

PCC Newsletter

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milka krem
world
of healthy
delights



Fresh option at
'Fresh Start'

muy bella
cara bella

milk-laced
cuisine
in fine dining

Enriching 'em with
carabao's

milk

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Success stories of farmers, cooperatives, and other beneficiaries and stakeholders of the Carabao Development Program are preferred.

PCC encourages reproduction of articles from this publication with proper acknowledgment.

Topic suggestions and comments are also welcome.

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about the cover



Milka Krem is steadily gaining its niche market in the countryside setting. Not only is it becoming a crowd-pleasing place to lounge with friends, either for business or pleasure, because of its wide array of healthy and delectable milk-based products but also a fashionable way to join the PCC's thrust to help empower the smallholder dairy buffalo raisers. [Photo by RGBumanlag]



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'Milka Krem' opens doors, offers fresh buffalo milk-based products

By ROWENA GALANG-BUMANLAG

PCC recently opened a door of opportunities to dairy farmers thru the launching of a market venue called "Milka Krem" for their milk produce.

This is where the milk produce from the dairy cooperatives will be sold after being processed at the state-of-the-art central milk collecting and processing facility.

Essentially, the Milka Krem is an infrastructure support for dairy farmers. It is an avenue to empower smallholder farmers as they are provided with an opportunity to have an access to the commercial market for greater income.

The Milka Krem carries the tagline "Fresh and Natural" which is anchored on products development thru science-based practices.

The raw milk that is processed every day comes from healthy animals that are well-managed and cared by smallholder dairy farmers. These dairy animals are fed with naturally-grown forage and feeds that guarantee their sound diet essential for the production of fresh milk.

Prior to processing and packaging, the freshly harvested milk is pasteurized to destroy pathogenic bacteria that may be present and preserve the health-promoting substances naturally inherent in buffalo milk.

Buffalo's milk is high in total solids making it very suitable for dairy product processing.

Milka Krem's flagship products are coffee concoctions that are all milk-based that include *mozzarella di buffalo cheese*, *kesong puti*, premium ice cream,

yogurt, and pastillas de leche.

The Milka Krem fosters an advocacy that "in every satisfied patron of the dairy products is a satisfied need of a smallholder dairy farmer in the rural community".

The establishment of the facility is a component of the Php200 million-worth 2KR grant assistance for underprivileged farmers from the Japan government.

This is under the project "Enhancing Rural Employment thru Promotion of Village-based Dairy Enterprises" being implemented by PCC which aims, among others, to capacitate the family members, including women, as agri-entrepreneurs using dairying as a medium.

The Milka Krem is strategically located along Maharlika Highway, just adjacent to the PCC headquarters.

MILKA KREM. It's about empowering the smallholder dairy farmers thru provision of opportunity for value-adding and thus, greater income.
(Photo by DA USec. Segfredo Serrano)





PCC Executive Director Libertado Cruz (2nd from left) and KAPE Chief Executive Officer Hyungkyu Choi (3rd from left) shake hand after signing the Memorandum of Agreement for research and scientific collaboration between the two institutions, December 5.

PCC partners with Japan, Korea for animal health issues, quality livestock products in PH

By CARLA F. PADILLA

PCC strengthens its collaborative efforts by signing a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the Consortium for Japanese Veterinary Medicinal Products Manufacturers (CJVM) and Korea Institute for Animal Products Quality Evaluation (KAPE) last December 5.

The two MoAs aim to enhance the quality of animal products through technology exchange and regulation of veterinary medicinal products in the country.

KAPE performs grading service under the goal of enhancing the qualities of animal products, facilitating distribution in the market and improving animal breeds in Korea. As such, they partnered with PCC to share relevant technologies that they developed in their country.

“The PCC is very lucky to have a formal collaboration with this institute. The KAPE is contributing not only to the Korean livestock industry but also

worldwide by sharing knowledge on quality management of animal products. Hopefully this partnership will hasten PCC’s capability to address food security in the country,” PCC Executive Director Libertado C. Cruz said in his message during the MoA signing.

The CJVM, on the other hand, contributes to Asian countries by conducting research on the demands and regulation of veterinary medicinal products in each country, exchanging information among the authorities and industries, developing new products to deal with particular livestock diseases in a country, and introducing products that are compliant with a country’s regulation.

“We thank the institute, the people, and the government of our international partners in helping the Philippines by participating in this collaborative effort. This is a very important milestone in the livestock industry of the Philippines,” Dr. Cruz ended.

PCC research papers bag awards in CLARRDEC Symposium

By ROBINSON B. VALENZONA

Two research papers of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) bagged awards during the 23rd Regional Symposium on Research and Development Highlights held last December 5 at the Central Luzon State University, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

The “Concordance of Competitive ELISA and Nested Polymerase Chain Reaction in the Detection of Caprine Arthritis-Encephalitis Virus” was adjudged 3rd place for Regional Best Paper in Research Category. The paper was authored by Dr. Justin Christian Vinson Gonzales with Dr. Clarissa Yvonne Domingo, Dr. Nancy Abes, Dr. Charito Gutierrez, Dr. Marvin Villanueva, and Dr. Claro Mingala.

The study was about the early detection of Caprine Arthritis-Encephalitis Virus (CAEV) in animals with the aim of preventing its spread to other animals.

CAEV is one of several lentiviruses in the family *Retroviridae*. Another type of retrovirus is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in humans.

Another paper titled “Science and Technology-based Farm Project on Improving the Productivity of Dairy Buffaloes through Flushing and the use of Milk Replacer” claimed the 2nd place for the Regional Best Paper in the Development Category. The paper was authored by Dr. Daniel Aquino, Ms. Wilma del Rosario, Dr. Lester Verona, Mr. Mario Delizo, and Dr. Anabelle Sarabia.



Rural broadcasters hold biotech appreciation confab at PCC

By ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

A joint undertaking of the Philippine Federation of Rural Broadcasters (PFRB) and the Biotechnology Program Office of the Department of Agriculture which aimed to give countryside communicators a better understanding of the concepts and applications of biotechnology was held at the PCC headquarters last November 14-16.

Some 60 rural program hosts and announcers from government, private, and community or town-level radio stations from Luzon participated in the conference including information officers from different government agencies.

Biotechnology experts and development communication specialists from the PCC, Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech), and Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) served as the discussants.

DA undersecretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Development, and Regulations Segfredo Serrano served as the keynote speaker.

He clearly emphasized in his message that “biotechnology is not just an option but the government’s proactive action to address the concerns of the future”.

He said that as a country, the Philippines “ambitions to be competitive and food secured” and that we have the right resources “to be able to claim our rightful place among the other great nations of the world.”

While the DA promotes harnessing biotechnology toward food sufficiency, he said “the food must be safe, nutritious, and delicious.”

Otherwise, he added, our efforts to increase production and investment on inputs would be useless.

“We have a risk assessment system that screens if our food imports are genetically modified or not. We must take full responsibility in ensuring that

the food that we produce are safe to the environment, safe for the production system, and safe for the consumers. It has to pass an acceptable level of safety,” USec. Serrano said.

His message clearly emphasized that biotechnology is not something to be feared of.

“It is science, predictability, and objectivity that will win,” he said.

One of the organizers of the event, DZMM’s “Sa Kabukiran” program host Louie Tabin said the conference was purposively done toward achieving better appreciation of the concepts and applications of biotechnology and its related issues among the rural broadcasters.

The envisioned goal was for the participants to be capable of translating information on biotechnology in the simplest form among their radio listeners. This, he said, will only be realized thru constant communication with the experts and the concerned agencies.

He added that the “meeting was also an occasion for renewing acquaintances and revitalizing camaraderie among the rural media practitioners as well as working relationship between communicators and the science community”.

The second day of the conference was devoted for the discussion of organization matters and projects that included effective program material distribution and program exchange system; prospective scholarship or foreign training for members; group insurance coverage scheme; and other means to help the PFRB members.

The same activity for the rural broadcasters in Visayas and Mindanao is scheduled on November 20-21 at the Crowne Regency Residences in Cebu. About 60 community broadcasting practitioners are expected to attend.



“We presented the paper to share and inform the farmers and students that productivity of dairy buffaloes can be improved through the use of flushing and milk replacer,” Dr. Aquino said.

Initially, flushing was adopted by 18 farmers, he further said. After a series of more aggressive activities to promote the technology, the number of adopters grew to 200-300 farmers.

Flushing is a technology that provides nutrients to the dam above its maintenance requirement specifically during the 30 days pre-calving and 60 days post-calving period.

The PCC regional centers in Cagayan, Laguna, and Nueva Ecija,

on the other hand, are deliberately showcasing the use and benefits of milk replacer.

Milk replacer is a water-soluble milk powder offered as a substitute to whole milk for buffalo calves from one week of age to weaning at 90 days.

These technologies and more were presented by the 10 member-agencies that participated in the said annual symposium.

These agencies are members of the Central Luzon Agriculture and Resources Research and Development Consortium (CLARRDEC).

Twenty-six other agencies and institutions that are members of this consortium are promoting research and development in agriculture and natural resources in Central Luzon.

3 PCC researchers gain expertise in S. Korea training

By ROBINSON B. VALENZONA



Needing the expertise for the use of the pieces of equipment donated by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), three researchers of Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) underwent a two-week training in Hankyong National University in Anseong City, Geongg-do, South Korea.

The trainees were Amie Villanueva, Trinidad Fernando, and Mark Francis Soliven, all research assistants from the Molecular Genetics Laboratory of PCC's Genetic Improvement Program Unit.

The training was held last October 21 to November 3.

The training provided the trainees the know-how in using the Applied Biosystems (ABI) Genetic Analyzer 3500 series. This equipment is used for the fragment analysis and sequencing of DNA samples of livestock animals, the carabao included.

