

Big Boi Makes Filipino Food History at Downtown Disney

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



For the first time, Filipino food has found a home at Downtown Disney. Chef and entrepreneur Barb Batiste marked the grand opening of Big Boi Lumpia Co. on August 28, bringing one of the Philippines' most beloved foods to the heart of the Disneyland Resort destination.

The celebration was attended by Philippine Consul General Adelio S. Cruz and members of the Consulate staff, along with representatives from the Filipino American Press Club, Philippine Global Media Group, and the Filipino American community.

Batiste, also the entrepreneur behind B Sweet, built Big Boi around the Filipino food and family recipes she grew up with. Named in honor of her father, Angel, whose nickname was "Boi," the concept gives Downtown Disney visitors an approachable introduction to Filipino flavors.

The menu features crispy lumpia with pork, chicken and

plant-based fillings, as well as sweet ube and peach-mango lumpia, dipping sauces and calamansi juice. The convenient grab-and-go concept makes Filipino food accessible to families and visitors exploring Downtown Disney.

For Batiste, the opening also represents years of building Filipino-inspired food concepts in Southern California and introducing traditional flavors to a broader audience. Big Boi's presence at Downtown Disney is another sign of the growing visibility of Filipino cuisine in the American food scene.

With visitors from around the world passing through Downtown Disney, Big Boi represents more than a new place to eat—it puts Filipino food, culture and entrepreneurship in front of an international audience, one lumpia at a time.

CHAT WITH MIC

Irene Formentera: Finding Purpose

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER

For **Irene Formentera**, becoming the woman she is today has meant learning how to rebuild. During her interview on *Chat With Mic*, the Miss Philippines USA Empress Tourism 2025 titleholder shared how motherhood and the painful end of her marriage became two of the experiences that shaped her most. Rather than remain defined by betrayal, she eventually chose forgiveness—not for anyone else, she said, but so she could find peace, rebuild herself and move forward.

Born and raised on Camotes Island, Cebu, Formentera grew up with simple dreams before moving to Manila for college and later becoming a flight attendant with Qatar Airways. After moving to the United States, she faced a difficult transition, taking jobs in restaurants, caregiving and as a cashier before eventually building a career in healthcare and residential care.

Years later, she returned to another childhood dream—

becoming a beauty queen. At 43 and already a mother, Formentera entered Miss Philippines USA Empress hoping simply for the opportunity to compete. She ultimately won the Empress Tourism title, an achievement she sees as proof that dreams have no expiration date.

Formentera has since used her platform to give back, including providing school supplies to children in her hometown. Through motherhood, career, entrepreneurship and pageantry, her story has become one of starting over and finding purpose after hardship. Her message to other women is simple: whatever season of life you are in, if the opportunity to pursue your dream comes, go for it.

DON'T MISS OUT!

Check out the full interview in *Chat With Mic* on the Mic Diaz Presents Youtube channel.



New conversations every week on *Chat With Mic* Talk Show at Mic Diaz Presents Youtube Channel



CHAT WITH MIC Episode 77: Irene Formentera



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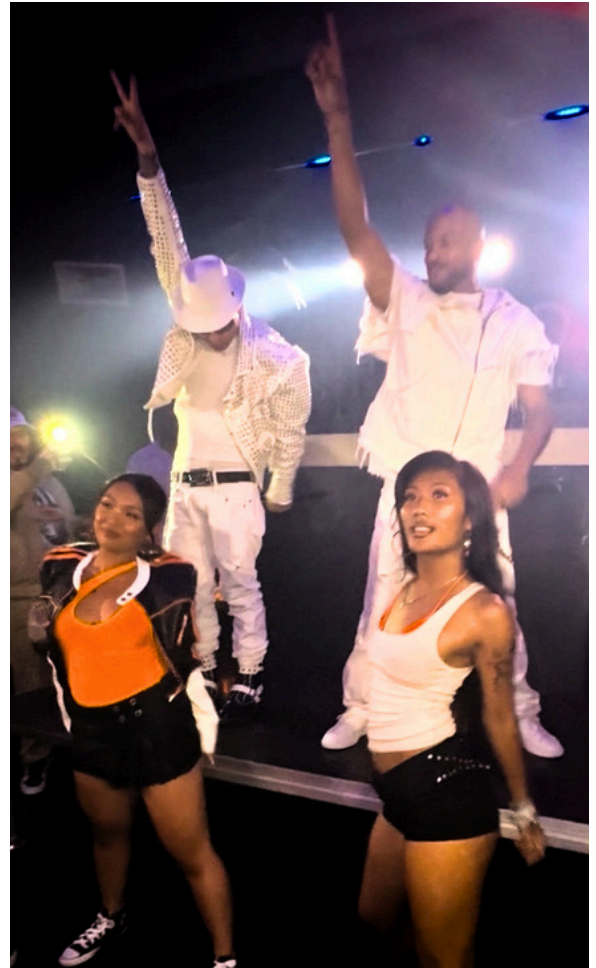
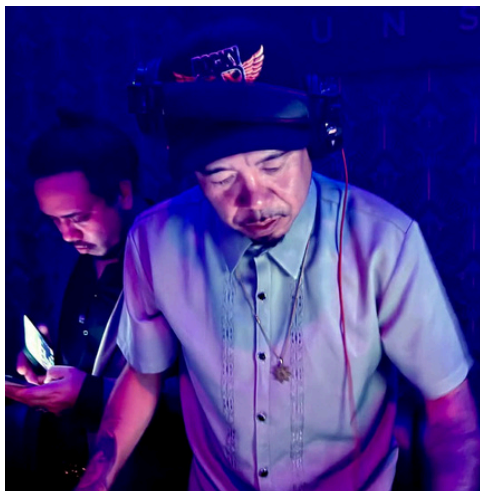
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ART & CULTURE

