

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Flint Grill and Bar

Address of Restaurant

JW Marriott Hotel, Pacific Place, No. 88, Queensway, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, November 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	Reasonably Priced
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Name of Direct of Food and Beverage

None

Name of Executive Chef

Mr Sven Wunram

Comments

Newly opened Flint Grill and Bar is a bit of a farce.

As the concept of an American steakhouse, it fails, miserably, but, at the same time, in five years or so, when Management gets its act together, it has every possibility of being a food outlet of J.W. Marriott Hotel, Hongkong.

TARGET () employs the word, '*possibility*', (potential or prospective value), not the word, '*probability*' (the chance that a given event will occur).

Certainly, Flint Grill is more than half a step up from the former JW's California Restaurant that was a loser for year upon year until it died a natural death.

One month after Flint Grill reopened, following its complete cosmetic makeover, **TARGET** appeared, having booked a table for three people, under an assumed name.

At exactly 6:15 pm on November 15, having been shown to a table, very loud, jazzy music, beating one's eardrums to death, making it nearly impossible to be heard above the din, without yelling rather loudly, Eric, **TARGET**'s waiter for the evening, was asked if it were at all possible to have the music turned down a few hundred decibels.

With the music, now, having been lowered to an acceptable level for humans, Eric, a Filipino, explained that the food outlet had been designed to be something along the lines of an American steakhouse.

This was a first worrying factor – because the bump on the Internet described Flint Grill as being '*a new, industrial chic restaurant, serving delicious grills and modern classic dishes, prepared with market fresh ingredients by Head Chef, Sven Wunram.*'

The bump, it was discovered, was plastered with lies although Flint Grill could, vaguely, be said to be '*cleverly stylish*' (one definition of the word, '*chic*'), but, as for being endowed with '*smart elegance and sophistication*', this food outlet is far from having been imbued with either of these adjectives.

As for '*a new, industrial chic restaurant*', what in the world does this mean?

Lastly, how can frozen food be considered '*fresh ingredients*'?

The Food

The following dishes are those that this medium ordered on Friday, November 15, 2013:

Clam Chowder
littleneck clam, dill
\$HK80

House-Cured Salmon
honey-mustard dressing, flaxseed toast
\$HK150

Baked Oysters
lump crab, hollandaise
\$HK160

Suckling Pig
roast mango, red wine sauce
\$HK180

Seafood Grill
catch of the day, 1/2 Boston lobster,
red king prawn, pot of mussels
\$HK380

Nebraska
63 Days Dry-Aged on the Bone
rib-eye 20oz
\$HK580

Sliced Tomatoes
\$HK60

Creamed Spinach
\$HK60

Forest Mushrooms
garlic butter and parsley
\$HK60

Baked Alaska
Meringue, mango-custard, raspberry sorbet
\$HK80

Ice-Cream and Sorbet
selection of homemade ice-cream and sorbet
\$HK80

Banana Trifle
banana rum cake, dulce de leche, coconut parfait
\$HK80

Of the three first courses – the Clam Chowder, the Baked Oysters and the House-Cured Salmon – one would be correct in stating that the Baked Oysters, despite being served lukewarm, were just about passable, as was the House-Cured Salmon, but, as for the Clam Chowder, it was almost undrinkable, having been served at the temperature, ranging from between 16 degrees and 18 degrees Celsius, and the gruel having been watered down to the extent that it was insipid.

When a passing waiter was told of the complaints, he hurriedly returned the stainless-steel pot of ‘*soup*’ to the open kitchen where it was reheated. This remedial act of somebody in the kitchen, however, changed little else but to make the muck very hot.

It was a terrible mess – dishwater would have tasted better!

Of the three main courses, the Suckling Pig was the highlight – in fact, it was the only flickering light in what could only be described as the restaurant’s long and very dark tunnel of absolute, culinary mediocrity.

The Suckling Pig (which, correctly, should have been labelled as ‘*Suckling Piglet*’ – a mature pig does not suckle, normally) may have been cooked by a Chinese chef because it was perfectly prepared and presented.

