

TOKYO TASTE

The World Summit of Gastronomy 2009



LEFT: A demonstration by Kunio Tokuoka, head chef of the Arashiyama Kitcho restaurant in Kyoto, who was on hand to represent Japanese cuisine.

ABOVE: A *kaiseki-ryori* dish (a traditional multi-course Japanese dinner) by Kunio Tokuoka.

WHAT A LINEUP of culinary celebrities—the universally acclaimed French master chef Joël Robuchon; Ferran Adrià, chef at the ultra-famous Spanish restaurant El Bulli, which continues to be at the cutting edge of global cuisine; “Nobu” (Nobuyuki) Matsuhisa, the man said to be most famous chef in the United States, and Kunio Tokuoka, famed for his work at the Arashiyama Kitcho restaurant in Kyoto. From February 9 to 11, 21 top chefs from eight countries gathered in Tokyo for Asia’s first culinary festival of international exchange, Tokyo Taste—The

World Summit of Gastronomy 2009, in which they shared their cooking skills and ideas. At the summit, the chefs exchanged knowledge by taking the stage to display the latest cooking techniques or explain aspects of their own cooking philosophy.

Chef Robuchon, who says that he visited Japan for the first time approximately 40 years ago, pointed out the great impact that Japanese cuisine has had on Western culinary styles. He commented that, “The elegant presentation of Japanese cuisine, bringing out the essence of the ingredients and

BOTTOM: Chef at the famous Spanish restaurant El Bulli Ferran Adrià gives a demonstration in which he introduced the innovative methods he uses in his cooking.

BELOW: A dish by Ferran Adrià.



LEFT: A demonstration by Pierre Gagnaire, chef of a three-star restaurant in Paris.

ABOVE: A dessert by Pierre Gagnaire using *wasabi* and *ooba* (beefsteak plant leaf).

doing away with unnecessary elements, has had a significant influence on my cooking. These days Japanese ingredients such as *yuzu* (Japanese citrus), *shoyu* (soy sauce) and *wasabi* can be found all over the world.”

A discussion was also held at the event on *dashi* (soup stock) and *umami* (rich and savory flavor). Discovered in 1908 by Japanese scientist

Kikunae Ikeda as a taste distinct from the already well-known tastes of sweetness, sourness, saltiness and bitterness, *umami* is now attracting attention among the world’s chefs as the fifth basic taste. The day is probably not far off when a new culinary culture—influenced by Japanese fare and the mutual inspiration of the top chefs participating in this festival—will appear.