

## Event Report | A Toast of Glasses: Connecting Winemakers and Drinkers – 4<sup>th</sup> Japan Wine Toasting Day



Organized by the Japan Winery Award Council and Mitsubishi Estate Co., Ltd., The “4<sup>th</sup> Japan Wine Toasting Day & Week” was held from October 27 to 31 in Marunouchi. As an event aimed at promoting Japan wines, it featured special sales events and a variety of seminars were held across the Marunouchi area, drawing large crowds of visitors.

The event started with a wine toasting ceremony at The Front Room on the first floor of Marunouchi Building on October 27. Various parties involved in the production and popularization of Japan wines gathered and enjoyed a tasting session. The venue was filled with wines of rich fragrance, provided by winemakers across Japan, and participants enjoyed conversations with winemakers with glasses of wine in their hands throughout the event.

“Japan Wine Toasting Day” was established by the Japan Winery Award Council to mark the day when the Japan’s National Tax Agency introduced official labeling standards for “Japan Wine” on October 30, 2018. Thus, October 30 has been designated as the official annual day for Japan wine.

This toasting ceremony holds deep significance for Japan winemakers, and it is the second year for the event to be held in Marunouchi. It was a moment that brought together the richness of nature and the spirit of the city, allowing participants to experience the appeal of Japan wine of growing international reputation with all five senses.

● A toast to aspirations: a ceremony celebrating conversations about the future of Japan wine



Commemorative photo of the toasting ceremony

As the first part of the event, the toasting ceremony welcomed guests along with winemakers from the 11 five-star wineries in the 8th Japan Winery Award 2025, as well as 3 winemakers who received the JAL Award, creating a warm and celebratory atmosphere throughout the venue.

Representative of the event organizer, Mr. Koji Kurebayashi, Executive Officer of Mitsubishi Estate Co., Ltd., gave a speech and remarked, "As we commemorate this milestone in establishing the legal recognition of Japan wine, we hope to spread its attractions from Marunouchi." He expressed his deep respect for the producers who continue to craft high-quality wines while confronting challenges such as climate change, adding that he hopes to see Marunouchi serve as a hub that connects Tokyo with wine-producing regions across Japan.

Next, Mr. Kazuhiro Takahashi, President of Takahata Winery, offered his remarks. Looking back on the remarkable progress of Japan wine over the past two decades, he expressed gratitude to the pioneers who paved the way, saying, "We will continue to challenge ourselves and support one another as we share our wines, which reflect the character of our land with the world."



Mr. Koji Kurebayashi, Executive Officer of Mitsubishi Estate Co., Ltd.



Mr. Kazuhiro Takahashi, President of Takahata Winery

Honored guests Mr. Yasushi Yamaguchi, Director-General of Crop Production Bureau, MAFF<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Norio Kimura, Senior Vice Commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency, MLIT<sup>2</sup> attended the ceremony and delivered a speech. Mr. Yamaguchi remarked, “Japan wine has the potential to become a driving force for regional revitalization” as he drew on his experiences in Yamagata Prefecture and Tokachi region. Mr. Kimura also expressed his hope that Japan wine will become an appealing tourism asset for international visitors.

Next, the winemakers from the award-winning wineries were introduced and welcomed on stage with cheers and applause. It was impressive to see the leading winemakers representing their wineries from long-established five-star winners to emerging wineries sharing smiles with each other.

#### ● Welcoming the 3 emerging winery recipients of the JAL Award



Keynote talks by the JAL Award recipients and Japan Airline



In the keynote talks, together with Japan Airlines, the recipients of the JAL Award—Memuro Winery (Hokkaido), Heidee Winery (Ishikawa) and Kitani Wine (Nara) shared their thoughts on the future of Japan wine and the challenges ahead with the audience.

**Mr. Kouichi Bitou of Memuro Winery**

“Our winery is located in Tokachi, where the temperature in winter drops to minus 30 degrees and can reach nearly 40 degrees in summer. It is run cooperatively by six farm families, and the wines made from the same grape variety differ in flavor depending on the producer. I hope you enjoy the diverse charms of wines that reflect the character of the land and the people there.”

**Ms. Rie Yamashita of Heidee Winery**

“Our vineyard near the sea in Wajima suffered severe damage during the Noto Peninsula earthquake on New Year’s Day in 2024. Even so, we worked together to restore it, and were able to complete this year’s harvest. We hope you can sense the minerality of the grapes grown in our vineyard, where the sea breeze blows through in the aroma and flavor of our wine.”

**Ms. Tomomi Endo of Japan Airline**

“At JAL, we launched a Japan wine promotion in 2025 through our official online shop ‘SORAKARA OTODOKE’. By promoting Japan wines to our membership base of 30–40 million Mileage Bank members, we hope to widely share the appeal of Japan wine with travel lovers and food enthusiasts, to support the growth of its popularity.”



Guests held glasses of Japan wine and raised a toast

Led by Mr. Kazuhiro Takahashi, President of Takahata Winery, everyone offered a toast to the continued growth of Japan wine. With Takahata Winery's sparkling wines "Minori" and "Yoshi" poured into the glasses, the shimmering bubbles reflected the light, and a warm atmosphere of applause and smiles filled the Marunouchi night.

● A wine tasting experience surrounded by aromas, lively conversations, and warm smiles



Winemakers standing at the serving counters



The lively venue filled with participants

A wine tasting session came after the toasting ceremony, which drew approximately 90 wine lovers, from groups of friends to couples and individuals, making the venue even more lively. 42 kinds of Japan wine, including Red, White, Rosé, Sparkling were brought in from 16 wineries for the event, with aromas that showcased the unique character of each region.

Every participant was handed a glass and moved between the serving counters, where winemakers poured their wines for them. Some winemakers also walked around with bottles in hand, engaging in conversations with the participants. They shared stories about the landscapes and climates behind the wines and the grape varieties they use. They also spoke about their commitment to natural cultivation and how they face the challenges of climate change.

Light meals were also prepared for the event, and the participants enjoyed pairing the wines with the food while having conversations with one another.



Winemakers, event organizers and participants enjoyed engaging conversations with one another.

A wine lover who came with a friend shared, “What I love about Japan wine is you can visit the wineries easily and speak directly with the winemakers. That kind of experience is truly appealing.” Another participant, who visited together with her husband, said with a smile, “The natural acidity of Japan wines pairs beautifully with Japanese cuisine. Their global reputation of Japan wine has risen dramatically over the past decade, and I hope international visitors will love them as well.”

There was even a participant who runs a wine bar specializing in Japan wines and said, “I closed my shop today to come here.” Comments like these show that the event drew a lot of interest with the participation of different winemakers.



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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism