

# SAFARI

ISSUE 10

**THE GOLD LIST**  
The Chef Series 2025  
Showcases Culinary Stars  
From Around The World

**Keruing Bukit**  
An Exciting  
Rediscovery In  
The Forests of  
The Datai Langkawi

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**Travel**  
A Guide To  
North Borneo's  
Ancient Wilderness



THE  
CHEF  
SERIES



2025

THE GOLD LIST

MICHELIN-STARRED CHEFS FROM AROUND  
THE WORLD IN THE HEART OF THE RAINFOREST



ANA ROŠ  
Slovenia  
24 and 25 January  
\*\*\*



JORDI ARTAL  
Spain  
14 and 15 March  
\*\*\*



JAN HARTWIG  
Germany  
18 and 19 April  
\*\*\*



KIM HOCK SU  
Malaysia  
20 and 21 June  
\*



GERT DE MANGELEER  
Belgium  
18 and 19 July  
\*\*



THIBAUT GAMBA  
France  
4 and 5 December  
\*



ALAIN ROUX  
United Kingdom  
13 to 17 January 2026  
\*\*\*



# Serenity

The Datai Well-being Series



EMBRACING NATURE  
IN HOLISTIC WELL-BEING  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Dr Leonard McGill  
*Developer of Structural /  
Energetic Integration Therapy, USA*  
13-23 February 2025



Bastien Gonzalez  
*Podiatrist, France*  
10-18 April 2025



Hannah Moujing  
*Indigenous Movement Practitioner, Malaysia*  
5-15 June 2025



Daphne Chua  
*Somatic and Therapeutic Bodyworker, Singapore*  
7 - 17 July 2025



Liam Harkness  
*Founder of The Stretch Clinic, UK*  
9-19 October 2025



Savy Ho  
*Sound Healer and Yoga Practitioner, Malaysia*  
22 December 2025 - 2 January 2026



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**Director of Marketing**

Tina Dotzauer

**Public Relations and Marketing Consultant**

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Cover image of The Datai Langkawi nestled within the Machinchang mountain range.



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**S**alam sejahtera and selamat datang to our latest issue of *Ikhlas*, our first since the twin collector's editions that marked The Datai

Langkawi's 30th anniversary last year. Those volumes traced three decades of hospitality through culinary creativity, well-being journeys, cultural festivals, rainforest-inspired design, community engagement, arts, crafts and nature.

Our 2025 calendar brims with experiences that honour land and sea. Our signature Chef Series welcomed Ana Roš, Gert De Mangeleer, Jordi Artal, Jan Hartwig and Kim Hock Su, who each created menus that championed local produce and sustainable practice – and it will continue with legendary culinary luminaries including Alain Roux and Thibaut Gamba. The Serenity Series gathers six world-class practitioners at our rainforest this year, from structural integration maestro Dr Leonard McGill to sound healer Savy Ho, guiding transformative journeys that align body and spirit with the ancient rainforest. Alongside, the new Pulih programme marries traditional spa rituals with personalised training so that well-being endures long after departure, while our naturalists helped with the rediscovery of the elusive and majestic Keruing Bukit tree in Datai Bay.

Whether you are stepping onto our rainforest paths for the first time or returning to a place you now call home: Thank you. Your enthusiasm fuels our vision and our team give that vision life: our resort's first resident historian Shakira Mobarak rekindles Langkawi legends, and horticultural innovator and award winner Zakwan Zamri turns waste into fertile promise.

Through initiatives that embody purposeful hospitality, The Kanshalife

Project, our pillar partner for Pure For The Future under The Datai Pledge, has upcycled more than 11,500kg of discarded candles from our resort operations, and gave old textiles a new use – all while empowering Langkawi locals.

Meanwhile, Roots & Shoots Malaysia, led by TP Lim, has seen 10 volunteers from The Datai over the past four years contribute volunteer hours at Datai Bay under the RASMA umbrella programme which has galvanised over 130 youths across the country.

In these pages and at our resort, you also encounter *Primus*, a limited-edition wildlife volume with The Datai Pledge, by photographer Peter Ong and enriched by a rare foreword from Dr Jane Goodall before her passing.

Looking ahead, Datai Hotels and Resorts has its sights set on carrying its nature-first ethos into new frontiers within the region. In the near future, we plan to replicate our rainforest blueprint in remote sanctuaries, craft urban retreats rooted in heritage and greenery, and unveil a millennial-minded offshoot that blends sustainability with vibrant social spaces.

I look forward to welcoming you on this journey where every encounter with nature becomes a lasting memory.



**Arnaud Girodon**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Datai Hotels and Resorts*





CONTENTS

**VISION**  
**Natural Evolution** 8-9  
Arnaud Girodon, Chief Executive Officer of Datai Hotels and Resorts, shares how staying true to The Datai's roots in nature shapes his vision for the resort's future.

**NATURE**  
**Beneath the Canopy** 10-11  
The Keruing Bukit tree, once thought to be extinct in Malaysia, may be thriving once again within Datai Bay.

**THE DATAI PLEDGE**  
**The Future of Social Consciousness** 12-15  
How does one empower underserved voices in the community and redefine environmental responsibility in an arena of luxury? The Kanshalife Project, the sustainability partner of The Datai Pledge, gives us the answers.

**IN HOUSE**  
**Through the Canopy** 16-21  
Behind the lens of wildlife photographer Peter Ong, Malaysia's endangered primates find their voice in *Primus*, a limited-edition handsigned book that transforms a passion project into a powerful tool for conservation.

**OUR PEOPLE**  
**The Power of Preservation** 22-24  
Inside the diverse roles of two team members at The Datai Langkawi who contribute to the resort's commitment to heritage, sustainability and community enrichment.

**INSPIRATIONAL VOICES**  
**The Long Game** 26-29  
As the driving force behind Roots & Shoots Malaysia, TP Lim's vision has transformed hundreds of young Malaysian environmentalists.

**WELLNESS**  
**Echoes of Balance** 32-35  
In its second year, The Datai Langkawi's Serenity – The Datai Well-being Series offered a pathway to inner calm, guiding guests through sound baths, traditional healing and gentle movement.

**Body, Mind and Spirit** 36-37  
For 2025, the Serenity Series welcomes six distinguished practitioners, offering guests transformative experiences from ancient healing traditions to contemporary wellness approaches.

**A Symphony of Rejuvenation** 38-39  
The Datai Langkawi's newest offering promises a thorough, immersive experience for travellers seeking wellness that transcends traditional spa or fitness routines.

**THE ATELIER**  
**An Uncommon Thread** 40-43  
Six recipients of Malaysia's prestigious Hasanah Gold Threads Awards demonstrate how ancient textile traditions are being reimagined for contemporary times while preserving their cultural essence.

**IN THE KITCHEN**  
**A Year of Culinary Excellence** 44-47  
With a total of nine Michelin stars, the 2024 Chef-fe Series was an extraordinary gathering of female culinary masters.

**The Gold List** 48-52  
The Datai Langkawi's signature Chef Series for 2025 glitters once again with guest chefs from Michelin-starred restaurants all over the world.

**SPIRITS**  
**Spirit of Craftsmanship** 56-59  
The Datai Langkawi expands its spirits lineup with a single cask whisky and exclusive rum, complete with a special-edition collection box set created in collaboration with Royal Selangor.

**IN RESIDENCE**  
**A Journey Through Time** 60-65  
Dave Gillan, a seasoned luxury travel expert, rediscovers how The Datai Langkawi harmoniously blends its renowned hospitality with sustainability initiatives.

**TRAVEL**  
**Unmissable Adventures in Borneo's Wild North** 66-73  
From the world's tallest tropical trees to Cousteau's favourite dive spot, Sabah offers Southeast Asia's most spectacular natural wonders.

**TEE OFF**  
**Fairways in Bloom** 74-75  
The Els Club Teluk Datai was recently awarded with a prestigious eco-accreditation, making it the first golf course in Malaysia to be certified sustainable.

**INSIDE OUT**  
**The Art of Evening Grace** 76-79  
From elegant tea turndown services using garden-fresh herbs to refined pillow selections, upscaling amenities can be both responsible and indulgent.

**PAGE TURNER**  
**Unveiling Langkawi's Ocean Secrets Through a Porpoise's Eyes** 80  
Combining scientific insight with storytelling, this charming tale highlights the need for marine conservation.



## Natural Evolution

As The Datai brand looks towards regional expansion, Arnaud Girodon, Chief Executive Officer of Datai Hotels and Resorts, shares how staying true to The Datai's roots in nature shapes his future vision.



In the search for new locations that match the vision for The Datai brand, Arnaud Girodon, Chief Executive Officer of Datai Hotels and Resorts (DHR), is steering the iconic resort brand with a refreshingly unconventional compass. It's an approach that has seeds in The Datai Langkawi's inception. Spearheading the site selection, the progressive vision of Adrian Zecha, founder of Aman Resorts, emphasised forest immersion alongside beachfront location with minimal environmental impact.

Arnaud's subsequent arrival, then as General Manager, came during a period of decline. "You cannot offer a nature experience without respecting and protecting that nature," he reflects, speaking of the deep environmental commitment that now shapes every aspect of DHR's operations.

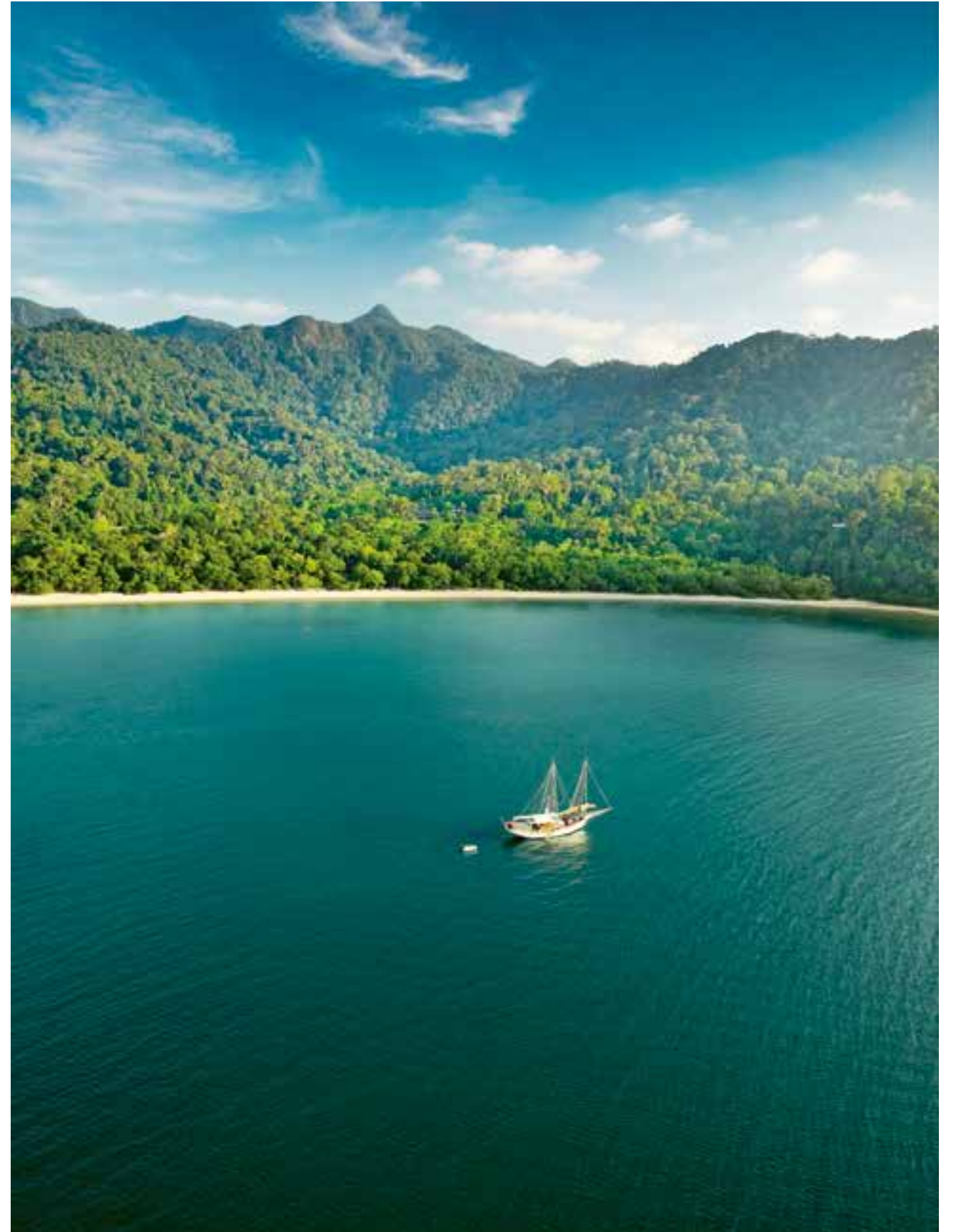
Today, The Datai Langkawi has transformed into one of the most successful resorts globally with a clear identity centred on authenticity, immersive nature experiences and environmental respect.

Looking ahead, DHR envisions a thoughtful expansion across Southeast Asia, with a particular focus on Malaysia's diverse landscapes – from the pristine rainforests and mighty

rivers of Borneo to the untouched coastal areas of peninsular Malaysia. "We are looking at Malaysian Borneo, Indonesia and other countries in the region. We think there is great potential, and the concept of nature and nurturing the environment would work amazingly well in these places," Arnaud explains.

This expansion strategy takes two distinct paths. The first follows The Datai Langkawi's blueprint of remote locations and adds an extension into urban settings with a connection to history or nature. The second path breaks new ground with an upscale millennial-focused brand designed for vibrant urban and beachfront settings, combining sustainability with social spaces that foster community connections.

"Our loyal guests at The Datai Langkawi have shaped our understanding of true luxury – it's about authenticity, connection and respect for nature," Arnaud says. "As we expand, we're creating experiences that will allow them to explore more of Malaysia and Southeast Asia while maintaining the standards they've come to expect from us. Each property, whether remote or urban, will have its own distinct identity while staying true to our core values of environmental stewardship and genuine hospitality." 📍





# Beneath the Canopy

A stunning botanical rediscovery has emerged: the Keruing Bukit tree, once thought to be extinct in Malaysia, may be thriving once again within Datai Bay.

The journey to potentially rediscovering the Keruing Bukit began quietly during the COVID-19 lockdown, when diminished human activity allowed nature to reclaim its full vibrancy. As The Datai Langkawi's team of naturalists meticulously catalogued the flora, they encountered a tree reminiscent of the long-lost Keruing Bukit, also known by its scientific name, *Dipterocarpus costatus*. This species has been listed as Endangered on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List, and is listed as Critically Endangered on the Malaysia

Red List. "During these quieter months, it was as if the forest exhaled a breath it had been holding," says Dev Abdullah, Nature Centre Manager and Pillar Leader of Wildlife For The Future, The Datai Pledge.

The team collaborated with the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) to verify its identity. Together, they examined leaf structure, seed morphology and flowering patterns. "While trees of the same genus can appear similar without flowering, the unique characteristics of this specimen matched the Keruing Bukit's profile



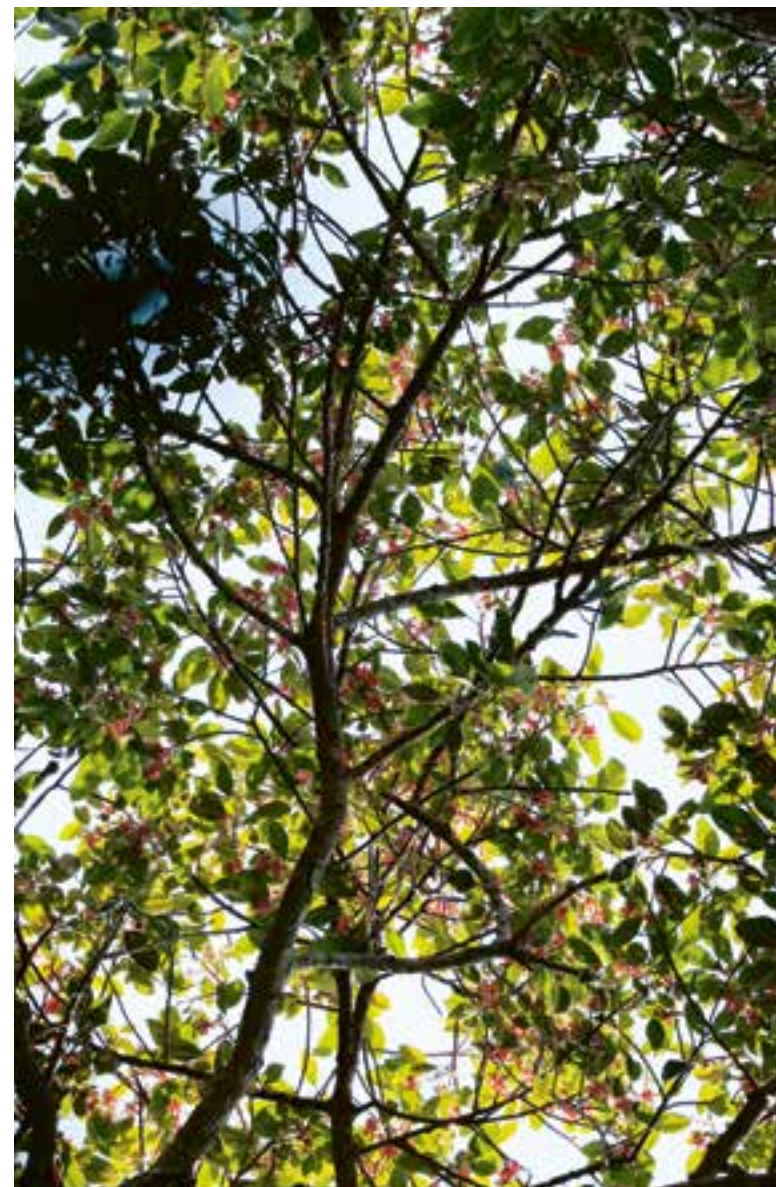
beautifully," explains Nur Afiqah Izzati binti Noh (Izzati), a naturalist with a background in botany.

DNA analysis is currently underway to confirm this promising identification.

The Keruing Bukit – a keystone species in Southeast Asian rainforests – is known for its impressive height and dense canopy that provides shelter for countless indigenous species. "Finding the Keruing Bukit reinforces Langkawi's value as a conservation site," Izzati adds. "Its presence here emphasises the importance of preserving undisturbed landscapes."

The potential discovery of multiple 'mother trees' (often the biggest, oldest trees in the forest, they are the glue that hold the forest together) at The Datai Langkawi offers hope for the species' future. Pending DNA confirmation, the resort plans to create a native tree nursery dedicated to this forest giant, while collaborating with the Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia to ensure its survival. Plans include developing a seed bank and growing seedlings for reintroduction to mainland Malaysia.

"Malaysia's forests are treasure troves of unique species, but they're vulnerable to habitat loss and exploitation," notes Abdul Fuad bin Ahmad (Fuad), another naturalist at The Datai Langkawi. "The prospect of having found the Keruing Bukit on Langkawi elevates the island as a site of conservation importance. We have an extraordinary responsibility to protect and nurture these trees for future generations." The tree's potential rediscovery could also provide an impetus for other regional conservation initiatives, encouraging botanical surveys and possibly leading to further rare finds. ①







## The Future of Social Consciousness

How does one empower underserved voices in the community and redefine environmental responsibility in an arena of luxury? The Kanshalife Project, the sustainability partner of The Datai Pledge, gives us the answers.

Langkawi's pristine landscapes and rich cultural heritage have found an unexpected champion in The Kanshalife Project. This social enterprise has emerged as a vital force in preserving the island's natural beauty while empowering its local communities, including enhancing ties with local partners such as Geng Bersih Kampung (GBK) by providing after-school education to underserved children.

Through a groundbreaking partnership with The Datai Pledge, The Kanshalife Project bridges luxury hospitality

with grassroots action. At its heart is founder Skaii de Vega, a Langkawi resident and surrealist artist who lived and worked in Belgium before moving back to Langkawi to start The Kanshalife Project.

Working closely with local community groups such as GBK, the project has created a sustainable ecosystem of change. "We work especially with single mothers, providing them with an income that allows them to be self-reliant and confident in their abilities," Skaii explains, emphasising the importance of





economic independence in Malaysian rural communities.

The initiative's impact is tangible. In 2023, more than 11,500 kilograms of materials were upcycled, transforming discarded candles and textiles into new products. At the heart of these transformation efforts is Mak Tok, a local single mother who has found renewed purpose through The Kanshalife Project.

Working from her home workshop, she skilfully transforms used candles from The Datai Langkawi's operations into new ones through an innovative remoulding process.

Her creative touch extends to giving discarded bedroom slippers a second life as comfortable stool cushions, exemplifying how traditional craftsmanship can meet modern sustainability needs.

The Kanshalife Project's philosophy manifests in its Food Forest, an area it



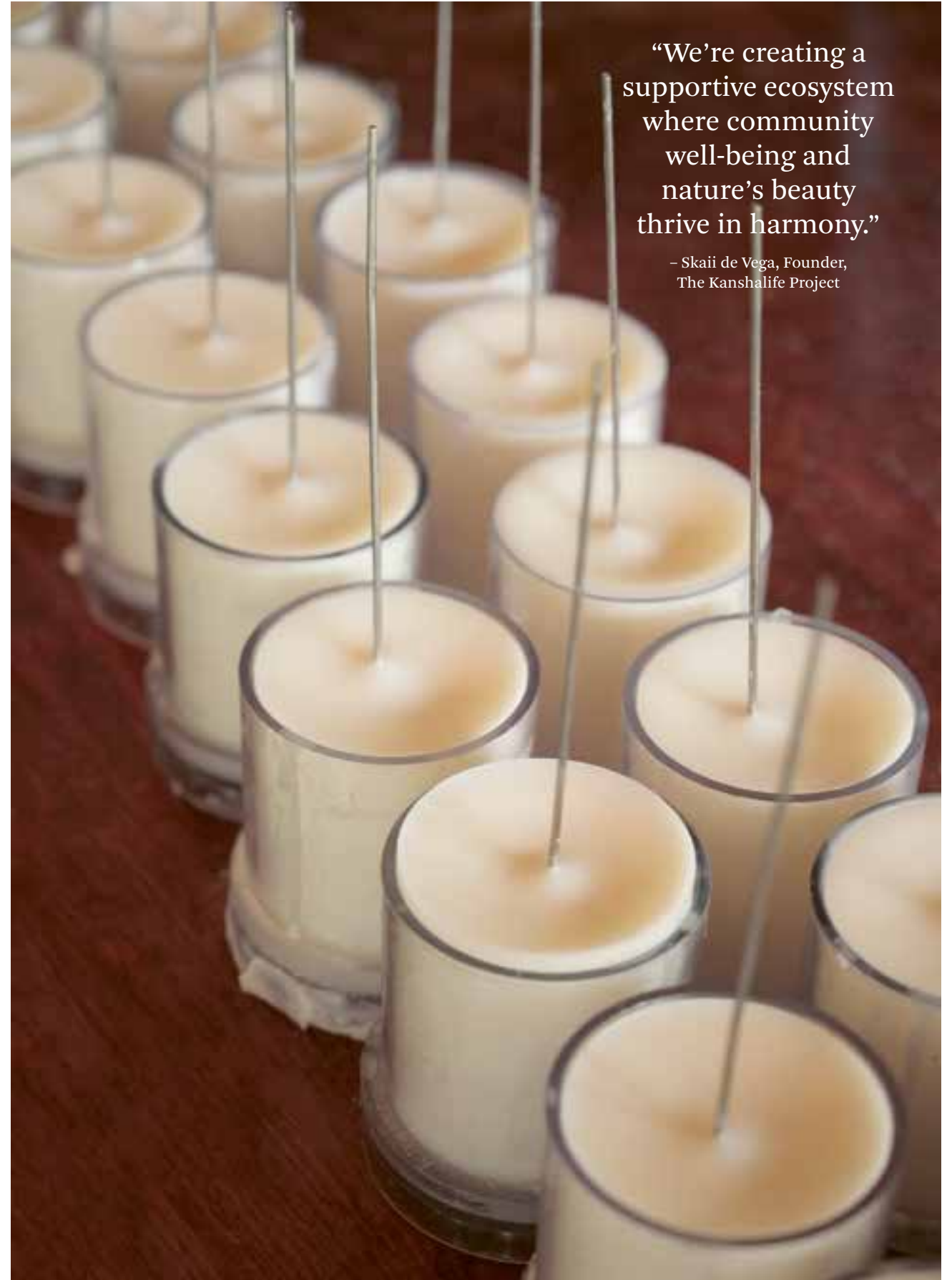
The Kanshalife Project, run by Skaii de Vega (pictured above, left), is helping single mothers, such as Langkawi local Mak Tok (pictured above, right), to become financially independent. Mak Tok transforms discarded bedroom slippers into comfortable stool cushions in her home workshop.



established on its property next to its 'mother house', producing vegetables for community donation.

Innovation flourishes in many ways, from repurposing candle wax with Skate Bowl Langkawi – the island's vibrant skateboarding community – to developing eco-friendly products using advanced machinery provided by The Datai Pledge.

Plans are underway to expand this vision through an Eco Hub, intended as an off-grid facility demonstrating eco-friendly practices such as permaculture gardening and alternative energy usage. "Our work aims to leave an indelible mark of sustainability for generations to come," Skaii reflects. ❶



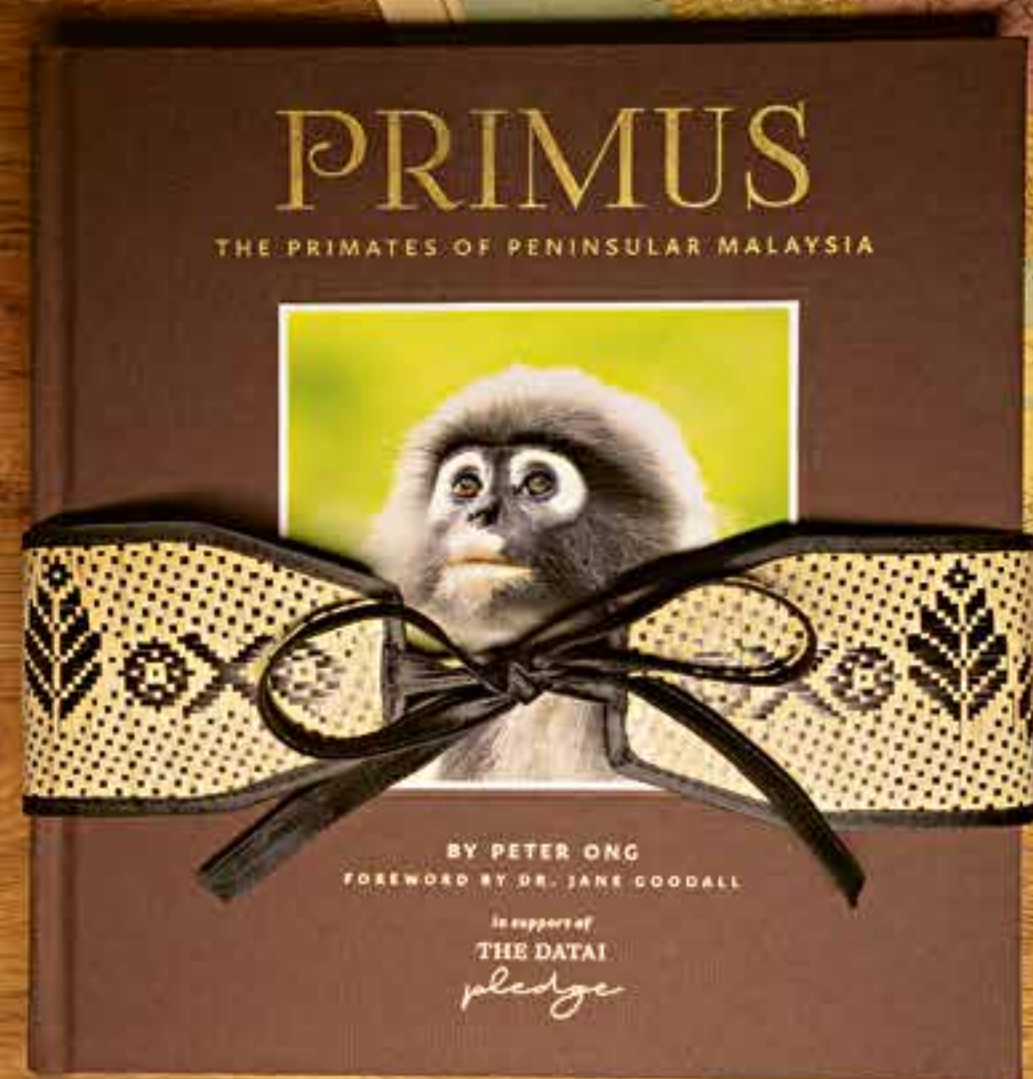
"We're creating a supportive ecosystem where community well-being and nature's beauty thrive in harmony."

– Skaii de Vega, Founder,  
The Kanshalife Project

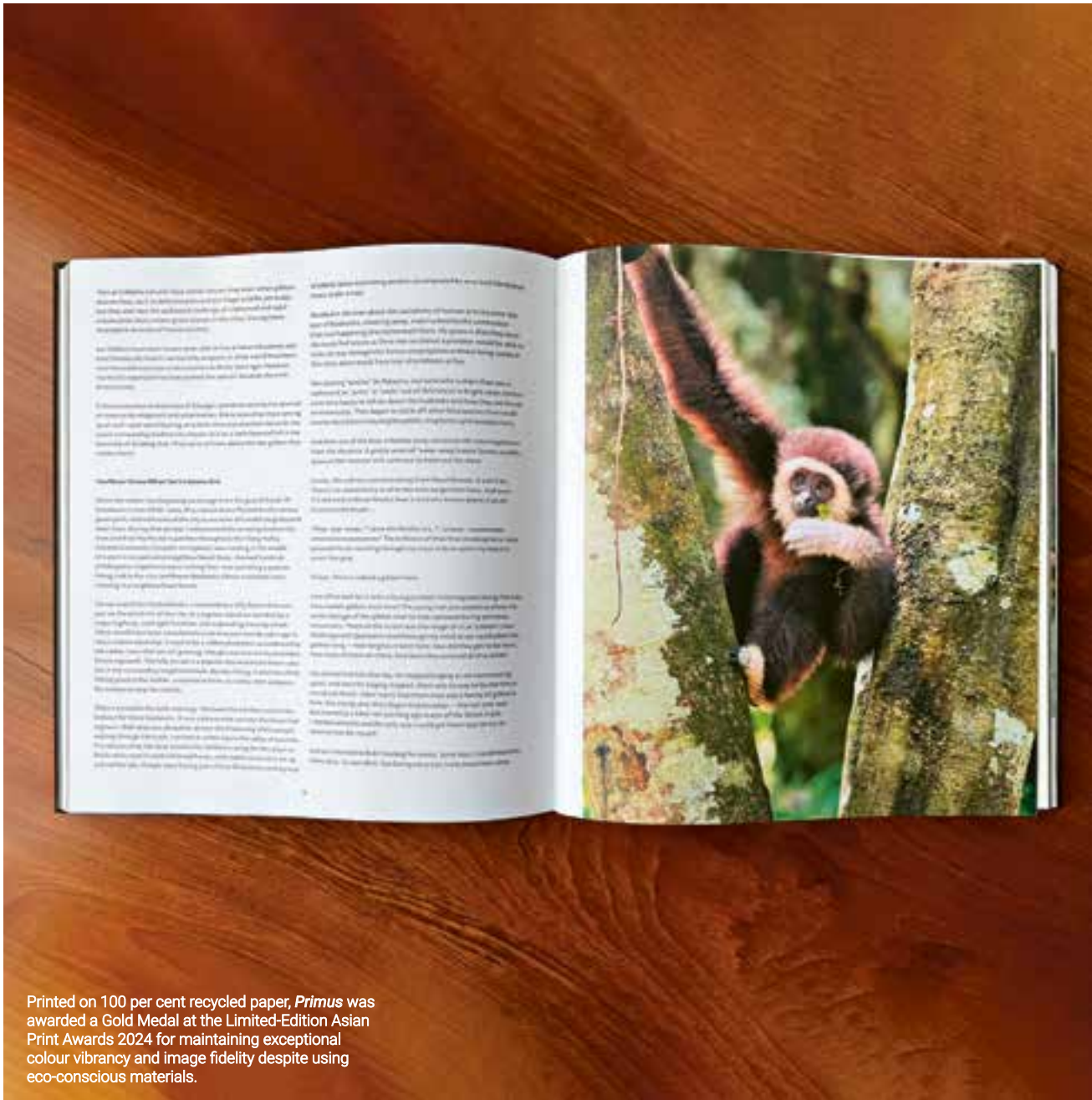


## Through the Canopy: A Storyteller's Quest to Preserve Malaysia's Primate Legacy through Photography

Behind the lens of wildlife photographer Peter Ong, Malaysia's endangered primates find their voice in *Primus*, an extraordinary tome, available as a limited-edition handsigned book in collaboration with The Datai Pledge that transforms a passion project into a powerful tool for conservation.







