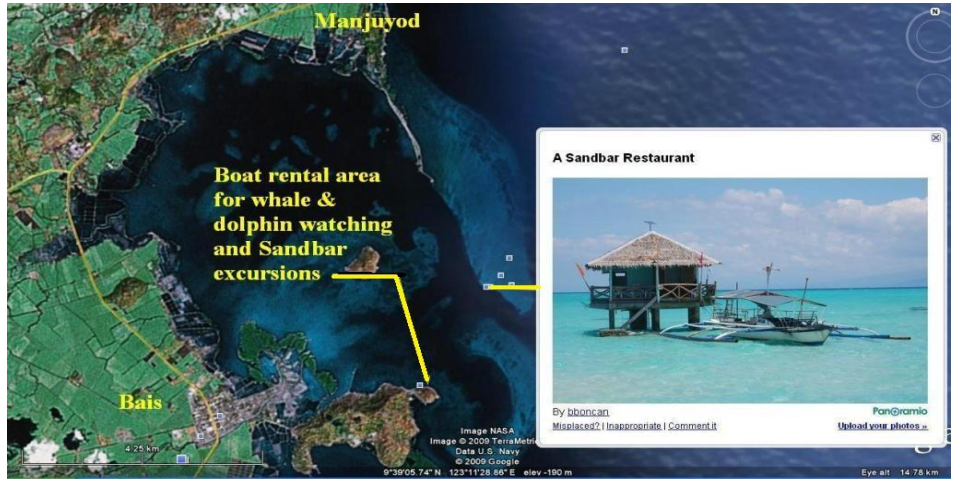


## THE BAIS SANDBAR, REVISITED



The sandbar is very popular tourist spot located about 45 km north of Dumaguete in the Bais bay. There are rental huts on stilts. At very low tide, the white sand is exposed and one can motor bike. At high tides, the water level can be great for wading, all the way to swimming when you can't reach the bottom anymore. Photo above shows a map and picture inset.



A few years ago, we rented a boat, above. It first took us half-way to Cebu, chasing dolphins, then to the sandbar. Unfortunately, the tide was high and we could only swim around, and not wade as what we wanted. That's my daughter & hubby.



Last week, we went back, as guests of Nilo Tam, businessman and former vice-mayor. We went in style, via his yacht.

That's Nilo standing. The rest of the guests, all 6 of us, are partly shown on the top deck. Main event was the blessing of the yacht by the Msgr Glenn (raised arm). The crew was much larger which included those handling the food.



As the captain maneuvered closer to the sandbar, lots of bancas laden with food paddled after the yacht to sell their ware, which included super fresh fish, squid, seaweed, clams, prawns and scallops. Photo above shows the large scallops we bought to bring home. There even were fresh buko for sale. Much of what we collectively bought over complemented the food stuff Nilo brought. Most of the other boats on the sandbar had cooking facilities, hence all those banca vendors.



The air-conditioned area on the main deck proved to be the most comfortable place. Left photo shows Lisa relaxing. Next photo shows me pretending to man the wheel. A similar set of controls are duplicated on the top deck. Next shows the kitchen, two steps down, and last shows the lower deck with its sleeping quarters, adjacent to shower and head. Up front was the foredeck with its sun-bathing beds, and the windlass for the anchor. The rear or aft deck had the cooking paraphernalia, fishing gear, and the transom where the rubber dingy was secured. See right, below,



The yacht's equipment seemed to be complete with sonar, radar, radio and of course compass. Top deck had all the appurtenances.



But the highlight for me was to get to the sandbar, shown left, and wade and frolic. I was set to dive into the deep water (blue portion) and swim about 100 feet, but the crew suggested against it as the sea was choppy with a strong breeze. And then, how would I come back? So together with another brave soul, Braddock, 77 and 3 years my senior, we waited for them to set up the rubber dingy and new 15 hp outboard. We got there, then the motor conked out. After repeated attempts to restart, the two crewman finally took refuge under the house at far left. With the wind, there was no way we could paddle our way back with only one oar. Braddock and I didn't anymore feel like wading and swimming in the thigh deep and relatively warm water. Then I decided to do very stupid thing. Swim to the yacht and then back with a tether line to haul in the dingy. I only made it a third of the way. All of a sudden, I felt exhausted. I treaded water, while avoiding the large waves from swamping me. I drifted to the boat on the right side of the picture, grabbed the out-trigger and worked my way to the shallow portion where I could stand. A fellow on board offered me a life jacket, which I declined. When I waded back to the dingy, it was running. Back on the yacht, I was chided for stupidity in trying to be a James Bond.



Pretty soon, we were homeward bound with two Detroit Diesels pumping out 450 hp each.



At home, we cooked the scallops in the normal way we know, baking them with the usual condiments. The meat was chunky and tough. Shells were 8 inches long. We should have followed Nilo's advice to cook as adobo.

Reported by Danny Gil, 9/6/17