

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Habibi

Address of Restaurant1/Floor, Grand Progress Building, Nos. 15-16, D'Aguilar Street, Central,
Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Wednesday, October 14, 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	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier	Excellent	Acceptable	None

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive Moderately Expensive Very Reasonably Priced

Name of General Manager Nil

Name of Executive Chef Nil

Comments

TARGET () does not appreciate Lan Kwai Fong.

It is a filthy place, in the main, and some of the buildings in their present state ought to be condemned, in this medium's opinion.

The entire Lan Kwai Fong, though it is well known to Hongkongers as an entertainment area, is a horrid admixture of European and Asian drunks, sitting outside bars and restaurants, while whores and prostitutes roam the street, looking for johns.

At the same time, homosexuals scour the area in search of new partners.

For young girls to visit this area of Hongkong Central, it may seem an exciting adventure into another side of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but, probably, more often than not, innocent girls are corrupted by the fast-talking inebriants that frequent what this medium would claim is a blot on the territory.

However, there is at least one restaurant in this area that serves authentic Middle Eastern food.

It is called Habibi.

The reason that **TARGET** makes the claim that Habibi serves authentic Middle Eastern food is because the chef – there is only one chef, by the way – is Egyptian and he speaks almost no English.

TARGET met the chef as he strolled round the 70-seater restaurant and asked: *'Where are you from?'*

The chef replied: *'Giza ... Pyramids ... Egypt ...'*.

And that was, just about, as far as his English vocabulary went.

But his preparation of the food at this restaurant told a different story.

At about 7 pm, last Wednesday evening, without reserving a table, this medium visited Habibi after walking through a veritable smoke-screen of Europeans and Asians, puffing away on cancer sticks.

With a bottle/glass of beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other, these drunks soil Lan Kwai Fong from one part of this horrid area to another.

Habibi is located at Numbers 60–62, D’Aguilar Street, on the First Floor of Grand Progress Building.

This restaurant is quite difficult to find and, in fact, the entrance to Grand Progress Building is not on D’Aguilar Street, at all, but a small side street.

Having discovered where Habibi was located, **TARGET** took the lift to the First Floor and entered the dining room in which only 2 other people were seated.

The restaurant, **TARGET** learned, had only recently been relocated from Numbers 112-114, Wellington Street, and this fact appeared to be only too evident.

The air-conditioning system is incapable of handling the load; and, the staff appeared to know very little about the dishes on offer or what the dishes comprised.

The waitress, looking after **TARGET**’s table, was from Nepal and her knowledge of Middle-Eastern cuisine could be written on the back of a penny stamp, as the saying goes.

The menu, however, is simple enough to read and is almost self-explanatory so this medium did not have to rely on the broken English of a young Nepalese lady, trying to act the part of a waitress.

This was the menu that was chosen for the night:

Soup

Shurbit Ads
Pureed Lentil Soup
\$HK30

Halloumi

Mild Goat Cheese, Lightly Browned in Olive Oil and
served with Fresh Greens
\$HK50

Main Dishes

Firahk Roman
Whole Baby Chicken, stuffed with Dried Apricots, Figs and Raisins,
Cooked in a Pomegranate Sauce
\$HK150

Fatera Dani
Lamb, Braised with Onions, Carrots, Potatoes and Green Peas,
Baked with a Puff Pastry Crust
\$HK150

Wine

Pharaohs, Cabernet Sauvignon 2007
\$HK40 per glass

Turning first to the wine, it is not recommended, at all.

It is just a small step up from grape juice, with the exception that grape juice has more flavour.

It was just as well that **TARGET** ordered only one glass in order to taste it, first.

The soup dish was a winner, however.

It was clear that this broth, which appeared to have been made from a chicken-stock base, had been cooked for an extended

period of time and tasted, as one would have hoped, of pureed lentils with overtones of chicken.

The Halloumi was not a patch on the soup course and the few squares of goat cheese tasted something like fried cardboard.

Halloumi is made from a mixture of [goat's](#) milk and [sheep's milk](#), although some Halloumi can, also, be produced from cow's milk.

It has a high melting point and so it can easily be [fried](#) or [grilled](#).

Halloumi is set with [rennet](#); it is unusual in that no acid or acid-producing bacterium is used in its preparation.

The Halloumi, served at Habibi, could not have been the creamy cheese that one can buy in most parts of Greece.

The 2 Main Courses should have been winners, also, but the Egyptian chef, named Mr Nohsen Ammar, was hamstrung because he can only perform as well as the tools that he uses and the quality of the raw produce with which he tries to create his dishes.

With regard to the lamb, braised with onions, carrots, potatoes and green peas, it was the highlight of the evening and it was eaten in its entirety.

No criticism could be leveled against this dish.

The same could not be said about the whole baby chicken, stuffed with dried apricots, figs and raisins.

The only thing wrong with this dish was that the chicken was tasteless.

The reason for this had to be that it was a frozen bird before it graced **TARGET**'s table.

This was really a pity because, otherwise, this dish would have compared very favourably to the lamb.

The Building

Having paid the bill for the meal, due to the fact that there is only one flight of stairs to the road, **TARGET** determined to walk rather than wait for the lift.

However, on looking at the stairs, it appeared that the building was on fire, the smoke in the stairwell, being thick and acrid.

It turned out that a kitchen on the second floor of the building was operational and, because there is insufficient ventilation on that floor, the smoke from the second-floor kitchen was invading the first floor, all the way down to the lobby, as well.

Prior to investigating the matter in full, this medium thought that there was a fire in the building and, as such, the quicker out of the building, the better.

But the exit was impeded by about 24 bags of what appeared to be cement, lining the stairs, a dozen or so brooms, mops, ladders and an entire paraphernalia of workmen's tools, along with some old furniture and what-have-you.

One had to pick one's way down the stairs, very gingerly.

This situation is illegal and, in the case of a real fire, it would have been utterly impossible for more than 10 people to exit the entire building on the assumption that one is not going to use the lift.

It need not be stated that the stairwell was filthy because that goes with the territory of builders where stored building materials are located.

This medium cannot understand the reason that the Hongkong Government permits Lan Kwai Fong to exist, at all, in its present state, an area that is reminiscent, in many parts, to an unpleasant-looking slum.

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