



eatz cebu

ZEE PUBLICATIONS, INC. SEP-OCT-NOV 2022



CEBU'S IT PARK IS BACK

Seda Central Bloc Hotel
is the heartbeat of this
business district...



AN ISLAND OF NEW POSSIBILITIES

Kawit Island, South Road Properties,
Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines

Visit nustar.ph for more details.





ADVANCE PURCHASE

Book your stay 15 or 30 days in advance and get 15% or 20%, respectively, off the Best Available Rates of Deluxe Rooms or Serviced Residences.

To reserve: centralbloccebu.sedahotels.com



misto

EXECUTIVE LUNCH

3-Course Set Lunch

Monday - Friday | 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Php 699 net

COFFEE-NECTIVITY

Free-flowing coffee or tea, sweet pastries and savory treats plus seamless WiFi

Monday - Friday | 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM
Php 599 net



STRAIGHT UP



APERICENA HAPPY HOUR

Complimentary pica-pica for every order of alcoholic beverage

Sunday - Thursday | 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

5+1 BEER DEAL

For every five bottles ordered, complimentary one bottle of standard or local beer

Daily | 5:00 PM - 10:00 PM
Php 599 net per set

WINE BUFFET

Daily | 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Php 799 net per person



(032) 410 8899 | CBCEBU@SEDAHOTELS.COM

[f](#) SEDA CENTRAL BLOC CEBU [@](#) SEDAHOTELS [globe](#) SEDAHOTELS.COM

Padriga Street, Apas, Cebu I.T. Park
Cebu City 6000, Philippines



AN EXQUISITE CULINARY EXPERIENCE AT SHANGRI-LA MACTAN, CEBU

Get lost in exceptional flavours & textures of the land and sea, as the Cove's world-class culinary team highlights signature creations like their Meat and Seafood Platters, Charred Wagyu and Burnt Octopus End.

Enjoy curated dining and Happy Hour selections amid coastal views and elegant interiors.

Open daily from 05:00pm - 10:00pm
www.shangri-la.com/en/cebu/mactanresort

 **SHANGRI-LA**
 MACTAN
 CEBU

eatz cebu

ZEE PUBLICATIONS, INC. SEP-OCT-NOV 2022

CONTENTS

12 Book Review:
The Cookbook Shelf

14 Expat Life:
ELENA PALACIOS

16 Expat Life:
MICHAEL MCCOLLOUGH

18 Editors' Choice:
Curated Suggestions

26 Mindful Mendicant
by OJ HOFER

28 Timeless Trotter
by BUTCH CARUNGAY

30 LesEatMore
by LESLEY TAN RICE

32 Dining:
The Café Laguna Legacy

38 Cover Story:
Life in the Fast Lane at
Seda Central Bloc Hotel

44 The Bai Dining
Experience

46 Tourism:
Cebu Basics - the Island's
Urban Centers Explained



50 Tourism:
48 Hours in Cebu and
How to Spend It

54 Tourism:
Highland Adventures at
Cebu's Transcentral Highway

60 Tourism:
Bohol, the Island Ahead

64 Tourism:
Vertical Heights, Rock
climbing in Cantabaco

68 Tourism:
Bacong Pier, Diving in the
Sunken Forest off Negros
Oriental island

73 Dining:
Top 6 Restaurants Not to Miss

86 Lapu-Lapu Insider

96 Hole in the Wall Finds

97 Bargain Hunting in Cebu

98 Five Eats for P200 or Less





Have an art day with us.

Crossroads, Gov. M. Cuenco Ave
Banilad, Cebu City 6000

3F, Design Center of Cebu,
A.S. Fortuna St. Mandaue City 6014

Contact us at +63 918 807 4175

www.qubegallery.ph



Oube
gallery



ON THE COVER

TOP LEFT The Mactan Shrine in Lapu-Lapu City takes a place of pride on the island of Mactan which commemorated the Battle of Mactan's 500th year anniversary last year (1521-2021). The shrine is allegedly the spot where Magellan was killed. **TOP RIGHT** Cebu's Transcentral Highway boasts of bountiful harvests with several way to enjoy them, including a picnic at Gardens and Blooms. **MIDDLE and BOTTOM LEFT TO RIGHT** At Seda Central Bloc Hotel: Cebu's famous lechon is deconstructed as lechon belly, served as part of the lunch offering at Misto; the hotel's facade; the main lobby; hotel manager Ron Manalang; an executive room of the business hotel.

executive editor **EVA GULLAS**
entertaining editor **KATE DYCHANGCO-ANZANI**
columnists **OJ HOFER, BUTCH CARUNGAY, LESLIE TAN RICE**
copy editor **JANET ALFAFARA**
art director **EDWIN JAVIER JR.**
photographers **PABLO QUIZA, STEFFEN BILLHARDT**
editorial coordinator **CINDY CABALLES**
senior account manager **AMY UNDALOC**
editorial assistant **CHRISTIAN GREGORY RESABA**
staff writer **RYAN DANIEL DABLO**

eatz cebu

ISSUE NO. 2 | SEP-OCT-NOV 2022
ZEE PUBLICATIONS, INC.

Published by Zee Publications, Inc.
MRC Compound, P. Burgos St., Alang-Alang,
Mandaue City, Cebu, Philippines, 6014
Tel. No. (032) 326-0553
E-mail Address: info@zee.ph

EATZ Cebu is published by Zee Publications, Inc.
Publication schedule:
• June-July-August
• September-October-November
• December-January-February
• March-April-May

© All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

www.zee.ph | [FB /zeephcebu](https://www.facebook.com/zeephcebu) | [IG @zeephcebu](https://www.instagram.com/zeephcebu), [@eatzcebu](https://www.instagram.com/eatzcebu)

EATZ Cebu Quarterly Magazine is available as a room amenity in most major hotels, resorts and restaurants in Cebu. With a food-centric editorial voice, EATZ Cebu is the first publication to introduce readers to the current dining scene in the island of Cebu. Advertisers will appreciate its wide audience reach of printed copies, a digital edition as well as social media posts.

Cover price: **Php 150.00**

Eats Cebu is published in coordination with
DOT7, Cebu City Tourism Council and Mactan Tourism





Club Serena Resort

MOALBOAL • CEBU

LUXE IN A NEW FORM

DISCOVER RELAXED LUXURY

Indulge in a unique union of luxurious accommodations, gastronomic presentations, and activities above and under the waters of Moalboal, immaculate since the beginning of time.

Find out more, contact +63-917-872-6367 or sayhello@clubserenaresort.com.



IF YOU HAVE A FREE WEEKEND, WHERE WILL YOU GO IN CEBU AND WHY?

JANINE TAYLOR *hotelier*

"If I had a free weekend I would love to be boating and go to a sandbar with good friends. Nothing like being in the middle of the ocean and the serenity of it all."

Janine is a hotelier who has worked in the Philippines and Indochina. She loves writing as it helps harness her creative side and time permitting, hopes to write a blog and/or novel one day.



KARA MAE NOVEDA *lawyer*

"For an easy beach fix, I'd be content to lounge at the poolside of a resort in Mactan. But if I'm up for a long drive, the islands of Bantayan or Sumilon are always worth the trouble for their year-round pristine waters and fresh seafood."

Kara was a youth columnist writing for a national broadsheet while in high school. She became a weekend page editor for a Cebu daily for 9 years then a segment host/writer for a regional television news program. Taking a break from professional media work to study law, she is now a practicing lawyer and hopes to write more about her intertwined passions for food and travel.

LANA OSMEÑA *entrepreneur*

"I have two favorite go-to places in Cebu on weekends – the beautiful house of a very good friend in Tabogon, and Crimson Resort in Mactan."

Svetlana Osmeña or Lana is a seasoned executive with over a decade's experience in expatriate relations and real estate. She is the General Manager of KMC Solutions Cebu and has been with the company for 7 years.



LESLEY TAN RICE *marketing communications consultant*

"I would go to the beach in Mactan, barely an hour's drive from the main city. Recently, I visited Cebu Safari with my family, and the place blew me away - the animals are well cared for and its landscaped gardens are so lovely and peaceful. I wouldn't mind going back there, even for just a stroll along the beautiful gardens."

Lesley Tan Rice is a marketing communications consultant specializing in luxury hospitality with close to twenty years of experience. While working in an international hotel group for 12 years overseeing brand, marketing and communication efforts, she also held stints as an assistant lifestyle editor for a Cebu daily and as an independent book publisher. Currently based in Singapore with her husband and three dogs, she enjoys cooking at home and discovering dining finds in different cities.

Dusit Thani Mactan Cebu Resort
www.dusit.com

Punta Engaño Road, Mactan Island,
Lapu-Lapu City 6015, Cebu, Philippines

For reservations, call +63 (32) 888 1388
or email dtmc@dusit.com

Rediscover the true flavors of Thailand at Benjarong,
the only authentic Thai restaurant on the island.

Now open from 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

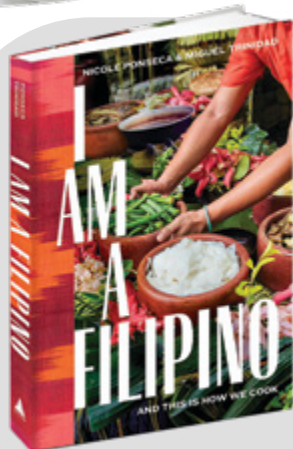


Dusit Thani

MACTAN · CEBU
RESORT



KULINARYA, A GUIDEBOOK TO PHILIPPINE CUISINE
Kulinarya seeks to do one thing and it does it well. This book elevates Filipino cuisine to make it stand toe-to-toe with global standards while remaining true to the source material. It treats dishes and recipes that Filipinos would be familiar with and, without compromising their traditional roots, dresses them to become elegant representations of Filipino culture. The book is touted as friendly for newcomers and experts alike and is chock-full of inventive twists to many a Filipino dish.



I AM A FILIPINO: AND THIS IS HOW WE COOK

This decorated and multi-awarded cookbook has certainly made a name for itself, and for good reason. Juxtaposed against all the Filipino recipes are little snippets of culture, from the dish's origins, its namesake, to fun facts about the ingredients in the recipe. The informative backgrounds on all the dishes make for quite the enrichment and the dishes themselves are no slouches, either. Everything from all-time favorites like adobo and humba to exotic fares like *kinilaw* and *ukoy* are covered inside.

THE COOK BOOK SHELF

For this issue's top picks, hearth and home take centerstage. Two of these books offer visual and narrative glimpses of the vibrant Filipino cuisine that has percolated through more than 7,000 islands-worth of culture. The third is a guidebook on skills and techniques that have cemented their way into every kitchen. All of them are steeped in food tradition and history.

by RYAN DANIEL R. DABLO



HEIRLOOM: TIME-HONORED TECHNIQUES, NOURISHING TRADITIONS, & MODERN RECIPES

This book is more universal in its scope, but its message rings true to any kitchen. It compiles a plethora of techniques that are well worth mastering, everything from food preservation to working with meat and dairy to making jams and pickles. It also deals with specific plant ingredients and how best to treat them, store them, and extend their pantry life to make use of all that flavor and drive it home while cooking. For the more nuanced cook with a home garden to play in, this book is a handy companion.



THE SUITES *at* GORORDO

Singapore-Inspired Living

Live and work in an integrated world class hotel,
residential and business-friendly development at the
heart of Cebu's golden district.



A Project of



Property Management:



A Member of CapitaLand

Serviced Residence Operator:



0917 849 4600

corporate@worldwidecentralproperties.com



photography by Pablo Quiiza

The Pig & Palm



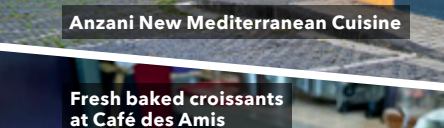
Asmara Urban Resort & Lifestyle Village



Infinity Pool Crimson Resort & Spa Mactan



Anzani New Mediterranean Cuisine



Fresh baked croissants
at Café des Amis



Kinilaw na Isda

ELENA PALACIOS

ELENA PALACIOS HAS BEEN IN Cebu since 2016. The president and CEO of Lexmark Research and Development Philippines, she wears a double hat as General Manager for the Competence Center. Lexmark has had a strong presence in Cebu for more than 20 years, and considers the city its home base for research and development in Asia. Being from Venezuela, Elena quickly adjusted to Filipino culture.

WHERE WAS YOUR PREVIOUS HOME? I arrived in Cebu on January 7, 2016 coming from Miami, Florida. Now, I live in Maria Luisa Estate Park, a very nice neighborhood, great houses.

WHERE CAN WE FIND YOU ON WEEKENDS OR ON YOUR LEISURE TIME?

Normally we stay at home enjoying our swimming pool with good food and good music, but we also go to different restaurants or resorts. Among our favorites are

Anzani's, Crimson Resort and Spa, Asmara, Tavolata, Pig and Palm, Marble + Grain Steakhouse. Boating and going to sandbars around the island is something we also enjoy very much.

FAVORITE FILIPINO FOOD

I love *lumpia*, crispy *pata*, adobo, *mongo* and *kinilaw*. I also like the sweet mangoes.

PLACES TO BRING GUESTS TO

There are many places to go, first visit would be the Basilica del Santo Nino and the spots close to it like Plaza Independencia, Fort San Pedro and Casa Gorordo. We like to bring our guests island hopping by renting a boat in Mactan, or just staying in the many beachfront resorts there. For longer trips, we take them to Bohol.

WHAT RESTAURANT WOULD YOU TAKE A VIP GUEST?

Anzani's because I know Marco and Kate, they always help me to set a great dinner for our VIP visitors with great food and service and a beautiful view. For breakfast or lunch, I take guests to Café Des Amis because Philippe is a great chef, the food is very good and the service is very friendly. **E**



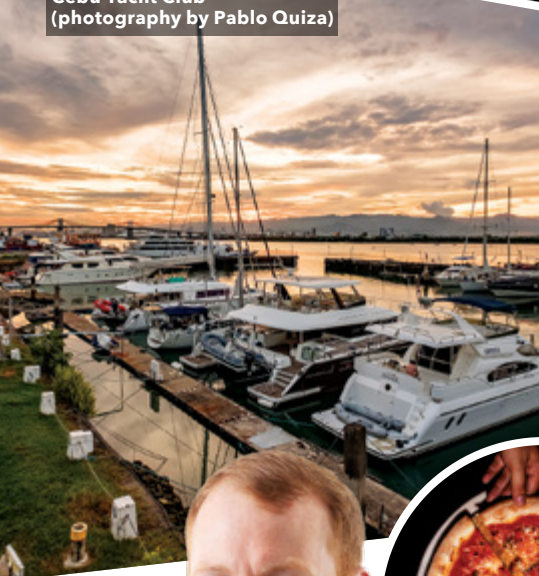
Ching Hai

OCEANS OF FLAVORS



The Pig & Palm's signature pork dish with apple sauce

Cebu Yacht Club
(photography by Pablo Quiza)



Bulalo



Suman



Baked treats at Abaca Baking Company

MICHAEL MCCULLOUGH

MICHAEL MCCULLOUGH IS the CEO and co-founder of KMC Solutions, an ISO-certified provider of flexible workspace solutions and staff augmentation, as well as being Managing Director of KMC Savills, a full-service real estate services firm. He has a long history of working for multinational companies on their relocation and real estate needs in the Philippines.

Companies was set up by Michael with friends Greg Kittelson and Amanda Rufino Carpo. Starting off with KMC Savills, the group soon established KMC Solutions, an outfit that initially assisted foreign companies set up operations and grow their businesses in the Philippines. Today, KMC Solutions, a pioneer in the serviced-office market, is the largest coworking and flexible workspace provider in the country.

WHERE WAS YOUR PREVIOUS HOME? I arrived here in January 1st 2007, sent by my former employer to set up a regional office for software development. We had found great senior resources which helped service our US clients. I was living in Palo Alto, California prior to coming to Manila.

WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO SET UP KMC OFFICES IN CEBU? We've been in Cebu for more than seven years and always loved visiting as tourists. Our clients wanted to explore the lifestyle that Cebu has to offer versus the hustle and bustle of Manila. We try to capture Cebu's laidback vibe with its super friendly, team-oriented people, so our offices allow space for a lot of collaboration. Also, Cebu is 15-30 minutes away from everything, including world class water sports. Our hybrid working model supports our employees who like working from the beach or the office.

WHERE CAN WE FIND YOU ON WEEKENDS OR ON YOUR LEISURE TIME? We've been hopping around different Airbnb's to explore parts outside of Metro Manila. We started this during COVID and while we do it a bit less now, we enjoy the different scenery. With 3 boys, anywhere with a pool or beach is key to our enjoyment and sanity. Mactan is always my favorite — the beaches and water are amazing, plus I love scuba diving!

FAVORITE FILIPINO FOOD I do love my *bulalo*, *sinigang* and *adobo*. Also, the *suman*, if I feel like something sweet.

WHEN IN CEBU, WHAT IS THE ONE PLACE YOU WON'T MISS? The Pig and Palm restaurant always satisfies, the pork dish with applesauce is a favorite.

WHAT RESTAURANT WOULD YOU TAKE A VIP GUEST? We usually take guests to restaurants in Mactan for the sea breeze and tasty food.

WHAT IS YOUR GO-TO RESTAURANT? There are so many great places to eat in Cebu and coming from Manila, they are all affordable! We love Pig and Palm, Asmara and Abaca Bakery. 🍷



Asmara's Pizza Margarita



CELEBRATE LIFE'S PRECIOUS MOMENTS WITH A MEMORABLE DINING EXPERIENCE

In VisMin's biggest hotel, an excellent selection of various cuisines, familiar grub, notable wines, and high-quality spirits is provided by over eight venues including specialty restaurants and bars.

bai
HOTEL
CEBU



POOL BAR

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Go around Cebu like a local. Our Editor's Choice is a curated guide on what we think is the best this island can offer. Our list of food and destinations are essential to help visitors traverse this multi-city island!

Best Service to Move Items Within Cebu: LALAMOVE

If you need a parcel or a huge box to be moved from one end of the city to another, Lalamove is your essential tool! This neat app is all you need to move things around, be it a bulky purchase of a huge TV to a basket of fruits from the local fruit stall. Courier services are reasonably priced at P88 (USD1.58) for envelopes and small packages. Most tourists with only a few days to spare in Cebu are pressed for time, and Lalamove conveniently transports tickets, shopping items and balikbayan boxes to your hotel, giving you more time for other experiences instead of getting caught in Cebu's famous rush hour traffic.



Mangoes: R & M MANGOES

Cebu is famous for its sweet golden mangoes. Properly ripened mangoes are juicy and sweet, but they are not easy to transport and can easily spoil. So, for a taste that reminds you of Cebu, try the best dried mangoes that the island has to offer. R & M Mangoes is the top brand to seek if you are looking for quality dried mangoes. This heritage brand has expanded to other mango-based products as well, and if you can find their sold-out Choco Mangga on the shelf, grab a box fast. R & M products are available in most reputable groceries and at Cebu's airport shops.

Working Away from Office: KMC SOLUTIONS

Not all of us have the pleasure of working by the beach, with margaritas in hand. With many offices still not open, nomadic workers have the option to choose where to go. For the best co-working space in Cebu, nothing beats KMC Solutions' location at the heart of Cebu IT Park.

Open 24/7

18th Floor, W Geonzon
St, Cebu IT Park

(02) 8779 6540 loc 1110

www.kmc.solutions



Waterviews: bai Hotel's TWILIGHT ROOFDECK LOUNGE & BAR

With the mountains behind, and the sea in front, bai Hotel's rooftop bar on the 23rd floor view is unsurpassable in Cebu. Easily accessible from all parts of Metro Cebu, this scenic lounge features great entertainment with their house DJ and live bands on weekends.

Open on Friday and Saturday
5:00pm to 11:00pm

23rd floor bai Hotel

(032) 342.8888

[f @twilightroofdeck](#)



Culture: FORT SAN PEDRO

Cebu's colonial heritage is no more apparent than at the 2,085 square meter fort. Erected in the 17th century, the fort's stone walls are reminiscent of centuries past when pirates rampaged and galleons sailed around many ports across the globe.

