



CITY OF FAITH: San Sebastian Cathedral, built in 1876, is said to have been made of materials sourced from Palawan, as well as coral stones from Guimaras. Right beside the church is the Bishop's Palace built in 1830. Photo by Rhonson Ng

A SWEET LIFE IN SUGARLANDIA

Give yourself 50 hours and experience what Bacolod living is all about, sans any sugarcoating, **VALERIE CAULIN** writes.

DO + SEE

Talisay City, a mere 15-minute ride north of Bacolod, is the place to go to see European-style ancestral houses of local affluent families. Popular spots include the Lacson House in Hacienda Claparols, built by Gen. Aniceto Lacson. It has a balcony that completely surrounds the house's perimeter, which made it easier for the masters to oversee their fields. *Balay ni Tana Dicang*, the ancestral house of Efigenio Lizares and Enrica Alunan built in 1872, is one of the most well-preserved houses in the province.

Got kids? Check out **Negros Forest and Ecological Foundation Inc.**, which is located right at the heart of the city. Not just a zoo, it's a breeding center for local species of warty pigs, leopard cats, spotted dears, owls, eagles, hornbills and fruit bats. Girls will have a blast at the **Negros Museum's Doll**

Collection, which boasts more than 20,000 pieces of local and imported dolls, including the biggest and the tiniest.

Private collections from horses, toys, key-chains, glass, and mementoes from the Holy Land are all housed in the **Dizon-Ramos Museum** in Lacson-Burgos Street, also known as the "Millionaires' Row" for the impressive mansions lining this famous lane.

A walk around the city will take you to the city plaza's **San Sebastian Cathedral** and the **Bishop's Palace**. Close by is the seven-story **Pope John Paul II Tower**, the place where the late Pope John Paul II celebrated mass when the pontiff visited the country in February 1980. Climb to the top for a nice view of the city, the port of Bacolod, and, on clear days, the neighboring islands of Guimaras and Iloilo. **The Capitol and Lagoon Park** (open daily from



ILOILO CONNECTION

Most Bacolodnons and Negrenses trace their roots to Iloilo, which is where the Ilonggo or Hiligaynon language is widely used on the island. When the sugar industry boomed, many Ilonggos transferred to Negros as sugar planters.



...m. to 12 midnight) is the perfect spot to stretch
 ...take a breather from your day tour. Buy rice
 ...pies (Php20 per pack) from local kids and feed
 ...tapias. At night, locals stroll around or dance
 ...the fountain. A fitness buff? Jog or join *taebo*
 ...classes in the Lagoon Park in the morning.
Mambukal Resort, a 23.6-hectare property that
 ...hosts the natural geothermal wonders of Negros
 ...idental, is a 45-minute drive from Bacolod City,
 ...ing vast sugarcane plantations that have fueled
 ...the local economy for centuries. Start with the
 ...umping pool or go Japanese with the newly opened
 ...indoor *onsen* (hot spring). Walk on pathways under
 ...canopy of tall trees, check the local bats, swim in
 ...the sulfur pool, or hike all the way to the Seven Falls
 ...Mambukal. You can even stay overnight.

OFF THE TOURIST TRAIL

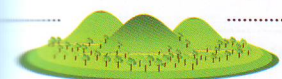
Negrenses are cockfighting aficionados and this is evident in their mini-stadium-style cockpit arenas. **RCG Sports and Recreation Center** in Hacienda Guanzon Mansiligan, Bacolod City, is the biggest with multimillion peso bets. A favorite Filipino pastime, cockfighting is a blood sport between two game cocks, with spectators taking sides and placing bets on their favorite rooster.

GO LOCAL

Bacolod's local cuisine only means one thing—chicken *inasal* (grilled chicken marinated in ginger, garlic, brown sugar, calamansi, rock salt, and native coconut vinegar). Still the best place to get this popular treat is **Manokan Country** at the Reclamation Area with Aida's and Nena's on the frontline of 12 different stalls. *Kansi*, Negros' version of

AL FRESCO APPEAL:

Mambukal Resort gives nature lovers a variety of choices including (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) an outdoor Japanese *onsen* or hot spring, Mambukal Falls, and a view of Mambukal's resident fruit bats. Photos by Valerie Caulin



SAFE HILLS: Bacolod comes from the word "Buklod," or hilly terrain, where the province's original settlers established their community after moving inland and away from marauding Moro pirates.



Photo by Charlie M. Jaceda



Photo by Valerie Caulin

RICH HERITAGE:

(ABOVE) The Lacson Mansion, popularly known as The Ruins, was built by sugar baron Don Mariano Lacson in the sprawling Hacienda Claparols in Talisay City; (LEFT) The 18-room, 129-year-old *Balay ni Tana Dicang* is the ancestral home of the Lizares and Alunan clan.

bulalo (sour beef stew), from **Saning** in Sto. Nino (Php120 per bowl) is another local fare not to be missed. **Bar21**, **Mely's Garden**, and **Aboy's** please with a family restaurant environment.

Calea Pastries and Coffee is the undisputed best pastry shop in the city, along with **Felicia's Pasty Café and Steak Room**, **Crumbs and Cake**, and **Bailon's Piaya** (the flat, muscovado sugar-filled bread Bacolod is very famous for).

Museum Café, located beside Negros Museum, offers relaxing al fresco meals, with healthy options from bread, cold cuts, and freshly made cheese from

Sagay City (Php130 per serving). Their iced fresh ginger-lime drink (Php60) refreshes.

THEY LOVE THE NIGHTLIFE

Newest hangout venue is **Art District** in Mandalagana, Bacolod City, where arts in different forms, from murals to sculptures and paintings, abound. **Orange Gallery** (Mondays to Saturdays, 2–9 p.m.) gives visitors a taste of the works of local artists. Fancy a quieter crowd? **Mu Shu Asian Restaurant and Lounge** along Lacson Street is the best place to chat and chill.



