



Top: Explore the space of Gabby's Bistro where an inner section has amusing displays of M&Ms, Betty Boop, and vintage luggage stickers

Cebu: Beyond Mactan Island

Picture resorts and relaxation and Mactan Island is usually first on the list of visitors to Cebu. But on a recent visit, **APPLE MANDY** heads to Cebu's Daanbantayan for a city escape.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A PLACE to stay in Cebu to unplug from the daily grind and experience an active holiday at the same time, drive three hours north from Cebu City to Daanbantayan where you'll find the remote **Kandaya Resort**. There, located at the island's northern tip, you'll be surrounded by nature and provided with plenty of activities to keep you well entertained.

The seven-hectare haven has quite an interesting background. Nestled in a 14-hectare piece of land owned by Milagros Salimbangon, Kandaya was once a holiday home of the Salimbangon family. Kandaya, meaning 'home of daya,' was named after Datu Daya, who was known as the legendary chieftain and protector of Daanbantayan.

I found myself shutting away from the world outside as soon as I arrived on a Saturday afternoon. A golf cart whisked me to one of the seven Ocean Pool Villas, which is considered the resort's top-tier accommodation. The space is the second biggest among six other

room types, measuring 68 square meters. Its bedroom and bathroom are designed with modern furnishings in earth tones, making the space look bright and airy. The king-sized bed is the center of attraction here, fitted with sheets and linens that are as soft as cotton. The room's greatest feature is the uninterrupted views of the private infinity pool and direct access to Balas Beach.

Unlike other resorts which primarily feature pools and beaches, Kandaya plays host to a variety of activities that will not give you the typical 'I'm bored' look. For ladies, toning muscles and improving posture are possible when attending fitness and yoga classes. For men, their stamina and endurance can be tested from running on a cardio machine at the gym, followed by a class on mixed martial arts at Kombate. Although the resort requires a bit of a journey, guests have the advantage to enjoy small, personalized activities.

Ball games like beach volleyball, basketball and tennis are also offered here. But if you fancy

some splash or want to ride along the calm waves, the Bangka House provides a variety of water sports. Drive a jet ski, sail a catamaran, kayak or go stand-up paddleboarding. Kid-friendly activities are also available, such as mixed martial arts, pony riding, zumba and pizza-making.

For the adventurous, visit the stable at Kuwadra and ride a horse along the trail through coconut trees and along the beach. A 30-minute trip to Malaspascua Island lets you snorkel at Coral Garden or scuba dive with manta rays and thresher sharks.

After a day of activities, book a treatment at Daya Spa to relax your muscles and calm your mind. The Filipino hilot is recommended, aimed at rebalancing energy using the ancient Filipino art of healing.

From welcoming service, nourishing food and drinks at Kusina restaurant, to the activities offered, Kandaya redefines luxury and makes it a standout in the Philippines. ■