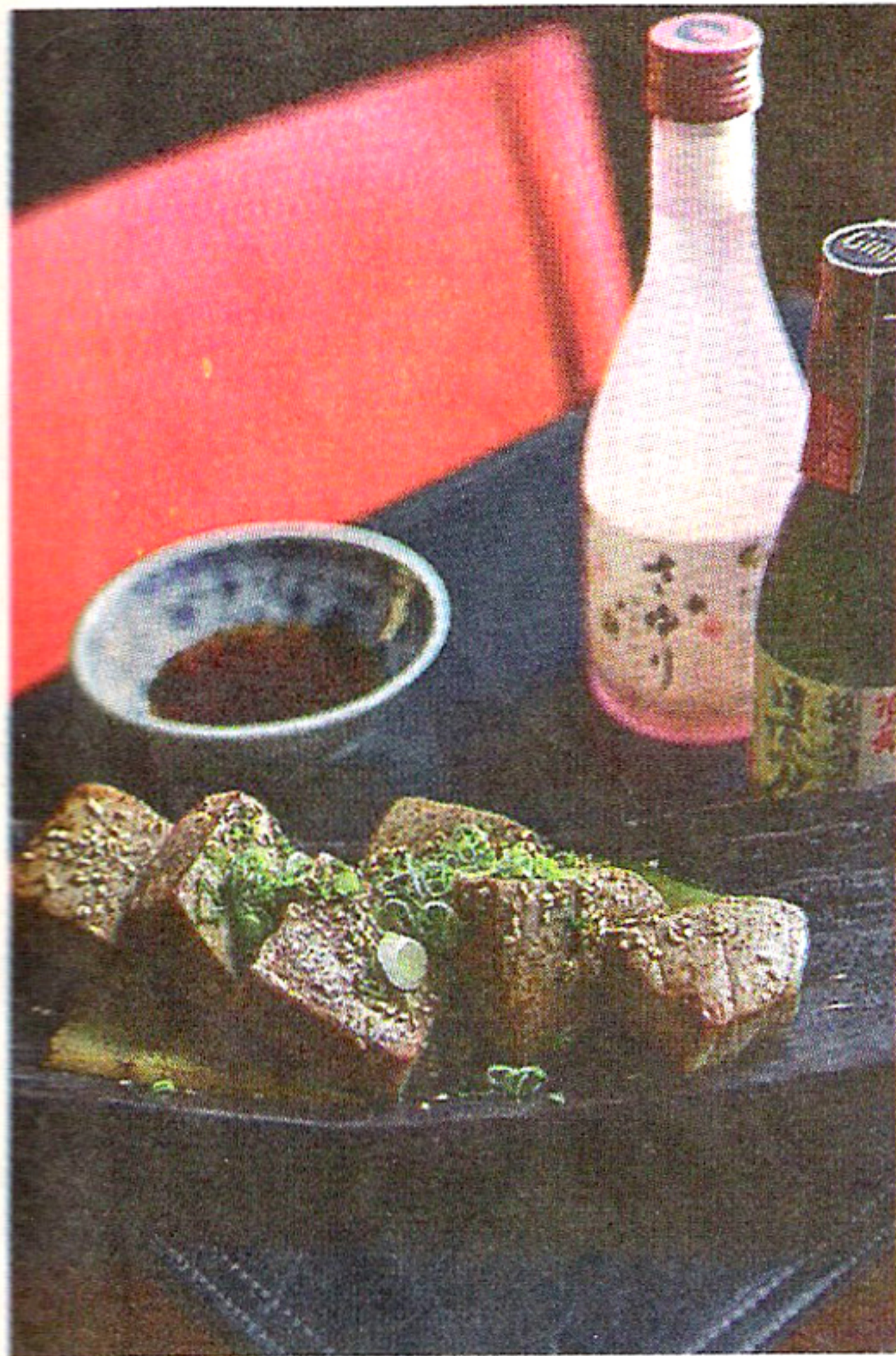


# TUCSON RESTAURANT REVIEW



JAMES GREGG / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Tuna Butter Steak and Grilled Zucchini is one of the appetizers sampled at Sushi Matsu.

