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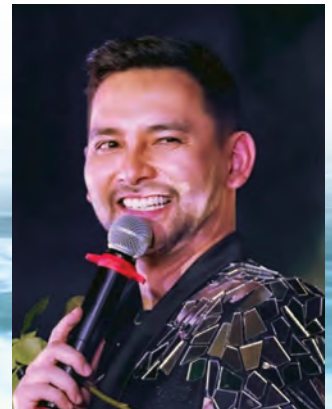
Featuring...
2012 AMERICAN IDOL
RUNNER-UP

Jessica Sanchez



GRAND CHAMPION
GLOBAL PINOY IDOL

Shane Ericks



PRINCE OF TELESERYE
THEME SONGS

Bryan Termulo

*Philippine Islands
Come to America*



EXHIBITORS FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND THE USA

AUGUST 17-18, 2024 • 10AM

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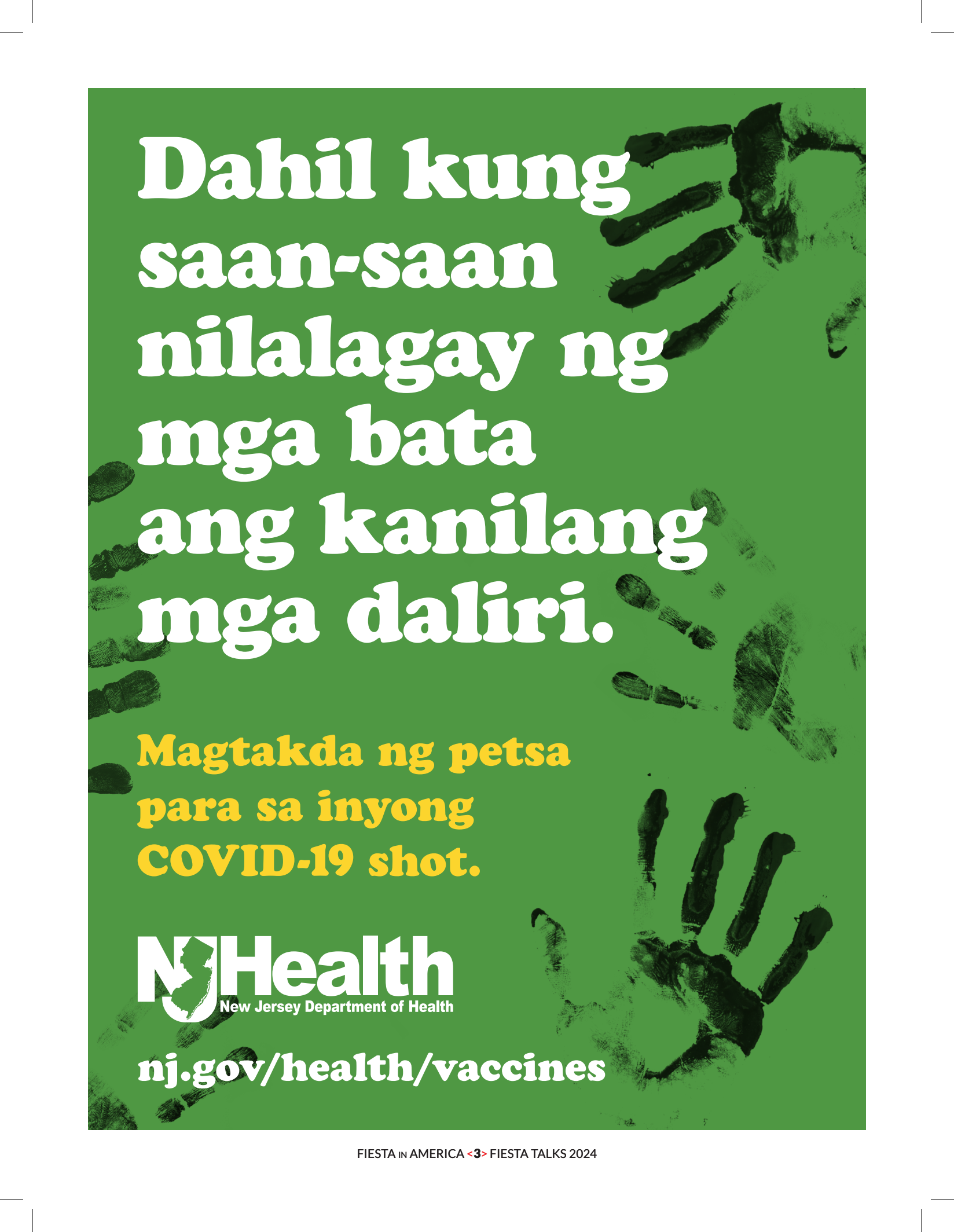


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PUBLICATIONS



27th YEAR

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PROGRAM



Saturday, August 17, 2024

- 12:30 pm US & Philippine national anthems
- Invocation
- Welcome address
- Guest speaker address
- 1:00 pm Bibak NY
- 1:10 pm Lirazen Rose
- 1:20 pm Vox
- 1:30 pm Amazing Filipiniana Dance Ensemble of NJ
- 1:40 pm Brown Sugar
- 1:50 pm Cebu Inc.
- 1:55 pm Wynnum Sabile
- 2:05 pm Erl Diva Dancers
- 2:15 pm Sponsors' video ads
- 2:30 pm The Arato Brothers
- 3:00 pm Carmelo Designs by Carl Andrada
"Filipiniana"
- 3:30 pm Not Shy Kpop Dance Group
- 3:40 pm Sponsors' video ads
Chambers Commerce
Induction of Officers
- 4:05 pm Belvidere Band
- 4:30 pm D'divas of Good Vibes
Line Dancers of St. Vincent
- 4:40 pm Sponsors' speaking engagement
- 5:25 pm Shane Ericks
- 6:00 pm Bryan Termulo
- 6:30 pm Jessica Sanchez
- 6:35 pm Sounds of Manila
- 7:00 pm Part 1 Sign off



Sunday, August 18, 2024

- 10:30 am FIA Sunday Mass
- 11:30 am FIA Santacruzian
- 12:00 pm Sponsors' video ads
- 12:15 pm Gabrielle
- 12:25 pm Droovy
- 12:35 pm Bayani
- 12:45 pm The Filipino School of New York & New Jersey
- 1:00 pm Kayumanggi Chorale
- 1:15 pm Sponsors' video ads
- 1:35 pm The Green Planet Band
- 2:00 pm Ellen San Miguel & Kats Alvir
- 2:15 pm Bibboloysius of Jersey City
- 2:25 pm Sponsors' video ads
- 2:40 pm The Band of Brothers
- 3:05 pm Carmelo Designs By Carl Andrada
"Philippine-Inspired Costumes"
- 4:45 pm The Angels
- 4:50 pm Not Shy Kpop Dance Group
- 5:00 pm La Cucaracha
- 5:15 pm Sponsors' speaking engagement
- 5:45 pm JACMAC
- 5:15 pm Shane Ericks
- 5:45 pm Bryan Termulo
- 6:15 pm Jessica Sanchez
- 6:45 pm Sounds of Manila Finale
- 7:15 pm END



Hosts: Grace Rustia and Vincent Medina

The event schedule is subject to change.

For the latest updates and any changes, please refer to our website at <https://www.gophilippines.co/program>



MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

MESSAGE

A fiesta is a defining and integral component of Filipino culture. The vibrancy of this occasion allows us to creatively demonstrate the richness of our heritage and bring to life the spirit of our community. I thus extend my heartfelt appreciation to the organizers, participants, and visitors of the **Fiesta in America**, which I welcome as an opportunity to promote our proud Filipino distinction in the global community.

Let this festivity reflect the unifying force we all share, that no matter where we are in the world, Filipinos are persistently preserving and flourishing our roots through the arts of music, dance, cuisine, and other valued traditions. May this event also contribute to enlivening the diversity of the United States of America and to fostering amity between our nations.

I hope that this gathering will serve as your display of support in building a *Bagong Pilipinas* where all Filipinos, both within and beyond our shores, are active participants of this shared endeavor.

I wish everyone a joyous and meaningful fiesta.


FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

MANILA
17 August 2024



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NEW YORK



MESSAGE

Warm greetings to all the participants, organizers, and attendees of the 27th Edition of Fiesta in America. For nearly three decades, Fiesta in America has stood as a beacon of Filipino culture and entrepreneurship in the Northeast United States. It has played a dual role, serving as a gateway to the Philippines showcasing our vibrant customs, arts, and traditions, while also providing a platform for Filipino and Filipino-American businesses and organizations to shine before an audience of diverse backgrounds.

I commend the dedication and passion of everyone involved in making Fiesta in America a resounding success year after year. Your efforts in celebrating and promoting Filipino culture and business contribute to the Philippine Consulate's mission of preserving our rich Filipino heritage for the next generation of Filipinos in the United States and fostering economic development in the Philippines.

