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Love Boracay 2023: A Lovefest For The Island

The four-day festival showcased a Boracay united in celebrating responsible and sustainable tourism

By Freida Dario-Santiago

Making her first-ever public appearance on Boracay Island, the “Crown Jewel of Philippine Tourism” since assuming her post as the Department of Tourism (DOT) chief last June 30, 2022, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco graces the “Love Boracay” 2023 festival’s opening ceremony at the beachfront of Epic Boracay along White Beach on April 28 as its honorable special guest speaker.

Leading the festivities were Aklan Governor Jose Enrique “Joen” M. Miraflores, Malay Mayor Floribar S. Bautista, and DOT officials Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, OIC-Undersecretary Verna C. Buensuceso, Assistant Secretary Rica C. Bueno,



The Department of Tourism (DOT) joined local government officials and tourism stakeholders in officially kicking off the “Love Boracay” 2023 Festival amid the backdrop of world-renowned White Beach, lined with the island’s iconic paraw sailboats. From left: Department of Tourism (DOT) Undersecretary Shahlimar Hofer Tamano, Aklan Governor Jose Enrique Miraflores, DOT Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista, Municipal Councilor Alan C. Palma, and DOT Region 6 Director Crisanta Rodriguez

(Photo by Freida Dario-Santiago)

Director Judilyn Quiachon, Director Ronald Conopio, and DOT Region 6 Director Crisanta “Krisma” Rodriguez. It will be recalled that the annual weeklong Labor Day beach party formerly dubbed as “LaBoracay” (pronounced as \ley-bo-’ra-kay!)-a term coined from combining “Labor Day” and “Boracay” was notorious for the no-holds-barred island-wide events marked by big stage performances by local and international DJs and artists along world-famous White Beach, that drew tens of thousands of revelers and with it, their garbage in the aftermath resulting in a bad rap and eventually, a permanent ban. Incidentally, Boracay Island underwent a temporary six-month closure for environmental rehabilitation back on April 26, 2018, by virtue of Proclamation No. 475 by President Rodrigo R. Duterte, and LaBoracay was canceled, indefinitely. The following year (2019), in strict

adherence to environmental preservation, the government’s interagency task force composed of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Tourism (DOT), and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered the banning of parties and drinking and smoking in Boracay, which was implemented when the island was reopened to tourists in October 2018. Then-Tourism Sec. Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said, “Bawal po ang LaBoracay. (LaBoracay is prohibited.) No drinking, no smoking in public places. That still stands.” Consequently, the local government unit of Malay (LGU-Malay) proposed a novel alternative: “Love Boracay.” The Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG) announced its support for the initiative to celebrate rehabilitation efforts in the world-famous tourist

spot, likewise commemorating the first anniversary of the island’s closure. The weeklong celebration was dubbed “Love Boracay: Celebrate, Rehabilitate,” with environment-friendly activities celebrating the rehabilitation of the island. Spearheaded by LGU-Malay, this year’s “Love Boracay” focused on advocating tourism sustainability, wellness and the arts, wherein conduit venues through different activities were initiated to be the highlight of this event in pursuing the advocacies. The biggest summer event of the season saw a revival of the festive (and a much more subdued) island party vibe, the environmentally-responsible and sustainable reinvention indeed celebrates and promotes love for Boracay Island with environmental awareness components to every event, not only for

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PERCY

“BEST SEAFOOD”
Esquire

STATION 1 BEACHFRONT, SEAWORTHY BORACAY
IN FRONT OF WILLY’S ROCK

the SURRY SIDE CAFE group

EDITORIAL

Editor's Note

“Let the games begin!”

I always love saying that! It immediately sets the mood, the bar, and the excitement for gatherings—be it for socials, business or sports.

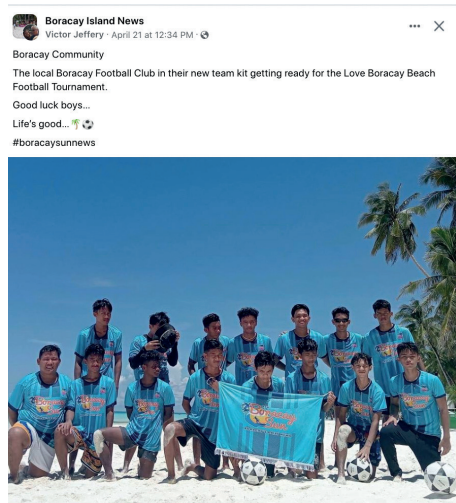
This year’s “Love Boracay” was a celebration of our love for the island and its sustainability, with a daily early morning beach cleanup drive at various beaches, island-wide, thanks to the LGU-Malay and the hundreds of volunteers!

It was also quite evident that the community’s love for good food and good fun was alive and kicking from day to night, particularly at the Globe Musicfest in Laketown with food kiosks lining the main road which was closed to traffic, and throughout the promenade from 4 p. m. until midnight; and the live musical entertainment featuring the country’s biggest artists and DJs at the “Love Boracay Beach Music Festival” at Newcoast-Megaworld, in Barangay Yapak, and the big-name DJ events from sunset until late night at top night spots: Epic Boracay and Om Bar, that attracted music-loving partygoers that flew in to dance in their summer best, to the music of their favorite artists, and to the beat of the island vibrations, Boracay-style!

Best of all was the flurry of sporting events daily, that were immensely enjoyed by spectators and participants alike, that have been eagerly awaiting the chance to play once again after the long pandemic lockdown pause on sporting events. To give you a quick rundown, the Malay Association Sailing Boat Owners Incorporated (MASBOI) cooperative’s paraw sailboat race kicked things off on day 1, the Boracay Dragon Boat Association dragon boat races featuring Boracay’s local teams on day 2, and the very first Unisikad invitational circuit race on day 3.

A series of beach sports competitions spearheaded by Municipal Councilor Datu Yap Sumndad, Committee Chair on Tourism, & Committee Chair of Sports and Amusement for the LGU-Malay were held on days 2 and 3 along the 4-kilometer stretch of Boracay’s pristine playground called White Beach, namely: beach frisbee organized by the Boracay Dragons Ultimate Frisbee Team, beach volleyball organized by the Boracay Volleyball Club, beach football organized by the Boracay Football Academy, and beach tennis organized by the Boracay Racquet Sports Club PH.

And in the thick of the action, your community newspaper, the Boracay Sun News (BSN) was well-represented on the sandy beach football pitch, to lend our full support to the Boracay Football Academy. Our very own founder and publisher Vic Jeffery and his lovely wife Claire personally handed out the participants’ kits as they got ready for the much-anticipated Boracay Beach Football Tournament.



Indeed, it was beautiful to see the best of Boracay highlighted and paraded during the four-day “Love Boracay” bonanza—the best of the best of Boracay—#BetterThanEver!

Comic relief

It must also be said that there was an unfortunate downside that (in all fairness to the festival’s organizers) had absolutely nothing to do with the four-day celebration, but dampened the island residents’ moods nonetheless: the almost two-day island-wide brownout that residents, especially the non-revelers had to endure at home.

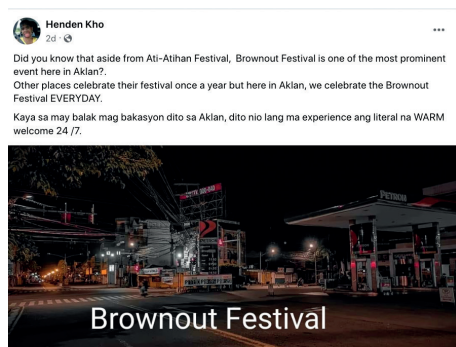
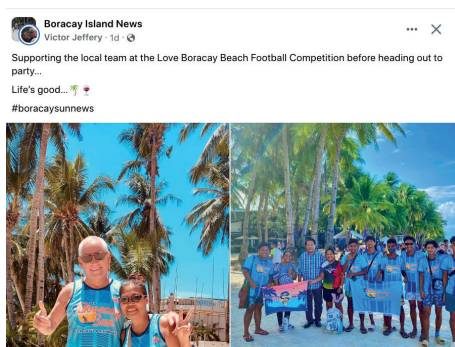
It was dubbed the “Brownout Festival” which later evolved to “Brownout Pestival” on social media, which goes to show you that no matter the hardships, the island endures it all together! Peace!

For the thousands of residents that stayed in during Love Boracay’s final shebang, it was no party at home, more like a sweat fest for two days on April 28 (from 7 a.m. until midnight) and then again, the following day from morning until afternoon. Facebook lit up with mixed reactions to the fireworks that were launched at around 9 p.m. on Bulabog Beach, some welcoming the illumination amidst the blackout, while some lamented that it woke them and their kids up from their sweaty slumber.

We know that contrary to what the majority thinks, AKELCO is not to blame, but according to updates on their Facebook page, fingers point to the deficiency in power supplied by the NGCP. But let’s not go down that rabbit hole, this is a story for another issue!

For now, I hope this gives you all momentary comic relief!

Last but definitely not least, the “Love Boracay” opening ceremony last April 28 was a wonderful opportunity for the BSN to introduce ourselves to the Honorable Department of Tourism (DOT) Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco, who warmly accepted our invitation for the DOT to keep our readers abreast with the department’s programs and projects





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towards the island’s sustainable tourism, and to weigh in on current issues and concerns.

We were thrilled as well that she so kindly obliged us for this photo op of the tourism chief holding up her copy of BSN alongside our distinguished Mayor Frolibar S. Bautista. [Read “Love Boracay 2023: A Lovefest for the Island” on the front page]

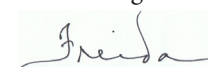
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newspaper to start your day, pass on your free copy to a neighbor and share the good news. Happy reading!

We have two reasons to celebrate this month: Malay Day on June 15th and don’t forget to show your love for the Philippines on June 12th as we celebrate the 125th anniversary of Philippine Independence! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

Peace and good vibes,



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Boracay Sun News 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 letting us into your homes and for making us a part of your day

Big thanks to our reader Dr. Kate Ng. Larrauri for posting this on your social media stories and reels!

LOVE BORACAY 2023: A LOVEFEST FOR THE ISLAND

continued from front page

tourists but to remind residents to help protect and preserve their island home, and to encourage health and wellbeing by promoting land and water sports tourism.

Graced no less than by the tourism chief who, in her speech, said that “Many flights later,” (from the US to Japan to Manila and to Cebu the day before) “I could not miss the opportunity to be here, first of all, to express my gratitude. Maraming maraming salamat po sa inyong lahat dahil sa inyong kontribusyon sa ating ekonomiya.” She adds:

Boracay has always seen us through despite all of the difficulties and challenges faced by the tourism industry and it continues to be the beacon of hope for tourism destinations all over the Philippines. Salamat Boracay, congratulations.”



DOT Sec. Frasco taking a selfie with Mayor Bautista and Gov. Miraflores at the Pinta Layag paraw sailboat parade along White Beach, Boracay Island

(Courtesy of the DOT)

Boracay, Philippines

Paradise reborn



An aerial view of White Beach, Boracay in the Philippines. RDW Aerial Imaging—Alamy

Secretary Frasco who described the country’s beach capital as “the gem of the Philippines,” proudly cited TIME Magazine’s recognition of Boracay Island as among “The World’s Greatest Places” (to visit) in 2022—calling it “Paradise reborn,” adding, “As of February 2022, international visitors can finally revel in this revamped, recuperated, natural playground after what was effectively a three-year convalescence. Locals report the return of flora and fauna, like sea turtles, and hospitality has come back just as spectacularly.”

Sec. Frasco continues by expressing her sincere gratitude to the local government unit of Malay headed by Mayor Bautista and to the Municipal Tourism Office headed by the Chief Tourism Operations Officer, Felix Delos Santos Jr., as well as other officials and department managers, for sustaining Boracay Island as one of the “Greatest Places in the World.”

She likewise applauds Gov. Joen

Miraflores, expressing her confidence that their partnership will bear fruit for Boracay and the entire tourism industry in the Philippines, by working closely with the DOT’s officials that came to show their full support for Boracay Island.

“And deserving of the biggest round of applause, of course, are our private stakeholders here in Boracay, resort owners, tour operators, tourism front liners, tour guides, boatmen, and to everyone that came to the opening ceremony, to show their support as well.”

Her message hit home, having acknowledged those who often are left the unseen heroes of tourism.

Here are a few more highlights of the tourism chief’s moving speech, that left many of us in the audience feeling appreciated, inspired and motivated, further reinforcing the bond of community:

“Today we celebrate Love Boracay,

and I cannot help but look to my favorite verse in the Bible that says: ‘Love bears all things, hopes all things, believes all things, endures all things. If there are prophecies, they will pass. If there are tongues, they will be silenced. Love never fails.’

And that is exactly what Boracay to me, represents. The love that you have for this island, for each other, for each and every single tourist that has come through these shores, has sustained you amidst all of the difficulties and challenges that you have faced.

Boracay, you have inspired us all. Love has never failed you here in Boracay ... I know it’s not been easy. From the closure of the island, to the COVID-19 pandemic, to all the other economic hardships that you had to endure. But because you have been so determined to fight for the survival of this island, to continue to be the beacon of sustainability in the Philippines and in the world.

Here you are, delivering for the Philippines, no less than 1.7 million domestic and international arrivals in 2022, and this year with only four months having elapsed in 2023, delivering already over 687,000 international and domestic arrivals ...

Boracay for me is the shining example of how successful a tourism endeavor can be with such close collaboration especially between the local government and the private stakeholders.

And so I’m here, not to dictate upon you what you should do because you are clearly doing very well already. I am simply here to assist in any way that I can, to listen if there are any concerns that we can act upon, and to help where help is needed.

It’s taken me some time to come here because I did not want your first impression of me as your secretary to be

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one that is dictatorial, one that says, ‘Since I am now secretary of tourism I will tell you what to do.’ You know what to do. You have thrived and survived through the many decades of challenges that you have faced ... You have all the essential pillars ... there really is no reason why Boracay should not continue to be one of the top islands in the entire world.

Thank you so much Boracay for continuing to inspire us and for reminding us of the hope that despite all of the difficulties that we have faced, love never fails. Daghang salamat sa inyong tanan (Thank you very much everyone) Maraming maraming salamat po.”

Her message reverberated among those of us who were lucky enough to hear it, straight from the heart. In her heartfelt eight-minute speech, the Secretary expressed the unequivocal support of the DOT for the promotion and preservation of Boracay Island in Malay, Aklan.

In a press statement about “Love Boracay 2023,” she said: “*Boracay has become the model for sustainable tourism*

development all over the world. We are seeing concepts of sustainability being lived by the stakeholders here who, out of their own volition now recognize the necessity of longevity of this destination for generations to come ... including caring for the environment as well as balancing that with the commercial viability of the island. That is the push of the Department of Tourism: to be able to balance the protection of life with the protection of livelihood as well as pursue all of these efforts on the bedrock of sustainable tourism principles .”

Malay-Boracay Tourism said on their Facebook post: “The Opening of Love Boracay 2023 was officially declared by the Municipal Mayor Frolibar S. Bautista, and a friendly foam party, Pinta Layag Display, Paraw Sail Race of MASBOI, and the parade of water-sports assets, presented by the BWSA, immediately followed to commemorate this moment of the island’s recovery.

After two years of uncertainties, celebrating Love Boracay signifies that Boracay Island is now finally living up to its ultimate goal of being the “Happiest Island in the World.”



Boracay stakeholders join DOT Sec. Frasco, Gov. Miraflores and Mayor Bautista for a photo op; A resounding applause from the crowd (Photos by Astrophel Tabanera)



The parade of Boracay Island’s iconic paraw sailboats along White Beach (Courtesy of the DOT)



Kicking off the “Love Boracay” festivities was the Pinta Layag parade and the MASBOI paraw sailboat race along White Beach (Photo by Freida Dario-Santiago)



DOT Sec. Frasco addresses tourism front liners and the Boracay community (Courtesy of the DOT)





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LISTENING TOUR

By Freida Dario-Santiago

From the action-packed opening ceremony at the beachfront of Epic Boracay along White Beach, DOT Secretary Frasco was off to a closed-door Listening Tour meeting with tourism stakeholders at the Savoy Hotel, Boracay Newcoast-Megaworld, in Barangay Yapak, Boracay Island.

Citing the importance of being in touch with the realities on the ground, DOT Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco held a Listening Tour to consult with the regional tourism offices and tourism stakeholders on ways to further develop and support the recovery efforts of the tourism industry.

Among her priorities were giving attention to sites, people, and products that have not necessarily been given equal opportunity to be developed; reaching out to all partners in the local government units; extending to them the hand of collaboration from the DOT and sending across the message that they are here to help the industry arise and recover.

Clean Restrooms Please

Tourism stakeholders raised suggestions and broached possible areas of collaboration. The dialogue was done in order to fully grasp the challenges and realities faced by tourism stakeholders across the country.

Among the tourism stakeholders’ requests were a comprehensive training program on foreign languages,

prioritization of local tour guides, and the urgent need for a hyperbaric chamber.

The need for clean public restrooms was likewise emphasized by stakeholders during the meeting, noting that the island—a favorite among domestic and foreign visitors—lacked public toilets.

“This has become a problem for many visiting tourists,” said Ernest Bandiola Cruz Jr., President of the Boracay Photographer Association, Inc.

Responding on behalf of the DOT, Sec. Frasco vowed the prioritization of a hyperbaric chamber for Boracay Island, while other DOT officials present expounded on the training programs delivered by the Department, as well as the requirements for the DOT’s flagship program, the Tourist Rest Areas which will house clean restrooms, a pasalubong center for MSMEs, and an information center to provide tourists with convenience during their trip.

In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, Boracay recorded more than two million visitors. Last year, despite the challenges of the pandemic including the displacement of 17,000 tourism workers, the island remained the poster image of resiliency and sustainability of the Philippine tourism industry, as evidenced by the 1.75 million tourists who visited the island. Meanwhile, from January to April 2023, the island has already recorded 687,139 tourist arrivals.

Dubbed as one of the “World’s Greatest Places in 2022” by *TIME Magazine*, and among the “World’s Best Islands in 2022” by *Conde Nast Travelers’ Readers’ Choice Awards*, Boracay is one of the Philippines’ premiere destinations.



(Courtesy of the DOT)

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BEACH ALERT

Boracay Beach Safety Tips

By Mark Cabrera

Our swimming club has recently resumed swimming sessions. The majority of our sessions are for open-water swimming. We would usually swim an average of a kilometer during our regular sessions, sometimes longer if we are training for a swimming event. People with various swimming skills and age groups join the club, including kids, parents, grandparents and guardians.

Since not all beachgoers are familiar with the Boracay water conditions, we would like to share some beach safety tips so everyone can safely enjoy the water world of Boracay and have wonderful memories of Boracay Island.

• **Wear Appropriate Beach Attire**

During my active lifeguarding days, we would encounter high-risk tourists who would wear loosely sized hoodies with huge sun visors on the beach. These same tourists would wear these “fashionable” hoodies and pants as they frolic in the beach water. And as predicted, they would eventually be rescued by the lifeguards since they would struggle going back to the shore as their outfits would absorb and catch water, making it very difficult for them to swim or even move in the water. A recipe for disaster.

So, we suggest you wear the proper attire when you go to the beach. For ladies, fitting bathing suits are highly recommended. One- or two-piece



Red & yellow flags at designated swimming areas (Photo by Freida Dario-Santiago)

bathing suits are best because they allow ladies to move freely in the water. Plus, they are pleasant to the eyes of beachgoers! For men, swimming trunks or board shorts are best because of their fabric and functional design. Denim shorts and shorts with open pockets are not recommended as they absorb and catch water, making it difficult to swim.

Aside from swimsuits, it's also important to bring proper eyewear since the sunny beach can damage our eyes. We recommend wearing good-fitting goggles when you go swimming. Before buying your swimming goggles, make

sure they fit your face because goggles come in different shapes and sizes. Any brand will do as long as they fit your face securely. Wearing good-fitting goggles helps you enjoy the beauty of the marine life underwater and at the same time protects your eyes.

• **Block the Sun**

Although we get benefits from the sun like vitamin D, warmth and sunlight, too much sun can also be harmful to our health. Too much sun can cause skin and eye irritation and problems. In order to protect our eyes from the sun and eventual debris brought by the wind, we recommend wearing beach-appropriate sunglasses. Like swimming goggles, we recommend you wear well-fitting sunglasses so your eyes are properly shielded from the sun.

It is important to use sunscreen lotion as protection from the sun's harmful radiation. For Boracay conditions, a minimum of 50 SPF-rated sunblock lotion with UVA and UVB protection is best. Apply this at least 10 minutes before your exposure to the sun to give the lotion time to bond with your skin. Putting on sunscreen lotion also prevents skin damage and skin aging caused by exposure to the sun. If you are not comfortable with the oily and sticky feeling of sunscreen lotion, you can also wear rash guards on the beach. We recommend you wear well-fitting rash guard suits when swimming. Loose clothing usually catches water and makes it difficult for a person to swim or move in the water. Surfing or swimming rash guards are highly recommended.

When walking along the beach under a hot sun, wearing a hat or a cap is a smart move. I usually wear a baseball cap, a fisherman's hat or a hunting hat. This protects my head, face and sometimes my neck from the scorching heat of the sun.

• **Stay Hydrated**

Long exposure to the sun can cause severe dehydration and heat stroke. The best way to address this is to stay hydrated. Bring a refillable water container when you are going out to the beach. Water is the best hydrating fluid for our bodies. I tried buko juice and it works just as well. Alcoholic drinks are highly discouraged because alcohol impairs your judgment. You may not be able to notice a dangerous situation in the water when intoxicated, much less get out of it.

• **Look for designated Swimming Areas**

The Malay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (MDRRMO) recently deployed 30 well-trained beach lifeguards around Boracay Island. They now also have 14 lifeguard towers strategically built around the island.

