

Celebrity Taste Test: *Best*



No. 1
Chula Seafood
Laudable freshness from the renowned boat-to-table Scottsdale seafood counter, but “there’s too much rice... it soaks up the sauce and [the bowl] is not terribly flavorful.”
chulaseafood.com



No. 2
Pokedon
This Tempe poke purveyor achieves a better ratio of “sauce to starch,” Watson says. “And it’s very fresh-tasting, too.”
pokedonaz.com



No. 3
Koi Poke Bar & Bowl
A good specimen of a balanced, flavorful poke, according to Watson. “The presentation is good, the sauce is nice and tangy, and the fish feels integrated [into the whole].”
koipoke.com



No. 4
Poke Spot
Watson was not impressed with the Scottsdale joint’s presentation or taste. His assessment: “It’s super bland.”
pokespotaz.com

The Judge: Robert Watson, seafood-sourcing mastermind and executive chef of Steak 44
When & Where: Thursday, June 22, at the PHOENIX offices. Judging began at 2:08 p.m.
The Rules: Most poke operations offer a DIY option. Our standard order: ahi tuna, half brown rice and half mixed greens, edamame, seaweed salad, green onions and a shoyu or house sauce. Locally owned poke places only.



QUARTERFINAL WINNER
Pokedon

Chula’s “untossed,” rice-logged poke proves its undoing – along with the pineapple that snuck into the bowl. “I’m not a fan of fruit with seafood,” Watson says.



FINALIST
Koi Poke

The koi-free Koi Poke emerges victorious by benefit of “better overall flavor and a cleaner, fresher finish.”



FINALIST
Poké Wave

“It’s all about balance and portions with this one. It’s gets the golden ratio right.”



QUARTERFINAL WINNER
Ocean Poke Co.

The poke pride of Arcadia Lite is a no-brainer for Watson.



No. 5
Pokitrition
“Very little tuna, and a lot of everything else,” Watson says, skeptically picking through the tangle of greens proffered by the west Chandler poke shop.
pokitrition.com



No. 6
Ocean Poke Co.
The “most generous” cuts of the bunch, he says. “It’s from the belly, which is the most tender part of the fish. You can tell from the faint striations of fat.”
oceanpokeco.com



No. 7
Poké Wave
“This one I like,” Watson says. “Elegant, balanced flavor mix, and the [tuna] cuts are very consistent. It’s very professional.”
pokewave.com



No. 8
Poki Bar Central
Located in Arcadia Lite just down the street from Ocean Poke, it serves passable poke, according to Watson. “The fish is fresh, but the cuts are small.”
facebook.com/pokibarcentral



CHAMPION!

Koi Poke

Ultimately, the citrus-kissed shoyu of Koi may have clinched the deal for Watson over the sesame-boosted shoyu of Poke Wave. “It definitely doesn’t skimp on flavor,” Watson says. And should we need to say it again: No koi were harmed in the making of this poke contest.

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PHOTOS BY MIRELLE INGELFELD