

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Café Gray Deluxe

**Address of Restaurant**

Upper House, Pacific Place, No. 88, Queensway, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Wednesday, November 11, 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

**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	None

#### Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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#### Name of Director of Restaurants

Mr Willem van Emden

#### Name of Executive Chef

Mr Gray Kunz

#### Comments

Café Gray Deluxe, the lone food outlet at *'the Upper House'*, the latest addition to the hotel complex at Pacific Place, on the border of Wanchai, is more of a mess for the upper crust Establishment of The Swire Group of Companies than anything else.

This is only too obvious.

In order to obtain a table at this eatery, one is told that one has to wait for at least a fortnight because *'we are so busy, these days'*, one is told by the telephone operator at the restaurant.

However, according to Ms Melody Chung (), Sales Manager of Café Gray Deluxe, with whom **TARGET** () spoke on Wednesday, November 11, 2009, while drinking a cup of tea with a friend at about 5:30 p.m.:

*'This is a gimmick ... I suppose I should not tell you that, but we do it because we don't want to be overbooked on any one day ... The restaurant's policy ... '.*

Smile, smile, smile.

Without Ms Melody Chung, knowing with whom she was speaking, when asked whether or not there would be a table available for 3 people at about 7:30 p.m., after a little humming and hawing, she admitted that there was more than one table available.

*'For you, I can do it,'* she said as she sauntered over to the entrance in order to make the booking, without bothering to ask the name of this reviewer.

Prior to the allotted time for dinner, this medium took note of how this restaurant was being operated.

The Executive Chef, Mr Gray Kunz, left soon after Café Gray Deluxe was operational and, to this day, he is still in New York.

This Austrian chef, however, did not leave the restaurant before setting up a very clever method of making certain that his style of cooking would continue, during his long periods of absences.

In fact, the open kitchen is a complete and very efficient assembly line, with allotted cooks and trainees, assigned to perform certain jobs, only.

As a result, the food is unlikely, ever, to vary very much, at least, not without the express permission of the absent Executive Chef, unless somebody screws up badly, one must presume.

The entire menu comprises, exactly, 25 dishes, all of the dishes, being tasty, but none of the dishes, being exceptional.

What all of the dishes lack is, simply, love: It is, as **TARGET** has just pointed out, an assembly line, fast-food concept, similar to the way in which McDonald's Corporation, churns out its hamburgers, one after another, hour after hour after hour.

The following is the entire menu of Café Gray Deluxe:

## CLASSICS

### FIRST PLATES

\$135	CAESAR SALAD <i>Anchovies</i>
\$145	STEAK TARTAR <i>Kunz ketjap, chips</i>

### SECOND PLATES

\$245	COQ AU VIN <i>Pearl onions and bacon, spätzli Pinot noir</i>
\$375	LOBSTER THERMIDOR <i>Chinese mustard greens</i>

### SIMPLY CAFÉ GRAY

#### SECOND PLATES

\$235	LAVENDER GRILLED RED SNAPPER <i>Fennel vinaigrette</i>
\$240	STEAMED SEA BASS <i>Watercress – ginger bouillon</i>
\$255	ROASTED ASPARAGUS, PARMA HAM AND TRUFFLES <i>Tarragon mousseline</i>
\$285	POMFRET MEUNIÈRE <i>Chardonnay – squash emulsion</i>
\$295	ROAST RACK OF LAMB <i>Beans and curry – carrot emulsion</i>
\$320	BRAISED SHORT RIB OF BEEF <i>Soft polenta and Meaux mustard</i>
\$355	PLANCHA SEARED STRIPLOIN FLANK STEAK <i>Creamed spinach, gaufrette potatoes Herb butter</i>

### FIRST PLATES

\$95	BIBB LETTUCE <i>Yogurt-mint raita</i>
\$125	SAFFRON PASTA FIORE <i>Tomatoes and lemon thyme</i>
\$135	ARTICHOKES AND SUNCHOKES À LA BARIGOULE <i>Basil and ricotta gnocchi</i>
\$135	CRAB BISQUE <i>Crabmeat vinaigrette</i>
\$135	BARBECUED QUAIL AND RED BEET SALAD <i>Cranberry – hazelnut vinaigrette</i>
\$165	FOIE GRAS AND GREEN LENTIL SALAD <i>Sherry vinegar and honey</i>
\$180	SYDNEY ROCK OYSTERS ON ICE <i>1/2 dozen</i>

### DESSERTS

\$85	ROASTED PEAR AND RAISINÉ <i>Walnuts and crème fraîche</i>
\$90	CHOCOLATE RUM TOAST <i>Rum raisin ice cream</i>
\$90	FLOATING ISLAND <i>Stewed berries in red wine Sauce Anglaise</i>
\$95	HAZELNUT – PRALINE CRÈME BRÛLÉE <i>Grapefruit granité</i>
\$100	PASSION FRUIT SOUFFLÉS <i>Passion fruit juice</i>

### COLD FRUIT SOUPS

\$55	CHILLED SOUP OF LEMONGRASS <i>Yogurt-lime sorbet</i>
\$60	CHILLED SOUP OF POMELOS <i>Campari</i>

According to Mr Ray Leung (), whose name card puts him down as being the Team Leader, the menu will be lengthened in due course.

But he did not know when that would happen.

On the day of **TARGET**'s visit, the following dishes were sampled:

Steak Tartar	Crab Bisque
Bibb Lettuce	Caesar Salad
Lavender Grilled Red Snapper	Lobster Thermidor
Coq au Vin	Roasted Asparagus, Parma Ham and Truffles

Every one of the above-mentioned dishes was good and one could not criticise either the cooking or the presentation.

Service was quite acceptable, generally, although far from being the best, and special mention should be given to Ms Kimberley Drake, Chef Sommelier (), who made valid suggestions in respect of the wine to accompany the above dishes.

The entire meal along with wine, which cost \$HK1,155, was \$HK2,701 for 3 people.

This is not at all expensive, as far as restaurants charge in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), but, then, again, this is not a 5-star restaurant in spite of its splendid view of Victoria Harbour.

An interesting aspect of this restaurant is that, if it isn't on the menu, don't ask for it – because there is no way that you will get it.

Another interesting thing that happened at **TARGET**'s table was that the person, who claimed to be in charge of the restaurant, in his haste, thought nothing of mixing one type of wine with another and then, realising his mistake, looked sheepishly at **TARGET**'s guest and said: 'Oops!'

And, then, scurried away.

In respect of this 80-seater restaurant, it does not resemble anything more than it was intended to be: An assembly line eatery, similar in fact, to any up-market, fast-food restaurant, such as Fairwood, Burger King, etc.

The major difference between any number of fast-food joints, familiar in the territory, and Café Gray Deluxe, is that the quality of the raw produce, used in the preparation of the dishes in this restaurant, is far superior, as is the view from the window – if you are permitted to sit near a window, that is – but not the service.

The waiters, for the most part, do not seem to be fully cognisant as to what they are supposed to be doing while on duty.

When, for instance, **TARGET** ordered Steak Tartar as the first course to accompany a glass of Champagne, it took 30 minutes to arrive.

When asked as to the reason for this long delay, the answer from a passing waiter was only: 'Sorry!'

On another point, the bar area is very noisy and, if one is unlucky enough to find oneself within about 10 feet of the bar area, one is quite likely to find a half inebriated male or female, with his/her arm, dangling over the side of the counter where one is sitting, almost touching one's shoulder.

It can be a little disconcerting.

As far as this medium is concerned, eating at Café Gray Deluxe was an experience, to be sure, but it is an experience that will not be repeated in this decade – unless there are very material changes.

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