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The IMMIGRANT

Crossing the Edge of Allegiance

Joel P. Salud discusses what one
risks in dual citizenship

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HAT IS A CITIZEN?

What constitutes citizenship?
These are questions hardly
asked in this day and age of

blurred lines and definitions tossed and twisted to suit a particular kind of political correctness. Inasmuch as words find solid footing in the meanings given them, the words 'citizen' and 'citizenship' achieve better traction only by way of one's understanding of allegiance. Every other detail attached to it—no doubt significant to the overall provision—falls by the wayside. Citizenship is a matter of the heart and exercise of will more than birth or a set of rights, where anything less than full and undeniable involvement in the decisions made by the State can be considered an assault on one's sovereignty, and thus on the sovereign State to which one belongs. It is, in the final analysis, one's blueprint to a collective identity.

In this light, talk of dual citizenship naturally raises questions as to its real intent. Based on a 1993 law—Republic Act 9225—Filipinos who went through naturalization in other countries can reacquire Philippine citizenship as long as the new host country legally allows it. The advantages are plentiful and no less tempting: privilege to vote in the national elections; own real property and operate a business sans the commonplace restrictions; the practice of one's profession in the Philippines; even for spouse and members of family to avoid exit clearances and fees during travel.

The Best of Both Worlds

At first glance, it seems that having the best of both worlds offers more payback than one would expect. Voting privileges come within the range of what novelist José Saramago once said, "As citizens, we all have an obligation to intervene and become involved—it's the citizen who changes things." Such involvement is crucial not only to the country of origin but to much sought-after efforts at reform, especially if some members of the immediate family of the dual-citizen preferred to stay in the Philippines. Fundamental to any citizen, whether single or dual, is the question of security, and dual citizenship seems to offer more advantages than disadvantages along this line.

Along the area of business and land ownership, this is where it gets better. Present laws restrict ownership of land to foreigners. All they are allowed to do is lease it. Albeit there are provisions consenting to owning the house built on the leased land, experts say many foreigners rarely bite the carrot. Real property in the country is reserved singly for Filipino citizens. Dual citizenship leapfrogs over these restrictions and permits,

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Illustration by Carina Santos

Crossing the Edge of Allegiance

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without due limits, ownership of real property. This provides incentives for dual citizens to come home and retire in their country of birth.

The same is true with the offer to own and operate a business. Dual citizens are exempt from the usual hassle of raising \$200,000 as initial minimum investment and own only 40 percent interest, which foreigners are limited to enjoying. The same demands do not apply to dual citizens. In fact, RA 9225 agrees to a foreigner owning a business only if his dual citizen wife takes the remaining 60 percent of the shares.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS, GREAT DISAPPOINTMENTS

With great expectations often come great disappointments, and true enough the law on dual citizenship hardly got out of its self-imposed conundrum even at the point of enactment. It has at the start provoked a string of reactions ranging from issues dealing with military service and taxation to the more heady frontiers of loyalty and allegiance. The problems it raises are hardly trifling, which seem to some constitutionalists as a railroading of Article IV Section 5 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, which says, “dual allegiance of citizens is inimical to the national interest and shall be dealt with by law.”

That taxation is based primarily on where an individual lives and not necessarily on one’s citizenship renders the issue null and void. Double taxation is a feared myth, one created and recreated as an argument against dual citizenship. The Philippines has bilateral treaties in this regard, rendering Filipinos living and working in foreign lands blameless for not paying taxes in their country of origin. Even in countries where bilateral treaties of this nature do not exist, the myth will hardly hold water.

The matter of military service, on the other hand, dredges the very heart of the controversy with the question of allegiance. This, in many a sense, is where the rubber meets the rough road. Questions on allegiance surfaced even at the onset of the debate on RA 9225, with no less than Hector Calilung of the party-list group Advocates and Adherents of Social Justice for Social Teachers and Allied Workers saying that any law that allows dual allegiance “is inimical to the national interest.”

Data on the case did point to a Supreme Court decision saying that Section 5 Article IV of the 1987 Constitution is not against dual citizenship per se but dual loyalty “such as that often manifested by naturalized Filipinos who, while professing allegiance to their adoptive land, retain their allegiance to their native land and even involve themselves in its political affairs.”

The argument that raises the issue of dual loyalty seems to be firm in light of questions regarding military service. In an era where wars are fought on protracted measures seem to require more than the commonplace loyalties demanded by law and the idea of citizenship. Some argue that while dual citizenship may give its advocates sufficient points in favour of said law, one cannot dismiss the natural problems it raises, such as: should the dual citizen render military service to both countries?

Joel Pablo Salud has worked as writer and editor for numerous national publications in the Philippines. He now saddles his pen as editor-in-chief of the Philippines Graphic magazine, the country’s leading newsweekly publication.

In his article “Irony Upon Irony” published on February 24, 2004, Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist Conrado de Quiros posits a crisp argument on what dual citizens may face in times of war: “Can there be a more ridiculous concept that someone swearing absolute, total and exclusive loyalty to two flags? That is like swearing absolute, total and exclusive loyalty to two wives. As it is, swearing absolute, total and exclusive loyalty to two wives is banned as bigamy. Yet swearing absolute, total and exclusive loyalty to two flags is embraced as a virtue. What if the two flags get divided on war? Will you serve in the army of the one as a conscript while the other opposes it?”

WHO IS SUPREME?

The thing is, part and parcel of the procedure to reacquire citizenship in the Philippines is the recitation of the Oath of Allegiance before the Consul General or a Foreign Service Office of the Post after all the other requirements have been completed. In the said oath, an applicant will have to declare:

“I... (state name) do solemnly swear that I will defend the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines and obey the laws and legal orders promulgated by the duly constituted authorities of the Philippines; and hereby declare that I recognize and accept the supreme authority of the Philippines and will maintain true faith and allegiance thereto; and that I impose no obligation upon myself voluntarily without mental reservation and purpose of evasion.”

To understand this, a Filipino-American of dual citizenship for example doesn’t have to understand differences between the Philippine Constitution and the United States Constitution. If words mean anything, both countries’ pledges of allegiance require indivisible loyalty to flag and republic, to duly constituted authority, and the recognition that the host country must be accepted as supreme as only “true faith” and “allegiance” or loyalty can do: as it is said by Americans, “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands: one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.”

