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HALA BIRA!

Boracay Island and Aklan's capital of Kalibo pull all the stops in celebration of the annual Ati-atihan Festival

story on page 3

Photo by Sr. Inah Ellana, D.C.



Malay Mayor Floribar Bautista told Boracay Sun News in an exclusive interview last January 18, that he is awaiting resolution coming from the Boracay-Caticlan Sustainable Development Council (BCSDC) before allowing the use of beach beds along the beaches of Boracay Island.

The Municipality of Malay issued Executive Order No. 36 Series of 2023 last November 28, 2023, ordering the regulation of temporary structures and accessories along Boracay's White Beach, outlining

MALAY MAYOR BAUTISTA AWAITS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL RESOLUTION BEFORE ALLOWING BEACH BEDS

By Jun N. Aguirre

establishment guidelines for businesses, as well as the creation of a Composite Team, all in accordance with Municipal Ordinance No. 2000-132 section 3c.

The return of beach beds, also known as sun loungers was among the requests made by the private stakeholders in this resort island hoping that this would lure foreign tourists. Boracay Island's current foreign tourist arrivals are down by about 60 percent compared to that of 2019.

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BORACAY BUCKET LIST
Top 7 Tables for Two

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EDITORIAL

Editor's Note

Summer lovin'

After the whirlwind Christmas and New Year's holiday celebrations that were nothing short of brutal, with some of us managing the time-honored island tradition of rolling from the deep towards the first sunrise of the year on Bulabog Beach, and then suffering violent bouts of coughing and other respiratory illnesses, I think it's safe to say that it's time to decompress, find our bearings and, well, start the year right (READ: Take two!).

In these parts, that means another round of celebrations first, but this time, with a whole lot of noise and street and beach dancing, "Hala Bira" style or "with all your might" at the two-week Ati-atihan Festival held on Boracay Island and in the town of Kalibo.

This is the drill each and every year on the third week of January, for a nation obsessed with religious fiestas and partying as hard as we pray for an abundant year and to give thanks to the Santo Niño, patron saint of the Aklan province.

Just when you think you can breathe again, the Lunar Chinese New Year comes around on February 10, marking the first long weekend of the year (Feb. 9-11), and before that week ends, it's Valentine's Day! Exactly 10 days from Valentine's is the highly anticipated and longest special non-working holiday week: Holy Week (March 28-31).

There you have it, and the year has only just begun!

And so, you see, the months of February and March will roll in so quickly and will take us all on a special ride, one that's fueled with romance, and our love for the beach! Not to worry because there will be lots of time in between the merry-making to reboot and start over, and perhaps find some inspiration from our "Summer lovin'" stories.

There really is nothing to it, but to allow the beauty that surrounds us to do its magic. Just look outside, or step outside and take your shoes off, dig your feet in the sand, and even better, grab the hand of someone you love, and allow Boracay to lull you into oblivion and surrender.

As for the various issues the island faces ("Disturbing the peace" on page 18), one would be well-advised to keep one's expectations conservative and realistic; take them with a grain of salt, or take them with a dash of salt and a with a shot of tequila! Not to make light of the problems we have (which deeply hurts those who have invested everything they've got in the island or have no other place to go), this is just a friendly reminder that most people we know are stuck in traffic, inhaling plumes of polluted

air, and worst of all, might be suffering from an illness or are suffering unimaginable loss at war.

Love, Romance and the Beach

Celebrating your love and the month of hearts in Boracay is a many splendor thing, indeed, so where to begin? With a plethora of places and luxuries to be had, we've done your homework and came up with the "Top 5 Romantic Things to do in Boracay" (page 9); "Top 7 Heavenly Tables for Two" (page 24); followed by "Sweet Sojourns"—romantic escapes and staycations to get away from it all; and "CCF Boracay's Forevermore Couple's Retreat" for couples in need of a refresher course in the most inspiring of settings.

Now all you have to do is tick away on these bucket lists, flutter your eyelashes, and get on the Boracay love train!

And because it's a special "double issue" with double the fun stuff just like an Oreo Double Stuf cookie, we asked eight "Dynamic Duos" (pages 14-15, and 16) to share their recipes for the secret sauce for love and friendship, and making partnerships last.

My mantra for the year is simple:

"Time wasted (at the beach) is time well spent."

Sea la vie!

Let's love and respect the island that keeps on giving—from the endless horizon to its sunsets of which no two are ever alike ... Live and embrace it all, even the parts you don't love. Find the humor, and if there is none, find the lesson.

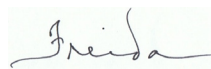
And most important of all: Love one another.

Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde said, "To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance." He also (and more famously) said,

"Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much."

Vibe high, dive deep!


Peace and good vibes,



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 Boracay Sun News

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BORACAY SUN NEWS READER SIGHTINGS

Boracay Island's much-loved community newspaper continues to make its rounds, beachcombing and blazing a trail all over the island! We thank you for making us a part of your day ☀️



We caught up with celebrity host and eventologist (among his many hats) Tim Yap enjoying his copy of *Boracay Sun News* at Jammers Beach Shack!



We caught up with Dos Mestizos' Binggoy Remedios enjoying his breakfast with his dose of *Boracay Sun News*!

CELEBRITY SIGHTING



Australian filmmaker and actor Joel Edgerton who, according to sources, was billeted at Shangri-La, was spotted enjoying sunset cocktails (our insider said he had Frozen Margaritas) at Discovery Shores last December 10, photographed with Boracay fan girls and BFFs Donna Mae Sarmiento and Claissa Ang.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Boracay Sun News Editor,

We first came to Boracay 6-7 years ago and fell in love with the place!

However, White Beach was brown and Bulabog a "stinkhole" full of raw sewage.

Your President, Rodrigo Duterte came here and rightly closed the place down for a cleanup. Wow! What a difference – White Beach is now white again, the sea is clean, and one can again swim in Bulabog.

Then we had 2-3 years of Covid and finally this year we managed to return for

a few weeks on your beautiful island.

However, it is with sadness that we have decided not to return. Why? Touts (or commissioners as you call them) on the beach. Every 5 meters touts are shouting at us and pushing plastic folders in our faces. Unacceptable.

We have spoken to many (well about 10) couples while here and ALL (except one with a Filipino girlfriend) have said they will **NOT** return for mainly the same reason.

While we appreciate people have to make a living and the history of this has

been explained to us by local business people. In practice, it achieves nothing except to piss off and annoy tourists. Touts will not coerce us into going to a particular restaurant or a particular massage. Only we shall decide. In fact, they have the reverse effect.

So why not ban them, have a few ticket stations say every 200 meters along the beach where they can advertise their wares but not approach tourists. It will enhance the restaurant and hotel business and encourage people to return.

We only want what is best for the future of Boracay. You have something special and it is a pity to see you ruin it.

Please pass our comments on to politicians of government, hotel federation, or whoever.

We wish Boracay every success and prosperity for all the people.

Kind Regards,
Ken Bryan

Editor's note: This letter was sent to us last December via email.

After a few correspondences, we gathered that they are Irish living in Mallorca, Spain. Having spent a few weeks in Boracay, they were on the last day of their two-month trip to Indonesia and the Philippines when they decided to write the letter. "having a past love for the Island decided we should put pen to paper to pass on our (and almost all other tourists as well) views on where Boracay is going wrong. It is meant to be constructive criticism ..."

They were spending a few days in Istanbul, Turkey, and interestingly enough, they had just learned, "In Istanbul, the government passed a law banning the hassling of tourists by restaurants. Currently, they are allowed to speak

with tourists but not to carry menus or literature. They can invite tourists to view their menu which is strategically placed outside each restaurant."

He ends by lamenting that the bad impression that the commissioners had left has sadly convinced them not to return to the beautiful island of Boracay.

This is not the first, and in fact many share these same sentiments. It is for this reason that BSN felt that it was time to put a spotlight on this age-old problem. BSN writer Azenith Resurrection breaks the silence to expose the tourist island's unflattering side in "Disturbing the Peace." (page 18)

continued from front page



The iconic Fridays Boracay of the 80s and the resort's magnificent beachfront setting, furnished with cushioned bamboo beach beds, nipa huts and umbrellas made it one of the Philippines' most sought after vacation spot.

The private stakeholders believe that returning beach beds would lure more foreign tourist arrivals this year. The Malay local government is targeting some 2.3 million

tourists, hoping many of them would be foreigners.

Foreign tourists are considered valuable as they have more spending power to spend on tourism activities compared to domestic Filipino tourists.

"The council has talked about it in the last quarterly meeting last November 2023 and yet until now I received no resolutions of approval from them. I am awaiting the council's official approval before I would allow its operation at the beach," he said.

The development council is a local replacement for the Boracay Island Rehabilitation Task Force after its term expired in 2021. Former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte had ordered the creation of a Boracay task force that would ensure the environmental sustainability of the resort island.

In 2018, the use of beach beds was banned along with other setups at the beach such as tables and chairs by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The DENR said the added physical setups at the beach hamper the environment of Boracay. The physical

setups back then included dining tables and chairs, massage beds, beach umbrellas, souvenir shops and food stalls along the beach.

The development council is co-chaired by Aklan Governor Jose Enrique "Joen" Miraflores and Malay Municipal Mayor Floribar Bautista. The members of the development council include the DENR, DPWH, DOT, DILG, DTI, DHSUD Regional, NEDA, DSWD, DOLE, Aklan Police Provincial Office, private stakeholder associations such as the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Boracay (PCCI-Boracay), Boracay Foundation Inc. (BFI) and CAB, Coast Guard-Caticlan, LTO-Aklan, TIEZA and the Provincial Prosecutor along with other stakeholders and government agencies.

The said council aims to supervise the development of Boracay and Caticlan as a primary tourism zone. As of this writing, Boracay business stakeholder groups are calling to reconvene the council for a session.¹

FRIDAYS BORACAY TO REOPEN IN 2026: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR



An artist's rendition of the new Fridays Boracay

"We want to differentiate ourselves... when you come to Fridays, you really think, 'Wow, I'm in the Philippines, I'm in the islands.'"

- Samantha Panlilio

Fridays Boracay, located on the island's west coast in Station 1, is finally getting a facelift after two decades and will reopen in 2026.

The resort will be launched under the Radisson Collection brand following the partnership between Fridays Holdings Inc., a subsidiary of the Panlilio-owned Boulevard Holdings Inc. (BHI), and the Radisson Hotel Group.

This also marks the debut of the Radisson Collection, a lifestyle luxury brand with a portfolio of properties inspired by their locale, in Southeast Asia.

Jose Marcel Panlilio, chairman of Fridays Holdings, said: "Our resort has been an icon of Boracay's hospitality scene for almost 40

years. By partnering with Radisson Hotel Group and becoming the first Radisson Collection hotel in the Philippines, we look forward to attracting international guests to discover this world-famous island."

Fridays Boracay is Beauty queen-entrepreneur Samantha Panlilio, who oversees the Fridays resorts in Boracay and Puerto Galera, said they are already in the process of demolishing the property.

"We are aiming for April 2026. Currently, we are demolishing the whole property and redesigning it. We only had 48 keys, and we're going to design a resort with 110 keys," Ms. Panlilio, who is the chief operations officer of BHI's Puerto Azul Land Inc., told ABS-CBN News.

The soon-to-rise five-star resort will boast of beachfront villas, four restaurants and bars, three pools, a jungle gym, and an outdoor beach wedding pavilion that overlooks the sea, according to a press release. She adds, "It's been 20 years since we've had any major renovations in Fridays, so what better way than to demolish it now and really start off with the Radisson Collection? It will have the five-star luxury resort feel, but at the same time we're still going to maintain the Fridays Boracay iconic design," she added.

(Source: ABS-CBN News | ANCX | Dec 06 2023)²

NEWS HALA BIRA!

Boracay Island and Aklan's capital of Kalibo pull all the stops in celebration of the annual Ati-atihan Festival

By Freida Dario-Santiago

The Ati-atihan Festival is a celebration in honor of the Holy Child or Infant Jesus, Kalibo town's patron. Ati-atihan means 'making like Atis,' that is, to be like the indigenous people of Aklan. This involves smearing oneself with soot to darken the skin and dressing up in tribal finery. The start of the procession is signaled by drums and whistles, and later punctuated by shouts of "Hala Bira! Viva Señor Santo Niño!"

Hala bira is a Hiligaynon phrase that means "dispense all means," which is a popular catchphrase among Ilonggos to show enthusiastic involvement in the Dinagyang. It is also a way of saying "To pour all you've got to share what you have," reflecting the Filipino's generosity of spirit.

Dubbed as the "Mother of All Festival in the Philippines," Kalibo's Ati-atihan Festival is the oldest in the country. The two-week annual celebration culminates with the biggest celebrations held during the third Sunday of January and is widely celebrated on the country's tourism capital of Boracay Island, in the town of Kalibo which is the provincial capital of Aklan, and in several towns of the province on Panay Island.

The festival consists of religious processions and street parades showcasing themed floats, rhythmic dancing of the crowds who darken themselves with soot and don colorful tribal finery, marching bands, and people sporting face and body paints. The street parade is known as *Sadsad*, which is also what the locals call their way of dancing where the foot is momentarily dragged along the ground in tune with the marching bands.

Visitors are always cordially welcome to share in the festivities that are not complete without traditional tribal music, dancing, feasting, beauty contests, balls, processions, sports challenges and a host of other events.

This year's festivities which commenced on January 10, drew thousands of residents and tourists to the white sandy beaches of Boracay for the much-awaited White Beach



Photo by Sr. Inah Ellana, D.C.

The Boracay Ati Tribal Organization (BATO) arrive in style and in full force, leading the "Sadsad" beach dancing parade along Boracay's famed White Beach



Photos courtesy of Malay-Boracay Tourism Office



Photo by Kate Tagua



Photo by: Daryl Miguel Velado (Boracay Mix)

parade and other celebrations as well as to the town of Kalibo for the week-long festivities of the religious event.

According to the Malay-Boracay Tourism Office, organizers of this year's Boracay Sto. Niño Celebration, the profound theme, "Growing in Love for God" extends a heartfelt invitation to all for a spiritually enriching experience marked by reverence, cultural significance and communal celebration.

The Municipal Incident Management Team activated by MDRRMC, flawlessly implemented the 2024 Boracay Sto. Niño celebrations. "With steadfast support from diverse agencies in emergency preparedness, response, safety, security and peacekeeping, the celebration proudly achieved its primary objective— a ZERO INCIDENT event." They reported an estimated 5,841 participants (Balik Ati, Tribal & Commercial Groups), 10,919 tourists and 20,000 devotees with a total of 36,741 participants at the "Beach Dancing" and the traditional "Sadsad Panaad" event, rooted in celebrating abundant harvests and giving thanks to the patron saint Santo Niño.

The coloring of the face and body of non-natives is an Ati-atihan tradition meant to honor the Ati people for their compassion towards non-Ati natives as recorded in the indigenous people's local history. The Boracay Ati Tribal Organization (BATO) led the "Sadsad" beach dancing parade along Boracay's famed White Beach, joined by all 55 families and 273 members, children included.

Not to be missed was Malay Mayor Floribar Bautista who donned a head-dress, as well as prominent families from the Sacapaño, Gelito, Señeres, Licerio and Gregorio clans, among others, who came in full force in a parade of colors, joining various private groups, NGO organizations such as the Philippine Red Cross-Boracay and various tribal organizations in full-regalia and the barangays that represented the fun-loving communities of Boracay Island.³

Editor's note: In keeping with the February "Love" month theme, we asked Dr. Larrauri if she could write about "heart health," and we were surprised to read the title of her piece! And so, we feel the need to spell out the correlation between the heart and stress, for you, our dear readers: make no mistake, a healthy heart's worst enemy is stress! It is a silent killer that sneaks up on us when we least expect it.

What is stress? Stress is a common and inevitable part of life, especially in the modern world. The word itself has a negative connotation that links one's physical and mental health, such as causing headaches, insomnia, anxiety, depression and more.

"Stress can affect the body by increasing the risk of developing heart disease."

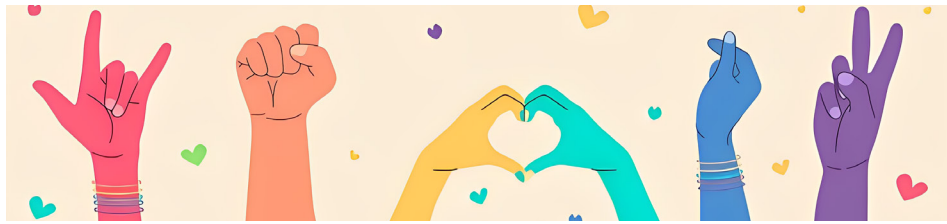
Hearth disease is a collective term that covers a range of conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels, such as coronary artery disease, heart attack, stroke and heart failure. There are several mechanisms by which stress can contribute to heart disease.

