



 **Philippine Airlines**
The Heart of the Filipino

mabuhay

JUNE 2019

A PAINTER
REVEALS
LONDON'S
TIMELESS
APPEAL

Brooklyn's emerging
fashion designers
challenge the rules

A bold new spirit joins
the lively craft drinks
scene in Melbourne

Inventive locavore
food in Antique's
destination restaurant



Manila, the capital city of the Philippines, turns 448

years old on June 24, but lest we forget, it is so much older than that. Before Spanish contact, what we now call Manila was a walled Muslim settlement with *barangays* (*villages*) ruled by *datus* (chieftains); and before that, it is believed to have been part of Indonesia's Majapahit Empire. Manila has a rich ancient history, and it is sad that reference books about that period are scarce. That said, we can't wait for modern-day scholars to piece it together.

Until then, let's embrace more recent history, the way artist Jill Paz has. Raised in North America, she moved back to Manila two years

ago and has been making paintings inspired by her great grand-uncle, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, one of the Filipino master painters of the 19th century. Jill recently participated in Art Basel Hong Kong and in "Family Portrait" (see page 44), she shows us how she reinterprets Hidalgo's works – many of which were destroyed during World War II – using modern technology and the *balikbayan* box used by overseas Filipinos to send care packages to family back in the Philippines.

Another artist to read about this month is Carla Sibal Thompson, who takes us on a tour of London in "Going Global" (see page 64). An elegant woman who used to edit a fashion magazine in Manila, Carla picked up the paint brush again a few years ago and in April held a solo exhibition of her 19th century-inspired portraits at Chelsea Gallery. Carla didn't even plan to relocate to London – she was there to study – but when she fell in love with the city's cultural history, and her future husband, she decided to stay.

As exemplified by Thompson, travel can be a powerful catalyst for change, something that inspires us to forever alter our life path.

Many who experience this epiphany on holiday fly back home reinvigorated. Others, like Ken Cazeñas, stay and start anew. In December, the LA-raised chef, whose family has roots in Antique, built a one-bedroom resort and an organic restaurant on this corner of Panay Island, with his partner Kimberly Eng. There they use only ingredients that are locally available – it's an ambitious feat and something worth adding to your list of destination restaurants (see "Taste of freedom", page 34).

This month, whether you're traveling to admire a city's rich past or aiming to make personal history, I hope you come back inspired.

James P. Ong
Editor

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📍 Antique (San Jose)

Taste of freedom

Two Asian Americans are drawing travelers to a unique dining and vacationing experience on Panay island

FOOD

Ken Cazeñas and Kimberly Eng are the couple behind Alpas, a restaurant that is the only one of its kind in Antique – and perhaps even on the whole island of Panay. That the establishment is a destination itself is evidenced by its clientele, who typically drive 33km – roughly 50 minutes – from Evelio Javier Airport. The type of food Cazeñas makes isn't necessarily from a particular cooking tradition; he loves working with native ingredients and might take something that grows plentifully, like coconut, and concoct different dishes using its various forms. Eng herself is knowledgeable about the local produce and how to put what's in abundance to full use. For both Cazeñas and Eng, Alpas is their way of reminding people that everything has value – how simple ingredients can be turned into something delicious and unique, as long as one is creative, patient and dedicated.

The set menu at Alpas changes every day, allowing the couple to minimize waste and offer a variety of flavors. Cazeñas, whose family hails from Antique, was raised in Los Angeles and has been cooking professionally since he was a teenager, while Eng is a Chinese American from New Jersey who cultivated her interest in food when she moved to California. The two met in 2012 while working at Namu Gaji, a restaurant in San Francisco's Mission neighborhood, where they learned the importance of strong relationships with suppliers.

It was also in San Francisco that they saw how the seasons affected the taste and availability of food, and how quality ingredients can elevate even a simple dish. In 2016 they moved to Hong Kong to work in the now-defunct Home – Eat To Live. Cazeñas was then executive chef while Eng

worked as restaurant manager. But when the establishment departed from its original concept of being a high-quality, organic, slow fast food vegetarian restaurant, the two packed their bags and moved to Antique a year later.

What inspired Cazeñas and Eng to set up their own place in Antique was the country's rich natural resources. "Alpas was the type of experience that we were looking for in the Philippines but couldn't find. We wanted a space that used indigenous materials that also evoked the place we were in," Eng recalls. "We wanted high-quality local food that was prepared well."

"We're lucky to have a lot of mature coconuts and mango trees on our property. So just from the coconut tree alone, we can make milk, butter and cream. We serve coconut water and we also make *tuba* (coconut wine) which we use in cocktails," Eng adds. "When it starts to become sour, we turn it into vinegar to add to our salad





IMAGES: NICOLE GARCIA

dressing. We've been able to have so many uses out of that one tree alone."

Sitting on 7,500m² of beachfront property, Alpas has an organic farm, garden and guesthouse. A second guesthouse, scheduled to open in July, will be able to accommodate 10 to 15 overnight guests, with movable partitions to make the space suitable for solo travelers, couples as well as large groups.

Alpas also offers cooking classes for any age group and skill level. Cazeñas teaches basic techniques, including how to use a whole animal with minimal waste and how to rely on one's instincts when cooking. "If you like certain flavors, I can guide you on what ingredients to use," Cazeñas says.

Since opening in December 2018, Alpas has welcomed visitors ranging from young professionals and zero-waste and permaculture groups to the artist community in Iloilo. They've also hosted Filipinos working abroad – especially those that seek a genuine experience with people who practice sustainability and support the local community.

"Most of them are appreciative of what we do and how we choose to stand by our principles," Eng observes. "They also find our place very relaxing."

For those who are keen on a longer stay, Eng can organize a health retreat which includes yoga, cooking, classes with local buri palm tree weavers as well as a field trip to their suppliers. According to Eng, Alpas strives to give its visitors an important takeaway: "We hope that our guests leave with a better appreciation of where they come from, where they live and the environment we all share." alpasph.com
– **Melissa Salva**

ANTIQUÉ FINDS

Zero-waste and sustainability advocate Kimberly Eng recommends these hidden gems for the environmentally conscious traveler

Culasi islands

"Mararison is the most accessible and offers a good view of Mount Madia-as. Maniguin is the farthest and a good place to go camping and fishing and to experience seaweed farming."



Malumpati Cold Spring

"Located in the municipality of Pandan, this place is good for swimming and water tubing. It's also one of the cleanest rivers in the country."

Barbaza

"We get our free-range, native pork from Green Warrior Eco-Farm, which you can visit to learn about permaculture. You can head to the nearby waterfalls afterwards."

San Remigio

"Also known as Little Baguio because of its cool climate, this town is home to Aningalan Farm where we get seasonal produce. Visit Panalsalan Cave for its karst formations."

Nogas Island Marine Sanctuary

"This is the closest to Alpas among the places in this list. The Dive House in Anini-Y offers scuba diving and snorkeling in the area."