

NEIGHBORHOOD CHIC

There are 140,000 places to eat and drink in the Japanese capital. Narrowing down options is trickier than coming up with ideas. Fortunately **Mosaique** ticks a number of boxes. It's smart but not stuffy, laid-back but with a hint of glam.

Situated in Tokyo's tony Minami-Aoyama district and next door to Prada's sexy fishnet stocking-covered flagship, Mosaique bridges the gap between high-end Michelin-starred French restaurants, where jackets are required, and a comfy neighborhood bistro.

In the adjacent bar Maître d' Arn Moorcraft glides around his domain ensuring standards are perfect, a hangover from his days working at Tokyo's three-star Château Restaurant Joël Robuchon. Topping up champagne glasses and engaging customers with easy conversation, Moorcraft ensures Mosaique is the ideal pit stop after an afternoon's shopping in the area. Marc Jacobs, Cartier, Loveless and Comme des Garçons are just steps away, but this oasis of calm could be situated 30 floors up, not on the fourth floor, given its peaceful vibe.

Mosaique is named after its design: Gold and biscuit tiles glitter as a backdrop, a style reminiscent of headier days when Tokyo was king and cities like Shanghai and Singapore were merely wannabes. Burnished wood fittings and white linens tone down the mosaic accents, creating a room filled with warmth and light not unlike a Turkish spa.

For at least nine months of the year, Tokyo is a pleasant place to spend time outdoors. Mosaique's large terrace creates the sort of environment that invites you to linger with a bottle of chilled Pouilly Fumé and a plate of fresh seafood from brunch through to preprandials.

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GOLDEN / MOSAIQUE



SLEEK SWEETNESS / HORTENSIA



DUPLEX DELIGHT / HORTENSIA

FLOWER POWER

Chef Tetsuji Koga's previous career experience reads like a Who's Who of Tokyo restaurants. Koga honed his craft at the legendary Tableaux in Daikanyama, the first restaurant in Japan to introduce fusion dining. Knives sharpened, he moved on to Restaurant J, a favorite spot of Tokyo's literati. A stint as executive chef at Breeze of Tokyo and then a waltz around the kitchen at two-starred Michelin restaurant Edition Koji Shimomura sealed Koga's reputation.

Taking this resume and creating a new dining experience that's original requires skill. Fortunately Koga is the man for the job, and **Hortensia**, named after a delicate clustered flower that resembles a miniature floral bouquet, elevates both the food served and its concept to new levels. Offering a graceful balance of French and Japanese cuisine, and taking the best from both worlds, including classical techniques applied to seasonal ingredients and a light preparation, has ensured Hortensia's already strong reputation despite its launch just last year.

No detail has been left untouched at **Hortensia**. Food is exquisite and the accompanying wine list is presided over by head sommelier Kaz Chiba, who ensures the selection is as good as you would get at any of the world's top wine bars.

At Hortensia the customer is always right. In this spirit, lunch is a selection of four courses. The sweet-toothed may prefer to interpret this as three desserts and an appetizer; the hungrier, four mains, and the traditional, a meal that tells a story from first bite through to final taste.

Décor is simple and chic with three-meter-high ceilings, stone walls and dark natural woods providing a backdrop to dishes like watari crab bisque cappuccino-style, and sea eel with a curry-scented beurre blanc.

There is even a 'kid's day' held once a month when indulgent parents can bring little ones, safe in the knowledge that there are others doing the same.

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