



Prospect in the Raw

New Sushi Restaurant a Rousing Success in Longmont

by Rob Peaslee, photo by Jessica Grenier



In this space I have previously disparaged New Urbanism as a conceit. For the uninitiated, this is the name given to housing developments that are designed with their own town square, “distinctive” houses and apartments, and ample retail space.

They follow the logic that a community, in all its life and diversity, can be constructed for profit. Snobs like me find this premise largely absurd.

I have to admit, however, that the town-within-a-town that is Prospect in Longmont has managed to move beyond the Disney storefront version of “Main Street USA” to produce some pretty fine eating establishments. One of the newest examples of this is Sushi Jianken, a brashly postmodern cacophony of color and shape that plates some of the prettiest and tastiest food this side of Mt. Fuji (or at least Longs Peak).

With its bright hues and clean elegance, Jianken venerates the long tradition of arty sushi bar design, while its exposed plaster walls speak to the kind of industry taking place behind the glass. Chefs sculpt rolls under the watchful eye of a dozen or so bar customers, while capable and stylish servers administer the remaining bistro tables and showcase-worthy private booths. The ordering process is made more streamlined by a menu system that must be experienced rather than described.

Our experience at Jianken was wonderful. Visiting early on a Friday night, we were exceptionally well taken care of by Jessica, who started us out with a round of drinks and some delicious seaweed salad (\$4.95). We next sampled a Maguro Poke (\$9.05), a gorgeously plated medley of heaven-fresh raw tuna, avocado, sweet onion, sesame chili marinade and yuzu cream.

And I'm sincere about the plating: This was the first time I have ever taken a picture of a dish. I couldn't help myself.

Still flush from our experience with the poke, we were next swept away by the aburi gyu, or seared beef (\$6.95). Served to temperature (in my case, a perfect rare), these decadently marinated, black pepper-rubbed medallions are served simply, with nothing more than a warm and delicious ponzu sauce and some sliced raw jalapenos. The combination is a raging success and, at this price, makes this one of the best steak deals in the region. Seriously, folks, every bite melts your brain.

On to the sushi! Still learning the ins and outs of this cuisine, and therefore remaining cautious, we stuck with the familiar: some maguro (\$6.95) and hotategai (seared scallops, \$5.95). Again, these were presented with flare and were extremely satisfying, especially with the ample supply of no-kiddin'-around wasabi (what a pleasure to find good housemade wasabi!). Our lone roll selection, the Holden's Wasabi Spider (\$9.95), featuring fried soft-shell crab, was significantly muted in this respect but still very good. Our only disappointment of the evening was the Vegetable Tempura Combo (\$3.50), which, while fine in flavor, came across to us as being a bit skimpy (three pieces).

Overall, there can be little question that Sushi Jianken is already a major player in the Denver Metro sushi scene.

How do we know? We saw a somewhat notorious area foodie, who shall remain nameless but would have little other reason to be in Prospect, sitting at the bar. The word is out.

Sushi Jianken



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Bottom line: Sushi and Japanese cuisine lovers rejoice, The Prospects are good for this one.

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