"The training enhanced our knowledge about molecular techniques that we can apply to improve our existing PCC laboratory protocols," Villanueva, one of the trainees, said.

She added, they can now dramatically shorten the selection of animal genetics recording in a more precise way compared to conventional recording. Using conventional recording, the animal genetic selection usually reaches beyond 10 years.

Titled "Training Course in Enhancing of Livestock Sector Performance in the Philippines", it provided them the opportunity to meet, discuss, and learn from the livestock molecular genetics experts from the Hankyong National University.

The focus, however, of the training was on the analysis of data for Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) genotyping and Microsatellite (MS) genotyping using ABI Genetic Analyzer 3500 series.

SNP genotyping provides genetic fingerprint for identity testing of human and animals, while MS genotyping is used to identify genes in complex diseases.

To conduct an analysis with SNP and MS genotyping as part of the training, a total of 140 buffalo DNA samples were brought to Korea by the trainees.

In SNP genotyping, the samples are analyzed using DNA marker for Corticotrophin Releasing Hormone (CRH). This hormone was reported to be associated with milk production.

The buffalo DNA samples were tested using this marker and about 50 per cent of the samples had amplification.

Meanwhile, in MS genotyping, 140 DNA samples coming from 36 families of sire-dam-offspring buffaloes were analyzed.

Based on the trainees' observation, some of the DNA samples used had low concentration due to the extraction kit used. To address the problem, Korean experts who visited the PCC last November performed extraction in the DNA samples using a different extraction kit.

The training was hosted by Prof. Hak-Kyo Lee and was sponsored by KOICA.

PCC scientist presents PH's food safety system for dairy products in intl seminar

By ROBINSON B. VALENZONA

Ensuring the safety and quality of agro-fisheries and livestock products highlighted the 2012 International Seminar on Livestock Products Safety for Asian countries last October 27 to November 3 in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea.

Dr. Nancy Abes, head of the Animal Health Unit of the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), presented a topic on "Food Safety System of Dairy Products in the Philippines". Her topic covered import protocols for milk products and food safety legislation in the country.

Dr. Abes participated with three other food safety key persons from the Bureau of Soils and Water Management and the National Veterinary Quarantine Service.

The seminar, sponsored by the Animal, Plant, and Fisheries Quarantine and Inspection Agency of South Korea, aimed to facilitate exchange of information on the safety of livestock products as well as developing cooperative relationships on this aspect among Asian countries.

The international seminar highlighted presentations on livestock product safety, safety procedures on livestock product manufacturing, sanitary management, and import risk assessment and microbiological inspection system for meats.

A total of 26 participants from 14 Asian countries participated in the said international seminar. They were from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei and Myanmar.

Thriving businesses with buffalo's milk-derived and -flavored products

By ERIC P. PALACPAC

Much has been spoken about the peculiar taste of buffalo's milk, mainly its "richness" or "creaminess" brought about by its high fat content, which is two to three times more than cow's milk.

For the health-conscious individuals, it is a relief to know that the cholesterol content of buffalo's milk is also significantly lower. These same qualities make the buffalo's milk an excellent ingredient to enrich the flavor of traditional beverages, processed dairy products, pastry, cakes, and other baked goods that please one's craving without the guilt.

To put it simply, drinking the buffalo's milk in its fresh form is already a delightful experience but partaking products that are derived from or flavored with buffalo's milk makes anyone's dining experience a more satisfying one.

It is not surprising then that many Filipino entrepreneurs in various parts of the country ventured into the food and beverage business with buffalo's milk as the main ingredient.

In Pampanga, considered by many as a cuisine haven, you will find Cara Bella by Arlette, boasting of variants of mouth-watering cakes and other pastries; Susie's Cuisine with its infamous "tibok-tibok" pudding; the glorious Saniculas cookies by Atching Lillian; and Kabigting's refreshing halo-halo.

Far north in Baguio City, there is Café by the Ruins with its innovative menus of coffee and chocolate drinks, pasta, bread, cakes, and salad; In Visayas, there is Bacolod's "Fresh Start Organics", who has begun foraying into the production of artisan cheese, mozzarella, and milk beverages on top of its organic food products.

In Global City, Taguig, Bistro Filipino boasts of its halo-halo sherbet and molten chocolate cakes while Chuck's Deli entices everyone with its creamy milkshake.

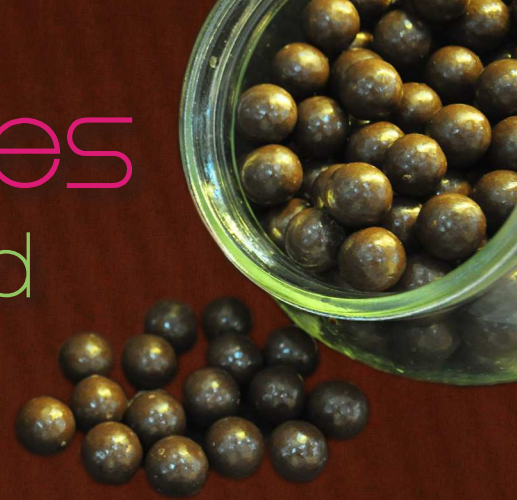
For those who love native glutinous rice cakes (bibingka) laced with kesong puti, then look no further than Café Via Mare restaurant in Makati City or Ferino's in Quezon City. Meanwhile, novelty and aesthetics await anyone who visit Sweet Blooms in Timog Avenue, Quezon City with its colorful flower-like pastillas, a sure hit for the romantics especially on Valentine's Day and special occasions. Milkshake and tea aficionados will also love what The Carabao Milkshake Company in Quezon City offers.

PCC's very own "Milka Krem" at the Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija has joined the bandwagon when it formally opened to public last October with its many coffee preparations and, of course, dairy products like fresh buffalo's milk, chocolate-flavored milk, pastillas, ice cream, yoghurt, mozzarella, white cheese, gouda cheese, among others.

Above are just some of the many flourishing businesses in the country that we featured in this issue of the **PCC Newsletter**. They are all doing well using a common ingredient—buffalo's milk.

These businesses also employ a common business strategy, such as niché marketing that targets very specific customers in a society like coffee lovers, sweets, pastries, and cheese cravers, among others.

Clearly, they have also demonstrated that adding value to buffalo's milk is feasible (and a wise decision) especially if the finished product is of the finest quality and offers something unique to the public.





fresh option at 'Fresh Start'

By ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

Photo Credits FRESH START ORGANICS

As everyone likes to move in a dash to skip the traditional long process of preparing food at home, the tempting comfort of instant and fast foods comes as a handy refuge.

Unconsciously, though, they who have become overly dependent on more convenient food packages are depriving themselves of the gratification to enjoy the right and good food.

Happily, they have better options. They can elect to be in the good habit of having a “fresh start”.

By happy coincidence, there’s a “fresh start” at Fresh Start Organics.

Anyone, be he or she in a serious rush to get to work or she is a working

mom who is up to finish her daily grind, can partake a serving of healthy food without a fuss at Fresh Start Organics’ food outlet at the Robinson’s Central Citywalk in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental.

Obviously, that idea of establishing a one-stop-shop that provides healthy options to prospective customers is embodied in the business plan of Fresh Start Organics.

Embedded in the plan is that overarching dictum of “social responsibility over income generation”.

Young couple and company owners Ramon and Francine Uy, both 30, affirm their company’s vision which says “A vibrant eco-enterprise that implements ecologically, socially, and economically sound practices in organic agriculture”.

“As a staunch supporter of the organic agriculture movement, Fresh Start Organics fully believes in the importance of good health, fair trade, and environmental conservation,” Ramon said.

What was once a daunting challenge

for Ramon and Francine Uy in crafting an enterprise out of organic products, their establishment is now providing them high esteem in the organic agriculture industry.

Ramon is currently the President of the Negros Occidental Organic Producers and Retailers Association. It is the largest and widest movement for organic agriculture in the Philippines.

Negros Island is one of the major producers of organic food in Asia.

In 2005, the late Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon and former Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz both signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to transform Negros Island into an “Organic Food Bowl in Asia.”

The following year, various stakeholders who are supporting organic agriculture signed a covenant and soon launched the organic week-end market enterprise with corresponding stringent rules and regulations.

“Promoting organic products was initially very difficult. This was because

we had to undergo very demanding processes to be certified plus the fact that it caters to the high-end market. But we wanted to be a catalyst of change on the perspective that it can be done so we strived hard. Now, we are doing progressively well," he said.

To prove his mettle along this line, Ramon and Francine established the "Fresh Start Organics".

In 2005, they initially produced only organic fertilizers but soon expanded to offering an extensive product range of freshly harvested greens, vegetables, culinary herbs, and organic fruits; organic and natural products like rice, natural sweeteners, preserves, fruit jams, coffee, pickles, artisan cheeses and beverages; and all-natural body care and home essentials like soaps, body scrub, lip balm, repellent, hand sanitizer, mouthwash, massage oil, aroma oil, room spray, and all-purpose cleaner.

Ramon said these products are all organically-grown and certified by the Negros Island Certification Services (NICERT).

Included in this variety of commodities are dairy products and

artisan cheeses made from fresh carabao's milk. The cheeses, like mozzarella and kesong puti, are either sold in vacuum-sealed packs or are made as toppings on their most-sought-after vegetable salads.

Fresh carabao's milk is also included in their organic coffee mixtures and milk shakes, making the natural flavors all the more appealing to the taste.

Another must-try delight is their *dulce de leche* which is used with either muscovado or yacon sugar for sweetening.

Muscovado sugar is minimally refined, thus, it retains the essential vitamins and minerals which can be found in the sugarcane plant. It is rich in Potassium, Calcium, Magnesium, Iron, and other compounds which make muscovado "healthier" than white sugar.

