



SHINICHIRO TAKAGI Owner & Executive Chef, Zeniya



To be served a meal at Zeniya, Chef Shinichiro Takagi's famous restaurant, is to experience not only the finest ingredients superbly prepared, but also Chef Takagi's deep understanding of the art and philosophy of Japanese cuisine. Each meal, prepared without a menu, is a unique creation specially prepared for the individual: Chef Takagi uses his experience and intuition to provide an unforgettable meal, mentally composing the courses as he seeks out the freshest ingredients at Kanazawa's noted Omicho Market. Customers dining at the counter have the opportunity to talk to Chef Takagi, and he will often adjust the menu mid-meal to satisfy their palate.

Chef Takagi's cooking is based on a deep understanding of the seasons which he views as continually changing. Choosing the best seasonal ingredients to match the mellow local sake, and served on the renowned Kutani porcelain and Wajima lacquerware, Chef Takagi creates not just a meal but a work of art where the surroundings, layout, and meal

create a perfect harmony matching the subtle needs of his guest, accentuated by the unstinting hospitality of the host.

With a growing overseas interest in Japanese cuisine, Chef Takagi is keen to differentiate the traditional gourmet kaiseki cuisine from that of Kyoto. Within Japan itself, regional Kaga cuisine is regarded as amongst the finest in the country and he is endeavoring to introduce the regional Kaga cuisine to a discerning international audience.

Born in Kanazawa in 1970, Takagi completed his bachelor's degree in commercial science at Nihon University. Subsequently, he served his apprenticeship at Kyoto Kiccho, one of Japan's top restaurants known for its traditional kaiseki, a cuisine that developed during the 16th century in parallel with the tea ceremony. He returned to Kanazawa in order to dedicate his life to Zeniya, which his father had originally opened as a modest local eatery.

A significant turning point in his career came when he was invited to a special dinner co-hosted by the Consulate General of Japan and the Ishikawa Prefectural government to promote Ishikawa's refined Kaga cuisine to the United States. The invited guests included Chef Michael Romano, Chef Jean- Georges Vongerichten, Chef Eric Ripert, Tim and Nina Zagat, the co-founders of the Zagat Survey and food editors from The New York Times and Fortune Magazine. The ten-course meal prepared by Chef Takagi and his four assistants from Zeniya was a spectacular success.

Since this breakthrough, Chef Takagi has been invited as a guest chef to numerous hotels and events both in Japan and abroad including the United States, Korea, German, Italy, and Hong Kong. In November 2009 Takagi was invited as the only guest chef chosen outside of Kyoto to Rendezvous, a collaborative event where the chefs of Beige Alain Ducasse Tokyo create special feasts with Japanese culinary masters.

In 2009, Chef Takagi was appointed chairman of The Real Japan Ishikawa Project Committee, which aims to promote Ishikawa as a destination to luxury travelers from abroad. In February 2010, the committee hosted the International luxury Lifestyle Forum, holding a discussion involving 3-star chef Alain Ducasse and Horst Schulze, the founder of the Ritz Carlton hotel as guests. With Alain Ducasse Takagi had the opportunity to discuss the art and philosophy of luxury cuisine and its future directions.

Chef Takagi will endeavor to spread Ishikawa's traditional culinary culture abroad, feeling that Japanese cuisine is in essence an aggregate of regional dishes. He would like discerning diners to visit his restaurant Zeniya in Kanazawa so that they can eat the best that his region can offer, and experience the soul of Japanese cooking.