

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Laris

Address of Restaurant2nd Floor, Carfield Commercial Building, No. 77, Wyndham Street, Central,
Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Monday, January 21, 2013

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 -- 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

Nil

Comments

**NOT CONTEMPORARY DINING,
BUT, CERTAINLY, CONTEMPTUOUS DINING**

While Laris makes the claim of being ‘*Contemporary Dining*’, about the only aspects that are ‘*contemporary*’ in respect of this tiny and very pretentious, stand-alone eatery is its propensity to cause some people to get ill.

Two of the reviewers of **TARGET** () suffered from diarrhoea on eating at Laris on Monday, January 21, 2013.

Laris is part of a chain of restaurants, owned and managed by the Hongkong company, Dining Concepts Ltd. This company, according to its webpage, was established in 2002, its Founder, being Mr Sandeep Sekhri.

The restaurant’s name, Laris, was chosen because the so-called Chef and Chief Executive Officer was named of David Laris by his parents.

On entering the restaurant on that fateful Monday evening, at about 6:20 pm, the first thing that struck the reviewers of this medium as being very odd was that it was completely empty!

About two hours later, on leaving the restaurant, there had been only two other couples that had been brave enough to try the food at Laris. These two couples brought the total number of patrons to have been seated on the chairs of this restaurant to six in a period of 150 minutes.

On being seated on the Monday evening of **TARGET**’s visit, it was noted that one, uniformed waiter was trying to clean the outside of the numerous, dirty glass lampshades of the restaurant with a filthy rag, passing the dirt from one lampshade to another. He never thought, it was very apparent, of rinsing off the dirt from the rag in a bucket of fresh water as he made his way through the restaurant that has a maximum capacity to seat 54 patrons.

Another uniformed waiter, who had a big ball of hair on the top of his head, which he played with every 10 minutes or so when he was not scratching his scalp, that is, was intent on trying to clean the floor behind the small bar, first, by spraying some kind of detergent on it – which could be smelled, throughout the restaurant – and, then, pushing the strong-smelling substance around the floor with a kind of broom.

Then, there was a third waiter who appeared to be scratching his arse in plain view of everybody while telling his jokes to some members of the serving staff.

The lampshade cleaning went on throughout **TARGET**’s stay and included the lampshade directly above the reviewers’ table.

The waiters and a single waitress all come from Nepal, **TARGET** was told, and they tried to do their best in making this medium’s trio comfortable, but it was very obvious that they were all completely untrained or, in the alternative, they have a great deal of trouble in learning.

It was, also, very clear that none of them had any idea about hygiene.

The wine list, which was placed on **TARGET**’s table, was scanned for a full 10 minutes. It was noted that it concentrated on wines (or plonk) from the antipodes.

Wine is not difficult to produce; bad wine is even easier to produce.

Since this reviewer, who knows very little about wines from the bottom of the world, was not about to experiment on the unknown so a gin and tonic was ordered.

Also, this medium noted that the wines on offer on the wine list are far from being reasonably priced and, in this reviewer's opinion, having been to New Zealand and Australia on a number of occasions, they are, in anybody's terms, expensive.

The food that was ordered after the Nepalese waiter, assigned to **TARGET**'s table, had visited us about five times in a matter of about 10 minutes in order to enquire whether or not a decision had been made on what dishes had taken our fancy, comprised:

Starters

*Home-Smoked Oysters, home smoked oyster,
served with toast
\$HK118*

*Forest Mushrooms, Olive-Oil Powder, truffle,
carrot and mascarpone
\$HK118*

*Smooth Clam Chowder with chive,
potato puree and confit
\$HK78*

Main Courses

*Char Grilled, New Zealand, Grass-Fed, Ocean Beef Ribeye,
Triple Fried Potato, Truffle Butter,
Morel Mushroom and Vinegar
\$HK388*

*Pigeon, Stuffed With Foie Gras, Japanese Pumpkin,
Port Braised Prunes and Apple
\$HK268*

*Angel Hair Pasta, Lemon Dill,
Trikalinos Bottargo and Olive Oil
\$HK188*

Deserts

*Poached Pear With Ruffle Honey Yoghurt
\$HK78*

*Carrot Cake, Coffee Crumble, Chocolate Ganache,
and Cardamom Anglaise With A Sprinkle Of Sea Salt
\$HK78*

*Sticky Date Pudding and
Brandy Caramel Sauce with Crème Fraiche
\$HK78*

Trying To Eat

The Home-Smoked Oysters comprised four little blobs of a grey '*somethings*', measuring about one quarter of an inch by one eighth of an inch. The '*somethings*' were insipid and it appeared as though they had come straight out of a tin.

