AROUND THE WAVES IN 40 DAYS: SAKES OF THE WEEK

**Week one: January 18-24**

**COLD: heavenly grace “tenko 50”**

junmai daiginjo. akita, ±0, aromatic & fresh. bottled as nama genshu & flash pasteurized: rich yet refreshing. The nose on this new offering from an old famous brewery is an interesting collection of melon, apple, banana, citrus, and floral aromas. It is a fun, lively, bright Junmai Daiginjo that is crisp overall but drinks with some weight to the fluid. Spritzy, chippy, lively, and a little tingly this is one of those sakes that screams, “I am alive and I am fun!” Call it a nice attitude brew that has dried cranberries, tangerine, and crisp apple flavors that excel in a white wine glass. It is a happy brew that is great for those new to sake and a wonder to behold for those who know the run of the lot Yamadanishiki sake milled to 50%. **WORD:** Bright **WINE:** Sharp Reds/Crisp Whites **BEER:** Crisp Ales **FOODS:** Sushi and sashimi, Champagne fare, fruit and cheese plates. (chef kiko’s favorite) (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**HOT: happy owl “fuku chitose”**

junmai yamahai. fukui, +3, layered & complex yamahai with savory aromas of pumpkin & spices, long dry finish. Talk about a Yamahai nose! Sniff around for earthy, yeasty, stinky cheese, citrus, muddy, and wet wool aromas. Typically a sake with this type of nose drinks big and beefy and you cannot drink too much. But Happy Owl is different. It has huge flavors but it is not too musky and immense to drink. Thus this is a great Yamahai to try for the experience of tasting a smoky and roasted brew that drinks more smooth and round. The huge upfront flavor splash features earthy, nougat, maple syrup, coffee, and nutty expressions that slide into a clean finish. How did they do that? Big flavor with a subtle back! Wow! This is like a Yamahai-Lite! Great for warming. **WORD:** Flavorful **WINE:** Zins and big reds **BEER:** Stouts **FOODS:** Big flavorful cuisines, cured meats and cheeses.

**Week two: January 25-31**

**COLD: fragrant jewel “hakugyokko”**

junmai yamahai muroka nama genshu. chiba, -5, super fragrant, big, bold, fruity, complex.

**HOT: fragrant jewel “hakugyokko”**

junmai yamahai muroka nama genshu. chiba, -5, super fragrant, big, bold, fruity, complex.

A singular expression of Yamada Nishiki rice polished to 60%, Hakugyokko is a bold and rustic sake made by the time consuming hot yamahai method unique to Kidoizumi Brewery.  Emblematic of their brash style it has a ripe fruit-driven nose that moves to flavors of honeydew melon and lychee on the palate and finishing with a robust dryness. Due to its unique production it is a remarkably sturdy brew, continuing to breathe and develop even weeks after opening. This week we are showcasing the same sake enjoyed either chilled or warmed----or both! A great experiment to see how warming affects the flavors & aromas in a sake! (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**Week three: February 1-7**

**COLD: forest spirit “soma no tengu”**

junmai muroka nama genshu. shiga, +6, close to drinking straight from the tank: alive, bright, complex. Made from locally grown Yamada Nishiki rice milled to 59%, the Soma no Tengu is a low intervention sake retaining a lot of the character and vitality from the fermenting tank. It still contains the finest part of the fermentation sediment resulting in a cloudy sediment and a delicate rice fragrance. It has not been diluted or proofed down (genshu), has not been filtered with carbon to lighten the flavor (muroka) and has been left unpasteurized (nama) giving it zip and vitality.

One of the few sake not made with conventional yeast types, Soma no Tengu is fermented with yeasts native to the brewery giving the sake a beautiful tartness reminiscent of lambic style ales, and a completely singular flavor. While being on the dry side, the texture is velvety and smooth. The texture of this unique usunigori (light cloudy sake) is fine and light,  lending the sake a beautiful silvery color and a rich softness. Remarkably bright in flavor, reminiscent of a squirt of freshly squeezed citrus, and finishes with a lemony tang. (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**HOT: great peaceful mountain “taiheizan”**

kimoto junmai. akita, +3, earthy aroma, full-bodied & umami rich, with perfect bright acidity to pair with all food. This is a traditional, old-method sake that would appeal to the American palate. Welcoming and rich, it has a big, creamy nose with sides of banana and vanilla. It’s soft and rolling, with expansive flavors hidden in a clean and delicate finish. A huge bite of flavor offers up all sorts of mouth feel—chewy, syrupy, wide—with hints of nuts and a subtle backdoor fruitiness.

