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# EQ Kuala Lumpur Celebrates 50 Years Of Hospitality Excellence

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8–10 minutes

Against the backdrop of the Malaysian capital's skyline, [EQ Kuala Lumpur](#) stands as a testament to five decades of unwavering commitment to world-class hospitality. Nestled in the heart of the bustling Golden Triangle, this hotel has not only weathered the test of time but has also emerged as a shining beacon of luxury, warmth and impeccable service since its inception in 1973. As it celebrates its remarkable 50th anniversary, EQ Kuala Lumpur continues to set new standards and create indelible memories for its guests.



Açaí Rapadura crumbs with fresh strawberries and dried milk.

It all began on 27 December 1973 when Hotel Equatorial Kuala Lumpur first opened its doors. Instantaneously, it became a landmark, symbolising the advent of modern hospitality in Malaysia. Over the years, the Equatorial brand has meticulously curated a

reputation for delivering exceptional service and hospitality. Donald Lim, the Chief Executive Officer of the Equatorial Group, shares his insights into what has propelled EQ Kuala Lumpur to this pinnacle of success. “Excellence is the foundation of all that we do,” he emphasises. In a highly competitive market, rife with internationally renowned hotel chains, EQ thrived by consistently delivering nothing but the very best. Lim acknowledges that the hotel industry’s open market nature has been both a challenge and an opportunity—pushing them to work harder, spurring innovation, and driving them to excel in all aspects of hospitality.

Lim’s words echo the sentiments of those who have been part of EQ’s journey for the past 50 years. When asked about what the 50th anniversary means to the team, he says: “Standing on the shoulders of others is a clichéd expression, but it’s so true. The dedication and hard work in those early years helped establish the Equatorial brand, and we recognise that. For our current generation to build on that prior success, it requires a mindset that drives the brand forward. Given our standing and continued market leadership, those who have been part of EQ’s journey since 1973—many of whom are enjoying retirement today—can still look at the brand and take pride in their association with it.”

In addition to its enduring success, EQ holds a surprising [detail about its history](#) that many people might not be aware of. “Many of our food and beverage brands such as the Chalet, Golden Phoenix, Nipah Coffee Shop and the Blue Moon have become an integral part of our local social fabric. Kampachi is another iconic name and is today the oldest Japanese restaurant in Malaysia,” Lim says. “The Sunday Japanese buffet, now commonplace in the industry, was really pioneered by Kampachi. It began in the early ‘90s when there was nothing quite like it, and at the peak of its popularity, there was a three-month waiting list for a table. Naturally, others followed suit, but the Kampachi Sunday buffet was the one that initiated this trend.”





Brazilian beef glazed with shallots and aubergine.

The hotel has also played a prominent role in Malaysia's history, serving as the backdrop for hosting entourages of significant events and welcoming renowned personalities, including the world heavyweight boxing title bout between Muhammad Ali and Joe Bugner in 1975. Over time, the hotel seamlessly wove itself into the vibrant tapestry of the city's social life, with many of its staff members venturing on to illustrious careers.

What truly distinguishes EQ is its commitment to continuous improvement and attention to detail, as this journey extended with the establishment of the new EQ building—a total redevelopment of the original hotel site. It is also the only five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur with a GBI Gold certification, reflecting its commitment to green-building principles. Also, in just four years since its reopening in 2019, the hotel has accumulated a plethora of local and international awards, including being ranked as the No.1 hotel in the city by TripAdvisor since August 2019.





Coral grouper with seaweed vinaigrette, trout roe and baby cress.

In 2023, EQ marked its golden anniversary with a year-long celebration, offering 50 commemorative events to evoke cherished memories while looking ahead to the future. The anniversary celebration is not only a tribute to EQ's dedication to excellence but also a heartfelt recognition of the loyal customers, partners and employees who have been long-time supporters of the brand throughout the years. The festivities kicked off on 5 July 2023 and will continue to unfold throughout the year. Some of the highlights include the resurrection of famed restaurants such as Chalet and Golden Phoenix, a Blue Moon Night event, and the participation of visiting guest chefs, winemakers and *sake* masters. These events are thoughtfully designed to offer a distinctive viewpoint, whether in reflecting EQ's storied history or envisioning the future of hospitality.

A poignant memory wall now graces the lobby of EQ, where guests can step back in time and reminisce about specific memories and events that have shaped the hotel's history since 1973. Digitally, the hotel has launched commemorative platforms on Facebook and Instagram, inviting guests to share their own cherished memories.



Chef Alberto Landgraf.

Amidst the 50th anniversary celebrations, EQ is also striving to elevate the epicurean experiences available to its discerning guests. The most recent culinary sensation to grace EQ's upscale dining restaurant, Sabayon, is none other than two-Michelin-starred chef Alberto Landgraf, whose culinary approach, rooted in naturalist Brazilian cooking, places a strong emphasis on utilising fresh local ingredients prepared through a harmonious blend of traditional and modern techniques. The Michelin Guide applauds his ability to transport diners into a world of highly precise culinary sensations, particularly in his consistent use of the region's finest fish and seafood, which showcases a skilful fusion of flavours. Landgraf also expressed his delight in collaborating with Malaysia's culinary experts and introducing EQ's diners to the rich flavours of native Brazilian cuisine alongside Japan's finest ingredients. "There are many similarities in our cuisines, most notably the availability and use of wonderful fresh produce and ingredients," Landgraf says.



Sea bass with grilled leeks, buckwheat and tucupi sauce.

During his tenure as a guest chef from 24 August to 7 September, Landgraf curated exclusive lunch and degustation menus, offering diners a delectable [selection of dishes](#). The lunch menu featured options such as coral grouper with a delicate seaweed vinaigrette, sweet potatoes adorned with Brazilian nut cream, sea bass complemented by grilled leeks, and Brazilian beef elevated to

perfection with a luscious gaze of shallots. To cap off this delightful midday culinary experience, diners indulged in a sumptuous Açaí dessert, which featured rapadura crumbs, fresh strawberries, and dried milk. Mignardises provided a sweet note at the end of this exceptional lunch offering. Furthermore, this culinary experience extends beyond one's palate with a [special wine pairing](#) option thoughtfully selected by Sabayon's award-winning team.



Sweet potatoes with Brazilian nut cream, Belgium endives and truffles.

EQ Kuala Lumpur remains committed to its core value: excellence. It's evident that its excellence is not limited to service but also extends to all aspects of the guest experience, including its culinary offerings. The celebration of its past and future come together to create an unforgettable experience for all visitors and locals alike. Whether you seek to immerse yourself in half a century of unparalleled hospitality or to savour the tantalising creations of acclaimed chefs, EQ Kuala Lumpur is your destination for an extraordinary journey.

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[EQ Kuala Lumpur](#)