

New restaurants bring to life two old buildings

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Typically I save the last column of the year for rehashing my favorites from the previous 51 weeks. But this year it finally occurred to me that I've been a little stingy, giving kind and thrifty readers only 51 cheap places to eat every year — not quite a full deck, is it?

That's why I'm doing double duty today, offering two Cheap Eats options for the time it takes you to read one.

I've lived near The Ridge long enough to see a lot of real estate casualties accrue, from Kmart closing to Medley Centre. So when Shogun Palace Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Bar pops up (a place so stylish and new that it still has the restaurant equivalent of the new car smell), I'm eager to support it.

Shogun Palace's back room is where trapeze artists of the table grill turn cooking into an acrobatic performance. The live entertainment has its price, so if you are keeping to a budget, sit in the front room, where you can opt for one of the sushi lunches (\$7 to \$9), bento boxes (\$8 to \$13) or patch together two or three appetizers that would make a meal.

When table and timing are right, you can at least watch the show through an open space adjacent to the sushi bar. Or console yourself with a moment of Zen meditation while listening to the wall fountain after freshening up with the hot, wet towel brought to your table on a small bamboo tray.

Shogun Palace used to be a China Buffet, and before that, a Ponderosa, so table service is a definite upgrade. My \$10 bento box smorgasbord included miso soup, salad, shumai, sushi, stir-fried vegetables and unagi (smoked eel) on rice. The compartmentalized box was MIA, so things came out piecemeal, in an unpredictable pattern on oversized plates. I'll trust that these first-day bloopers will be fixed soon.

Here's another two-fer. (See [First Bite](#) for a full review and read [here](#) if you want a quick bite.) Back in the 1940s, the original Wintonaire really was cooler than most other taverns, being one of the first to offer air conditioning. It survived several decades and nearly an equal number of owners. The building sat empty for more than eight years, until brothers Terry and Dick Flynn decided to bring the Wintonaire back to life this fall, serving modern pub fare (wraps, panini) as well as classic Rochester entrees (chicken parm, meatloaf) in one of the better restaurant renovation jobs I've seen in a long time.

My combo special — a cup of vegetable soup and a bacon cheeseburger — still manages to put house-made potato chips on the side. At \$6.50, I could have grabbed a beer and stayed within budget. In my book, that's pretty cool, too.

SHOGUN PALACE

Address: 850 E. Ridge Road, Irondequoit.

Phone: (585) 342-2077.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and then 4 to 10 p.m. weekdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, noon to 10 p.m. Sunday. Closed Christmas Day.

Accessibility: Fully wheelchair-accessible.

Good to know: Full bar coming soon.

What I ate: Unagi bento box lunch for \$10; green tea, \$1.

WINTONAIRE

Address: 628 N. Winton Road.

Phone: (585) 730-8350.

Good to know: Full bar.

What I ate: Bacon cheeseburger and cup of soup special for \$6.50.
