

JAPANESE EATS

A guide to Japanese cuisine beyond sushi and ramen and where to get it in Calgary.

BY CARMEN CHENG PHOTOS BY JARED SYCH

North Americans often pigeonhole Japanese food as sushi and ramen, but this is a very limited view of such a rich and varied cuisine. It is estimated that there are over 30 food genres in Japan, ranging from convenience-store fare to multi-course fine-dining culinary experiences designed to honour nature through complex technique.

Japan's culinary scene is highly respected internationally. In recent years, Tokyo has been recognized as the most Michelin-starred city in the world, with awards given to restaurants of different categories and price point. Here in Calgary, the variety of Japanese restaurants has also grown, with options that include *katsu*, Japanese curries, yakitori, "sandos" (sandwiches) and more. Here are a few popular genres of Japanese gastronomy to check out locally and 12 restaurants where you can find them.

IKUSA IZAKAYA &
TOKYO MARKET



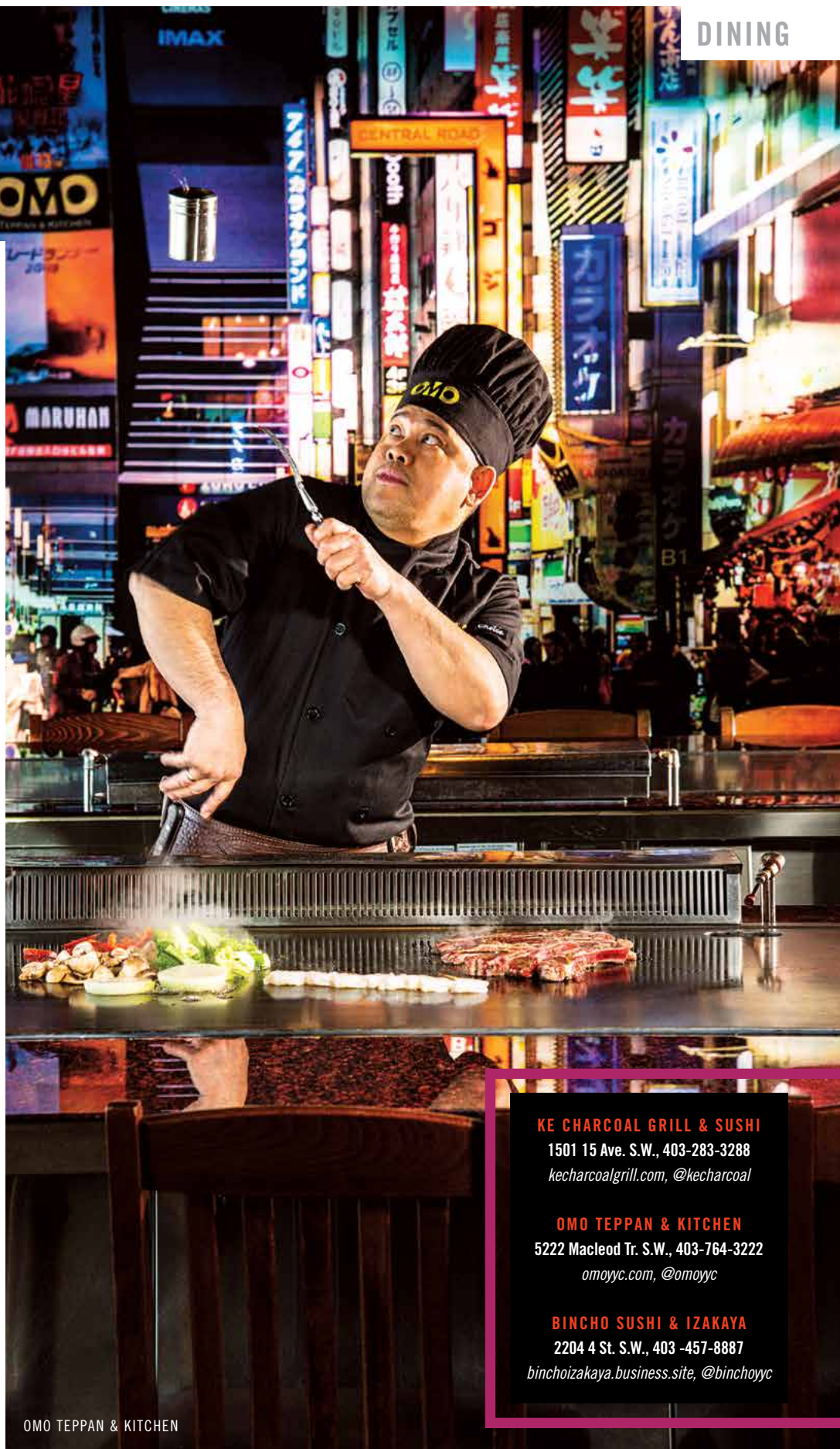
JAPANESE GRILLING

With the popularity of grilled meat dishes in Japan, it's hard to believe there was once a 1,200-year ban on eating meat. In 675 AD, Emperor Tenmu, a devout Buddhist, decreed the killing and consumption of animals to be taboo for religious reasons, and the ban was only officially lifted in the mid-19th century. The aroma of meat cooking over high heat is undeniably enticing, and Japanese cooking uses various grilling techniques and ingredients to coax out as much flavour as possible.

