

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Fire, W Hongkong

Address of Restaurant

No. 1, Austin Road, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Saturday, January 17, 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
<u>Wine</u>			
Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier --	None	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Total Cost of Meal</u>			
Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced	

Name of Director of Food and Beverage

Mr Kaya Sadettin

Name of Executive Chef

Nil

Comments

Whereas, The Kitchen at W Hongkong (hotel) was, and, probably, still is somewhat of a disaster area, Fire, at W Hongkong, which could be likened to the fine-dining outlet of the luxury hotel, has all the makings of a very nice restaurant.

Comparing The Kitchen with Fire, they are, as they say, like night and day.

TARGET () visited Fire on Saturday, January 17, 2009, at 7:45 p.m., having been told by the telephone operator that the restaurant is, always, fully booked.

Well, that is, clearly, not the case because the restaurant, which seats about 90 people, was only about 30-percent full on the day of this medium's visit and, one is told by the serving staff, that this is, usually, the case.

Be that as it may, the experience and the food at Fire, at least on the day of **TARGET**'s visit, was pleasant and, generally, very positive, all things considered.

Still, as this medium pointed out in **TARGET** Intelligence Report, Volume XI, Number 9, published on Wednesday, January 14, 2009, locating W Hongkong, in the rabbit warren, commonly known as the commercial complex of Elements in Kowloon, which is one of the newest, 5-star hotels in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is difficult – even on the second attempt.

Fire has a number of very positive aspects, which contrast markedly with The Kitchen:

1. The food and the presentation are far superior;
2. The service is much more polished;
3. The serving staff bend over backwards to accommodate all guests; and,
4. When something is not, exactly, correct, it is rectified as far as is possible – which is the way that it should be.

Also, there is an experienced Chef de Cuisine at Fire, a Mr Chris Woodyard, who appears to be in complete charge of the entire restaurant and seems to make demands on the entire restaurant staff to know who are the guests and, perhaps, more importantly, he wants to know whenever there is a complaint about his food.

Of course, Mr Chris Woodyard is an Australian, but one cannot have everything, can one?

On the evening of **TARGET**'s visit to Fire, this was the menu, chosen for the evening:

Potted Rabbit, Foie Gras and Woodfired Breads
\$HK110

Garlic Roasted Cherry Tomatoes with Goat Cheese, Olives and Crisp Potato

\$HK158

Linguine Vongole
(US Clams in White Wine Sauce, Mild Chili and Fresh Herbs)
\$HK188

Mustard Crusted Lamb Loin, Honey Grilled Eggplant,
Chick Pea Chips and Glazed Greens
\$HK390

Wood Fired Pigeon with Speck Potato Gnocchi,
Hazelnut Jus, Chestnuts and Broad Beans
\$HK430

Soufflé of Raspberry and Rose Water,
Spiced Strawberries and Candied Rose Petals
\$HK126

Port Butterscotch Soaked Date Tart
Butter Coffee Ice Cream, Fresh Dates, Candied Nuts and Banana Chips
\$HK96

Expensive?

Decidedly so especially considering where one is eating and the difficulty in reaching this restaurant from the Central Business District of Hongkong Island.

With the above meal for 2 people, **TARGET** selected a bottle of Australian wine, a Penfolds 'Private Release', Vintage 2007, made from Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes.

(This wine was selected long before this medium realised that the Chef de Cuisine was Australian.)

The cost of the wine was \$HK480 per bottle.

The wine was a very good choice as many wines from this South Australian producer are – See, not all of the products and people from this Antipodean country are bad!

This wine is a large, dark, ruby red with an alcoholic content of about 13.50 percent by volume.

It tasted of cherries and raspberries and, perhaps, an overtone of red currents. It was only slightly acidic.

It went down very well with the meal.

Lastly, about the wine list at Fire, as with The Kitchen, the wines on offer are terribly over-priced and something should be done to rectify this situation – unless, of course, management of this food outlet is not interested in selling bottles of wine.

The Food

The only real negative about the above dishes was the Linguine Vongole because the linguine was served lukewarm.

This is the same comment that **TARGET** had made about most of the dishes, tasted at The Kitchen on Saturday, January 10, 2009.

The Potted Rabbit dish, which was meant to be an appetiser, only, in any event, tasted very much like Cantonese flaked pork pieces, used as a type of condiment on congee.

Indeed, on enquiry of **TARGET**'s waitress, named Teepee, this was, in fact, true: A type of Chu Yuk Soong () had been used in the dish on the ratio, it appeared to this medium, of about one part rabbit meat to about 10 parts of Chu Yuk Soong.

The strong flavour of this typical Cantonese condiment completely overpowered the taste of any rabbit meat.

Pity, actually!

The rest of the food was good and nothing really negative could be said about the dishes, all of which could stack up well against most, top-of-the-line, fine-dining restaurants in the territory.

The good thing about the food was that, on departure, one felt that a return trip might well be just as rewarding as the first visit.

One could never say that of The Kitchen: Once shot of this outlet, one does not want to return.

Some of the highlights of the meal were the lamb and the pigeon dishes.

The meat of the pigeon, the dead bird, having been imported from France, could be cut with a fork; it had been only about 70 percent cooked.

In this manner, one could still taste the delicacy of the bird's flesh without it, having been invaded by other flavours, during the cooking process.

The lamb was Australian – naturally – and, as with the pigeon, it has been cooked to absolute perfection.

The presentation of this dish was on a par with the taste of the meat.

As for the soufflé, it was, in a word, perfection.

After the meal was nearly over, Mr Chris Woodyard appeared at **TARGET**'s table without an invitation – which is typical of many Australians – and asked for a comment about the Linguine Vongole, following this medium's veiled complaint to Teepee.

On hearing **TARGET**'s rather minor complaint, this tall, good-looking Australian said that it was a constructive comment and he thanked the **TARGET** team for taking the trouble to make known the situation.

At this point, this Australian had no idea with whom he was talking and, within minutes of his appearance at **TARGET**'s table, he volunteered the intelligence that he had only been installed in his present post for 3 days, the Executive Chef of the hotel, no longer in his former position.

(Good!)

'I have inherited a bit of a headache at The Kitchen,' Mr Chris Woodyard lamented. 'I shall fix it. I am in charge of that outlet, too. Many complaints about it.'

Hmmm.

TARGET is of the opinion that this chef, with obvious drive and passion, will turn things round at The Kitchen – it, dearly, needs something to be done in a hurry.

On leaving Fire, this reviewer left the **TARGET** name card to Teepee – who turned a little of the colour of the red wine that had been drunk on realising what had taken place, during the 90-minute dinner.

'I'm not worried,' she said at last, taking in a deep breath. 'I know that I have done my best job.'

Indeed, she had done a wonderful job as had all of the serving staff of this food outlet!

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