

HIGH PROFILE

THE MAGAZINE OF **PAGCOR** / PHILIPPINE AMUSEMENT

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HERE COMES THE SUN:
THE PHILIPPINES
GOES TO SHANGHAI

Heart Evangelista
in the year of the tiger





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Previous page - Gold Photo:
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LET US HEAR
FROM YOU!
PLEASE SEND YOUR LETTER TO:

EDITORIAL



This spring a major event is taking place in Asia: the World Expo 2010 opens its doors in Shanghai in May and is set to receive millions of visitors from all over the world.

The Philippines will have its own pavilion, a pavilion which follows the theme Better City/Better Life but is dedicated to the human side of the urban, to the men and women who build cities and make them what they are through their work and their network of relationships.

We've also decided to keep with the "city" theme by creating a "metropolitan" issue. In Urban Landscapes we present several different looks at Metro Manila by photographers and writers. It's an unusual take on this megalopolis: its busy streets look deserted on a Good Friday, its billboards are stripped, its constructions look ghostly. Like many urban centers in the world, Metro Manila is a place of contradictions which visitors – and locals – love to explore.

Other exciting developments are taking place in the Philippines that will change life in Metro Manila and its skyline: one of the most interesting is the building of the Entertainment City, a PAGCOR project that is bringing some of the top international names in entertainment and gaming to invest in the country. It will create a new dynamic hub in Manila Bay to rival with similar projects in Macau, Las Vegas and Singapore.

Shanghai also inspired us to present the dual heritage of actress Heart Evangelista through several layouts by top photographer Mark Nicdao: whether she plays the coy Chinese lady or the modern Filipino woman, Evangelista makes hearts beat faster and is a fitting cover for the first issue of 2010.

This is the year of the golden tiger, a year of change, intensity and daring. We believe that the artists, personalities and places in this issue represent all that.

Marco Venditti
Managing Editor

CONTRIBUTORS



Mark Nicdao

Open almost any major magazine in the Philippines and you'll find Nicdao's work. Between shoots in the US and flying up to Batanes he finds time to photograph actress Heart Evangelista for the cover and an editorial piece with portraits that reveal her Chinese-Filipino heritage.

Wesley Villarica

Whether photographing fabric, noodles or a troupe of artists and dancers, Villarica has a talent for making a difficult shoot look nothing short of fantastic. In this issue he does an off-stage take on PAGCOR's spectacle *Flow*.



Raffy Tesoro

Tesoro's realm is behind the scenes. He's the guy making everyone – and everything – look great in front of a camera. Having done fashion and product design, creative and art direction, styling and advertising work, he now likes to say that his work has become his hobby, and he only takes assignments that inspire him.

Paolo Lorenzana

After almost three years as a liquor-fueled, no-topic-is-too-shady lifestyle columnist for major daily *The Philippine Star*, Paolo Lorenzana was recently promoted as editor of its Friday youth section, *Young Star*. "Covering young people plus their passions and buzz minus bull is right up my alley," admits Paolo.



Audrey Carpio

Her job has taken her to the cliffs of Batanes and the depths of the Mindoro seas, where Carpio has learned about her country through writing. She is always happy, however, to return to Manila. She foresees a better city, better life right where she is, and as an editor for *Metro* magazine and *The Philippine Star*, she continues to explore the ways the metropolis grows and changes.

HIGHLIGHTS

The latest. The newest. The best. The brightest.

A PAVILION TO THE HUMAN URBAN

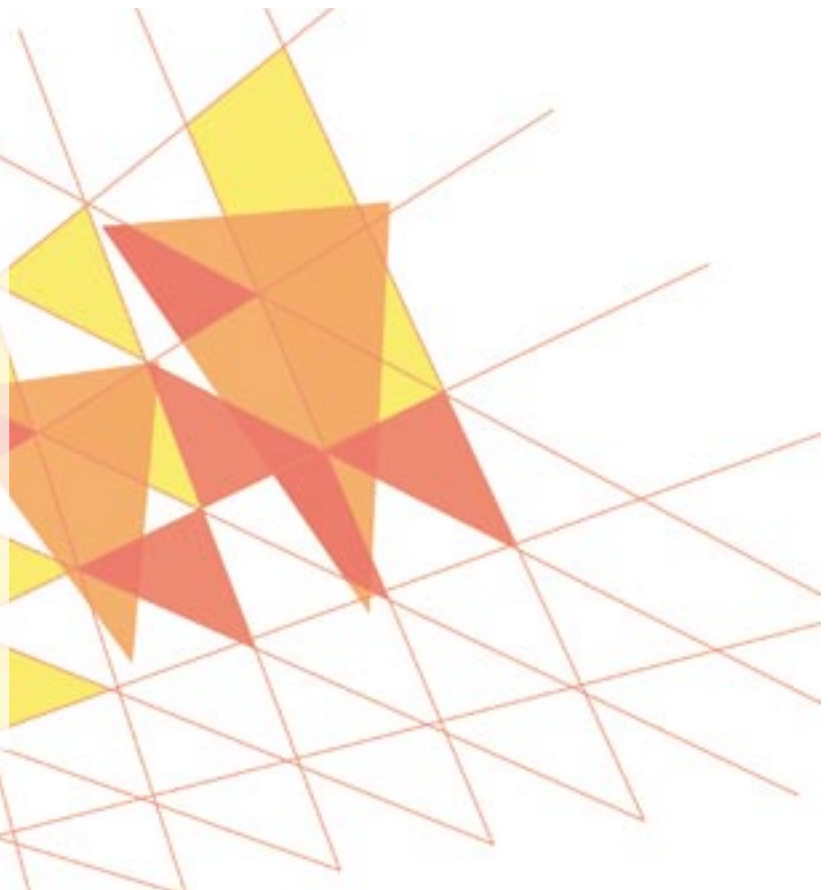


The World Expo 2010 in Shanghai is starting this spring and the Philippine pavilion evokes organic, people-made cities. Celebrating the idea that cities are made by the people who live in them – in ways that transcend and overwhelm the work of planners – the pavilion is designed as a free, animated, multipurpose space. The performing artists inhabiting it for the duration of the Expo stand in for all Filipinos: a people who constantly take over their streets to use them as markets, festival sites, procession itineraries, and outdoor salas. And while there are many other countries where city streets serve as vast theaters, the Philippine version has a distinctly intricate association with family and community relationships. It is these dynamic relationships that are expressed – or rather performed in hundreds of thousands of daily hand gestures – in music and dance, careful professional work, and the widest repertoire of care-giving skills in the world.

THE DESIGN VOCABULARY

Curator Marian Pastor Roces, assisted by conceptual artist Adrian Jones, conceived an intellectual infrastructure that the Philippine design team – led by Architect Ed Calma and graphic designers Damien and Asuncion Anne – translated into a visual and spatial experience. The infrastructure is anchored by five “cues” that reveal the underlying logic of Philippine cities. These are: the diamond shape, the Filipino hand, the sari-sari store, the multipurpose space, and the billboard.

The figure of the **diamond** or rhombus is a reference to the consistent appearance of this shape in Philippine traditional ware, textiles, boat sails, mini festival flags, musical instruments, and even house elements. The figure’s use in the pavilion is a visual cue to the links of the modern Philippine city to an archaic character.

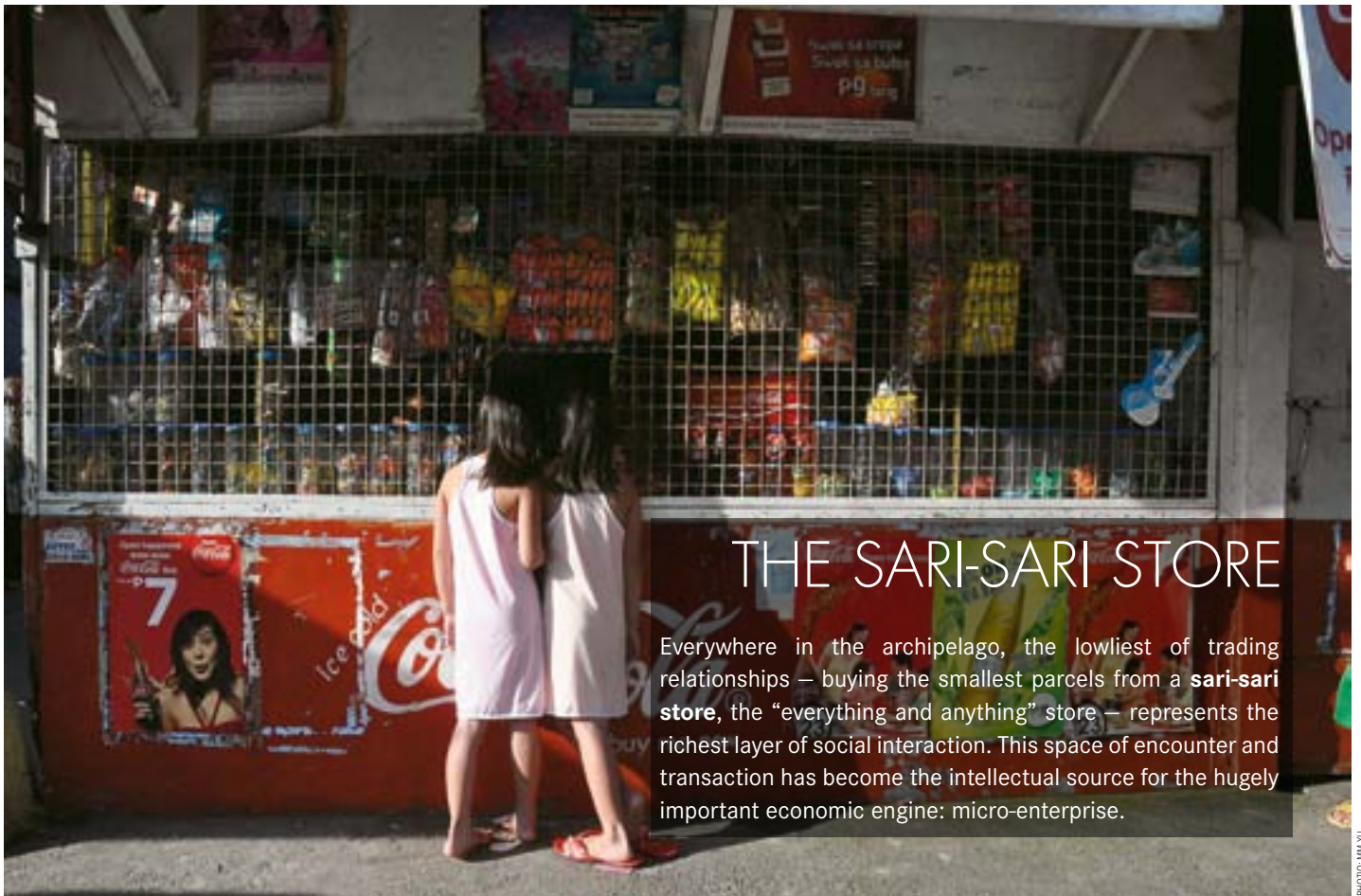


THE HANDS

The **Filipino hand** gestures towards the millions of acts of kindness, creativity, and intelligence that literally build Philippine cities, with, over and above the work of planners and architects. These hands perform the magic that all visitors recognize as Filipino love for home and community.



IMAGE: NEAL OSHIMA



THE SARI-SARI STORE

Everywhere in the archipelago, the lowliest of trading relationships – buying the smallest parcels from a **sari-sari store**, the “everything and anything” store – represents the richest layer of social interaction. This space of encounter and transaction has become the intellectual source for the hugely important economic engine: micro-enterprise.

PHOTO: IAN YU

THE MULTIPURPOSE SPACE

Basketball courts metamorphosing into festival venues, streets becoming markets and markets becoming performance areas, restaurants evolving into theaters, and plazas used as outdoor salas: Philippine cities do not abide by single-use dictates. **The multipurpose space** is a hallmark feature of cities that are made by the people living in them.

IMAGE: NEAL OSHIMA



THE BILLBOARD

Anyone driving through Philippine cities at night is transported into an over-the-top landscape of illumination. **Billboards** are like giant lanterns puncturing the dark and offering an entrée into fantastic worlds. The Filipinos, so given to fantasy and optimism, have transformed the ordinary consumerist instrument into a major communal cultural statement.

PHOTO: TOTO TARKISA



A TIME TO BUILD

THE ENTERTAINMENT CITY IS THE MOST AMBITIOUS TOURISM PROJECT IN THE PHILIPPINES TO DATE. IT WILL CHANGE THE SKYLINE OF METRO MANILA AND RIVAL OTHER BILLION-DOLLAR DEVELOPMENTS IN MACAU AND SINGAPORE.

Text: TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

REINVENTION. CONSTANT REINVENTION.

Without it, everything from celebrities to brands, companies, cities and even countries become as passé as last season's fashion and become vulnerable to more aggressive players who are out to achieve a single goal: to get a sizable chunk of their market or territory.

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is well aware of this irrefutable truth, especially with the rise of billion-dollar developments in neighboring Macau and Singapore that are already siphoning precious tourism and gaming dollars away from the Philippines.

