POWERCLUB

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SUBSIDIARY FOCUS:

MServ
Lights Up Ciudad de Victoria and Philippine Arena

COMMERCIAL LUMINARIES ON PROFILE:

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMPLEX

LYCEUM UNIVERSITY-CAVITE

MERCURY DRUG

THE U.S. EMBASSY

INDUSTRY TRENDS:

COMMUNITY MALLS
Growing big by thinking small

2013 Corporate Commercial Luminary

JONATHAN GOTIANUN

FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT CORP. Chairman

THE LUMINARIES OF 2013

PLUS: *An Evening of Light and Magic*

SHINING EXAMPLES FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW

Since its launch in 2011, the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) Luminaries Awards has led the way in highlighting the importance of effective energy management and innovations to fuel business growth, uplift the quality of life, and ultimately, spur national development.

The awards celebrate the collaborative partnership with our business clients to constantly seek creative and cost-efficient energy solutions. This collaboration extends to both national and local government agencies, where we work together to drive local commerce and provide essential public services. In addition, the Meralco Luminaries Awards have become an important venue for a rare gathering of industry leaders to carry out quick exchanges of ideas critical to the continued progress of the country.

Through these awards, we hope to encourage and inspire more businesses and local government units to continue developing innovative strategies that deliver exceptional economic performance.

The efforts have begun to bear fruit: the recent credit rating upgrade by financial agency Standard & Poor's places the Philippines among the world's fastest growing economies, second only to China. This growth is a result of many factors, ranging from improving governance and strong macroeconomic fundamentals, to a growing resurgence in manufacturing. Meralco constantly strives to do its share with initiatives and end-to-end services, that allow all stakeholders to fulfill the shared vision of a brighter, more progressive Philippines.

Alfredo S. Panlilio
Senior Vice President and Head of Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications

THE MERALCO LUMINARIES

Every year, the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) stages an event to celebrate the country's top corporations. This is the annual Meralco Luminaries Awards, where we recognize our Outstanding Partners in the public and private sectors, companies and government units which have harnessed technology for innovation and showcased excellence in power management. These are the innovations that revolutionize the way business and public service are done in the Philippines.

The Awards are given to partners across several categories, including Commercial Corporations, Industrial Corporations, Local Government Units, and Small and Medium Enterprises. These Luminaries are all recognized leaders that, in collaboration with Meralco, do more than drive economic growth and national development, but positively impact the lives of our people.

WHAT'S INSIDE

3c **Electric Capital Projects**
KEEPING UP WITH THE SUMMER SURGE
Upgrading the Malabon-TMO-Grace Park line to ensure more power to an energy-hungry metropolis.

4c **Industry Trends**
DOWNSIZING MALLS TO UPSIZE THE CONVENIENCE
With so many supermalls going up, some mall developers have decided to scale down.

8c **Cover Story**
GROWING A CITY FROM SCRATCH
From a simple car-financing business turned mega-urban developer, Filinvest Development Corp. has even bigger plans for the future.

10c **Commercial Luminary Profile**
A PEERLESS PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS
How Mercury Drug went from corner drugstore to national pharmacy.

11c **Commercial Luminary Profile**
LOCAL POWER FOR A GLOBAL SUPERPOWER
The prestige and influence of the United States Embassy rests on many sources – including solid connections from Meralco.

12c **Commercial Luminary Profile**
A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP
Lyceum shows off a radically different campus in Cavite, to spearhead a drive for globally relevant education.

13c **Commercial Luminary Profile**
TEACHING MINDS, TOUCHING HEARTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES
The future is taking shape at De La Salle University's Science and Technology Complex in Laguna.

14c **Subsidiary Profile**
VICTORY CITY COMES TO LIGHT
MServ plays its part in powering the sprawling new Ciudad de Victoria and the world's largest arena.

Flip over this magazine to continue to the Industrial Luminaries (pages 2i through 17i).

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KEEPING UP WITH THE SUMMER SURGE

MERALCO WORKS HAND-IN-HAND WITH GOV'T TO FEED MORE POWER TO THE MALABON-GRACE PARK 115 kV LINE

When the Therma Mobile Inc. (TMO) generator interconnection project was completed on March 7, 2013, the original power supply was limited to only 150 megawatts (MW). To fully optimize the generator's 230-MW capacity and help meet the summer peak demand, the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) needed to reconfigure the existing three-terminal Malabon-TMO-Grace Park 115 kilovolt (kV) line into two 115kV lines (i.e., Malabon-TMO and TMO-Grace Park), as required by the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP). The reconfiguration also ensures system stability even during an N-1 contingency — a component failure in a power system), or during an outage on any of the two 115kV lines.

Given the tight construction schedule, the main challenge was not technical but bureaucratic in nature: to secure permits from agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Metro Manila Development Authority, the Navotas local government, and the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority. Thanks to the close coordination between TMO's engineers and the NGCP, Meralco completed the project on April 4, 2014, 26 days before the target completion date and 57 days ahead of the NGCP's May 31, 2014 deadline.

DOWNSIZING MALLS TO UPSIZE THE CONVENIENCE

A NEW GENERATION OF COMMUNITY MALLS SWAP SIZE FOR INTIMACY

BY TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

Century Mall

Photography by **Jun Pinzon** Grooming by **Bernice Recto**

Bigger is not always better.

Take the ubiquitous mall, which in the Philippines is not just a place for shopping but also a de facto public park.