Yacon sugar, on the other hand, is a type of sugar extracted from the yacon roots that does not elevate blood sugar levels making it a healthy choice for diabetics and weight watchers.

Besides muscovado and yacon sugars, among the other choices for

natural sweeteners are raw honey, coconut sugar, Stevia powder, and cane syrup.

When it comes to product development, Ramon said, the company's manufacturing principles are founded on good management practices that are deliberately adhered to by its own research and development team.

"Our focus is mainly on producing quality food," he said.

The company's good values, he added, are anchored on providing only the best and healthy options to its customers while taking care of its workers and suppliers.

Ramon considers himself as an entrepreneur who is pro-Filipino. All the products that his company carries are produced locally.

Ramon gets his supply of fresh carabao's milk from the institutional

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Cheeses, like mozzarella and kesong puti, are either sold in vacuum-sealed packs or are made as toppings in Fresh Start's most-sought-after vegetable salads.



café by the Ruins?

Why not, indeed?

Text and photos by
JOAHNA G. GOYAGOY

If you're up for a refreshing experience sans the heavy traffic and pollution, then look no further than Baguio City. Aside from the pine-scented breeze wafting through the surrounding rocky mountains, the city is also rich with a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables that can surely make your jaunts rewarding and healthy.

There's more. If you're looking for savory treat and healthy dining, then Café by the Ruins has got it covered.

Located opposite the city hall, this establishment is quasi-closed allowing patrons to catch whiffs of pine-scented breeze which at once becomes palpable as you enter its arc-shaped door.

Inside, a cursory look reveals several artworks collaged in every nook and corner of the café. In one corner, too, a bonfire invites customers to request to have it fired up when the temperature turns unbearably cold.

Without having second thought, one can conclude that the café is run by artists.

Indeed it is true. Ryan Chua, the restaurant manager, says it all.

"The establishment started as an art gallery, a hang-out place for artists alone. As the city started to blossom as a haven for business ventures, it later

evolved into a café that accepts people from all walks of life as customers."

Today, Ryan added, it is being run by artists, writers, and businessmen who are already the second generation members of the corporation.

The walls of the café, Ryan said, are the remains of the headquarters of the first Benguet government during the American-Japanese war, hence the name.

The artistic displays and historic accounts of the café are just 50 percent of the experience. The other half is right on its menu.

Café by the Ruins offers an array of fresh and organic sumptuous and sometimes bizarre menu for a luscious gastronomic journey. There are no artificial ingredients, preservatives, or enhancers used for the food. The menu is not constricting as it is changed every quarter based on the availability of the season's goods. This is to ensure that only fresh and naturally-produced commodity is served.

While there are other food establishments in Baguio City offering fresh and organic menu, Café by the Ruins stands out not only because of its artistic ambiance but also because of its carabao's milk-based concoctions. Because of this, the café is an A-list among thousands of patrons, a testimony attested to by netizens and by the international award it recently bagged for being "one of the best





Café by the Ruins offers an array of fresh and organic sumptuous and sometimes bizarre menu for a luscious gastronomic journey.



restaurants in the country”.

Evidently, one can lose his or herself in the luxury of indulging in the delight of partaking organic and fresh dishes, pastries, and drinks. These are just some of the products made richer and better by carabao’s milk offered by Café by the Ruins.

Coffee and chocolate drinks

Using a siphon coffee maker, sipping coffee prepared by the café makes it a more fantastic experience. This kind of brewing filters the ground coffee efficiently bringing out the best in this drink and leaving the cup generally clean.

The brewed coffee is served with a jigger of carabao’s milk or cow’s milk (depending on the client’s preference), making it an “A” for coffee aficionados.

Cold coffee is also available in which the brewed coffee is blended with milk and cream. It is called *Iced Ruins’ Coffee*.

It also serves civet coffee, the world’s priciest, at a very affordable price.

Chocolate, either eaten as a bar or taken as a drink, is also heaven to take. It becomes more delectable when mixed with carabao’s milk.

Its *Rizal’s tsokolat-e* served in a hero’s cup of hot carabao’s milk blended

with chocolate is a perfect fusion. Their demitasse chocolate in a mini cup made from dark, bittersweet chocolate cream, cream from carabao’s milk, muscovado sugar, and cinnamon is also a delight to partake.

Breads and spreads

Bread is one of the oldest prepared foods. It comes in various slices, flavors, and even colors. Anyone can actually make it himself or herself. At Café by the Ruins, however, the bread is no ordinary product. It is improved by adding carabao’s milk for a tastier, healthier, and extraordinary treat.

Appetizers

The *dynamite cheese sticks* composed of long, green chilis stuffed with carabao’s milk cheese in spring rolls explodes in goodness and creaminess inside the partaker’s mouth while it leaves a spicy-sweet-creamy tinge as it slides down the throat.

Salad

It is a garden fresh greens mixed with fried kesong puti (white cheese) and butter seasoned with caramelized pili nuts.

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A close-up photograph of a chocolate cake with white cream and a fork cutting into it. The cake is dark brown and moist, with a thick layer of white cream on top. A silver fork is inserted into the cake, lifting a small piece. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, possibly a plate or a wall. The text 'Milk-laced cuisine in fine dining' is overlaid on the top left in a yellow, hand-drawn style font.

Milk-laced cuisine in fine dining

Text and photos by
ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

Anyone who visits Bistro Filipino, owned by Chef Roland Laudico and wife Jacqueline in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, is sure to be embraced with a certain sense of warmth.

Firstly, the ambience is an exception to the Metro's bustle with its offering of a cozy niché. Secondly, it's anybody's comfort zone which ensures a gastronomic treat that is truly Filipino yet at par with the world's best.

Bistro Filipino opened to the public in 2006 as a fine dining restaurant with defined difference. It advocates an all-Filipino cuisine without disregard for the international taste.

This advocacy is proven in the culinary course of Bistro Filipino. Each food item is sure to bring any diner an experience of the exciting innovation of traditional Filipino cuisine in a world-class setting.

Chef Jacq, the Bistro's executive pastry chef, said they are proud to offer food items that are not only sumptuous but are sure to uphold a belief that will support the local economy thru their choice of ingredients.

"We believe in promoting Filipino cuisine. To do that, we buy our ingredients only from local suppliers. Each item has to be purely Filipino in nature and in taste," she said.

CHOCOLATE MOLTEN cake



She added that each dish is carefully handled from the preparation of ingredients up to the actual plating. Definitely, Chef Jacq stressed, they are not using synthetic powders to make their dishes tasty. None of the items in their course, she said, are tampered.

Bistro Filipino is a restaurant known for its “traditional cuisine prepared in an innovative way”, Chef Jacq emphasized.

One ingredient that has taken an important role in Chef Jacq’s kitchen is carabao’s milk.

“Carabao’s milk is very Filipino,” she said.

She added that she particularly likes to add carabao’s milk in their dishes because it makes them tastier, richer, and creamier, exuding better mouth fill.

Carabao’s milk, she said, is also used to thicken soups and sauces. Chef Laudico’s originals, such as its desserts, are also extensively complemented with carabao’s milk. They include *halo-halo sherbet* and *molten chocolate cake*.

The all-time Filipino favorite dessert and summer refresher, *halo-halo*, is a must-try course ender at Bistro Filipino. It is made of home-made carabao’s milk-based ice cream, fruits, beans, *leche flan*, and ube cookies.

What makes Bistro Filipino’s *halo-*

halo more unique is the three-tier setting that momentarily mesmerizes when served. After a while, it lures partakers to take a spoonful at a time until the whole generous serving is finished.

Each order of *halo-halo*, Chef Jacq shared, is also a generous serving of one and a half cup of carabao’s milk.

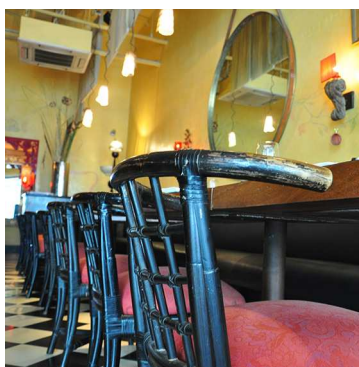
Another entrée in Chef Jacq’s grand offering, which she terms as *Patisserie Filipino*, is the molten chocolate cake. This dessert, an item that is a perennial favorite among Bistro Filipino customers, is in every bite true to its name. The first bite is as engaging as the first time anyone lays his or her eyes on the plated sweet treat.

A perfect mixture of tablea chocolate, carabao’s milk-based ice cream, *dulce de leche*, and *barako coffee tuille*, the *molten chocolate cake* comes as a delightful finale at the end of a meal course.

“We like to challenge the perception that Filipino food is not for fine dining. Each dish that we bring out from the kitchen is an output of artful work and diligent labor,” Chef Jacq said.

Bistro Filipino serves full courses, a dining experience that is similar to the European setting, she added.

This ambience has won the loyal patronage of its high-class guests who frequent Bistro Filipino. They keep coming back because of the restaurant’s



unparalleled cuisine that is imitated but not surpassed by others in the business that are claiming to offer the same fine Filipino fare.

Asked about sustaining a top-notch course and impeccable service to its guests, Chef Jacq had a few reminders to young and budding chefs alike.

Before a chef can pull off a creation, she said, he or she has to master the basic culinary skills. It will prove to be a helpful tip especially in the very basic preparation of stocks and sauces, she added.

With background training from a French chef, Chef Jacq also emphasized the importance of being open to criticisms, receptiveness to learning, passion at work, and respect for the craft.

“When we go out and dine in other restaurants, we do not criticize and compare the dishes with ours. Unless we are called to judge professionally, we don’t easily criticize because we know how much heart and soul goes in every dish,” she said.