May Fiesta in America 2024 be a memorable and enriching experience for all, further strengthening the bonds of friendship and cultural exchange between the Philippines and the United States.

Mabuhay ang Fiesta in America!



SENEN T. MANGALILE
Consul General

22 March 2024, New York City

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TEL: (+1) 212 764 1330 | FAX: (+1) 212-382 1146
NEWYORK.PCG@DFA.GOV.PH | WWW.NEWYORKPCG.ORG

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Dear Friends,

2024 is set to be an exceptional year for Fiesta In America as we celebrate our third edition at the American Dream Mall and our 27th Anniversary as the largest annual indoor Filipino event on the US East Coast. This year, we're putting a stronger emphasis on our two-day business and cultural expo, designed to empower Filipino businesses and deepen engagement with our vibrant community of attendees.

We're excited to bring back business talks, now called Fiesta Dream Talks, staying true to the heart of Fiesta in America—not just as a celebration of our roots, but as a powerful engine for Filipino entrepreneurs to build and grow their businesses.

City government officials from Angeles City, Mati, Davao Oriental, Siargao, and Zamboanga City will be joining us to showcase the beauty and investment opportunities in their cities. The city government of Siargao, partnered with Siargao Bleu Resort & Spa, will highlight their offerings. Additionally, Boracay will be featured in our magazine as well.

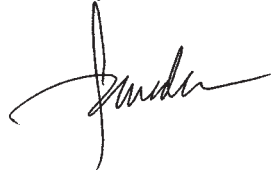
The entertainment highlights will include Jessica Sanchez, the 2012 American Idol runner-up, and a dazzling fashion show by acclaimed "Fashion Week" designer Carl Andrada, featuring Philippine-inspired designs. Major sponsors will have the unique opportunity to engage with high-value attendees through private 20-minute slots.

Recognizing the significant presence of Filipinos in the healthcare industry, we are pleased to include various healthcare facilities at our event, with some providing free health screenings. The NJ Department of Health will also be present to emphasize the importance of vaccination.

This vibrant event promises an unforgettable experience with activities and giveaways for the whole family, including exclusive KPop and Pokémon giveaways, a Gundam building session, crochet-making, Filipino comics, and 1,000 pieces of giveaways from IKEA.

With 68 sponsors and exhibitors and more than 25 performers, Fiesta in America at American Dream is set to be a spectacular celebration of Filipino culture, business, and community. Join us on August 17 and 18 for the biggest Filipino indoor event of the year.

Sincerely,



Nanding Mendez

MESSAGE



Thanks to the Fiesta Team

It is with great pleasure that we greet all our beloved guests with a HAPPY, HEALTHY FIESTA 2024!

For the third year in a row since the pandemic, Fiesta In America is back, now at its new home—the American Dream Mall, the second largest retail and entertainment center in the United States. Despite the hurdles we've faced over the years, we are proud to say that we are stronger, more vibrant, and more energetic than ever, with even more surprises in store for our beloved and loyal supporters, benefactors, and sponsors.

This year marks our 27th anniversary, and we continue the legacy of the late Mrs. Mila Mendez, founder of Philippine Fiesta, now rebranded as Fiesta In America. We are excited to hold this event over two days, as we have done for the past 26 years. We are thrilled to showcase over 25 talented Filipino American artists and other guest artists to the American mainstream audience.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the Fiesta in America team, particularly Ms. Vicie Allam, Business Office Manager as well as the Marketing Team – Mr. Gino Cabigao; Mr. Dennis Clemente; and Mr. Jeff Rivera – for their seamless support in helping to produce the show with great and fruitful outcomes.

A special thank you to Mr. Nanding Mendez, CEO and President of Fiesta In America, and Mr. Len Manansala, Vice President for Marketing. Be safe, be happy, and enjoy the fiesta!

Ogie B. Afable
Production/Cultural Director

MESSAGE



Mabuhay!

Welcome to the 27th Fiesta in America!

It is more than a privilege and opportunity to be part of FIESTA. It is an event you should never miss, where being home is simply a stone's throw away.

As ever, it promises to be another exciting, enriching, and fulfilling FIESTA as we embark on another milestone journey.

More than its music, dances, entertainment, talks, sights, food, travel, health, wellness, and array of products, it is the interaction, connectivity, and exchange of ideas with fellow “kababayans” you hardly know, but with whom instant friendships and alliances form and establish.

This and many more rewarding experiences await you as our valued sponsor, exhibitor, participant, and guest.

Discover, explore, learn, and cultivate what you can offer and give. Be your best.

Though your stint may be sweeping, fleeting, and brief, it will be the beginning, and never will it be the end.

We wish you a pleasant, safe, and memorable stay. Thank you for being a part of our FIESTA Family!

Susan del Mundo
Vice President
International Sales and Marketing



Republic of the Philippines
Office of the City Mayor
Angeles City

Mensayi

On behalf of the City of Angeles, Pampanga, I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Fiesta in America Inc. for the successful Fiesta in America 2024.

We commend the Fiesta in America Inc. for its commitment to celebrating Filipino culture and heritage and promoting Filipino-made products to the world.

Angeles City is honored to be part of this year's Fiesta in America 2024, allowing us to showcase Angeleño products to a wider audience, especially to the Filipino Community in New Jersey and in nearby areas.

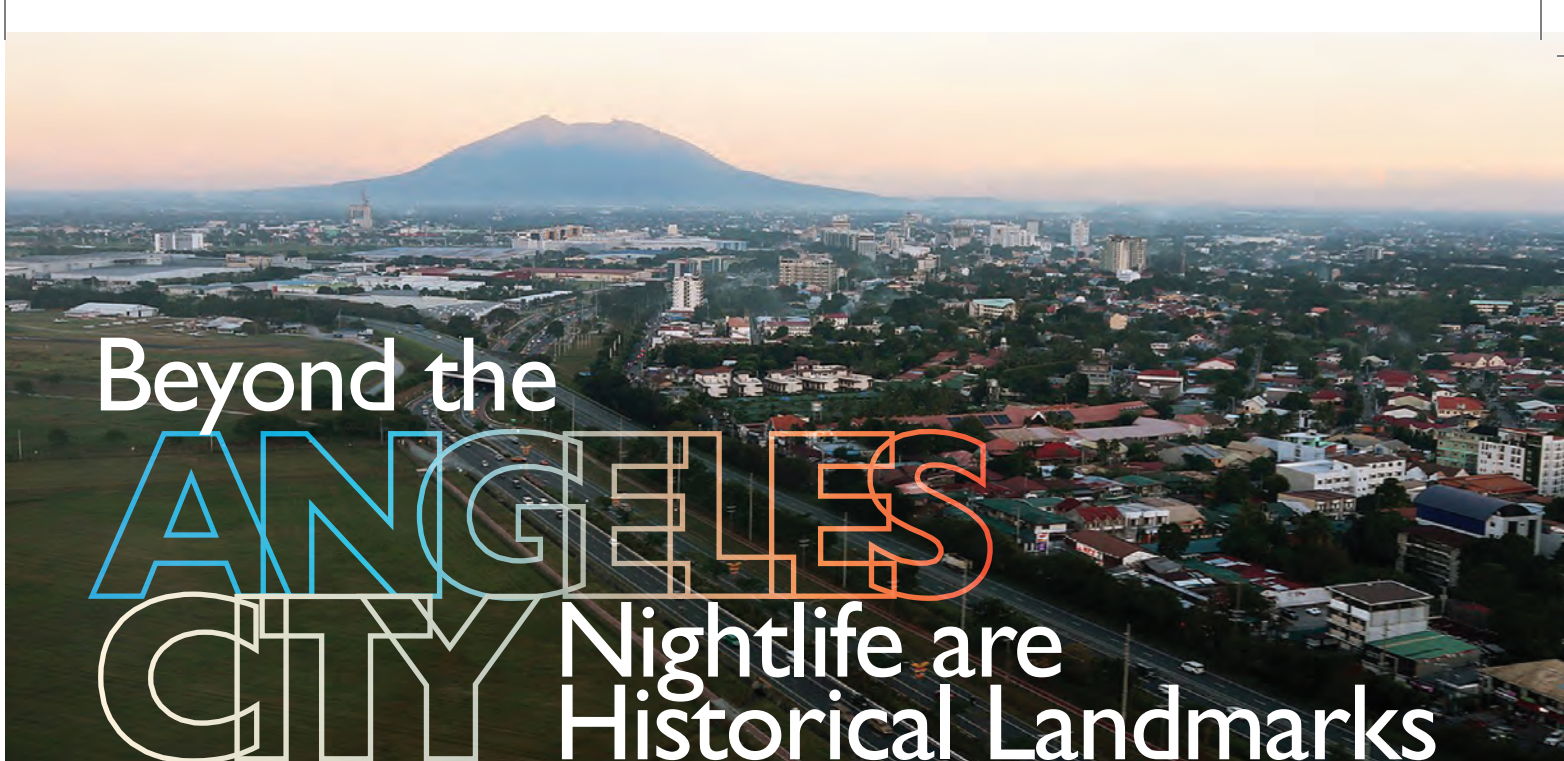
Although Angeles City is known for its rich culinary tradition, we are also home to a vibrant cultural heritage and a fast-growing local industry, and we are excited to introduce Angeleño products to the participants of the Fiesta in America 2024.

