

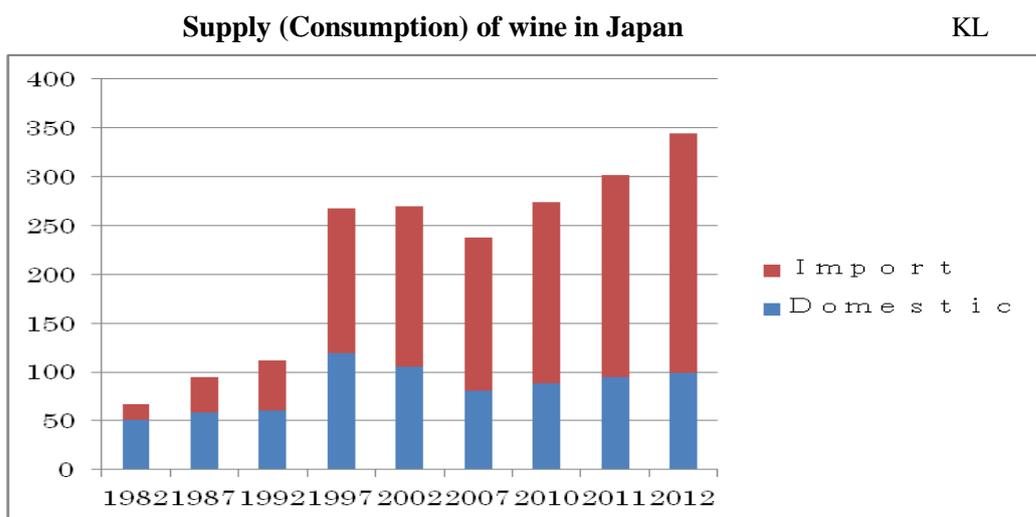
## Japan Wine and its Regions

### Wine production and consumption of Japan

Japan has about 1000 years history of grape production and more than 150 years history of making wine. Japanese people, however, have not well understood wine for about 100 years, because of the crucial difference of Japanese foods and dietary habits from the Occidental ones. In particular, meat such as beef and pork has not been consumed in principle until the Meiji era (since 1868). After the opening of the territory of Japan, the production of wine was encouraged by the Meiji new Government.

However, the consumption of wine had been shifted to sweetened wine (sugar and some flavor added wine) from the genuine wine under Japan's unique dietary habit, and the contamination of phylloxera. For long period, more than 80 years, "wine" meant this sweetened, port style wine in public general .

It is in 1960's, when the real wine began to be appreciated by Japanese consumers. In that time, people enjoyed their life with the prosperity due to the rapid economic growth, and had occasions to know various cultures in overseas. Afterwards, Japan had experiences of several temporary excessive growth of consumption of wine, triggered by some events like Tokyo Olympic Games and Osaka Universal Exhibition, in the course of long term gradual growth of consumption. Then, at the present the consumption of wine per capita reached to 3.1 L / year/adult (in Tokyo 7.7 L).in 2012, although it is much less than figures in European countries. The consumption of wine is still growing, despite the declining consumption of the other alcohol beverages..



Source: Japan Winery Association

The supply and consumption pattern may be unique in Japan, due to the economic and agricultural

situation, and to the historical background. So, the structure of supply of wine consists of 5 % of wine produced by grapes grown in Japan (Japan wine), 23 % of wine produced by imported grape juice and 71% of imported wine. Constraints of agricultural land, vulnerability of agriculture and other factors prevent the rapid increase of the production of grapes in Japan. Then, we have to rely on the increasing imported wine and wine produced by imported must, to meet the growing consumption of wine in Japan.

Around 200 small and medium size wineries, which are based on the regions, mainly provide the Japan wine. 5 big wine companies (wineries) exist in Japan: Kirin Beer (Mercian), Kikkoman (Mans Wine), Suntory, Asahi Beer, Sapporo Beer, that are making substantial efforts to producing Japan wine and are producing big amount of wine by imported grape juice as well.

#### Wine production and consumption in Japan

2012

Quantity of wine KHL		Type of wine	Share	Type of producers
Wine produced in Japan  (Domestic Wine)  <b>990</b>	Wine produced by grapes grown in Japan  (Japan wine)  <b>178</b>	Quality wine  Medium wine	5.2%	Large, Medium and small size wineries
	Wine produced by imported juice  <b>812</b>	Ordinary wine	23.6 %	Mainly large size wineries
Imported wine  <b>2,450</b>		Ordinary wine  Quality wine	71.2 %	Large, Medium and small size importers
Total  <b>3,440</b>			100. %	

Source : National Tax Agency

The originality of wine is due to characters of its region. These characters of region consist of natural conditions such as soil and climate as well as tradition and culture of the region. In particular, the quality and characteristics of wine definitely depend on grapes grown in the region. In recent years Vignerons well recognize this fact, then, they often say “Wine making is agriculture”. Accordingly, they are proud of making wine in the region, well understanding the meaning of making wine in the environment of the region.

