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Boracay

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# SOUTH KOREAN TOURISM COMEBACK EXPECTED IN JUNE



**BORACAY ISLAND'S WHITE BEACH NAMED #1 MOST STUNNING BEACH IN ASIA**

Story on page 3

Photo by Den Bersaba, Island in Frames

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

**S**outh Korean tourists are eager to return to Boracay soon, according to Soojin Kim, president of the Korean Residents Organization in Boracay (KROB).

Soojin told the *Boracay Sun News* in an interview that of the 450 South Korean residents of Boracay Island, “Many of them are now in South Korea but are waiting for an opportune time to return to Boracay.

They love to be in Boracay because it is a paradise for us,” she said.

It was gathered that South Korean tourist arrivals in Boracay peak from June onwards every year. Since the late 1980s, South Korean tourists have topped the lists of foreign travelers coming to Boracay.

However, certain factors have discouraged the influx of tourists, particularly elderly South Korean travelers, such as the lack of proper travel facilities that provide accessibility, comfort and

safety that cater to the specific needs and preferences of older travelers. Such facilities include features like wheelchair-accessible transport, designated seating, accessible restrooms, and support services for those with mobility limitations.

“The major factor limiting South Korean tourists from coming here is the lack of proper facilities, both at the Kalibo International Airport (KIA) and the Godofredo P. Ramos Airport in Caticlan,” she said.

“When a South Korean elder goes to Boracay, he is already tired in the middle of the journey. When coming from the KIA, one needs to travel to Boracay for another two hours,” she added.

Currently, only a single chartered flight by T’way Air Co., Ltd. (formerly Hansung Airlines, a South Korean low-cost airline) flies to Kalibo from Seoul twice a week.

According to reports from the Civil

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**PERCY**

“Best seafood”  
Esquire

Seaworthy Boracay, Station 1 Beachfront  
in front of Willy’s Rock





# Editor's Note



**M**abuhay ang manggagawang Pilipino! This Labor Day or “Araw ng Manggagawa,” we honor every Filipino worker’s strength, perseverance, sacrifices and tireless dedication.

In the Philippines, Labor Day is celebrated on May 1<sup>st</sup> and is a regular holiday—a nationally observed day off with employee pay. Beyond rest and family time, Labor Day is a reminder of how valuable every worker is in building a better nation.

The entire month of May (and beyond), let us show our appreciation to our hard-working countrymen and women, starting with the people we work with, and to those we encounter in our daily lives—from co-workers to security guards, service providers such as drivers and delivery couriers, and our household staff/workers—who help keep the country moving forward, and care for us, day in and day out.

Furthermore, we salute the Filipino work force who deliver the world-class Filipino brand of hospitality and excellent service to our valuable visitors to Boracay, from those working in the formal sector such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, dive shops, souvenir shops, tour activity centers and transport providers, as well as those in the informal sector such as massage therapists, tattoo artists and beach vendors.

Shout out to **Aria Cucina Italiana** and their amazing team: Happy 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary! *Grazie mille* and more power to the island’s best-loved Italian restaurant!

And let us not forget the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs). According to Statista.com, in 2024, preliminary figures recorded about 2.47 million Filipinos leaving the Philippines to work overseas. A significant portion of these OFWs are women, with 55.6% of the 2.16 million being female in 2023. We wonder how many of these women are mothers, so, before we forget, **HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY** to all of you!

President Ferdinand Marcos, JR. said on his official Facebook page last April 25, 2025, “The Filipino is a global citizen. In every corner of the world—whether as an OFW or tourist—you’ll find a Filipino making their mark. I am proud of how our people adapt, thrive and carry the Filipino spirit wherever they go.”

In this issue, we shine the spotlight on the new and still emerging work from home workforce, who are a colorful mix of Filipinos and foreign migrants who are basically “overstaying” or have decided to stay indefinitely, for obvious reasons! (“*The Work from Home Culture in Boracay*” by Seema Manohar, page 11)

## Mark your calendars: Mother’s Day is on Sunday, May 11

If you know what’s good for you, DO NOT forget to greet your mom and your baby mama, before they give you the stink eye, because then you’re too late and in the doghouse for the rest of the year, or until their birthdays when you can make up for it. If I were you, I would put this newspaper down right now and start making reservations and online orders—and yes, the more expensive one.

When you’re done, turn to page 13

and allow yourself to be inspired by environmentalist **Ritchel Casidsid-Cahilig** and **Dr. Girlie Teotico**, two Boracay women who are amazing mothers, not only to their kids, but are mother figures in the community for their nurturing and wisdom. (“*Mother Figures: Portraits of Leadership in Boracay*” by Pauline Reitzer, page 13)

## Homage to Mother Earth

Still on the subject of mothers, this issue also pays tribute to Mother Nature, with an investigative probe into the impact of plastics on Boracay’s fragile environment. **BSN** correspondent Dom Napat dumpster dives into the Boracay garbage problem and emerges with nuggets of environmental wisdom and invaluable suggestions from some of the island’s food & beverage operators on mitigating the problem of plastics. (“*Plastic Impact and Efforts to Reduce Plastic Use in Boracay*” by Dominic Napat, pages 18-19)

We were reminded of the importance of striving towards being a plastic-free island by a reader who wrote to us, and the importance of imploring everyone to please **STOP** using plastics. Remember, World Earth Day’s official theme for 2024, “Planet vs. Plastics,” underscored the urgent need to combat the global plastic problem.

Speaking of climate change (yes, single-use plastic is produced from fossil fuels, extracting and creating these plastics emits vast amounts of greenhouse gases, have you noticed how we’ve been having hotter-than-usual days and nights and how the heat is becoming more intense? The Philippines has been experiencing heat indexes within the “danger” category (between 42°C and 51°C), which poses health risks such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. **SO, STAY HYDRATED!** (“*Top 6 Summer Quenchers*” by Rica Velasco, page 20).

For real-time nationwide heat index (HI) data, visit the PAGASA website and access the online HI monitoring platform called iHeatMap. **In case of emergency, CALL HOTLINE 106 OR +63 919 851 4102.**

## Our heartfelt condolences

On behalf of the **BSN** team and the Boracay Island community, our hearts go out to the family and friends of slain Slovakian tourist **Michaela Mickova**. We strongly condemn this tragic and senseless crime and we urge authorities to ensure swift justice. We hope the perpetrators are brought to justice for Mickova and for her loved ones.

Meanwhile, due to the deafening silence from the authorities whose last official report was in March, the public is clamoring for answers and justice is growing stronger. An official update is long overdue, and in efforts to get more answers, **BSN** news correspondent Jun Aguirre reports on the NBI’s permanent deployment. (“*NBI Builds a Permanent Boracay Facility*” by Jun Aguirre, page 10)

Our heartfelt condolences also go to the loved ones of **Antonio “Pepito” San Jose** and **Mama Victor Ortega**, as we honor their memory in these pages and pay tribute to two iconic Boracay Island figures who were both very well-respected and loved.



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One thing I’ve learned from their stories is that the more important measure of a person’s life is not the number of years they lived or the number of good deeds, not even how much they’ve donated to charity. The true measure of a life well-lived is intangible and immeasurable. Like how many people were touched by their lives and inspired by their example.



The world also mourns the passing of **Pope Francis**, born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, who died at the age of 88 last April 21. He touched the hearts of millions, and we hope and pray for the next Pope to have

the same love and compassion for the poor and disenfranchised, and the same gift of communicating God’s message of love. He was lovingly nicknamed *Lolo Kiko* (Grandpa Francis) by Filipinos, following his pastoral and state visit to the Philippines in January 2015, when he visited Tacloban and Palo, Leyte, to comfort the victims of Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) and Typhoon Hagupit (Ruby).

To our valued visitors, welcome to Boracay Island!


## Vibe high, dive deep!

Peace and good vibes,

Editor-In-Chief  
Email me at [fvds@boracaysunnews@gmail.com](mailto:fvds@boracaysunnews@gmail.com).

## BSN Reader & Celebrity Sightings

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



We caught up with international host and media personality **Rovilson Fernandez** with his wife **Drey David-Fernandez** during their recent visit back on the island.

When asked about their impressions and how the island was treating them so far, Rovilson said, “I haven’t been back to our former playground in seven years! The progress is apparent, the island vibe is still there and the charm and allure of the people will always make Boracay one of the best beach destinations in South East Asia.” Rovilson is the national ambassador of the Philippines to the World Wildlife Fund.



continued from front page



South Korean star Seo In Guk, Philippine tourism ambassador for Korea, strolls along shores of Boracay

Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

Aviation Authority of the Philippines, flight time to Kalibo from Seoul is about four hours and 20 minutes.

The Department of Transportation

announced in October 2024 that the KIA was among the airports in the country to be privatized. Aside from KIA, the other airports being privatized are the Iloilo International Airport and the Bulacan International Airport. As of press time, bidders have yet to express interest in the privatization of the KIA.

“I appreciate the personnel from the Bureau of Immigration on their courteous dealings with foreign tourists,” Soojin said.

In 2022, complaints were filed against an immigration agent at the KIA due to alleged abuses of foreign tourists, especially South Koreans.

It was announced in November 2024 that the Boracay Airport in Caticlan will be upgraded with a world-class passenger building terminal by 2026.

For his part, Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista acknowledges Soojin’s observation that only a few South Korean senior citizen tourists come to Boracay.

“Only a small percentage of tourists coming to Boracay are senior citizens. We have taken cognizance of this concern and

SUN TOONS



Line art by Antonio “Pepito” Gelito San Jose, Jr.  
Colors by Takako Sono and Sigmund Torre

we are studying how we can improve our facilities in Malay to make it safe and more accessible for senior citizens coming to Boracay,” Bautista said.

When asked whether the weakening of the South Korean won will continue to

keep South Koreans from traveling, Soojin was optimistic that South Korean business owners and island residents were already looking forward to a homecoming and a strong Boracay comeback this June. 🌴

BORACAY ISLAND’S WHITE BEACH NAMED #1 MOST STUNNING BEACH IN ASIA

Boracay Island has once again proven its world-class appeal, securing the top spot among the “9 Most Stunning Beaches in Asia” as ranked by *The Times of India*, one of India’s largest and most influential daily newspapers.

Asia is globally renowned for its stunning beaches where nature lovers can experience pristine landscapes and vibrant ecosystems. So, to top the list of the most stunning beaches in Asia is no mean feat.

The announcement described White Beach as “A tropical paradise perfect for nature lovers. Surrounded by lush greenery, it offers an idyllic escape to nature’s beauty.”

El Nido, Palawan also made the list and was described as “renowned for its dramatic limestone karsts, hidden lagoons and vibrant coral reefs, perfect for nature lovers and marine life enthusiasts.”

Congratulations, Boracay Island and El Nido!

3 Boracay Beaches Among the Top 10 Best Beaches of the Philippines 2025

Among the 7,641 islands in the Philippine archipelago, travel website TripAdvisor

which operates online travel agencies, comparison shopping websites, and mobile apps with user-generated content, released its “Top 10 Best Beaches in the Philippines” list for 2025, naming three beaches in Boracay Island: **White Beach** ranks 1<sup>st</sup>, Puka Shell Beach ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> and Diniwid Beach ranks 10<sup>th</sup> best beach in the Philippines.

With its powdery white sand and crystal-clear waters, Boracay continues to be the choice for beach lovers!

TripAdvisor users were quoted as saying: “Breathtaking Sunsets: As the sun sets around 6:00 pm, White Beach transforms into a magical scene.” – traveller023

“Unlike the bustling White Beach, Puka Shell Beach offers a quieter and more tranquil atmosphere, perfect for unwinding.” – 204aurav

“If you’re looking for a serene escape with gorgeous views, Diniwid Beach is the place to be.” – jeep\_girl\_00

Humility aside, Boracay Island is truly extraordinary, and it is up to its leaders, public servants, stakeholders and residents, to be good stewards of this magnificent natural wonder. 🌴

ENVIRONMENTAL REMINDERS

A friendly reminder: Respect the environment and be eco-friendly, especially at the beaches.

- ✔ **Take nothing but pictures** (leave the sand, pebbles and seashells where they belong).
- ✔ **Leave nothing but footprints** (leave nothing at the beach, taking everything back with you).
- ✔ **Kill nothing but time** (respect flora, fauna, wildlife and their natural habitats, and interact ethically with animals and marine life).
- ✔ **Do not litter. No spitting.** Most eco-travelers take this one step further by picking up pieces of trash from the beach and disposing of them in proper segregation receptacles. Beach guards patrol the beaches, with stiff penalties and fines for violators.
- ✔ **Do your business in the right place.** Relieve yourself at the nearest restroom. If you smoke, find the nearest designated smoking area. Walking around with alcoholic beverages & bottles is prohibited on the beaches.
- ✔ **Earth Day’s** official theme for 2025, “Our power, our planet,” underscores the urgent need for us commit to renewable energy NOW!
- ✔ **Be kind to others.**



Clown fish in their anemone home 📷 Franzi Preglo

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NEWS

# DOST Announces Halal Accreditation of Boracay Accommodations

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The Department of Tourism-Western Visayas (DOT-WV) has partnered with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in the region to promote Halal tourism.

In a training event hosted by both departments last March 14, 2025 at the Boracay Tropics Resort Hotel, DOT Regional Director Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez said in her welcome remarks that the public training was intended to align both departments' goals in the promotion of Halal tourism in Region 6.

Also announced by DOST was the accreditation of 18 Halal accommodation establishments in Boracay, namely: Crimson Resort & Spa, Boracay Tropics Hotel Resort, Patio Pacific Resort, Henann Prime Beach Resort, Henann Palm Beach Resort, Mandarin Island Hotel, The Lind Boracay, Red Coconut, Paradise Garden, Astoria Current, Altabrizo Resort, Henann Crystal Sands, Casa Pilar Beach Resort, The Tides Hotel, Boracay Haven Suites, Boracay Haven Resort, Feliz Hotel and Henann Regency Resort & Spa.

Speaking at the training event via Zoom, Isabelle Ann Biscocho, Executive Assistant IV of the Office of Halal Tourism and Muslim Concerns of the DOT, gave an overview on Muslim-friendly certification. She discussed the amended guidelines governing the operation and recognition of Muslim-friendly accommodation

establishments to ensure they can provide authentic and respectful services to Muslim guests.

DOST Regional Director Rowen Gelonga told the *Boracay Sun News* that the participants gained valuable insights into Halal food standards, as DOST-6's Project Technical Assistant (PTA) Norjanah Barosa detailed guidelines on the Halal concept and principles, Halal food preparation and service.

Philippine Tourism Authority's Shanon Naval introduced the services of the Central Philippine University (CPU) Packaging Technology Resource Center in Iloilo City, showcasing how technology can further enhance food safety and presentation.

Senior Science Research Specialist Joeben Gubatanga provided an orientation on DOST's various programs and services, highlighting their relevance to the tourism industry. These include the food safety seminars conducted at several restaurants and hotels in Boracay in recent years.

DOT Boracay Field Officer Marc Maio Judicpa concluded the activity by emphasizing the importance of the training in positioning Boracay as a welcoming destination for all tourists.

Emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts, DOST Aklan Provincial Director Dyna Rose Gubatanga



Halal-accredited expert from DOST 6, Norjanah Barosa discussed the key aspects of Halal tourism

stated, "We will focus on sustainable tourism practices and Muslim-friendly services, building on the lessons learned from Boracay's rehabilitation efforts. This training is very timely as our Muslim brothers and sisters are currently observing the holy month of Ramadan."

Last April 11, 2025, DOT Secretary Cristina Garcia Frasco urged tourists to book with DOT-accredited hotels for a safe and convenient stay. The statement was released in anticipation of the influx of tourists to Boracay and other tourism destinations during Holy Week.

"These accredited establishments have undergone a thorough accreditation process, ensuring that visitors receive truly high-quality experiences," Frasco said.

Among the advantages of staying at DOT-accredited establishments is the assurance that it is safe and that excellent service based on the DOT standards is to be expected, ensuring tourists a pleasurable stay. 🌴

NEWS

# Multi-Sectoral Body Unites to Address Beach Erosion in Boracay

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

A multi-sectoral body has agreed to address the worsening problem of beach erosion on this resort island.

Commodore Glenda D. Pereyra, commander of the Marine Science Investigation Force (MSIF) of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), said that plans to alleviate beach erosion started in February last year. The PCG hopes that the project will be finalized this year.

Last February 6, 2025, Pereyra led the continuation of the Thematic Map Creation for Boracay Island Beach Erosion. The meeting, which was presided over by Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista, was held at the operations center of the Malay Disaster Risks Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO) in the mainland of Malay.