Open daily from 8:00am to 5:00pm
A. Pigafetta Street, Cebu City

(032) 256.2284

[f FORT SAN PEDRO cebu official](#)



Shopping: METRO AYALA

With its 5 levels, Metro Ayala is the preferred store for most locals. Their expansive grocery is the best source for produce and local food delicacies, just go in the morning before 10:00am to avoid the line at the cashier counters. Two floors up, ladies will love the experience of shopping for cotton frocks while on the 5th level, tucked in one corner, is the travel section where luggage sets and travel packs come at great prices. Metro Ayala Department Store is the anchor store of the sprawling Ayala Center Cebu shopping mall.

Open daily from 10:00am to 9:00pm.
Cardinal Rosales Avenue, Cebu
Business Park, Cebu City 6000
(+63) 917.886.3876
shopmetro.ph



Best Breakfast to Eat Like a Local: DANGGIT

Danggit is a dried fish delicacy from Bantayan Island, and Cebuanos' go-to fare for breakfast. Best eaten when freshly fried and crunchy, it is usually served with garlic rice and fried eggs, and eaten dipped in seasoned vinegar. You can spot

them in most hotel's breakfast menu or at the morning buffets. It is an acquired taste, but definitely worth a try!



Best Comfort Food: EDDIE'S HERITAGE HOTEL

Craving for an old-fashioned apple pie? Look no farther than Eddie's famous pies. SOpened way back in the 50s by an American GI, Eddie's Log Cabin was the place to be for honest to goodness meals. This little secret known only to locals serves comfort food in a convivial setting that clearly states that you are there for a satisfyingly good meal. Top sellers include their fresh corned beef, pork knuckles served the German way, and the famous crispy pata, brined and deep fried to perfection.

Open from Monday to Saturday at 6:00am to 10:00pm and Sundays at 7:00am-3:00pm
F. Manalo St., Sambag Cebu City
(032) 254.8570

 **Eddie's Log Cabin Restaurant**



Recommended Food Market: FARMER'S MARKET

The local farmer's market at the Marco Polo Hotel parking lot has expanded to include stalls with cooked food and quick delicious meals, in addition to produce that farmers from nearby Busay Hills bring down at the crack of dawn. Fresh harvests of ginger, garlic, bananas, lettuce and other vegetables are for sale here. Of course, there's always Carbon

Market downtown for hardcore shoppers, but if you don't want the bustle of 200 or more stalls, this Saturday Market is a good alternative. Open on Saturdays only from 7:00am to 2:30pm.



Handicraft: CURIO CEBU

CURIO is the brainchild of mother-daughter tandem aiming to modernize native Philippine-made products by creating functional, fashionable pieces for every lifestyle. Follow @curiocebu for your home and lifestyle accessory needs. CURIO offers hats, bags, and trays that are all 100% made in Cebu, with other locally weaved items from Argao and Ilocos Norte.



Best buffet:

FERIA AT RADISSON BLU CEBU & CAFÉ MARCO AT MARCO POLO PLAZA CEBU

Locals love good value, that's why buffets are very popular. While many restaurant and hotels offer this style of food service, two locations stand out for their extensive spreads and interactive cooking stations — the breakfast buffet at Marco Polo Plaza's Café Marco priced at P950 nett per person and the dinner buffet at Radisson Blu Cebu's Feria priced at P1,488 nett per person. If you have the time and the appetite to enjoy the variety of dishes that buffets offer, dining at either of these two hotels would be very much worth your while.

Radisson Blu Cebu

Opens daily

Breakfast - 6:00AM-10:00AM

Brunch/Lunch - 11:30AM-3:00PM

Dinner - 6:00PM-9:30PM

Sergio Osmeña Avenue cor. Juan Luna, Avenue, Cebu City

+63 32 402 9900

 @FeriaRestaurant

Marco Polo Plaza Cebu

Breakfast - 7:00 to 10:30 AM

Lunch - Fridays & Saturdays

11:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Dinner - Fridays & Saturdays

6:00 to 10:00 PM

Sunday Brunch:

11:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Nivel Hills, Cebu Veterans Dr., Cebu City

+63 919 083 6768

 Marco Polo Plaza Cebu



Feria at Radisson Blu Cebu



Marco Polo Hotel Cebu's Cafe Marco

JAPANESE CUISINE BY THE SEA



Ayame
SEASIDE TALES
海岸物語

FOR RESERVATIONS
& DELIVERIES, CALL
(0991) 452 5888

IL CORSO

Lifemalls
FUNITEST

Visit also our other branch
Ayame JAPANESE RESTAURANT
eBloc 1 Tower, Cebu IT Park, Apas, Cebu City

The EZ Comfort Food You Love!



80 F Ramos Street, Brgy. Santa Cruz, Cebu City

032.236.6027 0917.318.8383

/EZEatsCebu



SCAN ME

TO SEE OUR MENU

OPEN from Tuesdays thru Sundays
DINE-IN from 10:00 -14:30 | 16:30 -19:00
TAKE-OUT & DELIVERY from 10:00 -19:00
LAST ORDER accepted at 18:15

EDITOR'S
CHOICE



Best Destination for Family: JPARK ISLAND RESORT & WATERPARK CEBU

Locals and visitors with young children troop to JPark Island Resort and Waterpark Cebu for a holiday or a special treat. The sprawling resort offers family-friendly rates and activities in their massive water park. Their rooms are also bigger than usual with many connecting rooms for those checking in with families. Located in Mactan Island, the hotel also boasts several food outlets like Nonki Japanese Restaurant, Abalone Buffet Restaurant, Maru Korean Restaurant, Ching Hai Chinese Restaurant, Coral Seaside Restaurant, J Lounge, Aqus Island Pool Bar, Aqus Beach Bar, Havana By The Sea and Pirate Bar—making sure that little tikes and adults alike are never far from the water slide when hungry.

M.L. Quezon Highway, Maribago, Lapu-Lapu City
(032) 494.5000

@jparkislandresort

www.jparkislandresort.com



**Best place to
hang out for cigar
aficionados:
F CIGAR BAR**

The perfect place to smoke those Cohibas is at this clubby F Cigar Bar, a little space of quiet adjacent to the bustling F Bar with it's nightly djs. The cigar lounge is located at 88th Avenue mall in Banilad.

**Best Sunset Views :
DUSIT THANI MACTAN CEBU**

The recently re-opened Dusit Thani Mactan Cebu Resort has the exclusive claim to having the best sunset view in Cebu. Located at the tip of Punta Engaño in Mactan Island, the resort's endless infinity pool faces the west overlooking Mactan Channel. Relax on their lounge chairs at Tradewinds Café by the main lobby with a drink in hand, and watch the sun never looking more glorious as it dips below the horizon at 6pm. It is a long drive if you're not an in-house guest, but the awesome views are unexpectedly worth it. Better yet, for a limited time, avail of their special Summer Staycation Package which includes a deluxe king room with breakfast for two and unlimited cocktails at certain hours, for the special rate of P9,441 plus tax.

**Punta Engaño Road, Lapu-Lapu City
(032) 888.1388**

**@DusitThaniMactanCebu
www.dusit.com/dusitthani/mactancebu/**



Ba

BEAUTE AFFAIR LUXE

**The First Accredited Center of
Biologique Recherche in Cebu**



Platelet Rich Plasma
Luxewave
Parfaite Laser Hair Removal
CO2 Illumina,
Slenda Body
Pico Luxe
Drips
Face Thread Lift
Haiku Nose Thread Lift
and Botox
among others

STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY
IN-HOUSE DOCTORS
CERTIFIED MEDICAL AESTHETICIAN,
AND
HIGHLY-TRAINED BEAUTY THERAPISTS

**EXPERIENCE
THE FRENCH WAY
OF SKIN CARE**

2F The Space, A.S. Fortuna
Open every Tuesday to Sunday
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

f Beauté Affair Luxe

ig @beauteaffairluxe

EDITOR'S
CHOICE



Seda Central Bloc

Serviced Apartments: CITADINES & SEDA CENTRAL BLOC

Our Editor's Choice for serviced apartments goes to two new hotels: Citadines, for those who prefer to be near the top hospitals and tourist attractions and Seda Central Bloc for those wanting to be near the central business centers of Cebu IT Park and

the Cebu Business Park. Both hotels offer short-term and long-term stays and their one bedroom apartments are furnished with modern amenities, a kitchenette with refrigerator, and a dining area which can double as work space.



Citadines Cebu



Pho Bo from Lemon Grass



Pho Noodles from Phat Pho

Ah Pho!

Cebu boasts several Asian restaurants, but our editors are very partial to a hot bowl of Vietnamese pho. Our two recommendations for this are Lemon Grass at Ayala Center Cebu and Phat Pho at Crossroads Mall in Banilad.



Sheraton's 5-Cien All Day Dining



King Ocean Room at Sheraton Mactan Cebu Resort

SEPTEMBER NEWS

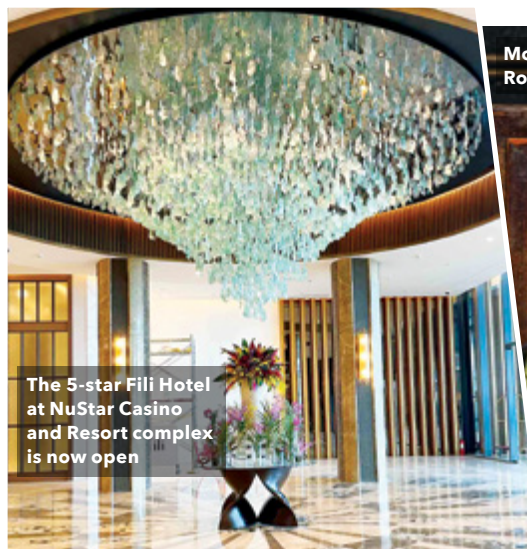
September brings two exciting news with the opening of Sheraton Mactan Cebu Resort at Punta Engaño, Mactan, and NUSTAR Resort and Casino's continuing rollout of their 3 hotels and world-class dining.

Sheraton Mactan has 261 rooms and suites. They currently have an Introductory Rate Offer until the end of October starting at P10,500 including breakfast for two guests. To book, please go to www.marriott.com

Going southbound from the Cebu City, close to the recently opened Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway bridge is another sparkling new project,

the NUSTAR Resort and Casino. The impressive complex will house three luxury hotels, with one already open, the 5-star Fili Hotel, and the 5-star+ NUSTAR Hotel expected to open next year. Meanwhile, the dining scene at NUSTAR continues growing: Aside from Il Primo, they will open Mott 32, the Peking duck specialty restaurant which started in Hong Kong. The fine dining Cantonese restaurant opens its first outpost in Asia in Bangkok and Cebu this year.

Eatz Cebu will be doing a full coverage of these two establishments in our next issue.



The 5-star Fili Hotel at NuStar Casino and Resort complex is now open

Mott 32's famous Applewood Roasted Peking duck



EATING MINDFULLY AT POTLUK



SALAD OF THE DAY
Crisp, fresh trio of leafy greens, fruits and
boiled bananas with Acai Berry dressing.

Eat to live. Mindful eating, which was explained in my previous article, enables us to maintain awareness and appreciation before, during and after meals.

BY OBSERVING THIS meaningful experience of dining, we develop no attachment nor aversion to what we eat. No biases towards or against the food, venue, the occasion or the people whom we are with.

Recently, this writer visited Eya and Chef Steve's Potluk Pantry and Tasting Room which they opened in June this year. Located at 17 Acacia Street in Cebu City, Potluk has limited dining space but a seemingly limitless menu of socially and environmentally responsible, wholesome plant-based food and non-vegetarian dishes.

They currently have a table and counter seating for four and on certain days, al fresco tables at their pop-up area. You can drop in quickly to grab their health-giving bottled drinks, chutneys, jams, and boxed meals or conveniently order their beautifully balanced, nourishing offerings online for delivery (www.facebook.com/potlukph/).

This mendicant hasn't seen Eya and Steve in *kalpas*, thus, dining-in was the only way to reestablish friendships and experience mindful eating. As expected, everything went wonderfully well. One learned that Eya now heads CAFE-i (Communities for Alternative Food Ecosystems Initiative) the non-government organization that trains, develops, verifies and



GLUTEN-FREE GRAIN & SEED BREAD. Freshly baked bread that can be smudged with mushroom confit or vegan pesto.



VEGETARIAN UKOY FRITTER. Crispy fried sweet potato, and green papaya, with zero-waste mango sweet chili sauce.



POTATO, SAYOTE SOUP. Potatoes, sayote and fresh herbs in a vegetable stock with a hint of sourness for a heart-opening soup.

certifies organic farming while working with Cebu Farmer's Market (www.facebook.com/cebufarmersmarket/). Meanwhile, Steve continues to create flavorful and mindfulness-enhancing dishes that are responsibly and locally sourced.

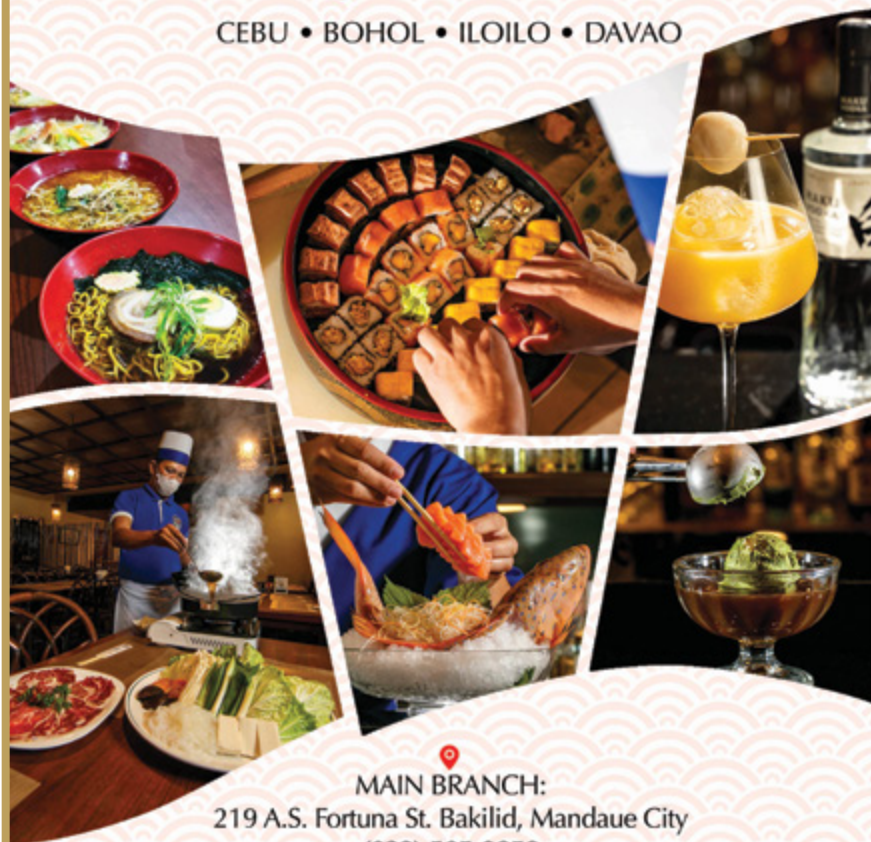
With these two advocates of mindful eating, Cebu's food industry has become even more exciting. Potluk Pantry is providing us healthful food, delightful drinks and the causes and conditions for mindful eating. **E**

Your ultimate authentic Japanese food experience awaits.



Japanese Restaurant

CEBU • BOHOL • ILOILO • DAVAO



MAIN BRANCH:

219 A.S. Fortuna St. Bakilid, Mandaue City
(032) 505-9858

Upper G/F, Fiesta Strip, SM City Cebu
(032) 232-7712

@nonkiph

www.nonki.ph



Scan Me

For Nonki Bohol,
Iloilo & Davao



**TIRELESS
TROTTER**
by Butch Carungay

MEAT AND GREET

Let's get acquainted with the premium beef offerings of 3 of Cebu's best meaty restos.



IT IS A WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED fact that Pinoys love their meat – especially among those segments of the population that continue to prosper despite the challenges brought about by COVID-19. Pre-pandemic figures published by the UK think tank Chatham House cited the Philippines as amongst the Top 10 countries worldwide with the fastest expected growth in the consumption of beef, pork and chicken.

Cebuanos definitely are not dissimilar to their compatriots in their affinity for these fleshy fares and are particularly proud of Cebu Lechon – which legendary food critic Anthony Bourdain once declared as the best roasted pig on the planet. From the humblest of stalls to the fanciest of restaurants, meat figures prominently on nearly all menus and comes in practically every shape, size and form.

This article, however, will focus on the holy grail of meat – in the realm of premium beef. Once inaccessible locally, availability of the top echelon of beef in Cebu has skyrocketed – whether it comes from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Spain, the United States or the United Kingdom. The improved supply has also prompted local restaurants to level up their game so they are able to showcase the buttery textures, the unequaled tenderness and the subtle umami flavors that define such meat quality. So here are three new(ish) dining establishments that have definitely raised the steaks.

IL PRIMO AT NUSTAR RESORT CEBU

As the flagship restaurant of Cebu's most awaited integrated resort development in decades, Il Primo has grand expectations to meet. Billed as

Cebu's first and only Italian steakhouse, it is headed by Executive Chef Luca Angioletti who last helmed Paparazzi at EDSA Shangri-La. With its stunning seaside setting, dramatic modern interiors, and high-end Josper grill, Il Primo takes pride in the highest quality steaks prepared to bring out the best in each slice while preserving its aroma and texture.

Their most popular steak is the US Black Angus Cab Omaha Prime Beef served with asparagus, marble potatoes, and mushroom/truffle sauce and is available in a wide variety of cuts ranging from T-bone, ribeye, tenderloin, and striploin. For those who want an even more elevated experience, they also serve Wagyu A5 – which as many of us know – sits at the absolute top of this already vaunted pile of flesh.

WAGYU SHIROGANE AT CEBU QUINCENTENNIAL HOTEL

The newest kid on this particular

block, this high-end Japanese yakiniku restaurant just opened its doors on August 8, 2022. Its sleek Japanese aesthetic, professional service, and edited menu under the watchful eye of Chef Kazuto Ohe will surely keep regulars coming back for more.

Of the wide array of cuts of beef to choose from, the Wagyu A5 served on a gold leafed plate on a bundled bed of Japanese herbs is a multi-sensory feast for the eyes, nose and taste buds. Obviously, this level of quality and attention to detail comes at a rather steep price but even the “lesser” offerings were just as tasty.

LA CARNE PREMIUM MEAT AT 88TH AVENUE

Last but certainly not the least on this list is technically not a restaurant but an upscale butcher shop that recently introduced a Steak Bar for in-store dining. Founded in the UAE in 2014 by the affable Jovy Tuaño, La Carne

has direct access to the world's best meat brands and has brought them to Cebu as an homage to Jovy's mother who used to run a butcher shop on D. Jakosalem Street decades ago.

One can find practically every cut of beef here from Margaret River, Cape Grim, Mulwarra, WX by Rangers Valley and John Stone. The Cebu branch is headed by Master Chef and Butcher Ed Diñoso who is more than happy to dole out cooking tips on how to best prepare their meat at home. However, for a nominal cooking fee which also includes unlimited side dishes, one can savor all the meaty goodness in their outlet. Incidentally, La Carne also serves White Stripe lamb which is arguably the best in town for those who have had too much moo moo and want a bit of baa baa.

So there it is folks – Cebu's newest shrines to meat and all its glory. Here's hoping you enjoy your trot around these joints. Until we MEAT again... **E**





LESEATMORE
by Lesley Tan Rice

BIRDS OF THE SAME FEATHER

Chicken eaten with rice is a popular dish all over Asia, with different countries boasting its own breed. Leslie Tan Rice, our resident foodie, renumerates on the different nuances. From the humble chicken tinola using *manok Bisaya* to Singapore's popular chicken rice.



Conching's roasted native chicken

IN SPITE OF THE CURRENT state of world affairs, I still believe there are more things that unite us than divide us; and eating together is among the greatest of all activities that can bond. Even in my growing years, eating has always been an enjoyable experience – not by how it filled an empty stomach, but more by how partaking of a meal could make me recognize and appreciate the cultural differences and interesting morsels of history that came with every bite I took.

This column is an ode to eating, discovering new gastronomic finds, as well as ruminating past dining adventures through a single ingredient which ties together these varied experiences.

