



## THE DATAI LANGKAWI APPOINTS CHEF CHAI CHUN BOON AS SENIOR CHEF DE CUISINE

**Langkawi/Malaysia, 25 April 2022:** The Datai Langkawi is delighted to welcome Chef Chai Chun Boon as Senior Chef de Cuisine. A Malaysian national from Sarawak, Chef Chai brings with him an impressive range of experience working at critically acclaimed restaurants around the globe, including 2 and 3 Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe, and most recently as Founder and Head Chef of the renowned Copper restaurant in Kuala Lumpur.

Chef Chai's experience embraces both the technical and experimental aspects of gastronomy, gained through working with highly esteemed chefs including Sergio Herman, Xavier Pellicer and Jason Atherton, along with tenures in Holland, Spain and Norway. He also honed his craft at Santi in Singapore, the 1<sup>st</sup> restaurant outpost in Asia of late 3 Michelin star Chef Santi Santamaria. These experiences have nurtured his ability to infuse experimentation with expertise and ingenuity with craft.



Chef Chai's culinary philosophy is based on working with the best of locally sourced ingredients from responsible producers, espousing a farm-to-table approach to guarantee natural freshness. He is delighted to find an extensive garden at The Datai Langkawi, with essential ingredients such as chilli, turmeric, ginger, ulam raja, and more grown for the resort's dining services and ripe for the picking. Taking full advantage of local resources, the culinary team at the resort has long practiced sustainable purchasing practices and has been supporting local producers wherever possible.

Chef Chai states his passion for sustainable procurement: "At The Dining Room, we offer locavore cuisine; inspired by our locality, the terroir of the surrounding Andaman Sea and the bounty it has to offer, the history, people, culture as well as the strategic location of where we are situated. The cross-cultural influence of the Nusantara period has shaped the cuisine in this region and combined with the use of herbs and spices sourced locally, we create nuances of flavour that aromatise and tease the palate. We do not confine ourselves with a set cuisine but are instead inspired to cook with what's given and the talent available. We are inspired by the fresh buffalo curd 30 minutes down the road, sweet, tart seasonal pineapples from the hills, organic petite vegetable farmed specially just for us, humanely farmed organic chicken full of flavour and bestowing its essence into gulais and curries, and sweet rock melons and grapes matured generously under the heat of the Andaman sun."

To premiere his arrival at The Datai Langkawi, Chef Chai has crafted a special 9-course Degustation dinner – a gastronomic journey, traversing inspirations and influences from near and far. Chef Chai believes in a multi-sensory approach to food, one that engages all the faculties and stimulates the emotions. He bridges the fundamentals of contemporary European haute cuisine with cross-cultural techniques and the sensibilities of the Asian palate. Chef Chai's culinary style amalgamates a breadth of textures, aromaticity and ingredients, artfully innovating through utilising a more

expanded range of flavours and intensities than a traditional degustation menu. Dishes, such as black & white Iranian Sevruga Caviar served with scallop umai, sago pearls and kaffir coconut dressing, are elevated or imbued with piquancy through the addition of aromatic herbs and spices like kaffir lime, chili, lemongrass and masala spice. The flavours of each dish resonate like a chord of notes – each note quite distinct, cascading effortlessly in layers, complementing or counterbalancing other flavours in a harmonious whole.



The sequence of courses is in turn perfectly modulated to create an overarching balance in the menu. The Degustation menu is paired with a selection of fine wines and champagne, such as the 48 hours slow cooked oyster blade with parmesan cream, charred aubergine pegaga shade and Andaman aromatic juice, which is expertly paired with a Château Sociando-Mallet from Haut Médoc that brings out the aromas of the meat with its leathery deep cru notes. Diners are offered a non-alcoholic pairing as an alternative. With a range of beverages ranging from teas to light mocktails, it offers a thoughtful and innovative alternative to the wine pairing. The curation of this extraordinary tour de force of a degustation menu reflects a further evolution of his cuisine, effectively creating a unique signature style with verve.

Commenting on Chef Chai's appointment, Arnaud Girodon, General Manager of The Datai Langkawi, said: "Chef Chai's arrival further establishes the gastronomic reputation of The Datai Langkawi through introducing enhanced innovative dining concepts at our fine dining restaurant the Dining Room. Chef Chai's experience working in some of the best restaurants in gastronomic centres of the world will be an asset to the resort, whilst his technical skills combined with his inventiveness will delight the most discerning diner. I'm pleased to see the positive resonance to our enhanced focus on food and beverage; with the continuation of The Chef Series, we ensure to bring the best in local and international dining to our guests, and with creative talents such as Chef Chai as part of our resident team, we can ensure that guests can savour extraordinary culinary experiences any day of the week with us here at The Datai Langkawi."



Chef Chai graduated in European Culinary Management from DCT International Hotel and Business Management School in Switzerland. His tertiary education also includes classes on the Science of Cooking (from Haute Cuisine to Soft Matter Science) taken from Harvard University, USA. He began his career in 2006 in Malaysia, forming part of the restaurant launch team for Gobo at Traders Hotel before returning to Europe in 2009 to work at the 2 Michelin-starred ABA restaurant in Barcelona and the 3 Michelin-starred Oud Sluis in the Netherlands. In 2011, he moved to Singapore where he worked at restaurants such as Santi, the acclaimed fine dining tapas restaurant, and Pollen Garden by the Bay, before rising to Head Chef at Graze, the Modern Australian restaurant. In 2014 he returned to Malaysia, launching his casual fine dining Copper restaurant a year later.

For more information on the range of dining experiences available at The Datai Langkawi, visit our [website here](#); to make a dinner reservation for Chef Chai's 9-course degustation dinner, please call +60 4 9500 500 or email [reservations@dataihotels.com](mailto:reservations@dataihotels.com) .

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

For high resolution photos of Chef Chai and a selection of dishes from his degustation menu, [click here](#)

For high resolution photos of The Datai Langkawi, please [click here](#)

**ABOUT THE DATAI LANGKAWI**

One of the world's most stunning resorts, The Datai Langkawi, is situated on the northwest tip of the island of Langkawi in Malaysia. Located in an ancient rainforest rich in wildlife and overlooking the tranquil Datai Bay awarded by National Geographic one of the Top 10 Beaches worldwide, the iconic property enchants with mesmerising nature, visionary architecture, understated elegance and Malaysian hospitality. All of the 121 rooms, villas and suites at The Datai Langkawi, including the five-bedroom The Datai Estate Villa, offer breath-taking views of the surrounding nature. Elevated among treetops, set in the very heart of the rainforest and located directly on the coastline, the dining outlets which include the award-winning The Gulai House, The Pavilion, The Dining Room and The Beach Club, pay homage to the exotic flavours and culinary traditions of the region and beyond. Bespoke facilities include The Nature Centre, an educational facility and home to resident naturalists and marine biologists, and The Spa featuring Ramuan treatments, its own Akar retail range and Phyto 5 facials. Leisure facilities include three pools, a state-of-the-art fitness centre at The Health Club; an array of wellness activities including silat and yoga, retail outlet The Boutique, a reserved space to showcase local arts and talents at The Atelier, as well as one of the most scenic golf courses in the world designed by golf legend Ernie Els, The Els Club Teluk Datai. The resort has founded The Datai Pledge in 2019 - a sustainability and conservation trust that supports Langkawi's unique fauna, flora and communities. All proceeds from The Datai Pledge aid this work and contribute to local non-profit organisations. The Datai Langkawi is managed by Themed Attractions Resorts & Hotels Sdn Bhd, an investment holding company incorporated to develop, manage and operate hospitality and attraction destinations.

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