



Chef Hisashi Udatsu Opens First Udatsu Sushi Outside its Michelin-Starred Tokyo Home



Udatsu Sushi Opens at FWD HOUSE 1881 in Tsim Sha Tsui, where a soundtrack of jazz, rotating Japanese art exhibitions, Japanese sake and Agave drinks pair effortlessly with world-class sushi technique.

(Hong Kong, 1 August 2024) Enjoying a jazz soundtrack while sipping on a Clase Azul highball couldn't be further removed from traditional sushi restaurants, but Udatsu Sushi opening at FWD HOUSE 1881 in Tsim Sha Tsui is proudly breaking the mould as it launches its first location outside its Michelin-starred home of Tokyo.

Chef-owner Hisashi Udatsu focuses his culinary lens on the concept of art and sushi, where his world-class technique, honed over years working for masters and running his

eponymous restaurant, meets a contemporary approach to hospitality which is atypical in Michelin-starred sushi dining.

As Chef Udatsu states: “I want people to use their five senses to enjoy sushi. Eating and drinking something delicious is the base, but people should enjoy the whole experience including the service, conversation, atmosphere, art and music.”

Diners will convene at the 12-seat, 150-year-old Yoshino cypress counter which takes pride of place in the striking space at FWD HOUSE 1881 where a collection of contemporary art adorns the concrete walls, giving the feel of an upscale gallery. Not only will Udatsu Sushi host rotating exhibitions of acclaimed artists from Japan, Hong Kong and beyond, but they will also sell the works in collaboration with art consultancy WangSim, with the acclaimed Hiroshi Sugimoto the first artist to feature.

This unique approach to a sushi dining experience continues with music being played, largely gentle jazz in the background, but with options to adjust as the evening flows. Chef Udatsu believes that music allows guests to feel more relaxed and comfortable speaking to the chef, creating an atmosphere where diners also talk to each other. Once again, one art form intertwines with another and encourages an atmosphere that differs from typical omakase dining.



Udatsu Sushi, Hong Kong at FWD HOUSE 1881

Likewise, the critical elements of food and drink are taken in thrillingly innovative directions, all while remaining respectful of the traditions and history which underpin one of the world's greatest culinary experiences.

Chef Hiroki Nakamura, Chef Udatsu's sous-chef and protégé who has worked for him for thirteen years in Tokyo, will be leading Udatsu Sushi in Hong Kong as Head Chef. Chef Udatsu's own regular visits will also include sourcing trips as, while the majority of ingredients are flown in daily from Tokyo's famed Toyosu market, the restaurants will also proudly champion and celebrate some produce from around Hong Kong, especially herbs and vegetables.

Chef Udatsu explains that meticulous sourcing, preparation and flawless technique of the best ingredients available, regardless of their origin, are the critical factors to ensure the finest overall dining experience.

"I have always admired the refined palate and discerning standards of the Hong Kong audience. For this reason, I always wanted to come to Hong Kong if I ever got a chance to launch in Asia," says Chef Udatsu. "Also, Hong Kong's pride in its local ingredients perfectly aligns with my vision of blending the finest local and Japanese products."

The omakase menu at Udatsu Sushi in Hong Kong is also not a pure sushi experience, as untypical smaller plates are also served, such as the beloved Japanese favourite of croquettes. Served on elegant tableware, crafted in Hong Kong, Japan and Italy, the lunch and dinner menus also feature multiple nigiri, maki, seasonal specials and signatures.

For the two distinct batches of sushi rice, Udatsu Sushi in Hong Kong uses the same blend of brewed vinegars as at one Michelin-starred Udatsu in Tokyo. This allows Chef Nakamura to meticulously blend and contrast the taste profiles of each piece of fish, seafood and rice.

A case in point, their unique take on uni. As a dish typically wrapped with rice and seaweed, they instead choose to fry the nori seaweed like a tempura with the thinnest coating of batter, placing it on rice with the uni crowning it. The result? Much more depth of flavour and the contrast of warm rice with cold uni that melts in the mouth and releases its gentle sweetness.

Otoro kunsei uses a traditional marinade, with the tuna then smoked over straw, giving it a distinctive scent. When served, extra smoke is added to the bowl which escapes when it is served, making a theatrical and visual feast for the eyes as much as the palate, exciting all the senses.

One of the most sought-after ingredients in Hong Kong, abalone at Udatsu Sushi comes from Itoshima in Fukuoka Prefecture and is prepared in different ways depending on the season. Monthly special dishes may include a simmered scallop nigiri, a tuna futomaki or 'thick roll', or squid nigiri.

Elsewhere, a seasonal herb roll maki uses local organic herbs to envelop fish with herbs, with no rice, while a vege-roll only uses seasonal vegetables, regularly changing ingredients, that are topped with miso. This passion for the finest vegetables also reflects Udatsu Sushi's extremely rare, inclusive ability to allow vegetarian diners to enjoy a full omakase dining experience.



Double Sea Urchin with Seaweed Tempura

The drinks menu focuses on sake, curated personally by Chef Udatsu and his team who pair creations with a rotation of seasonal sake sourced directly from many of Japan's hidden gem sake houses. However, in a thrilling and wholly unexpected turn, Udatsu Sushi also champions serving non-traditional spirits to pair with some creations. One uni dish, for example, is paired with a tiny shot of artisanal Agave, while the beloved Japanese highball cocktail includes options for tequila topped with soda and yuzu.

Sustainability is another crucial element of dining at Udatsu Sushi in Hong Kong, as a proportion of their fish comes directly from a trusted fisherman in Itoshima, Fukuoka Prefecture. The partnership ensures responsible and controlled fishing methods, aimed at preventing overfishing and preserving marine life through maintaining ocean ecosystems. A case in point, the damage caused by sea urchins to seaweed. By capturing excessive sea urchins, the fisherman mitigates the threat to seaweed and subsequently transfers the urchins to a farming tank. Here, they are fed unused broccoli sourced from local farmers. Once ready for consumption, the sea urchins are enhanced with seaweed previously used in broth at udon restaurants, which would otherwise be discarded. This repurposed seaweed adds a unique flavor to the delicacy, showcasing an innovative approach to reducing food waste.

The fisherman collaborating with Udatsu Sushi also seeks to tackle marine pollution by collecting plastic marine debris that is melted down and moulded into coasters, demonstrating an innovative approach to recycling and environmental conservation.

Udatsu Sushi also maximises the use of all parts of the fish, as part of its commitment to zero-waste cooking. The bones are utilised to create a rich broth, which is then used in the sauce that accompanies many of his dishes. The restaurant also uses coasters made from stone end pieces that typically have no usage, while even the caviar served is harvested using no-kill or cruelty free methods.

Further sustainability initiatives include prioritising the use of organic herbs sourced from Kajiya Farm, avoiding pesticides that harm the environment. This commitment to organic farming ensures that the ingredients used in his dishes are both high-quality and environmentally friendly.

Chef Udatsu's dedication to sustainability embodies a harmonious balance between tradition and innovation and, through his efforts, Udatsu Sushi not only delivers exquisite culinary experiences but also contributes to the preservation and restoration of our natural environment.

Chef Udatsu is thrilled to open Udatsu Sushi in Hong Kong, offering diners a uniquely sensory experience, grounded in a love of art – in every form: “My humble neighbourhood restaurant, nestled away in the residential backstreets of Nakameguro, brings together the finest ingredients, crafted in interiors which are immersed in art and the warmth of hospitality. I am bringing this same approach to Udatsu Sushi Hong Kong, serving art that you can eat.”