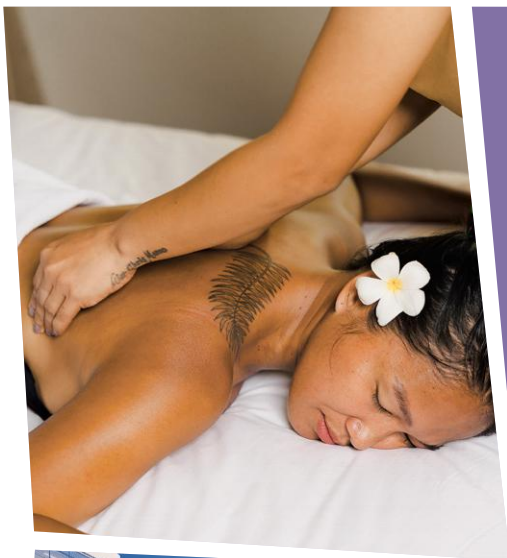




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ZEE PUBLICATIONS, INC.

SEP-OCT-NOV 2025



DESIGN & DISCOVER

CEBU

The Design Issue



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It's Cebu quarterly magazine introduces readers to the current dining, leisure, and lifestyle scenes in the island of Cebu. It is available as an amenity in the airport, major hotels, resorts, restaurants, and more establishments around Cebu.

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ERRATUM

We mistakenly identified the wedding venue designer of the Siao-Ong wedding featured on page 31 in our June 2025 issue. The design was beautifully executed by SANDRA YAP. We regret the error and sincerely apologize for the oversight.

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contributors

WHERE IS YOUR FAVORITE WEEKEND GETAWAY SPOT IN CEBU?

JAY FRANCIS GONZALEZ
writer

As someone who works from home on weekdays, Sundays are my time to be out and about. If I don't have plans with friends, I usually start with a solo thrift run—hunting for clothes, books, or quirky little toys around Fuente or Mango Square. Then I recharge at a random cafe (usually whichever new spot I see on TikTok) before heading out again for a jog around Fuente Circle or Cebu Business Park, or a late afternoon hike at Starbuds.



ARI SIMANGAN
professional photographer,
creative director, AI artist

I'm from Manila and recently relocated to Cebu. One weekend getaway to the south included hearing mass at Simala Church and trying out the famous Carcar *lechon*. If I'm in the city, I hang out with my friends at Asmara.

KATE BIOL
hotelier marketer

When the weekend rolls around, I like to laze on the beaches of Bantayan Island or check out some hole-in-the-wall restos.



CARISSA BONGALOSA
media buyer

I like to call it a getaway, but the truth is it's just me wandering for food. Some weekends it's ramen at our usual spot, other times it's a cafe that tempts me to stay longer than I meant to. And every now and then, it's a brisket place in Mandaue I didn't know I needed.

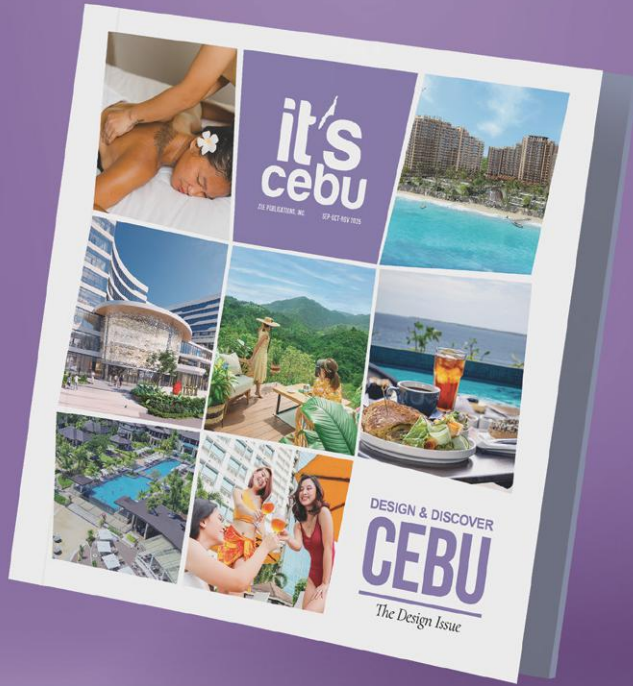
Mizu

LUNCH: 11:00 AM to 2:30 PM

DINNER: 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM

NOBUYUKI IMAMURA
JAPANESE CHEF





ON THE COVER

First row: Unwinding comes easy with a soothing massage at Club Serena Resort in Moalboal; the coastal elegance of Aruga Resort & Residences – Mactan.

Second row: The striking façade of Mahi Center; panoramic views from the viewing deck at Foressa by AboitizLand; handcrafted pastries and rich coffee by The Bakery at The Reef

Third row: An aerial sweep of Crimson Resort & Spa Mactan captures the island's allure; cool drinks and easy conversations by the pool at Quest Hotel and Conference Center



Since 2019, UNESCO has designated Cebu City as a Creative City of Design, one of 49 in the world under the Design field of the broader list of 350 Creative Cities worldwide. It's a welcome and well-deserved recognition for cities "placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of its development plan at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level."*

Design applies to a broad spectra, from art and fashion to architecture and curated experiences. It involves various fields of expertise—artistry, creativity, science, engineering, or a combination of these—but design is always carried out with intention and purpose, even if that purpose is solely to make something more beautiful.

In this issue, we pay homage to design around Cebu, across industries and throughout time: from precolonial handwoven textiles and centuries-old churches, to modern architecture and how current Cebuano designers continue to create and innovate in their respective fields. Our team takes you on in-depth tours around the city and province: cafes, hiking trails, and gardens in the mountains, leisure and wellness oases, and the small yet captivating towns of Carcar and Malapascua Island.

We hope these stories help you find a newfound or deepened appreciation for Cebuano design, creativity, and heritage.



Where is your favorite weekend getaway in Cebu?

I've lost track of the number of times I've visited Moalboal. I love free diving and snorkeling there because there's a lot to see underwater, including the famous sardine run, healthy corals, and always an unbothered turtle or three.

*Source: unesco.org

JOANNA CUENCO
Managing Editor

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QUICKFX
by JING RAMOS



Compared to mainland Cebu's mountains and varying elevations, Mactan is an island with mostly flat topography, which is one of the reasons it's ideal for the airport to be situated here. Mactan is a natural harbor for Cebu and has expansive mangrove forests, which act like natural filters for coastal waters. With its pristine white sands and clear blue waters, Mactan has always been a tropical paradise—an ideal location for relaxation and rejuvenation.

When Stephen Aznar finally decided to build a house in Mactan, he quipped, "I craved a living space that was not just expansive but also luxurious." Stephen chose Mactan because it was the closest escape from the bustling urban life of Cebu City. It also offered the peace and tranquility he was searching for. He pursued this dream of moving to the island and building a house with the atmosphere of a riad in a medina in Marrakech—a deluxe one with a lap pool and a Jacuzzi bordered by pocket gardens.

THIS PAGE: A subdued color palette in the living room reflects the homeowner's style.

MAJORELLE MEETS MACTAN

From a dream sketched in Marrakech's colors to a haven framed by Mactan's sea breeze, Stephen Aznar's island retreat is a testament to vision, patience, and the art of living beautifully.

photos by **DORO BARANDINO**

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Jardin Majorelle was a huge inspiration for Stephen, who was a fan of Yves Saint Laurent and partner Pierre Bergé. The couple saved and restored the gardens in the middle of Marrakech, which had been created initially by the Orientalist artist Jacques Majorelle. Stephen admits, "At one point, I seriously considered painting the house in a vivid Majorelle blue. Alas, my location wasn't ideal—being in a tropical zone with harsh sunlight, the blue would have been too garish under the Mactan sun."

"I craved a living space that was not just expansive but also luxurious."

-Stephen Aznar

The structure of the building became the most significant challenge because the contractors Stephen hired took over two years to complete the project. The main house sits on a 664-square-meter lot with a floor area of about 200 square meters.

Once the construction plan was completed, the owner sighed with relief and felt a deep satisfaction in overcoming the obstacles of a real estate development. The results are nothing short of spectacular. More importantly, Stephen was candid enough to admit that the quality of his life has vastly improved since. Once that dream was realized, he felt happier. He adds, "I slept with a smile each night knowing that my dreams had come true." 🌟



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Details of the house's architecture feature Moorish designs, such as the entry to the living room, which is bordered with a handwoven North African fabric; Moroccan lamps hanging over a dining set in teakwood create the mood for the setting, but the view of the swimming pool defines the space; the master's bedroom is framed with a high ceiling to allow cross ventilation and adequate natural light; grand abat-jour and a bouquet of heliconias, lilies, and philodendrons greet guests for a luncheon party.



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MINDFUL MENDICANT
by OJ HOFER

DESIGN VISIONARIES: DISTINCT IDENTITIES IN FILIPINO DESIGN

In this issue, we unravel the quiet power of five Cebuano designers whose work bridges memory and modernity. Through unexpected materials and deeply personal choices, they transform tradition into a living, wearable language.

photography MARK PHILIP DALES

In the shifting world of contemporary Filipino fashion, five designers from Cebu quietly lead with clarity of vision. Their work reveals not just a fluency in form and fabric, but a groundedness that speaks of ancestry, landscape, and the enduring rhythms of home. Drawing from Cebuano heritage with calm confidence, they craft deeply considered, distinctly personal, and thoughtfully local pieces in their global presence.

Edwin Ao turns to the poetry of imperfection in a red terno suite that deconstructs ideas of structure and artifice. Strips of *tela caballo*, roughly torn from butterfly sleeves, form jagged linear embellishments—each mark intentional, each rupture a story. Ao's methods depart from convention even as they reference it, revealing a tactile sensibility shaped by travel and terrain. His threadwork in this design evokes layers of dermis, inviting viewers to look inward. "Subtle cultural references—whether in the weave, the embroidery, or the textures I layer—are a quiet nod to Cebu's vibrant history and artistry," he shares. Modern tailoring softened by the pulse of something emotional and easily remembered.

Protacio Empaces draws on embroidery, reimagining time-honored techniques in unexpectedly joyful



ways. His designs recall the silhouettes of mid-century couture, enlivened by contemporary layering and artisanal flourishes. Appliqués of *antuanga*, *ilang-ilang*, and *sampaguita* bloom across garments, alongside seashell forms—*saang*, *takubo*—and botanical motifs rendered with playful precision. Beneath the decorative surface lies a regional tribute: electric pleating by Cebuano hands, embroidery steeped in tradition, and garments constructed through quiet collaboration. Empaces' pieces walk the line between nostalgia and renewal, held together by an unbroken thread of regional creativity.

Jun Escario designs with an intuitive ease that reflects Cebuano life. His garments move as the body moves—unhurried, open to air, attuned to climate and comfort. A lightweight *piña calado* cape offers structure and softness, while silk and cotton tulle linings convey subtle luxury. "It's all about ease and the relaxed, laid-back spirit that we, as Cebuanos, naturally embody," he explains. Escario's design language suggests confidence without

LIGHTNESS OF BEING

Santiago's white swan stuns in silk organza—from hexagonal lining to ombré feathers.



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insistence, favoring quiet elegance instead of overt display. The result is clothing that fits naturally into life—measured, graceful, and innately rooted in luxury.

Philip Rodriguez returns to material heritage through a lens of quiet reflection. His latest piece engages with the Cebuano shell craft of *Lagang*—an almost-lost decorative tradition—reinterpreted into the neckline and overskirt of an otherwise restrained silhouette. Silkscreen, sublimation, embroidery, and other processes emerge not as ornament but as cultural artifacts—echoes of history and coastal memory embedded in form. His work reflects his Chinese-Filipino identity, allowing craft to speak in the present rather than dwell in the past. Rodriguez's design becomes not a reconstruction but a conversation—with history, place, and the invisible hands behind the craft.

Last but not least, **Cary Santiago**, known for his sculptural fluency, draws from basket weaving and ombre dyeing techniques to create garments that blur the boundary between

fashion and applied art. Feathers cut from silk organza nod to Cebuano attentiveness—care, precision, and an affinity for nature. “I forget that I am a designer when I create a collection. I take off the shackles of commercialism and celebrate art,” he shares. These garments speak gently—more expression than spectacle, rooted in practice rather than flourish.

Together, these designers offer a nuanced vision of Cebuano fashion. Their work isn't unified by look but by conviction: to anchor design in memory, material, and meaning. Not by chasing newness, but by staying still—deep in origin, and deliberate in vision. 🌿

THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
SARTORIAL SHIFT: Ao reworks the *terno* with butterfly sleeves, tassels, and pinstriped trousers that move from day to night;
CALADO CHIC Escario's breezy piña set channels tropical luxury with effortless grace;
NAÏVE CHARM Empaces layers Cebuano floral appliqué and playful cutwork on a tunic silhouette;
SHELL SPELL Rodriguez casts a quiet spell with *Lagang* shell craft on a modern Filipino form.



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BEST OF
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2024



DREWTH BE TOLD
by DREW SARMIENTO

SKYLINE GLOW-UP:

SEVEN GAME-CHANGING PROJECTS WORTHY OF THE QUEEN CITY

Every great city has that moment—the one where its skyline stops being just a cluster of buildings and becomes an identity, a source of pride. Today, Cebu is on the cusp of that transformation.

The Queen City of the South has always been known for its rich history and laid-back coastal charm, but a new wave of visionary developments is pushing its silhouette into the future. These aren't just buildings; they're statements of ambition, artistry, and confidence—projects designed to make you pause mid-scroll, mid-flight, or mid-sunset and say, "I love Cebu."

The city's skyline is transforming into a bold new era of urban beauty and architectural swagger. Here are seven upcoming projects we're incredibly excited about:

MASTERS TOWER CEBU

Meet Cebu's soon-to-be crown jewel. Rising 172 meters over Cebu Business Park, Masters Tower is what happens when Filipino ambition meets global architectural pedigree—its design comes from the same firm behind Dubai's Burj Khalifa. The tower will host the five-star Sofitel Cebu City, premium office spaces, and curated retail, all while aiming for LEED Gold certification. Beauty meets sustainability.

Developer: Cebu Landmasters Inc. (CLI)



PATRIA DE CEBU REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Proof that heritage can glow up, too. Just steps from the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño, the historic Patria compound is being reborn as a chic mixed-use destination courtesy of Cebu Landmasters. Expect boutique hospitality, retail nooks, and lovingly preserved heritage spaces—a dialogue between the past and the present, with Spanish-era romance intact.

Developer: Cebu Landmasters Inc. (CLI)





SM SEASIDE ARENA & SMX CONVENTION CENTER

No more Manila envy. By 2026, Cebu will host the country's largest SMX Convention Center—a 21,000-square-meter showcase for global events—plus a 16,000-seat SM Seaside Arena. Imagine concerts by world-tour headliners, international summits, and major sporting events—all without leaving the island.

Developer: SM Prime Holdings

IPI CENTER BY ROCKWELL

Rockwell brings its signature “live beautifully” ethos to Cebu with the IPI Center in Kasambagan, at the heart of Cebu's business district. Picture a 50-storey residential tower, sleek office spaces, and a high-end retail hub with buzzy new dining spots. Rockwell has a knack for transforming neighborhoods, and this one promises to be no exception.

Developer: Rockwell Land Corporation in partnership with IPI Pharmaceuticals

ABACA RESORT MACTAN

The beloved boutique beach-side escape is back—bigger, bolder, and more indulgent. Opening late 2026, the new Abaca Resort in Punta Engaño will feature sky villas, private plunge pools, and sweeping beachfront views. Luxe but laid-back, the kind of barefoot glamour could reset the standard for tropical getaways.

Developer: Cebu Landmasters Inc. (CLI)

ASTRA CENTRE MANDAUE

Mandaue's A.S. Fortuna Street is stepping into the future. Astra Centre's two sleek towers combine residences, offices, a hotel, and a lifestyle mall in one striking complex. It's a vertical playground where you can work, shop, dine, staycation, and maybe impulsively buy a condo between errands.

Developer: Cebu Landmasters Inc. (CLI)

BDO TOWER FUENTE

Midtown Cebu has a bold new landmark, the BDO Tower. Rising over the iconic Fuente Osmeña Circle, this contemporary corporate tower is more than just another high-rise—it's a symbol of momentum, a sleek counterpoint to the city's storied core.

Developer: BDO Unibank, Inc.

These projects aren't simply concrete and steel—they're a vision for what Cebu can be: vibrant, vertical, and unapologetically world-class. The Queen City isn't just keeping up; it's staking its claim as one of Asia's most exciting skylines in the making. 🌟



OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP: SMX Convention Center in Cebu South Coastal Road (photo from SM Hotels); Astra Centre.

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: BDO Tower at Fuente Osmeña (photo by Leylan Romarate); Masters Towers Cebu; Patria De Cebu.

ALEXANDRA FORTABAT DE HERMES RETURNS:

AND FINDS THE PHILIPPINE TOURISM DREAM... STILL WAITING AT THE TERMINAL

A sharp but hopeful look at why the Philippines remains one of the world's most beautiful destinations—if only it could get out of its own way.



After years in the Maldives for clarity, Marrakesh for chaos, and Marseilles for the mistake, I returned home with a hopeful vision—a seamless, sophisticated tourism experience wrapped in warmth, welcome, and world-class charm. What I found was something less so, and still deeply familiar. A country in full hair and makeup (I’m referring to the impressive and seamless arrival area of the Cebu International Airport), yes—but barefoot, hesitant, and shaded beneath a mango tree, waiting for the next chapter of its rebirth.

So, shall we begin?

