

Healthy and fast are two words that don't often appear in the same sentence when describing food, but as Julie-anne Sprague reports, that's not always the case.

**F**OR sushi-eaters on the go the JAS Sushi logo is probably very familiar. But those of you who haven't bought a six-pack to go shouldn't be surprised if the tasty Japanese treat you enjoyed at that recent business function wasn't a JAS Sushi roll.

According to JAS Sushi managing director Melvin Wee, the wholesaling business has grown steadily and the customer base has widened, even to include school kids.

"Schools are an area that have started taking it. We are re-introducing a four-piece pack so it is a good size for school kids," Mr Wee says.

**"From the first year to the second year our growth was double and from the second to the third [it was] 50 per cent, and from the third to the fourth 50 per cent."**

- Melvin Wee

"We sell it at a few schools but it hasn't expanded that much yet, but it is a growth area. We invited some schools down and showed the school children how we make sushi and what it is."

JAS Sushi's role in the schoolyard was recognised in the recent WA Nutrition Awards, when the business won the School Canteen Association Food Service Award.



Julie-anne Sprague

GUSTO

winner prize and a catering food service award.

"We were the first and only sushi company that has won this kind of award [WA Nutrition Awards]," Mr Wee says.

"For us, we always believed it was nutritious and low in fat, but to have that award makes it more public." Mr Wee started JAS

Sushi from its current Northbridge site four years ago. The business has since opened a retail outlet in the Trinity Arcade, Perth, and bought a Sushi store in Fremantle.

"From the first year to the second year our growth was double and from the second to the third [it was] 50 per cent, and from the third to the fourth 50 per cent," Mr Wee says.

"We started with a

wholesaling. We thought a retail outlet would provide good margins and we opened the store in Trinity Arcade, but really it is a five-day a week operation with a two-hour operation.

"We also have a Fremantle branch now. It is quite large, about 385 square meters.

"It is under JAS management but it operates as a restaurant. We do operate some wholesale from that kitchen.

"We think with the win of the awards we will see some growth again.

"We may look at moving north near Joondalup and south at Rockingham.

"We have had requests from people to do just that."

Mr Wee says his very first client was Subiaco's gourmet food man Christopher Hiller, and Food by Christopher Hiller is still a paid-up customer.

"He buys our sushi for

his platters," Mr Wee says.

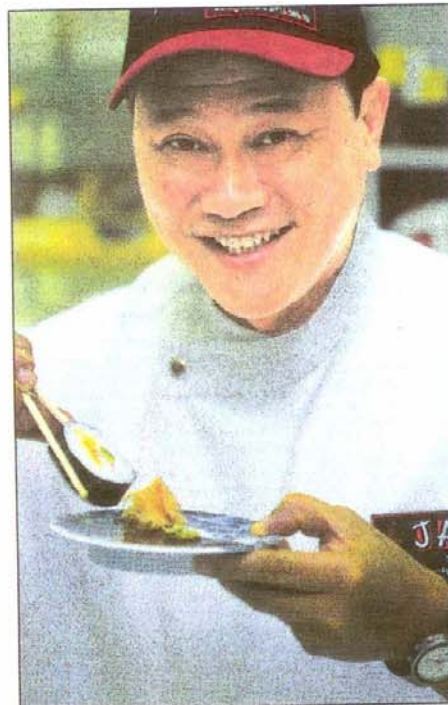
JAS Sushi has now found its way onto the shelves of several Dewson's Supermarkets and other gourmet outlets such as Herdsman Fresh.

"Each week we would go through about 2,000 to 2,500 rolls, and that is a normal week," Mr Wee says.

"When there are big things on like the Melbourne Cup we might do 1,000 rolls in a day.

"We are almost an around-the-clock operation. At 7pm we start rice cooking and then the sushi rolling goes on past midnight. At 3am a new team starts cutting the rolls and packing them and its ready for delivery early in the morning."

And what does JAS stand for? "Jonathon, Audrey, and Samuel, they are my three children," Mr Wee says.



**FRESH DAILY:** JAS Sushi has significantly expanded its business since it opened in Perth four years ago.

Photo: DONNA SWAN



## Sushi bar wins award

**NORTHBRIDGE** business Jas Sushi has been rewarded for its innovative and healthy food choices by winning a 2003 WA Nutrition Award last week.

The WA Nutrition Awards recognise local food producers, retailers and manufacturers that are committed to provid-

ing consumers with healthy, low-fat and nutritious food products.

Owner Melvin Wee was excited at being the first sushi company to achieve the award.

"We have always believed Japanese food, especially sushi, is a healthy food for all ages," he said

Nine companies and 17 high-quality food products received an award, after meeting strictly imposed guidelines for nutritional value and food safety.

Jas Sushi products won in the general, school canteen association food service and catering food service categories