



KEN HIVELY Los Angeles Times

CHEF: Hideo Yamashiro prepares a dish at his new restaurant, *Orris*, where those catfish fans will have to find a new menu favorite.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Shiro plants roots on Westside

By S. IRENE VIRBILA
Times Staff Writer

IT'S no secret that Hideo Yamashiro of South Pasadena's Shiro restaurant has been itching to do something else — something besides frying catfish all night long. Whole, deep-fried catfish with ponzu is, to his everlasting chagrin, the single most requested dish at Shiro.

A few weeks ago, the Chicago alum, who goes by the name Shiro, broke out with a new restaurant on Sawtelle Boulevard in West Los Angeles. The name, *Orris*, which means the root of the flower, iris, is a bit obscure perhaps, but Shiro likes it and depicts the flower in rapid brush-strokes at the top of his menu here.

Liberated from behind the scenes by an open kitchen, Shiro, wearing an unconventional hat

instead of the usual toque, looks happy. The soundtrack plays cool jazz. Friends and longtime fans drop by to have a few small plates at the counter and chat. The mood is lively, the setting casual.

And sorry, no catfish. No rice either. At *Orris*, Shiro is intent on exploring the world of small plates — tapas, Shiro style. Most have a definite Franco-Japanese bent, but he's also into charcuterie and cheese, spring rolls and smoked salmon with his interesting and moderately priced menu, which includes half a dozen cold dishes and slightly more hot dishes.

Jump into the menu anywhere: It's strictly mix and match. We started with Prince Edward Island mussels steamed in white wine and served with a pungent garlic sauce for \$8. Dungeness crab salad with julienned cucumber is just \$8.50, a trio of plump crab cakes in whole-grain

Orris

Where: 2006 Sawtelle Blvd., West Los Angeles

When: 6 to 10:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Street and lot parking behind (valet Thursday, Friday and Saturday).

Cost: Cold dishes \$6.60 to \$11; hot dishes \$5 to \$9. Beer and wine.

Info: (310) 268-2212

mustard sauce, \$8.50. We liked the crisp, flaky spring rolls stuffed with chunks of shrimp and scallop so much, we ordered them twice.

If you love duck, go for the roasted Sonoma duck breast, thinly sliced and served with a dab of *yuzu* and green chile. Grilled quail with white beans and sage is juicy and tender. And a special of lamb loin carpaccio

infused with rosemary and garlic is delicious too. When all of these are under \$10, and portions big enough for all three of us to have a share, it seems a phenomenal bargain for the quality of the cooking.

And yes, if anybody's asking, Shiro has brought his famous ravioli stuffed with shrimp mousse in shiitake mushroom sauce to *Orris*. Also, his potato dauphinois, which is loose and fresh, with the cream sliding off the perfectly cooked potatoes.

What's for dessert? Ice creams and sorbets from L.A.'s own (and excellent) *Ciao Bella*. The blackberry Cabernet sorbet is particularly recommended.

Folks on the Westside seem to be getting more than their fair share of new, interesting neighborhood restaurants: Here's one more place to grab a quick bite or hang for a while with a bottle of sake or wine.

Just don't expect any catfish.