Printed on 100 per cent recycled paper, *Primus* was awarded a Gold Medal at the Limited-Edition Asian Print Awards 2024 for maintaining exceptional colour vibrancy and image fidelity despite using eco-conscious materials.

In the misty rainforests of Malaysia, former lawyer and advertising executive Peter Ong found his calling through a pivotal conversation with renowned primatologist Dr Jane Goodall in 2007. Her simple question – “How are Malaysia’s primates faring?” – revealed a significant gap in documenting local wildlife.

This discovery inspired Ong to launch Project Monyet (Malay for ‘monkey’) in 2019, an ambitious initiative to photograph Malaysia’s 26 primate species. This work evolved into *Primus*, a groundbreaking photographic chronicle that would find a powerful ally in The Datai Langkawi’s conservation efforts.

The connection between Dr Goodall and Ong deepened as Ong went on to co-establish the Malaysian chapter of Roots & Shoots, Dr Goodall’s global youth movement that operates in over 60 countries. The programme’s name symbolises how youth, like roots growing strong foundations and shoots breaking through walls, can overcome



Peter Ong

“I wanted to capture their expressions, their thoughts, their hopes, and their wonderment, just as Jane Goodall did 65 years ago when she introduced the world to the chimpanzees of Gombe.

In many ways, this publication is an extension of her chimpanzee studies that have rippled forward through time and space. Now it is time for the world to meet the little-known primates of Peninsular Malaysia - thanks to Jane.”

– Peter Ong



*Primus* celebrates peninsular Malaysia’s 12 primate species, such as the Lar Gibbon (left).

challenges to improve the world. As Head of Education and Outreach for the Malaysian chapter, Ong guides students in projects ranging from wildlife conservation to sustainable agriculture. “It came as a great surprise to discover that Malaysia did not have a comprehensive primate species list,” Ong recalls. This knowledge gap

inspired him to traverse the country’s diverse landscapes, from the heights of Gunung Raya in Langkawi to the limestone forests of the state of Perlis, Malaysia’s northernmost and smallest state, documenting the peninsula’s 12 primate species. In collaboration with The Datai Pledge, Ong has created an exclusive

limited edition of 100 numbered and signed copies of *Primus*. Each book features gold-foil stamping and is adorned with a bespoke belt, handwoven by the community of Kampung Lunguyan, Keningau, Sabah, led by Emily Jeneble. Crafted from hand-harvested and dyed bamboo, these belts feature intricate wild fig (ficus,





“If an image can move someone to choose to want to find out more about the biodiversity that sustains our planet, or even go as far as to do something for nature and conservation, then it would have made everything worthwhile.”

– Peter Ong



‘*buah ara*’ in the Malay language) and leaf motifs, a tribute to the primates’ favourite food.

A striking photograph of the endangered Dusky Langur captured at The Datai Langkawi is affixed to the cloth-bound hardcover. The edition includes three initialled fine art prints, exclusive illustrations by Southeast

Asian wildlife artist Illulasiesta, and historic primate watercolours from 1803, reproduced with permission from the National Museum of Singapore. All proceeds from the limited edition's sales support The Datai Pledge, established to protect Langkawi's biodiversity and support local communities.

Significantly, *Primus* carries a foreword by Dr Goodall – the first Asian publication to feature her written dedication, and with her recent passing, a

valuable insight into Malaysia's work in biodiversity through her own words.

*Primus* also highlights the fragile state of Malaysia's biodiversity. Of the 12 primate species found on the peninsula, seven are listed as endangered, with one critically endangered.

“I wanted to capture their expressions, their thoughts, their hopes and their wonderment,” Ong reflects. Among the 94 portraits, his photograph of a Siamang father and infant exemplifies his patient artistry. “Every image of a gibbon in the wild is a blessing,” he says, describing the challenge of tracking these elusive creatures.

Beyond *Primus*, Ong is working on rehabilitating a century-old forest trail in Perlis and planning his next volume on the primates of Malaysian Borneo. He recently published *Wang Kelian, Perlis – The Forgotten Valley*, a dual-language coffee-table book documenting the biodiversity and cultural heritage of Wang Kelian in the state of Perlis. The book was officially launched by the Regent of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail.

“There is a saying in Malay: *tak kenal maka tak cinta*. Simply translated, ‘you cannot love what you do not know’,”

Ong explains. Through *Primus*, he hopes to inspire others to protect these remarkable creatures and their habitats for future generations. ⑩





# The Power of Preservation

Inside the diverse roles of two team members at The Datai Langkawi who contribute to the resort's commitment to heritage, sustainability and community enrichment.

From preserving the ancient stories of Langkawi – a tropical archipelago of 99 islands off Malaysia's northwestern coast – to pioneering cutting-edge sustainability, Shakira Mobarak and Zakwan Zamri play their part in ensuring The Datai Langkawi stays true to its DNA. Their unique roles highlight how the resort is weaving cultural heritage and eco-consciousness into the fabric of social consciousness.

## The Storyteller

The philosophy of cultivating cultural awareness is brought to life through Shakira Mobarak, the resort's first Historian, appointed to uncover and narrate the layers of history and myth that make Langkawi unique. "Building a luxurious resort isn't enough," she says. "We aim to connect guests with meaningful local history and the rich folklore of Langkawi, an island steeped in Malaysian maritime legends."

Shakira leads The Datai Langkawi's Journey, a complimentary guided walk exploring the resort's design and architectural heritage, which draws inspiration from traditional Malay building principles, in addition to relating the island's myths and legends that inhabit the surrounding landscape.



"My role is about more than recounting the past; it's about crafting an experience that connects our guests to the spirit of Langkawi."

– Shakira Mobarak

Among the stories is the legend of two giants, Mat Cincang and Mat Raya, whose friendship turned to conflict during their children's wedding feast. Their epic battle, according to folklore, shaped Langkawi's landscape – their spilled gravy formed Kuah Town, while other sites like Ayer Hangat (hot springs) and Belanga Pecah emerged from their struggle. Consumed by remorse, the giants transformed into the mountains that define Langkawi's skyline today: Gunung Mat Cincang and Gunung Raya, with Bukit Sawar standing between them as an eternal mediator.

The depth of these narratives adds an enriching layer to the guest experience, transforming a stay at The Datai Langkawi into a journey through time. Shakira's passion for storytelling is palpable and her connection with the land is heartfelt.



Shakira Mobarak.





Zakwan Zamri



“We’re setting new standards for how luxury hospitality can work in harmony with the environment.”

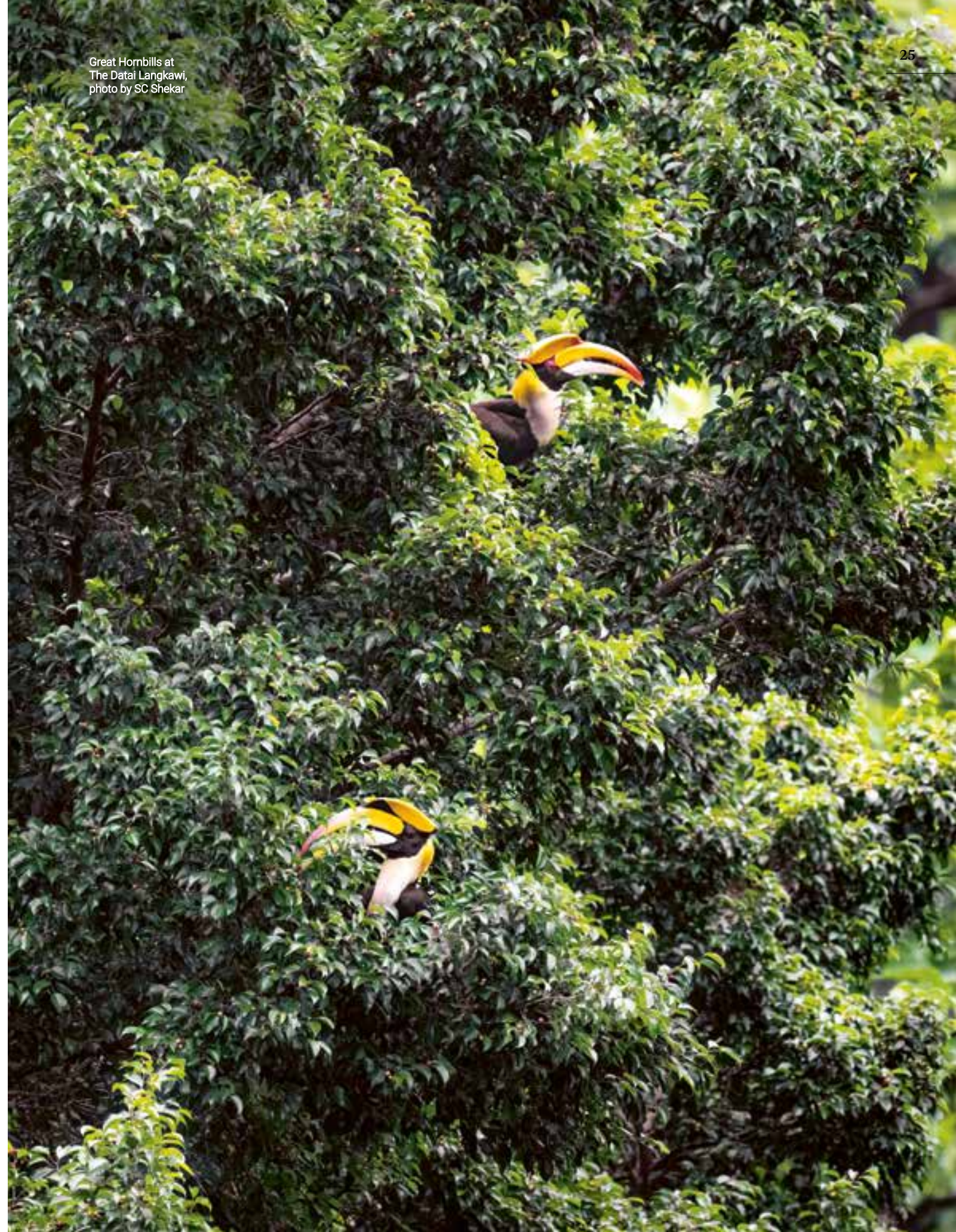
– Zakwan Zamri

#### Transforming Challenges

Zakwan Zamri, Assistant Manager Sustainability at The Datai Langkawi and key member of the Pure For The Future pillar under The Datai Pledge, has earned recognition as one of Junior Chamber International Kulim’s Ten Outstanding Kedahans – an award celebrating achievers from Kedah, the northern Malaysian state where Langkawi is located. His horticultural expertise has transformed the resort’s garden into a self-sustaining ecosystem providing fresh produce for the kitchens.

In addition, Zakwan champions pyrolysis process technology through the resort’s purchase of The Asher, a Malaysian-designed invention turning non-recyclable waste into biodegradable ash and non-hazardous gas. This innovation is an integral part of The Datai Langkawi’s efforts to achieve its zero-waste-to-the-landfill goal. He also leads many of the resort’s upcycling initiatives, turning waste materials into new products such as glass products from crushed bottles or producing insect repellents from herbs grown on-site. By partnering with The Kanshalife Project, a social enterprise on the island, bedroom slippers and candles are donated to them and transformed into stool cushions, while the used candles are melted, remoulded and repurchased by the resort – just over two tons of wax was processed last year. These efforts offer guests a unique, hands-on understanding of conservation in action. 🌱

Great Hornbills at  
The Datai Langkawi,  
photo by SC Shekar







## The Long Game: TP Lim's Journey to Transform Youth Environmentalism

As the driving force behind Roots & Shoots Malaysia, TP Lim's vision has transformed hundreds of young Malaysian environmentalists, with The Datai Langkawi offering a unique platform for hands-on conservation experience.



Persistence and passion drove TP Lim across multiple countries in his mission to bring Dr Jane Goodall's vision to Malaysian shores. After first crossing paths with the legendary conservationist at a dialogue he moderated in Taiwan in 2008, TP embarked on what he playfully calls his "seven-year stalking campaign" across Asia. "I followed her speaking engagements from country to country, building a case for why Malaysia needed Roots & Shoots," he recalls with a smile.

His unwavering dedication finally bore fruit in 2015 when Dr Goodall gave her blessing to establish Roots & Shoots Malaysia. Today, as the head

of the local chapter, TP helps carry forward Dr Goodall's global youth-led environmental movement, which operates in nearly 100 countries with over 150,000 active groups worldwide, empowering young people to become compassionate leaders through projects benefiting people, animals, and the environment.

The flagship Roots & Shoots Malaysia Award (RASMA) has made significant impact in 2024, with 130 young Malaysians dedicating more than 11,000 volunteer hours across 35 partner organisations. "Many of the RASMA participants come from less privileged

backgrounds and rural parts of Malaysia where volunteering opportunities are less readily available," TP explains. This youth empowerment initiative has become a vital platform for nurturing community service and environmental stewardship among Malaysia's next generation.

The Datai Langkawi stands as the only resort among RASMA's typically NGO partners. Through The Datai Pledge – the resort's comprehensive sustainability initiative – RASMA volunteers experience real-world environmental initiatives firsthand. "The Datai Pledge is a working example of sustainability ideas being practised authentically. It's a





Roots & Shoots helps to empower youths who are passionate about helping communities, wildlife and the environment.

“The most satisfying outcome of the RASMA programme is the knowledge that hundreds of young Malaysians will become better stewards of the Earth and make better decisions in their personal and professional lives for the benefit of the environment and all living things.”

– TP Lim



#### IN MEMORIAM

We mourn the passing of Dr Jane Goodall, the pioneering ethologist and conservationist whose life's work forever changed our understanding of the natural world. Through her groundbreaking research on wild chimpanzees in Gombe, Tanzania, she revealed their rich emotional lives, tool use and complex social structures – insights that reshaped science and deepened humanity's connection to our closest relatives in the animal kingdom.

