

El Rio

Nature Resort & Observatory

...for guests, a vacation that they do not want to end.

For YOU, a retirement and vacation home in paradise
(and an investment that *pays* for itself)!

The Vision

The El Rio Nature Resort & Observatory is planned to be a world-class sustainable resort, bamboo plantation, and observatory bordering the clean and beautiful Diaman River in Barangay Debucao, Maria Aurora, in the province of Aurora.

Developments will begin in 2019 (in case the [9.7 hectare land](#) envisioned for it will not be sold this year).

The resort accommodations will include private villas, suites/rooms (in the main wing), and dorm-type accommodation for big groups. The private villas will follow distinct design and architectural inspirations from different cultures and principles such as Filipiniana (Filipino), Japanese, Asian-Balinese, modern-contemporary, and Greek.

In a nutshell, El Rio shall offer the following features and amenities, offering a distinct niche:

- **The Bamboo Grove Villas** - 5 private villas near the main wing (Hiraya)
- **The Bamboo Grove Residences** – exclusive villas (for sale to investors)
- **Spice & Stars Restaurant & Observatory** – a Filipino-Asian fusion restaurant with an observatory deck. It will host viewing during special cosmic and astronomical events like lunar eclipses, meteor showers, etc. (as far as we know only 1 hotel does this in the Philippines); secondly, this offers an alternative as Aurora is synonymous to surfing only. This way Aurora can offer other things aside from surfing!
- **Kalinangan Creative Hub** - art center and workshop (e.g., for bamboo products, etc.); exhibit/show area for artists; events place for big groups
- **Harmony** - at the center of the resort is a very beautiful Japanese Garden - again, to differentiate El Rio from other resorts; this is envisioned to be among the best ever Japanese and Zen Gardens in the world.
- **Kasaganaan** - organic farm/garden farm, which will practice organic and sustainable farming methods to produce fruits and vegetables that will be enjoyed

by the guests and sold in local and international markets. The production of stevia and timber is currently under feasibility study.

- **Serenity** – a meditation park (we will build gazebos here where guests can contemplate, pray, meditate, write, etc.)
- **Resilience (Bamboo Grove)** - a 5-hectare bamboo park where visitors can read inspirational quotes/verses while listening to the sounds of the bamboo

As the site is not yet connected to the grid, the nature resort will require a renewable energy system for its electricity requirements and will be the 1st-ever resort (of this type) in the Philippines to rely on it 100%. This will also ensure sustainability, cutting down costs on electric bills. It shall also adapt green principles and energy-efficient design in all its buildings and facilities.

Where we are

We are now undertaking a feasibility study and will share our journey through this blog initially (transitioning to its own website in 2019) as we go along the path of building this world-class nature resort, bamboo grove, and observatory.

Who we are

We are a husband (JR) and wife (Mei) team, doing our best to make a difference. We are not first-time entrepreneurs and had been quite ‘scarred’ in the past by challenges but those experiences are our stepping stones that are making us wiser. We know there will still be challenges ahead but we have reached this point where we are more confident than ever of God’s continuing graces and light. If the lands will not be sold this year, then, it is God’s answer to our question, “Shall we do this?”!

Professionally, I (Mei) am an environmental and social development specialist with a Master of Environment and Natural Resources Management and BA Development Studies degrees. Meanwhile, I (JR) completed BS Management Accounting and Commercial Cooking NC II (TESDA-certified). Mei will manage design, environmental, and human resources requirements while JR will be in-charge of financial planning, operations, and culinary requirements.

Flor (turning 81), our Mom, and her best friend, Linda (in her 70s) are retired teachers and among the core reasons for the establishment of this resort. We want to honor Flor for this land is her inheritance from her parents and all her life, dreamt of developing this. Flor’s children are all city-bred and, therefore, while Mei grew up feeling a deep affinity to the land, she also felt she was not (yet) ready for the huge task. However, this year, we felt it is a good time to pursue Mom’s dream as well as ensure that she—along with Mommy Linda—will enjoy their twilight years being closer to God and his gifts of creation.

Flor and Linda are envisioned to participate in the building of this dream by allowing them to assist in the landscaping and gardening requirements. After all, despite their ages, they are still very strong!

Community solidarity

All supplies and materials will be sourced from local and sustainable sources (to the extent possible). For example, *Inabel* blankets and textile from the Ilocos region shall be used in all guest rooms.

El Rio is also for the people of Aurora, Flor's birthplace and where she spent all her adult years as a public school teacher. After the nature resort is firmly established (or even before operations!), we intend to develop livelihood projects for the people, aside from hiring local talents for the operations of the nature resort and observatory. We envision creating world-class bamboo-based products and furniture with most if not all raw materials to be sourced on-site and locally and for which I (Mei) will be the lead designer.

Support for Filipino artists

El Rio intends to build an art center called, **Kalinangan ("Culture") Creative Hub**, and turn this into an art and cultural space for Filipino artists. Filipino painters, sculptors, and photographers shall be invited to run shows/exhibits here. An annual **El Rio Arts Festival** is envisioned to gather local and international artists, students, and professionals. This annual arts fest shall be El Rio's contribution in the promotion of arts, culture, history, and nationalism.

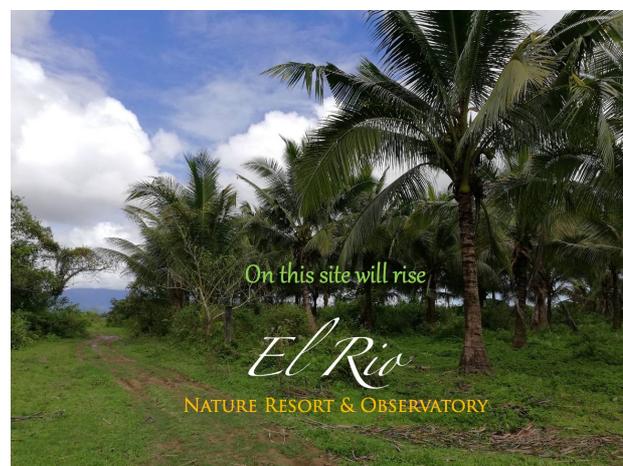
Aurora - the north's jewel and surfing paradise

We are confident about the viability of the nature resort & observatory as Aurora is fast becoming a popular tourist destination with its great surf and pristine environment. As mentioned earlier, the Diaman River bordering the site is still crystal-clean! It also offers other natural and historical sites including the popular Ditungab Falls in San Luis and the *Millenium Tree*, which is incidentally, just about 10 minutes by car from the site! The site is about 30 minutes from Baler (where the great surfs are). It also offers tourists and travelers an alternative destination particularly that it is in the inner (quieter) part of Aurora—but still not so far from the more crowded beach front resorts. In El Rio, guests are guaranteed a quiet and restful vacation and pampering.

Partner with us!

We are now seeking potential partners, investors and earth-nurturers. (The business model is a perfect fit for innovative and passionate visionaries like us, too!) Young architecture graduates are also welcome to send us a pitch on the design work. Please drop us an email through the Contact page in Meilbox or through daughter.of.aurora[at]gmail.com.

May the spirit of JOYS, LOVE, PEACE, and ABUNDANCE always accompany you!



Come, dream and BUILD with us!

Note: This announcement/brief is also available at <http://meilbox.net/el-rio-nature-resort-observatory/>

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