

THE FILIPINO E-MAGAZINE IN EUROPE

Roots & wings

CULTURE PEOPLE PEACES

- on this issue -

AGREA & NUTRITION

FILIPINO TASTE IN ICELAND

FILIPINO FOOD FAIR BRUSSELS

MOSCOW WORLD FOOD DAY

October of 2019

Dear Kababayans



Food is one of the defining ingredients of a nation and its people. The Philippine archipelago of over 7,000 islands yield immense diversity from its expansive agricultural lands and limitless shores. Today's climate and

food issues dominate global headlines. This month's Roots and Wings issue highlights the Philippines as a country eco-rich and entrepreneurial and is beating headlines on global nutrition and gastronomy tourism. Cherrie Atilano, young and remarkable agri-entrepreneur featured in Roots and Wings (RAW August 2019) is freshly appointed in New York by United Nations Secretary-General Antoni Guterres as a high-level ambassador to the UN's Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in its bid to eliminate all forms of malnutrition across the world by 2030.

Jennifer Fergesen, RAW Iceland Country

Editor is conferred this month the Plaridel Award for her food story Filipino Taste in Iceland, one that "explores cultural diversity and unique perspectives on Filipino cuisine." The San Francisco-based Award was "created to inspire and empower journalists of Filipino descent by acknowledging and celebrating outstanding journalism."

It's awesome to be the at helm of Roots and Wings now on its 11th year of publication and surrounded by a team of brilliant Filipino-European journalists. I am fascinated by Belgium-based Louise Baterna's encompassing Filipino Food Festival in Brussels, awed by award-winning Jennifer Fergesen's Hotel am Brillantengrund in Vienna, and curious about Gloria Grejalde's World Food Day in Moscow. Complimenting the sweet and savoury are Philippine-based Marthy Angue's 22nd Cine Europa Philippines Cinema screened in Makati and Mae Cayir's age-old Bicol tradition of honouring Ina, our Lady of Penafrancia in Austria. Hunting for Pinoy delights in Europe? Take a screenshot of Jennifer's listing of European Carinderia.

Betsy von Atzigen
Editor-in-Chief & Founder

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Roots&Wings Filipino Magazine in Europe

the team



ELIZABETH "BETSY" VON ATZIGEN
Editor-in-Chief



MARTHY ANGUE
Associate Editor, Philippines



MAE CAYIR
Bureau Editor, Austria



LOUISE BATERNA
Bureau Editor, Belgium



REBECCA GARCIA URBANCIK
Bureau Editor, Czechia & Germany



JENNIFER FERGESEN
Bureau Editor, Iceland



AYA SUNGA ASKERT
Bureau Editor, Sweden



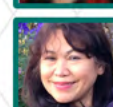
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Bureau Editor, Russia



AIMEE ALADO
Bureau Editor, United Kingdom



LYNDY BAGARES
Web Editor, Norway



RACHEL HANSEN
Business Ventures Editor, Founder

contents

PROFILE

AGREA, p4
Brian Gandola, p24

THE FOOD ISSUE

Filipino Taste in Iceland, pg10
Philippine Food Festival in Brussels, p14
Hotel am Brillantengrund, p18
Carinderias in Europe, p22

EVENTS

Our Lady of Penafrancia in Vienna, p26

NEWS

WorldFood Moscow, p30
CineEuropa 22, p32
H.E. Franz Jessen, p33
International Design Conference, p34
The Nordic Awards, p35

RAWVENTURES

For Sale in Tagaytay, p36
Maia Magpantay, p38



Cherrie Atilano teaching students in one of the TGC schools in Siargao

ECOLOGY *of* DIGNITY

How this Filipina is scaling nutrition through “One-island economy”

Multi-awarded Filipina agriculture changemaker - Cherrie Atilano, was recently appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, to be a high-level ambassador of the UN Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. Ms. Atilano is a SUN Movement Lead Group member effective this year, until the year 2021. The SUN Movement is successfully catalysing the fight against malnutrition in 60 countries, including the Philippines. Cherrie leads together with 26 ambassadors across the globe.

Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Cherrie, in recognition of her strong commitment to the fight against malnutrition, as evidenced by her grassroots work towards rural development through sustainable agriculture in AGREA. Cherrie is the Founding Farmer, CEO and President of AGREA – an innovative and inclusive enterprise founded on fair trade and sustainable agriculture, and is based in the island province of Marinduque. AGREA is creating the first replicable model of



Wave 9 graduates of AGREA Farm School

a one-island economy that is zero hunger, zero waste, and zero insufficiency.

“I make my commitment to secure nutrition by securing food sufficiency and security. Always make farming sexy by mentoring a lot of young people to venture in agriculture, empower women in agriculture to make sure proper nutrition starts from home, work on multi stakeholder partnerships on making sure nutrition will be a serious business to lower stunted growth and boost our human capital productivity, and invests in impactful agri-foods.” Cherrie shared in a post.

The principle of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement is that “everyone has the right to food and nutrition”, and this two should go hand in hand. SUN movement is a renewed effort to eliminate malnutrition in all its forms, and ensure a world free from malnutrition by 2030. The movement addresses the problem of 149 million children, who are suffering from malnutrition – which has devastating consequences for health, learning, future earning potential,

economic development, resilience and security. Nutrition is a maker and marker of sustainable development. Ending malnutrition in all its forms is essential to unlocking the full potential of current and future generations, and for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Cherrie’s role is to support the 60 member countries, as they pursue their goals to scale up nutrition. She will also provide strategic oversight of the Movement: encouraging coherence and collective accountability for results.

With this role of providing strategic oversight and scaling nutrition across the globe, Cherrie is championing and anchoring on AGREA’s core programs and best practices. AGREA’s programs such as: The Garden Classroom, Farm School, Women in Agriculture, and Family Farming. These programs are value-adding holistic approaches in enabling the replicable one-island economy of AGREA. What’s exciting is this can be evidenced based models that may be scalable in SUN Movement’s 60 participating countries.

The Garden Classroom (TGC): learning from the ground up From idle lands, to ideal living classrooms of learning - The Garden Classroom program’s mission is to enhance the quality of life for elementary students, by turning barren and forgotten school gardens in elementary schools into blooming centers for learning.

Through TGC, students learn food cultivation for healthy eating and nutrition, explore wildlife, participate in inter-school farming collaborations, and develop a passion for taking care of plants and the environment. The program also provides a high-quality learning environment, through collaboration with local leaders, community partners, and Parent’s Teachers Association (PTA). These groups share the same goals in mind: scholastic achievement, health and wellness, and real-life connections for students.

TGC is currently being implemented in 31 public elementary schools in Marinduque, and 15 public elementary schools in Siargao. AGREA is currently looking for partners and donors to help in co-enabling all 183 public elementary schools in Marinduque, and 120 public elementary schools to set-up TGC – one school at a time. The cost in setting up TGC in one school is Php 90,000 (around 1,585 Euro). This includes the training of the teacher-ambassadors, TGC set (includes vegetable seeds, organic fertilizer, seed tray, string and tape measure, watering can, shovel, rake, hoe, multiple hand trowel, 3-pronged hand cultivator, TGC brand tarpaulin, and a TGC manual), and monitoring and evaluation of the TGC.