If these pledges were to be secured as the basis of any argument against dual citizenship, the battle to understand the dilemma would die a natural death, making de Quiros’ words unshakeable and firmly grounded on the understanding of real citizenship. If one really thinks about it, the declaration of citizenship, which is no different from an oath of allegiance, moves beyond the notion of the metaphorical marriage as death for flag and country hardly nullifies one’s part in the nation’s collective identity. Death, in fact, by any means, whether by natural occurrence or martyrdom, only strengthens it.

It also bears mentioning that of the countless benefits overseas Filipinos should accept this law, even on just the point of allegiance, the difficulty outweighs the good. Because in the long run, citizens will be made to face a choice. We practically live in an era where the world does not lack those that demand our loyalties, hence our choices will be weighed by the allegiances we bear.

It is timeless advice never to serve two masters. As to intent, it is clear that dual citizenship seeks to benefit overseas Filipinos, to offer that chance to once more come back and enjoy the fruits of their labours in their land of birth. It is in many a sense a practical solution to the problem of tourism, for example. But deep in the heart of the matter lies the need to grasp the concept of national allegiance. To recall the words of American writer George William Curtis: “A man’s country is not a certain area of land, of mountains, rivers, and woods, but it is a principle—and patriotism is loyalty to that principle.”

There can be no loyalty in the service of two masters while true and indivisible allegiance remains as the flag’s ever jealous spouse. ●

newsbyte

U.S. Renewable Energy Trade Mission introduces clean energy technologies

Organized by the Commercial Service of the US Embassy Manila., the seven-member trade mission exposed US companies to business opportunities through meetings with prospective business partners and relevant government officials in the Philippines last September 19 and 20. Representatives from the Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Board, National Biofuels Board and Baker & McKenzie joined the event.

The trade mission was composed of the following firms offering renewable energy products, technologies, consulting and financing solutions: BioEngineering Group (renewable energy solutions); General Biodiesel, Inc. (biofuels/biomass energy technologies); Lockheed-Martin Corporation (ocean technology energy conversion); Mosaic Federal Affairs LLC (project development, funding for biomass/geothermal projects); Ormat Technologies (solar and geothermal development);NRG Systems (wind energy development); and, Smart Grid Network/ADICOR (smart grid network solutions).

UK and RP Foreign Secretaries meet

British Foreign Secretary William Hague met with Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York last September 27.

They discussed a range of issues around security, trade and investment, and bilateral and international relations. Hague also reiterated the UK’s support for the Mindanao Peace Process. British Ambassador Stephen Lillie said that the meeting is an indication of the strong bilateral ties between the Philippines and the UK. “Their meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss issues of mutual importance to both countries and we look forward to high level visits later in 2012. The Philippines is an important partner of the United Kingdom and such dialogues will bring the two countries even closer.”

Improving RP-Japan Economic Ties

The fifth meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Improvement of Business Environment under the Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (PJEPA) led by the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Toshinao Urabe, and Undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry, Hon. Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., last September 26, 2012 yielded very encouraging reports. Trade volume between the two countries increased in 2011 as compared to 2010: Japan is the largest importer of Philippines’ export marking US\$ 8.90 billion in 2011 from US\$ 7.84 billion in 2010. The Philippines’ import from Japan accounted for the largest share among other trading partners despite slight decrease to US\$ 6.52 billion in 2011 from US\$ 6.74 billion in 2010. In the first half of 2012, Philippines’ export to Japan and import from Japan has seen an year-on-year increase of 11.0% and 13.6% respectively

Also, Japan remains the biggest investor to the Philippines in terms of investments approved by the Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) with the value of Php 77.4 billion in 2011. During the first half of 2012, approved FDI’s from Japan recorded Php 22.3 billion, making Japan the country’s top investor during the period.

Representatives from various Philippine government agencies, Embassy of Japan in the Philippines, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) attended the meeting. The private sector was represented by Mr. Takashi Ishigami, President, Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines Inc. for the Japanese side and Mr. Miguel B. Varela of Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and Mr. Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr. of Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT) for the Philippine side.

The next meeting of the Sub-Committee is scheduled in March 2013.

The IMMIGRANT

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arts&culture

Culture Vulture’s Five Manila-Musts

Hold that ‘I ♥ MLA’ shirt’ just yet, you must visit at least one of these places to wear it. Reinerio A. Alba writes

YOU HAVE NOT BEEN to the Philippines’ capital city Manila, or for that matter, the greater Metro Manila (geographically composed of 17 cities) if you have not been to the following places—bastions of art, culture, history and religion.

1. Rizal Park. The park, otherwise known as Luneta, is named after national hero Jose Rizal, one of the more known 1896 Philippine Revolution martyrs, who was shot here by the Spanish military authorities. His death in this park is supposed to have incited the Filipino revolutionaries at that time in much the same way that Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino sparked the Philippines’ 1986 “People Power.” Don’t worry about being clueless on Rizal as you only need to spend around PhP50 for a 30-minute light and sound show on Rizal’s life up to his execution in the area. Schedule: Wednesday to Sunday at 7-7:30PM for the Tagalog version and 8-8:30PM for the English version.



Photos by Walter Villa

2. Intramuros. Translated as “within the walls,” Intramuros is the old stone fortified capital of Manila that was built in 1571 by

the Spanish authorities. Must-sees are the centuries-old Roman Catholic churches within it: The Manila Cathedral, the Prime Basilica of the Philippines and highest seat of the archbishop in the country; and St. Augustine Church, built in 1599 and one of the Philippine Baroque Churches inscribed in 1993 in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Visit the nearby Fort Santiago, which used to be the seat of the colonial powers of both Spain and the US and a dreaded prison under the Spanish regime. Here, too, Jose Rizal spent his last hours before his execution in Bagumbayan (now Rizal Park). Take a livelier tour of Intramuros with performance artist Carlos Celdran.

3. The National Museum. Feelin’ like Indiana Jones? Then see notable artifacts here like the 400-year old Banton cloth, considered as the earliest known warp “ikat” (tie-resist dyeing) textile in Southeast Asia found in Banton Island, in the province of Romblon. There’s also the 22,000-year-old “Tabon Skull Cap,” one of the earliest human fossils in the country and it belonged to a female. For art patrons, there’s the monumental work of painter Juan Luna entitled “Las Virgenes Cristianas Expuestas al Populacho” at the Museum’s Hall of Masters. (http://www.nationalmuseum.gov.ph)

Writer-poet **Reinerio A. Alba**, who hails from Gumaca, Quezon, works in National Culture for Culture and the Arts. On travel writing, he tips his hat to both Kerima Polotan and Lawrence Durrell. Visit his blog site www.intothebutterfly.blogspot.com.



