

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

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

Name of Restaurant

BLT Steak

Address of Restaurant

G62, Ground Floor, Ocean Teminal, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, April 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 -- 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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General Manager

Mr Jeremy Cole

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Chris Mark

Comments

If Subscribers of **TARGET** () want to throw away about \$HK1,800, please throw it in the direction of this medium.

But, be warned: Do not eat at BLT Steak because that would be a complete and utter waste of money, assuming that Subscribers want to enjoy a good steak meal.

TARGET visited BLT Steak on Friday, April 10, 2009, having been told that this restaurant, having been opened only recently, was one steak house like no other.

Well, BLT Steak is like no other steak house in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) – and, hopefully, it will remain, being the only such, stand-alone eatery in these 416 square miles.

BLT Steak is located on the Ground Floor of Ocean Terminal, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon.

It claims to specialise in a variety of steak dishes.

This is that which **TARGET** ordered, last Friday:

New England Clam Chowder
\$HK78

Roasted Beets
\$HK98

Wagyu Sirloin Steak – 11 ounces
\$HK348

American USDA Rib Eye – 14 ounces
\$HK360

Creamed Spinach
\$HK58

Grilled Butternut Squash
\$HK58

With the above, this medium ordered a bottle of Penfolds 'Bin 407', Vintage 2006, a Cabernet Sauvignon from Australia, at \$HK750.

Now, before starting to describe any of the above, Subscribers should note that the above prices for a meal for 2 people are equal to, if not higher than, the prices, being charged at 2 other steak houses within walking distance of BLT Steak.

Unlike BLT Steak, however, the steaks, served at these other 2 restaurants, are excellent.

Please Refer To:

TARGET Intelligence Report,

Volume X, Number 34, Published On February 20, 2008 –
[Morton's The Steakhouse](#); and,

TARGET Intelligence Report,

Volume X, Number 127, Published On July 9, 2008 –
[The Steak House, Winebar + Grill](#), InterContinental Hongkong.

Now, about BLT Steak in some detail.

The New England Clam Chowder may have started out its life as a chowder, but it ended up as dish water.

What, clearly, had taken place was that the stupid somebody or other in the kitchen ran out of chowder, but the water faucet was handy, so, in went some water and, Lo and Behold! There was more chowder!

Miracles never cease!

For most of the Chinese people – and it appears that most of the guests at BLT Steak, last Friday, were, in fact, Chinese – who visit this eatery, they are unlikely to know what happened in the kitchen of BLT Steak, but **TARGET** () has known of the water treatment on a number of occasions at other restaurants and understands the modus operandi when some idiot, be he/she management or employee, determines to be penny-pinching and/or lazy .

Alternatively, when management of a restaurant is determined to cheat customers.

The Roasted Beets, as they are called on the menu, is an excellent course, however, and comprises beetroot slices, endives, apples and some Gorgonzola cheese slivers.

The Roasted Beets and the Penfold's Bin 407 were the only items that could pass a **TARGET** taste test.

The Grilled Butternut Squash, which accompanied the steak courses, but is charged, separately, would have been quite acceptable if the restaurant had not been so cheap as to tell the kitchen to include the skin of the squash as well as the flesh of the fruit of this kind of gourd.

The dish was ruined by the stupidity of management.

Now, to the steaks.

They looked very similar; they tasted almost identically; and, neither one of them exuded any odour, at all.

It was the first time in this reviewer's 50-odd years of working in this profession that a steak, straight off the fire, was devoid of any smell, taste or visible appeal.

As is **TARGET**'s policy, there are at least 2 of this medium's employees, present at any and all food-tasting sessions, just in case somebody wants to take this medium to task or questions whether or not a reviewer had even visited a particular restaurant.

Placing a chunk of Wagyu sirloin aside a similar-sized chunk of USDA Rib Eye resulted in the discovery that they were one and the same.

Neither one had any taste, but they were both identical in thickness, colour and the texture of the meat.