If there's one protein I could eat everyday without boredom, it would be chicken. It can be baked, boiled, steamed, poached, grilled, roasted,

stewed or fried, and combined with assorted ingredients. Plus, almost every part of it is edible, so nothing is wasted. My personal preference is the native chicken, what we call *manok Bisaya* in Cebu. Whenever she picked me up from the airport, my mother would bring me to **Conching's** at North Reclamation for a pit stop. We'd order a whole chicken each with a bowl of chicken *tinola*, rice, *talong*, *guso* or *lato* on the side, and a bottle of soda.

The chicken itself hardly looks appealing. Tiny, shriveled and usually a little burnt from the coals it was cooked on, it is noticeably unlike commercial roast or barbecued chicken that have most likely depended on modifiers and processes to plump them up. This may be up for debate, but I think *manok Bisaya*, along with Bacolod chicken, deserves a spot in the Philippines' culinary tourism as being the original free-range produce, way before the terms free-range and organic along with farm to table and such came to populate our social media consciousness.

At Conching's, the poultry is charcoal-grilled slow and steady, and when you bite into it, the taste is like no other. You instantly catch a whiff of *tanglad* (lemongrass) and aromatics, while the naturally sweet flavor of the meat comes through, enhanced with a mildly tangy and smoky taste. It's also comforting and quite nostalgic to see how the restaurant remains laidback and unpretentious through the decades.

Another equally appetizing option is the *lechon manok* at **Maco**. My first taste of this barbecued favorite was at its original Banilad branch. I still remember the taste of smoky, crispy skin covering a firm and incredibly delicious fowl. Two more branches have opened as the restaurant expanded to Busay and Consolacion. I have not been



Maco Manok native chicken

to either, but that gives me two more places in Cebu to try when I go back.

While similar in how they're raised, native chicken in Cebu and Singapore differ in culinary preparation. In Singapore, the equivalent to our *manok Bisaya* would be *kampung* or *kampung* chicken – *kampung* being the Malay term for village. Just like our local poultry, *kampung* chickens are reared in a more natural environment, allowed to run free in house farms, making the fowl fitter and their meat firmer.

With not enough land for agriculture in Singapore, the island-country imports most of its food requirements, as is the case of *kampung* chicken which are bought from nearby Malaysia. Indonesia has recently been approved as a chicken supplier too, to help meet the – dare I say insatiable? – demand for chicken. As an informal saying goes: Chicken Rice is to Singapore what pizza is to New York.

My preferred cooking method for *kampung* chicken is poached, Hainanese-style. Most restaurants and hawker stalls in Singapore also serve a roasted version along with soya sauce chicken rice – a poached chicken braised in soya sauce (a Cantonese influence) which gives it a darker appearance.



Soup Restaurant's Samsui Chicken

Thrust onto the world stage after visits by the late Anthony Bourdain and a cook-off with Gordon Ramsey, **Tian Tian Chicken Rice** at Maxwell continues to attract a sizeable queue from both locals and tourists everyday. The signature dish with its succulent and flavorful meat is served with fluffy, fragrant rice cooked in chicken stock. Tian Tian is not without controversy though – its head chef of more than 20 years left to open his own stall called **Ah Tai** at the same hawker center after a tiff with the owner's daughter.

So which one is better? It depends on who you ask. Some people prefer Tian Tian and its fluffy and umami rice which is given equal importance as the chicken meat; while others choose Ah Tai, which is more value for money and includes soup and more condiments.

Personally, I can't tell the difference – I may need to go back again and dissect each ingredient and condiment. However, if I were to choose based on condiments alone, I prefer **Soup Restaurant's Samsui** chicken. The chicken is prepared the same way as the beloved chicken rice dish, the difference being in the one

RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR NATIVE CHICKEN FIX:

CEBU

Conching's: the original *sinugbang manok Bisaya*, North Reclamation Area (beside SM City Cebu)

Maco Manok: a close second. Tender, roasted *lechon manok*, A. S. Fortuna, Mandaue City and Tambayan Food Park in Consolacion, Cebu

SINGAPORE

Tian Tian Chicken Rice: Maxwell Food Centre, #01-10/11, 1 Kadayanallur St.

Ah Tai Chicken Rice: Maxwell Food Centre (2 stalls away from Tian Tian)

Boon Tong Kee: 425 River Valley Rd. Soup restaurant: at Paragon shopping mall in Orchard, or Holland Village beside Holland MRT

and only condiment: ginger sauce in sesame oil, instead of the usual garlic chili sauce. It's called *Samsui* chicken as this was originally prepared by immigrant Chinese women from Samsui who came to Singapore in the 1920s to 1940s to seek employment in the construction sector. Samsui women were also known as *Hong Tou Jin*, or red bandanas, the headdresses that identified them as they went about making a living.

Boon Tong Kee is also highly recommended for its chicken rice and classic favorites served family-style. If you want air-conditioning and comfortable seating, this is the place to go.

Whether poached or grilled, dipped in vinegar or spice, calamansi or chili, there is a native chicken dish to satisfy any craving. 🍗

THE CAFÉ LAGUNA LEGACY

With three generations of the Urbina family lending a hand, the Café Laguna story continues with its rich food heritage, as it celebrates 31 years being the city's most revered Filipino restaurant. Its stamp on the dining scene is indisputable, as it expands with more outlets all over Cebu, and beyond.

by **JANINE TAYLOR**
photography **PABLO QUIZA**

PUTTING UP A RESTAURANT is daunting and opening one in Cebu is even a bigger challenge. To know why is to understand the mindset of the finicky locals. Cebuanos are generally proud and rally behind their own; value for money plays a huge role among Cebuano clientele. Which is why the staying power of Café Laguna, now a byword in the dining scene, makes an interesting story. Café Laguna's founder and chairwoman is Julita Urbina whose roots are from Luzon.



Café Laguna's founder and chairwoman Julita Urbina

Café Laguna rose from humble beginnings. Lita and her husband, Dr. Ricardo Urbina, a military doctor, relocated to Cebu in the mid 70's when he was assigned to Camp Lapu-Lapu in Lahug. Lita found herself a job at the Montebello Villa Hotel but eventually quit. She ventured into opening a carenderia to help augment her husband's salary as they had six growing children to support. Mother's Best was the name of the little eatery she set up in a rented apartment right outside the gates of the camp. Initially offering only three recipes she learned in her mother's kitchen, her simple menu of *ginamay* - also known as *menudo*, *bam-i* and beef stew soon became instant favorites of the military personnel and their visitors. Lita's kitchen crew was

composed of her laundrywoman and her driver, both whom she trained. Word quickly spread and company executives and other business people discovered the place and became regular diners; and the unassuming carenderia that served home-cooked food transformed into a full-blown, air-conditioned restaurant. At her husband's suggestion, the restaurant was named Café Laguna, as they both hailed from the same province, Laguna.

The first Café Laguna offered Tagalog dishes and some popular merienda fare such as palabok, fresh lumpia, *dinuguan* with *puto*, to name a few. With their increasing client base, customers wanted more hearty dishes so *kare-kare* and *sinigang* were then introduced to the menu.

Their big break came when Lita was approached to open a Café Laguna branch at the Ayala Center in 1994. With the shopping mall's convenient accessibility and high foot traffic, Cebuano tastebuds soon learned to love the Tagalog specialties that they had consistently dished out. Five years later, the two-storey Laguna Garden Café was established, opening its doors at The Terraces of the Ayala Center. The dining area on the ground floor offered comfortable restaurant seating while a spacious function hall on its 2nd level could be divided into smaller rooms for weddings, birthdays, corporate launches and other milestone events. As the restaurant grew in popularity, their



Juno and Kay Urbina Viado sharing the kitchen with their grandmother, Lita Urbina.



Café Laguna's famous kare-kare with manggang hilaw dipped in bagoong; savory fresh lumpia.

banquet menu also widened to serve a diverse selections of dishes. More branches subsequently opened in SM City Cebu and SM Seaside City.

Playing a key role in the company's expansion was her son, Raki, who attended the Culinary Institute of America in Napa Valley. After completing his Advanced Culinary Arts Program at the CIA in 2005, the mother and son tandem collaborated to work on new restaurant concepts and launched its catering service. Brands under the Laguna Group of Companies include Lemon Grass which features Thai-Vietnamese cuisine, Parilya pays tribute to Cebuano favorites, and Ulli's Streets of Asia brings the flavorful bestsellers from our regional neighbors. (Taken from the name Julita, "Ulli" is how the grandchildren fondly call their Lola). Encouraged by the popularity of their family-run restaurants, the Laguna Group branched out to other cities

in Visayas and Mindanao including Bacolod, Dumaguete, Ormoc and General Santos.

Chef Raki helped professionalize the business by establishing food costing, standardizing recipes and work organization as well as setting up their

* THE CEBUANO PENCHANT FOR EMBRACING THEIR OWN STILL HOLDS TRUE THESE DAYS.

commissary. His mother Lita candidly shared that her business started with no project study nor vision or mission — it was born out of survival, the need to help support her family. She knew she could

cook well and if her love for cooking could help her earn, she was willing to take the risk. That's all that mattered; it was as simple as that.

Lita's food philosophy is to maintain authenticity in her restaurants by paying respect to traditional flavors and not delve into fusion cuisine. Perhaps the old-fashioned preparation of familiar recipes, without shortcuts, coupled with the focus on food quality is what sets them apart. Café Laguna showcases the rich heritage of Filipino food and is always the caterer of choice for visiting dignitaries and VIP events.

A proven culinary prowess, the Café Laguna founder has 31 years of experience in operating a successful family business and a string of restaurants under her wing, but remains ever humble. Saying God has blessed her with His plans, Lita's love for good food and cooking is shared by her family. Her children are very much involved in the Laguna Group and head its different divisions. Now a third generation is wearing the chef's jacket. Two of her grandkids, Katrina (Kay) Joy Viado and her brother Juno both undertook Professional Culinary Arts & Kitchen Management at the International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management (ISCHAM) in Cebu.

Chef Kay spent a year working in Colorado before returning home. Now the management associate for branch operations, she oversees the restaurant side while Chef Juno is the Junior corporate chef for the Laguna Group and is in charge of their catering arm. Passionate about their roles in the organization, the Viado siblings are inspired by the legacy and

leadership of their grandmother and count themselves lucky to have been mentored by their late Uncle Raki.

Business continues to flourish and evolve with the younger Urbinas on board adding their own touch but never forgetting their roots. Dedicated staff like Lisa has worked with the family for decades while Besing has been with Mrs. Urbina for the last 30 years. As entrepreneurs and business owners they value good relationships with their employees.

The Cebuano penchant for embracing their own still holds true these days. Lita, while originally from Luzon, is an adopted Cebuano who has endeared not only herself, but her homegrown restaurant as well, to the countless people who have visited any of their branches. She considers *buwad* (dried fish) and eggs as comfort food when she's at home, contrary to the assumption that every meal at the Urbina household is a fiesta! Someday, she hopes to publish a cookbook of her well-loved classic recipes for others to try out in their own kitchens.

While food sits at the center of their operations, the strong bond they share among themselves is what truly keeps the family and business together. Starting with Lita Urbina, the family continues to uphold the standards and traditions set by their loving matriarch whose culinary passion is legendary. This legacy is carried on by the second and third generation of Urbinas and will surely move down the line to those who follow. **E**

Café Laguna will celebrate its 31st anniversary on September 28.



LAGUNA GROUP



CAFÉ LAGUNA

Ayala Center Cebu
0917 590 3662

Laguna Garden Cafe
0917 120 5586

SM City Cebu
0922 547 1470

SM Seaside City Cebu
0968 635 0801

Mactan Cebu Int'l Airport T1
0998 841 3462

CafeLagunaPH



LAGUNA
CATERING
Flavors of the world

Main Office:
Laguna Culinary Center
0919 068 8812
0906 501 6070
(032) 231 3553

catering @lagunagroup.ph

LagunaCateringPH
 LagunaCatering



PARILYA

Il Corso, City de Mare,
Cebu City SRP
(032) 232 3418
0919 068 8815

ParilyaPH



LEMON GRASS
VIETNAM THAILAND

Ayala Center Cebu
0977 843 8994

SM Seaside City Cebu
0942 956 9844

LemonGrassThaiVietnamese
 LemonGrassPhilippines



ULLIS
STREETS OF ASIA

Level 1, South Entrance,
Ayala Center Cebu
(032) 234 2033
0908 891 2034

UllisStreetsofAsia

MEET YOU AT THE METRO

Visit the improved New Generation Store of Metro Supermarket in Ayala Center Cebu... Discover a more pleasurable grocery shopping experience with its well-designed aisles that are light and airy. Items are curated to fit even the most discriminating shoppers with products from Europe, the US, Australia and all over Asia.

Find out why more locals and visitors prefer to do their grocery, or souvenir food shopping at the Metro!

Make it your one stop shop for everything and anything that makes cooking, housekeeping or hosting a meal so much easier.



1

THE WINE AND LIQUOR SECTION

Check out the new location with an even bigger range of wine and liquor selection, all displayed in easy access racks.



2

THE PRODUCE SECTION

Boasting a fresh make-over, the produce section is arranged by fruits and vegetables with several refrigerated shelves containing perishables like tofu, imported mushrooms, seasonal herbs and more.



3

THE IMPORTED SECTION

With so much more shelves dedicated to imported items, a wide selection of international favorites and hard to find products can easily turn you into a gourmet chef. Finding your preferred Korean Shin Ramyun noodles in this part of the grocery is totally easy-breezy.



4

ROASTER CHEF

The all-time family favorite roasted chicken stall with an attractive canopy has also found a brand new spot inside the supermarket. Busy moms can save time preparing meals and have ready-to-serve chicken on the table in no time.



5

PET ZONE

Located at the basement level, a new one-stop section dedicated to your lovable pets is stocked with a huge variety of local and imported pet essentials, grooming items and cute accessories. Shopping for your fur babies' needs is more fun with elevated visuals: lighted logo, colorful category headers, end-cap designs and images with column and highlight developments.





LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

Seda Hotels is the multi-property brand of the Ayala Group of Companies. One of its newer hotels, Seda Central Bloc Hotel in Cebu's IT Park district, opened in 2020 with 214 room including units with 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms.

by **EMCEE GO**

CEBU IT PARK IS THE latest business district in the city, the other two being the nearby Cebu Business Park and the old downtown filled with universities and the sprawling Carbon market and Cebu City Hall. Cebu IT Park is anchored by the new mall, Central Bloc, with Seda Central Bloc Hotel occupying the upper levels starting at the 5th floor where the hotel's main lobby and public rooms are located.

Seda is the hotel arm of the large Ayala Group whose properties are almost all located in the busiest commercial areas of major cities such as BGC and Makati, Cebu Business Park and IT Park, Davao Business Center as well as a resort in Lio, El Nido, Palawan. A wholly-Filipino owned and managed brand, Seda's design is modern minimalist with interior accents by Filipino artists and artisans.

The second Seda hotel in Cebu City, the first one being Seda Ayala Center Cebu Hotel, Seda Central

Bloc's grand opening in March 2020 coincided with the global pandemic announcement, and with it, everything stopped. It did afford management time to polish its product, and by the time quarantine was implemented for travelers entering the country, Seda

newly-built hotel, Seda Central Bloc was constructed with modern equipment that enabled them to run operations without interruption. When bunker oil got scarce, they were able to source out directly from oil depots. Water sourcing was also critical, and again, the Ayala Group lent

*** SEDA CENTAL BLOC IS FAST BECOMING THE HEART OF THE CEBU IT PARK COMMUNITY BECAUSE OF ITS FRIENDLY FACILITIES LIKE MEETING ROOMS AND HIGH SPEED WIFI, AS WELL AS THEIR POPULAR EXECUTIVE LUNCH.**

IT Park was well positioned to accept guests under the strict health guidelines implemented by the government.

December 16, 2021 brought an extra challenge when typhoon Odette left a devastating effect in Cebu. But belonging to the broad-based Ayala conglomerate, the two Seda hotels in Cebu fared way better than others. As a

its support by flying in experts to fill the gaps. The day after Odette hit, throngs of local residents were trying to book rooms at the two Seda hotels in the city. Their lobbies became a refuge with full-blasting air conditioning and wifi accessibility while outside, streets were littered with broken trees and fallen debris from construction sites.



Misto Restaurant



Straight Up Bar



Rooftop Pool

Seda Central Bloc is a 17-storey property that offers a unique combination of hotel rooms for short stays and serviced residences with home-like conveniences like a fully-equipped kitchenette and washer/dryer for long-staying guests. It is strategically located in the heart of Cebu IT Park with direct access to Ayala Malls Central Bloc and is walking distance to a lot of retail and dining options.

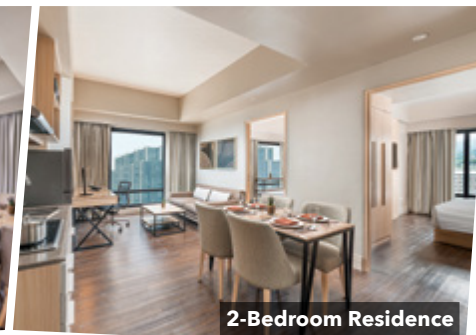
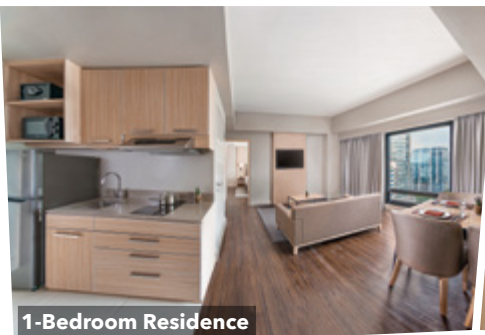
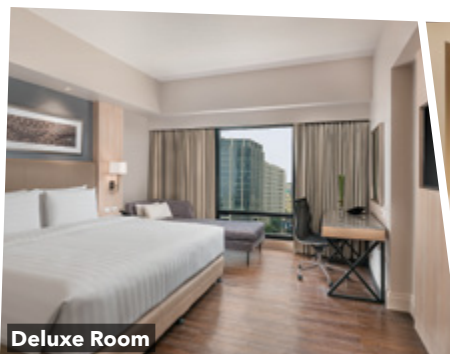
The hotel's main restaurant, Misto, boasts an open kitchen concept highlighted by an authentic Italian oven that can perfectly bake pizzas and bread in minutes. Buffet breakfast is offered from 6:00 am, with the restaurant open for dining until 10:00 pm. During weekdays an Executive Lunch at P699 net per set is good value, while dinner is a la carte. This all-day dining outlet serves crispy Lechon de Cebu and a medley of international and local dishes. Misto's strong WiFi connection is also a favorite for those who want to work, and its Coffee-nectivity package with unlimited coffee or tea and a platter of pastries and sweets is available from Monday to Friday, 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm for Php 599 net per person.

Straight Up is the hotel's rooftop bar on the 17th floor. It offers a spectacular view of the skyline and the city's vibrant business center. It caters to an active after-work crowd as well as locals and tourists who just want to enjoy the scene with cocktails and pica-pica.



For events, Seda Central Bloc has a total of 7 banquet halls and meeting rooms for a variety of functions. It can accommodate a small meeting for five people to a social gathering of 120 guests. Sinamay is the biggest banquet hall, which can also be divided into 2 separate rooms for a smaller crowd. Jusi, Hablon, Tinalak, and Pina are the medium-sized rooms perfect for conferences or meetings of up to 28 people. For more private meetings, there are 2 boardrooms available that can hold up to 6 people. Thrina De la Calzada, the hotel's Director of Sales further adds, "All our meeting rooms are equipped with modern facilities such as LCD projectors, drop-down white screens, basic sound systems, and microphones. Most importantly, our meeting rooms have access to high-speed internet access, which is essential for hybrid meetings that are very common nowadays."

GUESTROOMS & SERVICED RESIDENCES



DELUXE ROOMS

Ideal for mobile guests staying a night or two, it has a king bed or twins, with a multi-purpose desk and chaise lounge that offers added comfort.

STUDIO RESIDENCES

Solo travellers will appreciate this fully-equipped residence with a kitchenette and multi-functional round table.

1-BEDROOM RESIDENCES

Long-staying guests love its space and home-style layout that features a separate master bedroom, living room, and dining area for four, as well as a kitchenette and a washer/dryer.

2-BEDROOM RESIDENCES

Versatile and convenient -- this residence is perfect for a family or group of 4, or a couple needing an extra room.

