



Have a Joyful Christmas & a Prosperous New Year !!!

InLife

THREE SIMPLE TIPS

TO BECOME A MILLIONAIRE THIS YEAR

ASAP LIVE IN SYDNEY

A HUGE SUCCESS AT MANY LEVELS

GET TO KNOW

ALBERT

PRIAS: A MULTI-TALENTED INTERIOR DESIGNER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR

THREE BEST-KEPT SECRET VACATION SPOTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

FIVE PAINLESS WAYS TO LOSE THE HOLIDAY FLABS

RISE UP AN AMAZING THANKSGIVING CONCERT FOR HAIYAN



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Cover

Albert Prias

Find out more about the man behind some of Sydney's most successful events and fascinating shops and interiors!



OPENING REMARKS



It has been a challenging yet exciting year thus far for InLife Magazine. So far we've had the pleasure of featuring some of the most talented, upcoming actors, models and artists from all over the globe. Next up we are also involved with a number of local events in Sydney, Australia and we are launching something exciting very soon so this is not to be missed! Right now we are focusing all of our energy and resources towards our projects lined up for next year and we are definitely ready to take on 2019! I would like to thank everyone for your continued support and commitment to our publication. We are doing our very best to always deliver excellent editorials for our readers across all our channels.

Mike Ilagan
Managing Editor



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Spotlight

Six classic dishes Filipinos serve on Christmas Noche Buena

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Opening Remarks

Unbelievably, we're already into the second half of 2018! Hitting the halfway mark in anything – a race, an assignment, the school year, a book, a fitness plan, even a meal – is usually the impetus to keep going. Thoughts of: "I'm halfway there, I can't stop now!" start going through your mind. It's a heady sensation and is great motivation to finish your goals. But what if you didn't start in the first place? What if those New Year plans and resolutions never got off the ground? Well, get started now! There is nothing worse than looking back in frustration at those dreams that never came true just because of the simple reason where you NEVER TRIED. The journey to fulfilled hopes may be hard, but REGRET is a harder burden to carry every day. So go ahead and emulate the artists and entrepreneurs InLife magazine has had the privilege of meeting over the years. I guarantee that not one of them will tell you they begrudge the blood, sweat and tears it took to get them to where they are now. Don't wait, START, and get going!

Jenny Aluning
editor in chief

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CHRISTMAS

IN THE PHILIPPINES: THEN AND NOW

Unlike any other countries, the Philippines goes big when it comes to Christmas celebration. Its stance as the only country with the longest Christmas season has been paramount to its culture and it has been enriching the lives of the Filipino people ever since traditions had been brought to their once colonised country. The Philippines has completely cut its umbilical cord from the U.S A and Spain which both ruled the archipelago but there are some things from the past that still cast shadows to the present.

Do Filipinos still celebrate Christmas the traditional way?

Christmas season in the Philippines starts the moment BER-months begin. This means Christmas always comes early for Filipinos as Christmas carols, lanterns, Christmas trees and other decorations ornament the surroundings as soon as September traipses its way to the picture. By that month, most Filipinos who are working abroad have already booked their plane tickets back to the Philippines to spend the holidays with their families. This explains the seemingly endless gatherings, parties and reunions stretching the yuletide season while they earnestly make up for the lost times.

Moreover, old traditions like attending Misa de Gallo or Simbang Gabi remains stronger in the Filipino culture. As a predominantly Christian country in Asia with 93% devotees, attending mass has been a major part of the celebration and this is always followed by a sumptuous meal shared with extended family and friends. Exchange gifts and other Christmas-related festivals all over the country are still dominant despite the modern changes in our technologically-driven world.

Filipinos embrace their traditions almost religiously and though others might have thought that traditions can be easily swayed away by the advancement that's happening in a progressive economy, Filipinos cling strongly to their beliefs and customs just like how they value their family ties. Recently though, Christmas celebrations in the Philippines have turned more meaningful and exceptionally dramatic but it does not make them forget the traditions. In fact, it has even more cemented the true meaning of Christmas.

