



SAKE AND OTHER UNIQUE PRODUCTS

Although I wasn't a judge at the Alberta Beverage Awards, I managed to take some time out of my very hectic 12-14 hour days to do a little tasting. Sake? I love it. I usually feel that I perhaps need a little more appreciation for it, and perhaps I'm not the best person out there to profess any sort of expertise, but on the right sort of day? It's so good, so refreshing, and so very, very tasty. I thoroughly enjoyed both winners below, though personally I rarely reach for the "Nigori" or cloudy bottles. Get yourself out of that beverage rut! *Tom Firth*

JUDGES SELECTION



Lucky Cat by Kaiun
Japan
\$45-48
CSPC 860885



BEST IN CLASS

KAWATSURU SANUKI CLOUDY
Japan
\$33-38
CSPC 861360

OTHER SPIRITS

Calling these "other spirits" is a bit of a disservice, but we frequently get many examples every year that don't really fit in with just about any flight of other products. Ofttimes, we have to stick them into a closest grouping, give the judges a little heads up that there are some different things hiding out (without giving away which bottle, country, or producer it might be). Then off to the computer to see how they stacked up. These disparate bottles below are wildly different, but stunning enough examples that they managed to really shine forth in difficult circumstances.

JUDGES SELECTION



Hwayo 41 Premium Soju
South Korea
\$90-95
CSPC 835328



Lee Gang Ju Pear Ginger Rice Spirit
South Korea
\$31-35 (375 mL)
CSPC 863465



Absinthe La Pipette Verte
France
\$85-90
CSPC 820903



BEST IN CLASS

MASSAYA ARAK
Lebanon
\$50-55
CSPC 847751



Rig Hand Chilean Aguardiente
Alberta, Canada
\$22-24 (375 mL)
CSPC 864079



AMARO

Amaro means bitter in Italian and bitterness is the defining characteristic of this digestive. In the beginning, monks made amari in monasteries, using foraged ingredients (herbs, barks, roots) to be steeped in alcohol and used as medicine. Drink after dinner, some are best chilled, others on ice. Look for balanced sweetness, intensity and flavour complexity. Even in styles not made in Italy, look for those made with local flavours.

Mary Bailey



Citrange Amaro Limone dell' Etna
Italy
\$58-62
CSPC 869642



Venti Amaro
Italy
\$52
CSPC 820748



Nonino Amaro Quintessentia
Italy
\$54-58
CSPC 707179



BEST IN CLASS



NONINO L'APERITIVO BOTANICAL
Italy
\$53-55
CSPC 828409