AGREA Farm School: always learning, always discovering Cherrie and the AGREA Team have a dream of scaling and replicating the AGREA Farm School wherever AGREA is present. Cherrie believes that education can be a sustainable development multiplier. The AGREA Team maximizes their holistic farm school approaches to train and enable farmer-leaders, farmer-scientists, and farmeragripreneurs. Empowered and enabled food producers, offer good and nutritious food for the people.

The vision of the AGREA Farm School is to cultivate a safe, well-rounded, inclusive learning environment that encourages learners and educators to explore their talents, and achieve their potentials in a manner that is always growing, always discovering. With this, the AGREA Farm School is preparing and empowering each learner with agricultural competency, and technical-vocational ability to lead productive and sustainable futures, and develop character to lead fulfilling and healthy lives.

“Do more good: the world needs more goodness and kindness.”

Women in Agriculture

Cherrie is a staunch advocate of empowering women in agriculture. She believes that good nutrition starts at home, and women play a key role in achieving this. Globally, women produce over 50% of the world’s food and comprise about 43% of the agricultural labor force. Additionally, women invest as much as 10 times more of their earnings than men do in their family’s well-being in areas including child health, education and nutrition. Thus, empowering women in agriculture will create a good impact on: child health and nutrition, and education.

AGREA through Cherrie’s leadership is taking

the lead in the creation of the “Magna Carta of Women in Agriculture”. Last September 17, 2019, thirty advocates of gender equity and empowerment from across the Philippines gathered at the Savoy Hotel in Pasay City to evaluate the current status of women and girls in rural areas, and to put forth measures to improve the lives and livelihoods of Filipina women in agriculture. These women advocates brought a diverse range of experiences and insights as farmers, policymakers, scholars, entrepreneurs, and leaders of indigenous communities.

The round table discussions were implemented by AGREA in partnership, with the Philippine Commission on Women, the Office of Congressman Bingo Matugas, and Corteva Agriscience. Expanding upon the 2018 UN Commission on the Status of Women and the 2010 Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710), the output of these talks are a set of key issues and proposed solution that will be forwarded to the Philippine House of Representatives, in order to create a new

“Magna Carta of Women in Agriculture.”

Focusing on Family Farmers

Farming is a family activity that provides decent work and economic growth. AGREA works closely with smallholder family farmers – in their 60 hectare coconut-turmeric intercrop farm in Marinduque (the biggest in the Philippines). AGREA enables these farmers to be climate-smart, and diversify their economic base through agriprenurship and farm tourism approaches. “When you enable and empower family farmers, you will create a ripple effect: they will produce good food that will nourish not just their families, but the whole community”, Cherrie shared in a statement.

“Do more good: the world needs more goodness and kindness” – this is Cherrie’s mantra. Do you want to take part in sharing goodness through grassroots-driven sustainability in AGREA’s work? You may email hello@agrea.ph.



An AGREA community in Kulilis, Torrijos - had their first solar water pump



FILIPINO TASTE IN ICELAND

words by Jennifer Fergesen | Iceland



Matstofan on the main street of Borgarnes

The oldest Filipino restaurant in Iceland does not have a Filipino name.

The sign outside says “Matstofan,” a generic term with the same lowbrow connotation as “carinderia.” The only hint at a foreign presence is written in fine, slim letters, barely visible from across the street: “Filipino taste.”

Those two words brought me to Borgarnes, a sleepy coastal town 70 km north of the capital city Reykjavík. Though Filipinos comprise the largest Asian population in Iceland — some 2,000 people in a country of 330,000 — Filipino restaurants are all but nonexistent. The tight-knit community trades tales of businesses that failed to gain a foothold. Filipino Restaurant floundered despite its sumptuous lamb sisig; Philippine Islands Grocery Store sold bagoong and dried kamias for over a decade before folding. One might conclude that the average Icelander has no appetite for the funky, acerbic flavors of the tropics.

Despite the apparent difficulties of selling Filipino food in Iceland, Matstofan has managed to operate for over two decades in a town with fewer than 1,500 residents. It also holds the obscure claim of being the northernmost Filipino restaurant in the world. On a 10°C day in June, I took a bus from Reykjavík to learn how “Filipino taste” and ingenuity have helped this restaurant survive.

The interior of Matstofan has few of the markers that one might associate with restaurants of the Filipino diaspora. Instead of

teleseryes on DVD, the flat-screen broadcasts Icelandic news. Framed maps of Iceland, not the Philippines, hang on the walls. Inside the snack case at the bar, though, bags of kropek share space with potato crisps; the condiment shelf offers both ketchup and Mang Tomas.

The menu is similarly subtle. Only a handful of dishes are obviously Filipino: lumpia, of course, and pancit canton, which the menu calls “stir-fried chicken noodles.” The rest of the offerings chart a freewheeling course across Europe and Asia, from Russian beef stroganoff to Thai curry. The pancit comes with triangles of white bread, but it’s as good as any you’ll find in a neighborhood fiesta, thrumming with patis and lime. Even the stroganoff carries a garlicky warmth that recalls lola’s kitchen more than babushka’s.

“That’s the Filipino taste,” says Maria Socorro Villanueva Grönfeldt, better known as Cora, who runs Matstofan with her husband, Dússi. She emerged from the kitchen to share the history of her restaurant, which became the story of her life — a story that typifies the experiences of many Filipino immigrants in Iceland and other far-flung corners of the diaspora.

A native of Cebu, Cora moved to Iceland in 1987 as part of the exodus surrounding the volatile final years of Ferdinand Marcos’ rule. An Icelandic friend, whose children she had taught, told Cora that she might find a job

in a school there. She arrived to a nighttime blizzard. “I thought we were in the middle of a bamboo forest,” she says of the drive from the airport to the city, when the snow rushed past the windshield like long white stalks.

The man who drove Cora through that blizzard was a friend of the Icelander she had known in Cebu. “He had wanted to meet a Filipina woman,” she explains demurely. After three months — the extent of her tourist visa — she asked him to marry her. She was then 29, he 47. They moved to a tiny village in the sparsely-populated north, where Dússi worked as an electrician. Within a year, they had their first child; a second came in 1990.

Cora and Dússi spent nine years in the countryside before buying the restaurant in Borgarnes. The locals were slow to accept the new business. First, there was Dússi’s reputation as a rural laborer; few believed he could transition into the urbane role of a restaurant owner. Then there was the reputation of Asian food. Cora padded her menu with Western standbys such as stews and pastas, but even these were viewed with suspicion. “They said it was dog food,” says Cora. “They didn’t try the taste.”

