

METRO

VOL. 10 NO. 1

# home

& Entertaining

WHAT'S  
GLAMOROUS  
TODAY

COLOR  
FASHION  
DECOR

**EXPERT ADVICE:**

Color in interiors, garden and cuisine

**TRENDING NOW:**

Maximalist-eclectic, disco chic,  
nature-inspired, glitter!

Chefs Gene and Gino Gonzalez  
pop the color in Pinoy cuisine





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VOL. 10 / NO. 1



80 Orient expressions

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PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM ONG

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# Trending topic: The Victorians



**JUST RECENTLY, I WAS ASKED** what were new trends in the fields of home and entertaining. Here are some of the things that I've been seeing.

In terms of design, homes are veering away from modernism and minimalism to the warmer sensibility and more ornamental forms of the past. In particular, there is an inclination towards the antithesis of the modern: the Victorian, with its obsession with minutiae, with objects, with decorative detail, with the forms of otherworldly nature like in insects, sea shells.

Many of the things that came into vogue during the Victorian era have suddenly become the rage. Things like hunting trophies, for example, have been quite popular for some time now, although in less cruel form, simulated versions in fiberglass, wood or whatnot. If you regularly peruse interior design magazines, I'm sure you've seen a deer head or two mounted on a wall in a few homes.

Terrariums, which were invented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are becoming popular again. So are seashells and coral. The Victorians had such a fascination for these. Now, of course, they are manufactured, in wood or resin.

In a similar vein, a greater premium is being placed on things that show their age rather than the mint-new. Again, there's something Victorian about this. For upper class Victorians, newness was considered vulgar. One lord suggested your valet should wear your suit for a year before you donned it yourself.

Worn leather, battered wood, eroded stone, rusted metal, frayed fabric, all evoke a history. Even modernist furniture with a few nicks and dings exudes the air of authenticity, of having been born when the design was just made.

Color and pattern have also come back home. In contrast to the reticence of modernism with its neutral palette, strong color statements and bold graphics are the mode.

You'll see these trends in the photos that we have in this issue. There tends to be more stuff in them.

We can be grateful, though, that not everything is going Victorian. Crinolines and corsets are not on the horizon. Instead, comfort is a key aspect of current design. Instead of style for its own sake, design that is a physical delight to be in, sensuous surfaces, commodious proportions.

Today's design also aims for the natural and green. Wood in particular, especially in its rawest, most natural state, in barely treated tree trunks and branches, is sought after and cherished. And, as I'm sure you know, design that honors the environment is today's non-negotiable.

In entertaining, I see that more and more Filipinos are having people over for dinner rather than going out to a restaurant. And the food is homemade rather than catered. Because of the extraordinary range and quality of ingredients now so easily available, people are also more ambitious and adventurous in their cookery. The popularity of cooking shows is both the result of this inclination as well as its cause. Cookery shows of all kinds teach viewers how to cook all sorts of dishes, and so people's culinary repertoires continuously expand.

In this issue, we asked two chefs who have a cooking show to show us color in Filipino food, to put to rest the popular notion that it's all brown. Renowned chef Gene Gonzales and his chef son Gino, who star on *Chefscapade*, happily oblige.

*Carlo*  
carlo.tadiar@abs-chn.com



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 CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS  
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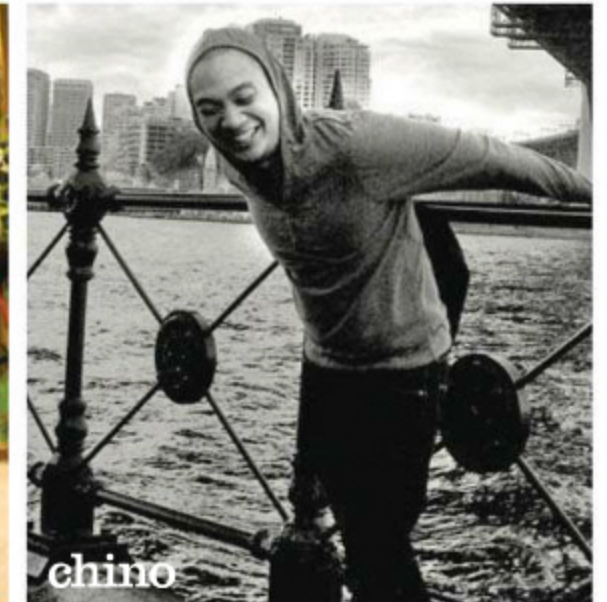
## home family



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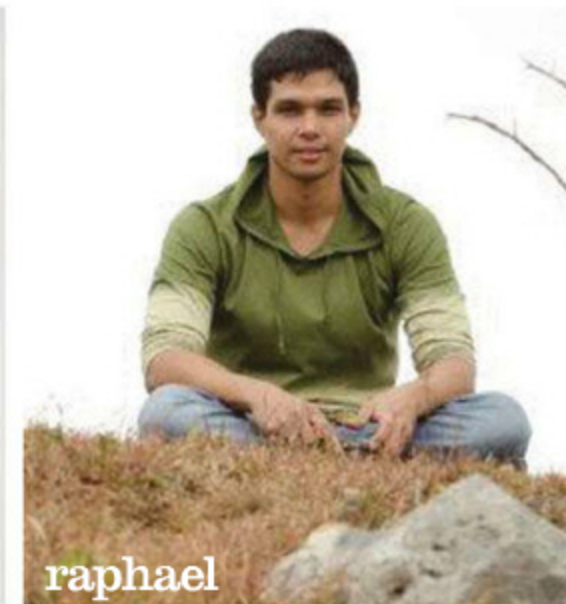
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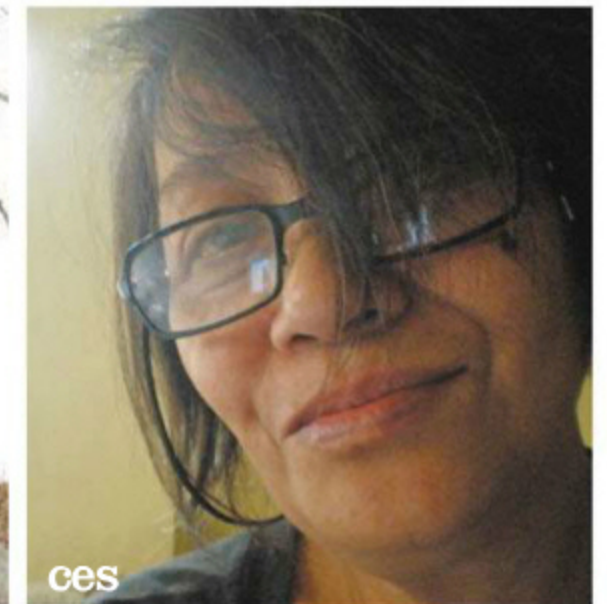
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ces

**Nina M. Santamaria** is a professional interior designer and has been running her own firm, Grupo Santamaria, for the past 10 years. Her projects range from small condo projects in Manila to university classrooms and auditoriums in Mindanao. Her design team is currently working on key projects such as a hilltop residence in Cebu, a 1950s home in Paco, and a massage center run by the blind in a high-traffic shopping mall. She is a regular contributor to home and design magazines as a stylist and writer. For this issue of **Metro Home**, she pinch-hit for Managing Editor Anna M. Rosete, who was temporarily indisposed.

When **Cal Tavera** is not designing for her interior design company, C+C, she's a design consultant for her tile business, Floor Center Outlet, on Visayas Avenue or blogging on [whimsykal.com](http://whimsykal.com) on her latest furniture finds and projects. Her favorite projects are collaborations with clients who are a tad quirky

and open to experimenting with patterns and textures. She wrote about a few of the homes that appear in this issue ("New Leaf," p. 42, "Familial Style," p. 90 and "Mix and match," p. 72).

**Chino dela Torre** is a builder and an interior designer for C+C Interiors, and a long-standing contributor to **Metro Home**. He co-owns Floor Center along Visayas Avenue, and is continually grateful to be a part of the design industry. For this issue, he wrote about two homes in this issue, one on the ground, the other up in the air ("Subtle Drama," p. 50, and "Orient Expressions," p. 80).

**Paul del Rosario** is a regular contributor to *Kris Aquino*, *Sharon*, *Working Mom*, and *StarStudio* magazines. He never took photography seriously until he was given one of the biggest assignments of his career to date—covering the wake of former president Cory Aquino in 2009 for the *Cory Aquino*

magazine and the *Cory Book*. His work can be seen at [www.pauljdelrosario.com](http://www.pauljdelrosario.com). Paul photographed many of the stories in this issue, including "New leaf," p. 42, "Familial Style," p. 90 and "Mix and match," p. 72.

**Raphael Kiefer** is a student of life who is engaged in several projects. He has organized art festivals, started a travel blog ([themoonlitroad.tumblr.com](http://themoonlitroad.tumblr.com)), and is now more involved in nature conservation in Mindanao. He wrote about the National Museum and a showcase of Swiss architecture in this issue ("The national jewel," p. 20, and "Swiss positions," p. 28).

**Ces Rodriguez** is an editor and writer for a number of publications here and abroad. She was an editor for *Jingle Music* magazine, ran two record stores, co-produced a bunch of punk concerts, and called herself Igor, the DJ for a show called "Capital Radio." She interviews Lebanese hotel art consultant Hala Jaber in "In-Between Art," on p. 22.



# All that glitters

BY **BARBIE PARDO-TIANGCO**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **WILLIAM ONG**

IT'S TIME TO BRING ON THE BLING WITH THIS YEAR'S GOLD AND BRASS INTERIOR DESIGN TREND. THERE IS A DISTINCT RESURGENCE OF THIS CLASSIC STYLE AND, FROM THE LOOKS OF THESE NEW BEAUTS, WE HOPE IT STAYS FOREVER



1  
Gold-framed club chair from More than a Chair



2



3



4



5

2. Pasha chair from Pedrali, from Maison 68.  
3. Gold-painted wooden birdcage, P14,500, Rustan's. 4. Matte gold cutlery, P32,500, Rustan's. 5. Doberman figure, Cura V



6. Floral sunburst mirror, P21,600, Rustan's. 7. Faux coral on stand, Cura V. 8. Tavolini Fergana low table cum tray by Patricia Urquiola, Moroso. 9. Fink candelabra, Maison 68



# Permanent exports showcase

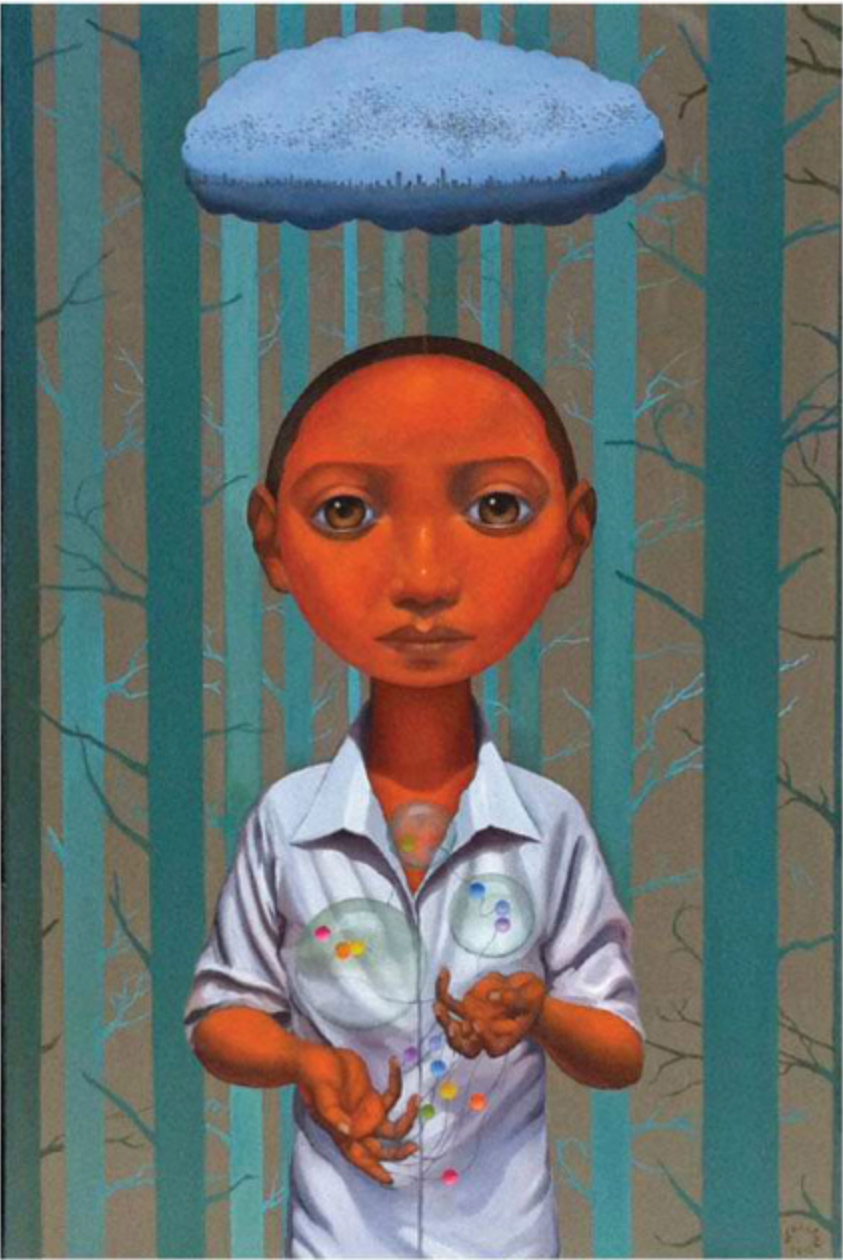
MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR ART IN THE PARK

**YOU CAN NOW** view the latest in Philippine design and crafts throughout the year. After the completion of a P10-million overhaul, the 25-year-old HallOne at the International Trade Center in Pasay City was reopened as the country's permanent show space. The Department of Trade and Industry envisions the Budji Layug- and Royal Pineda-designed facility as a venue to promote Philippine exports. Associations of manufacturers, from furniture and garments to jewelry and gifts, can capture both foreign and local buyers by leasing the facility for, say, two months. Hall One, which is managed by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, also serves as business hub, offering complementary services such as business matching, factory visits, export order-taking, shipping assistance, design clinics, and industry workshops. Most recently, the renewed space presented furniture, home decor, tropical wear, and iconic pieces by Philippine designers. — *Clifford Olanday. Photographs by Jovel Lorenzo.*



Furniture and lights by Milo Naval, pillows by Tadeco, among other designs and crafts to be exhibited at Citem's renovated HallOne.





ART IN THE PARK

ON SATURDAY, March 16, from 2 p.m. to midnight, Jaime Velasquez Park in Salcedo Village will bustle with excitement at the Museum Foundation's annual affordable art fair, Art in the Park.

Originally envisioned to introduce wider audiences to Philippine contemporary art by providing them with an occasion to view art in a relaxed setting, Art in the Park is now a community activity. People come initially to peruse the stalls with the intent of purchasing art but end up lingering because of the atmosphere—the food, drinks, conversations and friends.

Of course, the main attraction of the fair is the art. Where else can you see more than 40 galleries all offering art for P30,000 or less? There is something for everyone: illustrations, paintings and drawings for children, collectible toys for the young at heart, wonderful still lifes and landscapes, sculpture and photography, and the most cutting edge of contemporary art.

There are artfully repurposed furniture, pottery and jewellery for those who like to use their art pieces. The galleries are there for those who want to buy and browse. The art installations all over the park are for those who just want a nice afternoon in the park.

One of the greatest draws to the fair is the opportunity to pick up reasonably priced artworks by artists that are so in demand that there are waiting lists for those who want to buy their works as soon as their exhibitions open. They have seen what Art in the Park is about and they support it. They are happy to make new works that fall under the price cap of the fair—it gives them an opportunity to work with different materials, perhaps make smaller, more intimate pieces.

Art in the Park is a day that buyers, artists and gallerists all look forward to. It's not just about the selling but providing people with a friendly experience of art. Some galleries even create special themes for their booths, and commission their artists to make new works for it.

NEW SHOWROOM

LIFESCAPES BY ALVEO LAND is an impressive showcase of upscale real estate products from a leading developer. A strategic spot on the second floor of Greenbelt 3 served as a blank canvas for internationally renowned architect Ed Calma, who was commissioned to conceptualize this special showspace. Fully furnished and interior-decorated model units as well as bare or "as per turnover" ones are also available for better appreciation of dimensions and space.

Lifescapes by Alveo is at Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. The showroom is open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. For more information, visit [www.alveoland.com.ph](http://www.alveoland.com.ph), e-mail [info@alveosales.com.ph](mailto:info@alveosales.com.ph), or call (632) 848-5100 (Metro Manila), and 1-800-10-8485100 (outside Metro Manila).



Model unit by architect Ed Calma has washed oak veneer cladding on walls and rough hewn wood furniture.



Fixtures that celebrate water from Focus Global.



'THE SPIRIT OF WATER'

DORNBRACHT is an international producer of high-quality designer fittings and accessories for the bathroom. The company's focus used to be very much on the hardware—the product and the architecture. According to Andres Dornbracht, "The major challenge for the future is to go beyond this and occupy ourselves with the software—the water." Hence, Dornbracht's present tagline, "the Spirit of Water." In 2008 Dornbracht launched Water Units, function-related basins for the kitchen, and finally positioned itself as a leader of innovation around the theme of water in both the kitchen and the bathroom. Dornbracht is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Focus Global Inc., with a showroom at Pioneer, corner Reliance Streets, Mandaluyong. Call (632) 6348587.

AMERICAN COLORS COLLECTION

ACCORDING TO lifestyle maven and renowned host of *For Your Home* Vicki Payne, the colors for 2013 glow with sophisticated selections that will inspire people to embrace a neutral palette.

Payne adds that neutral shades evoke a soothing backdrop. Hence, it is ideal to go for trendy home accessories that bring out intricate and sculptural

shapes, intriguing textures, and interesting motifs that transcend as focal statements—the exact features that define Ethan Allen's new collection called American Colors, on display in their showroom by summer of 2013.

Ethan Allen is exclusively distributed by Focus Global Inc. Call (632) 634-8587, or visit [focusglobalinc.com](http://focusglobalinc.com), [ethanallen.com](http://ethanallen.com)



New takes on traditional American style at Ethan Allen.







TOP-OF-THE LINE BATHROOM FURNITURE

VILLEROY & BOCH does not only offer ceramic bathroom collections in a variety of styles but also high-class bathroom furniture, coordinated fittings and accessories. The wellness range, with its innovative shower, bath and whirlpool systems, is an impressive blend of beauty, quality and state-of-the-art technology.

One of the most important success factors for Villeroy & Boch is an all-embracing culture of innovation. An integral part of the 260-year history of the company, it has allowed the company to reinvent itself time and time again.

Villeroy & Boch bathroom sanitaryware is exclusively distributed by Focus Global Inc., with showroom at Pioneer, corner Reliance Streets, Mandaluyong. Call (632) 6348587.



WILCON DEPOT NOW IN CEBU

TALISAY CITY in bustling Cebu is the site of Wilcon Depot's latest branch in the Visayas. With the opening of its 27th branch nationwide, Wilcon now offers residents of Talisay and nearby towns total shopping convenience on a wide selection of premium building materials and home furnishings all under one roof. The new branch also features the Design Hub, a staff-assisted interior design consultation facility, where customers can virtually see the overall image of their product choices in 3D.



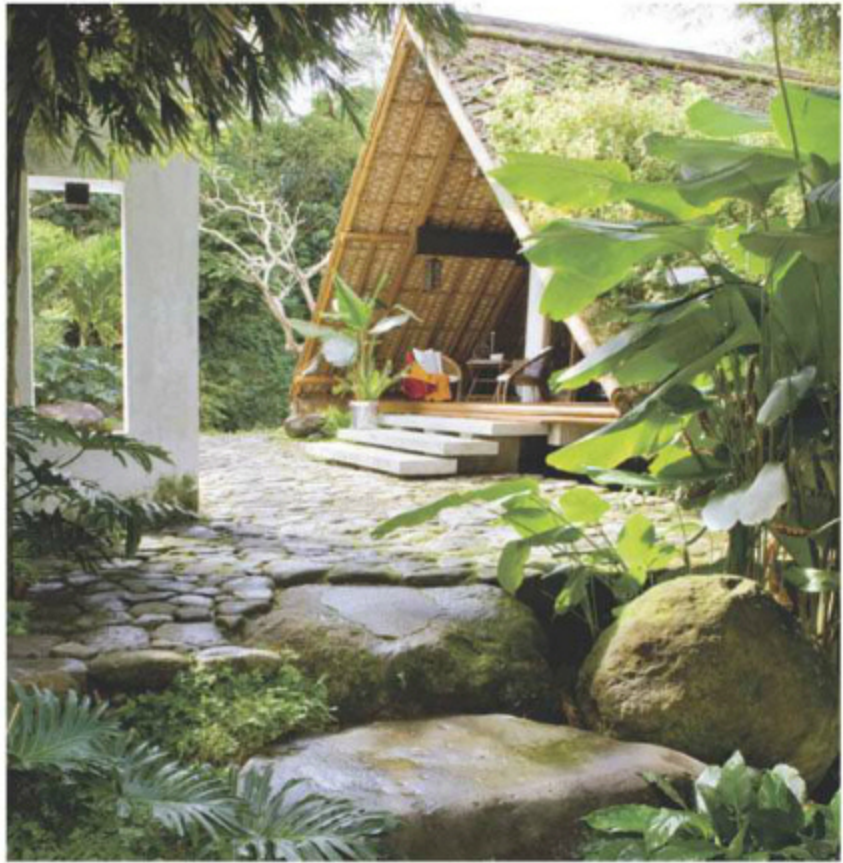
(Front row from left) Luo Jiehua of Huanqiu Ceramic Company, Wu Yufeng of Lola Ceramic Company, Chen Wuzhu of Xinruncheng Ceramic Company, Wilcon Depot executive vice president and chief financial officer Lorraine Belo, Xie Chaofan of Taitao Sanitary Company, Lai Wenping of Morning Kitchen Company, Wilcon Depot president and chief executive officer William Belo, Wu Jinming of Yatai Ceramic Company, Guo Jiayin of Gaoxia Primary School, Wilcon Depot executive vice president and chief operating officer Rose Bosch-Ong, (back row) Mariwasa Siam Ceramics vice president for sales and marketing Jakkrit Suwansilp, Mark Belo, Hocheng Philippines Corporation president Sam Chen, Grohe Philippines country manager Alpha Ang, and Tang Yongyuan of Toe Ceramic Company

TRADITIONAL PHILIPPINE HOMES

THE ENTIRELY NEW EDITION of *Philippine Style: Design and Architecture* cites the *bahay kubo* as the archetypal Philippine house, and the *bahay na bato*, which came from the Spaniards. Houses like the Villa Angela in Vigan, the Acosta-Pastor in Batangas, the Casa Villavicencio in Taal, the Andres-Santos house in Antipolo, the Borja-Rojas house in Malabon, Don Catalino Rodriguez's house in Quezon province, and the Alunan-Lizares' in Negros "could be seen as a metaphor for the character of the Filipino, incorporating and adapting new influences, while retaining deep down, like structural posts, an indefinable, ineluctable sense of self." The book's new edition, written by Elizabeth V. Reyes with photographs by Luca Tettoni, includes chapters on antique furniture, furnishings and home accessories in organic materials by modern-day designers and architects like Galicia, Budji Layug, Anna Sy, Kenneth Cobonpue, Lanelle Abueva and Jon Pettyjohn, among others. Available exclusively at National Book Store, Powerbooks, and Bestsellers.



