

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Mandarin Grill

Address of Restaurant

No. 5, Connaught Road Central, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Wednesday, August 13, 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	Unknown

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Reasonably Priced
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Comments

For a number of years, **TARGET** () always stayed away from The Grill Room of Mandarin Oriental Hotel, located in the Central Business District of Hongkong Island. This was due to dissatisfaction with many aspects of this food outlet.

But, of late, things have changed dramatically at this food outlet – and all for the best, it appears.

When this medium stated, ‘*of late*’, above, it is meant to indicate since the last visit to Mandarin Grill, going back a few years.

While Mandarin Grill has the outward appearance of being just about the same as it was a few years ago, there have been very material changes to (a) the quality of service (b) the presentation of dishes (c) the quality of the food and (d) the seemingly intimate knowledge of many of the dishes by quite a number of the serving staff.

TARGET’s return to Mandarin Grill was on Wednesday, August 13, at 7:45 pm, in the midst of a torrential downpour that had engulfed the territory.

After studying the wine list and the menu, these were that which were chosen for the evening’s meal for three people:

Lobster Bisque
\$HK248

Langoustine
(Norwegian Hot Stone, Seaweed, Sea Urchin Dip)
\$HK488

Bacon and Egg
(Spanish 18-week, Suckling Pig, Organic Duck Egg, Herbs, Truffle Jus)
\$HK468

Dover Sole, Grilled
\$HK738

Turbot
(Line Caught, Grilled, Girolles, Baby Spinach, Chicken Jus)
\$HK708

Lamb
(Welsh, Rhug Estate, Organic, Peas and Mint)
\$HK668

Three Soufflés
(Chocolate and Grand Marnier)
\$HK684 – \$HK228 each

Tea
\$HK68

Cappuccino
\$HK78

The Food

There was only one criticism with regard to any of the dishes that were selected: The Turbot. It tasted rather salty and it was not fresh. Of that, there could be no question.

It was not eaten in full, with the exception of one chunk that tasted horrible.

No mention was made to anybody of this matter.

Other than this one complaint, all of the other dishes were near perfect.

The Three Starters

The Lobster Bisque was excellent and all that could be said of it was that it was completely devoured, the pinkish fluid that once graced the white bowl, vanishing in a matter of minutes.

The langoustine dish was, in a word, supreme.

A langoustine (*nephrops norvegicus*), also known as a Dublin Bay prawn, scampi, or Norway lobster, is a rather small decapod, the meat of which, if cooked properly, is succulent and sweet.

The way in which Mandarin Grill serves this delicacy is on a hot stone, with two decapods, draped over it.

The decapods literally melted in one's mouth – and this was no exaggeration.

As for the bacon and eggs, words can hardly explain this dish that is prepared at the table.

Of course, it is not the traditional, British breakfast fare although the duck egg, fried by the waiter on a very hot iron pan as he recited a couple of jokes, had all of the outward appearance of a breakfast dish, but that was as far as it went – a vague appearance.

With the fried egg came a chunk of the most-delicious, suckling pig that one could imagine. Now, one might have thought that suckling pig would give one's taste buds an oily suggestion: Not at all.

You, really, have to see this presentation to appreciate it, fully.

The Main Courses

The Dover Sole was the outstanding Main Course.

It was grilled so that it would not become too dry, during the cooking process.

With a lemon-butter sauce, generously poured over the deboned bottom fish, this dish reigns large as being among the best fish dishes that one could imagine.

The flesh of the fish has a mild, but buttery sweet flavour ... What could surpass it!

As for the Welsh Lamb, well, it should be reserved for people who enjoy a strong-tasting meat because this Welsh Lamb is, really, pungent.

Some people, on tasting it, might be tempted to state that the meat is a little off, in fact.

That was not the case, however.

The Dessert

Turning to the soufflés, all that needs to be said about them was that there was little room for culinary improvement.

Many restaurants tend to '*cheat*' when claiming to prepare soufflés, using all kinds of tricks in order to have the finished product, stand tall and stiff: Using flour is one such application in this regard.

Not so at Mandarin Grill, this reviewer is happy to report.

With the above, **TARGET** ordered a lovely bottle of Bollinger Champagne, La Grande Année, Vintage 2004, at the price of \$HK2,999.

It has become one of the favourite Champagnes of this reviewer, today.

The Ambiance

Mandarin Grill is a lovely restaurant that seats 75 patrons.

On a normal evening, most diners are sedate and their voices can be hardly heard since the tables are spread quite far apart in a very civilised manner.

However, on occasion, one is attacked by the verbosity of philistines of various colours and ethnicities – sadly.

One must forgive these people who seem to be totally unaware of good manners as their sometimes booming voices travel round the room, with gaffaws and giggles.

But, happily, this sort of behaviour is the exception, rather than the rule.

In order not to suffer the philistines of this world, it is suggested to try to avoid table Number 16.

One of the pleasant problems with regard to Mandarin Grill is that the wine list is quite long and comprehensive; and, one may be tempted to drink too much too quickly – which is not good for health.

This reviewer does not condole gluttony on any level and limits imbibing alcohol to not more than one bottle of good Champagne, to begin a meal, one must understand, a nice bottle of [Pomerol](#) to drink with the main course, and, perhaps, an ounce or so of Cognac – to wash down the Champagne and the claret.

Life can be taxing when one visits Mandarin Grill, **TARGET** Subscribers should be aware.

Ah! Well! Life can be trying, can't it?

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