

Rah, rah, rah! Kimpura!

Say hai to Japanese cooking! And when it comes to good old Japanese food, the choice is loud and clear: Kimpura, rah, rah, rah! Fact is, for the past four decades, we've been

cheering for Kimpura. When it opened its quaint doors at the Makati Commercial Center (now Ayala Center) with Lor Calma as architect in October, 1970, the Pinoy palate welcomed a whole new world of dining experience. Today, it continues to dazzle the taste buds with old favorites and new offerings that are guaranteed best-sellers, too.

Surely, there's more to love about Japanese food at the Kimpura restaurant, which opened barely three months ago at the third level, TriNoma Park, Quezon City.

The menu has hardly changed. But why change a winning recipe? If it ain't broke, why fix it? At Kimpura, there are no magic tricks, just good old treats to delight both the young and old.

But as an added treat for the loyal Kimpura buffs, Wagyu was introduced last year. Of course, you know that Wagyu is a premium cut of beef that's got extensive marbling and is quite expensive. But did you know that because it's well-marbled (an intermixture of fat and lean), its fat content is reduced and may actually lower cholesterol levels or cater to people who are forever watching their diet? The new Wagyu rib eye beefs up Kimpura's fine steak menu that also includes Kobe steak, US Angus rib eye, US Roshu sirloin, and sukuyaki steak.

So, what else is new at the new Kimpura?

Yes, there's shiitake *no tsutsumi age* (black forest mushrooms stuffed with diced shrimps and battered). Now, this mushroom dish is a real must, it's shrilly delicious!

For those who love eels, the eels are alive and cooking at Kimpura. Try the *unagyoko maki* (broiled eel wrapped in a flaky omelette).

The new Kimpura offers a visual feast, too. "We now have more modern interiors, warmer, airy ambience," describes restaurant manager Lulu Palileo who's a Kimpura fixture, having been with the restaurant for all of 39 of the restaurant's 40 years. "The place seats 150 persons. We



Kani mango salad consists of assorted garden greens, mango cubes, and crabsticks served with a piquant dressing.



Make mine maki: *Unagyoko maki* (broiled eel wrapped in a flaky omelette) is new on the menu.



Make room for mushroom: These black forest mushrooms stuffed with diced shrimps are shrilly delicious.



Here's the (prime) beef: Wagyu beefs up Kimpura's fine steak selection.



Room with lots of view: From the glass window of a function room at Kimpura in TriNoma, you can see the Sierra Madre mountain range.

have five function rooms, each good for eight to 10 persons and three of which have *misono* tables."

So, we sit down and get a nice view of the Sierra Grande mountain range from the glass window while we wait for our food to be cooked right at our table. Then we rivet our gaze on what's cooking and notice a familiar face—that of Benny Tiongco who must have cooked for us more than a couple of times before at the original Kimpura. Faster than we could say *yasai moriatouse* (mixed vegetables), Chef Benny was serving us our equal portions (one for you and two for me) of Wagyu and *yakimeshi* (Japanese fried rice with veggies, shrimp, and egg).

Of course, we didn't forget to order a well-loved classic — *ginlara* (black cod grilled with Kimpura's special teriyaki sauce). Oh my cod, this *ginlara* is really delish!

Kimpura's staggering menu includes

Photos by WALTER BOLLOZOS



Imported from Japan: Japanese Chef Irisawa has his hands full doing your favorite sushi.

such headings as: *teppanyaki* steaks; tempura and *age mono* (deep-fried dishes); *nabemono* (one-pot dishes like Wagyu beef *sukiyaki* and the US sirloin *shabu-shabu*); *yakimono* (broiled dishes with teriyaki and seasoned with sweet wine sauce); *menmai* (noodles, of which there are oodles); *onami mono* (soup) and *sarada* (salad) to kick start your food trip; *gohan* (rice dishes — the good old *kamameshi* still can't be beat); *domburi* (rice bowl — steamed rice topped with your choice of meat, seafood, chicken or egg); *oshukugo* (dessert — tempura freaks like me will find it hard to resist the tempura ice cream or the banana tempura).

Along with its *ippin-ryori* (a la carte) dishes, Kimpura has its *teishoku* (set meals served with rice, pickles, *kobachi* or salad bowl, miso soup, and a choice of dessert).

So many dishes, so little time to choose? No worries. Try the Chef's Specials. The chef recommends the soft shell crab tempura (crispy and



New home, good old favorites: "We now have more modern interiors, warmer, airy ambience," says Kimpura restaurant manager Lulu Palileo.

flavorful buttered soft shell crabs served with tartar sauce; only P350). Yes, you can bring home the bacon; or better yet, enjoy your *aspara bacon maki* (green asparagus wrapped in bacon, P295) at Kimpura. If you like ampalaya (for bitter or for worse), try the *sakura ebi goya kakiage* (tempura vegetable patty of ampalaya with crispy dried Japanese shrimps, only P105) or the *goya sunomono* (a light and healthy appetizer of ampalaya strips in vinaigrette dressing).

Of course, for a no-fuss, real fast meal, there are the *bento* menus served on weekdays for lunch. Kimpura's version of the executive lunch. Just to give you an idea of what goes into a *bento*, the cheapest Menu 7 or *Ebi Furai Bento* that costs a mere P375 includes a salad, miso soup, rice, breaded prawns, pork steak with mustard sauce, and dessert. The more expensive but still affordable Menu 5 (P725) has got *ginlara* teriyaki and tempura, salad, *chawan mushi* (Japanese savory custard), miso soup, steamed rice, and dessert.

Ah, once you get addicted to Kimpura, you'll never stop saying *hai* to good old Japanese food. Yes!

The new Kimpura restaurant is located at the third level, TriNoma Park, EDSA corner North Avenue, Quezon City with telephone numbers 901-0813, 901-0692, and 901-0772.