

In Praise of Fine Sake

Vol. 6

Miyaizumi Brewery

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- Alcohol content: 16%
- Seimaibuai (rice milling percentage): 60%
- Nihonshu-do (Sake Meter Value + dry, -sweet): +0.5
- Acidity: 1.5
- Rice: Yume no Kaori (grown at Kamimawatari Yume Farm, Minato-machi, Aizuwakamatsu)
- Volume: 1.8 liters
- Price: 2,310 yen (tax inclusive)



Junai Shikomi (Pure Love Brew) Junmai Sharaku

Text/ Kaori Haishi (sake sommelier) Photography/ Susumu Nagao



Pure Love Brew: A Sake that Moves the Heart

Mention driven young brewers to me, and the first person that springs to my mind is Yoshihiro Miyamori of the famous Miyaizumi Brewery. Always moving with the times and taking on new challenges, the sake he brews provokes an enthusiastic response from sake drinkers. His dignified, straightforward and uncompromising stance rather reminds me of a Tokugawa shogunate loyalist.

You might expect that sake made by such a dauntless brewer would be an ultra-dry man's drink, but this is not so. Junai Shikomi Junmai Sharaku is a sake with an enchanting fruity flavor, with a smooth texture and bittersweetness reminiscent of white peaches. However, by fruity I don't simply mean that this is

a sweet sake. The acid leaves a fresh impression, and forms a superb balance with the dryness that makes a final shy appearance. It also has a mild lactic acid aroma, derived from the rice from which it was made. You don't tire of this sake after one glass.

I took the plunge and tried thinly sliced apple as an accompanying snack, since I wanted something that had the same sweet-sour tartness. You might think that a strange concept, but it does in fact work well. Sprinkle some salt over the apple and it's even better. A glorious sake accompanied by the taste of fruit is an experience everyone should try. I can also recommend dishes that feature vinegar, such as squid and cucumber with a vinegar dressing, or chicken wings simmered in vinegar. When the food and sake have an acidity in common, it heightens the deliciousness

of it in both. The ideal temperature for drinking this sake is 10 to 12 degrees. Over-chill it and the finely-tuned smoothness is reduced by half, making the taste harsh. Remove it from the fridge a little while beforehand, and wait until slight drops of water appear on the bottle before you drink it.

The label around the neck is so often mistaken for a misprint, but it's not "Junmai," as you might think, but "Junai". Pure love. Sake brewed with love. Putting this on the neck label is the sort of small touch characteristic of Miyamori, and is indicative of a greater allegiance: his love of sake brewing, love for the local area, and love for Fukushima. Many loves have been poured into the making of this brew. With just one drop of it, your palate will experience the spirit of this brewer.