

**Dining and Wining ...
Where To Go ...
Where Not To Go**

**THE BEST
RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...
AND THE WORST !**

Name of Restaurant

Sabatini, The Royal Garden Hotel

Address of Restaurant

Number 69, Mody Road, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Wednesday, February 7, 2007

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

<u>Wine</u>				
Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced	
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Very Expensive	
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Plastic Cork*	
Expertise of Sommelier --	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	

* See remarks

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive Moderately Expensive Very Reasonably Priced

Name of Director of Food and Beverage

Mr Johnny Lai

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Billy Lee

Comments

After an absence of some years, this reviewer returned to Sabatini – to discover a marked improvement.

This 88-seater restaurant, now 15 years old, looks very much as it did when it first opened in 1992, but there have been material improvements in its cuisine, in **TARGET**'s opinion.

But it, still, can't make a decent lasagna!

On the evening that **TARGET**'s duo turned up at 6:30 pm, there was nobody else in the restaurant, but it started to fill in the next 45 minutes to the accompaniment of 2 guitarists and one bass player.

This was the menu that was ordered:

Straciatella alla Romana (A double-boiled beef consommé with egg cliffs and Parmesan cheese)	\$HK100
Ossobuco di bitello in Gremolata (Slow braised veal shank "Gremolata" style)	\$HK328
Timballo di lasagna alla Bolognese (The Grandmother's lasagna "Bologna Style")	\$HK198
Galletto marinate al limone Corn aglio e timo groccanti (Grilled free-range baby chicken with thyme lemon and roasted garlic)	\$HK288

With the meal, **TARGET** ordered a bottle of wine from Tuscany:

Poggio, Vintage 2004 \$HK530

The wine was a terrible mistake.

From the moment that the waiter started to pull the cork on this bottle of wine, warning bells were ringing in this reviewer brain because it was noted that a orange plastic cork was being extruded from the bottle.

A pink plastic cork for Italian wine is not, exactly, normal – and neither was this wine.

The taste was decidedly dry and acidic and left a somewhat bitter aftertaste in one's mouth.

Being produced from a mixture of the must from the grapes of Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Merlot, this reviewer had

high hopes for this wine.

It was not to be.

Even at \$HK10 per bottle, this wine is badly overpriced.

Disregarding the Poggio, Vintage 2004, and continuing with the food, seeing that this restaurant continues to import huge legs of smoked pork – Parma Ham – **TARGET** thought that, along with a juicy piece of cantaloupe, it would be pleasant to try it once more.

It is as good as ever and our waiter supplied it, gratis, as a taster.

A nice touch.

The Straciatella alla Romana was excellent and it was served piping hot as any soup should be served.

This soup was served after another waiter, originally, served a vegetable soup by mistake!

No questions were asked and the mistake was corrected.

As for the lasagna, it was, simply put, '*mashed potatoes*'.

What this restaurant seems to be doing, in order to be able to give quick service, is to pre-cook the lasagna and put it into casserole dish, complete with a kind of sauce on the outer edges of the dish.

Then, when a customer orders it, it is re-cooked (probably in a microwave oven) and, in **TARGET**'s case, it was badly overcooked.

Result: Mashed potatoes with a lot of starch.

Also, the lasagna lacked any depth of flavour: There was no hint of any red wine, having been used in the cooking process, anywhere.

The person responsible for this cock-up, **TARGET** discovered, is the restaurant's sous chef, Mr Cheung Kam Kuen.

As for the main courses – the chicken and the ossobuco – they were both really excellent, but the chicken had the edge, in this reviewer's opinion, because, even if thyme had not been used to flavour the young, free-range chicken, it, still, would have been extremely tasty.

Once again, it was noted that the main courses were served hot, unlike the last time that **TARGET** had entered this restaurant.

For dessert, taken from the temptation wagon, **TARGET** ordered Dolce St Honore and Green Tea and White Chocolate Cake.

TARGET subscribers are advised not to go for the dessert trolley because (a) it is terribly fattening (b) it is much too good to eat just one portion and (c) there is just too much variety: One's resistance is lowered, almost immediately, on viewing the desserts.

Stick to grapes and fresh fruit if one is on a diet.

Better yet, if one is on a diet, don't go to Sabatini.

If one compares Sabatini with Angelini, the Italian food outlet of the Kowloon Shangri-La Hongkong, the restaurants, being located within spitting distances of each other, then, the choice is, plainly, Sabatini.

The ambiance, the service, the quality of the cuisine, the preparation and the presentation of dishes at Sabatini has it all over that of Angelini.

Sabatini has been around since 1992; Angelini is unlikely to last 2 summers of discontent at the rate that it is going.

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