

Japanese cuisine now in Luganville

By Harrison Selmen

ONE OF THE CAFES IN Luganville "The Natangura Café" is now operating with a Japanese chef producing the best Japanese meals at affordable cost.

The restaurant is the only meal producer in Luganville introducing for the first time the different Japanese meals.

The café is situated in the center of Luganville with the best environmental view.

The Natangura café is the smallest branch café in Luganville that has connections with the Melanesian Hotel in Port Vila. The café offers a 24-hour free wireless internet to any customer who purchases any drinks or anything from the café.

Daily Post Santo Reporter, **Harrison Selmen**, caught up with the Manager Yuki Maekauua and got the following results.

Firstly can you tell us your name and your position?

My name is Yuki Maekauua. I am from Japan. My position here at the restaurant is manager and at the same time the restaurant chef.

How long have you been here in Luganville? And what are your aims?

I have been in Luganville for more than 3 months now. My aims are to make sure the café produces the best Japanese meals that people can enjoy at their doorsteps. But most importantly I want to show people our taste which I can just tell is very unique to our local style here in Vanuatu.

How many staff do you have here with you in the café?

I have 10 staff altogether who were working with me. All of them are locals except my wife giving me a hand with the entire kitchen work. Most of them were new to these Japanese styles but I managed to train them and they were getting to know the styles and they have improved a lot.

Can you list some of the Japanese specials you provide here?

Yeah sure! We have some of the best menus here that I know people have never tasted before. And for sure I know some people may like it and if they have a taste they will never forget the delicious flavour. We have the mixed Sashimi, Tempura prawns, Teriyaki, Beef Tataki and Sushi. Mixed Sashimi is made of tuna, cucumber, snapper fish, squid, ginger, and Sashimi sauce. All ingredients were raw but as you tipped them into the sauce all the raw sea food taste so pleasant and yummy. The tempura prawns are made of mixed vegetable all fried together and that was one of the family meals back in Japan. Ter-



Staff of Natangura.

iyaki chicken or fish might be a favorite dish for locals because it's simply fried chicken or fish with some vegetables and teriyaki sauce. Beef Tataki is thin sliced beef cooked on the edged with a mixture of green vegetables surrounded. Teriyaki chicken and Tempura Prawns have proven popular.

Why do you decide to employ locals despite the fact that they are new to this cooking style rather than getting experts from Japan to come over here?

That is a good question! But the main reason is that locals are less expensive, they are more comfortable friendly to the locals that makes it easy for customers to communicate better than Japanese. We decide to use locals that can help deal more easy with Ni-Vans. And observing the people I can tell that locals are shy so we need to use ni-Vans to make it easier for our customers.

I understand Japanese style is new here for the first time in Luganville. Since you started operating producing the Japanese cuisine, have people come often to try your different menus?

I guess people are not yet aware of this menu. We don't receive a lot of customers who are locals. But we do receive expats who came here mostly than locals. But we are encouraging locals to come and taste the Japanese flavor here because you won't see such menu provided elsewhere here in town. And this

is your only chance to come here and taste something at your door steps without any high cost. This is only provided by Japanese people and I guess such recipe used was only in Japan.

What are your opening hours?

We open 7.30am - 4.30pm from Monday to Friday. But we do offer specials while we extend further from 4.30pm to 9pm at night on Fridays and Thursday. On Saturday we open from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Do you have any last words you would like to say?

We provide a lot of sea foods here. So my word is "COME, COME" because we have the best Japanese meals to offer you here. You will never regret as you taste one of our traditional Japanese styles, am happy to prepare you the world's best beef that we have naturally here with us so just come.

Meanwhile, the manager said sea food is one of the main diets back in Japan. They believe that most of their people get more old to certain age because they eat a lot of fish which is very high in protein.

Speaking to one of her local staff, Germaine Bonaventure said she has gained a lot from Maekauua especially with the Japanese dishes. She said she no longer depends on the chef's teachings. Her favorite menu she likes to prepare is "sushi".