



## Sex Never Tasted so Good

Review by Carla Sommers

**Carla Sommers and friend get on their culinary surfboards to sample sushi at the new JW Marriott dining duo Tsu & Nami; awash with praise, she gives the new venue a wave review.**

It is rare that I pay the equivalent of a short-haul holiday for a meal for two, but there are exceptions. With a food-crazy Italian chef arriving in Bangkok and barely six hours to overnight in the Thai capital, he'd resolutely insisted on spending most of his time at JW Marriott's new Japanese dining duo, Tsu & Nami.

Just as *tsu nami* (tidal wave) is written as two Japanese characters: 'tsu,' (harbour) and 'nami,' (wave), JW Marriott has, while appropriately separating their names, created two restaurants in one.

Tsu serves sashimi, sushi and seafood; Nami dishes up teriyaki: famously tender grilled meat or fish. We opted for a sashimi-fest in the basement eatery, where a suspended, ply-wood ribbon flowed spectacularly through a long lounge room. The dimmed, centrally-located cubicle that we were swept into has a raised wood floor, single table and beautiful woven light globe that looked like a ball of Udon noodles. Our only problem: no soundproofing. Within seconds, Tsunami Head Chef, Akihiro Izumi arrived. Amiable and chatty, Shrek-sized Chef Aki loomed over us like a Sumo wrestler; instantly, he created a menu just for us.

**The Hokkaido King Crab leg: one giant wand of flesh, gently warmed and faultlessly moist.**

A case of too many chefs spoil the broth, my eager Italian chef friend welcomed a huge bowl of sashimi nestling in shaved turnip with raptures.

"Wow! Thees is the BEST!" he remarked knowledgeably, prodding his chopstick into the finger-thick slice of yellowtail and wedge of dark pink tuna: "Eet's sooo theek!" Thick it was, akin to most dining tables; its garnish, a simple twig of plum blossom - like the fish, it had been flown in from Tokyo.

"You know 'ow expensive eet ees to get thees quality?" continued my friend rhetorically. I shook my head, intent on inhaling the fragrance of the hot salmon with a zesty nanban sauce. Then came the sizzling Matsuzaka beef: impeccable and butter-soft. The Hokkaido King Crab leg: one giant wand of flesh, gently warmed and faultlessly moist.

The crispy Ebi Tempura Maki (shrimp tempura rolls) that followed were Chef Aki's own invention; "Don't dip them!" he warned. A bit too large to be eaten in a ladylike manner, the balance of crispy, sweet and spicy was exquisite.

"Thees is fantastic!" cried the Italian chef *fortissimo con brio*. "Thees is better than SEX!" Suddenly, around us, the otherwise cacophonous lounge fell silent, except for the sound of polite coughing.


After the requisite velvety Miso, we finished off with chilled Japanese melon. Not just any melon, said my friend, who told me to study its perfect moment of ripeness; its garnish a twig of Japanese spruce.

Like an expanding balloon, I was fast getting wedged into that hole in the floor. A Sumo wrestler would be required to haul me out.

When Aki came to see us off he looked exhausted. "Was it OK?" he asked politely - but unnecessarily. Everything, down to the choice of Sake, had been unparalleled.

The bill came to USD 360 - admittedly the cost of a two return tickets from Bangkok to Tokyo - but hey, the Marriott's posh limousine had delivered us from Bangkok's international airport much faster than the time the bullet train takes from Narita into Tokyo.

In Thailand such prices may seem outrageous; in London, New York or Tokyo it would be unquestionably good value - that's if you understand what quality is.

And if you don't, I can put you in touch with a chef who does. 



**Tsu & Nami**  
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