

SAIBITO

Portfolio Overview

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Takanoi Brewery

Ojiya City,
Niigata Prefecture



Overview

Takanoi Shuzo traces its origins back to the late Edo period, though the exact founding date remains untraceable after a devastating fire in 1937 destroyed all historical records and facilities. Within half a year, the family rebuilt on the current site near the Shinano River.

However, wartime rice control forced them to suspend sake brewing for another 15 years, later resuming production in 1955.

In 1987, Takanoi became the very first brewery in Japan to utilise snow to mature Sake: a technique that reshaped the brewery's identity and has now been adopted by many breweries in heavy snow regions.

Brewing Philosophy and Achievement

The brewery crafts its own flavour theory, intentionally departing from the traditional light-and-dry "Niigata flavour style".

This attempt has earned significant international recognition, including a Gold at KuraMaster (2025), Platinum at Milano Sake Challenge (2024), multiple golds at US National Sake Appraisal (2024–2025), Grand Gold and Gold at HongKong Oriental Sake Award (2024), Platinum at Kura Master (2020), and numerous gold medals at nationwide and Niigata-level competitions such as multiple Grand Golds and Golds at Japan National KANSAKE contest (2025, 2023, 2022), Gold at Annual Japan Sake Awards (2021), multiple Grand Golds and Golds at the Best Sake with Wine Glass Awards in Japan (2024, 2023, 2022), etc.

Japan's First Snow Maturation

Takanoi is the first brewery to conduct snow maturation in 1987, where the entire stainless-steel tank of freshly pressed Sake is buried directly under natural snow mounds.

This creates a stable 0°C environment with 100% humidity, free from light, vibration, or air contact. Under these unique conditions, freshly pressed sake retains active enzymes that work slowly to soften the sake and suppress alcohol sharpness while preserving youthful, elegant fruit aromas.

After 100 days of maturation, the result is a rounded, silky texture with deep umami integration that modern industrial refrigeration cannot replicate.

Toji: Akihiro Kimura

Master Brewer, Akihiro Kimura, joined Takanoi at the age of 24 and graduated at the top of his class from the Niigata Sake Brewing School. His philosophy is defined by a continuous evolution and an uncompromising refusal to rely on repetitive methods.

Because rice quality changes each year with the climate, He believes that sake must evolve through steady trial, error, and adjustment.

Now in his 12th year as Toji, he is recognised as a leading brewer in the region, earning awards both locally and internationally.



Koshino Hatsuume Junmai Ginjo

越の初梅

By Takanoi Brewery

Ojiya, Niigata

It is the original "snow-matured sake," pioneered by Takanoi in 1987, batch brewed only once a year. After 100 days of maturation beneath natural snow, the freshly pressed unpasteurised Junmai ginjo sake develops a uniquely softened, silky, rounded profile with a clean finish.



Gohyakumangoku
100% from Ojiya, Niigata

Type	Junmai Ginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Silky, mellow, softly sweet yet fresh and clean
Rice Polish Rate	55%
SMV	-2.0
Best served	Chilled, Cellar Cool, Room Temp, High Ball

Tasting Note

Structure:	Snow maturation preserves the sake's fresh character while softening the firmness of the new sake, resulting in a more mellow and settled profile.
Aroma:	Gentle fruity Ginjo aromatics with a soft sweetness and a calm, settled character.
Palate:	Soft and clean on entry, with youthful freshness, silky texture, and a gentle sweetness broadens smoothly.
Finish:	Clean, smooth, and mellow, with a soft lingering impression free of harsh edges or heaviness.

Gohyakumangoku Rice

Developed in Niigata to meet the region's cold northern climate. Valued for its clean, restrained character more than overt aromatics, it is closely associated with Niigata's tanrei style—crisp, elegant, and highly food-friendly.

Food Pairing

1. Delicate Seafood: Sashimi, carpaccio, salt-grilled preparations, etc.
2. Light Fried Dishes: Tempura, seafood fritto, white fish fry, etc.
3. Mediterranean: Olive oil-based seafood starters, mild herb dishes, salad with chicken, light pasta, white fish meunière, etc.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) /
Cellar Cool (10–15°C) /
Room Temperature (18–22°C) /
Highball (1 : 1 with soda)

Snow Maturation

Each winter, freshly pressed, unpasteurized sake is matured by burying the entire tank beneath a massive natural snow mound for 100 days.

In this light and vibration-free environment of constant 0°C temperature, the sake evolves without the stress of oxidation or mechanical cooling.

This allows enzymes to work slowly, suppressing harsh alcohol tones and smoothing youthful edges to create a signature silky texture while preserving the vibrant, delicate aromas of the new brew.



Denyu Junmai Ginjo 田友 純米吟醸

By Takanoi Brewery Ojiya, Niigata



Koshitanrei

100% from Ojiya, Niigata

Type	Junmai Ginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Polished, softly rounded, and clean-cut
Rice Polish Rate	55%
SMV	+1.0
Best served	Chilled, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

- Structure:** Lightly dry and gently rounded, with a soft, polished texture and a clean sense of lift.
- Aroma:** Restrained and elegant, showing subtle fruit tones and gentle acidity rather than overt floral aromatics.
- Palate:** A clean, smooth entry broadens into mild sweetness and the quiet umami of Koshitanrei rice.
- Finish:** Refined and well-controlled, with good clarity, a smooth exit, and a clean, precise cut.

Koshitanrei Rice

Niigata's original premium sake rice developed through a 15-year breeding program by crossing Yamada Nishiki — known as the king of sake rice — and Gohyakumangoku — well known for clarity and a clean finish. Highly suited to high polishing for Ginjo and Daiginjo production, it tends to give sake a broader, more layered mid-palate than a purely lean style, while preserving clarity, smooth texture, measured umami, and a clean, well-cut finish.

