



For Immediate Release

SAIJO SAKE BECOMES A JAPAN BRAND

HIROSHIMA –September 2, 2008—Saijo Sake has been selected as the first sake brand of the JAPAN BRAND Development Assistance Program, a Japanese government initiative to promote the Japanese products that feature local resources and traditional skills.

The Saijo Sake Brewers Association commissioned development of a label for the brand to help consumers identify the 20 high quality sake brands that are certified as Saijo Sake. The brand logotype, logo and the accompanying slogan, “Taste Japan,” were developed to invite and encourage consumers who cannot speak or read Japanese to try sake, and eventually associate Saijo with sake.

According to sake experts, the town of Saijo near Hiroshima has the ideal natural conditions for brewing sake, including pure water and high quality rice. It is one of Japan’s three main sake-brewing areas and the birthplace of *Ginjo*, a high-grade sake made from highly milled rice fermented slowly at a low temperature.

TEN BREWERIES UNDER ONE LABEL

In Saijo, 10 sake breweries reside in close proximity around a neighborhood called Sakagura Dori. While each brewery has its own unique traditions and brewing techniques, they have united under the Saijo Sake brand to promote sake from the area to the world. Only the top three premium grade sakes, *Junmai Daiginjo*, *Daiginjo* and *Junmai Ginjo*, will bear the new Saijo Sake label.

Many Westerners are interested in sake today, according to recent market trends, but there is a dearth of English point-of-purchase information about the beverage. Most sake bottles are labeled in Japanese only, and consumers who don’t read Japanese cannot discern between sake and *shochu*, a popular distilled beverage in Japan. The labeling and the language barrier make selecting a bottle of sake a difficult proposition. The new Saijo Sake logotype aims to communicate what’s in the bottle in simple English and features a design intended to appeal to Western aesthetics.



AN INVITATION TO “TASTE JAPAN”

Accompanying the logo and logotype, the slogan “Taste Japan” implies that sake is the representative beverage of traditional Japanese cuisine. Thus, the brand message is “for those who want to experience Japan, Saijo sake is a good place to start.”

ABOUT THE PRIMARY LOGO DESIGN

The primary Saijo Sake logo design is a square depicting a *masu*, the traditional wooden cup used to drink sake. Inside the square is the Japanese character for “west,” which is also the first character of the word Saijo. The entire shape also resembles a traditional Japanese signature stamp as well as the lattice pattern found on traditional sake breweries’ walls. The spaces inside the square are filled with pale green and blue, colors inspired by the Saijo’s mountains, rice fields and water. With these colors, the Japanese-looking logo appeals to both modern and Western sensibilities.

COMPLEMENTARY DESIGN OBJECT

To complement the main logo, a secondary design object depicts a brush stroke from Japanese calligraphy. It was drawn by Japanese calligrapher Shuntei Adachi, who lives in Hiroshima. To create the design, she used a Kumanofude brush, another Hiroshima-based product that is also a “JAPAN BRAND.” The brushstroke resembles an “S,” the initial letter of both Saijo and sake. The brush stroke is also meant to represent the sake brewers’ craftsmanship as well as Saijo’s nature. A stylized water drop at the end of the stroke represents an essential ingredient of sake and the sake itself.

WHAT MAKES IT SAIJO SAKÉ?

For a sake to be called Saijo Sake, as defined under the Saijo Sake Locality Designation Control System, the following criteria must be met.

1. The sake must be *Junmai* or *Ginjo* grade.
2. It must be made using Hiroshima’s traditional three-stage brewing process.
3. It must be made with 100% Hiroshima-grown sake rice.
4. It must be brewed with water from wells maintained by the breweries.
5. The rice must be milled and polished to 50% or less for *Ginjo*, and 60% or less for *Junmai*.
6. It must pass a blind taste test, by an appointed judging panel, for overall quality.