The production method of this sake is unique to this very old brewery in the northernmost part of japan’s akita prefecture. **WORD**: Plush **WINE**: Pinot Noir/Hefty whites **BEER**: Chewy **FOODS**: Tomato-based dishes, grilled meats, smoked fish (duke’s favorite). (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**Week four: February 8-14**

**COLD: wind of the woods “kaze no mori”**

junmai muroka nama genshu. nara, +2.5, floral, fruity, slightly effervescent: the brightest nama in town! WARNING – Be Careful Opening This Sake! The nose on this magical brew is a unique collection of ricey, earthy, woody, banana, and pear aromas. This is “refreshing” sake at its best. Spritzy, lively, tingly, and fun it drinks like a mouth party but is incredibly well balanced for a brew that has so much going on. There are fruity hints of blueberry, grapes, pear, apple, and white raisins on a fluid that makes the flavors pop in the palate. A mid-sized glass controls all of the action the most and makes all of the lively flavors drink their brightest. We’ve been waiting a long time for this sake to be available and now it is, so get ready to get refreshed the sake way. **WORD:** Refreshing **WINE:** Beaujolais /Bright Whites **BEER:** Zesty Ales **FOODS:** Champagne fare, shellfish, American sushi, fruit salads. (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**HOT: old mountain “jikomi” yamahai**

tokubetsu junmai. tokushima, +3, slightly aged, full bodied, with a razor-smooth dryness. Located on the offshore island of Shikoku, Tokushima has a unique culture distinct from the mainland of Japan. Over 3/4 of Tokushima is covered by forests, and the prefecture is also famous for its clear seas and abundant water.Housui means "fragrant water".Very yellow in color due to the Yamahai process. Yamahai is a style that ferments at a colder temperature to make the yeast struggle more. Sweet earthy nose. Bright and crisp with subtle sweetness and earth. Ends with a textured earthy toasty finish.Delightful aroma of razor-smooth, super dry, premium yeast mash sourness, which gives way to pleasant and mild sweetness after exposure to air. Old Mountain delivers a pleasant and sweet aftertaste.Food Pairing: Great with a vast array of foods, including grilled meats and fish, crispy tempura, well seasoned grilled vegetables, and pasta with tomato wine or cream based sauces.

**Week five: February 15-21**

**COLD: super dry “akishika, okarakuchi”**

junmai ginjo nama genshu. osaka, +17, biodynamically grown rice, so clean, one of driest sakes in USA! Akishika Shuzo was founded in Osaka prefecture in 1886 and under the present 6th generation Kuramoto [Brewery Owner] this tiny brewery is creating some of Japan’s most exceptional and finest sake. Hiroaki Oku is both Kuramoto and also Toji [Master Brewer] at Akishika and his dedication and skill in creating quality sake shows in every bottle.

Okarakuchi is the ‘house’ dry-style of Sake from Akishika Shuzo. The word ‘kara’ means ‘dry’ in Japanese and in this case ‘O-kara-kuchi’ means extra dry palate. This Sake has an intensely spicy nose with hints of honeydew melon and lychee. The palate on the Okarakuchi certainly possesses a mineral-like dryness that lingers with balanced acidity. (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**HOT: seven spearsmen “shichi hon yari”**

junmai. shiga, +4.5, complex with layers of mushroom and earth, yet a long, clean finish. This sake is made at the 3rd oldest brewery in Japan, the Tomita Brewery, which was founded in the 1540's. It is managed by the 15th generation of the family. Despite the long history of this brewery, the current brewmaster and son, Yasunobu is one of the leaders of a new generation of sake makers.Tasting Note Dried mushroom on the nose; viscous and creamy in weight and texture; bright grapefruit notes on palate; crisp finish. Food Pairing Serve room temperature or warmed with mushroom risotto, nutty cheese, or stews.

**Week six: February 22-28**

**COLD: clear moon “chogetsu”**

junmai ginjo. akita, +1, aroma of white spring flowers, round & creamy mouthfeel, fresh long flavorful finish. The nose on this very class Junmai Ginjo is a gentle collection of honey, apple blossom, citrus, and rice aromas. This is a great diversion from the bright and fruity Ginjos that have flooded the sake market. Rich, round, and super smooth this brew has layers of creamy flavors and drinks fluffy and soft. There are hints of honey, grains, rich fruit compote, and breakfast cereal flavors that evolve into a creamy raisin and pear finish. Chogetsu is a great example of a creamy sake and it warms quite nicely too. A terrific “feeling” sake that should not be missed. **WORD:** Creamy **WINE:** Soft Reds/Fat Whites **BEER:** Creamy Ales **FOODS:** Meats, game, stews, pasta, roasted chicken and potatoes. (kaz’s favorite) (imported by the floating world right here in santa fe!)

