



METRO

# home

*Make it Magical!*

## & Entertaining

VOL. 11 NO. 6

**FUN & FABULOUS GIFT  
IDEAS FOR EVERYONE**

**75** **WAYS TO MAKE  
YOUR CHRISTMAS  
MERRY & BRIGHT**

**DECK  
THE  
HALLS**

**TERRIFIC  
STYLING  
TRENDS FOR  
THE SEASON**

**HOMES TO  
FEAST IN**

**ECLECTIC  
CHARM**

**COZY DECORATING  
FOR THE SEASON**

**Urban  
Courtyard  
Living in  
Alveo Land's  
Portico**



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ON THE COVER  
The Portico Lifestyle

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
MILO SOGUECO

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*All You Want for Christmas...*



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# Christmas is Home

**WITH ALL ITS ORNAMENTS** and opulence, Christmas is all about coming home to life's essentials: our family, our friends and our faith. Our magazine does focus on the home and entertaining, and so this season offers a special chance to truly celebrate the warmth and comfort that come with welcoming our loved ones.

We are deeply thankful and appreciative that creative and talented forces Ana Rocha, Ginggay de la Merced and Mia Trinidad opened their hearts and homes to us and shared how they spruce up their Christmas gatherings. We are also privileged to have sat down and learned some secrets from hostesses Naynay Montilla, Sabrina Artadi and our very own contributing editor Carissa Coscolluela.

This issue offers a rich treasure trove of inspiring ideas and we offer it as a gift to our dear readers. It may come in its regular plastic casing, but if we could, we would have wrapped it up in beautiful paper with a big, bright ribbon. We hope your holiday celebrations this year will be heartwarming and memorable.

Since this is the time of year to be kind to one and all, I would also like to thank all our collaborators, the patient and persevering photographers, writers, contributing shoot producers and generous friends who have helped **Metro Home & Entertaining** this past year. It cannot be repeated enough that magazine work depends on collaboration, and we have been blessed with wonderful people who tirelessly pitch ideas and locations that we can feature. As the new year nears, we look forward to more wonderful homes and interesting interiors, and hope that you, our readers, will join us in our new stylish adventures.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOVEL LORENZO

**ERRATUM:** MHE 11.5's Etiquette article, *Now You're Cooking* was mistakenly credited to Leah Puyat. We apologize for this error.





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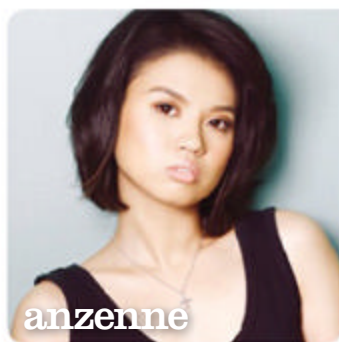
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tess



flexi



anzenne

## Raph Kiefer

Raphael is a model, writer and entrepreneur with an advocacy for local culture. His most recent venture includes setting up and supporting livelihood programs in textile-producing communities in the Philippines to preserve and trade heritage looms. In the summer, he co-produces a peace festival in Mindanao, the place he still calls home, to support his other advocacy: promoting permaculture. This issue, he wrote the cover story ("The Portico Lifestyle," p. 76) as well as feature articles on two inspiring ladies who are big on entertaining: Sabrina Artadi ("The Kitchen Zen," p.148) and Trish Panlilio ("No Naughty Shortcuts," p. 156).

## Gay Ace Domingo

Gay, who wrote about artist An Alcantara in this issue ("A Storyteller Still," p. 54) is a freelance writer who also works in independent film production. She recently co-wrote and held duties as associate producer for the 2014 Cinemalaya film *Mariquina*, which represented the Philippines in the 2014 Busan International Film Festival. A former associate editor of *StarStudio* and *UAAP Magazine*, she is also a publicist for independently produced films.

## Tess Raymundo

Tess loves to travel and is a self-confessed foodie. She worked for a global company and some telecommunication companies where she handled corporate communications, environment, business development, sales and marketing positions. With her extensive knowledge and experience in marketing and communications, she currently works as a freelance consul-

tant. When she is not doing her consultancy work, Tess writes on her blog ([coolstopovers.blogspot.com](http://coolstopovers.blogspot.com)) about the cool places she discovers when she travels and food, events and fashion finds. that have captured her attention. She also enjoys cooking and loves visiting an organic market on weekends, so she can create her own fresh and healthy dishes at home. This issue, Tess talked about a cool and easy-to-do DIY project fit for Christmas ("DIY Makeover," p. 34).

## Flexi Sarte

Flexi is enjoying motherhood. But in between parental duties, she finds time to pursue her passion for writing children's stories. Adarna House published her first book, *A Boy Named Ibrahim* this year. In her writing debut for **Metro Home & Entertaining**, she talked about the leading design brand of glass mosaic tiles ("Italian Spectrum," p. 48) and profiled Project *Kisame* ("Towards the Heavens," p. 62), a heritage advocacy community whose work involves the documentation of the Philippines' historically and artistically significant church ceiling paintings.

## Anzenne Roble

Anzenne, former editorial assistant of **Metro Home & Entertaining**, is now the editorial assistant of *Metro* magazine. Despite her new position, she continues to put together interesting features for the Garden section of this magazine (p. 135). She loves to write about people, places, food, art, fashion, and design. She's also an Internet junkie, an aspiring fiction novel author, and an almost writer who's enjoying life and living her dream job.



# Merrily Muted

A REFRESHINGLY UNDERSTATED  
TAKE ON FESTIVE TRIMMINGS

BY BARBIE PARDO-TIANGCO  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG  
AND JAR CONCENCO

**THEY SAY THAT THE HOLIDAYS** isn't a time to practice restraint when it comes to decorating. But this year, instead of purchasing hundreds of Christmas balls or hanging thousands of tinsel, consider opting for more a more subdued and sophisticated palette. You just might find it to be quite a refreshing but still festive change.





**CLOCKWISE:** Giant pine cones, P1,850.  
 Christmas balls, P450 per box. Small  
 square pillow with gold tree, P795. All from  
 Rustan's. Oval box horn with gold garland,  
 P2,000. Snuff box with crown decoration  
 P1,500, All from Kish. **OPPOSITE PAGE:**  
 Magnifying glass, P1,395. LG resin wooden  
 train, P2,595, Gold branches with mini balls,  
 P425 per branch, All from Rustan's. Box  
 with metallic embroidery, P8,500, Kish.





## elements / LEADS

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Kim Seybert chandelier ornament, P1,500.  
Kim Seybert bead burst ornament, P1,600.  
Kim Seybert crystal ornament, P450.  
Kim Seybert constellation ornament,  
P2,600, All from Blue Carreon. Reindeer,  
P895. Small musical snow globe, P6,450.  
Small pillow in beige and white, P795,  
All from Rustan's. Striped ornaments  
(large), P350. Striped ornaments  
(small), P200, all from Blue Carreon.

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# Stylish Essentials



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## CONTEMPORIZING FILIPINO ARCHITECTURE WITH 'RANDOM RESPONSES'

Buensalido Architects launched the book *Random Responses: A Crusade to Contemporize Filipino Architecture*, a compendium of past, future, built, unbuilt, small, and large-scale projects from the firm's eight years. It features over 150 designs in rendered images and blueprint. "The book epitomizes our design principle 'random responses'," says Chief Design Ambassador and Principal Architect Jason Buensalido (in photo). "We believe there is no fixed response for any project so random responses become a design strategy. We understand each project's context and then we test concepts and solutions until we see what works and satisfies the parameters." For more details, visit [www.buensalidoarchitects.com](http://www.buensalidoarchitects.com).







## HOMES FOR EVERY NEW BEGINNING

Ayala Land Premier's latest development, the 50-storey high East Gallery Place now rising in Bonifacio Global City, offers a versatility of living spaces that can fit your life now, and still accommodate how you want things to be someday. Take the new Flex units, ranging from 86 to 142 sq.m., that do not have partitions. Owners can transform these spaces from studio to one- or two- or even three-bedroom homes. Think of when the baby needs a nursery, when a career takes off and a home office or studio becomes a necessity. *For more details, email them at [info@startospr.com](mailto:info@startospr.com).*

## CAPTIVATING SPHERES OF LIGHT

Cosmos is the new collection of lights designed by Lievore Altherr Molina. With the incorporation of LED technology, the light remains completely integrated in the interior of every piece. The largest disk turns on, drawing a half moon on its surface and an effect of indirect illumination that supports an aesthetic and compositional quality in the environment. Its single-material finish invokes the opaque texture of river rocks, gathered like a refined pendant. The Cosmos lights form harmonious rays, in perfect equilibrium with the space available horizontally, vertically and in depth. *For more information, email them at [info@kuyesen.com](mailto:info@kuyesen.com)*



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## CONTEMPORARY 'BAHAY-NA-BATO'

Mañosa Properties, Inc. introduces the *bahay-na-bato* inspired Campanilla Lane. The 3,027-sq.m. lot, located in the most prestigious part of New Manila, Quezon City, will be open to only 20 owners for its 16 luxury apartments and four villas. All units will measure approximately 260 sq.m. and have three bedrooms with their own toilet and bath, a den, a powder room, and a maid's room. Intended to be a multi-generational home, the villas are built with two master bedrooms and its own elevator. *For more information, log on to [www.manosa-properties.com](http://www.manosa-properties.com) or call 0917-8825604 / email [sales@manosa-properties.com](mailto:sales@manosa-properties.com).*



## THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL

This year, Kohler launched their first showroom in Manila, featuring the latest kitchen units and bathroom products. Larry Yuen of Kohler Asia Pacific sat down with **METRO HOME** for a chat about their latest plans.

**METRO HOME: What upcoming trends and directions are you showcasing in the Manila showroom?**

**YUEN:** We found out that in watches and jewelry, rose gold is very popular in Asia, so we are launching our rose gold fixtures here as well as new bathroom suites.

**You have a very extensive lineup. Please tell us what is your favorite product.**

That would be like asking if I had a favor-

ite child. But if I had to name one, it would be the Numi toilet that combines comfort, design and technology. It has a motion-activated cover and seat, an air dryer and deodorizer, and its own illumination, so you don't have to struggle in the dark.

**What innovations are you unveiling soon?**

We will soon launch a Kohler app, which will be extremely interactive. From your phone, you can program your bathroom settings for the toilet and the shower. We like to do non-traditional things, and we don't like to repeat ourselves. **-Leah Puyat**

*For more information, email them at [pr@newzilla.geisermalang.com](mailto:pr@newzilla.geisermalang.com)*

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**Traditional Pillow** can be easily shaped for comfortable support. Available in soft, medium and firm.

**Transit Pillow** is your neck companion when traveling or whenever you need extra neck support. The shape cradles the neck and holds the pillow in place.

For more details, visit their website [www.tempur.ph](http://www.tempur.ph).

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## 'DREAM BIG' WINNER

Rodell Nicetas Rueda was the lucky winner of a brand-new Mercedes Benz B180 Sedan at the recent third draw of the "Dream Big and Win Big at Wilcon" raffle. Rueda is a customer of Wilcon Depot's Filinvest branch. Over P12 million worth of prizes is at stake in the five-draw raffle bonanza, celebrating 40 years of providing high-quality construction and home décor supplies. "Dream Big and Win Big at Wilcon" is ongoing at all Wilcon Depot and Home Essentials stores nationwide until December 30, 2014. For more details, visit [www.wilcon.com.ph](http://www.wilcon.com.ph).



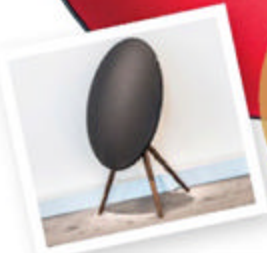
# A Pop of Red

METRO HOME & ENTERTAINING  
EDITORS' PICKS IN THE BOLD,  
TRADITIONAL COLOR OF CHRISTMAS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOVEL LORENZO



**ANTON BARRETTO**  
Enjoy listening to your favorite tunes with this stunning speaker from Bang and Olufsen. The Beoplay A9 can be mounted on the wall or on the floor. Available also in white and black.



**ANNA M. ROSETE**  
The season calls for lots of gatherings. For your favorite hostess, a bright red cocktail napkin monogrammed with her initial, like this one from VW Home, is the perfect way to honor her.



**BARBIE PARDO-TIANGCO**  
A lamp in a statement shade, style and silhouette, such as this peacock lamp made of resin from Kish, gives a minimalist space that much-needed punch and makes for an interesting addition to a maximalist interior.



**MARISSA LOPA**  
Add vibrance and a youthful flair to a simple table with an eye-catching accent. This cherry tabletop décor made of fiberglass from Fashion Interiors is a yummy-looking pick.



**TESSA ALINDOGAN**  
Adorn your ceiling with a chandelier that has a lavish design and intricate details. This red accent piece from Dimensione is a stunning, dangling sparkler that can pull together the whole look of a room.



**GRACE LIBERO-CRUZ**  
Inspired by luggage trunks, this Canton box by Ethan Allen is made of wood with brass and antique red finish with aged Chinese paper lining. It functions as storage and a decorative item on which one may even perch accent décor.



# Vase Craze

LUXE CONTAINERS WITH ORGANIC SHAPES, FLUID MOVEMENT AND CLEAN LINES

BY ANTON BARRETTO  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALDWIN ASPILLERA



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: Mosaic vase, P6,950, Pottery Barn. Tristan ceramic vase, P9,000, Calligaris. E-Li-Li flower vase (ceramic and steel) P16,000, Alessi. Satinate ceramic vase, P85,000, Cappellini.

COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Bel Air scoop vase, P13,198, Dimensione. Vase Stoneware, P1,575, BO Concept. Jupiter tall glass vase, P12,000, Calligaris.



# Indoor Starlight

TURN AN UMBRELLA STAND INTO A CHIC LAMP

BY TESS RAYMUNDO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NORMAN LLESES



A homemade lamp fashioned from an umbrella stand and Christmas lights exude a warm glow in a room.

**CREATIVITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS** can transform your living space into a cool and relaxing place. Change the look and feel of your room with a fun DIY activity at home. For starters, convert an umbrella stand into a chic lamp by following these five easy steps:

**1.** Gather the following materials, conveniently available at ACE Hardware:

- Umbrella stand
- Christmas lights, preferably with small bulbs
- Decorative fabric, to hide the electrical cord of your hanging lamp
- Electrical extension cord
- Hook for hanging the lamp to the ceiling

**2.** Wrap the Christmas lights around the frame of the umbrella stand.

**3.** Wrap the piece of fabric around the extension cord.

**4.** Sew the sides of the fabric together to hide the cord completely. Give it a “perfectly imperfect” look, as designers would say, simple yet artsy, by creating a wavy effect when you fix the fabric around the cord.

**5.** Install a hook on the part of the ceiling where you want to hang the lamp. Hang the lamp on the ceiling hook and plug it into a nearby electrical source. ■

## Design smarts

USE THIS LAMP TO TRANSFORM YOUR LIVING SPACE IN SO MANY WAYS:

- 1. Create a chic Bohemian-style boudoir** or upgrade your dressing room. Now your boudoir becomes a cozy place for reading a book or favorite magazine while having some tea.
- 2. Add a cool vibe to a themed dinner party.** The effect of the lamp lights, which is similar to fireflies perched on a tree, lends a charming quality to your party set-up.
- 3. Liven up your home bar area,** and give it atmosphere.
- 4. Make a garden lounge,** and create a casual ambiance for your al fresco dinner.
- 5. Lighten up the entertainment room.** If you enjoy listening to music to unwind in your home entertainment room, position the lamp in a nook where you often sit.





# Holiday Trimmings

FOUR PALETTES FOR  
THE MOST DECORATED  
OF SEASONS

BY ANTON BARRETTO  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO

**THE CLASSICS ARE ALWAYS** welcome, but this year, an explosion of colors in all degrees of shimmer and shine reign for holiday décor. Opt for an all-out, lavish display of these on your tree or table. On the opposite end of the spectrum, you can always go organic, in the natural colors and textures of burlap and twine. Whatever décor you choose for the holidays this year, make it stylish, merry and bright!



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**  
Plastic ball ornaments, P495.  
Millefiori Milano car fabric  
freshener in white musk, P795.  
Voluspa Ponderosa Coconut  
Wax Bougie Parfume, P2,150.  
Voluspa Ponderosa Corta Maison  
Bougie Parfume, P2,150. Pine  
cone ornament and plastic  
ornaments, P345. Printed plate  
and feather and bird accent.  
Apple green lima vase, P2,650  
and Green cylindrical vase,  
P7,750, all from Rustan's.

## Emerald Green







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Noritake Islay Gold dinnerware, P150,000. Plastic ornaments, P445 each. Gold utensils, P39,500. Porcelain tea pot, P4,780. Porcelain tea cup, P4,470. Plastic ball ornaments, P495 each and vase, P2,650. Glass ornaments, P195.00, all from Rustan's.



## Champagne and Gold





# Natural and Earth Tones



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
Teak log planter from Pols  
Pottern. Wooden ornaments and  
candleholder. Woven basket and  
pine and acorn accents. Printed  
pillow (small), P545, printed pillow  
(large), P745 all from Rustan's.



# Turquoise



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Georgian turquoise dinner set by Noritake, P150,000. Plastic ornaments in various shapes, P395 each. Lagoon square vase (small), P1,250, (large), P2,250. Shiny ball ornaments, P395. Plastic ball ornaments, P595 each and glittered leaf accents, P42.50, all from Rustan's.





# Trimming the Tree

WHICH IS BEST: GOLD, SILVER, OR COPPER?

BY FLEXI SARTE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAR CONCENCO AND WILLIAM ONG

Black, silver and minimal characterize *Metro Home & Entertaining's* tinsel Christmas tree. A bevy of handblown glass teddy bears are accompanied by black and silver ornaments.



Team  
Metro  
Home

**ALTHOUGH THE CHRISTMAS TREE** is the crowning glory of every home during the Christmas season, it can sometimes be an object of neglect when the décor is predictable year after year after year.

So when the challenge at hand involves dressing up a 3-foot silver tinsel Christmas tree, **Metro Home & Entertaining** applies the trend of traditional modern decorating by mixing traditional elements with a monochromatic scheme of black and silver. Here, the use of black Christmas balls from Metro Gaisano and blown-glass teddy bear figurines from NEST lend a classic yet dramatic effect that goes well with a modern, compact abode, such as those

## Metro Home Smarts

- 1 Consider scale and proportion by minimizing clutter and abundant decorations. This is true most especially for small homes.
- 2 Streamline your décor and avoid "mix-matching." Choose a specific theme or color and stick to it.
- 3 Bring nostalgia to your décor by picking an ornament that reminds you of your childhood.



of today's young couples. Even with holiday décors, following a color or decorative theme and using only a few key pieces can achieve minimalism.

Bibai Puyat of Renegade Folk, a shoe brand that makes chic and one-of-a-kind leather sandals, says her Christmas tree is representative of loved ones coming together during this joyous occasion, thus, she channels a "Christmas garden" vibe. The rich red silk hydrangeas are arranged in clusters, giving the whole ensemble a soft and feminine touch. Combining the hydrangeas with antique-finish copper balls—instead of gold—is a traditional approach, but the copper provides more warmth and subtlety, which makes the décor appealing to those who celebrate Christmas in a more traditional fashion. For a punch of personality, Bibai finished off the tree with resin shoe ornaments that she had collected through the years. ■



**Bibai Puyat of Renegade Folk** decorated her three-foot tinsel tree in clusters of red hydrangeas, reflecting the bountiful Christmas season. Copper balls add a traditional touch, while shoe ornaments hint at a bit of whimsy.

## Design Smarts

- 1 Add character to your décor with an ornament that reflects your personality.
- 2 For Christmas balls, go for a variety of sizes and texture.
- 3 Match the style of your home with your holiday decorations. A traditional tree, for instance, suits a traditional home, while a minimalist tree blends well in a modern dwelling.



# Italian Furniture

AFFORDABLE CHOICE DESIGNS  
FOR A WIDER MARKET

BY DAHL BENNETT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG

**FLORENCE KO'S NAME** has been synonymous with high-end Italian furniture as managing director of Furnitalia for 13 years now. Under her helm, upscale Italian furniture brands such as Molteni & C, Poltrona Frau, Giorgetti, Flexform, and Cassina have become accessible to the Filipino market. She is also the person behind the thriving Calligaris brand here in the country that has made great Italian furniture choices available to a wider market.

In 2008, Florence saw the opportunity to bring in the new but more affordable brand to the Philippines. Although known for producing only chairs and tables, Calligaris soon expanded to introduce a whole range, making the decision easier for Florence. "Eight years ago, the time was right to introduce a brand with mid-range priced products. We wanted a brand with a complete line that can furnish a whole house, and is strong in contract projects such as restaurant and hotels. Calligaris was the first one that I thought of," recalls Florence.

Today, Calligaris carries sofa, coffee table, armchairs, beds, lights and accessories such as picture frames and magazine stands. "You can build a house and Calligaris can supply all your furniture needs," she says.

The brand's distinct aesthetic is attributed to the originality and smartness of its design. "Many stores offer imitations, but originality is a premium edge of Calligaris. On top of that, its designs also find answers to many look and space concerns. We have stackable chairs and expandable tables that you can convert from a console to a dining table," Florence says. Such ergonomic features are what makes Calligaris' products fit for everyday use for both big and



Spacious, contemporary, and complete, the new Calligaris showroom at the Fort showcases a whole range of original Italian design furniture and accessories for big and small spaces, lights and accessories.



small spaces, from residences to condominiums.

Contemporary, modern and original are the stamps of this 90-year-old brand, which started out as an artisan shop specializing in chairs and tables. Though not as expensive as other Italian brands, particularly those carried by Furnitalia, it does have that Italian appeal that evokes high-end lifestyle furniture. Many of its designs are simple and clean, vibrant and warm that fit homes of today.

What makes Calligaris truly right for the Philippine market is that it is a furniture brand that can stand on its own, unlike other showrooms that has to carry a mix of brands to satisfy more selective clients.

Just this July, Florence Ko launched a single-brand showroom in Fort Bonifacio. It is an all-mezzanine structure, with a floor area of 300 sq. ft., carrying only Calligaris products. New items are introduced regularly, many of which are featured at

the annual Milan Fair. "Now that we have a new showroom with a superb location, we can show our clients a more complete line," proudly says Florence.

Smart, affordable, original, and Italian, Calligaris has covered the bases enough to wow an increasingly practical and discerning Filipino market. ■

*Calligaris showroom is located at Mezzanine Floor, Clipp Center, 39th cor. 11th Street, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City; tel. nos. 8691059 / 8691060 / 8691061.*



# A Cali Take on Classic lines

PHILUX IS TAKING THEIR LINES TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH NEW FINISHES

BY MAAN D'ASIS PAMARAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY UY

**PHILUX HAS PROVIDED** a generation of homeowners with high-quality handcrafted wood furniture by Max Kienle.

The decision to add more modern pieces is a response to what the current market is looking for. "This is really a rebranding, where we are renewing our styles and our look to be more dynamic in general. We are definitely coming up with new collections on a regular basis," says Stephanie Kienle-Gonzalez, Head of Design and Visual Merchandiser.

## The streets of San Francisco

The new lines are Cali-inspired, owing to her stay in the sunny state.

"Cali living, for me, means a more laidback lifestyle, so I am putting in lighter finishes. We were always known for our dark wood in a gloss finish, so that is something we don't want to phase out. What we did was to incorporate a coffee finish, which is open grain on a very matte wood. I believe that this shows off the beauty of our Philippine mahogany pieces," she says.

There's also the new color called Charcoal, which she describes as "literally matte black," and Whitewash to give a more country feel. "We also have pieces in Duco Black and Duco White, which are completely opaque and super glossy."

## Chic and sleek

The look is industrial chic, with matte finishes, new colors, and metals.

