Now attracting attention as part of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage - Traditional Knowledge and Skills of Sake-making with Koji Mold in Japan-

Miyazaki Shochu A Journey in Search of Perfection







What Is Shochu?

Shochu is a Japanese spirit made by distilling a mash that is fermented from base raw ingredients. The taste differs depending on these base ingredients, which include rice, barley, sweet potatoes, and buckwheat, and you can enjoy a huge variety of distinct flavors due to differences in the distillation methods and recipes at individual distilleries. Shochu's taste also varies according to how it is served, for example, with cold or hot water. Shochu has been a well-loved drink in Kyushu for centuries, and as of March 2025, Miyazaki Prefecture can lay claim to shipping the largest quantity in the country. In 2024, Japan's traditional knowledge and skills of sake-making with koji mold—including the making of shochu—were registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Now, Miyazaki shochu is in the spotlight thanks to this global recognition.

Rice shochu is characterized by a refined taste while retaining the fragrant sweetness and aroma of the rice itself. Drinking with hot water or by heating the shochu cup after mixing with cold water gives rise to a mellow aroma and gentle, rounded taste. Because rice is the base ingredient, these shochu go particularly well with white rice dishes.



Barley shochu has a fruity aroma and a clean finish. Some brands pursue a more roasted aroma in the distilling process. Barley shochu is delicious however it is served, with a taste that is refreshing whatever food it accompanies. Serving with soda water makes it light and easy to drink, and is especially recommended for shochu beginners.



Base ingredients -

How to serve

shochu

Sweet potato

Shochu derived from the base ingredient of sweet potatoes envelops the taste buds with its unique sweetness, aroma, and depth. Some varieties have a more distinct aftertaste, others are fruity and light. Miyazaki has a deep fondness for potato shochu, making it exceptionally compatible with the prefecture's cuisine. We recommend potato shochu with hot water as a drink that is notable for its aroma.



Said to have originated in Miyazaki Prefecture, buckwheat shochu has the roasted aroma of its base ingredient and is characterized by smooth drinkability. Its refined taste is the perfect accompaniment for any dish. For a mellower taste, we recommend *sobayuwari*, which is mixed with the hot water used to cook buckwheat (*soba*) noodles. Give it a try when you visit a soba restaurant.



On the rocks Pour the shochu into a glass filled with plenty of ice for an invigorating drinking experience that emphasizes the flavor of the base ingredients.



With water An enjoyably milder drink that retains its aroma and taste. We also recommend

taste. We also recommend maewari, for which shochu is mixed with water a day before drinking.

With hot water Pouring the hot water in before the shochu gives rise to a pleasant aroma. This way of drinking enhances the flavor of the base ingredients.



With soda water The bubbles popping and fizzing contrast refreshingly with the gently rising shochu aroma. A great starting point for shochu beginners.

\Find out more!/

Miyazaki Sake Brewers Association

https://miyazaki-sake.or.jp/eng/index.html

The official Miyazaki Brewers Association website contains information about authentic Miyazaki shochu and sake, as well as other spirits.

Dareyami: A website supporting authentic Miyazaki shochu

https://eng.dareyami.jp/

Contains introductions to breweries in Miyazaki Prefecture and other information relating to brands and shochu. Promotes the excellence of authentic Miyazaki shochu not just in Japan but also globally.

Flavor Map for authentic Miyazaki sweet potato shochu

https://www.kanko-miyazaki.jp/news/252

This map visualizes the characteristics of 74 brands of potato shochu from 27 breweries in Miyazaki Prefecture by classifying their aromatic components and flavors into four elements.

been 20% ABV, with 20% ABV shochu on the rocks being a favorite combination. Some shochu brands renowned nationwide are sold in limited-edition, 20% ABV versions exclusive to Miyazaki Prefecture.

Alcohol content of shochu

Abundant natural water

Miyazaki Prefecture is blessed with extensive forests that include those in the Kyushu Mountains, and high-quality natural water accumulates deep below the ground over many years. This water is integral to preparing shochu, and shochu breweries are located all over the prefecture specifically to make use of such a valuable resource.