BROSHIGEEZ Introduces World Hop to Hollywood

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



Hollywood got a taste of a new global sound on August 27 as **BROSHIGEEZ** celebrated the release of its **WORLD HOP EP** during the Breaking Hits World Hop Experience at Hyde Sunset. The high-energy evening brought together music, dance and nightlife while introducing the group's genre-blending vision to a room filled with artists and entertainment industry creatives.

BROSHIGEEZ members Thomas Van Musser (TVM), Rawcel and R1CKONE describe World Hop as a sound without borders, combining hip-hop with musical influences, instruments, languages and cultures from around the world. The Los Angeles collective brings decades of songwriting, production and performance experience, with credits connected to artists including the Black Eyed Peas, will.i.am, Justin Timberlake, John Legend, Zendaya and others.

The night featured BROSHIGEEZ alongside DJ Rocky

Rock and DJ Motiv8, with a crowd representing many corners of Hollywood's creative community—from DJs, radio hosts, singers and dancers to actors, media, publicists, marketers, event planners and entertainment executives. The evening also included F!LO, recognizable in his signature mask, adding to the eclectic mix of personalities in the room. The event was presented by Breaking Hits, with World of Dance among the industry and creative community represented at the experience.

With **WORLD HOP**, BROSHIGEEZ is positioning its music as more than a new EP—it is introducing a movement built around connecting cultures through sound. At Hyde Sunset, that idea came to life as Hollywood's diverse creative community gathered under one roof to experience what World Hop is all about.

COMMUNITY

VIP Tour 2027: A Winter Escapade

BY MIC DIAZ | PUBLISHER



The Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles and Philippine Department of Tourism–Los Angeles launched the **2027 Very Important Pinoy (VIP) Tour: Winter Escapade Edition** on August 25 at the Consulate in Koreatown. The special edition brings together the U.S. VIP Tour and Canada's Winter Escapade for the first time, inviting Filipino Americans, Filipino Canadians and friends of the Philippines to rediscover the country.

Scheduled for February 7–17, 2027, the tour begins in Manila and offers travelers a selection of Philippine destinations and experiences. The program includes pocket-tour choices such as Leyte, Legazpi–Naga, Siargao, Camiguin and Bohol, with additional tour options that include Iloilo–Bacolod and El Nido, Palawan. Rajah Tours is handling the tour arrangements, while Philippine Airlines announced special discounted airfare for participants.

Beyond showcasing destinations, the VIP Tour also encourages travelers to reconnect with Filipino traditions, local communities and regional experiences beyond the

local communities and regional experiences beyond the country's usual tourist routes. The Winter Escapade edition offers participants an opportunity to experience the Philippines through both travel and cultural connection. For many participants, the journey is also an opportunity to strengthen their connection to the Philippines while discovering parts of the country they may never have experienced before.

The Los Angeles launch brought together tourism and consular officials, media and community leaders, including Consul General Adelio Angelito Cruz, Tourism Director Gerry Panga, Philippine Honorary Consul in Arizona Jenny Lynn Ho-Vijungco, members of the Philippine Global Media Group, and representatives from Filipino American organizations, chambers of commerce and the Filipino American press. The gathering offered a preview of a tour designed not simply as a vacation, but as a homecoming connecting the Filipino diaspora with the Philippines through its culture, heritage, destinations and people.

