



The sweet flavor and aroma that only barrel-aging can bring

KOHAKU JIHEI

Mellow flavors & sweet aromas from extended aging on American oak. Aged in a temperature-regulated, repurposed koji room

Ingredients: rice, rice koji
ABV: 40%
Distillation method: atmospheric
Aged: 6+ years



Aromas like a ginjo sake, made with Kumamoto ingredients

SAKURA NO SATO BLUE

Mizukami has over 10,000 cherry blossom trees that bloom in the spring. Made with ginjo yeast developed in Kumamoto for a sake-like aroma and a fruity, clean aftertaste. Made with Kumamoto rice, Kumamoto yeast, and Kumamoto water.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji
ABV: 25%
Distillation method: vacuum



Made with Kumamoto rice at Kuma's oldest shochu distillery

SAIKOGURA

Matsushita began making shochu in the Edo period, making it the oldest Kuma distillery. Made with 100% Kumamoto & Kuma rice. Clean taste and bright aromas of rice.

Ingredients: rice, rice koji
ABV: 25%
Distillation method: vacuum
Age: 3+ years

Matsushita Jozozo

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THE HISTORY OF KUMA SHOCHU

Kuma Shochu: Born from the History, Climate & Culture of Hitoyoshi-Kuma



Abundant Water & Unique Climate

The Kuma Valley is located at the southernmost tip of Kumamoto Prefecture, deep in the mountains of Kyushu. The cool waters of the Kuma River—famed for its rapids—nourish the fields, while the valley's distinctive climate and significant temperature variations create one of the prefecture's prime rice-growing areas. The frequent dense fog in the region allows for fermentation and storage at relatively low temperatures, which helps give Kuma

shochu its refreshing aroma. The soft water from the Kuma River system is ideal for shochu making and helps enhance the gentle sweetness of the rice. The rich aroma and deep flavor of Kuma Shochu can only be produced in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region.

Tradition & Evolution

Rice shochu production in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region is believed to have started about 500 years ago. Distillation

techniques were supposedly brought over through trade with southeast and continental Asia. Today, 27 distilleries preserve the traditional techniques honed by their predecessors, offering a variety of flavors that have evolved over time.

In 1995, Kuma Shochu was designated as a Geographical Indication by the National Tax Agency, establishing it as a world-class shochu brand and attracting attention from around the globe.

WHAT IS KUMA SHOCHU?

- Must be made with rice (including rice koji) grown in Japan
- Mash must be made with Hitoyoshi-Kuma water and shochu must be distilled in a pot still and bottled in Hitoyoshi-Kuma.

Matsushita Jozozo

松下醸造所



You must be 20 or older to drink. Do not drink and drive.
Drinking alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding may affect the development of the fetus or infant.
Drink in moderation. Please recycle.



Upper left: Matsushita uses a furnace boiler to steam its rice, resulting in a soft-tasting shochu.
Upper right: Clay pots holding Kame Yorozuya Jihei are stored for 3 to 5 years to ensure a smooth taste.
Left: There are still centuries-old buildings on the property.
Right: Since its founding, Matsushita has used clear well water to wash and steam its rice. When rice is removed from the steamer, the distillery is filled with *amazake*-like aromas.

■ MATSUSHITA JOZOJO (Mizukami) ■

A historic shochu distillery working to protect the environment

■ HISTORY
Licensed by the Lord of Sagara

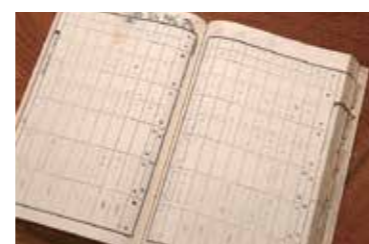
With Saikogura as its flagship product, Matsushita was founded in 1804, making it one of the oldest Kuma Shochu distilleries. The founder Jihei Yorozuya supposedly moved from modern-day Hitoyoshi to Mizukami, the source of the Kuma River, to make sake with the area's bountiful rice.

Matsushita later obtained a license to make and sell shochu for the lord of the Sagara domain and switched from making sake to making shochu. Permits were of

different ranks, with Matsushita receiving the highest rank: a permanent license. This historical document is still stored in the distillery to this day. The third president of the company took the name "Matsushita," which has been the name of the distillery ever since.

Over Matsushita's long history, it has seen a number of drastic changes. After World War II, the company briefly made potato shochu due to shortages of rice. Around that time, the 11th owner of Matsushita passed away suddenly and his wife

Nao took over the distillery and protected the brand in his stead. Matsushita has attempted new aging methods, including storing the shochu in earthenware pots. The distillery houses earthenware pots filled with Kuma Shochu that has been passed down through generations. Matsushita has also started cask aging some of its shochu. Most recently, in 2020, the new 14th president of Matsushita decided to develop new products for sale overseas.



Left: Historic permit from the Sagara lord to produce shochu. Has been passed down through generations. **Center:** Many items remain demonstrating the history of the distillery. **Right:** An accounting book from the early 20th century that is now an important resource that tells us things like historic shochu pricing.

■ ABOUT US

Made from 100% Kumamoto rice

Mizukami is a village at the foot of Mt. Ichifusa, with a population of 2,000 people and 7,000 deer. There are legends that exiled members of the Taira clan took refuge in this village, and some stories even say Matsushita's founder Jihei sheltered sisters of the Taira clan at the distillery. However, it is undisputed that the pure and bountiful water at the Kuma River's fountainhead here and the quality rice it fosters have supported the distillery's shochu for more than 200 years.

The 13th owner of the company married into a family of farmers and decided to "make delicious rice, whether it is to be used for food or drink." After his older

brother inherited the family home, the brother supplied the distillery with different varieties of rice for shochu. Even now, all the rice used is produced locally. Matsushita has helped breed better rice varieties, and is also pursuing farming methods that use fewer chemicals to help protect the local environment. Starting 20 years ago, the company also began converting shochu and waste liquids into fertilizer for use in replenishing the rice fields.

The 14th president was the first boy born into the Matsushita family in 108 years. The distillery's ultimate goal is to both preserve and evolve the flavor of shochu, while making old things new and introducing new ideas and cultures into shochu-making.

The 14th owner, Naoki Matsushita, states, "I want our shochu to tell future generations about our local history."



All of the wood used for everything, from the distillery buildings to the tank lids, is sourced from Hitoyoshi-Kuma. The shochu ferments amidst this local wood.