



Sake Selected in Japan, Built for Modern Hospitality

Sake selection tailored to each venue, with brewery-direct sourcing from Japan for premium hospitality.

Contents

01	Sake Beyond Japanese Cuisine	03
02	How Sake Works in Non-Japanese Hospitality	04
03	SAKEbitO as Your Private Cellar in Japan	05
04	Why Standard Sake Import Models Do Not Fit Premium Hospitality	06
05	A Premium Sake Opportunity Still Underdeveloped in Europe	07
06	Operational Simplicity: Serving and Storage	08
07	Understanding Sake Through Flavour	09
08	What Creates the Difference in Sake	10
09	Work With SAKEbitO	11
—	Appendix · Glossary of Sake Styles and Production Terms	12



Sake Beyond Japanese Cuisine

Where Sake Fits in Premium Hospitality



Sake is often associated with Japanese cuisine, yet its range of aroma, umami, acidity and texture allows it to complement European and global cuisines.

When matched correctly, sake functions as a versatile culinary pairing category across seafood, vegetables, meat, cheese, dessert and tasting menus.

It can also stand on its own as a refined drink for aperitif service, receptions, lounge menus, cocktails, and post-dinner occasions.

SAKEbito supports venues that want to expand their beverage programme without changing kitchen workflow or service standards.

AT A GLANCE

- Menu differentiation without kitchen changes
- A new pairing category from seafood and vegetables to rich, savoury dishes
- Premium upsell category beyond wine and spirits
- Fits within existing wine lists, cocktail programmes, and a variety of cuisines
- The main barrier from consumers was not lack of interest, but limited opportunities to try sake and lack of information

How Sake Works in Non-Japanese Hospitality

Sake can be integrated into premium beverage programmes in multiple ways, depending on the venue's food, service format and guest profile.

Welcome Drinks & Receptions

Served chilled in small wine glasses, sparkling sake or light-bodied sake can work as an alternative to Champagne or a welcome cocktail during standing receptions, gallery openings, private events, yacht gatherings and networking occasions. It gives guests an approachable first encounter with sake without requiring a formal explanation.



Aperitif & Afternoon Service

Fresh, sparkling or aromatic sake can provide an alternative to Champagne, white wine or light aperitif service. It can sit naturally in lounges, terraces, pre-dinner service and afternoon hospitality with oysters, fresh cheese, canapés or citrus-led small plates.



Tasting Menu Pairing

Sake can accompany an entire tasting menu, with styles ranging from light and aromatic to savoury, structured and mature. Different temperatures and glassware allow each sake to be adapted across courses, from seafood and vegetables to poultry, cheese and dessert.



By-the-Glass Selection

Sake can stand as its own premium by-the-glass category because it offers a wide range of styles. Its balance of aroma, texture, umami and moderate acidity allows it to work as an aperitif, a pairing option, or a discovery pour alongside the wine list, without requiring guests to commit to a full bottle.



Cocktails & Lighter Serves

Sake can form the base of refined cocktails where spirits may be too dominant. Aromatic Ginjo, rich Junmai and sparkling sake each offer different levels of aroma, texture and sweetness, while yuzu liqueur and umeshu can support adjacent Japanese-inspired cocktail development.



Cheese & Post-Dinner Service

Rich Junmai, Kimoto, Yamahai and aged sake can extend sake beyond the main meal. Their umami, acidity and mature flavours can work with cheese, nuts, chocolate and caramelised desserts, or serve as an alternative to Port, dessert wine or an after-dinner spirit.



SAKEbito as Your Private Cellar in Japan

Instead of working from the traditional importer model of holding large volumes of a limited sake selection in European inventory, SAKEbito starts by evaluating the venue's requirements, then identifies the sake that best fits that context and arranges air import directly from breweries in Japan where suitable.

This shorter route from brewery release to service helps make seasonal, limited or freshness-sensitive sake available for client-specific selections.

VENUE-BASED CONSULTATION AND DIRECT SOURCING

SAKEbito develops a sake selection around the venue's context, service style, and guest profile. Where the right products are not available through our European inventory, we source suitable sake directly through our brewery network in Japan.

Our professional sake sommelier, certified in Japan, works directly with you to understand your menu and service format, and identify the specific styles of sake that will best complement your venue's service.

DIRECT IMPORT SOLUTION

SAKEbito combines menu-based consultation with direct air sourcing from Japan, allowing suitable products to be selected around the client rather than only from pre-existing importer stock.



Menu-Specific Curation

Sake selected around the venue's dishes, beverage programme, service format and guest profile.

Faster Brewery-Direct Sourcing

Shorter-route import directly from breweries, enabling us to offer seasonal, limited or freshness-sensitive sake without a long storage period in Europe.