3-BEDROOM RESIDENCES

The hotel's top-of-the-line residence can accommodate 6 persons with 2 additional bedrooms and a bigger living room, dining area and kitchenette.

In-room Amenities: Media panel and/or HDMI, USB and audio-visual connectivity; LED HDTV with cable channels; IDD phone; WiFi connectivity; mini-bar; coffee and tea making facility; safety deposit box

Residence Features: Tableware, refrigerator, kitchen equipment, cookware, utensils

Q&A WITH RON MANALANG

Eight months after typhoon Odette, we caught up with Ron Manalang, Seda Central Bloc's hotel manager, over coffee at the hotel's stylish coffee shop. A career hotelier with more than 20 years experience gained from working at the Mandarin Oriental in Manila, the Marriott in Atlanta, and the Seda brand's eponymous BGC hotel, Ron was well equipped to handle the double challenges of COVID and Odette.

What lesson and new things have you learned from the almost 2-year pandemic lockdown?

Ron: We have different means and methods of coping with difficult situations, but with proper motivation and guidance, our team is able to rise above any challenge. During the pandemic, we relied on technology and were constantly in touch through chat apps, which was important in resolving last-minute issues. Staying connected helped us manage the situation well. Of course, adherence to safety measures was extremely important and still is," he adds. "Preventive measures can save lives and avoid potential liability. Last, but not the least, versatility of products and service helped us offer solutions to clients whose needs changed due to the pandemic. Flexibility and innovation were key in broadening our offerings and tapping new markets."

Service is integral to your operations, especially since we have now google review and Tripadvisor that ranks in real time, how do you address a bad review?

Ron: Having been in the industry for quite some time makes me no stranger to negative reviews. Negative reviews



Ron Manalang, Seda Central Bloc's hotel manager



can happen even to the best of hotels. My formula is to **ACKNOWLEDGE**, **APOLOGIZE** and **MAKE IT RIGHT**. Acknowledge customer feedback. Let them know that you understand their dissatisfaction. Go through each of them and summarize the issues pointed out. Then apologize and make it right. Like any other customer service issue, there are a lot of ways to recover from a poor customer review.

If you have a chance to speak to our new DOT Secretary Christina Frasco, what suggestion can you give to improve our tourism sector?

Ron: Tourism as we all know, in all its forms, is a very important strategy for economic growth. Just like the hospitality industry, tourism is service based. It's important to develop a

supply chain of ecotourism attractions for visitors. Economy wise, this will diversify multiple sources of revenue. Second, ensure safety and security—tourists look for safe and secure locations. Third, provide a clean and healthy environment. Cleanliness is important to every tourist especially if they are visiting foreign destinations. Fourth, do marketing that is web related and makes an impact in promoting key and attractive locations. Lastly, have medical facilities like hospitals and clinics, first aid and emergency stations in all key tourist locations.

What can we expect from Seda in the next 12 months?

Ron: Seda Central Bloc will be the best place to call “home” for visitors in the city. We will see more movements in

international and domestic travel, and give us a chance to fully showcase our hotel as the perfect choice for business and leisure stays.

For dining, we are excited about the new showkitchen in our Misto restaurant. This will see an expansion of its culinary offerings and enhance our guests' dining experience. We are also coming up with new promotions and entertainment for our rooftop bar, Straight Up, which has become a popular nighttime hang-out, not just for the IT Park crowd but many others from beyond the vicinity. Our Christmas offers will be announced soon, including special menus, holiday room and party packages, gift baskets and of course, our New Year countdown at Straight Up.

What is a typical working day for you?

Ron: No two days are alike because I encounter and learn something new every day. I start with a walk-through to ensure that the premises are in tiptop shape, where guests feel at ease, safe, and comfortable. I also drop by the offices to have a brief chat with the employees, then have a meeting with the department heads for updates and discuss any concerns. It's important for me that the team is engaged and motivated and that they feel their role is important to the success of the business. The day won't be complete without talking to guests to get feedback, first-hand. But I also attend to administrative tasks and of course, spend time going over key analytics and performance data.

What do you and your family do during weekends and holidays?

Ron: We like going to the mall and when we have time, go out of town. **E**

THE bai DINING EXPERIENCE



WITH OVER 600 rooms and eight dining outlets, bai Hotel Cebu has plenty to offer Cebu's locals and tourists that make it a formidable force in the growing hotel scene. It's restaurants—with the unique dining experiences they provide — have created a buzz in the city and won't be stopping anytime soon.

Whether you're in the mood for a buffet spread or fine dining, or perhaps cocktails at the rooftop with stunning city views—these gastronomic delights of bai Hotel Cebu has got you covered.

For more information and table reservations, you can contact bai Hotel Cebu (032) 888 2500 or email them at info@baihotel.com.ph

CAFÉ bai

A gastronomic feast awaits at CAFÉ bai. Get ready to dine with delectable dishes that will surely satisfy your buffet cravings.

Featuring more than 20 live-cooking stations of globally-inspired cuisines, guests can dine on a variety of fresh seafood, as well as specialty carvings of roast beef, lechon belly and other meats. Try the homemade gelato for dessert.

If food is your aim, then CAFÉ bai is indeed on top of the game. Prepare your appetites and bellies because another indulgent adventure seeks the eat-venturers.



Marble+Grain Steakhouse

Known for serving the finest custom-aged USDA prime beef and other meats, Marble+Grain Steakhouse aims to satisfy your carnivorous cravings. With its elegant decor and striking interiors such as comfy individual and double couches, the steakhouse exudes a luxurious ambiance perfect for date nights, extraordinary celebrations or days when steaks sound just about right. It also has a wine cellar with an extensive collection.

Only using the finest ingredients, from appetizers to mains, this steakhouse gives you delicious and bold flavors that will surely deliver a

taste of indulgence to your palate. Each dish is delicately prepared by their chefs that show their skills, expertise, and talents. The service is top-notch, as their staff ensures everything is suited to your liking. It's no wonder why this restaurant has been awarded three (3) badges from Restaurant Guru namely Recommended, Best Service, and Best Romantic Restaurant for the year 2022.



Ume Japanese Cuisine

With its umami-rich character and distinct emphasis on quality and flavor, there's no doubt that Japanese food is one of the comfort foods of many, and Ume Japanese Cuisine is indeed a favorite.

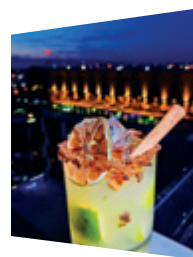
Each savory mouthful makes you want to dive into more of its tasty dishes especially their signature and best-selling roll the Nature's Spring Roll—a shrimp tempura roll with crab stick sauce and yes, cheese. The servings are generous, so make sure to bring in a friend or two when you dine at Ume Japanese Cuisine. Quality ingredients, expert craftsmanship, and respect for savory sensibilities make for a truly superior Japanese experience, plus their resident Japanese chef makes the visit worth it.



Twilight Roofdeck Lounge+Bar

Whether you enjoy the company of others or are in the mood to be alone, there's no denying that after a long, hard week, we all need a moment to relax, unwind and chill—and what better place to hit up a few drinks, listen to good music and enjoy an amazing view to wash the week's worries away than at bai Hotel Cebu's Twilight Roofdeck Lounge+Bar.

Located at bai Hotel Cebu's 23rd floor, Twilight's atmosphere is a breath of fresh air despite being located high above the hustle and bustle of the city of Mandaue. Be in awe of the gorgeous sunset that brings out colorful hues as the day winds down and watch the city lights come to play as if demanding to be noticed. And what comes best with great views? Good food and drinks. From panoramic views to good music, delicious dishes and unique cocktails and drinks, bai Hotel Cebu's indeed has everything you need for that quick respite after a long day. **E**





CEBU BASICS: the Urban Cities

Still mapping out where-to-go-next on your Cebu trip?
Get a low-down on what each zipcode has to offer.

by KARA MAE M. NOVEDA

HALF OF THE EASE OF travel comes from knowing the territory you're about to explore. Half of the fun begins also from not knowing fully what you're getting yourself into.

A first trip to any place is equal parts exciting and unnerving. Leave it to the internet to suck out the marrow of mystery as dotcom searches can make anyone an overnight destination expert. Much has been said about Cebu. Rather than go blindly with the top searches it's good to discover the province by your own interests and at your own pace. Whether visiting for a few days or longer, the journey starts with one

crucial step: choosing the right place to crash in the right zip code.

6015: LAPU-LAPU CITY

Fresh off the plane, Lapu-Lapu is the city that ushers you into Cebu, and its landmark Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA) is sure to make a fine first impression. The airport terminal is a sight for the travel-weary who will find it hard not to pause for a moment, stare, and promptly whip out their phones to capture the clever woodwork of its wave-like roofing. Just a year after its inauguration in 2018, MCIA's new Terminal 2 won the "Completed Buildings-Transport Category" Award in the 2019 World Architecture Festival,

besting even the Singapore Jewel Changi Airport.

Mactan, site of the Cebu airport, is more than a land-and-leave dot on your itinerary. It makes a compelling start off point for a quick introduction to Cebu's beach scene. A short drive from the airport takes you to seaside resorts mainly clustered along the island's eastern coast in the areas of Punta Engaño and Maribago.

Beach accommodations suiting all visitors are widely available on Mactan from sprawling upscale resorts, mid-ranged family villas and island-style options. International hospitality brands in Punta Engaño include Dusit Thani Mactan Cebu Resort, Sheraton



Cebu Mactan Resort and Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort. Soon to join the neighborhood are Rockwell's Aruga Resort and Residences as well as the luxury boutique hotel, Abaca Resort Mactan.

Nearby lies Maribago, one of the earlier areas developed in Mactan. If you were raised in Cebu, chances are your weekends were spent at beach clubs here. Maribago, to this day, remains a favored base for its better-value resorts, a concentration of local and Asian (think Korean and Chinese cuisine) restaurants, and its easy access to island-hopping activities. Private and public wharves are not uncommon in Mactan with the Maribago Pump Boat Wharf as one of the busiest. Motorized bancas can be hired to ferry you to nearby islands for a full day of swimming. While out on one of these islets, savor the catch of the day cooked by local boatmen—a rustic seafood meal somehow made more satisfying when eaten with your hands.



Aside from offering tropical fun and the usual water activities, Mactan Island produces handcrafted guitars. What started as a backyard enterprise has grown into an established industry that has been carried on by generations of masterful artisans.

History buffs may be interested to know that the epic Battle of Mactan took place on this sandy shore in 1521. The spot is now marked with two monuments to its main protagonists, Ferdinand Magellan and the brave native chieftain, Lapulapu. Fearlessly fighting to resist Spanish colonization,

Lapulapu is hailed as the first Filipino hero who led his men in the victorious encounter that brutally ended the life of the foreign invader. The Magellan Shrine is a stone memorial dedicated to the Portuguese explorer. Honoring the legendary local warrior is a 20-meter high bronze statue and the town which bears his name.

Located also in Lapu-Lapu City the Mactan Export Processing Zone (MEPZ) is a registered special industrial zone housing multinational manufacturing firms that have contributed significantly to the city's economy since it opened in the 1980s while creating jobs for thousands of the local population. Not far across it is Cebu Yacht Club which offers sailing tours and yacht charters. Take a sunset cruise along the Mactan Channel or try the open-air restaurants along the dining strip to fully enjoy the cool sea breeze.

With the steady upswing of (pre-pandemic) passenger traffic to Cebu, it was only a matter of time for development to go Cordova-bound. Separated from Mactan Island by a narrow stream, the small municipality of Cordova can now hold its own with at least a dozen hotels including the 13-hectare Solea Mactan Resort. The recently inaugurated Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway (CCLEX), also the longest bridge in the country, is expected to hugely improve connectivity and further economic opportunities by reducing travel time between Mactan and the Cebu mainland. Motorists are eagerly awaiting the planned extension of the expressway to connect directly to the airport.

OPPOSITE PAGE An aerial view of Cebu City.
THIS PAGE FROM LEFT Entry to Mactan Island via the Marcelo Fernan Bridge; the imposing 20-meter high bronze statue of Lapulapu at the Mactan Shrine in Punta Engaño.



6014: MANDAUE CITY

Tourists usually just drive through this city across the bridge from Mactan. Much has changed since and the city has become the get-off point for your Cebu holiday. The highly urbanized patch of Mandaue, also known as the industrial hub of the province, is where you'll find bus and van terminals that bustle with day trippers setting out on their adventures. The city actively moves forward with property developments, shopping malls, and a mix of restaurants and hotels. As if to make up for its lack of direct beach access, the city boasts of three waterparks: Cebu Westown Lagoon, Skywaterpark Cebu on the rooftop of J Centre Mall, and the three-hectare complex of WaterWorld Cebu, the biggest in the region.

The long stretch of A.S. Fortuna Street connecting Mandaue and Banilad in Cebu City is the perfect setting for a food and pub crawl. Peppered along its almost 3-kilometer length are varied mom-and-pop restaurants that stay open way past standard mall hours. More than a handful of two-to-three-star hotels can be found on the same street for you to settle in after a full day. But if more cushy



THIS PAGE FROM LEFT The Mandaue City Hall; bai Hotel Cebu's Cafe bai.

selections are to your taste, traverse to Ouano Avenue where the 600-plus room Bai Hotel is hard to miss. Being built on the North Reclamation Area of Mandaue City is the expansive Mandani Bay, a waterfront township development facing the Mactan Channel that will be adding premium residential, office, retail and dining spaces to the community.

6000: CEBU CITY

Of the three key cities, Cebu City needs the least introduction because of its storied beginnings. The first Spanish settlement in the Philippines was established here making it the oldest city in the country. Historically significant landmarks around the downtown area are well preserved with its religious sites usually flocked by devout locals and out-of-towners alike.

If a leisurely heritage walk is more your speed while wanting to be close enough to the touristy sites, you'll

likely luck out and find comfortable lodging in what's known as the uptown district. Particularly on Gen. Maxilom Avenue, Fuente Osmeña, the gentrified Escario Street and the Capitol area are where several affordable hostels and boutique hotels are located.

The city has seen a heavy facelift in recent years with relentless developments transforming the skyline mainly at Cebu IT Park and the Cebu Business Park, the central business district (CBD). Combining commercial, banking, residential and leisure facilities, the business park is readily accessed from major points in the city. At its heart sits the Ayala Center, a shopping and lifestyle destination that features an extensive selection of retail establishments and dining outlets at The Terraces.

Business and leisure travelers will find a host of suitable accommodations within and around the vicinity of the CBD. Connected by a

walkway, the conveniently located hotel, Seda Ayala Center Cebu is literally steps from the shopping mall. Construction will soon be underway inside the park complex for Sofitel Cebu City, another addition to the existing international hotel chains already operating nearby, namely Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, Radisson Blu Cebu and the just-opened Holiday Inn Cebu City.

About 1.5 kilometers away, a special economic zone called Cebu IT Park has grown into a vibrant hub not only for IT-related enterprises but also mixed-used developments. With a high concentration of BPO companies and a workforce of several thousands, lining both sides of its streets are sleek and modern office towers and high-rise residential condominiums. It's hard to beat the attractiveness of an IT Park location, making it one of the most preferred addresses in the city. Integrated into the high-energy community are an abundance of restaurants, coffee shops with free wifi and the shopping center, Ayala Malls Central Bloc. Just adjacent to the mall is Seda Central Bloc Cebu, the second hotel under this brand in the city. Covering some 27 hectares, one side of the park faces the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino along Salinas Drive

where a few more hotels in the Lahug district are found. It may do well to check out Airbnb listings, too, if you want to be close to the favorite spots you want to hang out in town.

There's no shortage of options, only a shortage of vacation time when you're in Cebu. **E**

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Street and building lights illuminate this aerial view of Fuente Osmeña Circle in Cebu City at night; an artist's rendering of the Cebu tri-cities map; Radisson Blu Cebu's Feria Restaurant; enjoying a cocktail drink at Seda Ayala Center Cebu's exclusive Club Lounge.



CHECK IN AT GOLDEN PRINCE HOTEL & SUITES for a taste of truly unique Cebuano hospitality. A 45-minute drive from the Mactan-Cebu International Airport and 30 minutes from the Port of Cebu, the conveniently located Golden Prince Hotel is a walk away from the business hub of Cebu Business Park and the premier shopping mall, Ayala Center. Offering modern comforts, style and value, its facilities include meeting and conference rooms, Le'Mon restaurant for all-day dining, the Hercules Gym and Fitness, and a business center.



48 HOURS IN CEBU

Spending a brief weekend in Cebu may not be enough time to experience everything the Queen City of the South has to offer. But here are some budget-friendly ideas to uncover the historic and new hotspots, diverse food scene and maximize your 48-hour adventure.

by RAINE BALJAK



START YOUR ADVENTURE BY WALKING DOWN THE STREET TO THE ANTHILL FABRIC GALLERY

and discover how Filipino weaving traditions are kept alive today. The social and cultural enterprise supports their partner weaving communities across the Philippines by providing sustainable livelihood and market access for their beautiful products. Anthill stands for Alternative Nest and Trading/Training Hub for Indigenous/Ingenious Little Livelihood Seekers, whose mission is to preserve and promote the Philippines' weaving industry. Tour the gallery to learn some of the rich stories behind Anthill's weavers such as the Daraghuyan Bukidnon Community who perform a thanksgiving ritual before any part of their hand-weaving process starts. Anthill is located at Pedro Calomarde Street corner Acacia Street, Gorordo Avenue and is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 6pm.

IF YOU'RE ON A HUNT FOR SOMETHING FAR REMOVED FROM LECHON, CHECK OUT SHAWARMA GOURMET CEBU.

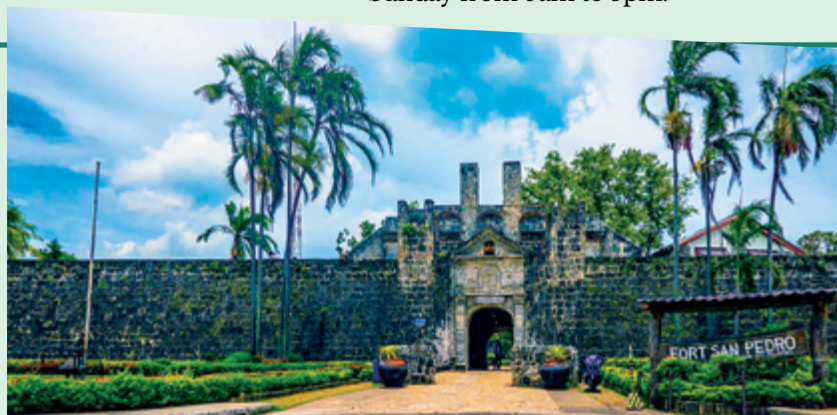
Serving authentic Lebanese and Mediterranean comfort food, this casual dining restaurant has an extensive menu with staples like hummus, the eggplant-based baba ganoush, tabbouleh and falafel to name a few. Be sure to order their signature beef or chicken shawarma or try the kebabs. Vegans and vegetarians will be happy to choose from a selection of plants-based dishes with halal foods also available. House blend iced teas and fresh smoothies, with dairy-free versions, are your go-to thirst quenchers on hot and humid days. Shawarma Gourmet Cebu is at Escario Central Mall and opens daily from 10am to 12 midnight for dine-in, take-out and delivery.



ENRICH YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF CEBU'S PAST THROUGH A GUIDED TOUR OF THE CENTURY-OLD CASA GORORDO MUSEUM.

Built in the 1850s, Casa Gorordo is the former residence of the first Filipino bishop of Cebu, Juan Gorordo and family in the Parian district where many of the city's prominent Chinese traders settled then. A classic reflection of a Spanish dwelling of a bygone era, the balay na tisa (house with tiled roof) stands as a silent witness to the history of Cebu. Acquired in 1979 by the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (RAFI), Casa Gorordo was restored, enhanced and later opened as a museum in 1983, showcasing elaborate antique furniture and family memorabilia. The house museum was declared a "National Historical Landmark" by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines in 1991. Casa Gorordo is open Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 5pm.

DON'T MISS OUT ON A CHANCE TO VISIT THE NEARBY FORT SAN PEDRO located in Plaza Independencia. Established in 1565 as the first Spanish military defense structure, the oldest and smallest fortress in the country was originally made of wood and was later replaced with stone in the 17th century. The triangular fort, whose two sides face the sea and one fronting land, now houses a museum with well-preserved Spanish artifacts and documents.