Despite initial prejudice, Cora figured out how to make the restaurant self-sustaining. A lifelong teetotaler, she nevertheless picked

up the profitable trick of emphasizing alcohol sales over food. “For the foreigners,” she says — referring to the tourists who pass through Borgarnes en route to elsewhere — “drink is the supplement to food. But for the natives, food is the supplement to drink. And so they supplemented my business.”

Cora’s business also allowed her to sponsor relatives who wanted to make a life in Iceland. In 2000, she brought over her uncle, an accomplished chef trained at five-star hotels in Qatar. He taught her how to make many of the more technique-heavy items on her menu, including Swiss-inspired chicken rolls, and ran a brisk business in frozen siopao. “We were selling in bulk, for the Filipinos who worked in the geothermal plants,” she says. “They took one for baon each day, to have the Filipino taste at work.”

Many Filipinos in Iceland still work in the geothermal industry, but the community now includes many students, skilled workers, and second-generation Filipino-Icelanders like Cora’s children. The growing community is part of the country’s slow but definite shift away from its historically stark homogeneity.

Iceland’s changing restaurant culture illustrates this shift towards cosmopolitanism. In the capital city, one can hardly walk a block without running into a kebab shop or a curry house, and every Reykjavíker has her favorite Thai spot. Cora has noticed these changing attitudes in her own clientele. The people who sniffed at stew two decades ago still prefer fish and potatoes, but their children happily eat stir-fried noodles.



Matstofan's pancit canton, served with a side of white bread

Matstofan’s pancit canton, served with a side of white bread.

Iceland may be poised to jump on the trend for sisig (sizzling chopped pork and liver) and lumpia that is currently sweeping America. Creative underground cooks are already beginning to introduce Icelanders to the intricacies of this complex cuisine. One of the most creative is Marvi Ablaza Gil, a writer, psychiatric nurse, and amateur chef who hosts supper clubs with a side of Filipino history. She explains the Dutch influences in lumpia and the deep pre-colonial roots of sinigang (sour soup), then rounds out the meal with tsokolata poured from her grandfather’s heirloom pot. “Food is the first point of entry through which many people start to learn

about Asian culture,” she says.

Marvi and others will take on the role of monitoring that point of entry when Matstofan finally closes. Cora owns a house in Cebu where she plans to live out her days with Dússi — not necessarily in retirement. They are entertaining the idea of starting an Icelandic restaurant for curious Cebuanos. “A restaurant is really the best business,” she says. “Everyone needs to eat. And many like to try new tastes.”

As the world continues to globalize, a sign advertising “Filipino taste” in the middle of small-town Iceland may eventually seem less surreal. For now, though, Matstofan’s presence in Borgarnes is a minor miracle, and one that will be missed.



"Taste it, it's Filipino!" at the Philippine Food Festival in Brussels, Belgium

words by Louise Baterna | Belgium

I saw them, sitting on the grass with four bowls of food in front of them. Judging from their faces, the look was perplexed and a call for help. Obviously, this was the first time they were tasting Filipino food, an experience shared by many of the two thousand visitors who came to the Philippine Food Festival in Brussels last September. So, I sat down with them and explained what is a *Binagoongan* (pork in shrimp paste), *Dinuguan* (blood soup), *bopis* (a spicy dish of pig's heart and lungs) and *adobo* (pork marinated in soya sauce, palm vinegar, bay leaf and peppercorns), half apologising for such a meaty diet. "Taste it, it's Filipino," I said.

Filipino food is relatively unknown in Belgium with a non-existent official marketing program to push it on the mainstream. Unlike many Asian culinary cultures that have managed to make themselves known, Filipino food is yet to be discovered, promoted, tried and tasted. That's exactly what four Filipino friends – Rey Silao Borra, Joy Pauchano, Gemma Sulit and me – thought, and unceremoniously we decided to embark on hosting a Philippine Food Festival in Brussels. There was no monetary goal, no grand ambitions, just one simple target: promote Filipino food.

The first one was held in 2018, in a small hall in the middle of a community park. There was an unexpected big crowd, half of it non-Filipinos, wiping empty the tables of invited vendors of home-made dishes by mid-afternoon. After the euphoria, we got together in a round table discussion on potential improvements for the year after. We found a new venue that was four times bigger than the year before. We invited more food vendors, asking them for higher standards of quality and hygiene, and for the first time, we also attracted some institutional exhibitors that we hoped we can help launch to the general public. The interest was immediate and so came Mama Sita, the pioneer of Philippine food mixes; Don Papa Rum, and Moulinet Chocolat, created by UK-based Estela Duque, a passionate activist for Philippine cocoa beans and who successfully marketed our chocolate in the UK and in the Netherlands, under the brands Land and Krak, respectively.

Reaching out to a bigger market implied challenges and the first one was how to raise interest on a festival featuring a cuisine which was relatively unknown. We wanted to communicate but were wary of defining Filipino cuisine. So, we thought this should sound nice:



Sometimes it's a mystery, defining what is Filipino food. It's a little bit Chinese, Spanish, American, with influences from India, Mexico, Malaysia, or best described as fusion, mix and match, global. But it's all these which define Filipino food, a combination of recipes, cooking techniques, ingredients that come from far or grown from fertile soils on any of the 7000 islands or caught from its surrounding deep, blue seas.

But haven't we heard a thousand times the saying "the proof of the pudding is in the tasting" and that's exactly what the Philippine Food Festival promises, a one-day opportunity to discover this mysterious cuisine with grandmothers' recipes tweaked from Spain's culinary heritage, improvised American desserts, and twin dishes from its Asian neighbours. What will we have on the table? It could be anything from blood soup, lechon, ensaymada, halo-halo, kare-kare, banana crepes, adobo, pig's ears, San Miguel beer, noodles, rice and sponge cakes, fresh mangoes, to salted eggs. Discover award-winning chocolates, exquisite rum, and world chefs' favourite new ingredients like kalamansi and ube.

And if this one-day tasting is not enough for

you, join our raffle and get a chance to visit the Philippines with **a free round-trip ticket from ASEANA Voyages**. It's more fun (and more food) in the Philippines... and from Brussels, that begins at the Philippine Food Festival this September.

The free air ticket was a great come-on. We wanted to bring the lucky winner to the Philippines and give him the chance to experience that "eats...more fun in the Philippines," as promised by a recent campaign of the Department of Tourism.

For several weeks, our social media campaign indicator hit a reach of over 40,000 with a potential number of visitors pegged ten percent of that figure. The page and post shares multiplied. A week before the event, the Philippine Food Festival was making a buzz.

Early Sunday the 15th, the last hottest day of the year, began with the flurry of food arrivals. Vendors were warned of an onslaught of visitors and they seemed to have taken at heart that advice, preparing large quantities of food for a huge crowd. There was a parade of pans and casseroles. One by one, the buffet on each table took form. They all looked tempting. The

lechon was gleaming. There was an ice cream corner, a dry goods section where bottles of vinegar, sauces, sweets and fresh *saba* bananas were displayed; a rum bar, a chocolate stand, and as an added attraction, an exhibit-sale of Cordillera fashion accessories and Ifugao authentic bululs (statues).