Aside from Pereyra, other personnel coming from the MSIF were Commodore Jonie Belarmino, deputy commander of the MSIF, ENS John Mare Castellano, MSI staff for human resources management, and P/ENS Myraflor Carajay, assistant officer-in-charge for the Field Scientific Investigation Group, all of whom played key roles in the discussions.

Also in attendance were Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) Jason Lavadia, Cmdr. Marine Environmental Protection Enforcement and Response Group-Western Visayas, LTJG Jinky Collada PCG, including MGDH-I (LDRRMO), Catherine Fulgencio, Office of Civil Defense VI Regional Director (RD), Raul Fernandez, Mines and Geoscience Bureau VI RD Eng. Raul Laput of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and representatives from various government and non-government agencies.

"This collaborative initiative utilizes advanced mapping techniques to develop a detailed thematic map, involving relevant agencies and stakeholders in the ongoing efforts to address coastal erosion in Boracay Island," said Pereyra.

Mayor Bautista said a follow-up meeting was held on March 6, 2025.

"This time, more people are coming in to help us with this project. We welcome with gratitude the insightful Dr. Kazuo Nadaoka, Dr. Masahiro Tanaka, and Dr. Hiroyuki Takasuna of Kajima Technical Research Institute, Japan, along with Dr. Yasmin P. Tirol from the College of Fisheries and Marine Sciences at Aklan State University,



Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista leads the council that aims to solve the problem of beach erosion in Boracay. (Photo courtesy of PCG-Aklan)

New Washington, and Mr. Denric Augustus Sadiasa, Malay Municipal Agriculturist.

Bautista said the discussions centered around potential collaborations and funding support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to combat the severe erosion problem. Proposed rehabilitation efforts include utilizing a so-called CORAL Net-based technology to restore and protect the island's coastline, ensuring sustainability for both tourism and the local ecosystem.

This initiative is part of the #ResilientMalay movement, which aims to promote resilience and sustainability in Boracay tourism.

Bautista said they hope that the ADB will soon approve the project for its immediate implementation. 🌴

NEWS

# AKELCO STRENGTHENS POWER LINES IN BORACAY

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE



AKELCO linemen practice their climbing skills

📷 Jun N. Aguirre

The Aklan Electric Cooperative (AKELCO) has started to strengthen its power distribution lines for member consumers, especially for Boracay

Island, as mounting concerns were raised after a series of power interruptions that damaged household and business appliances.

During the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Membership Assembly (AGMA) at the Saturnino Gomez Fernandez Sports and Cultural Center in Lezo, Aklan on April 12, 2025, Desiree Segovia, an AKELCO member consumer, raised the concern to the members of the board of directors on the recent series of power interruptions in Boracay.

"Nasiraan po ako ng refrigerator dahil sa laging brownout sa Boracay. Ano po ba ang masasabi ng AKELCO dito," Segovia asked.

Atty. Ariel Gepty, assistant general manager of AKELCO, responded with an apology.

"Aside from the series of power interruptions in Boracay, I understand that the resort island suffered a 12-hour-long brownout last March 15. The distribution lines of the 69 kilovolts from the Mainland to Boracay were corroded because of long years of exposure to the sea," Gepty said.

Reports indicate that the (code) 336 transmission wire tripped in the AKELCO facility in Barangay Rizal, Nabas, Aklan, resulting in a 12-hour blackout, not only in Boracay but in the towns of Malay and Buruanga as well.

The power trip-off occurred at night along a cliff, which posed risks to the linemen who were tasked to fix the line. So, they waited for daylight to fix the problem, resulting in the 12-hour-long brownout.

"When AKELCO started its operations

in Boracay, with only a few consumers at the time, we used single-wire lines to distribute electricity on the island. Nowadays, there are many consumers, and some of them are big hotels. This year, we have started to place three-wire distribution lines in Boracay for stability," he added.

On April 16, 1974, AKELCO began distributing 69 kilovolts of electricity to 10 towns, but it was only in 1977 that the power cooperative started to distribute electricity to Boracay.

By law, since AKELCO is in its 50th year, its franchise with the National Electrification Administration (NEA) is due for renewal, pending the resumption of Senate hearings after the midterm general elections on May 12, 2025. 🌴





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Life-sized self-portrait (top); The young artist wearing his own creation in Paris (left); Daniel Hechter, Jean-François and Pepito at SIPC, Paris

IN MEMORIAM

# THE MAN BEHIND THE GLASS WINDOW

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

*This tribute offers a glimpse of the man behind the glass show window, and the many facets of the beautifully complex, and the one and only Pepito, in his loving memory.*

## Antonio “Pepito” Gelito San Jose, Jr.

September 10, 1956 — February 3, 2025†

Sto. Tomas (UST). He became a working student to help subsidize his schooling, but eventually dropped out of university by choice to help ease the financial burden on his parents. He found himself working for some of Manila’s top fashion designers like Christian Espiritu and Rusty Lopez. According to Rafel, he even worked at Cinderella, designing kids’ clothing. She also recalls that he spoke of a Japanese girlfriend named Michico, before he went to Europe, whom he met at the Manila Hotel.

At the age of 18, the young aspiring fashion designer worked as an assistant for no less than the legendary and foremost Filipino fashion designer, Auggie Cordero. Pepito also moonlighted as a tour assistant in Manila.

His early sketches caught the eye of a German fellow who asked him if he would be interested in going to Germany to pursue a better education and career in fashion. He took the leap and studied language and Fashion Art at the Lette-Verein Berlin (Lette Society), a German educational organization for applied arts.

According to its website, the Fashion Design vocational education strongly focuses on linking skills in fashion design, fashion illustration and professional garment manufacturing. “Thinking from a craftsman’s perspective” is the educational principle by which the students learn the process of designing collections from concept and draft to developing prototypes and sample collections for fashion fairs and showrooms. Expressing their visions and creative ideas through skillful, artistic fashion illustrations.

It goes without saying that in Berlin, Pepito shined. So much so that the faculty suggested that he try it out in Paris. “And so, I went to Paris, the fashion arena in Europe, and the global center of fashion,” Pepito often recounted, without batting a single eyelash.

He was commissioned by *Journal du Textile*, a monthly publication for designers and textile manufacturers, to create seven pages of illustrations for fashion designers such as Versace, Kenzo, Armani, Yamamoto, Miyake, and Comme des Garçons, to name a few, for a special summer edition.

He also made sketches for the House of Daniel Hechter, the famous French luxury ready-to-wear retail brand which has successfully embodied French fashion and Parisian chic for the last 50 years.



Sketch for Journal du Textile Berlin



Filipiniana sketches, c. 2010

He became a member of the *Société Internationale Promotion Des Créateurs* (International Society for the Promotion of Creators), an organization based in Paris that promotes or supports creative individuals, particularly those within the arts or fashion industries. It aptly describes his legacy in the arts, which I later found out is quite remarkable.

According to Gary, being accepted by an art society in Paris was something that Pepito was very proud of as a Filipino. “He also learned how to cut and sew his own clothes, crocheted and knitted, and he always liked to learn new things about clothing and tapestry so he could bring his ideas to life, through art.”

It was then that the magic happened, and the visual artist had made a name for himself, and the rest, as they say, is history.

By the time he returned to Manila, Pepito had gained a level of respect and admiration for his exemplary artistic skills. Gary reveals that Pepito’s full name was originally Jose Antonio San Jose, which, after high school became Jo-An for short, a nickname that stuck during his heyday in Manila’s fashion circles back in the 90s.

He later dropped “Jose” and wanted to be called Antonio.

Fashion designer and journalist Barge Ramos, known for his many iterations of the Barong Tagalog, wrote a feature on Pepito when he returned to Manila, entitled “A Filipino in Paris.” The Manila fashion scene was so abuzz about Jo-An (“That was my code name back then,” he mused). He made

caricatures for the newly launched *Preview* magazine under then-EIC Raymond Lontok, and designed ballroom gowns for Raymond’s mother Sonia, for about a year.

He took pride in his volume of works, having been invited to exhibit paintings in Paris through the years—paintings that were archived at various museums. He described his collections as “works by a Filipino artist who studied in Germany and then had the opportunity to work for French society.” It was, for him, his way of leaving his mark, instilling Filipino pride and waving the Philippine flag in an otherwise very exclusive place, and inspiring younger Filipino artists to shine.

### Art for Art’s Sake

Fast forward to Boracay, “There’s also a lot of international passersby that walk by my studio and ask me if I sell my paintings and *kung pwede magpagawa* (if I could paint something for them), and I would say no,” he said.

Admittedly, he worked for art’s sake, driven not by money but by his passion.

He once had a collection of 24 pop art portrait paintings, which he exhibited at his best friend Nenette Aguirre-Graf’s Boracay Beach Resort. His studio was full and he had no intention of storing the paintings after the show, so he approached a couple of museums to exhibit them in Manila but never heard back. He had already sold six of them at his asking price, and considered giving the rest as gifts, but how would those who paid feel? So, he burned the rest instead. That’s Pepito.

### True Son of Boracay

In 1998, he found his way to Boracay Island.

Pepito was a true son of Boracay, and is not just a “Boracaynon,” but is a full-blooded “Tumandok.”

“Tumandok” is Aklanon for “native” and also refers to descendants of the first settlers of the island. “Boracaynons” originally referred to the original settlers, but now loosely applies to permanent migrant residents of Boracay.

Although Pepito and his siblings were born and raised in Manila, they are sixth-generation descendants of the prominent **Sacapaño**, **Coching** and **Gelito** clans, considered among Boracay Island’s founding families.

Their great, great-grandfather on their mother’s side, **Simeon Coching Sacapaño** (married to

The Boracay Island community mourns the passing of legendary artist Antonio Gelito San Jose, Jr., or Pepito for short, at the age of 68.

He passed away peacefully in his sleep on February 3, 2025, according to his loving cousins Baby Susan Sual-Dela Cruz and Rafel Gelito-Vismara, who took turns checking on him. A wake was held at his home studio in Bulabog Beach, and his ashes were brought home to his mother and siblings in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, where he was laid to rest.

Pepito was the eldest of five and is survived by his siblings Josenia (Jiji), Edgardo (Gary), Dinah San Jose-Valebia, and Eduardo (Eddie Boy), and their mother Delia Gelito-San Jose, all of whom live in Las Vegas, except for Eddie Boy, who lives in Zamboanga. They called him “Kuyang” as a term of endearment and respect, and so did their cousins.

Their father, Antonio Tuason San Jose, Sr., died at the age of 70 in 2021.

### The Artist

He was renowned as a world-class visual artist, fashion designer and illustrator, not only in Manila and Boracay, but also in Munich, Germany, and in Paris, France. He speaks fluent German and speaks and writes fluent French.

When the local cable TV station PCTV aired an episode of “Kapihan Sa Boracay” with Pepito as the special guest back in July 2023 in a series featuring *Boracaynons* who were recognized internationally, they described him as “One of the most prominent island talents, who conquered Paris fashion with his designs.”

Watching the episode reminded me of how intelligent,

articulate, eloquent and expressive he was. He could paint you a picture in words, as vivid as his paintings on canvas, and always with grace, panache and his signature deadpan humor. He would not brag (OK, he sometimes did), but he would do so in the most modest way.

According to his brother Gary, Pepito was a very private kid growing up, and when he wasn’t in school, he was lost in his own world, sketching and practicing the art of calligraphy. Their mom saw his potential and introduced him to an artist friend who owned a gallery in Malate, Manila, and that’s where he learned how to clean brushes, different brush strokes, shading, and creating shadows on a painting.

According to Dinah, when Pepito enrolled at Slim’s Fashion & Arts School, their mom was his model. As an artist, he was a perfectionist. “I remember when he was still learning to sew, if he did not cut the pattern correctly, he would throw away the whole textile and then start from scratch.” She also remembers him to be a loving son and a fair and caring brother. She adds, “*Nanay* is his number one inspiration in life.”

Josenia recalls that in grade school, Pepito won first place in a national aquarium painting competition, which brought pride to his school. Dinah also recalls how their Kuyang was great in language class. “Our aunt was very strict when reviewing his lessons with him after school and told us that he had to learn 10 new English words a day, and he did!”

He finished high school at the Notre Dame of Greater Manila in Caloocan, and from there, he took undergraduate studies in Advertising Art at the University of the East (UERM) and then Fine Arts at the University of



Gavina Tumaob)\*\* was the second of the eight children of **Angel Sacapaño** of Bugtong Bato, Ibajay, Aklan, and **Vicentica Coching\*** of Ondoy, Ibajay, Aklan, who were the first family to settle in Barangay Balabag, Boracay Island, circa 1817.

The fourth of six children was **Teodora (Orang) Tumaob Sacapaño** (married to Germinigildo Agustin Gelito)\*\*\*—Pepito's great grandparents. The sixth of seven children was **Ulpiano Sacapaño Gelito** (married to Emilia Mendoza from Bacolod, Negros)\*\*\*\*—Pepito's grandparents. The first of six children was **Delia Mendoza Gelito** (married to Antonio San Jose, Sr.)\*\*\*\*\*—Pepito's parents.

Looking at the 69-page Sacapaño-Coching family tree is like looking at a page from the Old Testament's Book of Genesis, with pages of names of descendants spanning six generations. It traces the family's bloodline from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present and is the closest one gets to a roadmap to Boracay's relatively short history.

It was a project of their late matriarch, **Lucrecia "Nay Oking" Miralles Sacapaño Gelito-Sullano**, who was historically the island's longest living elder, who lived to be a hundred. I had the privilege of meeting Nay Oking when I wrote a historical piece on Boracay back in March 2013. She and her daughter **Jovita Gelito-Sullano** painstakingly worked on the family tree for years.

\*1<sup>st</sup> generation  
\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> generation  
\*\*\*3<sup>rd</sup> generation  
\*\*\*\*4<sup>th</sup> generation  
\*\*\*\*\*5<sup>th</sup> generation

**FUN FACT:** The iconic Boracay landmark famously called Willy's Rock was named after **Wilfredo "Willy" Miralles Gelito**, Pepito's uncle, who was regarded as a great leader and humble public servant. His wife Rebecca Supetran Miralles-Gelito was a registered nurse and the sole healthcare provider for Boracay and nearby islands.

### The Pepito Who Walked Among Us

"Manash" to friends, Pepito was a Boracay icon and one of those characters that, once encountered, one never forgets.

You would be wise not to start a discussion or debate with him on any subject matter unless you're well-versed and prepared to engage to death. Meaningful conversations on just about any and every subject got his blood pumping, and you'd know because at some point it would turn multi-lingual, with French, German, and sometimes Latin repartee—or did he just have that effect on people?

According to Rafel, "His favorite thing to do was lying on the beach under the sun, working on his tan and swimming." Another thing he loved to do was to walk. He walked everywhere, sometimes wearing just his swim trunks with his goggles wrapped around his wrist. Did I mention that he was very fit?

He was my very first neighbor when I moved to Boracay back in 2003. I lived in what was then a structure made completely out of bamboo called Banana Saging (currently Banana Bay) next door to his home, known back then for

its trademark blue roof, earning the title of "the blue house." You see, it is a common practice in rural areas without street names in the Philippines to paint your walls a certain color to distinguish one's home, although Pepito only painted his roof a tasteful shade of blue.

There were hardly any other structures around us, just nipa huts with huge windows that allowed the wind to flow constantly. The first time we met, I was standing on the beach and I started to feel piercing eyes burning a hole in my back, and there he was with his huge eyes, sizing me up from head to toe. The moment our eyes met, though, he flashed me the widest Cheshire cat grin, blinding me with his pearly whites that glistened from the sun! He gestured for me to approach, and that was that. I remember being surprised by his accent, which sounded very Western, and by his choice of words, which were both scholarly and scientific (identifying certain people as a "species" and standouts were "specimens"), and very, very gay, and we hit it off splendidly!

Most mornings, he would walk to the bakery to buy hot *pan de sal* while I brought the can of sardines, and that was how we started our day. Aside from breakfast, people-watching and star- or moonrise-gazing were our thing as we sat on bamboo benches at the beach. It was not nearly as eventful as it is now, but still, there was always some form of entertainment, and never a dull moment with Manash.

He was really an unforgettable

Boracay character, a talented and underrated artist and designer, speaking of which, he LOVED impersonating his favorite German fashion designer, Karl Lagerfeld on Halloween. That was his favorite costume and he wore that look with the stiff white tuxedo collar, even when it wasn't Halloween. If I wanted to make his day, all I had to do was walk past him and whisper, "Karl Lagerfeld, is that you?"