The lifeguard towers strategically located in the following areas:

- Angol Beach in Station 3, Barangay Manoc-Manoc
- Paradise Garden in Station 3, Barangay Manoc-Manoc
- La Carmela in Station 3, Barangay Manoc-Manoc
- Coast Resort in Station 2, Barangay Balabag
- Deparis Resort in Station 2, Barangay Balabag
- D'Mall of Boracay in Station 2, Barangay Balabag
- Jony's Area in Station 1, Barangay Balabag
- Willy's Rock in Station 1, Barangay Balabag

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Republic of the Philippines
Region VI
Province of Aklan
Municipality of Malay

WAYS YOU CAN HELP TO MAKE
Boracay Island
A DISCIPLINE ZONE

GCash
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DISCIPLINE ZONE

DO NOT LITTER
(Municipal Ordinance No. 311 S. 2012)

NO SAND CASTLE MAKING
(Municipal Ordinance No. 246 S. 2007)

NO CARRYING OR CLUTCHING OF GLASS BOTTLES ON THE BEACH
(Municipal Ordinance No. 319 S. 2012)

DO NOT SMOKE ON THE BEACH, PUBLIC AREAS AND PUBLIC UTILITY VEHICLES
(Municipal Ordinance No. 272 S. 2009 & 269 S. 2012)

NO FIRE DANCING
(Municipal Ordinance No. 331 S. 2014)

REGULATING BEACH ACTIVITY
(Municipal Ordinance No. 122 S. 2000)

DO NOT URINATE OR DEFECCATE ON THE BEACH
(Municipal Ordinance No. 108 S. 1998)

NO ILLEGAL TOUR GUIDING
(Municipal Ordinance No. 104 S. 2003)

REGULATING WATER SPORTS OPERATIONS
(Municipal Ordinance No. 199 S. 2003)

DO NOT EXTRACT WHITE SAND ON THE BEACH
(Municipal Ordinance No. 310 S. 2012)

NO DRY DOCKING AND ENTRY OF VEHICLES AT THE BEACH
(Municipal Ordinance No. 110 S. 1997)

NO VENDORS, PEDDLERS, AMBULANT MASSEURS & MANICURIST AT BEACHFRONT
(Municipal Ordinance No. 422 S. 2020)

DO NOT EAT AND DRINK LIQUOR ON THE BEACH
(Municipal Ordinance No. 318 S. 2012 & 122 S. 2000)

NO ID, NO TOURGUIDING
(Municipal Ordinance No. 164 S. 2002)

NO FLYING, STREAMER & POSTER AT BEACHFRONT
(Municipal Ordinance No. 204 S. 2004)

NO PETS ALLOWED ON THE BEACH
(Municipal Ordinance No. 432 S. 2010)

NO DRONES ALLOWED FOR PERSONAL USE
(Municipal Ordinance No. 382 S. 2017)

SCAN ME

A FRIENDLY REMINDER FROM LGU MALAY

GLOBE: 0966 276 3376
 SMART: 0947 495 7290

continued from page 6

- Two Seasons Resort in Station 1, Barangay Balabag
- The Lind Hotel in Station 1, Barangay Balabag
- Diniwid Beach in Station 1, Barangay Balabag
- Puka Beach front beach, Barangay Yapak
- Bulabog Beach, Barangay Baabag
- Tambisaan Beach, Barangay Manoc-Manoc

These are designated swimming areas. You can plan your swims along these swimming zones.

Another indication of a designated swimming area is the presence of red and yellow flags. The presence of red and yellow flags planted on the beach sand signifies that there is a lifeguard on duty in the area. So, keep an eye out for these red and yellow flags on the beach before you take a dip in the water.

• **Check the Tide, Current and Weather Conditions**

Before we enter the water during our open water swims, I ask the kids the following questions: Is it high tide or low tide? Where is the direction of the current going? Are there waves? Are they strong enough for surfing? Where do we enter the beach? Here are tips on how to derive the answers to the mentioned questions.

You can check the level of the tides online. You can check them out at www.tideschart.com/Philippines/Western-Visayas/Province-of-Aklan/Boracay-Island/.

It can tell you if the tide is going up or going down. It can also tell you the exact times of the highest tides and the lowest tides. If you are not connected to the internet, you can just check out the

tide lines on the sand. Tide lines are the border of flattened sand smoothed by waters during high tide and the soft, dry sand on the beach. If the water level is far from the tide line, it is low tide. If the water level is near the tide line, then it is high tide.

About the water current, you can easily tell the direction of the current by looking at the movement of the surface of the water. Look for a floating element on the surface of the water and follow where it is going. You can also throw a dried leaf into the water and watch where it goes as it floats away from you. Another tip to tell the direction of the water current is to look at the parked boats. Boats are usually anchored thru their bow or front part. The water current will be pushing the boat away from the anchor so the direction of the water current is towards the boat's stern or rear end of the boat. Look at where the boat butts are pointing and that is where the water current is going. Simple but effective.

Wave sizes are also easy to determine just by looking at them. And speaking of where to enter the beach, it's just where the waves are not breaking. And if you have a destination target that you are swimming toward, just adjust your entry point. If your swim destination (e.g. a parked boat) is right in front of you and a strong water current is going to your left, just enter the water several meters to your right side. If you swim straight target the right of your swim destination. The water current will drag you to your left and you will just ride the water current as you swim straight and eventually land at your targeted swim destination.

• **Swim with a Buddy**

Before I let my swimmers enter the beach water, I would assign them

a swim buddy. It's usually a pair or a group of three if there are three swimmers with the same swimming level. There are many advantages of having a swimming buddy. First off, it's safer to swim with a swim buddy in case you get cramps or get injured. Your swim buddy can rescue you or they can call for help. If you are not swimming together, you can take turns watching over your valuable belongings and at the same time, your swim buddy can also watch over you from the shore. Do not let the lifeguards watch over your belongings. It will only distract them from their life-saving job.

• **Follow Boracay Beach Rules & Regulations**

The Local Government Unit of Malay has just released an updated list of beach guidelines that are posted on the lifeguard tower. Also available in or around the lifeguard tower is the beach warning flag guide. Kindly check out the photos for guidance.

• **Cooperate with the Lifeguards and Other Beach Authorities**

Acknowledging the presence of beach authorities will make your Boracay experience more pleasant. They are the lifeguards, the beach guards, the Malay Auxiliary Police (MAP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP), among others. The lifeguards are stationed in the lifeguard towers and the beach guards and the MAP usually patrol the beach. The PNP also have their own stations around Boracay Island. In general, their roles are to keep everyone safe, to preserve peace and order, to keep the beach clean, and to make sure that the beach regulations and ordinances are followed. Just cooperate with them when they approach you to remind you of a beach rule or ordinance



that you may have accidentally violated. Just acknowledge them respectfully and you will be back on your safe and merry way.

• **Actively Supervise Your Children, Elders and Belongings**

There were instances during my active lifeguarding days when a tourist would ask me to look after their child or belongings. Lifeguards are not yayas (nannies) or locker attendants. There were also many incidents of losing a child or an elder on the beach. Luckily, we were able to coordinate with the other beach authorities to find the lost child or elder. Also, it will be smart to secure your belongings at all times. This way we eliminate tempting the suspicious elements lurking around us.

• **Have Fun**

Enjoy the beautiful beach and waters of Boracay Island everyone! Cheers!



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ISLAND NEWS

Malay Mayor Worried Over The Possible Surge Of COVID-19

By Jun N. Aguirre

BORACAY Island, Malay Aklan – Malay Mayor Floribar Bautista has expressed worry over the possible spike again of the Covid-19 virus in the Western Visayas region.

In an interview last April 28, Bautista told the Boracay Sun News that he asked the Municipal Health Office to remain vigilant. He also urged the Malay Health Office (MHO) to study if the requirements of Covid-19 vaccination should be returned or not.

On April 26, the Department of Health announced that the Philippines had registered its first case of Arcturus, a Covid-19 subvariant, that had been detected in the region.

“Our health personnel have monitored

arriving foreign tourists that manifested with Covid-19 symptoms. Worse, the tourists were unvaccinated. I immediately advised our MHO personnel to require the said tourists to undergo antigen testing,” Bautista said.

It was not immediately learned what the results were of the antigen tests taken from the undisclosed tourists.

Boracay Island is currently on the road of economic recovery because of the so-called revenge travel.

Reports from the Department of Health indicate that nearby cities of Iloilo and Bacolod have revived their requirement to their residents to wear face masks in both public and crowded areas.

According to the MHO, majority of both hotel stakeholders and Malay residents were already vaccinated against Covid-19 because of their intensive campaign.

ISLAND NEWS

Senator Legarda Offers Help For Sustainable Waste Management In Boracay

By Jun N. Aguirre

Senate President Pro-Tempore Loren Legarda has officially offered her help for sustainable waste management for the resort island of Boracay.

Legarda made this unsolicited statement as the guest of honor during the Aklan Foundation Day last April 25, 2023 at the ABL Sports Complex in Kalibo, Aklan.

“To the local government of Malay, I am willing to support the waste management challenges in Boracay if I would be given a chance. I am willing to fund and provide technical support, especially on best practices in waste management,” she said.

In an earlier interview with Boracay Sun News, Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista said that this resort island has encountered problems with garbage.

“The contractor supposed to ferry the wastes from Boracay to mainland Malay needs to be docked for a short period of time as part of its maintenance. Because of this, the problems of garbage pile up in Boracay causing problems to both the residents and the tourists,” he said.

While the local government has yet to accept Senator Legarda's unsolicited proposal, the mayor said there is a company that has also offered help to treat the broken glass waste in Boracay.

“The offer was that the company would bring some machinery into the island to pulverize the broken glasses. If this materializes, this would provide relief to the local government as we are not spending the costs of transferring tons of broken glass wastes from Boracay to the dumpsite in mainland Malay anymore,” Bautista said.

Livino Duran, Regional Executive Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Western Visayas said that although Boracay has retained its world-class recognition of being the best beach in the world, “there are still more things that need to be done in Boracay.”

“The front beach of Boracay is clean and safe for swimming for now. Our concern is the beach at Sitio Lugutan,” Duran said.



Senate President Pro-Tempore Loren Legarda

As this develops, news coming from Metro Manila indicates that the Marcos administration is eyeing the continuation of the Boracay Island Task Force, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-led the task force during the Boracay closure in 2018.

Duran in February this year said that they are awaiting advice from Malacañang to continue the suspended rehabilitation of Boracay. The task force was deactivated in May last year to give way to the decision of the next administration, now under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

To sustain the environmental gains of this resort island, the Malay Tourism Office had launched the Pristine Boracay project last April. The project involves Boracay stakeholders joining a weekly beach clean-up.

Among those who participated in Project Pristine were Boracay Association of Scuba Schools, Boracay Photographer Association, and the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary, among others.

Haron Deo Vargas, a marine biologist of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office-Boracay told Boracay Sun News in an interview that several endangered marine sea turtles in the past were found dead in Boracay after they were believed to have eaten plastic wastes.

“Based on our initial examinations, the turtles were bloated indicating that they have ingested some plastic wastes,” he added.



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INDULGE

Jardin Mediterranean Cuisine Boracay is Quite Special

By Rich Valdez

The dining opportunities along White Beach just keep getting better and better.

There are many long-time favorites that still continue to serve up top-quality dishes and excellent service, and fortunately for all, there are some rather new ones that have added themselves to the favorites list.

One of those in particular is Jardin, a Mediterranean-style restaurant ideally situated along the beachfront pathway of Station 2. For those that have been around for a long time, it's located where the former Pat's Creek Bar used to be.

You'll find three floors of exquisite food choices in one location. The ground floor dining and open kitchen area, on the second floor a luxurious fine dining section with a temperature-controlled wine cellar, and a not to be missed super cool roof deck.

The roof deck offers regular music sets and is an ideal place to enjoy Boracay's sunset sessions. Beautifully designed and furnished, this has fast become a favorite hang-out place for the hip crowd around town.

The fine dining floor is a special place where you can actually dispense with your shorts and flip flops and pull on a nice pair of slacks and loafers and dress up for a wonderful evening out. Plus, the selection of wines in the glass-walled cellar are



superb as well as being reasonably priced.

