

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Gaddi's of The Peninsula

Address of Restaurant

Salisbury Road, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Tuesday, January 29, 2013

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 -- Spotty	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	Not In Attendance

### Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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### Name of Restaurant Manager

Mr Kelvin Tsang

### Name of Executive Chef

Mr Florian Trento

### Comments

### Gaddi's of The Peninsula

Since 1961, **TARGET** () has been patronising Gaddi's, the fine-dining outlet at The Peninsula, Hongkong.

By a wide margin, this restaurant remains the most exquisite in the 416 square miles that constitute the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Since the departure of Mr Rolf Heiniger, the former maître d'hôtel of Gaddi's – which is named after the first General Manager of The Peninsula, Mr Leo Gaddi, who hailed from Switzerland – a number of things have changed, but it, still, remains, after 60 years, the most-elegant looking of all of the restaurants in the territory.

Entering Gaddi's on a Tuesday afternoon in order to take luncheon is, for the uninitiated, like nothing that one could imagine: It is akin to going back into those graceful times of the past when ladies wore tailor-made dresses, complete with wide-brimmed hats in the summer, and their gentlemen escorts wore suits, no matter what was the time of the day; it is the very smell of luxury, unsurpassed; the music that seems to waft from every corner of the room puts one in a very special mood that demands that all conversations should be in whispers in order not to break the spell of the moment that is, almost, magical.

When Mr Rolf Heiniger was in charge of Gaddi's, the dinner music, generally, was played by a violinist, a cellist and a pianist. Diners used to dance to the lilting melodies of the pasty masters of classical music.

Today, sadly, from Monday to Saturday, in the evenings, one is likely to be bombarded by a Filipina female whose screeching voice can, only too often, disrupt the enchantment of this lovely restaurant.

It is supposed, very sadly, **TARGET** must add, that, on entering Gaddi's in the evenings from Monday to Saturday, one should not dwell on the past and the supposed grandeur of that period of history, but accept the present, inculcating it into one's mental aspect.

At about 12:30 pm, on Tuesday, January 29, **TARGET**'s reviewers returned to Gaddi's in order to learn what changes had taken place since the last visit of nearly two years earlier.

During luncheon on the day of this medium's last visit, however, one was able to enjoy only the sounds of music over the restaurant's sound system, perhaps, of the early 1930s, 1940s and the 1950s, of Oscar Hammerstein, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers and a host of others musical geniuses, all of which are the favourites of the heritage of a past period in history.

Visually, little has changed – thank the Good Lord! – other than the price of a set luncheon has risen to \$HK498 plus a 10-percent Service Charge for gentlemen and \$HK428 for a Ladies' Leisure Lunch, also, plus a 10-percent Service Charge.

Even with this price increase, however, it may, still, be considered a bargain when things do not go wrong.

The set Lunch Menu on the afternoon of **TARGET**'s visit comprised:

*Tuna Carpaccio and Piquillos Bavaois, Red Bell Pepper Coulis with Lemon Confit*

*Grilled Beef Filet, Purple Potato Gnocchi and Heart Of Romaine*

*Baked Yoghurt Tart with Blueberry Compote and Lemon Sherbet*

The Ladies Leisure Lunch comprised:

*Fine Puff Pastry with Tomato, Basil and Crunchy Vegetables*

*Cress Soup with Smoked Duck Breast*

*Pan-Fried Scallops with Glazed Winter Vegetables and Spinach Cappuccino*

*Gaddi's Sweet Taste Surprise*

### The Food

Little complaint could be made about the set Lunch Menu with the one exception that **TARGET** had asked for the beef to be cooked, medium: It came rare.

However, regardless of the fact that Gaddi's is continuing to use Australian beef, which is not a patch of US beef, in this medium's opinion, the way in which the beef had been prepared indicated that the cook, even being hamstrung with poorer quality of meat, is able to meet the challenge, par excellence.

The presentation of the three dishes was good.

However, there was little that was exceptional about anything on the luncheon menu.

As for the Ladies' Leisure Lunch, Management of The Peninsula needs to do something – in a hurry.

To begin with, the Cress Soup was terribly salty: It was impossible to swallow.

The Pan-fried scallops were of the frozen variety and had been sautéed on one side (and could have been sautéed twice on the same side) and (the poor little things) left to their own devices on the other side. As a result, a watery substance seeped out of the dead molluscs from the uncooked side and onto the plate.

The entire dish, as one could well imagine, was almost inedible!

As for the dessert, well, the least said of this, the better.

When the coffee was poured, lo and behold! the same sweet '*things*' were placed on the table – exactly the same as the so-called, '*Gaddi's Sweet Taste Surprise*'.

Surprise, Surprise!

**TARGET**'s conclusion about the food was that, perhaps, the Tuesday of this medium's visit was an off-day for Gaddi's or, in the alternative, there had been nobody in the kitchen, making certain that the Chinese cooks, whipping up the dishes, were doing their duties in accordance with the rules and regulations, laid down by Mr Rémi van Peteghem, Gaddi's Chef.

With little or no accountability in the kitchen, well, simply put: '*When the cat's away, the mice will play*'.

### Other Comments about Gaddi's

The food of any restaurant is its signature: It is its very heart; it identifies that restaurant and sets it apart from all others.

If the food is not up to scratch, no matter how well appointed is the venue, sooner or later, serious eaters will stay away, regardless of the price.

On the afternoon of **TARGET**'s last visit to Gaddi's, Mr Rémi van Peteghem was wondering round, talking to certain select guests, one in particular, an Indian gentleman who, obviously wanting to impress this thin French cook, introduced him to one of his guests, a gentleman from the Middle East who, then, engaged the chef in French.

After talking to the ageing, ethnic Indian host for a full 30 minutes, along with his entourage of two other Indian gentlemen and a European lady, a senior member of the serving staff ushered the French chef away to talk to a Chinese couple who appeared to be upset about something.

One very negative aspect of some of the junior serving staff was that their knowledge of the dishes, on the menus, was terribly limited and, when confronted with something about that which they did not know or have an understanding of a question, they tended to mumble something that was completely inaudible and incomprehensible – before quickly rushing away.

Things have gone wrong in the past in respect of Gaddi's, but not to the extent of this medium's last visit. It is a real pity.

If any **TARGET** Subscriber would like to experience the past greatness of Gaddi's with its wonderful décor, its ambience, and traces of the remaining magnificence, then, step into history and enjoy a nice bottle of Champagne and taste some canapés, but

do not expect the food, served at this restaurant, to be anywhere near the days of past glory.

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