

TARGET

Intelligence Report

VOLUME XXIII No. 44

S A T U R D A Y

February 27, 2021

Viewsletter

Dining and Wining

Dining and Wining

THE BEST

RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...

AND THE WORST !

<u>Name of Restaurant</u>	Popinjays
<u>Address of Restaurant</u>	26 th Floor, The Murray, Hongkong, a Niccolo Hotel, No. 22, Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hongkong
<u>Date of Visit</u>	Saturday, February 6, 2021

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Category

TARGET's Rating

Service

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

Ambiance

Lighting	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Music	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
General	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Food

Presentation	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive Moderately Expensive Very Reasonably Priced

Comments

One of the newest hotels to open in the **Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)** of the **People's Republic of China (PRC)** was The Murray.

This 52 year-old building, originally constructed in 1969, was purposely constructed and extensively used to house some of the offices of the Hongkong Government.

This old building was purchased by its present owners in an ‘*as is*’ state of disrepair.

After a period of renovation, it was transformed into a hotel, located just a relatively short walk from the Central Business District of Hongkong Island.

On Saturday, February 6, 2021, **TARGET** (泰達財經), after numerous attempts to visit the hotel in order to try to sample its culinary offerings, about which this medium had no idea other than hearsay tittle-tattle, this medium’s team of four surveyors entered the 26th floor of The Murray, reserved for one of the food outlets, named, ‘*Popinjays*’.

(The definitions of a ‘*popinjay*’ is a vain or conceited person, especially one who dresses or behaves extravagantly; a species of a parrot of the order ‘*Psittaciformes*’)

At 2:30 p.m., precisely, **TARGET**’s team was led to a table at the extreme corner of the restaurant, the exterior walls of which had all been enclosed in large glass panels.

In the centre of this restaurant was a number of separate tables, laden with numerous cold dishes, ranging from raw fish (sashimi), to marinated seafood (cerviche), smoked fish dishes, such as smoked salmon, raw oysters in their shells, etc, Iberico chorizo, Hokkaido scallops, salads of various types ... and quite a mix of other dishes, too numerous to describe in this survey.

On scanning the restaurant’s menu, **TARGET** was somewhat surprised to come into collision with a variety of that which had been given the nomenclature, ‘*caviars*’.

Only Beluga Caviar, at the cost of \$HK988 for a tin of 30 grams, was ordered because it was the only one recognisable name about which this medium had had any exceptional experience in the past.

It was just as well that the Beluga Caviar had been ordered, actually, because, when a chilled bottle of Dom Perignon, Vintage 2010, at the cost of \$HK2,588, eventually found its way to **TARGET**’s table after a wait of about 20 minutes, by the way – along with blinis and the usual other condiments to accompany the Champagne and Beluga Caviar – a small, nondescript dish of that which was described by a waiter as ‘*the lowest level of caviar*’ was placed on the table.

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Curiosity caused this medium to sample a very tiny amount of *'the lowest level of caviar.'*

It was a tragic mistake!

It was a horrible-tasting something or other, but this medium can attest that it was not caviar, of that there can be no question.

To this day, this medium had no idea as to what that grey muck was supposed to have been; and, since no member of **TARGET**'s entourage had the courage to enquire as to its origin, lest it had been created out of something that might be considered disgusting to one who was well aware of culinary refinement, it was determined best not even to consider the origins of the muck, any further.

About The Food At Popinjays

Aside from the grey muck, parading, not very gallantly, as *'the lowest level of caviar'*, few of the other dishes, sampled at Popinjays, could be negatively criticised.

In fact, for a goodly part, the dishes that had been selected were of a fairly high degree, ranging from good to just a shade below very good.

One lone exception to the adjective *'good'*, however, was the Main Course of a roast chicken dish.

The roast chicken dish had been, clearly, the result of a very unfortunate hen, having lost its life at the hands of a butcher who had scooped out the innards from the chicken's carcass, after which the remains of the hen had been fast-frozen and, then, long before being fully defrosted, it had been popped into an oven for about two hours, causing the hen's carcass to become almost bone dry: This insipid dish was almost impossible to be ingested.

The following is that which **TARGET** ordered as the Main Courses with the exception of the bone-dry chicken dish that had been described in the two paragraphs, above:

Roasted Pork Chop;
Celery and Sunchoke *'Risotto Style'*; and,
Grilled Stone Bass.

As for the desserts, complaints are best left unsaid except, perhaps, to suggest that this hotel does require, as a matter of some urgency, the services of pâtissier, one with an extensive knowledge in the art of producing desserts for discriminating ladies and gentlemen.

(This medium suspects that the items, placed on the dessert table on the day of **TARGET**'s visit to The Murray, had been purchased, that is to say, not having been created in the hotel's kitchen.)

The Hotel And Its Service

The service at Popinjays, on the day of this medium's visit, was suggestive of a Management, trying to save as much money as possible by employing only the minimal number of bodies in order to cater for the anticipated crush of patrons.

Some Cases in Point:

The table, at which **TARGET** had been seated, had not been properly cleaned on this medium's arrival: Somebody's bodily hairs were clearly visible on the marble top.

When seated, for the first time, a waiter, completely disregarding the three ladies at the table, tried to pass a menu to the lone gentleman – who refused to accept it out of good manners – and, after the waiter was told that there were ladies present, he sauntered away in order to try to secure three more menus.

He succeeded in locating three more menus and, a few minutes later, he presented menus to the three ladies ... and this time, around, the lone gentleman accepted his menu.

The toilet for the ladies was disgustingly filthy.

Yuck!

'*Shocking*' could be another adjective aptly to describe the state of the ladies' toilet.

In order to obtain refills of empty flute glasses, specially designed to imbibe Champagne, as well as to obtain chopsticks in order to grasp parts of sashimi pieces on one's plate, etc, one or more of this medium's quartet was obliged to surround a passing waiter, located in the recesses of the restaurant, in order to obtain some semblance of service.

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On ordering cups of coffee for **TARGET**'s quartet at the conclusion of the meal, no cream or sugar was forthcoming. When asked for some cream, skimmed milk was produced – only!

The coffee, however, could be described as having been extraordinarily anaemic; it was left on the table as this medium determined to make its exit from Popinjays.

Comments

Management of The Murray claims to have produced a five-star hotel.

Clearly, Management has failed in its original intent.

At most, The Murray is, in the opinion of this medium, a two-star hotel, by the looks of things, today, graded, inter alia, by the measure of service – or the lack thereof.

As for other amenities in this hotel, if they exist, at all, this medium has no knowledge.

On making earlier enquiries as to the parking of one's motor car at the hotel's entrance, a female, answering the telephone, about one month prior to this medium's visit, stated that one should be willing to walk from the Central Business District to the hotel.

This was because, this lady explained, it was the hotel's policy that it is first-come, first-served. If, therefore, it is raining, there is nothing that the hotel can do: Come back another day!!!

On the day that **TARGET** visited The Murray, one was informed, from a person on the ground floor, this person, adorned in a black jacket, suggestive of an employee of the hotel, that, if one was willing to spend a minimum of \$HK800, then, one would be permitted to park one's motor car for three hours on the ground floor – only.

As for walking in the rain in order to visit The Murray, for one reason or another, it is a no-no, to be sure, especially in Hongkong's long rainy seasons.

The Murray has a history of being operational for the past three years: Hopefully, Management will come to the realisation that there is plenty of room for improvement.