The stalls were finally ready, *ensaymadas* were piled high, sample plates of *leche flan* and *sapin-sapin* (*glutinous rice and coconut milk dessert*) were put in front of the table, *sisig* (*of pig's ears and cheeks*) started sizzling, lids of the *bain-marie* were lifted as the first visitors arrived just a little bit before 10 am. It didn't take long before the "mob" came and there were the familiar cheers and camaraderie among Filipinos, mingling with foreign tongues of non-Filipino visitors as they wandered around with heightened curiosity at the variety of dishes laid before them.

By mid-afternoon, the chafing dishes had already begun to look empty, the *ensaymadas* were gone, there were just a few slices left of the cassava cake, packs of *tocino* were fast disappearing, and we were at our last cases of beer. Yet, a new wave of human traffic just arrived. The crowd was estimated close to two

thousand. At half past four, there was nothing more to eat. We were so sad for those who came later in the day. We didn't want to disappoint them but who would have thought that an "unknown" cuisine would generate so much interest and awareness. The plates were empty but our hearts were full.

Perhaps, we did make progress in introducing Philippine cuisine to the general public. Maybe, just maybe, we have planted the idea to both vendors and visitors the possibility of opening a Filipino food outlet. We hope that one day, through such humble efforts, Filipino food products will go beyond ethnic Asian stores and reach the shelves of mainstream supermarkets.

The number of visitors validated the public's hunger for new cuisine, ingredients, recipes. While our Asian neighbours have taken a head start, it is now our turn to bring Filipino food to the Belgian tables. After all, Philippine cuisine is undoubtedly the next culinary star of Asia.



Hotel am Brillantengrund

Fashion, Art and Culinary Diplomacy in Vienna

words by Jennifer Fergesen | Iceland

The seventh district of Vienna hides many strange and beautiful things behind its pastel facades. Turn into one of the neighborhood's 19th-century row houses, once home to the laborers who powered Austria's silk industry, and you might discover anything from a workshop transforming leaves and buttons into high-end jewelry (Schmuckladen) to a shop specializing in vintage classroom posters — anatomy, botany, maps — up to 200 years old (Irenaeus Kraus). Come sunset, some shops shape-shift with the change in light, like the wholesome breakfast cafes Figar and Liebling that spend their nights as cocktail bars throbbing with house music.

Even the places that disclose their purposes may hold something unexpected. Outside Hotel am Brillantengrund, a mid-century placard announces the yellow building as a "HOTEL," like the neon "EAT" and "SLEEP" billboards that punctuate old American highways. But inside there's far more than a place to sleep. The hotel houses a showcase for art and design, a meeting place for creators and — most surprising of all — one of the most remarkable Filipino restaurants I've ever encountered.

A platform for passionate people

The project is the brainchild of Marvin Mangalino, who took over the then-aging hotel in 2010. An Austrian-born transmedia artist with family ties in Laguna and the Visayas, Marvin fits seamlessly into the design-focused seventh district. During my August visit, I only ever saw him in a white v-neck, impeccably fitted shorts and Common Project sneakers like the summer uniform of

a hipster academy — that is, when he wasn't wearing the house-branded cycling kit that he helped design. He speaks English with a Germanic lilt that lends an extra cachet to words like "cool" and "art." "I'm the most European of my siblings," he admitted.

Marvin has remade the hotel in his own image, shaping it around his love of art, fashion and community while paying homage to his Filipino roots. With an in-house gallery, a curated shop and space for events, it has become "a platform for artists, cyclists, passionate people generally," Marvin said during a conversation in the hotel's courtyard, lush with potted palms and bougainvilleas.

The hotel restaurant, set in and around that verdant courtyard, hasn't always served Filipino food. In its first years under the current ownership, the kitchen turned out Austrian staples like *schnitzel* and *spätzle*, which filled stomachs but "had no identity," said Mangalino. "So I said, why not just sell what I really like, which is Mama's food?" He called in his mother Frezida, who grew up cooking in her father's Laguna carinderia, to helm the kitchen. At 71, she still rules over the restaurant, which would most likely be Austria's best Filipino spot even if it weren't the only one in the country.

"What even is Filipino cuisine?"

The Mangalinos have embraced their role as culinary ambassadors. Their menu is structured like a textbook for Filipino Food 101, a survey course for the uninitiated. There's even an



introduction on the first page titled “*Was ist eigentlich Philippinische Küche?*” (“What really is Filipino cooking?”) that explains the cuisine’s Spanish, Mexican, Chinese and American influences and assures diners that it’s rarely spicy.

That’s not to say that anything kowtows to Western tastes. The adobo and bistek, made with locally-sourced meat cooked to yielding tenderness, strike that elusive balance between savory, sweet and sour — the syzygy that defines so much of Filipino cuisine. Despite the menu disclaimer, the sisig bangus and Bicol Express prickle with more spice (from both birds-eye chiles and red peppercorns) than you’ll usually find even in the Philippines.

The restaurant makes only one allowance for the tastes of the seventh district: you can order almost anything vegan. Many of the meatless variations are worth trying in their own right. The vegan siopao, branded with a green “V” like the red dots that separate bola-bola from asado, comes stuffed with a ratatouille-like stew of eggplant and tomato, the long-simmered essence of late summer. The monggo guisado, high-protein mung beans as smooth and rich as risotto, makes you wonder why monggo isn’t vegan by default.

If there’s a vegan jewel in Brillantengrund’s crown, it’s the seitan bistek — marked “*die Spezialität des Hauses*” on the menu. Frezida and her staff make

the seitan in-house, a labor-intensive process that takes more than a day. To infuse the blank canvas of wheat gluten with flavor, the kitchen collects all their vegetable trimmings — carrot peels, celery leaves, the root ends of onions — and simmers the seitan in the brew for a full 24 hours. The result is a supple, deeply umami product that holds its own against anything that comes from an animal.

A matriarch in the kitchen

“I did not copy this from any book,” said Frezida of the seitan bistek, when I managed to lure her away from the kitchen long enough to tell me her story. “This is my own invention.” Frezida developed all of the dishes at Hotel am Brillantengrund, with input from Marvin and food & beverage manager Javier Mancilla, and she guards her recipes like family secrets. Even her staff aren’t privy; she completes critical stages of each process away from prying eyes.

I asked if she could share just one small, inconsequential recipe with me, and Frezida countered with a cautionary tale. Two years ago, she hired a promising line cook who blandished her with attention. “One time, he told me, ‘Mother, give me all your recipes, and you can take a rest,’” said Frezida, “and I laughed at him.” Three months later, he left the restaurant. “If I had given them, goodbye!” finished Frezida, with a toss of her hand. “We wouldn’t have any identity.”

Frezida has worked to preserve her identity through decades of turbulence. She followed her husband to Vienna with her two older children in 1978, after a devastating fire destroyed her family’s compound in the Philippines. (Marvin was born the following year.) While raising her three children, she found odd jobs around the city — pressing medals in a factory, supervising an apartment building, managing an alterations shop, then pulling long shifts as a hospital nursing aide. She refused even government-mandated maternity leave, and found a job cleaning in a hotel one day into her official “retirement” from

the hospital. “I’m not the type of woman to stay at home,” she said, raising one eyebrow as if to judge any woman who would.

