



Jar-fermented shochu aged in five types of oak casks

OAK ROAD

A blend of jar-fermented shochus aged in five different types of oak barrels: white, Limousin, cognac, sherry, and scotch, resulting in a shochu that tastes just like brandy.

Ingredients: rice (Japanese), rice koji (from Japanese rice)  
 ABV: 37%  
 Distillation method: vacuum  
 Aged: 3+ years



An innovative spirit made with wildflower yeast

ASAGIRI NO HANA

Flagship shochu made with Yamada Nishiki rice and wild yeast harvested from dianthus flowers. Enjoy this shochu for its fruity ginjo aroma, and the natural sweetness of rice. Refreshing and great on the rocks.

Ingredients: rice (Japanese), rice koji (from Japanese rice)  
 ABV: 25%  
 Distillation method: vacuum  
 Aged: 6 months



An exquisite bottle made with homegrown Yamada Nishiki rice

YAMAHOTARU

Homegrown Yamada Nishiki rice fermented with low-temperature yeast for a full body and fruity yet mild taste that goes down easy. Perfect for drinking on the rocks or with water.

Ingredients: rice (Japanese), rice koji (from Japanese rice)  
 ABV: 25%  
 Distillation method: vacuum  
 Aged: 6 months

Takata Shuzojo

756 Fukada-higashi, Asagiri, Kuma-gun, Kumamoto Prefecture  
 Tel: 0966-45-0200  
<http://www.takata-shuzohijo.co.jp/>



THE HISTORY OF KUMA SHOCHU

Kuma Shochu: Born from the History, Climate & Culture of Hitoyoshi-Kuma



Abundant Water & Unique Climate

The Kuma Valley is located at the southernmost tip of Kumamoto Prefecture, deep in the mountains of Kyushu. The cool waters of the Kuma River—famed for its rapids—nourish the fields, while the valley's distinctive climate and significant temperature variations create one of the prefecture's prime rice-growing areas. The frequent dense fog in the region allows for fermentation and storage at relatively low temperatures, which helps give Kuma

shochu its refreshing aroma. The soft water from the Kuma River system is ideal for shochu making and helps enhance the gentle sweetness of the rice. The rich aroma and deep flavor of Kuma Shochu can only be produced in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region.

Tradition & Evolution

Rice shochu production in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma region is believed to have started about 500 years ago. Distillation

techniques were supposedly brought over through trade with southeast and continental Asia. Today, 27 distilleries preserve the traditional techniques honed by their predecessors, offering a variety of flavors that have evolved over time.

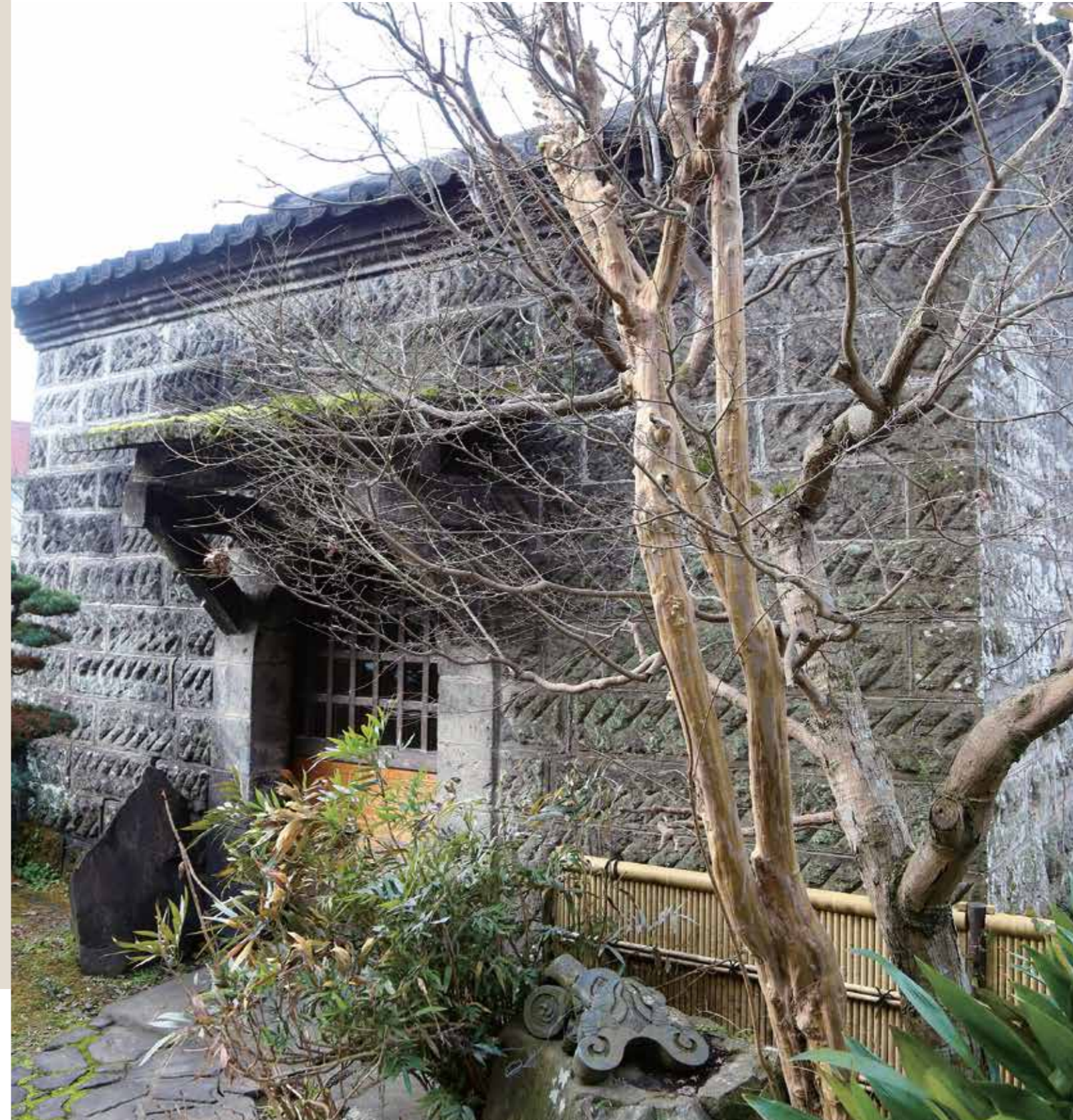
In 1995, Kuma Shochu was designated as a Geographical Indication by the National Tax Agency, establishing it as a world-class shochu brand and attracting attention from around the globe.

