

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

The Kitchen, W Hongkong

**Address of Restaurant**

No. 1, Austin Road, Kowloon, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Saturday, January 10, 2009

**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

#### Wine

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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#### Name of Director of Food and Beverage

Mr Kaya Sadettin

#### Name of Executive Chef

Nil

#### Comments

Before determining to dine at W Hongkong, one of the newest, 5-star hotels in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), there is a number of things that a prospective, peripatetic adventurer to Kowloon must consider:

1. Are you healthy and physically fit and able to withstand a non-stop walk of about 30 minutes or so?
2. Are you well-heeled?
3. Do you enjoy lukewarm food?

In addition to the above, **TARGET** () strongly suggests that any prospective, peripatetic adventurer, determined to eat at W Hongkong, bring a compass or, even better, a hand-held, **Globe Positioning Device (GPS)** in order to assist in finding the hotel.

This medium decided to visit The Kitchen at W Hongkong, last Saturday night (January 10, 2009), in order to see just how one of the territory's latest additions to the 5-star brand of hotel had progressed.

From Admiralty Hongkong via the **Mass Transit Railway (MTR)**, it takes about 20 minutes to find Elements, the commercial complex in Austin Road, Kowloon, where W Hongkong is housed.

The actual MTR ride is not more than 10 minutes and it is effortless, but the walk from the Central Station in order to board another MTR train on the Tung Chung Line takes another 10 minutes to find.

The walk is about one mile, according to **TARGET**'s rough calculations.

Then, after just one stop on this MTR line, one is at Elements.

Then comes the problem of finding W Hongkong.

That takes another 5 minutes to 10 minutes because the signage at Elements is just terrible and one is forced to take a circular route through a maze in order to arrive at one's destination.

**TARGET**, eventually, asked a couple of shop-owners at Elements for the whereabouts of the hotel.

The entrance to W Hongkong from Elements can easily be missed because, in the evening, there is only a dark door with the one letter, 'W', indicating that this is the joint.

By the time that this medium had located the hotel and The Kitchen, The Kitchen, being one of the 2 food outlets at W Hongkong, frustration must have been very evident on the faces of the **TARGET** team, with the hostess of the food outlet, volunteering to empathise with the situation, stating that W Hongkong had complained to the MTR about the very poor signage, leading to the hotel.

By the time that a seat had been assigned to this medium by the hostess of The Kitchen, a healthy appetite had been the result of all of the exercise and frustration.

The menu came along with the wine list and **TARGET** looked round the room.

The Kitchen, one learned very quickly, is, in fact, the coffee shop of the hotel.

It accommodates about 136 people and, on the night of **TARGET**'s visit, it was about 60-percent empty.

Put another way, it was 40 percent full.

This turned out to be somewhat surprising because the cost of eating a meal at this coffee shop is high, the food is mediocre, and, unless one enjoys looking at motor vehicles, entering a grotty tunnel, there is little in the way of scenery from the large windows of The Kitchen.

After scanning the menu, this is that which **TARGET** ordered:

*White Bean Soup*  
\$HK75

*Potato Leek Soup*  
\$HK75

*Fungi Pizza*  
(tomato base, mozzarella cheese, mushrooms and parsley)  
\$HK140

*Dark Ale Pie*  
(beef steak, cooked in Guinness beer, onions and seasonal green vegetables)  
\$HK145

*Black Cod*  
(white beans plus beetroot relish)  
\$HK250

*Chocolate Fudge Cake with Chocolate Ice Cream and Hot Chocolate*  
\$HK90

*Mandarin Crème Caramel with Citrus Jellies and Brandy Snaps*  
\$HK75

With the above meal, **TARGET** ordered a bottle of wine, which hailed from the Elk Cove Vineyards of California.

This white wine is made from Pinot Blanc grapes and originates from Willamette Valley.

The cost of this wine was \$HK600 – which is quite expensive for this almost non-descript white which has no discernable nose and few lasting properties.

The wine was crisp and only slightly acidic; it had overtones of the earth with a hint of watermelon.