During the afternoons I like to hang out downstairs and sit at the front of Jardin and simply people-watch right on the beachfront while sipping an ice-cold beer

or a delightful cocktail. Their lunchtime menu is quite extensive and all dishes are cooked to perfection. A favorite of mine is the Souvlaki, a skewer of chunks of tenderloin beef served with pilaf rice and a

lovely fresh salad. Many of the salad items are homegrown at the owner's farm and the fresh herbs from their rooftop garden. The freshness makes a huge difference to the flavor and perfectly complements this lovely dish.

On this last particular occasion when we visited, my wife Claire plumped for a special pizza, Viva España, I believe it was called. The fluffy light crust made a lovely change from the thin-crust pizzas that many places serve these days, and the fresh cream and Buffalo Cheese were topped off with a large amount of delightful Parma Ham. A touch of freshly grated black pepper and a squeeze or two of lemon made for a really delicious lunch.

Well-trained and friendly staff complete the picture at Jardin. Give it a try!



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ENVIRONMENT

June: A Month for the Environment and Celebration of Malay

By Rica Velasco

June is a great month for environmental awareness. Not only is this Philippine Environment Month, but World Environment Day is also celebrated on June 5th, and World Oceans Day on June 8th. Boracay historically celebrates both these days, which have a significant impact on the island, with various activities and initiatives aimed at raising awareness and promoting sustainable practices. These events bring together locals, businesses, and visitors to foster a sense of environmental responsibility and conservation.

On World Oceans Day, establishments on the island organize a range of activities to highlight the importance of the oceans and the need to protect their fragile ecosystems. One of the key events is beach clean-ups, where volunteers gather to remove trash and debris from the shorelines. Similarly, underwater clean-ups are organized by divers. These clean-up efforts help maintain the pristine beauty of Boracay's beaches and prevent marine pollution.

In addition to clean-ups, educational programs are conducted to inform residents, tourists and business owners about marine conservation. Workshops, seminars and talks are held to address topics such as coral reef protection, sustainable fishing practices, and the



(Courtesy of the Department of Tourism)

impact of plastic pollution on the oceans. Snorkeling and diving trips are organized to showcase the rich marine biodiversity and create a deeper appreciation for the underwater world. Local marine biologists and environmental experts often participate to share their knowledge and insights.

On World Environment Day, Boracay focuses on broader environmental issues. The island promotes sustainable tourism practices and encourages responsible behavior among visitors. Hotels and

restaurants may emphasize eco-friendly initiatives, such as reducing single-use plastics, implementing recycling programs, and using energy-efficient practices.

Community engagement plays a crucial role in Boracay's observance of World Environment Day. Local communities are encouraged to participate in clean-up drives, tree-planting activities and awareness campaigns. By involving residents, Boracay fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility.

Both World Oceans Day and World Environment Day are also marked by social media campaigns and online awareness initiatives. Boracay establishments leverage digital platforms to reach a broader audience and inspire individuals worldwide to take action for the environment. Social media posts, videos, and infographics are shared to educate and engage people in sustainable practices and conservation efforts.

Through these collective actions and events, Boracay demonstrates its commitment to preserving its natural beauty and promoting sustainable

practices. The island's observance of these two United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) international days serves as a reminder of the ongoing need to protect the oceans, the environment, and the long-term sustainability of Boracay as a world-class destination.

To make this month extra special, Malay Day is also commemorated on June 15th to celebrate the day that Malay was made into a municipality. Previously, activities such as the Discovery Tour and the Paraw Regatta have become cherished highlights of this lively celebration.

As of this writing, Boracay Sun News has reached out to the Malay Tourism Office and Sanggunian Bayan, however, they have yet to meet and firm up plans for these special days in June. Stay tuned to their Facebook page for event announcements.

This month of June, let's all try to give back to Boracay Island by doing our part in its conservation and sustainability, shall we?

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Courtesy of District Boracay



Photo by Alan Jay Jacalan (Philippine News Agency)

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FUN FACTS

What makes Boracay's sand as fine as flour

By Rica Velasco

What makes the sand on Boracay's beaches so incredibly stunning? It's not just any old sand; it's a special

kind of sand that's powdery and white like snow. It's a concoction that is an amazing collaboration involving tiny creatures, colorful fish and even seaweed!

Let's start with foraminifera. These single-celled organisms are too small to see with the naked eye, but they pack a punch! Found in abundance in the Pacific Ocean where the Philippines is located, forams have calcium carbonate shells. When waves pound on them, these shells break down into fine, powdery grains of white sand. When they are viewed under a microscope, they reveal intricate shapes such as hearts and stars.

Next up, coral reefs. These vibrant ecosystems are home to tiny marine animals called polyps, which give the corals their color. But when the polyps die, they turn white and are washed ashore. Over thousands of years, coral skeletons are also washed ashore and merge with the sand, giving it its white tone. Coral reefs are like the gift that keeps on giving. Even in death, they contribute to the beauty of Boracay's sand.

Halimeda or seaweed skeletons, are also a key ingredient in creating Boracay's magical sand. Made of calcium carbonate, when these skeletons wash ashore, they form tiny white specks of sand.

Let's not forget about the parrotfish. These colorful creatures are the ultimate

sand makers. They have special teeth that allow them to pulverize coral into fine sand, which they then excrete before making their way to the shore.

It is for this reason that if you see parrotfish (locally called loro or mol-mol) being sold, it is best not to support this (as well as other coral reef and small fishes) by buying them as they are crucial to Boracay's coral reefs and play an integral part in the island's distinct fine white sand, and to protect our fragile underwater ecosystem.

Finally, the organic component that makes the sand soft and powdery: coralline algae. During the summer months, the natural occurrence of green algal bloom is believed to contribute to the sand's unique appearance. The sand has its little secret recipe for becoming the most beautiful sand in the world.

The powdery, fine sand is a result of the many building blocks of sand, including foraminifera, corals, Halimeda, parrotfish and coralline algae. Who knew that something as simple as sand could be so complex and mesmerizing? While the exact scientific theory behind the sand's appearance may continue to be debated, but one thing is certain: Boracay's beaches are a natural wonder to be celebrated and protected.

This information has been verified by Haron Deo Vargas, project support officer in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Community Environment and Natural Resources Office Boracay (DENR-CENRO Boracay).



Delicious Spanish fare and refreshing concoctions





The Shoppes at Station B
Canyon Hotels and Resorts, Boracay



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CHIRINGUITO

BY BARCINO



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SPECIAL FEATURE

Weddings in the Philippines are commonly held during the month of June, named after Juno, the most powerful goddess in Roman mythology, and the goddess of love and marriage. It is therefore believed that marriages in the month of June are blessed, making it the best time of the year to marry. Next to June, December is the next most popular choice since it is the time when family comes home to celebrate the holidays, followed by the love month of February.

To celebrate the “marry” month of June, here is *Boracay Sun News'* INSIDER'S GUIDE TO GETTING MARRIED IN BORACAY! Clip it – who knows, this could very well hold the secrets to making your dream tropical island wedding come true!

The Wedding Whisperer

A Peek Into the Life of Boracay's Beloved Wedding Planner Amanda Tirol

By Rica Velasco

Amanda Tirol is the most sought-after wedding planner on Boracay, renowned for turning dreams into reality. Her journey began 21 years ago, newly married to her husband Bong, when she started Boracay Weddings and Events. With her passion and dedication, Amanda quickly made a name for herself in the wedding industry.

While running her preschool in Manila, she would travel to Boracay to orchestrate weddings, relying on her own experience as a bride. Each event became a learning opportunity, allowing her to refine her craft and make each celebration more memorable than the last. Word of mouth spread, catapulting Amanda's reputation and generating a high demand for her services. Eventually, she made the decision to relocate to Boracay and focus on her business fulltime.

Amanda's love for weddings shines through when she talks about her work. "I love weddings," she says with enthusiasm. "Being part of such a special moment in couples' lives is truly remarkable. They become my friends and recommend me to others. It's a joyous occasion, and I feel honored to be a part of it."

With a genuine fondness for her work and a hands-on approach, Amanda goes above and beyond to ensure each wedding is an unforgettable experience. Her secret lies in meticulous attention to detail and a commitment to treating every client like a VIP. "We give it our best at all times," she emphasizes. "We want to make their special day as happy, stress-free, and memorable as possible." She points out that it is, after all, a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

When Amanda is not immersed in planning weddings, she cherishes quality time with her family. Whether it's swimming, playing on the beach, boating, or simply exploring the island's vibrant culinary scene, Amanda, her husband, and their four children relish the beauty that surrounds them.

Amanda and Bong's enduring love is exemplified by the five weddings they have celebrated over the years, with four of them taking place on Boracay. From their original ceremony to milestone anniversaries, each event has been an expression of their commitment and an opportunity to involve their children in the joyous celebrations.

Fulfilling her own dreamy fairy tale wedding on their 15th wedding anniversary and renewal of vows ceremony at the Discovery Shores Boracay on November 23, 2017

On the kids' summer and Christmas breaks, Amanda prioritizes spending quality time with her loved ones. While weddings still take place during these periods, Amanda entrusts her capable team of 17 professionals to handle the events, while she remains involved in a

supportive role.

Amanda takes pride in balancing her personal and professional life. She and Bong have developed a mutual understanding in which they fill in and take turns when the other one's presence is required elsewhere.

What sets Amanda apart is her unwavering dedication to supporting the local community. Not only does she contribute to the island's thriving wedding industry, but she also actively promotes local suppliers and businesses. Amanda ensures that the positive impact of weddings extends far beyond the celebration itself. The island benefits from the influx of guests who stay in various resorts, partake in water sports, indulge in local cuisine, and explore the vibrant nightlife. It's a symbiotic relationship where everyone shares in the success of each wedding held on the island.

During the temporary closure of Boracay in 2018 and subsequent pandemic-related restrictions, Amanda took the opportunity to capture precious moments with her family on the island's empty shores. She wanted her children to cherish the unparalleled experience. However, Amanda longed for the island to thrive again, as it provided sustenance for countless families and employment opportunities for locals.

When asked about her favorite aspect



Fulfilling her own dreamy fairy tale wedding on their 15th wedding anniversary and renewal of vows ceremony at the Discovery Shores Boracay on November 23, 2017

of Boracay, she exclaims, "Everything!" She particularly appreciates the picturesque white sand beaches and the tranquil azure waters that provide a safe haven for children. She remains grateful for the privilege of living and working in paradise.

Amanda's commitment to creating unforgettable moments has made



her an indispensable figure in the wedding industry. As she continues to unlock dreams and orchestrate magical celebrations, the increasing recommendations of happy couples spread like wildfire, further solidifying her reputation as a top wedding planner in the region.

While Boracay remains her primary base, Amanda's expertise extends beyond the island's shores. Through her expansion to Events by Amanda Tirol, she orchestrates weddings and events in Manila and various destinations across the Philippines. Her attention to detail, commitment to client satisfaction, and the allure of Boracay as a wedding destination have made her services highly sought after.

Amanda Tirol's journey as a wedding planner on the island of Boracay is a testament to her passion, dedication, and love for creating unforgettable moments. Events by Amanda Tirol is not just a business for her; it's a way of being part of something truly special in the lives of couples as they embark on their journey of love. With her incredible team and the stunning backdrop of Boracay, Amanda continues to bring dreams to life and make wedding celebrations truly magical.

Everyday People Are Anything But Ordinary

The Story Behind Boracay's Popular Wedding Band

By Rica Velasco

(Photos courtesy of Everyday People)

As the sun sets on Boracay Island, the air comes alive with the captivating tunes of acoustic musicians and bands. Among these talented acts, one group has left an indelible mark since its inception in 2009: Everyday People!

