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Las Vegas Scene: Britney and More

By REBECCA DANCER



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THE JAPAN PLAN: Following in the successful wake of Yellowtail Japanese Restaurant & Lounge at Bellagio, executive chef Akira Back has again partnered with The Light Group to open his second Las Vegas venture, Kumi — “beautiful” in Japanese — inside Mandalay Bay.

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A former professional snowboarder turned foodie, Back trained in the kitchens of such culinary masters as Nobu Matsuhisa (Nobu Restaurants), and Masaharu Morimoto (“Iron Chef America”), whom he credits with teaching him “the value of using rare and exotic ingredients” in his culinary creations.

The Korean-American chef channels his heritage — including some of his mother’s family recipes — while exploring new twists on traditional Japanese dishes, experimenting with flavors and textures with the aim of leaving guests feeling “both comfortable and adventurous.”



The dining room at Kumi.

Photo By Courtesy Photo



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Fan favorites, such as the “Hot Mess” signature sushi roll made of crab and sashimi poke (\$21), and Back’s spicy “Screaming O Sauce,” already have celebrities like [Justin Timberlake](#) coming back for seconds.

Other popular menu items at the elegant eatery include whitefish carpaccio (\$21), Japanese eggplant topped with sweet miso and mozzarella cheese (\$31) and garlic maple soy-glazed Jidori chicken (\$28).

The 10,000 square-foot space, designed by award-winning firm Munge Leung, features traditional Japanese pottery, a custom iridescent black canvas ceiling and a two-story rotunda, and seats up to 300 guests.

Kumi Japanese Restaurant & Bar By Akira Back

3950 Las Vegas Boulevard South

Tel: 702-632-9100

Hours: Sunday to Thursday, 5-10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 5-11 p.m.

Web: kumilasvegas.com



Executive chef at Kumi, Akira Back.

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