Reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan in UK

Outline

Country (city): United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (London), hereinafter called UK.
Date: Wednesday, November 3rd, 2010
Event: Japanese Food Served on Lacquerware
Venue: Ballroom of the Japanese Embassy in London.
Sponsorship: Japanese Embassy in London, Sakenohana (local Japanese restaurant), Sake Samurai (a promotional organisation for Japanese sake), with the cooperation of Nishidanosan (a promotional organisation for local goods of Tanegashima).
Attendees: Approximately 210 guests (personnel associated with cultural exchange between Japan and UK, press, distributors of fishery products, Japanese sake promoters, Japanese restaurant professionals, etc.)
Overview: Japanese food is fairly popular in UK, so much that many Britons no longer see it as special. Long lines form during the lunch hour at low-priced Japanese restaurants targeted for the masses, which leaves much room for developing what is still an untapped Japanese food market. Against this backdrop, this event introduced quality food ingredients Japan can be proud of. The objective was to give Japanese food a stronger foothold by showcasing the essence that makes it appealing. As for food ingredients, due consideration was given to various factors, such as the high popularity of sushi in UK, and the deep-rooted public opinion regarding conservation of fisheries resources such as bluefin tuna. The nigirisushi samplings were made from whitemeat fish (Yellow Jack, Yellowtail and Sea Bream). The Embassy is holding a private exhibition of lacquerware as applied to modern industrial designs in UK. We used this opportunity to serve sushi made with whitemeat fish on lacquerware, and annoimo, a yam local to Tanegashima and imojochu, a shochu made from the same yam. The sushi was made using ingredients shipped directly from Japan using a scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries entitled "WASHOKU - Try Japan's Good Food". To make this sushi, we received the cooperation of a local Japanese restaurant chef, Mr. Daisuke Hayashi, who demonstrated nigiri-making techniques. We also introduced three brands of sake that Sake Samurai received from a brewer in Ishikawa Prefecture, hometown of lacquerware crafts. It should be noted that Sakenohana head chef Daisuke Hayashi, who performed the sushi demonstration, was recently reviewed along with his restaurant in the Evening Standard, a local evening newspaper.

Menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appetizer</td>
<td>Fugu Sashimi (flounder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sashimi</td>
<td>Raw fish (a variety of fish)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup</td>
<td>Japanese-style broth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Dish</td>
<td>Assorted Japanese dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dessert</td>
<td>Japanese sweets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WASHOKU TRY JAPAN'S GOOD FOOD

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

Reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan in UK

Promotional Cards

Results

Following the opening speech, a presentation was given on lacquer-painted English modern industrial art. The unlikely combination of English modern industrial art and Japan's traditional lacquering technique was presented in detail on screen, along with an explanation of the aim of the industrial artwork. The reactions indicate that the general audience gained a better understanding of the finesse and beauty of Japanese lacquerware. The presentation was followed by a musical performance by the local group Stereoart, who play an electric silent cello with gold-inlaid lacquerware (crafted in Wajima). The audience listened intently to this highly original performance.

Delaying the sushi demonstration and tasting by Daisuke Hayashi and his Sakenohana's chefs until after the silent cello performance caused the general audience to rush to their tables, further driving home the intense popularity of sushi in this location.

Chef Hayashi is well known for his appearances in the local media. The general audience looked on with keen interest during his nigiri demonstration. The sushi samplings were made with Yellow Jack, Yellowtail and Sea Bream. Also included were norimaki (laver wraps), and inanisushi (rice in fried tofu pouches). These items were served on oval lacquerware trays that received the gold prize at a dishware exhibition in Germany. Initially, we planned to provide 150 servings but due to popular demand, 250 servings, our complete stock, were consumed.
Reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan in UK

Photos of the Event

- Sushi demonstration (food desk)
- Nigirisushi (hand-made sushi)
- Tasting
Impression of the Embassy of Japan

(1) Regarding the sushi offerings, we displayed POP posters and distributed cards depicting the sushi ingredients and fresh fishery product. Unfortunately, this was not necessarily the most effective way to reach all of the participants. As such, we feel there should be experts on hand to explain the food ingredients.

(2) Questionnaires were distributed at the venue but only 11 of those collected were filled in, resulting in a rather low response rate. To raise the response rate, we feel a stronger push should be made for the general audience to fill in these questionnaires.

(3) Although we invited many media professionals, the event did not receive any coverage. We need to consider measures to increase the exposure by the media for future events.

(4) According to T&S Enterprises, the foodstuff distributor for this event, fresh fishery products (currently, the three items listed above) are subject to strict control by EU regulations, even though their export from Japan to EU countries is permitted. T&S commented that in order to increase export volumes, Japanese fishery producers must comply with EU regulations, and a concerted effort must be made by Japan's governmental bodies (the MAFF and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare). T&S also commented that as a result of the FTA between Korea and the EU, fishery products (such as Yellowtail) from Korea will be subject to reduced tariff rates. Consequently, concerns were raised that this could cost Japan its competitive edge for fishery products, and negatively affect Japan's drive to promote exports of agricultural products.