

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

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

Name of Restaurant

The Verandah at The Peninsula Hongkong

Address of Restaurant

Salisbury Road, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Monday, April 15, 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	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
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Name of Director of Food and Beverages

Mr Kevin Tsang

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Florian Trento

Comments

Very little in this world of ours stands still ... at least, not for very long.

Companies that do not improve their products or produce new/or improved products, eventually, find themselves uncompetitive and, sooner than later, rivals take over their place in the marketplace.

One thing, however, has stood the test of time: That *'thing'* is quality. Quality is universally recognised and hotly sought after.

But even then, one cannot rest on one's laurels ... at least, not for very long if one is determined to stay competitive and to retain customers.

Obtaining a customer is difficult enough; keeping that new customer is even more difficult, however.

Which brings **TARGET** () to the gist of this report: The situation at The Verandah at The Peninsula Hongkong.

This medium visited this food outlet at this once posh hotel on Monday, April 15, 2013, having pretended to have been a visitor from London, England.

Using an assumed name, this medium obtained a table for two people at this restaurant in record-breaking time, akin to a hot knife, slicing through soft butter.

On at least six other occasions over a period of two months, this medium had been told that there were no tables available at The Verandah.

Obviously, this restaurant likes to give the impression to prospective customers that The Verandah is for a select group of people, only.

The Newly Renovated Outlet

The Verandah reopened its doors in November, last year, after renovating the 120-seat restaurant at a cost, said by one employee of the hotel, to have been in excess of \$HK500 million.

'Everything is the best, here,' this employee explained. *'The design of the restaurant is French, the hotel, bringing in French experts to design it. All of the serving stations are using French-made warmers or ovens. This is the best of the best!'*

This proud and rather rotund, middle-aged man could not help but extoll his adoration for his employer: The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd ().

With this introduction to The Verandah, **TARGET** was expecting something extraordinary.

Sadly, it was not forthcoming.

This medium sampled all of the food on offer at this outlet and the conclusion, at the end of the evening, was *'Yuk!'*

Most of the food items on display at the various food stations appeared tempting enough, but, on tasting the offerings, it did not take long for one to realise that, in the main, the quality of the fresh produce was sadly lacking.

At the first food station that **TARGET** approached, on display was a huge side of a prime rib that had been cooked medium rare. Taking a thin slice of the meat and pouring some gravy over it, it was discovered that the meat had little to no flavour while the gravy was spicy!

In a short conversation with the young Chinese lady, serving at this station, this medium was told that the meat was Australian. That explained a great deal. Australia and New Zealand cattle, bred for their meat, are all grass-fed while US cows are, in the latter stages of their lives, corn-fed – which gives US beef that special flavour.

US beef, of course, is a great deal more expensive than its antipodean competitors.

And that may well be the reason that this hotel purchases Australian beef over US beef.

On the second visit to this food station, this reviewer tried the Chicken Galantine.

Now, a galantine is supposed to be a cold dish, consisting of boned meat or fish that has been stuffed, poached, and covered with aspic.

Well, the aspic was missing, but everything else seemed to be just as the *'doctor'* ordered.

'The Yorkshire Pudding go with the "chicking",' the young, Chinese serving attendant explained. *'There is a hole in the middle of the puddin and you can put the "chicking" in there and add the spice sauce over it, all. Velly nicy!'*

Well, this charming young Chinese lady, in her explanatory attempts to explain to customers about the food that she was serving, got it all wrong, but, to be totally fair to her, she ranked very highly on the ladder of trying to be friendly and helpful.

Oh! The Chicken Galantine: It was on a par with the Australian Prime Rib – tasteless.

As for the sauce, it tasted very much as though it had been made from an OXO cube.

On the next food station, **TARGET** sampled some Veal Patties. They, too, were on a par with the Australian Prime Rib and the Chicken Galantine.

The absence of any discerning flavour of the veal meant that it could have been anything, from imitation meat, created from tofu – commonly eaten by vegetarians, around the world – to soggy cardboard that had been marinated and, then, camouflaged in an OXO-style sauce.

At another station, the Ox Tongue Teriyaki was tasted. All this medium can say about this dish is that it is best left to the Japanese to cook.

Steamed Grouper (Portuguese spelling is Garoupa) was next to be sampled and, aside from the fish, being a little dry, it was quite acceptable. It had, obviously, been cooked by a Chinese person who knew how to steam a fish.

At one food station, a variety of Sushi had been arranged on a large charger. It was horrible! The rice was not Japanese, at all, and some kitchen fool had added some vinegar and sugar to it, making the one-inch oblong sushi fall apart as it was being picked up by a pair of chopsticks.

At this station, also, were slices of some Smoked Scotch Salmon and Gravlax. There was nothing wrong with either one of the two preparations – if one does not mind to have rather poor-quality salmon.

And so it went on, one dish after another, being as bad as or worse than the previous one.

At the plate where four kinds of cheeses were on display, one tubular piece of cheese, which was very ripe, was described as being Emmentaler from Switzerland.

It turned out to be Chèvre, from France – and it was delicious!

It was only too clear, at this point in **TARGET**'s tour of The Verandah, that very few of the serving staff had any idea as to what was on offer at this food outlet.

This medium did try the wine by the glass and, after sampling two glasses of *'vinegar'*, gave up and ordered a gin and tonic, instead.

The buffet at The Verandah costs \$HK698 per person. For what one gets, it is terribly expensive.

Having a simple bowl of noodles at a small shop in Wanchai or Mongkok is far better and far cheaper than eating at this food outlet at The Peninsula Hongkong.

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