An exacting perfectionist, Frezida expects the same tireless work ethic from her staff. I watched her scold a server for looking at her phone, severe as any lola at a dinner table. Still, the staff betray a familial fondness for her, calling her “Mama” and speaking in awe of her driving passion — something she has in common with her son.

A neutral zone

Don’t let the craft cocktails, Eames chairs and fiddle leaf fig trees fool you — Marvin doesn’t want his hotel to be the hippest address on the block. “At most of these trendy and fancy places, it’s almost like a battle,” he said, evoking the silent contest that passes among the Beautiful People in some of the seventh district’s favorite hangouts. Elsewhere in the neighborhood, walking into a bar or restaurant can feel like entering a hipster pageant, with points for those who can dress the best, emote the least, exude the most Euro-chic aloofness.

“Here, you have the young hipster generation, but you also have normal old people, and over there a grandma sitting with her grandchild who’s studying in Vienna,” Marvin continued, gesturing to the umbrella-shaded tables around us. “It’s a neutral zone.”

In territorial terms, a neutral zone is somewhere that belongs to no one and to everyone, outside of nations and their rules. Hotel am Brillantengrund functions like that kind of non-territory. In a city governed by tradition, a district obsessed with style, this is the rare place that refuses to categorize either itself or its customers.

“The atmosphere, it’s like you’re visiting your family,” said Marvin, and he was correct — I felt right at home.

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FIX
 I N E U R O P E

words by **Jennifer Fergesen | Iceland**

Austria

Hotel am Brillantengrund

Set in a stylishly-appointed hotel in Vienna's seventh district, this restaurant offers updated versions of Filipino favorites from sisig to siopao. Don't overlook the plentiful vegan options; the seitan "bistek" is made in-house.

<http://brillantengrund.com/>
 Bandgasse 4, 1070 Wien, Austria
 +43 1 5233662

Finland

Pobre Filipino

Six young Filipino chefs banded together to create this Filipino restaurant in Helsinki's busy Kamppi district. The menu leans towards the often-overlooked fish and vegetable dishes that dominate the Philippines' regional cuisines, like pinais, kinunot and vegetable ginataan, but there's also plenty of pork on offer.

<https://www.pobre.fi/>
 Urho Kekkosen katu 1, 00100 Helsinki, Finland
 +358 44 9787821

Paisano

A new effort by the chefs behind Pobre Filipino, Paisano takes a looser interpretation of Filipino flavors, influenced by the minimalist, seasonal tenets of New Nordic cuisine. Menus change with the markets, but you might find beet-marinated eggs, hand-pulled noodles or pike perch cured with tamarind and served with burnt eggplant like a drunken dream of sinigang.

<https://www.paisano.fi/>
 Korkeavuorenkatu 45, 00130 Helsinki, Finland
 +358 44 9842271

France

Le Palawan

With rattan chairs, bare-wood tables and tasteful black-and-white images of the tropics on the walls, Palawan recalls the laid-back style of a Balinese resort. (No wonder the chef's other spot is called Ubud.) The food, though, is all Filipino; the kitchen even roasts the occasional whole lechon.

<http://www.palawan-restaurant-marseille.com>
 29 Boulevard de Louvain 13008 Marseille
 +33 06 67 94 21 68

Germany

Ayan Filipino Streetfood

Cheery and casual, this pocket-sized spot does a brisk business in takeaway rice boxes topped with street-snack staples: barbecue skewers, fried tokwa and lumpia. Get a table to enjoy some proper lutong bahay, like kare-kare, bulalo or sinigang.

<https://www.ayan-berlin.de/>
 69, Potsdamer Straße, 10785 Berlin, Germany
 +49 30 23913657

Larry's Bar and Restaurant

Mood lighting and a romantic atmosphere make Larry's a popular date spot in the medieval castle town of Lübeck. The generous servings of meaty dishes like crispy pata, kare-kare and chicken inasal are often enough to satisfy two.

<http://larrys-bar.de>
 Marlesgrube 9, 23552 Lübeck, Germany
 +49 451 70788677

Greenland

Mary's Kitchen

This popular spot brings some much-needed Filipino warmth to icy Nuuk, Greenland. Few things are more satisfying than tucking into a sizzling plate of lamb sisig on a freezing day in the near-Arctic winter.

<https://www.facebook.com/maryskitchennuuk/>
 H.J. Rinkip Aqquataa 43, Nuuk 3900, Greenland
 +299 22 17 11

Hungary

Malom Udvar

Tucked away in a "wellness guesthouse" in the Hungarian countryside, Malom Udvar serves surprisingly seamless Hungarian-Filipino fusion; both cuisines share a love of pork, garlic and stews. Try the canton teszta, pancit made with Hungarian noodles.

<https://www.facebook.com/malomudvar/>
 Bér, Táncsics út 9, 3045 Hungary
 +36 20 938 6935

Norway

Pinas Filipino Restaurant

This classy spot is on a mission to elevate Filipino home cooking to the presentation standards of European haute cuisine. Here, kare kare comes as entrecotes of beef with a swirl of peanut sauce, served alongside a heart-shaped mound of rice.

<https://pinasrestaurant.no/>
 Bygdøy allé 19A, 0262 Oslo, Norway
 +47 973 06 720



Bryan Gandola

Life after Česko Slovenská SuperStar

words by Rebecca Garcia | Czechia + Germany

One of the many words that can describe Filipinos is “musical.” One evening while browsing through the channels on the TV, my then fiancé and I landed on *Česko Slovenská SuperStar* and decided to watch. To my surprise, there was a Filipino candidate on the show. *Syempre basta Pinoy*, we try to support our roots no matter where we are ...

So, who is Bryan Gandola? Bryan, 26, is from Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. He met “the girl of his life” while she was on vacation in the Philippines with her parents. Since then, Bryan moved to the Czech Republic with his girlfriend. When asked what he likes about Prague, “The place is amazing – the historical buildings... [it also gives me] the opportunity to share my music...” Bryan’s musical style is a mix of pop, funk and R’n’B. His favorite artists / influences include Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Bruno Mars, and Ed Sheeran.

It was one day that Bryan’s girlfriend saw on TV that a casting for *Superstar* would take place in Prague, and so Bryan decided to give it a shot... Bryan impressed the judges from the very first casting round, with a rendering of “Lay Me Down” by Sam Smith, as well as a song by local Czech band, Kryštof. Bryan eventually made it through all the casting rounds, the duels, semi-finals. He reached the finals, rounding off his journey on *Superstar* in the TOP8. Bryan’s voice and talent resonated in

his performances with songs from artists such as Bruno Mars, Queen, and Robbie Williams to name but a few.

