

Everything's nice but the price

Your traveling taster visits area eateries and rates them on a 100-point scale. Up to 30 points are awarded for ambience, which includes general atmosphere and service; 55 points for food; and 15 points for price/value rating. A total count of 59 points or less indicates a restaurant is not recommended; 60-74 points signify from passing to good; 75-89 points designate very good with some extraordinary features; and 90-100 points show that a very special dining experience awaits you.

JACQUES, 30100 Telegraph, Bingham Farms (642-1373), offers a lovely setting with a spacious feeling enhanced by an open courtyard, which includes pretty trees strung with lights. Since its change of ownership and some much-needed refurbishing, the dining area provides an attractive opportunity to enjoy good cuisine. The classical music is appealing, there are candles on the tables and the feeling here is comfortable and relaxing. Some additional investment in new flatware, china and furnishings is needed, however, before a word like "elegant" would be appropriate. Generally, men were dressed in suits or sport jackets and women in dresses or skirts. Our reservations were promptly and very pleasantly handled. Dinner took about two hours. General Atmosphere — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 13.

The pace of service is so important in a restaurant that is attempting to attain a "gourmet" reputation. Our waiter was extremely knowledgeable about the menu items. He arrived at the table as soon as we were seated and took our drink orders. Throughout the meal, he refilled our water, replaced our dirty silverware and — generally — was very attentive to our needs. However, he also rushed the first half of our meal so that, for example, the entrees appeared as we were finishing our salad. Additionally, the plates of some people were removed while others were still eating. This may seem "picky," but a narrative on the back of the menu tells the patron how much pride the restaurant has in itself and why its prices may seem high. If it wants us to expect perfection, it must be judged by that measure. Service — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 13.

The seafood fettuccini (\$5.75) featured freshly made pasta, which was prepared well. The sauce contained an ample quantity of seafood, but the taste was overly fishy and the sauce too runny. The assorted appetizer plate (\$6.95) had a delicious range of (primarily) seafood items. In particular, the oyster Rockefeller, the clam casino and the scallops and shrimp were noteworthy. Warm bread was served, and drinks were fine. Drinks, Appetizers and Bread — 10 points maximum. Points awarded — 8.

a counting for taste

D. Gustibus

Our waiter promoted the "international award-winning Caesar salad" (\$4.95 per person). The lettuce was served European style, in large pieces, to "involve" the eater. It was professionally prepared at our table, but we were disappointed that there was no anchovy taste and no ground pepper served over it and that there was too heavy a taste of mustard in the dressing. It was good, but not superb as we had hoped. Salad — 5 points maximum. Points awarded — 3.

We ordered three daily specials as entrees. The Prawns Cajun-style (\$21.95) was served with a green-and-red pepper sauce and fresh peppercorns. Our waiter offered to bring the sauce on the side, but we did not serve over the prawns. It did prove too spicy for one person's taste but was well received by others. The grilled Norwegian salmon (\$17.95) was only average, as the fish was nearly tasteless. More interesting was the barracuda, which was served with a lime hollandaise sauce (\$18.95). This fish, though mild, had a pleasing flavor and consistency. Asparagus with hollandaise was served

with each entree. It was nicely presented with the two fish dishes, but came all alone on a separate plate with the prawns. Entree, Vegetables and Garnishes — 30 points maximum. Points awarded — 26.

In the past, Jacques has been known for its pastries. The desserts we tried (\$3.50 each) were disappointing. The lemon chiffon cake seemed stale and dry with noticeable lemon taste. The Mozart cake also came dry and chalky. An old favorite, the caramel apple upside-down cake, tasted the best, but even this seemed to lack anything extra-special. Dessert — 10 points maximum. Points awarded — 5.

For \$85 per couple including tip you should be able to receive an outstanding meal. We expect to pay a higher price for a fancier setting and more servers, and although the atmosphere and service were very enjoyable, our food did not entirely measure up to the price. Price/Value — 15 points maximum. Points awarded — 12.