PAGCOR, however, has an ace up its sleeve – the Bagong Nayong Pilipino Entertainment City Manila complex along scenic Manila Bay that promises to put the Philippines on the minds of not just high rollers but also locals and tourists looking for a good old time.

The project that will rise on a 150-hectare reclaimed property near the SM Mall of Asia – the second largest in the continent – is grand by any measure. It is envisioned to have as many as eight hotels, a museum, various theme parks, shopping malls and other recreational establishments. “With the Entertainment City we want Filipinos to be proud of Manila and their country as a whole for initiating a project of this magnitude,” says Efraim Genuino, Chairman of PAGCOR. “These world-class establishments will change the skyline of Metro Manila forever and we feel confident that once the project is fully operational, the sense of belonging to this city will also improve as a consequence,” he continues.

According to sector analysts, over one million additional tourists a year could flow into the Philippines, while the complex could create as many as 200,000 new jobs.

Genuino explains how: “We expect to provide at least 50,000 new jobs, especially among card dealers and gaming experts whose experience is valued in companies overseas. Through synergies with other sectors such as construction, furniture, food industry and services, we expect the number to escalate to 200,000 when it comes to indirect job creation,” he says. “If you think that all these people will also be part of extensive families, as is customary in the Philippines, the socio-economic impact of this project will be enormous.”

The development of the Entertainment City will complete the shift in PAGCOR's growth strategy from just casino operations and gaming to wholesome, family-oriented recreation and entertainment. There are reasons for the state-run gaming corporation to be optimistic about fulfilling the lofty promise of the Entertainment City as big investments have already been committed.

In June 2009, three major investors — the SM Group of retail magnate Henry Sy Sr., Genting Group of Malaysia and Universal Entertainment (formerly Aruze Corp.) of Japan, a partner in the Wynn group, deposited a combined \$300 million in earnest money to assure PAGCOR of their commitment to pursue their plans to take part in developing the reclaimed property into the country's flagship integrated gaming and entertainment complex. As each group is required to invest a minimum of \$1 billion according to the terms of reference, PAGCOR is already banking on \$3 billion in investments, and that's just the start.

“On June 30, 2010, Universal Entertainment will break ground at the Entertainment City and they will start construction immediately after,” says Genuino. “This is



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a very important event, as it shows that the investors are serious about their commitment.”

Even more important in the long run is the recent denomination of this mega project as a special economic zone. Under existing Philippine regulations, businesses that are operating within the economic zones are entitled to fiscal incentives and are exempt from most national and local taxes, except real estate taxes and a five percent tax on gross income. According to Genuino, the local government has created a win-win scenario for both itself and investors. “Providing a sound business landscape for the investors will assure the success of this venture. This means more jobs, increased productivity, higher income and a better quality of life.”

Companies like Universal Entertainment or Genting Group are not attracted to the Entertainment City by just a fancy blueprint. Like all capitalists, they know when and where profit is to be made and they believe that they will find it there. Their sanguine outlook is due in part to rosy projections of economic growth in the Philippines and the rest of Asia, which will mean higher disposable income that will go to fun and entertainment.

Already, real estate companies are building high-rise developments in Metro Manila’s own Bay Area on expectations of the people and the investments that will come to the Entertainment City.

“At the moment there are 14,000 hotel rooms available

in Metro Manila,” says Genuino. “With this project we can double the total number.” Genuino’s arguments are echoed also by Secretary of Tourism Joseph Durano who stated that the influx of investments means that tourism is bound to be a major growth driver in the coming years.

The \$700-million Resorts World project, which has already become a landmark in the city, is a smaller example of what the Entertainment City will become. Built a stone’s throw away from the busy Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Resorts World is fully licensed and regulated by PAGCOR.

Behind the venture is Travellers International Hotel Group Inc., a joint venture between the Genting Group of Malaysia and Alliance Global Group Inc. of Filipino-Chinese real estate magnate Andrew Tan.

It doesn’t take a stretch of the imagination to see that many Filipinos who have become prized employees of gaming companies abroad will be able to return and make a fresh start at the Entertainment City or at developments like Resorts World in the near future.

“I believe no other projects so complete and similar in scale will appear anywhere in the world in the near future, at least not for the next 10 years,” says Genuino. “We can make history with the Entertainment City and dramatically change the perception of the Philippines abroad, as well as the quality of life of many of our citizens.” □

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HOLLYWOOD GAMES

FROM THE TIME WHEN LAS VEGAS WAS A DUSTY EXPANSE OF DESERT TILL PRESENT DAY, MOVIES HAVE MIRRORED THE CHANGES IN THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF GAMING. SINCE THE 1950s, GAMING ON FILM WENT FROM A SIN TO BE PUNISHED TO A PURSUIT TO BE ENJOYED – WISELY.

TEXT: CARMEN MOURA ILLUSTRATIONS: ED

Frankie Machine arrives back in town one early morning, a suitcase in his hand and a smile on his face as he gets off the bus. Frankie has been away recovering from a heroin addiction and now that he's clean, he has returned to make a new start and to care for his invalid wife.

As he walks down the street to his place, however, we see that this is a world full of temptations for a fallen man. There are bars lining the sidewalks and people staggering home, cigarettes dangling from their lips. Our fears for Frankie are soon materialized in the shape of Schwiefka, a suave hood who runs illegal card games. He's glad to see Frankie and wants him back to use his "golden arm" for dealing cards at his games. Frankie shakes his head: the golden arm now will be used to play drums in a band, to make an honest living. Schwiefka and Louis, Frankie's erstwhile heroin provider, smile and bide their time.

In 1955, Otto Preminger's *The Man with the Golden Arm* caused controversy for showing heroin addiction in all its

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A QUICK GLANCE AT GAMING IN THE MOVIES:



***The Cincinnati Kid* (1965):** In somber card rooms during the Depression, Steve McQueen has one obsession: how to wrest the title of best poker player from Edward G. Robinson. He doesn't succeed.



***The Gambler* (1974):** Bad shirts, bad hair and a bad addiction. Though Vegas was in full swing in the 70s, James Caan's literature professor was still based on Dostoyevsky's tortured experiences of a century before.



***21* (2008):** A sleek young group of card counters is threatened with bad beatings instead of just frowned upon by the casino. But they still get away with their winnings in a garbage bag.

ugliness for the first time. Frankie (Frank Sinatra) succumbs to heroin again as his plans for clean living go awry and he goes back to dealing cards to support his habit. After 24 hours at a poker table without a hit, Frankie is told by Schwiefka to change the game around by cheating. But his golden arm fails him: he is so tired and the withdrawal symptoms are so severe that he is caught by the poker players and beaten up. The climactic scene of the film shows Sinatra going cold turkey as Kim Novak keeps the door to her room locked in spite of his screams.

Sinatra was nominated for an Academy Award for best actor and the film sparked the possibility of showing all types of ugly truths on the big screen. It also seemed to be putting poker and gaming in general on the same footing as heroin addiction. The card rooms where Frankie deals, against his will, are made darker and more sinister by the black and white photography and Frankie is a literal prisoner within them, having to participate in a hellish, never-ending game so that he can feed his need for drugs.

For a long time Hollywood studio films were censored and the content of any proposed motion picture was scoured for morality. If drugs, adultery or gambling were shown, the characters had to pay a heavy price before they found redemption at the end. Gaming was never the stuff of fun, unless what was depicted was a friendly bridge game played by women or old men.

In fact, gaming only became legal in Nevada in 1931 and it wasn't until the 1950s that Bugsy Siegel saw the possibility of a gaming paradise in the middle of a desert. Las Vegas sprang up as an attractive investment for crime figures. Other states took a while to follow suit, with New Jersey only becoming a significant tourist destination after it legalized gaming in Atlantic City in 1976. Due to the federal system, states need to decide whether or not gaming should be legal on their own: to this date only 18 states and Puerto Rico allow commercial casinos in some form.

Gaming kept being portrayed through the old dichotomy of sin versus redemption for a long time. Norman Jewison's *The Cincinnati Kid* was released in 1965, but it was set in Depression-era New Orleans. Though the 60s were a much more permissive age and Steve McQueen's character Eric "The Kid" Stoner is a cool cat, the card games are still set in dark rooms with closed windows, cheating and some degree of blackmail permeating the very idea of poker. This time, however, the evil plan by rich, spoiled player Slade (Rip Torn) to cheat Lancey "The Man" Howard (Edward G. Robinson) out of his title of "greatest player" goes askew. The Kid may succumb to the insistent charms of his friend's wife Melba (Ann-Margret), but he wants a clean shot at the title. He tells Shooter (Karl Malden) to deal the cards honestly in spite of being financed by Slade. He bets heavily on a full house, but

Howard reveals that he has a straight flush.

Gaming might have been illegal in *The Cincinnati Kid*, the room dark and McQueen might have given in to Ann-Margret's curves, but he loses like a gentleman. Edward G. Robinson walks away with his winnings undisturbed, and McQueen emerges into the day to find his loving girlfriend waiting for him, having forgiven all.

In 1974's *The Gambler*, James Caan, who was battling his own addiction to cocaine at the time of shooting the film, plays literature professor Axel Freed in this loose adaptation of Dostoyevsky's eponymous novella. He has a job he likes and a beautiful girlfriend, but Caan needs to bet on just about anything and it's not long before he's \$44,000 in debt. He haunts the New York card rooms, which in spite of 1970s' colorful shirts and pants still look like the illegal dens they were, but he doesn't seem to have any luck. Finally his mother lends him the money to pay off his debts but he can't help going to Las Vegas where he starts to gamble it all over again. At the blackjack table he puts most of his chips on cards that amount to 18 points. "Give me the three," he tells the dealer. A Mahler symphony begins to soar. The three lands on the table. He has doubled his money only to lose it all again on a sports bet. The dichotomy of sin/redemption is still present, though this is the 70s.

After Howard Hughes and other legitimate investors purchased hotels and casinos in Vegas, the city's connection to organized crime decreased gradually throughout the decades and eventually the legalization of commercial casinos in many US states during the 1990s saw a paradigm shift in gaming films. More and more of them started to be set in Las Vegas, showing a world of attractions built around glitzy casinos. But Hollywood could still not get rid of some cherished ideas about gaming.

One of them is the fascination with card counting, which created such iconic images as Dustin Hoffman's *Rainman* in a grey suit muttering numbers under his breath at a blackjack table. In the movie world people who are seen to be card counting by hotel security are still taken to the back to have their limbs threatened with a hammer. This is what happens to the sleek band of card counters in *21* (2008). Seeking to make enough money to afford his tuition at Harvard medical school, Ben Campbell falls with the clique formed by his MIT math teacher Rosa (Kevin Spacey): gifted young people who hit the casinos at Vegas in disguises and help each other count cards. This is actually an illegal move which has casino security's eyes and ears open throughout the world, but casino officials laugh at the idea of harming clients in the basement. Usually they are approached by staff and politely asked to leave, or a member of security will engage them in conversation to make them lose count.

A franchise that shows casinos in all their glory is the Ocean

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Casino Royale (2006): Straddling the decades is über male James Bond: always elegant and never losing a hand — or his head — at the poker table.



Ocean's Eleven (2001): Boys-who-steal will be boys in this franchise that spanned three movies. Though more interested in the casino safe than in the blackjack tables, the Ocean films still make Las Vegas look good.



Las Vegas (2003 till present): The US TV series showed a kinder, gentler side of the casino from the point of view of the staff, including a head of security turned president of operations who looks out for players.

The name's Bond. James Bond.
The British secret agent has been
sauntering in and out of casinos
since 1962's *Dr. No*.

films (*Ocean's Eleven*, *Twelve* and *Thirteen*). Here casino owners are sometimes not that nice, but the establishments themselves are legitimate, elegant venues for grown-up fun. Daniel Ocean (George Clooney) and his crew are more interested in stealing than they are in making some money at the blackjack tables, but Vegas is portrayed as a sleek town with high rise buildings, extravagant water fountains and all.

TV has also given gaming a break with the series *Las Vegas*. For once the protagonists are the casino staff, led in the first few seasons by James Caan – 30 years after *The Gambler* and now inhabiting the character of an ex-CIA agent turned casino security chief, turned president of operations. He takes an interest in ex-Marine Danny MacCoy (Josh Duhamel) and teaches him the ropes at the casino: how to spot and deflect trouble and also how to be somewhat of an angel figure to innocents who might otherwise be trapped by Vegas' whirl of fun and overspend at the tables. It's not uncommon, in fact, for real casinos in small communities to take such a personal interest in their players, convincing them to go home early when they are having a bad night.

Only one character has walked in and out of casinos with his tuxedo unwrinkled and his winnings intact in the last half a century. James Bond, the über male alter ego, has been allowed by Hollywood to gamble without collateral damage since 1962 when *Dr. No* was released. But Bond has been gaming in Europe, where morals are notoriously looser and casinos are beautiful palaces full of lovely women

and elegant men. And considering that he has a license to kill, why should a game of baccarat be seen as anything particularly sinful?

In fact, Bond never seems to be more addicted to cards than he is to beautiful women, fast cars or his shaken-not-stirred martini: he is able to walk away from any of them in pursuit of Her Majesty's secret service.