A breathtaking range of Filipino homes in *Philippine Style*.





# Color power

PERSONALITIES CITE THE IMPACT OF COLOR IN A SPACE

BY ANNA M. ROSETE

**COLOR IS THE DESIGN ELEMENT** that perhaps provokes the most emotional response from the beholder. From fiery reds, tranquil blues, sunny yellows and a whole spectrum of hues in between, people's responses to color are as varied as there are as many characters in this world. For this year's color issue, *Metro Home and Entertaining* asked several personalities to recall the most impactful use of color they have seen in a space. Their responses evoke various memories of places, and often offer instructive nuggets of advice on the use of color in a space.

"I think the translucent grey used as a curtain wall of the Zuellig Building's exterior to mimic a forest had a great impact on the beauty of the building, which is one of the most beautiful I have seen in this country."

—**Maurice Arcache**, society columnist

"For interiors, it would have to be charcoal grey. It's the new black. It's modern, sleek and draws the eye to any focal point without competing with the color scheme."

—**Frenjick Quesada**, interior designer, Design HQ

"It would be Jean Nouvel's red Serpentine Gallery in London because red is such a vibrant, strong color. It is very hard to get it to be consistent. But in this case, it's been done very well. We are usually told to use hot colors like red in moderation, but here it's a fully immersive color, which creates a unique environment of just one single chroma and color."

—**Lee Reed Miles**, instructor and programme coordinator for interior design at Raffles Institute of Design, Manila



Bold color in a model unit designed by Atelier Almario for Augusta Sta. Rosa by Brittany.

"I recently visited a home that used burgundy all over. It went perfectly well with their baroque-framed oil paintings and the surprising combination of turquoise and yellow."

—**Isabel Gatuslao**, graphic designer

"I think the color that made the most impact in various interiors is warm tones of orange to deep vermilion. Designers use it as an accent against a neutral palette like cement, grey, wood or white."

—**Wilmer Lopez**, interior designer

"When it comes to color, I'm attracted to neutral colors and earth tones. I guess that naturally comes with my love of simplicity inspired by

Scandinavian and Japanese aesthetics. I think the most successful use of color is when an object, building or home looks and feels natural. I prefer things that say 'look at this' over ones that scream 'look at me!'"

—**Vito Selma**, furniture designer

"My wife and I were in Berlin a few months ago. There, we visited the Pergamon Museum in Museum Island. At the section of the Museum of Eastern Antiquities, I was awestruck by the reconstructed Ishtar Gate, the Processional Way leading to it and the façade of the King's Throne Hall. The entire exterior of these four-storey-high structures found in Babylon over 800 years ago are beautifully eye-catching color-

wise. All are sheathed in glazed bricks and tiles, shimmering in iridescent blue and ochre! The details in the brick's patterns portray lions, dragons and horses in stunning colors. Pretty awesome! Centuries-old antiquity in brilliant colors!"

—**Architect Manny Miñana**

"Cynthia and I love color. We feel that the most impactful use of color in a home is to always use color in any applicable installation. For example, striped walls, pattern on pattern, murals or to use an overall neutral color on walls and ceiling, and isolate a portion of the wall with an accent color."

—**Ivy Almario**, interior designer, Atelier Almario

# The chairman himself

WITH TYCOON BOBBY ONGPIN'S HANDS ON, RADICAL DEPARTURES IN CONDO DESIGN

BY CARLO TADIAR

**AT THE SHOW UNITS** for the fast-rising Makati Place condominium, what you see is what you get. While at model units for other condominiums sales people are careful to point out the luxuries are all upgrades, here you get practically the entire showcase—including the enviable built-in wine closet in the kitchen.

"Imagine it as if it were a box," suggests Joanna Ongpin-Duarte, who heads marketing for the condo's developer, Alphaland. "If you turned it upside down, everything that sticks to the box comes with the unit."

It seems only fitting that everything in the two show units—in contrast to other model units—works. The refrigerator is on, water flows out of the faucet, you can flush. It's only appropriate where the come-ons are real rather than imaginary, or—in the language of sales—add ons.

To begin with, all the high-end appliances you see in the show units actually come with the apartment, the top-of-the-line built-in oven, stovetop, microwave, ref, range hood in the gleaming kitchen; the 32" flat screen TV in the bedroom and the 42" flat screen TV that electronically lifts into and disappears from view electronically. Even that mechanism comes with the unit.

The luxury finishes, including the Philippe Starck bathroom fixtures are not just there to pique your imagination, they're part of the deal.

But even more luxuriously, the apartments are fully automated. Each one comes with a tablet which you can use to operate the security, lighting, air condition and entertainment systems. An app allows you to use other devices for the same



TOP AND ABOVE: Dining area / kitchen and living area in a two-bedroom show unit of Makati Place. The apartment comes with the mechanism that lowers the TV electronically at the tap of a fingertip on your tablet.

thing, as well. Lights can be set to go off when a room remains unoccupied, or they can be made to go on when someone enters.

While this feature is available in other developments, in some it is an option. Here it is an integral part of each unit.

The air conditioners are on motion sensors which turn them off automatically once a room becomes unoccupied.

Still, none of these comprise the ultimate of the development's amenities. Makati Place is two towers





ABOVE LEFT: Corridor of two-bedroom unit with lots of built-in shelving and closets. ABOVE RIGHT AND RIGHT: Kitchen / dining and living area and bedroom on the 63 sq.m. one-bedroom.



(a third will be a hotel) rising up to 55 stories high from a three-floor podium, housing a state-of-the-art, members-only sports club, The City Club, offering every imaginable athletic and leisure activity and including eight specialty restaurants each devoted to one of the world's favorite cuisines: Thai, Japanese, Spanish, Italian and so on. The open-air top floor will have a sprawling complex of pools, including lap pools and seven Jacuzzis. On this floor, will be a spa, and children's playgrounds and learning center. On the second level will be tennis, basketball, squash and badminton courts. Several of the restaurants will also be on this floor.

The exclusive City Club rises above a ground-level mall.

Makati Place is going to be a unique world unto itself. Even the units are unusual.

Asked who designed the show units, Joanna says it was

the chairman himself. She is referring to her uncle, Bobby Ongpin, who helms Alphaland. "I swear," says Joanna, "if he hadn't become a businessman, he would have become an architect."

One of its uniquenesses, certainly adding immense value to the product, is the generous amount of storage built-in, especially in the two-bedroom unit, which has a striking circular shower stall.

The shower reminds Joanna's brother Apa Ongpin of an apartment their uncle had in

Paris. Apa is on top of another mammoth project of Alphaland, the Alphaland Marina Club, a 300-berth marina in Parañaque to open next year. Apa says that his uncle is himself a condo-dweller who has preferred relatively compact spaces over large ones. This makes the chairman particularly insightful about the needs and wants of this market.

The smallest unit is a one-bedroom with a civilized 63 sq.m. of floor area. Two-bedrooms range from 90 to 123 sq.m. With the exception of the

three-bedroom unit, none of the apartments come with maid's quarters, certainly a radical departure in condo design.

What Makati Place offers in lieu of maid's quarters is maid service. This affords each unit substantially more space for the homeowner, more privacy, and is more in tune with changing lifestyles. **■**

*The Makati Place show units are at Alphaland's headquarters in the Alphaland Southgate Tower at the corner of Chino Roces (Pasong Tamo) and Edsa. Visit [www.makatiplace.com.ph](http://www.makatiplace.com.ph).*

# folio

The old Pinto Gallery extends, page 24





# The national jewels

FUNCTIONING MORE NOW LIKE THE LOUVRE IN PARIS AND THE PRADO IN MADRID, THE NATIONAL MUSEUM MAKES A PERMANENT SHOWCASE OF BREATHTAKING NATIVE GENIUS

BY RAPHAEL KIEFER



A row of HR Ocampo's in one gallery.  
BELOW: A simulation of Fernando Amorsolo's studio with his actual chair and table in a gallery devoted to a survey of his work.



Loans of important artwork to the museum have increased since the renovations began; among them, the four-panel "Progress of Medicine" by Carlos "Botong" Francisco.

**NOW ON PERMANENT DISPLAY** at the National Art Gallery of the National Museum are the many gems in its custody formerly kept in storage. Any day of the year now, you can go to see magnificent works by Juan Luna, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Fernando Amorsolo, Guillermo Tolentino and even Jose Rizal, apart from work by later masters. The National Art Gallery now functions like the Louvre in Paris and the Prado in Madrid, as a permanent showcase of the nation's artistic genius.

Prior to renovation, most of the art pieces under the custody of the Museum were not on display. Says Museum Director Jeremy Barns, "We want to get to a point where only 15% of all pieces are in storage. Careful re-curations were planned alongside the restorations for a more practical and logical display."

The building itself, the old Senate along Padre Burgos Avenue in Manila, has undergone extensive restoration and is still in the process of being restored to its original glory. It was originally designed to be the National Library, but eventually became the home of the Congress and Senate. It was bombed by the Japanese during the war and restored in 1949 as the offices for the lower and upper house. This structure eventually became the National Museum when the Senate moved out in 1997.

Apart from the restoration of the National Museum complex in



Manila, which was envisioned in 1990, restorations of select regional museums have also been set. Zamboanga and Batanes museum restorations have already begun. Barns shares, "Hopefully, we will be done with the major restorations in 2014."

At the heart of the project is the Session Hall, which took the least damage during the bombing of Manila but fell victim to time and neglect. The restoration brings back its pre-war glory with its vibrant red floors, Corinthian columns and pilasters. Once again open to the public, one can appreciate the glory of the hall designed by outstanding Filipino architect Juan Arellano, and decorated by master sculptor Isabelo Tampinco, whose artworks still look down from the top of the hall. The Session Hall will now be used for functions and events.

In the hall is the main draw of the museum, the "Spoliarium" by Juan Luna, standing opposite Hidalgo's "La Tragedia de Gobernador Bustamante." In the Luis Ablaza Hall (Gallery 1) are 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century religious art in a room with eye-catching black and white tiles. The Rizal Room (Gallery 5) contains four sculptures by the National Hero himself, as well as a sketch he made of Berlin, which sits in a climate controlled glass case.

A four-panel mural by Carlos 'Botong' Francisco depicting the

progress of medicine in the Philippines, on indefinite loan to the museum, has been given a brand new gallery.

The room dedicated to the first National Artist Fernando Amorsolo contains sketches and paintings, his original chair and a touching unfinished painting that the artist was working on at the time of his death.

Very recently, another major art piece found its home at the National Museum, thanks to a long term loan agreement with the GSIS—"The Parisian Life" in which Luna and Jose Rizal are in the background of a Paris café. This prized piece, as well as works by Vicente Manansala, Hernando Ocampo, Carlos Francisco and Federico Alcuaz, is accompanied by extra security provided by the GSIS.

Gallery II showcases a National Cultural Treasure, the 14 paintings called the Basi Revolt series, on loan from the Ilocos Sur Historical and Cultural Foundation.

Another interesting and educational touch is in the basement, where visitors can see actual restoration work being done on important artifacts and art collections. **📍**

*The National Museum is open Tuesdays to Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an admission fee of P150 per adult, P50 for students. It is free on Sundays. Visit [www.nationalmuseum.gov.ph](http://www.nationalmuseum.gov.ph).*



# In-between art

ARTWORK THAT STRADDLES TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY IS ON DISPLAY AT THE PRESTIGIOUS RAFFLES RESIDENCES AND HOTEL

BY CES RODRIGUEZ / PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: *The Singapore Sling* by Sherwin Gonzalez and Anthony Palomo in the Long Bar. OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT: Jar Top by Aldrie Acosta in the Owners Lounge, Raffles Residences. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: Untitled work for Filipino Modern themed floor by Aldrie Acosta and Anthony Palomo. THIS PAGE, LEFT: *Magnificat 2* by Daniel dela Cruz in the Lobby. BELOW: *The Serenade*, a series of paintings by Anthony Palomo in the Writer's Bar.



INTO THE SECOND HOUR of striding down the corridors of the 19-floor Raffles Residences in Makati and weaving in and out of the unmade suites of the two-story Raffles Makati Hotel before it launched in February, one rues that few will be given this grand tour.

Art consultant Hala Jaber is holding forth, leading us to sanctums few will see to explain the themes and motifs of the art she has commissioned for the hotel and its adjacent condominium units.

## Precise specifications

The artwork numbers more than 1,000 pieces created by more than 30 artists for more than a year. The specifications were so precise (color, dimensions, themes) that some of the artists dropped out, or revised their work or had a second artist rework their art by adding a fillip or two to conform to the brief.

In fact, there's a bunker somewhere in the bowels of Raffles where Jaber has set up an easel on which artists propped up their finished work. It is critiqued and then brought to where it is intended to hang or be displayed to see the work in context.

Does it stay true to, say, the Pahiyas theme of the 14<sup>th</sup> floor residences? Does the exuberance of the canvas match the muted palette of a room or is it a bit too...exuberant?

While purists may blanch, Jaber, a Lebanese who studied sociology and moved to Ghana with her husband, used pretty much the same formula with the Movenpick Hotel in Accra, her first such project. Discovering an eye for color and combinations by being involved in her husband's thread factory, she approached her art consultancy in the same way. For the hotel in Ghana, she hired local artists to create Af-



rican art reinterpreted for modern sensibilities, which is said to have gone over swimmingly with the locals and European guests.

But why in Manila, where there is a prodigious amount of art now being produced, thanks to the rise of exciting new artists, a surfeit of galleries, and the historic prices Philippine art now commands on the auction circuit?

"The Philippines has a lot of artists. A lot. I was surprised and impressed by the quantity of artists and how people are artistic and creative," Jaber says. "But you have two trends: the traditional or the pure contemporary. The in-between is hard to find. Which is what I did."

## Filipino concepts and ideas

The in-between art that Jaber commissioned included large collages in the Long Bar, featuring pop icons like Manny Pacquiao, Charlie Chaplin, and carnival queens. Abstractionist Max Balatbat, who won a medal at the Florence Biennial in 2009, worked his urban textures and geometric patterns on a Makati Skyline theme for the corridors of the 11<sup>th</sup> floor residences. And the diptych "Scherzo" by Edwin Wilwayco,

one of the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Thirteen Artists in 1994, hangs in the hotel lobby to play off on the Harana theme.

"We wanted to go with a real Filipino concept and ideas because Raffles is a traditional hotel. We wanted to embrace the heritage of the country, but we wanted to do it in a contemporary way because this is a new building. So we had to develop things to match the whole image of the hotel," Jaber says of her choice of artists.

While there are themes and techniques that on the surface appear literal—jeepneys, a *banig* pattern on all the art lining a corridor—Jaber points out details one has missed and erects the context to frame the work singly and as a whole.

This prompted the note-taking from the concierge and the longing to have an art tour as part of the Raffles Manila experience.

"I think with a foreign eye," Jaber explains, "but since I am a sociologist, I think in terms of the history of the country, the culture behind it, what the art scene is, what inspired these artists. I tackle it from a sociological angle so that makes the art interesting—and not only aesthetically. It's the whole thing: aesthetics, concept, history." ❶



# Taking new wing

PINTO ART GALLERY, THE ORIGINAL EXHIBITION SPACE OF RENOWNED ARTS PATRON DR. JOVEN CUANANG, SPILLS OVER

BY CLIFFORD OLANDAY / PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOVEL LORENZO



Built in the tradition of the California Mission, the new wing of the Pinto Gallery features long hallways, wide windows, and high ceilings—perfect for art patron Joven Cuanang's collection of contemporary works by young Filipino artists.



**THERE WERE MORE TREASURES** left unseen in his archives, so art patron Dr. Joven Cuanang decided to expand Pinto Art Gallery, his ode to contemporary works, with a new 1,000-sq.m. wing. After annexing an adjacent plot in hilly Antipolo, the neurosurgeon collaborated with architect and artist Antonio Leño to create what he describes as “something extra special.” That turned out to be a house built in the California Mission style.

“The feel is like a convent or a monastery of sorts,” muses Cuanang. “People say it’s like you’re in Santa Fe. For me, it’s very Spanish and Provençal.”

In the tradition of the original Alta Missions, the structure employs simple building materials like “bare cement and lots of bricks.” The walls are white stucco while the roof was laid with old Spanish tiles. The doctor describes the wing as a blunt structure, “a square building” with a central garden adorned with a pond and fountains. On one side, there is a bell tower with working antique bells.

Tasked to create a green building, the architect installed a bay of sky lights that provides a flush of illumination and increased cross ventilation. Bright and breathy, the new wing is perfect for the presentation of multi-piece art installations. “I wouldn’t miss the bamboo forest, which is found in a cavernous part of the museum, by Antonio Leño,” suggests the doctor. “There’s also the catwalk with a balcony, where we display drawings. You can look at them up close, and when you go to the opposite side, you can view the larger paintings as a whole.”

Dr. Cuanang notes how the new wing feels just like a home, except that this house is exclusively furnished with artifacts of creativity. A dining room is populated with the gallery’s permanent collection of ceramics and terra cotta works. A sleeping area’s bed and beddings are



artworks by Jia Estrella. There is also a library and media room where visitors can peruse the doctor’s own collection of books and film.

With works by Geraldine Javier, Jim Orenco, Emmanuel Garibay, among others, this monastic area underlines the gallery’s commitment to contemporary work by young artists. “They are worth showing,” says Cuanang. “I built Pinto Art Gallery to inspire young Filipinos. Students will see these works and be inspired by what new artists can do and, I hope, will be moved to do art in the future.”

*Pinto Art Gallery is at 1 Sierra Madre Street, Grand Heights, Antipolo City, Rizal. For more information, call +632 697 10 15 or visit [www.pintogallery.com](http://www.pintogallery.com).*

# A house of wanderlust

‘LA MAISON’ IS A LIVABLE INSTALLATION OF REVIVED FURNITURE

BY CLIFFORD OLANDAY  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOVEL LORENZO



**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** ‘I love mixing traditional style with contemporary, vintage, modern Asian, and European influences,’ says Jia Estrella, creator of ‘La Maison’ at the Pinto Gallery. The main salon employs Majorelle Blue as its anchor color. The images on her painted dining chairs are inspired by ‘family adventure, runway trends, cinema, and elements from my home.’ The artist incorporated interior design, fashion, and art into a believable home setting.

ond-hand shops, revives the pieces with the help of her team, and then applies her images using mostly oil paints. An abandoned railing became “Sitting Pretty,” a gallery bench found on the main wall of the exhibit. For “Mirror, Mirror,” a narra vanity, picked up in a garage along Evangelista Street in Makati, was restored to its original glory, its drawers and a frame embellished with thick ribbons of ornate carvings. The artist then collaborated with artist Art Sanchez “to transform the original mirror into a magnificent work of art.”

“I’m sure there are others that paint on furniture, but I think Jia is the only one who, after restoring something nobody really cares about, paints [images that] inspire her in fashion,” muses Tina. “She also knows where to place them in any given setting.”

The artist has a strong background in fashion and design. Before art, the interior design graduate first worked as a furniture designer at Habitat, and then became part of the merchandising and buying team of Rustan’s, for which she managed luxury labels such as Salvatore Ferragamo, Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Fendi, Tiffany & Co., and more. She retired after 16 years as the assistant vice president and buying director for the fashion division of Rustan’s.

All that experience has been poured into “La Maison,” where she put together believable spaces that can be plopped right into, say, the empty rooms of new houses. More important, the artist creates a complete story. “La Maison” is a house of wanderlust. You are spirited away to the cobalt blues of a fantasy ocean. You are tempted to dream on a four-poster bed veiled in white curtains embroidered in a delicate web of blue vines.

*“La Maison” is at the Pinto Art Gallery, 1 Sierra Madre Street, Grand Heights, Antipolo City, Rizal. For more information, call +632 697 10 15.*

**ARTIST JIA ESTRELLA** describes her new exhibit “La Maison,” currently on show at the Pinto Art Gallery in Antipolo, as “a seamless incorporation of art, fashion, and interior design into a livable installation.” This is the second exhibit for the mother of three, who is best known for painting *Vogue*-worthy images on the seats of chairs. It is a precise arrangement of refurbished and stylized furniture and home accessories in four rooms.

“She was able to transform a stark white space into a French Moroccan abode,” says Tina Fernandez, the Art Informal gallery owner and also the artist’s manager.

Inspired by a tour of Jardin Majorelle in Marakkesh, Morocco, the artist created “a journey of art that combines Filipino ingenuity with French elegance and Moroccan refinement.” Jardin Majorelle is the 12-acre botanical playground designed by French artist Jacques Majorelle, later snapped up as a private oasis by fashion god Yves Saint Laurent.

She uses ragged furniture as a canvas. Jia could always imagine the potential of broken things, so she takes in forgotten stuff from sec-



# Filipina in Baltimore 'RAWrs'

U.P. GRADUATE GEM JAMLANG IS NAMED 'VISUAL ARTIST OF 2012' BY THE WORLD'S BIGGEST INDIE ART AWARD BODY

BY ANNA M. ROSETE / PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF GEL JAMLANG



Left: *Tiny Window*, Watercolor, 9" x 12", by Gel Jamlang, 2013. Above: Baltimore-based Filipina artist, Gel Jamlang, named "Visual Artist of the Year" in 2012 by RAW: Natural Born Artists.

**THE LIKENESS OF AN EYE** is intensely rendered in watercolor. The anatomical parts of the eyelid have been carefully modeled, revealing a small industrial city of inverted buildings, chimneys giving out smoke. Surrounding the eye are cloud-like formations. The artist, Baltimore-based Filipina, Gel Jamlang, calls this work "Tiny Window."

In another piece, a woman with a bob cut is depicted with her mirror image, but with a different facial expression and hair color. The one with the blue hair escapes the reader's gaze, while the brunette intently meets the viewer's gaze. Gel Jamlang calls this 8" x 8" piece "Split Apart."

## Love-hate relationship with art

It is for such works that Gel was honored by RAW: Natural Born Artists, an independent arts organization that hosts the biggest independent arts award in the world. Through showcases held several times a year, RAW shines the spotlight on various independent artists, from photographers and painters to performers and fashion designers.

"Through online voting, I was able to make it to the top 5 semi-finalists for RAW Baltimore, where we get to exhibit our works in another showcase. During this show, the audience votes on the spot, together with a panel of judges, to determine who wins and represents the city for the national prize at RAW Awards. I was lucky enough to

win Visual Artist of the Year for 2012 for RAW Baltimore. I am very happy and honored in winning this prize," Gel says of the experience.

A proud graduate of the University of the Philippines' Fine Arts program, Gel admits that she "used to have a love-hate relationship with [her] art." She grew up around art. She recalls, "My stepdad, Fil Delacruz, is a big part of everything that I know of art. He taught me that art is not just a hobby or a talent, it is a 'way of life,' meaning, you live and breathe art. He taught me a work ethic where I set aside any kind of artistic temperament and 'show up for work everyday,'...paint every day... create every minute. He taught me all the skills I know now about painting. He made me realize that having the talent is not really enough. It is a starting point, but that I needed to show respect for the craft by learning as much as I can from it and putting in the work."

## Finding the joy in painting

After college, Gel worked for her aunt, Teng Bustos, the popular builder of high-end homes in a American Southwestern style. Gel painted murals, designed furniture and sketched designs. Between 2008 and 2012, she worked with her mom Cynthia's Pueblo Builders. "I've never really realized why I wasn't completely happy with my work until I changed the direction of my life and moved to Baltimore to be with my husband, Aaron," Gel says. "I wanted to keep painting so



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: *Swallow*, Watercolor, 9" x 12". *Hannya Veil*, 15" x 20". *Jack*, Portrait of Aaron Coe, 9" x 12", 2012. *Hurricane*, 15" x 20", 2013.



