力に影響を与える中、当協会は引き続き雇用の動向を注視していく。しかし、今年後半には経

済成長が加速する可能性があり、それが消費者の信頼感を高め、さらなる消費を後押しする可能性がある。

2026年のレストランでの消費動向について、回答者の過半数（61%）は、レストランを依然として自身のライフスタイルに欠かせないものと捉えており、外食を優先し続けると答えている。しかし、割引や日替わりメニューといったお得なサービスや、ロイヤリティプログラムが、店内・持ち帰りを問わず、レストラン選びに影響を与えると指摘している。

最も重要な情報の一部は、労働力開発や技術革新に対する業界の受容と導入に関するものである。報告書によると、これには以下が含まれる：

- *将来を見据えた人材の育成
- *変化する職務に対応できるよう、従業員を育成するための研修やツールへの投資
- *おもてなしの心とテクノロジーによる効率性を融合させる力。

また、各事業者は、卓越したサービスを提供できる、熟練かつ柔軟性のある人材を育成することで、次世代の人材を育成していく意向を示している。

テクノロジーの活用拡大について、事業者の60%は自店のレストランがテクノロジーの主流にあると回答している一方、10人に3人近くは自店が後れを取っていると考えており、同業他社と比較して自店が技術革新の最先端にあると考えるのは10人に1人に過ぎない。

テクノロジーの影響を最も受けている分野としては、店舗での注文・決済、マーケティング・広告、顧客からのフィードバック、そしてバックオフィス業務が挙げられる。

また、多くの事業者は、デジタル注文、自動化、データ分析といった画期的な効率化策を活用し、業務の効率化、コスト削減、顧客体験の向上、そして長期的な競争力の強化を図っていく計画であると述べている。

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世界最高峰の食文化が選ぶ、日本の酒

-Kura Master 2026——世界最高峰の美食空間で開かれた“和酒”の祭典



The judging session for Kura Master 2026, the Japanese sake competition held in Paris, took place on April 27 at the prestigious Le Pavillon Ledoyen, nestled within the gardens of the Champs-Élysées, where the official results were unveiled. Marking the 10th anniversary of Kura Master 2026, this year's edition became the largest in the competition's history. In addition to the sake competition, the event expanded to encompass 23 categories in total, including Japanese wine, Honkaku Shochu and awamori, as well as liqueurs—showcasing the remarkable breadth and evolution of Japan's artisanal alcohol culture.

Launched in 2017, Kura Master is a Japanese alcohol competition created by the French, for the French palate. What sets the competition apart is its panel of judges: rather than Japanese experts, the evaluation is entrusted to France's leading culinary and beverage professionals.

Approximately 125 judges took part this year, including sommeliers honored with the prestigious MOF (Meilleur Ouvrier de France) title, sommeliers from Michelin-starred restaurants, beverage directors from five-star hotels, and renowned restaurateurs. Every entry was assessed through a rigorous blind-tasting process, ensuring that each label was judged solely on its character, balance, and craftsmanship.

The setting for this landmark 10th anniversary was Le Pavillon Ledoyen, a historic establishment founded in 1779. Today, it stands as a temple of gastronomy led by Yannick Alléno, one of the world's most Michelin-starred chefs. Surrounded by the lush greenery of the Champs-Élysées gardens, the venue provided a symbolic stage where Japanese sake and Japanese wine were evaluated through the lens of French culinary culture—an eloquent reflection of Kura Master's growing international prestige. This year's sake competition featured judging across nine categories, including junmai, junmai daiginjo, and sparkling sake. The evaluation process was conducted over six tasting sessions, with judges

comparing six to eight labels at each table in a meticulous blind-tasting format. From the 55 finalists selected for the final round, 30 outstanding sake labels were awarded distinction prizes, while nine exceptional entries—one from each category—received the coveted Jury Prize, the competition's highest honor.

One of the defining characteristics that continues to distinguish Kura Master is its strong emphasis on pairing. Within French culinary culture, wine and spirits are considered complete only in harmony with food, and Japanese sake is evaluated not merely on its own merits, but also through its compatibility with cuisine.

This philosophy was especially evident in this year's "Alliance Gastronomie Prize," a special judging category centered on pairings with dishes curated under the supervision of Yannick Alléno. The category focused exclusively on sparkling sake, exploring how Japanese sake can engage in dialogue with haute cuisine at the highest level.

More than a mere competition of spirits, it was also an exploration into the role Japanese sake can play at the world's table.

Meanwhile, the Japanese wine competition entered its second edition, drawing growing international attention. Presiding over the judging panel was Paz Levinson, the internationally acclaimed sommelier renowned on the global gastronomic stage. Sommeliers from leading institutions such as Ritz Paris, Cheval Blanc Paris, and Mandarin Oriental Paris, alongside professionals from three-Michelin-starred restaurants, evaluated the distinctive character and quality of Japanese wines. In France—the very heart of European wine culture—the establishment of a serious platform for discussion and evaluation of Japanese wine marks a significant step forward for Japan's wine industry, signaling its steady emergence on the global stage.

In recent years, Japanese sake exports have continued to reach record highs, steadily strengthening their presence in international markets. In



France in particular, growing enthusiasm for Japanese cuisine, combined with an increasing number of Michelin-starred restaurants incorporating sake into their wine lists, has helped reposition "SAKE" not merely as an expression of Japanese culture, but as an integral element of global gastronomy. Against this backdrop, Kura Master has emerged as a symbolic international stage—one that reflects and reinforces sake's evolving role within the world of fine dining.

This year's Kura Master 2026 served as a compelling showcase of how Japan's diverse drinking culture—spanning sake, Japanese wine, shochu, and liqueurs—is received at the forefront of French gastronomy. Marking its 10th anniversary, the competition has evolved beyond a traditional tasting contest. It now stands as a cultural bridge, fostering dialogue between Japan and France and positioning itself as a true platform for cultural exchange—one that carries Japan's beverage heritage onto the global stage. What the gourmets of Paris discovered in each glass was not taste alone. It was the terroir behind it, the philosophy of its maker, and, ultimately, the essence of Japanese culinary culture itself.

The awards ceremony, scheduled for Wednesday, September 30 at the Residence of the Ambassador of Japan in France, will announce the ultimate "President's Prize," selected from among the Jury Prize winners. The event will also honor the Best Brewery of 2026, present the Jury Prizes, and recognize the recipients of the Alliance

Gastronomique Prize.

**Japanese Sake Competition:
"Jury Prize" Winners (Top winners
in each of the 9 sake categories)**

1. Sparkling Sake Category

Yamanashi Meijo Co., Ltd.
Shichiken Hoshinokagayaki
Sparkling

2. Junmai Diginjo (1-35%) Category

MIYAKE HONTEN Co., LTD.
Sempuku Yamadanishiki
Junmaidaiginjo 35

3. Junmai Diginjo (36-50%) Category

Azakura Shuzou Co., Ltd.
Azakura Junmaidaiginjo Muroka-
genshu Misatonishikishikomi

4. Junmai (51- 65%) Category

TSUBOSAKA Shuzo Co., Ltd.
Junmaiginjo SEPIKOSAN
Muroka-genshu

5. Junmai (66- 100%) Category

Nabedana Kouzaki Brewery
Jinyu Junmai

6. Diginjo Category

AKITA SEISHU CO., LTD.
Kariho Daiginjo KOUN

7. Classic Fermentation Category

Shata Shuzo Co., Ltd
Tengumai Yamahai Jikomi
Junmaishu

8. Aged Amber Sake Category

Enoki Shuzo Co., Ltd.
Hanahato Kijoshu Aged for 8 years

9. Aged Sake Category
MIYAKEHONTEN Co., Ltd.
Sempuku Shinriki Kimoto Junmai
Muroka Genshu85

**Japanese Sake Competition:
Alliance Gastronomique Award
Winner**
AKITA SEISHU CO., LTD.
Dewatsuru AWA SAKE ASHITAE

**Honkaku Shochu & Awamori
Competition: “Jury Prize”
Winners (Top winners in each
of the 8 Honkaku Shochu &
Awamori categories)**

***Sweet Potato Category**
Wakashio Shuzo Co., Ltd.
GLOW EP05

***Rice Category**
Toyonaga Distillery
Joatsu Toyonagakura

***Barley Category**
Toyonaga Distillery
Mugishiru

***Brown Sugar Category**
Amami Oshima Brewery
Jougo

***Awamori Category**
Yaesen Distillery
Yaesen

***Variety Category**
Hachinohe Shuzo Co., Ltd.
MINATO DISTILLERY APPLE
SPIRITS

***Barrel Aging Category**
DEN-EN SHUZO CO., LTD
DEN-EN ENVELHECIDA

***Prestige Koji Spirits Category**
Shinozaki shochu
ASAKURA SHERRY CASK FINISH

**Japanese Wine Competition:
Jury Award Winner (Top winners
in two wine categories each)**

1. Koshu Category
Monde Winery Co., Ltd.
Koshu Barrels2024

2. Muscat Bailey A Category
Horaisun Winery CO., LTD
R359 SANGOKU

MOF (Meilleurs Ouvriers de France)
Meilleur Ouvrier de France (“Best Craftsman of France Sommelier”) is a prestigious award presented to individuals who demonstrated exceptional skills and craftsmanship in various industries such as culinary arts, confectionery, patisserie, jewelry, folk art, gardening, etc. Befitting the French spirit of Art de Vivre (“the art of living”), the award is presented in approximately 180 professions, of which the most renowned is “Culinary Arts.” Renowned chefs awarded the MOF include Paul Bocuse and Joel Robuchon.■

フランス・パリで開催される和酒コンクール「Kura Master 2026」の審査会が、4月27日、シャンゼリゼ庭園内にある名門レストラン「Le Pavillon Ledoyen (ル・パヴィヨン・ルドワイヤン)」で行われ、その結果が発表された。今年はKura Master開催10周年という節目の年。日本酒コンクールに加え、日本ワイン、本格焼酎・泡盛、リキュールなど計23部門に拡大され、過去最大規模での開催となった。

Kura Masterは2017年にスタートした、フランス人によるフランス人のための和酒コンクールである。最大の特徴は、審査員を日本人ではなく、フランスの食と酒のプロフェッショナルが務める点にある。審査には、MOF（フランス国家最優秀職人章）受章ソムリエをはじめ、ミシュラン星付きレストランのソムリエ、五つ星ホテルの飲料責任者、著名レストランオーナーら約125名が参加。すべてブラインドテイasting形式で評価が行われる。

10周年の舞台となった「Le Pavillon Ledoyen」は、1779年創業の歴史的建築であり、現在は世界最多級のミシュラン星を持つ料理人、ヤニック・アレノ氏が率いるガストロノミーの殿堂として知られている。シャンゼリゼの緑に囲まれたこの空間で、日本酒と日本ワインがフランス料理文化の視点から評価されたことは、Kura Masterの国際的な価値を象徴している。

今年日本酒コンクールでは、純米酒や純米大吟醸、スパークリング酒など9部門で審査が行われた。審査は6セッションに分かれ、1テーブルにつき6～8銘柄を比較しながら評価。決勝進出55銘柄の中から優秀賞30銘柄と、各カテゴリーの最高賞にあたる「審査員賞」9銘柄が選出された。

また、Kura Masterならではの特徴として注目されたのが、“ペアリング”を重視した審査である。フランスの食文化において、酒は料理とともに完成する存在であり、日本酒もまた単体評価だけではなく、料理との相性が重視される。今年の「アリアンス ガストロノミー賞」では、ヤニック・アレノ氏監修の料理とのマリアージュをテーマに、スパークリング日本酒を対象とした特別審査が行われた。これは単なる酒類コンテストではなく、日本酒が“世界の食卓”でどのような役割を果たせるかを問う試みでもあった。

一方、日本ワインコンクールも2回目を迎え、注目度を高めた。審査委員長を務めたのは、世界的ソムリエとして知られるパズ・レヴィンソン氏。リッツ・パリ、シュヴァル・ブラン・パリ、マンダリン・オリエンタル・パリなど、一流ホテルや三つ星レストランで活躍するソムリエたちが、日本ワインの個性と品質を評価した。欧州ワイン文化の中心地・フランスにおいて、日本ワインが本格的に議論される場が設けられたことは、日本ワイン産業にとっても大きな前進と言える。