Bond's gaming run culminates in 2006's *Casino Royale*, which brought Daniel Craig and a much needed strong script to the franchise. Based on Ian Fleming's novel of the same name, about one third of *Casino Royale* takes place at a poker table in Montenegro, where Bond plays out a tense game against his enemy of the moment, the sinister Le Chiffre (Mads Mikkelsen). Annoyed at Bond's good luck, Le Chiffre has a drug that will induce a heart attack dropped into the secret agent's drink. Bond needs to excuse himself from the table, run to the parking lot, establish contact with M16 in London and get shocked back into life by a small defibrillator kit. Returning to the table in his elegant black tuxedo to the astonishment of Le Chiffre, Bond quips, "Sorry, that last hand nearly killed me!"

From the 50s when Las Vegas was still being built and administered by some unsavory characters and gaming elsewhere mostly went on in illegal card rooms to the present day where

Sin City is pretty much considered the City of Fun in boys-will-be-boys movies, Hollywood has shifted the perception of gaming, from something to heavily atone for to a civilized pursuit for adults with the simple advice: play smart. □



URBAN LANDSCAPES

With a GDP of \$150 billion and 12 million people, *Metro Manila* contains not only the capital of the Philippines but an agglomeration of 16 other cities. Makati, Mandaluyong, Marikina, Pasig, Quezón, Taguig are just some of the names of the cities surrounding Manila which are seamlessly integrated into a megalopolis. With its chaos and dynamism, Metro Manila is one of the most modern metropolitan areas in Southeast Asia. Here is a look at it from the point of view of writers and photographers.



CITY OF CONTRADICTIONS

Manila is old, Manila is new, Manila is Far East and West, it is the Muslim settlement that the Spanish conquistadores found at the mouth of the bay, it is the city of gleaming shopping malls spreading across the landscape of the 21st century, it is Third World and First: cardboard and tin shacks leaning against the high concrete walls of huge mansions, rusty jeeps festooned with plastic colored banners and statuettes of the infant Jesus careening down congested highways, passing shiny Porsches ferrying beautiful women in couture from the Paris spring collections as if there were seasons in the tropics besides hot-

« AYALA AVENUE, TOTO TARROSA

Between 1999 and 2009, Tarrosa took photographs of Metro Manila on Good Friday. The city always became empty in stark contrast to its usual bustle.

FIRE IN THE DISTANCE, MARCO VENDITTI (2007)

Makati is considered the premier business district of Metro Manila. Its skyline is given more drama by smoke from a fire.



and-dry and hot-and-wet, workers exiting the packed trains and trooping to the office at 9 am while call center agents stagger out into the blazing sunshine, permanently jetlagged, looking for a nightcap; grown men wailing about love lost, found, and lost again in karaoke bars at 4 in the afternoon while women walk on their knees from the door to the altar of Baclaran Church, praying for the husbands, fathers, brothers toiling in the deserts of Saudi Arabia.

Every city has its contradictions, but Manila offers no explanations. It just is.

● *Jessica Zafra*



≈ **BRIDGING THE GAP, G. RAINIER B. MANERA**
(2008)

Photographing a landmark like Gustave Eiffel's Quezon Bridge in Quiapo is a way of immortalizing the city for Manera. Bridges add to the city's personality.

» **DRIFT, FRANK CALLAGHAN**
(2008)

British-Filipino photographer Callaghan finds himself drawn to the quiet, empty spaces of urban fringes at night and to the unintentional beauty of dwellings.





**UNTITLED, WAWI NAVARROZA
(2009)**

The wake of Typhoon Ketsana left Edsa without its ubiquitous billboards. The strangely naked effect served as inspiration for a series by Navarroza.

WE'RE GETTING THERE

“Happiness” is what it says on what is probably the largest billboard along Edsa. It’s easy to come by, the billboard asserts, a bottle of Coke helping you immediately attain it. But it could very well be the truth at the time you’re crossing an expressway that’s considered a necessary evil, just as the phrase “rush hour” means exactly the opposite for someone who’s trying to get somewhere, on a road awash with people who are trying to do the same.

But here is happiness in a bottle. Here is happiness from a millionaire television host, his success now encapsulated by a body spray. Happiness is also a bowl of hydrogenated noodles or a meal of oriental-style, orange-infused chicken beamed from a gigantic screen; the immensity of which blocks a neon sign that states “Jesus Alone Saves”, which in itself is a way to happiness. And here, behind the smirk of Manny Pacquiao, a man who raised this country up by knocking men down, is happiness attained through sheer dedication and pain.

The billboards along Edsa are tremendous and plentiful because the dreams of Filipinos are the same. At least while our commute from fatalism to progression is underway.

For now, happiness will be something we’ll aspire to, vivid on tarpaulin affixed to an expansive backboard. Happiness will be illuminated at six pm daily, while we’re part of a halting procession where a river of taillights are like candles that all signify the same kind of hope.

Because one day, we hope, the roads will flow quickly and smoothly; one day, what will be lit brighter than these two-dimensional dreams and the gross national happiness we’re known for is how our nation is thriving. For now, these looming distractions are welcome – so long as we keep our eyes on the road and keep moving forward.

● *Paolo Lorenzana*



SNAPSHOT: MANILA

CIRCA 2000: Beneath a superhighway flyover, a fortune-teller reads bumps on heads. In Tondo, a fishball vendor's veins run with Lakan blood. Bobby Fischer hides in northern mountains. Amulets, talismans, potions are sold in the plaza in front of Quiapo church, and an old lady peddles stones with moonlight held within. A restaurant owner in Parañaque was once the chef of the Beatles. A priest in Quezon City speaks with the spirits of the land. The last American horsed cavalry marched proudly by the sea as the sun set on the first days of the war. Miracles are as common as death and disease in shanties cluttering the shoulders of the old town. Opera millennia old soars like shrill echoes of the mainland lost in alleyways marked by Han characters. Police make music of squeals of breaks and blasts of horns and dance like matadors in morning traffic. A church rusts

CANDLE STALLS, JAKE VERZOSA (2009)

Fascinated by the display of hope around the Black Nazarene sculpture in Quiapo, Verzosa created a series called "Reflections of Faith". In spite of the rising concrete, the metropolis remains a place of worship.



slowly, remembering the dark holds of ships sailing from a forge far away. Dragons eat starlets for breakfast in department store dressing rooms. Bread of salt is baked in mornings warmed with wood in huge brick ovens. Empires rise and fall in the silences of Binondo. Cicadas cease and still when police cars pass. Muslims bow towards the sea. Cobblestones keep secrets four centuries old. Daemons slumber within the trees. Children raise spiders to fight on knobby sticks for a lunch money wager. The Pearl that was recalls splendor at every sun's swan song. The hopeful flock from provinces a hundred islands away to search for life in the crowded bridge of land between a lake that flows like brown tears to a bay embraced like remembered childhood. Manila always calls us. We return like children. I love this city. □

● *Miguel Syjuco*

**KALESA, ALLEN KEITH DE SILVA
(2010)**

In the heart of old Manila, the city proper, horse-drawn carriages are a reminder of the colonial past.

METROPOLITAN HOTSPOTS

A better city/better life also means moving seamlessly between urban spaces, having brunch, dessert, a relaxing trip to a spa, browsing through a few special stores and going for a drink at a hip hotel and then dinner and more drinks at an all-night club.

The sleek areas of Makati and Fort Bonifacio have all that to offer and more. ***Audrey Carpio*** proposes an itinerary.





SOCIETY LOUNGE

High ceilings, warm chandeliers, and amber wood flooring recreate the tasteful elegance of a French chateau at this restaurant and bar. As you sit on high-back chairs, French chef and owner Patrice Freulson takes fusion cuisine to new places, using the multitude of Asian flavors with the refined techniques of French cooking and creating dishes that aren't necessarily complicated, but executed in high style. When the hour gets late, patrons can shift to the 46-seat capacity bar area where L-shaped couches form mini-beds and the DJ spins appropriately loungey tunes. An enclosed room at the back guarantees privacy, an enclave for the VIPs of society.

G/F Atrium Building, Makati Ave. corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati

CHOCOLATE FIRE

There can never be enough things dipped in chocolate, and gourmet café Chocolate Fire goes beyond the chocolate-covered strawberry of romantic movie scenes (although they do have those) and plunges figs, dates, apples, pomelos and even Pringles into its Belgian blend. Other creative concoctions include smothered cornflake clusters and a spicy dark "bark" with chili bits, giving it real bite. Coffee, sandwiches and seriously indulgent milkshakes (try and say no to the Bananas in Pajamas, made with peanut butter) also make it the latest neighborhood hit, and a soon-to-open wine bar will only add more fuel to the fire.

Leviste corner Rufino St, Salcedo Village, Makati

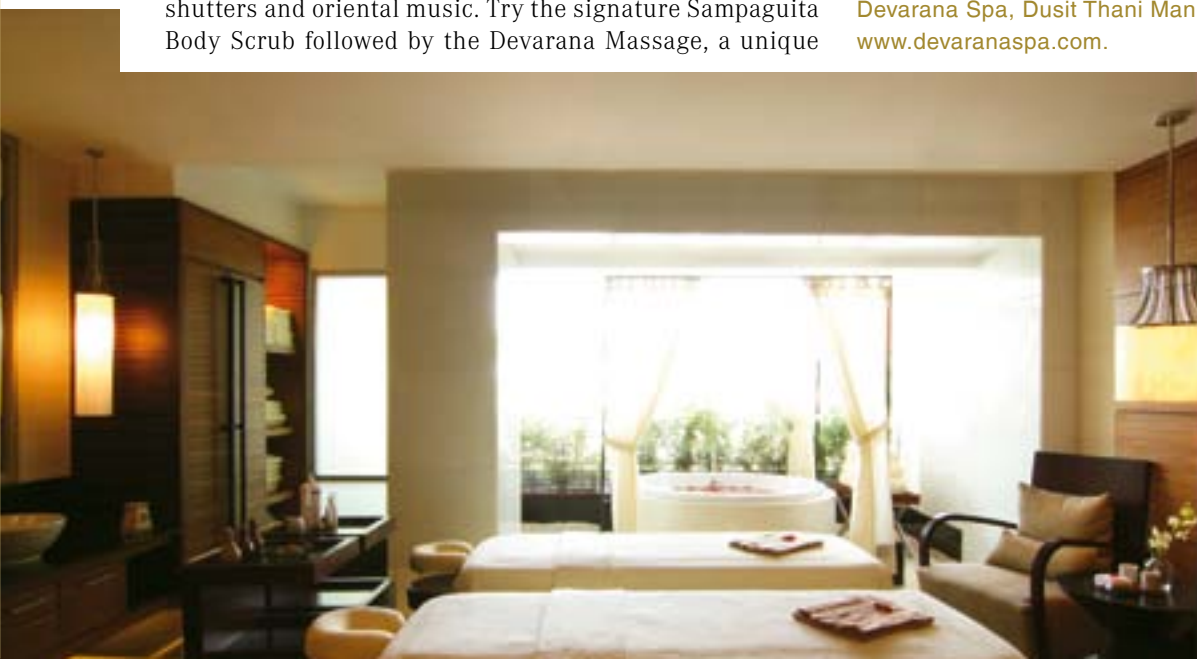


DEVARANA SPA

Bring your cares to Devarana Spa at the Dusit Thani Manila in Makati: you'll leave without them. Devarana (pronounced te-wa-run) means "garden in heaven" in Thai-Sanskrit, and the moment the glass doors open to allow you into the cool, bright interior of the spa, paradise is where you will be. You'll be shepherd by a smiling therapist into your own suite complete with shower, bathroom and a massage room with dim lights, wooden shutters and oriental music. Try the signature Sampaguita Body Scrub followed by the Devarana Massage, a unique

combination of Thai, Ayurveda and Shiatsu techniques with Swedish and Aromatherapy influences. Sampaguita is the Philippines' national flower, and its scent, reminiscent of jasmine, will remain in the air and mix with the citric smell of the bowl placed under your face during your massage. For two hours or even more, according to the package you choose, Devarana will offer you the ultimate pampering experience.

Devarana Spa, Dusit Thani Manila, Ayala Center, Makati.
www.devaranaspa.com.



EAIRTH

On a chance surf trip to the northern beaches of the Philippines, New York designer Melissa Dizon “rediscovered” Filipino culture. Eairth was the raw, wild product of this union, a collection of clothes that embodies the harmony of the earth and air, the organic and abstract. Using natural pigments from coconut husk, talisay leaves and indigo on hand-woven fabrics, the designs always refer back to those twisted, knotted, imperfect pieces she created from T-shirts out of necessity on her surf journeys. Indigenous motifs play with innovative construction and draping, creating a unique global-ethnic style backed by local artisanal knowledge passed through the generations.

101 Bormaheco Condominium, Metropolitan Avenue corner Zapote Street, Makati



SOUMAK

If Eairth clothes the body, Soumak clothes the house. They not only share the same showroom, but the same philosophy of “sustainable luxury.” Textiles woven from abaca, raffia, buntal, silk, and furniture crafted from rattan, wicker, and wood from fallen trees form the heart of this store, owned by artist and designer Yolanda Perez, who literally climbed mountains in search of new-old materials. Her pieces have been exported to posh stores in Europe and the US, while Prince Charles and the Sheik of Jeddah are among her customers. Choice antique and modern pieces from around the world have since been added to the collection, as well as natural bed linens to complement your Ifugao nouveau bed.