When asked about his experience on the show, Bryan stated, “It was a nerve-racking experience, because I’ve never been in a singing contest before...plus singing in front of judges with a lot of cameras (smiles)... it was all a first for me.”

Since *Superstar*, Bryan has been working on his own projects notably the release of his first official single entitled, “Crush” – which can be streamed on his official YouTube page (<https://youtu.be/cWTXExl6pKo>). He has also held live performances around Prague, at the renowned hangout spot, Náplavka, as well as private events.

It’s always nice to see Filipino talents succeed and reach all corners of the world. I had the pleasure to meet Bryan during the Philippine Independence day celebrations last year, and hearing him perform live only confirmed the talent that the judges on *Superstar* saw and heard in him. I asked Bryan what advice he can give to musicians / young artists when it comes to pursuing a career in music; he answered, “Practice your craft every day. Be confident, but humble... Never stop chasing that dream.” Mabuhay ang mga Pilipino!



CELEBRATING OUR LADY OF PEÑAFRANCIA

IN VIENNA

words by Mae Cayir,
pictures by Dean Calma | Austria

The festivities in honour of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Austria is a 26 year tradition since 1993, patterned after the 309 year old tradition in the Bicol Region, Philippines. This is a very popular and memorable celebration in the Bicol Region which clearly shows a deep love and devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia or “Ina” as Bikolanos fondly call Her.

The Philippines is a nation in love with Mother Mary, celebrating abundant festivities in her honour as our “Ina”, a figure of love, humility and fidelity. This annual event is the only Filipino Marian devotion celebrated worldwide that has become a legacy of faith, culture and tradition, carried in the heart of the Filipino wherever they are, far from their homes and families in the Philippines.

In Vienna, Austria, the devotion began with circulating the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, initiated by a birthday gift given to Honey Silva by his mother. Founded on prayers, Mr. Efren Ante, with other Bicolanos in Austria, took the lead to formally spearhead the festivities in cooperation with the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy. As a result in 1993, the Bikol Society Austria (BSA) came into existence, serving to strengthen religious, social and cultural bonds among Bicolanos gathered together by their motto, “

maski harayo nagkakasararo” (unity despite distance).

Since its inception, BSA has grown in strength and commitment in this annual practice of circulating the image of Our Lady. The festivities are held on the 3rd week-end of September simultaneously with the celebrations in Naga City in Bicol, Philippines. “Celebrate with meaning, your Peñafrancia every year and renew. Promise Jesus, promise Virgin Mary, that you will renew your commitment in your heart. Tell stories about your faith.” Most Reverend Archbishop Gilbert A. Garcera D.D.

It was in 2003 that the first Fluvial Procession along the Danube River took place, with Tulln as its destination, 41 kilometers from Vienna city center. On board the flagship of the DDSG Blue Danube, 600 devotees of Our Lady went on a one-day trip to Tulln, holding the procession from the dock to the church, concluding with a celebration of Holy Mass in the church of St. Stephen.

In 2004, Msgr. Romulo Vergara of the Basilica de Peñafrancia in Naga City, Philippines, entrusted a replica of the original image of our “Ina” which was enthroned on 5 September 2004 at Pfarre Maria von Berge Karmel, Stefan Fadingerplatz 1, 1100 Vienna, Austria, in the care of the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy headed by Rev. Fr. Joey Demoy, Chaplain and Rev. Fr. Conrad Amon, Asst. Chaplain. According to Fr. Conrad, the enshrining of our “Ina” is the first historical and memorable event that ever happened not only in Vienna but in Europe. Through the intercession of our “Ina”, more and more devotees from all over Austria and the nearby countries join in on these annual festivities.

The 309th year tradition in the Philippines celebrated its 26th year here in Austria

(17th year of Fluvial Procession) on 13-22 September 2019, starting with the 9-day Novena, followed by the Fluvial Procession on the River Danube on board DDSG Blue Danube, MS Admiral Tegetthoff, with a procession to the Church of Stift Dürnstein, about 90 kilometers from Vienna city center. The Mass was concelebrated by Most Reverend Archbishop Gilbert A. Garcera DD, Fr Ely Dalanon, Fr Vic Tamayo and Fr Joey Javier.

In his message through an interview conducted by Mag. Hector Pascua, Most Reverend Archbishop Garcera, DD, stated that as his first impression of the Filipinos in Vienna, he found that they are keen to share their culture, their home-cooked dishes, and their faith, as a way to have a sense of belonging being so far away from their home of Bicol. Faith is the core of their happiness, especially while carrying their personal burdens. It is what defines the “good Filipino”, the quest to be a “good Christian”. True faith of a good Christian is one that is not to be ashamed of, but rather to be shared with pride. In this way, life can go on in joy, putting a genuine smile to show that life is, indeed, beautiful.

Dr Carlo Arcilla, Director of the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) a Bicolano who was in Vienna during the 63rd General Conference of the IAEA, attended the Fluvial Procession, sharing the message on pride of faith, the valuable practice of Catholic prayers, its legacy on the youth, and science with religion that bears no conflict.

Vice Consul Patricia Milla, representing Her Excellency, Ambassador, Maria Cleofe Rayos Natividad of Vienna, Austria, delivered a message of inspiration. This trip reminded her of the ten years she spent as a student of Colegio De Sta. Isabel in Naga. “As Christians,



we are all pilgrims. On a pilgrimage, instead of being humans on a spiritual journey, we are in fact, spiritual beings on a human journey by which we engage in the most profound relationship between a mother and a child. It is to our Mother that we share our disappointments, the degradations of life, as much as our joys, in the most intimate and familial form of communication.”

“It is gratifying to note that BSA has been continuously honouring Our Lady of Peñafrancia... replete with holding the fluvial procession... This year, I join the community in commemorating this centuries-old festival, which is a testament to the Filipino’s deep spirituality and religious heritage. I am pleased to see that BKA members are still Filipinos at heart. I am proud that all of your actions and programmes are motivated by the desire to promote the Philippine’s culture,

tradition and arts to the world, and the need to help those who are wanting in life. In both areas, you have already represented the Philippines well. I encourage you to continue the good you do for the community, and to uphold the values that we Filipinos are known for.” Ambassador Maria Cleofe Rayos Natividad.

“Come to the Philippines, to the land of the beautiful lady - Bicolandia!”

“Madya na sa Pilipinas, sa lugar kan Daragang Magayon* - Bicolandia!”

**Daragang Magayon is a beautiful unmarried girl but usually refers to Mayon Volcano, the most perfectly coned volcano in the world.*



NEWS
Moscow tastes exotic Filipino food
 words and pictures by
 Gloria Fernandez-Grejalde | Russia

Muscovites had a taste of exotic and generic Filipino products at the WorldFood Moscow Exhibition held at the Crocus City exposition center from Sept. 24 - 27, 2019.

Fourteen Filipino exporters were among the 1,500 Russian and foreign companies from 65 countries that participated in the four-day event. Among the local produce served for tasting were tropical fruit juices, artisanal chocolates, banana chips, crackers and biscuits, virgin coconut oils and other coconut products, noodles, condiments, and fishery products.

