

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Lobster Bar and Grill

**Address of Restaurant**

Ground Floor, Island Shangri-La Hotel, Queensway, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Monday, November 25, 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 Director of Food and Beverage

Mr Christian von Rechenberg

### Name of Executive Chef

Mr Alexander Paul

### Comments

Over the years, things have changed at the Lobster Bar and Grill at Island Shangri-La, Hongkong, but this food outlet still has a way to go.

The serving staff, for the most part, still needs a great deal of Senior Management's attention in order to knock them into shape at this cozy little food outlet at the corner of the ground floor of this five-star hotel.

**TARGET** () revisited the Lobster Bar on Monday, November 25, 2013, at 6:30 p.m., in order to sample the food after an absence of at least four years.

The décor of the outlet has not changed, at all (sadly), and the nonchalance of the serving is, still, very apparent (which is, really, very sad, considering that the Shangri-La Group makes the claim of being a premier hotel chain).

What has changed, appreciably, at this outlet, however, is that the pianist (**TARGET** is being very generous in employing this nomenclature to the man, sitting at the piano, at 8 p.m. in the evening), is among the worst that this medium has, ever, had the misfortune to be forced to hear for a good three hours.

The person, sitting at the piano, wearing sun glasses, long after the sun has disappeared behind the horizon, is playing for himself, certainly not for the patrons, most of whom do their best to disregard his outrageous and atrocious attempts at trying to emulate the genius of George Gershwin, the American pianist and composer who penned, among his many great, classical works, Rhapsody in Blue (1924), An American in Paris (1928), as well as the great opera, Porgy and Bess (1935).

The cacophony of notes, pouring out of this man's piano, using what must have been two large hammers instead of the deftness of the fingers of his hands, floating over the piano keys, must be considered an affront to one's eardrums.

And, when a female singer, early in the evening, tried to entertain the patrons, well, it was high time to leave this food outlet.

### The Food

The following is the menu for three members of the **TARGET** reviewing team on Monday, November 25:

*Six Fines de Claires*  
\$HK330

*French style creamy scrambled eggs and toasted brioche*  
\$HK330

*Prepared with white wine sauce*  
*Mussels*  
\$HK270

*Daily Catch*  
*Whole Barramundi*

\$HK340

*US ribeye*

*\$HK430*

*Slow-cooked Dingley Dell pork belly  
White mushrooms and potato mousseline*

*\$HK480*

*Bourbon vanilla crème brûlée  
Strawberries*

*\$HK125*

*Guanaja chocolate with crunchy streusel  
Vanilla ice-cream*

*\$HK125*

To start off the night, this medium ordered a bottle of Taittinger Champagne at \$HK890.

While the food was being prepared, **TARGET**'s waitress for part of the evening was Kei Kei who was not loath to state that she would be getting married very shortly.

While putting a very nice basket of breads and some insipid butter on the table, she, accidentally, nearly sliced off a piece out of the face of one of this medium's reviewers with her serving tray.

'Oh! Sorry!' she exclaimed as she quickly made an exit on being told of the tray incident.

The first three courses were excellent and, at about this time, this scribe was thinking that the Lobster Bar could well become a favourite hang out in future when gnawing hunger pains attacked.

The French-styled, creamy scrambled eggs were a real delight and the white truffles embellished the otherwise great dish, enormously.

As for the mussels, it was difficult to believe that they could have been prepared any better.

The last time that **TARGET** visited the Lobster Bar, the mussels, which were, also, cooked in white wine, were impregnated with sand, making them inedible – because somebody in the kitchen had been sloppy.

Such a situation was not uncommon in days of yore.

As for the six, Fines de Claires oysters, they were fresh and the taste of the salt marsh ponds, from where they had been harvested, was still in evidence. The main courses, all three of them, left a lot to be desired, however.

The barramundi that was ordered was not the Australian barramundi cod (genus *Sopclerages*), but the barramundi (*Lates calcarifer*), also known as Asian seabass.

It was interesting to hear from Kei Kei that the grilled barramundi would have a crispy skin whereas the pan-fried barramundi would not be crispy.

Her statements were a gross exaggeration. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Whatever the barramundi was supposed to have been or how, in fact, it had been prepared, the fish was not fresh and the skin of the fish was soft – when it should have been crispy.

After two bites, it was very obvious that the fish was far from being fresh and so this Reviewer refused to take the chance of getting a stomach ache.

(It is surprising, really, that the menu did not specify that the barramundi was not the Australian variety.)

As for the steak, it could not have been the top-grade, US beef. It was a very bland-tasting piece of a cow. Also, the pan (or whatever it was), as with the barramundi, had not been sufficiently hot to do the job for which it was intended.

At the cost of \$HK430 for about four ounces of beef, Shangri-La can easily afford a better grade of meat, surely.

As for the pork belly, **TARGET** will not waste any time on this dish except to state that it was ridiculous.

Turning to the desserts, they were both excellent and a pleasure to sample.

### The Restaurant

The Lobster Bar and Grill, probably, makes the bulk of its revenue from selling alcoholic drinks and wines to chronic inebriants so that one can understand that at least one third of the outlet is dedicated to hotel guests as well as visitors to the hotel, looking for a cosy nook in order to engage in social intercourse that might lead to some other kind of intercourse.

The wine list has a number of pages, devoted to cocktails; the good wines are relegated to just a few pages.

When Kei Kei had done her disappearing trick, this reviewer helped himself to the Champagne, standing in the ice bucket.

When a black-jacketed lady made note of this, she came over in an attempt to render assistance in handling the bottle of wine.

This reviewer said:

*'It is perfectly taken care of, but thank you for coming over. It seems that your staff do not want to wait on this table, any more.'*

The response: *'Why?'*

The reply: *'Please refer that question to Kei Kei.'*

**TARGET's** table was never cleaned throughout the three-hour stay, because, aside from the disappearing act of Kei Kei, it seemed that most of the other serving staff had, also, gone off somewhere.

Nobody appeared to be in charge of this food outlet and the staff seemed to do whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted, or, alternatively, they did little to nothing.

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