🗹 Features of Miyazaki Shochu 🗡

The alcohol content (ABV) of shochu is normally 25%, although

traditionally, the shochu distributed in Miyazaki Prefecture has

Brewer Interview

A Marriage of Shochu and Cuisine PART 1

WATANABE DISTILLERY

Koichiro Watanabe CEO and President Watanabe Distillery Co., Ltd.

Watanabe is the fourth generation president of this family business, which continues to produce shochu unique to the Tano district. "I believe that our shochu retain their sweetness whether they are served hot or cold, and their comforting taste is what makes them so delicious," says Watanabe. "We keep moving forward and work each day with the promise that each year's shochu will be even better than the last."

HI-N

Shochu Making Starts from Base Ingredients

The Watanabe Distillery has been making shochu since 1914 in the town of Tano located in the southwest of Miyazaki City. The process starts with the cultivation of its base ingredient, sweet potatoes, and is primarily undertaken by President Koichiro Watanabe and members of his family.

"Tano gets a lot of sunshine and its soft, dark soil is ideal for growing sweet potatoes," says Watanabe. "Growing the potatoes ourselves ensures that the base ingredient for our shochu is fresh, high in starch, and has a concentrated flavor." The distillery's representative brands are Shiro-Koji Asahi-Mannen and Kuro-Koji Asahi-Mannen potato shochu. "They suit all kinds of food, but our kuro (black) koji shochu goes particularly well with the fat in meats," continues Watanabe. "It is fantastic with locally produced, charcoal-grilled chicken. In fact, it also goes well with anko (sweet red bean paste), so I recommend having it with traditional Japanese sweets." Other enduringly popular products include the barley shochu Mugi Mugi Asahi-Mannen which is aged for over three years.

"I think Miyazaki shochu is characterized by a gentle drinkability that is not to be found elsewhere. Perhaps this comes from the character of the people who live here!" says Watanabe with a smile. One taste of Asahi-Mannen is sure to evoke the vibrant personalities of the team at Watanabe Distillery.



traditional production methods, for example, with the cultivation of sweet potatoes and the use of atmospheric distillation to bring out the flavors of ingredients.







1. The distillery is right next to Tano IC on the Miyazaki Expressivay. **2.** Fermentation takes place in an environment that is entrusted to nature and not reliant on air conditioning. Yeast cultivated in the distillery is another key element in producing such a distinctive taste. 3. The distillery's own farm, where sweet potatoes are cultivated.

Watanabe Distillery Co., Ltd. 2032-1 Tano-cho-Ko, Miyazaki Tel: 0985-86-0014

http://asahi-mannen.com/en/index.html

Suggested by Watanabe Distillery!





Charcoal-grilled seasonal ingredients & 12% ABV potato shochu

Guided by a small sign, when you climb the stairs and open the door to this restaurant, you are greeted by a tranquil space in the style of a tea house with bar seating only. The selection of drinks includes more than 100 varieties of shochu specially chosen by the owner, whose goal is to communicate its appeal to customers. Here you can enjoy shochu together with simple charcoal-grilled dishes and broths with a focus on seasonal local ingredients.



Kokushu Matsu

Address: 2F, No. 1 Watanabe Building, 3-4-9 Tachibanadori-higashi, Miyazaki Tel: 0985-23-9392 Hours: 3:00 pm-11:00 pm Days closed: Sundays, Mondays Seating: 9 Parking: None Credit cards accepted Instagram 🕨 @kokushu_matsu

The city of Miyazaki is lined with restaurants where you can sample a variety of seasonal ingredients and local specialties from around the prefecture. Here are two establishments that serve shochu and characterful dishes that pair perfectly with Miyazaki's signature drink.

Savor the finest sushi with sommelier-recommended drinks

Surrounded by greenery, this Japanese-style space is a renowned restaurant with a 50-year history where the sushi is specially made to delight customers. With a combination of the finest ingredients chosen by the chef according to each season and alcoholic drinks carefully selected by the sommelier, this restaurant overflows with a sense of well-being. In recent years, it has also been increasingly popular among visitors from overseas. The lunch set menu starts at 8,085 yen



Isshin Zushi Koyo

Address: 21 Showa-cho, Miyazaki Tel: 0985-60-5005 Hours: Open 12:00 pm/last orders 1:00 pm (from 11:30 am on weekends/public holidays) / 5:00 pm/last orders 8:00 pm Days closed: Wednesdays and lunch on 1st Tuesday and Thursday of the month (excl. public holidays) Seating: 12 Parking: Yes Credit cards accepted Instagram 🕨 @isshinzushi_official



Shochu from North and Central Miyazaki Prefecture –



AKATSUKI SHUZO AKATSUKI

A robust drink to enthuse shochu-lovers. Excellent with all kinds of food, be they Japanese, Chinese, or western. Available in 20, 25, and 35% ABV varieties. Produced in small quantities, the 35% AKATSUKI has a flavor with a distinctive edge that is characteristic of this long-established distillery.