Artpaul Sison, a charismatic vocalist from Metro Manila who hails from a musical family (legendary musical artist Bong Gabriel who is famous for his hit "Ang Aking Awitin" is his first cousin), joined forces with Apple Andion (now Apple Sison, his wife), a gifted vocalist from Roxas City, and the skillful guitarist Ryan Ferrer from Iloilo City. Together, they form the heart of this acoustic trio. Completing the full band's line-up is the extraordinary lead guitarist Andy Delgado from Roxas City, the groovy bassist Jojo Lasquite and the versatile keyboardist Edzon Belloga, both from Iloilo City, with Ryan taking charge of the drumming duties.

With over 20 collective years of musical experience, Everyday People boasts an impressive repertoire spanning pop, R&B, ballads, alternative, and timeless hits from the 60s to the 90s.

Founding member Artpaul had already left his mark on the music scene as part of the group "Wiseguys" in the late 90s, gracing the charts with their memorable hits "Sabi Mo" and "The First Time I Saw You" under Neo Viva Records. Initially starting as an acoustic ensemble at Don Vito Boracay, they eventually caught the attention of the esteemed wedding coordinator, Amanda Tirol. Recognizing their immense talent, she encouraged them to expand into a full band for events.



Everyday People (from left): Edzon Belloga, Ryan Bert Ferrer, Jojo Lasquite, Andy Delgado, Artpaul Sison and Apple Sison

Artpaul took on the additional responsibility of managing the band. His natural ability to foster strong relationships with clients, event coordinators, and hotel managers, along with positive feedback from clients, propelled their success. Today, Everyday

People stands proudly as one of the most highly recommended acts by hotels and coordinators, particularly for weddings and special occasions.

When it comes to their craft, Everyday People takes it seriously. Meticulously selecting songs they know they can



Everyday People making extraordinary memories on every occasion

do justice to, their dedication shines through. Their hard work pays off as they bask in the satisfaction of happy clients, which leads to more opportunities. The recognition they receive from renowned artists and celebrities they collaborate with is the cherry on top, filling their hearts with joy.

The allure of island living has captured their souls, as it is a far cry from the hustle and bustle of city life. In this laid-back paradise, they can perform two to three gigs a day, thanks to the proximity of the island's establishments. Although the cost of living may be higher, the rewards are greater—they enjoy a higher quality of life and a thriving career in this idyllic setting.

Make sure to seek out Everyday People. Try to catch them at their regular shows at Don Vito Boracay along Station 2, White Beach, Mondays to Saturdays from 6 to 9 p.m.

Let their harmonious melodies and musical talents sweep you away and make your Boracay experience even more magical.

You may reach Artpaul via mobile at +63 929 488 8149, via email at paul_s0214@yahoo.com or find them on Facebook, TikTok, or YouTube @everydaypeopleboracay.



Dream Weddings Are Made of These

16 Priceless Tips from Boracay's Top Wedding Planner

By Freida Dario-Santiago

Updated by Rica Velasco

Planning a destination wedding requires careful consideration and attention to detail. If Boracay Island is your dream wedding destination, here are some priceless tips from renowned wedding and events planner Amanda Tirol.

1. Research and book early: Boracay is a popular wedding destination, so research venues and vendors as early as possible to secure your preferred dates.

2. Choose the right venue: There are a variety of wedding venues on the island, ranging from beachfront resorts to private villas. Choose a venue that suits your style, guest count and budget.

3. Work with a local wedding planner: A local wedding planner can provide invaluable insights into the island's wedding scene and can help you navigate local customs and regulations.

4. Consider the weather: Boracay has a tropical climate, so plan your wedding date accordingly. Avoid the rainy season and prepare for hot and humid weather.

5. Prioritize guest experience: Many guests will be traveling to attend

your wedding, so plan activities and accommodations that will make their stay on the island comfortable and enjoyable.

6. Incorporate local elements: Boracay has a rich culture and natural beauty, so consider incorporating local elements into your wedding, such as Filipino cuisine, traditional music, and locally-sourced decor.

7. Collect pegs that you can send to your stylists. To be more cost-efficient, consider going with local flower varieties that achieve the same effect, while adding a touch of local charm.

8. Be sure that you or your wedding planner meet with the local suppliers to iron out details way in advance. Aim to finish all the planning at least two months before the wedding so that you can have enough time to focus on yourselves and your guests in the last weeks leading up to the big day.

9. As much as possible, source your professional suppliers from the island that have the experience and track record for reliability. This will help you cut costs from otherwise flying-in suppliers to the island that will entail additional expenses for airfare, accommodations, and daily incidentals.

10. Be mindful of the environment: Boracay is a protected natural area, so make sure to choose eco-friendly vendors,

avoid single-use plastics, and consider giving back to the local community or conservation efforts.

11. Considering the island rehabilitation's guidelines for sustainability, beach events including weddings are no longer allowed within the 30-meter easement zone. There are, however, a handful of beachfront properties that have a few meters that can accommodate small gatherings, as well as some that have gardens fronting the beach, and hilltop chapels with breathtaking views that serve as exceptional alternative wedding venues.

12. Although fire dancing is likewise prohibited on the beaches, performances are allowed within other areas away from the beach. A new trend is LED light dancing.

13. Due to the sound ordinance that regulates noise at certain hours, loud music must be turned down at a particular time in the evening. If you wish to extend your revelry, be sure to book prior arrangements with one of the many indoor bars and clubs on the island where you and your guests can party to your hearts' content.

14. You may want to ask your wedding planner or venue hotel/resort to make prior arrangements for your pre- or post-nuptial photo shoot on the beach to capture stunning images of your dream Boracay wedding.

15. Pre-wedding celebrations are a great way to cordially welcome one's guests to Boracay. Should you decide to have one, pick a venue other than the wedding and reception venue itself so guests may experience more of Boracay and keep the wedding venue special and sacred.

16. For post-wedding celebrations, private boat cruises are a popular choice as guests are treated to an unforgettable experience of seeing the island of Boracay on a tour while enjoying an intimate gathering with privacy and comfort while being surrounded by nature away from it all. Be sure to choose a cruise service that is eco-friendly and respects the natural surroundings and sound ordinances.

With this expert advice, you can create a wedding experience that not only reflects your unique style and values but also respects the local culture and environment. From choosing the perfect venue to incorporating local traditions, you can weave together all the elements that make Boracay such a captivating wedding destination.

Aside from dream Boracay weddings, Events by Amanda Tirol also organizes destination weddings worldwide. You may reach them through telephone number (+63 36) 288 5982, via email at amandatirol@hotmail.com, or on Facebook @Events by Amanda Tirol.



These dream weddings can be yours, because anything is possible with proper planning with the pros

(Photos courtesy of Events by Amanda Tirol)



OPINION

They Call It Progress

By Charlie Greene

I was sitting at a bar in Kuala Lumpur with some friends recently after just arriving from Boracay and after the normal catch up chit chat (we hadn't all seen each since before the Covid-19 farce), one friend who works in the tech industry started talking about some of the recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) that have begun to worry him.

When I think of AI, I visualize a robot cleaning my house and cooking dinner, or my car driving itself while I'm asleep in the back. Nothing too sinister, right?

But my friend went on to say:

"What if I told you just as you were about to board a flight that 50 percent of the engineers who made the plane you're

about to get on said that there's a 10 percent chance that everybody could go down? Would you still get on that plane?"

This was a question raised by the creators of the award-winning Netflix documentary "The Social Dilemma" after discovering that 50 percent of AI researchers they spoke to believe there's a 10 percent or greater chance that humans will become extinct due to our inability to control AI. Yes, you read that right.

Welcome to the double exponential era. One where our unquenchable desire for superiority and advancement over everything else could drive us into early extinction if we don't start pumping the brakes before it's too late.

Nobody is saying that AI doesn't offer

tremendous benefits. Far from it. I want a robot to cook and clean my house ... But now we are opening a new door that has far, far greater repercussions if not handled carefully.

One of their key points during their address to AI engineers in their presentation at the Center for Humane Technology was that when you invent a new technology, you uncover a new class of responsibility.

Also, aside from new levels of responsibility, a lot of what the AI community worries most about is when there's what they call the takeoff. This is when AI becomes smarter than humans in a broad spectrum of things and begins the ability to self-improve. Because it is operating on artificial intelligence alone, it may come up with some bizarre solutions to commands. Say you wish to be the richest person in the world, so then AI kills everyone else. It could be that kind of thing. Scary ...

As it is now, we've already seen automated exploitation of code and cyber weapons, exponential blackmail

and revenge porn, and automated fake religions that can target the extremists in your population and give automated personalized narratives to make the extreme even more extreme. AI can also recreate your voice from a three-second sample and have you say anything it wants. We've already read reports of extortion or ransom from AI-generated phone calls from a loved one pretending to be in trouble and asking for money. Then there are the deep fake videos. And because this is all coming at us at a double exponential rate, we as humans are not equipped to deal with these threats. It's simply coming in too fast.

AI is something that affects all of humanity, we must form a treaty, much like we did with nuclear weapons. Because if history has taught us anything about technology, it is, if that technology confers power, it will start a race. And if you do not coordinate, the race will end in tragedy.

I'm glad I'm back in my spot at the bar under a palm tree watching another Boracay sunset.

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ISLAND SPORTS

Beach Football Extravaganza

By Charlie Greene

Our beautiful island of Boracay is famous for its sunsets, hospitality, gorgeous beaches and crystal-clear waters.

There's also the iconic Boracay paraw sailboats and their sunset races, other beach sports such as Frisbee tournaments, and diving off of our shores is somewhat spectacular.

Biking has recently become a popular sport and even stretches back to before Covid-19 lockdowns hit us all.

But a sport that is dear to my heart is now hitting the headlines and enticing more of the island's youth to start playing. It's the good old game of British football, or soccer as the Americans call it.

Football dates back more than a hundred years and has become one of the leading sports in the world.

"Modern football originated in Britain in the 19th century. The Football Association, formed in 1863, codified the rules of the game and hosted the first cup competition between regional football clubs in Britain."

It is the world's most popular ball game in number of participants and spectators. Simple in its principal rules and essential equipment, the sport can be played almost anywhere, from official football playing fields (pitches) to gymnasiums, streets, school playgrounds, parks, or beaches. Football's governing body, the Fédération Internationale de



Football Association (FIFA), estimated that at the turn of the 21st century, there were approximately 250 million football players and over 1.3 billion people "interested" in football; in 2010

a combined television audience of more than 26 billion watched football's premier tournament, the quadrennial month-long World Cup finals.

Well, all of that being said, we now have our own Boracay Football Club.

If you were up at Station 1 for the beach sports competitions during the "Love Boracay" 2023 weekend, you would no doubt have seen them playing their hearts out to reach the semi-finals of the Beach Football Competition. It was very hot out there, but all the players gave it everything to participate and the competition was fierce and furious.

Boracay Football Club is managed by Kalid Macalanggan, a young but enthusiastic guy who simply loves the game and wants to help local kids to develop their skills and themselves as individuals.

Although basketball has (and still is) always been a favorite of Filipino kids, football is fast becoming extremely popular. We have world-famous names like David Beckham, Lionel Messi and Christian Ronaldo to thank for much of this.

Although the local kids have to attend to their studies, on every possible occasion they'll head off to their "training ground" on the beach at the front of Seawind to practice and hone their skills. It's hard work, but their dedication pays off and more kids are joining their ranks.

