



MGM and UTM Jointly Present Sharing Sessions by Internationally Renowned Female Culinary Masters from Across the Silk Road

*Exploring the Gastronomic Influence of the Past and Future
To Kick-off the MGM x RR1HK Culinary Masters Macau 2024 Program*

An avid supporter of fostering Macau's vibrant and diverse culinary scene, MGM, together with Robb Report Hong Kong and Macao University of Tourism (UTM), with support from the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), hosted two culinary demonstrations and a sharing session under the theme of "**Exploring the Culinary Journeys of Trailblazing Women: From the Silk Roads to Global Gastronomy**" at UTM on June 28. Four internationally acclaimed female chefs were invited to showcase their culinary expertise and inspiring stories to over 140 local culinary students, chefs, culinary associations' members and small enterprise owners from Macau.

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Macau S.A.R. and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Macau, designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy with a rich history of cultural connections between East and West, served as the perfect backdrop for exploring the historical culinary significance of the Silk Road, as well as the global trend of the gastronomic scene.

The distinguished panel lineup included four female culinary masters from across the Silk Road, including **Garima Arora**, the chef-owner of the Indian restaurant *Gaa* and the world's first female Indian chef with two Michelin stars; **Chudaree "Tam" Debhakam** from *Baan Tepa* in Bangkok, who is also the world's first female Thai chef to win two Michelin stars; **Sara Aqel**, at the helm of an Italian-Mediterranean restaurant in Jordan, *Dara Dining*, who is also known for her previous management lead with all-woman restaurant concept in the past; and **Florita Morais Alves**, a well-respected ambassador of Macanese cuisine in Macau and proprietor of popular Macanese-Portuguese restaurant, *La Famiglia*.

Addressing over 80 participants, the chefs engaged in a thought-provoking dialogue on two key discussion points: "A Culinary Journey Rooted from Heritage to Future Food" and "Exploring the Culinary Journeys of Trailblazing Women". During the first part of the sharing session, **Florita Morais Alves** shared, "The flavors of the Silk Road have undergone a fascinating evolution, adapting to modern tastes while preserving historical significances." **Garima Arora** added, "The flavors of Indian cuisine and, within it, the unique use of spices is what had shaped my culinary journey. Going forward, integrating ingredients from around the world with a modern food philosophy while staying true to an ancient culinary heritage will be a new chapter for us to learn from". At the latter part of the talk regarding women empowerment, **Chudaree "Tam" Debhakam** shared, "As a trailblazing female chef in the industry, I'm passionate about preserving the essence of



Thai cuisine through our unique lens.” **Sara Aqel** added, “Recently, we can see that more female chefs like us are breaking the ‘glass ceiling’. Having shattered the barriers and inspired each other, we believe that we can leave an indelible mark in our culinary path”.

To equip the culinary talent with more practical knowledge, the program included two cooking demonstrations, which were opened to 60 participants from UTM’s culinary students and local culinary associations on the same day. **Chef Chudaree 'Tam' Debhakam** demonstrated signature dish *Dong Dang*, from her Michelin-starred restaurant in Bangkok, which is an elevated version of Northeastern Thai Noodles with a modern touch that reflects her culinary identity. **Chef Sara Aqel** shared her insights towards the use of olive oil and its possible touch in multiple ways with a demonstration to showcase how its magic plays with both savory dishes and even desserts.

Geoffrey Simmons, Vice President of Food & Beverage at MGM, said, "MGM is dedicated to supporting Macau's status as a 'UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy', and we have the honor of hosting a panel of remarkable chefs who have each made significant contributions to the global culinary landscape. Culinary art plays an integral part in all culture as it reflects the terroir and climates combined with the palates and customs of its people. We hope to take this valuable opportunity to help broaden the horizon of Macau’s young chefs, giving them an opportunity to explore flavors, ingredients and techniques that are usually considered as ‘exotic’ in a conventional culinary setting, in a bid to spark inspiration among them.”

Fanny Vong, Rector of Macao University of Tourism, said, “Serving as the designated protection unit for Macanese gastronomy, we are proud to be an active part in today’s inspiring event, which has highlighted the boundless creativity, unwavering passion, and relentless efforts of the gastronomy sector. This event will undoubtedly infuse fresh vitality into our collective endeavors to promote culinary excellence and sustainability.”

###



About MGM

MGM is an abbreviation for MGM China Holdings Limited (HKEx: 2282) and is a leading developer, owner and operator of gaming and lodging resorts in the Greater China region. We are the holding company of MGM Grand Paradise, SA which holds one of the six gaming concessions to run casino games in Macau. MGM Grand Paradise, SA owns and operates MGM MACAU, the award-winning premium integrated resort located on the Macau Peninsula and MGM COTAI, a contemporary luxury integrated resort in Cotai, which opened in early 2018 and more than doubles our presence in Macau.

MGM MACAU is a Forbes Five-Star luxury integrated resort inspired by the arts with every element of the resort infused with creativity and style. MGM MACAU has approximately 600 guest rooms and suites and boasts a number of distinguishing features, including the architecturally stunning European-inspired Grande Praça, housed under a soaring glass ceiling. MGM MACAU's world class facilities include the MGM Art Space, dedicating over 5,000 square feet to display authentic works of art, conference and event facilities, spa, and seven signature restaurants and bars to fulfill any gastronomic craving. Our property is conveniently located on the Macau Peninsula and is directly connected to the luxury retail shopping complex, One Central.

