

TARGET

Intelligence Report

VOLUME XXIII No. 221

S A T U R D A Y

October 9, 2021

Viewsletter

Dining and Wining

Dining and Wining

THE BEST

RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...

AND THE WORST !

<u>Name of Restaurant</u>	8½ Otto E Mezzo BOMBANA
<u>Address of Restaurant</u>	Shop 202, 2 nd Floor, Landmark, Alexandra House, No. 18, Chater Road, Central, Hongkong
<u>Date of Visit</u>	Friday, October 1, 2021

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Dining and Wining

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

Wine

Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	
Expertise of Sommelier	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor None

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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Comments

According to usually reliable information, 8½ Otto E Mezzo BOMBANA was first opened in the year of 2010.

For a free-standing restaurant, located in the Central Business District of Hongkong Island, an 11-year history is rather rare.

And, so, one has to ponder:

‘What makes this restaurant so different from the competition?’

On Friday, October 1, 2021, **TARGET** (泰達財經) determined to try to obtain answers to the reason that 8½ Otto E Mezzo BOMBANA succeeded when Hongkong Government statistics, with regard to this type of commercial enterprise, suggests otherwise.

It is a well-known accepted fact that, in Hongkong, more restaurants are forced to close, every year, for one reason or another, than there are new ones, taking their places.

And, during the past few years, COVID-19 has taken its toll of the Hongkong restaurant industry, weeding out the weak with ruthless abandonment.

Upon arrival at 8½ Otto E Mezzo BOMBANA at Shop 202, 2nd Floor, Landmark, Alexandra House, Central, Hongkong, that which became immediately obvious was the opulence of the restaurant, the attentiveness of the service staff, the fact that, although the restaurant was more than 90-percent full, patrons, dressed in fashionable attires, talked in hushed voices.

An almost immediate suggestion that popped into the minds of **TARGET**'s trio of food surveyors was that, even the most-popular and most-expensive food outlets, located in many of Hongkong's five-star hotels, managements must find it exceedingly difficult to compete with this restaurant with regard to its ambience and the outward, high regard that its serving staff paid to its patrons.

Having been comfortably seated, the menu, having been presented, **TARGET** ordered a bottle of Castello di Ama, Vintage 2013, a Chianti Classico, from San Lorenzo, Italy – naturally!

(After all, Mr Umberto Bombana, after whom the restaurant is named, is a native of an Italian town and comune in the Province of Bergamo, Lombardy.)

The list of wines covered a seeming tome of some 81 pages, one was informed.

Dining and Wining

On scanning the menu, the following dishes were selected for the evening:

<u>Appetizers</u>	
<i>Marinated Fresh Scallop Matsutake, Lemon Seafood Dressing</i>	<i>\$HK420</i>
<i>Tuna Tartare Citrus and Tofu Emulsion, Oscietra Caviar</i>	<i>\$HK450</i>
<i>Langoustine Langoustine Tarragon Sauce, Roasted Mushrooms</i>	<i>\$HK680</i>
<u>Second Courses</u>	
<i>Fresh Homemade and Artisanal Pasta</i>	
<i>Chitarra Spaghetti Sicilian Red Prawn, Datterino Tomato and Citrus</i>	<i>\$HK580</i>
<i>Trenette Hokkaido Sea Urchin, Herbs and Seafood Jus</i>	<i>\$HK590</i>
<i>Scampi Risotto Confit Sicilian Lemon, Scampi Jus</i>	<i>\$HK580</i>
<u>Main Courses</u>	
<i>“Fassone” Veal Tenderloin In Crisp Bread Crust, Mushroom Ragout, Roasted Termite</i>	<i>\$HK650</i>
<i>M9 Sirloin and Beef Cheek Green and Vegetable Salad, Red Wind and Plum Sauce</i>	<i>\$HK620</i>
<i>Brittany Blue Lobster Lobster Broth, Sea Urchin and Warm Eggplant Salad</i>	<i>\$HK760</i>
<u>Desserts</u>	
<i>Limoncella Souffle Citrus Salad and Lemon Gelato</i>	<i>\$HK180</i>
<i>Blond Cannelloni Bitter Chocolate Creamy, Cacao Sorbet Crisp Sponge and Raspberries</i>	<i>\$HK190</i>
<i>Crispy Pear Tart Served with Vanilla Gelato</i>	<i>\$HK230</i>
<u>Wine</u>	
<i>2013 Castello di Ama San Lorenzo</i>	<i>\$HK1,180</i>
<i>Total cost: \$HK8,118.00</i>	

The First Course

Tasting the appetisers was no mean fête since they, all, were exceptional, all in their own right, all being different, all being exquisite, and all being devoured in a thrice.

The Second Course

Turning to the second course, the three pasta dishes, the pasta, having been freshly made in the restaurant's kitchen, one was told, were, as expected in any decent Italian-style restaurant, cooked al dente.

However, the Scampi Risotto was more than just a little weak, compared with the other two dishes.

As for the Chitarra Spaghetti, **TARGET** found it to have been much too sweet, tasting something like commercial ketchup, purchased in supermarkets in Hongkong.

The Third Course

With regard to the three Main Courses, they were, all, of various degrees, from good to extremely good.

The Brittany Blue Lobster, it appeared to **TARGET**, had been of the frozen variety, but taking into consideration that this marine decapod crustacean had been forced to '*swim*' from France to Hongkong, what may one expect?

The other two meat dishes – the veal and the beef – they were both excellent: Cooked to perfection.

Turning to the desserts, the Pear Tart stood out as the clear winner, while the Limoncella Souffle was a close second.

Dining and Wining

A Short History of Mr Umberto Bombana

Mr Umberto Bombana arrived in Hongkong in the 1990's and it was, at about that time, that **TARGET** first met him in the kitchen of The Ritz-Carlton at the time that this hotel was located on the outskirts the Central Business District of Hongkong Island.

This hotel closed in 2001 and was replaced by a commercial building.

Mr Umberto Bombana was, when he first arrived in Hongkong, somewhat slimmer than he is today, but when one is partial to ingesting spaghetti, regularly, and drinking carafes of Chianti, when the spirit moved him so to do, there is, always, a physical price to pay ... and looking at Mr Umberto Bombana, today, he is a classic example of the end result of over-indulgence of food and wine.

But, having said that, he must be happy with his lot because his restaurant, is, without question, a roaring-success story.

The Hotel Furama Kempinski Hongkong, by the way, no longer exists at the outskirts of the Central Business District of Hongkong Island, having been replaced by a 37-storey commercial office block.

Mr Umberto Bombana was schooled in what is, today, the old-fashioned manner of the apprenticeship scheme, serving his time under the tutelage of one or more experienced Italian chefs.

He appears to have excelled in his trade.