

weekend palates

JASON HYATT

'AN EMPTY PLATE IS THE ULTIMATE COMPLIMENT'

Just as he is causing quite a commotion whipping up specialties in his relatively new kitchen in this new part of the world, well-traveled American chef, Jason Hyatt, is causing quite a stir in Cebu, where he and his wife, Anna, have relocated from Hong Kong with their two children. His ultra-plush restaurant on the bank of the Mactan Channel, barely five minutes from Shangri-La Mactan, opened in August last year, but has since been packed with discerning diners, all clamoring for what the chef defines as California Mediterranean or "clean and simple beachfront cuisine" as well as a stylish atmosphere worthy of the Big Sur or Majorca. But the restaurant is only a hint of the main attraction, as it is only the dining outlet of Abacá, a nine-room boutique resort that, opening soon, is sure to redefine ultimate luxury in Cebu.

Did you cook growing up?

I have been interested in cooking since I was a young boy. My dad is quite a cook as was my mother.

Name some highlights of your cooking life.

I have literally traveled the world. There are many highlights. My proudest moment would have to be opening Abacá and seeing it flourish. Watching our staff become real cooks with the ability to work in any kitchen... anywhere.

Signature dish

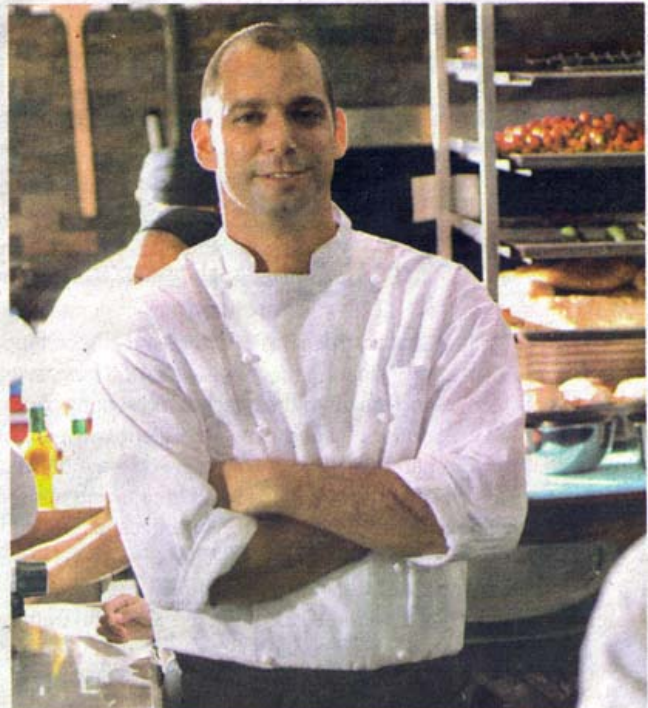
In Abacá, it has to be the *papperdalle* with braised veal and *porcini*. The pasta is homemade as are all of our pastas... And it's just so rich and succulent.

What can you say about the Filipino palate?

Highly refined.

Best compliment you have ever received

An empty plate is the ultimate compliment.



ABACÁ DAD. Chef Jason Hyatt transplants his family from Hong Kong to open a new restaurant and boutique hotel in beautiful Mactan Island.

Best gourmet experience

"Gourmet" is subjective.... The best food I ever had was slow roasted pork tacos outside a bullring in Mexico City.

Is it a plus with women that you are a chef?

Clearly! (With a nod toward his wife)

What is your favorite gadget and kitchen aid?

True chefs need only a sharp knife and a hot pan.

When at home, what do you eat?

Korean and Japanese. My wife is a very fine cook of both cuisines.

Best tip for homemakers

Keep it simple.

Comfort food?

Roasted chicken with mashed potatoes. ■

Abacá Boutique Resort + Restaurant is at Punta Engaño Road, Mactan Island, Lapu Lapu City, Metro Cebu. For inquiries, call +63 32 495 84 56, fax +63 32 495 13 78, or log on to www.abacaresort.com.

interview AA PATAWARAN

At a buffet: don't push or cut the line, nibble on food or extend a long arm to reach for more, while waiting for the line to move.