101 Bormaheco Condominium, Metropolitan Avenue corner Zapote Street, Makati



THE COLLECTIVE

The latest warehouse-conversion project in the city gathers together shops and services that address a new, but growing market: socially conscious consumers with an unaffected appreciation for the local, the handmade, and the community-oriented. Mixed-use spaces like Blackbook, which showcases clothes and art, New Old Bikes, a custom-rehabbed bike shop and silkscreen workshop, and Ritual, a repository for organic body products and fair-trade coffee, define the spirit of The Collective—communal, creative and up-and-coming. This is not some new hipster outpost, however, the keepers of The Collective are quick to say. They intend to keep an open atmosphere, where everyone can just be who they are.

7274 Malugay St, San Antonio Village, Makati



THE PICASSO

This serviced residence/boutique hotel replaces an iconic apartment building in Salcedo Village but still bears traces of its past beneath the modern remake with cubist and slightly whimsical themes inspired by the prolific Spanish painter. The Art Cabinet, an in-house art gallery, features work from contemporary Filipino artists, and a changing selection of installations are displayed throughout the colorful corridors, keeping the space dynamic and fresh. The Brasserie Boheme restaurant, along with a high-tech gym, spa, parlor and even a modeling agency within the building make it a kind of self-contained community for travelers and transients looking for a more individualized experience.

119 Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati



ESTABLISHMENT

At the end of a strip of clubs, semi-private lounges and ever-revolving restaurants in the shiny new city of Bonifacio lies the Establishment, one of the most grown-up watering holes in the metro. It comes in three highly-designed parts: Tulipan, with neo-Baroque touches like flocked wallpaper, acrylic chandeliers and velvet couches, is a cozy tapas bar serving original cocktails, like the ChocNut Martini. The vibe picks up in the next room—simply called the Hall—which has similarly dark and dramatic interiors, but loud house music and a floor meant to be danced on. Upstairs is the all-white Crystal Room, a charmingly formal French restaurant where you'll find the privacy to dine on your *terraine de foie gras*.

The Fort Strip, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig

PEOPLE



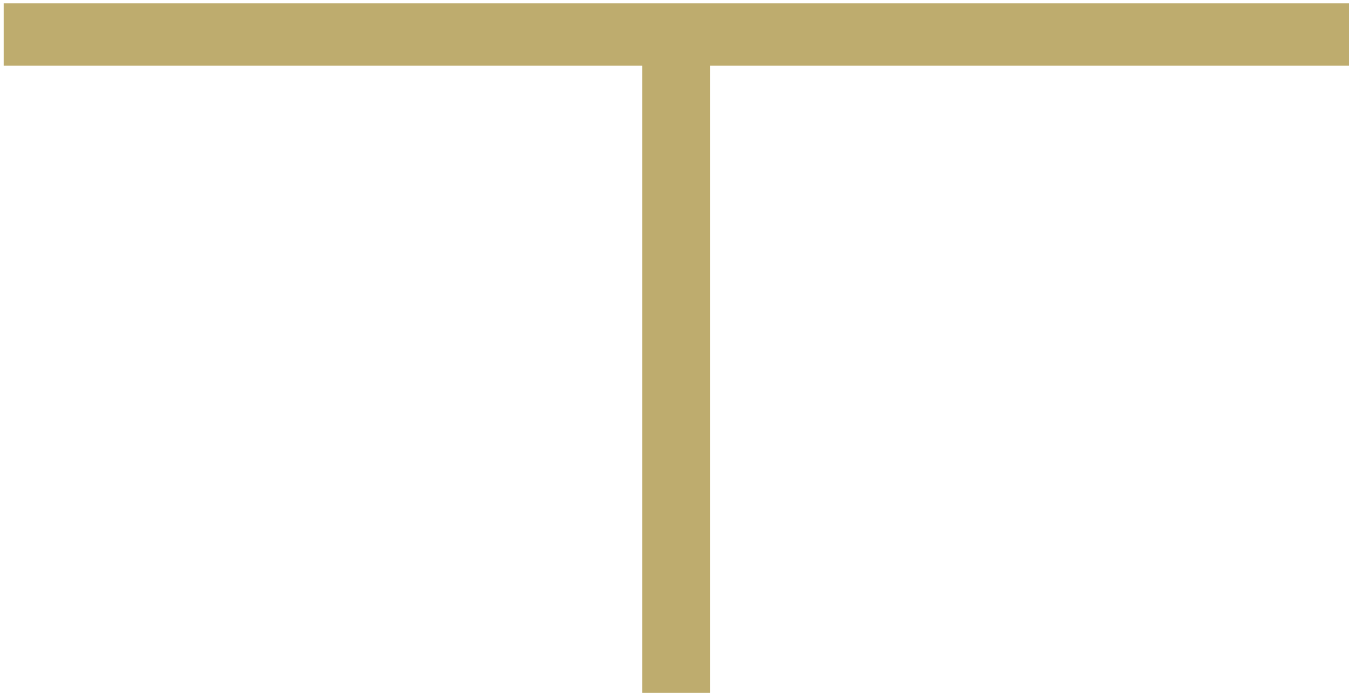
VINTAGE GREEN CHIFFON MUMU DRESS, STYLIST'S OWN
TOTEM RING BY JOYCE MAKITALO AT HOUSE OF LAUREL,
SHOES BY CESAR GAUPO

HEART *of the* TIGER

At one point, Heart Evangelista had fallen hard — for the wrong kind of guy, from her family's good graces, and from the unofficial title of teen screen queen. But in the year of the tiger she shows that she can do it all over again, only better, and get hearts to beat for her once more.

TEXT: PAOLO LORENZANA
PHOTOS: MARK NICDAO
CONCEPT: CARMEN MOURA





This Heart Evangelista is quite a businesswoman.

You would, of course, be more willing to buy into something if whoever's selling it seems honest. This quality of being up-front is difficult in one of the most cutthroat businesses: the selling of oneself, aka show business. The interest of this particular customer, however, has been piqued by the woman sitting across from him at the Italian restaurant she'd asked to meet at; things laid out on the table, so to speak, and appealingly so.

It's only been a year since her career began to show signs of life again, starting with a role in *Mano Po 6: A Mother's Love*, the latest installment in the film franchise known for dramatically depicting the Sino-Filipino ties that bind; a Chinese family's traditions—"Mano po" being a term of respect to elders—and their entanglement with Filipino customs. "It was my comeback movie but I wasn't the first choice," she says, rattling off names of several Eastern-featured showbiz darlings that were in the mix before hers was suggested by the movie's lead, her mother in the film and heavyweight actress, Sharon Cuneta.

"A lot of people weren't so happy about me playing the role so I really had to do my best. It was my first movie after three years...after that whole *thing*," she says, waving away the period of her love-inspired rebellion as if it were a pest.

As her name evokes, romance has always been a factor in Heart's celebrity. But from the adolescent mush in flicks like *My First Romance*, her reality transformed into an epic love story with a few Bonnie and Clyde snags: the sheltered star meets an actor from the wrong side of the tracks; the actor teaches the star to eat with her hands and live on her own; the actress's parents vehemently disapprove but she runs away with him anyway, fans are more entertained by the cloud of gossip surrounding the couple than any show she appears in

afterwards. This has been the case until recently, at least, in the wake of her eventual split with the actor and all the rumors of her getting knocked up and his cheating with a Malaysian actress. Today, Heart refers to this interlude as a "fiasco."

This is why her role in *Mano Po* made for a fitting role for a return to the screen. Drawing on her own life experiences and her mixed Chinese-Filipino heritage, Heart plays a young woman who shuns her Filipina mother after Chinese relatives deceive her, yet whom she reconciles with through their merging corporations. "I can relate. I have a lot of angst about that. I know what that sort of pain feels like, unlike before, when I didn't know what buttons to press because I had no buttons. I didn't even know what unconditional love meant," she explains of the raw emotion *Mano Po* wrung out of her.

The performance of daughter reuniting with mother and pride slackening as the tears fell, won Heart a MMFF (Metro Manila Film Festival) trophy, the Philippine equivalent of a Golden Globe, late last year. She was "a working woman with a strong personality" finally maturing from the ingénues she once played. And on top of what the role called for, it was also what she'd needed in her own life.


The self-awareness now comes easily for someone who has understood the lure of her look since she was 14; a scout at a mall offered her a way out of high school which had only taught her of the insecurity girls were inclined to inflict upon an oriental stunner. The transition from being just a pretty face to becoming one half of PG-appropriate onscreen love team-up with actor John Prats was quick.

Even closer to young people's hearts was her seven-year stint as a VJ on local music channel Myx. When music videos were still the youth's coping mechanism, Heart introducing them with a giggle and hair flip was like dizzying insulin to the male populace. A crinkle of those delicate China-doll eyes

»»




NUDE CHIFFON DRESS BY VEEJAY FLORESCA
METAL BIB NECKLACE BY JOEL ESCOBER AT MYTH
FLESH-COLOURED SHOES BY YSL

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair styled in a traditional updo. Two large, vibrant red tassels are attached to her hair. She is wearing a sleeveless dress with a rich, textured pattern of red, gold, and white, featuring large, stylized floral motifs in purple and white. Her expression is serene as she looks downwards. The background is a dark, solid color, creating a dramatic effect.

BEADED ORIENTAL-INSPIRED
DRESS BY RAJO LAUREL,
HAIR ORNAMENTS AND
EARRINGS, STYLIST'S OWN



AQUA CHIFFON DRESS BY JUN ESCARIO,
THREE-PENDANT NECKLACE BY JOYCE
MAKITALO AT HOUSE OF LAUREL



RED JERSEY DRESS WITH RHINESTONE
BIB DESIGN BY JUN ESCARIO, DROP
EARRINGS, STYLIST'S OWN, FLESH-
COLOURED SHOES BY YSL

“I REALLY KNOW
WHAT I WANT
NOW AND I STICK
TO THAT. YOU LIVE TO
LEARN FROM YOUR
MISTAKES.”



“I DON'T
WANT TO
DO ACTING
FOREVER...
I WANT TO MATTER
IN ANOTHER PLACE
— THE *REAL* WORLD.”



when her candied lips formed a coy smile could cause pulses to quicken.

This was before the industry had become less of a way to avoid parental dependence for her and more a passion spiked with pain; before she represented another showbiz story that turned sour and was devoured and spat out by both industry and audience.

“I had billboards everywhere and then all of a sudden, one day...” Heart snaps her fingers, demonstrating how quick a country’s poster girl of cute can end up a mere afterthought. She continues, “No one wanted me anymore. Now that I’m back again and doing well, I want to make sure that I’m holding onto something solid if this all collapses.”

“I really know what I want now and I stick to that. You live to learn from your mistakes,” she says, taking into account all that has recently led to wrap up a hit show, shoot two more movies and a television drama, not to mention fulfilling a regular hosting gig for the weekly noontime extravaganza *Party Pilipinas*. All of this before her 25th birthday last month

and all of which she approaches today with a healthy shot of romanticism and a chaser of sobering realism. “I don’t want to do acting forever. I want to do hosting, news casting, whatever. I want to matter in another place — the real world,” she says with that newfound no-bull demeanor taking over. “You have to evolve and keep changing, go with the flow if you want to get where you want to go. I may have all these goals, but stuff happens.”

Which brings us to that something solid she tries to hold on to. More than family or the family business, such as her stake in her parents’ restaurant empire and their co-managing her career, there is something that one must be shrewd enough to sustain. When you know where you’ve come from, what you’ve got, and what really matters, that should count as a pretty firm grip of yourself, shouldn’t it? □

STYLING: SHAHANI GANIA

MAKE UP: DENISE GO OCHOA

HAIR: OGIE RAYEL OF KIEHL’S

PORTRAITS:

young artists take on the world

Hunger comes from the desire to conquer the universe, to shine as a bright light bringing more understanding and new ways to express nostalgia, satire, laughter, movement, love and even disapproval.

We've chosen 5 artists to showcase what can be done with a lot of talent, no lack of ambition, and some hope.

CHARLIE CO: The COLORS

Based in Bacolod, the capital of Negros Occidental, the Chinese-Filipino artist came into the limelight in 1983 when he co-founded “The Black Artists of Asia,” a group known for their politically and socially motivated work.

“Co uses art to provoke, to inspire and to make people reflect on current issues,” says a press release from one of his latest exhibitions in Manila. Co still identifies with this definition. He has exhibited not only in the Philippines, but also internationally and while his art has always been intrinsically Filipino, now it has paradoxically become global.

With his unique universe made up of flashy colors and intricate symbolism, Co awakens our aesthetic sensibilities as well as our consciousness towards issues as varied as politics, society and the human condition itself.

✧ **When we started the Black Artists of Asia movement,** I had pretty much the Philippines in mind. These were the turbulent years of the 80s, of the EDSA movements and many other events that brought so many changes and an awakening to this country. Nowadays I still dwell in political issues, but I tend to look at it from a more global point of view, mainly because of technology. Boundaries are disappearing in a world without walls and so are cultural identities. With millions of Filipinos living abroad – and my family among them – I often wonder how much of our cultural identity will we be able to retain? This is something that fascinates me and worries me at the same time.