Finally, Chef Jacq said, “I look at my craft as an important part of any celebration. That’s where I find pride in my work.” 🍷🍷

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Roland Laudico | Jacqueline Laudico
Net 2 Building Ground Floor, 3rd Avenue,
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Tel. No. (02) 856.0541
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sherbet HALO-HALO





muy bella

carabao bella

By KHRIZIE EVERT MARCELO-PADRE
Photos by ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

It all started as a simple hobby for Ma. Victoria Arlette Aranas-Feliciano—a hobby that eventually catapulted her to business venture. She soon engaged in the lucrative practice of baking and decorating cakes to cooking goodies for local coffee shops in her place in Angeles City, Pampanga.

Arlette, as she is fondly called, started by taking lessons and training at the Heny Sison Culinary School for cupcakes and bread-making. In 2007,

she completed her course on “Essential Baking and Pastry Series”.

Knowing that in order to make it big in the baking business, she had to stand out among the rest. She relied on using carabao’s milk for her mouth-watering baked products and found her baking glory in it.

Carabao’s milk, which is abundantly available in Pampanga, has been a key ingredient to many sweet delicacies and native dishes which are enjoyed and loved by Capampangans. Arlette capitalized on this penchant of her provincemates for carabao’s milk in her delicacies and did not regret it.

With the help of Chef Vicky Villanueva of the Heny Sison Culinary School, she passionately crafted in those nights of hard work and sleeplessness, her own line of pastries all made from carabao’s milk. In 2010, armed with the knowledge and passion for cooking, she then started the “Cara Bella by Arlette—The House of Carabao Milk Pastries”. Her first outlet was at Petron Lakeshore,

San Fernando, Pampanga, and later on moved to another location.

“We have menus filled with old favorites as well as new must-tries. These include *yema cake*, *dulce de leche cake*, *decadent chocolate cake*, *pastillas sans rival*, *brazo de mercedes* and *frozen brazo*, all of which are made richer, creamier and more delectable by carabao’s milk,” Arlette said.

Her pastry shop, she said, also offers brick oven-baked pizzas in two different flavors: a must-try *aligue* (hardened fat of crabs) and *pepperoni*. The pizza delight is in thin and crispy crust laden with fresh mozzarella cheese, also made from carabao’s milk, all the way up to its edges.

Her best-seller, she said, is the *yema cake*. Also known as *milk custard cake*, the yema filling, mixed with carabao’s milk, is spread evenly and generously atop two layers of soft and fluffy sponge cake filled with whipped cream.

The luscious cake is topped with perfectly torched caramelized sugar. The right amount of sweetness compliments the creaminess of its yema filling.

The perfect blend of its flavor tastes light, fluffy, and rich that make the Cara Bella's *yema cake* version a delightful treat.

The *yema cake* is available in various sizes: round (8"x12", Php635), rectangular (8"x12", Php790), and a 3-inch round mini *yema cake* (Php135).

According to Arlette, *yema* fillings are pre-cooked a day before it is used for baking to help in preventing the spoilage of the carabao's milk.

She also ensures that the other ingredients like eggs and flour are of good quality. An average of 10 to 20 liters of carabao's milk is brought to her shop every week.

Arlette said sweets-lovers are also relishing their other tempting treats such as the *dulce de leche* and *sans rival* cakes.

The *dulce de leche*, she said, is a butter cake filled with luscious sauce.

Priced at Php825 (8"x12") and Php115 per slice, it is also one of the favorites by the customers, she said.

The classic *sans rival*, on the other hand, is a five-layer crispy meringue loaded with ground cashew nuts held together by rich pastillas cream filling and pastillas-flavored French buttercream. Chopped cashew nuts pepper the outer cover of the whole cake.

The cake is available in pastillas and toffee flavors. An eight-inch round *sans rival* cake is priced at Php1,185.

The bakeshop is in its peak season during the holidays, Valentine's Day celebration, and on graduation days.

Her customers also include medical representatives who buy her pastries as token or giveaways for their respective clients.

Other superb treats in Cara Bella's

offerings include *panna cotta*, *leche flan*, *chocolate crinkles*, *best-ever choco chip cookies*, *dulce de gatas*, *red velvet cupcakes*, *chocolate cupcakes*, *ensaymada*, *home-made doughnuts*, and *malunggay-flavored pandesal*.

Arlette is assisted by Jean Divina, 20, who has been with her for almost three years now.

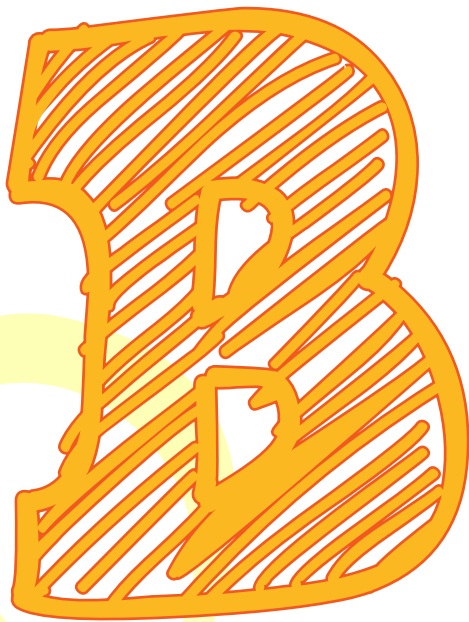
Cara Bella also accepts made-to-order pastries and customized cake design. It does catering, too. It also participates in bazaars, trade fairs, and exhibits and makes use of online and social networking sites for products promotion.

In Quezon City, Cara Bella's new shop, is made more spacious and designed to have a bakeshop-like image to showcase its identity and to attract more and more customers. 🍪

Store Contact and Address:
Ma. Victoria Arlette Aranas-Feliciano
1043 Marcon Bldg., Del Monte Ave.,
Quezon City | Tel No. (02) 569.2436

"The carabao's milk is an ideal ingredient in making bread and pastries. When I started my business, I was confident that my creations will be loved by customers because of it."

Freshly-baked malunggay pan de sal with kesong puti filling



bibingka with cheesy allure

Text and photos by
ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

Its aroma lures anyone to plunge a bite for personal pleasure. When that happens, it results in nothing but a perfect rendezvous with its delicate yet chewy goodness.

Of course, it is *bibingka*, that favorite Filipino rice cake which is cooked with fire on top and underneath.

When served steaming hot, its melting cheese on top is a delectable sight to behold. It has become a come-on attraction, not to mention its familiar smell of withering banana leaves scorched with embers.

That sensory experience is the absolute reason for those families crowding *bibingka* stalls after attending the nine-day masses at Christmastime to order and savor once more this delicacy.

At the Café Via Mare restaurant, this Yuletide fare is brought to a notch higher. First, it is priced relatively higher at Php115 and second and more importantly, it is innovated to become a premium choice among the restaurant's top-class clientele.

Its innovation is differentiated with

the use of the finest-quality glutinous rice made into "galapong" (ground rice flour) and kesong puti (white cheese made from carabao's milk).

The restaurant offers two variants of *bibingka*. One is filled with kesong puti and salted duck's egg and the other is topped with Edam cheese (queso de bola).

Via Mare Corporation's marketing officer Sheryll Marco said their *bibingka* takes the foremost spot in the roster of finest *bibingkas* in the market.

"This is because we use only the best ingredients for our product. This is proven by the well safeguarded secret of making our *bibingka* of different quality that is constantly a favored preference among *balikbayans*," she said.

Sheryll said they get their daily supply of kesong puti from Los Baños, Laguna.

"We order 20 to 25 kg of kesong puti every day," she said.

To ensure the consistency of their products, Sheryll shared that Via Mare observes rigorous quality control procedures. Every dish that they serve, she said, conforms to the highest standards of Current Good Manufacturing Practices.

"*Bibingka* with Laguna cheese is one of the café's signature items. It is pricier compared to other *bibingkas* in the market because we use only the finest ingredients. We also go the extra mile in

its preparation and cooking processes," Sheryll shared.

It is not the significant price tag that comes with a serving of gourmet food but the pleasure that is derived from it that defines a truly satisfying dining experience.

This has been Via Mare's corporate strength as a restaurant and catering company since its establishment in 1975.

Its patrons revel on that unique experience and do not mind paying for its food items that are relatively higher in price. The pleasurable dining encounter is what makes their visit to that restaurant truly worthwhile.

The Café Via Mare prides itself as one of the pioneers of establishing a café that is truly Filipino. It carved its niche in the Filipino taste with its offering of delectable fares such as *puto bumbong*, *dinuguan*, and *pancit luglog*, aside from *bibingka*.

These delicacies are among Café Via Mare's top five best-sellers based on the records of its point-of-sales machines.

Among these heartwarming fares, it is *bibingka*, though, which remains to be a perennial topic and subject of praises in many various food blogs that it became the most recommended must-try food item at the Café Via Mare.

With the kind of standards that Via Mare upholds to suit the discriminating taste of its customers, its position as a premiere café will remain intact. 🍴

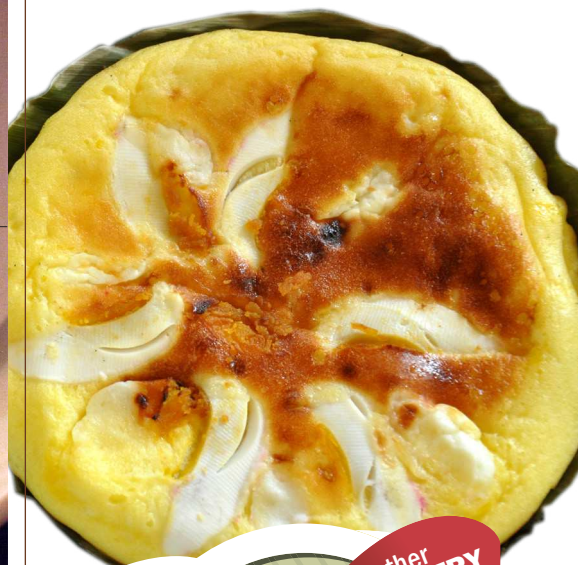


Via Maré Executive Offices

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Another
MUST-TRY

FERINO'S bibingka

Text and photo by
ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

Voted by food bloggers as one of the top 10 best bibingkas in the Metro, Ferino's bibingka gained its popularity because of its chiffon-like texture.