WHAT IS KUMA SHOCHU?

- Must be made with rice (including rice koji) grown in Japan
- Mash must be made with Hitoyoshi-Kuma water and shochu must be distilled in a pot still and bottled in Hitoyoshi-Kuma.

Takata Shuzojo

高田酒造場



You must be 20 or older to drink. Do not drink and drive.  
 Drinking alcohol during pregnancy and breastfeeding may affect the development of the fetus or infant.  
 Drink in moderation. Please recycle.



**Upper left:** 4th-generation head Takahiro Takata was quite the ideas man. He developed over 100 new products using different strains of rice and yeasts. **Upper right:** The koji room from when the distillery was founded remains in use today. **Left:** Locally-grown Hinohikari, Yamada Nishiki, and Aigamo rice are each used for different products. Enamel metal tanks and earthenware jars are used for fermentation. **Right:** Jars, protruding slightly from the floor, are used for initial fermentation. Approximately 60 jars with different shapes and volumes are buried in the ground.

■ TAKATA SHUZOJO (Asagiri) ■

# Using wildflower yeast to make shochu and developing Kumamoto's first craft gin

■ HISTORY  
Locally named hit products

The early generations of men who ran Takata Shuzojo all took the name "Matasuke." These were the lineal heads of the village, and the ninth Matasuke began making shochu. The first batch was made in 1902, following a bumper crop in which they couldn't fit all of the bags of rice into the village storehouse. At the time, the nascent distillery put out just one type of shochu: Akiho. Low-volume output created a bottleneck that prevented them

from increasing their sales. This, coupled with the WWII, meant that they wouldn't see real success until the 12th-generation Matasuke became the fourth-generation head of the distillery. This change began around 1985.

The key to Takata Shuzojo's success was dianthus yeast. Professor Hisayasu Nakata of the Tokyo University of Agriculture became the first to successfully isolate yeast from wildflowers. The future fifth-generation head of Takata belonged to the same research lab, leading to the new

yeast being used in her family's shochu. The yeast was intended for use in sake, but controlling the temperature, humidity, and interactions with house yeasts proved difficult, and the final product wasn't ready until 2003. It went on sale under the name Asagiri no Hana, after the neighborhood of the distillery. It features a rich aroma of ginjo and flowers and tastes like fresh sake. The spirit's interesting and unique story helped make it a huge success.



**Left:** Family portrait of the Takatas, circa 1953. The second head of the distillery sits front and center. **Center:** A certificate of commendation preserved from the early 1900s. **Right:** This space was once a shochu storehouse but is now a reception room. Visitors can enjoy shochu tastings and browse historical documents here.

■ ABOUT US

Father & daughter revive Kuma Shochu

The 12th generation head of Takata gave the world the first Kuma Shochu made with wildflower yeast. This gene for innovation seems to have been passed down, as in 2018, the 13th-generation head saw her company become the first in Kumamoto to sell a craft gin, called Jin Jin Gin.

Gin is a distilled liquor made from fermented grains, then infused with juniper berries and other botanicals to give it a distinct aroma. Craft gin is a small-batch, more unique take on gin. Takata uses the same spirit used in its flower yeast shochu, and infuses it with local citrus fruit like shiranui oranges and banpeiyu, and herbs

such as rose geranium. Citrus and herb notes make for a refreshing spirit with a crisp flavor. The first batch of 300 bottles sold out within one week, and the gin took home the gold prize at the 2021 Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition. It breathed new life into Kuma Shochu.

In 2021, Takata also unveiled a rum made using sugar cane grown in Ashikita. These gambits continue to open new, unique vectors of growth for the distillery, to raise awareness of Kuma Shochu and draw the interest of new consumers. The Takata family does not waver in pursuing this goal.

The fifth generation distillery head, Yasuna Takata. She attended Tokyo University of Agriculture and, like her father, studied yeast under professor Hisayasu Nakata. Upon returning home, she dedicated herself to breaking new ground in the Kuma Shochu market, ultimately discovering a new frontier in gin.



This storehouse, said to be the oldest one in the Hitoyoshi-Kuma Region, is full of white and Limousin oak casks. A mixture of all of these is bottled and sold as Oak Road shochu.