

Uchi's Sexy Kid Sister: Meet Uchiko

Tolly Moseley | Food & Drink | Wednesday June 16 2010

When Paul Qui first dined at [Uchi](#), he was so impressed, he asked if he could work in the kitchen for free. Gradually, Qui's talents earned him the title of Chef de Cuisine.

But now, six years after his first meal at Uchi, Qui assumes a new role altogether. He will become Executive Chef — but not at Uchi. Meet [Uchiko](#), the sexy kid sister of Austin's most well-known sushi institution!

"This isn't a pretentious restaurant," says Qui of Tyson Cole's second restaurant venture, opening this summer at 4200 N. Lamar. "But we're going to deliver that special, Uchi experience to people."

And for Qui, that experience is all about "the perfect bite," as he calls it.

"It's what I'm always in search of," says Qui. "So for the menu at Uchiko, we're playing just a bit more. Experimenting with more textures, particularly. It's the level of cuisine that diners would expect from an Uchi restaurant, but a different menu."

And pray tell, what might those differences be?

"Fried chicken," Qui says, a small grin playing at the corners of his mouth. "As chefs, we get to work with beautiful dishes, so much gourmet. But I think deep down, we all crave a little soul food. So that type of thing will definitely make more appearances on this menu."

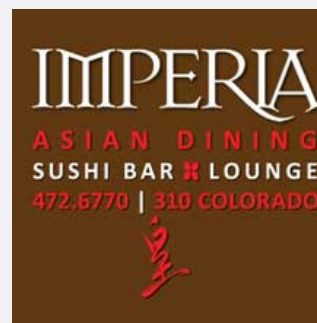
I'm lucky enough to get a taste of some of the creations that will be following Paul to Uchiko. A sliver of grilled mackerel topped with huckleberry boshi (a type of preserve) is terribly delicious — nearly enough to make me cease the interview entirely, just so I can focus on eating. But before he brings out a pretty serving of amberjack fish, fennel and apple poised on top, there really *is* a marked interview pause. That's because Paul is meticulously readying the dish in the kitchen, overseeing every minute detail with a near-scientific eye.

"I get carried away back there," he smiles sheepishly.



Executive Chef of Uchiko, Paul Qui.







Speaking of waiting, diners have much to look forward to at Uchiko. That's because unlike Uchi, a large portion of the restaurant will be devoted to reservations only. Qui notes that the only criticism Uchi gets is wait time, so this way, diners – large parties especially – can plan their meals a little more precisely.

The cafe bar, located at the front of Uchiko, will still be designated as first-come, first-served. Architect Michael Hsu, with the help of contributing designer Joel Mozersky, outfitted the space to resemble a modern Japanese farmhouse, so no matter where you dine, the interior feels cozy and familiar. Uchiko bought discarded trees from Shady Grove to cover one whole wooden wall, and the sushi bar itself is built out of a single, huge, Texas Cedar tree.

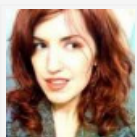
“We want this space to feel inviting,” says Qui. “And the one thing we can't really do at Uchi are large parties. Ten is kind of pushing it. So it was really important for us to have a private dining room in this place that did accommodate large parties, but that was still very intimate. Between the trees, one whole wall out of red brick, these mailbox drawers that almost look like card catalogues...it feels like you're in someone's well cared-for space.”

And cared-for we shall be at Uchiko — especially if gourmet fried chicken is on the menu.

<http://uchikoaustin.com/>

Photos By: [Annie Ray](#)

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Tolly Moseley is a blogger, freelance writer, and book publicist in Austin, TX. She is a fan of the Alamo Drafthouse, Jane Austen, and cheese. In 2009 and 2010, Tolly was featured in the Austin American Statesman's "Fortunate 500" (now Out and About 500) under the Media & Interactive categories. She also won a Austin American Statesman 2010 Texas Social Media Award, partly for her blog, partly for organizing local blogger meet-ups ("bleet-ups"), and partly for bribing the publication with a million dollars. Just kidding about the bribing. Tolly's work has been featured on Discovery Channel's two eco-sites, PlanetGreen.com and TreeHugger.com, Village Voice's feminist blog, Heartlessdoll.com, Austinist.com, in Austin Woman Magazine, and a variety of other media outlets. Her hands-down favorite interview was with the late Rue McClanahan, aka Blanche on The Golden Girls. On her blog, she writes about events, artists, and organizations in Austin, as well as stories from her own life. Follow her adventures at www.austineavesdropper.com.