To squeeze as much revenue from every square inch of property, many malls today are simply air-conditioned boxes that are more about excess than character. Throw in congestion, traffic, and the mad scramble for parking, it's no surprise that many mall-goers are looking for more convenient alternatives.

This is where the community mall comes in. Also known as a strip malls, community malls are intended to serve a specific neighborhood or district. They have a fairly small footprint, from as little as 20,000 square meters (sqm) to 80,000 sqm; a fraction of the more than 100,000 sqm at the so-called super-regional malls in the Philippines, which are among the world's largest.

CONVENIENCE IS KING

Perhaps the community mall that best illustrates proof-of-concept is the Z Square Mall, at the corner of Del Monte and Banawe streets in Quezon City.

Built by Zest-O Group founder Alfredo Yao, who also has interests in banking and in airline operations, the six-story mall caters mainly to the needs of the area's largely Filipino-Chinese community.

Opened in September 2013, Z Square Mall has food chains, fine-dining restaurants, service shops, a hardware store and a supermarket. According to Z Square manager Amiel Villaseñor, its location was a main impetus to Yao's first foray into mall operations.

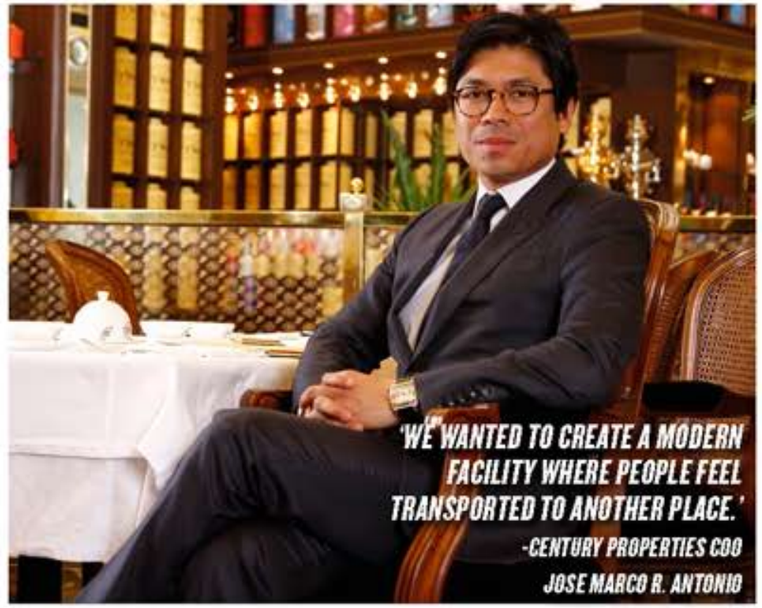
Built in a community of affluent residents and hundreds of other business establishments, Z Square spares customers the slog through heavy traffic to reach the bigger shopping centers on EDSA.

Z Square Mall also provides residents of the highly congested district one other benefit: breathing space. The open-plan mall offers walkways uncluttered by shops where customers can stroll at leisure while enjoying elevated views of Banawe Street. There's even a garden at the top level, offering a spot of nature above the noisy traffic. Meanwhile, a gym offers more vigorous exercise options to the more active residents.

STYLISH SELLS WELL

A community mall can build a loyal clientele, despite the bigger malls in its vicinity, if it offers a high level of sophisticated design and trendy style to attract an upscale market. This consumer base can make smaller malls a viable investment even for those businesses that venture into the mall sector for the first time, such as Century Properties Inc.

Century Properties' maiden effort is the



'WE WANTED TO CREATE A MODERN FACILITY WHERE PEOPLE FEEL TRANSPORTED TO ANOTHER PLACE.'
-CENTURY PROPERTIES COO
JOSE MARCO R. ANTONIO

₱1.4-billion Century City Mall located along Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City. According to Century Properties Chief Operating Officer (COO) Jose Marco R. Antonio, this is an integral part of the development of the Century City project in the area.

As the retail anchor of the 3.4-hectare, eight-building vertical village, Century City Mall features popular shops, restaurants and a supermarket to primarily serve the residents and office workers of Century City.

Despite competition from nearby Rockwell Plant and the Ayala Malls, Antonio is confident Century City Mall can bring in customers, given the healthy retail sector, the improving economy and the Filipinos' robust appetite for shopping.

"There is always room for good retail developments," he elaborates, "and the more discerning market has grown to appreciate quality, innovative concepts and convenience, as well as value for money and global sensibilities."

To differentiate Century City Mall from the competition, Antonio says the local architectural team of Century Properties worked closely with Broadway Malyan, an award-winning design firm that created the Vauxhall Tower in London and Obel in Belfast. The design firm used architectural elements such as steel, glass and open space to give Century City Mall a posh, premium look.

"We wanted to create a modern facility where people feel transported to another place," says Antonio. "It combines local sensibilities with modern architectural coolness."

Going into retail is part of the company's overall strategy to diversify revenue sources with recurring income from retail operations, he adds. The company is also providing retail outlets at Gramercy Residences, Knightsbridge Residences, and Centuria Medical Makati. The next stage is expansion to other developments such as the Azure Urban Resort Residences in Parañaque, Acqua Private Residences in Mandaluyong, Residences at Commonwealth in Quezon City, and future projects north and south of Manila.

