



*Recognizing Japanese Craftmanship:
Japanese Whisky
2021 Society of Wine Educators Conference*

August 20th , 2021

「Docendo Discimus : Teach to learn」

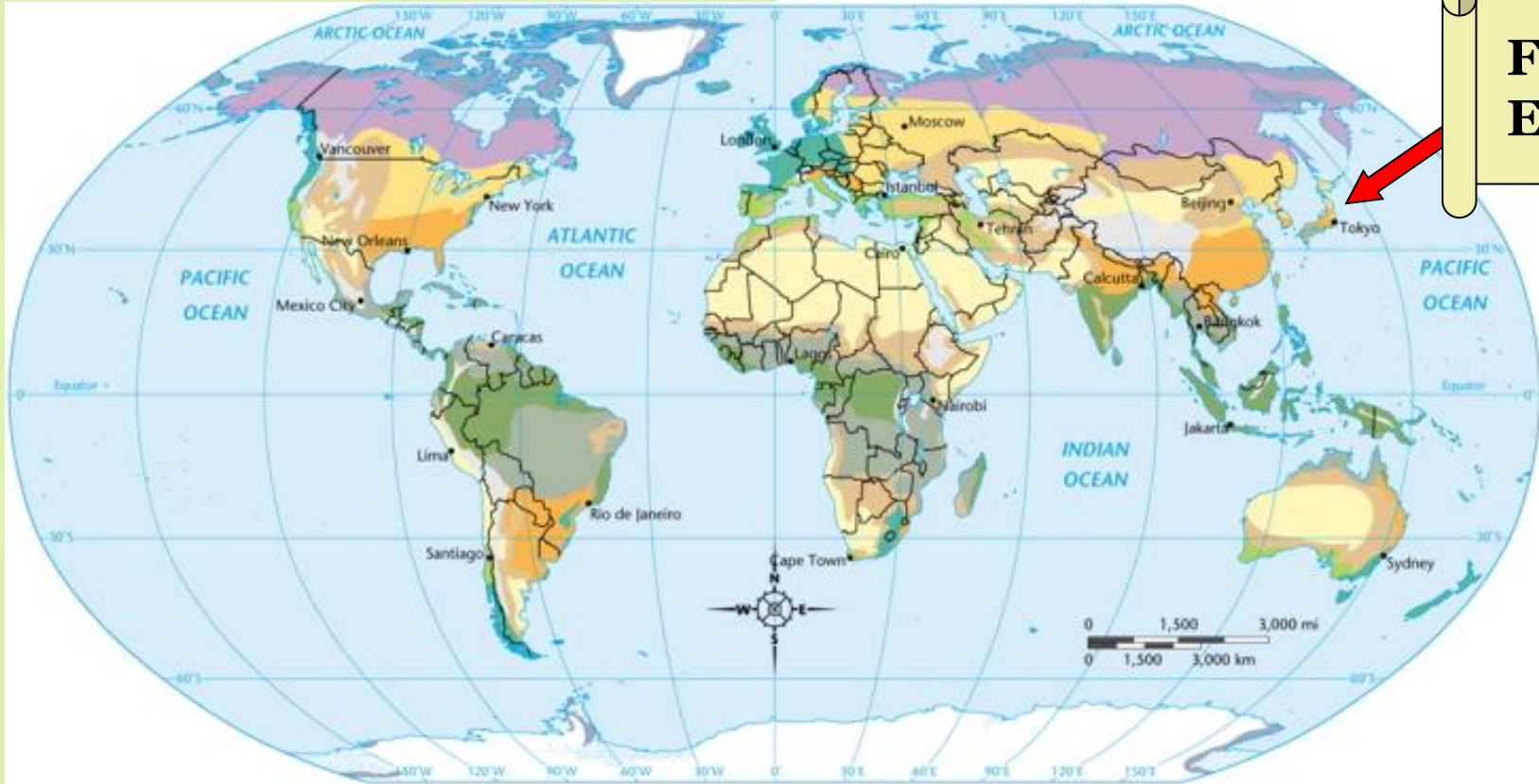
From Ancient Roman Philosopher Seneca

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World Map & Climate



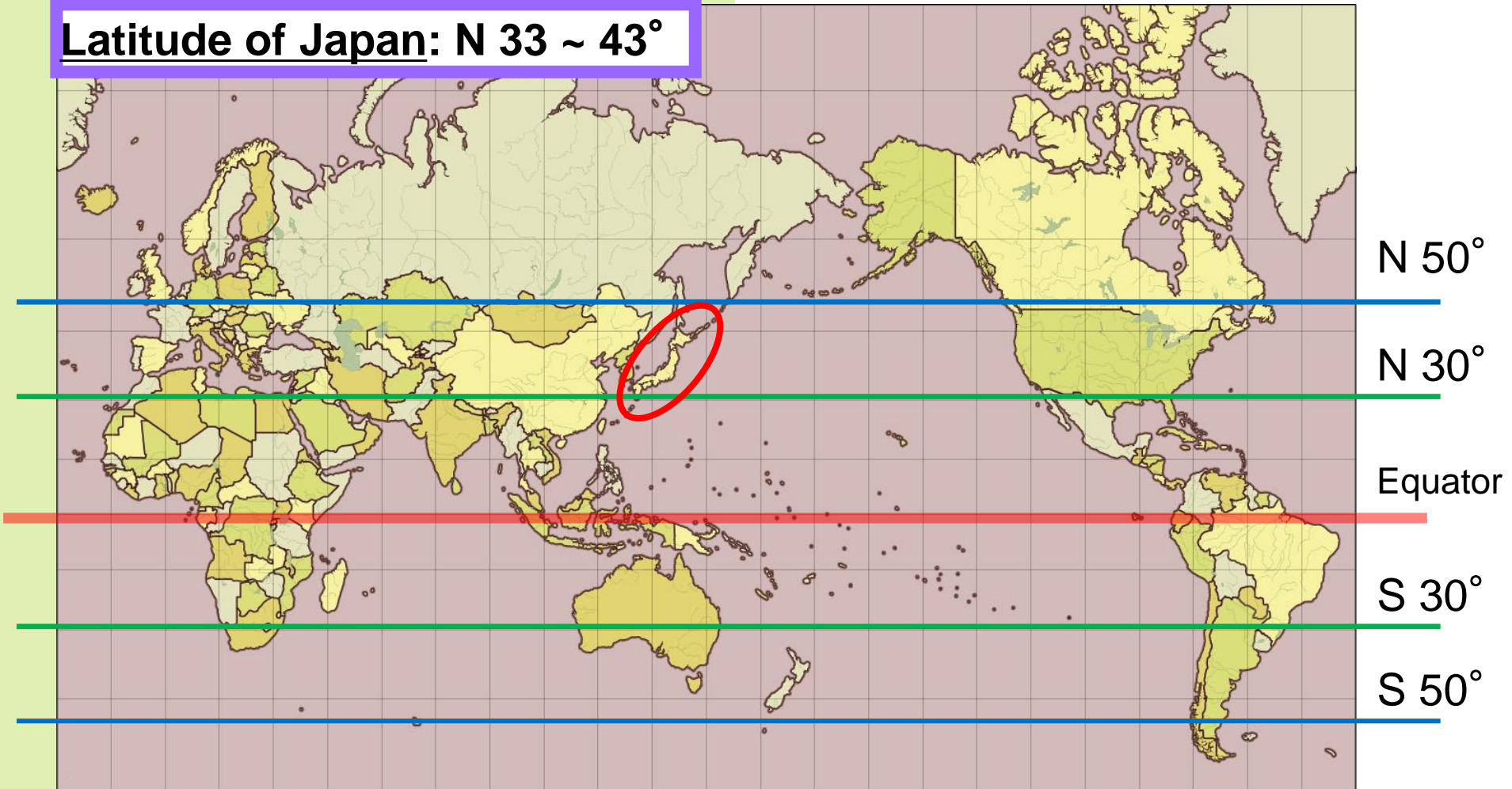
Far Far East...

Tropical		Dry		Moderate		Continental		Polar		Non-permanent ice
	Tropical wet		Semi-arid		Mediterranean		Humid continental		Tundra	
	Tropical wet and dry		Arid		Humid subtropical		Subarctic		Ice cap	
					Marine west coast				Highlands	



Japan & China on Map

Latitude of Japan: N 33 ~ 43°





Japan & its Region

Latitude: 33~ 43° N

Ave. Temp:

Jan 43 F: Sep 74F

Land:145,883sq mi

Rains: 57.7 inch /yr





Four Seasons – North to South



Winter, Niigata



Spring, Shizuoka



Fall, Nagano



Summer, Okinawa

Japan is divided into 6 main climatic zones:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Hokkaido: | Cool summers, long and cold winters. |
| Sea of Japan: | Relatively cool summers, cold winters with heavy snowfalls. |
| Central Highland: | Large temperature variance between summers and winters, and between days and nights. |
| Seto Inland Sea: | Mild climate throughout the year. |
| Pacific Ocean: | Hot and humid summers, cold winters with little snowfall. |
| Southwest Islands: | Subtropical climate with hot summers, warm winters with high precipitation. |



Japanese Whisky History

1854 Commodore Perry's Visit, brought Whiskey

Matthew Calbraith Perry was a Commodore of the United States Navy who commanded ships in several wars, played a leading role in the opening of Japan to the West with the Convention of Kanagawa in 1854.

