

Health & Wellness

DiMino's Lewiston Tops expands sushi offerings with in-house preparation

Store also adds new self-scanners; preparing to officially launch seasonal space

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Chef Mang Lian is making fresh sushi for DiMino's Lewiston Tops. • Assistant Front-end Manager Nick Broughton shows off a new self-checkout scanner. • The seasonal room will soon have expanded offerings and entry points.

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

DiMino's Lewiston Tops has expanded its sushi offerings with a new display station at the far end of the deli counter, and the addition of an Advanced Fresh Concepts Franchise Corp. chef.

"The sushi chef comes in every day and he makes the sushi, as opposed to delivering it," Store Manager John DiMino said. "He's coming and making it in the morning. He makes everything in house here: the rice; he slices all the fresh fish. There's a little more variety."

DiMino added, "We have a bigger space here. He wasn't able to put out the full line of what we had before."

"We're hoping, as things progress here, that we can further expand with different options that they have," he said.

Since debuting this fresh fish line last summer, the Lewiston supermarket has been a sushi sales leader across all Tops stores.

"It does pretty well," DiMino said. "I've had a lot of compliments saying that the product is a good product. I myself have tried it. It's good. A lot of my employees enjoy it as much as the customers that do come in. It's a nice option to have, especially in the village, because no one else sells it in the village."

And whereas customers previously had to go to Niagara Falls for sushi, "It's more convenient for my customers to be able to just come down to Lewiston and get their sushi; and it's a nice, healthy option for the consumer for a quick lunch or dinner," DiMino said.

Chef Mang Lian is "making it twice a day," DiMino said. "He's making it once in the morning, and then when we get low on stock, he'll make more for the afternoon and dinner."

DiMino explained, "Right now, it's a preset menu. We haven't gotten to an ordering system where you can tell him what you want. We're just trying to get our feet



on the ground by just having him here, filling the case up. We're hoping that that's something that we can do in the future, that we can actually have a menu that you can actually order off of."

Some of the sushi choices this week were crunchy California roll, spicy tuna roll, rainbow roll (salmon, shrimp, tuna), seaside combo (salmon, tuna) and a chef sampler. Other items included a seabreeze (seaweed) salad, pork shumai and grilled shrimp dumplings. The display case also has pickled ginger, sushi and spicy sauces, and wasabi.

Shoppers can purchase sushi daily, and take advantage of \$6 "Sushi Friday" specials on select products.

New Scanners, Seasonal Product Room

The sushi upgrade is just one of the new changes at DiMino's Lewiston Tops.

"We just put in five new self-checkout scanners," DiMino said. "They're putting them at the other Tops locations. They're top-of-the-line self-checkouts. They're much more user-friendly, because the scanners can scan the barcodes a lot easier."

"We have some of the old ones still, but these ones are more cutting-edge in the industry. They work a lot faster and they pick up the barcodes a lot easier. And they also have the option to use one of those scanner guns – kind of similar to like what Home Depot or Walmart has at their self-checkout. You can use that for big items in your cart without putting

them on the register itself.

"We started with five, and we'll do the other five in the future and have all the brand-new ones. For now, we started with these ones. See how they're received. So far, they're well received by our customers, and we haven't had any problems.

"It's continuing to update and be more modernized in the industry."

Outside the store, the new seasonal room is set to showcase summer goods.

"We wanted to open in the early fall, and have it really set for the fall with pumpkins and mums and all the fall items, but we got delayed," DiMino said. "So, we opened really right around Christmastime, winter – which wasn't the best time for us to utilize it, because we only really had stuff to fill with like salt and outdoor things, logs and windshield washer fluid."

"But now that we have the weather starting to break and we're starting to get our summer seasonal items, customers are really going to see what we built this for. Right now, we have the garage doors closed because of the weather. But in the next month or so, we're going to have it fully stocked with all our summer furniture. We'll have plants in early May."

"We're going to have the garage doors open during the day so people can just come right out of the parking lot and walk right into it."

"It'll have that user-friendly look. I think customers, right now, don't see what our vision is. But they will definitely notice what it will be in the next month or so. They'll see why we built it."

"It'll be a nice addition to the store," he added. DiMino's Lewiston Tops is located at 906 Center St., Lewiston; and online at <https://www.topslewisston.com/>.

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