

**FRENCH CHEF GIVES CONRAD A \$HK250,000 WALLOPING**

Conrad International Hongkong has had to pay more than \$HK250,000 in compensation to a former French chef, who was fired without warning, last August.

Mr Philippe Leclerc, who is now working for the Paramount Group of Restaurants in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), confirmed this to TARGET, today.

*'It is the biggest scandal of my career,'* a very angry Frenchman told TARGET, sitting at a table at the Wanchai restaurant, Bacchus, a restaurant which is owned by the Paramount Group.

*'I have never met such arseholes like this!'* Mr Leclerc exploded. *'I could "kill" the hotel!'*

This explains and fills in many of the blanks of TARGET's article, published on [September 10, 1999](#), headlined: *'The Conrad and the HKSAR: Quantity or Quality?'*

On Page 3 of that report, TARGET stated:

*'Chefs at The Conrad come and go, with one famous French chef, having left, recently, under somewhat mysterious circumstances.'*

*'Mr Phillipe Leclerc, a world-renowned chef who worked in the world-famous, Trois Gras Restaurant, Roanne, France, is now in Shanghai, the PRC, preparing to start at his new job on October 7.'*

*'He was in The Conrad for about one month, having been hired to head the cooking team at Brasserie-on-the-Eighth, the idea, being, that this outlet could become a strong competitor of Nicholini's. This plan, now, shall never come to pass ... '.*

With no way to reach Mr Leclerc, TARGET was unable to get to the bottom of the matter, last September, but now Mr Leclerc has resurfaced to tell his side of the story.

According to Mr Leclerc, in the middle of last year, he was working in Tokyo, Japan, at Hotel de Mikuni, when he was approached by the former Senior Vice President, Conrad International Hongkong, Mr Dario Regazzoni.

He was offered a position in the HKSAR to beef up Brasserie-on-the-Eighth at The Conrad at a salary of \$HK35,000 per month plus a monthly allowance of \$HK10,000.

But before Mr Leclerc could put into effect his proposed recommendations, with regard to a new menu, all of which had the blessings of Mr Regazzoni, Mr Dennis Clarke was installed in Conrad International Hongkong with the title, Area Director of Operations – Asia, Managing Director of Hongkong.

With Mr Regazzoni out, and Mr (new broom) Clarke in, it was house-cleaning time, with American sharpshooter Clarke, scrubbing Mr Leclerc's concepts, stating that he would be cooking hamburgers and steaks and other American delicacies, according to Mr Leclerc.

While Mr Leclerc went on a short weekend holiday to Shanghai, Mr Clarke sacked him -- without notice.

There followed a 3-month fight with Mr Leclerc, engaging the services of Ms Bernadette Gicquel, of the solicitors firm of Chaine Chow and Barbara Hung.

TARGET contacted Ms Gicquel who said that she could not discuss a client's file, thus confirming, indirectly, that Mr Leclerc was, indeed, her client.

According to Mr Leclerc, Ms Gicquel obtained a settlement from Mr Clarke, on behalf of The Conrad, in the amount of about \$HK250,000, after Mr Clarke had offered to settle for \$HK37,000.

Mr Leclerc said that he was especially upset because, among other things, The Conrad had accused him of sexual harassment.

*'What shit is that! I have a 9-year-old boy!'* Mr Leclerc barked at TARGET's reporter.

Mr Leclerc will be Chef de Cuisine for the new Madison Restaurant, which will replace Pomeroy's in Pacific Place as soon as renovations begin in March.

Paramount Group, which owns Pomeroy's as well as Bacchus, is about to spend between \$HK12 million and \$HK15 million in giving Pomeroy's a facelift like no other facelift.

With a preliminary opening date in about August this year, Madison is to be the showcase restaurant of Paramount, with Mr Leclerc, creating his own style of cooking for the New York-style restaurant.

*'You will see. This will be the best of the best,'* Mr Leclerc said.

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