

FOOD & DRINK  
REVIEW

# NORTHERN EXPOSURE

With standout Japanese favorites on the menu and ambiance that makes the most of its oceanside setting, Hallandale Beach's ETARU is certainly worth the drive

By Joe Karrenick // Photography by Michael Pisani



Fresh top black kampachi sashimi with yuzu-truffle dressing and pickled vegetables; Japanese benedictine with quinoa salad with ginger soy dressing



**ETARU**  
Hyde Beach Club  
111 S. Surf Road, Hallandale Beach,  
954.371.3222, etarurestaurant.us  
Snacks and soups, \$4-\$5; sashimi, \$7-\$29;  
sukunin, \$15-\$22; maki rolls,  
\$5-\$15; salads and takaki, \$8-\$20;  
tempura, \$14-\$16, robata, \$8-\$40.  
Dinner: Mon.-Sat., 5:30-11p; Sun., 5:30-10:30p  
Lunch and brunch: Sat.-Sun., noon-3p

An indoor-outdoor beachside setting. A stylish interior relies on neutral tones, with furniture, wall and ceiling panels carved from Brazilian ipe wood, and floor-to-ceiling glass that showcases the Atlantic in all its moods. A robata-yaki concept that offers quality ingredients, ranging from Japanese grade A5 Wagyu beef to Osetra caviar, prepared by highly trained chefs from diverse backgrounds. You couldn't ask for a more Miami kind of restaurant than ETARU, which possesses these attributes and more.

There's only one catch: ETARU isn't exactly in Miami.

Located in Hallandale Beach, ETARU debuted at The Related Group's Hyde Beach Club in late August. If you think that's too far to make the trek, here's some incentive: The two-story establishment was conceived by Rainer Becker, the co-founder of the renowned Zuma eateries as well as ROKA London. ROKA's Group Executive Chef Hamish Brown, who was on hand for the first month of service, conceived the menus. And head chef Sergio Rivera, a 10-year veteran of Nobu Miami, executes the day-to-day. The talent of this team translates to a superior experience, from presentation to palate, with the initial emphasis on the food staging. Every dish is plated on a variety of handmade Japanese pottery specially imported for the restaurant. It's done so beautifully that it seems like every sesame seed has been positioned as deliberately as a drop of paint. For the dinerware buff and Instagram poster alike, the optics lock first.

Fortunately, it's not just all about looks; the inner ETARU is also a beauty, starting with the preliminary categories of the menu. These sections range from sashimi to maki rolls to robata, the last of which means

specialties. The sashimi is actually fairly special itself—each glistening piece, ranging from fatty tuna to red bream to freshwater eel, is a pure expression of texture, flavor and seriously impressive knife skills.

Still, sashimi may sound plain next to the descriptions of the maki, which includes a roll made with softshell crab, cucumber, kinchi and chile mayo, and menu standouts like the stunning array of black kampachi sashimi—sliced so thinly in an overlapping fan pattern that it more resembles a tiradito—drizzled with a yuzu-truffle dressing and crowned with misoana. The latter's buttery fish, similar to silky black cod, is balanced by the citric, earthy vinaigrette and probing bite of mustard green. It's an addictive combination. And that's just one of the signature preparations here.

Ensure a true sampling by ordering the sashimi platter, which is priced per person. It's an assembly of ice, both block and crushed, upon which fish is posed like swimsuit models, and in which a coterie of robata nestle here and there with slices of limes and leaves of greens. CONTINUED...





Clockwise from left: The restaurant's outdoor terrace overlooking the beach; a diner enjoys a spicy rock shrimp tempura; the sashimi platter for two also includes yellowtail tartare, tuna tartare and oysters.

...CONTINUED like abstract art. They include oysters puddled with black vinegar and an autumnal dollop of *manji amabi* (grated daikon mixed with red chile pepper) and a glass bowl of chopped raw tuna spiked with minced scallions and wasabi. A wooden spoonful of Osetra caviar rests beside it, along with half of a quail's eggshell holding what is mostly yolk. Drop the egg into the tuna, mix and then gently fold in the caviar for a velvety, just-salty tartare. A zingier yellowtail tartare, with a chile dressing and sesame crackers to tone it down a bit, also is included. Separately, you can order molded ovals of prime beef tartare served on nori crisps with a tangle of scallions and ponzu pearls that burst in the mouth.

Continue through the salads and tatakis sections to find more decorative delicacies, ranging from a grilled baby gem salad with soy aioli, bacon and quartered eggs that boast a pliable yolk—and tastes like a Caesar salad with Japanese finishes—to yellowtail tuna tatakis with avocado, misuna and apple-wasabi dressing. Since dishes are meant to be shared, order a couple of these complex, umami-inducing bowls before digging into *la carte* tiger prawns, wrapped in a crispy, phyllo-like crust or skewered head-to-tail and grilled with garlic and *arima sambu*, a sauce comprising pepper, sake, soy and sugar. Four to an order, the prawns are as fresh as could be, and you can eat the grilled ones like corn on the cob.

Other items cooked on the robata grill include plush sea scallops, served two to an order and made additionally rich with yuzu mayonnaise; a delicately cooked salmon teriyaki with *sando* (Japanese pepper) salt and a squeeze of lemon; a juicy, six-ounce, prime filet sliced and covered with pliant but meaty eryngii mushrooms and wasabi-ponzu sauce; and a sturdy, 10-ounce prime ribeye, brushed with chile and ginger and partnered with a mash of pickled eggplant.

If you now feel like you want to sample the entire menu, well, you can. The venue's Sunday brunch is a buffet of sashimi, maki, salads and more, followed



**Getting There**

Don't get confused by the fire station that fronts Surf Road. Go to the end of the street, where it dead ends at the beach, to find ETARU's valet stand.

**Beach Eats**

On the first floor, the ETARU Beach Bar serves everything from beverages to breakfast with Japanese influences. Have your eggs Benedict with yuzu Hollandaise on a shiso waffle.

**ETARU: Part Two**

A second location of the eatery will open in Fort Lauderdale at The Related Group's Icon Las Olas in 2018.

by entrees such as cedar-roasted baby chicken with chile miso and pork ribs glazed with *inohojon* (spicy soy bean paste). The meal is matched with signature cocktails (opt for the Bellini with Japanese plum) and all the Whispering Angel rose you can drink. Brunch also includes the dessert you might order at dinner if you feel opulent enough: a composition of fruits (from dragon fruit to rambutan) along with sorbets mounted on shelves of ice to keep them from melting and cakes such as the green tea-filled chocolate bombe topping the collection. It's a fittingly gorgeous ending to what, for Hallandale Beach, is most certainly some kind of beginning. ■