

TARGET

Intelligence Report

VOLUME XXIII No. 18

S A T U R D A Y

January 23, 2021

Viewsletter

Dining and Wining

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THE BEST

RESTAURANTS OF HONGKONG ...

AND THE WORST !

<u>Name of Restaurant</u>	Brasserie on the Eighth
<u>Address of Restaurant</u>	Level 8, The Conrad Hongkong Hotel, Pacific Place, No. 88, Queensway, Hongkong
<u>Date of Visit</u>	Sunday, January 10, 2021

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Dining and Wining

<u>Category</u>	<u>TARGET's Rating</u>		
<u>Service</u>			
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
<u>Ambiance</u>			
Lighting	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Music	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
General	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Food</u>			
Presentation	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Taste	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
Quantity	Excellent	Acceptable	Poor
<u>Total Cost of Meal</u>			
Very Expensive	Moderately Expensive	Very Reasonably Priced	

Comments

Nobody is quite certain from where it originated, but, in 1917, there was a popular early recording of the Prince's Orchestra of that which, today, has been given the title of the limerick, put to music, with the introduction of the nomenclature of which was

'The Old Gray Mare'.

Today, it is sometimes sung, only by very young children, mainly of the United Kingdom, the first verse of which is:

*'The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be,
Ain't what she used to be, ain't what she used to be,
The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be,
Many long years ago.'*

The simple '*libretto*' of this four-verse limerick, put to a repetitive musical melody, could easily be associated with that which might well be considered, by many, as being as hilarious as that which is presently being served at the Champagne Brunch on Sundays at The Conrad Hongkong Hotel.

On Sunday, January 10, 2021, at 2:10 p.m., **TARGET**'s team of two food appraisers – a male and a female – showed up at the eighth floor of The Conrad Hotel, only to be told, rather sternly, that this medium was 20 minutes early!

That being the case, this medium was ordered to stand in line until the appointed time when guests would be permitted to enter the restaurant.

The eighth floor is, in fact, the lift entrance to the eight floor of The Conrad Hotel.

It measures no more than about 30 square feet so that, as the minutes dragged on to the magic moment of 2:30 p.m., the entire surface area of the eighth floor was accommodating some 40 or so hungry guests – at a time in the history of the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China that physical distancing was strongly in vogue in order to try to prevent the continuing onslaught of COVID-19.

Exactly, at the appointed moment, the crush of guests was permitted to enter, somewhat hurriedly, the hallowed grounds, reserved exclusively for moneyed residents of the 416 square miles that constitute that which is known, today, as simply, Hongkong.

To be absolutely fair to The Conrad Hotel, '*Brasserie on the Eighth*' has the outward appearance of magnificence, with its 29 tables, and smartly dressed serving staff.

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Seated at **TARGET**'s assigned table, the following one-sheet menu was presented by a waiter and, through his face mask – that muffled much of that which he was trying to explain – he took the trouble, all within a period of about one minute, to recite a statement that he had, obviously, been forced to memorise.

<p><i>Soup</i></p> <p><i>Pumpkin Soup</i></p> <p><i>Mushrooms Soup</i></p> <p><i>Sushi Bar</i></p> <p><i>Al Dente Pasta Kitchen</i></p> <p><i>Carving Counter</i></p> <p><i>Grill Beef Rib</i></p> <p><i>Sausage</i></p> <p><i>Mains</i></p> <p><i>Pan-Fried Salmon</i></p> <p><i>braised lentils, beurre blanc</i></p> <p><i>Grilled Veal</i></p> <p><i>beurre Maître D'Hôtel, truffle mash, arugula salad</i></p> <p><i>Dessert</i></p> <p><i>Panna Cotta with Raspberry Coulis</i></p> <p><i>Blueberry Cheesecake</i></p> <p><i>Chocolate Mouse with Griottines</i></p> <p><i>Strawberry Mille-feuille</i></p> <p><i>Opera Cake</i></p> <p><i>Lemon Éclairs</i></p> <p><i>Seasonal Fresh Fruits</i></p> <p><i>Ice Cream Selection</i></p>
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Since the 20-minute wait had resulted in **TARGET**'s team, being left somewhat thirsty, a bottle of water was requested as a substitute for the house water that came directly from the hotel's tap.

