

## ORCHID GARDEN SUITES

# A hotel with a past and a present

By AYVI NICOLAS

Once in a friendly and drunken discussion about art, I had to say for argument's sake that architecture is art that feeds on itself. Architecture has to tear down in order to build; it replaces itself in order to evolve.

Of

course, I had in mind the quaint but run-down Spanish houses in Manila that were being demolished to give space to commonplace but cost-effective buildings. My architect-friend Norman

believes that architecture is the most useful art. His point is why live in bamboo and nipa when one can live comfortably in concrete, glass and steel. And in that case, why live in rotting wood and crumbling stone when you can live in a modern house?

That conversation came to mind during my recent visit to Orchid Garden Suites. There it was, old and new architecture juxtaposed, proving that architecture does not have to be self-consuming.

The foremost charm of Orchid Garden Suites is its pre-war mansion lobby which was built in early 1930 by National Artist for Architecture Pablo Antonio Sr. The mansion used to be the residence of Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Villareal, son of Luis Enciso Villareal, one of the 13 martyrs of Bagumbayan.

This house has an unobtrusive, quiet charm because it has acquired a character that no new structure can ever assume. The mere walls breathe history and the windows seem to look out into a different era.

But even when the newer building looms behind it, the larger impression is still old-fashioned and homey. After all,



Photos by  
**VAL RODRIGUEZ**

where else can you enter a house to check in at a hotel?

But don't think everything else about Orchid Garden Suites is dated. It is the first to follow the trend of boutique hotels in the country. The current course is to have kitchenettes in rooms with the appliances that go with it. That is in response to the needs of clients who stay for long periods of time.

At Orchid Garden Suites, there are cooks who could be



Orchid Garden has an unobtrusive, quiet charm.



hired per day for a minimal fee. The hotel's location, just a short walk away from the Rustan's Supermarket, accommodates that kind of hotel living. Also, some of the suites have stairs leading to separate bedrooms,

giving guests a real homey feel.

Orchid Garden is the perfect place for people who want value for their money. It's a small hotel with a five-star standard. There are 91 rooms with varying types to suit your needs. Other amenities include function rooms, business center, swimming pool, bar and restaurant. Of course, other hotel features are a given like IDD/NDD facilities, cable television and in-house laundry services.

The hotel is situated in the heart of Manila's business and cultural districts, with the airport only 20 minutes away. It is within walking distance of Manila Bay, Manila Yacht Club, Cultural Center of Philippines, Folk Arts Theater, Metropolitan Museum and Philippine International Convention Center.

Orchid Garden Suites is located at 620 Pablo Ocampo Sr. st., Malate, Manila. For reservation or inquiries, call (02) 523-9870, 523-9860 or 523-9836 or e-mail at orchid@netasia.com.

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