Flexible Selection Renewal

Ability to refresh the sake list over time instead of being locked into the same large-volume inventory.

Venue-Specific Guest Experience

Sake chosen for the venue's own guests and service context, helping avoid overlap with similar venues and creating a more distinctive beverage experience.

Availability, lead time, customs and excise procedures, and pricing depend on the destination and selected products. Please contact us for details.

Why Standard Sake Import Models Do Not Fit Premium Hospitality

Most conventional sake imports are built around large volumes per label, which works for safer, more general products, but limits the introduction of unique, freshness-sensitive, rare, seasonal or premium sake because importers must commit to substantial stock before knowing the market response.

Conventional import also relies on sea freight, creating long lead times. When a new label is introduced, additional coordination can further extend the lead time, encouraging importers to prioritise stable selections that can be sold repeatedly rather than products selected for an individual client's requirements.

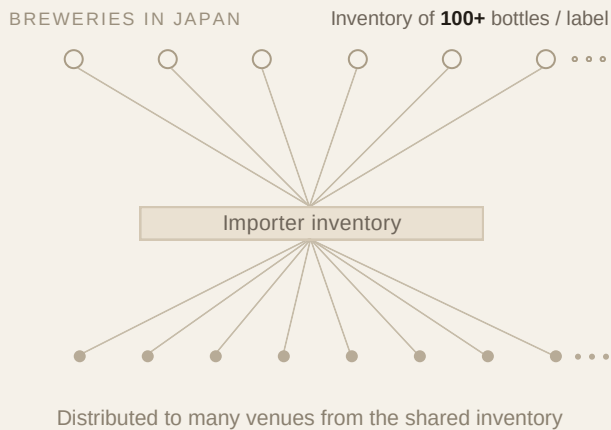
Many existing sake importers also serve predominantly Japanese or Asian-style restaurants. As a result, the label range becomes concentrated around this specific channel, rather than supporting the wider range of service occasions required by other venue categories.

For premium non-Japanese hospitality such as fine-dining restaurants, bars, lounges or private events, sake may need to fit a specific menu, guest profile, service occasion or seasonal concept. Venues may also need to avoid carrying the same bottles as nearby or similar venues, which is difficult when a limited range of labels must be distributed across many clients.

SAKEbito addresses this gap by combining curated European inventory with air-freight sourcing directly from breweries, selecting labels around each venue's requirements and enabling access to seasonal, limited or freshness-sensitive sake.

Traditional model BEGINS WITH INVENTORY

Product-led — selection fixed before the venue.



- Selection created before the venue's needs
- Large-volume stock of a limited label range
- Long sea freight and extended inventory holding
- More handling stages between brewery and venue
- Less suitable for limited, seasonal or freshness-sensitive sake
- Better suited to stable, general-market sake
- Same labels may appear across multiple venues

4–6 + months Brewery → Service

SAKEbito model BEGINS WITH THE VENUE

Venue-led — selection built for the venue.



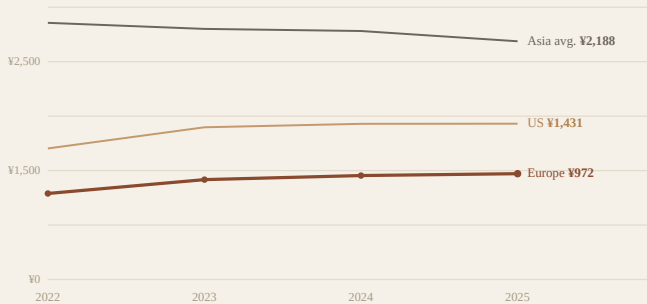
Label selection and import arranged for each venue where suitable

- Selection begins with the venue's requirements
- Smaller, venue-specific quantities where suitable
- Directly sourced from breweries in Japan
- Shorter time between brewery release to service
- Fewer handling stages for clearer quality control
- Suited to seasonal, rare, freshness-sensitive sake
- Flexibility to refresh; less overlap between venues

≈ 1 month Brewery → Service

A Premium Sake Opportunity Still Underdeveloped in Europe

01 Europe Has Yet to Capture Sake's Premium Value



Export value per litre (¥/L).

Asia avg.: China, Hong Kong, Singapore.

Europe avg.: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, UK.

