

Moriki Brewery

Established in 1893, Moriki Brewery has been owned by the same family for five generations. Unlike most breweries, Moriki still relies on traditional methods: the rice is steamed in a metal tub heated by burning oil, and some of their sakes are mixed by hand. Another thing that sets Moriki apart is its female *tōji* (master brewer), Moriki Rumiko.

Women were traditionally forbidden to participate in the brewing and selling of sake, but Rumiko has not let that stand in her way. During the late 1980s, she and her husband, Hideki, joined her father at the brewery, where they learned how to become *tōji* as well as *kuramoto* (brewery owners). Around the time Rumiko began brewing her own sake, she read a manga called *Natsuko no Sake*, about a novice female *tōji*. She befriended the manga's creator, Oze Akira, and in 1992 debuted her own brand, Rumiko no Sake, labeled with a portrait of Rumiko that was drawn by Oze.

Since assuming ownership of the brewery, Rumiko and her husband have shifted its focus, producing only premium *junmai* sake using both traditional and modern techniques. Moriki is also unusual for its use of wild yeasts and locally sourced ingredients. In fact, some of the organic rice is grown near the brewery itself. After 30 years as *tōji*, Rumiko is still committed to brewing newer, bolder flavors, as well as continuing her family's centuries-old traditions.