

Outline of the Annual Japan Sake Awards 2013

May 22, 2013

National Research Institute of Brewing
Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association

1. Awards

The Annual Japan Sake Awards 2013 were held under the auspices of the National Research Institute of Brewing (NRIB) and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association. This year marks the 101st Annual Japan Sake Awards, which were first held in 1911.

For these awards, a nationwide investigation of manufactured *sake* was conducted with the aim of clarifying the current manufacturing technology and trends in order to contribute to the improvement of *sake* quality and enhance public awareness of *sake*. As these are the only national awards, we believe we have enough influence to contribute to improvements in manufacturing technology and quality.

2. Exhibit

(1) Qualification for entry

Manufacturers who hold a *sake* brewing license and are members of the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association

(2) Applicable standard for entry

Entries must be unprocessed *Ginjo-shu* brewed at the manufacturer's own licensed production sites during the brewing year 2012, as stipulated in the "labeling standard for the manufacturing process and quality of sake" of the National Tax Agency. Each entry must have a degree of acidity greater than 1.0 and contain no added aroma.

(3) Number of entries

Limited to one entry per manufacturer.

(4) Entry fee

The entry fee is 15,750 yen (including consumption tax) per item.

3. Overview of examination

(1) Number of entries: 864

(2) Examination schedule

Preliminary examination: 3 days, from April 23 to 25 (Tue. - Thu.)

Final examination: 2 days, May 8 & 9 (Wed. & Thu.)

(3) Jury: Persons appointed by the president of the NRIB, including:

Sake manufacturers recommended by the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association

Staff of local public brewing related organizations

Technical officers of the National Tax Agency

Staff of NRIB

(4) Method of examination

a) During the preliminary examination, a sensory profile of each entry was created by examining the "aroma", "taste" and "total evaluation" (5-point scale). In the final examination, an overall sensory evaluation was given (3-point scale). Both the preliminary and final examinations were conducted by

grouping examinations based on the aroma constituent, which was analyzed in advance. According to this method, the jury could carefully evaluate the flavor, aroma, and balance of each entry without being influenced by the diverse range of aromas among *Ginjo-shu*, as was the case in previous evaluations.

b) Evaluations of the characteristics of the aroma and taste obtained from the sensory profile were presented to manufacturers as feedback, and should be utilized for the improvement of *Ginjo-shu* manufacturing technology and shipping management technology in the future, and should also be considered as information regarding the quality of the individual manufacturer's products.

(5) Examination results

Prize winners: 426 awards

Gold prize winners (those recognized as the very best among the prize winning *sake*): 233 awards

Testimonials are presented to the manufacturers jointly by the presidents of the NRIB and the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association. The list of gold prize winning *sake* is shown on a separate sheet.

(6) Manufacturing technology workshop

Time: May 22 (Wed.) 10:00 – 15:30

Place: Higashi Hiroshima Sports Park, Gymnasium

67-1, Taguchi, Saijo-cho, Higashi-hiroshima, Hiroshima

(7) Public Tasting

Time: June 14 (Fri.), Part 1 10:00 – 13:00, Part 2 16:00 – 20:00

Place: Sunshine city, Bunka Kaikan 4F exhibition hall B

3-1-3, Higashi-ikebukuro, Toshima, Tokyo

4. Comments

The Annual Japan Sake Awards 2013 held two examinations, a preliminary (April 23 to 25) and final (May 8 & 9) examination, and released the results to the public on May 17.

Although in some regions, the effects of a cold spell caused the temperature of the *moromi* (mash) to become too low, overall, the *sake* brewing season for the 2002 brewing year experienced steady, cold weather through February, and the prevailing weather conditions were well suited for *sake* brewing.

Generally speaking, most brewing rice was of stellar quality; however, some brewing rice had a harder quality resulting from growth at high temperatures during ripening, making the rice more difficult to digest. Ordinarily, the use of such brewing rice as a raw material would make processing and control of the mash extremely difficult; however, because information about the rice quality was known at an early stage, the efforts of brewers and manufacture personnel, to our understanding, yielded successfully brewed, quality *sake*.

Entries this year numbered 864, which were 12 less than the prior year. Nonetheless, the number of *Junmai Ginjo-shu* entries continued an increasing trend, reaching 97 this year, up 15 over last year. Submissions of *sake* made from brew-suited rice varieties other than *Yamadanishiki*, such as *Koshitanrei* and *Senbonnishiki*, numbered 134. Thus, submissions made from varieties other than *Yamadanishiki* continued their steady increase.

With respect to the quality of entries, the predominant aroma, as in the past few years, came in the form of ethyl caproate as apple-like notes, although the main aroma of many submissions was provided by isoamyl acetate as bananas. The rice variety and yeast strain was highlighted by a palate of entries that ranged from light, clean types to savory types with rich body, although sweetness and acidity were

also prominently featured.

As mentioned above, the 2012 brewing year was once again marked by a tremendous variety of *sake* entries, although some entries exhibited deficiencies, such as with the aroma. We will provide details of any deficiencies in the examination results that will be disseminated later. We kindly ask applicants of the relevant entries to examine the possible causes of these deficiencies, place efforts on countermeasures, and further engage in improving the quality of their *sake*.

Overall, this year's *Ginjo-shu* entries were of superb quality. The applicants have committed their most detailed attention and highest technology to the selection and processing of brewing rice, *koji* (initial ferment base) preparation, *moromi* (mash) control, extraction and filtration. Among the field this year, brands awarded the Gold Prize created a harmony of rich notes and clean flavors, a testament to the applicants' mastery of brewing technology. We ask that all breweries and related parties double their efforts henceforth, including appropriate storage controls and distribution, to enable discerning consumers to fully enjoy this fine beverage known as *sake*.