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John Puma: Hello and welcome to Sake Revolution. This is America's first sake podcast. I am one of your hosts, John Puma sake nerd at large, founder of TheSakeNotes.com and the administrator of the internet sake discord.

[00:00:41] **Timothy Sullivan:** And I'm your host Timothy Sullivan. I'm a sake samurai, sake educator, and the founder of the Urban Sake website and together John and I will be tasting and chatting about all things sake and doing our best to make it fun and easy to understand.

[00:00:56] **John Puma:** Yeah, that's right, Tim. Now we finally made through the long journey of the basics of how to make sake.

[00:01:02] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yes. We had a long series on sake production and we're done.

[00:01:07] **John Puma:** ...and we are. And it kind of brings me back to like, you know, how do we even get into all of this? , what made me become a sake geek?

[00:01:13] What made you want to become a sake educator and a sake samurai?

[00:01:18] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. It's funny where you end up but I think everyone has an interesting origin story and, Sake Revolution is no exception to that. So, if you want, I could tell you a little bit about how I got into sake.

[00:01:30] **John Puma:** I am dying to hear it.

[00:01:33] **Timothy Sullivan:** Well, I used to work in corporate America. A lot of people assume when they meet me and they hear about my job working in the sake industry, they assume that, you know, maybe I used to work in restaurants or hospitality or worked in a hotel or something like that and not true at all.

[00:01:48] **John Puma:** And that's

[00:01:48] very common in our circles. Like a lot of people who are in sake are coming from that end of things. So you're not being from there. And being from corporate America is very unique.

[00:01:59] **Timothy Sullivan:** Not only corporate America, but I also worked in technology, which I know you work in technology and

[00:02:05] **John Puma:** yeah,

[00:02:05] **Timothy Sullivan:** that's something we have in common.

[00:02:06] I used to do web development for a fortune 500 company. And I actually did that for 11 years. So I had this whole career before I got into sake and sake became a huge part of my life. I actually went out, on a date when I was 35 years old. And, this was, uh, Early date in this

relationship. And we went to a Japanese restaurant and had premium sake for the first time ever, at that restaurant.

[00:02:34] And I just, from the first moment I sipped it, I was like, this is amazing. And, you know, John, it wasn't just the sake. It was the pairing of the sushi with the sake together. Like it was the food pairing that really got me. So that's always been an important thing when I've been teaching and learning about sake has been the food pairing aspect of it.

[00:02:53] But that moment was really special for me. I always. Jokingly described it as like, you know, you can hear the angels singing and the chorus in the background, like the scales fell from my eyes and I was just like, Oh my God, this is so good. And the one thing I do remember saying to myself was that why didn't anyone tell me this was out there?

[00:03:14] I'm 35 years old! Why did I not know this was a thing. This is a crime against humanity. Something's wrong here. And that really. got me thinking that I have to spread the word about this because I didn't want other people waking up 35 years old. Never having had good sake before.

[00:03:33] So that's what really got me going and

[00:03:37] **John Puma:** interesting.

[00:03:37] **Timothy Sullivan:** Not only did , that sake experience go well, that date went well and now we're married. So everything just worked out

[00:03:44] really well.

[00:03:45] **John Puma:** So now you're married to that person and Your, your profession is sake. Yes. This restaurant was important to you.

[00:03:54] **Timothy Sullivan:** You're not gonna believe this, but the sake that I had that day. Yeah, it was Hakkaisan Junmai Ginjo, and I am now a brand ambassador for that company.

[00:04:06] **John Puma:** That is it. You should write a book.

[00:04:10] **Timothy Sullivan:** Okay. I'll be back in a few minutes. No.

[00:04:12] **John Puma:** Okay. All right. All right. Good.

[00:04:14] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. So I had Hakkaisan Junmai Ginjo that day, and that brand was always really special to me.

[00:04:20] And then flash forward many years, I had the chance to connect with that brewery, and then I had the chance to work there. Uh, do my internship there, and now I'm brand ambassador for that brand. So. This Hakkaisan Junmai Ginjo is a very, very special sake for me.

[00:04:38] **John Puma:** Wow. Fantastic. And, you've brought some of that along today?

[00:04:41] I believe?