## Sushi Matsu stands on its own proudly

By Doug Kreutz  
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Sushi Matsu might strike you as a rather shy little Japanese restaurant.

It's tucked away in a fairly small, unassuming and yet pleasingly appointed room within its "parent" establishment — Yoshimatsu Healthy Japanese Eatery at 2660 N. Campbell Ave.

Ah, but like some shy people, Sushi Matsu blossoms once it's noticed.

Owner and chef Yoshimi Tashima designed the place — a full-service restaurant and sushi bar — to complement the more casual atmosphere and order-at-the-counter setup of Yoshimatsu.

On a lunch visit to Sushi Matsu, we sat near a window opening onto a small garden area with soothing greenery and statuary.

The menu is extensive and diverse, with everything from poki salad and noodle dishes to assorted sushi and sashimi offerings. It's also possible to order items from the Yoshimatsu menu — including the popular bento boxes featuring main courses and a variety of side dishes.

But the name of the place says sushi — and that's what we ordered for lunch.

See SUSHI, C4

## SUSHI

Continued from Page C1

The Nigiri Lunch (\$10.95) was a chef's choice of eight pieces of Nigiri sushi served with Japanese-style greens, ginger and wasabi — that wonderful, strong, green, Japanese version of horseradish.

The sushi included tuna, shrimp, salmon, escolar and other fish. Wonderfully fresh and artfully presented, the lunch included a bowl of miso soup.

We also tried the Sashimi Lunch (\$10.95). Following a bowl of miso, the generous cuts of tuna, salmon and other fish were tender, savory and über-nutritious — testimony to the fact that sometimes the best preparation for food is no preparation at all. A seaweed salad and rice completed the dish.

The meal, along with a large glass of cold green tea, was so filling and refreshing that a full-on dessert wasn't tempting.

So we opted to split a Melon Soda Float (\$3.80) — a refreshing if not exactly low-cal combination of a melon-based soda and vanilla ice cream.

Sushi Matsu's decor begins

with a Zen-like simplicity and doesn't stumble into excess.

The small garden area outside the window, the sushi bar itself, a whimsical elongated clock and wall art with a Japanese theme please the eye and calm the mind.

The restaurant — apparently not a secret despite its hide-away location — was nearly full when we arrived for a dinner visit.

Our server clearly was very busy but made every effort to bring water, take our orders and get us started with miso as soon as possible. We had enjoyed the same efficient service on our lunch visit.

If the restaurant is routinely as busy in the evenings as it was during our dinner experience, it might be a good idea to add another server at night. We're aware, of course, that a small restaurant must carefully control costs, but it seemed as if our server was pretty much running flat-out through the busy dinner period.

We began dinner with an appetizer of Tuna Butter Steak and Zucchini (\$7.50).

A generous — really generous — serving of tuna steak was served with a delicate wasabi dipping sauce. Fortunately, we had decided to split the appe-

tizer. It was enough to serve as a small dinner for one person.

If sushi was our theme for lunch, tempura was the dinner motif. And Sushi Matsu displayed a fine tempura touch — delicately flash-frying fish and vegetables in a not-too-heavy batter.

The Tempura and Sushi Dinner (\$19) was a feast of shrimp and vegetable tempura served with six pieces of sushi. Neither sushi nor tempura are tastes for the faint of palate — and a dinner combining the two might be a bit overpowering for some diners. But we savored the tastes, and the tempura batter was subtle enough to prevent conflict on the plate.

Another entree, the Tempura Dinner (\$14), was made up of shrimp and veggie tempura with rice. The dish was light and flavorful, but we would have been even happier with a bit more of the veggie tempura offerings.

Arrive with a lighter appetite and you can micromanage less-filling selections at the sushi bar or from the main menu's sushi and vegetarian offerings.

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The Tempura and Sushi Dinner at Sushi Matsu. The menu at the full-service restaurant and sushi bar on North Campbell Avenue is extensive and diverse.