Their staple Dakar living set, one of their most iconic items, will be given a makeover by Stephanie by yearend. "It sells really well because it is modular, and you can basically customize your sofa with its

The classic Philux sofa set gets modern Cali touches with accents such as the mod fabric poufs and a low center table that serves double duty as a conversation piece.



sectional pieces."

She added a pop of color to the set-up with a whimsical ottoman that has a jazzy print. "While Filipinos still like their neutrals *kasi takot sila mag-sawa*, I think pieces like these make our showroom come alive and add points of interest for the buyers."

Space is one of the considerations for younger homeowners. "We have pieces that can fit in condos," Stephanie points out. "Our beds can be customized as

singles or doubles, for example. Our two-seaters can be a love seat. Bigger pieces such as our armoire or wingback chairs can be points of interest in a condo foyer."

As for trends, Stephanie says, "I think people now are getting a little more daring with the look and style that they want. Buyers are also becoming more design-oriented, adding more colors and becoming more adventurous with prints and patterns. ■

## Pass it on

STEPHANIE KIEKLE'S TIPS ON MAKING GOOD FURITURE INVESTMENTS:

1. Go for quality. In the age of cheap knockoffs, nothing still beats the original in terms of craftsmanship and quality. Look for good pieces that will last you for a very long time, things that are sustainable, design-wise, so you can pass them down to the next generation.
2. Check after sales. Since furniture is an investment, you'd want to be able to go back to the manufacturer or seller. If, after two years, you want to change the fabric or foam, we can do that for our customers at a special price.
3. Look for a piece that is both comfortable and functional.



# Italian spectrum

BISAZZA IS THE LEADING ITALIAN DESIGN BRAND OF GLASS MOSAIC TILES FOR INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR APPLICATIONS

BY FLEXI SARTE / PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY UY



Bisazza, the leading brand for Italian mosaic tiles, now has a bathroom fittings line, Bisazza Bagno. In Bisazza Home, mosaic is employed for luxurious furniture.

**MOSAIC IS AN AGE-OLD** decorative art technique first used to adorn ancient buildings, churches, mosques and palaces all over the world. In modern times, mosaics are popularly used in everyday spaces such as kitchens, swimming pools, bathrooms, or as an accent wall.

Bisazza, the Italian luxury design brand founded by Pierro Bisazza, is the leading producer of glass mosaic tiles for interior and exterior decoration since 1956. It offers hundreds of colors and designs, from candy-colored tiles to monochromatic pieces, to suit its clientele's discerning taste.

Bisazza has also collaborated with big names in architecture and fashion such as Emilio Pucci, Marcel Wanders, Tord Boontje,

and Patricia Viel, to name a few, to come up with the ultimate mosaic for the bold and daring. To complete the experience, Bisazza has also dabbled in home and bathroom furnishing, Bisazza Bagno and Bisazza Home, where mosaic is combined with other luxury items.

"Bisazza is a symbol of luxury and beauty, and to have it satisfies more than just aesthetics, as it is emotionally fulfilling," says Ric Vincent Atienza, Managing Director of iMic, the official distributor of Bisazza in the Philippines. ■

*Visit the Bisazza Kitchen Studio Showroom at the Ground Floor of One McKinley Place, 26th St. corner 4th Ave., Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.*





# Luxurious Depot

TWO FLOORS OF STYLE AND FUNCTION FOR THE HOME

BY REDILYN DIMAANDAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG



Their modern showroom features a broad range of kitchen displays and premium product lines by Kohler, Grohe and Franke.

**WILCON BUILDER'S DEPOT** brings to the country the premier brands in the global market.

Designo Atelier is Wilcon's first Design Center that carries globally known brands for design enthusiasts and industry professionals. Its bath and kitchen showroom has an expansive 500-sq.m. display spread out on two floors.

The latest in bath and kitchen products from Baldwin Lockset, Kohler kitchen and Franke kitchen systems can be found on the 2nd and 4th floor. Grohe faucets, mixers, showers and bathroom accessories are on the ground floor, and Wilcon tiles, Versace Home, Grespania, Gardenia Orchidea and Novabell on the 3rd floor. ■

Visit *Designo Atelier* at L35B B11 Green Acropolis Village, Bagumbayan, Quezon City. For inquiries, contact (02) 437-0250 or via e-mail at [atelier@designoatelier.com.ph](mailto:atelier@designoatelier.com.ph).





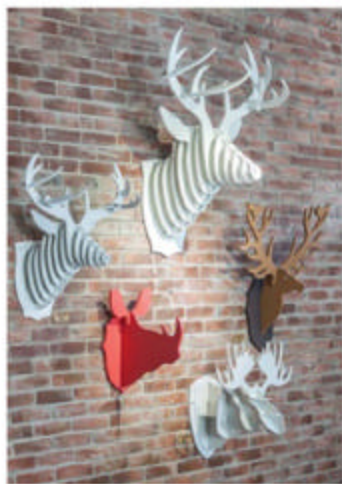
# A Welcome Change

CO/OP MANILA HAS REVIVED AN OLD LOT AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

BY ELGA D. REYES  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAR CONCENGCO



Natural light is maximized in CO/OP Manila, enhancing further the vibrancy of their colorful, kitschy items on display. BELOW: The better alternatives to wall-mounted animal heads.



**THERE IS A SUDDEN CLEARING** in a crowded, narrow street in San Juan, a large open parking yard shaded with old trees, where an unlikely modern house with four huge letters beckons. The place is CO/OP Manila, a hybrid space mixing a lifestyle store with a restaurant-café. Sisters Christine and Michelle Chan and cousin Polly Caragay run the roughly 200-sq.m. joint, and they have filled it with all the things they love, from an assortment of cute and quirky items to a menu of satisfying meals and deadly rich desserts.

According to Michelle and Polly, Christine is the visionary behind CO/OP. Although she prefers to remain behind the scenes, it was her penchant for kitschy items and “a little bit of a hoarding problem” that led to the business, says Polly, who takes charge of operations.

Michelle, on the other hand, is the pastry chef. She graduated from the International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management (ISCAHM) only last April, but already concocts her own creations here, such as the popular smores cupcake and salted caramel cheesecake. CO/OP, Polly notes, is a result of their “common denominator”: what they like to eat and what they like to shop for.

## Building a cohesive unit

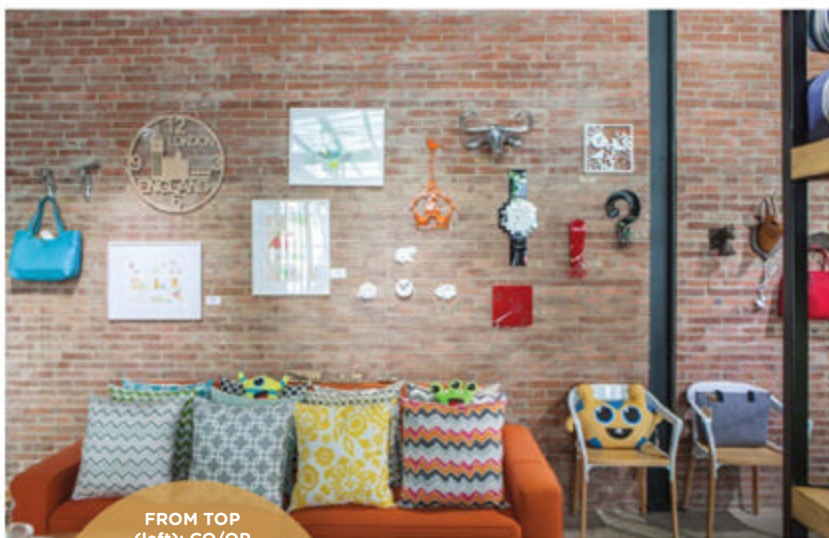
This is why they named their passion project CO/OP. “It’s a collaborative effort among the three of us,” says Michelle. The idea, though, was to originally create a beach vintage vibe, and not the industrial chic design that currently characterizes the space. They wanted to simply renovate the house and retain its old charm and

personality. However, it was a condemned piece of property, and so the concept evolved.

Architect Fredric Chung of Atlas Urban Homes and interior designers from Jagnus Design Studio helped rebuild the place. They suggested creating a cohesive unit instead of having two distinct structures for the store and café. They also incorporated Christine’s preference for midcentury design, as seen in the powder blue single-molded chairs that are a nod to the Eames Shell Chair.

And together with walls of bricks and glass, plus ample use of wood and exposed steel beams, the owners and designers developed an inviting ambiance, perhaps a tad on the hipster side but perfect for the cousins’ curated goods and for customers wishing for idyllic afternoons (with specially made lemonade in a mason jar, please!).





**FROM TOP (left): CO/OP**  
Manila's massive doors open to a cheerful display of desserts; servings good for sharing; coffee and cake while browsing the store's design goods; pillows from Cynthia Rowley and others, and more décor ideas to individualize your space.

## Eclectic appeal

The items on sale add to the eclectic appeal. There are off-beat mushroom lamps, gnomes in different colors, stacked trays and plates with a dinosaur or duck for support, felt bags from M.R.K.T., and ring holders in the form of a melting ice cream or popsicle stick from Canadian design company Imm Living. CO/OP also carries home and lifestyle products by Jonathan Adler, Cynthia Rowley and Helen Dardik, among others.

Filipino makers likewise figure in the trendy landscape with Star Wars-inspired knickknacks by Habil Crafts and stuffed toys by Plush and Play, a social enterprise working with Gawad Kalinga. The goal, the cousins explain, is to have a 50:50 ratio of local and international artists in their line-up. They are always on the lookout for non-mainstream items that complement their concept, they add.

Polly, Michelle and Christine are keen on receiving and

working on feedback. "We want to keep improving," says Michelle. "We want people to know that we hear them... At the end of the day, we just want them to appreciate what we like also," she points out.

This, of course, gives new meaning to their name. The collaboration is no longer just among the cousins, but between owners and customers. Now who wouldn't want that, together with a slice of their Big, Bad Brookie? ■



# Displays of Charm

OFF-THE-BEATEN PATH,  
A FINE SELECTION  
OF BESPOKE PIECES

BY REDILYN DIMAANDAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO



Marry the charm of the old world with updated pieces. Lucina store absolutely knows how to make a room stand out with unique finds.

**ON THE HUNT FOR BESPOKE FURNITURE PIECES?** Off the beaten path, there's a store full of finds along the highway in Sta. Rosa, Laguna en route to Tagaytay. The façade appears to house four different shops, but it only has one. It is called Lucina, named after the mother of store owner Joel Salazar.

Lucina offers artworks, particularly ornately framed paintings, a selection of chairs, tables, consoles, cabinets and headboards. Also available are ceramic plates, saucers, trays, cups, mugs and a lot of imported cookies, crackers and chocolate. There are also throw pillows, rugs and linens.

It all started when owners Paul Baes and Joel Salazar started to collect pieces from their trips. They even rented a warehouse just to keep all the items they've collected. Later, they thought of setting up this shop. Aside from their personal collection, they also produce

handcrafted furniture.

Paul and Joel love to mix and match different elements of design to create a style that offers narratives, both beautiful and timeless. "The trend is not having any rule in color and style. We mix pieces that just look good together, like putting up an antique table and modern chair. The contrast between them creates energy," says Joel.

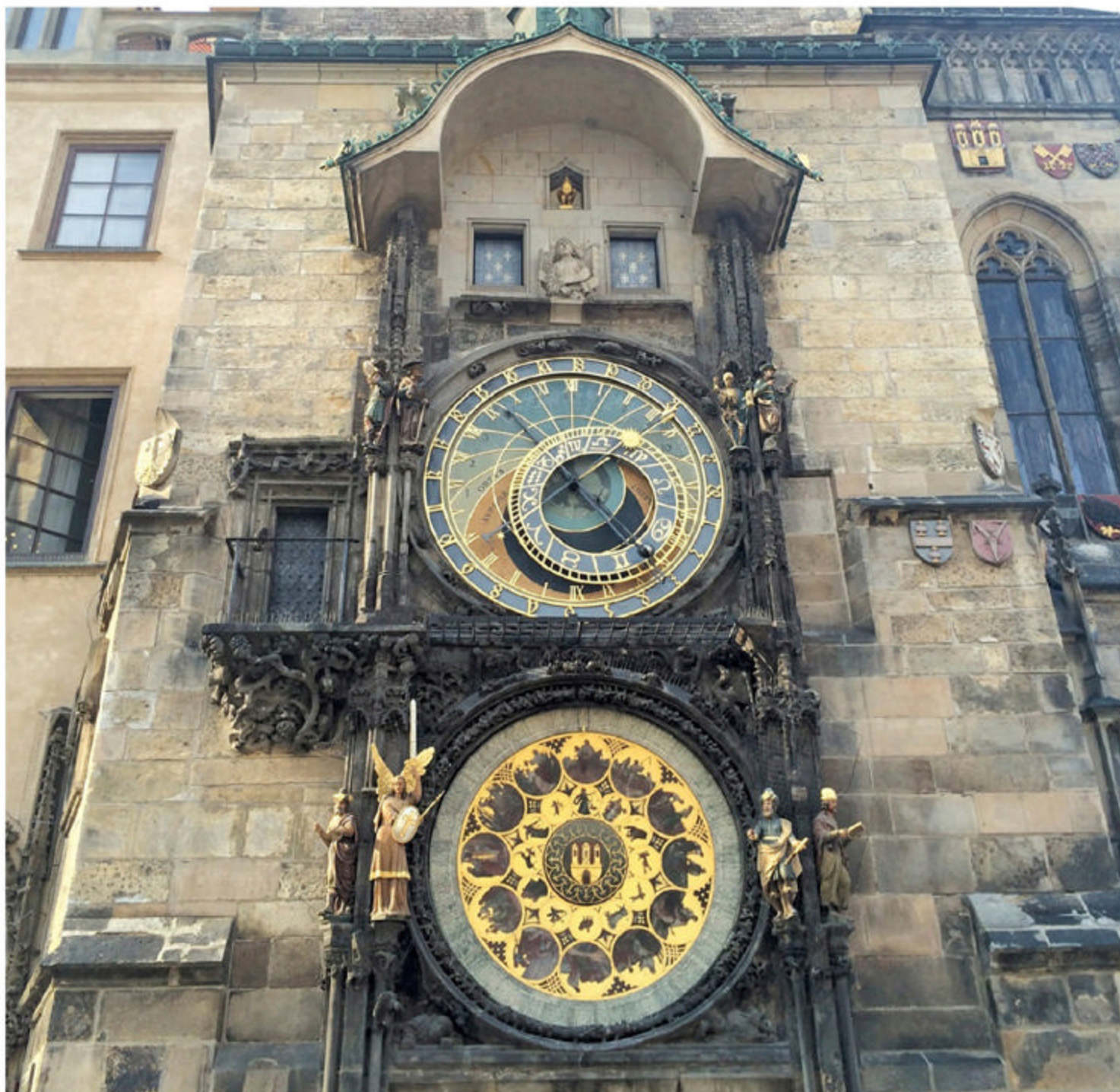
Their mission is to showcase a range of hand painted furniture, designed and hand painted by Joel. These pieces come in limited editions, and as such, each piece is unique and special.

"We only sell pieces that we would also like to use in our own house," adds Joel. Passion and dedication mark this duo, traits that make their pieces elegant, sophisticated and exceptional. ■

Visit Lucina store at Sta. Rosa, Laguna. For inquiries, email them at [info@lucina.ph](mailto:info@lucina.ph) or check their website [www.lucina.ph](http://www.lucina.ph).









# A Storyteller Still

FORMER EDITOR-  
WRITER TAKES TO CLAY  
TO TELL NEW TALES

BY GAY ACE DOMINGO  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAR CONCENGCO



Of her art's style, An Mercado-Alcantara says, "At some point, you have to decide if you are going to be 'artsy' or be an artisan. I chose to be the latter."



ABOVE: The *Santita* series depict various incarnations of the Virgin Mary that one can hold in their hand. Here, Our Lady of Manaoag and Our Lady of Guadalupe. A piece from the *Tableaux* series, featuring the scene of the Nativity of Jesus.

**WHEN AN MERCADO-ALCANTARA** told ABS-CBN Publishing Inc.'s (API) management in 2011 that she was quitting to become a potter, her bosses didn't believe it. "They couldn't understand that I'd give up an executive position to turn to pottery," she says of her bosses.

Back then, An was overseeing several magazine titles, including *Metro*, *Chalk*, and API's flagship celebrity lifestyle glossy *StarStudio*. For several years, the editor-writer was involved in the content and creation of magazines and books. She was the first editor-in-chief of *Good Housekeeping Philippines* and the founding EIC of *Working Mom* magazine.

Actually, pottery had been a long-time passion of An, having been into the art for years. Around 2002, she began taking lessons with renowned pottery artist Ugu Bigyan. "This was after my dad passed away," she relates. Her dad, Antonio Mercado, was one of the pillars of Philippine advertising, and the loss motivated An to take up a new hobby.

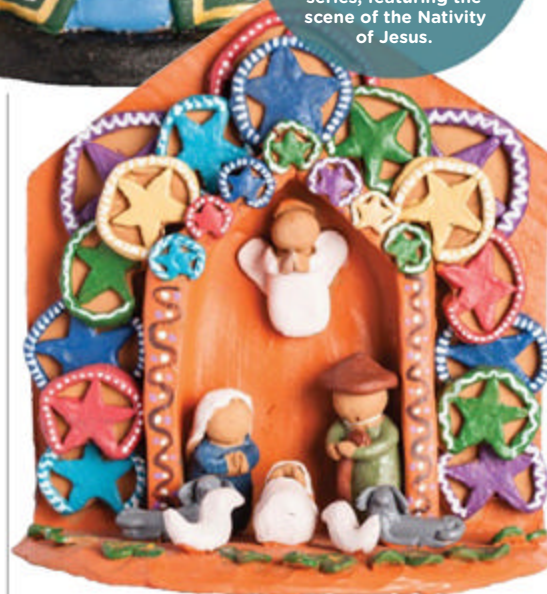
Molding clay was one of the activities she enjoyed with her son, Diego. "Initially,

we were making figures out of Playdough. Eventually, we moved to modeling clay bought from the bookstores," An says.

## Reviving Cochiti pottery

From Bigyan, she learned to handle clay to create dinnerware like pots, plates, and mugs. The experience was gratifying, but An ached to do something more. She says, "I knew I wanted to make figures, not pots." So she also studied under noted ceramic artists John and Tessy Pettyjohn. "They told me, 'We don't do figures, but we're willing to explore.'"

Continuing efforts and research led An to the art of the late Helen Cordero, an artist from Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico. Cordero is credited for reviving Cochiti's pottery tradition. In the late 1950s, Cordero came out with a figure of an old man with many children on it. The work was the Mexican artist's take on the traditional form of a woman holding a child. Cordero called it a "storyteller" because it was inspired by her grandfather who regaled her and her young relatives with fascinating tales.



For close to five decades, Cordero created countless storytellers that were defined by a human base figure with smaller figures on it. The faces of the figures usually had open mouths and closed eyes.

An was immediately drawn to Cordero's clay storyteller dolls. Before she discovered





LEFT: *Antukin*, a piece from the Storyteller series which features an individual female figure with small figures of children. RIGHT: *Clay Storytellers* holding *parols*. BELOW: A piece from the *Santa Maria Tablet Series*, which depicts the Virgin Mary of Lipa surrounded by smaller figures paying homage to her.

Cordero, she was torn between whether to take the road of high art or to be more accessible. She elaborates, “At some point, you have to decide if you are going to be ‘artsy’ or be an artisan. I chose to be the latter.”

## No two are alike

Instead of making large, pricey and elaborate one-of-a-kind pieces, An chose to craft medium-sized and affordable terracotta figures. She calls them “clay storytellers.” Although there are several pieces of one clay storyteller, each one is made by hand, and no two are completely alike.

It takes days to create one, sometimes, even weeks and months to complete an entire batch composed of around 10 pieces.

The process is tedious as it is special. An first makes a figure and teaches her group of artisans how to shape it. “Then, they’ll do it on their own and show it to me, and then I approve it,” says An. The figures are brought to Ugu Bigyan’s kiln in Tiaong, Quezon. Afterwards, they are brought back to An and her artisans for painting. Every clay storyteller has an acrylic finish so that the color does not come off.

An works with only a handful. She says, “Two people do the shaping, and eight do the painting.” Finding them is also a story in itself. “I told my barangay captain that I wanted to provide livelihood to the community.” At one point, she even explored working with tattoo artists who were very talented, but were not so consistent. So, these days, An works with a group of women who are more reliable and dedicated. “It’s also easier to deal with women,” she notes. “I allow them to execute the figure, to explore and inject their personalities into the creation.”



## A devotion to Mama Mary

Together, An and her artisans have been creating various clay storytellers that have become the toast of art fairs and bazaars. There is the Storyteller series composed of individual female figures with small figures of children on it, or individual female figures hugging children. She crafted a form of a woman holding two children tightly; sparse and with a distressed treatment, this figure was created right after Super typhoon Yolanda struck the Visayas and rendered so many people dead and homeless. An says the creation was her spontaneous reaction to the tragedy. “All I could make was this (female figure) *na inaakap ‘yung mga bata*.”

An also has figures of the Virgin Mary

mounted on tablets, a result of her devotion to the Blessed Mother. The Santa Maria Tablet Series features the main figure of the Virgin Mary surrounded by smaller figures paying homage, holding flowers or (in the case of the piece entitled “Our Lady of the Rosary”) carrying beads. “Mama Mary is a storyteller,” An says. “Every time she appears, it’s because she wants to give a message.”

There is also a Tableaux series with scenes of the Nativity of Jesus and the Last Supper. An explains her choices of subjects saying, “I always want to create something very Filipino.” She cites that the Last Supper tableau was fashioned because practically every Filipino home has a Last Supper painting in the dining room. “*Malapit na nga akong gumawa ng giant spoon and fork!*” she says.

## Infinite possibilities

Every creation is close to her heart. But perhaps the ones that are most dear to An are those depicting folk from San Pablo Laguna, hometown of her husband Boots, and site of their inn, Casa San Pablo. There are figures of women with veils on their heads, men carrying vegetables, and other barrio people. There is a part in the inn that is a showroom for the clay figures. “San Pablo is all about stories and food,” says An. “The people there are natural entertainers... My dream is that tourists will go also to San Pablo because of the clay storytellers.”

That wish is now being fulfilled. The clay storytellers are hits at bazaars and art fairs, and have created interest and patronage for San Pablo.

With the upcoming Christmas season, An and her team are expected to be busier. “For now we’re living from bazaar to bazaar,” An admits. “But I’m willing to see where this art will take me.” ■

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/claystorytellers> for orders more information on An’s clay storytellers.



# Building on Basics

THIS SHOW EXPLORES THE SYNERGY OF THE MOST BASIC OF MATERIALS AND A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

BY LEAH PUYAT / PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Owner of W17 Kaye Tinga and the artisans behind *Cloth, Metal, Wood*, Tata Montilla, Mark Wilson and Ian Giron. RIGHT: Montilla's manipulation of silver leaf "aged" by exposure to chemicals results in an abstraction that calls to mind a painting, though it has no actual paint. BELOW: Wilson's upcycling and bleaching of a narra table offers an update of traditional materials.



IF MAN'S BASIC NEEDS are food, clothing and shelter, then perhaps we can say that the most basic materials are cloth, metal, and wood. The weaving and embellishment of cloth, the mining and forging of metal, and the cutting, carving and burning of wood have all defined human civilization.

W17, the eclectic and exquisitely curated home store, hosts *Cloth/Metal/Wood*, the first group show of lighting designer Mark Wilson, former fashion denizen Ian Giron and multi-

hyphenate (construction business owner-riding instructor-surface material expert) Tata Montilla.