Before the water arrived, a glass of Perrier-Jouët Champagne appeared and it was served to the male constituent of **TARGET**'s team, while the female constituent declined the offer of the Champagne, she, being the designated driver of the afternoon.

(The Conrad Hotel had not been apprised of **TARGET**'s visit, the reservation, having been made under a nom de plume.)

The Champagne, by the way, was excellent.

The First Course

The Cream of Pumpkin Soup was an absolute disgrace.

It was a terribly watered-down version of the original recipe, no doubt; it was lukewarm; and, in a word, it was insipid – as mildewed water is expected to be.

The reason that this liquid concoction was lukewarm was because, among other things, the stainless-steel pot had no way to heat the pot's contents.

When a passing guest, noted the soup in its stainless-steel pot, on reading the contents, he pried open the lid and, obviously somewhat shocked at the pot's content, accidentally dropped the heavy lid that careened about three feet from the guest, coming to rest, downside, not too far from **TARGET**'s table.

The noise of the accident, being rather loud, alerted a waiter, who rushed over to retrieve the lid and, without any consideration of cleaning it, smartly replaced it on the pot.

At this point, it was noted that the pot's content had a thin skin on top of it.

As one could have surmised, the startled guest left ... without sampling the pot's contents.

The Second Course

The sashimi course comprised four uncooked shrimps, two slices of raw salmon, and two slices of the meat of an octopus.

It was edible; no other comment was required.

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The choices of the sashimi are readily available at the supermarket, located in the basement, below The Conrad Hotel.

The Third Course

Pasta was the third course that was sampled.

For those people who enjoy copious quantities of tinned tomatoes and tinned tomato puree, poured over spaghetti, cooked al dente, this course might be considered acceptable.

However, the tinned tomatoes and the tinned tomato puree were terribly acidic to such an extent that it was an irritant to one's palate.

There were two kinds of this aborted version of Italian cooking: One with minced meat; and, one with seafood.

There was little difference between the two versions: One teaspoon of each was more than enough.

The Fourth Course

The Conrad Hotel only serves Australian beef because, as one might appreciate, meat from Australia is vastly cheaper than buying USDA Prime beef.

The baked Australian beef, as with the watered-down mushroom soup, was without any discernible flavour: It, too, was served cold, for one reason or another, known only to Management of The Conrad Hotel.

And, if one closed one's eyes with a thin slice of the Australian meat in one's mouth, it would have been impossible to know as to that which was expected to be masticated.

With the meat, a teaspoon of mashed potatoes was served, probably of the powdered variety, due to the fact that it, also, was without any discernible flavour, it having the consistency of saliva.

There was, also, some other white mush that was supposed to pass as mashed (mushed) vegetables.

If one was not too happy with the Australian beef, there was, also, a seven-inch sausage roll, around which was a thin layer of something that looked mysteriously like pastry.

TARGET's female constituent member labelled this as '*Sausage Wellington*'.

It tasted of the likes of versions of World War II spam that was included in K-Rations for individual soldiers as a daily combat food ration, first introduced by the United States Army due to its high fatty contents – and little else.

The Desserts

The dessert platter, comprising numerous little pieces of this and that, one blob of that which was supposed to pass as ice cream that was on a par as with the majority of the meal: Tasteless.

If anything, this course was a joke – but the joke was on the pastry chef (this is an assumption, here, that there is a pastry chef in the employ of The Conrad Hotel) – because this medium had no intension of sampling more than the smallest crumb of most of the colourful offering.

Just one final comment in respect of the so-called ice cream: It turned out to be iced milk, not ice cream, at all. It was laced with tiny pieces of frozen strawberries and, as the iced milk started to melt, it was easy to see exactly what this blob comprised.

The Cost

The total cost of this meal was \$HK1,782.20 for two people.

It was money badly spent.

It is highly unlikely that this medium shall suffer this restaurant again unless Management makes material improvements.

No doubt, Senior Management shall be glad to learn of this definitive determination.

Lastly, many years ago, this restaurant was '*the*' place to take a Sunday brunch and spend two or more hours in so doing, but, sadly:

'The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be ...?'