



Liquor Burn's Guide to Japanese Wine 日本ワイン



Wine makers in Japan have been working hard for over 100 years to create quality wines that can generate recognition on the world stage. Due to heavy annual rainfall and rich soil Japan is generally not the best geography for growing wine grapes. However there are regions of Japan that are ideal from growing high quality grapes. Yamanashi prefecture and Hokkaido prefecture are the main regions in Japan for growing wine grapes. Yamanashi prefecture is the top domestic producer of grapes, peaches, plums, and wine in Japan.

Japanese Wine Grapes

Japan has developed two native wine grapes: Koshu and Muscat Bailey A.

Koshu 甲州

The koshu grape is the most important grape variety native to Japan. It's a white grape grown primarily in Yamanashi prefecture. *Koshu* is the former name of Yamanashi. It was developed from grapes that travelled the Silk Road across Central Asia to Japan, at a period estimated to be around a thousand years ago.

Koshu white wine is a pale, straw color with a soft, fruity bouquet with overtones of citrus and peach. The taste is often described as clean, delicate and fresh. A distinctive and refreshing bouquet and a nicely balanced acidity are among its distinctive characteristics. Low alcohol content adds a pleasing lightness. The acidity is well balanced. It is a superb match for subtly flavored foods and a perfect match for Japanese food.



Muscat Bailey A マスカットベリーA

Developed over a lifetime by Zenbei Kawakami, the father of Japanese wine growing, to create a red wine grape adapted to Japan's climate. Originally used to make a sweet Japanese fruit wine called *amakuchi*, it has recently been developed to create drier varieties and barrel aged varieties. It is also blended with Western grapes to create a very full-bodied Bordeaux style flavor. In addition, different blending has led to smoother Bourgogne style varieties.

Three Notable Japanese Vineyards

Tomi no Oka Winery 登美の丘ワイナリー



TOMI NO OKA WINERY
SUNTORY

"Our goal is to create wines that are like a Japanese Kimono."

- Eiichi Okawa, Managing Director

This vineyard is owned by Suntory. The founder of Suntory, Shinjiro Torii, started one of the very first vineyards in Japan in 1907. In 1936 he joined Zenbei Kawakami, father of the Japanese red wine grape Muscat Bailey A, in initiating management of a vineyard in the Tomi no Oka region of Yamanashi prefecture. The vineyard is a model of sustainable agriculture, recognized by its ISO 14001 certification for excellence in environmental management.

Their signature wine is called Tomi. In 1997 Tomi was the 1st Japanese wine to win a gold medal at the International Les Citadelles du Vin wine competition in the Bordeaux region of France.

- White grapes: Koshu, Chardonnay, Riesling Forte
- Red grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Pinot Noir, Black Queen

Chateau Mercian シャトー・メルシャン



Château Mercian

This vineyard was founded in 1970 by Kirin. It is located in Yamanashi prefecture. Chateau Mercian's goal is to introduce finesse and elegance through Japan's unique viticulture. Mercian was the first Japanese vineyard to have a wine appear in the world famous wine magazine *Wine Spectator*.

- White grapes: Koshu, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling
- Red grapes: Muscat Bailey A, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah

Tamba Wine - a local Kyoto winery 丹波ワイン

Tamba wine is a small local winery founded by Tetsuo Kuroi in 1979. He was on a mission to seek out the perfect wine to complement Kyoto cuisine. Kyoto prefecture is famous for its agriculture and fertile soil. Vegetables from Kyoto are particularly famous. This vineyard is located in Kyo-tamba town, the bread basket of Kyoto city.



Taking into consideration the balance between the food and the wine, Tamba wine is produced to extract high acidity and fruitiness from the grapes. It is made to be a perfect match for Kyoto's cuisine. It is said that the wine is reminiscent of sake.

Their logo includes the German proverb "Liebe geht durch den Magen," which translates as "Love is through the stomach." As this old German saying goes, a husband will return home early if he knows there is good home cooking waiting for him.

Japanese Wine List 日本ワイン

Type	English	Japanese 日本語	Price	No.
Red Wine	Cabernet Fran '02 by Tomi no Oka Winery	登美の丘 カベルネフラン 02	¥4,200	41
	Claret by Tamba Winery (half bottle)	丹波クラレット ハーフ ★ From Kyoto! ★	¥670	46
	Red Wine without Additives or Preservatives by Chateau Mercian	おいしい無添加 ふくよか赤	¥552	47
	Muscat Bailey A Barrel-aged Cuvee Ikegawa by Sakaori Winery	木下マスカットベリ-A樽熟成キウ イケガ ワ'08	¥2300	42
	'Aia Kane' by Chateau Mercian	シャト-メルシャン アンサンブル 藍茜'11	¥1400	43
	'Chushin' Merlot by Chateau Mercian	日本の地ワイン 中信メルロ'09	¥1100	45
	Assemblage by Tamba Wine	丹波ワイン アッセンブラージュ ★ From Kyoto! ★	¥1,216	44
White Wine	Koshu by Tomi no Oka Winery	登美の丘 甲州	¥2,800	33
	Fruity White by Tamba Wine	丹波フルーティ 白 ★ From Kyoto! ★	¥924	38
	Fruity White by Tamba Wine (half bottle)	丹波ワイン フルーティ 白 ★ From Kyoto! ★	¥514	40
	Chateau Sakaori Koshu by Sakaori Winery	シャトー酒折 甲州	¥1,200	36
	Koshu Kiiroka by Chateau Mercian	甲州きいろ香	¥2,250	34
	'Moegi' by Chateau Mercian	シャト-メルシャン アンサンブル 萌黄'12	¥1400	35
	Hosaka Koshu by Chateau Mercian	日本の地ワイン 穂坂 甲州'11	¥1000	37
	Hokku by Tamba Wine (half bottle)	丹波ワイン ホック ハーフ ★ From Kyoto! ★	¥655	39

