

# Rediscover Manila—aboard a Pasig River cruise

and Department of Tourism and ABS-CBN's "Kapit Bisig sa Ilog Pasig" project, visitors can now use the Pasig River "to see and explore Manila."

## Alternative

Providing an alternative to the more conventional tour package trips to Luneta, the National Museum or Intramuros, this new program is centered on the concept of "Beyond the Usual." Its first tour, "Pasig Ferry Cruise and Binondo Culinary Walking Tour" is just the beginning.

The ferryboat cruise will start at the station in Mandaluyong and end in Escolta. En route, the air-conditioned, 150-pas-



**TOURISM Secretary Ace Durano (fourth from left) and Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque (leftmost) lead guests at the event.**

senger boat passes historical areas such as Malacañang Palace and Sta. Ana. An outside deck is also available for those who want fresh air and a glimpse of water lilies floating by.

Starting in September, pre-taped audio-visual presentations will be shown onboard on all ferries with tours, with historical facts and stories shared as each particular area of interest is passed by the ferry.

A guide from the Mabuhay Guides group, the DOT's highly-trained team of tourist guides, will meet the group at Escolta and conduct a three-hour walking tour of the highlights of Binondo.

The tour provides historical

Within the next two years, tourists will be able to disembark at the Mexico station for a walking tour of Intramuros; the Sta. Ana station for a heritage tour of Sta. Ana; and Guadalupe for shopping at nearby Shangri-La Plaza and SM Megamall.

## Sense of pride

As Clang Garcia, owner of Jeepney Tours and Philcoa member, says, "It gives me a sense of pride to rediscover the richness of Philippine history. Seeing it through such an unusual experience of traveling on the Pasig River only heightens that affect. It made me feel connected to my real identity as a

**By Sunshine Lichauco de Leon**  
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"THE STATE OF THE PASIG river today mirrors the state of the country. And the potential of the river mirrors the potential of the country. It might take a generation to make it happen, but the river, and the country, can be

transformed," said Tourism Secretary Ace Durano as he observed the view from the deck of the Pasig River Ferry.

Durano recently took the ferry as part of the launch of a new tourism program. Thanks to a partnership between Philcoa, an association of tour operators that exclusively promotes inbound and domestic tourism,

## Global Academy bags top prize in culinary competition

Global Culinary and Hospitality Academy bested other participating schools to win first place in the recently concluded Manila Meets Ming culinary competition held at the Rockwell Tent.

For the Manila Meets Ming event, international celebrity Chef Ming Tsai, the master of East-meets-West cooking, gave top props to the menu prepared by students of Global, led by the school's Executive Chef Robert Pengson himself a well-known chef.

"Overall the judges said they approved of the flavors that went on the plate as it all went good together," said Chef Rob. Along with Ming Tsai, giants in the local culinary world like Jay Gamboa, Buddy Trinidad, Reggie Aspiras and Joanne Limoanco sat at the judges table.

Told to prepare a three-course meal with the theme Modern Asian Cooking, Chef Rob and Global students Celeste Isidro and Christian Billano whipped up smoked unagi on pine nut crisp with apple fennel salad, modern chicken adobo and a dessert called Philippine Summer in honor of Ming Tsai. It was a menu that got Global to the

"What also helped Global most was the dedication of the students to quality and efficiency — traits they live out each and every school day," observed Chef Rob. "When a big day came around, with six of the top culinary schools competing, our students simply remembered to focus on the five values that make Global unique: passion, reliability, integrity, commitment and excellence."

Since it was established just two years ago, Global Culinary and Hospitality Academy now has branches in Pasig, Alabang and soon to open, a third branch on Timog corner Panay Avenue in Quezon City with a student-run restaurant. It continues to refine its curriculum and teaching methods to reflect its focus on real-world cooking offered at the most affordable rates among the top culinary schools in its class.

Recognizing the need of students to quickly transition from the classroom cooking to real-life kitchens, Global has made it policy that instead of the group work standard to most schools, Global implements an individual training system. This means providing each student with his or her own set of ingredients to work on so they can put all their skills to the test. Chef Rob believes Global's individual training

The tour provides historical information and insights on what life was like in a bygone era, with visits to streets such as Escolta, Tomas Pinpin, Quintin Paredes, Ongpin, Condesa and Enrique Yuchengco.

A visit to a local Philippine-Chinese temple is also included. To provide a break from experiencing the sights and sounds of this bustling area of little streets and alleys, stops are made at different eateries where participants can try things such as delicious dumplings and fresh Chinese *lumpia*.

Although walking tours of Binondo exist, this program is unique in that it uses the Pasig River as a means to transport local and foreign tourists to the heart of what was once "Chinatown".

Walking tours emanating from other Pasig River Ferry stations will be launched in September.

connected to my real identity as a Filipino."

According to Durano, the Pasig River tour program is important because everything begins with building appreciation of this vital waterway.

"We just need more people to appreciate it and to not continue the mind-set of past generations, which have neglected what we have. It can dramatically improve the quality of life of residents of Metro Manila," he says.

The Pasig Ferry Cruise, along with its peripheral tours, is just one example of the "Beyond the Usual" tour packages that have been created by Philtoa. The rest will be officially launched at the Philippine Travel Mart on Sept. 4. The fair is open to the public.

*For more information on the Pasig River tours, call 812-4513 or visit [www.philtoa.ph](http://www.philtoa.ph).*