Since opening in March 2014, the five-level Century City Mall offers about 100 shops, representing 70 percent of the projected tenants. To date, all the leasable 17,000 sqm are sold out, and Antonio expects all the yet-unopened stores to be fully operational by August.

He stresses that Century City Mall required the expertise and various other services of the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

"The Century City Mall infrastructure is powered by Meralco, from LED lighting on the mall exteriors to well-lit corridors, air-conditioned spaces, an events center and a cinema that runs on the latest picture and sound technology," he notes. "The Century City Mall experience would not have been possible without Meralco's support."

That support extended to the removal of the massive tangle of utility cables that used to hang from overhead poles. Meralco moved all the 34.5-kilovolt power cables underground along the stretch of Kalayaan Avenue, giving the mall façade a cleaner, uncluttered look. Meralco's efficient cooperation also ensured the mall was fully powered by November 2013 as scheduled, despite the many challenges it encountered.

SPREADING SOUTHWARD

Like Century Properties, newly formed real estate developer DoubleDragon Properties Corp. of the Tan Caktiong and Sia groups, is also bullish on retail.

While Century Properties bets on Metro Manila, DoubleDragon is pursuing untapped revenue opportunities in underserved Visayas and Mindanao through its subsidiary, CityMall Commercial Centers Inc. (CCCI).

CityMall is setting out to become one of the largest branded community mall chains in the Philippines, with malls ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 sqm in floor area. DoubleDragon chief executive officer Edgar Sia III will position CityMall as "the everyday mall" where people can make a quick trip to grab a bite, do shopping errands or buy groceries.

All CityMalls will have a uniform theme, color, and look to make the design a brand in itself. A food court will complement existing full-sized fastfood restaurants. These restaurants are brands associated with the owners, such as Jollibee, Mang Inasal, Chowking, Greenwich, Red Ribbon and Highlands Coffee, and will complement non-food anchor retail tenants in each development.

To reduce energy costs and shrink its carbon footprint, CityMalls will feature solar panels on its elevated carparks. This earth-friendly approach will further differentiate CityMalls from the 800 existing community malls all over the country.

The first five of these CityMalls, partly owned by the Sys of the SM Group through a 33-percent stake in CCCI, will open by the end of 2014. These will be the first of as many as 200 CityMalls the group plans to put up over the next three to four years.

Z Square Mall provides breathing space for a highly congested Quezon City district

Confident that growth will remain brisk and economic activity increasingly come from areas outside Metro Manila, Sia believes these CityMalls will thrive in their respective communities.

"We are helping push the economy forward in the provinces, in terms of increased property values, employment, and taxes to local government units," he says. "There will definitely be a change; some consolidation will happen in the countryside."

EVEN BIG PLAYERS GO SMALL

The potential profitability of the community mall has also caught the attention of a well-established operator of large malls, property giant Ayala Land Inc. (ALI).

Operating the Ayala Malls, including the iconic Greenbelt, Glorietta, and TriNoma complexes, ALI sees the community mall as the third place people visit, after the home and the school or office.

Maria Corazon G. Dizon, vice president and head of the Retailing Business Group of ALI elaborates: "It is an extension of the home or office where you can pay your bills, go to the salon, have coffee and not be around a lot of people. It is a place to relax, bond and do quick chores like buy a loaf of bread."

'WE ARE HELPING PUSH THE ECONOMY FORWARD IN THE PROVINCES WITH INCREASED PROPERTY VALUES, EMPLOYMENT, AND TAXES.'
- EDGAR SIA III, DOUBLEDRAGON CHAIRMAN AND CEO

Photography (Mr. Marco Antonio) by **Vincent Coscolluela** Grooming by **Bernice Recto**

Profile Photography by **Jun Pinzon** Makeup Artist by **Weng Briones**

The District Dasmariñas

'IT IS AN EXTENSION OF THE HOME OR OFFICE WHERE YOU CAN PAY YOUR BILLS, GO TO THE SALON, HAVE COFFEE AND NOT BE AROUND A LOT OF PEOPLE.'
- MARIA CORAZON G. DIZON, VP AND HEAD, RETAILING BUSINESS GROUP, AYALA LAND

The District Imus

Adds Rowena Tomeldan, vice president and head of Operations and Support Services of ALI's Commercial Business Group: "Our customers are time-starved. So we provide convenience by bringing the community malls to them. These malls have become a place of convergence for families to shop, enjoy bonding time through various community activities, and experience the Ayala Malls 'U-First' brand of customer service."

ALI has its own system of classifying malls. There is the neighborhood mall, often on the ground floor of an office or residential building, which occupies as little as 500 sqm. Next comes the community mall, which doesn't exceed 20,000 sqm in floor space. Above that are regional malls like The Marquee in Pampanga or The Abreeza in Davao which cover 40,000 to 80,000 sqm and are intended to be the dominant retail center in their areas. Super regional malls like TriNoma in Quezon City have floor spaces that exceed 80,000 sqm. Topping the hierarchy are open-air lifestyle malls like Bonifacio High Street in Taguig.

Dizon says ALI has launched an aggressive expansion of its mall portfolio to keep up with the rapid growth of its real-estate holdings. Where the company once built a mall every two years, today it puts up about five malls annually. The objective isn't so much to increase the number of malls but to cater to a wider range of income classes; in particular, the middle-class residents migrating out from the big cities to less congested areas in nearby provinces or districts. Hence, the name of ALI's community mall brand: The District.

