



Cebu

Into the wild

Cheetahs, white tigers and aquatic birds are just some of the animals represented in the country's newest – and biggest – adventure park

WILDLIFE PARK

The sight of a brahminy kite spreading its majestic brown wings, zebras galloping across sprawling grassland and colorful lorries swooping down to eat papaya seeds will have visitors thinking they've landed in the untamed wilderness. They are, in fact, only a 50km drive away from Cebu City's downtown area, at the newly opened Cebu Safari and Adventure Park.

Located in the lush mountains of the municipality of Carmen, the park sits on a 170ha piece of land and is home to over a thousand animals representing more than a hundred species grouped into different zones. There are cheetahs and giraffes in the African Savannah area, white tigers and blackbucks in Tiger Turf while meerkats and aquatic birds hang out in the Safari Outpost. The park also features a vast tiered garden with a million orchids and mayana flowers.

"All my life, I've had the deepest love for farming and nature," says business magnate and park founder Michel J Lhuillier, whose childhood dream was to be a farmer.

Prior to the Cebu Safari and Adventure Park's opening, Lhuillier had been collecting exotic animals and plants, and a visit to the San Diego Zoo inspired him to open a wildlife sanctuary in his hometown that would raise public awareness of the importance of animal and plant conservation. "It became my dream project, not only for Carmen, but also for the Philippines," says Lhuillier.

To maintain such a facility, hired consultants ensure that the park meets the standards of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. One of the consultants, Vasantha Nugegoda, says it's important that



the exhibits are set up in a way that allows the animals to "express their natural mental and physical behaviors".

Eduard Loop, the chief operating officer, envisions the park to be both fun and educational. Open on weekends and receiving up to 3,000 people per day, the park will soon add adventure rides, zip lines and swimming pools to cater to the youngest visitors – and the young at heart. The goal, Loop says, is to "be a place where visitors can enjoy world-class entertainment and learn more about our animal kingdom".

cebusafari.ph – Crystal Neri

IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE

**Can't get enough of the great outdoors?
Venture into Cebu's wilderness
at Foressa Trails**



A 90-minute drive from downtown Cebu transports you to a nature-lover's playground. Opened by eco-conscious real estate developer AboitizLand, Foressa Trails in the mountains of Balamban is an outdoor adventure park that offers beginner to advanced hiking and biking trails with numerous natural pools, hidden waterfalls and butterfly sanctuaries along the way. End the adventure by spending the night in a tent and gazing at the stars. **foressa.com**