RELICS, like these coming from a sunken Spanish trade galleons can be seen in The National Museum. Take the quirky tour of Intramuros (LEFT) with performance artist Carlos Celdran.

4. Cultural Center of the Philippines. One of the more famous of Imelda Marcos’ projects (next to her 2,700 shoes), CCP, sitting on a reclaimed land in Manila Bay, is the country’s national center for performing arts, where the likes of world-renowned artists such as Cecile Licad and Lisa Macuja have already performed. Designed by National Artist for Architecture Leandro Locsin, it houses four theaters, an ethnographic museum, galleries, and a Philippine arts and culture library. Check out the current shows online. (http://www.culturalcenter.gov.ph/)

5. EDSA Shrine. In 1986, Filipinos invented the greatest weapon to thwart a dictatorial regime. It’s called People Power, which they did again in 2001 along Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue or EDSA where the seat of power of military (Camp Aguinaldo) and police (Camp Crame) are located. The EDSA Shrine built in 1989 is a special tribute to those unsung heroes. It houses a small church marked by the gigantic bronze sculpture of the Virgin Mary, “Our Lady of Peace” by Virginia Ty-Navarro. Throughout the shrine are the 14 Stations of the Cross as rendered in bronze by another National Artist: Napoleon Abueva. ●

live&learn

You Condo It Unknown to many, there’s no stopping expats from owning condominium units in the Philippines



WHILE FOREIGNERS are generally forbidden by law to own a house-and-lot in the Philippines unless they are born here or part-owner of a company whose majority share is owned by Filipinos, there’s no stopping them from buying condominium units.

According to Cherri Lyn Cruz, marketing manager of DMCI Homes, foreigners or expatriates need only their passport, Alien Certificate of Registration and Tax Identification to complete a purchase.

“Foreigners can enjoy residing in the Philippines by owning condominium units,” said Cruz whose company DMCI is known to lead condo development with urban resort feel since 1999.

With wide, high-ceiling corridors with central garden atriums and common areas manicured with lush tropical plants and charming swimming pools with cabanas, recent condominium development in Metro Manila promotes warm and laidback atmosphere.

“The setting captures the true resort feel as if one is on a vacation,” claimed Cruz.

One size does not fit all, and while SM Development Corporation (yup, the sister-company of the famous malls) joined the residential foray a bit late in 2007, it quickly cornered a market looking for small units from 22 to 26 square meters with PhP2 to PhP2.5 million price tag.

And whenever there’s SMDC property there’s an SM mini-mall and supermarket. For example, SMDC’s Jazz Residences in Bel-Air, Makati has its own mall called the Jazz Mall.

Vladimir Corder, SMDC’s head of corporate and marketing services, cited that condo living has become the new concept of home.

“Instead of renting a house, investing in a condo unit is considered a more practical option since the property could later be rented out.

Megaworld Properties, the developer of micro-city Eastwood in Quezon City, recognizes the rising expatriate markets. Its high-profile properties in premier spots across Bonifacio Global City and McKinley Hill totaling 18 at the last count, have been serving foreigners in recent years.

“Megaworld has a number of properties that can be used for short term and long term stay,” said property consultant Wesley King. “Particularly in Global City near Burgos Circle, we already have Forbeswood Parklane which foreigners can lease for short and long periods. Foreign expats may also opt to purchase a unit while pre-selling that they can eventually rent out upon turnover.”

“Five-star home in prime location—that is what we promise to deliver,” Cordero said. ●

— **Annie Villasin-Young**

On the net: DMCI Homes: <http://www.dmcihomes.com> Megaworld Properties: <http://megaworldproperties.com> SM Development Inc.: <http://smdevelopment.com>

Dual Questions

Former Bureau of Immigration commissioner Jun Subido writes down the basic Republic Act 9225 Dual Citizenship facts and Frequently Asked Questions

Illustration by Manix Aberra



DEFINITION: The dual citizenship law affords former natural born citizens of the Philippines the opportunity to reacquire their Filipino citizenship without having to give up their present citizenship acquired from a foreign country.

Rights and privileges: Dual citizens shall be entitled to full civil and political rights. The enjoyment of rights likewise imposes corresponding obligations.

Purpose of the law: One of the main reasons of the dual citizenship law’s enactment is to welcome back former citizens who sought greener pastures abroad and eventually acquired their host country’s citizenship. Dual citizenship allows them to fully enjoy the fruits of their labor back in the country where their family, friends and childhood memories await.

Application Process: The application and documentation process has been simplified to accommodate and facilitate the reacquisition of citizenship even by senior citizens. Basic documentary requirements such as NSO birth certificate, old Philippine passport, voters I.D., old driver’s license, community tax certificate etc. ensure speedy processing of applications.

Who may apply for dual citizenship?

Only natural born Filipino citizens who became naturalized citizens of a foreign country and have renounced their Filipino citizenship in the process may apply for dual citizenship.

May Native Born Certificate of Registration visa holders apply?

There have been numerous queries by former (NBCR) Native Born Certificate of Registration Immigrant visa holders in the Philippines regarding dual citizenship. They usually ask if they are qualified to apply for dual-citizenship after migrating abroad and acquiring the citizenship of their host country?

Clearly, the answer is NO since they are originally aliens granted permanent residence by virtue of their birth in the Philippines. The law specifically limits dual citizenship to former natural born Filipinos only.

Is there any age or time limit?

There is no prescribed age limit in applying for dual citizenship. The privilege is afforded

to former Filipinos at any age they realize the desire to take on the enjoyment of rights and corresponding obligations of citizenship. No one is too old nor to young to apply in order enjoy the law’s benefits. It also follows that there is no time limit or deadline as to when a former Filipino may actually apply. Importantly, any application should be coupled with the sincere desire to reacquire Filipino citizenship and a full understanding of rights and corresponding obligations.

If I become a dual citizen do I forfeit my citizenship by naturalization from my host country?

R.A. 9225 does not impose any obligation to renounce an applicant’s citizenship acquired by naturalization from the host country.

If I am sponsoring my daughter for an immigrant visa (green card) in my host country, will my dual citizenship become an issue?

R.A. 9225 grants the privilege of dual citizenship to former Filipinos with their best interest mind. However, it is always advisable for prospective applicants to be aware of the pertinent laws of their host country as well. Some applicants are more comfortable paying monthly tourist visa extension fees until approval of their dependent’s visa petition.

I am serving in my host country’s armed forces can I apply for dual citizenship?

Yes, but under R.A. 9225 a dual citizen serving with the armed forces of the host country will not be allowed to exercise the right to vote, be elected or appointed to public office.

