

Sushi Shin Pop-up to serve a gastronomic feast at Kampachi

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by LYDIA NATHAN

FOR anyone who is fickle-minded and could not seem to decide on anything, it might be wiser to get the assistance of someone who is more conversant and skilled to make the right choice.

That is exactly what the Japanese omakase tradition provides — a practice that gives a chef the creative freedom to construct a memorable experience that will linger on the taste buds for a very long time.

Luckily for Malaysians, this experience will become available as three-Michelin-star Chef Masaaki Miyakawa brings his exquisite menu to the first-ever pop-up Japanese restaurant in Malaysia.

Kampachi Restaurants Sdn Bhd marketing manager Tan Yun Yi told *The Malaysian Reserve* (TMR) that the Sushi Shin Pop-up experience embodies the best of traditional Edomae-style sushi while integrating ingredients from native Hokkaido.

The restaurant will share the same concept as the other outlets around Japan. Tan said that would also be the first for Malaysia.

She said the omakase menu will depend much on the ingredients used by Chef Miyakawa. The same concept was previously held in Macau and Singapore with much success.

"We are ecstatic that it will be held at Kampachi in EQ Hotel and we look forward to sharing the experience with our clients. All the ingredients are imported from Tokyo and Hokkaido because the team wants to create a similar experience but we have not been given a set menu. Chef Miyakawa wants a surprise element to it," she told TMR in a recent interview.



The countertop seating has its own special element, which involves a 200-year-old piece of inoki wood

Tan said the team — which includes Chef Miyakawa and five other chefs — also brings special Japanese rice with them.

"Coming from Hokkaido, Chef Miyakawa is a very experienced and knowledgeable cook, especially in matters of seafood. His food and restaurants get a Michelin star everywhere he goes," she said.

Tan said this time around, the Sushi Shin experience will be open for lunch, dinner and an exclusive dinner setting with two

types of seating areas.

"The two options available are the dining area and countertop. Diners at the countertop will have a better view of the chefs in action but the dining-area diners won't miss out because the chefs are still visible from where they are sitting."

"Each slot can only accommodate 20 people. This is the chefs' wish. The Lunch Nigiri Menu, will consist of about 13 or 14 courses while the Dinner Omakase Menu will showcase 18 courses," she said.

Tan said the difference between the two menus will be the type of fish used and the quantity of appetisers.

"The lunch menu will have one appetiser while dinner will have five. The exclusive dinner will feature a special sake pairing and a complimentary 17-year-old bottle of Nikkata-ketsuru whiskey," she added.

According to Tan, the countertop seating has its own special element, which involves a 200-year-old piece of *inoki* wood, one of the only two available in Malaysia.

She said the counter produces an ethereal scent that could transport one to another time and place.

"The scent is scientifically proven to have a calming effect on people, as well as enhancing the appetite. It was purchased for about RM250,000 and brought in from Japan. It was handpicked by our CEO when the hotel reopened this year," she said.

Tan said the slots are being booked up quickly, proving that this style of dining is still a popular choice.

"So far, about 260 slots have been booked up and we expect the rest also to be sold out quickly. The prices are quite attractive for such an elaborate experience with a highly accomplished chef," she said.

Chef Miyakawa's love for sushi made him move from a small town rural town in Hokkaido to the capital of Japan in 2012.

Within a year, he was awarded two Michelin stars in the Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau 2013 and a third star the following year.

He then established Sushi Miyakawa in Hokkaido in 2014, earning the outlet and his creations another three Michelin stars in 2017.

It is still the only sushi establishment in Hokkaido to be commended as such and one of five sushi restaurants in Japan to be conferred the highly revered distinction.

Tan said both the teams from Japan and Kampachi have been communicating on the smallest details of the experience, including the table setting and utensils to be used.

"Japanese chefs are known for their detailed and meticulous attention. So, we are trying to coordinate everything down to what materials the utensils are made from," she said.

Tan said while omakase is truly for the brave and adventurous, it is a must try for sushi lovers and Japanese food enthusiasts.

The Sushi Shin Pop-up will run from Nov 1 till Nov 10, and will have time slots for the lunch and dinner menu.

The Lunch Nigiri Menu will cost RM500 per person while the Dinner Omakase Menu will be RM1,000.



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