近年、日本酒は輸出額が過去最高を更

新し続け、海外市場での存在感を強めている。特にフランスでは、和食人気の高まりに加え、ミシュラン星付きレストランでの採用も増加しており、“SAKE”は単なる日本文化ではなく、ガストロノミーの一要素として認識され始めている。Kura Masterは、その流れを象徴する国際的な舞台となっているのである。

今回のKura Master 2026は、日本酒、日本ワイン、焼酎、リキュールという日本の酒文化が、フランス美食界の最前線のように受け入れられているかを示すイベントとなった。10周年という節目を迎えた今、Kura Masterは単なる品評会ではなく、日本の酒文化を世界へ橋渡しする“文化交流の場”へと進化している。パリの美食家たちが一杯の酒に見出したのは、味わいだけではない。その背景にある土地の風土、造り手の哲学、そして日本の食文化そのものだった。

なお9月30日（水）に在フランス日本国大使公邸で行われる授賞式では、各審査員賞から最高賞となる「プレジデント賞」を発表するほか、ベスト蔵元2026、審査員賞そしてアリアンス ガストロノミー賞の表彰が行われる。

**【日本酒コンクール 審査員賞受賞酒】
（日本酒各9部門のトップ）**

< 1. サケスパークリング部門 >

山梨県：山梨銘醸株式会社
「七賢 星ノ輝 スパークリング」

< 2. 純米大吟醸酒【1-35%】部門 >

広島県：株式会社三宅本店
「千福 山田錦純米大吟醸35」

< 3. 純米大吟醸酒【36-50%】部門 >

秋田県：阿櫻酒造株式会社
「阿櫻 純米大吟醸無濾過原酒 美郷錦仕込み」

< 4. 純米酒【51-65%】部門 >

兵庫県：壺坂酒造株式会社
「純米吟醸雪彦山 無ろ過原酒」

< 5. 純米酒【66-100%】部門 >

千葉県：鍋店株式会社
「仁勇 純米酒」

< 6. 大吟醸酒部門 >

秋田県：秋田清酒株式会社
「刈穂 耕雲」

< 7. クラシック酎部門 >

石川県：株式会社 車多酒造
「天狗舞 山廃仕込純米酒」

< 8. 古酒部門 >

広島県：榎酒造株式会社
「華鳩 貴醸酒8年貯蔵」

< 9. 熟成酒部門 >

広島県：株式会社三宅本店
「千福 神力生純米無濾過原酒85」

**【日本酒コンクール アリアンス
ガストロノミー賞（特別賞）受賞酒】**
秋田県：秋田清酒株式会社
「出羽鶴 awa酒 明日へ」

**【本格焼酎・泡盛コンクール
審査員賞受賞酒】**

芋焼酎部門
鹿児島県：若潮酒造株式会社
「GLOW EP05」

米焼酎部門
熊本県：合名会社豊永酒造
「常庄 豊永蔵」

麦焼酎部門
熊本県：合名会社豊永酒造
「麦汁」

黒糖焼酎部門
鹿児島県：奄美大島酒造株式会社
「しょうご」

泡盛部門
沖縄県：有限会社 八重泉酒造
「八重泉」

バラエティー部門
青森県：八戸酒造株式会社
「湊蒸留所 りんごスピリッツ」

樽貯蔵部門
鹿児島県：田苑酒造株式会社
「田苑 ENVELHECIDA」
クラフト コウジ スピリッツ部門
福岡県：株式会社篠崎
「朝倉 SHERRY CASK FINISH」

**【ワインコンクール 審査員賞 受賞酒】
（ワイン各2部門のトップ）**

< 1. 甲州部門 >

山梨県：モンデ酒造株式会社
「甲州バレルズ2024」

< 2. マスカット・ベリー A 部門 >

富山県：ホーライサンワイナリー株式会社
「R359 サンゴク」

MOF (Meilleurs Ouvriers de Franceの略で、国家最優秀職人章。)はフランス文化の最も優れた継承者たるにふさわしい高度な技術を持つ職人に授与される賞。現在では、対象となる職種は料理、製菓、パン以外にも、宝飾品、工芸品、ガーデニングなど幅広く、フランス人の Art de Vivre (生活芸術) の精神にふさわしく、その数は約180職種に及ぶ。一番有名なのは「料理」であり、これまでにポール・ボキューズ、ジョエル・ロブションら多数の有名料理人が名を連ねている。





2026 FOOD EVENT CALENDAR JUNE-AUGUST

JUNE

Summer Fancy Food Show

6/28-30

New York, NY

The Jacob K. Javits Convention Center,
New York

In 2026, the Specialty Food Association will proudly host the 70th Summer Fancy Food Show in New York City. Thousands of specialty food suppliers will showcase their new, in-demand, and on-trend products to food industry attendees from every channel of trade. Buyers, brokers, distributors, investors, media, students, and manufacturers will find ways to check off their to-do lists, achieve their unique goals, and get inspired at the Fancy Food Show, specialty food's premier product discovery event. The Specialty Food Association is a thriving community of food artisans, purveyors, importers and entrepreneurs who bring craft, care and joy to the distinctive foods they sell. Established in 1952 in New York, the not-for-profit trade association provides its 3,000+ members in the U.S. and abroad the tools, knowledge and connections to champion and nurture their companies in an always-evolving marketplace. The Association (formerly the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade, Inc.) owns and produces the Winter and Summer Fancy Food Shows, and presents the sofi Awards honoring excellence in specialty food. Delight your taste-buds, chew on emerging trends, and get facetime with all the right people at one of the food industry's tentpole events.

July

FoodieLand Food Festival

7/3-5

Los Angeles, CA

Rose Bowl Stadium

Experience FoodieLand: a nationwide food festival filled with 250+ vendors with global flavors, artisan shops, games, and live music. FoodieLand is the nation's LARGEST FOOD FESTIVAL, uniting local talent, small businesses, and global flavors in one vibrant experience. More than just a festival, FoodieLand is a gathering place where people come together to celebrate community through food, culture, and unforgettable moments. Get your tickets now! See you there.

School Nutrition Association — SNA

7/12-14

Charlotte, NC

Charlotte Convention Center

Known as the School Nutrition Event of the Year, SNA's Annual National Conference (ANC) is the largest and most vibrant gathering of K-12 school nutrition professionals in the country. Each July, thousands of school nutrition operators, directors, managers, state agency staff, and industry partners come together for four energizing days of learning, networking, and discovery. ANC is where school nutrition comes to life. From cutting-edge education sessions and expert-led keynotes to the nation's largest exhibit floor dedicated to K-12 foodservice, ANC delivers the tools, ideas, and inspiration needed to elevate school meal programs and support student success. With a focus on both professional and personal growth, ANC is your moment to connect with peers, explore solutions, and celebrate the power of school meals in shaping healthy futures.

Texas Restaurant Show

7/12-13

Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center

San Antonio, TX

www.texasrestaurant.org

Texas Bar & Nightclub Convention has been acquired by the Texas Restaurant Show. This merger, to be known as the Bar & Nightclub Showcase, creates a single destination to explore the future of beverage driven business within the Texas Restaurant Show with upwards of an additional 100 booths and expands the show's audience to more than 8,000 industry professionals. Quincy Barnes, owner of SMC-Events and longtime director of the Texas Bar & Nightclub Convention, will help guide the transition and elevate the experience for attendees and exhibitors as the new Bar and Nightclub Showcase takes shape.

The enhanced 2026 Texas Restaurant Show will offer expanded products, services, and education designed for bars, nightclubs, and alcohol serving restaurant establishments, from beverage innovation and bar equipment to nightlife technology, compliance insights, and work-force solutions. Exhibitors will gain unmatched exposure to a larger pool of owners, buyers, and decision makers, while operators will access the tools, insights, and partnerships they need to grow. Stay inspired. Stay connected. Stay at the forefront.

The Foodservice Conference — International Fresh Produce Association

7/23-24

Monterey Conference Center

Monterey, CA

www.freshproduce.com

This conference unites fresh produce and foodservice industry leaders to explore innovative solutions and foster collaborations. Attendees enjoy keynote sessions, networking opportunities, and insights into the latest foodservice trends. With its focus on fresh produce's role in culinary innovation, the event is ideal for chefs, suppliers, and distributors aiming to drive growth in foodservice.

Bite of Seattle

7/24-26

Seattle Center

Seattle, WA

For over 40 years, The Bite has proudly served as the gathering place for local and regional businesses to foster community connections and celebrate the Pacific Northwest's food scene. Under new management by FoodieLand, and in partnership with Seattle Center, The Bite promises an impressive lineup of 300+ food vendors, retail pop-ups, craft beer and wine tastings, and 50+ musical artists. FoodieLand's mission has always been about community and fostering connection through cuisine. Acquiring the Bite in 2023, FoodieLand extended its West Coast flair to the PNW, bringing over 16 annual events across the country. Its first year revitalized the annual city tradition, bringing in over 355,000 attendees across the 3-day festival.

UNFI Holiday and Winter Show Central / West

7/20-22

Las Vegas, NV

The specialty food market can be incredibly competitive and gaining shelf space or distribution requires you to be on the ball. Luckily, no matter what stage of growth your brand is in, we have the data and expert insights and product-level attribute tracking to help you get the sweetest results. This selling show exhibits the full spectrum of products and services, supporting both the natural and conventional suppliers, as well as all grocery retail customer channels for the western region.

August

2026 Los Angeles Food & Sake Expo

8/1

Anaheim Marriot Hotel

Anaheim, CA

Annual Wismettac Sake and Food Celebration — a signature event featuring premium sake and delicious food pairings.

Source Premium Japanese Sake & Asian Food-efficiently, in one place. Meet some of our vetted manufacturers and distributors, sample the latest products, and experience firsthand. Special prices and discounts will also be available for events participants. This event is strictly 21+. Valid government-issued photo ID is required for entry. This is B2B-Only event and not open to the general public. For more information about the event, please contact a sales representative at Wismettac Asian Foods Inc.

California Restaurant Show

8/23-25

Anaheim Convention Center

Anaheim, CA

www.californiarestaurentshow.com/

Whether you're an independent owner, quick-serve restaurant operator, chef, caterer, baker, bar or nightclub operator, hospital, hotel, or commercial foodservice personnel — join us August 23-25, 2026, at the California Restaurant Show at the Anaheim Convention Center. Join thousands of your peers at the show, where you'll have access to the hottest menu trends, state-of-the-art design and decor, the best in business education, and hundreds of the leading vendors and purveyors dedicated to serving the restaurant & foodservice community — all under one roof. Watch live culinary demonstrations, competitions, and awards ceremonies and listen in on education sessions in our Education Alley Theaters. Shop from hundreds of exhibitors, explore the latest in foodservice trends, and join our exciting events - all on the show floor!

Dream Asia

8/7-9

South Carolina State Fairgrounds

Columbia, SC

Dream Asia Festival is coming to South Carolina on August 07-09, 2026, at the South Carolina State Fairgrounds in Columbia, bringing three unforgettable days of Asian food, culture, entertainment, and family fun. Explore 80+ Asian food vendors, shop 30+ unique merch and anime vendors, enjoy high-energy live performances including K-STAR Circus: A Kung-Fu Journey, DJ & live music, cultural showcases, K-pop dance parties, and cosplay contests, and take part in interactive experiences like the Squid Game Challenge, Karaoke Contest, and JDM Car Expo. Experience crowd-favorite attractions like the Fetch the Fun Dog Show, along with a Kids Activity Zone and petting zoo.



One of North America's largest Japanese food trade shows, "FOOD & SAKE EXPO," was held

-JFC International brought together food and sake, attracting more than 1,500 industry professionals-

北米最大級の日本食商談会「FOOD & SAKE EXPO」開催

JFCインターナショナルがフードと酒を融合、1500人超の業界関係者が来場



Hosted on May 16 at the Hilton Hotel in Costa Mesa, California, the "Food & Sake Expo" organized by JFC International — a member of the Kikkoman Group and one of the largest Japanese food distributors in the United States — drew significant attention as a major industry event showcasing the appeal of Japanese sake and washoku culture to the North American market. The venue welcomed a wide range of attendees, including sake breweries from across Japan, food manufacturers, restaurant professionals, distributors, and local buyers, creating a vibrant atmosphere for networking and lively exchanges on the latest products and market trends.