Other Options

Former Filipinos who are not quite ready to apply for dual citizenship have other residence options available to them, such as:

Balik-Bayan: This visa is a tourism-incentive visa which allows a returning former Filipino citizen one year visa-free stay in the country. Immigration monthly extension fees will apply after the one year period. It is not uncommon for Balikbayans to overlook updating of their visas after one year. Penalty/fines will be imposed for overstaying.

13(g) Permanent Residence Visa – allows former Filipino with dependent spouse and unmarried children under 21 year old to become non-quota immigrants. This category is subject to immigration fees.

13(a) Permanent Residence Visa – The former Filipino spouse becomes a dual citizen and petitions dependents to become non-quota immigrants. This category is subject to immigration fees.

SRRV Visa – A retiree visa under the Philippine Retirement Authority which allows the visa holder and dependent family to reside indefinitely in the country during the validity of said visa. The visa is issued subject to a US\$20,000.00 time deposit which remains with the program for the duration of the visa.

All things considered, re-acquisition/retention of Filipino citizenship under R.A. 9225 is one of the best gifts our law makers could offer to former Filipinos who want to return to our country. ●

The following FAQs are the sole opinion of the writer and should not constitute as legal opinion. – The Immigrant

Big Deeper

From page 10

The immediate surroundings contain huge boulders and ledges where nurse, white tip and bamboo sharks congregate for a midday nap. When the currents are running, these otherwise bare boulders are covered in lush soft corals in pastel hues of yellow and orange while black tree corals in fluorescent shades of green, yellow and orange sprout from the sea floor.

The dive sites around the island are a macro photographer’s dream and the eagle-eyed spotters are keen to assist in finding the critters beloved to camera enthusiasts.

Verde Island Passage, Batangas

Called the underwater equivalent of the Amazon River basin in terms of bio-diversity, this 100-km stretch of water is home to three dive destinations: Anilao, Puerto Galera and Verde Island.

Anilao has long been the favorite hangout of Manila based-divers. What once was the laid back domain of locals, word has leaked

out to the international community who now come in droves to fill their underwater (UW) macro portfolios of subjects such as nudibranchs, frogfishes, ghost pipefishes, seahorses, shrimps and crustaceans with the rare Rhinopia showing up once in a while to tease the avid UW photographer.

Couple that with reefs that overrun with anthias amidst barrel sponges and yellow Tubastrea coral, a better underwater scenic will be hard to find.

Puerto Galera which is located on the opposite side of the passage is more popular with the international crowd because of the vibrant nightlife. Scuba diving is no slouch either with the area boasting of several five-star dive sites such as the Canyons and Hole in the Wall. These two dive sites are located at the tip of Escarceo Point and converging currents from the two sides guarantee a profusion of corals and big fish.

There are several wrecks in the waters, with the *Alma Jane* being the largest. Sank by

the dive centers, the masts are now festooned with soft corals and the ship is alive with schools of batfish, lion fish and emperors.

Twenty minutes away from Puerto Galera on Verde Island is the San Agapito Pinnacle. A series of rocks breaking the surface is actually the tip of a monolith lying beneath the waves. One side is a vertical wall containing seafans and barrel sponges while the opposite side has a shallow reef with black tree corals and gorgonians. Everywhere there is fish, fish, fish. From the ubiquitous pink and orange anthias, to batfish, snapper, jacks and giant trevally, this dive is as good as it gets. In season, divers can expect a rain of fusiliers to accompany their dives.

Dauin and Oslob, Negros Oriental

Dauin has the distinction of having several premier dive sites in the country. The first is Apo Island which is widely

considered by many as the most successful marine sanctuary in the country. Even with almost 500 inhabitants on the island, judicious fishing and diving practices has enabled it to maintain its rich photogenic marine life.

Closer to the shore, the dark volcanic sand beaches hide some of the most prolific macro dives in the world. Mimic octopus, seahorses, frogfishes and ghost pipefishes abound in several locations such as the Car Wreck and the house reefs of several resorts along the coastline.

Although Oslob is located on the island of Cebu this dive site, rapidly gaining fame due to the interaction between fishermen and whalesharks, is more easily accessible from the resorts located in Dauin. Usually done as a whole day trip, one or two dives can be planned along the route in addition to the whaleshark encounter. Time your visit during the school year as this area is open to snorkelers and boaters as well as divers. ●



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Phils. Like Home

American book author and sportswriter Ted Lerner, a long-time Philippine resident, lists the thing he loves most in his second country

It's been nearly two decades since I decided to make my home in this amazing and often quirky archipelago. I have a family, a varied and interesting life, a wide range of friends, tried my hand at things I never thought I'd do, traveled to the furthest locales, met MANY interesting people.

Reading that, you might assume that I know just about everything there is to know about the Philippines and Filipinos. Actually the opposite is true. My first month here I was sure I knew everything. Now it seems the more I know, the less I know. It's hard to explain but so are a lot of things here.

Frankly, though, I kind of like it that way. A plethora of the unexplainable tends to keep day to day life more interesting. Unlike most people who seem to crave order in their lives, I like a bit of uncertainty. Predictability and boredom are not my friends and thus, when I first came to the Philippines I knew I had found my paradise. No day has been the same since and a happy surprise seems to await around every corner. It is a big reason why I fell in love with the Philippines. It's all snowballed from there.

Interestingly many of the things that I love about the Philippines are the very things that can, at times, cause massive frustration. And that's one of the endlessly interesting facets of living here; you can't have all that's wonderful in this life without having the other, darker side of the coin make its presence felt.

The key for the foreigner then is understanding yourself and what you like. If above all else, you value perfection, stability and predictability, the Philippines is not for you. If you crave a colorful life with endlessly interesting things to do and see, all accompanied by smiling care free faces ready to welcome you, then welcome home.

I won't lie to you and say that I love everything about the Philippines. There are, however, so many things that I adore about this country that when added together, they form an irresistible magnet that just keeps pulling me back for more. What do I love about the Philippines? After nearly 20 years the highlights that stand out are...

Simplicity: No matter how sophisticated the world around us gets, no matter how many gadgets and megabytes of data we store in our pockets and handbags, Filipinos will always be a simple people at heart. Whether rich or poor, it doesn't matter. Gather some friends and family, throw out a spread of food, a bottle of booze, some music and the party is on. (Now if we can only find a way to get rid of public karaoke, life here would be absolutely perfect.)

