

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

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

Name of Restaurant

TOTT's - Talk Of The Town

Address of Restaurant34/Floor, The Excelsior, Number 281, Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay,
HongkongDate of Visit

Monday, January 29, 2008

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
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Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Wine</u>			
Choice -- French Only	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 Food and Beverage Manager

Mr Matthew Thomas

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Franz Dajcman

Comments

If one is serious about the quality of the food that one puts into one's stomach, then Talk of the Town (TOTT's), located on the top floor of The Excelsior (Hotel), in Causeway Bay, is not the place to consider for an evening meal.

The food, served at this food outle, is, generally, very poor; and, to a great extent, it is fast food, dressed up to try to resemble quality cuisine.

TARGET () visited TOTT's last Monday night at 6:30 p.m. and, after fighting one's way through the throng on the ground floor, managed to squeeze into a lift that carried this medium's duo to the 34th floor.

Seated at a table, facing Victoria Harbour, **TARGET** had a beautiful view of The Pearl of The Orient, with the twinkling lights of Kowloon, casting flickering reflections on the water of the Harbour.

In such an attractive setting, this was that which this medium ordered for a meal:

Starters

Cannelloni of Goat Cheese, Spinach, Tomato

\$HK158

TOTT's Seared Salmon, Scotch Eggs, Horseradish Cream

\$158

Main Courses

Battered Haddock, Thick Chips, Minted Pea Puree, Champagne Sauce

\$HK248

Pan-Fried Calves Liver, Parsley Bean Mash, Onion Rings, Sage Jus

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\$HK248

Side Dishes

Broccoli Hollandaise

\$HK48

Sauté Wild Mushrooms

\$HK48

With the above meal, **TARGET** ordered a bottle of Italian wine: Valpolicella, produced by Zenato, at the price of \$HK380.

This wine is created by the blend of Corvina and Rondinella grapes, grown in the hills, north of Verona.

It was the highlight of the evening even though it was supposed to be Vintage 2003, according to the wine list, but turned out as Vintage 2004.

The Starters

The Seared Salmon dish was a complete failure because, aside from the fact that the entire dish was cold, it tasted only of oil, which obscured any flavours that the salmon might have had, prior to it being cooked.

This situation had to be due to the dish, having been prepared, perhaps 3 hours earlier, and, then, left in a refrigerator, awaiting some unsuspecting customer to order it.

It was so bad that when Mr Wilfred Lui, the Service Manager of TOTT's, walked by and asked what **TARGET** thought of the food (without knowing that his restaurant was serving this medium's survey team), he went to investigate what had happened in the kitchen.

(Mr Wilfred Lui did not charge **TARGET** for this starter, obviously agreeing with this medium's determination).

As for the Cannelloni of Goat Cheese, the Goat Cheese turned out to be Ricotta Cheese, which is, in fact, made of whey and is the residue of cheese-making, which used to be fed to animals in days of yore.

Ricotta, actually, means '*recooked*' in Italian.

Be that as it may, this dish was edible if one did not mind eating something produced some hours earlier and, then, reheated in a microwave oven.

The Main Courses

The Battered Haddock was the only freshly cooked dish of the entire evening.

It was excellent in every aspect and rated, if one is keen on rating dishes, at about 8 points out of 10 points.

However, sadly, the pea puree was described by a member of the serving staff as being '*pesto potatoes*'.

So much for the knowledge of that member of the serving staff.

The calves liver was not a patch on the Battered Haddock because, among other things, the liver, after it had been sautéed, was placed on a cold dish and this resulted in the entire dish, becoming cold by the time that it was served to **TARGET**.

The onion rings, however, had not been freshly deep fried – because the oil had congealed on the rings of the poor vegetable, making it inedible ... unless one enjoys sucking on cold oil.

The Side Dishes

In a word, both of these dishes were '*disgusting*'.

The Sautéed Wild Mushrooms were '*swimming*' in a cup of lukewarm water, measuring about 2 inches deep.

The mushrooms were completely insipid.

TARGET offers a challenge to anybody to close one's eyes and, then, to try to identify any part of this dish without being told what it was supposed to be.

As for the broccoli dish, what happened to the Hollandaise Sauce?

Further, the broccoli was of an age that it should have been retired – along with the person in the kitchen, who was trying to pass himself off as a cook.

The Serving Staff

Without any hesitation, at all, the serving staff is as good as one finds anywhere in the world.

They are a credit to the hotel.

Every serving staff member, with whom **TARGET** came in contact, tried his or her best to pull the fat out of the fire, but, unfortunately, without the cooperation of the kitchen staff, it was a hopeless task.

This medium's duo only ordered 2 courses, but it took from 6:30 p.m. until 8 p.m. to obtain the food that had been ordered.

And one must bear in mind that, for the most part, the food was fast-food, dressed up to resemble freshly made dishes.

Lastly, **TARGET** was told that the chef of TOTT's is Mr Samuel Lim, a Malaysian.

Enough said.

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