



Umi is grand slam of great Japanese specialities

James Park finds himself in an envious position. As owner of a couple of very successful award winning Takamatsu restaurants in Phoenix and Tucson, he's now also operating his third venture, Umi, on Shelter Island, with a celebrity partner, Boston Red Sox ace reliever Byung "BK" Kim.

It was during his earlier stint with the Arizona Diamondbacks that James and Byung hooked up. They bought Umi and redecorated it and created a fantastic new menu. The sport connection is depicted in the restaurant with framed jerseys and other decor such as pretty paper lanterns, aquariums, pretty woodwork and a large mystical "fish dragon."

There are a couple of sushi bars, one seats 12, another about 20; and there's plenty of room in the adjoining dining rooms. You won't strike out at Umi; virtually every item we tasted was superb. Clip today's coupon and get ready to enjoy a terrific meal. The appetizer and sushi roll is unique in that almost every item is illustrated with a clear full color photo. Among appetizers, try the incredible soft shell crab, the seafood salad, Gyoza dumplings, baked green lip mussels, Yakitori skewers or the tuna sashimi. The array of specialty rolls is truly amazing. Try their Crazy Boy Roll (a delicious squared roll of crab and avocado wrapped in a tempura baked golden brown). The No.21 is a thing of beauty called the Caterpillar Roll (it really looks like a green caterpillar made with thin sliced avocado, eel and cucumber, complete with two salmon eggs for eyes, almost too pretty to eat).

Other great rolls are the Vegas Roll (crab, salmon tempura, avocado and cucumber), spicy Scallop roll, Spider Roll with soft shell crab, or the Mountain roll with spicy tuba. In all there are some 35 rolls to choose from. There's also a complete list of traditional Nigiri sushi classics, combination boats and plates and sashimi. Umi also has some tasty Japanese dishes including beef Katsu, chicken teriyaki, barbecued short ribs, beef teriyaki and noodle specialties.

Those craving a variety of items are advised to enjoy a two or three item reate your own combo. An example of one would be a three-item combo of a California roll with mixed tempura and chicken teriyaki, served with rice and miso soup for only \$17.95. A two-item combo is just \$15.95.

For dessert, try the novelty called Mojji ice cream (nuggets of ice cream wrapped in flavored marshmallow like confection). Party platters are a specialty (great for football parties). Umi (open for lunch and dinner) is at 2806 Shelter Island Dr. Call (619) 226-1135.

Article from 2005 The San Diego Union-Tribune