First, stress can trigger the release of hormones such as epinephrine and cortisol, which can raise blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar levels. These changes can damage the lining of the arteries and make them more prone to plaque buildup and narrowing.

Second, stress can also affect the behavior and lifestyle of people, leading them to adopt unhealthy habits such as smoking, drinking, overeating, or being physically

HEALTH & WELLNESS
Your guide to thriving, not just surviving!
Managing Stress in 2024
Show yourself some love this year, and start by not underestimating stress

By Kate Ng-Larrauri, M.D.



inactive. These factors can further increase the risk of heart disease by raising cholesterol levels, causing inflammation and reducing blood flow to the heart.

Third, stress can also impair the immune system and make it harder for the body to fight infections and heal wounds. This can increase the likelihood of infections or inflammation in the heart or blood vessels, which can trigger or worsen heart problems.

In essence, stress contributes to a domino effect as stated by Johns Hopkins University. Chronic stress can also affect your heart indirectly. When you're worried, you tend to sleep poorly. You're also less likely to exercise, make healthy food choices, or watch your weight. All of these lifestyle changes can put your heart health at risk. In addition, irritability, anxiety, depression, rumination and insomnia, or waking up in the middle of the night with anguish can result from chronic stress.

It is important to recognize the signs and sources of stress and to find healthy ways to cope with it. Some of the strategies that can help reduce stress and protect the heart include relaxation techniques, physical activity, social support, counseling, and

medication if needed. By managing stress effectively, one can improve their quality of life and lower their risk of heart disease.

Here are some tips for managing stress in the new year:

1. Identify the sources of your stress and try to eliminate or reduce them.

For example, if you are stressed by a heavy workload, you can delegate some tasks, prioritize your goals, or ask for help. If you are stressed by a conflict with someone, you can try to resolve it peacefully or avoid unnecessary contact.

2. Practice relaxation techniques regularly, such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga or massage.

These can help you calm your mind and body, lower your blood pressure and heart rate, and release tension and negative emotions.

3. Maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating well, sleeping enough, exercising regularly, and avoiding alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

This can boost your immune system, improve your mood and energy levels, and prevent or reduce the symptoms of

stress-related illnesses.

4. Seek social support from your family, friends, colleagues, or professionals.

They can offer you emotional comfort, practical advice, or a different perspective on your problems. You can also join a support group or a community that shares your interests or challenges.

5. Engage in positive activities that make you happy, such as hobbies, sports, music, art, or volunteering.

Activities can help distract you from your worries, express yourself creatively, or contribute to a good cause. They can also enhance your self-esteem and confidence.

6. Learn to accept what you cannot change and focus on what you can control.

Sometimes, stress is caused by factors that are beyond our influence, such as natural disasters, accidents, or illnesses. In these cases, it is better to accept reality and adapt to it than to resist or deny it. You can also focus on the positive aspects of your situation and the opportunities for growth or improvement.

It is always easier said than done, but when it comes to your health, stress can really take control of everything. When everything else seem to be falling apart, quite figuratively and literally, it might already be too late to cope with the consequences. So, take a deep breath before making the next step, and ask yourself, "Is it worth it?"

Dr. Kate Ng-Larrauri is a Boracay-based pediatrician, a specially trained medical doctor who works with babies, infants, adolescents and young adults. In this section, she shares and debunks the most common misconceptions on child care, and separates fact from fiction, especially for first-time moms.



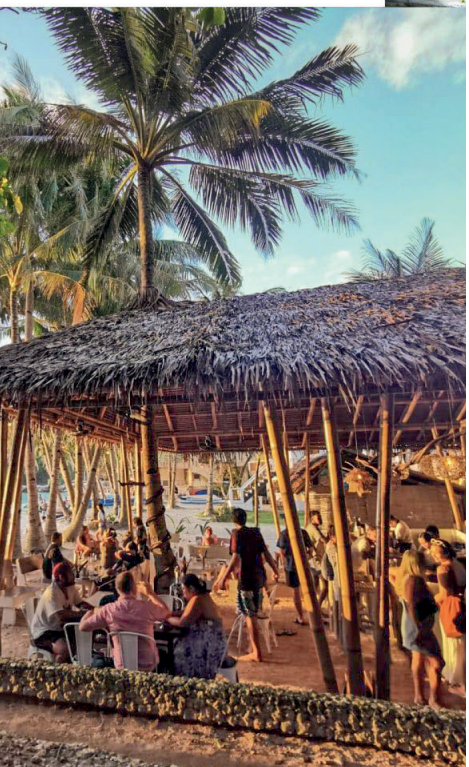
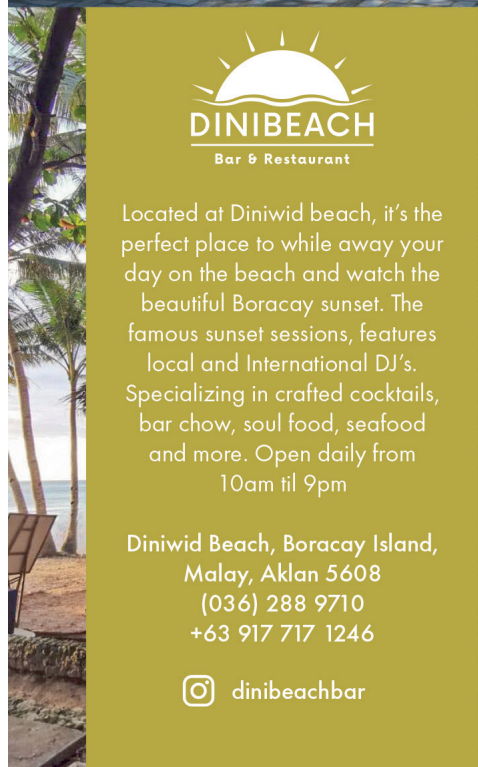
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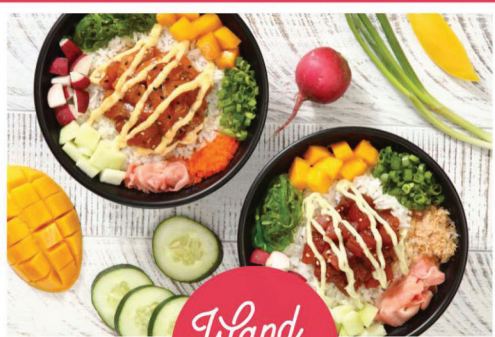
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Sunrise at Tambisaan Beach



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Pandesaal break at Tambisaan Beach



Bulabog Beach



Lugutan Beach Mangrove Park

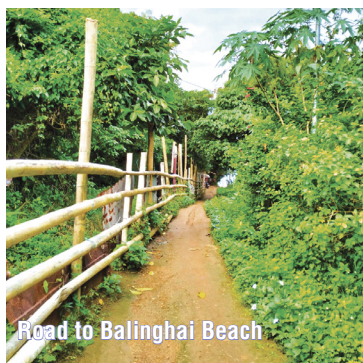
ISLAND LIFE

BIKING ROUTES: A NEWBIE'S RIDE INTO THE SUNRISE

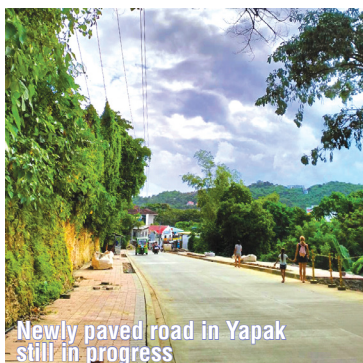
By Elle Quevedo | Photos by Uize



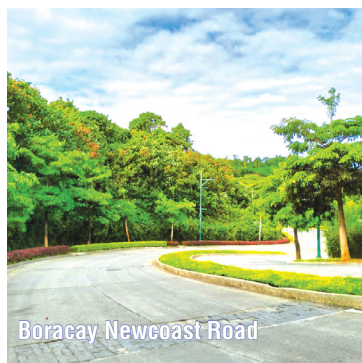
Diniwid Beach



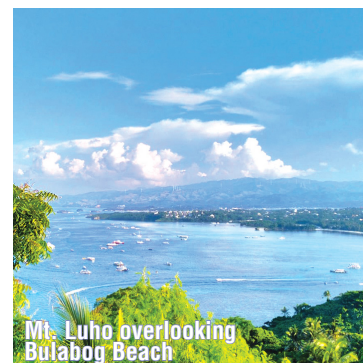
Road to Balinghai Beach



Newly paved road in Yapak still in progress



Boracay Newcoast Road



Mt. Luho overlooking Bulabog Beach

If you didn't know me you might be wondering, "What is this middle-heavy lady got to do with biking?" Well, let me tell you that riding a bicycle was my childhood passion. I seem to have forgotten this love for biking along the way. The last time I rode a bike was with my daughter back in 2019. In the interest of full disclosure, my friend Uize—a cycling enthusiast who spends most weekends exploring the island's nooks and crannies—was a tremendous help to me in discovering as many routes one could do around the island.

At 5:34 a.m., on a Saturday, Uize and I set off on our journey from Cagban Ibabaw, on the southwest side of Boracay Island,

going east to Tambisaan Beach, which was the first planned stop. So that is from the Main Road - East to get to Tambisaan Beach. We caught a glimpse of the sunrise upon getting there and had warm *pandesaal* before leaving. My aging knees are not up to the thrilling task of pedaling uphill roads, so I stopped frequently during the ride. Uize patiently encouraged me, and eventually, I slowly gained confidence.

Our next quick stop was at Lugutan Beach and Mangroves Park via Bantud. After that, we continued north and passed the Boracay Ati Village until we approached the Club Galaxy building, where we entered the brick road toward Bulabog Beach. I was

able to tap up my drinking water at Levantin Bar, which is one of the nice establishments lined up along this new brick path on the beach. We were greeted by the fresh *Amihan* breeze and basked in the breathtaking, shiny reflection of the morning sun on the ocean water. No kiteboarders yet around this time, but this side of the island would be filled with colorful kites during the season.

At the end of Bulabog Beach Road was a big "I Love Boracay" sign where we stopped for another break. We had our delicious *taho* (soft tofu with caramel), a sweet reward. Uize and I parted ways, and she continued with the rest of her usual routes that she completed by herself.

She went north of the island, first to Diniwid Beach via Diniwid Road, then to Balinghai Beach via Balinghai Road, where the terrain was much too rough. Lastly, she went back out to the Main Road, still going further north to Yapak. She entered the Boracay Newcoast subdivision, which has well-paved roads with a variety of up-and-down hills and some winding routes that are great for cyclists. This route through Boracay Newcoast is quite popular and is often recommended by blogs and guides. She followed the paved roads to reach Lapus Lapus Beach and the famous Boracay Keyhole rock formation. Boracay Newcoast was the final leg of her biking journey for

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the day, before she headed back home. My friend finished her planned routes in 3:39 hours, and I believe she would have done it in less than 3 hours without my handicap.

Check out the short 3D GPS tracking video of her full trip that also shows a bird's-eye view of the island by scanning this QR code:



Concurrently, I reversed back to the same brick road on Bulabog Beach and headed toward Lugutan Beach, but this time

turning westward via Lugutan (Kingfisher's) Road to get to the Main Road. I had two choices at this point: either go straight to Station 3, pass Faith Village and follow the path all the way to White Beach and head south from there, or turn left on the main road. I chose to turn left and drag the bike uphill until I reached the entry to Angol Point Road, a steep downhill access to Angol Beach. I stopped by Nagisa Restaurant for a break and filled my drinking water once more.

After my quick break, I turned left on Angol Beach toward the back road of Sundown Resort, where I followed it straight

ahead, which led me to a much narrower brick path through the apartments. At the end of this *eskinita* (alley), there was an uphill paved road that connected me to the Main Road - South again. Finally, I turned right on this main road, passed Auhana Resort, then rode downhill back home to Cagban Ibabaw.

During a previous biking trip, Uize and a friend went up to Mt. Luho and followed the road to the Main Road by Shoppes at Station B Mall. Check out the breathtaking view of Bulabog Beach and the golf course at Fairways and Bluewater from the peak of Mt. Luho. Expect steep inclines if you

choose to take this route in the future.

There are two bike and electric scooter rental shops, one at D'Palengke and the other along Bulabog Beach Road close to Hangin Kite Center where one may inquire of suggested routes that pass through Mt. Luho and Boracay Newcoast. A guide will be provided for you if you need it. Additional routes that you can undertake if you are aiming for a longer stretch of your cycling journey would be to go to Ilig-iligan Beach and Puka Beach. These routes are much further north than Boracay Newcoast; just follow the Main Road, and it will lead you to those routes inevitably. 🌴

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ISLAND LIFE

CCF Boracay's #ForeverMore Couples Retreat

Join the next one from February 16 to 18 By Mark Cabrera



Participants of CCF Boracay's last #ForeverMore Couples Retreat attend various talks and sessions before celebrating their renewal of vows on Boracay's world-famous White Beach.

Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF) is a church movement of men and women who have encountered God and have committed their lives to the Lord, focused on making an impact through the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming lives, families, communities and nations, for the glory of God.

CCF Boracay was born when celebrity couple, best-selling author and motivational speaker Ardy Roberto and his wife, former actress and television host Miriam Quiambao (now Miriam Roberto), best known as Miss Universe 1999 first runner-up titleholder, decided to move to Boracay and shared their home for fellowship since October 2022. Since then, their home church has grown into a dynamic island home church now known as CCF Boracay.

Miriam has since delved into many significant roles, including being an actress, brand ambassador, inspirational speaker, author, wife, mother and advocate.

From the Biblical roles of husband and wife, forgiveness, intimacy and sex, communication and leaving a legacy.

Why is it important for couples to attend?

Couples attend for different reasons but all of them come out of the retreat with a common result: they feel that they were touched by God and that their relationship needs were met. The sessions somehow leave couples inspired to change for the better, and the fellowship and new friendships formed with other couples leave them with life-long friends.

My wife and I were able to attend a teaser of the Retreat during the CCF Couple's Workshop held a few months ago. But the couples who attended the retreat had a more in-depth experience. There were quite a few couples who attended the retreat who were on the verge of separating but God used the retreat to reconcile them. For one of the couples who were not based on the island, it was the first time they had been away from their kids in 13 years.

Here is a testimony from a couple who attended the retreat, Mr. and Mrs. Jaime and Bianca Barlizo.

According to Bianca, "Marriage has no manual, or so we thought. The #ForeverMore Couples Retreat that was lovingly and meticulously prepared by CCF Boracay opened our eyes to many biblical truths and has led us back to its designer, God the Father, the one who wrote the manual for marriage, and you can find this in the Bible.

Couples from different age groups (early 30s to almost 70 years), newly married, and married for almost 35 years were the ones who attended the retreat. As an attendee myself, I praise God for the miracles that my husband and I witnessed and experienced firsthand. Different couples had different goals. Some were on the brink of separating and others just wanted to make their relationship better.

Although the three-day retreat (which I secretly wished were five days) seemed short, it was very powerful and life-changing. This retreat allowed my husband and I to view marriage through God's lens and we're now on the same page. Our marriage was good, but I'd say it's definitely better now. Roles are clear. Forgiveness has been given and received. Conflict resolution has been made better by helping us with how we communicate down to improving intimacy in the marriage and how we can and what kind of legacy we can leave our children.

There's nothing that God cannot fix. When God touches your heart and opens your eyes to His truths, there are so many blessings that we can receive through the gift that He designed for man and wife, marriage. A bonus from the retreat would be lifelong friends whom we can go through married life with. These are couples who are committed to sharing their love, support, and godly wisdom in the preservation of society's most basic unit, the family.

I am forever grateful for this retreat and excited for those who will be blessed by it on the next run. There is hope for you and your marriage in and with God. Join us next time."

The next one will be from February 16 to 18, 2024, and will be held at Savoy Hotel, Newcoast Boracay.

To find out more about CCF Boracay, find them on Facebook @ccfboracay. Location: La Carindera (across Altabriza), Boracay Main Road, Station 2 Mobile: (+63 917) 507 4588 Email: ccfboracay@gmail.com



The Robertos: Ardy & Miriam with their children Elijah (4), Ezekiel (1) and Joshua (15)

Meanwhile, CCF Boracay was able to impact the Boracay community by initiating community activities that have touched lives and brought them closer to Jesus Christ. One of the many activities CCF Boracay initiated was the #ForeverMore Couples Retreat which was first held at The Muse Hotel from October 13 to 15, 2023. CCF Main has been organizing couples retreats for more than 35 years already.

The event announcement said: "In marriage, stress and distractions are inevitable. Conflicts and temptations may arise over time. Your role as a spouse may become so overwhelming, routine, and wearisome.

