



CHICHIBU THE FIRST 2008 | 2011

Single Malt Japanese Whisky

Chichibu The First 2008/2011 is Ichiro Akuto's inaugural single-malt release — the first spirit distilled at Chichibu Distillery in 2008 to reach the three-year legal minimum to carry the designation 'whisky' in Japan. A vatting of 31 first-fill American bourbon barrels, bottled September 2011 at cask strength 61.8% volume, non-chill-filtered. Strictly limited and long since sold out at source: a museum piece in the Chichibu narrative. MATURATION: a brief tenure that might seem insufficient, yet the dense new make spirit from Chichibu's compact copper pot stills extracted remarkable depth from young wood in the Saitama climate. The cask strength preserves the spirit exactly as it emerged — no adjustment. That a three-year-old whisky shows the complexity of more mature expressions is testament to Ichiro Akuto's distillation philosophy and the quality of his new make. SERVING: this is a collector's bottle, not a casual pour. If opened, use a Glencairn glass and explore by adding water in small increments — three drops, then six, then ten. The water progressively reveals dried lavender, stone fruit and candied citrus. As the founding release of one of the world's most celebrated young distilleries, The First is best served alongside its story.

Tasting notes

Color

Luminous golden amber.

Aroma

Vivid for a young whisky: linseed oil, juniper and desiccated coconut over creamy vanilla, citrus and orange flower, with ripe mango, pineapple and a hint of cinnamon spice.

Taste

Dense and concentrated — corn-sweet honey, dried tropical fruit, vanilla and candied citrus. A drop of water silken the texture and reveals dried lavender and ripe stone fruit.

Finish

Long and woody, with brazil nut, gentle pepper spice and the quiet warmth of American oak. Malty grain returns clean and persistent at the close.

CHICHIBU DISTILLERY Chichibu Distillery opened in 2008 in Saitama Prefecture, roughly 80 km north-west of Tokyo. It is the creation of Ichiro Akuto, 21st generation of a family producing spirits since 1625. After the closure of the family's Hanyu Distillery in 2000, Akuto purchased the orphaned casks and founded Venture Whisky Ltd. in 2004 to commercialise Ichiro's Malt. In 2008, he opened Chichibu — Japan's first new whisky distillery in 35 years. His philosophy is built on small-scale artisanal production, uncompromising attention to raw materials, distillation and maturation, and a refusal of chill-filtration. The distillery sources local barley and employs floor malting for part of its production. In 2019, Akuto opened Chichibu Daini, with five times the original capacity. In 2024, he was inducted into the Whisky Magazine Hall of Fame.

