

# Selling Saké...

by Marcus V. Pakiser

# and Tasting It!

## Key Selling Points:

- Saké is 100% Gluten Free
- Saké is 100% Sulfite Free
- Besides being versatile – saké lasts for a long time after opening...months. Easy to create a BTG program including flight saké programs.  
Saké is NOT wine and does not oxidize like wine will after opening.
- Saké Flights
- Saké breweries are family owned – many are small operations with only a handful of people

## Saké Goes WAY BEYOND the Traditional Japanese Setting...

I recently went to a Non-Japanese restaurant and ordered Saké. I was told the restaurant is not Japanese so they do not carry saké. I asked if they carry Champagne – “yes, we have several to offer”. I asked if they are a French Restaurant...answer – “No”. I asked if they carry Italian Wine – “Yes, we do”. Are you an Italian Restaurant?...I asked. “No”. Hmmm ... Why is Saké out of the question?

## Misconceptions About Saké:

Saké only goes with Sushi- FALSE. Why? It is only our preconceived ideas that limit Saké. That is the same thinking that the only food that goes with beer is pretzels...or Caviar with Vodka. The reality is that Saké goes better with a larger variety of food than wine does.

Cheese and Saké is an absolutely fabulous pairing. Saké works better with cheese than wine does. Most Japanese food in Japan is NOT sushi....it is small plate dishes such as vegetables, grilled chicken, meat and many different kinds of grilled seafood.

All saké should be served hot – FALSE. Most saké should be served chilled. Heating many saké is the same as boiling chardonnay or drinking hot Pinot Gris. Premium saké is nothing like the traditional hot saké. Chilled saké can be as diverse as wine. Young's Market offers over 160 different saké – 80% are designed and should only be served chilled.

**Aroma** - Saké can have big fruity, floral aromas or almost no aroma at all. This is always designed by the Toji, or brewmaster in terms of what is trying to be achieved. Daiginjo and many Ginjo saké tend to have fruity and sometimes floral aromas. The Yeast used in saké is very diverse – and used by design to achieve specific aromas. Some yeast is called Brewing Society Yeast and given numbers such as #701 or #901. These are yeast that have been discovered by a brewery in the past and or the brewing society. They are sold by the brewing society in vials to breweries around the country for guaranteed consistency. A number of brewers used “in house” proprietary yeast that no one has duplicated – giving that brewery a unique position. Yeast is also derived from Flowers – which often produces very floral aroma. Some yeast is heartier to achieve higher alcohol content offering earthy qualities such as mushroom aroma or none at all.

**Impact of Flavor** -The impact of the saké is the first impression of the flavor. The flavor can expand, change and be very expressive...lingering for a long time, or the flavor can drop off quickly. Some saké can start off fruity – then change and finish dry. Earthy saké tend to remain grounded and stable with some including slightly gamey, smoky flavor. Fruity style saké offer flavors such as honeydew melon, honeysuckle, strawberry, apricot, peach and pear. What impression is made when the saké first hits the palate is the impact of the saké.

**Impression** – Saké flavor can be big and sharp or soft and subtle. Many saké are very gentle compared to wine or beer. This gentle flavor is one of the reasons it pairs so well with a diversity of food. Backing up the flavor of the food and not competing with its flavor.

The acidity in Saké is much lower than what is found in wine, but it is there. Acidity is at its highest impact when the saké is first tasted and then towards the finish. Saké with higher acidity generally pairs best with oiler foods. Salty foods don't need much in terms of acidity so quieter, lower acidic saké works. The temperature of the saké can affect the perceived acidity within just a few degree difference. Because the acidity is low in general – it can be difficult to notice the acidity.

### **Saké and Food**

The nature of saké allows it to pair with a vast array of food from meats and fish to vegetables and soups. One of the best pairings to prove the versatility of saké is cheese. Saké is rich in amino acids and many of the same amino acids are found in cheese. The biggest reason saké has not gone beyond the basic pairing of sushi is our own preconceived ideas or tradition. Saké will enhance the food – adding to the enjoyment of the meal itself. Chefs understand this – so the best way to educate consumers about the amazing versatility of saké is for the chef to suggest saké pairing with something on the menu – not Japanese.

### **Saké at Retail**

The growth of saké on premise has helped create a synergy at the retail level. Saké has packaging, creative labels a variety of bottle size and formats. We can help you organize and craft your retail set to take full advantage of this explosive growth.

### **6th Annual Saké and Japanese Beer Trade Show**

This is your opportunity to come experience, taste and learn about this amazing category.

When: Monday, January 16, 2012

Time: Show time: 3 – 6pm

Education: Saké 101 Course: 2:15 – 3pm Taught by Briana Seeley - Certified Saké Specialist  
Saké in Depth: 2:15 – 3pm Taught by Marcus V Pakiser, Saké Brewer, Sommelier

Where: Saucebox, 214 SW Broadway, Portland

### **Here are some fantastic saké ideas that work for both restaurant and retail.**

Hakushika Ginjo Carton 900ml	#406043		\$7.99
<i>Amazing Ginjo saké in a unique package, which is quite common in Japan. Family owned since 1662.</i>			
"Ring of Fire" Kan Nihonkai Super Dry (Bright red bottle)	#889336		\$24.49
<i>This is the driest saké available in the US. Great balanced flavor and perfect with hearty food dishes</i>			
Tyku Silver Junmai	#602243	330ml	\$6.99
	#602201	720ml	\$11.19
<i>New Saké from Japan Tyku Silver offers light, slightly earthy flavor in a unique stand out package</i>			
"The Brewer's Saké" Yuri Masamune	#897883		\$13.99
<i>This slightly dry saké is what the brewers drink at home each night. ...slightly earthy with a smooth finish.</i>			
Fukucho Moon on the Water	#387400	300ml	\$11.89
	#487430	720ml	\$24.84
<i>Fukucho is 100% hand-crafted by an woman brew master – very rare in the Saké industry. This saké is soft, floral and packed full of rich umami flavor.</i>			
Momokawa Organic Junmai Ginjo	#891373	750ml	\$9.09
<i>Certified organic by the USDA and Oregon Tilth – fresh, fruity and well balance with a hint of earthiness.</i>			
Gekkeikan Black & Gold	#897852	750ml	\$11.19
<i>Black &amp; Gold represents saké of the past with rich, full body earthy flavor.</i>			
Hakutsuru Junmai Ginjo	#897860	300ml	\$4.89
<i>Perfect saké for new saké consumers. Lightly fruity, gentle and soft.</i>			
Zen Junmai	#897028	720ml	\$20.29
<i>Perfect name for this perfectly balanced earthy saké.</i>			