From left: Nenita, Blossom, Julia, Girly, Irma, Eva-Marie, Jakie, Pepito, Freida (the author), Babes, Gladys (May 2018)

He playfully summed up his mantra in a word: "Vogue." He loved to ALL CAPS EVERYTHING. If you received a message in all-caps, you knew not to be alarmed because his keys were permanently on all-caps setting. Oh, and he loved his *calamansi* juice. He did not drink alcohol. NEVER.

As next-door neighbors, he was the first person I'd see in the morning and the last person I'd see at night, unless I went out, but then again, we frequented the same bar and often walked home together.

He took pride in his "show window" home atelier/studio, which for him was his way of breaking the monotony of a

landscape of hotels.

In the years leading up to his passing, he had two close calls (or, as Nenette loved to tease him, his "practice dying" episodes). In April of 2023, he spent a month in the ICU due to an infection in his lungs, but his health was never the same. He recovered and was able to enjoy nearly two more years, and each time I saw him, no matter how frail he looked on not-so-good days, his fighting spirit was heroic.

He was a lover of life, and I still find it hard to believe that Manash, who has always been around my entire Boracay Island existence, is gone.

For those of us who knew him, he was larger than life. As I got to learn more about Pepito from meeting his siblings and from stories shared by his closest friends after his passing, I realized that he is the summation of who and what he meant to others.

**Our deepest condolences** On behalf of the Boracay Island family, the **Boracay Sun News**, and the island community, we would like to offer our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. May the Lord comfort your hearts in this time of sorrow. To his loved ones and friends, he will be most remembered, not so much for the incredible achievements mentioned above, but more so for his good nature, his pureness of heart.

**Godspeed and thank you, dearest Pepito ...** You were truly one in a million, and there will never be another like you. May you rest in peace in the loving embrace of our Lord. #GODISONE 🌿

## PEPITO IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER

"Josenia told us how Pepito and their mother worked tirelessly to secure the legal paperwork for the property they had inherited from their *Lolo* Ulpiano, and how he had made sure that it was fairly divided among each of the siblings and cousins. For his part, she said, all he wanted was a small piece of land in Bulabog where he could live and build his studio. We, his siblings, are very grateful to our *Kuyang* for putting us ahead of himself. He was the BEST kuya, full of love and generosity." — **Josenia "Jiji" San Jose, sister**

"We grew up in a one-story, two-bedroom house and shared one bedroom with two bunk beds with all my siblings. There aren't many childhood memories except for a few family outings. But one thing's for sure, Kuyang tried to be a good brother the best way he knew how. Another thing people should know about him is that despite life's many challenges, my brother knew what it takes to be a responsible man. He enjoyed watching sunsets, long walks, having good conversations over meals, shopping for rare finds (something he did with my wife Alma), and he also laughs at my corny jokes. No one probably knows this, but he played a small part in a high school production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*." — **Edgardo "Gary" San Jose, brother**



"I first met Pepito in 1998 at Wahine Beach Bar, which I co-owned with Cory and Gladys. The bar was right beside Willy's Resort, which was owned by his uncle Willy. Pepito was helping Wilbec at the resort and he would sometimes hang out at Wahini and we would also see him at Beachcomber Bar. He used to always wear a crochet beret, which he made himself. He carried himself with confidence and elegance—understandable, given his background as a Parisian designer. Though he sometimes appeared *mayabang* (aloof), he was, in truth, a kind and caring friend, and we became very close. One day, he surprised me with a painting of my nine-year-old daughter, Leonae. Later, in 2015, he gifted me another painting, this time, a pop art mother and child." — **Nenette Aguirre-Graf, friend**



"I'll never forget that funny day in Boracay ... it was 7 a.m., *ginising ako, may mga dala dalang* huge gabi leaves. "*Hoy reyna ng gabi, lumabas ka dyan, may photo shoot tayo*"



and you'll be the model of one of my *obra* (work of art)!" It was a fun day, non-stop *halakhakan*, and here's that beautiful painting. *Kakamiss si Joanna Pacula*—that's what I called her, LOL! I miss him so much! RIP Joan!" — **Xaviera Pettel, friend**

"Pepito was my lunch buddy while staying at Levantin for a few months during the pandemic. Over meals, we chatted about island life, but I was more interested in hearing about his life. He beamed that radiant smile as he recounted his early days as a student in Manila and his chic life in Paris. One lunch date, as he tossed his rice salad (if you know you know), he told me of how he was sending a series of paintings to Paris. And that deserved a toast! Thank you for having a few sips of red with me, Pepito! *Tchin-tchin!*" — **Dr. Anna Ruaro, friend**

"*Pag naga istoryahan baea. Kami ag ea om namon nag nagamati maw, hay basta pagka angan2, maw ra anang hambaeon: "Ganun ba? Bakit? Sino? Ang ano?"* Physically present, mentally absent ah gali! Eubay eubay pa anang paghambae ngaron. In Tagalog: *Pag nag kwentuhan kami, akala namin nakikinig, tapos biglang magsasalita: "Ganun ba? Bakit? Sino?"* Physically present, mentally absent pala! *Tapos ang delivery pa ang malumanay at monotone.*" — **Baby Susan Sual, cousin**



was like his extended kitchen because Pepito never cooks! They saw each other every day.

B a b e s is Pepito's cousin who owns Niu O h a n a , which is right next door to Pepito's home, and

"When he did the furniture for Willy's Beach Resort in 1990, he designed the room furniture made of wood, rattan and *bagakay*. They were so beautiful and unique, and added character to the resort. We had a great time and Tatay Willy also enjoyed those moments and was very fond of him. Pepito's most memorable line: "My painting is a definition of my passion in art with love. I brought my experiences back to Boracay from Europe and that I am proud of." He often said that the Gelitos are Boracay's gems." — **Rafel Miralles Gelito-Vismara, cousin**



"We first became aware of Pepito as we walked by his atelier window in Bulabog. We were lucky enough to get to know Pepito, sharing lunches and talking about art and life. Beneath everything, he was so nice and incredibly funny! A few years ago, Pepito gave us a couple of line drawings. As a tribute, Takako and I colored the pieces, and thanks to **Boracay Sun News**, we can help keep his memory alive." — **Sigmund Torre & Takako Sono**

The editorial cartoon on page 3 is by artists Sigmund Torre & Takako Sono.



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7,641: PHILIPPINE TRAVEL INSIDER

More to love about the Philippine islands

**Editor's note:**

This section is our way of introducing our readers to other Philippine destinations worth a visit, and connecting the 7,641 islands by creating travel corridors and routes from Boracay Island and back to our shores! #stringingthegems

## FROM BORACAY AND BEYOND: WHERE TO DIVE NEXT

The diving's great. The leaving part, not so much.

BY GENE LOVES ACOSTA

You already know Boracay for its sunsets, powdery sand, and possibly a few too many late-night rum & Cokes. But here's something people don't talk about enough: it's also a pretty solid starting point for diving. And not just the easy "let's try scuba" kind. The local sites offer more than most people expect.

Another reason to start here? The Philippines just got another nod as one of the world's top dive destinations (humblebrag), and from Boracay, you're perfectly placed to kick things off. Maybe it's your first time strapping on a tank, or maybe you've already filled a few logbooks and are just figuring out where to head next. Either way, getting from here to other dive places is refreshingly simple.

>>Jumpstart: Boracay

**Why go:** The local sites are a mix of chill and unexpectedly cool, like **Camia II**, a sunken cargo ship that's now a full-on fish hangout, or **Tribird**, a downed airplane-turned-reef that feels like something out of a movie. If you're certified for deep dives and looking for a bit of a thrill, head north to **Yapak**. It's made up of three separate wall dives (Yapak 1, 2, and 3), all starting at around 30 meters and dropping way past 70. Expect strong currents, serious depth and some big fish.

For something more relaxed, **Crocodile Island** (don't worry, no crocs) is a favorite for its coral gardens, sea snakes, and macro life. **Angol Point** is another chill spot that is perfect if you're easing back into diving or getting certified. There's also **Coral Garden** just off White Beach, which lives up to its name on a good day and is great for shallow reef dives or snorkeling with friends who don't dive.

area, and **Twin Rocks** is great for spotting schools of fish doing their synchronized swim thing. If you're a bit more experienced, **Dilumacad Tunnel** is a 35-meter underwater tunnel that's as fun as it sounds. Spooky, but in a good way. The diving here isn't extreme, but it's pretty. And with those limestone backdrops and calm conditions, it's an easy place to mix in a few dives between island-hopping and long, lazy breakfasts by the beach.

>>Next Destination: El Nido to Bohol

**How to get there:** AirSWIFT operates direct flights from El Nido Airport to Bohol, Panglao International Airport, also known as New Bohol International Airport. Flights are available multiple times a week. **Estimated travel time:** Approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes.

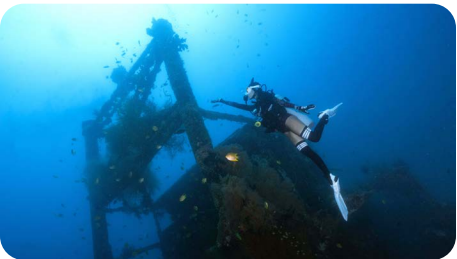
**Why go:** Bohol isn't exactly a secret anymore when it comes to diving. For good reason. It's got that sweet spot between solid dive infrastructure and a natural wow factor. **Balicasag Island** is the star of the show, with steep coral walls, swirling schools of jackfish, and turtles that casually cruise by. Visibility is usually great; the current keeps things lively, and there's enough reef action to keep both newbies and dive veterans very, very happy.

If you want something quieter, take the scenic three-hour drive to **Anda** on the island's eastern coast. It's less crowded, full of life and perfect if you're into macro or just want to feel like you've found a spot that not many people are talking about (yet). Expect frogfish, nudibranchs and that "I could stay here a while" kind of calm.

**Worth noting:** Bohol was recently named the Philippines' first UNESCO Global Geopark and has been nominated as Asia's Leading Emerging Tourism Destination. Not bad for a place where you can still rinse your gear under a palm tree.

>>Next Destination: Bohol to Cebu

**How to get there:** Catch a ferry from Tagbilaran to Cebu City. OceanJet and SuperCat both have multiple trips a day. **Estimated travel time:** Around 2 hours **Why go:** Cebu's one of those places that quietly does some things well. Big city energy



| Boracay 📷 Aaron Tan

>>Next stop: El Nido

**How to get there:** Hop on a direct flight from Caticlan to El Nido via AirSWIFT. **Estimated travel time:** Around 1 hour (plus a short trike ride into town) **Why go:** El Nido is mostly known for its dramatic cliffs, lagoons and island-hopping day trips, but if you're already there, it's worth getting underwater, too. The vibe here is relaxed, and so are the dive sites. **South Miniloc** has some of the best coral in the



| Malapascua 📷 Kevin Gacad



| El Nido 📷 Diveplan.ph

when you need it, and just a few hours away, some of the best diving in the country. If you've got time to explore, two names should be on your radar: Moalboal and Malapascua.

The sardine run is the main event down south in **Moalboal** (around 3-4 hours by land). Thousands of sardines swirl in massive, silver walls, just a few fin kicks from shore. You can snorkel it, freedive it, or just hang back and watch the show. Add in the drop-offs at **Pescador Island**, a few curious turtles



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and some sneaky-good macro life and it's the kind of place that's easy to settle into.

Then there's **Malapascua**. Head north (4-ish hours by van, then a short boat ride), and you've got one of the few places in the world where thresher sharks reliably show up every morning. Early dive? Yes. Worth it? Absolutely. **Monad Shoal** is the big draw, but if you stick around, there are wrecks, reefs, and more critters than you'd expect.

**Quick Note Before You Pack Your Fins:** This dive trail is a suggested route based on current travel connections and dive-friendly flow. It's not a fixed itinerary. Always double-check flight schedules, ferry timings and local weather updates before locking anything in. And of course, plan your dives with proper surface intervals and no-fly times in mind. Safety comes first, always.

>>>**Optional Add-On: Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (Palawan, liveaboard only)**

**How to get there:** Fly to Puerto Princesa (from Manila, Cebu, or El Nido), then board a liveaboard. Most trips run for 5-7 days.

**Why go:** If diving had a bucket list, Tubbataha would be in the top three. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site right smack in the middle of the Sulu Sea, only accessible by liveaboard (usually March to June). Expect massive walls, sharks, rays, swirling barracuda and pristine reefs as far as you can see. It's remote, protected and mind-blowingly rich in marine life. This is serious diver territory, but if you can make it happen, it's unforgettable.



| **Tubbataha** 📷 *Boogs Rosales*

>>>**Next Destination: Cebu to Dumaguete**

**How to get there:** You've got a couple of options here. The most common route is by land and ferry. Ride a bus from Cebu City's South Bus Terminal to Liloan Port (about 4 hours), then take a short ferry to Sibulan, just a tricycle ride away from Dumaguete. **Estimated travel time:** Around 5-6 hours total but the views are nice and the snacks along the way aren't bad either. **Why go:** **Dumaguete** is low-key, but ask any diver and they'll probably light up a little. The city itself has a university-town vibe. Walkable, friendly and with just enough buzz to keep things interesting. Most people base themselves in **Dauin**, about 30 minutes from town, where you'll find some of the best muck diving in the country. Weird and wonderful critters are the game's name here: frogfish, ghost pipefish, flamboyant cuttlefish and all sorts of stuff you'd probably miss if your guide didn't point it out. If macro's your thing, Dauin is heaven.

But don't miss **Apo Island**, which is just a short boat ride away. It's all about turtles, hard corals, healthy reefs and those satisfying wide-angle scenes that make you want to stay underwater forever. The marine sanctuary here is one of the oldest in the Philippines, and it shows. There's a sense of calm and color that hits the second you backroll in.

>>>**Next Destination: Dumaguete to Puerto Galera**

**How to get there:** Fly from Dumaguete to Manila (about 1.5 hours), then hop on a bus or van to Batangas Pier (around 2-3 hours, depending on traffic), followed by a ferry to Puerto Galera (about 1-1.5 hours). **Estimated travel time:** Around 5-6 hours total, give or take some wait time. **Why go:** It's one of the easiest major dive spots to get to from Manila, but it doesn't feel like a "convenient backup." The diving really holds its own. There's a huge variety of sites here, from relaxed reef dives to drifts with

punchy currents and everything in between. The standout? **Verde Island Passage**. It's been called the "center of the center" of marine biodiversity, and it lives up to the hype—corals bursting with life, schools of fish that block out the sun and that feeling like you've dropped into a full-on marine documentary.



| **Dumaguete** 📷 *Kevin Gacad*



| **Verde Island** 📷 *Boogs Rosales*

Closer to shore, sites like **Canyons** and **Hole in the Wall** deliver stronger currents, soft corals, and the occasional sea snake gliding by like it's got somewhere better to be. There are also shallower muck sites near **Sabang** for those into critter hunting. You'll spot nudibranchs, frogfish and all the weird little things you didn't know you were obsessed with until now.

>>>**Optional Add-On: Anilao (Batangas)**

**How to get there:** From Puerto Galera, take the ferry back to Batangas Pier, then it's just a 1.5-hour drive to Anilao. It's super doable as a last stop before heading back to Manila. **Why go:** **Anilao** is where a lot of Manila-based divers get their fins wet. The area is famous for its insane variety of critters: nudibranchs in every possible color combo, hairy frogfish, blue-ring octopus, flamboyant cuttlefish, and the list goes on. If you're into underwater photography or just like finding the weirdest-looking things nature has to offer, Anilao delivers.

The sites are close to shore, so you can squeeze in 3-4 dives a day without spending hours on a boat. The current is usually manageable, the visibility is decent, and there's enough variety to keep you entertained whether you're new or a bit obsessive. **Bonus:** The dive resorts here range from budget-friendly to boutique, and most are set up for serious divers with camera rinse tanks, full gear rental, and night dives on the regular. Speaking of which, night diving in Anilao is a must. You'll see stuff you'd never spot in daylight.



| **Anilao** 📷 *Diveplan.ph*

Still planning? That's the fun part. Whether you do the full loop or just a few stops, this trail is all about soaking up reef time, salty air and that sweet underwater quiet that makes everything else fade out.

**Quick Note Before You Pack Your Fins:**

This dive trail is a suggested route based on current travel connections and dive-friendly flow. It's not a fixed itinerary. Always double-check flight schedules, ferry timings and local weather updates before locking anything in. And of course, plan your dives with proper surface intervals and no-fly times in mind. Safety comes first, always. 🌿

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# NEWS

## Malay LGU Formulates Incident Management System

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The Sangguniang Bayan (SB) of Malay is currently crafting an Incident Management System in order to institutionalize the mechanisms of government action, especially during emergencies.

