

TARGET

Intelligence Report

VOLUME XXII No. 262

S A T U R D A Y

December 5, 2020

Viewsletter

Dining and Wining

Dining and Wining

THE BEST

RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...

AND THE WORST !

<u>Name of Restaurant</u>	Flint Grill and Bar
<u>Address of Restaurant</u>	Level 5, JW Marriott Hotel, Pacific Place, No. 88, Queensway, Hongkong
<u>Date of Visit</u>	Friday, November 27, 2020

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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

Aside from the coffee shop of JW Marriott Hotel Hongkong, named JW Café, the only other food outlet where one may obtain a Continental-style meal is Flint Grill and Bar.

This restaurant was first opened at the tail end of the 2013 calendar year.

TARGET's trio of three reviewers had been amongst some of the first customers to explore that which was heralded, in bygone days, as being one of the most-exciting food outlets in the history of the hotel, dating back to 1989.

On Wednesday, November 27, 2013, in **TARGET** Intelligence Report, Volume XV, Number 223, this medium wrote, in the first paragraph of its four-page report:

'Newly opened Flint Grill and Bar is a bit of a farce.'

In the opinion of this medium, having suffered for the best part of 60 minutes in the confines of Flint Grill and Bar, on November 27, 2013, with a cacophony of near deafening sounds, filling the restaurant, the clearly incompetent Chinese cooks, Filipino and Chinese waiters, as well as one European cook (this is an assumption because, after all, he was wearing an off-white uniform, and donning a grubby white hat), having a ball of a time, being irritatingly raucous with their off-colour jokes and statements that the few customers of the evening were forced to endure, and with the then Manager of the outlet, suggesting, by his actions and grimaces, that this medium might not have a sufficiency of money to pay the demanded \$HK10,250 for a bottle of Château Cheval Blanc, Vintage 1999, **TARGET** made a hurried exit – vowing never to return, again.

And, for seven years, this medium kept to its vow.

But, with the reopening of the restaurant, this medium was interested to learn how things had fared and whether or not the new Senior Management of the hotel had made improvements to Flint Grill and Bar.

This medium recalls how the food at the (old) Flint was far from being up to par, with the slab of Nebraska Steak, as a prime example, having been, sadly, a complete wash due to the fact that the meat must have been heated on a cold or lukewarm grill so that the middle of the slab was still suffering from the results of having been kept, in what must have been, a very cold part of a refrigerator.

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There, probably, had been nothing wrong with the slab of Nebraska steak, lying on a cold plate and placed before this food reviewer, that is in advance of its massacre by an incompetent cook, but the same could not be said of the idiot who had tried – and failed – to cook it, properly.

As for the soup, which had been served at a temperature, ranging from about 16 degrees to 18 degrees, Celsius, it was insipid and badly watered down so that, in the opinion of **TARGET**, dishwasher would have tasted better.

And so, it went on, and on, and on.

A New Broom Sweeps Clean

The ‘*new*’ Flint Grill and Bar is something very different from its predecessor of seven years past, however.

TARGET visited Flint on Friday, November 27, 2020, at 7 p.m., without having made a reservation for a table for three people.

The female receptionist, after having obtained the name of one of **TARGET**’s reviewers, as well as the required contact telephone number, on scanning the anaemic list of customers that had reserved tables, she stated that there was, indeed, a vacant table in the restaurant.

On being shown to one of the many vacant tables, that could seat a maximum capacity of 55 customers, in all, a very polite young waitress let it be known that **TARGET** could have a choice of any of the tables because very few customers were due to arrive.

Having selected the table for the evening and having ordered two bottles of water, at \$HK90 per bottle, this medium’s trio scanned the single-sheet menu, all of which, in fact, contained set menus for the evening.