**HOT: snow shadow “yukikage”**

tokubetsu junmai. niigata, +4, soft like skin, light as a feather, and yet clean and dry finish. This "solid as your father" sake has a mild nose filled with green apple, bamboo, steamed rice, apricot and pudding elements. Talk about a "feeling" brew that is grounded and drinks very well balanced. It's a classic "non-impactful" sake that is a joy to drink because it is so solid and so sake! There is a smooth and subtle richness that hides within a tight and compact delivery that rounds out more in a larger vessel. Take the flavor elevator up for hints of rice crackers and steamed rice, and down for semi-sweet deep and earthy tones including maple syrup and caramel. A light and solid sake that has many masks, but one solid face. **WORD**: Smooth **WINE**: Merlot/Sauvignon Blanc **BEER**: Hefeweizen **FOODS**: Sushi, sashimi, grilled oily fish, Asian fried fare.

**Week seven: March 1-7**

**COLD: true mirror “seikyo omachi”**

junmai ginjo. hiroshima, +3, you really notice the clean, true flavor of the rice, japan’s oldest strain. Since olden times, most sake has been brewed with ordinary food rice. Today, the mainstream of sake consists of local sake (jizake) also brewed with ordinary rice harvested in that area. Already in the past, in Hiroshima and the Chugoku area rice of high quality was harvested thanks to the cold water springing up in the mountains and the cool climate at night. Koji rice is the ingredient that has the greatest influence on the taste. In general, it takes 46 hours to make koji-rice, but we spend more than 50 hours, the time necessary for making koji-rice for Daiginjo sake. In this way, they are able to make koji-rice with a solid taste and brew sake with a richer flavor and more depth.**Tasting Note** Mellow, mild, and balanced with hints of honey and brown butter. **Food Pairing** Best slightly chilled or room temperature; can be lightly warmed. Excellent with fried oysters, Japanese "katsu," or cutlet, or yakitori.

**HOT: yeti “yuki otoko”**

junmai. niigata, +12, bone-dry. soft & smooth with rice-laden umami. clean finish. excellent with pork or oysters. This very drinkable cup sake has a very gentle nose made up of cream, rice, and a hint of wood aromas. This is a very light and very dry brew that drinks quick and gone. There is an interesting layer of mint that comes out as the fluid warms. Consider this a cup of liquid rice and that’s what you are looking for in a cup sake right? Clean and drinkable. Named after the famous yeti snow monster, and part of the sales of this sake go towards mountaineering/rescue organizations in niigata. We also sell this sake in a “one cup” version---one cups are sold in vending machines and sports events all over japan, and the cups you can keep and collect. **WORD:** Dry **WINE:** Dry reds/woody whites **BEER:** Soft dry ales **FOODS:** Bar snacks.

**Week eight: March 8-14**

**COLD: JOTO daiginjo**

daiginjo. hiroshima, +5, subtle & soft, clean taste & finish, made with a rare apple yeast for great aromas. “Dai” means great or big; “ginjo” is the upper echelon of sake. Daiginjo is the highest, the ultimate. To qualify as a daiginjo, the rice must be polished to 50% or less of its original size. Sake makers get rid of at least half of the raw ingredient they start with. This makes daiginjo’s elegant, refined and delicious. In Japan, Joto Daiginjo is sold under the Maboroshi brand as their “white box” Daiginjo. Maboroshi Daiginjo is made using an apple yeast that the brewery discovered in the 1940’s. This is the least expensive of the three daiginjos in this line and is an incredible value for this level of sake. **Tasting Note** Hints of crushed sage on the nose, spiced apple on the palate, finishes with a supple satin texture. **Food Pairing** Serve chilled with elegant foods like fatty tuna, butter sauces, oysters, and custards.

**HOT: cabin in the snow “yuki no bosha” yamahai**

junmai. akita, +1, mellow, well-balanced, low in acidity, made with old-school yeast starter. The nose on this "traditionally" made sake is a collection of cooked rice, cream, chestnuts, cocoa and mint tones. This is a very balanced and tasty Yamahai that is solid and richly confident. There is a gentle sweetness of powder sugar, honey, sweet nuts, and milk chocolate that rides on a round body with a quick finish. Dig deep amongst the candy bar flavors and find a vein of mint hidden in the creaminess. Just a very well balanced and a supremely drinkable Yamahai that shows a little acidity in a larger vessel. **WORD**: Flavorful WINE: Bordeaux/Deep Whites **BEER**: Creamy Belgians **FOODS**: Big dishes as well as small, from grilled to raw. (staff favorite)