

GASTRO-GLOBAL OROYO WINE BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN WINE AND SUSHI.

W

hen it comes to pairing sushi with a beverage, sommeliers have historically had trouble finding the right match for the cuisine's complex flavors and unique accompaniments. Now, Oroya, a new wine developed specifically for sushi, is taking the place of sake bombs at sushi restaurants nationwide.

The concept was born of Japanese-born winemaker Yoko Sato's residence in Spain. Sato recognized that while wine was a central part of the Spanish table, when sushi lovers reached for a glass, their wine choices were limited.

"We were looking for a wine that didn't clash with the flavor of Japanese food, especially the fifth taste, umami, that often creates a bitterness when combined with tannins," says Sato, who explains that Oroyo is Spanish for "a basket to transport goods from one side of the river to the other," symbolizing a bridge of flavors and cultures.

To create Oroya's crisp, aromatic and fruit-forward flavors, Sato selected three grapes: Airén, Macabeo and Muscat. The Airén has ripe, round tannins while the acidity of Macabeo helps clean the mouth and cut through the oils of the fish. And the Muscat has a natural sweetness that complements the sugar used to prepare sushi rice and softens the hot wasabi and bitter ginger. Of course, it's no coincidence that Oroya is an excellent match for Spanish tapas, as well.

"Japanese food and Spanish tapas have a lot in common," says Sato. "They are little portions and a lot of different tastes. The balanced acidity of Oroya lets you enjoy the flavors even more."

Oroya is available at fine sushi houses throughout the United States and online at Beverages & More at www.bevmo.com.

—AMY PATUREL



Yoko Sato, winemaker for Oroyo