

Japanese Cuisine Gathers Attention in the U.S. for Its Quality and Diversity

Healthy and Delightful Japanese Dishes

A Report on the Worlds of Flavor International Conference & Festival 2010
JAPAN: FLAVORS OF CULTURE

Text and photos by Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture

13th Annual Worlds of Flavor® International Conference & Festival

The 13th Worlds of Flavor International Conference & Festival (WOF), hosted by the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), was held from November 4 to 6, 2010 at the CIA campus in Napa Valley, California. The annual WOF is the world's largest conference for the culinary arts, with roughly 800 participants, including chefs, culinary art experts and food service professionals. Under the theme of "Japan: Flavors of Culture," the 2010 program included 16 general sessions, 26 small-group seminars and 17 kitchen workshops that offered detailed explanations, demonstrations, questions and answers and, most importantly, tastings. Japan has been the only country except Spain (in 2006) to receive this sort of exclusive focus at the conference, and this is evidence of the increasing interest in Japanese cuisine in the U.S.



At the entrance of the WOF venue, American and Japanese flags were raised to mark the theme for this year's forum.

Top chefs active in the U.S., 39 renowned chefs from Japan, and a number of culinary arts educators and journalists from Japan, as well as Japanese chefs working abroad all joined together to make the conference and festival exciting and truly meaningful. This article gives an overview of some general sessions and seminars that this reporter was able to participate in, with a focus on the essence and diversity of Japanese cuisine, as well as on Japanese flavors that have been drawing keen interest in the U.S.

Japanese Cuisine and Culture, as Japanese Chefs Wish to Convey it to American Chefs

1. Traditions and Innovations in Japanese Cuisine: An Inquiry into the Source of Diversity

Yoshiki Tsuji [President of the Tsuji Culinary Institute]

Mr. Tsuji kicked off the first general session, and invited Chef Yosuke Imada (Ginza Kyubey), Chef Yoshihiro Takahashi (Hyotei) and Chef Kunio Tokuoka (Kyoto Kitcho) to the stage for respective presentations on *kaiseki*, Edo-style sushi and *hassun*. [1]

① *Edomae* Sushi (Gizzard Shad and Tuna) [2]

Chef Imada explained that *Edomae* or Edo-style sushi must be eaten as soon as it is made to appreciate its flavor.

He also described how the practice of lightly salting and marinating gizzard shad in rice vinegar to eliminate the fishy smell, and then letting it stand for an hour or two to soften the small bones, are techniques developed in the Edo period (1603–1868). He mentioned that *toro* (fatty tuna) used to be discarded but became popular after beef entered the Japanese diet, and said "marinating in soy sauce for just five minutes makes even low-priced tuna delicious."

② *Kaiseki* (Sea Bream Soup) [3]

Chef Takahashi explained, "With one year divided into 24 solar terms, it is important for *kaiseki*, originally a style of dinner served during a formal tea ceremony, to express the dawn of each term. Sea bream, whose Japanese name resembles the word for "auspicious," is an indispensable food for celebrations, and comes into season in November." Starting with the preparation of the fish, he demonstrated the making of a simple yet elegant sea bream soup. He added grilled oyster mushrooms, orange-hued and creamy *kabocha* tofu, and green beans topped with aesthetically cut *yuzu* rind in a hot *dashi* broth. He added "You can appreciate the flavor of the soup better if you slurp it, as slurping allows the aroma to pass through your nose."



[1] To showcase the diversity of Japanese cuisine, three chefs representing the Edo (Tokyo), Kyoto and Osaka styles of traditional cuisine made presentations.



[2] The correct way to cut the *chutoro* (medium fatty tuna) block was demonstrated, and sushi was made with fresh *wasabi* grated with a shark skin grater.



[3] The colorful ingredients, white meat of sea bream, orange *kabocha* tofu, brown oyster mushrooms and green beans, were a feast for the eyes.



[4] "In addition to taste, visual aesthetics are particularly important for *hassun*." The foods were placed to create a picture.



5 The Golden Gate Bridge and high-rise buildings of San Francisco were easily reproduced.



6 Sea bream with enhanced umami, which has been placed on konbu for 6 to 7 hours.



7 Yuan miso marinade was developed to make savory fish dishes in mountain-bound Kyoto.



7 Autumnal dish of yuan-miso salmon, grilled between cedar sheets (used to add flavor and tenderness).



8 Usually, the konbu-jime technique is used for fish. Sandwiching beef between konbu to seal in the umami introduces a whole new flavor.