The District has already made its presence felt in ALI's mid-market residential community brands such as Avida and Nuvali. Other District Malls may also be found in Dasmariñas and Imus in Cavite; North Point in Talisay City, Negros Occidental; and soon, in Tagaytay.

Ayala Land knows that it has to remain vigilant to stay ahead of other mall players. This includes looking for new and better ways to operate more efficiently. Dizon says it explores "green" elements in mall design, using rain catchment devices, maximizing the use of available light and installing energy-efficient cooling and lighting systems.

"We are really conscious about energy use," she adds. "We measure energy efficiency because we are very big on sustainability." ALI has explored solar-energy use but existing systems are still quite costly. However, Dizon is confident the quality and availability of solar technology will keep improving and allow their future community malls to run more cleanly and more efficiently.

Big malls will never be out of the picture, yet it's clear that the community mall is here to stay. It's fair to say that for property developers, small is beautiful and quite profitable, too.

FILINVEST DEVELOPMENT CORP.

GROWING A CITY FROM SCRATCH

TURNING A PASTORAL COMMUNITY INTO A VIBRANT URBAN CENTER

BY JING LEJANO

Some 20 years ago, Alabang in Muntinlupa City was a veritable bedroom community, with most of its residents travelling all the way to Makati and beyond for work. It was a sleepy locale, peppered with villages, schools, and a few shopping malls.

Today, Alabang is one of the fastest growing communities in the country, thanks in part to Filinvest Development Corp. (FDC). In 1995, Filinvest became the joint venture partner of the Philippine government in developing the 244-hectare Alabang Stock Farm.

"Filinvest City started as a vision – an ambitious endeavor to transform an underutilized property into a model of urban development," according to FDC chairman Jonathan T. Gotianun. FDC is the holding firm of the Gotianuns' business interests, which include real estate, financial services, sugar, hospitality, and utilities.

Filinvest City hums with its new buildings and infrastructure.

VISION, SHAPED BY DETERMINATION

Like all the earlier initiatives of Filinvest, the city was the brainchild of the Gotianun patriarch and matriarch, Andrew L. Gotianun Sr. and his wife, Mercedes T. Gotianun. The former is the idea man, a true visionary with an acumen for business opportunities and talent, while the latter is the tireless implementer with an eye for details.

They were eventually joined by their four children. Andrew Jr., now Director of FDC and Filinvest Land Inc., Jonathan, Michael Edward, vice president at FDC, and the only girl in the brood of four, Josephine Gotianun-Yap, now at the helm as FDC President and Chief Executive Officer. Together, this formidable conglomerate breathed life into a vision, and turned that vision into a sprawling, shining metropolis of stone, glass, and steel.

"To our parents, possibilities are like dreams – they chase, craft, and weave it – and they make it into something that surpasses expectations," reflects the FDC chairman. "Such as what Filinvest City is now, a world-class CBD (central business district) and garden city that has transformed the quality of life in southern Metro Manila."

However, it takes more than vision to realize a landmark undertaking this big. By staying true to its core values, FDC has managed to become one of the most successful conglomerates in the country.

Gotianun explains: "For almost six decades now, Filinvest continues to be guided by our family's tradition of integrity, quality and service, thus making it possible to remain steadfast and strong. These values along with its commitment that has kept the dynamism alive in everyone within the organization."

The same values helped propel the family's first business back in 1956, the small-scale financing of second-hand cars. Partnering with foreign institutions such as Chase Manhattan Bank, Westinghouse Electric Corp., and Ford Philippines, that small business expanded into consumer finance, and became Filinvest Credit Corp.

In 1967, the family entered the real estate business with the incorporation of Filinvest Realty Corp., and developed residential subdivisions. By 1989, the company had begun to look beyond building and selling affordable housing units, aspiring to do bigger things; and so, Filinvest Land Inc. was born.

INVESTING IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Maintaining a good relationship with vital partners continues to be one of the company's keys to its success. Such is the case with the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), which Gotianun considers as one of Filinvest's reliable partners.

"Many of Filinvest's most critical projects are energized by Meralco," he says. "The constant coordination and servicing help a lot in putting in place both the necessities and the niceties, from planning to sustaining initiatives. With Meralco's help, the energization requirements of projects that are still in the pipeline are adequately provided for. Through this partnership, Filinvest's commitment to enhance land and lives will continue to thrive and flourish for generations to come."

Filinvest has dedicated a 1,240-square-meter lot to house a state-of-the-art, three-story Meralco gas-insulated substation to power Filinvest City. It is strategically located within Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest City's Philippine Economic Zone Authority-registered information technology and business process outsourcing (BPO) hub. The substation will likewise contribute to the power reliability of Asian Hospital, Ayala Alabang Village, and an upcoming Far Eastern University campus. Filinvest has earmarked more substation locations for Meralco to complement its continuous growth.

"Meralco has been an invaluable partner in our progress as the provider of one essential need for the city, and that is a reliable source of power," notes Gotianun. "For a CBD like Filinvest City, this service is vital to supporting businesses, leisure, and residential establishments that set up camp here. More so with our BPO locators, based mainly in Northgate Cyberzone, for whom a reliable power supply 24/7 has become paramount. And Meralco has provided us with exactly that."

Always under constant development and re-development, Filinvest City promises new facilities and amenities for residents and business locators now and in the future.

WHAT'S NEXT? PLENTY!