They were not served on toast, as stated in the menu, and were very cold, suggesting that they had just come out of a refrigerator.

All of **TARGET**'s trio tried the '*somethings*' ... and regretted it before the entire meal had been sampled.

The Forest Mushrooms had been cooked, but the Chinese person, who might try to make the claim of being a cook, appeared to have no idea about preparing the umbrella-shaped sporophores, all of which were served lukewarm.

After the mushrooms had been placed on the table, the Nepalese waiter brought a second gin and tonic and, while pouring the tonic into a glass, the waiter's tie, which drooped from his neck, was trying to tickle the mushrooms on this reviewer's plate.

The young Nepalese waitress, who was, also, trying to assist her colleague by her presence, said something in a sweet voice in a foreign tongue to the waiter, who, confirming what his tie was trying to do to the plate of flaccid mushrooms, said, *'Oh, sorry!'* and withdrew the offending piece of his uniform from **TARGET**'s plate.

And off he went to clean some more lampshades.

The Clam Chowder was not a clam chowder, at all: It was a cream of something, quite indistinguishable from a watered-down, potato puree. It was served hot – the one and only hot dish of this restaurant, as it turned out – and that was its only saving grace.

The Main Courses

The New Zealand steak, which was served rare – **TARGET** was told by the Nepalese waiter that the cooks have a special way of cooking and, as such, one may not ask how one enjoyed one's meat – was the best dish of the evening.

New Zealand and Australia beef are among the cheapest that one can buy, these days, but the way in which Laris cooks beef is quite good.

If this reviewer were to give a point count for this dish, it would score about six points out of ten points. This is, really, quite a good score because all of the other dishes would not even have rated one point – for the entire bunch.

The Pigeon, on the other hand, was little more than swill, the bird, clearly, having been frozen at some time after it had lost its life.

TARGET can confirm, by close examination of the few bits of bird meat, which adorned the plate, that, at one time, the meat had been part of a bird of origin unknown: If the meat had been that of a pigeon, then, it had been very well disguised.

As for the Angel Hair pasta, the least said of this, the better: It was dry, cold and tasteless.

When the Nepalese waiter came to clear away the dishes of the main courses, he asked:

'You did not eat this dish! Is something wrong?'

'Yes,' came the immediate reply. *'It was horrible!'*

The waiter looked a little befuddled, but, not knowing what to do or say, quickly removed the dish without another word.

The Desserts

The Poached Pear had not been poached, at all: It was hard and cold, straight out of a refrigerator.

The Carrot Cake was not carrot cake: It was the type of cheap cake, measuring about four inches by one inch, that one can buy in the cheapest cake shops in the territory.

The Sticky Date Pudding was on a par with the other two desserts – terrible!

The Restaurant

Laris is a nice-looking restaurant, located at Number 77, Wyndham Street, Central, Hongkong, on the second floor.

Mr David Laris was in plain sight, throughout the entire time that **TARGET** was present, but his attention did not appear to be in the direction of his open kitchen which, clearly, lacked accountability.

None of the kitchen staff, including Mr David Laris, wore gloves so that food was constantly touched by the naked fingers of the Chinese cooking staff and the lone Frenchman, even to the extent of reaching for garnish or sprinkling some beans on a dish.

If Mr David Laris is, as it is alleged, a very experienced French chef – which **TARGET** doubts, by the way – then, as a French chef, he should know the rules, concerning his personal hygiene as well as that of his staff, cooking and serving.

This restaurant has been open since January 9, 2013, and, therefore, it is possible that the serving and cleaning staff – which appeared to be the same people, by the way – are, still, trying to come to grips with their duties.

Also, this medium would not hesitate to suggest that the beneficial owners of Laris employ the services of a central buying office for the raw produce that goes into the dishes that are served at this and other restaurants that they control.

TARGET makes the above statement because no self-respecting chef could have been happy with the food, dished out on the Monday of this medium's visit.

It was during the sampling of the Main Courses that two of **TARGET**'s team started to feel very uncomfortable. A rush to the

unisex toilet resulted in a discharge of fecal matter of the semi-liquid variety.

Throughout the night that followed **TARGET**'s quick return home, there were frequent visits to the toilet, but by Tuesday morning, things were nearly back to normal, again, but it had taken the best part of half a roll of toilet paper.

It would be a slight exaggeration to state that any **TARGET** employee came even close to dying after eating at Laris, however.

Conclusion

Don't go near the water and you can't get wet.

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.*