A Counting for Taste — 100 points maximum. Total points awarded: 80. Jacques is a fine choice if you are hoping for a romantic setting and lots of attention. The specials are more imaginative than average, but a greater attention to details is necessary if the restaurant plans to fulfill the promises made on its menu story.

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the movies

Dan Greenberg

One's big trouble, the other's the pits

"Big Trouble in Little China" (PG-13). If we are at all lucky, will be confined to San Francisco Chinatown alleys and collars. If the current epidemic of bad movies spreads, however, we're all in trouble.

"Big Trouble" is billed as a kung-fu, mystery-adventure, action, ghost story. Director John Carpenter also calls it a comedy. By no stretch of the imagination is it funny.

Let me bore you for a moment with a brief synopsis so you'll know, "Who is Jack Burton?" Then you won't have to waste your time and money.

Jack Burton is a carefree truck driver and soldier-of-fortune whose idealized heroine, attorney Grace Law, joins him and an endless stream of Chinese friends and foes. All these people are either out to destroy Loi-pan, a cursed Chinese ghost, or they are trying to destroy Jack and his crowd.

KIM CATTALL and **Kurt Russell**, as Grace and Jack, have neither the repartee, good looks and style nor acting ability of Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas, whom they are imitating — and very badly.

"Who is Jack Burton?" scream the nearly full-page movie ads. Who cares?

I've already spilled the beans. It's Kurt Russell, in what might have been a stylish spoof that turns out to be leaden and wooden, with endless kung-fu/karate battles fought in half-lit cellars.

However Carpenter bills this, it's a poor excuse for a motion picture. "Little Value in Kung-fu Land" is the name of this game.

Someone was confused when they turned Prince loose to direct, star in and do the music for "Under the Cherry Moon" (PG-13).

The film is as stiff, unpleasant and unimaginative as one could dream up in the worst nightmare. Even Prince fans at the preview, who poured in with great expectations, left seemingly disappointed.

Among the film's many deficiencies: relatively limited musical performance by Prince. At least "Purple Rain" had that for his fans.

"Under the Cherry Moon" stands as a monument to Prince's ego. Only by an incredible stretch of the

imagination may one believe that every time Prince cocks his head and pouts women swoon in ecstasy.

IN ALL FAIRNESS, one must admit that besides pouting he prances and makes a disgusting moue while regularly screwing up his face in imitation of an inexperienced lady of the night.

That's a movie? Hardly. Yet Prince's musical box-office gives him the clout to do anything and everything. He certainly has done everything in "Cherry Moon" — everything, that is, except make a decent movie.

If you can believe "Under the Cherry Moon," Prince is a successful gigolo, Christopher, working in Nice on the French Côte d'Azur. The Riviera setting is an excuse for a week stab at the slick black-and-white look of high-style 1940s movies, complete with Lear Jets. It turns out looking like early Fred and Ginger that spent too much time in the developing solution.

Christopher's partner and best friend, Tricky (Jerome Benton), works the club with him. One of Christopher's best customers, wealthy Mrs. Wellington (Francesca Annis), is also having an affair (or being kept) by Isaac Sharon (Steven Berkoff), the billionaire bastard who dominates his daughter, Mary (Kristin Scott-Thomas).

Naturally, Mary falls for Christopher who is willing to give up his dazzling life as a male prostitute. She's going to make an honest man of him Not If Daddy and his goons have their way.

"Under the Cherry Moon" is a childish imitation of the adult world by a successful rock star who can do whatever he wants because he sells a lot of records.

The acting is limited to Scott-Thomas caricaturing a wealthy Briton scolding servants and to Prince grimacing, although Jerome Benton as friend Tricky manages to seem like a real human being from time to time. One cannot imagine a more one-dimensional character than Steven Berkoff's Daddy Sharon.

Add the simple-minded plot and relatively limited music by Prince, and there you have it. "Under the Cherry Moon." It's the pits.



Kurt Russell is Jack Burton, who tries to rescue Kim Cattrall as Grace Law (left) and Suzoo Pal as Miao Yin from an evil magician in "Big Trouble in Little China."

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