Beyond her remarkable scientific contributions, Dr Goodall was a tireless champion for wildlife, conservation and climate action. Through the Jane Goodall Institute and her Roots & Shoots programme – an initiative we are honoured to support through The Datai Pledge – she inspired generations to protect the planet with hope, compassion and courage.

Her legacy endures in the forests she fought to protect and in the countless lives she touched worldwide.



life-changing experience for RASMA volunteers to work there,” TP shares.

A success story emerged in Tan Chin Wen, a 2022 RASMA alumni. She served as the first Manager of The Datai Pledge from March 2024 to August 2025. “My experiences instilled a deeper understanding of the holistic nature of sustainability,” Chin Wen shares.

Looking ahead, Roots & Shoots Malaysia is expanding into conservation art, syntropic agroforestry and eco-

tourism. Dr Jane Goodall's visits to Malaysia, most recently in 2024 to celebrate RASMA graduates and her 90th birthday, have highlighted these achievements and the organisation's growing impact.

“We build bridges, not walls,” TP recalls Dr Goodall's advice that shapes their approach. “It's about finding common ground. Environmental work can't happen in isolation.” 🌱





## Making Waves Sustainably

Sustainable luxury meets cross-cultural artistry in Ozero's exclusive collection for The Datai Langkawi.

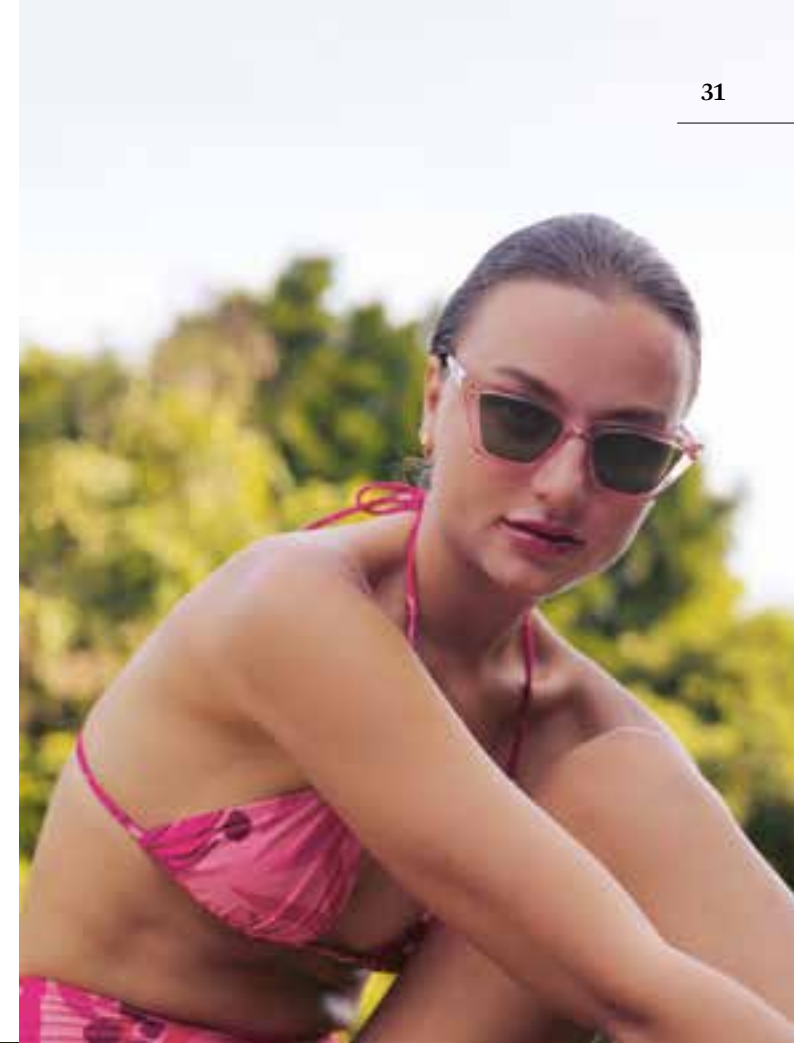


Carvico. This new shimmer fabric for solid colours exemplifies advanced environmental manufacturing, utilising technologies that minimise water and energy consumption, while adhering to strict chemical safety standards.

The printed pieces feature an innovative blend of 86 per cent REPREEVE recycled nylon and 14 per cent elastane. REPREEVE, created by global textile innovator Unifi, transforms post-consumer and post-industrial waste – including plastic bottles and fabric scraps – into high-performance materials that don't compromise on quality or function.

"While these materials come at a premium, we believe in the importance of investing in sustainable, long-lasting pieces", Elena explains. She adds that the design of the collection emphasises timeless simplicity, allowing pieces to be mixed and matched to extend their wearability.

The limited-edition collection is available through Ozero's sales channels as well as at The Boutique at The Datai Langkawi, offering guests an opportunity to take home a piece of the island's natural splendour, reimagined through sustainable fashion. 🌿



When Elena Cheurina visited The Datai Langkawi, she was immediately struck by the harmonious blend of architecture and nature. This inspiration led to a unique collaboration between her sustainable swimwear brand Ozero and the resort, resulting in a collection that captures the essence of Langkawi's ancient rainforest and the Andaman Sea.

"The diverse flora surrounding The Datai Langkawi directly influenced the floral patterns in this collection", says Elena. "We wanted to reflect the deep greens of the rainforest canopy and the rich blues of the ocean in our designs."

The collection represents a fascinating cultural fusion, with Russian-born artist Katya Schukina interpreting Malaysian landscapes through artistic sensibilities traditional in her homeland. Her intricate patterns merge the tropical flora and serene beaches of Malaysia with the detailed aesthetics of Russian art.

Ozero's philosophy matches up with The Datai Langkawi's brand ethos, putting sustainability at the forefront, which is evidenced by the swimwear brand's choice of premium Italian fabric supplier






# Echoes of Balance

In its second year, The Datai Langkawi’s Serenity – The Datai Well-being Series offered a pathway to inner calm, guiding guests through sound baths, traditional healing, and gentle movement in a series of residencies where nature and wellness meet.





Scan this QR code to watch Dr Rafael Bagheri during his residency at The Datai Langkawi.

As The Datai Langkawi’s Serenity Series closed out its second year, we look back on six distinguished practitioners who brought their unique approaches to wellness to this rainforest sanctuary, from sound healing to ancient traditions.

The 2024 series featured three returning experts whose previous residencies proved highly successful: Dr Rafael Bagheri, a chiropractor specialising in neuromuscular disorders; Bastien Gonzalez, renowned podiatrist behind the Pedi:Mani:Cure Studios worldwide in luxury resorts around the world; and Roxanne De Guzman, a wellness practitioner with over two decades of experience in luxury spas worldwide.

“We select practitioners who inspire guests to embrace holistic practices as part of their lifestyle,” says Louise Ward, Director of Spa and Wellness at The Datai Langkawi.



**NATURAL ALIGNMENT**


The first quarter of 2024 welcomed Dr Rafael Bagheri, whose approach centres on spinal alignment as the foundation of physical wellness. With modern life placing unprecedented stress on our bodies, his treatments emphasise the vital connection between proper alignment and overall health. Through precise adjustments, guests discovered how physical realignment can unlock mental clarity and renewed vitality.



**FOOT HEALTH**

In April, world-renowned podiatrist Bastien Gonzalez returned to elevate foot care beyond the aesthetic. Through his signature approach – developed at Pedi:Mani:Cure Studios worldwide – Gonzalez combines medical-grade podiatry with refined beauty treatments. His philosophy recognises feet as fundamental to holistic wellness, offering guests a transformative experience that transcends traditional pedicures.






Scan this QR code to watch Dr Lim Xiang Jun talk about her holistic approach.



**ANCIENT TRADITIONS**

Dr Lim Xiang Jun brought her mastery of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to The Datai Langkawi in June, bridging ancient wisdom with modern wellness needs. Her sessions seamlessly blend acupuncture, cupping and energy work to foster complete equilibrium. Rather than targeting isolated concerns, Dr Lim’s holistic approach emphasises the essential harmony between mind, body and environment – a philosophy that deeply resonates with contemporary wellness seekers.





Scan this QR code to see how Bastien Gonzalez pampered guests at The Datai Langkawi.





Scan this QR code to find out about Savy Ho's approach to holistic healing.



#### SOUND HEALING

In August, Savy Ho, a sound healer hailing from Malaysia, invited guests to participate in her restorative sound baths and unique tea ceremonies. Her sessions embraced a wellness style that aligned perfectly with the global pursuit of therapies fostering inner alignment through sensory immersion. With harmonic vibrations resonating against the rainforest's natural sounds, she curated experiences that cultivate profound calm and inner balance, often tapping into deeper consciousness levels.



#### GENTLE MOVEMENT

Concluding the series in December, Canadian yoga and fitness instructor Roxanne De Guzman returned to offer sessions centred on the Thai art of stretching and gentle movement. Contrary to trendy high-stress, high-impact workouts, Roxanne's approach emphasises sustainable, accessible exercises. Her sessions prioritise resilience and self-kindness, providing guests with an opportunity to reconnect with their bodies in a grounding, joyful manner. 🧘



Scan this QR code to gain insights into Roxanne De Guzman's rejuvenating sessions.



#### NUTRITION AND MOVEMENT

Recognising a shift from regimented practices to natural and balanced nourishment, nutritionist and fitness expert Hannah Prescott offered sessions focusing on lifestyle guidance beyond restrictive diets in October. Hannah's philosophy emphasises intuitive eating and fitness as forms of self-care rather than obligation. Her tailored, practical advice resonated deeply with guests, reminding them that healthy living should enhance life rather than impose limits.



Scan this QR code to get Hannah Prescott's views on nutrition.



# Body, Mind and Spirit

For 2025, The Datai Langkawi's Serenity Series welcomes six distinguished practitioners, offering guests transformative experiences from ancient healing traditions to contemporary wellness approaches.



The Datai Langkawi invites you to rediscover balance and serenity in 2025 as it proudly showcases this year's edition of the Serenity Series, an unparalleled celebration of integrative healing amid the enchanting embrace of the ancient rainforest. This thoughtfully curated programme, a cornerstone of the resort's wellness philosophy, brings together six distinguished practitioners from across the globe to share their expertise and elevate your well-being.

Rooted in the harmony of nature and modern science, the 2025 Serenity Series underscores The Datai Langkawi's dedication to crafting exceptional wellness experiences. Each residency has been handpicked to provide an immersive exploration of holistic healing. From enhancing physical vitality to nurturing emotional resilience and spiritual peace, the Series offers a unique opportunity to align body, mind and soul.

Whether it's the transformative touch of structural integration, the rhythmic flow of indigenous movement practices or the meditative embrace of sound healing, each session is designed to harmonise with the resort's natural surroundings. Guests also have the chance to experience cutting-edge modalities such as spinal alignment, meridian rebalancing and somatic therapy, all tailored to foster personal growth and rejuvenation.

Over the year, these highly anticipated residencies include personalised consultations, one-on-one sessions and engaging group workshops. Every guest is invited to embark on a bespoke wellness journey that resonates with the timeless wisdom of the rainforest.

Regardless of whether you are seeking profound relaxation, rejuvenation or rediscovery, Serenity – The Datai Well-being Series promises a holistic retreat like no other.



Scan to watch Dr Leonard McGill enhance posture and energy.

**Dr Leonard McGill**  
(13-23 February 2025)

Dr Leonard McGill arrived from the United States to share his masterful approach to structural integration therapy. Blending ancient energy practices with modern techniques, Dr McGill's sessions focused on spinal alignment and meridian rebalancing, offering guests relief from chronic pain while improving posture and mobility.



Discover Bastien Gonzalez's fusion of podiatry, therapy and harmony.

**Bastien Gonzalez**  
(13-20 April 2025)

Celebrated French podiatrist Bastien Gonzalez, renowned for his unique methodology combining medical techniques with holistic therapies, returned to The Datai Langkawi in April. With a unique blend of advanced medical techniques and holistic therapies, his distinguished methodology transcends traditional foot care to embrace full bodily harmony.



Experience Hannah Moujing's blend of tradition, movement and body.

**Hannah Moujing**  
(5-15 June 2025)

Hannah Moujing, an indigenous movement practitioner from Sabah on the island of Borneo in East Malaysia, helped guests reconnect with their bodies and discover the joy of movement. Drawing from her background in dance psychology and yoga training in India, her expertise creates a unique bridge between traditional wisdom and modern movement therapy.



**Daphne Chua**  
(7–17 July 2025)

Daphne Chua, the founder of Somatic Therapy Asia in Singapore, combines movement, meditation, visualisations, sounds and creative expressions to effectively improve motor control, coordination, rewire brain-body patterns and rehabilitate injuries. Each of her sessions is a journey through the body's natural healing capabilities.



**Liam Harkness**  
(9-19 October 2025)

British physiotherapist Liam Harkness is the founder of The Stretch Clinic in Kuala Lumpur. His expertise lies in physiotherapy and active isolated stretching, which is used by some of the world's top athletes to keep them in competitive shape as well as reduce muscle pain and inflammation. His techniques focus on promoting optimal recovery.



**Savy Ho**  
(22 December 2025 – 2 January 2026)

The transformative approach of Malaysian practitioner Savy Ho combines yoga, meditation, sound healing and tea ceremonies. Trained in various healing modalities, Savy creates immersive experiences that harmonise with The Datai Langkawi's natural surroundings. Her sessions honour both ancient healing traditions and modern wellness practices.



# A Symphony of Rejuvenation

The Datai Langkawi's newest offering promises a thorough, immersive experience for travellers seeking wellness that transcends traditional spa or fitness routines.



The concept of wellness evolves at The Datai Langkawi with the introduction of Pulih (Malay for 'to recover') – a seamless six-hour journey that dissolves traditional boundaries between spa treatment and fitness session.

In recognition of the fact that true transformation requires personalised attention, the experience begins with a pre-screening health questionnaire

that the guest fills in at The Spa, with the responses enabling the wellness team to craft a journey aligned with individual goals and capabilities. In the privacy of a secluded spa villa, the tailored experience then starts with a 60-minute pre-exercise massage. Skilled therapists, guided by traditional practices, employ oils infused with native botanicals. "This treatment is a luxurious

stretch that prepares the body to engage fully," says Fariz Abd Rahim, Senior Spa Therapist at The Datai Langkawi. "It ensures guests feel relaxed and motivated for the fitness challenge ahead."

The next step leads to Muhammad Danish, the resort's personal trainer, who will escort the guest from The Spa to The Health Club, a space framed by windows overlooking

"What sets Pulih apart is its comprehensive nature."

— Muhammad Danish, Personal Trainer



the Andaman Sea. "What sets Pulih apart is its comprehensive nature," Danish explains. "Rather than isolated sessions, we've created a flowing sequence that enhances endurance and flexibility in an enjoyable way. Each experience is crafted to be intense yet accessible, allowing participants to achieve optimal results through careful preparation, guided activity and thorough recovery."

Following the workout, a 90-minute post-exercise massage awaits at The Spa. The sounds of a nearby stream create a peaceful backdrop as therapists focus on releasing muscle tension and supporting recovery. Each massage addresses areas worked during the fitness session, using techniques to enhance circulation and promote natural restoration.

At The Beach Club, the journey concludes with a thoughtfully prepared

lunch that balances nutrition with culinary excellence. The menu, crafted to complement the morning's activities, features fresh ingredients that support the body's natural recovery process.

More than just a single day's experience, Pulih is an ongoing journey of wellness as its benefits resonate long beyond the rainforest setting of The Datai Langkawi. 🌿





Scan this code to discover how the Hasanah Gold Threads Awards propel Malaysian textile artisans to new heights.

## An Uncommon Thread

Inside The Datai Langkawi's Year of Master Craftspeople, where six recipients of Malaysia's prestigious Hasanah Gold Threads Awards demonstrate how ancient textile traditions are being reimagined for contemporary times while preserving their cultural essence.