I took up watercolor, something I've always been fascinated with. This time, I didn't have the pressure of selling, and I stopped thinking what my potential audience would want to see from me. I just painted what I wanted to paint. I began painting watercolor portraits, which developed into portraits with a twist. I think it's still changing. This time, I found the joy in painting that I've always thought was missing before."

Aside from her portraits and watercolors, Gel is also part of Society 6, an online art resource for affordable art prints, art printed on accent cushions and even iPhone cases, bridging the gap between affordable

and fine art. "Society 6 is a way of getting my art sensibility out there for a bigger audience, and making it affordable with art prints," she says.

After winning the RAW Awards, Gel says, "My goal is to be a full-time artist, and to continue living my life with this as my main occupation. I dream of reaching a bigger audience with my art. I want to do more shows. One of my goals this year is to have an exhibit Manila."

To view Gel Jamlang's work, her blog and to get in touch, visit [www.geljamlang.com](http://www.geljamlang.com), and [www.society6.com/artist/thisisgel](http://www.society6.com/artist/thisisgel) for art prints, framed art prints and stretched canvases.



# Swiss positions

THE AESTHETIC  
AND THE SUSTAINABLE

BY RAPHAEL KIEFER



**IN CONVENTIONAL ARCHITECTURE**, a pedestrian bridge, especially if it stands isolated in a forest away from the general public, does not require a complicated design as long as it is able to carry out its function. Unless, of course, we are referring to a footbridge in Switzerland designed by Swiss architects, in which case, a common design will not do.

The Boudry Footbridge was among subjects of “Swiss Positions: 33 Takes on Sustainable Approaches to Building,” a traveling showcase of 33 photographs of key Swiss construction projects over the past 20 years, all of which look into sustainable development. The exhibit, which ran through January, was held in celebration of 150 years of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and the Philippines.

“The global community needs to reorient itself economically, ecologically and socially,” says Edward Schwarz, general manager of the Holcim Foundation for sustainable construction, which sponsored the exhibit. “For future generations to be in the position to meet their needs, the traditional approaches to designing, constructing, and using buildings and structures must change significantly.”

The beauty of these featured architectural masterpieces is that going green is only half the battle. The designs are also aesthetically wonderful as they blend seamlessly with their natural environment.

Take the Boudry Footbridge. Architect Geninasca Delefortrie made the experience of crossing this bridge a fascinating one as it complements the beautiful surroundings rather than acts as an eyesore. The sinuous design of the bridge never makes the pedestrian feel “constricted” and allows maximum natural light. For good measure, the technical aspects that hold the bridge up are well hidden within its complex wood and steel design.

Swiss architects and engineers enjoy not only an excellent reputation for technicality and originality in design but also for their concern

**ABOVE:** Extension of the historical museum in Bern (Historisches Museum Bern) is “sunk” halfway underground and rises with the glass facade reflecting the old building. **RIGHT:** Boudry Footbridge built between two riverbanks is an extension of the existing footpath, a sinuous structure of slatted screens with a sculptural quality blending into the surroundings. Photographed by Thomas Jantscherconstruction.



for sustainability and long term effects on the natural environment. The exhibit proves that aesthetics and function do not have to be compromised in the name of the protection of the environment. Another concern that the Swiss have been able to address is the question of adding space in a congested area without having to build tall vertical structures. The extension of the Historical Museum in Bern is a fitting example.

The need for additional space in a structure originally built in 1894 was addressed by a Swiss firm called *mlzd*. The highlight of the design is the perfect marriage of the old and the new. The annex was made primarily of a colored concrete to make it look similar to the original sandstone material. Part of it was “sunk” halfway into the ground, rising at some distance with a facade of mirrored glass reflecting the original building, which was made to resemble an old castle. It’s an ingenious solution to the challenge of adding to architecture more than a century old while remaining vivid as contemporary architecture.

“In the Philippines, sustainability must be brought down to reach the greater majority of people by promoting green and sustainable solutions that encompass the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit. We must bring sustainability to the lowest level of society, the *barangay*,” says Miguel Guerrero, president of Green Architecture advocacy Philippines (GreenAP), a civic organization that promotes green architecture and sustainability to all sectors of society. **1**

Visit [www.yuchengcomuseum.org](http://www.yuchengcomuseum.org).

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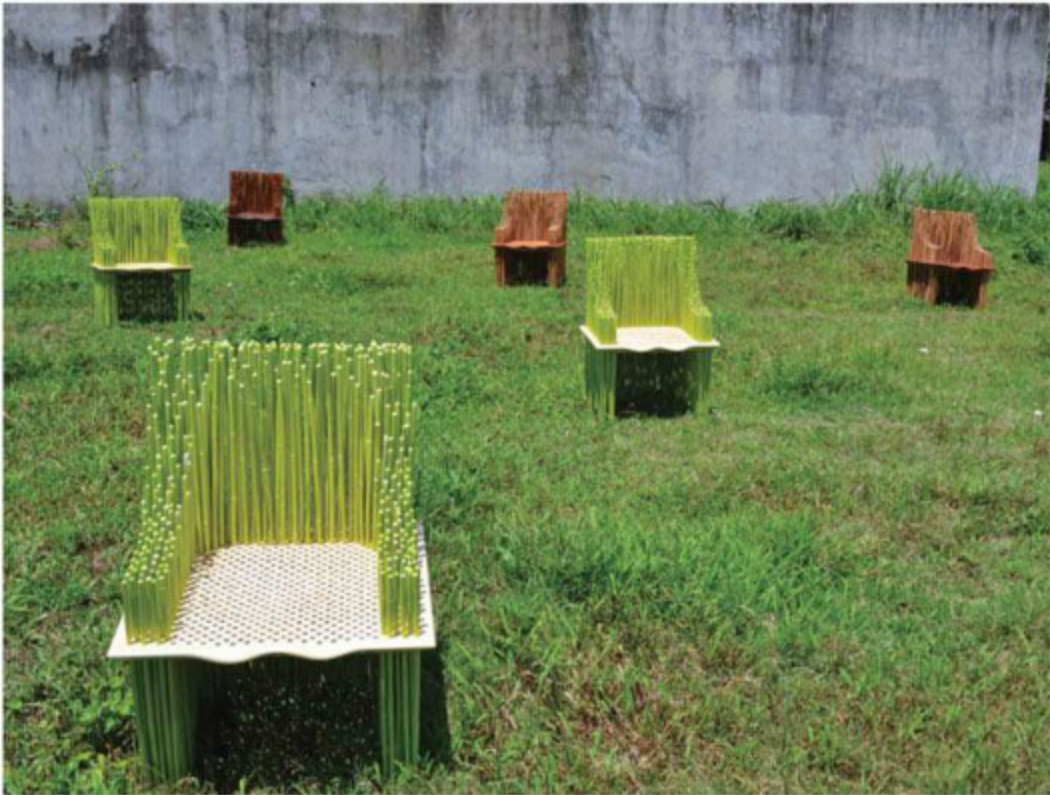


# New breed two

BY ANNA M. ROSETE

A JAPANESE EXPAT  
AND A FRENCH-  
FILIPINA HELP  
BRING NEW LIFE TO  
PHILIPPINE DESIGN

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW:  
Artist and designer, Olivia d'Aboville  
in front of her installation, Coral  
Stress. (Photograph by Milo  
Sogueco). Anemone Lamp for Hive.  
(Photograph courtesy of Hive).



“MY CHILDHOOD LIFE was surrounded by disciplined Japanese art forms,” says designer Wataru Sakuma, recalling his father’s fascination for *tougei* pottery and woodcut printing, and his mother who taught Japanese calligraphy and ikebana. He majored in painting at the Memphis College of Art. A residency followed at the affiliate Parsons School of Design. “[But] it was only after coming to the Philippines that I found the passion for design when I encountered pulp and paper,” he says.

Now, Sakuma’s work is most recognizable as explorations in paper with Masa Ecological Development, Inc., with whom he develops various paper products from agricultural waste materials. Through a common belief that “more young designers need to be active to revive the [design]industry,” Wataru joined Daniel Latorre Cruz and Jinggoy Buensoceso in forming the design group Epoch just in time for Cebu’s 2011 Kagikan Project. (Epoch’s Latorre Cruz, Buensoceso and Stanley Ruiz were featured in our last issue, **Metro Home** 9.6.)

“Any simple object or experience could strike as a starting point for design. Material is definitely one of the starting points for my design process. I spend time with the material, [discerning] the alternative possibilities with the material and technique,” Sakuma says. “It is very important for me to visit factories and witness the process first hand in order to experience and feel the production site and materials. When I have an idea, I may not have an image of how it should exactly turn out to be. I like to work towards it and see the idea evolve into something totally different. It’s important to keep the idea alive and let it be. I like my designs to surprise.”

On the development of design and young designers in the Philippines, he says, “The Philippines has a lot to offer young designers, a



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT:  
Re baroque Chair manufactured  
by StoneSets International Inc.  
(photograph by Wataru Sakuma);  
Tsubo Chair, manufactured by Finali  
Furniture (photograph by Wataru  
Sakuma); Hanami pendant lamps,  
manufactured by CSM PH Inc.  
(photograph by Daniel Latorre Cruz)

vast resource of indigenous materials, craftsmanship, and the amazing nature for inspiration... As I become more involved with the design industry in the Philippines, I am convinced that the younger generation of designers is the key to sustain and enhance the awareness.”

On participating in international design fairs as part of Epoch, he observes, “When I exhibit abroad, people ask me where I am from. I say that I am from the Philippines, and they reply without any surprise, ‘Of course, the creative Philippines.’”

## Dreamweaver

**TINY, TRANSPARENT AND CONCAVE** oval shapes creep up a wall. They are numerous, and together are gathered in a mass reminiscent of coral reefs. The way light hits them and their composition on the wall evoke comparisons to beds of seaweeds. Upon closer inspection, you discover that they are plastic spoons intertwined together.

This is the work of Olivia d’Aboville, a textile major in Paris’ Ecole Duperré. Today, she works with everyday objects such as water bottles, plastic spoons, and pins. Her use of these utilitarian and mass produced things conveys their role in society as objects that also pollute nature. In her art, she recycles them, creating new forms and meaning with them. “The material is always my starting point. After manipulating it, I get the feel of how it needs to be translated into a new form. I work a lot with plastic, but I’ve started using indigenous materials in my recent designs such as abaca and capiz. The process for me stays the same although the material dictates the final shape,” Olivia says.

As a young girl, Olivia was more into painting and visual art. Surrounded by her mother’s collection of indigenous Filipino crafts, Olivia says, “I was always exposed to Filipino indigenous crafts from different tribes such as the Mangyans and T’boli, which were part of my mom’s collection. I also enjoyed creating my own bags and accessories, using crochet techniques and beadwork. After a year of art prep school in Paris, I decided to specialize my education in textile design.”

This background informs Olivia’s design process. Working with textile techniques, she shapes her materials of choice into something interesting. Arriving at a particular form demands an inquisitive process into the material’s properties and a spirit of play.

She explains, “My design process is quite simple. I play with a material of my choice until I come up with an interesting shape. My textile design background is definitely a key motor in my process. When I play with a material, I test its flexibility, its reaction to tension. I will try to weave it, accumulate it, knot it or crochet it.”

Manila FAME’s March 2012 show offered Olivia the opportunity to exhibit part of her Coral Garden Collection. It was also in the same show where she unveiled her Anemone Lamp collection in the Hive booth. The Epoch designers saw her work and asked her to be part of Epoch. It is an experience which she esteems to be very beneficial for her growth as an artist and designer.

“The support that we get from Citem is great,” shares Olivia. “They link young designers to different companies around the Philippines for programs such as product development. It’s a great opportunity, as we get to travel to different cities and create a collection in collaboration with the selected company. I’ve recently come back from Davao, where I’m collaborating with Tadeco Home for the March 2013 show.”

Olivia envisions growth for the Philippine design industry. She says, “It has one way to go—up.”



# Nature and absence

LANDSCAPES FILL A VOID

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Melissa LaO, *Running Away From Home, The World Is Big, Mankind Leaps Upon The Moon, Overflowin, In A Bad Bad World, Drugs Are A Rational Response To Insanity*



**THE ARTIST MELISSA LAO** is going to have a rare solo show, titled “Supernature” at Finale Art File, opening March 6.

Melissa paints lyrical landscapes without people or animals or any evidence of other forms of life. The setting is usually in waning light.

“I’m really just in love with the world,” the artist says in a statement. “Between what we see, what we experience, what we remember and how we choose to feel about that. Between abstraction and figuration.” For her, rational, conscious thought arrests the ability to make art. “If you thought about painting, you wouldn’t do it,” she says. And I like that. Not thinking, letting things happen.

“And I guess that’s what I paint,” she continues. “I paint the space I occupy, a mad mix of memory, images floating in from tacked up pictures on my studio walls: snapshots from surf trips, Japanese prints where it’s sometimes raining, and the moon is out, the whorly Munchs, Cranach’s horses, grass, flesh and trees moving to the same gusts of wind.”

Melissa finished her bachelor’s degree in Architecture at the Southern California Institute of Architecture. She has an MS in Advanced Architectural Design from Columbia University. Her last solo show was in 2010, at Jarmuschek + Partner in Berlin. **D**

*Finale Art File is at Warehouse 17, La Fuerza Compound (Gate 1), 2241 Pasong Tamo, Makati.*



## I have no concept, seriously

INTERVIEW BY ITNL

**What is your show called?** Like the other year, I did a show in Berlin and we turned the gallery into a disco. My friend sent me a song called *Supernature* by Cerrone. I don’t really understand what the show name means, actually. But I’m sure I will in a year. Plus, I do really listen to disco. I did DJ a disco set.

**Are you a professional DJ?** No.

**What are you then?** Right now I think I’m a painter.

**Tell me about your paintings. What is the concept?** I have no concept, seriously. I had no friends and I had no company, so my paintings became my friends. It’s like nature! Always there for you and around you and surrounding you.

**So the loyal quality of nature is what inspires you?** I guess.

**Maybe you could get a dog?** I do have a dog. He lives in a jar over my mantle. His name is Gogo. When he wasn’t in a jar, he loved the beach.

**There are a lot of beaches in your show. That seems like a concept.** It’s more like a theme. I paint purple beaches and pink moons. My stuff is so bad. Maybe my theme is bad.

**Or bad-ass.** No, it’s just bad.

**Or perhaps I’m sensing a tinge of irony in the “badness.” That sensibility seems to have a place in contemporary art today.** Unfortunately, it does. Really, I just like love. And rainbows. I think that’s where I’m going next.



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# homes



Dining area  
in the home  
of production  
designer  
Rious Caliso,  
page 56



# THE ACCIDENTAL HOUSE FLIPPER

SEEING THE PERFECTION IN IMPERFECTION

BY **BARBIE PARDO-TIANGCO**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **JOVEL LORENZO**



A sculptural sofa by Mark San Diego and painting Rodel Garcia in the living area of the home of Lex and Chippy Ledesma. OPPOSITE PAGE: A pair of old narra doors with handles of painted metal pipes beside a piece of driftwood made into a natural sculpture.





A branch cut from a tree is the crowning glory of the dining area.

**WHILE OTHERS SWEAT** blood and tears to get into the Manila house-flipping business—the business of buying a house and upgrading it to sell—Lex Ledesma seems to have stumbled on the industry by happenstance.

Lex, 38, is the school director of The One School, proprietor of the Whistlestop restaurant chain, managing director of Nami Resort Boracay, and staunch mentor, through RockEd Philippines, at the New Bilibid Prison. Also, he is newly married and in the process of moving homes again because of an accidental sale.

Young couples, it seems, are drawn to his personal aesthetic. They make offers on houses he's made over without the thought of selling.

### The seekers

This particular two-story townhouse in Palm Village, Makati was renovated and furnished with his beautiful and creative wife, Chippy, an ABS-CBN sales executive. Together, they constantly seek old furniture to restore and repurpose for their current and future homes. "The trick is to see the beauty and potential in something even amidst ruin," Lex says. "We both share a passion for fixing things and repurposing them. We both see the perfection in imperfection."

On weekends, they frequently scour their usual haunts around the city for unique pieces that they transform by reupholstering, repainting or using in an entirely unique way. A licensed civil engineer, Lex handles the construction while Chippy takes care of the interior decoration. A friend and architect, Xander Lacson, handles space planning and also gives his inputs on aesthetics.

Their dining lighting fixture, for example, is a cut-off branch from a tree right outside their house, draped with three bare bulbs. The result is a sculptural, rustic and very charming conversation piece that all their guests want to know about.

The entire home's aesthetic, as Lex describes it, is a mix of industrial and earthy, which blends the styles of both husband and wife. The



ABOVE LEFT: A French bulldog lamp, a made-to-order distressed metal buffet table, an Ivan Acuna painting, a bright yellow jar, and a classic bar cart. ABOVE RIGHT: Bench made from a discarded piece of marble. RIGHT: Lex with his French Bulldogs Chuck and Chida.



lived-in and warm look is a breath of fresh air compared to the antiseptic showroom look of many Makati homes today.

Lex and Chippy's growing art collection is constantly rotated from storage to provide a freshness to the home every so often. Most of their pieces are by budding, young artists whose work they love, and many are by Bilibid inmates whom Lex mentors on weekends.

**Passion for restoration**

"I have lived in maybe 12 homes in 38 years," Lex explains, "and I feel no attachment and sentimentality to addresses and furniture so when buyers ask us to include the furniture and artwork, we usually oblige." Lex and Chippy do so probably because they have a passion for restoring things, finding the diamond in the rough, and extending the life of every item.

When Lex goes house-hunting, brokers are often surprised when he finds beautiful even the most rundown and dilapidated homes. When shown picture-perfect homes, he is often unimpressed. "This may stem for our wanting to polish and personally unearth the beauty of a place or an item that we may deem unattractive," Lex explains.

When renovating, Lex always builds his dream home for himself. He likes to mix the old with the new, the rugged with the sophisticated, thus creating his own brand of home appreciated by many. 11



Open air deck with outdoor furniture, which enjoys the permanent shade of a big tree.

**Lex Ledesma's tips**

1. Renovate as if you plan to live in the house yourself. Better yet, actually live there first to get to know the house and what it needs to be the best home it can be.
2. See beyond the ruin. When searching for a fixer-upper, look only for "good bones" or a healthy home structure.
3. Give personality to a home. Don't decorate as if the home is a showroom—it's best to decorate for function and for a particular aesthetic sensibility.
4. Consider location and lighting. Visit sites at different times of the day to see how light falls in the different rooms so you can design accordingly.
5. Do not rush, whether selecting a property, constructing or decorating. This ensures that each decision will be well thought of. In fact, building the structure slowly will help to ensure quality, since each element is made properly from the start.
6. Don't be afraid to buy old furniture, but only if you can fix this to fit your needs.
7. Contrast is key. When buying furniture, make sure to blend new, polished items with raw or refurbished ones so your place doesn't end up looking like an antique shop.
8. Every room should have a focal point that draws the attention of the guest.
9. Don't be afraid to move things around on a regular basis. Rotate furniture, artwork, books, etc., so your space always seems fresh to you.
10. Make your home your sanctuary, the place where you get good vibes and inspiration to work well and hard everyday. To do this, each room must have a lot of "you" in it. Rely on your intuition, instinct and personality to bring all the elements together.



A growing art collection which rotates constantly. Among the works on display in the stairwell are photographs taken by Lex during his travels, works from Team Manila, and an Edades that Lex inherited from his parents.



# NEW LEAF

A MOM AND DAUGHTER MOVE FROM THE BUSTLING CITY TO THE QUIET SUBURBS, INTO A HOME THEY ALWAYS DREAMED ABOUT

BY **CAL TAVERA**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PAUL DEL ROSARIO**

**AFTER EIGHTEEN YEARS,** Paz Magadia and her daughter Lea allowed themselves the dream of a house. Tired of living in the noisy city, they thought it was time to pack up, bid farewell to their apartment and move on. While scouting for a potential place, Paz came across a house, but the chemistry was not instant. As soon as she set foot in it, the space felt clinical.

She had misgivings about the place, but Lea was adamant about putting down roots here. She recounts, "My mom was doubtful about living here, but I convinced her to get this as our home. There was a special air to the house even though the appeal was not apparent at first. This place was meant for us."

Her enthusiasm was understandable as the place would be their first house. After living in a one-bedroom apartment in Manila for nearly two decades, this place is a dream realized. Lea shares, "We lived there ever since, but we never had the opportunity to design it the way we wanted to. It was plain and simple, but we were located on the main street so it was accessible to stores. Living in the city was pretty



Lanai in the home of Paz and Lea Magadia. The owners designed the table themselves. Made with antique railroad ties they found at Queen Bee in Tagaytay, it has stainless steel legs. The chairs are from the same company. The metal sofa was found at Manila FAME 2011. The drop lights are from Far East Furniture in Pampanga, floor lamp from Mandaue Foam and accent mirrors on the walls from Tribosa Bay Living.





The glittering wall decoration is from Triboa Bay Living. The longhorn armchair is a design of Luisa Robinson for Detalia Aurora. The horns are of fiberglass. The sofa from Far East Furniture is surrounded by side tables and a coffee table made with shagreen frames from Cebu based furniture store Sky Shine.



Graphic wallpaper from Weaves of Asia forms the backdrop of the dining area. The glass-topped dining table with a base of walnut wood is by Kenneth Cobonpue. The dining chairs are from More Than A chair, a furniture store based in Mabalacat, Pampanga. The arrangement of plates on the side is an inspired idea from a wall in A11 gallery on FB Harrison Street. The light fixture with glass chain links is from Loft Details.

fast-paced." Suburban Ayala Alabang is remote, but the lure of nature and quiet proved too seductive for mother and daughter.

"To be honest, we had no intention of settling down in this neighborhood. Initially, we had our sights set somewhere else, but I suppose it was fate," says Lea. "When we saw this house, it did not have a gate. It was one of the many things that attracted me. We never liked feeling enclosed so it was fortunate that we found a house without one."

The original state of the interiors yielded a different reaction. They needed an overhaul. To help them through the arduous process of transforming their ideas into reality, they collaborated with family friend and decorator, Karisa Yee, who recently graduated from the Philippine School of Interior Design.

"I entered the project in the midst of the demolition process. The place felt claustrophobic," says Karisa. "Originally, there were four bedrooms on the ground floor and three on the second level, but we brought it down to three. We tore down all the partitions to open up the space. The exterior and narra wood planks are the only remnants of the original house after the renovation."

"I was fortunate to have Paz and Lea as my first clients," Karisa continues. "They were very much involved in the whole process because they wanted a home that was designed specifically for them."

During the first meeting with the designer, Paz proclaimed, "First and foremost, I want a spa. And that is non-negotiable." Her regular calendar consists of penciled appointments for massages three to five

times a month. For this special requirement, a real massage bed from Creative Spa and a sauna were ordered. Aside from this, three other specifications had to be met. First, there should be an expansive open space for the living room. Second, the main door must be relocated. Third, all the upstairs rooms must be connected. Karisa, with Architect Eugene Mangubat, was able to define a new layout for the owners.

### The extra mile

While the modern facade was preserved, Karisa produced a few surprises for the visitors who expect similar interiors to the architecture. "I wanted the interiors to be dictated by the taste and lifestyle of the clients and not the structure of the house, so I encouraged them to pick the pieces they loved. The end result was a modern traditional home," Karisa explains. "We avoided trends, opting for a combination of a modern and classic look as you can see from the raw claw foot tub in the master bathroom to the modern Cobonpue dining table. We did not want to spend a fortune, but we placed a premium on the furniture pieces because they are timeless."

