



FARIÑAS. Enjoys her food with "patis" and "bagoong."

Philippine Daily Inquirer

LOS ANGELES — We were grateful for two things when we recently visited the set of E!'s "Fashion Police" in L.A.

E!'s Fil-Am exec notes greater racial diversity on TV

Written by Ruben V. Nepales
Friday, 08 July 2011 20:34

First, we were not cited by the amusingly acerbic Joan Rivers and her fellow fashion cops, Kelly Osbourne, George Kotsiopoulos and the stunning Kimora Lee Simmons (she told us she's often mistaken for a Filipina, and she's proud of it), who was subbing for Giuliana Rancic that day.

Second, we got to meet Leilani Fariñas, a Filipino-American executive at E!, which has just launched its channel in the Philippines.

A daughter of immigrants from Ilocos Sur, Leilani is vice president for marketing of NBCUniversal International, which includes E! and Style among its networks.

The patis- and bagoong-loving *Pinay* has over 15 years of experience launching brands globally, with stints at Sony Pictures Entertainment and the William Morris Agency.

When we spoke to Leilani, she was getting ready to fly back home for the launch of E! in the Philippines, initially available to SkyCable's gold and silver digital subscribers.

Viewers

In the future, Leilani hopes to bring some of her network's stars to the Philippines.

Excerpts from our interview:

The launch must be special to you because it's in the country where your family roots are from.

It's very rewarding to know that E! Entertainment Television is finally going to be seen by Filipinos.

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My parents, who are both from Ilocos Sur, immigrated to Hawaii.

My father and mother worked very hard to put my sisters, brother and me through school.

I'm proud to tell them that some of the work I do is reaching the Philippines.

It is great to see a female of Filipino heritage holding a key position in a mainstream US company like E! Can you talk about your journey to get to where you are now?

Like many Filipino parents, my folks instilled the importance of studying and working hard.

I saw how much they sacrificed, so I always do the best that I can.

I graduated from high school in Honolulu and moved to Los Angeles to attend Loyola Marymount University, where I received a degree in English literature.

Interest

I eventually found a career in marketing television channels internationally.

It's very challenging, but I have an avid interest in the entertainment industry to begin with, so working hard came naturally.

Who inspired you?

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My parents.

They grew up without a lot of things.

They started working very young, just to help their parents make ends meet.

I know I've gotten where I am today because of the sacrifices they made to ensure I had opportunities.

My responsibility to them and to myself is to make sure I keep working hard, learn and help my family, as well as other Filipinos and Asians who want to work in television.

My advice to those who want to be in this field is to be as open to meeting and learning about people as you go along, whether professionally or personally.

I landed one of my first jobs at Sony through a person I met at a friend's barbecue gathering.

Can you talk about women like Kimora paving the way for more Asian faces on television?

We have a truly global society now, and the faces and cultures you see on television reflect that more and more — especially on global channels like E! Modern women are savvy and know that it takes not only hard work but building your own brand in order to make an impact.

And, Kimora is a great example of that, as is Jeannie Mai, another of our series stars.

Appeal

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What's the appeal of E! all over the world?

E! is the premiere destination to see A-list celebrities and get the latest entertainment news, and we know this content is universally appealing.

"E! News" is our daily one-hour program covering every happening in Hollywood and pop-culture, hosted by Ryan Seacrest and Giuliana Rancic.

"Fashion Police" is another tentpole program for us.

It's a weekly show that covers the latest fashion hits and misses of celebs.

The contents of these shows are akin to all of the print magazines you're seeing out there.

Viewers will get to see signature series first on E!, such as the newest season of "Keeping Up With the Kardashians," premiering on July 12.