

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Mistral

Address of RestaurantInterContinental Standford Hongkong, No. 70, Mody Road, Tsimshatsui
East, Kowloon, Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Friday, September 5, 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
----------------	----------------------	-------------------

Comments

Things have changed, considerably, at the Italian, fine-dining restaurant of InterContinental Grand Stanford Hongkong.

Aside from the décor, having been upgraded to an advanced level, Mistral must, today, rank very highly, compared with many, if not most, of its competitors.

TARGET () revisited Mistral on Friday, September 5, at exactly 7 pm, having endured a one-mile hike from the Tsimshatsui Station of the Mass Transit Railway in the sweltering, 30-degree (Celsius) heat, with the humidity level, being in the high 90-percent level.

But the hike was aptly rewarded by the very elegant meal that was devoured at this remake of what was, in days of yore, a hopeless food outlet of this hotel, an outlet that could, in days gone by, make the claim of not having even one competent chef on duty – from any country.

On the evening of this medium's visit to Mistral, this was that which was ordered:

Antipasti

Pizza buffalo
\$HK268

First Courses

*Cappasanta arrostita con lardo di Colonnata, caviale di melansana
olvere di olive nere e salsa al rosmarino*
*Roasted hand dived scallops with colonnata's lard, eggplant caviar,
Black olive and rosemary dressing*
\$HK288

Ricotta e insalata di asparagi Verdi al tartufo nero
*Ricotta cheese with green asparagus salad
and summer truffle*
\$HKHK218

Zuppa di astice, fregola e infusion di erbe
Lobster soup with Sardinian fregola and herb infusion
\$HK198_

Second Courses

Risotto ai funghi, tartufo nero di Norcia e fonduta di parmigiano
Piedmont style risotto with assorted mushrooms, Norcia's black truffle and parmesan fondue
\$HK328

Stracci di pasta ai funghi, bagna cauda e tartufo nero di Norcia
*Hand made stracci pasta tossed with seasonal wide mushrooms,
Piedmontese "gagna cauda" sauce and black truffle*
\$HK308

Guancia di manzo brasata, polenta soffice, porcini e tartufo nero di Norcia
Braised beef cheek in red wine, soft polenta,

Sautéed porcini mushrooms and Norcia's Black truffle
\$HK488

Desserts

Il tiramisu del Mistral
Mistral signature tiramisu
\$HK98

Il Limone e la Meringa Italiana, I profumi di una crosata
Lemon and Italian meringue, reminiscent of a lemon tart
\$HK98

Il caldo mollo al cioccolato e zafferano
Soft centered chocolate cake with saffron ice cream
\$HK118

As is this reviewer's habit, one of the first actions that is taken on entering a restaurant under review is to inspect the toilet facilities on the assumption that, if the facilities are not sparkling clean, what can one expect from the kitchen and/or the serving staff.

Well, on the evening of this reviewer's visit to Mistral, the short walk to the toilet was not for any other reason than to engage in ablutions in order to be refreshed and to cool down from the arduous walk from Tsimshatsui to Tsimshatsui East.

The toilet facilities were immaculate.

The next action, on being seated, was the scanning of the wine list that, it was soon discovered, was somewhat limited.

However, the prices, for the most part, were reasonable, considering the upgrading of the hotel, generally, and of Mistral, in particular.

After a short consultation with Mr Fabio Miconi, Mistral's Manager, these were the wines that were selected:

Ferrari Perle, Nero Blanc de Noir, Vintage 2005
\$HK1,890

Amarone Aldegheri, Classic Barneato, Vintage 2008
\$HK1,240

The Food

To start off the very comprehensive meal, a little libation was in order and it was, at this point, that **TARGET** was able, once again, to taste one of Italy's best sparkling wines: Ferrari.

(Italy is not permitted to use the word, 'Champagne', because this term for France's sparkling wines is jealously guarded under French law.)

Well, this reviewer can report that Ferrari is as good as, if not better than, many champagnes from France.

Sucking on glasses, full of Ferrari, **TARGET** nibbled on slices of the Pizza Buffalo.

This dish had been ordered as an antipasti, notwithstanding the fact that one of this medium's food reviewers hails from Indonesia and is very partial to pizza.

The pizza was good, but it was far from being the best that this reviewer had sampled.

Having travelled to Rome, Milan, and many parts of Tuscany, on numerous occasions, Mistral's pizza comes in as second-class.

The First Courses

The First Courses were, just about, perfect.

The lobster soup was sheer perfection in spite of the fact that most Italians would never permit a soup to follow a pasta dish.

The scallop dish was an outright winner: There was no room for improvement.

As for the salad, what can one state: It was a good salad.

The Second Courses

The two pasta dishes were both very good, but, most likely, Mr Fabio Miconi must have thought that this Englishman was completely bonkers to have ordered a pasta dish (the pizza), followed by a soup, and, then, another pasta dish!

The beef cheeks, however, was very much a letdown: The meat had no taste of its own, relying, almost completely, on the accompanying sauce that, by the way, was much too salty.

In a conversation with Mr Fabio Miconi, again, he let it be known that the restaurant only serves Australian and New Zealand beef.

This reviewer remarked that New Zealand beef is even worse than Australian, grass-fed bovines.

In addition, this reviewer stated that Australian beef is fit only for the 23 million-odd Aussies – the word, ‘*Aussies*’, being the demonym for indigenous Australians – served with a fried egg on top a slab of an overcooked chunk of meat for breakfast.

(This reviewer is not planning to visit Australia in the near future: Safe is better than sorry.)

However, top marks for Mr Miconi’s choice of an Amarone, the alcoholic content, being 15.50 percent by volume.

The Desserts

The desserts were all good, but a little too sweet for this reviewer.

The Italians have never, really, been known for their desserts and pastries so that, what can one expect?

Having said that, **TARGET** cannot complain about the three desserts, but this reviewer was more interested in trying to drain that which remained of Amarone and Ferrari.

One cannot beat a good wine, as a dessert, can one?

By the way, Mistral does not have a Vino Santo (Holy wine) on its wine list!

Shame! Shame! Shame!

***While TARGET makes every attempt to ensure accuracy of all data published,
TARGET cannot be held responsible for any errors and/or omissions.***

*If readers feel that they would like to voice their opinions about that which they have read in **TARGET**, please feel free to e-mail your views to editor@targetnewspapers.com. **TARGET** does not guarantee to publish readers' views, but reserves the right so to do subject to the laws of libel.*