

Clint Eats



By Clint Hamblin



Samurai's Maki Roll

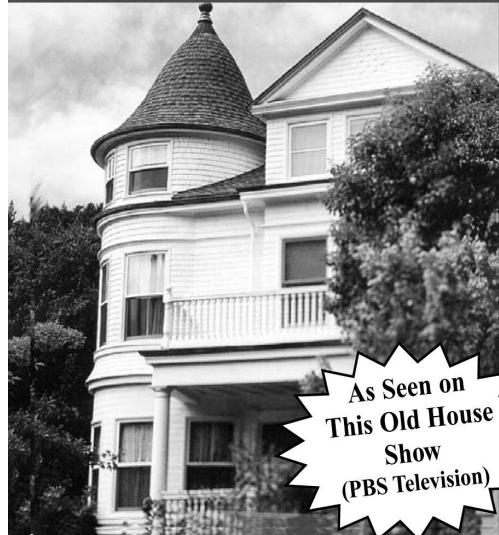
New Restaurants

Boston's Japanese food invasion has gone way beyond new restaurants specializing in this distinctive cuisine with many upscale eateries now including some form of raw tuna or salmon on their menu. We have developed a good sense of what tra-

ditional Japanese food is, but all that has changed. Traditional Japanese cuisine in Boston is evolving with chefs cultivating an "anything goes" attitude merging new combinations of ingredients that can easily surprise and tantalize a willing palate.

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A Sushi Crown from Sushi-Teq for Miss Massachusetts

PHOTO: COURTESY OF INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL

Samurai Restaurant recently opened in their subterranean 827 Boylston Street location and chef Makoto Hamada has developed an adventurous menu bringing together distinctive flavors of dissimilar cultures. How about Hamachi belly sashimi covered with corn salsa? This is not exactly Japanese or Mexican but definitely delicious fusion cuisine that really works.

Samurai offers traditional sushi and sashimi that is perfectly prepared including Toro, Black Seabass, Tuna, Hirame and Iwashi. The sushi rice falls apart in your mouth, not on the way, and the ama ebi or raw sweet shrimp is exceptional. You may have to develop a taste for this seasonal shrimp delicacy, but once you do, you'll be looking for it all year round.

Samurai's bar serves various brands of sake and exotic cocktails, and the Mango Mai Tai and the Green Tea Martini are worthy of your attention. Great atmosphere and great service puts Samurai close to the top of the list for Boston Japanese cuisine.

Sushi-Teq. And speaking of fusion Japanese food, Sushi-Teq is now open at the elegant InterContinental Hotel located at 510 Atlantic Avenue. Truly delicious sushi, the likes of which you have never tasted before, includes outstanding maki rolls combining flavors and ingredients certainly not common in a traditional Japanese restaurant. Try the Tuna Mozzarella which includes spiced olive oil coated fresh maguro (raw tuna), tomato, mozzarella, Kochujan garlic olive oil, frisee and slivers of red pepper. It's not the sushi your okaasan (Japanese mother) might have made.

What's the Teq of Sushi-Teq? Tequila! Not sake, although sake and many creative cocktails are available, tequila is clearly the focus and the drinks are distinctive. Sushi-Teq offers 69 premium vintage agave tequilas, a variety of margaritas, and specialty cocktails. How about a raspberry or a jalapeño cocktail with your maki roll? Now that's hot!

Sushi-Teq is a "cozy" restaurant but there are plans to provide access to the vast InterContinental terrace on the water where sushi devotees can sit at a table and enjoy the well-manicured gardens and the view of the water. Beginning in May, Sushi-Teq launches their summer "Tequila Tuesdays," including salsa dancing, tequila and sushi under the stars. Very cool, indeed.

Banq Restaurant. As the South End continues to grow, restaurants are being developed from buildings never designed for that purpose. Boston restaurateurs Hemant Chowdhry and Mark Raab have opened Banq located at 1375 Washington Street in the totally renovated Penny Savings Bank building originally constructed in 1917. Waves of wood panels cover the ceilings and walls creating a one-

of-a-kind environment and a perfect background for this contemporary French and Southeastern Asia style restaurant. Just seeing the architectural redesign of this space is worth a visit.

Ranveer Brar, formerly executive chef of The Claridges in New Dehli, uses his classical French training and influences from work and travel in Singapore, India, London and Southeast Asia to create appetizers like the succulent Coho Salmon on a sugarcane stick with watercress and cherry tomato vinaigrette.

How about tasting a Soy Ginger Lamb Spring Roll with Roquefort glaze? Or try the Fire-Charred Sea Scallops with Indian lentils. The Duck Confit Samosa with shallots and a spicy Indian tamarind glaze is a tasting experience to remember.

Banq's bar includes an extensive wine list, as well as a variety of unusual mixed drinks, including the popular Japanese Side car made from sake, apricot brandy and lemon lime. Compai!

MFA Entertains Spanish Royalty. The MFA rolled out the red carpet for the Princess Doña Christina de Borbón, Infanta, the Princess of Spain, who, along with an impressive international guest list including Ted Kennedy and Mrs. Victoria Kennedy, celebrated the exhibition openings of "El Greco to Velázquez: Art during the Reign of Philip III" and "Antonio López García."

In keeping with the Spanish theme, a crowd of over 1,000 enjoyed paella served with fruity sangria. Flamenco dancers entertained guests before and after touring the exhibition.



Her Royal Highness Doña Christina de Borbón, Infanta of Spain with His Excellency Don Iñaki Urdangarin, Duke of Palma

PHOTO: CLINT HAMBLIN