

Rotary Zone Institute in Bali 2011

Last November 28 to December 6 was our 4th trip to Bali, Indonesia. This time it was our first visit to the Kuta area. Previously the most popular beach resorts were in Sanur, where we stayed the first time in 1987. On our second trip we stayed at the Bali Hilton in Nusa Dua (its name now is Ayodya Hotel). This was in 1997.

Nusa Dua is the new area developed by the Balinese government exclusively for tourism. On our last visit there in 2006, right after the Jakarta Zone Institute, we stayed at Intercontinental Hotel located in Jimbaran close to the Ngurah Rai International Airport. I still remember that the first time we visited Bali in 1987, the airport was only one small building similar to our small airports in the Visayan Islands. When we landed in 2006, the airport was a big complex filled with lots of Duty-Free shops and stores overflowing with Balinese Arts and Crafts. The Intercon was only about 15 minutes from this airport. It had a long lovely cove with the creamy beige sand and was almost deserted. Every night we dined at the outdoor grill restaurants to fresh seafood and hot steaming rice. We found out when we got back to the Philippines that this was where the 2005 Bali Bombings occurred, right where we were dining every night. The first Bombing was in 2002 in Kuta and the second one was in 2005, both in Kuta and Jimbaran.

The Institute had a separate program for us spouses. We drove first from Grand Hyatt to Uluwatu Temple, the southernmost tip of the island. We enjoyed the high location of the temple and saw magnificent cliffs. The temple was filled with monkeys who wanted to grab anything... from earrings, eyeglasses, cameras, etc. From Uluwatu Temple we visited five worship places in Siligita. From there we drove to the Museum Pacifica to view paintings and gigantic totem-pole-like sculptures from all over Southeast Asia and the Pacific. I posed near a huge wooden sculpture from Vanuatu. We even saw two paintings by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo of the Philippines. One was an unfinished nude painting and the other was a colorful landscape.

Preserving Indonesia's Heritage, Taman Bhagawan is characterized by Joglo structures, or antique wooden pergolas. The Joglos are showcased in various forms: at the maingate, chapel and covered areas. These were purchased in Randublatung, Blora Region in East Java as part of conservation initiatives of what is typically Indonesian architecture and are now becoming hard to come by.

The 2011 Bali Zone Institute was held at the huge Grand Hyatt Hotel, the crown jewel of resorts in Nusa Dua, the luxury stretch of magnificent beachfront with 648 luxury rooms & suites nestled in low-rise Balinese villas located in 4 villages. Grand Hyatt Bali resort was conceived as a water palace with lakes, landscaped gardens and five lagoons surrounding low-rise Balinese style buildings set amid tropical gardens. It had an 18-hole championship Bali Golf & country club. Right across the hotel was Bali Collection, a sprawling modern Balinese shopping and dining area and night market hosting cultural shows, food stalls, handicraft exhibition and bazaar-style market. When we didn't feel like eating dinner at the hotel, we just went for a short walk across and tried the different dining joints. The Institute was held at the huge Bali International Convention Center in Nusa Dua, which was just a

short drive from our hotel. Even then, we were all fetched by big buses and brought to the impressive Convention Center. There were many dance presentations by Balinese dancers, but one of the main attractions was the native dance by the Philippine Past District Governors. At the end of the program, the turnover ceremonies was done by RI Director Jackson Hsieh and received by RI Director Shekhar Mehta of Malaysia where the 2012 Zone Institute would be held.



*Two views of the unobtrusive façade of the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Nusa Dua
Next page: the spacious lobby with comfortable sofas and unique dried arrangements on round glass tables. The water features all around are uniquely Balinese*







PDG Digna Ragaza of District 3790 waiting with other PDGs in the hotel gift shop

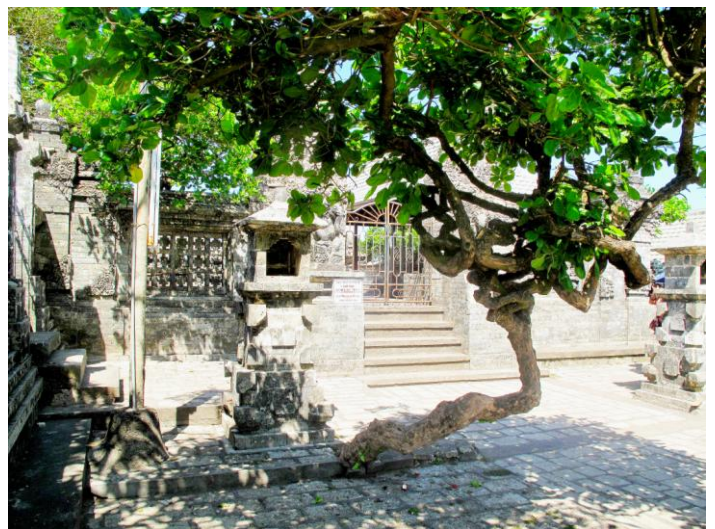


Photos show the differently shaped swimming pools of the hotel, some rounded, some angular, with mini waterfalls and secret caves. Pools also surround the multi-storied rooms behind and the gardens are dotted with fuschia Bougainvillas and Frangipani bushes with white flowers



