

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Ruth's Chris Steak House

Address of Restaurant

Ground Floor, Lippo Centre, No. 89, Queensway, Admiralty, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Tuesday, June 15, 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

<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

* When food is this bad, any cost is too much !

Name of Restaurant Manager Mr Kieran Galyway

Name of Executive Chef Mr Chiu Hung

Comments

Of the 100 or so steak houses in the world, all of which bear the name, 'Ruth's Chris', the lone outlet in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) must be among the worst of the worst.

Either that or **TARGET** () has been very unlucky on 2 separate occasions.

This medium is not referring to location, service, or décor of Ruth's Chris of the Ground Floor of Lippo Centre, Queensway, Admiralty, the HKSAR, but of the quality of the food and, especially, of the lack of expertise of the people in the restaurant's kitchen, people who may like to call themselves, cooks.

After an absence of about 3 years, at which time, **TARGET** had labelled the Ruth's Chris's outlet as one of the worst steak houses in the 416 square miles, this medium decided to ascertain whether or not there had been any improvements in the HKSAR restaurant of this international chain, spanning some 45 years.

The answer: The improvements in the HKSAR outlet are limited to the service and décor, only.

Today, without question, Ruth's Chris has scraped the bottom of the steak-house barrel in the territory.

TARGET returned to Ruth's Chris on Tuesday, June 15, 2010, at about 8 p.m., having booked under a fictitious name in order to avoid tipping off the management of the restaurant that it was about to be reviewed.

This was that which was ordered:

Ruth's Chris Set Menu

Lobster Bisque ()
U.S. Prime Ribeye (12 ounces)
Baked, a one-pound, coated potato
Ice Cream ()
Coffee ()
\$HK780

From the a la carte menu, **TARGET** ordered:

Sizzlin' Blue Crab Cake ()
Two jumbo lump crab cakes with sizzling lemon butter
\$HK140

Lamp Chop ()
Three chops cut extra thick, marinated overnight and served with fresh mint
They are naturally tender and flavourful
\$HK460

Cream Spinach ()
\$HK75

TARGET's waiter for the evening was a charming Filipino who said his name was Renchie.

After reciting his required Ruth's Chris introductory monologue, Renchie asked whether or not the **TARGET** duo would care for a drink.

This reviewer said that he would pass because of the law, forbidding drink driving in the territory.

To this comment, Renchie smiled and responded: *'Good man!'*

However, **TARGET**'s companion ordered a glass of red wine from the Columbia Valley, Washington, the US, a merlot from the Estate of Chateau Ste. Michelle.

On tasting the wine, it was discovered that it must have been opened about one week earlier because it was without any discernable taste, at all.

In Great Britain, such plonk is referred to as *'Maiden's Water'*.

The Food

The Lobster Bisque smelt, from afar, as one would expect this lobster soup to smell.

However, the taste of this soup was so far removed from what it should have been that it was a bit of a joke.

What this medium thinks probably happened was that the kitchen staff discovered that, after the luncheon guests had vacated the premises, there was insufficient lobster meat and broth for the number of expected dinner guests so, into the pot went a few gallons of hot water, laced with some kind of wine and who knows what else.

Certainly, there was a paucity of lobster meat – this medium found not a trace of a crustacean of any kind.

Then, when **TARGET**'s team ordered the Lobster Bisque, into the microwave went a bowlful of the watered-down, left-over broth for a few seconds and, then, just before serving it at the table, a spoonful of Cognac was added in order to embellish the soup's horribly weakened fragrance.

Unluckily for the kitchen staff at Ruth's Chris, this kind of shenanigan has been discovered in the past and can easily be detected because microwave food is always heated from the inside middle to the outer limits of any food, being reheated or cooked.

The Lobster Bisque, served to **TARGET**, last Tuesday night, was a watered-down version of the original broth, almost completely insipid and being warm in the middle and cool at the outer limits of the soup bowl.