## Mental images

Tata Montilla wears many hats, and he says he owes it all to organization. "If you give me any date of the year, I can tell you exactly what I will be doing on that day." He shuttles between Cebu and Manila, and never feels any sort of displacement. Mentally, he knows when to shut on and off. And yet, there is so

much more inside his head than his jam-packed calendar.

Of his artworks, he says, "I have these images in my head, and I just want to make them real. My training is in material surfaces, and one of our subjects

was gilding. Gilding is a very ancient process, but I wanted to do something fresh with something old. I like the mix of media. I love the look of an object when it has aged. And so I do the gilding and then expose it to corrosive chemicals."

The process forms graceful, abstract images in subtle tonalities. When asked what his artworks reveal about himself, he agrees with my observations that he likes to look at some-





thing from many points of view, from the deepest to the most superficial, from the serious to the silly. He smiles, not a wide smile, and adds, “I think that what really attracts me is the simplicity of life. I don’t come from a deep, dark place.”

The exhibit is being held in a home store, where the artwork is hung in vignettes of interior. Would he be offended if a buyer tells him that the piece was bought to complement a sofa? “Not at all,” he says. “I don’t have that attachment to the work.”

## Contemporizing traditional embroidery

Ian Giron worked with Josie Natori for many years, and of his exit from the Natori lifestyle empire, he says, “There was no drama. It was just time to open new doors.” But Ian did not stray too far from his roots in fashion, which began with studies at Parsons School of Design. He says, “I really wanted to support our local embroiderers, specifically those from Bulacan, because that’s where I’m from. Embroidery itself came from Europe, and brought here by the Spanish colonizers, but we have been able to make it our own. And so, when Europeans see our embroidery, they are astonished.”

Ian wanted to integrate our traditional embroidery, and reinterpret it in a fresh and contemporary way. And as he was a bit weary of the fashion world, he thought to create coromandel screens, but in an updated way. One screen is Italian silk embroidered with a mix of classical Oriental motifs, Filipino tribal symbols, and random musings in Ian’s own handwriting. “I was inspired by the Dadaists, but if people ask me what it means, I just say that I wanted to show the range of the embroidery that we could do!”

Another screen is done in florals reminiscent of the *manton de Manila*, of black thread on a vivid red silk. He did it half-height, so that it is not the stature of a traditional screen and can define a more intimate space. “Screens can be



Giron's screens present a new interpretation of embroidery and ancient motifs. An organic slab of deep purplish brown *balayong* on slim metal legs is a future heirloom.

so versatile,” he expounds. “One lady wanted the screen to be a headboard. It can go into a boudoir where it was usually used for dressing. We can customize motifs and sizes.”

## The warmth of wood

“Yes, it is very primal. I just love wood. I love the warmth of it, the grain, and I’ve been collecting wood for a long time,” confesses Mark Wilson, who is the prime mover behind this exhibit. “I’ve bleached the narra so that the wood’s grain and grada-

tions really come out; bleaching is a 24-step process.

“But more than *narra*, my favorite is *balayong*, which is a wood I think every Filipino should know about. Just as *huanghuali* is the more popular wood for Chinese furniture, and *zitan* was reserved for the emperor, the *balayong*, with its brown purplish color, is a more exclusive material.”

Mark retrieved an old narra conference table from his dad’s office that was going to be given away. “The people clearing it

didn’t recognize it as narra, and that’s why they were willing to let it go. I work with Claude Tayag for the wood treatment and with Mike Aguas for the metal, because I like to work with the masters,” Mark reveals. “I believe in upcycling and adaptive reuse, and so I want to use old wood, but make it more contemporary.”

The melding of these three friends’ personal histories and the heritage of their artistic journeys show the fine blend of art and history. ■



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# 'Globalscapes: World Design Reimagined'

TWENTY-TWO SPACES INSPIRED BY THE CULTURE, TRENDS AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF AFRICA, ASIA, EUROPE, THE AMERICAS, AND OCEANIA

BY REDILYN DIMAANDAL / PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG



LEFT: The play of lines and angles is shown in a modern interpretation of Australia by Donae Edusado, Sasa Rodriguez, Kat Morales. RIGHT: Using acrylics and lighting, Mexico's vivid and fluid costumes were interpreted by Erika Hernandez, Maxine Medino, Roanna Padilla, Armi Piamonte, Julia Cristobal, Jia Cabansag.



IT WAS IN THE MID-'60S when Edith L. Oliveros, a young and upcoming US-educated Interior Designer, was employed at Cancio-Calma Furniture. During her stay in the company, an increasing number of young socialites expressed interest in the interior design practice. This led Cancio-Calma to see the potential of establishing a design school in Manila. They commissioned Edith Oliveros to design a certificate course program specifically for the study of Interior Design.

Today, the Philippine School of Interior Design (PSID) is a very successful tertiary educational institution dedicated solely to teaching and imparting knowledge in the subject.

It has been a yearly tradition for PSID's advance class to showcase an exhibit, and this year's theme is "Globalscapes: World Design Reimagined." To mark PSID's 47th year, 105 aspiring interior designers conceptualized and created 22 spaces inspired by culture, trends and architecture of different countries.

The works of these young Filipino interior designers reimagined what makes each country's aesthetic truly distinct. It also provided ideas for the home. ■



The famous Kenyan Safari landscapes interpreted by Cat Arambulo-Antonio, Myrhh Cortes, Kady Robles, Janis Tesoro, Sharlene Yu, Kim Tan.



# The Pioneer

HE WAS AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME TO HELP THE INTERIOR DESIGN INDUSTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES MOVE FORWARD

BY DODO DAYAO

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF STEVEN LEACH MANILA



TOP: Mr. Benjamin E. Hughes II inspecting work last December 2013 for a resort project in Daet, Camarines Norte, the project called Port Logpond—a private port for a resort in Calaguas Islands. BOTTOM: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Executive Floor

IN THE UNIVERSE of Interior Design, particularly the slightly younger, more contained universe that is Interior Design in the Philippines, Benjamin L. Hughes II is a man who needs no introduction. His name alone carries a pedigree that cuts across an entire industry. His peers are unanimous in their exaltation. Benjamin Hughes is a Pioneer. Above and beyond such fundamental qualities of adventurism and prescience and initiative and, of course, a persistence of vision, Pioneer implies a specificity of presence at a particularly critical juncture in history, a sense, if you will, of cosmic timing. Right place, right time, right attitude, right spirit, all that.

Hughes' first trip to the Philippines was in the late '60s. Benny Toda Sr., the founder of Philippine Air Lines and its then-owner, flew him in from the States and tasked him with designing what was then the PAL HQ in Ayala Avenue. His expertise may have been







TOP: Hallway and Le Chef restaurant in Camp John Hay Manor in Baguio City. BOTTOM: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Executive Floor



## Remembering the golden moments

"Always impeccably dressed and with a calm demeanor. I never saw Mr. Hughes raise his voice or seem stressed out," remembers Julia Fontana, a former designer at SLA whom Hughes also mentored. "The respect for Mr. Hughes was palpable and this was true for anyone who was fortunate enough to interact with him." Fontana recalls. "We had a joke around the office that if Mr. Hughes were to ever leave, there would be a train of us hanging on to him by his belt hook."

This gift for striking delicate symmetries was mirrored in his work. "Our home will be a daily reminder of his extraordinary talent, his simplicity and elegance," says Gretchen Barreto, whose home Hughes designed and worked on for several years.

"He has been an inspiration," attests his friend and colleague Edward Pangilinan. "He believed in a strong work ethic in all aspects of his projects."

"My work with Ben was always collaborative," says surface decorator and restorer Tats Rejante Manahan, who worked with Hughes many times, including the Zobel house in Boracay. The Zobel house was made almost entirely of glass, and Manahan was bothered that the sun had changed the color of the tiles and the plaster.

She called Hughes, who promptly flew in all the way from Manila. She recalls, "For the rest of the day, we just sat and watched the sun change the tile color." It was a matter of finding the right hue. With the right hue, the tiles and walls would be one color at any given time of the day. *"That, he said would be the golden moment."*

urban planning and environmental design, but Hughes, who studied both Architecture and Sociology, was already starting to blaze a trail in the field of Interior Design and it was crossing over to the other side of the world. Trace his career back, and this first trip to Manila may well be his "critical juncture in history," that fixed point in time that was primordial to his career and his stature.

The twist was, at that time, the interior design industry in the Philippines was in its infancy. As soon as Hughes moved to the Philippines in 1972, a few years before establishing the Manila office of Steven J. Leach Jr. and Associates, he began to parlay his expertise into laying down the ramparts of the discipline, and subsequently the industry, that he has since helped shepherd into its

bloom and boom.

Of course, Hughes, as a designer but more so as a man, knew a thing or two about balance. He may have had an undeniably distinctive presence, but he also had a quietude about him. This particular elegance, this sense of grace almost, is something that is mirrored in the work itself. People close to him make note of his fondness for elephants, a fondness that may well be out of seeing something kindred in how these magnificent colossi conduct themselves with a calm that belies their size.

For someone of his stature, Hughes was refreshingly grounded. Right up to the very end. His loss may have resounding permutations across the industry. But when he passed away a few months ago, it was, true to the nature of the man, with nary a rustle. ■

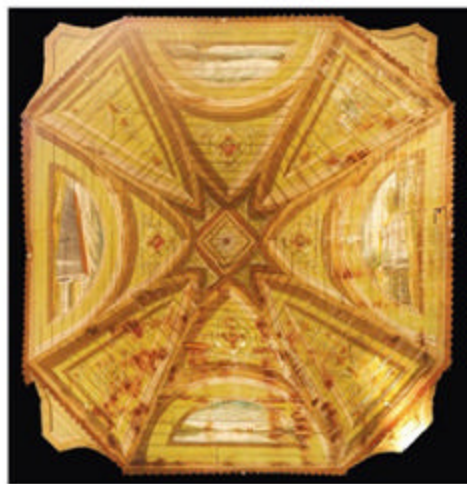


# Towards the heavens

PRESERVING CEILING ARTWORKS OF SPANISH COLONIAL CHURCHES IN THE PHILIPPINES

BY FLEXI SARTE

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF PROJECT KISAME



**JOEL ALDOR HAS SUCH A PASSION** for ceilings (*kisame* in Filipino) that he founded Project Kisame. It is an advocacy, project and community dedicated to the appreciation and conservation of ceiling artworks of Spanish colonial churches throughout the Philippines, starting off in the Visayas, dating back to the 1920s and 1930s.

The idea came about when Joel visited Bohol in 2010 as part of his heritage work, documenting the colonial churches of the province. His discovery of these magnificent ceiling paintings led him to form Project Kisame in 2013, with help from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

After turning to social media to engage

others about his advocacy, he formed a team specializing in the arts and cultural heritage preservation to conduct a comprehensive documentation project of 15 identified churches in Cebu, Bohol and Siquijor. Visayan churches are home to some of the most beautiful ceiling artworks in the Philippines.

The website **[www.projectkisame.com](http://www.projectkisame.com)** now provides historical accounts of each church complete with high resolution photographs, 2D and 3D renditions of these masterpieces, as well as iconographic analyses and conditional assessments of the paintings. The ceilings have been mapped to offer a detailed description of each segment through a diagram.



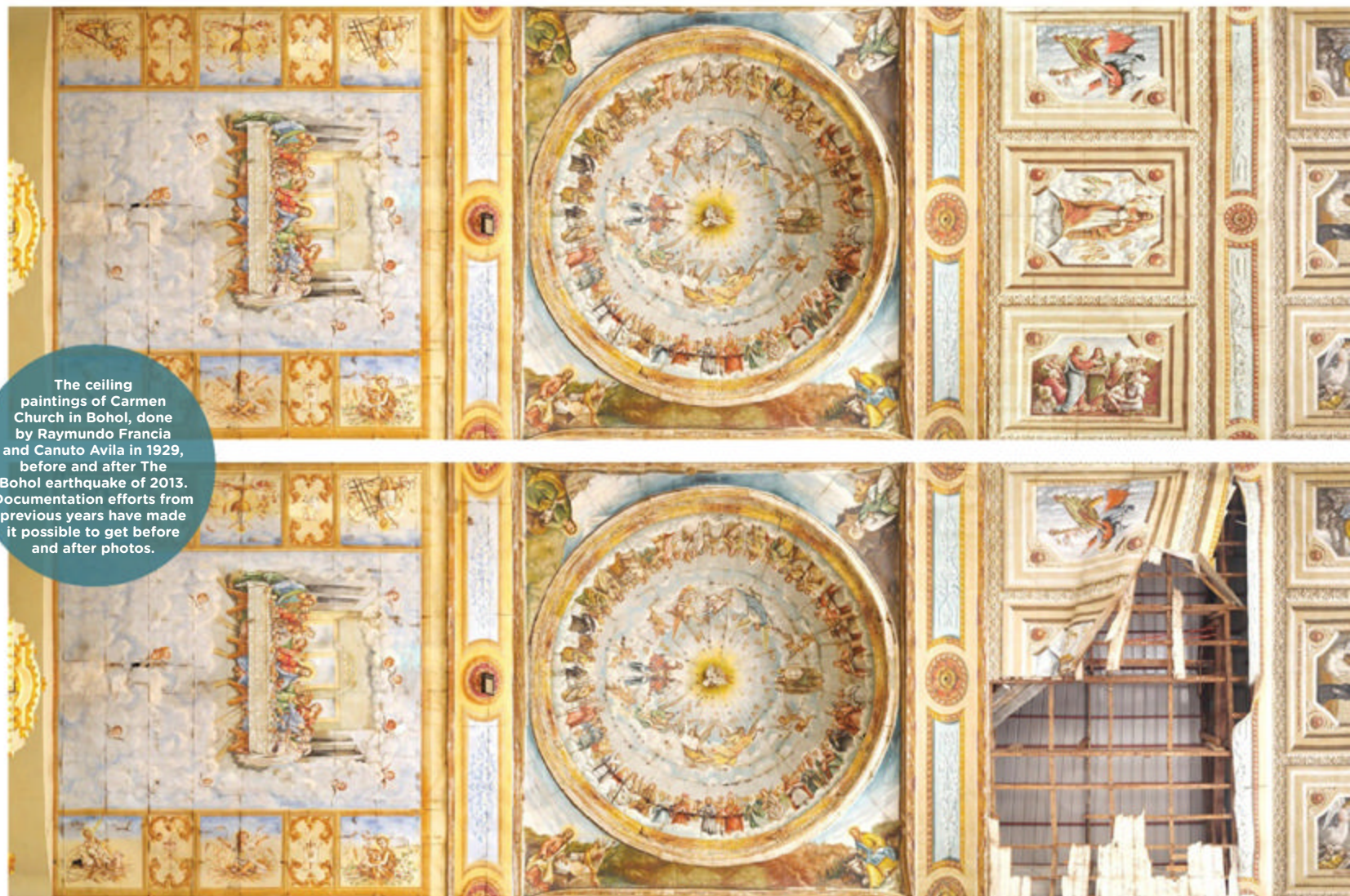
BELOW:  
Sibonga Church  
in Cebu, the crème  
de la crème of all  
Raymundo Francia  
masterpieces,  
finished in 1924.



BELOW LEFT:  
The Project Kisame  
Team (counterclockwise  
from left): Joel Aldor  
(project head), Jun Reynales  
(photographer), John Christian  
Yayen (graphics artist), Joseph  
Ian Yeo (architect), Jay Nathan  
Jore (arts specialist). RIGHT:  
John Christian Yayen digitally  
enhancing the photos of  
Argao church ceiling paintings.





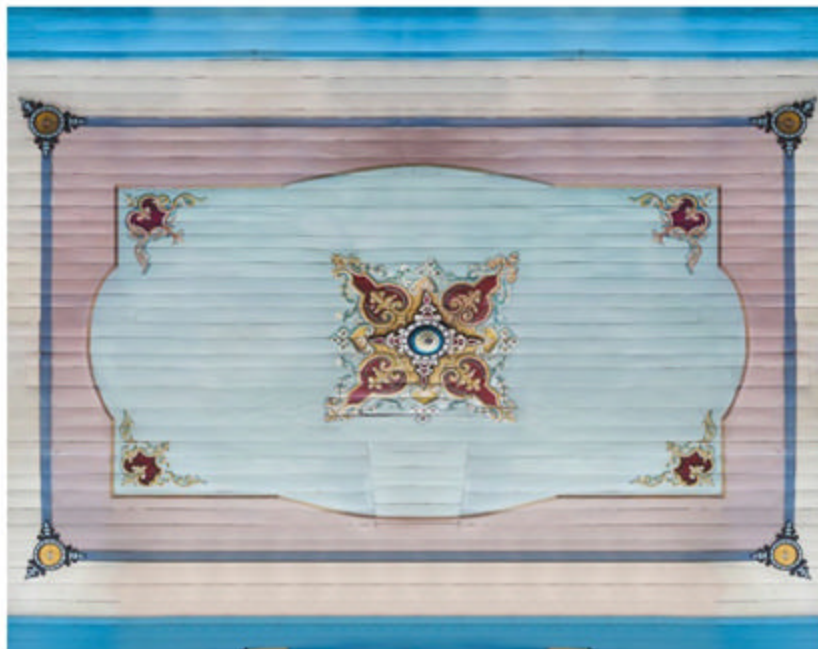


The ceiling paintings of Carmen Church in Bohol, done by Raymundo Francia and Canuto Avila in 1929, before and after The Bohol earthquake of 2013. Documentation efforts from previous years have made it possible to get before and after photos.

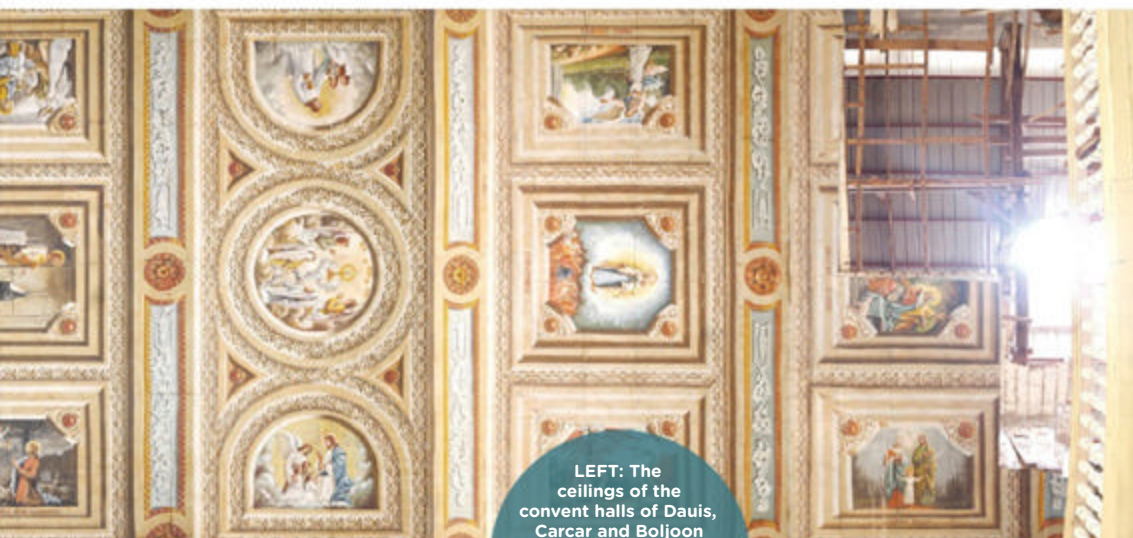
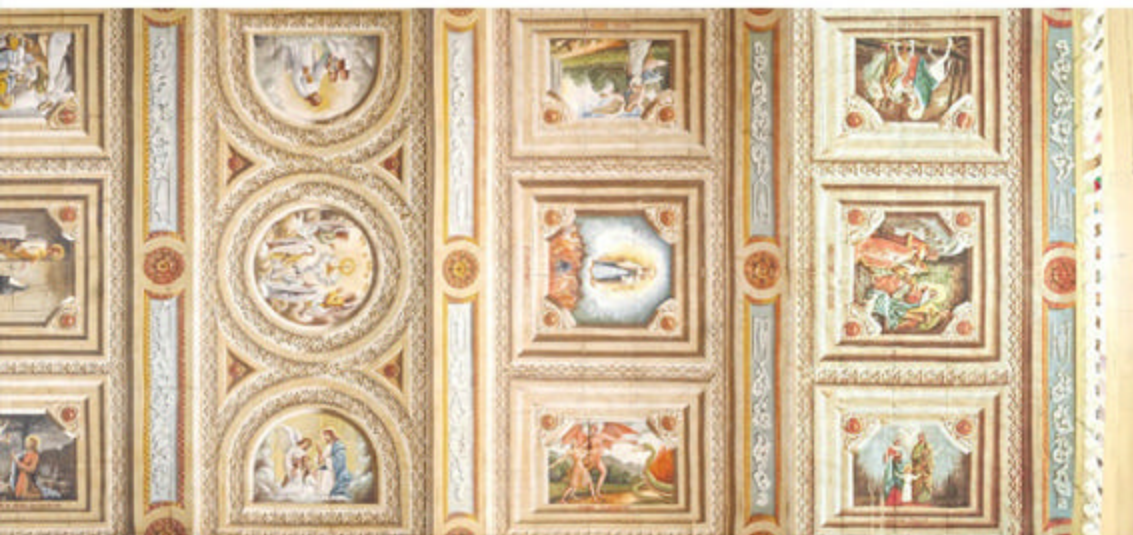
The ceiling artworks successfully merge artistry and spirituality through its design elements, where heavenly bodies, saints, Biblical narratives, angels, and martyrs are key figures.

“I hope that we could come up with a program where we take the kids to these churches, and bring back the true purpose of these ceiling paintings, [and that is] to instruct the faithful about the Catholic faith,” Joel says.

For now, lectures on ceiling art are conducted in various art history classes to gain public awareness. “Eventually, we want to come up with an interactive art installation and exhibit of these ceiling paintings in an open art space so that the public can appreciate these artworks using 3D projection technology and immersive virtual tours,” Joel says. Churches in Luzon and Mindanao are now the next targets of this monumental undertaking as well as a coffee table book on this subject. ■







LEFT: The ceilings of the convent halls of Dauis, Carcar and Boljoon all have very elaborate art as well. RIGHT: Arch. Joseph Ian Yeo surveying the ceiling paintings inside Carcar church convent.



## 7 splendid ceiling paintings

PROJECT KISAME'S JOEL ALDOR RECOMMENDS LOOKING UP HERE

**San Agustin Church**, Intramuros, Manila - Painted in 1876 by Italian scenographic painters Cesare Alberoni and Giovanni Divil-la. The use of *grisaille* and *quadratura* styles with the trompe l'oeil technique makes the paintings look like an architectural space.

**San Sebastian Basilica**, Quiapo, Manila - In 1888-1891, this work of three masters and students from the premiere art school Academia de Dibujo Pintura y Gravado, namely, Lorenzo Rocha, Felix Martinez and Toribio Antillon, revolutionized church interior decoration by painting directly on steel.

**Santiago Apostol Parish Church**, Betis, Guagua, Pampanga - Done by Mariano Henson (1895), Macario Lignon (1939), and the 1895 repainting by Victor Ramos, Lignon's apprentice and nephew.

**Nuestra Sra. Del Pilar Parish Church** of Sibonga, Cebu - Completed in 1924, it is considered as Raymundo Francia's earliest surviving artwork. Using fabricated wooden panels, it depicts the Creation of the World, the Seven Sacraments and the Salvation History of Mankind.

**San Miguel Arcangel Parish Church** of Jagna, Bohol - Another work of Raymundo Francia in 1928, it portrays the lives of the saints and the seven sacraments. It was later on reworked by Jagna's native mural artist, Rosalio Ortiz.

**Santo Niño de Anda Parish Church**, Anda, Bohol, (1923-1925) - On its octagonal dome is the painting of the Holy Trinity and the Seven Sacraments by Raymundo Francia. It is regarded as his best-preserved artwork painted over steel.