As the wine has taken firm position in respect of daily food intake, consumers understand and appreciate this essential nature of wine. They have begun to support vignerons who are consistently

making wine based on the principle of soil and region, despite of unfavorable conditions and higher costs. Accordingly, they have been greatly interested in Japan wine, although its share in the total consumption of wine is only as low as 5%.

Such attitude of consumers is a big promoter and contributor to making better wine of Japan. Not only in Japan, but also in countries with long history of agriculture, people tend to appreciate original and distinct characters and tastes of regional foods. This culture is the ground for good wine of regions. Despite short, only 50 year, history of making real and good wine in Japan, we have been now able to make excellent wine of which we are proud in the world.

It is astonishing that the Japanese characters could be observed in wine, if we make wine with great care. The originality of character in good wine appeals for something to drinkers. It is really a charm of wine. Moreover, this type of wine goes well with Japanese cuisine. It is said that Japan wine brings out the subtle taste of the Japanese cuisine.

Vignerons of Japan are now convinced that they could fully compete with quality wines in Europe, the USA, Australia and others on the same ground. When you visit Japan, you are recommended to taste Japan wine, paring it with Japanese food.

In the course to attaining such development, vignerons had some difficulties. In particular, from late 1980's to early 1990's, the opinion that it would be better to give up to make wine from grapes grown in Japan had been prevailed by the reason that the cost is very high and that good quality of wine would be difficult to obtain under the unfavorable conditions of Japan.

However, some vignerons insisted that good wine could not be made, if the production of wine is separated from the cultivation of grapes. After this principle of the appellation d'origine had been confirmed among the majority of vignerons in Japan, the quality of Japan wine has been rapidly improved.

As described above, Japan now seems to be under the Japan wine boom. But, we don't have yet accurate statistical figures on the volume of production of Japan wine which is produced by grapes in Japan. The estimation of production by manipulating the various official statistics shows 178KHL in 2012. The production has not been increasing not at all in recent years. We suppose that the reason is a certain loss of vitality among farmers and a high cost of making wine by Japan's grapes. The steady increase of production of grapes is one of the important challenges for the future of Japan wine.

**Production of Japan wine**

Unit: 'KHL

	2007	2010	2011	2012
Japan wine	222	201	179	178
Wine from imported juice	588	679	771	812
Total (Domestic wine)	810	880	950	990

Source: Estimation by the statistics of the National Tax Agency

**1. Wine making regions**

With consumers' growing interest to Japan wine, wine making regions have been developed. **Yamanashi** is the oldest and dominant region. The Katsunuma area is like a center of the region where wine making and grape growing originated from. Secondly, newly developed **Nagano Thikuma-Gawa Valley** consists of Upriver-River Valley (Shinano East) and Lower River Valley (Shinano North). Thirdly, old **Nagano Kikyo-Gahara Valley**. Fourthly, **Nagano Nihon Alps Valley** near to Matsumoto city. Fifthly, rather old **Yamagata Mogami-Gawa Valley**, Finally, **Hokkaido** region consists of Otaru , Sorati and Tokati · Furano areas. In Iwate, Tochigi, Niigata, Kyoto, Hyogo, Okayama, Shimane, and Hiroshima, as well as in Kyusyu region, wine is produced. However we could not yet classify them as wine regions because wineries have not yet been integrated in a particular region. At the moment, about 200 wineries exist in Japan. Almost half of them, 80 wineries, operate in Yamanashi region.

## Wine Regions in Japan (East Japan)



1. Yamanashi ①
2. Nagano-Tikuma- Gawa Valley (Higashi-Shinano, Kita-Shinano) ②
3. Nagano-Kikyo-Gahara Valley ③
4. Nagano-Nihon-Alps Valley ④
5. Yamagata-Mogami-Gawa ⑤
6. Hokkaido (-Yoitchi⑥, Sorachi⑦ Tokachi • Furano⑧)

## 2. Grape varieties for wine in Japan

It is interesting that Japanese traditional grapes such as Koshu (vinifera), Muscat Bailey A (hybrid between vinifera and labrusca, developed 90 years ago) are rather dominantly grown in Japan. The share of these varieties is approximately 30%. Including Japanese wild grapes, the share may go up to 35%. In the past it was higher than the present level.