How do you protect your relationship? How do you stay strong and solid throughout the years? How do you keep the fire burning so that it lasts #ForeverMore?

Whether you are engaged, newly married or have been together for many years, find a new level of intimacy with your spouse. Discover and learn what will keep you together #ForeverMore Couples Retreat Boracay!

I was able to catch up with my friend and he was able to share what the #ForeverMore Couples Retreat is about.

Who is it for?

The couple's retreat is primarily for married couples— both newlywed and even those married for decades—who want to ignite or re-ignite romance and at the same time discover God's design for their marriage.

What is it about?

The CCF couples retreat is about God and his design and intention for marriage.

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ISLAND LIFE

Top 5 Romantic Things to Do in Boracay

By Pauline Reitzer



Celebrating love on Valentine's Day in Boracay can be quite a romantic adventure. Aside from a romantic candlelit dinner, make this year memorable by doing something meaningful with your loved one. Create unforgettable memories that will last a lifetime in this breathtaking island paradise. Make this year's Valentine's Day a moment you'll cherish forever and treat yourself and your loved one to these delectable indulgences!



Boracay Island offers endless romantic postcard moments to cherish this Valentine's month (Photo courtesy of Villa Caemilla)



Photo courtesy of Mandala Spa



Photo courtesy of Boracay Helicopters



Photo by Bambi Corro courtesy of Unsplash



Photo courtesy of Helios Spa



Photo courtesy of Tirta Spa

Scenic helicopter ride for two

Experience the breathtaking beauty of Boracay like never before with a very special island tour By Boracay Helicopters. Fly above the crystal-clear waters that surround our beautiful island. Capture unforgettable birds-eye-view photographs and feel the rush of adrenaline as you fly high beneath the clouds. Helicopter tours offer the ultimate chance to witness paradise from above and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Island tours start at PhP6,250 per person. Visit: www.boracayhelicopters.com.

Romantic getaway on a Paraw for sunset

Book the ultimate romantic Boracay adventure with a sunset Paraw ride. Paraws are traditional Filipino sailboats that offer a unique and unforgettable way to catch the most beautiful views of the sunset. As you glide across the water, watch the colors of the sky transform before your eyes. This intimate and peaceful experience is perfect for couples looking to create unforgettable memories together.

Paraw sailing rates start at PhP2,500 with an additional PhP500 per person for the third passenger, with a maximum of six persons allowed. Ask your resort to assist you or just head over to Boat Station 1 or 3 to book a paraw ride. You can also try booking a 1-hour romantic sunset private charter (PhP4,000 for 2 persons) with Patong and his Song Fleet: (+63915) 455 5838.

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Villa Caemilla in Station 3 where you can enjoy the ocean breeze. This simple yet romantic experience is sure to strengthen your relationship and create unforgettable memories.

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Photo courtesy of Villa Caemilla



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NEWS

HONESTY ISLAND

By Jun N. Aguirre

Amid businesses and tourism stakeholders clamoring about the lack of foreign tourists arrivals during the last quarter of 2023, the residents, electronic-tricycle (e-trike) drivers and informal workers have unexpectedly given back to the bounty of this resort island by being honest.

Throughout 2023, several incidents have been reported via social media, especially on Facebook wherein e-trike drivers and other honest Boracaynon workers returned found items such as cash and cell phones, among others.

Famous among these cases was the one that happened in December 2022 when an unidentified vendor returned a whopping PhP2 million to a tourist.

According to the Salaam Police Advocacy group in Boracay, the vendor immediately turned the loot over to the Malay Municipal Station for safekeeping. The money was placed inside a wallet which also contained the owner's identification, so the police immediately connected with the owner.

The Salaam Advocacy group said the vendor did not think twice about returning the money to the tourist.

The said advocacy group is managed by Muslims, who have migrated to Boracay to do trade. They have committed to helping Boracay in peace.

Aside from the Muslim vendor, several e-trike drivers have also reported returning lost items found in their units to their passengers, some of whom were tourists. Several similar cases have been reported in social media throughout 2023.

Another case of honesty was posted on Facebook by Malay Councilor Daligdig Sumndad wherein he had forgotten to pay an unidentified tricycle driver who brought him home. Sumndad said he never heard of the driver since.

Because of this, Sumndad posted on social media calling for the identity of the kind driver. Soon after, the driver went to his home and Sumndad gave him a new cell-phone as a reward.

But not all await or expect a reward. On one occasion, e-trike driver Jesus Policarpio returned a missing cell phone to a tourist. The tourists tried to give him a reward but he declined, saying he was just happy to be of help.

These stories of honesty when amplified may lure foreign tourists to come to Boracay

again soon. Several tourism experts agree that the excessive fees and awkward policies may have given some foreign tourists a reason to look for alternative tourism destinations.

Because of these problems with the lack of foreign tourists, several business stakeholders in Boracay have asked the Aklan provincial government and the local government of Malay, Aklan to simplify the process of coming to and from Boracay.

According to the Malay Tourism Office, as of November 7, 2023, the island has welcomed a total of 1,825,758 visitors. From the said figure, 1,433,024 were local tourists; 357,066 were foreign tourists; and 35,668 were vacationing overseas Filipinos.



The local tourism office noted that April registered the greatest number of visitors received with 213,736, followed by July with 207,696 tourist arrivals, and the month of May with 207,512.

The 2023 figures mean there were 680,000 fewer foreign tourists than in 2019, the year before the pandemic hit the country, said former Malay tourism

Gil Delos Santos.

In 2019 Boracay registered 1.72 million tourists, with 914,928 domestic tourists and 827,531 foreigners.

Because of this, Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores issued a memorandum simplifying the protocols for entering Boracay. He also canceled the hotel voucher requirements as stakeholders described the hotel voucher policy as a violation of human rights to travel.

Malay Mayor Floribar Bautista also released Executive Order No. 36 allowing the temporary installation of beach beds, white umbrellas, and small tables at the beach.

Malay Councilor Alan Palma, Sr. said the Sangguniang Bayan of Malay hopes also to introduce new mechanisms to the resort island soon.

"We in the council are currently studying how we can improve tourism in Boracay," he said.

For his part, Peter Tay, a Singaporean national and a liaison officer of the Chinese embassy in Boracay said that he hopes that Chinese tourists will be arriving in groups in 2024.

NEW Boracay Sun BORACAY'S DAILY NEWS Lifestyle

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COMMUNITY NEWS

SLOW FOOD BORACAY

A community that showcases local Aklanon products and food

By Rica Velasco

The Slow Food Community has arrived on Boracay Island, so get ready to tantalize your taste buds!

Slow Food is more than just a passing trend; it is a way of life. Supporting small, local producers and connecting the community with their food is what it is all about. The Slow Food Community aims to shape the province of Aklan's and the island of Boracay's food scene, giving us a taste of the stories behind every mouthwatering dish.

Slow Food is a global force that kicked off in 1989 to rescue local food cultures and push back against the hectic pace of modern life, counteracting the loss of interest in the food we eat, where food comes from, and how food choices impact the world. Since then, Slow Food has bloomed into a worldwide movement with millions of people in over 160 countries, all on a mission to ensure everyone gets access to good, clean, and fair food.

Slow Food believes that food is not just about eating; it is intertwined with culture, politics, agriculture, and the environment. By choosing what we eat, we can change how food is grown, made, and shared, ultimately changing the world.

Established in 2023, the Slow Food Community in Boracay developed through the efforts of island resident Kate Tagua. It started in December 2022, when members of Slow Food International and more established communities in the Philippines visited potential communities all over Panay Island, including Boracay. From then on, Slow Food International and the Slow Food Community in Negros have consistently provided support and guidance to the Boracay community.

Who are the locals and residents behind Slow Food Boracay? Kate Tagua (Spokesperson, Tumandok, owner of Meninas Oven and Haagyan Events), Wynken Myrrh Gelito (Secretary, Tumandok, NGO experience related to the environment and sustainability), Janna Lejano (local videographer, co-owner of Haagyan Events), Gil delos Santos (Tumandok, passionate and active advocate and storyteller in Malay, coordinating with local communities and indigenous peoples), Desiree Segovia (Owner of Pinay Boracay and long-term advocate for local

farmers, fisherfolk and women), Patrick & Shria Florencio (Nonie's group of restaurants), Chef Derrick Perez (Nonie's head chef and Filipino cuisine enthusiast), Leonae Graf (Tumandok, Motag Living Museum, operations and marketing specialist), Toni Santos (Tara, Boracay! and Musyon Coworking Space).

As of this writing, Boracay Slow Food Community has achieved the following goals:

Data Mapping

Data mapping is necessary to identify the plants, animals, and processed food in the whole province of Aklan. Being the only established Slow Food Community in Aklan, the Boracay community took it upon themselves to include the whole of Aklan.

Ten areas have already been visited: Malay (Motag, Nabaoy, Kabulihan), Ibajay, Jawili, Batan, Madalag, Libacao, and New Washington. They interacted with 35 individuals from Aklan and identified 90 possible products while visiting these locations.

Representing Aklanon Cuisine in Terra Madre

Terra Madre Visayas was celebrated in Bacolod in November 2023. It was held alongside the 16th Organic Farmers Festival in Negros and marked the first Terra Madre event in Asia. The event displayed the region's food, culture, traditions, and diversity. Thanks to the support of several local establishments and individuals, Slow Food Boracay set up a booth to highlight the entirety of Aklan at the event. Aside from featuring processed food and cooked food, they were also able to share materials explaining practices and food culture in Aklan.

Despite being new and small, the Boracay Slow Food Community actively participated in Terra Madre to display and promote the province of Aklan.

They also took center stage by joining taste workshops, plotting exciting future collaborations with neighboring communities, and featuring three core members as speakers for engaging food talks. Kate recounted the journey of setting up a Slow Food Community in Boracay. Chef Derrick shared his experiences at Nonie's, championing good, clean, and fair food; and dished out tales of his experimentation

with Aklanon cuisine and ingredients. Wynken expounded on their data mapping experience across Aklan and the pivotal role of Indigenous peoples in preserving biodiversity.

Their booth was composed of three stations: an area featuring items data mapped from Ibajay, an area for products they can buy, and an area for cooked food.

As they focused on launching Aklan as the Ginataan Capital of the Philippines, these were the Aklanon dishes they decided to feature:

Pork Adobong Puti sa Gata: Adobo with no soy sauce and cooked with Gata

Inubarang Manok: Chicken with ubod ng saging (banana pith) with gata

Ginataang Gabi with Hipon: Shrimp and gabi with gata

Ginataang Buhay-buhay with Blue Marlin: Buhay buhay (a freshwater plant that can be found alongside wetlands in Boracay such as the area near Laketown) and fish with gata

Ginataang Seaweed: Seaweed (gulaman/sea moss) cooked with gata

Tinumkan: Freshwater shrimp wrapped in young gabi leaves and simmered in gata

Gil delos Santos tells us in an interview for *BSN*: "Our Ginataan dishes were well-received and appreciated by booth visitors who get to taste our delicacies. Reactions varied from surprise at the rarity, and delight by the diversity of Aklanon offerings.

Ginataang Seaweed was never heard of before then. The Adobong Puti sa Gata was such a hit that even the Slow Food Philippine Councilor, Chin Uy, had frequented the booth for more, and was often heard saying, "Namit gid ya!" Rave reviews also came from the Slow Food International dignitaries, the country's food historians, and Erwan Heussaff who is an icon in the Philippine culinary scene.

Delos Santos added, "The decision on which dishes to feature were the result of food mapping and the availability of ingredients."

Raising Awareness

Slow Food raises awareness on the benefits and goals of slow food to the community, as well as shares ways people can contribute to the cause, through community engagement, farmer and fisherfolk interactions, and online social media presence.

Establishing a Slow Food Cooks Alliance

The Slow Food Cooks' Alliance is a network of cooks, from home cooks to professionals, to support local producers, influence policy, and awaken eaters to the rich food cultures and biodiversity of our planet. Currently, the Slow Food Boracay Community is waiting for the launch of the Cooks Alliance Western Visayas next year, but meetings are already ongoing for those who are interested in joining.

Slow Food aims to encourage the use, creation, and sale of Aklanon products. Local establishments that practice the slow food philosophy will be featured on the Slow Food Boracay social media pages and in events. As of this writing, Pinay Boracay and Nonie's are active in practicing Slow Food methods.

The savory stories of Slow Food Boracay are just getting started. More delicious chapters are on the way, each unveiling new flavors and tales from Aklan. Get ready for the next helping of local delights, sustainable eats, and the community spirit that makes Slow Food in Boracay truly special. The culinary journey continues!

Follow them on their social media channels: Facebook: Slow Food Boracay Instagram: @slowfoodboracay Email: slowfood.boracay@gmail.com



From left: Desiree Sagovia, Vilmina Villanueva, Realisa Bornasal, Nenita Oquendo, Eden Wilson representing Aklan (Photo by Janna Lejano)

COMMUNITY NEWS

TGH THE GRILLHOUSE CHARITY WALL

The concept for our establishment was born from the fusion of a grillhouse and sports bar. Rather than the usual dusty jerseys, we took a unique approach by engraving guests' favorite team logos onto mahogany plates adorning our walls.

Driven by a charitable mindset, we aim to give back to the community. Guests

contribute 3,000 pesos for engraving, and we, in turn, cover the costs and donate the proceeds to our TGH Charity Foundation. Donors have the choice to support local sports clubs, aid communities after disasters, or assist in education through school supplies and books.

Our achievements include featuring

emblems from over 25 European football clubs, basketball, and rugby teams, including the reigning world champion, the Springboks from South Africa, on our "Wall of Fame." In our first charity initiative, we donated 15,000 pesos' worth of food supplies to the local Ati village, with our Hospitality Manager and Charity Founder, Michael, personally

delivering the donation.

We're also gearing up to provide schoolbooks and supplies to further support the village's education. This program embodies the spirit of community support and engagement within our establishment.

Come alongside us and make a difference.



These days, in such a fast-paced world where instant gratification is the norm and everything is readily available at the click of a button, the greatest gift that one could give their loved ones is quality time spent savoring each other's company.

Romantic escapes are a wonderful way to explore new experiences together and just be away from it all, not to mention the daily routines. There's nothing more romantic than a secret escapade, a sweet escape,

INDULGE
SWEET SOJOURNS
Relish Valentine's Day at these romantic staycations

By Freida Dario-Santiago

or a mini-honeymoon to rekindle the love and deepen your connection, even for just one night! For this writer, the perfect "love

nest" is not about the fancy amenities or the extravagant offerings and grand luxurious rooms, but more about savoring your

own private space, while cocooned in sheer comfort and serenity, and the exquisite little details that make you feel special.

For those who are still looking for the perfect Valentine's Day gift for your special someone, we highly recommend these top romantic hideaways that many of us locals swear by, and keep returning to, to destress, zone-out and tune-in to each other, in the picturesque setting of one of the best beaches in the world!

So, pack that overnight bag and create new and unforgettable memories this Valentine's month!

True Home Hotel

Centrally located in the heart of Boracay's world-famous White Beach, True Home Hotel offers island luxury with spectacular views of one of the world's most sought-after tropical scenes. Its ideal location invites guests to experience the best of Boracay, from refreshing dips in its turquoise waters to the stunning sunset hues from your balcony or terrace.

With only three luxurious rooms (deluxe, premiere and suite), you are assured to experience the absolute privacy and tranquility you deserve. Wake up to one of the world's most sought-after views, with every imaginable water adventure just a few steps away.

We highly recommend the Suite Room which offers a sweeping view of paradise! A

comfortable option for couples or for those traveling with family and friends, the Suite Room is a spacious living space that includes a bedroom furnished with a King-sized bed and a double pullout sofa bed, a dipping pool and a rooftop terrace furnished for outdoor dining and utmost relaxation.

Also home to True Home Bistro, you can enjoy Asian and continental flavors and an ambiance designed to reflect the turquoise waters that surround you.

Located along White Beach, Station 2 with road access across Balabag Plaza

Tel: (+63 36) 288 3784
Email: truehomehotel@yahoo.com
Website: www.truehomehotelandbistro.com



Mandala Spa & Resort Villas' Romantic Escapes

It is hard to think of a more romantic destination than Boracay Island. Imagine three days of romantic bliss away from it all, yet surrounded by the beauty of Boracay's natural splendor. Enter the award-winning Mandala Spa and Resort Villas and lose yourselves in the lap of utmost care, while nestled in the beauty of nature.

Their "Romantic Escapes" package is a three-day, two-night journey designed to indulge you in romantic rituals and luxurious spa treatments while cocooned by nature, serenaded by birdsong, and enticed by rose petal turndowns, a selection of the finest wines, and complimentary Mandala Qi Massage spa treatments that will leave you and your partner breathless.

