

Suntory Celebrates its 100th Anniversary of Whisky Making

- Approx. 10 billion JPY investment to enhance quality craftsmanship and elevate visitor experience for the next 100 years to come -



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Tokyo, Japan (February 1, 2023) — Suntory, a global leader in the beverage industry with iconic whisky brands such as *Yamazaki*, *Hibiki* and *Hakushu*, celebrated its 100th Anniversary of whisky making in Japan.

In 1923, Suntory founder Shinjiro Torii began his journey of whisky making at Yamazaki Distillery, located on the periphery of Kyoto. Since then, Suntory has been pioneering the art of Japanese Whisky by crafting with relentless pursuit of perfection; striving to cultivate whisky drinking culture and produce the highest quality spirits. In 2003, this devotion bore fruit when *Yamazaki 12 Years Old* was awarded Gold at the International Spirits Challenge, leading to the international reputation of other Japanese Whisky brands such as *Hibiki* and *Hakushu*.

In order to enhance quality craftsmanship by focusing on processes before maturing whiskies, and to elevate its visitor experience, Suntory will invest approximately 10 billion JPY (equivalent to approximately 77 million USD*¹) by 2024 into its Yamazaki and Hakushu Distilleries.

Quality ingredients are essential in whisky production. Suntory will operate “floor malting*²”, a traditional process of malting barley, at both the Yamazaki and Hakushu Distilleries. The Hakushu Distillery will also introduce a process to cultivate yeast*³, a fundamental ingredient to produce alcohol.

Since 1968, the pilot distillery*⁴ in Yamazaki has been the root of enhancing Suntory Whisky quality through new technology development and “Tsukuriwake” – the craftsmanship of diverse malt whiskies. The pilot distillery will install an electric heating pot still, additionally to the direct-firing pot still, to start research on how to enhance quality craftsmanship. It will serve as another symbol of the company’s persistent innovation in whisky making.

Yamazaki and Hakushu Distilleries will refresh their facilities to elevate the visitor experience and reopen in Autumn 2023. Updates will reflect the uniqueness of Suntory Whisky, the harmony between Japanese nature and culture, as well as the passion and precision of Suntory Whisky craftsmanship.

The whisky business embodies Suntory’s philosophy to inspire the “Brilliance of life” through “creating harmony with people and nature”, and “creating a rich and prosperous lifestyle”. As Suntory looks forward to the next 100 years, the company will take on challenges to develop innovation while coexisting with people around the world and the global environment, and aspire to produce Suntory Whisky beloved by all.

Learn more about Suntory Whisky [here](#), and its history [here](#).

*1: At a rate of 130 Japanese Yen per US dollar

*2: Once the barley has been soaked in water, it is spread out on the malting floor where it is shoveled or raked to expose it to oxygen in the air and encourage uniform germination. This method will enable malting barley in various conditions.

*3: Yeast is used in the fermentation process. By cultivating yeast at its in-house facilities, the company aims to continuously obtain high quality yeast.

*4: A small scale distilling facility in Yamazaki Distillery for quality research and development.

Key milestones

- 1923 - The Yamazaki Distillery, Japan’s first malt whisky distillery, started construction on the outskirts of Kyoto.
- 1929 - *Suntory Shirofuda (white label)* launched as the first genuine whisky to be produced domestically.
- 1937 - *Suntory Whisky Kakubin (square bottle)* launched and becomes a long-selling product.
- 1972 - Sungrain Chita Distillery, the predecessor of Chita Distillery, established at the calm shores of Chita Peninsula in Aichi Prefecture.
- 1973 - The Hakushu Distillery established in the deep forest of the Japanese Southern Alps.
- 1984 - The launch of *Yamazaki*, followed by *Hibiki* (1989) and *Hakushu* (1993).
- 2003 - *Yamazaki 12 Years Old* awarded Gold at the International Spirits Challenge for the first time. Suntory Whisky has been recognized with renowned international accolades thereafter to date.

- 2010 - Suntory Liquors Limited, the former Suntory Spirits Limited, becomes the first Japanese company to be awarded the “Distiller of the Year” at the International Spirits Challenge
- 2014 - Suntory Holdings acquired Beam Inc. and becomes one of the world’s leading spirits companies with a dynamic portfolio across key categories.
- 2022 - *Hakushu 25 Years Old* wins the Top Award “Trophy” in the Japanese Whisky Category at International Spirits Challenge
- 2023 - Suntory Whisky celebrates its 100th Anniversary.

About Suntory Group

As a global leader in the beverage industry, Suntory Group offers a uniquely diverse portfolio of products from premium spirits, beer and wine to brewed teas, bottled water, carbonated soft drinks, ready-to-drink coffee and energy drinks, along with health and wellness products. Suntory is home to award-winning Japanese whiskies *Yamazaki*, *Hibiki* and *Hakushu* as well as iconic American spirits *Jim Beam* and *Maker's Mark*. Suntory also fascinates the taste buds with *The Premium Malt's* beer and also owns the exceptional Japanese wine *Tomi* and the world famous *Château Lagrange*. Its brand collection also includes *Sauza Tequila*, non-alcoholic favorites *Orangina*, *Lucozade*, *Ribena*, *BOSS* coffee, *Iyemon* green tea, *Suntory Tennensui* water, *TEA+* Oolong Tea, *V* and *BRAND'S*, as well as popular health and wellness product *Sesamin EX*.

Founded as a family-owned business in 1899 in Osaka, Japan, Suntory Group has grown into a global company operating throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania with an annual revenue (excluding excise taxes) of \$19.8 billion in 2021. Suntory is driven by *Yatte Minahare* - the spirit of bold ambition - and our 40,275 employees worldwide draw upon our unique blend of Japanese artisanship and global tastes to explore new product categories and markets.

As a company that delivers blessings of water and nature to our customers, Suntory is committed to its mission to create harmony with people and nature. Always aspiring to grow for good, Suntory is devoted to giving back to society through protecting water resources, nurturing its communities and fostering the arts.

Learn more about Suntory Group, its brands, and its commitment to social responsibility at www.suntory.com, on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).