

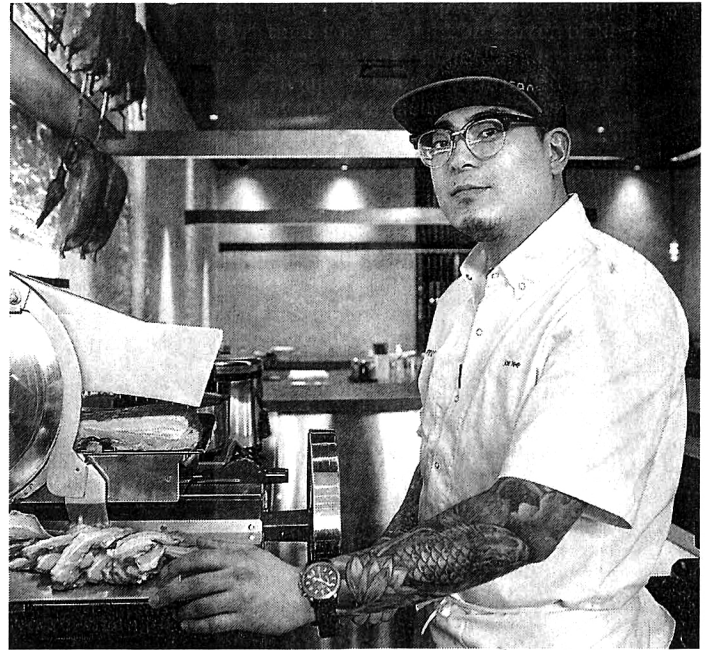
# The New York Times

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**OFF THE MENU** | FLORENCE FABRICANT

## **HEADLINER** Momosan Ramen & Sake

Masaharu Morimoto has used his nickname for this relaxed ramen restaurant, a new direction for the chef, who has a global empire of Morimoto restaurants. There are four varieties of ramen on the menu, all available in two sizes. His long-simmered pork chashu, the basis of many ramen dishes, is cut into thin ribbons using a classic red Italian hand-cranked ham slicer. And with Sun Noodle, his supplier, he developed a noodle that does not become soggy as quickly as most. Some of the ramen bowls are classic, like the tonkotsu, though Mr. Morimoto's executive chef, Jae Lee (right), is Korean, and was given the liberty to indulge his taste for spice. "Morimoto likes the fusion approach," Mr. Lee said. That means Peking duck tacos and a take on bibimbap, chashu bop, sizzling in a stoneware bowl with crispy rice. Sake, beer and wine are poured, and mixed into cocktails with Asian fruits. The white brick restaurant is simply furnished, with high and low dark wood tables and effective lighting. (Opens Friday): 342 Lexington Avenue (39th Street), 646-201-5529, momosanramen.com.



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