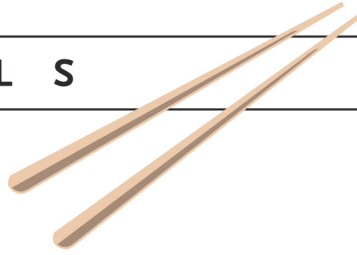


SUSHI MASTERS

F I N A L S

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CALIFORNIA HAS A NEW SUSHIMASTER

San Francisco chef rolls to victory in SushiMasters State Finals

SACRAMENTO, CA – As sushi’s popularity soars, SushiMasters, an event paying tribute to this culinary art form, brought six of the best chefs in competition yesterday to determine California’s top sushi chef. After intense competition, Chef Tomoharu Nakamura of Sanraku Four Seasons emerged as the Best of Show winner.

“I feel just great,” Nakamura said. “I was so happy to win. I just tried to show the experience I have learned in everything I made.”

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

Nakamura not only captured the SushiMaster title, he 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.

Other competitors included Chef Koji Ogawa, Sakura Chaya (formally with the Japanese Kitchen), Fresno, Chef Billy Ngo, Kru Restaurant, Sacramento, Chef Akifusa Tonai, Kyo-ya Restaurant, San Francisco, Chef Takuya Matsuda, Sushi Bar Nippon, San Diego and Chef Aung Soe, Geisha House, Hollywood.

Hundreds gathered for the event at the Sacramento Convention Center, which also featured sushi and sake tasting, cultural entertainment and presentation of the 2008 Culinary Innovator award to Advanced Fresh Concepts/South Tsunami, a Rancho Dominguez business that maintains more than 2,500 sushi bars throughout the U.S. A portion of the proceeds for the event went to aid the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Project, an effort to preserve the first Japanese Settlement in North America.

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, interviews or photographs from the SushiMasters Finals can contact Jim Morris, CRC Communications Manager at 916/387-2264 or jmorris@calrice.org.

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