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Yamazaki 50-Year-Old Sets New World Auction Record as Demand for Rare Japanese Whisky Surges

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A rare bottle of Yamazaki 50-Year-Old whisky has set a new world auction record for Japanese whisky, achieving HK$8.25 million at Bonhams' The Legendary Japanese Whisky sale and reinforcing the growing global appetite for ultra-premium aged spirits.

The record-breaking bottle, created exclusively for Club Natsume in Nagoya to commemorate the club's 50th anniversary, nearly doubled its high estimate during intense bidding. Distinguished by its unique washi label and signature from Suntory Chief Blender Shinji Fukuyo, the expression is regarded as one of the rarest Japanese whiskies ever produced.

The auction result surpassed the previous world record of HK$6.2 million, also set by Bonhams Hong Kong in 2020 for a Yamazaki 55-Year-Old. Together, the two headline lots generated a combined HK$14.5 million, highlighting robust collector demand for exceptionally rare Japanese whiskies.

Among the most coveted expressions in the category, the Yamazaki 50-Year-Old is the distillery's second-oldest release and was issued in limited quantities in 2005, 2007 and 2011. The Club Natsume edition is particularly sought after due to its exclusive provenance and scarcity.

Commenting on the milestone, AmayÃ¨s Aouli, Global Head of Wine & Spirits at Bonhams, said the result reflects the auction house's leadership in the rare spirits market.

"Breaking the world record for Japanese whisky is an important milestone. We are not simply responding to demand; we are defining the market through expertise, authenticity and an international platform. This record underscores our ambition to be

the trusted global reference and keep elevating the category to new heights," Aouli said.

Terrence Tang, Head of Wine & Spirits, Asia at Bonhams, noted that the auction underscores Asia's importance as the leading market for collectible Japanese whisky.

"Bonhams has a strong track record in rare and ultra-premium Japanese whisky, having set multiple records over the past decade in our Hong Kong saleroom. These stellar results highlight Asia's position as the premier market for the category, uniting an international community of collectors at the highest level," Tang said.

The latest auction success reflects the continued premiumisation of the global spirits industry, where rare-age statements, limited editions, provenance and craftsmanship increasingly drive value. Japanese whisky, in particular, has evolved from a niche category into one of the most sought-after segments among collectors and luxury beverage investors worldwide.

With the new record, Bonhams now holds the top three prices ever achieved at international auction for a bottle of Japanese whisky, further cementing its position as a key marketplace for rare and collectible spirits.