As devastating as it was, Philippines experienced catastrophic events for the last few years which displaced thousands of people. Destructive storms like Sendong in 2011, Ondoy in 2012 and Yolanda in 2013 had deepened the way Filipinos perceive Christmas. This had also relatively infused more significance to those observed traditions. Suddenly, hearing mass does not only mean praying for their own but it further includes the welfare of other people who have been homeless and whose permanent livelihoods had lost. The act of gift giving extends far beyond affiliations and relationships as most Filipinos go out of their way to share their blessings to those who are less fortunate. Indeed, the last few years may have been sombre but those unexpected situations had uplifted so many spirits as everyone selflessly went out of their way to help one another.

Christmas traditions spell more than material meanings. While it circulates around fancy food, gifts and money, Filipinos have become smarter as they invest more in their future. 13th Month pay and bonuses are now being spent on insurances, funds, education and new business endeavours.

Yes, Filipinos still remain rooted to their traditional Christmas celebration and this has always been a part of their ways and life. There might be little changes but those only add more Filipino flavour to the influences that have been inherited from their ancestors.

Clearly, history would tell us that Christmas in the Philippines was first brought during the Spaniard colonisation. This is undeniably true. In fact, there are more present Christmas traditions that mirror past influences and we can always glimpse on it in the way Filipinos celebrate their Christmas. They are, after all, a country rich in traditions with strong ingrained convictions. Their meriment exudes with sincerity and depth hence, their name "The Land of Fiestas."



Millionaire

HOW TO BECOME A

THREE WAYS TO REACH YOUR GOAL

“Property won’t make you wealthy overnight, but it is a great first step to financial freedom – a great form of income for you and your family in the future.”

Building wealth is probably the most spoken about topic across the world and will be for years to come. How to make money is the 24th most Googled question in the world that's 246,000 individuals per month hoping to find answers.

You can earn more and save for your future easily, but many people get caught up in the old saying "You have to have money to make money." If you have this mindset, you have already set yourself up for failure. The truth is you have to be driven, be willing to work hard now and invest so you see a return on capital.

Property won't make you wealthy overnight, but it is a great first step to financial freedom – a great form of income for you and your family in the future. The Sydney residential property market alone has increased by 74% since 2012. Sydney offers promising returns for investors and the long-term outlook for this market is positive.

Follow our three simple steps to wealth and find out just how easy it can be to build your wealth.

1. Using the family home to build a property portfolio

If you have equity in your own home, do you know that you've already taken the important first step in your property journey? That's because the family home can be more than a great place to raise your children. It can be a powerful tool for growing your wealth and setting up your financial future.

After all, a lender may let you use the equity you already have in your home to fund the purchase of an investment property. That means you may not need any further deposit. Meanwhile, the rent your tenant pays should help you meet the cost of taking out your new loan.

2. Renting and buying simultaneously

Think you can't afford to buy where you want to live but still want to get a foot on the property ladder? Try the 'Buy and Rent' model. Under this strategy, which PIA pioneered back in 2005, you can rent where you'd prefer to be based on your lifestyle, study or work. If you earn \$70,000 annually, you could buy an investment property worth \$650,000 for as little as \$42 a week, out of pocket.

3. Helping the children

Worried your children will never be able to afford to buy property? By using the equity in your own home, you may be able to get into a property without the need to save a deposit. If they're not ready to leave home just yet, you can secure and manage a tenant who'll help pay off your loan until they do.

It's never too late or early to start thinking about the future and making a plan, invest in property to secure a comfortable, stress-free future for you and your family, build your property portfolio and build your wealth.

Information from this article was sourced from The Property Investors Alliance



SIX CLASSIC DISHES FILIPINOS SERVE ON

CHRISTMAS

NOCHE BUENA

For Filipinos, Christmas is a perfect time to bond with their loved ones. It bridges friends and relatives who have been away from each other mostly because of overseas employment while others become wrapped up in the tangled city life. This is why Christmas is the happiest season to celebrate in the Philippines. The energy that fills the air is so rejuvenating and uplifting.

