

Eating out

Whether you prefer your wagyu in a burger or as thinly sliced tatakai, Western Australia's latest serve of restaurants is delivering the goods.

SATSUKI « Subiaco

If you retraced the history of Japanese cuisine in Western Australia, it would be a relatively short, but exciting one.

Getting its foot in the door thanks to the now-ubiquitous sushi that one can find in any shopping centre in Perth, Japanese food has taken many shapes locally: sushi trains, teppenyaki bars, international noodle chains, combined karaoke bars.

Now that the much-anticipated Satsuki has (finally) opened its doors, Nippon fare in WA looks set to go full circle with the Subiaco restaurant hanging its hat on Edomae-style sushi.

Originating in Tokyo, Edomae sushi was born from the need to preserve seafood in an era where refrigeration was non-existent and ice was a luxury item.

While Edomae techniques are no longer necessary in an age where men can buy their very own USB beer coolers, practices such as zuke (soy-marination) and kobujime (kelp-marination) are a long way from useless or outdated.

Thank you chef George Yamahara for exposing Perth to these old school flavours as well as your own Osakan culinary traditions.

But just because Satsuki has sushi front and centre (and a tad on the pricey side), don't think the rest of the menu is a mere afterthought.

Succulent slow-cooked pork belly kakuni melts at the slightest prod; pieces of snap-cooked tender octopus have been smooched with just the right amount of vinegar and simmered cuts of anago eel seduce with their subtlety and scant need for heavy-handed BBQ-saucing.

The bottom line? Satsuki will redefine and recalibrate the Nipponese dining experience in Perth.

Is the restaurant home to possibly Perth's best Japanese food? I'll answer that in three words: hai (as in yes), and buy (be prepared to pay for it).

WHAT'S TO LIKE:

Deep-fried sushi roll What has the potential to be horribly gimmicky is instead a highlight thanks to George Yamahara's skill and resourcefulness. Miso-marinated tuna "scraps" (flesh salvaged from whole



fish broken down in-house) form the core of small, cigar-sized sushi rolls that are quickly deep-fried in the lightest of tempura batters. Brilliant.

Wagyu beef tatakai Crepe-thin slices of full-flavoured wagyu beef from the Howies of Dorper Lamb fame are a shining example of the culinary fireworks that can take place when the East meets West (as in West Australian produce).

Sushi Satsuki The platter that matters. Seven bites of breath-taking sushi (pre-seasoned, hold the soy and wasabi) that demand your full attention as

you marvel in each piece's tradition-steeped deliciousness.

The one thing I'd change The ridiculous way that incompetent tradies can stop restaurateurs and other small businesses dead in their tracks. How good would it have been to have Satsuki as a dining option during the festive season?

Stats Shop 1, 50 Subiaco Square, Subiaco, (08) 9381 9868.

Two courses and glass of wine: \$60

In a word Benchmark