

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

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

Name of Restaurant

Caprice

Address of Restaurant

6/Floor, The Four Seasons Hotel, No. 8, Finance Street, Central, Hongkong

Date of Visit

Friday, June 26, 2015

CategoryTARGETs RatingService

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 - None	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 - No Comment	Reasonable	Unreasonable	Expensive
Storage of Wine	Good	Poor	Poor
Expertise of Sommelier	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor

Total Cost of Meal

Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced
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Comments

Quite a number of things has changed at Caprice, the fine-dining restaurant at Four Seasons Hotel, Hongkong.

And all of the changes have conspired, either by accident, design, or rank incompetence on the part of Management, to downgrade this once elegant, French restaurant, very substantially.

TARGET () has visited Caprice three times since it first opened, but on the return visit of Friday, June 26, 2015, the experience at this restaurant was, in a word, horrible.

The view of Victoria Harbour from the restaurant is still stunning, of course, and the quality of the serving staff has been maintained at a very high level.

But this medium's accolades stop at this point.

On the day of **TARGET**'s visit to Caprice, this was the menu that was chosen:

*Duck Foie Gras Terrine,
Burlat Cherry Chutney, Spicy Red Wine Jelly
\$HK410*

*Chilled Risotto, Sea Bass Carpaccio,
Spider Crab and Kristal Caviar
\$HK880*

*Wild Watercress Velouté,
Fresh Sheep Milk Cheese, Gnocchi, Girolles Mushroom
\$HK390*

*Brittany Blue Lobster Tart,
Watermelon, Green Apple, Avocado, Kristal Caviar
\$HK870*

*Caramelised Pigeon Breast,
Moroccan Spices, Couscous Style Vegetables
\$HK690*

*Salers French Beef
Pommes Soufflées, Artichoke Mousseline, Dolce-Forte Sauce
\$HK850*

*Guanaja Chocolate Soufflé,
Toasted Hazelnuts, Tahitian Vanilla Ice Cream
\$HK180*

*Burlat Cherry Custard Tart,
Caramelised Cherries, Almond Ice Cream
\$HK180*

With the meal, the following wines were selected:

Taittinger Comtes de Champagne, Vintage 2005	\$HK2,680
La Fleur Petrus, Vintage 1995	\$HK8,600

The Champagne was excellent, but the two reds were appalling, both having been corked to varying degrees.

When this was pointed out to a black-jacketed, European gentleman that this reviewer took to be a youthful, peripatetic sommelier, at first, after taking a tiny sample of the La Fleur Petrus, he was about to suggest that **TARGET** was incorrect in that the wine was very good when he was caught short.

Without caring to argue the point with this young Frenchman (?), with this reviewer's flourishing gesture with a simple wrist movement, one that was suggestive of, '*Do not argue with your betters*', the offending wine was removed without another word and exchanged for the Château Cheval Blanc.

This wine, as it turned out, was also corked, but nowhere near to the extent of the La Fleur Petrus.

It was, at about this time, that **TARGET** realised that the sommelier had determined not to present the corks of either of the reds to be inspected.

One can only conjecture as to the reason for this '*oversight*'?

The Food

Of the three first courses, the worst was the most expensive one.

The caviar, accompanying the chilled risotto, was not caviar, at all, and the blinis, accompanying the '*caviar*', were not blinis, at all.

Further, the entire dish was insipid.

As for the wild watercress velouté, it was so salty that it could not be consumed. When this was pointed out to a waiter, he quickly returned the green liquid to the open kitchen.

Within about two minutes, the wild watercress velouté was returned to the table and, to this medium's horror, what the kitchen people had done was, merely, to water down the broth – which made it, by that time, completely tasteless.

And, still, it was very salty!

Turning to the duck foie gras, it was bitter, because, clearly, some fool has permitted some spleen of the poor bird to infect the liver at the preparation stage of the dish.

As for the three Main Courses, only the Brittany Blue Lobster was worthy of a positive comment.

TARGET suggests that this dish had been prepared by an ethnic Chinese cook since the Chinese continue to be among the top cooks in the world (not the French, as one has, historically, been taught to believe).

Chinese cooks have never had to rely on butter as the chief ingredient in the cooking process of any of their dishes. And Chinese cooks do not create rich, buttery sauces in order to blanket their lack of expertise in the preparation of any dishes.

The pigeon breast was tasteless – probably because it was of the frozen variety.

Turning to the French beef, the meat had been prepared in such a manner so that sinews ran throughout the six ounces or so of meat, making it difficult to cut and, then, difficult to chew.

As for the taste: It had none!

Could it, also, have been of the frozen variety?

TARGET will not attempt to describe the two desserts, mainly because neither one was worthy of a positive comment.

The Restaurant

The one thing that has not changed in Caprice is the décor of the restaurant.

It is attractive and efficient and the open-kitchen design tends to lend confidence to first-time visitors to this restaurant since they are able to watch the cooks, doing their things.

With European cooks, trying to follow time-honoured recipes, for Asian guests, it must appear that Caprice is the best of the best in the 416 square miles that constitute Hongkong.

In truth, however, far from it.

Caprice, today, has graduated into being among the most-pretentious restaurants in the territory; and, dressing it up with some

European faces in the open kitchen and having the audacity of calling them chefs when, if truth be known, they are no better than short-order cooks in a diner (a small, North American roadside restaurant, well known for a long counter and one, short-order cook, on duty), has not helped to dispel the facts: They can't (or don't want to) cook.

The attempt to camouflage the problems, endemic at Caprice, by calling the posh eatery, one that specialises in preparing 'French cuisine', cannot hide the fact that most of the dishes are, at best, mediocre.

This medium spent more than \$HK24,000 in testing the culinary expertise of Restaurant Caprice – and all that could be said about it was that it was a miserable failure.

This restaurant is a rip-off, in **TARGET**'s opinion.

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