In view of improving the quality of wine, vignerons eagerly tried to introduce European varieties (vinifera). One of main problems is the wet condition of Japan. We were much concerned about whether European varieties could well adapt and make good grapes. In Japan, the rainy season of Monsoon comes from June to the middle of July, except in Hokkaido (It is called "prune rain", since fruits of prune are ripen in the season). In addition, in fall, ripening season of grapes, "autumn rain fronts" come, and a couple of typhoons attack the land with heavy rain and strong wind. In such humid environment, grapes tend to be swollen and are vulnerable to pests and diseases. Vignerons have made tremendous efforts to overcome these unfavorable conditions.

In these days, European grapes for red wine like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are estimated to be 15%. Merlot is widely grown in Japan, since it comparatively well adapts to Japanese climate and soil conditions. Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir are regarded as comparatively difficult varieties to Japan.

At the moment, European grapes for white wine such as Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc are estimated to be 17%. Chardonnay adapts rather well to Japanese conditions, and good wine with the international level is produced from Chardonnay in recent years. By contrast, Riesling is grown quite little, due to the difficulty of cultivation of this variety in Japan. Despite this fact, in a few spots such as Ohmori (Akita prefecture) distinctively good Riesling wine is made. Regarding Sauvignon Blanc, vignerons pay much attention to this variety. However, it remains still under developing stage. The cultivation of varieties for colder climate such as Kerner, Muller-Thurgau is under rapid expansion in Hokkaido region.

The quantity of European grapes in Japan is estimated to be 27 % in total. We have not yet sufficient experience or knowledge on the adaptability of European varieties to the Japanese climate and soil, either to each regional environment. Many years must be needed to identify the adaptability of each vinifera variety to each region and to develop the suitable growing method.

In addition to above, American varieties (Labrusca) such as Concord, Niagara and Delaware are grown as both grapes for wine and for table grapes. These varieties, which are greatly cultivated in

Kikyo-Gahara, estimated to be 18% in total.

Regarding the grape varieties, we recognize the importance of Japanese traditional varieties such as Koshu whose exact origin is mysterious and Muscat Bailey A , crossed by Zenbei Kawakami, one of founders of wine making in Japan, about 90 year ago.

### Share of Grapes in Japan 2012

In terms of quantity

<b>1 Traditional Japanese varieties</b>					<b>(30.4%)</b>
Koshu (white),	Muscat Bailey A(red),				
(19.7%)	(10.7)				
<b>2 Vinifera varieties Red</b>					<b>(15.0%)</b>
Merlot,	Cabernet Sauvignon,	Pinot Noir,	Cabernet Franc,	Zweigeltrebe	
(8.2%)	(3.1)	(0.8)	(0.9)	(1.9)	
<b>3 Vinifera varieties White</b>					<b>(12.2%)</b>
Chardonnay,	Kerner,	Muller-Thurgau,	Sauvignon Blanc,	Riesling	
(7.3%)	(2.8)	(1.2)	(0.4)	(0.5)	
<b>4 Labrusca varieties</b>					<b>(18.9%)</b>
Concord(red),	Niagara (white),	Delaware (white)			
(13.7%)	(3.8)	(1.4)			
<b>5 Other (Varieties other than those listed in the above 1 to 4)</b>					<b>(23.5%)</b>

Source: Estimation from the survey of production of special fruits by Ministry of Agriculture in Japan

#### 4.Japan wine and its regions

Most wine regions of Japan consist of mountains and rivers . When we drink some wine in regions, looking up high mountains and looking down incessant flows of river water, we can enjoy the happiest moment. In such occasion, the taste of wine is quite pleasant.

The number of visitors to vineyards has been increasing under the growing popularity of Japan wine. Then, a lot of volunteer workers to assist works of vineyards come to wine regions from cities. They feel the beautiful nature of mountains and rivers purify their soul for a while. Moreover, they can get an access to good and sometimes surprising wines that they could not usually drink in cities.

The originality of wine comes from the characteristics of region (Fudo).In addition, the history and culture of the region are closely related to wine making. Then, finally wine makes us happy

through its taste. For a number of centuries, wine has been integrated almost exclusively in the Occidental culture, such as Europe, North and South America as well as Australia. However, in recent years wine are penetrating into the culture of the Asian monsoon zone such as Japan, China, Vietnam, Thailand, India. A philosopher, Tetsuro Watsuji classified world cultural zones in terms of Fudo, Accordingly, the world Atlas of wine is now changing. The map of Japanese wine regions of east part of Japan is illustrated as above. We are now going to proceed to details of wines and vineyards of each region .

In Japan, the wine law has not yet been established. Accordingly, there is not legal demarcation between wine with and wine without indication of geographical origin. However, as described above, the majority of consumers are willing to distinguish the geographical origin , and are interested in telling about differences of characters of wine according to its producing regions. Since high costs are required to produce wine with grapes grown in Japan, we have to make better quality of wine in Japan, This situation results in small production of Japan wine .In these circumstances, consumers tend to appreciate wine representing regional character as high quality wine..