It is also soft in every bite even after it has cooled down.

Ferino's has four variants of bibingka for customers to choose from: bibingka special, bibingka super, bibingka extra super, and bibingcute (mini bibingka).

All of these are used with pure "galapong" (ground rice flour), fresh eggs, and topped with salted egg. The "extra super" comes with a special garnishing of kesong puti which is made from carabao's milk.

Store Contact and Address:
Francisco Food Specialties
117 Kalayaan Avenue, Barangay Central
Quezon City, Philippines
Tel. No.: (02) 441-2118 | Mobile: 0923-739.270
eMail: info@ferinosbibingka.com.ph

Bibingka with Laguna cheese and queso de bola at Php138 per order at Via Maré

Oh, my caffé!



By ANSELMO S. ROQUE

Photos by ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

It's a confusing world. This business of buying in the grocery store.

You see, I was asked to go buy something. Like laundry soap, bath soap, and others.

For the laundry soap, the grocery store attendant asked: "Is it in bar or liquid form? *Ariel, Surf, Pride, Champion, Bonux, Downy...*? Three-in-one? White, blue, pink, or red? With calamansi or lemon? Is it *Ivory, Dove, Hermes, Kojic, Lanelle Kojic, Papaya, Gluta*? With oatmeal? With carrots? With rice bran? Oh, my! Back then, I will just say *Super Wheel* or *Perla* for laundry soap and *Camay* or *Lux* and that's it.

I did not attempt to ask the attendant for the "others" in my list. I may be asked: Is it non-wing or winged-type? Ultra thin? Slim? Regular? Maxi? Super? All-night? Dry?

I thought of getting coffee, to help soothe my confusion. But then, where? Coffee shop? Café? Coffee Bar? Coffee Seller? Bistro? Cafeteria? Chophouse? Coffee Room? Java Shop? And what kind of coffee?

Back then, it was a simple exercise if I wanted to sip coffee. I will go, walk a little distance, sit at *Aleng Nene's Carinderia* and order coffee. A hot steaming coffee in a *sarten* (metallic

cup with a handle) is handed with the sugar in a small container and the milk in a milk can. At times, I order *pan de sal* or, sometimes, *putok*—that one with a little crack in one side of the bun.

Sometimes, whenever I strayed in the sidewalk across the bus terminal near the public market, I would order coffee and while standing, would sip it while watching and appreciating the slices of ordinary day life of common people.

Or, walking further, I will find another favorite meeting place of the *masa* (common people). It is called “Hilton” or *hila ng kariton* (pulled by cart). On a long *bangko* (wooden bench), I would sip my hot coffee served in a thick transparent glass.

By the way, the drinking glass in that “Hilton” center was seen everywhere. It proliferated, and was mistaken as the National Drinking Glass of the Philippines, because it was the container for a certain kind of a coffee brand.

And by the way, I met again *Aling Otya*, she of the “Hilton” fame. She said she owns two eateries now, the “SM at Iba Pa” (SM is for Sa Malamig). She certainly gave face to the phrase “world of endless opportunities. . .”

Then came the instant coffee, then “three in one”, “four in one”, and even “seven in one”.

And these new ones: *Americano*, *Capuccino*, *Latte*, *Caramel macchiato*, *Moca*, *Espresso shot*, *Doppio*, *Lunggo*... Oh, my coffee, errr, my café! You not only confused me. You brutalized me! Promise.

I decided to confront the confusion head-on. I went to “Milka Krem” that newly opened dairy products outlet at the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC). Although it specializes on many milk products, it also offers café with carabao’s milk, of course.

My ignorance was vanished by the “barrista” – Sherry Rose Licuanan and storekeeper Roshelle de Vera. They underwent a training conducted by

the “Philippine Barrista and Coffee Academy”.

Join me in my sojourn in knowing “café”.

The drinking of coffee is as old as eight centuries ago - or six centuries ago depending on what account to believe. One account said that in a monastery in Yemen in mid-15th century, a monk who was given an unknown berry threw it in a fire thinking it was poisonous. The aroma of the roasted berries enticed him, though. Placing the roasted berry in a cup, he poured water in it, and sipped it.

That was the world’s first cup of coffee!

In the world, the popular varieties are *Arabica*, *Robusta*, and the other, would you believe? —“Kape Barako or Coffee Barako”.

Going back to the “café”, here are their preparations:

1. *CaféAmericano*: one shot of black coffee in a demitasse (seven to nine grams of espresso added with water), no sugar, no cream.

2. *CaféCappuccino*: one shot espresso coffee, carabao’s milk (four ounces per cup), 10% milk foam, and no sugar.

3. *CaféLatte*: one shot espresso and five ounces milk. Water and sugar

depend on customer’s preference.

4. *CaféCaramel Macchiato*: one shot espresso coffee, one half ounce of caramel (simple syrup), six ounces milk, and 10% foam.

5. *CaféMocha*: one shot of espresso coffee, half ounce of caramel, six ounces of milk, milk foam, dark chocolate, and water. Sugar depends on customer’s preference.

They are “Espresso-based”. One *Espresso shot* is seven to nine grams of ground coffee brewed for 20 to 30 seconds. Double it for *doppio*. For *lunggo*, seven to nine grams of coffee brewed 25 to 35 seconds.

Their drinking cups or glasses? Demitasse is the smallest cup. There is also Irish glass and pilsener.

That’s for your “hot café”.

There’s also *Iced Coffee*, *Iced Latte*, *Iced Mocha*, *Iced White Mocha*, and *frappes* which are also coffee-based.

For their prices, which one: Php50, Php60, Php80, Php85, Php100, Php115, Php135? The answer: All of them depending on which order you make.

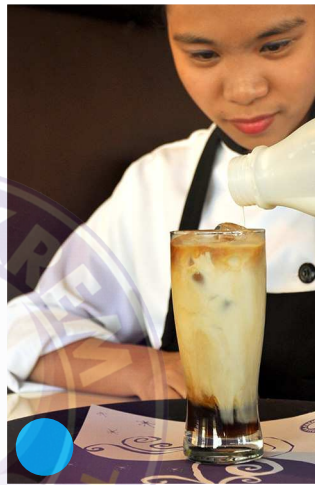
Café, anyone? ☺

Store Contact and Address:
**Philippine Carabao Center
National Headquarters and Gene Pool**
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Tel. No. (044) 940.7826
eMail: milkakrem@gmail.com

Milka

World of Health

Photos by ROWENA G. BUMANLAG



- Caramel Macchiato ●
- Café Latté ● ● Cappuccino
- European Dark Chocolate ● ● Iced White Mocha
- White Mocha Frappé ● ● Hot Green Tea Matcha

A close-up photograph of a white ceramic coffee cup filled with a latte. The coffee has a rich brown color with a thick layer of white foam on top. The foam is decorated with latte art, featuring several heart-like shapes. The cup sits on a matching white saucer, and a silver spoon is placed on the saucer in the foreground. The background is a dark brown, textured surface, possibly a woven placemat.

Krema thy Delights

Social Responsibility

Milka Krem is an avenue to empower smallholder farmers as it opens the door to the commercial market and provides the opportunity for value-adding and greater income.

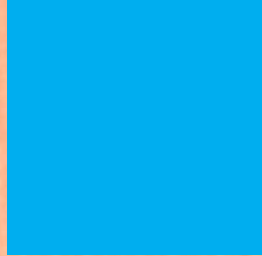
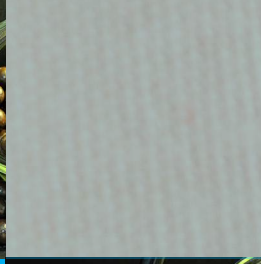
Milka Krem exists for the noble purpose of providing a valuable venue for the production and marketing of high quality buffalo milk products.

Vision and passion dictate the movers of Milka Krem to help create a better future for dairy farmers.

Fresh & Natural

Milka Krem products are anchored on best and scientific practices done by its institutional proponent.

The raw milk collected daily as source of products comes from healthy animals that are well taken care of and individually managed by smallholder farmers and members of cooperatives. Dairy buffaloes are fed with naturally-grown forage and feeds, which are selected and manually harvested, to guarantee the animals' sound and healthy diet essential for the production of fresh and natural milk.



milk SHAKE it!

Text and photos by
ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

A whip of sweet flavorings and creamy milk poured altogether into a glass of crushed ice makes up for a refreshing milkshake that anyone during the scorching summer days would want to dash in to indulge.

Couple Dinualdo and Marlene Yap capitalized on the advantage of this treat when they conceptualized to put up their business which they named “The Carabao Milkshake Company” in 2011.

The stall, located in Puregold Q1 in Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, offers an array of carabao’s milk-based milkshakes and tea concoctions.

Customers may choose from a

variety of blends whether they are chocolate or fruit lovers. For their chocolate-based flavors they have developed five delights: choco choco, choco mousse, nutty choco, cookies and cream, and coffee crumble.

Those who prefer to indulge on fruity blends, may choose from the flavors of mango, strawberry, yogurt, and avocado.

An average of 70 liters of carabao’s milk, which they get from PCC, is easily sold out in a week. Aside from using the milk to complement their milkshakes, the company is also distributing pasteurized milk.

The business, Dino Yap said, has higher mission than earning profit. Their foundation in putting up the carabao milkshake company, he added, was based on the recognition that many smallholder farmers are now benefitting from carabao’s milk.

