

Café China has been given a Michelin star, placing it on an equal footing with gourmet restaurants such as Boulez and Jean Georges. Given the fact that Café China excels in cooking up the worst Chinese food on the planet, this can only be explained by a bribe or a personal connection between the Michelin reviewer and the restaurant owner. There is no way that the disaster we had for dinner at this lamentable eating establishment could, by anyone with even a hairsbreadth of ability to appreciate good food, be regarded as a gourmet restaurant. If Café China is deserving of a Michelin star, then MacDonald's is deserving of two.

How shall I describe the nightmare I endured at the hands of Café China's chef, if so he or she can be called? The first dish we had was the smoked duck. It would have been better if, rather than smoking it, they had opted for cremation. I generally love duck. I hated this one. But then, what passed for food on this occasion had as little in common with duck as it might with an old shoe. Rather than the customary succulent and juicy meat to which I have so happily been accustomed in past culinary experience with this particular bird, I was faced with the challenge of chewing on what I can only describe as salty, smoke laden leather. The thought did cross my mind that this culinary nightmare had been concocted in the Dead Sea where it is said that due to the overwhelmingly high salt content, nothing can sink. Such was the degree of saltiness lingering on my taste buds after regretfully having placed a morsel of this dish in my mouth. Having paid for the food and being rather hungry, I tried to eat a few more pieces in the hope that they might not be as bad as the first. Alas, all of my attempts at deriving even the smallest degree of pleasure from the duck were utter failures. Needless to say, I did not eat more. My girlfriend, who cannot tolerate waste, decided to take the remains of the duck home in a doggy bag. I only hope the dog doesn't choke.

Another dish, not quite as bad as the first, but not much better, was the "Blossom Fish." I had the same dish in Shanghai which was one of the best dishes I have ever had. I have had similar dishes in various Thai restaurants which I also enjoyed immensely. In each of these establishments, the fish was crispy on the outside, tender on the inside, and lightly laced with a delicate sweet sauce. Sadly, I cannot say the same for the Café China's version of the dish. In Shanghai, the fish used was "Yellow Fish." In the Thai restaurants, Red Snapper was used. My girlfriend identified the fish at Café China as Tilapia, a fish far cheaper fish than those used in the other restaurants. In all fairness, I will say that the fish was tender and the crust was not entirely devoid of crispiness. What ruined it was the sugary, suffocating syrupy glop that smothered it. If the fish had not been dead prior to having been covered with this concoction, I have little doubt the chef's application of this most inventive syrup would have done the job. The last I heard, murdering a fish is no crime. In this case, it should have been.

The third dish we ordered was "butter squash soup." I generally love this kind of soup. I did not love this one. It was not as overtly offensive as the duck or the syrup on the fish. There was little about the flavor to call it offensive. I would rather say it was simply bland, character-less liquid as thin as a sufferer of anorexia, an ailment one might well develop if the only food available on the planet were made by the Café China cooking staff.

Had I not gone to Café China based on a Michelin review, I would probably not have taken the time to write this deservedly scathing review. The focus of my outrage is directed less at the

Café China management and chef as it is at the Michelin reviewer who has forever tarnished, at least for me, the credibility of what is generally regarded as the finest and most discerning of restaurant reviewing agencies. Shame on you Michelin!