The Datai Langkawi's sunlit Atelier has hosted six of Malaysia's finest textile masters in 2024 as part of its Artist-in-Residence programme, a partnership between the resort and the country's Hasanah Gold Threads Awards. These Awards are an annual recognition to honour and celebrate excellence in craft and push the envelope in traditional textile techniques.

**Shah Nor Ramin bin Mohammad** discovered for himself *Tenun Pahang Diraja*, a royal-endorsed silk weaving tradition, through an innovative prison rehabilitation programme championed by the Queen Consort of Pahang, the largest state in peninsular Malaysia stretching from close to Kuala Lumpur all the way to the eastern



Shah Nor Ramin bin Mohammad discovered *Tenun Pahang Diraja* (right) for himself.



coast of West Malaysia. His journey from prison warden to master artisan exemplifies how heritage crafts can evolve in surprising ways. Through his experimental approach and creative designs, Ramin has helped revitalise this 300-year-old weaving technique, demonstrating how traditional craftsmanship can be reimagined while preserving its cultural essence.

Textile innovators **Ong Wan Fen** and **Hasmah binti Yamin** are breathing new life into *songket*, a luxurious handwoven fabric once known as 'the cloth of gold' for its intricate patterns created with metallic threads woven through silk or cotton. At their workshop, they use a traditional foot-operated *kek* loom to blend time-honoured techniques with sustainable materials, transforming this ceremonial textile from its royal court origins into contemporary designs.



Ong Wan Fen and Hasmah binti Yamin are breathing new life into handwoven *songket* (left).





The gentle click of glass beads announces the workspace of **Kenny Loh**, whose journey from nutritionist to celebrated artist embodies the revival of the rich Peranakan heritage of Penang – an island just south of Langkawi. The Peranakans, also known as Baba-Nyonya, emerged from the cultural fusion between Chinese merchants and local Malay families dating back to the 16th century, creating one of Malaysia's most distinctive communities. Their unique identity is reflected in the honorific terms – Baba for men and Nyonya for women – that have become synonymous with their sophisticated craftsmanship and cultural traditions that blend Chinese and Malay influences.

Each exquisitely beaded slipper (known as *kasut manik*) and elegant *baju kebaya* (an upper garment worn by women of Southeast Asia) that Loh fashions is an intricate and painstaking effort that captures the opulent artistry and aesthetics that are the hallmarks of the Peranakan costume. Embellished with vibrant leitmotif, these coveted pieces are increasingly finding their way into modern wardrobes.



Kenny Loh is reviving the rich Peranakan heritage of Penang (top and below).



From the royal state of Perak, **Muhammad Hilmi bin Muhammad Hafni** is leading a renaissance in *tekat*, an endangered Malay decorative art passed down through generations of women in his family. This intricate craft, practised by fewer than 25 artisans today, involves embellishing velvet with raised patterns of gold or silver thread, traditionally used to create ceremonial items for Malay weddings. His work combines ancestral techniques such as *mempulur* (decorative rattan borders) with innovative designs featuring Islamic calligraphy and nature motifs.



Muhammad Hilmi bin Muhammad Hafni is leading a renaissance in *tekat* (below).

Hailing from Sabah, on the island of Borneo in East Malaysia, master craftswoman **Adiguru Crisna binti Mojupi** preserves the heritage of *sulaman pis*, a traditional embroidery art of the indigenous Rungus people. This meticulous technique transforms cotton into *kain tinohian*, ceremonial cloths that tell stories through intricate satin stitching. Each piece serves as a visual narrative of Rungus folklore, featuring motifs drawn from Malaysian wildlife and flora. Crisna's contemporary interpretations, including handbags and wall art, ensure this cultural storytelling tradition remains relevant for modern audiences.

Closing this year's Artist-In-Residence programme, batik practitioner **Halmi bin Chek** introduced guests to a

uniquely Sarawakian (Sarawak is a Malaysian state located on the island of Borneo) form of batik known as *batik linut*. Drawing on his three decades of experience since apprenticing in



Adiguru Crisna binti Mojupi preserves the heritage of *sulaman pis* (below).



Kelantan, Malaysia's traditional batik heartland, Halmi has pioneered the use of *linut* (sago palm paste) as an environmentally conscious alternative to conventional wax resists. His intricate designs, created through a combination of silk-screening and gold hand-stamping, demonstrate how ancient crafts can evolve to embrace both sustainability and artistic excellence.

Guests of The Datai Langkawi can experience the artistic legacy of these award-winning and highly skilled artists through The Boutique's collection and The Atelier's continuing series of talks and workshops. Boutique Manager Norhayanti 'Yanti' Jamil is curator of the store's collection as well as the resort's Artist-In-Residence programme. For collectors seeking Malaysian textiles with solid provenance, each piece selected represents exceptional craftsmanship and tells of innovation within tradition.

"Each artist showed us different ways forward," Yanti observes. "Whether through sustainable materials, new applications or fresh interpretations, they've demonstrated how heritage stays relevant. That's the real gold thread – the one that connects past to future." ⑩



Halmi bin Chek and one of his *batik linut* pieces (below).







Douce Steiner is the only female chef in Germany to hold two Michelin stars. Scan this code to see her in action at The Datai Langkawi.

## A Year of Culinary Excellence

With a total of nine Michelin stars, the Chef-fe Series 2024 was an extraordinary gathering of female culinary masters bringing together global flavours in a celebration of taste and culture.

The Chef-fe Series 2024 at The Datai Langkawi marked a groundbreaking moment in culinary history, presenting an all-female lineup of extraordinary talent. This pioneering initiative showcased nine Michelin stars collectively, celebrating the growing representation of female chefs in an industry traditionally dominated by men. Each intimate dinner, held primarily at the resort's spectacular The Dining Room situated by the main

pool and surrounded by lush rainforest, offered guests an unparalleled opportunity to experience diverse culinary philosophies united by a dedication to exceptional ingredients and craftsmanship.

Germany's first female two-Michelin-starred chef **Douce Steiner** inaugurated the series in February, presenting refined seasonal cuisine that married classic French techniques with local ingredients from the resort's



Permaculture Garden. Her sophisticated menu demonstrated how simple ingredients could be transformed into exquisite experiences that resonated with the natural surroundings. Growing up in a 500-year-old family restaurant in Sulzburg, Steiner's approach challenges traditional kitchen culture. "I don't have to shout all day to be heard," she explains. "We work with absolute respect for each other." This philosophy extends to her innovative management

style – she runs just four evening services weekly to maintain creativity and quality.

Malaysian chef **Melba Nunis** followed, showcasing the unique Portuguese-Malaccan fusion of Kristang cuisine. Her signature Devil Curry and Caldu Galinhia came alive through personal stories of heritage and tradition. "Environmental consciousness is ingrained in Kristang cooking", she explains. "We utilise every part of an ingredient – a philosophy that resonates with The Datai Langkawi's values." Having learnt these recipes in her mother Mercy's kitchen, Nunis has dedicated herself to preserving authentic Kristang flavours exactly as her great-grandparents prepared them. Her dishes tell a broader story of cultural fusion, incorporating fiery sambals, spicy curries made with dried spices, fragrant coconut, and the tanginess of tamarind alongside non-spicy Portuguese, Dutch and Chinese influences.

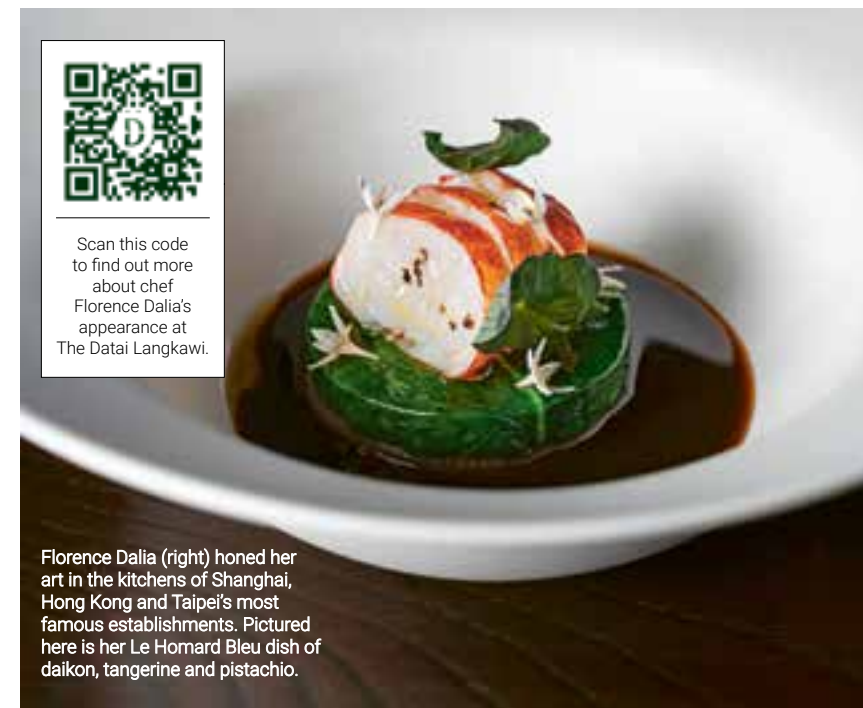


Melba Nunis is of Malaccan-Portuguese descent and known for her signature dishes of Portuguese-Malaccan or Kristang cuisine.



Scan this code to go behind the scenes of her residency at The Datai Langkawi, with Malacca-born chef and author, Melba Nunis.

From Taipei came **Florence Dalia** (pictured below) of 16 by Flo, bringing her distinctive blend of Burgundian technique and Asian influences. Her Vivaneau Rouge – red snapper with stuffed lettuce and seaweed butter sauce – paired with a Wittmann Trocken Riesling 2019, exemplified her mastery of cross-cultural flavours. Dalia's journey in Asia has included prestigious roles in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taipei, including earning two Michelin stars at L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon. Her culinary philosophy emphasises "the marriage of ingredients, but with the complexity that you might expect from a fine wine", creating dishes where individual flavours remain discernible yet blend harmoniously. This approach stems from her rich heritage – with family roots in Burgundy, Sicily and Sardinia.



Florence Dalia (right) honed her art in the kitchens of Shanghai, Hong Kong and Taipei's most famous establishments. Pictured here is her Le Homard Bleu dish of daikon, tangerine and pistachio.





Cristina Bowerman has held one Michelin star and three forks from *Gambero Rosso* since 2010, and is also a case study at Bocconi University in Milan.



Scan this code to discover Cristina Bowerman's residency at The Datai Langkawi.



“As a homage to Malaysia’s diversity, I introduced Malay, Indian and Chinese flavours to my dishes, with a hint of Japanese influence.”

– Cristina Bowerman

Glass Hostaria’s **Cristina Bowerman** introduced innovative interpretations of Italian cuisine, incorporating Malaysian spices in tribute to the country’s diverse culinary heritage. “As a homage to Malaysia’s diversity, I introduced Malay, Indian and Chinese flavours to my dishes, with a hint of Japanese influence,” she says. Her commitment to sustainability showed through the thoughtful use of local produce. Bowerman’s unconventional path – from law studies in San Francisco to culinary arts in Austin – reflects her philosophy of challenging accepted norms. As Rome’s only female Michelin-starred chef, she advocates fearlessly for women in professional kitchens: “I learnt not to be afraid to be a woman in this field. We don’t want riches; we reinvest everything back into the business.”



Scan this code to watch a glimpse of the Six Hands Dinner by Angela Hartnett, Lisa Goodwin-Allen and Nieves Barragán.

October saw a remarkable collaboration between three British culinary stars – **Angela Hartnett** of Murano, **Lisa Goodwin-Allen** of Northcote and **Nieves Barragán Mohacho** of Sabor. Their six-hands dinner celebrated British and Spanish flavours while embracing Langkawi’s abundant resources. Hartnett’s Italian-influenced cuisine, which earned her both an MBE and OBE, brings a philosophy of elegant simplicity: “I like restaurants that don’t mess around with ingredients. For me it’s about really good, simple, tasty food.” From

her beginnings at London’s most prestigious kitchens to opening the Michelin-starred Murano in Mayfair, she has championed authentic, seasonal Italian flavours in Britain.

At Northcote, Goodwin-Allen took over the kitchen at just 23 and quickly established herself as one of the UK’s most innovative chefs. “I like food to be very visual, very elegant and packed with great flavours. It must taste of what you see,” she explains. Her commitment to local Lancashire suppliers and nurturing young talent through programs like Springboard’s



Clockwise from left: Angela Hartnett of Murano, Lisa Goodwin-Allen of Northcote and Nieves Barragán Mohacho of Sabor; crab with paella and blue fin tuna *tartaleta*; Siberian caviar, wild sea prawn toast and Angus beef *carne cruda bruche*.

Future Chef has made her a pivotal figure in British gastronomy.

Bringing the vibrant flavours of her native Bilbao, Barragán Mohacho earned Sabor a Michelin star just eight months after opening in 2018. Her approach celebrates authentic Spanish cuisine without pretense: “We were not fine dining, we didn’t have white tablecloths. We were just doing good food with passion, with love.” This philosophy has earned her acclaim from her early days at Barrafinia through to her current success at Sabor. 🍴



# The Gold List

The Datai Langkawi's signature Chef Series for 2025 glitters with guest chefs from Michelin-starred restaurants all over the world, each bringing their unique culinary philosophies and artistic expressions to create unforgettable dining experiences at the resort.



Scan the code to find out more about chef Ana Roš and what inspires her.

The anticipation of an extraordinary dining experience begins the moment guests step into The Dining Room at The Datai Langkawi. In 2025, this anticipation is heightened as a roster of acclaimed chefs take up residency, each bringing their distinctive approach to cuisine while embracing local ingredients and traditions.

Opening the series in January and simultaneously closing out the Chef-fe Series 2024, which highlighted female talent in kitchens around the world, **Ana Roš** of Hiša Franko in Slovenia took over The Dining Room at The Datai Langkawi. Roš runs one of

the select group of restaurants which hold the prestigious three-Michelin-star rating, in addition to the green Michelin star recognising restaurants that uphold outstanding sustainable and eco-friendly culinary practices, representing the pinnacle of culinary excellence, and aligning perfectly with The Datai Langkawi's ethos of sustainability and conservation. She brought her innovative interpretations of Slovenian cuisine to the shores of Langkawi. Remarkably self-taught, Roš has transformed her innate talent and relentless drive into a force that has firmly placed Slovenia on the global



Ana Roš and her seed taco with black sunchoke puree, pears and *Silene vulgaris* (top).

gastronomic map. Her degustation menu combined the essence of Hiša Franko with locally sourced ingredients that she and the team handpicked directly from the local market, infusing her deep connection to nature, culture and gastronomy with a unique local twist.



Jordi Artal specialises in contemporary Catalan cuisine such as Perdiz (top) and Fresa Nata (top right).



Scan the code to see how chef Jordi Artal took guests of The Datai Langkawi on an extraordinary culinary journey.



Jordi Artal crafts narrative-driven tasting menus featuring local treasures.

In March, **Jordi Artal**, the self-taught chef behind the two-Michelin-starred Cinc Sentits, brought his modern Catalan cuisine all the way over from Barcelona, Spain. Artal crafts narrative-driven tasting menus featuring local treasures like Palamós prawns and Sagàs pork, sourced from small, trusted suppliers. His dishes marry tradition and innovation to deliver a deeply personal and flavourful experience.



April 18 and 19 saw **Jan Hartwig** from his eponymous three-Michelin-starred JAN restaurant in Munich, Germany, taking centre stage. The celebrated German chef impressively earned his stars six months after the opening with his avant-garde approach to fine dining and has retained them ever since. Regarded as a master of modern European cuisine, he often presents German culinary traditions in an entirely new light, focusing on local fish and meat.



