



Decorated Executive Chef Ken Nakano Joins Celebrated Team at Newly Transformed Inn at Laurel Point

New Chef will oversee all culinary operations at Inn at Laurel Point and iconic eatery Aura Waterfront Restaurant + Patio

November 17, 2020 (Victoria, BC): [Inn at Laurel Point](#) is delighted to welcome acclaimed Executive Chef Ken Nakano to its renowned gastronomic team. Here, he will oversee the property's culinary portfolio, which includes banquet cuisine, in-room dining, Grab & Go options, and the Inn's signature restaurant, [Aura Waterfront Restaurant + Patio](#). Chef Nakano's arrival comes on the heels of the property's multimillion-dollar ground floor renewal, which brought to life the vision of late Canadian architect Arthur Erickson.

A passionate advocate for sustainability, Chef Nakano's appointment builds on traditions and philosophies central to the award-winning Inn, set against an inspiring backdrop of Victoria's picturesque Inner Harbour. Raised in a traditional Japanese household, Chef Nakano's mother instilled in him a deep respect for honouring the seasons, nourishing the land and harvesting responsibly – teachings he has carried throughout his career. While this influence can be experienced throughout each of the culinary touch-points in the hotel, his philosophy is especially integral to Aura, where local and seasonal ingredients take center stage – encouraging guests to experience bold and worldly flavours through globally-inspired "small plates".

During his 20-year culinary tenure, Chef Nakano has prioritized a farm-to-table approach, supporting local growers and producers wherever possible, and was instrumental in launching the Vancouver Aquarium's OceanWise program on Vancouver Island. Prior to joining the team at Inn at Laurel Point, he led the kitchens of global hospitality leaders like Shangri-La Hotel Vancouver, Rosewood Hotel Georgia and Hotel Fairmont Empress. In his new role, Chef Nakano will apply his philosophy of marrying local ingredients with Asian flavours, while utilizing the Pacific Northwest's fresh assortment of seafood and the Inn's robust hotel garden.

"Joining the culinary team at Inn at Laurel Point was an easy decision for me – in addition to honouring local, my philosophy of infusing seasonal ingredients with Asian flavours is similar to the approach at Aura," said Chef Nakano. "I feel extremely lucky to be working and living in Victoria, where there is so much fresh seafood, vegetables, meats and other organic, sustainably grown ingredients to play with. I'm excited to share our team's creativity and passion with diners across the property."

In February, Inn at Laurel Point debuted a large-scale, multi-million ground floor renewal, which was originally conceived in 1987, when owners Paul and Artie Arsens asked their friend Arthur Erickson to design a second hotel wing (now called the Erickson Wing). He agreed, and Inn at Laurel Point became the first and only hotel in Erickson's portfolio. Following the unveiling of the modernist-style wing – which paid homage to the property's marine locale with dazzling waterfront views at every vantage point – Erickson and the Arsens, planned to extend renovations to the entire property.

Sadly, the Arsens died before they could complete the project and, shortly afterward, Erickson passed away, too. Thirty years later, in 2020, the hotel's staff honoured the Arsens' and Erickson's collective vision by completing the renewal with the help of John Graham of Graham Sherwin Studio, who worked with Erickson on the original project. The newly unveiled ground floor renewal completely transformed the lobby, entranceway, meeting spaces, outdoor garden area, and Aura – and now,

with Chef Nakano at the helm of its culinary team, the property is ready to welcome guests to an exciting new chapter for the property.

“We are thrilled to welcome Executive Chef Nakano to the family here at Inn at Laurel Point, and couldn’t be happier that his skills so perfectly complement those of Restaurant Chef Austin Lu and Pastry Chef Kimberley Vy,” said Julie Wright, Director of Human Resources at Inn at Laurel Point. “While COVID-19 has affected our industry tremendously over the past several months, our recent renewal and Chef Nakano’s appointment have helped to pave the way towards a promising future.”