Filipinos by nature loves eating and we always connect especially when there's food. This connection is even stronger during special occasions like Christmas. Our Noche Buena or Christmas Eve dinner is always a gastronomical experience that the whole family is always looking forward to. Here are six classic Noche Buena foods that are always served every Christmas.

- **Lechon** –Think of anything roasted over coals such as roasted pig or pork belly and this would surely remind you of Christmas Eve dinner at home. Special occasions like this wouldn't be complete without people feasting over the glorious lechon preparation, matched with home-made sauce such as chopped garlic with vinegar and soy sauce squeezed with native lemon or Kalamansi.
- **Puto Bumbong and Bibingka** –These are Christmas statements often found being sold just outside churches. Bibingka (rice cake) and Puto Bumbong which is a purple-coloured Filipino delicacy are just iconic representations of typical Filipino Christmas celebration. You know it's your favourite time of the year when you see these being sold after mass.
- **Filipino Style Spaghetti** –Yes, Filipinos do have their own version of the most loved pasta. Aside from being a staple in various special occasions, this too, has earned its space during Christmas dinner. Spaghetti is cooked using tomato paste and sauce mixed with ground pork, grated cheese and a little amount of sugar to achieve that distinct sweet taste that Filipinos love.
- **Fruit Salad** –It's not Christmas without fruit salad. That's right! Being a tropical country, the Philippines is rich with various kinds of fruits which make this dessert perfect for every occasion. You can achieve that unique Filipino taste by adding condensed milk and cream to a canned fruit cocktail or fresh fruits, whichever suits your liking, and prepare for a creamy and sweet dessert outcome.
- **Leche Flan** –This is another famous dessert during Christmas season. Leche Flan is done by mixing egg yolks, fresh milk, condensed milk, and sugar to achieve the sweet flavour that is perfect for Filipino tasting.
- **Macaroni salad** –Definitely one of the easiest foods to prepare, macaroni salad is perfected by mixing with chicken strips and mayonnaise. This type of salad is also loved because of so many variations it can add to your table. Depending on the versions that you like, macaroni salad can also be mixed with fruits and cheese pimiento. Whichever way, macaroni salad certainly makes it to the Christmas recipe list.

Filipinos are erudite when it comes to tasteful palette adventure. This becomes evident the moment they excitingly jump at every chance they get to showcase their gastronomic magic. Indeed, Christmas is the season to be merry. Are you homesick yet??



THREE BEST-KEPT SECRET VACATION Destinations IN THE PHILIPPINES

As a Balikbayan coming home to the Philippines for a short vacation, we always look for a quality time that we can share with our family and friends. We also tend to make each of these special moment seemed longer and is worth our time for coming home. As a substitute to this time passer activity, we attend fiestas, parties and other occasions just to enjoy and savor the beauty and culture of our beloved Philippines. However, there are also other ways for us to enjoy our Balikbayan moments with some of Philippines noteworthy locations and tourist spots.

Below are some of the most majestic and noteworthy getaways for Balikbayans.

• Bohol

The aesthetic beauty of Bohol always captivates any tourist's hearts. This natural tourist-made wonder is located in the Central Visayas where the famous Chocolate Hills are found. Chocolate Hills are so-called "chocolate" because of its color and it looks like big piles or arranged kisses from the top view of Sagbayan Peak. In Bohol, we can also see the world's smallest primate and nocturnal creature called Tarsier.

Accommodations, party life and restaurants in Bohol are abundant due to the number of tourists who are visiting the island. Other historical places, monuments and resident of the late Philippine hero Dr. Jose Rizal are also located in Bohol. This place also holds some of the oldest catholic churches that are definitely worth visiting.

• Bacolod

Bacolod City is the capital city of Negros Occidental in Visayas. Widely known for its successful commerce and tourism, Bacolod is also a perfect place to enjoy the renowned Maskara festival that is held every end of the week of October. With lots of shopping centers and great night life, you would want to be in this city for a long time.

There are lots of resorts and tourist destinations that are located near the vicinity of the Bacolod area going north to south. You can also dine in local restaurants or eat one of Bacolod's specialties such as Piyaya and Talaba.