1923 Suntory founded by Shinjiro Torii

1929 Suntory's 1st Whiskey White was released

1934 Nikka founded by Masataka Taketsuru

1980 Suntory Old hit 144,000,000 bottles

No.1 in the World

2000 Japanese Whiskey Consumption dropped to

20% of 1983

2003 Suntory Yamaazaki won ISC Gold



Standards for Labeling “Japanese whisky”

On February 16, 2021, the **Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association** made an announcement of **Standards for Labeling Japanese whisky**. The Labeling Standards have been instituted by the association members themselves, as an internal rule to define “Japanese whisky”, **effective from April 1, 2021**.

Term	Production Method Quality Requirements		
"Japanese whisky" (or "Japanese whiskey")	Raw ingredients	Raw ingredients must be limited to malted grains, other cereal grains, and water extracted in Japan. Malted grains must always be used.	
	Production method	Production	Saccharification, fermentation, and distillation must be carried out at a distillery in Japan. Alcohol content at the time of distillation must be less than 95%.
		Aging	The distilled product must be poured into wooden casks not exceeding a capacity of 700 liters and matured in Japan for a period of at least 3 years thereafter.
		Bottling	Bottling must take place only in Japan, with alcoholic strength of at least 40% as of such time.
		Other	Plain caramel coloring can be used.

The background behind setting the Labeling Standards is as follows

*“By clearly defining what “Japanese whisky” is and making that information available to the public in Japan and abroad, we **aim to clarify the confusing situation for the consumers.**”*



Japanese Whiskey



Nikka Yoichi Distillery

Yoichi, Hokkaido Pref.

Nikka Miyagikyo Distillery

Sendai, Miyagi Pref.

Sasanokawa Distillery

Koriyama, Fukushima Pref.

Suntory Hakushu Distillery

Hakushu, Yamanashi Pref.

Suntory Yamazaki Distillery

Shimamoto-cho, Osaka Pref.



Suntory Yamazaki

THE PIONEER OF JAPANESE WHISKY



Yamazaki Distillery
Shimamoto-cho, Osaka Pref.





Suntory = Torii-san

THE PIONEER OF JAPANESE WHISKY



SHINJIRO TORII (1879-1962)



Suntory Whisky History

The history of Japanese whisky is the history of Shinjiro Torii, the founder of Suntory.

Torii was born in 1879, when Western culture & civilization flowed into Japan. Ending his schooling at age thirteen, Torii entered into an apprenticeship at a pharmaceutical wholesaler in Osaka that carried Western liquors. There he mastered techniques of mixing and blending through his teenage apprenticeships.

In the year 1899, Shinjiro Torii went independent, started generations of pursuit of a dream.



Suntory Yamazaki

THE PIONEER OF JAPANESE WHISKY



The Yamazaki Distillery is Japan's first and oldest malt whisky distillery established in **1923** by Suntory's founder Shinjiro Torii.

Inspired by **traditional Scottish whisky**, Torii envisioned a Japanese approach by choosing a terrain and climate completely different to those of Scotland to create a unique kind of whisky.

Nestled proudly on the periphery of Kyoto, this region was formerly referred to as "Minaseno", where one of the purest waters of Japan originates.

- Yamazaki is also home to Sen no Rikyu, Master of "The Way of Tea." Located where the Katsura, Uji and Kizu rivers converge, providing a unique misty climate and one of Japan's softest waters.
- The diversity of this region's temperature and humidity creates ideal conditions for cask aging, known as the signature "Suntory Maturation".



Suntory Yamazaki

THE PIONEER OF JAPANESE WHISKY



Yamazaki Whisky is **Suntory's flagship single malt whisky**, multi-layered with fruit and **Mizunara aromas**.

Awards: ISC Gold – 2003, 2010
SFWSC Double Gold - 2009, 2013
SFWSC Gold - 2014
IWSC Gold (Best in Class) 2011

Today, Suntory Yamazaki is not only the No.1 single malt whisky in Japan, but is enjoyed in more than 35 countries.

