

VOTE # 1 BEST SANDWICH FOR 13 YEARS

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FOOD

BY TODD SOUTH



On its menu, Ohana Sushi notes which ingredients are inside versus piled on top of its sushi rolls.
PHOTO/ALLISON YOUNG

Family style

As the Hawaiian phrase goes, “Ohana means family,” but the folks at Ohana Sushi really take it to heart. Every team server repeatedly asked, “How are we doing, family?” Though it’s barely been open a month, Saturday lunch service was packed. Service was very attentive, though there was a fair amount of wait between plates. Chalk it up to being a brand new, suddenly popular eatery.

Poke bowls (\$9.95-\$13.95) and sushi burritos (\$9.95) are available, although I didn’t see much of that being served. Most of my family group ordered all-you-can-eat (AYCE) sushi, with my carb-averse son choosing a seared ahi salad (\$12.95) with spicy miso sauce and cilantro aioli. The slices of tuna were perfectly seared, the greens fresh, and the combination of dressings a powerfully good one. He was extremely happy with it.

For included appetizers we ordered miso soup, chicken skewers, yakitori and baked mussels. The soup was hot with plenty of tofu. The chunks of chicken were doused in a sweet and spicy sauce, the meat surprisingly tender and juicy. The deep-fried wonton rolls were golden brown with a creamy, meaty filling. Best of all, the sizeable mollusks were tender and delicious. We ordered the AYCE limit of those beautiful morsels.

As usual, I selected most of the nigiri menu to share. The cuts of fish were ample, the rice just right and tightly packed. The unagi was tender and lacked the “earthy” flavor I don’t care for. The octopus was unfortunately a bit overcooked and chewy. The scallops were perfectly seared, as ordered. Salmon was served with thin slices of lemon on the side rather than placed on the fish, making for an entertaining game of, “Who can pick up slippery citrus with chopsticks?” I won, but just barely.

The photocopied order sheets imperfectly denote the difference between long and hand rolls. My daughter received four tekkamaki and said, “What’s with the cones?” Most engaging was the Tornado, with asparagus spear, kani, spicy tuna, unagi, sweet potato, goma miso and teriyaki—a pretty unique combination. All of her unintentional hand rolls were well made, with far more goodies than rice.

The menu notes internal ingredients versus what’s piled on top of long rolls, an interesting attention to detail. As with the nigiri, the sushi-to-rice ratio was good and each piece was easily bite-sized. I don’t have room to describe the quantity of rolls ordered by my hungry crew. The Battle Born included spicy crab, salmon, lemon, hamachi, green tobiko, ponzu sauce and sriracha and a thin slice of fresh jalapeño. It was good, but I felt the more subtle flavors were overwhelmed by the heat. The Ohana roll’s mix of crystal shrimp, cooked scallop, spicy crab, avocado and togarashi spice blend was fantastic, the avocado a particularly welcome addition.

A deep-fried Godzilla roll had a nicely crunchy exterior, although the interior was a bit chewy. The friend who ordered it—apparently a fan of these rolls—was disappointed. I surprisingly kind of liked it despite its flaws. Keeping with the island theme, there are several tropical “fruity rolls” that the kids enjoyed, though not really my thing. A round of ice cream and mochi ended our outing on a high note, and we were certainly made to feel like family throughout. □

Ohana Sushi

1560 S. Stanford Way, Sparks, 453-9722

Lunch is from 11 to 3 p.m., \$17.95 for adults, \$12.95 for kids. Dinner is from 3 to 9 p.m., and is \$23.95 for adults, \$17.95 for kids.