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# EVENT RESULTS EAT-JAPAN SUSHI AWARDS 2009

at MasterChef Live A BBC GoodFood Production

## A CELEBRATION OF GLOBAL SUSHI

On Saturday 14th November, the 4th annual Eat-Japan Sushi Awards welcome 300 foodies, food writers and culinary experts to the undisputed Oscars of the sushi world. Held as part of MAFF's "Oishii Japan" programme of events (see p.3), the Sushi Awards saw 7 of the world's leading chefs serve 300 pieces of sushi each, in just 90 minutes, to guests and judges; everyone then voted for their favourite. The eventual winner – Tomoyuki Abe from Japan - was awarded the Sushi of the Year 2009 prize, along with a stunning bespoke porcelain soy sauce dispenser courtesy of Kikkoman.



*The Winner*

## SUSHI OF THE YEAR 2009: CRISPY SALMON

Chef Abe first marinated the salmon in Kikkoman Soy Sauce and mirin, a traditional technique known as *tsukekomi*, which draws out excess water and intensifies umami, thus retaining the natural deliciousness of salmon; "I have always been taught to prepare, but never to over-prepare, the fish," says Abe. "I also wanted to bring something new to the salmon, a crispiness that is not its natural texture". This was achieved by a topping of deep-fried chips of lotus root and avocado, and crumbs of tempura batter.

### MAIN INGREDIENTS

Kikkoman Soy Sauce, Clearspring Toasted Sesame Oil, Kinjirushi Wasabi, Mizkan Rice Vinegar, Akita Komachi rice, Salmon, Lotus root, Avocado, Flour, Tempura oil, Mirin, Bamboo leaf

## WINNING SUSHI SAMURAI 2009: TOMOYUKI ABE (JAPAN)

Tomoyuki works in the Shiodome branch of Sushizen – one of Japan's most prestigious sushi restaurant chains, founded by Tsutomu Shimamiya. Chef Shimamiya has been named a 'Contemporary Master Craftsman', the highest honour of artisan expertise awarded by the Japanese government. Chef Abe is an expert in the traditional techniques of *Edomaezushi*, the Tokyo-style sushi that is the most familiar style overseas.

“ *Elegant and simple – a real corker. A great contrast of flavours and textures. All the elements of a great dish: wonderfully cured salmon, big umami, very well judged use of soy sauce and wasabi. Overall, beautifully made with a little frizzle of tempura batter crumbs.* ”  
**Judge HENRY HARRIS**

“ *All of the chefs had to use Japanese rice in their sushi, and I think one of the reasons that Crispy Salmon triumphed was that its simple, elegant flavour matched so well with the flavour of the delicately seasoned sushi rice. It was an extremely well-balanced entry that brought all of the elements together into a unified whole.* ”  
**Judge MASAYOSHI KAZATO**

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## 2009 SUSHI ENTRIES

Although there could only be one Sushi of the Year 2009, the other six entries showcased the diverse approaches, technical skill and conceptual brilliance of some of the world's leading sushi chefs.

### Wild Salmon in Tranquillity

Sayan ISAKSSON

Råkultur, Stockholm, SWEDEN



2<sup>nd</sup>



A visually stunning entry. Oyster tapioca in a daikon-wrapped *gunkan* sushi was served together with a delicate tower of crisp salmon skin and a bead of shimmering black emulsion from belly fat. The clean presentation was inspired by Japanese Zen gardens.

### Forest Champ in Autumn

Taiji MARUYAMA

Nobu, London, UK



3<sup>rd</sup>

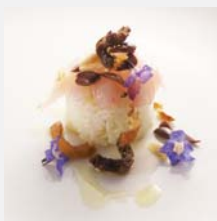


A classically presented sushi based on the key concepts of health and umami. Seasonal mushrooms combined with other umami-rich ingredients to showcase the central role of umami using traditional sushi skills and presentation – all at just 25kcal per piece.

### Riviera di Ponente

Brendan BECHT

Becht Brendan S.a.s., Milan, Italy

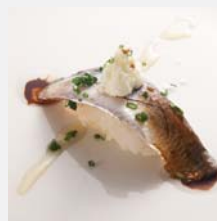


Combined classic Italian ingredients in an innovative rounded sushi, filled with a stunningly fresh pesto and topped with line-caught, wild sea bass, Taggiasche olives and a brilliant blue borage flower. A wonderful example of Brendan's concept of "Sushi Italiano".