• Dumaguete

Being a Balikbayan, we always tend to look for a place that is likely similar to the place where we have been or worked. Well, Dumaguete is something that gives us both the feel of being in a serene foreign environment but still cultivates the Filipino culture. This city is the capital city of Negros Oriental and is widely known as the motorcycle city in the Philippines. There are also dozens of hotels, bars, restaurants and shopping centers that we can visit or stay with.

Dumaguete gives an easy access to some of the best diving spots and resorts in the oriental province while offering sincere services and gratitude.

These given locations are just some of the best and most visited places here in the Philippines by Balikbayans like us who likes to spend more quality time with our family and friends. Other locations that provides wonderful accommodations, breathtaking locations such as Palawan, Cebu and the Ifugao Province are also worth visiting.



Post-Holiday

FIVE SIMPLE WAYS TO LOSE YOUR BELLY FAT

Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year, so they say. It's that time when we catch up with good friends and relatives that we don't often see every day. The season is so festive that most of us look forward to it with incredible excitement in our eyes. But if you think holiday is all about merriment, think again as you binge on some yummy cookies and while you finish your first slice of cake with remorse.

Indeed, holiday traditions and endless Christmas dinners are amazing. We cook new memories with our loved ones and become nostalgic as we dig on the good stories we have established with them in the past. Often, these happen in the middle of delicious menus and seemingly overflowing hors d'oeuvre which we can easily be trapped into. We sit together and lure ourselves more into the sweet temptation of roast turkey, mouth-watering Christmas cakes, smoked salmon and salads. The guilty pleasures of eating enslaved the gods of diet and before we knew it, we have already gained more pounds than the previous midnight.

Are you turkey-stuffed and covered with holiday flabs? Reverse those pounds with these easy and quick holiday fat blasters which you can do even with your stressful and frazzled schedule.

1. Kick off your cardiovascular exercise by doing rounds of jumping jacks. This may take up to 30 seconds.
2. Do step-up lunges using stairs or a bench. This brings good benefit to your leg muscles as you step one foot forward while the other is stepping up onto the bench. Repeat this exercise for 90 seconds for well-defined hamstrings and gluteus.
3. Cling on crunches and get that to-die-for abs in no time. A few set of crunches combined with a powerful cardio can eliminate those flabs as these tone the abdominal muscle. Crunches can also help in easing constipation problems and are a great way to develop strong pelvic muscle and body posture.
4. Reinforce some dumbbell trainings for a better body. Do 15-20 reps for a full body fitness that can turn those pounds into sweat.
5. Adopt the explosive leap frog movement. This workout composes mainly of hopping, jumping and bounding routines that are proven to be effective in strengthening leg muscles and body firming results. Do this in 1 minute with at least 1-4 reps.

Are you ready to get on the floor and sweat off your mom's holiday stuffing? Do not shun the good times of festivities just because you are on a strict diet to keep your heavenly summer bod. Letting yourself crave for a calorie blowout is fine. While losing weight may be harder than gaining them, keep in mind that your self-discipline and control can always take you back to where you started. So taste the sweetness of the holidays, raise those forks and keep your incomparably good mind set. After all, good memories will keep you warm forever. The rest, like holiday fats, can be burned and melted.



ROCKY GATHERCOLE

LIVE DOWN UNDER



The outstanding management behind Rock the Runway Australia by Rocky Gathercole recently hosted a glamorous Fashion Spectacular at the stunning Grand Ballroom in Hilton Hotel on December 1 2018. Marites Novis of MFN Productions was the executive producer behind the show and she was supported by her business partner Leo Bello.

Lights dimmed, and the fancy affair kicked off with a tantalizing song performance by none other than Ballina Gee aka "The Pacific Diva."

Pews of well-dressed guests assembled excitedly on either side of the elevated platform, ready for the fashion showcase to come.

