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Journalist Zurinna turns restaurateur

➔ **HOW** does one go from journalist to entrepreneur? With drive and motivation, that's how. This is the success story of Zurinna Raja Adam, who was a business journalist for more than nine years. Her role models were the high-achieving business owners she interviewed as a journalist. While driving back from every interview, she always asked herself why she couldn't be one of those who run such successful businesses. The opportunity to open an eatery came while she was on maternity leave and she decided it was time to realise her dreams. She shares with **FocusM** her daily encounters at her restaurant, Del's Kitchen.

Which customers tend to be the most difficult?

Customers who walk into the restaurant come with the expectation of tasting good food and since our forte is serving authentic Johorean dishes, the most difficult customers to please would be the die-hard Johor food enthusiasts. They have very high expectations and sometimes they would come in expecting the dish to taste like some particular stall from Johor, which they are familiar with or like how their mum would cook it. These customers definitely pose a challenge to us. Nevertheless, we strive to please the tastebuds of our customers, to ensure they go home with a happy smile and a well-fed tummy.

What is the strangest demand made by a customer?

This question takes me back to the time when a customer asked for a cup of fresh coconut milk to pour over her nasi lemak. She said she enjoys her nasi lemak better when it is creamier.

What items are the most sought-after?

Most of our dishes go down well with our customers, but if I have to name some of our most sought-after dishes, then I guess they will be the soup-based item soto ayam and the rice meals. Among the popular rice dishes are Nasi Ambeng – a Javanese dish traditionally served on a large tray as a communal meal. The Nasi Ambeng at Del's Kitchen café consists of steamed white rice served with 11 small portions of side dishes. Another noteworthy item on our menu is the Nasi Ayam Penyet which is chicken fried with spices accompanied by white rice and our special spicy sauce.

At what time of the day do you have the highest number of customers and what age category are they? Are there any peculiar customer trends?

Our shop is often packed during lunch time between 1pm and 2pm on weekdays and our clientele is made up of young professionals working at the offices around the area. A peculiar trend that I can identify right off the bat is the change in demand for certain dishes on our menu. We notice that sometimes in a week we will see an overwhelming demand for Laksa Johor and the following week it would be Nasi Ambeng.

Who are harder to please, men or women?

I must say that in this instance men will win hands down. Men are simply harder to please because they expect the food at our restaurant to be similar to their mother's cooking. I think I can safely say that no matter where one goes to eat, the comparison between the food served and the one

cooked by our mothers will always be made and somehow no dish measures up to our mother's cooking. We have experienced situations where customers have come up to us and said: "I can't point out what is lacking in your Laksa Johor but it doesn't really taste like how my mother makes it."

Who are more fickle, men or women?

Women are definitely more fickle-minded. They would sometimes change their order upon seeing what their friends have ordered, or sometimes the image of one food item can be more appealing than the one they have ordered or they could simply look at the food being served at the next table and they would want to have the same dish. Their diet plans can also go up in smoke once they set their eyes on our Pavlova on neighbouring tables.

How receptive are you to feedback?

Well, I think as business operators, especially in the food and beverage industry, we definitely welcome and

appreciate constructive criticism. Positive criticism would go a long way in forging better ties with restaurateurs and it would also ensure the quality of food served retains a good standard as opposed to having customers condemning or making comparisons with other restaurants.

And in Malaysia, a disgruntled customer could be scalded with a pot of boiling water, so be very careful when commenting about your food. Rest assured, when you walk into Del's Kitchen café and find that there is room for improvement, then you are most welcome to share your opinions with us. To facilitate better communication with our customers, we also have a Facebook page.

The biggest sin a salesperson can commit?

Lying about their product, then being defensive and not apologising if the product fails to deliver. That is a definite no-no and it will destroy the brand image you have worked so hard to build. **FocusM**



The Nasi Ambeng at Del's Kitchen consists of steamed white rice served with 11 small portions of side dishes



Zurinna says her cafe's forte is authentic Johorean cuisine

IGB eyes foreign buyers for Condominium 328 Tun Razak

IGB Corp Bhd will launch in August a serviced apartment project called Condominium 328 Tun Razak (328 TR) along Jalan Tun Razak, a stone's throw from The Intermark in Kuala Lumpur.

Located next to the KL Trillion, the project has an estimated gross development value (GDV) of RM170 mil. A total of 166 units measuring between 700 sq ft and 1,300 sq ft will be available for sale at a price of RM1,000 per sq ft.

Piling for the project, which sits on 0.38ha, has been completed, IGB Corp's head of property development Teh Boon Ghee tells **FocusM**. He says the project has already received enquiries from Japanese and Singaporean buyers. "We have had interest from the Japanese to buy several units," he adds.

328 TR is directly opposite The Hampshire Place, KLCC, which is also a project by IGB. The Hampshire Place was ready for occupation in December 2010 and is now 85% occupied.

The high occupancy at The Hampshire Place also provided IGB with the cue to launch 328 TR. According to Teh, the market price for units at The Hampshire is around RM1,100 per sq ft.

The 23-storey 328 TR, with one basement level, will be ready in 2016.

Teh says the units are "reasonably priced". "It is based on what we think the market price for this location is." The land was purchased about two decades ago. He expects the take-up to be encouraging, given the development of KL Trillion next door, which includes offices, serviced apartments as well as retail

components.

In late 2009, it was reported that the government had plans to compulsorily acquire this piece of land from IGB to build a fire station. At that time, the prevailing price for land in the vicinity was estimated at RM1,200 per sq ft.

However, the government's plan to buy the land did not materialise. The land could have cost an estimated RM40 mil based on the market value then. IGB had, in fact, already obtained a development order to build high-end serviced apartments.

Meanwhile, other parcels of land in the vicinity where IGB plans to launch high-end residences include 3 Lorong Stonor and 6 Stonor – both in the vicinity of the Petronas Twin Towers. – BY **VASANTHA GANESAN**



328 Tun Razak will have a total of 166 units measuring between 700 sq ft and 1,300 sq ft and priced at RM1,000 per sq ft