

## The Age of Gastronomic Sake ガストロノミック酒の時代到来

When brewing and commercializing Sake, the Sake maker first decides on the direction or on how the product will be consumed by the drinkers. Then at the actual brewing stage, the Sake maker follows along the set direction to decide the ingredients, brewing method, and packaging. Since there are countless of options, there's no limit to the quality and style of Sake that will finally be produced.

Among the general liquor industry, the quality of liquor is generally divided into two main categories. One is designed to be paired with the food, and the other emphasizes the flavor of the liquor, more as a stand-alone beverage.

Until very recently, world-renowned wine critics such as Robert Parker gave higher evaluation to the latter

type. However, in the last five years or so, the idea of enjoying drinks as an in-meal liquor has received reconsideration, thus the term "Gastronomic Wine" was born and adopted into the trade.

Gastronomic Wine refers to wine made with an emphasis on acidity and Umami that pairs well with food. This style of wine often has a beautiful flavor, richness, and a long finish.

In Japan, Sake and Shochu have traditionally been enjoyed as in-meal liquors, but in recent decades, highly fragrant and beautiful flavored Sake have come to dominate the market. This is starting to change, as consumers' preference is shifting back to Gastronomic Sake and Shochu, to be enjoyed along with a meal.



日本酒を醸造し商品化する際、消費者にどの様な形でその酒を飲んで貰いたいのか、造り手やメーカーが最終的な方向性を決めなければならない。そして、醸造時にその方向性へ沿って原料・醸造方法・パッケージングをどうするか決めていく。

色々な選択肢があるので、商品化される酒質・スタイルに限りは無い。他方、酒業界の中で一般に酒質を大きく二つに分けることがある。その酒を料理と一緒に飲むように設計するのか、もしくは料理との食べ合わせはあまり重視せず、酒の風味だけを楽しむ酒にするのか、である。

つい最近まで、有名な酒評論家ロバートパーカー氏による評価の高い後者の酒の風味だけで楽しむ酒が好まれてきた。しかし、特にここ5年程でワインは食中

酒として楽しめるべきであるという考え方が見直されて来ており、しばし耳にするようになって来たのがGastronomic Wineという表現である。奇麗な風味、濃醇差、長い余韻を重視するから、料理と相性の良い酸味や旨味を重視して造られた酒のことをGastronomic Wineと呼ぶのである。

日本酒や焼酎はもとより食中酒として飲まれていたのが、ここ何十年は香り高く綺麗な酒が好まれる傾向にあった。ところが、最近では前述したように酒蔵も消費者も料理との相性の良いGastronomic酒を好みつつある。長い歴史を持つ日本酒の特徴である食中酒という消費形態(あるべき姿)に回帰しているのである。

## GASTRONOMIC SAKE & FOOD PAIRING IDEAS

お勧めのガストロノミック酒と料理のペアリング

### Shiromi Sashimi Izumibashi Tonbo Sparkling Junmai, Kanagawa



This sparkling Nigori is wrapped in aromas of yellow peach, lychee, pineapple, and yogurt. The naturally made bubbles are fine and gentle, leaving a clean, soft finish that melts onto the palate. Smooth acidity balances the slight sweetness from the rice particles. Chill this sake well for the best experience!

### Yakitori Takashimizu Muroka Junmai, Akita



This Sake holds rich flavors and Umami that make for a fantastic Yakitori pairing. The slightly sweet aromas match well with Tare sauces, and the slightly dry finish invites an appetite for more skewers!

### Tempura Tamano Hikari Junmai Daiginjo Bizen Omachi, Kyoto



A delightfully fruity and floral aroma keeps the mood of the pairing light, just like the tender-crisp Tempura. On the palate are flavors from the Bizen Omachi rice that highlight soft Umami and herbaceous hints, often found in Tempura dishes.

### Akami Sashimi Emishiki World Peace Junmai Ginjo, Shiga



Elegant aroma of pear, lychee, and honeydew melon. Soft and pure mouthfeel on entrance, developing a curvaceous figure midway, but finishes lean and smooth with a balanced elegant finish. A sake meant to be served along with food, rather than a beverage alone.

### Hikarimono Mutsu Hassen Isaribi Tokubetsu Junmai, Aomori



This is a dry Sake with solid Umami, strong acidity, and less focus on fruitiness. When chilled, this Sake matches perfectly with grilled and Sashimi mackerel, as well as squid sashimi and soy sauce flavored foods.

### Fried Dishes Kokonoe Saika Yamahai Junmai, Wakayama Oze no Yukidoke Ohkarakuchi Junmai, Gunma



Elevated acidity and Umami in Saika Yamahai pair perfectly with fried foods like Karaage and Katsu, especially with the sauces that are often served with these dishes. Classic pairing of a dry Sake like Oze no Yukidoke Ohkarakuchi Junmai with fried foods can't be beat! The dry finish cleanses the palate and whisks away oils to refresh, and readies the diner to enjoy the flavors on the next bite.

### Oysters, Raw Shellfish Kubota Junmai Daiginjo, Niigata Senkin Classic Kamenoo, Tochigi



The uplifting fruitiness of these Sake complements the flavor of oysters perfectly. Kubota offers a slightly brighter, fresher approach, while Senkin's high acidity and qualities of the Kamenoo rice deliver a richer experience with oysters.

## 2021 SAKE COMPETITION AWARD WINNERS (Part 1)

### Amabuki Shuzo Co., Ltd.

Amabuki Nama Ichigo Junmai Ginjo – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – GOLD  
Amabuki Kimoto Junmai Daiginjo – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – GOLD

### Hakkaisan Brewery Co., Ltd.

Hakkaisan Daiginjo 45 – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – GOLD  
Hakkaisan Junmai Daiginjo 45 – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – SILVER  
Hakkaisan Snow Aged 3 Years Junmai Daiginjo – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – SILVER  
Hakkaisan Clear Sparkling Awa – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – SILVER

### Izumibashi Sake Brewery Co., Ltd.

Izumibashi Junmai Daiginjo Umeshu "Yamada Juro" – San Francisco International Wine Competition – DOUBLE GOLD  
Izumibashi Junmai Kimoto "Black Dragonfly 2 Year Aged" – San Francisco International Wine Competition – GOLD  
Izumibashi Junmai Daiginjo "Gold Dragonfly Kimoto 35" – San Francisco International Wine Competition – SILVER

### Katoukichibee Shouten

Born Gold Junmai Daiginjo - Las Vegas Global Wine Awards – PLATINUM & BEST SAKE – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – GOLD CLASS – SAKÉ AWARD  
Born Muroka Nama Genshu Junmai Daiginjo – Las Vegas Global Wine Awards – GOLD – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – SILVER  
Born Tokusen Junmai Daiginjo – Las Vegas Global Wine Awards – SILVER – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – BRONZE  
Born Dreams Come True Junmai Daiginjo – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – GOLD; Las Vegas Global Wine Awards – SILVER  
Born Wing of Japan Junmai Daiginjo – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – GOLD; Las Vegas Global Wine Awards – SILVER  
Born Nama Premium Sparkling Junmai Daiginjo – TEXSOM International Wine Awards – SILVER

