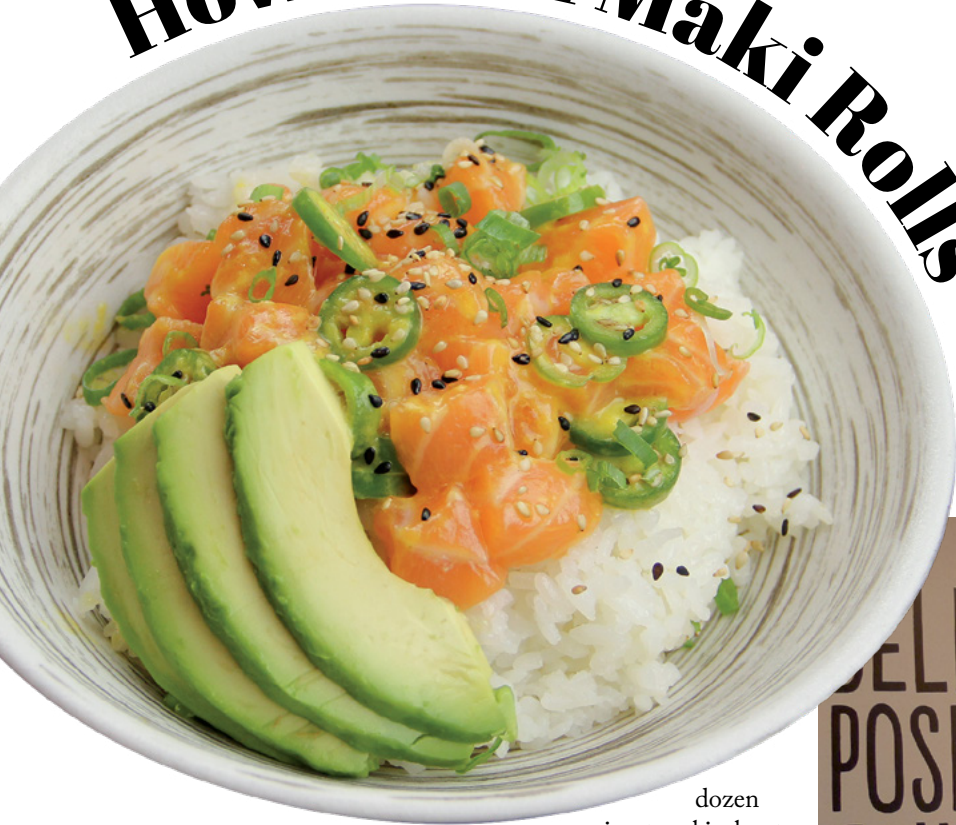


# How Sushi Maki Rolls



Eighteen years after Abe & Christina Ng opened the second Sushi Maki off Miracle Mile, they're still on a roll, a drum roll, if you will. Kudos to the happy couple who first brought Cali-style, contemporary Japanese cuisine to South Florida. "Christina's from LA; I'm from here," says Abe over pretty plates of Miso Yaki Sea Bass and Salmon Usuzukuri, new items on the menu. "We're both Chinese-American, but we had a real passion for sushi and wanted to give Miami something it didn't have back then – a neighborhood Japanese restaurant for sushi connoisseurs that served delicious fresh food at good prices."

Fast-forward. So, they did. Headquartered in Coral Gables, they opened five Sushi Maki locations in Miami-Dade, a

dozen in-store kiosks at local Whole Foods, and setups at FIU, UM and Miami International Airport. Now, that's a lot of sushi.

"Business is a team sport," says Abe, looking quite the leader in tangerine New Balance kicks. "In 2000, Sushi Maki had many co-founders – my dad, my sister Iva, my brother-in-law. They all pitched in."

It's a family affair alright. Abe's dad, Allan Ng, now 78, grew the Canton Chinese chain from a take-out counter. He still works at the main restaurant down the street from Sushi Maki on Ponce de Leon. Abe tells his Horatio Alger story: "Dad left Hong Kong for New York in the Sixties with \$70, a high-school diploma, and his Protestant work ethic. [FYI, the Ngs are

Most of what we do for the brand happens right here in the Gables...

Co-owner Christina Ng

**THE NG FACTOR:**  
ECO SUSTAINABILITY + HIP HOSPITALITY =  
SWEET SUCCESS

by Cyn. Zarco



Baptists.] After working classic immigrant jobs, in a Chinese laundry and as a busboy for a Chinese restaurant in Long Island, he married my mom Betty and they went to Miami on their honeymoon. With the help of his friend, a pastor, they moved down to Miami where Dad learned all about the business working at Chinese restaurants all over town."

Abe also got his hands dirty, working at Canton Chinese and Tiger, Tiger till he went to Cornell to study Hotel Administration. There he met a bright, young law student named Christina Tsai, married her, and brought her home to the family. Three kids, five restaurants and two decades later, the dynamic 40-somethings juggle work, play and parenthood like, dare we say it, a master sushi chef. (FYI, Abe is certified by the California Sushi Academy.) And, after a stellar 11-year relationship with Whole Foods providing sustainable seafood sushi, Amazon awarded them the honor of "Florida Supplier of the Year."

Says Christina from their administrative offices above the store on Ponce: "Most of what we do for the brand happens right here in the Gables. We have a great team led by our Corporate Chef Dominique Bustamante and Head Chef Fe Banzon. And, we do our own graphic design in-house."

Abe talks food: "In the last 18 months, so much is being delivered. We're like a Remote Sushi Kitchen! There are lots of third-party delivery orders to businesses and homes, from DoorDash, Grub Hub, Uber Eats. And, we also deliver within a three-to-five-mile radius for only \$3.50." A green, three-wheeler marked DELIVERY waits outside.

Adds Christina: "Since the streetscape on Miracle Mile was completed, we've seen a resurgence in foot traffic, more people driving in at night and on weekends. The city did a great job activating Giralda Plaza's restaurant row, which is right across the street from us, so it's great for business."

Drum Roll.

## New Kids on the Block...

### Salumeria 104



For fans of this wonderful, authentic Midtown eatery with quality, affordable food from rustic Northern Italy, it's time to rejoice. Salumeria is now open on 117 Miracle Mile.

There you can eat from their core menu of salumi (cured ham), pasta and meats or try the daily specials. Where else can you find braised rabbit served with artichokes for \$25?

### M House



The idea behind M House, says chef Abraham Silva, is to present food inspired by the European Riviera of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. On top of that, this new, lushly designed restaurant at 2524 Le Jeune

boasts a Josper Charcoal Oven. That means unique dishes like smoked shrimp cocktails and naturally raised chickens "Jasper-baked" with pale ale and Taggiasca olives.

### Clutch Burger

Is Coral Gables just the place for a \$20 hamburger? The answer is yes, says Clutch Burger owner Steven Bradley – especially if that burger is made from expensive Wagyu beef. It also

helps to have 75 beers and wines, and to be on Giralda Plaza.

As for the name, that's what you have to do with the towering 2-patty cheeseburger with onion rings.