



Appreciating the Changing Seasons with Beer

■ Daisen G Beers produced by Kume-Zakura Micro Brewery Corp.

A beer brewery at the foot of Mount Daisen in Tottori Prefecture seeks to produce beers that express the seasonal changes using locally produced wheat and fresh, home-grown hops, while valuing both tradition and innovation.

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With an elevation of 1,729 meters, Mount Daisen in Tottori Prefecture is the highest mountain in the Chugoku region of western Japan. The *Izumo no kuni fudoki*, an account of the culture, climate and other features of the former Izumo province completed in 733, called it a mountain where gods reside, and to this day Mount Daisen is considered sacred. Reflecting their faith in the bodhisattva Jizo, revered as the savior of all living creatures and who is said to have appeared at the summit of Mount Daisen, many people have visited the Daisen-ji Temple since the end of the Heian period

(794-late twelfth century) to pray for the protection of their cows and horses. The bountiful nature, beautiful landscapes and large beech forests in the area have thus remained largely untouched, and due to the beech forests, the area at the foot of Mount Daisen has plentiful underground water supplies and good quality springs.

Using this underground water as an ingredient, Kume-Zakura Micro Brewery Corp., established in 1996, has been producing beer at an elevation of 300 meters in the town of Houki at the foot of Mount Daisen. It brews beers under the Daisen G Beer brand using soft water pumped from a well that is 150 meters deep.



■ The Daisen G weizen that won the World's Best Grain-only Wheat Beer award at the 2011 World Beer Awards in the U.K.



■ Beer barley "Daisen Gold" grown in collaboration with local farmers



☐ Beer is brewed using water pumped from a 150-meter-deep well



☐ Hops grown in the fields next to the brewery



☐ Inside the Kume-Zakura Micro Brewery

Daisen G Beer brews approximately thirty-five different beers over the course of the year, including its flagship weizen (a top-fermented beer brewed with a lot of malted wheat), pilsner (bottom-fermented pale lager brewed with extra hops), pale ale (top-fermented with a lot of pale malt) and stout (a dark, top-fermented full-bodied beer).

Iwata Hideki, Factory Manager of Kume-Zakura Micro Brewery Corp., explains, “There are many kinds of malted grains, hops and yeast available. These are the ingredients for making beer. Different types of beer can be produced, depending on the type of ingredients chosen.”

The company collaborates with local farmers and cultivates the ingredients it uses. For example, it grows Daisen Gold, a two-row barley originating in Daisen, as well as Yamada Nishiki and Goriki, which are rice varieties famous for their use in sake brewing, using

them as ingredients in seasonally-limited beers. The company also grows hops, the ingredient that generates beer’s bitter taste and aroma, in the fields next to the brewery. It has even been growing wheat in recent years. The company only brews its Daisen G Weihen Hop in autumn, using freshly picked hops. People enjoy its comfortable citrus flavor and refreshing, bitter taste.

The Daisen G-Beer brewery has its own restaurant.

“If we start brewing immediately after harvesting the hops in August, we can provide beer in September. We seek to express the seasonal changes in Japan by providing beers that feature the different tastes of each season.”

Daisen G-Beer has garnered high praise in international beer competitions to date. For example, the Daisen G Weizen won the World’s Best Grain-only Wheat Beer Award, the grand prize in its category, at the 2011 World Beer Awards in the United Kingdom.

“Our focus recently has been on maintaining a successful balance between tradition and innovation. Leveraging the power of tradition that we experienced during our European inspection tour and the innovation that we witnessed in our tour of the United States, we

seek to create a brewery that is able to continue to take on challenges while always valuing tradition,” says Iwata.

The entire area surrounding Mount Daisen was designated as the Daisen-Okii National Park in 1936, and Mount Daisen was certified as a Japan Heritage site in 2016. With Mount Daisen at their back, these areas face the Sea of Japan, providing not only beautiful natural scenery, but plentiful seafood and foods found in the mountains. These foods include locally caught snow crab that are best in the winter and which pair excellently with beer.

Many parts of the Daisen-Okii National Park are known for their magnificent sunsets, which bring new color to the local landscapes. What better time than sunset to experience the delicious food and drinks created in the foothills of sacred Mount Daisen? [7](#)



☐ Cultivating rice for the seasonally-limited beer “Yago”