



Les Clefs d'Or Japan Key News



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A Visit to Suntory Yamazaki Distillery

List of Les Clefs d'Or Japan attendees:

Mr. Osamu HAMASAKI (*Hotel Okura Tokyo*)
Ms. Etsuko HIGASHIDE (*The Capitol Hotel Tokyo*)
Ms. Miki SAITO (*Shangri-La Hotel Tokyo*)

By MIKI SAITO

On September 15, 3 Les Clefs d'Or members and 10 Japan Concierge Association members visited the Suntory Yamazaki Distillery.



The facility is located in the suburb of Kyoto. It was established in 1923 as the first whisky distillery in Japan. As Japanese whiskies have recently become very popular and is quite difficult to

make reservations for the distillery tour. The tour was hosted by Mr. Katahira of Marunouchi Brand Forum who organized the Mazda factory tour for us back in January as well.

Our tour was escorted by Mr. Koshimizu, the Chief Blender Emeritus. He was once featured in the famous documentary TV program. It was a valuable occasion for us.

Each factory has a different aroma and we smelt it the moment we entered the factories. In order to produce a variety of whiskies, they use both wooden and stainless steel wash backs and also pot stills of different shapes and sizes.



Mr. Koshimizu explained that fermented whiskies are colorless and polyphenol from the wash backs gives them colors. Their aging warehouse has no air conditioning and all the casks are stored at their natural temperature. Whiskies will finally become a product five to ten years after they were made.



The Yamazaki Distillery is said to be located in a most suitable place for making whiskies with a moist climate and top-quality water. In the back of the facility, we saw a rich bamboo forest and a stream of clear water.

After the tour we tasted whiskies produced in four different types of casks. Mr. Koshimizu explained that although they were made from the same ingredients, they resulted in different aromas and flavors depending on the types of casks. White oak gives a fruity and fresh aroma, sherry oak contains a lot of polyphenol and makes rich aroma, Japanese oak (*Mizunara*) gives an aroma like incense, and smoke oak leaves gives medicine-like scent.



Mr. Koshimizu said that the blender's job is to create new flavors by utilizing the characteristics of each whisky and supply stable quality to their customers. They review all the recipes every year and create their products by combining whiskies reserved.

Mr. Koshimizu told us that before he retired, in order to keep

his taste in the shape, he ate the same lunch menu every day and tried not to accumulate stress. He also shared his thoughts of qualities for ideal blenders: gentle-natured personality, having a heart and sense for tasting, diversity, and a spirit of challenge. We were absolutely fascinated by Mr. Koshimizu's stories and whiskies.

Networking with Louis Vuitton

List of Les Clefs d'Or Japan attendees:

Ms. Etsuko HIGASHIDE (*The Capitol Hotel Tokyo*)
Mr. Kazushi KAWAMURA (*Palace Hotel Tokyo*)
Mr. Philippe MULLER (*Grand Pacific Le Daiba*)
Ms. Miki SAITO (*Shangri-La Hotel Tokyo*)
Ms. Mayako SUMIYOSHI (*Palace Hotel Tokyo*)
Ms. Naoko TSUGITA (*Cerulean Tower Tokyo Hotel*)

By KAZUSHI KAWAMURA



On September 24th, 2015, six members of Les Clefs d'Or Japan and seven including four main store managers of Louis Vuitton in Tokyo assembled for luncheon meeting at ICONIC Ginza.



Thanks to the cooperation by Client development and Client Marketing of Louis Vuitton for the successful networking occasion.

During the meeting, we exchanged various service experiences and "wow" stories from both sides vividly.

After the luncheon meeting, we paid a visit to the Ginza boutique which is one of the main flagships stores of Louis Vuitton

Japan for observation.

Mr. Sato, the Store Manager, showed us the private salon where customers could make order-made products and explained its luxury service flow.

It is such an important and vital chance for the members of Les Clefs d'Or to have exchanged our ideas and customer service skills with other members of industry.

We hope this will be the stepping stone to establish good relationship with the members of Louis Vuitton and lead to the development of our customer service skills and knowledge in future.