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The following is a facsimile of the set menu for the evening:

APPETISERS			
CAESAR SALAD baby gems, aged Parmesan, white anchovies, grated cured egg yolk		SEARED FOIE GRAS pineapple salsa, brioche toast, aged balsamic	
SUPER GREENS watercress, baby spinach, arugula, grains & seeds, yuzu dressing		AHI TUNA TARTARE avocado, lime, seaweed cracker	
		SEARED U.S. SCALLOP celeriac purée, caramel apple, bisque foam	
SECOND COURSE			
CREAM OF MUSHROOM		LOBSTER BISQUE	
MAINS			
CATCH OF THE DAY curried cauliflower, Kipfler potato, pine nuts and tomato salsa	680	ROASTED NEW ZEALAND LAMB RACK polenta cake, almond purée, broccolini, salsa verde	680
KING CRAB LINGUINE king crab leg, chorizo sausage, piquillo pepper	780	GRILLED IBÉRICO PORK RACK pumpkin purée, roasted pumpkin, cider pork jus	680
BOSTON LOBSTER steamed or grilled, Choron sauce, U.S. asparagus	880	AUSTRALIAN WAGYU M7 RIB EYE 6oz grilled asparagus, fat chips, Flint's steak sauce	880
		STOCKYARD- PREMIUM AUSTRALIAN BLACK ANGUS BEEF TOMAHAWK duck fat chips, English asparagus, fricassée of wild mushrooms, summer truffle jus	1,880 2 persons
DESSERTS			
YO-YO red bean coconut crèmeux concentrated milk, coconut milk ice cream, vanilla milk agar		GYRO licorice lemon cream, peppermint lemon compote, candied lemon peel	
FRUIT & BERRIES seasonal fruit, lime sorbet			

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The following dishes were those that this medium ordered on Friday, November 27, 2020, exactly seven years after the first unfortunate venture into this food outlet:

First Course

Foie Gras

Caesar Salad

Seared U.S. Scallops

Second Course

Lobster Bisque

Cream of Mushroom Soup

Third Course

Boston Lobster

Australian Wagyu M7

Lamb Rack

Fourth Course

YO-YO

FRUIT AND BERRIES

GYRO

The First Courses were, all, that any commercial kitchen may be expected to produce.

The Second Courses were excellent, with the soups, all being served very hot with perfectly balanced flavours.

The Third Courses were nowhere near the levels of the first two courses, however.

The Boston Lobster was tasteless, water, seeping out from under the near ice-cold dead marine crustacean's shell.

Clearly, it had been kept in a very cold refrigerator for an extended period of time or, else, it had been frozen at some time.

As for the Australian Wagyu M7 Rib Eye, it, as with the Boston Lobster, was more than being somewhat tasteless.

To be honest and fair to Antipodean cattle farmers, they cannot help themselves.

Australian cattle farmers permit their feedlot animals to eat, only, the grass, growing on the many pastures of the country. They do not introduce their animals to grain, such as corn, during the latter part of the useful lives of their cattle, as do US cattle farmers. This is due to the simple fact that grain is much more expensive than the grass, growing on the pastures.

Hence, the unique taste – or lack thereof – of Australian and New Zealand beef.

As for the New Zealand lamb, it was on a par with the Australian Wagyu beef.

Where the New Zealand lamb differed from the Australian Wagyu beef was that the lamb was quite tough with water, seeking out of the meat as one, with some difficulty, tried to slice out portions of it.

This is a sure sign that the lamb had been frozen and had not been sufficiently defrosted before being cooked.

As for the fourth course, it was amongst the best course of the day.

Beware! This course has the ability to make one very fat!

Service and Cleanliness

With regard to the service staff, it would be nice if management could instruct them to appreciate that ladies should always be served before gentlemen.

It was very obvious that insufficient training had been given to many, if not all, of the serving staff – sadly.

The restaurant has no soft furnishings so that sounds, such as the clinking and chinking of plates, knives and forks, etc, carry round the entire restaurant's area in which customers might be trying to hold conversations.

The tables are cleared the moment that a customer vacates the restaurant.

(This was not the same as in the [old] Flint Grill and Bar.)

On a visit to the restaurant's toilets, they were, in a word, immaculate.

(This, also, was not the same as in the [old] Flint Grill and Bar.)

If music had been piped through to the restaurant, it could not be discerned because of other sounds drowned out all else.

The cost of the entire meal was \$HK2,882.00 for three people.