This year's expo showcased not only traditional varieties of sake such as Junmai, Ginjo, and Daiginjo, but also a diverse lineup of market-driven products, including low-alcohol options, sparkling sake, and fruit-infused liqueurs designed to appeal to evolving consumer tastes.

In particular, sake featuring elegant aromas and a light, refined finish reminiscent of white wine received strong praise from American buyers familiar with wine culture. Plum wines and fruit liqueurs made with ingredients such as peach and yuzu also attracted considerable attention as products well positioned to appeal to younger

consumers and female customers.

At the venue, exhibitors went beyond simple tastings, actively presenting pairing suggestions with Japanese cuisine. By matching sake with dishes such as sushi, yakitori, and contemporary fusion creations, they highlighted new ways to enjoy Japanese sake, with a clear focus on expanding its adoption in local restaurants. Many exhibitors also emphasized versatility as a key message, with one noting, "We want people to understand that sake pairs not only with fine Japanese dining, but also with Western cuisine and casual dishes as well."

Yoshihide Murakami of JFC International, commented, "Amid concerns over an economic slowdown, Trump-era tariffs, and rising costs for rice, raw materials, and logistics, Japan's sake market is increasingly shifting from premium offerings toward more affordable price segments. While overall consumption levels at restaurants have remained relatively stable, there is a noticeable trend toward smaller formats, with bottles moving from the traditional 720ml size to 300ml servings in an effort to reduce procurement costs. At the same time, cocktail events featuring sake and shochu have been gaining strong popularity, particularly among younger consumers. This growing interest is also driving



demand for low-alcohol, sweeter, and more approachable products, signaling a broader shift toward more casual and flexible drinking occasions. An increasing number of products with alcohol content in the 11–13% range are also entering the market, reflecting a broader shift in both Japan and the United States toward more flexible and creative ways of enjoying sake. What was once considered a distinctly American approach—sake cocktails—is now also being embraced in Japan, with some brewers noting that they have begun hosting similar initiatives at their own breweries. Sake is gradually evolving beyond being a beverage meant solely for traditional consumption, becoming instead part of a more versatile drinking culture that encourages mixing and experimentation with other drinks. While the outlook remains

uncertain, sake continues to show resilience, maintaining steady growth even as the beer market contracts, and is widely regarded as holding up well under current market conditions.”

In North America, growing health consciousness and the popularity of fermented foods have been steadily boosting interest in Japanese cuisine year after year. Against this backdrop, sake is increasingly being recognized as an integral part of food culture, and this year’s Food & Sake Expo went beyond a simple tasting event to become a comprehensive platform showcasing the full breadth of Japanese food and sake together. The event also served to reaffirm the strong potential of the North American market as Japan continues to pursue the expansion of its alcoholic beverage exports. ■



キッコーマングループで、米国最大級の日本食品総合卸として知られるJFCインターナショナル社が5月16日、カリフォルニア州コストメサのヒルトンホテルで開催した「Food & Sake Expo」は、日本酒と和食文化の魅力を北米市場に向けて発信する大規模な業界イベントとして大きな注目を集めた。会場には日本各地の酒蔵をはじめ、食品メーカー、飲食店関係者、流通業者、現地パイヤーなど多くの来場者が集まり、最新の商品や市場動向について活発な情報交換が行われた。

今回の展示会では、純米酒や吟醸酒、大吟醸といった伝統的な日本酒に加え、低アルコールタイプやスパークリング日本酒、果実を使ったリキュールなど、市

場を意識した多彩な商品が紹介された。特に、白ワインのような華やかな香りと軽やかな飲み口を持つ日本酒は、ワイン文化に親しむ米国人パイヤーから高い評価を受けた。また、桃や柚子などを使用した梅酒・リキュール類も、若年層や女性客を取り込みやすい商品として関心を集めていた。

会場では試飲だけでなく、和食とのペアリング提案も積極的に行われた。寿司や焼き鳥、創作料理などと合わせることで、日本酒の新たな楽しみ方を提案し、現地レストランでの採用拡大を狙う動きが目立った。出展者からは「日本酒は高級和食だけでなく、洋食やカジュアル料理とも相性が良いことを知ってほしい」との声も聞かれた。

JFCインターナショナルの村上宣秀氏は、「景気後退やトランプ関税、原料米価格や輸送費の上昇により、日本酒市場では高価格帯から低価格帯へのシフトが進んでいる。レストランでの飲酒量自体は大きく変わらないものの、720mlから300mlへと小容量化し、仕入れ単価を抑える動きが見られる。一方で、日本酒や焼酎を使ったカクテルイベントは若年層を中心に好評で、低アルコール・甘口・飲みやすい商品への需要が高まっている。アルコール度数11～13%の商品も増え、日本酒を自由な飲み方で楽しむ流れが日米双方で広がっている。以前はアメリカ特有と思われていた日本酒カクテルも、日本の蔵元から「自分たちの蔵でも実施した」との声があり、日本酒

はそのまま飲むだけでなく、他の飲料と組み合わせて楽しむ柔軟な文化へ変化している。先行きは不透明だが、ビール市場が縮小する中、日本酒は一定の成長を維持しており、健闘していると思う」と語った。

北米では健康志向や発酵食品ブームを背景に、日本食人気が年々高まっている。こうした流れの中で、日本酒も“食文化の一部”として認知が広がりつつあり、今回のSake & Sake Expoは単なる試飲会ではなく、日本の食と酒を総合的に提案する場となった。日本産酒類の輸出拡大を目指すうえでも、北米市場の可能性を改めて示すイベントとなった。



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または、電話、メールでお問合せください。

お問い合わせ: Japanese Restaurant Academy

(213) 680-0011 restaurantacademy@alljapannews.com

練習問題

- 1 次のうち、食を扱う場所で微生物の蔓延を防ぐために最も重要なことは何か?
- 食べ物を扱うときに手袋を着用すること
 - すべての身に着けている貴金属を外すこと
 - ヘアネットを被ること
 - 効率的に手を洗うこと

- 2 不適切に解凍された食品は危険を伴う可能性がある。なぜなら・・・
- その食品の味または色を変えるかもしれないから
 - 解凍中にバクテリアが増殖するかもしれないから
 - お客様が凍った食品の一部を偶然食べるかもしれないから
 - 不適切な解凍は中心の大部分が凍ったままになるかもしれないから

回答 :1)d 2)b

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July 2026

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Yuji Matsumoto
 Master Sake Sommelier

Finalist of the 2nd World Sake Sommelier Competition. Graduated from Keio University Faculty of Law, Department of Political Science. Worked for Nomura Securities for 10 years. Former president of California Sushi Academy Former chief of planning dept. at Mutual Trading.



David Kudo
 Sake Sommelier
 Master Sake Sommelier

Born Kita-Akita City, Akita Prefecture. Took over as Executive Officer of the Japanese Food Trend News founded in 1991, when the predecessor was assigned back to Japan. Currently distributed as Japan Restaurant News (20,000 issues published electronically) in North America, Japan, and Southeast Asia.



Pairing of Sake

In this issue, I'd like to report on a secret to enhance pairing of Japanese cuisine with sake.

First, please have three brands of Japanese sake with very different properties.

For example, select Junmai Daiginjo, Tokubetsu Junmai, and Junmai Kimoto from different regions.

Glasses used for the three sake brands must have the same shape. Chill the sake in the refrigerator at approximately 55 degrees F for three hours

prior to serving.

As for the cuisine, they can be prepared in advance if time allows. If not, if you want to try several different dishes to compare, then take out is recommend. For example, trying Chinese and Italian cuisine (avoid foods strong in flavor or garlic) is fun.

For the order of sampling, be sure to start with sake made from rice with the highest milling: from Daiginjo – Tokubetsu Junmai – Junmai. The most important aspect of sampling sake is to

sip the sake, sample the cuisine, then drink the same brand of sake again.

If umami or a wide range of rich flavors are detected, then the pairing is considered a success. Also, if the appetite increases, this is also a good outcome.

Japanese sake goes surprising well with unexpected dishes (like cheese or steak), so please try pairing without biases for interesting discoveries.■

轻松配对日本酒

这一次，我想教一些技巧，以提高日本酒和料理的配对能力。

首先，我想请你准备三个品牌的日本酒，其性质尽可能不同。

例如，找出完全不同的产地的纯米大吟酿、特别纯米、纯米生酛。

三个品牌的酒必须使用相同的形状的玻璃杯。同时储存在冰箱中约3小时，并保持约55°F。

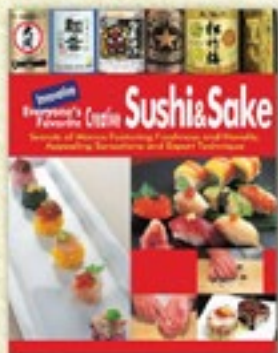
關於料理，有時間的人可以自己煮，如果你想吃多種不同的料理進行比較，建議外賣。不只限於日本菜，嘗試中國菜和意大利菜（避免太辣或大蒜味濃的食物）也很有趣。

飲酒吃菜的順序是大吟釀-特別純米-純米，是從高精米率的開始飲用。然後飲酒的人最重要的是，喝一口日本酒，然後吃一道菜，然後再喝少量同樣的酒。請你感受一下只喝酒

時和吃完菜後喝的相同酒，酒味在口中的變化。

如果你感受到脂味道和濃厚的味道的傳播，那麼可以判斷配對的菜是好的。此外，促進食慾的感覺也是好的。日本酒也適合意想不到的東西（奶酪和牛排等），沒有任何偏見，如果你嘗試配對它，可以發現有趣的事情。

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(published in English by All Japan News, Inc., in 2005)



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Beyond Bitter:

The Rise of Fruity Japanese Ji-Beer

超越苦味： 果香與茶香日本地產啤酒的崛起

Ji-Beer: “Local Beer”, artisan craft brew, reflecting unique characters has long leaned into bold hops, bitterness, and high-alcohol experimentation. But consumer preferences are shifting toward beverages that feel lighter, smoother, and easier to enjoy casually.

This change is especially noticeable among younger consumers.

Gen Zs came of age on flavored beverages. Yuzu. Lychee. Matcha. Mikan. These flavors are no longer unfamiliar or niche. They already exist across cocktail menus, sparkling beverages, desserts, and snack culture. The question is no longer whether consumers are interested in fruit-forward or tea-infused drinks. The question is whether restaurant beverage programs are offering them in beer form.

That shift creates new opportunities for Ji-Beer.

Unlike many Western craft beer styles built around hop intensity, Ji-Beer often emphasizes balance, seasonality, and compatibility with food. In many ways, it reflects the broader philosophy of Japanese cuisine itself: harmony over dominance.

For foodservice operators, fruit and tea-forward Ji-Beer offers something increasingly valuable: approachable flavor profiles that appeal not only to beer drinkers, but also to cocktail, wine, and hard seltzer consumers looking for something refreshing, flavorful, and new.

Many restaurants already feature specialty cocktail sections to showcase signature beverages and create a stronger sense of identity. Ji-Beer can serve a similar role within the beer category. A dedicated seasonal or specialty beer section featuring fruit and tea-forward Ji-Beer can help differentiate a beverage program while creating opportunities for featured pours, pairing menus, and stronger guest interaction.

