

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

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

Name of Restaurant

BRASS' French Restaurant

Address of Restaurant

2/F, Nexus Building, No. 41, Connaught Road, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Thursday, June 30, 2011

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 General Manager

Mr Christophe Horrenberger

Name of Chef

Mr Mickael Le Calvez

Comments

The peripatetic French chef is at it again!

This time he is performing as a partner in a French-styled restaurant, obliquely opposite to the old Central Market on Connaught Road, Central, Hongkong Island.

TARGET () has labeled Mr Mickael Le Calvez, the peripatetic chef, because he prefers to walk round the restaurants in which he works rather than keeping his feet, firmly planted in the kitchen – which is where he is supposed to be, especially during the hours when customers want to taste his food.

The first time that this medium was confronted with the food, dished out by the kitchen staff of the restaurant in which Mr Mickael Le Calvez was supposed to be in charge of food preparation area, was on April 15, 2010, when this medium visited The French Window at IFC Mall, on the Podium Level 3 in Central.

This well-positioned restaurant, overlooking Victoria Harbour, had all of the ingredients of what could have been very stiff competition for just about any 5-star restaurant or a fine-dining outlet in any notable Hongkong hotel.

The lone ingredient, missing at The French Window, back in April of 2010, however, was an executive chef, willing to work in the kitchen, making certain that his recipes were being followed precisely and overseeing his kitchen staff with regard to the presentation of the many dishes.

Without accountability in the kitchen, no restaurant can succeed for very long if it is intended that it wants to be known for its cuisine.

Thus Mr Mickael Le Calvez ‘left’ French kitchen and, now, 14 months later, he is the Executive Chef of BRASS’ French Restaurant, a pretentious little restaurant, located on the Second Floor of Nexus Building, Number 41, Connaught Road, Central.

This medium visited BRASS’ French Restaurant, last Thursday evening at about 6:00 p.m., having reserved a table under a fictitious name.

After being seated and scanning the very tiny wine list, it was very clear that this reviewer, being a little rotund in one part of his lower anatomy, was not about to order any of the wines on offer and settled for a gin and tonic, instead.

At about this time, Mr Christophe Horrenberger came over to **TARGET**’s table and asked if he could be of any assistance.

Mr Christophe Horrenberger is the General Manager of BRASS’ French Restaurant and is a rather affable gentleman.

He explained that the restaurant had only been open for a month and that he would be reviewing the wine list, almost immediately.

That seemed to make admirable sense since, inter alia, there were only 2 choices of Champagnes, both of which it is almost a guarantee that 99.99 percent of the wine-drinking population of Hongkong would never order because, among other things, these Champagnes could never stand up to the competition that exists in these 416 square miles.

To produce wine is not particularly difficult; and, to produce poor wine is even easier.

TARGET asked Mr Horrenberger: *'Who is that fat man, walking up and down the restaurant, all the time, the one, wearing a black uniform and seeming to be lost?'*

The answer was the Executive Chef of BRASS' French Restaurant, Mr Mickael Le Calvez, the peripatetic chef, formerly of The French Window.

In **TARGET** Intelligence Report, Volume XII, Number 78, published on Wednesday, April 28, 2010, this medium said about this gentleman, among other things:—

'The Peripatetic Chef'

'Some people may have heard of the lost tribe of Israel, members of whom are said, still, to be wandering round the world, looking for a home.

'Members of this tribe have been wandering for the past 3,800 years, it has been suggested.

'Originally, there were only 12 tribes of Israel, but the 13th tribe is said, today, still to be homeless, lost and forlorn.

'It would be nice and a gesture of generosity if a member of this lost tribe, in the vicinity of The French Window, would consider asking Mr Mickael Le Chalvez whether or not he would like to join the rest of the mob in looking for a home.

*'This is because, throughout **TARGET**'s visit to this restaurant, Mr Mickael Le Chalvez was walking back and forth, looking for something.*

'It is possible, of course, that he had lost his way and could not find the kitchen.'

Things for this obese cook have not changed one iota, it appears: He is, still, lost, forsaken and abandoned; and, he continues to look for something.

But what is that something? The kitchen, perhaps?

Having studied the menu of BRASS' French Restaurant, this is that which this medium determined to eat, last Thursday:

Mickael's Foie Gras Terrine
\$HK98

Saddle of Rabbit with Mustard Sauce and Polenta Cromesqui with Cep Chips
\$HK268

Ratatouille
\$HK68

*Roasted Filet of Salmon,
Thin French Beans and White Butter*
\$HK238

Mixed Fresh Mushrooms Sautéed
\$HK68

Apple Tarte Tartin with Cinnamon Crunch and Whipped Cream
\$HK88

Pistachio Crème Brûlée
\$HK88

The Food

The first course, the foie gras terrine, was excellent and, along with the gin and tonic, it went down very well.

Full marks for Chef Mickael Le Calvez if, indeed, it was his creation.

However, it is very questionable if, indeed, it was a terrine because this medium would have labeled it as an excellent pâté rather than an excellent terrine.

A terrine is, more often than not, food that is cooked and served in a terrine dish, often being a coarse pâté.

Praise for the food, served to the 2 reviewers of this medium, last Thursday, started with the first course ... and it ended with the first course.

Just about all of the rest of the meal was a washout.

The saddle of rabbit was completely insipid, that is, having no discerning flavour. It could have been a piece of meat from any animal, bird or fish. If one closed one's eyes, one would never know that which one was ingesting.

Of course, there was the possibility that the rabbit meat, if it was rabbit meat, had been cooked and, then, placed in a refrigerator for a day or so, awaiting some unsuspecting person to order it.

That, perhaps, could have been the reason that it tasted like nothing.

As for the salmon dish, which was supposed to have been roasted, it had been pan-fried, to be sure, probably by a Chinese cook, by the looks of the piece of fish, it, having been about 50 percent sautéed, the centre of which was pink and slightly raw, which is as it should have been in Asian cuisine.

But BRASS' French Restaurant is supposed to serve French food!

Which brings one to the dessert and, in particular, the so-called Apple Tarte Tartin.

Now, somebody ought to tell Mr Mickael Le Calvez that not everybody in Hongkong is stupid: Some of the residents do know a little about French cuisine, unhappily for him, no doubt.

Tarte Tartin, originally, was the creation of the Tatin sisters of Lamotte-Beuvron, France.

It is a caramelised apple tart that is baked with pastry on top and then inverted for serving.

What was presented to **TARGET** was an entire cooked apple with a paper-thin piece of something atop of the apple, measuring about one-inch in diameter, sporting a tiny blob of tasteless cream in the middle.

If the Tatin sisters could have seen this nonsense of a desert, they might well have called in the gendarme in order to arrest the person for passing off of their creation.

The other dessert, the crème brûlée, as a custard, it was quite acceptable, but it was not a crème brûlée, no matter how one might argue the toss.

The Restaurant, Itself

BRASS' French Restaurant seats about 70 customers if the bar area is eliminated.

It is easy to find because there is no front door and the restaurant is located at the top of the escalator of Nexus Building.

As such, it is never going to be a fine-dining restaurant, but it could be turned into a brasserie if a decent chef could be located.

The space that is now known as BRASS' French Restaurant has seen 2 other restaurants try to make the grade in the past year, both of which have failed.

This restaurant, therefore, is the third attempt to turn this commercial area into a money-spinner.

TARGET is covering all bets that, unless a replacement chef can be located, quickly, the days are numbered for BRASS' French Restaurant.

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