Gotianun says: "For Filinvest City, we are constantly taking steps to ensure our competitiveness as a central business district. We are currently reviewing our master plan to see where we can introduce enhancements to the city. We will do this while still making the living experience worthwhile by being a garden city, a modern metropolis, and a convergence hub."

> 'WITH MERALCO'S HELP, THE ENERGIZATION REQUIREMENTS OF PROJECTS THAT ARE STILL IN THE PIPELINE ARE ADEQUATELY PROVIDED FOR.'
>
> - JONATHAN T. GOTIANUN, FDC CHAIRMAN

Two upscale condominiums were launched in 2013: the Bristol at Parkway Place, and Botanika Nature Residences. Located at the corner gateway of the city, Bristol is the tallest building in the area thus far, while Botanika is the first development in Filinvest's most premium brand category. With these two projects, all market segments for residences in Filinvest City are now being served.

On the commercial side, Festival Supermall recently expanded with the addition of an area dubbed River Park. This new section follows the natural contours and topography of a living creek, made bigger and refreshed with picturesque landscaping. Charming façade structures now house restaurants, shops, and promenades to allow customers to enjoy the suburb's fresh air and open spaces.

Westgate, a fashionable dining and entertainment hub located at the edge of Filinvest City, is also undergoing redevelopment to further upgrade the customer experience.

Meralco has been working hand in hand with FDC amid this flurry of development activity. Gotianun reveals: "Quite recently, we have also collaborated more closely through a strategic planning session between the top management of FDC and Meralco so that we can do more integrated planning. This way, Meralco can ensure they keep up with our company's pace of development."

Buoyed by the success of Filinvest City, FDC hopes to do the same in other parts of the country. "Filinvest continues to develop and upgrade large-scale, mixed-use townships located in some of the country's most strategic areas. These include Timberland Heights within the Quezon City environs, Havila in Rizal, Ciudad de Calamba in Laguna, and Bella Vita di Mare in Cebu, while others of similar magnitude are lined up for launch this year."

"Combined with the company's diverse yet solid interests in various industries, one can only expect smooth expansion and steady growth. Within the next five years, you will see these key projects rise from the ground up, flourish and be a catalyst for their host cities' progress," Gotianun stresses.

Through the years, the company has pursued different avenues of success. It has gone beyond property development, seeking opportunities in the financial services, power generation, and hospitality industries. While strategic diversification and thoughtful resource allocation remain the keys to FDC's competitiveness and strength, it is a steadfast vision – backed by steely determination – that continues to shape the future of the conglomerate, and of the people and communities it touches.

Profile Photography by Jun Ponzon Grooming by Arlene Adlo

US Deputy Chief of Mission Brian Goldbeck

LOCAL POWER FOR A GLOBAL SUPERPOWER

HELPING THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE GO GREEN

THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY

BY KAREN CAPINO

No matter how Filipinos today think of the United States, one cannot deny the intimate history linking both nations – and its peoples – together. Forged from peace and war, commerce and culture, the Philippines' relationship with the world's sole superpower is often best represented by the stately US Embassy building along Roxas Blvd. in Manila.

Under the helm of Ambassador Philip Goldberg, the US Embassy does far more than issue visas; it also acts as a conduit for US expertise, humanitarian assistance, and developmental funds. Aside from community-driven projects implemented through the US Agency for International Development, the embassy has helped provide clean water to around 3,500 residents of Barangays Lumbangan and Lumayang in Zamboanga City. It has also given more than US$86 million to the victims of Typhoon Yolanda (international code name: Haiyan) in the Visayas.

The embassy today lies behind tall fences and security barriers, all of which hide a building with a colorful and complex history.

A NOD TO THE PAST

In the 1940s, Manila Bay's fiery sunsets were viewed by American officials from what was then the US High Commissioner's administrative center and residence. Originally designed by Filipino architect and painter Juan M. Arellano, this building was the first office block in the city to be air-conditioned. When the Imperial Japanese Army marched into Manila in 1942, the building became the Japanese Embassy. Three years later, General Douglas MacArthur returned and put the building back in American hands.

After the Philippines gained independence from the United States on July 4, 1945, the High Commissioner's building become the US Embassy. Its modernist architecture by Alfred Aydelott was manifested in a memorable filigree grillwork and brise soleil-covered entrance that people growing up in the 1960s will clearly remember.

The embassy has evolved over the succeeding decades, reflecting shifts in foreign policy, international security concerns, changes in the Philippine-US relationship – and most recently, revolutions in energy efficiency.

It is in the latter area where the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) has proved itself to be an indispensable partner.

THE FUTURE IS GREEN

US Deputy Chief of Mission Brian Goldbeck revealed that as early as 2011, Meralco had been assisting in the upgrade of the Chancery compound's main electrical switchgear, which has increased its supply from 13.8-kilovolt (kV) Medium Voltage Switchgear (MVSG) to 15-kV MVSG. This upgrade is part of a US$166-million, six-year improvement project, resulting in the rise of two New Office Annexes: NOX1 – the second largest US consular service building in the world – and NOX2, inaugurated in 2011 and 2013 respectively.

A key aspect of the construction is the embassy's commitment to sustainability, resulting in a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold award. LEED honors buildings that are constructed as energy-saving, environmentally-friendly, and cost-efficient.

According to Goldbeck: "When construction was initially contracted, we wrote into the contract specifications that the buildings must be registered with LEED and achieve the highest possible LEED rating."

