

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Domani

Address of Restaurant

Level 4, Pacific Place, Admiralty, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Thursday, November 13, 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 -- None	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
General	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Food

Presentation	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Wine

Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier --	None	Excellent	Poor

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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Name of Food and Beverage Manager

Nil

Name of Executive Chef

Mr John Wingerstsahn

Comments

There is another new 'kid' on the block.

It is called, 'Domani', and if this free-standing restaurant can maintain its present standards of excellence, it is quite likely to give the managements of the 2, fine-dining establishments, in close proximity to it, a great deal of concern.

Domani opened its doors on Saturday, November 8, 2008, and, since its opening, it appears to have waged an undeclared 'war' on its rivals in the area.

It is located at Level 4, Pacific Place, Admiralty.

It is destined to offer a great deal of competition to the managements of both Nicholini's (of Conrad Hongkong) and Petrus (of Island Shangri-La), both of these food outlets, being the premier restaurants of these 2, 5-star hotels, respectively.

Of course, this presupposes that that which **TARGET** () witnessed on Thursday, November 13, 2008, at between 7:30 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., will be maintained as the standard level of both service and food quality of this new restaurant.

Domani, in the Italian language, means 'tomorrow' and one hears it as 2 friends shout to each other in Cortona: 'A domani! – See you tomorrow!'

TARGET has no idea as to the reason that this restaurant is named, 'Tomorrow' because it appears to be offering some stiff competition to other food outlets in Pacific Place – today.

After watching the construction of the free-standing structure, housing this 135-seater restaurant over the past 30 months or so, it was interesting to learn from the General Manager, Mr Danilo Nioicetti, the unique-looking roof and ceiling have no real function, other than being the whim of the architect, a Mr Thomas Heatherwick.

The building, housing Domani, is purpose-built for a restaurant, with a smoking area, outside, a bar (for boozers, one supposes), and a dining area for the more sedate people or, alternatively, for would-be lovers.

On the day of **TARGET**'s visit, this was that which was ordered:

A La Carte

*Acqua di Pomodoro, Capesante, Gamberi, Insalatina,
Germogli e Frutta, Sale Nero*
tomato jelly, prawns, scallops, sprouts, salad, fruit and black salt
\$HK280

Astice alla Mediterranea
warm Canadian lobster, Mediterranean style

\$HK310

Piccione Arrostito con Mele e Spinaci, Marmellata di Cipolle e Sugo al Piccione

roast pigeon, apple, spinach, red onion jam, pigeon jus

\$HK330

The tasting menu called in Italian, 'Degustazione', was as follows:

Degustazione (*It means, simply, 'Tasting'*)

Tagliatelle di Seppia, Pesto di Alga Nori, Quinoa Fritta

squid tagliatelli, nori seaweed pesto, fried quinoa

Acqua di Pomodoro, Capesante, Gamberi, Insalatina, Germogli e Frutta, Sale Nero

tomato jelly, prawns, scallops, sprouts, salad, fruit and black salt

Albanella di Crostacei e Molluschi

marche style fruit of the sea, simmered and served in an albanella jar

Strigoli al Nero di Seppia, Seppia, Parmigiano e Basilico

marche black ink strigoli, baby calamari, parmigiano reggiano and basil

Rombo Carciofi al Vino Bianco, Bottarga

turbot, ligurian artichokes, and "bottarga" (sardinian air dried fish roe)

or

Filetto di Manzo, Salsa al Vino Rosso e all' Aglio, Patate Arrostiti, Olive Taggiasche e Peperoni

angus beef tenderloin, red wine and garlic sauce, roast potatoes, "taggiasche" olives, red bell peppers

Ciocco and Cocco

hot chocolate and frozen coconut

Caffe e Pasticceria

coffee or tea and cuddles

\$HK1,200

Along with the above dishes, a bottle of Amarone della Valpolicella Monte Zoro, Vintage 2003, was ordered at \$HK800.

This is a heavy, high-power red from Veneto, Italy, and tends to have almond overtones.

With meat dishes, it goes down very well after it has been allowed to breathe.

Unfortunately for this medium, the wine tended to overshadow some of the fish dishes that were ordered.

But that was **TARGET**'s mistake, not the mistake of Domani or of the staff of this restaurant – sometimes, a little knowledge is dangerous, is that not so?

A little more about the wines, offered at this restaurant:

1. The wine list is quite long and the prices appear to be reasonable, generally, although, in some cases, the charges were more than a little off the chart; and,
2. The list of wines is heavily weighted to Italians (well, after all, this is supposed to be an Italian eatery), however, one can find an assortment of other wines from other parts of the world, but nothing as good as the Italian selection.

The Food

This medium cannot fault the quality of the food at Domani although one could be critical of the some of the presentations of the dishes and the obvious lack of training of many of the staff members.

Having said that, **TARGET** realises that it is difficult for a cooked pasta dish, such as squid tagliatelli, to look like anything other than that which it is: A pasta, made with squid ink and cooked in olive oil and served in a bowl.

Also, **TARGET** noted that the dishes on the Degustazione Menu were not balanced since there was a marked absence of much in the way of vegetables.

Each dish, however, was good and stood on its own merits.

Perhaps, the best dishes, in this reviewer's opinion, were the turbot and the roast pigeon.

TARGET was told that the pigeon was from Bresse, near Champagne, in France.

This was somewhat surprising because this medium did not know that pigeons from this area of France were available although Bresse chicken happens to be among the best in the world.

A word about the Canadian lobster appears to be in order, at this point, because the flavour of this crustacean was completely masked by other flavours that accompanied the dish.

There is nothing wrong with this way to serve such a dish, of course, but one would have thought that the flavours of the lobster should have predominated.

Still, that is an opinion that may not be shared by all.

Lastly, about the food and the service, **TARGET** was not offered tea, or coffee, and had no idea what were 'cuddles', printed at the end of the Degustazione Menu.

The Restaurant

Domani is a pleasant-enough place, but Management must be expecting an explosion of business since the tables are fitted very closely together.

It could never be a fine-dining establishment, for obvious reasons, but it is, in **TARGET**'s opinion, an interesting place to eat.

The prices are high, without question, and one cannot help but ponder whether or not the prices are commensurate with the quality and quantity of the dishes.

It is certain that this is not a meat-and-potatoes joint (and it was never meant to be, of course) because, after finishing the meal, this reviewer's stomach was far from being satisfied.

But that is a good thing, not a bad thing, isn't it? – We, all, tend to overeat.

The restaurant is interesting, the décor, having been created by a Mr Branko Pahor, one is told.

The entire structure is owned by The Swire Group of Companies and is merely leased to the operator.

A great deal of thought has gone into this restaurant and one notes that there were 5 European cooks, teaching Chinese assistants how to do this and that.

It seems quite likely that, after a while, some or all of these Europeans will vanish from the scene, leaving the Chinese to dish up the food.

For the time being, however, the Chinese are the students of the Europeans who appear to be teaching formula cooking.

And this, in **TARGET**'s opinion, is a mistake because it may well detract from creativity in the future.

Domani is not a fusion restaurant, at least, not at this time, but it could become such an 'animal' if some of **TARGET**'s fears become a reality.

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