



Aiming at IWC

Appealing to the Wine Market

Introducing Nada's Traditional Sake Brewing Techniques to the World

"One thousand two hundred and seventy-seven entries from 344 companies will be received, the numbers of both which show a large increase to a record high level when compared to previous entries (876 items from 300 companies)."

The Sake Category at the International Wine Challenge, a sake contest of the world's largest scale, will be competed for over three days starting on the 16th May at the head office of Hakutsuru Sake Brewing Co., Ltd in Higashinada Ward, Kobe. The contest marks its 10th anniversary this year, which will be the first formal sake contest held in Japan, and therefore a lot of enthusiasm in the hosting team.

The judges include 55 sommeliers and distributors, about half of whom are from the U.K., the U.S., or other countries, and the other half Japan. They get divided into groups of four or five people and, as a specific characteristic of the IWC contest, the exhibits then are evaluated by their features being discussed by the groups as part of the test process.

On the 16th or initial day of the event they screen all the exhibits and select medal candidates in each of the nine sub-categories, including Junmai, Junmai Daiginjo, and Honjozo. The second day involves the candidate sake items being ranked for gold, silver and bronze medals. They then select the best as the "Trophy Sake" of each sub-category on the final day.

Representatives of the brewers whose sake items have been selected as the winners of the nine Trophies then get to take part in an announcement ceremony regarding the "Champion Sake," or highest ranked sake," held in London on the 7th July.

Unfortunately, no sake originating in Hyogo has been selected as the Champion Sake in the last nine contests. The sole winner of the Trophy Sake award has been Sakuramasamune Co., Ltd. (Nada Ward, Kobe), whose "Oukaichirin (single cherry flower)," Daiginjo, was selected at the first Sake contest held in 2007, with Tazaemon Yamamura (aged 52), the

President, appearing dressed in a haori hakama (traditional formal Japanese wear) at the ceremony in London. He still remembers the ceremony and stated "It was just like the Academy Awards ceremony you watch on TV."

The company aims to receive the highest award in the oncoming contest and will exhibit 10 types of sake in seven sub-categories, excluding sparkling sake and aged sake. "We are doing this not only for the purpose of promoting our own products but also to contribute to increasing recognition of Nada Gogo," stated Yamamura with expectation on the "IWC effect."

"Nada Gogo originated in the happy coincidence of various favorable elements that included the emergence of the Edo market, which ensured a large amount of sake consumption, and the innovative rice-polishing techniques that could be used because of advantage of the steep streams flowing down from Mount Rokko. There are a lot of brewing techniques still used in Japan. My hope was to use this opportunity to provide that information to local communities." He plans to present the abovementioned techniques in related events.

Fukuju Junmai Daiginjo Black Label sake of Kobe Shu-shinkan Breweries, Ltd., (Nada Ward, Kobe) was awarded a gold medal in 2012. The brewer will submit 10 items this time.

Takenosuke Yasufuku talking about the attraction of the IWC event (Kobe Shu-shinkan at 1, Mikage-tsukamachi, Higashinada Ward, Kobe)



Tazaemon Yamamura looking back to the event when his sake was awarded the Trophy Sake in 2007 (Sakuramasamune Co., Ltd. at 5, Uozaki-minami-machi, Higashinada Ward, Kobe)



Using the motto of "Making sake that can be enjoyed with Italian and French dishes but while still adhering to Nada's traditions," the company has been gaining recognition as the producer of sake that is served at Nobel Prize banquets. Takenosuke Yasufuku (aged 42), the President, said, "Gaining new sake fans is the main theme of the sake brewing industry. The IWC therefore, from the viewpoint of brewers who wish to promote sake in wine markets both in and outside Japan, is a very attractive event."

Six of its 10 exhibits are of the Junmai type, for example Junmai and Junmai Daiginjo. "I made that choice, because, of course, I am proud of our Junmai, and I am afraid that non-Japanese sake drinkers wouldn't accept the taste of sake that has been diluted with distilled alcohol."

He has included sake that is based on traditional Kimoto (special sake yeast) in his entries. And in fact there is a movement throughout Japan to resume production of Kimoto type sake among brewers that have discovered the advantage in it. "Various judges will be there together from various countries to discuss how they feel about and to evaluate sake, which I consider to be very exciting. I am looking forward to hearing the comments they will make about our Kimoto-based sake."

(Kazuyoshi Tsujimoto)

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End of the series

兵庫に乾杯

日本酒と酒米の聖地

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2007年にトロフィー賞に選ばれた時の様子を振り返る山邑太左衛門さん。神戸市東灘区魚崎南町5、櫻正宗。

に選ばれた神戸酒心館(同区)は今回、10種類を出品する。灘の伝統を守りつつ、イタリヤ料理やフランス料理も楽しめる酒造りを掲げ、ノーベル賞の晩さん会へ提供された酒として知られるようになった同社。安福武之助社長(42)は「新しいファンを増やすのは業界の大きな課題。日本酒を国内外のワインマーケットにアピールしていく上でIWCは魅力がある」と話す。

「344社の1エタ7銘柄がエントリー予定で、前回(300社876出品)を大きく上回り、過去最大規模です」

世界最大級の日本酒コンクール「アンターナショナル・ワイン・チャレンジ(TWC)SAKE部門審査会」が、16日から3日間、神戸市東灘区の白鶴酒造本社で開かれる。10回目の今回は日本で初の本格開催で、主催者

IWCへ

側は意気込む。純米大吟醸、本醸造など審査にはソムリエやどろりカテゴリーのメタ流清酒関係者ら英国、米ル候補酒を絞り込み、国などの外国人と日本人2日目に候補酒を金銀人約半ずつ計55人が銅のメダルに格付けする。4〜5人のグループ。最終日はカテゴリー

ワイン市場にアピール

ロンドンである最高評価の「チャンピオン・サケ」の発表セレモニーに出場する。

残念ながら過去9回、兵庫からの出品酒はチャンピオン・サケに選ばれていない。トロフィー酒を唯一受賞した経験を持つのが櫻正宗(神戸市東灘区)。初回の2007年、大吟醸酒「櫻華」が選ばれ、ロンドンでのセレモニーに羽織はかま姿で参加した山邑太左衛門社長(52)は「テレビで見るとアカデミー賞のような場だった」と振り返る。

灘の伝統伝える場に

グと古酒以外の7カテゴリーに10種類出品し頂点を目指す。「自社米へのこだわりもあるが、灘五郷の知名度向上に繋がれば」とIWC効果に期待する。

「江戸という消費地」の出現や六甲山の急流を生かした精米の技術革新など、諸要素が一つになって誕生したのが灘五郷。今の日本た。「さまざまな国の酒の醸造技術にもつながる。地域に知ってもらう機会を」といって、関連イベントなどで説明していくつもりだ。

◇ 12年に福寿純米大吟醸ラベルで金メダル(江本一好) おわり



IWCの魅力について語る安福武之助さん。神戸市東灘区御影塚町1、神戸酒心館。