“We always tell our customers that every drink they order from our stall helps generate income for our local

carabao raisers,” Dino further said.

“We want to be able to help Filipino farmers become empowered with our little contribution to the local dairy industry,” he added.

Aside from that, Dino said, the company is helping encourage its customers to take care of their health by making wise food choices.

“Definitely, carabao’s milk is a healthy option,” he said.

Both industrial engineers by profession, Dino and Marlene said they see the great future that carabao’s milk offers to entrepreneurs like them and to the smallholder farmers.

“We commit to our advocacy of supporting the local dairy industry in the simplest form we can and we stand to uphold this campaign as long as we are in this business,” Dino said. 🐮

Store Contact and Address:
Dinualdo Yap
Puregold Q1, Araneta Ave.,
Quezon City | Tel. No. (02) 569.2436

Another
MUST-TRY

CHUCK'S DELI'S carabao milkshake

Text and photo by
ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

None but a milkshake with carabao's milk is smoother and creamier.

With this version of Chuck's Deli, no competitor will even come close with its use of three sinful scoops of Arce Dairy ice cream.

Surely, anyone with a discriminating affection for food will exalt the heavenly taste of this concoction right on his or her first encounter.

Flavors include vanilla, chocolate, quezo real, caramel, coffee crumble, strawberry, and avocado.



Store Contact and Address:

G/F Serendra Piazza

(Along the driveway, across Market! Market!),

Bonifacio High St., Bonifacio Global City,

Taguig City, 1634, Metro Manila

Tel. No. (02) 576.4210 | (02) 846.1734

Mobile No. (0923) 398.6378



Kabigting's

halo-halo

A refreshing, 'manyaman' treat!

By CARLA F. PADILLA
Photos by JOAHNA G. GOYAGOY

In tropical Philippines, Filipinos have a never-ending craving for something refreshing to beat the oppressive scorching heat.

Halo-halo, a popular Filipino dessert which is a mixture of shaved ice, evaporated milk, and various tropical fruits, tops the list of treats that refresh the weary, restive bodies.

It is already in the psyche of the Filipino culture that sells, especially in summer season, like a hot commodity for going and alike.

One of the Filipino families which found fortune in the *halo-halo* business is the Kabigtings which originated in Arayat, Pampanga. They founded and named their venture as "Kabigting's Halo-halo."

Kabigting's *halo-halo* has set its standards beyond the traditional and innovated its product by flavoring using only three main ingredients: pastillas (milk candy made from carabao's milk), mashed beans, and sweet corn.

According to Jacinto Kabigting, the owner, their success began thru a series of experiments to come up with an exotic flavor for their *halo-halo*.

Started as a small eatery in the 1970's, Kabigting's *halo-halo* was offered with seven ingredients. They noticed, however, that a lot of these ingredients lessen the refreshing effect of the dessert so they decided to simplify it.

Simplicity at its finest

Out of curiosity, Geraldine Kabigting, a sister of Jacinto, suggested adding the simple yet enticing flavor of pastillas as one of their main ingredients.

"Ang mga Capampangan kapag nagkaroon ng interes sa pagkain, hindi tumitigil hangga't hindi matutunan lutuin iyon. Kaya nung nagka-interes ako sa pastillas de leche na gawa sa gatas ng kalabaw, inaral kong gawin iyon at naisip namin na kaysa ice cream ang gamitin sa halo-halo, pastillas na lang (The Capampangans, when they are hooked up into a certain food, they don't stop until they master how to do it themselves. That is why when I became interested in carabao's milk pastillas de leche, I studied how to do it and decided to use it in our halo-halo instead of ice cream)," said Geraldine.

Store Contact and Address:
Jacinto Kabigting | Irene Kabigting

Main Store: Paralaya, Arayat, Pampanga

Mobile No. (0920) 5009.439

Branch Store: 2nd flr., Nepo Mall Angeles City, Pampanga

Tel. No. (045) 630.1219

The Kabigtings achieved the perfect sweetness in their *halo-halo* with the use of pastillas. Yet, still unsatisfied, they experimented in making their *halo-halo* creamier without increasing the production cost. They later came up with a perfectly mashed beans as one of the main ingredients.

“Parang trial and error ang nangyari sa akin noon sa pagluluto ng beans. Hindi ako tumigil hangga’t di ko makuha ‘yung tamang texture n’ya kapag naluto na. Nang malaon, nakuha ko rin kung paano dapat gawin iyon. . . Hayun, tuluy-tuloy na pagkatapos (I underwent trial and error method in cooking the beans. I didn’t stop until I got the right texture. I got it. So it was a go afterwards),” Jacinto said.

Their ‘keep it plain and simple’ technique in making *halo-halo* was immediately relished much by the people in their town. Words rapidly spread and business went on at a brisk.

A trade secret

In Pampanga, where the food business competition is very keen, the Kabigtings never revealed how the beans are cooked and how they perfectly mix the three ingredients all together. Of course, it is a trade secret, a secret that spells their *halo-halo* as an exotic and famous Capampangan treat.

Its all-natural sweetness coming from carabao’s milk pastillas and creaminess from the mashed beans keep their customers coming back for more.

One thing that is no secret about their *halo-halo*, though, is that its *halo-halo* is like a gospel that spreads easily because of their satisfied and loyal customers.

Its popularity in Pampanga was further revved up when the staff of *Travel Time* with Susan Calo featured them on national television show which was also aired in *The Filipino Channel* abroad.

From then on, the *balikbayans* in Pampanga, and even from other parts of the country, never missed savoring the famous *halo-halo*. They became loyal customers of the Kabigtings since then until today.

Kabigting’s *halo-halo* now has eight branches and two of them were franchised by private entrepreneurs.

The other branches in Pampanga can be found at the Nepo Mall in Angeles City, Marquee Mall in San Fernando City, Guagua, and in Arayat.

Halo-halo of the stars

Jacinto doesn’t have to pay for advertisements for his business as national magazine, television shows, and newspapers come to feature the so-called Arayat’s Pride.

The Kabigtings are very proud to say that even celebrities, and big names in politics including the former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, visited their main branch in Arayat to enjoy their *halo-halo*.

There was even a time that the former president brought some hundred glasses of *halo-halo* all the way from the airport to Malacanañ thru a private plane.

Former senator Tessie Aquino-Oreta, they said, also frequently visits the place to partake *halo-halo* and takes home boxes of carabao’s milk pastillas.

Genuine service with care for customer loyalty

The Kabigtings take pride in their increasing number of loyal customers. This, they said, is because of the friendship and trust they have established in this business.

“Even if we have stiff competition, it’s okay for us since we are already contented with what we have done and are doing,” Jacinto said.

Jacinto also said he can’t still believe that their product is being featured not only on the internet but also on print and TV.

Because of this, the Kabigtings are committed to never take their business for granted as a payback to their loyal customers who made their *halo-halo* a click to thousands of patrons. 🌸



Couple Jacinto and Florencia Kabigting

By CARLA F. PADILLA
Photo by JOAHNA G. GOYAGOY

After years of painstaking experimentations, the Dairy Training and Research Institute (DTRI), has developed its own version of Gouda that has unique and intense flavor.

The Gouda cheese is a semi-firm Dutch cheese made from cow's milk. Its name comes from a place in the Netherlands where it originated from.

While "gouda" is already a generic name, how to make it different from the original challenged Ms. Olivia C. Emata, a university researcher in the Animal and Dairy Sciences Cluster of the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB).

She delved into using carabao's milk in making Gouda and succeeded. She introduced their Gouda cheese last Christmas.

The goodness of Gouda

Gouda, when partaking it, is best matched with fruit and wine. Adding pasta or bread, it can make a haymaker special treat for *Noche Buena*.

Just like Gouda's best match, which is the wine, the older this cheese gets, the more intense its flavor becomes.

Its minimum ripening age ranges from one to six months and it can be preserved up to 24 months by encasing it in a wax or a vacuum pack. As it ages, it develops a caramel sweetness and stronger flavor.

Goudah! Gouda

The Gouda from carabao's milk

The experiment for the production of this cheese using carabao's milk with special coagulants was pioneered by UPLB professor Dr. Clara Davide in the 1980's. However, the texture was not as perfect as that of the Gouda from cow's milk. This is because carabao's milk's has high fat content which made the finished product hard as it ripened.

