

Japanese Culinary Fellowship Workshop

Joint sponsors: Japanese Culinary Academy,
UMAMI Information Center,
Organization to Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (JRO)

Date: December 6, 2009

As a part of the 5th Japanese Culinary Fellowship, a public workshop was held at Kyoto Culinary Art College on December 6, 2009.

The Japanese Culinary Academy, since its establishment in 2004, has been supporting a fellowship and exchange programs for young overseas chefs on a regular basis with the goals of encouraging development of Japanese cuisine and its global dissemination.

This year's fellowship course is the second year collaborated with UIC, and four promising young chefs, working in the USA, Denmark and Finland, participated to enhance their knowledge about Kyoto cuisine through an integrated approach that included training in the kitchens of some of the finest traditional restaurants in the country, attending tea ceremony, and visiting agricultural producers.

The program was devised with a view to developing the chefs' overall knowledge about the climate, customs and traditions that have shaped Japan's culinary culture in which umami plays an important role.

The public workshop was scheduled for the final day of the fellowship program.

Each chef was asked to prepare a single dish that encompassed everything they had learned in the program.

The workshop started with a congratulatory speech by the guest of honor, Seiji Maehara, the minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

The minister remarked that Japanese cuisine and its hospitality was a great asset to Japanese tourism industry and eventually to the future development of the nation.



The four chefs who took part in the workshop.
From left: René Redzepi, Hans Valimaki, David Kinch, Michael Cimarusti.

René Redzepi (NOMA, Copenhagen, Denmark)
Danish Interpretation of the kaiseki cuisine: The palatable expression of the season

René's first dish was a Danish interpretation of the kaiseki cuisine. He filled a plant pot with white miso and mustard mix on which he put crunchy malts, beer and nuts mix which looked like soil, and planted fresh Kyoto local vegetables in it. He intended to reflect the sense of the season incorporating local produces. The dish was not only eye-catching, but also impressive in taste; the combination of delicious sauce and toppings brought out the taste of the local vegetables. The second plate was yuzu sorbet with kombu powder topping. He tried to make a Japanese version of a classic in Europe. He came up with the idea from the popular combination of lemon and liquorices in Danish cuisine. His stay in Kyoto inspired this interesting match of umami of kombu and elegant flavor of yuzu.



René Redzepi's Dish

David Kinch (MANRESA, Los Gastos, USA)
Early Winter Tide Pool and Seabream in Sashimi Style

In a deep bowl, David layered foie gras, abalone, horse clam, sea urchin and thin kombu and poured two kinds of hot soup on them as if drawing the image of the Pacific Ocean where his restaurant was located by. The soup based on Rishiri kombu, dried bonito and fresh shiitake mushrooms added a flavor of the sea. Another dish was thin sliced sea bream accompanied by his original dressing of soy sauce and olive oil. He mentioned that raw fish was common in US but usually marinated. His dish looked like Japanese but tasted very western.



David Kinch's Dish

Hans Valimaki 「Chez Dominique」Helsinki FINLAND
Salmon Dish and Snow Ball

Hans carefully broiled marinated salmon with olive oil, salt and herbs keeping the temperature at 55°C. He topped it with ikura (salmon roe), rice cracker crumb and yuzu flavored miso, and served with salmon and bonito based bouillon which he called Finish dashi. He also created a frozen dessert from his childhood memory named "Snow Ball," using berries and sour cream and a hint of yuzu flavor.



Hans Valimaki's Dish

Michael Cimarusti (Providence, LA, USA)
Buri in black and white puree, Fresh Tofu

Michael prepared the seared seasonal buri (yellowtail), cooled in iced water, accompanied by impressive bicolored sauce. White sauce was made from broccoli and soy milk, and umami rich black sauce was made from mixture of green scallion puree, parmesan rind, bonito based dashi and black truffle. The participants were fascinated by his innovative naming of "parmesan dashi." His second dish was fresh tofu topped with toasted sesame, sea urchine, yuba and yuzu.



Michael Cimarusti's Dish

Following sampling the dishes created by four chefs, a panel discussion on “Cuisine and Nationality” was carried out.

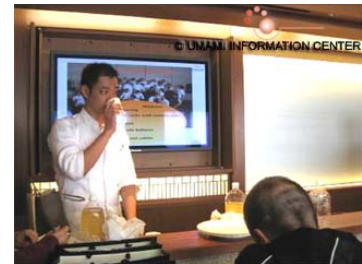
Dr. Toru Fushiki, professor of Kyoto University Graduate School, defined nationality as shells which chefs had to break and the last thing they should lose. The chefs exchanged their views and standpoints in their creation. René emphasized using only ingredients from natural environment and incorporating a sense of time and place in a dish. David adored California’s long coastline and his goal was to express the beauty of the place. Hans felt that people wanted something new but that did not have to be something expensive. He also pointed out that people were becoming more eco friendly and sensitive about food mileage. Michel focused on fish coming from his water. The Japanese chefs who hosted them shared their impression during training. René concluded by sharing his ambition to enrich his Western cuisine synergistically with the influence from Japanese cuisine, using the phrase “one plus one becomes seven.”



Umami lecture by
Ms, Ninomiya

Umami lecture supported by the Umami Information Center was held prior to this public workshop.

Four chefs experienced umami by tasting cherry tomatoes and expressed umami by their own words. After tasting famous Japanese ryotei’s dashi, active Q&A session began. The chefs who only had known the word umami perfected their understanding through presentations filled with accurate data and actual tastings. One of them expressed umami as a subtle aftertaste and mouthwatering. The chefs who trained those young chefs were quite impressed by their ability to absorb and assimilate knowledge on umami.



Chef Yoshihiro Takahashi
supports Umami lecture

Thank you for Japanese Culinary Academy for providing pictures of chefs and their dishes. Please refrain from unauthorized reproduction of text and pictures.