

Smile

MAGAZINE FOR CEBU PACIFIC
NOVEMBER 2010

Have a lava fun!

Get active in Albay

Field of dreams

A Japanese couple trades city life for country comfort

LEAVE THE MALL BEHIND
Shop in Manila - indie style



Fancy weird and wacky dining?

Turn to page 68

Christon Café in Osaka is a cathedral-esque restaurant that is a big hit among Japanese and tourists alike.





Quirky Cuisine

Imagine a dining experience that involves being "kidnapped", served by hobbits or eating on a toilet seat. Welcome to Asia's wildest restaurants.
Text by Richard Baimbridge

THIS REGION HAS always been known for its exotic cuisine, but lately a few innovative restaurateurs have taken things to a whole new level. In response to the very modern dilemma, "What shall we have for dinner?" people are getting increasingly creative (or perhaps desperate), and sometimes, downright bizarre. Maybe you've heard of some of the more common ones: dining in the dark and being served by waiters in night vision goggles; sushi served on a naked body; restaurants where guests are attended to by coddling Japanese nannies or vampires, your choice.

So if you're sitting at home tonight, or perusing the guidebook listings in your hotel room, thinking that Italian/French/Mexican/Chinese/Fusion/Japanese just sounds too humdrum, and your palate is yearning for true excitement, read on. Here, we bring you some of the strangest dining experiences in the culinary world. Elitists might "poo poo" the idea of having dinner on a porcelain commode, and few if any of these restaurants will ever find their way into the prestigious Michelin Guide. But if your gastronomical vocabulary favors the word "unusual," then you're in for a real eye-opening treat.

Christon Café

SPECIALTY Gothic dining in a cathedral-esque restaurant

Twilight fans rejoice, here's a restaurant just for you. Filled with dark Gothic touches and medieval Christian iconography, gargoyles leer at diners perusing the drinks menu, which is shaped like a coffin. The altars are authentic, imported from European churches, and the food is surprisingly, dare we say, tempting.

The menu boasts dishes that claim to be made not just by mortal hands, but by God Himself. That's bound to be worth at least one Michelin Star. For cocktails, sample the Joan d'Arc made with vodka, ginger ale, and raspberry. Now if only it were served flaming. 2-5 Shinsaibashi-suji, Opaque Osaka Building, 6th floor, Osaka, Japan, tel: +81 (6) 6213 2516.

Cebu Pacific flies to Osaka from Manila.
www.cebupacificair.com



The interiors of Christon café mimic that of a medieval Catholic church. Left: The menu features mouth-watering entrées that will tempt even the staunchest of dieters to "sin."



The spankingly antiseptic gleaming interiors of the one-of-a-kind Modern Toilet Restaurant in Taipei.

Modern Toilet Restaurant

SPECIALTY Dining a la commode

This restaurant, as even the owners will tell you, is really crap. Yet it's doing so well that it has expanded into a thriving chain and is going international. In fact, during the lunchtime rush, it's hard to even get a seat — or a toilet seat, to be more precise. Started by a group of young artists who were inspired by the pleasure of enjoying Japanese manga comic books while sitting on the loo, they decided to open a place where you could sit on the royal throne and enjoy, you guessed it, chocolate ice cream.

To everyone's surprise, including their own, it was an instant success, so they expanded to a full menu, including

drinks served in mini urinals, and the rest, as they say, is history. Business has been anywhere except in the toilet — which, come to think about it, is a sight to see in itself, with matching glitter-decorated potties for two, should you prefer to visit the ladies room with a friend. Modern Toilet Restaurant has several branches in Taipei and Hong Kong. For a complete listing of their locations, click on www.moderntoilet.com.tw

Cebu Pacific flies to Taipei from Manila, and to Hong Kong from Manila, Cebu and Clark. www.cebuspacificair.com



This fly is fake!
Modern Toilet's
wacky food is clean
and hygienic.



With his truly avant-garde Ultraviolet (UV) restaurant, Chef Paul Pairet may as well be the James Cameron of Shanghai restaurateurs. Below: One of his cutting-edge food creations.



Ultraviolet (UV) Restaurant

SPECIALTY Full-sensory-experience
20-course "avant-garde" dinner for 10

The race to be "the next big thing" in the restaurant world is moving faster in Shanghai than anywhere else in Asia. And the man way ahead of the pack is French Chef Paul Pairet, who claims to have created the "restaurant of the future."

Opening in early 2011, Ultraviolet is poised to be the *Avatar* of restaurants, turning avant-garde cuisine into a 3-D, IMAX, surround-sound dining experience. The restaurant consists of only one table, seating a maximum of 10 guests per evening in a secret location that's very closely guarded. Guests arrive at a meeting point, where they are blindfolded and then driven to the restaurant kidnap-style. When the blindfold comes off, they find themselves surrounded by wall-size visual projections depicting an array of atmospheres corresponding to the course that is being served. The visuals are accompanied by audio, as well as other sensory experiences like breezes and fragrances, all designed to enhance the food experience.

Pairet hopes to "offer a bold and exclusive dining experience that engages all the senses to create the ultimate luxury: emotion." Let's hope that pork and durian aren't on the menu. *Address undisclosed, somewhere in Shanghai, China. www.uvbupp.cc*

Cebu Pacific flies to Shanghai from Manila. www.cebupacificair.com



PHOTOS SCOTT WRIGHT

Hobbit House

SPECIALTY The only restaurant staffed entirely by "little people"

Fans of Manila's Hobbit House definitely don't come for the portions. "Super size me" isn't a phrase you'll hear a lot around this pub-style eatery, which serves up Tex-Mex favorites, along with a very extensive list of international beers. And just like the ales, all the staff here are pint-size. And they're more than proud of it.

The story of the Hobbit House goes back all the way to 1973, well before the popularity of *The Lord of the Rings*, to a man named Jim Turner who was so obsessed with Tolkien's trilogy that he opened a bar staffed entirely by little people. With a stage for live music that has featured the likes of the renowned Pinoy rock star Freddie Aguilar, Hobbit House isn't short on excitement.

1212 M H del Pilar cor Arquiza Street
(Arquiza Trade Center), Ermita, Manila,
Philippines, tel: +63 (2) 484 0982,
hobbithousemanila.com

Cebu Pacific flies to Manila from 16 international destinations and 32 domestic cities. www.cebupacificair.com



Guolizhuang Restaurant

SPECIALTY The most extensive menu of male virility-enhancing dishes in China.

In China, animal penises are touted as a means of stimulating health and male virility. That's what Guolizhuang is about, using this main ingredient in all its dishes. And with its lofty price (several thousand RMB for dinner), this body part is definitely prized for its health benefits. The animal phalluses are thinly sliced before serving. "We started doing that because sometimes customers would see the waiter coming to their table with a whole body part of a horse, and they would get up and run away." A dining experience that's definitely not for everyone! *Dongsi Shitiao Bridge, Beijing, China, tel: +86 (10) 6405 5698 www.dlz.com.cn*

Cebu Pacific flies to Beijing from Manila.
www.cebuspacificair.com



The house specialty is thinly sliced before it is served. Inset: Cutting up the main ingredient in the kitchen.