[00:04:42] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yes, I have it with me. All right. Uh, this brewery is Hakkaisan Sake Brewery. This is the first sake that I have had, and I'm going to open the bottle here and all right. And I'm going to pour myself a taste of this now, Hakkaisan Junmai Ginjo comes in a very distinctive green bottle, has a white label with black writing on it.

[00:05:12] So it's a very beautiful bottle. this is from Niigata prefecture. The Hakkaisan brewery is in Southern Niigata, the town is called Uonuma and this sake has a 50% rice milling rate. So the rice grains are all polished to 50%. Uh, that is Junmai Daiginjo quality, but they sell it as a Junmai Ginjo. It has an SMV of plus four. So that indicates a very, very gentle light dryness, not super dry, not sweet.

[00:05:43] **John Puma:** Right.

[00:05:43] **Timothy Sullivan:** And it uses the water that comes from Hakkaisan mountain. So the water is snow melt in origin. So it's mountain stream, snow melt water, and Niigata's famous for having vast amounts of snow in the winter and the water source that they use is incredibly important to the overall profile of this sake.

[00:06:05] So let's give it a smell. Hmm. Very very gentle, restrained, light aroma.

[00:06:13] **John Puma:** by the way, so Hakkai-san.. "san" , is one of the Japanese word for mountain

[00:06:18] **Timothy Sullivan:** hakkai

[00:06:19]

[00:06:19] means eight-peaked and "san" means mountain. So the name of this mountain and English literally means eight-peaked mountain.

[00:06:28]

[00:06:28] You know, when

[00:06:28] they put this sake on menus, the English name, sometimes they call it eight peaks as the English translation of that. And they named this brand after that mountain for two reasons. One is that you can literally see the mountain when you stand in front of the brewery.

[00:06:43] The mountain is right there. And also the water comes from the mountain. So the snow melt that is happening to get the water source is from Hakkaisan mountain. And the water source is the same. It's a one stream and that stream has a pipeline to our brewery. And, all the water comes from this one spot and it's at the foot of Hakkaisan mountain.

[00:07:03] So that's why this mountain is so tied with the brand of Hakkaisan.

[00:07:07] **John Puma:** That's wonderful.

[00:07:08] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. And John you've been there.

[00:07:10] **John Puma:** I have.

[00:07:11] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yes.

[00:07:11] **John Puma:** . I haven't been there and I have actually sipped the water that comes down the mountain. Uh, guys, it's safe. I didn't just like, dunk, my head into a stream.

[00:07:20] there is a method to doing this and it was delicious water and people from the neighboring town actually go to the spot. You told me this. And I was like a little skeptical. I was like, maybe they tell Tim that that's what happens, but that's not really what happens. But while we were there, a guy drove up with a couple of jugs and started filling the water and I was like, son of a bitch.

[00:07:41] He was telling the truth.

[00:07:42] **Timothy Sullivan:** Right on cue.

[00:07:43] **John Puma:** right on cue.

[00:07:43] You hired that guy. Didn't You?

[00:07:45] **Timothy Sullivan:** So there's one spot that the water goes to Hakkaisan brewery. And then there's another channel where the water comes out in this little fountain, at the base of the mountain. And that's where we were hanging out. And that's where you can actually come and taste the water, but people do come with jugs and they drink it at home as their local water.

[00:08:02] And it's, it's so delicious. It's really light and clean. And so I'm going to go ahead and give this a smell. Hmm. So very, very restrained as I said, but there is a hint, just a back note of something fruity makes me think of strawberries or melons, something fruity, but it is a whisper of it. And then on top of that, there's a little bit of steamed rice.

[00:08:28] Like, if someone in the next room was eating a bowl of steamed rice, and you just got this little waft of, rice aroma, that's what this is so gentle and restrained, but that is completely by design. And that is one of the hallmarks of the Niigata region is kind of really restrained lighter and cleaner styles.

[00:08:48] So I'm going to give this a taste.

[00:08:50] **John Puma:** Nice.

[00:08:54] **Timothy Sullivan:** Mmm. All right. So this makes me think of my nickname for this sake. Do you know my nickname for Hakkaisan Junmai Ginjo?

[00:09:03] **John Puma:** I think I do.