3 Hassun 4 (Previous page)

Chef Tokuoka first explained that *hassun* is a dish meant to accompany sake. As a rule, seasonal delicacies from the mountains and sea are placed on a square cedar tray. He then arranged the foods as though he was creating a picture. “Since *hassun* is intensely imbued with the chef’s message, it should be eaten while the guests are still hungry and can discern the delicate flavors.”

In his session, Mr. Tsuji described Japan as a small country with four major islands 70% covered in mountain and forest, marked by an abundance of rivers and ocean. As warm and cold currents converge in Japan’s seas, the country enjoys a rich supply of fish. He also explained the diversity of contemporary Japanese cuisine by referring to the three major Edo Period (1603–1868) cities of Edo (Tokyo), Kyoto and Osaka, where 260 years of isolation shaped Japan’s distinct culture. Edo was a city of samurai warriors, where “fast foods” were developed to serve the mostly male population. *Kaiseki* and the art of tea ceremony were developed in the ancient capital of Kyoto, where successive emperors resided for 1200 years. Osaka was a merchant city, where restaurants flourished with rich clientele. On the potential of Japanese cuisine, Mr. Tsuji said. “As *honzen ryori* (a highly ritualized and formal style of dining) and the art of tea ceremony gave birth to *shojin ryori* (a vegetarian cuisine), Japanese cuisine continues to evolve in the 21st century by offering new Japanese foods and dishes.”

2. Ryotei and Kaiseki: Secrets of the Japanese Art of Fine Dining

Yoshiki Tsuji [President of the Tsuji Culinary Institute]

Following an introduction by Mr. Tsuji, four chefs delivered explanations and demonstrations of *kaiseki*, a typical style of Japanese cuisine.

1 San Francisco Expressed with Sashimi 5

Masahiro Kurisu [Tankuma Kitamise]

Chef Kurisu stated, “Foods should be presented in a vessel that serves as a frame, just like when for drawing a picture on a canvas to express an image of natural scenery.” He then depicted a view of San Francisco on a plate, with a Golden Gate Bridge made from Maine lobster, high-rise buildings made of flounder and tuna sashimi, an Alcatraz of radish and *wasabi*, and added his own touch of autumn with colored Japanese maple leaves.

2 Mukozuke: Sashimi 6

Shigeo Araki [Uosaburo]

Chef Araki explained, “To make perfect

sashimi, you must only draw the *yanagi-ba* sashimi knife toward you when cutting, without crushing the fish fibers. The cut determines how the sashimi tastes.” Dipping sauce was made by adding sake and *katsubushi* (dried bonito shavings) to soy sauce. He also introduced the *konbu-jime* technique of placing lightly salted fish on *konbu* kelp to concentrate the *umami* of the fish, (moisture is removed by the salt and replaced by the *umami* of the *konbu*).

3 Yuan-Miso Marinated Salmon Grill 7

Hisato Nakahigashi [Yasou Ichimian Miyamasou]

Chef Nakahigashi explained that soaking lean fish in a *yuan* marinade, which is a mixture of white *miso* (fermented soybean paste), sake, *mirin* (sweet sake), dark soy sauce, *yuzu* and other citrus juice, provides the fish with a soft-textured finish without sacrificing any inherent flavor. He then demonstrated the technique of searing only the marinated fish surface and sandwiching it between cedar sheets to cook the fish softly and flavorfully over a grill.

4 Beef Konbu-Jime 8

Kunio Tokuoka [Kyoto Kitcho]

Chef Tokuoka said, “People universally desire certain taste qualities, and *umami* from amino acid is one that gives us all a lift.” He then made *konbu-jime* by sandwiching raw beef between sheets of *konbu*. “What our taste buds sense as delicious is a synergy achieved by a combination of inosinic and glutamic acids.

Beef has inosinic acid and *konbu* has glutamic acid. Chicken *konbu-jime*, and bonito stewed with tomato should present the same effect.”

3. Japanese Casual: From Street Food to Home Cooking, and Open Fire Cooking

Hisashi Furuichi [CIA Alumni Club of Japan, FEAST International Inc.]

