



# KIRU

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HUSH



Since opening in September 2015, Kiru has quickly become one of the hottest restaurants not only in Chelsea, but greater London too. With paparazzi occasionally camped out front, KIRU has welcomed a variety of actors and musicians as well as famed football players and a notable selection of London celebrities. What was the initial idea that led to the opening of a restaurant? From Executive Beverage & Ops Director, Christian Pulido's perspective was simple: "I thought it extremely odd that within the Japanese fine dining experience, it was difficult to find a good connection with the bar to make it possible to enjoy a full meal accompanied by cocktails. Obviously, this was a most interesting aspect to develop, and to this day, I still firmly believe that it is one of the trends to follow in the future. With Kiru being Japanese haute cuisine, we search for perfect combinations with character, which remain always balanced and suitable to complement the food of our talented chef, Taiji Maruyama". Christian manages the restaurant with Cameron & Beau McCarthy, Georgia Lee and Taiji Maruyama, and has created a loyal customer base via this philosophy. "I take advantage of the collaboration of a very strong team, which is somehow formed by artists with different backgrounds and experiences, like me," Christian says. "They are all Olympians in their own field and have a great sensibility. From chefs and bartenders with a superfine palate to musicians and photographers who show up at the restaurant, I believe that it is always important to surround oneself with talent and creativity. This helps one to grow and to realize fun projects like this one, which, among other things, will soon have follow-up, given that just one year after opening we are actively looking to expand into Knightsbridge, Soho, and Brighton."

Hush Hush

## Christian Pulido

When you meet Christian, after a brief exchange you immediately think: "He is the quintessence of a mixologist. One who can not only contextualize the different ingredients and technical elements he uses to perfect each cocktail, but who can also charm you with the mix of experiences and emotions acquired over the years that have informed his creations. A thousand adventures around the world and several professions to his name, not just that of the bartender." Christian was born in Mexico City, grew up in San Diego and moved to Los Angeles to study literature at UCLA. The ultimate globetrotter, he has lived in Spain and Italy, before moving to London. On his resume, under the "profession" heading,

you can read that in the past he was a water polo player with the US and Mexican national teams. He played on Italian teams in Bergamo and in Rome, founded a multimedia production company, participated as an actor in film and theater, loves music and is now in charge of Kiru restaurant in Chelsea, in the heart of London.

In short, Christian is a complete artist whose barman profession began in 2011 and has continued until the present day. As he himself describes, "When my water polo career was interrupted due to a shoulder injury, I started pursuing other artistic interests, and took the compulsory bar job to make ends meet between gigs. At the time, to be honest, I was more interested in food than in cocktails—in fact, I didn't start drinking till the age of 22. As we know though, there is a certain relationship one must develop with their guests and a general showmanship involved in bar work. In retrospect the notion of "winning the room," and the emotional engagement involved in the work of an actor or a musician helped a great deal here. I probably would have never got my first real job otherwise... uncertain about my cocktail skills I built and presented an entire cocktail menu and wheeled in a mini fridge with most of them pre-batched to demo it at my first interview. These drinks were basically alcoholic iterations of the flavors of my youth—Mexican, Italian, and even some Asian— and I think the nostalgia communicated something unique that made the owners overlook my scant experience. These aspects of experimentation, resourcefulness, and ability to listen (to people, ingredients, and life), along with a deep reverence for the emotional reverberations flavors can bring forward are aspects that are present daily in all my work. Maybe the most important turn here at KIRU for that ethic has been the goal to understand Maruyama's cuisine and extend this holistic approach into the Asian palate via pairings with his dishes".



On the previous page: Christian Pulido, Taiji Maruyama, Beau McCarthy

On the left: Yellowtail smoky aubergine



## TAKAMINE ROSE MARTINI

### For the cocktail

70 ml Shirakabegura Nigori Sake  
 25 ml Kettel One Citrön Vodka  
 10 ml Luxardo Maraschino Liqueur  
 15 ml agave syrup  
 5 ml Peychaud's bitters  
 Smoked Rose water (10:1 Ardbeg Whiskey:  
 Rose Water) atomized in glass

Place all the ingredients - except garnish and rose water - in a Boston shaker, fill up with ice and shake. Spray atomized rose water into the glass (12 sprays, aromatic only). Strain all the shaker's contents through Hawthorn strainer directly in the glass.

Garnish with miniature clip of lavender sprig and Peychaud's Bitters.

### Garnish

*Clipped lavender sprig*  
*Droplet of Peychaud's Bitters*

The Takamine Rose Martini is near and dear to Christian's heart. In many ways it epitomizes what he loves most in food and beverage: the ability to add occasion to otherwise casual, mundane, experiences. In other words: to make any moment, the moment. In this cocktail, elements from the drink's name sake, Jokichi Takamine's storied life, blend together in the glass to elevate the drink to the that of the mythic man credited with the discovery of Koji (instrumental to sake production). The Takamine is a soft, subtle beverage that amplifies and focuses flavours in dishes like the Lamb with Genghis Khan sauce. It can temper spicier recipes, and generally offer a beautiful balance to umami rich dishes.

Kiru, according to Japanese Haiku poetry, it is the cutting word that delivers deeper meaning through division and juxtaposition, greater than the sum of its parts.



