

MIYAKOBIJIN SHUZŌ

都美人酒造



Located on Awaji Island, Miyako-Bijin was established as a company in 1945, when 10 smaller breweries merged together to consolidate their brewing skills. Originally called Awaji Shuzo after the island's name, it changed to Miyako-Bijin in 1959/1960. After the sake boom of the 70's and early 80's Miyako Bijin struggled with sales and over the following years cut back on volume-based production and focused solely on small batch quality-driven products. Much of the brewery machinery was sold off and they moved back to handmade, small-tank production. They primarily use Yamahai fermentation for their sakes and rely on ambient yeast.



'Yoigokochi Yuzu'

Region: Hyogo

Rice Variety: Gohyakumangoku

Type: junmaishu

Polishing Rate: 65%

ABV: 7%

Ingredients: rice, water, kōji, yuzushu

Brewing: yamahai slow ferment, brewed with yuzu juice, undiluted, unfiltered

Serving Temperature: very cold

What is Pure Sake?

'Pure sake' (junmai or junmaishu) is a modern, postwar term, and in many ways, connects to the term 'natural wine'. In both cases, they are terms that advocate limited /minimal intervention beverages. Just like 'natural wine', 'pure sake' is a term that arose as a reaction against postwar industrial and chemical practices in sake brewing. The addition of sulfites and commercial yeast in wine is paralleled in sake by the addition of distilled alcohol. The addition of distilled alcohol during the brewing process is a wartime invention at the command of the Japanese Army – during the occupation of Northeast China in the 1930's, colder temperatures would freeze the sake. When the war in the 1940's escalated to a world war and the supply chain was disrupted, rice became a scarce commodity. The sake industry was instructed to produce as much sake out of as few grains of rice as possible – hence the addition of distilled alcohol. Adding distilled alcohol makes the product cheaper to produce and allows the brewer to further expand the volume by adding large amounts of water. In turn, the final drink is very dry, harsh, and basically tasteless, which prompts the addition of sugar and monosodium glutamate to make it more palatable. After a complete absence from the 1940's to the 1970's, a resurgence of pure sake began to take shape, and a small but steady infrastructure of producers, retailers, restaurants, and bars came into place. The market share of junmai sake versus alcohol-added sake (honjozo) remained very low until a boom in the 2010's where it now makes up 30% of the entire market. Sake producers and consumers alike have made a definite shift and grown more akin to pure sake.

Sake Terminology

Bodaimoto	● medieval starter method developed by Buddhist Monks – rice is soaked in water before being steamed, a portion inoculated with kōji, and added to the moto
Ginjō	● rice polished to 60% or less
Daiginjō	● rice polished to 50% or less
Genshu	● undiluted sake
Junmai / junmaishu	● 100% pure rice sake
Kimoto	● ancient starter method in which steamed rice, water, and kōji is mashed into a puree with long wooden poles and fermented for 30-40 days until the moto is ready
Kōji	● rice mold used to convert starch into sugar
Kura	● sake brewery
Kuramoto	● brewery owner
Muroka	● no carbon filtration
Nama	● unpasteurized sake
Shubo (moto)	● yeast starter comprised of rice, water, yeast, and native or added lactic acid
Tōji	● master brewer of a kura
Yamahai	● slow starter method consisting of kōji rice, water, and yeast. Similar to kimoto, but without the laborious mashing