

# SUEHIRO SHUZO



## Junmai Yamahai Suehiro Shuzo, Fukushima Prefecture

### SAKE DETAILS:

Rice: Koksanmai  
Polish Rate: 60%  
Sake Meter Value: 0  
Acidity: 1.4  
Alcohol: 15.5%

### ABOUT "JUNMAI YAMAHAI" 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. Most Junmai sakes use rice polished to at least 70%, but no legal mandate exists. Junmai style sakes tend to be richer and rounder, while emphasizing more savory characteristics. 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.

### ABOUT THE BREWERY

Hailing from the small region of Aizu within the Fukushima Prefecture since 1850, Suehiro Shuzo is truly one of the classic breweries of Japan, known throughout the country due to the number of national awards it has gained, and groundbreaking production methods it has spearheaded. Suehiro Shuzo is the founder of *yamahai* style brewing. *Yamahai* sake begins with a "spontaneous" fermentation, using ambient microbes and yeast to begin the starter. It represented a departure from the much more labor intensive *kimoto* method which was the standard until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. *Yamahai* brewing is considered a classic style of brewing in the sake world. The resulting sake is lively, structured, and excellent with food. Suehiro was the first brewery to employ an official *Toji*, or brewmaster, now common in all sake breweries. They were also the first brewery to hold a formal contract with local rice-growers ensuring rich community bonds.

Aizu is a region that takes pride in the rich samurai culture of Japan. It stood as the last stronghold of the shogunate until its defeat by the Imperial army in 1868, ushering in the Meiji Restoration. Suehiro Shuzo is the official sake supplier of the Toshogu Shrine. Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate which ruled Japan for over 250 years during the Edo Period lies here. Current President of the brewery, Shinjo Inokichi, represents the 7<sup>th</sup> generation at Suehiro Shuzo, and can trace his lineage back to the first ruler of the Aizu region.

The physical brewery stands as a nationally protected building, showcasing a classic dark wooded façade with a large central balcony to display the *sugidama* – the cedar ball hung by breweries to signify when fresh sake has been completed. As the green leaves gradually turn brown, it notifies the public of the age of the sake on hand for sale. Today, the brewery is known for their expressive *Yamahai* style sakes, luxurious *Daiginjo* grade sakes, and fun sparkling sake.

### TASTING NOTE & PAIRING

A harmony of umami, slight sweetness, and acidity.  
Versatile with food – try with everything from rich soups to fresh seafood.

**FUKUSHIMA**



SCOPERTA IMPORTING | THE MARCHETTI COMPANY

216 | 321 | 4162

WWW.SCOPERTAIMPORTS.COM

5/3/2023