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Rodents, roaches and eight restaurants (three in malls) on The Sick and Shut down List

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This week's Sick and Shut Down List, with three food establishments in shopping malls, reminds us of the early 1990s day something large with a rat's head and tail scurried across the food court of the Omni shopping center at 15th Street and Biscayne Boulevard. Maybe it was a rat. Maybe it was an opossum. Whatever, a whole lot fewer feet were on the floor the rest of lunch. Our lunch pal asked, "How did that get up here?" "It's pretty obvious that it stood on its hind legs and pressed the elevator buttons," we said, readjusting our feet.

What follows comes from Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation restaurant inspections. A restaurant that fails inspection remains closed until passing re-inspection. If you see a problem and want a place inspected, contact the DBPR, not us.

We don't control who gets inspected nor how strictly the inspector inspects. We don't include all violations, just the most moving, whether internally or literally moving (because it's alive or once was alive). We report without passion or prejudice, but with a side dish of humor.

In alphabetical order:

China Bowl, 2863 W. Sunrise Blvd., Fort Lauderdale: You had 20 flies "landing on clean utensils stored above the three-compartment sink in the kitchen" and another 10 lighting on to-go boxes.

For various reasons, inspectors don't like food stored on the floor and China Bowl had a container of cooked rice, a bag of cabbage and two oil containers sitting on the kitchen floor.

Here's one reason: "Water draining onto floor surface due to a leak under preparation sink next to triple sink."

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“Accumulation of food debris/grease on food-contact surface. On shelf above preparation sink where sauces are stored.”

This is a bit unsettling. Nobody in charge knows anything about “foodborne illnesses and symptoms of illness that would prevent an employee from working with food, clean equipment and utensils, and single-service items.”

When the inspector returned the next day, Jan. 5, the entry says there was a re-inspection fail, but gives no details. A same day re-re-inspection wasn't a complete flunk, but says there needs to be a follow-up inspection.

China Buffet, 18690 NW 67th Ave., Northwest Miami-Dade: We're thinking the handwashing sink isn't a high traffic area between the live roach in it and the hot water being shut off.

The other roach resort, where over 20 hung out, was under the prep table at the hibachi station.

“Observed rice container without cover at the dry storage room.” Hope nobody sneezed around it.

“Ceiling/ceiling tiles/vents soiled with accumulated food debris, grease, dust, or mold-like substance.”

“Interior of reach-in cooler soiled with accumulation of food residue.”

When the inspector came back Thursday, another live roach skittered around the hand washing sink and one crawled on the kitchen floor by the dry storage door.

Later that same day, China Buffet passed the re-re-inspection.

Fish Depot, 511 NE Fourth St., Boynton Beach: What a paradise for the neighborhood cats! A fish joint with a rodent problem.

This was apparent because of the more than 10 pieces of rodent poo under the dishwasher. But it's the ice machines that might as well be the Fish Depot Town Square for all the stuff going on around them.

More than five pieces of rodent dump behind the ice machine in the dishwashing area. Another five behind an unused ice machine in the dishwashing area.

More than 30 flies buzzed around a dishwashing area basket with dirty towels next to, yep, the ice machine.

“Accumulation of black/green mold-like substance in the interior of the ice machine.”

All of which makes “Dishmachine chlorine sanitizer not at proper minimum strength” more of a problem than it is normally.

Fish Depot passed re-inspection on Saturday.

Kelly’s Cajun Grill, Southland Mall, 20505 S. Dixie Hwy., Cutler Bay: Our first mall location had 30 live roaches in a broken freezer and seven dead roaches spread around, including the kitchen reach-in cooler.

We love us some blackened fish and rice, but the rice container lid was soiled with raw chicken residue (hello, salmonella); a tray with fish and another with cooked carrots weren’t covered in the walk-in cooler, vulnerable to anybody’s coughs and picked boogers; and the raw fish fillet had been kept at 68 degrees, about 27 degrees too warm, for more than four hours.

What do you want to drink? A soft drink? “Accumulation of black/green mold-like substance on/around soda dispensing nozzles.”

Or water? “Observed no proof of water filter at ice machine was replaced within a year.”

During the Thursday re-inspection, a live roach was seen “crawling on the kitchen floor.”

Kelly’s passed re-re-inspection Friday.

Lakay Mama Restaurant, 5572 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Lauderhill: You might remember Lakay Mama and her problems of scores of roaches from a November appearance on The Sick and Shut Down List.

Well, the inspector came back, the roaches are back and Lakay Mama’s back on the list.

Of the 23 live roaches, six were “crawling on the floor where bags of rice and food being stored, also crawling on cans of tomato paste.” There were 10 dead roaches inside the tomato paste cases.

“Four on the floor” described the live roaches in the women’s restroom while six roaches were legs up. Around the restaurant, there were 46 dead roaches, so they’ve got a two-to-one dead roach-to-live roach ratio going for them.

At the main kitchen entrance, the inspector saw “hole in ceiling and soiled tile. Operator stated damage is due to A/C leakage.” Yeah, like the inspector’s going to say, “Oh, then it’s an approved hole, now that you’ve told me the reason.”

Give them credit, though, for getting things back together to pass Thursday’s re-inspection.

Tyler Family Restaurant, 12302 NW Seventh Ave., North Miami: “Approximately 20-plus rodent droppings on the shelf in the dry storage room where they store rice, salt, corn flour and beans.”

The inspector also noted “six live roaches in the dry storage room by kitchen area where they store rice, salt, corn flour and beans.”

After that, do you really care about the food debris in the reach-in cooler or oven? Didn’t think so.

The Tyler Family came correct on Friday’s re-inspection.

Sushigami, Sawgrass Mills, 12801 W. Sunrise Blvd., Sunrise: Back at a mall, we have 10 roaches, one of which was “running on outside of flour containers in rear kitchen” and another was “crawling on dishes.”

You don’t want roaches crawling on your dishes when your dishwasher’s sanitizing strength is zero.

A massive Stop Sale came down on 12 quarts of sushi rice made the previous evening and stored at room temperature overnight.

Neither the handwashing sink in the rear kitchen nor the one in the bar area had any way to dry hands — were they supposed to blow on them? — and the handwashing sink in the rear kitchen was blocked anyway.

The inspector did Sushigami a solid and came back for a same day re-inspection, which they passed. We’re sure all those roaches and their kin were gone.

Yeung’s Lotus Express, Southland Mall, 20505 S. Dixie Hwy., Cutler Bay: You don’t often see restaurants flip off the inspector and customers with “Operator continued to use food after notification by inspector that food is unsafe for human consumption.”

The inspector had come by on Thursday and noticed a problem with the walk-in cooler — it could get down only to about 52 degrees and the food needed to be at 41 degrees — while slapping Stop Sales on several food items in the cooler.

When the inspector came back for the first time Friday, the walk-in wasn’t any better but Yeung’s didn’t get shut down.

But on the re-re-inspection, the inspector hurled the lightning of failure upon seeing this slap in the face: “Food for which Stop Sale notice issued continues to be prepared for service/served to

the public. Observed operator cooking raw chicken under a Stop Sale order and placing it in a hot holding unit to serve the customers.”

Meanwhile, the walk-in cooler continued getting warmer, with Stop Sales being dropped on 55-degree diced ham; raw chicken; cooked noodles; pork; shell eggs; raw ground beef; and cooked honey chicken.