

The Japanese Steakhouse

"The restaurant business is a challenge. I love it. Apart from meeting interesting people, the satisfaction of a customer well pleased with the fare and also the service gives me a tingling sensation. I try to get that feeling with each customer," laughs Eva Bailey Schaffner, proprietor of Freeport's Japanese Steak House.

One evening recently, reminiscently, Mrs. Schaffner told of her early business experience. She was only 16-years-old when she began active participation in the operation of a small shop her family maintained in Nassau. There, her determination to succeed was fostered. This determination has driven her ever since and has made her the successful business person she is today.

Last year, she, among five Bahamian women was honoured by the Business and Professional Women's Association for her contribution to the business community in the Bahamas. But, of course, one for Eva's temperament does not rest there. She learnt early the sky must be the limit.

Freeport/Lucaya is acclaimed a diner's paradise — from casual and simple to the elegant and

grand. The Japanese Steak House, International Bazaar, sets the standard this tradition of fine dining demands.

Opened officially in lavish style last year by Prime Minister the Hon. Lynden O. Pindling, the Steak House's imposing Buddha stands poised at its entrance to bid patrons welcome. A few steps beyond, one enters the delightful confines of this international eatery.

The restaurant's motto: "Ah so Japanese. Ah so happy to have the pleasure of your honourable company at the Japanese Steak House" best sums up what owners Eva and her husband, Leo, strive to offer customers.

The restaurant's unique style of food preparation is on the famed habachi tables. Kimono-clad cooks prepare succulent steaks and lobsters, marinated in secret Japanese herbs and spices. The preparation of the dishes is a performance. A visit to the Steak House is more than just a visit to an ethnic restaurant. In reality, it is a visit to a dinner theatre. The Japanese Steak House offers in its setting and service aesthetic delight equal to the partaking of scrumptious servings, pleasing the body and soul.

Comments in the likes of "The

service is excellent," and "The staff is so friendly," are not uncommon.

These characteristics have made the Japanese Steak House stand out among other restaurants and become a popular dining place for both residents and visitors alike.

For the natural foods' concerned, salad ingredients and vegetables are freshly grown for the restaurant by the Schaffners. Their Grand Bahama Hydroponic Farm provides the restaurant's produce as well as other restaurants' and hotels.

Eva's teenage dream was to own a Playgirl Club. "But," she quipped, "I wound up with all other businesses except that." She still plans to open such a club one day.

Her Japanese Steak House, Playgirl shops in the International Bazaar and St. Croix, Hydroponic Farm and Michel's Cafe are no Playgirl Club but can certainly be considered forerunners to one.

Her recipe for success: "Hard work. One should pick a goal and stick to it. My motto is: 'I'm going to stick to what I want to do until it's finished'."

How does she cope? "It's easy. Once you like something, things fall into place."



Typical evening at the Japanese Steak House.