「柑橘帶來明亮感，花香提升層次，
茶香則在不增加厚重感的前提下，
賦予風味更深的結構。」

這是以日本風味視角重新詮釋的通用餐酒搭配邏輯。



隨著年輕世代消費者的飲品偏好逐漸轉向更輕盈、順口且帶有果香層次的風味體驗，地產啤酒（Ji-Beer）正迎來新的市場契機，為現代餐廳的飲品菜單開拓出令人耳目一新的全新可能。

地產啤酒（Ji-Beer），又稱「在地啤酒」。泛指展現地域特色與釀造個性的手工精釀啤酒，長期以來，以鮮明的啤酒花香、強烈苦味與高酒精度的實驗風格為特色。然而，隨著消費者偏好逐漸轉變，市場正迎來一股更輕盈、順口，也更適合日常輕鬆享用的飲品趨勢。

這樣的轉變，在年輕消費族群中尤其明顯。

Z世代是在風味飲品文化中成長的一代。柚子、荔枝、抹茶、蜜柑，這些風味對他們而言早已不再陌生，也不再只是小眾選項。它們已廣泛出現在調酒菜單、氣泡飲品、甜點與零食文化之中。因此，當前的問題不再是消費者是否對果香或茶香飲品感興趣，而是餐廳的飲品計畫是否已準備好，將這些風味以「啤酒」的形式呈現給客人。

這樣的市場轉變，正為日本地產啤酒創造新的發展機會。

有別於許多以強烈啤酒花風格為核心的西方精釀啤酒，地產啤酒（Ji-Beer）更常強調平衡感、季節性，以及與料理之間的搭配性。從某種角度來看，這也呼應了日本料理本身的核心精神：追求和諧，而非讓單一風味主導全局。

對餐飲營運者而言，主打果香與茶香的日本地產啤酒，提供了一項越來越具有價值的選擇：它們擁有親和、易入口的風味輪廓，不僅能吸引啤酒飲用者，也能觸及平時偏好調酒、葡萄酒或硬蘇打氣泡酒（Hard Seltzer）的消費族群。對於正在尋找清爽、有風味層次且具新鮮感飲品的客人而言，這類地產啤酒正好提供了一個自然的切入點。

許多餐廳早已透過特色調酒區來展示招牌飲品，並建立更鮮明的品牌識別。地產啤酒也能在啤酒品類中扮演類似角色。透過規劃季節性或特色啤酒區，導入果香與茶香調性的日本地產啤酒，不僅能提升飲品計畫的差異化，也能創造更多限定單杯推薦、餐酒搭配菜單與賓客互動的機會。

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KYOTO PEACH WEIZEN

口感柔和，充滿夏日氣息。像是一杯白桃貝里尼（Bellini），但更適合搭配料理。



KYOTO WHITE YUZU ALE

帶有明亮的日本柑橘香氣，收尾乾淨。如果您喜歡琴通寧（Gin & Tonic），這款會很適合您。



WAKAYAMA BREWERY LYCHEE BEER

花香細緻，口感優雅。和辛辣料理搭配時，會有意想不到的好效果。



YUZU WITBIER

口感清爽，帶有柑橘香，非常容易入口。這是一款帶有日本風味詮釋的夏季經典白啤酒。



WAKAYAMA BREWERY MIKAN BEER

輕盈、順口，帶有淡淡柑橘香。很多平時不太喝啤酒的客人，也很喜歡這一款。



KYOTO MATCHA IPA

抹茶讓IPA的苦味變得更柔和。風味帶有茶香與清爽感，和烤物搭配非常適合。



WAKAYAMA BREWERY YUZU BEER

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產品	營運實務要點	產品	營運實務要點
 KYOTO PEACH WEIZEN #54567	以柔和的小麥啤酒為基底，帶出成熟白桃般的細緻果香。完美適合早午餐、露天座位區與日間菜單，也能自然吸引平時偏好粉紅葡萄酒（Rosé）的客人，具備強烈的跨品類吸引力。	 WAKAYAMA BREWERY YUZU BEER #23573	風味明亮、清新，柚子香氣更為鮮明。適用範圍廣泛，能搭配壽司、居酒屋料理與烤海鮮等多種菜單應用。
 KYOTO WHITE YUZU ALE #2997-1	帶有花香感的日本柚子柑橘香氣，收尾乾淨俐落。這是一款以料理搭配為優先考量的啤酒，能自然搭配生蠔、義式生魚片（Crudo）、刺身與風味較輕盈的海鮮料理。	 WAKAYAMA BREWERY LYCHEE BEER #28139	帶有細緻花香與柔和清甜感，特別適合搭配辛辣料理與較輕盈的甜點，能在味覺上形成清爽而優雅的平衡。
 YUZU WITBIER #18747	以比利時白啤酒（Witbier）的結構為基礎，融入日本柑橘的明亮特色。對傳統啤酒飲用者而言足夠熟悉，同時又能提供具辨識度的新鮮感。	 WAKAYAMA BREWERY MIKAN BEER #10551	呈現溫和的日本蜜柑風味，尾韻親切順口。對於喜愛硬蘇打氣泡酒或罐裝調酒的客人而言，這是一款非常適合作為入門選擇的啤酒。

茶香調性日本地產啤酒

產品	營運實務要點	產品	營運實務要點
 KYOTO MATCHA IPA #9651	抹茶柔和的苦韻與鮮味（Umami），能細緻地修飾IPA的啤酒花輪廓，使整體風味更圓潤、有層次。非常適合搭配燒鳥（Yakitori）、烤肉與帶有焦香風味的料理。	 OOLONG ISLAND ALE #10860	散發烘焙烏龍茶香，尾韻順口並帶有輕微單寧感。能自然搭配唐揚炸雞（Karaage）、油炸料理與各式鹹香小盤料理。

跳脫傳統啤酒酒單的創新思維



夏季啤酒品飲組合

提供三款果香調性地產啤酒小杯品飲，並搭配簡潔的風味說明卡。非常適合無菜單料理（Omakase）、精選套餐（Prix-Fixe）與季節性品飲菜單。



早午餐的新亮點

以「KYOTO PEACH WEIZEN」取代傳統的含羞草調酒（Mimosa）。相同的飲用情境，卻能帶出更具故事性的飲品體驗。它能自然搭配蛋料理、煙燻鮭魚與較輕盈的早午餐餐點。



辛辣料理的風味搭配

「LYCHEE BEER」非常適合搭配辛辣料理。其花香與清甜感能柔化辣度，並在日式、韓式、東南亞料理，甚至帶有墨西哥靈感的菜單中，創造清爽而鮮明的對比。



燒鳥與茶啤之夜

以「KYOTO MATCHA IPA」搭配串燒，以「OOLONG ISLAND ALE」搭配唐揚炸雞。這樣的組合非常適合作為期間限定的餐酒搭配企劃，或季節性促銷亮點。



輕盈的甜點收尾

以「LYCHEE BEER」搭配日式麻糬（Mochi）或義式奶酪（Panna Cotta），能為整體用餐體驗帶來更清爽、乾淨且不厚重的收尾。

For operators thinking beyond traditional beer categories, Ji-Beer may become less of a niche offering and more of a modern menu advantage.

對於願意跳脫傳統啤酒品類框架的餐飲營運者而言，日本地產啤酒將不再只是小眾或異國風味的補充選項，而有機會成為現代飲品菜單中的一項實質優勢。

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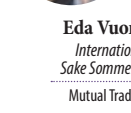
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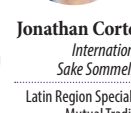
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酒豪大陸

California
SAKE
CHALLENGE

by Kosuke Kuji 225



Kosuke Kuji

Fifth Generation Brewery Owner
Nanbu Bijin, Inc.

Born May 11, 1972. Entered Tokyo University of Agriculture's Department of Brewing and Fermentation. In 2005 became the youngest person ever to receive the Iwate Prefecture Young Distinguished Technician Award. In 2006 was selected to be a member of the board of trustees of his local alma mater, Fukuoka High School. Currently is featured in a number of media outlets including magazines, radio, and television.

*Positions of Public Service:
Chairperson, Cassiopeia Corporation Youth Conference;
School Board Member, Fukuoka High School, Iwate Prefecture, Vice-Chairman, Technology Committee, Iwate Prefecture Brewers and Distillers' Association

Anime, Voice Actors, and Japanese Sake Part 2
動畫、聲優與日本酒 其二

A collaboration project titled "Seijo" has launched, bringing together anime voice actresses and "Kokushu," Japan's traditional alcoholic beverages culture that has been registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. "Seijo" is a new project designed to share the appeal of Japan's traditional "Kokushu" — including Sake, Honkaku Shochu, Awamori, and Hon-mirin — through the voices of anime voice actors and comedians.

As the first event of the "Seijo" project, a special collaboration event featuring anime voice actors, comedians, and Japanese sake was held at Tokyo Station.

Under the theme of "Giving Voice to Kokushu," a wide selection of Sake and Honkaku Shochu from across Japan gathered at the venue, showcasing the diversity and richness of the country's traditional alcoholic beverages. The featured performers included a wide range of today's leading anime voice actors and comedians, such as Kaede Hondo, Hantaro Tenshin, Mikako Takahashi, Risae Matsuda, Hotomi Sekine, Nana Hamasaki, Haruki Ishiya, as well as the manzai duo Nihonshu. Bringing together talents from across the anime and comedy worlds, they energized the special venue at Tokyo Station with their distinctive "voices," each adding their own color and

personality to the presentation of Japan's traditional "Kokushu."

Guests were treated to heart-felt expressions of deep affection for "Kokushu," along with unique personal insights and entertaining anecdotes shared by the performers.

When I closed my eyes and listened to the talk, it felt like scenes from that anime were coming back to me, and I truly felt that an anime world without visuals was appearing in my mind.

The activities will become more full-scale from here on. Events overseas are also planned, so please look forward to them. ■

以動畫聲優與日本酒為主題，並與被聯合國教科文組織列入世界非物質文化遺產的「國酒」相結合的合作企劃——「聲釀」項目正式啟動。

這是一個透過聲優和藝人的聲音來傳播日本酒、本格燒酎、泡盛以及本味醃等「國酒」魅力，並透過體驗型活動和音頻內容培育全新酒文化的項目。

作為首場活動，聲優與藝人攜手在東京站舉辦日本酒的聯動活動。

以「讓國酒承載聲音」為主題，來自日本全國各地的眾多日本酒、本格燒酎等齊聚一堂，由聲優和藝人們用他們動人的「聲音」，向粉絲們講述這些國酒的美味與魅力。

參加活動的聲優和藝人包括本渡楓、天津飯太郎、高橋美佳子、松田利冴、關根瞳、濱崎奈奈、石谷春貴，以及漫才師「日本酒」等。他們既有活躍於當下熱門動畫作品中的聲優，也有藝人和漫才師等，在東京站的特別會場以精彩的「聲音」為現場

增添了熱情活力。

他們分享了自己對國酒深厚的熱愛、獨特的感悟以及許多有趣的親身經歷。觀眾們一邊聆聽，一邊品嚐當天提供試飲的國酒，沉醉其中。

閉上眼睛聽他們講述時，彷彿動畫中的經典場景在腦海中重新浮現。那一刻，即使眼前沒有影像，動畫世界卻真實地呈現在人們的想像之中。

「聲釀」項目今後還將進一步全面展開活動。未來也計畫在海外舉辦相關活動，敬請期待。

日本酒 百味百題

Japanese sake generally sold is undiluted sake adjusted with water to the alcohol content of 15 ~ 16%. However, the alcohol content of squeezed sake mash itself is rather

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Alcohol content of sake 日本酒の酒精度

high, at approximately 20~22%, the highest alcohol content among brewed liquor worldwide (wine is between 9~14). While alcohol is generated from sugar broken down by yeast, for yeast to produce large amount of alcohol at once, high sugar content of approximately 40% in the sake mash would be required. However, if the sugar content is too high in the yeast, the production of alcohol would be inhibited due to osmotic pressure. Within high concentration of sugar, yeast cannot grow. Despite this fact, the secret behind the high alcohol-concentration in sake is in the brewing method.

Sake mash that creates Japanese sake is prepared by adding steaming rice, rice malt, and water to the yeast starter with large quantity of cultured yeast. Therefore, sake mash contains two parallel functions: to produce sugar by gradually breaking down steaming rice into glucose using yeast from the rice malt, and alcohol fermentation by breaking down the glucose into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas using the glucose. In other words, the glucose in the sake mash is always maintained at an appropriate concentration for the yeast. For this reason, yeast can generate large quantities of alcohol without exposure to osmotic pressure. In this way, the production of alcohol in the sake mash and alcohol fermentation occurring together is known as "parallel multiple fermentation." Also, it is known that alcohol tolerance is added to the yeast starter by a portion of the rice malt component, which generates high concentration of alcohol. On the other hand, grapes, the ingredient to

produce wine, is a "saccharine food ingredient" that originally contains abundant sugar content, thus there is no need to produce sugar during the production process.