Hospitality: The phrase "Filipino Hospitality" may sound like a bit of a cliché, but it's real and it's a powerful force that makes the Philippines perhaps the friendliest, most welcoming country in the world. Although Filipinos surely value smart-looking, well-dressed people, even the fattest, dirtiest, smelliest foreigner is welcome without precondition. Especially if you're nice. The easy smiles offered by



Illustration by Manix Aberera

that freedom thing again. Where I come from, having a child means you're finished. You can't go out. Or you have to hire an expensive baby sitter. Having a maid has allowed us to live our lives. Don't for a minute think that we've abandoned our child. It's just little things, like going out for the night, taking care of business or errands without having to worry about what you're going to do with the kid. A good maid adds that extra something special to your life.

The Cordillera mountains: I love tropical paradises as much as anyone. There are so many beach areas of the Philippines—for me especially Palawan-- that are simply out-of-this-world spectacular. My favorite destination in this country, however, has no sand or ocean. It's the Cordillera mountains.

I'm forever amazed at how so few foreigners know anything about the mountains and the rice terraces. To me the rice terraces—which, you should know, extend way beyond just the Banaue area—are more impressive than the pyramids of Egypt, the Taj Mahal in India and other great works of mankind. I never fail to marvel at how hardy people centuries ago, with rudimentary tools, were able to carve out those rice terraces out of mammoth mountains, and not in the name of some dictator or unknown god, but for daily sustenance.

To wander through a Philippine rice terrace, or stand on top of one and look down, listening to the life giving sounds of water being channeled down through unseen crevices, brings on feelings of peace and serenity that you simply can't get on a beach.

Street vendors: I still enjoy hearing the call of the *balut* vendor waft over my gate in the evening, the *taho* vendor in the early morning, the *puto* and *cucinta* guy squeezing his rubber horn, the *gulay* (vegetable) vendor in his Baguio straw hat pushing his ancient wooden cart, the merienda lady balancing her offerings on her head every afternoon. There is something heartwarming about people who engage in good old fashioned peddling, who hit the hot and dusty streets with zero guarantees of success for that day. I always wish them the best.

Sari-sari stores: An institution in every neighborhood in the Philippines, the very first convenience stores—way before 7-11's and Mini-Stops—life in this country just wouldn't be the same without them. From matches, to load, to eggs, pancit noodles, cold beer, a single piece of candy. We couldn't live without them.

Children: In the Philippines, kids are still kids, and there is absolutely no rush to "grow up." Playing in the streets and making up games is still a part of life. My daughter, now 16, grew up running all around the streets of our neighborhood, playing games, hanging out, learning about life. I have no doubt she's a much more grounded person, more open minded because of her experiences as a child in the Philippines. She was free to be a kid. The rest of the world should take notice.

Filipinas: I've saved the best for last. No disrespect to the men here, but I'm sure even Filipino guys would agree with the following statement: If you removed all the Filipinas from the Philippines, this country would not be livable. Sure one could say that about any nation...imagine a country filled just with men? Yeah, you get the picture. But a day doesn't go by where I fail to marvel at Filipinas. Beside the obvious beauty of so many Filipinas, there are other traits...their resourcefulness, their smiles, their work ethic, their dedication to family. The list could go on for a while.

Filipinas are always polite and friendly when approached. This may not sound like a big deal but it is if you've lived outside the Philippines and seen how it is in other countries. It's almost impossible to make a rude pass at a Filipina. If you say hello to one in a supermarket or on the street, you will almost always get a smile and a reply back. You may think this is no big deal, but trust me, where I come from, if an old man like myself—I'm 49 and I'm old in the US—says hello to a 25 year old as we wait in line at the store, I could get in trouble. Yes it's that bad.

I'd personally like to give a big thanks to all Filipinas for being, well, Filipinas, the most unique and friendly women on earth. You are the glue that keeps this society humming along. Ultimately, above all the many other things that I love about the Philippines, you are the very reason why I am still here after all these years. ●

Ted Lerner is the author of the timeless classic book, Hey, Joe—a slice of the city, an American in Manila, and the book of Asian travel essays, The Traveler & the Gate Checkers. (Both are available at bookstores nationwide.) He works in boxing and billiards circles as a ring announcer and TV commentator. For 15 years he was the Philippines correspondent for the bible of boxing, The Ring Magazine. His articles have also appeared in many publications including The Wall St. Journal. He lives in Angeles City with his wife and 16-year-old-daughter. Email Ted at tedlerner@gmail.com

Enchanting Hilot Trilogy

a double award-winning journey through Filipino wellness

Hilot is the Philippines' indigenous wellness system that has been passed down through generations. It embraces a holistic idea of health, nurturing the spirit as much as the body, restoring balance and allowing energies to flow. Mandala Spa's Hilot Trilogy is a journey through the wellness of the Philippine Islands and has been bestowed with two AsiaSpa Awards.

The Hilot Trilogy starts with Suob, a Filipino smudging ritual that is followed by Hihilaan, where coconut oil and banana leaves are used to identify areas of imbalance in the physiology. Bentosa, a traditional technique of vacuum cupping rebalances your energy before you flow into Hilot, an ancient Filipino therapeutic form of massage using long and deep strokes to harmonize your vital energies. Finally, Dagdagay, a therapeutic foot massage using two bamboo sticks boosts your body's immune system.

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Hybrid High

From page 12



electric car. The fuel-powered generator can charge the batteries while the vehicle is in motion so the owner does not need to plug it in the electric socket. But to be categorized as a hybrid, a vehicle has to meet three requirements—i.e. the car can be refueled easily and quickly, drive at least 482 kilometers before refueling, and keep up with other vehicles while on the road.

Toyota was the first to put out a commercially viable gasoline-electric hybrid, the Prius, in 1997. Honda followed in 1999 with the Insight, which I was able to drive on the Twin Ring Motegi circuit in Japan.

Honda designers developed the Insight to get the best possible mileage. It is a small, lightweight two-seater with a tiny, high-efficiency gas engine. The Insight is categorized as a simplified parallel hybrid which has an electric motor coupled to the engine. In Honda, this is known as the “Integrated Motor Assist” system. I was able to drive the first-generation model with an automatic CVT (continuously variable transmission). The motor was so quiet I had to glance at the instrumentation panel for

a second time just to check if the car was indeed running.

The Insight is actually not very different from any conventional car once you get behind the wheel. When you accelerate, the gas engine does most of the work. Step on the accelerator and the electric motor kicks in to provide that extra power. When cruising, the gas engine is the one running the car. Slow down by hitting the brakes or let off the gas and the electric motor kicks in to generate electricity that will charge the batteries. You don’t have to plug the Insight into an electrical outlet; the motor generates all of the power needed to charge the battery.

