



(TOP) Lee Wolf of Bigfoot Entertainment has worked for big Hollywood companies like Paramount and Universal (LEFT) Bigfoot's International Academy of Film and Television prides itself on giving its students hands-on training and the opportunities to use state-of-the-art equipment

# Cebu City

You'll never run out of reasons to do business in the Queen City of the South

WORDS Abby Yao • PHOTOS Mitch Mauricio

**C**ebu City is an ideal breeding ground for new businesses because of the following reasons:

- Wages and the cost of living here are 30 percent lower than in Manila
- There is no political, ethnic or religious violence, making it one of the country's safest cities
- It is the distribution center for Visayas and Mindanao because of its domestic air and sea linkages, which are unmatched even by Manila

## GATEWAY AND GETAWAY

Cebu is the number one tourist destination in the country. It also ranked seventh in Condé Nast Traveler magazine's Readers' Choice Awards for Top Islands in Asia 2008 and 2009, and fourth in Travel + Leisure magazine's Top Islands in Asia 2009. Beach resorts, dive spots and golf courses make Cebu attractive for vacationers and retirees alike, while markets and malls teem with good buys for shoppers.

Health and Wellness is one of Cebu City's three One Town One Product (OTOP) offerings under the Department of Trade and Industry, the other two being Information Technology (IT) and the Creative Industries. In the city center, medical tourism facilities and numerous spas present various treatment and relaxation options at prices friendly to both locals and visitors.

## VISMIN'S IT HUB

The Cebuanos' English skills, combined with ample broadband connectivity, make Cebu a major hub for call centers and other business process outsourcing firms. The latest citations cement Cebu's position in the industry: Cebu ranked eighth overall in the 2007/2008 Asian Cities of the Future in FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) magazine, and leading outsourcing advisory firm Tholons named Cebu number one among the Top 50 Emerging Outsourcing Cities in 2008 and 2009.

The Cebu Educational Development Foundation for IT (CEDF-IT), founded in

## INTERESTED TO DO BUSINESS IN CEBU?

**Jun Sa-a**  
Executive Director  
**Cebu Educational Development Foundation for IT (CEDF-IT)**  
Asiatown IT Park  
Apas, Cebu City  
[www.cedf.org](http://www.cedf.org)

**Roberto Varquez**  
Center Manager  
**Cebu Investment Promotions Center (CIPC)**  
LG/F Waterfront Cebu City Hotel  
Lahug, Cebu City  
[buvarquez@cebuinvest.com](mailto:buvarquez@cebuinvest.com)  
[www.cebuiinvest.com](http://www.cebuiinvest.com)

**Hope Melgar**  
**Department of Trade and Industry-Cebu**  
3/F LDM Bldg. M.J. Cuenco Avenue  
cor. Legaspi Street, Cebu City  
(032) 412-1863  
[dticebuphil@yahoo.com](mailto:dticebuphil@yahoo.com)  
[hopemelgar@gmail.com](mailto:hopemelgar@gmail.com)

**Bigfoot Studios**  
One Hollywood Blvd.  
Bigfoot I.T. and Media Park  
6015 Lapu-Lapu City  
Cebu, Philippines  
[www.bigfoot.com](http://www.bigfoot.com)  
[www.bigfootstudios.com](http://www.bigfootstudios.com)

**International Academy of Film and Television**  
[www.filmsschool.ph](http://www.filmsschool.ph)



(TOP) An aerial shot of South Road Properties (SRP). (RIGHT) Roberto Varquez of the Cebu Investment Promotions Center explains the development at SRP.

2001, links the academe and industry to ensure that graduates are equipped for the requirements of the industry. "Through CEDF-IT, communication lines were made more open between the two sectors with the support of local government units and other agencies such as TESDA and CHED," says Jun Sa-a, CEDF-IT Executive Director. CEDF-IT programs include a scholarship and a human resource survey on Cebu's IT industry. Sa-a reveals that the organization is coordinating with the industry members for a free "trainers training" program to produce qualified programmers and call center/BPO workers.

