



Tryst with Sake at His Majesty The Emperor of Japan's Birthday Celebration in India

Description

The celebration of the birthday of **His Majesty The Emperor of Japan** organised at the Embassy of Japan in New Delhi witnessed attendance in large numbers by diplomats, bureaucrats and prominent citizens of the capital.



Welcome address by the Ambassador

Very commendably the Ambassador opened his **welcome speech in Hindi**, a gesture which was appreciated by all present.

Personally, it was a great honour for me to get an invite from the Japanese Embassy and to be a part of the event as a guest of the **Ambassador of Japan to India HE Mr Ono Keiichi**.



That's me alongside the HE The Ambassador of Japan

During the event, a multitude of Japanese products and services including luxury cars, beverages, cuisines, electronic gadgets, tourism, airlines etc were also showcased. As a wine enthusiast what appealed me the most were a plethora of **Japanese Sake**, some of which are as shared in pictures below.













What is Sake ?

What is Sake (and what's the big deal about it)? â?? the uninitiated may ask.

Well quite simply, Sake is a Japanese alcohol made from rice. Such rice-based alcohol beverages are being made in Japan for over 1000 years.

If Sake is an acquired taste, then the world is divided into two kinds of people: those who have acquired the taste and those yet to acquire it. Once bitten by the (Sake) bug, you'll never look back as a world of unalloyed drinking pleasure opens up before you.

The above quote from Decanter magazine aptly describes the increasing popularity of the Japanese Sake all over the world.

Sake Mom India

Out of all the Sake showcased during the evening, I shall give a share description of two, both of which are now available in Delhi. But before that let me introduce to you the brand ambassador of these Sake – Ms Mika Eoka a.k.a the **Sake Mom India**.



Me with the Sake Mom India

Mika Eoka is a prominent figure in India's sake education landscape as a Sake Instructor and possesses a deep understanding of sake culture and production. She is also the founder of Mika Sake Global, a company dedicated to exporting Japanese sake to India.

A tale of two Sake

The two Sake which were showcased by the **Sake Mom India** during the event are mentioned in succeeding paragraphs.

IKU's SHIRO SAKE

Iku's Shiro is the name of a Japanese **Junmai Daiginjo Sake**. A sip of Iku's Shiro refreshes your palate with its notably high acidity. It is made from polished **Yamadanishiki rice**. Certain terminology related to this is explained below.



Shiro is a Japanese word that can mean 'white' or 'samurai and gentleman'. It is associated with honour, valour, discipline, and respect.

Junmai literally means 'purely rice'. It refers to Sake made with nothing other than rice, water, yeast and Koji fungi (with added alcohol).

(Junmai sake is made from just rice, water, koji, and yeast. There is no brewer's alcohol added in the process because to qualify as Junmai the sake must be "pure". Typically, the rice in Junmai sake is polished to at least 70% of its original size).

Daiginjo means a super premium Sake with a 50% polishing ratio. It displays elegance with fruity, floral and perfumed notes and comes with a lot of finesse.

Yamadanishiki is one of the preferred rice for making Sake due to the large percentage of the "white heart" or the starch in the core.

With just 9% alcohol level, it can go nicely as an aperitif on its own and even paired well with finger food like canapés etc. I indeed loved the light and refreshing taste of this Sake.

ZUISEN CLASSIC HONZOJO SAKE

As the name indicates this is a **Honzojo Sake** which comes from the **Zuesen region** in Japan. It is made from **Gohyakumangoku**. Certain related terminology is brought out below.



Honjozo is similar to Junmai because in this also the rice is polished to at least 70% of the original size. But to qualify as Honjozo, a small amount of neutral alcohol is added to the sake.

Gohyakumangoku is a popular variety of sake rice from Niigata. It was registered in 1957 under its current name, which translates as “five million koku” or approximately nine million liters, as a commemoration of Niigata’s rice yield surpassing the five million koku mark that year.

Zuisen Honjozo Sake is known for its smooth and balanced flavor. It typically has a clean and crisp flavor profile with subtle fruity or floral notes and has an alcohol content of 15%.

So that was about the event and the two sake which I tasted there. Hope you liked reading the blog post.

Kampai “” which means Cheers in Japanese !!

(Mukul Manku)

