

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Angelini, Kowloon Shangr-La Hotel

Address of Restaurant

No. 64, Mody Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Thursday, October 2, 2008

CategoryTARGETs 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	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 Food and Beverage Manager

Mr Randal Linhart

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Gary Robinson

Comments

There have, definitely, been dramatic changes to Angelini, the premier food outlet at the Kowloon Shangri-La Hotel in Tsimshatsui East, with the service, having been improved, as has the ambiance.

Unfortunately, although there is an Italian chef, wandering through the restaurant, most of the time, he does not appear to have improved the quality of the food very much.

At least, that was the case when **TARGET** () visited this restaurant on Thursday, October 2, 2008, at about 7:15 p.m.

The name of the new chef is Mr Vittorio Lucariello, who has been installed in the restaurant for the past year or so, following the death of the previous chef de cuisine, Mr Massima Iarossi.

With the installation of the new chef de cuisine, who comes from Aversa, Naples, it was out with Mr Alessandro Argento as the Manager of Angelini.

Just as well, in this medium's opinion.

The change of management is very noticeable and the outlet no longer resembles a wet open market, the type that one finds in Wanchai or Mongkok, with waiters and waitresses, yelling and screaming as though they were looking for customers to buy their wares.

TARGET goes on record as stating that the 'new' Angelini is a lovely restaurant, but something must be done to improve the quality of the food if this food outlet intends to compete with other Italian restaurants in Kowloon.

On the day that this medium visited Angelini, this was that which was ordered:

Set Menu Dishes

Tonno Cotto All'olio Angelini e Pomodori Agrumati Mezzi
(Slow-cooked tuna in Angelini extra virgin oil with citrus semi-dried tomatoes)

Linguine con Zucchini e Crema d'Aglio Dolce
(Linguine with courgette in sweet garlic sauce)

Coscio de Angello Profumato all Menta con Tortino di Papate e Lardo di Colonnata
(Oven-roasted leg of lamb with mint and potato cake)

Gelo de Melone
(Italian watermelon pudding with candied pumpkin and cinnamon)

\$HK740

From The A La Carte Menu

Seared Calamari with Goat Ricotta Cheese, Abrate Pea and Firsee Salad
\$HK198

Homemade Scialatielli with Veraci Clams, Zhuchini and Basil
\$HK200

Italian Baked Whole Sea Bass
\$HK580

The Set Menu

The slow-cooked tuna in Angelini extra virgin oil (which this medium does not believe, in any event, because Angelini does not press its own grapes or anybody else's) with citrus semi-dried tomatoes turned out to be 5 dry cubes of tuna over which spoonfuls of olive oil had been poured.

It was inedible.

TARGET's waiter explained, on seeing that the dish was not being eaten, that, in fact, the tuna had not been cooked, at all, but had only been marinated in the olive oil.

That, **TARGET** was told, was the reason that the tuna had turned a slightly brownish colour.

TARGET asked how many days had the tuna cubes been marinated.

No response.

The pasta dish was a little better than the first course, with the exception that the linguine had metamorphosed into spaghetti.

The salty taste of the vegetables, used to give flavour to the otherwise insipidity of the entire pasta dish, turned this reviewer off, completely.

Trying to eat this food reminded one of trying to enjoy a slice of tasteless, white bread, dusted with a great deal of salt.

The third course, the leg of lamb, was an absolute disaster.

The meat, other than being tasteless, was as tough as old army boots.

It was clear that the lamb, the skin of which was black, had not been roasted, at all.

How the kitchen staff had prepared the lamb, **TARGET** cannot state, having not seen the workings of the kitchen staff at Angelini, but this medium would hazard a guess that the lamb had been boiled quickly, initially, and, then, basted with something, and, then, put in an oven at very high temperature in order to blacken the outer skin.

One small mouthful was all that could be devoured.

As for the desert, it was a joke.

Enough said of that rubbish.

The A La Carte Menu

The A La Carte Menu was better than the Set Menu, but only by a hair.

The first course, the seared calamari, was excellent; it was obvious that it had been prepared by a Chinese cook and that no Italian had been near it.

The calamari pieces were only half-cooked, making them juicy and very tasty.

As for the scialatielli (a flat noodle, said to have been homemade) with clams, the second course of the a la carte menu, would have been very nice – if the cook had not been heavy handed with the salt.

Because of the plethora of salt, added to the dish, it was just too much.

A young couple, at the next table, which had ordered the same dish, complained about the saltiness of the dish and was told by their waiter that the clams had caused that anomaly!

The whole sea bass, the third course, which was supposed to have been baked, was served within about 5 minutes of being ordered, suggesting, strongly, that it had not been baked at all.

Alternatively, if it had been baked, the cooking process had been accomplished hours before, with the dish, being kept in a warmer, which did not improve it, at all.

More importantly, somebody should tell the kitchen staff either to descale the sea bass before cooking it or, in the alternative, not to serve the skin of this delicate fish, complete with the scales.

(It is difficult to eat the bony or horny overlapping plates of the skin of most fishes although bears do not seem to mind devouring them.)

In addition to having mouthfuls of scales, the meat of the poor fish was tasteless, too.

And this dish costs \$HK580!

With this assortment of dishes, **TARGET** ordered a bottle of Chianti at \$HK520.

It was excellent – because nobody in the kitchen had touched it, no doubt.

The entire meal cost \$HK2,230.

For what one got, this is very expensive.

It will not take too long before people will realise the mediocrity of the cooking at Angelini and stop frequenting this otherwise lovely food outlet of this well-appointed hotel.

On a final note, **TARGET** could not help noting the chef de cuisine, walking round the restaurant for the entire 90 minutes of this medium's visit.

Not once did he visit the kitchen – which is where he should have been throughout the entire evening, in this medium's opinion.

Considering that Management of Kowloon Shangri-La has gone out of its way to improve the premier food outlet of the hotel that would make the claim of being the '*fine-dining outlet*', it, really, is a pity to be let down by the kitchen staff, the majority of whom, clearly, know little to nothing about cooking Italian food or any other European food, **TARGET** ventures to guess.

If a food outlet wants to charge top dollar for its dishes, then, it is to be expected by patrons that they receive authentic, well-prepared cuisine, not dressed up dishes, fashioned by fast-food, stir-fry ignoramuses.

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