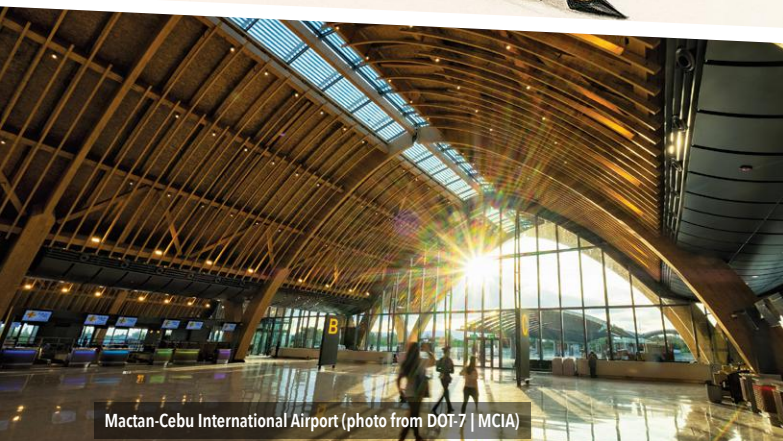
IT’S QUICKER TO GET TO TOKYO THAN TO BANTAYAN

Here’s a fun little riddle: What’s faster—flying from Cebu to Tokyo, or from Cebu to Bantayan Island? If you answered Tokyo, you’ve attempted both. Between the traffic gridlock, the shared van shuffle, uncertain ferry schedules, and that elusive boat that may or may not leave today—it’s not travel, it’s

a test of patience and persistence. In Manila, it’s no less poetic: hours inching through traffic, then a dash through regional airports whose aircon are more suggestion than fact. You’ll arrive at your destination windblown, parched, and just a little older, as one seasoned expat summed it up: travel around the Philippines can be deeply rewarding—but undeniably exhausting.

EXPENSIVE—WITHOUT THE UPGRADE

And it’s not just the effort—it’s the cost. Hotels in Palawan now command rates similar to those in Hong Kong, but often without polish. Domestic flights can surpass round-trip flights to Seoul or Singapore. A long weekend in Bohol costs what you’d spend in Bali without the refinement. Land transport? A game of roulette. Tricycle fares are mood-based, private vans strain the budget, and “special rates” appear like mirages when visitors arrive. We remain more costly, less consistent, and often more complicated to navigate than our ASEAN neighbors.



Mactan-Cebu International Airport (photo from DOT-7 | MCIA)

FEE-NOMENAL FATIGUE

Then there are the fees—layered, local, and loosely defined. Each island, town, and barangay operates its own cash-only micro-economy. Environmental Fee: P100; Barangay Access Fee: P75; Tourism Maintenance Fee: P150; Tour Guide Fee: P300 (yes, even on paved trails); Camera Fee: P50; Snorkeling Zone Fee: P200; Boatman's Fee: "Depende sa mood ni kuya". All separate. All unstandardized. All non-refundable. No choice. What we need is a simple, consolidated, transparent system. Fragmentation shouldn't be the business model—it should be the problem to solve.

OVERRUN, OVERPRICED, UNDERPLANNED

Boracay, El Nido, and Siargao still sparkle—but they're straining. Expect queues for the best sunset spots, plastic bobbing in lagoons, and buffet lines long enough to make you question your life choices. We label everything "sustainable," yet allow concrete blocks to rise on beaches and jet skis to roar through marine sanctuaries. The disconnect is louder than the karaoke boat offshore.

STILL HOOKED ON OPPAS

We're lucky to have such loyal Korean visitors. But banking on one market for 70% of our arrivals? That's not strategy—it's overdependence. If Korea sneezes, our tourism catches a cold. Meanwhile, travelers from Europe, other parts of Asia, and even within our own country are often overlooked, overcharged, and underserved. We don't need to pivot away—we just need to balance the scale.

SERVICE GAPS, CLIMATE WARNINGS

Filipino hospitality remains legendary. But let's acknowledge the quiet truth: many of our best-trained tourism workers are abroad. Those at home are doing their utmost—but often with too

little training, too few tools, and too many obstacles.

Meanwhile, climate change is knocking louder: coral bleaching, eroding coastlines, stronger storms. Yet we continue to build—too fast, too close to the edge.

IN FAIRNESS: THE DOT IS TRYING

The Tourism department has launched real initiatives—regional marketing, digital upgrades, and sustainability roadmaps. They have provided critical rest stops that are clean and IG-worthy at some of the country's well-traveled routes, mainly in the provinces. They continue to encourage local

stakeholders to be part of a national effort that encompasses campaigns in Filipino culture and cuisine. The vision is commendable.

But intent alone isn't enough. Even the best ideas stall at the gate without stronger coordination, better infrastructure, and accountability. Yes, we need more working restrooms, but also transparent, fair pricing, better accessibility with strong local partnerships, and tangible benefits for the communities hosting them.

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

The Philippines is extraordinary—naturally, culturally, and spiritually.

But we can't keep dressing dysfunction in a floral lei and calling it "fun." The world is watching, and they want to love us. Let's give them more than just pretty postcards and filtered sunsets.

Let's offer a journey worth repeating, a welcome that feels effortless, and a country that finally delivers not just beauty—but consistency, care, and pride. 🌿

#FasterToTokyoFromCebu

#FixFirstThenFlex #FeeFatigueIsReal

#AlexandraIsWatchingAgain



A souvenir shop inside the Tourist Rest Area



The Mactan Newtown promises to delight locals and tourists with an exciting array of exciting experiences, whether you're visiting the township for vacation or doing business



10 THINGS YOU'D LOVE TO DO AT THE MACTAN NEWTOWN

by **ERICKSON BECO**

From colorful festivals to weekends filled with heart-pumping sports action, there remains a lot to discover about property giant Megaworld's township with a beach in Lapu-Lapu City, the 30-hectare The Mactan Newtown.

Here's a list of things every explorer

can enjoy at The Mactan Newtown.

1. LOUNGE ALL DAY AT MACTAN NEWTOWN BEACH Just 15 minutes from the Mactan-Cebu International Airport, The Mactan Newtown features a stretch of pristine beach just steps away from residential condos, office towers, and hotels.

Among the features at Mactan Newtown Beach include a spacious infinity pool with a wading area and a pool bar, cabanas and beach lounges, and landscaped gardens. Thrill-seekers also enjoy a range of watersports activities, including banana boat rides and parasailing.

2. SAVOR THE BEST CEBU LECHON AT MACTAN ALFRESCO Guests can indulge in the world's best pork dish—the Cebu Lechon—from over a dozen dining establishments at the Mactan Alfresco. There's even a live roasting pit where visitors can witness firsthand the intricate process of preparing Cebu lechon, from seasoning and roasting to chopping and serving.

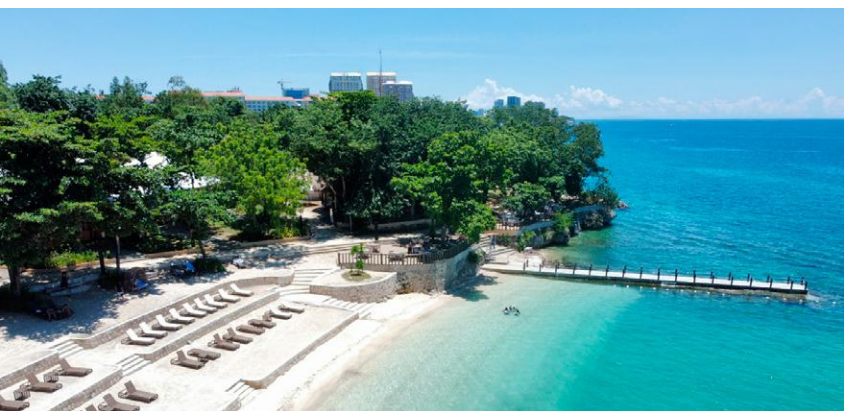
3. ENJOY 'EVERYTHING MANGO' AT THE CEBU MANGOES FESTIVAL Cebu's luscious, golden mangoes have become a global icon that helped put the province on the culinary map. And every summer, these

sun-kissed fruits take center stage at the Cebu Mangoes Festival.

During the festival, people can pick mangoes from trees, take photos with a giant tub of mango sago, witness chefs battle it out at the mango culinary showdown, and more!

4. SAMPLE GORDON RAMSAY'S WORLD-FAMOUS CREATIONS...WITH A LOCAL TWIST! One of the most talked-about happenings in Cebu recently was the opening of two restaurants of multi-Michelin-starred British celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay: Gordon Ramsay Fish & Chips and Gordon Ramsay Street Burger.

Dig into the British classics from Gordon Ramsay Fish & Chips, like the iconic fish and chips and the indulgent Slipper Lobster & Shrimp Combo. Next door at the Gordon Ramsay Street Burger, savor all-time American diner favorites headlined by no less than



A new destination that's becoming popular on this side of Cebu, the Mactan Newtown Beach brings a complete leisure experience right at the heart of Mactan Island.

their very own take on a much-loved Cebuano masterpiece: Lechon Burger.

5. RELAX IN STYLE IN THESE MEGAWORLD HOTELS

Discover why Savoy Hotel Mactan Newtown's signature ensaymada earned the title as *Cebu's Best Ensaymada* for three consecutive years. Book the Presidential Suite at Belmont Hotel Mactan and enjoy stunning views of the Hilutungan Channel and Olango Island. Soon, Belmont Hotel Mactan will transition to become an international hotel when it rebrands as Mercure Mactan Cebu.

6. SWIM, BIKE, AND RUN LIKE AN IRONMAN

Thousands of elite endurance athletes troop to The Mactan Newtown every August for IRONMAN 70.3 Lapu-Lapu. Action kicks off at Mactan Newtown Beach, where athletes plunge into a 1.9-kilometer open-water swim. Then, they transition to the 90-kilometer bike leg, before returning to the township for the final 21-kilometer run segment.

7. EXCHANGE 'I DOS' ON A CLIFF BY THE BEACH

Couples dreaming of a romantic beachfront wedding can turn that vision into reality at the Ceremonial Garden of Mactan Newtown Beach. This enchanting outdoor venue, complemented by several other event spaces including The Glass House, has quickly become one of Cebu's most sought-after event destinations.

8. MEET THE BEST OF THE WORLD AT MACTAN EXPO

The township is set to host some of the world's most prominent leaders when the Mactan Expo opens later this year. A two-level standalone convention center by the beach just across two hotels, the Mactan Expo features a state-of-the-art convention hall that can host up to 2,500 guests.

9. RELIVE HISTORY AT MACTAN WORLD MUSEUM

Also opening in the township soon



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: For four years now, The Mactan Newtown has been the proud home of Ironman 70.3 Lapu-Lapu; No visit to Cebu is complete without feasting on its most popular culinary treasure—the Cebu Lechon—which the rest of the world has come to love; A grand welcome to the township awaits those staying in at the Presidential Suite of Belmont Hotel Mactan; These must-try masterpieces from the two new Gordon Ramsay Restaurants in the township—the Lechon Burger (left) and the Gordon Ramsay Fish & Chips (right)—have undoubtedly become exciting additions to the vibrant lifestyle that people enjoy.

is the Mactan World Museum, which will showcase collections highlighting the rich cultural exchange between the Philippines and Spain. It will

feature a main hall that can hold nearly 300 people and can be split into two performance halls, as well as five exhibit galleries, and giant monuments

of some historic icons like Lapu-Lapu, King Philip II, and Ferdinand Magellan.

10. LIVE THE REAL ISLAND LIFE The Mactan Newtown offers over 1,800 completed condominium units and nearly 700 more from pre-selling developments.

Want to move in today? Ready-for-occupancy properties offer easy access to retail hubs, open spaces, and the beach just steps away. If you're dreaming of a seaside sanctuary, CostaVida Residential Resort promises resort-style amenities and wellness features.

Prefer a touch of European elegance? La Victoria Global Residences blends Spanish architecture with modern comforts and panoramic sea views.

Indeed, the long list of things to love at The Mactan Newtown is endless.



The ceremonial garden at Mactan Newtown Beach offers a scenic backdrop for those who want to bring their dream wedding celebrations to life.

ABOITIZ LAND BUILDS LEGACIES ON SOLID GROUND

In real estate, trust is earned through vision, foresight, and a steadfast commitment to enduring value. For over thirty years, Aboitiz Land has consistently delivered developments whose worth continues to grow—proof of its dedication to building not just properties, but legacies. With a long-term perspective and a deep understanding of evolving market dynamics, the company remains anchored in its mission: to create communities that stand the test of time.

Each Aboitiz Land development begins with a discerning eye for location.

Prime sites are chosen in key growth areas where progress is organic and sustainable. These master-planned communities are thoughtfully designed to foster connection, comfort, and continuity—welcoming environments where families can flourish across generations. More than just homes, they are investments in a better quality of life, offering present-day fulfillment and future financial stability.

The company's approach is building on solid ground—literally and figuratively. Its projects reflect a balance of innovation and reliability,

addressing today's aspirations while anticipating tomorrow's opportunities. From residential enclaves to mixed-use estates, each development is a foundation for a life well lived, shaped by thoughtful planning and a commitment to excellence.

Aboitiz Land doesn't just build structures—it cultivates places of belonging, growth, and legacy. With every project, it reinforces its promise: to create spaces that appreciate in value and meaning, generation after generation. 🌱



Priveya Hills, Bacayan – An exclusive enclave offering privacy, security, and sweeping aerial perspectives of its scenic landscape.



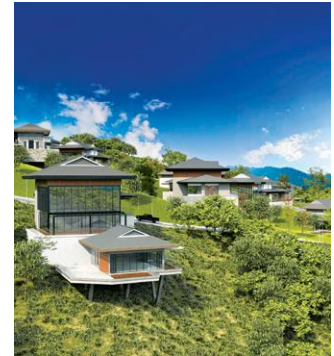
Amoa, Compostela – A family-friendly community with scenic charm, generous open spaces, and sea-to-mountain vistas.



Pristina North, Talamban – A serene community designed with elegant homes and walkable spaces.



Foressa Mountain Town, Balamban – A viewing deck that frame the beauty of nature with mountain and forest views.



Foressa Mountain Town, Balamban – Hillside lots surrounded by lush greenery.

CEBU'S GROWTH, GROUNDED IN LEGACY: ABOITIZ LAND PROJECTS

Aboitiz Land, one of the most trusted developers in Cebu, continues to shape the region's landscape with master-planned communities that balance thoughtful design, strategic location, and long-term value. Their residential landmarks, such as North Town Homes in Cabanalan, Mandaue, have set the benchmark for prestige and suburban living, establishing a legacy that continues to guide the brand's vision today. Building on this foundation, Aboitiz Land has expanded its portfolio to include communities that reflect the evolving lifestyles of Cebuanos: Foressa Mountain Town in Balamban offers a nature-anchored lifestyle with forest trails and mountain views, ideal for weekend retreats or permanent escape; Pristina North in Talamban redefines suburban living with elegant homes and walkable spaces; Priveya Hills in Bacayan highlights exclusivity and privacy in a lush hillside setting; while Amoa in Compostela provides a vibrant, family-friendly environment with generous open areas and scenic vistas. Each development is proof of Aboitiz Land's unwavering commitment to creating spaces where families thrive, investments grow, and communities endure—true legacies that feel like home today and increase in value tomorrow.

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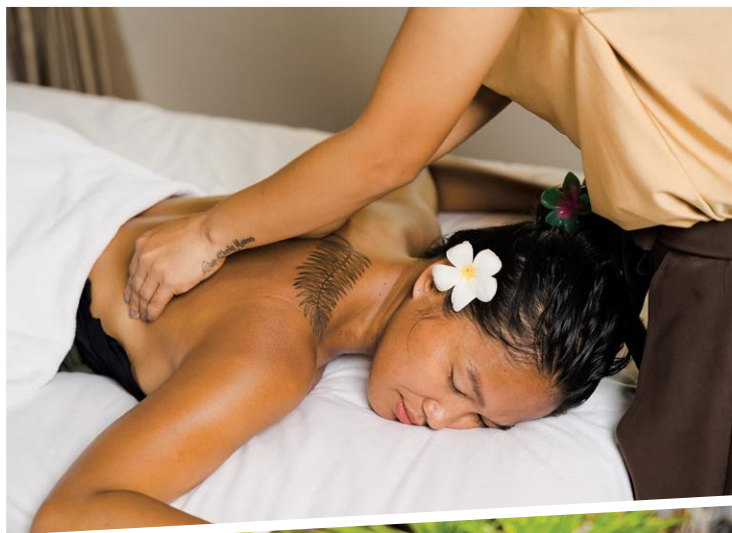
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Quest Hotel

CONFERENCE CENTER | CEBU



ROMANTICIZING LIFE: MY QUIET ESCAPE TO CLUB SERENA RESORT

Club Serena sits along a quiet stretch of Basdaku Beach in Moalboal, the kind of place where time shifts gently. Away from the congested side of town, mornings ease in slowly, and sunsets invite stillness. The sky moves between shades of vivid blue to a pinkish golden sunset, and various colorful and silvery fish dart and shimmer beneath the ocean's surface. There's an easy rhythm to the days here.

What I appreciated most was how the resort's service met me where I was ready, without too much fanfare. A lei of fresh flowers was offered with care upon arrival. A handwritten note waited in the room. Cold towels and citrus drinks arrived as if anticipated, not orchestrated. If I needed anything, I messaged the concierge from my phone without having to dial or ask twice. Everything felt considerate, never overdone.

My room was well-appointed and comfortable, with little luxuries that made my stay easy, practical, and relaxed. A robe carried the faint scent of coconut and salty breeze. Locally made bath essentials were an invitation to unwind. I indulged in a massage without having to leave my room. I read barefoot in the shade, played a board game I hadn't seen in years, and daydreamed.

My dog came with me, and she settled in right away with plenty of space to roam around and new things to sniff. Her tail wagged happily, showing how welcome she also felt.

