

Yakiniku rejuvenates and warms the heart because it is grilled together (Ishoni) with loved ones.



Left photo: The 11 in-charge employees on Fridays, who are friendly and get along well. Few people ever quit. Even if someone leaves occasionally, he/she usually returns to the store. "Young people in America job hop because they like to try new things. But if they ever want to come back, we welcome them with open arms. I myself have grown up that way," said co-owner Steven. Right photo: The restaurant at 6:30 p.m. on a Friday. It usually continues to be fully seated until after 9 p.m.

Gathering around the fire and grilling meat together (Ishoni) has been an eating tradition since ancient times. That's why Ishoni's yakiniku warms the bond between people.

Why did you choose an uncommon Japanese word "Ishoni" as the name of the restaurant even though you, the owner, are not Japanese

"Yakiniku warms people's hearts. The appeal of yakiniku does not only come from its taste, it teaches us the value of eating around the grill with loved ones," answered one of the co-owners, Steven Su (39 years old)."

Steven relocated to the United States from Taiwan with his parents when he was 12 years of age. His father was an owner and chef of a Chinese restaurant. Looking at his hard-working father, he thought: "I don't want a restaurant job." However, when he discovered yakiniku, he believed that he could be excellent in this job. He went to Taiwan more than 20 times to study yakiniku, but still felt that more experience was needed. When he reached 25, he started working at Kanpai, the most popular yakiniku restaurant in Taiwan.

In just one short year, he acquired both cooking and customer service skills. "One day, the Chairman of Kanpai, Mr. Hiraide, suddenly visited and complimented my yakiniku, saying: 'This yakiniku is really delicious.' I was overjoyed and inspired by the comment, and still remember it to this day. Kanpai is a kind company," reminisced Steven, while looking back on his training days.

The first Ishoni restaurant opened in June

2013 in Bellevue with 30-35 seats where customers cooked their food on Shichirin grills. Due to redevelopment, the restaurant opened at a second location in Seattle's Capitol Hill. The startup capital for the restaurant was 200 million Yen, which was raised by selling a residential real property.

In February 2021, the restaurant started offering takeout services. Despite launching the services during the COVID-19 pandemic, the restaurant is now operating much better than projected: it is thriving with a 2.5 turnover on weekdays and a 3.5 turnover on weekends. Capitol Hill is a popular and hip district for the young with very few high end restaurants. The trendy and affordable spots attract long lines. The decision to open the second location in this neighborhood turned out to be perfect.

"We have very low employee turn-over, probably due to the welcoming work environment. I want everyone to work hard to make Ishoni a happy place. The warmth of our employees' hearts is something that customers can feel directly. We want Ishoni to be a place where customers and employees can share the happiness of eating delicious yakiniku together."

Perhaps customers come to eat yakiniku to warm their hearts. By gathering around the grill and cooking and eating together, the connection between them becomes warmer too.

Why choose our restaurant?



Wade Jono (39) (front right) chose our restaurant to celebrate the birthday of Sunny Jono (40) (back right). They drove one hour from Everett just to visit us, and have also visited our Bellevue location three times before. Wade loves BBQ, including Korean-style BBQ, although he finds the seasoning a bit overwhelming. For Sunny's birthday, Wade decided to celebrate with the Japanese-style BBQ. The high quality of thinly sliced meat was excellent.



Ethan P (24) (back left) traveled three hours by train from Portland to visit the restaurant. His girlfriend (front left) frequents Japanese izakayas in her hometown of Portland, so she asked her friends in Seattle to recommend a restaurant. They found a highly rated restaurant on Google, which happened to be Ishoni. The restaurant lived up to its reputation, and they both enjoyed Japanese-style BBQ while drinking. "This restaurant is a winner," Ethan said with a smile.



<Popular menu> Photo 1: 5 Item Platter (\$49.95). More and more customers are enjoying the different flavors of each cut. Photo 2: Thickly sliced beef tongue (\$23.95). Photo 3: Japanese A5 Wagyu Truffle Sandwich (\$29.95).

