



KATIE ELDRIDGE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Shabu has people talking about its rare Asian-influenced fare.

Rave/Park City repast

KARI J. BODNARCHUK

With just a hint of Mongol

PARK CITY, Utah — It's an improbable setting for a hip dining scene: upstairs in an enclosed shopping mall overlooking Main Street. Shabu restaurant not only manages to pull it off, but does so with flair. Its dishes are uniquely prepared and artfully presented in a chic setting that draws a trendy local crowd and visitors in the know (we discovered it through local friends).

Shabu is run by Kevin Valaika (the general manager) and his brother Robert (the chef), who serve "freestyle Asian cuisine." Translation: Japanese, Thai, and Chinese fare with a Western twist.

The restaurant's name comes from shabu shabu, a style of cooking that allegedly dates to the days of Genghis Khan, when the Mongol ruler developed a "hot pot" style of cooking, designed to feed a hungry army that was always on the move. His troops huddled around large pots of boiling broth into which they dipped skewers of thinly sliced meat — a fast cooking technique that preserved the army's valuable fuel and the meat's nutritional value.

Order a shabu shabu here and you can dip skewers of beef, chicken, seafood, tofu, and veggies into a vegetable or Thai coconut broth

and eat with a variety of sauces over udon noodles.

If you're hungry after a full day on the slopes, you may find the regular entree portions a tad on the lean side, but there is plenty to choose from on the extensive menu. For starters, try the delicious dim sum or an assortment of fresh sushi rolls, including the Nitro Roll, with tempura shrimp, avocado, pineapple, and mango wrapped in tuna and served with a Japanese red pepper citrus sauce.

People come from around the valley for the sweet miso-glazed black cod and sake-steamed sea bass, both entrees. They also come because it's a cool place to hang out. The modern, Zen-like decor strikes a nice balance between funkiness and ambience. Creative artwork, including a metal fish sculpture and paintings by local artists, decorates the room with its red, earth-tone walls, and black ceiling with exposed pipes.

Shabu, Main Street Mall, 333 Main St., Park City, Utah. 435-645-SAKE (7253). shabupc.com. Open nightly, 5-11. Entrees \$21-\$33. Reservations recommended. In summer, dine Thursday-Sunday on the outdoor patio with live jazz and a sushi bar.

Destinations/Food

ALISON ARNETT

Drink it all in, Kona to Hanoi

There's nothing like the crisp days of autumn to induce wanderlust. Maybe a wine and food festival will catch your fancy. Or a coffee festival on the Big Island of Hawaii? You could get your licks in at the annual extravaganza of chocolate in New York next month. Or pull out all the stops and sign up for a chefs tour of Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Thailand.

Kona Coffee Cultural Festival

HAWAII **Nov. 3-12**
At Hawaii's oldest food festival (36 this year), Kona coffee will be king for 10 days on the Big Island of Hawaii. The Kona Coffee Cultural Festival is the place to tour coffee plantations, mills, and roasting operations. There will be cupping competitions for flavor and aroma, a coffee-bean picking contest, and a golf tournament. The price is right, only \$3 for a festival button to most events — airfare not included.
konacoffeefest.com.

Wine and Food Affair

SONOMA COUNTY, Calif. **Nov. 4-5**
More than 60 wineries are taking part in the 8th annual wine and food event along the Russian River Wine Road. Participants can enjoy food and wine pairings, tour the wineries, and meet winemakers. Tickets range from \$20 for designated drivers to \$50.
800-723-6336. wineroad.com.

San Antonio New World Wine and Food Festival

SAN ANTONIO **Nov. 5-12**
Another emerging wine state is Texas, where this festival founded in 2000 will explore the influence of Spain on New World cuisine.

Chefs from the Canary Islands, Spain, and Mexico will demonstrate neo-Spanish cuisine. Wine-maker dinners, cooking classes, and seminars will also be offered. Prices for events, such as lunch at the Becker Vineyards, in the hill country east of Fredericksburg, range from about \$40-\$60.
210-930-3232. nweff.org.

Chocolate Show

NEW YORK **Nov. 10-12**
Who doesn't love chocolate? Chocolate exhibitions, demonstrations, chocolate fashion, and activities for children will be part of the 9th annual Chocolate Show. Renowned pastry chefs including Jacques Torres, François Payard, and Martin Howard will describe how to make chocolate goodies. An opening night fashion benefit will cost \$200 per person; tickets for the chocolate show are \$25 a day for adults, free for children.
chocolateshow.com.

New Asian Cuisine Chefs Tour

HONG KONG **Nov. 26-Dec. 8**
New Asian Cuisine is offering a 13-day chefs tour that promises a taste of what the Far East has to offer. Participants will see the fish markets of Hong Kong and Hanoi, dine in top restaurants, meet chefs, take a cooking class at the Oriental Bangkok, and tour a soy sauce factory and a brewery. The cost, starting from \$3,999, includes airfare, accommodations, transfers, and 22 meals. There are also tours in January, February, and March.
973-338-8687. clubabc.com/cheftour.