Breakfast flowed into late morning, conversations stretched without interruption, and the stillness made space for presence. Romance here was rooted in the simplest of things: a towel warmed by the sun, the hush of evening, and not being asked to be anything more than at ease.

Club Serena didn't try to stand out. It just welcomed me—quietly, intentionally. I didn't feel the need to capture, curate, or post every moment as I basked in its calm. And somewhere in that calm, I found myself at peace.

(by Edge Javier) 📍

Club Serena Resort

Brgy. Saavedra, Basdako, Moalboal, Cebu
sayhello@clubserenaresort.com
(+63) 961 650 6243





MORE AT MAHI CENTER

Mactan Island is long established as Cebu's gateway to tourism and economic activities, with many hotels, resorts, and export processing zones located close to the international airport. As Cebu's economy continues to grow and diversify, Mactan has seen massive progress in recent years to cater to increasing requirements for hotel rooms, commercial hubs, and facilities ready for leisure and business, especially the meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE) market.

Cebuanos and tourists eagerly await the grand unveiling of a landmark lifestyle destination rising along ML Quezon National Highway, Mactan's main thoroughfare, less than two kilometers from the airport. Mahi's modern architecture with a sleek off-white facade beautifully houses five floors of international-

standard office spaces, a lifestyle mall with curated shopping and dining options from local and international brands, and a stylish nine-floor hotel. Fairfield by Marriott Cebu Mactan shall soon open 196 keys at Mahi Center, and includes a fully equipped fitness center, meeting rooms, and versatile function rooms.

A landmark development by the Cebuano visionaries of the AppleOne Group, Mahi Center symbolizes the island city's dynamic transformation, where work, leisure, and global connectivity converge.

(by Joanna Cuenca) 📍

Mez 1, Brgy. Ibo, Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu
mahicenter@api.com.ph
www.mahicenter.com.ph



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: An artist's rendering of the MAHI Center façade, envisioned as Mactan's modern lifestyle destination where retail, dining, and leisure converge; a preview of a guestroom at Fairfield Cebu Mactan, Marriott's newest property offering contemporary comfort and effortless stays.

SOOTHING THE SENSES: A WELLNESS JOURNEY AT AUM SPA

by JOANNA CUENCO photography ARI SIMANGAN



In the constant noise and motion that have become part of our daily routines, it is easy to forget one's well-being. Jam-packed schedules, a constant barrage of notifications, and a daily slew of worries old and new can leave anyone feeling stressed, disconnected, and less like one's usual self.

At Crimson Resort and Spa Mactan, Aum Spa is a peaceful oasis that invites you to step back to balance and clarity. Inspired by the Filipino word *umaum*, which means motherly love and care, the service at Aum is fully attentive and complete, with every detail carefully considered.

Aum's wellness treatments are intentionally designed as holistic

experiences that help realign the mind-body-spirit connection. Every step helps to calm the nervous system and refresh the senses. Inside the softly lit treatment room, the selection and low volume of soothing music are just right; the temperature is not too warm and not too cool, just perfect for the body to be at ease. A restful ritual begins with a foot wash in a petal-strewn basin. The guest is given smooth, warm stones to cup in the hands while being guided on a short breathing and relaxation exercise to encourage the mind to slow down and the body to relax.

Massage styles vary, from the traditional Filipino Signature Hilot Massage to relieve tension and

blockages, to the Jetlag Recovery Treatment for travelers adjusting to sudden changes in time zone and climate. Other unique treatments include using bamboo wands for muscle therapy, herbal compresses to ease inflammation, and seashells to calm and soothe.

The spa's signature massage oil glides smoothly and lightly, without any tacky or heavy feel. The sandalwood and jasmine oil blend is olfactory perfection: a tropical garden at golden hour, the scent of sun-warmed petals that subtly lingers as dusk slowly fades to evening.

Aum is a sacred mantra that represents universal consciousness and interconnectedness. Through experiences inspired by the nurturing spirit of umaum, Aum Spa is a wellness retreat that helps bring the body back to balance, soothes over-stimulated senses, and gently guides you back to your truer self. 🧘

Aum Spa, Crimson Resort and Spa Mactan

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spamngr@crimsonhotel.com

bit.ly/AumSpaMactan



SKIN IN BALANCE

Beauty Affair Face and Slimming Hub's Luxe Facial keeps skin resilient from the ravages of time, daily stress, and unpredictable weather conditions.

At this time of year in Cebu, the weather changes with little notice—bright morning sunlight often yields to an afternoon downpour, causing humidity to swell and recede drastically. With pollution and the pressures of daily life, all these shifts take their toll on the skin.

One such day, I visited Beauty Affair Face and Slimming Hub at The Space in A.S. Fortuna, Mandaue. The clinic, recently named Best Skin and Facial Care Clinic in the city, will celebrate its 10th milestone next year, a decade of refining services, evolving treatments, and prioritizing skin health. Their team of doctors, medical aestheticians, aesthetic nurses, and therapists continually expands their knowledge to ensure the highest level of care and safety.

My appointment began with a consultation, followed by a facial analysis using a skin-mapping machine, a free service in Beauty Affair that is often billed separately in other aesthetic clinics. The device helps determine what treatments best suit a client, as it reads skin age, sensitivity, acne activity, pore condition, pigmentation, and wrinkle depth. My results showed high sensitivity, excess oil, pore congestion, early wrinkles, and mid-face pigmentation. The aesthetic nurse, guided and overseen by the clinic's in-house doctor, recommended the Luxe Facial—a multi-step journey addressing

deep-seated impurities, dullness, and early signs of aging.

Unlike conventional facials, the Luxe Facial incorporates Hydradermabrasion for deep cleaning, red PDT Light to stimulate collagen and calm inflammation, and Galvanic technology to infuse high-quality serum. The process includes cleansing, exfoliation, vacuuming, and pricking for pore clearing, a soothing jelly mask for bacteria reduction, and finishing touches—a moisturizer to lock in hydration, sunblock for protection, and a light massage.

After the treatment, my skin felt smoother, brighter, and calmer, and continued to improve over the following days.

Beyond the Luxe Facial, Beauty Affair offers a full range of non-invasive and minimally invasive procedures. Their newest additions are the Wrinkle Erase System and Triméra Slim, in addition to fillers, Botox, threads, Platelet-Rich Plasma treatment, V-lift, scar revisions, and subcision—all delivered with the same precision and expertise. (by Edge Javier) 📍

Ramos Branch – 2F Primeway Plaza,
Ramos St. – 0977 202 0598 | 401 4551
A.S. Fortuna Branch – 2F The Space,
A.S. Fortuna, Mandaue - 0997 759 4838
Open Tuesdays to Sundays, 10am to 7pm



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: A treatment room showcasing state-of-the-art machines; a soothing face massage in progress; the Beauty Affair façade; rejuvenating red PDT light therapy; the advanced skin-mapping machine.

A RARE BEACHFRONT ADDRESS AWAITS AT ARUGA RESORT & RESIDENCES – MACTAN



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM: A serene retreat inside the one-bedroom model unit bedroom; the open living and dining space of the two-bedroom model unit; the striking exterior of Aruga Mactan's residence and hotel; luxury is best served by the sea—private sails with a spread of gourmet fare or champagne by the shore.

Mactan has an inimitable island flair all its own. Home to Cebu's international airport, luxury resorts by respected local operators or globally renowned hospitality brands, and a dining scene as vibrant as its sparkling turquoise waters, Mactan is the most desirable address in the country for those who want both coastal living and urban vibes within arm's reach.

Known for refined mixed-use communities in Metro Manila, Rockwell Land first made its mark in Cebu with lush garden living at 32 Sanson in Cebu City. Rockwell continues to grow its legacy here with two more standout developments: IPI Center Done Rockwell close to Cebu IT Park, and Aruga Resort & Residences – Mactan in Punta Engaño, Rockwell's first beachfront development. Spanning 5.2 hectares, Aruga seamlessly blends a residential community with a resort hotel, offering the longest stretch of beachfront in Punta Engaño at 270 meters.

Since establishing its presence in Cebu, Rockwell has continuously

redefined elevated living in the region — and nowhere is this more striking than by the shores of Mactan. Aruga Mactan stands as a stunning seaside community where coastal serenity meets Rockwell's signature sophistication. Well-considered amenities such as multi-purpose pavilions and function venues, a pool deck and lounge, fitness center, children's play area, and residents' lounge were all designed to create spaces where connections and memories flourish.

With turnover beginning this year, future residents eagerly anticipate calling this coastal paradise their home. Excitement is building as the community begins to take shape, and only a select number of residences where you can enjoy beachfront living at its finest soon.

And for those who wish to be part of this coveted community, Rockwell has more in store with another residential development on the horizon to embrace island living done the Rockwell way. 🌴

FULL AND JOYFUL AT KALIPAY

Dining at Kalipay, a Filipino restaurant, feels like being welcomed into a home where every dish is a feast of joy. The menu is crafted to satisfy even the most voracious appetite, with comforting and generous dishes served with the pleasure that their name promises.

Start with the Kalipay Poke Bowl, where the zing of tuna kinilaw meets a refreshing medley of crisp greens, diced avocados, and soaked pineapple bits for a burst of freshness with every bite. For a thrilling twist on tradition, discover the Crispy Seafood Palabok: crunchy noodles with fresh seafood and a rich, velvety sauce. Savor the classic Crispy Pata with audibly crunchy skin giving way to succulent pork; the tender, perfectly cooked Signature Steamed Molmol; and the tangy, savory broth of Sinigang Salmon Head sa Miso. The show-stopping Seafood Paella is rich, abundant, and meant to be shared. End on a note of nostalgia with *Halo Halo*, an icy, colorful treat that cools and delights in equal measure.

Every plate tells a story of home, heritage, and happiness best savored together. (by Neil Roy Impas) 🌱

R. Duterte Street, Banawa, Cebu City
Instagram @kalipayfilipino
0994 085 8088 | 0994 085 8188
Open daily 11am-2pm, 6-9pm



A feast worth savoring—from the freshness of the Kalipay Poke Bowl to the crunch of Crispy Pata and Seafood Palabok, the comfort of Steamed Molmol and Sinigang Salmon Head sa Miso, the richness of Seafood Paella, and the sweetness of Halo-Halo to finish.



FORM, FUNCTION, AND SPINAL HEALTH

Health is often viewed as being pain-free and physically active. It is ideal to include the spine in one's regular health checkups as part of an overall wellness regimen. Subluxations, or misalignments of the spine, can cause significant health issues, such as chronic pain, reduced mobility, a weakened immune system, or nervous system dysfunctions that can cause fatigue, digestive problems, or mood disorders.

At Form and Function Corrective Chiropractic, they prioritize identifying and correcting subluxations to restore health and well-being. Dr. Scott Jahn evaluates the spine to pinpoint misalignments and perform a comprehensive assessment. "By ensuring the body remains as free as possible of subluxations through chiropractic adjustments and adopting a sensible, wellness-oriented lifestyle, we can significantly enhance its natural restorative abilities," says Dr. Jahn.

The clinic also offers tailored treatment plans, including spinal adjustments and therapies such as cervical traction, a weight system, and Whole-Body Vibration Therapy (WBVT). Patients receive ongoing education and support with knowledge to maintain spinal health, including nutritional advice and holistic wellness techniques like Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). (PR) 📞

Unit 907 AppleOne-Equicom Tower,
Cebu Business Park
0917 670 0907

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Dr. Scott Jahn with actor Baron Geisler; a chiropractic adjustment in progress; a focused consultation; and another hands-on treatment by Dr. Jahn.



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IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD: F. RAMOS STREET

F. Ramos Street is a vibrant microcosm where daily life in Midtown Cebu unfolds. From the morning rush to after-hours, immerse in the evolving rhythms and unscripted moments that define a typical day in the city.

by JESTYN ROMO

Some streets make the postcards with grand boulevards framed by monuments, the glossy avenues crowned with skyscrapers. And then there are streets like F. Ramos in Cebu City: unassuming, indispensable, and deeply woven into the fabric of daily life.

Stretching just 1.2 kilometers and named after Fructuoso Ramos, one of Cebu's early municipal leaders, this modest road cuts through the city's midtown district like a quiet current beneath the bustle. Jeepneys—14Ds and 17Cs among them—rumble past, ferrying office workers from Cebu Business Park, students from IT Park, and tourists with Google Maps open on their phones.

It's easy to dismiss F. Ramos as just another street, but linger a little, and you'll see what locals already know: this is where Cebu lives, breathes, and hums.

MORNING RUSH

At sunrise, F. Ramos Street feels almost tender. The first jeepneys of the day clatter past as the sidewalks stir awake. Fruit vendors stack pyramids of mangoes and bananas, their stalls splashed with color. The scent of garlic rice and fried eggs drifts from hole-in-the-wall eateries, inviting early risers for a *silog* breakfast before the day takes off.



Students tumble out of dormitories—backpacks swinging, as they go to classes at nearby schools and universities. A couple of wide-eyed tourists, fresh off the ferry, weave through the crowd searching for caffeine and direction. Accommodations such as the Diplomat Hotel and Nomad Hub Coliving Hostel cater to various traveler needs, whether a brief overnight rest or an extended stay to explore the vibrant surroundings.

DAYTIME DYNAMICS

By mid-morning, the frenetic energy smooths into a steady rhythm. Students spill into tiny eateries, while office workers slip out on lunch breaks, scanning for their favorite

carinderia or a quick café fix. Robinsons Fuente anchors the area with familiar retail comforts, while Raintree Mall, one of Cebu's oldest strip malls, holds the nostalgic charm of simpler shopping days. Just across the way, the sleek new Primeway Plaza hints at the city's modern ambitions.

The street is a quiet workhorse for daily needs: document processing shops, phone repair kiosks, and print services share space with cafés that offer WiFi, AC, and a break from the heat. Good Cup Coffee Co. has become a social crossroads for meetings or catch-ups happen over brewed cups of joe.

When it comes to lunch, the area boasts a vibrant mix of dining options that cater to every craving. Ditoy's

Eatery is a Ramos institution; their pork sinugba is smoky perfection, and their menu spans hearty soups, slow-cooked stews, and curiosities like *lansiao*—a delicacy for the adventurous.

AFTER-HOURS APPEAL

After 6pm, F. Ramos Street shifts gears. The office crowd thins, replaced by students cramming for exams and remote workers logging in for clients halfway around the world. Productivity spaces like Workplace Café and MeshMedia.space glow softly into the night—sanctuaries for digital nomads, side-hustlers, and deadline-driven dreamers.

Couples lean in over candlelit dinners at Tales and Feelings, while others hunker down at Row's Batchoy,

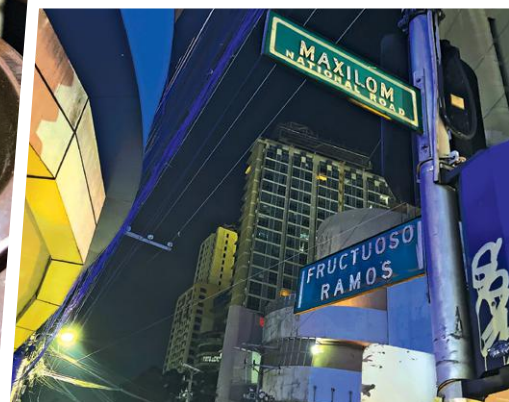
steam rising from bowls of rich broth. After dark, the sidewalks transform: BBQ vendors fan their coals, smoke curling up into the night, while Kusina ni Osting and other budget-friendly haunts feed the city's night owls with sizzling platters and ice-cold drinks.

F. Ramos Street doesn't shout. It doesn't demand a photo op or chase the spotlight. Instead, it hums with the quiet dignity of the everyday—of jeepney routes, coffee runs, grilled pork lunches, and late-night cramming sessions.

This isn't the Cebu you'll find on postcards, but maybe it should be. Because here, on these unassuming sidewalks, is the Cebu that locals know, love, and live—messy, beautiful, and entirely real. 📍



OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP: The warm, inviting interiors of Good Cup Coffee; bustling street scene along F. Ramos. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** A bustling fruit stand illuminated at night; a steaming bowl of Special Batchoy; late-night bites on the street; street sign marking the corner of F. Ramos and Gen. Maxilom Streets.





QUEST HOTEL: Style, Flavor, and Warmth

Set in the vibrant center of Cebu City, Quest Hotel and Conference Center marries sleek urban style with the warmth of Cebuano hospitality.

THE HOTEL AT A GLANCE

Guests are welcomed by a sleek, metropolitan ambiance: polished mineral tones, geometric flooring, and warm lighting over plush seating areas set the tone for a refined yet inviting lobby experience. Upstairs, the guest rooms offer a bright and calming retreat, featuring neutral color palettes, soft padded headboards, minimalist furnishings, and, in many rooms, floor-to-ceiling windows that frame

sweeping city views—beautifully blending modern simplicity with cozy, business-class comfort.

WHO'S THERE

Due to its strategic location, modern amenities, and accessible pricing, the hotel typically attracts a mix of business travelers, local and international tourists, families on vacation, and groups attending conferences or events.



WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST?

Breakfast at the hotel's award-winning Pusô Bistro and Bar features a generous buffet featuring international and Filipino flavors—complete with pancakes, cereals, fresh juices, and local favorites like *danggit*, *tocino*, and *silog*—alongside live egg stations, *tahô* service, and consistently well-stocked hot chocolate and bacon. Daily themed breakfast buffets have been introduced recently to give guests more variety and exciting new options each morning.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

Pusô Bistro and Bar combines modern Filipino regional dishes, Cebuano specialties, and international cuisine. It is known for its assorted California maki, tuna, and salmon sashimi at the Japanese station, and roast beef at the carving station. Guests can enjoy various desserts and native delicacies, including rotating regional highlights at the mains section, such as flavorful Tausug dishes.

