

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Caviar Kaspia

Address of Restaurant

Shops 236-237, Second Floor, Landmark Atrium, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Thursday, February 5, 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 -- 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 --	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 Jeff Ronan

Name of Executive Chef

Nil

Comments

Caviar Kaspia is one of the latest additions to the free-standing restaurants of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) amid the ever-growing number of restaurants that have called it a day and have closed down.

It is located in the middle of a shopping mall, namely Landmark, in the heart of the Central Business District of Hongkong Island.

The restaurant is owned by The Bluebell Group which is a group of companies that market a number of things, internationally, from cosmetics to fashion goods to food outlets.

As the name of Caviar Kaspia connotes, it specialises in serving caviar.

TARGET () entered this restaurant on Thursday, February 5, 2009, at about 6:30 p.m. without reserving a table.

The restaurant, if one could call it by that name, seats about 54 guests, but, on the night of this medium's visit, there were only 2 guests – both being in the employ of **TARGET**.

To start off the meal, a gin and tonic was ordered at \$HK70.

Usually, in restaurants in the HKSAR and elsewhere, especially those that sock it to you, the gin is served in one glass and the tonic in another glass, if not in the original bottle.

Not so in Caviar Kaspia: The gin and the tonic comes in one glass and, like it or lump it, that's it, folks.

Looking round at the dining tables, arranged in neat little rows, one could not help but be impressed by this first appearance, but the appearance is merely cosmetic, as became only too evident as the evening progressed.

For **TARGET**'s dinner, this is that which was ordered:

Dinner Chatelet

\$ 1,525

Baked New Potato with Caviar

Smoked Fish Platter with Champagne Jelly

*Pan Fried Foie Gras with
Roasted Wagyu Beef and Avocado Salad*

Cream of Cauliflower Soup with Smoked Sword Fish

Blood Orange and Raspberry Sorbet with Vodka

Spaghetti with Smoked Eel and Spicy Olive Sauce

*Spelt Parpadelle Pasta with Iberico Ham
and Sun Dried Tomatoes in a Cream Sauce*

Dessert

From the a la carte menu, **TARGET** selected:

Chef's Recommendation

Caviar and Crayfish with Green Salad

\$HK225

Roasted Venison Tenderloin with Foie Gras, Potato Gratin and Cranberry Sauce

\$HK390

The Food

In a word, the food was terrible.

TARGET has had worse food than at this restaurant, mind you, but the muck, dished up on Thursday, February 5, 2009, must rank with the growing list of lousy eateries in these 416 square miles.

The first course on the Dinner Chatelet –Baked New Potato with Caviar – was a joke, unrivalled in the annals of any cook's memoirs of successfully presented fakes.

Here was a new potato, measuring about one inch round, the innards of which had been scooped out and, then, mashed and replaced into the potato skin, on top of which was a dab of something that resembled the black fish eggs of a sturgeon.

However, the cook had surrounded the entire dish with black sea salt so that one could not tell what was the caviar and what was the black sea salt.

When this reviewer had been able to determine the difference between the caviar and the black sea salt – with the assistance of keen eyesight of a waitress – after having ingested a mouthful of black sea salt, it was discovered that the caviar was without any discernable taste, at all.

The second course was edible and comprised 3 kinds of smoked fish.

Probably, because the smoked fish had been imported – or bought at the local supermarket – it was quite a presentable dish and, to be perfectly honest, the presentation had been tastefully done.

The next course – Pan Fried Foie Gras with Roasted Wagyu Beef and Avocado Salad – was, believe it or not, devoid of foie gras, but there was some stewed beef.

It was difficult to remember how it tasted, but **TARGET** is certain that it tasted of something.

The Cream of Cauliflower Soup was, in fact, Cream of Potato Soup – at least, that is how it tasted.

It was served hot so, because of this fact, it scored about one point out of 10 points, with zero, being the lowest possible score.

The final 2 dishes had a great deal in common: They both tasted very similar.

For what reason would a restaurant serve 2 pasta dishes in a row, **TARGET** has no idea, and to have 2 pasta dishes that tasted so much alike was another mystery.

As for the a la carte dishes, the first course – Caviar and Crayfish with Green Salad – was quite a challenge because, first, it was difficult to locate any suggestion of caviar, which must have been hiding under a corner of a leaf, and, second, the crayfish measured about one inch in length and about one quarter of an inch in width.

Further, the crayfish had been of the frozen variety – and the restaurant confirmed this as fact.

As one would expect, the crayfish, as with the disappearance of the Pan Fried Foie Gras in the third course of the set menu, was insipid.

As a salad, however, there was nothing wrong with the fresh, edible greenery.

But at \$HK225!

It was a rip-off.

The Roasted Venison Tenderloin course was, also, of the frozen variety, the meat of which was, also, insipid.

Unless one enjoys, munching on tasteless meat, one could not grade this dish or compare it with anything; and, **TARGET** has, yet, to establish a negative value for cooked dishes.

Having paid \$HK2,563 for the above meal for 2 people, one could only state that one felt that the word, '*Cheat!*' was an apt description.

The Ambiance

Sitting in the middle of a shopping mall, one expects to experience a little more noise than in an enclosed, fine-dining establishment, but, at Caviar Kaspia, one is treated to the yelling and screaming of workers, trying to find their way here and there, and, occasionally, there is that young lady, talking loudly on her cellular telephone, looking desperately for her boyfriend who is lurking somewhere in the large, Landmark complex.

Then, at about 8 p.m., the construction of something in the bowels of Landmark gets underway, making it difficult to tolerate the cacophonous sounds of jackhammers and what-have-you.

There is nothing wrong with the layout of this restaurant, at all, but it is just located in the wrong part of Landmark since it is quite impossible to enjoy a meal amid the constant din, the yelling and the screaming of passers-by and the construction works that seem to take place, nightly.

There is no chef in Caviar Kaspia and the person, doing the cooking is a Chinese gentleman, **TARGET** was told.

This medium was assured that this cook had spent 6 months in France, learning his trade.

He, really, should return for a refresher course.

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