

THE RAINY GETAWAY



Swiss-based visitor Bernie de Castro Muller comes and goes very often, and on this visit, she brought her daughter Vera and their family. Not surprisingly, it was mostly sightseeing and the tourist trappings, but as Bernie later related, it didn't come out that smoothly due to the bad weather.

After the family left, Bernie had time to see her old friends. Over the weekend Sunday and Monday, we got together for an overnigher at Morong, Bataan, about an hour's drive south of Subic. Mercy Abad, who made all the arrangements, had access to a private "resort" on the stretch of beach beside some hotels. This was owned by her daughter-in-law's family, and indeed, the couple's wedding was held there a year or so ago.

See the photo above

There were eight of us: Jimmy & Mercy Abad, Mon & Mimi Pasicolan, Danny & Lisa Gil, and Bernie Muller & Jessie Javelona. We came in two vehicles each with a driver. We decided to split by gender. The bigger one, a Hyundai van had the 5 girls, while the Honda SUV had the 3 guys. A very comfortable fit.

When we left the meeting point area at UP Oblation at 9:00 AM Sunday, we still had crossed fingers that the weather would remain good since it had rained heavily the previous night, and indeed, the day looked nice and sunny. But alas, it didn't turn out to be so. As we left the NLEX turnoff point toward Subic some 2 hours later, it started raining cats and dogs, and we had to settle for a crawl. But eventually, we got to Subic, and it was noontime, and we were hungry, so off to the Aristocrat restaurant we went, and dawdled there for almost two hours.

From Subic, it took another hour to negotiate the winding road to Morong, amidst the verdant terrain. When we finally pulled up into the parking area of the resort, it was raining so hard that inspite of the proffered umbrellas, the girls decided to wait in the van until the rain abated a bit more.

The accommodations were fantastic. Each of us three couples had a private room with t&b while Jessie & Bernie shared a fourth. And the kitchen was well stocked with all cooking paraphernalia and tableware. And of course, there was the major doma who also was cook, together with two other assistants, all at our service.

Between the house and the beach was a open structure, shown below, for outdoor events. That's Mon in red.



Beyond, was the rough sea, strongly wind-swept with rain.

But inside the house, it was nice and comfy. We ate a lot, and talked and discussed all manner of topics, from old reminiscing to politics and business. Photo on right shows Mimi, Jimmy, Mercy and side view of Bernie, all partaking of the food. We had great fun recounting Joe Alzona's capers, and I reminded them that the UPSCA Newsletter book compilation available on Amazon had many of those vignettes.

The next day Monday morning, many of us ventured outside to walk on the beach. Jessie went off to mass. Mimi and Mercy did their regular Tai-chi exercises in between rain showers. I decided to test the water and go for a swim, and so did Bernie. I waded into the water up to my knees as the waves came crashing in, and as I stood balancing myself, the receding wave sucked out the sand under my feet, and then I'd start losing my balance.

I had hoped to go up to my thighs and then sit down, but then it was obviously too risky. There was a strong rip tide. Might end up in Scarborough Shoal. Instead, Bernie and I opted to just walk on the beach. She left her slippers on the sand. When we came back, one of the slippers had been carried away by an errant wave. She was all set to throw away the remaining slipper, but I kidded her that we might find a close-enough matching one among the flotsam and jetsam on the beach. It's a good thing she retained the slipper because about 2 hours later, I heard the girls' whopping cries: they had found the lost slipper which apparently had been redeposited by the sea back on the beach.



In the meantime, the cook and her assistants were preparing a slew of yummys that had been purchased at the fresh market earlier that morning. We actually ate three times. Early breakfast which we scrounged up for ourselves from the baon (including munchies, imported chocolates, cheese) we brought; midmorning breakfast with various omelets, bangus bellies, camote tops. Then finally the real lunch treat with broiled tilapia, beef bulalo with lots of veggies, and others dishes. Mercy had indicated that if the weather was good, she would have had lechon also. Turned out to be an eating getaway.

By 2:30 in the afternoon, we were packed up, and hit the road. We had a pit stop at San Fernando where we had our first group picture together (me stitched in) below.

reported by Danny Gil 31 Aug 2016



Mercy Jessie Lisa Mimi Bernie Jimmy Mon Danny