

Hana Yori: Food and fun

■ Show part of the attraction as meal is prepared at your table.

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MISHAWAKA

The chef flipped the shrimp tail from the steaming flat surface into the air, pulled out his shirt pocket a tad, and caught it. Soon another was soaring ... this time into his white chef's hat atop his head.

"Just like home cooking," John Nguyen remarked to the three women seated at the teppanyaki table, or grill, as he made a flaming volcano out of onions.

It's all part of the show at Hana Yori of Japan, the restaurant that has occupied a spot on Grape Road, just south of Edison, since 1987.

A juggling egg cracked perfectly on his spatula was equaled only by the joke Nguyen cracked right after it.

No doubt about it, the theme at Chung Park's Hana Yori is good times and good food.

"I promise myself, the only important thing is two things," Park said. "Customer happy. How? Let them have a good time with a good food."

He was born in Japan and spent the first five years of his life there, before moving to Korea, where he was raised. But it was not until decades later when the 28-year-old Seoul University graduate moved to the United States and began working at Ron of Japan steakhouse on East Ontario in Chicago that he entered the restaurant business.

And he has not left it, opening Japanese steakhouses and later selling them in both Indianapolis and Lafayette.

But it was while working in



Chef David Smith heats up the teppanyaki table, or grill, making a volcano out of onions and an alcohol solution. It's one of several ways the chefs entertain visitors to Hana Yori of Japan in Mishawaka.



Hana Yori of Japan owner Chung Park is in his 20th year of business and staffs six experienced teppan chefs and two sushi chefs.



Ongoing series highlights locally owned eateries.

Home-grown Restaurants

If you go

Hana Yori of Japan, 3601 Grape Road, Mishawaka:

■ Price range: from \$13.95 for teppan chicken to double portion of teppan steak for \$22 to seafood combo (shrimp, scallops and lobster boat for \$28.50). All meals include shrimp appetizer, salad, soup, fried rice and teppan vegetables.

■ Smoking allowed in lounge. Rest of restaurant is smoke free.

■ Alcohol, including Sapporo, is sold.

■ Sushi bar open evenings.

■ Kids' meals featuring chicken, sukiyaki or shrimp are \$9.50.

■ Lunches mostly in the \$7 to \$10 range. Lunch includes teppan vegetables and rice.

■ Hours: Open Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch. For dinner, open 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday.

