

# METROPOLIS

**BODY & SOUL** EXPLORE THE HEALING POWERS OF  
**SHIZEN JAPAN BEAT** ROCK OUT AT YOKOHAMA'S  
**LIVE HOUSES** **CARS & BIKES** MAKE YOUR BID AT  
**TOKYO'S MASSIVE CAR AUCTIONS**

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## **GIMME SHELTER**

**ASYLUM SEEKERS FIND LITTLE  
REFUGE IN JAPAN**





table talk

# AKIKO TOMODA

Sake sommelier and wine advisor

BY SARAH CORTINA

What do you call someone who can jump from a discussion of the merits of *kimoto-zukuri* sake to a lecture on Bordeaux wines? Akiko Tomoda refers to herself as a "Total Alcoholic Beverage Coordinator," which you've got to admit has a nice ring to it. The Fukui native hails from a family of restaurateurs, and used her culinary upbringing to break into the food import business. She soon found herself in France, studying to become a sommelier, and started her own beverage consulting company in 1990. Though certified as a wine adviser, Tomoda felt she had neglected her country's "national beverages," and so began immersing herself in the world of *nihonshu* and *shochu*. She is now a much sought-after lecturer and essayist, as well as the author of *The Sake Selection*, a bilingual guide to *nihonshu*.

## FAVORITE PLACES TO EAT

For steak, I recommend **Aragawa** in Onarimon and **Kawamura** in Ginza—they've both got the best meat in the world! Aragawa serves champion beef that's been cured to perfection, and they also do fantastic *kama-yaki*. If you're looking for a great deal on sushi, then **Sushi Zanmai** in Tsukiji is the place to go. It's operated by Kiyoshi Kimura, the "King of Tuna," so of course the *maguro* is inexpensive and delicious. My favorite place to get yakitori is **Akiyoshi**, a chain with locations all around Tokyo. The main store is in my native prefecture of Fukui, so the food tastes just like home. I recommend the *shiro* (intestines) and *kei* (breast meat from an adult hen). They're so good, you'll feel like you can eat 30-50 sticks!



## FAVORITE PLACES TO DRINK

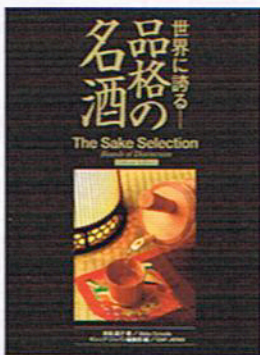
I often go to **Utou** in Asagaya for *nihonshu*. The owner, Kon-san, is a master of *okan*, or hot sake. In the same way that wine is affected by how it is decanted,

Kon created his own original decantation process to bring out the complex flavors of the sake. He calls it "okantage." Since Kon is from Aomori, the bar also offers lots of handmade specialty dishes from the Tohoku region, which really complement the sake. Be sure to make a reservation if you go! I also love **Amanogawa** (bottom left), which is located inside the Keio Plaza hotel. The sake sommelier there will recommend you the perfect pairing of *nihonshu* and *otsumami*. It always takes me away to a dreamlike place where I can forget my busy life.

Finally, **Shusaron** in Shinagawa is probably the only bar in the world that specializes in *jukusei* *nihonshu*. They have an extensive collection of old and rare sakes from brewers all over Japan.

## FAVORITE PLACES TO SHOP

For wine, I usually go to **Cave de Relax** in Shimbashi. They carry many delicious vintages from all over the world, and everything is very reasonably priced.



## ADDRESS BOOK

**Akiyoshi** Various locations around Tokyo and Kanagawa. [www.akiyoshi.co.jp](http://www.akiyoshi.co.jp)

**Amanogawa** Keio Plaza Hotel, 2-2-1 Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku. Tel: 03-3344-0111. Open daily 5-10:30pm. [www.keioplaza.co.jp](http://www.keioplaza.co.jp)

**Aragawa** 1F 3-23-11 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-3438-1867. Open Mon-Sat noon-11pm, closed Sun & hols. Nearest stn: Onarimon.

**Cave de Relax** 1-6-11 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-3595-3697. Open daily 11am-8pm. Nearest stn: Uchisaiwaicho or Toranomon. [www.cavederelax.com](http://www.cavederelax.com)

**Fukui Aoyama 291** Glassarea Aoyama, 5-4-41 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-5778-0291. Open daily 11am-7pm. Nearest stn: Omotesando. <http://fukui.291ma.jp>

**Hasegawa Sake-ten** Main store: 1-18-12 Kameido, Koto-ku. Tel: 03-5836-3477. Open Mon-Sat 11am-7pm, closed Sun & hols. Nearest stn: Kameido or Nishi-Ojima. For other locations see [www.hasegawasaketen.com](http://www.hasegawasaketen.com)

**Kawamura** 7-3-16 Ginza, Chuo-ku. Tel: 03-3289-8222. Open Mon-Sat 6-10pm, closed Sun & hols. Nearest stn: Ginza or Uchisaiwaicho.

**Masumotoya** 5-35-21 Kitazawa, Setagaya-ku. Tel: 03-6904-6331. Open Mon-Sat 11am-7pm, closed Sun. Nearest stn: Sasazuka. [www.masumotoya1949.com](http://www.masumotoya1949.com)

**Nicolas** Roppongi store: 2F 1-4-3 Azabudai, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-3583-4712. Open daily 11:30am-11pm. Nearest stn: Roppongi-Itchome. <http://r.gnavi.co.jp/g383701/>

**Sho-Chu Authority** B2F Caretta Shiodome, 1-8-2 Higashi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-5537-2105. Open daily 11am-10pm. Nearest stn: Shiodome. [www.authority-online.jp](http://www.authority-online.jp)

**Shusaron** 2F 4-10-18 Takanawa, Minato-ku. Tel: 03-5449-4455. Open Mon-Fri 5pm-midnight, Sat-Sun & hols 3pm-midnight. Nearest stn: Shinagawa. [www.koshunavi.com](http://www.koshunavi.com)

**Sushi Zanmai** 4-11-9 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku. Tel: 03-3541-1117. Open 24/7. Nearest stn: Tsukiji or Tsukiji-Shijo. For other locations, see [www.kiyomura.co.jp](http://www.kiyomura.co.jp)

**Utou** 2-4-7 Asagaya-Kita, Suginami-ku. Tel: 03-3337-8734. Open Mon-Sat 6:30-10:30pm, closed Sun & hols. Nearest stn: Asagaya.

**Sho-Chu Authority** in Shiodome (bottom right) is also worth a visit, if only for the incredible variety they stock. For *nihonshu*, I recommend going to either **Hasegawa Sake-ten** or **Masumotoya**. Hasegawa carries many of the most popular brands of sake—they'll also be carrying Nanbubijin's *junmaishu*, which is the official *nihonshu* of the 2010 World Cup. Masumotoya, on the other hand, specializes in delicious homemade *karinto* snacks. For specialty food items, I recommend **Fukui Aoyama 291**, an antenna shop near Omotesando. They carry Fukui *meibutsu* like Echizen crabs, pickled sea bream and a kind of soft azuki bean jelly called *mizu-yokan*. The store also organizes crab, sake and wine tasting events.