The Pool Bar, nestled by the pool on the seventh floor, serves casual modern Filipino and international bar chow, perfect for enjoying alongside refreshing cocktails and drinks in a relaxed al fresco atmosphere.

SOMEWHERE FUN IN THE HOTEL

Quest Hotel Cebu's Pool Bar offers a lively happy hour with a Buy One, Get One Free deal on select cocktails

daily from 2pm to 4pm, making it the perfect mid-afternoon treat. The drink lineup features refreshing tropical blends like mojitos and margaritas, which are ideal for unwinding at the poolside swim-up bar.

ACTIVITIES

The hotel just launched its exciting Find Your Quest campaign in partnership with premier local establishments. Guests can experience the vibrant Cebuano lifestyle for themselves with exclusive discounts and perks from Cebu Safari and Adventure Park, Anjo World Theme Park, Primer Group of Companies, Beauty Affair Face and Slimming Hub, and more to get the most out of their visit to Cebu.

WHAT'S NEW?

The hotel just launched its exciting Find Your Quest campaign in partnership with premier local establishments. Guests can experience the vibrant Cebuano lifestyle for themselves with exclusive discounts and perks from Cebu Safari and Adventure Park, Primer Group of Companies, Beauty Affair Face and Slimming Hub, and more to get the most out of their visit to Cebu. A new à la carte menu will also be launched soon, serving the same quality and warm service that the buffet is known for, but in a more relaxed, made-to-order format ideal for quick lunches, business meetings, or intimate dinners without the whole buffet experience. 🍷

Quest Hotel and Conference Center Cebu
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cebuinfo@questhotelsandresorts.com

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT:

The welcoming lobby of Quest Hotel & Conference Center-Cebu; the hotel's modern façade rising in the cityscape; a relaxing moment by the poolside.

WATERFRONT HOTEL: In the Heart of Cebu

Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino is centrally located between the city's two business districts, Cebu Business Park and IT Park. This urban hotel offers comfortable modern accommodations, excellent dining options, and a convention center that hosts the city's top events.

HOTEL AT A GLANCE

A grand welcome awaits at Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino, where soaring ceilings, intricate artwork, and gleaming marble floors create an atmosphere of elegance. At its center, the Lobby Lounge offers a sophisticated space for relaxation, serving signature drinks and delightful cuisine. This refined aesthetic extends to the guest rooms, where neoclassical sophistication meets timeless charm.

WHO'S THERE

A preferred destination for business travelers, families, international guests, and event attendees, the hotel provides both comfort and convenience in the heart of Cebu.

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST

An extensive international buffet features a variety of Filipino classics and Cebuano specialties, catering to a wide range of tastes.



TOP: Waterfront Hotel's grand lobby. LEFT: Breakfast at Cafe Uno.



WHAT'S FOR DINNER

A diverse selection of dining experiences is available across the hotel's specialty restaurants. Uno offers an international buffet, with a special seafood station on Fridays and Saturdays. Mizu, an authentic Japanese restaurant led by a Japanese chef, showcases signature dishes such as Sukiyaki, Gindara Miso-yaki, and Tempura Roll. Tin Gow highlights bold Cantonese and Szechuan flavors, with specialties including Tin Gow Fried Kway Teow, Siew Mai, and Shanghai Mini Buns, expertly prepared by a Malaysian chef. La Gondola delivers an authentic Italian dining experience, featuring Rib Eye Steak, wood-fired pizzas, homemade gelato, and dishes crafted with freshly picked herbs using traditional culinary techniques.

SOMEWHERE FUN AT THE WATERFRONT

Happy Hour at Pool Aquarius runs daily from 4pm to 6pm, offering a buy-one-get-one promotion on cocktails. A curated menu enhances the experience, making it the perfect spot for relaxation by the pool.

WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES ARE THERE

A fully equipped gym provides modern fitness facilities, while a

refreshing swimming pool and sauna offer relaxation. A wellness center is also available, offering massages and treatments designed to rejuvenate and restore balance.

WHAT'S NEW AND UPCOMING

From September to November, the hotel offers a feast of seasonal promos—Lobby Lounge's merienda buffets and coffee specials, Uno's flash sales, discounts, themed dinners, and weekend turkey spreads, plus Pool Aquarius' happy hours, boodle fights, and barbecues. Madeleine adds 50% bake sales, cakes of the quarter, and Christmas goodies, while Tin Gow, La Gondola, Mizu, and Café Fortuna showcase specialty dishes and unlimited dining treats. With buffet group deals, flash sales, and monthly room promos, every visit promises something new to savor. 🍷

Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino
Salinas Drive, Lahug, Cebu City
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THE REEF ISLAND RESORT MACTAN: Welcome To Your Sea and Sky Sanctuary

Awaken to the sight of turquoise seas, endless blue skies, panoramic ocean, and mountain views. Just a short distance from the Mactan Cebu International Airport, The Reef Island Resort Mactan sets the stage for an unmatched wellness retreat.



THE HOTEL AT A GLANCE

The lobby is enhanced with local craftsmanship and materials thoughtfully brought together to reflect the Philippines' splendor in an elegantly modern resort hotel setting. Designed for comfort and relaxation, our 175 rooms and suites offer stunning views of the ocean, decorated in hues of nature, and equipped with state-of-the-art amenities.

WHO'S THERE

The resort attracts a diverse range of guests, including honeymooners, families, long-stay visitors, and leisure-seekers.

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST

The resort offers buffet-style breakfast at HAWKR by The Kitchen with a variety of local and international dishes. It features traditional dishes that reflect the culinary culture of Cebu, like *chorizo*, *humba*, and *danggit*. The Bakery offers a delightful selection of handcrafted bread, freshly baked pastries, gourmet coffee, and an array of local and international food options, creating a perfect spot for both casual bites and indulgent treats. Our flatbread at The Bakery is a must-try!

WHAT'S FOR DINNER

HWKR by The Kitchen's specialties, Seafood Laksa with its rich, spicy broth and freshly made Dumplings, promise a truly satisfying dining experience. If you're looking for al fresco beach front dining, HA•LI•NA at The Grounds elevated our take on the

charming *carinderia*—or roadside restaurant, an outdoor dining area where one can indulge in traditional Filipino food like the classic *sugba* / BBQ and other well-loved, homestyle dishes like *tortang talong* and *ensaladang langka*.

SOMEWHERE FUN IN MÖVENPICK

Kids and kids-at-heart alike can R&R to their heart's content at the Kids Arcade, exclusive children's pool, and the rest of our family-friendly facilities. For some much-needed alone time, take a trip to The Spa, where our signature treatments are sure to soothe and recharge.

WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES ARE THERE

At The Reef Island Resort, we offer state-of-the-art facilities designed to make your stay unforgettable. Whether you're seeking relaxation or excitement, we have everything you need for the perfect getaway - three swimming pools, 110-m beachfront shoreline, a kids club and arcade, spa, and modern gym facilities. 🌊

The Reef Island Resort
Vistamar Subdivision, Dapdap, Mactan,
Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu
Facebook: The REEFMactan
Instagram: @reefmactan
info@thereef.ph | www.thereef.ph
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LEFT, FROM TOP: The striking façade of The Reef Island Resort Mactan, the colorful arcade area; a well-appointed fitness center.

RIGHT, FROM TOP: The vibrant Kids' Club; a delectable spread from The Bakery.

SHANGRI-LA MACTAN, CEBU

Tropical Elegance in the Island

Nestled amidst 13 hectares of lush greenery and landscaped gardens, Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu, is a multi-faceted leisure destination that combines luxury relaxation, fine cuisine, and exciting recreational activities.

HOTEL AT A GLANCE

Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu seamlessly blends with its natural surroundings, featuring graceful, tiered terraces adorned with lush greenery cascading toward the sea. The open and airy lobby boasts a sprawling, sunlit layout with expansive windows that offer breathtaking waterfront views. Thoughtfully incorporating natural elements like wood and locally sourced materials, the design creates a warm and inviting ambiance. The guest rooms reflect this aesthetic, with elegant furnishings, plush textiles, and subtle touches of Filipino craftsmanship, providing a serene and luxurious retreat.

WHO'S THERE

Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu welcomes discerning travelers seeking a refined and relaxing escape. Whether it's

couples on romantic getaways, families on tropical vacations, or groups indulging in the resort's world-class amenities, every guest finds their perfect retreat along the resort's pristine beachfront.

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST

Start the day with an indulgent breakfast buffet at Tides, offering a diverse selection of international and local flavors. Filipino favorites like *danggit*, beef tapa, and *taho*—a warm silken tofu dessert drizzled with sweet syrup and tapioca pearls—are particularly popular among guests.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER

For dinner, Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu takes guests on a diverse culinary journey. Tea of Spring, a local favorite, offers authentic Cantonese delicacies, while Cowrie Cove

specializes in fresh seafood with stunning oceanfront dining. Acqua, the signature Italian restaurant, delights guests with hand-stretched pizzas and classic Italian dishes. For a more immersive experience, Buko Bar hosts the vibrant Kasadya dinner buffet, featuring live cultural performances on select evenings.

SOMEWHERE FUN AT SHANGRI-LA

Unwind at Cowrie Cove's cocktail hour, where expertly crafted cocktails, fine wines, and local beers pair perfectly with breathtaking ocean views. Coastal ambiance and delicious bar chows create a fun evening followed by dinner at the adjacent seafood restaurant.

WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES ARE THERE

Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu offers a wealth of activities to suit every guest's interests. Indulge in holistic treatments at the award-winning Chi, The Spa, stay active at the state-of-the-art Health Club, or cool off in the resort's multiple pools—including a dedicated children's pool with exciting water slides. Families can enjoy interactive fun at the Adventure Zone, featuring an indoor playground, outdoor activities, and supervised programs, ensuring a memorable stay for all ages.

WHAT'S NEW AND UPCOMING

September opens with guest chef takeovers: Chef Pablo Ramirez of Shangri-La Makati's Sage Grill brings bold Latin American flavors to Tides (Sept 11–13), while Chef Michelle Menegazzi of Shangri-La Sydney's Altitude presents modern Australian sophistication at Cowrie Cove (Sept 26–27). October 31 features Cosmic Glow: An Out-of-this-World Halloween, a family-friendly celebration with costumes, games, and trick-or-treating. November marks the resort's Tree Lighting Ceremony on the 25th, alongside ongoing culinary highlights—Buffet on Us group dining specials at Tides until Nov 30 and Flavours of Southeast Asia every Wednesday through December, spotlighting favorites from Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines. 🌟

Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu

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Facebook: Shangri-La Mactan, Cebu
Instagram: @shangrilamactan

FROM LEFT: The elegant and luxurious Shangri-La Mactan Suite; a magical dining experience under the stars awaits at Cowrie Cove.



CHECK-IN!

JPARK ISLAND RESORT & WATERPARK MACTAN: 5-Star Family Adventure

Jpark Island Resort & Waterpark on Mactan Island is a premier destination for family getaways, offering luxurious accommodations, exceptional amenities, and a 5-star waterpark experience. Recognized for its sustainability efforts and award-winning service, it's the perfect place to create cherished memories.



HOTEL AT A GLANCE

Nestled in the heart of Mactan Island, Jpark Island Resort & Waterpark seamlessly blends exclusivity with excitement. Boasting 772 rooms and suites, along with 48 private villas, the resort offers refined accommodations for every traveler. Beyond relaxation, family adventure awaits—dive into the sprawling waterpark, explore the indoor theme park, or indulge in thrilling water sports.

Upon arrival, guests are welcomed by the grandeur of the hotel lobby, featuring soaring ceilings, elegant chandeliers, and gleaming marble floors. Warm wood accents and stylish furnishings create a sophisticated tropical ambiance, setting the tone for an unforgettable stay. The resort is a favorite among families and adventure-seekers looking to balance thrill and tranquility.

WHO'S THERE

Jpark attracts a mix of families with young children, leisure travelers, and adventure enthusiasts seeking a dynamic yet luxurious island getaway.

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST

Mornings begin with a lavish international buffet, showcasing flavors from Korea, Japan, and China, along with a variety of soups, pancakes, desserts, and freshly baked bread.

WHAT'S FOR DINNER

Guests can savor a range of dining experiences—from Maru's authentic Korean flavors and Ching Hai's refined Chinese dishes to Coral's freshest seafood. Galo Grill & Bar serves grilled favorites with skyline views, while The Abalone Buffet Restaurant offers a global all-you-can-eat spread.

SOMEWHERE FUN AT JPARK

For a vibrant evening, Aquas Bar allows guests to sip handcrafted cocktails while taking a dip. Those looking for an elevated experience can head to Galo Grill & Bar, which offers breathtaking skyline views and a lively atmosphere. For a more intimate setting, J Lounge provides a refined space for quiet drinks and relaxed conversations.

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE THERE

Beyond its iconic waterpark, Jpark offers activities for every interest—from gym workouts and spa relaxation to water sports, mini-golf, go-kart biking, and beach games.

WHAT'S NEW AND UPCOMING

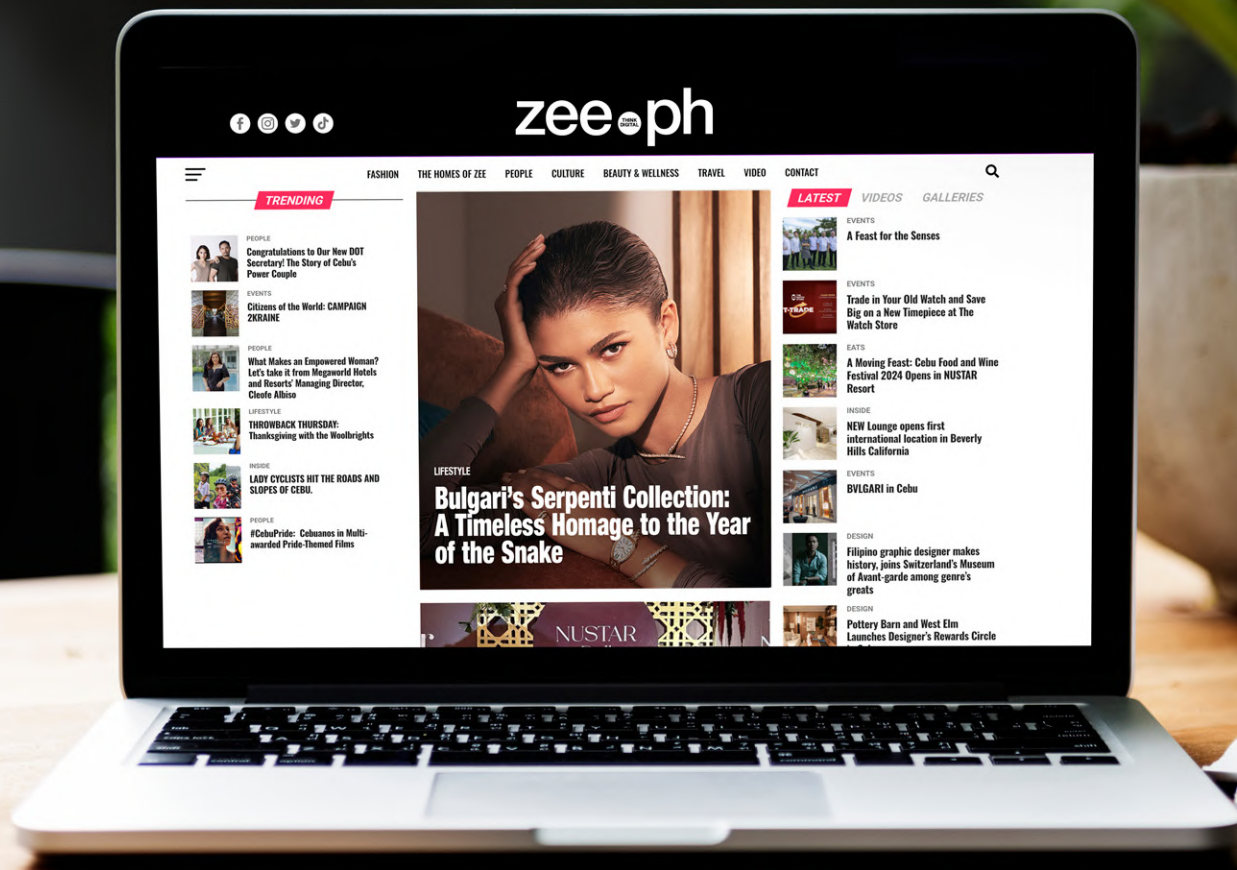
On October 26, 2025, Jpark will host a festive Halloween Special, promising a fun-filled celebration for families and guests. The holiday spirit continues on November 11, 2025, as the resort ushers in the season with its enchanting Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony. To close the year, everyone can look forward to the much-anticipated Year-End Sale happening nationwide from November 28 to 30, 2025, with big discounts and exclusive deals at Glorietta Mall in Manila, The Gallery at Ayala Center Cebu, and Abreeza Mall in Davao. 📍

Jpark Island Resort & Waterpark Mactan, Cebu
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FROM TOP LEFT: The expansive lobby with several seating areas. Fresh seafood reigns supreme at the resort's Coral Seaside Restaurant; The resort has three towering waterslides for endless fun and thrills.

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CEBU STYLE, GLOBAL VISION:

CEBU WEAR SHOWCASES FILIPINO DESIGN TO THE WORLD

Cebu, long celebrated as a cultural crossroads of heritage and innovation, is stepping into the fashion spotlight with Wear Cebu –a movement that fuses local craftsmanship with global vision, championing designers who honor tradition while boldly shaping a uniquely Cebuano presence on the world stage.

by **DEXTER ALAZAS** photography **ARI SIMANGAN** models **AMANDA OUANO, AISHA VAN HOEK & LOUIS PAUL ROILAND OF ADMIRE MODELS PHILIPPINES** hair & makeup **KRIS BAGUIO** accessories **STROZZI** and **MONA** locale **BELMONT HOTEL MACTAN**



Cebu is one of the more important cultural centers in the country. It's a melting pot of heritage, innovation, and resilience. Now, it's stepping into the fashion spotlight with a new force: Wear Cebu, a movement rooted in the soul of Cebuano craftsmanship with an eye on the global market. It champions a new wave of designers who aren't chasing trends, cognizant of their roots but aren't afraid to branch out. The result is a collection of proudly Filipino fashion, unmistakably Cebuano, yet designed for the world stage.