✧ **I am not sure I still believe in politics,** but I certainly believe in grass root movements. I, for instance, feel much more effective when I operate in my own town away from galleries and the market of art. There I can implement some of my concepts into real projects as I have an open house to the artists that are looking for a space to where to meet and express their ideas.

✧ **I believe that Filipinos possess an extraordinary creative energy,** which derives from a society that is based on contrasts and a political scene that is constantly on the edge. There is so much poverty and so much wealth in this country and somehow we became numb in front of this clear unbalance. Life is like a black comedy in the Philippines and that’s where I get my inspiration. Humor makes people more human, I think.

✧ **I am a self-taught artist and loads of painters have inspired me over the years,** but if I had to choose one in particular I would say Goya, especially his black period. Filipino masters have also influenced my style. Just now I came back from an exhibition showing the last 50 years of our history of painting and it’s amazing to see how much our perception of reality has changed in a couple of generations.

✧ **I guess you can call my art satirical,** even though I don’t like to be boxed within a particular definition. What I do now could change overnight if I were to be exposed to a dramatic new experience. During my stay in Japan for instance, I learned about the healing properties of painting as I had to deal with personal health problems. With my painting I basically want to tell my story, even if at the end it turns out to be an insignificant one. I just want to share my happiness, my fears, my dreams and, if possible, I want to raise questions in people’s minds about the world we live in, and about me too. □



CANDICE ADEA: The MOVEMENT

“**A**rtists, let me tell you that there are great dancers all over the world, but not many of them can compete with Filipino passion and soul,” says Ballet Philippines’ guest teacher Toni Lopez-Gonzalez, addressing a room full of young, motionless dancers.

Among them is Candice Adea, recently awarded with the Philippine Stage Award for best female lead performer. She listens in silence trying to control her quickly beating heart after a demanding routine, but her eyes have the spark of a clear goal.

Candice graduated with high honors from the Philippine High School for the Arts where she studied under the country’s best dancers such as Nonoy Froilan, Victor Ursabia and Ronilo Jaynario. Her career has been skyrocketing ever since.

Like many of her fellow dancers she lives and breathes classical ballet, but her ultimate hope is to inspire younger generations of Filipinos to discover this noble art.

✂ **I started dancing when I was four years old** as I wanted to emulate my older sister but I got tired of it pretty soon, so decided to learn tae kwon do instead, can you imagine that? I wanted to kick everything around me I guess. Luckily, though, the passion for dancing came back to me – and thank God it did, as it changed my life.

✂ **The first time I entered an international competition I was 13 years old, in Japan.** At that moment I realized how many talented kids existed all over the world. I also realized that only through real commitment and love for this art could one achieve important goals and survive all the emotional and physical pain that comes with ballet dancing. Your feet hurt, your back hurts and your heart aches, but it’s all for the good of the art.

✂ **The capacity of feeling emotions** is what makes a great dancer, I believe. Any professional out there can pretty much perform the same steps, it doesn’t matter how complicated they are, but it is only by feeling them from within that you can make the difference. This sometimes is a painful process as you have to reach inside for feelings, but that’s also what distinguishes us as artists.

✂ **Unfortunately young generations** are growing up surrounded by all kinds of stimuli like mobile phones, computers and all sorts of gadgets that can easily distract one’s mind. Performing arts like ballet inevitably suffer from this global competition, especially in a country like the Philippines where the budget for the arts is undoubtedly limited compared to other parts of the world. For this reason I believe that we have to make an extra effort to stay competitive, starting with us, the performers.

✂ **When I am not in theater rehearsing or performing,** I like to watch films and eat chocolate – still in a movie theater, though. There is something about being in a dark room full of people who are looking for a cultural experience that I wouldn’t exchange for anything else. I am fortunate to be part of Ballet Philippines which is the resident company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), where most of the country’s best performances are held. When it is too late to go anywhere after rehearsals I often stay here to watch different performances with my friends

✂ **The last movie I liked was *Slum Dog Millionaire*.** I loved the flash backs and I loved the story of a young driven person from an unfortunate social background. I love cartoons too and I often cry while watching them. Have you seen *The Lion King*? ☐



MIGUEL SYJUCO: The WORDS

Ilustrado, Miguel Syjuco's first novel, has hit the bookstores. It is a complex tapestry that weaves the work of an imaginary famous writer who has been found drowned in the Hudson River with the protagonist's quest to find his last, unpublished novel. Ilustrado reviews hundreds of years of Filipino history, its present-day society and the human condition itself.

Currently living in Montreal, Syjuco received the 2008 Man Asian Literary Prize and the Philippines' Palanca Award for the then unpublished manuscript of Ilustrado.

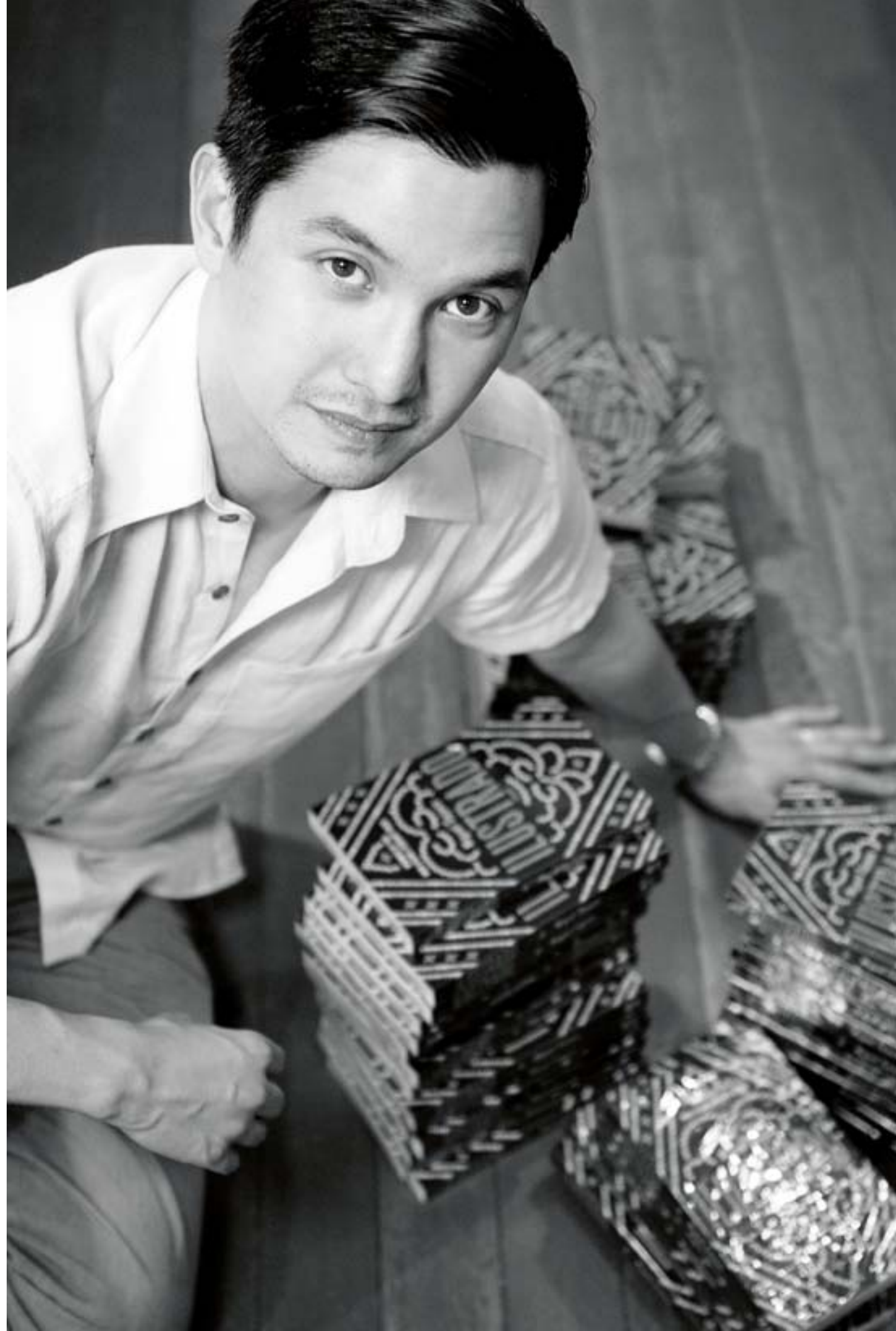
✂ **I was lucky to have a wonderful mother who nurtured my interest in reading.** Growing up bookish, I read everything from Roald Dahl to Dr. Seuss to Franklin W. Dixon to The Bible. I loved the Hardy Boys, Archie comics, and anything else I could get my hands on. But what really transported me were the books of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien. The first thing I ever wrote was in Grade 5; it was a sequel to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. That's thankfully lost to history, but I know now that it was then that literature hooked me.

✂ **I take a lot from other arts – jazz and classical music, film, sculpture, journalism, etc.** One of the big eureka moments for *Ilustrado* came while watching a documentary on T'boli weavers. I saw them manufacture their thread, then weave them into fabrics with patterns. When I saw that, I rushed to take apart my manuscript, which was linear and monolithic, developed the separate narrative threads, and then wove them together to create thematic patterns within the novel. I owe my novel's structure to our indigenous weavers.

✂ **I don't think a Filipino artist should be anything except authentic to himself or herself.** Isn't art about trying to represent some semblance of a particular aspect of a greater multi-faceted truth? The problem, I think, is that we have so few novels coming out of the Philippines that each is expected to be the Great Filipino Novel, the book representing our race and culture. But that's bull. A book should be one of many perspectives that focus on the multiple facets of our rich and storied culture. To take a narrow view of what art should be is parochial and self-defeating. Besides, the Philippine experience is, and has arguably always been, an international one. Our multi-lingual being gives us an advantage, and we writers should use that advantage to bridge the cultural divide between our Anglophones and Tagalophones. The reality is that publishing – but not necessarily writing – in English is simply the price of admission to that global readership. But compared to many countries, we're a step ahead, and I hope we can use that advantage rather than sabotage ourselves.

✂ **In terms of literature,** I don't think we shouldn't get bogged down in questions of the "first" and "third" world dichotomy. In a way, the fact that we're a developing country means we're blessed with plentiful material from which to draw, a myriad of opportunities for growth and innovation, and many chances to try to make a difference in small ways that can hopefully accumulate into real change. But there is an expectation that writing from the "third world" should be exotic or "magical realism", and there's a tendency for writers from such places to pander to the tastes of the market. The choice, then, is the artist's – you can go with the sure thing, follow the trend, and sell your book, or you can try to do the more challenging and unsure thing and try to make something new that may or may not succeed in what it tries to be. I understand those who decide to write in the "exotic" or "magical" vein, but to me they're not making art – they're manufacturing widgets based on supply and demand.

✂ **I think every Filipino has a love-hate relationship with the Philippines.** That old schoolyard taunt of "The more you love, the more you hate!" couldn't be more apt. We hate aspects of Philippine life precisely because we love the Philippines and being Filipino. I miss the Philippines all the time – it's paradise, really; it's such a paradise our human weakness meant we had to go and screw it up. How can one not love a country blessed with perfect climate, natural abundance, beautiful people, talent, laughter, and great food? It has everything going for it. But what I hate most is that we've been unable to avoid our worst tendencies. The rich do not know when enough is enough, we tend to blame others for our faults, and we just do not yet have the systems in place that would allow us to change what must be changed. □



CHARMAINE CLAMOR: The VOICE

It could be said that Charmaine Clamor's career began at the age of three when she sang in the backs of buses traveling to Manila to entertain the other passengers.

Since then she has created a musical genre called Jazzipino and become one of the most important Filipino singers in the world when her second album, Flippin' Out, made it to the top five in both U.S. jazz and world music radio charts.

Jazz critic Don Heckman of the Los Angeles Times wrote that Charmaine is "One of the important and original new jazz singers of the decade."

Her other CDs include Searching for the Soul and My Harana: A Filipino Serenade, with which she introduced traditional Filipino music to an international mainstream audience.

Charmaine lives in Los Angeles, where she became one of the founders of The Jazz Society of the Philippines-U.S.A.

✂ **With "Jazzipino" I combined my two great loves: *kundiman* and jazz.** *Kundiman* is the Filipino equivalent of the Great American Songbook, with timeless lyrics and classic melodies. Endowing these songs with the soul and swing of jazz, a new and hip genre is born. Then I obtained materials from older folk sources and started singing songs from different regions, with other dialects. I also incorporated some of our indigenous instruments, such as the *kulintang*, *gabbang* and *kutiyapi*.

✂ **If I had a fashion idol growing up, you couldn't tell.** I think they needed to call the fashion police on me back then. Aside from jazz and *kundiman*, I was into new wave music. So whatever cultural delights came during this era, I embraced. In music, my muses were Shirley Horn, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, Nina Simone, and locally the works of ASIN, Apo Hiking Society, Ryan Cayabyab, George Canseco, and Willy Cruz.

✂ **As a girl I daydreamed mostly to Disney music,** especially Cinderella's "So This is Love" and "A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes". I always wanted to be a princess and have the fairy tale life and love story, the "happily ever after" ending.

