

AS SEEN IN
NY POST

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE

FOUNDED OVER TWO and half decades, **Hatsuhana** is one of our best exponents of authentic Japanese cuisine. Occupying two floors, patrons

Restaurant Report

crowd the main dining room upstairs with its comprehensive sushi bar, while the first floor provides limited seating, a private dining room, another big bar for sushi and a fully stocked bar for libations.

Serious fans of Japa-

nese food appreciate Hatsuhana's freshness, diversity and presentation. The food is also agreeable enough for anyone with a casual interest in Japanese edibles. True, some people are spoiled by the wealth of new Japanese restaurants, but Hatsuhana keeps as much up to date as recent venues, easily holding its indisputable crown.

In addition to creative approaches to soups, salads, teriyaki and tempura dinners, sushi/sashimi and the Hatsuhana combo of salad,



cooked codfish, tempura and sushi, there is also an exquisite Kaiseki tasting menu (\$75) offering mysterious and startling surprises.

The house appetizer cooked on individual ceramic table grills, pairs crunchy bamboo and smoked octopus with a bonito dust dip. A personal favorite, ethereal tile fish caviar garnished with a savory sea urchin, is delicately enhanced by a mild ponzu sauce. Sakura dai, a dense gold leaf red snapper soup arrives brimful of seaweed and rice. Sashimi of toro, yellowtail and tile fish come festooned with seaweed, shredded pumpkin, white Japanese radish and freshly made wasabi. Adventurous palates must sample the charcoal grilled fatty tuna steak topped by a dime-sized, brittle-textured Japanese crab (eaten shell and all) under a mellow teriyaki sauce, that was our appetizer highlight.

Deftly fried, greaseless and flaky shrimp and vegetable tempura is both light and tasty. Among the vast selection of fresh sushi, we chose sparkling toro, fluke, salmon and yellowtail. Salmon skin roll likewise earns high marks.

★★★ *Hatsuhana*, 17 E. 48 St., NY. (212) 355-3345. L & D daily. Clos. Sun. Park Ave. location clos. weekends. Dinner entrees \$21-\$45. Accepts res., AE, DC, DIS, IGT, MC, V.

SCOOP: Science says butter is better—healthier than margarine. Allegedly the best is Italy's **Occelli**, at \$8 a bar (about 8 oz.). Call toll free 877-907-2525.

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WHAT THE ★★★ MEAN

- 0- Farkackt (Beneath contempt)
- 1- Unremarkable but acceptable
- 2- Good
- 3- Very good
- 4- Outstanding

FOR THE RECORD

Restaurant reviews in this column are in no way paid advertising. Restaurants are selected at Landwehr's sole discretion and praised or panned accordingly. Feedback is welcome. Write Landwehr at 823 11th Ave., NY 10019 or call (212) 956-1882 or check-out his web site @www.SheldonLandwehr.com; Email Sheldon@.Sheldonlandwehr.com.