

Time for the Philippines

An airport upgrade means Boracay is poised to become one of the region's top international destinations, so now is the time to buy.



I like to read my stars but of course with the prudent policy of only believing in them if they are riotously positive and promise the most incredible week ahead filled with giant cash windfalls, amazing fortune, love, romance and good hair days a-plenty. On the other hand if us steadfast Taureans are warned of conflict, difficult decisions and a quagmire of stress and problems to look forward to, then of course astrology is for total losers who don't understand the meaning of free will.

I don't stretch to visiting clairvoyants, or reading tarot cards or any of that other stuff (too scary!), but despite my very on/off relationship with my horoscope, from time to time I ain't half bad at predicting the future - so here is a little tip for you now.

Boracay is about to rock.

If you are not familiar, this little chunk of paradise, just 7 kms long at its widest point, is famous for its gorgeous and bustling pure white sand beaches, turquoise waters and swaying palms. That's not to mention its reggae cafes, very cool live music bars and huge array of truly fab and understated restaurants, where usually your toes are buried in the sand as you sip your 15 year old Tanduay Rum and coke at sunset. Boracay is already a well established and dearly loved tourist destination. For me, it's the funnest place on earth and my favourite place in the Philippines for a great beach holiday and a side order of hell raising by night, if that happens to take my fancy. In fact, I once raised a rather unsteady glass to an American man

who loudly pronounced at Hey Jude (a killer beach bar btw) that, "if you don't like Boracay there must be something wrong with you". Here here!

So what's going on? Well the island is already teeming with tourists, and not backpackers either. At peak season times such as Chinese New Year it's like every single Hong Kong banker or trader can be found on a bamboo lounge on Bulabog Beach nursing a midday mojito (just to take the edge off you'll understand)... but something new is occurring.

Investors take note — Boracay airport is upgrading to international status in 2014. Construction of the new terminal and extended runway is well underway (a JV between the Government and San Miguel Breweries - and whilst we applaud the project we sincerely hope that San Miguel is not going to be "the official drink" of staff at the control tower) and this will mean direct flight routes with all major Asian gateway hubs, notably HK, Singapore, Seoul, Shanghai and Beijing. Add this unprecedented influx of well heeled leisure seekers to an island that is already maxed out for a decent proportion of the year, and add on top of that an already acute shortage of luxury accommodation (there are just 2 genuine 5 star resorts on the whole island - the Shangri La and Discovery Shores) and you have yourselves the perfect storm.

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formed Claire Brown Realty in 2004 having worked for various developers across South East Asia. Her roles included sales and marketing, project management, construction planning and consultancy. As well as running the business, Claire is also developing her own project in Bali, a luxury villa and spa retreat in the beautiful and somewhat undiscovered province of Tabanan. She enjoys travel, food and wine, interior design and shopping – in no particular order. www.clairebrownrealty.com