Jan Hartwig and his  
crispy tartelette with Foie  
Gras au chantilly and  
Breton sardine (bottom).



Su Kim Hock's Au Jardin and his  
Assorted Local Mushroom  
Cilantro roots, Turmeric  
Emulsion (above).



Scan the code to  
see how chef Jan  
took guests of The  
Datai Langkawi on  
an extraordinary  
culinary journey.

The star-studded list for June 20 and 21 is illuminated with a home-grown star. **Su Kim Hock** of the one-Michelin-starred Au Jardin in Penang, Malaysia, has captivated diners with his culinary artistry. While his other restaurants boast authentic flavours and deep tributes to the cuisine of that restaurant, Su has also curated Sincere Co's meatless menu to accommodate lacto-ovo vegetarians, vegans as well as curious individuals looking to have healthier options. The menu draws inspiration through dishes the world over, from the traditional Thai snack, Miangkam, to the Mexican crowd favourite, Quesadilla.



Gert De Mangeleer and his  
Breton langoustine 'Crudo',  
raspberry, beetroot and  
vanilla (below).

Following on from the Penang culinary powerhouse's stint is **Gert De Mangeleer** from the Hertog Jan Restaurant Group, who hosted dinners at the resort on July 18 and 19. In 2011, the Belgian-born chef – then only 33 years of age – was feted with three Michelin stars at Hertog Jan, a feat that he maintained for the next eight years until the restaurant's final day of operations in December 2018 when he decided to close the restaurant on a high.

Since then, De Mangeleer busied himself with the Hertog Jan Restaurant Group with the chef-inspired sandwich outlet Babú, the French-inspired Bar Bulot, and in Brugge, the hip and urban LESS Eatery with the name an acronym for Love, Eat, Share, Smile. In Antwerp, one finds his crowning glory, the 16-seater, two Michelin-starred and omakase-styled Hertog Jan at Botanic which showcases the chef's love affair with Asia. Think Anjou pigeon finished on bincotan and sides of wild strawberries and red beetroot.



Thibaut Gamba and his  
La tomate de Gironde (above).

Ring in the year-end is **Thibaut Gamba** of the one Michelin-starred Logis de la Cadène based in France's Saint Émilion wine region. His cuisine features plenty of locally sourced ingredients such as fruit, vegetables and honey from the estate on which the restaurant sits.

His culinary training has brought him through some of the greatest kitchens, from Lassere with chef Jean-Louis Nomicos to Pierre Gagnaire's Parisian establishment and then across the pond at Thomas Keller's Per Se in New York City. A stint in Norway imbued him with new understanding and techniques for seafood preparation as well, which he now brings to The Datai Langkawi's Chef Series.



“Nothing is very complex in our cooking, in our family. It’s about simplicity, but the little details can make all the difference.”

– Alain Roux



Alain Roux stays constant with favourites such as pan-fried lobster and baked Alaska (left and below).



Anchoring the 2025 culinary lineup and featuring in a specially extended showcase in January 2026 is none other than the legendary **Alain Roux** – one of the UK’s most celebrated chefs. From 13 to 17 January 2026, Roux will bring his extraordinary culinary artistry to Langkawi for an exclusive five-day residency at The Datai Langkawi.

Guests will be treated to an unforgettable series of gastronomic experiences: exquisite degustation dinners, refined al fresco beachside dining, and a one-night-only sunset cruise aboard the resort’s Gadis Pulau Catamaran, featuring curated canapés under the stars.

As Chef Patron of the iconic Waterside Inn in Berkshire, famous for its classic French cuisine, Roux has preserved a legacy of excellence, maintaining the restaurant’s coveted three Michelin stars for 40 consecutive years – a feat unmatched in the world outside France. Continuing the legacy of his father, Michel Roux, OBE, and uncle Albert Roux, Alain is globally revered for his dedication to craftsmanship, tradition and culinary finesse.

At The Datai Langkawi, Roux will share not only his renowned cuisine, but also the Roux family philosophy that has captivated the culinary world: “Nothing is very complex in our cooking, in our family. It’s about simplicity, but the little details can make all the difference.”

This is a rare opportunity to savour the flavours of a master – an experience where timeless techniques, family heritage and the natural beauty of Langkawi come together in perfect harmony. 🍷



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# Raising a Toast to Excellence

The Datai Langkawi forges an exclusive partnership with Champagne Barons de Rothschild, bringing together French winemaking excellence and Malaysian hospitality in a unique collaboration.

The Datai Langkawi has formed an exclusive partnership with world-renowned Champagne Barons de Rothschild, marked by a champagne-pairing dinner on 8 October 2024 at The Dining Room, hosted by Frédéric Mairesse, President of the champagne house.

The story of Champagne Barons de Rothschild began in 2005, when three branches of France's renowned Rothschild family united their winemaking expertise. Philippe Sereys de Rothschild of Château Mouton Rothschild, Ariane de Rothschild of Château Clarke, and Eric and Saskia de Rothschild of Château Lafite Rothschild combined their knowledge to create a house dedicated to champagne excellence.

The meticulous approach to this new generation of champagnes centres on Chardonnay, which makes up over 70 per cent of the house's grape supply. The grapes are sourced



primarily from Grand and Premier Crus vineyards in Côte des Blancs and Montagne de Reims – two regions in northeastern France known for producing some of Champagne's finest wines. This careful selection of terroir, combined with using over 40 per cent reserve wines from Barons de Rothschild's perpetual reserve, creates wines of notable depth.

The house maintains one of Champagne's lowest dosage levels, allowing the true character of each wine to shine through. Each bottle rests in the cellars for four to 10 years, followed by six months after disgorgement – a patience that shows in the final product.

The partnership brings an exclusive Concordia Brut cuvée to The Datai Langkawi, a blend of 60 per cent Chardonnay and 40 per cent Pinot Noir. This champagne will welcome guests upon arrival and feature on restaurant wine lists throughout the resort.

The Datai Langkawi joins the house's Club Ambassadeurs, a carefully curated network of establishments that shares a dedication to fine wine and hospitality. It is a collaboration that connects two traditions – the heritage of French winemaking with the natural splendour of Langkawi – to create a unique tasting experience for all at The Datai Langkawi.

The Concordia Brut is available by glass or bottle at all dining venues within the resort. 🍷





## Spirit of Craftsmanship

The Datai Langkawi expands its spirits lineup with a single-cask whisky and exclusive rum, finalising its four-spirit collection, complete with a special-edition collection box set created in collaboration with Royal Selangor.



Crafted from sustainably sourced wood with an ebony veneer, the Royal Selangor presentation box pairs a smooth matte finish with pewter for the corner guards and the top of the box.



Amid the lush beauty of The Datai Langkawi lies a curated spirits adventure that began with the launch of its vodka and gin in 2019. Now, the collection has been expanded with a single-cask whisky and exclusive rum – each bottle embodying the polished elegance and artisanal finesse that define the resort experience. Spearheaded by Indra Mohan, The Datai Langkawi's Director of Food and Beverage, the collection offers more than just spirits; each bottle invites guests to sense the nuances and depth of The Datai Langkawi's ethos, one sip at a time.

Leading the collection is the resort's single-malt whisky, the pinnacle of the range. Indra and his team selected a single cask of 22-year-old whisky aged in sherry casks from the Scottish distillery BenRiach. Renowned for its peated and unpeated expressions, BenRiach's whisky gains honeyed sweetness, nutty undertones and a smooth finish from the rare sherry wood. The distillery's use of mineral-rich aquifer water further enhances its exceptional character.

"We wanted something resonant with our guests – sophisticated and steeped in time," Indra says. Every detail, from the whisky's smooth notes to its floral aromas, embodies timelessness and sensory exploration. Limited to 181 numbered bottles, its rarity highlights the team's aim to transcend the ordinary. "This whisky has a feminine elegance," Indra adds, describing its delicate, complex and memorable profile that unfolds subtly with each sip.

Every detail of the bottle and label has been carefully selected, uniting the collection under a visual story inspired by Langkawi's natural surroundings. The whisky label features the outline of a Meranti tree in gold foil against a racing green background, representing the resort's ties to the lush rainforest.







Complementing the whisky is the collection's 10-year-old Jamaican Golden Rum. Aged in oak barrels, it offers a robust profile of caramel, toffee and subtle spice. Sourced from a single Jamaican estate, this rum complements the whisky's refinement, creating harmony within the range. Enjoy it neat or in a signature cocktail. The rum's label features a Hawksbill Turtle, symbolising the island's leisurely pace and the resort's commitment to marine conservation.

These two new spirits join The Datai Gin and Vodka – born from a partnership with a renowned Italian distillery in 2018, just before the world paused. The meticulous selection process involved extensive research and development as well as testing various flavour profiles and ingredients. The final gin The Datai opted for is infused with locally sourced botanicals like nutmeg, cinnamon and orange peel. The Datai Vodka, produced by the same Italian distillery, was chosen for its crispness, reminding the team of the crystal-clear waters of Langkawi's waterfalls.

This quartet of special bottlings find their way into an exceptional wooden case made by Royal Selangor International, the world's foremost



pewtersmith, which has amalgamated wood carpentry and pewter accents into a presentation box inlaid with green felt. The box, composed of sustainably sourced wood with ebony veneers, is embellished with pewter corner guards that recall the late architect Kerry Hill's minimalist elegance, tracing the motifs of The Datai Langkawi's railings.

At the resort, experience these spirits from mixologists who use the vodka and gin to craft signature cocktails. Examples include a spin on the classic gin & tonic enhanced with capsicum, highlighting the gin's herbaceous profile and offering a unique tasting journey that resonates with the locale's authentic flavours. Meanwhile, The Datai Vodka is used in several of the resort's signature cocktails, such as the Espresso Martini.

Standout creations include the Nám Aroi martini, blending vodka with kaffir leaf, galangal, lemongrass and lime for a vibrant mix of savoury spice and sweet-sour balance, and the Kesom Boi martini, featuring The Datai Gin infused with kesum leaf, asamboi and lime, embodying the herbaceous warmth of local flavours. The tropical LangKooler highlights The Datai Rum, which combines a lemongrass rum infusion with kaffir lime leaf, mint, citrus and soda for a refreshing island-inspired drink. For whisky purists, enjoy The Datai single-cask whisky neat or with a splash of water to enhance its floral and nutty notes, delivering a sublime post-dinner experience. ①



Bunga Raya: The Datai Vodka infused with hibiscus, blanc vermouth, fino sherry infused with pandan, sparkling coconut water and lime



Tropicroni: a negroni base with a tropical twist. Coconut fat washed gin, pandan saline, vermouth and Campari



# A Journey Through Time: Revisiting The Datai Langkawi in a Digital, Sustainable World

Dave Gillan, a seasoned luxury travel expert, discovers how The Datai Langkawi harmoniously blends its renowned hospitality with sustainability initiatives while preserving the magical connection between rainforest and sea that first captured his heart 23 years ago.

It had been more than two decades since I last visited The Datai Langkawi, an iconic luxury resort hidden in the heart of the rainforest on Langkawi, Malaysia's serene island. My first stay was back in 2001, and I can still vividly recall the unforgettable experience of being enveloped by nature while enjoying the utmost in luxury. Fast forward 23 years and I read about The Datai Langkawi celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2023. With the resort having undergone a highly acclaimed refurbishment in 2018, I knew it was time to return and rediscover a place that had left such a lasting impression on me. Writing this article for IKHLAS allowed me to reflect on how much The Datai Langkawi has evolved and how luxury travel itself has transformed in the intervening years.

**A Thoughtful Return To Langkawi**  
As I prepared for my return to The Datai Langkawi, I found myself wondering about the changes I might find after all this time. Would the resort retain that magical blend of nature and luxury that had captured my imagination years ago? How had the resort adapted to meet the growing global emphasis on sustainability, without losing its reputation for luxurious experiences? More personally, how had I changed? Since my last visit, the world has witnessed enormous shifts in technology, wellness trends and environmental consciousness, and I was eager to see how the hotel had responded to these broader developments.

The excitement of my return was heightened by a serendipitous coincidence: just before my departure from the United Kingdom, I discovered



"The villa structure itself has been expanded, particularly the bathroom area, which now felt more like a 'bathroom wing'." Dave Gillan

that The Datai Langkawi was featured in an episode of the BBC series *Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby*, with Monica Galetti and Rob Rinder. This gave me a preview of what was to come and whetted my appetite for what I hoped would be another memorable and reflective stay.

## Timeless Luxury Meets Modern Innovation

During my visit in 2001, I had stayed in one of the hotel's Rainforest Pool Villas, a perfect sanctuary for anyone seeking immersion in nature without sacrificing luxury. I remember the exact villa I stayed in (Villa 31) and, for this trip, I was eager to return to either a similar setting or one of the Beach

Villas which had been newly added in 2012. I opted for Villa 28, another Rainforest Pool Villa, located opposite my previous one, nestled deep within the tropical rainforest. To my delight, the lush vegetation had only grown more vibrant over time and the wildlife that makes the resort so special was as present as ever. Macaque monkeys, playful and mischievous, would swing through the trees and occasionally attempt to sneak into my villa in search of snacks. These interactions added a playful charm to the experience, making it feel even more connected to the surrounding environment.

While much of the essence of the villa remained unchanged, there had been notable upgrades since



This aerial view of the resort was captured by the author in 2024, showing the resort's tranquil architecture surrounded by lush greenery.





The view from the Lobby still provides stunning vistas across the rainforest and Andaman Sea to Thailand's Koh Tarutao. Pictures from 2024 (left) and 2001 (below).



The Spa has retained its luxurious setting within the rainforest (below) with the addition of a Spa Suite (right).



The private plunge pool in the Rainforest Pool Villa in 2001 (top) was transformed into a lap-sized pool in 2024 (above).



“From a zero-waste organic food system to upcycling initiatives, the resort has fully embraced eco-conscious practices.”

– Dave Gillan

my last stay. The villa structure itself had been expanded, particularly the bathroom area, which now felt more like a ‘bathroom wing’. This addition provided even more space for relaxation, with its serene design allowing me to feel connected to the natural surroundings. The private pool, which overlooked the river, was one of my favourite spots to unwind. I spent many moments there, sipping champagne while listening to the soothing sounds of the rainforest. It was reassuring to see that The Datai Langkawi had not only retained its signature blend of luxury and nature, but had enhanced it in ways that were sensitive to its unique environment.

**Rediscovering The Datai Langkawi’s Beauty, Wellness And Sustainability**  
Spending a full week at the resort this time allowed me to truly experience the full breadth of what The Datai Langkawi now offers. One of the first things I noticed was the expanded spa, which had always been a haven of relaxation. Though it remained in the same location as before, the spa had been modernised and now featured an even broader range of wellness treatments. We indulged in a couples’ massage in an open-air treatment suite along the river, a tranquil experience that reminded me why the resort had left such a lasting impression all those years ago. The sounds of the flowing river and the soft calls of the rainforest’s inhabitants made for an immersive and deeply calming treatment.

The property has also introduced several new spaces that weren’t part of my original visit, including The Nature Centre and a Holistic Pavilion. These additions provided unique opportunities to deepen our connection to nature. At The Nature Centre, we participated in nature walks, where expert guides pointed out local wildlife and plant species, enriching our understanding of the unique ecosystem surrounding the resort. The Holistic Pavilion, located closer to the beach, was a serene spot where we experienced sound healing therapy with the calming backdrop of the ocean’s rhythmic waves. One of the highlights for me was a canopy walk that began on the beach and took us across a wooden bridge floating above the mangroves, eventually leading us deep into the heart of the rainforest. The variety of environments we encountered – from sandy shores to dense jungle – was breathtaking.

