

# *As you wish*

An Event Planning Company

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**Ai Japanese Restaurant & Lounge**  
358 West Ontario Street  
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“Ai” is the Japanese word for “love” and this delightful establishment is named for the daughter of one of the owners. Located just west of Orleans on Ontario, Ai is the third outpost from the creative duo of Agnes and Gene Chua. Gone is the “nyotaimori” featured by the previous owners (thank goodness!) - replaced by a serene restaurant, floor to ceiling windows, large sushi bar and a funky yet relaxed black and red lounge.

We walked in hungry, so the sushi chefs at Ai began preparing several of their innovative starter courses. We began with the beef asparagus maki consisting of perfectly grilled thin asparagus spears wrapped in beef slices, drizzled with honey pear sauce and sprinkled with sliced almonds. A house specialty was next - toro tartar. A healthy-sized portion of the best diced o-toro we have eaten in awhile was served over a creamy disk of soft tofu sprinkled with a tangy ceviche sauce and topped with fried spring roll skins.

Our final fabulous and over-the-top appetizer was the Midori Sushi. Presented on a circular base of sushi rice, this “tower” of tuna, spicy kani (crab), unagi (cooked freshwater eel), kampyo (pickled gourd), asparagus, shimeji mushrooms and wasabi tobiko was wrapped in a thin and very long slice of cucumber. The kicker here was the edible flakes of gold decorating the dish. It made us feel like a million bucks!

A highlight of our dinner was the Beef and Ebi Tobanyaki. For those of you who are not familiar with tobanyaki, it is a smaller version of the more familiar teppanyaki which is derived from teppan (meaning iron plate) and yaki (to broil). We delighted in melting a pat of butter on the 500°F iron plate and grilling our own steak, shrimp, enoki and shimeji mushrooms.

Ai is known for its salmon, tuna and toro flights. Our table favored tuna so we selected the nigiri tuna flight consisting of super white tuna (escolar), akami tuna (lean), tuna topped with avocado and wasabi mayo, aburi (torched fatty), chu-toro (medium fatty) and o-toro (premium fatty). Ai has a lovely selection of white fish and we tried shima aji (striped jack) and kampachi (amberjack) - both melted in our mouth.

You cannot come to Ai without trying at least a couple of their signature maki - a bit pricier than regular maki but definitely a value for the original creations and the amount of fish in each. The Madai Ceviche Maki consists of an avocado and cucumber roll, swathed in Japanese red snapper and topped with a dollop of fresh tomato and white onion ceviche, cilantro and a dash of togarashi (spicy red chili pepper). The table favorite was the soft shell crab volcano maki. It is a cucumber, avocado and tempura crunch roll topped with decadent soft shell crab and spicy mayo sauce. Each maki was presented with additional garnishes of fish which could have been someone else’s side dish!

For “dessert”, we loved the tropical mango maki. The pink of the tuna and yellow of the mango contrasted beautifully to the green of the avocado and purple of the koshyu (grape) sauce. The sweetness from the mango and grape was delightful as a dessert if you are not into the traditional Japanese endings.



**During August 2008, bring this flyer to Ai and receive a complimentary Toro Tartar appetizer with purchase of an entrée**



Something to look forward to... fugu season will be here in November! Call Chef Hemmi for availability!

**Welcome to a world where dining is... AS YOU WISH!**

Claudia & Jane

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*from the small details... to the big picture*

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## Hours

Monday - Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday  
Sunday

11:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.  
11:30 a.m. - 2:00 a.m.  
5:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m.  
5:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

## Contact

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