**San Juan Bautista Parish Church**, Jimenez, Misamis Occidental, (1896) -This century-old masterpiece of a Spanish painter from Bilbao, Julio Sanz Cruzado, was painted on canvas. The paintings were recently restored in 2003 by the National Museum of the Philippines.



# Heritage Showcase

BY NANA CARAGAY  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO

The three-storey structure of Casa Bizantina, built in 1890, has found a new home in Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar. In its current incarnation, it's a luxury seven-bedroom hotel that comes with butler service, cocktails, and toiletries from Hermes.



**HOW'S THIS FOR AN EXTREME HOBBY:** real estate developer Jerry Acuzar likes to collect old houses. And by that, we mean he seeks them out all over the country, takes them apart piece by piece (with the owner's consent, of course), and transports the entire thing before lovingly rebuilding it from the ground up at Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar, which he has dubbed a "heritage resort."

The venture began as a passion project in the year 2000, and by the time the resort officially opened 10 years later, 17 houses were already standing. Today, there are 34 fully reconstructed heritage homes on the 40-ha. property. Only seven hectares so far are officially in use, so that leaves plenty of

space for more old houses and new undertakings to come.

"Mr. Acuzar is really fond of old houses—it's his passion," explains Dexter Manansala, the resort's head tour guide. "When he goes to the provinces, the first thing he looks for are the old houses."

The painstaking restoration process starts with documentation—every nook, cranny, corner, and crevice is photographed in detail so that they will be able to rebuild it as accurately as possible. Then the parts are carefully dismantled, with portions marked and labeled so that they will be able to re-erect it in the exact same place. Afterwards, all materials are loaded onto

a truck and brought by land to the resort's seaside location in Bagac, Bataan. Only then can the extremely tedious process of reconstruction begin.

It takes about a year to a year-and-a-half to complete each house, making use of as much of the original materials as possible. Manansala estimates that about 40 to 60 percent of each home's previous parts are retained, such as the original wooden flooring, doors, walls, stairs, and ceilings. The oldest home on the property dates back to 1780 and belonged to Pampanga's Reyes family (it was also where some scenes for Gerry de Leon's 1961 *Noli Me Tangere* adaptation were filmed). Many of the houses are from the





A STAY AT LAS CASAS FILIPINAS DE ACUZAR IS LIKE STEPPING INTO A TIME MACHINE, BUT WITH MODERN COMFORTS AND AMENITIES, WHICH MAKES IT EVEN BETTER

Still under construction at the time of *Metro Home & Entertaining's* visit was Simbahan ni San Jose, patterned after a church in Balanga, Bataan. It's bound to become the location for many future wedding ceremonies that will be held on the premises.



The cobblestoned walkways add an antiquated feel to the place. LEFT: A heritage house located by the Estero de Binondo. As of today, there are 34 heritage homes on the beachside property, all of which come with their own distinct stories and legacies which are relayed to visitors in guided tours.







Casa Hidalgo (named for its former location along Quiapo's R. Hidalgo St.) has been converted into a contemporary art gallery, fitting to its legacy as the former campus of UP Fine Arts. Currently at the 2nd floor is Geraldine Javier's Cabinet of Curiosity while the ground floor is dedicated to an exhibit exploring religious themes.







RIGHT: La Bella Teodora is the resort's Italian restaurant, helmed by Chef Louis Jurilla. LEFT: The rustic interiors are the perfect complement to his strong, inventive flavors, including Puerco con Cerveza and an appetizer of bread with roast garlic, olive oil and vinegar, and salt and pepper.



## Modern-Day Fun

TAKE A NOSTALGIC TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE OR SIMPLY ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL SCENERY AT LAS CASAS

**Relive your childhood.** Tour the resort on board a horse-drawn *kalesa* or head to the game room to enjoy traditional Filipino activities—it's got everything from *sungka* to coconut husks for a *cadang-cadang* race. The staff can also set up a friendly round of *palo sebo*, *hampas palayok*, or *agawang biik*.

**Explore nature.** Las Casas has its own stretch of private beach exclusive to guests only; you can also rent a boat so you can go island-hopping to the other beaches nearby. Try looking out for fish at the fish sanctuary, home to many diverse species that can occasionally be spotted coming up to the surface for air.

**Take the tours.** You can opt to go around the heritage homes with friendly guides who will give you the unique and colorful histories behind each home, or take the workshop tour to the different warehouses where the materials found in the homes and hotels are made. The latter is quite fascinating as you can watch workers bake bricks, carve sculptures and furniture, create artworks out of wood, fiberglass, and clay, and paint wallpaper by hand, stunning examples of which can be seen in Casa Bizantina's rooms.



early 1900s; a house that was built in 1920 is the “youngest” one of all. The foundations and roofs are often updated, while the resort's own furniture makers replicate the look of the antique furniture that would have been housed here.

But because Las Casas is also a resort meant for thoroughly modern uses, the homes where guests are accommodated are outfitted with modern comforts and amenities—air conditioning, WiFi, flatscreen cable TV and, of course, modern toilets and baths. The result is a charming blend of old meets new, where guests are invited to appreciate the history and heritage that come with their surroundings, not to mention the gorgeous stretch of beach just a few steps away. Here is a look at some of the other exciting developments ahead for this heritage showcase.

### Hotel de Oriente

Modeled after the historic hotel built in Binondo in 1889, this replica was inspired by the original's structural design. Using old pictures, the resort builders have attempted to stay as faithful as they can to the source material. This time around, the hotel will be used as a convention center with modern facilities as well as to house artwork inspired by the Filipino greats. (During our visit, the **Metro Home & Entertaining** team was given a sneak peek at a wood mosaic of Juan Luna's “Spoliarium” that will be on the ceiling). Legend has it that Jose Rizal





Inside two of the seven bedrooms at Las Casas' most luxurious accommodations, Casa Bizantina.

once stayed in Room 22 upon returning from a Hong Kong trip. Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar will be just as historic, as it has already been chosen as a venue for the APEC Summit in 2015.

### Estero de Binondo

Inspired by the floating city of Venice as well as Manila's very own *estero*, this hotel will have its own man-made canal connected to the river and fish sanctuary running on the seaside part of the property. It can be traversed by a raft made out of PVC pipes and bamboo. The raft is outfitted with benches and a table, big enough for the *barkada* or family but just as perfect for a party of two.

### La Bella Teodora

The resort's Italian restaurant has just received a makeover. A recent addition to the team is Chef Louis Jurilla, with 16 years of work experience in hotels here and in the US, to elevate your dining experience. Eventually, Chef Jurilla hopes to develop the resort's own herb garden and source even more local ingredients.

### Simbahan ni San Jose

Las Casas is already a favorite venue for wedding receptions, and by 2015, with the completion of a church on the property, couples can hold the nuptial ceremony on site as well. At the time of our visit, the façade was already standing, inspired by an old church in Balanga, Bataan.

### Casa Bizantina

This magnificent three-storey structure once stood sadly neglected at the corner of Madrid and Penarubia Streets in San Nicolas, Binondo. Originally built by Don Lorenzo del Rosario in 1890, it was used by the Instituto de Manila (now University of Manila) as a school building from 1914 to 1919. This classic *bahay na bato* bears characteristics of the floral period popular among Philippine ancestral homes from the 1880s to the 1930s, with embellishments and fixtures made of real gold and Moorish transoms over the doors and windows. The original flooring and grand staircase were retained, as well as the main door and some pillars, most of which can be found in the Presidential Room. ■







A closer look at the ornate wallpaper reveals that every single design was painstakingly painted by hand. Join the workshop tour to catch a glimpse of the women hard at work. The wooden mosaic is a replica of Juan Luna's Spoliarium that will be placed on the ceiling of the soon-to-open Hotel de Oriente. Wood is sourced from as far as Bicol and Batangas to get the exact shades they need to make up the different shadows and colors.



## Homes Away from Home

A NEW LEASE ON LIFE FOR THESE HISTORIC ANCESTRAL HOMES

**Casa Lubao.** Built in 1920, it originally belonged to the Arrastia-Vitug family of Lubao, Pampanga, and was saved from being burned down in World War II by a Japanese colonel who had worked under-cover for a decade as the family's driver. With its large rooms and high ceilings, it combines elements of Filipino, Spanish, and American architecture.

**Casa Luna.** This symmetrical house with a square plan (characteristic of the Ilocano *bahay na bato*) was built in 1850 and belonged to the Novicios of Luna, La Union. It was used as a meeting place during the Liberation period of the Japanese Occupation and was once headquarters to the US Armed Forces in the Philippines, North Luzon.

**Casa Unisan.** The first *bahay na bato* in Unisan, Quezon, it was built by Antonio Maxino in 1839 and is composed of two almost equal-sized main structures. The living room and bedrooms were located in the larger portion; the dining room and kitchen are in the smaller structure, with a red clay roof beautifully merging the two.

**Casa Hidalgo.** To find this house, look out for the prominently displayed logo of the University of the Philippines—the school seal was placed here in honor of its once being the university's Fine Arts campus from 1909 to 1926. Built in 1867 and designed by Felix Roxas y Arroyo, the Spanish Era's first Filipino architect, it was later repurposed into a dormitory, a bowling alley and even a venue for live sex shows. It is now a contemporary art gallery in honor of its heritage as a building where the likes of Juan Luna and Fernando Amorsolo once trained.

*Las Casas Filipinas de Acuzar is located at Bo. Pagasa, Bagac, Bataan. Contact tel. no. 546-9123 or e-mail [reserve@lascasasfilipinas.com](mailto:reserve@lascasasfilipinas.com). For more information, log on to [lascasasfilipinas.com](http://lascasasfilipinas.com).*



# Czech Mate

VISIT PRAGUE AND STEP INTO THE PAGES OF A STORYBOOK—COBBLESTONED STREETS, HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES, CLOCK TOWERS AND A CASTLE TOWERING ABOVE THEM ALL

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY **CARISSA COSCOLLUELA**



The Charles Bridge (formerly known as the Stone Bridge or the Prague Bridge) is a famous historic bridge that crosses the Vltava river in Prague, Czech Republic.

**IN PRAGUE, THERE IS A STREET** in the Old Town lined with luxury boutiques, but the urge to shop is overpowered by a desire to explore the historic city center. Itself a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the city reflects what happened centuries ago beneath the greened antique copper cupolas of its many churches and the hundreds of pointed spires jutting towards the sky.

It is impossible to walk through Prague without seeing it in the context of the reign of Charles IV, the Holy Roman Emperor from 1346 to 1378. **Charles Bridge**, named after the ruler who turned Prague into the seat of the empire, is an imposing landmark, built in the 14th century to connect the Old Town to the area on the other side of the Vltava River, where the castle is situ-

ated and, at the foot of its slopes, the Mala Strana, or Lesser Town. Thirty statues line the edifice, with recatholization as the common theme and evident in the statue of St. Francis Xavier. Most notable, though, is the statue of St. John of Nepomuk, the patron saint of the Czech Republic and the first martyr of the Seal of the Confessional. Refusing to divulge the contents of the confession of the Queen of Bohemia, the priest was tortured and then hurled off the bridge and drowned in the Vltava on orders of her husband, Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia and King of the Romans. It is said that at the exact moment he was thrown from the bridge, five stars appeared over his head. This scene is depicted on a plaque near his statue, and it is said that touching this plaque will ensure

another visit to the magical city.

For many Catholics, a visit to Prague is not complete without making the pilgrimage to the **Infant Jesus of Prague** in the Church of Our Lady of Victory. In fact, it is possibly the initial reason for any visit to Prague at all. The church itself, as is most of the city, is unassuming and quiet. It is never bustling with tourists, which makes for a perfect setting for prayer. At the center of the right-hand side of the church is the venerated statue, 19 inches tall, glass encased, and dressed at the time of our visit in green, signifying Ordinary Time in the liturgical calendar. The museum on the second floor of the church has the Infant's numerous robes in intricate lace, rich velvet, and luminous silk.



CLOCKWISE  
FROM LEFT: St. Vitus  
Cathedral in the Prague  
Castle area. The houses  
and buildings of Prague as  
seen from Charles Bridge.  
A closer look at the St. Vitus  
Cathedral shows its Gothic style  
architecture. The author in the  
Old Town Square, with the  
Church of Our Lady Before  
Tyn in the background.







The artistic building of Restaurace U Minuty, a touristic restaurant where one can enjoy specialties of Czech cuisine. RIGHT: The Vladislav Hall in Prague Castle is large enough to accommodate knights mounted on horses for tournaments in the Bohemian court. BELOW: Trndl, a popular sweet Czech pastry, is sold in stands all over the city.



Still on the western side of the river is **Prague Castle**, the largest ancient castle in the world. On its grounds are found several churches, most notable of which are St. Vitus Cathedral.

Perhaps the most important part of **St. Vitus Cathedral** is the Chapel of St. Wenceslas, which holds the relics of the saint. The room is not accessible to the public, but can be viewed from the doorway. The walls are decorated with scenes from the Passion of Christ depicted in early 16th century paintings and adorned with thousands of gemstones. Through a doorway in this room, with seven different keys held by seven different individuals, is a room where the Czech government keeps the Bohemian Crown Jewels, composed of the Crown of St. Wenceslas, made for the coronation of Charles IV, the royal orb and scepter, the coronation vestments of the Kings of Bohemia, the gold reliquary cross, and the sword of St. Wenceslas.

While it is best to view the Castle area and the Lesser Town on foot, there is a different way to see the Old Town. The buildings in the Old Town are built so that the second floor, where drawing rooms and grand halls are found, are ornately decorated. It is, therefore, worthwhile to

view the structures in the Old Town from the slightly elevated perspective of a horse drawn carriage, which is abundant in the **Old Town Square**.

Around the Square, there are two must-sees: the **Church of Our Lady Before Tyn** and the **Astronomical Clock**. The church is a wonderful example of the Gothic style, with a relief depicting the Crucifixion in the northern portal. The baroque altarpiece is another great example of the co-mingling of different artistic and architectural styles in the city. Nearby, tourists gather to witness the fascinating animation of the gilded Astronomical Clock. The sides of the clock begin to move, and two windows reveal a parade of the apostles. The spectacle ends with the crowing of a golden rooster and the tolling of the bells atop the tower.

It is in this area that you will find several shops. And if you can't resist the impulse to buy something, then let it be some antiques or good quality Bohemian crystal. Designs range from the traditional starburst pattern to more contemporary geometric designs. From glasses and candlesticks to vases and dishes, the items on offer are endless. Grab a few on your first trip to Prague, anyway, you'll be back. You did touch the plaque on the bridge, didn't you? ■

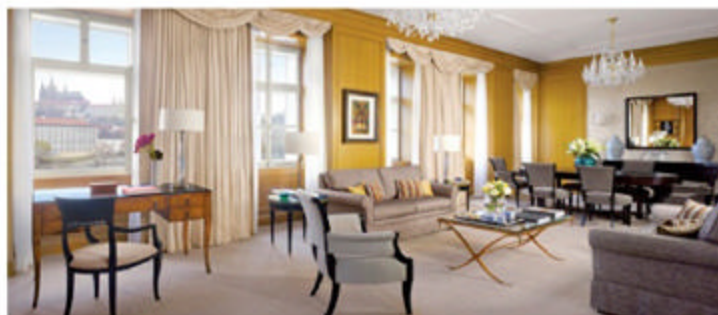


The rooftops of the Lesser Town as seen from the Prague Castle grounds. BELOW: A luxurious room at the Four Seasons Prague



## WHERE TO STAY

The **Four Seasons Prague** in the Old Town is the ultimate in accommodations in this beautiful city. The hotel is at the foot of the eastern end of Charles Bridge, conveniently keeping a safe distance from the hustle and bustle of the main tourist walkways. Choose a Renaissance Room in order to imbibe a true Czech feel, with luxurious paneling and molding to bring you back to a bygone era. Furnished in soothing light blues and celadon green, with a grand Bohemian crystal chandelier above, the room signifies the most gracious of living.



Don't forget to pay a visit to the gift shop—there is a wonderful array of candles and perfumes.

## WHERE TO EAT

**Kampa Park** on the banks of the Vltava in Mala Strana offers al fresco seating on a patio with a view of the bridge, the river, and the Old Town, or in an indoor dining room on the lower level, right at the riverbank. Either way, the atmosphere is amazing and the food is excellent. There is a lot of seafood on the menu, all very fresh, as well as the usual Czech fare consisting of pork, potatoes and cabbage.

Dine on a terrace of a quaint hotel to take in a breathtaking view of the entire city. **Terasa U Zlate Studne** atop the Golden Well Hotel is another superb choice for dining in Prague. During the summer, guests can access the Royal Gardens of Prague Castle through a small gate from the terrace.

You will see a lot of **Trndl stands** in Prague. Try their delicious sugared bread for a light snack as you take in the city sights.

## WHAT TO DO

Get in touch with **Context Travel** for some of the most in-depth and insightful specialized tours of Prague. The private tours are worth every penny. The docents are specialists in the fields relevant to the tour and are matched to the profile of the members of the group. They give an insightful appreciation of the city from different perspectives such as in the context of the reign of Charles IV, the Iron Curtain and the Vel-

vet Revolution, the Habsburgs, Jesuits, and Jewish Prague.

## WHERE TO SHOP

**Artel Glass** sells luxury Bohemian crystal in both traditional and contemporary designs. By far, they carry the most interesting and unusual selection of crystal houseware in Prague. Choose from dainty glass-etched designs with hummingbirds and cherry blossoms or geometric art deco patterns of everything from candle holders to pitchers.

Prague is teeming with antique shops, and among the best is **Antique Andrie**, a stone's throw away from Charles Bridge on the side of the Old Town. Scour the shop for icons, china, silverware, paintings, sculptures, furniture, porcelain, crystal, and jewelry. You can spend hours looking at the treasures that range in style from Byzantine to Art Nouveau to Art Deco to Cubist, and you will surely not emerge from the store empty-handed.









# THE PORTICO LIFESTYLE

BRINGING A SENSE OF  
SERENITY TO CITY LIVING

BY RAPH KIEFER / PHOTOGRAPHS BY MILO SOGUECO  
ILLUSTRATION BY PAULO VALENZUELA





The eclectic interiors of this two-bedroom unit encapsulate successful and balanced urban lifestyles. Rare travel finds are all tastefully integrated into the unique design without crowding the area. The unit's contemporary-rustic-indie vibe is accentuated by the interesting choices of art and curios, like the re-purposed weaves on the Ottoman chairs. Natural light flows inside the unit while offering spectacular views of the Antipolo mountains or the Makati/Ortigas/BGC skyline; and with its urban courtyards Portico essentially merges the comfort of your living space with the outdoors.

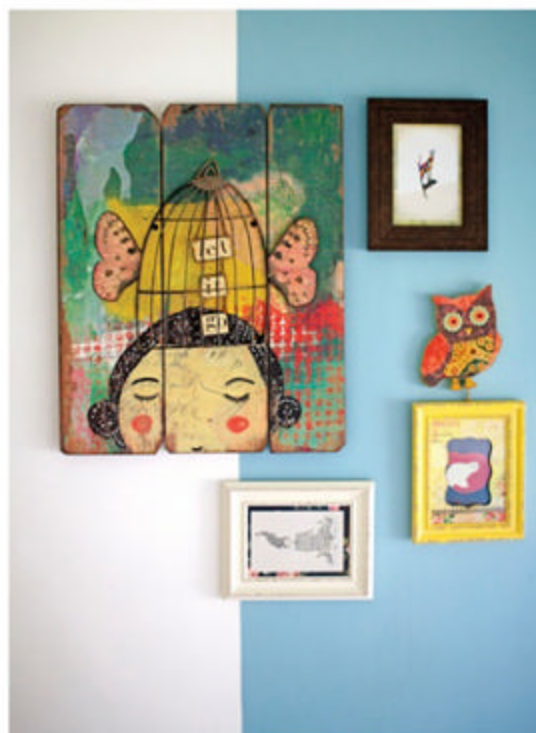


**YOU WILL HAVE HEARD THIS BY NOW:** “the key to happiness is finding the right balance between work and everything else.” It’s a philosophy shared by businessmen, spiritual leaders, teachers and pretty much everyone old enough to have a career. With the “answer” to the conundrum so clear, the new question becomes “how do we achieve this balance?” After all, for the modern individual living in the urban jungle we call Manila, the challenge of switching off from our ‘work mode’ proves to be a constant struggle. Blame it on the energy of the city, its dense population or the concrete walls that close in around us on a daily basis.

The reality for most of us is that most of our surrounding environment isn’t exactly the restful sanctuary we want it to be. So we often find a means to escape from our mundane settings, and go on vacations to faraway places where once-in-a-while the hustle and bustle of the everyday can’t follow. To these quiet places where nature and the warmth of community puts our minds at ease, where time slows down and the family enjoys things together.

It is this idyllic neighborhood environment that Alveo Land’s newest development, *Portico*, brings to the megacity. A cozy alternative haven set right at the heart of where everything happens that you can call your own and that you can escape to everyday. A great and inspiring place that makes a home truly...a home.

The 3.6-hectare Portico development is a charming neighborhood in the midst of the Ortigas CBD that allows its residents to live life with the gentle pace of a timeless era, all within a modern world setting. In-















The units are carefully laid-out to maximize living spaces and views. The bedrooms and the living area are oriented towards the facade to take advantage of the scenic views. The kitchen and utility areas are clustered towards the main hallway with spaces large enough for the homeowners to work in them. Floor-to-ceiling mirrors make the unit look larger while mixed-and-matched furniture and wall decor hold an eclectic but modern look. Portico's interior design was done by Design Hirayama + Quesada [DHQ] for LIFESCAPES by Alveo (Portico).



spired by the quaint brownstone architecture of New York City and the spectacular piazzas in classic European neighborhoods, Portico's distinctive community will provide an urban courtyard living experience highlighted by lush greens, cobblestone pavements, wrought-iron features, stylish amenities, and airy living spaces. The various courtyards around the development will be convergence spaces that allow the community to interact, mingle, and co-exist against the backdrop of nature and the open skies. The emphasis on common spaces for nature and community in between stately high-rise residential towers puts an end to the compromise of the otherwise dense surroundings of Ortigas. As the metropolis continues to make spaces even tighter in the name of progress and at the expense of quality of life, Portico's urban courtyard lifestyle provides a rare luxury to city living.

"In essence, the lifestyle we envision for Portico is one that is unhurried; it persuades you to slow down, to take a breath, to relax a bit, and find that quality time to reconnect to things that matter," says Paulo Ong, Division Manager of Project Development for Alveo Land. "Because the community is located right in the heart of the city, it's easy to connect with your work, school, or business, as well as with yourself and with your loved ones. Portico provides the kind of simple and convenient lifestyle that homeowners need to switch on and switch off pretty effortlessly and all the while, providing them with a signature living experience that lets them cherish the warmth in every moment."

### Abundant options

Conveniently located in the dynamic Ortigas CBD, Portico is a highly-networked and centrally-located neighborhood in close proximity to prime work and lifestyle hubs around Metro Manila, including Makati City, Bonifacio Global City, and Quezon City's Vertis North. Being in the middle of it all makes this development one of the most attractive residential choices in terms of access to both business and entertainment hotspots.

This distinctive neighborhood is surrounded by generous options for commercial leisure, boutique shopping, and artisanal gastronomy. The surrounding Ortigas CBD is a renowned home to many thriving







restaurants, recreation spots, and retail centers that cater to every palate and mood. Nearby is Barrio Kaptitolyo, another well-known area for home grown and original dining options. The general vicinity is a favorable area for great finds for your home and lifestyle, many of which are just a walk away in either direction.

