

MINAË TANI-LAFLEUR

Certified Saké Sommelier | Chef | Educator

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Helping restaurants, professionals, and guests discover saké through food, culture, and hospitality. Featured by Yle, Yle Areena, and Glorian Ruoka & Viini



PROFILE

-Based in Helsinki and working internationally, Minaë Tani-Lafleur specialises in Japanese saké, food pairing, hospitality education, and traditional and contemporary Japanese food culture.

-As both a chef and certified saké sommelier, she brings a practical, food-focused approach to pairing. Her work explores how saké can complement not only Japanese cuisine, but also Nordic ingredients, modern gastronomy, and diverse culinary traditions.

-Minaë holds the Kikisakeshi certification from the Sake Service Institute (SSI), one of Japan's leading professional saké education organizations.

-Her work has been featured by Yle and Glorian Ruoka & Viini, reflecting both her expertise and the growing interest in Japanese food and beverage culture in Finland and Europe more broadly.

-Recent projects include hospitality training, restaurant collaborations, guest sommelier appearances, bespoke saké-food-music pairings, private tastings, workshops, and cultural events in Finland, Germany, and Greece.

SERVICES

Guest Saké Sommelier

Curated saké experiences for restaurants, pop-ups, private dinners, and special events. Saké selection and sourcing / Food pairing development / Guest presentations / Staff briefing and training / Event hosting

Hospitality Training

Practical training programmes designed to empower hospitality professionals with the confidence to recommend, serve, and sell saké in real service situations. Topics include: Saké fundamentals (history, production process, ingredients) / styles and categories / Food pairing principles / Service and sales techniques / Japanese beverage culture

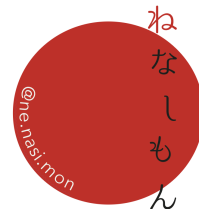
In Finland, multiple sessions have been provided to train service staff at Saké Bar & Izakaya Helsinki and organised Master Class for professionals, in collaboration with the importer Gusto Partner.

Private Tastings & Workshops

Tailored experiences for private groups, companies, cultural organisations, and special occasions. Guided saké tastings / Food and saké pairing workshops / Japanese home cooking workshops

Consulting & Collaboration

Support for restaurants, importers, and event organisers seeking to integrate saké into their beverage programmes, menus, or guest experiences. Available throughout Finland and Europe.



APPROACH & EXPERTISE

Making Saké Accessible

Saké is often perceived as complex or unfamiliar. Minaë's approach focuses on making it approachable, enjoyable, and relevant for modern audiences. Through tastings, workshops, and pairing events, she helps consumers discover saké without unnecessary complexity, encouraging curiosity and confidence rather than expertise for its own sake.

Empowering Hospitality Professionals

For hospitality teams, education should lead to confidence and practical results. Training programmes are designed to help staff understand saké within the context of restaurant service, guest communication, menu development, and beverage sales.

Food-Forward Approach

As a chef, Minaë approaches pairing through flavour, texture, seasonality, and dining experience. This perspective allows her to develop pairings that work naturally with both Japanese and non-Japanese cuisines, from traditional dishes to contemporary Nordic cooking.

Japan to Europe: Understanding the European Beverage Landscape

European dining culture is shaped by strong traditions of pairing food with wine, beer, cider, whisky, and other regional beverages. Through extensive travel and 9 years living and working around Europe in food and drinking spaces, Minaë has come to understand these traditions and how guests make beverage choices within them. While knowledge of other beverage categories provides a valuable foundation, saké benefits from its own approach to service, storytelling, and sales. Her work helps restaurants position saké alongside existing beverage programmes in a way that is commercially relevant, accessible to guests, and authentic to Japanese dining and drinking culture.

Hospitality Experience

Minaë currently works as the primary saké sommelier at Saké Bar & Izakaya Helsinki, where she continues to develop hands-on experience in restaurant operations, beverage service, and guest engagement. Alongside educational and consulting work, she is available for guest shifts, restaurant collaborations, pairing events, and temporary service roles.

CERTIFICATION

Kikisakeshi (SSI Certified Saké Sommelier)

Awarded by the [Sake Service Institute \(SSI\)](#), Japan.

MEDIA RECOGNITION

• Yle – Finland's National Public Broadcaster

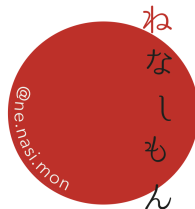
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• Glorian Ruoka & Viini

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Coverage has highlighted Minaë's work in saké education, Japanese food culture, hospitality, and cross-cultural culinary exchange.



SELECTED FEES

Fees are agreed upon each project. Below is the indication of the price for each service.

Minaë prefers to work with hospitality industry professionals closely, and through mid-long term collaboration. Fee is subject to adjustment, if the collaboration runs throughout the year to support seasonal listing and pairing change, and through guest shifts, repeated training sessions and social media collaboration.

Restaurant Pairing / Saké Listing Consultation
€500–900

Guest Saké Sommelier
€700–1,200

Premium Pairing Collaboration
€1,200–2,500

Professional Hospitality Training
€600–1,500

Private Tasting or Workshop
from €800

Corporate Events
from €900

International Projects & Pop-Ups
Quotation upon request

AVAILABLE FOR

- Restaurant collaborations
- Guest sommelier appearances
- Hospitality training
- Corporate events
- Private tastings
- Food & saké workshops
- Festivals and cultural programmes
- International pop-ups

Based in Helsinki, Finland. Available throughout Europe.