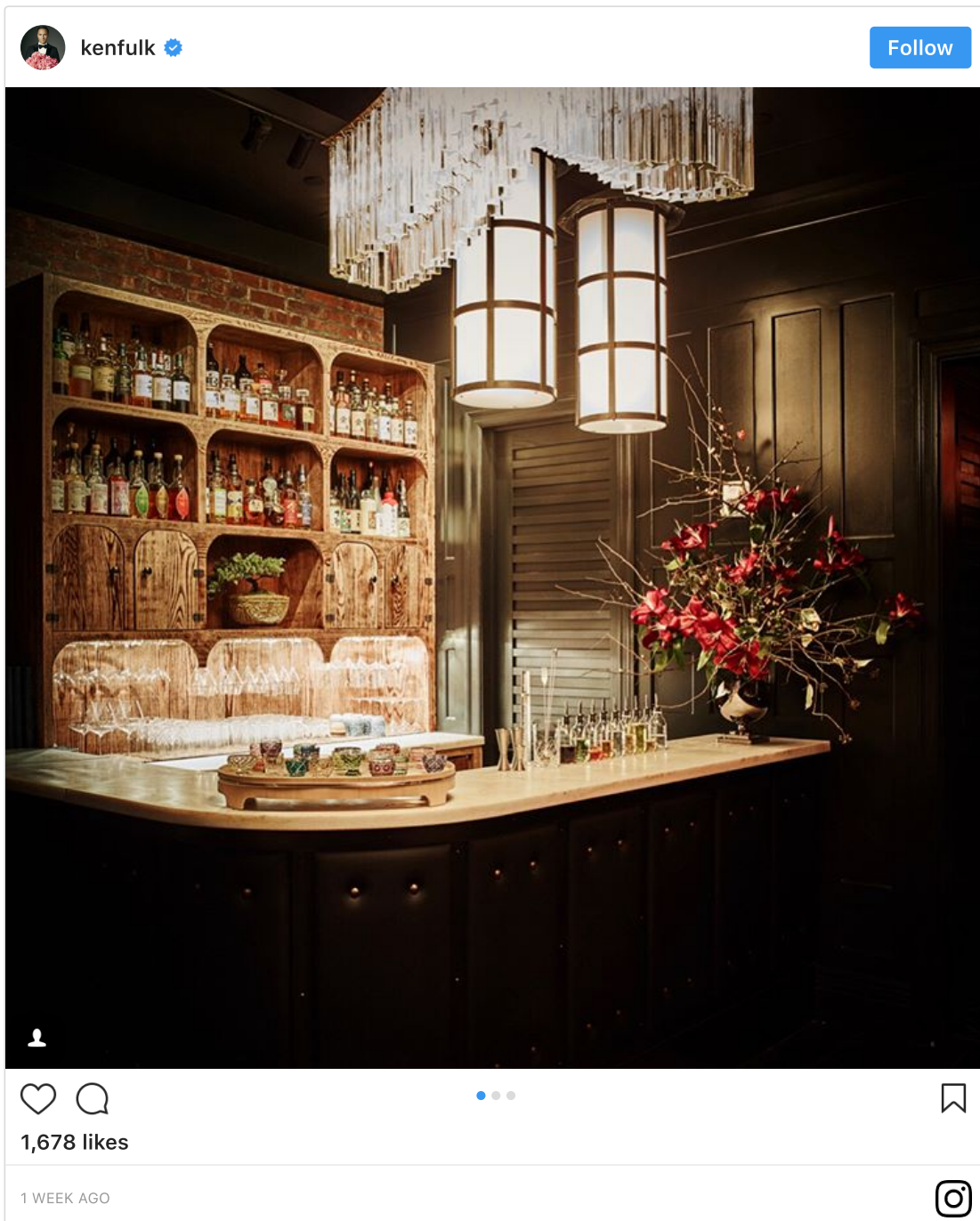


High-End New Omakase Combines Traditional Sushi With Opulent Decor

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Noda has a chef straight from Japan serving a \$285 omakase in a Ken Fulk-designed space

by [Stefanie Tudor](#) | [@stefanietuder](#) | Mar 8, 2018, 5:10pm EST



Nomad has a new high-end omakase spot that has run under the radar despite a very pedigreed team. Open now for a few weeks, **Noda** serves a \$285-per-person omakase (gratuity included) from chef **Shigeyuki Tsunoda**, brought here from Tokyo Michelin-starred restaurant Sushi Iwa by owners **Justin Hauser** and **David Hess**, in a **Ken Fulk**-designed space at 6 West 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue.