Honda Cars Philippines brought in two units of the Insight to the country a few years ago. But this was all for experiment—although a company executive was quoted to have said they are considering selling the Insight commercially, possibly next year.

Toyota Motor Philippines, however, is already selling its Prius lineup here. The first-generation Prius, which came out in Japan at the end of 1997, is designed to reduce emissions in urban areas. To

accomplish this, Toyota has designed a parallel hybrid powertrain known as the Toyota Hybrid System. It is a four-door sedan that seats five, and the powertrain is capable of accelerating the vehicle to speeds up to 24 kilometers per hour on electric power alone—allowing better city mileage than on highways. The Prius 1.8-liter variant is priced at P2.25 million; add P15,000 if you want it in White Pearl color.

The standard model of the 1.5-liter Prius C, which looks like the Yaris subcompact, retails for P1.475 million while the top-of-the-line, full-option model is priced at P1.525 million.

Toyota’s high-end sister company Lexus Philippines has two hybrids in its lineup—the RX450h (priced at P4.78 million) and the flagship LS600hL sedan (about P9.988 million for the four-seater version, and approximately P8.9 million for the five-seater model). Lexus uses an electric motor with a gasoline engine to increase performance and mileage for its hybrids. The RX450h features an Atkinson-cycle 3.5-liter V6 with front and rear electric motors that allow a total of 295 brake horsepower (bhp). The LS600h L comes with a 5.0-liter V8 with electric motor, good for 438 bhp and posts a 5.5-second zero-to-100 kilometers per hour acceleration time.

But does it cost more to maintain a hybrid car than a fuel-powered car? You might be surprised that routine maintenance and

minor repairs are no higher than on a regular car. In fact, they may actually be lower.

A hybrid car’s gas engine shuts down when the car is idling and, at other times, such as driving at low speeds when the electric motor takes over. That means there’s less wear and tear on the engine. On smaller hybrids, oil changes are recommended at about 8,000 kilometers rather than the 5,000 kilometers mechanics recommend for regular cars. The hybrids’ regenerative braking system and the lower heat involved also means that brake pads and brakes tend to last much longer.

If you have to drive it through floodwaters, Prius has proven in Indonesia that driving through water 30 centimeters (about 11 inches) deep is no cause for worry. Hybrid vehicles feature a layered system of security warnings that make it safe for the driver and passengers. But if something goes wrong with the car’s hybrid system, especially after its warranty has expired, you may have to shell out a lot of pesos.

At the time of this writing, the Lower House has passed a bill that proposes perks on hybrid vehicles including exemptions from excise, import and value-added taxes supposedly to help bring down showroom prices and make hybrids more accessible to Filipinos. If this is finally passed, perhaps we can see more of these “green” vehicles plying the city streets. ●

Armin A. Amio is currently the senior editor in charge of the Companies and Digital Life (Technology) sections of the award-winning BusinessMirror newspaper. She also regularly writes for the daily’s Motoring section. She used to race in professional auto rallies and was even awarded top female driver in an autocross competition among media practitioners.

iOS vs. Android

From page 12

so there’s no room for expansion should you need to. If you’re the type who likes to download and upload apps, photos, music and other files, even 64GB may not be enough to cover all your bases.

Android tablets, on the other hand, usually start as low as 4GB of internal memory but includes USB connectors for those who want to add more memory. Entry-level models, however, are often limited to 32GB of external memory. Another disadvantage is that running apps or accessing data from a USB drive is noticeably slower on Android tablets than it would be on an iPad.

Touchscreen. Perhaps it’s not the operating system’s fault but there is a small price to pay for buying the cheaper Android tablets. Most of them, especially the non-branded models use resistive display that require more touch pressure.

By comparison, the superior capacitive screens of the iPad and the Samsung Galaxy Tab can quickly wake up these devices from sleep and launch new apps at a feathery touch. This kinda shows that you really get what you pay for when it comes to tablets.

Size. Until Apple decides to have a smaller version of the iPad outside of the iPhone and iPod Touch, (oh yeah, the iPad Mini) you’ll only see the iOS on 10-inch tablets, which is great if you prefer big screens. Android, on the other hand, also runs on smaller tablets with 7-inch and 8-inch displays, which provide more options for those who prefer smaller and lighter devices. If you want the best multimedia experience, be on the lookout for branded Android tablets with HD OLED (organic light-emitting diode) and AMOLED (active-matrix organic light-emitting diode).

Apps. While there are exclusive applications available only on one platform (i.e. those made by

Apple usually run only on the iPad while certain Google apps either runs only on Android or have features exclusive to Android), many applications such as social networking clients like Facebook and Twitter as well as popular games like Angry Birds, Plants vs. Zombies and Temple Run have their own implementations for both iOS and Android.

And even those exclusive apps on one platform have their own counterpart on the other such as photo enhancers, e-readers and music downloads. This essentially means that there is very little to miss out whichever tablet you decided to go with. **Price.** Since Google has licensed Android for use by third-party manufacturers, its prices vary from as much as over and under Php30K for branded tablets built by reputable companies such as Samsung, Sony, HP, Lenovo, Dell, Toshiba and Motorola to as low as just slightly above Php2K for cheap, Taiwan-made iPad knockoffs such as the ePad, APad and iPed, depending on screen size, specifications and storage capacity.

The price of enjoying an iOS-powered iPad, on the other hand, is more expensive by comparison at also around Php30K for a brand new model while older, second-hand models can only be had for as low as Php12K on sites like TipidPC.com and Sulit.com.ph.

And the winner is? Both the iPad and competing Android tablets have their own advantages: we don’t see anything that can be considered as a deal breaker for choosing one over the other. Truth is, other than their respective operating systems, they actually have more similarities than differences. And although they are still works in progress, they are more than useful enough for everyday use. The real winner here is actually us, the general public, who will benefit not only from their existing features but also from

Best Tablets in the Market

Still buying a new laptop? These souped-up tablets are more than enough reason to reconsider

IPAD. The best incarnation yet of Apple’s game-changing mobile device is improved across the board with features like an astounding 2048x1536 Retina display, quad-core A5x processor, 5MP iSight camera with HD video recorder, Ultra 4GE connection and of course, access to over 200,000 apps in iTunes.

Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1. No longer the small seven-inch wonder that we used to know, the Galaxy Tab with a bigger and brighter 1280x800 10.1 inch display is all grown up and ready to rock. Powered by Android 3.1 (Honeycomb), productivity, communication, social networking and just about everything else are all significantly enhanced. No other slim tablet looks sexier. **Asus EEE Pad Transformer Prime.** With a powerful quad-core Nvidia Tegra 3 processor, an impressive 8.1MP rear camera, a more advanced version of Android’s

Honeycomb upgradeable to Ice Cream Sandwich, microSD and microHDMI support for additional storage and HD video playback, it’s truly a geek tool in an even thinner package. **Lenovo IdeaPad K1.** Although thicker and not as bright as the others above, the IdeaPad K1 still packs a lot of bang for the buck as it optimizes Honeycomb by packaging it with more than 30 preinstalled apps which include Netflix and Kindle as well as standard Android goodies like Android Market, Google Maps, Gmail, Navigation, Books, and Google Talk. **Toshiba Thrive.** Any tablet with full HDMI and USB support, full SD card slot, and removable battery comes at a price and in the Thrive’s case, the weight (the heaviest tablet at 1.66 lbs. versus iPad3 at 1.46 lbs.). Business users will be elated with its built-in file management system that makes finding and accessing files way easier. ●




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Big Deeper

For most visitors the famous Philippine beaches are enough to charm them to stay, but as underwater photographer Yvette Lee writes, beauty is more than a skinny dip

Last April the Philippines was ranked with Palau and Maldives among the world's top dive destinations during the Marine Diving Fair 2012 in Japan organized by *Marine Diving*, one of the most prestigious dive publications in Japan.

This accolade, together with a dozen more, validates what most hardcore underwater divers in Japan, France, Germany, United Kingdom and even the United States already know: that the Philippines is one of the best diving destinations in the world.

We round up the top spots that every diver should add to his bucket list:

Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, Palawan

Smack in the middle of the large body of water that separates Palawan from the rest of the Visayan Islands lies the almost 100,000-hectare Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park.

Hands down, this is the best diving the Philippines has to offer. Marine biologists believe that this area is a major nursery for the fish spawn that populates the reefs of Palawan and the Visayan Islands bordering the Sulu Sea. So important is this sanctuary the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared it as a World Heritage Site in 1993.

Its distance from any large body of land means no runoffs of silt so visibility can be in excess of 50 meters. The fact that the diving season here, done exclusively from

live-aboards, is only during the dry months from March to early June also contribute to the almost virgin appearance of the reefs.

Two atolls make up this marine park: **North Tubbataha** and **South Tubbataha** which both have rich sloping reefs that drop abruptly off into the deep blue and the walls are a banquet of colorful sponges, huge basket corals and a myriad of sea fans and gorgonians.

When it comes to fish life, think BIG. Big schools of jacks and barracudas as well as turtles and sharks are quite common. Seasoned Tubbataha dive professionals know where to find the mantas, hammerheads, and nurse sharks amongst the numerous dive sites. Other pelagics like torpedo shaped tunas and Spanish mackerel patrol the walls adorned with refrigerator sized barrel sponges, soft corals, sea whips and humongous sea fans. One of the last guaranteed shark dives in Asia, the white tip sharks encountered on every dive are so ubiquitous that a visiting diver dubbed them the stray cats of Tubbataha.

Coron, Palawan

Divers go to Coron for one reason: wrecks. There are 12 dive-able support shipwrecks of the Japanese Imperial Navy in the waters surrounding the numerous islands between Busuanga and Culion Island. These ships camouflaged themselves and tried to hide from the planes on the carrier fleet of Adm. W. Halsey. The ruse failed and at 9AM on September 24, 1944, bombers from the American fleet sank 24 Japanese vessels.

Accessible year round due to the sheltered locations, all the wrecks are intact, extremely photogenic and overgrown with hard and soft corals. The Olympia Maru has huge white tube sponges, anemones and black coral. It is a favorite for photographers because of better lighting since its portside is only 12 meters from the surface.

Meanwhile, the deeper Akitsushima, a sea-plane tender, is for more advanced divers. With a good guide, this wreck is easily penetrated. The remains of the coral encrusted crane lies outside along with anti-aircraft guns yet the sea-plane has never been found.

In all of the wrecks, expect to find lion and scorpion fishes, fusiliers and batfishes. Lurking underneath and in the twisted metal remains are large groupers.

Competing for a diver's attention is the topside beauty of the land which is simply breathtaking. Limestone Islands topped with dark green vegetation rise out of the turquoise sea. There is also a freshwater lake called Cayangan which can be reached after a short climb. Although it doesn't contain much fish life, the clarity of the water reveals impressive underwater formations and a thermocline where the hot water from an underwater spring mingles with the cooler water on top.

Malapascua Island, Cebu

Off the northeastern coast of Cebu lies Malapascua island. Its claim to fame are

SUBMARINE DELIGHTS. (Clockwise from top) A diver peers through the rusted remains of the Coron Wrecks; seafans grace the walls of the famous San Agapito Pinnacle off Verde Island; a diver inspects the rare Rhinopia in Anilao, Batangas; and Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park is home to mantas and other big pelagic species such as sharks, tunas and barracudas.

the Thresher Sharks and Manta Rays that regularly visit the cleaning stations on Monad Shoal at dawn. Further out, there are several wrecks, including a Japanese warship that lies upright with the shallowest portion at about 40 meters and the *MV Dona Marilyn*, a passenger liner that went down during a typhoon over 20 years ago. It is conceivably the most beautiful wreck in the Visayas due to the profusion of dendronephthya and black coral bushes that cover most of the ship.

Gato Island, a marine sanctuary, has a distinctive 80-meter long tunnel that cuts through the northern tip and divers will find the walls covered with yellow sponges and all kinds of shells. Conceivably the best night dive the county has to offer, nocturnal critters include bamboo sharks, active white tips in search of a meal, crustaceans and shrimps by the dozen as well the graceful Spanish dancer and several species of the nudibranch family.

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Diving Tips

1. Bring any personal and prescription medicine with you as some of the places are really off the beaten track and will not have a pharmacy for miles.
2. Bring a windbreaker. Boat rides between dive sites can be windy and cool especially in the early mornings or late afternoons.
3. Bring a small drybag to keep your cellphone, wallet, cameras and other valuables dry and handy.
4. Make sure the dive establishment you are hiring is accredited with the Philippine Commission on Sport Scuba Diving (PCSSD).
5. If the dive rates being charged sound too cheap, beware! You will get what you pay for.
6. Always carry a surface balloon and safety sausage while diving. If you are using rental equipment, make sure that everything is intact.
7. Make sure your rental regulator has a pressure AND depth gauge if you do not have a dive computer.

