

## WINTER 2018 TEA HIGHLIGHTS AT MEGU

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For Winter 2018 Megu features a group of five exceptional teas in its seasonal menu. Tea is an art that requires dedication, patience and skill, and allows you to experience truly calming and refreshing moments. Megu invites you to sample from the immense world of green tea and its variety of benefits.



When are the teas on the menu served at Megu?

The tea menu is included in the dessert menu, and it is available all day.

Does Megu have a tea sommelier or similar, who advises guests on their tea choices?

We don't have a tea sommelier, but your server can offer expert advice. The matcha tea used in authentic ceremonies is served in the same way here, but to make a real ceremony takes a real monk. For a description, see newsletter page 2.

Can you tell us a bit more about the Gyokuro tea? Where does it come from in Japan?

Gyokuro tea is grown in different conditions from other green teas. This tea undergoes a special process to alter the chemical composition of its leaves. This green tea is grown in a misty and rainy climate at a lower altitude than Sencha, a more common Japanese green tea. Megu's Gyokuro is a world exclusive to The Alpina Gstaad.



A few weeks before plucking, the Gyokuro tea bush is covered with black curtains or bamboo and straw shades, filtering about 90% of the sunlight. Shading defines the character of the tea by reducing the photosynthesis process and so increasing the chlorophyll content. The leaves become dark green and the tannin content is reduced, making a sweeter and less astringent tea. As a result, you will get a pure and fresh tea. Only the youngest buds are picked once a year in the springtime, called the first flush, so it is quite a rare tea to find. Once plucked the leaves are immediately steamed to stop the oxidation process and preserve their characteristic flavor. Once the green tea leaves are cooled down, they then undergo several stages of rolling in order to soften the leaves, promote drying and to allow them to acquire their delicate needle shape. To further reduce their moisture, the leaves are dried yet again. By this stage, the tea leaves are called "*aracha*" and will be sorted into several grades named "*tencha*". The finest grades of tencha will make Gyokuro tea come to life. The leaves are then fired to reduce the moisture one last time, thus making this tea last longer and enhancing its flavor. Finally the leaves are aged for several months before packaging and shipping to tea shops around the world. See newsletter page 3.



What time of year is the Shincha tea harvested?

The southernmost region where tea is produced is in Okinawa. In 2018, as with every year, Okinawa was the first to announce the harvest of Shincha. In late March, Kunigami-son in Okinawa reported its first Shincha harvest. Because of its small production, Okinawa is not included in the so called "Shincha front". The Shincha front shows when Shincha is harvested in each region. Okinawa, located in the southernmost part of Japan with its warm weather, begins the Shincha season. The Shincha front gradually moves north: to Kagoshima; Miyazaki and Shizuoka; Fukuoka, Mie, and Shizuoka; Kyoto and Saitama; and finally to Niigata, the northernmost region of tea production. Even in the above mentioned prefecture if the tea field is located in a mountainous region, the harvesting period is likely to change due to the lower temperature in those areas. The peak of Shincha harvesting is from late April through early May, the season which is often referred to as the Golden Week (there are a number of national holidays in one week and many people use this time of year to take a long holiday, sometimes up to 9-10 days depending on the year's calendar).



Just like the cherry blossoms, many Japanese tend to feel that the Shincha season heralds the coming of spring as well as a warmer weather. See newsletter page 2.



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**Matcha Ennennomukashi**

Harvest: May 2018

Origin: Japan / Fukuoka / Yame / Hoshino

Height: 250 m.a.s.l

Tea plant varietal: Saemidori, Okumidori, Tsuyuhikari

**Description:**

Finely ground Tencha of superior quality and freshness (we have small amounts ground in Japan and then sent by airmail). Store in the fridge! This Maccha received its name from the Urasenke tea school for its superior quality. This tea is meant for Chanoyu (the Japanese tea ceremony) and suitable for Koicha (thick tea).

**Character:**

Aromas that remind of aromatic, roasted sesame. Sharp, umami as a foundation for delicious aromas, which shape the world of Maccha. This tea's rich intensity develops into a flowery, sweet and simultaneously vegetal-spicy bouquet.

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**Sencha Uji**

Harvest: May 2017/2018

Origin: Japan / Kyoto / Watsuka

Height: 230 m.a.s.l

Tea plant varietal: Okumidori & Yabukita

**Description:**

A beautiful Sencha from Uji, a region near Kyoto, a traditional tea-growing region of Japan. As is the case with most senchas of good quality, the tea bushes have been shaded a few days before the harvest. This tea shows the spicy aromas typical for the region. This tea has been composed by tea master Morita. In order to keep the character of last year's tea, he has blended teas from this year's harvest with carefully stored teas of last year.

**Character:**

A pleasant Umami taste with a delicate tartness and spiciness.

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**Shincha Yame**

Harvest: April 2018

Origin: Japan / Fukuoka / Yame

Height: 150 m.a.s.l

Tea plant varietal: semidori

**Description:**

An excellent Shincha, plucked on the very first days of harvest. This tea comes from a tea garden in Yame City that has been conceived as a prefectural pilot project and set up between 1969 and 1973. It is considered very suitable for tea growing, as fog covers the gently sloping mountains; naturally shading the tea and thus giving it a sweeter, richer taste.

**Character:**

Dense yet subtle, fresh, sweet and lively.

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**Gold Medal Gyokuro**

Harvest: 23.04.2016  
 Origin: Japan / Fukuoka / Yame / Hoshino  
 Height: 400 m.a.s.l  
 Tea plant varietal: Saemidori

**Description:**

Japan's very best Gyokuro of 2016. This tea won the first price in the overall Japanese championship 2016.

**Character:**

A taste of young rice with a subtle sweetness, at times gently reminding of cherry leaves and simultaneously with much Umami and notes of vegetables. Delicate, elegant and at the same time intense.

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**Gyokuro Uji**

Harvest: May 2017/2018  
 Origin: Japan / Kyoto / Kyotanabe  
 Height: 100 m.a.s.l  
 Tea plant varietal: Goko

**Description:**

An excellent Gyokuro from the region of Uji, one of the most famous regions known for tea in Japan, that looks back on a long history. This balanced and simultaneously expressive tea has been composed by tea master Morita. In order to keep the character of last year's tea, he has blended teas from this year's harvest with carefully stored teas of last year.

**Character:**

This Gyokuro combines the taste of umami with a peculiar spiciness and a sweetness in a most elegant manner.

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**About Megu Restaurant**

Head Chef Takumi Murase and Head Sushi Chef Tsutomu Kugota take diners on a journey of discovery through some of Japan's most pristine and rare ingredients and presentations. Gault Millau has named Megu as Switzerland's top Asian restaurant (16/20 points). Michelin awards one star to its elaborate dishes and elegant interiors.

The restaurant's interior, designed by Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance, incorporates antique kimonos, Alpine fir wood, accents of vermillion, slatted wood partitions, inspired by the temples of Kyoto and traditional Japanese houses.

Megu also offers the largest sake collection in Switzerland.

**About The Alpina Gstaad**

The Alpina Gstaad is a small, discreet and modern hotel property of only 56 rooms and suites. An exclusive resort set on a hillside, the hotel overlooks a Swiss ski village filled with classic chalets. Gstaad's pristine valley is surrounded by spectacular Alpine views.

The Alpina Gstaad upholds a global standard of refinement and elegance in the 5-star category. Known for its authentic architecture, local crafts, gardens and art collection, The Alpina is home to the highest expressions of Swiss design. The Alpina offers on-site Michelin-starred restaurants, a wine cellar containing over 1'700 selections, and a range of services to experience.



THE ALPINA  
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