As we say in Kapampangan, luid ya ing produktong Angeleño, luid ya ing produktong Pilipino!

Dakal a salamat pu!



Carmelo Lazatin, Jr.
Hon. Carmelo 'Pogi' Lazatin, Jr.
Mayor of Angeles City Government



Beyond the

ANGELES

CITY Nightlife are Historical Landmarks

Angeles City is renowned for its vibrant nightlife, but it offers much more beyond its entertainment districts. The city is a blend of historical landmarks and cultural treasures, especially in downtown Angeles, where history provides a glimpse into the country's rich past.

Top Attractions in Angeles City

Clark Freeport Zone

Located near the international airport, the Clark Freeport Zone is famous for its tax-free shopping. Visitors can also enjoy excellent golf courses and family-friendly theme parks.

Clark Museum

The Clark Museum and 4D Theater offer insights into the history of Metro Clark, Fort Stotsenberg, and Clark Air Base. The museum features artifacts, replicas, dioramas, and interactive displays that showcase Filipino bravery and ingenuity. The 4D theater enhances the experience with a thematic film. *Location: E. Jacinto St, Clark Freeport, Mabalacat, Pampanga, Philippines*

Museo Ning Angeles

Housed in a 1922 building that served as the city hall until 1999, Museo Ning Angeles now offers exhibitions on the history and culture of Angeles City from the pre-colonial era to the present. The upper floor highlights the unique cuisine of Pampanga, featuring dishes like stuffed frogs and sisig. *Location: Santo Rosario St, Angeles, 2009 Pampanga*

Museum of Philippine Social History

The historic Pamintuan Mansion, built

around 1890, now houses the Museum of Philippine Social History. Its nine galleries explore various aspects of Philippine life, including clothing, architecture, furniture, music, games, cooking, and mythology. *Location: Santo Entiero St, Angeles, Pampanga, Philippines*

Nayong Pilipino Clark

A cultural theme park featuring replicas of historical sites and traditional villages from various Philippine regions. It includes areas such as Colonial Plaza, Hero's Plaza, Spanish Culture, and indigenous villages. The park is great for souvenir shopping and offers overnight stays in cottages. *Location: Nayong Pilipino, Centennial Rd, Clark Field, Mabalacat, 2010 Pampanga, Philippines*

Exploring Downtown Angeles City

Downtown Angeles City offers a true sense of the daily life of Angeleños. Jeepneys are the most affordable way to get around, while tricycles offer convenient options for quicker trips, and taxis provide the most comfort.

Historical Landmarks

- ▶ Museo Ning Angeles: Established in 1922, it houses artifacts narrating the city's evolution.
- ▶ Kapampangan Center at Holy Angel University: Preserves local culture and language, showcasing artifacts and historical photos.
- ▶ Holy Rosary Parish Church: Constructed between 1877 and 1896, it stands as a testament to the city's religious devotion and

architectural grandeur.

- ▶ Pamintuan House: Built in the late 1880s, this Spanish-inspired mansion is set to become a museum.
- ▶ Founder's Residence (Bahay na Bato): Constructed in 1824, it is the oldest domicile in the city.

Shopping and Dining

Downtown Angeles City offers various shopping and dining experiences. Popular shopping destinations include Nepo Mall and Jenra Mall. For dining, Susie's Cuisine is famous for its Filipino delicacies, while Camalig provides a lively atmosphere with live band performances. The Street Food Center offers an array of inexpensive snacks.

Educational and Medical Institutions

Angeles City is home to prominent educational institutions such as Angeles University Foundation, Holy Angel University, Systems Plus College Foundation, and Republic Central Colleges. The city also boasts top-notch medical centers like AUF Medical Center, Angeles Medical Center, and The Medical City.

Acknowledgment

Fiesta in America extends its gratitude to Mayor Carmelo G. Lazatin Jr. for his continuous support in promoting the rich culture and history of Angeles City.

Angeles City blends historical richness with modern attractions, making it a unique destination. Whether exploring its cultural heritage or enjoying its bustling markets, there is something for everyone in this vibrant city.

Office of the Municipal Mayor



MESSAGE

Mabuhay!

The Municipal Government of General Luna, from the world-renowned island of Siargao, in our beloved Philippines, is deeply honored and grateful for the opportunity to participate in this year's Fiesta in America, with the Siargao delegation well-represented by the officials from the six (6) municipalities and partners from private sector.

Our bustling town, along with eight towns of Siargao Island, has put immense efforts to join you and personally promote our tourism destinations and unique offerings through this prestigious event. We are excited to introduce to you one of the country's most loved and visited destinations: the beautiful island of Siargao, which, over the years, has gained immense popularity not just to balikbayans but among international tourists as well.

Recently, Siargao has received numerous accolades, including being named the "Best Island in Asia" by the Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards 2023. These recognitions highlight Siargao's unparalleled charm and appeal. In addition to the beautiful beaches and scenery on the island, it is also host to various international sports tourism annual competitions such as the Siargao International Game Fishing Tournament and the longest running sports tourism event in the country by far, the Siargao International Surfing Cup.

With that, we will take this expo as an opportunity to extend our heartfelt invitation to discover the unparalleled beauty and rich cultural heritage of our island and the entire region located in the northeastern section of Mindanao in the Philippines.

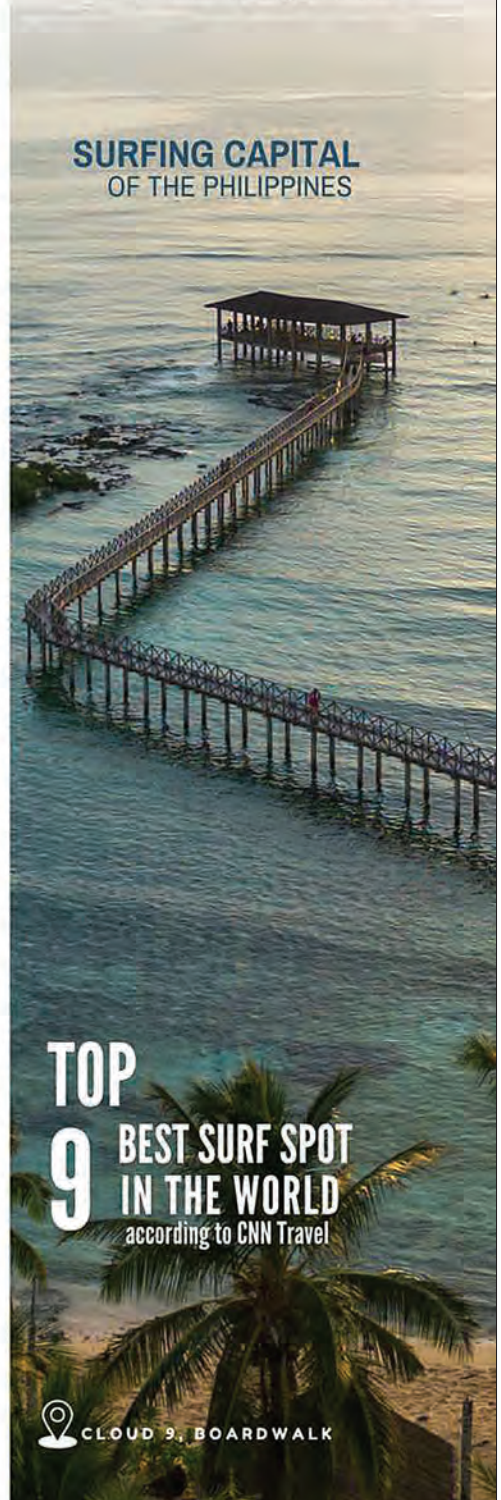
See you in Siargao!


SOL F. MATUGAS
Municipal Mayor



Republic of the Philippines
Caraga Administrative Region
Province of Surigao Del Norte
MUNICIPALITY OF GENERAL LUNA
email: solmatugas@gmail.com

SURFING CAPITAL
OF THE PHILIPPINES










TOP
9 **BEST SURF SPOT**
IN THE WORLD
according to CNN Travel

 **CLOUD 9, BOARDWALK**

7 of the Best Places to Visit in Southeast Asia

According to Lonely Planet

-  **Siargao, Philippines**
Best for surfing
-  **Amed, Bali, Indonesia**
Best for diving and snorkeling sites
-  **Cao Bang, Vietnam**
Best for getting off the beaten track
-  **Khao Sok National Park, Thailand**
Best for animal lovers
-  **Luang Prabang, Laos**
Best for Buddhist culture
-  **Penang, Malaysia**
Best for history and culture
-  **Gili Air, Indonesia**
Best for relaxation

Source: Lonely Planet | 7 of the Best Places to Visit in Southeast Asia

Siargao



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 - 4D3N \$1806** Add Corregidor Island Tour: Trekking, Snorkeling, Lunch
 - 5D4N \$2335** Add Sugba Lagoon and Kawhagan Sand Bar with lunch
 - 6D5N \$2646** Add Surf Day with instructor, guide or SUP at Secret Beach
 - 7D6N \$3461** Add Gamefishing or Sohoton Cave by speedboat with snacks and lunch
- DOT- accredited & fully-vaccinated tour guides.
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BDO



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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
CITY GOVERNMENT OF MAKATI

MESSAGE



Greetings to everyone at the Fiesta in America!

