

Kotta Sushi Lounge: *Artistically Tasty*

BY THE DINING DIVAS
PHOTOS BY CHRIS FRITCHIE



YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW WHAT "KOTTA" MEANS to thoroughly appreciate this Japanese restaurant's fresh sushi and sashimi, but the Divas looked up the meaning as soon as we sat down: *Artistic... Elaborate... Exquisite... Refined... Tasty*. Five marvelous meanings packed into one word. Sounds like the Divas are in for a treat!

Let's dive in

We start with Kotta's Shelby Dumplings (\$7), which comes five to a plate. Plump, steamed and lightly sautéed, the dumplings are filled with crabmeat and shrimp. "I taste more of the shrimp than the crab," notes Barbara and adds, "The noodle is not too soft; it's perfectly firm." Delectable and satisfying, we devour every one.

You say bento, we say box

Bento originates from an Asian slang term meaning "convenient." A bento box compartmentalizes your dish to prevent the flavors of neighboring pieces of sushi from mixing together. It also makes for a lovely presentation. We order a large Grilled Salmon Bento (\$12), which comes with lightly-seared salmon topped with Kotta's house teriyaki sauce, shrimp and vegetable tempura, salad, *daikon*

(Japanese relish), a California roll, and a sliced orange. The tempura includes zucchini, sweet potato and onion, along with two shrimp. The breading is perfectly light and crispy. (Small bento boxes do not come with shrimp and vegetable tempura.)

The salmon is fresh and Barbara notes that it's not swimming in the glazed teriyaki sauce. Colbea adds, "Sometimes, chefs undercook salmon, but this is firm and flakey."

Colbea also raves about the California rolls. "These are the best California rolls I've ever had. They are so moist and I can taste every element: the crab, the rice, the seaweed."

Barbara adds, "They don't skimp on the crabmeat and it's not chewy; it's real crabmeat."

A tower of succulent sushi

Our next dish is the Kotta Tower (\$10), a stack of rice, spicy tuna and crab accentuated by three types of caviar. Slices of fresh avocado are served on the side. Our server asks if she should mix the ingredients for us. Brit finds it odd to deconstruct something so beautifully presented, but gives the go ahead. "I never thought I would eat caviar in my life," Brit says, "but I really appreciate the texture it adds to this dish." Colbea agrees, "It's definitely (and pleasingly) more crunchy than I expected."

Left: Kotta Tower, featuring spicy tuna and crab accentuated by three types of caviar.

A surprise ending

We end lunch even more pleased by Kotta's desserts. While some Japanese restaurants only serve green tea ice cream, Kotta takes it a step further, offering six sweet endings, two of which the Divas conquered: The Bananas Foster (\$8) and the Kotta Funnel Cake (\$10). Barbara and Colbea devour the rum-glazed banana confection. Sliced bananas accompany a heaping scoop of vanilla ice cream and are topped with chocolate sauce, chopped peanuts and strawberries. Hands down, their favorite. Brit can't resist the Kotta Funnel Cake, a bed of warm tempura shredded sweet potatoes—yes, sweet potatoes—hugging a ball of vanilla ice cream, drizzled with chocolate, caramel and honey. Delish.

Our outing to Kotta was Colbea's first turn as a Diva...and with the fresh, artistically tasteful lunch we had today, we're pretty sure it won't be her last. 📷

This month's Dining Divas are Plano Profile's Barbara Walch, Brit Mott and Colbea Smith.

Kotta Sushi Lounge

The Shops at Starwood
6959 Lebanon #108
Frisco, Texas 75034
214.705.0090
kottasushilounge.com

Monday–Thursday:
11 a.m.–9:30 p.m.
Friday–Saturday:
11 a.m.–10 p.m.
Sunday: 12–9 p.m.



Kenneth Kim, owner

Kenneth Kim began his restaurant career working for Orchid Restaurant at Halekulani Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii, back in college. Later he worked at a retail consulting firm before deciding to purchase a chain of retail stores. The later sale of this business allowed Kim to move to South Korea to start another venture—the Pretzel Maker, where he had the chance to learn about large-scale operations. Relocating back to the U.S., Kim owned a successful Japanese restaurant in Portland, Maine, for seven years. It was Maine's cold, long winter that attracted his family to Texas, where he opened KOTTA six years ago. "People in Texas are warm and generous. Our hope is to live and work here for the rest of our lives," said Kim.

cocktails+cuisine

Looking for a place to unwind after work?
Check out these happy hour specials!



BAVARIAN GRILL

221 West Parker Rd, Plano
972.881.0705 • BavarianGrill.com

Join us in our Biergarten from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. for Stein Hour featuring our imported Bavarian draft Biers, and our special Stein hour menu, available in the Biergarten only. We have games on, the beer is cold, and the food is fresh.



BONNIE RUTH'S

Shops at Starwood • 214.705.7775 • BonnieRuths.com
Happy Hours: Tues–Fri 4–7pm, \$2 off beer, wine, and wells, \$3 martinis. Mon: \$5 house wine, well martinis, wells ALL evening with \$6 Burgers & Margarita Flatbreads. Tues: ½ price French Wines 4–close. Wed: \$3 Martinis ALL evening (inside). Thurs: Ladies Night \$10 AYCE Mussels @ bar.



HICKORY

8100 Dallas Pkwy., Granite Park
972.712.7077 • HickoryPlano.com
Daily 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

\$6 Signature Big Daddy Martini and Barrel-Aged Old Fashioned. \$5 Well Drinks, House Wine, Daily Sangria, \$4 Maytag Waffle Fries, \$2 Tacos, \$3 Sliders.



KOTTA SUSHI LOUNGE

6959 Lebanon at Shops of Starwood, Frisco
214.705.0090 • KottaSushiLounge.com
Happy Hours Monday–Friday 2–5 p.m., \$6 Hot Sake, \$2 Domestic Beers, \$1 off Import Beers, \$5 Martinis and Wells, \$2 off Wine by the Glass. Sushi starting at \$2.95 and Rolls starting at \$2.25.



ONE2ONE RESTAURANT AND BAR

1339 Legacy Drive, Frisco
214.618.2221 • one2onerestaurant.com
Happy Hour: Mon–Fri. 4–7 p.m.; Sat. 9 p.m.–1 a.m.
\$3 Wells, \$3 Domestic Beer, \$4 House Wine, \$2 off Special Cocktails. Mon. 1/2 off Pizzas, Tues. \$2 off Tapas, Wed. 1/2 off bottles wine \$150 or less, Fri. \$12 Trumer Pills and Burger.



TRATTORIA AL GIARDINO

1279 Legacy Drive, Suite 100, Frisco
214.618.1991 • giardinointalian.com
Happy Hour Monday–Friday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Featuring Glass of Wine \$5, Well Drinks for \$4, Well Vodka and Gin Martinis for \$5, and complimentary pizza.



SAMBUCA 360

7200 Bishop Road #270, Plano
469-467-3393 • Sambuca360.com
Mon–Fri 4:30–6:30 \$3, \$4 and \$5 drink specials.