[00:09:04] What is it?

[00:09:06] Is it magic water?

[00:09:07] **Timothy Sullivan:** It is magic water.

[00:09:08] **John Puma:** a-ah! I knew it.

[00:09:09] **Timothy Sullivan:** So I called this sake magic water because it is so light and clean.

[00:09:14] It really makes me think of that water source that we went through that snow melt water source. It's just light, clean and crisp. And, this is the taste that made me fall in love with sake. It was just so pristine. And just with sushi, it's just so good.

[00:09:30] **John Puma:** I have a question, is this, is this restaurant, cause I'm really curious about this.

[00:09:34] Part of it actually is the restaurant still around

[00:09:37] **Timothy Sullivan:** it is.

[00:09:38] **John Puma:** And do you go back there occasionally and wax nostalgic about your humble beginnings in sake?

[00:09:45] **Timothy Sullivan:** I do, but I have some bad news for everybody.

[00:09:48] **John Puma:** uh oh

[00:09:49] **Timothy Sullivan:** So I do go back there and I do wax nostalgic and I sit at the same table. I had my religious conversion experience, but. They have taken the sake off, the menu.

[00:10:00] **John Puma:** nooooo!

[00:10:01] Wait, don't they know don't have you, can you talk to them? Can you talk to the manager and be like, look, man, this is...

[00:10:08] **Timothy Sullivan:** you need a plaque on the wall here.

[00:10:11] **John Puma:** Here's sat Timothy's Sullivan. No, it's, it's,

[00:10:16] **Timothy Sullivan:** it's so sad, but

[00:10:19] the reason,

[00:10:19] **John Puma:** that's funny acutally.

[00:10:20] **Timothy Sullivan:** The reason I know for sure it's Hakkaisan is because when I went on the date and

[00:10:27] we had dinner. And I said, that was amazing the next week or so I kept thinking about it. Like I was like that sake was so good. It's one of the best, most delicious things I've had in so long. And it shocked me that I was 35 and I had, there was something out there that just knocked me off my feet. Like that was amazing.

[00:10:44] And I had no idea. It was really a thing. Um, I actually went back for dinner.

[00:10:52] **John Puma:** Ah, at least you went for dinner.

[00:10:54] **Timothy Sullivan:** I went for dinner with my Palm pilot, and I took a photo with my rudimentary phone, my Palm pilot. I took this grainy grainy photo using my, 2006 technology. And I still have that picture.

[00:11:13] It's a grainy low resolution picture, but it is of the. The menu, which was on the wall. So they had four sake's on the list and there was a poster for each one that they had hand drawn. And I have this picture of the different posters, because I wanted to remember the name of the sake. Cause I loved it so much.

[00:11:35] And then maybe eight or nine years later, I went back and the poster was gone...

[00:11:41] **John Puma:** oh no!

[00:11:41] **Timothy Sullivan:** I was like,

[00:11:42] Oh, okay. I need that for my sake but it was long gone. Yeah. And I've never told the restaurant that. They don't care. They're just doing their business. But, I loved it so much.

[00:11:53] And the fact that it's not carried in that one restaurant anymore, doesn't really bother me. I'm not at all of them now and I spread the gospel far and wide and ,

[00:12:03] To spite them...

[00:12:03] sipping on the sake now is very, very nostalgic for me. And my number one, pairing recommendation for this as sushi, because that was my first pairing with this sake and really works so well.

[00:12:15] Wonderful. That's a, that was quite a story.

[00:12:17] Yeah. Yeah. Uh, so John, how about you? How did you get into sake? I mean, we both started in technology.

[00:12:24] **John Puma:** Yes. Uh, now my, my tale is not nearly as romantic. Uh, I do not work for this company. And I did not marry anybody who was involved with my experiencing it. So let's just set the table right here.

[00:12:41] Things are going to be a little less exciting. It's fine. Um, now the, the sake I fell in love with was not the first sake that I had. Um, not the first premium's sake that I had, but my interest in trying sake, I actually came from a trip to Japan. Now it was 2006. And for the record, I was 29 at the time, not to 35, like some people on this call.

[00:13:06] **Timothy Sullivan:** eeeeh? what was that? Speak up Sonny...

