

# FOODIES WEST

Where else?

## SAKÉONE:

Wa jo ryō stiu — It means harmony in the brewery will make harmonious, or good, sake.

Steve Vuylsteke, CEO  
Greg Lorenz, Brewmaster  
**SakéOne**

The more they talked, the more interested Vuylsteke got. "I had actually visited the company back in 1997 when they were building

as what the pioneers were trying to do," the perception good as what else is out there. Otherwise, why buy what we make?"  
*Out there, it's*

Brewmaster Lorenz



Most American rice farmers use absorbable fertilizers that allow the rice to have a high protein content to make it more nutritious for consumption. The organic rice has no chemical fertilization, so the rice has lower protein levels.

"I saw the same characteristics in the organic rice as what the Japanese have in their high-quality saké," Lorenz said. The organic rice produced a more layered and fruit-forward saké with floral notes. "The flavor is actually being expressed by the organisms," Lorenz explained. "Happy yeast makes good saké."

Lorenz noticed how the Japanese also have respect for the product and handle it more gently. As a result, SakéOne uses machinery to transport rice into the brewery, but they do the more delicate processes the old-fashioned, hands-on way.

"We do not hurt the rice or break the rice intentionally," Lorenz said. "Japan seems to be able to be more open to this."

Vuylsteke also changed a few things. Particularly in the way he does business.

"Five years ago, I had never been to Japan," he said. "Now I've been there nine times. This has given me great insight into how they live their lives. They develop respect and trust before you get to the business part of the deal. It's a more fulfilling way to do business. In American it's win-win. That is not how they do it in Japan at all."

While developing a relationship with the president of Hakutsuru Saké Brewing Company, he found out the president was an exchange student who spent time in the Sacramento area where the rice used in SakéOne is grown.

"As a result, his son will be spending time with our family this summer," Vuylsteke said.



Left: SakéOne's top selling saké, Momokawa Diamond, made with techniques shared by teachers in Japan's Aomori and Niigata Prefectures. Right: SakéOne's newest import, KIBO Saké brewed at the Suisen Shuzo Kura in the Iwate Prefecture.

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