As Mayor of Makati, it is my great honor to extend my warmest congratulations to the Philippine Fiesta USA, Inc. on the 27th anniversary of this remarkable celebration. Fiesta in America has grown to become the biggest annual Filipino event, showcasing the vibrant culture, rich heritage, and dynamic spirit of the Filipino community.

This event is a testament to our shared pride in our roots and traditions. It brings together a diverse array of cultural performances, culinary delights, artistic expressions, and business opportunities. By celebrating our culture and heritage, we not only honor our past but also build bridges to a brighter future.

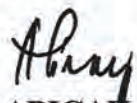
Fiesta in America plays a crucial role in promoting Filipino culture by providing a platform where our traditions, values, and achievements can be shared and appreciated by a broader audience. It fosters a sense of pride and belonging among Filipino-Americans, while also educating and engaging others about the richness of our heritage.

As a Filipino, I am committed to supporting Filipino-American communities and their efforts to preserve and promote our culture. Your dedication and hard work contribute to the strengthening of our community and the promotion of our beloved Philippines on the global stage. It is through events like this that we can highlight the contributions of Filipinos worldwide and inspire a deeper understanding and appreciation of our cultural legacy.

To all the organizers, participants, and attendees, thank you for making this event a success. May this year's Fiesta in America be filled with joy, unity, and unforgettable experiences.

Mabuhay ang Fiesta in America!

Mabuhay ang sambayanang Pilipino!


MAR-LEN ABIGAIL S. BINAY
CITY MAYOR

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INSTAGRAM!





In Photo: Sol Marina Villa with private pool

BORACAY, AGAIN?

Of course! Only this time, it's not just your typical 'Boracay' but Mövenpick Boracay.

For many Filipino-Americans planning a trip back to the Philippines, Boracay is often at the top of their list. Known for its world-famous White Beach, the island offers a variety of stunning resorts and vibrant activities. Yet, amidst the bustle of this tropical paradise, lies a serene sanctuary that promises not just a vacation but an experience of true fun and relaxation: **Mövenpick Resort & Spa Boracay.**

One common misconception is that Mövenpick is too far from the bustling city center, D'Mall. In reality, it's just a 300 PHP (or roughly \$5) ride away via an "e-trike"—the local term for the electric tricycle, also known as "arkilla" when booked privately. This unique local transport is an immersive way to travel, safely accommodating up to 4 people comfortably. It's a small adventure in itself, making the trip to our resort culturally engaging.

Why Choose Mövenpick Boracay?

While White Beach is renowned for its lively atmosphere and stunning sunsets, it can sometimes be overwhelming with its crowds and constant activity. If you're looking for a more intimate escape, Mövenpick offers a unique blend of relaxation and excitement, making it the perfect choice for your next vacation.

1. The Island's Largest Swimming Pool

One of the standout features of Mövenpick Boracay is its expansive 3,300-square-meter multi level swimming pool, the largest on the island. Our favorite features are the kiddie pool by the instagrammable cabanas and the three bubble pools. Imagine starting your day with a refreshing dip in this sprawling pool or unwinding in the evening as the sun sets over the horizon.

2. The Chocolate Hour: A Daily Sweet Treat

At Mövenpick, 3 PM is Chocolate Hour, where guests can indulge in a free sweet buffet. From our decadent chocolate fountain corner to our delightful kakanin of the day, this daily event is a perfect way to satisfy your sweet tooth and enjoy a moment of indulgence.



3. Sol Marina Beach Club: Home to the Best Boracay Sunsets & Quality Entertainment

For those who enjoy a bit of excitement without the crowds, our beachfront Sol Marina Beach Club at Mövenpick Resort & Spa Boracay will not disappoint. While it is a popular place to enjoy Happy Hour and the Kalye Sol (street-style 'turo-turo') experience, it also stands out for its unique week-long entertainment, featuring alternating fire dances, live music, and other performances you won't find anywhere else on the island.

What are you waiting for? Take advantage of the limited-time offer exclusive to Fiesta in America. Contact us for details and see you in paradise.

MÖVENPICK
RESORT & SPA BORACAY

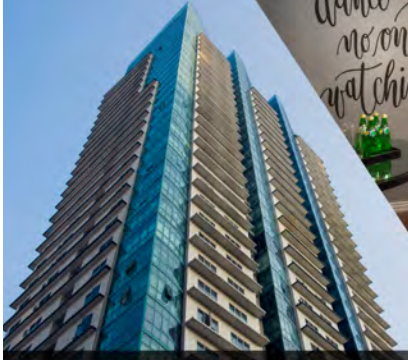
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no one's
watching*



ASTORIA GREENBELT

#Amenities



ASTORIA PALAWAN

#Appetite



ASTORIA BOHOL

#Attention



ASTORIA BORACAY

#Appeal



ASTORIA CURRENT



Booking.com
Traveller Review Awards 2022

- 8.9 Astoria Current
- 8.7 Astoria Palawan
- 8.5 Astoria Boracay
- 8.3 Astoria Greenbelt
- 8.3 Astoria Plaza



- Astoria Current
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MESSAGE

Bienvenidos A ciudad de Zamboanga! Enjoy our rich culture, delicious food, and numerous tourist attractions. We have more than 50 accommodations and 234 restaurants that can satisfy even the pickiest of eaters. Zamboanga City is accessible by land, air, and sea. We offer different tours; cultural, culinary, bird-watching, industrial, diving, golf, and eco-tours.

Visiting Zamboanga City will be one of the most magical moments of your life. Come and relish the beauty of the pink sands of the Great Sta. Cruz Island, heralded as one of National Geographic's most beautiful beaches in the world. Dive into the crystal-clear waters surrounding Once Islas and immerse yourself in the stunning rock formations on the island.

Zamboanga City is also home to some of the most delicious food on this side of the equator. Sink your teeth in our *curacha*, a species of deep-sea spanner crab that is traditionally eaten with a sweet and tangy sauce dredged on top of it. Warm up your bellies with *satti*, a sweet and spicy sauce topped with rice cooked in woven coconut leaves and your choice of barbecued meat. Grab a glass of *knickerbocker*, a popular dessert in Zamboanga City, known for its mixture of fresh fruits such as mangoes, bananas, and apples, along with jelly or gelatin cubes, all layered in a tall glass.

We are thankful for the opportunity of being able to feature our beloved city during the conduct of the Fiesta in America.

Zamboanga City can satisfy all of your travel wanderlust so book a trip and discover Zamboanga, the crowning glory of the Philippine South, and experience our culture, tradition, and warm hospitality. *Vamos!*

John M. Dalipe
Zamboanga City Mayor



Where Diverse Cultures, Historic Landmarks, and Pink Sand Beaches Await

Zamboanga, a city in the southern Philippines, is a treasure trove of rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and vibrant traditions. Home to a diverse population influenced by ethnic groups such as the indigenous Subanen people, Muslim communities, and Spanish settlers, Zamboanga offers a unique blend of cultures.

As the third-largest city in the Philippines, Zamboanga derives its name from the Malay word “Jambangan,” meaning “place of flowers.” Founded on February 26, 1635, it is one of the oldest cities in the country. One of its major historical landmarks is Fort Pilar, also known as the Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar.

The city is renowned for its unique Chavacano language, a Spanish-based creole. The Yakan Tribe, indigenous to

Zamboanga, is famous for their intricate weaving. Every October, the city comes alive with the Zamboanga Hermosa Festival, a vibrant celebration of the city’s patron saint, Our Lady of the Pillar.

Zamboanga also boasts natural attractions such as Great Santa Cruz Island, famous for its pink sand beaches. National Geographic recognized this sun-drenched island as one of the world’s best beaches. The pink sand, glowing under the sunlight, is a result of microscopic organisms called “foraminifera,” which contain pink algae. These organisms mix with corals, shells, and calcium carbonate in the sand, creating a magical hue.

Great Santa Cruz Island is just a 15-minute boat ride from Zamboanga City’s bustling commercial district and

about a 90-minute plane ride from Manila. As an ecotourism site, Santa Cruz Islands, or Las Islas de Santa Cruz, only allow low-impact structures, facilities, and activities to preserve the natural environment. Visitors can snorkel, dive, bird watch, take lagoon tours, and immerse themselves in the culture of the peace-loving Sama-Bangingi community. Locals also prepare delicious seafood dishes for those looking to experience the local cuisine.

