



The Betty Letters

My Dear Grandchild,

Bo-Bo took me to dinner at Gaddi's at The Peninsula Hotel in order to celebrate my birthday, last Saturday. This restaurant has, consistently, been one of the many wonders of Hongkong. The food at Gaddi's is as good as ever in spite of the fact that the Chef de Cuisine is English. English people are not known for good food, you know, but the chef at Gaddi's is, really, good. It is surprising, actually, that he has not received the accolades which he richly deserves. If a Hongkong noodle shop can rank a Michelin Star, for what reason did not Gaddi's rate something – a smile, at least? My frog of a husband, Bo-Bo, did not like the idea of spending about \$HK6,000 for my birthday dinner and I swear to you that moths flew out of his wallet when it came time to pay for the meal. However, to his credit, he paid the bill as though he were a Rockefeller of Wall Street and did not flinch when he noted the cost for the wonderful, 6-course meal. However, at the end of the meal, I had a headache! It was not the time of the month for me to have my attacks of headaches and Bo-Bo was well aware of that fact. The reason for the headache were the screeches, emanating from the voice-box of a Filipina, trying to demonstrate her ability to sing loudly – with the help of an booming amplifier that exaggerated her high notes that much more.

Now, as I recall during my many past experiences, Gaddi's has always been a sedate, fine-dining restaurant with a small orchestra, mainly composed of stringed instruments, wafting lyrical melodies throughout the well-appointed and tastefully decorated restaurant. It has, always, been an establishment of romance, a bastion of fine dining with the best wines and food that money can buy, anywhere in the world. It was the place where, on birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, etc, one was certain to enjoy the food, the wines, the music and the ambiance. But, today, one is bombarded by a Filipina singer whose only interest appears to be to try to burst one's eardrums, while some other Filipinos try to play various wind instruments – without too much success. I talked to the English Chef de Cuisine and asked the English gentleman whether or not it were possible to shoot the Filipina and her accompanying fellow deadbeat musicians. He said, graciously and with a little smile on his cute face: 'That's a hard one. I will pass on your message to the General Manager, but I am afraid that she will not do anything about it. She likes the band.' 'Yuk!' I exclaimed. Then, Mr David Goodridge said: 'However, on Sundays, there is only a pianist in the restaurant.' So, one has a choice, it seems: If one wants to eat in the rarified atmosphere of a fine-dining restaurant and not have one's ears attacked by the little Filipina and her band of dud musicians, all of whom seem to know little to nothing about music, other than yelling and screeching, come on Sundays. Otherwise, when one enters Gaddi's on other days, be prepared to bring earplugs in order to shut out the horrible noises of the band and the screeching singer. However, on Sundays, I must warn you, the Chef de Cuisine is unlikely to be on duty. I surmised that Mr David Goodridge, also, is not a fan of the band.

Now, there is another fine-dining establishment on the other side of the water, on Hongkong Island, which is called, Petrus. It is on the 56th Floor of Island Shangri-La Hotel. In this fine-dining restaurant, which has a lovely view of Victoria Harbour, one is treated to music that delights everybody, played by a very competent pianist. He is a Filipino, too, but he appears to know quite a great deal about music and does not need to have an amplifier to exaggerate the sounds that flood out of his musical instrument. Hence, at the end of a

dinner, one leaves the restaurant, almost dancing out of this well-appointed restaurant as the sounds of lovely music continue to ring in one's head. For me, I like both Gaddi's and Petrus, but there is something about the ambiance of Gaddi's that is absent at Petrus. With Chef David Goodridge, I and Bo-Bo need not even look at the menu, but just ask the Chef for his recommendations for the evening and, as his wont, he may well utter, 'Then, Bob's yer uncle'. And from out of the kitchen, a great meal emerges. The Chef de Cuisine at Petrus is Mr Frederic Chabbert, a Frenchman, who, usually, is not seen, wandering round the restaurant, at all. Being a Frenchman, this is understandable because it is well known that most Frenchmen are shy people except when wooing members of the opposite sex. Also, Frenchmen tend to get much fatter than Englishmen as they age, probably due to all of the butter that they consume – when they are not downing wine, that is. There is nothing wrong with the food at Petrus and it does compare, favourably, with the food at Gaddi's, but Gaddi's is, still, Gaddi's. Having said that, since the General Manager of The Peninsula Hotel will not stop the screeching sounds of that incompetent Filipina and her entourage of deadbeats at Gaddi's, I shall switch venues for next year's birthday dinner. Anyway, Bo-Bo is, now, used to opening up his wallet on occasions that I select. Even frogs can be taught, my dear.

Talk to you, next week.

Chief Lady

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. TARGET does not guarantee to publish readers' views, but reserves the right so to do subject to the laws of libel.