



AUNTY'S CATCH OF THE DAY

The St Regis Langkawi is proud to support local fisherwoman in its efforts towards impact the local community in Langkawi

Langkawi, Malaysia, January 2018 – The St Regis Langkawi is proud to announce its alignment to support the local community by initiating an endeavor to provide opportunity to local suppliers. The collaboration will aim to marshal our volunteering efforts towards social and environmental responsibility. ***“The team at The St Regis Langkawi is very proud to join hands to lift up the community, inspire our guests to join us in our efforts, and create new opportunities to help the local community achieve overall development, be it the smallest member. We are proud to be of assistance to Tuba Island’s only fisherman, a single earning woman whose story continues to inspire us to make a real and sustainable impact by procuring direct and eliminating mediators. We have built a legacy of distinctive service on this island and our tradition extends into our local community and inspires us to impact the lives of others. Every contribution we make is an opportunity to leave an imprint and it is through this collection of imprints that we can make a meaningful difference”***, announces Michelle Caporicci, Managing Director, (Complex), St Regis Langkawi and Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa.

Tok Kamariah, a 64-year old fisherwoman from Tuba Island goes by the nickname Tok Bajau Laut or Tok Kamariah Udang. Born on Langkawi Island and currently living in Kampung Selat Bagan Nyior, she began fishing when she left school at 12 years old and that has been her daily routine after morning prayer ever since. For more than 40 years now, she has been going out to sea in her wooden sampan to etch a living by catching fresh seafood. Her resilience comes from years of handling the boat at sea, first with her late husband, then with her children and grandson. Currently, she is on her own as her son had left and now lives in Kuala Lumpur and her grandson too has left Tuba Island. Like all Tuba residents, having a piece of land and a home with one or two boats to go out to sea with, is more than sufficient to prevent a person from going hungry.

An expert in sea knowledge including tide and sea patterns as well as fish, Tok Kamariah has been setting off to the seas on her small boat using a long shaft propeller engine and net to ‘hand fish’- the traditional way. On an average, she catches Golden snapper, stingray, threadfin and local prawns with her small fish cage that she uses to keep the catch distinctively fresh and ready to consume fare. Her heaviest catch to date weighs 17.2 kilograms-, which is no mean feat for a woman of her frail physical stature. She tells us, ***“My greatest victory is the sense of independence and pride I feel surging through my body every time I catch a fish, no matter the weight”***. Reminiscing an experience from her fishing diary, she recollects a particularly bad incident that occurred late one evening when her boat engine broke down in the dense mangrove area. To make matters worse, the weather wasn’t particularly helpful that evening with bouts of lightning and rain. With no paddles on her boat, she used a weary long stick to manage the long, painful journey back to land. Tok Kamariah continues by telling us how everyday is a new experience in this region of human remoteness and marine biodiversity; where she is a seasoned fisherwoman who has no inkling of how to swim and has been miraculously saved from drowning on plenty of occasions. ***“It gets tiring for me to go out to sea everyday, but this is my only livelihood as I have no formal education or skill-set. I barely make between RM 30-40 everyday, if***



I am lucky and the weather permits. But I have to do this all alone- by myself and for my survival,” continues Tok Kamariah. A childlike impishness takes over and she conspires to let us in on her favourite secret location on the island- the untouched mangrove area with 20-year old aged trees and the stunning natural stone structure of Batu Reban on Seashell Beach.

Upon hearing of her tremendous life story, the management team at St Regis Langkawi took a step forward in a philanthropic effort to join hands with Naam Sdn Bhd, a premium leisure marine company in an endeavour to boost Tok Kamariah’s daily income by purchasing daily catch directly from her.

“We are of the strong belief that even the smallest effort will impact this incredible lady, Tok Kamariah to carry on with her livelihood which for her is a way of life, culture and economic buoy. The team is determined to work together in order to support the livelihood of the local community by perpetuating culture, making sustainable choices with local procurement practices and essentially buying direct.” voices Michelle Caporicci, Managing Director (Complex), St Regis Langkawi and Westin Langkawi Resort & Spa.

For more information, please visit www.stregis.com/langkawi

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