

American-made sake tastes as good as established Japanese brands

Original Article (in Japanese, requires log-in):

<http://www.nikkei.com/article/DG XKZO13092630Y7A210C1CR8000/>

As the popularity of Japanese sake is increasing around the world, the spotlight is shining on a local American sake brewery.

In 2016, at an international tasting hosting a number of long-established craft sake breweries, an American man was awarded the gold medal for his Junmai ginjo. The man had lost his job after the Lehman shock and was determined to make sake.

At first glance, the label and bottle resemble white wine, but when you put it into your mouth, it's clearly the refreshing taste of sake. The acclaimed junmai ginjo, Blue Current, is in the hands of Daniel Ford (47). "It has a brilliant aroma of banana and vanilla doesn't it?"

To sell the sake to Americans unfamiliar with the drink, it's prepared to look like wine.

Gold medal winner

At the London Sake Challenge tasting in August last year, Blue Current was selected for the gold prize among 29 contestants including from well-established breweries in Japan.

Ford's small brewery is on the East Coast of the US, in Kittery, Maine, about 10 minutes by car from where the Treaty of Portsmouth was signed. Kittery's climate is similar to that of Tohoku and Hokkaido, with a snowy winter suitable for sake brewing.

The water used for brewing comes from a nearby lake is soft water, creating a good taste. The rice is koshihikari from California, 40% shaved rice grains, tailored for junmai ginjo.

In Japanese sake brewing, complex processes -- koji and yeast starters and other preparations are needed, but Ford deals with most of the procedure single-handedly. A warm room for fermenting, equipment such as tanks for preparation and storage were set up by Ford himself.

Using tanks ordered from a Chinese company rather than importing ready-made materials, he was able to cut investment costs by 90%.

He ships about 1,200 25-dollar 750 ml bottles to 38 states and the UK per month. He's also currently considering entering the New York market.

Tour of local sake brewery

After graduating from Harvard University, Ford worked as a financial system consultant, and researching DNA, etc. In 2005 he visited Japan and first came into contact with Japanese sake. After returning to the US, and with the Lehman shock hitting businesses hard, he was out of work, and though he searched for a new job for two years, realized "independence is better" and decided to become an entrepreneur.

He had experience already making beer and cider for fun, but beer breweries were already abundant in the US, and decided on Japanese sake, where there was still room for growth. He visited sake breweries in Kyoto, Osaka and Hiroshima, and learned about sake brewing through participating in seminars. In 2015 he began his venture.

His goal was to share American local sake. According to the English survey company Euro Monitor, consumption of rice wine like sake and makgeolli is only 0.1% of the rice alcohol market. According to JETRO, sake produced in the US comes mostly from large Japanese businesses, with few craft sakes.

Ford's dream is to showcase his sake to Japanese people alongside Japanese craft brewers at bustling Japanese restaurants. His fight continues.





ブルー・カレントは昨年8月、英ロンドンで開催された国際金・ロンドン・サウサース・チャレンジャー

SAKE造り 米国人挑む



純米吟醸「ブルー・カレント」を造るダニエル・フォードさん(メイン州カタリー)

元金融技術者、失業で一念発起

「見ても、ラベルも瓶も白ワインのようだが、口に含むとさつきのどろろとした日本酒の味わいだ。自慢の純米吟醸「ブルー・カレント」を手に入れたダニエル・フォードさん(47)は、パナマとバニラのような華やかなアロマを感じるような酒。日本になじみのない米国人に売り込むため、あえてワインのようないわゆる「外見」にしている。

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世界の鼓動

日本の老舗に負けぬ味

みなご複雑な工程が必要だが、フォードさんははばんでこなす。高麗多なった。05年に異動で米国に帰った福原や、仕込みに用、許認可など多岐にわたる。備後、リーマン・ショックといった機運は自分設計。タンクの製造は中国企業に発注し、既製品を購入するより投資額を削減した。

25(約2800円)の750ml入りボトルを目標1200本生産している。現在、大田県であるニューヨーク州を出発点だ。

各地の酒蔵見学。フォードさんはハーバード大卒業後、DANA(元金融技術者)として米国で働いていた。2005年に異動で米国に帰った福原や、仕込みに用、許認可など多岐にわたる。備後、リーマン・ショックといった機運は自分設計。タンクの製造は中国企業に発注し、既製品を購入するより投資額を削減した。

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17日、米の強制収

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不適切な言葉、業界外へ拡散、大企業に伝わり、大企業に伝わり、大企業に伝わり。

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福島第、試験操、地元漁協、東京電力、事故後、福島、試験操、地元漁協、東京電力、事故後、福島。

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