

Seaside Vineyard of Tomioka

Journalism School
— Team 6

Creating Wine for the Next 100 Years

Tomioka Winery Officially Opens — 7,000 Bottles Produced Last Year



Grapes grown in the vineyards of the Tomioka Winery

Tomioka Town suffered devastating damage from the tsunami and nuclear accident associated with the Great East Japan Earthquake. Tomioka Winery was founded with the desire to “rebuild a town that was once reduced to nothing and turn negative emotions into positive ones,” and “create a town even better than before the disaster.” Located just 150 meters from the sea and 200 meters from Tomioka Station, the winery officially opened on May 17 this year, bringing new industry and hope to the town.

Mr. Shubun Endo (53), the president, began grape cultivation in 2016 with ten colleagues, driven by the fear that “Tomioka might completely disappear” during the

long evacuation period after the disaster. He has been producing wine with a focus on passing the town’s revival to the younger generation.

They began by planting 200 grapevines, and by the third year, harvested several dozen kilograms—enough to produce around 50 bottles of wine. Learning that grapes could grow even so close to the sea, they launched full-scale operations. Over nine years, the vineyard expanded to 60,000 square meters, about 1.3 times the size of Tokyo Dome. Last year, they harvested 7.3 tons of grapes, resulting in about 7,000 bottles of wine.

“I want to make wine that will be recognized around the world,” Mr. Endo said passionately. To attract interest, the winery’s second-floor restaurant was built at the same height as the Joban railway line, so train passengers might look over and wonder, “What’s that place?”



The only remaining storehouse that withstood the tsunami

Rebuilding the Town for the Next Generation

Connecting Food, People, and Community



Mr. Endo explaining the winery

Mr. Endo’s ultimate goal is the revitalization of community. Before the disaster, Tomioka Town had a population of 16,000; after the evacuation, it dropped to zero. Now, about 2,500 people live in the town, fewer than 1,000 of them original residents—the rest being newcomers.

Last year, the number of people involved in volunteer activities such as caring for grapevines at Tomioka Winery, as well as those who visited Tomioka Town—the so-called nonresident population—reached 2,500, the same as the town’s current population.

As the nonresident population continues to grow, the community’s network is expanding.

Mr. Endo said, “We want to do our best and pass the baton of community building to the younger generation.” The winery plays a vital role in connecting food, people, and the local area. If grapevines are carefully nurtured, they can bear fruit for up to a hundred years. Because winemaking requires a vision that looks a hundred or even two hundred years into the future, Mr. Endo and his team call their initiative the “100-Year Project.” Through these ongoing efforts, they hope Tomioka Town will become even more vibrant than it was before the disaster. Mr. Endo said, “I want to rebuild Tomioka into a town that shines brightly and brilliantly—and keep growing Tomioka Winery.”

“Thank You” to the World

Eight Languages on the Fermentation Tanks



A fermentation tank with the words “Thank you” written in eight languages

On Tomioka Winery’s fermentation tanks, the word “Thank you” is written not only in Japanese but also in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, and Ukrainian.

This idea came from a soy sauce brewery in Aichi Prefecture that had written “Thank you” on its fermentation tanks. Since fermented products are living things, expressing gratitude while producing them was said to improve their quality. Mr. Endo, inspired by this idea, wrote “Thank you” in the languages of the countries he had visited, hoping that the many international visitors to Tomioka would also feel uplifted.

The winery’s logo uses green for the land and fields, blue for the sea, and light blue for the sky, and features a stylized warehouse in purple, reflecting the town and its history.

The warehouse shown in the logo symbolizes the winery and is the only structure in the area that survived the tsunami of

2011. Mr. Endo believes it was “left behind as a blessing, serving as a reminder that if you endure and persevere, anything is possible.”

Every time he sees it, he says, “It rekindles my spirit of challenge and motivates me to move forward.”



The logo mark of Tomioka Winery

Editorial Note

The road to founding Tomioka Winery was extremely challenging—it took about three years just to achieve the first harvest. The Great East Japan Earthquake took everything from Tomioka Town, but the winery now serves as a bridge connecting the town’s people and spirit. By creating wine with a vision for the next century, it continues to support the town’s revitalization.

I was deeply impressed by President Endo’s words: “Even if people around me say it’s impossible, I won’t give up. I don’t want to stop at ‘can’t do it’—I want to turn it into ‘can do it.’”

Through this interview, I was reminded of the importance of taking on challenges without fear. We, the younger generation, must continue to carry that same spirit of determination and courage. (Yui Ito)

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