This was initiated by the Committee on Laws chaired by SB member Victoria Salem and Councilors Dante Pagsugiron and Alan Palma, Sr.

During the hearing held last March 19 at the SB session hall, Palma said he observed that there was a disorder in the flow of information among government agencies especially during emergencies. The *Boracay Sun News (BSN)* was among the media outlets who were consulted for the crafting of the module.

“Boracay as a prime destination, should have a clear flow and orderly conduct of information dissemination to prevent the spread of misinformation,” said Palma.

Aside from *BSN*, other media outlets consulted on the said legislative meeting were representatives of the Publishers Association of the Philippines, Paradise Cable TV, Aklan Press Club, Yes FM Boracay and the Aklan Media-Citizens Council.

Also present were representatives coming from the Philippine National Police, Municipal Disaster Risks Reduction and Management Office, Bureau of Fire Protection, barangay representatives from Boracay including Edwin Pelayo, the designated spokesman of Mayor Frolibar Bautista.

According to Pelayo, his role is currently limited to managing the social media pages of the Malay LGU, as a separate legislation and an allocation of funds by the LGU for necessary logistic operations are needed to appoint him as a full-time spokesman.

Palma said that it was agreed during the legislation that each of the departments should immediately activate a local spokesperson to address the concerns of the media and content creators. For example, the MDRRMO should have a focal person in case of drowning incidents or vehicular accidents, the PNP for crimes, the BFP for fire and the PCG for boat-related incidents.

After the first meeting, the Committee on Laws will be preparing a module for the implementing policies. Once finished, this will be presented to the Sangguniang Bayan for deliberation.

If approved, the said book will be presented to the Mayor for comments and approval. Once approved, it will then be officially implemented. Once implemented, any of the departments involved may face penalties if found violating the said code.



Photo courtesy of Wellphoto / Fotolia.com

# NEWS

## Who is MUPH–Malay Aklan Candidate Taylor Marie DeLuna?

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

Many Filipinos were stunned when Miss Universe Philippines 2025 (MUPH) announced that a candidate representing Malay, Aklan, was named. She is Miss Taylor Marie DeLuna.

Her participation was a surprise among Malaynons who thought that there would be only one Aklanon in the MUPH this year, MJ Isberto Fernandez of Numancia, Aklan. She was crowned this year’s Binibining Kalibo Ati-atihan Festival beauty pageant.

Because many Malaynons are curious about her personality, *Boracay Sun News* traced her digital footprint, hoping to have a clearer view of her.

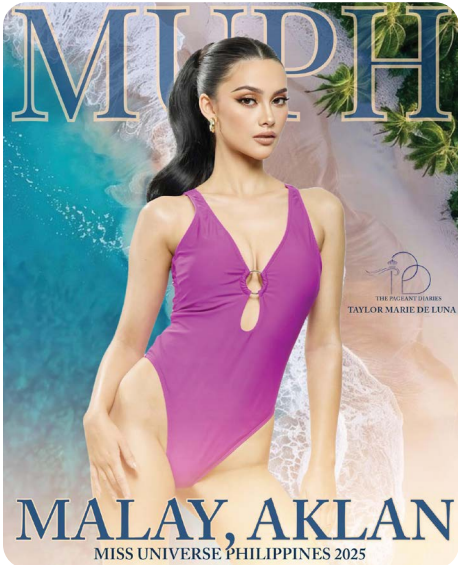
It turns out that DeLuna is a 22-year-old Filipino-American from St. Louis, Missouri. According to a TikTok video that has apparently been deleted, she was a candidate in the Miss Filipina International 2022.

DeLuna is officially “Miss Universe Philippines Malay Aklan,” representing the Filipino Society of Southern California.

As of this writing, Miss DeLuna has been one of the crowd favorites at the MUPH 2025 and was among the top 10 candidates in the Runway Showcase and in the Personality Showcase.

The top 10 delegates are Kayla Jane Usison (Bago City), Gwendoline Meliz Soriano (Baguio), Mikae Ibarde (Benguet), Juliana Fresado (Iligan), Eloisa Jauod (Laguna), Taylor Marie DeLuna (Malay, Aklan), Teresita Winwyn Marquez (Muntinlupa), Andrea Cayabyab (Pangasinan), Amanda Russo (Pasay) and Katrina Llegado (Taguig).

According to MUPH, the “Top 10” delegates are those with the highest number of votes during the voting period that ended



Bringing island magic to the runway, Taylor Marie DeLuna of Malay, Aklan, stunned at the Aqua Boracay Swimsuit Competition for Miss Universe Philippines 2025. (Photo courtesy of The Pageant Diaries Facebook page)

on April 15, 2025.

The MUPH Coronation Night will be held on May 2, 2025, at the Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay City. The winner of the pageant will represent the country in the 74th Miss Universe Pageant in November of this year in Bangkok, Thailand. The pageant advocates for inclusivity, innovation and social impact.

Under the esteemed guidance of Nawat Itsaragrisil, National Director of Miss Universe Thailand, and Miss Universe owner Anne Jakrajutatip, the competition promises to highlight the power of authenticity, ambition, culture and the strength of women around the world.

# NEWS

## NBI Builds a Permanent Boracay Facility

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Western Visayas (WV) has announced that it has started to put up its facilities here to ensure the bureau’s prompt response in case of heinous crime incidents.

Aldrin Laurence Mercader, executive officer of the NBI WV office told local media at a press conference held at the Pinnacle Resort & Villas that the bureau’s decision to put up a

facility was triggered when a 23-year-old Slovakian tourist was found murdered at an abandoned chapel.

Mercader said that the NBI facility will have forensic capability, a desk to receive relevant complaints, and NBI clearances, among others.

The NBI clearance system is currently being put up at CityMall Boracay, so that employees need not have to go to Kalibo.

Mercader announced this development after Aklan’s Second District Congressman Teodorico Haresco formally turned over his pledge reward of Php100,000 to the Malay Municipal Police Station (MPS).

Police Captain Jesus Ambay III, Malay Deputy Police Chief, said that despite the killing of the Slovakian national Michaela Mickova, “Boracay remains to be the safest tourism destination in Southeast Asia.”

According to Cambay, Boracay’s murder rate per 100,000 tourists before the ill-fated Mickova murder was at zero percent. Boracay has one of the lowest crime rates in the world, “With a murder rate at .38 percent after the incident, compared to Phuket, Thailand at .39 percent and Bali, Indonesia at .40 percent,” Cambay said.

He added that they are continuing to work on a case build-up against two persons of interest (POIs) relative to the killing of the Slovakian tourist. One of the two POIs was apprehended in a drug buy-bust operation recently undertaken by the Malay MPS in Barangay Sambiray, Malay.



Aldrin Mercader, executive officer of NBI WV



cajun shrimp



gamberetti pizza



grilled ahi tuna



seafood platter



**SEAFOOD  
Specials**  
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baked oysters



puerto rican fried shrimp

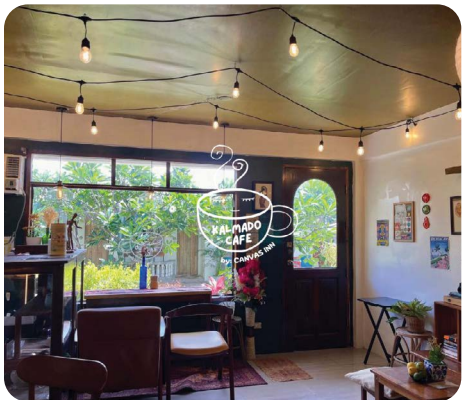


garlic butter mussels



shrimp aglio olio





From Top:Caemilla Beach Hotel, Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast, Kalmado Café and True Home Bistro

## ISLAND LIFE

# Catch a Glimpse of the Work From Home Culture in Boracay

BY SEEMA MANOHAR

The pandemic of 2020-2023 saw the rise globally of people escaping city life in exchange for a quieter, scenic, and slower lifestyle.

Boracay was no exception to this trend, and the island welcomed digital nomads, social media influencers, those on sabbatical from corporate or university jobs, online business owners, journalists and individuals whose jobs continued to remain as remote positions post-pandemic. With more and more physical offices closing and a preference for jobs being remotely based, this shift in global work patterns saw the rise in a work from home (WFH) culture, enabling individuals and families to have a healthy work-life balance.

Boracay has proven to be a haven for WFH folks and nothing beats a day maximizing work productivity while taking in the views of our turquoise waters and white sand beaches.

A lot of WFH-ers agree that their post-pandemic lifestyle continued to be appealing as it gave them back more hours in their day without having to commute, flexibility to choose their work hours, independence in managing their own time and schedules, and the convenience to be based anywhere as long as they have internet connectivity. With the growth of online jobs, the earning potential increased, as well as the ability to earn in foreign currencies without having to disrupt their lives or be forced to move to cities or other countries for job opportunities.

The best part of WFH culture in Boracay is having to live the idyllic tropical life, have a healthy work-life balance and lead less stressful lives. For the WFH creatives, the island offers inspiration with its beautiful views that allow creative juices to flow or

while stuck in a creative rut, a walk down the beach, an afternoon swim or watching a breathtaking Boracay sunset always offers the reset needed to get back to work.

The island's active lifestyle also allows WFH-ers to take breaks and engage in energizing activities like kiteboarding, diving, beach tennis, etc. WFH also enables people to set up their workspaces that best suit their work style, whether this is from home or a café or co-working space, and best of all, being able to work in shorts and easy beachwear and ultimately not having to spend on a work wardrobe!

With the perks come a few drawbacks, such as reliance on internet connectivity and stable power. Boracay does experience its fair share of power-cuts and unfortunately, not many homes, cafés and co-working spaces are set up with generators. This is especially challenging when having to attend online meetings or working to meet a deadline. Internet speed and stability are not always guaranteed.

Discipline with time management is crucial as it is easy to get distracted with a lot of fun activities on the island, and the dilemma of enjoying a beautiful beach day while forcing yourself to get behind a computer is a real struggle! Networking opportunities and job growth potential may be limited while being a WFH-er in Boracay as it is harder to meet with clients or colleagues outside of the hospitality sector as these likely need to be pursued off the island.

A lot of WFH-ers prefer to work from home as they can set up their spaces to be free of distractions and have dependable internet connectivity. However, beachfront cafés are also popular, especially those with beautiful views, strong caffeine choices and fast and

reliable internet.

Some popular choices are tucked in the quieter parts of the island like Angol, located in Station 3, such as **Villa Caemilla Beach Hotel** which has stunning beachfront views, a great menu and excellent internet (IG @ villa\_caemilla). Everrich Resort Boracay is the perfect location if you are looking for a pet-friendly spot (when your dog needs a break from the home office, too!) and a quiet space to zone in and focus (IG@ everrichresortboracay).

In Bulabog, a popular favorite is the **Lazy Dog Bed & Breakfast** with its reliable high-speed internet at 61 Mbps, comfort food, easy listening tunes, and a backup generator to ensure your workflow remains uninterrupted (IG @lazydogboracay).

A new addition to the neighborhood is **Kalmado Café**, a quaint, Instagrammable café, located inside Canvass Inn. This airy, light-filled café offers a lovely coffee and lunch selection and its cozy vibes are a favorite among WFH creatives (@kalmadocafeboracay).

In Station 1, **True Home Bistro** is all about the breathtaking views of White Beach and is a good spot to park yourself for a morning of work with a variety of food options and strong coffee. This list is by no means exhaustive and many other places are conducive to stress-free work environments.

### TIPS FROM WFH PROS

- ✓ For a successful WFH career, they recommend establishing a schedule and a daily routine to maximize productivity and to stay away from distractions.
- ✓ Create a dedicated workspace to separate leisure activities from work and invest in good equipment such as proper work desks, ergonomic chairs, noise-canceling headphones, hotspots for backup internet, etc., to ensure comfort and wellness.
- ✓ Schedule breaks during the day to recharge and have social interactions to offset the potential isolation from WFH jobs.

The WFH culture seems to be here to stay, and Boracay's community adds its unique character to the island's diversity, proving there are many options to enjoying the best beach lifestyle Boracay has to offer. 🌴

## ISLAND LIFE

# Semi-Long-Term Abodes in Boracay

## How to find the perfect place for an extended stay

BY PAULINE REITZER

Boracay isn't just a vacation hotspot—it's also an amazing place for a semi-long-term stay.

Whether you're a remote worker, a long-term traveler, or someone coming for the kitesurfing or diving season, finding the right rental can make your experience more enjoyable. Here are a few tips to find the perfect home away from home.

### 1. Know where to look

- **Airbnb:** Many hosts offer discounts for long-term stays, and it's always worth negotiating for a better deal, especially in the off-season.
- **Facebook Group "Boracay Long Term Rentals":** This is one of the best ways to find available rentals, often with better prices than the usual booking platforms.
- **Network and community:** Boracay has a tight-knit community of locals, immigrant foreigners, and long-term visitors. Networking can lead to great rental opportunities that may not be publicly listed.

### 2. Choose the best area for your needs

Boracay is a small island, but different areas offer distinct experiences:

- **Station 1:** Quiet, upscale and perfect for those who want a more peaceful stay.
- **Station 2:** The heart of Boracay's nightlife and shopping scene, good for those who love the buzz.
- **Station 3:** A more laid-back and old-Boracay vibe with affordable accommodations and a close-knit local community.
- **Bulabog Beach:** Ideal for digital nomads and kitesurfers, with many long-term rental options and a great community feel.
- **Diniwid Beach or Yapak:** More secluded, perfect for those who prefer nature and tranquility.

### Other factors to consider:

- **Proximity to groceries:** There are major grocery stores like BudgetMart, Robinson's, CityMall and Boracay Minimart. If you prefer local markets, being near D'Talipapa or Tindahan it Boracay (T.i.B) market (next to AKY) might be ideal.
- **Transportation:** Most areas are walking

distance to the main thoroughfare, but if you're staying in more remote spots, you may need an e-trike service or scooter.

- **Internet stability:** Some areas have better Wi-Fi than others. Check with landlords what internet providers they are using and what speed is available beforehand.

### 3. Understand pricing and availability

Prices fluctuate depending on the season and location:

- **Peak Season (November to May):** Expect higher prices, especially from December to February when tourists flood the island.
- **Off-Peak Season (June to October):** Prices decrease and you can find great deals, especially if you commit to a longer stay.
- **Monthly rental costs:** Budget stays can start at Php15,000 to 25,000 per month, while mid-range accommodations range from Php30,000 to 60,000. High-end villas or beachfront condos can go up to Php80,000+.
- **Utilities may not be included:** Always clarify if electricity, water



Balai ni Inday, Diniwid Road  
(FB: Boracay Long Term Rentals. Contact Ronnie Riva (+63 908) 636 4596 to arrange a viewing.)

and Wi-Fi are covered in the rent.

### 4. Best time to inquire

If you're planning to stay long-term, it's best to start inquiring one to two months before high season kicks in. This gives you better chances at securing a place at a reasonable rate before demand spikes.

### 5. Final tips

- **Visit before committing:** If possible, check the place in person to ensure it meets your expectations.
- **Ask about deposit and payment terms:** Some landlords require a security deposit or advance payments.
- **Consider community and lifestyle:** If you want to socialize, choose a lively area like Bulabog. If you prefer peace, consider Diniwid or Angol.

Happy house hunting! 🌴



IN MEMORIAM

# Celebrating the Life and Legacy of Victor Ortega: Visionary, salon owner, celebrity hairstylist, brand ambassador and island mother

BY KEIZA ROSADO AND MAMA VO'S CLOSEST FRIENDS-TURNED-FAMILY



## Victor Balbuena Ortega

August 11, 1965 — April 10, 2025

him the honor of becoming an official ambassador for TRESemmé Philippines, a role that allowed him to showcase Filipino artistry on both national and international stages. He led styling teams for major fashion events, including Philippine Fashion Week and TRESemmé Runway Ready Shows, and contributed to major editorial campaigns and global beauty initiatives.

A passionate mentor, Victor was committed to training and uplifting young talents, many of whom have gone on to successful careers under his guidance. His influence extended far beyond the salon, inspiring a generation of stylists to pursue their dreams with passion, discipline and confidence.

