vinetur

Japanese sake gains global traction at ProWein 2025

Increased interest from international media and wine industry highlights sake's growing status as a business asset.

Thursday, March 27, 2025



At ProWein 2025, held from March 16 to 18 in Düsseldorf, Germany, the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association showcased its national alcoholic drinks at the Kokushu Booth. This included Japanese sake and honkaku shochu/awamori. Eleven companies

participated, with ten sake breweries and one shochu producer promoting their products. This marked the fourth year of their participation. Nanoha Higuchi from the Overseas Operations Department observed a shift in perception. Visitors from the alcoholic beverage industry are now considering how to integrate sake into their business strategies. Many attended a seminar led by Julia Scavo, focusing on sake umami and food pairing, showing a growing interest in koji and umami. Higuchi emphasized the importance of knowledge on selling sake in restaurants and retail stores.

The Kokushu Booth also hosted a vibrant sake master class mini-seminar. The JSS received numerous inquiries from international media, particularly from the wine industry, eager to include sake in their coverage. Higuchi noted that the media is recognizing the value of adding sake content to attract readers. The JSS has strengthened its collaboration with the International Sommelier Association, conducting sake master classes for sommeliers worldwide. They have also invited wine specialists to Japan to visit various sake breweries, experiencing their history and culture firsthand.

Despite some consumers still viewing sake as a high-alcohol spirit, the association's collaboration with the wine industry has helped importers, sommeliers, and retail buyers understand sake better. They now see it as an essential business item. In 2024, sake export destinations reached a record 80 countries and regions, with export value increasing by 6% from the previous year. During ProWein, inquiries came from countries like Romania and Ukraine, where sake consumption was previously low, suggesting further growth in export destinations.

In 2025, the JSS plans to increase interactions between sake and both trade professionals and consumers. At ProWine Tokyo in April, they will set up another Kokushu Booth. During the Osaka Expo, expected to attract 30 million visitors, the JSS will host a Kokushu Fair at ATC Hall on June 14 and 15. This event will feature tastings of honkaku shochu and awamori, alongside Japanese sake. In collaboration with the wine industry, the JSS will hold a Sake Master Class at the ASI Boot Camp for young sommeliers in Singapore in July, sharing the latest sake trends with top young sommeliers in Asia. In September, the Best Sommelier of Asia & Oceania competition

will take place in Malaysia, where the association will offer another Sake Master Class to sommeliers from across Asia and Oceania.

ProWein highlighted the shift in sake’s global stature, with interactions among importers, media, and sommeliers worldwide. The JSS aims to continue expanding sake’s status in the global alcohol market throughout 2025, positioning it as a business asset and enriching people's lives.