Despite her schedule, the owner accompanied the designer to Cebu. Land of renowned furniture designers, this city was pivotal in completing their wish list, and their industriousness was greeted with choices from red pen shell finished consoles and stingray side tables to cocofiber coffeetables. Karisa reveals, "Our favorite statement is the longhorn occasional chair from Detalia Aurora by Luisa Robinson





**LEFT:** Study area of college student Lea. She says, "I don't know what this doll on my desk is exactly but my mom is quite sweet. She saw it somewhere and purchased it because it reminded her of me. My mother is always doing thoughtful things for me." **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The chosen color palette dictated the rest of this bedroom. Lea shares, "When I saw the wallpaper from Weaves of Asia of red, pink and yellow roses, it was perfect for my room. They are my favorite flowers and they remind me of my father." In contrast to her mother's canopied bed, Lea opted for this four poster design instead and had it custom made by More Than a Chair.



that we discovered in their Mandaue showroom." A pair of them form a highlight of the living room.

The chairs join a coffee table framed in shagreen by Sky Shine Furniture, customized ottomans by Restoration, lamps by Far East Furniture. Forming a backdrop is a glittering assembly of mirrored angles on a metal frame from Triboa Bay. Everything was picked by the client with concurrence from the designer. Karisa advises, "When you see something that you connect with, go with that instinct. You can't go wrong with choosing pieces that you feel strongly about."

The same philosophy applies to the dining area. The solid wood table by Kenneth Cobonpue was one of their major purchases during the Cebu trip. Karisa says, "The client coveted this table as soon as she saw it because of the design, finish and construction. It really is unique. Also, it is always good to own a piece by one of our finest local

designers." The table was paired with eight dining chairs from Pangpanga-based More than a Chair.

The palette of the house combines light shades of ivory and biscuit with dark wenge wood. Karisa shares, "The furniture items we ordered were specified in neutral colors so they will last long. We used the accessories to infuse color because they are less expensive and can easily be changed."

For less formal dining, there's the lanai. Lea shares, "Aside from my bedroom, the lanai would have to be my personal favorite. We sometimes eat breakfast al fresco, and we lounge there with friends." The table is made from old railroad ties purchased by the client in Tagaytay, and paired with eclectic lighting fixtures from Far East and a wrought iron sofa.

The area is great for entertaining. Lea says, "We enjoy our privacy,



"The peg for the master bedroom is that it has to be traditional yet light. She wanted it to be feminine as well," says Karisa of her client. So the decorator proposed a canopy with subtle patterns. The bed was custom made by More Than A Chair. The night tables and chaise lounge were all made to the owner's specifications by MTC as well. The Chinese stool was a bargain they purchased from a pot supplier in Mandaluyong. Lea says of her mother's suite, "This is her haven after work so she wants to feel relaxed." Adjacent is a spa room with sauna.



but we have guests over at times because of their curiosity about our new home. Sometimes they would catch me sleeping when my mother gives them a tour because all our upstairs bedrooms are connected."

### The rooms upstairs

"This wallpaper with roses is perfect for me," exclaims Lea upon entering her bedroom where the usual neutral palette is banished in favor of red, pink and yellow accents. "They are my favorite flowers," she explains. While her mother gravitates towards subtle hues, Lea is attracted to bolder colors. Karisa says, "Lea was given the latitude in conceptualizing her space. She knew she wanted a four poster bed and a bright accent color. We started with bed options and worked around that design. The wallpaper she picked determined the palette for the rest of the room."

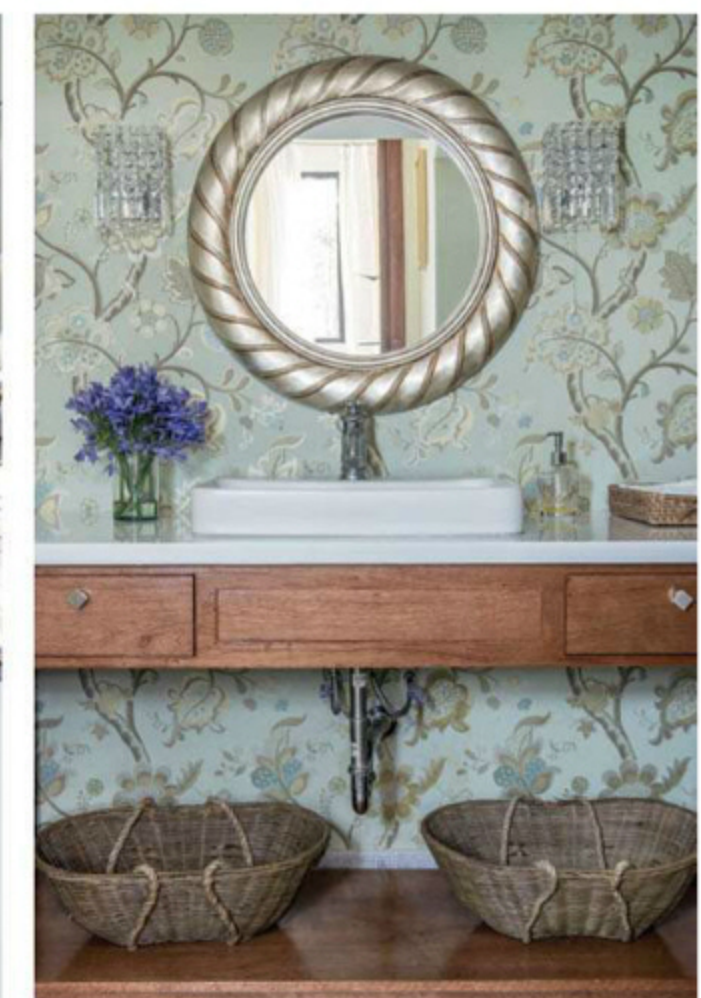
Lea adds, "Unlike my mother, I wanted it to feel more pop than princess. That explains why the other bedrooms have canopies except mine. My mother prefers a haven where she can relax and meditate. She was uncompromising with the spa room because that is her haven. All the rooms on the second floor interconnect with each other. The spa is located between the two bedrooms because we share its facilities. We have

a close relationship, so I do not mind that the rooms are built this way."

In the middle of the master bedroom is a queen size bed under a canopy of beige. A custom-made tufted chaise lounge is at the foot of the bed beside a Chinese ceramic stool piled with healthy living titles. Lea shares, "My mother is really into the organic and natural way of living. She's constantly reading up on how to take care of herself more. I suppose that lifestyle inspired the feel of the entire home."

In the master bathroom, an antique style bathtub beckons by the corner. Lea shares, "When my mother has time for herself, she would take baths rather than showers. Sometimes she even pours petals into the bath." A small stool carries towels and an array of bottled bath creams that promises a relaxing experience. Karisa explains, "This is her sanctuary, something the owner looks forward to enjoying after long hours at the office."

Lea recalls, "It was a bit of an adjustment moving here. We used to know all our neighbors when we lived in the city. Now everything is new. But the trade-off is the privacy and the bigger space, which is the best part about moving here. This house is a blessing. It serves as a reward for my mother's many years of hard work." 1



LEFT: An antique-style tub from HomeStore in the master bathroom. ABOVE: Powder room on the ground floor. Karisa says, "Since it was so dark before, being under the stairs and with no windows, we wanted to brighten up the space using light colored wallpaper, tiles, paint and providing ample lighting." The accent mirror from Our Home and vanity counter from Touchwood is placed against wallpaper from Weaves of Asia. The baskets under the counter are from the bargain market along Dapitan Street.



A deeply pitched ceiling, emphasized by contrasting wood trusses, chandelier and ceiling fans, creates high drama in the living room. A rippled tile wall backdrops the sofa. Chinese chairs and coffee table give the space a distinctly Asian mien. OPPOSITE PAGE. A 'foyer' is created at the entryway with an antique Chinese screen and a gathering of objects. The provides a suspense by shielding the rest of the house from immediate view.



# SUBTLE DRAMA

CLASSIC STYLE  
AND NEUTRAL  
PALETTE WITH BOLDLY  
MODULATED VOLUMES

BY **CHINO DELA TORRE**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **WILLIAM ONG**

**"IT FEELS LIKE I'M ON VACATION,"** says the doctor who pleasantly seems surprised to hear those words come out of his mouth. It's final proof he has successfully created an oasis. What was once a '60s-style bungalow is now a two-story tropical haven with generously scaled, sun-bathed interiors with a cozy mix of contemporary and traditional touches.

The property was purchased over a decade ago, and rented out much of the time. When the tenant's lease expired in 2010, the owner decided to move in, again enlisting the services of interior designer Frenjick Quesada of DesignHQ. "This is about the third time Frenjick has worked for me. I like his results, so I thought he'd be the right person to do the renovation of the house," says the doctor. "This house had only gone through minor renovations since it was only for rent. But when I decided to live here, I signed up for a major renovation... I'm here for good."

From the outside, the house is partially covered by greens. What remains exposed are the exterior walls clad in natural stones. A stone path leads guests to a huge solid narra door that serves as the main portal of the house. It opens to a vignette of Oriental furniture and objects, serving as a prelude, like a kind of foyer, to the living room and the rest of the house. The living room is bright and inviting. Large window panels and glass sliding doors blur the line that separates the interiors from the outdoor garden.

## A view of the gardens

"I wanted my house to maximize the view of the gardens," says the owner. This became the basic principle that dictated the general open layout of the house. White tile accents framed in wood dress parts of the living room walls. Drama is created by a deeply pitched ceiling towering over the space. "The angular shape and the wooden trusses and accents that define the pitched ceiling give the house that modern tropical touch," says Frenjick. "We treated the angled side with a neutral textured wallpaper instead of making it all wood finish to achieve a lighter and cozier feel."







Kitchen and dining area form one continuous and expansive space. Despite the casual open layout, the dining set bears an elegant formality.





The foyer is composed of a long console propped up against a folding divider the owner acquired in China. “We had to contact the supplier to add an extension to the divider to make it taller and more proportional for the space,” says Frenjick. The divider casually partitions the living room from the kitchen and dining space so you don’t get to see everything at once when you enter the house. At the same time, the intricate carving and construction add visual interest to the Asian character of the house.

The kitchen, given a generous amount of space, is adjacent to the dining area. Though both are in one open space, dropped ceilings with cove lightings help frame each area without being obtrusive. Both areas share the view of the back garden seen through large panels of glass doors. “It was one of my requirements as I really like seeing the garden when I’m inside,” explains the owner. The kitchen is ready to handle any occasion as it’s equipped with long work counters that can easily be used as a nook, bar, or buffet table. “My partner loves to cook and we’re happy to entertain as well,” adds the owner.

Above the dining table is a light installation composed of a fabricated log with a glass tube spiraling around it. “The first time I saw it, I told Frenjick that I didn’t like it,” admits the owner. “But he insisted on putting it up and reassured me that it’ll look fine. I said OK, let’s test it. True enough, I loved it.”

Much of the space is kept neutral, from the light wood finish of the kitchen cabinets to the monochromatic wallpapers with floral patterns. The patterns are not visual distractions, but they add that extra tropical touch. Varying-height shelves and plenty of wall space were

provided for the owner as well. Having flexibility in display was important for the traveler who likes buying a new art piece on his trips.

### Architectural details

Originally a split-level bungalow, the house was renovated and a second floor added. “The split level, which is about four steps above the common areas, used to run all the way to the living room. We had to demolish that part to open up the living area,” explains the owner. What remained of the split level became the guest room, the staircase, and the master bedroom. “I didn’t want my room to be on the second floor anymore. I used to live in a townhouse with a lot of stairs and I think it’s about time I have a room that didn’t have so much,” laughs the doctor. “My son’s room, study, and a storage room are now on the second floor.”

An anteroom opens up to the master bedroom with its own pitched ceiling, architectural details similar to the living room. The room boasts of a high ceiling and sunlit interiors. The bed, a gift from the owner’s dad, is paired with matching side tables, lamps, and convex mirrors that add that extra level of polish.

Most of the furniture came from the owner’s previous home. Old pieces were restored or modified to fit in the new interiors. The result is a blend of contemporary tropical design grounded in Filipino roots.

“I’m very pleased with the outcome of the house. It’s cool and restful and has a certain hotel feel to it that I enjoy,” says the doctor. Although he loves to travel, he doesn’t really have to go far for his next vacation. This home is now his own tropical retreat. 11



Pitched ceiling is reiterated in the master bedroom. The French Empire-style bed is an heirloom, from the owner’s father. OPPOSITE PAGE, RIGHT: Glass sliding doors lead from the dining area to the backyard garden and lanai, where a vintage dining set serves as an al fresco alternative to the dining area. LEFT: The powder room is layered with a combination of textured and earth-toned tiles. An occasional table was added to make the space feel more homey and add interest.



AS A  
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BY CLIFFORD OLANDAY  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
WILLIAM ONG

# NIGHT MOVES IN

Production designer Rious Caliso employs techniques from his set styling work in this 55-sq.m. two-floor apartment. He reuses a divider, which was put together using plywood, fabric, and upholstery tack, from a commercial shoot to delineate the living spaces from the kitchen. Personal artifacts make spaces feel fuller. OPPOSITE PAGE: While the proportions of this bookshelf were sourced online, Rious added decorative molding for a richer look. The designer, who invents finishes that will look good on television, created a custom corn color for the piece. A European-style chair found along Evangelista Street in Makati is reupholstered in a gray velvet brocade to suit the dark feel of the apartment.



**"EVERYTHING IS JUST AN ILLUSION,"** proclaims Rious Caliso, a production designer for TV commercials, the visual expert who builds various settings like, say, a grungy warehouse for a rager or those pink and pretty bathrooms for a shampoo spot. He describes the work as "very much like interior design but at a faster pace." Sets are put together as quickly as three days. Fake is not a dirty word when it makes a 15-second scene appear real. Tricks and techniques are employed to make sure that a three-walled room looks amazing for the moving camera. And after the director yells cut, the interior illusions are torn down.

## Perpetual dusk

For his 55-sq.m. two-floor apartment, perpetual dusk is the illusion. In the creative universe, Rious says your sense of time gets muddled, especially when work wraps from four to seven in the morning. When days end at the rising of the sun, he seeks the feeling of nighttime, finding rest in the veil of a shadow.

When Rious moved in three years ago, the walls were painted bright white. He gave everything a wash of dove gray, a shade that

seems to draw the space into itself, making it feel like a cozy cocoon—just as he wanted it. Then, he fell in love with a beveled mirror, and hung it in the middle of everything. For him, furniture is the point of creation. The pieces he collects for sets and, more recently, this apartment, are finds from glossy boutiques and *segunda mano* shops along Evangelista Street in Makati, or A11 on E.B. Harrison Street in Pasay. Spotting a Dimensione sofa that echoed the sumptuous feel of the centerpiece, "I didn't let it go," he says.

Rious does not want to cite a particular style as the look of his place. Most of his friends say that it's shabby chic. He qualifies it as "a darker, moodier shabby chic." The spirit of the Old World, particularly both the sophisticated and pastoral feel of France, is evident in the arrangements as well. But Rious goes back to his sofas and tables and chairs, saying that he is moved by "classic pieces of furniture" most of all. For instance, though the size of an austere study table is too small for actual work, Rious made it the anchor piece for a vignette found underneath the stairs. Today, the flea market find serves as a catchall for stuff.





Drawn to classic furniture more than specific styles, Rious bought this desk at a flea market even if it was too small for use. The designer had it repainted with wood grain details. A matching chair in the same mid-century style was added. The glass lamp with blue shade from SM injects color. The corner space is now used as a catchall for work items and memories. OPPOSITE PAGE: Using a gilded and beveled mirror as the font for inspiration, this setting became a mix of European elegance and shabby chic. By placing a rustic dining table near a Parisian-style sofa, this space becomes a combined sala, dining room, and study. All the large pieces have been reworked to suit the restful atmosphere. Chinese ceramic stools from the homeowner's mother are put to use as side tables, where an overflow of more design books are placed.





Employing his knowledge of how light falls on a set, Rioux prefers accents and furniture with volume and deep details. A set of painted platters from AC+632 is placed on the walls instead of paintings. The elaborate bones of garden furniture from Bulacan cast shapes when illuminated by the afternoon sun. On the counters, the minimal dish rack was a housewarming gift from Ito Kish, his former boss. The photographs were taken in Palawan.



The bedroom, like the rest of the house, is a work in progress. While Rioux is in search of the perfect bed, his queen-sized mattress is set on the floor, underlining the loft feel of the apartment. Another set of dividers block out daylight from the floor-to-ceiling windows.

### Production tricks

The production designer does his work at the overlarge wood table nearby. To save space, the handsome piece—reminiscent of a workman's table with its faded varnish and innumerable nicks—pulls triple duty as dining table, coffee table (it is placed before the sofa), and study table. When friends come over, it is a space for food deliveries. When he's alone, the surface is covered in a mess of papers, swatches, and picture books such as Taschen's *Paris* or *Undecorate*. Here, Rioux draws freehand on his sketchpad. Then, he sends the illustration, together with references such as color palette, wall finish, and layout, to an artist for drafting.

There are production tricks that were applied in the creation of this apartment. His appreciation for how things fill a space, for example, is implemented in the details. "I like the idea of hanging something that's three dimensional," Rioux explains.

A pair of painted platters (birds dressed in costumes) is displayed on a kitchen wall. Over at the entryway, the plainness of a light switch cover is dressed up with an ornate frame. "It's right smack in the middle of the wall, so rather than hiding it, I created something interesting," he shares.

There is also his knowledge of light. A deer head in glossy white is positioned in the hall, so that it can bask in the afternoon sun. When

light filters in from the clerestory windows, the sculpture casts a moody shadow over everything. The same applies to a clock under the stairs (still reached by the strong sunlight).

### Work-free zone

Upstairs, the bedroom is a work-free zone. The loft-like space is also unfinished.

In commercial sets, the camera stops rolling. Here, "you live in the space," and that's why everything remains a work in progress. A queen-size mattress lies on the floor because Rioux has yet to find his dream bed. Several paintings and framed photographs lean on the walls.

There is also a linen-covered divider that he created for a commercial. When sunlight becomes too harsh, Rioux places his creation before the bed to maintain the shadowy ambience.

The mood is an illusion, but the feeling of home is real.

Gifts from friends, mementos from trips like a photograph of the Tuileries Garden, a painting by his cousin Jon Cuason, who is an early inspiration in his design life, and more family snapshots are scattered throughout. For Rioux, in this refuge that he has created as an escape from the everyday, "objects that you love" make the space fuller. They make it complete. **11**



## STYLES FOR HOME AND PERSON

1. Amoebae Chair (1970) by Verner Panton, Vitra. 2. Pillow with embroidered dog figure, Bo Concept. 3. Peg coat stand. 4. Flash Circle table. 5. Flash rectangle table. 6. Copper Shade pendant lights. 7. Mirror Ball Tripod Stand—all by Tom Dixon at MOs Design. 8. Limited Gold Edition My Spaceship, P4,400, and 9. Limited Gold Edition My Robot, P4,800—both at Dimensione. 10. Blown glass vases, P6,800 and P9,480, at Firma Greenbelt.

Photographed at Vitra, MOs Design,  
Bonifacio High Street, Taguig.

Yeah, baby!

**Multi-colored glitter platform shoes, Steve Madden**







1. Ostrich feathers, P95 each, Rustan's.
2. Burmese teakwood screen, P75,000, Kish.
3. Vintage telescope, P32,980, ac+632.
4. Fiberglass horn, P5,950, Interiors.
5. Silver pheasants, P9,500 for the pair, Interiors.
6. Burmese teakwood table, P25,000.
7. Moss deer, P3,450 for a pair.
8. Lancaster gothic side chair, P12,500, Kish.
9. Lace tablecloth, P11,800, ac+632.
10. Busilak bell jar lamp, P7,000, Kish.
11. Wood bird, Kish.
12. Shell form, Kish.

Photographed at Kish, 233 N. Garcia, Makati.

## Earth angel

The natural and the mystical.

Aeta ruffled dress by ITNL to order from Eairth. Short sleeved, knit and woven cotton shirt by Kris van Asche, P22,800, and slim-cut pants, P3,950, and reed slippers, P420, ac+632.





# Blue and white and Orientalia

The color scheme of the ceramics the Chinese exported to the world for over a thousand years.

1. Vase with keilin or mythical horse-like beast figure, 20th century. 2. Small octagonal box, probably used for cosmetics, with the lid painted with a rabbit, symbolizing calmness and a sweet disposition, Ming dynasty, ca. 15th to 16th century. 3. Small "hole-bottom" saucer with a raised goldfish at the center, 14th-15th century. 4. Ming dynasty saucer. 5. Late Ming dynasty dish. 6. Large stoneware dish with abstract baskets around the sides, containing long-leafed plants, late 18th-19th century—all at Yamang Katutubo. 7, 8, 9. Carved shell dishes, from P1,680; 10, 11. Carved shell forks, spoon and knife, from P580—all at ac+632. 12. Blue and white tray, P2,250. 13. Blue and white cake stand, P2,650. 14. Blue and white teapot for one, P2,650—all at Rustan's.



Long dress embroidered with golden dragon, Josie Natori at Rustan's.

