

BlackBook

THE DRAMA ISSUE



SPIRITS

OF RICE AND MEN

Comedian and *Daily Show* correspondent Wyatt Cenac samples sake seven different ways at Nobu Fifty Seven. Turns out there's more to the Japanese national drink than sake bombs.

BY VICTOR OZOLS

It's pretty slow going," sighs Wyatt Cenac when I ask him what he's been up to. Yeah, right. Beyond working as a correspondent on *The Daily Show* and appearing in stand-up gigs across the country, the 35-year-old comedian, actor, and writer is hosting a public television documentary series called *AfroPop*, which premieres on January 12 ("I'll be like some kind of bedraggled Alistair Cooke," he says), and his recent Comedy Central special, *Wyatt Cenac: Comedy Person*, was just released on DVD and iTunes. But tonight he has only one job: tasting sake with me at Nobu Fifty Seven. We're in the talented hands of mixologist Oren Cohen, who has worked at the sleek Midtown Manhattan hotspot since it opened six years ago, and who created many of the cocktails on the menu. Cohen has agreed to give us



PROMOTION HITLIST

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SARAH SILVERMAN GETS HER ROCKS ON
XAVIER SAMUEL MAKES HIS NAME IN ANONYMOUS
KEEPING UP WITH FELICITY JONES

CHOP-SOCKY:

THESE CLASSY SAKES BRING THE BEST OF THE PADDY FIELD TO YOUR PATIO

Momokawa has several affordable offerings, including its Organic Creamy Nigori Junmai Ginjo (\$13), a silky sake with a citrus bite, and the Organic Medium Rich Junmai Ginjo (\$13), with coconut notes and a nice balance of tart and sweet.

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Sake is rarely spotted in the U.S. outside the gilded ghetto of sushi bars and Asian-themed nightclubs. That's a shame, as the sakes I've tasted would brighten just about any occasion. At its best, cold sake (the warm stuff is generally less refined) boasts the versatility of liquor, the cerebral complexity of wine, and the visceral satisfaction of beer. There are hundreds of styles and brands out there, but here's a selection of my



better wine and liquor stores anywhere.

Hiro Blue Junmai Ginjo (\$40) is a crisp sake with a fruity edge and notes of blueberry and watermelon. The pricy but delicious **Murai Family Daiginjo** (\$69) has tart grape flavors and an aroma of spring flowers. **Yoshinogawa Gokujo Ginjo** (\$33) is a super-smooth sake with enjoyably complex notes of fennel and herbs. Oregon-based **Momokawa** has several affordable offerings, including its **Organic Creamy Nigori Junmai Ginjo** (\$13), a silky sake with a citrus bite, and the **Organic Medium Rich Junmai Ginjo** (\$13), with coconut notes and a nice balance of tart

and sweet. A grain of rice can come to no finer end.

...evening spent drinking fine sake is a pleasure. But if you want to end it on something with a kick, try Suntory's exciting new **Hakushu 12-year-old Single Malt Whisky** (\$60). Its smoky aroma belies its crisp, breezy taste, from the energizing bite at the front to the raisin and plum finish. Suntory time indeed.



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