Of course, once Portico opens its own refreshing retail corridor, it will become a popular destination by itself. Within Portico, a charming retail row of everyday essentials and artisanal specialties will greet residents and guests alike with its picturesque al fresco ambiance, tranquil walkways, and scenic courtyard plazas. “What we intend to have here is a unique, open plan shopping and dining experience where people can comfortably sit or take a relaxing stroll either by themselves or in the company of family and friends. We will have an eclectic mix of merchants that offer distinct and one-of-a-kind finds, the kind that you’d expect in old world cities, where the curated environs are warm and cozy, yet still offers the everyday urban conveniences of modern city living,” Ong explains.

### Oasis in the city

The 41-storey Sandstone, the first of Porticos’ high rise condominium towers, is delightfully low in density, with only 11 units assigned to a typical level. At a 34% glass ratio, each unit will benefit from tall windows that allow natural light and air to circulate, as well as provides breathtaking views of the Antipolo mountains or a stunning panorama of the Makati/Ortigas/BGC skylines. The units themselves are well laid-out to maximize the space while still staying functional. This means residents will have amply spaced areas for bedroom, T&B, kitchen, utility, living, and dining with select units featuring spacious balconies to allow maximum appreciation of Porticos magnificent surroundings.

### Contemporary-rustic-indie vibe

The two-bedroom model unit interiors featured within the pages were done by Design HQ (Hirayama + Quesada) for Alveo Land. The

unit was designed around an upwardly-mobile 30-something couple who have a darling 5-year-old daughter. Both the husband and wife are successful and at the peak of their respective careers while the daughter, a girl scout, actively enjoys camping and the outdoors. The look that Design HQ has achieved is one of visual diversity, rarefied taste, and asymmetrical balance that define the individuals that call the space “home”.

The color palette, furniture pieces, and accessories incorporated in the model unit capture the personalities of the owners and reflect many of today’s trends which revolve around a contemporary-rustic-indie vibe. Illustrating this are details such as repurposed old weaves converted into ottoman chairs, deliberately weathered wooden elements, natural “birch cabin” colored wood and metal objects covered with luxurious patina.

The advent of colorful prints and fabrics being the in thing at the moment; there is more room for adventure and expression within Portico’s thoughtful layouts. The model unit’s mismatched furniture and home accessories are the perfect showcase of how ‘modern’ has become a new form of retro. Recycling has become ‘upcycling’ and everyone can get into it.

“The model unit is Alveo and Design HQ’s take on modernized American turn-of-the-century apartments that blends together contemporary industrial components with traditional New York brownstone elements, all with a generous helping of unique curios from all across the globe,” adds Ong.

### Family-oriented activities

The heart of the development is its ability to make people connect within truly inspirational surroundings, and it does so by creating various activities for the entire family to do. With several themed courtyards, a range of verdant gardens and landscaped paths, as well as, high-end amenities that include a signature two-storey clubhouse structure replete with function rooms, outdoor lounges, a fitness hub,





The stately master bedroom is cloaked in a variety of textures, where rustic meets luxe. OPPOSITE PAGE : Sun-filled rooms are a treat within Portico, as the most important areas of this spacious home are oriented towards the views.





With the entire family in mind, the Portico model unit boasts ample space in the kid's bedroom, equipped with its own study and play areas.

and glorious pools, Portico will itself be an ideal place to truly bond with your near and dear once it is completed.

The neighborhood surrounding Portico is also rich with activities for the whole family. The development connects you to a variety of interesting and engaging recreation spots. Take a trip to Ark Atilon along C5 for an interactive indoor zoo experience in a Noah's ark-like structure. On Sundays, the usually busy Emerald Avenue is closed to vehicular traffic so that the neighborhood can take (or rent) their bicycles out for a spin on the large open road. People from all walks of life come here with their families and pets, and if you don't want to be running after your children all day, there are numerous coffee shops where you can wait. For something more educational, a trip to the Lopez Museum on Exchange Road is a good option. The museum is the oldest privately owned museum and library in the Philippines.

The serene balance of prime property and vast open spaces is a rarity these days and it is this detail that makes Portico and Alveo Land truly unique. The overall Portico masterplan was conceptualized by Carlos Arnaiz Architects (CAZA) while The Sandstone at Portico's ar-

chitecture was developed by Pimentel Rodriguez Simbulan & Partners (PRSP), renowned consultants that have been tapped by Alveo to work on this prestigious project. As a whole, the development is designed to bring a distinct charm and character into the city, to create a life, unhurried, to bring symmetry to an otherwise hectic city life, and to bring back the sense of community from the old world, today. It may not be the sole and have-all answer to the balance we all seek, but if we're going to try, the home is definitely a great place to start. ■

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# Buzzling Community

ALVEO LAND'S NEWEST DEVELOPMENT, PORTICO, IS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT IS SURROUNDED BY GENEROUS OPTIONS FOR COMMERCIAL AND ARTISANAL LEISURE.

## Food:

**Poco Delicatessen** (21 East Capitol Drive, Kapitolyo, Pasig City) is a small deli with 11 tables, perfect if you're in the mood for artisanal sausages, homemade sauerkraut, brick oven baked pizza, sandwiches, great cheese selections and wine to go along with it.

**Cafe Juanita** (19 Capitol Drive, Kapitolyo, Pasig City) is one of the mainstays and most consistent in serving great Filipino food since the year 2000. Juanita is both a feast for the eyes and the palate as the restaurant is filled with items collected by the owners from their travels.

**Locavore** (10 Brixton St., Kapitolyo, Pasig City) is one of the hottest restaurants in Manila at the moment. Locavore never fails to surprise with its unique spins on Filipino food. There is something familiar and yet fresh about this establishment. Nearly a third of the menu focuses on a Filipino favorite, the *Kinilaw* (raw seafood prepared in vinegar) while the rest of the menu is original, delicious and worth multiple visits.

**Marufuku Japanese Restaurant** (Ground Floor, Crescent Bldg., 29 San Miguel St., Pasig City). People have been flocking to this relatively new restaurant despite its elusive location. This quaint, clean and neat restaurant serves great food. The sashimi and sushi are as fresh as raw food should be. Servings are big and great for sharing.

**Detalle Italian Restaurant** (88 Meralco Ave., corner Julia Vargas Ave., Pasig City), one of the newest establishments in the area, is fast gaining a reputation for great Italian comfort food. Open only at 5 p.m. onwards for dinner and drinks, this is the kind of place to casually hang out and enjoy a night out with friends.

## Shopping:

**Focus Global Inc.** (Pioneer St., corner Reliance St., Mandaluyong city) established itself as a provider of quality products and services. Through its efforts, Focus brands such as Ethan Allen and Siematic have successfully become an integral part of Philippine households.

**HMR Philippines** (Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City). When it comes to quality surplus, HMR is the name that stands out. Their products are from Australia and the US, and stocked in a two-storey warehouse-like building. Going in there requires a significant amount of time as every corner has something you think you might need.

**Heima** (103 Brixton Bldg. #3 Brixton St., Pasig City). For original, colorful, fun and unique furniture and finds for the home, Heima is the go-to spot in Manila. If, despite their diverse selection, nothing catches your eye, they will proudly offer custom designs for they believe that there is something that can define anyone's lifestyle. All items are locally made with love. Especially appealing is their selection of stationary in their Paper Club selection.

**Space Encounters** (Unit B, Mezzanine, Padilla Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr., Pasig City). For those who prefer to think (and live) outside of the box, a trip to Space Encounters might be overdue. With accent pieces that pop out and eclectic designs and fabrics abound, this store has something made for your inner artist.

**Urban Abode** (CW Home Depot, Julia Vargas Ave., Pasig City) keeps up with the global trend of the Industrial-rustic look. They have everything from wall décor and furniture to accent pieces to match today's lifestyle. The establishment has been able to blend tradition with contemporary looks, and functionality with aesthetics.

## Gallery:

**Lopez Museum** (Exchange Road, Pasig City) is the oldest privately owned and managed museum and library in the city that specializes in Philippine material. With over 500 works in its collection and over 20,000 titles in the library, visiting here is like going back in time. Of high interest are the personal effects of National Hero Jose Rizal, 16<sup>th</sup> century maps and books, and works by Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo and Juan Luna, to name a few.

## Activites:

On Sundays, the entire stretch of **Emerald Ave.** is closed and turned into an activity area.

It's the perfect place to bring your children for some safe fun on their bicycles or skateboards while you wait in one of the coffee shops or fast food places on the street. If you don't have your own bike, you can conveniently rent one at a reasonable rate.

**Ark Avilon Zoo** (Frontera Verde, Ortigas Avenue cor. C5, Pasig City) was inspired by the biblical 'Noah's Ark.' The building may look small from the outside, but it is home to many animals, some of which visitors may interact with. The indoor zoo also offers arts and crafts activities, and has an area for birthday parties and other functions.

**Ace Water Spa** (United St. cor. Brixton, Kapitolyo, Pasig City) Looking for a different spa experience? Spend a day at this facility where all massages are done with water pressure rather than hands; guests get to choose from soft, medium and hard just like in a regular spa. People who like aromatherapy can jump into one of the heated pools with options of lavender, jasmine or mint. Other facilities include steam rooms, saunas, cold pools and, of course, 'normal' pools. ■





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# homes



Home Dream Home, p. 94



As the *Metro Home & Entertaining* team dropped by right before the holidays, the house was already prepped accordingly, with a Christmas tree standing in one corner. Architect Ramon Antonio initially suggested to the family that they limit the tree's decor to Christmas balls only, although they have taken liberties with this instruction: "We just kept adding and adding!" the homeowner admits with a laugh.







RENOVATED TEN YEARS AGO, THIS HOME'S CLEAN LINES AND MODERN TOUCHES CREATE A LOOK THAT ALLOWS IT TO REMAIN FRESH, CLASSIC, AND ALWAYS NEW

# MODERN TIMELESS

BY NANA CARAGAY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO



The homeowners like to entertain guests in the lanai. "We use it for *merienda* and snacks," the lady of the house says. It's also where the family patriarch prefers to relax, read the newspaper, and take breakfast. The mustard sofa set was custom-built by Romero.

**AFTER PAYING A VISIT** to a friend's newly built, Antonio-designed home, this homeowner was so inspired that he decided to give his own abode a makeover. He knew he wanted the best advice possible, one that would always take into account the owner's unique wants and needs into the integrity of architectural and interior design. Thus, he sought the services of Ramon Antonio. The result: a two-storey, four-bedroom, 600-sq.m. structure of steel, glass, and white walls, an oasis that effortlessly stands out in this idyllic southern suburb.

"My dad said, 'When I went to my friend's house, it was so serene, so calm, and so relaxing...' that he wanted probably to feel the same vibe in his own house," says the homeowner's daughter, who now resides here with her own family. So they tore down the American colonial home they had lived in and started to build a new one from scratch, this time guided by Antonio's modern tropical aesthetic.

"My dad wanted something calm, peaceful, uncluttered—a house where you could see the outside from the inside and allow the outdoors to come in," the daughter explains. Indeed, a calming, relaxing vibe does seem to instantly wash over you the moment you step in, due to the high ceilings, large vertical windows that allow plenty of natural sunlight, and carefully curated, streamlined furniture. Because the residents had already accumulated pieces from years of living in this address, Antonio took it upon himself to choose from and edit the items that they owned, requesting only a few major additions. "He worked on the existing pieces that we had as far as artworks and collectibles were concerned, and worked around that," the daughter says.











## Meticulous arrangements

Antonio was very meticulous, too, about which items should stay and which should go—the artwork he chose to highlight among their extensive collection were his personal choices as well. Take, for instance, the specially commissioned work by Raul Isidro with splashes of yellow, brown, and beige that hangs in its own recess surrounded by a console. This became the focal point for the décor of the rest of the room, dictating the mostly neutral, beige, and brown color scheme. Another commissioned piece by BenCab provides the lone touch of color in the dining area, while a sculpture by Ramon Orlina stands beside the staircase. Works by Arturo Luz and Joya can also be found in designated areas around the house. “My parents collect art,” the homeowner explains, and Antonio shows them off in the perfect spaces.

Another consideration that Antonio kept in mind is that the homeowners love to entertain, hence, the presence of multiple sitting areas where guests can congregate, easily transforming the space into a venue for mini-gatherings. “It pretty much fits our profile—we like staying home and entertaining friends at home. We keep it small though,” she says. An example is the living room with a cozy, inviting white sofa from Minotti. Silver candelabras (brought by the homeowner from Switzerland) sit on a glass coffee table in the center, while an antique *chofah* from a temple in Bangkok, and ornamental belts worn by ethnic dancers in Mindoro are displayed on one side.

## Favorite places

The second place that visitors are naturally drawn to is the bright, cheerful lanai, with accents of mustard and beige care of the custom-built sofas from Romero. “This space is where we have *merienda*,







**RIGHT:** A piece by BenCab presides over the dining area; on the opposite wall hang antique wooden window frames from China. **OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:** The painting by Raul Isidro was specially commissioned for this space and became the focal point of the room, dictating the mostly neutral color scheme. **OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM:** The white and steel kitchen reflects the rest of the house's modern, streamlined design.









Beyond the home's structure, Architect Antonio is known for being hands on with every single detail of the furniture, interiors, and decor — he also had a hand in styling the elements displayed in the den, editing and curating the ornaments, artworks, and accessories the family had collected over the years.





snacks, and where my dad takes his breakfast and reads the papers every morning,” the daughter explains.

As for the rest of the residents, you will most likely find them safely ensconced in their bedrooms, which Antonio designed to be their own little retreat. “If you ask all of us, we like staying in our respective bedrooms,” she admits with a laugh. “Architect Antonio said, ‘I’m going to give you a Four Seasons vibe!’” And if you had a bedroom that was patterned after a hotel renowned the world over for its patented sense of luxury, then you, too, would probably never want to leave.

As we walk around the household, we observe how well it has aged, considering that all of the renovations took place around ten years ago and yet, it maintains the appearance of looking impossibly shiny and new. The owner wholeheartedly agrees. “We haven’t even repainted!” she points out, and remarks that whenever they go abroad, they always look forward to coming home to this welcoming, beautiful space. “Whenever we come home from a trip, my daughter kisses one of the walls before going up the stairs!” she exclaims. “We feel at peace here—peace, rest, and the love of God.” ■





LEFT: Even the bathroom represents Antonio's modern tropical aesthetic, with wooden walls and shiny fixtures providing a contrast between warm and cool. RIGHT: Antonio told the homeowners that he would create little sanctuaries for each of them in their bedrooms, and he delivered on this promise, as seen in the bedroom of their teenage daughter. The family's beloved Pomeranian certainly seems to agree.



# THE HIGH LIFE

SOARING CEILINGS AND A BOLD DESIGN SCHEME MAKE THIS HOME A STUNNING YET SUPREMELY LIVABLE HAVEN

BY LEAH PUYAT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO

**“WE SHOULD FOCUS MORE** on architectural shots, rather than the small, detailed interior shots,” declares interior designer Timmy Roa Antonio as we began our tour of this striking and yet palpably homey family oasis. It is a touching tribute to her husband, Yugi Antonio, who is the architect of this bravura design statement that masterfully combines a clean, lofty design with a practical and still cozy atmosphere. “Bright and airy, that’s what Yugi wanted; to make it *maaliwalas*,” Roa Antonio reveals. It may sound like a simple objective, but the result was not simple to achieve.

Originally, the home was a hodgepodge of ‘70s bungalow design that was added without much thought for a cohesive look. The lady of the house says, “This was an old home of my husband’s family that they used to rent out, and it was a bit dark and cramped. We were planning to renovate, and then typhoon Ondoy came, the house was flooded, and we had to build a new home instead.”

The collaboration of the husband-and-wife design team and the clients was an easy and mostly stress-free process. The lady of the house admits, “It was really my husband and Yugi who discussed the house! My only request was that the island in the kitchen have electrical outlets on all sides, so that when I bring out my mixer and other cooking things, I don’t have to think where to plug everything.”

And sure enough, when the man of the house arrives midway through the shoot, and, we all compliment him on the home, he laughingly does the humble-brag, and says, “This is all me. I did it all.”





A grand homecoming. Soaring ceilings and a sculptural staircase create a stunning presence. The eclectic mix of Oriental furnishings, a more casual sofa and contemporary Filipino art is timelessly elegant.







The family jewels. The dining space is a union of both family's treasured hand me downs. The dramatic chandelier used to hang in the lady of the house's family home. The chairs came from the husband's mother, who bought them from a Chinese restaurant that closed shop. The dining table also belonged to the wife's mother. Though the chandelier and table are Indian, and the chairs are Filipino Chinoiserie, the subtle drama and more traditional lines add up to an interesting, inviting mix.









## Height is might

The almost cathedral-height ceilings and the huge windows and sliding doors make the home feel expansive and spacious though the home is not actually that large. A sleek, sculptural staircase stands as a focal design point. Wooden paneling adds drama to the open living and dining areas. An Oriental-inspired doorway frames the kitchen and gives the utilitarian space its own presence. The mix of dramatic lighting fixtures adds modern elegance. The three black hanging lamps by the staircase, an ornate emerald green chandelier over the dining area, and the crystal chandelier with white and black shades all work with the home's scale and style.

"I do lean towards a more Asian modern look, but I also like it

when there are things that seem as if they won't go, but somehow does all work together," explains the lady of the house. She cites a gilded woven settee that takes pride of place in her living area, juxtaposed with a low-key modern white sectional sofa and Chinese chairs. "It's the bigger version of the stool I have in my dressing room. It doesn't really match anything, but I like how it looks."

Her acceptance of an unexpected design gesture must have been honed in her mother's home. She was lucky enough to have a mother who is obsessed with interior design, and she was so happy when her mother renovated the old family home and passed on to her the dining table and the chandelier in the dining room. Her mother is also always on the hunt for furniture and other finds for the home. "She found our





Overscaled black lighting fixtures bring a bold and new focus to the second floor. LEFT: The kitchen is the lady of the home's haven, and her sister has combined a glamorous interpretation of Orientalia with meticulous and practical space planning.

piano! She heard that someone who was leaving the country was selling the piano at a really low price and she called me and told me that I just had to get it. My husband and my daughters now play together," the proud wife and mother shares.

She got her dining chairs from her mother-in-law. "A friend of my mother-in-law had a Chinese restaurant that went out of business, and my mother-in-law bought these chairs from her! My husband is from a big family, so we need all the seating we can fit into our house. To refresh the chairs, we had them painted black, to go with the kitchen."

Roa Antonio adds, "She inherited her mom's love of shopping for the home. She has also been collecting Chinese furniture and other pieces through the years, and so I just found ways to make them feel

new again." One unpredictable move was to place a slim red antique cabinet in the kitchen.

The owner is also particularly fond of a steel cabinet that is now placed in their outdoor dining space. "That cabinet was on a set of a Woody Allen movie and that's why I got it, and why I made sure I brought it home with me." The couple met and fell in love in New York when they were both doing post graduate studies, and this piece marks that special time in their story.

Another design feature that makes the most of the home's high ceilings is the man cave. Tucked into a corner off the entrance, it features a media center, and a home office that is on a mini mezzanine. "My husband told Yugi, 'Since the ceilings are so high, why don't we









Clever storage space behind the bed maximizes this bedroom's space. The wood from the old house and the previous home's front door are upcycled in this room. The Asian accents provide continuity with the rest of the house. **OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP):** The husband's home office is a combination den and loft, the ultimate man cave. "He can hide out here for hours, and I even have to text him sometimes, just to let him know I'm home, too," chuckles the lady of the home. **(BOTTOM):** The master suite's bath calls to mind a spa retreat.

build a little loft into it, so I can have more space.' Now, this is where he goes to get lost. Sometimes, he'll be here for hours, and when I text to ask where he is, I just get surprised when he texts back that he is home," relates the lady of the house.

### Old is the new black

The architect also managed to save all the wood from the old house and reused it in this new incarnation. The old front door is now the door to the master bedroom, and the staircase, and the wooden floors in the bedrooms also were built from salvaged materials from the old home.

The distinctive front door was cobbled together from old Meralco posts in the family's Cavite vacation home. "But I floated the door, surrounded it with glass, so that it wouldn't feel too heavy." The old home's dining set is now part of the outdoor dining space. The daughters' beds were repainted and reupholstered to look fresher, with that neo-vintage feel that is currently in vogue.

Roa Antonio is also proud of finding ways to design inconspicu-

ous storage. She hid some shelves behind a post in the kitchen; in the master bedroom, she created a bespoke upholstered headboard that hides a slim cabinet where the couple keep their pillows. She also lined the lady's dressing room with open shelves so she can see everything she has. "That's where I spend all my time, in my dressing room! I sort my things, what I can pass on to my teenage daughter, or what I can hide away and save for her, and then make space for newer things," she confesses.

What does she love most about her home? "I like the flow. Everything is easy. It's easy to maintain because it's not that big. But there's now enough space for all of us to be together and to have private time. I love my kitchen, and my spice garden on the side."

Pablo Picasso once said that every act of creation must start with destruction. A typhoon may have ravaged this family's old house, but they now have a home that not only heightens their enjoyment of their time together, but is a far more appropriate backdrop to their shared creativity. ■





A mix of paintings by Filipino masters such as Amorsolo and Magsaysay-Ho, and a contemporary resort vibe make this main living room a comfortable and inviting space, perfect for family gatherings and larger parties. The earthy neutrals and the mostly figurative art add up to a space that is neither trendy nor antiquated.





# A NEW OLD HOUSE

A HOME  
OF MANY  
STORIES,  
UNDEFINED  
BY TRENDS  
AND TIME

BY LEAH PUYAT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
PAUL DEL ROSARIO





**THE ARAAL STONE THAT MARKS** the home's facade gives it a presence and gravitas; the columns that line the short walkway to the front door provide a sense of ritual. An exuberant Joya in pale greens welcomes you into the foyer, thus leavening the dark tones of the earlier impression.

A quick glance to the left gives a visually arresting and fairly dramatic cage-like installation of wooden slats that makes the stairs quite unique. The lady of the house greets us with a smile, and in a minute comes the sense that this is a home of many stories.

## Working against time

The homeowner worked with Architect Popi Laudico, daughter of Yola Johnson, the artist and retail maven who established Soumak, the shop that pioneered the more contemporary use of Filipino fiber and antique Filipino furniture and indigenous wood.

"We had worked with Popi before on a vacation home, so we knew that we could work well together. She gives you a long questionnaire, not just about your tastes, but also your kind of sports, so she can plan the storage, or how willing everyone is to share a bathroom. It's really quite detailed," says the homeowner.

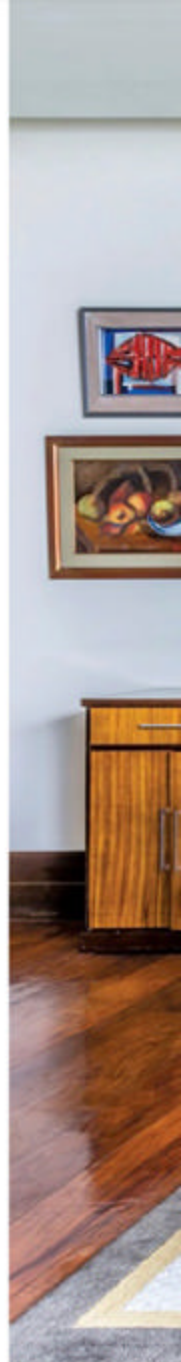


The verve and dynamics of the graphic Luz painting are matched by the contrast of the slim lamps against the more rotund jars. The ottomans that fit snugly underneath the console table provide extra seating in the living room. **LEFT:** The wooden slats, created from wood salvaged from the owner's childhood home that once stood on this lot, pay homage to the family's heritage in a bold and fresh aesthetic gesture. These were recycled from the homeowners' old house.













The dining room's gallery wall has paintings by young artists and the homeowner's own mother. "We like to entertain and had our table customized so that we could have lots of friends over for dinner." **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The lady of the house is a passionate home cook. She designed the kitchen so that she could prepare meals for large groups. She has two big ovens and an industrial grade stove. "When I was growing up, I had friends always coming over to see what was for *merienda*, and it's still the same now," confesses the lady of the house. On the day of the shoot, blueberry muffins were the treat of the day.