Food Pairing

1. Light Seafood: Fresh oysters, white fish sashimi, salt-grilled fish, shrimp tempura, etc.
2. White Meats: Lightly seasoned chicken or dishes with gentle butter or oil-based elements.
3. Light Mediterranean dishes: Herb-driven starters, citrus-marinated seafood, and fresh cheeses.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) /
Room Temperature (18–22°C) /
Warm (38–42°C)

Accolades & Recognition

- Platinum at Milano Sake Challenge 2024
- Gold at US National Sake Appraisal 2024 Ginjo Category
- Grand Gold at the Best Sake with Wine Glass Awards Japan 2024 Junmai Category
- Gold at the Best Sake with Wine Glass Awards Japan 2023 Junmai Category
- Gold at Kura Master 2023
- Gold at Japan National KANSAKE (Warm Sake) Contest 2023
- Gold at Japan National KANSAKE (Warm Sake) Contest 2022
- Platinum at Kura Master 2020

Denyu Tokubetsu Junmai 田友 特別純米

By Takanoi Brewery Ojiya, Niigata



Koshitanrei

100% from Ojiya, Niigata

Type	Tokubetsu Junmai
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Smooth, rice-driven, and quietly crisp
Rice Polish Rate	60%
SMV	+0.0
Best served	Chilled, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

- Structure:** Medium-bodied and composed, balancing expanding rice umami with a clean, well-structured texture.
- Aroma:** Restrained and soft, led by subtle rice-driven notes rather than overt fruit.
- Palate:** A smooth entry opens into gentle depth, with rounded umami, mild sweetness, and soft acidity.
- Finish:** Clean and refreshing, with a crisp cut that leaves both clarity and the rounded impression of the rice.

Koshitanrei Rice

Niigata's original premium sake rice developed through a 15-year breeding program by crossing Yamada Nishiki — known as the king of sake rice — and Gohyakumangoku — well known for clarity and a clean finish. Highly suited to high polishing for Ginjo and Daiginjo production, it tends to give sake a broader, more layered mid-palate than a purely lean style, while preserving clarity, smooth texture, measured umami, and a clean, well-cut finish.

Food Pairing

1. Light Seafood: sashimi, steamed white fish, salt-grilled preparations, etc.
2. White Meats: Gently cooked poultry, pork, etc.
3. Light butter- or oil-based dishes: Fish or vegetables prepared with butter or olive oil.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) / Room Temperature (18–22°C) / Warm (38–42°C)

Accolades & Recognition

- Gold at Japan National KANSAKE (Warm Sake) Contest 2025
- Grand Gold at Hong Kong Oriental Sake Award 2024 Niigata Category
- Gold at Hong Kong Oriental Sake Award 2024 Junmai Category
- Gold at US National Sake Appraisal 2024 Junmai Category
- Gold at the Best Sake with Wine Glass Awards Japan 2022 Junmai Category
- Gold at Japan National KANSAKE (Warm Sake) Contest 2022

Itano Brewery

Ashimori Town,
Okayama Prefecture



Overview

The sake brewing by the Itano family started in the late Edo period, though the precise origins remain shrouded in history. They have continued the technique since the early Edo period and employ *Bitchu Style*, which is one of Japan's most influential and prestigious brewing traditions.

Their craft has won 40 consecutive excellence awards at regional appraisals, an achievement recognised with the prefecture's first Phoenix Prize. Mastery of the Omachi rice—a variety notoriously difficult to ferment—stands as a testament to their craftsmanship.

Geographical Characteristics

Located in a mountainous area, the brewery benefits from sharp intraday temperature changes, creating an ideal environment for slow, stable fermentation while suppressing unwanted bacteria.

The water is sourced from the Ashimori River, one of Okayama's cleanest waterways, which supports the fine texture and clean finish.



The Bitchu Style

The Bitchu style is one of Japan's most influential and respected brewing traditions, originating approximately in 1690. Their reputation for technical excellence ranks among the highest in Japan. The defining strength of the Bitchu style lies in its ability to work with Omachi rice, the most prestigious yet notoriously difficult sake rice. Bitchu brewers pioneered a slow fermentation process that suppresses off-flavours in regions with a relatively warmer climate. The resulting sake offers a generous body without heaviness—rich in flavour yet with a clean, crisp, and refreshing finish. This ability to combine pronounced umami with lightness represents an ideal form of Sake that continues to influence today's premium sake style. Without their contribution, the lineage of modern ginjo sake would have evolved very differently.

Town of Ashimori

The region has been a sanctuary for Sake production for over a millennium, and it was mentioned in Manyoshu, Japan's oldest poetry collection created in the 8th century. During the Edo period, Ashimori flourished as a vital centre of commerce and administration under the Kinoshita clan, relatives of the Shogun Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who once ruled Japan. This vibrant merchant culture once supported nine active breweries, including Taniguchiya, a leading producer founded by the Itano family. Now it is known as Itano Brewery, the house continues to craft sake within its original Edo-period production site, preserving centuries of brewing heritage.



Toji: Fuminobu Itano

The brewery is led by Bitchu Toji, Fuminobu Itano. Having entered the brewery at the age of 15 following the passing of his father, he has spent decades honing a deep, practical understanding of the craft. As a member of the Bitchu Toji Association himself, he remains committed to traditional, hands-on brewing even in an era of increasing mechanisation.



Daiginjo Kimoto

大吟醸 生酛造り

By Itano Brewery Ashimori, Okayama

Crafted using the traditional handcraft, Kimoto method, which origin traces back to the Edo period.

Matured for 2 years to achieve its significant structural depth.

 **Omachi**
100% from Okayama

Type	Daiginjo Kimoto, Aged
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	17.0%
Flavour Profile	Velvety, complex, and silky umami
Rice Polish Rate	50%
SMV	+0.5
Best served	Cellar Cool, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

Structure: A bold and sophisticated architecture that balances significant density with a seamless structural transition.