HIMEIZUMI SHUZO

Soba Kuro Gohei With only two base ingredients,

buckwheat and rice koji, this authentic buckwheat shochu uses atmospheric distillation and is recommended for those who want to enjoy the pure aroma of buckwheat. It is a fine drink made predominantly by hand in a brewery with a history of over 130 years, and received an excellence award at the 2024 Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureau South Kyushu Sake and Shochu Awards

AKUGARE DISTILLERY Hvuqa Akuqare Shirokouii Shikomi

Made with Heisei Miyazaki Yeast, this shochu has a robustly sweet aroma of potatoes, and its appeal lies in its mellow, refreshing taste. Try it on the rocks for a different taste experience. A set of two flagship products that received excellence awards at the Kumamoto Regional Taxation Bureau South Kyushu Sake and Shochu Awards is very popular.

WATANABE DISTILLERY Kuro-Koii Asahi-Mannen

This fine shochu is made with Kogane Sengan sweet potatoes and kuro (black) koji mold. creating a full-bodied flavor with deep roasted notes to envelop your mouth. Based on the motto of "Making shochu that is delicious when served with hot water and whose authenticity cannot be disguised." great effort has been invested in this product.

North and Central Miyazaki Prefecture

Sightseeing Spots to Drop By



Address: Oshioi, Mitai, Takachiho-cho, Nishiusuki-gun Tel: 0982-73-1213 (Takachiho Town Tourism Association) Admission free/visitors can wander freely https://takachiho-kanko.info/sightseeing/18/

Takachiho Gorge

Takachiho Gorge is located in Takachiho Town, which is the subject of myths and legends. The town's many shrines worship numerous gods such as those at Ama-no-Iwato cave and Ama-no-Yasukawara riverside. Visitors can rent a boat to explore the gorge, which was formed by pyroclastic flow from an eruption at Mount Aso and is one of the most spiritual places in Kyushu



With a coastline of just 1.5 km in circumference, Aoshima is imbued with the ambiance of southern land. You can visit Aoshima Shrine from 6 am until sunset

Address: Aoshima, Miyazaki

Tel: 0985-20-8658 (Miyazaki City Tourism Association) Admission free/visitors can wander freely https://www.miyazaki-city.tourism.or.jp/en /see-and-do/10001



A picturesque spot located at the end of Cape Hyuga. The rocks of the cape were named Umagase because they resemble the back of a horse

Address: 1-1 Hososhima, Hyuga Tel: 0982-54-6177 (Umagase Tourist Info Center) Admission free/visitors can wander freely https://hyuga.or.jp

Tadashi Yanagita

Representative Yanagita Distillery Co., Ltd.

Having worked as an engineer in Tokyo for about five years, Yanagita returned to his hometown to become the fifth-generation head of the family business. He has even capitalized on the knowledge from his previous job to build distillation equipment. "We also hold lectures on how to serve shochu with hot or cold water so that our customers can enjoy the best possible drinking experience," says Yanagita.

Brewer Interview A Marriage of Shochu and Cuisine

YANAGITA DISTILLERY

Shochu Born in Miyakonojo with Its Abundant Water

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The Yanagita Distillery was founded in 1902. "I think shochu mixed with hot water is the ultimate cocktail," smiles Tadashi Yanagita, the fifth-generation head of a family business that produces distinctive varieties of shochu. "The city of Miyakonojo is located in the southwestern part of Miyazaki Prefecture, a region blessed with groundwater that comes from beneath the Kirishima Mountains. Obviously we use this as the water for preparation during the shochu-making process, but the area is also suitable for making koji mold because volcanic steam rises naturally from beneath the ground. As well as shochu breweries, there are many producers of miso and soy sauce, so Miyakonojo could be called a kind of 'fermentation town'."