Mizunara Cask is now used by Scotch Whisky makers.



Suntory Yamazaki



Succulent with soft fruit



Suntory Yamazaki Single Malt

Aged 12 Years

ABV: 43%, Price: \$150

- Succulent with soft fruit

Color: Pure Gold

Nose: Peach, pineapple, grapefruit, clove, candied orange, vanilla, Mizunara (Japanese oak)

Palate: Coconut, cranberry, butter

Finish: Sweet ginger, cinnamon, long finish

Yamazaki Distillery founded in 1923

Production: Malt

Fermentation tank: Stainless 8
Wood 8

1st Still: 6

2nd Still: 6



Suntory Hakushu

HAKUSHU. WHERE INSPIRATION CONTINUES.



Suntory Hakushu,
Hakushu, Yamanashi Pref.





Hakushu Distillery

HAKUSHU. WHERE INSPIRATION CONTINUES.

The **Hakushu Distillery** was founded **half a century** after Yamazaki.

Keizo Saji inherited **his father's vision** in his quest for innovation and constructed this **second Suntory distillery in 1973**.

Keizo Saji, the **Second Master Blender**, inherited his father's quest to push the boundaries of what a Japanese whisky could be. He had searched all over Japan for high quality water that will **become the most delicately aromatic** to produce whisky that people would love. After searching with tenacity to the headstreams of rivers and **deep into rugged mountains**, he found **Hakushu**.

The Hakushu Distillery is without question one of the Highest Distilleries in the World, built amidst the **Deepest Forests** in the **Japanese Southern Alps**.



Hakushu Distillery

HAKUSHU. WHERE INSPIRATION CONTINUES.



Exceptionally Soft Mountain Water

of Hakushu originates as clear-flowing rainwater and melted snow, which passes through Mt. Kaikomagatake of the Japanese Southern Alps.



With Four Distinctive Seasons, the clear air and cool, humid climate of Hakushu's vast forests allow the distillery, one of the few situated at an elevation of 700 meters or more, to produce high-quality whisky through a slow, unhurried process.



Suntory Hakushu

HAKUSHU. WHERE INSPIRATION CONTINUES.



The **Majestic Forest** that surrounds the Hakushu Distillery shelters an **Abundance of Plant Varieties reflecting the many expressions of Japanese Nature.**

The malt whiskies born here are simultaneously **blessed** with a very particular **microclimate, verdant forests,** and **water offering** a rare softness and purity, only made possible by filtration of rain & snow through **thousand-year-old Granite Rocks.**

Suntory Hakushu

THE VERDANT JAPANESE WHISKY



Straight from the **Untouched Forests, Soft** and **Crisp Waters**, it is no wonder that Hakushu is a “**Green and Fresh**” whisky. Four Seasons in High Altitude is praised by the most curious whisky connoisseurs and lovers of gastronomy.

Suntory Hakushu

THE VERDANT JAPANESE WHISKY



The environment at the Hakushu distillery is vastly different to that of the Yamazaki distillery.

At fermentation, artisanal craftsmen use solely wooden washbacks to encourage maturation by retaining heat in the cool air at the distillery.

A variety of pot stills and casks are carefully chosen to suit the high elevation and climate of Hakushu, ultimately producing an array of single malt whiskies with a variety of characters that reflect its surroundings.



Suntory Hakushu Distillery



Suntory Single Malt Whisky Hakushu is the **fresh and gently smoky single malt whisky with herbal notes that is the revelation of Japanese single malts.**

In **2006**, the **Hakushu** won its **First Gold Medal** at the **International Spirits Challenge**; since then it has won numerous awards at the ISC and other major international competitions.

By using a **variety of stills, processes and techniques**, a **wide range** of styles from light to full-bodied are produced.



Suntory Hakushu



Fresh with citrus notes



Suntory Hakushu Single Malt

ABV: 43%, Price: \$100

- **Fresh with citrus notes**

Suntory Single Malt Whisky Hakushu is the fresh and gently smoky single malt whisky with herbal notes that is the revelation of Japanese single malts.