In his final days, Victor remained true to his vibrant spirit and zest for life. His heartfelt words, **“The world is my runway,”** reflected his enduring belief that life itself was an art form to be lived with boldness, beauty, and grace. In a recent post on his social media account, Victor also shared, **“You will always be my Kingdom, my Paradise, my Boracay,”** a touching tribute to the place that brought him peace, joy and inspiration.

Victor Ortega was more than a hairstylist; he was a visionary who redefined beauty, celebrated individuality, and uplifted the human spirit. His legacy is not only measured by his many professional achievements but by the lives he transformed, the confidence he nurtured, and the love and light he shared with everyone around him.

He is deeply mourned by his island family, friends, colleagues, clients, and the many lives he touched across the world.

### Our deepest condolences

On behalf of the Boracay Island family, the **Boracay Sun News**, and the island community, we would like to offer our deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. May the Lord comfort your hearts in this time of sorrow.

Mama VO will be most remembered for his kind and gentle soul, and for caring for those around him.

**Godspeed and thank you, Mama VO.** May you rest in peace in the loving embrace of our Lord.

### Mama VO's Most Memorable Expressions

*“So far ...”; “Yes, of course!”; “And all of a sudden ...”; “Loka loka ka!” And the sweetest endearment, “Anak.”*

### Mama VO's Favorites

- ♥ He loved celebrating Halloween on the island and sashaying from one party to another.
- ♥ Having breakfast at Seawind or Discovery Boracay.
- ♥ Stand-out, eye-catching lighting designs for his salons.
- ♥ He had a deep appreciation for timeless beauty, not just in styling but also in his passion for collecting antiques, which reflected his refined taste.
- ♥ The color white for its timeless elegance and purity, just like his style.
- ♥ Comfort food: Pancit, sinigang, chicken potato salad (his specialty); and for desserts: cheesecake, chocolates and Filipino desserts.
- ♥ He loved wearing his puka shell necklace.

## NEWS

# Singaporean Businessman Promotes Diving in Boracay

BY JUN N. AGUIRRE

A Singaporean businessman has been promoting Boracay as a premier diving destination in Asia.

Peter Tay, president of the Boracay Island Travel Agency & Tour Operators Association (BITATOA), is also a board of director of the Boracay Foundation, Incorporated.

He also owns and operates a tour agency on the island.

On April 18, 2025, Tay posted on his Facebook page that he was in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, representing Boracay for the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA Fair). Aside from Boracay, he was promoting other Philippine destinations such as Bohol and Palawan, in cooperation with AirLink Travel and Tours in Kuala Lumpur.

On April 4, Tay was in Singapore to promote the

Philippine diving industry during the 31<sup>st</sup> Asia Dive Expo 2025, after which he invited Constance See Sin Yuan, the Singaporean Ambassador to Boracay, where she completed her PADI Open Water Diver Course.

Tay is confident that by attending these summits, he will attract more foreign tourists to come to Boracay.

Last year, during the groundbreaking of the Hyperbaric Chamber in Boracay, Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco announced that Boracay is a world-class diving destination.

“It is not enough to just say that we will continue to promote the island; we have to improve the developmental pillars of the island,” Frasco said.



Peter Tay at the 31st Asia Dive Expo 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



**epic**

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BORACAY PEOPLE

Mother Figures: Portraits of Leadership in Boracay

BY PAULINE REITZER

Ritchel Casidsid-Cahilig



Ritchel Casidsid-Cahilig is a passionate environmentalist whose nurturing leadership has shaped conservation efforts on the island and beyond. Through her work, Ritchel has not only protected natural resources but has also fostered a new generation of eco-leaders.

Dedication to Nature and Community

Ritchel's journey as a leader began with a deep love for nature. Born and raised in Aklan, she grew up surrounded by lush landscapes and coastal beauty, which gave her a sense of responsibility for the environment. "Nature has always been a part of my identity," she shares. "From an early age, I understood that protecting

it wasn't just a duty, it was a calling."

She founded Aklan TREKKERS Inc., an organization focused on environmental preservation and ecotourism. She later took on the role of Conservation and Training Specialist at the Haribon Foundation, where she manages projects aimed at protecting the Aklan River Watershed Forest Reserve and leads the Sea Guardians Program to safeguard Boracay's marine ecosystem.

Leading with a Mother's Heart

For Ritchel, leadership is about nurturing relationships and instilling values. "To me, being a 'mother figure' is about fostering growth, providing support and empowering others," she says. "It's about ensuring that the next generation inherits not just a beautiful island but also the responsibility to protect it."

Her leadership is evident as we witness her mentoring young environmental advocates, collaborating with Indigenous communities, and building bridges between

stakeholders. "One of the most fulfilling parts of my work is seeing young people take charge, leading conservation efforts, raising awareness and making a real impact," she says. "When women step into leadership roles in climate action, it reinforces the power of collective effort."

Overcoming Challenges with Resilience

Like many women leaders, Ritchel has faced her share of challenges. "Balancing environmental conservation with economic pressures is never easy," she admits. "It takes patience, deep listening and a commitment to finding solutions that work for both people and nature."

Building trust within communities has been a crucial part of her journey. "Working with Indigenous groups and local stakeholders means understanding their perspectives and respecting their traditions," she explains. "Change happens when people feel heard and included in the process."

A Legacy of Empowerment

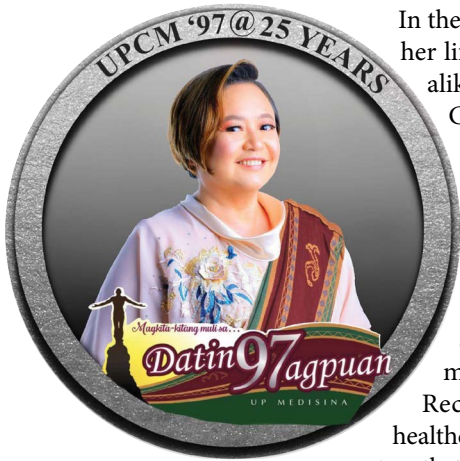
Ritchel's impact extends beyond conservation; she is shaping the future of Boracay by inspiring others to take action. Her leadership is not about "personal accolades but about creating a ripple effect, one that ensures sustainability for years to come."

"I want to instill the values of resilience, empathy and unwavering commitment to social and environmental justice," she says. "I hope future women leaders understand that leadership is not about power—it's about service, collaboration and lifting others up."

Her advice to the next generation is simple yet profound: "Listen deeply, learn continuously and lead with compassion. Never underestimate the power of collective action and always be a voice for those who have none."

Through her steady dedication, Ritchel is not just a leader, she is a mother figure to an island, a community and a movement for change. Her story serves as a testament to the power of women in leadership, proving that true strength lies in nurturing, protecting and inspiring others.

Dr. Maria Cristina "Doc Girlie" Teotico



In the heart of Boracay, one woman has dedicated her life to ensuring that both locals and visitors alike, receive the care they deserve. Dr. Maria Cristina Teotico, a medical director fondly known as "Doc Girlie," has spent decades filling the gaps in healthcare access, building a system that is not just efficient, but deeply compassionate.

Doc Girlie's journey into medicine was driven by an innate desire to serve. She arrived in Boracay in 1999, a time when medical facilities on the island were scarce. Recognizing the urgent need for accessible healthcare, she took on the challenge of building a system that could cater to the diverse population of locals

and international tourists.

"Healthcare is not just about treating diseases; it's about ensuring that every person, no matter where they come from, feels safe and cared for," she says. "In a place like Boracay, where tourism and local livelihoods intertwine, a strong healthcare system is essential."

Building a Medical Community

Over the years, Doc Girlie has worked tirelessly to enhance medical services on the island. She has been instrumental in establishing MedExpress Medical and Diagnostic Center, ensuring that emergency care, diagnostics, and preventive healthcare are available to everyone. Her leadership has transformed the perception of healthcare in Boracay, making it more than just a service—it is now a pillar of the community.

"Doctors and healthcare professionals should be part of the fabric of a community, not just outsiders providing treatment," she explains. "That's why I've made it my mission to not only treat patients but to educate them, advocate for public health initiatives and support wellness programs."

A Mother Figure in Healthcare

Beyond her role as a doctor, Doc Girlie has become a mother figure to many. She is known for her gentle but firm approach, ensuring that patients receive the best possible care while also guiding young medical professionals in their careers. "She leads with both intelligence and heart," shares a colleague. "She's not just about medicine; she's about community, about making sure everyone feels seen and heard."

Through her work, Doc Girlie has not only saved lives but has also shaped the future of healthcare in Boracay. Her dedication, compassion and unwavering commitment make her a beacon of leadership, proving that true leaders are those who nurture, heal and uplift the communities they serve.

From her early days working at the government hospital in Boracay, Doc Girlie saw an urgent need for accessible healthcare. She envisioned and built a healthcare system that was not only fast and responsive but also deeply human. "At the heart of it, healthcare isn't just treating illnesses; it's about ensuring people feel safe and valued, especially in moments of crisis."

Redefining Motherhood

Motherhood, as Doc Girlie sees it, is not solely defined by biology. "Motherhood, to

me, is less about biology and more about commitment," she explains. Raising her adoptive children, Patch and Gabbie, deepened her understanding of what it means to nurture.

"It's about holding space for others—with empathy, strength and quiet guidance. It's knowing when to nurture and when to let go, when to comfort and when to empower." This philosophy extends to her work as a mentor to young doctors and a leader in the medical field, where she fosters a culture of compassion and excellence.

A Balancing Act

One of the greatest challenges Doc Girlie has faced is balancing compassion with boundaries. "People often come to us in moments of crisis, and it's easy to want to give everything," she admits. "Early on, I'd stretch myself thin trying to solve every problem. Over time, we learned that we had to prioritize critical cases and delegate responsibilities, even when it meant saying 'no' to some requests."

She emphasizes that sustainable service requires self-care, recognizing the emotional labor involved in her work. "Staying grounded, especially while managing a team and ensuring our operations run smoothly, requires intention, support and grace. It's a daily act of balancing service and self-care."

Moments That Matter

Among the countless lives she has touched, one moment stands out. A gravely ill patient once came to her clinic on the brink of death. The team coordinated an emergency evacuation just in time, saving his life. "When he was fully recovered, he came and hugged our whole team and said, 'You saved my life, but more than that, you made me feel I wasn't alone.'"

For Doc Girlie, that moment reaffirmed the true essence of her work: presence, comfort and making people feel that they matter.

Lessons for the Next Generation

To future women leaders and caregivers, Doc Girlie imparts some powerful lessons: "Strength and softness can, and should, coexist. You don't have to choose between being respected and being nurturing. Compassion and authority aren't opposites. You can advocate fiercely for your patients while respecting your own limits."

She wants women to know that empathy is not a weakness but a superpower. "True leadership isn't about sacrificing yourself; it's about modeling resilience so others can thrive too."

To those stepping into a nurturing leadership role, Doc Girlie offers simple yet profound advice: "Clarify your purpose. Know your 'why' and let it guide you through chaos. When things get overwhelming, as they often do, this purpose becomes your anchor."

She also emphasizes the importance of trusting one's instincts and surrounding oneself with a supportive team. Ultimately, she believes that leadership is not about perfection but presence.

"In the end, people may forget your title or credentials, but they'll never forget how you made them feel."

Doc Girlie's journey is a testament to the power of compassionate leadership. Through her unwavering commitment to service, she continues to be a beacon of hope and healing in Boracay—a true mother figure to her community. 🌱



HEALTH & WELLNESS

# Let's Get Ready to Tumble!

## The Lowdown on alcohol poisoning and first aid

BY KATE NG-LARRAURI, M.D.

Dr. Kate Ng-Larrauri is a Boracay-based pediatrician, a specially trained medical doctor who works with babies, infants, adolescents and young adults.

What's Boracay without fun and partying? True to its hype, alcohol is the most abused drug there is.

Drinking can be all fun and games until it's not. Alcohol is recognized as a toxin "by and to" the body. Thereby, consuming it in high doses give the body more work in eliminating it. Our bodies are capable and efficient in filtering these toxins from the bloodstream to a certain point, but how do we really know when one has had enough?

Alcohol poisoning is a serious and possibly lethal condition that occurs when someone consumes a large amount of alcohol in a very short period, overwhelming the liver's ability to process it.

Anything in excess is never beneficial. Know your limit and take control, be mindful of each other. It can be all fun and games, until it is not. You can save a life.

Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:

- Confusion
- Unconsciousness
- Vomiting
- Slow or irregular breathing
- Hypothermia or low body temperature (below 35 degrees Celsius)
- Pale, bluish or clammy skin

If not addressed immediately, seizures, severe dehydration, acute kidney injury, permanent brain damage and/or death may ensue.

ISLAND EVENTS

# A Sunset Spectacle: Weddings by Crimson Unveils First-Ever Beachfront Fashion Show

The golden hues of twilight set the stage for an unforgettable showcase as Crimson Resort and Spa Boracay hosted its first-ever beachfront sunset fashion show as part of Weddings by Crimson. Marking a milestone in destination weddings, the event reinforced Crimson Boracay's place among the most sought-after beachfront wedding venues, offering pristine



First-ever beachfront sunset wedding fashion show at Crimson Resort & Spa

white sands, breathtaking sunsets, an exclusive beachfront, a seamless blend of romance, luxury and world-class hospitality.

Weddings by Crimson is about crafting extraordinary moments for couples ready to say "I do." Since its debut in 2023, Weddings by Crimson has evolved into a premier showcase, bringing together top designers, stylists and industry professionals to create a wedding journey as magical as the big day itself.

Welcoming guests to this special occasion, Didier Belmonte, General Manager of Crimson Boracay, shared: "With its breathtaking shores, curated experiences and unparalleled hospitality, Crimson Boracay provides an unforgettable setting for couples to begin their journey together. This event is a celebration of love, artistry and the seamless fusion of fashion and romance."

Renowned New York-based Filipino designer Bessie Besana took center stage with his latest collection, Ray of Twilight—a 20-piece bridal couture series inspired by the fleeting beauty of dusk. Known for his impeccable craftsmanship, Besana has dressed some of the country's most celebrated figures, including Pia Wurtzbach, Regine Velasquez and Sarah Geronimo.

The show's grand finale saw Miss World Philippines Tourism 2022 and Century Tuna Superbods 2024 winner, Justine Felizarta, walking hand-in-hand with her boyfriend, restaurateur Ben Arnold, in a scene reminiscent of a real wedding ceremony. For more information, visit [www.crimsonhotels.com/weddings](http://www.crimsonhotels.com/weddings).

FUN FACTS

# BORACAY MARINE LIFE

## And what we can do to protect it

BY ABIGAIL LEI

Did you know that the Philippines was named "Asia's Best Dive Destination" in the Asia Pacific region at the 2024 Travel Weekly Asia Readers' Choice Awards?

Divers from around the world have been drawn to the Philippines' breathtaking underwater world, and it's easy to see why. The country was awarded the title of best country for diving in the Asia Pacific region at the 2024 Travel Weekly Asia Readers' Choice Awards, solidifying its status as a must-visit destination for diving enthusiasts.



Ryan Dominguez @discoverscubaph

new ones sprouting even in the most barren sandy spots, holding out hope that we simply need to take much better care of our natural resources.

A frogfish or nudibranch sighting is also a good sign that the reef is thriving, and it always makes me happy when I spot them around Boracay dive sites.

I remember back during the lockdown days, probably because there wasn't so much boat traffic on the White Beach, we witnessed big fish and even baby dolphins coming close to shore. Also, a short distance from the Yapak dive site, there was a group of whale sharks sighted to have taken this migration route to Antique, whereas we didn't have many of these back during the busy days of the island (pre-Covid).

Perhaps we need a no-boating season alongside the no-fishing rule that's already in place?

Sea turtles have also been a frequent sighting at White Beach, as opposed to encounters almost exclusive to dive sites at Bulabog Beach. I believe this begs the question: Should we give the ocean time to rest from commercial tourism?

It then follows that, as tourism is the island's bread and butter, islanders, tourists and the LGUs should work hand-in-hand in preservation and conservation efforts for sustainable and responsible tourism.

