

Opening Traditional Liquor Gallery in Seoul, Korea

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On February 11, 2015, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), together with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) opened a traditional liquor gallery in Insadong, Jongno-gu in Seoul. It is for introducing the values of Korea's traditional liquor and the beauty of Korean cuisine in the center of Seoul in Korea.

Ministers from both MAFRA and the MCST participated in an opening ceremony for the gallery, as well as guests from the traditional liquor industry and the culture & art field. Participants did a tour of the gallery, tested sample different liquors, and enjoyed cultural performances. In particular, there was a special toast event where participants experienced the traditional liquors recommended by MAFRA into the traditional shot glass recommended by the MCST and shared the meaning of the event in commemoration of the cooperation between MAFRA and the MCST. Toasted traditional liquors at the opening ceremony opening is White Lotus Makgeolli (First prize of the 2014 Korea Liquor Contest) and Shot glass is Gwangjuyo Sorijan (received excellent handicraft products award from the MCST).

In order to promote the consumption of Korea's traditional liquors, the traditional liquor gallery was established in Insadong in Seoul where it is visited by about 17 million tourists from home and abroad. It is expected that the gallery will spearhead the export of Korea's traditional liquors and play an important role as an information center where consumers and non-Korean tourists can get a variety of information about Korean traditional liquors. To this end, the gallery will be run by specialized experts for traditional liquors, including Korean and non-Korean traditional liquor sommeliers.

Various traditional liquors and handicraft culture in Korea will be widely promoted with different themes every month at the gallery. In February, there was a session by 'Food Masters' (nominated by MAFRA) explaining traditional liquors during the holiday of Chinese New Year. The theme of March is 'Trip to a Brewery' as breweries are where one can find decent produce and see for themselves the beauty of fermentation. In April and May, there will be a promotion session of local, and seasonal spring liquors. Along with those liquors with different themes every month, the shot glass and liquor bottles of the month recommended by the MCST will be displayed as a part of the plan to restore the high-end culture of Korean traditional liquors.

In order to improve the added value of Korean traditional liquors as Korea's representative fermented food, the Korean government plans to provide educational programs for business owners of the food service industry like hotels and restaurants, sommeliers and foreign expats at the gallery. Business consultations can also be provided, along with educational programs to directly and indirectly expand the demand of traditional liquors. The gallery of Korea's traditional liquors is open from 10 AM to 6 PM every day except Mondays. Those who wish to do some liquor sampling can make a reservation through the gallery's blog (<http://blog.naver.com/soolgallery>), its Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/thesoolgallery>) or its email account (soolgallery@naver.com). Any walk-in tour is always welcome within regular working hours.

An official from MAFRA said that "It is meaningful to prepare a venue where we can

permanently promote Korean traditional liquors in the center of Seoul.” He also added, “MAFRA plans to restore the culture of traditional liquors by displaying traditional liquors made by good local ingredients with devotion, along with exquisite handicrafts, as well as providing liquor sampling opportunities. Also, the ministry will develop the gallery as the must-visit place for tourists from home and abroad in the near future.

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