A significant change since my last visit was the introduction of The Datai Pledge, the resort’s commitment to sustainability and conservation. This pledge goes far beyond the standard environmental measures you might expect from a luxury resort. We took part in the Permaculture Walk, learning about the resort’s zero-waste food production system, which operates through a closed-loop waste management process. Much of the produce used at the resort is either sourced locally or comes from its organic garden, where herbs, spices and plants are cultivated in harmony with the local ecosystem. It was inspiring to see how committed the resort is to reducing its environmental impact while maintaining a world-class experience for its guests.

A particularly memorable experience was the Bee a Beekeeper activity. During this hands-on session, we donned protective camouflage gear and got up close with the resort’s *Trigona itama* bees, a stingless species native to the area. We even harvested our own honey with syringes, which we took home with us to use on salads and as a healthy topping for my morning bircher muesli. It was an unexpectedly enjoyable experience that deepened my appreciation for The Datai Langkawi’s efforts to incorporate sustainability into the guest experience in creative and interactive ways.





An aerial photo captured in 2024 shows how The Datai Langkawi's architecture sustains a symbiotic relationship with the surrounding 10-million-year-old rainforest.

Another new feature of the resort since my last visit was The Lab, a space dedicated to upcycling and recycling projects. Here, guests can learn how to recycle old candles, make natural soaps, and even reuse bed linens to create eco-friendly wax wraps. The hands-on nature of these activities made sustainability feel like a natural extension of the resort experience rather than an afterthought. It was refreshing to see how far the resort had come in its environmental efforts.

**A Personal Journey: 23 Years Of Growth, Wellness And Technology's Impact**  
As I reflected on my first trip to The Datai Langkawi, I couldn't help but marvel at how much the world had changed since 2001. Back then, I felt quite advanced for owning a 35mm camera, which I'd purchased in Singapore after my original camera malfunctioned. The photos from that trip, now neatly preserved in a physical album, remind me of a time before the digital age fully took hold. Alongside

the photos, I kept mementos like villa keycards, brochures and postcards – souvenirs that feel almost quaint in today's hyper-connected world.

On this trip, I travelled with far more advanced technology. My Canon R10 mirrorless camera captured images in stunning detail, while my iPhone (which didn't launch until 2007) and a DJI drone allowed me to capture both ground and aerial footage. The evolution of technology has transformed the way we travel and document our experiences.



The Gulai House in 2024, with its open-sided design, immerses guests in nature's embrace.

On my first visit, there was no Wi-Fi, no MacBook, iPad or smartphone, and no Kindle. I remember bringing a stack of physical books to read by the pool, and when I finished them, I traded them at the resort's library. Today, my Kindle holds an entire library of books and the resort's excellent Wi-Fi ensures that I can stay connected whenever I wish.

While technology has certainly made travel more convenient, it has also made it more important than ever to take time to disconnect and be fully present. At The Datai Langkawi, I found it easier to do just that. The connection to nature here, combined with the resort's understated luxury, creates an atmosphere where it's possible to escape the digital noise and immerse yourself in the present moment.

#### The Datai Langkawi's Enduring Elegance In A Technology-Driven, Eco-Conscious World

Returning to The Datai Langkawi was an experience that blended nostalgia with new discoveries. Some changes were subtle – like the raised sun deck at the beach pool for new canopied double-bed sun loungers – while others were more significant, such as the relocation and expansion of the gym and fitness area, which now features a sauna and steam room. Despite these upgrades, the resort's essence remained unchanged. It still felt like a sanctuary, a place where luxury and nature coexist harmoniously.

“Despite changes, the warmth and pride of the staff remain a constant.”

– Dave Gillan



What impressed me most was how the resort had embraced sustainability without sacrificing any of the luxury that had always defined it. For example, The Datai Langkawi now bottles its own water in glass on-site, reducing its carbon footprint by minimising the need for transported goods. Excess food has the water extracted to be reused for watering the gardens and the food pulp used in worm beds (actually the old bathtubs before the refurbishment) to create organic fertiliser, and excess proteins are donated to local shelters for dogs, demonstrating the resort's commitment to minimising waste. Even with these eco-conscious initiatives, the luxurious experience remained intact. I could still enjoy a glass of chilled champagne in the heated pool (using environment-friendly technology through the use of heat pumps) while marvelling at the wildlife around me, knowing that my stay was having a minimal impact on the environment.

#### What Makes The Datai Langkawi A Luxury And Sustainable Icon

One of the standout experiences during our stay was dining at The Gulai House, an authentic Malaysian restaurant housed in a traditional wooden structure that had been relocated to The Datai Langkawi from a neighbouring property. The rustic, open-sided dining experience, surrounded by nature, brought back fond memories of my previous visit (as I'd actually been in that same restaurant building, though not on The Datai Langkawi site) while introducing me to new flavours of Malaysian cuisine.

Throughout our stay, the staff at the resort were as attentive and welcoming as I remembered. Many have worked at the property for years, and their pride in working in such a unique environment was palpable. From the moment we arrived at the airport to our departure, the service was impeccable, contributing to the overall sense of luxury and comfort that makes The Datai Langkawi such a special place. 🌿

*Dave Gillan, known as The Private Traveller, has spent 30 years exploring the world. Since 2018, he has shared his experiences on social media (@thepivatetraveller) and his website, ThePrivateTraveller.com, and now provides expert guidance as a luxury travel adviser.*



## Unmissable Adventures in Borneo's Wild North

From the world's tallest tropical trees to Cousteau's favourite dive spot, Sabah offers Southeast Asia's most spectacular natural wonders. This insider's guide reveals 14 unmissable experiences in Malaysia's wild north-east, where ancient rainforests, pristine seas and living traditions await.

Crowned by Malaysia's highest peak, Mount Kinabalu (which is also the third-highest peak of an island on Earth), and home to some of the world's oldest rainforests dating back 130 million years, the Malaysian state of Sabah stands as a biological wonderland that is renowned the world over. This state, occupying the northern tip of Borneo, the world's third-largest island, harbours an astonishing array of wildlife – from endangered Bornean Elephants to the critically endangered Orangutans (Malay for 'man of the forest'), and over 600 species of birds soaring through its emerald canopies. Pristine beaches with turquoise waters seamlessly merge with

ancient rainforests, creating a natural paradise that caters to both adventure seekers and nature enthusiasts.

Here is a guide to some of Sabah's unmissable experiences as recommended by The Datai Pledge's Chief Advisor Irshad Mobarak as well as the dedicated husband-and-wife team of Dr Ravinder Kaur and award-winning wildlife photographer Sanjitpaal Singh of Gaia. Their social enterprise focuses on protecting Malaysia's endangered hornbills by way of initiatives such as installing artificial nests, maintaining fig tree nurseries in Kinabatangan on the East Coast of Sabah, and conducting community outreach programmes.



Valley of Giants

In Danum Valley in the heart of Sabah, lowland rainforest trees stretch over 100 metres above forest trails. This pristine 43,800-hectare conservation area is one of the few places where you can witness the complete cast of Borneo's wildlife, including rare wild oxen called Banteng and the elusive Borneo Bay Cat. Home to 340 bird species, 124 species of mammals and 72 species of reptiles, it harbours the world's tallest tropical tree, a giant yellow meranti tree (*Shorea faguetiana*) discovered in 2019 and measuring 100.8 metres.

River of Life

If hiking is not your speed, lazily drift down Sabah's mighty Kinabatangan River in a boat. This 560-kilometre wildlife corridor, passing through diverse habitats from dipterocarp forest to mangroves, is one of only two places globally inhabited by 10 primate species. It's your best chance at spotting the oddly comical Proboscis Monkeys and Bornean Elephants that venture to the muddy riverbank, alongside tarsiers, slow loris and over 200 bird species.

Underwater Symphony

Jacques Cousteau wasn't exaggerating when he declared Sipadan the world's finest diving spot. Malaysia's only oceanic island offers visibility between 18-60 metres, where Green Turtles nest, Barracudas swirl in tornados at the aptly named Barracuda Point, and Hammerhead Sharks patrol the deep blue. With over 300 fish species and abundant coral, the legendary site offers both novice-friendly shallows and technical dives at spots like South Point and the stunning soft coral formations of Hanging Gardens.

Summit Challenge

At 4,095 metres, Mount Kinabalu or 'Aki Nabalu' – the revered place of the dead in Kadazan – offers climbers one of Southeast Asia's most achievable peaks. The typical two-day ascent begins with a six-kilometre trek through rugged montane and subalpine habitats, with most climbers stopping at Layang-Layang Shelter for lunch. The final pre-dawn push rewards early risers with a spectacular sunrise summit. For thrills, descend by via-ferrata, a series of

metal rungs, rails and bridges that cling precariously to the mountain's edge.

Canopy Kingdom

"Understanding hornbill habitats is crucial for conservation," explains Dr Ravinder Kaur of Gaia. Her team climbs trees to install artificial nests as part of their conservation and research work. For a more accessible treetop experience, visit the Rainforest Discovery Centre in the 4,300-hectare Kabili-Sepilok Forest Reserve, Sandakan. Here, Southeast Asia's longest canopy walkway puts you 26 metres up among

the treetops. Declared one of the world's Important Bird Areas with over 300 species recorded, lucky visitors might spot the iconic Bornean Bristlehead, various hornbill species, or the shy Red Leaf Monkey.

Waterfall Wanderlust

The 'Lost World' of Maliau Basin harbours some of Borneo's most impressive cascades. The seven-tiered Maliau Falls, formed by alternating hard sandstone and softer mudstone beds eroded by water over time, tumbles through pristine rainforest. Meanwhile,



Bornean Elephants, seen here in Danum Valley, are the smallest subspecies of elephants in the world.



Rhinoceros Hornbill



Barracudas swirl in Sipadan



the spectacular 95-metre Tawai Falls in Telupid to the north, Sabah's second-highest waterfall, offers a more accessible adventure.

#### Rapids and Railways

Tackle the Grade III-IV rapids of Padas River on a thrilling 9-kilometre white-water adventure. The journey begins with a charming 90-minute vintage train ride from Beaufort to Pangi, before confronting seven challenging rapids including Headhunter, Cobra Point, and Washing Machine. During the rainy season, the rapids can surge to Grade V, turning this stretch into Malaysia's most exhilarating white-water experience.

#### Sanctuary Stories

Wildlife sanctuaries at Sepilok near Sandakan offer hope for endangered species. Marvel as wild orangutans swing through their forest playground at the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, established in 1964 and spanning 43 square kilometres. Today, 60 to 80 orangutans live freely in the reserve. Next door, visit the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, where the world's smallest bear species finds refuge from the illegal pet trade and poaching, in preparation for eventual release into the wild.

#### Stellar Nights

Thanks to minimal light pollution, the night sky over Sabah offers a natural light show that rivals the state's sunrise and sunset spectacles, particularly between March and September. Sugud Milky Way Plain, just 27 kilometres from Kota Kinabalu, Kundasang and Ranau in the mountains, and Tanjung Aru beach – perfect for combining sunset

Wildlife sanctuaries at Sepilok near Sandakan offer hope for endangered species.



Red Leaf Monkey

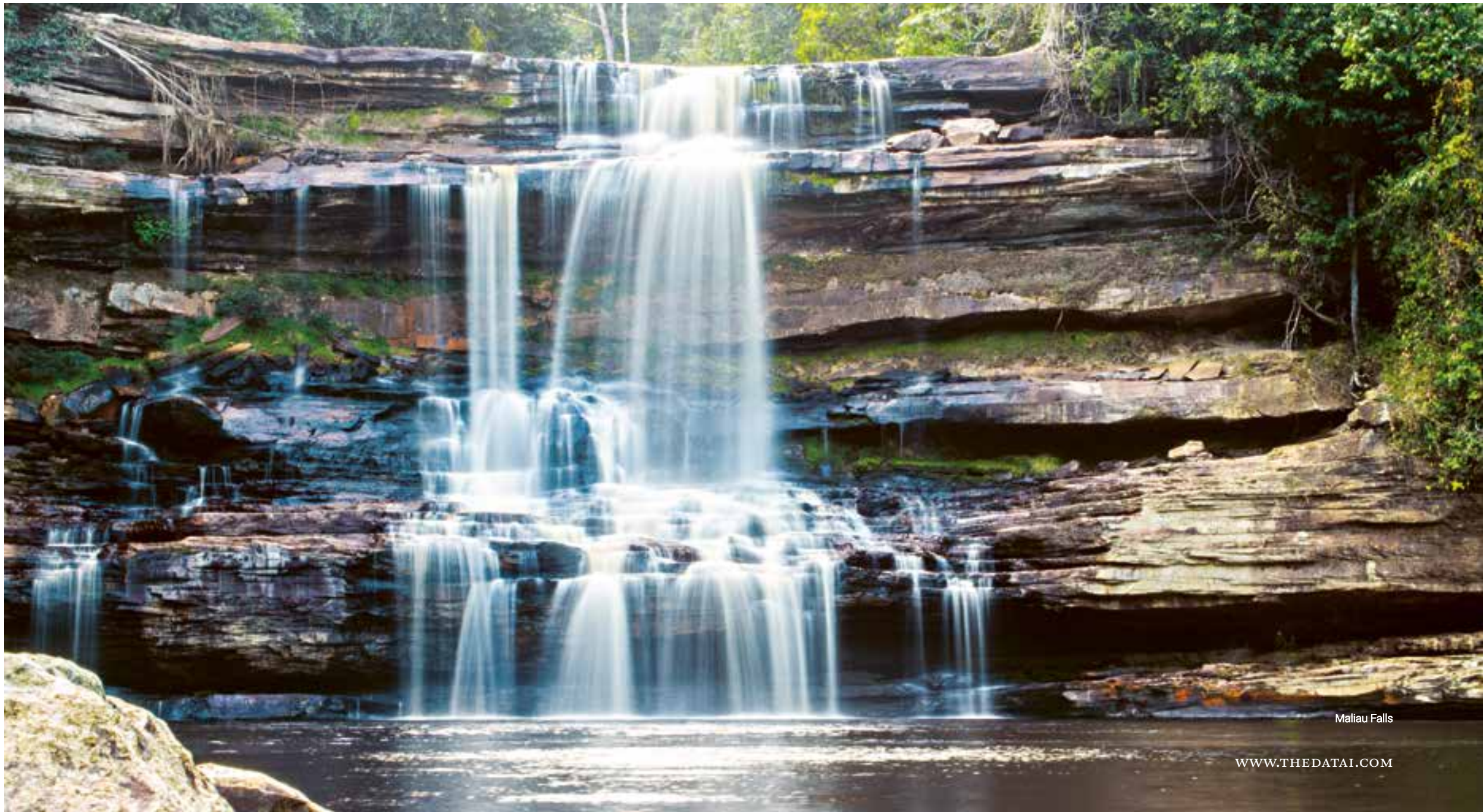
and stargazing – are among the celestial hotspots that will wow stargazers and romantics at heart.

#### Volcanic Ventures

Bohey Dulang, part of the Tun Sakaran Marine Park, is what remains of an ancient volcano formed 2.5 million years ago. Scale the rugged 353-metre peak that once formed the crater for breathtaking views over the sapphire-coloured Bodgaya Lagoon. The island features unique plant communities including regional endemic species not found elsewhere in Borneo.



Stargazing in Kundasang

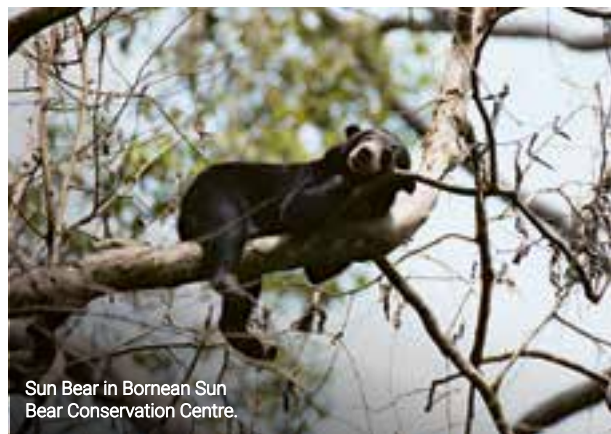


Maliu Falls





Mother orangutans stay in close contact with their offspring for up to nine years.



