

SAWA SAVA

Sparkling Nigori Choryo Shuzo, Nara Prefecture

SAKE DETAILS:

Rice: Field Blend

Polish Rate: 70%

Sake Meter Value: -55

Acidity: 1.3

Alcohol: 8.5%

ABOUT "SPARKLING NIGORI" SAKES

Sparkling sakes are produced in numerous ways. Sometimes carbon dioxide is simply injected into a finished sake. Other methods are more refined such as capturing the CO2 naturally produced during fermentation – similar to Prosecco. Some sparkling sakes are even produced by traditional method, like Champagne. For this sake, a secondary fermentation is permitted in bottle giving it a naturally gentle sparkle. The term *Nigori* denotes that an amount of sake lees have been retained in the bottled sake, giving a cloudy effect. Therefore, this sake is a naturally sparkling brew with a small amount of sake lees retained in bottle.

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.

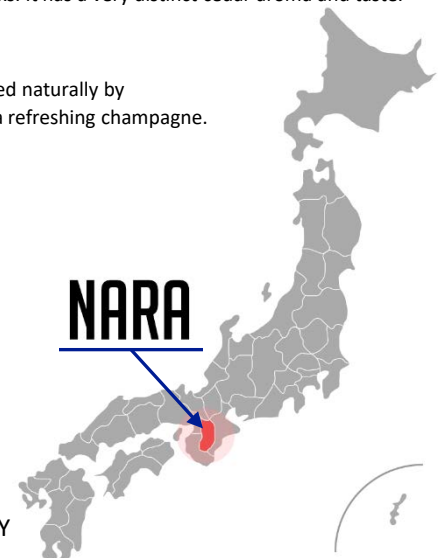
TASTING NOTE

This is a sparkling sake which has carbonic acid gas generated naturally by in-bottle fermentation. Its clear sweetness reminds you of a refreshing champagne.

FOOD PAIRING

Excellent as an aperitif or in a cocktail.

Excellent paired with mildly sweet desserts or spicy fare.



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