Aroma: Fragrant rice-driven sweetness centred on a distinctive, smoky nuance gained from two years of maturation.

Palate: A remarkably mild and velvety entry expands into full-bodied, complex umami where smoky maturity meets the structural acidity of the Kimoto method.

Finish: Exceptionally crisp and bone-dry; a late, airy acidity emerges alongside matured umami before a sharp, refreshing cut.

Food Pairing

1. Smoked & Grilled Preparations
2. Creamy Textures: Seared foie gras, butter-based sauces, etc.
3. Aged hard cheeses, fermented products, truffle risotto, etc.

Note: Avoid delicate raw white fish or highly acidic dressings

Serving Temperature

Cellar Cool (10–15°C) /
Room Temperature (18–22°C) /
Warm (38–42°C)

Omachi Rice

Omachi is highly prized by brewers and connoisseurs for its generous sweetness, layered umami, and a rounded, mellow texture. It often develops beautifully with maturation. At its best, Omachi can show both volume and structure, combining rich flavour with a firm, lively acidity and a long, satisfying finish.

Kimoto Brewing Method

It creates the profound depth and structural integrity of this sake, and is the most traditional and labour-intensive technique of fermentation, originating in the Edo Period.

Rejecting modern shortcuts of adding external lactic acid directly into the fermentation starter, brewers manually grind rice into a paste to invite wild, beneficial bacteria from the air, which naturally produce lactic acid inside the starter.

This rigorous process "trains" the yeast to be exceptionally resilient, creating a robust microbial structure. This strength provides the sake with the structural longevity required for extended maturation, resulting in a vibrant, architectural acidity and a multi-layered umami that defines the pinnacle of traditional craftsmanship.

This approach results in a sake with a far more complex and integrated texture than that found in modern, industrial production.

Futamo Kinbotaru Daiginjo 二面 金蛭

By Itano Brewery Ashimori, Okayama



Yamada Nishiki

100% from Okayama

Type	Daiginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	17.0%
Flavour Profile	Rich, yet elegantly clear
Rice Polish Rate	40%
SMV	+5.0
Best served	Chilled, Cellar Cool

Tasting Note

- Structure:** Medium-bodied with a smooth, refined texture. The attack is light and silky, yet the palate carries enough weight to avoid a thin impression.
- Aroma:** Fruity and elegant ginjo aromatics with a polished, expressive nose. The bouquet opens gently while retaining a refined character.
- Palate:** A smooth, silky entry is followed by balanced sweetness and softly rounded umami, creating a harmonious and polished mid-palate.
- Finish:** Clean and crisp, with a smooth resolution and a gently lingering, refreshing finish.

Yamada Nishiki Rice

Widely regarded as the "King of sake rice," It is the foundation of fragrant and full-bodied character. It contributes to a core of umami, aromatic lift, and gentle sweetness with a smooth and graceful finish.

Food Pairing

1. Fresh and delicate Seafood: Fresh oysters, scallop carpaccio, sashimi, salt-grilled fish, etc.
2. Light starter, Fresh Cheese & Fruit: Prosciutto, Preparation with peach or pear, etc.
3. Delicate White Meats with light butter sauces

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) / Cellar Cool (10–15°C)

Sanshoraku Brewery

Nanto City,
Toyama



Overview

Founded in 1880, Sanshoraku is located in a remote area known for the gassho-zukuri villages of Gokayama, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Even before the founding in 1880, several breweries already existed within the village, and Sanshoraku was established to bring them together under one brewery.

While grounded in traditional methods such as *yamahai*, the brewery does not hesitate to incorporate modernisation where necessary - not to move away from traditions, but to recognise changes in the climate and brewing conditions, and to preserve the brewery's identity in flavour while further refining quality.

Brewing Philosophy

Sanshoraku has long embraced the *yamahai* method, a traditional yeast-starter technique that is more labour-intensive and time-consuming than modern methods.

At the same time, they recognise that protecting the long-standing brewery's identity requires practical adaptation to modern realities. In response to climate change, labour shortages, and rising rice costs, the brewery has introduced modern equipment such as temperature-controlled tanks, real-time remote monitoring systems, sensor-based moisture management, and so on.

These technologies are not used to industrialise the sake or replace human skill, but to preserve brewing precision and maintain consistency under increasingly unpredictable and unstable climate conditions.

Toji: Hidehiro Yamazaki

The brewery is led by Hidehiro Yamazaki, who serves both as representative director and toji (chief brewer). He led the shift away from the traditional seasonal toji model, in which external brewers were brought in for the winter brewing period and worked under demanding live-in conditions, and instead established a brewery-led in-house structure under his own leadership.

This improved the working conditions significantly, which helped attract younger workers and respond to the labour shortage facing many rural breweries, while keeping the craftsmanship continue to next generations.

Geographical Character

The region's cold climate and heavy snow create ideal brewing conditions, providing stable low temperatures during winter.

Behind the brewery is a vast beech forest, where fallen leaves naturally filter water through the mountain soil, creating soft, mineral-light spring water. The forest also acts as a natural barrier protecting the village in a very steep valley from avalanches.



Junmai Daiginjo Yamahai 純米大吟醸 山麩

By Sanshoraku Brewery Nanto, Toyama



 **Omachi**
100% from Okayama

Type	Junmai Daiginjo, Yamahai
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	17.0%
Flavour Profile	Umami-rich, structured, firm acidity, and clean finish
Rice Polish Rate	40%
SMV	+3.0
Best served	Cellar Cool, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

- Structure:** Full yet controlled, with a soft, rounded texture and a firm Yamahai-driven acidity that keeps the Omachi rice's richness in balance..
- Aroma:** Gentle and layered, showing ripe banana, melon, cream, light citrus, and subtle toasty or smoky nuances.
- Palate:** Rounded and umami-rich on entry, with Omachi depth supported by clear acidity and a dry, structured balance.
- Finish:** Moderately long, savoury, and clean, with a firm acidic lift and a smooth, tightening close.