[00:13:11] **John Puma:** 2006. And I went to Japan for, for the reason of the lady I was involved with at the time she had, due to her job, the ability to kind of go to any hotel in the world for free. And she wanted to go to Japan. And I was, an idiot and, really not worldly at all.

[00:13:30] I got a passport for this trip cause I'd never traveled. And I thought to myself, well, I like video games and, and I've seen some anime, so this should be great. And I got on a plane to Japan. A bunch of our friends came with us. Yeah.

[00:13:47] **Timothy Sullivan:** So this was like a

[00:13:48] group trip?

[00:13:49] **John Puma:** It was a group trip now here's, here's where it becomes tragic.

[00:13:52] So number one, I did not prepare at all for, any dietary experiences. I did not look into, Hey, wait a minute. What kind of food do they have in Japan? I'm going to be okay. should I start to prime myself on things? Should I maybe look into that and try eating some, maybe try some sushi before you go to Japan.

[00:14:12] Good idea right now, now, never, that never did any of that. What about drinks? Should I look into sake? what else is there? I don't even know. So go to Japan and I'm barely eating anything.

[00:14:24] As I told you

[00:14:25] **Timothy Sullivan:** so you were freaked out by the sushi?

[00:14:26] **John Puma:** I was freaked out.

[00:14:27] I was such again, never had a passport before I was freaked out by everything.

[00:14:32] And on top of that, my friends were kind of being, not amazing about a lot of things. And my girlfriend was being even worse. So we're fighting the whole time. Everybody's. Bickering and blah, blah, blah. And I'm starving. So I'm not, not that I'm not being any help at all. And at some point, my closest friend, we went to the sushi restaurant and he ordered some premium sake.

[00:14:56] And he's like, he's like here, try this. And I was like, I don't want, I don't want to taste your sakes... And he's like, just, just do it. And I'm like, okay. I was like, you know, this is, this is pretty good stuff. All right. and that was the end of it for that. Night for that moment. And it was

really when we got back to New York things quieted down and that same friend is like, Hey, you know, there's a sake bar right near my office in Midtown.

[00:15:26] We should go. And I'm like, wait, there's sake bars in New York? That's weird. And we'd see, we sake bars while we were in Japan, but they seem terrifying. Right. You know, you're walking past and it's all this Kanji. And again, John just got his passport for this trip and it's, and I was having a hard time working out the McDonald's menu.

[00:15:45] Like I was not ready to go into an izakaya and order sake. so we go to, to this sake bar izakaya in Midtown Manhattan and. We're dipping our toes in and we're trying the sake they have, and they have a pretty nice little list and we dabbled, we would, each order one and taste each other's sake.

[00:16:08] And eventually we had moments of like, Oh, this, this one, this is the, this is the one right here. this is the best sake on this list. And then you just keep going. Eventually we made it through the whole list, but I did come out with some big favorites and the first sake that I ever ordered by name and not by looking at the menu going this one, the first sake I ever ordered, my name is called Kaori.

[00:16:33] And it's a Junmai Ginjo from, Yamaguchi. And the name of the, the brewery is actually Yamagata Honten because the family to owns it. The family name is Yamagata ...Has nothing to do with the prefecture.

[00:16:46] **Timothy Sullivan:** John, you got to have Yamagata in there somewhere. Don't you?

[00:16:51] **John Puma:** That's it. That's secretly seeded.

[00:16:53] Why I would eventually get into Yamagata sake. It was because the first sake I ever loved had that word Yamagata in the brewery name anyway. Sorry. I went out and found a bottle of it so I can talk about it today a little bit.

[00:17:04] **Timothy Sullivan:** Oh, wow.

[00:17:05] **John Puma:** Okay. Yeah, it's actually gotten a little bit hard to find.

[00:17:08] I want to say back then there was a much smaller selection of sake in New York. And

[00:17:16] **Timothy Sullivan:** I agree

[00:17:17] **John Puma:** as more sake has come in. A lot of the flashier hipper sakes have kind of taking the place of some of the classics, quote, unquote, you know, some of the older brands, and this is one of the older ones, that was carried here.

[00:17:28] Also that izakaya is no longer around or rather I'd say they moved and I've gone through several iterations of their menu since. Um, and now I'm going to open it up and we're gonna talk about it a little bit.

