

## BRNTWD

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## ■ L.A. RESTAURANTS

# Contemporary Cuisine

From Beverly Hills to Santa Monica

## Sushi Roku

1401 Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica. (310) 458-4771

No prosaic California roll in a minimalist white-walled setting here. Sushi Roku is designed to be an eclectic, sensual and complete dining experience. The owner, former nightclub proprietor Phillip Cummins (Renaissance, 217 and The Gem) hasn't had problems drawing an upscale hipster crowd. Well-to-do execs on their ubiquitous cellular phones cluster at the full bar with its overhang of steel eyelashes that forms just a part of the bizarre Zan-meets-Frank-Lloyd-Wright design. One could almost imagine Doris Day at home amidst the surfeit of '50s inspired stone walls and windows cascading with water, elements of bamboo and red wood floor.

Instead the execs feast on eye candy of well-heeled, sinewy blondes and sushi presentations that resemble a Cindy Sherman Christmas scene. But Sushi Roku's pièce de résistance isn't simply raw fish on small beds of sticky rice. Instead, their well-trained Japanese technicians excel at dishes made Matsuhisa style salmon wrapped in daikon, preening with sevruga caviar, with which they suggest a glass of champagne; seared white tuna marinated in wakame and soybean paste; and most delightful of all, crispy tuna sashimi spring



rolls with a chili oil and beurre blanc sauce. Any visit to Sushi Roku should be rounded out with the banana spring roll served with vanilla ice cream and a redolent caramel sauce. The food is without doubt exceptional, although the prices are understandably high.