As a member of CEDF-IT, Globe Telecom provides the foundation with free Internet access. It works with other members such as the University of San Jose-Recoletos to launch Globe Labs for the training of mobile application developers. The synergy of education institutions, tech companies and the government keeps the sustainability of IT in check and helps the industry reach its goals. For consumers and small businesses, the same connectivity options available in Metro Manila can be found in Cebu at no cost difference, says Globe's Ayala Center Retail Manager Lou Jumalon.

### SOUTH ROAD PROPERTIES

A city-owned development registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) holds promise for both Cebu's OTOP and small businesses looking for commercial spaces in the next few years. South Road Properties (SRP) is a 300-hectare prime property on reclaimed land. It is five minutes from the Central Business District and the International Seaport, and 30 minutes from the International Airport.

Mall giant SM purchased 30 hectares in SRP early this year for a complex similar to the Mall of Asia. According to initial announcements, the development will include the biggest mall outside Metro

Manila, an SMX Convention Center, two hotels, a number of condominiums, a school and a hospital. Filinvest earlier acquired a 10-hectare property for commercial development and entered into a 40-hectare joint venture with the city government for five-story residential clusters, or at least 10,000 dwelling units. SM and Filinvest are expected to hold groundbreaking ceremonies this year. Negotiations for a fastcraft terminal are also under way. In a few years, SRP will be the city's new center and the single biggest driver of Cebu's economy.

### HOLLYWOOD IN ASIA

The first locator in SRP is Bigfoot Studios, which has made a big imprint on Cebu since it began operations in Mactan in 2006. Bigfoot Studios is a division of Bigfoot Entertainment, an independent film production company headquartered in Los Angeles.

Bigfoot recognized the creativity of Cebuanos even before the third OTOP, Creative Industries, was announced. "We love the culture and the talent. We've seen and harnessed that ability and incorporated that into our productions and feature films," says Bigfoot's Chief Information Officer David Overton. "Compared to building a similar facility in Los Angeles, or even in the region—Hong Kong and Singapore—we can save dramatically on the cost of operations and infrastructure. The strong English ability is also a factor."

Bigfoot has so far invested over ₱3 billion in the Philippines. "We're optimistic and aggressive on Cebu," says Overton. It's hard not to be. Cebu City's excellent transport links and connectivity, world-class amenities, creative people and resort environment create a satisfying business atmosphere sought after by foreigners and Filipinos alike. ●

## CEBU CITY OVERVIEW

### WHERE TO STAY:

#### CEBU CITY MARIOTT HOTEL

Cardinal Rosales Avenue  
Cebu City, 6000 Philippines  
[www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cebph-cebu-city-mariott-hotel/](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/cebph-cebu-city-mariott-hotel/)  
Adjacent to Ayala Center, Marriott Hotel is the first business hotel in the city that is part of an international chain of hotels. It boasts of luxurious guest rooms and spacious meeting rooms.

### HOW TO GET AROUND:

Multicabs serve fixed routes around the city center, no shortage of taxi cabs

### HOW TO GET TO

CEBU: Domestic flights from key cities, including 25 flights daily from Manila

### FAMOUS ENTREPRENEURS:

Aboitiz Shipping, Islands Souvenirs, Bo's Coffee Club, Julie's Bakeshop, among others ■



### GLOBE STORES

#### AYALA CENTER CEBU

3rd Level, Expansion Bldg., Ayala Center Cebu, Cebu Business Park, Cebu City

#### GLOBE TELECOM IT PLAZA

Ground Floor, Globe Telecom IT Plaza, Asia Town IT Park, Salinas Drive Ext., Lahug, Cebu City

#### E-MALL

2nd Level, Elizabeth Mall, cor. Sanclungko and L. Kilat Sts., Cebu City

#### SM CEBU

Cyberzone 2nd Level, SM City Cebu Northwing, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City