

# KAI PASIFIKA

Fine produce & cuisine from the Blue Pacific Continent

## Blue Pacific Chefs Flying in for KAI PASIFIKA

### ABOUT KAI PASIFIKA

KAI PASIFIKA a celebration of Blue Pacific cuisine will be at Peter Gordon's acclaimed Homeland restaurant at Westhaven, Auckland, in the week starting 3 October 2022.

KAI PASIFIKA will introduce new or unusual ingredients from Pacific Island producers to New Zealand chefs, food lovers, and media.



**Ms Dora Rossi** (Samoa), Chef and owner of Paddles Restaurant and Milani Café. Family-owned businesses, specialising in Samoan-Italian cuisine (reflecting the cultural background of the family). Dora received her professional training at the Italian Culinary Institute 'IPSSAR Alfredo Beltrame' in Vittorio Veneto -Treviso.

Paddles Restaurant, situated on the waterfront in downtown Apia, was opened in 2006. They offer an international menu, but with a focus on Samoan and Italian cuisines. Paddles has won 'Best Restaurant at the 'Samoa Tourism Excellence Awards' in 2017 and 2019 and has been consistently recognized as the best restaurant in Samoa on Trip Advisor every year from 2015 to date, as has Milani Café.

Dora has been a pioneer of the new wave of Samoan cuisine and is the Samoan Ambassador and co-host for the TV show *Pacific Island Food Revolution* which promotes local, healthy food in the Pacific to combat the non-communicable disease crisis through communications and partnerships, screened in 12 Pacific countries, Australia, New Zealand, South-East Asia and the United Kingdom.

### **Chef Losavati Sewale**

(Fiji) who started off at Nukubati Island Resort in Macuata is now training staff at Nadi's renowned Fiji Orchid Resort as the Executive Chef at Raymond's Restaurant at The Fiji Orchid Boutique Hotel, Lautoka.



Raymond's Restaurant at The Fiji Orchid is famous for its delicious contemporary Fijian cooking style. Executive Chef

Sewale was the successful recipient of a scholarship to the Le Cordon Bleu cooking school in New Zealand in 2017, a prestigious hospitality education institution famous for providing the highest level of culinary and hospitality instruction throughout the world and has mastered the art of seamlessly merging international and Pacific Rim cuisine.

Losavati Sewale has created a wonderful menu that features a majority of traditional South Pacific recipes which use Fiji's fresh local produce and both traditional and exotic herbs and spices.

Sewale's signature dish is Walu Vesa – A salad of coconut husk smoked Walu served on a bed of Ota (forest fern), Watercress, Tavola nuts and Vara (fresh coconut fruit) served with fresh coconut cream dressing (Miti).

Chef Losavati's story is one of empowerment for young women in Fiji's culinary sector. Losavati is a role model for other young Fijian women.



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## Blue Pacific Chefs flying in



### **Chef Rangī Mitaera-Johnson (Cook Islands)**

Much loved Cook Islands-based Chef Rangī Mitaera-Johnson has links to Rarotonga and the Northern black pearl paradise of Manihiki, always had aspirations of working in the food world.

However, instead of following her heart, she followed her head and after leaving school at a young age, she pursued more 'secure' office work, and even had a six month stint in Japan contracted as a Polynesian dancer at a hotel. She now runs a cosy bed and breakfast with her husband on the island of Manihiki.

Finally, years of working in an office took its toll which led to sacrifices to realise her journey to become a Chef – and excelled, and the rest as they say, is history. Chef Rangī works mostly as a freelance Chef providing catering and consulting services and training in the Rarotonga community where she promotes the use of locally sourced foods.

### **Chef Tuiohu Mafi (Tonga)**

Executive Sous Chef at Tanoa International Hotel and a catering instructor for Tonga Maritime Poly Technical Institute, Chef Tuiohu Mafi is also the President of the Tonga Culinary Association.

Chef Tui grew up in Nuku'alofa. "Food is a very important part of Tongan culture with everything we do in the family or country judged by how good the food was! It ties us together as family...we show our love, support or happiness by preparing a feast for big events, it is a sign of wealth if the food is great. So food played a vital part in my upbringing."

With the support of her Royal Highness Princess Salote Pilolevu Tuita, Chef Mafi was recruited to produce a local TV show for the Tongan audience about revitalising local ingredients. Chef Mafi is the caterer for the Tongan Royal Family, hosting dignitaries, royal weddings and royal gatherings.



### **Chef Leonid Vusilai (Vanuatu)**

Growing up Leo Visalia never had any interest in cooking. All this changed eight years ago when a careers expo at his high school introduced him to the culinary arts.

"My dad told me you can be a pilot or doctor but one day you will have to retire. Cooking is a skill that is always needed, people will only stop eating when they're six feet under". Leo signed up for a course in Culinary Arts at the Vanuatu Institute of Technology (VIT). "After I started I realized, Wow, cooking is beautiful. It is an art".

He participated in the Salon Culinaire organized by the Vanuatu Chefs Association and he won the Vanuatu Student Chef of the Year Award receiving a gold medal. After graduating from VIT, Leo worked in kitchens in various hotels, restaurants, cafes and pubs refining his art and gaining experience.