ENJOY THE DRIVE FROM OLD CEBU TO THE NEW BY ENDING THE DAY AT BRIGOLS RESTO, home to the country's spiciest sisig. Located across Cebu Doctors' University in Mandaue, the restaurant was established over the pandemic by Joshua Brigoli, a physical therapy student who moved to Cebu from San Francisco. After many friends complained that "spicy" in Cebu was just not spicy enough, he opened a restaurant serving the Hella Halang Sisig which has the hottest peppers known to

mankind - Carolina Reapers and Ghost Peppers. Be sure to sign the digital waiver before biting into the challenge. If you manage to finish the dish, you'll have a story worth sharing with your friends or family. For those not up for the spice, there's a variety of silog dishes or have a "munchie" with their Spam Musubi. Operating hours are Monday to Saturday from 10am to 9pm.



ESCAPE THE CITY ON YOUR SECOND DAY AND UNWIND AT THE TRANQUIL HEIGHTS OF SOUL SIERRA. In the highlands of Babag 1, this refreshing oasis will leave you renewed amidst its lush greenery, unique natural landscape and a pond alive with koi. Discover holistic wellness with Kymberly Muego, who offers private reiki, crystal and sound healing sessions,

cacao ceremonies and tarot readings. This feel-good space also holds yoga classes, retreats, sacred circles, and other healing workshops for the mind, body and spirit. Dine at The Garden for a delicious range of nourishing meals, creative vegan options and healthy drinks. Start your journey to self-love and #discoverwellness at Soul Sierra, open Tuesday to Sunday from 9am to 10pm.

BEFORE HEADING BACK TO THE CITY, VISIT SERENITY MOUNTAIN CAFÉ for a panoramic view of Busay's spectacular landscape. The fresh mountain air, cool breeze and remarkable vistas provide the best atmosphere to enjoy a cup of freshly brewed coffee. Walk next door to the newly renovated Liel's Kitchen that serves up modern Japanese cuisine. It has easy access from their ample parking area.

Both restaurants are part of the Serenity Farm and Resort complex in Barangay Malubog, Busay which has public and private guest rooms and entire houses for rent which can accommodate up to 35 people for day-use, overnight group stays and catered events. If time permits, venture further to other popular mountainview sites like Terrazas de Flores, Temple of Leah, Tops, Top of Cebu, and Mountain View Nature's Park.





A RECOMMENDED PLACE TO END THE DAY IS AT ARANO'S SPANISH RESTAURANT to appreciate authentic Spanish cuisine. One of Cebu's first Spanish restaurants, the unpretentious home turned cozy indoor-outdoor diner offers home-style cooking from paella Valenciana or negra, to gambas al ajillo, lengua and chorizo suelto. Old photographs, antique pistols, Euskadi flags and other memorabilia displayed inside are an ode to the late Señor Angel Arano Ibarlucea. A proud Spanish-Basque expat who used to heartily welcome and entertain visitors and

family with a myriad of historias for over a quarter of a century is survived by his wife Señora Elizabeth Bernedo Ibarlucea — the master cusinera of all Aranos' dishes, as well as the property's horticulturist. Arano's Spanish Restaurant is located at 31 Fairlane Village, Guadalupe, Cebu City is open Monday to Saturday from 6pm to 10pm.

With much to see and do in such limited time, this quick guide hopefully leaves a lasting impression and inspires you to return and spend more days in Cebu. **E**



TRADITIONAL IZAKAYA
JAPANESE COMFORT FOOD
PRESENTED WITH MODERN BEAUTY




Operating Hours
11am-2pm | 5pm-9pm

Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City
0931.031.2624 | 0919.943.2676
[@ori.izakaya.ph](https://ori.izakaya.ph)

HIGHLAND ADVENTURES

Winding its way through Cebu's mountainous heartland, the 33-kilometer Transcentral Highway, or TCH, is not only an all-important artery connecting east and west of the island but also offers a jam-packed trek that any visitor will enjoy. With Cebu fully open for business, this bustling long stretch of road is worth a visit.

by RYAN DANIEL DABLO
photography PABLO QUIZA



STARTING POINT FOR THIS FUN road trip is usually the iconic Marco Polo Hotel perched on top of Nivel Hills and still the city's highest point hotel. The winding road passes through roadside stalls selling local produce and flowers. Traffic can be daunting specially on weekends when Cebuanos from all walks of life head up for a myriad of reasons — nature and fresh air, plants and vegetable shopping, or just for a leisurely drive on four or two wheels.

COFFEE BREAKS

Transcentral Highway is dotted with coffee shops which serve local brews, each boasting its own vista. First off is Gaslamp District, a popular stopover for cyclists and families who appreciate its safe and ample parking. Sitting on a mountainside, this wide open space has lots of food stalls and offers weekend music entertainment with live bands and DJs. Along the way, you can stop at Hapitanan Grill Restobar, Bayer's Café, 21 Kilometers Coffee or Adventure Café with its own zip line park. Most restaurants have their own open-air patio, perfect spots for observing the morning fog disperse over undulating views of hills and valleys. There are also humble stalls which bear no names for the budget-priced three-in-one mug. About an hour's drive out along the cliffs of Balamban is Charlie's Cup, a pet-friendly café that's named after a corgi. Terraced viewing decks and lots of canopy shade covers give it a fun, treehouse vibe.

BLOOMING FLOWERS

Right next door to Charlie's Cup is Lakeview Le Jardin with acres of tiered gardens. Its multi-level

bar and restaurant overlooks colorful blooms and botanical gardens that sprawl along ridges where you can catch a glimpse of Malubog Lake in the distance. Peeking through the trees are cottages and cliff-hugging viewing decks, a testament to the property's steady expansion down the mountainside.

For a nature-filled jaunt there's Buwakan ni Alejandra, another picturesque terraced garden bursting with vibrant colors. The backdrop of plants and flowers makes for quite the scenic location ideal for photoshoots or just plain sightseeing. Elevated

walkways and decorative archways overgrown with plants complete the picture.

A little off the main road is the charming Sirao Garden Little Amsterdam, so named for its flower-filled promenades and a windmill. Around this area are several smaller gardens to visit if you have time to wander.

GARDENS

Locals make regular jaunts to TCH to buy fruits like mangoes, bananas, coconuts and even strawberries at a certain time of year.

Vegetables and other produce are also abundant here — lettuce, cabbage, sweet corn and local herbs, ornamental plants and flowers. The highlands' elevated terrain and temperate climate are ideal for growing crops.

Gardens and Blooms by Jaime Chua is a favorite pick among the city's well-heeled residents. Jaime's landscaping talent can be seen in some exclusive resorts and also in homes in gated subdivisions. He is noted for his collection of orchids, both endemic to the area as well as from other Asian countries. He recently opened his garden as a venue for private events, and visitors can also book appointments to buy his prized phalaenopsis, *waling-walings* and variegated ferns.

 **TRANSCENTRAL HIGHWAY IS NOW A NOT-SO-SECRET DESTINATION FOR LOCALS AND VISITORS TO ESCAPE THE URBAN BUSTLE OF THE CITY. DRIVE BY AND STOP AT CHARMING COFFEE SHOPS OR BETTER YET SPEND A WEEKEND AT BED AND BREAKFAST VILLAS THAT HAVE RE-OPENED AFTER THE COVID LOCKDOWN.**

IG-WORTHY STOPS

Tops Lookout, the most well-known observation point in Cebu, started it all. It was the brainchild of the late former governor of Cebu, Lito Osmena, who owned several hectares of land in the area encompassing the lookout. He built a stone fortress-like deck in the 1980s where young people would escape until the wee hours of the morning, and was the quintessential hangout for a bottle of beer or two. These days, Tops still attracts young and old alike. Dotting its periphery are several restaurants one of which is La Vie in the Sky, a stylish lounge with European aesthetics created by a French gentleman, that serves wine and pizza. La Vie is a choice spot for sunrises and enchanting sunsets, as well as city-gazing at night with the stars above and a tapestry of city lights below.

In contrast with the natural theme of most of the Transcentral Highway attractions, the Temple of

Leah is a testimonial to human creativity. Throngs gather to marvel at the architecture of the stately edifice which is a shrine dedicated by the prominent Adarna family patriarch to his well-loved wife, Leah. Bronze sculptures, chandeliers, a tableau-filled pediment, a fountain, views of the city below, and haunting instrumental melodies create an other-worldly atmosphere inside the temple.

NATURE

There's no better place to commune with nature than at the highlands of Cebu City. It doesn't miss a beat when offering outdoor activities for visitors of all ages. Two hiking trails take you up there: the first mountaintop attraction is Sirao Peak which can be traversed through the relatively easy Busay Trail in less than an hour, or the Budlaan Trail in Talamban which takes three to five hours passing through the Budlaan Falls, and onwards to the top of Mount Kan-irag.





THIS SPREAD FROM TOP LEFT

A feast of local produce and street food of barbecue and puso at Gardens and Blooms by Jaime Chua; orchids available for purchase from Gardens and Blooms; one of the many roadside stalls selling fresh young coconuts; the sophisticated interiors of La Vie in the Sky; birds are frequent visitors at Sirao Garden; guests never pass up photo ops at the Temple of Leah; Tops Lookout is the perfect place to get an aerial view of Cebu; fresh herbs like rosemary and basil sold along the road; the terraced gardens of Lakeview Le Jardin; hearty breakfast served at Charlie's Cup.

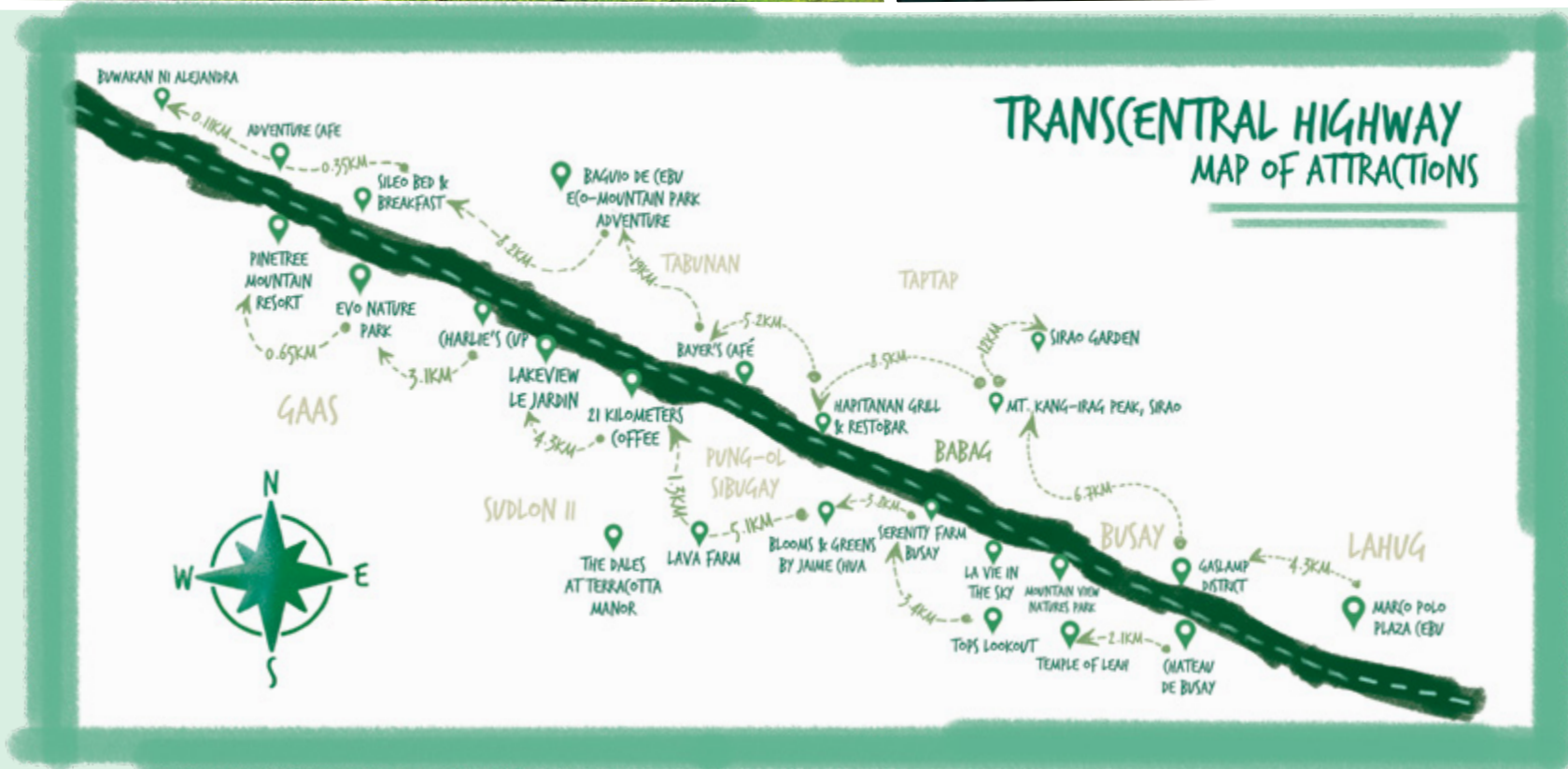




A guided hiking trek at the Mahiga Creek

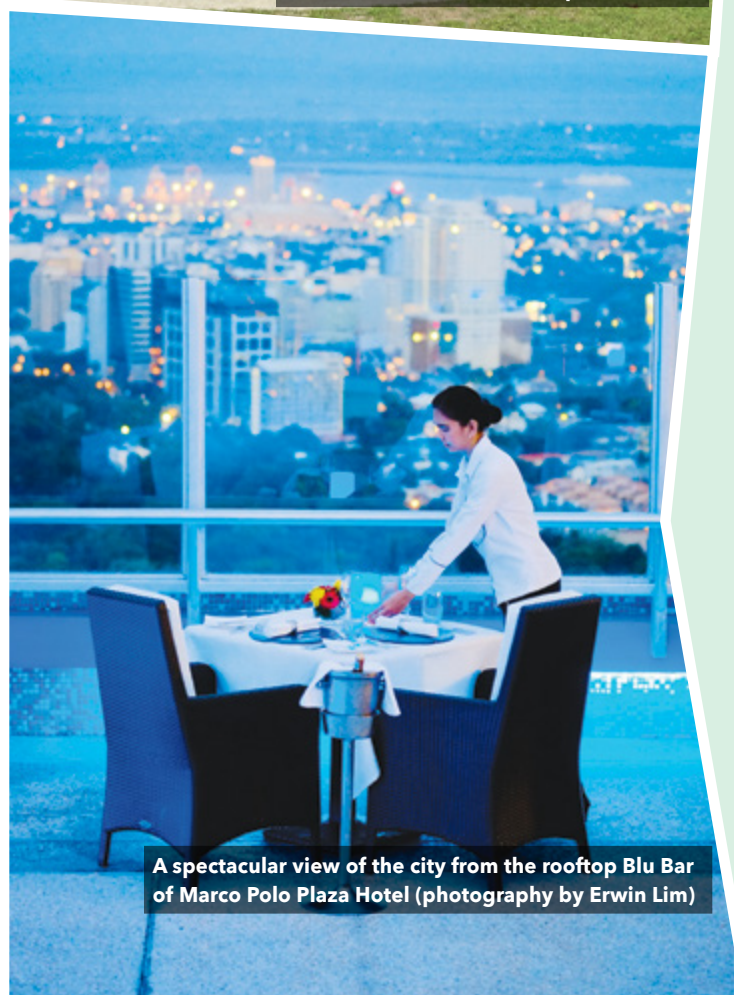


Discover tranquility and serenity at Soul Sierra





The scenic Chateau de Busay offers an extensive wine list and European cuisine.



A spectacular view of the city from the rooftop Blu Bar of Marco Polo Plaza Hotel (photography by Erwin Lim)

Adventure travellers can also camp at the peak for the ultimate sundown and sunrise experience.

The second and more advanced trail takes you to Mount Manunggal, where the hike is made challenging with its cliffs and narrow paths of limestones. This mountain is better known as the plane crash site of the country's most beloved president, Ramon Magsaysay, who perished in 1957. At 982 meters above sea level, it is one of the top 3 peaks on the island. At the end of the trail, Mount Manunggal Eco-Adventure offers more adventures like zip lines and donkey rides. Accessible through many routes, the trail from Tagba-o and Cantipla in Barangay Tabunan, are its two main tracks. Then there's the Chasing Waterfalls trail in Barangay Tagba-o passing through three falls: Liki, Mangasang and Pasong Falls which takes 5 to 7 hours from start to finish depending on how long you want to soak in the refreshing pools. It is highly advised to book these activities through local tour agencies accredited by the Department of Tourism such as Southwind Travels (look up their FB page).

The Transcentral Highway also has off-the-beaten-track trails accessible only through DOT-Accredited Cebu City Trail Guides

and Community Tour Guides Association: Jeffrey Jero (+63 995.844.2524), Kenneth Canada (+63 955.781.0862), William Radana (+63 998.207.1123), and Reymar Sano (+63 951.153.3014). The hikes can last from 3 to 5 hours.

For more sedate activities, there are several resort-like establishments with swimming pools and lookouts that offer respite from all the high energy of TCH, such as the Adlawon Vacation Farm, The Dales at Terracotta Manor, Sileo Bed and Breakfast, Pine Tree Mountain Resort, Mountain View Nature Park and Serenity Busay. Also found in the area are wellness sites offering a tranquil place for meditation and yoga sessions such as Soul Sierra and Lava Mountain River Farm.

WINDING DOWN

As you make your way back down, the airy openness of the Transcentral Highway recedes, admitting the rhythm of city life. If splurging is on your list, the impressive Chateau de Busay is a good stopover point. Their wine and cheese fondue makes a fine ending to a scenic road trip while you watch the twinkle of city lights at dusk. A nightcap at Marco Polo Hotel's rooftop Blu Bar and Grill is also in order, before calling it a day. **E**



BOHOL: THE ISLAND AHEAD

The Department of Tourism Region VII has been working tirelessly to boost the Philippines' economic growth through a re-birthing of the tourism industry after the two-year pandemic. If you are thinking about a 3-day itinerary with what to see, eat and experience outside of Cebu, there's no better place to start than getting in touch with the Bohol Provincial Tourism Office at boholtourismph@gmail.com or dot7@tourism.gov.ph to learn more about the Farm, Fork and Fitness Circuit, and the Outdoor Adventure Trails.

by RAINE BALJAK

THE NEIGHBORING island province of Bohol is a premier tourist destination for both local and international visitors, and a short ferry ride of about an hour and a half from the Cebu Port. Bohol is a big province, almost the same size as Cebu and has Tagbilaran City as its capital. The adjoining Panglao Island is known for its white sand beaches and diving sites. Travel further north and see the famous Chocolate Hills and nature reserves where you find its most famous residents — the diminutive tarsiers. But there are so many attractions to visit in Bohol and for this, DOT Central Visayas in collaboration with the local tourism has organized two

new programs: The Farm, Fork, and Fitness Circuit (FFFC), and secondly, The Outdoor Adventure Trail.

Here, we break down what visitors can expect from these two varied products.

THE FARM, FORK, AND FITNESS CIRCUIT

This tour covers several destinations. First on the list are the farm-to-fork visits which includes South Farms, Egay's Farm, Green Thumb, Vita Isola Leisure Farm, and the Bohol Bee Farm.

The fitness part is the Outdoor Adventure Trail - a sunset kayak tour to the Virgin Island sandbar in Panglao, trekking through the Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape in Bilar, and finally, stand up paddleboarding (SUP), motorboat riding and mountain biking in Loboc with SUP Tours Philippines.

SOUTH FARM

The 9-hectare property located in Panglao practices organic farming, promotes rural and handmade products



THIS PAGE Handcrafted goods and healthful farm-to-table dishes highlight the Farm, Fork, & Fitness experience.

and is committed to sustainability through its nature-based attractions and farm-to-table dishes. The property has three villages: the farmer's village, the fisherman's village, and the artisan's village. Visiting families will have fun at the farmer's village where children can encounter farm animals and have a chance to feed and pet guinea pigs or chase after rabbits, or ride around the premises on a carabao, pony or kalesa. The village has a full range of vegetation and livestock as well. The fisherman's village with ducks waddling by the pond, gives visitors the opportunity to fish for tilapia; while the artisan's village has a basket and rafia weaving area, clay making, pandayan and a coco shed. Dine in while you're at South Farms and try their native chicken, grilled tilapia and bangus, chicken halang-halang, ube turon or farm fresh juices.

