

SUSHI MASTERS

COMPETITION

2009

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SUSHIMASTERS NATIONAL TITLE DECIDED IN SUNDAY SHOWDOWN *San Francisco Chef defeats top challengers to claim the prestigious honor*

LOS ANGELES, CA – A sold-out venue and the pressure of a live competition did not phase Chef Tomoharu Nakamura, who took home Best of Show honors in tonight's 2009 SushiMasters Finals East/West Challenge in Los Angeles.

Chef Nakamura, 2008 SushiMasters State Finals Champion, took gold medals for his Morikomi Plate and Signature Roll, to capture the coveted title as the nation's top SushiMaster. Other competitors included Randy Noprpa of Maneki Neko Restaurant in Falls Church, Virginia, Toshio Furihata of Moshi Moshi Restaurant in Miami Beach, Florida and Hyun Min Suh of Sushi Ran in Sausalito.

"I can't believe it," said the victorious chef, who works at Sanraku in San Francisco. "I didn't think I could do this again!"

Chef Nakamura credited his use of seasonal items and a special combination of three varieties of California rice as his keys to success.

The 2009 SushiMasters Finals East/West Challenge was held at the Aratani/Japan America Theatre in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles.

The Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC) presented the SushiMasters competition in partnership with the California Rice Commission (CRC). The JACCC is the largest Asian American cultural center in the U.S. and the CRC is a non-profit organization that represents the growers and handlers who farm and process premium quality rice used in sushi and many other dishes. Every piece of sushi made in America comes from California rice.

SushiMasters sponsorships, including *Japanese Restaurant News*, Gekkeikan Sake and JFC International Incorporated. Expansion of the competition to Florida and Washington, D.C. was chiefly possible through title sponsorship by Kirin Brewery. More information on the competition can be found at www.sushimasters.com.