



# SUSHI BY BOŪ

CHEF DAVID BOUHADANA OFFERS AN EXCLUSIVE AND  
ANIMATED OMAKASE EXPERIENCE

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**S**ushi by Boū is unlike any dining experience I've ever had and I've enjoyed plenty. The restaurant concept's Instagram bio reads: "A unique omakase speakeasy experience," and they deliver. With three locations in New York

City (a fourth is opening soon) and a brand-new location in South Beach's legendary Versace Mansion (launched in February), this intimate sushi bar, brought to you by Simple Venue, is quickly becoming a hot spot for discerning diners.





Recently, I stopped by the Sushi by Bou in Suite 1001 at Hotel 3232 in NYC. I enter the lobby and let the woman at the front desk know I have a reservation at Sushi by Bou. I am handed a room key, which I curiously take. My guest and I ride the elevator up, locate the suite, and unlock the door. The suite has been transformed from your typical New York City hotel room into a chic speakeasy. There's a small seating area, four-seat sushi bar, a nice-sized balcony with a bar and additional seating (which is closed as it's winter), and a self-service sake vending machine, where guests can select three sakes for \$30.

Josh, our waiter, greets us and suggests that we take a seat on the loveseat and indulge in a cocktail as we wait for Chef David Bouhadana, aka Chef Bou, to finish up with two other couples. Josh suggests that we try one of their speciality cocktails, Herald's Berald—a refreshing concoction comprised of Japanese vodka, barley syrup, lemon juice, and muddled blueberries. It is delicious.

A few minutes later, we are seated at the sushi bar. We are the last dining time slot tonight—each 60-minute dining time slot seats up to four diners—and since the other random couple cancelled, we have Chef Bou to ourselves. Omakase is a Japanese phrase that translates to, "I'll leave it up to you." This means that every one of the 17 pieces of sushi being served to us tonight have been carefully selected by the chef.

Chef Bou expertly slices the raw fish, lightly paints it with some sort of sauce, and places it on our bright, red plates. "Akami, lean tuna. Blue fin tuna from Spain. Enjoy!" It's light, fresh, and bursting with flavor. The masterful chef explains the different cuts of the 445-pound bluefin being served. As he holds three large chunks of tuna, he points out the subtle differences in color: the lean tuna is very red, then it goes to a light red to a light pink—the belly, aka toro.

We enjoy Hokkaido scallop topped with lightly smoked charcoal salt, uni, crab, yellowtail... Chef Bou utilizes the subtlest touches of flavor to enhance the

raw fish. And not one dish of soy sauce is provided for dipping. Just as you wouldn't ask for a salt shaker at a five-star restaurant, soy sauce is not needed for these perfectly-prepared, bite-sized courses. It would be a crime to even ask for some.

The energy in the room is energetic, fun—thanks to the fast-paced music and Chef Bou's lively personality. As each round is served, Chef Bou explains the course and entertains us with personal tales. It's no surprise that his favorite part of his job is interacting with his guests. "My style of sushi is Tradition 2.0. My style is from my heart... I think sushi should be explained. It should be fun. But if you want to be quiet and just have the experience, I'll do that."

Sushi actually found him, Chef Bou tells me. At 26, he had reached a point in his culinary career where he wondered, "How can I do this everyday and pay my rent?" That's when he decided to open a restaurant. "Sushi Dojo was my first; I was 27. I was awarded two stars by *The New York Times*, and that's when I realized my passion became my business. Long story short, I didn't have equity, I wasn't an owner but I knew at that point people liked me, they liked my food and my food was regarded very well. From that point on, I no longer had to give freebies—people came to eat with me."

Sushi by Bou is the chef's first venture that he has equity in. "With Sushi by Bou, I sold the idea to Michael Sinensky, like a *Shark Tank*. I gave him a percentage of my company, while I still had equity. I'm an owner. I have a vote. I have a say and it's my company—that was 18 months ago," says the 32-year-old chef/restaurateur. ML

Sushi by Bou offers a memorable omakase experience for \$125 inclusive of tax and gratuity. For more information and locations, visit: [www.sushibybou.com](http://www.sushibybou.com)

