

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Al Molo

Address of RestaurantShop G63, Ground Floor, Ocean Terminal Harbour City, Tsimshatsui,
Kowloon, HongkongDate of Visit

Thursday, May 26, 2011

CategoryTARGETs RatingService

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 Selected

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
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Name of Restaurant Manager

Mr Gianmarco Bocca

Name of Chef

Mr Jimmy Everett

Comments

Al Molo has only been open in Hongkong for about one month and, at the rate that it is going and provided that it can maintain its present standards of excellence, it will overtake most of the best fine-dining, stand-alone restaurants very smartly.

Al Molo describes itself as being '*Ristorante Italiano*', but, in **TARGET**'s book, a better description would be that of a '*Trattoria Italiano*' at the seaside (Molo).

Where Al Molo breaks the mould of being a trattoria is that it is not in the least bit simple in anything; and, the quality of the food, along with its presentation, served at this 180-seater eatery, located on the Ground Floor of Ocean Terminal, Harbour City, Tsimshatsui, is as good as it comes.

Last Thursday, May 26, 2011, **TARGET** () arrived at Al Molo at 7:15 p.m., 45 minutes earlier than had been reserved, and, although as was learned, much later, that the restaurant had been booked to full capacity for that evening, this medium's survey team was shown, immediately to Table 44.

(Nobody at Al Molo knew that a Ms Lee, the name of the person, reserving a table at 8:00 p.m., last Thursday, was an employee of **TARGET** Newspapers Ltd.)

After studying the menu, this was that which was chosen in order to sample the food of this newly opened restaurant:

Antipasti

Zuppa

Saffron soup, razor clams, leeks, prosciutto, garlic-grilled crostini
\$HK98

Salumi

(cured sliced meats)

Salame Milano

Cured pork salame
\$HK88

Pasta e Riso

(Fresh housemade pasta and risotto)

Rigatoni

Italian sausage, tomato, mascarpone, pecorino
\$HK158

Piatti Principali

(Main course)

Branzino

Wild seabass, artichokes, roasted peppers, riso nero, dates
\$HK258

Osso Buco
Braised veal shank, bone marrow, saffron risotto, sautéed spinach
\$HK258

Dessert

Coppetta
Sicilian honey yogurt mousse, apple torta, morello cherry granita
\$HK88

Panna Cotta
Soft vanilla custard, strawberry-rhubarb compote, strawberry sorbetto
\$HK88

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The Food

The first course, the saffron soup, razor clams, leeks, prosciutto, garlic-grilled crostini, is worthy of severe criticism because the bowl was far too small to allow this reviewer to obtain sufficient soup to meet his requirements.

The blend of the ingredients was quite amazing and it was a pity, really, that there was so little to drink of the broth, which measured less than 5 ounces.

As for the Salame Milano, if it had been served with a nice bottle of Sangiovese or a Brunello, it would have improved it, immensely.

But that was **TARGET**'s mistake, not that of Al Molo.

There was absolutely nothing wrong with this dish, but it required a nice bottle of wine to complement it and, perhaps, a charming lovely lady to honour it.

The pasta dish that followed the first 2 dishes was among the best that this reviewer had had the pleasure of sampling for some time.

The rigatoni, with Italian sausage, tomato, mascarpone, pecorino, was, simply put, out of this world.

These was nothing special about this dish, it was just perfection, the ingredients, having been fresh, pungent and of the first quality, and the rigatoni, having been cooked par excellence.

It had been freshly cooked, piping hot, in fact, unlike many so-called Italian restaurants of Hongkong, which like to use a microwave oven in order to reheat pasta dishes, made hours (or days) earlier.

Due to the amount of food, having been ordered so that the **TARGET** review could be comprehensive, one had to be careful not to finish every dish ... although one was sorely tempted so to do.

The 2 Main Courses, The Branzino (wild seabass, artichokes, roasted peppers, riso nero, dates) and the Osso Buco (braised veal shank, bone marrow, saffron risotto, sautéed spinach) were both delightful, both to the eyes and to one's taste buds.

It is said that good food requires 3 simple ingredients: Appearance; smell; and, taste.

Well, at Al Molo, one has it all.

The Main Courses looked delicious, smelled delicious, and tasted as though they had been charmed by wizard, cooking in a magic skillet.

For the wild seabass, the last time that this reviewer had tasted anything of this quality was on a trip to Rimini, Italy, on the Adriatic Coast.

As for the Osso Buco, some clever fellow had removed the meat from the veal shank and, then, replaced it in a circular pattern on a dish, along with the bone marrow, which was put in the middle of the circle of veal meat.

To this reviewer's horror, he ate the lot without realising how quickly it vanished from the dish.

Three more hours on the treadmill!!!

As for the desserts, **TARGET** strongly suggests Subscribers not to order them, at all, because it will just come to mean that it

will cause one to spend another 3 hours on the treadmill.

The Coppetta (Sicilian honey yogurt mousse, apple torta, morello cherry granite) and the Panna Cotta (soft vanilla custard, strawberry-rhubarb compote, strawberry sorbetto) were just too good to be considered healthy.

To the absolute disgust of this reviewer and his partner, the desserts were wolfed down in their entirety in the manner of a slightly maddened person.

There, really, ought to be law against producing such delicious desserts.

The Ambiance

The ambiance of Al Molo is relatively simple, but very pleasant.

The service was excellent and the staff appear to know the food that is being served and of its ingredients.

The prices are well below those of a 5-star, fine-dining restaurant, but the food is far above the level of most of the fine-dining restaurants of Hongkong.

One thing that did not go down well with **TARGET** was that there was a \$HK1.00 mandatory (forced) donation to a charity unknown to this medium, added to every bill.

It was not the amount of the \$HK1.00 donation that bothered this medium, but the fact that it was forced upon one without even being asked whether or not one would like to make a donation.

Further, one is not told about the mandatory donation until the receipt/ bill is presented.

The idea of the donation may well be a good one, but it would be preferable that one is given the opportunity to select the charity of his/her choice rather than being foisted with the restaurant's favourite one.

Aside from the \$HK1.00 charity donation, which every patron is forced to pay, like it or lump it, **TARGET** will be returning to Al Molo because the food is just too good to miss.

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