

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Bistecca

Address of Restaurant2/Floor, Grand Progress Building, Nos. 15-16, Lan Kwai Fong, Central,
Hongkong**Date of Visit**

Friday, September 27, 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

The 90-seater, restaurant was jam-packed, with the smallish tables, being so close together that the four serving staff could not help but bump into guests as they negotiated a passage from one part of the room to another.

The air-conditioning system was totally inadequate to cope with the crush of diners, nearly all of whom were sweating, some more profusely than others, depending on their level of inebriation.

The restaurant to which the three-man, **TARGET** () team was reviewing on Saturday, September 27, 2014, is named Bistecca Italian Steak House and all that this medium can say about it is that one is advised to avoid it if one is intent on enjoying a good, beefsteak meal.

Bistecca is located in one of the dirtiest parts of Hongkong Island, about 500 feet up a steep lane from the Central Business District. This area can boast of being the closest thing to a human ashtray.

Lan Kwai Fong is resplendent in prostitutes, looking for johns who could afford the price of a quickie legs-up, and bands of roaming homosexuals, looking for new people to bugger.

European ‘gypsies’ and ethnic, Chinese inebriants are seated in bars, the managements of which have long since removed the front doors and windows so that, sucking on glasses of beer, with cigarettes, dangling from mouths, all of the male customers are afforded the opportunity to engage passing, unsuspecting females in not-so salubrious conversations.

On the evening of the medium’s visit to this area, an area of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) that must be considered an offence to gentility as well as being a depiction, in microcosm, of a civilisation in the first stages of decay, with the temperature in the low 30 degrees Celsius, **TARGET**’s team waited for a good five minutes for the lift to carry the team to the second floor of Grand Progress Building.

The lift could not carry more than about five passengers so that there was another, five-minute wait for the second lift to descend to the Ground Floor.

With not even a fan in the lobby of this old, dilapidated building, by the time that **TARGET** arrived at the tiny reception area of Bistecca, the entire team required a shower, with perspiration, dripping down one’s forehead and with one’s clothes, being soaked to the skin.

The female receptionist, who was, clearly, out of sorts – probably, feeling terribly uncomfortable at the lack of air-conditioning in her area – and, being unable to speak a word of Chinese and knowing only a smattering of English, ordered the **TARGET** team that, while a table had been prepared for our arrival, we were only permitted to stay in the restaurant for 90 minutes, from 7:00 pm until 8:30 pm.

On entering the dining area, the first thing that was experienced was the obvious the lack of adequate air-conditioning.

The entire restaurant had been planned on the concept of an open-kitchen design so that the cooking in the kitchen helped to maintain a rather high degree of humidity in the dining area and, at the same time, caused a migration of healthy volumes of heat to flood the dining area, thus causing the temperature, without the cooling effect of any air-conditioning, to range between 28 degrees Celsius and 30 degrees Celsius.

When a passing waitress was informed that the temperature was far too high, she mumbled something and quickly strode away.

As luck would have it, Mr Roy Shek, a Chinese gentleman who is the Restaurant Manager and who took a cursory note of this medium’s complaint, went over to an adjoining table and, after confirming that the four diners at that table, also, were complaining about the heat, informed the receptionist to keep the front door closed.

A small 'war' ensued between this young lady, who might have been a Nepalese, and Mr Shek, resulting in the receptionist, first trying to wedge the front door open, permanently, with a piece of wood (or something hard), and, when this failed (Mr Shek was having none of this nonsense), she stationed herself inside the dining area, her back to the closed front door, seemingly refusing to acknowledge prospective guests, alighting from the lift, from time to time.

After about 10 minutes, she capitulated, however, and, with a few tears, about spoil her makeup, she was forced to return to her original position in the virtual sweatbox of the reception area.

With the front door, being closed, the air-conditioning system cooled down the room, somewhat, but every time that a guest, needed to visit the toilet facilities, a gust of hot air invaded the dining area.

About the toilets, they were disgustingly dirty, with men, having urinated on the floor of the small, male cubicle while, on the female side, there were unmentionables, littering the area.

