

Hunt is on for the Sake Sommelier of the Year



In the first of its kind to be held outside Japan, the Academy of Food & Wine Service (AFWS) together with the London-based Sake Sommelier Association, have launched a UK-based Sake Sommelier of the Year competition, sponsored by one of the world's oldest and finest producers, Gekkeikan.

Sake, the traditional rice wine drunk with Japanese food is growing in popularity both in the UK and globally. It is made by polishing and fermenting rice grains and varies in quality and taste according to the rice used, the amount of milling it undergoes, the water used and the skill of the producer.

The Sake Sommelier Association (SSA) is the only organisation to offer sake education outside Japan. Candidates passing the Introductory Sake Professional and Certified Sake Sommelier will become a sake sommelier, a certificate accredited by the SSA.

Said AFWS executive director John Croft: 'Sake is becoming increasingly popular in the UK and consumers are becoming more aware of the different sakes available and the way it should be served.

'We are delighted to join forces with the Sake Sommelier Association to launch and run this fascinating competition, which can only help broaden people's understanding of sake and the complexities of its production and service.'

All sommeliers are invited to enter the competition, including sake sommeliers. A masterclass will be held in celebration of the launch of the competition at Harrods Tasting room on 19 August.

Entrants to the competition will be sent a first round questionnaire. The competition semi-final and final will be held on 11 November 2013 at London's Westbury Hotel and will involve blind tastings, food matching tests and errors on a sake list.

The winner will receive a fully funded trip to Japan to take the five-day Sake Sommelier Association Advanced Sake Sommelier course.

Further information on the competition and the masterclass can be found at www.afws.co.uk/events and www.sakesommelierassociation.com.

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For further press information, please contact:

Linda Pettit, Tilburstow Media Partners

T: 01342 832866 or Linda@tilburstowmedia.co.uk