



Toyama Japanese Cuisine joins East End dining scene

THE FORAGER

The latest addition to the Rundle Street dining strip will be a Japanese restaurant with an extensive food and drinks menu, a long bar where diners can watch sashimi chefs at work, and a small retail grocery space.



An artist's render gives an indication how Toyama's sashimi bar will look. Illustration: SOKO Design Studio

Toyama Japanese Cuisine is aiming to open this weekend at 277 Rundle Street in the premises briefly occupied by St Louis House of Fine Ice Cream and Dessert and

before that by the Max Brenner chocolate bar.

Business partners Leon Du, Billy Tang and Vincent Wu believe that Toyama, which will have 80-plus seats, will offer a point of difference in the East End dining scene.

“On Rundle Street and in the city, there’s not many Japanese fine-dining restaurants – that’s why we wanted to open here,” says restaurant manager Wu, who was previously the supervisor at Empress Restaurant on Greenhill Road.

“I can see it being quite popular at night time, when a lot of people are going out eating and drinking.”

The fitout is currently being completed based on a design by Unley-based SOKO Design Studio that includes two feature walls showcasing colourful Japanese graphic art.

The dining space will include an area looking out onto Rundle Street, and a key feature will be a long bar along one wall where diners can watch the chefs preparing sashimi and sushi, with the menu offering a daily selection of fresh options.

The owners say Toyama will focus on authentic Japanese food, with dishes including a range of miso soups, meat and vegetable skewers flame-cooked over a charcoal grill, okonomiyaki (traditional Japanese pancakes) and tamago (egg omelettes).

Among other lighter dishes on the menu will be salmon yukke (julienned salmon with quail egg yolk and spicy soya sauce on a garden salad) and a wafu salad (julienned carrot, cabbage, wakame, garden salad with yuzu soy dressing).

Mains will range from agedashi tofu and tempura dishes, to teriyaki chicken, stir-fried wagyu beef with home-made Japanese steak sauce, and Japanese-style broiled eel and rice.

It’s contemporary in style, Wu says of the food, “but if you go to Japan you won’t find a restaurant that has all the different types of food because they focus on one

thing – for example they might just have sushi rolls – but our restaurant will have all different things”.



Vincent Wu outside the soon-to-open Toyama Japanese Cuisine. Photo: Tony Lewis / InDaily

Another feature that will set Toyama apart is the small retail shop at the front of the premises, which will sell Japanese snacks and grocery items such as soya sauce, green tea, sweets and soft drinks.

Tang, who is also co-owner with Du of the izakaya-style Gyoza Gyoza restaurant in Gouger Street, says the business partners are confident the Toyama retail shop will be successful, especially given the residential development nearby and the lack of any similar offering.

“Some of what we sell will be things we actually use in the restaurant, so if the customer likes it they can buy it – it could be the noodles, or the soya sauces or green tea.”

When it comes to drinks, diners will be spoiled for choice, with a list of around 10 different sakes – and the option of sake flights – plus a range of plum wine, shochu (considered a quintessential Japanese spirit), Japanese whisky, cocktails and mocktails, plus Asahi and Kirin beer on tap.

Toyama Japanese Cuisine, 277 Rundle Street, is planning to be open from this weekend for lunch and dinner.