Below: The group of spouses ready to enter the Uluwatu Temple with its stunning and magnificent cliffs





Above: Posing on a spot showing the magnificent cliffs and at right, a temple entry beside a tree with a grotesque shaped trunk and one of the denizens of Uluwatu Temple

Below: Taman Baghawan



Below: Taman Baghawan Fashion Show by Rotarians, spouses, and some Rotaractors



Below: Taman Baghawan's beautiful beach area and the makeshift tables filled with batik materials, bags, and other gift items for sale after the lunch and fashion show...with PP Liza J. Melendez of RC Calasiao



Below: Ben and I posing near the Kuta Beach entrance. Below right: Ben with PDG Robert Kuan and PDG Dan Espinosa ready to go shopping at Oceans 27 near Kuta Beach area.





Above: The very impressive entrance to the Bali International Convention Center in Nusa Dua; Below: The expansive lobby of the Convention Center





Above: A Choir singing Balinese and English songs for the Rotarians and guests at the Opening Ceremony; The Convenor, RID Jackson Hsieh and the RI President, his spouse and Zone Institute Officials





Above: With former schoolmate Cora Gamboa Ortiz , PDG Rafael Jocson and Mr. Ortiz (sitted) Right: with PP Chuck Gueco; Below: with PDG Benny and Nona Ricafors and PP Chuck Gueco





Above left: With Chuck Gueco near the buffet table at the grand dinner; Above: Part of the colorful dance numbers at the opening ceremony featuring typical Balinese costumes; Below: PDGs from different Districts in the Philippines doing a song and dance number





Left: The two lovebirds, RI Director to be Guiller Tumangan and spouse Letty. Below: Future Ri Director Raffy Garcia with spouse Minda and PDG Corina Bautista and friends; Down below: The Philippine group with the various PDGs, PPs in attendance



Below: The VIP table showing Incoming RI President K.R. Ravindran , Convenor, Past Director Jackson Hsieh and spouse Juliet with Past RI Director Noraseth Pathmanand and Past Director Shekhar Mehta and his spouse; Down Below: The Selangor Zone Institute being announced with Past Director Shekhar Mehta as the incoming Convenor



Below and Down Below: The Official Ceremonial Turn over for the 2012 Selangor Zone Institute



From there we drove to the Museum Pacifica to view paintings and gigantic totem-pole-like sculptures from all over Southeast Asia and the Pacific. I posed near a huge wooden sculpture from Vanuatu. Also on display were colorful masks used by Balinese “Barong Dancers”. We even saw two paintings by National Artist Fernando Amorsolo of the Philippines. One was an unfinished nude painting and the other one was a colorful landscape in brilliant colors.



As soon as the Institute was over, Ben and I decided to revisit the Art Museum and home of famous artist Antonio Maria Blanco (15 September 1912 – 10 December 1999). He was a painter of Spanish and American descent. Antonio was born in the Ermita district of Manila, Philippines. He initially lived and worked in Florida and California, United States, until he became interested in exploring the islands of the Pacific Ocean that had been a source of inspiration for painters such as Paul Gauguin, José Miguel Covarrubias and others before him. He planned to go to Tahiti, but fate brought him to Hawaii, Japan and Cambodia, where he was a guest of honor of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

From Cambodia he went to Bali in 1952 and married a traditional Balinese dancer named Ni Ronji in 1953. Bali gave Antonio important elements that he needed to develop his artistic gifts: the beautiful scenery, the dreamlike atmosphere of the environment and the pervasive art and great love.

Settled in Bali, Antonio began to realize his dreams in life and work. He built a house and museum in Ubud, which contains many of his paintings. The land on which the construction of his house was erected was given to Antonio by the King of Ubud Tjokorda Gde Agung Sukawati. Women are the focal point of his paintings and one could say that Antonio was a painter of the eternal feminine and his style is romantic-expressive and dreamy.

Blanco received numerous awards, including the Tiffany Fellowship (special award from The Society of Honolulu Artists), Chevalier du Sahametrail of Cambodia, the Society of Painters of Fine Art Quality of President Sukarno and the Prize of the Art Critique in Spain. Antonio was also awarded the order of Cruz de Caballero from the King of Spain Juan Carlos I, giving him the title of "Don" in front of his name.

