

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Yamazaki - Single Malt Whisky

[Suntory Limited](#) has the oldest distillery in Japan at **Yamazaki**, proving the adage, "with age comes experience and with experience, wisdom."

Shinjiro Torii founded [Suntory Limited](#) in 1899 to introduce western-style spirits to Japan. In 1923 he was a true pioneer when he built Japan's first whisky distillery in the Vale of Yamazaki and in 1929 he introduced the first Japanese whiskey, and earned the title of "Father of Japanese Whisky."



Today, Suntory Limited whisky receives worldwide acclaim and continues to win awards at international spirits competitions. In July 2004, they introduced the award-winning Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years, whose most recent awards include a Gold Medal, 2005 Beverage Tasting Institute and a Silver Medal, 2005 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, and the award-winning Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 18 Years, whose recent awards include a Double Gold Medal 2005 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, and a Gold Medal, 2005 Beverage Tasting Institute, and the accolades and awards keep accumulating.

Recently, Edward F. Nesta and I assembled a few of our friends to do a comparative tasting of the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years and the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 18 Years.

The Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years is 43% Alcohol by Volume and has a rich gold appearance. Although whisky can be drunk straight, we added a bit of water to our tasting glasses to open up the whisky and bring out the full flavors, and we nosed dried fruit aromas, prune, nuts, wood, caramel and someone even smelled chocolate. The taste was creamy, buttery, sweet, dry, with prune and wood. This is a medium-body whisky with a pleasant lingering warm finish.

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The Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 18 Years is also 43% Alcohol by Volume and has a deep copper-gold appearance. Once again adding a bit of water to our tasting glasses, we nosed prunes, toffee and honey aromas. The taste was complex, creamy, dry, and fruity with the essence of dried cherry, and honey. This full-bodied whisky had a long pleasant dry finish.

Over the course of our tasting, both the 12 year and the 18 year whiskies' aromas mellowed, with the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years retaining a caramel nose, and the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 18 Years retaining a toffee and honey nose. Both of these ultra-premium sipping whiskies retained the gratifying experience from the beginning of our tasting until the last dram was drunk.

Both the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years and the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 18 Years were very well-received by our tasting panel, but like most everything else that comes with age, the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 18 Years really stands out as an exceptional spirit.

Although whisky aficionados might cringe at the idea of adding anything to a high-quality whisky, the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years brought out the cocktailian in me, and I think that this cocktail really works.

### **The Grand Mizuwari**

2 ounces Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years  
water  
splash Grand Marnier

In a rocks glass, add the Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years, water to taste and a splash of Grand Marnier. Add ice and stir.

Whether you drink Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" straight, mixed with a bit of water, or drink it mixed with water and served over ice, which is called "Mizuwari" in Japan, there is one thing that you can be sure of, and that is the pure pleasure that comes from drinking a quality product that is rich in history.

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The symbol on the Suntory box is "harmony", which truly reflects the harmonious nature of the Suntory Limited products. As they say when toasting in Japan, "Kampai."

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