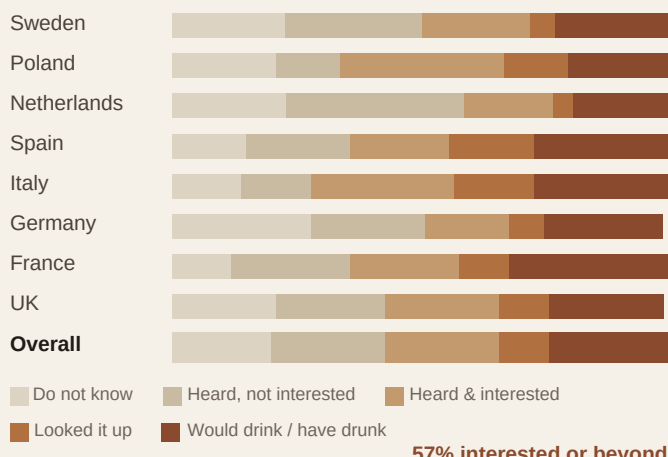
Source: Export statistics, Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association.

Sake is already positioned as a premium beverage in established Asian markets. In key European countries, sake export value per litre has risen from around ¥790/L in 2022 to around ¥972/L in 2025; however, it is still **less than half of the Asia average**.

For European hospitality, this gap suggests room to move beyond standard listings and introduce more curated, premium sake selections.

02 Consumer Interest Exists, but Discovery and Guidance Remain Limited

INTEREST IN SAKE (%)



57% interested or beyond

REASONS FOR NOT DRINKING SAKE (%)



Across the surveyed European markets, **57%** of respondents had either expressed interest in sake, actively looked it up, or wanted to drink it / had drunk it previously.

The most common barrier among those who had not tried sake was not having an opportunity to drink it, followed by a lack of information.

This suggests the issue is not weak demand, but limited access, explanation and confidence. For hospitality venues, this creates an opportunity to provide the access and service context currently lacking — establishing a premium beverage category before it becomes common across Europe.

Source: survey of the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden, 500 consumer responses per country (JTB / National Tax Agency, EU sake consumer study).

Operational Simplicity: Serving and Storage

Practical integration into established hospitality service standards.

1 Storage & Shelf Life

Unopened. Follow the guidance for each bottle. Most pasteurised sake keeps in a cool, dark, stable environment; unpasteurised and freshness-sensitive styles require refrigeration.

Opened. Refrigerate after opening. Many pasteurised styles remain suitable for service for 2–3 weeks; sparkling, delicate and unpasteurised styles should be served within 1–2 weeks.



3 Service Temperature

"Chill & Pour" standard. Most of our portfolio is designed to be served chilled or cellar-cool. Remove from the fridge, pour into the selected glass, and return to the cooler.

Warm service (optional). For specific labels, warm service may be preferred. Use a hot-water bath to warm Sake to around 35 - 45°C. Avoid microwaves or direct boiling. Ceramic or heat-resistant glassware can be used for warm service.



2 Glassware Protocol

Standard service. No specialised Japanese sake glasses are required — our selections are suited to standard white-wine glasses.

Versatility. Using your existing stemware maintains service consistency and minimises additional equipment.

Optional sake glassware. For venues that want a more distinctive sake service, SAKEbitO can arrange sake-specific glassware such as Ushuhari or Edo-kiriko.



Ushuhari glass

Edo-kiriko glass

4 Staff Support

We do not burden your staff with the complexities of production. Onboarding focuses on:

Clear descriptors. Simple, accessible flavour notes for each bottle.

The narrative. A concise story, key features and appeal points for each producer and region to share with guests.



Understanding Sake Through Flavour

A simple two-axis map: body runs from light and delicate to rich and structured; aroma runs from subtle to pronounced.

Fragrant & Light

Ginjo · Light Daiginjo ·
some sparkling sake

Aperitifs, seafood, citrus
dishes, fresh cheese,
delicate starters.

Fragrant & Balanced

Ginjo · Junmai Ginjo · Daiginjo

Welcome drinks, tasting-menu
openers, elegant vegetables,
shellfish.

Fragrant & Rich

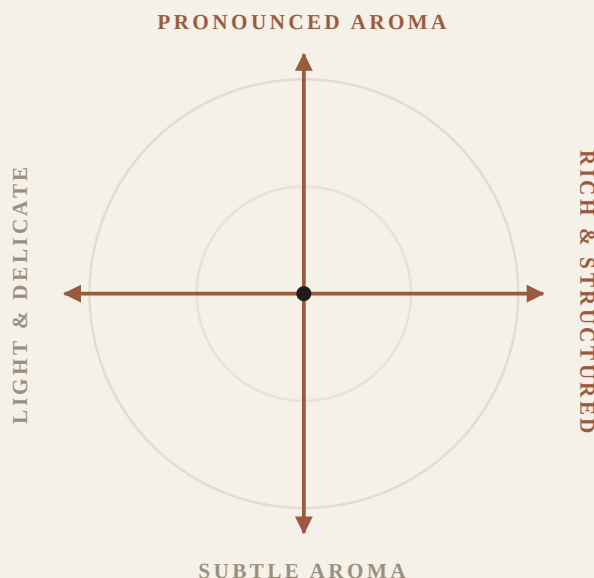
Junmai Daiginjo ·
Muroka Nama Genshu

Lobster, richer seafood,
glazed poultry, creamy
sauces.