Some of the sustainable practices adopted by the US Embassy include using energy-saving compact fluorescent bulbs, and an airconditioning system with refrigerants that do not harm the ozone layer. The new annexes incorporate solar panels and on-site waste-water treatment that is used to irrigate the embassy's grounds.

Throughout the upgrades, Meralco provided constant preventive maintenance and support to ensure that the new facilities operated at full capacity. Meralco engineers generated stringent parameters for the energy-saving phases of the project, and provided the embassy's residential energy manager with individual building energy audits and billing reviews to help reduce peak demands.

"The US Embassy enjoys an excellent relationship with Meralco and continues to coordinate closely on all issues related to our electricity supply," Goldberg stresses.

This association can be seen as symbolic of the long relationship between the Philippines and the United States, one which will continue to be strong, cordial – and sustainable.

Profile Photography by **Jun Pinzon** Grooming by **Arlene Adto**

MERCURY DRUG

A PEERLESS PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

TAKING MEDICINES FROM THE SIDEWALK TO THE HIGH STREET

BY JING LEJANO

It all began after the liberation of Manila. With only ₱100 left in his pocket, Mariano Que, the founder of Mercury Drug, bought a bottle of sulfathiazole, the wonder drug of that time. He peddled the medicine per piece ("tingi-tingi") from his pushcart on the sidewalks of Bambang, Manila.

On March 1, 1945, he eventually opened the first Mercury Drug in Bambang and named it after Mercury, who in Roman mythology is the messenger of gods and the god of commerce and manual skill.

THE SYMBOL OF SERVICE

Mercury's winged feet symbolize speed while the caduceus he carries signifies the medical profession. These qualities sum up Mercury Drug's commitment to its customers in delivering fresh, reliable and quality medicines to the public through prompt service.

Mercury Drug has since grown from that one drugstore in Bambang to over 900 stores nationwide, more than 100 of which operate 24 hours a day. Through the years, the company has introduced a number of notable service innovations, including prescriptions delivered straight to customers' homes in select cities, and consultations with in-store pharmacists on drug dosages, directions for use, side effects and adverse reactions.

Customers can also raise their other queries through Mercury Drug's hotline 911-SUKI (7854) or dial MERCURY (637-2879). Its "Gamot Padala" service offers Call Order Pick-up, Order Anywhere, Pick-Up Anywhere, and Order Online. Mercury Drug also has medicines on-the-go through its first drive-thru service in Ortigas, San Juan.

These innovations, says Mercury Drug President Vivian Que-Azcona and daughter of Mariano, can be attributed to the company's corporate philosophy: "to have what you want, where you want it, when you want it and how you want it."

A PARTNER IN SERVING PEOPLES' NEEDS

In its quest to reach out to even more customers, Mercury Drug has counted on the support of the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), which has been a dependable partner from the days of its first drugstore.

The speedy service of Meralco in energizing soon-to-open Mercury Drug stores has greatly helped the company to achieve its expansion plans in a shorter period of time.

Meralco has also helped Mercury Drug improve operational efficiencies at many levels, organizing a series of forums that provided education and updates on processing of energization and safety procedures. For greater administrative convenience and efficiency, Mercury Drug has enrolled all its branches in Meralco's Auto-Debit Arrangement.

"Our business partnership with Meralco has always been good. Over the years, Meralco has been an excellent service provider of Mercury Drug's energy needs," says Azcona.

While knowledgeable account officers ensure that Mercury Drug is constantly well-informed of the latest matters related to energy, a Relationship Manager was assigned to manage Mercury Drug's corporate concerns more closely. This new development has further strengthened the relationship of Mercury Drug with Meralco.

A LEGACY RECOGNIZED EVERYWHERE

Mercury Drug does more than provide convenient access to vital medicines. It has also played its part in the nation's economic health. Azcona says, "By far, Mercury Drug has more than 11,000 regular employees which largely contribute to the human capital of our economy. And with the company's continuous expansion program, more employment offers are set to be laid in the future."

As the country's leading drugstore company, Mercury Drug has truly set the standard in retail pharmacy. On January 2012, Mariano Que was honored as the Father of Philippine Health and Wellness Retailing by the Philippine Retailers Association.

Azcona points out: "True to my father's vision, Mercury Drug continues to open more branches to reach every one's homes and serve every household's needs. Our founder, Mariano, always says, 'Customer is king.' Thus, every innovation taken by the company is according to the needs, wants, and satisfaction of our customers."

Mercury Drug Corp. President Vivian Que-Azcona

Profile Photography by **Jun Pinzon** Makeup Artist by **Arlene Adto**

TEACHING MINDS, TOUCHING HEARTS, TRANSFORMING LIVES

AN OLD SCHOOL PUSHES NEW TECH

BY JING LEJANO

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

You probably cheered for – or against – its basketball team, and if you're not an alumnus, then many of your friends, relatives and colleagues are. For 103 years, De La Salle University (DLSU) has made its mark on Philippine business, society, and sports, providing generations of men and women with a superb Christian education.

This pursuit of educational excellence has seen DLSU expand in ways the original founding Christian Brothers could never have imagined.

A TRADITION OF INNOVATION

The drive to innovate has always been part of the Lasallian culture. "Our story did not start in 1911, when we opened our campus in Paco, Manila," explains DLSU President and Chancellor Br. Ricardo Laguda FSC. "I always go back to the story of our founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle. He was an innovator who knew how to break paths in any way that is best for education."