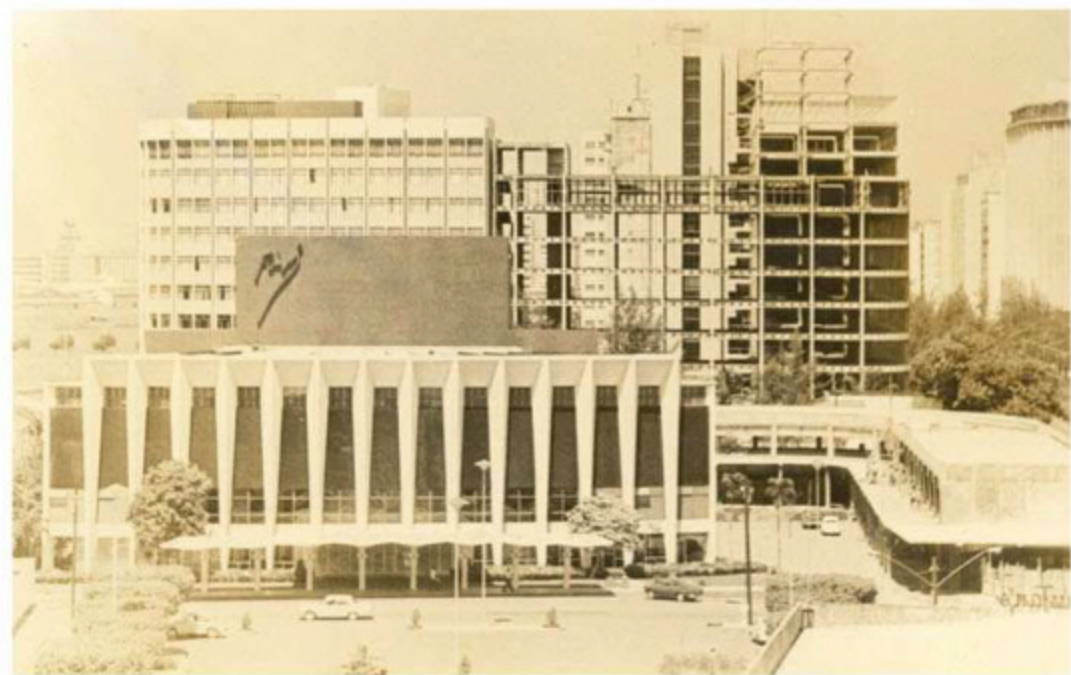






# CONCRETE DREAMS

FROM THE CRUDEST RURAL STRUCTURES AND COMMUNITY MONUMENTS TO THE MOST SUBLIME ARCHITECTURAL AND CIVIC EXPRESSIONS, THE MEDIUM IN THE PHILIPPINES IS CEMENT

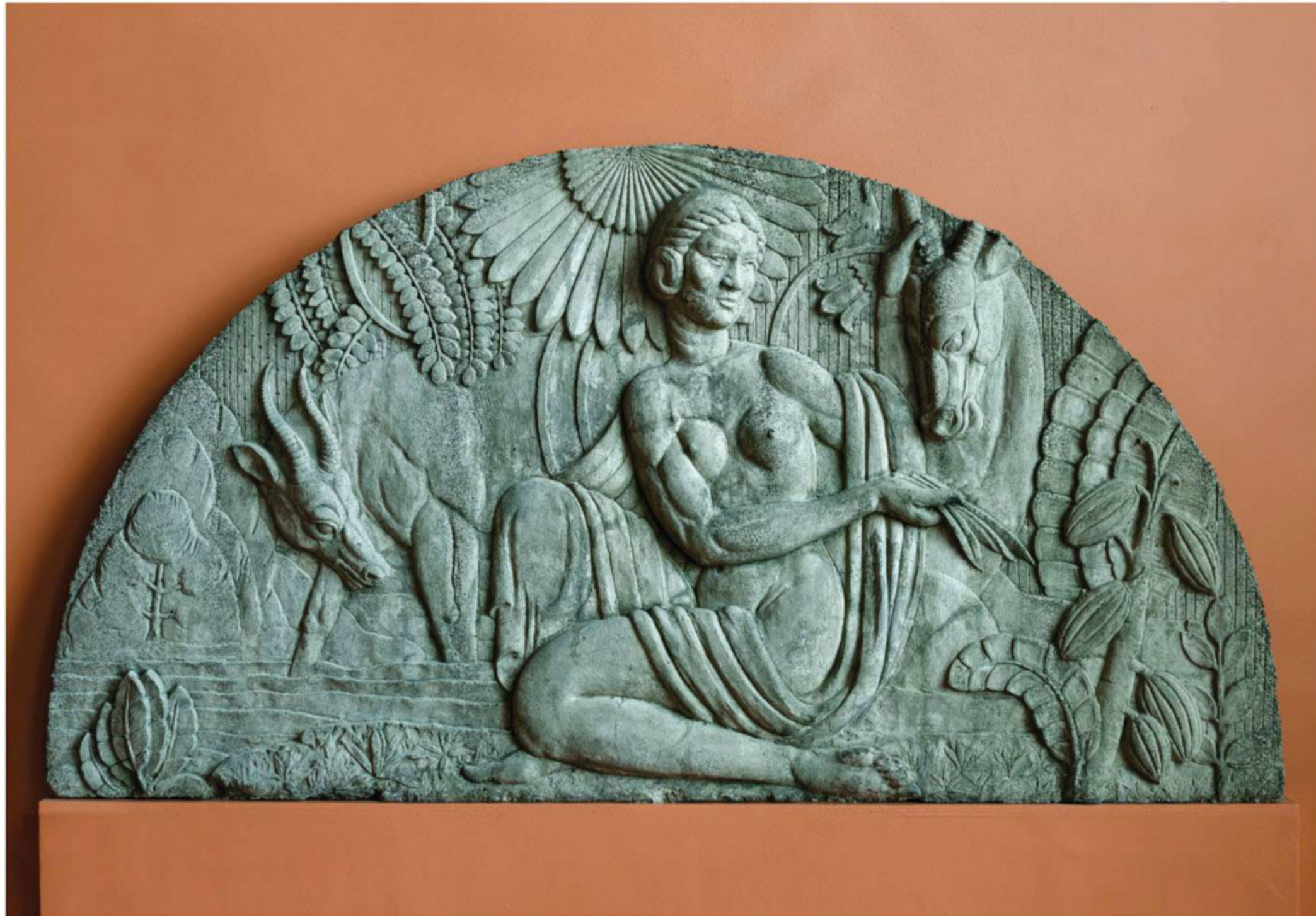


The discourse of the modernist masters—all in cement, not steel, glass or stone. COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Philippine International Convention Center and Cultural Center of the Philippines by National Artist Leandro Locsin, and Rizal Theater by Juan Nakpil. All photographs courtesy of Lopez Memorial Museum and Library.



Expressivity of great delicacy in a concrete bust by Isabelo Tampinco, ca. 1930s, in the National Art Gallery. Photograph by William Ong.





ABOVE: "Mother Nature," an Art Deco bas relief (undated), and OPPOSITE PAGE: "Apotheosis of Balagtas," 1920, both in concrete, by Isabelo Tampinco, in the National Art Gallery. Photographs by William Ong.





Double-height wall in the receiving area displays work by the first artist Chat Fores patronized, Kiko Escora. The original tiles of the 1950s house were retained. Bespoke floor lamp, Azcor chandelier and metallic stools from Old Asia.

# MIX AND MATCH

AN OBJECT LESSON IN JUXTAPOSITION

BY **CAL TAVERA** / PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PAUL DEL ROSARIO**

**THE WHITE HOUSE WITH THE RED GATE**, once victimized by caretakers, had gained a reputation—for the wrong reasons. Today, it is a symbol of style as the new home of popular interior designer Chat Fores.

“We did not give much attention to this place before because it didn’t house any of my family for over a decade,” recounts Chat of the Quezon City residence. “One day, we discovered that our staff was taking advantage of the free space with their extracurricular activities, so when my mother suggested to utilize the house as my showroom, I decided to move back even though I was reluctant initially. That was not in my plan because I visualized myself living in fast-paced Makati.”

## Mother’s influence

She recognized, later in life, how strong her mother’s influence was. Chat adds, “Even with her wardrobe, my mother’s taste was ahead of her time. She has clothes from the ’70s that are still relevant today. I dismissed her style—I myself veered towards black—but when I got older, we started having the same taste. I used to think she was too loud, even in the way she dresses.”

It is evident that her sense of style was evoked beyond the closet and is now present in the house, with the interiors strewn with pieces from her large collection of contemporary art, including many wild pieces by Christian “Itch” Tamondong. She tones them down, however, with the more sober sketches of Kiko Escora as well as religious artifacts and Glenn Bautista’s paintings that she nicked from her parents.

“With art, if I like it, I’ll buy it. Even our family portrait was painted by Itch. Look, we’re on a carousel,” Chat says, pointing to the commissioned painting spanning the floor-to-ceiling wall by the stairs.





ABOVE: Works by Christian Tamondong on the white walls Chat retained from the old house. The contemporary art shares space with the more traditional collection of angels and a pair of Savonarola chairs. RIGHT: An antique door and a painting by Tanya Villanueva backdrop the living room. The floor lamp is from Furnitalia. The pair of sofas are by Philippe Starck. A pair of mini Chinese-style chairs are for the children. OPPOSITE PAGE: The color palette for the dining room was inspired by a graphic black and white wallpaper used in a previous project, and red was injected as an accent. On the slate walls, paintings by Popo San Pascual and Salvador Juban. The console is from Old Asia.





RIGHT: Conference room Chat shares with husband, Hugo Lozano. Fabio Novembre's anthropomorphic Him and Her chairs surround a solid narra wood table that they designed. Trudis and Trudat sculptures add a playful touch for children Rocco and Patrice. The painting is by Christian Tamondong.







Chat says, "I got this huge Venetian mirror for a very reasonable price from friends who were renovating their condominium." The table was an antique door converted into a table. It is paired with chairs from Las Palmas.

She coveted her first piece in 2004, by artist Escora. She says, "It is better to collect art while it is affordable. For my children Rocco and Patrice, I acquired these blue and pink sculptures from Itch. When I bought them, the pair was standing against a wall brightened up with rainbows. The artist assured me that after I pick a space for these sculptures, he will recreate the mood on my wall." Temporarily, the sculptures stand guard in her conference room, where her clients and staff brainstorm sitting on Fabio Novembre's anthropomorphic Him and Her chairs.

Before allotting space for a conference room in her house, Chat claims her living room was practically nonexistent with the staff invading the receiving area and Rocco running around inquiring who they were. It was hardly work-conducive so when Chat decided she wanted one more child, she told herself, "That is it. I have to fix everything. Things need to be organized. I did not want to commit the same mistake back in 2008 when I was expecting, and work continued but everything else desisted."

### Child-friendly home

She also made sure this multileveled house is child-friendly, opting for circular coffee tables in lieu of sharp corners. Samples of dyed

crocodile skin, which are partnered with the more structured lines of Philippe Starck furniture, add to the playfulness of the house.

Chat says, "I got the crocodile skin locally and from Thailand, but you can see that the ones dyed abroad are much more vibrant. For furniture, I like to mix and match. I get a lot of my items from Rose, my supplier for several Oriental pieces. Her items are very affordable. I also got the Venetian mirror in the lanai for a good price from friends who were renovating their place."

She keeps the combinations interesting with some antique heirlooms from her parents. Chat says, "The house is a result of our mood. The red gate has been there ever since, but we made our garage modern because we felt like it." Currently, a two-story building is starting within the complex. It will house both Chat's and her husband Hugo Lozano's business. Aside from her upcoming office, there is the unveiling of the new website, a collaboration with Terry Uy and Isabel Gatuslao.

Chat now has a newfound appreciation for the old house in QC. She says, "When I kept an office in Makati, there were so many temptations, and work is your neighbor. You are often expected to be in a meeting at a mere five-minute notice. Here, it is more relaxed. I now have time to focus on my career without sacrificing family and personal life." **D**



Philippe Starck sofa, surrounded by furniture finds, old ceramic pieces from Chat's parents, and gold stools, faces a garden that was once a basketball court.





Living area of the home of the Duarte family, a polished blend of neutral and natural shades in a variety of textures that echo each other, and black. In the foreground, the juxtaposition of a Chinese yoke-back chair and an antique Filipino chair epitomizes the heritage of the family as well as the decorative scheme of the apartment.

CHINESE AND FILIPINO  
ART, FURNITURE AND  
OBJECTS IN A HIGHRISE  
HOME WITH DEEP ROOTS

BY CHINO DELA TORRE  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG

# ORIENT EXPRESSIONS





Large portraits of a Chinese gentleman and lady on framed panels built into the cabinetry can be slid shut to hide a TV. The speakers are hidden behind the cane panels on both sides. RIGHT: The elevator foyer that the owners decorated with Filipino paintings and artifacts.

**THE LARGE CONDO HOME** is splendidly Oriental. In the expansive common space, a pair of large traditional style portraits of a Chinese man and woman mirror a pair of traditional style Chinese landscapes stretching from floor to ceiling. The artworks gaze at each other across living and dining areas.

Homeowner Joanna Ongpin Duarte, who oversaw the decoration of the apartment she shares with husband Ramon and children Jaime and Rocio, cannot but affirm a fondness for Orientalia. The two Chinese portraits presiding over the living area are bordered by an abundant display of Chinese ceramics.

If to a lesser extent, there is also a marked presence of Filipino objects and furniture.


Joanna says, as a whole, the home is an apt reflection of the family's Chinese and Filipino roots.

Joanna hails from one of the most illustrious Filipino-Chinese families. Her great-great-grandfather Don Ramon Ongpin is the namesake of the primary thoroughfare in Binondo, Manila's Chinatown. He was a patriot who helped fund the Katipunan during the Revolution. He ran a hardware store where the artists of the time, including Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, got their art supplies. Don Ramon's son Alfonso is called the first Filipino art collector. Joanna's father Jaime was finance minister during the presidency of Cory Aquino. Her business magnate uncle Bobby, for whose Alphaland real estate development company she now works, was trade and industry secretary during the presidency of Ferdinand Marcos. Quite a legacy.

Joanna oversees marketing for Alphaland, which owns the much talked about, members-only resort island of Balesin off Quezon province and is completing a landmark condominium on top of a multi-storied sports club along Ayala Avenue, called Makati Place.







Antique arched wood doors, long in the possession of the lady of the house, Joanna Ongpin-Duarte, replaced the original single door of the main entry. Past it, a highly unusual figurative Sanso is from Joanna's parents' collection.

### Getting the right shade


At the condo tower where the Duartes live, the elevators arrive directly onto the units' private foyers. It is a rare luxury.

The Duartes' foyer is dominated by Filipino art and objects, including an antique style wooden *santo* and a large *bulul* or Ifugao spirit figure by the main entrance, a magnificent pair of old arched doors. The carved antique replaced the original front door, and sets the tone for the home. "I had those old doors for years stored at my mom's house," Joanna says. "I always loved them because the circular carving reminds me of the one in my family home. I never had a place to use them until we moved here."

Mom is, of course, Maribel Ongpin, the newspaper columnist and political activist.

Past the double doors, a rare Sanso hangs over an old chest of drawers. You would never guess it to be a Sanso because it's a figurative work in the classical style and very old. The painting used to hang in the Ongpin home. "I used to get scared looking at it when I was young," Joanna confesses, pointing to its secret in the lower portion of the canvas. "There's an image of an eye that can be seen if you look closely. Sanso must have painted over another painting. Eventually, I grew fond of the painting and brought it with me."

The open living and dining areas are backdropped by floor-to-ceiling windows commanding bird's eye views of the Makati landscape. Another luxury of the apartment is the floor of gleaming cherrywood. The room is



A pair of Chinese landscapes, acquired by Joanna in London, is set against an oxblood red accent wall in the dining area. Black lacquered rattan chairs are by E. Murio. In the corner, a painting of daughter Rocio by Mia Herbosa on an easel that belonged to Joanna's great-grand father, Alfonso Ongpin.



painted mustard except for the wall backdropping the dining area, which is painted a very Oriental oxblood red.

"The colors, as suggested by Anna, complement well with our things. There were many trials to get the right shade as Anna was very particular about it. It turned out really well in the end," says Joanna.

The living room is dominated by an expansive sectional sofa matched with antique chairs, one Filipino, the other Chinese. The seating is oriented towards the two Chinese portraits earlier mentioned, hanging on beautiful black antique finish cabinetry built by Sandro Olondriz, the interior designer's son. The portraits slide back to reveal a flatscreen TV. "We wanted the option where we can hide the TV when we're not using it. The sliding panels allow us to do that decoratively. Even the speakers are hidden in the compartments covered by the *solihya* doors," explains Joanna.

**Eye-catching composition**

Across the room are the pair of Chinese landscapes that stretch from floor to ceiling. They are not old, says Lisa. "Well, at least not when I bought them," she jokes. They were acquired new many years ago in London where her sister once lived, and have been with Joanna always since.



In the master bedroom, a sofa covered in chinoiserie chintz. On the wall, a street artist sketch of homeowner Ramon as a young traveler looks like an old master in its gilt frame. OPPOSITE PAGE: In the powder room, Joanna converted a traditional Thai parasol into a light fixture by simply inverting it. In their elegant frames, the replica vintage Chinese posters look real.





“They used to hang separately by the stairs in our previous house,” she recounts. “I like how they are now, side by side, as they should be,” explains Joanna. The composition is an automatic eye-catcher as you are drawn by the proportions of the paintings set against the red accent wall of the dining area. The paintings are echoed in style by the black lacquered rattan dining chairs, by the venerable manufacturer E. Murio, in a Chippendale style. The backrests look like Chinese calligraphy. In the corner of the room is a painting of Rocio when she was six, made by Mia Herbosa. It rests on an heirloom, an easel that belonged to Alfonso Ongpin.

The Oriental theme continues in the master bedroom although it is more subdued. By the bed is a sumptuous sofa covered in chintz with a Chiniserie print. Across the bed is a chest of drawers, once nondescript, made one-of-a-kind with a decoupage of prints of 19<sup>th</sup> century Filipinos by Damian Domingo. The decoupage was made by Monica Olondriz, wife of Sandro. Joanna regularly goes to the atelier of Sandro and Monica Olondriz to have ordinary wooden things made extraordinary. Like a frame, for example, or a reproduction artifact, both of which will be given a more elegant patina.

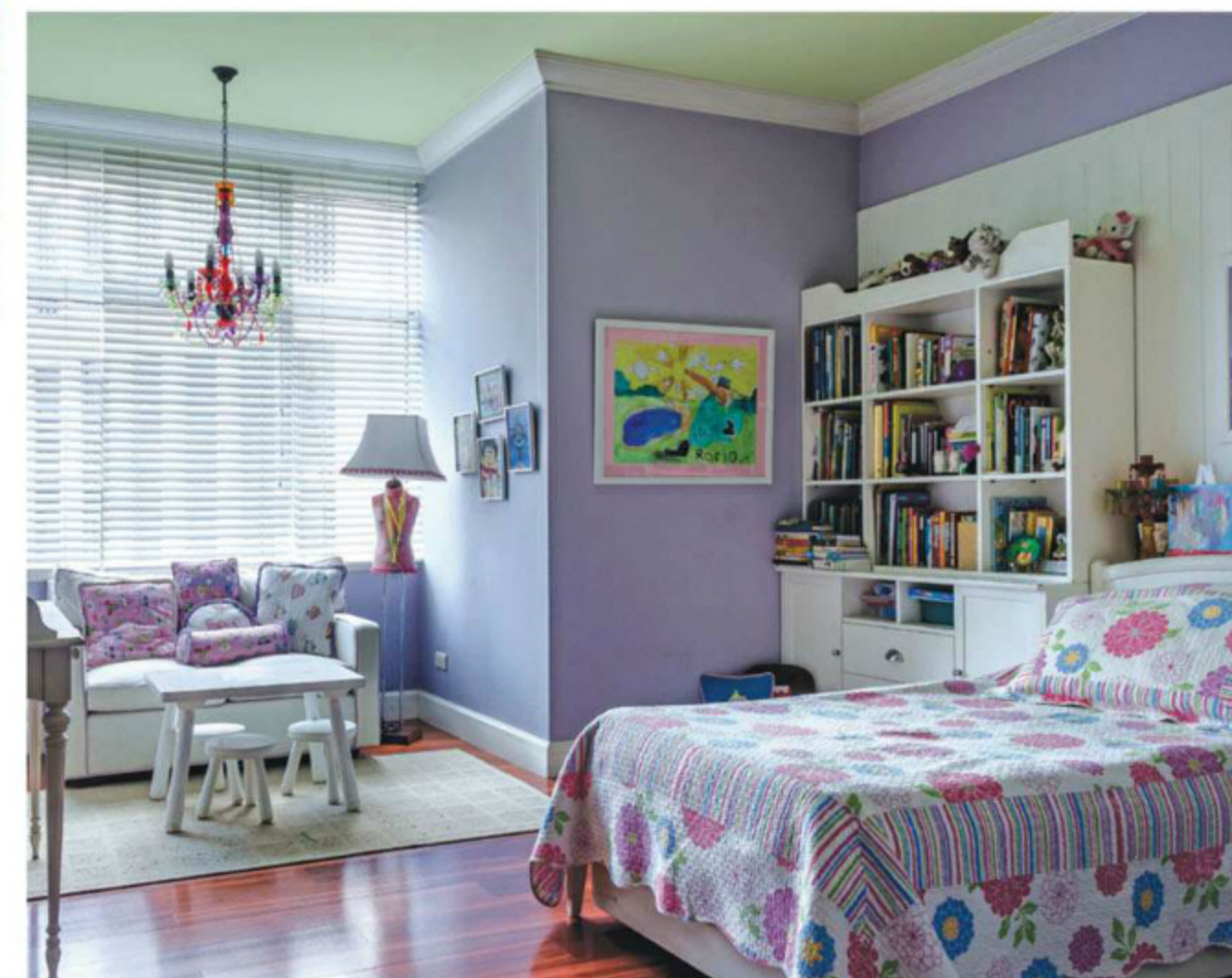
Most of the original layout of the apartment was kept intact except for this master bedroom, which was enlarged. “We had one of our

bedroom walls encroach for about a meter into the dining/living room space,” explains Joanna. “We felt the dining and living areas had more than enough space to accommodate the extension, and it was crucial for the reorientation of our bedroom.” It was a smart allocation of space that allowed for an anteroom with a study area, a walk-in closet, and a bigger master bedroom.

The gentlemanliness of son Jaime’s room belies his young age. Remarkably, a little detail embellishes its bespoke character. The brass pulls of Jaime’s desk were sourced from the manufacturer and used throughout drawers in the built-in shelving. It’s little details like this that give a room a more finished look. The same goes for Rocio’s room, where the lavender on the walls and mint green on ceiling were picked up from tones in the multicolored chandelier that majestically crowns the room fit for a princess.

In Jaime’s room is a display of particularly touching mementoes. They are pictures by the well known photographer Wig Tysmans of the late Jaime Ongpin, the finance secretary with his wife in front of their Baguio home, and of Maribel’s late mom, Justina Vallejo Garcia, whose family owned and ran the old, much storied Casa Vallejo in Baguio. They are pictures which speak volumes. **1**

**ABOVE:** A shade of khaki in son Jaime’s gentlemanly room. Study table is from Design Ligna. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Built-in shelving in Jaime’s room is outfitted with the same handles as the desk drawers, creating a more polished, bespoke look. **LEFT:** A colorful chandelier from Dimensione crowns the play area of Rocio’s lavender bedroom. Rocio’s own artwork is displayed with paintings from Art in the Park.





# FAMILIAL STYLE

IN ALL-INCLUSIVE DESIGN PROCESS

BY CAL TAVERA  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO

Living room of the object-filled Sebastian family home. The shade of yellow on the walls is the result of a design process involving the whole family.



**STEPPING INTO THIS HOME**, with its yellow rosewood Ming arm-chairs, hand carved mirrors and 1900s Chinese wood panels, is akin to an antiques emporium experience.

"Nothing in this house is new," shares the owners' daughter, Nicola Sebastian. "The Chinese wood panels were acquired circa 1981 along old Kotewall Road in Midlevels, Hong Kong. They are always revamping or destroying houses there. These were salvaged from a demolished house, and my mother was able to negotiate a good price for them."

Another daughter, Carla, says, "She was expecting at that time, but no one has ever managed to tame the force of nature that is my mother. Imagine a pregnant woman carrying these boards on her own." She adds fondly, "The visual is baffling, but it also speaks of passion. The discarded panels now stand prominently in the dining room."

