



## WHAT RISES IN THE EAST

With powder white beaches, jewel-toned coral reefs, and tangled jungle, Balesin Island Club could be any other stunning island paradise—except for its six distinct villages that take after the world's most beautiful seaside destinations, and its carefully planned, inherent sustainability.

**THE CONCEPT** of a members-only resort that brings together the beach capitals of the world on one beautiful island off the Eastern coast of Luzon is both fascinating and ambiguous at the same time. Six top seaside destinations within easy reach is fascinating, but ambiguous, because, how could an idea as big as this not look like a tropical Disneyland gone wrong?

Seeing is believing. Balesin Island Club is just a 25-minute plane ride from Manila. As the airplane circles the island prior to final approach, you see

winding roads curving through the lush, unhindered growth of the rainforest. The thick foliage hides most of the club's minimal structures.

The six villages are scattered throughout the island, with the club set to open this July. When they are completed, floating villas from 'Bali' will reach out from the white, powder-soft sand onto the waters of Lamón Bay, while a Greek tavern in the 'Mykonos' village makes its home on Balesin's limestone cliffs, looking out at the Pacific Ocean. Boats will bob at anchor

in 'Saint Tropez', and the richness of Thai culture will be evident in every beam and carving in the 'Phuket' village, nestled in a secret, southern cove. And while 'Costa Smeralda' will make you feel like you've been transported to an Italian village redolent with the homey aromas of olive oil and parmesan, the Philippine-inspired 'Balesin' village should help you remember that there's no place like home.

As a member, the choice is yours. You get 14 nights a year, where you can stay at



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any village you like. Alphaland's Senior Vice President for Corporate Communications Michelle Ongpin calls it "a tackline to your own private paradise."

Michelle's father, the larger-than-life Roberto "Bobby" Ongpin of Alphaland, is behind this vision. His track record in exclusive development projects, like Tagaytay Highlands, demonstrated his lofty standards of quality. One of the best development planners in the world, EcoPlan of Florida, ensured that Balesin Island Club was designed

as a harmonious, integrated whole, built according to a master plan that takes into careful consideration the island's geography and climate, top-notch amenities, and of course the all-important guest experience.

For Alphaland's chairman, this project is strictly personal. Each of the chosen villages is a personal favorite of Mr. Ongpin, including Balesin Island. "It was my dad's dream from the beginning," shares Michelle Ongpin, "He used to go to Balesin every year in the '80's and '90's; he built a house

there, and absolutely loves the island. He's always wanted to do something more with it." To make sure they got it right, Mr. Ongpin sent his architects to each foreign destination, so they could immerse themselves in the local culture and architecture. He insisted on personally overseeing the design plans, sharing his memories of countless trips. It may promise six different experiences in one resort, but there is nothing hodgepodge about Balesin Island Club.

