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# sustainable japan

## Destination Restaurants 2025: These are the winners

Destination Restaurants is a list of Japan's best restaurants published by The Japan Times. Started in 2021, the list is selected by Japanese experts with an international audience in mind. On May 28, The Japan Times hosted the 2025 Destination Restaurants Awards at Dining 33 Hills House, a cozy restaurant in Azabudai Hills Mori JP Tower, in which the selected restaurants were recognized for their exquisite dishes and sustainable cuisine.

Restaurant Himawari Shokudo 2, located in Toyama city, Toyama Prefecture, won Destination Restaurant of the Year 2025. Owner-chef, Hozumi Tanaka, opened

Himawari Shokudo 2 in 2024, a fine-dining Italian restaurant serving an omakase course menu based on the chef's creativity. The main dining room has two counter seats and six table seats.

The 100-odd attendees were delighted with curated platters prepared by some of the listed chefs, as well as Hibiki whisky provided by Suntory. Some of the previously awarded chefs join a talk session to share their perspectives on Japanese food culture, exploring the differences in culinary expression between urban and rural areas. The three speakers said they hoped the Destination Restaurant award would

have a positive impact on local communities and discussed what they expect from diners as craftsmen.

The judges selecting the restaurants, Yoshiki Tsuji, Naoyuki Honda and Takefumi Hamada, consider the use of local ingredients, as well as whether the chefs have the skills to make the best use of the ingredients in a sustainable way, whether they are creating a unique gastronomy, whether they are playing an important role in raising the level of local producers by having their restaurants at the selected locations, and whether a restaurant adds to the community by shining a light on it.

### Himawari Shokudo 2 The Destination Restaurant of the Year 2025

**Address**  
1-5-18 Jinzuonmachi, Toyama-shi, Toyama Prefecture  
<https://r930900.gorp.jp>

### Farm Restaurant Cuore

**Address**  
Charogawanishi, Shiranuka-cho, Shiranuka-gun, Hokkaido Prefecture  
<https://charomen-cuore.com>

### Stanza della Sincerità

**Address**  
3005 Akayu, Nanyo-shi, Yamagata Prefecture  
<https://osteria-sincerita.com>

### Nonna Nietta

**Address**  
3-26-28 Namiki, Tsukuba-shi, Ibaraki Prefecture  
Instagram @nonna\_nietta\_

### Restaurant Kam

**Address**  
3-1-13 Tozuka, Kawaguchi-shi, Saitama  
Instagram @restaurant\_kam\_1130

### Auberge Eaufeu

**Address**  
Lo-48 Kanagaso-machi, Komatsu-shi, Ishikawa Prefecture  
<https://eaufeu.jp/>

### Inaka no Taiho

**Address**  
2-1 Yatsuai-cho Betto, Ayabe-shi, Kyoto  
Instagram @inakanotaihou



### Kurumasushi

**Address**  
1-6-9 Ichiban-cho, Matsuyama-shi, Ehime Prefecture  
<https://www.kurumasushi.com>

### Nihon Ryori Beppu Hirokado

**Address**  
4-2 Horita, Beppu-shi, Oita Prefecture  
<https://beppu-hirokado.jp>

### Senti.U

**Address**  
587 Shinkawa-cho, Kanoya-shi, Kagoshima  
<https://www.facebook.com/SENTI.UNatureGastronomy/>

Scan the QR code for more information about Destination Restaurants 2025



Award-winning chef of Destination Restaurants 2025 TAKAO OHTA



Restaurant of the year chefs since 2021 TAKAO OHTA



All of the Destination Restaurants' award-winning chefs for the 2025 cycle, along with the judges and the event organizer.. TAKAO OHTA



Secretary-General Secretariat of Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters, Cabinet Office Futoshi Nasuno TAKAO OHTA



Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Director Tsutomu Wakamatsu TAKAO OHTA



Brazilian Minister-Counselor, Deputy Chief of Mission Patricia Barbosa Lima Cortes TAKAO OHTA



## Seven chefs take part in an event for Noto's recovery

**TAEKO TERAO**  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Destination Restaurants, presented by The Japan Times, tells the world about Japan's outstanding regional restaurants. An event for the recovery of the Noto Peninsula was held on Feb. 13 at Crazy Pizza in Toranomon Hills Station Tower with the participation of seven chefs honored by Destination Restaurants: Toshiya Ikehata of L'Atelier de Noto and Toru Kawashima of Ipponsugi Kawashima, both in Ishikawa Prefecture; Kazuhiro Inoue of Restaurant Uozen and Keiko Kuwakino of Satoyama Jujo, both in Niigata Prefecture; Kanji Kobayashi of Villa Aida in Wakayama Prefecture; Hiroto Murai of Yoichi Sagra in Hokkaido; and Masakazu Taira of Don Bravo in Tokyo. Using ingredients from

their home regions, the chefs prepared and served attendees highly creative appetizers and pizzas.

The event was made up of three seating periods starting at noon, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Each gathering was a great success, with every seat filled. All the guests looked delighted as they savored the original, one-time-only pizza creations of these celebrated chefs.

Kawashima said: "Even though it has been over a year since the earthquake, Noto's recovery is not progressing. But there are actually a lot of people who think things are all right now, and I'm afraid [Noto] will fade in people's memories. If skilled chefs getting together and creating an event like this helps raise awareness of the current and future situation of Noto, which is working so hard [to

recover], I'll be happy."

Ikehata, whose restaurant collapsed in the earthquake and whose outlook for rebuilding remains unclear, said: "I can't let the encouragement I've received from so many people go to waste. Having colleagues all over the country who support me has enabled me to look forward. Chefs are unhappy when they're not cooking, so an event like this makes me really happy."

Taira, the event's presenter and the owner-chef of Crazy Pizza, remarked that the plan had come together very quickly when the chefs met at the previous Destination Restaurants award ceremony in May 2024. He said he was infinitely grateful to fellow chefs throughout Japan who, with heartfelt wishes, sent products in support of the event although they were unable to attend in person.



From left: Kazuhiro Inoue of Restaurant Uozen, Hiroto Murai of Yoichi Sagra, Toru Kawashima of Ipponsugi Kawashima, Toshiya Ikehata of L'Atelier de Noto, Keiko Kuwakino of Satoyama Jujo and Masakazu Taira of Don Bravo. In front is Kanji Kobayashi of Villa Aida.

PHOTOS: TAKAO OHTA



Destination Restaurants 2025 AUTHENTIC JAPAN SELECTION



## Osaka Expo Times Gallery



Ambassador Jaber Al-Marri, the commissioner general of the Qatar Pavilion, inaugurates Invest Qatar's roundtable at Expo 2025, showcasing strategic investment opportunities. EMBASSY OF QATAR



Ambassador Aleksandra Kovac of Serbia (right) cuts the ribbon at the opening of the Serbian Pavilion at Expo 2025. EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



Panama inaugurates its pavilion highlighting its role as a strategic bridge under the theme "Saving Lives." From left: Alejandro De Leon, consul general of Panama; Walter Cohen, ambassador of Panama and Any Lam Chong, second secretary of the Kobe consulate. EMBASSY OF PANAMA

Participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Italy Pavilion are Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani; Ambassador Mario Vattani; Archbishop Rino Fisichella; and architect Mario Cucinella, designer of the pavilion. GENERAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE OF ITALY

