

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Pierre

Address of Restaurant

25/Floor, Mandarin Oriental, Number 5, Connaught Road, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Wednesday, March 21, 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	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier -	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive Moderately Expensive Very Reasonably Priced

Name of Director of Food and Beverage

Mr Paul Jackson

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Sean O'Connell

Comments

Pierre, the fine-dining restaurant at Mandarin Oriental Hongkong, is, perhaps, the biggest fraud in the territory, today.

That is to state, in the words of John Milton (1608-1674), the English poet who had such a profound influence on poets who followed him:

'So glisten'd the dire Snake, and into fraud Led Eve.'

TARGET () is not afraid to go further to suggest that Pierre is, without question, one of the biggest epicurean delusions ever foisted upon the unsuspecting public of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China.

TARGET's opinion with regard to the food at Pierre is that the restaurant dishes up inferior-prepared food, foisted on diners, while charging among the best prices in the territory.

Again, in the words of John Milton:

'The unskillful fraud of him that foisted this Epistle upon Ignatius.'

TARGET's duo, a male and a female, visited Pierre on Wednesday, March 21, 2007, at exactly 7 pm, which is the time that this so-called *'fine-dining'* outlet opens for business in the evenings.

In fact, **TARGET** was 4 minutes early and was refused entrance, with a young, Chinese hostess, suggesting that it would be appropriate to return at the appointed time: 7 pm ... and not before.

So, **TARGET** took the lift, down to the lobby floor of the hotel, walked round the lobby for 2 minutes, and, then, returned to the lift, slowly pushed the button for the 25th Floor, and returned to Pierre, exactly, at 7 pm.

TARGET was very careful not to take any wine to this exclusive eatery (this medium has never done such a thing, actually) because, when making a reservation, the telephone operator at Pierre had warned, completely unsolicited:

'You may not bring your own wine. If you do, you shall be charged a \$HK500 corkage fee.'

This voluntary statement of the telephone operator at Pierre certainly says a great deal.

Disregarding this silly wine-proscription statement – after all, who would think of bringing one's own bottle of wine to one of the most-expensive, fine-dining outlets in the HKSAR – the first impressions of Pierre is outstanding.

Overlooking Victoria Harbour gives one breathtaking views; and, the ambiance and decor of the restaurant complements this beautiful view.

TARGET's waiter for the evening was named Kevin Lo, a very nice, young Chinese man who tried to do his best to serve and to explain the dishes which had been chosen by this medium's duo.

The following is that which **TARGET** chose for the evening's meal:

DÉGUSTATION MENU (Tasting Menu) BY PIERRE GAGNAIRE

Chilled yabby and Pouilly Fuisse broth; baby carrot and celery.

Steamed oysters and leeks, pan fried cockles with chick pea flour.
Radicchio and bellota ham fondue.

Langoustine salpicon with flat parsley, seabass poached in grains of paradise butter.
Cider and turnip infusion. "Pomme-pomme".

Bellino red mullet fillet, sweet onion and coriander gratin.
Almond and parmesan tuile.

<<Entre terre et mer>>:

White and green asparagus, peas, baby spinach, fennel, scallops and sea almond.
An olive oil honey-lemon-mint seasoning.

Wurtz of beef bouillion, a carpaccio "cuisine".

Milk fed leg of lamb with sweet garlic and sweetbread "escabeche".
Tarbais beans with dried fruit,

Matured Gouda with a courgette chutney; Brie square coated with paprika, celeriac remoulade. Endive salad with Fourme d'Ambert and Ewe's milk yoghurt.

Les desserts de Pierre Gagnaire.

\$HK1,450 plus 10-percent Service Charge

And, from the à la carte menu, the following dishes were chosen:

Popcorn Soup	\$HK80.00
Guinea Fowl	\$HK440.00

As for wine, **TARGET** selected:

Lafleur Petrus, Vintage 1999	\$HK2,900.00
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Without wasting Subscribers' time, the entire food was, for the most part, insipid: One was never quite certain what one was tasting.

Everything tasted very similar, adding to a completely boring evening.

The only exceptions to dishes that were not insipid were the Popcorn Soup, which was unmistakable because there was a small, handful of popcorn, lying atop a bowl of cream of corn soup, and the Guinea Fowl, which, actually, was quite tasty.

As for the other dishes, they were complete disasters.

Not one of the dishes on Pierre Gagnaire's tasting menu could be said to be distinctive from another except, perhaps, that some dishes were colder than others.

As wild as this statement may appear to be, even the main course, the leg of lamb, could well have been veal, chicken, rabbit, garoupa or even couscous – there was no way to know what one was eating if one closed one's eyes.

And, when the cheese course arrived, **TARGET** was completely shocked: This medium has never heard of a French restaurant, serving nearly frozen Brie cheese.

This was not a dream: It was a horrible nightmare!

TARGET was certain that the one, 9 millimeter cube of cheese was Brie – because Mr Kevin Lo identified it as such.

When **TARGET** complained to Mr Kevin Lo, at one point, during the 150-minute horror night, he said that he would tell the kitchen staff of **TARGET**'s comments.

The desserts of Pierre Gagnaire included a type of sorbet – with pepper, or something just as spicy, added to the concoction!

Turning to the Pomerol, it was excellent except that the 1990 vintage is a little better, at least in **TARGET**'s opinion.

When the sommelier decanted the Lefleur Petrus, he forgot to deliver the cork to the table.

While there was, absolutely, nothing wrong with the wine, **TARGET**, initially, determined to overlook this little faux pas, but, later on, repented and decided to have a look at the cork, after all.

After some searching, which took the French sommelier, a Mr Pierre Legrandois, about 10 minutes, he returned with a dried-out cork – of a completely different bottle of French wine!

When **TARGET** commented that the cork was bone dry and did not appear to be the correct cork, in any case, the sommelier shrugged his shoulders and said that he was sure that it was the correct cork because that was the only one that he could find.

What is one to say?

What **TARGET**, categorically, can say to Subscribers about Pierre at Mandarin Oriental Hongkong is that the food at this eatery is not worth one tenth of the value, placed on it by this absolutely pretentious food outlet.

According to Mr Kevin Lo, the food at Pierre is known as '*Modern FrenchCuisine*'.

That would explain, **TARGET** assumes, the popcorn in the cream of corn soup.

There was an elderly American couple, which entered the room in which **TARGET** had been seated, and one could not help but overhear the following comments, being exchanged between this husband and wife:

The wife: '*You know, I am not happy with this food or the presentation. What is it? It is supposed to be French, but ...*'.

The husband: '*I know what you mean. I am not happy, too. What is this stuff?*'

The wife: '*I don't know. What did you order?*'

The husband: '*I forgot, but it could not be this mess!*'

The wife: '*Ask the waiter (who was Mr Kevin Lo, also)*'.

The husband: '*Forget it! Let's go.*'

Then, 3 Dutchmen (**TARGET**'s assumption) entered the room and were seated next to **TARGET**'s table.

And, then, **TARGET** overheard the guffaw: '*Popcorn Soup!*'

One other little thing that the lady Subscribers of **TARGET** should note: The waiters have been instructed to try to check in your handbags.

Mr Kevin Lo asked of **TARGET**'s lady reporter, when a request was made for a stool on which to rest her Escada handbag:

'May I check it in for you because we do not have a stool?'

TARGET's lady reporter replied:

'What lady would give up her handbag to be checked in at a restaurant cloakroom?

Mr Kevin Lo sauntered away quietly.

TARGET left Pierre, quietly, too, never to return – which, no doubt, will please Mandarin Oriental Hongkong.

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