

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Aspasia, Luxe Manor

**Address of Restaurant**

No. 39, Kimberley Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Thursday, February 26, 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
----------------	----------------------	------------------------

#### Name of Food and Beverage Manager

Mr Andy Curtis

#### Name of Executive Chef

Mr Roland Schuller

#### Comments

In a grotty little area of Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is what could rightly be described as a rose among the brambles and thorns.

The area is Number 39, Kimberley Road and its adjacent surroundings, the rear of which has been designed to be a small lane of restaurants, just about all of which is known to be controlled, directly or indirectly, by truly unsavory characters, the likes of which **TARGET** () need not define or elaborate.

The 'rose' that **TARGET** discovered, completely by accident, is Luxe Manor, a boutique hotel, comprising 159 rooms, housed in a 14-storey structure.

The size of the rooms ranges from 240 square feet to 330 square feet. There are, also, 6 suites, but the staff at the hotel could not state how large are the suites.

This hotel is owned and controlled by the multi-billionaire Lee Family, famous for Hysan Development Ltd () (Code: 14, Main Board, The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd).

According to one, usually reliable party, working at the hotel, Mr Marcus Lee () purchased the building in order to create his idea of a smallish hotel, catering for a certain class of clientele, looking for a different style of accommodation, different, that is, from the usual, 5-star hotels of the HKSAR.

**TARGET** did not visit the hotel, other than the foyer, because this medium's interest was centered on the lone restaurant of the hotel, called Aspasia.

This restaurant, **TARGET** discovered, is a joint venture of some well-known Italian residents of the territory, with the lead partner, appearing to be Mr Roland Schuller, an Austrian by birth, but who has spent many years of his life in Italy.

As this medium sauntered into this 60-seater restaurant, one of the partners, who happened to be talking to Mr Roland Schuller, immediately recognised the Editor of **TARGET**, Mr Raymonde Sacklyn.

The jig appeared to be up.

But it was not, as things turned out.

The other partner was Mr Umberto Bombana, formerly the Executive Chef of Ritz- Carlton, Hongkong, that hotel, having been demolished in order to make way for another commercial complex in the Central Business District of Hongkong Island.

After a little chat about this and that, Mr Roland Schuller suggested to **TARGET**'s duo to have a tasting menu.

The following was this gentleman's suggested 8-course meal for the night:

*Puntarelle e Coppa Puntarelle Salad with Coppa Ham*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Carpaccio de Dentice Insalatina de Carioiffi Tartuffo Nero*  
*Japanese Snapper Carpaccio with Artichoke Salad Black Truffle*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Ribolitta a la Toscana Burrata e Patta Negra Tuscany Style Vegetable Soup*  
*With Burrata Chesse Pata Negra*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Ravioli di Scorfano Profumato ai Limone e Bottarge*  
*Scorpien fish Ravioli Flavored with Lemon, Bottarga Wild Broccoli Sauce*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Cavolo Nero e Fagioli Zolfini con Calamorelli Novelli*  
*Black Cappige and Zalfini Bean Soup with Japanese Micro Squied*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Spaghetti Cacio e Pepe Guanciale Fave*  
*Spaghetti with Black Pepper Pecorina Cheese Guanciale Fave*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Agnello di Colora do con Puiea de Carcoiffi Ricotta Affumicato*  
*Colorado Lamb Rack Artichoke Pomte Smoked ricotta*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Pear Tart with Vanilla Ice Cream*

With the meal, the following wines were paired:

*Biondi Santi, Caspagnolo, Chianti dei Colli Senesi, Vintage 2007*

*Ca'Vit, Pinot Grigio, Trentino, Vintage 2007*

*Thelema, Shiraz from South Africa, Vintage 2004*

The cost of the above was \$HK2,530 without the tip.

As **TARGET** Subscribers, immediately, no doubt, realise, this is not an inexpensive restaurant, and, in fact, it is as expensive as many fine-dining food outlets at most, 5-star hotels in the HKSAR.

The ambiance and the service of this restaurant are, really, excellent, with lovely classical music, wafting through the room, throughout the entire night.

On the night that **TARGET** visited Aspasia – Thursday, February 26, 2009 – the restaurant had about 25 covers, or, put another way, it was about 42 percent full or 58 percent, empty.

This little eatery, therefore, appears to be well known to people in the know, only.

What **TARGET** discovered about the menu, designed by Mr Roland Schuller, appeared to be the standard fare because a number of other diners were, also, eating the same, or similar, dishes.

In effect, therefore, this medium was not getting anything special or receiving any special treatment from Management or the Executive Chef.

Which was a good thing, actually, because, by the Executive Chef, preparing the table d'hôte for this medium, objectivity and impartiality were assured: **TARGET** was getting similar treatment to everybody else in the restaurant.

To name some of the outstanding dishes of the evening, the first, little salad was, simply, superb.

The small salad was crisp and left a clear, clean taste in one's mouth.

The Coppa Ham, on the other hand, spiked up the blandness of the salad leaves.

The pièce de résistance was the Colorado Lamb Rack.

Aside from the fact that the lamb was first quality, its cooking was, as the saying goes, to a T.

One could, just about, cut the lamb with one's fork: It is just that tender.

As for the desert, the ice cream tasted of the flavours of Häagen-Daz.

**TARGET** was completely wrong, however: It had been made by the pastry chef of the hotel.

After a little more investigation, it was discovered that the hotel's pastry chef and his team of 3 people, also, make all of the bread for the outlet as well as the Pear Tart.

And this is a hotel with only 159 rooms!

It is clear that the hotel is aiming at being known as a high-class inn in spite of its very questionable location.

Luxe Manor may not be located in the most-prestigious part of the HKSAR, and the size of the rooms may not be as large as some of the 5-star hotels of the territory, but one can hardly complain about the food, served at its lone, fine-dining outlet: Aspasia.

In ending this review, while the Pinot Grigio and the Chianti were both standard and nothing very special, although both, being excellent pouring wines, the same could not be said of the last wine, the Thelema.

This is a very powerful wine, produced by a winery at Stellenbosch, which is an area, located about 31 miles east from Cape Town, South Africa.

It is 14.50 percent proof and the first sip tells one that it is a full-bodied wine.

With overtones of chocolate and vanilla, this wine was a perfect complement to the lamb.

Aspasia has only been opened about 2 years and 3 months, **TARGET** was told by the staff.

It is a wonder, actually, that it has not been discovered by people who are really interested in what food they place in their stomachs.

The Executive Chef is in attendance, every day, according to the staff of the restaurant.

One could easily be put off in visiting Aspasia if one sees its sign from the rear of Luxe Manor, but, once seated in the restaurant with a glass of Champagne and with the lovely music, permeating the room, one completely forgets the grotty area and settles back for a truly luxurious feast.

***While TARGET makes every attempt to ensure accuracy of all data published,  
TARGET cannot be held responsible for any errors and/or omissions.***

*If readers feel that they would like to voice their opinions about that which they have read in **TARGET**, please feel free to e-mail your views to [editor@targetnewspapers.com](mailto:editor@targetnewspapers.com). **TARGET** does not guarantee to publish readers' views, but reserves the right so to do subject to the laws of libel.*