Ask them about the special limited offer today!

Located along the Boracay Main Road, Station 3, Manocmanoc
Mobile: (+63 917) 622 8538
Tel. (+63 36) 288 5857 to 58
Website: www.mandalaspaboracay.com



INDULGE
POCO DELI

By Charlie Greene

We recently visited a newly opened deli just behind the HUE Hotel in Station X and were really impressed with the quality of the food and the excellent decor.

Dining both inside and out on the terrace is available, and the food and service is up there with the best that's available on the Island.

"Poco Deli is a small family-run delicatessen. We focus on Old World sausage making and recipes slow cooked by Filipinos. With the rich history of Europe and the passion of the Filipinos for innovation, we make the best possible charcuterie and comfort food to respect traditions and serve food that makes people happy," said

Sonny de Leon. Joy and Sonny are the founders of Poco Deli.

"Boracay is the perfect location for Poco Deli. The emerging local culture merged with diversity from Filipino and global tourists, is the perfect community that we want to serve. Folks who have traveled and appreciate origins and tastes of Germany, France, Italy, and Spain."

They started a small local business in Manila, and now have Poco Deli in

Kapitolyo, Capitol Commons Estancia, Bonifacio Global City, Coron Palawan and Boracay.

Sonny went on to say, "The Boracay Department of Tourism (DOT) can help us, small business owners, by sharing our brands and stories. We need to increase awareness for the new businesses that are serving the tourists coming to Boracay."

Good luck guys. We are sure this will be another success story for you both. 🌿



Romantic Staycations

By Amanda Virrey

Romance is in the air in Boracay! We've picked these beach havens that offer exquisite retreats and the perfect staycations, all year round!

Feliz Hotel

If you're looking for a romantic weekend in Boracay and yet prefer to be at the center of the island's world-famous White Beach, where restaurants, shops and the island's hip nightlife are within walking distance, then Feliz Hotel would be a great choice. Its Premier King room epitomizes the fulfillment of endless fantasy, fun, laughter and romance. It features high-end amenities, including a plush king bed, a cushy daybed and an ensuite double-vanity bathroom with a luxurious tub. With the hotel's facilities at your bequest, it would be fun to work out in the gym together or go to the roof deck to plunge into the infinity pool and delight in cocktails and appetizers while watching the sunset. And if there's a full moon, you may even catch the moonrise and sunset simultaneously. At nighttime, you can have a candlelit dinner arranged for you by the hotel's hospitable staff at the Buenavista rooftop dining or at

La Plaza restaurant on the ground floor, where you could also avail of the breakfast buffet, either to be enjoyed there or in private.

Located at D'Mall of Boracay, Station 2
Tel: (+63 36) 288 3424
Email: info@felizhotelboracay.com
Website: www.felizhotelboracay.com



Casa Mika Villa at Tropicana Ocean Villas

The Casa Mika Villa at Tropicana Ocean Villas is among the most idyllic lovers' nests on the southern side of Boracay. Enshrouded with blossoming bougainvillea, yellow bells and gumamelas, couples are ushered into a romantic hideaway, where they can enjoy sunbathing on the viewing deck at the edge of the cliff, have breakfast at the garden, relax with a couple's massage at the patio or in the outdoor jacuzzi, or watch the sunset on the lounge beds, and then retire in style to the Master's bedroom in the attic. As the beautiful panorama of the sea, the adjacent islands and the immaculate beaches envelops this villa, couples would not have any other reason to leave, apart from basking in the white sandy beach and to swim in the crystal clear sea. With everything provided in the villa, including a kitchen, a staff that can cook and expedite any requests, couples

are certain to experience uninterrupted intimacy and serenity.

Located in Diniwid Beach
Mobile: (+63 920) 901 9629 / (+63 981) 484 3564 (evenings)
Tel: (+63 36) 288 5796
Email: rent@boracayvillas.biz
Website: www.boracayvillas.biz



Villa Caemilla Beach Boutique Hotel

For a romantic staycation in the more laidback part of White Beach, Villa Caemilla Boutique Hotel offers an exquisite beachfront haven, complete with top-class services and amenities to fulfill every couple's fantasy. Couples vie for its Executive Suite Beach Front, which boasts a king bed, sofa bed, a spacious living and dining area, a bathtub in its lavish bathroom, and a balcony where couples could savor a bottle of wine overlooking the stupendous sun setting beyond the sea. Couples who are checked in this luxury suite are entitled to a complimentary fruit basket, complimentary red and white wine set up upon arrival, a free 10-minute foot massage, and a complimentary shuttle within Boracay. For mouthwatering indulgences, the restaurant and bar offer a

delicious array of international dishes and signature cocktail drinks to be enjoyed amid the fresh breeze, snug and stylish furniture, and the alluring tropical seascape of its front beach.

From this list of Romantic Staycations, couples would have a clearer idea of how to optimize their romantic holiday on the Island, which may include sunset sailing, tandem kayaking, couple's massage, and other things that could easily be arranged by the hotel's caring and helpful staff. And at the end of the day, there is the sunset, enticing imagination and igniting the romance all over again.

Located along White Beach, Station 3
Mobile: (+63 917 526 9449)
Tel: (+63 36) 288 3354 / 3106
Email: reservations@villacaemilla.com
Website: www.villacaemilla.com



Ambassador in Paradise Boracay

When you have the sea view room of Ambassador in Paradise Boracay all to yourselves, you would not think of spending your moments elsewhere. You would want to stay cuddled in your spacious room's plush king bed, have a sumptuous breakfast in the privacy of your balcony overlooking the sea, and step out of your cozy alcove to experience more of the hotel's romantic offerings. There is the swimming pool that is perfect for night swimming, a fully-equipped gym nearby where you may work out together, as well as a beachfront restaurant where you can have cocktails overlooking the sunset and a candlelit dinner of sumptuous international cuisine with live acoustic music. Being on the more expansive portion of White Beach along Station 1, you and your beloved have infinite memories of love and romance to create and cultivate for a lifetime.



Email: reservations@ambassadorinparadise.com
Website: www.ambassadorinparadise.com

Located along White Beach, Station 1
Mobile: (+63 946) 987 4104 (WhatsApp & Viber)
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The Boracay connection:

1. Did Boracay Island have anything to do with your story?
2. How has living in Boracay deepened your bond with one another?
3. As a duo, how have you strengthened your involvement and connection with the island community?

How did you meet?

Did you instantly hit it off?
Was it love at first sight?

What important traits do you value most about each other?

To celebrate the Valentine's "Love" month of February and the summer lovin' month of March, we asked these eight "Dynamic Duos" who we also like to refer

to as "Awesome Twosomes" and simply "BFFs" (Best Friends Forever)—to share the secrets behind their deep connections, longevity, and above all, to keeping it fresh and real!

Love is a lot of things, but all would agree that it is perhaps the most powerful force in the universe. And on Boracay Island, the elements seem to conspire to make our bonds stronger—I suspect that it must be the salty air, or the talcum powder sand, or the magical sunrises and sunsets punctuated by the many faces of the moon—that only mirror what we've already got in spades: a whole lot of love for one another

The Power of Two

Dynamic Duos of Boracay

By Freida Dario-Santiago

and for the island life we've chosen, (from the rosy days to brownout nights)!

We, the Boracay Island community, are all connected, and it's by being involved with and active in certain circles, in sports, in volunteering for a cause, and so on, that we find meaning and a sense of place.

"Ultimately the bond of all companionship, whether in marriage or in friendship, is conversation"
—Oscar Wilde

These eight dynamic duos represent the island's diverse pairs, who prove that there is power in twos, whether they be best friends, partners in business or in fighting for a cause, professionals in the same field, romantic and married couples, and the most fun, partners in crime! They say the magic that

makes friendships, relationships and partnerships last is chemistry. Some say it's the commonalities, and some believe that "opposites attract." For others, certain values and traits such as honesty and having a sense of humor are the keys to happiness and to keeping the flame and fun alive.

These interviews are mere glimpses of the multifaceted lives and the deep connections people share, and the secret to finding love and friendship, and making the partnership last. Read on and unlock your own relationships' secret ingredients and learn to harness the power of two in your life!

One thing's for sure, the interconnection of the island community, and the strength of our relationships are an integral part of this deeply-rooted foundation of our society; it is our deep love for each other and our shared love for the island that acts as the catalyst for keeping our island home sustainable and thriving.

Sigmund Torre & Takao Sono

By Amanda Virrey



Occupations: Artists
Status: Couple since 2011

Both: In Boracay, we were embraced into a great community and were able to express ourselves artistically through many murals all around the island. Living in Boracay has made us closer in the simple fact that we wake up together every day in paradise. With everything we need, including the most beautiful beaches a nice walk away, our stress levels are definitely far less compared to the five years we spent together in Manila. The island has also given an incredible amount of inspiration for our art

The best part of this wonderful place is the community. Meeting the island family while visiting was a huge part of our decision to make the move here. It is such a nice feeling to step out of your door to greet and be greeted by friends who have become family.

We are also very lucky to see our art all over the island in places like JT's Manukan Grille, Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast, Dinibeach Bar & Restaurant, Lemoni Cafe, Boracay Beach Truck, Two Brown Boys, Coast Boracay and many other places. We were also able to share our art with the island's children through painting workshops with JT's Manukan and Paradise English. It was very nice to see the talent and passion in the next generation

Both: Both: We met at a New Year's 2011 party in Tokyo, just after midnight.

Both: Not really romantically, but there was a definite interest because we realized we were both designers/artists. We didn't have our first real date until March of the same year. But Sig moved to the Philippines in April.

Takako: Sig is smart, very free-spirited, passionate about things he likes, and has a way of drawing people together.

Sig: Takako is immeasurably kind, caring,

and big-hearted. She has a way of putting other people first that is amazing to see and receive. She's also very strong-willed, thinks things through, and is very talented artistically.

Sig: After I moved to the Philippines, a few months later, Takako came to visit for my birthday. It was then that we realized we were each other's.

Both: We are very opposite in many ways and it is in these differences that we complement each other very well, both in life and in our art.

Both: Communication is the most important. Coming from different backgrounds and languages, it isn't always easy, but finding a way to express your feelings to each other goes a long way. And, have as much (of it) as possible

Both: When we collaborate on our pieces, we take on different mindsets and become a couple of painters instead of just a couple. We try to separate from our daily lives and become creative partners working towards the same goal. We also make sure to enjoy what we do together, as much as possible.

Gerard & Rona Liza Orada

By Mark Cabrera



Occupations:
Gerard: Architect
Rona: Nurse/RedCross Boracay Administrator
Status: Married for two years
Partners in: Life

Gerard: Yes, I believe the Island brought us together, in its perfect time. I pursued my Architecture career outside the Island, but I was drawn to go back, and it all made sense.

Rona: I had reasons to leave Boracay, but the Red Cross made me stay, the Island made me stay.

Gerard: I saw her on "People you may know" on Facebook. She works for the Red Cross, so I thought of adding her. I might need her service.

Rona: I usually don't add people on Facebook unless we have many common friends. But I saw the Italian flag 🇮🇹 on his

wall, I thought he was from Italy where I spent three months volunteering in 2016 and was going back there in a few months (July 2019). I clicked the friend request button in May 2019. Turned out it was used to indicate their membership in INC.

Gerard: Not love at first sight and I had no intention of courting her. She was also too committed to her work then, and not really looking for love.

Rona: No. But I liked the fact he didn't converse to please me, because if he did, it would just bore me.

Gerard: She's strong and independent, smart, sweet and caring.

Rona: He is a dreamer and a doer. He is consistent and a family man. He is sweet.

Gerard: I was seated beside her on the beach, and I suddenly felt I was ready to settle down. She was my missing piece.

Rona: He feels calm and steady. I am at peace in his presence.

Both: We talk about everything. Our thoughts, struggles, achievements. We share ideas and dreams together and show support for each other's career and goals. There's no formula for a good relationship, every day you just get to know your partner deeper and still commit to the vows. Make God the center of your relationship.

Both: Prioritize each other, spend quality time together but also respect individual time (we have our "me" times too) to grow individually and as a couple. Go on an adventure, try new things, and explore both of your needs. Dream together, do role plays, be a kid and a grown-up. Be both yourselves. Build the relationship through trust and respect.

Gerard: We are both into each other's passions. Rona is also into art and is creative. She gives her inputs on my designs. I also like doing community work and I am happy to contribute to her organization in whatever way I can. While complementing each other a lot, we also set boundaries to separate tasks from our relationship.

Rona: Boracay played a role in our relationship. Whenever we were overwhelmed with work, we would go have a sunset walk. We also like to be surrounded by people who share the same ideals and love for the Island. Gerard has been more involved in community work as he signed up to be a Red Cross Volunteer himself. We aim to give back to the Island that's been so good to us, through our passion, talent and skills. This has made our relationship even stronger. We are a team.

Kevin Salzlechner & Tina Occhionero

By Pauline Reitzer



Occupations:
Kevin: Bar Owner (Exit Bar)
Tina: Hotel manager (Bianca's Garden Apartments)
Status: Boyfriend & girlfriend for almost 15 years
Partners in: Life

1. Tina: Boracay had everything to do with our story. I was trying to find myself again after being in my Manila bubble for so long (high school and college years) and coming home made me realize some important things that I had lost along the way. For Kevin, coming home was a fresh start for his career, creating a new business at a young age and learning how to process his new relationship and his new business all at the same time. We were both quite young when we first started dating so it was all an adjustment. We have been raising each other from young adults to now parents.

2. We both have very deep connections with Boracay as we both grew up here. We shared the same experiences and understanding of the island so that bonded us together. There was no need to explain, we already understood each other.

3. For many years we would team up to raise funds for certain causes for the Boracay community, whether it's donating to the Ati community during the pandemic, donating essentials for fire victims, or helping raise funds for friends and family that are in need. The local community has always been important to us. We have used Exit Bar as a platform to help those causes.

Tina: We officially met at Exit Bar, but we have known of each other while growing up on this small island. Back then, we had different circles, so we were never really friends as kids. But we would see each other from time to time when our friend groups would intertwine.

We had many late nights watching the stars at night, listening to music and just bonding and reconnected as a big group of new and old friends. I broke up with my boyfriend and we slowly started to develop feelings for one another. We would

When did you know that he or she is “your person” and that it was for keeps?

What is the secret to your relationship/partnership or the glue that keeps you together? Is there a formula or special ingredients for a good partnership/relationship?

Your advice on a happy relationship/marriage/friendship/partnership, and keeping the flame/fun alive?

For those who are also business partners: Some say that friends should not get into business together. What do you think/how do you make it work?

exchange messages from time to time but he was texting me with random peoples’ phones as he never owned a phone! We both didn’t think of it very seriously. Then finally after a couple of months, we decided to give it a try. It was long distance for a couple of years and then boom, 15 years later, we are still together and we are now parents to our cute little toddler.

Both: We don’t exactly know if it was love at first sight, but it was definitely infatuation and curiosity at first sight. So it depends on how you look at it. We bonded over music, family history, home interior designs/architecture, and travel.

Kevin: Tina puts everyone’s needs before hers, I value her honesty and straightforwardness. She loves fully and completely. She never stops caring for me even at times I don’t deserve it. She is an amazing partner and mother to our child. For that, I will forever be grateful. She is also pretty fun to be around if she’s in the mood.

Tina: Kevin is an amazing father to our daughter. He is a very caring and down-to-earth person. He is also very silly and obnoxious but that’s what I love about him until it gets annoying. He doesn’t care about what people think and he has a very positive perspective on life, full of energy and love.

Kevin: When Tina left her boyfriend.

Tina: When I left my boyfriend.

Both: Over the years, we had many ups and downs like any relationship, and communication can be lost at times. But we’ve miraculously always found our way back to each other with new levels of understanding and by both staying accountable for our actions. We constantly seem to find our way back “home” somehow. It takes two to tango as long as love is still there.

Both: Traveling has been our reset, our way of finding each other again and finding ourselves ever since. Quality time can be a bit difficult when children come into the picture so it’s important to plan a few date nights here and there, whenever you can.

Sarah Adey LaBrooy & Julia Lervik

By Pauline Reitzer



Occupations: Business owners
Status: Friends for 24 years and business partners for 19 years
Partners in: Lemoni Cafe & Restaurant and Dimbeach Bar & Restaurant

1. Julia: Everything. Sarah and I always bonded through food and we both wanted to open a restaurant at one point. Breakfast was our thing. We started with an all-day breakfast place since it didn’t exist.

Sarah: AAs soon as I moved to Thailand, I knew I wanted to come home. Boracay was home. You won’t find this community everywhere. There is no barrier between the people.