✂ **What I would want the world to know about my country** is that Filipinos do really want to be on time but somehow our perception of the clock is way off from others. Seriously, we have a multitude of really amazing artists with original concepts and engaging ideas. The world is starting to discover this, and I hope I can be of some help in aiding this process.

✂ **Right now in my iPod there are songs for my upcoming album** and a mixture of others: Shirley Horn's *Here's to Life*, Stevie Wonder's *The Definitive Collection*, VV Brown's *Travelling Like the Light*, Virginia Rodrigues, Sia's *Colour the Small One*, the *Woman on Top* soundtrack, Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*, Lenka, Jason Mraz, Robin Thicke's *Something Else*, Tierney Sutton's *I'm with the Band*, Kurt Elling's *Dedicated to You*, and Joshua Redman's *Wish*.

✂ **More often than not I call things the way they are.** I'm willing to question authority and not believe everything that is out there until I do my own research. I don't usually participate in the popular culture (I probably watch TV two hours a week, if that), and one of my life goals is to not have material lust. I usually conform when it is for the best of the team or the group and the issue involved does not conflict with my core values.

✂ **Palawan, in the Philippines, is an island to get lost in.** I would take my family, my camera, my Kindle, journal, my iPod with speakers for dancing and singing – oh, and sun block! ☐



JIM LIBIRAN: The EYE

Born in Tondo, one the poorest areas of Manila, Jim Libiran has risen to the limelight of the Filipino independent movie industry by using his heritage as a creative backdrop for his films. While in *Tribu*, a film acclaimed at the 2008 Paris Cinema Festival Libiran told the inside story of the gangs of Tondo, in *Happyland* he looks at the social virtues of football and its force to unite underprivileged children. “I began my career as a reporter and my work took me to faraway places like Afghanistan and Iraq, but it is over here, right where I was born that I found the most dramatic stories to tell,” he says.

While Libiran’s style combines the essential qualities of cinema vérité and the social connotations of investigative journalism, it is his uncompromising eye directed towards problems that are afflicting the Philippines that is making a difference.

✂ **Tondo used to be the capital of an ancient kingdom. Today is known for its infamous Smokey Mountain,** where thousands of souls used to survive on piles of trash. The mountain of trash was finally removed a few years ago, but the problems of Tondo were not magically eradicated. Two million people are still there, most of them living below the poverty line, and sometimes it feels like they have been forgotten by our society. Tondo is like an extra character in my films, it’s not just another location. It couldn’t be otherwise since I was born there. My films are in fact a four-dimensional exercise where the city has its own place in time and space.

✂ **After I shot *Tribu* I led a group of ambassadors to visit Tondo,** as the area all of a sudden has become fashionable among a certain cultural elite. In May the Goethe Institute, for instance, will bring a famous German rapper to organize a concert at the top of what once was Smokey Mountain. He’ll perform there with local Filipino musicians who have turned Tagalog slang into poetry. These are positive initiatives that can reestablish a connection between a forgotten part of the city and the world out there. It is also an inspiration for me to bring my camera and film again in Tondo.

✂ **For my films I mix real people with professional actors.** I guess that’s part of my journalistic background. You don’t need to tell real people what is going on, they know that already and that is their strength. All they have to do is be themselves in front of the camera. In *Happyland* for instance I used a real priest, Father James, who came to the Philippines during the 60s trying to teach football and hasn’t left since.

✂ **Although I am not a football player,** I believe this sport suits the Filipinos much more than basketball, which was adopted as our national sport after the American occupation of the Philippines. Besides, you don’t necessarily need a real football field to play, all the basketball courts available in this country could be used to play five-a-side. Because basketball is so competitive now, only a few young people are able to emerge and most of them are already from higher institutions and a middle class background. Football, on the other hand, puts together a larger number of people and it is a sport that could bring a real change to the lower social classes. In a way it’s like real therapy for these kids, some of whom have terrible stories of violence and drug abuse. I have seen the change happening in Tondo with my own eyes.

✂ **My son is 10 years old and I believe he is the real reason** why I made this film. I wanted to leave him a story of hope to dream about. ☐



BEHIND *THE* SCENES

BACKSTAGE AT THE HIT SHOW
FLOW THE MAGIC BEGINS. FIRE
IGNITES BETWEEN DANCERS,
ACROBATS PRACTICE THEIR
MOVES AND SHOWGIRLS PREEN
IN THEIR FEATHER COSTUMES.

PHOTOS: WESLEY VILLARICA
ART DIRECTION: RAFFY TESORO







A FOLLIES DANCER HAS
FUN WITH BUBBLES WHILE
WAITING FOR HER TURN.



THE PASSIONATE REHEARSAL
OF A FLAMENCO DRAWS THE
ATTENTION OF OTHER ARTISTS.



DEDICATION WITH A TWIST:
THE CHINESE CONTORTIONISTS USE THE
SMOKE MACHINES AS SUPPORT FOR THEIR ACT.





SMOKING HOT: TAKING A MOMENT TO ENJOY
A CIGARETTE ON THE SLY DOESN'T STOP THE
DANCERS FROM LOOKING THEIR BEST.



TAPPING HER FEET IN A SOLO
ACT UNDER THE LIGHTS IN
PREPARATION FOR A BIG NUMBER.



A LYRICAL MOMENT AS
A COUPLE OF ACROBATS
PRACTICE A DIFFICULT ROUTINE.



THE HIGH JUMPS AND STREET MOVES
OF HIS COLLEAGUES ARE NEWS TO
THE AUDIENCE, BUT NOT TO HIM.

ANCIENT GOLD

THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION AT THE AYALA MUSEUM ENTITLED “GOLD OF ANCESTORS: PRE-COLONIAL TREASURES IN THE PHILIPPINES” FEATURES MORE THAN A THOUSAND GOLD OBJECTS. THEY OFFER CLUES TO A PAST WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT: AN ERA MARKED BY WEALTH, SOPHISTICATION, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE GREAT CULTURES OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

TEXT: JESSICA ZAFRA PHOTOS: NEAL OSHIMA/COURTESY OF AYALA MUSEUM

On the fourth floor of the Ayala Museum, in the heart of Makati City’s commercial district, there is a literal treasure trove. A collection of gold objects believed to date back to the 10th-13th centuries elicits many questions, beginning with the age of the artifacts. Most of the pieces were not found under controlled scientific conditions; some of the most stunning artifacts were accidentally turned up by a bulldozer operator at a construction site in Surigao in the 1980s. Only the pieces from the six burial sites excavated by Dr. Warren Peterson in Masago, Butuan, Agusan del Norte in 1981 are supported by archaeological documentation. The approximate ages of the rest of the items were established using three methods.

First, through association with datable Chinese export ceramics. Many of the gold artifacts were found buried with Chinese ceramics, the ages of which can be accurately determined. Some funerary pieces such as diadems and masks appear to have been created at the time of burial.

The dates of the ceramics set the earliest possible dates for the manufacture of the gold.

Second, through radiocarbon dating. Gold is inorganic and cannot be radiocarbon-dated, but organic substances such as charcoal samples found with the gold can be tested through this method.

Third, through stylistic dating. The gold objects found on the six archaeologically-supported excavations are stylistically similar to the other objects in the collection, therefore it is assumed that they were created during the same period.

The second question pertains to the creators of the gold artifacts.

How do we know that the objects were created by the inhabitants of what is now the Philippines? They could have been brought to the islands by traders from neighboring countries.

“That is a very good question,” says Dr. Florina Capistrano-

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Kinnari
Surligao
Ca. 10th to 13th century
12 x 7.5 cm
178.7 grams
Ayala Museum Collection

Baker, curator of the exhibition. “And the answer to that is always, ‘We don’t know.’ One of the reasons the collection is so important is that it provides a large body of works for comparative study with similar objects from Southeast Asia.” These include the artifacts discovered at Oc-Eo in Vietnam and Wonoboyo in Indonesia. “We assume that they are locally made until proven otherwise,” she adds.

The local manufacture argument is supported by a discovery in the northern Philippine island Batanes of a workshop that made the omega-shaped ornaments called “lingling-o.” The lingling-o, which are found all over



Plaque
Surigao
Ca. 10th to 13th century
12.9 x 17.2 cm
71.1 grams
Ayala Museum Collection

Southeast Asia, were formerly believed to be of Vietnamese origin. The findings of Dr. Peter Bellwood’s team in Batanes indicate that lingling-o were actually made in Batanes 2,500 years ago.

Let us assume then, that the creators of these gold objects were from the islands that now comprise the Philippines. What do we know about them?

“From the types of objects they produced, it appears that the producers or their patrons had been exposed to Hindu beliefs,” Dr. Capistrano-Baker notes.

Several objects in the collection show a Hindu influence, notably the Agusan Image, which may represent the god Prajnaparamita. One of the most amazing articles on view is a gold halter weighing almost four kilograms. It is very similar to the Upavita or Sacred Thread, a sash which was worn only by members of the Brahmin class in Hindu society. The Upavita was usually made of fabric; the gold version in the Ayala Museum consists of layers upon layers of gold chains and gold beads.

Then there is the gold wrought vessel in the shape of a winged *Kinnari* – a half-woman, half-bird creature from Hindu mythology. “Inquiry into the migratory movements of peoples and influences in Hinduized Southeast Asia, and the role played by pre-colonial Philippine cultures in these fluid movements, would shed more light on the full significance of this fine vessel,” Dr. Capistrano-Baker writes in the exhibition notes.

The Philippines has always been viewed as having a marginal role in Southeast Asia, where the focus has been on the better-known cultures of Funan, Angkor, Sri-Vijaya, and Majapahit. This collection opens even more tantalizing possibilities.

Many of the objects in the gold collection were found in Butuan in Mindanao. Why did Butuan have so much gold? Who were the fabulously wealthy owners of this treasure, and why have we never heard of them?

If there was so much gold in the Philippines, why did the Spanish colonizers conclude that there was not enough easily obtainable gold in these islands – nothing compared to the scale of Peru or Mexico? Did they fail to find the gold, or did the gold artifacts – and the cultures that created them – vanish before the colonizers arrived?

“The colonial accounts describe how the inhabitants mined only what was needed at the moment, never fully exploiting the mines until more gold was needed,” Dr. Capistrano-Baker explains. “There is still a lot of research to be done on the topic, but there are descriptions of gold jewelry confiscated by the Spaniards from the converted natives, melted, and sent to Spain. What survive are only the gold objects that were interred with the dead, a practice that was not universal on the islands. The Visayans interred gold, but not the Tagalogs.”

“It is interesting to note that the richest mines are in those areas that were not successfully subdued by the Spaniards – the Cordillera in the north, and Mindanao in the south,” Dr. Capistrano-Baker adds.


We do not know the owners of these artifacts, but we know something about the people who made them. We can tell by looking at their handiwork that they were highly-skilled, meticulous, even obsessive about detail. It was not enough for them to create useful, functional objects; they had to be beautiful. The people who made these artifacts were artists. □



TOP: Pectoral
 Butuan, Agusan del Norte
 Ca. 10th to 13th century
 Diameter: 13.1 cm
 37 grams
 Ayala Museum Collection

BOTTOM: Cuff
 Surigao
 Ca. 10th to 13th century
 12 x 19.8 cm
 204 grams
 Ayala Museum Collection



A man with a shaved head, wearing a black martial arts gi with red and white striped trim on the collar, cuffs, and waistband, is shown in a ready stance. He is holding a wooden staff (bō) with both hands. The background is a solid green color, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting the man's face and the gi.

Dominador Vince Lera, third-degree black belt master, gets ready to spar.

FIGHTING SPIRIT

IN A LAND KNOWN FOR ITS WARM, HOSPITABLE PEOPLE WAS BORN THE PHILIPPINE ART OF COMBAT CALLED *ESKRIMA*, *ARNIS*, OR *KALI*. FROM ITS RICH HISTORY DURING TIMES OF CONFLICT TO ITS FORAY INTO THE REALM OF HOLLYWOOD, THERE ARE MANY FACETS TO THIS MARTIAL ART.

TEXT: CHAD RIALP PHOTOS: MARCO VENDITTI AND JESUS CASABAR

The bustling metropolis of Cebu City, found in the very heart of the Philippines, is the epicenter of *eskrima*; a class of weapons-based Filipino martial arts utilizing anything like sticks, knives, and even swords.

Many martial arts enthusiasts flock here for the privilege to train under men like Diony Canete, one of the few men who hold the extremely rare title of Supreme Grandmaster in the art of *eskrima*. Some of Canete's prized students have moved on to be National Champions in a sport that is only now beginning to gain recognition.

While martial arts such as wu-shu, tae kwon do,

or karate typically fall in the realm of competition and exhibition, *eskrima* is used by the local police and the military for a variety of scenarios; from subduing suspects to liberating hostages armed only with a knife. It is a part of the Philippine Marines' basic training for close quarter combat, with a Special Forces branch training in the use of the *bolo* — a curved double edged machete — in their campaign against the Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist group, Abu Sayyaf.

Eskrima is a complex fusion of striking and grappling, utilizing the stick to parry blows, lock joints, and deliver

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copious amounts of pain. The term *eskrima* is most commonly used in the Visayas region – a large cluster of islands in the center of the Philippines where Cebu City is located – and is derived from the Spanish word for fencing, *esgrima*. *Kali* is the name primarily used in the southern islands of Mindanao and abroad.