Here are a few things we can do on our own:

1. Bring your *basura* (trash) home. I've always been taught this from a young age. If you don't see any trash bins while beach walking or during boat tours, just stuff your rubbish in your pocket or bag and dispose of it at home. Never throw your trash in the ocean, and remember to segregate, too.
2. Purchase mindfully. Think of all the packaging your purchases come in. Bring your own eco bags to lessen the use of plastics.
3. When snorkelling, diving, or doing any water sport, leave unnecessary things on land (especially plastics) which may pollute the seas or endanger sea creatures. Likewise, as an example of conscientious consumerism, there are sunblock creams that do not contain ingredients that harm ocean life.
4. Never lay hands on sea life. As a rule of thumb, no matter if you know the animal is safe or friendly, we should keep our distance. We never know when they feel provoked. Also, the more attractive they are, the more likely they are to be poisonous, venomous, or generally harmful to touch. Corals are also very delicate and may take years to grow or sprout, so be sure to keep your fins or other water gadgets in the clear when you are near them.
5. Call for action: If you see or feel the need for your local community to do something about illegal or overfishing, sea pollution or other harmful practices, take the lawful and necessary steps to help solve the problem. Use the proper channels and avenues and help ensure the authorities enforce marine laws.

The beauty of the island and its waters has been gifted to us. Our gift back to its creator is to be its stewards and to advocate to protect and nourish it. Let us remember that nature always keeps giving and feeding, especially if we take care of it.

I hope this magnificent sea world and these amazing creatures continue to exist for our children and the next generations to revel in.



# Boracay Day Crawl (Part 1)

BY ABIGAIL LEI

What better way to spend your holiday than relaxing over food and drinks, right? In Boracay, you might get overwhelmed with tons of offerings sprawled across the stretch of the beach, and you could easily overspend, too. But don't worry, your island girl has got you covered with an itinerary you can try.

**06:00** Wake Up Little Suzy

Make the most of your vacation by hitting that alarm by five or six. Take a deep breath and a nice stretch, and walk over to Real Coffee at Station 2. Their *calamansi* muffin and perfectly brewed native cup o' joe are a great way to get your day started from their balcony seats overlooking White Beach—an experience that never grows old. Even as a resident, I still find myself happily lost in reverie there, during the early hours of the day.

Real Coffee's famous must-try calamansi muffins |



**08:00** Get Grounded

Grounding is defined as a wellness practice involving having direct bodily contact with any surface of the earth, or even immersion in the ocean. Going barefoot is an excellent example of this, so after that pick-me-up, feel the sand between your toes and walk the shore, not forgetting to don your sun protection essentials. If or when you feel hot, take the plunge for just fifteen minutes, maybe even trying to hold your breath while meditating, as you let your body absorb the nutrient-rich sea water. To wrap this grounding session up, pick a shady spot to sit or nap, enjoying the breeze and sights. Don't forget to breathe in and out, slowly and mindfully.

**09:30** Midday Refresher



Lucky if you get offers from the local kids to fetch you a coconut. They will most likely climb up the nearest tree bearing your next refreshment of fresh *buko* (coconut) juice. Yummy! You can also head out and lounge at Cocoloco in Station 3, order a drink and a side of *lumpiang* Shanghai (Filipino spring rolls), the perfect snack after that beach walk.

Fresh coconut juice at Epic Boracay

**11:00** Sighting Sand Artists

Some sandcastle makers start early in the day, but many also work on their crafts close to noon. When you chance upon them, find a comfortable spot from a distance and be amazed at how they bring these masterpieces to life with painstaking skill. Witnessing them in their element, one learns to appreciate and respect the beauty of sand art.

Boracay sandcastles | Dannie Solidum



**12:00** Lunch Hits

How about a grilled fish steak or a delectable stuffed squid for a light but hearty lunch? Add a side of *lato* or sea grape salad with mango salsa or the good old *atsara* (pickled green papaya), and feel free to pair it with your favorite beer or sparkling drink. What a lovely lunch that would be!

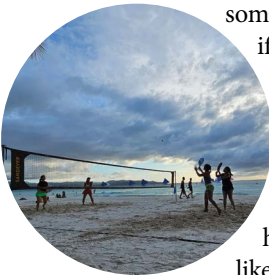
Feeling adventurous? Head over to a *paluto* (cooking service) restaurant have be pleasantly surprised as your meal is cooked to your liking, preferences and budget. Just a note of caution: Advise them of any food allergies.

**13:30** Cool Down

This may be the hottest part of your day, so you'll need to cool down. Just remember that sudden changes in core body temperature may be harmful, so hydrate before taking another dip in the sea. Also, reapply your sunscreen products. You can simply lounge in a beach bed with a drink or two, or read that book you've challenged yourself to finish. Whatever you decide, the goal is to get yourself ready for the next round.

**15:00** Get Going

The sun may be a little more tolerable at this time so you can either go for another walk or try a beach sport you may happen to stroll by. Beach football, volleyball and even tennis are some of the games you might chance upon all the way to Station 1, and if you want to give it a try, simply say "hi" to the players. Boracay communities are a super friendly bunch, so you simply need to unshy yourself to meet new friends.



Beach tennis | Freida Dario-Santiago

**17:30** Sundown Chill

Take a breather after that walk or sport, and find an unobstructed view of the sunset. I'm a big advocate of no-gadget sunsets, putting down phones and truly taking in the wonder of this daily reminder that life and even endings are beautiful. One day of not having a sunset photo or video won't matter, compared to having that moment of taking it all in, whispering a prayer or wish as it disappears into the horizon, that is so priceless and a rarity. Try it once, as I did, and you may find yourself foregoing gadgets altogether every time wonderful things happen.

They say "you only live once," but I say, we can choose to live our lives every single day. Stay tuned to part two: Boracay Sundown Crawl. 🌅



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SPORTS

# ICTSI Kiteboarding Tour Season 10 Concludes with Thrilling Finale in Boracay

BY AZENITH RESURRECCION  
Photos courtesy of PKA Tour

**B**ULABOG BEACH, BORACAY ISLAND – March 18, 2025 – The 10th season of the ICTSI (Kiteboarding Tour organized by the Philippine Kiteboarding Association (PKA) reached its exhilarating conclusion at the iconic Bulabog Beach in Boracay Island, from March 14-16, 2025. This season finale, the fourth stop of the tour, delivered a spectacular showcase of world-class kiteboarding, attracting athletes and enthusiasts from across the globe.

For a decade, ICTSI (International Container Terminal Services, Inc.) has been the unwavering main sponsor of this prestigious tour, solidifying its commitment to promoting the sport and supporting the Filipino kiteboarding community. This year's event was further amplified by the generous support of Aqua Boracay as the event partner and the local government of Malay, who played a crucial role in ensuring the event's success.

The three-day competition featured four exhilarating disciplines: Twin Tip Racing, Foil Racing, Freestyle and Hangtime, catering to both men and women. The pristine waters and consistent winds of Bulabog Beach provided the perfect stage for the athletes to showcase their skill and prowess.

The event witnessed intense competition and remarkable performances across all categories. Notably, several riders stood out with multiple podium finishes, demonstrating their exceptional talent and consistency.

Hangtime

With the time of 5.77 seconds, Triina Trei (EST) made it to the top spot for women's division, followed by Cyril Dacudao (PHI) at 5.63 seconds and Irene Lara (PHI) at third spot with 5.23 seconds. Archie Bantang (PHI) got the

third spot at 7.48 milliseconds short of Rey Sastre (PHI)'s 7.54 seconds. The 16-year-old Ben Field (PHI) clocked at 7.7 seconds, earning him the top spot.

Freestyle

In the Women's division, Ksenia Ivanova (RUS) claimed the top spot, followed by Cyril Dacudao (PHI) in second, and Triina Trei (EST) in third. The Men's division saw Narapichit Pudla (THA) take first place, with Oswald Smith (RSA) securing second, and Ken Nacor (PHI) earning third.



Overall Champion in Freestyle Men MJ Cahilig during the semi-finals heat

Novice Women: Pia Mantecon (PHI) emerged victorious, with Ksenia Ivanova (RUS) and Christina



The world's elite kiteboarding twin tip racers paint the skies of Bulabog Beach

Klinger (AUT) following in second and third place, respectively. Novice Men: Kobe Delos Santos (PHI) won first, Emmanuel Sacapaño (PHI) second, and Alex Lietz (PHI) third. Grandmasters: Eddie Garcia (PHI) secured first, Mariel Candava (PHI) second, and Warren Vance (NIR) third. Masters: Doque Delos Santos (PHI) took first, Ken Nacor (PHI) second, and Louie Fernando (PHI) third. Women: Irene Lara (PHI) triumphed, with Cyril Dacudao (PHI) and Triina Trei (EST) placing second and third. Men: Stefan Vance (NIR) claimed first, Narapichit Pudla (THA) second, and Jerry Cerera (PHI) third.

Foil Racing

Women: Triina Trei (EST) dominated, followed by Cyril Dacudao (PHI) and Ksenia Ivanova (RUS). Men: Ben Field (PHI) took first, Stefan Vance (NIR) second, John Louie Non (PHI) third, Rey Sastre (PHI) fourth, and Warren Vance (NIR) fifth.

The diverse nationalities represented at the event underscored the international appeal of the competitions. Competitors from Russia, Thailand, South Africa, Estonia, Austria, Northern Ireland, Japan, Vietnam, China and the Philippines, among others, participated, creating a vibrant and multicultural atmosphere.

The successful conclusion of the 10th season solidifies its position as a premier event in the global kiteboarding calendar. The event not only showcased the incredible talent of the athletes but also highlighted the stunning beauty and ideal kiteboarding conditions of Bulabog Beach. For more information about the tour, visit their Facebook page: Philippine Kiteboarding Tour – PKA Tour. 🌴



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SPORTS

# Boracay Open 2025: A Battle on the Sand

BY PAULINE REITZER  
Photos courtesy of All About U

The shores of Boracay once again hosted one of the most thrilling beach Ultimate tournaments in Asia: the Boracay Open 2025, held from March 14 to 16. Three days of high-energy action with 42 teams and one grand prize, the Boracay Open 2025, was nothing short of spectacular.

The competition brought together local and international challengers, creating a dynamic mix of experience and fresh talent on the sandy beaches of Boracay.

In the middle of unbelievable plays, jaw-dropping moments and non-stop excitement, we got to witness two grassroots teams—Nex-Gen Kids & Team Island Kids—making their debut in the Chill Division. As for the most awaited title in the Elite Division, sports fans wondered whether the two local powerhouses, the Boracay Dragons and Boracay Pirates, would defend their turf once again, or if another team would steal the title. The anticipation was sky-high, and the event did not disappoint.

Raising the Stakes

As the tournament progressed, teams adjusted to the heat, raising their intensity with every match. Day 2 was crucial, separating the best from the rest as semifinal spots were locked in. Every point mattered, every throw was important, and every play was a step closer to the championship. The Elite semifinal matches were a showcase of endurance, precision and passion, setting the stage for an unforgettable final.



| Homegrown grassroots players debut in the Chill division

International teams, proving that the future of Ultimate in the Philippines is bright. Both teams made a strong push to the semifinals, with Island Kids securing a spot in the Finals against Zhen Kong Clan (HK).



| A true David vs. Goliath moment

with tears from the young athletes, the post-game huddle was a touching moment, as the older players recognized and praised the young team's skill, perseverance and fearless play.



| 14-year-old Kayla Maming the powerhouse of BU Ninja

on a display of skill and resilience. But the Ninjas, including 14-year-old standout Kayla Maming, played with relentless energy and determination, securing a well-earned victory. Their speed and endurance ultimately gave them the edge, allowing them to claim the Power Pool title.



| Prica Casidsid, still smiling and fully committed to the catch

Nex-Gen and Island Kids Make their Mark

One of the most exciting highlights of the tournament was the debut of the Nex-Gen Kids and Island Kids teams. Just a year ago, these young athletes were part of an exhibition match at the Boracay Open, showcasing their potential. This year, they stepped up to compete in the big league as they joined the Chill Division against 10

David vs. Goliath: A Battle of Heart and Strength

Island Kids came close to pulling off a true underdog victory, pushing their older and taller opponents to the limit. Despite taking an early lead, the Island Kids, aged 9 to 15, struggled as Zhen Kong Clan began using their height advantage to send throws over their heads. In the end, Zhen Kong Clan secured the win in the Chill Pool Finals. Though the loss was tough and filled

Power Division: Youth Takes Over

The Power Division saw an exciting battle between the Boracay Ultimate Ninjas and the Legends. Experience and strategy were on the Legends' side, but the younger generation proved to be a force to be reckoned with. The match against the Boracay Dragons Legends was especially intense. The Grand Masters of the Dragons gave it everything they had, putting

Elite Division Finals: A Battle for Legacy

The highly anticipated final match brought together two of the strongest beach Ultimate teams—Boracay Dragons and Boracay Pirates. It was a showdown no one wanted to miss. The Pirates set the tone early with a long-range connection from Max

to Boracaynon Caren Arban, scoring a two-point goal under a special Boracay rule. They jumped to an early lead, but the Dragons were determined to fight back. More than just a championship was on the line, both teams were chasing a legacy.

Point after point, the intensity grew. Spectacular layouts, high-flying catches, and



| Max snatches the disc mid-air, sealing the victory for the Pirates

precision throws kept us all on edge. The Dragons had been chasing the title back after coming up short in past years, while the Pirates were just as eager to reclaim their title. With the Pirates leading 16-15, the match reached its breaking point. Every play was crucial, and the energy on the field was electric. Then, in a decisive moment, Max made a perfectly timed cut, secured the catch, and rolled forward, sealing the victory.

The Boracay Pirates claimed the 2025 Boracay Open Elite Division Championship with a hard-fought 17-15 win. Cheers erupted across the beach as the Pirates ran towards their endzone, marking another unforgettable chapter in Boracay Open history.

A Celebration of Ultimate and Friendship

Boracay Open has always been more than just a tournament. It's a vibrant gathering of athletes, friends from all over the world and the Ultimate community.

As the sun set, the island transformed into a festival of music, costumes, celebration and camaraderie. The magic of Ultimate? We leave the rivalry behind after walking off the field and put friendship in the center of the party. Players came together to unwind, dance and enjoy the island's famous nightlife.

Looking Ahead: The Legacy Grows

Year after year, Boracay Open proves why it remains the peak of beach Ultimate in Asia. Just when it seems like the tournament has reached its crowning point, it finds new ways to captivate, inspire and bring the community closer together. With new teams and young talents to look forward to, we are thrilled to see what the next battle on the sand will bring. Boracay Open, see you in 2026! 🌴

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ENVIRONMENT

# Plastic Impact and Efforts to Reduce Plastic Use in Boracay

BY DOMINIC NAPAT



Freida Dario-Santiago

When business booms, the economy flourishes but at what cost? Boracay receives millions of visitors every year and many depend on tourism for their livelihood.

How much trash does Boracay generate per day? Let's take a look at statistical information from the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and the 10-Year Ecological Waste Management Plan (EWMP) for the Municipality of Malay.

According to a separate report called the Waste Analysis Study, written in the 10-Year EWMP conducted by the Municipality of Malay in March 2018, approximately 64% of solid waste on the island is generated from commercial establishments, 33% from residential households, and the rest is divided into smaller institutions. Further information from the study shows that 27% of the 34 tons per day are recyclable, 37% are biodegradable, 31% are residual waste, and 4% are other classifications. The waste analysis study did not specify classifications such as glass or plastic.

### National Laws

The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, RA No. 9003, was amended into the Extended Producer Responsibility Act of 2022. This Republic Act requires enterprises to register with the National Solid Waste Management Commission to “reduce and/or recover for reuse, recycling treatment, or proper ecological disposal of the plastic packaging” released into the market (Republic Act No. 9003, 2022). Therefore, the statistical information on the EMB database reflects only the establishments that have reported their plastic packaging discharge. For more accurate data, all commercial establishments of Boracay need to report plastic release to prevent under-reporting. With proper data, proper measures can be taken to address the plastic problem, but more importantly, we can prevent a solid waste crisis sooner.

Local commercial establishments contribute more than 60% of Boracay's solid waste since 2018, the same time that the Municipal Ordinance No. 386 was initiated. In 2018, the LGU of Malay initiated Municipal Ordinance No. 386 that prohibits the use of single-use plastics from all establishment accommodations on the island. Single-use plastics can include straws, containers, bags and other

packaging materials.

### Boracay Establishments Address the Problem of Plastics

For this piece, I was able to investigate and learned how some businesses have adapted to the local ordinance and heard their suggestions on mitigating the plastic problem. Here's what they had to say.

### What has your organization done to reduce plastic use?

#### Cathy's Bistro Bulabog

“We use a practical approach that still abides by the food safety standards while reducing plastic dependence. Nearly 15% of the business earnings are from take-out and managing suitable food storage options is a challenge every restaurant faces. Coffee-based straws as well as tree-free food storage containers and cups are the first approach to reducing plastic use.”