Color: Light gold

Nose: Peppermint, melon, cucumber

Palate: Yuzu, grapefruit, lemon thyme

Finish: Refreshing, subtle smoke

Hakushu Distillery founded in 1973

Production: Malt

Fermentation tank: Wood10

1st Still: 6

2nd Still: 6



Nikka Yoichi Distillery

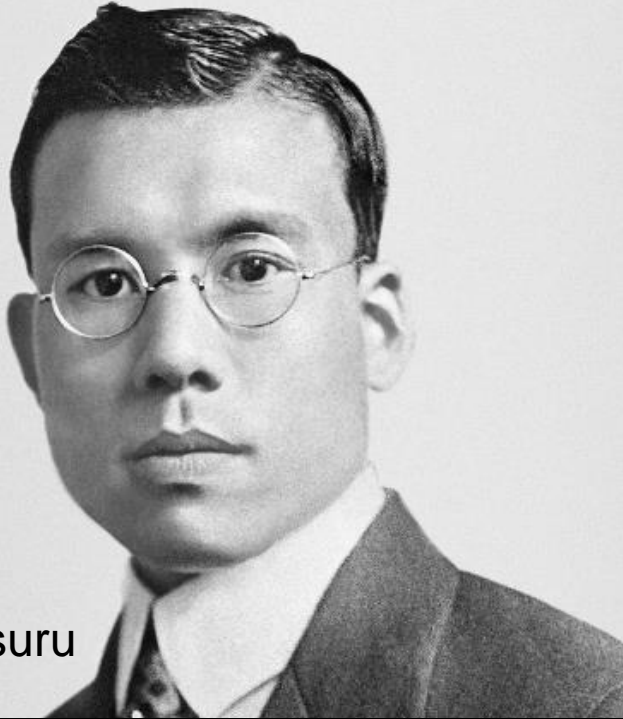


Nikka Yoichi Distillery
Yoichi, Hokkaido Pref.





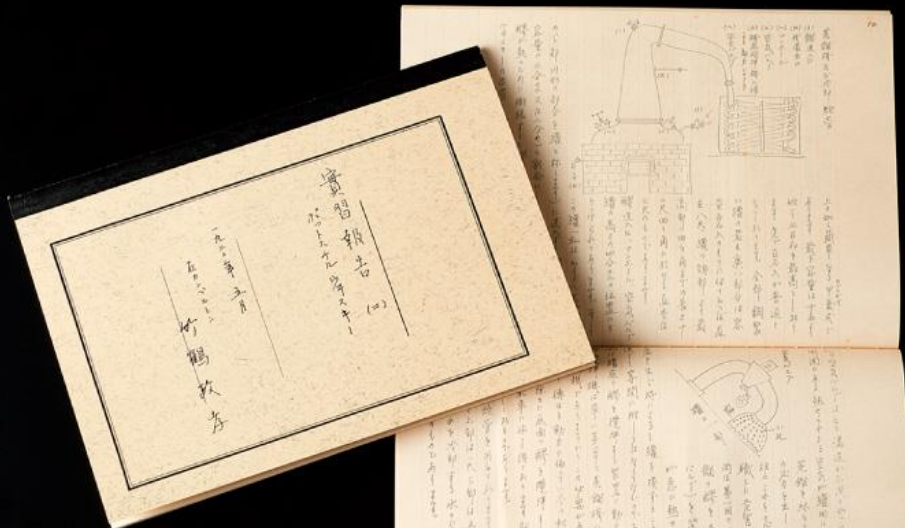
Nikka Distillery



Masataka Taketsuru

Nikka Whisky History

- Born into a sake brewing family in Hiroshima in 1894.
- Graduated from Osaka Technical in 1916 where he majored in brewing.
- From 1919 he apprenticed at Longmorn Distillery, James Calder, and Hazelburn Distillery.
- Came back to Japan in 1920 and start working at Kotobukiya (Suntory), worked for 10yrs.
- And Establisehd Dai Nippon Kaju Co. in 1934
- Yoichi Distillery started distillation in **1936**





Nikka Distillery

At Latitude 43.2° N

The harsh and rich nature in the north



Taketsuru valued the climate and natural features of the north.

- Yoichi was close to the sea, surrounded by mountains on three sides and in many ways similar to Highland in Scotland.
- Cold climate with an appropriate Humidity, Crisp Clean Air and Fresh Water - everything necessary for his ideal whisky.
- The proximity to the sea is one of the distinctive features of Yoichi. The Sea Breeze gives a Briny Hint to the whisky during the Maturation.



Nikka Yoichi Distillery



Direct coal-fired distillation



Pot stills



The characteristics of Yoichi Single Malt such as boldness and toasty burnt flavors are unique features of this distillation.

Direct coal-fired distillation
The tradition inherited from the foundation

Similar to pot stills at Longmorn Distillery in Speyside where Masataka had the first practical training in Scotland.