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT:
Fuschia macrame gown by Dexter Alazas; piña cotton and lace combo by Jean Paul Cabigon, bag by Nest Home and Fabrique Shop and Resort Luxe Wear–hemp cloth with cotton lace sleeves accented with MOP beads, ISLA by Filippo; recycled cotton and Hablon dress by Jessica Ouano Durano, tote by Nest Home and Fabrique Shop; pure cotton handwoven HABLONUEVO suit by Dexter Alazas.

LOCAL MATERIALS, GLOBAL AESTHETIC

Every garment tells a story through the materials and techniques behind it. Think fabrics handwoven on traditional looms, bold embroidery echoing Visayan heritage and folklore, macrame textures that evoke coastal life, and intricate crochet work passed down through generations. These aren't minor ornamental details—they're the core of the design. By fusing slow fashion production and fast fashion adaptability, Wear Cebu presents a hybrid that works, items that are made to last, yet wearable for everyday use. They serve both the conscious consumer and the fashion-forward dresser, offering designs that honor traditional craftsmanship while leaning into global trends.

A NEW CEBUANO MARKET, A GLOBAL MINDSET

Cebu's design scene is no longer content with staying in the wings. Philip Rodriguez, Dexter Alazas (this writer), Jean Paul Cabigon, Jessica Durano, Alejandro Godinez, Pee wee Senining, and Patrice Uytengsu all support the Wear Cebu movement. The new Cebuano market craves expressive, culturally aware, ready-to-wear pieces that reflect their identity. They want narrative, technique, and authenticity stitched into what they wear. Wear Cebu designers aim to position Cebu as a fresh player in the local creative circle. It's about exporting not just products but perspective, a Filipino way of creating that blends artistry and pragmatism, heritage and innovation, intimacy and impact.

A MOVEMENT, NOT A MOMENT

Wear Cebu is a blueprint showing how local design can lead, not follow. It encourages collaboration across disciplines—fashion designers working with weavers, painters, and textile artisans. It creates a vast space for Cebuanos to wear pieces that reflect their pride and culture, and for the rest of the world to see what Filipino ingenuity looks like. Wear Cebu isn't just ready; it's about dressing to impress. 🌟



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: Sarimanok embroidered detail on HABLONUEVO barong by Dexter Alazas; metallic Hablon jacket and skirt by Pee wee Senining, bag by Arte ni Juana; Corded linen shirt with MOP chips as accents, ISLA by Filippo; Bangsamoro Terno dress by Alejandro Godinez for Aisha; Kantarines resort wear for him and her by Yves Camingue.



READ BETWEEN THE THREADS

Weaving is one of the Philippines' oldest and most essential crafts. Philippine textiles are vibrant storytellers of history and tradition, each thread woven with the heart and soul of the communities that create them. *Filipiniana*, the term for the Philippines' traditional formal wear, includes the Barong Tagalog for men and the Maria Clara gown or Terno for women. But centuries before the *Filipiniana* came into fashion, pre-colonial Filipinos already had a wealth of historic textiles varying from region to region. Weaves could signify status, rituals, or the environment that indigenous tribes lived in.

by KATE BIOL photos by MARKY RAMONE GO, ANTHILL FABRICS, BALIK BATIK



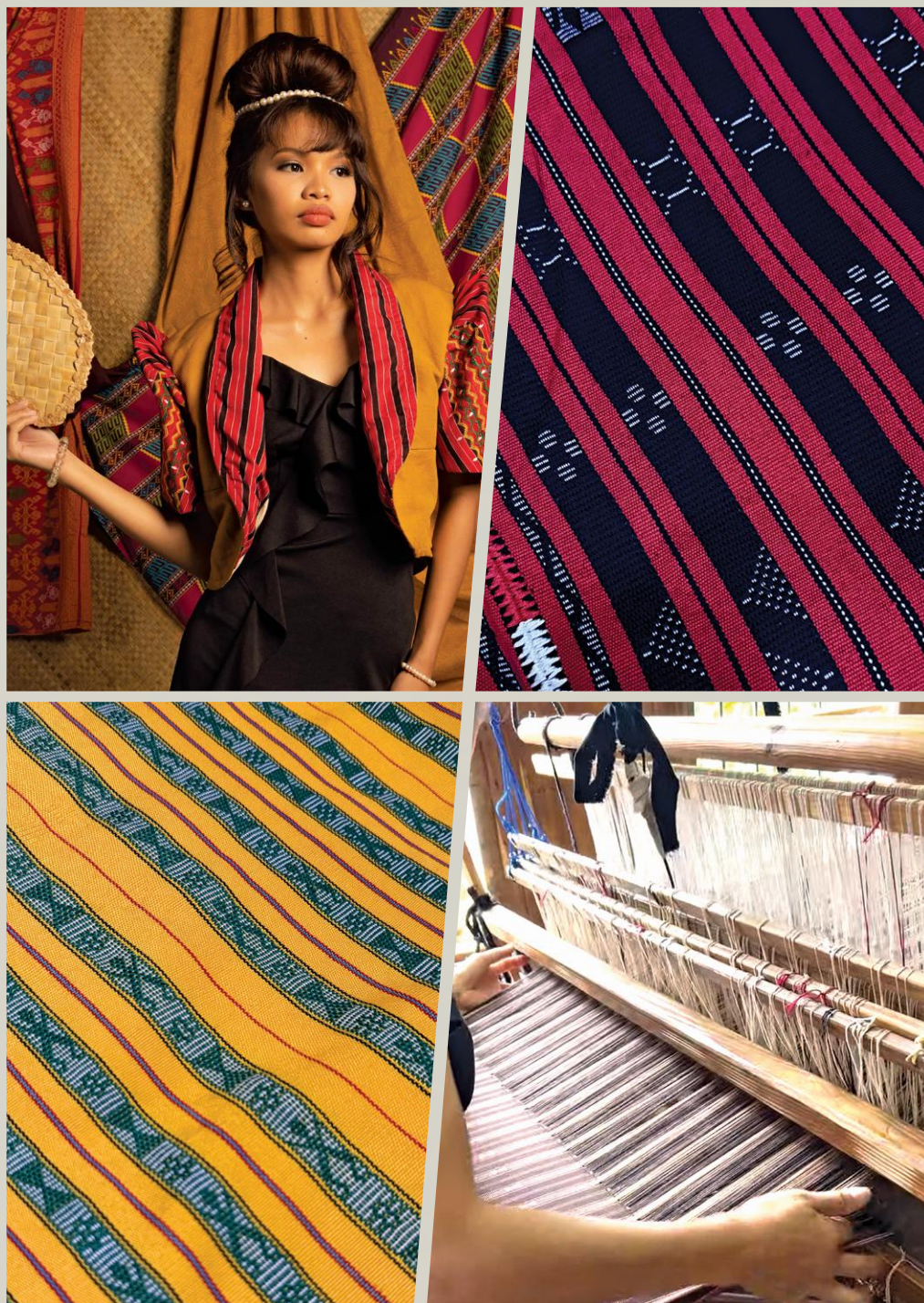
Philippine textiles weave stories of identity, history, and the ties that bind across generations. From Argao's hablon to Maguindanao's royal Inaul, each piece proudly showcases Filipino weavers' craftsmanship and creative spirit.

HABLON OF ARGAO, CEBU

Derived from the Bisaya word *habol*, meaning blanket or to cover oneself with a blanket, Hablon refers to Argao's enduring tradition of handloom weaving. Argaoanons actively preserve this local craft through initiatives like Hablon ni Lauriana, which began with just four weavers specializing in polyhemp and *kinarnero* weaves.

These artisans are adept at working with vertical handlooms to produce traditional plaid, checkered, and striped patterns. In 2018, the community grew to 15 weavers after becoming a direct partner of ANTHILL Fabric Gallery, which designated Argao as its Center for Research and Textile Innovation. Through this partnership, weavers are trained in new techniques and introduced to zero-waste fashion practices, ensuring that Hablon continues to evolve while honoring its roots.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Lilia Dress by ANTHILL; a Kalinga Bolero from Balik Batik; traditional *hinikkitan* (shuttle) and *inambayung* (hip belt); a weaver at Sagada Weaving Center; and intricate motifs such as *tinaggu* (human) and *linuhung* (mortar).



Alternative Nest and Trading/ Training Hub for Indigenous or Ingenious Little Livelihood (ANTHILL) Fabrics is a Cebu-based social enterprise that works directly with weaving communities to ethically support their livelihoods.

INAUL OF MAGUINDANAO

Inaul symbolizes Maguindanaons' dignity and nobility or "Bara-Bangsa." Weavers use local cotton and silky threads to convey emotions and stories into various patterns. Colors also hold meaning: red for bravery, black for dignity and honor, yellow and orange for royalty, green for peace and tranquility, and white for sadness or purity.

T'NALAK OF THE T'BOLI

In the Land of the Dreamweavers, the T'boli people of the Cotabato region believe that their sacred T'nalak textiles are not merely handcrafted; they are dreamt. According to tradition, Fu Dalu, the Spirit Guide of Abaca, visits chosen weavers in their sleep, imparting intricate visions that they faithfully translate onto the loom upon waking.

T'nalak holds profound spiritual significance, woven into the fabric of marriages, rituals, and celebrations. Its patterns—over a hundred traditional designs—range from geometric motifs to depictions of plants, animals, and anthropomorphic figures, each reflecting ancestral memory and

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: Balik Batik offers contemporary, wearable pieces using Inaul; Photo of the different Inaul patterns by Marky Ramone Go (L-R) Sikukaruwang, Lombayan, Karanda, Biyaludan, Sikuandune.





natural inspiration. This reverence for nature also extends to traditional T'boli attire. Blouses such as the Kegal Nesif (embroidered or cross-stitched) and Kegal Bentilas (sequined) echo the organic forms and symbolism found in T'nalak, embodying a living heritage passed down through generations.

CORDILLERA WEAVES

In the highlands of Luzon, Cordillera weaving is a meticulous craft that interlaces warp and weft threads to produce textiles rich in symbolism and tradition. Dominated by vibrant reds, these fabrics are often accented with black, white, yellow, or green—each hue carrying cultural weight. Patterns and motifs are thoughtfully selected to convey social status, honor ancestors, and express spiritual beliefs. Specific weaves are reserved for weddings, rituals, and other significant occasions, making each textile not just a garment, but a vessel of meaning woven into daily and ceremonial life.

WHERE TO FIND THESE WEAVES

If you value the culture and tradition woven into these intricate designs, you can support the artisans who craft them through Cebu-based enterprises. Balik Batik offers modernized garments—think ready-to-wear *boleros*, skirts, and dresses—that reinterpret traditional weaves for contemporary wardrobes. For those seeking native textiles

by the meter or in the form of clothing and accessories, ANTHILL Fabric Gallery provides a curated selection that celebrates heritage while championing sustainable fashion. 🌱

THIS PAGE FROM LEFT: ANTHILL's T'nalak Hafak Banug represents the eagle stretching its wings as it soars through the sky. Woven by Lang Dulay in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato; Traditional T'boli regalia with Kegal Nesif blouse; Balik Batik's Veronica Baguio proudly wears a T'boli inspired blazer called Kegal Nesif.



HANGING OUT IN CEBU'S HIGHLANDS

Cebu's Transcentral Highway is a scenic 33-kilometer mountain road that begins in Lahug. It's a convenient shortcut from Cebu City to Balamban, allowing travelers to enjoy stunning mountain views. While driving up, roll down the car window to enjoy the cool, refreshing breeze and the beautiful scenery.

by MICHELL L. OROC

The *bukid*, as locals refer to it, has always been a favorite respite for residents who need a quick breather from the city's congestion. When open spaces and fresh air became more necessary in recent years, there was a new appreciation for the simple joy of being outside and close to nature. Friends and families come together and create cherished memories in this picturesque landscape, surrounded by lush greenery and breathtaking views, while enjoying the freedom to reconnect.

Numerous new cafes and restaurants continue to open along the Transcentral Highway, eager to provide diverse food and drinks in this beautiful setting.

CASA DE MEZZA

Sundown here promises a great view with delectable bites and drinks. Located at the ground level of Hayat Tower in Busay, it's an excellent place to sample Italian, Mediterranean, and Asian specialties.

ONE LOVE BAR AND GRILL

If you're looking for a laidback, reggae vibe, this Jamaican-inspired restaurant offers delicious food, ice-cold beer, and chill beats.





ANTHONY'S CAFÉ

This cozy, glass-enclosed café offers a delightful selection of coffee, chocolates, and pastries. It is located in the Gaslamp District, which has a variety of restaurants and food stalls serving an array of grilled dishes and classic meals.

THE TOPS

More fun and adventure await foodies at The Top of Cebu. This popular destination recently underwent a significant renovation and upgrade and has transformed into a hotspot, featuring nearly 30 restaurants and food stalls. Established in the mid-1980s and situated 2,000 feet above sea level, The Tops continues to attract tourists and locals alike for its breathtaking views and cool temperatures. Steak lovers can try Yappari Steak, while those craving Japanese cuisine can visit Ten Izakaya and Tongara Ramen. For more Asian flavors, options like Moo-Kra-Ta, Hawker Chan, and Celadon Thai Cuisine are available. Quick Snack is perfect for indulging in comforting Tsinoy food, snacks, and local treats. Got a sweet tooth? You'll want to stop by Sweet Alchemy Dessert and Café or Sorbetes by Polar Treats. For your caffeine fix, Bo's Coffee and Alishan have got you covered. Topsy Hut and West 103 serve great spirits and wines for something a bit stronger. Finally, check out Honeycomb Hostel. The hostel's Dark Side of the Moon Bar serves tasty Filipino-Mexican fusion food and welcomes hostel guests and walk-ins. It's conveniently located near the parking area and boasts fantastic views of Kan-Irag mountain—perfect for chilling out and catching a beautiful sunset.



MR. A BAR AND RESTAURANT

Inarguably the longest-operating restaurant in the area with an amazing city view, this old favorite attracts diners looking for a delicious meal, great ambiance, and a mesmerizing view of the city. For those seeking a daytime caffeine fix or a cool hangout at night, there's Mr. A Café perched just below the restaurant. Nearby, at Mr. A Pizzeria, you can get a bite of thin-crust Italian pizza and pasta, perfect steamy creations with a cold beer.

NIU BEEF FRESH AUTHENTIC CUISINE

For a taste of authentic Chaoshan fresh beef hotpot and buffet, this restaurant offers stunning views, unlimited hotpot, and the best Filipino-Chinese fusion dishes, which can be enjoyed indoors or al fresco.



OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The inviting interiors of Casa de Mezza; city views over Mr. A Bar and Restaurant; flavorful plates at Niu Beef Fresh Authentic Cuisine; and the cozy ambiance of Anthony's Café. **THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM:** Drinks and music at Hostel Honeycomb's Dark Side of the Moon Bar; laidback vibes at Timplados Café at Tops; live performances at One Love Bar and Grill; and casual bites at Hawker Chan at Tops.

Heading up to The Tops, there are many more restaurants in the area, including Highlands de Busay, The Vue, La Parisienne Sky, and Balay sa Busay. Each restaurant offers unique dishes and stunning views of the Cebu skyline and harbor. In our upcoming issues, we'll continue to share more coffee shops and chic stops in the highlands of Cebu. 🌟

PLANT PARENTHOOD

Whether you're a certified plantito/plantita or just starting your journey into the world of flora and leafy greens, here are some wonderful gardens to visit around Cebu. From rare collectibles to vibrant blooms, these places are a treat for the eyes and the soul.

by **WILL YAP**

Call it a positive effect of a global pandemic that had everyone staying at home, or a mindset shift to spend less time in front of a screen. There's been an apparent resurgence of plantitos and plantitas ("plant aunts and uncles" to our foreign readers) in recent years. What started as a simple way to pass the time became full-blown plant parenthood. Some of us went beyond caring for houseplants—we started hunting for rare and exotic varieties, even sourcing plants from outside the Philippines. Online plant groups began popping up everywhere, connecting fellow Cebuanos who shared the same interest in a specific species of plants.

I was (and still am) a plantito. There's something so calming and rewarding about nurturing plants. It's not just in our heads—science says that looking at greenery can boost endorphins.



