

THE FAR EAST

FOUND ON WEST PEACHTREE

Steel Restaurant and Lounge Brings Pan-Asian Dining to Atlanta

By Clayton Morey

Bringing a unique take on the cuisines of Asia to the Midtown dining scene for the last five years, Steel Restaurant and Lounge has proven to be deft at providing a unique and enjoyable pan-Asian dining experience. I recently had the opportunity to enjoy some highlights from their expansive menu and to meet the man responsible for creating this one of a kind Midtown destination, Chuck Kneeland.

Kneeland, a Dallas transplant, brought the Steel concept to Atlanta in 2006 after reviving what was a struggling restaurant into a thriving and successful enterprise. Kneeland—a seasoned veteran in the hospitality industry with years of experience at groups such as Brinker International—brings a polish and professionalism that is palpable as soon as you meet him.

Steel Restaurant and Lounge occupies one corner of Plaza Midtown on West Peachtree. The interior is a commanding yet cozy space created by Atlanta restaurant design maven Bill Johnston of Johnston Studios. Modern elements of sleek concrete and polished steel mix effortlessly with Asian elements and warm well-polished wood accents. Huge square steel lamps with rectangular cut outs that hang from the ceiling are reminiscent of Japanese lanterns.

While the space certainly has an Asian sensibility, it's not at all stereotypical or overdone. The private dining room features a one-of-a-kind wine wall that showcases Steel's expansive wine selection and offers Steel a place to host all sorts of private events ranging from rehearsal dinners to corporate meetings.

Steel's Indo-Chine menu brings together influences and flavors from all over Asia. Dishes from Korea, Vietnam, and Thailand are featured, alongside more mainstream Chinese and Japanese offerings. The sushi selection is world class. The finest and freshest selection of fish and seafood are artfully presented. If it's busy, you should be prepared to wait; this kind of perfection takes time to create.



Steel also brings its distinctive culinary creations to customers with a full catering menu to make private events as enjoyable and unique as dining at Steel.

As Steel prepares to celebrate its fifth year in business in Atlanta, they are planning an anniversary party to showcase their amazing and varied creations. The party theme "A Night in Asia" will be

a journey through each of the different styles of food Steel has to offer, with multiple stations—each featuring the cuisine from a different region. Scheduled for early June, look for more information about this event on their website (or in *David Atlanta*) soon.

Steel Restaurant and Lounge has become a pillar of the Midtown dining landscape and has plans to continue to do so for many years to come. Always reinventing itself and responding to the needs and uniqueness of its patrons and neighborhood has made Steel an undisputed success. Its motto of "Never Settle" is clearly a mantra to which we can all aspire.



Menu highlights include the Crispy Duck Egg Rolls with a plum dipping sauce and a Sea Salt and Chili Pepper Calamari with paper-thin slices of fiery jalapeno and Serrano peppers with a duo of dipping sauces. The house signature steamed Sea Bass is marinated in Miso and Sake. The delicate and flakey fish is served in a Miso and wasabi broth with grilled asparagus spears. For a unique addition to your dining experience, try the Japanese Hot Rocks: Beef Tenderloin or fresh Ahi Tuna Seared tableside on super-heated river rocks.

The main attraction at Steel, however, is undoubtedly the sushi selection. Classic sushi offerings are complimented by a selection of the less conventional Steel specialty rolls such as the Cowboy Roll, which replaces the raw fish with seared beef tenderloin.

To accompany the culinary creations at Steel its beverage program features a globally influenced cocktail menu that changes with the seasons, as well as a respectable Sake Selection and a world-class wine list. All of this is watched over and delivered to you by a gracious and welcoming staff of servers and bartenders that are well-educated on all that Steel has to offer.

Steel Restaurant and Lounge is located at 950 West Peachtree Street, Suite 255. For more information on the restaurant, including their upcoming "A Night in Asia" party, visit steelatlanta.com or call 404-477-6111. For more restaurant reviews from Clayton Morey, visit davidatlanta.com or feedinfrank.com.

