

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Jimmy's Kitchen

Address of RestaurantGround Floor, South China Building, Numbers 1-3, Wyndham Street,
Central, Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Thursday, June 19, 2008

Category**TARGETs 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> (Weighted Toward Italian Wines)			
Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Very Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier - None	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive Moderately Expensive **Very Reasonably Priced**

Name of Food and Beverage Manager

Mr William Lam

Name of Chef

Mr Steven Lee

Comments

One has, often, heard the expression: '*Out with the old, and in with the new.*'

However, in the case of a number of restaurants of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), there is something to be said for the converse of this age-old expression: '*Out with the new, and in with the old.*'

Jimmy's Kitchen has been in existence in the HKSAR, in one shape or another, since 1928.

It appears to be continuing to rake in its old customers, the clientele, being, pretty much the old-timers of the territory, or their extended families, especially the ethnic Indian community.

TARGET () revisited Jimmy's Kitchen, last Thursday at 7:40 p.m., to discover that the décor of the restaurant at South China Building has hardly changed since it opened in June 1975.

The restaurant, which was started in Shanghai by the late Mr Jimmy Landau, was relocated to the British Crown Colony of Hongkong (as it was, then, known) in 1928.

The son of Mr Jimmy Landau, whose name was, actually, Mr Leo Landau, but who was more popularly known as (mistakenly) Mr Jimmy Landau, was the most visible personality at the Hongkong restaurant for many long years.

Jimmy's Kitchen used to be in another location, within spitting distance of its present site, and this reviewer recalls the old Jimmy's Kitchen with its sparse, wooden furniture and Mr Leo (Jimmy) Landau, moving among the tables, chatting with customers and telling them to eat their food while it was, still, hot.

The present Jimmy's Kitchen does not measure up to the original concept of this famous eatery, but it, still, beats the pants off many of the relatively newly established restaurants in the territory, such as the very pretentious, dressed-up, fast-food restaurant, known as Isola Bar + Grill, located at IFC Mall.

Please Refer To:

[TARGET Intelligence Report, Volume X, Number 108,](#)
Published On Wednesday, June 11, 2008

One thing that is remarkable about Jimmy's Kitchen, Vintage 2008, is that the prices for most of the dishes are very reasonable, especially for an up-market restaurant, located in the heart of the Central Business District of Hongkong Island.

One cannot say the same for Isola Bar + Grill where the average price for dishes, considering most of the mush, dished up, are outrageous, in **TARGET**'s opinion.

However, having said that, **TARGET** noted that the Jimmy's Kitchen of today is cutting corners and has lowered its former high standard of excellence.

On the evening that **TARGET** entered this restaurant, 2 things were very noticeable:

1. The European maitre d'hotel – later, it was discovered that this European was, in fact, the Manager, Mr Tom Watson – had his back to the front door and, after **TARGET**'s duo had entered, this gentleman continued to read his English-language newspaper in a standing position, his back to this medium's reviewers, until, having finished an article (or something), he looked up and said, without even the usual salutation: 'Do you have a reservation?' and,
2. There was the good beginning of a flood in the men's room, with toilet water, starting to seep out into the dining area.

Having been seated at a very small table for 2 people (which has been standard for this restaurant since its opening), **TARGET** ordered a gin and tonic and, within minutes, a glass with a mixture and gin and tonic was placed on the table.

(No niceties, here, where the ounce or so of gin and the bottle of tonic water are served in separate containers, allowing guests to mix their own drinks as they see fit and in accordance with their individual tastes.)

On scanning the wine list (one has to request it because it is not placed on the table), it was clear that all of the wines were much too young to be drunk, with very few exceptions.

The presentation of the different dishes on the menu is far superior to the last time that **TARGET** paid a visit to this restaurant, more than 5 years earlier, but it was nice to see that there was, still, a smattering of the old-time dishes, introduced by the Landau Family in days of yore.