And yet for all those questions, she succinctly says, "I wanted a new old house, or an old new house. Yes, I still wanted it to feel new, but I didn't want it to belong to any certain time. For example, when we were building this house, everyone was doing that Asian modern look with travertine. But I don't like travertine, I really want *araal*, so that's what Popi used."

There was a kind shorthand but the one bone of contention was the height of the doors. "When I first heard that Popi wanted floor to ceiling doors, I was afraid that it would end up looking like a villa, and that is so not us," says the homeowner.

"So when I told her my worries, she just said that she would make one door, so we could see if we could live with it. If not, she would find a place where the door would not be seen. And I liked it in the end, I realized that she was right, I loved the effect."

I had to ask about the staircase, because I find that many houses today lack a memorable staircase, which I consider a missed opportunity, as it is such a sculptural element that can be completely unique and stunning. The eloquent and effortlessly compelling





homeowner elaborates, “I actually grew up on this lot, and when we tore down our old house, I really wanted to use as much as we could from what we had saved. The wood on the staircase is from our old house.”

### Like a magnet

The Joya in the foyer is such a joyful work of art and, of course, there is a charming story about it. “I actually dreamt that that painting was already there before we had placed any of the paintings. I feel that the colors and the brushstroke are saying, ‘I am not in your face, but I won’t be ignored.’”

The paintings are a juxtaposition of the classics by Anita Magsaysay Ho, Amorsolo, Bencab, and the more contemporary Gus Albor and Elmer Borlongan. The homeowner’s mother also loves to paint, and her works are displayed in the lanai and the dining room.

Her mother has what is known in Brit English as a “granny flat.” According to the homeowner, “She has her own wing, and her own schedule, but we eat together everyday. I really want my mom and my

daughters to get to know each other well.

“My husband and I love to have friends over, and so do our kids, but I think my mom entertains the most,” she continues with a laugh. “When I was growing up, my friends would come over and open the fridge, and check out what’s for *merienda*. I wanted our house to be the same.”

A close friend is with us, and she reveals, “This house is like a magnet. Or Grand Central Station. People are always coming by, or dropping things off. Plus, she (the homeowner) bakes so well, so there is also something good to eat.”

As the afternoon winds down, and it is almost dusk, there is time for one last story.

“The morning after we moved in, I was by the front door and overheard two construction workers talking. One of them said, ‘Ay, *tapos na pala ’tong bahay*.’ And then the other one answered, ‘*Hindi, matalaga na ’yan diyari*.’”

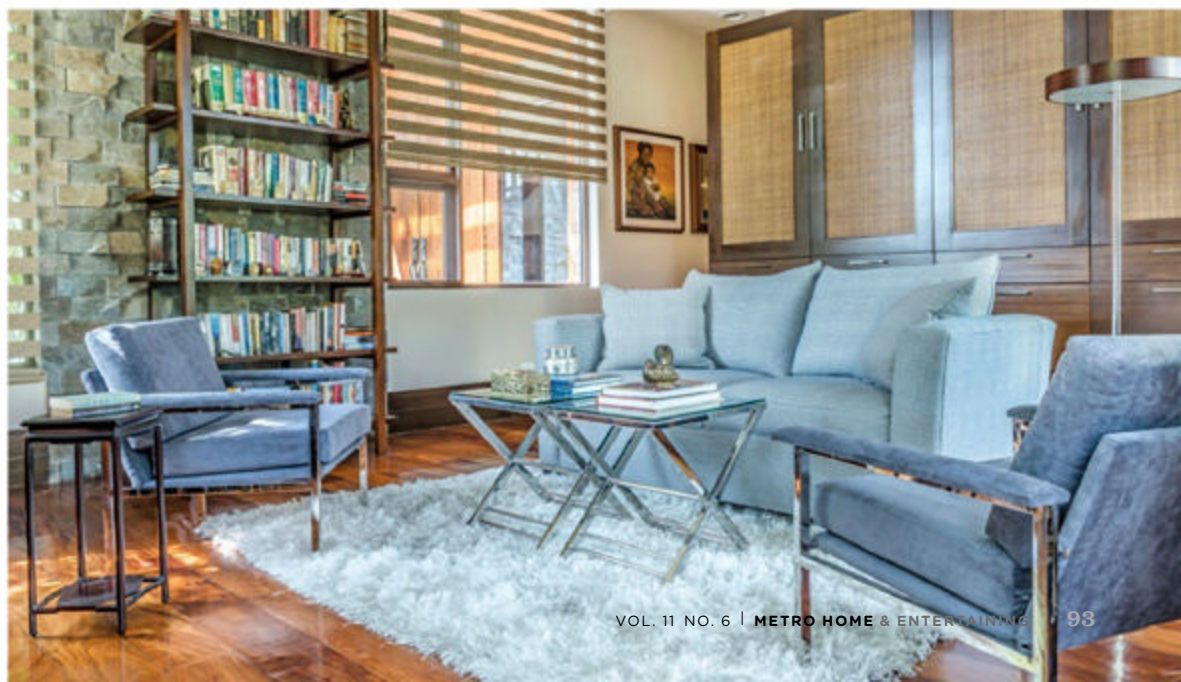
“I called Popi immediately, and said, ‘We got it right!’”

They most certainly did. ■





LEFT: "Popi (Laudico, the home's architect) loves designing huge bathrooms, and we added a shower to the powder room, so that our den could function as an extra guest room," explains the gracious lady of the house. TOP (RIGHT): The "granny flat" is a large wing of the house with a bedroom suite and a home office. With a smile, the homeowner reveals, "My mom leads the busiest life of all of us, and she entertains the most, too!" BOTTOM: The discreet checks on the sofa in the library alludes to bespoke English tailoring, an apt motif in the library/den.





# HOME DREAM HOME

BALI-INSPIRED EXOTIC MEETS  
COMFORT IN THIS FAMILY HOME

BY DAHL BENNETT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAR CONCENGCO







A full wall of the formal living room features the ripple-patterned frame giving the house its strong Asian character. Furniture pieces are modern and streamlined. The sofa is upholstered in Charles Pollack velvet fabric and leather armchairs are from Italy sourced from Ozzi. The coffee table top is Dark Emperador marble with stainless steel legs. All accessories on the accent table are from Shelter.



The piano was central to the design of this entertainment room as it meant a lot to the patriarch of the house. “My husband loves to play the piano and he does so only by ear. That piano was the most prized fixture in their modest home that survived without a television or a stereo,” says Gen.



**WHEN BUILDING A HOME** for your family, you’d want to make sure that the entire structure is how you want it to be—perfect aesthetically and with a strong connection to your sense of family. The Sinoros are fortunate to have achieved both.

### Bali resort feel

Genevieve “Gen” Sinoro felt that their old house had become too small for her three teenagers, so the idea of moving to a bigger one was always in Gen’s mind. However, it took a distressing experience with Typhoon Ondoy in 2009 that convinced the family that it was time to act on their plan.

“Ondoy inundated and extensively damaged the ground floor of our house. Fearing a repeat of the disaster, we decided to move out,” says the mother of the home, a former flight attendant of an international airline who now helps her husband in their consulting service and other businesses.

Hiring a young, talented architect, the owners began construction of their house in 2011 on a 700-sq.m. lot in a subdivision close to their old residence in Quezon City. Gen was not keen on having an overwhelmingly huge house; she wanted a functional, well-ventilated one with a minimalist design that would lend a genuine appreciation for its aesthetics. It was also important to keep the construction cost within the budget.

### All access

The peg was a Bali resort that Gen’s family had seen in a magazine. The picture featured an entire structure wrapped around a pool. “Our preference was to have a Balinese-modern Asian touch with func-







The formal dining area shares a view of the pool outside. It also features the ripple-patterned panels, giving continuity to the design of the entire house.



The all-white walls and transparent Ghost chairs lend a lightness to this simple breakfast nook with views of a pocket garden just a step away. RIGHT: Clean, sleek lines dominate this all-white modern kitchen installed by a specialist contracted by Gen. The foreground features black and white counters using Corian material.







tional rooms. We also wanted optimum visual accessibility of these sections to a water feature that could be either a pool or waterfall, and a garden,” says Gen.

The architect came up with a two-floor U-shaped structure with a well-planned sectioning that allowed maximum visual access to the pool from all sides and on both floor levels. The formal dining, entertainment room, and living area on the first floor have full views or glimpses of the pool or garden while most of the bedrooms on the second floor, installed with wide windows, have generous views of the pool and landscape below.

For better ventilation, the ceiling was designed higher than the standard height while doors, windows and glass paneling allow natural light and air to flow into the spaces. “It’s exactly what we envisioned. With some modification in the initial design, we knew that was it,” says Gen.

### The Almario touch

The family knew at the onset that they needed to hire interior designers. Through a common friend, they met the design duo Cynthia and Ivy Almario. “Prior to working with them, we knew of Ivy and Cynthia as they are celebrities in their own right. We like their unique design concepts, especially when it comes to the color scheme and creating the right mood for the projected theme,” says Gen.

While they showed great confidence in the Almario sisters’ work,

they were won over by the designers’ professionalism. Gen was impressed with how they handled the job, consulting the family on the minutest details, rendering a 3D of each room design and even sitting down with the children to have a feel of their individual preferences. “We told Ivy and Cynthia that we wanted a simple but elegantly designed interior finishing, including the decor. We are not fond of expensive things and we wanted the barest minimum to fill the basic spaces.”

The Almarios met the family’s wishes by approaching each room with a fine balance of luxury and comfort. The use of different color themes, credited to the Almario sisters, also gave each room an element of surprise.

What Gen prizes most is the impact the rippled panels have given their entertainment, living and formal dining areas. This decorative element has never failed to spark a conversation with visiting guests and friends, she says. These panels were especially done by the Almarios’ millwork supplier using Philippine mahogany. “We wanted to create a window treatment that filtered the outside light while still being uniquely decorative,” says Cynthia Almario.

To maintain the Bali inspiration, the Almarios introduced wooden coved ceilings in every room. “This was our ‘nod’ to their preference while keeping the look still contemporary Asian.”

The rooms on the second floor share the rich textures and luxurious details of the first floor, but their real impact comes from the color







The youngest son's bedroom floats in aqua and has the best view of the pool below. "Aqua being his favorite color was used for his custom designed beddings and his favorite round reading chair," says Cynthia. OPPOSITE PAGE (TOP): This tea room is connected to the pool deck through sliding doors behind the blinds and is used for relaxation or to entertain guests. Cynthia Almario brings out a sunny and lively feel to it with the dominant use of orange. BOTTOM: This bedroom, owned by the second daughter, is whimsical and glamorous at the same time. It uses robin's egg blue as its color theme and features mirrored furniture and silver leaf designs. "We were able to source bird ceramics of various shapes to create a vignette on the night table and console," says Cynthia.





The master bedroom instantly radiates a five-star suite ambiance with its generous space and upholstered walls in champagne colored leather. The area accommodates a sleeping, sitting and dining-cum-working areas. The coffee table is Nero Marquina marble with brass legs while the accent chairs are Thomas Pheasant-inspired. RIGHT: The family room comes in a brown and orange color scheme. Cynthia made sure this room has a fun yet functional layout. A sofa and four ottomans easily accommodate a group. The metal shelves in the background are for accessories and picture frames. Its bottom part provides desks for studying.







themes complemented by views below and the lightness lent by natural light. "All the bedrooms, including the family room, have a sizeable view of the pool. It somehow effortlessly and seamlessly connects us all as one family, which is what makes a house a home," says Gen.

### Magic strokes

Each bedroom is a product of Cynthia's magic strokes, ensuring that it reflects the owner's color preference. All rooms feature tufted headboards and platform beds, mixing classic textures with contemporary lines.

The eldest daughter's room carries a green theme with a hip and modern vibe to match "her zest for life and adventure, and love for the natural outdoors," says Gen. Adds Cynthia, "Her furniture look is Barbara Barry while her accessories vary from ceramics to picture frames, all in a complementary green color. Her bed has an upholstered ledge that doubles up as a sitting ledge."

"This room is very glamorous with its mirrored furniture and silver leaf accents," says Cynthia, of the second daughter's bedroom. A wallpaper with robin's egg blue design and champagne gold branches radiates a pleasantly feminine vibe. This is complemented by embroidered beddings.

Cynthia masterfully balances print on print for the only boy's room, expertly working around colors of black, white, gray and aqua. "In all, the bright color scheme projects a hue of life befitting their young age without being loud," Gen says of her children's rooms.

The master bedroom, on the other hand, is dreamy with its generous space and five-star hotel suite luxury. The whole room is upholstered with champagne colored leather while the full height headboard is customized in diamond Chanel quilting pattern. Flanking the bed are customized full-height oval mirrors with matching nightstands polished in walnut finish. "We were happy to find out that champagne is Gen's favorite color so we had her beddings custom-embroidered in champagne colored thread as well," shares Cynthia.

"Our house has only the basic sections and rooms that a family would normally need to comfortably move about, but it is the resort-like but homey ambiance it generates that makes it valuable to us," says Gen. "We considered building this as a dream house, a first step to making it our dream home." ■



# Deck the Halls

THE SEASON'S REVELRY CELEBRATED IN THE HOME'S MOST FESTIVE CORNERS



Tidings of welcome and joy. Ana has many creative talents—architect, jewelry designer, magazine columnist—and yet the very best of all her talents come to the fore when she orchestrates her family's Christmas celebration. She decorates the home, she sets the table, she art-directs and photographs her nephews and nieces in photo shoots, and keeps everyone jolly and bright.

## Ana Rocha's Whimsical Christmas

A HOLIDAY LOOK OF BUBBLES AND RAINDROPS WITH KID APPEAL

BY LEAH PUYAT  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JC INOCIAN

**WHEN I SAW THE GIANT** red lanterns hanging like globules of a mythical fruit on a tree by the sidewalk, I knew I had reached the Rocha home. Ana Rocha, architect, interior designer, jewelry creator, magazine columnist, and restaurateur and all-around formidable woman of style, does not do dainty.

For two years in a row, Ana didn't set up any Christmas décor, too drained by professional demands. "My nephew arrived from Singapore and asked, 'How can you say it's Christmas if there are no garlands by the staircase?'"





“So with that one question ringing in my head, I made up my mind to really go all out this year. I thought of bubbles and rain-drops. I just wanted a look that would appeal to children.”

## A fantasy Christmas

And in every way, her Christmas set-up is a child's fantasy Christmas come to life. The colors are bright and cheerful; the classic motifs such as stockings and traditional cottages are mixed with shell trees and unique finds, such as an albino carabao horn in the shape of a cornucopia, which, she says, is “about plenty and good fortune, and I just added a flower to make it more festive.”

Memories also play a vital role in her holiday tableaux. “When we were kids, my dad and my brothers would set up train sets that would wind around the base of the Christmas tree. So I started collecting cottages and train sets to complete a Christmas village.

“To set the table, I mixed my mom's oldest Noritake set (a delicate silver and white lily of the valley pattern) with some newer china with bold calligraphy on it. I found the porcelain Nativity sets in Hong Kong, clustered them as centerpieces and, at dinner, those will be both my giveaways and gifts to my friends.”

A baby grand piano is a part of the celebrations, as well as an elegant focal point in the living area.

## Movies and styling

“I went with musical instruments to go with the piano. My nieces play (the piano). And every year, they present a little movie, doing it all on laptops and stuff. It's really cute, they do all the filming and editing themselves, and friends and neighbors who are the ‘extras’ get invited to our Christmas celebration as well.”

She proudly notes that she has also passed on her love of all things glamorous and stylish. “I make sure that they all do a little pictorial for Christmas, and they know how to style themselves. They bring and choose their clothes; I just make sure the colors will all go together.” She shoots these photos, gathers them in elegant black photo albums, and these take pride of place in the family home's coffee table.

Ana loves to laugh, and there is never a dull moment in her presence. But she can also wax poetic and philosophical: “Christmas is a time for good thoughts, happy thoughts. It's a time to celebrate life, because Jesus came to life. To count all the blessings you've received throughout the year, to be thankful and to reflect on how you can become a better person in the coming year.”

Indeed, these are the best and happiest thoughts. ■

Vintage and new, casual and formal, the various elements of the Christmas feast come together in the classic green, white and red color scheme; Ana's mother's heirloom.



China mixes fantastically well with more modern plates. Containers that look like Chinese takeout boxes add humor and charm. Delicate and delightful Capiz Christmas trees top the grand piano and add local color to the home.







Ginggay Joven de la Merced, pictured here with her daughter, thoroughly enjoys the holidays because of her children. RIGHT: Christmas is all about gold in de la Merced home.

## Merry Magic at the de la Merceds

ALL THAT GLITTERS ISN'T GOLD, IT'S WARM HUGS AND GOOD CHEER

BY ELGA D. REYES  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY UY

**CHRISTMAS, IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT**, is designed as an exclamation point ending another year, another moment, in a lifetime of routine. At the risk of sounding like a Scrooge, the holiday season is simply one of many events that happen annually. Almost everything is to be expected, save for the gifts waiting to be unwrapped. But Ginggay Joven de la Merced, PR extraordinaire to global luxury brands catering to shifting tastes and markets, proves that Christmas is no ordinary occasion.

This year, instead of waiting until Halloween has passed, she opted to celebrate Christmas more-fun-in-the-Philippines style. She started decorating in September. "I







LEFT: The warm tones of the house dictate the appropriate décor for Christmas. RIGHT ABOVE: The dining table with an extravagant garland setting. BELOW: A Santa vignette brings a pop of red and whimsy into the home.



felt the Christmas spirit early," she says. "My husband went out of town for a weekend, and I wanted to surprise him when he got back."

Together with their home staff, they placed stretches of garlands on stair railings, filled clear vases with gold ornaments, arranged a red Santa vignette on a side table, and decked out their Christmas tree with everything golden, from huge acorns, leaves and poinsettias to Christmas balls of varying sizes, and twinkling lights.

The set-up was done late at night after her two children had gone to bed, "so when they awake the next morning, it's like magic," she says gleefully.

### Classic trumps fantasy

When her kids were younger, Ginggay even wanted to do a "whimsical, dream-like look." She abandoned the idea, though, since she knew it didn't suit the interiors of the house, which is predominantly in earth tones. The two-storey, four-bedroom townhouse designed by her favorite architect and interior designer, J. Anton Mendoza, is a classy contemporary home. It somewhat follows Ginggay's personal and widely regarded

style—non-fuss yet chic, and quite effortless.

It follows, therefore, that her holiday taste is equally classic. A special décor of hers is an Impy Pilapil glass Christmas tree that she received from her mom. "That's still my favorite piece, Christmas or not," she notes. Ginggay also prefers to buy most of her Yuletide furnishings and trimmings from Rustan's. She reasons, "I'm not very patient with the hunting and sourcing. I see it. I like it. I put it in. If it's too much of an effort, I won't enjoy it, and it would make the task not merry at all."

Indeed, the de la Merced home exudes joy. Next to the tree, the dining area (where her family likes to gather) is the ideal image of Christmas. A lavish tablescape is in place, bearing the same golden motif seen throughout the house, and one can only imagine the feasting that will happen here come Christmas Eve.

### Christmas is where the heart is

Interestingly, however, the family doesn't spend Christmas at home. They celebrate Christmas week overseas, usually somewhere where they can enjoy a winter

wonderland. For those who know of Ginggay's much followed Instagram account, this should be no revelation. Her travel photos are immensely envy-inducing, and she has shared this love for traveling with her family.

She says, "It's magical to share white Christmases with the children. I enjoy the snuggling because it's too cold, the snowball fights, and the freezing overcrowded theme parks. Mayhem and madness, yes, but of the happiest variety."

"And cliché as this may sound, I love [Christmas] because of my kids. I love the innocence of believing in Santa Claus. I love the gingerbread cinnamon smell. I love the warm hugs when they open their presents. I love it all."

The de la Merceds are spending Christmas in Europe. While this is the first time she and her husband have brought the kids to England, France and Italy—as opposed to taking them to their usual haunts in Disneyland and Universal Studios in the US or Japan—Ginggay believes that "Christmas is joyful whether in or out of the country. I suppose you can say Christmas is wherever they are," she says. ■





Mia and her son bond over holiday bliss, it took 20 years to build the village to its current state and it is still a work in progress.

## A Christmas Village

THE TRINIDAD FAMILY'S SPRAWLING VILLAGE-THEME DÉCOR ENRICHES THEIR COLLECTIVE MEMORY YEAR AFTER YEAR

BY MAAN D'ASIS PAMARAN  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOVEL LORENZO

**THE TRINIDAD HOME** seems quiet from the outside, its neutral colors blending in with the rest of the quiet neighborhood in a Southern enclave. Once one opens the front door, however, the festive air of Christmas cheer hits you like a wall made of tiny little bricks.

The piece de resistance is the first to greet visitors—a lit-up Christmas village consisting of more than 50 houses and tiny little shops. It started out as a small street scene some twenty years ago, and as more miniscule models were added, it became something akin to a charming mini-city, complete with a theater, a park, the requisite railroad and—get this—its own airport.

“My dad is a pilot,” Trinidad explains. Her father was actually the instigator of the project, bringing home little Lemax



structures from his trips abroad. “He would hand-carry them,” she recalls. “Our village started in the early ‘90s, *paísa-isa*. Aside from my dad’s figurines, people started giving us new things to add. Our latest is the airport. That runway is dad’s project, and he went to Toy Kingdom to look for the airplanes.”

### Urban planning

Like any other metropolis, even those with proper urban planning, their little piece

### Tip:

It is so easy to overdo the decorations, and some houses may end up looking like the Christmas fairy went on a tinsel-and-glitter spree. Mia advises exercising a bit of self-control. “You should give your eyes a break by leaving an area décor-free.”





The village has turned into a mini-city, complete with different forms of transportation ranging from cars and buses, to trains and planes.



of real estate is running out of space. "I am actually glad when something breaks because I am given an excuse to buy a replacement," she smiles. She has also learned how to improvise. "There used to be a hole in the middle, which we would use as a way to set the village across the sprawling table. We had to close it up to make room for more items."

It takes them around three weeks to put all the décor up, spending a few odd hours during weekends until they are satisfied with the finished look. "People suggested that I make it a permanent display, or to glue all the village items on the table and just find a way to store it," Trinidad says.

"We also get an electrician, just to check

that the adaptors are working and will not cause a short circuit. We just do the lights ourselves. This year, I also got a carpenter to sand the plywood base and added Styrofoam."

### Christmas in their hearts

Mia says that the holidays are really something special for her family. "I remember that it was really a production number, even when we were kids," she recalls. "Once, a piece of velvet fabric was found hanging at my Tita's house. *Si Santa daw kasi bumaba*, and a part of his suit got ripped. I enjoy doing that bit here even though my own kids are grown-up because my brother has toddlers and they really love it!

"Everyone is now grown-up, and some of my siblings are not here to celebrate Christmas with us. They live abroad with their families, and are even too busy to set up more than a Christmas tree. I do have a sister, who is a preschool teacher, but people get her to decorate their houses for Christmas. This year, she also did the lobby of a bank. She is not looking to commercialize her work, she just really loves doing it!"

An African saying goes "It takes a village to raise a child." In this case, it takes a Christmas Village to get the family together. "Every December 24, we have dinner with our respective families at home, but this is always the meeting point. We have our Noche Buena here, and then go outside to the patio for a few drinks until the early morning. *Masaya!*"

"I guess it is important to have traditions like these in each family," she reflects. "I used to bring my friends over so they can enjoy the house. Now my eldest is doing the same thing. Traditions like these help our kids see the importance of Filipino values like having close family ties."

