

ILOCOS LAKBAYAN - 3

Driving back from Pagudpud after that heavy lunch, we saw the windmills of Bangui in the far distance, but we opted to forego the side trip. In the first place, we had decided that the swimming would be right at our backyard at the hotel. Besides, I had already shown to all the Google photos of the windmills, and we still had to go to the lighthouse at Burgos, buy bread at Pasuquin, see the Bacarra church, eat halo-halo at the market before going for a swim in FIR. And we did all that, as shown in the photos below:



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1. Romy & Edna with the lighthouse behind, and up about 50 high steps to its base.
2. Light house belles Mercy, Jessie & Mimi at the very top after another 79 steps in spiral staircase.
3. Yours truly also made it to the top. That's the main lamp in foreground, with fresnel amplifying lenses around. Lighthouse was completed in 1892, and is still in use according to the caretaker. I saw a truck battery, a 12 volt dc to 220 volt ac inverter, and a "beware 220 volt" sign. The general condition however was in a sorry state, with blown-in windows, rusty gear, etc, much unlike the well-maintained condition that Mercy remembers from her last visit 20 years ago.



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Backtracking to earlier that morning:

5. The inviting Saud resort that we had to skip; in an hour a horde of Robina delegates would take over.
6. But not before the five ladies tested the hammock.
7. Relaxing at one of the many resorts along the Blue Lagoon beach. Owner was a young San Diegan Pinoy.

From the Burgos lighthouse, it was 30 km to Pasuquin, then another 10 km to Bacarra. We found the bakeshop after asking around, and got a bit confused because it looked more like a hardware store from the outside. Then on we went to Bacarra church. I especially wanted to see this place again because my uncle's wife comes from there; her grandfather was the local Spanish friar, and up to the early 1970s her siblings occupied the large house beside the convento, which Lisa and I slept in during a visit years ago. It now houses some nuns, I understand. The church façade, like many old churches, was all spruced up, but the adjacent bell tower, having suffered damage in an earlier earthquake, remained untouched, shown above beyond the trees.



But the sides of the church also remained untouched, with its buttresses. And there was a mysterious looking flight of stairs leading to a festid well. We figured it was either a torture chamber or an escape way leading to the nunnery. See photos below. Rightmost shows the bell tower's top on the ground.



The weather was hot, and all the more we welcomed the halo-halo at the store of the best friend of Cherrie, Arthur Adiarte's wife. When Mercy and Jimmy were in the US a few weeks earlier, they had a Lakbayan adventure with a bunch of other Upscans, and had met up with the Adiartes.

It was a full day although the sun was still high, but all we wanted to do was go back to the hotel. We got back in no time, as Bacarra was pretty close to Laoag, thence we crossed the river into San Nicolas, angled right towards the airport, then left to the hotel.

Most of us the others hit the sack, I understand, but Lisa and I went to the beach and swam. The waves were a trifle rough, as least when comparing them to the inland sea that we have in Tanjay, so after a few minutes, we moved to the swimming pool. Larger photo below is an early morning shot at the beach with fisherman in the background pulling in their nets. On right is the Olympic size pool.



Photo on right is the inside of Bacarra church. The roof obviously is not original. I am reserving this shot for my Tanjay friends who presently are in a fight with the new, local priest who started demolishing the church pillars as an improvement.

To be continued