This was **TARGET**'s menu of last Thursday night:

Appetisers

Pâté Maison, old Swedish veal liver recipe
\$HK78

Camembert Cheese, coated with sesame seeds fried, cranberry relish
\$HK88

Soup

Mulligatawny, lightly spiced Indian specialty
\$HK58

Thursday's Special

Hungarian Veal Goulash, with ginger noodles
\$HK150

Indian Curries

Chicken Madras, with sauce
\$HK149

Deserts

Wine Trifle, with raspberries and almonds
\$HK66

Bread and Butter Budding, with custard sauce
\$HK62

The 2 appetisers were more than passable, although one could, perhaps, criticise the Pâté Maison for being too bland.

But that is a very personal, taste observation that some people may not hold as being a valid criticism.

The Mulligatawny Soup – literally, 'Pepper Water' – was nothing like the original soup that used to be served at the old Jimmy's Kitchen.

It, even, contained rice!

Mulligatawny Soup is a complex soup, at the best of times, and its origins date back to the time that the British Empire included the Indian Continent.

It is said that the English adapted a traditional spiced pea and lentil, Indian peasant dish to suit their own love of soup ... and, then, labelled it as being a typical Indian soup.

Nothing could have been further from the truth.

The Mulligatawny Soup, served at Jimmy Kitchen, today, is definitely not Mulligatawny Soup, but, for the uninitiated, it could pass for this famous soup, first created by the British in the 19th Century.

Certainly, it was drinkable.

The 2 Main Courses were disasters, however.

The Chicken Madras had pieces of frozen chicken, mixed into a sauce that tasted very much of lamb.

This was because Jimmy's Kitchen, also, serves Lamb Madras and, clearly, the person in the kitchen, who is a Mr Steven Lee, who has been the cook of Jimmy's Kitchen for the past 4 years, had determined that there was little reason to make 2 different kinds of sauce, one for the Chicken Madras and one for the Lamb Madras, when the same sauce could be used for both dishes – and, no doubt, it was hoped that few people would recognise the difference.

Well, **TARGET** did.

As for the Hungarian Veal Goulash, **TARGET** asked the waiter – this very rotund gentleman goes by the name of Peter – whether or not the veal had come right out of a tin.

Rotund Peter assured this medium that that is never the case at Jimmy's Kitchen.

TARGET was not convinced by the answer, but Rotund Peter did his best to assure this medium that he was telling the truth.

(To this reviewer, it appeared that the veal had been recycled more than once because:

- a. At the touch of a fork, the meat seemed to melt away and disappear into the sauce; and,
- b. The meat, when one could catch a little piece, was, completely, insipid.)

If that which Rotund Peter had attested had been the case in respect of the veal – and **TARGET** uses the subjunctive mood, here – then, the Hungarian Veal Goulash must have been flown to the HKSAR, some time earlier, and the veal had been left to age in order to make its fall apart at the first touch of one's fork.

It was almost inedible as was the Chicken Madras.

Rotund Peter was informed.

To this gentleman's credit, he informed a young black-jacketed captain, who apologised and offered to give **TARGET** a free desert.

That hardly alters anything, does it?

This medium will not comment on the desert in view of the aforementioned.

This restaurant accommodates about 120 patrons and the surroundings are very conducive to a quiet night out, as has been the case for decades past.

While the 2 main courses were, without doubt, disaster areas, as far as **TARGET** was concerned, this medium is almost certain that, had other main courses been ordered, the situation would have been righted on viewing other patrons's food.

The service is, for the most part, rough and ready, with all of the serving staff, being ethnically Chinese (Rotund Peter has been working as a waiter for Jimmy Kitchen for the past 18 years, he claimed).

Jimmy's Kitchen is not a patch on the old version when the restaurant was housed in what used to be called, China Building.

It is, today, a Chinese-styled, European eatery, but it is still miles ahead of Isola Bar + Grill.

It is not fine-dining, not by a long shot, but it has its calling, to be sure, and it is, still, a very pleasant experience, by and large.

***While TARGET makes every attempt to ensure accuracy of all data published,
TARGET cannot be held responsible for any errors and/or omissions.***

*If readers feel that they would like to voice their opinions about that which
they have read in **TARGET**, please feel free to e-mail your views to
editor@targetnewspapers.com. **TARGET** does not guarantee to publish
readers' views, but reserves the right so to do subject to the laws of libel.*