

THE MYSTERY WATCH/HAND or the FRENCH LAKBAYAN

It's amazing how email threads develop. The recent spate of emails on the UPSCA loop about germs and air pollution on an airplane gave way to more discussions on surgical masks and SARS. This prompted me to pull out an old photo from 2003 taken in Paris where some of us Lakbayans had jokingly donned masks. I mentioned that my camera was faster than the one held most likely by Tony. He in turn denied that was his, and this started a whole round of discussions on whose watch, and hand was it. Shown below is the photo that started it all.



So now I am pulling out more photos with watches shown. Above is Tony with round silver watch. Above right is him again with a square gold one.



On right is Mon crowding up to the famous Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum. He wears his watch on the right hand, so it can't be him on the first photo. Erwin says he doesn't wear a watch, and besides, he still wasn't in Paris until the 2nd week of the Lakbayan trip. By a process of elimination, it appears to be Choy Armaldo, shown on left with Liliosa, holding the camera in a similar way, with watch barely visible. Choy was Paris based, and did not join the Lakbayan. That's him below, on left.



Since I have started on this reminiscing, let me add a page more of photos, commentary and trivia on the May 2003 Lakbayan trip.

Liliosa did make a comprehensive record of the event in hardcopy.

Like many other Lakbayans, this was a trip by a bunch of us old friends, converging from both the US and the Philippines. For almost 2 weeks, we toured parts of France in two big rental vans, each driven by Tony and me. We coordinated all these by internet. Each couple was assigned to rent hotel rooms for all at each of the cities we visited.

The map on the left traces our route via the blue line, starting from Paris, then leftward to Honfleur, looping further counterclockwise until the southern end at Arles, where we stayed 3 days and made radiating trips out to Marseilles and other interesting places.

On the next page are more photos.



Early group with Mimi, Jong, BernieN, Tony, BernieM, Mon, Ting, Lisa, Mercy and Jimmy. I manned the camera. Liliosa not in photo. I believe this was taken at Notre Dame church. Bernie (nee de Castro) Muller was the most invaluable in this trip. For one, she was the head of the Philippine Consulate in Paris; her family is Switzerland-based. She spoke French.



Later group (interwoven, L to R) Erwin, Jimmy, Mercy, Liliosa, Lisa, Ting, BernieM, Jong, Mon, BernieN, Tony, Mimi & Danny cloned it. Thirteen in all, but we weren't superstitious. Johnny and Mila, who had done lots of the initial planning, couldn't join. This was taken at Marseilles, the famous Cathedral de la Garde where we all had to climb hundreds of steps.



Can anybody imagine Jimmy changing a flat tire? Or posing with a pretty girl while Mercy is around? Well, that really is a mannequin at a restaurant entrance, above.

On right is the van driven by Tony with all their wet clothes strung up to dry. In Honfleur the fire main broke over their room.

There were hundreds of photographs of the trip and memorable events for all. Some that shocked the ladies deserve showing: the loo below at a rest stop on the highway, and the hermaphrodite statue at the Louvre.

The photo below right is the famed aqueduct at the Pont du Gard, built by the Romans 2000 years ago. There were no water pipes then, so water had to flow on canals by gravity, and this "canal" (top of structure) crossed a river. That's yours truly posing.

There were other Laybayan trips, and in one of them, the mystery wasn't a watch, but black panties. This was featured in the hardcopy news letter of 2001. Care for it in PDF?



Above, Tony shows us his painting kit, & on left is one sample. We kidded him a lot about making it a second career, especially after he sat by the river Seine to paint. But now, it's photography.

