BODY LOVE

A STAR MAGIC 25 SERIES

KIM CHIU and GERALD ANDERSON

return for our Annual Body Issue
in a back-to-back exclusive with

ELLEN ADARNA
LIFESTYLE

With Palawan often named as one of the most beautiful islands in the world, El Nido, along with the sights in Coron and Puerto Princesa, forms part of its travel trilect. Whether you’re staying in Pangulasian or Lagen islands, you absolutely have to visit the Big and Small Lagoon, Secret Lagoon, and the various beaches, to truly understand what everyone’s been raving about.

PHOTOGRAPH KENNETH SURAT
PARADISE REDISCOVERED

Restless travel bloggers show us their favorite places around the country. Pack your bags, 'cause we're tagging along.

BY AURELIO ICASIANO III

The Philippines has a vast arsenal of experiences to throw at any kind of traveler, and people from around the world have been touring the country to take on the challenge. Writer and photographer Jack Morris of Do You Travel and Lauren Bullen of Gypsea Lust both raved about Siargao, Palawan, and Boracay. Christian LeBlanc of Lost LeBlanc has made up his own list of top ten spots. Anthony Bourdain, widely esteemed for his television series, No Reservations and Parts Unknown, explored the Philippine culinary scene. This is a country that's worth taking the time to get to know better. A country that's near inexhaustible in its wonders.

From France to Germany to London to Dubai to the Philippines, travel bloggers from all over talk about some of their favorite destinations, making your summer travel list that much longer.

ELEN TURNER
www.wildnessmetropolis.com

Elen began her blog in 2014, using it mainly as a showcase for her freelance travel writing work. Here, she focuses on South Asia, with bits of Southeast Asia in between. She has lived in Nepal and has traveled around India, which is the source of her stories from these countries.

Camiguin Island. "Camiguin Island, just off Mindanao is just gorgeous, and it's a shame that more tourists don't take the time to head south to Mindanao."

VICTORIA ADE-GENSCHOW
thebritishtourist.com

Victoria is the founder and editor-in-chief of The British Berliner, who, as a British vice-school principal and social media manager, has been living in Germany for over 15 years. In her blog, she offers travel tips for going around Europe and beyond, mixing her signature British humor with elegant itineraries. Victoria has traveled to over 61 countries and five continents, writing about the things that make each destination special.

Bohol. "I loved the exotiness of the forest, the Chocolate Hills and the intriguing tarsiers. The river cruise was such a surprise. Really beautiful and serene."

Cebu. "This island was wow! Again, I was shocked at the gorgeous beaches, and the loveliness of the sea. I'm not really a fan of beaches but the water was so clean, and blue-green. It actually sparkled! And as for the food, I've never tasted pork so good!"

Manila. "Manila can be a little intimidating, but I really like the Manila history and the Chinese cultural aspects of the city."

On travel blogging: "I've always wanted to travel and as a British expat, I've lived in four different countries—England, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Germany. I've also harbored a love for academics, writing and reading—hence my job as a school principal. Being a travel blogger combines my love for both travel and writing. It's also opened the doors for many other opportunities such as television presentations, movie-making, fashion shows, and the fact, that in reality, I'm a bit of a diva!"
TRAVEL
TRISHA VELARMINO
www.psinmyway.com

In 2013, during her first year backpacking in South America, Trisha Velarmino realized that she didn’t want to go home. But funds were running slim, so she had to find a way to maintain her lifestyle. This was when she began blogging. Soon after, the blog gained a lot of attention, especially since her authentic experiences went beyond the mandatory tourist destinations. She prefers staying in a place for at least three weeks, even staying on for months or years—which is her way of knowing how a culture lives and breathes. She also highlights visa-free countries for Filipino travelers, such as Israel Djibouti, Morocco, and Georgia—places that give a multitude of opportunities.

Boracay. “All of my closest friends left the life in the city and moved here. Life there is simple but fun! The idea that my friends can leave their corporate jobs to live simply in one of the most beautiful islands in the world still amazes me. I know a lot of people think Boracay is overrated but if you know how to go around there like a real local, it will definitely change your perspective about the island.”

Siargao. “When I am done living a life of travel (or at least traveling longterm), I plan to stay in Siargao and just have moments of peace every day. A friend of mine told me to stop writing about Siargao as more and more people are coming, but I can’t help it! I really have strong feelings about this place that are unexplainable.”