Blooms and Greens by Jaime Chua

Garden at La Joya Farm



Dragon fruit from La Joya Farm (photos on this page by Christoff Yu)

One of the respected OGs in the plant community, Jaime Chua, has been a passionate plant enthusiast since maybe even before I was born. Widely known for landscaping expertise, Blooms and Greens by Jaime Chua is a famed sanctuary for exotic and rare plants. If you're looking to kickstart your plant journey, this is a great place to begin since they also sell a variety of plants. *Bonbon - Sudlon 2 Barangay Road, Cebu City, 6000*

For vibrant gardens bursting with color and blooms you can visit in one afternoon, Sirao Garden, Buwakan ni Alejandra, and Terrazas de Flores Botanical Garden and Restaurant are all along the Cebu Transcentral

Highway. These are even more stunning in person than on your social feed. Take heed, though, because these tourist attractions can get a little crowded. Plan your visits on off-peak days to enjoy the gardens in more peace and with fewer photo bombers. *Cebu Transcentral Highway*

If you're heading south, drop by La Joya Farm in Aloguinsan. The resort farm offers overnight accommodations and is open to daytime visitors if you stop for lunch en route to Moalboal. Butterflies near the main restaurant populate a large central garden. But the entire resort feels like a massive garden with plenty of open spaces showcasing dozens of trees, plants,

and flowers. They also have a dragon fruit plantation where guests can buy fruit fresh from the tree when in season. *Jose G. Escario St., Rosario, Aloguinsan, Cebu 6040*

Last but not least, don't miss Michel's Garden in Cebu Safari and Adventure Park. This hidden gem towards the north is sometimes overlooked when guests are too excited to see the safari animals, but it's worth carving out time to look at the beautiful display of rare, exotic plants. Here you'll find mature, rare plant specimens beautifully curated to bring out their natural charm. This is a well-planned, modern garden with pathways encouraging guests to linger in awe at every turn (and every Instagram opportunity). *Barangay Corte, Toril, Carmen, Cebu 6005* 📍



URBAN SUMMITS:

THREE MORNING HIKES WORTH THE CLIMB

On an island where only 8% of the land is flat, according to the World Bank, the climb begins close to home. Ridges and forest trails surround the neighborhood subdivisions; if you're willing to wake early, you won't need to go far for elevation. These hikes offer fresh air, movement, and enough challenge to shake off the week, without missing lunch.

by **JAY FRANCIS GONZALES** photos by **LINFORD GALO**

Level 1: BAR CRAMPS – CHILL TRAILHEAD WITH COMMUNITY VIBES

Location: Banawa; starting at Paseo Arcenas, near Spartan Trail

Hike Time: 30–60 minutes, depending on route and pace

Difficulty: Easy

Just a short walk past the popular Starbuk trail stop in Banawa is Bar Cramps, a stopover quickly becoming my new favorite. With shaded benches, a spot to enjoy coffee or instant noodles, and even a small volleyball court beside the trail, it feels like part rest area, part neighborhood hangout. It's laidback and quiet on weekdays and more lively on weekends, especially early mornings. Bar Cramps is a key connector to other trails. From here, it branches out toward the Spartan Trail, Buhisan watershed, and other extended routes. The short climb to Bar Cramps from Paseo Arcenas is slightly inclined with uneven ground, so wear shoes with grip. I bring smaller bills if I plan to grab refreshments, and as with all trails, I carry a bag for trash.



Level 2: SPARTAN TRAIL – WINDING PAST THE WATERSHED

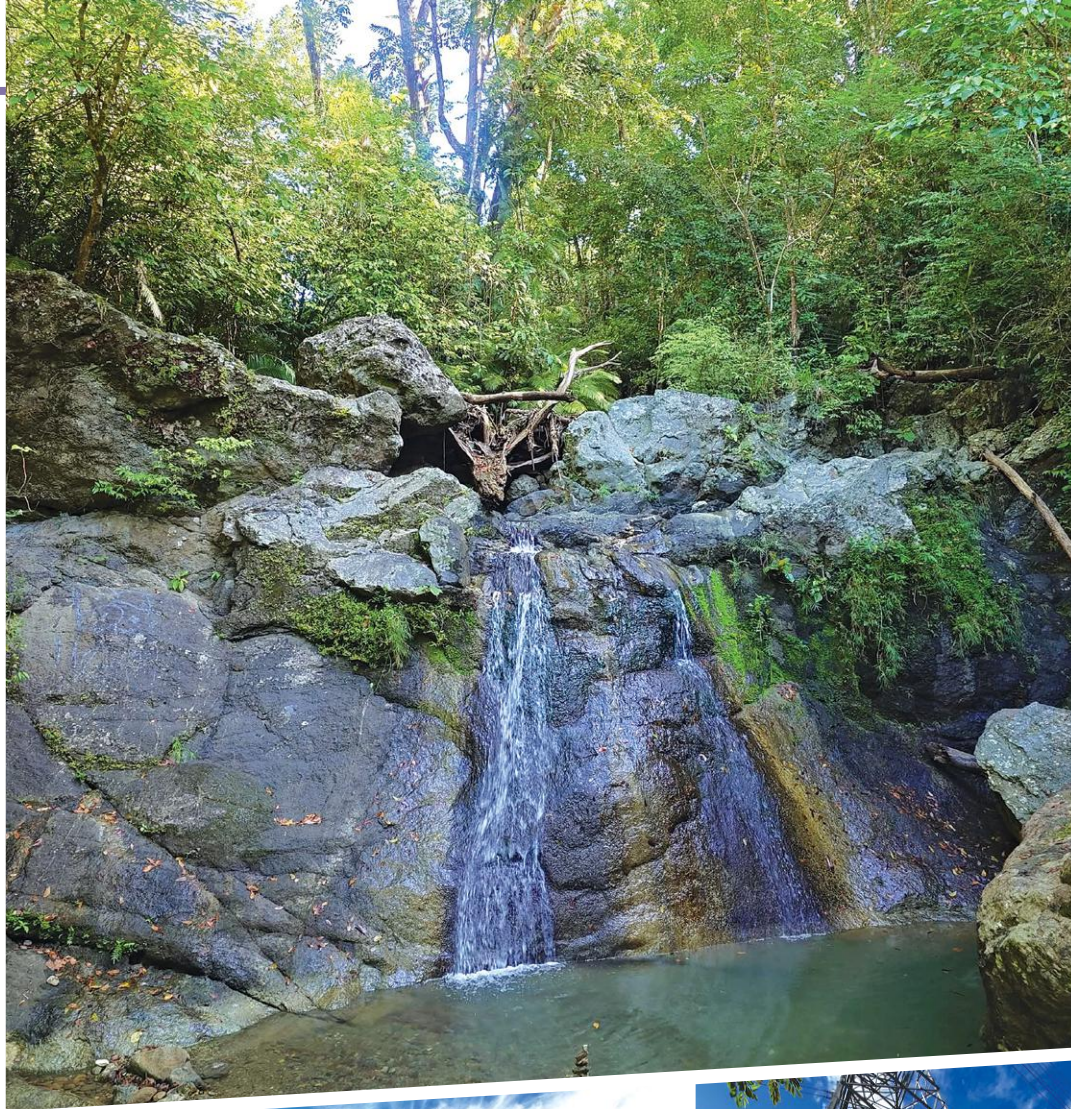
Location: Banawa; Paseo Arcenas trailhead to Barangay Pamutan, via Buhisan

Hike Time: 2 to 4 hours, depending on stops and pace, about 6 kilometers

Difficulty: Intermediate

After warming up at Bar Cramps, Spartan Trail is my next level. It begins at the same jump-off in Banawa and winds through a network of trails that dip into the Buhisan Watershed, one of the city's last forest pockets. I pass through shaded hills, muddy paths, narrow crossings, and the occasional stream. It's not uncommon to meet other hikers sharing snacks near the water or in forest clearings. I cross the Buhisan River several times along the route, with quiet pools and a small waterfall near the water reserve. The route ends in Pamutan, but sometimes I go further to Punta Princesa or Bocaue Peak. Some parts of the trail are unmarked or overgrown, so I go with a friend or a guide for safety. Gloves help with thorny plants, and waterproof shoes make river crossings easier.



**Level 3: SIX TOWERS – BEAUTIFUL BUT BRUTAL**

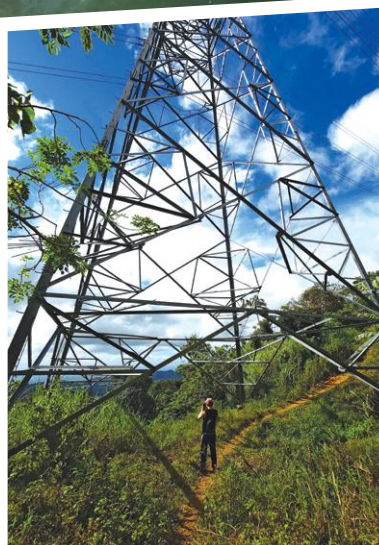
Location: Sitio Napo, Guadalupe to RCPI towers, Babag Range

Hike Time: 4 to 6 hours round trip

Difficulty: Hard

Six Towers is the final boss on my list. Starting from Guadalupe, this trail follows a ridgeline leading up to six RCPI towers scattered along the Babag Range. The climb is long, steep, and sweaty. While the downhill MTB route spans about three kilometers with roughly 111 meters of elevation gain, hiking the broader loop takes four to six hours round trip. This is a black-diamond-rated descent for mountain bikers—fast, rough, and technical. For hikers like me, the route passes several campsites, including Manggang Par, Camp Adela, and Plateau de Laborte, which features an infinity swing. Some sections of the trail feel nearly vertical, so they aren't ideal for casual hikers. Once I reach Tower #6, bragging rights are well earned. I bring at least two liters of water, as there are no refills past Tower #2. Mountain bikers wear full protective gear and check their brakes beforehand. I take caution with any trails and never risk going on soft soil if the weather has been rainy.

If I'm up early and want to start my day differently, these urban summits offer a morning that's sweaty, scenic, yet surprisingly close to home. The first time I hiked, I worried about what to wear. Halfway through, I just hoped I wouldn't slip. A little after that, I started questioning my life choices. But by the time I reached the top, none of that mattered. There was just the view, the silence, and the personal triumph of making it to the summit. 🏔️



24 HOURS IN MALAPASCUA ISLAND, ON A BUDGET

Time and budgetary concerns are the most common hindrances to planning more trips. But the wonders of a tiny island in northern Cebu, Malapascua—snorkeling in clear waters and vibrant seascapes, seeing a sunken ship wreck, and swimming with baby sharks—are too enticing to pass up. Armed with a budget of P3,000, I'm off on a journey to the home of the thresher sharks.

by **CHRISTIAN ORELLANO**

It's taken eight years, but I'm finally back on Malapascua Island. Many things have changed, like the new port, which hadn't been constructed yet when I was here. But some things haven't changed, like my budget, which is still tight.

As a world-famous diving destination that draws visitors from all over the world, Malapascua Island boasts majestic diving spots like the Monad Shoal and Kimud Shoal, where thresher sharks can be sighted year-round. While beginners are allowed to dive with an introductory certificate from some diving shops, a higher level of diving certification is required to reach the depths of the sites frequented by thresher sharks. Even if diving is beyond the budget, or you're not too

keen about being 30 meters underwater with sharks, there are plenty of cheap thrills to enjoy on the island's surface.

SATURDAY

11:30am - Cebu North Bus Terminal is bustling as many passengers from the city commute home to their provincial towns over the weekend. Hopping on the earliest trip possible is likely more relaxed if you want to avoid the weekend rush. Riding a bus is cheaper and more spacious, but it takes more travel time and has several stops. I opted to take a V-hire (van for hire) from the terminal to shorten my travel time, as I only have 24 precious hours. Both modes of transportation end at Maya New Roro Port in Daanbantayan, approximately 134 km from Cebu City.

Depending on traffic, it takes about three hours on the road. The ride traverses the Central Nautical Highway, giving a sneak peek of northern Cebu's coastlines and the green plains of Bogo City and Medellin. Watching the scenery roll past is far more entertaining than scrolling on social media.

4pm - A boat trip from Maya's new port to Malapascua Island is scheduled regularly. However, the operator depends on the number of passengers to make the most of every trip. Luckily, upon my arrival, a few passengers were already waiting for the next boat ride. After a 30-minute wait, we set off for the island.

The next half hour was a scenic cruise as we crossed the waters between

mainland Cebu and Malapascua Island. The sea breeze and the sunset served as a backdrop to this 35-minute boat ride. Maybe leaving the city at noon wasn't such a bad idea. Boarding and alighting from the boats are easier now than before, when people sometimes had to walk knee-deep in water first while carrying backpacks and other gear. At the port in Malapascua, motorcycle drivers await, offering rides to arriving passengers. After a short ride, I checked in at Malapascua Budget Inn, the most affordable accommodation I could find. Expect roommates in a dormitory-style, with capsule sleeping quarters for privacy, making the rate worthwhile. The inn is popular among backpackers and is filled with adventurers and wanderers from all over Cebu and



A palm-fringed shore at dusk in Malapascua

overseas. Check-in is 2pm, and check-out is at 11am the next day.

7pm - My dorm-style hostel is strategically accessible to the island's must-see spots. A food marketplace is only a short walk away, where different stalls offer barbecue, seafood, fruits, and more. I have dinner at Avril's and enjoy the island's bounty of local ingredients. I finished my meal with a fresh mango shake. Since the night was still young, I decided to explore a bit. One of the island's landmarks is Bounty Beach, tucked away at the southern end of Malapascua. At first glance, a strip of resorts, bars, and restaurants is visible. It's always a lively weekend night, as people walk around under strings of lights to enjoy musical performances or a cold glass of beer.

SUNDAY

8am - A local guide picked me up from my accommodation for the island tour I booked through Malapascua Budget Tour. He brings me to Bounty Beach, where the rental boat and four tourmates await. The sky was overcast, but there was enough sun to appreciate Malapascua's beauty. Our first stop was Dakit Dakit Islet, a snorkeling spot marked by a tiny limestone protrusion. We snorkeled in the water, where colorful fish swam over and under vibrant, healthy coral reefs. The flap of wings can be heard from the birds and bats enjoying the fresh air. The scene from the water to the blue sky feels much more relaxed here. Next, we went to the black-tip sharks sanctuary. Unfortunately, there were no sightings at the Baby Shark Sanctuary that day. We headed north on a calm sea to the Japanese shipwreck site. We dipped into the water and peered down from the surface. It took a moment to distinguish that the long dark shadow beneath was the ship's hull, all that's left of the mighty vessel.

Our last destination at North Beach was on the other side of the island. From afar, a line of white sand draws a noticeable boundary against



the pale blue water. We disembarked, and set out on the shore to take photos and explore this more laid-back side of Malapascua. It was the perfect time for a snack and a cold drink; I bought mine from a mini *sari-sari* store along the beach.

There's no better way to explore Malapascua than on an island tour. In three hours, you can get around spots that feature the island's low-key charm, a distinction that sets it apart from other places.

11:30am - When it's time to fuel up, finding a place to eat on the island is easy. Several *carenderias* are open from morning until evening, offering various dining options, mostly local dishes of meat, seafood, and vegetables. With this, you will be ready for any adventure that awaits, whether above or under the water. Souvenir shops sell some keepsakes to bring home, like miniature wooden sharks and stingrays, and other handmade trinkets. There's a market that sells local delicacies and products, too.

1:30pm - On Sundays, many passengers take the boat ride back to Maya port on the mainland. Some are heading to Daanbantayan and other towns, while others, like me, have a longer trip to the city. These passengers have one thing in common: there's a little of Malapascua with them wherever they go. Whether it reminds them of home or a vacation,





THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A small office at Maya New Roro Port where nature collection is collected; men are docking a boat into Malapascua Island port; miniature thresher, hammer, and black-tip sharks for souvenirs; budget meal: grilled chicken and chorizo, rice, and mango shake; island visitors are having dinner at Avril's; kids handlining to catch fish; a portion of Dakit Dakit Island is above water; boats are brought to shore at the North Beach.



Malapascua Island has a way of lingering in the memory.

6pm - As expected, the return trip takes longer. Many vehicles are returning to the city for the new week. If you have more time to spare, you can catch a bus. Vans are on standby at the port as a speedier option.

I arrived in Cebu City and was surprised to see that I had P331 left in my budget. For P2,669, I've enjoyed a full-blown trip to Malapascua Island, including fare, accommodation, fees, an island-hopping tour, and meals. I could've bought a souvenir with the extra money, but I decided to save it as a small contingency fund in case I needed anything on the three-hour ride home.

It cost less than P3,000 to experience what the fascinating island of Malapascua offers. Next weekend, pack your bags and sense of adventure if you need a break from the daily hustle. Then head up north! 🐋

MALASPASCUA ISLAND BUDGET

Cebu North Bus Terminal to Maya New Roro Port	P350
Maya New Roro Port to Malapascua Island	P200
Nature Collection	P95
Accommodation	P499
Island Tour	P450
Dinner	P210
Lunch	P210
Snack	P105
Motorcycle (two rides)	P50
Malapascua Island to Maya New Roro Port	P200
Maya New Roro Port to Cebu North Bus Terminal	P300
TOTAL	P2,669



Pusô Village

36 HOURS IN THE CITY

Cebu blends tradition and modernity, with historic landmarks alongside newer spaces and flavors. In just 36 hours, the city reveals a mix of history, cuisine, and culture in constant motion.

by BUTCH CARUNGAY

FRIDAY

3PM – MUSEUM REBIRTH

Start at the National Museum of the Philippines Cebu housed in the beautifully restored Aduana Building (Old Customs House). This architectural seaside landmark now hosts regional art and archaeology exhibits alongside rotating contemporary shows that highlight the richness of the Visayas. Entry is free, but book ahead for guided tours.

5PM – STREET FEAST, REIMAGINED

Walk to the nearby Pusô Village, Cebu City's new open-air dining haven where heritage meets design. Grab hanging rice and grilled chorizo with artisanal vinegar at a stylized *sugbahan* stall, or try a modern take on *kinilaw* (Filipino ceviche) with calamansi foam. End with *halo-halo* served in coconut shell bowls.



The National Museum of Cebu



7PM – HEAD FOR THE HILLS

Take a 25-minute drive to Tops Lookout in Busay. The view? A shimmering carpet of city lights. The vibe? Chill and slightly romantic. Grab a cold beer or fresh buko juice and soak up the breezy evening air—this is where locals bring first dates and long-time loves alike.

SATURDAY**8:30AM – STEP INTO THE PAST**

Start the morning in Cebu's historic heart. Visit the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño, where flickering candles and worn stone floors speak of centuries of devotion. Just outside, stand beneath the symbolic Magellan's Cross, then go to Fort San Pedro, a compact Spanish-era bastion

overlooking the sea. If time permits, stop by Casa Gorordo to deepen your understanding of Cebu's layered colonial story.