Contact Alison Arnett at arnett@globe.com.



There's no masking it, 'tis chocolate dressing this mannequin.

Where they went/Cross-country

DIANE DANIEL

College tour follows a different game plan

WHO: Paul Alphen, 51, and his son, Chris, 17, of Westford

WHERE: Across the country

WHEN: Three weeks in June and July

WHY: "My son's a senior and you have to go on those college trips," Alphen said of Chris, who attends Westford Academy, where he's on the football team. "You can take a long weekend here and there, but we thought, let's see America. And I wanted to show my sons that the country isn't Middlesex County, Mass.," said Alphen, who four years ago took his older son on a similar journey.

GAME PLAN: "I needed a hook for Christopher," Alphen said. "So we put eight baseball games in the trip. We watched 'The Grapes of Wrath' so he could see the importance of Route 66, and 'Cars,' so Chris could see it from a modern perspective. We'd planned to visit a bunch of large colleges — not that he'd be applying to, but to see a wide variety."

THE WHEEL THING: Before the trip, Alphen bought a new Mustang GT convertible (it helped that his brother-in-law owns Framingham Ford), which he then had shipped to California. "We'd installed satellite radio and GPS. At one point we admitted we had become dummies. If it had told us to drive left and turn off a cliff, we probably would have. But it did save time and gas because we didn't get lost." By the end of the three weeks, they had driven 4,800 miles through 13 states.

THE RED LINE: Although they couldn't schedule in a Red Sox game, "we saw Cleveland beat the Yankees; that's the next best thing," Alphen said. They always wore Red Sox shirts and caps to games, and met other people from Boston visiting ballparks across the country.

GAME ON: They started with a stay in San Francisco and tickets to an Oakland A's-Los Angeles Dodgers game at McAfee Coliseum in Oakland. Other California highlights: a nighttime Alcatraz Island tour, a visit to Hearst Castle in San Simeon, a game at Dodger Stadium in Los An-



Chris Alphen, left, and his father, Paul, at Wrigley Field for a Cubs-White Sox game.

geles, and eggs Benedict aboard the Queen Mary in Long Beach.

DRIVE, HE SAID: "As soon as we hit Route 66, I handed the steering wheel over to Chris," Alphen said. On and off the route, they hit attractions ranging from the original Bass Pro Shop in Springfield, Mo., to the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Mich., and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. Their favorite lodging was Bright Angel Lodge in a cabin looking over the South Rim of the Grand Canyon.

EXTRA POINTS: College tours always included football stadiums. The University of Oklahoma in Norman "looks like Harvard on steroids," Al-

phen said. "The stadium is huge; they've won a lot of football championships there." One day they visited three schools in Chicago and then the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Chris was most drawn to Temple University for its urban location in Philadelphia, and Penn State in State College for its college town setting. "It's out in the middle of nowhere," Alphen said, "but there's no better place to be for college football."

COME SEE WHERE THEY WENT
Visit boston.com/wheretheywent for more photos of the Alphens' trip and other readers' photos. Send suggestions within two weeks of your return to diane@bydianedaniel.com.

Q&A

I am going to Las Vegas next month and have to schedule several meals with different clients. It's important that I make an impression. Any ideas?

J.G., *Boston*

You might be shocked to hear this, but Sin City has come a long way from 24-hour all-you-can-eat buffets. During the past few years it has become a culinary hot spot, recruiting top chefs from coast to coast.

With a pedigree of French Laundry (Napa) and Per Se (New York), Thomas Keller has become the go-to guy for making an impression. In Vegas, he has recently opened an outpost of his classic French bistro Bou-chon (frenchlaundry.com) at The Venetian. Expect blood sausage with sauteed apples (\$23.50), terrine de foie gras (\$45), and steak frites (\$34.50).

Vegas impresario Steve Wynn recruited Manhattan-based Daniel Boulud (danielnyc.com) to open a French-American brasserie in his flashy new Wynn Las Vegas. Order the extravagant fruits de mer plateau overflowing with oysters, clams, shrimp, and lobster (\$68) or Boulud's amped-up DB Burger, stuffed with braised short ribs, foie gras, and black truffles (\$29).

Even lunch has taken on a new dimension thanks to Tom



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wynn Las Vegas is betting on Daniel Boulud's menus.

Colicchio, who made his name at Gramercy Tavern and later Craft (both in New York). He has turned sandwich-making into an art form with his new branded restaurant, 'wichcraft (wichcraftnyc.com), located in the MGM Grand. Skirt steak, mer plateau overflowing with oysters, clams, shrimp, and lobster (\$68) or Boulud's amped-up DB Burger, stuffed with braised short ribs, foie gras, and black truffles (\$29).

A far cry from turkey on rye, but live a little — it's Las Vegas!

Got a travel-related question? Send it to Hillary Geronemus, travel editor at *Body + Soul* magazine, at hillarygeronemus@yahoo.com.



ONLY Vegas

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