



RESORTS WORLD

REDEFINING THE GOOD LIFE

Kaos is a Broadway-meets-Vegas show that features performers from all over the world. It runs at the Newport Performing Arts Theater.

Since opening its doors to the public, Republiq has drawn the trendy set to fill up its clubbing space. Expect good music, a strict dress code, and cover charge at the door.



WORLD TRAVELER NYX MARTINEZ FINDS A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF FUN AND PAMPERING RIGHT AT HOME.

I NEVER HEARD THE ALARM GO OFF.

It could have been due to the rare absence of my one-year-old son, who would normally be climbing over my head at 6:30 a.m., attempting to sneak a few items off my bed board. It could have been the previous partying-the-night-away with my husband, sipping signature cocktails and watching all the beautiful people stride past. Or, it could simply be the plush, six-star casino hotel that I was booked into, lounging in the kind of luxury that made me never want to wake up. When you have such an exquisite suite to snuggle into, you should be allowed to be lazy.

So I snoozed a bit more. And I dreamt a hazy dream of the night before, where, on the second floor of this compound, we had joined the hungry party crowd for dinner and drinks at Opus, the recently opened bar and restaurant whose popularity was gaining more loyal followers nightly. Opus—even the meaning of its name bore semblance to the age-old Roman style of architecture, one that obviously inspired its renaissance interiors. A word that stands for the best fine art rendered by a master. Opus is, in fact, the realization of a dream by the masters of Manila's night scene, who have an affinity to life's finer things.

Pearl, our tall, dark-haired VIP Services Officer, had escorted us to a table near the DJ's booth. "So you can get a better view," she had smiled. Perched on a slightly higher level, we watched the nightscape unfold—Manila's elite, the fashionistas, the trendsetters, the ever-so-posh pouring in like this was not the Third World.

"Perhaps you would like to try our truffle popcorn?" Pearl had suggested. It was a sampling of the restaurant's modern cuisine. The week before, I had already tasted Chef Carlo Miguel's imaginative and healthy dishes; behind a glass encasement where dinner had been served, I chose Crispy Skin Salmon Fillet with Roast Vegetable and Feta Tart, Broccoli Puree and Sauce Vierge.

But now, I was half-awake, conscious of the silence, the feel of fresh, soft sheets, and sunlight streaming through the window. I remember where we spent the night. A dream hotel, in Resorts World Manila.

Maxims Tower hotel features 172 all-luxury suites, three Royal Villas for VIPs, and one Presidential Suite which, I later learned, was where a certain Middle Eastern Prince had recently tucked into.

We weren't checked into that palatial lair, but I felt royal in our own suite, with a private sundeck and seductive jacuzzi. I took a deep breath, pulled back the heavy drapes, and stepped outside, recalling the details of the previous day. Valentine's Day was 48 hours ago, but it could hardly get more romantic than this. There, in warm, inviting water, we had soaked up some late afternoon sun while watching airplanes lift off from the runway.

We had also missed breakfast.

"Good morning! Would you rather take your lunch at Marriott?" Candy, our personal butler had been waiting outside for us. "We can have it arranged."



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) The crimson bedroom suite at Maxims Hotel; Ginzadon Restaurant; Sampling Ginzadon's delicate Japanese cuisine

My husband, who was also waking by now, needed no further convincing. Five minutes later, we were ushered into the large restaurant, its cozy interiors inviting us to dine in style. It was a vast, international buffet—a spread of fresh seafood on ice, multiple selections of the finest, inter-continental cuisine, a carving station that would melt anyone's vegetarian will.

Over a hearty lunch, we talked about Kaos, the amazing show we had witnessed last night, prior to partying. The Newport Performing Arts Theater could sit 1,500 people very comfortably. There had been live orchestra music, dancing, dazzling acts and death-defying stunts—all with an unmistakable Vegas touch. Big cats were the main attraction, but then so were the stunt motorcyclists and a magician named The White Wizard who produced sexy triplets from thin air. It was spectacular! Candy, always at our service, reappeared in the restaurant just then to remind us that, as per schedule, our movie would begin in an hour.

Our crimson "loveseat" in the Ultra 1 Theater was a cozy, enclosed pod. On cue, Candy refilled our popcorn and drinks, then pressed a button on the chair, swinging my legs into full reclining position. Ah, indulgence.

There is no finer cinema in the country: our sofas—with built-in cup-holders—were made of premium fabric and high-grade cushion, all in the name of comfort. Each pod came

in pairs, which gave the feeling of privacy while enjoying an optimum view. We snuggled into our movie world of adventure, thrills and romance.

Later that afternoon, I scoured Newport Mall. Its four levels were designed with a piazza at the center, looking up to a sun-showered glass skyline. The variety of restaurants available there meant an endless array of options. I had been to Beurre Blanc the week before to try its fabulous wines. Children played near the piazza fountain as their parents dined. Younger couples strolled hand in hand, and jetlagged travelers strode through the mall's wide open spaces, ready to spend more than a few bucks on branded items.

Resorts World Manila seemed a city all its own, and with such easy access to the airport and highways, you need not look further for cosmopolitan entertainment. We had spent two days in this world-class development, and had not even tasted the half of it.

Since the afternoon had blown in a cooler breeze, I stepped outside to survey my surroundings. This dream hotel, the Maxims Tower, was one of three international lodging brands in a giant complex, a stone's throw from Manila's international airport. Next door to the Marriott stood the Newport condominiums for those who want a permanent piece of this luxurious lifestyle.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) Shopping at Newport Mall; More dining options at Resorts World; The Newport residences just a few steps from the RWM compound

LIVE WHERE YOU PLAY

If your weekend visit to Resorts World Manila made you declare, “I want to live here!”—you actually can.

Just next-door to the Resorts World playground is Newport City, a 25-hectare development that offers residences and office spaces within walking distance of Maxims Hotel and Marriott Hotel Manila.

Newport City is a playground on its own, its condominiums complete with swimming pools and fitness stations. A few minutes away is the 60-hectare Villamor Golf Course, where you can while away the day as you wait for the night to come alive at the neighboring Resorts World.

This, really, is the life.

To go back to our suite in Maxims, I could cross through the adjoining casino. Resorts World Manila’s gaming facility is the country’s largest, with over 1,000 slot machines. Dizzying lights and foreign dancers took center-stage at the Bar 360 while hopeful gamblers tried their luck at the game tables.

Returning to our suite, I passed a few moments by the villa pool—an enticing, see-through glass encasement of turquoise water. No one was around just then, and if I’d had all the time in the world, this part would be my happy place.

And then it was time for dinner: authentic Cantonese cuisine at the Passion Restaurant, which could fill up to 400 people. Seated in a hall fit for Chinese royalty, we tried an array of perfectly cooked crustaceans, served with classic Cantonese spices and trimmings: oranges with caramelized prawns, crabs doused with gourmet garlic sauce.

And so went our dreamy weekend – our sophisticated suite was a playground within a playground, an affair to remember. In big cities like Manila, some hotels still manage to get ahead of their game and simply, give you everything you could possibly want. If you care to splurge the US\$300-500 a night for a Resorts World experience, you’ll get faultless six-star service you can’t find anywhere else here.

And that’s worth waking up to!