Sun Bear in Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre.



Bohey Dulang



Gong-making by two members of the Rungus tribe.

#### Colonial Time Travel

Wind the clock back to Borneo's recent colonial past at the Agnes Keith House in Sandakan, where the pithy American expatriate penned 'Land Below The Wind' in 1939. Follow up your exploration of this carefully restored museum with afternoon tea and scones in its country garden setting, offering a glimpse into the life of one of Sabah's most celebrated literary figures.

#### Celebrity Island

Pulau Tiga off Sabah's west coast was one of the stars of the early reality TV show 'Survivor'. At the Pulau Tiga Marine Park, its natural phenomena are equally deserving of the limelight. Watch Banded Sea Kraits glide through turquoise waters, Megapodes build massive incubator nests, and indulge in the island's natural therapeutic mud volcanoes. The park's diverse ecosystem makes it a perfect destination for snorkelling, hiking and wildlife observation.

#### Cultural Exchange

Commune with the indigenous Rungus community of Kudat in north Borneo for a day of music and fashion. Announce your entrance at Sumangkap village with a bang of the gong; gong-making is a celebrated craft here. Recently showcased at The Datai Langkawi's Atelier, Rungus artisans are lauded for their vibrant nature-influenced tapestries called 'kain tinohian', which tell stories through intricate patterns and reveal the deep connection between the community and their environment.

#### Culinary Discoveries

Indigenous cultures and geography collide in a delicious melting pot of fresh seafood and forest bounty. Savour 'pinasakan', an aromatic fish stew, or toast your trip with a glass of 'tinonggilan', a sparkling but heady maize brew. From wild herbs to wriggling sagu grub, Sabah plates up culinary wisdom for the gourmand that dares, showcasing the rich diversity of traditional Malaysian cuisine.

#### Getting there

Kota Kinabalu International Airport is connected to many major Asian travel hubs, including Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong and Taipei, making it easily accessible for international travellers. 📍





## Fairways in Bloom

Spearheading eco-conscious golf, The Els Club Teluk Datai was recently awarded with a prestigious eco-accreditation, making it the first golf course in Malaysia to be certified sustainable.

Between the ancient rainforest canopy and shimmering Andaman Sea, golfers at The Els Club Teluk Datai encounter an experience unlike any other. Now, the club has scored another remarkable achievement by becoming Malaysia's first GEO-Certified sustainable golf course – proving that world-class golf and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand.

“This certification recognises years of careful innovation,” says Remi Giromella, Director of Quality Control and Improvement, Datai Hotels and Resorts (DHR). “We’ve reimaged every aspect of our course management through an environmental lens.”

### Sustainable Waste Management

The Els Club has adopted several green initiatives to minimise its environmental impact. Waste reduction and recycling

are prioritised, and careful sorting limits landfill contributions. Compost is made from natural ingredients, reducing reliance on synthetic fertilisers, and natural pest control methods are under testing to protect the greens without harmful chemicals.

With a goal of achieving zero waste to the landfill, these strategies have yielded impressive results in 2024 with 94 per cent of solid waste (25,220kg) diverted from landfills, underscoring The Els Club's dedication to sustainable waste management in Langkawi.

### Harnessing Nature

Going forward, The Els Club Teluk Datai will enhance its renewable energy efforts by installing solar panels on select buildings. The club aims to reduce its reliance on conventional energy and lower its carbon footprint. Additionally, it is implementing advanced irrigation systems for better

“Our players appreciate the eco-friendly choices and many are eager to contribute to our sustainability efforts.”

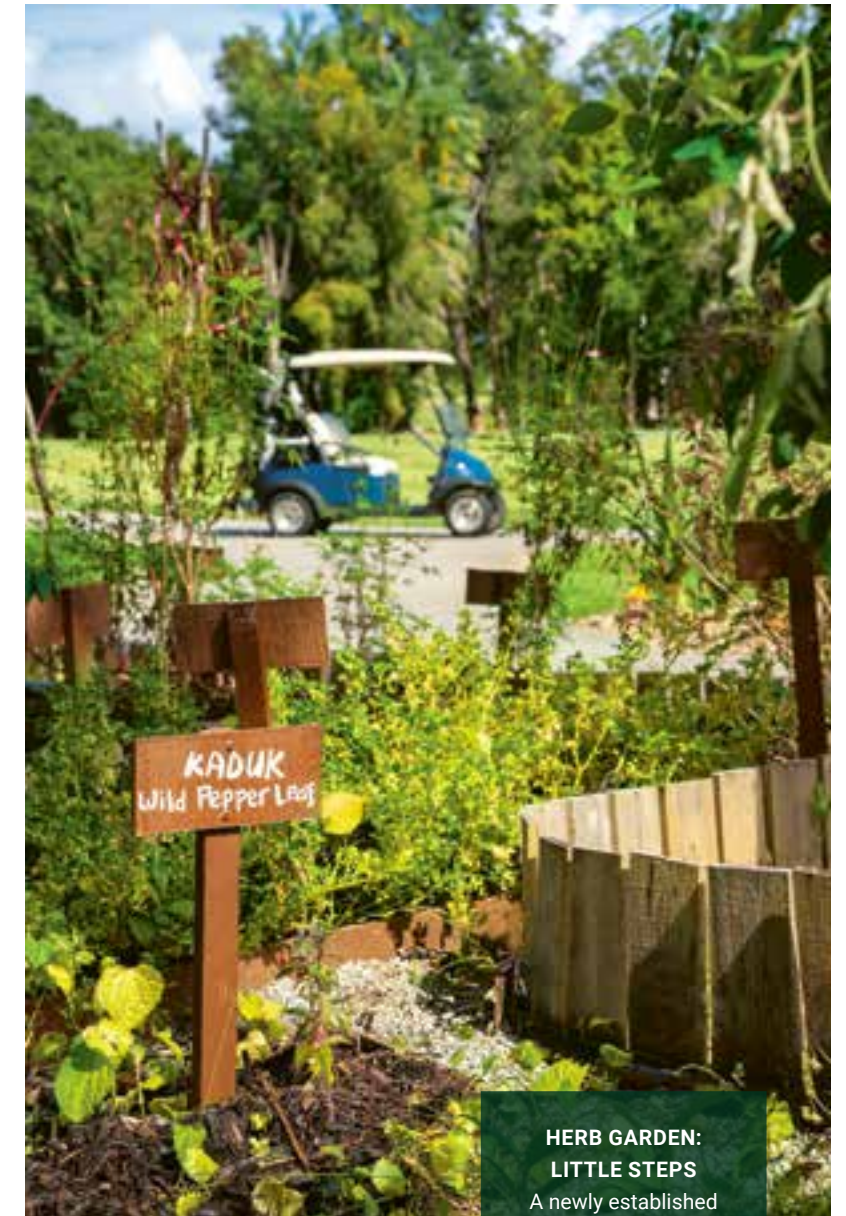
– Sharudin Kamarudin,  
Club Manager, The Els Club  
Teluk Datai

water conservation and establishing buffer zones with wildlife experts to protect local ecosystems.

### Sharing Best Practices

The Els Club's sustainability journey involves internal practices and community engagement. Through tours and displays, the club invites players to learn about eco-friendly initiatives. It also partners with local schools to promote organic farming and environmental responsibility.

Club Manager Sharudin Kamarudin has witnessed growing enthusiasm from players. “Our guests are increasingly passionate about these initiatives,” he shares. “They see how sustainable practices enhance rather than diminish the golfing experience.” 🌱



### HERB GARDEN: LITTLE STEPS

A newly established herb garden brings fresh flavours to the clubhouse kitchen while showcasing sustainable cultivation. Under the careful eye of the agronomy team, this vibrant space draws inspiration from The Datai Langkawi's permaculture practices. Local herbs and edible plants flourish here, reducing the need for imported ingredients while adding authentic Malaysian touches to every dish.





# The Art of Evening Grace

From elegant tea turndown services using garden-fresh herbs to refined pillow selections, upscaling amenities can be both responsible and indulgent.







**The Pillow Menu: Curated for Personal Comfort**

The new Pillow Menu, available in select room categories, transforms a good night's rest into a bespoke ritual. Housed in an elegant leather case, miniature versions of seven distinct pillow types invite guests to select their perfect evening companion. Options range from Beauty pillows that offer skincare benefits with organic buckwheat filling to Downfeel pillows crafted with botanical fibres. For returning guests, the preferred choice of your previous stay awaits your arrival as part of the resort's commitment to personalised service.

“Luxury is not just about comfort – it’s about creating experiences that resonate with the land.”

– Jaya Nazreen, Resort Manager



**Tea Turndown: An Immersive Ritual**  
As dusk settles over the rainforests of Langkawi, the Tea Turndown service offers a moment of tranquillity. The herbs used in these signature blends flourish at The Datai Langkawi's Permaculture Garden, creating a direct connection between the experience and the natural environment.

Each brew is complemented by organic lemongrass, pandan and other botanicals, which are carefully harvested, dehydrated and transformed into calming brews designed to ease guests into a state of relaxation. To sweeten the offering, a jar of premium Tualang honey (made from the giant honey bees found within the region) is placed on the turndown service tray.

**Tea Bird Tea: An Organic Experience**  
In partnership with Malaysia-based Tea Bird Tea, established in 2015, the resort presents two bespoke blends: Hibiscus and Ginger Snap. These artisanal teas come in custom-made tin canisters adorned with designs inspired by the surrounding jungle. The packaging reflects both aesthetic refinement and environmental consciousness, with fully biodegradable cornstarch tea bags that forgo unnecessary elements like strings and staples. 🌿





# Unveiling Langkawi's Ocean Secrets Through a Porpoise's Eyes

Combining scientific insight with storytelling, this charming tale highlights Langkawi's underwater beauty and the need for marine conservation.



On a shelf of The Datai Langkawi's Boutique and at The Nature Centre, guests will find *Mummy, Where's My Dorsal Fin?*—an enchanting storybook crafted to raise awareness about Malaysia's unique marine life. The book is written by marine biologist Dr Louisa Ponnampalam, Co-founder of MareCet – the NGO partner for The Datai Pledge's pillar Fish For The Future. *Mummy, Where's My Dorsal Fin?* follows in the wake of the collective MareCet effort, *Fintastic Marine Mammals and Where to Find Them?*,

which introduces young naturalists to Malaysia's marine treasures through engaging illustrations and activities.

In *Mummy, Where's My Dorsal Fin?*, illustrated by local artist Celine Tay, the book follows Aluna, a young Indo-Pacific Finless Porpoise, and her mother, Cheriya, as they journey through the Langkawi Archipelago.

This isn't just a story; it's an invitation to discover Langkawi's beauty through the eyes of one of its most elusive creatures. Inspired by MareCet's extensive marine research, *Mummy, Where's My Dorsal Fin?* combines playful narrative with scientific insights, introducing children and curious readers alike to an often overlooked species.

Dr Louisa recalls her early encounters with these creatures while conducting her research in Langkawi, where the Finless Porpoise was among the first species she observed. She shares that her team often uses drones to study the Porpoises' behaviours, observing how calves roll playfully over their mothers' backs and how they thrive in this unique ecosystem. "It's a pity that not everyone knows about this side of Langkawi," she says. "Beyond the tourist

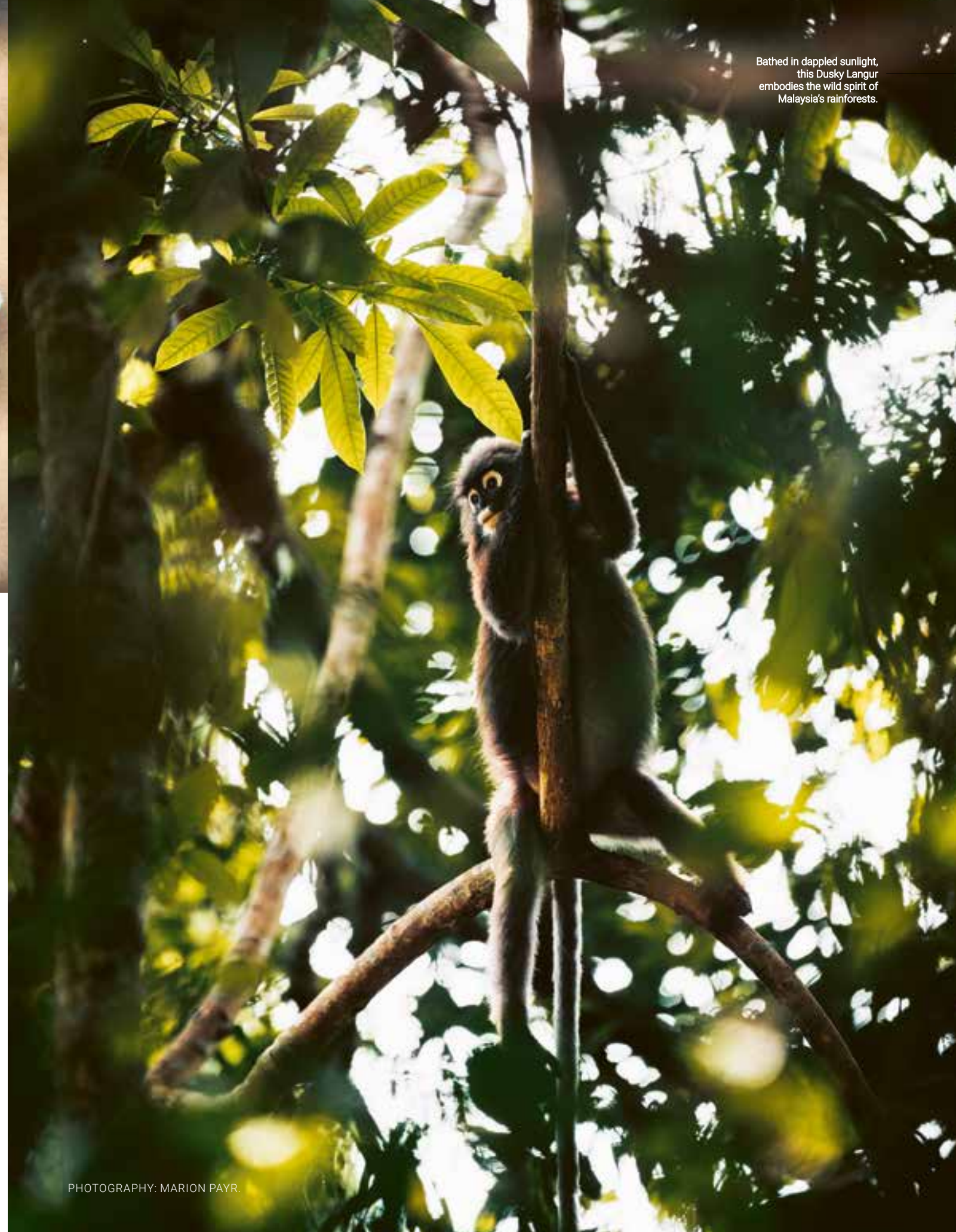
attractions, there's a raw beauty here worth protecting."

The book encourages readers not only to enjoy Aluna's adventures but also to understand the importance of conservation. During her visits to The Datai Langkawi, Dr Louisa engages young guests with enchanting storytelling sessions, bringing marine conservation to life through the tales of these gentle sea creatures.



Despite challenges such as rapid development, Dr Louisa believes Langkawi's marine mammals deserve a spotlight. "People think of Langkawi for its beaches, but rarely for its rich marine life. With this story, I hope to change that perception and inspire a new generation to care for Langkawi and protect our oceans." 🐬

Bathed in dappled sunlight, this Dusky Langur embodies the wild spirit of Malaysia's rainforests.



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