Subic. “I was born and raised here so there’s quite a bias about this small town. When I visit the Philippines, I spend most of my days here. Aside from that this is the place where I first dreamt of traveling the world, it has so many interesting features… I swear, if you don’t know the ins and outs of Subic, you won’t enjoy it. But come visit and I can take you to the secret spots that only I and my childhood friends know about.”

On travel blogging: “I like the vastness of creative space that I am able to find in blogging. I love that I have the freedom to write anything I want because I own the blog—no one will dictate what I should write about. I love writing, above all—this love for writing, more than traveling the world has completely changed my life.”

VIOLETTE VAUCHELLE AND ANTOINE LE GUEN
www.vloologies.com

Violette is a photographer, editor, and storyteller that focuses on travel experiences while Antoine is a videographer, and together, they share a passion for travel. From a life-changing three-month backpacking trip from France to New Zealand, they realized they don’t fit in the corporate world. From their blog, the two now focus on video as their medium, publishing interactive travel vlogs to share that immersive experience. The two are set to start a new travel web series called Expedition 100, which is about visiting the top 100 most wonderful places on earth. Season 1 will be set in South East Asia, with the first episode set in Manila.

Manila. “We particularly enjoyed Intramuros, Manila as we are big fans of history and architecture. We were surprised to see how the architecture was tinted with Latin culture and how the historic center was culturally rich. And we were driving around in a karaoke journey so that was a lot of fun!”

Cagayan de Oro. “In Northern Mindanao we experienced white water river rafting in Cagayan de Oro, it was a fun afternoon of water sports and nature watching, as we were cruising on the river. It was the first time we did this kind of activity and we had an amazing time.”

Camiguin. “But surely our most favorite place visited was Camiguin Island. We only spent one night there, but it was the best. Discovering White Island and its wonderful view on the volcanic island of Camiguin and snorkeling at the Sunken Cemetery, the best snorkeling spot we’ve been to so far.”

On travel blogging: “Since we ‘vlog’ now more than we ‘blog’ what I like best about it is the sincerity with which we share our story. When I was writing I felt like I was trying to be too professional, like a journalist writing the perfect article. On camera, we feel more comfortable, we feel like we can share the ‘real’ us, and we feel like we can connect with our audience easily. It feels more authentic. I think a picture is better than a thousand words, that’s why I personally chose photography to be my main media of creation and storytelling. To us, images and videos are the best way to tell a story. Video surely is the future of storytelling.”
Kenneth Surat

www.kennethsurat.com

Architect and leather artisan Kenneth Surat left his corporate job in Dubai in 2015 to pursue travel blogging, backpacking in Australia, across Europe and America, before returning to the Philippines and exploring other South East Asian countries. In his blog, he talks about his experiences during his travels, with stories that resonate with solo travelers who like to do DIY trips.

El Nido, Palawan. “Easily, this is the best island getaway in the Philippines. The moment I stepped on the boat and explored the islands—jaw drop.”

La Union. “More than its beach, what I like about La Union (Elyu) is its growing surfer community. Its party scene, hipster cafes, and hostels give this place that happy-go-lucky travel vibe, like everything will be fine, just go with the flow.

Batanes. “I visited this place when I was still in college and until now, I still have this place close to my heart. The coastal view around the island is just breathtaking. Its landscape is different from what we normally see around the Philippines. Most of all, I love the people, the Ivatans. I can say that they are most hospitable people I have ever encountered around the Philippines.”

On travel blogging: “I love it when I get messages how people get inspired with my story. How somehow I inspire them to follow their dreams (travel related or not). Because of this platform I met so many people whom I consider now as friends.”

Hanna Sobczuk

bannatrazuls.com

Hanna is a full-time adventurer from Poland who started her Polish travel blog, plekakwaizaka.com, back in 2011. Two years later, she launched an English blog Hanna Travels and has been writing in both languages since. Recently, she packed 20 kilos of her stuff, walked out the door, and hasn’t been home since, heading off to travel around Asia for a length of time that even she can’t figure out anymore.

Palawan. “I haven’t been to the whole country yet but so far I liked most Palawan because of turquoise lagoons and island hopping.”

Cagayan de Oro. “I also liked Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao because of white water rafting I really enjoyed it.”

Manila. “I really like Manila! I spent here enough time to know it better than just during one to two days like most of [the] travelers who come to the Philippines. And Manila is not easy city at all— it’s challenging. And I love challenges when I travel!”

On travel blogging: “I love that travel blogging gives me independence. I can be wherever I want to be, I can write whatever I want, and I see my blog is improving. After so many years of this I can’t imagine my life without it anymore!”