Aura Waterfront Restaurant + Patio is open Monday to Sunday for breakfast and dinner, as well as happy hour on Friday and Saturday. For more information, visit www.aurarestaurant.ca. To book a stay at Inn at Laurel Point, visit www.laurelpoint.com.

About Aura Waterfront Restaurant + Patio

Food should move you. To socialize, to experiment, to savour, to indulge. Aura plays with fresh, locally-focused ingredients through global inspiration, crafting flavours and experiences to take you further. Beyond the backdrop of Victoria’s Inner Harbour, Aura is an adventure into bold tastes and beautiful platings. Follow your curiosity through our sommelier-crafted wine list or splash into cocktails featuring BC’s finest spirit producers. Whether an evening out, a quick bite after work, or a relaxing patio afternoon taking in the views, let Aura be your journey to something spectacular.

Aura Highlights

- 104 indoor seats, including 10 bar, 24 lounge, 2 private rooms and 60 postcard perfect patio seats, make up Aura.
- Interior design by Denise Ashmore, principle at Project 22 Design
- Cove Room: encased in glass, seats up to 8, overlooks the patio and the iconic view of the inner harbour and downtown Victoria.
- Inlet Room: this private room seats up to 10 at a custom boardroom table, features a 60” flatscreen TV, background music and harbour views.
- Small plates brunch served 11:30am-3pm every Saturday & Sunday
- Beverage program features local craft breweries, local distillers, local sake, wine on tap, wine flights, 3/6/9oz pour options available for wines served by the glass

Meet Executive Chef Ken Nakano

Chef Nakano has led the culinary teams of globally recognized companies like Shangri-La Hotel Vancouver, Rosewood Hotel Georgia and Fairmont Hotels. During that time Chef Nakano has prioritized sustainability and a farm-to-table approach throughout his 20-year culinary tenure and supports local farmers, producers and fishermen wherever possible.

Chef Nakano’s philosophy of marrying locally sourced and seasonal ingredients with worldly flavours is perfect for [Aura Waterfront Restaurant + Patio](http://www.aurarestaurant.ca) small plates concept and the culinary operations at [Inn at Laurel Point](http://www.laurelpoint.com). His traditional yet inventive approach to cooking inspires him to create sophisticated yet uncomplicated ingredient driven dishes. He is currently developing menus based on

his planting of various items for the Inn's culinary garden; these will include indigenous as well as rare and unique fruits and vegetables to be showcased in Aura throughout the year.

Meet Pastry Chef Kimberley Vy

Pastry Chef Kimberley Vy joined the Inn at Laurel Point and Aura Restaurant team in 2015. With a love of art and creativity from a young age, Chef Vy found a way to have a stable and viable career that would allow her that outlet when she embarked on her first pastry courses. Flavour inspirations that date back to her early childhood evoke memories for all those who try her dishes. She holds creativity, respect and humour as benchmarks in all that she does, and is looking forward to even greater flexibility to express those in her new small plates menu. Her opening menus will combine traditionally savoury flavours such as salted egg yolk into her desserts and she looks forward to introducing spicy, sour and savoury elements to her sweet confections.

Website: www.aurarestaurant.ca

Images: www.dropbox.com

Facebook, Instagram: @Aurayyj #EatatAura

Twitter (seldom used): @Aurayyj

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About the Inn at Laurel Point

Find genuine hospitality and a breathtaking setting in downtown Victoria at Inn at Laurel Point. With stunning views of the city's famous Inner Harbour and serene surroundings on the edge of the capital city, Inn at Laurel Point makes every stay a remarkable one. Our 200 water and garden view rooms, inspirational meeting and event spaces, award-winning Aura restaurant, mix with ocean air and tranquil gardens to create a rare retreat in the city. As a social enterprise and the first carbon-neutral hotel in British Columbia, the property is committed to caring for their team, community, and environment