The distillery's classic product is barley shochu, a popular brand of

which is their AOKAGE. It has a roasted aroma similar to freshly baked bread and suggests a hint of burnt sweetness similar to cotton candy. "AOKAGE tastes fantastic when served with hot water and paired with *oden* (a hot pot with various ingredients) or charcoal-grilled chicken," suggests Yanagita. In 2013, the distillery revived its potato shochu MOCHIO SENBONZAKURA, which had been out of production for 35 years. As a result of repeatedly taking on even greater challenges, its Senbonzakura Jukusei Hanakomachi received the Superior Gold Award at the 2024 Tokyo Whisky & Spirits Competition. "We are working every day to improve the shochu-making process," continues Yanagita, "and we are very proud of the taste of our products. I hope many people will enjoy them."



The Meat & Sakagura Tourism campaign is currently underway in the city of Miyakonojo. Visitors to Yanagita Distillery can learn various delicious ways to serve shochu while looking at a beautiful garden that has been maintained for generations. https://meat-tourism.jp/tourism/ $(\rightarrow P8)$







 Situated in a quiet residential neighborhood, the distillery blends in with the local area.
The second moromi (fermentation mash) is being fermented after the base ingredient and water have been added to the first moromi (starter mash). The moromi is meticulously stirred several times a day 3. Distillation equipment with which careful adjustments are made to create the ideal taste.

Yanagita Distillery Co., Ltd.

14-4 Hayasuzu-cho, Miyakonojo Tel: 0986-25-3230 https://www.yanagita.co.jp/en/index.html

Suggested by Yanagita Distillery!

Miyakonojo City edition Enjoy the perfect marriage with shochu **Recommended Dining Spo**

The city of Miyakonojo is a center for meat production and is proud to be the leading producer of beef, pork, and chicken in Japan in terms of total output.* We hope you will sample a combination of the delicious meats, vegetables, and shochu! *Source: 2022 Agricultural Output per Municipality by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries



A hidden gem renowned for its meat and vegetables

A traditional Japanese house was renovated to create this charming restaurant, where you can sample dishes that utilize beef, pork, and chicken, along with fresh seasonal vegetables. Enjoy mouthwatering Miyazaki meat dishes such as Mivazaki beef steak and pork cutlets from oimobuta-pigs raised on a diet of sweet potatoes. As the owner says, "Steak and shochu are a great combination."



Food Gallery Sorasora

Address: 5369-1 Oiwada-cho, Miyakonojo Tel: 0986-39-3477 Hours: 11:30 am-2:30 pm/6:00 pm-10:00 pm (Reservations only/set menus only) Davs closed: Sundays Seating: 30 Parking: Yes No credit cards Instagram 🕨 @sorasora.saitoh



Value set menu with an all-you-can-drink deal including AOKAGE

Located in the heart of the nightlife district of Miyakonojo, this izakaya restaurant is much loved by locals. The single 5,000 yen set menu features an all-you-can-drink deal (including AOKAGE shochu). You can select from five different main dishes, such as whole roast chicken and Kannonike pork shabu-shabu hot pot, all of which are prepared with local ingredients.



A fresh combo of pizza & shochu! With its high ceiling, this restaurant interior has a

sense of openness, and its centerpiece is a wood-fired oven decorated with green tiles. The carefully baked pizzas here are healthy with expertly selected ingredients and no additives. The menu includes pizzas topped with Tomangyu beef, Kirishimadori chicken, and other meats from Miyazaki Prefecture.

FURUSAWA JYOUZOU

Miyakonjo Village

Address: 4-15 Nakamachi Miyakonojo **Tel:** 0986-77-3015 **Hours**: 6:30 pm-10:30 pm (Reservations required) Days closed: Sundays and some unscheduled days Seating: 24 Parking: None No credit cards Instagram

@miyakonjo_village



PEM -pizza earth and me-

Address: 19-18 Tenjin-cho, Miyakonojo **Tel**: 0986-66-8582 Hours: Open 11:30 am/last

orders 2:30 pm 5:00 pm/last orders 8:00 pm Dinner is available to eat in from Friday to Sunday and on public holidays. On other evenings, takeout only. Days closed: Tuesdays and 4th

