

Vogue-UK names Ariara Island, Palawan, as #1 Holiday Destination

A July 16, 2012 press release from the Department of Tourism



Philippine tourism is poised to benefit from the worldwide recognition of Ariara Island in Calamian, Palawan for ranking first in the Top 100 holiday destinations, which will be released in *Vogue-UK* Magazine's August 2012 issue.

This luxurious and spacious private getaway has attracted and welcomed a number of high-profile groups with its all-inclusive package of exclusivity, relaxation, 24-hour service, excellent cuisine, and a host of amenities both for the laidback and adventurous. Ariara is the ultimate "off the beaten track" destination where the structures are contemporary in style and have been designed with sensitivity to the environment.

The resort website describes it to have eight spacious villas and beach cottages situated along Ariara's 600-meter white sand beach with uninterrupted views of the sea and neighbouring islands. All bedrooms have private terraces and gardens, scattered with hanging chairs and hammocks. Many have vaulted ceilings, four poster style beds, walk-in wardrobes, enormous bathrooms, and open-air showers. Every item of furniture in Ariara has been designed, made, and upholstered in-house by local carpenters and craftsmen in the island's own workshops or outsourced to Filipino artisans. Materials were sourced locally and all furnishings were created using traditional methods: marble bath hand carved from single blocks of Romblon marble, wooden bath made using traditional boat-building techniques, local wood and rattan, cushions made from tribal fabrics in Mindanao, and intricate wooden chests by indigenous Palawan woodcarvers. Ariara's decorative flair is accentuated by striking wall hangings, heliographs and ceramics made by a talented Filipino artist Ugu Bigyan.



"What is remarkable is that the entire resort is a testament to the unique artistry and skills of Filipino designers and artisans. The use of local materials and traditional techniques serves as good advertising for Filipino craftsmanship and world-class products. Tourism is not just about counting tourist arrivals. More importantly, it is about building opportunities on the ground and improving lives, in communities in very real places," beamed Tourism Secretary Ramon R. Jimenez Jr.

"Furthermore, the resort's properly planned development and low density shows the owners' respect for the environment. We want to see more of this type of investment which supports the principles of responsible, ethical, and sustainable tourism," the Tourism Secretary added.

Prior to *Vogue's* recognition, Ariara was likewise featured in various magazines in the United Kingdom. The annual travel issue of *Times Magazine* hailed it as the "Best Private Island Resort" and described as "a Philippine island of such prettiness that you almost expect Johnny Depp to pop out with a parrot on his shoulder" and "beyond a forest of coconut palms, ridiculously blue water stretches out to a techno-colored reef, where pink, fluffy, Barbra Cartland-esque corals and rainbow-hued creatures waft in the tropical current."



In *Independent's* "Life's a Tag: 2012's Most Surprising Holiday Destinations", Ariara was listed as one of the best islands to visit this year. *Black Tomato*, on the other hand, hailed the island resort as "the" place to visit in 2012 in the *Evening Standard*. Other illustrious UK magazines which featured the private island destination are *Angels and Urchins*, *Harrods Magazine*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *The Spectator*, *Wine and Dine*, *Urbanology*, and *Tatler*.

Roxanne, a British guest, had this to say about her group's experience: "We had to pinch ourselves to be sure that the unique mixture of stunning beauty, cossetting luxury, and peace from anyone's agenda other than our own wrapped in the friendliest of support teams were all real. With all our varied needs, tastes, and energy levels, every member of the family felt it was the most exciting, stimulating, restful, cleansing, and privileged break they had ever experienced."

UK remains to be a key generator of tourist arrivals to the Philippines. The UK market grew stronger in 2011 and registered 104,466 year-end tourist arrivals—a first in its history to yield over 100,000. January to May 2012 statistics also attest to the market's continued growth as it yielded 50,327 tourist arrivals rising one notch higher from its previous 10th place. The market's performance is expected to be better with heightened awareness and current promotional efforts in UK via London taxicabs, double-decker buses, and posters in strategic places at the underground rail stations in time for the Queen's Jubilee and the 2012 Olympics.