[00:17:43] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. It will be interesting to see when you re- taste this. if the things you remember are still there, or if it seems different now, or

[00:17:51] **John Puma:** I'm not going to lie, it's been a long time.

[00:17:58] Now, in Japanese Kaori means a fragrant or fragrance. Yeah.

[00:18:02] **Timothy Sullivan:** Like aroma. Yeah.

[00:18:03] **John Puma:** Aroma. Right, right. And there it is. Ah,

[00:18:08] **Timothy Sullivan:** it's got one!

[00:18:09] **John Puma:** It does. you know, to this day, that's something I really look for in a sake as I want that aroma, I want that fruity. palate to be the first thing I experienced when I bring the glass up to my nose, that's, always something that I find really exciting about sake and it's, no coincidence that the first sake that interested me a lot has that, and it's, very like sweet and fruity on the nose.

[00:18:35] You're getting a bit of. I hate to do a call back on the show, but it's got some wafting Melon on the nose. Uh, want to go back to the episode with Chris Johnson? The sake Ninja that's right there. That's that's right. References from, Hmm. Yeah. There's like slightly, slightly overripe melon. Very, very nice though.

[00:19:03] Hmm. And the taste is. Actually shockingly light it's lighter than what I would like now. I think lighter than my personal, like my current, palate . Yeah. So the fruitiness carries over on the taste, but it's a very, very, very light. It's almost nonexistent.

[00:19:24] It's very restrained. Which is something I, these days have not, I'm not, altogether about restrained flavor these days. I like big, bold, fruity stuff, but this is fruity, but very, very light, very smooth, very drinkable. I can easily imagine how I'd be sipping this and be like, Oh yeah. Okay.

[00:19:45] This, this is, this is very easy to drink. Very. inoffensive. And when you're first getting into sake, you want something that's going to be lighter, I think, or something that's going to be more welcoming. This was totally up my alley. And I to understand why I was really into it. But I think these days, I like something a little bit more bold.

[00:20:05] Um, only a little bit more bold, a little bit more fruity, I would say, but this is very, very, very sip-able sake.

[00:20:12] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. I think it's interesting that, the first sake that really caught your eye kind of your aha moment was one named Kaori, which means aroma. And that's something you're you're all about now.

[00:20:25] **John Puma:** Yeah,

[00:20:25] totally.

[00:20:26] **Timothy Sullivan:** Right?

[00:20:27] **John Puma:** But it's very interesting. Cause this is kind of like a version 1.0. of the sake style that I would eventually define as my style. Right. It's very much a, simpler version of where I eventually ended

[00:20:41] up.

[00:20:41] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. like you said, like a version 1.0, you know, that's a great way to put it, but that, that is true.

[00:20:48] I think across the board for many things in life, like we, we get really into something and it could be the same with wine or beer or, so many things, coffee, and, you have a first kind of coffee you really love, or a first type of beer you really love. And then your palate develops. You get a little bit older, you get into different foods and you might want a different style and things evolve and develop.

[00:21:13] And that's one of the most exciting things that can happen. And it's so great to look back at what got us into this.

[00:21:20] **John Puma:** I find it really interesting that your favorite sake back then, is still one of your favorite sakes today. I don't want to get you in any trouble with your job, but I imagine that's still the case.

[00:21:29] **Timothy Sullivan:** No, I still love the sake. And I could like, if I had a tap in my house that, magic water just came out of the tap, like I would just still drink it every day.

[00:21:40] **John Puma:** Are you saying you want a Hakkaisan kegerator?

[00:21:45] **Timothy Sullivan:** Hint, hint. Yeah, no, I could drink this sake every day and I think one of the things that surprised me when I think back 15 years ago, my palette was definitely not as developed now. And it was really. The texture and the harmony of that sake with the sushi, but the sake was so smooth and it was like, wow, I've never had anything like this before. And I've done a lot of sake teaching and I've done a lot of pairing dinners at restaurants.

[00:22:17] And, I've been with a lot of people when they have that experience of sipping on a premium sake for the first time. And you see the gears kind of turning in their head, like, yeah, Oh, it tastes good, but I don't know how to describe it. And do I like this? I think I like this. It's really good. Yeah.

