



PHIPPS

International Wine Challenge names its Sake Champions

The International Wine Challenge announced its Sake Champions at the prestigious awards dinner ceremony in London last night. The three Sake Awards comprised the Great Value Champion, the Sake Brewer of the Year, and the Champion Sake 2019.

The winner of the Great Value award, sponsored by the Sake Samurai Association, is the 350-year-old **Kiku-Masamune** brewing company's **Shiboritate Gin-pack**. This Futsu-Shu Sake, the most popular style in Japan that accounts for 75% of all sake produced, demonstrates an elegant style of the category, with tasting notes of red apple skin with a soft texture and yoghurt creaminess, mixed with a hint of grapefruit zest, melon rind and white pepper, and a long, lingering aftertaste.

The highly coveted accolade of IWC Brewer of the Year was awarded to **Heiwa Shuzo Co**, who brought home four Gold medals this year, three Silver and two Bronze. The company was founded in 1928, and is located on the site of a temple. The brewery is in a valley which receives plenty of rainfall, providing a generous supply of the essential soft spring water that is crucial for making world-class Sake.

The final award, the IWC Champion Sake 2019, sponsored by Japan Airlines, was awarded to Katsuyama Junmai Ginjo Ken, which won both a Gold medal and the Junmai Ginjo Trophy. The sake exhibits rich perfumed aromas of red apple and flowers. It has a juicy impact, with an elegant style, bright and firm while retaining freshness. It has a sophisticated finish, and is a good representation of the style.

IWC Sake Co-Chair Kenichi Ohashi MW commented: *"The breadth of the style of top medal-winning Japanese Sake has without doubt expanded. This is due to the diversification of flavours on the producer side, the improvement of the tasting ability of the individual judges, and the attitude of IWC in educating consumers."*

The IWC Sake competition was founded in 2007 and has grown exponentially with Sakes now entered globally – from regions as diverse as USA and Europe. The world-famous Japanese rice wine continues to gain momentum around the world, with bespoke sake menus appearing in a selection of restaurants globally.

Chris Ashton, Director at the International Wine Challenge, commented: *"Our rigorous approach and international judging panel make this a truly unique competition that is recognised the world over. With these Trophies under their belts, these brewers can expect global attention."*

The competition, hosted last year in Japan, was held in London at The Oval in May this year.

In its 36th year, the International Wine Challenge is accepted as the world's most rigorous, impartial and influential wine competition. The awards aim at recognising achievement across the industry with a thorough judging process. This year's winners were announced on 9th July and the full list of those awarded can be seen [here](#).



PHIPPS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The International Wine Challenge

In its 36th year, the International Wine Challenge is accepted as the world's most rigorous, impartial and influential wine competition. The IWC assesses every wine 'blind' and judges each for its faithfulness to style, region and vintage. Each medal-winning wine is tasted on at least three separate occasions by a minimum of 12 different judges including Masters of Wine. Awards include medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze) and Commended awards.

The IWC Sake

The IWC Sake competition was introduced in 2007, and has grown exponentially with hundreds of sake being entered from Japan, USA and Europe. The IWC employed a vast number of international sake experts to judge the competition each year. The sake competition adheres to the same strict processes as the International Wine Challenge which combined with the experience of the panel undoubtedly make the IWC Sake competition the most credible of its kind.

The IWC is committed to helping consumers discover great wine, and the medals displayed on winning bottles and in winning shops offer a trusted guarantee of quality.

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