

THE SUN... THE SAND... THE SURF... THE CULTURE OF PARADISE AND OVER 18,000 SURROUNDING ISLANDS

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MORE POSITIVE

THE SECRET GARDEN

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HELLO, 2016!

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THE ELEMENTS OF LIFE

OUR CONTRIBUTOR MELIANA SALIM DISCOVERS MIND-BLOWING INNOVATIVE RAW FOOD AT THE SAKTI DINING ROOM...

Here's a question to think about: do you eat to live or live to eat? From Socrates to Buddha, we are encouraged to eat simply and live modestly, yet for most of us, food is more than merely fuel. "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are," wrote French gastronome



The bamboo-structured restaurant at Fivelements, the Sakti Dining Room

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. In our society, eating has become an intensely personal experience and an imperative language in the articulation of our identities as individuals, a society, a culture and a nation.

We live in hedonistic times of egocentric consumerism, information obesity and digital overload.

This technological revolution has drastically changed our love affair with food and our dining behaviour. The joy of eating is replaced by the obsessive act of documenting it. Dining has become more of a visual experience and less of a sensory indulgence. Gadgets and the internet invade and exploit our mealtimes, turning them into a perpetual

state of surveillance and culinary voyeurism.

Human beings are intricately connected with the environment and other life forms, and it is imperative to synchronize ourselves with the world around us. One of the ways is through our relationship with food. In recent years, a fundamental paradigm in the way we eat has shifted. The “farm-to-table” dining concept and the “locavore” and “living foods” movements have evolved from fancy fads and marketing strategy to food aspirations, inspiring us to make informed decisions in how we source, cook and eat our food in pursuit of a sustainable healthier lifestyle.

RAW FOOD PIONEER

In Bali, straddling the sacred Ayung River near the cultural town of Ubud rests Fivelements. This award-winning eco-luxury wellness destination is built around the traditional Balinese life philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana*, which promotes living in harmony among humans, with nature and with God.

Nestled within the Fivelements area is its iconic fine dining restaurant, the Sakti Dining Room, a celebrated pioneer of innovative raw food cuisine that has been awarded AsiaSpa’s “Best Spa Cuisine of the Year” for the second year running. A true sanctuary for the senses, this bamboo-structured restaurant sits



amidst trickling fountains and lush tropical gardens, and is free from smoke, alcohol and stress.

Joining Sakti Dining Room’s green and chemical-free kitchen is a new executive chef, Felix Schoener from Germany. Chef Felix’s impressive resume boasts extensive international experience in Michelin-starred restaurants and enviable training with Gabriel Cousens and Cherie Soria, both renowned leaders in the fields of living foods and gourmet raw vegan cuisine.

THE SIGNATURE

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food,” is the famous

citation by Hippocrates that is written on Sakti Dining Room’s menu, which set the tone for my three-course plant-based lunch from the restaurant’s signature Chef’s Tasting Menu. First came the refreshing Hibiscus Rose, a heaven-sent elixir on a particularly hot and humid day, accompanied by an amuse bouche of creamy cashew pâté infused with coconut milk and garlic.

The appetizer consisted of finely diced mango, tomato and jicama tartar stunningly served on chilled light-as-clouds avocado velouté, topped with micro greens, crunchy tomato chips and finished off with a surprising drizzling of kaffir lime oil.

As I was focused on licking my plate clean, I could almost feel my body expressing gratitude for the pure nourishment.

For a corn and mushroom fan like me, the main course, the Exotic Mushroom and Sweet Corn, was truly a dream come true. It features corn as the star of the dish in three unique ways – curried corn polenta, spiced popcorn and sweet corn crackers — complemented by hearty, smoky shiitake mushrooms, caramelized shallots and a medley of exotic Asian herbs.

The White Chocolate Truffle with passion fruit mousse and tarragon marked a sweet and satisfying ending to my extraordinary lunch. If this was what “healing cuisine” tastes like, I am hooked — mind,

FOOD PHOTOS BY MELIANA SALIM
ALL OTHERS COURTESY OF FIVELEMENTS

Herbal tea and a chocolate truffle



body and soul — and ready to join this culinary cult.

ALL ABOUT BALANCE

Chef Felix's love of raw living foods and his passion in the ancient philosophies of Ayurveda and Chinese medicine are beautifully portrayed in each dish. Embracing local, seasonal, organic and wild foraged ingredients, he has perfected the art of applying ageless Asian wisdom in his avant-garde modernist cuisine, marrying it with Balinese culture and tradition and elevating it with innovative culinary techniques. "It's mother nature's cuisine," he stated.

The Sakti Dining Room is a true sanctuary for the senses and has created a way for people to connect with the food they eat through its inventive gastronomy revolution. It is true that embracing raw food allows people to experience a whole new world with a new vision – to feel healthier, see more clearly and think more positively.

Personally, I'm a believer of renowned food writer Michael Pollan's simple and healthy attitude towards eating, "Eat food. Not too much. And mostly plants." After all, life is all about balance, isn't it? ■

By Meliana Salim

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Exotic Mushrooms



The White Chocolate Truffle

