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Flesh & Buns Gets a New Look

Flesh & Buns, the renowned Japanese restaurant from Ross Shonhan specialising in steamed gua bao buns and credited with bringing the 'izakaya' Japanese pub experience to the London dining scene, is getting a brand new look. Following a short closure on 3 July and to coincide with its fourth year anniversary, the Japanese hotspot re-opened on Monday 17 July with refreshed interiors in keeping with the izakaya concept.

The vibrant underground space, part of the Bone Daddies collection of restaurants, opened to critical acclaim in 2013, with Shonhan changing perceptions of how Japanese food can be enjoyed. Clichéd clean aesthetics, sushi bays and a quiet dining ambience were nowhere to be seen, instead replaced by cool, edgy, interiors and a punchy Japanese food and drink menu, all served in a casual yet quality setting alongside a banging retro rock 'n' roll soundtrack – Shonhan ensures that any song played at his restaurants should be at least 20 years old. Four years on, and Flesh & Buns continues to excite London diners and foodie tourists alike, with its changing menu of Japanese drinking snacks, famous gua bao steamed buns, made-to-order sushi, robata-grilled dishes and inventive cocktails – all inspired by Shonhan's ongoing appreciation of Japanese food and culture.

The talented chef and restaurateur was keen to fully represent the Japanese izakaya experience with the refurbishment at Flesh & Buns – working with the design team at B3 Designers to create a more defined and comfortable space. B3 Designers worked in collaboration with Furniture Fusion, Lighting Corporation and sign writer Ged Palmer to create the new look restaurant.

Speaking to Premier Hospitality magazine about the project, Roisin Reilly from B3 Designers said: "Flesh & Buns, being the second restaurant we delivered for Ross, had to be approached in a different way to the St Christopher's Place Bone Daddies site. The dining experience is completely different, and called for the design



to be comfortable and a bit sleeker to reflect this. It's a basement site with arches throughout; it's been a great space to work on"

Interior additions include a larger bar area offering bar dining for up to 10 people, serving a variety of sake brands and a diverse range of cocktails including signature Frozen Yuzu Margarita, alongside the restaurant's varied sharing food menu. The new bar accommodates walk-ins as well as bookings. Draped fabric 'noren' screen curtains are a new addition to the restaurant, surrounding intimate dining booths and transporting diners to an authentic Japanese drinking den experience – bookable and ideal for groups of friends or colleagues meeting for lunch, dinner or Flesh & Buns ever-popular Sunday Brunch.

Roisin added: "The furniture used previously was very hard with no upholstery. There were some booths, but they were far too big, impractical and uncomfortable. We wanted to introduce different types of seating. The chairs now have leather upholstery and arms on them, which encourages you to enjoy the experience for longer, and in comfort. The booths have been redesigned, with dividing slatted screens. So as opposed to having booths that sit 12 people, we have reduced the size to make the overall space cosier with intimate hubs."

In a nod to Flesh & Buns popularity with large groups of diners, Shonhan has also introduced a 'Party Flesh' menu for groups of 6+ as part of the refresh – large cuts of roast suckling pig, ribs of beef and braised lamb shoulder with Kimchee, all served with a selection of sauces and pickles for table (pre-order essential, menu changing year-round).

Ross Shonhan commented: "Time has flown by since we opened Flesh & Buns, and we feel humbled that the restaurant is as busy now as when we opened. With the fourth anniversary, it felt like the right time for a refresh. We hope people will like the dining bar and new look interiors, which will be more in keeping with an authentic Japanese izakaya – right in the heart of Covent Garden."