Sunday of the month Seating: 30 Parking: Yes Credit cards accepted Instagram ▶ @pem_miyazaki



Shochu from South and West Miyazaki Prefecture

SUKI BREWERY Yamajishi



Yamajishi, a limited seasonal shochu available from March each year, is the kind of hearty shochu that has become a rarity. The moment you take a sip, the powerful combination of *umami*, sweet and roasted aromas rush through your body, like the wild boar for which it is named. We suggest trying it in combination with meat dishes

YANAGITA DISTILLERY AOKAGE

This barley shochu cleverly incorporates the subtle *umami* flavor of *nijo-omugi* barley so it comes through clearly in the finished product. As a result, it retains some cloudiness. It is characterized by a profound richness and a sustained note of sweetness resembling bitter barley chocolate.

AKASHI SHUZO MEIGETSU

This is the most popular product in the Meigetsu series, whose potato and rice shochu are invested with the hopes of past generations for a bright future. It has a hint of the aroma of sweet potatoes and a flavorful finish. We recommend it for connoisseurs who love potato shochu.

YAEZAKURA Carefully selected Kogane Sengan sweet potatoes are the base ingredient for this shochu, which is made in pots at a brewerv in a traditional earthen-wall storehouse. The unrefined shochu is slowly aged for six months to two years, which enhances both its depth and flavor. It is the perfect shochu for you to unwind with at the end of the day.

KYOYA DISTILLIERY & BREWER KAMESIZUKU

雫 大田市 家屋在高有限会社

This comes in a small earthenware pot with a ladle so you can enjoy serving it at home. Diluting nine parts KAMESIZUKU with one part water and chilling in the refrigerator make an invigorating cold drink with a heightened aroma similar to that of refined sake. Its uncomplicated smoothness is characteristic of shochu prepared in large earthenware pots.

South and West Miyazaki Prefecture

Sightseeing Spots to Drop By

Kirishima Factory Garden



Address: 5480 Shibita-cho, Miyakonojo Tel: 0986-21-8111 Hours: 9:00 am-9:00 pm Days closed: None (some unscheduled closing days)



This garden park is managed directly by Kirishima Shuzo. It features exhibits about the history of shochu, original cuisine unique to Kirishima

Shuzo, and limited-edition souvenirs. Be sure to take a

commemorative photo with

the giant model of a sweet



Obi Castle Town

Here a charming townscape is preserved, including a gate that is emblematic of samurai residences in a traditional castle town. The castle also has the Obi Castle Historical Museum.

Address: 10 Obi, Nichinan Tel: 0987-25-1905 (Jutaro Komura Memorial Hall general inquiries) Hours: 9:30 am-4:30 pm Fee: Free to walk around Davs closed: Dec 29-31 https://www.kankou-nichinan.jp/tourisms/375



Sunmesse Nichinan

Overlooking the Nichinan coast, visitors to this theme park can enjoy natural scenery, the main feature of which is a line of Easter Island-style Moai statues. These are unique as they are the only officially approved replicas in the world.

Address: 2650 Miyaura, Nichinan Tel: 0987-29-1900 Hours: 9:30 am-5:00 pm Fee: Adults 1,000 yen Days closed: Wednesdays https://www.sun-messe.co.jp



The number one area for nightlife in Miyazaki City is commonly known as Nishitachi. More than 1,000 bars and restaurants are gathered in an area that extends about 200 meters in each direction, centered on Nishitachibana-dori and Chuo-dori streets. Here you can savor cuisine and shochu unique to Miyazaki, enjoying hospitality in the Miyazaki dialect. We recommend rounding off your night out with the local specialty, kama-age udon noodles!



Jidori Sumibiyaki

(grilled chicken thigh)

a smoky aroma

Tender chicken infused with

Founded in 1954, this restaurant specializes in chicken

dishes and is always bustling with regular customers.

grilled over high heat using binchotan charcoal. The

Jidori Sumibiyaki is carefully prepared and flame

more you bite into Jidori Sumibiyaki, the more its

delicious umami flavor envelops your taste buds.