Food Pairing

1. Richer and savoury fish preparations: Grilled or roasted fish, shellfish, seafood dishes with butter/cream preparations, beurre blanc, etc.
2. Roasted white meats and savoury poultry dishes: Chicken, guinea fowl, duck breast, etc.
3. Lightly smoked savoury dishes: Mushroom-based dishes, grilled vegetables, etc.
4. Mild to medium cheeses

Serving Temperature

Cellar Cool (10–15°C) / Room Temperature (18–22°C) / Warm (38–42°C)

Omachi Rice

Omachi is highly prized by brewers and connoisseurs for its generous sweetness, layered umami, and a rounded, mellow texture. It often develops beautifully with maturation. At its best, Omachi can show both volume and structure, combining rich flavour with a firm, lively acidity and a long, satisfying finish.

Yamahai Brewing Method

Yamahai is a traditional yeast-starter technique. Unlike the modern method (sokujo), which uses the commercially produced lactic acid to grow the yeast while suppressing unwanted microorganisms, Yamahai relies on naturally occurring lactic acid bacteria.

Because this process develops more gradually, it generally requires more time and careful control than the modern method (sokujo).

Yamahai is often associated with sake that shows greater depth, savoury umami, and more pronounced acidity.

Daiginjo

大吟醸

By Sanshoraku Brewery Nanto, Toyama



 Yamada Nishiki
100% from Hyogo

Type	Daiginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Elegant, smooth, and composed
Rice Polish Rate	40%
SMV	+2.0
Best served	Cellar Cool, Room Temp

Tasting Note

Structure: Refined and composed, with a smooth, well-balanced structure built around gentle depth rather than overt intensity.

Aroma: Restrained and elegant, showing a calm ginjo fragrance that remains subtle rather than flamboyant.

Palate: Smooth and polished on entry, opening into refined rice umami with a soft, understated sweetness.

Finish: Clean and poised, with a graceful close that remains food-friendly and does not tire the palate.

Yamada Nishiki Rice

Widely regarded as the "King of sake rice," It is the foundation of fragrant and full-bodied character. It contributes to a core of umami, aromatic lift, and gentle sweetness with a smooth and graceful finish.

Food Pairing

1. Delicate Seafood: Sashimi, carpaccio, steamed shellfish, salt-grilled fish, etc.
2. Poultry and other light meats
3. Light butter- or oil-based preparations
4. Seasonal Vegetable dishes, herb-accented starters, warm preparations, etc.

Serving Temperature

Cellar Cool (10–15°C) / Room Temperature (18–22°C)

Kitsukura Brewery

Saku City,
Nagano



Overview

Established in 1696, the brewery has adhered to a philosophy that “Sake is a gift from nature”, and has always prioritised the preservation of traditional sake-making methods.

The lineage traces back to the Tachibana clan of the Heian period (794-1185AD), and its deep historical standing was recognised on the global stage including their sake being served at the 2016 G7 Summit in Ise-Shima and welcoming the President of Estonia in 2021 to the brewery site

Rare In-house Rice Cultivation

The brewery sources all rice from Nagano, with 70% from its home, Saku city, through long-term contract cultivation with local farmers. via the Minami-Saku Sake Rice Association.

Since 2020, Kitsukura has also cultivated its own sake rice—an uncommon practice in Japanese Sake brewing—now accounting for about 10% of total usage.

This in-house cultivation allows direct control over rice quality and close observation of how climate variability and soil conditions affect Sake rice, while helping secure a stable supply amid labour shortages, weather instability, and rising sake rice costs in Japan.

Geographical Character

The brewery sits on the Saku plateau surrounded by the Asama, Yatsugatake, and Tateshina mountain ranges, which provide crisp air and significant diurnal temperature swings—ideal for cultivating premium sake rice.

The brewing water is drawn from a dedicated on-site well that has been in continuous use since the brewery’s founding in 1696, fed by the volcanic Yatsugatake mountain range.



Tachibana Junmai

橘 純米

By Kitsukura Brewery Saku City, Nagano



Miyama Nishiki

100% from Nagano

Type	Junmai
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	15.0%
Flavour Profile	Clean, restrained aroma, and crisp finish
Rice Polish Rate	59%
SMV	+4.0
Best served	Chilled, Cellar Cool, Room Temp

Tasting Note

Structure: Clean, dry architecture and a light body. It possesses a crisp transparency that emphasises precision over weight.

Aroma: Restrained and understated; characterised by primary notes of steamed rice and subtle cereal nuances.

Palate: Features a smooth entry with a measured expression of rice umami. The flavour is focused on purity, balancing between subtle sweetness and a refreshing acidity.

Finish: Lean and precise; it concludes with a lightly mineral edge that tidies the palate quickly.

Miyama Nishiki Rice

It was developed specifically for Nagano's high-altitude cold climate. It yields sake with clarity, sharpness, and a transparent profile, offering subtle aromatic lift and crisp acidity rather than pronounced richness.

Food Pairing

1. Delicate Seafood: Sashimi, scallop carpaccio, etc.
2. Salt-Grilled Preparations: Salt-grilled fish, white meat, lightly charred vegetables, etc.
3. Modern European Cuisine: Butter-poached seafood, herb-grilled fish, cured meat/fish, young/soft cheeses, etc.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5-10°C) / Cellar Cool (10-15°C) / Room Temperature (18-22°C)

Tachibana Junmai Daiginjo 橘 純米大吟醸

By Kitsukura Brewery

Saku, Nagano



Miyama Nishiki

100% from Nagano

Type	Junmai Daiginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Polished rice umami and silky elegance
Rice Polish Rate	49%
SMV	+2.0
Best served	Chilled, Cellar Cool, Room Temp

Tasting Note

Structure: Features a silky, refined texture and medium body, showing a polished elegance.