Rocky Gathercole is a Filipino self-made celebrity designer whose name in the world of runway continues to shine. It all started with threads and strings and a driven mind to create a collection of couture that wears his story wherever he goes. Eventually, his dreams became dresses and his sketches became superb avant-garde pieces. As his creations continued to make an impression in the Fashion world, Hollywood celebrities and pop stars started knocking on his door and coming after his sun-stunner creations. A-plus celebrities such as JLo, Nicki Minaj, Sia and Katy Perry eventually became some of the bearers of his incredible pieces.

But before all the glitz and glamour brought to life by his creations, Rocky actually had a rough start in life. Rocky Gathercole recalls how he struggled to live a life sheltering from the coldness of the street, sleeping under a bridge, and making little income from helping a pushcart vendor. Although he did not finish high school, he had set forth to Saudi Arabia where he met his employer, who would later help him in fulfilling his dream as an avant-garde designer. Everything escalated from that moment. Now, parading before the world's eyes during fashion weeks and beauty pageants, this golden designer doesn't only excel in the runway, for he also has a golden heart for the world, particularly to the less fortunate ones.

The atmosphere in The Hilton for the Fashion Spectacular was electric. Models bustled backstage with nervous excitement before awaiting their name called and strutting down the runway to the latest in music. With more than 30 models walking the makeshift runway, the evening was an ongoing display of stunning fashion and style.

The fantastic Fashion Spectacular event also supported Destiny Rescue which is an internationally-recognized Christian non-profit organization dedicated to rescuing children trapped in the sex trade.

All in all, it was definitely a night to remember - all hail Rocky Gathercole - fashion designer extraordinaire!

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT

ALBERT PRIAS

Alberto Prias (most commonly referred to as Albie) is a classically trained Interior Designer yet a very Contemporary Stylist. Educated in fine arts at the University of Santo Tomas, Albert received Cum Laude Honors and the Manuel Quezon Presidential Award for Leadership - he is currently working as a TAFE teacher and Assessor at the Design center in Enmore as well as a Design Consultant at Coco Republic. He boasts a long, and impressive resume.

In the past, Albert has worked with many different companies. This impressive resume includes designing for the King and his son Mohammad Bin Fahad, designing various retail shops and Residences in Sydney, including Golden Globe Travel, Bhajune Hair & Makeup, and Mama Lor Restaurant as well as producing, managing, and directing large local and international shows including plays, talent searches, modeling, beauty pageants, and fashion runway shows such as the Rocky Gathercole show in Sydney.

Albert's many different career successes come from his many talents. He's a successful emcee, singer, and dancer. In addition to these talents, he can also create performance choreography and admirable paintings and sketches - he is no doubt a Jack of All Trades.

Besides his many accomplishments in life, there is so much more to him than meets the eye. Albert has proven himself to be a talented and caring individual by participating in countless community organizations. Most impressively, he is the Managing Director of FLAGCOM & Friends, a well-recognized and award-winning Gay & Lesbian advocate group. He is also a high-ranking member of the Alliance of Philippine Community Organizations, a consistent promoter of the Department of Philippine Tourism and Philippine Consulate as well as the Aids Council of Australia. He even uses his talents to help different community and charity organizations create, plan, and manage their fundraising events so that they may further their missions and their community outreach.

Albert is no doubt driven by strong ties to his community. He is moved by passion, the happiness of, and an undying love of

the Filipino community, no matter where they are in the world. All of his community outreach work is done around a very busy working schedule. He says, "It is an honour to share my talents and time to help others, in spite of my very busy schedule at work." True love and dedication will never be stopped by work, and Albie proves that day in and day out. Working with the community is something Albert enjoys, in fact, he discovered that helping the community actually helped his business. "I get benefits like free advertisement. Having a number of skills that can help the community has helped my business continue to grow. Being popular in the community has given me a kind of "celebrity" status when I attend these different events."

When it comes to running a successful business, Albert has one major tip: "Don't become a slave to your business. You should enjoy your business and the things you need to do to make it succeed. If you can run your business with little to no partners, try and do that. Businesses often collapse when disagreements between partners arise. Keeping this tip in mind may save you time, trouble, and effort in the end."

