

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

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

Name of Restaurant

La Brasserie, The Marco Polo Gateway

Address of Restaurant

Harbour City, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

CategoryTARGET's RatingService

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
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Name of Director of Food and Beverage

Mr Jason Ling

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Frederic J. Hustache

Comments

It had been at least 5 years since **TARGET** () last visited La Brasserie, the French-styled bistro of The Marco Polo Gateway Hotel in Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and this reviewer cannot understand the reason that there has not been a return visit to this charming little restaurant for such a long period of time.

Actually, it is not a small food outlet of this hotel, which used to go by the name of Marco Polo Hotel, in the past, since it does seat 83 people.

The eatery looks, today, almost the same as it did years ago except that the staff has all changed since **TARGET**'s last visit and the food has been changed, somewhat, also.

The one aspect of this outlet that this reviewer liked, very much, was the friendly service of the staff and the way in which the staff go out of their way to accommodate the requirements of the individual guests.

At least, that was this reviewer's impression when **TARGET** visited La Brasserie on Tuesday, July 31, 2007, at 6:45 pm, without having telephoned for a reservation.

Before going further into this review, **TARGET** would like to warn Subscribers that this restaurant is not easy to find from inside the shopping centre, known as The Gateway, because the signage is absolutely appalling.

Having walked the entire length of The Gateway, a clerk at another of the Marco Polo Hotel Group suggested that I find La Brasserie from the Canton Road entrance: *'It's easier to find,'* **TARGET** was told, *'because of the all of the construction.'*

Getting back to La Brasserie, on the day of **TARGET**'s visit, our waitress was the charming, 23-year old, Candy Li (Oh! How I wish that I was 50 years younger!).

After explaining the fact that there were pencilled check marks on the daily printout, aside the names of the fresh fish, indicating what was available on any particular day, **TARGET** selected what was termed, *'Plateau Brasserie'*.

This dish, costing \$HK428, comprised:

- 2 Rock Oysters
- 2 Barron Point Oysters
- 4 Little Neck Clams
- 1 Stone Clam
- 4 Large Prawns
- 4 Green Lip Mussels
- 2 Sea Snails
- Half of a Coral Crab

2 Cray Fish

No criticism could be made of any of the above except, perhaps, that it was a little too much for this reviewer since one was told that this was just a first course (!).

As I emptied the oysters into my mouth, I luxuriated in the salty taste of the Atlantic Ocean, which is a sure sign of the freshness of the bivalve molluscs.

Down my gullet went the oysters, one after another.

Not wanting to wash away that wonderful flavour of the Atlantic Ocean with '*dead*' water, **TARGET** ordered a bottle of Veuve Clicquot, a French Champagne from Reims, France.

It was a worthy complement to the fruits de mers.

Wanting to challenge this restaurant, **TARGET**, then, ordered a bouillabaisse, a fish stew which originated in Marseilles, France.

This was an excellent choice, also, and the Champagne helped this dish, too.

At about this time, the Executive Chef of La Brasserie, Mr Frederic J. Hustache, wandered by and, noting that I was indulging myself, alone, he started to chat with me, explaining that he had made numerous changes to the eatery because he liked authentic French food.

TARGET ordered a Crepe Suzette in the presence of this young chef after learning that he had instructed his people in the art of preparing this classic dessert.

This reviewer has eaten better Crepe Suzette than that, prepared at La Brasserie, but, after so many years – and many pounds more – one should not complain too loudly about this dish which was prepared by a Chinese pastry cook.

Mr Frederic J. Hustache introduced me, also, to a new alcoholic drink, Chartreuse, a high-powered, after dinner drink which could lay one very low if one was not careful.

Mr Frederic J. Hustache explained that Chartreuse is made by monks who do not divulge their secrets in their art.

More's the pity!

The Chartreuse was a complement to the cheese dish.

Unfortunately, the meagre cheese selection was a disgrace to any Frenchman's idea of what a cheese dish should comprise.

TARGET sincerely hopes that the Senior Management of The Marco Polo Gateway will correct this mistake because the lack of good, fresh and a varied selection of cheeses detracts from an otherwise fine food outlet.

The entire meal took about 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete, which may seem to be a long dinner for one person, but the atmosphere of the restaurant, the food (for the most part), the lovely Candy Li and the care and attention of the other serving staff made the hours fly by.

The cost of the entire meal came to about \$HK2,000 at the end of the day: It was money well spent.

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