Their performances so far this season have been little short of spectacular, and I can see much more success is on its way.

Congratulations to all concerned for the many achievements and thanks for all your passion and efforts in playing the great game of football.

KELANA is a newly opened Bar and Restaurant located at Station 2 in front beach, serving the best coastal cuisine in the island.

Enjoy our cocktails, have a delicious meal and kick back to some live music.

Facebook Page: Kelana Coastal Cuisine
 E-mail: kelanacoastalcuisineboracay@gmail.com
 Tel.: 036-288-9873 Mobile: 09274948010

ISLAND EYE

Welcome Back Dragon Boats

Last month's Love Boracay weekend saw the long awaited return of Dragon Boat Racing to our Island.

The local Boracay Allstars ladies team performed outstandingly to take the honors:

Small Boat Women's - Champions

Standard Mixed - Champions
 Team A - 3rd
 Team B Newbies - Champions
 Everyone joined in to celebrate a wonderful and great weekend of sports and fun.

Congratulations.



ISLAND EVENTS

Miss Universe Philippines Returns to Aqua Boracay

Photos courtesy of Aqua Boracay

Boracay Sun News was there to witness the Miss Universe Philippines (MUPH) pageant's return to Aqua Boracay, the official host of the swimsuit presentation for the second year. The island paradise was the venue for the "Under the Rising Moon Party" event for the MUPH candidates, which took place on April 12 and 13, 2023.

The event was a spectacular affair, with 37 participants showcasing their beauty and talent on the runway. Guests were treated to captivating performances by light and fire dancers, and the music was provided by the country's legendary DJ Manolet Dario and Groove Manila's DJ Jason Soong. Fans and guests were also given the opportunity to meet and mingle with their favorite candidates.

In line with the MUPH's advocacy of giving back to the community, various activities included a Mental and Wellness

activity, a Feeding Program at the Boracay Ati Tribal Community Village, and a Bulabog Beach cleaning drive. These activities were aligned with the pageant's mission to create positive change and to make a difference in the lives of others.

Aqua Boracay is a luxury resort located on the pristine island of Boracay, known for its stunning beaches and crystal-clear waters. It offers world-class amenities and services, making it the perfect venue for events such as the Miss Universe Philippines pageant.

The MUPH pageant is one of the most anticipated events in the Philippines, and this year's edition promises to be even more exciting than ever before. With the stunning Aqua Boracay as its backdrop, the pageant is set to be a spectacle that will capture the hearts of fans and viewers alike.

For more information on Aqua Boracay, you may visit www.aquaboracay.com. – **Freida Dario-Santiago**



AQUA Boracay had the honor of hosting the Miss Universe Philippines candidates for the second year in a row and was chosen as the venue for the 2023 swimsuit presentation



On the runway: 37 Miss Universe Philippines contestants showcased their beauty while walking down the runway that was the resort's exceptional swimming pool, designed by Lor Calma



Special guests and media (from left): Groove Manila's Jason Soong, Manolet and Dee Dario, BSN editor-in-chief Freida Dario-Santiago, Epic Boracay's DJ Ryan Acidburn Field, Aqua Boracay's Shandy Say, Mark Santiago, and Lifestyle Inquirer editor-in-chief Ria Francisco-Prieto



Aqua Angels: Antonio Co, President of Aqua Boracay, was joined by his wife Carol Co and eight Aqua Angels: Michelle Dee from Makati, Samantha Panlilio from Cavite, Pauline Amelinckx from Bohol, Clare Dacanay from Paranaque, Christine Julianne "CJ" Opiaza from Zambales, Angelique Manto from Pampanga, Krishnah Gravidez from Baguio, and Jannarie Zarzoso from Agusan Del Norte



Aqua Boracay's beachfront served as the perfect backdrop for the competition



MUPH candidates pay a visit and bring cheer to the residents of Boracay Ati Tribal Community Village



MUPH candidates participated in a clean-up campaign along Bulabog Beach

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BORACAY DIARIES

Live and Work for Pleasure

By Rich Valdez

Summer is at last upon us, with all of its sticky weather and its rooftop bars and its beachy summer reads. And yes, the ideal summer reading scenario is throwing your shiny new summer novel into your large woven bag, and heading to a beach somewhere in the Philippines to leisurely read it while drinking frozen alcoholic beverages. Unfortunately though,

for those of us who are "adults" with "jobs" and "obligations," summer isn't always so luxurious. You might not have time to spend every single day of the summer lying on a beach with your novelty sunglasses. You might still have to suffer through a sweaty summer commute.

However, don't fret too much. Just change your life and come live on a beach anyway.

Boracay has upped its game since the Covid-19 scare was blown away from our

shores and high-speed internet has finally arrived on the island. No more suffering with 2 to 3 Mbps (if you were lucky.)

Living on a tropical paradise island and being able to work from there is now a dream come true.

I moved here just four months ago and upgraded the old internet system to the latest fiber optics and both download and upload speeds now both go over 100 Mbps, and the costs are pretty low at around PhP2,000 per month, which also includes a landline phone. Some companies are more expensive than others, as always, but shop around for some excellent deals. I use Globe as they had a great promo just when I needed it.

Of course, nothing's perfect in life. We still get the too often brownouts on the island, but not as often as before, and not for so long, I am told. But what the heck, many places have backup generators, and you can always buy yourself a small one for backup purposes—you do want to live and work on the beach, right?

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, most of us were forced to work from home (if we didn't lose our jobs), so let's put into practice what we learned and move our home to the beach and work from there. Working from home doesn't necessarily mean being stuck in your small condo in the metropolis somewhere. Nobody needs to know where you are ...

Imagine waking up and going for a short stroll along the beach and a leisurely swim before breakfast and work. And compare that to the daily commute to the office.

I'll say no more. See you back on the Island soon.



ISLAND EYE

Another great fun day of beach bocce at Sundown Bar every Wednesday.

It was a big win by Krismer and Gesylie for the ladies... Krismer was particularly overjoyed as her husband Dan was in the opposing team who they beat in the final.

We can't reveal what Dan went on to say...

Thanks for a great day everyone.





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<p>AMIHAN season</p> 	<p>KITE season</p> 	<p>BALIK-BAYAN season</p> 

Lightening-up the day with a perky dose of humor

Denise Tolentino is an illustrator, children's book author and former Boracay resident. Her book "The Quick and Careful Adventures of Muni" won the 7th National Children's Book Awards for Kid's Choice (Chapter Books Category). She is currently working on a comic about her life in Boracay Island and shares them here as a returning Boracay Sun News contributor. You will find most of her work and adventures on Instagram and TikTok: @drawnbydenise



SPORTS

The First Unisikad Invitational Circuit Race: A Thrilling and Challenging Bike Race

Text & photos by Mark Cabrera

Last April 30, 2023, the first Unisikad Boracay Bike Race was held at the Boracay Newcoast property in Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan. The event was organized by the Unisikad Boracay Association, a group of cycling enthusiasts who wanted to promote the sport and tourism on the island. Noted collaborators are Belmont Hotel Boracay, Savoy Hotel Boracay, Boracay Newcoast, Department of Tourism Region VI, the Local Government Unit of Malay, and a fleet of sponsors and volunteers.

The race featured a circuit course of varying distances complementary to each category. There were eight categories, namely: Kids 13 and below, Professionals 40 and above, 30 to 39 years old, 20 to 29 years old, 19 years old and below, Women Elite and Men Elite categories. Whether you were a beginner or a pro, there was a place for you in this race. Participants also got to meet and mingle with other bike enthusiasts from all over the country and from overseas.

The race attracted more than 150 cyclists from different parts of the country, as well as some foreign riders. Teams, like Go for Gold from Manila, Team Henry from Cagayan de Oro, Team Espanya from Iloilo, and teams from neighboring towns all the way to Kalibo, were part of the action. Cycling personalities such as Tashcuh Sonota from Bacolod also participated in this challenging circuit race.

The participants had to complete varying laps on the cemented race course under the scorching heat of the sun. The race course included uphill and downhill sections, sharp turns, and scenic views of the beach and the hills of Boracay Newcoast.

The cycling event was supported by almost sixty local sponsors and marshaled by volunteers from Unisikad Boracay Association members, Philippine Air Force Reservists, and Philippine Navy Reservists. First aid stations were manned by members of the Philippine Red Cross Boracay and the Malay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office.

The winners of each category received trophies, medals and cash prizes, sacks of rice, gift checks and free accommodations from sponsor hotels. They also received cheers and congratulations from their fellow bikers and fans. More than PhP200,000.00 worth of prizes were given away to the winners. Raffle prizes were continuously being given away while the race was ongoing.

The race was not only a test of speed, skill, stamina and endurance, but also a celebration of cycling culture and community. The spectators cheered and applauded as they watched the bikers zoom past them on their bikes. Despite the scorching weather, the bikers enjoyed the camaraderie and friendship that they shared with each other, regardless of their team affiliation or nationality. They also enjoyed the beauty and hospitality of the Boracay Island culture.

The organizers of the race expressed their gratitude to all the participants, sponsors, volunteers and spectators who made the event a success. They also announced their plans to hold another Unisikad Invitational Circuit Race next year, with more categories, challenges and prizes.

If you are interested in joining the second Unisikad Invitational Circuit Race, kindly contact the Unisikad Boracay Association through their Facebook page. Also watch out for their announcements and updates.

See you in the next race guys! Cheers!



ISLAND EYE

A Local Champion

It's not every day, or even year, that we get such a good prospect for future success. WVRAA regional meet gold medal winner AMET - the islander, Charly B. Tolosa ... Boxing champion ... pride of Boracay Island. Congratulations and good luck for the future Charly. Much more success lies ahead...



ISLAND EYE

Boracay Football Club

The local Boracay Football Club in their new team kit getting ready for the Love Boracay Beach Football Tournament. Boracay Sun News sponsored their team kit and cheered them on all the way to the semi finals.

Well played boys... much more success to come. * If you'd like to help the team with donations for their travel, accommodation and tournament registration fees, please email me at: vjeff@boracaysunnews.com. ~ Thank you.



INDULGE

BORACAY BUCKET LIST

Must-try Seafood and Filipino Restaurants

By Amanda Virrey

As a top island destination in the Philippines, Boracay definitely knows what it takes to attract tourists from all over the world. This by all means goes beyond the island's white sand, tantalizing seascape and fantastic weather, rather it is the array of sumptuous seafood delights and traditional culinary offerings that sustains them.

In this issue, we narrow down the search to these top six restaurants for seafood and Filipino cuisine!

In D'Mall of Boracay alone are a handful of restaurants that are a favorite among locals and tourists for their impeccable quality, tastiness and the relaxed dining experience.

Starting at the beachfront, **Epic Boracay** boasts a menu of seafood dishes that are designed to harmonize your palate with the richness of the sea. Try the Chef's Recommendations, such as **Crab al Ajillo**



immersed in a chili garlic sauce alongside crab fat rice, a plate of **Fresh Oysters** from Aklan, and the **Epic Seafood Platter** with steamed crab, grilled squid, octopus tentacles, fish ceviche, grilled prawns with sweet potato chips.

A few meters away from Epic is **Ole' Tapas Bar and Restaurant**. This Latin locale offers an extravagance of international dishes, specializing in Cuban, Mexican and Spanish, like squid ink **Paella Negra Mariscos** with treasures from the sea, Mexican **Shrimp Fajitas** simmered in herbs and bell peppers with matching tortilla flatbread, and **Baked Mussels** topped with bacon, cheese and garlic. Savor these mouthwatering



dishes and be serenaded by their nightly entertainment.