Zamboanga’s colorful festivals, historic landmarks, and commitment to community development make it a unique and unforgettable destination. Whether exploring its cultural sites or natural wonders, visitors to Zamboanga are sure to experience the city’s dynamic spirit and heritage.



MESSAGE OF THE CHAIRMAN

As we celebrate Fiesta in America, it is my great honor to extend warm greetings from the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF). This year makes the 50th edition of the MMFF, and we are honored to share this significant milestone with our *kababayans* in North America.



Over the past five decades, the MMFF has evolved into a cherished tradition that celebrates Filipino talents and creativity. This year, through the generous platform provided by Fiesta in America, we have the unique opportunity to bring our films to our fellow Filipinos here, promoting the MMFF, and igniting joy and a sense of nationalism within our community abroad.



We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organizers of Fiesta in America for their unwavering support in promoting the Filipino film industry. Your dedication helps us continue our mission of celebrating Filipino talent and bringing our stories to audiences worldwide.

As we look forward to the MMFF in December, we invite you to join us in celebrating our golden year. Let us come together to celebrate Filipino cinema, support our artists, and promote our culture wherever we may be.

Maraming salamat at Mabuhay ang Pelikulang Pilipino!

ATTY. ROMANDO S. ARTES, CPA
Chairman, MMDA &
Overall Chairman, MMFF



The recent restoration and remastering of Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Jose Rizal," produced by GMA Pictures, and its screening at the Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival this August have brought the Philippine national hero back to the forefront of cultural discussions, making his story even more accessible and impactful for modern audiences. This year, a special collaboration between the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF), the Manila International Film Festival (MIFF), and Fiesta in America also brought the film to New York.

Here's why watching this film is crucial, especially for young Filipinos who recognize Jose Rizal as the Philippines' national hero but are unfamiliar with the intricate details of his life and work.

Visual and Emotional Impact. Diaz-Abaya's "Jose Rizal" allows viewers to connect with Rizal's struggles, ideals, and sacrifices on a deeper level. Focusing on his last days while offering the unique perspective of his novels' relationship to his life, the film makes his heroism and historical context more relatable and memorable.

Historical Context and Education. The film offers an immersive history lesson, bringing to life the events and conditions of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. It helps viewers understand the socio-political environment that shaped Rizal's thoughts and actions, essential for appreciating his contributions and the impact of his work on Philippine independence.

Accessibility and Engagement. While reading Rizal's novels and writings is invaluable, films like Diaz-Abaya's make his story accessible to those who might find historical texts challenging. The film serves as an engaging introduction to Rizal's life and works, potentially inspiring viewers, especially young Filipinos, to explore his writings more deeply.

Cultural Connection. For Filipino Americans and others who live outside the Philippines, watching the film helps bridge the cultural gap and strengthens their connection to their heritage. It vividly portrays Filipino traditions, struggles, and the spirit of resistance, fostering a deeper appreciation of their roots and national identity. It is an opportunity for younger generations to understand the history and sacrifices that shape their identity today.

Appreciation of Filipino Cinema. Marilou Diaz-Abaya's "Jose Rizal" is a landmark in Filipino cinema, showcasing the talent and artistry of Filipino filmmakers and actors. Watching the film highlights the rich tradition of Filipino storytelling and the importance of supporting and valuing local cinema. The

newly restored film should encourage more people to watch it.

Inspirational Storytelling. The film's portrayal of Rizal's intellectual brilliance, moral courage, and unwavering commitment to his country is profoundly inspirational. It serves as a reminder of the power of one individual to effect change, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own roles in society and how they can contribute to positive change.

Multifaceted Character Portrayal. Through Cesar Montano's award-winning performance, viewers get a nuanced portrayal of Rizal as a multi-dimensional character—scholar, reformer, lover, and patriot. This humanizes Rizal, making him more than just a historical figure but someone with relatable struggles and emotions.

Cinematic Excellence. The film's direction, screenplay, and performances have been critically acclaimed, making it not only an educational experience but also an example of cinematic excellence. It highlights the collaboration of talented individuals like Jun Robles Lana, Peter Ong Lim, and National Artist Ricky Lee, who crafted an authentic narrative.

Promotion of National Unity and Pride. Watching "Jose Rizal" fosters a sense of national pride and unity. It reminds viewers of the shared history and values that bind Filipinos together, encouraging a collective effort to honor and preserve their heritage.

Relevance to Modern Issues. The themes explored in the film, such as social justice, human rights, and the fight against oppression, are timeless and highly relevant to contemporary issues. It encourages viewers to draw parallels between past and present struggles of Filipinos.

Conclusion
Filipino Americans who have the chance to watch this film should seize this unique

opportunity to reconnect with their heritage and gain a deeper understanding of their cultural roots. As a final thought, remember the words of Rizal himself: "He who does not know how to look back at where he came from will never get to his destination."





Metro Manila Film Festival

December 25, 2024

to

January 7, 2025

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|  <p>Parade of Stars</p> |  <p>Premiere Week</p> |  <p>Sponsors Night</p> |  <p>Gabi ng Parangal</p> |  <p>Coffee Table Book Launch</p> |
| <p>December 15, 2024</p> | <p>December 14 - 21 2024</p> | <p>December 21, 2024</p> | <p>December 27, 2024</p> | <p>February 2025</p> |



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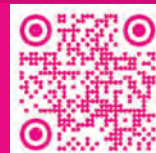
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OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR



Madayaw!

It is with great pride and joy that we extend our warmest greetings from Mati City to all the participants and attendees of the Fiesta In America 2024.

This vibrant celebration is wonderful opportunity to showcase our rich culture, heritage and the spirit of unity that binds us as a community.

We are honored to be one of the Destination Partners for this grand event. Through this partnership, we hope to bring a piece of Mati's beauty and charm to you all.

May this fiesta be filled with joyous moments, meaningful connections, and a deeper appreciation of our shared Filipino heritage.

Mabuhay and enjoy the festivities!

Very truly yours,


MICHELLE N. RABAT
City Mayor

City Hall, Nazareno St., Barangay Central, City of Mati, Davao Oriental

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Mati, officially known as the City of **Mati**, is a captivating 5th class city and the capital of Davao Oriental, Philippines. Situated on the southeastern side of Mindanao, this city boasts a population of 141,141 people according to the 2015 census. With its unique blend of history, culture, and natural beauty, Mati is a destination worth exploring.

Historical Background

The city's roots trace back to 1861 when Captain Prudencio Garcia, the pioneer political-military head, and his comrade Juan Nazareno, founded Mati and two other towns in Davao Oriental. By 1903, Mati was declared a municipality through Act No. 21, and its local government was further established by Act No. 189 in 1907. Bonifacio Serrano was appointed as the first mayor, with Patricio Cunanan becoming the first elected mayor in 1923. Since 1967, Mati has served as the capital of Davao Oriental.

During World War II, the Japanese Imperial forces occupied most of the eastern Davao region, including Mati. The city was liberated in 1945 by the combined efforts of the Allied Philippine Commonwealth troops and local guerilla units.

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

The name "Mati" is derived from the Mandayan word "Maa-ti," referring to the town's creek that quickly dries up even after heavy rain. The city's early settlers included the Kalagan, Mandayan, and Maranao tribes, which carried strong Arabic and Indo-Malayan influences.

Cebuano is the most widely spoken language in Mati, with the corresponding ethnicity (including the Boholano subgroup) accounting for 71.55% of the population as of a 2000 census. Other significant ethnic groups include the Mandaya (12.74%) and Kalagan (6.87%). Most residents are descendants of migrants from the Visayas who came to Mati for employment opportunities in logging, mining, farming, fishing, trading, and teaching.

Religious Landscape

Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion in Mati, comprising 80% of the population. Islam is the second most practiced religion at 8%, followed by Iglesia Ni Cristo with 6%. Other Christian groups like the United Church of Christ and Seventh Day Adventist also have a presence in the city.

The Cathedral of San Nicolas de Tolentino serves as the center of the Diocese of

Mati, under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Davao. There are two parishes in Mati: one in the town center and another in Brgy. Dawan.

Festivals and Celebrations

Mati is home to two grand annual festivals: the Pujada Bay Festival every June and the Sambuokan Festival every October. The Pujada Bay Festival, which began in 2004, aims to promote and protect Pujada Bay. The Sambuokan Festival, started in 2001, unites Matinians during the commemoration of the municipality's founding anniversary on October 29. These festivals have become popular tourist destinations, attracting competitors from various regions for events like street dancing, boat racing, skimboarding, and frisbee.

Transportation

Getting around Mati is convenient with the pedicab or tricycle and the bao-bao which is like a rickshaw. Jeepneys are available for travel within Mati and to neighboring towns, while vans and buses connect Mati to other cities. The Mati Airport is scheduled to reopen soon, with Cebu Pacific planning to offer direct flights from Mati to Cebu. Additionally, the Mati Seaport in Pujada Bay is one of only three seaports in Davao Oriental.