2. Sarah: I feel that if you decided to live here in the first place, you already have something in common because it’s not for everybody. Living here is very bonding through good times and bad times.

3. Julia: When we started our menu, we tried to build it around products we have here so we don’t have to import everything.

It should be local, we want to support the community and small businesses. Some of our staff have been with us for 19 years.

Julia: We met our group of girlfriends in this aerobics class. We all started going to happy hour together while the kids were playing. It turned out Sarah had been working in the restaurant industry all her life and so had I. We had a love of food in common and bonded over that all the time. After I divorced and Sarah moved to Thailand for a year, D’Mall was being developed. The Lemon Cafe spot was available so I called Sarah and asked if she wanted to be partners.

Did you instantly hit it off as friends/business partners?

Julia: We became really good friends fast. We never thought of looking for a business opportunity, it came.

Sarah: But we had talked about it. The island was different back then, there were fewer opportunities, businesses and tourists. We became business partners naturally.

Sarah: I value her huge heart. She is a very kind person. And I especially value the fact that she is very straightforward and strong. I kinda hide behind her and she stands against what is wrong. I really admire that. She will always fight for what is right. Not just in business. She fights for other people, for the island, for the community. And she’s always working on something for a good cause, not for money. I also admire that a lot.

Julia: One of the first things I admire in Sarah is her capacity to always welcome everybody. It doesn’t matter how you look, what race or whatever, she always embraces everybody. She is accepting people from all walks of life. The way she is taking care of people, not only our guests but also our friends is amazing. She is always taking care of everybody, accepting everybody for who they are. Not many people are like this today.

Sarah: Immediately. As partners, it is so important that our strengths are in different places. There is no competition between us. We both are very hardworking and we are both honest. It is really important.

Julia: We had this bad experience with this one business partner. And we both stuck together against it. We value different things and we have very different personalities but we have the same core. We also have the same tastes regarding restaurant affairs.

Both: Mutual respect, trust and communication. Those are the top three.

Sarah: We support each other. When she is in Sweden or her daughter will give birth, she can take all the time she needs. When I am in Manila, she is the one taking over for me. We rely on each other and we stay in our line. What she does, she is good at. What I do, I am good at.

Sarah: Drink together. We work but make time to do other things together. In the busy months, 90 percent of our conversations are about work. But we still save this 10 percent to talk about other things. We still save time for some friendship in the middle, no matter how busy we get. We also know how to give each other space within the partnership.

Julia: Communication is important. Our friendship and our business have grown stronger through the years. When it comes to business, we follow each other’s gut feeling. If she doesn’t feel like doing something,

let’s not do it. We discuss it clearly and treat business as business. And when we go out with our group of friends and are having fun, we do not discuss work.

Julia: Our fear as friends was for the business to ruin the friendship. But we always ran the business very professionally. Economically, everything we consume is paid out of our respective pockets. If I treat people, it is on me. We keep it very clean. We have gone through different hardships and she has been the person I can call about everything.

Sarah: Loving what we do is key. This is our dream and we are living it. As foreigner women, it is not so easy to earn money in the Philippines so we are very proud of what we achieved together.

Andre & Carmille Garcia

By Pauline Reitzer



Occupations: Sip Happens founders
Andre: Operations manager, Dos Mestizos
Carmille: Social media manager, Dos Mestizos
Status: Married since October 2022

1. Both: We believe that Boracay offered us a fresh start. Coming from Manila right after finding out we were expecting a year into our relationship, we settled on the island not wanting our son to grow up in the city. It was a fresh perspective and the community helped us grow. In terms of business, by observing what the island needed we worked on creating what the community was looking for.

2. Both: Our bond became stronger. In Manila, it is all hustle and bustle. Here, we have more quality time together even on busy days. We can always find time for each other.

3. As a couple, we strengthen our connection with the people by supporting events and getting involved with the community. We are trying to be present and eat out as much as possible.

Andre: We have been together since 2013. We were introduced by friends at a college bar in Manila. After a year into the relationship, we were expecting. I worked on a cruise ship for years to provide for the family while Carmille had to be a single parent. We had to grow individually. When the pandemic happened we were reunited and were able to bond more than ever.

Andre: We hit it off and gradually fell in love. Since she outdrank me with Red Horse, I was always amazed!

Carmille: Andre takes the lead in the relationship. I feel there is direction in our lives, thanks to him. He is also very funny.
Andre: Her good looks! In all seriousness, she is smart, nurturing, understanding and corny.

Carmille: When he decided to switch his life up and set goals for the family after finding out we were expecting.

Andre: After the trial of our first year and the news of the pregnancy, we got through it. I then realized I could go through everything with her.

Both: The main one is mutual trust. We respect each other. We come from different backgrounds, but we value what the other

brings to the table. Decision-making is a team effort. We are looking in the same direction.

Both: Spontaneity and spending quality time together. We also have our own set of friends. And we never go to sleep angry after an argument.

Both: Communication and transparency. In our case, it is better if we work together. We each have very clear roles and are complementary

Nowie & Odette Potenciano

By Rica Velasco



Occupations: Entrepreneurs
Status: Married for 22 years and business partners
Partners in: The Sunny Side Group

1. Boracay was where we had our honeymoon. We had such a great time on the island and we’d return whenever we could. Later on, we thought of an excuse to keep on going back, and that was to put up a business. Fortunately, it worked out well for us and we’ve made the island home ever since.

2. Living and doing business in Boracay has its ups but also its downs. And sometimes the downs can be very challenging indeed like the 2018 closure and the pandemic. Facing all of those challenges together helped us come out stronger on the other side.

3. We’d like to think that our restaurants in Boracay are some of the more progressive on the island and we hope that the initiatives we champion slowly take things in a good direction for our community. For example, we have always tried to make our business more sustainable and we were the first to adopt metal and rice straws in our operations. We have long been championing local ingredients and after the pandemic, we accelerated our efforts.

We met way back in college at the library at UP Diliman, and we’ve been together since.

It sure seems so! We’ve been together since we first met and that was almost thirty years ago.

Nowie: I admire Odette’s grit and attention to detail. She’s the finisher in our duo and she’s the one who takes all our projects to completion. I’d like to think that she appreciates the creativity and vision that I bring to the table.

There hasn’t really been an a-ha moment but our relationship has something we’ve always just tried to build since the beginning and we’ve never stopped.

Like any good relationship, it’s all about trust. We each have our strengths and we trust that the other person will be able to pull through for us.

Do something you both love. We both love eating, traveling, going to the beach, and yes, even creating restaurants. So, while challenges are sometimes thrown our way, we’re able to get through them because we’re having fun along the way.

Both: Communication and transparency. In our case, it is better if we work together. We each have very clear roles and are complementary.

Congas

Congas Restaurant is the one and only Thai Restaurant in the island that serves Authentic Thai Food. We have two restaurants located in Sitio Angol Beach Station 3, open from 8:00 am to 9:30 pm and Bulabog Beach near Laketown, open from 11:00 am to 8:40 pm.

For reservation, you may reach through our mobile numbers: 09288191211 for Congas Station 3 and 09201068180 for Congas Bulabog.

FRESH & HOMEMADE



Brendan Green & Bing LaRocque

By Mark Cabrera



Occupations: Brendan: Head Distiller & Manufacturing at Destileria Barako
Bing: Freedive School owner/instructor
Status: Engaged best friends
Partners in: Life. We have three sons and two businesses.

1. Both: Definitely. This is a very active and social island, and we met and fell in love here. Our island friends felt we would be a perfect match.

2. Both: Living in Boracay is magic and beautiful; it always makes you grateful for what you have. We believe having gratitude in our hearts makes us have a brighter perspective in life.

3. Both: We love the island activities that are great for our family or just for us. Being able to switch off from work and free your mind helps keep us sane.

Both: We were introduced to each other by common friends. We have been friends since 2018 and got together later that year.

Both: It was definitely attraction and admiration at first sight! We both have our businesses of our own and respect was there from the start.

Bing: For me, it was important that Brendan was a positive person. He is funny, smart, principled, and a man of action.

Brendan: Bing is very honest and whatever she puts her mind to, she is devoted. No matter if it's our family, her work, or even quality time with friends, you always get 100 percent from her.

Bing: While on one of our vacations, we were told the chef did not come in that morning. Brendan got in the hotel kitchen and cooked us breakfast, despite the receptionist's shock, whom Brendan convinced to show him where the eggs were. He is definitely a go-getter!

Brendan: Bing told me she could take care of herself, and she meant it. This was always going to be a team partnership.

Both: Good communication is key, and seeing things from the other's perspective. Letting each other have space when needed, sports, or spending time with friends is so important.

Both: Make time for just the two of you. Try new adventures and have FUN. Really listen to what each one is saying and don't just wait for your turn to talk.

Both: We are not business partners but we help each other out in business, bounce ideas back and forth or even roll up our sleeves up and get right into it. Helping your partner build something they love is so fulfilling for both of you.

Elivir & Jennifer Dublin

By Azenith Resurreccion



Occupations: Elivir is a contractor, Jen is an architect
Status: Married since May 2022
Partners in: Dublin Abawag Architectural and Double Dragon Apparel

2. Eli: We are together most of the time and are able to work, as well as play and party with friends in just a kilometer radius.

3. Jen: When we both joined a dragon boat team, it strengthened our bond together since we shared another common interest and passion and gained more friends.

Jen: We met because of work and our profession since the island was booming in the construction business at the time. We've been together for 20 years, two years married, business partners for 15 years. We met here in Boracay in Punta Rosa Boutique Hotel while it was being constructed in 2003 where I was working as an architect and the owner's representative while Eli was the contractor's representative and supervisor.

Eli: When we met, we had a heated misunderstanding about work. Then we "hit it off" with each other's interests after that.

Jen: Yes, our first meeting was not smooth because we had an argument about concerns in our project but we became good friends after that incident. He introduced me to the ways of the island since he was born and raised here.

Jen: Elivir is very friendly and has a great sense of humor, there's never a dull moment with him during work and out of work. We have the same profession so we speak the same language. I admire how he is dedicated to everything he does, from the moment I met him until now, he has the respect of his workers and I think that is one of the best traits I like about him until now.

Eli: Jen is CURL: Caring, Understanding, Respectful and Loving.

Jen: After just a month of knowing Eli, I knew that he was "for keeps." Now I consider him my best friend.

Eli: There was love and respect from the start.

Eli: The secret to longevity is understanding, especially when one is already in "maoy" mode (Visayan word for negative emotions)! Learn to adjust and don't forget to infuse the important ingredient: humor. It will lighten the situation, but only with proper execution!

Jen: More than love, it's respect for each other. We know that we are not perfect and we struggle with our shortcomings. We do not talk when we are mad since we cannot take back the bad things we might say to each other. We also try not to mix personal matters with business and work.

Is there a formula?

Jen: For a happy marriage, the old saying is still true: "A happy wife is equal to a happy life!"

Eli: Correct!

Eli: As the man of the house I have to be always supportive of my wife/partner, especially when an order from Lazada arrives – just be cool and pay. And most of all, as men, we should always know that we are always wrong, correct?

Jen: I am lucky that my husband and business partner is a humorous person. My advice is to try to find someone like him and your life will be better.

Jen: As partners, we make sure we don't step on each other's roles and never make a decision without the knowledge of the other. We listen to each other's suggestions and maintain good conversation.

Eli: Being business partners for 15 years, we practice a give-and-take system, and the term "learn to adjust" has been our power motto in both personal and client matters. In our line of work, we adjust and go with our clients' best interests. We do the same for our family, especially now with our two boys.†



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COMMUNITY NEWS
Talk of the Town

The hot topic of the moment

DISTURBING THE PEACE

Text & photos by Azenith Resurreccion

Boracay Commissioners, Tour Guides and Coordinators in the hot seat

“Island-hopping, paraw sailing, paddleboard, party boat, or massage Mam Sir?”



A tour guide (in uniform), a coordinator (tour company shirt) and a commissioner comparing notes; A Tour guide and a commissioner along the busy White Beach pathway (commissioners carry small body bags and usually have a laminated brochure of activities in-hand); Doing the hustle; Like vultures looking for prey

Commissioners on the beaches of Boracay have been labeled by some private agencies as a “public nuisance,” with quite a number of them offering various activities along White Beach, causing distress to vacationers expecting to have a relaxing holiday at the beach.

Despite draconian rules after the government-imposed temporary closure in 2018 to rehabilitate the world-famous island destination, these hordes of commissioners, tour guides and coordinators prevailed and continue to be the number one, most tiresome cause of complaints by visitors.

After an alarming decrease in tourist arrivals starting October to November 2023—the supposed start of the usual super peak season on the island post-pandemic, emergency consultations and meetings were conducted by the Provincial Government of Aklan, Local Government Unit of Malay, the Boracay-Caticlan Sustainable Development Council (BCSDC) which includes business sector groups as well as government agencies, to come up with solutions to address this critical situation.

Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores then signed Executive Order 097 (series of 2023) on November 15th to “soften” restrictions and requirements to enter Boracay Island. The lifting of hotel voucher requirements upon entering the island, extending the

swimming hours, and other adjustments were seen to encourage tourists, especially foreign backpackers to choose Boracay instead of the other popular island destinations in the country.

Along with the provincial government’s efforts to help revitalize tourism, complaints and petitions to eradicate the existence of commissioners and their practices have resurfaced. Many of the netizens have aired on social media groups their suggestions on how to address the decrease in tourist popularity and one of the points discussed was to regulate the illegal tour coordination activities throughout the island.

To find for actual tourist complaints published or posted online, just search “Boracay commissioners” and at the top of the search results, one might find the oldest post on Tripadvisor, dated 18 years ago, where tourists discussed their dismay on commissioners in Boracay who took advantage of them and ripped them off by marking up published rates apart from asking the accommodation’s management of commission. This scheme also applied to other transactions such as island-hopping tours and other activities. Most of the guests would find out about these sketchy transactions later on but had no one else to turn to as resorts and activities management agencies had to agree and protect the commissioners’ terms since they bring in

guests to their businesses.

Back then, having an online booking was not yet that popular among the general public and tourists arrived on the island with no room reservations. These commissioners would offer rooms at the jetty port and escort the arrivals to the resorts. At the same time, tour activities were being transacted along the busy pathways by the beach. Guests would air their disappointments and warn other tourists about their experience. Tripadvisor used to be the only popular online travel advisory that had a platform for guest reviews, especially on negative comments, whether valid points or mere bickering.

Over the years, these “job opportunities” attracted many migrants to make a living as commissioners. The rising number of tourists aligned with the rising number of bystanders who offer various activities.

According to the Akean Forum blogspot published in 2021, illegal tour guides are still rampant and though the Malay LGU “disowns” these illegal commissioners, there have been continuous complaints received in the office of the Department of Tourism (DOT) about exorbitant fees these commissioners charge some tourists. Actions may have been taken by the LGU in the past years, but everybody is questioning what happened to the laws or ordinances that protect tourists from being extorted by these illegal touring activities.

What is the difference between tour guides and commissioners?

In 2015, Municipal Ordinance 341—An ordinance regulating the operation of foreign and local tourist guides, tour leaders, tour coordinators and seasonal foreign workers within the municipality of Malay, was established as the latest improvisation and amendment of the Municipal Ordinance 164 of 2002 and the Municipal Ordinance 313 series of 2012, that sought to regulate the operation of foreign and local tourist guides, tour leaders, tour coordinators and seasonal foreign workers within the municipality. Section 2 of the ordinance states the definition of the terms below:

- 1. Tourist Guide** – a local or foreign individual who guides tourists, local or foreign, for a fee, commission, or any other form of lawful remuneration, either as a freelancer or as an employee of any tourism-related establishment within the Municipality of Malay. To guide means to lead the way, provide information and professionally conduct tourists to desired destinations or activities.
- 2. Tour Leader** – an individual who assists or leads tourists to any establishments, destinations or activities, for a fee, commission or any form of lawful remuneration. To assist means to provide ease and convenience to tourists



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3. Tour Coordinator – a local or foreign individual who is either a freelancer or employed in any tourist establishment or agency who makes arrangements to provide various recreational activities to tourists, local or foreign alike, such as snorkeling, diving, boating, island hopping, banana boat riding and other similar activities.

The term “commissioners” is no longer accepted or applied in any touring activity or transaction, however, the mechanics may remain the same. These tour guides bring in guests or customers to the activities providers and in return they get commissions, they can of course, offer marked-up prices and/or give discounts to close a deal with any inquiry done in the offices or establishments, the streets or even via social media “legally.”

The use of social media platforms such

as Facebook groups or pages in booking activities started post-pandemic since tourists had to prepare all activities in advance to make sure they get proper assistance from these tour guides. This trend created opportunities for residents to become tour guides and commissioners just by coordinating with suppliers or operators.