Aroma: Refined and softly expressive, featuring gentle fruit tones alongside rice umami.

Palate: Smooth and finely textured; it opens with a soft sweetness before transitioning into a graceful mid-palate of rice umami and delicate fruit character.

Finish: Crisp, polished, and quietly aromatic, with understated elegance.

Miyama Nishiki Rice

It was developed specifically for Nagano's high-altitude cold climate. It yields sake with clarity, sharpness, and a transparent profile, offering subtle aromatic lift and crisp acidity rather than pronounced richness.

Food Pairing

1. Delicate Seafood: Sashimi, carpaccio, etc.
2. White Meats & Herbs: Poached chicken, lightly grilled pork loin, preparation with herbs, etc.
3. Creamy Dishes or Soft Cheese: Light cream/butter sauces or gently oil-forward preparations, etc.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5-10°C) / Cellar Cool (10-15°C) / Room Temperature (18-22°C)



Tachibana Taru Premium 橘樽プレミアム

By Kitsukura Brewery Saku, Nagano

Overview

It is the finest attempt of Kitsukura brewery, where the Junmai Daiginjo is matured for 36 hours in Yoshino cedar barrels. It uses a filtering method called Shizuku-dori, which is a traditional method where only the clearest essence of sake is collected.



Kinmon Nishiki

100% from Nagano

Type	Junmai Daiginjo, Barrel aged
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Clear/refined umami, fine texture, and cedar tone
Rice Polish Rate	49%
SMV	+0.0
Best served	Chilled, Cellar Cool, Room Temp

Tasting Note

Structure: Characterised by exceptional clarity and a remarkably smooth, seamless texture achieved through non-mechanical Shizuku-dori filtration.

Aroma: A clean, refreshing wood note from the brief cedar maturation supports the nose with a focused, subtle lift.

Palate: Finely textured and expanding into rounded umami. Cedar maturation adds a light dryness and a faint, spice-like grip.

Finish: Long and refined, carrying cedar and delicate fruit tones in a balanced, composed elegance.

Kinmon Nishiki Rice

It is a prestigious variety developed in Nagano, which once became almost extinct. However, it was revived through rigorous local efforts and contract cultivation, and is now a rice for premium sake. It is often associated with refined elegance, clarity, and a gentle yet expressive aromatic profile.

Food Pairing

1. Delicate Seafood: Sashimi, carpaccio, etc.
2. Grilled & Salt-based Dishes: Grilled vegetables, white meats, etc.
3. Dairy Elements: Cream/butter preparations, fresh / mild cheeses, etc.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5-10°C) /
Cellar Cool (10-15°C) /
Room Temperature (18-22°C)

Shizuku Dori: Traditional Manual Filtering

It is a traditional technique where the sake mash is placed in small cloth bags and hung to drip slowly by gravity alone. By avoiding the modern mass production method of mechanical press, this prevents the extraction of impurities. The result is an exceptionally clear, elegant sake with a silky texture and delicate aroma.

However, it is extremely labour-intensive and time-consuming as it solely relies on gravity; it yields Sake only a small fraction of mechanical methods, making Shizuku Dori a hallmark of craftsmanship and the brewery's highest technical standards.



Tamayura Sparkling たまゆら スパークリング

By Kitsukura Brewery Saku, Nagano



Overview

Tamayura Sparkling is a fresh and elegant junmai sake crafted through natural secondary fermentation inside the bottle. Characterised by fine, persistent bubbles and moderate acidity, it avoids excessive sweetness to focus on freshness and structural elegance.

Type	Sparkling Junmai Sake
Amount	300ml
Alcohol	8.0%
Flavour Profile	Gently sweet, tart, refreshing, and fine bubble
Rice Polish Rate	70%
Best served	Chilled

Flavour Profile

Tamayura is a sparkling junmai sake with a fresh, citrus-led character and a clean, refreshing profile.

The secondary bottle fermentation creates smooth, fine natural bubbles, gentle sweetness balanced by lively, citrus-like acidity reminiscent of orange peel and lemon zest.

Rather than richness, the style focuses on clarity, lift, light tartness, and drinkability, with a softly stimulating texture and a refreshing finish.

Natural Bottle Fermentation

Unlike injected carbonation, Tamayura's sparkle is created by bottling the sake while fermentation is still active. This allows the CO₂ to dissolve naturally into the sake, resulting in finer, more persistent bubbles and a softer mouthfeel. This method requires exceptional timing and temperature control, only capable with breweries with deep fermentation expertise.

Serving and Pairing Strategy

1. Chilled to Cellar Cool (5-15°C)
2. Light Seafood: Oysters, crab, scallops, white fish carpaccio, lightly cured seafood, etc.
3. Vegetable and Citrus-Accented Dishes
4. Light cream or Dairy preparations and Fresh Cheeses
5. Lightly Fried or Roasted Dishes

Takasago Brewery

Asahikawa City,
Hokkaido



Overview

Founded in 1899, Takasago Brewery focuses on embracing the natural climate of Hokkaido. In 1926, it became the first brewery in Hokkaido to win a gold medal at the Japan National Sake Appraisal.

Takasago is recognised for its innovative technique, such as "snow maturation" and the use of an "ice dome" (Yuki-Himuro).

These methods, developed in the 1990s, leverage Hokkaido's subzero climate to achieve refined, rounded flavours with crisp finishes.

