

Flashback of the 2009 DOT-hosted welcome reception for Philippine Starball



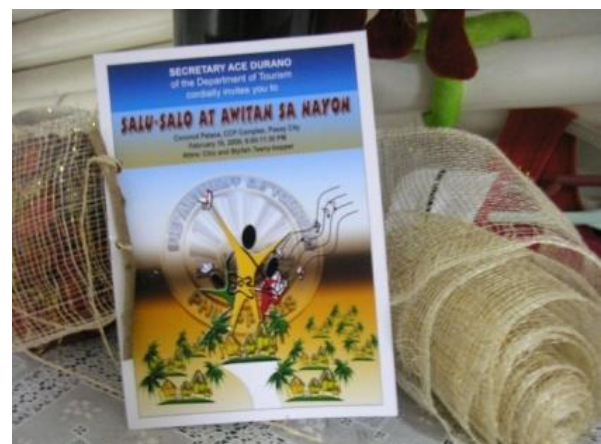
Dubbed as “Salu Salo, Sayaw at Awitan sa Nayon,” more than a hundred guests (foreign delegates, technical officials, performers and performing artists, etc) of the 2nd Philippine Starball International Ballroom Dance Competition were treated in February 2009 by Secretary Ace Durano of the Department of Tourism to a sumptuous banquet of unique Filipino cuisine serviced in a very elegant fiesta-style set up at the at the Coconut Palace.

Event organizer, the *Altius Sports Management Specialists*, has ensured the infusion of social and economic sensitivity and responsibility in the occasion. The event promoted a deep sense of clean and green through the full use of indigenous wooden materials and natural fibers, such as abaca for its invitation, for the leis, and the surrounding decors. Every single detail of items used during the occasion bear the Filipinos’ creativity, ingenuity and practicality.

The DOT has maximized the use of native products that the country is widely-known for, and that are produced for world consumptions. It made full use of the event to educate the foreign guests about the fiesta culture and the Filipinos’ kind of celebrations, food, music, arts and character. All touches of aesthetics and craftsmanship seen during the event were uniquely-Filipino.

The invitation

The invitation cards were made of pure abaca material, finely crafted to suit the taste of world-acclaimed guests (world dancers). With this consideration, the invitation flaunted one of the goods this country is proud to have been producing and contributing to the world, the abaca. The card notes that 90% of world supply of abaca comes from the Philippines, making this country the world’s number one exporter/producer of this product. Its cover bears pictures of nipa huts and coconut trees, emblems of countryside and old traditions of Filipino abode. Its title, *Salu-Salo at Awitan sa Nayon* was intended to be phrased in Filipino words in order for the guests to endeavor learning to speak and understand words in Filipino while in the country.



The lei as token



The lei was made of natural fiber with finely-scraped wooden flower. Its pendant had an event (starball) logo made of Maolawin wood (from a rare tree found in Quezon province). The lei was placed in a specially-made abaca box. Its string was a woven abaca mat with touches of golden glitters to accentuate the design.

The Guest Book

The event used a guest book covered with a board made of colored abaca fiber. Inside pages were made of scrap materials, where guests were to note their memories of stay in the Philippines.



Lively and festive ambience of buntings and rural set-up

The ambience was lively and festive. The scenery projected a fiesta mood, with colorful buntings and rural set up.

The Cocktails: Showcasing Filipino Wines

At the cocktail, guests had a grand taste of Filipino wines. It showed that the Philippines has had its own tradition of brewing, fermenting and drinking wines produced in the different parts of the country.



Samples of wine made available during the event are as follows:

- ✚ *Wines made of tropical fruits*, such as: strawberry wine from the Province of Benguet, particularly in Trinidad Valley and Baguio City, tomato wine from Province the of Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao, among others.
- ✚ *Tuba*, processed and fermented from coconut sap, had been acclaimed as the oldest-recorded native alcoholic drink in Philippine history.
- ✚ *Lambanog*. A clear potent liquor processed and stilled further from Tuba. Most of the time, this is added with raisins or some other ingredients and buried under the ground or under a running water in the river to come up with a much higher percentage of alcohol with a more distinct sweet taste.

