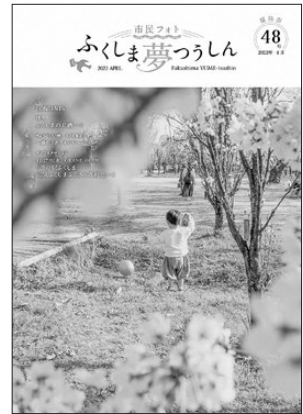


Fukushima Dreams – a quarterly publication of Fukushima City — APRIL 2022

Thank you for picking up this quarters' "Fukushima Dreams – a quarterly publication of Fukushima City". In this issue, we hope that you will learn more about, and be moved by the various charms that Fukushima City has to offer.

With a population of around 290,000 people, Fukushima is surrounded by the beauty of nature. Due to its location, the city has a characteristic basin climate, and is a famous fruit production area: producing many varieties through the seasons, including cherries, peaches, Asian pears, grapes and apples.

We hope that through this edition, you'll come to appreciate even a little of what Fukushima City has to offer.



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① Brewed in Fukushima — Beers, Wines, and Sakes

② Five Short Stories of Brewers Brewing in Their Hometown of Fukushima

Blessed with a favorable climate and excellent soil, Fukushima City is famous throughout Japan as an ideal location for growing a wide variety of fruit. The abundant nature, clean air, and crystal-clear water in this part of the country combine to produce bountiful harvests, which are also extremely valuable in the realm of brewing alcoholic beverages such as sake, beer, and wine.

In recent years, several new breweries and wineries have sprung up in Fukushima City, and they are steadily gaining fans and helping to revitalize the surrounding area. According to these breweries and wineries, the more they insist on using locally produced products such as water, rice, and fruit, the more frequently they interact with farmers and enthusiasts alike, and the more such encounters and conversations they have, the better they are able to communicate and revitalize the appeal of their region.

For this issue of Fukushima YUME-tsushin, we visited some of the sake, beer, and wine makers in Fukushima City and asked them about why they started brewing, what things they are passionate about, and which brands they particularly recommend. Please enjoy right to the end this series of short stories about Fukushima City's alcoholic beverages, which have the power to captivate as they glisten and sparkle like jewels in the glass.

③ Craft Beers Brewed by Rice Farmers Who Have as Many Strong Feelings and Stories about Their Work as They Have Recipes

④ Mie and Minamisoma. Two Encounters Propelled Me to Obtain a Sake Brewing License.

There were two reasons why we, a rice farming family, started brewing beer. After the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, an opportunity came my way to visit one of the most famous craft beer breweries in Japan, which is located in Mie Prefecture. Even though I personally am not a beer lover, I found the beer there to be outstanding, with a gorgeous taste as well as being exceptionally easy to drink. Deeply impressed by this beer, I approached the brewery's president, whose father used to run a rice cake shop, and asked him, "Could you help me if I decide to set up a brewery in Fukushima?" He willingly agreed on the spot, saying, "Certainly!" Meeting someone I could consult about brewing was the first reason.

The second reason was reconstruction assistance. When we were given the opportunity to farm in Minamisoma, we sowed barley seeds to make beer, and in 2019, we also planted hops. At first, we were thinking of outsourcing the brewing, but after talking to various people, we changed our minds and decided to do it ourselves. The timing was favorable for us because we were in the process of building a processing plant, so we added a brewery attached to the plant. After that, I studied and trained hard to obtain a brewing license.

Our Goal Is to Brew Easy-to-Drink Beers. Please See Our Newest Lineup on SNS.

We began brewing beer one month before the Yellow Beer Works (Yellow) opened, at the same time as I obtained the brewing license in August 2020. Our style of selling beer by volume is also something of a novelty, and even today we have a lot of customers who visit us for the beer. Last year, in an effort to boost the Tohoku region through the power of beer, we collaborated with a brewery in Kesenuma, with each of us brewing a craft beer called "SQUEEZY PEACH" using peaches produced in Fukushima City. Both of these beers were well received.

At Yellow, each of the three fermentation vessels is prepared according to a different recipe. We are very particular about palatability. We aim to produce beers that are easy to drink, even for people who are not particularly fond of beer. Our regular product is a muddy type of beer, which is known in the trade as hazy. Our goal is to make a hazy beer that goes down smoothly and that people will never tire of drinking. We also brew homegrown corn beer, a beer made from sweet potatoes with apples and spices from local fruit farmers, pear beers, and other seasonal beers. Our newest lineup is posted on SNS, so be sure to check it out.

We Want to Brew Local Barley and Hops in Cooperation with Fruit Farmers in Fukushima City.