**'Mi casa, su casa'**

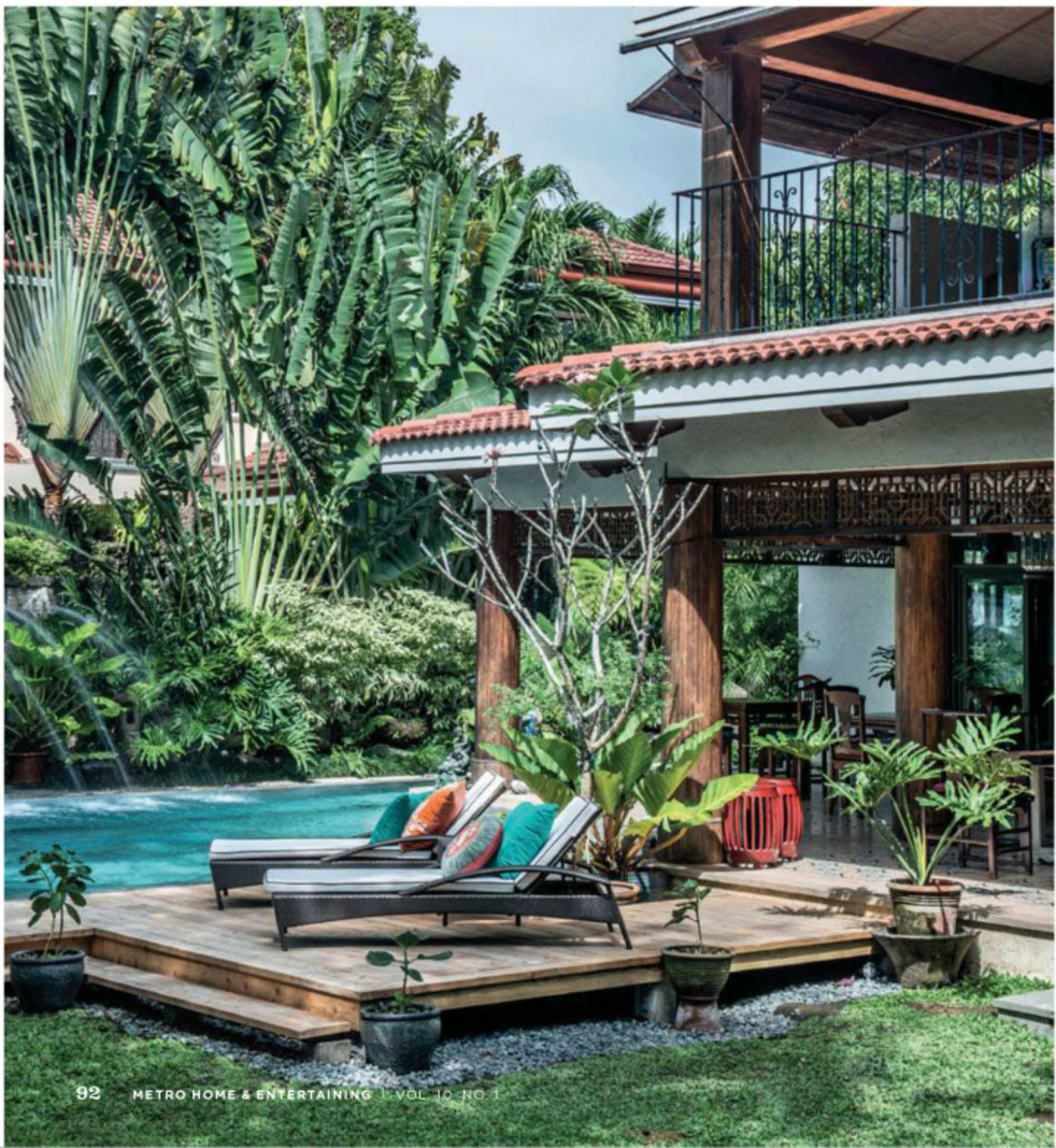
A cyclone of ideas, vigor and lover of colors, homeowner Enrica Manalo Sebastian is a maximalist, with a partiality for antiquity. So when it came to the house renovation two years ago, she and her family found themselves locked in a yin-yang vortex. The result is a slightly

watered down compromise of her philosophy. Take the living room, where her enthusiasm for color refuses to humor the conventional.

Nicola recounts, "We initially wanted white and countered my mother's suggestion for bright yellow for the stucco walls, but she was adamant about it. There were various colors and components already in the room so we did not want the boldness of yellow to overwhelm the space. We had to test 20 different samples before convincing her to go with a more subtle shade of yellow. Although now, I have to admit that this room is my favorite space in the house."

Nestled in the middle of the living room are a couple of oversized ottomans that replaced a coffee table to accommodate more seating for guests. Lounging on them are accent pillows constructed by the mother. Nicola says, "My mother adores fabrics. She's always making pillow covers. She purchases small cutouts and bigger samples from a market in the U.K. She has several of them."

On both sides of the ottomans, a couple of three-seater sofas face each other. The wall displays hand carved bedroom panels, one of which was cleverly converted into a mirror. Together, these elements alter any notion of stiffness characteristic of an antiques store. This particular



**LEFT:** "Even without a background in landscape architecture, my mother won the bid to do the landscaping of Pacific Mall in Hong Kong," says Carla. For the Sebastians' backyard paradise, the mother took charge coordinating with the late landscape architect Frank Borja for the pool planning and layout. Nicola adds, "We love to spend a lot of time in the water so we wanted to incorporate a swimming pool in the garden. Our peg was the lap pool of Shangri-La Boracay."

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Lanai, part of an extension, which the family worked on with Architect Pablo Antonio Jr. for the architecture, interior planning and layout. The mother, Enrica, traded some cabinets for the table. Nicola says, "We have a million chairs that sprouted from our family's collections. They resurfaced during the renovation and we paired the table with them." The Malaga tiles were inspired by a family trip to Hanoi where cement tiles are used extensively in old buildings.







**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Massive teak columns in a porch. The roof allows in natural light. The Asian objects were acquired during the family's travels to Hong Kong, Vietnam and Cambodia. **ABOVE LEFT:** The mother's flair for color is clearly visible in this hallway. The floors combine tiles and wood. **ABOVE RIGHT:** "We designed the mosaic border ourselves," says Nicola of the kitchen island counter floor detail. "We conceptualized and experimented with the possible black and white patterns with our mother. This is her domain."

house was built for everyone. According to Carla, "We entertain a lot. Our neighbors drop by to swim in our pool. Our guests are encouraged to sleep over. We pretty much adopted the *mi casa es su casa* mentality."

### Hands-on coordinator

"Our old home's perimeters extended to that mango tree," Nicola points out. "After we bought the other lot, we had an additional 400 sq.m. of space, which incorporated the master bedroom, dining room and clean kitchen. We also set aside plans for the garden."

Nicola, editor-in-chief of lifestyle website Juice.ph, took the reins in collaborating everyone's inputs for the additional area. "I was the only one interested in coordinating with the suppliers for the project, but everyone had ideas. The whole family put this together." The family counts her father, banker Francisco Sebastian, bed-and-

breakfast owner Mia, graphic designer Jo-B, graduating interior design student Carla, European Studies student Ina, fashion design student Rina and, of course, the mother who has her own jewelry business and two boutiques.

Nicola shares, "We were hands on with our home. I suppose we inherited our creative genes from my mother. We collected several inspirations from our travels, blogs, pegs, giving it a global aesthetic. In fact, the grill work design on our main door was from the Ambassador Hotel in Vietnam. We even made mood boards. My contribution in the design process would probably be the Malaga hand crafted tiles that reminded me of our stay in the French colonial inspired city of Hanoi. They injected molds of colored cement to our custom-made tiles. It's not painted on so they last long.

"We were involved in every detail, from the bathroom fixtures and flooring to the roofing. When we were shopping in Home Depot in the States, I remember taking forever picking out the right handles. In the end, our mother bought the whole lot."

### Constant shopper

Carla adds, "My mother doesn't really plan out what she buys. She's constantly shopping for the house. During the renovation, items we didn't know existed just started revealing themselves. Apparently, they were stocked in our *bodega*. Our mother certainly developed a fascination for furniture. She reads interior design magazines, but she doesn't really take note of designers or the brand names of furniture."

While she may have missed out on formal design training, Enrica





still got to fuel her interest by working for Charlotte Horstmann & Gerald Godfrey Ltd., a renowned antiques shop, and a favorite of serious art collectors in Hong Kong. There, she familiarized herself with the history of the objects as well as the art of trading. Nicola reveals, "The long table in the lanai was actually a barter deal with my mother's friend for some cabinets."

Meanwhile, the dining table that accommodates eight was unearthed from their storage area. So were the Huang Hua Li Ming style chairs that accompanied it. Nicola exclaims, "We have a million chairs! She's had them ever since we were younger and still living abroad. To be honest, I lost count of how many we have."

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Old Hanoi served as inspiration for the dining area. The Chinese chairs have been with the family since the children were little. The drop lights sparked one of the biggest debates among the family members. While the children wanted minimal lights, the mother had her way in the end suspending a variety of fixtures from the ceiling. **BELOW:** At the top of the stairs an armoire holds linens for the many guests who sleep over.

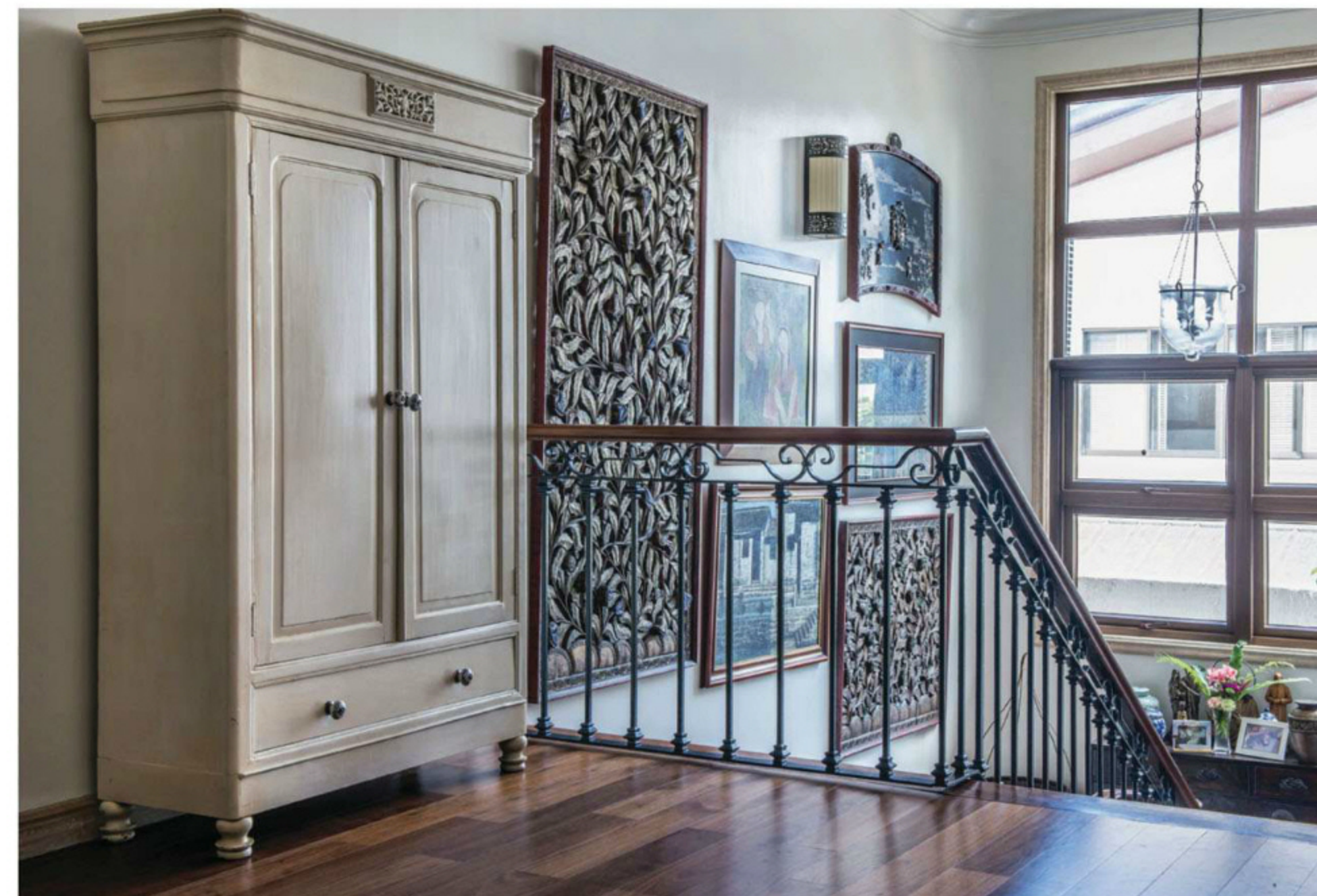
The extended home stayed true to the spirit of the original house, dotted with travel memorabilia, artwork and furniture shipped from several family vacations that include Eastern Europe, Afghanistan, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Hoi An, a trading port of Vietnam.

### The personal quarters

"My father is the complete opposite of my mother. He is very consistent and organized," says Carla. "When he buys a piece, he also looks at the value of it," adds Nicola, referring to the Malang, Magsaysay Ho, Baldemor and Sanso paintings on the walls.

The bedrooms on the second level are a world apart from the rest of the house since the children were granted license to design them however they wanted. The bedroom of the youngest sisters, Ria and Ina, has southern France as inspiration. Pieces from their travels are displayed on the shelves, including accessories from Poland and a lacquered TinTin in Tibet poster from Vietnam. The study desk from their Lola Juliette is paired with a modern chair from Dimensione. Carla says, "We inherited several pieces from our grandmother, including the chairs in my bedroom and in Nicola's. We just dress them in new fabric."

For their bedroom, Nicola explains, "Carla and I opted for a more vintage beach feel and painted the walls seafoam green. We got some







**ABOVE:** Sitting area in Nicola's and Carla's bedroom. The yellow sofa is from Heima. Carla shares, "This rug is old. It's from Izmir, Turkey, and we got the cabinet from Ubod, Bali. My mother is always shipping things over from our travels." Not everything was purchased from their trips abroad though. A hat stand that manages to hold all their bags and hats was acquired from their neighbor. **RIGHT:** Carla shares, "My father knows what he likes. For the master bedroom, we consulted with him more for the room. He appreciates convenience and nice lighting." By the mother's standards, the children describe the father as someone obsessive-compulsive and organized, her complete opposite. In lieu of the bold colors that dominated the rest of the house, a more subtle color was picked for this room's background. The furniture around the room are antique pieces they collected from living in Hong Kong for over two decades.

of the Balinese pieces from our Makati condominium. That place is crammed with things, but we also worked with Heima for some of our big pieces. The shabby chic finish for my desk is courtesy of that store." Nicola frequents Heima for her furniture, so when she requested Heima to reupholster her wing chair with patchwork fabric, they baptized one of their chairs after her. She continues, "A lot of the accessories in the room were brought home from travels. The eggs on my desk are from Budapest, and a lot of the things here came from the French market in Porte de Clignancourt."

The metal bed frames are from Manila's flea market haven, Bangkal. On Nicola's bed is folded fabric that managed to survive from the '70s. On Carla's side, a blanket from Mexico keeps her warm. The wood that served as their flooring before the renovation has now found a new purpose on the walls.

Carla laughs, "We just painted it white for a new look. We attached the wood and installed a fan so each time we wake up, we are transported to the Bahamas." The recycled wood planks also found their way to their brother's wall. Nicola shares, "Together with his architect friend, they pulled off a mod look for his space."

## A safe haven

Among all the bedrooms, it is the master bedroom that resembles the rest of the house the most. The familiar panels and old printed artworks are present, but this time, slate paint colored the walls for a more relaxed ambiance.

Carla says, "We coordinated with our father more about this room so he would have a safe haven whenever he needs one." A prayer kneeler is placed by the window, where he starts the day by praying every morning.

Carla says, "My father always made family a priority. We watch movies and have dinner together. In this house, there is no place to hide. You can see everything since it is all connected. Even from the second floor, you have a view of the living room."

Nicola adds, "We are very close. Our parents always encourage us to do our own thing. It will take some adjustment to the changes around here, but it's long overdue. Mia will be based in La Union more now because of her resort, Jo-B is in New York for his jazz scholarship. And one day, I'd like to study abroad for a master's degree in literature, but family will always come first. For holidays, we will be together."

"My father constantly talks about blessings. He always reminds us to appreciate when we receive them and to share them, just like this house. This home is a truly a blessing." **11**





# The ART of Business



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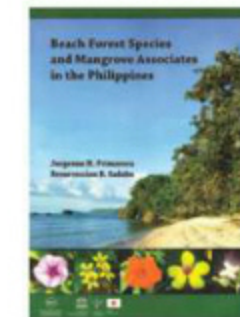
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# gardens

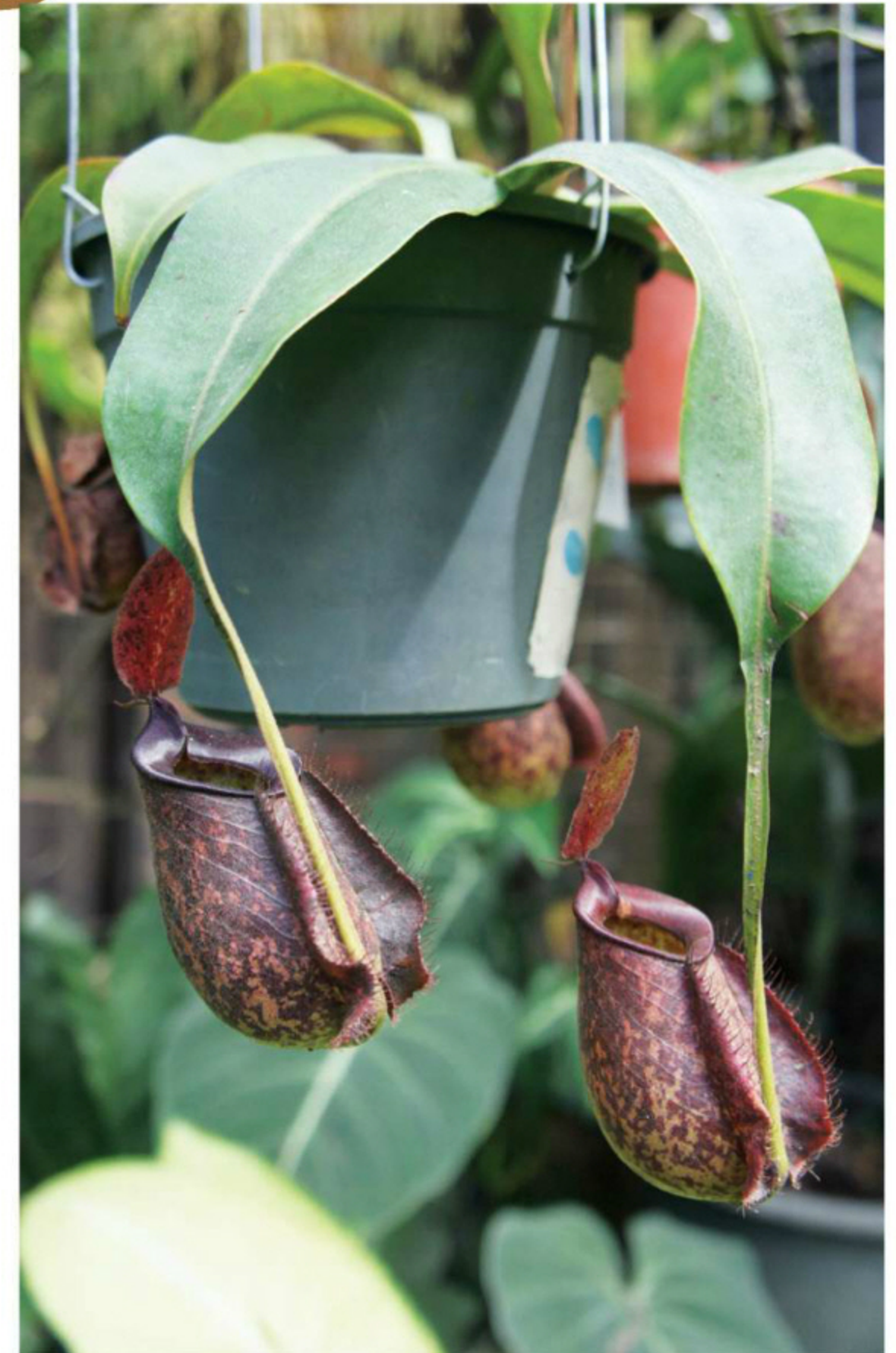
## The lovely carnivore

Most gardeners dream of growing carnivorous plants successfully. One of the easiest genus to keep is *Nepenthes* or pitcher plants. Regarded as the carnivorous plant for beginners, some species are more rare and therefore sought after, like *Nepenthes ampullaria* with small, attractive, compact pitchers. Specimens of *N. ampullaria* and other *Nepenthes* are carefully cultured by Jun Golamco in his Wild Root Tropicana Plant Nursery. Check out his outlet in Manila Seedling Bank.

## Beach flora book



It is difficult to grow a beach garden because of the extreme conditions and salty environment. *Beach Forest Species and Mangrove Associates in the Philippines* by Jurgenne Primavera and Resurreccion Sadaba lists down native plants that grow naturally around our local coastal areas. A good read for gardeners and naturalists, it gives the extensive background and habit of some pertinent species for easier identification. Available at La Solidaridad Bookstore, 531 Padre Faura, Metro Manila, tel. no. (+632) 2541086 or Museo Pambata, Roxas Blvd. cor. South Drive, Ermita, Manila. You can email the author at [jurgennep@yahoo.com](mailto:jurgennep@yahoo.com).





# TAGALOG RUSTIC

A NOSTALGIC RECREATION  
OF AN OLD PROVINCIAL GARDEN

BY **PATRICK GOZON**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **WILLIAM ONG**



Villa Javier's rustic Pinoy landscape has a network of pathways snaking from one building to another. Guests would have to step on the playful interplay of *gabi*-leaf-shaped concrete tiles, stone and crushed gravel to go around the various nooks and crannies created around the garden. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The entrance to the gallery is filled to the brink with the Pilar family's passion—antiques and ornamental plants.





**A WOOD MARKER POSTED** near the entrance gate says the compound was developed in honor of grandparents Catalino Javierto and Dionisia Villa, hence the name. Villa Javierto is on the outskirts of Lucena City, where several of the family's homes are located. Emilio Pilar and Redemcion Javierto-Pilar's property is near the road, concealed by a long line of old metal fence with circular perforations, which was salvaged from old airport grounds. Behind it, a row of Filipino-inspired structures shows a wealth of old wood and other rustic materials.

Much of Villa Javierto was developed over the last decade. The Pinoy shabby-chic style in its architecture evinces the homeowners' love of nostalgia. The property has seen a lot of changes throughout the years, from simply being a home compound into having a nursery for ornamental plants, an antique shop and prayer garden (the latter was featured by **Metro Home** in 2008).

### Eding's legacy

In 2009, Redemcion "Eding" Pilar decided to convert a portion of her property adjacent the Ilitao River into a bed-and-breakfast and restaurant. Being a plant lover, she made sure that there would be ample space devoted to greens.

The family's romance with antiques also gave the garden a rich provincial character. The new but old-looking additions are kept open and transparent, with easy visual access to open space. In 2011, Eding

**ABOVE:** The garden culminates in the restaurant of the B&B on the property, Catalino. The open structure, built from old and repurposed Pinoy materials, has a grand view of majestic Mt. Banahaw. **RIGHT:** Miladay Pilar takes a break from restaurant and shop duties to enjoy some play time with the family pet poodle.

