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## Japanese restaurant offers variety

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Named after a street in Japan known for its bright lights and variety of restaurants, Ginza III - a hibachi steak house and sushi bar - just opened at 111 West Ridge Road.

The restaurant features eight hibachi tables, where customers can watch their food as it's prepared.

Restaurant manager Peter Chung says a hibachi steak tastes like steakhouse steak - lean and delicious.

"The Japanese people have their own way of eating, which I think is genius," Chung said.

The hibachi menu features a variety of meats and vegetables, from chicken to filet mignon and lobster tail. The lunch and dinner menus from the hibachi include clear soup, salad, fried rice and vegetables.

There's also a sushi bar, where customers can watch the sushi chef, Frank Zou prepare ornate and diverse varieties of sushi.

Zou is co-owner of the restaurant with Mandy Chen.

Zou, who has been a chef for more than 10 years, said the restaurant offers about 20 varieties of sushi, with 10 cooked varieties. There are two types of sushi - traditional raw rolled fish sushi and the more Americanized sushi, which is cooked well done.

There are three tatami rooms, which are smaller areas that seat about eight and are ideal for private parties. Customers remove their shoes to enter the wooden-paneled areas, in the Japanese tradition, and can lower curtains to make the room more private.

There is also a bar alongside the sushi bar with a TV and several small regular tables in the restaurant.

Chung says business has been decent, especially at lunch. He said state employees have been enthusiastic about the sushi, whereas locals are more interested in the hibachi.

He said dinner hours aren't as busy, but he expects that to change now that it serves liquor - American and Japanese brands, and beer, and wine, including sake.

Chung said Asahi and Sapporo - Japan's two most famous beers -- are available as well as several American varieties.

The restaurant also serves non-alcoholic beverages including homemade sweet tea and Japanese hot green tea, which is free with a meal. There are a variety of sodas, including Shirakiku in three flavors.

"The children really like it," Chung said.

Chung emphasized that much, if not all, of the food is prepared by hand - even the teriyaki sauce.

"The cost of a Japanese restaurant is very high because everything is homemade and fresh," he said.

Large parties are welcome at lunch and dinner, though parties are encouraged to call for a reservation.