



CHECK IN TOKYO

Like and Share this Tasty Treat

All scream for ice cream, but which ice cream can make people scream more?

MICHAEL LO and JURI KAMITANO share their approach.

Michael Lo and Juri Kamitano established Check in Tokyo, simply wanting to create a quality of product and service branding for ice cream lovers in Hong Kong. Fans of Japanese culture and soft serve ice cream, the pair set to work.

“We believed the current Hong Kong market lacks Japanese cultural services, and we wanted to create a happy experience whenever our customers purchase our goods,” says Lo.

“As we started planning our business model, we noticed that Hong Kong lacks quality soft serve companies. There are a lot, but in terms of quality, none has fully developed to represent the authentic Japanese soft serve. We want to bring both the authentic quality and service attitude for Hong Kong consumers.

Cool Product

The market has grown rapidly, and many competitors began to get involved in the business with some slight differences in their signature strategies.

“For us, we always stick with our principles: to bring Hong Kong the quality of food, services, and new product trends that have not yet been implemented by our competitors,” says Lo.

“We noticed that others tend to stick with the same flavour most of the time, and differentiate with additional ingredients topped on their core product. We strongly believe that soft serve only requires the core product itself, something simple but delicious. We introduce new flavours, those that have never been in the market. We put effort into making them of a higher grade through stronger density flavouring, giving customers something distinctively outstanding and not easily imitated.”

Check in Tokyo’s menu is difficult to duplicate. “The ramune soft serve is cur-



rently our signature and most in-demand flavour. Hong Kongers purposely came to us for this as word spread through social media. We appreciate the feedback of customers who have enjoyed our product. Ramune is a very original flavour that only Japan offers. We knew what we needed to differentiate ourselves by introducing this as our core product.

“We also introduce new flavours monthly, as well as new styles to enjoy soft serves. We understand that part of consumer behavior in Hong Kong is the tendency to take photos of the product first. Photogenic products serve as advertisement means for us. We always consider the presentation and quality of our products simultaneously. We believe it gives our products such an advantage.

“Our customers come not just to enjoy our product but to post about it and share with friends online. Our products are often found on blogs and personal

food portfolios. It created a chain effect exponentially to bring in more customers to our shop, with no advertising cost.”

Soft Serve Savvy

“We strive to produce the highest quality soft serve,” says Lo.

“All our products and ingredients come directly from Japan. Our secret recipes strengthen the product’s texture and taste. Majority of our planning focuses on product creation – how to make them affordable, attractive and delicious. Moreover, we offer quality over all elements of the business. We operate in a heavy traffic location to keep up sales volume as well as bargain for costs in ingredients with mass demand. Satisfaction of customers is our priority; we never shortchange anyone.”

Lo and Kamitano are planning to open two more booths in sustainable locations, and with that, implement quality control through a centralized kitchen. The company is also exploring the brand’s franchise potential for other cities such as Macau, Shenzhen, and others in Greater China.

“We believe customers deserve a better experience consuming soft serves. Soft serve ice cream is considered an all-time favourite dessert in Hong Kong, for its taste, look, affordability, and undeniable coolness.” ■

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