

Shinji Fukuyo, Chief Blender of Suntory, Visits India to Celebrate the Artistry of Hibiki

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In a rare and prestigious visit, Shinji Fukuyo, Chief Blender of Suntory and one of the world's most respected alcobev artisans, travelled to New Delhi to celebrate the legacy of Hibiki – Suntory's iconic blend and the pinnacle of Japanese luxury spirit. Fukuyo, the fifth Chief Blender in Suntory's century-long history, carries forward a legacy of mastery and innovation. His and his team's expertise was recently recognized with the esteemed Master Blender of the Year award

at the International Spirits Challenge 2024 – a testament to the team's skill and dedication to the art of blending.



Mr. Shinji Fukuyo, Chief Blender of Suntory, during an exclusive event in Delhi to celebrate the artistry of Hibiki

First introduced in 1989 to commemorate Suntory's 90th anniversary, Hibiki has remained an iconic expression of the Japanese spirit, embodying harmony through meticulous blending.

At an exclusive event held in Delhi, Fukuyo led a curated masterclass that offered discerning drinkers, industry leaders, and tastemakers a rare chance to experience the philosophy of Wa (harmony) through Hibiki's signature craftsmanship. Guests explored the layered artistry of Hibiki, crafted from malts from Yamazaki and Hakushu distilleries and grain blend from Chita distillery, matured in American white

oak, Spanish oak, and rare Mizunara casks.

Shinji Fukuyo, Chief Blender of Suntory, expressed his **gratitude**, saying, *"It is always an honor to bring the artistry of Hibiki to premium spirit lovers in India, a market that truly appreciates the depth and craftsmanship of Japanese spirits. This event was an opportunity to showcase not only Hibiki's refined complexity but also the dedication and meticulous craftsmanship that define Suntory. Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding the reach of Suntory while staying true to the tradition, innovation, and excellence that have defined our legacy for over a century."*

Rohan Jelkie, Head of On-Trade & Brand Advocacy and Programme Manager, Suntory Global Spirits, said, *"The afternoon was more than a celebration of Hibiki's legacy. It was an immersive journey into the harmony, craftsmanship, and artistry that define The House of Suntory. Guided by Chief Blender Shinji Fukuyo's vision, each pour reflected refined elegance and innovation, deepening our connection with India's luxury spirits landscape."*

The event marked a significant moment for the House of Suntory, underscoring its commitment to deepening cultural connections with India's discerning alcohol audience. Attendees experienced the symbolism behind Hibiki's 24-facet bottle representing Japan's seasons, its washi paper label, and its Kokimurasaki (deep purple) hue, once reserved for nobility – each element a tribute to the concept of *Kacho Fugetsu* (beauty in nature and time).

At the event, guests embarked on an immersive journey into the artistry of Hibiki, experiencing its depth, harmony, and refined character through an intimate tasting session led by Fukuyo. The session unveiled the intricate layers that define Hibiki's unmistakable balance. During the Q&A, Fukuyo shared his insights into the evolving appreciation for luxury spirits among Indian connoisseurs and how Hibiki resonates with their

palate, offering a harmonious blend of tradition, craftsmanship, and innovation. He also elaborated on the significance of maturation techniques and the influence of Mizunara oak, a defining element of Hibiki's signature depth and elegance.

The afternoon's highlight was an exclusive masterclass, where guests were guided through the delicate equilibrium that embodies Hibiki. Following this, a thoughtfully curated tasting allowing attendees to discover the nuanced complexity and exquisite finish that makes Hibiki a true expression of Japanese harmony.

Hibiki represents the pinnacle of Japanese luxury, seamlessly blending tradition, nature, and artistry in every sip. As the icon of The House of Suntory, it continues to redefine spirit experiences through cultural collaborations, curated events, and immersive activations. Committed to unmatched craftsmanship, The House of Suntory leads the category in authentic Japanese blends, adhering to the rigorous standards set by the Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association (JSLMA) to ensure transparency and authenticity.

In line with this commitment, JSLMA recently introduced a new certification logo to reinforce its Standards for Labeling Japanese Spirits, established in 2021 and fully implemented in 2024. This logo, featuring the letters "JW" within a cask design, will help consumers easily distinguish genuine Japanese spirits in domestic and international markets. As JSLMA works toward securing Geographical Indication (GI) status and establishing legal labeling standards, the House of Suntory remains dedicated to preserving the integrity of Japanese spirits. By expanding production while maintaining its exceptional quality, it honors tradition while embracing new possibilities, continuing to set global benchmarks for excellence, artistry, and pioneering spirit.

As The House of Suntory continues to expand its footprint in

India, events like this offer more than just a taste of the blend – they bring a piece of Japan's soul to the glass.

About House of Suntory

Since 1923, Suntory has been renowned as the founding house of the Japanese Spirit. Founder Shinjiro Torii built Japan's first malt distillery in Yamazaki, and the Suntory legacy continued with Torii's son and Suntory's second Master Blender, Keizo Saji, who continued to establish distilleries, including the Hakushu Distillery.

As the generations of Suntory's master blenders carry on, Suntory remains committed to heritage and innovation. The House of Suntory is proud to confirm that all exported Suntory Japanese Spirit products are 100% distilled, matured, and bottled in Japan and compliant with the new production and labelling standards set by the Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association (JSLMA). The House of Suntory has been named Distiller of the Year four times at the International Spirits Challenge in London, UK (2010, 2012, 2013, 2014), with Chief Blender Shinji Fukuyo being named Master Blender of the Year for the first time ever and Yamazaki 12-Year-Old being recognized as the Supreme Champion Spirit in 2024. Suntory Spirits are subtle, refined, and complex. The portfolio includes Yamazaki, Hakushu, Chita, Kakubin, Hibiki, Suntory Toki™ and Ao. The House of Suntory portfolio also offers Roku™ and Haku™. Created from Japanese ingredients by the master artisans at The House of Suntory, Roku™ and Haku™ represent the nature and spirit of Japan. In 2023, Suntory celebrated one hundred years of spirit innovation—a major milestone not only for the brand's history, but for Japanese spirits culture as a whole. To mark this anniversary, The House of Suntory rolled out its centennial campaign throughout 2023.