From this year, we are planning to grow barley and hops in Fukushima City. For myself, I hope that by continuing to attempt various challenges, I will be able to repay the people who have helped me. Brewing beer can be done in cooperation with fruit farmers, which means the local people will be happy, and if we can produce something that makes an impact at Yellow, we will be able to convey the tenacity of Fukushima to people who live far away from here. Our dreams are continuing to expand.



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① Michinoku Fukushima Beer

A Pioneering Craft Brewery in Fukushima City that Encourages Local Farmers

Our brewery was founded 24 years ago in St. Anna's Garden, in the suburbs of Fukushima City. We have 23 fermentation vessels, and the beer is made slowly and carefully using water from the Azuma Mountains, Euromalt malt extract, Czech hops, and German yeast as basic ingredients.

In recent years, we have focused on brewing beer made with locally grown fruit and other produce, represented by MY BEER, a beer made with Fukushima-grown Hitomebore rice and the prefecture's original Utsukushima Yume yeast, which is usually used to brew sake. This began as an attempt to help orchard growers in northern Fukushima Prefecture after hearing how the reputation of their produce had been damaged by harmful rumors. Since the groundwater we use is very soft, it produces a softer beer flavor. The growers are now happy that they can sell more of the fruit that they put so much care and effort into producing, and they are also increasingly obtaining alcohol handling licenses so that they can sell the beers that we brew for them on consignment.

When we sell raspberry beer at events, we serve it in a flute champagne glass with a single ice cube. The whole glass, even the foam, turns a beautiful shade of red and the drinkers are delighted with the experience. Our fruit beers are made with luxurious amounts of fruit juices such as peach, apple, blueberry, and strawberry. We hope that you will enjoy both their subtle aroma and their flavor.

② Winery Azuma Sanroku

A Gentle and Delicate Taste Brewed by a Certified Oenologist (Winemaking Specialist)

This small winery was established in August 2019 and is situated on a well-drained alluvial plain at the foot of the Azuma Mountains overlooking Fukushima City. My aim is to make wine that brings out the distinctive character of the land. I would like to convey the joy of brewing and tasting the delicious wine that is unique to this region, while also expanding the appeal of Fukushima Prefecture throughout the Tohoku region and further afield in Japan as well as to the rest of the world.

Two years ago, we started growing grapes in our own vineyard. Harvesting will finally begin this fall. I believe our mission is to listen carefully to the grapes and then to express what kind of wine they want to become.



The wines we are currently selling were fermented at our winery last autumn from grapes we procured from Nagano and Yamagata Prefectures. We also recommend our aromatic Fukushima Cider, which is made from two types of apples grown in Fukushima City. Continuing from last year, the label for this cider was designed by students from the Design Science Course of Fukushima Prefectural Nishi High School. We are planning to start selling a 2020 vintage Merlot sometime around June, after first aging it in barrels for 18 months. Each of these wines was produced with the smiles on the faces of the people who will drink them in mind. Our cellar door will be open this summer, so feel free to come and visit us.

③ Orara

Offering New Special Products as Part of a Town Renewal Project at Tsuchiyu Onsen, as Well as Draft Doburoku, Cocktails, and Other Drinks

The impetus for opening our brewery came from Fukushima City's recognition of its first "Fruit Basin Sake Special Zone." We are very particular about our doburoku (unrefined sake) in that we use our own sake rice in making both steamed rice (the main ingredient of sake) and koji (mold). The second thing is that when you open the cap, the bubbles, the aroma, and the smoothness immediately come gushing out. The cap of each bottle is hand-tightened while being warmed in order to seal in the carbon dioxide gas from the yeast together with the aroma. In addition to dry sake, we are also now making a sweet version in response to demand. (Comment from Mr. Ota)

The ingredients of our cider are also quite simple. Only the juice of apples grown in Fukushima City and yeast are used. The filtering is performed in such a way that the apple and yeast ingredients remain as undisturbed as possible. It has a slightly carbonated, sparkling, clean, dry taste and a sweet apple aroma. We also sell this cider in a single-drink size that people can drink while walking around the hot spring resort. Since it is a cloudy cider that is rich in nutrients, we hope people will drink and enjoy it all the way down to the sediment. Please visit the retail space Orara no Sake BAR Junjogura, where you can also enjoy seasonal cocktails made with fresh doburoku and other ciders. (Comment from Ms. Ariga)

④ Kinsuisho

Fukushima City's Only Sake Brewery is Meticulous in Selecting Water and Rice for Brewing.