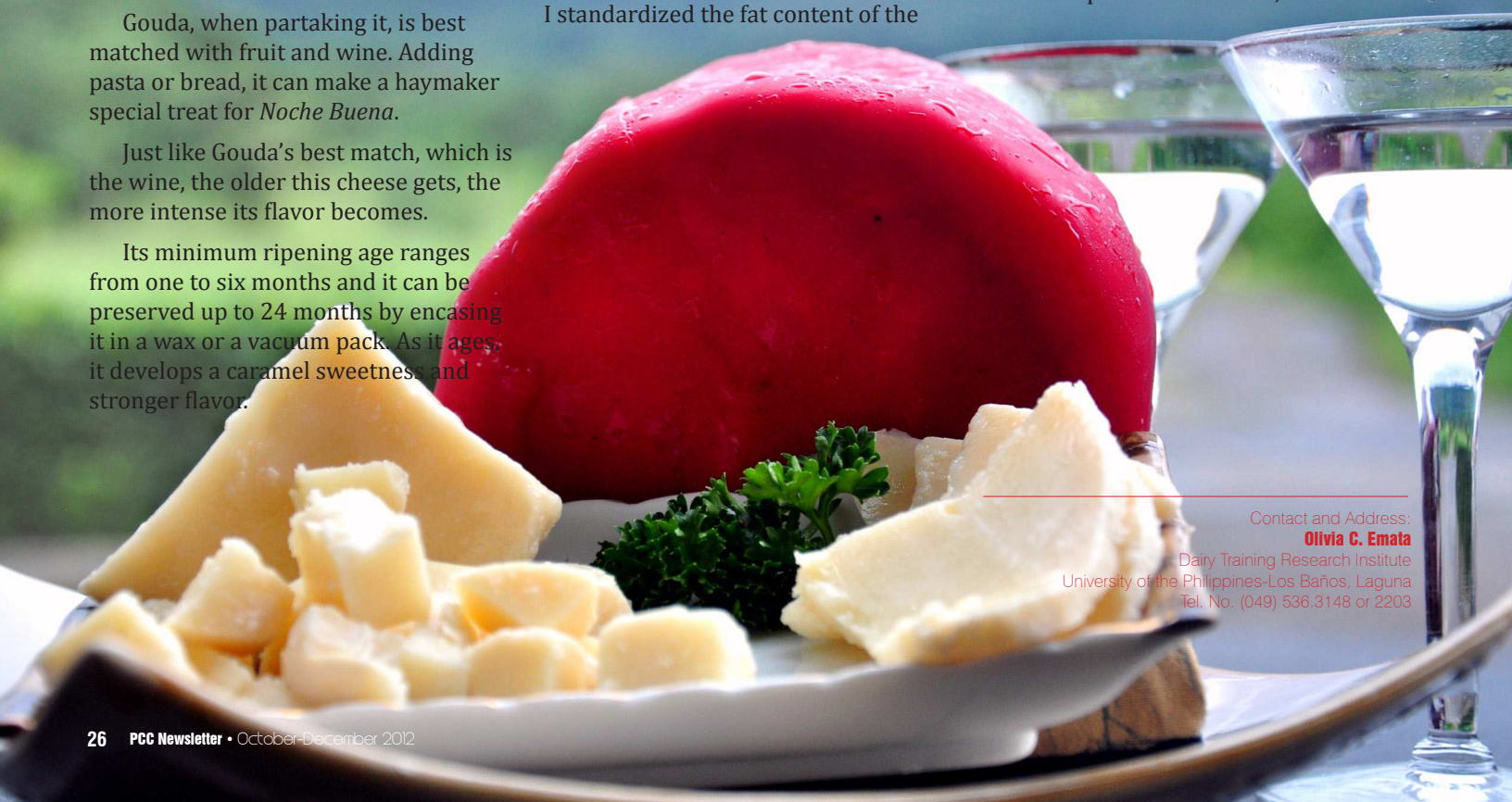
Last year, with the help of center director Dr. Arnel del Barrio of the Philippine Carabao Center at UPLB, Olivia continued the project of Dr. Davide. She used a reconstituted skim milk to perfect the texture of the Gouda.

"By adding reconstituted skim milk, I standardized the fat content of the

carabao's milk from 7.4 per cent to 3.5 per cent. It is important to lower the fat content of the milk to soften and smoothen the cheese even on its ripening period. That's how I came up with the perfect texture," said Olivia.

The DTRI then ventured into producing more Gouda cheese. At one point, a 300 li of carabao's milk was used in its processing and made 36 kilos of cheese that sold like hotcakes to European and American customers.

"They were amused by the lighter color of the cheese and, of course, its creamy flavor. They said it was their first time to taste Gouda made from carabao's milk and attested that it is as good as the ones made from cow's milk in other parts of the world," Olivia said.



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Gouda



By ROBINSON VALENZONA
Photo by ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

The longer it ages,
the tastier it becomes.

This is what a Gouda cheese is like.

Gouda cheese is a washed-curd and semi-hard kind of cheese with a creamy yellow paste made of whole ripened milk.

Aside from its extensive processing, the Gouda cheese is also fermented naturally. The fermentation process usually lasts for two days. With these characteristics, this product is categorized as a high-end cheese.

At Milka Krem, the Gouda is made better, richer, and nutritious because it is made from pure carabao's milk. Aside from Calcium, Gouda is also rich in Zinc, Phosphorus, Vitamins A, B2, and B12.

Priced at Php70 per 100 grams, the product is now available at the Milka Krem.



DTRI's Gouda cheese is affordable. Priced at Php90 per 100 grams, the customers continue relishing the taste of this Gouda which underwent improvement over the years.



May de Vera

Flower-like PASTILLAS

...returns are sweeter

By KHRIZIE EVERT M. PADRE
Photos by ROWENA G. BUMANLAG

Excellent talents are rewarded by sweet returns.

Take the case of May de Vera, the owner and brain behind the pioneer maker of flower-like pastillas—Sweet Blooms Cakes and Delicacies.

Sweet Blooms prides itself by offering creatively-crafted floral arrangements all made out of pastillas.

These pastillas made into flowers are created in a colorful variety of rose buds arranged in unique and stylish bouquets and baskets.

“Roses are best known as the ideal gift for romantic occasions, commercial perfumery, and commercial cut flower crops. So, we thought of making edible roses to make it more appealing, and at the same time, more heartwarming,” May said.

What makes these flower-like pastillas more unique is that it is made from

carabao’s milk. According to her, each edible flower is prepared in a special way, handled with care to ensure that the gift provides a unique memory for every customer’s “special someone” after the tasty treats have been enjoyed.

She inherited her creative talent in floral design from her mother, Remy Tiburcio, who is from Isabela. Aling Remy, as she is fondly called, concocted the original recipe for the floral pastillas. She made the pastillas into rose petals which then adorned centerpieces in her restaurant business and also served as gifts. She also sold them in schools in their community.

It was in 2008 when May decided to venture into the business of pastillas-making after mastering the recipe of their home-made pastillas over the years.

“Sweet Blooms was born out of passion and patience to produce these flower-like creations. I used to give them as a gift to my boyfriend, who is now my husband. My mother-in-law got interested in

“By being creative and providing continuous improvement on our products and floral designs, we know we are contributing something special to our customers in their special occasions.”



Staff members of Sweet Blooms at SM North Edsa

my creations and became my first client. From there, I started to offer these home-made products to different online marketing sites and bazaars,” May said.

During exhibits, May offer free-taste spree of their products to attract customers. At the start, she said, it was really difficult to sell their products as they [customers] thought that what she was selling were candles.

After some time, she said, the customers started to pour in and even big-time clients made bulk orders. That was the time that she experienced earning an amount equivalent to a month’s earnings in just a day.

Her staff is composed of 18 personnel, 11 of whom are assigned in the production area located in her residence. Their average production in 12 hours can reach up to 5,000 pieces of flower-like pastillas. Their peak months are November, January, and especially February which is in time for the Valentine’s Day celebration.

According to May, one recipe requires two liters of carabao’s milk which can make 55 pieces of pastillas-made rose petals. Eight different colors are also made available for their clients.

Their products can last for 45 days.

“The pastillas-made flowers with carabao’s milk are available only on

a made-to-order basis. Most of our *balikbayan* clients like the original recipe, so they place their order ahead of time. We require a minimum of 55 pieces per color in every order and three days lead time to deliver their orders,” May said.

Due to high demand for their products, Sweet Blooms’ products are now available for delivery and early reservation via phone call.

“We also recommend the pastillas-made flowers from carabao’s milk to people who want a sugar-free product since we don’t really add sugar when we use carabao’s milk in making it,” she said.

She also added that most of their milk supply come from Bulacan.

May never hesitates in using carabao’s milk in their products because she wants to promote this special Filipino delicacy.

May believes in the power of “word of mouth” in promoting her products. One of the reasons why her business is still growing is attributed to the satisfaction of their clients thru her products. Eventually, she said, their clients promote the products themselves.

Devoted in ensuring the quality of her products, she also sees to it that

every product is properly labeled and sealed to assure clients of product specifications.

Currently, Sweet Blooms has four branches. They are located in Quezon City, SM Megamall, SM North Edsa, and The Landmark.

The delivery in every branch is made every day, which is done on a policy of “first-in, first-out” basis. Wholesale orders are given 30 per cent discount.

Sweet Blooms’ customers can choose from different flower designs like Rose, Sunflower, Daisy, Chrysanthemum and Calla Lily. Party characters like Mickey and Minnie, Thomas the Train, and Hello Kitty designs are also available for children’s party. Made-to-order fondant cakes, cupcakes, *leche flan* and *eggche flan* (leche flan in egg shell) are also made for special occasions.

Sweet Blooms looks forward to something more that can be done to add up to its passion of “sweetening” the life of their customers and make them satisfied some more with their sweet surprises. 🍬

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May De Vera

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Main Shop: (02) 624.8358 | #20 Timog Avenue, Q.C.

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Atching Lillian
Borromeo



Every bite of Saniculas does not only satisfy one's cravings. It also represents a tradition of love, devotion, peace, and miracle.



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A1ds...

A bite of Saniculas!

Text and photos by
JOAHNA G. GOYAGOY

The Capampangans, who are inhabitants of Pampanga, are very much well-known for their discriminating taste for food and high regard for cooking.

This prevailing fact traces its roots to the olden times. Accounts say that every female born to a Capampangan family is exposed to the kitchen at an early age. To master her culinary skills, she is obliged to prepare her family's dishes. This devoir continue until she passes it on to her daughters.

Lillian Mercado-Lising Borromeo, who is fondly called as "Atching Lillian", is a living proof to this tradition. She came from a wealthy Capampangan root where her grandparents were "don" and "doña", a status that is equivalent to business tycoons or magnates in the modern times. Thus, she grew up with the practice of meticulous food preparation.

Atching Lillian, along the way, learned that one of the secrets of the unique, incomparable taste of Capampangan cuisine is the use of carabao's milk and *dayap* (lime).

She recalled that her grandparents had a herd of carabaos. With the abundance of carabao's milk, her grandfather used to drink fresh carabao's milk while taking a sip of *duhat* (jambul) every morning. Her grandmother, on the other hand, uses the milk with *dayap* juice in most of her recipes.