Black Book



# Cocktails according to Christian

Christian has no doubts when asked what the new trends in the cocktail world are. "One must consider at least three important aspects," he says with absolute conviction. "The first is certainly the use of new ingredients. The second is the idea of creating a guided tasting journey and the third is rediscovering beverage hospitality. Concerning the second aspect, as is already the case for Chefs, bartenders are asked more and more often not only to replicate the classics, but also to highlight a vision, skill, and charisma, a unique personality in suggesting perfect pairings with the food that is brought to the table. One must not forget that in recent years, the production of tailored, artisan, spirits has increased exponentially and this aspect is truly essential to growth. Now we have the technology to build spirits from scratch, with the advantage that they fit beautifully with the stories we want to narrate through our drinks. You know why I cannot stand cocktail competitions? Because in the end no trend is born in a vacuum! By using the competition as a litmus test for the development of the craft one fails to see that hospitality—an interaction between barman/woman and guest—is and always has been at the crux of new beverage trends. It's a ridiculous proposition to think that some competition help amongst bartenders for bartenders and the beverage industry could accurately encapsulate human taste. And here, we come to the third and final key aspect. Perhaps the trend I perceive today and that I would like to see revived is the rebirth of what we know as classic cocktails. The classics were known as such because they precipitated from the interaction between bartenders and guests in specific communities around a community (let us not forget that many classics were created for specific clubs or regions). What's better than when a Chef or Bartender remembers your preferences? Simply put, the idea is to take care of people using our art as a means for deep empathy. And who wouldn't want to be a part of that club?" Even if pairing is never easy, as Christian reminds us "The

general rule is to assess guests properly before recommending any type of pairing. Successful choices always start from understanding the customer's palate. For example, I often bring at least four different bottles to the table to test first. Secondly, it is essential to determine expectations, including price with the goal of surprise—to guide them towards the best cocktails that they did not even know existed. Much of this is undoubtedly subject to the customer's desire to participate with enthusiasm in the discovery of new ways of drinking, which isn't always the case. And that's okay. This may be an extreme example, but few people accept trying Fernet Branca at first. Yet, in the right context, this can be a memorable experience to say the least."

## SALSA VERDE

### For the cocktail

*50 ml Tapatio Blanco tequila  
25 ml St. Germain elderflower liqueur  
15 ml agave syrup  
30 ml fresh squeezed lime juice  
muddled cilantro  
Italian parsley leaf  
cucumber  
Jalapeño tincture to taste*

*Place cilantro, parsley, cucumber and lime juice into a Boston shaker and muddle. Add the rest of the ingredients - except jalapeño tincture - and shake. Place a hand cut ice cube (or other ice cubes) into the glass and double strain over it. Add three shakes of Jalapeño tincture (3-7ml) and garnish with cucumber wedge and cilantro leaf.*

### Garnish

*slice of cocumber  
coriander leaf*

Garnish the cocktail with a slice of cucumber and a coriander leaf.

This cocktail emerged from a home cocktail session with Christian's family, and it clearly reminds us of his Italian - Mexican - American origins. In KIRU's menu it serves the function of bringing one very important element from Christian's Mexican heritage to the restaurant and as such, world cocktail canon... picante.





Lamb in Genghis Kan sauce





Beef Tataki



## ASHTON ARTIST

### For the cocktail

40 ml Bulleit Rye whiskey  
25 ml fresh squeezed lemon juice  
20 ml Aperol  
10 ml Amaro Averna  
15 ml agave syrup

Place all the ingredients, except garnish, in a Boston shaker with ice. Shake, and double strain directly into the glass. Garnish with a fancy lemon zest.

### Garnish

*Fancy lemon zest*

The drink transcends category containing elements of both a sweet, sour and amaro - hence its placement in the umami category of cocktail. Umami for drinks, unlike for food, is precisely this: one that defies categorization and leans toward the more saline, warm, and savoury aspects of cocktail culture. This drink, if nothing else, is the gateway for the uninitiated dark spirit drinkers. Best paired with a main high in fat or umami content dishes like Maru's wagyu tataki.



*Kiru Klub*



*Nigiri sashimi*

# The Cuisine

Kiru's Chef is thirty-five year old Taiji Maruyama who in the past has collaborated with the great Spanish Chef Martin Berasategui. Maruyama's style encompasses common sense and Asian rigor while at the same time intercepting the tastes of the international clientele strolling down the neighborhood's elegant streets, and in a way, he also touches upon the classicism of the now well-established Europeanized Japanese cuisine. The names on the menu are the same as always; Nigiri, Sashimi, Sushi, Tempura, Teriyaki, and so on. However, we are not in the typical Japanese restaurant.

The restaurant team is outstanding, ideas collected from the Chef, Christian and restaurant business partners have been put to good use, starting from flawless quality ingredients. The most creative variations are in the section of the menu that collects Kiru signature dishes such as Salmon cooked at 50 degrees accompanied by miso and green tea powder, Secreto Iberico with Kimchi, and the grilled asparagus with quinoa and

sesame dressing. And even the dishes that everyone knows well (or think they know well) hide variations that are closer to the original than to the adapted version for Western palates. Taiji Maruyama has a very simple policy: "I use any technique I know to make the ingredient more delicious for our guest. More than 50% of my technique is European, but the underlying philosophy is always Japanese". As I said, however, the cocktail pairing steals the show and for enthusiasts, possibilities are almost endless if you want to "play" at the table.

## Kiru

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3 days koji cured chilean seabass



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