

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Liberty Exchange Kitchen and Bar

Address of Restaurant

Two Exchange Square, No. 8, Connaught Road, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, July 16, 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

Wilson or Laura or Paul, according to the hostess

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Makoto Ono

Comments

TARGET () has made a terrible mistake: This medium thought that Liberty Exchange Kitchen and Bar would be a restaurant that might be an alternative for Subscribers, wanting to try something completely new.

It is not.

In fact, Liberty Exchange Kitchen and Bar is one restaurant, if one may call it, that, to which Subscribers may be advised to steer a course, in the opposite direction of it.

It is an eatery best left to those who know little to nothing of good food and what is meant by a reasonable standard of service.

With all of the hype about this restaurant – **TARGET** wonders how much money was spent on obtaining the propaganda publicity, which was utterly devoid of objectivity and/or impartiality – this medium had expected something exceptional.

Well, Liberty Exchange Kitchen and Bar is exceptional – exceptionally bad, that is.

Last Friday, at exactly 7:00 p.m., **TARGET** entered the restaurant, having booked a table for 2 people under an assumed name.

The hostess directed this medium's representatives to a table in front of the glass-encased kitchen, next to the staircase, leading down to the restaurant's bar.

(The noise of the drunken and near-drunken revellers, mostly male Caucasians, downing large glasses of beer and flagons of wine, swamped any of the other noises in the restaurant.)

On making the reservation, it was stipulated that this medium did not want to be seated next to a toilet, the kitchen, or the bar.

When this was pointed out to the Chinese hostess, she said that the entire restaurant had been fully booked for the evening.

With that, **TARGET's** duo started moving toward the exit whereupon, the hostess, suddenly, changed her mind and said that a booth could be made available, after all.

Having been seated in a booth which, for many people who enjoy eating, they would find it much too tight, especially if they are over the age of 30 years, with the table, bolted to the floor and the bench seat with a high back, being about 18 inches from the edge of the table, **TARGET** studied the menu and the wine list, both of which had been, unceremoniously, plonked on the table by another Chinese young girl whom, it was presumed, was a waitress of sorts.

This was that which this medium ordered for the evening:

Eight Hour French Onion Soup
\$HK72

New England Chowder
\$HK78

Short Ribs
Red Wine Braised, Ginger Potato Salad,

House Made BBQ Sauce
\$HK208

Pig and Apple
Double Cut Pork Chop
Granny Smith Apple Compote,
Apple Slaw, Sweet Potato
\$HK198

No wine was ordered because, among other things, the wine list was uninviting, small, very limited in its choices, as well as being unbalanced.

Having ordered the meal for the evening, this medium ordered a cup of hot water and received, in its place, a glass of room-temperature water, right out of the tap.

This was corrected with this medium's waitress, excitedly stating '*Oh! You mean boiling water.*'

The Food

When the soups arrived, they were both, piping hot.

The Eight Hour French Onion Soup was fine.

It was loaded with onions, so much so that much of the broth was partially obscured by the copious quantities of sliced onions.

The New England Chowder was somebody's idea of a sick joke, however.

This was, to be polite, a bowl of an opaque, white liquid, to which a healthy amount of flour (or some other food thickener) had been added, along with some half-cooked vegetables.

To this, placed atop of the half-cooked vegetables, were 4 rather large clams.

There was nothing wrong with the clams, but they were the only ingredients of this dish that had any taste at all.

The soup was, completely, insipid.

As for the Short Ribs, this dish comprised about 60 percent fat, 20 percent bone and, beneath the very large dry bone, was some meat.

The big question was whether or not this was pork, or beef, or ...

There, really, was no way of knowing for certain.

One could taste the fat and the BBQ sauce, but little else.

The rib (there was only one) could have been part of the back of an old sow; it could have been a rib of an old bull or cow; or, it could have been part of the rib cage of an elderly hippopotamus.

What was very clear was that it was a dietitian's nightmare.

This dish could not have been baked because, due to the heat of an oven, most of the fat would have melted.

Logic dictated that the meat – whatever it was supposed to be – had been boiled, first, rather quickly too, and, then, the top side was smeared with something to give it the appearance of having been baked.

Anyway, it was completely inedible.

As for the Pig and Apple, this chunk of pork must have weighed about a pound and measured a good 4 inches thick.

The meat was as dry as the bone of the Short Rib (or something).

The reason for the dryness of the pork was, probably, due to the fact that, because of the thickness of the serving, it had had to be cooked longer than one would, normally, cook a pork chop else the centre of the meat would have been raw.

The meat was tasteless and, unless one had the disposition and table manners of a jackal, one would find it exceedingly difficult to cut or chew the stuff.

At this point, **TARGET** paid the bill, amounting to \$HK684, and left with a mental promise never to return to this restaurant – which will, probably, make Management of Liberty Exchange Kitchen and Bar very happy.

The Restaurant

Liberty Exchange Kitchen and Bar seats about 30 guests on the upper floor and has been open for about 5 weeks.

The bar section of this restaurant, located just below the restaurant area, was packed on the evening of **TARGET**'s visit and everybody appeared to be having a good time, downing large amounts of beer and other booze.

None of the Chinese serving staff appeared to have the faintest idea of their duties and this was made very evident when, on seeing that the soups had only partially been drunk, with the bowls, having been pushed to the outer corner of the table, it took about 10 minutes for the bowls to be taken away in spite of the fact that **TARGET**'s waitress had been viewing them, all along.

There was no butter on the table and no salt and pepper, either.

When this medium asked for some salt in order to try to give the soup some taste, the waitress said: 'Oh! OK'.

The bread was stale and, after one bite, it was left alone.

As for the ambiance, it was interesting to note that, as soon as this reviewer entered the restaurant, the question uppermost was: 'Why am I here?'

The music is loud; the service is almost non-existent; and, the knowledge of the serving staff with regard to the food on offer was a bit of a joke.

When this medium asked as to the person who was the Manager of the restaurant, the hostess said it was Paul, or Laura, or Wilson (she did not know their surnames, she said)

TARGET strongly suggests that Subscribers think a number of times before venturing to this joint – because that is what it is: A joint.

This joint is located at:

Two Exchange Square,
Number 8, Connaught Place,
Central,
Hongkong Island.

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.