Finally, Albert wants future business leaders to consider a few things. He points out that it's inevitable for you to make mistakes, but you just have to accept that that's life and business. His biggest regret was not learning to invest when he was younger, as well as not getting his Ph.D. One of his biggest wishes is that he could have a body double so that he won't need to turn down jobs or invitations. Unfortunately, this isn't possible. Running a business comes with making sacrifices, and he believes that you need to decide what sacrifices you can live with. Finally, Albert would like to give a few pieces of advice. "Life is too short. Be happy. Make time to relax, unwind, and to thank God for your blessings. Be careful what you ask for, and make sure you only ask for what you can handle. Whether you're an employee or a business owner, do your job well. Be your best. Be proactive. Allot time to learn new skills, learn from your mistakes, and finally, focus on the positives in life."



RISE UP

THANKSGIVING CONCERT FOR HAIYAN



By Michelle Baltazar

More than 500 guests packed the Blacktown Workers Club in November to lend support to a benefit concert commemorating five years since super typhoon Haiyan.

The concert was held on Sunday, November 4 at the Diamond Showroom, Blacktown Workers Club in Sydney and it was co-hosted Miss Philippines-Australia title holders Melanie Balagtas (2013), Rica Sey (2015) and Kimberlee Street (2017).

"Australia dug deep into its pockets during the storm, and we wanted to show our gratitude (called 'utang na loob' in Filipino) and say that five years on, we haven't forgotten Australia's generosity," said Michelle Baltazar, one of the concert organisers and founder of social media FB group, Help After Haiyan. The show will go towards livelihood programs in Tacloban City, the city worst-hit by the disaster.

"While five years seem like a long time, the rebuilding of the places destroyed by the supertyphoon has only just begun and this is our way of contributing to that recovery," said Violi Calvert, another volunteer from Help After Haiyan.

Various community groups lent their support, including Plaza Filipino, NARRA Co-op, FLAGCOM and Adhika among a growing list.

"While five years seem like a long time, the rebuilding of the places destroyed by the supertyphoon has only just begun and this is our way of contributing to that recovery," said Violi Calvert, another volunteer from Help After Haiyan.

"It was an unforgettable concert, particularly with the support of choir groups One Voice Kids with Tina Bangel, the Sydney Sonata Singers and the Rise Up choir led by Ballina Gee," said fellow concert organizer Jasie Musa, president of Adhika, Inc.

Super Typhoon Yolanda is the deadliest Philippine typhoon on record, killing at least 6,300 people and causing damage worth US\$4.55 billion. It made its first landfall on November 7 in Guiuan, Eastern Samar before sweeping through most of Leyte and Samar.

The international response was swift and generous. The Australian government alone donated US\$70 million in humanitarian aid and supplies. Various individuals and organizations in Sydney also raised tens of thousands of dollars to help survivors. In total, Australia was third only to the U.K. (\$131 million) and the US (\$86.7 million) in providing disaster relief.

The Filipino-Australian community's foremost talents headlined the show, including Lillian de Los Reyes, Brian Lorenz, June Young, and Marcus Rivera.

The Voice Australia 2017 finalist Fasika Ayallew, who is of Ethiopian and Filipino Heritage, wowed the audience with her rendition of the hit song, Rise Up, and Mariah Carey's I'll Be There.

Getting rave reviews after their performance was also upcoming girls trio, Herizon, who sang their own version of 'Somewhere over the rainbow'.



The Property Industry Alliance



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IN SYDNEY, A HUGE SUCCESS AT MANY LEVELS

By Violi Calvert

ASAP Live came and conquered Sydney in more ways than one! The music, song, dance and talk extravaganza dazzled at least 8,000 fans who packed the International Convention Centre in Sydney's Darling Harbour on Saturday, October 20, 2018. It was truly a spectacular show that every Filipino could be proud of! The world-class entertainment showcased the amazing talents of longest-running Filipino weekend variety TV show and global live concert tour of ABS-CBN, and its current international flagship channel, TFC.

The wild cheering and deafening applause from the audience for each of the performances reflected the people's joy as they listened to their favourite songs and watched the crisp, precise and energetic dance moves of their idols against the backdrop of a kaleidoscope of radiant, flashing and colourful lights. This was reminiscent of "ASAP Live" in the various international locations it visited - Singapore, Dubai, Los Angeles, London, New York, Toronto, and Honolulu, proving that the show's high calibre is consistent.