"The carabao's milk with *dayap*

juice, when used in cooking, adds a very distinct flavor," Atching Lillian said.

As the only female among the brood of four, she inherited a family heirloom that included 17th century cooking and baking utensils and some secret family recipes. Among these century-old recipes is the making of "Panacillos de San Nicolas" or San Nicholas cookies. For the Capampangans, they call it "Saniculas".

According to Atching Lillian, this recipe is the most noteworthy of all because this was passed on to her by her grandmother Impung Andang (Doña Alejandra Andres David Hizon) who learned the recipe from the Dominican sisters.

Atching Lillian, hailed as the "Guardian and Steward of Capampangan Cuisine", unselfishly shared her family's priceless recipes especially that of the *Saniculas*.

Saniculas, a melt-in-the-mouth goodness, is the oldest cookie introduced in the Philippines by the Spaniards, circa 1600. Its inception was born out of oversupply of egg yolks.

During those times, the whole of egg except its yolk (i.e. albumen), was mixed with lime powder and sand to build churches, schools, and other government buildings. Hence, the Spanish nuns thought of using the yolks in several pastries and other delicacies. Every family, too, was encouraged to come up with a product out of the yolks. *Saniculas* was one of them.

Atching Lillian, with her passion of sharing the secrets of Capampangan cuisine, gladly demonstrated how *Saniculas* is made.

It starts by gently mixing the ingredients that is composed of arrowroot flour, egg yolks, carabao's

milk, *duhat*, and enough amount of water to make the dough. The dough is kneaded and flattened using a cookie mold and a rolling pin with gradual precision. After which, the dough is ready for baking.

Atching Lillian, during her demonstration, insisted on using carabao's milk, instead of any other milk. This, she said, gives the cookies its exact aroma, taste, and texture.

The making of San Nicholas cookies back then, she said, was a lot more interesting. The nuns or the women making it, had to pray three *Our Father*, three *Hail Mary*, and three *Glory be to the Father*. After which, one has to put her hand inside the oven to check if the cookies were already cooked. In some instances, if the cookies were still not properly cooked after the three prayers, they would pray the *Salve Regina* also known as the *Hail Holy Queen*.

The baked cookies back then, she quoted others as saying, were perfect in its taste and texture as the prayers served as their timer.

Interestingly, too, the *Saniculas* is imprinted with the image of San Nicholas, the great miracle healer.

But the cookie's interesting facts don't end there. Every 10th of September, the feast day of St. Nicholas de Tolentin, the *Saniculas* cookies are blessed and distributed to devotees for it is believed to have a curative effect. This practice was said to have been passed on by the Spanish friars to the Filipinos. Other than this, the cookie can also be crumbled and scattered on rice fields to ask for a bountiful harvest.

Needless to say, every bite of *Saniculas* does not only satisfy one's cravings. It also represents a tradition of love, devotion, peace, and miracle. 🍪

Tibok-Tibok

A Throbbing Indulgence

By KHRIZIE EVERT M. PADRE
Photo by JOAHNA G. GOYAGOY

Pampanga has always been known as a food connoisseur's paradise, boasting of restaurants offering a wide array of gastronomic delights ranging from native delicacies to exotic dishes complete with an assortment of scrumptious appetizers and desserts.

Tibok-Tibok is a Capampangan pudding made purely with carabao's milk. The name, which literally means heartbeat, was derived from the way the bubbles pulsate up and down resembling that of heartbeats.

During the holiday season, which is characterized by joyous celebrations and heartwarming reunions with family, relatives, and friends, the Susie's Cuisine is a must-go-to food destination in the province. Its best-tasting Pampango *kakanins* (rice cakes) beckon for their full savoring.

Situated inside the Nepo Mart in Angeles City, this establishment serves a range of mouth-watering native delicacies since 1972. It is the pioneer-maker of one of its signature dishes, the *Tibok-Tibok*.

Tibok-Tibok is a Capampangan pudding made purely from carabao's milk. The name, which literally means heartbeat, was derived from the way the bubbles pulsate up and down resembling that of heartbeats.

Tibok-Tibok stands out as a crowd pleaser, described by many as nothing like it that they've ever tasted before.

It is immaculately white with the right amount of sweetness. It is soft and gelatinous, topped with *latik* (coconut cream curds) and complemented with a *dayap* (lime) to add some zing.

One of its main ingredients, the carabao's milk, gives the pudding unique saltiness,

velvety, and creamy texture which other kinds of milk cannot achieve.

An average of 300 long-necked bottles of carabaos milk are being delivered to Susie's every day. Operating from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., all of its products are produced in its branch in Angeles City and delivered twice or thrice a day to its 12 other branches located in the different parts of the province.

"Susie's Cuisine uses only the freshest ingredients, more particularly the carabao's milk. Our chief cook tastes the milk first before accepting it from the supplier. If it passes his standard, then the delivery will be accepted. If the milk has bubbles even before heating, it will not be used," said Maricel Harnecillo, Susie's operation's manager.

According to Maricel, Susie's Cuisine owes its 40 years of existence and success from maintaining the good quality of its homemade delicacies which are cooked the old-fashioned way.

"Anita Ayson, popularly known as Lola Aning, was the founder of Susie's popular concoctions," she said

Maricel said that Lola Aning's concoctions has been their guide since they started with the business.

Her daughter, Jesusa Yabut, is now the owner-

operator of Susie's.

Sold by *bilao* or on per slice basis, these delicate *kakanins* can only last for a day or two. Susie's can produce 10 *bilao* of Tibok-Tibok every two hours. An average of 80 *bilao* during weekdays and 150 to 200 *bilao* during weekends are being made to satisfy the cravings of its clientele. The orders during Christmas seasons, however, go up to 1,200 *bilao*.

"During the peak period we usually experience shortage of milk supply. What we do is to get milk from other provinces like Nueva Ecija and Bulacan," Maricel explained.

"In 2000, due to increased number of patrons, we decided to branch out. We noted that time that even if we open our main branch for 24 hours, it was still impossible to serve the growing number of our customers," she added.

Other favorite *kakanins* made from carabao's milk are the *ube haleya*, *kalamay ube*, and *haleyang gatas*.

The shop also offers varieties of *pasta*, *pancit*, *kakanin*, and *pasalubong* treats made available for diners and walk-in customers. Comfort foods like *halo-halo* and *pancit palabok* are also the shop's special dishes.

With the immense popularity of its offerings despite many competitions around, Maricel said that they make sure about the quality and the continuous improvement of their products.

The management maintains good communication line not only among its clients but also its milk suppliers. It recognizes their important roles in its success.

Currently, Susie's Cuisine maintains 129 staff from all of its branches, 30 of whom are assigned in the main branch.

With the constant patronage of many customers, the management of Susie's Cuisine makes sure that the satisfaction of their clients will always be their top priority. 🍷

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Fresh option...

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herd of the Philippine Carabao Center in La Carlota Stock Farm at Php75 per liter and his best quality shade-grown coffee beans from a group of farmers at the minimum price of Php120 per kg.

“We buy coffee not from individual farmers but from a group of farmers. In that way, we influence them to value community-based efforts,” he said.

He also revealed that he does not habitually haggle prices from farmer suppliers.



“We have empowered our people. They look at the business as if it is their own. Thus, they feel responsible and accountable for their respective roles. In fact, our workers would even go on overtime work even if I do not require them. That is how they value our partnership,” Ramon proudly shared.

“Why will I do that?” he asked, “I know that they drudge thru their lands just to earn a measly income.”

Undoubtedly, based on the practices they actualize, social responsibility takes the couple’s topmost consideration in running the affairs of their business. Earning big sums of money is only secondary for them.

From his mere dream of passing only his exams to make it thru college for his chosen degree, Ramon, with wife Francine, is fast rising to become the Negrense’s icon of organic farming in the province because of his staunch advocacy for it.

With his achievements in offering healthier food options and his commitment to his chosen advocacy, the Negros Island is assured of a sustainable organic food in the plate. 🌱

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Fresh Start Organic and Natural
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Organic sweeteners sold at the Fresh Start Organics





Evidently, one can lose his or herself in the luxury of indulging in the delight of partaking organic and fresh dishes, pastries, and drinks. These are just some of the products made richer and better by carabao's milk offered by Café by the Ruins.

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Café by the Ruins...

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Pasta

For pasta lovers, the *pasta ala carbonara* in which a lemon-flavored cream sauce of ricotta cheese (processed from carabao's milk) is used, provides a wonderfully-tasting pasta. With grilled chicken breast on the side, the *pasta ala carbonara* becomes more delicious and daring. Grilled mushroom is also offered for non-meat caters.

Sandwiches

For a light snack, *kesong puti sa calesa* is a perfect pick. It is stuffed with cottage cheese (again, made from carabao's milk) and pili pesto in a carriage—a variation on the usual grilled cheese sandwich. With sweet potato chips on the side, this sandwich

becomes an irresistible relish.

Desserts

For the sweets' lovers, Café by the Ruins has a long list of must-try desserts. On top of the list are the Ruin's *leche flan* and chocolate lava cake. The *leche flan* is of pure carabao's milk with a spoonful of caramel sauce oozing with lime aroma. The chocolate lava cake, on the other hand, is a hot cake in which dark, smooth, chocolate, partnered with homemade vanilla-flavored cream (from carabao's milk), ooze from the center. These desserts are "heavenly and flavorful", making customers crave for more.

Café by the Ruins? Well, why not? 🍷





The Advocacy Hub
that is

**Milka
Krem**

Every cup of coffee that is served at Milka Krem is an assurance of good management standards practiced by its dedicated workers from tending the dairy buffaloes to postharvest processing. Thus, a customer's cup of milk-based concoction is rich with an advocacy that PCC endeavors to uphold. Photo by RGBumarlag