



**AT LANGHAM HOTEL :
THE COMPETITION HAS HOTTED UP, CONSIDERABLY !**

Don't bother to look at the menu – because what is off the menu is even better than what is on the menu.

Don't look around for a European chef – because there are none to be found.

Don't bother to look at the prices – because, for the quality of the food, it is money very well spent.

This is The Bostonian Restaurant, which appears to be very little known in the cosmopolitan city of Hongkong to many of the European community.

While Langham Hotel, Hongkong, does not appear to have the glamour of some of the international hotel chains, it is, nevertheless, an extremely good, 5-star hotel, located in Kowloon, just one station on the Mass Transit Railway from Pacific Place on the Hongkong side of Victoria Harbour.

TARGET had visited The Bostonian Restaurant when it first opened, many years ago, when Langham Hotel was known as Great Eagle Hotel.

This reviewer had not been impressed with it, at that time.

Today, however, things are very different at The Bostonian Restaurant, this 100-seater outlet, located in the basement of Langham Hotel.

The premier outlet of this hotel is undefined with regard to its cuisine, making it difficult to understand the rationale behind its name, The Bostonian Restaurant.

Certainly, it is not American food; it is, definitely, not English food (thank God!); it, definitely, is not French cuisine; and, simple Italian fare is nowhere in sight; but, at the same time, it appears to have many of the characteristics of the above.

When **TARGET**'s reviewer ambled into The Bostonian Restaurant, a few weeks ago, it was noted that the outlet was displaying 17 different varieties of oysters – yes, friends and neighbours, exactly, 17 different varieties.

Armed with a bottle of chilled Veuve Clicquot (at \$HK498 per bottle), this reviewer started in on the oysters, all 17 of them.

What was missing, however, was the French Fine de Claire Oyster, one of this reviewer's favourites.

TARGET had to content himself with a Kumamoto Oyster from California, instead, which was, by the way, fresh and delicious.

Before ordering the 17 oysters, **TARGET** asked of the waiter:

'They will be freshly chunked, won't they?'

The answer: *'Watch! Don't worry!'*

And watch **TARGET** did.

There was never any further consideration as to the freshness of the produce, served at The Bostonian Restaurant.

With oysters, one must be very careful because one bad one, once ingested, can give one 10 days of squatting on a toilet seat.

TARGET did not inform Management of Langham Hotel of its intentions to review any of the food outlets and, prior to the publication of this review, Management of the hotel, or of the outlets, had no idea what was going on.

Which is the way that it should be if one is determined to be objective.

During the course of the light repast, The Food and Beverage Director of the hotel, Mr Dominique Artigolle, ambled by, and noting the huge tray of oysters and the second bottle of Veuve Clicquot, sitting happily in **TARGET**'s ice bucket, stopped to have a chat.

Mr Dominique Artigolle suggested to **TARGET** that, perhaps, the largest oyster, an Island Pacific Oyster, whose meat must have weighed close to 3 ounces, at least, would be better enjoyed Kilpatrick Style.

It was a great idea!

The Executive Chef of the hotel, Mr Christopher Christie, by this time, had joined **TARGET**'s table.

It was the Executive Chef, who performed the honours in respect of the Oyster Kilpatrick; he made **TARGET** a true believer in the notion that oysters may be enjoyed in more ways than au naturel.

For the uninitiated, Oysters Kilpatrick comprise the oyster (of course), chopped onion, a little white wine and small pieces of bacon, all of which are grilled in the oyster shell until the bacon is, completely, crispy.

(There are variations to the above recipe, **TARGET** hastens to add)

Oysters, cooked in this manner, can become habit-forming, this reviewer discovered.

After the 2 bottles of Champagne – that which was left for this reviewer, that is – **TARGET** finished off the meal with a few braised scallops, poached in some wine.

The Saturday Night Binge

Having rediscovered The Bostonian Restaurant, so to speak, **TARGET** sneaked back to the outlet the following Saturday, June 19, 2004.

On entry to the outlet, **TARGET** told Mr Jacky Ip, the Headwaiter:

'There is no reason to inform anybody of my presence, here.'

