

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Tosca, The Ritz-Carlton Hongkong

**Address of Restaurant**International Commerce Centre, No. 1, Austin Road West, Kowloon,  
Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Thursday, July 7, 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 Director of Food and Beverage**

Mr Cristiano Rinaldi

**Name of Executive Chef**

Mr Peter Find

**Comments**

The most-expensive restaurant in Hongkong, today, is probably Tosca, the fine-dining outlet atop The Ritz-Carlton Hongkong.

In **TARGET**'s opinion, it has priced itself out of the market.

For what one gets at Tosca, it just is not worth the money that is demanded by Management.

This medium visited this restaurant on July 7, 2011, at exactly 6:30 p.m., having booked a table for 4 people, earlier in the day.

While the hostess (assumed), who answered the telephone when Mr John Smith (**TARGET**'s alias for the evening) called for the reservation, hummed and hawed about the time of the reservation, as it turned out the restaurant was only about one third occupied for the entire 2 hours of this medium's visit.

From the 102<sup>nd</sup> Floor of International Commerce Centre, Number One, Austin Road, West, Kowloon, one has a superb view of Victoria Harbour and, notwithstanding the other negatives about this food outlet, just coming for the view is well worthwhile.

Having been seated below a chandelier of the restaurant, a water feature below the chandelier, issuing forth the soothing sounds of small waterfalls as pristine water fell from one level to another lower level, one cannot help but be drawn to the elegance of this well-placed eatery.

The open-kitchen, a central theme of the restaurant, with its 14 cooks, busy at their art, lends itself to the ambiance of Tosca, which can seat 110 wealthy patrons – because one has to be wealthy to afford to eat in this restaurant.

The expectation of what is to transpire is exciting and enthralling.

But the reality, with regard to the food, only, did not live up to the expectations of the 4 diners, at least, not on the night of this medium's visit.

All of **TARGET**'s table ordered the same menu, labelled an '*Open Tasting Menu*'.

It comprised:

*A salad, made from 4 kinds of tomatoes*

*A pasta dish of tagliatelle, porcini mushrooms and black truffles*

*Sautéed wild sea bass*

*Tiramisu*

*\$HK880 per head*

The first course was pleasant enough and, for the 2 ladies who were present at this dinner, they thoroughly enjoyed it because it was without many calories, thus ensuring that their figures would not be enlarged by the colourful array of raw vegetables.

The pasta dish, however, did not live up to that which was expected by first appearance.

The thinly shaved circles of black truffles had no discernable taste so that the expectations of eating a generous portion of pungent truffles were completely destroyed by the realisation that one was not able to enjoy the taste of this delicacy of underground fungus.

As the dinner progressed, **TARGET** discovered that the truffles had been flown in from Australia.

Now, the continent of Australia is the remotest of the settled continents in the world. It is, also, the flattest and, except for Antarctica, it is the driest continent. The average elevation is about 987 feet and only 6 per cent of its area is above 2,000 feet. The vast interior of Australia, known to white Australians as the Outback, is made up of plains and low plateaux, which are generally higher in the north-east.

All of the above description of this land is not conducive to the growing of subterranean mushrooms, also known as truffles.

Hence, truffles from Australia are taste-fakes.

But Tosca uses the Australian black truffles probably because they are thought to remind people of the French white truffles, found in Périgord and Piedmont, the last-named truffle variety, being an import from Italy, actually.

The main course of the evening was the sautéed wild sea bass: It was superb and this medium would not dare to criticise it.

The skin of this fish was very crisp due to it, having been sautéed after sea salt had been applied to it rather generously.

This dish was presented on a bed of root vegetables.

As for the desert, well, it was tiramisu: What else can one say about this Italian sweet, made with layers of sponge cake, soaked in coffee, especially espresso, Marsala or other alcohol, mascarpone cheese, and chocolate.

Just about every Italian restaurant in the 416 square miles, that constitute the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, boasts of being able to create this dish.

One would have thought that Tosca, with its sky-high prices, would have opted to produce something more daring than the well-worn and common tiramisu.

With the above food, **TARGET** and guests drank 6 glasses of a Brunello Montepulciano, a delicious Italian wine, made from the Sangiovese grape.

One glass costs \$HK260.

The cost of the entire meal, including a 10-percent service charge, was \$HK5,681.

It was not money well spent.

Tosca is more expensive than a similar meal in New York, Paris, London, Rome, etc, etc, etc.

For this kind of money, one could have had a huge feast of some of the most-exotic dishes for 12 people at the best Chinese restaurant in the territory.

And Chinese food is, still, the best in the world, the Italian cuisine, having been passed off as European food for far too long.

Damn those Italian family members who visited the Middle Kingdom in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century with one of them, penning the book, *'Il Milione'*.

Without the merchant Marco Polo, Italy would never have had pasta – then, what dish would Tosca have served up with a profit margin of 500 percent or more?

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