MGM COTAI is the latest integrated resort of MGM in China. Designed as the “jewelry box” of Cotai, it offers approximately 1,400 hotel rooms and suites, Asia’s first dynamic theater, meeting space, high end spa, retail offerings and food and beverage outlets as well as the first international Mansion at MGM for the ultimate luxury experience. The Spectacle at MGM COTAI becomes the record holder of the largest free-span gridshell glazed roof (self-supporting) on January 19, 2019, making it the first architectural and structural GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for Macau, China. MGM COTAI is being developed to drive greater product diversification and bring more advanced and innovative forms of entertainment to Macau as it grows as a global tourist destination. MGM COTAI is the only mega complex and hotel in Macau to gain three-star certification in both Green Building Design and Operation Label, as well as the first hotel in the Greater Bay Area and second in Greater China to receive the certifications.

MGM China is majority owned by MGM Resorts International (NYSE: MGM) one of the world's leading global hospitality companies, operating a portfolio of destination resort brands including Bellagio, ARIA, MGM Grand, Mandalay Bay and Park MGM. For more



information about MGM Resorts International, visit the Company's website at www.mgmresorts.com.

About Robb Report Hong Kong

Robb Report Hong Kong entered the Hong Kong luxury lifestyle media market in 2022 under Nexus Media Limited, and the title is dedicated to featuring all aspects of luxury, including automobiles, aviation, and boating, alongside coverage of real estate, travel, dining, whiskies, wine, watches, jewellery, and fashion. *Robb Report Hong Kong's* print magazine, Best of the Best, is an annual publication that serves as the definitive tome on luxury and lifestyle in Asia, showcasing the finest products and services, while the *Robb Report Hong Kong* website is dedicated to daily reporting on the latest in the world of luxury across all digital platforms.

For more information, please visit robbreport.hk.

About RR1 Hong Kong

RR1 is the exclusive private-membership club that brings *Robb Report* to life through extraordinary, curated experiences. Members enjoy unparalleled access to benefits and events as part of a powerful community of like-minded tastemakers who seek out the very finest experiences, products, and services. From discovering the most alluring and exclusive destinations, to previewing the top cars and products before their official release, to dining with culinary luminaries and meeting leaders of the luxury world, RR1 members truly experience the extraordinary. *Robb Report Hong Kong* is the first international edition of *Robb Report* to develop the exclusive RR1 membership programme outside of the US. For more information about RR1 Hong Kong, please visit rr1hongkong.com.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Jessie Kuan

Executive Director of Public Relations

MGM

Tel: (853) 8806 3412

Email: jessiekuan@mgm.mo

Juliana Kung

Director of Public Relations

MGM




Tel: (853) 8806 3424

Email: julianakung@mgm.mo




Appendix

Profile of the Chefs

Photo	Name	Intro
	<p>Chudaree “Tam” Debhakam</p>	<p>Not only the first female Thai chef in the world to achieve two Michelin stars, she is also recognized with the <i>2024 Michelin Guide Young Chef Award</i>. She helms the Thai restaurant Baan Tapa Culinary Space, which is renowned for its strong sustainability initiatives and was ranked among <i>Asia's 50 Best Restaurants</i> in 2023. Chudaree “Tam” Debhakam's cuisine focuses on showcasing organic, local produce with Thai flavors and a modern flair. She is also the first 'Top Chef Thailand' having been the youngest in the competition.</p>
	<p>Garima Arora</p>	<p>The world's first female Indian chef to earn two Michelin stars. She is also the head chef and proprietor of the Indian restaurants Gaa and Marigold. Her passion for the culinary world began in her family's humble kitchen in Mumbai, after which she underwent professional culinary training in Paris and went on to work for some of the top kitchens in the world. Garima Arora is a passionate advocate for incorporating Indian cooking techniques into modern cuisine. She has founded the non-profit organization "Food Forward India" to explore the immense diversity of the cuisines of India.</p>
	<p>Sara Aqel</p>	<p>born and raised in Jordan. She studied at the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, Les Roches, and later worked at the restaurant owned by world-renowned chef Massimo Bottura in Dubai. She then opened the first female-led restaurant in the region, Fi'lia, and served as the global executive chef for the brand in Dubai. Thereafter, Sara led the operations of Fi'lia in Miami, the Bahamas, and Paris, and was recognized as the <i>F&B Arab Woman of the Year 2022</i>. She has now co-founded her own restaurant brand Dara Dining by Sara Aqel. She made a name for herself by creating unique stories through her dishes and seeing potential in every ingredient in the kitchen. Her ultimate goal is to create a warm, homely atmosphere for her guests through her meticulously prepared Italian-Mediterranean cuisine, coupled with a relaxed ambiance filled with laughter and conviviality.</p>



	Florita Morais Alves	<p>Born and raised in Macau, is one of the most renowned Macanese chefs. She is also the proprietor of the hugely popular Macanese-Portuguese restaurant La Famiglia. She has dedicated herself to promoting the culinary and dining culture of Macanese-Portuguese cuisine both locally and internationally. As part of the <i>Brotherhood of Macanese Gastronomy</i> (Confraria da Gastronomia Macaense) and culinary ambassador of Macau, Florita Morais Alves has travelled to many countries around the world to showcase Macau's gastronomy. This includes participating in the CEUCO (European Eno-gastronomical Brotherhood Congress) for various years, where she was awarded the Best European Chef Award in 2018 in Athens, Greece. She has also co-produced a series of food programs with Japan's NHK television; and presented her famous Macau Cha Gordo (Macanese-style afternoon tea) in Portugal.</p>
---	---------------------------------	---