Mr. Furuichi reported that popular casual dining in Japan includes hamburgers, *okonomiyaki* (a pancake containing a variety of vegetables, seafoods and meats), *ramen* noodles, *yakitori* (skewered and grilled chicken), conveyor-belt sushi, *soba* buckwheat noodles and *udon* noodles. Tokyo has 160,000 casual food shops, almost nine times the 18,696 such shops found in New York. On the projectors, cooking scenes from remote kitchens were broadcast live. The characteristics of the dishes introduced are outlined below.

1 Kushiage (Deep-Fried Foods on Skewer)

Ikuro Mizuno [Rokukakutei]

The batter was unique, with olive oil and white wine added to flour and water.

② One-Spoon Ramen

Yasuji Morizumi [CHABUYA]

Ramen noodles topped with uncured ham, black pepper and a dried mullet roe called *karasumi*, all accented with soy sauce.

③ Ramen

Ivan Orkin [Ivan Ramen]

Ramen in salted soup made by a non-Japanese chef

④ Udon Noodles ⑨

Yoshihiro Maeda [Hanamaru Udon]

Udon dough, prepared by kneading a mixture of medium-strength flour, salt and water, was stomped on to make firm, chewy-textured noodles.

⑤ Modern-Yaki ⑩

Katsumi Kashihara [Yakiyaki Miwa]

Stir-fried and Worcestershire sauce-flavored noodles sandwiched between *okonomiyaki* pancakes. The batter contains flour, Japanese yam, *dashi* and soymilk.

⑥ Yakitori

Katsunori Yashima [Yakitori Hachibei]

A dipping sauce made of soy sauce, *mirin*, sugar, *konbu* and *katsuobushi*, and the technique of constantly fanning *bincho* charcoal (made from ubame oak) to raise the heat to 900°C, are both essential when making good *yakitori*.

4. Mastering Techniques: Soba Noodles, Tempura, Vegetarian Flavors, and More

Five chefs showcased their traditional artisan skills. Among them, Chef Horii's efforts when kneading the buckwheat dough with all of his soul received loud cheers from the generally reserved audience.

① Soba Noodles ⑪

Yoshinori Horii [Sarashina Horii]

The entire process of making *ni-hachi* (2 to 8) soba was demonstrated, from mixing eight parts of newly-harvested green buckwheat flour with two parts of wheat flour, to the final cutting.

② Tempura ⑫

Hitoshi Arai [Tenko]

Explanations included this gem: "As the ingredients lose moisture, the sound will quiet down and the foam will subside. You will know when the frying is done by using your visual and auditory senses."

③ An Assortment of Simmered Vegetables ⑬

Daisuke Nomura [Buddhist Vegetarian Cuisine, DAIGO]

"Vegetables should be of five colors, each cooked individually with the most suitable method." The dish featured separately simmered turnips, taro, *kabocha*, eggplant, carrots, and snow peas.

④ Hako-Zushi (Box-Pressed Sushi)

Shiro Komaki [Sushman]

"Unlike Edo-style sushi, Osaka sushi is refrigerated for three days after pressure is applied to the ingredients, including the sushi rice, placed in a mold. This allows the salt and vinegar to make the fish firm and flavorful." After this explanation, Chef Komaki demonstrated with *anago* eel sushi.

⑤ Bento (Boxed Meal) ⑭ (next page)

Masahiro Kurisu [Tankuma Kitamise]

Chef Kurisu explained, "Food is placed into the box with consideration given to the season, colors and balance of flavors, and each piece must either be bite-sized or easily breakable with chopsticks." He then completed a gorgeous box meal containing ten culinary treats.

5. How to Give Depth to Flavor: Umami, Dashi and Seasonal Ingredients

Hiroko Shimbo [Japanese cuisine consultant] & **Harold McGee** [Food writer]

Ms. Shimbo stated that breast milk is not only complete in nutrients but also highly rich in *umami*, and Mr. McGee reported that *umami* is found in tomatoes, mushrooms and cheese. Mr. McGee also said that the U.S. culinary world is advancing from *umami* to other things. Chef Murata followed with a demonstration.

