



FOODIE ISLAND  
HOKKAIDO



# Wines of HOKKAIDO JAPAN





Brilliant blue sky and wide spreading land.  
A new northern wind is blowing through  
Japan's wine world.



## The power of a climate like that of the world's great wine regions

Hokkaido's climate is remarkably suited to wine making, much like that of Europe's famed wine-making regions Champagne and Alsace. From this rich soil, a variety of unique wines are made.

Hokkaido's wine-making history stretches back to 1876, when the Kaitakushi (Development Commission) Winery was opened in Sapporo in an effort to develop national industries in the north. Hokkaido's wine was born from the wild Crimson Glory grape wine made there. The early stages of wine making in Hokkaido were thus large scale operations led by government agencies. However, from the year 2000, smaller wineries began opening one after another. Hokkaido has a cold climate with heavy snowfall, so it's well suited to German wine grapes. However, since that same year, changes in climate have led to an increase in previously difficult to grow French varieties like pinot noir and sauvignon blanc, which have influenced current wine-making trends.





## Changing the Japanese wine world through the synergy of new and old.

Hokkaido has earned more and more interest as a region with all the best conditions for raising grapes, and wineries are sure to increase as those interested in wine-making come to try their hands.

Now there are both of venerable old wineries who have established names nationwide, and young makers trying handmade and organic wine-making. The old and new wineries work together, improving both the techniques and flavor of Hokkaido wine. And so, as Hokkaido attracts more attention as a Japanese wine region, look for the “Made in Hokkaido” label when choosing your next Japanese wine.





## About Main Grape Varieties



This variety was developed in Germany as a crossing with Riesling. In snowy Hokkaido, its characteristics vary depending on when it is harvested. It is the main variety of white wine in Hokkaido.

**Kerner**



This is a top class white wine grape representing the Alsace region of France. It stands out for its rich, sweet, mature aroma with notes of spices and lychee fruit.

**Gewürztraminer**



This, the world's most famous white wine grape variety, is mostly used in dry wines. It's well suited for cask aging, and in recent years Hokkaido chardonnay cultivation has been steadily increasing.

**Chardonnay**



Niagara grapes are known for their robust and complex aroma. The scent and flavor of Niagara wines has no equal, and they offer a unique freshness on the palate.

**Niagara**



This is one of Austria's primary grape varieties, and is widely grown in Hokkaido as the main grape for red wine production. It is marked by its gentle, calm mouthfeel.

**Zweigelt-Rebe**



A Bordeaux red wine variety that has become possible to grow as Hokkaido warms. The taste and tannins are mellow.

**Merlot**



"Yamasachi" was developed by crossing Kiyomi and wild grapes with the aim of having strong cold resistance. It became an O.I.V. registered variety in 2020, and the cultivation area is expanding.

