

**NINA MOINI:** The James Beard Foundation has announced this year's finalists in the awards known as the Oscars of the restaurant world. Among the nominees for Best Chef Midwest is Chef Shigeyuki Furukawa. He's the only Minnesota chef nominated in any category. He runs Kado no Mise, which means corner restaurant in Japanese.

From Wednesday through Sunday, his team serves a tasting menu of delicate traditional sushi. On Tuesdays, diners get a 10-course tasting menu drawn from a centuries old cooking tradition called kaiseki. There's also a Japanese whiskey bar tucked in the same space in the North Loop neighborhood of Minneapolis, and Chef Furukawa is on the line now. Thanks so much for your time, Chef.

**SHIGEYUKI  
FURUKAWA:**

Hi.

**NINA MOINI:** Huge congratulations to you on your nomination for Best Chef in the Midwest, and I understand this is the second year in a row that you've been nominated. That's amazing. How does that feel?

**SHIGEYUKI  
FURUKAWA:**

I'm so honored to be here. Yeah. I'm so glad and happy.

**NINA MOINI:** What an honor. Yeah. And I would love if you could take us back to the beginning of your journey in food. And I understand that when you were a teenager, it sounds like you made something for a friend of yours.

**SHIGEYUKI  
FURUKAWA:**

Oh, yeah. That's right.

**NINA MOINI:** Tell me about that.

**SHIGEYUKI  
FURUKAWA:** Yeah. That's right. Yeah. So my parents was working, both parents. Then when I feel hungry, I was cooking by myself with my friend-- neighbor. Then when I cook just the slice of ham and egg with soy sauce, then I feed my neighbor that he said, Shige, this is so delicious. And he was smiling and happy face. That makes me more happy than him I guess. Yeah, that's a start of my cooking.

**NINA MOINI:** That's a delicious meal. Do you still make that?

**SHIGEYUKI  
FURUKAWA:**

I hope so. No, I guess that was too salty though.

**NINA MOINI:** Yeah, it was a one-time--

**SHIGEYUKI  
FURUKAWA:**

Yeah.

**NINA MOINI:** Experiment. But I like what you're saying about taking joy in other people experiencing joy from what you produce, what you make. So I understand that you opened Kado no Mise in Minneapolis all the way back in 2017, which is a really long time for a restaurant I think to be around and have this success. So congratulations. What made you want to open the restaurant in Minneapolis?

**SHIGEYUKI** So when I moved to Minneapolis, that was 2009 with my ex-wife because ex-wife grew up here and then her mom  
**FURUKAWA:** is still here. Then we decided to move to Minneapolis from Kyoto, Japan. We went to almost every Japanese restaurant, the Twin Cities, then every restaurant was kind of same quality and serving same food such as crunchy roll, spicy tuna roll. But I learn in Japan, which is a traditional Japanese food, but sadly those restaurant was not authentic or traditional. Now I want to introduce what is real Japanese food, then I decide to open own restaurant.

**NINA MOINI:** So you saw a need for something deeper, more authentic. Tell me about what does make the style of sushi you prepare more I guess rooted in tradition and authenticity. What are the different ways that you prepare the meals?

**SHIGEYUKI** Basically we are using seasonal items such as-- for spring, there's a firefly squid. It's tiny squid but only available  
**FURUKAWA:** in spring. Also the baby sea bream like a small size of sea bream because of they just born from the eggs, hatch the egg. Then that sea bream is very tiny, but we're using those kind of things in spring. Also the bamboo shoot, fresh bamboo shoot, we are using very seasonal ingredients.

**NINA MOINI:** It really depends on the season, and you're being really intentional about the ingredients. Tell us again--

**SHIGEYUKI** Correct.

**FURUKAWA:**

**NINA MOINI:** I mentioned in the introduction, but will you tell us a little bit more about the style of kaiseki.

**SHIGEYUKI** So kaiseki is not focused sushi, another format of the tasting menu. Also the ingredients is seasonal. Also the  
**FURUKAWA:** tableware should be the seasonal items. So, for instance, this April, we are going to use a cherry blossom pattern of the place or more spring colors tableware.

**NINA MOINI:** Great. So you're really being intentional about every season and making all of these changes. When do you start to prepare for the next season, or are you constantly evolving and being inspired.

**SHIGEYUKI** Because our restaurant menu changes bi-monthly, I'm start to creating next month-- menu is middle of the  
**FURUKAWA:** month.

**NINA MOINI:** Is that common to have a new menu every month? It seems like a really big undertaking?

**SHIGEYUKI** Some restaurant in Japan, they are doing every other week change or every day. Chef goes to the market and  
**FURUKAWA:** then what's available. Then some chefs start to creating menu for that day. Every day is different some restaurants.

**NINA MOINI:** So I understand you get most of your ingredients from Japan as well.

**SHIGEYUKI** Yes.

**FURUKAWA:**

**NINA MOINI:** Has that been difficult? Have you seen any sort of strain due to tariffs and just different situations across the world?

**SHIGEYUKI** Yes. Yes. So before pandemic and after pandemic, the price is jump up. Also the tariffs makes more expensive.

**FURUKAWA:** But no choice.

**NINA MOINI:** You have to do what you have to do. Yeah.

**SHIGEYUKI** That's right.

**FURUKAWA:**

**NINA MOINI:** What do you love-- I know you mentioned you love when people are just happy and smiling and enjoying the food that you are preparing or that's being prepared for them. What's your favorite part about being at the restaurant on a typical day? Are you just mostly focused on the food, or do you feel like you're walking around talking with other people?

**SHIGEYUKI** Oh no, I'm in a counter-- in the counter. I'm literally me cooking for you, not a very, very clean, chef coat and  
**FURUKAWA:** walk around the dining area. I'm not that kind of person. I'm cooking, making.

**NINA MOINI:** Period. OK.

**SHIGEYUKI** Yep.

**FURUKAWA:**

**NINA MOINI:** And that is why. You're sticking to what is the really at the heart of everything, and that's probably why you've had so much success.

Chef Furukawa, thank you so much for your time. Huge congratulations to you on this honor.

**SHIGEYUKI** Thank you very much. I hope and I wish I will win this time. June 15th in Chicago, that is my birthday. Maybe the  
**FURUKAWA:** birthday-- as a birthday gift, maybe they will do that.

**NINA MOINI:** Well, I'm sure Minnesotans will be standing behind you and hoping you get your birthday wish. Thank you so much.

**SHIGEYUKI** Thank you very much.

**FURUKAWA:**

**NINA MOINI:** Chef Shigeyuki Furukawa is the owner of Kado no Mise in Minneapolis and a finalist for the James Beard Award for Best Chef in the Midwest. The winner will be announced like he mentioned on his birthday, June 15th in Chicago.