

SO YOU WANT TO EAT A STEAK, DO YOU ?

Morton's of Chicago, located in The Sheraton Hongkong Hotel Complex in Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, is a first-class steakhouse – and charges first-class prices.

Having opened only a few months ago, this reviewer thought that it would be both instructive and fun to compare the version, located in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), of this Chicago, Illinois, food outlet, with that of Toronto, Canada, where Morton's has an outlet in the fashionable Hyatt Hotel.

Morton's of the HKSAR is a dead ringer for the Toronto outlet, with the exception that the wine list at the HKSAR Morton's is a lot better than that of the Toronto outlet.

Nevertheless, there is still a huge gap in the wine list at the HKSAR Morton's; somebody, really, should try to help in putting together a decent selection of wines to accompany some of the delicious meat on offer.

The HKSAR prices of Morton's are extraordinarily high, and so the restaurant is only likely to attract a select few HKSAR residents: The outlet will have to rely on hotel guests and tourists if it is to survive the long pull.

Also, just across the road from The Sheraton is one of the best restaurants in the world, located in The Peninsula Hotel: Tough competition.

A dinner for 2 people, comprising just 8 pieces of poached asparagus, a Morton's Salad for one person, one, 14-ounce, Cajun Rib Eye steak, one order of 2 potato skins, a bottle of mineral water, a bottle of Penfold's Bin 389, a Shiraz, a vanilla soufflé, and 2 cups of coffee will set one back about \$HK1,700, including the tip.

But the food is good.

Fair dinkum!

This reviewer visited Morton's of Chicago in the HKSAR on January 14 and was very surprised to discover that the recently installed Restaurant Manager is an old acquaintance, whom this reviewer had met, some years ago, at The Conrad International Hongkong Hotel.

At that time, Mr Simon Chan was the Restaurant Manager at Brasserie-On-The-Eighth, but it appears that he defected about 4 months ago to become Restaurant Manager at Morton's of Chicago.

Mr Simon Chan is very capable at his job and he made this reviewer's visit most enjoyable.

He, also, made it very clear that Morton's of Chicago is not part of The Sheraton (one wonders at the reason that he was so emphatic about this piece of intelligence).

Because this reviewer knows that Americans overeat, by and large, that which was ordered was for one person, only: It was presumed that one portion for an American would be enough for 2, average English people, or sufficient for 3 average Chinese people.

This reviewer was absolutely correct because, even that which was ordered was too much for 2 people (I and my companion are not fat, although I could benefit from dropping a few pounds, my doctor suggests).

Beware! The steaks at Morton's are gross, disgustingly gross – and lovely in their grossness.

One is offered a steak, weighing 14 ounces ... and more, and more, and more.

The steaks are the '*thing*' at Morton's: That is the only reason to go to this restaurant.

If you don't want to eat a steak, then you should not be at this expensive outlet at The Sheraton Hongkong Hotel and Towers.

The steaks are so good that you may cut them with a fork.

But they will cost anywhere from \$HK375 a serving and up, and up, and up.

To be sure, the steaks will cause one to stuff oneself, silly, until it becomes uncomfortable – because they, really, are so tasty.

However, if one is expecting to see an interesting presentation of the food, forget it: This restaurant will slap a chunk of meat on a plate (everything is a la carte, which means that one pays for everything, separately) and leave it up to the patron to work his/her way through the eating orgy.

Animal fat, it is said, is the worst thing to ingest, but, on occasions, it is nice to be naughty.

Other Than Dead Cow Meat

There is not much that one can comment about freshly poached asparagus. It is either poached, correctly, or it is undercooked or overcooked.

At Morton's, the asparagus is cooked to perfection. Worry not.

As for the salad, well, it was fresh, and the dressing was freshly made. What else can one say about lettuce leaves.

Aside from the steaks, it appeared to this reviewer that the soufflé was, also, outstanding.

If one likes sweets, then a Morton's soufflé is better than most anything that one may obtain in most of the so-called, fine-dining outlets of Toronto.

One can always tell when a pastry chef knows how to make a soufflé because there is no flour and no huge pools of butter in the bottom of the soufflé dish. Also, there is no hint of sugar to hold up the soufflé.

While the steaks at Morton's must be awarded high marks, so should the soufflés.

An interesting aspect when eating at Morton's is that all the servers have memorised, exactly, the same introduction as have the waiters at the Toronto outlet.

The introductions to the food, by the table servers, takes about 5 minutes, in all, and comprises a comprehensive review of what is on offer for the day.

It is rattled off with a great deal of precision, but the servers at the HKSAR Morton's do it with a great deal of gusto ... and they smile, all the time, unlike the servers at the Toronto, outlet.

Full marks for the HKSAR Management!

This 130-seater restaurant is becoming very popular so that a reservation may be required in order not to be disappointed.

Also, there is a complete division between smoking and non-smoking areas, with only 30 seats, reserved for smokers.

It is good that this restaurant has determined to do this because the statistics are in: Smoking will kill you.

It is a pity that the excellent food outlet at The Mandarin Oriental, The Mandarin Grill, does not employ the same rules as Morton's of Chicago because The Mandarin Grill is one of the very few good restaurants in these 416 square miles that allows, and, seemingly, tacitly encourages smokers to bother non-smokers

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