

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

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

**Name of Restaurant**

Nicholini's

**Address of Restaurant**

8/Floor, Conrad Hongkong Hotel, No. 88, Queensway, Hongkong

**Date of Visit**

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

**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 -- None**

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**                      Very Reasonably Priced

**Comments**

Things appear to have changed for the better at Nicholini's, the fine-dining, food outlet at Conrad Hongkong Hotel (), located at Pacific Place.

While the dining room appears to be almost completely unchanged from days of yore, the food and its presentation rate much higher than the last time that this medium visited the restaurant.

At least, that was the situation when this medium, without making a reservation, showed up on the evening of Wednesday, March 11, 2015.

The last time that **TARGET** () visited a food outlet at this hotel, some of the desserts had grown unsightly mouldy and, when this was pointed out to a member of the serving staff, a Chinese cook was summoned.

He apologised for the mould on a small glass of mousse, making a puerile excuse for the fuzzy white, organic growth atop the orange concoction.

Since the mouldy dessert incident, last Wednesday's return was the first in more than three years.

**TARGET Makes An Entry**

On the Wednesday of **TARGET**'s visit to Nicholini's, it was somewhat reminiscent of the days when Mr Dario Regazzoni was the General Manager of Conrad Hongkong because it was he who determined to launch this food outlet.

The Restaurant Manager of Nicholini's today is Mr Emanuele Gorla and, on being informed by the restaurant's hostess that **TARGET**'s representatives had, once again, determined to sample the food on offer, Mr Gorla came over and introduced himself, taking the trouble to explain that, on the evening of this medium's visit, there was a guest chef who would demonstrate his art with regard to the cuisine of the Piedmont Region of Italy.

Guest chefs! Shades of Mr Dario Regazzoni!

On studying the menu, this was that which was selected:

*4-Course Set \$HK938 each*

*Appetizers*

*Battuta di Fassona*

*Al Coltello Con Fonduta Di Parmigiano e Verdure Croccanti*

*Fossona Beef Tartare with Parmesan Fondue and*

*Crunchy Vegetables*

*Scaloppa di Foie Gras*

*Crudo di Seppia e Carciofo, Salsa Alla Maggiorana*

*Pan-Fried Foie Gras with Raw Cuttlefish. Artichokes and*

*Marjoram Sauce*

*Risotto and Homemade Pasta*

*Riso Mantecato  
Con Gli Scampi, Profumo di Mandarino  
Scampi and Tangerine Risotto*

*Agnolotti Del Plin  
Al Sugo D'Arrosto  
Homemade Agnolotti Pasta with Gravy*

*Main Dishes*

*Controfiletto di Manzo  
Arrosto Con Asparagi Bianchi, Salsa Olandese e Bordolese  
Pan-Seared Beef Sirloin with White Asparagus,  
Hollandaise and Bordelaise Sauce*

*Carre D'Agnello Arrosto  
Con Marmellata di Cipolla di Tropea, Gratin di Bietola, Profumo di Timo  
Roasted Back of Lamb with Tropea Onion Jam,  
Chard Gratin and Thyme*

*Astice  
Con Piselli, Spugnole e Caviare  
Blue Lobster with Green Peas, Morels and Caviar*

*Desserts*

*Fragola  
Yogurt e Meringa  
Fresh Strawberry with Yogurt and Meringue*

*Tiramisu  
Alla Nocciola  
Hazelnut Tiramisu*

**The Food**

A large part of the food tasted somewhat bland, not so as to be offensive to one's taste buds, mind you, but having little or no discerning characteristics that one would have expected from quality raw produce from which the food was said to have been created.

This was especially true of the beef tartare.

The Risotto Mantecato was rather a poor showing, however, at least the first attempt, that is. It was sent packing because the rice was almost raw whereas it was supposed to have been cooked al dente.

On the second showing, however, the risotto was fine. It was the first time that this reviewer had eaten this dish that had distinctive, tangerine overtones.

The blue lobster, which is the favourite of many people who love the sweet, delicate taste of fresh lobster meat, was perfectly cooked, having been quickly dunked in a hot broth and, then, swiftly served lest the meat cool too quickly.

When the lamb was produced, to a shocked Mr Gorla, no doubt, this reviewer requested mint jelly to accompany the dish.

On a negative note, had Mr Dario Regazzoni been seated with **TARGET**, last Wednesday evening, he may have had a fit.

During the entire 90 minutes that this medium was present at Nicholini's, not once was the table cleared of droppings of breadcrumbs and what-have-you.

It appeared that nobody had been trained to clean patrons' tables, halfway through the meal – or whenever it, obviously, was

required so to do.

Further, a number of the serving staff were standing round the room, chatting and telling jokes to each other, and so, when a guest wanted something, it was required that a high-pitched noise floated through the room in order to attract the attention of somebody.

For a fine-dining restaurant as Nicholini's wants to be known, this is just not on.

Changes have, definitely, been made at this restaurant, but there is, still, some way to go before it has the ability to achieve a level that, originally, made Nicholini's the talk of the town.

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