

In Praise of Fine Sake

Vol. 14

Miyasaka Brewery

Address: Motomachi 1-16, Suwa-shi, Nagano
0266-52-6161

- Alcohol: 16% ● Seimaibuai (rice milling percentage): 45%
- Nihonshu-do (Sake Meter Value + dry, -sweet): + 1
- Acidity: approx.1.5 ● Amino acidity: approx.1.0
- Rice: 100% Yamada-nishiki from the Kato Yamakuni area in Hyogo prefecture
- Volume: 720ml (no packaging)
- Price: 2,415 yen (tax inclusive)



Yamahana Junmai Daiginjo

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



A Junmai Daiginjo for Casual Enjoyment

The Miyasaka brewery has been making sake since 1662, and celebrated its 350th anniversary this April. The brewery is situated in the rich natural environment of Suwa in Nagano prefecture, and is known throughout Japan and overseas as the birthplace of yeast number seven, or nanago, which is a favorite of sake brewers. With the launch of its limited distribution line, Miyasaka, along with its main brand Masumi, is experiencing increasing business momentum. This doesn't mean they can rest on their laurels, however, as young brewers in tune with the times exert a major influence while still maintaining respect for tradition. Due to the Miyasaka name being so well-known, many assume that the brewery

must be automated, but that is a misapprehension. Although there is partial automation, the processes that are central to sake-making are still in the hands of skilled brewers. Miyasaka is proud of its long-selling Yamahana Junmai Daiginjo, a sake that is very popular with women. This brew is advertised as being inspired by the lovely early-spring flowers in the Yatsugatake mountains, and sure enough, the aroma that gently wafts up evokes an image of white blossoms. There are also faint traces of green apples and a lactic aroma, but this is not overly florid and has a nice elegant touch. A light viscosity contributes to the round taste, and the flavor of rice umami is also rich and healthy. With each glass you drink, your mood gets mellower. The flavor is centered around an sense

of sweetness and acidity, with a long aftertaste that fades out to a slow finish. This sake has a beauty and refinement reminiscent of dyed Yuzen cloth floating on a river. That said, however, it wouldn't be appropriate to put on airs when you drink it. For a junmai daiginjo made from meticulously selected ingredients, it's very reasonably priced. This sake is one to drink casually with some laid-back friends while the sun is still high, ideally accompanied with some very simple food. At this time of year I would recommend a marinade of sweet tomatoes and new onions, grilled broad beans, or firefly squid with vinegar miso dressing. I also highly recommend trying an oil-based pasta. Thinking about the marriage of flavors is another pleasure that comes with this brew. It reaffirms my belief that Japanese sake is a great accompaniment for meals.