

Haute Chef's 'Fish Bar' is an in-home Japanese cuisine party service

BY SEAN BELK

Jode' Hyman was invited to a dinner party one night and saw her favorite dish, sushi, as one of the catered items.

She had seen it before— your typical disappointing rolls and sauces that find their way into so many markets and make-shift restaurants all over the coast.

But for Hyman, of Signal Hill, sushi is more than just an appetizer or a quick way to energize your palette.

After tasting some of the best and worst cuisine as a restaurant critic and event planner for 15 years, a light went off in her head.

"How can I show people that they can have a dynamic sushi experience, every time?" she thought to herself.

There was only one solution.

"The only way we can do it is if we are on the premises, where the chef is preparing fresh from the sushi case, hand-rolled and cut-to-order." Hyman said.

And that's exactly what she designed.

After crafting together her own rustic, but functional mobile sushi bar, Hyman has begun offering exquisite Japanese cuisine, with not only quality, well trained sushi chefs, but also the highest quality fresh fish, and locally grown Organic or Farmers Market produce. Most of all, unlike most dinner parties or events you throw in your home, it comes without the mess to clean up - It's just part of the package.

As the owner of "Haute Chefs", Hyman has recently introduced her new "Fish Bar," division, placing professional local chefs in the homes of creative party planners that want to give their guests a fun and new way to "experience" sushi, like it should be.

"People who love sushi have never had this available to them



FLAVORS: This sushi dish is one of many fusion-style cuisines that Jode' Hyman offers as part of her Haute Chef's Fish Bar. Seen below, a functional mobile sushi bar that she offers with a chef as a catering service for special events.

Taking sushi to a new level

before," she said.

"They get both the cultural and sensual experience of what sushi represents."

And what better place to debut her Fish Bar than at Morry's of Naples, located at 5764 E. 2nd St. in Long Beach, on Sunday, June 29 from 5 to 7 p.m. The intimate setting of Morry's "private Back-Room" is where Hyman will be showing off the creative artistry of her chef, with six courses of sushi and sake or wine pairings offered by the experts at Morry's. This special event is restricted to only 30 guests, so for reservations call Morry's at (562) 433-0405.

During the event, guests will get a taste from Fish-Bar's mobile sushi case, which she said gives the ultimate in-home experience.

While sushi might be on the top of her list, it isn't her only culinary venture.

The idea spawned from her original business known as Haute

Chefs, which provides in-home interactive culinary lessons, where you select your own menu and choose from a network of talented chefs, as well as for those with a sweet tooth "Cherry On Top Ice Cream Catering" which boasts lovely ladies scooping ice-cream sundaes for adults. But, for the Fish Bar, guests get to relax and try Japanese cuisine, which seems to have more healthy elements than many other Asian cuisines.

For one, she said, in traditional sushi preparation, there are no heavy sauces. "You're getting a good clean food experience," "Personally I'm such a sushi lover I could eat sushi seven days a week and be completely satisfied."

However, having eaten sushi for so long, she said there have been far too many bad sushi experiences. "Do we want something fast and filling, do you want to compromise quality for quick and cheap?" she asks. "You're not going to get the same sushi."

For Hyman, bringing the chef and the sushi directly to the home is worth the price for the type of quality she insists upon for her customers. Fish is delicate if it's not handled properly, she said, and if not fresh, bacteria runs rampant. Fish more than any other types of foods require a lot of temperature control.

"One out of three times I dine out, I get sick because of the inappropriately handled product," Hyman said.

Unlike a refrigerated case like you see in most sushi outfits, the Fish Bar was made out of two different kinds of Japanese maple and

balsa woods with design specifications that make it both mobile and functional. It keeps its temperature with proper insulation, and dry ice strategically placed in the bottom of the case. About four feet in length, the bar is lightweight and easy to move around, and accommodate most any size kitchen counter or outdoor table setting.

Planning a perfect palette

As for the fish, she said it's pretty close to going up to a fishing dock and grabbing it out of the fisherman's net with everything hand-selected and picked fresh the same day of your event.

The beauty of the Fish Bar, Hyman said, is the host can pre-select their own sushi favorites, or choose from a menu guide of specialties that are the most popular. My chefs can make just about anything, so you don't need to feel confined to a specific menu like a restaurant."

"I want people to know that the menu is evolving based on each customer's needs," she said.

For instance, at a recent dinner party, there were about 35 guests and the menu was pre-selected by the hostess. She included salmon, Blu-fin tuna (highest grade) spicy scallops and spicy shrimp, Unagi (freshwater eel), seared Albacore and Yellowtail.

The chef for the evening, Chef Vu, created a variety of traditional and Fusion style rolls and Nigiri items, and towards the end of the evening, whatever was left over in the way of fish, he created his own "free-style" items, which the guests indulged in.

"The goal is to have nothing left behind in the way of fish," Hyman said.

Typically, hostesses can either select the traditional— sushi, sashimi, (sliced raw fish), Nigiri, (fish or vegetables placed on top of rice) rolls, cut rolls or hand rolls, generally wrapped in seaweed, soy-paper or rice.

Hyman also suggests that guests might want to try the fusion style— which is simply combining together the elegant flavors of the raw fish, with different cuisine elements, such as the inclusion of mango with tuna, or adding tropical fruit sauces or roasted macadamia nuts to the dish, or rolling your Albacore in whole peppercorns or wasabi root and searing them; Fusion is just the essence of combining non-traditional flavors to really send your taste buds soaring in an unexpected direction.

Sushi for any occasion

What Hyman also emphasizes is her willingness to extend herself to just about any occasion.

Starting at about \$26 a person, the Fish Bar caters to private parties at your residence, birthdays, milestone celebrations, corporate team building events, wedding or groom showers, office luncheons or unique engagements.

Also teaming with creative event-planners, Hyman can arrange such side items as flowers or decorations for just about any party.

She also said sushi can be prepared for your friends at such events as a local golf course, with 50 guys coming through on a final hole, doing a sake' shot and having a bite or two of something totally fun and unusual."

"Anywhere you can visualize having it, I can try to make that happen," she said. "How cool would it be to have a knife-wheeling, bandana-clad sushi chef while hosting a yacht party."

For more information one may log on to www.hautechefs.com. Call (562) 606-6565 - or toll free (888) 567-CHEF



At a recent sushi party, Chef Vu prepares the slices of fresh fish.



Jode' Hyman