



Behind the Limelight

Christian Bautista gives us a tour of his Cavite hideout

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Daddy Ebert shares that the look of their dwelling was patterned after a house that he saw in an architectural magazine. He says, "We hired *Yong Kumpare Kong* architect. *Sabi ko gayahin niya 'yong nasa magazine. Tapos coco lumber lang ang ginamit namin kasi mura lang pero maganda siya at matibay.* Okay siya kasi hindi maliwasan ang anay dito sa lugar namin, kasi nga this is farm living. *Kapag inamay 'yong kapiraso, tatanggalin mo lang 'yon tapos papalitan mo lang ng bago. Walang kahirap-hirap.*"



Powder blue long sleeve button-down (P1425 by **21 Men at Forever 21**), Cobalt blue Henley shirt (P349.75 by **Bench**), Beige straight-cut chino jeans (P1398.75 by **Bench**), Stainless steel watch with navy blue leather strap (P7500 by **Swatch**), Chocolate brown suede belt (P2990 by **Zara**), Gray canvas boat shoes (P2450 by **Skechers**)

Above: Since Christian is a Landscape Architecture graduate, it was inevitable for him to have a hand in the design of their garden. But he laughingly admits that he was still overpowered by his mother and his aunt in terms of the overall look. "I wanted something a bit different *sana* but I have to say, they still did a wonderful job," he says. "My main contribution there would have to be the pathway so we could drive through the garden"

SPACES

IN THE BAUTISTA HOUSEHOLD, A RULE HAS BEEN SET FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE: "KUNG SAAN KA AABUTIN O KUNG SAAN KA KAKAILANGANIN, DOON KA." This rule works best especially for Christian, who just recently acquired a condo unit in the metro to accommodate his busy schedule.

"Cavite is far from his work so we don't require him to be here everyday," Christian's Daddy Ebert says. "Why bother with the traffic, *'di ba, lalo na ngayong naglilipat siya ng tirahan.*" That's why I set that rule."

The Kitchen Musical star might have just recently wrapped up taping for the Singaporean musical drama, but his hands are still tied up with various commitments. And of course, being the Asian Sensation that he is, he hops in and out of the country not only to visit his Malaysian, Singaporean and Indonesian fans, but also to promote his latest and first international album, *Outbound*.

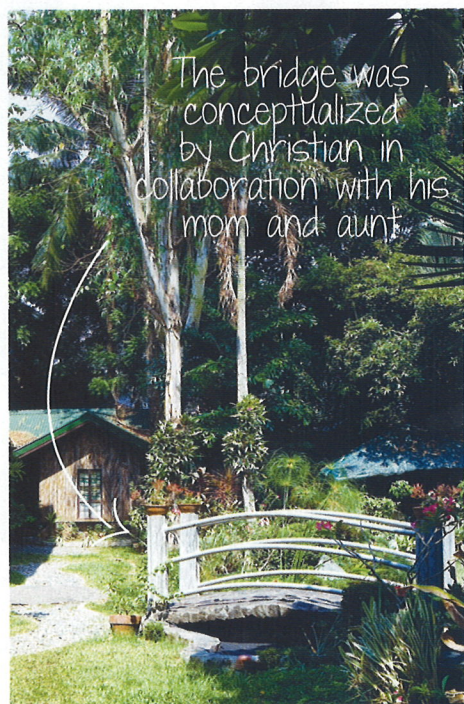
But given all the success that he has attained since the advent of his career as a singer and eventually as an actor—both in theater

Right: One of the doors located at the facade opens into an elevated part of the house, which Christian calls "the stage where they mostly announce, 'Hoy, kakain na!'" It also holds a rack full of albums that are labelled with the names of the Bautista boys. "My mother really likes posting notes and labelling things around here," Christian explains with a smile

Bottom: Being a handyman, Daddy Ebert does most of the repairs in the house. Some of the bookshelves, like the ones in the living area, also reflect his fascination with carpentry

and in TV—there is still one aspect of him that has and will always remain: he is *promdi* at heart. When we ask him to choose between Manila and Cavite, he easily picks the latter in a heartbeat.

"I prefer living here [in Cavite] *kasi nandito ang mga mahal ko sa buhay at marami akong magagandang memories dito,*" Christian shares with warmth. "*At matulungin din kasi kaming magkababayan. Kahit anong sakuna, makikita mong nagtutulungan kami. Yan ang pinakagusto ko dito, 'yong mga tao.*" That's why I always make time to come home, *kahit* at least every two weeks, to reconnect with everyone.



The bridge was conceptualized by Christian in collaboration with his mom and aunt.