Clean & Crisp

Honjozo · Ginjo ·
Karakuchi / Dry sake

Oysters, seafood, fried
dishes, salty canapés,
receptions.



Rich & Savoury

Junmai · Kimoto ·
Yamahai · Genshu

Roasted meat,
mushrooms, aged cheese,
butter-based sauces.

Subtle & Delicate

Honjozo · Namachozo-shu
· Light Junmai

Raw seafood, vegetables,
mild cheeses, canapés.

Subtle & Rounded

Junmai · Tokubetsu Junmai ·
Honjozo

Poultry, pork, cooked
vegetables, broth, creamy
dishes.

Mature & Complex

Jukuseishu · Koshu ·
Aged Genshu

Aged cheese, caramelised
dishes, chocolate, desserts.

These positions show common stylistic tendencies rather than fixed rules. Flavour is also shaped by rice treatment, koji, yeast, fermentation, pressing, filtration, maturation and serving conditions. For explanations of the Japanese terms used here, please refer to the glossary.

What Creates the Difference in Sake

Sake character is not determined by rice selection alone. Even with the same rice, the final profile changes with how the rice is polished and steamed, how koji is made, how fermentation is managed, and how the sake is filtered, pasteurised, matured and stored.

01

Rice Preparation

Polishing, water absorption and steaming are precisely controlled. Small differences in water absorption even for several seconds can change how rice breaks down — influencing texture, sweetness, clarity and body.

02

Koji Making

Koji produces the enzymes that convert starch into fermentable sugars. Control of temperature, humidity, time and growth pattern shapes saccharification, umami, sweetness and structure.

03

Fermentation Control

Small changes in yeast selection, temperature control, fermentation length, and the balance of sugar conversion and alcohol formation shape the final profile.

04

Pressing & Maturation

Pressing, filtration, pasteurisation, ageing and storage continue to shape the sake — some made for freshness and clarity, others for softness, depth, warming or seasonal expression.



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR HOSPITALITY

Even when two sake share the same brewery, rice variety and broad production style, the final profile can change if the brewer adjusts polishing, water absorption, koji making or fermentation temperature.

The opposite is also true: two sake may share rice variety, polishing level and regional origin yet taste different when made by different breweries. Selection cannot rely on category alone — the final flavour depends on the production design and the brewer's choices.

SAKEbito does the heavy lifting of evaluating each sake beyond the label, then identifies the bottles that best fit the venue's food, service format and guest experience.

Work With SAKEbito

SAKEbito supports premium hospitality venues with sake selection, hospitality consultation, sake importing and Japanese sake distribution across Europe.

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Glossary

Sake Styles & Production Terms

Futsu-shu	Sake outside the regulated premium classifications; the term does not determine quality.
Honjozo	Rice polished to 70% or less, with a limited addition of brewing alcohol — commonly a lighter, cleaner finish.
Ginjo	Rice polished to 60% or less of its original weight, often producing refined, fruity aromas.
Daiginjo	Rice polished to 50% or less, often producing a more delicate, highly refined aromatic profile. Note: the polishing ratio indicates how much grain remains; 60% means 40% has been removed.
Junmai	Brewed from rice, koji and water, without added brewing alcohol. With Ginjo or Daiginjo requirements it may be labelled Junmai Ginjo or Junmai Daiginjo.
Kimoto	A traditional starter method using naturally developing lactic-acid bacteria, with rice and koji manually mashed to assist their breakdown.
Yamahai	A related traditional starter that also develops lactic-acid bacteria naturally, but without Kimoto's manual mashing stage.
Namazake	Unpasteurised sake — commonly fresher, livelier aromas and flavours. Usually requires refrigeration.
Namachozo-shu	Stored without pasteurisation, then pasteurised once at bottling — often retaining some freshness while being more stable than fully unpasteurised sake.
Genshu	Bottled without the usual water adjustment, often giving higher alcohol and greater concentration.
Muroka	Made without secondary charcoal filtration after pressing, often retaining more colour, aroma and flavour.
Muroka Nama Genshu	No secondary charcoal filtration, no pasteurisation, and no dilution. Often vivid, powerful and fresh — though delicate examples also exist.
Jukuseishu	Sake intentionally matured for greater roundness, depth and complexity; no universal ageing period is legally defined.
Koshu	Sake from an earlier brewing year or sold as an aged expression, ranging from gently matured to deeply developed.