

# Renaissance Woman

In New York City, Yuki Minakawa showcases her expertise at Sushi Ginza Onodera

Last October, New York City's Sushi Ginza Onodera—the only two-Michelin star Japanese restaurant in the United States—launched its first-ever cocktail program under the direction of beverage and service director Yuki Minakawa.

A Japanese-Brazilian sake sommelier, Minakawa began her U.S. food and beverage career in 2008 as a hostess at New York City restaurant Soba Totto, where she eventually became manager. She followed this with a stint as a wine consultant for Winebow; it was in this role that her love for sake grew, ultimately leading her to study and become an expert of the rice-based wine. While helping launch the Mizunomai shochu brand in the U.S. in 2013, her interest in bartending was sparked. “I was working with a lot of mixologists and bartenders at the time and they inspired me to take it up myself,” she says. After several years of flexing her cocktail muscles and wine expertise at different Japanese restaurants throughout New York City, Minakawa was approached by the Onodera Group about developing their beverage program. “I saw a great opportunity to grow by joining the company,” she says.



Yuki Minakawa (pictured), beverage and service director for New York City's Sushi Ginza Onodera, displays her Japanese and Brazilian heritages in her cocktails.

Sushi Onodera's sake and wine lists are constantly rotating, but its cocktail menu is seasonal, changing two times this year, with plans to rotate four times with each season starting next year (drinks are \$15-\$28). “For my cocktails, I like to work with both my Japanese and Brazilian heritages,” says Minakawa. Though she was raised in Brazil, Minakawa acknowledges that Japanese flavors and ingredients are more prominent in her drinks. “I like to make my own syrups and sodas from scratch,” she says. “I love all spirits and try to have each cocktail feature a different one.”

On the current Spring/Summer menu, her Matchatini (\$20) comprises Mizunomai Green Tea shochu, Shichida Junmai sake, Suze liqueur, Grand Marnier orange liqueur, Martini & Rossi Extra Dry vermouth, simple syrup, matcha tea powder, and egg white. “We also started offering a Tequila-based cocktail featuring cherry blossom tea,” Minakawa adds. “There's nothing better for summer than Tequila.” Called Pink Oh (\$20), the drink features Espolòn Tequila, house-made sakura tea syrup, lime juice, and a muddled Luxardo Maraschino cherry. **mw**

Sally Kral

## Yuki Minakawa's Recipes



### MATCHATINI

**INGREDIENTS:**

2 ounces Mizunomai Green Tea shochu;  
1 ounce Shichida Junmai sake;  
¼ teaspoon Suze liqueur;  
1 teaspoon Grand Marnier orange liqueur;  
½ ounce Martini & Rossi Extra Dry vermouth;  
½ ounce simple syrup;  
1 teaspoon matcha tea powder;  
1 egg white;  
Gold leaf for garnish (optional).

**RECIPE:**

Combine shochu, sake, liqueurs, vermouth, syrup, tea powder, and egg white in a cocktail shaker. Dry shake well. Add ice and shake again. Double-strain into a coupe glass. If using, place a piece of gold leaf in the center of the drink.



### PINK OH

**INGREDIENTS:**

1½ ounces Espolòn Tequila;  
1½ ounces sakura tea syrup<sup>1</sup>;  
½ ounce lime juice;  
1 Luxardo Maraschino cherry.

**RECIPE:**

In a cocktail shaker, muddle cherry. Add Tequila, syrup, and juice, then ice. Shake and double-strain into a coupe glass.

<sup>1</sup>Soak several pickled sakura flowers in water until they're no longer briny, then brew into tea with hot water. Add sugar to make a syrup using a 40/60 ratio of sugar to tea.