However, in principle, smashing grapes and placing them in a container would allow the natural yeast on the grape skin to produce alcohol fermentation that produces wine. However, the alcohol concentration level will not be as high as Japanese sake. In this way, alcohol fermentation occurring independently is referred to as single fermentation. Also, in case of beer, since the ingredient is the same grain product (starch) as rice, it is necessary to convert the food ingredient into sugar during the production process. First, the saccharogenic amylase of the malt would break down into sugar, where the yeast proliferates for alcohol fermentation. In this way, the function to convert into sugar and alcohol fermentation that takes place independently is referred to as "fermentation after saccharification." However, since beer uses a large quantity of water, alcohol-level is rather low at approximately 5%.■

一次性產生如此大量的酒精，酒醪中必須含有接近40%的高濃度糖分。然而，當糖分濃度過高時，酵母會因滲透壓作用而受到抑制（稱為“高糖壓迫”）。更何況，在如此高濃度的糖環境中，酵母甚至難以生長。儘管如此，日本酒卻能夠達到遠高於其他釀造酒的酒精度，其祕訣就在於獨特的釀造方式。釀造日本酒的酒醪，是在大量培養了酵母的酒母中加入蒸米、麴和水製成的。因此，在酒醪內部，會同時進行兩種反應：麴中的酶逐漸將蒸米中的澱粉分解成葡萄糖的糖化作用；和酵母再將這些糖分分解為酒精和二氧化碳的酒精發酵。也就是說，酒醪中的糖分始終維持在適合酵母活動的濃度水平。因此，酵母不會受到高糖壓迫的影響，從而能夠持續產生大量酒精。這種在同一酒醪中同時進行糖化作用和酒精發酵的方式，被稱為“並行複發酵”。此外，還發現麴中的部分成分能夠增強日本酒酵母對酒精的耐受性，使其能夠在高酒精環境下繼續發酵，從而產生更高濃度的酒精。另一方面，葡萄酒的原料葡萄本身就富含糖分，屬於“糖質原料”，因此在釀造過程中不需要進行糖化。從原理上說，只要將葡萄壓碎放入容器中，依靠附著在果皮上的天然酵母進行酒精發酵，就能夠釀成葡萄酒。但其酒精濃度無法達到日本酒那樣高。這種僅進行酒精發酵的方式稱為“單發酵”。至於啤酒，其原料與大米一樣，屬於穀物類（澱粉質原料），因此在釀造過程中也需要先進行糖化。首先利用麥芽中的糖化酶將澱粉分解為糖分，然後再加入酵母進行酒精發酵。這種將糖化作用和酒精發酵分別獨立進行的方式，被稱為“單行複發酵”。由於啤酒在釀造過程中使用的水量較多，因此其酒精度通常較低，約為5%左右。

◆ ◆ ◆
一般市售的日本酒，通常會將原酒加水調整至15%~16%的酒精濃度；而剛從酒醪中壓榨出來、未經稀釋的原酒，其酒精含量高的可達到20%~22%左右。這一酒精度在世界各種釀造酒中屬於最高水平（葡萄酒通常為9%~14%）。酒精是酵母分解糖分後產生的。一般認為，要讓酵母



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Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America was founded with the purpose to promote further understanding of Japanese sake, shochu and beer in a shared where 500 million people enjoy wine in North America. We strive to increase Japanophiles by furthering understanding of the sake culture through online Japanese sake and shochu colleges and books related to Japanese sake, shochu and beer, etc. Especially sampling parties directly approaches consumers and no doubt contributes to expanding the market. Also, our final purpose is to facilitate communication with sake breweries, sake producers, and distribution companies, etc., to introduce Japanese sake, shochu and beer to American consumers in a way that's easy-to-understand.

Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America 美國清酒燒酎烈酒研究所

Japanese Sake Type Differ According to the Combination of Flavor and Aroma

In addition, Japanese sake type also differs by aroma and preparation method. The Sake Service Institute focused on the sake flavor and aroma to classify sake into four different types.

Sake type is classified by plotting the sake flavor onto the horizontal axis and sake aroma onto the vertical axis. Sake with concentrated flavor and aroma is designated as Mellow Sake, while sake with concentrated flavor but light aroma is Pure Sake, sake with subtle flavor but pungent aroma is Aromatic Sake, and sake with subtle flavor and light aroma is designated as Refreshing Sake.

Compatible cuisines and temperature are indicated for each sake type as reference to select your sake type for sampling.

Refreshing sake with no odd flavor is referred to as clean sake flavor. The lower the rice-polishing ratio, the cleaner the sake flavor. To the contrary, the higher the rice-polishing ratio, the more concentrated the umami flavor in the sake. Generally, aromatic sake is best served chilled, while rich sake is best served hot. Raising the temperature increases the umami and sweet flavors, mellowing the acidity of sake.

Heating both Mellow and Pure Sake produces more full-bodied flavors.

Rich sake refers to Japanese sake light and refreshing in flavor, while sweet Japanese sake is heavy and strong in flavor.■

日本酒の類型

——根據口感與香氣的組合進行分類

除此之外，日本酒還可以根據香氣或釀造方法進行分類。其中，由日本酒服務研究會提出的一種分類方式，是根據口感和香氣兩個角度將日本酒劃分為四種類型。

以口感為橫軸、香氣為縱軸進行分類：口感和香氣都較強烈的稱為熟酒；口感濃郁但香氣較為低調的稱為醇酒；口感輕盈而香氣濃郁的稱為薰酒；口感和香氣都較為清淡的稱為爽酒。

針對每一種類型，都有適合搭配的料理以及推薦飲用溫度，因此在挑選想喝的日本酒時，可以作為參考。

沒有雜味、口感清爽的酒，通常會被稱為乾淨的酒。一般來說，使用精米步合較低的酒米釀造出來的酒會更加乾淨；相反，精米步合較高的酒則會具有更豐富的旨味。

通常認為，香氣濃郁的日本酒適合冷飲，而醇厚感的酒則適合溫熱後飲用即燗酒。隨著溫度升高，酒中的旨味和甜味會更加明顯，酸味則會變得更加柔和。

尤其是熟酒和醇酒，加熱後飲用能夠展現出更加飽滿豐富的風味。

所謂醇厚的酒，是日本酒風味描述中的一種表達方式。描述日本酒甜口口感時，常見的說法還有淡麗辛口和濃醇等。

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Tokyo Jizake Strolling

東京地酒散步

by Ryuji Takahashi



Ryuji Takahashi

Regional Sake Specialty Store “Ji Sakeya” Owner, Master Sake Sommelier, Shuto-Meijin, and the charismatic guru of ordinary sake. Plans and manages events and seminars with his own unique flare to introduce the appeal of Japanese sake and cuisine, unaffected by the latest trends, while managing a jizake retail store.

A Night of Half-Priced Lemon Slices — The Quiet Happiness Drifting Through Keihin’s Beloved Izakaya, Akafudaya

- The Popular Tavern Culture I Encountered in a Seaside Town—Cheap, Delicious, and Free from Having to Worry About Anyone Else-

檸檬片減半的夜晚——瀰漫在京濱大眾酒館「赤札屋」裡的靜謐幸福

——在海風拂拂的街區邂逅的，便宜、美味且無需顧慮他人的大眾酒館文化——

On a personal note, I recently moved from the shadow of Shinjuku’s skyscraper district to the Keihin area. Although both are part of Tokyo, the atmosphere feels remarkably different. Around Shinjuku, people always seem to be moving at a brisk pace, as if the city itself never stops rushing forward. In the Keihin region, however, time appears to flow a little more gently. Perhaps it is the influence of the sea breeze, but there is a curious sense of calm that makes the passage of time feel slower and more relaxed. Compared with the Shinjuku area, the Keihin region also seems to have far fewer disappointing budget izakayas. Cheap and delicious establishments exist here as if they were the most natural thing in the world, and it is not unusual to find them already full by five o’clock in the evening. The drinking culture feels different as well. In Shinjuku, many bars and izakayas seem to attract people looking for company or conversation. In the Keihin area, by contrast, there appear to be more places where one can sit quietly and enjoy a drink alone without saying a word. Among these establishments—cheap, delicious, and requiring little in the way of social effort—there is one particular place in the Keihin region that I find myself returning to again and again.

When you visit on a weekday afternoon, you will find seasoned solo drinkers lined up along the counter, seated one seat apart from one another, quietly enjoying their drinks and snacks in complete silence. Inside the tavern, the only sounds that regularly break the calm are the electronic chimes signaling that an order has been placed. The Chinese staff members serve food and drinks with a matter-of-fact efficiency and little small talk, and somehow that

understated, no-frills style contributes greatly to the comfort of the place. What is truly remarkable, however, is the pricing. A glass of shochu highball or green tea highball costs just 100 yen, while a mega-sized mug is only 150 yen. The food menu is equally astonishing: nearly one hundred different dishes are available, with most priced between 300 and 500 yen. It is the kind of place that feels almost impossible to imagine in central Tokyo today—a tavern where abundance, affordability, and quiet solitude coexist with effortless ease. However, even this price-breaking izakaya has not been immune to the rising tide of raw material costs. When I first visited the place about ten years ago, a plate of tuna sashimi was only 190 yen. Sake was equally cheap at 190 yen per “go” (a traditional unit of measure). Today, however, the situation has changed. The tuna sashimi now costs 350 yen, and a “go” of sake has risen to 300 yen. Even in a place built on the idea of extreme affordability, the quiet pressure of inflation has inevitably made its mark. Even so, the place remains extremely cheap, so there is really no cause for complaint. However, on a recent visit, I ordered my usual mega mug of chūhai for 150 yen, only to notice something different. The lemon slice that usually floats coolly in the glass had been reduced—cut in half. I have to admit, I prefer the full “full-moon” slice of lemon, so I felt a slight sense of disappointment. Still, that feeling was quickly replaced by admiration for the effort of the shop. Even as other menu items have gradually increased in price, they continue to hold the line on the chūhai, keeping its price unchanged. In that small gesture lies a kind of quiet determination—an attempt to preserve something essential about the place,

even as the surrounding world grows more expensive. Perhaps it is because of that very spirit of perseverance that, despite being a down-to-earth, everyday izakaya, the establishment has even expanded overseas. It now operates several branches in Germany and United Kingdom, and is still in the process of steadily increasing its number of locations. It is somewhat astonishing to think that a humble neighborhood tavern culture, born from cheap drinks and unpretentious meals, has begun to take root far beyond Japan—continuing to grow, quietly but surely, across borders. Even as prices continue to rise, neither the stance of the establishment nor its regular customers seems to have changed in any significant way. It is the kind of place that, once visited, inevitably makes you want to return again. For anyone who enjoys a drink, I would strongly recommend paying a visit at least once to the popular izakaya chain Akafudaya.■



說

點個人的事情。我從新宿副都心附近搬到了京濱地區。雖然同樣都在東京，但與人們總是步履匆匆的新宿相比，京濱地區彷彿因為海風的緣故，時間流逝得稍微緩慢一些，這是一種奇妙的感覺。這裡也是一個比新宿更少踩到廉價居酒屋雷區的地方。價格實惠又美味的店鋪彷彿理所當然地存在著，傍晚五點就已經座無虛席。喝酒的氛圍也有所不同。新宿的店裡似乎聚集著許多戀人渴望交流的人們，而京濱地區則有更多可以安靜獨酌的店鋪。在這樣一個便宜、美味、又不需要社交能力的京濱地區，有一家我經常光顧的店。平日白天去的時候，總能看到獨酌高手們隔著一個座位並排坐



在吧台前，默默享受著酒和下酒菜。店內只有點單成功時的電子提示音偶爾響起，而那些華人女店員不帶過多熱情、只是淡淡地上菜的態度，反而讓人感到格外舒適。更令人驚訝的是，這家店的燒酒蘇打、綠茶燒酒等飲品每杯只要100日元，大杯裝也僅需150日元。而且店裡還有將近一百種菜品，大多數價格集中在300至500日元之間。不過，即便是這樣一家以低價著稱的居酒屋，也難以完全避開原材料價格上漲的衝擊。我第一次來這家店大約是在十年前，那時一份金槍魚刺身只賣190日元，日本酒一合也只要190日元，便宜得驚人。如今，金槍魚刺身漲到了350日元，日本酒也漲到了300日元一合。即便如此，依然非常便宜，所以並沒有什麼問題。前些天我再去時，照例點了一杯150日元的超大杯燒酒蘇打，卻發現平時悠然漂浮在酒杯裡的那片檸檬，竟然只剩下原來的一半了。說實話，我還是覺得整片月形的檸檬更好看一些，因此多少有點失落。但轉念一想，即使其他菜單有些已經漲價，這家店依然堅持不提高燒酒蘇打的價格，這份努力實在令人欽佩。或許正因為有這樣的堅持，這家明明只是大眾居酒屋的連鎖店，卻已經把分店開到了德國和英國，而且現在仍在不斷擴張。即使物價上漲，店鋪的風格和常客們的氛圍卻始終沒有太大變化。只要來過一次，就一定會想再來第二次。如果你喜歡喝酒，我真心推薦你至少去一次大眾居酒屋連鎖店「赤札屋」。