[00:22:30] But I don't know how to say it. And, they they're having their aha moment with sake, but sometimes they don't have the vocabulary or they say like, Oh, this is interesting or, Oh, that's really good. Unique. And, they don't have the exact way to describe what they're experiencing.

[00:22:46] And I was very much like that too, where , I couldn't really process it. I was like, what's going on? None, but I just knew it was so good. And that made me want to go back, try more, learn more. And, the other thing, yeah, I wanted to comment on John as a, what you, mentioned before about there not being a big selection 15 years ago, so true.

[00:23:04] When I was first getting into sake, there was a limited number of restaurants and bars here in New York that specialized in sake. And you saw a lot of the same sakes at different places you'd go. And it's a very, very much seen now. Don't you think?

[00:23:16] **John Puma:** When I first got into sake, most places I went to had, like, if a sake bar had 10 sakes, that was extraordinary.

[00:23:26] Like that was amazing. Wow. 10. , now when I was first getting into sake, I didn't know. That there were also places in New York that had hundreds. Yes. But I was mostly doing these like smaller places in Midtown that had, wonderful food and ambiance. Like when you stepped into these places, they were mainly for ex-pats like everybody that was in there where Japanese people who now lived and worked in New York. So being in there and having that experience was like, this is where. People who miss this are going. It's like, okay, this is really great. this is special. And helped make me more comfortable with sake and also helped me help make me more comfortable going back to Japan as I did, , many times since then, and going to Japan and being like, all right, now, I'm comfortable in places that look like this now.

[00:24:19] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. Yeah. I think for both of us, it's fair to say that. Falling in love with sake. Getting into sake really was a starting point for appreciating Japanese culture

[00:24:31] a whole lot more.

[00:24:33] And we both studied Japanese language. Now too.

[00:24:36] **John Puma:** We do. We do, I study it poorly. I hope that you study it better.

[00:24:41] **Timothy Sullivan:** no, I don't

[00:24:42] **John Puma:** oh no.

[00:24:43] **Timothy Sullivan:** But, the fact that we're even trying, I think we get a merit badge for that. , we're not perfect, but we're trying, we're studying. And there's so many things about Japanese culture that I've come to love. And I'm well known in my seminars for saying that sake is Japanese culture in a cup.

[00:25:00] You know, it's a, it's a real. Concentration of everything I love about Japanese culture in beverage form. Yeah. It's it looks simple on the outside. Like if you put it in a glass and hold it up, it looks like you've got water in there, but you could have a whole universe of flavor in that glass, even though it looks so simple.

[00:25:18] And I take that same philosophy and I apply that to Japanese culture. Like if you look at Japanese design, So many things about Japanese culture, they look simple and basic on the outside, but when you dig a little deeper, when you scrape the surface, you can go really deep. And there's so much behind the scenes.

[00:25:38] **John Puma:** My wife is fond of saying that when she's drinking sake and drinking sake from different regions of Japan, she feels if she's exploring Japan through having all of these different sakes, because there are so many regional and they're not hard and fast rules. There are regional, almost themes in the variations of sake from place to place.

[00:26:00] You're fond of noting that Niigata sake is a usually very restrained and that's not going to be the case for all of it, obviously, but, when sometimes when you have that kind of sake or you're looking for that kind of sake, you can say Something like Niigata sake people in that field and people who are in those circles, they're going to know what you mean.

[00:26:18] Same thing for me with Yamagata. I could say things about Yamagata style and then people are gonna know that he likes the really fragrant fruity stuff. And he does.

[00:26:29] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah. And also for both of us, I think we've, both made trips to Japan. Looking forward to trying sake from all these different places.

[00:26:38] We've both traveled, widely in Japan, with the primary intent of breweries and experiencing, uh, sake. It's one of the great joys I've had in the last 15 years is going to Japan, drinking sake at the source and, coming back to the States and talking to people here about sake and spreading the gospel a little bit and, telling people about it.

[00:27:00] That's been something that I've really enjoyed and it's given me a lot of pleasure over the years.

