

# SPOTLIGHT

# ON *Back Bay*

by Clint Hamblin



*The Sushi Bar at 711 Bistro and Sushi Bar*

**Japanese Culture Invades Boston.** Japanese cuisine has been popular in Boston for many years with several well-established eateries leading the pack, and why not? Perhaps one of the healthiest cuisines in the world, soy-based Japanese food is delicious, great to look at and a terrific way to maintain your dietary health. The question is, "Does the arrival of Japanese born Daisuke Matsuzaka, Red Sox baseball player extraordinaire, have anything to do with the huge real estate and business investments being made in Boston's restaurant and entertainment scene?" Let's look at the latest lineup of restaurants.

Samurai Boston located at 827 Boylston across from the Prudential Center's Boylston Street entrance has recently replaced the once very popular Gyu-hama Restaurant at the same location. "We needed to execute a complete renovation of the former restaurant space," said Gregg Spalding of Spalding Tougias Architects. After a year of planning and seven months of construction, this stylish Japanese and Korean cuisine restaurant is already enjoying a brisk business, and with Japanese sushi chef Makoto Hamada creating traditional and creative dishes, it's no surprise that this establishment is already filled with discriminating Asian customers.

Down the street, the former Jae's Café has had a name and partnership change. Joe Cimino, owner of Newbury Street's Ciao Bella and Daisy Buchanan's, has opened 711 Bistro and Sushi Bar at the 711 Boylston Street address. In addition to traditional sushi, Thai and Korean food, Cimino has added a weekend club format, including a DJ, dance floor and lighting system. The restaurant also remains open until 2 am on Thursday through Sunday nights featuring lower prices for sushi. Live jazz is presented on Wednesdays and Thursdays during dinner.

Douzo is located on 131 Dartmouth Street in the Back Bay. The restaurant's cuisine is definitely Japanese and includes sushi, sashimi, tempura, various maki rolls and some interesting creations probably not found on the island of Japan. Owner Jack Huang has been busy for the past year as this very spacious restaurant caters to full capacity on a regular basis.

Located between the Copley Place Mall and the Westin Hotel at 10 Huntington Avenue, Osushi has also been benefiting from a solid business for the past year, presenting original sushi creations not found in other Japanese restaurants. The service is quick and the food is delicious.

You might think so many Japanese restaurants were enough for this small area, but in the fall Boston's ever-developing restaurant scene will welcome Haru, a modern Japanese restaurant with six locations in New York City and one in Philadelphia. Haru will occupy 6,100 square feet that was previously Dick's Last Resort on Huntington Avenue. This will be the first Haru in the New England area and one of the largest Japanese restaurants in Boston.

The 165-seat restaurant will include a sushi bar, lounge area, private event space and outdoor seating. Haru will be open for lunch and dinner and will offer delivery, takeout, private party and corporate catering services.

Tour guides, hotel concierges and restaurant waiters have been learning to speak Japanese to cater to the tremendous Japanese tourism coming to see Daisuke Matsuzaka play with the Red Sox. As Martha Stewart (and Mayor Menino) would say, "It's a good thing."



*Parody of the Three*

**MFA Japanese Exhibit.** Opening on Thursday, August 28 and running through Sunday, December 16 in the Torf Gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) is the exhibit titled *Drama and Desire: Japanese Paintings from the Floating World 1690 – 1850*. The exhibition derives its name from the "drama" and "desire" depicted in a pair of screens by Hishikawa Moronobu from the MFA's Asian art collection, *Scenes from the Nakamura Kabuki Theater* and *Scenes from the Yoshiwara Pleasure Quarter*.

Ukiyo-e paintings were born out of this atmosphere during the late 17th century and continued to flourish until the end of the Edo period, from 1615 to 1868. These pictures of flamboyant actors, seductive courtesans and beautiful geishas are the subject of a landmark exhibition organized by the MFA, Boston, which includes 83 paintings from its extensive ukiyo-e collection. Most have not been seen since first exhibited in Boston in 1892. The works of all major ukiyo-e masters, including Hokusai, Utamaro and Hiroshige, will be showcased in screens, scrolls, banners and theatrical signboards. For more information, visit [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org).



*Samurai's Sun Dubu - Spicy Korean Seafood Soup*