

What a woman wants

She gets at Eastwood City

IT'S refreshing to meet a woman who, even after living a couple of decades in the United States with a successful career, still considers her stay overseas as "temporary" and the Philippines as her home. Gina Santiago, an alumna of Maryknoll College, moved to the US to study in the prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City and pursued her career there. She is currently a fashion production manager for Coldwater Creek apparel and based in Idaho, for now.

In one of her business trips in this part of Asia recently this month, Gina stopped for a few days in the Philippines recently to visit her family and also to see the final product of a purchase she had made in 2003—a three-bedroom unit at Eastwood Excelsior, one of property giant Megaworld Corporation's posh condominiums in Eastwood City.

As someone whose hectic business schedule requires her to travel all over the world, Gina needs her home to be calming and rejuvenating. She shares that her refuge in Idaho is surrounded by nature that lets her relax whenever she comes home. And the same goes for her new condo unit in Eastwood.

For the interior design, Gina enlisted the help of her friend, contractor and designer Jun del Rosario. "I believe in his taste. We sat down and talked about it, and I told him all about who I am and what I want in the design. He's a genius and he transformed this into gold," she says in all conviction. "I did not really follow up on this one—we just spoke around 3 times since I had turned this over to him. I gave him all my trust. I'm really very happy about it," she remarks about the results.

Looking around the unit, it's very warm and cozy, yet has several points of interest from one room to the next. Gina's passion for wood and stone is incorporated seamlessly into the design. "I believe in granite and marble with the combination of wood—it gives you both warmth and coolness," she says, pointing out the marble and stones on the walls. "I like putting in Filipino products and some of the knickknacks I have picked up in my travels."

Another thing that Gina wants is space. To maximize the floor space of the 89-square-meter unit, Jun knocked down the wall of the third bedroom and made it into a formal dining area. The room is made to appear much bigger by the immense mirror. However, one of the most fascinating aspects of the design is the drop ceilings in various shapes that distinguish one section of the living area from another, yet at the same time unifies the design. Gina pointed out that there are at least three different colored lights incorporated in the drop-ceiling design so the lighting would match

whatever mood she has for that particular day – be it white, yellow or blue.

Gina is a woman who definitely knows what she wants in life yet doesn't rush into decisions without any consideration. Even back in 2003, when there were just a few residential developments in Eastwood City, she had been reading up on this new satellite city and knew that there's a great future for the area. She chose Eastwood mainly because of its location. "It's all about location, location, location," she states. "It's near the school here, it's near Megamall, it's near Makati. I live in Valenzuela, so we can stay here and relax whenever we go out and rest first before we go home."

She points out that in Eastwood City, from her condo, she can just walk down the street and she's already in the middle of various choices of cuisine dining, a few steps more and there are at least two more shopping centers to choose from in Eastwood's Citywalk. There, she can just leisurely shop or spend the afternoon at



Fil-Am Gina Santiago says her Eastwood unit is a gift for her mom Paulina.



The master's bedroom contains Gina's mementos from her travels to Korea and Hawaii, among others.



The granite wall, mirror and wooden cabinetry of the foyer immediately make one feel at home at Fil-Am Gina Santiago's Eastwood City condo unit.



The hallway contains precious antiques from Gina's travels within the country.



The dining area's drop ceiling gives off warm red light - helping spread the love during family gatherings.



Being a New Yorker, Gina rarely uses the kitchen. But she of course had it designed to be neat and clean.

RP out of 3rd world status by 2024

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to farm and they reap what they sow. The primary purpose is food on the table. Whatever surplus, they can sell," she explained.

GK is on the process of perfecting the model, which they intend to replicate on a nation-wide scale. They have launched 115 farms in the past three months, with 25 metric tons of vegetables

harvested and over 17,000 individuals fed.

Like the other GK projects, Bayan Anihan is also a multi-sectoral endeavor involving the government, local government units, youth, non-government organizations and the academe.

A lot of things have been achieved since GK's official founding in 2003. Over 900 communities all over the Philippines and in other developing

countries, such as Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and East Timor have welcomed Gawad Kalinga with open arms.

GK groups based outside of the Philippines were also established in recent years. GK Hope Initiative Limited (GK HI) was incorporated in February 2009 and registered as an International Charity Organization in the Singapore Economic Development Board to give Gawad Kalinga an official presence in Singapore.

GK HI is composed of volunteers who work to

promote GK and its vision in the Lion City. Singapore volunteers have participated in a number of builds and immersions in the Philippines. They have also been involved in charity work for orphans in East Timor and for the elderly and handicapped in Singapore.

Delegates from Singapore led by GK HI director Su-Chzeng Ong and active supporter Antonio del Rosario, president of Coca Cola Singapore and Malaysia officially announced that the country will be hosting the 2010 GK Global Summit next June. ■



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