



An artist's impression of the cafe, which will let customers experience Japanese culture through *kawaii* products, gourmet food and workshops, and also feature items and services to encourage travel to Japan.

World's first Japan Rail Cafe coming to Singapore: GuocoLand

By Grace So
graceso@sph.com.sg

Singapore

GUOCOLAND on Wednesday announced that it will be bringing the world's first Japan Rail Cafe to Singapore among a slew of new-to-market food-and-beverage (F&B) concepts that represent a 70 per cent take-up of retail space at Tanjong Pagar Centre.

The tourist-themed Japan Rail Cafe will be operated by Japan's largest rail operator, East Japan Railway Company (JR East), and is set to open in the fourth quarter this year.

The cafe will allow customers to experience Japanese culture through an array of *kawaii* ("cute", in Japanese) products, gourmet Japanese food, and in-store educational workshops.

In addition, the cafe will feature items and services to encourage travel to Japan, such as travel itinerary recommendations, in-store ticket counters for purchasing train passes, as well as pop-up displays of Japan's tourist destinations in collaboration with the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO).

Expressing his excitement about the new cafe, Japan Rail Cafe's general manager Makoto Yamataka said: "We decided to open our world's first tourism-themed cafe in Singapore as we believe Singapore travellers are extremely experienced, adventurous and would influence travel trends."

GuocoLand said in a release on Wednesday that Japan Rail Cafe will enhance Tanjong Pagar Centre as a "transit-oriented development" – a mixed-use residential and commercial space designed to maximise access to public transport, hence encouraging transit ridership.

When completed in the third quarter, the 290-metre-high Tanjong Pagar Centre will take over the title of Singapore's tallest building, and introduce many other new concepts to the local F&B scene.

The development will also bring in several new-to-market brands including Korean restaurant SBCD Tofu House, which specialises in Sundubu; The Little Island, which serves authentic Penang-style cuisine; and Chalong, which serves Thai fusion bentos.

Tanjong Pagar Centre has been de-

signed to include a large 150,000 square foot landscaped urban park, which will house even more F&B outlets in an al fresco dining environment under a 16-metre-high glass canopy.

The urban park also contains a community space that can accommodate up to 2,000 people for a large range of events including music and the arts.

The development's expansive lifestyle offerings, which are built alongside office areas, are part of GuocoLand's strategy to position it as a unique destination that integrates lifestyle and commercial spaces.

GuocoLand Singapore's general manager (commercial) Valerie Wong said: "We want Tanjong Pagar Centre to be a major driver in transforming the district into a unique yet relevant lifestyle hotspot that offers a new dimension to the definition of the CBD (central business district)."

Ms Wong also believes that the development's new-to-market tenants and concepts, such as the Japan Rail Cafe, will further boost Tanjong Pagar Centre's status as "being a first in many aspects".