[00:27:06] **John Puma:** So when you go over to Japan, is your favorite thing going to the breweries or is it more, going, meeting people or going to places? Tell me more about that. Well, curious,

[00:27:16] **Timothy Sullivan:** when I go to Japan, I really enjoy visiting sake breweries.

[00:27:21] There's. About, you know, over 1200 that are still up and operating in Japan.

[00:27:29] **John Puma:** Yeah. Something like that. Yeah.

[00:27:31] **Timothy Sullivan:** And most of them are really small kind of family run brewery. Some are larger, but. Uh, there's things that are common between all breweries. Like they're all going to have a Koji room, you know? And, yeah.

[00:27:45] You know, they're all going to have someplace to get their rice milled and there's some commonalities, but there's something unique about every single one of them. And I love

meeting the person who made the sake, whether it's the master brewer or the brewery owner, and then tasting their sake with them.

[00:28:05] And then we'll usually have some local dish that's from the region and it's just like such a magical moment that brings everything full circle . And they're so appreciative that someone from far away has made the Trek to their part of Japan and is interested enough to want to meet them and talk to them about their sake.

[00:28:24] , it's usually just a totally wonderfully positive experience. I don't know if you've had that experience as well. John.

[00:28:31] **John Puma:** I have actually, but so when I go, I find, well I go to Japan, it's usually on vacation and I do enjoy going to sake, breweries. Every trip I go on, I try to arrange for one sake brewery trip while I'm there.

[00:28:46] I find them to be wonderfully informative. I like to see how it's all done. . If I do have an opportunity to sip the sake with the people who made it , and have a meal with them, it's wonderful. It's a, great experience. But when I go to Japan, I spend more of my time trying to find the local sake bars.

[00:29:08] And I like to experience the local sake culture and in a given town or city. That's the exciting thing. for me. Um, again. I do love going to the breweries, but there's something about just seeing how the people there in a given region react to sake and what they love about sake.

[00:29:27] I feel like I'm getting that regional feel by doing that and seeing you just, how such a culture is in a, in a given area. And it's a lot of fun. It's very different. It's when you go to different, different parts of the country, the way that they experienced sake is sometimes really unique.

[00:29:43] **Timothy Sullivan:** Hmm. That's really interesting. My point of view is very much focused on production. Like I worked as a sake brewer for a year, and I want to know that all the nitty gritty details about the production. Right. And you're focused more broadly on like the local culture.

[00:29:57]

[00:29:57] **John Puma:** Right. I want to know how they, how they enjoy it.

[00:29:59] You wanna know how they made it. So its very interesting.

[00:30:04] **Timothy Sullivan:** You know, John, we got to take the podcast on the road. We've said this before, but as soon as we can, we have to get these microphones to Japan and do this from there. That will be fantastic. Can't wait.

[00:30:18] **John Puma:** Oh, that's going to be, I mean, it's. As long as they let us in, that's great.

[00:30:24] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yup. We're we're not there yet, but

[00:30:26] **John Puma:** yeah, one of these days, one of these days.

[00:30:28] **Timothy Sullivan:** Yeah, it was so great learning about your aha moment. My aha moment. Um, I think that hopefully I would be really happy if this podcast inspired our listeners out there to have their aha moment with sake. Wouldn't that be

[00:30:43] great.

[00:30:43] **John Puma:** It wouldn't be,

[00:30:44] it wouldn't be. Yeah. Fantastic.

[00:30:46] **Timothy Sullivan:** Well, thank you all so much to our listeners for tuning in. We really appreciate it so much. If you can take a moment to rate our show on Apple podcasts.

[00:30:55] **John Puma:** Yep. And while you're rating the show, make sure that you subscribe to the show. It really does help us out a whole lot.

[00:31:03] and it makes sure that you won't miss an episode. Also, if you can't tell a friend or two, it really helps us out.

[00:31:10] **Timothy Sullivan:** And as always to learn more about any of the topics or the sakes that we talked about in today's episode, be sure to visit our website, SakeRevolution.com for the detailed show notes.

[00:31:21] **John Puma:** And as we mentioned in every episode, if you have a sake question that you need answered, we want to hear from you reach out to us at feedback@sakerevolution.com, and we will be happy to answer your sake question. Or hear about your sake moment on the air until next time. Remember, keep drinking sake and Kanpai!