

Twilight Delights at the Queen City

By O Roldan

There are a few interesting places in Cebu where the time between sunset and dinner can be spent sipping a drink for a good price. *Expat Travel & Lifestyle* shares some suggestions for those hanging around the island.



Treff is located at the Gourmet Walk of the Waterfront Hotel in Lahug (at the city centre - not to be confused with its sister property near the Mactan airport) and offers a 50 percent discount on all beers and cocktails from the time it opens at 5pm. Treff is stylish yet decidedly contemporary. Inside, transparent Philippe Starck chairs are laid-out cleanly against a white-framed glass enclosure set aglow with Italian mood lighting. Outside, the balcony is laid out with long lounge sofas. Yuccas in box-like planters set out against the bar's interiors give the space a roof-deck feel. Local beers start out at PhP80 and tastefully-presented appetizers are available. Smoking is allowed outside and views of the approaching twilight are always free. Shorts and slippers are not allowed on Fridays and Saturdays when the city's stylish set congregates to the music of a live DJ. Happy hour runs until 9pm.



If a casual pub with stools around the bar is more your pint of beer, head off to **Badger's** along the Banilad Road (officially but less commonly known as Governor Cuenco Avenue). Home-away-from-home for many of Cebu's expats, this spacious two-floor sports bar is a venue with large screen TVs where you can cheer for your home team. Darts and billiards are also available, as is Wi-Fi Internet. Run by Canadian Wayne McCallum and his wife Evelyn, Badger's was created for "people who congregate because they like people". Wooden furniture on wood-plank floors highlighted by warm lighting give this place a decidedly homey feel. International flags and sports curios adorn the walls and windows. The atmosphere is always friendly and conversation inevitably convivial. Lady chef Jacque Week hails from the UK and serves authentic British pub fare (Beef & Kidney Pie, Curry, Fish & Chips) as well as Asian food like sashimi and Filipino favorites. Service is efficient but always affable. Draft beer is only PhP30 from 5pm to 7pm when discounts on whiskey and other spirits also apply. Beer lovers should try the signature Badgers Bitters while those who prefer cocktails can inquire about the day's special featured drink. Open daily until 2am, from as early as 11am Fridays through Sundays, 5pm weekdays. Tank tops not allowed.



A stone's throw away from Badgers is the Banilad Town Center. This is where happy hour runs to as late as 10pm daily at **Formo**. Bottled beers are at PhP35 and cocktails are only PhP45 from 6pm daily. Operated by Cebu's pre-eminent partyphile siblings JP Chiongbian and Jaja Rama (who created Club Vudu and the new entertainment complex Paseo), Formo is a restaurant that transforms into a venue for live bands, acoustic performers and DJs after dinner. At happy hour, it is a comfortable lounge that plays electronica and downtempo. Air-conditioned non-smoking seating is available around a raised enclosed bar area while smoking is allowed around an adjacent bar. After 10pm, the smoking area opens to an outdoor patio with more chairs and tables and yet another satellite bar. Enjoy 1980s music and dancing on weekends. Not to be missed are Formo's mojitos, included in its happy hour cocktail promotion.



Arguably the best setting for mojitos and caipirinhas in Cebu is **Cowrie Cove**. Shangri-La Mactan's seaside restaurant features a contemporary chillout bar overlooking the sea that is perfect for sunset cocktails. The bar affords a glorious vista of the sea and sky changing colors as the sun sets behind the mountains of Cebu Island. An occasional passing ship and the waves created in its wake coupled by contemporary ambient DJ music complete the escapist seaside experience. Happy Hour is 5pm to 7pm daily when everyone gets two drinks for the price of one. Cocktails made with fresh fruit go perfectly with the setting: Try the signature Cebunita Colada made with Cebu mangoes. Moët and Chandon by the glass is also exceptional value during happy hour. Drinks range from PhP180 to 350. Light bar fare is available, but for those who want something more substantial, the restaurant serves dinner from 6pm to 10pm and lays out a seafood buffet every Thursday. The bar is open through midnight on weekdays and beyond 2am on weekends when there are DJs and a good number of local party-goers.



New boutique hotel **Abaca** in Punta Engaño features a graceful seaside bar. The restaurant's lounge tables and sumptuous cushioned chairs are set up al fresco on a verandah facing the water where drinks and appetizers are served. Intended more as a place for pre-dinner aperitifs, the small area is a quiet place to spend happy hour at with close friends or a special someone in a casually elegant setting. Cocktails are on offer at two for the price of one on Saturday from 5pm to 6:30pm. They charge PhP230 for a mojito. Created by expat husband-and-wife team Ana Ido and star chef Jason Hyatt, Abaca targets a high-end clientele. Around ten minutes from the airport, this could be the jetsetter's ideal place for the first or last happy hour drink in Cebu. Reservations are highly recommended, phone (32) 495-8456, and suitable attire is suggested.