Yakitori literally translates to “grilling (*yaki*) bird (*tori*),” and refers to skewers of seasoned chicken grilled over charcoal or flame. It's common in Japan to stop for a beer and snack of yakitori as a way to decompress from the workday before heading home for dinner. In Calgary, Ke Charcoal Grill & Sushi has one of the largest selections of yakitori skewers in the city, using many different parts of the chicken, as well as other proteins, seafood and vegetables. The late-night yakitori specials have also made Ke an after-shift gathering spot for the hospitality industry.

Teppanyaki is the style of Japanese cooking that uses a large, flat grill. At Omo Teppan & Kitchen guests are treated to an interactive dining experience watching teppanyaki chefs cook their meal with showy flair moves and tricks. While the multi-course *teppan* meals offer guests a choice of protein, owner Eric Sit is especially proud of the restaurant's beef offerings. “We are the only restaurant in Alberta that serves both authentic Miyazaki A5 Japanese *wagyu*, as well as Brant Lake Wagyu, which is the highest-rated steak in Alberta,” Sit says.

Binchotan refers to the type of charcoal traditionally used in Japanese grilling. As its name implies, Bincho Sushi & Izakaya has a wide variety of charcoal-grilled dishes on the menu, along with sushi and drinks. Bincho's skewer varieties include *negima* (chicken thigh and green onion) and *mochi* bacon, a skewer of chewy rice cakes wrapped in bacon and grilled with Bincho's house sauce.