The glitterati's heartthrobs and idols comprised of: Angeline Quinto, Bamboo, Daniel Padilla, Darren Espanto, Daryl Ong, Enchong Dee, Erik Santos, Enrique Gil, Gary Valenciano, Gerald Anderson, Inigo Pascual, Jed Madela, Joshua Garcia, Julia Barretto, Kim Chiu, KZ Tandingan, Liza Soberano, Luis Manzano, Maja Salvador, Moira dela Torre, Ogie Alcasid, Piolo Pascual, Robi Domingo, Toni Gonzaga and Yeng Constantino.

They were joined by special guests: Yassi Pressman, Pia Wurtzbach, Paulo Avelino, Christine Reyes, Ariel Rivera, Randy Santiago, Marisa Punzalan and Regine Velasquez-Alcasid.

"It amazes me that 'ASAP Live' continues to grow, evolve and win new audiences thousands of miles across the globe. It remains relevant to today's Filipino diasporans living in multicultural societies. We in ABS-CBN Australia are very thankful for the opportunity via 'ASAP Live in Sydney' to collaborate with the entire ABS-CBN and TFC teams and partners to bring this huge, bright light of Filipino pride to

thousands here in Australia who welcomed the show with open arms. It's been a challenging but entirely fulfilling and heartwarming ride. We've been blessed," said ABS-CBN Australia Country Manager Jay Santos.

ASAP Live in Sydney not only brought together Filipinos from various walks of life and locations in Sydney but also fused features of the Australian and Philippine cultures. The concert opened with Walangari Karintawarra and Diramu Aboriginal dance and didgeridoo music. These were then followed by impressive Original Pinoy Music [OPM] and dances reflecting Filipino talents and culture.

On another level of success, it earned recognition from leaders in Australia. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, in a message sent to ABS-CBN Australia, offered his best wishes to everyone who attended the event and praised the "more than 250,000 Filipinos that have made Australia home". He is joined by New South Wales Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, in congratulating the Filipino community through a video message, for the passion in maintaining its unique cultural

identity, language and tradition, alongside a common commitment to Australia and the state of New South Wales. Consul General - Sydney Maria Teresa Taguiang and Member of New South Wales Parliament for Riverstone Kevin Connolly were among the notable guests of the event.

The hugely successful event happened as a result of many months of behind the scene preparation and the pooling of creative minds, the effective collaboration, and management of the actual staging of the TFC spectacle.

It had been more than a month since the elaborate and spectacular entertainment but the social media is still abuzz with excitement about it. We asked a few of the key people behind the show to share their personal perspective what they relish as the best part of staging the event and any challenges they faced.

Apple Segubience, ASAP Executive Producer

"Aside from the actual show, for me, the best part was when I finally saw the stage and lights set-up complete with all our performers rehearsing on stage. All our work for the past five months finally came into completion.

My biggest challenge was the constant changes that happened close to the day of the show. All of the changes needed to be addressed by the whole team. As a producer, I needed to keep the team together and make everything happen."

Cheryll May Ilagan, Project Manager, ASAP Live in Sydney Marketing Manager, ABS-CBN Australia

"The best part is seeing the big smiles of our Kapamilya. We know that we did it right and we brought them closer to home by bringing the best of Filipino entertainment here in Oz.

I'm very grateful to lead a passionate team composing of ABS-CBN colleagues, former ABS-CBN employees and members of the community, supportive bosses and mentors. Whatever challenges that came our way, we're able to manage and find solutions, as individuals and as a team, and pulled off the biggest, if not the grandest concert TV event ABS-CBN Australia has ever mounted."

The Filipino-Australians and members of the wider community who were enthralled by the stage extravaganza no doubt look forward to the next one.

Congratulations to the FLAGCOM team and Tet Ligon who did an amazing job on the groundwork, preparation, and staging along with the ABS-CBN team in Sydney.