EGAY'S FARM

Located in Dauis, the farm offers TESDA-accredited programs and day

workshops for aspiring farmers to learn about organic agriculture production, chicken or hog raising. TESDA is the government agency that supervises and manages technical education and skills development in the country.

Their integrated farm has livestock and grows organic fruits and vegetables that you can eat on site at their restaurant, or take home. An interesting herbal drink worth trying is made with blue ternate, or butterfly pea flower - known as an antioxidant which can improve eyesight and memory; or the refreshing rosella fruit juice which contains anti-cancer properties.

Munch on camote fries or have some pancit made with their farm-fresh carrots, green beans and pork. Other dishes offered on their menu include the savory goat caldereta which is a tomato-based stew, grilled pork belly, pork *humba*, native chicken, grilled tilapia and bangus, and other farm-to-table specialties.

GREEN THUMB FARM AND ALFRESCO RESTAURANT

Tucked in a quiet area of Sambog, Corella the Green Thumb Farm specializes in growing their own pink and white oyster mushrooms. Offering a variety of vegetarian and vegan-friendly dishes in their al fresco restaurant, they have creatively integrated freshly harvested mushrooms as the main ingredient. Try mushroom carbonara, mushroom *bulaklak*, mushroom *humba*, mushroom pizza, mushroom *siomai* and their specialty, mushroom *sisig*. They even have mushrooms in milk chocolate to take



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM MID LEFT Pasalubong treats from Green Thumb Farm; Kayaking at sunset with Kayak Asia; handicrafts making at the Bohol Bee Farm.

home as a unique pasalubong! Aside from being tasty, mushrooms have loads of health benefits and are highly nutritious, packed with vitamins, antioxidants and protein and better still, are low in calories.

VITA ISOLA LEISURE FARM

This coastal resort located in Loon with a Filipino-Spanish influence in its overall design is a relaxing sanctuary that allows you to wind down and enjoy the sea breeze and island life. The farm resort offers an overnight experience good for 4 people at their 2-bedroom La Casita, “the little house.” Otherwise, visit for the day and take a cool dip in their pool or dive into the sea. Prior to the pandemic

they offered stand up paddleboarding and aquaculture activities. For now, their restaurant is open for à la carte dining, buffet lunch and merienda. Try the deliciously addicting turon drizzled with tablea for that savory, sweet and salty flavor combination in each crunchy bite, and pair it off with some ice cream.

BOHOL BEE FARM

Their pioneering farm-to-table concept was started by garden hobbyist Vicky Wallace more than twenty years ago when she started selling herbs and veggies to the parents of her daughter’s classmates. This sparked the eventual opening of this popular eco-tourist

destination called the Bohol Bee Farm. Since its humble beginnings, the Bohol Bee Farm has been known for its beekeeping and organic farm. Its restaurant promotes healthy eating with deliciously prepared meals using natural ingredients and vegetables plucked fresh from their gardens. They also serve hearty main courses of spare ribs, honey-glazed chicken, baked tilapia, seafood soups and freshly-baked bread served with their honey-butter spread and homemade pesto.

The Bohol Bee Farm expanded into making bread spreads and home-made products to take home or gift to a friend; and it has now grown enormously with the addition of a hotel offering stand up paddleboard and kayak activities, and more recently, a relaxing spa. Whether your visit is to dine or stay for the weekend, a scoop of their homemade ice cream served in “cabcab” is a must-try!

THE OUTDOOR ADVENTURE TRAIL

For the fitness enthusiasts, the Outdoor Adventure Trail is a sunset kayak tour to the pristine Virgin Island sandbar in Panglao, trekking through the Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape in Bilar, and finally, stand up paddleboarding (SUP), motorboat riding and mountain biking in Loboc with SUP Tours Philippines.

Join @Kayakasia.ph for an unforgettable adventure across one or some of the 75 islands and islets of Bohol. Kayakasia’s mangrove tunnel tour and firefly kayaking trail at the Abatan river is a guided night kayaking adventure around Panglao or Mabini town to Anda town. One particular excursion that we recommend is the

4km kayak tour from the St. Augustine Church in Panglao to the appearing and disappearing oasis of the Virgin Island, a serene sunset sight worth the journey when you arrive at the untouched sandbar that stretches to the middle of the sea. This easy-going kayak tour is fit for even non-athletic individuals, taking only 1.5 hours of your time. Just be sure to leave the Virgin Island before 6pm so that you are not stranded at sea.

SUP Tours Philippines offers a range of activities such as stand up paddleboarding (SUP), motorboat riding and mountain biking in Loboc. For those who prefer a calm and relaxing view of the Loboc river, then we recommend the motorboat riding experience. While for the more adventurous, mountain biking in Loboc will definitely keep you at the edge of your seat as you weave through traffic and scale up the mountains for lush green sights overlooking Bohol. Otherwise, you can always cool down through a soothing stand up paddleboard ride down the Loboc river. When you are done, dry off at the Fox & the Firefly Cottages for a sunset dinner of seasonal dishes prepared with the freshest local ingredients and catch the fireflies through a romantic river ride.

Immerse yourself in Bohol's nature and wildlife at the Rajah Sikatuna Protected Landscape where they offer daytime treks for bird watching or night safari treks with tarsiers. Caving options are available for the adventuresome, but beware of spiders and scorpions! You want to spend some time with the wild long-tailed macaques that are unique to the Philippines and have made the park their home. Pack a fresh banana or ask your guide for unflavored peanuts so

that you can have a bit of fun with these mischievous but friendly monkeys. **E**

For more Bohol information, please check: www.philippines.travel/destinations/bohol

THIS PAGE FROM TOP Tasty turon with tablea, served with ice cream; a photo op with the monkeys at Rajah Sikatuna Protective Landscape; mountain biking and stand up paddleboarding with SUP Tours Philippines.





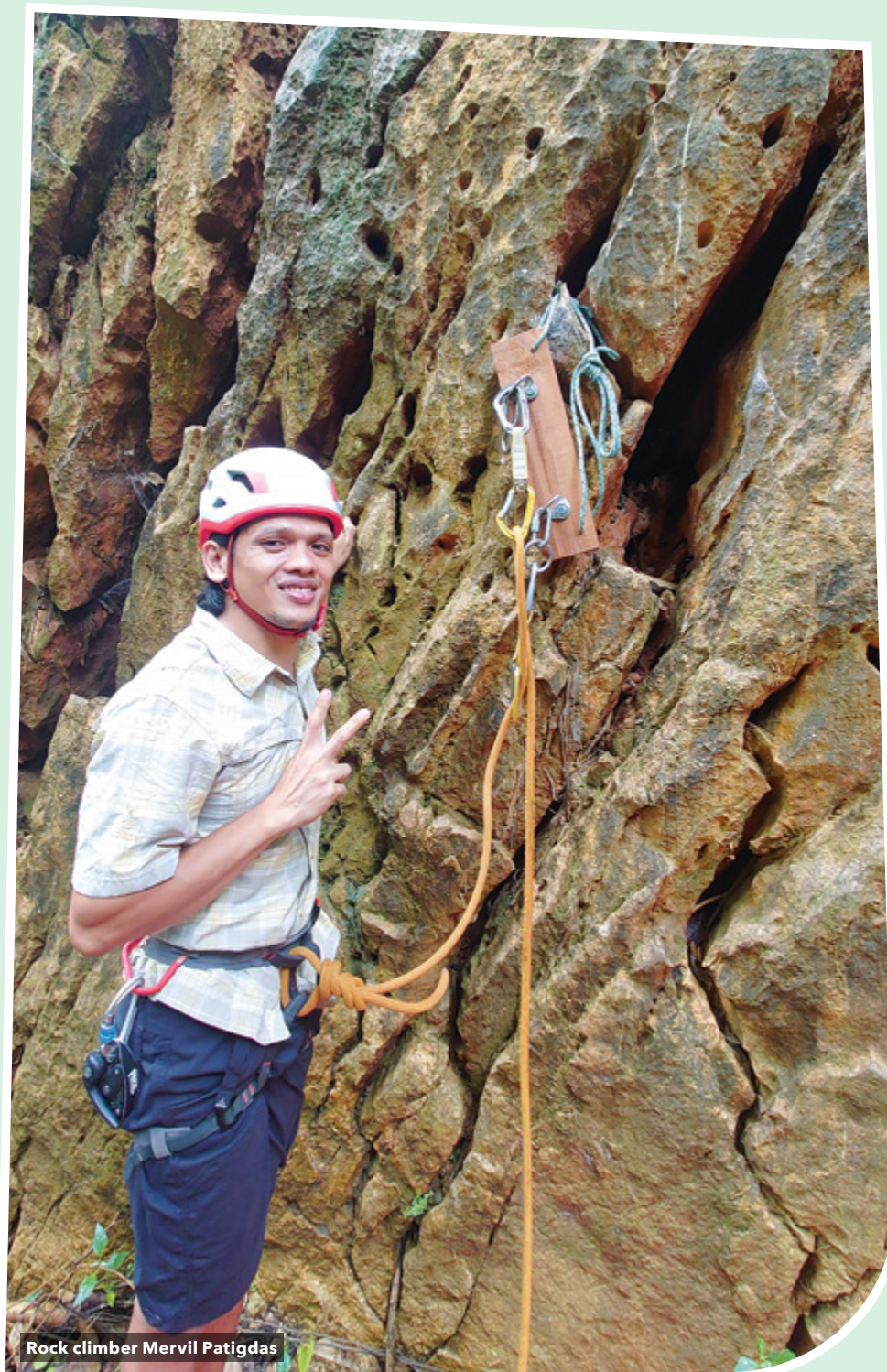
VERTICAL HEIGHTS

The center of Cebu Island is fast becoming a destination for adventure seekers, and nothing is more adrenaline-enducing than the almost vertical cliffs of Cantabaco.

by RAINE BALJAK

ROCK CLIMBERS ARE A growing breed, enthusiasts from here and abroad come to sample a taste of limestone cliffs that Cebu has to offer. For those in the know, there is no better starting point than the small town of Cantabaco, situated almost smack center of the island, close to the city of Toledo. Finding this sweet spot involves a 60-minute ride on the Transcentral Highway followed by trek through a little jungle.

It was in the late 1980s when outdoor enthusiast Chico Estrera and his friends first discovered a limestone cliff while caving in the area of Toledo. Realising that this towering sun-bleached cliff was massive enough to climb, the adventurers eventually invited seasoned climbers from Manila, Cebu and the owner of Habagat, an outdoor equipment brand, to check out the possibility of developing it as a climbing site. Back then, climbers would simply sling a rope through a hole in the wall and clip the rope, or use traditional gear through the crack and clamber up any which way possible, a hazardous proposition at best. Bolts, which are permanent anchors that are drilled into a rock for climbers to attach a quickdraw, a piece of climbing equipment through which a rope can be connected, was introduced a decade or



Rock climber Mervil Patigdas



Puto Maya with fresh brewed coffee for breakfast.

so later. One person in particular, Mackie Makinano, played a crucial role in the development of bolting new climbing routes not only in Cebu, but across other places in the Philippines such as Montalban, Bukidnon, Quirino Province, Benguet, Laguindingan and more.

Those early bolts from more than 10 years ago were eventually replaced and re-bolted as the area attracted more adventure seekers. This was done by Mervil Patigdas, who began climbing there in 2009; and today, is a foremost authority and guide in that area. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, he started to

bolt and set new routes for climbers. He quipped, “I like this kind of fun, even if it is hard.” Passion, such as Mervil’s, is what keeps the climbing community alive and flourishing.

Mervil runs his own climbing company called Grit Gravity, and holds a degree in Industrial Engineering. It was during his university years in Cebu when he joined the outdoor club and got involved in its weekly activities that included hiking, caving, and climbing.

* ROCK CLIMBING IN CANTABACO IS PART OF THE NEWLY MAPPED OUTDOOR ADVENTURE TRAIL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM CENTRAL VISAYAS.

He decidedly got serious and focused on climbing only on his final year at school. Finding work through a Google search of “climbing jobs in Asia” after graduating in 2012, Mervil worked as a climbing and kayaking guide in Vietnam for six months. A stint as a seasonal outdoor facilitator followed in Hong Kong. During the off season, Mervil would shuttle between the Philippines and Taiwan, a lifestyle he led for about 4 years, during which time he became a Single Pitch Instructor and professional member of the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA).

As climbers slowly started coming into Toledo City, many locals

who worked at the copper mine or in farms, saw business opportunities arise. Soon enough little carenderias and pungko-pungko stalls began sprouting to feed the hungry visitors. Homes became boarding houses offering safe and no-frills lodging for them, a small- town bed and breakfast, of sorts.

Climbing may be on the bucket list of many people who look for the adventure and challenge it brings. It's an exciting way to explore one's potential, stay fit mentally and physically while being connected with the great outdoors. They say everyone should give it a try at least once — the exhilarating experience takes you high. Vertically high, that is.

ROCK CLIMBING ESSENTIALS

Get Nourishment

Prior to making an ascent, most climbers consume carbohydrates as their fuel for enhanced performance. Staying light is important so climbers eat a little bread, some fruit and coffee in the morning. Snack time at the crag could be a packed banana or an energy bar. Since food affects one's performance it's best to stay away from anything too oily or heavy. It's also advisable to maintain a good balance of protein and carbohydrates; supplements like collagen or chondroitin are beneficial for joint health and recovery. Only after a climb can one fully indulge with a hearty meal.

What to Bring

Rock-climbing essentials include harness and climbing helmet. Some guided tours provide



rentals of equipment as well. Shoes that fit snugly and made specifically for climbing are important to provide grip especially on straight vertical climbs like the limestone cliff of Cantabaco. A water jug that can be clipped without protruding is also a must during the ascent. Climbers wear non-restrictive clothes that won't get in the way of the ropes for easier movement. Sweat-wink athletic wear is ideal to keep you dry and cool.

How to Choose your Own Spot to Climb

Tour guides like Grit Gravity are experts in the area and they can give valuable advice and tips whether you're a first-time climber or a more experienced one. **E**

Cebu's First Premium Butchery + Steak Bar



Order online for same/next day delivery at lacarne.ph



Follow @lacarne.ph for recipes and updates



Get in touch via FB chat @lacarnecebu

Book a table



Open 10am to 8pm
Tuesdays to Sundays
GF 88 Avenue, Banilad
0917 175 MEAT (6328) | 032 346 4201



BACONG PIER, THE SUNKEN FOREST

Diving enthusiasts are always looking for their next dive spot. Pablo S. Quiza, this magazine's favorite photographer, documents his own find, away from everyone else.



A FIFTY-MINUTE PLANE ride from Cebu's airport, Dumaguete is a jump-off point for DOT/PCSSD Dive Establishments mostly concentrated in Zamboangita and Dauin, just half an hour drive from the Dumaguete airport. The two coastal communities on the southern tip of Negros Oriental Island are home to DOT/PCSSD dive establishments, and gateway to Apo Island with its marine sanctuary and is a famous destination for divers because of the bubbles coming out of the sand from volcanic activities.

Divers who know the area are familiar with the predominantly horizontal dive sites in Negros Oriental. Horizontal in the sense that the seascape is mostly flat or slightly sloped, without the abrupt changes in topography found in many parts of the archipelago. The sandy flat seabed provides the perfect habitat for small and unique sea creatures and without extensive coral reefs for them to hide, it's easier for divers to spot them. For underwater macro photographers, it's heaven.

The reason for this orography is the second highest mountain in Negros Island, Mount Talinis. The potentially active volcano has shaped the area throughout millennia in a beautiful gentle slope from its summit to the coast, merely 13 km (8 miles) away. The

black volcanic sand might not be what tourists are looking for but it is definitely what macro divers are willing to travel across the globe to get to.

I first heard about Bacong pier from a fellow diver during a trip last July to Dauin and Zamboanguita. What came as a big surprise is that local dive shops do not organize dives there and access is seemingly restricted, if not, completely forbidden. That the pier remains mostly unused is actually a good sign for divers.

Apparently, local dive guides did not want any confrontation with the grumpy guard posted at the pier who chased divers away. After much convincing, our trusted dive guide, Jun, agreed to take us there anyway on the condition that our dive would start from afar, to avoid the guard.



Malatapay wharf at Zamboanguita.

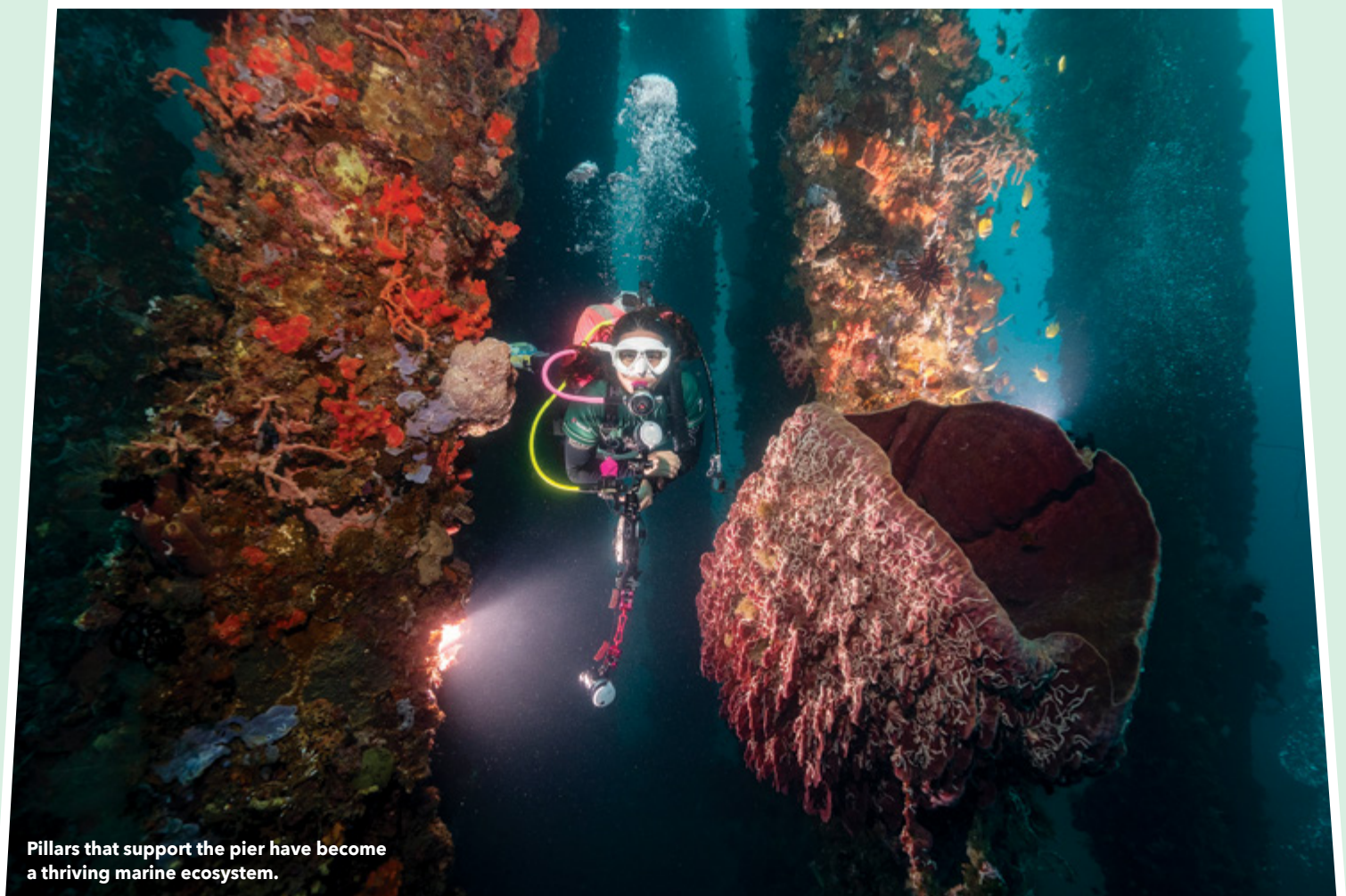


The dive day finally arrived. As always, divers have a checklist to make sure all their equipment is complete and working fine. Nothing could be worse than getting in the water and realizing your camera batteries were not charged, you forgot to put in a memory card or left your lens cap on, or your tank is not full, or that you forgot your fins or something else.

