

TARGET

Intelligence Report

VOLUME XXIII No. 99

S A T U R D A Y

May 8, 2021

Viewsletter

Dining and Wining

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THE BEST

RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...

AND THE WORST !

<u>Name of Restaurant</u>	Kaetsu
<u>Address of Restaurant</u>	Mezzanine Floor, Grand Hyatt Hongkong, No. 1, Harbour Road, Hongkong
<u>Date of Visit</u>	Saturday, March 20, 2021

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Dining and Wining

<u>Category</u>	<u>TARGET's Rating</u>		
<u>Service</u>			
First Impression	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Attentiveness to Customers' Needs	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Flexibility	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Product Expertise of Serving Staff	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Speed of Service	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Cleanliness of Uniform and Serving Staff	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Ambiance</u>			
Lighting	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Music	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
General	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Food</u>			
Presentation	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Total Cost of Meal</u>			
Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced	

Comments

In the **Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)** of the **People's Republic of China (PRC)**, only too often, a junior staff member of a restaurant, one that specialises in the preparation of (alleged) authentic, Japanese cuisine, is quite likely to make utterances with an air of pomposity and a seeming knowledge of the mastery of Japanese culinary skills, that the preparation of nearly all Japanese dishes is simple enough to learn, as well as to copy, and, in nearly all cases, one can even surpass Japanese dishes, by miles and miles.

After all, that which most of the dishes, prepared in an authentic Japanese restaurant, are just thin slices of raw fish, served on small, usually white dishes, with only a smattering of a tiny amount of a green garnish, one is likely to be told.

'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise', to quote Thomas Gray's immortal poem, penned in 1742: *'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.'*

By the cursory stature and, on being forced by circumstance to listen to such a *'small'* person, one who makes claims, mostly by innuendo, to be without peer with regard to the creation of Japanese dishes, with a tiny brain to match his physical appearance, might appear to be correct to some small degree, but he would be wise not to utter such tripe to a Japanese chef who has learned his trade over a long period of apprenticeship in a restaurant that is, in the American vernacular, *'the real McCoy.'*

Many a Hongkong restaurant, with a Japanese-sounding name, may not be all that it cracked up to be – and that would, also, be true in respect of the calibre of staff.

Such eateries come and go as do the seasons of the year.

Good, authentic Japanese cuisine is not easy to find in the 416 square miles that constitute the HKSAR, but, on occasion, one does find one.

On Saturday, March 20, 2021, **TARGET's** peripatetic surveying team discovered Kaetsu, the Japanese food outlet, located on the mezzanine floor of Grand Hyatt Hongkong.

On being seated in a private room – more by accident than by intention because this medium had not informed Management of Grand Hyatt Hongkong of **TARGET's** (true) intentions when making a reservation, via telephone, for dinner at 6:30 p.m. on that Saturday evening – one of the first surprises, one of many, by the way, was the way in which the serving staff seemed to go out of their way to make certain that this medium's requirements were met with alacrity.

After a waitress had poured some green tea in earthenware cups at **TARGET's** table, the menu for the evening was presented.

Dining and Wining

The following are the dishes that were ordered for the evening:

Sashimi and Sushi

Unagi River Eel
\$HK220 per 2 pieces

Hotate Scallop
\$HK100 per 2 pieces

Ikura Salmon Roe
\$HK170 per 2 pieces

Uni Sea Urchin
\$HK280 per 2 pieces

Tempura

Yasai, Assorted Vegetables
\$HK180

Sage Prefecture

Sukiyaki, Shabu Shabu
\$HK\$HK680

Toro Maki
\$HK300 per piece

Yanauni Soba
\$HK120

Dassai

\$HK300

Dessert

Six different kinds of ice cream
Strawberry cake

With the above dishes, a bottle of sake – a Japanese alcoholic drink, made from fermented rice – was ordered, but when it was sampled, it had a rather harsh, dry taste.

On the Assistant Manager, Oscar, being told of this matter – incidentally, he had recommended this brand of sake – he immediately removed the offending bottle and, on being told of this medium's preferences, without any mention of him, serving members of **TARGET**, of course, Oscar replaced the first bottle with another bottle of sake that was smoother and considerably sweeter than the first.

And there was no charge for switching bottles of sake in spite of some of the rice wine from the first bottle, having been drunk, at least partially!

Another very pleasant surprise was the order of that which was published on the menu as being '*Toro Maki*'.

Actually, to this scribe's very recollection, since **TARGET**'s Editor had stayed in Tokyo, Japan, in the late 1960s for some time, it should have been printed as '*Negitoro (ネギトロ) Maki*'.

Be that as it may, it was superb! It could not have been better!

As such, **TARGET** ordered a second helping of the '*Negitoro (ネギトロ) Maki*'.

(The Japanese chef, at the conclusion of the meal, bid us farewell – complete with a giant smile on his knowledgeable face.)

Having been satiated with the eight-course meal, Oscar announced that dessert were '*on the house!*'

And so, this medium ordered all six different kinds of homemade ice cream and a small piece of strawberry shortcake.

On sampling all the above desserts, it was very obvious that the Japanese chef of Kaetsu had not been privy to their production.

The total cost of the meal came in at nearly \$HK7,000.

One viewing the cost of the Japanese meal, it might sound expensive for just four people, but if one demands the best, one must expect to pay the best price.

On closing, **TARGET** would suggest that Kaetsu might well be one of the best Japanese restaurants in the HKSAR – if not the best!