MassKara Festival

WHEN

October 1, 2012. MassKara Festival opening October 19–21.

WHERE TO STAY

O Hotel (rates start at Php1,400 per night), San Sebastian St., Bacolod City. www.ohotel.com.ph

L'Fisher Chalet (rates start at Php1,600 per night), Lacson St., Bacolod City. www.lfisherhotelbacolod.com/chalet-rooms

WHERE TO PARTY

Bacolod public plaza area (fronting the Cathedral) will be closed for the daytime street-dancing and parades, and for the electric MassKara parade in the evenings. Lacson Street will be closed for three days and live-band performances will be held in every corner.

TOP TIPS

Enjoy the crowd. Dance. Wear your most comfortable clothes and footwear. Bring water.



PAL flies between Manila and Bacolod four times daily. For more information, call PAL reservations office at (+632) 855 8888 or visit www.philippineairlines.com



SHOPPING FINDS

Bacolod City is a great spot to go antique shopping. **Recuerdos de Bacolod Art and Antiques** and **San Carlos Antiques** sell antique pieces at affordable prices.

Jojo Vito, a local artist specializing in decorative and accent furniture, is also the maker of famous masks and fashion jewelry. Visit his showroom at Metrodome.

For more shopping choices, **Negros Showroom** is a one-stop shopping place for delicacies and world-class local crafts and creations. ■

CONTACTS

Acacenda Claparols/Lacson House. Negros Occidental Tourism Center; +6334 433 2515

Balay ni Tana Dicang. Entrance: Php100 for adults and Php20 for students; balaynitandicang@yahoo.com; +6334 712 8880

Negros Forest and Ecological Foundation Inc. Open from Mondays to Saturdays, 9 a.m.-12 noon and 1:30-4 p.m.; entrance: Php50 for adults, Php40 for seniors, and Php20 for children; +6334 433 9234; www.negrosforests.com

Negros Museum's Doll Collection. Entrance: Php50 for adults, Php40 for seniors, and Php20 for students

Dizon-Ramos Museum. Open from Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 a.m.-12 noon and 1:30-5 p.m.; entrance: Php40 for adults and Php20 for children; www.dizonramosmuseum.multiply.com

Pope John Paul Tower. Open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; entrance: Php20 for adults and Php5 for students

Mambukal Resort. Entrance: Php50 for adults and Php20 for children. In addition, the resort charges Php15 for light vehicles, Php30 for buses, and Php100 to enter its Japanese onsen. Should you decide to stay overnight, the resort offers an overnight accommodation for two (Php600) and a villa for four (Php2,400); +6334 473 0610

Bar21. www.21restaurant.com

Mely's Garden. www.facebook.com/MelysGardenRestaurantBacolod

Aboy's. www.aboysrestaurant.com

Felicia's Pasty Café and Steak Room. +6334 433 6586; www.facebook.com/Felicias.pastrycafe

Mu Shu Asian Restaurant and Lounge. www.mushubacolod.com

Recuerdos de Bacolod Art and Antiques. 18th Lacson St.; +6334 432 0922

Jojo Vito. www.jojovito.weebly.com

Negros Showroom. www.anp-philippines.com/the-showroom

巴科洛德的50小时之旅

若您拥有50个小时游览菲律宾的食糖之都，不妨参考VALERIE CAULIN的旅游攻略。

您可参观塔利赛市 (Talisay City) 的欧洲式祖苑 **Clacson House** 和 **Balay ni Tana Dicang**。若有携小孩同行，内格罗斯岛森林与生态基金会 (Negros Forest and Ecological Foundation Inc) 是必到之处。这是一家动物园暨当地生物种类如疣猪、豹猫、梅花鹿等的繁育中心。另一个选择是藏有逾两万个玩偶的内格罗斯岛玩偶博物馆 (Negros Museum's Doll Collection)。位于百万富翁街的 **Dizon-Ramos** 博物馆展出来自圣地巴勒斯坦的马匹、玩具及其它纪念品之私人珍藏。其它值得一游的景点还包括有 **San Sebastian** 教堂、主教宫 (Bishop's Palace)、教宗保禄一世塔 (Pope John Paul Tower) 以及国会和泻湖公园 (Capitol and Lagoon Park)。欲放松身心者可前往 **Mambukal** 度假村，仅需45分钟的车程。那里设有清新凉快的游泳池和露天温泉。此外，您也可攀登 **Mambukal** 的七座瀑布 (Seven Falls of Mambukal)，有供应住宿服务。

欲体验紧张刺激的战场玩意可光临 **RCG运动与休闲中心** (RCG Sports and Recreation Center)。为食家可在 **Manokan Country** 品尝当地的美味小吃如 **Inasal** 鸡肉 (采用醋、大蒜、黄砂糖、小酸柑、岩盐以及当地的椰醋腌制而成的烤鸡)。Sto. Niño 的 **Saning** 酸味炖牛肉 (Kansi) 也很畅销。爱好甜品者可光顾 **Calea Pastries and Coffee**、**Felicias Pasty Care** 以及 **Steak Room Crumbs and Cake**。Museum Café。Museum Café提供悠闲的户外餐饮。

巴科洛德 Art District 的五光十色夜生活是夜猫族的不夜城。**Orange Gallery** 和 **Mu Shu Asian Restaurant and Lounge** 是当地的热门夜店。

Recuerdos de Bacolod Art and Antiques 和 **San Carlos Antiques** 是购物佳所；**Negros Showroom** 则专售美食与当地工艺品。