A few unbothered fishermen looked at us as we prepared our dive gear and started the careful walk along the rocky shore. Carrying a load of around 25 kg of gear and wearing 3mm wetsuits under the scorching sun is not the best feeling; but when you're down in the water, the magic of scuba diving happens — we turn off gravity. Yes, that's right. Divers can turn gravity off thanks

to a buoyancy control device (BCD), a jacket which when inflated or deflated allows the diver to rise or sink in the water, as needed.

From the shore, the pier looked like the typical flat boring platform used for loading ships; but under the surface, it's a totally different world that has you marveling in silence. The silence was only disturbed by our bubbles as we



Pillars that support the pier have become a thriving marine ecosystem.



This seemingly sunken charred forest houses all kinds of marine creatures.



slowly followed Jun towards the pier against a mild current in a visibility of around 15 meters. Without any of the terrestrial references, we continued to swim for about 20 minutes, making sure not to get separated from the group and each of us having our own thoughts. I call it my underwater meditation, and I confess that I'm addicted to it.

Underwater wrecks are manmade structures of concrete blocks, cars, planes, tires or even motorbikes placed there to create artificial reefs. Sunken boats or ships that ended down there are mostly due to some kind of accident or disaster. For divers, wrecks are pretty much the pinnacle of underwater exploration and adventure;

alongside with cave diving, both are extremely dangerous but highly rewarding. Surrounded in mystery, wrecks hide stories behind their rusty walls. Underwater photographers see them as an oasis of biodiversity with plenty of different species coexisting and thriving.

While following the group towards the pier, I remembered my previous wreck dives while saying hello to another Nemo family. And suddenly, BAM! The pillars supporting the pier appeared out of the "fog" — majestic, mysterious, magical, eerie, and unusual. The 20 meter tall pillars looked like they were from a war movie scene, or those armored walkers from Star Wars. I had to stop swimming and turn my body upwards for a better view of the whole structure. It was like nothing I had seen before under the water.

From that distance, the vertical wreck looked like a sunken charred forest, grey and creepy. The closer I got, however, revealed its true colors — all kinds of gorgonian corals, barrel sponges, ferns, finger corals, acropora and many more. The kinds of fish living in this forest were stunning: the territorial and grumpy damselfish, the confident pufferfish, the shy octopus, glassfish, starfish, wrasses, batfish, and on and on... the list was never ending. The reef's health was just outstanding, thanks probably to its restricted location or the protection that the structure itself provides from fishing nets, or maybe both.

This place was an overload for the senses of an underwater photographer like me. I could compare it to presenting a sumptuous free buffet to a starving person — someone who wants to have it all at once, does not know where to start, or finds it too difficult to focus on what is the most important (or delicious) part, or what's the best way to capture the essence of something so enthralling. I was overwhelmed!

Then an inner voice comes to help and shouts at me: Pablo! For f***s sake! Focus! What is the most unique feature of this dive site? "The pillars," I replied to myself. What else? "The life that is flourishing around them," I continued. Then the photographer in me awoke and started snapping photos, left and right, mostly up, looking for the



*** FROM THAT DISTANCE, THIS VERTICAL WRECK LOOKED LIKE A SUNKEN CHARRED FOREST; GREY, CREEPY, MYSTERIOUS.**

best angles, the most gorgeous corals, the lines, the compositions, the frames, with divers around the pillars to give an idea of the sheer size and perspective.

The photographer in me would go into idle mode time and again, while the diver, the curious explorer, the child in me would demand to enjoy the moment, to fly suspended, effortlessly in

that surreal place that I was so fortunate to be visiting. It's not everyday that you are surrounded by a world so rich and beautiful as this. There are not enough words in the dictionary to describe the awesome feeling.

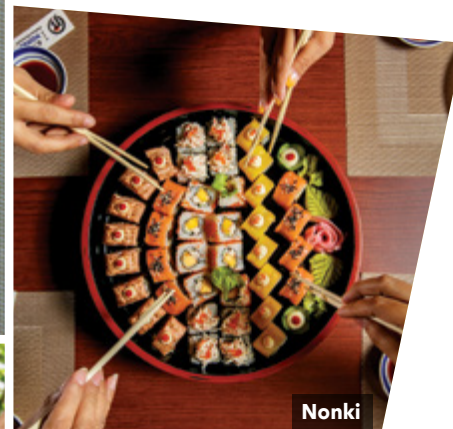
Until the usual reminder came: I'm a terrestrial mammal, I cannot stay here for as long as I want. My dive computer tells me that I'm 3 minutes away from starting a decompression dive, and that, with a single air tank, is better to avoid. It was time to go back to the surface, back to our world. In the underwater world we are lucky and fortunate but, nevertheless, mere visitors. See you soon again, sunken forest! **E**



La Carne



Ayame Seaside Tales



Nonki



Cowrie Cove



The Cove



Il Primo

TOP 6

RESTAURANTS YOU CAN'T MISS

Cebu's rainy season need not spell doom and gloom for the avid foodie. Braving the rain and erratic weather can lead you to hidden nooks and crannies all over the metropolis. Our highly-awaited second list of restaurants and food destinations are gastronomic hotspots that should be on everyone's must-eat visit.

COWRIE COVE

Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu's Cowrie Cove is finally back to serve the freshest seafood and grilled specialties in an al fresco seaside setting.

The beachfront bar is everyone's favourite hang-out with chill music for pre-dinner and cocktails, just before taking a few steps to their dining area.





FROM LEFT Tuna *Kinilaw*; The Ultimate Seafood Platter; Smoky Salmon.

TRUE TO ITS REPUTATION of being a sought-after dining place in the island, Cowrie Cove highlights the use of local ingredients and distinct Cebuano flavours.

The team infuses the bounty of the sea and organically grown herbs in serving their signature creations and crowd favorites such as Tuna *Kinilaw* and Burnt

Octopus End, among others.

Cowrie Cove takes pride in its Ultimate Seafood Platter, an appetizing cornucopia of succulent catches such as prawns, squid, crab, mussels, and fresh fish.

Seaside dining with a spectacular view and unparalleled Shangri-La standard of service makes for one memorable culinary experience. **E**

photography **PABLO QUIZA**



Open: Daily | 5:00pm – 10:00pm
Tel. No. **(032) 231 0288**

E-mail: **fbreservations.mac@shangri-la.com**

Address: Cowrie Cove, Shangri-La Mactan,
Cebu (Punta Engaño, Lapu Lapu City, Cebu)



/ShangrilaMactan



@shangrilamactan

CATEGORY: Global

PRICE: P P P P

DÉCOR: ★★★★★

ACCESSIBILITY: Along the road of Punta Engaño, accessible to both public and private transport. Dine indoor or outdoor with a beautiful view of the beach of Mactan. Available park spaces inside the hotel vicinity

BEVERAGE: Offers a wide selection of wines and liquor

NONKI JAPANESE RESTAURANT

This well-loved Japanese restaurant has been around for sometime starting with their first one at A.S. Fortuna Street in Mandaue City. Several branches have now been added including outlets in Davao, Iloilo and Bohol. As their main branch easily fills up, a new restaurant has opened to accommodate more customers at the lower ground level of JCenter Mall.



NONKI IS A JAPANESE word that means carefree, and this ideal is held in high esteem in their many branches. Nonki seeks to ensure that the dining experience is as comfortable, easygoing, and carefree as the restaurant's namesake, albeit matched with a mix of Cebuano friendliness and Japanese hospitality. The geometric plates used at

Nonki belie the layers of flavor in the actual dishes themselves, and here's a list of their best ones. You can never go wrong with their Ebi Tempura, perfectly crunchy whether piled high on a basket or tucked gingerly in a bento box. The clean, ocean-crisp tang of Salmon Sashimi is another bestseller. For a hefty and satisfying comfort food option, their Beef Teppanyaki is a welcome addition. Their sashimi and soba list

is also extensive, and you're in for a delightful treat with their sushi boats or the bento box meals.

Nonki has consistently maintained their quality through the years by carefully choosing their suppliers. Its longevity is testament to how it is the go-to restaurant among the Japanese community and Cebuanos alike. **E**

photography **PABLO QUIZA**



OPPOSITE PAGE Nonki sets the right mood with its rustic yet elegant aesthetic
THIS PAGE An enticing platter of sushi and sashimi, Matcha Coffee Jelly dessert; Sashimi Platter.



Open: 11:30am–2:00pm, 5:00pm–10:30pm
 Tel. No. (032) 505.9858 | Mobile No.: (+63) 917.651.1981
 Address: Main branch is at 219 A.S. Fortuna St., Bakilid, Mandaue City. Other branches at SM City Cebu, Mactan Tropics Center, One Pavilion Mall in Banawa, JCentre Mall in Mandaue, JPark Island Resort & Waterpark in Mactan. Branches outside Cebu: Bohol, Iloilo & Davao

www.nonki.ph



@nonkiph

CATEGORY: Japanese

PRICE: ₱ ₱

DÉCOR: ★★★★★

ACCESSIBILITY: Along the road of A.S. Fortuna Mandaue, accessible to both public and private transport.

BEVERAGE: Offers Japanese and local beers, and a few selection of wines

LA CARNE

The busy street locals simply call Banilad is where you'll find 88th Avenue.

Several dining options are lined along this strip, but if the delicious and savory aroma of meat being cooked entices you, go right past everything else and head straight to our third restaurant recommendation, La Carne.



WHILE NOT STRICTLY a restaurant, La Carne nevertheless elevates the Cebuano steak enthusiast's taste by providing access to premium meats and introducing an inventive one-menu concept. Customers pay a fixed rate of P399 as cooking fee for their meat of choice ordered from the display. The price includes their locally sourced seasonal salad, mashed potatoes or garlic rice

and some grilled local veggies. La Carne may not have the full dine-in menu, but there are other meat options to order: a selection of steaks, sausages, burgers, short ribs or brisket.

An artisanal butchery, La Carne's premium cuts of beef and lamb come from reputable producers in Australia, U.S. and Japan. Meat provenance is a highly coveted label, and La Carne has it in spades, being proud licensed retailers of true Aussie beef,

lamb and certified Angus beef. The meat at La Carne is prepared with care and full transparency and they welcome any and all questions you have on meat.

This no-frills outlet is manned by experienced butchers and servers who honed their craft abroad. We highly recommend eating there to experience how premium steaks are perfectly cooked — charred on the outside, juicy on the inside. **E**

photography **PABLO QUIZA**



OPPOSITE PAGE This humble, grounded facade is both meat shop and steak bar all in one
THIS PAGE FROM LEFT A selection of meat and cuts ready for sampling; Flavors get amped up with a dash of gravy.



Open: Tuesday-Sunday | 10:00am to 8:00pm
 Tel. No. (032) 346.4201
 Mobile No. (+63) 917.175.6328
 Address: Ground Floor, 88th Avenue Commercial
 Park, Gov. M. Cuenco Ave., Banilad, Cebu City
www.lacarne.ph



@lacarnecebu



@lacarne.ph

CATEGORY: a butchery specializing in premium cuts with a dine-in option

PRICE: PPPP

DÉCOR: ★★ ★

ACCESSIBILITY: Along the road of Gov. M. Cuenco, accessible to both public and private transport. Available park spaces at the basement area of the building.

BEVERAGE: Offers wines by the bottle

AYAME SEASIDE TALES

Interrupted by the lockdown, the seaside hub IL Corso is fast filling up with interesting food spots. Check out the fourth in our list — the Japanese restaurant called Ayame.





OPPOSITE PAGE Ayame capitalizes on its ocean-inspired ambience in both lighting and decor.

THIS PAGE Chicken Nanban Age; Beef Sukiyaki; Ebi tempura, the classic crowd-pleaser.

AYAME SEASIDE TALES' warmly lit interiors with Japanese accents and sleek wooden furniture is inviting and visually appealing.

But the real treat is the menu of exciting Japanese dishes on offer. Right along the IL Corso esplanade and fronting the bustling Cebu Strait, Ayame Seaside Tales opens its doors to admit patrons to its dainty interiors. Japanese murals, patches of Japanese gardens, polished wooden surfaces, and a seaside ambience with unobstructed views of the imposing CCLEX make for

quite the destination. But Ayame wows with more than just aesthetics.

Japanese cuisine is famed for its freshness, flavor, artistry, and even cleanliness. In this, Ayame sticks to tradition, ensuring that all of its delicately prepared food matches, and then exceeds, expectations. There is a smattering of dishes to choose from, from the ubiquitous but always delicious Ebi Tempura to the more obscure but nonetheless exciting Unagi Sushi. For the noodle enthusiasts, Ayame has two inspired dishes: it is hard to choose between the warm and filling Shoyu Ramen or the delectable Soba Noodles. In an innovative break

from tradition, Ayame also offers the Cebu Maki, a comforting take on salmon sushi with a distinct flair thanks to the Cebuano mango fruit in use. The entire menu is modern but deeply conscious of its traditional roots, and the food is meticulously prepared with great attention to detail.

If you are hankering for a classed-up Japanese dinner complete with spectacular views by the sea, it is hard to go wrong with a trip to Ayame Seaside Tales. As the restaurant's name implies, your time there is sure to become a tale worth telling. **E**

photography **PABLO QUIZA**



Open: Monday-Sunday | 11:00am-9:00pm
Mobile No. (+63) 991.452.5888
Address: I Canali, IL Corso Mall, South Road
Properties (SRP), Cebu City
www.ayamejapaneseresto.com



/AYAME Japanese Restaurant



@ayamejapaneseresto

CATEGORY: Japanese

PRICE: PP

DÉCOR: ★★★★★

ACCESSIBILITY: At the back of IL Corso Mall facing the sea. Accessible to both public and private transport.

Available park spaces outside the mall parking area.

BEVERAGE: Offers a selection of wines, Japanese drinks and local beers

THE COVE

Close to the famous Mactan Shrine where Magellan reportedly met his demise is the former fishing village of Maribago. These days, it's a busy community of resorts and diving shops. In one of the discreet streets the gate of Bluewater Maribago Beach Resort beckons guests who are in the know. Once you pass its assuredly Filipino-designed pavilion, it's a short golf cart ride to the resort's beachside seafood restaurant, The Cove.



WHEN IT FIRST OPENED in 1997, Pier 7, as The Cove was then called, was a pioneer of its kind. It was the first dining spot that served fresh seafood on the island of Mactan. The restaurant rose to popularity among its corporate clients, foreign and local tourists, as well as balikbayans and guests who came for its showcase of fresh seafood served in a clean and well-designed setting. The restaurant has since grown to its present size with the addition of the Oyster Bar where pre-dinner drinks are served and, of course, fresh oysters.

The Cove continues its unique “Aquaria-to-Table” dining initiative where only the freshest catch from the sea is served. Guests may choose from a menu of live seafood which includes *talaba* (local oysters), *tahong* (mussels), shrimps, crabs, lobsters, fish, and *guso* (fresh seaweed) and have them cooked to their liking. The cuisine is classic Filipino fused with Southeast Asian flavors, and highly influenced by the simple cooking practices of local fishermen. This traditional cooking method brings out the natural flavors of seafood and subsequently became

the inspiration for other restaurants to follow including the now classic Cebuano-style STK (short for *Sugba, Tuwa, Kilaw*) where freshly caught seafood is prepared in three different ways: *sugba* (charcoal grilled), *tuwa* (boiled in broth), and *kinilaw* (ceviche-style).

The Cove is also your best option for seafood cravings of grilled lobster and the seasonal steamed mud crab in crab fat sauce. Or *tinap-anan na pugita* which translates to smoked octopus, served with grilled pineapple for that added local flavor. **E**

photography **PABLO QUIZA**



OPPOSITE PAGE Fresh catch of the day at The Cove.
FROM LEFT *Kinilaw na Tanigue* (Ceviche); *Tinap-anan na Pogita*; steamed mud crab in crab fat sauce.



Open: Daily | 11:00am-3:00pm; 6:00pm-10:00pm
Tel. No. (032) 263.4410
Address: Maribago Bluewaters Resort,
Buyong, Maribago, Lapulapu City, Cebu
www.bluewater.com.ph

[f /Bluewater Maribago](https://www.facebook.com/BluewaterMaribago) [@bluewater.maribago](https://www.instagram.com/bluewater.maribago)

CATEGORY: Global

PRICE: P P P

DÉCOR: ★★ ★

ACCESSIBILITY: At the corner upon entering Buyong Road, accessible to both public and private transport. Available parking spaces inside the resort.

BEVERAGE: Offers a selection of wines and liquor

IL PRIMO

NUSTAR Resort and Casino is the latest player in Cebu's vibrant scene with several world-class restaurants in its wing. First to open is Il Primo, the open-kitchen concept restaurant located to the left side of their main entrance.





OPPOSITE PAGE The grand interiors of Il Primo.
THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Branzino; US Black Angus Omaha Prime Rib Eye; Pappardelle; classic Tiramisu.

IL PRIMO MEANS “THE FIRST,” fittingly so since it is the first restaurant to welcome guests as they step through the grand entrance of NUSTAR Resort and Casino, as well as being the first of the resort’s curated dining concepts to open.

Being close to the entrance of the casino has Il Primo always bustling with customers. But more than that, it’s the elevated Italian cuisine featuring premium steaks, traditional desserts, and signature beverages that guests come for.

Il Primo takes pride in its steak specialties using a Josper Grill — a specialized grill with precision

temperature control that gives meat a distinctly smoky flavor and charred texture while optimally retaining its juicy succulence. The restaurant also has a Dry Aging Cabinet which provides a controlled environment to perfectly achieve a flavorful profile for its steaks.

Cebu’s first and lone Italian steakhouse offers an array of specials from US Black Angus Omaha Prime Rib Eye, Pappardelle, Branzino, and Tiramisu under the supervision of Chef Luca Angioletti’s culinary dexterity. Il Primo is only the beginning of its culinary offerings as NUSTAR Resort and Casino aims to land Cebu as a gastronomic destination in Asia. **E**



Open: Daily | 12:00pm–2:30pm, 5:30pm–10:30PM
 Mobile No.: (+63) 998.539.6735
 E-mail: dining@nustar.com.ph
 Address: The Strip, NUSTAR Resort and Casino,
 Kawit Island, South Road Properties
www.nustar.com.ph

[f](https://www.facebook.com/IlPrimoNUSTAR) [ig](https://www.instagram.com/IlPrimoNUSTAR) @IlPrimoNUSTAR

CATEGORY: Italian

PRICE: P P P

DÉCOR: ★★★★★

ACCESSIBILITY: Find them at NUSTAR Resort & Casino, the newest resort in the city. Accessible to both public and private transport. Parking spaces are available.