① Proper Way to Make Dashi ⑮ (next page)

Yoshihiro Murata [Kikunoi, Kyoto]

Chef Murata described the complexity of *umami* and stressed the importance of *dashi* in Japanese cuisine. "*Umami*-rich *dashi* is healthy with almost no calorific value. *Umami* enhances the spirit, as seen in the relationship between *shojin ryori* and the serene lifestyles of Buddhist monks.

The typical ingredients of *dashi* are *konbu*, *katsuobushi* and dried *shiitake* mushrooms. Water with a hardness of no more than 60 is recommended. As glutamic acid from *konbu* is known to coagulate at 80°C, it is best to soak *konbu* in 60°C water for an hour. In this state, glutamic acid dissolves 30% more than it would in hotter water. After the *konbu* is removed, bring the liquid to a boil and add *katsuobushi*. The synergistic effect of the *konbu*'s glutamic acid and the *katsuobushi*'s inosinic acid increases the *umami* levels in the broth eight-fold. The *umami* of dried *shiitake* is guanylic acid. When *shiitake* is added to the *konbu* broth, the synergistic effect raises the *umami* levels by 16 times, making it a particularly good *dashi* for vegetarian dishes.

6. Regional Dishes: Diversity in Ingredients, Cooking and Festivals

Takahiko Yoshimoto [MYU Planning & Operators Inc.]

Mr. Yoshimoto suggested the geography and climate extending 3,200 km north to



⑨ The audience was momentarily stunned when Chef Maeda placed the dough on the floor and started stomping on it.



⑩ Modern-yaki, containing shredded cabbage, pork, shrimp, squid, octopus and deep-fried batter crumbs, was topped with Worcestershire sauce, *katsuobushi*, dried green laver and mayonnaise.



⑪ Standing ovations were given for the performance, starting from the kneading to the precision cutting of thinly rolled dough with the heavy specialized knife.



⑫ The explanation was easy to understand. Tempura becomes crispy and delicious as moisture is removed from the ingredients and the oil enters.



⑬ A blend of variously colored vegetables, individually cooked and then artistically assembled.



14 Foods are placed one by one into the box, with attention given to the season, colors and balance, as well as to the amount or size of each item.



15 Chef Murata measured the water temperature to confirm it was exactly 60°C when showing how to make good *dashi*.



16 *Jibuni* is a representative dish of Kanazawa. Floured duck meat and other ingredients are simmered in *dashi* seasoned with soy sauce, sake, sugar and *mirin*.



17 *Shottsuru*, as is, has a strong odor. However, when diluted and used to flavor soup for a hot-pot dish, Chef Abe explained that it becomes a savory ingredient.



18 *Maasu-ni* uses only salt and turmeric for seasoning, and is a light, refreshing dish from Okinawa.

south, and the four distinct seasons, as reasons for Japan's diversity in foods and cooking methods. In addition, Japan has adopted overseas cuisines and transformed them into uniquely new dishes. Nagasaki's *castella*, for example, is a specialty derived from Spanish sponge cake, and Fukuoka's *mizutaki* chicken hot pot is a healthy modification of an ancient Chinese dish. Regional cuisine has been handed down from one generation to the next. However, since the 1990s a number of dietary problems have emerged, partly due to the aging and shrinking population, the trend toward nuclear families, globalization, and increased numbers of convenience stores and supermarkets. To counter these trends, regional cuisines are gaining new attention as part of the slow food movement, healthy diet trends and "buy local" policies. After describing major foods and dishes by region, the chefs demonstrated their skills with these dishes to showcase regional diversity.

① *Jibuni* of Kanazawa 16

Shinichiro Takagi [Japanese Cuisine Zeniya]

Simmered duck meat, *fu* (wheat gluten) and taro in a thick soup with boiled spinach.

② *Shottsuru-nabe* of Akita Prefecture 17

Taro Abe [Washoku Otafuku]

A hot pot with monkfish as the primary ingredient was flavored with *shottsuru* fish sauce, which is a specialty of Akita made from sailfin sandfish.

③ *Maasu-ni* of Okinawa 18

Tamotsu Yabiku [Loisir Hotel & Spa Tower Naha]

Seafood and sea lettuce simmered in *katsuobushi*-based *dashi* seasoned with salt and turmeric, served in a large bowl for shared consumption.

