

AS SEEN IN
the

Parklander

May 2008



Sushi Palace HIBACHI STEAK HOUSE

By Charles Marcanetti

With specialties from Japan, Thailand, China, and Vietnam, and beautiful décor, Sushi Palace Hibachi Steak House, located at 5791 Coral Ridge Drive, Coral Springs (954-510-7557), is already a fixture in our wonderful community.

The real kicker here is that this is also a Hibachi restaurant. With six state-of-the-art Hibachi locations and family seating, patrons are treated to a wonderfully entertain-

ing food preparation ceremony. We'll get to that in a minute. First, though, let me tell you about a few things I discovered. Our waitress for the evening was Winnie who recommended an amazing drink as a starter. It's called Sushi Palace Cooler. It is made by combining plum wine with raspberry juice, sake and Sprite. It's marvelous and I can't recommend it more highly. We also shared a Tsunami Martini which is Vodka, Southern Comfort, Blue Curacao, sake, sour mix, and Pina Colada mix nestled on bottom, and the very special Pretty Woman, a delicate combination of vodka, strawberry puree, pineapple, sour mix, and Midori. Just to test the bartender's abilities, we also had a Piña Colada, which because it is ubiquitous, gives us a platform from which to compare. All the drinks were fun, light, and perfect for the Asian cuisine upon which we were about to gorge ourselves.

We started with several perfectly prepared appetizers. The soft shell crab (\$6.95) is lightly breaded and prepared with a mildly seasoned taste-satisfying quick-fry method that allows for the fullness of the crab to be expressed and not lost in the batter. We had a very enjoyable Calamari Sautéed in Garlic Sauce (\$6.95) which proved, once again, that calamari is just as flavorful (if not more so) when sautéed as when it is fried, and that it is just as delicate to the palate when not battered as when battered. The Alaska King Crab Puffs (\$6.95) were unique to Sushi Palace, and were quite delightful. I had the Steamed Lobster and Shrimp Shumai (\$6.95), served with a honey mustard sauce which I found to be tasty, light and well-balanced with fish and spice. Whenever I can I sample Age Tofu (sometimes called Age Dofu) (\$5.95) which is lightly fried cubes of tofu served with tempura sauce. I always find Age Tofu to be a gentle respite from fish and meat which nevertheless stands up to the full flavored evening's fare.

I am compelled now to again make a strong recommendation: please try the Shrimp, Crabmeat & Lobster Wonton Soup (\$4.50) if it is available on your visit. The broth has the same velvety texture as I find in Evian water (I'm not saying it is made with Evian, it just tastes that way). It is delicious, light and a perfect beginning to the Hibachi "show" about to follow.

But, still, and before we get to the highlight of the evening, let me tell you about the Sushi I sampled (don't I always?). We had a Sushi/Sashimi Boat (from \$18.95 for one very hungry person to \$74.94 for four hungry people). The fish was fresh, well-sized, and matched with tasty rice. The Volcano Roll (\$10.50), the Dynamite Roll (\$10.50), and the Rainbow Roll (\$9.95) were competitive with this area's excellent Sushi restaurants.

O.K., I've made you wait long enough. Let's describe the hibachi presentation.

Our Hibachi chef for the evening was Tommy, a South Vietnamese native, here for seventeen years who was as much a showman as master chef. He wheeled out the vegetables to be melded with the meat and seafood, and then displayed them proudly so that we could observe their freshness, crispness, and bright, beautiful coloration. Alongside the now sizzling vegetables he playfully rolled a hardboiled egg and then suddenly, as if triggered by some uncontrolled urge to slice... wham... wham... wham three strikes with his spatula and the egg is layered thin, ready for garnishing the vegetables, which he now flips and spins and juggles to guarantee an even, quick cooking. At the same time he rotates the spatula with one hand and intermittently claps the knife to the spatula creating a cymbal-like sound as if accompanying himself in this, his orchestrated concerto. Then he lays out the rice and soy to make the fried rice which he constantly moves to avoid hardening and then, with the other hand, he lays in the vegetables and voila, vegetable fried rice. He quickly serves perfect portions resting atop his spatula to each of us and then, without skipping a beat, begins the meat and seafood preparation. We ordered Filet Mignon (\$18.95), Scallops (\$16.95), and Lobster (\$22.95) hibachi. Tommy begins. One would think that because of the different textures and thicknesses that the foods would be placed on the grill-face one at a time. But, it is not true with Hibachi cooking. The foods are simultaneously placed for cooking on the various heated locations and Tommy masterfully "plays" with "his" food. He first sears the steak, then rolls the scallops, and next, he separates out the lobster meat from the shell. Then, again, wham, wham, and wham, the maniac strikes and the steak is sliced through, but not with the spatula, rather with a razor sharp chef's knife. He penetrated the steak far enough to slice it but not far enough to strike the blade to the metal cooking surface. Wow, what precision and accuracy. I hope he never gets mad at me!

The food, now perfectly cooked to our choice, is served and we devour a delicious meal made all the more savory by the fantastic presentation.

If you're looking for a fun-filled, family friendly evening of delicious, beautifully prepared food in an up beat, clean, and well lighted restaurant, this is your place. Say hello to the owner, Steve...who will make your evening (or lunch) more enjoyable with his ever present smile and genuine good wishes.

Sushi Palace Hibachi Steak House is located at:

5791 Coral Ridge Drive, Coral Springs
(P) (954-510-7557)

Hours of Operation:

Lunch: Mon-Sun 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Dinner: Sun-Thurs 4:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
Fri and Sat. 4:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

