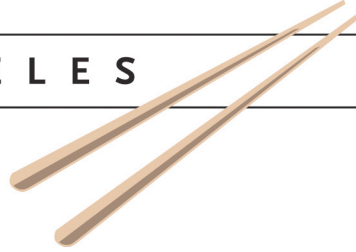


SUSHI MASTERS

L O S A N G E L E S

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TWO CHEFS EMERGE VICTORIOUS FROM LOS ANGELES SUSHIMASTERS

Hundreds delight in Sunday's culinary competition in Little Tokyo

LOS ANGELES, CA – Five of Southern California's top sushi chefs dueled head to head in today's SushiMasters Los Angeles Regional, with two taking home top honors.

Takuya Matsuda, Executive Chef of Sushi Bar Nippon in San Diego and Aung Soe, Head Chef of Geisha House in Hollywood won best of show and earned the right to compete at the SushiMasters Finals in Sacramento on June 10, against four other sushi chefs who won earlier competitions in Sacramento and San Francisco.

Each chef was judged by a group of culinary professionals, on several factors, including taste, presentation and overall execution.

Matsuda won gold medals for his Morikomi Plate, a traditional sushi combination plate and his Signature Roll, which is a sushi roll featuring the chef's signature ingredients. Soe took home silver medals in both categories.

Other competitors included Song Kim, Head Chef, Gugu Sushi & Roll, Hermosa Beach, Toshihiko Seki, Chef/Business Owner, Sushi Catering Toshi, Los Angeles and Kenny Yamada, Executive Chef, Takami Sushi & Robata Restaurant, Los Angeles.

Hundreds gathered for the event at the Aratani/Japan America Theatre in Little Tokyo, which also featured sushi and sake tasting, cultural entertainment and special ceremonies honoring pioneers of sushi in Los Angeles. Proceeds for the event went to aid cultural programs at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, the largest Asian

American cultural center in the nation and the preeminent presenter of Japanese and Japanese American arts and culture, which was a partner for the event.

The California Rice Commission (CRC) established SushiMasters in 2005, to highlight the growing interest in sushi and showcase the important role of rice in this and other world cuisine. Every piece of sushi made in America comes from California rice.

Reporters seeking more information or photographs from the SushiMasters Los Angeles Regionals can contact Jim Morris, CRC Communications Manager at 916/387-2264 or jmorris@calrice.org or Haruko Tanaka of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center at 213/628-2725, ext 121 or htanaka@jacc.org.

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