

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Da Domenico

Address of RestaurantShops 10 and 12, Ground Floor, Sunning Plaza, No. 8, Hoi Ping Road,
Causeway Bay,, Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Monday, April 20, 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

<u>Food</u>				
Presentation	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
<u>Wine</u>				
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

General Manager

None

Name of Executive Chef

Alessandro (Something)

Comments

TARGET () was recently taken to task by a Subscriber who claimed that there is not one decent Italian restaurant in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

'Yes, yes!' he complained to this Reviewer. *'There are restaurants, claiming to serve Italian food, here, but they are mostly phonies, with Chinese, hash-house, fast-food kids, dishing out rubbish which they claim are Italian dishes.'*

'I challenge you to find one, authentic Italian restaurant of any merit in Hongkong!'

Well, **TARGET** took up the challenge and discovered, in a side street of Causeway Bay, Hongkong Island, Da Domenico, an authentic, Italian restaurant, resplendent with an eccentric, young Italian cook, who seems to do everything in the small eatery, from yelling at staff, to cooking the food, and, even, to displaying the most-expensive Italian dishes to customers with a: *'Here it is ... I cut it, now.'*

This young Italian goes by the name of Alessandro (*'I don't like people to know my full name ... it's not necessary ... Alessandro is good enough!'*).

Socially, he is way off centre.

But he, certainly, can cook.

He can be heard, answering the telephone in a loud, screeching voice, complaining about this or that, or giving instructions to the serving staff ... *'He can sit anywhere he likes!'* ... *Order some more pasta, tomorrow ... Where's that*** @@@!'*

This medium visited Da Domenico on Monday, April 20, 2009, at 6:45 p.m., after circling the Causeway Bay area in order to find this little restaurant which has a seating capacity of about 40 guests.

On entering the stand-alone restaurant, **TARGET** noted that one of the male Chinese serving staff was feeling up one of the female, Chinese serving staff in the way that lovers are prone to do in a park, with roaming hands and lustful eyes.

Ah! Well, this is an Italian restaurant, isn't it?

Having been shown to a seat – the restaurant was completely empty at 6:45 pm – the first thing that struck this reviewer as being especially odd was that the menu and the wine list had all been hand-written by what appeared to have been a child ... or, a poorly educated Italian, whichever was most convenient at the time.

Ah! Well, this is an Italian restaurant, isn't it?

The menu and the wine list are short and so it took little time to make a decision.

This is the food that which was chosen by **TARGET**:

Soup of the Day

\$HK120

Fettuccine Ragú (meat sauce)

\$HK220

Salt Baked Sea Bass (x2 + 1/2)

\$HK690

Panna Cotta

\$HK70

Tiramitsu

\$HK70

With the above, **TARGET** selected 2 glasses of 2 different house wines:

Ciantic Chianti, Vintage 2006

\$HK120

Pinot Grigio, Vintage 2008

\$HK120

Still on the subject of wines, it was noted that the wine list had, at the very top of the Page, the following:

Sassicaia 1988 – \$HK15,000

This wine happens to be one of the best Italian reds, the grape varieties, used to create this great wine, being Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon.

It is commonly referred to as a ‘*Super Tuscan*’ wine.

However, at \$HK15,000 a bottle!

This is just too rich – even for a small, Italian restaurant in Causeway Bay, Hongkong, where the prices for food can be as high as many a 5-star hotel in the territory.

It is unlikely that Mr Alessandro (whatever is his full name) will be selling many bottles of Sassicaia 1988 at \$HK15,000 per bottle.

The Food

As far as **TARGET** is concerned, there was not one negative aspect about the food, served to this medium’s duo on the night of the visit.

The soup was a vegetable broth and appeared to have been made in the classical style, with only fresh vegetables, complementing a chicken base, although, without being able to talk to Mr Alessandro (whatever is his full name), one could not be absolutely sure of the composition of the base of the soup.

The pasta dish was, definitely, fresh, the fettuccine, melting in one’s mouth.

The sea bass was the pièce de résistance, however, and reminded this reviewer of last year’s visit to Rimini, Italy, on the Adriatic Coast where fresh fish and pizza are about the best things to eat.

The chef (Mr Alessandro something) presented the cooked fish, encased in sea salt, on a stainless steel tray and, said something along the lines ‘*your fisher!*’ and quickly disappeared where he filleted the fish and served it on warmed plates.

It could not have been better and was devoured in its entirety in a matter of minutes.

The deserts followed, but they paled to insignificance after **TARGET** had eaten the first courses of what was, truly, an Italian, culinary experience.

As for the table wines, they were fine and finished off the meal, splendidly.

The Service

Italy is not known for service – and neither is Da Domenico, today.

And, this aspect of this restaurant is unlikely, ever, to change.

For the most part, the service staff know little to nothing of their duties.

Some cases in point:

1. On ordering a bottle of San Pellegrino, a mineral water, it was delivered by a waiter who plonked down the opened bottle, hard upon the table with a clunk. And, then, quickly left the scene;
- 1.(a) The restaurant has no soft furnishings so that sound bounces off the walls and, equally, when the serving staff chit-chat to each other, this can, also, be heard from one part of the restaurant to another;
2. On the evening of **TARGET**'s visit, it was quite hot, about 26 degrees Celsius, outside. Inside Da Domenico, as one may appreciate, it was much hotter; and,
- 2.(a) On asking a waiter to turn on the air-conditioning system, at first, he just looked at this reviewer as though to question the request. On **TARGET**, being a little more forceful, however, this waiter got the point and the air-conditioning was activated. It took about 10 minutes to cool down the place.

In many, if not most, Italian restaurants, service is rarely considered very important so that the quality of the service staff should not be considered important, also – if one wants to enjoy (or suffer) an original Italian restaurant.

It is highly unlikely that this medium will be returning to Da Domenico, not because the food was not up to scratch, but because there are, still, 44,000 other restaurants to sample in this territory.

No more challenges, please, Felix, although this medium knows of no German restaurants of any merit in the territory.

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