7. Japan's Fish Markets and 5S1K

Dr. Theodore C. Bestor

[Professor of Social Anthropology at Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University]

Dr. Bestor described the Tsukiji wholesale market, which deals in 540,000 tons of seafood worth 434.5 billion yen each year, as the world's largest fish market. He explained that the *Uogashi* fish market in Nihonbashi (early Edo Period) was the origin of today's Tsukiji market, and that in the 1620s fish were both delivered from *Uogashi* to the shogun at Edo castle, and sold in the open market. A fish auction depends on the "five Ss and one K." These are *Shitami* (Inspection), *Shinsen* (Freshness), *Shun* (Seasonality), *Senbetsu* (Discrimination), *Soroi* (Selection) and *Kata* (Appearance). Prior to auction, more

than 100 varieties of fresh fish are neatly laid out for easy inspection. Intermediate wholesalers and licensed buyers then compete in the bidding. After the auction, fish tagged with their winning bid are displayed at wholesalers' stalls. This system has remained unchanged since the mid 17th century. *Shun* (Seasonality) refers to food that is fresh and signifies the season.

Color, shape and an unblemished appearance indicate quality, and are referred to as *Kata*. Dr. Bestor explained the process at Tsukiji, including the technical terms used at the market.

Chef Education in the U.S., and the Japanese Diet

1. Japanese Cuisine, Global Palates, and the Education of American Chefs

Dr. Tim Ryan, C.M.C., Ed.D., M.B.A.
[President of the CIA]

Dr. Ryan outlined the growth of Japanese cuisine in the U.S. He explained that Japanese restaurants began to appear in the U.S. in the late 1960s and today number more than 10,000 in North America. He also mentioned that it has been 50 years since the 300-year old Kikkoman Corporation expanded into the U.S. The



Dr. Ryan spoke about the prominent international profile of Japanese cuisine and the outcome of CIA education focused on Japanese flavors.

international esteem given to Japanese cuisine is evidenced by the fact that the 2011 Michelin Guide awarded three stars to twelve restaurants in Kansai and eleven in Tokyo, while New York has only four 3-star restaurants and even Paris has only ten. Dr. Ryan also reported that at the CIA, American menus made with a healthy dose of Japanese flavors are taught as part of the curriculum, and many prominent American chefs, including David Chang of Momofuku as well as many Japanese, have been graduates. The interest young American chefs show towards Japanese cuisine has grown so much that many

aspire to be like Masaharu Morimoto, an Iron Chef.

2. The Japanese Diet and Longevity

Lawrence H. Kushi, ScD

[Kaiser Permanente, Oakland, CA]

Dr. Kushi, who has been studying preventive medicine in a major U.S. healthcare organization, explained that Japanese lead the world in longevity with an average life expectancy of 86.44 years for women and 79.54 for men (as of 2009). He added that the U.S. was ranked 24th in the world for healthy life expectancy in 2004, at 69.2 years, while the Japanese average was 75.0 years. He then compared the countries with a focus on Japanese cuisine and food intake.

He explained that while American cuisine is marked by the use of dairy products and cooking in oil, Japanese cooking uses basically fire and water. Fresh ingredients chosen for their natural flavor, texture and color, as well as fermented foods such as soy sauce, miso and vinegar are also used in Japan. In addition, individual servings in Japan are considerably smaller. Americans consume twice as much cereal and sugar, and three times as much in red meat and dairy products. Yet, Americans consume half as much seafood and tea, and almost no soybeans or sea vegetables. As the rate of cardiovascular disease among Americans is 70% greater than that among Japanese, he recommended that Americans get more protein from soybean products, and that they consume more green tea, sea vegetables and mushrooms. "Seafood and marine products are healthier than red meat, and eating fish daily reduces the risk of heart disease. There is also a recognized correlation between the intake of red meat and colon cancer." He cited recent trends. As a result of the Western diet reaching Japan, many Japanese are now overweight, and Japan is now campaigning to prevent metabolic syndrome. He recommended that people learn from Japanese cuisine, especially seasonal and regional dishes, and *kaiseki* and *shojin* cuisines.

New Japanese Flavors Proposed by Japanese Chefs Based Overseas

Challenges Taken Up by Chefs Working on the Global Stage

Seeking to blend Japanese cuisine with local ingredients and sensibilities, a number of chefs introduced culinary creations inspired by encounters with local foods and cooking techniques.