Among other educational innovations, St. La Salle introduced the concept of simultaneous education and the use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction. "In the same manner, we at DLSU are never afraid to take bets because we know we will win," says Laguda. "Education creates a win-win situation. We know it's going to be good for the country. STC is one example."

He refers to DLSU's Science and Technology Complex in Laguna. Established in 2012, it is positioned as a major hub for research and development. The location of the campus gives students practical exposure to dozens of global companies within the nearby Laguna Technopark, with firms such as Hitachi, Panasonic, Toshiba, and Isuzu.

Over the next decade, the 50-hectare complex is set to undergo a steady series of infrastructural changes. These include facilities such as the Hangar, a playground for dirty and noisy science engineering; and the Clean Building, a shared space for high-precision equipment, experiments and laboratory work for science courses. An Energy Park, a Sustainability Institute, and a Biodiversity Center are also planned.

A COLLABORATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) is among DLSU-STC's partners who share the vision to develop this state-of-the-art complex.

Meralco provides frequent technical consultations on subjects such as the primary metering infrastructure, a review of electrical plans and an analysis of existing load. It was closely involved in many aspects of DLSU-STC's development such as the planning and construction of the Hangar and of the Clean Building, to ensure that these structures are more eco-friendly and less reliant on air-conditioning.

DLSU-STC has itself donated a 3,000-square-meter lot to Meralco for the construction of a substation that will distribute power to the entire campus upon its completion in 2023. The substation will also benefit other commercial and industrial developments inside the Laguna Technopark.

Laguda hopes that Meralco and DLSU can be more than just partners in saving energy, as the two can use their joint social capital and make a real difference in the lives of Filipinos.

"I will continue to engage this partnership with Meralco and take it to another level, maybe engage them in research," he adds. "They have the facilities and we have the faculty; we should do this together. We can find a sweet spot and figure out how to best educate the people. I think that's where we should go."

Keen to address the challenges posed by climate change with answers such as fossil-fuel alternatives, DLSU-STC is making significant inroads in the field of renewable energy research. It has ongoing projects in solar energy, hydroelectric energy, and biofuels.

DLSU always takes pride in producing creative and critical thinkers, but Laguda also hopes that DLSU-STC graduates can apply their knowledge in science for the greater social good. "As in any country, we need a percentage of our graduates to go into science and technology," he notes. "Even if they're only 10 percent, they can enable that country to enjoy faster progress or leapfrog over its competitors. If we could reach that 10 percent, then we are doing our job."

DLSU President and Chancellor Br. Ricardo Laguda FSC

Profile Photography by **Jun Pinzon** Grooming by **Fennie Tan**

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

EYE-CATCHING ARCHITECTURE, MODERN FACILITIES, AND GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE CURRICULA

BY JING LEJANO

THE LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY

Peter Laurel, president of LPU Batangas and Laguna and Roberto Laurel, president of LPU Manila and Cavite

Traveling down Governor's Drive in General Trias, Cavite, you will notice a contemporary structure of glass, steel and concrete rising on the horizon. Is it a mall? An airport terminal? An entertainment complex? Perhaps the headquarters of a multinational corporation? No, no, no, and no; the futuristic-looking complex is actually the Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU).

Built in 2008, the Cavite campus was meant to look different, explains Atty. Roberto P. Laurel, president of LPU Manila, Makati, and Cavite. "We wanted something that, when viewed from Governor's Drive, would look like anything but a typical school building."

The concept worked. The campus does more than catch the curious eyes of students and parents; it reflects the new international standards of the university. This translated into dramatic enrollment figures and earned recognition from the local government, which now includes the campus in its promotional brochures.

CREATING A WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

But there is more to LPU than its passion to be different.

Since its establishment in Intramuros, Manila in 1952, it has become one of the fastest growing university systems in the country, with campuses in Makati, Batangas, Laguna, and Cavite. Inspired by the ideals of José P. Laurel, President of the Second Philippine Republic, LPU seeks to be a leading university in the Asia-Pacific region.

Peter Laurel, president of LPU Batangas and Laguna and younger brother of Roberto, says that in light of this goal, they work to attract more foreign students, train their faculty to be highly competent, make improvements in their physical plants and facilities, adapt technology to facilitate teaching and learning, and garner accreditations from international institutions.

In 2008, LPU achieved ISO 9001 status, indicating high quality standards in management. Its Hotel and Restaurant Management program is the first in the Philippines to be recognized as a Center of Excellence. It is also the only university accredited by the Tourism and Hospitality Education - International Center of Excellence, a renowned international accreditation organization based in Australia. LPU now aims for its business and engineering programs to gain international certifications as well.

Much of LPU's pursuit of world-class excellence would not be possible without the ideal infrastructure, including a reliable source of power, which is steadily supplied by the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

ENERGIZED EXPANSION

Meralco is, however, far more than a utility provider. Working in close coordination with LPU, it also assists the university in its efforts at energy efficiency and conservation.

At the Cavite campus, LPU has engaged the services of MServ, a wholly owned Meralco subsidiary, for the preventive maintenance of its transformers. MServ's quick response to emergency situations has impressed the Laurels to no end.

"We initially planned to have two generators. In the campus, we have two power substations to house the generators. But because of the stable (power) and immediate response of Meralco, we've not experienced the urgent need to acquire any generator," says Roberto.

