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WEB EXTRA: LI bakeries making artisanal bread



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An inside-out bologna roll created at Jewel and Be-Ju includes spicy mayo, scallions and avocado with a bed of nori-backed rice.

Where's the beef? Maybe in your sushi

3 LI chefs create tastes of the latest food fad

BY PETER M. GIANOTTI
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Beefshi has yet to reach a plateau, but it's already on a diet. The newly minted word refers to substituting cooked red meat for raw fish when preparing sushi. Put away your special sushi knife — and your ritual dagger. Yes, beefshi recipes are readily available, including some that use beef jerky, hot dogs, bologna and pastrami.

So far, neither intricately marbled wagyu beef nor John Belushi's "Samurai Delicatessen" have entered the campaign. It's "Yee-haw," not haiku. To the sushi faithful, thinking about sushi with jerky or franks is closer to sacrilege than whimsy, applied more like a branding iron than a brushstroke. But there may be an audience developing for this medium-rare reply to the spicy tuna roll. In an online Harris Poll, funded by the beef industry, those age 18 to 44 viewed a photo of beefshi as more appealing than one of a sushi platter.

"They were particularly inclined toward it. They've been exposed to a broader variety of foods prepared in different ways," said Janet M. Reilly, senior vice president of the North American Meat Institute. "Beefshi grew out of a way to prepare these items and not be a sandwich."

Lisa Cherkasky, an author, chef and Culinary Institute of America graduate, created 20 beefshi rolls for the Meat Institute and the Beef Checkoff, which aim to increase beef consumption. "I was trying to make something that would be fun and a little bit different, playing off the familiar," Cherkasky said. "A lot of people don't want to eat sushi with raw ingredients."

The results include the Reuben roll with pastrami, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, sushi rice and Russian dressing; Carolina sushi, with shredded, fried beef bologna and sliced carrot in rice with a vinegared cabbage leaf instead of seaweed; and the Hiker's

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Insignia Steakhouse in Smithtown has seared beef wrapping a crab and lobster roll.

Roll, filled with beef jerky, omelet and pea shoots or watercress, ready for a Sriracha dip. "You get a lot of different flavors in two bites," Cherkasky said. "Food is always evolving," and beefshi is an alternative. The marketing of beef hit its prime with TV ads in the 1990s, when Robert Mitchum, and later Sam Elliott, intoned "Beef. It's what's for dinner." Matthew McConaughey on radio now extols "the power of protein in the land of lean beef."

While the term beefshi is new, using beef with sushi isn't. Several of Long Island's top steakhouses serve sushi in general and a surf-and-turf roll in particular. At Insignia in Smithtown, for example, seared beef and sukuyaki sauce finish a roll starring king crab and steamed lobster; at Blackstone Steakhouse in Melville, the surf-and-turf roll means spicy, crunchy lobster crowned with strips of lightly braised wagyu beef and sukuyaki sauce.

"It's one of our most popular rolls, served as a main course," said Jory Grisola, a manager at Blackstone. Ever vigilant to get ahead of the beefshi trend, Newsday reached out to several Long Island chefs to get involved and apply their skills — and try their patience with the concept. Three restaurateurs courageously agreed to foray into the red-meat debate.

JEWEL AND BE-JU IN MELVILLE
"I'm a purist," said Tom Schaudel, whose restaurants include Jewel, a New American establishment in Melville, and Be-Ju, a Japanese dining room within Jewel. "Beefshi? I think it's silly."

Accordingly, Schaudel's artful, layered entry "is like a spicy bologna roll," accented with avocado, scallion and sesame seeds, plus a little peppery heat. Be-Ju stars with Toro, or fatty tuna, and both traditional and contemporary dishes. The completed roll "tasted like bologna," Schaudel joked. And if your palate is inclined, the combination works, even without mustard.

BBD'S IN ROCKY POINT
In Rocky Point, BBD's stands for beer, burgers and dessert. But Ralph Perrazzo's full-flavored eatery goes beyond them, too, with original dishes to complement the American classics. This bastion of meat weers Japanese in technique and style with the treatment of filet mignon and tri-tip steak. The filet mignon is sliced into squares and cooked by applying searing-hot garlic oil, then piled on a roll. The tri-tip, cut from the sirloin, is made into a "white miso beef" roll. The roulade is destined to go into kousamade dashi, or cooking stock and soup, with ramen noodles. They don't appear on the regular menu.

"It's a three-day process," Perrazzo said. The dishes are "special requests."



Jewel owner and chef Tom Schaudel, right, with sushi chef Shigeki Uchiyama. The team decided to take the beefshi challenge.

TASTE TEST: A CERTAIN INTEGRITY
Chef-restaurateur Tom Schaudel gamely agreed to give beefshi a go at Be-Ju, the sushi bar within his Melville restaurant, Jewel. But it was his sushi chef, Shigeki Uchiyama, who really deserved combat pay for creating an inside-out bologna roll for this story. Schaudel noted that the bologna was local ("We got it about four miles away at Stew Leonard's in Farmingdale") and that it had a fat content comparable to that of tuna belly. "It's the toro of luncheon meat," he said, as Uchiyama, stone-faced, began his ministrations. First, he finely minced a few slices, and mixed the resultant paste with spicy mayonnaise, scallions and crunchy bits. He laid this "spicy bologna salad" on a bed of nori-backed rice and layered on some thin slices of avocado. ("Bologna and avocado are natural partners," Schaudel noted.) Then he flipped the whole thing over, rolled it up, rice-side out, draped overlapping slices of bologna around the roll and struggled manfully to keep it from sliding off. A pinch of wasabi, a squiggle of spicy mayonnaise and the deed was done. How did it taste? Schaudel and I agreed that it wasn't the worst sushi either of us had ever tried. In its very bologna-ness, it had a kind of integrity not shared by rolls whose main ingredient must share pride of place with assorted tempura shrimp, salmon skin and barbecued eel, drowned out by the addition of mango salsa and ponzu sauce. Uchiyama declined to sample his handiwork. — ERICA MARCUS

Ralph Perrazzo's ramen with thin slices of tri-tip steak at BBD's in Rocky Point.