

Sneak Peek Into TATENOKAWA 18 and 50

TATENOKAWA Brewery has already created a swirling buzz of anticipation in the sake industry with their future release. This brewery in Yamagata Prefecture will soon release TATENOKAWA 18 and TATENOKAWA 50 sake. To give our readers a good preview, we had Tim Sullivan from UrbanSake.com taste and compare the two sakes as well as talk about the brewery's characteristics.



What was your impression when you visited TATENOKAWA Brewery last year?

I was touring Yamagata prefecture's breweries for the first time when I visited TATENOKAWA. It is a very nice artisanal size brewery. When you walk up, the first thing you notice is the wonderful view of the main building and a rice field in front of it. I was struck by the natural environment and the beauty of the area. I was also surprised by the relative youth of the toji (brew

master) who is only 33, and how focused and concentrated he was on his work.

What is your initial reaction to the taste of these sakes?

The first thing that I noticed was how aromatic the TATENOKAWA 18 is, which is a trademark of this brewery. It has a very beautiful floral aroma like that of lilac. I find the aroma to be a good sneak peak of the actual taste of the sake. It has a long lasting complex palate that you find in top quality sakes, a long finish, and lots of body, and lots of depth. The TATENOKAWA 50 is also very aromatic, but on the fruitier side with notes of melon and other fruits. It has a shorter finish, and a cleaner taste, but still extremely smooth and well balanced.

How would you pair the two sakes?

With regards to TATENOKAWA 18, this caliber of sake is so complex in flavor it can be a challenge to pair. I suggest pairing it with lighter foods like sashimi, and poached fish. It's almost like a meal in a glass. In terms of sushi toppings, because of the quality, you really feel like you are indulging when you are drinking this, so I would pair it with something like otoro (fatty tuna) to really savor that luxurious quality. But I feel that this is the kind of sake you want to sip slowly by itself to really enjoy its lusciousness.

On the other hand, since TATENOKAWA 50 has a very clean taste, this would be more of a sake to enjoy with food. Grilled chicken, high quality soba, and high quality tempura would be my choice for pairing. With sushi, I think yellowtail belly would be great with it.

How do you think they would do in NY?

There is no question these are high-end sakes. But I think they are great additions to the market and will do really well. TATENOKAWA 18 in particular, would be considered a super luxury sake, but still a bargain for its quality.

How would you serve it?

In a white wine glass because you want to enjoy the aroma. To really experience everything this sake has to offer, I would definitely serve it chilled. The sake will open up in the glass and you will really enjoy all the different flavors that unfolds.

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