He also reveals plans to develop the remaining portion of the 16-hectare Cavite property into a "commercial sports and resort complex." (Only four hectares are currently occupied by the campus.) A new Bayleaf – LPU's teaching and research hotel - will break ground soon. It opened in 2011, and today the first Bayleaf in Intramuros is ranked the number one hotel in the City of Manila by the prestigious TripAdvisor. The Laurels are committed to maintaining its high standards of quality.

"That's the plan," says Roberto, "and we look to Meralco to assist us. We're submitting the plans of The Bayleaf Cavite to them to help us figure out what technologies to adapt and how to be more efficient with power."

In its quest to become a leading university in the Asia-Pacific region, LPU will open more campuses in other parts of the country, with Meralco supporting its efforts every step of the way.

Profile Photography by **Jun Pinzon** Grooming by **Fennie Tan**

VICTORY CITY COMES TO LIGHT

MSERV PROVIDES END-TO-END ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR IGLESIA NI CRISTO'S CIUDAD DE VICTORIA

BY KATRINA C. VINLUAN

The drive from Manila to Bulacan along the North Luzon Expressway is a plain vista of rice fields dotted with hog-feed billboards until a massive structure abruptly comes into view: the Philippine Arena.

This gargantuan building – the world's largest indoor arena – is the centerpiece of the new Ciudad de Victoria or Victory City. This development by the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) is also known as the INC Centennial City, with the July 2014 soft launch timed for the 100th-anniversary celebration of the religious organization.

Nestled in the tourism enterprise zone near the Bocaue and Sta. Maria toll exits, Ciudad de Victoria represents the fusion of vision and resources, of tradition and technology, of ambition and expertise.

For a project as grand as this 75-hectare mixed-use development, the INC wanted to partner with reliable and competent power engineers to customize their services according to the project's needs.

A STRONG PARTNER FOR A GRAND VISION

To date, the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) alone has the experience, resources and know-how to handle the extreme engineering needs of the Philippine Arena. For this project, Meralco built, among others, the first modern underground electric infrastructure, a 34.5-kilovolt distribution line, for a mixed-use complex north of Manila. It also provided Ciudad de Victoria with its own exclusive substation, to supply power to all establishments within the property. Electrical testing was conducted rapidly, to help ensure the facility would be launched on time.

Meralco tapped one of its subsidiaries, MServ, to provide a complete suite of end-to-end energy solutions. MServ President and Chief Executive Officer Dexter Lee explains that the company provides customers with complementary solutions where high-quality, efficient, and reliable power are critical.

"We offer everything from design, engineering, procurement, construction, operation, management, and auditing of electrical facilities-as well as energy audits and energy efficiency offerings that include lighting, and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) solutions," says Lee.

Aside from performing HVAC and electrical audits of the Philippine Arena, MServ also handled the design and engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) of electrical facilities for the 20,000-seater Philippine Stadium and the 30,000-seater Philippine Sports Center. In addition, the Meralco subsidiary tackled the operation and maintenance of the supplied facilities.

Glicerio "GP" Santos IV, INC's head legal counsel, points to the "personal relationship and personal stake" MServ demonstrates for the INC. "We really felt that we were given the services we needed—whatever we need, they provide, without any hassle, without any debate."

SCALING UP LOCAL TALENT TO A GLOBAL LEVEL

Given the very tight deadlines, the massive Cuidad de Victoria electrification was truly a major challenge for MServ.

Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan presents a copper replica of the Iglesia ni Cristo's (INC) Philippine Arena to Glicerio "Jun" Santos IV, general auditor of the INC.

From left: Ernesto Alberto, executive vice president and head of Enterprise & International Carrier Business Group, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.; Rodrigo Franco, president and chief executive officer (CEO), Manila North Tollways Corp.; Orlando Vea, chief wireless advisor, Smart Communications Corp.; Victorico Vargas, president and CEO, Maynilad Water Services Inc.; Glicerio "Jun" Santos, general auditor, Iglesia Ni Cristo; Manuel V. Pangilinan, chairman, MPIC; Glicerio "GP" Santos IV, head legal counsel, INC; Oscar Reyes, president, Manila Electric Co.; Ramoncito Fernandez, president and CEO, Metro Pacific Tollways Corp.; and Emmanuel Lorenzana, president and CEO, MediaQuest Holdings Inc.

Photos courtesy of **Candice Anne L. Reyes**

Santos says "What we are doing here at Ciudad de Victoria is a once in a lifetime project that showcases the best of the Philippines. *Hindi ito madali.* (This isn't easy.) With my dealings with Meralco, I found out one of their subsidiary companies – MServ – which provided me with all the peace of mind, with all the technicalities that gave me all the solutions that we needed."

MServ's flexible working model allows clients to get customized solutions that enable them to choose the right combination and quality of service specific to their needs which ensures value for money -- no over-engineering and waste.

"Plus they tailor-fit all our needs," Santos continues. "May malasakit ang mga tao dito (These people are personally invested). They will do whatever it takes to deliver on their promises."

Providing relevant and reliable energy solutions to one of the country's upcoming landmarks is a testament to MServ's continuous thrust to be the Philippines' premier energy-management company.

With an interconnected range of energy solutions, efficiency concepts and renewable-energy options, MServ proves itself well up to the task of bringing the City of Victory into the light.