

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

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

Name of Restaurant

JW's California, JW Marriott Hotel Hongkong

Address of Restaurant

Pacific Place, No. 88, Queensway, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Thursday, August 7, 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>			
Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	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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*If one cannot eat the food, it is VERY EXPENSIVE.

Name of Food and Beverage Manager

Mr David Day

Name of Executive Chef

None

Comments

Eureka!

It has been discovered – at last!

No, it is not that crock of gold at the end of the rainbow, as promised by the leprechaun.

No, it is not that fountain of youth that the Spanish Conquistadors searched high and low in the New World in the 15th Century.

It is the worst, premier restaurant in a 5-star hotel in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

No, it is not named Felix of The Peninsula Hotel.

No, it is not named Spoon of InterContinental Hongkong.

No, it is not even Amber of The Landmark Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

The dubious honour of being the worst premier restaurant in a 5-star hotel in the HKSAR goes to JW's California, the only European-styled food outlet at JW Marriott Hongkong, located at Pacific Place.

TARGET () visited JW's California on August 7, 2008, at 8:20 p.m., having not made a reservation, beforehand.

There was little reason to think of making a reservation because this restaurant only ever has a handful of customers in the evenings, in any event, except when there is a large convention in town and the other hotels' food outlets are full to overflowing.

The reason that **TARGET** determined to give this restaurant a second chance, so to speak, following an earlier catastrophe when a Japanese chef was trying to do his *thing*, was because of the publicity, surrounding the newly appointed chef de cuisine, an Australian gentleman, named Christopher Smith.

On the evening of **TARGET**'s visit, it was the chef's day off so that the open kitchen was manned by 3 Chinese gentlemen, all wearing little caps, designating them as being cooks of a certain rank.

The Set Dinner Menu for the day of this medium's visit comprised 7 courses, costing between \$HK598 – the cheapest – and \$HK1,350.

The cost of the meal is even more expensive than that of Felix of The Peninsula where the food is, also, almost inedible.

TARGET ordered the Set Dinner Menu at \$HK598:

Alaskan Seafood Bisque
truffle and cognac cream

Smoked Alaskan Sockeye Salmon
maple-dill dressing and eggplant caviar

Crispy Alaskan Red Snapper Tortellini
lemon and chive cream sauce

WATERMELON AND GIN GRANITA

Prosciutto Wrapped Alaskan Black Cod
goat cheese polenta and wilted spinach

Ivory Chocolate Fondant
raspberries, lime gelee and hazelnut ice-cream

And, from the á la carte menu, **TARGET** ordered:

Cured Alaskan Ocean Trout
herb mascarpone, crisp bagel toast and pickled cucumber
\$HK185

Smoked Alaskan Sockeye Salmon
dill-maple dressing and eggplant caviar
\$HK160

Persilladi-Crusted Organic Australian Lamb Rack
pea and mint puree, baby carrots and port wine sauce
\$HK315

Initially, this medium had intended to order some other dishes in order to sample the cooking skills of Chef Christopher Smith, but things went from bad to worse as the evening wore on so that, after suffering for about one hour or so at the hands of a trio of incompetents in the open kitchen at JW's California, it was determined that a bowl of noodles at a Chinese restaurant would be the best course of action in order to satisfy one's hunger pangs.

The 2 first courses of smoked salmon and smoked trout appeared to be the dried-out, cardboard-packed stuff that one buys at the Vancouver or Toronto Airports.

They were, just, terrible!

The Cured Alaskan Ocean Trout was completely inedible, the meat, tasting as though it was half rotten.

It was replaced by Smoked Alaskan Sockeye Salmon, which was just as bad as the trout.

The Seafood Bisque, which is hysterically labelled as such, had a crust on it when it was placed on the table – because it was straight out of the refrigerator!

It was replaced by a lukewarm version of the same.

However, the soup turned out to be the best course of the evening, scoring a good 4 points out of 10 points due, mainly, to the fact that it, at least, did taste a little of seafood, and it was, after all, a liquid, as promised on the menu – which one could not say for the state of many of the other dishes.

But the taste of this soup was more of a warm tomato juice rather than seafood bisque, laced with a little brandy.

There was no brandy to heighten the liquid, anyway.

The lamb dish was outrageous.

TARGET had ordered the lamb rack to be cooked medium well so that the meat would be just a little pink in the middle.

When the 2 pieces of very thickly cut lamb meat minus bone – note, not lamb rack – were placed on the table, with the first slice of the meat, blood gushed out, most profusely.

But the meat was dead, of this **TARGET** was certain.

The waiter was told to take this dish away and replace it with meat that had been cooked, not meat that was nearly raw.

At this time, enter Mr Doug Kim, the Restaurant Manager.

This gentlemen, of Korean birth, on hearing of the nearly raw meat, having been served, came over in order to see what could be done about the ever-worsening situation.

While talking with this medium's duo for about 10 minutes, back came the same dish of 2 lamb steaks (this was, in reality, not a lamb rack or lamb chops), this time the meat, having been blackened.

It looked like something from a horror movie, found by the heroine as she bravely opened the 100-year-old coffin of a vampire and stared down at his blackened face, his teeth, still glistening by the light of a candle.

In front of Mr Doug Kim, the meat was sliced open and, Lo and Behold! It was still bleeding!

The meat were the same pieces that had been sent back to the open kitchen!

All that had been done was that the people in the open kitchen – those people with the little hats on their pointed heads – had, somehow, blackened the outside of the meat in the hope, obviously, that it would pass inspection.

TARGET did not even deign to taste the nearly raw meat.

Mr Doug Kim suggested that beef might be a suitable substitute?

No thank you.

And that was the end of the meal.

Short and not very sweet was this medium's experience at this food outlet which should be an embarrassment to any 5-star hotel.

JW's California can accommodate about 150 people, but it is rarely full in the evenings.

One need not wonder as to the reason for this situation.

TARGET has, purposely, omitted, mentioning the details of some of the other dishes from the Set Dinner Menu because this medium does not want to bore Subscribers with the fact that, by and large, all but one of the dishes were inedible, being either refried this or that or completely insipid, frozen fish meat.

Mr Christopher Smith and/or Mr Doug Kim need not fret that **TARGET** will return to roast this food outlet over this medium's fire, again, because it will never happen: This reviewer would like to be able to live to a ripe old age.

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