Tel: 0985-22-6068 Hours: Open 5:00 pm/last orders

Days closed: Sundays (open on Sunday if Monday is a public holiday and closed the next day) **Seating:** 25

Maruman Yakitori Honten

Parking: None No credit cards

Address: 3-6-7 Tachibanadori-nishi, Miyazaki

9:00 pm *Closes when dishes are sold out



(spicy no



Sweet vinegar and tartar sauce are key ingredients

Deep-fried chicken breast marinated in sweet vinegar and topped with plenty of tartar sauce. The harmonious combination of tender chicken, crispy coating, and sweet-and-sour flavors is the perfect accompaniment to rice and alcoholic beverages.

Ogura Segashiraten

Address: 2-2-23 Segashira, Miyazaki Tel: 0985-23-5301 Hours: Open 11:00 am/last orders 8:00 pm Days closed: Dec 31, Jan 1 Seating: 160 Parking: Yes No credit cards



Brewery tours & experiences

KIRISHIMA WALK FACTORY



Kirishima Shuzo Co., Ltd., known for its Kuro Kirishima shochu, is a brewery in Miyakonojo founded in 1916. The factory tour offers many highlights in which you can taste Kogane Sengan sweet potatoes (shochu's base ingredient), experience the aromas of various shochu brands during their distillation processes, and sample the finished products. Using your five senses, you can enjoy and deepen your

understanding of its long-selling shochu, popular with people of all ages. You are sure to be captivated by the charms of shochu!





Shochu shopping guide

https://www.m-tokusan.or.jp/miyazaki

Address: 1-6 Miyata-cho, Miyazaki

Days closed: Jan 1 Parking: Yes Credit cards accepted

Tel: 0985-22-7389

Hours: 9:00 am-6:00 pm

Miyazaki Products Shop KONNE

Himuka Kirameki Market, AMU PLAZA MIYAZAKI

Address: 1-8 Nishiki-machi, Miyazaki Tel: 0985-44-5111

Hours: 10:00 am-8:00 pm *Differs depending on the store Davs closed: None (Some stores have closing days) Parking: Yes Credit cards accepted

https://www.amu-miyazaki.com



Miyazaki Yamakataya Dept. Store Address: 3-4-12 Tachibanadori-higashi,



Days closed: Jan 1 Parking: Yes Credit cards accepted https://www.yamakataya.co.jp/miyazaki/event/

Information featured in this publication is correct as of January 31, 2025. Some information may change subsequent to publication. so we suggest seeking confirmation by phone, etc. prior to your visit. Also, note that we will not compensate for any damage arising from the content of this publication. In principle, the prices herein, including consumption tax, were confirmed at the time of content gathering. In principle, the year-end and New Year holidays, the Bon holidays, and the Golden Week holidays have been omitted from the listed days closed. I herewise indicated, business hours denote opening and closing times each day. Be aware that last orders and last entry times are normally 30 minutes to 1 hour before an establishment closes. •Required travel times are approximate and vary depending on the season and weather conditions. Please inquire with the relevant transport organization prior to your visit.

8

Meat & Sakagura^{*} Tourism



itself in being the leading producer of beef, pork, and chicken in Japan (see page 7). It also has a brewery company with the number one domestic sales of shochu,** making it the home of both meat and shochu. Interactive tourism enables you to savor special menus that pair shochu made from sweet potatoes, rice, and barley grown in a temperate climate, with beef, pork, and chicken raised on fertile

In terms of total output, Miyakonojo prides

Spicy! But tasty and healthy!

Specially made karamen, similar in texture to

South Korean cold noodles, are served in a

Karamenya's original minced beef. You can

choose your preferred level of spiciness.

Karamenya Rin Miyazaki Honten

Hours: 6:00 pm-1:00 am (2:00 am on Fridays,

Saturdays, and days before a public holiday) Days closed Mondays Seating: 56

Parking: None No credit cards

Tel: 0985-31-0606

Address: West Building 1F, 6-5 Chuo-dori, Miyazaki

delicious soup whose ingredients include

garlic, beaten egg, Chinese chives, and

breeding grounds. These ingredients and livestock also benefit from the same high-quality groundwater.



**Source: 2023 Shochu Maker Sales Rankings by Teikoku Databank Fukuoka Branch

Tel: 0985-31-3111 Hours: 10:00 am-7:00 pm

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Sakagura means a brewery or distillery.