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Jessica SANCHEZ

The American Idol's Journey of Growth and Resilience

In 2012, American Idol was at the peak of its popularity when a 16-year-old girl, barely five feet tall, electrified homes across the United States. Though she didn't win the title, Filipino American singer Jessica Sanchez didn't need to. Little girls and their Filipino mothers in the US and the Philippines were glued to their screens, captivated by her every performance.

After moving to Los Angeles, Jessica recorded tracks with top industry songwriters, following label advice to release what was deemed marketable. Her post-Idol songs reflect this uncertainty.

Fast forward to today: Jessica Sanchez's latest album is set to drop on August 2. Just a few weeks later, she will be performing for thousands at Fiesta in America's Filipino Business and Cultural Expo at American Dream, in collaboration with Liberty Insurance from the Philippines.

Jessica admits to being a "major introvert." While she shines onstage, she finds songwriting "super hard," as she shared in her interview with Billboard Philippines. Writing songs about herself was a challenge.

After six years of refining her own songs, Jessica is ready to claim her place as an American Idol alum with the potential to be one of its biggest stars.

Over the past few years, Jessica has been actively involved in the music scene. She performed for the House of Bolkia during the Crown Prince Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah's birthday celebration in February 2019. Under the mononym Jes, she released the single "Love You" in April 2019 and announced plans for a third extended play. In May 2019, she reunited with Leroy Sanchez for a duet of "A Whole New World," followed by the release of her single



"Angels" in June 2019.

She also collaborated with Matt Blaud for "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" and performed at various events, including the grand finals of Idol Philippines. In 2021, Jessica released "Us," a single responding to the xenophobia and racism related to the COVID-19 pandemic, featuring guest appearances from Apl.de.ap and Mark Cuban. Her latest single, "Baddie," a self-written song about women's empowerment, was released in August 2022.

Watch her perform at Fiesta in America on August 17 and 18. See you at Court A of the American Dream. With her latest album and upcoming performances, she is poised to reconnect with her fans and introduce them to the unstoppable artist she has become. The journey has been long and challenging, but for Jessica Sanchez, it's just the beginning.

Watch her perform at Fiesta in America on August 17 and 18. See you at Court A of the American Dream. With her latest album and upcoming performances, she is poised to reconnect with her fans and introduce them to the authentic artist she has become. The journey has been long and challenging, but for Jessica Sanchez, it's just the beginning.

Jessica Sanchez is proudly sponsored by



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Bryan

TERMULO

Bryan is a Filipino actor and award winning singer-songwriter, who was the runner-up in Pinoy Pop Superstar Year 3. He is best known for singing the theme song of Filipino TV series titled *Dadalhin* and *Bihag*.



Shane

ERICKS

Shane Ericks is an award winning singer-songwriter who is instantly recognizable for her sonic similarity to Karen Carpenter. Shane has performed a recorded live medley with Moira Dela Torre, Angeline Quinto, Erik Santos, Inigo Pascual and AJ Rafael.

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THE ANGELS



From Capiz to Couture: Carl Andrada's Global Fashion Journey

Carmelo Andrada Jr., better known as Carl, has made a name for himself in the competitive world of fashion through his exceptional talent in designing costumes for beauty pageants. His intricate and stunning creations have graced international stages, earning him accolades and recognition. From his humble beginnings in Ivisan, Capiz, Carl's journey to fashion stardom is a testament to his passion and creativity.

Carl's breakthrough came in 2015 when he participated in the Metropolitan Fashion Week Costume Design Competition, emerging as one of the winners. This victory opened doors to the global fashion scene, allowing him to showcase his designs at prestigious fashion weeks in Los Angeles, New York, and Paris. His pageant costumes, worn by beauty queens from the Philippines and beyond, have won awards at major international events, solidifying his reputation as a top designer.

Based in Los Angeles, Carl continues to draw inspiration from his Filipino heritage,

incorporating traditional materials and motifs into his avant-garde designs. His work not only celebrates Filipino culture but also pushes the boundaries of contemporary fashion, making him a prominent figure in the industry.

From Capiz to California: Carl's Fashion Journey

Carl spent nine years as a Visual Merchandising Manager in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, working with renowned international fashion brands such as Topshop/Topman, River Island, Debenhams, Oasis,



and Liz Claiborne. In 2009, he relocated to sunny California, where he juggled various jobs while teaching himself to sew and design in his spare time. Eventually, he decided to formalize his training by taking fashion design courses at Los Angeles Trade Technical College. During this period, Carl began creating costumes for friends participating in local beauty pageants.

International Recognition and Achievements

Carl's talent soon gained international acclaim. His designs have been worn by beauty queens from the Philippines, Suriname, Zambia, Mauritius, Seychelles, and the USA, winning awards at major international pageants, including Miss Earth (2015 & 2019), Miss Universe (2017, 2021 & 2022), Miss Grand International (2018), Miss Globe (2019), Miss California USA (2016), Miss Teen Montana at Miss Teen USA (2021), Miss USA (2022), and Miss Teen USA (2023).

Carl has been invited to showcase his collections at prestigious fashion weeks both in the United States and abroad. Notable appearances include the 2016-2019 and 2022 Metropolitan Fashion Week in Los Angeles, 2017 OC Fashion Week, 2017 San Diego Fashion Fest, 2022 TFL New York and Los Angeles Fashion Week, 2023 Paris Fashion Week, and the 2023 and 2024 Bureau New York Fashion Week.

Celebrating Filipino Heritage

Carl is known in the Filipino community for his intricate dresses, particularly Philippine-inspired costumes using unconventional, indigenous, and natural materials from the Philippines. His unique and avant-garde headpieces have also garnered attention.

Currently, Carl serves as the Filipino American Cancer Care Ambassador and the Musa Ambassador in the USA. The Musa fabric, handwoven from banana fiber by individuals in the Davao Oriental Provincial Jail, features prominently in his costumes and ready-to-wear collections. Carl continues to create stunning designs, blending his cultural heritage with modern fashion, and remains a beloved figure in the fashion industry.



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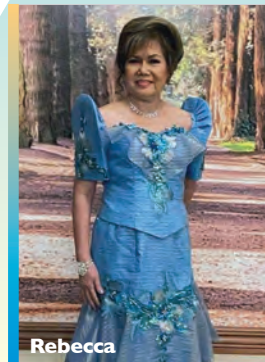
Ramona

Fiesta in America proudly acknowledges the incredible models who are making this year's fashion show an extraordinary event. Featuring the stunning creations of "Fashion Week" designer Carl Andrada, these models bring the runway to life with their dedication and passion.

From makeup to rehearsals, fittings, and wardrobe coordination, the effort required to mount a fashion show is immense. Yet, these talented individuals

have embraced the challenge with grace and enthusiasm, showcasing their unique backgrounds and remarkable journeys.

Lara Hirshenson Carlson, reigning as USOA Mrs. Parsippany 2024, has held prestigious titles including Miss Philippines Fiesta in America 2011 and Miss Fiesta in America International Queen 2014. **Ciarra Lumbera**, a former college instructor from Batangas, Philippines, is now



Rebecca



Kiara



Mark

pursuing her dreams in New York.

Lanica Nina Jardinaso, originally from Iloilo City and now residing in Annapolis, Maryland, is an aspiring model who lives life to the fullest. **Anna Lou Pedrosa**, a licensed medical aesthetician in Pennsylvania, has held titles such as Mutya Hong Las Nieves 2007 and Mutya Hong Libertad 2009, and worked as a DJ for 100.7 iFm and 88.7 Real Radio. **Francesca Radojevic-Bradley**, a cum laude graduate from the University of Santo Tomas

with a degree in Financial Management, is now a management consultant for an international firm.

Jelita Rome Dalmacia, a personal assistant based in NYC, balances her passion for fashion, archery, and pageantry. **Kiara Delos Santos**, an environmental advocate and business owner, promotes eco-friendly fashion through her vintage shop while leading sustainability initiatives.

Kate Perez, an incoming student at Archbishop Molloy



Kate



Ciarra



Dave



Ariel



Francesca



Zyan



Ira



Lara



Leo



Rose



Tara

involvement. **Rose Javier**, PACCAL President 2020 and PAFCOM Board of Directors member, adds her leadership and grace to the lineup.

The male models are equally impressive. **Leo Gabriel Ramos**, a sophomore at Rutgers University School of Nursing, balances his studies with a passion for pickleball and basketball. **Zyan Raguro**, a 17-year-old model, combines fashion with a love for volleyball. **Isra Cebrian**, a Critical Facilities Engineer and MBA student, serves as the Executive Vice President of JCI North Jersey. **Rex Payos** and **Mark Victoriano**, both proud Igorots, bring their cultural heritage

to the runway. **Kyian Raguro**, a 10-year-old model, captivates audiences with his bright smile and enthusiasm. **Jashua Andes**, Ginoo ng Kalayaan 2022, and **Joselito Paz**, Ginoo ng Kalayaan, showcase their talents with pride. **Dave Valeriano**, Mr. US United Duke 2024, rounds out this exceptional group.