① New Flavor of Tuna [19]

Masaharu Morimoto [Iron Chef Japanese, Iron Chef America, NY]

With a block of tuna cured overnight in a mixture of salt and brown sugar, Chef Morimoto made a salad using virgin olive oil with Kikkoman soy sauce and other Japanese ingredients.

② Dish with Maca (*Lepidium meyenii*) [20]

Toshiro Konishi [Toshiro's, Lima, Peru]

Chef Konishi prepares a sea bream *konbu-jime* dish with grated maca root as a condiment, along with tartar sauce and horseradish. Maca grows high in the Andes Mountains, and has long been used by the Indio to prevent horses from getting altitude illness and to promote fertility.

③ Bonito with Mediterranean Flavors

Hideki Matsuhisa [Koy Shunka, Barcelona, Spain]

To suit the local palate, Chef Matsuhisa adds the Spanish flavors of olive oil and tomato to *ponzu* sauce containing a *katsubushi*-based *dashi*, and uses it to dress bonito tataki (lightly seared sashimi).

④ Sushi with Diversely Prepared Rice

Mitsunori Kusakabe [Sushi Ran, Sausalito, CA]

Chef Kusakabe shared his creative idea for innovative sushi, presenting seven ways to prepare sushi rice: by roasting, frying, steaming, sautéing, freezing, fermenting, and extracting.

⑤ Chilled Noodles with Tuna Tartar [21]

Hiro Sone [Terra, St. Helena, CA]

Somen (thin vermicelli-style wheat noodles) with toppings of *onsen tamago*, diced tuna, finely cut Japanese leek and *shiso* (perilla), and yuzu pepper paste, served chilled in soup.

⑥ French Dish with Japanese Seasoning

Taizo Yoshikawa [Chef for Japan's U.N. Ambassador, NY]

Creamy, green soybean soup topped with raisins and salmon. This reporter noticed the distinctly Japanese taste coming from the texture of coarsely mashed green soybeans and the flavor of *sansho*.

⑦ French-American *Dashi* [22]

Takashi Yagihashi [Takashi Restaurant, Chicago, IL]

A deep fried sandwich of lotus root with meat filling, and shellfish sashimi were served with *dashi* flavored with lemongrass and peppercorns fed through a siphon.

⑧ Autumnal Japanese Cake [23]

Mitsuharu Kurokawa [Toraya, Paris, France]

Autumn is expressed with orange bean paste shaped to resemble a persimmon, and a Napa Valley vineyard is represented with purple colored bean paste shaped to make a bunch of grapes.



[19] A dish of *toro* prepared with a Western culinary technique. A whole new flavor is brought out of the tuna by curing it overnight in a mixture of salt and brown sugar.



[20] Thinking that local ingredients will make Japanese dishes more approachable for people in other countries, Chef Konishi uses maca.



[21] A chilled dish of *somen* noodles with *onsen tamago* (boiled egg with soft egg-white and partly hardened yolk) and tuna, modified as a Western-style dish.



[22] The *dashi* was uniquely flavored with lemongrass and peppercorns via a siphon.



[23] A persimmon was beautifully reproduced with orange colored bean paste. With the green stem, the completed Japanese cake looked just like the fruit itself.



24 Miso eliminates the smell of beef and yet enhances its flavor.



25 An amazing dish of sautéed foie gras with crown daisy sauce at the center, and fu soufflé with pureed truffles on both sides.



26 Chilled beef shabu-shabu was placed on a blend of soy sauce, mirin, rice vinegar, lemon juice and sesame paste.



27 Pork simmered American style, then charcoal grilled and again simmered Japanese style over reduced charcoal heat, to make an entirely new menu item.



28 A Japanese-style French dish with sashimi placed on cauliflower cream paste, over which a gelée made of tuna and bonito-flavor dashi was poured.

New Japanese Cuisine Drawing Inspiration from Other Categories

1. New Flavor Born from French Culinary Art Experience

Popular Japanese chefs acclaimed for incorporating Japanese flavors in French cuisine were introduced with their unique recipes.