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July 2026

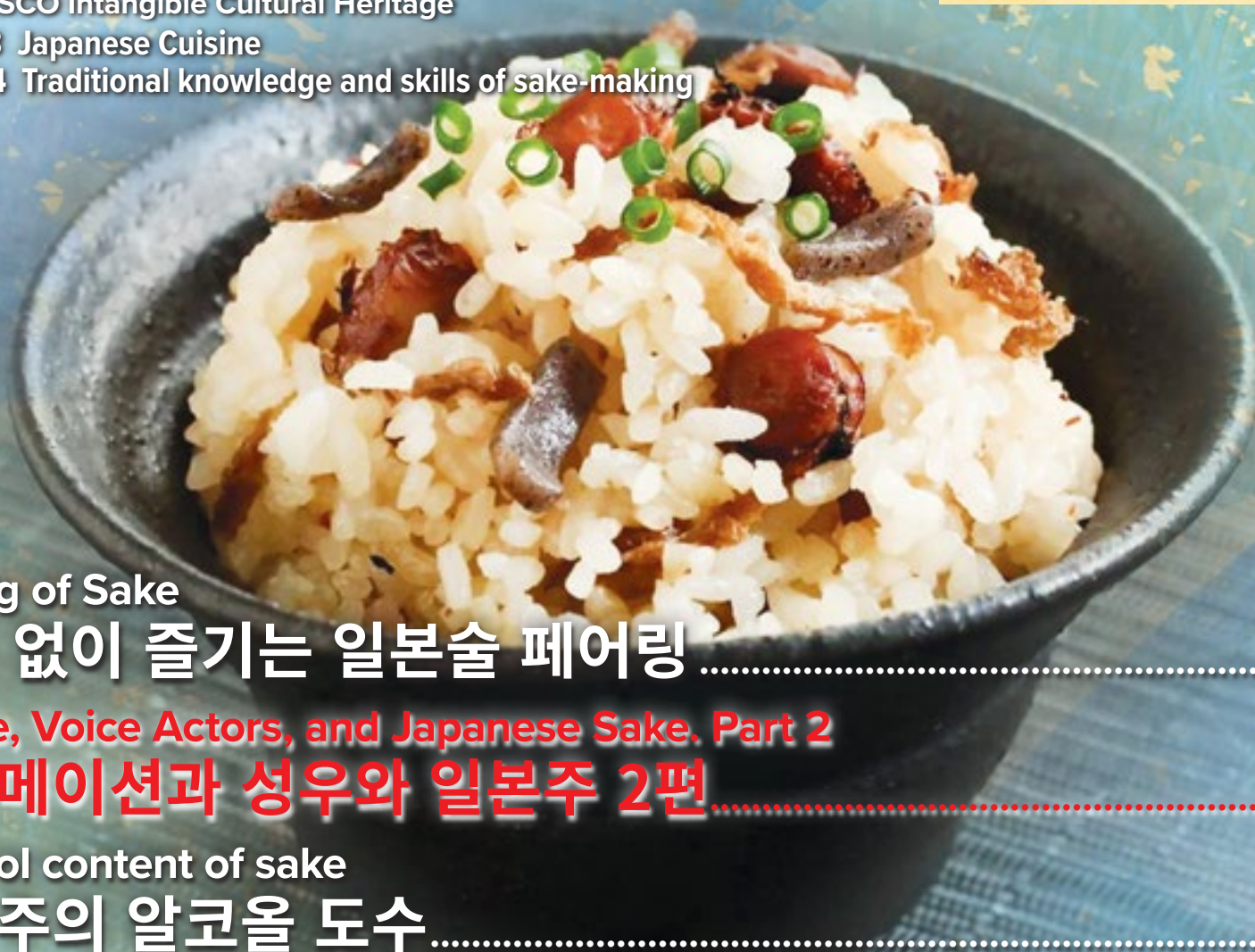
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UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

2013 Japanese Cuisine

2024 Traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making



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David Kudo

Sake Sommelier
Master Sake Sommelier

Born Kita-Akita City, Akita Prefecture. Took over as Executive Officer of the Japanese Food Trend News founded in 1991, when the predecessor was assigned back to Japan. Currently distributed as Japan Restaurant News (20,000 issues published electronically) in North America, Japan, and Southeast Asia.



Pairing of Sake

In this issue, I'd like to report on a secret to enhance pairing of Japanese cuisine with sake.

First, please have three brands of Japanese sake with very different properties.

For example, select Junmai Daiginjo, Tokubetsu Junmai, and Junmai Kimoto from different regions.

Glasses used for the three sake brands must have the same shape. Chill the sake in the refrigerator at approximately 55 degrees F for three hours

prior to serving.

As for the cuisine, they can be prepared in advance if time allows. If not, if you want to try several different dishes to compare, then take out is recommend. For example, trying Chinese and Italian cuisine (avoid foods strong in flavor or garlic) is fun.

For the order of sampling, be sure to start with sake made from rice with the highest milling: from Daiginjo – Tokubetsu Junmai – Junmai. The most important aspect of sampling sake is to

sip the sake, sample the cuisine, then drink the same brand of sake again.

If umami or a wide range of rich flavors are detected, then the pairing is considered a success. Also, if the appetite increases, this is also a good outcome.

Japanese sake goes surprising well with unexpected dishes (like cheese or steak), so please try pairing without biases for interesting discoveries.■

부담 없이 즐기는 일본술 페어링

이번에는 약간의 노력으로 일본술과 요리의 페어링 능력을 향상할 수 있는 비결을 알려드리겠습니다.

우선 가능한 한 성질이 다른 일본술 3종류를 준비해 주십시오. 예를 들어, 준마이 다이긴쵸, 도쿠베츠 준마이, 준마이 기모토 등 전혀 다른 산지의 술을 찾아보시기 바랍니다. 상표가 다른 3종류의 술은 반드시 같은 형태의 술잔을 사용해야 합니다. 이때 3시간 정도 냉장고에 넣어 55도 정도가 되도록 준비합니다.

요리에 대해서는 시간이 있는 사람은 요리를 직접 만들어도 좋고, 다른 요리를 여러 개 먹어 비교하고 싶을 때는 테이크아웃을 추천합니다. 일본식에 국한되지 않고, 중화요리, 이탈리아 요리(매운 음식이나 마늘이 많이 들어간 음식을 피할 것)등 어떤 음식이든 시도해 보는 것도 재미있을 겁니다.

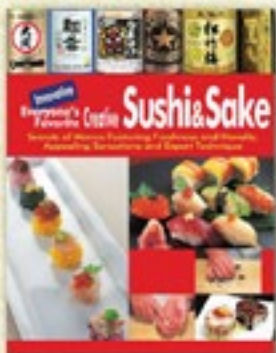
마시고 먹는 순서는 다이긴쵸-도쿠베츠 준마이-준마이 등 정미 비율이 높은 것부터 마십니다. 그러도 마시는 방법에서 가장 중요한 것은 일본술을 한 모금 마

신 후 요리를 먹고, 다시 같은 술을 조금 마십니다. 술만 마셨을 때와 먹은 후에 마신 같은 술이 입속에서 어떻게 변하는지 느껴보시기 바랍니다.

감칠맛이나 깊은 맛이 퍼지는 것을 느끼셨다면, 그 페어링은 성공입니다. 또, 식욕을 돋워 주는 것도 좋은 페어링입니다.

일본술은 의외의 음식(치즈나 스테이크 등)과도 궁합이 잘 맞습니다. 편견을 가지지 말고 페어링을 해보면 재밌는 발견을 할 수도 있습니다.

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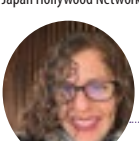
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Born May 11, 1972. Entered Tokyo University of Agriculture's Department of Brewing and Fermentation. In 2005 became the youngest person ever to receive the Iwate Prefecture Young Distinguished Technician Award. In 2006 was selected to be a member of the board of trustees of his local alma mater, Fukuoka High School. Currently is featured in a number of media outlets including magazines, radio, and television.

*Positions of Public Service:
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Anime, Voice Actors, and Japanese Sake Part 2 애니메이션과 성우와 일본주 2편

A collaboration project titled "Seijo" has launched, bringing together anime voice actresses and "Kokushu," Japan's traditional alcoholic beverages culture that has been registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. "Seijo" is a new project designed to share the appeal of Japan's traditional "Kokushu" — including Sake, Honkaku Shochu, Awamori, and Hon-mirin — through the voices of anime voice actors and comedians.

As the first event of the "Seijo" project, a special collaboration event featuring anime voice actors, comedians, and Japanese sake was held at Tokyo Station.

Under the theme of "Giving Voice to Kokushu," a wide selection of Sake and Honkaku Shochu from across Japan gathered at the venue, showcasing the diversity and richness of the country's traditional alcoholic beverages. The featured performers included a wide range of today's leading anime voice actors and comedians, such as Kaede Hondo, Hantaro Tenshin, Mikako Takahashi, Risae Matsuda, Hotomi Sekine, Nana Hamasaki, Haruki Ishiya, as well as the manzai duo Nihonshu. Bringing together talents from across the anime and comedy worlds, they energized the special venue at Tokyo Station with their distinctive "voices," each adding their own color and

personality to the presentation of Japan's traditional "Kokushu."

Guests were treated to heart-felt expressions of deep affection for "Kokushu," along with unique personal insights and entertaining anecdotes shared by the performers.

When I closed my eyes and listened to the talk, it felt like scenes from that anime were coming back to me, and I truly felt that an anime world without visuals was appearing in my mind.

The activities will become more full-scale from here on. Events overseas are also planned, so please look forward to them. ■

애니메이션 성우들과 일본주를 포함하여, 유네스코 세계무형 문화유산에 등록된「국주」콜라보 기획「세이조」프로젝트가 시작되었습니다.

이것은 성우나 예능인의 목소리로 일본주·본격소주·아와모리·혼미린 등「국주(코쿠슈)」의 매력을 전하고, 체험형 이벤트나 음성 콘텐츠를 통해서 새로운 술문화를 양성하는 프로젝트입니다.

첫번째 이벤트로 도쿄역에서 성우, 예능인이 함께 일본주 콜라보 이벤트가

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Alcohol content of sake 일본주의 알코올 도수

high, at approximately 20~22%, the highest alcohol content among brewed liquor worldwide (wine is between 9~14). While alcohol is generated from sugar broken down by yeast, for yeast to produce large amount of alcohol at once, high sugar content of approximately 40% in the sake mash would be required. However, if the sugar content is too high in the yeast, the production of alcohol would be inhibited due to osmotic pressure. Within high concentration of sugar, yeast cannot grow. Despite this fact, the secret behind the high alcohol-concentration in sake is in the brewing method.

Sake mash that creates Japanese sake is prepared by adding steaming rice, rice malt, and water to the yeast starter with large quantity of cultured yeast. Therefore, sake mash contains two parallel functions: to produce sugar by gradually breaking down steaming rice into glucose using yeast from the rice malt, and alcohol fermentation by breaking down the glucose into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas using the glucose. In other words, the glucose in the sake mash is always maintained at an appropriate concentration for the yeast. For this reason, yeast can generate large quantities of alcohol without exposure to osmotic pressure. In this way, the production of alcohol in the sake mash and alcohol fermentation occurring together is known as "parallel multiple fermentation." Also, it is known that alcohol tolerance is added to the yeast starter by a portion of the rice malt component, which generates high concentration of alcohol. On the other hand, grapes, the ingredient to produce wine, is a "saccharine food

ingredient" that originally contains abundant sugar content, thus there is no need to produce sugar during the production process.

