

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

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

Name of Restaurant

L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon

Address of Restaurant

Shop 401, The Landmark, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, August 23, 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 -- Unknown

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

Name of Executive Manager

Mr Carl Tang

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Olivier Elzer

Comments

The one, single aspect that separates L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon from most other, fine-dining restaurants is its attention to every last detail of a diner's experience.

It is difficult to imagine how meticulous are the cooks and serving staff in making patrons feel that coming to this restaurant is not just for the food, but also for the experience.

For that is what it is like to visit this restaurant, located at The Landmark, Hongkong Island, in the heart of the Central Business District.

TARGET () returned to L'Atelier on Friday, August 23, 2013, at 6:30 pm and, as luck would have it, our three-man team was ushered to the same table that this medium occupied on February 23, 2007.

What was very apparent was that, on the night of this medium's visit, the restaurant was packed to its full capacity (standing room, only); and, that most, if not all, of the serving staff had been replaced since this medium's last visit.

But, notwithstanding the fact that, with one exception, European serving staff appeared to be non-existent, the existing serving staff of today is just as attentive as those of old.

The first impression that **TARGET** received on entering the restaurant was one of warmth as our reviewers were ushered to the table that had been reserved, under the non-de-plume of Ms Lee.

As silken music wafting sweetly through the restaurant, the menu was studied and, having made selections, this was that which were ordered:

First Courses

Scampi Raviolis with Black Truffle and Foie Gras Sauce
\$HK510

Tomato 'Mille-Feuille' Layered with Crabmeat, Avocado and Green Apple
\$HK520

Maine Lobster Salad with Ratte Potato, Avocado, Radish and Lemon Olive Oil
\$HK500

Main Courses

Cod Fish Fillet Marinated in Sake and Mirin with Miso Sauce
\$HK410

Crispy Amadai Fillet with Purple Artichokes and Barigoule Sauce
\$HK690

Pan Seared Veal Sweetbread Flavoured with Bay Leaves and Salad
\$HK620

Deserts

Cheese Platter
\$HK250

Vanilla Soufflé with Raw Egg
\$HK160

Chocolate Soufflé
\$HK160

The Food

To begin with, the presentation of all of the dishes was nothing short of spectacular.

In respect of the first course, outstanding was the Tomato ‘*Mille-Feuille*’ – because it, actually, had the appearance of a ‘*real*’ mille-feuille, a 1,000-leaf, layered cake.

As for the taste, it was quite unbelievable with the various flavours, tickling one’s taste buds with every bite.

Not to be outdone, completely, the Main Lobster Salad was par excellence, but its presentation could not top that of the Tomato ‘*Mille-Feuille*’.

The two fish courses followed a similar pattern to that of the first courses, but the presentation of the codfish dish was another outstanding accomplishment of the chef who was responsible for its creation.

On a plate, there were two generous portions of cod, folded into a leaf that the serving staff could not seem to identify, but which appeared to be the leaf of a coffee plant.

The cod fish had been smoked, or so it tasted ... and it was delicious.

If one enjoys sweetbreads – sweetbread, being the pancreas of a calf – then this restaurant is the place to taste them.

If, on the other hand, one has never tasted sweetbreads, then, it is high time to sample this dish.

L’Atelier is one of the very few restaurants in Hongkong that has amadai on its menu. This is a fish, also known as a tilefish that, usually, swims in sandy areas, especially near coral reefs.

The Japanese, **TARGET** was told, eat them in great quantities.

L’Atelier fries the amadai, scales and all, so that the skin is crispy, leaving the meat of the fish as succulent as can be.

The desserts were, all, excellent, with the cheese trolley, topping the list for the conclusion of the meal. It is one of the best cheese trolleys that this medium has seen for some time.

For those with a sweet tooth, the soufflés were delicious and the raw egg, located at the base of the vanilla soufflé, was something extraordinary since it had absorbed some of the flavours of the other ingredients, during the baking process.

The total cost of the meal for three people was \$HK4,250 plus a 10-percent service charge.

This price is in keeping with most, fine-dining establishments of the territory, but there are few pretenders to the throne of L’Atelier de Joël Robuchon that can compete to the level that this restaurant has set.

The Ambiance

Seated at one of the tables, deep in the heart of this restaurant that can accommodate 32 diners (or luncheon patrons), one can view a relatively new addition: A semi-furnished verandah.

Instead of looking at a flat roof, as was the case in the past, one can see a little greenery and a few tables and chairs.

At the bar area, which can seat 42 patrons, one is somewhat isolated unless one has that special ‘*somebody*’ alongside.

It appeared, on **TARGET**’s visit, that the bar area is the haunt of the younger set while the tables in the inner sanctum are mostly occupied with the more-mature patrons.

But the service, no matter where one is seated, is excellent.

On entering the restaurant from the lift, the two hostesses, for the most part, are not particularly friendly, but they are efficient.

That is the only negative comment that this medium can make about L’Atelier de Joël Robuchon.

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