

Kenzo Tsujimoto Presents the Akira Kurosawa Award at the 38th Tokyo Film Festival



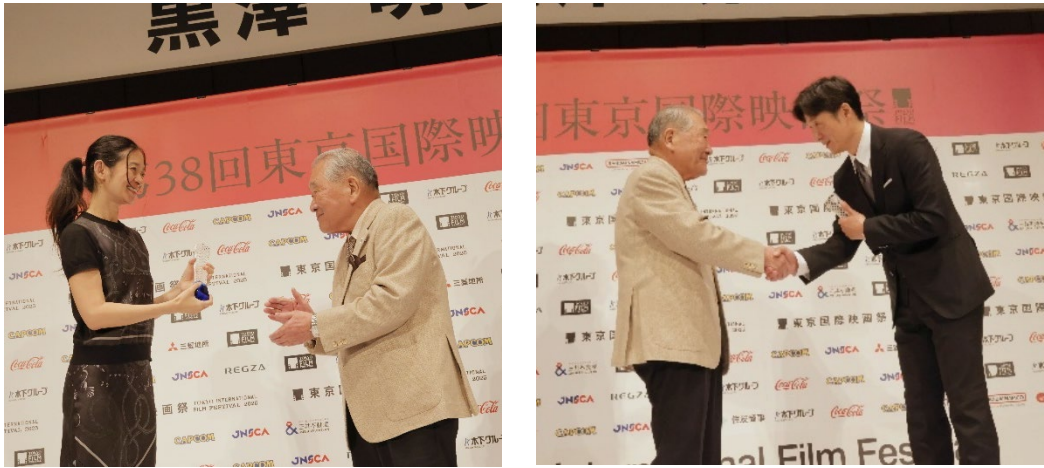
Presenter Kenzo Tsujimoto and Akira Kurosawa Award winners Chloé Zhao (*Nomadland* and *Hamnet*) and Sang-il Lee (*Kokuhō*).

Imperial Hotel, Tokyo JAPAN | On Monday, November 3, the 38th Tokyo International Film Festival hosted the Akira Kurosawa Award ceremony and gala dinner at the Imperial Hotel.

As in previous years, Kenzo Estate proprietor Kenzo Tsujimoto served as the presenter at the ceremony. The gala dinner afterward featured Kenzo Estate wines, captivating celebrities from all walks of life.

Receiving the 2025 awards are director Sang-il Lee, known for major works such as *Kokuhō* (translating to “National Treasure,” and in limited release in the US) and *Hula Girls*; and director Chloé Zhao, whose acclaimed film *Nomadland* won numerous international awards and whose new film *Hamnet* is also attracting significant global attention.

The Revival of the Akira Kurosawa Award, Led by Kenzo Tsujimoto



Directors Sang-il Lee and Chloé Zhao Receive the Akira Kurosawa Award

The Akira Kurosawa Award of the Tokyo International Film Festival honors filmmakers who have made significant contributions to world cinema, as well as those expected to shape the future of the industry. The award was established in the hope of preserving the legacy of the late Akira Kurosawa—



one of Japan's most revered filmmakers—and of nurturing new filmmaking talent.

The award had disappeared from the festival for 14 years; it was revived in 2022 thanks in large part to the efforts of Kenzo Tsujimoto, who grew up surrounded by films and even produced the live-action *Street Fighter* movie. This year marks the fourth consecutive year he has served as presenter.

The Presentation Speeches, with a Surprise Appearance by Actor Ryo Yoshizawa

The Akira Kurosawa Award recipients are chosen by a selection committee chaired by director Yoji Yamada.

Regarding Sang-il Lee, the committee noted: “His latest work *Kokuhō* was screened at multiple international film festivals, including the Directors’ Fortnight at Cannes, and achieved both critical praise and commercial success in Japan. We present the Akira Kurosawa Award to Sang-il Lee with high expectations for his future role in leading Japanese and global cinema.”

Director Sang-il Lee shared in his acceptance speech: “As with many others, the name Akira Kurosawa stands before me as a high standard that can never be surpassed. No matter how the filmmaking environment evolves, his powerful insight into human nature never fades. His name brandished on this award is a challenge I intend to wrestle with for years to come.”

A surprise guest, actor Ryo Yoshizawa—star of *Kokuhō*—appeared, energizing the venue, and expressed his gratitude to Lee: “I felt that he believed in me even more than I believed in myself. Though it was challenging at times, it was even more fulfilling.”

Director Lee replied with warm humor: “Watching you from behind, I could tell—you’re no longer in the role of a female actor. I was relieved.” The room erupted in laughter.

In commentary regarding Chloé Zhao, the committee’s remarks noted, “*Nomadland* received worldwide acclaim, winning the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and the Academy Award® for Best Picture. Her achievements have been a source of inspiration and courage for Asian women filmmakers. In recognition of these accomplishments and her expected future contributions to world cinema, we present the Akira Kurosawa Award to Chloé Zhao.”

In her acceptance remarks, Chloé Zhao commented, “In Kurosawa’s films, the vastness of nature exists alongside the deepest truths of human psychology. To stand in this tradition is profoundly humbling. Storytellers bridge cultures, borders, time, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, love and death. We transform our experiences—almost like alchemy—seeking meaning and catharsis.”

Kenzo Estate Wines Delight Guests at the Gala Dinner



The Imperial Hotel gala dinner following the ceremony welcomed celebrities from across industries and served Kenzo Estate wines.

The evening began with the rosé sparkling wine “suzu,” whose brilliant color, celebratory name, and elegant aromas elevated the excitement in the room.

Next came “asatsuyu,” the Sauvignon Blanc widely awarded both in Japan and internationally. Guests paired it freely with appetizers and fish dishes.



Kenzo Estate's flagship red blend, "rindo" was a featured red wine, versatile enough to pair with both fish and meat, making it ideal for the banquet event.



While the celebrated directors were at the center of the evening, many guests table-hopped to greet Kenzo and Natsuko Tsujimoto, to share their impressions of the wines. Director Sang-il Lee himself stopped by, to chat about Kenzo Estate wines and his movie, *Kokuhō*.

**Wines Served at the Akira Kurosawa Award Ceremony
At the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo**



- suzu — celebratory rosé sparkling wine
- asatsuyu — Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon blend
- rindo — the flagship Cabernet blend of Kenzo Estate

Kenzo Estate | Napa Valley is located on the majestic 3800-acre property owned by Kenzo and Natsuko Tsujimoto, in the southeasterly quadrant of the AVA, and grows approximately 160 acres of vineyards, cultivated by renowned viticulturist David Abreu. The winery is open for tours and tastings by prior reservation, which can be made online. Kenzo Estate wines are sold on the property, and online: www.kenzoestate.com

Kenzo Estate wines are highlighted at Kenzo and Natsuko Tsujimoto's Michelin Star **Kenzo** Napa restaurant, located a few miles from the winery estate in downtown Napa, California. The restaurant is noted for its authentic Japanese dishes and kaiseki-style traditions in service. Learn more and book in: www.kenzonapa.com

Kenzo Estate winery also boasts five luxurious **Kenzo Estate** "Wine-Dining" retail locations in Japan: Hiroo, Roppongi Hills, Ginza, Osaka, Gion. Find more information and book-in: <https://www.kenzoestate.jp/winedining>

