

Respected Chef Durga Reddy Now With Yadua Bay Resort and Villas

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Yadua Bay Resort and Villas Executive Chef Durga Reddy is one of Fiji's most respected Executive Chefs having been in the industry for 40 years.

Mr Reddy says sacrifice and cooking from the heart are the two main ingredients to making a successful chef.

Having started his career at the former Hyatt Regency (Warwick Hotel) on the Coral Coast, Mr Reddy has worked in Fiji, the United States and Vanuatu.

When did you first become interested in food and why?

I had been attending some cooking classes in high school in Sigatoka. So when the Hyatt Regency (now Warwick Fiji) opened in 1979, I was offered a position as a trainee cook and from there I never looked back. I loved cooking and my son has now followed in my footsteps.

What is the one dish you especially love and remember?

I actually do not have a favourite dish. I just love cooking all kinds of dishes, whether it is an international dish or a local dish.

How did your family react when you told them you wanted to become a chef?

Well at that time, chefs, or cooks as they were mainly known by were seen as not a sort of high paid job. So you can imagine when I was offered a job at the Hyatt Regency when it

opened my family was not too keen but was happy that I had a job.

Tell us about your career so far?

I started with Hyatt Regency and then it became Warwick Fiji so in total I spent 31 years at the hotel. Mr Reddy was also seconded to Warwick Group's Seattle, Colorado and Denver hotels where he got to work alongside some top chefs.

He also worked at the hotel chain's Le Lagon in Vanuatu.

In 2012, I parted ways with the Warwick Group as Executive Chef and joined the Naviti Resort (which is now under the Warwick Group) in the same position.

I then worked for Sonaisali Island Resort (now Double Tree Resort by Hilton Hotel Fiji), the five star Tadrai Island Resort on Mana Island, Plantation Island Resort.

I then came back to the Warwick Group in Fiji as a Consultant Chef and left in November last year after signing a contract to join Yadua Bay Resort and Villas.

I am actually happy to be working here as the resort's first executive Chef as I have once again working for my previous boss, Dixon Seeto whom I used to work under at Naviti. This is a challenge for me as it is a new kitchen, a new set of staff and the onus is on me to train them and make this resort known for its menu.

What is your favourite dish to cook for guests?

I don't really have a favourite dish as I love cooking all different types of food. But for here at Yadua, we will concentrate on local menus al-



Yadua Bay Resort and Villas Executive Chef Durga Reddy.

though we will be serving international dishes.

We will be looking to being host to local weddings and we will have a spread of local dishes mainly with some international dishes but we are going to make sure that it is the best.

Also at Yadua we are very close to the sea so we will have a variety of seafood dishes.

Do you have favourite ingredients you like to cook with?

Ingredients could be used in any dish so my favourite ingredients are the local ones we get that when added gives that Fijian taste to the food we make.

we make.

Describe a typical day at work?

I have arranged shift work with my staff. For me I come and check at the resort at 7am, then at 9am and then have a break in the afternoon before going back to check the preparation for dinner.

I am always there to see what was being prepared for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

What do you like most about your job?

Just being there in the kitchen. I just love cooking, trying new menus and generally teaching our upcoming Fijian chefs.

If you hadn't become a chef, what would you be doing right now?

At that time when I left school there weren't much job opportunities and we did not have a cane farm, so I was really planning anything until this job came along and I took it.

Other than creating great food, what are the most important qualities that make a successful chef?

Hard and dedicated work. You need to cook from the heart to become a successful chef otherwise the food will not turn out to be the way it should. You need to sacrifice things like when I was away from my family for five years working in other resorts outside Sigatoka.

I told my son you will have to sacrifice a lot to get to a position that I am in. You cannot just come and work your eight hours and leave.

Sometimes the kitchen is busy so you need to be there to see things through.