In 2021, the DOT and Municipal Tourism Office of Malay relaunched their program to accredit and regulate the rising number of tour guides. Local applicants had to undergo a DOT/Municipal Tourism Office-led 21-day seminar to add to other requirements before acquiring the occupational permit issued by the Public Employment Service Office or PESO. This program is set to deliberate the existence of illegal commissioners and try to give a proper solution to the tour guiding activities done by residents and migrants.

According to PESO manager/head Jona Solano, they have issued tour guide permits/

certificates for 2022-23. The list of accredited tour agencies also can be viewed in the tourism office or the DOT. All legal tour guides have their PESO IDs with them that can be verified through the PESO.

Here is the updated data on the number of individual occupational permits issued by PESO. Each year, these individuals need to renew their permits and comply with the requirements set by the Tourism Office.

| Year | Local Tour Guide | Local Tour Coordinator | Foreign Tour Guide |
|------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 2023 | 48 | 1505 | 127 |
| 2022 | 74 | 871 | 41 |
| 2021 | 11 | 40 | 0 |
| 2020 | 57 | 256 | 250 |
| 2019 | 76 | 783 | 656 |
| 2018 | 36 | 189 | 252 |
| 2017 | 32 | 172 | 317 |

The program that is set to regulate tour guiding activities has encouraged many

residents to apply and become legit Local Tour Coordinators. The number of applications almost doubled from 2022 until 2023 and according to Solano, they have issued these Tour Guide PESO IDs as per mandated by the LGU and the Tourism Office.

As of writing, the Tourism Office stated that they have halted the issuing of Tourism Recommendation certificates to applicants as they have seen a need to set a limit on the issuance of PESO IDs. Mayor Froilar Bautista recommends a need to review and amend the ordinance pertaining to the regulation of tour guides and ordered a temporary suspension on the issuance of certain documents for the tour guide applications.

Meanwhile, to get the Tourism Endorsement from the Tourism Office of Malay, tour coordinator applicants may submit requirements to get a Tourism Recommendation.¹

Editor’s note:

Based on Municipal Ordinance 341’s definition of terms, a tour guide, leader, or coordinator IS a commissioner, because at the end of the transaction, they collect a commission or fee. The difference lies in whether they have the paperwork or permits that allow them to offer activities and services, and to collect a commission or service fee from the destination or activity provider.

The question is: What is the penalty for unlicensed commissioners who are caught peddling their services to tourists (or what is to stop them from harassing tourists)?

More importantly, why is no one stopping them

from approaching tourists and locals alike (they don’t seem to care that they’ve already approached you)? Whether “legit” and licensed to operate or not, wearing a uniform (tour guide) or in plainclothes sporting a lanyard with various IDs and a handheld laminated brochure of sorts (commissioner), the rude “in-your-face” vulturelike harassment is the same.

Suffice it to say, despite the stringent requirements for a license to operate as a legitimate local tour coordinator, and add to this the temporary suspension of the issuance of permits pertaining to tour guide applications, they are out there, hustling and hassling in plain sight, and defining the Boracay Island tourist experience day in and day out.

Don’t get us wrong: we do not wish to take away the livelihoods from these enterprising individuals, but there must be a suitable and sustainable solution, one that doesn’t disturb the peace and damages the tourism island’s reputation; the rule of law must prevail and regulations must be enforced; and perhaps a means to employ these able-bodied individuals in line with the island’s thrust towards sustainable tourism.

Our humble advice (aside from trying to avoid eye contact), is to politely shake your head to say “No thank you,” and simply ask your hotel or resort concierge to arrange all your island activities. For water sports activities, just head over to the activities tents at Boat Station 1 and 3 (or in Bulabog Beach) and book your activity

directly with the service providers—the commissioners would have escorted you there anyway, and then collect a fee for it. If you wish to make table reservations, simply visit the restaurant or bar’s social media pages and book online.

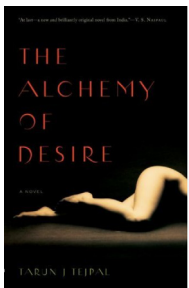
And lastly, this is a deeply-rooted problem and has been around since the tourism boom, and it will take some time to fully be resolved. But the LGU is working on it, and we are writing about it in the local newspaper. So please don’t judge Boracay Island harshly for this, and we will keep our fingers crossed that you will be pleasantly surprised on your next visit, when your beach walk is as peaceful as a dream.¹

BOOK REVIEWS

Finally, the perfect leisure holiday destination where you can read that book!

ROMANTIC READS

By Pauline Reitzer



“The Alchemy of Desire” by Tarun Tejpal

The Alchemy of Desire by Tarun Tejpal is a captivating novel that explores the complexities of love, relationships and desires. The story follows the lives of two characters as they navigate their way through the ups and downs of their relationship. The author goes deep into the psyche of his protagonists, revealing their innermost thoughts and feelings, making it a touching and lyrical work in terms of character development. *The Alchemy of Desire* is a deeply moving and emotionally resonant novel that will leave a lasting impression on the reader. Set in

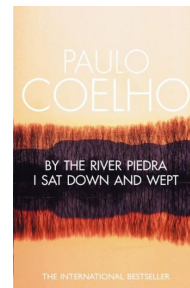
picturesque and amazing India, readers get a chance to explore the human condition, the tensions between desire and duty, tradition and modernity, and the search for meaning and fulfillment in a fast-changing world.



“Spring Snow” by Yukio Mishima

In his novel *Spring Snow*, Yukio Mishima, one of the most important writers of the 20th century, masterfully created a tale of love, betrayal and social class set in pre-World War II Japan. The story follows the life of Kiyooki Matsugae, a young man from a lower social class who falls deeply in love

with the aristocratic Sadaiko. Their relationship is forbidden by societal norms, and as their love affair unfolds, they are faced with the hard realities of their social standings. Mishima’s writing is poetic, delicate and poignant, showing the essence of the characters’ emotions. The descriptions of the Japanese countryside in springtime are particularly captivating, painting a realistic picture of the natural beauty that surrounds the characters. The novel also explores themes of honor, duty and the role of the individual in society. Mishima’s writing is both expressive and thought-provoking.



“By the River Piedra, I Sat Down and Wept” by Paulo Coelho

Known for his best-seller *The Alchemist*, acclaimed author Paulo Coelho wrote *By the River Piedra, I Sat Down*

and Wept in 1994. The novel is a deeply emotional and poetic tale that explores the depths of love and life. Quite different from the usual romances, this story follows two former lovers who reunite after a decade-long separation. Pilar has transformed into a self-reliant woman, while her childhood sweetheart has grown into a captivating spiritual leader. Pilar has learned to overpower her feelings, and he has turned to religion as a means of coping with his inner troubles and doubts. As they embark on a challenging journey together, long-buried feelings of blame and resentment resurface. In a small village nestled in the French Pyrenees, by the banks of the River Piedra, the past lovers will revisit this unique relationship in the light of some of life’s most profound questions. Full of insight and comfort, delight and sadness, this novel is a nice tribute to life’s endless possibilities and reminds you to embrace wonders and miracles.¹



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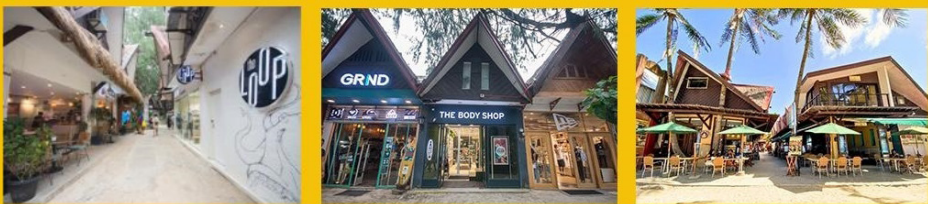



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WORLD AWARENESS DAY

February & March Holidays and Fiestas

By Rica Velasco

HOLIDAYS IN FEBRUARY



Philippine Heart Month

February is widely recognized as the month of love due to Valentine's Day celebrations on February 14. It is also designated as Philippine Heart Month to raise awareness about the serious and increasing prevalence of heart diseases among Filipinos. The Department of Health (DOH) reports that heart diseases rank high among the leading causes of death in the country. In response to the health challenge, various initiatives and events have been organized such as The Heart Fair by the Philippine

Heart Association, aimed at fostering public awareness and understanding of heart diseases to combat their prevalence and impact on the Filipino population.

UNESCO WATCH

UNESCO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that serves as a global platform to promote peace, sustainable development, and intercultural understanding. UNESCO commemorates specific days throughout the year to raise awareness and promote global action on critical issues within its mandate. Here's a rundown of the celebrated days this month.

February 4: World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4th. Since its inception in 2000, the day has become a rallying point, encouraging people globally to come together and tackle one of humanity's most significant challenges. The 2024 theme, "Close the Care Gap," highlights the need to prompt leaders to prioritize cancer, create innovative strategies for addressing disparities, and allocate resources for a world free of cancer. The focus is on eliminating health inequalities by tackling their root causes and ensuring everyone has access to quality health services, no matter when, where, or how they need help.

This initiative not only supports population control but also encourages responsible pet ownership while contributing to the overall welfare of animals.

HOLIDAYS IN MARCH

March 24-30: Holy Week

In the Philippines, recognized as the "bastion of Christianity in Asia," there is a strong emphasis on religious and spiritual development despite cultural diversity. As the world's fifth-largest Catholic country, the Philippines annually observes Semana Santa, or Holy Week, a time of solemn reflection on Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection. This period is highly significant for devout Catholics who value traditions. It is also one of the country's busiest travel seasons as people return to their home provinces.

Holy Week Observances

Palm Sunday: Worshipers bring palm fronds to church for blessing, reenacting Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem.

Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday: A procession portraying the journey to Calvary occurs, featuring the fallen Christ and images of saints.

Holy Wednesday: The last working day is marked by processions in various provinces depicting the Passion of Christ.

Maundy Thursday: This day marks the beginning of the Paschal Triduum, commemorating the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Typically celebrated in the evening, the Mass of the Lord's Supper aligns with the Last Supper.

Good Friday: The most solemn day observed with street processions, the Way of the Cross, and reflections on Jesus' Seven Last Words. In some places, notably in Pampanga, processions may include devotees who practice personal expressions of penance, like flagellation or even being nailed to crosses.

Black Saturday: Legally and colloquially termed "Black" due to mourning. The ritual of mourning for the "dead" Christ continues, albeit with less intensity.

Easter Sunday: This day is marked with celebrations, beginning with the pre-dawn rite called *Salubong* or *Sugat*, symbolizing Christ's resurrection before the first Mass. This day marks the joyous conclusion of the period of fasting and penance known as Lent. Easter Sunday is a day of religious observance for Christians, with many attending Easter Mass to symbolize renewal and new life in their faith.

February 11: International Day of Women and Girls in Science

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is celebrated on February 11th. The day also celebrates the birthday of Marie Curie, symbolizing a commitment to breaking down barriers and stereotypes to encourage more women and girls to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The focus is on promoting gender equality and empowering women in the scientific community.

February 14: Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is an annual occasion when loved ones express their affection towards each other with greetings and gifts. While Valentine's Day is typically celebrated by romantic couples, in the Philippines, it is widely observed as a day of love among significant others, families and friends. It is also a common wedding anniversary date in this country.

February 27: World Spay Day

World Spay Day is an annual event that promotes spaying and neutering as essential measures to reducing the number of stray animals at risk of euthanasia or harm on the streets, combating overpopulation, and address health issues. It is observed on the last Tuesday of February every year. In the Philippines, organizations like the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and municipal veterinarians provide free spay and neutering programs on this day.

Chinese New Year 2024 falls on Saturday, February 10th, 2024, starting a year of the Dragon, marking the "Year of the Wood Dragon." The Year of the Wood Dragon stands out for the rare fusion of the dragon's strength with the attributes of wood, believed to signify a year of vision, innovation and growth.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. declared February 9 and 10 as a special non-working holidays to mark the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Filipino-Chinese communities in

the Philippines celebrate Lunar New Year every year in hope of attracting prosperity, closer family ties and peace. Aside from cleaning their homes and preparing lucky money in red envelopes, firecrackers that are believed to drive off bad luck and the *Tikoy*, a Chinese sticky sweet treat is believed to attract good fortune. People also participate in parades and dragon dances. A public holiday in China, Chinese people will get eight days off from work from the 10th to 17th.

INDULGE CAFÉ DEL SOL CELEBRATES TWO STRONG DECADES IN BORACAY WITH A NEW LOOK!

Café del Sol is the first modern, full-service coffee shop to open on the island back in 2003



Our generation, locals or tourists alike, are big fans of coffee, so much so that we have a culture for it. We flock to our cafés down the street, in small alleyways and get Americanos for take-out. We meet our friends in big-city cafés in posh areas for brunch. We stopover when we travel in the provinces, and appreciate the café's native interiors, overlooking scenic views. We rush to cafés in tight kiosks with people buzzing in lines. One thing's for sure, we definitely love our cafés by the beach, where the waves endlessly kiss the shores and the cool winds caress our skin. There's nothing quite like sipping on an ice-cold latte with the bluest views of the crystal seas.

Perhaps this is one of the factors that contribute to the celebrated longevity of Café del Sol, on top of the good service and great offerings they cater to their patrons and customers.

Proudly being the first modern, full-service coffee shop to open in Boracay Island, Philippines back in 2003, the popular island café is the brainchild of entrepreneur Juan Elizalde and chef Paolo Occhionero. It started out as a cozy beach-front coffee shop, where locals and tourists from all over the world get to enjoy mouth-watering paninis, thirst-quenching ice-blended frappes and fresh fruit juices, and of course, their delectable selection of cakes, pastries, and breads. Their classic Mango Cheesecake easily gained a cult-following, while their Italian espressos paired with their breakfast plates have been a big go-to for early birds who want to enjoy the island's morning sun.

Now, on their 20th anniversary, Café del Sol excitingly launches a bigger, better, and brighter island coffee shop with their recent renovation and makeover. The interiors are updated and refreshed for a more stylish look. The second floor is also redeveloped with an expansive space that can hold private functions and parties, good for special events up to 50 pax, with a gorgeous views of the world famous Boracay beach and sunsets. To give more food options to diners, customers are also honored to cross-order from Aria Cucina Italiana, another brainchild restaurant of Elizalde and Occhionero, where authentic Italian pizzas, pastas, and gelatos are offered, just across the café.

"We are beyond thrilled and grateful for the 20 strong years our patrons and traveling diners have given us. We continue to uphold the café to the strictest standards when it comes to food and drinks, so we can ensure customer satisfaction every time they choose to visit us", shared from a Management Team member of Boracay Entertainment Resources Incorporated, the company that carries the brand. "We look forward to serving our future customers in our much improved café, with the same heart for warm Filipino service and delicious coffees and meals."

In an age where a lot of aesthetics are considered when it comes to selecting cafés, Café del Sol is a strong contender as the ultimate original in Boracay's coffee shop scene. On top of Instagram-worthy views is the high quality food and drinks they offer, because they know that a delicious menu, matched with excellent service, is what truly makes a café stand tall, even after two long decades in the industry.

Visit Café del Sol's recently renovated and refreshed space at beach front, Station 2, D'Mall, Boracay Island, Philippines.

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The Boracay Dragons ultimate frisbee team was founded around 2002 when a bunch of local kids were invited to participate in a beach ultimate frisbee event. The organizers were so surprised about these kids' natural athleticism that they picked up the sport in a blur. They became great at the sport, and they started to dominate the game. They are the longest-reigning champions of the Boracay Open Tournament since the first annual beach ultimate frisbee event.

World Class Boracay Dragons

The Boracay Dragons even spread their wings and conquered international ground. They've won second place three times in the World Beach Ultimate Championships. They won second place in Brazil last 2007 and another second-place finish in Italy last 2011. They also won third place in Dubai last 2015. The most recent one was the World Beach Ultimate Championships in Huntington Beach, California, USA last November 5, 2023. Here the Boracay Dragons won second place in the Grand Masters Open Division.

The team was mainly composed of Boracay Dragon Legends: Panoy delos Santos, Clyde Sullano, Junthir Flores, Datu Yap, Benjamin Yap, Pat Sacapaño, Nok Sacapaño, Jobert Buenaventura, Henrix Maming, Jude Lee and their playing Coach/Captain Buboy Famorcan. They were assisted by another Boracay Dragon and PFDA President Karen Cabrera. Again, these are the world championship tournaments.

Asian Golden Dragons

The Boracay Dragons also dominated Asia last year by winning two Golds. They won the Gold medal in the China Beach Open in Hainan, China last December 17, 2023. The Boracay Dragons were also key players in the Philippine team who won another Gold in the Asia Oceanic Juniors and Masters Ultimate Championships in

SPORTS

IT'S FRISBEE TIME, DRAGON STYLE

By Mark Cabrera



Don't miss the Boracay Open Beach Ultimate Frisbee Tournament (March 8 to 10, 2024) and catch the island's pride—the Boracay Dragons in action!



