



Miso-glazed black cod, served on a bed of vegetables

Sushi hot spot, sushi night spot

Everything and everyone looks terrific

India Street is typically thronged on a Saturday night, its city best restaurant scene luring every manner of date night, birthday celebration, and — is that a bachelorette party? I'm forced to wonder, what is the upscale restaurant seating capacity in Little Italy these days? And is it enough? Half of these restaurants weren't here two years ago, but they've slid right in to attract their share of proverbial butts in seats.

Fashionable ones at that. We squeeze in to the last two seats at the sushi bar in the back of [Cloak & Petal](#), where the clientele is decidedly dressed for a night out, gals

in cocktail dresses and guys in sleeves rolled up enough to show just the right amount of arm tattoo.



The La Jolla Parkway roll, no soy sauce required

Cloak & Petal took over what had once been envisioned as a [full-service taco restaurant fronting a speakeasy](#), and kept that spot's most distinguishing feature: an oblong island bar framed by a pair of artificial olive trees. In a somewhat brilliant turn, Cloak & Petal has re-purposed these as cherry blossom trees, and they look as though they were intended for a Japanese eatery from day one.

The pink and white blossoms, piped in music, large format artworks, and cushy seating options lend a loungey vibe. The former speakeasy in back is now home to a sushi bar, and added dining space, which has proven vital. Every table is booked, many of them young adults, soaking up the food, booze, and music, and it's tough to tell whether they're just beginning a night out, or if dinner is the night out.

As I sip on the restaurant's signature cocktails, a delicious house version of a Manhattan made with sesame-infused Japanese whiskey, I peer through the glass shielding the sushi bar to admire the glistening cuts of raw fish lined up and ready to slice. Ordering the belly sashimi plate (bluefin tuna *toro*, salmon belly, and yellowtail belly) seems like a no-brainer, and a relatively easy 32 bucks to spend.

On the other hand, \$125 for eight ounces of dry aged wagyu strip steak is out of our reach. Bear in mind, this is [A5 wagyu](#), making it one of the best, most beautifully marbled steaks on the entire planet, which can retail over a hundred dollars per pound. If could swing it, I most definitely would, and I'd probably embrace the option to add two ounces of uni for an additional \$30. Big spenders, stoke your appetites and tell me how it was.

For the rest of us, only the steaks really go for broke. Six ounces of perfectly executed miso glazed black cod melts in your mouth for a relatively harmless \$22, and I'd gladly repeat the experience. Upon return, I will also dip more into the nigiri menu, where I mentally note the availability of branzino, but my friend convinces me to go with a sushi roll she recommends, dubbed the La Jolla Parkway roll. No regrets. Spicy tuna and avocado inside, topped with yellowtail and dressed with cilantro, garlic and jalapeño, the *maki* comes plated on a red habañero hot sauce so good I want to swear off soy sauce and horseradish wasabi forever.

Cloak & Petal revamped its menu and experienced some chef turnover early on, but it seems to have found a fine groove. I found it an outstanding experience when I showed up this night, and it's quite evident from the music and the crowd that I am late to the party.

Cloak & Petal

1953 India St, Little Italy