Even the dryness of the meat was identical.

TARGET called over a black-jacketed, Chinese roving something or other – usually referred to as a restaurant Captain – and asked what kind of steak was the USDA Rib Eye.

The following was the conversation:

Black Jacket: *What did you order?*

TARGET: *USDA Rib Eye.*

Black Jacket: *Then, that is what you got!*

TARGET: *But it has no taste! It does not even taste of a steak!*

Black Jacket: *Ohhhhhhh. What do you want me to do? Change it?*

And the Black Jacket was back to his roving mode, again, disappearing as appeared to be his wont.

About 5 minutes later, a white-jacketed European appeared on the scene, just after **TARGET** had called for the bill even though the steaks had only been eaten at one 2-inch corner.

He turned out to be Mr Chris Mark, Executive Chef of BLT Steak.

(None of the staff of this restaurant knew of the identity of any member of **TARGET**, at this juncture)

Mr Chris Mark asked **TARGET** whether or not the food was satisfactory.

The following is, approximately, the exchange of pleasantries:

TARGET: (With an innocent smile) *Can you tell me, please, what kind of steak has been served?*

Mr Mark: *This looks like a rib eye and that one looks like a (Australian) Wagyu Sirloin.*

TARGET: *They taste almost identically, though.*

Mr Mark: *Well, Australian beef does taste very similar to American beef.*

TARGET: *Where is the marbling in the rib eye? It does not appear to be a rib eye.*

Mr Mark: *It depends from where you cut the beef. Not all rib-eye steaks have marbling.*

TARGET: *That is a piece of intelligence that is new to me.*

Mr Mark: (with a shrug of his shoulders) *Well, now you know.*

TARGET: *About the taste of the rib eye: It does not appear to have the taste of a corn-fed animal.*

Mr Mark: *Actually, I prefer the taste of grass-fed beef, which is the Australian Wagyu beef. Next time, when you come, let me know, and I will take care of it for you.*

TARGET: (Passing Mr Mark a **TARGET** name card thus identifying that BLT Steak as having been selected for a review by this medium) *There are about 44,000 restaurants in Hongkong and it is highly unlikely that this medium will ever return to this restaurant.*

Mr Mark: *I am sorry that you did not enjoy your food.* (Mr Mark, at this point, stood up straight as though to state, by his actions, that the conversation was ended.)

TARGET: *Before you leave, the Creamed Spinach was full of sand.*

Mr Mark just shrugged his shoulders, again, and disappeared into the bowels of the restaurant, having stated that 200 people could be seated in his restaurant.

The Restaurant

The ambiance of BLT Steak is that of an eatery, designed to have been decorated on the cheap with the staff, being untrained or semi-trained, part-timers.

On entering the restaurant from the seaside, as an example, a Chinese lady was blocking the door as she appeared to be breathing in the cool evening air.

A motion from the reviewer and she moved a few inches to her left, leaving sufficient room for the **TARGET**'s duo to enter the premises.

She turned out to be one of the serving staff, her mien, being was indicative, to a great extent, of the other members of her team, as **TARGET** discovered.

In short: There was a very obvious lack of training of the serving staff.

The tables at BLT Steak are not small and are quite adequate, but one has to be very careful not to lean on them because they are quite light and may be moved by the simplest touch of one's foot.

The wine list reeks of the greed of management since the prices are relatively high, compared with other steak houses in the vicinity.

One bottle of a California wine, for instance, will set one back \$HK9,750.

All in all, the prices of the wine are outrageously high.

TARGET did not order any dessert because this medium reasoned that, if the restaurant could not even produce a decent steak, how could it possibly be expected to produce a decent dessert.

Anyway, **TARGET**'s reviewers were hungry and it was time to locate a restaurant that was known to serve better-than-average food, with the quality of the raw produce, the standard of the expertise of the cooking staff, as well as the level of the serving staff, being commensurate with the prices, being demanded.

Management of BLT Steak, probably, has never considered the above simple factors – sadly.

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