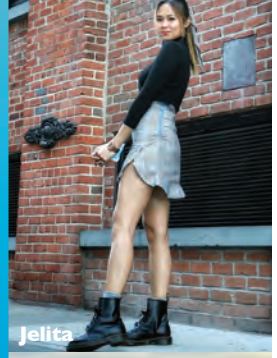
Frelin dela Cruz from Cotabato Philippines is an actress for E&M International Film Production, LLC and a model for 7 S PRODUCTION, LLC. Other models include **Melanie Stokes**, **Kaila Nucum**, **Arlene Obero**, **Maia Santarina**, **Fermarie Bedona**, **Nikka Andrada** and **Sean Nucum**.



Jan



Rex



Jelita

HS and a member of the National Honor Society, dreams of becoming a nurse practitioner. **Leilani June Ramos**, an incoming freshman at Rutgers University School of Nursing, loves the beach and traveling. **Ira Diocson**, a real estate professional and lifestyle content creator in Manhattan, NYC, is an active member of the Young Entrepreneur Society in Pampanga.

From rising stars like **Ava Catalfamo**, a 10-year-old per-

former from Annie's Playhouse School of Performing Arts, to **Ariel Obero**, Bb. Visayas ng Pilipinas 2024, these models embody diverse talents and ambitions. **Tara Nucum**, Diwa ng Kalayaan 2022, and **Jan Andrada**, Ginang Amerika Tourism 2024, bring their poise and elegance to the stage.

Ramona Gapasin, 2024 Mrs. PAFCOM, and **Rebecca Saman-yaphon**, Hermana Mayor Fiesta In America 2023, shine with their community



Kyian



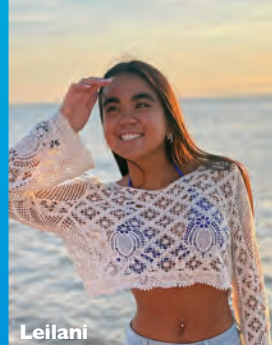
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EMPOWERMENT

The Empowerment Awards 2024 celebrate the remarkable achievements of Filipinos in the US who have made significant contributions in various fields, exemplifying leadership, dedication, and community impact. This year, we are honored to include extraordinary individuals whose career and community involvement have profoundly influenced the lives of many.



LAURA GARCIA
DNP, RN, FNYAM
Honorary Chair

Laura Garcia is associate professor of Nursing at the University of Mount St. Vincent and an adjunct clinical instructor at the New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing. She received the *Pamana ng Pilipino Award* in 2021, Presidential Awards for Individual and Organization Overseas (PAFIOO).

Dr. Garcia is currently Vice President for Community Relations at Fiesta in America and President of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, Northeast Region. Her Doctorate in Nursing Practice was conferred by Fairleigh Dickinson University. She sits on the Manhattan Community Board District Five.



SAHLEE MANONGDO
Excellence in Nursing Leadership

Sahlee Manongdo is a remarkable leader who embodies the qualities of dedication, willingness, and capability to lead and serve. As a member of both the Philippines Nurses Association of New Jersey, Inc. (PNANJ) and the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA), she actively promotes community service in the United States and the Philippines.

With over 46 years of nursing experience, the majority in management roles, Sahlee Manongdo has demonstrated unwavering commitment to her profession and her community. A God-fearing woman, she has made significant contributions through her leadership, service, and devotion to improving healthcare and supporting those in need.



ERIC B. BUSTAMANTE
Excellence in Banking Leadership

Mr. Eric B. Bustamante holds the position of First Vice President and General Manager of PNB New York. Mr. Bustamante is a charismatic, passionate and multi-awarded banker who made Philippine National Bank New York the Most Awarded, Most Profitable and No. 1 Philippine National Bank Overseas Branch since his assumption as its General Manager in 2018. His extraordinary leadership and world class customer service catapulted PNB New York to the top position for an unprecedented six straight years from 2018 to 2024. He is also an eight-time awardee in the field of Banking Management Excellence given by various

ENT AWARDS 2024

Fil-Am organizations, both in the United States and the Philippines. GM Bustamante and the PNB New York team were also twice bestowed PNB's Service Excellence Award in the field of Revenue Generation and Customer Service, a testament to their vision of "Banking Excellence Beyond Borders!"

Mr. Bustamante's dream is to make Philippine National Bank New York the "Bank of Choice" among Filipino American communities in the United States. PNB New York serves as the bridge to progress between Filipino American in the United States and the Philippines, providing excellent banking services to *kababayans* (fellow Filipinos). As a visionary leader, GM Eric also advocates Corporate Social Responsibility, staying true to his support of the bank's mission to provide a sustainable economy for all Filipinos, wherever they are. "May this award serve as an inspiration to all people in the banking community, especially Philnabankers across the Globe. I believe that, with Every Step Together, we can all be a beacon of excellence in our own way!"



AUGELYN FRANCISCO
Excellence in Filipino Culinary Awareness

Chef-restaurateur Augelyn Francisco, or Augee as she's affectionately known, was destined for a culinary future. Growing up on a farm in the mountain region of Northern Philippines, Augee's respect for seasonal ingredients and the bounty of nature were instilled in her from a young age. Her palate was further influenced by the flavorful traditions of her Igorot heritage, including vegetable stews (*nilaga*), vinegar-marinated dishes (*kinilaw*), and grilled specialties (*inihaw*). After venturing abroad to Korea and Japan, Augee's passion for food continued to grow. She absorbed the spices and flavors of these countries, adding new layers of depth to her culinary repertoire. This global perspective is evident in the innovative dishes she creates at Kabisera. Kabisera has two locations, Chinatown

in Manhattan and Hell's Kitchen.

Chef Augelyn is not only known for her expertly crafted Filipino dishes and pastries, but also for her warm hospitality. She is a passionate advocate for Filipino food and culture, the powerhouse of the Philippines Fest, a large-scale street fair that celebrates Filipino cuisine and creativity. Her recent accolades include: International Women Artist in 2024- Vice President and P721K Brooklyn Occupational Training Center in 2024



CATALINA SUERTE
Teaching and Educational Leadership

Dr. Catalina Suerte has dedicated her life to education. She taught for 24 years in the Philippines, spending 13 years at La Salle John Bosco in Bislig, Surigao del Sur, and 11 years at Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, before moving to the United States in 2006.

For the past 18 years, Dr. Suerte has been a special education teacher, earning numerous awards and recognition for her unwavering dedication and passion for teaching. Among these accolades is the prestigious "Big Apple Award" for the 2024-2025 school year, a citywide program that celebrates New York City teachers who inspire students, model excellent teaching, and enrich their school communities.

Dr. Suerte champions inclusivity, believing that educators' influence extends beyond the classroom. With the support of her chapter members, she has initiated impactful projects in the Philippines, participated in charitable causes, and provided aid during calamities and natural disasters. In 2023, her chapter was recognized as the outstanding chapter in the United States. Dr. Suerte believes that anyone with the ability to impart knowledge and skills can be an educator. Consequently, her chapter includes professionals from various fields. Their tagline is: "UNIFFIED New Jersey Advocates Empowerment, Inclusivity, & Teamwork for a Better UNIFFIED."



EMPOWERMENT AWARDS 2024



MARICAR TAINO
Excellence in Filipino Event Leadership

Maricar Taino steps into the role of President for 2024 of PAFCOM, bringing with her a wealth of experience, unwavering dedication, and boundless enthusiasm. Her journey within PAFCOM has been a testament to her commitment, making her an exemplary leader to guide the organization into the new year.

Maricar shares her sentiments, stating, "I am honored and excited to take on the role of President for 2024. PAFCOM holds a special place in my heart, and I am committed to building on the strong foundation laid by my predecessors. PAFCOM is more than an organization; it's a family, a community that has thrived through the years. My vision involves fostering stronger connections, celebrating our rich culture, and inspiring the next generation to actively participate in shaping our collective future."

With a rich background in leadership and community service, Maricar has consistently demonstrated her ability to bring people together and drive positive change. Her tenure as president promises to be a transformative period for PAFCOM, characterized by innovative initiatives, inclusive events, and a renewed focus on community engagement.



FRANCISCA T. VELCEK
MD FACS FAAP MAMSE
Excellence in Medical Leadership

Dr. Francisca Velcek is a trailblazing pediatric surgeon whose extraordinary career has transformed the field of pediatric surgery. With decades of dedicated service, she has not only excelled in clinical practice but also in teaching and groundbreaking research. Dr. Velcek's leadership and mentorship have inspired countless surgeons, making her a beacon of excellence in the medical community.

