

# CHORYO SHUZO

## Junmai Yamahai Taruzake Choryo Shuzo, Nara Prefecture



### SAKE DETAILS:

Rice: Bizen Omachi  
Polish Rate: 70%  
Sake Meter Value: +3  
Acidity: 1.5  
Alcohol: 14%

### ABOUT "JUNMAI YAMAHAI TARUZAKE" SAKES

The term *Junmai* is constructed of two kanji that together mean "pure rice." This means that the brew cannot contain any ingredient beyond the principal four of rice, water, yeast and koji. The term *Yamahai* refers to a special method of preparing the fermentation starter. Under the attentive care of the brewery staff, the starter is coaxed into creating its own protective balance of lactic acid. Its function is to guard the budding yeast colony from harmful bacteria that threaten to become the dominant microorganism. Normally, lactic acid is simply added from an outside source. *Yamahai* style sakes tend to have a wonderfully expressive and "wild" character. *Taruzakes* are sake that has spent time aging in cedar barrels (more below). Therefore this is a "pure rice" sake, produced in the *Yamahai* method, and spends time aging in cedar barrels.

### ABOUT THE BREWERY

Once upon a time, centuries ago, all sake was stored and transported in cedar barrels called *taru*, namely because stainless steel tanks and modern bottling technology had not yet been invented. It was easy to store the sake in a barrel, where one could walk to the local izakaya and fill up their *masu* cup or wineskin. Also, before modern brewing techniques, sake often had a very rough taste, and aging in cedar barrels helped mask some of the harsh edges. Many have seen these cedar barrels displayed at Shinto shrines, or placed at American restaurants. Indeed, the *taru* barrel still holds cultural significance, but improving technologies and brewing techniques have rendered them obsolete on a large scale. Sake that spends time aging in *taru* is called *taruzake*.

In 1964, Choryo Shuzo was the first sake brewery to bring back *taru* aged sake for sale to the general public. This time, they age the sake in *taru* before bottling it in modern fashion. This was the first time people could taste the delicious woody profile of *taruzake* without having to actually crack open an entire barrel themselves. Today, *taruzake* in barrel is donated to Shinto shrines, or used for special occasions, while bottled *taruzake* is enjoyed at will.

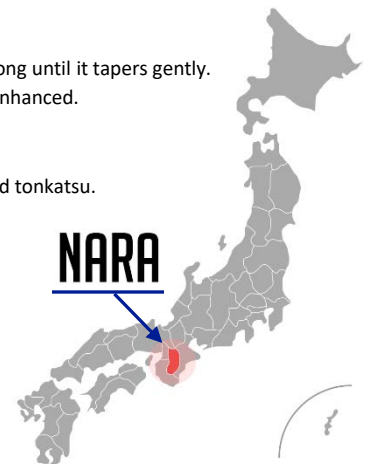
Choryo Shuzo exclusively uses Yoshinosugi (Japanese cedar) from barrel makers at the foot of Mt. Nara. There are only five Japanese barrel makers left in the country. The barrels must be made by hand, from trees at least 80 years old, and require an aging period of one year to drain all the excess water and create a beautiful color. *Taru* barrels are never charred like wine barrels and are used up to three times by sake breweries. *Taruzake* ages in barrel for only about three weeks. It has a very distinct cedar aroma and taste.

### TASTING NOTE

Soft and elegant cedar/fruity/floral aroma. Rice umami lingers long until it tapers gently. By warming up, the taste profile expands and its rice umami is enhanced.

### FOOD PAIRING

Hearty foods such as Korean BBQ, Tandoori chicken, hot pot, and tonkatsu.



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