Moscow PE Minister Counsellor Roberto Ferrer formally opened the Philippine booth with the assistance of Department of Agrarian (DA) Undersecretary for Special Concerns Waldo R.

Carpio and Department of Trade and Industry-Export Marketing Bureau (DTI-EMB) Director Senen M. Perlada.

In his opening message, Min. Ferrer said that the Philippines has a rich and fully developed food industry with brands that have achieved global recognition for their quality and universal appeal. "We are confident and eager to introduce our product lines (here)," he enthused. He said, "The exhibition will enable us to reach out to more clients and business stakeholders," and stressed that "with the expansion and the strengthening of bilateral relations between Philippines and Russia, our manufacturers and exporters have started to turn their attention to this region and seriously consider the vast potential of its markets."

For his part, Director Perlada, said that the country's participation was the "first substantive (undertaking)" in its drive to diversify and grow the market of the local goods. He spoke with optimism saying that "the number of participants in the coming years will multiply" and added that "we will increase our exports 15 times more than the (imports)."

DA Usec Carpio meanwhile, vowed to support the undertaking and said that the department will continue to work hand in hand with the trade industry to help promote the local products and expand their market.

The Philippine participants are the Armson Foods Corporation, Bahaghari Global Food, Inc., Businesspeople Inc., Century Pacific Food Inc., Fisher Farms, Inc., Mapagmahal Foods, Monde M.Y. San Corporation, NPJN Food Company, Oleo-fats, Inc., Paciolco Agri-ventures, Philippine Grocers Food Exports, Samance Agro Product Inc., See's International Food Manufacturing Corporation, and Philbest Canning Corporation. According to Century Pacific Food, Inc. Global Brands Group Head Robert Raymond Soriano Cruz, the event was very promising. He said that on its first day, some local retailers and marketers have already shown interests in their products.

He also said that negotiations with local distributors are already on going and chances are their sardines will soon hit the Moscow market by November.

The same optimism was shared by Philbest Canning Corporation Export Marketing Manager Mary Hope Benzonan-Salimbangon. She said that negotiations are also underway with some local retailers who will market their local brand Gold Seas. She also said that there are those

who will get their pouched and frozen pre-cooked tuna loins that will be repacked for local distribution.

A first exhibitor to Moscow, Monde M.Y. San Corporation General Manager Keng Sun Mar said the exhibition is promising and added that he intends to join the event when it is held again. WorldFood Moscow is held every two years. Local guests that flocked the Philippine booth showed enthusiasm to know how the products were produced. A chocolate taster kept on asking how it was cooked and processed while others kept coming back to enjoy the savory tuna sandwiches.

Meanwhile, the DTI said the participation of the manufacturers to the fair is part of the department's Outbound Business Matching Mission (OBMM) to Moscow which started on Sept. 20, 2019 and will end on Oct. 01, 2019. They also attended business matching sessions, market scanning, and briefing with the Eurasian Economic Commission (EAEC) on the preferential tariffs provided to beneficiary countries including the Philippines. The EAEC is an economic union composed of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia with a consumer base of over 170 million.

In 2018 Russia was the Philippines 21st trading partner with a total bilateral trade valued at US\$1.36 billion. It is also the 33rd export market valued at US\$69.31 billion and the 19th import source accounting for US\$1.27 billion. The country's exports of food products to Russia in 2018 was valued at US\$17.12 million. They include desiccated coconuts, other fruits, nuts, and bananas including plantains, fresh or dried.

NEWS Cine Europa 22 hits new venue, more cities

as reported by Marthy Angue | Philippines

The European Union in the Philippines celebrated the 22nd Cine Europa in a new venue this year, Greenbelt Cinemas in Makati, 19 September, 2019. The Philippine's longest and widest-spread International Film Festival, the film festival ran from the 20th to the 24th of September in Manila before proceeding to a nine-stop tour of the Philippines. Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, Iloilo, Naga and Palawan will be holding screenings of the movies before concluding at the Film Development Council of the Philippines in Kalaw, Manila. For the last two decades, Cine Europa has been an avenue for greater cultural exchange between the Philippines and Europe, bridging stories of exotic locales, unfamiliar traditions, and new ideas with the themes and emotions of our shared humanity.

"Cine Europa is a distinctive way to showcase European cultural diversity and to open up

opportunities in the cultural and creative industries" notes EU Delegation Chargé d'Affaires Thomas Wiersing who expressed great enthusiasm over the diversity and quality of the selection of movies this year. For Cine Europa 22, thirteen movies presented by the Embassies of Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom explore universal themes of love, friendship, faith, triumph and courage for a Filipino audience.

Cine Europa 22 is made possible in partnership with EUNIC Philippines, the Film Development Council of the Philippines, British Council Philippines, Goethe-Institut Philippinen, Alliance française de Manille, Instituto Cervantes de Manila, and The Philippine Italian Association.



NEWS EU AMBASSADOR FRANZ JESSEN BIDS FAREWELL

as reported by Marthy Angue | Philippines

Concluding four years as Ambassador on behalf of the EU Delegation in the Philippines, His Excellency Franz Jessen bade the press farewell at a brunch conference held in the Makati Dusit Thani, 27 August, 2019. At the conference, Ambassador Jessen recounted the triumphs and challenges faced by his tenure, his experience with the Filipino people, the current state of Euro-Philippine Relations and his outlook of things going forward.

"The Philippines is not easy to understand" he mused when asked about what his successor might need to understand about the country and its people before their succession. He remarked that there are many common ideas about the Philippines – images of a Hispanicized nation like Mexico or as a quintessentially Asian one like China or Japan – that do not adequately capture the nation's identity. Recalling a farewell reception held in his honor by the writer and National Artist F. Sionil Jose – a writer he has expressed admiration for – he notes a fondness for learning about Filipino history and culture as

well as his enjoyment over his interactions with the Filipinos he has met throughout his tenure.

"All relationships need to be maintained, this applies to personal as well as to international relations. We have succeeded in this. Relations also need to develop, and I am by nature quite ambitious, and would have liked to see even greater growth in our bilateral cooperation." Ambassador Jessen notes in his farewell post on the Delegation's website. "This said, I am grateful for the growth that I have seen in my personal friendships with you, I could not have wished for more. I will continue to nurture these friendships and will see you soon again."

The Ambassador cites the ratification of the EU-Philippine Partnership and Cooperation Agreement among the highlights of the last four years. Of the honors he has received for his services, he especially notes having been conferred the title of "Datu" by the Manobo of Mindanao. He was given the name "Banog Mantukod" or the "Eagle that Builds."



International Design Conference envisions tomorrow's urban spaces

as reported by Michellan Sarile-Alagao | Philippines

“What kind of future do I want for myself and my country?”

This question set the tone of the International Design Conference 2019, held September 20 in Makati City. As the audience of designers, students, and design aficionados thought about the question (posed by Royal Pineda) and its implications, guest speakers from all over the world engaged with the question as well during the five plenary sessions on Design Futures, Future of Cities, Materials Matter, Tech for Good, and Craft, Tech, and Social Innovation.

