



The True Nature of Cooking Realized in a Kyoto Rock Garden **Chilled Boiled Daikon with Winter Yellowtail Opens Up a New World of Flavor**

Josh DeChellis (U.S.A.)

Josh DeChellis fell in love with cooking when he started to work part time at a small local restaurant in New Jersey, USA, in order to save money to buy a snowboard during his high school years. After studying at the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, he moved to San Francisco in his early twenties, where this time, he fell in love with Japanese cuisine.

In San Francisco, DeChellis worked as a sous chef in renowned Austrian-born chef Wolfgang Puck's restaurant Postrio. One day when out on a date with a girl, he went to the sushi restaurant where she worked and was stunned. The sushi there was completely different from the sushi rolls he had had on the East Coast. Both the rice and the fish were wonderful and he was drawn to dishes using real dashi and "started to want to learn more about Japanese cuisine."

Having worked at L'Arpège, a Michelin three-star restaurant in Paris, and Union Pacific in New York, a major turning point in DeChellis' career came in 2003, when he landed a job as a chef at Sumile, a restaurant that was just about to open in New York by popular Japanese band Dreams Come True. Before the restaurant opened, DeChellis spent a long time in Japan, gaining experience at a Japanese restaurant in Shibuya, Tokyo, and thoroughly educating himself on Japanese cuisine, ingredients, and seasonings by trying out various restaurants.

One day, when visiting a rock garden at a temple in Kyoto, DeChellis had a revelation. "Gazing out at the rock garden, I saw that the branches of trees extended out to the inside of the fence surrounding the garden, creating an exquisite co-existence between nature and the man-made rock garden. Seeing this, I realized that what was important in cooking was not to merely assert the chef's taste by layering numerous sauces on a dish and making the flavor of the ingredients indistinguishable, but rather, how to bring out the flavor of the ingredients."

The dish DeChellis has submitted for Washoku World Challenge 2016 is boiled daikon with winter yellowtail. This was inspired by the traditional winter dish of buri daikon (daikon with winter yellowtail). DeChellis created a cold dish using the ingredients for buri daikon, originally a dish served warm. He lightly minced the winter yellowtail, using the flesh from the head, cheeks, and around the gills, letting it thoroughly soak up dashi, before combining it with daikon. He created the dish to open up a whole new world of flavor while imparting a sense of nostalgia, serving it cold and with the acidity of the yuzu juice and sting of the grated ginger used.

In January 2017, DeChellis will open his first restaurant in New Jersey, using a renovated former bank building as the location. There is strength and conviction in DeChellis' voice as he says "I want to use the best ingredients and make boundary-defying dishes."



Boiled Daikon with Winter Yellowtail