



Clockwise from far left: Inside Bellas Artes Outpost; pan-Southeast Asian restaurant Hey Handsome; Toyo Eatery's signature Bahay Kubo salad; local brands on display at Tropa.

the lens of chef Nicco Santos. I love the lamb *buah keluak* and always order beetroot paneer on the side.

● **SHOP Aphro** (fb.com/aphroliving) is Manila's top concept store, selling artwork and home items by mostly Filipino talents. Price points vary, but there's something for everyone looking for a one-of-a-kind gift. For Filipino fashion, stop by **Rajo!** (rajolaurel.com)—it's the atelier-cum-showroom of one of the Philippines' leading designers—or **Tropa** (tropastore.com), which showcases local brands with a focus on modern, minimalist attire and low-impact production methods.

● **DO** Explore the city's walled Spanish-colonial district on an Intramuros tour with performance artist **Carlos Celdran** (carlosceldranwalks.wordpress.com), whose theatrical approach to history provides a nuanced look at why the country is the way it is today. Architecture buffs should check out the brutalist **National Theater** (culturalcenter.gov.ph) at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, one of the greatest achievements of celebrated architect Leandro V. Locsin; do take the guided tour to fully admire the sweeping curves of poured-in-place concrete and capiz-shell chandeliers hung from the gold-leafed ceiling. Finally, the cluster of galleries around Chino Roces Avenue—**Silverlens** (silverlensgalleries.com), **Bellas Artes Outpost** (bellasarteprojects.org), and **The Drawing Room** (drawingroomgallery.com)—provides a glimpse into the city's burgeoning contemporary art scene. ●

MAD FOR MANILA

Locally born architect and designer James J.J. Acuna shares his favorite spots in the ever-evolving Philippine capital. BY CHRIS SCHALKX



● **EAT** Tucked inside a creative complex on the edge of Makati, **Toyo Eatery** (fb.com/toyoeatery) serves excellent Filipino fare by chef Jordy Navarra, who presents local flavors and ingredients in elevated ways—his Bahay Kubo 'salad' combines all 18 vegetables mentioned in a popular Tagalog

folk song of the same name. Two other great spots are **Grace Park** (fb.com/graceparkdining) for its farm-to-table comfort food by Margarita Forés, crowned Asia's Best Female Chef in 2016; and **Hey Handsome** (fb.com/handsomecome), where Southeast Asian dishes are reinterpreted through