



**PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL  
PRESS RELEASE**

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**PHILIPPINES PROMOTES DIVING SPOTS IN  
NEW JERSEY TRAVEL SHOW**



*(L-R) Tourism Officer John Agerico Rosario, Consul Zaldy Patron, Consul General Mario De Leon, Jr., Ms. Lynn Funkhouser, Mr. & Mrs. Mel and Mercy Agudo and Marco Agudo at the Philippine Booth during the Beneath The Sea (BTS) Travel Show.*



*Ms. Funkhouser and Consul General De Leon answering the queries of visitors going to the Philippine Booth.*

***The Philippines is rich with beautiful, exotic diving spots and can offer a great diving experience for the scuba and diving enthusiasts.***

With this pitch, the Philippines, led by officials of the Philippine Department of Tourism and the Philippine Consulate General in New York, participated at the Beneath The Sea (BTS) Travel Show held on 23-25 March 2012 at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey. BTS is billed as the largest consumer scuba and dive travel show in America for both divers and non-divers. The three-day event featured almost 400 booths offering various travel packages, membership in dive clubs, and selling diving gears and equipment. There were also seminars, workshops and film showing graced by renowned speakers and professional divers.

Competing for visitors' attention, the Philippine Booth did aggressive promotion of the Philippines' top diving spots, such as Coron, El Nido and Tubbataha Reef in Palawan; Apo Reef, Puerto Galera and Verde Island in Mindoro; Anilao and Mabini in Batangas; Donsol and Sorsogon in Bicol; Subic Bay in Zambales; Boracay in Aklan; Mactan, Moalboal and Malapascua in Cebu; Dumaguete, Siquijor, Sumilon and Apo Island in Negros; Balicasag, Pamilacan and Cabilao in Bohol; Camiguin and Davao in Mindanao. Videos of these beautiful places were played at the Philippine booth during the entire event and visitors were offered ready travel packages.

Leading the tourism promotion at the Philippine Booth were Consul General Mario De Leon, Jr., Tourism Officer John Agerico Rosario and Consul Zaldy Patron. They were joined by Mr. & Mrs. Mel and Mercy Agudo, owners of Marco Vincent Dive Resort in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, and Ms. Lynn Funkhouser, member of Women's Diver Hall of Fame, an international non-profit professional honor society whose member contributions span a wide variety of fields.

Ms. Funkhouser, a professional diver and photographer for more than 30 years, enthusiastically shared with visitors going to the Philippine Booth her personal diving experiences in the Philippines and her collection of photos of the Philippines' marine species. While she has been in many places in the world, she describes the Philippines as her "favorite place in the whole world" and she has been visiting the country every year since 1976 to dive. According to her, the Philippines has the richest species diversification in the world and she loves seeing new critters almost every dive. She has dived in over 250 of the country's 7,107 islands.

Other than the Philippine Booth, ten other tour operators at the BTS offered Philippine diving packages at their respective booths. Three resource persons also spoke about the Philippines during the scheduled BTS seminars. They were Mr. Paul Cater Deaton who talked about *Coron: Macro Mecca of the Philippines*, Mr. Robert F. Marx, *Manila Galleons*, and Mr. Richard Ladisky, *Total Philippines Above and Below*.

"We have a beautiful country and our diving spots are among the best in the world. Our participation at this year's BTS is in line with our aim of attracting more foreign visitors from Northeast USA to come to the Philippines. I am certain that they will have unique and enjoyable diving experience and have more fun in the Philippines," Consul General De Leon remarked.

The BTS is the third major travel show that the Philippines has attended this year in Northeast USA. The Philippine Department of Tourism and the Philippine Consulate General in New York also joined the Boston Globe Travel Show in February in Boston City and the New York Times Travel Show in early March in New York City. END.