Clearly, nobody was cleaning the toilets so that, in this medium's opinion, if the toilets of an eatery are not well maintained, what may one expect of the kitchen staff and of the kitchen, itself?

The Food

After scanning the wine list, **TARGET** determined that aside from a handful of good Champagnes, some of which were terribly over-priced – Champagne has no place in a steak dinner, in any event – there was little else of any note to tempt one to order a bottle of a decent red.

Turning to the menu for the evening, these were that which were ordered for three people:

First Courses

Caesar Salad, Romaine, Parmesan, Bacon, Anchovies
\$HK138

Watermelon and Heirloom Tomato Salad – Basil, Mint, Frisee, Pistachio
\$HK128

Bone Marrow
\$HK168

Main Courses

Seafood Linguine, Mussels, Clams, Prawn, Squid
\$HK188

Select American Steaks
(All American Steaks are USDA Black Angus Beef)

Ribeye 16 ounces
\$HK428

Sirloin 16 ounces
\$HK488

Seared Wild Mushrooms, Fresh Herbs
\$HK58

House Made Steak Fries
\$HK68

Grilled Onions with Thyme and Balsamic Glaze
\$HK58

The salad courses were both quite good, with the vegetables, clearly being fresh.

As for the bone marrow, however, it was, in this reviewer's opinion, horrible.

There was no salt on the table so that, when a member of the serving staff was passing, an ethnic Indian (assumed), and was requested to bring some salt, it was delivered – about 10 minutes later, after the salad had been devoured in its entirety.

As the meal progressed and some two large bottles of water had been consumed, it was noted that, for some odd reason, the three European, fast-food cooks were not in the habit of lacing their dishes with any salt.

When the two steaks and the linguine appeared on the table, it was discovered that the steaks were almost completely tasteless and, while the linguine – which was not fresh, at all, unless one assumes that packaged, dehydrated pasta, purchased at just about any Wellcome supermarket, is to be considered ‘fresh’ – was not overcooked, the accompanying seafood was all of the frozen variety.

And this restaurant boasts of being an Italian-style eatery.

Rubbish!

This restaurant’s beefsteaks are all said to be **USDA** – The United States Department of Agriculture – and, before being seared and served, certainly they looked the part, but one has to question whether or not the beef is among the lowest USDA grades or, alternatively, the restaurant is being cheated by its suppliers and that the beef, being purchased via a third party, only has the appearance of being that which it should have been.

According to **TARGET**’s intelligence, confirmed by The USDA’s website, there are eight beef grades:

1. US Prime – The highest in quality and intramuscular fat of which there is a very limited supply. Currently, only about 2.90 percent of all carcasses that are graded are stamped as being Prime.
2. US Choice – High quality, widely available in the food-service industry and retail markets. Choice carcasses are about 53.70 percent of the fed cattle total. The difference between Choice and Prime is largely due to the fat content in the beef. Prime typically has a higher fat content (more and well distributed intramuscular ‘marbling’) than Choice.
3. US Select – This is the lowest grade that is commonly sold at retail outlets and is considered acceptable quality. However, it is less juicy and tender due to leanness.
4. US Standard – A much lower quality of beef, lacking marbling.
5. US Commercial – A low quality of beef, lacking in tenderness, having been produced from older animals.
6. US Utility
7. US Cutter
8. US Canner

Note: Utility, Cutter, and Canner grades are rarely used in retail, food-service operations and meet the primarily requirements of processors and canners.

This medium suggests that Bistecca is selling something between US Standard and US Canner grades of beef. Certainly, it cannot be buying any of the top grades.

Whatever are the facts, **TARGET** gave up the ghost and was unable to ingest the insipid beefsteaks.

(**TARGET** sincerely hopes that the above information with regard to USDA beef grades will assist serious beefeaters when visiting restaurants that make suggestions as to what is being served.)

As this medium left the restaurant, Mr Shek, poor man, having been clearly slighted by our comments about the poverty of the food, this reviewer turned to the Nepalese receptionist and commented:

‘See! You have your beloved table returned before 8:30 pm!’

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