However, in principle, smashing grapes and placing them in a container would allow the natural yeast on the grape skin to produce alcohol fermentation that produces wine. However, the alcohol concentration level will not be as high as Japanese sake. In this way, alcohol fermentation occurring independently is referred to as single fermentation. Also, in case of beer, since the ingredient is the same grain product (starch) as rice, it is necessary to convert the food ingredient into sugar during the production process. First, the saccharogenic amylase of the malt would break down into sugar, where the yeast proliferates for alcohol fermentation. In this way, the function to convert into sugar and alcohol fermentation that takes place independently is referred to as "fermentation after saccharification." However, since beer uses a large quantity of water, alcohol-level is rather low at approximately 5%.■

일반적으로 시판되는 일본주는 원주에 물을 섞어 조정하여 15~16% 알코올 농도로 맞추지만, 모로미를 짜낸 원주의 알코올 함량은 높아져서 20~22% 전후가 된다. 이것은 전세계에서 가장 높은 알코올 도수이다 (와인은 9~14%). 알코올은 효모가 당분을 분해함으로써 생성되는데, 효모가 한번에 이만큼 많은 양의 알코올을 만들어 내기 위해서는 모로미 속에 40%가까운 고농도의 당분이

필요하다는 것이다. 하지만 효모는 당분 농도가 너무 높으면, 그 침투압력 때문에 생리가 억제되어 버린다 (농당압박). 게다가 이렇게 높은 농도의 당분에서는 효모조차 성장할 수 없다. 그럼에도 불구하고 일본주의 알코올 도수가 엄청나게 높은 비결은 그 양조방법에 있다. 일본주를 만드는 모로미는 효모를 대량배양한 주모에 찢 쌀과 누룩, 술을 첨가한 것이다. 따라서 모로미 안에서는 누룩의 효소에 의해 서서히 찢 쌀이 포도당으로 분해되는 당화작용과, 그 당분을 효모가 알코올과 탄산가스로 분해하는 알코올발효가 동시에 진행되는 것이다. 결국 모로미 속의 당분은 항상 효모속에서 적당한 농도로 남아있게 되는 것이다. 그 결과 효모는 농당압박에 노출되지 않고도 대량의 알코올을 생성할 수 있다. 이처럼 모로미 안에서 당화작용과 알코올 발효가 동시에 이루어 지는 것을 「병행 복합발효」라고 부른다. 게다가 누룩 성분의 일부가 청주효모에 알코올 내성력을 부여하여서, 고농도의 알코올을 생성한다는 것을 알게 되었다. 한편, 와인의 원료인 포도는 처음부터 당분이 풍부하게 포함되어 있는 「당질원료」이기 때문에, 제조공정에서 당화가 필요없다. 따라서, 원리적으로는 포도를 으깨어 그릇에 담으면 겉질에 부착되어있는 천연효모의 활동으로 알코올 발효만 이루어져 술(와인)이 되지만, 알코올 도수는 일본주 만큼 높지 않다. 이러한 알코올 발효가 단독으로 실행되는 것을 「단발효」라고 한다. 또 맥주의 경우는 원료가 쌀과 같은 곡물 (전분질원료)이기 때문에, 제조공정에서 원료를 당화할 필요가 있다. 우선 맥아의 당화효소에 의해 당분이 분해되고, 거기에 효모를 증식시켜 알코올 발효를 일으킨다. 이와 같이, 당화작용과 알코올발효를 각각 단독으로 시행하는 것을 「단행복합발효」라고 한다. 게다가 맥주는 물의 사용량이 많아서, 알코올 도수는 5%전후로 낮아진다.



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Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America was founded with the purpose to promote further understanding of Japanese sake, shochu and beer in a shared where 500 million people enjoy wine in North America. We strive to increase Japanophiles by furthering understanding of the sake culture through online Japanese sake and shochu colleges and books related to Japanese sake, shochu and beer, etc. Especially sampling parties directly approaches consumers and no doubt contributes to expanding the market. Also, our final purpose is to facilitate communication with sake breweries, sake producers, and distribution companies, etc., to introduce Japanese sake, shochu and beer to American consumers in a way that's easy-to-understand.

Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America 미국 사케·소주·맥주 주류연구기관

Japanese Sake Type Differ According to the Combination of Flavor and Aroma

In addition, Japanese sake type also differs by aroma and preparation method. The Sake Service Institute focused on the sake flavor and aroma to classify sake into four different types.

Sake type is classified by plotting the sake flavor onto the horizontal axis and sake aroma onto the vertical axis. Sake with concentrated flavor and aroma is designated as Mellow Sake, while sake with concentrated flavor but light aroma is Pure Sake, sake with subtle flavor but pungent aroma is Aromatic Sake, and sake with subtle flavor and light aroma is designated as Refreshing Sake.

Compatible cuisines and temperature are indicated for each sake type as reference to select your sake type for sampling.

Refreshing sake with no odd flavor is referred to as clean sake flavor. The lower the rice-polishing ratio, the cleaner the sake flavor. To the contrary, the higher the rice-polishing ratio, the more concentrated the umami flavor in the sake. Generally, aromatic sake is best served chilled, while rich sake is best served hot. Raising the temperature increases the umami and sweet flavors, mellowing the acidity of sake.

Heating both Mellow and Pure Sake produces more full-bodied flavors.

Rich sake refers to Japanese sake light and refreshing in flavor, while sweet Japanese sake is heavy and strong in flavor.■

일본주의 종류는 맛과 향의 조합에 따라 달라진다.

이 외에도 향이나 제조법에 따라 구분할 수 있다. 그런 가운데, 맛과 향에 주목하여 고안된 것이 일본주 서비스 연구회에게 만든 4가지 유형의 분류이다.

맛을 가로축으로, 향을 세로축으로 분류하여 맛도 향도 강한 것을 숙주, 맛은 강하지만 향은 은은한 것을 순주, 맛은 가볍지만 향은 강한 것을 혼주, 맛도 향도 은은한 것을 상주로 정의한다.

각 종류마다 어울리는 요리와 온도가 표시되어 있기 때문에 마시고 싶은 일본주를 찾고 싶을 때 참고가 된다.

잡맛이 없고 깔끔한 술은 깨끗한 술이라고 표현한다. 정미비율이 낮은 쌀로 만든 술일수록 깨끗한 술이 된다. 반대로 정미비율이 높은 쌀로 만든 술은 감칠맛이 강해진다.

일반적으로 향이 강한 술은 차게 마시고, 풍미가 깊은 술은 데워서 마시면 맛이 좋아진다고 한다. 온도를 높이면 감칠맛과 단맛이 증가하고, 신맛이 부드러워진다.

숙주나 순주는 데우면, 한층 풍부한 맛을 낸다. 풍미가 있는 술이란, 일본주의 맛을 표현하는 단어로, 담백하고 건조한 맛이나 진하고 풍부한 맛은 달콤하다는 표현이 있다.

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A Night of Half-Priced Lemon Slices — The Quiet Happiness Drifting Through Keihin’s Beloved Izakaya, Akafudaya

- The Popular Tavern Culture I Encountered in a Seaside Town—Cheap, Delicious, and Free from Having to Worry About Anyone Else-

레몬 슬라이스가 반으로 줄어드는 밤

——케이힌 대중술집「아카사츠야」에 떠오르는, 조용한 행복

-해풍의 거리에서 만난, 저렴하고 맛있으며 타인에 신경 쓰지 않는 대중술집 문화-

On a personal note, I recently moved from the shadow of Shinjuku’s skyscraper district to the Keihin area. Although both are part of Tokyo, the atmosphere feels remarkably different. Around Shinjuku, people always seem to be moving at a brisk pace, as if the city itself never stops rushing forward. In the Keihin region, however, time appears to flow a little more gently. Perhaps it is the influence of the sea breeze, but there is a curious sense of calm that makes the passage of time feel slower and more relaxed. Compared with the Shinjuku area, the Keihin region also seems to have far fewer disappointing budget izakayas. Cheap and delicious establishments exist here as if they were the most natural thing in the world, and it is not unusual to find them already full by five o’clock in the evening. The drinking culture feels different as well. In Shinjuku, many bars and izakayas seem to attract people looking for company or conversation. In the Keihin area, by contrast, there appear to be more places where one can sit quietly and enjoy a drink alone without saying a word. Among these establishments—cheap, delicious, and requiring little in the way of social effort—there is one particular place in the Keihin region that I find myself returning to again and again.

When you visit on a weekday afternoon, you will find seasoned solo drinkers lined up along the counter, seated one seat apart from one another, quietly enjoying their drinks and snacks in complete silence. Inside the tavern, the only sounds that regularly break the calm are the electronic chimes signaling that an order has been placed. The Chinese staff members serve food and

drinks with a matter-of-fact efficiency and little small talk, and somehow that understated, no-frills style contributes greatly to the comfort of the place. What is truly remarkable, however, is the pricing. A glass of shochu highball or green tea highball costs just 100 yen, while a mega-sized mug is only 150 yen. The food menu is equally astonishing: nearly one hundred different dishes are available, with most priced between 300 and 500 yen. It is the kind of place that feels almost impossible to imagine in central Tokyo today—a tavern where abundance, affordability, and quiet solitude coexist with effortless ease. However, even this price-breaking izakaya has not been immune to the rising tide of raw material costs. When I first visited the place about ten years ago, a plate of tuna sashimi was only 190 yen. Sake was equally cheap at 190 yen per “go” (a traditional unit of measure). Today, however, the situation has changed. The tuna sashimi now costs 350 yen, and a “go” of sake has risen to 300 yen. Even in a place built on the idea of extreme affordability, the quiet pressure of inflation has inevitably made its mark. Even so, the place remains extremely cheap, so there is really no cause for complaint. However, on a recent visit, I ordered my usual mega mug of chūhai for 150 yen, only to notice something different. The lemon slice that usually floats coolly in the glass had been reduced—cut in half. I have to admit, I prefer the full “full-moon” slice of lemon, so I felt a slight sense of disappointment. Still, that feeling was quickly replaced by admiration for the effort of the shop. Even as other menu items have gradually increased in price, they continue to hold the line on

the chūhai, keeping its price unchanged. In that small gesture lies a kind of quiet determination—an attempt to preserve something essential about the place, even as the surrounding world grows more expensive. Perhaps it is because of that very spirit of perseverance that, despite being a down-to-earth, everyday izakaya, the establishment has even expanded overseas. It now operates several branches in Germany and United Kingdom, and is still in the process of steadily increasing its number of locations. It is somewhat astonishing to think that a humble neighborhood tavern culture, born from cheap drinks and unpretentious meals, has begun to take root far beyond Japan—continuing to grow, quietly but surely, across borders. Even as prices continue to rise, neither the stance of the establishment nor its regular customers seems to have changed in any significant way. It is the kind of place that, once visited, inevitably makes you want to return again. For anyone who enjoys a drink, I would strongly recommend paying a visit at least once to the popular izakaya chain Akafudaya.■



개인적인 일이지만, 신주쿠 부도심 근처에서 케이힌 지역으로 이사했다. 같은 도쿄이면서, 신주쿠의 주변은 모두 급히 움직이는 이미지가 있지만, 케이힌 지역은 해풍의 탓인지 흐르는 시간이 다소 느리게 느껴지는 것이 신기하다. 그리고 신주쿠 지역에 비해, 저렴한 이자카야가 적은 지역이기도 하다. 저렴하면서 맛있는 가게가 당연히

있는 듯하고, 저녁 5시에는 이미 만석이 기도 하다. 손님도 신주쿠는 사람이 그리운 분들이 모이는 가게가 많은 반면, 케이힌 지구는 조용히 혼술을 마실 수 있는 가게가 많은 것 같다. 그런 저렴하면서 맛있고 커뮤니케이션 능력을 필요로 하지 않는 케이힌지역에 자주 찾는 가게가 있다. 평일 낮에 가면, 혼술을 즐기는 열혈 손님들이 카운터 좌석을 하나씩 건너뛰며 나란히 앉아서 조용히 술과 안주를 즐기고 있다. 가게에는 주문이 들어갈 때 울리는 전자음만 울려 퍼지고, 중화계 여성점원의 무뚝뚝하고 담담한 서비스가 매우 편하게 느껴진다. 그리고 그 가게의 놀라운 점이 칵테일·녹차하이 등이 한잔에 100엔, 메가잔은 150엔이라는 것이다. 그리고 대량의 식사 메뉴가 300엔~500엔을 중심으로 약 백종류가 있다. 하지만, 그러한 가격파괴의 이자카야에도 원재료폭등의 파도가 밀려들고 있다. 내가 처음으로 10년 전쯤 그 곳을 방문했을 때에는, 마구로 사시미가 한접시 190엔이었다. 사케도 1합에 190엔으로 상당히 저렴했는데, 지금은 마구로 사시미가 350엔, 사케도 1합 300엔이 되었다. 그렇다고 해도 저렴하니까 아무 문제는 없지만, 며칠전 방문했을 때 여느 때처럼 150엔 소주하이 메가잔을 주문했더니, 언제나 시원한 느낌으로 잔 속에 떠있는 레몬 슬라이스가 반으로 줄어 들어 있었다. 레몬 슬라이스는 역시 보름달 모양이 좋다고 생각하고 있어서 약간 충격이었지만, 다른 메뉴가 가격이 올라도, 소주하이의 가격만은 변함없이 그대로 유지하려는 가게의 노력에 감동했다. 그런 노력의 가게라서인지 대중 이자카야이지만, 독일이나 영국에 여러곳, 지점을 운영하면서, 아직도 점포수를 늘리고 있는 중이다. 물건 가격이 올라도, 가게의 입장이나 단골손님은 크게 변하지 않는, 한번 방문하면 반드시 다시 가고 싶어지는 가게이다. 술을 좋아하신다면 대중 이자카야【아카사츠야】에 꼭 한번 방문하기를 바란다.