Further, it tasted as only a Chinese chef can cook pork.

As for the Seafood Grill, it was a complete disgrace.

To begin with, it was only too obvious that some or all of the marine bivalve mollusks and the lone, decapod crustacean had been either frozen or, alternatively, had been precooked one or more days earlier. Certainly, nothing in this assortment was fresh on the evening that it was served to this reviewer.

The Boston Lobster may not have been frozen, but it tasted as though it had been transported in ice, judging by the amount of seepage that oozed out of the shell of the poor, dead sea creature.

As for the one ounce piece of mahimahi (mahimahi is, also, known as a common dophinfish), it was, without question, frozen

and tasteless. If mahimahi is not eaten when it is fresh, it becomes tasteless.

Turning to the Nebraska Steak, the meat was, obviously, very good, but the same could not be said of the idiot who cooked it. If the grill had been turned up to the correct temperature before the meat had been placed on it, that is, very, very hot, this could have been a winning dish, but, as it turned out, it was something of a wash.

At \$HK580 for this piece of meat, it was, in **TARGET**'s opinion, a rip-off.

Turning to the side dishes – the creamed spinach, the forest mushrooms and the sliced tomatoes – little can be said of them except that the spinach had not been creamed, at all, but had been, simply, stir-fried.

As for the desserts, they are not even worthy of comment.

The best part of this reviewer's meal was a lovely bottle of Château Cheval Blanc, Vintage 1999, at \$HK10,250.

Luckily for this medium, the staff of Flint Grill had no part in the creation of this fantastic [Saint-Émilion](#) Grand Cru that lingered long on one's palate for some minutes after the red '*nectar*' had trickled down one's gullet.

After the dishes had been removed from the table, three cups of cappuccino, which is supposed to be espresso coffee, mixed with hot, frothed milk or cream, were ordered.

What was served was some watered-down, terribly bitter espresso coffee with about one millimeter of something white, floated on top of the coffee – which was lukewarm, too.

After three attempts to get the cappuccino right, **TARGET** gave up the ghost.

Complaints

As far as **TARGET** could observe, the majority of the serving staff are incompetent and, clearly, the open kitchen staff do not know their arses from their elbows, as the American lingo goes.

Case in point, with this medium's table, having been bestrewn with breadcrumbs and what-have-you, Eric, our waiter, not once thought to remove the offending bits and pieces from the wooden table and, even if he had thought about it, he had no implements with which to do the job.

When a blob of cream landed somewhere near the middle of the table from one of the **TARGET** member's spoon, it stayed there for the best part of one hour – until it was time to leave.

A photograph of the blob, in plain view of Eric and the rest of the serving staff, was taken in order to remind this medium of the colour of the blob as well as the incompetence of the management of this food outlet.

Another tragic error was that, when the half of a Boston Lobster was brought to the table, there was no way that it could have been eaten because there were no implements with which to crack open parts of the shell, especially the claw, in order to get at the flesh.

When a passing waiter was informed of the problem, he took away part of the lobster shell and, about 10 minutes later, on a plate, was a near, ice-cold piece of lobster meat.

Further, after Eric had taken away the lobster shell, it never occurred to him to bring a finger bowl for one of this medium's team to wash her fingers.

When a finger bowl was requested, Eric did, after another 10 minutes or so, bring a bowl of warm water to the table – but without a small towel in order for the requested **TARGET** member to dry her hands.

Very chic!

Flint Grill and Bar is, obviously, going through a period of teething and it may take some years for the serving staff and the cooks to learn their respective trades ... if they are, at all, capable of learning, of course.

After having learned their trades, the next thing is to have Management of the hotel explain the essence and importance of accountability to those people, working at this outlet, people who have been given the express duty of making certain that the machinery of the restaurant is turning over, smoothly, instead of those who are supposed to be in charge, playing footsie with junior staff or cracking jokes about this or that in plain sight of patrons.

In the year 2015, this medium may consider a return to Flint Grill in order to see how this attempt at being a food outlet has fared, but, until then, well, there are tens of thousands of other restaurants in the territory, aren't there?

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