

Hayabusa Tohoku Shinkansen *GranClass* Service

Nippon Restaurant Enterprise Co., Ltd

Hayabusa services, the cutting-edge Tohoku Shinkansen E5 Series rolling stock making two daily round trips between Tokyo and Shin-Aomori and one between Tokyo and Sendai, were launched on 5 March 2011.

Hayabusa is Japan's first shinkansen to include the first-class section called *GranClass*, which has its own attendants providing passengers with constant top-class service.

Comfort and Quiet

JR East intends *GranClass* to be a feature shinkansen service. The name is derived from the words 'gran', meaning big, and 'class' in the sense of grade. We feel this name clearly conveys our concept of 'high-class and comfortable travelling space and services'.

The carriages have been designed around the catchphrase 'Exclusive Dream—special travel moments, just for you'. The interior design is unconventional but elegant and refined. Luxurious materials such as real leather have been used for the seats, which are both comfortable and also employ a novel back shell-type design. The seat pitch is 1300 mm and the maximum reclining angle is 45°, providing passengers with a wide personal space where they can relax completely without having to worry about bothering other passengers.

Another special feature of *GranClass* is that Japanese and Western-style light meals using typical Tohoku ingredients are provided, as are drinks, including alcohol. The Green Cars on the *Hayate* and *Komachi* Tohoku Shinkansen already provide soft drinks and moistened



Series E5 *Hayabusa* shinkansen *GranClass* Interior

(NRE)



GranClass drink and snack service on individual cocktail tray (JR East)



GranClass light western meal (JR East)



GranClass Japanese meal offered on services to Tokyo (JR East)



GranClass Japanese meal offered on services to Aomori (JR East)

hand towels, but *GranClass* differs in that it offers specially-produced original wines and snacks with the *GranClass* logo, as well as aromatic coffee and herbal teas. The blankets, eye masks, slippers and shoehorns are also of higher quality; every item that each of our passengers uses is typical *GranClass* high quality.

Meticulous Service for Each Passenger

So that our passengers can relax fully onboard, an important part of the attendants' job is to organize on-demand services for them by referring to data such as the stations where they will board and alight. Unlike an airplane, passengers get on and off a shinkansen at stations along the way, so attendants must always be aware of how to pace and tailor the service for each passenger.

The first contact with a newly boarded passenger is to provide a moistened hand towel and welcoming drink once they are seated. We also provide these with a light meal if the passenger so desires. After this, the pace is customized to each passenger, and we are careful to provide on-demand

services accordingly.

We expect our professional attendants to provide attentive service that displays consideration and vigilance. It is also important that the optimum service for any given situation is provided, so they need to acquire the correct knowledge to do so, and to always focus on their work while remaining flexible and aware of the wider picture. Our training includes the importance of 'self-study' so that our attendants make our passengers' journey as pleasant as possible and leave them with a good impression. ■

Acknowledgment

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