



"Live Webinar & Virtual Tasting "Crafting the Perfect Sake in Kanagawa"

The amount of Sake exported overseas has doubled in the last ten years, and its popularity is increasing. The value of Sake and other alcoholic beverages shipped to the United States from January to September of this year have increased approximately to 10.7 billion yen, making it the world leader in importing Sake.

In the United States, while COVID-19 has reduced the chances of eating out, there is a growing movement to buy Sake through retail stores and online. Under these circumstances, on December 8th, Kanagawa's North American office held a webinar, "Crafting the Perfect sake in Kanagawa," intending to expand the sales channels of the sake brewing companies that export sake to the United States. Over 1,300 people from all over the world, mainly the United States, watched the live-streaming webinar.

In the webinar, Mr. John Gontner, a sake journalist from the state of Ohio, who lives in Kamakura, gave a keynote speech on the history of sake brewing in Kanagawa and the characteristics of thirteen sake breweries in the prefecture. Mr. Gontner has issued many books about Sake written in English, and he is known as a "sake evangelist" in the United States.



Mr. Yuichi Hashiba, the 6th representative of Izumibashi Sake Brewery in Ebina, which exports their original sakes to the United States, gave a lecture on actual rice farming and sake brewing. Based on the belief that "Sake starts with rice," the company is committed to hand-making from harvesting the brewing rice to brewing and bottling sake locally as a "Cultivation Brewery."

*A "Cultivation Brewery" is a sake brewery that grows, harvests, and mills its rice for sake making. Such brewers treat Sake as an agricultural product, from the growth of the rice to brewing. Izumibashi is a registered Cultivation Brewery.

(Source: <https://izumibashi.com/en/>)

They introduced the process of traditional Japanese sake brewing, such as the "Kojibuta manufacturing method" that uses a wooden tray to make "Koji" and the "Kimoto brewing" that utilizes the power of nature.

(Koji is recognized as Japan's national microbe, and it is vital to make traditional Japanese products such as Sake, miso, and soy sauce)

Participants of the webinar got a deeper understanding of sake brewing through the immersive virtual sake brewery tour.



At the end of the webinar, Mr. Gontner talked about Sake and food pairing. He introduced five kinds of Sake in cooperation with Kumazawa Sake Brewery in Chigasaki and paired it with Iwai's sesame oil in Yokohama and Misaki Megumi Fisheries in Miura City.



Mr. Hashiba, who gave the lecture, said, "While I couldn't travel directly to do the business due to the pandemic, it helped a lot of sales. It was great that we could show the work scenery of sake brewing that we cannot usually show. It was also possible because the webinar was held virtually."

The other day, three sake breweries in Kanagawa, including Izumibashi Sake Brewery, won a prize in the French sake competition "Kura Master," and the evaluation of local Sake in the prefecture is increasing from overseas. In the United States, travel restrictions remain due to covid-19, but the prefecture's North American office will continue to devise ways to support companies' local activities in Kanagawa.

JETRO New York / Kanagawa Prefecture

*For more information on the webinar, please visit the website below:

<https://www.japansociety.org/webcast/crafting-the-perfect-sake-in-kanagawa>