Brewing Year 2003

# National New Sake Awards

May 27, 2004

Independent Administrative Institution

National Research Institute of Brewing

# The Results of the National New Sake Awards for Brewing Year 2003

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## 1. Awards

The National New Sake Awards have become the 92nd this year since the first awards were held in 1911. These awards, adopting a nationwide perspective in our look into manufactured sake, aim for a positive grasp of current manufacturing technology and trends, and thereby to contribute to the improvement of Seishu (hereinafter referred as "sake") sake quality and enhance public awareness of sake. Currently, as these are the only nationwide awards, we think our role is big enough to contribute to improvements in manufacturing technology and quality.

A characteristic of this year was a change in the method of examination, whereby the conventional method involving classification by the degree of acidity was changed into a grouping examination based on the aroma constituent performed by aroma constituent analysis, conducted in advance by gas-chromatography. This was to deal with the situation with increased number of Ginjo-shu exhibits, which uses the latest high aroma production yeast. As in ordinary years, we classified the exhibits into 2 parts in order to pay attention to suitable rice for sake brewing, which has been developed in each location. In addition, we comprised a jury team incorporating individuals from variety of fields, such as sake manufacturers, staff of local public brewing related organizations, technical officers of the National Tax Agency and staff of our own institute.

## 2. Overview of examination

(1) The number of exhibits: Part Ⅰ: 71 items, Part Ⅱ: 978 items; Total: 1049 items

(2) Examination schedule:

Preliminary examination: 3 days, from April 26 to 28 (Mon - Wed.)
Final examination: 2 days, from May 12 to 13 (Wed. & Thu.)

(3) Jury: Persons appointed by NRIB executive director, including:

Sake manufacturers recommended by the Japan Sake Brewers Association,
Staff of local public brewing related organizations, technical officers of the National Tax Agency (Division chief and Senior Technical Officer)
Staff of the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB)
(Executive Director, Division Chief, Senior Researcher)

(4) Method of examination

(a) During the preliminary examination, applying the Profile Act, a

sensory examination was conducted regarding the characteristics of “aroma”, “taste” and “total evaluation”. In the final examination, a sensory evaluation was conducted which involved a total evaluation (3 score method). Parts I and II were classified, and both the preliminary and final examinations were conducted by grouping examinations based on the aroma constituent, which was analyzed in advance. With this method, jury could carefully check flavor, aroma, their balance etc. of each exhibit without being prepossessed by the highs and lows of Ginjo-shu aroma as was previously the case.

(b) Evaluation regarding the characteristics of aroma and taste obtained from the Profile Act was given to exhibitors as feedback, and would be utilized for the improvement of sake manufacturing technology such as Ginjo-shu and shipping management technology in the future, and would also be provided to consumers as an information regarding the quality of individual company's products.

(5) Examination results

Prize winning sake 529 pieces

Gold prize winner（Those acknowledged as the very best among the prize winning sake) 278 pieces

Testimonials are presented to the production sites from the Executive Director of the NRIB.

The list of prize winning and gold winning sake is shown on a separate sheet.

(6) Workshop of manufacturing technology / Open Sake Tasting: May 27（Thu.）
From 10am to 3 pm（Workshop of manufacturing technology: to 3:30pm）

### 3. Comments

As an overview of brewing year 2003, it was generally a warm winter with a considerable difference between the warm and cold weather, but it became a suitable year for sake brewing thanks to generally cold weather after mid-Jan., namely the manufacturing period for high-class sake such as Ginjo-shu etc. On the other hand, the rice crop situation index, due to cold weather damage in the Hokkaido and Tohoku regions, was ”remarkably poor” with 90 points as a national average index. In some areas, the amount of secured local production of rice was insufficient, but on the whole, many regions could receive the expected overall quantity. Although Yamada-nishiki, which is the main suitable rice variety for sake brewing, experienced no problem in terms of quantity, some production sites found the treatment of raw materials and management of Ro problematic, because it tended to be hard due to high temperatures through the

duration of the grain filling.
Exhibits during this year's awards numbered 1049 pieces, a decrease of 16 pieces from the previous year. Exhibits in Part II decreased by 3 pieces from the previous year, while exhibits classified under Part I, which was set to observe characteristics of suitable rice varieties other than Yamada-nishiki, decreased by 13 pieces.
Based on the manufacturing circumstances as mentioned above which were not necessarily good, thanks to the efforts made by each production site, there were a number of good quality sake among the exhibits. In terms of aroma, diversity and individuality of sake quality featuring a variety of sake yeast were observed again this year, with a wide variety from a rich upper coming aroma to a mild aroma spread gracefully around the palate. There were also various types as for taste, including those which featured the characteristics of raw material rice and a variety of yeast resulting in rich and deep taste, as well as those with a light and clear-cut type flavor. However, among some of the exhibits, we came across those affected by problems of basic brewing technology, especially after filtration.
As for exhibits classified in Part I, which was set for the raw material other than Yamada-nishiki, the number had comparatively decreased. However, among new suitable rice varieties for sake brewing, such as "Senbon-nishiki" and "Akita sake komachi" which were developed in recent years, the number of exhibits which became prize winners increased from last year, so their characteristics seem to establish a different type of sake from Yamada-nishiki. It is desirable to develop such new rice varieties for sake brewing and promote the diversification of Japanese sake in future.
As for the 529 exhibits which entered prize winners among the exhibited Ginjo-shu, we are assured that they retain consumer satisfaction as high quality sake with unique characteristics, which were carefully manufactured paying close attention to the whole production process from the treatment of raw material, making Koji, fermentation management of Ro to brewing.

*Reference
Exhibits classification
(a) Part I
Ginjo-shu, which was manufactured using single or blended breeds except Yamada-nishiki as the raw material rice, or those using under 50% of Yamada-nishiki.
(b) Part II
Ginjo-shu, which was manufactured using only Yamada-nishiki as the raw material rice, or those using over 50% of Yamada-nishiki.