Our business Creed : Quality first

Rice, water and skill are of fundamental importance when brewing sake. Akita, is blessed with superb quality rice and is described as a “Rice country with excellent sake.” In addition, Akita is also blessed with gorgeous nature, and abundant fresh groudwater is plentifully found in throughout the region. We have continued to brew fine sake “Takashimizu” with excellent rice, water and high brewing skills based on a harmony with others for more than 70 years.

History

Our history began in 1944 after the merging of 12 small breweries. In 1950, the main brewery started its sake production in a place famous as a source of the purest water. Even after that, we built a new brewing institution, bottling factory and low temperature storage warehouse to improve our product capacity. In 1990, a rice polishing plant was built in Goshono and then a new sake brewery was built nearby in 1998. We practice sake brewing using techniques by young employees with the latest temperature management devices, succeeding to traditional brewing methods by hand. This makes it possible to supply a stable high quality sake of specific classes in this brewery. In 2005, our brewery was rebuilt from the start-up phase as “sake-dojo Senningura” (dojo means a training hall) to learn traditional sake brewing skills with old style tools. We now make good use of this brewery to create “new traditions” which will succeed into the future and continue to pursue the development of traditional sake brewing skills. In this way, we promote our sake brewing methods for future generations, while respecting tradition.

TAKASHIMIZU

Our brand name “Takashimizu” was selected among 5,037 submissions from the public by intellectuals of Akita (superintendent of Akita tax office, curator of prefectual library, the president of Akita Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the president of the Akita-sakigake newspaper office) soon after the war. It was named after the hill on which Akita Castle once stood.

Awards

We have been awarded a gold medal at the Annual Japan New Sake Awards, 18 consecutive years (as of 2017). We have also been awarded a gold medal at the Tohoku District Sake Competition 21 consecutive years. During these 21 years, we were won Soudai (the top award) 5 times. The Annual Japan New Sake Awards are held every spring by the National Research Institute of Brewing. The competition started in 1911 and has a history of over one century. This is the only nationwide sake competition in Japan. Every year, newly brewed sake from all over Japan is evaluated. The flavor and taste of new sake is carefully judged by sake professionals to decide the “Sake of the Year.”

Location

Akita is located in northern Japan, facing the sea of Japan and the Ou mountains, the nature is beautiful from season to season, such as Lake Tazawa : the deepest lake in Japan, the Oga Peninsula with its beautiful coast line and sunset, and Mt. Chokai: known as Dewa(Akita) Fuji. Akita is also known as a leading rice-farming prefecture in Japan. There are various local specialities made from rice, such as “Kiritanpo” or sake. The traditional sake brewing skills and rich natural environment share a deep connections. This is why Akita is one of the top sake-producing prefectures in Japan.

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THE SAKE MAKING PROCESS

1. Rice

We examine closely Genmai(Brown rice) with focus on sake rice produced in Akita such as Sake-komachi and Miyamanishiki, considering the period of preparations and brewing methods. There are about 200 kinds of non-glutinous rice grown in Japan. About 90 kinds of these are used for brewing sake. Only 28 strains of rice are certified as best suited for brewing sake in Japan.

2. Polishing

It is an important process to polish off the outer layers of the rice which cause inadequate taste. At our rice polishing plant, rice is polished carefully depending on varieties, classes and qualities.

3. Washing & Steaming

Rice washing machines are used to rinse when making standard sake, on the other hand, the highly polished rice for Ginjo-shu is still rinsed by hand delicately. The rice is then steamed, making it easier for the enzymes in Koji-mold (Aspergillus orizae) to break down the starches. At mass producing sake breweries, all of the processes from washing to steaming(for standard sake) are done by automated machines.

4. Koji

Making koji is the most difficult process of all because the quality of koji has a lot of effects on the quality of sake. Steamed rice is spread out while it is still hot and let it cool down to about 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Then koji -mold is sprinkled over the cooled rice. After koji-mold has been added, the cooled rice is stored at a constant temperature of 86 degrees Fahrenheit, letting it propagate to make koji. The mixture of steamed rice and koji-mold for Ginjo-shu is stored in traditional wooden boxes called “Koji-buta.”

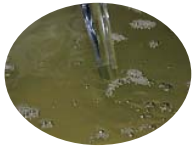
5. Shubo

In Japanese, Shubo means “mother of sake.” Shubo is a yeast mash made from a nutritious mixture of steamed rice, koji and water. It contains a considerable amount of lactic acid bacteria(LAB) giving it a strong sour taste. Sake yeast is grown under the delicate temperature control.

6. Moromi

Moromi is a mixture of steamed rice, water , koji and yeast mash. Inside the moromi tanks, rice starch is converted into sugar, and the sugar is converted into alcohol at the same time. This creates sake with high alcohol content(more than 20 %). This fermentation process takes about 20 days for standard sake, and about 30-45 days for Ginjo-shu.

7. Pressing & Pasteurization



The mash is then pressed by a machine that separates sake from the unfermented solids, known as “Sake-kasu.” After pressing, sake needs to be filtered because there are still microscopic particles floating in sake. Then sake is heated to about 150 degrees Fahrenheit to destroy enzymes and bacteria.

8. Maturation

Heat treated sake is usually kept in a storage tank at 60 degrees Fahrenheit until it is bottled for shipping. Namazake which does not need to be heated is stored in special tanks under the freezing temperature.

9. Bottling

Sake that is ready to be bottled is inspected and carbon-filtered once again to make a fine adjustment to the taste. Water is added to sake in order to lower the alcohol percentage to 15-16%, fitting Japanese regulations for sake production. Final pasteurization processes are done to the bottled sake and then it is ready for distribution.