



<Michael Chong Vui Shing>

Country/Region: Brunei

Age: 52

Occupation: Owner, Escapade Restaurant
Owner, Sno-Food Trading

○ Promotion of Japanese food in Brunei

- Mr. Michael Chong Vui Shing launched his Japanese restaurant business in 2002 and has since opened a series of restaurants in various parts of Brunei, boosting the popularity of Japanese food in the country.
- Today, he also operates Japanese food stores, which are still rare in Brunei. He has been contributing to the promotion of Japanese food by participating in cultural events hosted by the Japanese Embassy, organizing a tuna fair in collaboration with a Japanese company exporting tuna from Brunei, and so forth.
- Having his restaurants Halal certified by the government, he is promoting Japanese food among Muslims, who account for approximately 70% of the country's population.

Mr. Michael Chong Vui Shing joined a bank as a clerk in his early years and slowly climbed the corporate ladder in the corporate department. While working at the bank, his passion for Japanese food grew and in 2012 he opened his small Japanese restaurant (with 45 seats) in the capital. At that time, there was only one Japanese restaurant in Brunei and Japanese food was thought to be a very expensive cuisine. Being in a small market with a strict Islamic regulation, Japanese items are hard to come by, especially Halal products. These limitations were not enough to restrain Michael's passion to start his own restaurant with his newly found supplier from neighboring countries. Today he has 12 casual dining restaurants and two kiosks serving more than a thousand customers daily. These customers are mostly locals Muslims. The restaurants are mainly designed and built by his own in-house contractors and carpenters and branches are located in strategic areas.

In 2008, a few years before Michael started his restaurant business, Brunei Religious Council had announced new regulations on the Halal certification of all restaurants serving Muslim customers. In 2012, his restaurants were the first Japanese restaurants to be certified Halal by the Brunei Religious Council. Today, all his restaurants serve only Halal Japanese food. With the growing demand for quality Japanese products, Sno-Food Trading was formed. Primarily to support the restaurant and public needs at the same time, he centralized all his storage under one roof, including facilities for the centralized kitchen and storage. He has storage facilities with different temperature for dry, chilled and frozen foods. In 2017 he brought in his first container directly from Japan.