She laughs as she talks about taking the Christmas village down. "My father and I argue each year as to when we can take everything down. My dad wants it down by the first week of January, after the Feast of the Three Kings. I tell him that according to a nun that I talked to, the season really ends on January 13. He won last year; we will see who will prevail this year."

"When everything is back in storage, it feels a little sad. The house looks bare. So we plan what to put up next Christmas." ■



# Gifts for Keeps

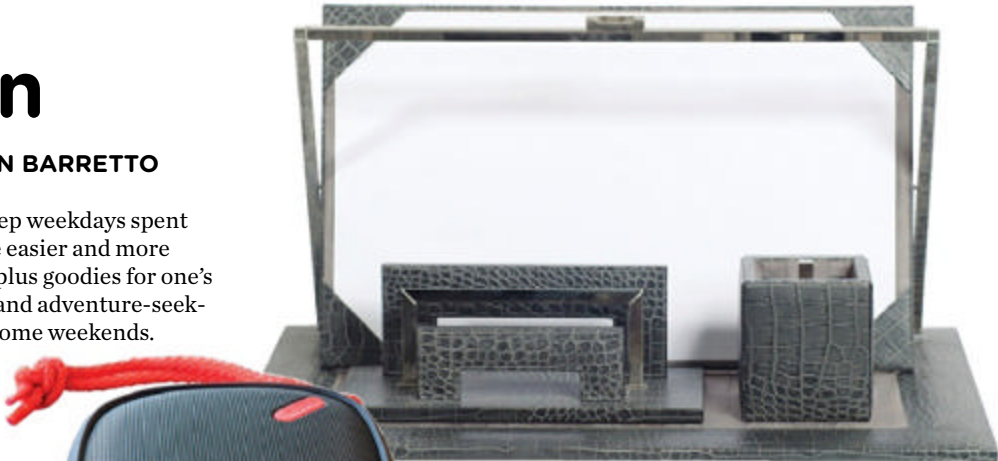
LUXE & COOL GOODIES FOR THE MEN, WOMEN, COUPLES AND KIDS IN YOUR CHRISTMAS CHECKLIST

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG

## Men

BY ANTON BARRETTO

Items to keep weekdays spent in the office easier and more organized, plus goodies for one's fun-loving and adventure-seeking streak come weekends.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Desk set, P83,500, Rustan's. Piquadro back pack, P25,950, Piquadro. Trevi Fountain lego architecture, P3,899.75. Re-vive recliner in Matt Black, Price available upon request. Natuzzi. Portable speaker, 2,990, Digital Walker.



## Plaids & Stripes

Set against a solid color, these linear designs make a bold, striking statement, and are universally appealing.





# Women

BY **MARISSA LOPA**

Soft and feminine palettes, silhouettes and designs—here are lovely and sophisticated pieces to adorn the home.

FROM TOP: Napkin, P450 (set of 6). Jute combi with satin border and embroidery placemat, P300, both from The Olive Tree. Disposable printed paper placemats, P1,600 each. Blue peacock octagonal plate, P270. Small dragonfly round plate, P350, the Wareshop.



## Rad in Ribbon

Offset a busy, printed wrapper with a striking solid ribbon that just screams merry and festive.



FROM TOP:  
Gold beaded  
placemat, P1,750,  
Pottery Barn.  
Arielle side chair,  
Ethan Allen.



# Couples

BY TESSA ALINDOGAN

For your special someone, pick a functional gift item or a décor that will speak closely about his or her personality and interests.



COUNTER  
CLOCKWISE FROM  
TOP: Black lamp,  
Dimensione. Popcorn  
popper machine, P1,200,  
HMR. Silver bulldog display,  
P2,400, Nest. Clay vase,  
UGU Bigyan. Monogram  
pillow, P550, Olive  
Essentials.

## Pretty Dainty

Wrap your gifts with a touch of romantic appeal, topped off with fancy accents.





# Kids

BY **BARBIE PARDO-TIANGCO**

Colorful and playful gift options—from sweet fashion and beauty picks to cute accents and furniture pieces for the room.



FROM TOP, CLOCKWISE:  
Wooden alphabet letters, P350 each. Jacadi perfume, P2,500 each, both from Chibi Momo. Elephant block chair by Zuo Modern Contemporary.

## Bright and Fun

Vibrant and eye-catching wrappers that will surely catch the attention of the young ones.



Mini piano, P5,499, Rustan's. Manuela fridge nude wingtip shoes, P5,150, Chibi Momo.





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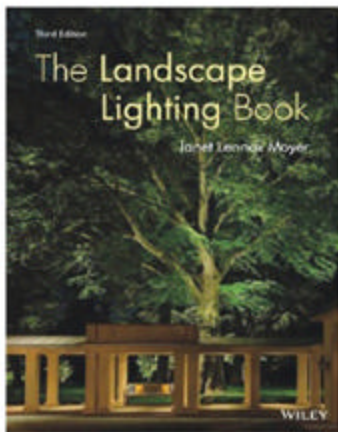
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# gardens



## The Landscape Lighting Book

How can you spice up your garden? Check out Janet Lennox Moyer's *The Landscape Lighting Book*. Written by the award-winning and internationally known lighting designer, this third edition covers all aspects of outdoor lighting design, from lighting practices and materials to design application, including guidelines for preparing lighting drawings, control and transfer charts, symbol lists, and other technical specifications. Available at National Bookstore.



## Recycled Lighting

Who would've thought that these whimsical outdoor lights are made from recycled water bottles? Called the *Giant Dandelions*, this lighting installation was created by French-Filipino artist Olivia d'Aboville for the Malasimbo Festival. Using a metal stem and LED light to complete the design, the *Giant Dandelions* combines art, functionality, and green living, making it a perfect statement piece for the outdoors. Check out [www.oliviadaboville.com](http://www.oliviadaboville.com) for more of Olivia's works or email [info@oliviadaboville.com](mailto:info@oliviadaboville.com).



## A Brighter Future

Solar-powered outdoor lights are becoming popular these days. Aside from saving on electricity bills, it's actually eco-friendly. Why not take your holiday lights to the next level and help improve the environment and the families living in rural communities around the world? "One Million Lights" helps improve the daily lives of children and adults by providing clean and healthy lighting. Help them reach their goal to distribute one million (1,000,000) solar lights to replace the dangerous and polluting kerosene lamps. Visit [www.onemillionlights.org](http://www.onemillionlights.org).





We heard it through the vines. Pintero's barn-inspired house has an enchanted storybook feeling, with its shutters and lush vines. Right: A path lined by hedges calls for a leisurely walk and languid reflection.





# PINTORESCO

THAT'S 'PICTURESQUE' IN SPANISH—EXACTLY  
WHAT THE GARDEN IS, 'PRETTY AS A PICTURE'

BY LEAH PUYAT / PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAR CONCENCO







**IT TOOK A FEW FALSE TURNS** and a few more inquiries from some friendly tricycle and jeepney drivers to finally find Pinteroesco, an idyllic family haven that is so worth the effort to find. But our morning jaunt was certainly nothing compared to the odyssey that the owners of Pinteroesco took in finally finding their provincial getaway.

The lady of the place recalls, “We were swindled out of a lot in Tagaytay. But somehow, that made us more determined. Our kids were getting older, and we didn’t want them to grow up to be mall kids. We wanted a place for them to run around free and happy. So we decided that instead of going through a broker or a developer, we would just go around and drive here and ask around if there were lots for sale.”

### **The green, green trees of home**

They settled on searching around Alfonso, a town that borders Tagaytay and Batangas. They literally went from house to house, lot to lot, asking around if the people knew which lots were for sale.

“We liked that Alfonso is a little more private, a little more remote, and it is not so commercial and developed,” she says. “And yet, it is always breezy and still near. Recently, the mayor said no to a major mall developer, so it shows that he knows that he shouldn’t go the overdeveloped route of Tagaytay.”

As the lady and her husband searched for their potential par-

adise, an old lady and a tricycle driver stopped them, and took them to their present property. All they saw was a lot of trees. “We couldn’t even walk around the whole property, it was so overrun with trees,” she recalls.

As the place was being cleared, it didn’t take long to discover that they had a veritable Eden. Complete with snakes. “It was full of snakes! There were so many of them! But we also discovered cacao trees, coffee plants, and lots of mango trees.”

“Normally, the lot owners let the caretakers do a bit of farming so they have some additional income, but this place wasn’t farmed at all,” she says. “But we had a good feeling, and it took just one meeting with the previous owner, and we knew. It just goes to show that if it’s meant for you, it will happen.”

Left a bit incredulous that a such a random encounter led to the buying of a rather large property, the lady continues, “We just really wanted a place where we could get away. I grew up in Baguio, and though we still have a place there, it’s still too far to go to regularly. In Manila, we don’t really have parks, and so here we are. Everybody needs a patch of green. Everybody. This is our patch of green.”

### **The barn, Hispanic-style**

A bunkhouse with a green roof was also built to the rear of the





**A deck in a clearing surrounded by old trees is the favorite spot for meals. Sitting amongst the branches feels like a scene from a movie. BOTTOM RIGHT: The outdoor fireplace is a cozy, inviting spot, conducive to long chats with loved ones, or solitary reverie. OPPOSITE PAGE: “What’s important is that you are aware of the life span of the vine, so that when it reaches its end, you can plant new vines,” states the lady of the home. She and her gardener experiment on which vines and plants work well in their micro climate, before they execute their landscaping.**

property to house bigger groups, for weekends when their children’s friends are invited.

The facade of The Barn is in a more Hispanic hacienda style, with red tile roofs and balconies, but the pale wooden beams and the larger living area on the second floor echo the classic French farmhouse.

“My sister married a French guy, and they have a hundred-year-old barn in the South of France, and my husband loved the look. At heart, I think he is a frustrated architect, and he told me, ‘I think we can recreate this look back home,’” she says.

A field has been cleared for family football games, and a swimming pool with a deck and outdoor fireplace and a brick oven is the site of many family gatherings.











The balcony right by the entrance of The Barn is the perfect brunch spot, offering a good view of the gardens. OPPOSITE PAGE: The pool deck is also a favorite hangout of the family and their guests.

### 'The grand old lady and her two sisters'

When asked how she knows what to plant in the garden, the affable and gracious lady admits, "When I travel, I shop for seeds. I research on the plants that will thrive in our weather, and I come home here and test if they will work."

The barn itself is covered with vines, and when asked what the names of the vines are, our hostess laughs and says, "Oh, please don't ask me the names of the plants and vines and trees. I don't remember them all!"

Though she may not memorize the names of the trees and plants, she has a knack for thinking up her own interesting "nicknames" for them. A tall, grand, truly majestic mango tree has the nomenclature "The Grand Old Lady." (It could very well be the tallest and largest mango tree I have ever seen in my life, and I went to school in a village that was once a mango plantation.)

She tells us a fascinating story: "There's a funny story about that tree. Actually, there are two mango trees beside her, so I call her 'The Grand Old Lady and her Two Sisters.'" And when some people were taking photos of the place, the biggest tree wouldn't show in the photos. It was only when we took some family photos that she became visible."

She also thought of the name "Pintoresco." She recalls with a soft laugh, "My husband wanted a long and rather pretentious name; if I remember right, it even had something to do with the Australian Outback. And then it just came to me, Pintoresco, which means picturesque in Spanish. Sometimes, it's better if you don't overthink things, don't you think?"

This same philosophy seems to have worked for the way Pintoresco has evolved. Nature has taken its course, and whatever human intervention was just to frame the views and vistas that grew originally on the property.

On the way home, photographer Jar Concengo posted on Instagram a scene from our shoot. We were on the balcony of The Barn, surrounded by the vines along the rails and the tops of the trees. Jar's comment: "An easy breezy shoot." An apt summation of a picture-perfect place. ■



# Orchid Essentials

IT IS A MUST TO UNDERSTAND THE ELEMENTS THAT AN ORCHID REQUIRES TO FLOWER AND GROW—LIGHT, AIR, WATER, MEDIUM, AND NUTRITION

BY NANA NADAL / PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN CASTAÑARES

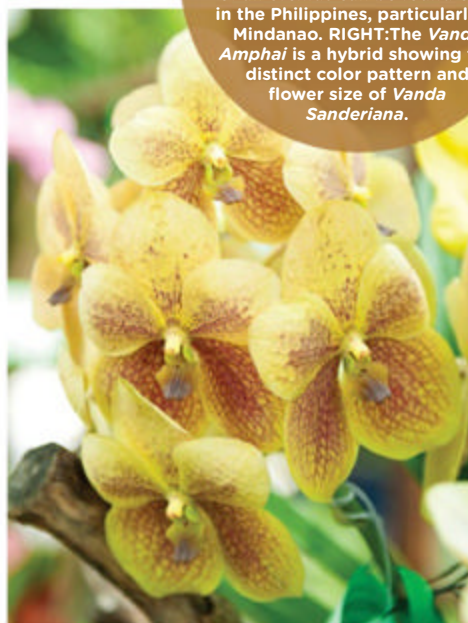


The Philippine Orchid Society's annual garden show promotes the Philippine floriculture industry and the conservation and preservation of our local orchid species. **BOTTOM LEFT:** The *waling-waling*, the queen of all orchids can be found only in the Philippines, particularly in Mindanao. **RIGHT:** The *Vanda Amphai* is a hybrid showing the distinct color pattern and flower size of *Vanda Sanderiana*.

**THE VIBRANT FLORAL DISPLAY** at the recent 68th Mid-Year Orchid and Garden Show was another reminder of our country's abundant natural resources.

"The Philippines has one of the biggest biodiversity when it comes to orchids. We have about 1,200 kinds," states Kelvin Neil Manubay, vice-president of the Philippine Orchid Society. He has been growing orchids since he was 12 years old and continues to promote floriculture through their organization for its livelihood potential and the beauty it brings.

A blooming orchid can easily enliven any corner, one reason why it is tempting to keep these flowers indoors. However, Manubay says that you have to bring them out after a week or two. "No orchid will live indoors for a long time. You have to provide the right environment. When you buy orchids, ask the seller where they got the plant so you can recreate the area where they thrived," he







LEFT: These strap-leafed vandas exhibit the size and flatness of form that many florists look for. RIGHT: The *Vanda Rothchildiana* has a blue hue that is difficult to find in orchids.

advises. “When your orchid doesn’t flower, change its location because it might be looking for something.”

It is a must for one to understand the elements that an orchid requires to flower and grow. “These are light, air, water, the medium where you plant it in, and nutrition,” Manubay enumerates.

Light is what helps the plant produce its food. “You have to know if your orchid grows in full sun or under a shade. The nets that you see in gardens are for diffusing the sun’s rays,” he says. The leaves of a tree can also do this trick.

“You have to control the wind flow. They need this to lessen the heat, but too much air will dry them up. It must be light flowing,” Manubay cautions. The net also stabilizes strong wind.

Water is vital to the plant, but too much can kill it. “Water your orchids once or twice a week, but keep the area around it wet so that humidity goes up. Orchids have very long root systems, which act as its mechanism to search for water. If the orchid is thirsty and there’s no water, it brings out new roots and searches for the humidity,” Manubay explains.

“Orchids are epiphytes, who use air as

their medium. You can tie them to a piece of wire and they will still live as long as the light, air and water supply are good. They just use trees for anchorage,” he clarifies.

Orchids need nitrogen for growing, phosphorus for blooming and potassium for fruiting. “Buy fertilizer according to your needs,” he emphasizes.

For beginner orchid hobbyists, Manubay recommends the dendrobiums, which have main stems or food reserves that are relatively big. Then you can move up to the cattleyas and strap-leafed vandas like the “Queen of Philippine orchids,” the *waling-waling*. He says the most difficult to take care of are the phalaenopsis. “Please keep away from the species. Just concentrate on growing hybrids,” Manubay says. “When you look for species all the time, the sellers have to invade the forests and deplete the genetic stock. If they become extinct, we lose part of our heritage, culture and identity.”

When asked about the effect of talking to plants, Manubay replies that there is a study that orchids react to sound and a lot of care. “Sure, you can talk to your orchids, as long as you don’t let your neighbor see you,” he jests. ■

## Getting Started

- 1 When buying orchids, inspect the plant. Make sure there is always a new and active growing lead, which is where the new flower and new plant will emerge.
- 2 Make sure that the roots are sturdy and firmly attached to the medium.
- 3 The first thing you should do upon arriving home with your orchid is to cut off the flowers which take too much energy from the plant. Allow the plant to rest and recondition itself to its new home.
- 4 Don’t water your orchid right away. Wait one to two weeks or until it grows new roots. Just keep the surrounding area wet so the air stays humid, and the plant will be encouraged to produce new roots and reach for water. The new roots will enable the plant to absorb the nutrients that you will give later on.




"IT ALL BEGINS WITH  
ONE DELICIOUS  
QUESTION."




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# entertaining

## Crystal Architecture by Zaha Hadid

A SENSORY EXPERIENCE MARKED BY VOLUPTUOUS CURVES

With the particular velvety touch of its satin finish, and its design both contemporary and timeless, LALIQUE has attained excellence not only in fashioning plain crystal but also black crystal, which is very complex and difficult to work with. Pushed back within its limits, black crystal offers an enchanting vision of spectacular depth.



The Manifesto vase displays innate, fluid lines that seem to have a life of their own. Superbly displayed in crystal, they are enhanced by the contrasting satin and polished finish characteristic of LALIQUE. The numbered edition is available either in clear crystal—a majestic sculpture of light—or in black, which lends mysterious depth to this work of contemporary art. *Lalique vases are available at Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Mall.*



Like a crystal tower, the Visio vase's lines ascend heavenward with dynamic lines that reference infinite movement. Satin finish and polished crystal, both emblematic of LALIQUE, make this an essay in style. Illuminated by the brilliance of the clear crystal or sublimated by the deep mystery of black crystal, this vase, in a numbered edition, is a *tour de force*.



# The Consummate Hostess

NO ONE THROWS  
A PARTY QUITE LIKE  
NAYNAY MONTILLA

BY BARBIE PARDO-TIANGCO / PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO

**MAYBE IT'S HER UNPRETENTIOUS**, warm and down-to-earth nature, or perhaps her fresh outlook and constant craving to keep the creative juices flowing. Whatever the reason, it is pretty obvious that no one throws a dinner party quite like Naynay Montilla.

Constantly searching for unique plateware, special and meaningful centerpieces and excuses to host for her many dear friends, Naynay has gained a reputation for throwing the most awesome parties. And, as wife to a lawyer and mother to two awesome children, excuses to throw a gathering are indeed aplenty.

Naynay makes it look so easy, too. She has mastered that perfect balance of creating an aesthetically pleasing set-up with her attention to the smallest of details while making sure it doesn't feel contrived or superficial. To her, parties are more about creating memories with family and



Naynay has totally mastered the perfect balance of creating a pleasing set-up as she brought together the Wooden Emperor dining chairs by Rose Abangan, Kai drop lamps by Cobonpue and woven rug from Bungalow 300.







For her dinnerware collection, Naynay puts up the festive hints of bright red and silver by using Crate & Barrel glasses, cutlery, silver gift boxes and napkins, Gourdo's silver plate chargers, Nest silver dome tealight holders and glass terrarium jar from CO/OP, and Landmark, and Christmas plates from Gumps, SF.



friends that will last much longer than the pretty floral centerpiece ever will. With ease and grace, she unassumingly makes sure every guest feels perfectly at home and welcome. Naynay, the perfect hostess, unobtrusively observes if her guests are enjoying the food or needs anything else, if they fit in comfortably with the other guests—this, much more than having excellent taste, is what makes Naynay the perfect hostess.

For this holiday set-up, Naynay wanted it festive with hints of bright red and silver, but grounded by using glass jar terrariums that survive way after the party's ended. She used pine cones, mini silver gift accents, moss, soil, gravel, plants, red roses and tea lights. Her process for setting up this particular Christmas luncheon was an organic one. It surely wasn't based on a Pinterest peg but on the thought of her parents and their gifts to her when she was growing up. She was drawn

to the theme of roots, relations and gifts. It is the ideal example to showcase her signature home entertaining style.

**Metro Home:** Why do you enjoy entertaining at home?

**Naynay Montilla:** Because it brings people together, forms connections, and builds memories. It celebrates the people in my life, usually over good food, I might add.

**How do you celebrate the holidays?**

We usually do some traveling and host get-togethers at home.

**Can you describe your entertaining style?**

Well-planned and executed with love, care and an eye for the visual, all driven by the guest of honor or the occasion.

**Any tips for those who want to entertain at home as well?**

Enjoy the process and live in the moment when the party is in full swing. Be present! ■



# Kitchen Zen

ENERGETIC AND BURSTING WITH GOOD FOOD IDEAS, SABRINA ARTADI FINDS HER CALM IN BRINGING SIMPLE, SCRUMPTIOUS FOOD TO THE TABLE

BY RAPH KIEFER / PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP SISON



LEFT: The bubbly TV personality poses for the camera inside her quaint home in Alabang. RIGHT: At the dining room is a vibrant set-up with tea, camote chips and bread sticks for entertaining guests in the afternoon.

**MEETING SABRINA ARTADI** in person is just like meeting her on TV. The energetic and bubbly “non-chef,” whose show *Sabrina’s Kitchen* is now in its fourth season on the Lifestyle network, is known for creating practical, simple and inexpensive dishes that viewers have come to love. Her enchanting ability to get people who are afraid of the kitchen interested in home cooking seamlessly transcends from real life to the small screen and to published cookbooks.

Comparing herself to a typhoon bursting with energy, she says it is in the kitchen where she finds her Zen, and she advocates that everyone can do the same. “I could be having a bad day, but cooking brings ideas together. Cooking brings people together... the kitchen is my best friend, and it should be for every mom,” she says.

Her artistic personality is rounded out with a surprisingly practical approach to food and entertaining, and the inclination to keep everything “creative but as simple as possible.” This contrast is further simplified when Sabrina casually explains how her inspiration for new dishes is found in the most primitive yet powerful natural force among all life on earth—hunger.

In Sabrina’s home, the kitchen becomes part of the entertainment as guests are invited



to partake in some of the cooking process without making it difficult. After all, her most important rule when entertaining is to relax because tension is easily passed on to guests. She graciously sits down with the *Metro Home & Entertaining* team for a quick chat.

## 1. What are the advantages of being a non-chef?

Many people are intimidated by chefs. My goal is to encourage everyone to discover the wonderful adventure that awaits you in

your own kitchen! My goal is not to show you how I excel at cooking but how easy cooking can be with key simple, pure, inexpensive ingredients that are good for you! Together with some spices, herbs, and oils, the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

## 2. What advice can you give home cooks who lack the confidence to cook for guests?

Just have fun and get started! My glam cookbooks’ goal was created for this





For a healthy and festive snacks, some lovely paper thin sliced camote chips with natural spices (sugarleaf), gluten free soy bread sticks and a marmalade dip. Best paired with tea.



purpose—to help get people started in the kitchen. Start with my simple heirloom Pechay Salad! Or other salads and home-made dressings like sesame tamarind, or virgin olive oil, balsamic and strawberries combined with mixed greens...divinely delicious! That should develop your confidence level! And you will tell yourself: “I am good!” Then move on to curries, kebabs, pâté and chorizo and then before you know it, you are doing paellas and lamb tagines! Bravo!

### 3. How do you plan the theme for your dining table?

I am very spontaneous and practical. I like conversation pieces but it must be do-able! I am inspired by what I see around me. So I pull out some flowers, fresh herbs and ferns, and lay them out on the table. Candles and scented herbs are a must. Colorful fruits

like limes and lemons with a sprig of fresh rosemary are brilliant! My style is more bohemian-cozy.

### 4. How do you celebrate Christmas with family and loved ones?

We just gather together, usually at the beach, attend Christmas Mass and enjoy our traditional meal, like the Artadi Rosemary Baked Chicken. The key is do less and just focus on family! We get so distracted and busy on Christmas that we forget the reason for the season.