The basis of good sake brewing is good rice and good water. Our brewery, which was founded in the Meiji era, was built on land that has an excellent water supply. We strive to make the best possible use of the characteristics of sake rice by using well water, which even among the various kinds of soft water is particularly suitable for semi-sweet sake. A certain amount of skill is also needed to grow rice. With the cooperation of the Fukushima Regional Sake Rice Research Association, we are using two Fukushima Prefecture-developed sake rice varieties named Yumenokaori and Fukunoka for all our sakes except premium Daiginjo sake, which is entered in Japan's largest sake competition, the Annual Japan Sake Awards. Yumenokaori is medium-bodied with a slightly sour, fruity flavor. Fukunoka has a sweeter taste because the rice is more soluble and the acidity is slightly subdued, making it smoother on the palate and with a sharper edge.

Because Fukushima City was established through an amalgamation of diverse communities, it has a distinct non-uniform character, including with regard to its water supply. The fermentation water for our sake Surikamigawa, which is produced on consignment, is taken from the Surikami River upstream of the Surikami Dam and is ideal for making sweet sake. While for Arakawa, we use subsurface water from the Arakawa River, which last year was voted the best water quality in Japan for the eleventh successive year. This is a medium soft water that is both crisp and clean. If every district had its own unique stories of sake, rice and water like this, I believe the entire Fukushima basin would be even richer in spirit.

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① A Just right Trip, Staying in Fukushima

② Fukushima City is only 90 minutes away from Tokyo. The city and the surrounding region abound in nature, activities, gourmet food, hot springs, culture, and other attractions that cannot be found in large urban areas. Visit Fukushima for fun, food, and relaxation. You will find enjoyment here that is just right for you. From this month's issue, we are introducing a special feature on the appeal of "A Just right Trip, Staying in Fukushima" in three parts. In the first part, we present "You Can Be Healed" in spring and early summer. Why not recharge your body and mind while enjoying the flowers and hot springs of Fukushima?



③ Iizaka Onsen

Iizaka Onsen was one of three most popular hot springs in the ancient Oshu region along with Naruko Onsen and Akiu Onsen. We also recommend the nine public bathhouses, including Sabakoyu, which was visited by the haiku poet Matsuo Basho, as recorded in The Narrow Road to the Deep North.

④ Hanamomo-no-Sato Park

Spread across about 80 acres of land, over 300 blossoming peach trees of 40 varieties from around the world are in full bloom in April. Usually, more than 10,000 people visit the park during the peak blooming season.

⑤ Tsuchiyu Onsen, Tsuchiyu-Toge Onsen Village

Tsuchiyu Onsen is a hot spring resort that is blessed several different types of hot spring water. Deep in the mountains beyond Tsuchiyu-Onsen lies Tsuchiyu-Toge Onsen Village, a hot spring area filled with a secluded atmosphere.

⑥ Tsutsujiyama Park

Located within a national park, the area offers visitors the opportunity to stroll along a promenade of colorful azaleas while enjoying views of the Azuma Mountains.

⑦ Lake Shonan Bio Park

On this lake, which was once used as a natural skating rink, about 500 water lilies bloom in a variety of colors.

⑧ Uwadaiyama Weeping Cherry Trees

Two rows of cherry trees line either side of the road for about 560 meters. If you take a shutter exposure of these trees against the blue sky, it looks like a scene from a movie.

⑨ Takayu Onsen

In keeping with its "hot water flowing from the source declaration," this hot spring sits quietly nestled in the Azuma Mountains. The milky white water with a scent of sulfur is said to smooth and soften the skin.

⑩ The Tanemaki (seed sowing) Cherry Tree at Jitokuji Temple

This weeping cherry tree is said to be over 300 years old. The elevated location allows visitors to view the city from above the cherry blossoms.

⑪ Azuma Sports Park

In spring, visitors are greeted by rows of around 800 cherry trees, in early summer by around 10,000 daylilies, which are known as "the queen of wildflowers," and in autumn by rows of illuminated ginkgo trees.

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① Roadside Station Fukushima

② Roadside Station Fukushima, which is being constructed in the vicinity of the Fukushima-Ozaso IC on the Tohoku Chuo Expressway, will have its grand opening on April 27! A variety of seasonal products will be available and a fair will be held to commemorate the event. The staff are looking forward to serving everybody. So please stop by when the station opens!

③ Genki Fukushima Furusato Donation (Furusato Nozei)

Fukushima City uses the valuable donations it collects from people's furusato nozei (hometown tax) donations towards the next stage of the city's development. We hope you will support our efforts by making a tax-deductible donation to the city, and we have prepared a wide variety of return gifts you can choose from, including seasonal fruit from Fukushima City!

