Hokkaido – Japan’s new wine mecca

by Masahisa Abe

Hokkaido's wine production began in the 1960s. Because of the snow and severe cold in Hokkaido, a species of European grape (Crimson Glory) was first used, but now thanks to the cultivation of European grape varieties such as Kerner and Müller Thurgau from Germany, Hokkaido has quickly developed into the No.1 wine-producing region in Japan. For the last 10 years after the turn of the 21st century, thanks to the staging of the Japan Wine Competition (JWC), the revision in labeling and environmental changes surrounding wine production in Japan, added to the activities of young producers and cultivators, aiming for world-class wine production at each establishment, the quality of and attention paid to Japanese wine has sky rocketed.
The wine-producing region of Japan has shifted to Hokkaido, where conditions are suitable for the cultivation of authentic European wine grapes, prompting more and more wineries to open up in the region.

The most talked-about wine-producing region

As interest in food safety increases, the Japan Wine Competition has brought Hokkaido wine to the forefront of the public’s awareness, and now the wine is not only coveted by Japanese wine enthusiasts but also plays an important role in linking Hokkaido’s tourism and food industries. “Wine tourism” involving tours of wineries and vineyards is beginning to develop, and expectations are high for the role of Hokkaido wine in the future.

Compatibility of Hokkaido wine and cuisine

Surrounded on all sides by the ocean, Hokkaido is naturally a treasure-trove of seafood, but is also home to an abundant variety of other foodstuffs such as vegetables, meat and cheese. It has recently become known that cuisine made with ingredients produced in Hokkaido is characteristic of the north country Tokachi Wine, with its authentic, sweet tasting grapes. Furano Wine is an acidic full-bodied wine available only in Hokkaido.

Where to buy

Marui Jr Department Store Odori-kann S2F Minato Y1-1 Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Sapporo Tel.: +81-11-220-1188
http://www.marui.co.jp/sapporo/top/bd01.html

Hokkaido Osanbashi Plaza Sapporo Office
JR Sapporo Sta., 1 East Exit Tel.: +81-11-213-5003
http://www.osanbashi.co.jp/sapporo_jr/
Hokkaido – Japan’s new wine mecca

by Masahisa Abe

Wine production in Hokkaido began in the 1960s. Because of the snow and severe cold in Hokkaido, a species of wine grape (Crimson Glory) (which is cold-hardy) was first used, but now thanks to the cultivation of European grape varieties such as Kerner and Müller Thurgau from Germany, Hokkaido has quickly developed into the No.1 wine-producing region in Japan.

For the past 10 years after the turn of the 21st century, thanks to the staging of the Japan Wine Competition (JWC), the revision in labeling and environmental changes surrounding wine production in Japan, added to the activities of young producers and cultivators, aiming for world-class wine production at each establishment, the quality of and attention paid to Japanese wine has sky rocketed.

The wine-producing region of Japan has shifted to Hokkaido, where conditions are suitable for the cultivation of authentic European wine grapes, prompting more and more wineries to open up in the region.

The most talked-about wine-producing region

As interest in food safety increases, the Japanese Wine Competition has brought Hokkaido wines to the forefront of the public’s awareness, and now the wine is not only coveted by Japanese wine enthusiasts but also plays an important role in linking Hokkaido’s tourism and food industries. “Wine tourism” involving tours of wineries and vineyards is beginning to develop, and expectations are high for the role of Hokkaido wine in the future.

Compatibility of Hokkaido wine and cuisine

Surrounded on all sides by the ocean, Hokkaido is naturally a treasure-trove of seafood, but is also home to an abundant variety of other foodstuffs such as vegetables, meat and cheese. It has recently become known that cuisine made with ingredients produced in Hokkaido is best complimented by Hokkaido wine. The number of restaurants serving Hokkaido wine is slowly increasing, so next time you dine out, why not ask what brands they have?

Where to buy

Marui Imai Department Store Odori-kan B2F
Minato-ku, Odori-kan, Chūō-ku, Sapporo
Tel. +81-11-205-1151
http://www.dousanhin.com/shop/sapporo_jr/

Hokkaido – Japan’s new wine mecca

The Chitose Winery was established in 1988 as the Grace Wine Company’s (Yamazaki Winery) second winery. It’s first product, Kerner 1996 went on to win the gold medal at the sale of Pinot Noir in 2004.

About the Crimson Glory

The Crimson Glory vine for wine producing purposes on the island of Okushiri began in 1999. Subsequently, the cultivation of other wine grapes also began and eventually in 2009 Okushiri Wine was born. A clear wine with a unique maritime aura.

Sapporo Shusaini Toriomi Winery
A winery with a history dating back to 1976. Authentic wine production techniques using Crimson Glory vine and European wine grapes produce a refreshingly acidic taste. The Haraimune, a wine made from cultivated nonnative Crimson Glory has a mysterious hue, distinctive bouquet and rich acidic taste.

Hakodate Winery Ltd.
Hakodate Winery produces a sharp white wine with a rich fruity bouquet and a red wine with a glamorous red fruit aroma, both of which take advantage of the characteristics of grapes that grow in cooler climates.

Nippon Sasho Yoichi Winery
Nippon Sasho Yoichi Winery is a newly opened winery that produces Yoichi Wine. The restaurant serves Italian cuisine made with Hokkaido ingredients such as Yoichi vegetables, along with a selection of 13 wines.

Tokachi Wine
Established in 1972 as a vineyard for the test cultivation of grapes imported from Germany, under the direct control of Hokkaido Wine Co., Ltd., the vineyard now covers an area of 447 hectares and is the most expansive in Japan. Highly efficient cultivation methods produce 8 varieties of grapes from which the highest quality harvests are selected for the limited edition Tsurunuma wines that are commercially available two years later.

Marui Imai Department Store Odori-kan B2F
Minato-ku, Odori-kan, Chūō-ku, Sapporo
Tel. +81-11-205-1151
http://www.dousanhin.com/shop/sapporo_jr/