

RESTAURANT JOURNAL

No knives used on these cuts

THE sushi's on the dining table, your chopsticks are at the ready and the Euro-electronica-bossa nova beats of Italian DJ Nicola Conte fill the room. A night at Sushi Roku?

No, it just sounds like it — literally.

Innovative Dining Group, the partnership behind Katana, Sushi Roku and BOA Steakhouse,

last month released the "Sounds Like Sushi Roku" compilation CD, the second in its "Sounds Like" series — 13 tracks of grooves to eat to, or maybe sip a shochu cocktail to.

People who come into the restaurant are always asking about the music, says Lee Maen, IDG partner and the CD's executive producer. "What is this? Who is this? 'How do I get this?'"

Maen approves the playlists for the restaurants — and he selected the songs for the CD series. "Sounds Like Sushi Roku" includes Weekend Players' "Jericho" and Mickey Avalon's "So Rich, So Pretty."

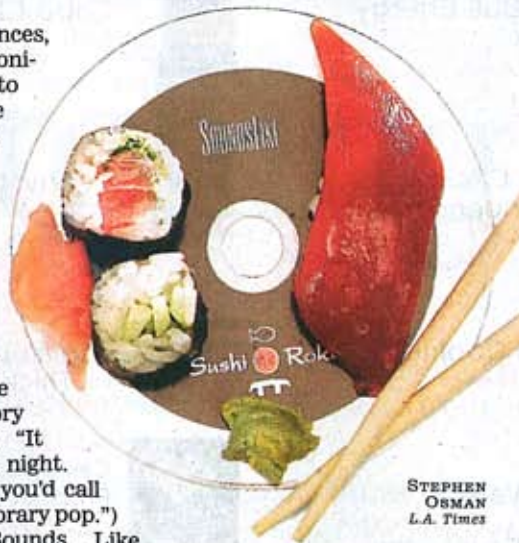
"There's definitely a lounge-y cocktail-culture kind of vibe to it," says Maen, "but I try to have

different influences, from French electronica to reggae to R&B.... What we play may not work at a Cheesecake Factory."

(What do they play at Cheesecake Factory? "Upbeat classical in the day," says Thea Mesina, senior manager of the Cheesecake Factory in Beverly Hills. "It picks up a little at night. I'm not sure what you'd call it. Maybe contemporary pop.")

Meanwhile, "Sounds Like BOA" is planned for a 2008 release.

Maen says 10% of the proceeds from the \$20 "Sushi Roku" CD, sold at the restaurant and on the IDG website, will go to organizations that support the fight against global warming.



STEPHEN OSMAN
L.A. Times

VIBE: Sushi Roku's CD.

The world may be heating up, but at least your music is cool. "Join us as we escape into a world of smooth sake, candle-lit moments and luxurious beats," the

back of the CD beckons.

That sounds like a cheesy date at Sushi Roku.

— BETTY HALLOCK

Small bites

■ Bastide owner and TV commercial director Joe Pytko has tapped Walter Manzke as executive chef. Manzke was formerly chef at Patina and most recently at Bouchée restaurant at LAuberge Carmel. "I'm bored with the idea that superstar chefs are going to grace Los Angeles with their presence as sort of a last stop on their world tour, usually after Las Vegas," said Pytko in a statement. Bastide's reopening is scheduled for April 15.

8475 Melrose Place, L.A.

■ Italian restaurant All' Angelo opens on Melrose with Mirko Paderno as chef. Proprietor Stefano Ongaro, an alumnus of Valentino and Enoteca Drago, is general manager. Paderno was

chef at Dolce and Bridge.

7166 Melrose Ave., L.A., (323) 933-9540.

■ A slew of openings in the Valley: Mikayel Israyelyan, owner of Republic and Prana Cafe in Los Angeles, has opened a high-end Russian restaurant in Studio City — modeled after the czars' Winter Palace. From the owners of Lasher's An American Restaurant in Long Beach comes Lasher's American Steakhouse in Burbank. And in Toluca Lake, Lucy's 51 has 51 signature martinis and "grown-up comfort food," while tapas and paella are served up at wine bar Eight-18 down the street.

Romanov Restaurant + Lounge, 12229 Ventura Blvd., Studio City, (818) 760-3177; Lasher's American Steakhouse, Cusumano Civic Plaza, 250 E. Olive Ave., Burbank, (818) 843-8800; Lucy's 51, 10149 Riverside Drive, Toluca Lake, (818) 763-5200; Eight-18, 10151 Riverside Drive, Toluca Lake, (818) 761-4243.