① Salmon and Sea Vegetable Salad and Steak of Tasty Beef

Kiyomi Mikuni [Hotel de Mikuni]

Vinegar-marinated salmon was placed on a jelly seasoned with sun-dried sea salt and made of green, red and white sea vegetables, garnished with herbs and orange peel, and served with an orange juice-based sauce to create a refreshing salad. Wasabi, mirin, soy sauce and miso added Japanese flavor to a steak that was grilled over burning rice straw to impregnate the meat with a smoked flavor, and shredded nori laver was sprinkled before serving. Chef Mikuni stressed, “While the fifth taste is umami, the sixth is fat.”

② Beef and Miso 24

Kihachi Kumagai [Kihachi]

A dish of beef cooked in miso sauce (a blend of white miso and red haccho miso) and red wine, and garnished with green asparagus.

③ Foie Gras and Fu with Crown Daisy Leaves Sauce 25

Masayasu Yonemura [Restaurant Yonemura]

Fu (wheat gluten), soaked in milk and egg and sautéed, was topped with pureed truffles, while sautéed foie gras was topped with a sauce in which crown daisy leaves soaked in konbu and katsuobushi dashi were blended with tofu, sesame paste and wasabi, and sprinkled with almonds. Finally it was topped with a drizzling of red wine and fond de veau sauce.

2. Modern Japanese Cuisine

① A Little Unique Sushi

Shigeru Toyama [Ginza Kyubey]

Sushi of soy sauce-seasoned salmon roe fenced in by a strip of nori, and hand-formed sushi made with lightly seared toro were introduced.

② Konbu Dashi and Chicken Bouillon

Kunio Tokuoka [Kyoto Kitcho]

In addition to clear sea bream soup, a typical dish that adopts the synergy between the umami of sea bream head and bones and the umami of konbu, Chef Tokuoka presented clear chicken soup by replacing the sea bream with chicken wing tips. He added, “All chefs should remember the working people who catch the fish and grow the vegetables.”

③ Chilled Shabu-Shabu, and Soy Beans Dressed with Mashed Tofu 26

Yoshihiro Murata [Kyoto Kikunoi]

Chilled beef shabu-shabu placed over a sesame-based sauce on a plate, with toppings of Japanese leek, daikon radish sprouts and rosemary flowers, and served with ponzu sauce containing lemon juice, was a bright and cheering dish. The salad of soybeans boiled in salted water and dressed with a sauce made by mixing mashed tofu and lean chicken paste was rich in soybean flavor and isoflavones.

Japanese Taste Proposed by American Chefs

There are some popular chefs in the U.S. who have a deep understanding and respect for traditional Japanese cuisine, and who use this to take adventurous leaps in inventing remarkably innovative cooking methods and recipes.

This section introduces some recent dishes presented by these pioneering chefs in several seminars.

① Aggressive Chef

Charcoal Grilled Pork Braised with Daikon Radish 27

David Chang [Momofuku Noodle Bar and other locations in NY]

The pork was charcoal grilled after being boiled in pork stock seasoned with light soy sauce, coca cola, bourbon, flavoring vegetables and spices.

Then, the grilled pork was simmered with daikon radish, carrots, Japanese leeks and burdock in konbu and katsuobushi dashi.

② Modern Luxury Dish

Striped Jack and Sea Urchin on Cauliflower Sauce with Dashi Gelée 28

Douglas Keane [Cyrus, Healdsburg, CA]

Dashi made by using shavings of dried tuna and katsuobushi, seasoned with white soy sauce, sake, sudachi citrus juice, and mirin, to which was added julienned shiso, was made into a gelée with gelatin. The striped jack sashimi and sea urchin were placed on a cauliflower cream paste, the dashi gelée was poured over it, and myoga ginger julienne and red shiso sprouts were added as garnish.

③ Pursuit of Japanese Taste

Seared Foie Gras Sushi with Chocolate Kabayaki Sauce 29 (next page)

Tim Cushman [O Ya (Japanese restaurant), Boston, MA]

Sushi rice, shaped with a ring mold and topped with a pinch of wasabi, was wrapped with nori around its perimeter. Topped with seared foie gras, it was sprin-

kled with chocolate laced *kabayaki* sauce, and rounded off with raisins cooked in cocoa and maple syrup and Arima *sansho* pepper.

