

KOJ

KOSHU OF JAPAN



INTRODUCING KOJ

Koshu of Japan (KOJ) is an organization established in July 2009 by fifteen producers of Japanese wine located in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan's premier wine-growing region. The partners in this organization, in addition to the producers, are the Koshu City Chamber of Commerce, the Kofu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Yamanashi Prefecture Winemakers Association. This organisation was founded to improve the quality of the distinctively Japanese Koshu grapes and wines and to increase the awareness of these wines on global markets.

KOJ has three principal aims: Overseas promotion, New Product Development and Publicity

In 2010 KOJ will launch a PR campaign in the UK as the first step in what is intended to be an EU-wide promotion. KOJ has invited Master of Wine, Lynne Sherriff, a world-class authority on wine, to provide advice and technical guidance on how best to promote Koshu in international markets.



THE KOSHU GRAPE



KOSHU, THE HISTORY

The Koshu grape is the most important grape variety native to Japan. It was developed from grapes that travelled the Silk Road across Central Asia from the Caucasus to China and then to Japan, at a period estimated to be around a thousand years ago.

The distinctively Japanese Koshu grape is grown primarily in Yamanashi Prefecture, whose climatic extremes of heat and cold, long days of summer sunlight, and well-drained volcanic soils are especially suited for cultivating grapes.

History records that winemaking in Japan was started in 1874 by individuals living in Yamanashi Prefecture's Kofu City. The first winery where full-scale wine production began was established in 1879 in Iwaimura, now Koshu City's Katsunuma-cho. The Dainippon Wine Co., Ltd., founded in 1877, had sent two young men to France. What they learned there led to the start of wine production in Japan using the native Koshu grape. Winegrowers worked tirelessly to improve the quality of their wines and, following the end of World War II, wine production increased dramatically. There are now 80 wineries in Yamanashi Prefecture.



THE KOSHU GRAPE



The grape and its flavour

The Koshu grape is strongly disease-resistant and has had centuries since its introduction to adapt to the terroir of Japan. It is grown in vineyards totaling 480 hectares, with 95% of total production grown in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The Koshu grape belongs to the same *Vitis Vinifera* family as European grapes and has long been part of the Japanese diet. The skin is thick and pinkish-grey. The clusters are long and the fruit of medium size. A distinctive and refreshing bouquet and a nicely balanced acidity are among its distinctive characteristics.



Viticulture and winemaking techniques

The Koshu grape vine is robust and treelike, difficult to plant in compact vineyards. Thus recent years have seen experiments with vertical shoot positioning in addition to the traditional trellis method. Long cordon pruning has also been tried as an alternative to the traditional Japanese pruning technique. Significant advances have been made in limiting production and crown management technology. For winemaking as well as viticulture, international experts have been invited to Japan to contribute their expertise. Improvements in winemaking have resulted in production of authentic, dry wines which retain the delicate bouquet and flavour of the Koshu grape.



THE HOME OF KOSHU, YAMANASHI PREFECTURE

Yamanashi Prefecture, where Koshu grapes and wines are produced is located an hour and a half by train from Tokyo, at the foot of Mt. Fuji and surrounded by mountains in the 3,000 meter range. Yamanashi is a place where natural beauty abounds in all four seasons, filled with greenery and a wealth of clean, fresh streams. Its soil is ideal for growing fruit, and its grapes, peaches and cherries have long been famous throughout Japan. Besides being the birthplace of winemaking in Japan, Yamanashi is also blessed with a wealth of other local products.

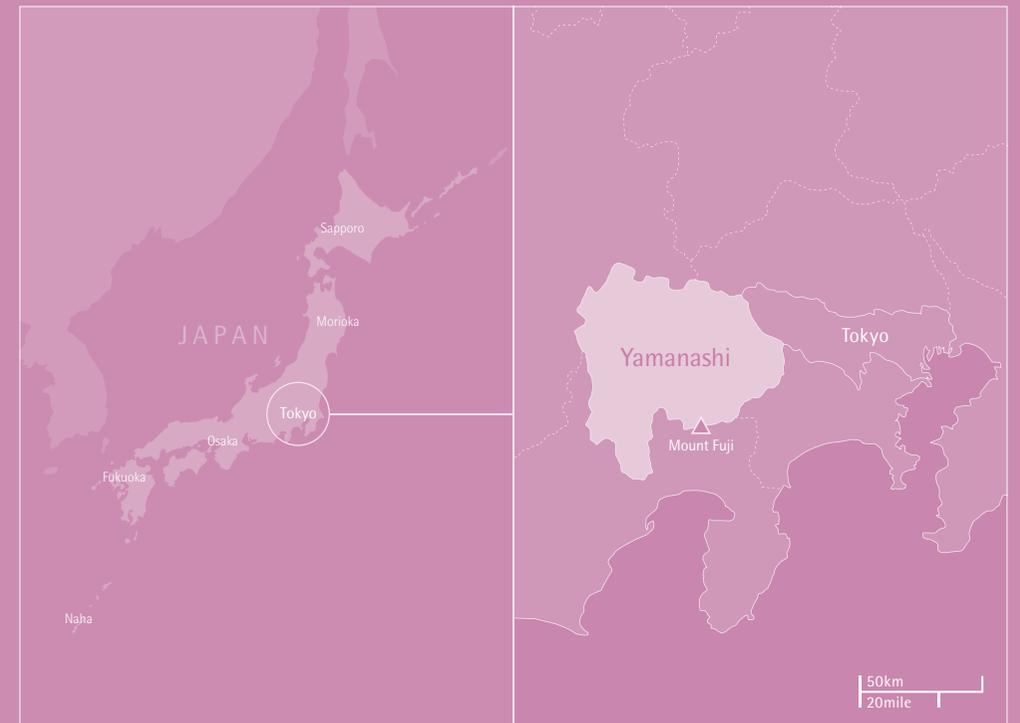


TASTING KOSHU

The distinctive characteristics of Koshu are a pale, straw colour and a soft, fruity bouquet with overtones of citrus and peach. Low alcohol content adds a pleasing lightness. The acidity is well balanced, and the overall impression is clean, delicate and fresh, a superb match for subtly flavoured foods. The taste is restrained and refined, unobtrusive but distinctive, the perfect pairing for Japanese cuisine, dishes inspired by Japanese cuisine, and health-conscious menus that take full advantage of fresh seafood and vegetables.



REGIONAL MAP



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