



PRESS RELEASE

A SOUTH-EAST ASIAN EXPERIENCE BY NAVIN KARU

DESTINATION MANJA

In the national language, Manja means 'to pamper'. Our food, service, decor and ambiance was designed around this basic principle. The restaurant is located in a block of colonial style buildings known as Old Malaya. These buildings were built in 1919 and were used as housing. In particular the building that Manja occupies, once housed a family of 40 individuals. The location is also uniquely beautiful, nestled at the foot of the KL Tower and neighbouring the Bukit Nenas Forest Reserve. It is very symbolic of Malaysia itself, a historic colonial building bordering the natural landscape and the architecture of the modern city. Much of the original architecture, such as the staircase, the brickwork, the ceiling and most of the moulding has been preserved and a lot of thought was put into highlighting this rich history. Special attention was paid to providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere in keeping with our goal to pamper our guests. To this end, the restaurant is swathed in various shades of warm red tones, appointed with furniture that exudes comfort and luxury and canvas artwork which showcases the various local cultures.

OUR SPACE

Each of our dining areas have a unique draw to them. The Hicks St. Bar, is our live outdoor bar which operates from 5pm daily. Guests can enjoy a uniquely handcrafted cocktail outside with a perfect view of the KL Tower. The dining area downstairs is our main dining area and features our original brickwork and much of the original moulding of the era creating a cozy atmosphere. The Peacock Private Dining is a private room, for smaller groups or business meetings with a feature glass showcase that displays our selection of spirits and wines. The Skyview balcony dining features a clear glass roof that gives the illusion of open air dining and lovely view of the KL Tower, yet safe from heat and rain. A feature of the design that is fast gaining an appreciation among our guests is the mural of the Manja lady in the upstairs bar and dining area. The Manja lady is beautiful, yet of uncertain ethnicity; warm and welcoming yet serene and mysterious. This hand drawn mural was designed by local artist Ellie Yoong and was created as a tangible representation of Manja philosophy. The large mirrored 3D bar on the opposite wall, ensures that guests sitting in any corner of the dining area can catch a glimpse of her. The kaleidoscopic effect of the mirrored bar also highlights the elaborate chandelier that adorns the ceiling. This chandelier was painstakingly handmade and was assembled entirely onsite.



ELEVATING **FOOD** MEMORIES

The inspiration behind Manja came from many areas. Having already been in the food and beverage industry for several years, founder Navin Karu, realised that the fine dining scene in Malaysia generally consisted of wholly Western cuisine; French, Italian and the like, which does not speak to Malaysian roots, culture or even tastes. Coming from a family where food plays an important role, with almost every family member having a specialty dish, inspiration was always one family gathering away. In addition to this, Chef Navin gained inspiration from his many travels, drawing ideas regionally and internationally. Each dish is a combination of favourite memories and flavours that meld together to tell a story on a plate. Food at Manja is more than just for eating. Every dish at Manja has been painstakingly created with the intention to layer flavours in a way that can invoke nostalgia of dishes that are rooted in Malaysian culture; and every dish is lovingly prepared to tell a story.

LET US MANJA YOU

Manja cuisine is a South East Asian experience, with each dish featuring a typically Malaysian flavour or a Malaysian product. At Manja the aim is to present familiar flavours in unfamiliar ways and vice versa, so we bring in flavours from around the region and borrow international cooking styles. We practise what we call the 'scratch kitchen' where about 90% of our food is made from scratch in our kitchens. All our stocks, oils, aiolis and sauces are made by hand, daily in small batches by our chefs without any artificial colouring, flavouring or preservatives. The decision was made early on that Manja would showcase local produce. This was to ensure the freshness of our product and to reduce our carbon footprint. So all our vegetables are locally grown and our seafood are sustainably fished and brought in from Tawau, and the freshwater catch comes from Kuala Selangor. The meat is supplied by our butchery, the Food Company and even then, Navin has made it a point to establish personal relationships with the farms that our meats come from. At Manja, our commitment to quality also extends to our drinks and we have begun to make our own infusions and syrups for our cocktails.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR...

Since its launch in July of 2016, Manja has grown from strength to strength. It has attained top ratings on TripAdvisor, receiving a Certificate of Excellence for 2018. It has also received a certificate of service excellence from the Malaysian chapter of the Society of the Golden Key; an international society of hotel concierges. In early 2018, Chef Navin was invited to cook for the annual Maybank International Golf Championships in which he showcased a number of Manja dishes. Over the years, Manja has become a local favourite for many corporations and local celebrities alike. At the end of 2018, Chef Navin and Manja was invited to cater for birthday party of Tun Mahathir, the current Prime Minister. In typical Navin style, he continues to innovate and fine tune the menu at Manja, tweaking dishes to greater heights, recently launching specially curated lunch menu.



PEOPLE. PASSION. FOOD.

Manja is the brainchild of Navin Karu. Navin entered the Malaysian food and beverage industry in 2010 with the opening of his first restaurant Vin's Restaurant and Bar in Taman Tun Dr. Ismail. The restaurant was a raving success and still remains one of the top restaurants in Kuala Lumpur. After his success with Vin's, Navin realised that the quality of the ingredients play a huge role in determining the taste and consistency of the food produced in the restaurant. He started a butchery in TTDI called the Food Company. Navin, sourced only the best suppliers of meats and began developing a close working relationship with them. He visited farms, ranches and even fishing boats, choosing only those that met his exacting standards. The Food Company, begun in 2012, supplies meat and seafood to not only Vin's and Manja, but also to many top restaurants in the KL area.