#### Aria Cucina Italiana

“All take-out orders use alternative packaging materials, notably bagasse, which is made from the pulp of sugarcane to make boxes. These boxes are wrapped in paper twine and then packed in paper bags. Plastic water bottles have been replaced by glass bottles, and disposable utensils are utilized.”

#### Two Brown Boys

“Being in the food business, we are obligated to practice these new ordinances, and we implement these eco-friendly products.”

#### The Nonie's Group

“Since our inception in 2017, Nonie's has been committed to sustainable practices to minimize our environmental footprint. We've consistently used metal or paper straws, biodegradable food packaging and glass bottles for our kombucha. Our restaurant features furnishings made from locally reclaimed wood, reflecting our dedication to the 3 R's: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Additionally, we offer a recycling program for our B2B kombucha clients, providing discounts when they return glass bottles to us. This initiative promotes a circular economy and strengthens our commitment to sustainability.”

#### Lemoni Cafe & Restaurant / Diniview Villa Resort / Dinibeach Bar & Restaurant

“The distribution of plastic water bottles has been replaced with large purified water dispensers in each room so that water is regularly provided. Single-use items were replaced by refillable shampoo and soap jars. Guests receive multi-purpose tote bags for everyday use. Plastic straws have been removed from our restaurants and paper packaging materials for take-out orders.”

#### Kolai Mangyan Fudhaus

“We have replaced most of our plastic or Styrofoam take-out packaging to food-grade paper materials, such as cups, straws, food boxes and paper bags. We also shifted to starch-based utensils, provided only when customers request them, since most are delivered to homes or accommodations where they already have utensils. Since we opened in 2011, we have always offered free drinking water to our customers. This helps reduce the need for them to buy bottled water, despite potential sales opportunities on our part. We mainly sell sodas in glass bottles or cans, though some larger bottles (1.5 liters) are still plastic. We offer an array of pitcher-drink alternatives to these plastic-bottled sodas. In food preparation, we mainly use washable containers for pre-mixed sauces and portioned items and do so as much as we can. We order supplies in bulk, requesting delivery in trays, baskets or boxes instead of plastic bags. If plastic bags are used in their delivery, we reuse them as garbage bags. Staff are also instructed to bring reusable bags for smaller purchases.”

### What measures or policies do you have in place to reduce the environmental impact of plastic waste discharge?

#### Cathy's

“Choosing better alternatives to plastic utensils can sometimes be more wasteful, especially in big catered events. Paper cups and straws often get soggy and useless after a few minutes. It takes more resources to constantly replace them. In this case, a smarter approach must be taken. The cost of a coffee-based straw and a paper straw is the same, but they have a much longer useful life without the soggy. Tree-free storage containers and cups are more durable compared to the softer paper-based container that absorbs the food and often leaks.”

#### Aria Restaurant

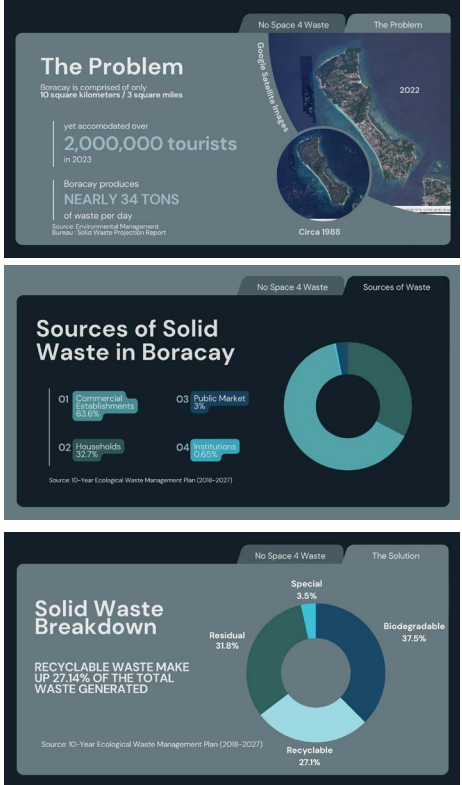
“The Pollution Control Officer manages and implements new technologies and proper handling of our waste disposal. The approach is to take small, simple steps every day that still balance practicality and food safety standards.”

#### Nonie's

“Sustainability is one of our company values and we base our offerings and our operations around this value. We integrate sustainability into our culture and our team is fully aligned with our mission to minimize our environmental impact. We are proud to say they consistently work together to uphold and enhance our eco-friendly practices.”

#### Lemoni / Diniview / Dinibeach

“All staff are trained and educated about the issues with plastic items. Since Boracay was closed in 2018 for environmental reasons, we always remind



Infographics courtesy of No Space 4 Waste

### The Facts

The online EMB waste generation records only up to the last five years. Boracay generated 34.29 tons or 31,100kgs of solid waste per day in 2024 according to the EMB. The report shows a steady increase of a total of four tons or 3,600kgs per day from 2020 to 2025.

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everyone of the problems with plastics in the ocean. Solid waste segregation is practiced regularly. Beach clean-ups with our staff are conducted regularly, especially during the *Habagat* season."

**Kolai Mangyan**

"Part of the orientation and training of our staff includes practices such as proper waste segregation according to local rules, reusing plastics, minimizing plastic usage, and promoting other eco-friendly habits among staff and customers, such as conservation of water and energy, that all-in-all foster continuous environmental consciousness even in their own homes and personal lives."

*How has your organization's dependence on plastics changed and what will change further to address plastic pollution?*

**Cathy's Bistro**

"There needs to be a balance. Catering a 200-person event presents challenges. Metal straws are costly and glass cups can shatter, creating a safety issue. Choosing the best item for the job while abiding by the ordinance is the best approach."

**Two Brown Boys**

"Biodegradable alternatives have replaced plastic packaging since the initiation of the municipal ordinance. Although slowly, plastic packaging has been replaced by paper boxes, glass bottles, eco/paper bags, reusable bottles and wooden spoons and forks."

**Nonie's**

"Nonie's has prioritized minimizing plastic usage and implementing sustainable practices since the beginning. To further address plastic pollution, we are actively exploring additional eco-friendly solutions. For instance, we are considering the adoption of biodegradable food-grade plastic wraps and compostable food service gloves. Integrating such products into our operations would enhance our sustainability efforts and reduce our reliance on conventional plastics. We remain committed to continuous improvement in our sustainability practices and are eager to adopt innovative solutions that align with our environmental values."

**Lemoni / Diniview / Dinibeach**

"We are always looking for environmentally friendly products for the restaurants, and to reduce and reuse the plastic containers we have."

**Kolai Mangyan**

"Our dependence on plastics gradually but drastically changed over time, as we started to make small changes, step-by-step. This was in response to the growing awareness on environmental degradation due to plastic pollution. When we started making small changes, we found that not only is it possible to shift to more environmentally sustainable products and practices, but that it also made practical business sense. For example, while sustainable products like paper can be slightly more expensive, reusable items in our operations reduced overall costs compared to single-use plastics. Ordering in bulk, using refillable cleaning supplies also helped reduce expenses. It has made us more mindful, overall, resulting in cost cuts across the board. We are continually looking for changes we can make because in the long run, choosing sustainable options will ensure we still have our business and our island in the years to come."

*Can you envision a plastic-free island?*

**Cathy's Bistro**

"The solution to environmental sustainability needs a scalpel not a shovel.

There needs to be a smarter way to be sustainable without virtue signaling. There is no competition to be superior in earth sustainability and practicality and instead strive for a balance. Let's be smarter."

**Aria Restaurant**

"It is really hard to eradicate the use of plastic especially for storing, transporting, and keeping our food items in a food safety aspect in operation but we try in our little ways to be part of the solution."

**Two Brown Boys**

"Once the best solutions have been identified, it should be seen how they could fit within the overall policy strategy. To be sustainable, they need a proven economic business case and legislative backing where relevant. After that, the island will be more beautiful and less polluted so that it can attract more tourists for having a plastic-free island."

**Nonie's**

"Envisioning a plastic-free island is an inspiring goal which requires a collective effort from businesses, consumers and policymakers. Continued focus on sustainability, coupled with the development of affordable and accessible eco-friendly alternatives, can turn this vision into reality. Broader adoption of eco-friendly alternatives is often hindered by higher costs and limited availability. Despite these challenges, we've observed a significant shift over the past eight years, with increased use of biodegradable packaging and a reduction in plastic straws. This trend is encouraging, and as sustainable products become more mainstream, we anticipate that prices will decrease, making them more accessible. The narrowing cost disparity between traditional and green packaging methods, driven by economies of scale and technological advancements, supports this optimism."

**Lemoni / Diniview / Dinibeach**

"We need to go back to banning single-use plastic bags. The garbage segregation system where the Municipal Recovery Facility (MRF) could have more visible segregation locations. More informational signs could spread awareness and garbage cans placed in more locations. Most of all, the government offices should demand that big companies be more accountable for the plastic packaging and the bottles they discharge. For example, there are places in Europe where people get financial incentives to return the bottle to a collection point. During beach cleanups, plastic bottles are one of the biggest issues found."

**Kolai Mangyan**

"A plastic-free island can be possible through improved environmental ordinances, consistent implementation and careful monitoring. Strictly ban the use of plastic and paper bags in groceries and stores then locals will eventually adapt and develop the habit of bringing reusable bags and containers. Oblige hotels and restaurants to have refilling stations for water and condiments. Shift to paper products for take-out containers and provide disposable utensils and packed condiments only upon request for take-out and delivery orders. Replace the sale of small plastic soft drink bottles with glass bottles and cans which are more recyclable than plastic bottles. Improve solid-waste management systems and place adequate trash bins in public areas and maintain them. Implementing Barangay-level MRFs to enhance waste segregation among residents and reduce landfill waste.

These are simple practices that also promote environmental consciousness. Conduct continuous education and training for local leaders and learn from

best practices from other regions and countries and refining our environmental regulations. Promote social responsibility, particularly among larger hotel and restaurant chains, by encouraging their active participation in environmental preservation. Large establishments that likely work under international standards, may also help support the small businesses community by sharing best practices and actionable solutions to reduce plastic waste in their operations. Educate and involve the youth and residents. When locals show strong commitment to environmental protection, tourists are more likely to follow and respect these practices and may even bring the practice home with them."

**Conclusion**

It is clear that these businesses of Boracay have taken the extra effort to create a smart balance between earth sustainability and practicality. Their insights can provide a blueprint to preventing a plastic waste crisis and to preserve the beauty of Boracay Island.

Although Municipal Ordinance No. 386 was implemented nearly seven years ago, continuing that example of good governance and social responsibility is needed to keep every establishment accountable for their plastic discharge. Each effort, no matter how small, can create a huge impact for the future of Boracay. As long as there are projects to build more hotels and restaurants, the amount of waste generated each day will increase. Everyone should take responsibility for the waste that is left behind. Most of all, it is up to every person that lives here to do a small act of kindness to nature every day. If we do this the right way, we can save the magic of our paradise home. 🌴

# We like this!

Although Starbucks' environmental friendliness is a complex issue, with both positive and negative aspects, the company has made strides in sustainability initiatives like the Greener Stores program and ethical sourcing of coffee. However, they face criticism for their significant waste generation, particularly from disposable cups. Having said this, their "LET'S SKIP IT: Little choices, big changes" campaign is hard to miss, anywhere in the world, and drives home a great lesson: always be mindful of your wasteful consumption and ask only for what you need. — **Freida Dario-Santiago**



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**Website:** jtsmanukangrille.com  
**FB:** JT's Manukan Grille Boracay  
**Phone:** 0968 6001961

# INDULGE

## BSN's Guide to the Island's Top 6 Summer Quenchers

BY RICA VELASCO

Cool off in the tropical paradise of Boracay with our "Top 6 Summer Quenchers," from iconic shakes to revitalizing drinks that help beat the island heat.



Jony's Fruit Shakes

Jony's, known as "Boracay's Original and Famous" fresh fruit shake spot since 1982, offers at least 60 different shake options on the menu. Fruit and milkshake lovers can choose among the classics such as a refreshing mango or watermelon shake, or more adventurous mixes like Bananatella and Mango Spinach.

White Beach, Station 1 (+63 36) 288 6179



Strawberry milkshake at Jammers Beach Shack

A beloved favorite since 2002, Jammers Beach Shack is the go-to spot for their famous burgers, chili cheese fries and shakes. After a revamp last year, they still managed to preserve the classic goodness of their delicious milkshakes topped with whipped cream. Choose from strawberry, vanilla or chocolate! Finish off your meal with their homemade Pineapple or Mango Whip for a light and refreshing dessert.

D'Mall, Station 2 (+63 917) 145 2788



Jonah's Fruit Shakes

Another shake haven is Jonah's Fruit Shakes, established in 1983. Likewise at the top of the must-try list especially during the summer season, there are several branches to choose from. Their shake combinations include all-time favorites like the delightful Chocolate-Banana-Peanut and the classic Avocado shakes.

White Beach, Station 1 (Astoria alley), Station 2, Bulabog Beach Road  
(+63 919) 630 8728



Halo-halo at Kelana

Kelana Coastal Cuisine, a recently opened restaurant by the beach, offers a diverse menu featuring dishes from various coastlines around the world. A highlight on the menu is the classic Filipino dessert, Halo-halo. This treat is made by blending crushed ice, milk, sweetened beans, fruits, coconut strips, gulaman, pinipig, taro, flan, wafer sticks, and other ingredients. A scoop of ube ice cream tops off this delightful dessert that is perfect for a summer day.

White Beach, Station 2  
(+63 917) 541 9504



All the Way at Sunny Side Cafe

The Sunny Side Café, known for its cheery ambiance, fantastic beach views and popular and distinctive all-day breakfast choices, also offers uniquely refreshing signature shakes with the perfect ingredient combinations. Favorites include "All the Way" made with pineapple, lychee, calamansi and smashed mint, and "It's Not You, It's Me" made with mango, pineapple, orange and muddled basil.

White Beach, Station 1 and Station 3 (Boracay Sands Hotel)  
(+63 36) 288 2874



Classic Mojito and Traditional Mojito muddled with watermelon at Epic Boracay's Fresh Fruit Bar

Epic Boracay is centrally located along White Beach and transforms from a family-friendly restaurant during the day to a vibrant party destination at night. Their thirst-quenching drinks are suitable for any time and include the top three best-selling fruit shakes: mango, banana and watermelon. For an extra kick, delve into their fresh fruit bar cocktails, such as the Classic Mojito (white rum, calamansi juice, sprite, sugar syrup, mint leaves) and the Traditional Mojito muddled with Watermelon (white rum, muddled with fresh spearmint leaves, raw sugar and lime).  
D'Mall, Station 2 (+63 917) 130 2619





ISLAND CALENDAR Special dates this month

MANOMISSION 2025: Another One for the Books! May 9 at Café GotSoul, Station 1

BY FREIDA DARIO-SANTIAGO

MANOMISSION is back this year by popular demand after last year’s highly celebrated comeback! The return of the iconic event celebrates the spirit of a golden era of House music, with the man behind the mission, **Manolet Dario**, who celebrates another revolution around the sun by sharing the love once again.

>>> Rewind

From the very first *MANOMISSION* in April 1998 to the final one in 2004 when he shared the stage with no less than Miguel Migs, the annual pilgrimage to Boracay Island

during Holy Week delivered its followers to greater heights of consciousness and good times, in an unadulterated celebration of life with pureness unmatched, known as the MANOMISSION. The annual event attracted people from all over the country to gather and hear the gospel from DJ Manolet Dario’s pulpit of House music. Such was his cult following that the tribe grew each year, and wherever he went, they followed. The holy ground was the island of Boracay. The man behind the mission is legendary DJ Manolet Dario, who hardly needs an

introduction. An iconic and key figure in Manila’s electronic dance music industry, also nicknamed the Godfather of House Music in the Philippines, his brand name–MANOMISSION–is an invitation to engage. “Ever since the first time I came to Boracay in the summer of 1991, I felt there was something special about walking the powdery white sand of the island, the green light on top of the coconut tree at Beachcomber or the red light marking Bazura, and lying on the beach and staring at the clear night sky—to name a few of the many reasons for doing *Manomission* in 1998. I have returned to the island regularly to play for fun and work, way before it was dubbed “LaBoracay.”

>>> Fast-forward

Last year, 26 years later, I decided to do it on the milestone year of my 60<sup>th</sup>, and it was phenomenal! This year, together with my wife Dee, our Groove team, and our favorite



Boracay DJs are taking it a notch higher at our new island headquarters, Café GotSoul and Casa Mezcaleria at the beachfront of Station 1. We’d love to see you all there from May 1 to 13, and for Manomission on the 9<sup>th</sup>! 🌴

May Holidays and Fiestas BY RICA VELASCO

May is a month of festivities, traditions and global observances. It brings together national holidays that honor workers and mothers, while religious feasts highlight faith and devotion. Across the Philippines, colorful fiestas and cultural events fill towns with music, dance and community spirit, while the world marks important awareness days that advocate for peace, equality and sustainability.

