



SIGNOR SAKE

SAKE IN BLOOM

SPRING RELEASES



As the sake brewing season draws to a close and the cherry blossoms start to flower, many makers release sakura-inspired labels to get people in the mood for warmer weather and hanami gatherings. These spring-inspired releases sold from February to April are perfect for a picnic and even better with Italian appetisers. Try caprese salad, crostini, arancini and bruschetta. Here are some of the best available in Japan right now.



HANAMI ROMAN

HANAIZUMI SHUZO - FUKUSHIMA
ABV 13% / Rice blend milled to 55%

Hanaizumi based in Aizu, use a time-consuming and expensive four-stage brewing method for all of their line-up (the standard is three). With the fourth addition, they add sticky rice which results in sake with a clean yet gentle umami and richness.

- Japanese pear
- Yoghurt, and vanilla
- Medium sweet



SAKURA JUNMAI

RAIFUKU SHUZO - IBARAKI
ABV 17% / Gohyaku-Mangoku milled to 59%

Raifuku use a total of eight flowers yeasts for their sake ranges including strains from the pink dianthus and sunflower. Although it's costly work to isolate them, they create some interesting flavours and aromas.

- Juicy fruit like strawberry and cherry
- A touch of spice
- Medium sweet



UKI UKI

YAMAMOTO SHUZO - AKITA
ABV 14% / Gin No Sato (Akita) milled to 55%

This bottle almost jumps off the shelf with its fluorescent pink label and large Yamamoto characters—the owner's name. Fermented with a yeast blend including a flower yeast first isolated in Akita.

- Lightly cloudy style with a gentle
- Pear drops and pineapple
- Strawberry yoghurt



ODAYAKA

NIIDA HONKE - FUKUSHIMA
ABV 16.5% / Miyama-Nishiki milled to 60%

Odayaka meaning 'gentle' is Niida Honke's aroma-driven series. The owner's ancient family crest which has been updated to include a frog (signalling the important role frogs play in a healthy rice paddy), cutely sits on the front label.

- Lightly cloudy and textural
- Delicate spritz
- Green apple, yoghurt and mandarin zest

HANASAKA YUHO

MIOYA SHUZO - ISHIKAWA
ABV 17% / Rice blend milled to 55%

Miho Fujita, owner and brewer makes sake to be enjoyed with food. This spring release is exactly that, with umami and acidity at the forefront. Located in the remote Noto Peninsula, the team have to battle with the snowy winters in peak brewing season.

- Melon, cereal
- Pleasant bitterness
- Lingering finish