Boracay Dragons take 2nd at the World Championships; Grandmasters Open Team



The best in Asia: Boracay Dragons win the Gold at the China Beach Open



Legends in action

Putrajaya, Malaysia last December 17, 2023. As a former frisbee player and former Boracay Dragon member, I'm proud to say they are the best in Asia.

Boracay Open 2024

The Boracay Open is the longest-running beach ultimate tournament in Asia. The Boracay Open Tournament is an annual Beach Ultimate event taking place on the stunning white sands of Boracay, Philippines. It is renowned as the epitome of Beach Ultimate tournaments, attracting teams from all corners of the world. Imagine the sun on your skin, the ocean breeze in your hair, and the thrill of playing frisbee against teams who share your passion for this incredible sport. Participants have so much to look forward to, not to mention Boracay's amazing beaches.

World-Class Competition

Compete against top international and local teams, each aiming to claim the title of the Boracay Open champion. Prepare for exhilarating matches and face fierce opponents as you push your limits. Join a community of frisbee enthusiasts passionate about the sport and the joy it brings. As the sun sets over the horizon, embrace the lively atmosphere of Boracay with unforgettable social events. From enjoying an array of international restaurants to thrilling beach games, experiencing vibrant parties, and create a lasting connection with fellow frisbee players.

This year, the Boracay Open Beach Ultimate Frisbee Tournament will be held at Casa Pilar, Boracay Island on March 8-10, 2024. Witness the Boracay Dragons Legends and Boracay Dragons Next Gen teams compete against the top ultimate frisbee teams.

If you want to participate in the event, check out the Boracay Open Facebook Page. See you there!



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BORACAY DIARIES

Is Being Single a Good Choice?

Cheers to all the singles out there this Valentine's!

Text and illustration by Elle Quevedo



GLAMOROUSLY Single

To live and die unmarried is also considered to be a sound choice by some people. Yes, it is true. I have one confirmation of a friend who had an aunt who lived to be 68 and died a single woman.

She never dated nor got married. I have not met such a person in my life, and I just turned 50 this year. However, I could get on board with this choice because I was single (and not really dating) for six years before I met my partner now for eight years. At the time, some of my closest friends were also single and chose not to be on the dating scene much.

During my years of being "unpartnered," I felt comfortable although, I was also raising my youngest child who was in

her middle-school, so I am not completely sure if my being single was conscious or intentional. To be fair, I was married in the 90s, divorced in the early 2000s, and am still legally single at present.

I asked a couple of friends if they too, had chosen to be unattached at some point in their lives. My English guy friend who was married for 20 years a lifetime ago, is now just single and dating. The longest he was not with anyone serious was three years. He also added that he feels that his present life on the island is his real life, and the old one seemed so distant and dreamed up. The rest of my friends had an average of three to four years of not being with anyone or dating. They did it for the advancement of their career or just the fact that they do not want to rush and settle for just any partner.

In my internet research about singlehood, et. al., I found Bella DePaulo's TED (technology, entertainment and design) Talk entitled "What no one ever told you about people who are single." Quoting from *TED Talks* YouTube channel video's description, it says "Movies, novels, love songs, and even scientific research all seem to tell us the same stories: Everyone wants to find that special someone. Once you get married, you will live happily ever after, and you will never be lonely again. However, more people than ever before are living single—often by choice.

A close look at the best scientific studies shows that people who get married do not end up happier or psychologically healthier than they were when they were single. The stories we have so often been told are distracting us from other stories about single people that we have never been told. The untold stories help us understand

why so many people choose single life and thrive there, often finding meaning, fulfillment, autonomy, mastery, rich and varied personal relationships, and sweet solitude in their single lives." This description says it all!

I did not sense any bitterness in DePaulo's explanations, but I did hear a tinge of disappointment. She went into detail about her research through surveys and even graphed them, as one does when presenting different facts, but the objective was to create awareness that being single does not mean having a less fulfilling life than someone who is married or with a partner.

Society has given this notion that single people are incomplete somehow. A little example that I had a bit of a discussion with the same male friend is the word "spinster" which is now considered derogatory and outdated. The modern equivalent and more accepted term since the 90s is "unmarried woman." When I asked Google what the opposite gender terminology for a spinster was, and it showed me the word "bachelor." A reverse search of "bachelor" resulted in the word "bachelorette." The words "bachelorette" and "spinster" are not equal. The former pertains to a young woman who has not yet married, whereas the latter is meant for a considerably older woman for whom marriage is too late. I know these are merely words, but the fact that "spinster" exists—which originally referred to women that spun yarns in the 1300s, a term that later connoted an unmarriageable woman, is just one of society's clear-cut pieces of evidence of a woman's singlehood's ill repute.

In conclusion, especially now in our modern world with all these technologies (Hello, streaming services!) our self-independence and a revolution of self-love become easier and more celebrated by people who are either married, cohabiting, single and dating, or single with no romantic partner, we could certainly consider that any of these relationship categories are equally a good choice.†

At Guppy One Stop, we know how stressful it can be to manage your child's needs while exploring the beautiful scenery of Boracay. You can let your little ones ride in style and comfort. At the same time, you enjoy the beauty of the sunset and savor your coffee without worrying about returning to your hotel room for nap time. We also offer wheelchairs so that seniors can enjoy the scenery with ease.

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BORACAY BUCKET LIST

BSN's Picks for a Romantic Valentine's Day Dinner

TOP 7 HEAVENLY TABLES FOR TWO

By Gene Loves Acosta



Few things in the world can compete with the romance of the island vibe. Perhaps it's the very nature of it—the whisper of the sea, the soft touch of the sand, and the moonlight draped in a blanket of stars. Yet, when paired with a spectacular meal, the result is nothing short of pure magic. Ready to ignite sparks with your special someone? We've rounded up some romantic dining destinations worth checking out.



Sea food by Chele, Aqua Boracay

When a restaurant has the name of a chef who has left a distinctive mark on the local culinary scene, it hardly needs any introduction. Elegantly situated by the poolside, it features classic seafood dishes from around the world. Their Tuna Tataki and Seafood Paella are must-tries.

Price range for two: PhP6,000 - PhP8,000 during Valentine's Day with a rose stem and live saxophone music

Aqua Boracay, Bulabog Beach
 (+63 981) 495 5039
 Sea food by Chele Gonzalez
 @sea.foodbychelegonzalez



Lanterna

Dressing to the nines isn't for everyone. For a relaxed and intimate date that invites sweet whispers between you and your partner, Lanterna is the perfect choice. Indulge in the exquisite flavors of delicate bites such as their Carpaccios or choose the heartier option like freshly-made pastas. Whatever you pick won't disappoint.

Price range for two: PhP3,000 - PhP5,000

Bulabog Road 1B
 (+63 929) 154 1533
 Lanterna Hotel Boracay
 @lanternahotel_boracay



Dos Mestizos

This spot is the perfect setting for a dreamy date, where the menu tells a love story through Spanish culinary delights. Don't let the night pass without indulging in their raved-out dish—the squid ink paella—a delicious highlight that sprinkles an extra touch of magic onto your dining experience. With each bite, you'll find that love is not only in the air but also on your plate.

Price range for two: PhP3,000 - PhP5,000

Boracay Main Road, Station 1
 (+63 966) 6728 077
 Dos Mestizos Boracay
 @dozmestizosboracay



Hain at The Henry Resort Boracay

Tucked away in a lush garden, this dining oasis somehow feels like a hidden gem. As you soak in the peaceful surroundings, the atmosphere creates a perfect setting for a chill date night. Modern Filipino flavors take center stage here, showcasing ingredients that speak to the distinct tastes of each region.

Price range for two: PhP1,200 - PhP1,500

The Henry Resort Boracay, Station 2
 (+63 995) 772 7533
 @hainboracay



Ambassador in Paradise Resort

Ambassador in Paradise Resort offers a captivating beachfront experience, where alfresco dining under the sway of palm trees meets the soothing melodies of live acoustic music. Nestled by the shore, this venue invites guests to savor an immersive feast for the senses, ensuring a memorable dining escapade.

Price range for two: PhP1,500 - PhP9,000

White Beach, Station 1
 (+63 36) 288 1541
 Ambassador in Paradise Resort
 ambassadorinparadiseboracay



Shangri-La Boracay Resort and Spa: Sirena and Rima

Picture this: the sun setting in a blaze of red, pink and orange hues over crystal blue waters. Such is the breathtaking backdrop when you choose to dine at Sirena. This, paired with dimmed lights and soft music, will put you in a romantic mood. Here you can delight in the finest seafood, grilled to perfection, or relish the succulence of juicy poultry and red meats.

Another standout choice for special occasions is Rima. Nestled in a tree-top setting with a captivating view of the sea, this award-winning restaurant transforms into a canvas for a truly romantic Valentine's Day celebration. The menu unfolds as a visual feast of Mediterranean delights, perfectly complemented by a curated selection of excellent wines.

Price range for two: PhP8,000 - PhP15,000

Shangri-La Boracay, Barangay Yapak
 (+63 36) 288 4988
 Shangri-La Boracay
 @shangrilaboracay



Mosaic Latin American Grill at Crimson Resort and Spa

Discover the unique charm of Mosaic, a restaurant with sleek glass walls and a wooden wave-like ceiling, offering a modern twist to dining. Whether you're staying on the island or just passing through, the menu's diverse options make Mosaic a must-visit spot. Share delightful moments with your special someone over a mouth-watering steak or Ceviches and explore their wine list recommended for food pairing.

If you truly want to impress your date, consider the private beach dinner for two at Crimson. Begin the evening with welcome drinks, followed by a fine 7-course menu. Benefit from the added touch of a personal butler, ensuring a seamless and special dining experience. It's not just dinner; it's a carefully curated evening to make an impression and create lasting memories.

Price range for two: PhP1,500 - PhP8,5000

Crimson Resort and Spa, Punta Bunga Cove, Barangay Yapak
 (+63 36) 669 5888
 Mosaic Latin American Grill
 @mosaicboracay

BSN'S Top Picks for Casual Dining (for brunch or dinner) that won't break the bank:

Epic Boracay

Beyond its reputation for lively parties, this restaurant is also a gustatory haven. Try the Seafood Platter for a showcase of ocean-fresh delights.

Price range for two: PhP800 - PhP3,000



Beachfront, D'Mall of Boracay
 (+63 917) 130 2619
 Epic Boracay
 @epicboracay

Jammers Beach Shack

Freshly revamped, this spot has become Instagram-worthy. Though renowned for their burgers, don't miss the chance to savor the delectable Molokai fish and chips and the flavorful Carne Asada.

Price range for two: PhP1,000 - PhP1,500



Beachfront, D'Mall of Boracay
 (+63 917) 145 2788
 Jammers Beach Shack
 @jammersbeachshack

Aria Cucina Italiana

This renowned Italian spot is celebrated for its homemade pastas, woodfire oven-baked pizzas, and an outstanding selection of wines.

Price range for two: PhP800 - PhP3,000



Beachfront, D'Mall of Boracay
 (+63 36) 288 5573
 Aria Cucina Italiana
 @ariacucinaitaliana

Lemoni Café

Indulge in a variety of tasty and wholesome dishes, featuring a bakery and an all-day breakfast menu that undeniably delivers deliciousness.

Price range for two: PhP1,000 - PhP2,500



D'Mall of Boracay
 (+63 36) 288 6781
 Lemoni Cafe & Restaurant
 @lemonicafe.boracay

Bistro de Amis

With its cozy ambiance and excellent service, this beachfront gem nestled in the quiet part of the island offers a delightful retreat. The spotlight here falls on their exceptional pastas and the Tuna Tartar.

Price range for two: PhP800 - PhP3,000



Casa Camilla, Angol Road
 (+63 999) 819 2918
 Bistro des Amis
 @bistrodesamisboracay

BUSINESS NEWS

A PRIVATE FIRST TASTE OF WOLFGANG'S STEAKHOUSE, SOON TO RISE AT BORACAY NEWCOAST

By Freida Dario-Santiago



Special guests at the private “pop-up” launch at the beachfront of Boracay Newcoast



Wolfgang's Steakhouse at Belmont Hotel, Boracay Newcoast (perspective render)

The secret is out: The critically acclaimed Wolfgang's Steakhouse is opening in Boracay Island—the sixth Philippine branch, with a target completion by the end of February 2024—just seven years after the steakhouse opened its first Philippine branch.

Wolfgang's Steakhouse President & Co-Founder Peter Zwiener is joining forces with Global Estates Resorts Inc. (GERI) to introduce an exciting steakhouse concept in the beautiful setting of Boracay Newcoast. This collaborative venture aims to bring together the renowned New York steakhouse and GERI's commitment to creating exceptional leisure destinations.

Rated as one of the best steakhouses in New York, Wolfgang's Steakhouse currently has over 30 locations worldwide, with five branches in the Philippines (Newport World Resorts, City of Dreams Manila, The Podium, Ortigas, Gateway Mall 2, Araneta City, Cubao and One Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City)—all current branches are in Metro Manila.

We were among an exclusive guest-list, privileged to get first dibs at an intimate “Sizzling Soiree” at the future site of Wolfgang's Steakhouse at the Belmont Hotel on the sprawling Boracay Newcoast estate. The beachfront setup offered a taste of things to come, on the spot where Wolfgang's Steakhouse Grill will soon rise.

The tasting menu was a lavish seven-course meal not for the faint-hearted, accompanied with specialty cocktails and wine pairings to make one's head spin quite delightfully.

Hosting the event were Wolfgang's Steakhouse (WGS) Philippines owners Raymund Magdaluyo and Leina Bolinas, along with communications specialist,

newspaper columnist and RestoPH founder Spanky Enriquez.

When I asked what convinced him to open a branch in Boracay, he candidly admitted that it was a spur-of-the-moment decision during an unplanned leisure trip to Boracay last November 2023 with Wolfgang's Steakhouse president Peter Zwiener, who was smitten immediately by Boracay Island's beauty.

Magdaluyo enthused, “I have a feeling Boracay New Coast, being 15 percent of the island's total area, will change the leisure, lodging and food landscape of the island, with almost 1,500 rooms with room rates so reasonable they get a lot of big groups not including air BNB'd condos and future independent hotels.” He also mentioned spoiler alerts such as a Medical City, a Starbucks drive-thru, and other strong Manila restaurants signing up soon, but we will reserve this for another issue!

Raymund has been a restaurateur for about 20 years and owns the Red Crab group of restaurants, whereas executive chef Chris Oronse has been with Wolfgang's Philippines since 2006.

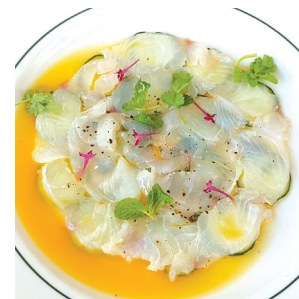
The Design

We learn that the design concept drew inspiration from the desire to create a space that embodies the essence of Boracay island's beauty and relaxed nature, while infusing it with a touch of breezy, laid-back elegance. The space will be composed of stone, wood and leather, creating an atmosphere that effortlessly conveys the notion of serene bliss within a rustic setting. The fusion of these elements promises to create a unique dining experience that captures the essence of this iconic brand with the unique spirit of the idyllic destination.

The location will also feature a Beach



Wolfgang's Steakhouse Philippine partners Raymund Magdaluyo (right) and Leina Bolinas (center) with Spanky Enriquez (left); The author and BSN editor-in-chief Freida Dario-Santiago (in orange) and husband Mark Santiago, Franck Merot (GM, Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts), Paula Maravilla (Wolfgang's PH, marketing/communications), Spanky Enriquez (RestoPH), Wolfgang's PH owners Leina Bolinas and Raymund Magdaluyo, and Chris Oronce (Wolfgang's PH executive chef)



A sampling feast from the exclusive grill menu: Skirt Steak Tacos, Fish of the day, Burrata salad (Photos by yours truly, the rest don't do justice to the dishes!)



Wolfgang's Steakhouse Boracay receives a resounding round of applause from the select guestlist of Boracay's business elite

Club positioned to offer the brand's collection of wines, specialty cocktails and extensive bar menu selections.

The Food

With the addition of the grill, the expanded menu introduces a variety of dishes featuring different cuts of beef. “While we embrace these new dishes, we are also committed to preserving the authentic essence of Wolfgang's Steakhouse. As a result, we will prepare these dishes in ways that maintain the soul and character that our restaurant is known for. This expansion allows us to present a wider selection of value-driven plates, catering to those seeking more intriguing and flavorful options, offering them a taste journey like no other.”

