CUISINE OF THE FOUR SEASONS: INSEPARABLE BOND BETWEEN GENUINE IZAKAYA AND FRESH SEAFOOD

Only a handful of places in New York provide genuine Japanese settings that make even Japanese people feel at home. With carefully crafted dishes and a warm atmosphere, Yopparai (meaning drunkard in Japanese) on the Lower East Side is the rare izakaya that can transport you to Japan in an instant. They are particularly uncompromising in their philosophy of serving homemade, seasonal dishes for their customers. Their biggest supporter is True World Foods, a premiere seafood distributor in the U.S. that specializes in shipping high quality fish from the Tsukiji Market in Japan.

“We've been having business with True World Foods since the very beginning of our izakaya this March. What's great about their service is that we can get the freshest fish in season every day,” says Junya Miura, hanaita (Executive Chef) of Yopparai. “Getting seasonal ingredients is crucial for our cuisine. Of course it's pricier to order fish from Tsukiji, but we don't want to spare that expense,” emphasizes Gaku Shibata, Yopparai's taisho (Owner). "I was accustomed to using fish from Tsukiji when I worked in Roppongi, Japan, so my cuisine and Tsukiji fish naturally go well together," Miura continues. As a collaborator with this acclaimed izakaya, True World Foods pays close attention to what they need for their cuisine and provides daily deliveries of high quality fish from either from Tsukiji or local markets.

As the city becomes colder, the flavors of sanma (saury), shima-aji (mackerel), tokobushi (abalone) and awabi (abalone) are maturing. This time Chef Miura wielded his knives and made an assortment of sashimi featuring these seasonal flavors, and served with grated ginger for sanma and wasabi for other fish. “What I love about Japanese cuisine is that it represents the beauty of the four seasons not only by its taste, but also by its presentation and atmosphere. There are always delicate and playful aspects to it. I hope our customers can enjoy the four seasons through our dishes,” says Miura while arranging the sanma in a striking leaf-shape. At the same time, Shibata, who is actually a certified sake sommelier, shared tips for choosing sake to go with the sashimi. “Blue-backed fish like sanma and aji will go with full-bodied junmai. For this dish types that are soft on the palate are particularly good, such as Umenishiki Genshu and Koshino Kanbai.”

Another dish Chef Miura presented is Lobster Salad. Instead of melted butter, Miura made a refreshing dipping sauce made from dashi broth, black vinegar and ginger to accompany and perk up the lobster meat. Shibata's sake choice for the salad were clean and dry profile sakes like Hakkaisan and Sawanoi.

Sake is indispensable at Yopparai, and so is the seasonal fish provided by True World Foods. As the name indicates, enjoy some drinks at Yopparai as you appreciate the seasons via the dishes prepared by Chef Miura. As we enter the cold season, nothing is more perfect than Yopparai cuisine with atsukan (hot sake)!

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True World Foods is the premier wholesaler and distributor of a full line of fresh and frozen seafood and specialty grocery items in North America. True World Foods brings quality seafood to the U.S. market directly from Tsukiji fish market.