

Shin Hinomoto is located beneath the railway tracks close to Yurakucho Station.

Meet You at Andy's!

Shin Hinomoto in Yurakucho is widely recognized as one of Tokyo's finest *izakaya*.

TOSHIO MATSUBARA

IZAKAYA are where ordinary people go to enjoy Japan's unique drinking culture, in which a wide variety of dishes are served and shared alongside big jugs of beer and other beverages. Unpretentious and reasonably priced, *izakaya* are popular venues for after-work drinks with colleagues as well as for office parties such as *bonenkai*. Adults of all ages and both sexes visit *izakaya* to eat and drink and enjoy the venues' typically down-to-earth, convivial atmosphere.

One of Tokyo's best known and most popular *izakaya* is Shin Hinomoto, which is situated under the elevated railway tracks near Yurakucho Station, where many other *izakaya*

and *yakitori* grilled chicken restaurants are also located. Shin Hinomoto is packed with customers every night, many of them repeat foreign customers who refer to the place simply as "Andy's."

The manager of Shin Hinomoto is Englishman Andy Lunt. In 1978, Lunt married Etsuko Nishizawa, who had studied in the United Kingdom. In 1986 he came to Japan to take over the management of a long-established *izakaya* originally owned by Etsuko's grandfather.

At that time, Etsuko's father was managing the tavern, and from the morning of the day after he arrived in Japan, Lunt began accompanying his father-in-law to the Tsukiji Fish Mar-

大衆酒場
新日の基
Andy's
1-6-021





- 1 Shin Hinomoto is packed with local office workers every night.
- 2 A serving of mixed *sashimi* at Shin Hinomoto
- 3 French tourists with a plate of crab legs at Shin Hinomoto
- 4 American and Japanese businessmen enjoy the large jugs of beer typical of izakaya.



ket to make wholesale purchases of seafood. Lunt had been a restaurant manager in Britain, but he had never previously experienced fish shopping at a market. Lunt quickly improved his Japanese and izakaya management skills through his experiences at Tsukiji Fish Market and of customer service in the izakaya. He took over the management of Shin Hinomoto from his father-in-law in 2010 and has grown it into an even more popular izakaya.

The main reason for Shin Hinomoto's popularity is the extremely high quality of the seafood.

"I've been making wholesale purchases at Tsukiji Fish Market for thirty years now, so I know all the good items that are caught in particular places throughout the seasons," says Lunt. "I buy only the best fresh seafood. I simply want to serve delicious dishes at reasonable prices. That means everything to us."

There are a number of meaty items on the menu such as stuffed gyoza chicken wings, steak and sausages, but it is the seafood that is the star, with customers wolfing down mixed plates of *sashimi*, succulent grilled fish, huge pan-seared scallops and baby clams steamed in sake.

All photos: Yoshifusa Hashizume

An unusually large number of non-Japanese visit Shin Hinomoto.

"We do not run a specific promotional campaign for overseas visitors; most of our non-Japanese custom is foreign businessmen working in Japan who advertise the tavern by word of mouth," says Etsuko. "We also welcome customers from many countries who have found us in guidebooks. We are delighted that our customers rate our cooking so highly."

English menus are available at every table and almost all the staff can speak English. The low, arch-shaped ceiling of the second-floor restaurant creates a distinctively cosy and often noisy ambience.

"The *sashimi*, grilled fish, tempura... Everything served here is fresh and tastes good," says an American businessman who is a regular customer. "Andy tells us the day's specials whenever we come. If someone wants assorted sashimi, Andy offers a flexible arrangement by confirming whether anyone does not like cuttlefish or octopus, for example. The tables are located so close to each other that I can easily enjoy talking to someone I have met for the first time. I think that this friendly, sociable atmosphere is unique to izakaya." 