

A local fisherman of Balesin boasts of his fresh catch

Awaiting Discovery

Louise Myjel A. Guevarra explores the still mysterious island of Balesin.

PHOTOS BY XAN VIVAR

If you're up for an international vacation experience minus the long lines at the airport, then look no further than Quezon Province. Somewhere east of Mauban near Polillo Island is Balesin Island Club. Named after the balet tree and asin, this 424-hectare property houses Lamón Bay, one of the richest fishing grounds in the Pacific. Aside from having a pristine beach, the island is also rich in vegetation with rainforests, trees, wild shrubs, and flowers growing all over.

Once owned by the Tordesillas family, the island was recently acquired by the Ongpins, through Alphaland.

"We aim to provide you with a unique,

luxurious, and exclusive island experience," says Michelle Ongpin, Senior Vice-President for Corporate Communications of Alphaland.

LAID-BACK DELUXE

Balesin is not another Boracay. You go to Balesin not to attend overcrowded parties or sing your heart out on karaoke nights, but to unwind, revel in the outdoors, and take a break from city life.

Hospitable locals greet visitors with fresh buko juice while kundiman songs courtesy of kuya Joey, play in the background.

After checking in, you will be escorted to a luxurious villa, which has all the accoutrements of a five-star experience including a king-sized bed, whirlpool bath,

flat-screen television, and outdoor sundeck.

But as comfortable as your villa is, you cannot help but be drawn to the pristine environment outside.


The beach, with its clear blue waters, immaculate white sand, and unspoiled quality, is probably Balesin's biggest lure. Swim in the waters. Lie down on the sand. Or take long walks around the 7.6-km. shore, its white sand remaining cool on your bare feet despite the scorching heat. If you're the more active type, there are facilities for diving, surfing, kayaking, snorkeling, and kite boarding. Oh, and you can also go horseback riding along the shores.

Fishing is another activity that you might want to try. Local fishermen regularly go out to the open water to catch fresh fish and seafood for the dining outlets. But if that's a bit too much for you, then settle for a few hours of spear fishing.


Speaking of dining, the meals at Balesin are served at the club restaurant, Sala. Try the Fish Binakol, lapu-lapu cooked in coconut water and served in a coconut. The idea is for you to take portions of the fish while scraping off some of the coconut meat from its husk. The Paella Negra is another must-try, its tender rice cooked in squid ink. Finish off with the Balesinner, a cocktail of Hendricks gin, soda, and gumamela syrup.


Everyone can be a jetsetter, even without leaving the country; Balesin offers exclusive world-class amenities and accommodations that are just a 25-minute plane ride away.


TURISTA GUIDE

 Balesin is located off the coast of Polillo Island. Take the chartered flight from the Alphaland hangar in Parañaque. The flight takes 25 minutes on board a 10-seater Cessna Caravan. Round trip tickets costs P4,000 per person.




 When completed, Balesin Island Club will have six villages, each inspired by a vacation destination namely: Balesin, Bali, Phuket, St. Tropez, Mykonos, and Costa Smeralda, with 30 villas each. Every village will have its own clubhouse, restaurant, pool, and spa. Lifetime membership costs P2,000,000, with 14 complimentary nights a year.

 In Balesin Village, the restaurant is called Sala. The other villages will have their own dining outlets namely: Café (St. Tropez), Taverna (Mykonos), and Trattoria (Costa Smeralda).

 The island is considered a wildlife sanctuary because of the rare species of birds and fishes to be found there. The Balesin safari may not be as awesome as Africa's, but it's still an amazing feeling to spot these rare animals.

 The South East Asia Property Awards recently gave the Best Villa Development Award to Alphaland for Balesin Island Club's destination villas. The awards recognize the most innovative and interesting property developments in the region.

 Balesin Island Club's 1.5 km-long concrete runway also doubles as a rainwater catcher. Water from the runway is treated and used around the island to fill lakes and small ponds. The Club's other sustainability initiatives include a recycling system and an organic farm. Plus, around 90 percent of the island's natural resources remain untouched.

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A prequel of Balesin's spacious and awe-inspiring dining area.

In Balesin, nothing is cut down, only relocated to make a picturesque, relaxing view



Whether on land and or up in the air, Balesin Island will leave you breathless with its serenity



Go horseback riding along beach on the pristine white sands of Balesin



Marvel on Balesin's view from the Sala while gorging on the most excellent lunch being served



Balesin's master plan is to make use of renewed energy, exercise sustainability and give service to the local community