✚ *Rice wine* The natives of the Cordilleras or the mountain Region in the island of Luzon claim that their *Tapuy* or Rice Wine has also been in existence long before the coming of the Spanish colonizers. Such wine is made from a nearly cooked red mountain rice preparation which is put in an earthen pot and fermented with the sprinkles of crushed local white cookie-like yeast called *budod* which is made out of molded rice powder with a little amount of water and grated local herbs such as the roots of a specific mountains grass called *inwed* by the Cordillera people.

The Unique Filipino Banquet Set-up

The venue was a sight of rural fiesta, highlighted by a magical and dramatic pool design of a grand lagoon with matching floating flower arrangements, fountain and tea-lights. Six (6) specially-designed nipa huts were constructed to host different kinds of Filipino cuisine.

The backdrop of the stage was hand-painted, with a DOT logo in watermarks and glow in various shades with interchange of lighting effects.

A coconut bamboo framed banner was posted beside each hut to explain the foods/menu being served or are made available at the huts.

Kubo #1: The Star of Philippine Fiesta

“In the Philippines, no celebration is complete without the most-awaited dish of the festivities – the Lechon, an original Spanish cuisine which Filipinos have made uniquely their own. By concocting marinate mixtures and spinoff recipes like Litsong Paksiw and Litsong Kawali we have made this dish appeal to our very own Pinoy taste.

This whole roasted pig or cattle is seasoned with a blend of spices and cooked in charcoal and leaves a mouthwatering aroma at its wake. Dip it in its special mixture of atsara or sarsa and that one taste will leave you wanting for more.”



Kubo # 2: Grilled to Perfection (barbeque)

“Where the west has baby back ribs, the Pearl of the Orient Seas features a barbeque banquet that is singularly Pinoy. Have a taste of Bacolod's pride, the Chicken Inasal, and experience for yourself the scrumptious meal everyone is talking about. What make our barbeque parties extra special are the friendly smiles and the good ol' Filipino camaraderie and hospitality.”

Kubo # 3: A Smorgasbord of Sea Food Delight

“With a country boasting of 7,101 islands, it does not come as a surprise that sea food is a staple dish in the Philippines. Considered to be nutrient-dense with its fair share of protein and amino acids, the seafood feast has been especially prepared to ensure that all the juice and moisture are retained so that you could experience what "fresh" is really about.

These dishes were carefully selected to capture the gastronomic influences of our diverse culinary heritage. Indulge your palate as you savor our exotic sea food cuisines.”

Kubo # 4: A Veritable Feast of Salad and Vegetables

“La Trinidad, Benguet – the landlocked province in the North is known as the Salad Bowl of the Philippines and from which most of the country's supply of vegetables come from. With our country's rolling hills, bountiful terrains, and diverse topography – agriculture is one of the backbones of our economy.

Savor the delicious and nutritious meal that we have laid out for you. From fresh lumpia roll to native Filipino salad like okra, eggplant, red eggs, onion, green mango and bagoong, every bite is a sure-fire hit.”

Kubo # 5: A Taste of Tropical Fruits and Juices

“What is the point of going to a tropical country if you could not indulge in fruity feast? Try the fresh fruits laid out before you. From the sweetness of the "sago't gulaman" to the endearing freshness of the melon juice – we hope you will have your fill. The Tree of Life – the Coconut – grows aplenty in our countryside. With more than 14 million volume production of buko (coconut) in the country, there is no reason for you to miss this palatable treat? Move over pina colada, it is time to satiate your thirst for buko juice. Our tropical drinking fête does not end here. Apart from our famed buko juice, you can also have a taste of the various fresh fruits in season that we have prepared for you.”

Kubo # 6: For Your Sweet Tooth: Assorted Native Delicacies

“Take a break from the decadent chocolates you were used to a sample our native desserts. The bibingka and puto bumbong and celebrated delicacies that Filipino families share right after attending the Misa de Gallo or Simbang Gabi during Yuletide Season. Meanwhile, our rice cakes like sapin-sapin, peachy-peachy, and suman are staple merienda dishes.

Meanwhile, Balut and Penoy are exotic food that was featured even featured in the Fear Factor Eating Challenge. Sample it and see if you too can conquer your fears.

To top off our dessert list is Leche Flan. This crème caramel dish is one of the most common dessert dishes in the Latin world. It came originally from the border area of France and Spain, but with the Filipino's famed sweet tooth there is no stopping the flan from gaining popularity here. Philippine delicacies – food that will appeal to your epicurean tastes.”

Kaleidoscope of the fiesta mood party at the Coconut Palace