Leveraging Snow

Although Ice Dome was unfortunately suspended in 2016 due to climate change affecting snow conditions, snow maturation continues to carry Takasago's identity.

Snow Maturation involves burying sake-filled tanks outside in the fields. Snow's high insulation ensures consistent low temperatures, allowing sake to mature slowly, and reduces impurities, creating a soft, rounded flavour with restrained aroma.

Sake aged in snow achieves a delicate balance between smoothness and sharpness.

Geographical Character

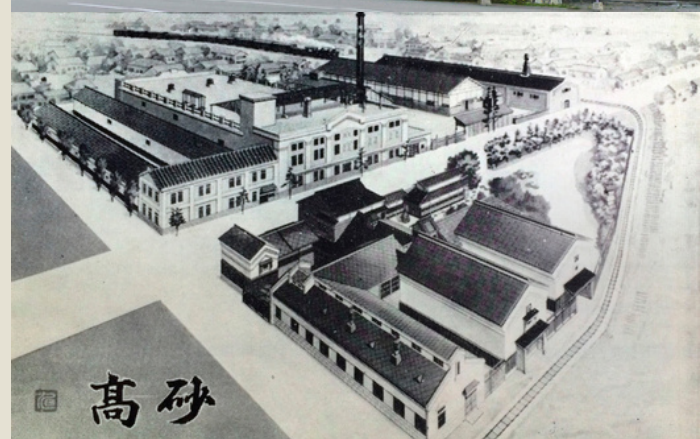
Takasago Shuzo is based in Asahikawa City, Hokkaido, a northern region known for its cold winters and heavy snowfall.

Soft water from the underground aquifers of the Chubetsu River system is exceptionally low in iron, making it highly suitable for brewing. Its softness supports a clean, crisp, dry-leaning profile and contributes to the precise, well-defined character seen across the brewery's portfolio.

Community Contribution

The brewery sources over 80% of its rice locally and leads programs, such as involving residents in the full brewing process through an annual Citizen Participation Project.

They promote a circular economy by providing sake lees as specialised feed for locally raised cattle and partner with agricultural high schools, where students participate in rice cultivation and product development.



Taisetsu Junmai Ginjo 大雪 純米吟醸

By Takasago Brewery Asahikawa City, Hokkaido



Overview

Taisetsu is crafted with the snow maturation method, where the freshly pressed sake is matured for approximately 100 days under a heavy blanket of Hokkaido snow.



Ginpu

100% from Hokkaido

Type	Junmai Ginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	15.5%
Flavour Profile	Silky Umami & Refined Dry
Rice Polish Rate	55%
SMV	±0.0
Best served	Chilled, Cellar Cool

Tasting Note

Structure: Snow maturation gives the sake a smooth, rounded texture and a composed shape on the palate, softening youthful roughness without adding weight.

Aroma: Delicate ginjo aromatics with a restrained fruity lift, kept discreet and polished rather than expressive or overt.

Palate: Gently rounded and well balanced, with integrated umami that gives quiet mid-palate depth while maintaining clarity and control.

Finish: Clean, tidy, and lightly dry in impression, with a subtle persistence that fades neatly.

Ginpu Rice

A signature Hokkaido variety which was developed for cold resistance and stable cultivation in the northern climate. Sake from Ginpu tends to show aromatic richness, mellow umami, and gentle depth.

Food Pairing

1. Raw and Lightly Prepared Seafood
2. Gently Cooked White Meats
3. Light Cream Preparations and Fresh / Soft Cheese
4. Tempura and Lightly Fried Dishes

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) /
Cellar Cool (10–15°C)

Snow Maturation

This process involves placing sealed tanks of freshly brewed sake outside and completely covering them with natural snow for approximately 100 days.

The dense snowpack acts as a natural insulator, maintaining a stable temperature of approximately -2°C, allowing the sake to mature gently without artificial refrigeration or risk of oxidation.

This natural process creates a remarkably soft and rounded texture while preserving the clarity of fresh unpasturised Sake.

Yonetsuru Brewery



Takahata City,
Yamagata Prefecture



Overview

Founded in 1697, Yonetsuru was an official supplier to the ruler of the area, the Uesugi Clan, during the Edo period (1603-1867AD) and played a key role in guiding the regional sake industry.

In the Meiji era (1868-1912AD), the 9th-generation owner served as a sake competition judge, actively contributing to the development of Yamagata's brewing culture.

As a pioneer in ginjo-style brewing, the brewery helped shape Japan's premium sake movement, especially during the late 1900s.

Agricultural Contribution

In 1983, the brewery established the Sake Rice Research Committee with local farmers to support the cultivation of the region's varieties, and the brewery has helped stabilise rice quality in the region while promoting sustainable agriculture.

In 1993, the brewery developed its own proprietary rice strain, which was the first Sake rice officially developed by Sake Brewery.

(Sake breweries hardly cultivate or develop their own rice, and rice is almost always sourced from dedicated rice farmers)

Toji: Satoshi Sugai

His philosophy extends beyond technical precision. Brewing is a collective craft, built upon coordination and trust among the brewery team. Quality is seen as the result of harmony within the brewery, not the achievement of an individual alone.

This perspective reinforces continuity, skill transmission, and shared responsibility within the production environment.

Geographical Characteristics

The brewery is located in a serene hilly area known as "Mahoroba no Sato", a name used for places surrounded by hills and mountains and blessed with fertile land. The region's climate of clear seasonal variation, hot summers/cold winters with snowfall, and day-night temperature shifts has supported agriculture in the area, including rice cultivation.



Extradry Junmai

米鶴 超辛純米

By Yonetsuru Brewery Takahata City, Yamagata



Dewanosato

100% from Yamagata

Type	Junmai
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	15.0%
Flavour Profile	Baldly dry and subtle savoury
Rice Polish Rate	65%
SMV	+9.0
Best served	Chilled, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

Structure: Firmly dry and crisp, with a light-to-medium body. A gentle core of rice-derived umami gives the palate enough substance to balance the dryness without making it feel heavy.