(**TARGET** did not want to be disturbed on this occasion)

Mr Jacky Ip nodded, assertively, not even knowing that **TARGET** was, officially, present.

As far as he was concerned, this was just another customer, who knew a few of the leading lights in Management of the hotel.

Which was great for any food reviewer.

For the first time, **TARGET** looked at the one sheet of cardboard, which serves as the restaurant's menu.

Not seeing that which **TARGET** fancied, back to Mr Jacky Ip.

No, **TARGET** was told, there was no Pâte de Foie Gras, but our chef makes a wicked Pâte de Foie Gras du Canard.

That, translated, means that the Pâte de Foie Gras is made with duck liver instead of goose liver, as most French would insist on using.

This reviewer insisted to sample a small piece of the Pâte de Foie Gras du Canard before ordering this dish because the name of the Chinese cook was a Mr Patrick Chau, described by the Headwaiter as being a '*junior*' in The Bostonian Restaurant's kitchen.

('*Junior*' , my foot!)

Well, the Pâte was as good as, if not better than, this reviewer has had for some time.

The smoothness and flavours of the Pâte were a delight to one's senses: As creamy as fresh clotted cream from Devonshire; and, as tasty as a fresh sea urchin.

It melted in one's mouth, literally.

Down went the Pâte with a little fresh, French bread and, of course, some more glasses of Veuve Clicquot.

The Pâte is not on the menu, by the way.

Next, back to Oysters Kilpatrick – Great stuff, these oysters!

But this reviewer assures readers that they are not all that they are cracked up to be with regard to assisting in bedroom activities.

With the Oysters Kilpatrick (**TARGET** only ordered one oyster per person because, after all, the night was young, the lady, present, **TARGET**'s companion, was very comely, and, in any event, the Champagne was nicely chilled), this review ordered a light salad, also, not on the menu.

The salad comprised lettuce, cherry tomatoes, slices of beef tomatoes and celery strips, all wrapped in a light oil-and-vinegar dressing.

The lightness of the salad, orchestrated by **TARGET** but '*played*' by Mr (*Junior*) Patrick Chau, balanced the second course of the evening, very nicely.

After that course, half a baked chicken, half of which **TARGET** devoured and half of which the comely wench woofed down.

The chicken, also, is not on the menu, but it is highly recommended for lovers of this bird.

It was cooked in what appeared to be a unique style, but not overly offensive in its dryness.

The Champagne was getting seriously low by this time.

But what about dessert?

Back to Mr Jacky Ip.

'Can you do a soufflé?' **TARGET** asked.

'Of course!' came the instant reply.

'But it is not on the menu?!' **TARGET** commiserated.

'I am the menu!' retorted Mr Jacky Ip.

The Mango Soufflé, this time produced by another, very able Chinese cook, Mr Martin Lam, who said that he was Senior AB (whatever that means), was superb.

It was made in traditional French style, with a little dish of a watery type of custard, laced with mango slices on the side.

Now, the situation was very serious: The Champagne bottle was empty!

And, so, it was time either to order another bottle or head for home.

TARGET chose home because this report had to be written while it was still fresh in this reviewer's mind.

The cost:

Oysters Kilpatrick (2 pieces)	\$HK96.00
Salad a' la Patrick Chau, The <i>Junior</i>	\$HK90.00@
Pâte de Foie Gras du Canard (one order)	\$HK175.00*
Roast Chicken (half a bird)	\$HK220.00
Soufflé for 2 people	<u>\$HK164.00</u>
TOTAL :	<u>\$HK745.00</u>
*On the bill, it was marked: ' <i>Special Starter</i> '	
@ TARGET 's nomenclature	

This is excellent value for money and Langham Hotel will issue, on request, its Entrée Club Card, which entitles diners to a 50-percent discount when 2 people front up for a meal.

It is surprising, really, that more discriminating, gustatorially inclined people do not frequent this very well-managed outlet of Langham Hotel.

In conclusion, the service at The Bostonian Restaurant is as good as it gets, with the staff, all very fluent in the English language in spite of all of them, being Chinese.

Which would suggest that Management of Langham Hotel is, also, first class.

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