Facing the Ferris wheel, on the other hand, is one of the pioneering food



establishments on the island, **Island Chicken Inasal**. This quaint restaurant offers a selection of dishes native to Bacolod province's famous gastronomy, which ranges from grilled chicken in traditional herbs and spices marinade or **Chicken Inasal**, **Monggo with Squash**, to their sour beef shank stew, called **Kansi**.



Order these dishes with garlic-topped rice when you are craving real Filipino food.

Toward the north of White Beach, near Station 1 is a treasure trove of rich flavors, known as **Salsa Fusion Restaurant**.



Expressed with robust signatures of Mexican, Spanish and Filipino, this homely dining space at Serene La Playa resort clearly presents an appetizing array of some of Filipino traditional dishes. The most highly recommended of these are



the crispy **Porchetta Bagnet** with pork filling, beef layered **Caldereta con Callos**, **Enchiladas** and the very original **Bulalo de Ravioles** beef stew.

Further north is the beachfront restaurant called **Mayas Filipino and Mexican Cuisine**. As its name implies, Mayas connotes the former national bird of the Philippines, or an indigenous

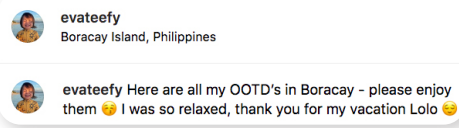


group of Mexico. When discerning its Filipino authenticity, best to try its oven-steamed pork belly or **Lechon Kawali**, goat rib braised **Kalderetang Kambing** and **Shrimp Rebosado Croquette** with special tropical sauce.



Beach Babies

Send us your kid's best beach photos or social media posts because nothing can brighten up the day better than the shiny, happy faces of children!



Meet Eva who visited Boracay in March 2023

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FOOD

ACTIVITIES

EVENTS

continued on next page

continued from previous page



Lastly, when you want to feast on seafood right on the beach, then walk further to the island's famous landmark called Willy's Rock and dine at **Percy**



Seafood, a restaurant dedicated to honing "The Bounty of the Philippine Sea." Employed with the freshest local caught sea fares, Percy promises a gourmet of Asian and Western dishes to satisfy its worldly clientele. Among the best on their menu, the Moroccan-inspired **Royal**



Seafood Tagine, the **Thai Curry Crab** and the **Korean Campfire Scallops** are highly recommended.

With this bucket list of seafood and Filipino restaurants, you are sure to experience Boracay's best culinary offerings to match your island adventures!



ISLAND EYE

A Must Try...

The soft opening last night of a new restaurant, **KELANA**, was full of great food and surprises.

Excellent cuisine is on offer with a delightful blend of Indonesian spices and Mediterranean herbs. The food choices are expertly selected and prepared and served to perfection.

This will quickly become a must go to restaurant right at the heart of White Beach in Station 2.

Thanks to the owners, friends and staff for a wonderful evening.

Watch this space for more details...



SPORTS

By Pauline R.

Welcome Back, Rowers!

Only those who have experienced the thrill of sitting on the narrow planks aboard the long wooden boat adorned with a dragon head can fully understand how much this rowing sport has been missed on this island. Ever since dragon boat rowing was introduced on the island in 2001, the intense paddling competition has been one of the highlights of each summer season's events. After a four-year hiatus, four local teams dusted their paddles and jumped back on their training boats to compete in a friendly local race during the "Love Boracay" 2023 festival.

Alongside the old-time paddlers who were oh-so happy to start paddling again, new paddlers quickly got hooked to dragon boat, adding a fresh vibe to the existing teams. Boracay Allstars, created in 2007 and composed mostly of Tumandoks and Boracaynons, welcomed new paddlers from their junior teams who have been training since 2014, as young as seven years old.

One of the beauties of this sport is that anyone can join regardless of their gender, age, strength or background. Filipinos, foreigners, mothers, business owners, local government officials, or long-term vacationers to name only a few, can be seen being part of teams. As Thomas Muller, team manager of the nine-year-old team Boracay Dragonforce says, "Anyone, who is interested in the sport and can commit to our team, is welcome." Hannah Sacapaño, one of the paddlers in charge of the Boracay Allstars says in agreement, "Everyone can join as long as they are willing to learn." The strength of this team sport is the symbiosis between the team members. Thomas explains that the essential ingredient is to "synchronize your power with your teammates." He adds, "It is not all about your individual strength and stamina, but the combined performance as a team."

On April 30, during the "Love Boracay" festivities, four teams came together for a fun race, to showcase their sportsmanship and to reconnect with one another and their love for rowing. The Boracay Allstars and Boracay Dragonforce teams formed two men's teams, one women's team, and one mixed team, while the all-women's Boracay Bumshells and all-men's Shangri-La Flying Foxes teams joined forces to



The Boracay Dragon Boat Association and "Love Boracay" 2023 brought the fun race back to the island

come up with a mixed team.

Early morning on a Sunday, it was a family atmosphere in Station 1, with new and former paddlers and island friends reunited and gathered to support each other with warm smiles and loud cheers. Two teams at a time competed by heat on 200 meters in each of the three categories under the scorching sun. Boracay Allstars—the oldest team of the four, stepped on the podium in men's, women's and mixed categories.

The teams spoke as one when voicing their goals and hopes of showcasing and growing their sports on the island again, joining local and international competitions again, and creating more memories. On behalf of the Boracay Island community, **Boracay Sun News** wishes them all the best, rowing forward, one stroke at a time.

"Ready ... Attention ... Row!"



Boracay Allstars cheering on their teammates

(Photo by Hannah Sacapaño)



INDULGE

A Touch of Spain

By Charlie Greene

During the early part of the last decade, I spent a couple of years living in Spain, Malaga on the Costa del Sol to be precise. It's a beautiful part of the world with constant sunshine and loads of excellent food and wine.

When I went up to the recently opened Robinsons supermarket in The Shoppes, I saw a restaurant at the Station B mall entrance called Chiringuito. All along the Costa del Sol's many beaches you will find Chiringuitos selling good wines and excellent, mainly grilled food. Basically, they are beachfront restaurant bars. That's how I spent many a long afternoon. Bliss!

Anyhow, I simply had to give this new addition to Boracay's dining scene a try.

Chiringuito Boracay is part of a 17 group chain with other outlets in Manila, Cebu and Clark, although the others go under the brand name of Barcino. This branch was named Chiringuito because of its island location.

Being greeted by the smiling manager, Tommy, who is originally from Guimaras, is always a nice touch for customer relations. And the rest of the staff follow his example.

I asked Tommy about the food choices on the extensive menu and he said most of them were created by the company's Executive Chef in Manila. But they are cooked here by long-time Boracay chef Mark, who prepares and delivers them with

passion and perfectly so.

During my time in Spain I developed a real love for their national Paella dishes. So when the menu was delivered it brought a smile to my face - several good varieties of exactly what I was craving for.

The Paella Negra, cooked as it should be with lots of squid ink, was a true delight. Sometimes this dish can be a little too heavy, but Chef Mark had cooked this to perfection. This truly tasted as good as it looked.

The House Speciality is something that the restaurant is particularly proud of - and so they should be. A traditional Spanish paella is a dish that one can really enjoy to the fullest. Flavors and aromas abound. And the presentation was pure eye candy...

Fresh prawns, clams, just enough chili, delicious rice and lots of fresh herbs made for a wonderful meal.

And, of course, good Spanish food simply has to have a jug of Sangria to complement the meal...

These were our meals for the day, but we will certainly return to Chiringuito as their menu really is extensive, and I believe one can be pretty sure that the other items on offer will be equally as good.

The restaurant's decor is colorful, bright, charming and very comfortable.

All in all - A great dining experience...

Many thanks to Tommy and all the wonderful staff.



ENTERTAINMENT

Teenstar UK Finalist Dreams of Performing in Boracay

By Jun N. Aguirre

Mia Librojo, 19 who won the prestigious singing competition in the United Kingdom called "Teenstar UK" dreams of performing in Boracay, according to her father Rudy.

In an interview, Rudy Librojo told the Boracay Sun News that his daughter was on a weeklong vacation in Antipolo Rizal last month and never got the chance to visit Boracay because of various commitments to perform.

The young Librojo who was declared as one of the finalists in December 2020, only started to enjoy some of the perks as the "Teenstar UK" winner. Librojo was also a runner up in the "New Breeds Belfast."

According to her father, "Her five original songs were played on BBC Ulsters Radio London UK. Her two original songs titled "If What I Said" and "I Can't Get Enough of You" were among the radio station's "Top in World."

Librojo is the very first Filipina-Irish to achieved having so many of her original songs played on BBC Ulster Radio London, UK

"Mia was born and raised in Belfast, Ireland but like many teenagers, she said that she would love to visit Boracay and perform there," reveals her father, in this exclusive interview.

Rudy hails from Antipolo Rizal while Mia's mother hails from Davao City.

In 2021, some songs composed by Mia were featured on Spotify under the pop rock genre. Among those songs include "He's in a Band" and the "Love Sick."



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PEOPLE OF BORACAY

Living A Digital Life in Boracay

By Pauline R.

Pre-pandemic, the term “digital nomads” was already becoming well-known around the world, due to its fast-growing community. Boracay was like many other Southeast Asian spots that could count its fair share of location-independent workers who would enjoy larger freedom due to their professional setting. Covid-19 seems to have changed the game for many people who needed a new opportunity after losing their job or for some who felt the need to escape the city after the lockdown. Even the office culture has evolved alongside the pandemic. Although this lifestyle grows rapidly, the digital nomadic lifestyle is still misunderstood by many.

I had the chance to meet several digital nomads who live in Boracay permanently or are passing through, who share with us about their experiences and lifestyle.

MJ Aoki is a licensed financial planner, a licensed life coach, and content creator who moved to Boracay in 2022.

MJ Aoki is often seen in Station 3, where she feels at home

In 2016, she started blogging and traveling around, earning from partnerships with companies. Despite the numerous places she visited, she would always go return to the Philippines: “Nothing compares,” she says with a smile. A fulltime digital nomad since 2018, she can only be a working nomad in the country as her coaching license is only recognized in the Philippines. But MJ is such a positive soul and laughs it off by adding, “I had my fair share of adventure so it’s ok!” But she was not always as bubbly and happy as now.



Back in her corporate days, her unhealthy lifestyle and work relations dragged her mental health down. Between the Manila traffic, insane working hours without overtime compensation, and bad treatment from her boss, she was constantly crying, getting sick and having low self-esteem. Working on herself and getting into self-development brought her out of this dark phase and led her to become a life coach.

Zo Aguilar is a freelance communication consultant who slowly moved to the island during the pandemic.

Zo Aguilar’s remote office on the beach

She too, went through her fair share of hardships as a corporate employee. Her burnout led her to take an early retirement package at the age of 32 and reevaluate her professional options. She is now working on a per project basis. Not tied to any company, she still has consistent clients. Although a freelancer for the past 10 years, she still had to be mainly based in Manila since face-to-face meetings were sometimes required. She was eventually able to move to Boracay. She tells us, “After Covid-19, it was easier for me to be away from the city much longer.”



Abi and Paulo Icamina left the stressful city life during the pandemic with their two children.