Aroma: Restrained and clean, with subtle rice and cereal notes rather than overt aromatic lift.

Palate: Clean and distinctly dry on entry, supported by moderate acidity and a modest umami core.

Finish: Powerful and rapid; it cleanses the palate completely, leaving a refreshing clarity.

Dewanosato Rice

It was developed in 2004 in Yamagata to improve Junmai-grade rice suited for Yamagata's cold climate.

It creates Sake with a clean profile and a refined, uncluttered finish.

Food Pairing

1. Fried and Lightly Grilled fish/White meat, Chicken karaage
2. Cream-Based and Mild Dairy Dishes: Mushroom cream sauce, Potato gratin, mild/Young semi-hard cheeses
3. Savoury or Mildly Spiced Dishes

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) / Room Temperature (18–22°C) / Warm (38–42°C)

Extradry Yukimegami 超辛 雪女神

By Yonetsuru Brewery Takahata City, Yamagata



Yukimegami
100% from Yamagata

Type	Junmai Daiginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	15.0%
Flavour Profile	Crisp, Light-Bodied Dry
Rice Polish Rate	50%
SMV	+8.0
Best served	Chilled, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

Structure: Built in a distinctly ultra-dry style with a clean, precise frame. It prioritises clarity, definition, and drinkability over weight or richness.

Aroma: Fresh and polished, with subtle muscat-like notes rather than overt aromatic intensity. The impression is clean and restrained, consistent with the sake's dry profile.

Palate: Crisp and dry on entry, with a light-to-medium body and a well-defined structure. Gentle rice-derived savoury depth gives substance through the mid-palate without adding heaviness.

Finish: Brisk, sharply cut, and refreshingly dry. The finish remains clean and focused, reinforcing its food-oriented character.

Yukimegami Rice

Developed in 2001 in Yamagata to have a region's own rice variety capable of high-polishing for Daiginjo Sake.

It supports refined, fruit-led Ginjo aromatics with a very smooth palate and cleanly expressed rice umami.

Food Pairing

1. Raw and Lightly Dressed Seafoods: Cured meats, sashimi.
2. Delicate Seafood and White Meats: Steamed clams, grilled prawns, lightly roasted chicken.
3. Egg-Based and Light Creamy Dishes: Fresh to young cheeses, omelettes, lightly creamy preparations.
4. Light Fried Dishes: Oyster fry, lightly fried seafood, vegetable tempura, pan-fried gyoza.

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) Room Temp (18–22°C) / Warm (38–42°C)



Seto Brewery



Ureshino City,
Saga Prefecture



Overview

Founded in 1789, Seto Brewery is one of the most historic breweries in Saga prefecture. From its early years, the brewery earned recognition beyond its local region, and by the late Meiji period (1868-1912), its sake had been selected for official presentation to the Imperial Household.

In 1920, the sake label Azumacho was named by the Prime Minister Takashi Hara, who praised its clean yet generous intoxication as “worthy of the ruler of the East.”

During the postwar period, Azumacho was served at GHQ, where it caught the attention of General Douglas MacArthur. As a result, it was selected as one of the official sakes supplied to U.S. forces and GHQ personnel.

Toji: Shingo Harada

His philosophy is centred on expressing the natural sweetness and depth of rice. While sake from Saga is often described as sweet, the current market trend in Japan has leaned towards lighter, drier profiles. In contrast, Harada deliberately maintains extracting the natural rice sweetness. For him, it is not simply a matter of sugar perception, but the purest expression of umami derived from rice.

This craftsmanship is not reserved solely for premium Daiginjo grades; rather, he views Honjozo as the foundational identity of the brewery in the era where premium categories often dominate attention.

By focusing on drinkability and rice’s inherent sweetness, he preserves regional character, rather than trend-driven brewing.




Azumacho Honjozo

東長 本醸造

By Seto Brewery

Ureshino city, Saga

 **Reihou**
100% from Saga

Type	Honjozo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	15.0%
Flavour Profile	Gentle Sweetness & Clean Umami
Rice Polish Rate	68%
SMV	-8.0
Best served	Cellar Cool, Room Temp, Warm

Tasting Note

Structure: Softly sweet and umami-driven, with a smooth, moderate body that remains approachable and never heavy.

Aroma: Relatively understated, with a gentle rice-led character rather than pronounced aromatics.

Palate: A gentle, smooth entry followed by soft sweetness and rice-derived umami with a rounded impression.

Finish: Clean and refreshing, with enough cut to keep the sweetness from lingering heavily.

Reihou Rice

Widely used in Kyushu, as it is suited to warmer climates. Rather than a highly expressive style, it supports clear, approachable sake without imposing an overt character.

Food Pairing

1. Light Seafood and Simple Grilled Fish
2. Roasted Poultry and Light White Meat Dishes
3. Mild Japanese Dishes, Tofu, and Light Simmered Foods

Serving Temperature

Chilled (5–10°C) / Room Temperature (18–22°C) / Warm (35–50°C)



Azumacho Junmai Ginjo 東長 純米吟醸

By Seto Brewery

Ureshino city, Saga



Yamada Nishiki
/ Saganohana

100% from Saga

Type	Junmai Ginjo
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	16.0%
Flavour Profile	Fragrant, Rice-Forward Sweetness
Rice Polish Rate	60%
SMV	-4.0
Best served	Cellar Cool, Room Temp

Tasting Note

Structure: Medium-bodied with a natural lift, balancing sweetness and savoury dimension without heaviness.

Aroma: Refined and moderately expressive, showing gentle ginjo-style fruit with soft rice notes and an elegant, controlled aromatic profile.