### 5. What's next for Sabrina Artadi?

More family bonding through healthy, simple, easy glam gourmet! I aim to emphasize to everyone the importance of eating healthy and how to get your family meals started. Keep it simple, affordable, and sustainable for everyone. ■

## Sabrina's tips on home entertaining:

1 Have a bottle of red and white wine in chillers alongside wine glasses, so people can help themselves and get a relaxed mood going.

*Suggestions: my favorite vintage red, 2012 Château Dominique St. It has a deep full body, great oaky vanilla vibe and is brilliant with a fat juicy medium steak, Kamote Squash and Alugbati Sidings. For white wine, Alsace Pinot noir. Brilliant flavor, not empowering but intense at the same time. Lovely with a Quesong Puti and blue cheese combo, grapes, walnuts or a date bacon wrap. Both wines are available at Wine Story.*

2 Prepare simple tapas like cream cheese topped with yogurt, smoked salmon and dill with some crackers. Sophisticated and simple.

3 Surround the area with hurricane lamps and scented candles to achieve perfect lighting and a relaxed homey feel.

4 I love open air spaces and indoor-outdoor garden evenings so citronella pails are a must, and my guests never complain of mosquitoes.

5 When the conversation flows and a relaxed

mood is evident in guests, introduce your menu to whet their appetites.

6 Naturally, soups and main courses should be prepared in advance, but I love a good show! So if you have an open kitchen, guests are welcome to gravitate towards the kitchen while you prep your salad and dressing! *Voilà!* One big toast before you invite everyone to dine and announce “Soup’s on!”

**Note:** You can do this with an assistant, your husband or your staff. It depends on how many guests you have. I do prefer the personal touch!

## Amazing Healthy Shake

This is an awesome meal on the run!

It's nutritious and full of anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory ingredients. The cayenne and cinnamon are full of health benefits—

natural detox, skin glow, pain killer, mood lifter and energy booster—along with the goodness of papaya, spinach, banana and eggs. You can add a packet of psyllium fiber and a teaspoon of virgin coconut oil to this as well. I am hooked on it as it helps me maintain my weight, curb my appetite for sweets and keeps me feeling full! Plus it's absolutely delicious.



1 heaping tablespoon of unsweetened cocoa powder  
A dash of cayenne powder (I like more cayenne but start with one)  
6 dashes cinnamon  
1 packet stevia (healthy options)  
Pinch of salt  
1 cup papaya  
2 bananas  
2 raw eggs  
2 cups fresh spinach  
2 heaping teaspoons of powdered whole milk  
2 cups of water  
Ice

Simply blend the ingredients together, and enjoy!



# Family and tradition

A GATHERING OF HEIRLOOM DINNERWARE AND RECIPES FROM THE OLEDANS OF PAMPANGA AND THE COSCOLLUELAS OF BACOLOD

BY WILLY MARBELLA / PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN CASTAÑARES



The social entrepreneur amidst everything familiar and traditional. These heirloom pieces warm their household every Christmas.

**THE CHIPPENDALE** dining chairs that surround the bountiful table spread hint at the importance of tradition to Carissa Coscolluela's family.

Turning into an entrepreneur/restaurateur does not come as a surprise as her roots hail from two regions where food reigns supreme. The Coscolluelas on her father's side are from Bacolod, and the Oledans on her mother's side are from Pampanga, so what can lineage can be more delicious?

As a Contributing Editor to *Metro Home & Entertaining*, she definitely knows a thing or two about design, and as we sat down for this interview, one cannot help but notice that the accoutrements are familiar and intimate. Family and tradition have a lot to do with how this holly patterned dinner service ended up in their dining table.



The mirrors over the sideboards and a host of blue and white china, soon to be decorated with more holiday accessories, will eventually complete the Christmas look. As for the menu during Christmas, when they host the Oledans for lunch, it is not too much of a stretch of the imagination to taste the food in one's mouth—they are, after all, Kappampangan. Here's what Carissa shares with

*Metro Home & Entertaining* readers:

**1. Tell us about your Christmas Day lunch.**

We spend Christmas Eve in my Lola's house, and then the following day, everyone comes over for lunch. There are about 30 of us who come over and we spend the whole afternoon here. We start with lunch and it lasts until *merienda* time.





The centerpiece of green, red, and gold Christmas balls are picked up by the holly patterns on the china, while candies in every conceivable color appeal to every one and the young at heart.

## 2. Do you do potluck for lunch?

Oh no, everything is cooked here. We may order a thing or two but everything else is cooked here. We have roast turkey, pasta, roast beef, crabs, prawns. Sometimes we order paella, and cochinillo. My mom's family is the Oledans from Pampanga, that's why we have all these recipes for Christmas.

## 3. How about desserts?

Oh, our family is big on desserts. We make those big *ensaymadas* just like the Kapampangans like it. We also make lots and lots of other desserts, including cakes and pies.

## 4. Do you have thematic table settings every year?

Of course, all the Christmas-themed items come out. Like these plates with hollies that we've had since the '80s; the silverware was a gift from my *Lola* to my mother even before she got married, and the silver chargers came from London. We've had all these since I can remember. Our centerpiece gets recycled annually, but the

look changes. We add, subtract, and change elements to make them look new and fresh every year. We use natural elements and mix them up with store-bought materials like Christmas balls. This way, it makes for an interesting mix. Sometimes we even use silver trays to give it a more elegant and festive feel.

## 5. You obviously cannot fit 30 people in this table. How do you manage the rest?

We set up tables in the balcony. This way we can also accommodate friends who drop by for Christmas lunch.

## 6. When do you bring down the decorations?

The decorations come down around January 10. This marks the end of the Christmas season, until the end of the year comes along and we begin a brand new celebration again! ■





# Refined Gift-Giving

FOR EVERY DISCERNING PERSON IN YOUR LIST, THERE IS AN OLIVIERS & CO. PRESENT

BY ANNA M. ROSETE  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARLENE SY

**IT'S THE SEASON FOR FRIENDS,** family, laughter, food and fun, but most essentially, it's the time to express gratitude and appreciation for loved ones. It's a comforting thought that every year, we have this opportunity to do so, but more often than not, this time of the year is marked by deadlines and an intimidating stream of everyday life hurdles that make gift-giving a conundrum. Thankfully, there's Oliviers & Co., whose offerings for the holidays make the season that much more magical. Boasting of festive flavors infused with olive oil, Oliviers & Co. has something for every discerning individual in your list.



## For the Chromatophile

Your gift list's resident color lover will appreciate a bottle of Oliviers & Co.'s Premium Bottle of Balsamic Vinegar of Modena. Its rich, dark color owes to the slow roasting of Trebbiani grapes, under precise temperature, resulting in a honey texture that complements its rich color. Aged in wooden barrels of oak, juniper, cherry, blackberry and chestnut trees, a few drops of this heavenly balsamic vinegar are potent enough for flavor. Level it up with Oliviers & Co.'s Gold Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, a version that is sealed with PGI (Protected Geographic Identification), owing to the fact that it is made from the most supreme of grapes from Reggio Emilia and Modena, Italy. Also delightful is the Supreme Pistachio Spread, Oliviers & Co.'s twist on a Sicilian favorite. This sweet treat is perfect with small pastries, breads and fruit.



## For the Naturalist

For the one who appreciates taste profiles imbued with natural flavors, Olivers & Co. offers a charming sampler of five olives and vinegars, all infused with flavors. Olive & Basil Oil, Olive & Lemon Oil, White Truffle Oil, Premium Balsamic Vinegar, and Fig Balsamic Vinegar in 1.7 fl. oz. bottles ensure that taste buds are always titillated. They can also always mix and match flavors with the Mini Melos. *Mili-melo* is a French term for “mix and match,” and this is exactly what Olivers & Co.’s combination of olive and lemon oil, and fig balsamic vinegar allows your naturalist to do. Indulge with Olivers & Co.’s white truffle oil, a marriage of pure Ligurian olive oil and white truffles from Alba. Its flavor hints of garlic, shallots and a penetrating musky aroma.



## For the Gourmet

For all types of cooking, the gourmet on your list will be happy to receive Olivers & Co.’s Azeites Milenium Olive Oil. True to the aesthetic of its decorative tin, this olive oil is a combination of three olive oil varieties, culminating in an exceptional Portuguese olive oil. The gourmet’s requisite pinch of truffle salt just got a boost with what Rossini has christened the “Mozart of Mushrooms,” truffles culled from Italy’s Piedmont region. Combined with salt from Guérande, France, a pinch of this white truffle salt makes dishes a gourmet’s dream. Just to cover all flavors, cap off gift giving to your resident gourmet with Olivers & Co.’s Trio Box of Olive Oils in Mediterranean flavors of olive, basil and citrus.







For the Sweet Tooth

Those who love sweets on your list will celebrate with Oliviers & Co.'s L'Extrême Chocolate Hazelnut spread. A ganache made of coca, hazelnut and olive oil, this creamy treat is sure to satisfy their cravings. Enjoy these with the pack of Oliviers & Co.'s almond pralines to keep the indulgence going. And just to temper the sweetness, a bottle of Combava and Wild Pepper Balsamic vinegars are apt. Made by Oliviers & Co. in collaboration with master vinegar maker, Chef Frédéric Chaix, this rare flavor owes to its use of the kaffir lime and Voatsiperify pepper from Madagascar, which give them their intricate flavors.

For the Foodie Couple

For your favorite foodie couple, there's something for every course of the meal from Oliviers & Co. Start them off with the Potato Chip Sampler. A collection of four in garlic, olive oil, lemon and truffle flavors, these have been kettle cooked in olive oil, using the choicest of potatoes from La Mancha, Spain. Follow the chips Italian style, with a Risotto Pronto con Tartufi course. Easy to prepare, this bottle has all you need for a savory dinner in seven minutes. Finish it off with the Trio Dolcezza. A truffle collection of white chocolate, pistachios and chocolate chips, these were made with premium ingredients, following tradition.

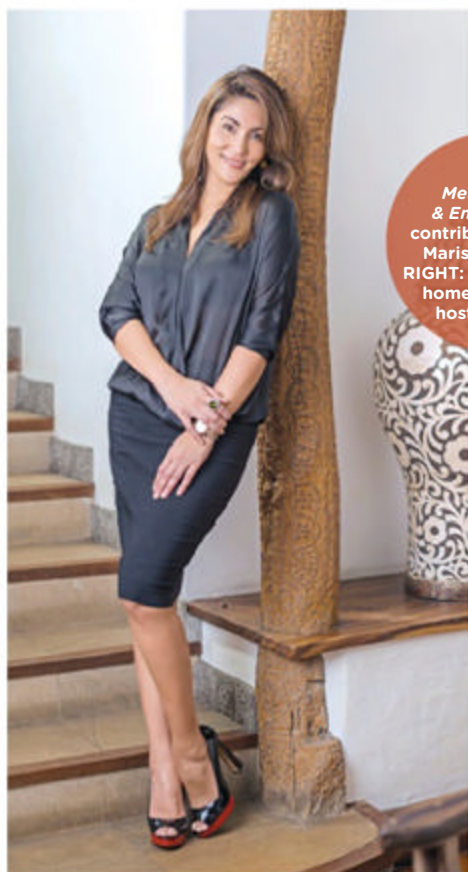




# Easy Entertaining

9 THINGS TO  
KEEP IN MIND

BY MARISSA LOPA  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALDWIN ASPILLERA



LEFT:  
*Metro Home  
& Entertaining*  
contributing editor,  
Marissa A. Lopa.  
RIGHT: A view of her  
home where she  
hosts parties.



LEFT:  
Marissa's acute  
attention to detail  
and flair are reflected  
in her place setting.  
RIGHT: Party favors  
are a must to cap off  
a Marissa Lopa  
gathering.



**1. HOSTS.** We like having friends over mostly in the evenings, starting off with cocktails at 6:30. It may be an intimate group of 4 to a bigger group of 10 to 15 people. We only entertain up to 100 people on Halloween, where every guest is costumed up, and my son Rich and I cook up a storm!

**2. VENUES.** If the season is too warm or I'm too lazy to prepare, I usually take guests to Las Flores (BGC), Rambla, L'entrecote El Cirkulo, where the food and situation are always consistent. If the group is pretty laidback or adventurous, I look for newly-opened places to match. Lately, I've hosted special get-togethers at Blackbird and CDP (Rockwell).

**3. HOME COOKED MEALS.** When entertaining at home, I usually fall back on tried-and-tested family recipes, like my son's succulent Roasted Turkey with all the sidings, or my mom's Callos or Fabada.

**4. FAVORITE FOOD ORDERS.** I don't usually order out for main dishes except for Cibo's Roast Lamb. For dessert, I usually ask my son to make my Grandmother's Special Bread Pudding or his Macaroons, and complement it with one of Baby Yulo's elegant cakes like her Crunch Cake.

**5. TABLE SETTING.** I have quite an assortment of tableware collected over the years as well as family heirlooms, and I love mixing the new and the old. For the holidays, one of the settings I am using is green plates (Rustan's) with white and silver lined Moroccan plate with dome cover (NEST) and partnered with my grandmother's antique silverware. The napkin rings are also hand-crafted from Morocco.

**6. FLOWERS.** If I have the time and the energy, I buy fresh flowers from Dangwa for tight bundled low arrangements. I don't want

floral centerpieces to block the conversation and the view.

**7. GIVEAWAYS.** I usually prepare little giveaways like a trinket or a tiny bottle of truffle salt.

**8. DRINKS.** We give the guests a choice of red or white wine (usually just one type for each to avoid changing glasses), and Coke or juice for my friends who don't drink alcohol. Single Malt Whiskey seems to be a favorite among my friends these days so I keep a bottle of Nikka handy. For warmer days, I like to offer gin (Hendricks) and tonic as a refreshing alternative.

**9. MUSIC.** I usually ask my kids to prepare a special playlist for the night, which is a mix of soft jazz and house music. Music adds the final touch to the ambience, the backdrop to lively conversation among friends. ■





Trish Panlilio, the home cook everyone loves, shares a savory pork chop recipe.

# No Naughty Shortcuts

FOR TRISH PANLILIO, 'BESPOKE AND CUSTOM CATERING' STEMS FROM A LOVE FOR FOOD

BY RAPH KIEFER  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY UY

**THE LOVE OF FOOD**, in a country like the Philippines, is often the occasion itself. While every family has its own narrative of a reunion to celebrate an important occasion or a casual Sunday afternoon with the children, it's what comes out of the kitchen and onto the table that makes the gathering unique to the group. These are coveted moments that feed not only our bodies but also our souls and while the reasons for this may vary, the prevailing argument is that the love that is put into the dishes makes them better.

In our evolving food service industry, this "home cooking" is becoming a trend as talented culinary artists without formal training carve out their own market. Blame it on *Masterchef* and social media for bringing those closely guarded family recipes out into the world...but then again if these recipes were not so good, would anyone even pay attention to them?

Trish Panlilio, the owner and driving force behind the highly successful nawwTy's Kitchen, is an ideal example of how tradition, style and taste can be moved from one home to another. She is known for her acute attention to detail, creativity in presentation and, of course, for cooking delicious food that "just tastes different." Catering to intimate gatherings for eight to 60 people was never in the plan, but a combination of satisfied guests, social media and love for the craft changed all of that. Trish brings more than just the food as "bespoke and custom catering" are part of the nawwTy experience. Here, the talented entrepreneur shares her story.

**1. Were you always in the kitchen before you started or is this a newly discovered passion?**

To be more precise, it began when I found myself cooking more for my boys. When entertaining friends and with Instagram new on the scene, my homemade dishes were visible to so many more people. It wasn't even nawwTy's kitchen (the business yet), it was merely my hashtag (#nawwtyskitchen), and it is where a gallery of food posts can be viewed.

**2. Do you consider yourself a natural?**

What I would consider natural is my deep love for food. Learning how to cook is a process and I'm loving the journey.

**3. I notice a lot of attention to detail in the way you present your food, and you did mention that you bring your own plates and cutlery to your dinner services. How much of what you present is an extension of your personality and how much of it is studied?**

We call our services "custom catering," as there definitely is a personal touch that





## PORK CHOP WITH APPLE SLAW

### For the Chops:

A pinch of sea salt  
A pinch of cayenne  
1 teaspoon ground sage  
Freshly ground pepper  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 pieces bone-in pork chops (8oz each)  
Olive oil

### For the Slaw:

1 onion, thinly sliced into half moons  
1 green apple, shredded  
1/2 head cabbage, shredded  
2 carrots, shredded  
1 pinch salt  
Olive oil

1. Marinate the chops in the combination of garlic, salt, cayenne and pepper; rub and soak for as long as you prefer.
2. In a non-stick skillet, and using medium-high heat, brown the chops on each side; set aside.
3. Mix the cole slaw and heat in the wiped pan from where chops were removed. Add slaw mixture until carrots and cabbage begin to soften.
4. Place chops in the pan again with the slaw mix pushed to the side. Cover pan for another 6-8 minutes until they are blush in the center.
5. To serve: Place the warm slaw in a separate container, place on plate with piled chops, and finish off by topping the dish with a fresh piece of sage.

my team and I apply. Delicate touches here and there separate us from the rest. Mere feedback alone has proven that what we have been doing works, and is much appreciated by our clientele. For me, presentation is equally important to taste, it completes the dish.

#### 4. Where does the inspiration to cook come from?

It definitely stems from my love of food, my curiosity about new things to enjoy and the desire to travel often to fulfill this passion.

#### 5. What are the biggest challenges to what you do?

Having to constantly change it up, spruce up our menu as well as our options for custom catering so our clients are not left with the same theme and dishes over and over again.

#### 6. Do you have fun doing this? Do you see yourself doing this 10 years into the future?

Yes, I am clearly enjoying what I do, and I look forward to each event. Every time we receive food orders, I still get excited and it always makes my day. To have what you do appreciated is a very rewarding feeling



The pork chop with apple slaw and prawn risotto showcase nawnTy's attention to detail and flavor. The balance of colors, well conceptualized use of side dishes and garnish and, of course, the generous use of ingredients are signs of a great home-cooked meal.

#### 7. Have you considered opening a cafe/restaurant in the future?

I have received several offers to be a partner in a restaurant venture, but even if it's something I can do alone, I am very content with how nawnTy's is run today. For

now, we are keeping it just the way it is.

For more information, call (0918) 936 9854 / (0920) 907 9122; email: [nawwtyskitchen@gmail.com](mailto:nawwtyskitchen@gmail.com); Instagram: [nawwTy](https://www.instagram.com/nawwTy) or visit [#nawwtyskitchen](https://www.instagram.com/nawwtyskitchen) for the food gallery; Facebook: [nawwTy's kitchen](https://www.facebook.com/nawwTy)



# To Gift or Not to Gift

IS IT BAD FORM TO STOP  
GIVING GIFTS TO A GODCHILD?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARLENE SY



**MS Demeanour:** One of my godchildren never acknowledges or thanks me for the gifts I've given. I am not even expecting a handwritten note anymore! A short text or even an email will suffice, but there's not a peep.

**CAT:** Have you tried giving them an etiquette book?

**MS. Demeanour:** Hmmm, that's a thought. Anyway, what if I just stopped the gift-giving? And until what age are we supposed to gift our godchildren?

**CAT:** Many people think that gift-giving defines the godparent's role, but it is actually to help the

parents in the proper rearing of the children, so if you just stop giving gifts to let the godchildren know that they should express their thanks, that's not really a bad thing. As to what age we can stop giving gifts to our godchildren, traditionally, it's until they're eighteen. Once they can vote, they can also buy gifts for their godparents instead! One of my godmothers started that tradition in our family, and so the older children and the young adults "repay" the favor of having received gifts as children, and now give gifts to the godparents. It's a fair exchange, don't you think?

**MS Demeanour:** Okay, time to brainwash my younger godchildren! ■



## Gentle Reminders

- If you have young children, encourage them to write thank you notes to their godparents for their Christmas gifts. If you see your children's godparents socially, your kids can also thank them in person.
- Christmas gifts can be less lavish since other families realize that most people have many other gifts to buy. If you are opting to give cash, there is no need to give a very big amount, as the godparents of your kids might feel pressured to match your extravagance.
- Many parents now have concerns about environmentally sensitive toys. Inquire first if they do not allow their children to play with plastic toys.



# Statement Necklaces

VINTAGE ARCHITECTURAL BRASS DETAILS COMBINED WITH MOTHER OF PEARL AND LEATHER ARE TRANSFORMED INTO ARCHITECTURAL JEWELRY JUST TOO PRETTY TO IGNORE!

BY ANA ROCHA / PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG



Architectural jewelry lines, Ana Rocha for Ayala Museum and Ana Rocha for Bijou is available at The Ayala Museum and at Bijou.



**AS I WALK THROUGH** the antique markets of Beijing, I stumble upon an ancient oriental hardware, where you can purchase exquisite vintage architectural brass details for furniture, doors and the like—artistry and utility rolled into one!

I am captivated by the numerous selections of picture frame hangers and brass mounts in all its shiny splendor. My sister Marc wanted to purchase the distressed versions. No problem! They just dunked the shiny hardware in a liquid (I suspect it was vinegar, and *voilà!* ancient distressed hardware!). Since they are made of solid brass, you just need to polish them to maintain the sheen.

These architectural details—too pretty to ignore—when combined with mother

of pearl and leather, comprise a line of statement necklaces available at the Ayala Museum and at Bijou at the 2nd floor of Greenbelt 5, Makati.

As the holidays are upon us, I will enjoy my season with the abundant festivities and revelry with the joys of my life, my six babies (actually my nieces and nephews), Misha, Bianca, Katja, William, Sasha and Thomas. Our Christmas photo shoot awaits, but that's another story.

The celebration of the birth of Christ is the reason for the season. We enjoy buying gifts for those we love. Check out all the beautiful bounty of Filipino creativity, support the Filipino artisan and their wares. As for me, I covet them all! ■



# Variety of Sweets

THIS CAKE ARTIST CREATES HAPPINESS WITH HER GOODIES—IT'S THE SWEETEST JOB OF ALL

INTERVIEW BY REDILYN DIMAANDAL  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO



As a cake artist, Joanna Romero takes pride in her designs, marked by clean lines and quiet elegance. She considers texture, good proportions and color play in her designs.



**FORMER BEAUTY QUEEN**, now a mother of two and cake artist Joanna Romero lives a charmed life. Growing up in a family of engineers, she was raised early on to value the importance of structure, form and function, which, admittedly, helped her a lot in the actual baking process. In 2010, she took a three-month pastry course and a private lesson with known sugar flower artist Jacqueline Butler that solidified her love for baking even more. She is now the cake artist at the helm of Cuppy Puppy Mummy, a baking business that specializes in bespoke sweets.

**WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT INSPIRATION?** I find inspiration everywhere, in people, fashion, music, art. Currently, I seem to be more drawn to nature.

**WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOU WERE INTERESTED IN BAKING?** I was drawn to it because of the endless possibilities with interpreting a theme or design. Emotion, personality and style come into play with cake decorating, and I really like that.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST COMMONLY REPEATED DESIGN MISTAKE?** That would be trying to put everything in.

I find it visually unappealing when there are too many elements and colors on a single cake. I look for something to focus on, and when the design is too cluttered, it becomes hard to appreciate all the little details.

**WHAT IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED BUT IS ACTUALLY A FINE DESIGN?** Sometimes the cake construction takes a backseat when people focus too much on the décor or accent pieces. A good design is based on a good, well made cake. The cake can have a single sugar figurine or blossom and still look superb as long as it is well constructed.

**WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A CAKE ARTIST?** People often come to me because they have a party or gathering and they want to have a cake or sweets to help make their event more memorable. It is always a happy time, filled with so much excitement. When people pick up their cake or when they enter the party venue and see the dessert spread laid out in front of them, their faces light up and you can see and feel their delight. I love my job. I enjoy it, and am very passionate about it. ■