THE HIDEOUT

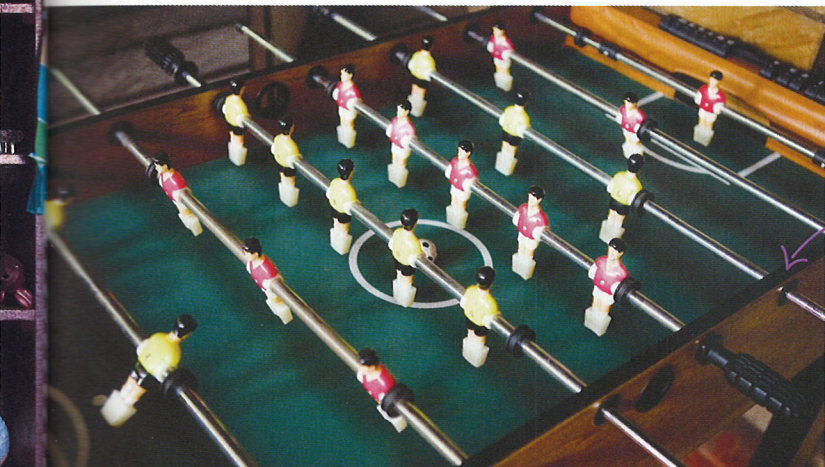
Christian's sprawling three-storey ancestral home tucked away in a quiet part of Imus has gone through several changes. Originally, it was a *bahay kubo* located right in the heart of a seven-hectare rice land owned by his great grandfather. He recounts that six hectares of the land were sold and later turned into a subdivision. Meanwhile, the remaining hectare was divided among the eight children—one of which was Christian's grandfather. "Now we call the whole hectare the Bautista compound," Daddy

Ebert can't help but beam with pride. As the *Celebrity Living* team gathers around him at the porch, he continues, "Parents *ko ang may ari ng bahay na ito dati*. Bungalow lang *ito noon, tapos kubo lang*. And then *noong lumipat na 'yong parents ko, naisip naming gawing vacation house ito*. But in 2006, we decided to finally move here because we needed a bigger space. That's when we changed the look of the house and added two more floors up."

Meanwhile, Christian shares how he spent his

"My favorite spot is the hammock ... Turwing gusto kong makapag-unwind talaga, doon lang ako sa duyan, nagpapahangin tapos tinitingnan ko lang 'yong clouds"

The foosball table is one of Christian's favorite pieces of furniture in their home





from the inside and out, the dominantly-used wood in the structure is coco lumber," Daddy Ebert says, pointing at the façade. "It was the in thing back then when we were renovating the house. The material comes from the trunk of a mature coconut *na mamamatay na. Matigas 'yan at madaling palitan.* I prefer to have a house made of wood *kasi kapag namantsahan,* it contributes to the character of the structure even more."

There are four points of entry into the house. Two doors are both located at the façade, while the other two are on the opposite sides of the house—one in Daddy Ebert's workshop and one in the dirty kitchen. These four doors allow more air to circulate around the house.

Left: Daddy Ebert says that the dining area contributed a lot to how tight their family is. He says, "*Kasi, 'di ba, tuwing kakain kami, hindi puwedeng walang kuwentuhan. Doon natuto ang mga anak namin maging open sa amin. Hindi sila nailang mag-open sa amin.*"

Below: Mommy Jo loves cooking for her family, especially when all her boys are home.

childhood making the most out of rural life in the very same house. He says, "*Noong farmland pa lang ito, my cousins and I would always come here. We would run around the haystack and hide our toys underneath it hanggang mawala sila, play with the carabao and pick some mangoes. Now that Cavite has been commercialized, our clan still tries to save a piece of that kind of life.*"

This explains the lush greenery (courtesy of Mommy Jo's green thumb) that surrounds not just the confines of their home, but also that of their aunt who lives right across from them. This, Christian describes, "provides an escape from the urban lifestyle that Cavite has been adapting."

Also providing a sense of escape is the house itself, which is modelled after a ranch. "You can see that



Upon entering, one can easily see the first floor as a long strip of space. The dirty kitchen, which doubles as a laundry area, opens into Mommy Jo's immaculate kitchen. With sleek marble countertops and a small island, it is almost a picture of modernity if not for the country-style wooden cupboards and the vintage fridge that Daddy Ebert repainted brown to go with the rustic interior. But what really attract attention are the notes on the fridge, containing important reminders from Mommy Jo. Pointing at the notes, Christian says with a chuckle, "*Kaya love na love ko si Mama, eh!*"

The dining area is a different story as it plays a significant role for the whole family. Housing a simple six-seater dining set made of polished wood and adorned with rattan detailing, it is more than just a place to satisfy their appetites. "This is where we really get to share stories," Christian says happily. "My mom sometimes recreates recipes *para mas* exciting. We like to bond over eating *dahil doon lumalabas ang pagka-close ng pamilya.*" And since his parents are



Above: When at home, Christian likes to stay in the living room to bond with his brothers over video games and movies

Left: The six-foot Batman was a gift from Kuya Germs (German Moreno) when Christian sang in a show for him. He says, "*Akala ko maliit na action figure lang 'yong ibibigay niya sa akin kaya nagulat ako nang dumating sa bahay 'yong Batman na 'yon'*"

always the first to wake up, the master bedroom is conveniently located near the dining area to help them prepare breakfast easier.