In turn, *arnis* is the term used in the northern island of Luzon, which contains the capital city Manila, and is now the official term used by the Philippine Olympics Committee. However, all three terms refer to the same field of Filipino martial arts. While *eskrima* and *kali* are more commonly associated with real life combat, *arnis* is the preferred term in regard to sports.

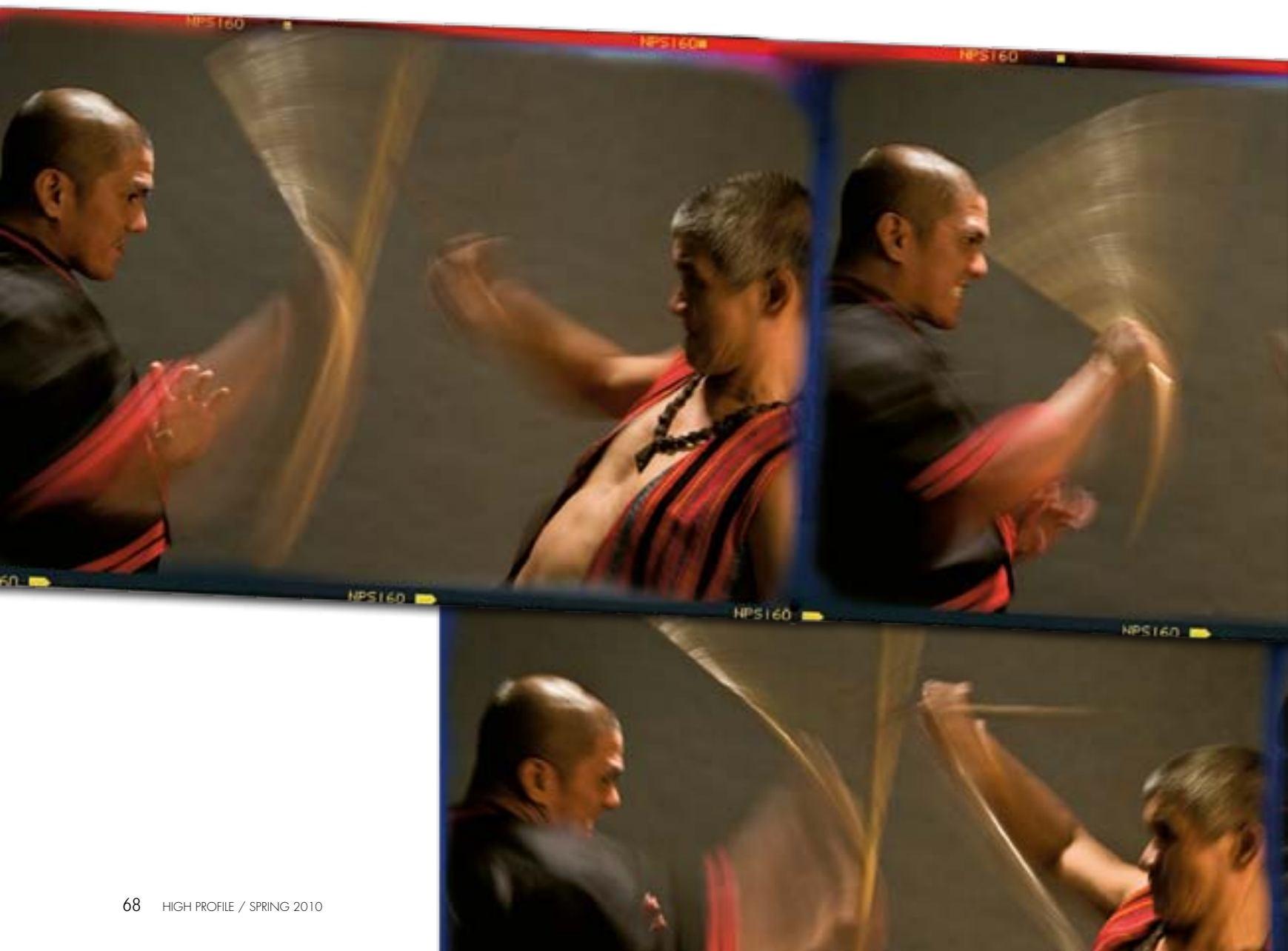
Making the transition from a deadly art to a sport that is safe for competition has been a challenging one. Following a Presidential decree last year that elevated *arnis* to a national sport, the Philippine Olympic Committee aims to transform it for standardized competition. However, there is still much debate in formulating rules that cater to all the different styles of *arnis* that have evolved over its long history.

Because of the Philippines' cultural diversity and island geography, many schools developed their own brand of *arnis*. The fragmented nature of the clubs and their respective styles may be due to trying to preserve their carefully crafted art forms without compromising safety.

Formal tournaments typically follow the set of rules established by the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) that works on a 10-point system with participants donning heavy padding and protective head gear. Though it ensure the safety of the competitors, purists argue that the protective gear is too limiting; the armor heavily favors aggression and takes away from the art's defensive techniques such as blocks, counters, and disarms.

What makes *arnis* unique in the world of martial arts is that newcomers are given a weapon at the very beginning of their training instead of starting out bare handed. The weapon is seen as an extension of the body, so even when unarmed, the same moves still apply.

To date, there are over 200,000 practitioners of this local martial art. Students practice their drills on stacks of old tires, train on rafts floating on water to learn balance, and some old school techniques even require wrestling a



water buffalo to the ground. Using the foundation of basic skills as a springboard, a student can learn numerous angles of attack. Depending on the opponent's first strike, a skilled fighter has a wide array of striking options at his disposal, and is capable of six hit combos in the short span of a second.

Arnis is deeply entrenched in Filipino culture. Its history dates as far back to the 2nd century when migrants from Indonesia and Borneo settled in the Philippines bringing combat styles which were rooted in Indian and Malayan techniques. *Arnis* has since evolved by incorporating the different martial arts from the cultures locals came in contact with; namely the Chinese, Japanese, and the Spanish.

It was here in the Philippines where Portuguese explorer Magellan met his end at the hands of national hero Raja Lapu Lapu at the Battle of Mactan on Cebu Island. The Spanish encountered further resistance from Sultan Kudarat, the legendary chieftain who united the Muslim tribes of Mindanao, preventing the would-be colonizers from gaining a foothold in the gold-rich south. Both were reputed to be skilled *arnis* warriors. Even during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines at the time of



Lera and eighth-degree black belt master Raffy Montalbo display both attack and defense moves of *arnis*.



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A WARRIOR MUST LEARN TO
INTERNALIZE THE BATTLE BEFORE
IT TAKES PLACE TO PREDICT
THE OPPONENT'S MOVES.
THINK ROBERT DOWNEY JR. IN
SHERLOCK HOLMES.

Turning *arnis* into a sport safe for competition has meant donning protective gear for tournaments. Purists argue that the armor favors aggression, taking away from the art's defensive techniques.



World War II, Filipino guerillas used *arnis* to combat their enemies.

It wasn't until 1932 when twelve Grandmasters decided to formulate a teaching method to pass on their techniques. The Doce Pares, meaning "twelve pairs", was formed, which triggered a ripple effect that resonates to this day all the way to Hollywood.

Of course, *arnis* is simply more than just kicking ass. There is a deeper, spiritual aspect to the martial art founded on three key principles. The first is *Gilas*, which literally means skill. In *arnis*, it means finding the balance between mind, body, and spirit. All three must become one entity. The second is *Maglarawan*, meaning visualization. A warrior must learn to internalize the battle before it takes place. In this way he can predict and manipulate his opponent's movements to his favor. Think Robert Downey Jr. in *Sherlock Holmes*. *Dakip diwa* is the third, which translates to "catching the spirit", or attaining awareness without consciousness.

There is also a cultish practice of wearing amulets, called *agimats*. *Agimats* can have a variety of uses such as invisibility and invulnerability when worn. Some even claim certain powerful amulets can make you impervious to blades, even bullets.

It is *arnis*' lightning quick movements and vicious attacks that make it so visually effective. It is these same combat techniques that we see in popular action movies; from Steven Seagal to Matt Damon as Jason Bourne to the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Due to the lack of any written record of how Spartans fought during the 4th century BC, fight choreographers of the movie *300* looked to *arnis* to create some of the most memorable battle sequences to date. Even Bruce Lee spent time under the tutelage of Filipino American Grandmaster Dan Inosanto.

Although it is still relatively unknown outside the martial arts world, perhaps the growing interest generated by *arnis* will transform it into an internationally-renowned martial art. □



THE BLUES OF TAGAYTAY

Only 60 kilometers south of the heat and bustle of Metro Manila lies the cool, stunning town of Tagaytay. Built on a meandering ridge high above the waters of Lake Taal, Tagaytay is the blue-eyed town where water and skies appear to be everywhere you look.

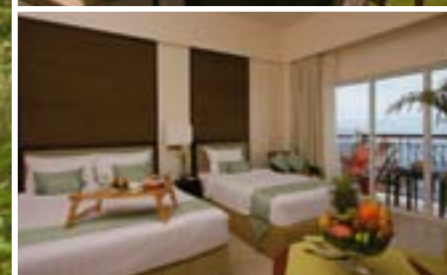
TEXT: CARMEN MOURA

For a town built around a volcano, Tagaytay seems to be the exact opposite of threatening. The scenery is dramatic all right: endless vistas of lakes and hill peaks within the craters of Taal Volcano. But everything here breathes quiet and contentment. Because of the altitude, the air in Tagaytay is fresh. No wonder this is the destination for well-to-do inhabitants of Manila when they want to escape the hotter months – and eat well.

There are many excellent restaurants in Tagaytay which use local products in their original menus. Antonio's is particularly popular with the upscale crowd and is a quite exclusive venue for international cuisine: call ahead for a reservation, especially on the weekends. Josephine along Aguinaldo Highway serves up some of the best Filipino food in the area as well as delivering outstanding views of the volcano. At Sonya's, a charming B&B, you can literally

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THIS PAGE (clockwise from above left): The Taal Lake Yacht Club hosts many exciting regattas every year; A stunning view of the volcano is on offer at the Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club; The Taal Vista Hotel has over 260 stylishly appointed rooms; Sonya's Secret Garden is a delightful resting stop for the night and shows flora in all its variety; Hobie 16 catamarans at the Taal Lake Yacht Club; The fare at Sonya's is served in English china over embroidered linen.

CROWNING EVENTS

stop and smell the flowers. Set in a “secret garden” which Sonya herself painstakingly created, the restaurant is one of the busiest and most beloved stopping places in the area. Particularly good are her patés and tapenades, made with products from her own orchard and greenhouse. After eating, either rest at one of the beautiful rooms of the B&B, each furnished with antiques and furniture that Sonya has brought from Vietnam and Indonesia, or have a signature massage at the in-house spa.

Another place to stay which is a favorite of the Manila crowd as well as foreign visitors is the Taal Vista Hotel. As the name indicates, most of the hotel’s 261 stylish rooms also offer a view of the volcano and the lake. Rooms have modern conveniences such as individually controlled air conditioning, cable TV and Wi-Fi access.

For more restless visitors, Taal Volcano affords the occasion for strenuous activities. Many operators will take you on a tour of the volcanic island inside the crater, which in turn hides another lake and another crater. The Hobie 16 catamarans at the Taal Lake Yacht Club are an alternative to the *bangkas* which offer to take you for a ride on the lake. For an admission fee, the Yacht Club provides a good selection of water-sport equipment. It is also the starting point for several yearly or monthly regattas that combine sportsmanship with a great location: the sails that fill Lake Taal during the regattas create a colorful counterpoint to the calm blue expanse of water.

One of the most exciting golf courses in Southeast Asia is found at the Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club. The 18-hole course is not only a beauty in itself, but it affords a stunning view of the volcano and the lake which makes it a choice spot for a game. Membership allows use of the Country Club facilities such as the restaurant, privileges at the affiliate clubs abroad and exclusive purchase rights for The Highlands homes.

On the way to Manila, buying local products is a high point of a Tagaytay visit: hardly anyone comes to the town without taking back the local *buko* pie made of a sort of custard and moist coconut. These can be found for sale along the road on the way back to Manila and the best are Colette’s. Sonya’s Secret Garden also has a bakery and particularly recommended are her butter biscuits – made without eggs because of a friend’s food intolerance – and her chocolate muffins.

The Philippines is home to 7,107 islands, each more beautiful than the other. But it’s also home to mountains and volcanoes, places where the sand and sea can be exchanged for pure cool air and amazing landscapes that will take your breath away. □

“My vision for this entertainment venue is to turn it into a family and leisure resort-style destination,” says Alexander C. Ozaeta, General Manager of PAGCOR Tagaytay. Considering the property and its ideal location, Ozaeta seems to be on to something.

Located walking distance from the Taal Vista hotel, one of the most established resorts in the region, PAGCOR Tagaytay is planning to expand its entertainment offer by including a brand-new shopping complex and a theme park, as well as other retail attractions in less than five years. “The model for our future development is projects like the Genting Highlands Resort in Kuala Lumpur,” says Ozaeta.