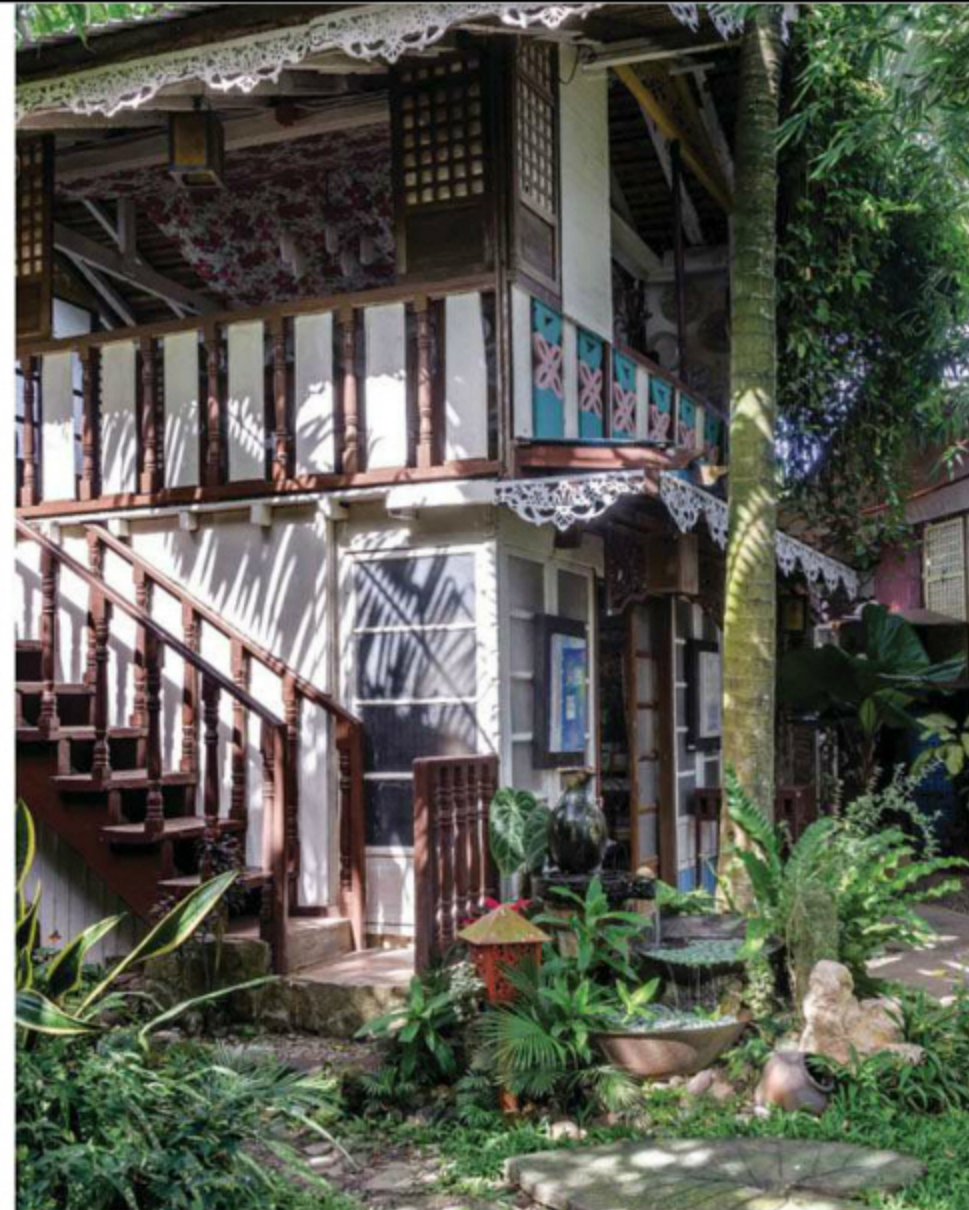


One of Villa Javierto's three complete *calesas* stands as the focal point near the main entrance, under the shade of two of the tallest trees around the compound.





Golden bamboo by path going from the public gallery and restaurant garden to the private Pilar house.



ABOVE: The garden is essential as the linkage to the different buildings around the premises. Eding Pilar made use of odd corners and spots to display more of the family's antique collections. ABOVE RIGHT: The small confined space adjacent to one of the cabanas was set up with a cozy sitting area complete with water feature and epiphytic greens. LEFT: The bed and breakfast cabanas have quaint rooms with generous visual access to the garden.

Pilar succumbed to a heart attack, leaving behind the care of her pet project, Villa Javierto, in the hands of Emilio and the Pilar children. The family of bankers set aside their careers in Manila to carry on the legacy of the beloved matriarch.

The Pilars also own an adjacent property on the other side of the river. The combined size of the two properties is relatively expansive but the family chose to concentrate development in the few hundred square meters nearer the road. The existing property holds the old structures with the newer Catalino Restaurant (named after the Javierto grand patriarch) and Bed-and-Breakfast, and commands breathtaking views of the rugged landscape and the majestic Mt. Banahaw. The nooks and crannies resulting from the construction of the restaurant and bed-and-breakfast led to the creation of cozy corners rich in Pinoy country character.

### Provincial nostalgia

Guests of Villa Javierto are welcomed through the antique gallery, which exhibits a wide array of old Filipino furniture and unique pieces sourced from and around Quezon province. The antique collection spills into the garden, as old wood, ancient jars, pottery, stone craft and even furniture are used as *objets d'art* and landscape accessories.





A few archways were also constructed using distressed wood pieces and recycled items from days of old. The portals serve as gateways separating the various sections of the private home garden from the public areas. The abundance of old furniture and equipment, like familiar handmade farm tools, utensils and glassware, may leave old folks feeling melancholic about simpler times when these items were used.

Another Pinoy element in Villa Javierto's landscape is the iconic *calesas* that are scattered around the grounds. Their integration into the garden pays tribute to what was once a common scene, when the horse-drawn carriages dominated the roadways of Quezon province. In Villa Javierto, *calesa* cars are positioned as focal points in the greenery of three different areas.

### Pinoy bucolic lifestyle

Catalino Restaurant is at the edge of the property, on a cliff overlooking the river valley. Diners have to pass through a network of concrete pavers snaking through the garden just to get to it. Though roofed, the structure is open on all four sides, giving it an almost al

fresco feel. It thus presents a rustic dining experience with contrasting visuals, with the simple provincial garden on one side and the grand Mt. Banahaw landscape on the other.

A canopy of *santol*, narra and other tall trees shelter much of the open spaces. The thick cover filters the sunlight on the understory, where some of Eding's prized ornamental collection remains. The planting palette is further enhanced with a selection of palms, bamboos and other interesting species like *Zamia* cycads and colorful *Agloanema* specimens. The old prayer garden with Christian proverbs inscribed on wood slabs manifests the family's spiritual devotion.

Villa Javierto is a reminder of what the clan has grown accustomed to in the Quezon countryside. In the garden, even the mundane task of sweeping dried leaves every afternoon completes the provincial ambience. Everything is reminiscent of a simple bucolic Tagalog lifestyle, which is what Eding Pilar cherished. It is exactly what the Pilar family now want to share with its patrons. 📍

Villa Javierto is at 2497 Gulang-Gulang, Lucena City. Call (042) 710-5753, 716-4982, 0917-5600281 or email [villajavierto@gmail.com](mailto:villajavierto@gmail.com).



ABOVE: A rustic portal is adorned with old wood and traditional terra cotta jars. RIGHT: A patio leading to another cabana is heavily shaded by the surrounding trees' canopy, making hard for grass to grow. Loose gravel was used as groundcover. Shade loving bird's nest ferns and other epiphyte were used to green the area. OPPOSITE PAGE: A pair of Igorot carved wood statues guards the steps leading from the antique gallery to the deeper part of the lot, where the restaurant and bed-and-breakfast are located. The eaves and archway are overgrown with Thunbergia vine, blessing passers-by with pendulous white to bluish flowers.





# Breathing ground

METRO MANILA'S  
INVALUABLE PARKS

BY **PATRICK GOZON**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PATRICK GOZON**



ABOVE: The Rizal monument has withstood time, as well as several changes and upgrades in its surrounding landscapes. BELOW: The reclaimed CCP grounds have seen several facelifts, including the construction of this APEC commemorative park.

**EVERY YEAR THE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE 1** (L Arch 1) classes of the University of the Philippines in Diliman conduct a joint field trip visiting some of the public parks and open spaces around Metro Manila. L Arch 1 is a general subject giving an overview of the landscape architecture profession; all students in the university can enroll in this subject. It also teaches simple appreciation of gardens and landscape design. It has been tradition to immerse L Arch enrollees in various landscaping developments.

**Emergence of urban parks**  
In days of old, public open spaces were merely congregation areas in front of important public buildings. Gardens were made

beautiful but primarily and exclusively enjoyed by royalty, the clergy and nobility. These private gardens were made in the confines of castles, villas or chateaus, church grounds, and not made accessible to the commoner. It was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when public parks became popular in the planning of a town or city. At the height of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the workforce, cities began to get congested. The public park introduced the idea of common urban open space and designed environment for the common city resident to enjoy. With the further urbanization, it became imperative to allot public open spaces. Parks were termed the “lungs of the city,” sometimes the remaining spots where trees and greenery



could grow. Probably the most famous, Central Park in New York City was designed by the very first landscape architects, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. The reclamation of congested blocks for conver-

sion into a big island of green in highly developed Manhattan became the yardstick by which other city open spaces are measured. Its design even influenced the landscape architecture around Manila.



ABOVE LEFT: Contemporary Bonifacio High Street features several interactive art pieces as landscape attraction. ABOVE RIGHT: The lotus pond in the Chinese Garden remains one of Luneta's most popular spaces. BELOW: The iconic carabao and tamaraw guard historic Quirino Grandstand.



**The parks of old Manila and suburbs**  
City planning in Manila began with American Daniel Burnham. Based on the City Beautiful Movement used in other major cities, the plan was based on major axes emanating from parks like Luneta and a few others. Today's leading landscape designs are incorporated into malls and commercial developments. This year's trip brought the L Arch 1 classes to the old open spaces of Manila and some of the newer ones at the Fort in Taguig. Always first on the agenda is Manila's iconic Luneta, which

is very much accessible to the public but shied away from by the A-B crowd. But Luneta up close does not look entirely bad. It might be wise, though, to visit it on a weekday, avoiding the maddening weekend crowds, to better appreciate the design details and amenities. The Chinese and Japanese gardens still have a certain charm. And the park's famous attractions are all intact, the grandstand, the flower clock, the large Philippine relief map, and the Rizal monument. Begging comparison are the Baywalk at the Cultural Center of the Philippines grounds and

the Mall of Asia Esplanade. Both illustrate how two different designs constructed two decades apart harnessed Manila Bay's most important attractions, the waterfront and the view of the spectacular sunset. Though each rely on commercial establishments to capitalize on open space, the newer MOA Esplanade incorporated more popular amusement recreation in its amenities. **More contemporary public landscapes**  
A favorite L Arch 1 destination is the American Cemetery because of its great contrast

to other open spaces around the city. The park, designed by Gardner Dailey in the 1950s, is timeless because of the simple lines and forms integrated into its planning. Over time, it has remained strong in its intentions to move and inspire its visitors. Though it is considered a memorial and not a recreational park, it is a must-see for garden enthusiasts. The students were allowed to go around and experience the ground's serenity. The day-long excursion was capped with immersing in the more fashionable public landscapes of Serendra and Bonifacio High Street in the Fort, Taguig City. These new hubs presented how gardens and greenery can be integrated in the design of commercial developments and used as an attraction. In Serendra, landscape architecture was used as an amenity to high density residential condominiums. In High Street, interactive art was used as a focal point in its central open space. The Fort developments illustrate the trends being followed in 21<sup>st</sup> century design. The strong contemporary look of both illustrates how public greens have come a long way from their roots in the early 1800s. It shows how open spaces have evolved into a powerful tool for better city lifestyles, a fitting conclusion to a day of landscape architecture learning. 📍



# Beyond green

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY PATRICK GOZON

**GREEN IS A REFRESHING COLOR**, synonymous to plants and vegetation. Because of this, we associate green with the invigorating feel of nature and healthy landscapes. Nowadays, it is ideal to design the built environment with as many “greens” as possible.

In plants, green is often seen as leaf coloration. Vibrant color is more associated with flowers and inflorescence. Ornamental plants used in Philippine gardens are predominantly tropical species with prominent foliage, therefore having more green color.

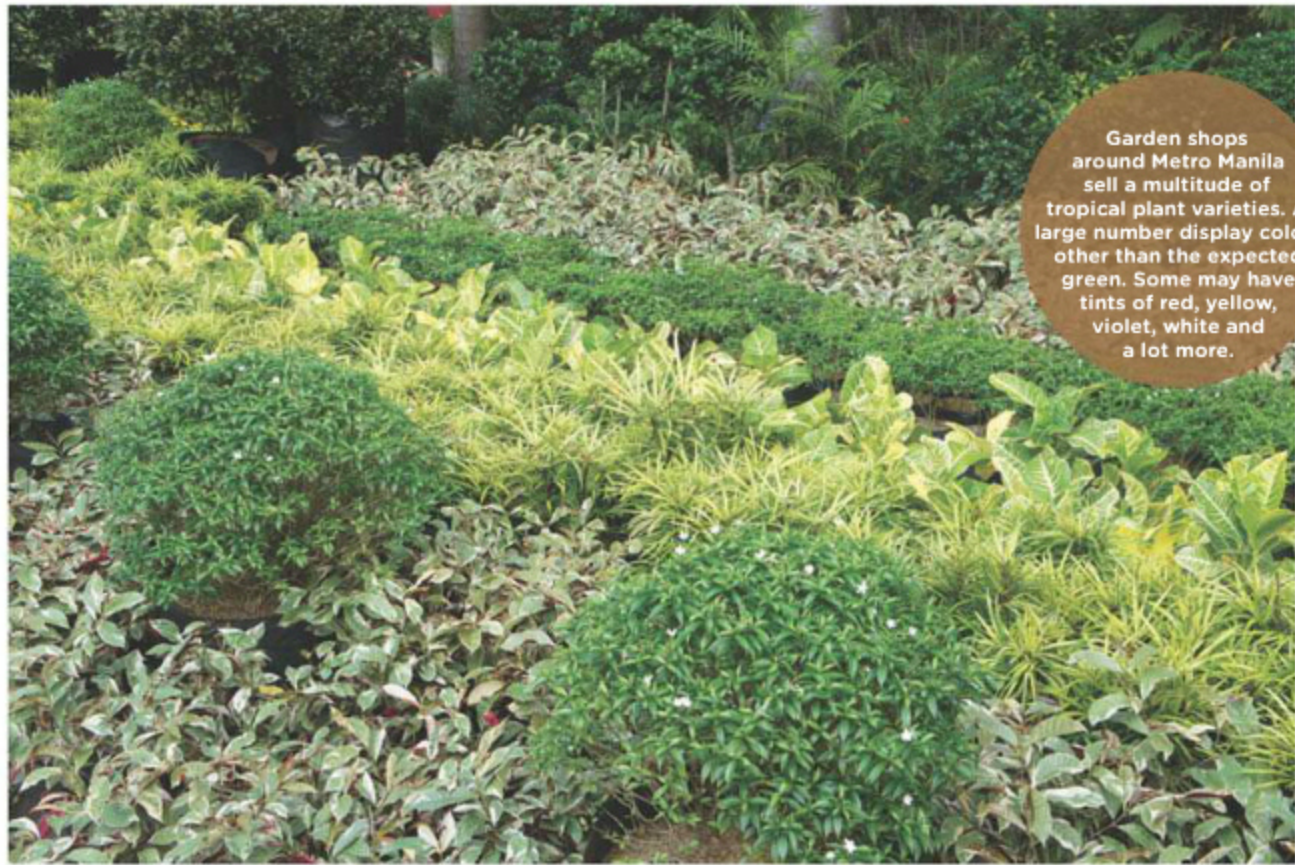
In our basic science classes, we learn that the green in plants is attributed to chlorophyll, which is responsible in converting carbon dioxide, water and nutrients into the plant’s food source. But without the energy supplied by sunlight, chlorophyll can not perform photosynthesis. Green is therefore a must in most plant species to become healthy. But some species have cleverly used other pigments to better absorb the right sunlight intensity in order for them to survive. Hence, you get a variety of color and leaf patterns in some plants.

When you visit your local garden shop, it is evident that a majority of garden plants sports the expected verdant color, but not all exhibits a purely green hue. Dispersed in the greens are shades of red, white, yellow, brown, violet, and other hues, which can give a more colorful planting palette for your garden.

## White

Apart from green, white is a sought after color in the garden. White in certain plants is a natural mutation brought about by less occurrence of green chlorophyll. In horticulture,

FROM WHITE TO RED TO VIOLET, EVEN BLACK, NATURE’S PALETTE SPANS A WHOLE RANGE



Garden shops around Metro Manila sell a multitude of tropical plant varieties. A large number display colors other than the expected green. Some may have tints of red, yellow, violet, white and a lot more.



LEFT: The beautiful shade plant *Alocasia reginula* has a concentration of chlorophyll on its almost black leaves. RIGHT: Many bromeliads have vibrant coloration. Some species turn vivid red when in flower or exposed to full sun growth or high light intensities.



RIGHT: The aluminium plant’s silver coloration maximizes filtered light by reflecting them onto another leaf surface chlorophyll to absorb. BELOW: Mayana’s full sun growth can afford it to have intense red and yellow patterns interspersed with its chlorophyll. The greener varieties are more adapted to partly shaded conditions.



LEFT: Adaptable *Rhoecia* or boat lily has dark leaf coloration, with deep green on the top and red violet on the undersides. RIGHT: Shade loving *Philodendrons* are horticulturally developed with red coloration to make them more attractive.



the white color is intensified by selective propagation in order to create varieties with strong contrasting patterns of white color called variegation. Due to lesser food-making chlorophyll, most variegated specimens should be grown under higher light intensities to compensate. Recently, the once scarce

white color is becoming common as numerous plant species now have variegated counterparts. This is an artificial mutation due to irradiation. A few years back, these genetically altered species were rare and expensive. But successful propagation have made them readily available and now, variegated ornamentals are

favorites of landscaping projects. Popular variegated plants include *Dracaena*, *Ficus*, *Schefflera*, lilies, ornamental shrubs and succulents. **Silver** The silver sheen, sometimes regarded as a bluish white tint, is often associated with a film/

powder-like or filamentous layer covering the surface of some sun-loving plants. The silver layer may be attributed to the plant’s adaptation to retain water better, prevent excessive water evaporation or simply reflect heat away from the leaf surface. Plants having this coloration are often used to harsh,





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Shade tolerant *Hemigraphis* sp. has varying shades of violet color; *Acalypha wilkesiana*, which has intense red to brown leaf coloration, is well suited for a full sun exposure growth; The sun-loving variety of *Hymenocallis littoralis* or beach spider lily has yellow to white color variegation.

arid or dry environments like deserts, coastal areas or steep slopes. These include certain species of *Agave*, *Aloe*, *Crassula*, *Euphorbia* and even cacti. Silver plants are ideally grown under maximum sunlight exposure.

### Red

Red is green's complementary color, hence, it strongly contrasts with the more common plant color. In a sea of green, a red-colored plant would surely stand out, that is why red-leaved plants are popular among gardeners and landscapers. Red is also much preferred by the Chinese in their home gardens and landscapes.

The orange and bright red plant colors are commonly observed in woody plants and shrubs that are grown under full sunlight exposure. In some of

these, the red color intensifies when exposed to higher light intensities. These include hardy plants like the common San Francisco, *Acalypha wilkesiana* varieties, *Coleus* spp. or mayana, *Syzygium* and a lot more.

### Yellow and brown

Yellow and brown in plants solicit mixed reactions from gardeners and landscape enthusiasts. Generally, yellow is always associated with non-healthy plants while brown connotes wilting. Thus, in a green garden, yellow and brown would mean unhealthy growth.

But there are species that develop yellow and brown pigment to harness a wider spectrum of sunlight. Some plants also develop specialized coloration similar to variegation, but

having prominent yellow than white. In horticulture, some collectors prefer a yellowish variegation, giving the specimen a "golden" sheen. These include varieties of *Dracaena*, *Sansevieria*, *Schefflera*, *Osmoxylon*, *Duranta* and a lot more.

### Dark green

The dark green color is sometimes referred to as deep green or black. It is often associated with plant species that are shade tolerant. These are mostly plants growing under the heavy shade of forest trees, thus having a concentration of green chlorophyll to absorb more of the faint available light. The dark green is often observed in shade loving aroids like *Philodendron*, *Alocasia*, *Anthurium*, *Rhapidophora*, *Spathiphyllum*, etc.

### Violet

The deep red, purple and violet plant colors are associated with some shade tolerant species. These colors are found on the underside or patterns of leaves, said to aid trapping available light more effectively. The purple to violet colors are associated with plants like *Maranta*, *Calathea*, certain aroid and ginger species that are used to the dark growth of the forest floor.

Whatever plant we choose, it is always welcome to have some color contrast introduced in the garden. But most importantly, we should learn the right growing conditions for each of the specimens selected in order for the plants to stay healthy and display their full color glory. 🌿

# entertaining



Jamon ice cream, mango in caramel and caramel sauce by Chefs Gene and Gino Gonzalez, page 128



# Color it Filipino

WHO SAYS NATIVE CUISINE IS ALL BROWN?  
NOT RENOWNED FATHER AND SON CHEFS  
GENE AND GINO GONZALEZ

BY CARLO TADIAR  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO



## Pasta a la Buenisimo

200 grams cooked spaghetti  
1/2 tsp garlic, chopped  
1/2 tbsp onions, chopped  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 1/2 fillets of gourmet *tuyo* (Zaragosa or Connie's brand)  
3 links *longganisang* Lucban, cooked and sliced  
1 tbsp button mushrooms, sliced  
1 tbsp green mango, chopped  
1/2 tbsp Kalamata olives, sliced into wedges  
1/2 tbsp green olives, sliced  
1/2 tbsp green bell pepper, roasted, peeled and then chopped  
1/2 tbsp red bell peppers, roasted, peeled and then chopped  
2 sun dried tomatoes, chopped  
1 tsp basil chiffonade  
Dash brandy  
Pinch Korean chili flakes

### FOR GARNISH:

1 tsp basil chiffonade  
Pinch Korean chili flakes  
  
1. Sauté all ingredients in pan. Finish with brandy and chili flakes. Toss over choice pasta.  
2. Garnish with basil and chili flakes.



*Dinuguan* sausage and roasted red bell pepper *puto* flank salad greens for a first course. OPPOSITE PAGE: Pasta a la Buenisimo follows next.





**“THAT’S NOT TRUE!”** protests the venerable chef Gene Gonzalez, an institution in Philippine cookery. He objects to the frequent complaint that Filipino food is un-aesthetically all brown. “That’s what we’re going to do today. We’re going to prove that Filipino food is not all brown.”

Gene is the inventor of the Ube Vichyssoise, a version of the cold French soup that recruits the indigenous tuber to make it a lovely lavender. But it’s not just in modern chefs’ interventions that Filipino food has color, Gene insists. Offhand, he cites *kinilaw na bariles*.

“It’s the poor man’s *kinilaw*,” he says. “The rich man wouldn’t even touch it because they like *kinilaw na malasugue*. But look at it, the pink, the purple onions and yellow ginger that go with it. It’s beautiful!”

“Then you take the *asadong baka* of the Kapampangans,” chimes in Gene’s famous chef son, Gino. “It’s golden because of the *achuete*, with flecks of red from the chili.”

The traditional dish is one of a set they are serving **Metro Home & Entertaining** today to show the vivid colors of Philippine cookery.

Multimedia chefs

We’re in the state-of-the-art test kitchen of Gene’s thriving school, Center for Asian Culinary Studies, which shares grounds with his flagship Café Ysabel, with now over a quarter of a century of unflagging popularity.

Father-and-son chefs in the test kitchen of their Center for Asian Culinary Studies. RIGHT: Chef Gene patiently cooks the slivers of various root veks to form a web-like wafer.