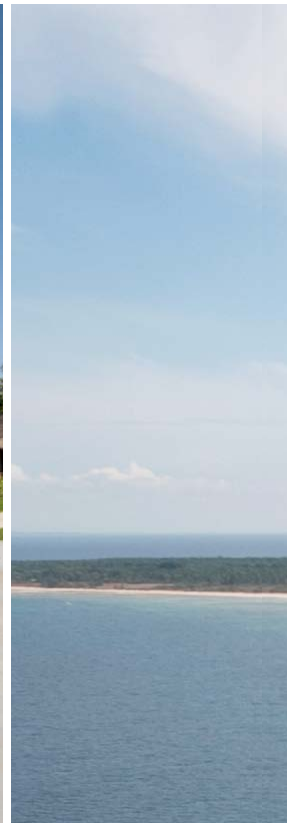


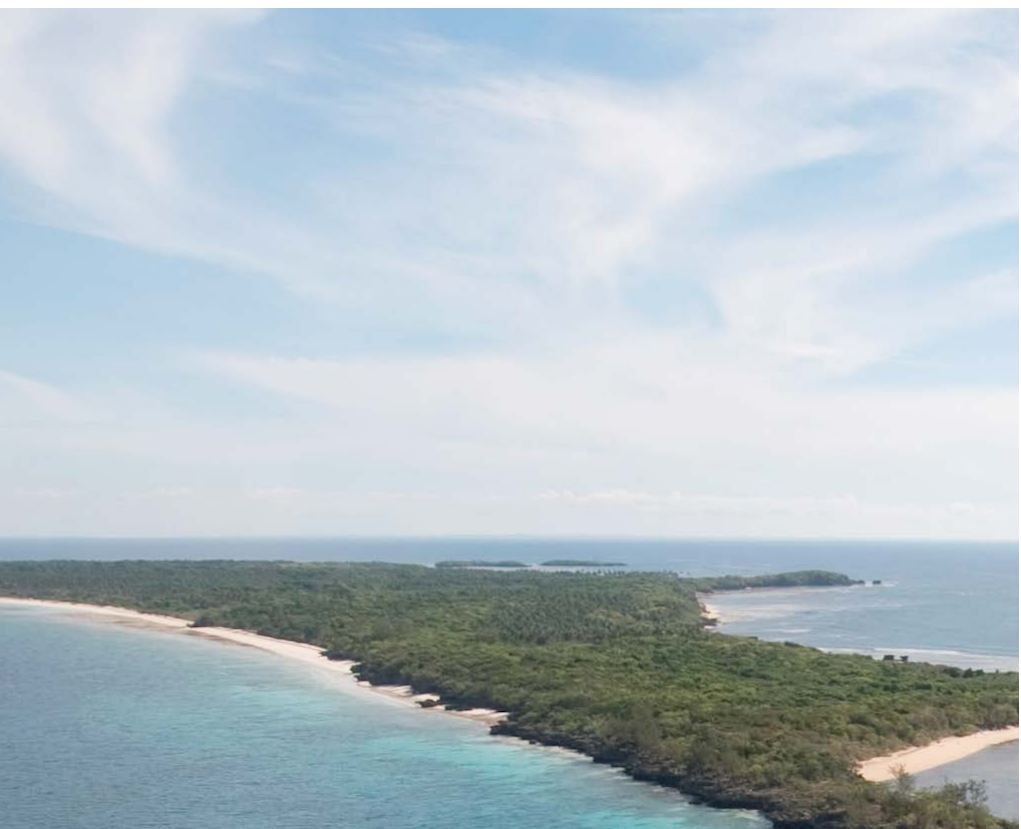
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The resort challenges other notions, too. In partnering up with EcoPlan, Balesin is an exquisite rebuttal to the idea that world-class luxury and authentic sustainability are ultimately incompatible. And the secret, once again, is in the master plan, guaranteeing that sensitivity for the island's environment is a key feature right in the blueprints. "We've master-planned it from the beginning to make Balesin Island Club sustainable in the long run," Ms. Ongpin says. "So the overdevelopment and pollution that has happened in Boracay will never happen here."

So, what does Balesin Island have instead? For one, an international airport with a 1.5km runway, complete with immigration and customs. The runway also doubles as a water collection system for the island. The rainwater falling on the runway runs off into a series of lagoons, which serve as the main supply for the island's water filtration plants.

Only 50 of Balesin's 500 hectares will be developed, preserving the island's natural beauty, while offering its members plush, 57-square-meter villas, swimming pools, premium sports facilities including covered tennis courts and water sports, and of course a lavish, holistic spa. The pristine coral reefs and virgin rainforests are protected by 80%





water recycling, sewage treatment, and roads that carve around trees rather than plough through the forest. The vehicles on the island will be electric shuttles, although guests can also ride horses from the equestrian center to get around.

Balesin's organic farm will grow fresh produce for the resort's needs, while the aquaculture center will supplement the daily catch brought in by the local fishermen—the local community plays a big part in the project. The island will offer “well-executed small menus with excellent produce,” supplies Michelle Ongpin. “As with everything else, it's not necessarily about quantity, but quality, with fresh, seasonal offerings.” Since each village has its own specialty restaurant, serving up authentic fare, there's plenty to choose from.

Of course, the fact that Balesin is a members-only island plays a big role in maintaining this subtle yet achievable balance between human development and natural environment. Its wealth of possible experiences, ambitious as it is, might also be the secret to the next level of exclusive membership resorts. Add the island's natural and developed assets, and Balesin Island Club is definitely a paradise you'll want to sign up for.