



DINING

Local intel

Chef Glenn Erari serves us a taste of his hometown of **Jakarta**

BY RANDY MULYANTO

Glennaldy Adrian Erari, executive chef at modern Indonesian restaurant **Semaja**, has embodied Indonesia's culinary diversity all his life – inspired by his father's heritage from Papua in the eastern part of the archipelago and his mother's from the Bangka Regency in the west.

These influences inspired chef Glenn to experiment at Semaja, by major lifestyle and hospitality group Ismaya, where he celebrates flavours from across Indonesia, giving diners a tasting tour of the country, an archipelago of a staggering 17,000 islands. From Papuan-style *papeda kuah kuning* (sago starch with turmeric fish soup) and Makassar-style *iga bakar konro* (grilled beef ribs prepared for four days) to West Sumatran-style beef rendang, West Javan-style chargrilled prawns with sweet and spicy sauce and Medan-style herbs and seafood fried noodles, it's a feast served in Menteng, in the heart of Jakarta. We caught up with the chef for some insider tips.



Chef Glenn Erari



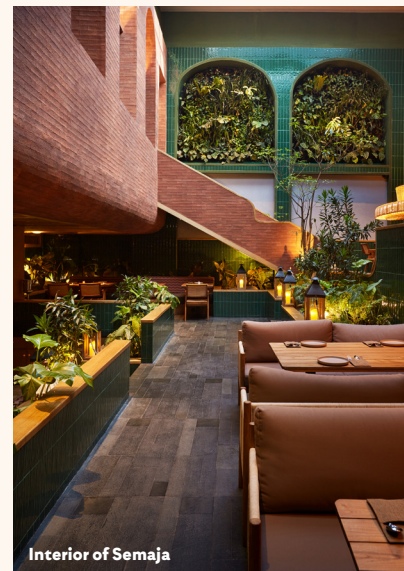
Tongseng

First of all, what should we eat?

“**Bakmi Acung** in Kedoya, West Jakarta. I grew up in this part of the city, enjoying various Chinese-Indonesian dishes. Since I was a kid, I developed a taste for Chinese food – like Bangka noodles and *pempek* (fishcake served with vinegar sauce). And West Jakarta, wow, that place is a food heaven. There's also **Tongseng** in front of the Great Mosque of Sunda Kelapa, Central Jakarta. I've enjoyed their goat stew since I was in high school. The *tongseng* is still cooked using charcoal. It's top-notch. For beef soup, go to **Soto Betawi Bu Nyai** in Kemayoran, also in Central Jakarta. It comes in a coconut milk-based broth.”

How do you spend your downtime?

“I like to go island-hopping and diving around **Kepulauan Seribu**



Interior of Semaja

(Thousand Islands) Regency – part of the Jakarta province – and staying there for a night. Take a few boat rides from Muara Angke port to **Pulau Bira**, which is great for camping. The place is quiet, not crowded, great for snorkelling and diving.”

Best souvenir?

“*Angklung* (a musical instrument consisting of bamboo tubes) keychains from street vendors in front of Café Batavia, part of Jakarta's **Kota Tua** or Old Town. The instrument is originally from Java and is a big part of Indonesia's heritage.”



What's a must-try in Semaja?

“The 18 different variants of *sambal* (Indonesian-style chilli paste). We thought foreigners couldn't handle the same level of spiciness as Indonesians, but it turns out they all love sambal. And they finish it – even the ones that we Indonesians find spicy.”

IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK (TONGSENG, KEPULAUAN SERIBU, ANGKLUNG)



Kepulauan Seribu