### Nigiri Sardina

Ricardo SANZ

Kabuki Wellington, Madrid, Spain



Designed to highlight the gastronomic value of the much under-rated sardine. Topped with charcoal oil, balsamic vinegar reduction, olive oil and *requesón* curd trickled with honey. A clean and elegant sushi, crafted with Japanese skills but effortlessly recalling Mediterranean cuisine.

### Itadakimasu – five elements, in honour of the bounty of the earth

Mitsunori KUSAKABE

Sushi Ran, California, USA



Another conceptually brilliant entry from the 2008 champion. Using diverse ingredients to evoke the five colours, elements and tastes of nature; wrapped in a bamboo leaf then grilled and eaten with a spoon, with each bite containing specific and stunning tastes.

### Aki Harinezumi

Marek HORA

Miyabi, Prague, Czech Republic



A bold, vibrant and exciting reimagination of sushi, combining classically Czech autumn ingredients: smoked duck, beetroot, cranberry and apples. Brought together with a deliciously velvety blanket of creamy sauce, another mainstay of traditional Czech cuisine.

## 2009 JUDGES

As always, the Eat-Japan Sushi Awards welcomed a panel of celebrity judges to join with the audience in voting for Sushi of the Year 2009. Chair of the panel, Henry Harris (Chef Patron, Racine), was joined by Jun Tanaka (Executive Chef, Pearl), Christopher Basten (Incoming National Vice Chairman, Craft Guild of Chefs), MasterChef 2009 winner Mat Follas (Chef Patron, The Wild Garlic) and Masayoshi Kazato (Executive Director, All Japan Sushi Association). Their combined experience and perspective provides invaluable feedback to the chefs and pointers to the audience.



## SUSHI MASTERS

The Sushi Masters were back too, to assist in preparation, take control of the Sushi Bar, and get on stage to show the crowd some simple tips for how to start making your own sushi. This year, in addition to Masayoshi Kazato (see above), we also welcome Kensaku Yoshida, Vice Director of the International Division, All Japan Sushi Association, and Yasuhiro Mineno, a rising star on the London sushi scene.

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## OISHII JAPAN

Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) organised the 'Oishii Japan' programme of events at MasterChef Live, of which the Sushi Awards was the highlight. 'Oishii Japan' saw thousands of guests visiting the Japan Pavilion, where they could catch demos from renowned Japanese chefs including Sushi Awards judge Masayoshi Kazato, taste stunning sake from around Japan, and stock up on essential, authentic Japanese ingredients. More details on 'Oishii Japan' at: [www.maff.go.jp/e/oishii/index.html](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/oishii/index.html)



“ *Being here tonight has certainly made me very excited about the future of sushi. It would be wonderful to see other Japanese cuisine matching the global success of sushi too.* ”

**Kousuke Nogi**

Assistant Director, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

“ *Enjoying Japanese food is a sensory experience – first you see the sushi, then you take in the aroma, then touch and finally taste. That's what so special about these Awards; you truly get a chance to experience Japanese culinary culture.* ”

**Takashi Funaki**

Director General, JETRO

## THE SPONSORS

The Eat-Japan Sushi Awards would not be possible without the generosity of the following leading Japanese and Japan-related brands. Mr. Bing-Yu Lee, Manager of Kikkoman Trading Europe GmbH, commented that he was delighted to see that the winning dish had been marinated in Kikkoman soy sauce, saying that it “proved just how much difference naturally brewed soy sauce can make to the taste of a dish, in any stage of cooking”.

  
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Organised by: EAT-JAPAN, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

## THE ORGANISERS

Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) organised the 'Oishii Japan' programme of events in MasterChef Live to promote Japanese food and Products. The programme was operated by the **Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)**.  
[www.maff.go.jp/e/index/html](http://www.maff.go.jp/e/index/html) [www.jetro.go.jp/uk/](http://www.jetro.go.jp/uk/)

- **Eat-Japan Magazine** & web for lovers of Japanese food & culture
- **Eat-Japan Online Shop** for authentic & unique Japanese craft gifts
- **Trade Directory Magazine** & web for Japanese food industry professionals
- **UK Seikatsu Directory** & web for the Japanese community in the UK
- **Publishers of Dashi and Umami: the heart of Japanese cuisine**  
with forewords by Heston Blumenthal, Nobu Matsuhisa,  
Pascal Barbot & Kiyomi Mikuni

\* **Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)** is organising the 'Oishii Japan' programme of events in MasterChef Live to promote Japanese food and products.  
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