



THE DATAI  
LANGKAWI

THEN & NOW – A SHORT HISTORY  
OF THE DATAI LANGKAWI

## Datai Bay, 2023.



As we commemorate our 30th anniversary, we also pay homage to the 10-million-year-old rainforest that surrounds us. It has been the inspiration for our offering of immersive experiences. In a symbiotic relationship, we have endeavoured to respect and protect it.

## Mount Machincang, 2018.



The spectacular backdrop to The Datai Langkawi is Mount Machincang. Formed between 490-550 million years ago and standing over 850 metres high, it is the second highest mountain peak in Langkawi and the oldest rock formation in Southeast Asia.

## Datai Bay, 2020.



This image of Datai Bay at the first light of dawn beautifully captures its three ecosystems: mangrove, sea and rainforest. Each of these environments supports an amazing array of fauna and flora. Datai Bay was voted one of the 'top 10 beaches in the world' by National Geographic.

**Datai Bay, 2018.**



When the visionary architect Kerry Hill and designer Didier Lefort visited the 65-acre site, they were spellbound by the beauty of the natural surroundings. This inspired them to create a resort that would honour the environment and foster a close connection to nature.

**Maquette of The Datai Langkawi, 1990.**



Embracing a vision where man connects with nature, the design team set out to create a luxurious sanctuary, with experiences in culture, dining and leisure pursuits, as peerless as the stunning natural surroundings that inspired it.

**The Lobby clearing before construction, 1990.**



Eschewing the typical sea-fronted resort design, Kerry Hill wanted to preserve Datai Bay's coastline whilst immersing guests in the magical rainforest. The Main Building was set on a ridge 40 metres above sea level and 300 metres from the beach.

**Construction of the Main Building, 1991.**



Construction of The Datai Langkawi took three years. It commenced with the facilities nearest to Datai Bay and worked upwards into the rainforest. Construction of the Main Building followed the contours of the ridge on which it was built. This in turn determined the building's 'L' shape.

## Construction of The Pavilion, 1991.



The very same *Dipterocarp* (Keruing) trees felled during construction were used as stilts to support The Pavilion, which hosts The Datai Langkawi's award-winning Thai restaurant. Standing 30 metres high, this elevation enhanced the sense of the resort belonging to the jungle.

## The Pavilion, 2018.



Today, The Pavilion stands as tall as the other trees that surround it and provides a stunning after-dark dining experience. Nature has reclaimed the surrounding area and The Pavilion's stilts blend seamlessly into the environment.

**The Lobby Lounge, 1993.**



The layout of The Lobby Lounge was arranged around a sunken bar, which facilitated views of the mountains, sea and islands further afield, and enabled gatherings of large groups as well as more intimate tête-à-têtes for aperitifs and after-dinner drinks.

**Construction of the Main Building, 1992.**



This image shows the west wing. Workers are laying on timber for the roof structure. The underlying base of locally sourced stone provided a solid foundation for the floors above. Trees encroach the site, as close as possible to the building.

## The Main Building, 1993.



This image shows The Lobby Lounge, The Dining Room and Main Pool at the end of construction. The floor below the Main Pool hosts a suite of meeting rooms along with an outdoor seating area. In addition, archives are also stored here.

## The Main Building, 2018.



The same area after the resort's renovation in 2017/2018, which was led by Didier Lefort. The ambition of the refurbishment was to retain The Datai Langkawi's design DNA, whilst upgrading the infrastructure, adding new facilities and bolstering the resort's focus on sustainability, nature and wellness.



Canopy Deluxe room, 1993.



Every Canopy Deluxe room looks out onto the rainforest, with a balcony to bring the outdoors indoors. As Didier Lefort said: “If you’re in a place where there’s nothing, it’s better to make a statement; if you’re in a remarkable setting, allow it to make the statement”.

Canopy Deluxe room, 2018.



Colour palettes inspired by the red and yellow hues of the rainforest were introduced to enliven the décor, whilst retaining the design style of ‘classic modernity’. Lighting and technology upgrades, and energy-efficient systems were introduced to achieve sustainable operations.

## Rainforest Villa, 2008.



This image was taken 15 years after The Datai Langkawi's opening, following the resort's remodelling which was intended to refresh the room collections. New furniture and fittings were incorporated to ensure a luxurious guest experience.

## Rainforest Villa, 2018.



Didier Lefort expressed the design language of 'understated luxury' through the use of locally sourced materials infused with elements of Malaysian heritage and culture. Tradition and modernity were blended seamlessly, creating a style as timeless as the surroundings.

## Construction of The Beach Club, 1993.



A key design feature was to reveal, layer by layer, the beauty of the natural surroundings, creating a sense of mystique and discovery. The Beach Club was the final reveal before guests encountered the glory of the perfectly crescent-shaped Datai Bay.

## The Beach Club, 2018.



As many trees were retained in the renovation as in the original construction. The same trees pictured in the previous panel have grown considerably. Today, they provide protection from the natural elements and also conspire to make the resort almost hidden from view.

## Construction of The Lobby, 1991.



The idea was that guests would be embraced by layers of different environments on arrival: from the initial welcome at the Porte Cochère, to the arterial Reception area, to the serene Lily Pond, before arriving at The Lobby Lounge, where they would discover the stunning vista of the sea and mountains.

## The Lobby Entrance, 2018.



After a 12-month renovation, The Datai Langkawi reopened its doors with heartfelt gratitude to all guests, past and present, for their continued support. The wooden sculptures of the two majestic horses in the background have become icons for the resort.

## Construction of The Grand Staircase, 1991.



Standing majestically in the heart of the rainforest, The Grand Staircase was made from locally sourced materials including chert, shale and mudstone, and comprises a total of 173 steps. It would become another iconic feature of The Datai Langkawi.

## Main Building and Grand Staircase, 2019.



The Grand Staircase connects the Main Building to Datai Bay via The Butterfly Walk, which hosts some of Langkawi's 535 species of butterflies. The preservation of the island's amazing wildlife is one of the main aims of The Datai Pledge, the resort's conservation and sustainability programme, introduced in 2018.

30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



EST. 1993



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