

Gold Standard Customer Loyalty Oath

I dropped into the Gold Standard midafternoon on Sakura Sunday after having sat in the hot sun among cherry blossoms for hours watching Taiko drummers, a samisen ensemble and a youthful Japanese rock and roll band called Magverry with a lead singer so skinny, nimble and elastic he made Mick Jagger look positively obese.

Not only was I famished, since the lines to the food courts in the park serving up sushi and teriyaki were two hours long, but I had forgotten my water bottle, and so I was thirsty as well.

It's been awhile since I've dined in the Gold Standard, and while the cheery fireplace was still roaring, the walls were hung with paintings of large women with distended breasts, including one monstrosity which seemed to depict the circus fat lady with pendulous mammaries beside the circus strongman with an outrageous moustache and bulging eyeballs. Not only that, but the waitstaff, both male and female were attired in neon green hot pants and low cut tank tops with protruding nipples branded with a garish red GS logo.

My attractive young waitstaffress hustled over and said in a breathy voice "Hi, my name is Tammy, and I'll be your waitstaffress today. Can I get you anything to drink?"

"Several pitchers of ice-cold water to start," I said, "then I'll have a look at the menu."

"Certainly darling," she whispered throatily. "Can I see your Gold Standard Loyalty Customer Oath Card?"

"My what?!" I expostulated. "I haven't been here for awhile, but I've never heard of a Loyalty Oath."

"No problem," she giggled fetchingly. "It's just something Roger dreamed up. I'll bring out the Oath and we can sign you up right away."

"OK," I groaned, "but please bring the water first or I may expire of thirst in the meantime."

"Sorry, honey, but without the Gold Standard Loyalty Customer Oath Card there's a fifty percent surcharge on everything, including the water."

"Alright, alright," I gasped in despair. "Bring it on, and that right speedily."

She returned with a stack of cookbooks and an engraved form about ten pages long.

"This is basically boiler plate," she explained. "Just put one hand on this stack of cookbooks and the other on your heart and swear everlasting loyalty to the Gold Standard and to the Cuisine for Which It Stands."

I leafed quickly through the oath, and found nothing particularly objectionable, although I was certain there would be something fishy in the small print.

"Well, OK," I said, "I'll sign, but as a Mennonite I can't swear, just affirm."

"Oh, that's fine," said Tammy. "You don't really sign, I just prick your thumb with this straight edged razor and you smear your blood on this line here."

"What the hell?" I vociferated. "Put my hand on a stack of cookbooks and sign in blood???? Has Roger gone out of his everloving mind?"

"Better get it over with, dearie," Tammy said, looking a bit peeved. "Remember, I can't bring you the water you so obviously need, much less anything to eat, without your paying that fifty percent surcharge up front."

Muttering darkly about Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage I quickly acquiesced. The business with the razor was as painful as it looked, but my waitstaffress thoughtfully brought me a large bandage with my water. I ordered a stack of pancakes with two sides of scrapply and gulped down several liters of the H2O and several ludes and in a few minutes felt much much better.

“Wonder why Roger needs a Loyalty Oath?” I mused to myself as I tucked into the pancakes. “Could it be that those nasty Yelp reviewers are biting into his bottom line?”

--Ross Bender