

Japan

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Like many Chinese vine growers, Japan's wine producers have to cope with summer monsoons. In some cases bunches may even be individually protected from the rain, such is the level of care taken to produce Japan's most prestigious bottles.

The wine industry of Japan has a long history and vines are grown, to a limited extent, in virtually all of the country's prefectures, with Yamanashi being the most important. Thanks to the humid climate, Japanese vines have to be coaxed to produce a reasonable yield of healthy grapes, by training them into high trellises and spraying them throughout the growing season. It is difficult to imagine a time when Japan will have such a wine surplus that she exports anything like as enthusiastically as she imports.

A wide range of fine copies of European models is produced but Japan's signature grape variety is Koshu, which can yield particularly delicate dry whites. Coincidentally, one of the best family-owned wineries in Japan is, as in China, called Grace.