

REIGN of CHAOS

UNLEASH AND UNWIND IN AN
UNUSUAL BAR SHAKING UP
TOKYO'S DRINKS SCENE

By AUDREY FOO

the most, as our industry is so tightly knit that we're often only separated by two degrees!"

Two of the most popular cocktails are the Cheung Fun Old Fashioned (sesame-infused bourbon, soy caramel, orange and angostura bitters, sesame seed garnish), which Graham says "always gets a smile from our Hong Kong visitors, which I love as it's my homage to my old home," and the "super-smashable" Tea Sea (gin, grappa, sauvignon blanc, green tea, lime, smoky salt).

There are also low- and non-alcoholic options and plenty of Graham's and Murata's two great loves: Champagne and agave. The first concept menu is planned for spring 2024.

Like the drinks, the food is globally-inspired. The menu, supervised by chef Daniel Calvert of two Michelin-star *Sézanne*, includes bagels with cream cheese and caviar and a British-influenced coronation chicken *monaka* (Japanese wafer).

Upmarket, casual, refined, rowdy — Tokyo Confidential defies pigeonholing. No wonder it attracted a visit from author Haruki Murakami, master chronicler of surreal plotlines and human quirks.



Tokyo Confidential

9F, The V-City Azabu-Juban Place,
1-6-1 Azabu Juban, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Chaos is a virtue at Tokyo Confidential, an eclectic new Tokyo venue in the city, where incoherence is the most coherent theme.

It opened in October 2023 in embassy- and expat-rich Azabu Juban, an area with long-established stores and trendy new restaurants. Tokyo Confidential has a diverse, international crew led by head bartender Wakana Murata.

Furnishings that evoke a modern Japanese living room contrast with punk-style graphics by artists from Argentina and the U.S. At the barrier-free counter, customers can commune right next to the staff — unlike classic, high-end Japanese bars where quietly watching bartenders perform their craft while seated opposite is the norm.

U.K.-born founder Holly Graham lived in Hong Kong for nine years before moving to Tokyo to start Tokyo Confidential. As an author, editor, educator, judge and mixologist — she's a big authority in the beverage world.

Graham's place channels a house party packed with different vibes and personalities. Guests can choose their own style of hedonism: whether it's intimate conversation with a date or getting raucous with the crowd. The slogan is "Pull up. 'Fess up." There are no reservations (except for Mondays and Tuesdays when the open terrace or whole space is bookable.)

Graham reflects on her patrons: "We've got such a good mix of people from all walks of life. Different cultures, countries, ages and preferences, but they all seem to love our ethos and what we bring to the scene. We also have a healthy dose of curious fellow bar industry professionals from all over the world. This warms my heart

Photos MILLIE TANG



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わフ第本ウミヨ入止ミケスヌ済棋始兼ちなか。指びもぶ予速のば基62意きルーつ供元えぼめ著田レヲフト勞軒ラ会恒ぶぎべ経入8観ヨ報試ヌクモル郎率マヨエ是事さ稿俊ゆち。