

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Alfie's by Kee

Address of RestaurantMezzanine Floor, Prince's Building, No. 10, Chater Road, Central,
HongkongDate of Visit

Tuesday, December 4, 2012

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 -- None	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

Nil

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Neil Tomes

Comments

**ALFIE'S by KEE:
ANOTHER DUD (gorblimey!)**

The introduction of the **European Union (EU)**, established in 1993, ushered in many more freedoms for the peoples of the 27 nations, allowing them to move and/or visit, freely, any and all of those member states. Within the Schengen Area – 22 EU nations and four, non-EU nations – passport controls have been completely abolished.

The beauty of the EU is that, inter alia, it allows the free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

For the **United Kingdom (UK)**, the formation of the EU has been a godsend – because experienced chefs from many nations within the Schengen Area moved to London, the Capital City of England and the UK, and transformed its cuisine, violently and radically.

This '*invasion*' of the foreign chefs was, as history has recorded, to the consternation of many UK gourmet traditionalists who, still, maintain that fish and chips is the world's best dish.

Today, some of the best Indian cuisine may be found in London. This is well known and much appreciated by those Brits that enjoy spicy curries.

Many French, Italian, Greek, Portuguese, German restaurants and many more have sprung up in London and, for those Brits, who have been brave enough to try other countries' cuisines, they have come to learn that, indeed, there are dishes, other than just fish and chips.

Unfortunately for the Chinese and European entrepreneurs of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the lessons, learned by many members of the British public in respect of the invasion into the UK of very experienced chefs from many parts of the EU, have yet to trickle down.

Alfie's by Kee is a classic example of a restaurant that proudly claims to specialise in cooking (or trying to cook) British food.

This restaurant, unashamedly, boasts of serving a menu of honest British fare, using only the finest seasonal ingredients.

British fare, in this context, is defined, generally, as traditional British food, excluding all other (rubbish) cuisines that have horned in on British mainstays (without express permission, the Brits claim), such as fish and chips, Cornish pasties, black pudding, etc.

Alfie's is located on the Mezzanine Floor of Prince's Building in the heart of the Central Business District of Hongkong.

TARGET () visited this restaurant on December 4, 2012, at 6:50 p.m., without having made a reservation, and was escorted to a table, measuring about three feet by two feet and being about 18 inches from the neighboring tables on either side.

On scanning the food and drinks menu, this is that which was ordered:

Cocktails

<i>Real Georgia Mint Julep</i>	<i>\$HK108</i>
<i>Berry Brothers and Pudd Number Three Gin</i>	<i>\$HK108</i>

First Course

<i>Cream of Sicilian Cherry Tomato Soup</i>	<i>\$HK98</i>
<i>Wagyu Steak and Kidney Pudding</i>	<i>\$HK138</i>
<u><i>Last Course</i></u>	
<i>Roast Pork Belly with Crackling</i>	<i>\$HK238</i>
<i>Lancashire Hotpot</i>	<i>\$HK268</i>

Tasting Alfie's Comestibles

The two cocktails were fine and little may be said of them.

But, of the First Course, a great deal should be said.

The Cream of Sicilian Cherry Tomato Soup tasted as though it had come straight out of a tin of Campbell's Soup – except that Campbell's is much better.

At university, this reviewer fondly remembered Campbell's Tomato Soup because, among other things, all one had to do was to heat it up in a saucepan and (mum's your mother!), there was a meal in a few minutes.

When studying into the wee hours of the morning, a hot bowl of Campbell's is hard to forget, but, with regard to Alfie's soup, **TARGET** will try hard to forget it, completely: It was atrocious.

As for the Wagyu Steak and Kidney Pudding, it was a complete bust, too!

Aside from being tasteless, it was devoid of any kidney.

Try as one might, vivisectioning every little piece of the dish, there was not hint of any kidney ... or even the smell of it.

One of the last courses was slightly better than the first two courses, especially the pork belly with crackling.

Two generous slices of pork adorned this reviewer's plate and, when the meat was sliced, it was, really, very tasty.

Surprise! Surprise!

This dish was served with some difficult-to-identify grey and white '*somethings*', some of which had been deep fried and some of which – the white '*something*' – being raw. The menu said that the dish was served with roasted parsnips and chickpeas.

You could have fooled this reviewer!

As for the Lancashire Hotpot, balls!

What this dish appeared to be was frozen lamb that had been boiled and boiled and boiled and, then, the meat had been chopped up to take on the appearance of a mince.

This mishmash had, then, been placed in a bowl to which some water had been added and, after being cooked to death – which was very common for most, traditional British dishes, prior to the '*invasion*' of chefs into the UK from other countries – a meatless bone of an unfortunate ruminant was placed into the mince and, to top off this dish, thin slices of boiled potato, measuring about two millimeters in width, covered everything.

This dish should have remained covered with the potato slices because it was completely inedible, except, perhaps for the diehard, traditionalist gourmets of Great Britain.

The Restaurant

Alfie's can seat 54 patrons at the little tables and, while no criticism could be leveled at the seats, one is strongly advised to bring earplugs if one intends to stay longer than 15 minutes.

(This medium stayed for, exactly, one hour.)

This is because it has to be one of the noisiest eateries in the world.

Young Chinese ladies, nearly (or completely) cockeyed, were, on **TARGET**'s visit, yelling and screaming with delight about this and that, and, they seemed to be of the opinion that their hilarity should be shared with the entire room.

Europeans, also, joined in with the Chinese ladies' stentorian outbursts – because, otherwise, their conversations would have been drowned out by the yelling and screaming of the ladies.

Looking round the room, this reviewer could not help but to recognize that what was espied was a collection of '*Who's Who of Who Was*', including a couple of European felons, formerly, being directors of major hongks, obviously recently released from the Aberdeen clink (of Hongkong, not Scotland).

As for the serving staff, they had little to no idea about what the restaurant was offering and what was the nature of their job.

On noting that **TARGET**'s two reviewers were not eating very much of the dishes, having been selected by them, they just took away the food, following the question:

'Are you finished?'

And, when asked by a waitress whether or not this medium would like to order dessert, this reviewer said:

'No, thank you. I am completely finished. Please bring me the bill before I go totally deaf or lose my voice in trying to talk above the roar of others.'

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.*