This traditional coal-fired distillation is hardly seen today as it is difficult to control temperature and requires highly skilled craftsmen.

However, the distillation process at Yoichi has remained very traditional to this day.



Nikka Yoichi Single Malt



NIKKA WHISKY
ニッカウヰスキー



Nikka Yoichi Single Malt

ABV: 45%, Price: \$100

- described as **Bold and Strong**. Pleasant peaty notes and smokiness originating from the traditional direct coal-fired distillation as well as a briny hint delivered by the sea breeze during the aging process.

Vatting various different malt whiskies together, this bottling expresses a delicate balance between peaty, smoky and fruity aromas.

Yoichi Distillery founded in 1934

Production: Malt

Fermentation tank: 10

1st Still: 4

2nd Still: 2

Delicate balance between peaty, smoky and fruity aromas



Nikka Miyagikyo Distillery



Nikka Miyagikyo Distillery
Sendai, Miyagi Pref.





Nikka Miyagikyo Distillery



Miyagikyo pot stills



Yoichi pot stills

Masataka aimed to develop a complete contrast between Yoichi Distillery and Miyagikyo Distillery.

Along with the different terroir, the different distillation method of Miyagikyo creates distinctive malt whiskies.

These pot stills are heated by Indirect Steam at a much Lower Temperature that allows Slower Distillation.

This distillation method results in Soft x Floral characteristics in Miyagikyo Single Malt.

Miyagikyo's pot stills are much larger than those at Yoichi with different shapes such as a Bulge Neck and Ascending Lyne-arm.



Nikka Miyagikyo Single Malt



Elegant and fruity
Expresses fruitiness & delicate mouthfeel

Nikka Miyagikyo Single Malt
ABV: 45%, \$90

- described as **Soft and Fruity.**

Using less peaty malt, this whisky is distilled in a pot still heated **by Indirect Steam at a Low temperature.**

Estery aromas generated by carefully Selected Yeast strains.

- Miyagikyo Single Malt has an **elegant fruitiness and a distinctive aroma with a strong Sherry cask influence.**

Miyagikyo Distillery founded in 1969
Production: Malt and Grain

Fermentation tank: 22

1st Still: 4

2nd Still: 4

(Patent Still: 2)



Nikka Pure Malt



Nikka Taketsuru Pure Malt

ABV: 43%, \$80

-One of Nikka's **signature products** to showcase their way of blending and perfecting flavors. **Gentle malt flavor, fruitiness** and extremely well-balanced taste make it a perfect entry point into the world of Nikka.

- **Taketsuru Pure Malt** is a range of **blended malt whiskies** named in honor of Masataka Taketsuru, the founder of Nikka and father of Japanese whisky.

Yoichi Distillery founded in 1934

Miyagikyo Distillery founded in 1969

Production: Malt and Grain

Fermentation tank: 10 + 22

1st Still: 4 + 4

2nd Still: 2 + 4



smooth & well-balanced
elegant softness and complexity

along with rich mouthfeel and smokiness.





Sasanokawa Distillery



Sasanokawa Distillery
Koriyama, Fukushima Pref.





Sasanokawa Distillery



Sasanokawa is
Tohoku Japan's
Oldest Sake
Brewery founded in

1765- as such, it has a long history of producing small batch craft whiskies for the local area.

- Started producing **Whisky** from **1946**.
- Also produces **Shochu, liqueur, other spirits**.
- They are also famed for assisting Ichigo Akuto in the launch of **Ichiro's Malt whisky** line (2004~2008) by holding on to casks from the closed Hanyu Distillery.

Fermentation tank: 4 (3KL)

1st Still: 1 (2KL)

2nd Still: 1 (1KL)



Sasakawa Pure Malt



Light, smooth and soft

Sasakawa Pure Malt

ABV: 43%, \$125

- A masterful blend of three different **bourbon-barreled** whiskies: **un-peated malt** whisky, a **peated malt** whisky, and a **peated malt whisky finished in Spanish sherry casks** after spending **five years in bourbon casks**.

Color: Light gold

Nose: Pear, lemon grass, yeasty

Palate: Lemon peel, honey

Texture: light, smooth, soft

Finish: Refreshing, herbaceous, hint of **peaty smokiness** hiding beneath **sherry savor**.

Sasanokawa Distillery

founded in 1946

Production: Malt, Grain, Sake, Shochu

2021 Society of Wine Educators Conference

Thank You
for Your Attention!