Throughout the conference, a number of major themes and common points recurred, such as the importance of building communities, the connection of design to hopes, dreams and vision for future cities, and how, at the end of the day, people are at the center of all our discussions. At the end of the conference, the guest speakers also shared their thoughts on balancing sustainability with profit, and the need to engage more with the educational sector by providing stronger education in science and technology.

International Conference Speakers included Alexander Chan of The Mills Fabrica (Hong Kong); Dr. Andrew Dent of Material ConneXion (UK); Kevin Martin of unspun (USA); and two speakers from Jacob Jensen Design in Denmark — Sebastien Maleville and Manuel Veiga Aldemira. There were also video messages from Clair Warnier of Unfold (Belgium) and Tomas Diez of Fab Lab(Barcelona).

Speakers from the Philippines were: Mylene Abiva of FELTA Multi-Media, Inc.; Dr. Justino Arboleda, of Coco Technologies Corporation; Royal Pineda of BUDJI+ROYAL Architecture+Design; and Aileen Zosa, from the Bases Conversion and Development Authority.

Aside from the plenary sessions, there were two Q&A sessions with the guest speakers as well as a pitching competition — spearheaded by the Design Center and Thames International Business School — which our very own Roots and Wings Editor Marthy Angue took part in.

The conference was organized by the Design Center of the Philippines, with various sponsors, such as the Danish Embassy, and numerous corporate, creative, and media partners.



NEWS

The Nordic Awards celebrate innovation and sustainability

as reported by Marthy Angue | Philippines

NordCham Philippines, together with the Embassies of Denmark, Norway, Sweden in Manila, the Embassy of Finland in Kuala Lumpur, and the Philippines Norway Business Council honored prominent Nordic-affiliated companies in the Philippines with the sixth Nordic Awards Night at the Fairmont Makati, October 23. More than 200 C-level executives, entrepreneurs, leaders of local and foreign chambers of commerce, ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, government, and media gathered together at the Makati Fairmont for the event.

With this year's 'Northern Lights' theme, the Nordic Awards recognized companies that exemplify Nordic values and commitment to UN Sustainable Development Goals. “The Nordic Awards is our way of recognizing companies who live by the values that we stand for in the Nordic countries: innovation, sustainability, equality, education, and growth”, explains NordCham Philippines executive director Joonas Selin.

“These values are reflected in the judging criteria for the five award categories, and we have also put a focus on sustainable development goals in each of the categories,” Mr. Selin explains further. The board of judges consists of Nordic and Philippine representatives from both public and private sectors:

- Carol Dominguez, Board of Governors Secretary, Management Association of the Philippines
- H.E. Harald Fries, Ambassador of Sweden
- H.E. Bjorn Jahnsen, Ambassador of Norway
- H.E. Petri Puhakka, Ambassador of Finland
- H.E. Grete Sillasen, Ambassador of Denmark
- Elizabeth Sy, Consul General (a.h.) of Iceland

The Corporate Sustainability Company of the Year award, won by global fashion titan H&M emphasizes environment, human rights, and business ethics. The Growth Company of the Year (won by KMC Solutions) and SME of the Year (won by Online Factory) both highlight employment generation and revenue growth. For the Innovation Company of the Year won by Aidea, degree of innovation and sustainability, as well as international potential and likelihood of success were key criteria. Finally, for Outstanding Employer of the Year Döhle Shipmanagement, gender equality, health and well-being, and equal development opportunities were key considerations. The winners topped the record number of 60 nominations tended this year.



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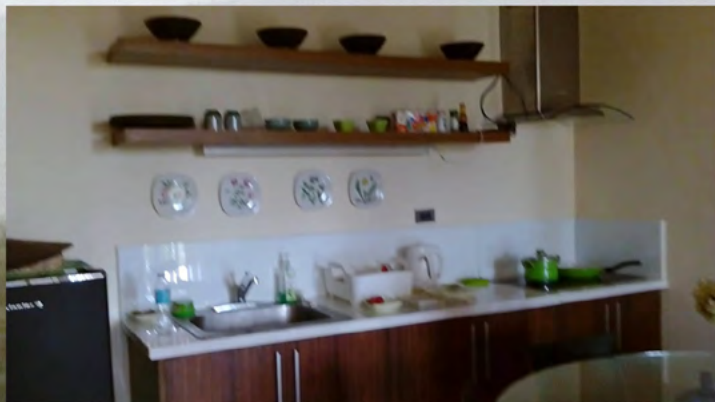
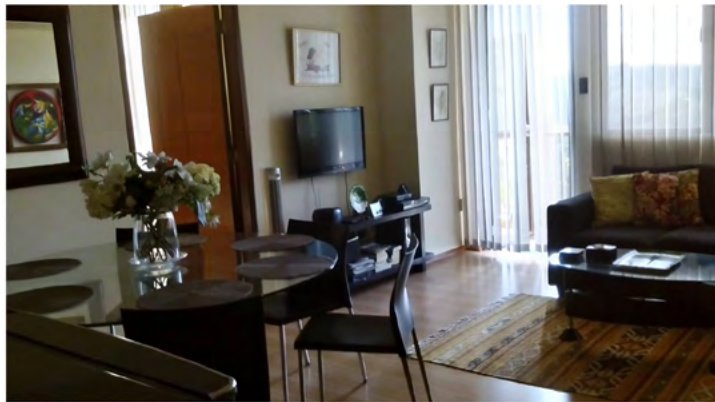
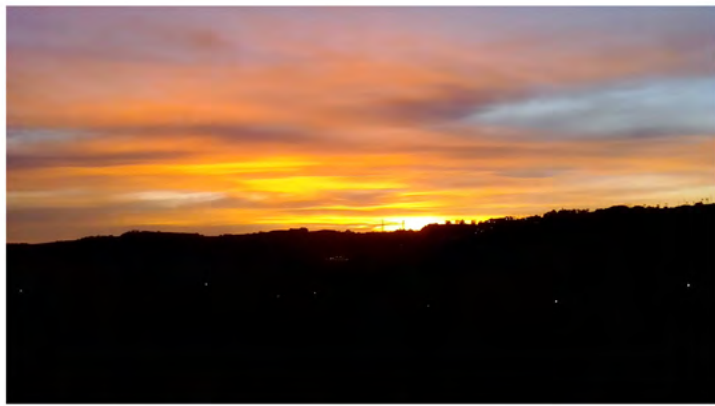
For a small fee, membership to Splendido Taal Country Club includes access to a Sports & Recreation Complex with high-end facilities and amenities like Infinity Swimming pools, locker rooms, jacuzzi, sauna, steam bath; A Fitness Center with high-end exercise

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Maia Magpantay

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The works of Roots and Wings Featured Artist Maia Magpantay is now available for sale through Roots and Wings. For inquiries, contact 0977 603 4300 Globe or email rachel_darlings@yahoo.com



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