

435

KANSAS CITY'S
MAGAZINE

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WHAT'S
COOKING
AT HOME
AND
WHERE
TO DINE
OUT
IN KC.

FOODIES'
PARADISE:
THE ANTLER
ROOM

A JOHNSON
COUNTY
HOME FILLED
WITH STYLE
AND GRACE

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PREVIEW:
CAN KU WIN
ITS 13TH
STRAIGHT
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TOP KC's CHEFS

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Blue Crush

Five things to know about Woodside Village's new sushi spot, Blue Sushi Sake Grill

words Allyson Wilson photo Adam Casey

Roll with It

If the name doesn't give you a clue, Blue's main domain is sushi. The Omaha-based eatery offers an array of Asian-inspired appetizers; soups and salads; entrees; desserts and cocktails, plus an impressive spread of 43 traditional with a creative twist sashimi, nigiri and maki rolls. For lovers of jalapeno poppers, the Hot Popper (smoked salmon, cream cheese, sriracha and jalapeno tempura) is a must. And despite its name, you should try Blue's popular Itchy Seabass (baked seabass, spicy crab, serrano, cilantro and ponzu). For vegans, we recommend the Eden Roll with sweet potato, asparagus, edamame hummus, sun-dried tomato and brown rice. Non-sushi options include the chicken and vegetarian lettuce wraps and the sizzling, jalapeno-crowned River Rock beef tenderloin, which cooks on the way to your table over a bed of scalding rocks. Blue practices traditional Japanese style, where dishes are placed in the center of the table to encourage sharing, so prepare to taste it all.

Sake Sipping

In addition to beer, wine and tea, Blue's bar serves signature martinis, cocktails and sake. Can't get away during the winter months? Opt for the Pacific Rim, a tropical mix of coconut rum, pineapple-infused vodka, pineapple juice and coconut puree. For those feeling adventurous, opt for the sake. Like grape wine, sake can be dry or sweet. There are 13 on the menu, ranging from the sweetest, Sho Chiku Bai, to the driest, Momokawa Silver. And if you're not sure where your taste buds lie, take a sake flight, which comes in Partly Cloudy (sweetest, dry and driest) and Sky Guardian (dry, drier and driest). Order a fish bowl to really get the party started. These fruity concoctions are served in a giant goblet with multiple straws for shared sipping.

Cool Blue, Red Hot

Its location might be in the suburbs, but the restaurant's energetic and vibrant ambiance feels more like the bustling nightlife of a big city than a hip, Midwestern sushi joint. Blue features a Japanese urban decor that incorporates casks of sake, contemporary art and statues of Buddha. Its two-sided bar divvies up the restaurant for a more intimate vibe. Highlighted by the cocktail bar, the "red-hot" Sake Bombers Lounge is an upscale happy hour scene decorated with a



Sushi platter with peppers

Godzilla mural, multiple TVs and an overhanging airplane wing adorned with a war-era "Blonde Bombshell" pinup. The sushi bar highlights the "cool blue" dining room, which evokes a laid-back atmosphere thanks to street-facing windows, café au lait booths, a geisha mural and a larger-than-life origami light fixture.

Feeling Special

No hotspot would be complete without happy hour or specials, and Blue Sushi knows how to do both. Throughout the week, this eatery excites with delicious daily specials like Crunchy Thursdays, where all four of Blue's crunchy rolls — red, blue, L.A. and cabbage — are \$5 from open to close. Lunch woes are remedied by Blue's lunch special: your choice of two maki, maki and sashimi or maki and nigiri. The combinations are endless.

The Happiest of Hours

The pièce de resistance at Blue is the happy hour. Offered Monday through Thursday, twice on Friday and Saturday and all day Sunday, the menu boasts a variety of appetizers, sushi, shared plates and libations. The best part? There's no special seating. The whole restaurant is fair game. The sweet and spicy mango crab rangoon, crab tempura fried Blue Balls or the Russian roulette shishito peppers (one out every five charred beauties is spicy) are perfect starters for girls' night, date night or any night. ■

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