**TARGET**'s waiter for the evening appeared to know something about serving wine and took the trouble to show the popped cork, first, and giving this reviewer a taste of the wine before attempting to pour it into the glasses.

Settled back and scanning this food outlet – which has no soft furnishings so that sound reverberates, round the room, causing a cacophony of unpleasant, gibberish noises, from loud yelps to the chinks of knives and forks as they struck dishes – it was noted that the tables were spaced quite far apart for a coffee shop.

### **The Food**

When the 2 soups were placed on the **TARGET**'s table, they appeared to have a number of things in common:

1. They looked very similar;
2. They tasted very similar;
3. They were both only lukewarm; and,
4. They were almost completely insipid.

The soup bases of both were, definitely, the same, regardless as to that which was alleged by the staff of the restaurant, with the

difference, being that one soup had a few beans, thrown in for good measure while the other had no beans.

One soup was served in a glass and the other was served in a Chinese bowl with a cover.

No points here.

The mushroom pizza was an 8-inch, thin-crust pizza which was served hot – unlike the soups.

But, for some strange reason, the cooks had stir-fried the mushrooms in sugar or some sort of sweetening agent before placing them on the hot pizza!

**TARGET** discovered, after leaving the hotel and talking to an official of W Hongkong over the telephone, that The Kitchen is watched over by a Thai cook by the name of Mr Tom Samranjit.

The penny dropped: Thai people often like to have their food cooked and seasoned in sugar and vinegar hence the reason for lacing mushrooms on pizza with sugar.

It had been noted by **TARGET**, upon entering The Kitchen, that all of the cooks were of Chinese or Thai origin so, perhaps, the pizza, served up last Saturday, was the Chinese-Thai version of the original famous Italian delicacy?

One could not state that the pizza was inedible, but this medium determined not to eat too much of it: One slice was quite sufficient.

The main courses could have been good, but they were not – sadly.

The Dark Ale Pie should have been a winner, but it was served lukewarm – again, lukewarm food! – and that completely ruined it.

When this was pointed out to the waiter, the answer came back: *'I'll talk to the kitchen.'*

And that was that.

As for the Black Cod dish, it, too, was served lukewarm: Another comment to the kitchen.

The Chinese vegetable that came with the fish dish had, also, been laced with a sweetening agent that resembled sugar.

And that was that: It just could not be eaten.

Neither dish was worth anything and was returned.

The 2 desserts were interesting for a number of reasons.

With regard to the Chocolate Fudge Cake with Chocolate Ice Cream and Hot Chocolate, the hot chocolate turned out to be almost a solid frozen mass of something, resembling chocolate.

When the waiter was told of this anomaly, back went the little shot glass with the solid, frozen brown mass only to be returned with some hot water, having been poured on top of the frozen wonder.

Underneath the scoop of chocolate ice cream was a nougat something or other, the strength and consistency of which could not be invaded by the use of a knife and fork.

As for the other dessert, Mandarin Crème Caramel with Citrus Jellies and Brandy Snaps, this was, simply put, a custard, underneath of which was a sweet, brownish sauce.

There were no citrus jellies or brandy snaps, but, at this time, it did not matter a hoot.

**TARGET** had had enough.

**Conclusion:** The cost of the above meal was exclusive of a 10-percent service charge and, considering everything, this was an expensive meal.

It was extremely expensive when one realises that the entire meal was almost, completely, inedible.

The service at this food outlet, however, was relatively good if one could forgive waiters, dribbling water and wine on the table and the floor, from time to time.

The restaurant and the facilities are clean and appear to be well managed, but, due to the obvious fact that there is no accountability in the kitchen (of The Kitchen), the quality of the food is poor.

The bumf about The Kitchen makes the claim that it is *'the city's finest modern bistro and a re-interpretation of global comfort*

*foods, served in a home-style ambience.'*

What a lot of drivel!

There is no executive chef in W Hongkong.

This is only too obvious.

And this is a food outlet at a 5-star hotel!

What a joke!

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