**Asadong  
Beef Ribs**

- 4 cloves garlic
- 2.5 kg beef ribs
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 tbsp ginger, finely julienned
- 2 tbsp fresh turmeric, (*luyang dilaw*) finely chopped
- 3/4 cup *achuete* oil
- 3 star anise
- 1/4 cup *patis*
- 3 stalks leeks, sliced crosswise
- 1/3 cup cane vinegar
- 2 tsp cracked blacked pepper
- 1 cup water
- 2 bay leaves
- Aromat (a seasoning made by Knorr)
- Salt
- Slurry (1 tbsp cornstarch dissolved in 1/4 cup water)
- Dash Anisado wine

1. To make *achuete* oil, first heat about 1 cup of neutral oil, turn off heat and add the *achuete* to infuse the flavor and color.
2. Heat *achuete* oil, French the ribs (partially expose the bone; your butcher should be able to do it or you could omit this step) and brown on all sides. Set aside.
3. In the same pan, sweat the onions, turmeric and ginger.
4. Lower the heat and add water gradually. Add cane vinegar.
5. Put the meat back and braise slowly until meat is tender.
6. When the meat is tender, season with salt, pepper, *patis* and Aromat. Splash with Anisado wine.
7. Thicken the sauce with slurry.



Carabeef braised with annatto, ginger and star anise on a bed of mashed plantains with a wafer of *ube*, beetroot and taro rising like a flame from it. OPPOSITE PAGE: Radical *jamon* ice cream in an *ensaymada* with mango in caramel on the side.





Father-and-son chefs are stars of their own cookery show, *Chefs-capade*, on the Lifestyle channel. The show has them visiting various locations around the country, discovering and sharing culinary delights. It airs Thursdays at 8:30 p.m. with replays on Saturdays at 11:30 p.m. Sundays at 3:30 p.m. and Wednesdays at 5 p.m. The show's new season premieres in April.

The meal begins with a roast red bell pepper *puto* with a delightfully clever *dinuguan* sausage. Our initial reaction was to compare it to the Spanish blood sausage called a *morcilla*. But Gene says while the *morcilla* is flavored with wood spices, like cinnamon or cloves, the *dinuguan* sausage is made with ginger, garlic and green chilies, more tropical tastes.

The *dinuguan* sausage, a gleaming black, is served with a *puto* colored jewel-tone orange. It is made by mixing roast red bell pepper with fermented *galapong* (rice flour).

Next, Gino is doing a Filipinized version of a signature pasta dish of his restaurant Buenísimo. The sauce is like a putanesca, but here he is substituting green mangoes for capers or olives, gourmet *tuyo* for anchovies, and Lucban *longganisa* for Italian salami.

**Carabeef and achuete**

The main course is *asadong kalabaw*, mentioned earlier. "There was a ban on carabeef a long time ago, because the cara-

bao is a farming animal," recalls Gene. "People didn't want carabaos slaughtered because they were used for farming. Now that we're all mechanized, we've gotten to see the benefits of carabao milk. People should also see the benefits of low cholesterol and highly nutritious carabao beef. I'm Kapampangan I grew up partly on carabao meat, and it's really a wonderful meat for braising."

(As it is more readily available, beef ribs are used in the recipe shared with us here.)

The huge slabs of ribs braised for this dish are a vivid orange-amber from *achuete*. Contrary to popular notion, annatto or seed of the *achiote* tree, which originated in South America, is not just for coloring, says Gene. "It has a wonderful, woody aromatic flavor."

"Well extracted, it has a flavor like the cashew nut," concurs son Gino. The seeds are simmered in oil, the resulting annatto oil is added to the braising liquid, which is flavored with ginger, shallots and anise seed.

The flavor is pungently aromatic, and the meat falls off the bone, tasting like beef but not exactly.

Gene pairs the braised meat with a mash of plantains combined with cononut. He crowns the dish majestically with a wafer made painstakingly by matting together slivers of *ube*, beetroot and taro, dry frying them and then rehydrating by poaching them in oil. The result looks like a flame roaring over the rack of ribs resembling firewood.

FROM OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFTMOST, TO ABOVE: The braised carabeef ribs; dissolved potato flour being drizzled on slivers of root veg; Chef Gino plating the Asadong Carabeef.

**Breaking boundaries**

For dessert, Gene serves something he concocted recently, a *jamon* ice cream. Absurd as it may sound, it is delicious, if a little wicked.

It is a rich, silky ice cream... then you bite into a chunk of ham. What a revelation! Savory and sweet, blended into one cool mouthful of shattered boundaries.

"A lot of European chefs have started crossing the border between sweet and savory," says Gene. "But 20 years ago I was laughed at by Italian chefs for serving cheese ice cream with a mango crepe. 'Ha! Fromaggio!' they said."

Quezo Real, sold by every neighborhood *sorbetero* since anyone can remember, is a cheese ice cream, points out Gino.

"One day, some Spaniard came up to me and said, 'You know, they're putting anchovies in chocolate.' Uy!" cries Gene, "You know we've been eating that for ages—*chamorado* and *tuyo*! Of course, I didn't say that, but I politely said, 'You know, that's very common in Southeast Asia.'"

The *jamon* ice cream is served in an *ensaymada*, which has cheese as well, and paired with mangoes in caramel. It's an over-the-top ending to a meal that's colorful in so many ways, and also unforgettable.

"Now everybody is crossing the line between sweet and savory," repeats Gene, ever inventive, ever rebellious and ever the champion of the local. "But 20 years ago, people were up in arms when I served *alimasag* ice cream." 🍴



# Feast for the eyes

START WITH A THEME,  
AND THEN A COLOR SCHEME

STAGED BY **MARK PEREZ**  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY **PAUL DEL ROSARIO**

**2** English garden, morning tea  
Color scheme: Monochromatic  
Shade repeated in various elements.  
Here, teal blue.



## 1 Plantation 'comida'

Color scheme: Analogous  
Featuring shades and hues that are close to each other in the color wheel. Here, yellow-orange, yellow, yellow-green and green, with neutral and accent colors.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-LEFT:  
1. Gold short glasses, P2,250, Rustan's.  
2. Brown ceramic bowl, P400, ac+632.  
3. Linen table napkins, P245, Rustan's.  
4. Gold three-wick candle, P4,450, Rustan's.  
5. Glass bottles, P245, Rustan's.  
6. Bambo-handle cutlery set, P880, ac+632.  
7. Ceramic bread plate, P2,480, ac+632.  
8. Ceramic dinner plates, P4,980 each, ac+632.  
9. Brass napkin rings, P245 each, Rustan's.  
10. Wooden floral tray, P1,450, Rustan's.  
11. Ceramic floral salad bowls, P300 each, ac+632.  
12. Ceramic floral soup bowl, P260, ac+632.

FABRICS: Both from Fabric Bar, Greenbelt 5, prices upon request.  
Backdrop: Silver / Leaf Charlbury  
Tablecloth: Green / Chocolate Primavera



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
1. Royal Albert porcelain cupcake stand, P2,750, Rustan's.  
2. Royal Albert porcelain tea set, P15,500, Rustan's.  
3. Birds and branch brass candle holder, P6,950, Interiors Greenbelt 5.  
4. Ceramic floral cup and saucer, P1,450, Rustan's.  
5. Royal Albert porcelain bread plate, P2,450, Rustan's.  
6. Wrought iron decorative key, P995, Sifra Greenbelt 5.  
7. Placecards, P400 per set, ac+632.  
8. Empire Home scented candles, P350, Robinsons Department Stores.  
9. Vintage silver butter holder, P22,000, ac+632.

FABRICS: Both from Fabric Bar, Greenbelt 5, prices upon request.  
Backdrop: Duck Egg / Cream Peony Tree  
Tablecloth: Violet / Crimson Painter's Garden



# 3 Oriental, evening affair

**Color scheme: Complementary**  
Hues that are opposite each other on the color wheel. Here, a “double split” between (1) Mulberry, a shade of magenta, and Citron, a shade of green, and (2) Russet, a shade of violet, and Cyan, a shade of blue.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:  
1. Clear glass flute, P860 each, ac+632.  
2. Oriental ceramic jar, stylist's own, wooden teal salad bowl, P1,180, Firma.  
3. Wooden turners, P990 each, Firma.  
4. Feathered fan, P6,980, Firma.  
5. Medium stainless bird, P9,500, Interiors Greenbelt 5. 6. Ceramic dinner plates, P280 each, ac+632. 7. Vintage silver bread holder, P21,500, ac+632. 8. Ceramic floral salad plates, P300 each, ac+632.  
9. Small stainless birds, P5,950 set of two, Interiors Greenbelt 5. 10. Chrome napkin rings, P2,450 per set, Rustan's.  
  
FABRICS: Both from Fabric Bar, Greenbelt 5, price available upon request.  
Backdrop: Cream / Pink Ella  
Tablecloth: Ruby / Emerald Amanpuri

# Dark wisdom

OBJECTS WITH EMOTIONAL RESONANCE, FULL OF SUGGESTION

SELECTIONS BY NINA SANTAMARIA  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM ONG



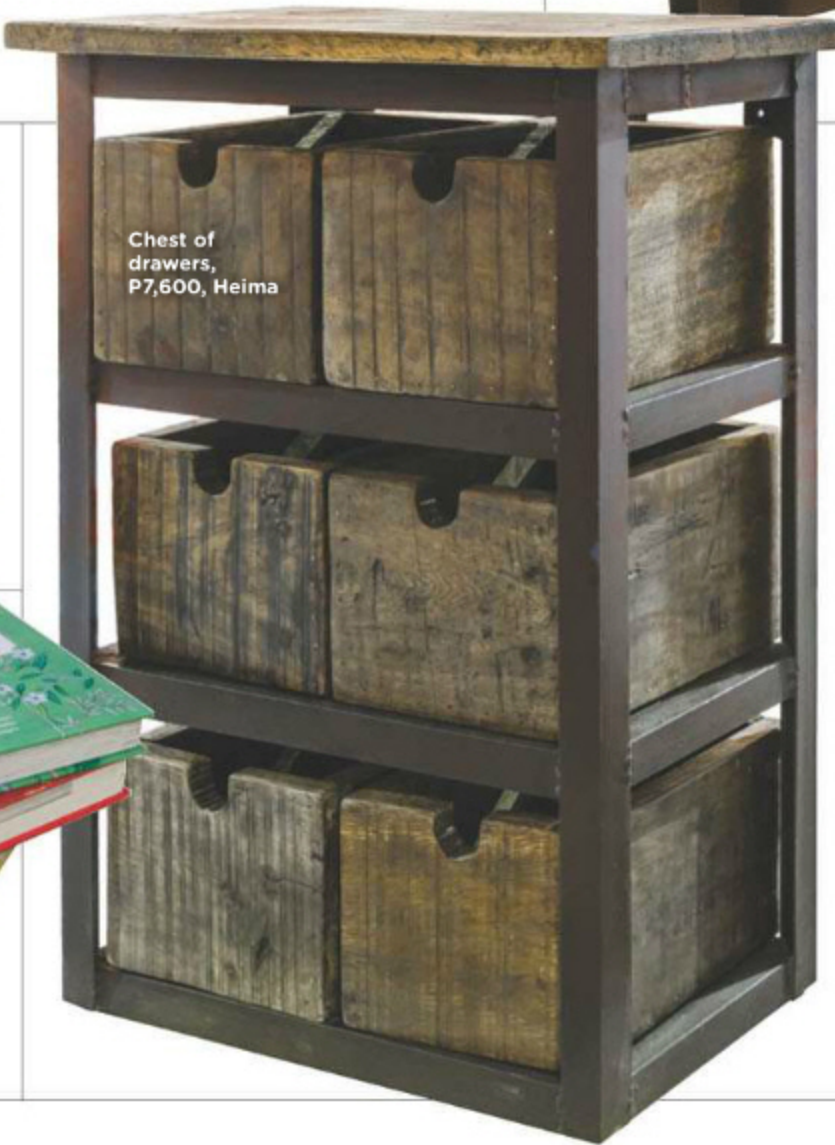
Page 56 An eclecticism that evokes the past in production designer Rious Caliso's home.



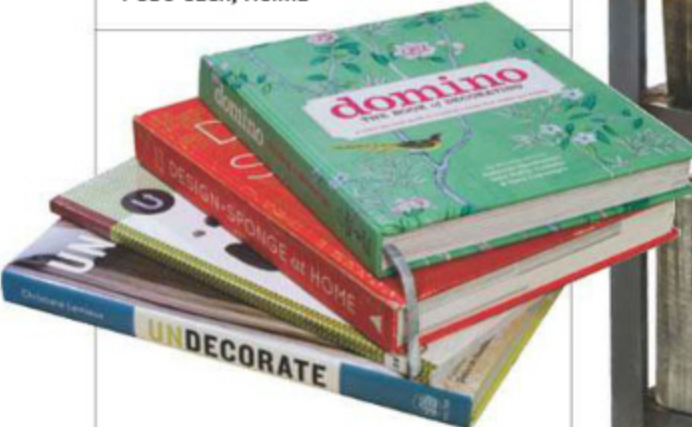
Octagonal leather side table, P32,000, Eclectic Living



Cylinder holder, P650 each, Heima



Chest of drawers, P7,600, Heima



Domino book, P1,600, Design Sponge, P1,900, Undecorate, P2,300, and Uppercase book, P950, all at Heima



Ceramic lamp, P7,200, Heima

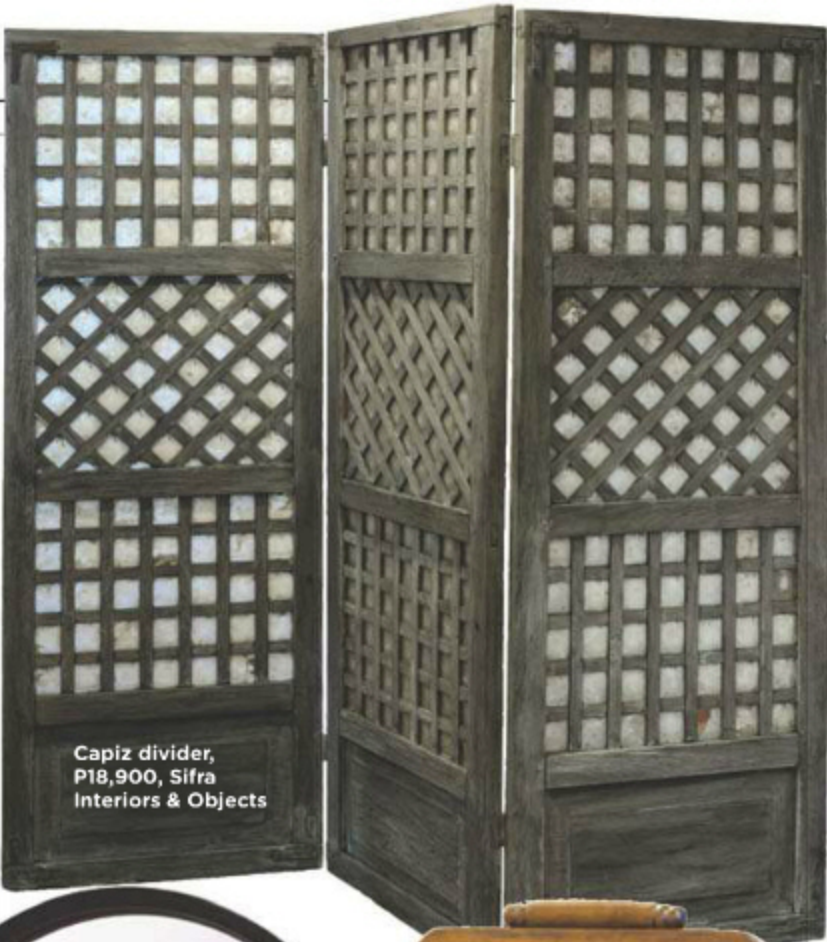


# Charm of wood

MOSTLY POLISHED AND GLEAMING, BUT ALSO WEATHERED AND TIME WORN



Page 50 Brand new and antique wood furniture and architectural elements bring warmth and comfort to this home.



Capiz divider, P18,900, Sifra Interiors & Objects



Contemporary side table, P11,495, Eclectic Living



Table lamp, P4,295, Eclectic Living



Round mirror, P19,675, Triboa Bay



Wooden chair, P7,500, Sifra Interiors & Objects



Console slab table, P52,000, Studio 10.10

# Orientalia

THE TIMELESS ALLURE OF EAST ASIA



Page 80 Chinese and Filipino art, objects and furniture in the highrise home of the Duarte family.



Asian paintings, P30,000, Noble Dreams



Brianna spiral staircase table lamp, P12,452, Triboa Bay



Hifi green chair with cushion, P18,050, Outdoor Living



Table cloth, P2,900, Sifra Interiors & Objects



Botanical coaster set, P600, Heima

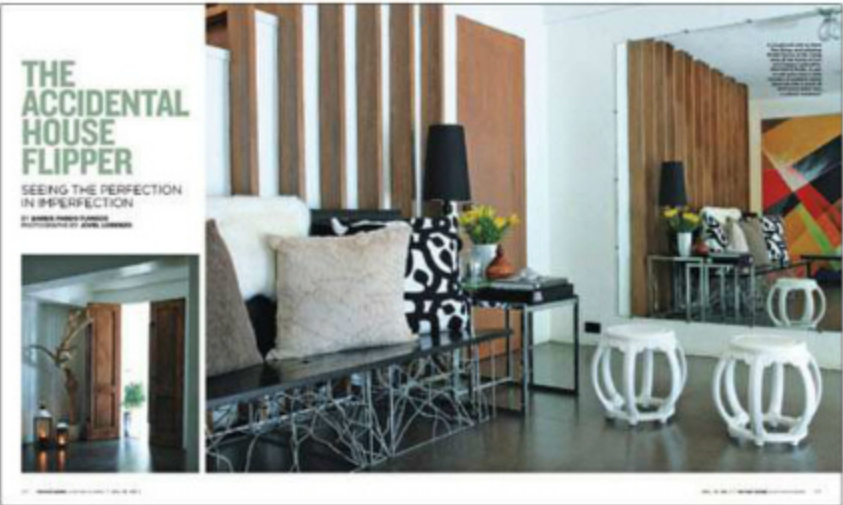


Hogan bench, P80,000, Studio 10.10



# Playful style

WHIMSICAL AND ELEGANT AT THE SAME TIME



Page 36 Youthful *joie de vivre* in the home of Lex and Chippy Ledesma.

Black floor lamp, P15,500, Eclectic Living

Bridge lantern, P9,807, Tribboa Bay

ID kids B.A.B.E.L., P1,800, Heima

Wine rack, P4,700, Eclectic Living

Kidney-shaped coffee table, P14,000, Eclectic Living

Throw pillow, P2,200, Heima

Forte dining table, P45,000, Living Space

Lacio side table, P7,600, Living Space

# Cozy glamor

DASHES OF STYLE, LOADS OF COMFORT



Page 42 A fine balance in the new home of Paz and Lea Magadia.

Wooden chair, P7,500, Sifra Interiors & Objects

Wall art, P4,800, Heima

Trance mirror, P21,708, Tribboa Bay

Console table, P26,000, Eclectic Living

Sol tripod floor lamp, P19,395, Tribboa Bay

Daniel lamp, P15,000, Outdoor Living

Chelsie sofa, P59,000, Living Space



**FAMILY STYLE**

IN A COLLECTIVE DESIGN PROCESS  
 WITH THE CLIENTS' TRADITIONAL & MODERN TASTE

4-seater wooden table,  
P21,000, Ethnic Home

Olanda  
table lamp,  
P11,079,  
Triboca Bay



**Turquoise  
Thai vase,  
P9,900, Kish**

A dark, woven basket with a herringbone pattern, likely made of bamboo or reed, shown from a side profile. The basket has a wide, flat base and a slightly flared rim. A small, dark, rectangular label is visible on the upper right side of the basket.



**Ming Chair,  
P18,000,  
Ethnic  
Home**

Old teak mini buffet, P12,500, Ethnic Home

**Old teak  
mini buffet,  
P12,500,  
Ethnic Home**

[illegible]

**Eclectic Living**, 2/F, LRI Design Plaza, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air, Makati City. Tel. 519-2938. **Ethnic Home** 9774 Kamagong St., San Antonio Village, Makati City. **Heima**, 2/F, LRI Design Plaza, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air, Makati City. Tel. 798-0027. **KISH** 233 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air Makati City. Tel. 896-8366; **Living Space** 2/F, LRI Design Plaza, 210 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air, Makati City. **Noble House Chinese Antiques and Painting** G/F LRI Design Plaza N. Garcia (Reposo) Bel Air 2, Makati City. Tel. 403-9296. **Outdoor Living** G/F LRI Design Plaza N. Garcia (Reposo) Bel Air 2, Makati City. **Sifra Interiors & Objects** 3/Level Greenbelt 5, 3/F, Home Zone Glorietta 4, 2/F LRI Design Plaza N. Garcia (Reposo) Bel Air 2, Makati City. Tel. 501-3220; 752-7174 email [Sifra.Interiors@yahoo.com](mailto:Sifra.Interiors@yahoo.com), [conradadamos@yahoo.com](mailto:conradadamos@yahoo.com). **Triboa Bay** G/F LRI Business Plaza Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati City. Tel. 403-6281.

3 Gold-leafed club chair from More than a Chair

**1**  
Gold-Plated  
Chair More  
than a Chair



# Modern and colonial

ANTON MENDOZA'S  
PERFECT MIX

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL DEL ROSARIO



In Anton's apartment. ABOVE: Max dining table, Vol au Vent chair, both B&B Italia; 19th century Spanish scone; early 19th century *salakot* with silver fittings; dinnerware by Jean-Marie Massaud for Alessi. RIGHT: The designer in a corner of his living room. George sofa, T60 side table, Mart armchair, all by B&B Italia; Penta lamp; artwork by Zobel; early 20th century Moro *buraq* (mythical steed); B&O phone.



**WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT INSPIRATION?** I love ultra modern design. I need modern architecture and design to inspire me. I am modern in many ways, and yet Intramuros is my sanctuary. I visit the old Spanish city once a week. It's the eclectic side of me. It's a side of me I've always liked.

**WHO OR WHAT WAS THE DESIGN INFLUENCE OF YOUR CHILDHOOD?** Good taste begins at home. The formative years are most important. I was lucky to grow up immersed in good design. My father, Toti Mendoza, is an architect, and my mother, Maribel González, did countless interiors

in her day. At home, things always moved around. It is rustic outside with plants growing in wild abandon, but polished and beautiful inside with fresh flowers on weekends. My grandparents' elegant Spanish home, and the maternal ancestral home on General Solano in San Miguel also influenced my modern aesthetic.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST COMMONLY REPEATED DESIGN MISTAKE?** Bad proportion. Good design is all about the right proportion.

**IF YOU COULD CHANGE ANY PART OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**OF METRO MANILA, WHAT WOULD IT BE?** Manila's unsightly street lamps. San Juan's are closest to the original Manila street lamps from the Spanish era. Perfect with modern designs. The Europeans do it all the time.

**WHAT IS YOUR DESIGN INDULGENCE?** The best modern designer furniture to highlight my modest collection of museum-quality Hispano-Philippine antiques. I adore the *moro gadurs* of Lanao del Sur.

**WHAT WOULD FOR YOU REPRESENT AN IDEALLY DESIGNED SPACE?** For a client? When

they are happy. One Christmas, I received an iPad and the card said, "Thank you for making our dream home come true." For me? A stunning modern structure, furniture to enhance it, and to perfect it, Hispano-Philippine antiques precisely arranged.

**APART FROM HIRING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER, WHAT BIT OF ADVICE COULD YOU GIVE HOMEOWNERS DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR CURRENT SPACE? HOW CAN THEY RE-IMAGINE IT?** Go visit good designer model units. You can get ideas and find a style that suits you. ①