



## BAKING UP A Sake Storm

Gwen Lim, Executive Chef and owner of the French-inspired bakery Patisserie G, shares with us her journey learning more about this Japanese rice wine.

### Creator of Gastronomical Delights

A graduate of the Pastry Diploma program at Le Cordon Bleu Paris, Gwen's passion for food and dedication to quality have led to the creation of Patisserie G in 2012. In this bakery, Gwen whips up classic French desserts and modern pastry interpretations while maintaining a focus on simplicity and excellent ingredients. Patisserie G is the only dessert cafe in Singapore selling bottles of sake, offering 40 to 50 different varieties of sake across a range of breweries and geographies.

When I started Patisserie G, I knew I wanted an alcoholic aspect to the place. However, I found wines or champagne difficult to pair with my desserts. Wines generally have higher acidity, and to pair dessert wines (which are already sweet) with desserts would make the treat too cloying. On the suggestion of a friend, I tried incorporating sake instead. Because sake is made from rice, it is less cloying and worked out pretty well in my creations!

I think a lot of people have the perception that sake should be paired only with Japanese food. On the contrary, just like how French wines can be paired with Chinese or Indian cuisines, sake can go with different cuisines as well. You just have to keep an open mind. As a general rule when pairing sake with desserts, you either have to find similar profiles of dessert with the sake to create a complement, or incorporate sake in a way that will give the dessert an added edge.

Unlike brandy and whiskey, we tend not to cook sake as it will lose its flavour. This makes incorporating sake into desserts a bit tricky, unless it is made into jelly or ice-cream sorbets. Instead, we create desserts like the sake kasu cheesecake using kasu, the lees left over from sake production. In this dessert, we also incorporated macerated

dried fruits, rum and brandy, so while it has quite a strong sake kasu flavour, there is also the taste of other liqueurs.

My interest in sake led me to learn more about the ingredient during a two-month trip to Japan earlier this year. I took the Advanced Sake Professional (ASP) course in Tokyo, and worked for two days in a small artisanal sake brewery called Shichi Hon Yari, in Shiga prefecture. I washed 800 kilograms of rice on my first day on the job, and 760 kilograms on the second day. It was very fun, but it was hard work! Many tasks were manually done – I remember washing cloth bags for three and a half hours in the cold winter. That experience made me really appreciate the hard work that goes into brewing good sake.

I think there is a huge potential for the sake industry in Singapore. People are getting quite interested in sake, but there is little knowledge of it. I feel that the way to help the sake industry and to promote it is through education. With more knowledge, people can make better decisions about their beverage choices. This inspired me to set up a sake cocktail bar, opening later this year on Stanley Street. We plan to have ninety labels of sake, and my business partner is a mixologist, so she will be serving up with some interesting sake cocktails!

**Patisserie G is located at 9 Raffles Boulevard, #01-40/41 Millenia Walk, Singapore 039596.**