Abi, Paulo and their sons have no regrets about escaping Manila during the pandemic

Working for a marketing service company for 16 years, Abi took this opportunity to live a less stressful life on the beach. Her company gave up its office during the pandemic, allowing her to keep working online from the beach. Abi explains “Prior to pandemic, I was already traveling a lot for work, so I was only at the office two days a week. It was a gradual transition for me as much as for the company.” On the other hand, Paulo, an IT for a US-based company, now goes back to his Manila office for one week every month and flies back to his family to work remotely the rest of the time.

Moving to Boracay with their children was a great decision for several reasons. But the main one? “Life is less stressful by the beach, without the many temptations the city has to offer in terms of spending, the rides back and forth for our and the kids’ schedules, the price of gas and activities, so it is more profitable.”



Another family that moved from Canada to the Boracay Island more recently are Natalya, Paul and their two daughters.

Natalya, Paul and their two daughters in Palawan before making the move to Boracay

Paul, originally from the Philippines, is a virtual strength and conditioning coach while Natalya is a Pilates instructor and app owner. They started their digital journey at the beginning of the pandemic when they lost their incomes, unable to meet their clients face-to-face. Off work by March, they pivoted swiftly in April. But it wasn’t easy at first as Paul explains: “Some clients pushed back the idea of moving online since they weren’t expecting the pandemic to last. They gave in, the longer it went. Soon enough, they were willing to invest in equipment and move to a virtual setup.” Natalya adds,

“Luckily, our clients are trusting and loyal for a long time, so it helped greatly.” While redefining the virtual way of coaching, Natalya decided to create an app called PilatesBodyWorkout, with the help of Paul. In 2022, they decided to spend time traveling to the Philippines to meet Paul’s family and have their daughters experience their Filipino roots. After hopping from beach to beach, they settled in Boracay to give their two little girls some stability.

While many people glamorize the digital nomadic life as an all-year-round holiday, the reality is quite different. As MJ explains, “Yes, I control my own schedule, but work ethic is very important. I am paid based on commission, so I need to be efficient rather than wait for my work shift to end—it’s motivating. But there are no paid holidays or other perks when I work on Sundays.” Zo adds, “I feel I need to prove my worth to my colleagues since many assume a remote worker is only having fun. So, I always make sure I am ahead of the deadline to prove I am a good investment for the company. Another challenge is that the benefits like retirement and health insurance are inexistent.”

One thing she also had to learn as a freelancer working remotely is that incomes are not always consistent. Learning how to budget and finding one’s own balance is crucial. “Despite this, I still prefer this setting. I can match my skills and time with the money I want to make,” MJ says. For her, soft skills are extremely important: courage, grounding, intentionality, work ethic and structure are the foundation

of her being able to sustain this lifestyle. Zo also gives her point of view: “From working in a museum in France to doing work inside trains across continents or on the beach, I don’t feel like work brings me down because I can live life while working. Yes, there are no holidays, but I get exposed to more things that inspire me. I feel I am more efficient since I want to finish my duty and go and explore places.”

They all agree that one of the biggest challenges is tech-related: Finding a stable internet connection and matching their tech to the apps and platforms their clients are using. “It happened that we had to cancel meetings or full days of work because of the unstable connection. We also had to quickly leave places when we realized the internet didn’t allow us to work properly,” Paul laughs.

When asked for their best advice for anyone who would like to transition to a digital nomadic lifestyle, each of them shared a great piece of wisdom based on their personal experience: MJ says loud and clear to just go for it. “Things that separate people who do things from those who don’t is the level of courage you are putting in; at least once in your life, you can say you’ve done it, you’ve tried.” Zo reminds everyone to “Know yourself and your work capacity to plan your day better. Remind yourself that work is only one part of your life.” As a working mom, Abi warns, “It is not for everyone. People can struggle with time management and motivation. Yes, you have more time but sometimes, you miss being in the office with co-workers, not being a mom and working simultaneously.”

Lastly, as a traveling family who moved from abroad, Paul and Natalya’s great advice is very practical and can go a long way for many people. As parents, their advice is to “Know your children, their capacity to adapt and to communicate clearly with their needs. Keep a routine and consider if you need support like a nanny or a family member who would join you on the trip because it can be a lot to handle.” And in general, they emphasize that if the duration of the trip is not already defined, everyone should assume that it will be longer. Both underscore thinking in advance, such as checking credit card and passport expiration dates. “Have a digital copy of everything. Check with your doctors about how to contact them easily. Research how to access your funds internationally and talk to your bank. This way, you don’t end up with a bad surprise.”



INDULGE

BSN's Guide to Island Day Trips

Unisikad Bike Tours

Text & photos by Mark Cabrera



Are you ready for an unforgettable adventure on two wheels?

If you love cycling and exploring beautiful places, then you will love the Unisikad Bike Tours on Boracay island.

The Unisikad Bike Tours are operated by the Unisikad Boracay Association, a non-profit Boracay-based cycling organization. Unisikad unites all cycling groups in Malay. For the bike tour project, they are working directly with the

Department of Tourism, Malay Chapter. The Unisikad Bike Tours program was officially launched last October 2022 at Station X in Hue Hotel, Boracay. They have several bike hubs around Boracay Island. Station X at Hue Hotel, Pugon Cafe at Kingfisher Farm and BSikleta Bike Shop at D'Mall of Boracay are some of the notable partner bike hubs of this bike tour program. You will be hooked up with an available bike hub near you when you book a bike tour with Unisikad Bike Tours.

The Unisikad Bike Tour offers three levels of difficulty to suit your preference and fitness level: easy, medium and hard.

Easy Ride

This is perfect for beginners or those who want a relaxing ride around the island. You will see the stunning Bulabog Beach, the must-see island landmarks, the charming mangrove park, and more. You will also enjoy a variety of snacks and have coffee or juice breaks along the way. This ride lasts for about two hours and costs PhP1,000 per person.

Medium Ride

This is for intermediate riders or those who want a bit more challenge. You will climb up some hills and enjoy the panoramic views of the island and the sea. You will also visit some hidden gems like the Tambisaan snorkeling beach, the cargo port, and Cagban Beach. This ride lasts for about three hours and costs PhP1,500 per person. For the effort, cyclists are treated to a hearty snack of local delicacies.

Hard Ride

This is for advanced riders or those who want to test their limits. You will tackle some steep slopes and rocky trails that will make your heart race and your muscles burn. You will also explore some off-the-beaten paths like the Ilig-Iligan Beach, the Keyhole and the secret chapel. This ride lasts for about three hours and costs PhP1,500 per person. Cyclists enjoy a refreshing cold drink of choice at the end.

All bike tours are available in the morning and in the afternoon. Suggested times are 6 am and 3:30 pm. All tours include bike rental, helmet rental, a Department of Tourism-certified tour guide and pictures of your amazing experience.

To book your Unisikad bike tour, kindly visit the Unisikad Facebook Page Unisikad Boracay Association.

When booking, you will be asked to send the following details:

- Name:
- Contact number:
- Date of tour:
- AM or PM:
- Height of rider/s:
- Bike skill level of the rider:

Upon submitting the sign-up form above, Unisikad will assign a mountain bike that fits you together with a DOT-certified tour guide that matches your profile.



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OUT AND ABOUT

Boracay for Newbies

Part 2: Cheap Eats, Cheap Finds

By Abigail Lei

Part 1 was about things to do on the island that cost next to nothing. Contrary to what some might think, one can definitely enjoy a trip to Boracay on a budget.

Allow me to guide you to some cheap eats and finds so you can finally achieve that longer vacation stay or even try a month or two of living a digital nomad life.

First, groceries. Basic needs and whatever else you need may be more costly here compared to your hometown or even most places, but it's all about where to look, and having the patience and time management to work around it.

Needless to say, shopping at big grocery stores, convenience stores, and malls would usually be more expensive

than most places. After all, it is the convenience and comfort that we are indeed paying for. When planning your next grocery day, head over to Station 3 along Ambulong where you will find minimarts where you can take home one or two more bags of groceries more than usual from where you normally shop. Wet markets also offer fresher veggies, meats, poultry and seafood, so if you can stock up, do so, and again, plan your market day and start with a list.

Secondly, let's talk cheap eats. **Andok's** is a popular go-to dining option for frequent island visitors for their reasonable meal prices and tasty selection that never disappoints. But if you haven't already, find either one of two branches of **Kolai Mangyan Boracay**, that also serves Pinoy favorites and is very easy on the pocket.

One more popular place is **Jasper's**

Tapsilog and Resto, just right outside the D'Mall market, serving you lutong bahay (home-cooked) selections, which come with free soup for every meal, and they have updated their menu that now includes sizzlers and wings.

And if you are situated near Bulabog or just happen to pass by, have a great dining experience without breaking the budget at **Happy Bongalow**, right on Bulabog Road. You can also head over to **Tod's Lomi House and Resto**, and enjoy Filipino soup dishes like bulalo, batchoy, or lomi, among their wide choices of comfort food. And don't forget, there is no shame in wanting to be cost-efficient with your food experience because it surely can make or break your Boracay stay.

Thirdly, souvenir items. It is no secret that shopping at high end shops costs far more than going to the talipapa or flea markets where one can find just about the same items at much lower rates. To test this theory, head down towards Station 3 and find souvenir stalls lining the beach pathway, and then check out the stalls at E'Mall. You simply need to find the time and the will to walk or take a ride to venture away from the usual tourist traps. To each his own, as they say.

I'd say it's worth the trouble when you need a bunch of different souvenir items to bring home. If you're not shopping much and only need to pick a handful or less, then by all means, shop where it is most convenient for you, but don't forget to haggle (except at branded boutiques of course).

So, you see, when in Boracay, you can have it all, if you know where to go!



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ISLAND EYE

Meaningful Celebrations, The Red Cross Way

By Karen Bermejo

The Philippine Red Cross Boracay-Malay Chapter has always made its celebration more meaningful. They always find ways to share each milestone with a greater purpose.

75 Years of PRC

To mark the 75th year anniversary of the Philippine Red Cross, the chapter conducted a free CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) demonstration exercise to promote lifesaving culture in Boracay.

Volunteers of the chapter showcased their skills in saving lives by doing a CPR demonstration at the White Beach. The activity also aimed at raising awareness of the importance of CPR, especially during emergencies.

The chapter has been providing Standard First Aid and Basic Life Support

training to the staff of resorts and other establishments on the island to equip them with the right lifesaving skills when responding to emergencies.

The CPR demonstration event was made possible in partnership with the Local Government Unit of Malay.

World Red Cross Day

On another note, to mark World Red Cross Day last May 8, the Philippine Red Cross Boracay-Malay Chapter also facilitated the ART & Pizza From The Heart event.

The chapter made the summer of more than 50 children more fun with an art and pizza-making workshop at the Rainbow Lounge Cafe. Thirty engaged in a pizza-making activity while the rest painted their canvases with colors in an art workshop.



The Philippine Red Cross Boracay Malay Chapter volunteers and staff perform a CPR demonstration exercise at the White Beach.

Likewise, the chapter expressed its gratitude to the management of Rainbow Lounge Cafe for hosting the event, to Paraw World for sponsoring the art materials, and to the Boracay and Malay artists for facilitating the art workshop.

Meanwhile, in the spirit of volunteerism, the Red Cross Youth volunteers also helped in facilitating the activities. Some members of the chapter's Board of Directors also showed their support to the activity and gave inspirational words to the participants. The art and pizza-making workshop was organized with the support of the DepEd Malay and the Boracay stakeholders.

To support the programs of the Philippine Red Cross Boracay Malay Chapter, contact us at (036) 288-2068 or email boracay@redcross.org.ph.




Fun learning experience for the kids of Boracay, with pizza and art.



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