BEVERAGE: Offers red and white wines, local and imported beers and cocktails



Map of Lapu-Lapu City



LEGEND

- POLICE STATION
- HOSPITAL
- DIVE SITE
- CAMP SITE
- SEA PORT
- HOTEL & RESORT

Map Reference: mata.ph



LAPU-LAPU INSIDER

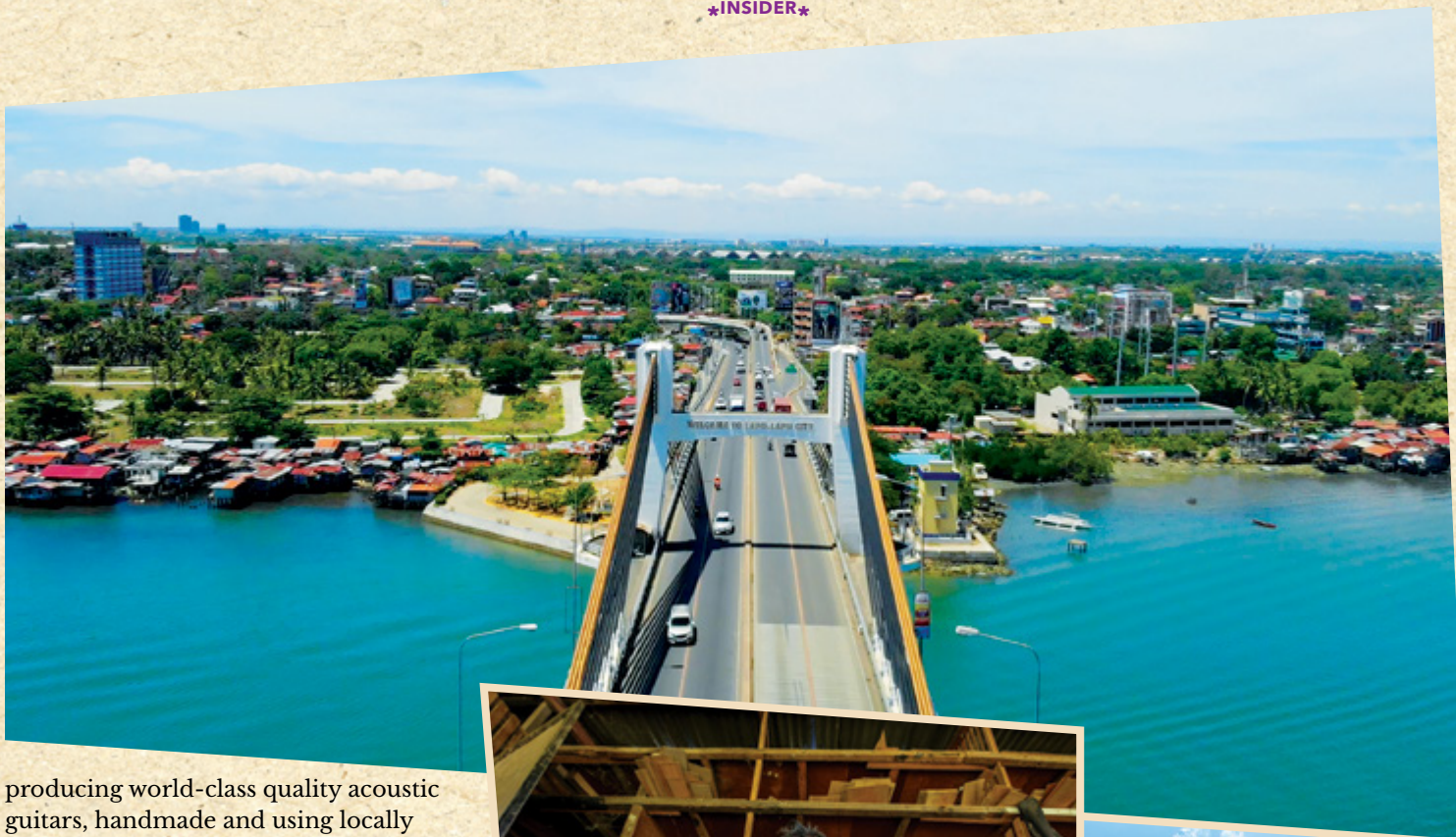
EVERYONE FLYING TO CEBU lands in Lapu-Lapu City, the gateway to Cebu Island and site of the Mactan-Cebu International Airport. Serving both passenger and cargo operations, the Cebu airport offers an attractive entry option into the country, bypassing Manila. The Philippines' second busiest airport has direct daily connections to a number of international and key domestic destinations, making it a transport hub for the region.

Encompassing several islands including Olango and a huge part of the popular beach island of Lapu-Lapu City,

it is linked to Cebu mainland by three bridges. Traffic to and from the island should then be smoother, congestion lighter and heads much cooler when this added access comes up.

The highly urbanized city hosts many multi-national factories clustered around its tax-free Mactan Export Processing Zone and has a hard-working, efficient and English-speaking labor pool.

Cebu is typically represented by pictures of Magellan's Cross, luscious mangoes, and additionally, white-sand beaches, and guitars. With three generations of experience, Mactan's craftsmen have perfected the fine art of



producing world-class quality acoustic guitars, handmade and using locally grown hardwood.

Opon was the town's original name when Augustinian priests founded it in 1730. Becoming a city in 1961, it was renamed Lapu-Lapu after the brave native chieftain who waged war and decisively defeated Spain's conquistador, Ferdinand Magellan, right on Mactan's shores in 1521. The spot is marked by the Magellan Shrine, while the local warrior stands heroically larger than life nearby, immortalized with a 20-meter high bronze statue and a city that bears his name. The Philippine



photography PABLO QUIZA



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Welcoming panorama of Mactan Island featuring the impressive Marcelo H. Fernan bridge; dive into the wonders of the underwater in Mactan; the resplendent retablo of the miraculous Nuestra Señora Virgen de la Regla, the patroness of Lapu-Lapu City; a handcrafted guitar, Lapu-Lapu City's pride.





National Police also carries his image on its official seal. The historic battle is commemorated at the Liberty Shrine and the re-enactment of Kadaugan sa Mactan (Victory in Mactan), a crowd-drawing festival in April. Tourist Police visibly patrol the area of the historical landmarks where little stalls selling souvenirs have also set up shop.

A treasured tourist destination, Lapu-Lapu City offers accommodations ranging from luxurious resorts for the indulgent to comfortable rustic lodges. If you can drag yourself away from its white beaches, popular excursions around Lapu-Lapu and Olango Island include full-day island-hopping on a motorized banca (outrigger canoe) with a hearty seafood barbecue lunch on one of the islands; and bird-watching or guided walking tours around the Olango Island Wildlife Bird Sanctuary. ❸

THIS PAGE FROM TOP The iconic and award-winning Mactan-Cebu International Airport is ready to welcome the world; nothing soothes the souls like a day by the water on the island.





A DAY IN MACTAN

Get away for the day on Mactan Island and uncover its rich history, discover local crafts and feast on fresh favorites from the sea served *SuTuKil* style.

by RAINE BALJAK

DURING A PERIOD WHEN trading vessels busily plied along pre-colonial Cebu's waterway, Mactan Island was called *Mangatang*, a word which loosely describes a "pirate" or "to lie in wait", according to oral histories recorded by antiquarian, historian and poet, Jovito Abellana. Fast forward to present day Mactan and the island still flourishes with a diverse economy fueled by different industries from tourism, trade, manufacturing and real estate. Here's how to spend a day in Mactan.

Morning

Start your day with a visit to the patron saint of Lapu-Lapu City, Our Lady of Rule, at the Birhen sa Regla Church. Formerly called Opon, the city was renamed Lapu-Lapu in 1961 in honor of its first local hero. Many of its residents still refer to the city by its old name and believe that their patroness has miraculously kept them safe and protected during catastrophes like World War II and the super Typhoon Yolanda in 2013. A citywide celebration takes place during Lapu-Lapu's fiesta every 21st of November with weeklong festivities

highlighted by a fluvial parade and a religious procession.

Pick up a souvenir from one of Mactan's guitar factories. Many family-owned enterprises on the island produce fine quality string musical instruments, a tradition that has been passed down through the generations. Cebu's long history of guitar-making dates back to its Christianization when Spanish friars needed to repair the guitars they brought to the Philippines. Mactan's talented craftsmen have been handmaking acoustic guitars along with ukuleles and

mandolins using imported and local woods like jackfruit, narra and black wood ebony, and even customize orders with shell inlays designs. Popular guitar makers on Mactan Island include the Alegre and Malingin families, Ferangeli, Inday Celia's and the New Susing's.

Lunch

Break for a seafood lunch and have your *Sutukil* experience. A row of restaurants near the Liberty Shrine displays an assortment of the local fishermen's catch of the day. Choose from the freshest fish, prawns, lobsters, crabs, squid and shells and decide how you want these served. *Sutukil* is a portmanteau to describe three common methods of preparing fresh seafood: *Su*, for *sugba* (to grill), *Tu* for *tuwa* (to cook as a soup) and *Kil* for *kilaw* (to eat raw or uncooked). Fish *kinilaw*, a popular Filipino dish where vinegar is used to "cook" the fish -without any heat- is much like a ceviche. It's the perfect appetizer with a cold beer.



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT Fernando Alegre and his grandchildren perform for visitors at the Alegre Guitar Factory (photo by Amanda Lago/Rappler); Olango Bird Sanctuary (photo from cebucharlietour.com); an outdoor cultural show at Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu (photo from mumpacktravel.com); fresh seafood on display in a SuTuKil restaurant (photo from fatmoments.com).

Afternoon

After lunch, step back in time and take a stroll to the Liberty Shrine. The small historic park is said to be the site of the Battle of Mactan of 1521 and holds two historic markers. The 30 meter-high coral stone Magellan Monument dedicated to Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan bears the inscription, *Glorias Españolas* (Spanish Glory). He captained the Spanish expedition that completed the first circumnavigation of the globe. Close by stands an imposing 20-meter bronze statue that memorializes Lapulapu, the native chieftain of Mactan who led his men in the victorious battle that defeated Magellan and the Spanish forces.

Dinner

Wind down your day with cocktails at the Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu and catch their live cultural show featuring folk and fire dances and the “tinikling” every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 6-7pm at the Buko Bar.

If one day is not enough, continue your adventures with a day trip to Olango Island where the 920-hectare Olango Island Wildlife Bird Sanctuary is its main attraction. Or discover a whole new world underwater from the island’s three dive sites namely Mabini Point, Baring and Santa Rosa that are suitable for experienced divers. **B**

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The view of Magellan Bay; Raine Baljak and Merce Abellana at the Shangri-La’s Mactan Resort and Spa; The view of Olango Island from the Hilutungan Channel; View of the Hilutungan Channel from the Shangri-La’s Mactan Resort and Spa.



MACTAN PRIMER



Whether staying on the island for a day or three, discover what Mactan has to offer. Home to some of Cebu's best beach resorts and the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, Mactan also houses two export processing zones with manufacturing companies and thousands of workers that drive the island's economy. The urbanized island has modern residential and mixed-use developments and diverse dining options.

MACTAN IN NUMBERS

8

WORLD-CLASS HOTELS AND RESORTS

- Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu
- Dusit Thani Mactan Cebu Resort
- Sheraton Cebu Mactan Resort (grand opening in September 2022)
- Savoy Hotel Mactan Newtown
- Crimson Resort and Spa (re-opening in December 2022)
- Jpark Island Resort & Waterpark, Cebu
- Bluewater Maribago Beach Resort
- Plantation Bay Resort and Spa

2

EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES MEPZ 1 and MEPZ 2

3

BRIDGES TO CONNECT TO THE MAIN ISLAND OF CEBU

- Mactan-Mandaue Bridge
- Marcelo Fernan Bridge
- Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway

1

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT Mactan-Cebu International Airport

1

CITY IN THE ISLAND Lapu-Lapu City

MACTAN PRIMER

MACTAN NEWTOWN

Driving from the airport towards the coast where the top resorts are located is a new development with several tall structures. At the fork of the road that leads to Punta Engaño, veer off to the right and continue on to a wide road announcing The Mactan Newtown. Designed with a live-work-play-learn lifestyle concept, the 28.8-hectare development brings together residential condominiums, office buildings, commercial establishments, restaurants and even a school to its township community where a two-level beachfront mall will soon rise. Disrupted during the pandemic lockdown, Mactan Newtown has picked up its pace, and is a lively center with lots of walking areas and dining options.

Created by one of the country's top developers, Megaworld Corporation, The Mactan Newtown boasts of its own hotel within the complex - the 18-storey Savoy Hotel Mactan Newtown. With over 500 sparkling new and stylish rooms, the hotel is within easy walking distance to the beach and is perfect for guests looking to mix work and leisure.



An aerial view of The Mactan Newtown



One of the many amenities of Savoy Hotel Mactan is the swimming pool.



Savoy Mactan's Deluxe Room



photography PABLO QUIZA



THE OUTLETS AT PUEBLO VERDE

This outdoor mall was developed by Aboitizland to answer the needs of the employees of nearby MEPZ 2 (Mactan Export Processing Zone 2). Favorite international brands like Adidas, Nike, Puma and many more sell their products at discounted outlet prices all year round. Peso Store, a dollar-store concept, also has an outpost here and is worth the visit if you are familiar with single price shopping similar to the US. One wing also has dining spots like the popular Zubuchon and 10 Dove Street, a dessert place known for its cakes.

JAMIE'S BAKASIHAN AND SEAFOOD KTV

Named after the owner's nephew, Jamie Entoy, this restaurant serves popular home-style cooking and seafood. But its specialty is *bakasi* – an exotic Cebuano eel stew, and what locals and tourists rave about when they visit the place.

- Buagsong, Cordova
- Open daily from 7:00am to 8:00pm
- (+63) 943.359.9048

[f /JaimesBakasihan0122](#)



HAVANA BY THE SEA

A modern Latino-Caribbean inspired bar at Jpark Island Resort, Havana by the Sea serves cocktails like mojitos, mango hurricane, piña colada, and havana surfer.

- M.L. Quezon Highway, Maribago, Lapu-Lapu City
- Open daily from 11:00am to 11:00pm
- (032) 494.5000

[f @jparkislandresort](#)

NIMO BREW

Serving coffee proudly made with Philippine-origin beans and international blends, this garden café that opened in February 2021 offers pastries, burgers, pasta and pizza cooked in a brick oven.

- Casanta Soong Rd., Lapu-Lapu City
- Open Daily from 10:00am to 9:00pm
- (032) 239.4126

[f /nimobrew](#)



MACTAN EATZ

Whether you are in the mood for something light or want to try something filling or different, these dining options should meet your cravings.



PHO19

Taking its name from their supposed opening year in 2019 but delayed due to the pandemic, pho19 uses 19 secret ingredients in its Vietnamese specialties like pho, spring rolls, *banh mi* and rice bowls. Their Vietnamese coffee goes perfectly with a slice of cake.

- 2nd Flr., Island Central Mactan Mall, Lapu-Lapu City
- Open daily from 10:00am to 9:00pm
- (+63) 945.712.5212 / 999.353.6006

[f /Pho19Mactan](#)

SPICE

A restaurant to satisfy all your spicy food cravings, this outlet serving South Indian cuisine has a range of flavorful vegetable and meat dishes, kebabs, curry, biryani and more.

- Cebu Yacht Club, Ibo, Lapu-Lapu City
- Open daily from 11:00am to 10:00pm
- (+63) 961.621.3524

[f @CherrysTheSpiceLapuLapu](#)



LA FAMIGLIA

Established as a family business, La Famiglia's bestselling pizza, pasta, and burgers will keep you coming back for more.

- Kiener Hills, Mutombok, Pusok Lapu-Lapu
- Open daily from 9:00am to 10:00pm
- (+63) 956.744.0129

[f La Famiglia](#)

HOLE IN THE WALL

Your next favorite food might just be around the corner in that very unexpected place. Here's our pick this issue for an interesting food hub in the city that you may want to visit on your next food trip.



"ANYTHING GOES IN THIS KITCHEN - WE FEEL IT, WE MAKE IT; WE LOVE IT, WE SERVE IT."

PUKOT KITCHEN

10 Adelfa St, El Dorado Subdivision,
Banalad, Cebu City

📧 pukot.kitchen@gmail.com

📞 0905.231.9525 | 0927.752.6943

📱 @pukotkitchen

CEBUANO 101

What's this?
Unsa ni?

Restaurant
Kan-anan

Where are we going?
Asa ta?

What's that?
Unsa na?

Nice
Nindot

How are you?
Kumusta?

See you later!
Kita lang ta unya!

Rain
Uwan

I am good.
Ok lang ko.

I am tired.
Gikapoy ko.

Cold or Hot
Bugnaw o Init

Where?
Asa?

MOVING AROUND CEBU



Car Rental
P1,500/day, self-drive



GrabCar
P120-150 (Sto. Nino to SM Seaside)



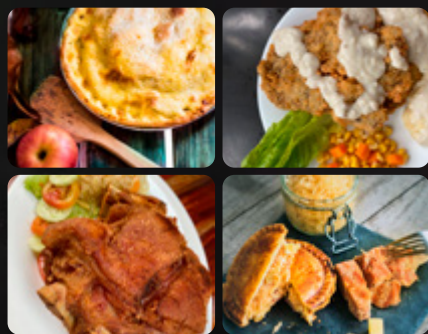
Taxi
P100 to 130 (Sto. Nino to SM Seaside)



Habal-habal
P100 to 150



MyBus
Free ride BDO Fuente to SM Seaside vice versa. 8:20am to 10:00pm (check their social media accounts for more updates)



Eddie's Log Cabin stands for substance—
real food, real people and real connections.

Eddie's
LOG CABIN
SINCE 1950

F. Manalo St, Cebu City

📞 (032) 254 8570

📱 /eddiesslogcabin



KMC

The leading flexible office space
and talent-as-a-service provider
in the Philippines

Cebu • Metro Manila • Clark • Iloilo

📞 (+632) 8779-6540 local 1110

www.kmc.solutions

📱 @kmcsolutionsph

GOLDEN SHELL AWARDEE
R&M



A Taste that Reminds You of Cebu.

Available in all leading supermarkets
and at the Airport shops.

📞 (032) 254 5767

📱 R&M Preserves

BARGAIN HUNTING, CEBU-STYLE!

1. FREEDOM PARK

You can find all manner of local crafts, native products, and even flowers in the trade shops that line Freedom Park. Navigate the stalls that spill over onto Cebu's downtown streets to find the cheapest bargains.

2. ISLAND SOUVENIRS

If you want to hand out presents in style, Island Souvenirs offers premium-quality retail products. From handicrafts, ref magnets, food items, to their "I heart" tees, everything comes in dainty packages.

3. TABOAN PUBLIC MARKET

This is the place for getting those oh-so-delicious bundles of dried fish, dried mangoes, and other local food products. If the telltale smell doesn't entice you, the eager hawkers and vendors absolutely will.

4. 138 MALL

Get things wholesale and at bargain prices within this lively downtown mall. If you don't have a specific quarry in mind, you just might find something fit for pasalubong within.

5. UNITOP

Unitop is a bargain hunter's dream. This mall's shelves are chock-full of products on the cheap, making you add more and more into your shopping bag without even denting your wallet.

6. CARBON MARKET

The granddaddy of groceries. This sprawling open-air market right in the middle of downtown Cebu has a wide, as in very wide, variety of fresh produce, seafood, and dried goods on sale.

photography PABLO QUIZA





Oriental Express



Gaia



Nurture by La Estancia



Juiceria Juice Bar



Cafe Docia

5 EATZ FOR P200 OR LESS!

We searched the city for bites that fit the budget of P200 or less. There's actually so much more than this list, but this should set your wandering taste buds to a good start!

by **CINDY CABALLES**

ORIENTAL EXPRESS

Oriental Express is an American-Chinese food place owned by Chef Lehner Monsales, John and his sister Hannah Cusi. They offer chicken, beef and vegetarian bowls. Customers have the option to choose rice or noodles in their bowls. They serve single, double or even party trays.

Dish to try: Glazed Tofu Rice Bowl, P150

Where to find them: Gov. Cuenco Ave Banilad, Cebu City across Bright Academy.

JUICERIA JUICE BAR

Juiceria Juice Bar is another healthy juice/ snack bar in the city. They started with just cold pressed juices smoothies and smoothie bowls but they have expanded with healthy main courses and snacks that's sugar free and low in carbohydrates.

Dish to try: Banana, Matcha, Almond Milk Smoothie, P195

Where to find them: Bonifacio District, F. Cabahug St., Cebu City.

GAIA

Gaia is an everything-vegan restaurant owned by Roy Vladimír. They offer salad, pasta, sandwiches and several main courses. They have detox juices too.

Dish to try: Vegan Burger with a sides of Sweet Potato Fries, P189

Where to find them: 4th Floor, Food Choices, Ayala Central Bloc, IT Park Lahug Cebu City.

CAPE DOCIA TURKISH CUISINE

Cape Docia serves Turkish cuisine owned by Misyl Medillo-Tasci and Mehmet Havren Tasci. They offer traditional food on their menu such as shish kebab, Lahmacun, baked kebab and more desserts.

Dish to try: Veggie Lahmacun pizza with Turkish sauce, P149

Where to find them: The Marketplace, Ayala Center Cebu.

NURTURE BY LA ESTANCIA

Nurture is a salad bar owned by La Estancia Agri-Ventures, a farm to fork experience. They offer several salad options, and for dessert, tartines.

Dish to try: Nurture Special Salad, P200

Where to find them: Streetscape Mall, Banilad Cebu City.

DO YOUR PART ONE BOTTLE AT A TIME...



bring your own cup



skip
the plastic

**Instead of ordering bottled water in
restaurants, ask for service filtered water.
Or carry your own water jug.**





LALAMOVE THE DISTANCE

Reach across CEBU
whenever you need it!



24/7 On-Demand Delivery App

ASC REF NO. L138N031522LS