



## Renowned Sushi Chef Makoto Okuwa Opens Makoto Vail

*The sushi master's first restaurant in Colorado offers an innovative and contemporary Japanese menu*

**VAIL, CO - February 16, 2024 - Makoto Vail**, the newest restaurant from acclaimed Chef Makoto Okuwa, opens in Vail [The Grand Hyatt Vail, Vail's premier luxury lodging destination, at 1300 Westhaven Drive, Vail, CO 81657]. A master of modern Japanese cuisine, Chef Makoto offers a menu inspired by traditional Japanese cooking combined with his own innovative style, with a selection of both raw and cooked dishes. The beverage program, created by Eduardo Dingler, features cocktails that highlight Japanese spirits and flavors, along with an extensive selection of wine, sake, shochu, and Japanese whiskey. The restaurant features 110 seats with a design that honors the elegance and simplicity of Japanese interiors, while complementing Vail's stunning natural landscape.

### THE TEAM

Makoto trained under legendary sushi masters including Makoto Kumazaki, Shinichi Takegasa, Haruyoshi Matsuda, and Masaharu Morimoto, under whom he was Head Sushi Chef at Morimoto Philadelphia and New York. More recently, Chef Makoto partnered with famed restaurateur Stephen Starr to open his eponymous restaurant in the renowned Bal Harbour Shops in Miami, one of the most successful independent Japanese restaurants in the country, and opened Love Makoto, a collection of culinary concepts in Washington D.C. featuring the highest quality sushi, Japanese and American wagyu beef, and more. With restaurants all over the world including Miami, Washington D.C., Panama City, and São Paulo, Chef Makoto has received a nod from Michelin for *Love Makoto*, and was recognized by the James Beard Foundation for Outstanding Contribution. Joining forces with Chef Makoto at *Makoto Vail* is seasoned restaurant developer Mark Stone. Stone spent over a decade overseeing Morimoto's business interests, where he first met Chef Makoto, and is now behind popular restaurants across the US including Chef John Tesar's Michelin-starred Knife & Spoon in Orlando, Florida and Chef Angelo Sosa's Tia Carmen and Kembara in Phoenix, Arizona, among others.

### FOOD MENU

Chef Makoto's menu showcases his innovative take on traditional Japanese cuisine and sushi. The menu begins with *Starters* like **Shishito Peppers** with szechuan sauce and bonito flakes; Chef Makoto's famed **Tuna Crispy Rice** with serrano chili; and **Rock Shrimp** with kochujang and endive; followed by *Raw* offerings such as **Toro Tartare** with cherry blossom salt and sesame miso; and **Umami Kanpachi** with yuzu vinaigrette and garlic chips. Main courses include dishes like **Sakura Pork Tonkatsu** with plum kombu and burnt lemon; **Miso Wild Alaskan Sable Fish** with pickled turnip and ume miso; **Ginger Lamb Chop** with whipped tofu

feta; and a selection of charcoal grilled **Makoto Premium Steaks**, like the Snake River Farms aged ribeye and koji-butter dry aged New York wagyu strip with smoked shishito sauce and fresh wasabi. Sushi, sashimi, and maki offerings feature a wide range of fresh fish sourced from Japan, and a daily selection of limited-availability specialty items. Desserts such as **Chocolate Supernova**, a flaming chocolate sphere with black sesame cream, green tea marshmallows, and sake dark chocolate sorbet, and **Fruit Toban Yaki** with passionfruit white chocolate, exotic seasonal fruits, almond cookie crumble, and mango sorbet, round out the menu.

## BEVERAGE PROGRAM

The beverage program is curated by Eduardo Dingler, renowned wine and sake judge and journalist, sake ambassador and sommelier, who is an alumnus of some of Napa Valley's most iconic restaurants. The cocktail program utilizes high-quality Japanese ingredients and spirits, and includes drinks such as **Dai Ume** with mezcal, Sekai Itto Waka No Megumi Umeshu, and shochu; **Coffee Nichibotsu** with Iwai 45 and Akashi White Oak Whiskeys, Mr. Black, and amaro; **Kodai No Hana** with Doburoku Sake, vodka, yuzu, and agave; and **Atsui Apres Ski**, a Japanese-style hot toddy with Iwai Whiskey, Junmai sake, honey ginger syrup, and spices including fresh yuzu, star anise, cinnamon, and clove.

Additionally, the restaurant has a Suntory highball machine, used to create four highball iterations with whiskey, vodka, gin, and shochu. There is an in-depth sake menu which includes Chef Makoto's own Junmai Daiginjo Private Label Sake, unique producers like Takachiyo, Tsuchida, and Imayotsukasa, with several selections carried exclusively by *Makoto Vail*. There is also an impressive collection of more than 60 Japanese whiskies, the largest in Colorado with many rare bottlings. The wine list encompasses over 100 selections from around the world, with an emphasis on vintage and grower Champagne, Riesling, Burgundy, Bordeaux and Napa Cabernet Sauvignon.

## DESIGN

Designed by [HBA San Francisco](#), *Makoto Vail* incorporates conscious materiality, color palettes, and textures inspired by Vail's surrounding natural landscape. Wabi-sabi design, the Japanese concept of embracing the natural world through natural materials, is showcased through light wood, dark metal, and smooth stone. The entrance is accented by a large shoji screen, which leads guests into the bar that is anchored by an original dynamic art installation made of paper and string by Colorado artist [Jacob Hashimoto](#). The main dining room features an open kitchen on one side and a line of cozy booths on the other, centered by a configuration of tables. Nano doors reveal the scenery of the mountains, and provide access to an indoor-outdoor, temperature controlled terrace for year-round dining. The space also holds an intimate private dining room for up to six guests.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Makoto Vail is open 7 days a week for dinner from 5PM to 9PM, with Apres Ski offerings available from 3-5PM. Reservations will be available on [Opentable](#). For more details, visit Makoto Vail's [website](#) and follow along on Instagram [@makotovail](#).