Genting Highlands attracts as much as 19.5 million tourists a year. Clearly Ozaeta does not expect such a dramatic increase of visitors at PAGCOR Tagaytay, but he sees similarities between the two resorts: “Like Genting Highlands, PAGCOR Tagaytay is located in a mountain resort easily accessible from the capital,” he says. “We attract people who are looking to escape the city for several days while enjoying a number of leisure activities including shopping, gaming, water sports, golf, dining and the region’s pleasant climate. For this reason we are coordinating our efforts with the local tourism authorities and presenting PAGCOR Tagaytay as a well-rounded experience that could appeal to families as well as individual visitors.”

Renowned for its abundant green surroundings and crisp, cool air, Tagaytay is certainly a refreshing getaway from the hustle and bustle of Manila. Thanks to the improvement in road transport, it is in fact increasingly becoming the favorite destination of well-to-do Manileños and residents of neighboring towns in search of sophisticated entertainment.

PAGCOR Tagaytay’s main architectural feature is a colorful crown which dominates the façade of the building. Ozaeta sees it as a symbol of the establishment’s future role: “The crown is there to suggest a majestic feeling to the place and our goal is to become the jewel in this crown.”





INSIDE LAKE TAAL

IF ONE EVER WANTS TO TRULY UNDERSTAND TAGAYTAY, THE INCREASINGLY POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION ONE HOUR'S RIDE FROM MANILA, A TRIP TO NEARBY LAKE TAAL AND ITS SIMMERING CRATERS IS A MUST.

TEXT AND PHOTOS: MARCO VENDITTI

Described by tourist guides as something similar to a Matryoshka doll — revealing a set of decreasing sizes of itself — Lake Taal provides a true experience when it comes to roughing it. The excursion's menu includes a trip aboard a local *bangka*, a climb over slippery hills with the help of native horses, a descent over volcanic ashes and ultimately a swim in hot sulphuric waters for relief.

Taal and its environs were settled in the late 13th century by Southeast Asian Muslims from Borneo and Brunei and were rediscovered by the Spanish in the 17th century. All of these settlers left vestiges of their cultures around the lake.

As in every real excursion, you have to wake up early. And early in the tropics means five in the morning — probably with the help of the local rooster. Catch the sunrise from Tagaytay's ridge if you want to start your day right, and no place is better for breakfast than one of the many restaurants that hang roughly 600 meters above sea level overlooking the lake. Most likely the view will be misty at that hour, but as the sun comes up, light will be



shed on the huge caldera below as you look at the base of a once towering volcanic mountain that literally fell apart in the remote geological past. What was left is an imposing lake 30 kilometers in length and 19 kilometers in width, dotted with small islands that host their own volcanoes and hidden inner lakes: hence the Matryoshka analogy. The view is truly stunning.

The drive down to the shore is a pleasant one. At the bottom you will want to rent a *bangka*, but plenty of locals will propose all sorts of package deals for the day. The journey across to Volcano Island takes at least 45 minutes, so relax in your *bangka* as you pass countless milkfish or *tilapia* ponds where fishermen work under the already scorching sun. But the slightly salted waters of Lake Taal also harbor an array of marine life species like sponges, sardines, eels and even tunas which migrate every year from the lake via the Pansipit River to spawn in the sea, then return to Taal.

As you arrive on Volcano Island, or Kalawit as it is known locally, you'll be welcomed by a happy community of fishermen. From the kids that love to have their photos taken to the village elder who functions as the local authority, they all seem to know what it means to welcome a stranger. In our case it is 65 year-old Rogelio, a native of the island, who will guide us up the crater and down to the inner lake. Out of respect for his age and social status, it is Rogelio who rides the horse, but half way up

I regret the decision as the climb turns out to be steep indeed. Thankfully, someone was smart enough to set up a little water station right at the top, which you'll reach after roughly one hour of hard trekking. That's where you will be stationing to finally take a look at the unspoiled view of the main crater and its inner lake.

Since 1572 this very volcano has erupted with fury at least 41 times, as recently as 1961. But these days the Philippines Institute of Volcanology considers it inactive, even though a geyser is clearly visible from a distance.

The way down to Crater Lake is even trickier than the way up, as the volcanic ashes are as fine as powder. In fact, no one except Rogelio makes it without falling down. How many foreigners must he have seen doing exactly the same thing, I think, as I gradually turn into a rolling ball of sweat and dust?

Luckily we hit the bottom – with a thud – and I almost run towards the water to wash my sins away. I am discouraged by Rogelio who points with his chin towards a particular side of the shore where smoke clearly rises from the lake's surface. Not an inviting sign. In fact, the water is very hot in Crater Lake, clearly a reminder of the turbulent past that bore the over 7000 mostly-volcanic islands of the Philippines.

Nevertheless, a swim is allowed few hundred meters in the opposite direction and I don't miss the opportunity. As I waded up to my neck in what it feels like a hot pleasant bath, I notice white birds taking off in the distance. All I can hear is the flapping of their wings and it feels like I am in another world and not just one hour away from Manila. □



TRAVEL



ESCAPE TO ESKAYA

OFF THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF BOHOL IS PANGLAO ISLAND, WHERE THE EXCLUSIVE ESKAYA BEACH RESORT OPENED ITS DOORS IN 2007. THE RESORT, BUILT AROUND A 16-HECTARE PROPERTY WITH MANICURED LAWNS AND BLOOMING GARDENS, OFFERS GUESTS THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF LUXURY AND PEACE COMBINED WITH ADVENTURE AND UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES.

TEXT: CARMEN MOURA
PHOTOS: MARCO VENDITTI



PHOTO: ESKAYA



PHOTO:ESKAYA



TOP: The large infinity pool next to Lantawan Restaurant offers stunning views of the ocean;
BOTTOM (left to right): The Presidential villa; Dinner on the beach can be arranged; The sunrise at the beachfront.

The airport in Bohol is small and makes for an easy arrival. Almost as soon as we come down the flight of stairs from the plane our luggage is brought to us and we're picked up by a driver holding up a sign with our names. The drive in the air-conditioned van to Eskaya Beach Resort takes about 40 minutes and after being greeted by the smiling staff with flower necklaces we are quickly ensconced in our Infinity Swimming Pool Villa.

"Eskaya" refers to the only known indigenous people of Bohol, and renowned architect Francisco Mañosa conceived villas that range from the Presidential to the Creek View using native materials and traditional architectural ideas. The villas, or *balai*, boast wood floors, thatched roofs and luxury outdoor bathrooms; they also come

with modern amenities such as flat-screen TVs, DVD players and iPod docks. Many of the *balai* face the flat azure sea, the edge of the infinity pool mixing with the horizon beyond. One of the great pleasures of staying in Eskaya is in fact to enjoy the villa itself, savoring a drink inside the pool while listening to music from your own iPod; or getting a foot and back massage in your candle-lit terrace in the evening.

Breakfast is served in Lantawan Restaurant next to the main pool. The menu features a variety of international and Filipino dishes recreated with a twist by Eskaya's chef. After a few fortifying cups of coffee, a visit to Panglao doesn't seem complete without a diving trip to one of the neighboring islands of Pamalican or Balicasag. The boat, dive

ONE OF THE GREAT PLEASURES OF STAYING IN ESKAYA IS TO ENJOY THE VILLA ITSELF, SAVORING A DRINK INSIDE THE POOL WHILE LISTENING TO MUSIC FROM YOUR OWN IPOD; OR GETTING A FOOT AND BACK MASSAGE IN YOUR CANDLE-LIT TERRACE IN THE EVENING.



TOP: The gardens at Eskaya have been carefully planned and are exquisitely kept; **RIGHT:** the furniture at the villas is hand-made with indigenous wood; **BELOW:** Cleaning the beach as the sun rises.



master and equipment can be arranged by the resort, but one of the big surprises at Eskaya is the house reef. Taking a canoe a few hundred meters from the shore down the steps from the restaurant and then jumping into the water yields fantastic sights: a rich, colorful array of coral and fish, as well as turtles and stingrays. One can swim or paddle back to the white beach to dry in silence on one of the deck chairs or in a hammock under a tree.

Wandering around the property one is greeted by groups of brightly-clad gardeners always at work on the sprawling lawn and gardens. You'll soon arrive at the beautiful Handuraw Spa, cleverly designed to allow light in through big windows, while maintaining a cool temperature in its wooden interior. The massages, ranging from the Filipino hilot therapy to shiatsu, are expertly given to the sound of chill out music or soft jazz.

For dinner, return to Lantawan Restaurant: if you seek more privacy you may be served down the stone steps on the secluded white beach or on wooden seaside decks, while a trio of guitarists discretely serenades you. Then enjoy the croaking of frogs

and the call of the local gekko in the gardens back at your villa as the housekeepers go quietly about their nightly task of putting up the mosquito net and fragrant incense in your outdoor bathroom.

If it's possible to get tired of so much pampering, the resort can arrange a car for you to explore Bohol, including the astonishing Chocolate Hills and a magical voyage through Lomboc River where children sing to passing boats while trees light up with hundreds of pulsating fireflies. Or rent a scooter and ride freely through Panglao, tasting the sweet papaya offered by roadside vendors and choosing your own fresh fish and seafood to be grilled at busy Alona Beach.

After all these adventures, which can fill up quite a few days, you'll realize that your stay at Eskaya hasn't been long enough. With the combination of beautiful interiors, warm service, gorgeous gardens and a stunning coral reef, as well as its access to the wonders of Bohol, Eskaya is a magical experience, and a place to return to. □

For more information and reservations please visit www.eskayabeach.com



ILLUSTRATION: GORGEOUS CANVA BY CHARLIE CO
PHOTO: SALDY CALAMONG, COURTESY OF GALLERIA DIEMILA

BEING CHINOY

BY JULLIE Y. DAZA

There are about two million people in the Philippines who are, according to the language of law books “of Chinese descent,” which is to say their grandparents and/or parents have Chinese blood. Most of them have acquired Philippine citizenship one way or another – by marriage to a Filipino, as the child of a parent who is a citizen, or by naturalization, a legal process that involves answering a set of questions, the ability to sing the national anthem, and swearing allegiance to the flag.

Whether they are called Chinese-Filipinos (also known as Chinoys), or ethnic Chinese, assimilation has been more or less complete in the last couple of decades. Unlike the Chinese of two generations ago, they now speak the national language of the country of their birth without shame or guilt or fear of being spanked by their elders. Their sons are allowed to marry non-Chinese girls, but not the other way around.

In fact, back in the swinging sixties, only two Chinese girls, me and Betty Go, dared break the silent, invisible race barrier by marrying true-blue, red-blooded Filipino guys.

As Betty’s politician husband, Sonny Belmonte, describes his wife and me, Betty was Exhibit A and I was Exhibit B. No one publicly called us names or openly humiliated us by throwing stones at us – at the brides or at the grooms – but a few tongues must have clacked and a few eyebrows must have hit the sky. Did it help that Betty’s family owned a newspaper publishing company and her Sonny was brilliantly carving a niche in politics? Did it help that my husband had maybe five percent Chinese blood flowing in his veins?


So much for history, but deep in my bones and without being a historian, I sensed that things were beginning to change – slowly at first – when the then first lady of the Philippines, Imelda Marcos, went to China to plead with Mao Zedong for oil as the fuel shortage in 1974 threatened to bring four-wheel vehicles to a stop. Her trip was a diplomatic *wow*, and its effects were felt in salutary ways by the “local Chinese.” They were no longer laughed at for their frugality, timidity and vulnerability to government agents and media bias (most of the time it was believed an arsonist had to be Chinese!).

They were just not glamorous enough, but after the opening of diplomatic relations with Beijing, Chinese-Filipinos felt the time had come for them to step out of their shadows. By a confluence of events, the 70s saw the dramatic rise of Chinese-Filipino businessmen and tai-pans whose contributions made them shining stars of the economy. They were stepping into the shoes of American investors and breaking new ground. From a start selling shoes, Henry Sy was building department stores and malls in Manila’s busiest, glitziest districts. Lucio Tan, who started selling cigarettes, was now manufacturing them on a large scale and branching out to farming, food, beer and banking. John Gokongwei, who sold rice, textiles and scrap metal after his family’s fortunes took a turn for the worse, left his native Cebu to try his luck in Manila, and succeeded, almost overnight.

Today the tai-pans’ wealth and its soul sister, philanthropy, along with that of other prominent, high-profile businessmen “of Chinese descent,” account for a different image. These days to be Chinese means to study in or graduate from two exclusive Catholic schools for boys and girls. It means running corporations big and small that employ thousands while keeping armies of suppliers, contractors and subcontractors happily on the payroll. Prosperity starts on the eve of the first day of the year when they celebrate the Lunar New Year with their Filipino friends who are only too eager to learn the trade secrets of the Chinese brand of fortune.

Do they have a Midas touch? What beliefs account for their mercantile minds, their bold visions and mega structures as they lead such relatively plain and simple lives? How do they raise their sons and daughters so that, unlike in many Filipino families, the second and third generations follow father and grandfather into the family business without a quibble?

For now, the most acquiescent seem to be the daughters of the more conservative clans. How many years would Sonny Belmonte need to complete the alphabet after Exhibits A and B? After Betty Go Belmonte and yours truly, I have only Exhibit C to add, Anita Ongaiui Austria. And D, E, F, etc.? Time will tell. ☐



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