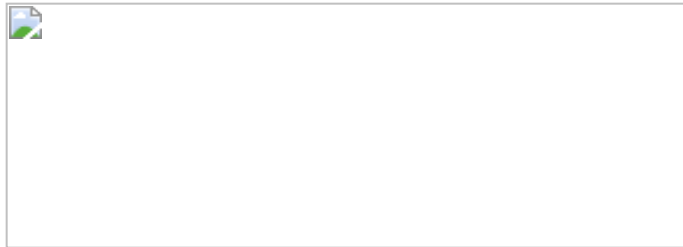


# RESTAURANT

Worst of The Worst

Among The



## OF CENTRAL HONGKONG : A RESTAURANT AKIN TO A PROUD PENIS, HUMBLD BY FLACCIDITY

While simple folk have to be content with the knowledge that they may only aspire to the level of being able to prepare mediocre to slightly above-average cuisine, it takes an expert of a very high level to be able to churn out food -- with little to no taste.

Tony Roma's, of Lan Kwai Fong, Number 30-32, D'Aguilar Street, Central, has proved to be the one food outlet in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) that is able to do what, in this observer's opinion, very few other restaurants are able to achieve.

Because Tony Roma's is able to boil food to a state of insipidness; it is, also, able to boil food to a state that it takes on the character of a wrinkled, penile extrusion.

An exaggeration?

No! Just the facts, folks.

TARGET's team revisited Tony Roma's after an absence of some years and discovered that it is worse, today, than it ever had been in the past.

That is to say that it was never much cop, anyway, at least, not the Lan Kwai Fong eatery.

On Wednesday, January 17, at about 1 p.m., TARGET's team showed up at Tony Roma's, said to be, by its advertising, *'The Place for Ribs'*.

TARGET was fully expecting to revisit our last pleasant experience at this international franchise, last sampled in Beverly Hills, California.

*'The Roma Feast'*, TARGET's order for 2 people, took 30 minutes to be produced, 5 minutes to sample, and all of 2 minutes to understand how this outlet has screwed up what should have been a wonderful concept.

At \$HK338 a crack, this is, without question, one of the worst values for money in these 416 square miles, where scores of superb eating establishments are par for the course.

*'The Roma Feast'* comprises the following:

1. Two ears of corn;
2. Two hot dogs, cut into 4 slivers per hot dog;
3. One chicken leg;
4. One chicken wing, attached to a quarter of a chicken breast;
5. Six rib bones, complete with hanging flesh; and,
6. A bowl of cole slaw.

Of all of the above, without question, the cole slaw was the best dish, if one may call it a dish.

The ears of corn had been boiled ... and boiled ... and boiled ... so that there was no flavour remaining in the once yellow cereal grain.

One had to wonder whether or not the ears of corn had been used, formerly, in the preparation of a soup, and then plonked on a plate to be sold a second time as part of this dish.

The hot dogs had been boiled, first, without question, and then slipped into an oven, or slapped on top of a cooker, in order to give them the appearance of having been barbecued.

The sausages and the corn were wrinkled, a sure sign of aged lines.

But the boiling process had taken away just about all of the flavours from the 2 sausages – which, like the rest of the dish, were probably below average, long before the person in the kitchen got his or her hands on them.

The pork spare ribs, all 6 of them, had been cooked in just about the same way as the sausages had been prepared: Boil first until the meat starts to fall off the bone; dry the ribs; lace with honey (or some other sweet sauce); then, throw the ribs onto a hot plate or a grill in order to cause burn lines to appear on the meat, thus giving it the appearance of having been barbecued.

But the proof was only too easy to see: Only part of the meat had been darkened by the last (burning) process, leaving the rest of the meat to have that unsightly grey look, which is very unappetising.

As for the 2 chicken pieces, they had been given the same cooking treatment as the ribs and, sad to say, they had little to no taste, too.

The meat and sausages, immersed in Tony Roma's barbecue sauce, camouflages the facts, no doubt, and, by the looks of the numbers of people that pack the place at lunchtime, it seems clear that many of the people, who come for a meal, have no idea, or little idea, as to what they are eating.

Having said that, TARGET noted that quite a number of people had ordered salads, forsaking the barbecued dishes, which are the trademarks (supposedly) of this franchise operation.

How Tony Roma's has managed to survive for such a period of time in the midst of the fierce competition among restaurants in these 416 square miles, TARGET cannot fathom: It must be doing something right; but this reviewer could not crack the code.

The restaurant seats about 130 people and is staffed, mainly, by Filipinos, who are trying to do their best, and seem to be working very hard to keep up with the crowd, at least, when TARGET was present.

The restaurant is located on the first floor of California Tower and it would be fair to say that it is clean and pleasantly decorated, although, looking a little tired from not getting a facelift for some years.

It appears that there are 3 locations of this franchise operation in the HKSAR; there is every reason to believe that one location is much like the other.

The Central Hongkong Tony Roma's, in TARGET's opinion, is a fraud and should be avoided by people, serious about what they put into their stomachs, unless one is desirous of proving this reviewer's allegations, all over

again.

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