May 1: Labor Day

Labor Day, locally known as *Araw ng mga Manggagawa*, is celebrated every May 1. It’s more than just a public holiday—it’s a tribute to the resilience and dedication of Filipino workers. The day is marked by parades, rallies and calls for labor reforms, with workers advocating for fair wages and better working conditions. In Boracay, Labor Day has evolved into a grand weekend celebration known as Love Boracay. This event, introduced as part of the island’s post-rehabilitation efforts, merges festivities with sustainability. This year, the celebration became a vibrant multicultural affair, featuring beach parties,

an acoustic music marathon featuring homegrown island musicians, various sports competitions held simultaneously, a *paraw* regatta, plus beach cleanups and eco-awareness campaigns to balance tourism with environmental protection. **May 1: Fiesta de Obreros** In Malay, Aklan, the *Fiesta de Obreros* or “Festival of Laborers” coincides with Labor Day but carries a more local and cultural flavor. Dedicated to St. Joseph the Worker, the town’s patron saint, the festival features lively street dancing, colorful parades and community feasts. The highlight is *Pasada*, a dance performance symbolizing the community’s agricultural and fishing heritage. Locals don vibrant costumes inspired by their trades, celebrating their livelihood through graceful choreography and rhythmic drumbeats. **May 8: World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day** World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day honors humanitarian workers and volunteers who provide aid during emergencies. In the Philippines, the local

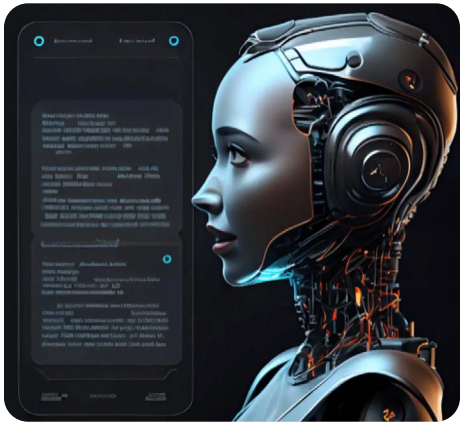
Red Cross chapters hold blood drives, first aid training, and community outreach programs. Volunteers distribute relief packages to vulnerable groups, while educational seminars emphasize disaster preparedness and first-aid techniques. **May 11: Mother’s Day** Falling on the second Sunday of May, Mother’s Day honors the selflessness and strength of mothers, who play a vital role in both family and society. Beyond the usual gifts and flowers, many Filipino families organize special gatherings, hosting meals and spending quality time together. Hotels and restaurants offer Mother’s Day brunches, and local events such as serenades or mini concerts dedicated to mothers are organized in public areas. In Boracay, beachfront resorts often hold pampering sessions, offering spa treatments and sunset dinners to make the occasion extra special. **May 1–31: Flores de Mayo** Throughout May, Filipino Catholics celebrate *Flores de Mayo*, a month-long festival honoring the Virgin Mary. Known for its vibrant floral offerings and nightly prayers, it’s deeply rooted in the country’s religious traditions. The highlight of the festival is the *Santacruzan*, a grand procession held on

the last day of May. During this event, young women dressed in elaborate gowns represent biblical characters and virtues, while men carry religious icons. In Aklan, the Santacruzan often takes on a distinctly local touch, with participants wearing outfits adorned with local materials, showcasing both faith and cultural pride. **May 22: International Day for Biological Diversity** The International Day for Biological Diversity highlights the importance of preserving the world’s rich biodiversity. In the Philippines, where biodiversity is both abundant and threatened, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) leads various campaigns promoting conservation and sustainability. On the island of Boracay, where marine biodiversity plays a vital role in its tourism-driven economy, the day is celebrated with eco-friendly initiatives. Local organizations, alongside resorts and dive shops, organize beach cleanups and coral restoration activities. Educational workshops on marine conservation are held to raise awareness among tourists and locals alike. 🌿

DIGITAL LIFE Get with the program!

Work Smarter, Not Harder: AI Apps and Assistants for Work and Life

BY PAULINE REITZER



Medium.com

We live in a world where time is one of our most valuable resources. With busy schedules and endless to-do lists, finding ways to be more efficient is a game-changer. The phrase “work smarter, not harder” has never been more relevant, thanks to artificial intelligence (AI) apps and assistants. These tools help organize tasks, boost productivity and make life and work easier.

AI for Work Efficiency

1. AI Writing Assistants

AI-powered writing tools like ChatGPT,

- Jasper and Grammarly help professionals draft emails, generate reports and edit content with ease. They reduce the time spent on writing while ensuring clarity and coherence, making communication more effective if this is not your forte.
- 2. Notion and Evernote for AI-Driven Organization** These note-taking and productivity apps integrate AI to help you structure your work, set reminders and even summarize notes. Notion’s AI can generate task lists and automate workflows, making project management so much easier.
- 3. Clockwise and Motion for Smart Scheduling** The multitaskers and freelancers with multiple calendars can rest easy with AI-powered scheduling tools like Clockwise and Motion that optimize your calendar by analyzing meeting patterns and suggesting the best time slots. They help eliminate scheduling conflicts and maximize your productivity.
- 4. RescueTime and TimeCamp for Time Tracking** AI-driven analytics tools track how

- much time you spend on different tasks, offering insights on how to optimize your workflow. These apps help you avoid distractions and ensure that time is spent productively.
- 5. Otter.ai and Fireflies.ai for Transcription** Meetings and brainstorming sessions are often valuable but taking notes can be time-consuming. In an era where voice memos are becoming the norm and where interviews are made virtually, AI transcription tools like Otter.ai and Fireflies.ai convert spoken words into text in real time, making it easier to document discussions.
- AI for Personal Life Enhancement**
- 1. Google Assistant, Siri and Alexa for Smart Assistance** AI personal assistants help manage everyday tasks, from setting reminders and alarms to controlling smart home devices. They make multitasking effortless and ensure important tasks aren’t overlooked.
- 2. Todoist and Microsoft To Do for Task Management** AI-driven task management apps help you prioritize tasks, set deadlines and receive smart reminders. They simplify daily planning and help you stay on track.
- 3. AI-Powered Finance Management: Cleo and YNAB** Budgeting and expense tracking can

- be automated with AI apps like Cleo and YNAB (You Need A Budget). These tools analyze spending patterns, offer financial advice and help you stay within budget.
- 4. Fitness and Health AI: MyFitnessPal and Fitbit** AI-driven health apps monitor fitness levels, suggest workouts and track calorie intake. They provide personalized recommendations to help you achieve your health goals efficiently, like setting up a weekly menu within your calorie needs, restrictions and even the country you live in, so vegetables and recipes are easily accessible.
- 5. Duolingo and ELSA Speak for AI Language Learning** Learning a new language is easier with AI-driven platforms that adapt to individual learning styles. Duolingo and ELSA Speak provide interactive exercises and real-time feedback to enhance language proficiency.
- AI-powered apps and assistants are transforming the way we work and live by automating repetitive tasks, improving efficiency and offering intelligent insights. By mastering these tools, we can focus on creative and strategic endeavors while minimizing stress and maximizing productivity. In a world where time is the most valuable resource, AI helps us truly work smarter, not harder. 🌱



# THE MANY WAYS TO STAY FIT & HEALTHY THIS SUMMER

BY JAZ MARA

With sunny weather and vacation trips to enjoy, summer is the season when everyone finds ways to be active and fit, and be in the best shape they can be. This paradise island offers several fitness activities so that maintaining or improving one's fitness is a cinch!

### Walking

Walking is considered the most underrated exercise. It reaps countless benefits, yet is the most convenient exercise anyone can do. At least 10,000 steps a day is ideal to stay healthy, both physically and mentally. An island like Boracay is a great place to achieve those steps. Immersing in nature and appreciating the island's scenery is also beneficial for mental health, helping to clear thoughts and reduce stress.

Here are some possible paths and trails that are perfect for early morning or afternoon to sunset walks:

- Route 1 (Beach stroll): Station 1 to Angol Beach (approx. 6,000 steps or 12,000 steps round trip)
- Route 2 (Errand walk): Station 3 > Kingfisher Road > Bulabog Beach > Mt. Luho > Sinagpa (approx. 10,000 steps) — This walk can include important errands along the way, such as grocery or hardware shopping at Shoppes at Station B.
- Route 3 (Golden hour stroll in time for sunset): Angol Beach > Station 3 > Kingfisher Road > Back Road > Bulabog Beach > Mt. Luho > Sinagpa > White Beach Station 1 to Angol Beach (approx. 16,000 steps) — Start this walk around 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. and you'll be at the front beach in time for sunset!



Walking is always more enjoyable with company.

### Strength Training

One of the key components of a well-rounded fitness routine is strength training. It focuses on building muscles and increasing endurance through the use of equipment and weights. There are quite a number of fitness gyms on the island that are well-equipped, such as **DC Fitness Gym** (Main Road, Station 1).

This fully-equipped gym houses certain machines that other gyms on the island don't such as the curved treadmill for sprints and the hip thrust machine, which is perfect for growing those glutes. Currently, the gym has two trainers who can guide gym goers to achieve their goals. Membership packages are available depending on one's preference, whether you're a local or a tourist. Members can also enjoy fitness classes such as Zumba and yoga, and free use of the sauna, hot and cold showers and body assessment machine. (Facebook/Instagram: DC Fitness Boracay)

The two-story **Alpha Fitness Gym** at Patio Pacific (Main Road, Station 2), also open to residents, long-staying and walk-in guests, is equipped with well-maintained machines for cardiovascular exercises. With monthly, quarterly and yearly membership

packages, members can enjoy the lap pool and shower rooms with lockers and basic toiletries so that one can leave the gym refreshed and ready for the next activity. They also provide water and towels. Upon request, gym attendants can design a program that targets personal fitness goals. (Facebook/Instagram: Patio Pacific Boracay)



Hip Thrust Machine and weights from DC Fitness Gym



Alpha Fitness Gym

### Boxing and Muay Thai

Practicing martial arts such as boxing and Muay Thai not only enhances physical fitness, but it also improves focus and concentration, increases self-confidence and develops self-defense skills.

**Legacy Gym** (Diniwid Road) is a Muay Thai and mixed martial arts gym, owned by Ole Laursen, a former world Muay Thai champion. This gym has two boxing rings, an octagon cage and a spacious area for circuit training. Equipped with punching bags, ropes, a training ladder and weights, they offer group classes for conditioning, boxing and Muay Thai, and one-on-one training for various levels. If you are the type who gets motivated from the energy of people around you, then joining group classes will be perfect for you. Whether you are doing it to stay fit or training for a fighting career, their professional coaches can guide you through your martial arts journey.



Mondays-Saturdays: Group classes  
Sundays: Private sessions.



Coach Jojo Bardon

There are also appointment-based coaches who can meet you at your preferred venue anywhere on the island. One of them is Jojo Bardon who is a boxing and Muay Thai coach at Legacy Gym. A former Philippine Flyweight Champion and Oriental Pacific Boxing Federation Champion, he has been training both locals and tourists on the island for several years now. (Facebook:jojo.bardon)

### Racket Sports

Interestingly, racket sports do more than just exercise the muscles; they also for brain health, as this type of sport is fast-paced and requires focus, and quick and strategic decision-making skills, keeping the brain active and sharp. **Beach tennis** courts are usually set up along White Beach in Station 1 in the morning or late afternoon. Players are welcome to join, whether beginner or intermediate level. Another option is **Shangri-La Boracay's** tennis court which is offered to resort members with coaches available upon request. (Facebook/Instagram: ShangriLaBoracay)

For indoor racket sports, there's **badminton** and **pickleball**. The courts are located on the second floor of CityMall but must be booked in advance. There is always a coach present to train and help out. Although they may look similar, they vary in many ways and it's best to try them out to see which one is most enjoyable and appropriate for you. (Badminton inquiries & reservations: + 63 915 7319955; Pickleball inquiries & reservations: + 63 917 163 9399)

### Yoga and Pilates

Yoga and Pilates are both mind & body practices that promote overall health, improve body awareness and reduce stress.

Yoga combines physical postures called *asanas*, breathing techniques called *pranayama* and meditation to enhance flexibility, mental clarity and relaxation. Yoga has different styles from meditative ones like Hatha and Yin Yoga to dynamic ones like Vinyasa, Ashtanga and Aerial Yoga.



Yoga class at Lanterna  
Yoga instructor Annika

Pilates on the other hand, is starting to be a favorite for many, since it is a low-impact exercise that emphasizes core strength, stability and controlled movements for muscle endurance. This exercise can be done on the mat or using specialized equipment such as a reformer or a Cadillac. Two establishments on the island offer classes on different types of yoga and mat Pilates: Happiness Hostel (Facebook/Instagram: Happiness Hostel Boracay) and Lanterna Hotel (Facebook and Instagram: Lanterna Hotel Boracay). Schedules vary per week depending on instructors' availability, so it is best to inquire and to reserve a slot days before your preferred class.

### Golf

While golf may seem like a leisurely activity focusing mostly on mental discipline, patience and strategic decision making, it offers numerous physical benefits as well. Since it involves walking a vast space, going from one hole to the next, golfers get good cardiovascular exercise. The sport also enhances muscle strength, flexibility, balance and coordination with every proper swing of a golf club. It is a low-impact sport, which is a great way to stay active without putting excessive strain on one's joints. **Fairways and Bluewater Boracay** has an 18-hole championship golf course on the island that allows its members and even non-members to learn and practice golf. They offer lockers, golf clubs and golf carts for rent. They also have golf instructors to teach beginners and assist players. Rates vary for members and non-members, so visiting and booking a schedule should be done beforehand. (For inquiries & reservations: +63 917 823 5875; Facebook and Instagram: Fairways and Bluewater Boracay)



Actor Derek Ramsey at Fairways golf course

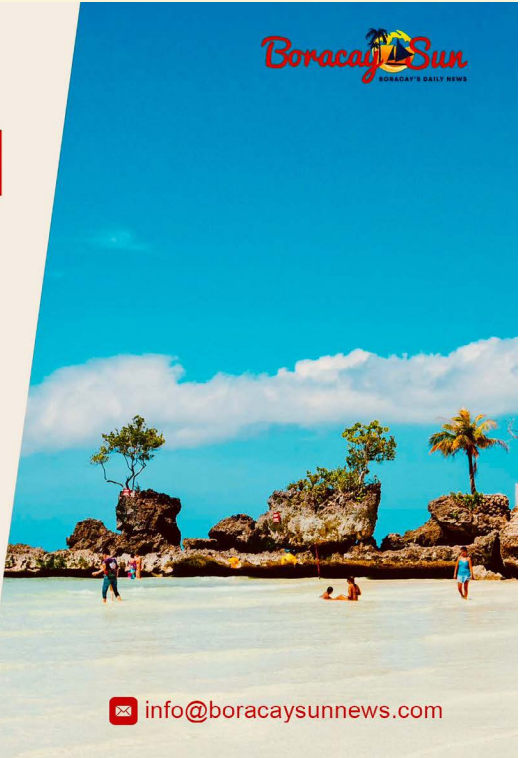
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**C5** Aria Cucina Italiana  
**C5** Aria Gelato  
**C5** Back Beach Burgers  
**C5** Cafe del Sol  
**C5** D'Mall  
**C5** Epic Boracay  
**C5** Hama Japanese  
**C5** Hobbit Tavern  
**C5, C6** Island Chicken Inasal  
**C5** Jammers Beach Shack  
**C5, D3** JT's Manukan Grille  
**C5** Kelana  
**C5** Lemoni Cafe  
**C5** Pick A Pearl Boracay  
**C5, C6** Coco Mama  
**C5** Mango Mama  
**C6, D4** The Sunny Side Cafe  
**D3** Villa Caemilla  
**D3** Bistro Des Amis  
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Sibuyan Sea

Crocodile Island

The Road to Kalibo





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Visit Villa Caemilla Restaurant, open daily from 6 am to 12 midnight, and delight in a tantalizing menu of international cuisine. Indulge in a variety of savory options including fresh salads, sandwiches, steaks, pasta, and seafood. Our restaurant is the perfect setting for families and friends to enjoy shared meals. Make sure to join us for our daily happy hour from 4 pm to 6 pm!

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