

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Sabatini, The Royal Garden

Address of Restaurant

No. 69, Mody Road, Tsimshatsui East, Kowloon, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, February 28, 2014

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 Dick Yuen

Name of Chef

Mr Andrea Delzanno

Comments

It had been some years since **TARGET** () had ventured into Tsimshatsui East in earnest in order to obtain a good meal and so, on Friday, February 28, it was determined to give Sabatini Ristorante Italiano, the Italian food outlet at The Royal Garden, another try.

On the previous three attempts over a period of more than a decade, the food at this ‘*Italian?*’ restaurant had been an almost complete flop, but one must never say ‘*die*’.

Well, as it turned out, things have not changed appreciably at this food outlet of The Royal Garden: It is still very bad.

In fact, the food at this restaurant is worse, today, than it was about a decade ago.

What has changed at Sabatini is that there has been some renovation work done to the interior dining area and, to be fair to Management, it is much cosier than in the past.

However, one cannot tell a sausage by its skin.

On the evening of **TARGET**’s visit, this was that which were selected from the menu. It has been copied verbatim:

Stracciatella alla Romana
Beef and Capon Consommé
with Beaten Egg, Parmesan and Parsley
\$HK148

La classica trippa stufata alla parmigiana con salsa di pomodoro e ceci
Stewed beef tripe with tomato sauce, chickpeas and parmigiano cheese
\$HK288

Lasagna alla Bolognese
The Original Oven Baked Lasagna Bolognese Style
\$HK358

Branzino alla Piastra Con Salsa Ai
Carciofi, ed Emulsione al Limone
Crispy Skin Seabass with Artichoke Sauce
and Lemon Foam
\$HK498

Braciola di Maiale Iberico ai semi di
Finocchietto e Salsa Alle Albicocche Candite
Iberian Pork Chop with Fennel Seed and Candied Apricot Sauce
\$HK488

Ossobuco di Vitello Brasato al Forno
Con Risotto Allo Zafferano
Slow Braised Veal Shank with

Saffron Risotto and Gremolata

\$438

Porcini Trifolati Aglio e Prezzemolo

Sautéed Porcini Mushrooms with Garlic and Parsley

\$HK138

Insalata di Rucola e Radicchio Con

Porcini Marinate

Rucola and Radicchio Salad

with Marinated Porcini Mushrooms

\$HK138

Sbriciolone“ con Mela e Gelato alla Vaniglia

Apple crumble with vanilla ice cream

Scelta di soufflés

Alla lavanda e albicocca con gelato alla mandoria

Apricot lavender soufflé with almond ice cream

Soufflé al Bailey's con gelato alla mandoria

Bailey's soufflé with almond ice cream

The Food

Of the three first courses, only the soup obtained a passing mark ... but only just, mind you.

The Lasagna alla Bolognese was terrible!

The entire dish had been badly overcooked and the pasta had become what could be described as being akin to looking like and tasting like mashed potatoes – sans taste.

In addition to having oil, seeping out of the mush on the plate, it was almost insipid – even the oil had a little rancid taste.

It appeared that the dish had been prepared, perhaps a day or so before, kept in a refrigerator and, then, when requested by an unsuspecting customer, popped into a microwave or a gas oven where it was overcooked – once again.

The above description has to be approximately correct because the plate on which it was served was even hotter than the mush.

As for the tripe, what can one say about a tomato sauce into which a few pieces of the innards of some animal(s) had been added in order for the restaurant to make the claim that this is the classic style of Italian tripe?

What a nonsense was this dish!

Turning to the Main Courses, once again of the three dishes that were served, only one – the seabass – scored any marks – but, again, only just, mind you.

The Iberian pork chop was, by far, the worst dish of the evening.

Here was a piece of pork that had, just before being ordered, been in a very cold place – perhaps a freezer? – because as soon as the near-white meat was chopped open (not sliced because it was too tough to be cut easily), out seeped, from the central region of the meat, some clear liquid that resembled water.

Further, the lone piece of meat that was sampled had no taste, at all! It could have been anything.

When our waiter saw that the pork chop had hardly been touched, he remarked only that everything was acceptable ... as he, quickly, removed the dish.

Turning to the Ossobuco, it was another horrible mess.

To begin, the risotto was not risotto, at all. It had not been prepared, using any kind of stock, of that there can be no question, and, adding insult to injury, the cooked rice had been in a refrigerator for some time before being scooped onto a plate that served as a charger for some pieces of boiled oxtail over which some tomato sauce covered the few pieces.

The tomato sauce was, exactly, the same sauce as had been used for the tripe!@#***

What really was bad about the Ossobuco was that the rice was very cold and very dry – really bone dry, as the saying goes – and the oxtail, which, clearly, had been boiled separately before being covered in a tomato sauce, was not even warm.

The Ambiance

The ambiance of Sabatini has been improved, markedly, there is no question of that.

The entire restaurant is neat and tidy and the serving staff does make an effort to make customers as comfortable as possible.

There is a troop of Filipino roving singers who wander through the restaurant, attempting to croon old favourites, but their attempts at melodies was, only, an attempt – that failed, miserably.

The restaurant can seat about 80 patrons, but it was noted on **TARGET**'s visit that about 80 percent of the patrons were ethnically Asian who, by the way that they were being served, had visited the eatery on a number of occasions in the past.

The Italian chef was supposed to be Mr Andrea Delzanno, but he had been on holiday for some time, **TARGET** was told.

It was very obvious that there was no European chef on duty on this medium's visit to Sabatini.

There was, however, a white-suited, Chinese gentleman, wandering round the restaurant on occasion, and, because he wore a tall white hat, one could mistake him for a substitute chef.

On scanning the wine list, it was very clear that the prices, being charged for most vintages, were way over the top.

The same criticism could be made in respect of the prices, being charged for most of the food dishes.

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