Alongside the to-die-for signature USDA Prime Black Angus dry-aged steaks, guests can enjoy exclusive grill items such as Beef Tartare, Burrata Salad, Steak Tacos, Charbroiled Flank Steak, Grilled Barbecue Short Ribs, just to name a mouthwatering few.

Wines and Specialty Cocktails

The wine list, an award-winning wine collection, is both diverse and meticulously selected to please even the most discerning palates. The selection features small, artisanal and up-coming producers alongside iconic winemakers. Whether it's a robust Cabernet Sauvignon produced in Napa Valley's perfect climate or a Bordeaux from the Old World, where grapes thrive under the gentle, temperate winds of the Bay of Biscay, it is very much a reflection of the menu with a focus on Wolfgang's Steakhouse signature dining experience.

Specialty cocktails were the enticing prelude to the exquisite meal, along with a charcuterie platter or the signature Tuna

Tartare. Based on refreshing and light ingredients, the cocktails were designed to reflect the allure of the seaside while incorporating a touch of creativity: the tropical bliss of Guava Caipirinha, a vibrant fusion of cachaca and ripe guava, and the Lilikoi Margarita, a harmonious blend of passion-fruit, zesty lime and the smoothness of tequila.

Wolfgang's Steakhouse, originally founded in New York City, has successfully expanded its presence in 34 locations across over 20 cities worldwide. Building upon the reputation of this renowned brand, Wolfgang's Steakhouse Grill introduces a concept focused on providing a wider menu range of grill favorites, offering a diverse selection of dishes that extend beyond the classic steakhouse fare.

In an interview with *PhilStar*, when asked what draws Peter and his father Wolfgang (a former waiter at the renowned Peter Luger Steak House in Brooklyn, NY) to the Philippines, Peter said it was a combination of Filipino food, Filipinos' knowledge of food, and Filipino friendliness.

“When we opened up our first restaurants in New York, California, and Hawaii, a lot of our clientele happened to be Filipinos,” Peter continued. “I think the style of our food is very compatible with what Filipinos like because it's very big-sized portions, high quality, a little fatty, and family food. All that combined works well.”

It goes without saying, that Wolfgang's Steakhouse will be a welcome addition to the hotel's dining outlets, and an uplifting addition (and a real game changer) to Boracay Island's thriving dining circuit!

Stay tuned to announcements on their social channels: @wolfgangsteakhouseph | @wolfgangsteakhousegrill Wolfgang's Steakhouse PH. 🌿

ISLAND LIFE

BORACAY VOICES: ISLANDERS' WISFUL THINKING

By Abigail Lei

As a radio personalities, we try to lighten the load and stress that many people have, especially workers and ordinary citizens. While some take their concerns or woes to social media, others pay us a visit at the local radio station and relay the inconveniences they have just experienced. Although we find ourselves empathizing with and relating to them, we often can't help but feel helpless because the most we can do is try to incorporate the unfortunate events in our funny and playful on-air banter, just enough to nudge the concerned parties, but not so much as to jeopardize broadcast standards and practices.

Commuter Problems

Tourists have it easy as they are instantly identifiable by public transport drivers and, although they won't admit it, given priority over locals because, well, we all got to hustle, right? But this is at the expense of locals, especially students who find it very difficult to secure a ride, more so if it's a

rainy day. The good news though is that there is an ordinance now on its second reading that will finally allow motorbikes to take commuters in and around the island. Hurray!

What might make things so much better for both tourists and locals is better implementation and vigilance about e-trike drivers who pick their passengers, especially if it's chartered versus the individual payment scheme, because not all of us are comfortable with or able to go on motorbike rides. Also, when law enforcers have checkpoints, I hope we don't hear of any more unlawful impounding of motorbikes or citations of the drivers. No to power tripping, please.

Waste Disposal

With the influx of tourists both domestic

and foreign, waste has been accumulating, too, very quickly, and it seems we do not have enough trash bins, especially along the stretch of the White Beach. With a lot of pop-up stores and restaurants using disposable packaging, consumers are at a loss as to what to do with their trash.

Some establishments might allow you to dispose of your trash in their receptacles, otherwise, the best thing to do is to take them back to your hotel. Hopefully, more dumpsters could be installed every few meters all over the island, with better garbage collection management and collection throughout the day.

Overpriced Boarding Houses and Apartments

We understand that the island has very high rates when it comes to land ownership

or lease, but to rent a small room made of light materials, with shared facilities, no system of garbage segregation or collection, no sanitation permits, or even fire safety, most workers or migrants are crying out against unjust rent rates. Shouldn't there be better regulating bodies to ensure the safety, security and overall welfare of the tenants? Remember, should unfortunate incidents happen, it could come back to the lessors, and worse, permits may be revoked or leasing businesses closed.

These are just some of the concerns of island dwellers, and even tourists, which have found their way to our station, and there are a lot more, honestly. Anywhere we may settle to live or work, there will always be pros and cons, and if we just keep mum, our leaders won't ever know our concerns and there will never be improvements. Change, no matter how little, is and should always be a welcome thing, especially if they are for the better and when they are for the benefit of the majority. 🌱



ENVIRONMENT

BORACAY'S WHITE SAND: A GEOLOGICAL MASTERPIECE

By Dadmar Amores

Boracay, a gem of the Philippine archipelago, boasts a fragile beauty, with its greatest asset being the pristine white sand encircling the island, notably along the four-kilometer stretch known as White Beach—an iconic haven acknowledged as one of the world's most breathtaking coastlines, a testament to the delicate interplay of geological forces and human interaction.

In the realm of geology, the late Dr. Raymundo R. Punongbayan, former Director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology (PHILVOLCS) and a revered figure in Philippine geology, embarked on a scientific analysis of the intricacies of Boracay's geological makeup that he articulated as saying: "The most important geological item in Boracay are the white sandy beach deposits." In recognizing the island's vulnerability to natural erosion and the impact of human activities, his work underscored the significance of understanding and preserving this fragile ecosystem.

The Boracay Tourism Master Plan, commissioned by the Department of Tourism (DOT) in the late 1980s, included a

rigorous, scientific, socio-cultural economic survey and assessment of the fast-rising tourist destination, authored by competent authorities in their respective fields. It was a chapter in this master plan that became a pioneering effort to unravel the geological mysteries of the island, authored Dr. Punongbayan.

It covered diverse aspects, including the island's origin, active faults, seismicity, sinkholes and salt intrusion, with a substantial focus on the enigmatic white sandy beach deposits. Unfortunately, the comprehensive master plan became irrelevant when the Local Government Code (RA 7160) was enacted in 1991 transferring development planning powers to local government units (LGU).

In contemplating the geological wonder of Boracay's white sand, Dr. Punongbayan debunked prevalent myths. He dispelled the

notion that *lumot* (seaweed) was the eternal source of the famed powdery sand, clarifying the true origin derived from "coralline fragments sculpted by wave actions from the surrounding fringing reefs."

Dr. Punongbayan demystified the intricate process behind the formation and behavior of Boracay's sands. "Waves would roll, drag and rub these fragments against each other and ultimately deliver the sand size fraction to the beach zone," he explained. Longshore currents played a pivotal role, orchestrating the seasonal migration of sand particles, and acting as a natural shield against the forces of nature.

Notably, Dr. Punongbayan addressed the escalating demand for these sands at that time. He astutely observed people collecting sand for aquariums and the soaring demand for Puka shells in Manila. His

concern echoed in his words: "Nor there should man-made structure be allowed to be placed orthogonally across the coastline of Boracay to arrest the northwestward and southeastward migration of sandy coralline grains to replace those that were forced by longshore currents to tumble towards the deeper bottom of the Sibuyan Sea."

The urgency to preserve the natural movement of these sands to counteract the impacts of strong winds became evident. The vulnerability of Punta Bunga, where prominent establishments like Club Panoly (now Mövenpick Resort & Spa Boracay) and Shangri-La stand, was highlighted. Dr. Punongbayan elucidated how longshore currents contribute to the reduction in particle size, resulting in Punta Bunga's fine-grained, almost powdery beach sand deposit.

In essence, Boracay's white sands are not merely a picturesque spectacle but a delicate equilibrium sculpted by nature's hand. Dr. Punongbayan's work serves as a beacon, reminding us of the intrinsic value of understanding, respecting, and conserving the geological treasures that grace this idyllic paradise. 🌱



PEOPLE

A FAMILY AFFAIR The iconic Boracay sandcastle makes a comeback

By Freida Dario-Santiago

We showcased the iconic Boracay Island sandcastle on the front page of the special Christmas holiday year-ender issue as our way of supporting the return of this most admirable craft, which is the livelihood of 29 members of the Boracay Sandcastle Maker Association.

For the past 10 years, sandcastle-making had been prohibited on Boracay's beaches. It was only last August 2023 that, after two years of hearings at the Sangguninag Bayan, the ban had been lifted. Malvin Tucio, 38, who is married, with two children, said that his wife had no choice but to find work abroad as an overseas worker. He struggled as an informal worker, subsisting on carpentry jobs as an "extra."

Robelyn's mother Aling Zenaida Francisco Saron, 52, has been making sandcastles for 16 years, and lovingly passed on the tradition and passion to her children. Sandcastles are allowed from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. which means that their work begins at

10 in the morning and by 9:45 p.m. they are already starting to tear it down and flatten it with their hands and with sea water.

No longer by donation like in the past, they have a box that says "Pay here." They charge a flat fee of PhP20 per person to make it worth all their hard work, toiling under the sun all day. But Robelyn assures us that you get bang for your buck because it's with "unli pictures!" Working daily even on weekends, they bring home an average of PhP300 to 500 daily or as much as PhP5,000, even more when they are commissioned for weddings.

How did they learn the art of sandcastle-making? They were born on Boracay Island and

they grew up playing on the sand, with the beach as their sandbox. So, from a very young age, they learned to make a living by building sandcastles and lanterns every evening to have pocket money for school the next day.

Aling Zenaida is Robelyn's mother, Malvin is the son-in-law and Robelyn's brother-in-law, so it's a family enterprise. Although they teach their kids the art of sandcastle making, minors are not allowed to work as sandcastle makers.

On average, it takes four to five hours for four feet high and five feet wide.

Bigger models are no longer allowed. They only disturb the sand in the immediate area,



Sandcastle makers (from left): Robelyn Francisco, Malvin Lumbo Tucio and Zenaida Francisco Saron
Not in photo: Ebilyn M. Garcia and Alejo R. Naig

and flatten it all back to normal before they leave for the day.

Sandcastles are strictly regulated and can be found within the 25+5 easement zones at these designated areas assigned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources: Fridays, Willy's Rock grotto / Estacio Uno, D'Mall / Aria beachfront, La Carmela B-Hub, Bulabog: I love Boracay sign, Bulabog by Aqua Boracay, Angol, Tambisaan and Puka Beach.

So, for your special occasions or a personalized and all-natural memento, support this age-old Boracay artisanal trade! You can reach Malvin's team through mobile number (+63 967) 261 6537. 🌱



All in a day's work: This customized sandcastle took three hours to make



- B6 Ambassador in Paradise
- C3 Calypso
- C3 Budget Mart
- C4 Isla Pollyanna
- C4 Plato de Boracay
- C4 Tyang's Resto Bar
- C5 Cafe del Sol
- C5 Cheesus Crust
- C5 D'Mall
- C5 Epic Boracay
- C5 Hama Japanese
- C5 Aria Cucina Italiana
- C5 Hobbit Tavern
- C5 Island Chicken Inasal
- C5 Jardin Mediterranean
- C5 Jammers Beach Shack
- C5 Jeepney Stop
- C5 Kelana
- C5 Lemoni Cafe
- C5 My Crepes
- C5 Thai Basil
- C5 The District
- C5 Ube Mama
- D3 Bistro Des Amis
- D3 Congas
- D3 Mandala Spa and Resort Villas
- D3 Villa Caemilla
- D4 BPMS
- D4 Guppy One Stop
- D4 Poco Deli
- D5 Club Galaxy
- D5 Red House Shabu-Shabu

* Contact our advertising department for information

Tablas Strait

Sibuyan Sea

A B C D E F

10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1



POCO DELI BORACAY NOW OPEN!

Makers of handcrafted sausages, gluten-free, nitrate-free, 100% meat, no MSG for over 15 years.



OUR STORY



Slow cooking comfort food since 2008.

"Before we opened Poco Deli, we were making gluten-free, nitrate-free, MSG-free, all meat sausages and bacon out of our home kitchen for our family. Cooking and baking had always been passions we shared. Our families were involved in cattle ranching down south in Bukidnon, which exposed us to butchery and charcuterie-making.

The inspiration for what would later be Poco Deli's signature dishes came to us during our travels to France, New York and Napa Valley. We were

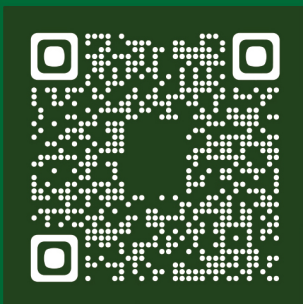
fascinated by the rich history embedded in different cuisines - from the Italian art of curing prosciutto and salami, to the pastrami sandwiches served by the culturally iconic Katz's Deli in New York.

Thus, in October of 2008, we opened the doors to the first Poco Deli restaurant. Our cozy shop tucked in our neighborhood was called "poco" by our Italian suppliers, and somehow the name stuck.

Throughout the years, this identity remained: a quaint neighborhood deli and restaurant, happily serving the community.

Indulge, celebrate, eat healthy!"

- Joy & Sonny de León



Facebook Instagram @pocodeli Scooter icon pocodeli.co

BEST SELLERS

TO EAT

Bacon Slab ✂ single 480/ double 680

Our claim to fame. Thick and hearty French pork belly cured, 8 hour wood-smoked & seared to perfection. With rice & 2 eggs.

Smoked BBQ Ribs 590

French smoky and tender ribs glazed to barbecue perfection. Grilled and slow smoked. Served with homemade BBQ sauce.

U.S. Steak Tapa ✂ 450

Seasoned U.S. beef tapa. Our classic recipe. Marinated in garlic and peppercorns and served with rice and 2 eggs.

Cold Cuts & Cheese Platter single 950 double 1250

The finest selection of cold cuts and cheese. The beginning of an incredible meal.

NY Grass-fed Pastrami solo 450 / full 680

NY style pastrami brined, seasoned & smoked to perfection. Inspired by Katz's Deli. Served on homemade Batard bread.

Spanish Callos ✂ 620

Beef tripe, chorizo, pancetta, pork knuckles, chickpeas & olives.

Sausage Sampler ✂ Except flatbread single 850 double 1250

A platter of our handcrafted and slow smoked sausages. Served with sauerkraut & flat bread.

Seafood Chowder ✂ Except bread 300

A creamy Seattle-inspired medley of shrimp, squid & vegetables. Served w/ garlic bread.

Black Truffle Mushroom Pasta ✂ G-F available 560

A luxurious pasta dish infused with the rich aroma of black truffle and mushrooms.

Truffle Oil & Mushroom Pasta ✂ G-F available 550

Truffle oil and mushrooms, delivering an Exquisite and earthy flavor.

Rockefeller Pizza solo 650/full 1000

Sumptuous Japanese Hokkaido Oysters on Mozzarella. *Seasonal

Quattro Formaggi Pizza solo 450/full 650

A heavenly pizza with cream four kinds of European cheese.

TO DRINK

Citrus Delight ✂ 250

Our signature sparkling Citrus Delight! A citrus-y masterpiece that dances on your palate.

Red Fruit Iced Tea ✂ 150

Our house-made iced tea that sparkles with refreshing citrus and the natural sweetness of sun-steeped tea leaves.

Manila Basil Smash Cocktail ✂ 370

Fresh basil, citrus, and gin; a smashing perfect balance of sweet and herbal flavors sure to invigorate your senses.

FILIPINO FAVORITES

Bistek Tapa 420

Angus beef marinated in soy & calamansi. Served with onion confit, rice and fried egg.

Classic Adobo 420

The quintessential Filipino comfort dish, featuring succulent meat marinated and simmered in a soy-vinegar sauce.

Baguio-Style Longganisa ✂ 420

A delightful homemade Filipino sausage blending sweet and savory flavors reminiscent of family road trips.

Angus Caldereta ✂ 420

A hearty Filipino stew, featuring tender Angus beef, vegetables, and a rich tomato-based sauce.

✂ Gluten-free 🌿 Vegetarian

POCO DELI

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Station X, Hue Hotel
Beside Nonie's

POCO DELI

KAPITOLYO

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CORON, PALAWAN

Calle Real, Coron Town Proper Coron Island, Busuanga

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CAPITOL COMMONS

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