

Sakepedia: A Non-Traditional Guide to Japan's Traditional Beverage

Jeff Cioletti

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It is easy to forget that as recently as twenty-five years ago, America's drinking habits were anything but crafty and adventurous. We were a Bud country, we liked our cocktails old-school, and the little wine we drank was of the Gallo Hearty Burgundy or sweet German Riesling variety. My, how things have changed.

If you're an early adopter of the nation's next cool inebriating beverage, you might just find yourself imbibing ultrapremium sake made from Mikinishiki, an heirloom rice grown in the Okayama prefecture of Japan. You'll note the elegant balance of tartness and sweetness, sour cherry and citrus flavors, all sheathed in a deceptively rich, even heavy mouthfeel. You'll ask for another glass.

Stylistically, sake appeals to both wine and beer drinkers, and the keen observers among us will have already noticed an increasing number of sake bars and trendy watering holes featuring a bountiful selection of the fermented rice beverage. Indeed, all the parts are in place for a sake explosion in the US, including the release of *Sakepedia: A Non-Traditional Guide to Japan's Traditional Beverage*. A certified sake sommelier, Jeff Cioletti does justice to sake's long history in Japan before turning to production methods, tasting notes, and the inside-baseball know-how to keep you in the good graces of the artisanal sake crowd.

MATT SUTHERLAND (January/February 2019)

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