11AM – LUXE BRUNCH AT MOTT 32

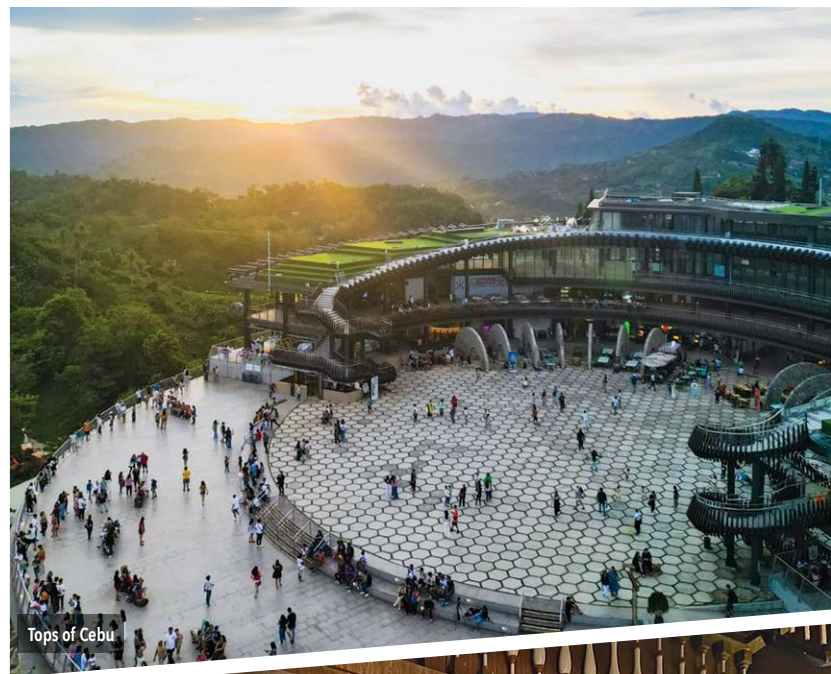
Head to Mott 32 at NUSTAR Resort and Casino for a decadent late-morning brunch. This sleek, award-winning Cantonese restaurant delivers on dim sum perfection and dramatic interiors. Don't miss the xiao long bao, applewood-roasted Peking duck, or yuzu tart. It's a glam prelude to an artsy afternoon.

1PM – CREATIVE RECHARGE AT ATUA MIDTOWN

By early afternoon, Atua Midtown is buzzing. This repurposed midtown compound is Cebu's new creative epicenter — a mash-up of concept



Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño



Tops of Cebu



Mott 32 at NUSTAR Cebu



Cebu Yacht Club



Atua Midtown

stores, rotating art shows, indie cafés, and local fashion. Expect bold statements from rising Cebuano designers and a curated mix of goods that blur the line between craft and contemporary cool.

2:30PM – HERITAGE SNACK AT EDDIE'S LOG CABIN

Tucked inside Atua is a beloved Cebu institution: Eddie's Log Cabin. One of the city's oldest family-run diners, it's famous for its no-frills, comforting fare. Order their homemade corned beef (tender, salty-sweet perfection), or grab a flaky personal-sized pie — coconut cream or pineapple if you're lucky. It's nostalgia on a plate that goes perfectly with a cup of coffee.

3:30PM – DOCKSIDE CALM AT CEBU YACHT CLUB

Cross the bridge into Mactan Island and ease into the afternoon at the Cebu Yacht Club. Yachts float lazily in the marina as locals sip coolers



The Cowrie Cove at Shangri-la Mactan Cebu

or coffee under wide umbrellas. It's not flashy but authentic — a breezy, unhurried scene ideal for quiet conversation or journaling with a drink in hand.

5:00PM – SUNSET TOAST AT COWRIE COVE

End your 36-hour Cebu immersion with sundowners at Cowrie Cove, the elegant seaside restaurant and bar at Shangri-La Mactan. With waves crashing just feet away, order a mango mojito, calamansi martini, or glass of crisp white while the sun dips into the

horizon. If you're hungry again, the grilled seafood and bar chow are top-notch — but honestly, the view alone is worth lingering for.

In just 36 hours, Cebu reveals its layers: a city shaped by conquest and resilience, with its eyes firmly set on a creative, globally connected future. Whether you're diving into its design scene or a bowl of lechon belly rice, this island metropolis knows how to surprise—and seduce. 📍



Seda Central Bloc



Crimson Resort & Spa Mactan

THE ESSENTIALS

WHERE TO STAY

City Chic: Seda Central Bloc, near IT Park or Asmara Resort Hotel in Banilad
Beachside Luxury: Crimson Mactan, Sheraton Cebu Mactan, or Mactan Shangri-La Resort Hotel
World Class: Fili Hotel or NUSTAR Hotel.

HOW TO GET AROUND

The Grab app is best for short hops. Hire a car for outer destinations like Tops or Olango.

WHEN TO GO

November to May for sunny skies. Don't miss the Cebu Culture, Art and Design Fest every third weekend of November and the epic Sinulog Festival every third Sunday of January.



The Sinulog Festival

24 HOURS IN CARCAR

A slow and thoughtful itinerary through heritage homes, quiet hills, and everyday flavors in Cebu's southern city.

by **EDGE JAVIER**

I woke to a blue morning sky, a breeze from the hills, and the faint sound of church bells—my first full day in Carcar after checking in at Carcar Eco Farm Resorts in Villa Anunang, Liburon. With no fixed agenda, the city unfolded gradually, revealing itself through old streets, shared meals, and quiet moments that asked for nothing more than attention.

6AM – BREAKFAST, CARCAR-STYLE

The food stalls at the New Carcar City Public Market were already busy. A warm cup of sikwate—thick, slightly bitter—paired well with puto just out of the steamer. I bought a *chicharon* bag for later. Carcar mornings start simple and strong—warm *sikwate*, soft puto, and crispy *chicharon* served without fuss. Meals here feel grounded, familiar, and full of comfort.

7AM – WALK THROUGH STA. CATALINA

Sta. Catalina Street runs past many of Carcar's oldest homes. Balay na Tisa, built in 1859, remains occupied, its original clay roof tiles still intact. The Mercado Mansion, painted in a faded Mediterranean blue, stands quietly down the road. Other houses, though weathered, continue to hold

their shape—shuttered windows, flaking paint, and the stillness of long-standing memory.

A quiet street lined with old homes and stories behind wooden shutters. The walk leads toward the coral-stone Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, its plaza still empty in the early morning light.

9AM – CARCAR CITY MUSEUM

Beside the church, the Carcar City Museum occupies a former dispensary built in the 1930s. It's the first city-run museum in Southern Cebu, with a collection that includes ceramics, photos, and everyday artifacts from earlier times.

Carefully kept everyday objects trace Carcar's past inside a modest civic building. Though small, the space offers a quiet sense of place.

10AM – TEOFILO CAMOMOT SHRINE

Just outside the city center, in Valladolid, the shrine of Blessed Teofilo Camomot, who used to be the bishop there, sits within the Daughters of St. Therese compound. His robes, notes, and liturgical items are displayed in a small museum next to the chapel. More devotional than



Carcar Eco Farm Resort



Puto sprinkled with muscovado sugar



Chicharon



The Mercado mansion





St. Catherine of Alexandria Church



Abad Santos obelisk



Carcar City Museum



Spicy lechon at Lita & Joel's



Balay Na Tisa



Tefilo Camomot museum (photo from cbcpnews.net)

historical, the space reflects a modest life of faith and service. The site is open most days, with shortened hours on Saturdays.

11AM – BOUGAINVILLEAS IN BLOOM

In Perrelos, JDM Bougainvillea Paradise offers rows of flowering vines climbing trellises and lining narrow walkways. The well-maintained garden isn't large, but the view reaches across rooftops to the distant hills. Climbing blooms and a hillside breeze make this a quiet stop with big color. Entrance is P200 for full-day access.

12NN – LUNCH AT LITA AND JOEL'S

Lunch was Carcar's famous *lechon* served with *puso*—rice cooked in palm leaves—and seaweed salad on the side. The pork had just been chopped, still hot and crisp. I ordered an ice-cold *buko* juice to go with it—no frills, no plating—just freshly roasted pork and rice, eaten like locals. Lita and Joel's, on the Diversion Road, is a longtime local favorite.

1PM – ABAD SANTOS OBELISK

A short ride into Guadalupe brought

me to a hilltop marker for Justice Jose Abad Santos. He once sought refuge here during the Japanese occupation and was later executed for refusing to betray the nation. The obelisk stands above a quiet ridge, the canopy below gently moving in the wind.

From here, the view opens wide—trees, rooftops, sky—and there is a moment of quiet reflection. The path is uneven but manageable.

2PM – MAINIT SPRING

Still in Guadalupe, Mainit Spring lies within the Guadalupe Mabugnao Mainit Hot Spring National Park. For P30, visitors can soak in warm, mineral-rich pools, explore nearby caves, or sit on shaded rocks while listening to birds overhead. Natural pools and shady corners offer an easy midafternoon pause. When I arrived, just a few people were there, feet in the water, taking it all in.

4PM – HALO-HALO IN TUYOM

Born and Raised Café, near Tuyom's edge, sets up a weekend-only *halo-halo* stall that draws locals and visitors. The dessert is generously layered and

served outside, with a view of the coast beyond. Best enjoyed under a tree, *halo-halo* in hand, with the breeze picking up and the beach in sight.

5:30PM – PASALUBONG AND SANDALS

Near Carcar's iconic rotunda—a heritage landmark with a grand central design—I stopped at the DOT Pasalubong Center and rest stop, where shelves are packed with *chicharon*, *ampao*, and *bocarillo*. A few minutes away, at Acacia Grill Restaurant, I found handmade shoes and sandals stitched on the spot by ACF-J Shoes Creation.

7PM – DINNER AT SUGBA-SUGBA

On Maximina Road, Sugba-Sugba de Carcar was still grilling. I ordered pork barbecue, grilled squid, and chicken *inasal*—all served hot with thick, spicy sauce and a glass-bottled soda. Grilled meats, extra rice, and no need to rush—dinner is unpretentious and deeply satisfying.

9:30PM – POOLSIDE STILLNESS

Back at the resort, I changed into something lighter and headed to the pool. The water caught reflections of the dimming lights. Cicadas were in full chorus as I finished a cocktail and listened to the quiet. Carcar winds down gently after dark—the stillness is soft, and the day is well spent. 🌙



Mainit Spring



Halo-Halo at Born & Raised Cafe



A cocktail at Carcar Eco Farm Resort



Sugba-Sugba de Carcar



CARCAR'S CARVED ACCENTS

In many buildings around the city, you'll notice a carved fan pattern above doors and windows. This Art Deco motif—popular in the 1930s—is now part of Carcar's design ordinance. All new or renovated buildings in the heritage zone must include it. The result is subtle cohesion—heritage that doesn't feel staged, but simply present. It's a small detail that keeps the past stitched into everyday life.



JDM Bougainvillea Paradise



Handcrafted footwear at ACF-J Shoes Creation

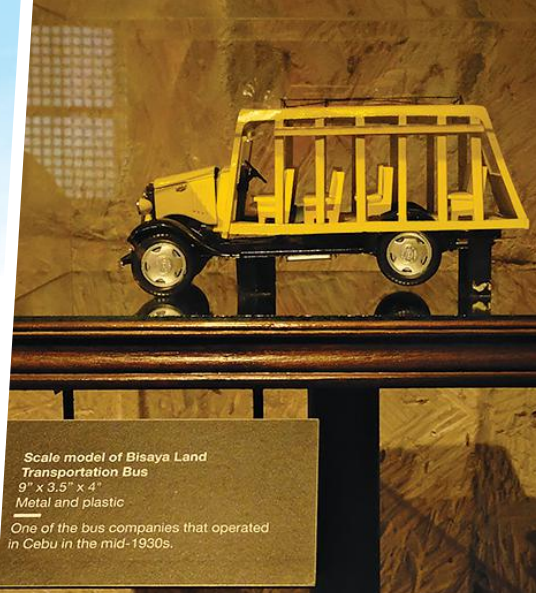


TRACING TIME

Step into the soul of Cebu through storied ancestral homes and a museum by the sea that brings the island's layered history to life in a heritage trail through the Queen City of the South.

by **CARISSA BONGALOSA**





Scale model of Bisaya Land Transportation Bus
9" x 3.5" x 4"
Metal and plastic
One of the bus companies that operated in Cebu in the mid-1930s.



In the heart of Cebu City's Parian district, time does more than linger—it lives. Once home to the city's mestizo elite, Parian still hums with history, where three ancestral homes and a striking new museum invite you into the island's colonial past. All within walking distance, the Casa Gorordo Museum, the Yap-Sandiego Ancestral House, and the 1730 Jesuit House Museum reveal an intimate portrait of Spanish-era domestic life. And just beyond, the National Museum of the Philippines – Cebu expands the lens, telling a sweeping story of Cebu's arts and culture.

CASA GORORDO: WHERE HERITAGE BREATHES

A graceful dance of history and architecture, Casa Gorordo blends Filipino warmth with Spanish elegance. Built in the 1850s by a Spanish mestizo family, the Rosales, and later purchased by the Gorordo family in 1863, it's one of Cebu's few surviving *balay sa tisa*—houses with iconic clay-tiled roofs and coral stone foundations. Notably, it became the residence of Juan Bautista Gorordo, the first Cebuano bishop, who played a vital role in the peaceful transition of Cebu to American rule in 1899. One of the city's main arteries, Gorordo Avenue, is named after the bishop.

The Ramon Aboitiz Foundation restored Casa Gorordo in 1983 and declared it a National Historic Landmark in 1991. Entering the house feels like opening a storybook of Spanish-era Cebu. Walk through the *zaguán*, once a storage space for sugar and abaca, and climb to the *taas*, where carved furniture and *capiz* shell windows recall quiet siestas and candlelit evenings. Don't miss the *capilla*, the home's private chapel, where Bishop Gorordo celebrated mass and where reverence still echoes in every corner. Outside, the garden café and museum shop offer thoughtful respite—sip local coffee, browse curated souvenirs, and let history settle around you like the soft Cebuano breeze.

Visitor Info: Open Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5pm. Admission P100 (general), P50 (students, seniors, PWDs); guided tours P150. It is located at 35 Eduardo Aboitiz St., Cebu City. casagorordomuseum.org

THIS SPREAD CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT:

Repainted in 2022, Casa Gorordo trades its dark brown for historic tones, reviving the elegance of its colonial-era origins; the *Zaguán* or *Silong*—Casa Gorordo's historic ground floor, evolving from crop storage area and animal-drawn carriage space to a modern family garage; Casa Gorordo's prized *capilla* (chapel); this pocket of green offers a rare pause

YAP-SANDIEGO ANCESTRAL HOUSE: CEBU'S LIVING TIME CAPSULE

Just around the corner, the Yap-Sandiego House stands frozen in time. Built in the late 1600s by Chinese merchants, this house of coral stone and hardwood may be one of the oldest in the Philippines. Now a private museum curated by heritage advocate Val Sandiego, it is packed with period furniture, religious icons, and period furniture. Its creaking floors and flickering candles create an almost theatrical yet utterly authentic ambiance.

Visitor Info: Open daily, 9am to 7pm.
Entrance fee: P100.

RIGHT: Built late 17th century by Chinese merchants, Parian's Yap-Sandiego House stands as one of the Philippines' oldest wood-stone homes.



JESUIT HOUSE MUSEUM: HISTORY HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

Step through the façade of a nondescript hardware store and discover one of Cebu's best-kept secrets: the Jesuit House. Believed to be the oldest dated home in the country, this coral-stone structure was once a Jesuit mission base. Situated in the heart of what was then the Chinese-Filipino district outside the Spanish citadel, the house features coral stone walls, antique furnishings, and a weathered plaque that announced its age, Año 1730. Now lovingly maintained by owner Jaime Sy, the home is both a museum and a memoir—offering guided tours steeped in colonial tales and Chinese-Filipino heritage.

Visitor Info: Entrance fee P100. Guided tours (30–60 mins). It is best visited in the morning or cooler afternoons.

LEFT: Colonial Cebu was divided into parishes in 1614, with Parian emerging as a Jesuit hub just beyond the swampy bounds of Intramuros.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES - CEBU: A CULTURAL JEWEL BY THE SEA

A ten-minute stroll toward the coast brings you to the new crown of Cebu's cultural scene: the National Museum – Cebu, housed in the restored neoclassical Aduana Building. Since its grand opening in August 2023, this museum has drawn visitors from all over the country with its sweeping galleries filled with notable local artwork and waterfront views.

Inside, five permanent galleries explore Cebu's ecology, archaeology, seafaring traditions, modern art, and local legends. Highlights include burial finds unearthed beneath city streets and pre-colonial trade artifacts. On the top floor, the gallery dedicated to Martino Abellana—Cebu's most beloved painter, pays homage to a life spent capturing the island's soul on canvas.

Visitor Info: The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and admission is free.

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE TOP: The facade of the National Museum of the Philippines-Cebu; a diverse mix of locals, students and visitors from other provinces and abroad gathers here to explore Cebu's rich heritage.

WHILE YOU'RE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD...

Before you leave, stroll through Colon Street, the oldest street in the Philippines, and stop by the Parian Monument, also known as the Heritage of Cebu Monument created by Eduardo Castrillo, one of the Philippines' most renowned sculptors. Unveiled in 1997, the monument stands at the center of the old Parian district. Castrillo's dynamic

sculpture is made of bronze, brass, and steel. It dramatically depicts key moments and figures from Cebu's history, including the arrival of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, the Battle of Mactan with Lapu-Lapu, the construction of the San Juan Bautista Church (Parian Church), Spanish-era clergy and revolutionaries and symbols of Cebuano cultural identity. It is one

of Castrillo's most ambitious public monuments outside Metro Manila, capturing Cebu's layered, often contested past in bold, kinetic form.

