

DINING  
 Mi Loc serves dynamic taste of Korea and Japan

BY ELEANOR AND RAY HEALD  
 SPECIAL WRITERS

If you try to locate Mi Loc, the marquee sign still reads Kobe, the former restaurant at this Southfield location. A window poster sports the name Mi Loc where there's now dynamism in Korean and Japanese cuisine created by owner Sang Candela. Mi Loc is Korean for "enjoy the taste," and diners most certainly do that.

This is not Sang Candela's first restaurant. Between 1989 and 1992 she owned and operated Hometown Restaurant in Trenton, specializing in Korean and American dishes. After selling this restaurant, she pursued a number of interests, including retailing at Hudson's. Her husband, Michael, whom she credits for ultimate encouragement in her projects, discouraged this position because every day was like Christmas. "I spent more than I made," she admitted. "But after leaving this job, I missed working with people and knew I should get back into the restaurant business."

Candela's sister owns Seoul Oriental Market in the same shopping complex as Mi Loc. When Kobe came up for sale, Candela thought the site was perfect to again enter the restaurant business. Her sister is the source of many unusual items available at Mi Loc, such as corn tea made from roasted corn. It smells and tastes exactly like what it is and makes a nice accompaniment to vegetable dishes on the menu. The center of this unpretentious eatery is dominated by a

**Mi Loc**  
 Where: 23043 Beach, at Nine Mile, Southfield, (810) 358-2155.  
 Hours: 11 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday; noon to 9:00 p.m. Sunday.  
 Menu highlights: Extensive selection of Korean and Japanese specialties in a casual setting. Sushi bar with 30 made-to-order items. Luncheon specials 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.  
 Cost: Sushi \$1.50-\$1.75; appetizers \$1.50-\$2; Korean dishes \$5-\$10; Japanese dishes \$5-\$10.  
 Reservations: Advised on weekends.  
 Smoking: Separate non-smoking area.  
 Handicap access: Wide front entry.  
 Credit cards: Major cards accepted.

Japanese-style sushi bar replete with comfortable stools and lanterns for added atmosphere. About 30 fresh and made-to-order items are available. Among the most popular are California Roll made with real crab meat, Maguro (tuna), Sake (salmon), Tako (octopus) and Ebi (shrimp). To guarantee freshness, a sushi essential, Candela receives a fresh fish order four times weekly. Each sushi plate is garnished with wasabi (Japanese horseradish) and thinly sliced raw ginger. Candela recommends

mixing the wasabi with some soy sauce in a small dish and dipping the sushi in the sauce before eating it with a small portion of the ginger.

Main seating is in booths or at tables. One section is equipped with table grills and overhead vents for Korean So-t-Ddu-Kung Gui (tableside barbecue). While a number of meats and various cuts are available, Candela recommends Kal-Bi (marinated beef short ribs) and Bul-Go-Gi (thinly sliced and marinated rib eye steak).

The Mi Loc menu is distinctly divided between Korean and Japanese dishes. Candela explains that Korean dishes range from spicy to spicy hot by the inclusion of hot peppers. Sesame seed oil is frequently used in cooking. Bibim Bob (cooked vegetables, marinated beef and fried egg over rice with a hot sauce) is typically Korean, but at Mi Loc it's raised to a signature dish and represents a creative use of root vegetables. Japanese cuisine, on the other hand, uses soy sauce and vinegar. A good example of this is Katana made with either pork or chicken with a sweet honey-soy sauce and garnished with supremely fresh, crisp and crunchy vegetables. Korean main courses are always accompanied by about eight small mouth-watering side dishes, including such items as Radish Kimchi, Napa (cabbage) with spices, bean sprouts, spinach and Doriagi (hot peppers).

So great was Candela's reputation in her Downriver eatery that many former patrons are finding her and traveling to the new Southfield location.



Taste of Korea and Japan: Restaurant owners Michael and Sang Candela serve Korean and Japanese dishes at Mi Loc, which is Korean for "enjoy the taste."

Confirming this was a Ford Motor Co. engineer, Korean-born Soon Kwon of Grosse Ile who brought a "table of nations" to Mi Loc. His associates, all Ford employees, were of English, American, Lebanese and Indian ancestry. They gave five thumbs up to Hae-mul-Pa-Jeon, a seafood and green onion pancake, which is listed on the menu as a side dish, but the gentlemen were eating it as an appetizer. They gave the same approval rating to their grilled Kal-Bi and Kimchi Pork.

A number of house wines are available, and, with inquiry, some other bottlings (there's no wine list). But with their food

the "dinner of nations" table preferred to drink OB Beer from Korea. OB stands for Oriental Brewery. Beers from Japan are Kirin, Asahi and Sapporo. Also available is sake, served hot or cold.

Oriental grill experts are encouraged to cook their own barbecued items, but novices get able assistance from friendly wait staff or even Candela herself, who is apron-clad for such occasions. Chef and general manager Kyu Man Yi stays behind the scenes heading a kitchen staff of four.

Besides table grilling skills, eating the barbecued items is also an art. Each generously-

sized dish of raw meat for grilling is accompanied by a dish of lettuce, a bowl of plain rice, soy bean paste and a lettuce and green onion salad. The Korean way to eat the thinly-sliced grilled meat is to place a piece of lettuce on your plate, top it in order with about one tablespoon of plain rice, one tablespoon of soy bean paste and a dollop of salad, then add a slice of meat. Roll it up in the lettuce leaf and go for it!

For dessert, try green tea ice cream, savory, not sweet. It makes a perfect ending after you've "enjoyed the taste" at the place named for just that eating pleasure.

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