

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Osteria, Holiday Inn Golden Mile

Address of RestaurantMezzanine Floor, Holiday Inn Golden Mil, N. 50, Nathan Road,
Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Monday, March 23, 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

<u>Food</u>				
Presentation		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Taste		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Wine</u>				
Choice --	Unknown	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost --	Unknown	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine --	Unknown	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier --	None	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive* Moderately Expensive Very Reasonably Priced

* If the food is inedible, it is very expensive

Name of Food and Beverage Manager Mr Ringo Poon

Name of Executive Chef Mr Marc Toutain

Comments

There are good Italian restaurants in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and there are very bad ones.

Unfortunately, there are more bad ones than there are good ones.

And, then, one has the latest additions to Italian cuisine in the HKSAR, which are in a class of their own.

TARGET () visited the latest addition to Italian restaurants in the 416 square miles that constitute the HKSAR on Monday, March 23, 2009.

It is named Osteria and it is located in the space that used to be the former coffee shop of Holiday Inn Golden Mile at Tsimshatsui.

Cutting to the quick, on the day that this medium sampled the food at this outlet it, was, in 2 words, unbelievably bad.

The food, for the most part, was, in fact, almost inedible.

Interestingly enough, the food, served at Domani, today, also a purported, Italian-styled restaurant, located at Pacific Place, has gone the same route as Osteria.

(More about Domani, later on in this review)

From the open kitchen of Osteria, encased in glass, one saw a European cook – **TARGET** suspects that he was the lone Italian chef of this eatery – yelling at the Chinese cooking staff about something or other.

Clearly, he was not happy about something.

This was that which this medium ordered from the Set Lunch on the day of this medium's visit:

Buffet di Antipasti

Appetizer buffet

Zuppa di zucca con briciole di amaretti
Pumpkin soup with amaretto crumbles

Calamaretti ripieni di mortadella e spinaci
Baby squid with mortadella and spinach

Pizza ai frutti di mare
Seafood Pizza

Dolce /Dessert
Le meringhe morbide con la salsa al cioccolato
Floating meringue with chocolate sauce

Three courses \$ 188

Starting with the Buffet Antipasti, its looks were equal to its taste – horrible!

There were 10 choices on the buffet table, including, believe it or not, some cold, hash-brown potatoes that had stuck to the serving plate so that one had to chisel the stuff free off the plate if one was sufficiently brave to sample the mush.

Had not **TARGET**'s waiter informed this medium as to what it was supposed to be, it would have been quite impossible to know of the origin of the grey, chunky matter.

There was some Mozzarella Cheese on one platter, the taste of which was, completely, insipid and resembled rubber rather than cheese.

One had to speculate how that feat could have been accomplished, but Management of Holiday Inn Golden Mile must get the credit for this questionable success.

Suffice it to say, very little of the first course was eaten.

The Pumpkin Soup tasted as though it had come straight out of tin to which some granules of sugar had been added.

It, too, like the appetizer course, was impossible to consume.

The last courses, a pizza and the baby squid, were edible, but only just.

The baby squid, which had been stuffed with ricotta cheese and spinach, is a traditional Italian dish and was tasty.

However, with the squid, which had been served on a cold plate, there were some semi-raw pieces of broccoli, all of which had come straight out of the refrigerator so that the warm quid had become somewhat cold while the cold broccoli had become a little warm.

The pizza was of the American variety, with plenty of cheese so that one could hardly taste the frozen seafood on top of it.

There was a generous layer of tomato paste on the pastry shell so that American tourist, no doubt, could recognise that this was an American pizza.

However, to be very fair, the pizza shell, which had been freshly made in the kitchen, had been cooked – which was a saving grace, one could suggest.

The desert was another horrible error.

It looked interesting, but that was as far as one could go.

The chocolate sauce was too thin to have any flavour at all (saving money?).

The ambiance of Osteria is in accordance with the quality of the food, dished up at this outlet: Bereft of any saving grace, at all.

The windows of the restaurant have been boarded up with red bricks and, then, a glass partition separates the brick wall from the dining area.

There are no soft furnishings, at all, so that, when the 90-seater restaurant is just one quarter full, one can hardly talk to one's neighbour because of the din and clatter and the horrible jazz music, polluting the open spaces.

One final word about this restaurant, the tables measure 2 feet by 3 feet so that ladies have no place to put their handbags and, if one orders too much food – which is highly unlikely for discriminating people – one would be hard-pressed to find sufficient space for the dishes.

Domani: A Return

On the same day of the visit to Holiday Inn Golden Mile, having not eaten very much at ‘*Hysteria*’, **TARGET** decided to have a return visit to Domani at Pacific Place in order to eat dinner.

The first time that this medium visited this restaurant was on Thursday, November 13, 2008, just 5 days after it had opened for business.

The original review of this restaurant was very positive, but **TARGET**, also, stated, in its review, that it would be interesting to learn how the restaurant fared in the succeeding 6 months.

Well, the European chefs have all disappeared, it seems, and, in their wake, there are some Chinese, quick-order cooks who are messing about in the open kitchen, trying to follow the recipes, left behind by the departed chefs.

As with Osteria, the food at Domani is, today, terrible.

It is, indeed, difficult to know which of the 2 restaurants was the better of what is, surely, some of the HKSAR’s worst examples of Italian-styled cuisine in the territory.

The waiters at Domani did not even know the difference between one dish and another, mistaking one for the other, in point of fact.

The female manageress, on realising that something was terribly wrong, came over and explained that some of the ‘*special*’ from the luncheon menu was still available so that the meat could be ground up in order to make a kind of Spaghetti Bolognese.

It was ordered, more as a joke than anything else, because **TARGET**’s waiter thought that Spaghetti Bolognese was the same as Spaghetti Vongole.

It was a horrible error to order the leftovers, ground up to resemble Spaghetti Bolognese: It was the worst of the worst.

In **TARGET** Intelligence Report, Volume X, Number 223, at Page 10, this reviewer ended the report on Domani as follows:

‘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.’*

Well, **TARGET**’s fears have been realised – sadly.

There are no chefs at Domani, at all, and there is nobody, supervising the hash-house, with some Chinese people, trying to pretend to be Italian chefs.

Even the General Manager, Mr Danilo Niolcetti, was not present on the day of **TARGET**’s visit although he did make a 5-minute appearance at about 7:30 p.m. before he shot off for some other clime.

This medium will not even try to describe the rubbish food at this restaurant, but sum it up by a passing remark to the Manageress who, on the way out of the door, said ‘*I know you did not like the food*’ to which **TARGET** responded: ‘*It is the worst example of Italian food that has ever graced a table.*’

TARGET will, never, return to Domani and, probably, Management of this eatery will be happy to read this last sentence.

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