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Toshiyuki Koizumi
Sake Sommelier
Owner "WASAN"



Michael Russell
Certified Sake Sommelier
Pacific International
Liquor Inc

Info

Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America
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酒豪大陸

California
SAKE
CHALLENGE

by Kosuke Kuji 225



Kosuke Kuji

Fifth Generation Brewery Owner
Nanbu Bijin, Inc.

Born May 11, 1972. Entered Tokyo University of Agriculture's Department of Brewing and Fermentation. In 2005 became the youngest person ever to receive the Iwate Prefecture Young Distinguished Technician Award. In 2006 was selected to be a member of the board of trustees of his local alma mater, Fukuoka High School. Currently is featured in a number of media outlets including magazines, radio, and television.

*Positions of Public Service:
Chairperson, Cassiopeia Corporation Youth Conference;
School Board Member, Fukuoka High School, Iwate Prefecture, Vice-Chairman, Technology Committee, Iwate Prefecture Brewers and Distillers' Association

Anime, Actores de Voz y Sake Japonés - Parte 2

Se ha lanzado el proyecto "Seijo", una colaboración entre actores de voz de anime y el sake japonés (incluido el sake, Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de la Humanidad de la UNESCO).

Este proyecto busca transmitir el atractivo del "Kokushu" (bebidas alcohólicas japonesas) como el sake, el shochu auténtico, el awamori y el hon-mirin a través de las voces de actores de voz y comediantes, fomentando una nueva cultura del alcohol mediante eventos experienciales y contenido de audio. Como primer evento, se llevó a cabo una colaboración entre actores de voz, comediantes y sake japonés en la Estación de Tokio. Bajo el lema "Dando Voz al Alcohol Japonés", se reunieron diversos tipos de sake y shochu auténtico de todo Japón, y actores de voz y comediantes compartieron su exquisitez y atractivo con los fans utilizando sus excelentes voces. Entre los actores de doblaje y comediantes que participaron se encontraban Kaede Hondo, Taro Tenshinhan, Mikako Takahashi, Risa Matsuda, Hitomi Sekine, Nana Hamasaki, Haruki Ishitani y el dúo cómico "Nihonshu", entre otros. Un grupo diverso de actores de doblaje, comediantes y humoristas que participan en populares animes actuales llenaron el recinto especial en la Estación de Tokio con sus maravillosas voces. Los asistentes

quedaron cautivados por el profundo amor por el sake japonés, sus perspectivas únicas y anécdotas entretenidas, mientras disfrutaban del sake disponible para degustación ese día. Escuchar con los ojos cerrados era como si las escenas del anime cobraran vida; un mundo de anime, ausente en las imágenes, se desplegaba en la mente. A partir de ahora, intensificaremos nuestras actividades. Tenemos eventos internacionales planeados, así que estén atentos.



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Generalmente, el sake japonés disponible comercialmente se diluye con agua para alcanzar una concentración de alcohol del 15-16%. Sin embargo, el sake sin diluir, obtenido simplemente prensando el mosto, puede llegar a tener un contenido alcohólico de hasta el 20-22%. Este es el contenido alcohólico más alto entre todas las bebidas alcohólicas fermentadas del mundo (el vino tiene un contenido alcohólico del 9-14%). El alcohol se produce cuando la levadura descompone el azúcar, pero para que la levadura produzca tal cantidad de alcohol de una sola vez, el mosto debe contener una alta concentración de azúcar, cercana al 40%. Sin embargo, si la concentración de azúcar es demasiado alta, la presión osmótica suprime los procesos fisiológicos de la levadura (alta presión de azúcar). Además, la levadura ni siquiera puede crecer en concentraciones de azúcar tan elevadas. El secreto del excepcional contenido alcohólico del sake japonés reside en su método de elaboración. El mosto utilizado para elaborar el sake japonés se prepara añadiendo

arroz al vapor, arroz koji y agua a un cultivo iniciador que contiene una gran cantidad de levadura. Por lo tanto, dentro del mosto, la sacarificación, en la que el arroz cocido al vapor se descompone gradualmente en glucosa por acción de las enzimas del arroz koji, y la fermentación alcohólica, en la que la levadura descompone ese azúcar en alcohol y dióxido de carbono, se producen simultáneamente. En otras palabras, la concentración de azúcar en el mosto se mantiene siempre en un nivel adecuado para la levadura. Como resultado, la levadura puede producir una gran cantidad de alcohol sin estar sometida a una alta presión de azúcar. Esta ocurrencia simultánea de sacarificación y fermentación alcohólica dentro del mosto se denomina "fermentación múltiple paralela". Además, se sabe que algunos componentes del arroz koji confieren a la levadura del sake tolerancia al alcohol, permitiéndole producir altas concentraciones de alcohol. Por otro lado, las uvas, materia prima del vino, son una "materia prima de carbohidratos" rica en azúcar desde el principio,

por lo que no es necesaria la sacarificación en el proceso de elaboración. Por lo tanto, en principio, si las uvas se trituran y se colocan en un recipiente, solo se producirá la fermentación alcohólica debido a la acción de la levadura natural adherida a los hollejos, y se convertirá en sake (vino), pero la concentración de alcohol no será tan alta como la del sake japonés. Este tipo de fermentación alcohólica que ocurre sola se llama "fermentación simple". Además, en el caso de la cerveza, dado que las materias primas son los mismos granos (materias primas a base de almidón) que el arroz, es necesario sacarificar las materias primas durante el proceso de fabricación. Primero, las enzimas sacarificantes de la malta descomponen los azúcares, y luego se deja crecer la levadura para llevar a cabo la fermentación alcohólica. Este proceso, en el que la sacarificación y la fermentación alcohólica se realizan por separado, se llama "fermentación múltiple de una sola etapa". Además, debido a que la cerveza utiliza una gran cantidad de agua, el contenido de alcohol es bajo, alrededor del 5%.



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NPO法人

米国酒焼酎蒸留酒研究所

Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America was founded with the purpose to promote further understanding of Japanese sake, shochu and beer in a shared where 500 million people enjoy wine in North America. We strive to increase Japanophiles by furthering understanding of the sake culture through online Japanese sake and shochu colleges and books related to Japanese sake, shochu and beer, etc. Especially sampling parties directly approaches consumers and no doubt contributes to expanding the market. Also, our final purpose is to facilitate communication with sake breweries, sake producers, and distribution companies, etc., to introduce Japanese sake, shochu and beer to American consumers in a way that's easy-to-understand.

Instituto de la Espiritu Sake Shochu de América

Tipos de Sake: Diferencias según la combinación de sabores y aromas

Además, los tipos de sake japonés también se diferencian por su aroma y método de elaboración. El Sake Service Institute se centró en el sabor y el aroma para clasificar el sake en cuatro tipos distintos.

Utilizando el sabor como eje horizontal y el aroma como eje vertical, el sake con sabor y aroma intensos se clasifica como "sake añejo"; el sake con un sabor intenso pero un aroma sutil, como "sake puro"; el sake con un sabor ligero y un aroma intenso, como "sake aromático"; y el sake con sabor y aroma sutiles, como "sake refrescante".

Cada tipo incluye sugerencias de maridaje y temperatura de servicio, lo que lo convierte en una referencia útil para

encontrar el sake perfecto.

El sake con un sabor limpio y refrescante se describe como "sake limpio". El sake elaborado con arroz pulido a un menor grado de molienda tiende a ser más limpio. Por el contrario, el sake elaborado con arroz pulido a un mayor grado de molienda tiene un sabor umami más intenso.

En general, se dice que el sake con un aroma intenso sabe mejor frío, mientras que el sake con cuerpo se disfruta mejor caliente. Aumentar la temperatura realza el umami y el dulzor, y suaviza la acidez. El sake añejo y el sake con cuerpo desarrollan un sabor más intenso al calentarse. Si bien «con cuerpo» es un término que se usa para describir el sabor del sake, también se emplean términos como «ligero y seco» y «con cuerpo y dulce».

**ONLINE
SAKE Class**

Sake Navigator

Presented by Sake Shochu Spirits Institute of America



Tokyo Jizake Strolling

by Ryuji Takahashi

東京地酒散歩



Ryuji Takahashi

Regional Sake Specialty Store "Ji Sakeya" Owner, Master Sake Sommelier, Shuto-Meijin, and the charismatic guru of ordinary sake. Plans and manages events and seminars with his own unique flare to introduce the appeal of Japanese sake and cuisine, unaffected by the latest trends, while managing a jizake retail store.

Una noche de medias rodajas de limón: la tranquila felicidad que se respira en «Akafudaya», una taberna de clase trabajadora en la zona de Keihin

—Descubriendo una cultura de tabernas asequibles, deliciosas y sin pretensiones en una localidad costera—

Personalmente, me mudé del corazón del subcentro de Shinjuku a la zona de Keihin. Aunque sigo en Tokio, Shinjuku da la impresión de que todo el mundo se mueve a un ritmo frenético, pero curiosamente, en Keihin el tiempo parece transcurrir un poco más despacio, quizás por la brisa marina. Y, en comparación con Shinjuku, hay menos izakayas baratos y decepcionantes. Aquí abundan los lugares económicos y deliciosos, y suelen estar llenos a las 5 de la tarde. En cuanto al estilo de beber, mientras que en Shinjuku hay muchos lugares donde se reúne la gente que busca compañía, en Keihin parece haber muchos sitios donde se puede beber solo y en silencio. En esta zona que es barata, de buena comida y no requiere habilidades de comunicación, hay un lugar que frecuento. Si vas

un día laborable por la tarde, encontrarás bebedores solitarios experimentados sentados uno al lado del otro en la barra, disfrutando en silencio de sus bebidas y aperitivos. El único sonido en el restaurante es el pitido electrónico cuando se toma un pedido, y el servicio sencillo y directo del personal femenino chino es muy agradable. Lo sorprendente de este lugar es que los highballs de shochu y los highballs de té verde cuestan solo 100 yenes el vaso, y los vasos gigantes cuestan 150 yenes. También tienen una carta enorme de unos 100 platos, la mayoría con precios entre 300 y 500 yenes. Sin embargo, incluso este izakaya de precios bajos se está viendo afectado por la ola de aumento de los costes de las materias primas. Cuando visité el restaurante por primera vez hace unos 10 años, un plato de sashimi de atún costaba 190 yenes. El sake también era una

ganga a 190 yenes la copa (180 ml), pero ahora el sashimi de atún cuesta 350 yenes y el sake 300 yenes. Sigue siendo increíblemente barato, así que no hay problema, pero cuando fui el otro día y pedí mi habitual highball de shochu gigante de 150 yenes, la rodaja de limón que normalmente flota refrescantemente en la taza solo estaba a la mitad. Me sorprendió un poco porque personalmente creo que las rodajas de limón se ven mejor cuando tienen forma de medialuna, pero me impresionó el esfuerzo del restaurante por mantener el precio de sus highballs de shochu igual a pesar de que otros platos del menú han subido de precio. Quizás debido a esta dedicación, este izakaya informal tiene varias sucursales en Alemania y el Reino Unido, y sigue expandiendo su número de locales. Aunque los precios han subido, la postura del restaurante y los



clientes habituales no han cambiado mucho, y es un lugar al que querrás volver una vez que lo visites. Si te gusta el alcohol, sin duda deberías probar al menos una vez la cadena informal de izakayas "Akafudaya".

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