

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Petrus

**Address of Restaurant**

56/Floor, Island Shangri-La Hotel, Pacific Place, Central, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Thursday, December 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 - Not Ordered/Not Offered**

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 Food and Beverage Director**

Mr Patrice Cornee

**Name of Executive Chef**

Mr Frederic Chabbert

**Comments**

The view of Victoria Harbour from the 56<sup>th</sup> Floor of Island Shangri-La, Hongkong, is spectacular; the ambiance of Restaurant Petrus, the fine-dining, food outlet of this 5-star hotel, is, equally, splendid; and, the serving staff, with a lone exception, is par excellence.

But that is as far as one could go to praise Restaurant Petrus.

**TARGET** () revisited this restaurant on Thursday, December 30, 2010, at about 7 p.m., after an absence of more than one year in order to learn how it had fared since having been awarded 2 Michelin Stars in 2009, then, losing one of the coveted stars for one reason or another, last year.

The former French maitre d'hôtel has been replaced by Mr David Falavier, who is, also, a Frenchman. He is very affable even though this reviewer had only met him once, briefly, at the time that he was first employed.

However, Mr Nicolas Pierron, the restaurant's sommelier, is something else, again.

This gentleman, who has been working at Restaurant Petrus for about 2 years or so and who became acquainted with this reviewer from the time that he was first installed in his present position, never spoke one word to **TARGET**'s reviewing team, not even a '*Good Evening!*'

He is, also, a Frenchman so one may forgive him for his obvious lack of acceptable social behavior – even as a servant!

It is possible, of course, that **TARGET**'s untimely visit to this lovely restaurant coincided with that period of the month that is not the best time for Mr Nicolas Pierron.

Who knows?

Who cares!

Nobody at Restaurant Petrus knew that this medium was planning to review the hotel's premier food outlet, with the dinner reservation, having been made under the name of '*Smith*'.

What transpired, during **TARGET**'s 2-hour visit, therefore, was completely unrehearsed and, no doubt, completely unexpected in spite of the fact that each and every member of Petrus's serving staff is well-known to this medium's reviewing team.

The food chosen, last Thursday night, came straight from the 2 tasting menus, the nomenclatures of which were '*Petrus Menu*' and '*The Seasonal Set Dinner*'.

The following are the 2 menus:

**Petrus Menu**

Periwinkles in Champagne Jelly with Caviar  
Sea Urchin Bavarois and Crispy Seaweed

Hakodate Calamari Served Cooked and Raw

Roast Almond Praline with Saffron Oil, Black Jus  
 Black Truffle and Crispy Potato Tart  
 Double-Boiled Oxtail Consommé Infused with Tie Guan Yin Tea,  
 Smoked Bone Marrow Ravioli  
 Sologne Venison Fillet  
 Swiss Chard and Wood Mushrooms with Cinnamon  
 Stilton Cheese, Caramelised Onions and Malt  
 Classic Paris-Brest  
 Victoria Pineapple and Ravioli  
 Cost: \$HK1,480\_

**Seasonal Set Dinner**

Duck Liver Terrine with Pomegranate Molasse  
 Autumn Fruit Caviar with Strawberry Tree Honey Sponge  
 Frog Legs Fricassee Perfumed with Liquorice, Beetroot Leaves  
 Crispy Mediterranean Red Mullet  
 Soft Potatoes and Rock Fish Consommé  
 Glazed Pork Breast  
 Buttered Cabbage with Smoked Bacon and Truffle,  
 Trotter Romesquis  
 Cheese Selection by Bernard Antony and Philippe Olivier  
 Thin Nougatine Leaves and Hazelnut Praline  
 Tangerine Flavoured Whipped Egg White  
 Cost: \$HK1,080

The 2 menus are, both, written in English and French (**TARGET** omitted the French-language version, purposely): After all, this restaurant boasts of serving only French cuisine.

However, it was difficult to believe that any French man or woman had cooked any part of the food that was served to this medium's team on the night of the visit although it is likely that the concept of the meals came from a Frenchman's brain.

**TARGET** noted that Petrus's Executive Chef, Mr Frederic Chabbert, was chatting with the charming little hostess, standing at the entrance to the restaurant, for a large part of the time that this reviewer was present, but she is a very lovely lady and one can well understand the reason that this rather rotund, French gentleman was keenly interested in talking to this young, lithe Chinese lady, young, that is, compared with the fast-approach of the ageing process of Mr Frederic Chabbert, helped along, no doubt, by the copious amounts of food that he ingests, daily.

Then, who was in the kitchen?

Certainly, not Mr Frederic Chabbert!

Without taking the 2 menus apart, one dish after another, suffice it to state that one could devour all of the food from both menus – and, still, have room for more food.

Which is a very good thing, mind you.

Another good point about the menus was that nearly all of the dishes were very easily forgotten.

Which is, also, a very good thing.

The 2 main courses, however, could not be forgotten:

**From the Petrus Menu**

The Sologne Venison Fillet had been baked, fried or what-have-you more than once so that the 2 chunks of meat were dry, tough and insipid. One was not quite

**From the Seasonal Set Dinner**

The Glazed Pork Breast was an idea, clearly, of a well-meaning Chinese cook. It was, simply put, sweetened, fatty pork. It was tasty

certain what type of meat one was eating. It could have been beef, rabbit, or even lean lamb. And the sauce, accompanying the venison, did little to cover up the mistakes of the 're-cooked' meat, or even to add any flavour to this tasteless dish. ... if one enjoys eating such sickly muck. This medium would describe the pork dish as being, simply put, French-Chinese, fusion-confusion.

Lastly, there is the matter of the cheese course on the Seasonal Set Dinner: It was a disaster!

For the most part, the various pieces of cheese on the trolley were so old and so stale that one was not inclined to want to eat any part of offerings since the fromage (the French word for cheese) had dried out, almost completely. The waiter, who served the cheese, explained that the Brie looked a little worn out because it was 'aged Brie'.

**TARGET** could not disagree with this gentleman and pondered whether or not, if the 'aged Brie' had been put under a microscope, one would be able to see some grey whiskers, confirming that the fromage was, indeed, past its prime.

One is led to believe that, prior to the cheese trolley, being wheeled out into the restaurant, it is inspected by the Executive Chef in order to obtain his approval: Perhaps he only had eyes for the charming Chinese hostess at the restaurant's entrance and forgot to pay attention to the important matters for which he is paid a goodly sum of money as befits his position as the head cook of this fine-dining establishment.

While the majority of the cooked food, tasted by **TARGET**, last Thursday, was not of a very high standard, not so was the presentation of the various dishes because it, generally, was excellent.

And, herein is this medium's opinion about the restaurant: So much thought has been placed on the cooked food's presentation that it is likely that something had been completely forgotten – people, who are well-heeled, go to a fine-dining restaurant to eat, not just to admire the way in which the food is presented at table.

The 3 ingredients of good food are well known: Appearance, smell and taste. In the case of Restaurant Petrus, on the evening of **TARGET**'s visit, only the appearance was good, the other 2 ingredients was sadly lacking or, alternatively, had been completely forgotten.

At the present rate of decline, this restaurant will lose its remaining star, in due course.

Last Thursday, one noted that, while Restaurant Petrus was well patronised, the majority of the diners were guests of Island Shangri-La, Hongkong, not locals residents of the 416 square miles that comprise the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

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