

# IN THE COUNTRY

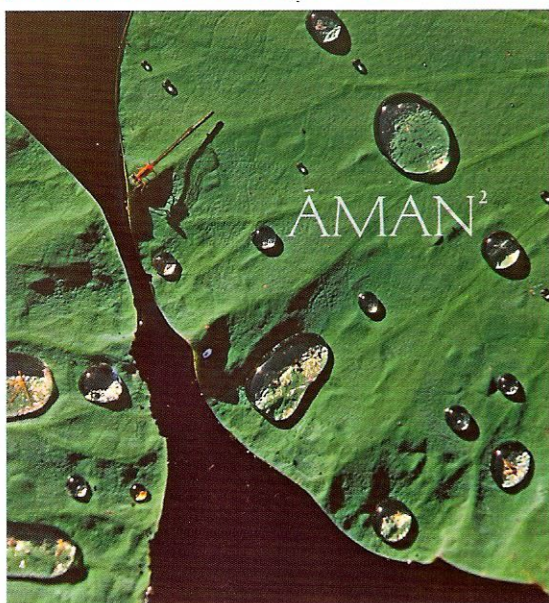


It was an instant hit with the foreign community that missed the taste and texture of breads back home. Among the best sellers are the French sourdough, baguettes and croissants. Lartizan's offerings are deliciously moist and chewy inside, with a beautiful golden outer crust typical of a rustic artisan loaf. The curious can see for themselves how the bread is made, as a crew of bakers prepares the dough right on the display counter. On floured boards the dough is kneaded, formed into various shapes and sizes, then placed in professional computer-controlled baking ovens. The intense, tantalizing aroma of the bread even before it's out of the oven is probably the store's most effective sales pitch—one that you simply can't resist. 144 Jupiter Corner Orbit Street, Makati; 897.1553; [www.lartizan.com.ph](http://www.lartizan.com.ph). PIERRE A. CALASANZ

## GREAT ESCAPES

If you haven't planned your summer vacation yet, hold off doing so until you've read *Aman2*. This 264-page hardbound volume, the third custom-published book by Amanresorts, contains hundreds of full-color photographs showcasing the most fascinating resorts the world over. In this book, which commemorates the resort group's 20th anniversary, noted photographer Basil Pao seduces the reader with enchanting shots of spas and villas in the most exotic and remote locales—from the mystical slopes of the Himalayas to the awe-inspiring steps of Borobudur. Accompanying the photographs are profiles of the properties in Amanresorts' ever-expanding portfolio, documenting their unparalleled amenities, design aesthetics, hospitality and ambiance—all a testament to founder Adrian Zecha's unwavering vision.

Also in the book are photographs of resort staff at work, providing readers a rare behind-the-scenes peek at how they meticulously create a vacationer's paradise. Then, on a trip down memory lane, Pao recreates a memorable shot



from the first *Aman* book, which he worked on ten years earlier. On the steps of Amanjiwo in Central Java, Pao captures a group of vibrant young women—the very same girls from a decade before. “The real joy for me with this project was rediscovering the old friends who had helped me with the first book ten years ago,” says Pao. “Many are now working at other Amanresorts in different parts of the world, but I loved the continuity and the feeling that I'd come home—to family.”

[www.amanresorts.com](http://www.amanresorts.com). PAC

## Volunteer Vacations

Whether you are a seasoned traveler looking for a new kind of vacation or it's your first trip to the Philippines and you want to discover it from an uncommon perspective, the newly launched programs of **HANDS ON VOLUNTEER VACATIONS (HOVV)** are definitely worth exploring. A project of Hands on Manila, HOVV provides the opportunity to both explore the Philippines and receive the many immeasurable benefits that come from volunteer work.

Programs are designed to be flexible and innovative—all you need is a minimum of a weekend, a sense of what skills you would like to use and a desire to make a difference. Keeping in line with their goal of “making helping fun”, volunteer trips are organized in areas of the country which both need help and offer interesting tourism related sites or activities.

A visit to San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro gives volunteers the chance to collect seedlings of indigenous species and plant a nursery on Mt. Halcon's 500 hectare Forest Museum, but can also be combined with scuba diving and snorkeling in Puerto Galera. For those who want to enjoy the sites of Taal Volcano, a Tagaytay trip can be easily mixed with doing volunteer work in Batangas, whose many heritage and historical sites are in need of refurbishing. Even your next trip to idyllic Boracay can help you develop a new appreciation for paradise. Participate in a feeding or crafts programs with the local Atis children, or work with the nearby piña cloth weavers of Aklan to help them find ways to promote their products.

There comes a time when all travelers want to gain a deeper understanding of the places and people they are visiting. Volunteering to help improve the lives of those who live in these communities is one of the most rewarding ways to travel. 473.7458; 386.652; [www.handsonmanila.org.ph](http://www.handsonmanila.org.ph). SUNSHINE LICHAUCO DE LEON

