

FOOD & WINE

SEPTEMBER 2005

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Los Angeles

BY BRAD JOHNSON

Beacon Chef Kazuto Matsusaka spent nearly a decade at Wolfgang Puck's influential Chinois on Main beginning in the '80s. Now he's serving some of the city's best Asian fusion food in the historic Helms Bakery complex. He prepares luscious miso-marinated black cod, grilled hanger steak with wasabi relish, and tuna sashimi pizza, an Asian version of Wolfgang's famous smoked salmon pizza.

DETAILS 3280 Helms Ave.; 310-838-7500.

Orris On the west side of L.A., a stretch of Sawtelle Boulevard has become an Asian pop culture epicenter. In the heart of it is Orris, a wood-and-stainless-steel place that looks like any sushi bar in town, only it isn't a sushi bar. Chef Hideo Yamashiro, who

owns South Pasadena's Shiro restaurant, blends European, Asian and Californian cuisines in a selection of small plates that appeal to a sake-thirsty clientele—choices like delicate shrimp wontons in shiitake sauce or sweet *shishito* peppers with crisp prosciutto.

DETAILS 2006 Sawtelle Blvd.; 310-268-2212.

Urasawa In a Rodeo Drive shopping center, what is likely the most expensive restaurant on the West Coast—dinners start at \$250—accommodates a maximum of 10 people. Chef-owner Hiro Urasawa serves exacting and exquisite dishes including his legendary sushi (baby barracuda over shiso rice, for instance) and grilled Kobe beef with a small pile of homemade salt, made from boiled seaweed. Japanese businessmen

closing a big deal have been known to make reservations from the Tokyo airport.

DETAILS 218 N. Rodeo Dr., Beverly Hills, CA; 310-247-8939.

Yi Cuisine At one of L.A.'s hottest spots, chef Rodelio Aglibot serves delicious takes on Asian classics: tender Vietnamese lemongrass beef, Chinese honey-walnut shrimp and everybody's favorite—Filipino deep-fried pork shank laced with foie gras. The decor features real-gold-and-wood panels illustrating the elements of feng shui and a two-story waterfall.

DETAILS 7910 W. 3rd St.; 323-658-8028.

Chicago

BY LISA FUTTERMAN

Meiji Meiji (named for a period of major democratic reform in Japan) flies in fish from Tokyo's markets

that's not often seen in the Midwest, like *kin medai* (goldeneye snapper). The restaurant is also known for its unusual rolls, like the eel-and-jalapeño-tempura roll, topped with strawberries. Giant Brazilian steelwood panels hang over the heads of the busy sushi chefs.

DETAILS 623 W. Randolph St.; 312-887-9999.

Shanghai Terrace

In a narrow dining room trimmed with red lacquer and decorated with antique Chinese vases, a 1930s-Shanghai atmosphere prevails. In the recently enlarged kitchen, old-school Asian chefs stir-fry peanut-flecked kung pao scallops while the more experimental cooks working alongside serve seared Kobe beef *tataki* with spicy sesame slaw.

DETAILS The Peninsula Chicago, 108 E. Superior St.; 312-573-6744.

chic sushi

JAPONAIS, CHICAGO

The team behind Chicago hot spots Le Colonial, Le Passage and Mirai Sushi has transformed an industrial warehouse into a theatrical Japanese restaurant. At the riverside lounge, playful cocktails like Asian pear martinis accompany Jun Ichikawa's excellent sushi, including octopus rolls topped with spicy tuna tartare. The cooked menu features dishes like seven-spice prime rib with sea urchin hollandaise. **DETAILS** 600 W. Chicago Ave.; 312-822-9600. —L.F.