Hauser and Hess named the restaurant for Tsunoda and moved him and his entire family to NYC, hinging the experience on Tsunoda's resume as trained by Tokyo's Saito team and serving Michelin-starred food in Japan. As is standard practice at most high-end omakases, Tsunoda uses fish flown in from Japan, as well as some sourced locally. Various unis, monkfish liver, sea perch, toro, and more pepper the edomae-style tasting menu that changes daily but typically includes about eight starting dishes, 11 pieces of sushi, tomato, and an ice cream dessert.

What sets Noda apart from the many Japanese chef-run sushi bars around town is its space, designed by the venerable Fulk, who is known for his opulent and occasionally wacky aesthetic that was also recently displayed at the lavish **Legacy Records**. At Noda, Fulk cites "James Bond opium dens" — which, note to Fulk, maybe isn't the best descriptor — and *Alice in Wonderland* as style inspirations. That translates to red-shaded lighting, cobalt blue banquettes, and an antique apothecary cabinet in the bar area up front that specializes in Japanese whiskey and sake with servers donning *Comme des Garçons* uniforms. Pink velvet stools line the 10-seat sushi bar, which is backed up by an exposed brick wall.

It's a very different style than what's typically seen in sushi restaurants, which traditionally are full of light wood and fairly bare so as to keep the focus on the food. But owners Hauser and Hess wanted Noda to veer sharply away from that, instead focusing on the more luxe, rich designs seen in high-end tasting menu restaurants like Le Bernardin or Eleven Madison Park.



Ika nigiri at Noda | Photo via [Go B./Yelp](#)

“Sushi in NYC is as expensive as the three-Michelin other cuisines, but when you go to a sushi restaurant, if your table isn’t ready, you’re forced to stand by the host somewhat awkwardly. That whole arrival sequence bothers us when you’re spending \$200 to \$300 per person,” Hauser says. “When you go to Le Bernardin, you have an unbelievable arrival experience with a welcome drink. We thought when a customer is spending that amount of money, you have to give them a dining experience beyond the food that is deserved of that average check.”

As such, when diners arrive at Noda, they wait in the front bar area for a pre-dinner drink from the seasonally changing cocktail menu from former EN Japanese bartender **Nick Krenn**, who collaborated with Bar Goto owner Kenta Goto. Once everyone at that seating arrives, the entire group heads to the semi-circle bar. Omakases are also traditionally not that social, in part because groups of more than three can’t dine at the rectangular sushi bar — a point that Hauser and Hess wanted to change at Noda. Here, they created a custom circular wooden bar to circumvent that.

These changes certainly aren’t traditional to Japan, which fits into other newer sushi spots “Americanizing” the high-end sushi experience. **Shuko**, for example, plays hip hop over the speakers, while O Ya adds unexpected ingredients such as “**wagyu dust**.”

Noda is Hauser and Hess’ first restaurant, though Hauser has worked in restaurants before and went to Cornell’s hospitality school and Hess graduated from Harvard Business School. They financed the restaurant themselves — both come from finance backgrounds — and with the help of family and friends; Fulk also ended up investing. The guys also own **Bondi Sushi** next door, a much more casual sushi spot with rolls in the \$10 range, though Tsunoda isn’t involved in that space.

Noda is now open for dinner Tuesday through Saturday with seatings at 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., as well as a Monday 8 p.m. seating, with reservations available on Tock.

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Noda

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