**Yamasachi**

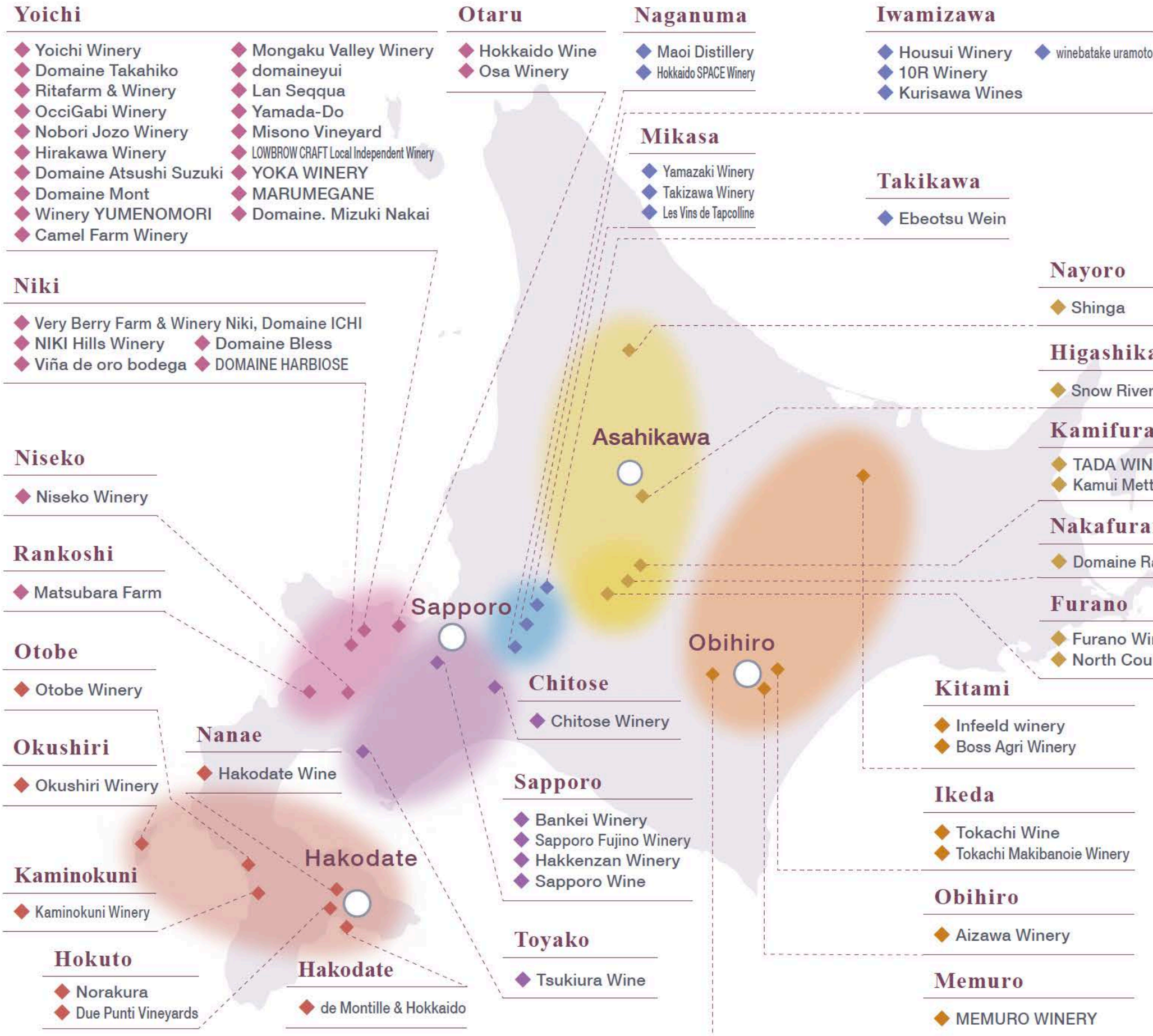


Known as the King of Bourgogne, this French sourced red wine variety has fans all over the world. It has a fine flavor, marked by a fruity berry-like aroma.

**Pinot Noir**



# Hokkaido Winery Map



## Sorachi Area

The winter is bitter cold and snowy, while summer is filled with sunlight and clear skies. This region is filled with vineyards that meld perfectly with the beautiful natural scenery.

## Kamikawa Area

This basin area stands out for hot summers and cold winters. The resulting grapes are rich in minerals and very sweet, and many grapes are used for ice wine in the bitterly cold winters.

## Eastern Hokkaido Area

Tokachi wine has been a driving force in Hokkaido's wine industry, and as the birthplace of new grape varieties, it's home to the highest level of unique techniques in both cultivation and fermentation. It's also in a period of rapid winery growth.

## Sapporo Area

The wineries in the Sapporo outskirts or within Chitose shine with unique personality against their scenery. The differences between the grape varieties and methods used at each winery are fascinating.

## Southern Hokkaido Area

With less snowfall than other regions of Hokkaido, the soil and climate both have unique characteristics here, so this area is outstanding for wineries and grape cultivation.

## Shiribeshi Area

The area around Yoichi Town and Niki Town is the most temperate in Hokkaido and famous for fruit cultivation, with half the wineries in Hokkaido clustered here. It's also got a lively wine tourism industry.

### Rules & Manners when visiting Wineries and Vineyards

- Please do not enter any vineyard without permission.
- Some wineries and vineyards do not allow tours or public entry, and others require advance reservations. Be sure to call or check the website before going.





The mark of 100% pure Hokkaido wine.

## GI Hokkaido

In order to better protect the name and quality of local produce as a brand, and to help consumers in finding the very best, GI (Geographical Indication) system similar to that used in Europe and elsewhere has been established, so that regional agricultural products and goods can be registered and protected as brands.

Hokkaido was designated a wine-making region by the National Tax Agency in June, 2018. With that designation, it is now possible for wines clearing certain standards, such as “using 100% of grapes harvested in Hokkaido,” to use the “Hokkaido” indication on their labels.

Hokkaido’s grape producing region sees large daily temperature changes and cool nights between April and October, and so it produces grapes with high sugar content and plentiful organic acids. The year-round coolness also allows for low storage temperatures to preserve the natural flavors of the grapes in the finished wines.

In addition to the unique efforts of wine operators and the cooperation of industry organizations within Hokkaido to develop special cultivation techniques to deal with the region’s heavy snows and climate, members of the industry have worked to help select and develop cold resistant grape varieties like the natural Crimson Glory and hybrids.

The GI Hokkaido Wine label is proof of the highest quality wine, made to the highest standards with 100% Hokkaido grown grapes.

### Characteristics

White

Light and fruity, with a rich floral and citrus aroma and refreshing acidity.

Red

An aroma with notes of spice and nuts, striking acidity and gentle astringency.

Rose

Abundant fruit aromas, with a fresh, fruity flavor.

### Production Standards

- ◆ Must use 100% of grapes harvested in Hokkaido
- ◆ Must be fermented, stored and bottled in Hokkaido.
- ◆ Passed a sensory evaluation by an expert.

Etc.