In Cebu, history isn't behind velvet ropes. It's in the breeze through an open window, the creak of old wood beneath your feet, the scent of molave and tobacco. Come not just to see the past—but to feel it. 📍





CHARTING TERRITORIES

The National Museum of the Philippines - Cebu has opened up an entire gallery dedicated to its new exhibition, *Classics of Philippine Cartography*, featuring rare maps and sea charts of the Philippines dating from the 16th to the 20th century. This exhibition is made possible in collaboration with the Philippine Map Collectors Society, whose members contributed original and reproduced maps, books, and facsimiles from their private collections. *Classics of Philippine Cartography* is on exhibit until January 2026. (photos by Joanna Cuenco)



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The cartography exhibition fills an entire gallery on the second floor of the Museum; reproduction of a 1734 map commissioned by Governor-General Fernando de Valdes y Tamon on King Philip V's instructions; reproduction of a 1620 map by an unknown cartographer showing trading routes across the China Sea; from a Latin edition of the Gerard Mercator atlas reissued by Hondius, 1623; The National Museum of the Philippines - Cebu is housed in the Aduana building built in 1910.

CARVED FROM HERITAGE, SHAPED BY FAITH

In a country where Catholicism shapes both faith and identity, Cebu's Basilica Minore del Santo Niño stands as a sacred symbol—one that artist Anton Quisumbing honors through a deeply personal tribute.

by ANGEL DEE

For a country with a nearly 80% Catholic population, churches are far more than built structures or architectural landmarks—they are living repositories of faith, history, and community. The Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño in Cebu's historical district is the oldest Catholic church in the country, revered by many Cebuano and devotees from around the archipelago and beyond.

"It's beautiful to see that even with these stones from the Basilica, what was broken can be restored, and what has fallen can rise again and become even more meaningful than we could have imagined. Nothing is wasted in the hands of God, and this artist's work is a way for us to understand God's plans."

- Fr. Pacifico "Jun" Nohara, a previous rector of the Basilica, on Quisumbing's replica

As a proud Cebuano and a devoted Señor Santo Niño (the Child Jesus) follower, artist Anton Quisumbing sees the Basilica as a symbol of Cebuano identity. "The Basilica is the most recognizable landmark of Cebu, my birthplace, my home."

With stone, metal, and memories from years of visits, Quisumbing sculpted this stunning replica of the Basilica: sacred and deeply personal work as a tribute to his hometown and his faith. He



used fossilized coral stone saved by the church after a portion of the Basilica's belfry collapsed from the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in 2013. Preparing the stone was a process that required utmost patience and care, as much of it was still fused to cement. To create the delicate scrollwork on the replica's windows, he applied jewelry-making techniques using 92.5% silver. He used aged madre de cacao wood for the doors, adding authenticity and warmth to the sculpture.

For Quisumbing, this is about more than craftsmanship—faith,

heritage, and personal memories. He hopes his art reminds people of meaningful moments tied to their hometown church: a wedding, a baptism, a family tradition, an answered prayer.

Work such as Quisumbing's makes it clear that art in the Philippines goes beyond design and aesthetics; art is a way of remembering, reflecting, and honoring one's roots and faith. Artists like him help keep Cebu's heritage alive meaningfully, ensuring that our stories endure for generations. 🌱



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Cebuano artist Anton Quisumbing with his miniature sculpture of the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño de Cebu; an early sample created before working in silver (92.5% pure) using jewelry-making techniques (photo courtesy of the Anton Quisumbing); stone debris from the original belfry of the Basilica that fell during the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in 2013 (photo courtesy of the Anton Quisumbing).

CEBU'S LIVING CANVASES: WHERE ART FINDS ITS PLACE

In Cebu, art feels intrinsic—woven into the everyday and shaped by tradition, landscape, and community.

by **CHRISTIAN ORELLANO**

Cebuano artistry traces deep roots, emerging long before colonization and continuing with quiet resilience. It lives in finely worked trinkets, handwoven textiles, and paintings that hold memory. Even unearthed artifacts hint at a long-standing impulse toward expression, where craft and culture have always moved together. Local galleries quietly carry this spirit forward, offering spaces where creativity is passed, practiced, and preserved.

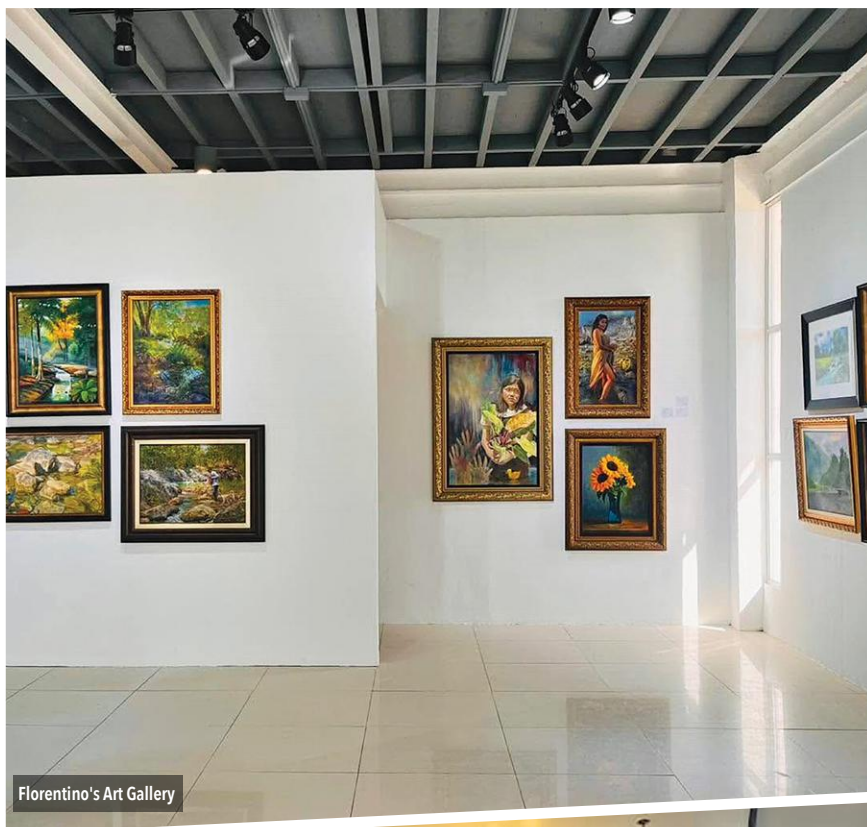
Today, that lineage continues through three distinctive galleries: Galerie Raphael, Florentino's Art Gallery, and Qube Gallery. Each offers a different vantage point for Cebu's evolving creative scene, shaped by place and practice.

GALERIE RAPHAEL: ART AT THE CITY'S CENTER

Tucked inside Ayala Center Cebu, Galerie Raphael offers a city-level lens on regional art. Its location keeps it accessible, welcoming passersby, collectors, and newcomers alike. Curated exhibits and rotating shows allow emerging and seasoned artists to present their work in context.

The gallery's ethos is straightforward: personal stories are at the heart of meaningful art. By bridging local talent with broader





Florentino's Art Gallery



Galerie Raphael

audiences, Galerie Raphael helps shape a more nuanced cultural dialogue—one built on honesty, reflection, and the value of looking inward.

FLORENTINO'S ART GALLERY: A QUIET ESCAPE IN THE HIGHLANDS

Nestled in the mountain town of Gaas, Balamban, Florentino's Art Gallery feels more like a retreat than a showroom. Founded by realist painter Florentino "Jun" Impas Jr., it focuses on classical and contemporary realism, often highlighting scenes rooted in everyday life.

The gallery doesn't chase trends—it fosters connection. Exhibits and gatherings introduce artists not just to collectors but to one another, shaping a sense of place through artistic exchange. The message to artists is grounded: honor the process, stay with the work, and let the craft evolve in its own time.

QUBE GALLERY: A PLATFORM IN MOTION

In Banilad's Crossroads, Qube Gallery offers a more exploratory, global approach. Since 2013, it has created space for Cebuano and Visayan artists to engage with contemporary themes, often through multidisciplinary formats and collaborative exhibits.

Qube moves between local and international scenes with quiet purpose. Its work goes beyond showing pieces: it represents artists, partners with brands, and participates in cultural forums that widen the frame. At the center of it all is a practice of inquiry, encouraging artists to push past familiar territory while staying true to intention.

These three galleries reflect the range of Cebuano art, not through spectacle but through sustained care and thoughtful presentation. From Martino Abellana's legacy to the works of emerging creators, Cebu's art scene continues to build not just toward recognition but resonance. 🎨

WHAT'S NEW, CEBU?

Just when you think you know every nook and cranny around town, something new pops up. I'm excited to share the latest spots and services making waves right now.

24/7 SWEET TREATS AT LA CRÈME

It's the middle of the night, and you're craving something sweet. Where do you go after the dessert shops close? La Crème - Premium Dessert Cake Master, the newly opened Korean-inspired cafe on the ground floor of Holiday Inn Cebu City, is open 24/7. I was completely charmed by the cozy ambiance and the incredible desserts crafted by a South Korean baker, Junghee Lee. The Muscat Croissant and the Strawberry Signature cake are divine. This is a new go-to spot for late-night study sessions or anytime you need a sweet escape. (by Neil Roy Impas)





A TASTE OF TAIWAN: DIN TAI FUNG FINALLY ARRIVES

Friends have raved about Din Tai Fung in Manila and abroad for years. The wait is finally over. As part of its 10th anniversary celebrations in the Philippines, the world-famous Taiwanese brand opened its doors in SM City Cebu. You can now get a bite of their iconic xiao long bao without booking a flight. It's more than just a new restaurant; it's a culinary milestone for customers who craved this brand.

(by Neil Roy Impas)

NEW IN MANDAUE: THE MANDANI BAY BOARDWALK

The buzz about the new Mandani Bay Boardwalk is true and even better in person. This beautiful 500-meter waterfront promenade in Mandaue City is now open to the public daily. It's perfect for a morning jog, an evening stroll, or just looking out at the water, for quieter ways to enjoy this bustling part of Mandaue. Furry friends are welcome in their strollers or carriers. (by Neil Roy Impas, photos by Leylan Romarate)



ABOARD THE PIRATE SHIP: HAEJEOK HOPPING FOR LOCALS

Remember hearing about that pirate-themed island-hopping tour for Korean tourists? Haejeok Hopping is now open to everyone. We can have even more island-hopping fun with live entertainment, a packed lunch on board, and snorkeling gear included on a spacious boat. Guides and trained staff are on board for a safe and fun experience. I'm already planning my next hop—who's with me? (by Neil Roy Impas, photos by Leylan Romarate)

RIDE YOUR WAY: INDRIVE'S NEW APPROACH

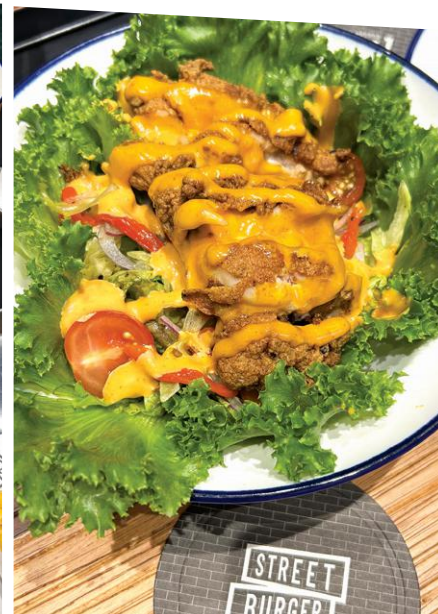
Getting a ride using apps can sometimes be a hassle. A new ride-hailing service app called inDrive offers a fresh take on transportation that puts more control in your hands. You get to choose your driver instead of simply being assigned a car. When you request a ride, you can browse a list of available drivers who have accepted your trip. This means you can see their ratings, car type, and how long they will take to arrive, so that you can decide the best fit. *(by Neil Roy Impas)*

**A NEW HEIGHT OF LUXE: THE PLATINUM HOTEL**

If you've been down N. Escario Street lately, you've probably noticed the striking new building piercing the skyline. It's the first Platinum Hotel in the Philippines by Sunland Development Corporation, following their first Platinum Hotel in Taiwan. Platinum Hotel will introduce 166 four-star hotel rooms to Cebu City, celebrating its topping off in the second quarter of this year. I can imagine sipping a cocktail overlooking the city from one of its high-level rooms. *(by Neil Roy Impas)*

**NOT ONE, BUT TWO:****GORDON RAMSAY NOW IN CEBU**

Noted British celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay has opened two restaurants side by side in Mactan Newtown: Gordon Ramsay Fish & Chips and Gordon Ramsay Street Burger, the first branches in Southeast Asia for each concept. Get hooked on British-style fish and chips, shrimp, and chicken that's perfectly golden, but not swimming in grease. Pair with thick handcrafted milkshakes or freshly squeezed lemonade. Next door, Street Burger flips the script on the American classic diner with signature takes on classic burgers and chicken wings. Try the Hell's Kitchen beef burger with its special relish, smoked Sriracha, white cheddar, and jalapeño salsa; the Mexican Smash burger with a smashed patty, guacamole, grilled jalapeño, nachos, and Hell's mayo; or the lechon burger exclusive to Cebu with charcoal-spit-roasted pork, smashed beef patty, house pickles, and jalapeño. The mac and cheese and the soft serve ube ice cream are perfect on their own, or as milder but still tasty accompaniments to spicy wings and deliciously Dirty Fries. *(by Joanna Cuenco)*



WINNER WINNER, CHICKEN WING DINNER



If Bacolod is famed for its chicken inasal, Cebu stakes its claim as the Philippines' unofficial chicken wing capital—a city where bottomless platters, bold flavors, and a near-fanatical love for wings have transformed a simple dish into a full-blown culinary culture.

by **WILL YAP**

If Bacolod has its legendary chicken inasal, Cebu might claim the Philippines' unofficial chicken wing capital title. The love affair here runs deep: a quick Google Maps search reveals more than 50 restaurants devoted to wings, many boasting bottomless platters and inventive flavors that dare you to keep going until you can't.

After eating my way across different Philippine cities, Cebu confidently leads the pack regarding wing joints. The frenzy started with a single restaurant offering unlimited wings, a novelty then, and spread like wildfire. Today, these all-you-can-eat havens are woven into the city's culinary fabric, beloved by locals and a must-try for visitors.

As a confessed chicken wing addict, I could happily eat them everyday. If you share the obsession—or want to understand the fuss—here’s my shortlist of Cebu’s essential wing destinations, each with its own spin on this crispy, saucy staple.

BURROW

The mother of all chicken wings in Cebu—the pioneer that started it all. If you were an early convert to the unlimited wings lifestyle, chances are you’ve perched here more than once.
Wilson Street, Cebu City

WINGERS UNLIMITED

Arguably, the city’s most ubiquitous wings brand, with branches scattered across Cebu. The twist? Your endless wings come with endless sundaes—a sweet finale to your salty-saucy binge
Multiple branches across Cebu

BOSS PAKU

My go-to. Think of it as more than a wing joint, an almost buffet. Alongside the wings, you’ll find unlimited pork *sisig* and mixed seafood, making it one of the best-value feasts in town.
Three branches in Cebu

BOSS MANOK

Many wing fanatics swear this is the spot. Boss Manok delivers consistency, quality, and seven flavors to satisfy every craving, whether a purist or an adventurous eater.
Several branches around Cebu

Whether chasing that first spicy bite, craving a sweet-and-savory glaze, or seeing just how many plates you can clear, Cebu’s wing scene offers a flavor for every mood. Try them all—you might discover your new number one. 🍴



Wingers Unlimited



Boss Paku



Boss Manok

CEBU'S BEST EATS UNDER P200

Cebu is lucky to have plenty of options for good food at affordable prices. For less than P200, it is possible to sit down to a meal that satisfies the belly and the budget: a hefty cheeseburger, a filling rice bowl, or a homey noodle soup. Check these out for quality meals at reasonable prices.

by **EDGE JAVIER**

YOMBIG BURGER'S YOM'S CHEESE BURGER, SM CITY CEBU

At the lower ground floor of SM City Cebu, Yombig Burger serves the Yom's Cheese Burger at P199. The patty is well-seasoned and flavorful, topped with melted cheese, fresh lettuce, and tomato, all in a soft bun. Yombig offers straightforward, hearty dishes in generous portions, making it a dependable option when you want something filling and familiar. Aside from burgers, Yombig also offers rice meals, fries, and nuggets for a complete comfort food fix.

KATSU DON AT YUKI JAPANESE FOOD, SM CITY JMALL

At SM City JMall, Yuki Japanese Food offers Katsu Don for only P189. A breaded pork cutlet and scrambled egg sit on fluffy white rice with a savory and slightly sweet sauce. Filipinos love rice meals, and Katsu Don (pork cutlet rice bowl or donburi) is available and popular at most Japanese restaurants here. Yuki's offers one of the most affordable options in town.

SUPER BATCHOY AT SILOGAN SA OPAO, CENTRO MANDAUE

In Centro, Mandaue City, Silogan sa Opaos serves Super Batchoy, a beloved Filipino staple made with noodles in a rich, savory broth, tender pork slices, bits of offal, and crushed chicharon. Hearty and flavorful, it's a cherished noodle soup that brings comfort, especially on cool days, but remains a favorite for loyal customers year-round. Silogan sa Opaos offers theirs for just P120. 🍴



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Yom's Cheeseburger, stacked with cheese, crisp lettuce, and a well-seasoned patty; the bold façade of Yombig Burger at SM City Cebu; a steaming bowl of Super Batchoy at Silogan sa Opaos; Katsu Don from Yuki Japanese Food, rice topped with crispy cutlet, egg, and savory sauce.



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