

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Amuse Bouche

Address of Restaurant

22/Floor, The Hennessy, Number 256, Hennessy Road, Wanchai, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Wednesday, June 30, 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

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**

Name of Restaurant Manager

Mr Kent Wong

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Ng Wing Shun

Comments

Amuse Bouche was first described to **TARGET** () as 'The Little Petrus' because many of the staff of this stand-alone, Wanchai restaurant emigrated from the fine-dining restaurant of The Island Shangri-La Hotel, located at Pacific Place, Admiralty.

Well, friends and neighbours, Amuse Bouche has a long way to go before it can compete, successfully, with Petrus of The Island Shangri-La Hotel, but one thing appears to be certain: It is, today, knocking out a profit whereas it is highly unlikely that Petrus has, ever, earned a cracker if the outlet were to be costed, properly.

TARGET visited Amuse Bouche, which is located at The Hennessy, Number 256, Hennessy Road, Wanchai, last Wednesday (June 30, 2010) and was greeted by a number of the old Petrus staff, all of whom recognised this reviewer by name.

(Amuse-Bouche, correctly called Amuse-Gueule, is the French word, meaning bite-sized, hors-d'oeuvre. Amuse-Bouche differs from appetisers in that they cannot be ordered from a menu: The chef determines the selection.)

The Manager of the restaurant is Mr Kent Wong, who used to be the sommelier of Petrus up to 2009, while Ms Charity Hung is the Hostess (she held the same position at Petrus for some 16 years).

After a few glasses of Dampirre Curvee Ambaxxadeurs Champagne, a wine that this reviewer had never tasted in the past – the Manager said that the restaurant imports the Champagne, itself, and it is offered nowhere else in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC) – **TARGET** asked Mr Kent Wong to decide on a dinner for 2 people.

This was his suggestion:

Menu Degustation

Amuse Bouche

Slow-cooked abalone with sea urchin and light soya sauce

Light lobster bisque with morel

Deep-fried organic egg and langoustine with asparagus, lemon butter sauce

Duck confit served with sautéed potato and herbs salad, duck jus

Crispy apple tart, vanilla ice cream

Coffee or tea

\$HK580

All of the above dishes came from the restaurant's set menu, allowing **TARGET** to taste the normal, daily fare and, by so doing, received no special treatment.

With the meal, this reviewer, on the recommendation of Mr Kent Wong, ordered a bottle of Chateau L'Evangile, Vintage 1997, a Pomerol, for \$HK1,300.

The wine was not the best, of that there can be no question.

The above menu, to a great extent, is a copy of that which Petrus used to serve, if it does not serve it, now.

This is hardly surprising, actually, because the head chef of Amuse Bouche, Mr Ng Wing Shun, had been working in the kitchen of Petrus for some years before taking up his present position.

Without describing dish by dish of the above menu, suffice it to state that the food, served at this restaurant, was a very poor cousin to its '*parent*' at Petrus.

However, this outlet, probably, is not meant to compete with Petrus, outright, but, as its accepted nickname suggests, it is '*Le Petit Petrus*.'

The price of the set menu is, obviously, meant to meet the financial criterion of the people who frequent the eatery.

After all, Amuse Bouche is located in the heart of Wanchai.

The restaurant, by the way, was full on the evening of **TARGET**'s visit and, according to the Hostess, it is, usually, packed at luncheon, during the week.

Amuse Bouche is closed on Sundays.

French food is not served at Amuse Bouche, but it is close enough to the cuisine of France for most of the Asian people who frequent it.

Amuse Bouche was opened on October 25, 2009, and the 58-seater is a success story, thus far.

It should be mentioned, at this point, that Mr Kent Wong has shares in the eatery.

In a telephone call to him, he admitted that he was the largest, single shareholder.

The facilities of the restaurant are first class and spotless; the service is excellent.

The shortcomings of the kitchen are fully compensated by the service and the ambiance, which, although not luxurious, is tasteful and pleasant.

If for no other reason, **TARGET** would return to Amuse Bouche because, among other things, Mr Kent Wong is the personification of what has made this territory into that which it has metamorphosed over the past 4 decades: A thriving and dynamic metropolis.

Anyway, who would not like to enter a restaurant where one is certain that one would be welcome.

The problem with so many Hongkong restaurants, today, especially certain fine-dining establishments with a reputation, is that early successes have caused many of the staff to become blasé and phlegmatic.

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