

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Verandah, The Repulse Bay

**Address of Restaurant**

No. 109, Repulse Bay Road,, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Thursday, May 13, 2010

**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
<b><u>Wine</u></b>			
Choice	Extensive	Limited	Unbalanced
Cost	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Unknown
Expertise of Sommelier	Excellent	Acceptable	Unknown

**Total Cost of Meal**

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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**Name of Operations Manager** Mr Galy Tse

**Name of Executive Chef** Mr Franck Studeny

**Comments**

For a truly romantic evening in an ambiance which is almost unbeatable anywhere in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), it is difficult to think of any venue more charming and more inviting than The Verandah at The Repulse Bay.

Its major strengths:

1. Its old-world charm;
2. The immaculate cleanliness of every nook and cranny; and,
3. The willingness, friendliness and expertise of the serving staff.

Its major weaknesses:

1. The desserts leave a lot to be desired;
2. The Chinese cook tries to execute short-cuts in the preparation of some of his dishes, and these do not pay dividends; and,
3. There is a decided lack of consistency in the dishes on offer.

**TARGET** () visited The Verandah after an absence of many years, having reserved a table at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 13, 2010, under a false name.

The drive to The Repulse Bay from Central, Hongkong Island, by itself, is charming enough and, on entering the pristine complex with its manicured garden, one is met by an elderly, uniformed car jockey who takes charge of one's motor car in a polite and deferential manner.

On entering The Verandah at precisely 6:45 p.m., **TARGET** was met by a member of the serving staff and told that the restaurant did not open until 7:00 p.m.

So, into the bar area this medium was escorted and, there, imbibed 4 hot toddies (rum, hot water, honey and spices).

While awaiting the opening of The Verandah, the menu was scanned and the following dishes were selected:

**The Repulse Bay Classic Menu**

***Smoked Scottish Salmon***  
*with condiments and Melba toast*

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***Traditional French Onion Soup***  
*baked with Gruyère cheese croûtons*

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***The Repulse Bay Black Pepper Steak***  
*accompanied by glazed seasonal garden vegetables*

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***Baked Alaska Flambé***

*Coffee or Tea*  
*and Petits fours*

*HK\$688 per person*

From the a la carte menu, the following dishes were selected:

***The Repulse Bay Soup Dégustation***  
*Lobster Bisque, Truffle and Wild Mushroom Cream Soup,*  
*Cream of Green Asparagus*  
*HK\$108*

***Homemade Linguine and Lobster***  
*in a Cèpe and Morel Lobster Sauce*  
*HK\$288*

***Classic Vegetable Curry Pie***  
*Seasonal vegetables cooked in Aloo Gobi Curry Base with Coconut Cream, topped with an Open Puff Pastry*  
*Cover*  
*HK\$258*

***The Repulse Bay Soufflé – Chocolate Chips***  
*HK\$108*

With the above, a bottle of Biondi Santi, a Super Tuscany Sangiovese, Vintage 2006, was ordered at the cost of \$HK660.

At about 7:30 p.m., the **TARGET** team entered The Verandah to the strains of a pianist, playing old favourites in a corner of this charming restaurant, overlooking a garden which leads down to the sea.

Due to the fact that honey had stuck to this reviewer's fingers and had, also, become impregnated on the outside of this reviewer's spectacle case, which is made of a synthetic leather, a visit to the facilities, reserved for gentlemen, was in order.

There, a charming Chinese gentleman, who spoke no English at all, assisted in cleaning off the honey from the spectacle case while this reviewer washed away the sticky goo from his fingers.

On looking round the facilities, what was a pleasure was to note that there was not a speck of dust or dirt, anywhere!

While the facilities were crafted to look as though they had been created about 30 years earlier, at least, they were, clearly, very new, their upkeep, being outstanding.

**The Food**

The first course of the Classic Menu, the Smoked Scottish Salmon, was, just that: Smoked Scottish Salmon.

It was first class and that was, just about, all that one could say about it.

The French Onion Soup was excellent and a pleasure to drink.

It was served piping hot.

While this reviewer was tasting the Classic Menu, **TARGET**'s assistant was served The Repulse Bay Degustation Soup, comprising:

- About one ounce of Lobster Bisque;
- About one ounce of Truffle and Wild Mushroom Cream; and,
- About one ounce of Cream of Asparagus.

The soups were, in a word, magnificent.

Now, this reviewer's description of one ounce of 3 different kinds of soup is accurate, but, after all, this course was not meant to be more than, as its name suggests, a tasting of soups.

While **TARGET** was awaiting the arrival of the third course of the Classic Menu, along came the Homemade Linguine and Lobster.

While no criticism could be levelled against the homemade pasta, severe criticism should be levelled against the entire concoction.

What **TARGET** believes had happened was that the lazy cook looked round for a shortcut and found it in the pot of Lobster Bisque.

Scooping some of the broth onto the pasta and, then, mixing it thoroughly, throwing in a few pieces of lobster meat into the pasta during this process, appeared to be a way in which to try to camouflage the sculduggery of this lazy person who makes a claim to some title.

Shame! Shame! Shame!

At this point, it should be mentioned that there were only 9 dinner guests, during the time that **TARGET** was present.

And this restaurant seats 84 diners, mind you.

Clearly, nobody was hard-pressed for time on the Thursday of **TARGET**'s visit.

The Black Pepper Steak, the third course of the Classic Menu, was as good as it gets, however: It could not have been better.

The steak could be cut with a fork. It was that tender.

The meat was Australian beef, **TARGET** was told by an official of The Repulse Bay, but it tasted, really wonderful, nevertheless.

While **TARGET** was finishing off the steak, the Classic Vegetable Curry Pie from the a la carte menu hit the table.

This was another failure, sadly.

The curry had not been cooked for a sufficient length of time and, as a result, one could, just about, feel the grittiness of the spices and condiments in one's mouth, those spices and condiments, used to create the curry flavour – which were poor, in any event.

Actually, it was not a curry pie, at all, but a soup bowl, filled with a mixture of vegetables in a type of curry sauce and, on top of the soup bowl, there was a slab of pastry, riding on the cooked vegetables which were floating in the yellowish soup.

Another shortcut, no doubt.

The desserts were hopeless.

That is about all that this reviewer can say about the soufflé and the so-called Baked Alaska.

The soufflé was undercooked and runny and the Baked Alaska was a bit of a joke.

**TARGET** has been told that there is, in fact, an Executive Chef at The Repulse Bay, a Frenchman, in fact.

Where is this elusive Frenchman?

Clearly, he was not on duty on Thursday, May 13, 2010.

**Conclusion:** Everything about this venue smacks of quality ... except certain dishes, served at The Verandah.

The Verandah needs a good, comprehensive cook, one who does not look for shortcuts and one who has a passion for his art.

The Verandah needs a pastry chef, too.

The French Executive Chef, if he is not a ghost, needs to teach his art to his subordinates.

The serving staff can only do so much and so, if the kitchen lets down the support staff, the result is that which **TARGET** witnessed on the day of this medium's visit.

According Ms Annie Chan, Marketing and Public Relations Manager of The Repulse Bay Company Ltd, the name of the

Chinese cook on the day of **TARGET**'s visit could not be given out because it is against company policy.

Well, **TARGET** is not too keen on this person, anyway, and this medium, definitely, does not appreciate some of the things that he is trying to do at The Verandah.

He needs either to be taught how to cook or, alternatively, he should be replaced.

That comment, probably, goes for the Executive Chef, too, assuming that he exists, of course.

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