Her expertise in managing complex pediatric conditions has revolutionized surgical techniques and improved outcomes for countless young patients. Dr. Velcek's innovative approaches and relentless pursuit of excellence have earned her numerous prestigious awards and widespread recognition.

As an influential member of various professional organizations, Dr. Velcek has shared her invaluable knowledge and insights at national and international conferences, shaping the future of pediatric surgery. Her passion for advancing medical science and her unwavering commitment to patient care make her an exemplary figure and a true inspiration.



LUISA FELISILDA MILONE
Excellence in Small Business Leadership

Luisa Felisilda Milone is a distinguished wife, mother, and businesswoman. She is married to Joseph Milone Jr. and they have one son, Joseph Cedric Milone III. Currently, she owns and operates Reliz

de Manila Beauty Centre and Spa, which she established in Maywood, New Jersey, in 2014. The salon's name, meaning "women favored by God," reflects her deep faith and heritage: (Re) stands for Rebecca, wife of Isaac the son of Abraham, and (Liz) is from Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, with Manila reminding her of her roots.

Luisa's commitment to her community is evident through her salons' active involvement in various causes, particularly medical, dental, and feeding missions in underserved areas of her hometown and nearby regions in Mindanao. Her dedication to service and compassion for others are central to her life's work.

Despite the challenges she faced growing up—moving frequently on the islands of Visayas where she was born and raised, and later migrating to General Santos City—Luisa remained determined. Her talent and dedication led her to become an on-call hairdresser and makeup artist for famous singers, actors, and actresses from the Philippines in major Filipino American events in New York and New Jersey.

Mrs. Luisa Felisilda Milone lives by the motto, "Serving others is serving God!" Her leadership and contributions to both her local and international communities exemplify her excellence in small business leadership.

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Did you know that families can enjoy visiting the largest IKEA in the world in Pasay City, Philippines? Fiesta in America brings that same IKEA fun and energy to its event for families to experience together at American Dream in East Rutherford, New Jersey. IKEA will provide special activities for families, including a wall coloring activity and 10,000 pieces of giveaways, adding to the excitement and joy.



FAMILY FUN with

Pokémon, Gundam, KPOP and IKEA's 10,000 Pieces of Giveaways

The exciting lineup of activity sponsors offers something for everyone: Filipino arts and crafts, "mini Pabitin" kits, rare Charizard cards and booster packs for Pokémon collectors, Gundam's RX-78-2 Gunpla model



kits, KPOP album giveaways, family indoor snowboarding, handmade gifts from Filipino-American entrepreneurs, and IKEA surprises. Fiesta in America is a true paradise for families, children, and hobbyists!



Collectibles and Crafts:

- ▶ Pokémon and One Piece card collectors can find rare cards and booster packs with Blank Collectibles, a NYC-based collector of everything Pokémon and One Piece TCG (trading card game).
- ▶ Gunpla enthusiasts can discover and build model kits through Filipino American members of Gundam Planet, the largest distributor of the hobby in the East Coast. Carlo Cabigao (former "Marvel" team member) and Jason Saavedra (toy photographer of #captain-sradtoys) will showcase their Gundam collections and teach others how to build their own kits.

▶ "BAYANI," an NYC-based Filipino comic book creator, publisher, and music artist, will perform records from his

latest release, the "Bayani Komix-tape," and sell and sign copies of his comic book series "The Realest Bayani," featured at NY Comic Con.



Filipino-American Entrepreneurs:

- ▶ Mochi Kittens will offer creative handmade crochet designs by Izzy, a Rutgers University graduate who currently works with KPOP Nara in American Dream.
- ▶ Jason Ross Yniguez of Pocket Kings BK will sell handmade



fashion apparel, seen on celebrities like Henry Golding from the movie, "Crazy Rich Asians." Pocket Kings BK

is located at 145 Front Street in Dumbo, Brooklyn. As a proud husband and father figure, he will also be providing stylish coloring books for children.

- ▶ The Filipino arts and crafts section by UNIFFIED will be a haven for artistic souls. UNIFFIED is an organization of educators dedicated to promoting excellence in teaching and providing community service. Catalina Suerte and her team will offer hands-on activities, allowing children and parents to create beautiful pieces reflecting the rich cultural tapestry of the Philippines.



Performances and Activities:

The Filipino School of New York and New Jersey, led by Venessa Manzano and Christine Ucker, will provide free Pabitin kits for families and children and showcase students' talents on stage on August 18. Founded in 2008, the school promotes the learning of Philippine languages and arts and understanding its rich culture, values, and traditions.

- ▶ Big Snow in American Dream will offer special discounts for thrilling snowboarding experiences. Families can bond over the excitement of carving down snowy slopes, sharing laughter and tumbles alike.



- ▶ Sephora will offer Philippine flag temporary tattoos, allowing families to wear their pride on their sleeves as they celebrate their heritage.



- ▶ KPOP Nara will host a KPOP album giveaway, filling the air with the infectious energy of Korean pop music. Fans can bond over their favorite KPOP idols, share fan theories, and dance moves, and enjoy special performances featuring both KPOP and PPOP hits.

▶ Moreover, Remitly will provide a unique opportunity for attendees to learn about seamless and affordable ways to send money back home to their loved ones in the Philippines. As families enjoy the various activities and entertainment, they can also discover how Remitly supports the Filipino community by making remittances easier and more accessible.



Fiesta in America 2024 is an extraordinary event that brings families, children, and hobbyists together in an unforgettable celebration of passion and togetherness.



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UNIQUE GIFTS

Showcasing the Rich Heritage of the Philippines

This year, Fiesta in America is thrilled to feature exhibitors who bring the rich heritage and craftsmanship of the Philippines to life at American Dream. Attendees can find unique items that make perfect gifts for the upcoming holidays, all while supporting local artisans, farmers, and weavers. Fiesta in America is not just a celebration of culture and community, it is a vibrant marketplace showcasing local New Jersey and New York businesses offering the finest locally made goods from the Philippines.

INABEL SHOP

Inabel, meaning “woven cloth” in the Ilocos region of northern Philippines, features textiles crafted by experienced weavers using traditional wooden pedal frame looms. Inabel Shop sources quality Inabel products directly from Ilocos weaving communities, where artisans are dedicated to preserving and promoting the tradition of Inabel loom weaving.

Jowie De La Merced and the Inabel Shop team encourage sustainable weaving practices and aim to promote fair trade principles in support of the Inabel artisans. Inabel Shop will be selling their unique items at Fiesta in America.



PAROLS OF AMERICA/ PINOY OF AMERICA

Founder Kateland Keene highlights Pampanga culture through her business. “Pinoy (Filipino) tradition was always a large part of my life growing up. My Tita is Bisayan and grew up in Cebu. I remember visiting her house every day and being welcomed by dozens of fans, the smell of dried fish, and the sound of The Filipino Channel. My favorite part was her stories of home—fresh fish, beautiful oceans, her dream of owning a jeepney ride business, and Pasko (Christmas) traditions.



“I will never forget the day my Tita showed me her *parol* (lantern). It was a white native design decorated with blue flowers, very delicate. She held a look of pure pride while hanging it up, explaining how hard they are to find in the US. Her longing for a small piece of home during the holiday season inspired me to make parols more accessible to all *kababayans*. With the help of my Tita, her family in the Philippines, and the talented artisans of Pampanga, our

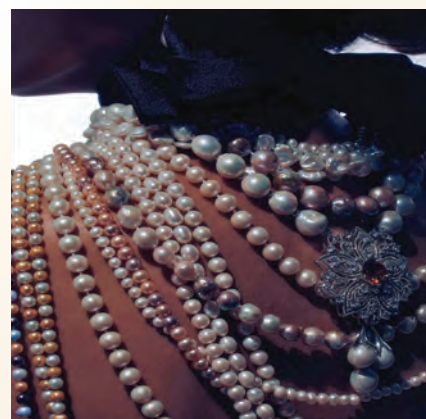


dream is coming true.” Parols made from Capiz shells and jewelry from Pampanga artisans will be available for purchase at Fiesta in America.



GRETZ JEWELRY

The Philippines has been renowned for its pearls since at least the 1400s. Gretz Jewelry, a Filipina-owned small business founded by Rita Shepard, offers authentic pearls from Coron, Palawan. From classic pearl necklaces and earrings to modern, stylish rings and bracelets, each piece from Gretz Jewelry embodies natural beauty and luxury.



These exquisite items make thoughtful and sophisticated gifts, promoting the hard work of pearl farmers and the stunning marine resources of the Philippines. Gretz Jewelry has a store at 265 Canal Street in New York, but it will be at Fiesta in America.

Join Fiesta in America and bring home a piece of the Philippines while making a positive impact on local communities. Celebrate the spirit of the holidays with gifts that tell a story of heritage, artistry, and cultural pride.



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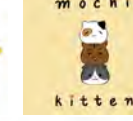
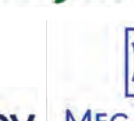
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