Turning to the crab cakes, prior to ordering them, **TARGET** enquired of Renchie whether or not the *'Sizzlin' Blue Crab Cake'*, mentioned on the a la carte portion of the menu, were frozen.

When the reply came back that they were freshly made, this medium had no hesitation in ordering them.

Well, if the crab cakes had been freshly made, it must have been quite a task for the kitchen staff to prepare them in such a way as to be hot in the middle of the cakes and cold at the outer limits of the poor, crumbling things.

Interestingly enough, and **TARGET** has no idea how this was accomplished, the outside of the crab cakes were soft even though they had the appearance of having been either baked or deep-fried.

The crab cakes may well have been freshly made, at some distant time, but the period of time when they were fresh could not be ascertained – probably a week or so earlier, this medium estimates.

They had the appearance of having been frozen solid before being placed in a microwave oven, along with some warm, clarified butter poured over them in order to give anybody the idea that they had been freshly sautéed.

When Renchie reappeared as **TARGET**'s table, he removed the offending Lobster Bisque and Sizzlin' Blue Crab Cake without a word (he must have had an inkling as to what this medium thought about both dishes).

The next dishes to be placed on this medium's table were the US Prime Ribeye Steak and the baked potato from the Set Menu and, from the a la carte menu, along came the lamb chops.

The platters of both dishes were so hot that one could not touch them without burning one's fingers.

The steak, once cut at a corner, spewed out some transparent liquid and the spill from the liquid continued for the entire time that the platter stayed on the table.

The meat, which had the appearance of having been grilled, was tasteless and Rennie was asked if, indeed, this was US beef or Australian beef.

Having been informed that it was US beef, the next question was about the transparent liquid, flowing from the inside of the piece of beef.

Rennie quickly disappeared.

During a period of about one minute or so, the lamb chops were tasted.

Strangely, the meat was dry and powdery and, once again, insipid – no discernable taste, at all.

The expression that the meat was '*bone dry*' applied as an apt description of the lamb chops.

Also, there was not a hint of any fat on the 4 chops.

At about this time, Mr Jason Lau (), the Restaurant Manager, appeared and inquired whether or not there was a problem.

By this time, the platter, on which the ribeye steak was resting, had accumulated about 2 millimetres of the transparent liquid – let's call it water, shall we?

Mr Jason Lau was very apologetic and tried to convince **TARGET** that the water, collecting in the platter, was not water, at all, but butter, mixed with blood!!!

But this time, the level of the water was approaching 3 millimetres ... and rising.

The statements of Mr Jason Lau reminded this medium of the excuses, given by BP plc, and that company's managements to the effect that the oil spill in The Gulf of Mexico, gushing about 100,000 barrels per day, was under control.

The trouble with the excuses of Mr Jason Lau was, inter alia, that, if he were correct – and **TARGET** employs the subjunctive mood (the inferred negative) – then the heat of the platter should have turned the water into a water vapour.

But, there it was, more and more water, gushing out of the slab of meat, which was growing thinner and thinner by the minute.

If, on the other hand, the water was clarified butter, mixed with blood, then, the combination would have congealed and stuck to the platter.

Instead, there was that transparent liquid, slowly filling up the platter.

As for the lamb chops, well, one was told that it was, after all, Australian lamb (Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, please note).

TARGET speculates that the lamb chops had been recooked (or precooked) in a microwave oven, probably after being defrosted, earlier in the day.

Conclusion: The food at Ruth's Chris in the HKSAR is, in a word, terrible.

The restaurant can accommodate about 150 patrons, but, on the occasion that **TARGET** visited it, it could not have been more than 20 percent full.

TARGET has visited Ruth's Chris in Lafayette, Louisiana, New Orleans, Louisiana, and in Florida and, in all cases, the food was excellent although the service was not half as good as in the HKSAR outlet.

This territory needs a senior executive of Ruth's Chris in the US to come to the HKSAR and clean up this outlet's mess.

***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.*