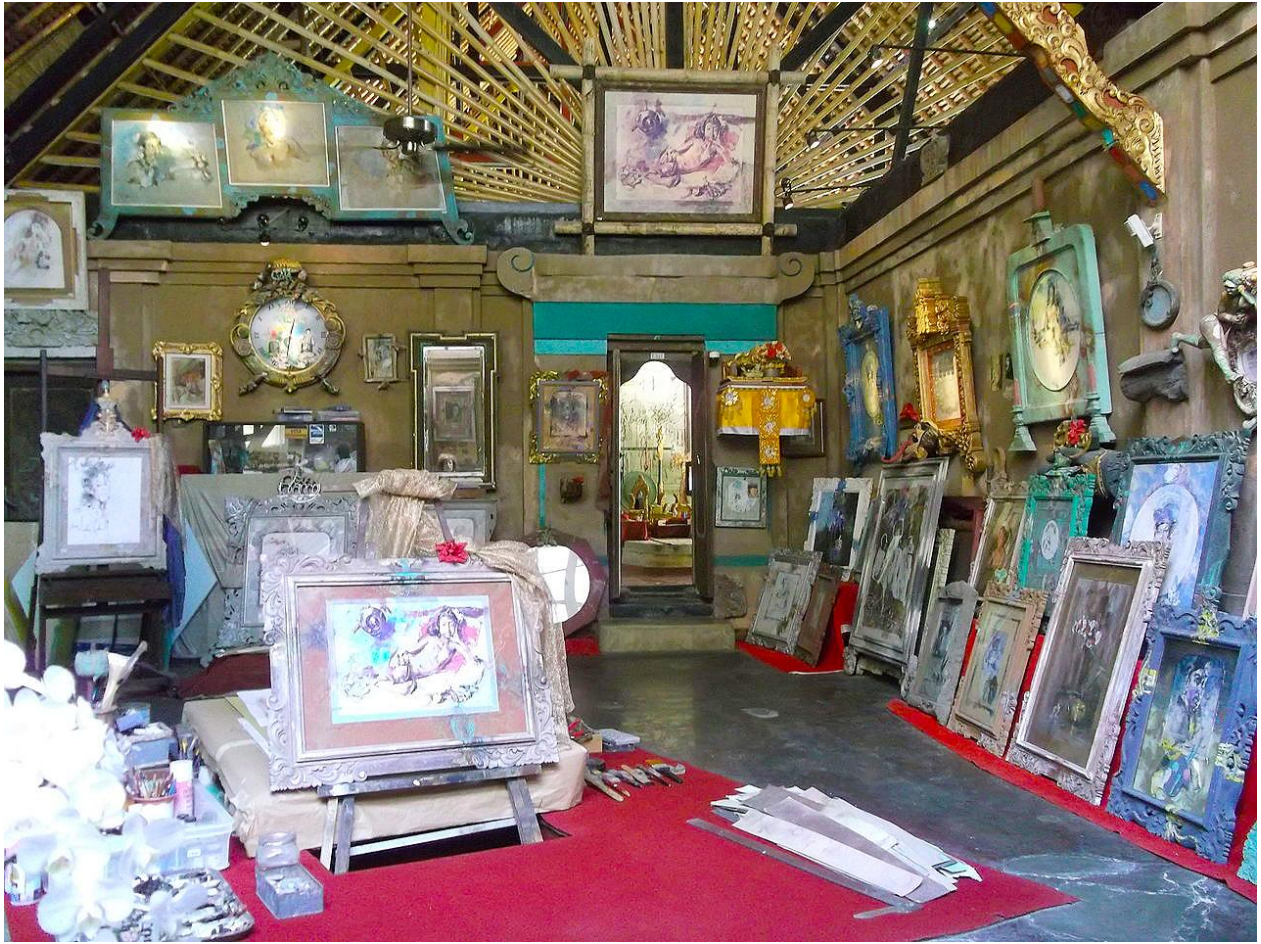
Many collectors have appreciated his paintings, including the actress Ingrid Bergman, Mexican telenovela queen Thalia (Ariadna Thalia Sodi Miranda), Sukarno (the first President of Indonesia), Suharto (the second president of Indonesia), the former Indonesian Vice President Adam Malik, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Michael Jackson and many more.

The Blanco Renaissance Museum, Antonio's lifetime dream, was opened on December 28, 1998 at his residence in a beautiful environment, where more than 300 works of Antonio are exposed in chronological order to show his artistic development. The sumptuous and impressive building offers a glimpse of the theatrical character of the artist. He emulated the flamboyance of Dali, to whom he has been compared.

Don Antonio Maria Blanco died on December 10, 1999 in Denpasar, Bali, from heart and kidney disease, survived by his wife and four children: Cempaka, Mario, Orchid and Mahadewi. Since Antonio converted to Hinduism, he had a cremation ceremony Balinese style in Ubud, finished on 28 December 1999. His son Mario is now also a famous painter and one of his daughters designs handcrafted intricate silver jewelry.

We were in Ubud in 2006 after the Zone Institute in Jakarta and it was great to see that they now had unique pet birds, which were people friendly. There was also this more than a century old banyan tree that was planted ages ago near an altar designed by the artist himself. This visit to Ubud was a fitting adieu to unforgettable Bali. We have been here four times but still look forward till our next visit to this beautiful Island of the Gods!

Below: Inside the Atelier of Artist Antonio Blanco; Lower photo: The main entrance to the Museum



The huge Gallery of the Antonio Blanco Museum showing his collection of paintings



Below: This huge sculpture dominates the main entrance to the gallery of artist Antonio Blanco. It is a new addition, as I don't remember seeing it during our first visit there in 2006



Below: with the friendly denizens at the Blanco Museum's Garden



Below: This centuries-old banyan tree stands guard at the stone altars designed by the Artist himself.

