

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

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

Name of Restaurant

SPOON By Alain Ducasse, InterContinental Hongkong

Address of Restaurant

Number 18, Salisbury Road, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, August 9, 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	Unknown

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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Name of Executive Assistant Manager,
Food and Beverage

Mr Christoph Travniczek

Name of Sous Chef

Mr Simon Kwok

Comments

There have been radical changes, made to the fine-dining restaurant, 'Spoon', located on the Ground Floor of InterContinental Hongkong.

Overlooking Victoria Harbour, Spoon, today, must be rated as one of the best eateries, specialising in the creations of contemporary French cuisine.

The changes that have taken place at this restaurant from the last visit of **TARGET** () are too many to list in this short review, but suffice it to say that the changes were far too long in coming.

On this medium's previous visit to Spoon, that was on December 21, 2006, the first paragraph of this report (please refer to **TARGET** Intelligence Report, Volume IX, Number 2, dated January 3, 2007) was:

'The best part of the dinner at the fine-dining outlet of Inter-Continental Hongkong in Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, on Thursday, December 21, 2006, was leaving.'

The January 3, 2007-review was accurate right down to the terrible service, the high prices, being demanded for what was little more than fast-food, dressed up to resemble the type of cuisine that one should expect of a fine-dining restaurant, and the fact that the former sommelier, Mr Thomas Scheidt, did not know the difference between a wine, made from the Italian Sangiovese grape, and a wine, made from the Spanish grapes, Tempranillo and Graciano.

But time and tide have truly brought to the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a fine example of the creativity that one has come to learn and appreciate from the culinary artistry of Mr Alain Ducasse.

TARGET revisited Spoon on Friday, August 9, 2013, at 7 p.m. and was pleasantly surprised to be led to a very nice table, facing Victoria Harbour, complete with the boardwalk, teaming with pedestrians who had come to enjoy 'The Symphony of Lights' that starts, every evening at 8 p.m., and lasts for the best part of 30 minutes.

After ordering a bottle of Bollinger, Special Cuvée, at \$HK1,390, this reviewer scanned the menu and selected the following dishes.

Chilled Tomato Bouillon, Burrata Cheese

\$HK290

Whole Poached Lobster, Niçoise-Style Garnish

\$HK590

Steamed Cod Fillet, Caviar

\$HK700

Dugléré-Style Line-Caught Sea Bass

\$HK710

Sorbet, Two Scoops
\$HK85

While this medium awaited the arrival of the first courses, out came the amuse-bouche, comprising a deep-fried frog's leg per person and two tiny bowls of consommé of frog.

These little dishes were just the start of a memorable evening – of gluttony!

Before continuing with a brief description of the food, this medium would like to insert the following negative comments:

- The bread, being served at Spoon, was not up to scratch, with the mini baguettes, being so hard that if a diner were to drop one on a plate from a height of more than six inches, it is likely to result in the plate, being cracked or, at the very least, chipped; and,
- The music is not in keeping with what one should expect of a restaurant of this calibre: It was more like discothèque music.

The Food

The first two courses were delightfully presented, each being designed to resemble a unique, colorful painting. In fact, all of the courses followed similar patterns.

The chilled tomato bouillon was excellent, but it was just tad too bland, as far as this reviewer was concerned.

The poached lobster salad was excellent and left the chilled tomato bouillon far behind in respect of culinary excitement.

Spoon is very generous with the Boston Lobster that is an integral part of this salad although the menu did not specify that it was '*homarus americanus*' that graced this plate.

The fish courses – the cod fillet and the sea bass – were delivered to the table after a respectable period, the cod fillet, being bathed in a lemon and white wine sauce, garnished with caviar.

The fish was cooked to perfection.

As for the sea bass, its sauce was pinkish, as opposed to the pure white colour of the sauce that complemented the cod fillet, and it tasted similar to a lobster bisque, being rich and pungent.

As with the cod, this piece of fish had not been overcooked, as so many English cooks are prone to do.

TARGET skipped any sweet desert and went for the assorted French cheeses, which comprised four different types. (There should have been a larger selection.)

The cheeses were all fresh and little can be said of them other than they were a good finishing touch to the meal.

The Ambiance

A striking aspect of Spoon is that the tables are not close together, unlike days of yore when the restaurant accommodated 120 guests, necessitating the tables, being very close together.

Due to this past situation, it was not at all easy to extricate oneself from one's chair without hitting one's neighbour with one's arse.

Today, the restaurant's Management said that, usually, about 50 guests are welcomed, but, in a pinch, the restaurant could be expanded to accommodate 70 diners.

The service is excellent: It could not be improved.

With boats, crisscrossing Victoria Harbour, their lights adding colour to the scene, one cannot help but be fascinated by the maritime collage.

Unlike the first visit to Spoon when wild horses could never have dragged this reviewer back, **TARGET**'s team shall be returning to this lovely restaurant just to enjoy the food, the service and the ambiance.

A word of caution, however, if one takes the MTR from Hongkong Island to Tsimshatsui Station, be prepared for a walk of about one mile, through a labyrinth of tunnels in order to reach InterContinental Hongkong.

The total cost of **TARGET**'s food for two people, including all of odds and sods, was \$HK4,596.90.

This may sound on the high side, but one is paying for a great deal more than just food: One is paying for the creations of artists as well as the experience of quite a number of very well-trained assistant cooks.

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