OMO TEPPAN & KITCHEN

KE CHARCOAL GRILL & SUSHI

1501 15 Ave. S.W., 403-283-3288

kecharcoalgrill.com, @kecharcoal

OMO TEPPAN & KITCHEN

5222 Macleod Tr. S.W., 403-764-3222

omoyyc.com, @omoyyc

BINCHO SUSHI & IZAKAYA

2204 4 St. S.W., 403-457-8887

binchoizakaya.business.site, @binchoyyc

MARIE

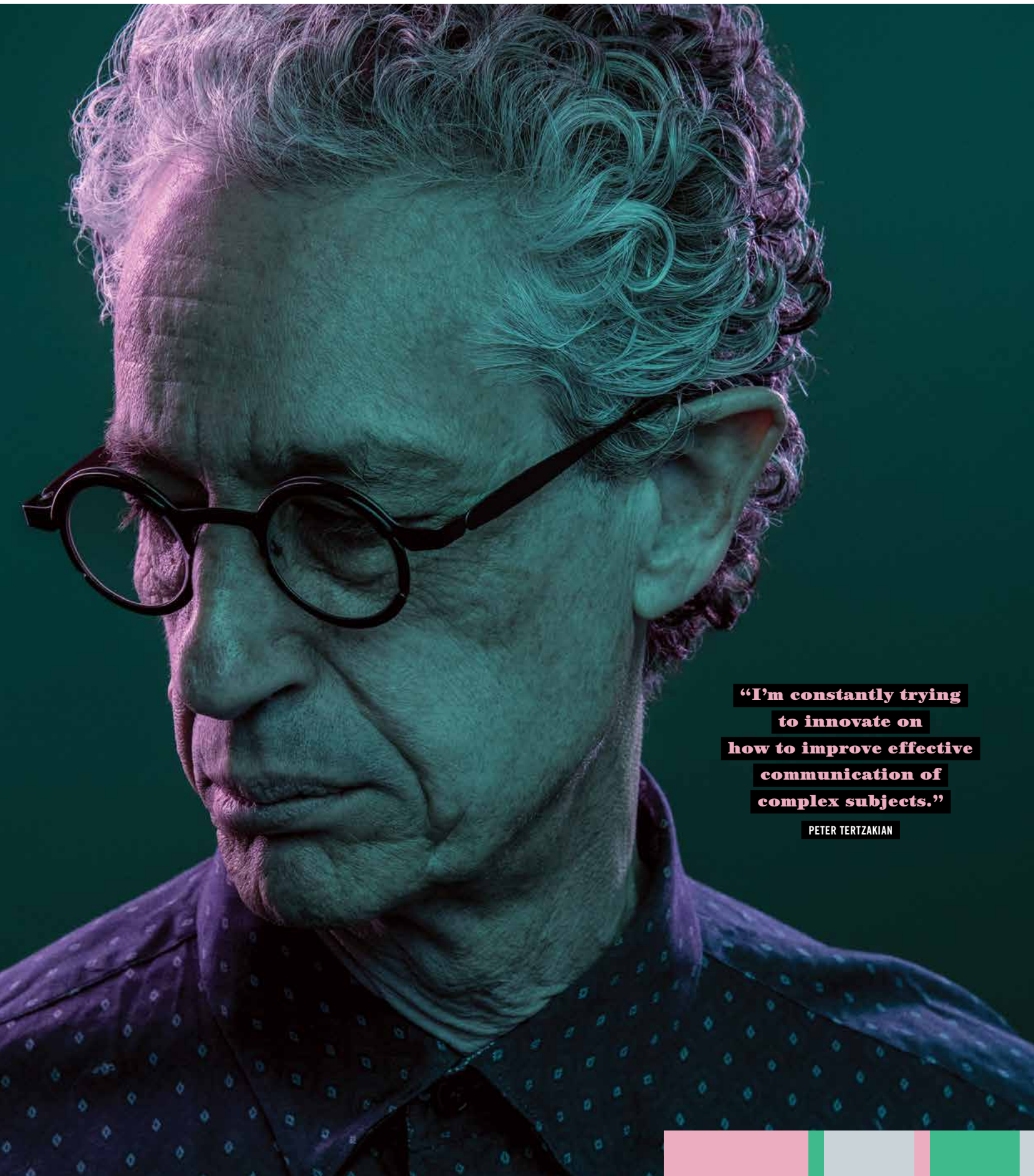
Iris Setlakwe coat, \$629, from Espy Experience; Icône jacket, \$129, and pants, \$89, and bralette top, \$25, all from Simons; Ganni platform sandals, \$575, from Leo Boutique; chain necklace, \$22, and earrings, \$24, from Oak + Fort; Bottega Veneta crossbody bag, \$3,970, from Holt Renfrew; Celine sunglasses, \$470, from Chinook Optical.





MARIE

Metallic joggers, \$149, and tank, \$98, from Kate Hewko; Jenny Bird chain necklace, \$235, from Leo Boutique; Casio watch, \$79, from Simons; Dr. Martens boots, \$250, from Little Burgundy; Acne Studios crossbody bag, \$250, and Versace sunglasses, \$306, both from Holt Renfrew.



**“I’m constantly trying
to innovate on
how to improve effective
communication of
complex subjects.”**

PETER TERTAKIAN