④ **Izakaya in San Francisco**

Autumn Vegetable Soup Served Cold [30]

Nicolaus Balla [Nombe Restaurant (Izakaya), SF, CA]

In a wide bowl, thin slices of young yellow-tail sashimi were placed on *maitake* mushrooms, steamed butternut squash, turnips, *shiitake* mushrooms and carrots. *Dashi* made by using *konbu* (kelp), dried *shiitake*, *maitake* and *katsuobushi* and seasoned with white soy sauce was poured over it, and finely broken *wakame* sea kelp was sprinkled on top to complete the dish. This is a wonderful starter dish to be shared by several guests.

Iron Chef and Top Chefs from Kyoto and New York Preparing Quality Autumn Ingredients from California

“Iron Chef” was originally a Japanese TV cooking program that aired for six years from 1993 to 1999 with 200 episodes. Its

American version is now popular in the U.S. The kitchen stadium was set up on the last day of the WOF, and four chefs engaged in a competition of culinary ideas using the theme ingredients of *kabocha* squash and *matsutake* mushrooms.

◆ **Masaharu Morimoto** [31]

A pine-smoked fillet of greater amberjack belly was served with *matsutake* sauce seasoned with *konbu dashi* and Kikkoman soy sauce, as well as with *kabocha* ice cream.

◆ **David Chang**

A soup of *matsutake* extract, cooked in white *miso*, sake and water.

◆ **Masayasu Yonemura** [32]

Grilled prawns and *matsutake*, seasoned with salt and pepper, were placed in a bowl. Added to this was *kabocha* soup prepared with coconut milk, chicken bouillon and *maccha* green tea powder, accented with amaretto.

◆ **Kunio Tokuoka** [33]

Beef, prepared with the *konbu-jime* technique, was lightly cooked *shabu-shabu* style in warm water. Then the beef, *matsutake* and stir fried onions were put together, formed into balls and covered with pureed *kabocha*.

Closing Remarks

Targeting an American audience, the presentations were structured to include detailed accounts of basic culinary matters that are common knowledge in Japan. Japanese presenters particularly emphasized that Japanese cuisine has been nurtured through a long history in a rich natural environment with four distinct seasons. It was also stressed that Japan is blessed with seasonal ingredients that have supported the health and lifestyles of the Japanese people.



At the closing ceremony, all of the American and Japanese chefs went on stage and received rousing applause.

Comments from American journalists included: “Japanese ingredients and food presentation have affected American and

French cuisine. I realized the depth of Japanese cuisine” and “Japanese dishes are aromatic.” The influence of Japanese cuisine in expanding from *umami* to the next sense of taste was suggested.

Visitors were treated to Japanese chefs who delivered accurate explanations of the basics of Japanese cooking and explained the depth and breadth of Japanese cuisine ranging from *kaiseki* to casual foods, Japanese chefs who are based overseas and have pursued new Japanese flavors that please the local palate, Japanese chefs who presented innovative dishes that took advantage of their expertise in French culinary techniques, and American chefs who introduced unique and adventurous dishes using Japanese ingredients combined with Western flavors. Every one of them delivered tantalizing and memorable cuisine, and gave us an idea of the directions of Japanese cuisine in the future.

Japanese cuisine and Japanese ingredients are being transformed into diverse appearances, forms and flavors by the many culinary hands who see them as sources of a new food culture progressing in many parts of the world. Feeling both bedazzled and sated, this happy reporter left Napa Valley.



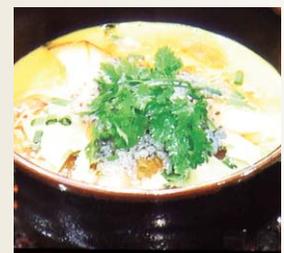
[29] A new sushi of seared foie gras, with raisin topping and chocolate flavored *kabayaki* sauce.



[30] In a large flat bowl meant to be shared by several guests, sashimi placed on vegetables was served amidst a *dashi* sauce made with avocado oil.



[31] Chef Morimoto used the specially carved ice housing to smoke the greater amberjack with pine chips.



[32] *Kabocha* soup with grilled prawns and *matsutake* was a dish of unique combinations.



[33] The dish of *konbu-jime* beef balls covered with pureed *kabocha* and garnished with charcoal grilled *matsutake* was rich in autumn flavor.