

## WORDS FROM THE HEART FOR DASSAI 23 2

As one of the highest quality sakes in Japan, *Dassai 23* has earned legions of fans since its introduction in the US. Here is what they have to say.

It's so silky as if superfine particles structured the sake. I would rather enjoy it on its own.

—Toshi Koizumi, *Sake Hana*



**Toshi Koizumi** Sake Sommelier of Sake Hana, the Upper East Side bar specializing in sake. He's ranked as one of the six NY region finalists in the 2nd World Kikisake-shi Competition.

## SILKY AND CLEAN LIKE WINE

He's served and drunk Dassai 23 almost every day for more than 5 years since he was first bewitched by it. *Mr. Toshi Koizumi*, the sake sommelier of **Sake Hana**, describes its taste: "While pouring, it gives a hint of strawberry and a lychee smell but the fruity aroma changes to a fragrant Daiginjo flavor in the glass. Then it flows over the tongue smoothly. It's a sophisticated, clean sake." His description is so vivid the readers feel drunk already, but he goes on, "It isn't sugary and heavy like sake used to be. The texture is silkier, and the flavor is cleaner, just like wine." As he puts his nose into the

glass of Dassai 23, a smile breaks out across his face.

## THIS SAKE NEEDS NO FOOD

As a sake sommelier, he has his own philosophy: bragging about their knowledge is not what sake sommeliers do; suggesting the perfect sake for the customer is far more important. The customers' taste preference, mood, and occasion, what food it's paired with - many factors come into play. "The more I study sake, the more I realize I know nothing about it," reveals *Mr. Koizumi*. He currently devotes himself to exploring how amino acids in sake match certain tastes in food. This contributes greatly to his ability to make food pairings. Being asked what kind of food would be best for Dassai 23 he says, "I would rather enjoy it on its own. What's unique about this sake is that it's so silky, as if superfine particles structured the texture. I like to appreciate that."

## THE TASTE IS PRICELESS

*Mr. Koizumi* recommends Dassai 23 to customers for special occasions. Although it's an expensive sake, as far as he remembers nobody has ever complained about the price after tasting it for the first time. Usually they order another glass or bottle. This is the charm of the sake that cast a spell over *Mr. Koizumi* 5 years ago. It's hard to analyze the magic, but he tries. "People have a fixed idea that sake in general is strong and dry, but Dassai 23 isn't

like that. It has an outstanding flavor; something like 'umami' which I guess is created in the brewing and fermenting processes of this particular brewery. This sake is so exceptional that it's easily detected in a blind tasting."

Interviewed at **Sake Hana**

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-Voice from Dassai 23 enthusiast-  
**DRINK IT ON ITS OWN,  
BUT DON'T DRINK IT ALONE.**

When I tried Dassai 23 for the first time, I had a chance to see samples of the rice grains. They had the milled rice and regular rice, and I was very surprised to see how small the rice of Dassai 23 was. Then, I tasted the sake, and it made a big impression on me because it was very refined and elegant. The aroma is gentle and mild, but you can pick up hints of fruit. In my case, it was a melon or a summery fruit taste. I would recommend that people try Dassai 23 on very special occasions, like a celebratory evening. It's a surefire hit. I haven't met a person yet who



doesn't like it. As for pairing, I usually drink it on its own, focusing on the taste and the flavor. Of course, I drink it with other people. I try not to drink the whole bottle by myself. (laughs)

—Timothy Sullivan



## Dassai 23 (Niwari Sanbu) Junmai Daiginjo

Made from rice milled down to its core until only 23% of the original remains. This is the highest degree of milling for commercial sake in the world. It is a sake that is the pinnacle of refined elegance, subtlety, delicate flavors and aromas.