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Hybrid High

Seasoned motoring editor Armin A. Amio gives the 411 on hybrid car options in the Philippines



WELL-RESTED AFTER A GRUELING long-haul flight, we were led to a large garage with several golf cart-like vehicles plugged onto electric outlet poles sticking up the ground. “You may want to test-drive an electric vehicle,” said our host from Southern Company, an energy firm based in Atlanta, Georgia.

That was back in the early 1990s, when electric vehicles were just “concept” cars with prototypes displayed only during auto shows. It was like driving a “pop car” at Rizal Park in Manila—those small go-karts that had its powertrain connected to a 12-volt automotive battery. You step on the pedal to make it move forward and then lift your foot off it when you want the car to stop. There were no provisions for making the vehicle go on reverse.

Unless you have a power generator that will tail you to your trip up to Ilocos Norte, there’s just no way you can finish that 8-hour drive without having to re-plug the vehicle up on the grid. A 240-volt circuit (such as the outlet for an electric dryer) is needed so the car can receive about 240 volts at 30 amps which can take about four to five hours to fully recharge.

But then you also have to make do with cost and power requirements—and possibly make it to Ilocos the next day.

Electric vehicle chargers are known to draw up to about 6.6 kilowatts, which is like adding up to three homes to a neighborhood—with air-conditioning system, lights and laundry running. While you think you’re doing good to the environment; it’s not always the case. Early studies have shown that plugging in several of these cars, even overnight when electricity use is not at its peak, can strain some power grids and could even boost pollution.

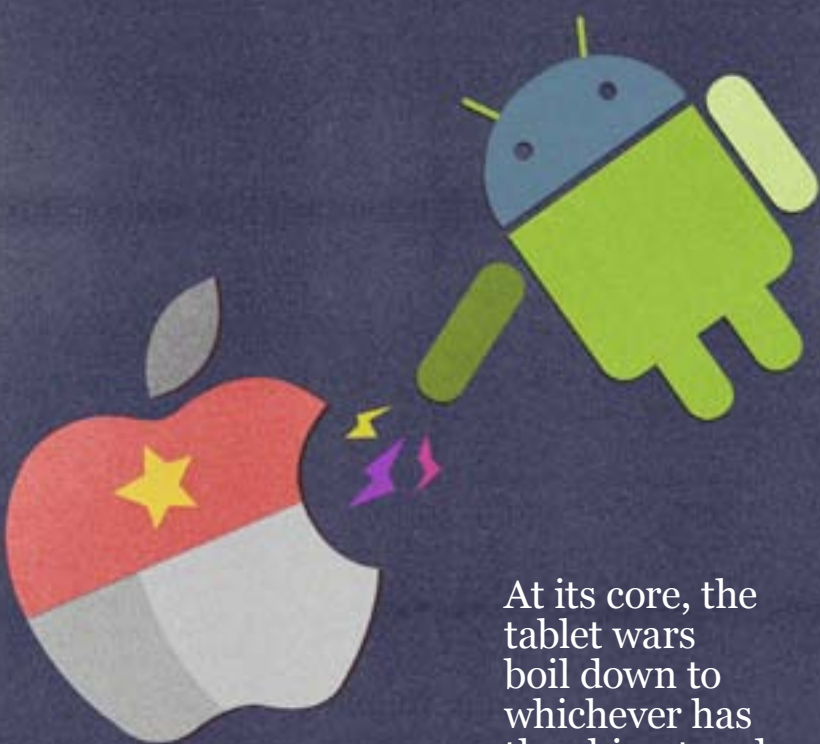
This is the reason electric hybrid vehicles were developed. Gasoline-electric hybrid cars are a cross between a gasoline-powered car and an electric car. A gas-powered car has a fuel tank, which supplies gasoline to the engine. The engine turns a transmission which then turns the wheels. An electric car, on the other hand, have batteries that provide electricity to an electric motor which then turns the transmission that will finally run the wheels of the car.

Hybrid electric vehicles offer a compromise—these significantly increase the mileage and reduce the emissions of a gas-powered car while overcoming the shortcomings of an

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iOS vs. Android

Illustration by Carina Santos



At its core, the tablet wars boil down to whichever has the chicest and most efficient platform. Edwin Sallan writes

They’re basically laptops without the wieldy keyboards. They have the processing power to run most business and entertainment applications which is pretty nifty if you want to bring the tablet instead on your weekend trip to finish that pressing document or spreadsheet.

Better think twice though if you plan on typing long hours since the absence of a full-size keyboard can take its toll—at least not if you’re in a real hurry or don’t mind buying the optional keyboard which defeats portability.

Yet, tablet computers or just plain tablets are all the rage now. It’s not just because they’re more portable (look ma, no brick chargers!) but also because surfing the Internet, organizing your schedule, social networking and yes, playing games on light, touchscreen package is a lot easier and certainly more fun than it is with a laptop.

More importantly, tablets also open a whole new world of thousands (yes, thousands!) of free and paid applications

that can do everything: from taking and fixing your photos to teaching you how to cook, playing musical instruments, learning various languages—thanks to the two dominant operating systems that provide the portal to these apps.

There’s the Apple’s iOS that runs the iPad series that pretty much started the tablet trend. And then there’s Google’s Android that powers Samsung’s Galaxy Tab series and other competing tablets from other reputable brands.

So which operating system for tablets offers a better user experience? What are their basic differences? What are the advantages of using one over the other? How shall we love it? Let us count the ways.

Hardware. As Apple prides itself on being a closed company that creates both software and hardware, it has not (and is not likely to) licensed the iOS (formerly known as iPhone OS) for use outside of its own iPhone, iPod Touch and yes, the iPad. This means that your choice is limited.

Google, on the other hand, has designed and licensed its

Android to run on as many smartphones and tablets that is willing to run it. Do take note that there may be compatibility issues between these two devices as there are Android versions designed mainly for smartphones (i.e. Version 4.x also known as Ice Cream Sandwich) and there are those designed and optimized for tablets (i.e. Version 3.x a.k.a. Honeycomb).

Performance. Google has designed Android to run on tablets with varying processors and with varying clock speeds going as low as 600MHz. Apple has more control of what type of hardware would run the iOS and its iPads are known to have more powerful and higher specs.

This translates to the iPad’s better overall performance including longer battery life without recharging. However, its closest competitor, Samsung Galaxy Tab, is fast catching up.

Expandability. The latest version of the iPad, the iPad 3 is available with 16, 32 and 64GB internal flash memory. The bad news is that there is no external storage support

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