Christian then leads the team to the spacious living area, which is simple yet eclectic. The neutral colors used in the area remain consistent with the whole look of the house but the combination of the key pieces representing respective looks make the room look all the more interesting—the velvet

wingchair and footrest for classic; cream leather loveseat and flat screen television complete with sound system for modern; wooden shelves for country. It might be a bit sparsely furnished but this works perfectly well for Christian and his brothers when they play video games. The minimal furnishing helps the boys easily set everything aside during game time, especially if it's Nintendo Wii that they're playing.

SPACES



The attic, which occupies the whole third floor, is temporarily home to a lot of things, including gym equipment, some of Christian's clothes and his many awards. "Dito kami nag-work out when we don't have time to go to the gym," Christian shares

"As much as possible we buy local furniture," Christian says as he continues to move around the house. "Sometimes I get furniture from craftsmen *na taga-Cavite*. And *kung gusto naman naming ready-made*, we go to Our Home in SM. We're just a simple family. *Hindi kami mahilig sa* luxurious furniture because we want this house to be homey. We

want people to see that we use every single space here, *na puwede kang maupo kahit saan. Gusto naming maging liveable siya.*"

The trip upstairs will lead you face-to-face with a six-foot Batman statue that stands guard at the top of the stairs. Decked behind him is a floor-to-ceiling bookcase which reflects the family's love for reading and dedication to church. "My



Above, Left to Right: Christian has a small closet in his bathroom where he stores some of his clothes. For a more casual look, he opts to wear Bench apparel but during black tie events, he goes for Louis Vuitton and Prada. "Sometimes when I'm abroad, I also shop from local brands there *para wala akong kaparehas ng suot pag-uwi ko dito*," he adds with a laugh • "*Kapag gusto kong makatulog nang mabilis, dito ako pumupunta*," Christian shares. "*Dito ako nag-re-recharge*"

parents have a lot of books about Christianity because they are elders in the church," Christian explains. Then he ushers us to his bedroom, which screams his personality in every way: clean, organized and, most especially, blue.

"*Ako talaga ang nagpa-blue nito*," he says proudly. "*Di ba, pag-akyat mo dito, feeling mo para kang nasa ibang bahay bigla?*" This room represents my contemporary side. Also, I always want it to look clean, fresh and organized."

There are three other rooms in the second floor, two of which belong to his brothers and the other one serves as a home office-slash-DotA room. "The office is where I unleash my nerdy side the most," he says with a hearty laugh. "*Kapag gusto naming magkakapatid maglaro ng computer games*, we set up our laptops here. But what I also love about this room is that the balcony here offers a breath-taking view of the garden below.



Like the rest of his family, Christian is a voracious reader. His book collection mostly includes historical fiction. "I especially like books *na ang* setting is either the Medieval Age or the Roman Empire," he reveals



Gray and blue paneled cardigan (P989.75 by Bench), White tank top (P199.75 by Bench), Beige carrot cut chino jeans (P1635 by 21 Men at Forever 21), Brown suede necklace with coin pendant (P555 by Aldo Accessories), Beige brown leather belt (P1295 by Aldo Accessories), Gray suede brogues (P3500 by Sperry Top Sider)

“I started with Erik Santos’ garden ... They liked it so na-encourage ako. I want to do more”

Left: When asked if he still considers dabbling in Landscape Architecture, he answers, “*Mayroon akong plano* to do a business with it. Something like celebrity designs, but maybe later on. That will be great. Actually, I started with Erik Santos’ garden, when he was remodelling his house. He asked me to design his garden so *nag-draw ako ng design na binigay niya sa landscaper niya. Maganda naman ‘yong kinalabasan*. They liked it so *na-encourage ako*. I want to do more”

Male Recording Artist of the Year from the 43rd Guillermo Mendoza Box Office Entertainment Awards



The view really helps you connect with nature.”

To sum it all up, the Bautista home is nothing but cozy and is not at all pretentious. And truly, it has become the epitome of love and unity, for it nurtures not just the connection within their family, but within the whole clan as well. “This is where we all celebrate our Christmas party every year,” Christian shares with glee. “We’d have games, food and programs where we sing and dance. Our clan is very tight. So *‘yong mga* girlfriends and boyfriends

who are introduced to the family are really surprised—or sometimes shocked—when they find out how close we actually are. Luckily, we end up with partners who are as fun as the family *kaya nagiging masaya talaga*.”

Christian might have become one of the famous stars nowadays, but after everything has been said and done, it is easy to conclude that he will never exchange his Imus home for any other dwelling. Surely, you can take Christian Bautista out of Cavite, but you can never take the Southern spirit out of him. 🏠



As you go up the stairs, you will be greeted by the three graduation portraits of the Bautista boys. “The pride of the family is displayed right here to remind us na *nag-aral kami!*” Christian says with a laugh