Palate: Gentle sweetness and clear rice umami build into a smooth, supple mid-palate.

Finish: Fresh acidity brings lift and definition, leading into a clean, softly sweet finish with a lightly citrus-bright impression.

Yamada Nishiki and Saganohana Rice

Saganohana is developed in Saga to suit the region's climate. It contributes to a visible rice presence, rounded sweetness and structure.

Yamada Nishiki is called as the kind of sake rice, Japan's most famous premium brewing rice. It gives a fragrant, full-bodied profile with a clean, graceful finish.

Food Pairing

1. Lightly Glazed or Roasted White Meats: Mild caramelisation, sweet-savoury glazes, herb-roasted chicken breast, etc.
2. Seafood: White fish and shellfish prepared with white wine, herb, butter, olive oil, or light frying.
3. Light Cream Sauces, Fresh Dairy Elements, soft cheeses

Serving Temperature

Cellar Cool (10-15°C) / Room Temperature (18-22°C)



Umenoyado Brewery

Katsuragi City,
Nara Prefecture



Overview

Founded in 1893, the brewery celebrated its 130th anniversary in 2023 with a move to a new facility. They operate under the philosophy of "Tradition and Innovation", combining historical Nanbu-style handmade methods with modern precision.

Important Region for Sake History

The brewery is situated at the foot of Mt. Katsuragi and Mt. Nijo, which is referenced in the Manyoshu, Japan's oldest poetry anthology. This area is also believed to be one of the birthplaces of sake.

Elimination of the Toji system

In 2017, they abolished the traditional Toji (master brewer) system and adopted a collaborative, team-based brewing structure led by 3 different leaders for each role.

Instead of centralising all knowledge and responsibility in a single individual, the brewery empowers all staff members to take active roles in both production and innovation.

Identity evolution under Kayo Yoshida

The 5th generation owner, Kayo Yoshida, represents a structural turning point for the Brewery. She initiated a transition to focus on fruit-based liquors at a time when such products were often dismissed, drawing resistance and criticism from within the industry, which viewed liqueurs as secondary to "serious" sake brewing.

Nevertheless, she remained committed to a clear principle: the value of craftsmanship is measured by the quality of the drinking experience, not by category hierarchy.

She observed that a guest's expression of delight did not depend on the title of sake; what mattered was whether the drink was genuinely enjoyable.

Through direct engagement with consumers, particularly younger generations where sake consumption has been declining, she recognised that what they sought was not classification, but genuine enjoyment.



Aragoshi Yuzu

あらごし ゆず

By Umenoyado Brewery

Katsuragi City, Nara



Overview

It is crafted by blending fresh Japanese yuzu juice with the brewery's junmai Sake. Each 720ml bottle contains approximately 8 yuzu, offering a robust, bright, natural citrus expression.

Type	Yuzu Liquor from Junmai Sake
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	8.0%
Flavour Profile	Bright Yuzu & Bittersweet Balance
Best served	Rock, Mix Sparkling Water, Cocktail

Tasting Note

Yuzu content includes not only the juice but also the pulp and skin, contributing to its layered citrus aroma and authentic mouthfeel.

On the nose, it offers a vivid burst of fresh yuzu with a trace of bitterness.

The palate is clean and smooth, with the fresh citrus acidity harmonising with the mellow sweetness imparted by the sake.

The finish is long and refreshing, leaving a lingering sensation of brightness and clarity without being overly sweet or heavy.

Food Pairing

1. Raw & Lightly Prepared Seafood: Best with highball-style
2. Grilled White Meats
3. Tempura & Fried Dishes: Best on the rock.

Dessert Pairing

1. Dairy-Based Desserts: Best on the rock. (Cheesecake, Yoghurt Mousse, Panna Cotta)
2. Light Sponge Cakes: Best with Highball-style
3. Ice Cream & Frozen Desserts: Best on the rock or affogato

Serving Style Guide

1. Rock
2. Highball (with sparkling water): Suitable as an aperitif or pairing for delicate dishes.
3. Yuzu Spritz (Yuzu + Sparkling Wine)
 4. With Tonic Water
 5. With Dry Ginger Ale
6. Chilled and Neat (6-10°C): For dessert pairings
7. Cocktail Ingredient: Alternative to citrus liqueurs.

Aragoshi Ume

あらごし うめ

By Umenoyado Brewery

Katsuragi City, Nara



Overview

This liqueur is made with the brewery's junmai sake and premium Japanese plums sourced from Nishiyoshino in Nara Prefecture. Each 720ml bottle contains the equivalent of approximately 7 plums.

Type	Ume Liqueur from Junmai Sake
Amount	720ml
Alcohol	12.0%
Flavour Profile	Rich, velvety and fruit-driven
Best served	Rock, Mix Sparkling Water, Cocktail

Tasting Note

It shows a generous aroma of ripe ume, with rich plum fruit, gentle tartness and a softly confectioned depth.

The palate is broad and silky, with a creamy, pulpy texture and ample fruit concentration. Sweetness is clearly present, yet balanced by plum acidity and the mellowing effect of the sake base, which gives the liqueur roundness and depth rather than sharp alcoholic lift.

The finish is smooth, persistent and fruit-led, making it a polished dessert-style umeshu without becoming excessively heavy.

Paring

1. Blue and aged hard cheeses
2. Cured Meat
3. Meat and Poultry: Roasted Duck, Quail, or Foie Gras.
4. Dessert: Panna Cotta, Nut Tarts, etc.
5. Ice Cream & Frozen Desserts: Best on the rock or affogato

Serving Style Guide

1. Rock / Neat
2. Highball (Ume 2 : Sparkling Water 1)
3. With Iced Black Tea
4. With Orange Juice
5. Cocktail Ingredient: Alternative to citrus liqueurs.