

KOTA KINABALU

Josie Dizon Henson

“BORNEO! The mere mention of the name conjures up an image of mystery and intrigue. The third largest island on earth has captured the human imagination for centuries. A magnet for adventurers, explorers, writers, and naturalists, Borneo has long enjoyed a reputation as one of the world’s last undiscovered Frontiers. People are fascinated by the bear-shape of Borneo. Kota Kinabalu is located just below the lower left ear of the “bear” which is called Kalimantan in Indonesia and is located north of Java Island, Indonesia, at the geographic centre of Maritime Southeast Asia.



Kota Kinabalu, formerly known as Jesselton, is the capital of Sabah state in East Malaysia. It is also the capital of the West Coast Division of Sabah. The city is located on the northwest coast of Borneo facing the South China Sea.

This is one of the most fantastic cities you will ever visit. A modern capital with a warm hospitality that you hardly find in many places around the world, just around a corner you have long sandy beaches, paradise islands, virgin coral reefs, tropical rain forests; and the mighty Mount Kinabalu is only 90 minutes away.

The island is divided among three countries: Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia. Approximately 73% of the island is Indonesian territory. The Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak in the north occupy about 26% of the island. The sovereign state of Brunei, located on the north coast, comprises about 1% of Borneo's land area. Borneo is home to one of the oldest rainforests in the world, along with the Daintree Rainforest in Australia and the Amazon rainforest.

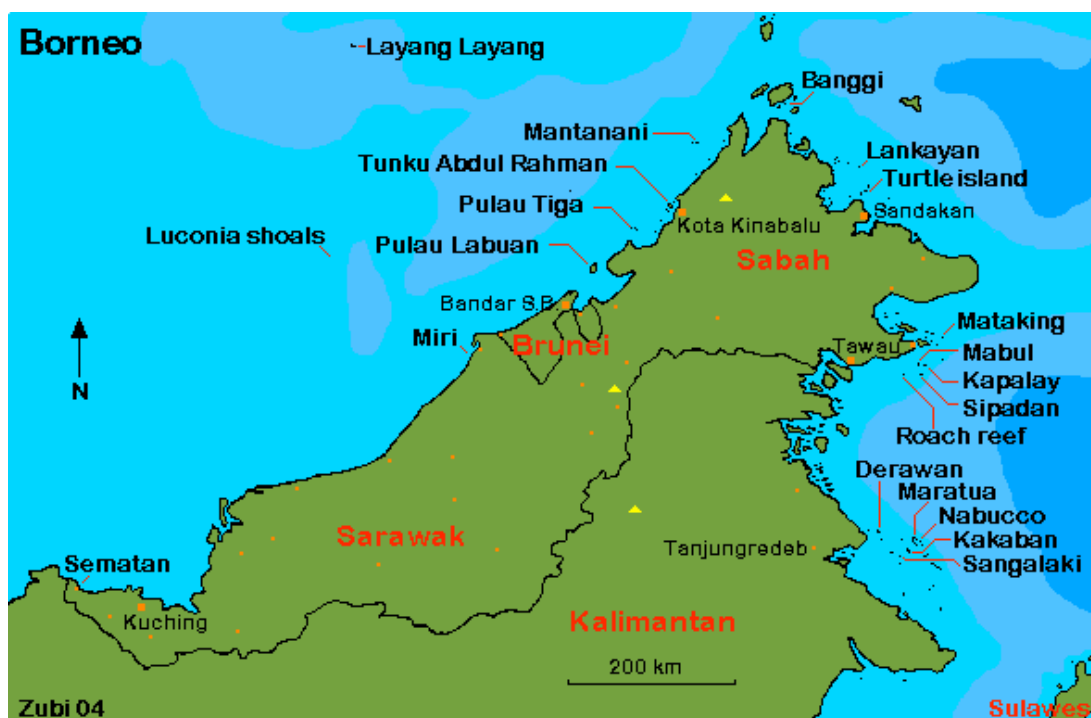


Strategically situated in the Northwest Coast of Borneo Island, facing the South China Sea and Tunku Abdul Rahman Park on one side, and set against the backdrop of Mount Kinabalu; this beautiful ‘Nature Resort City’ stretches for miles along the coast and towards the inland. Kota Kinabalu proper has a population of 452,058 while the larger urban area, which includes Penampang district has an estimated population of 651,658. It is the largest urban centre in Borneo and the sixth largest in Malaysia.

Affectionately known as KK or Api-Api by the locals, Kota Kinabalu is a popular tourism getaway and a major gateway into Sabah and

Borneo Island. Apart from featuring a number of tourism attractions in and around the city, Kota Kinabalu is also one of the most thriving industrial and commercial centers in East Malaysia. Internationally, it is a well-known major tourist destination and a popular gateway for travelers visiting Sabah and Borneo. Kinabalu National Park is located about 90 kilometers from the city and there are many tourist attractions in and around the city. These two factors combine to make Kota Kinabalu one of the fastest growing cities in Malaysia.

In the late 1800s, the British North Borneo Company (BNBC) began to establish colonies throughout North Borneo. In 1882 the Company founded a small settlement in the area known as Gaya Bay, which was already inhabited by Bajau people. The first settlement was on Gaya Island. In 1897, this first settlement was burned and destroyed by the indigenous Bajau freedom fighter Mat Salleh.



After the destruction, the Company decided to relocate the settlement to a more easily defended mainland at Gantian Bay (now Sepanggar Bay) in 1898. However it was found to be unsuitable. In 1899, Mr. Henry Walker, a Land Commissioner identified a site of 30 acres with a width of six chains and length of about half a mile as replacement for Gantian. This fishing village named Api-Api (see Original names below) was chosen due to its proximity to North Borneo Railway and the natural port that was up to 24 feet deep and protected from the wind. This new administrative centre was renamed Jesselton after Sir Charles Jessel, the then Vice Chairman of the Company.



Eventually, Jesselton became a major trading post of North Borneo, dealing in rubber, rattan, honey, and wax. The new railway was used to transport goods to Jesselton harbor. The Malay and Bajau uprisings during these times were not uncommon, and the Company worked to quell the long-standing threat of piracy in the region. Sir Charles Jessel, Vice Chairman of the BNBC after whom Jesselton (now Kota Kinabalu) was named.

Jesselton was razed by the retreating British early in World War II to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Japanese. After the Japanese takeover of Borneo, it was again renamed

Api. Several rebellions against the Japanese military administration took place in Api. One major rebellion occurred in 10 October 1943 by the group called Kinabalu Guerrillas, consisting of local inhabitants. Japanese forces quelled the rebellion after its leader; Albert Kwok was arrested and executed in 1944. At the later stages of the war, what remained of the town was destroyed again by Allied bombings day and night for over six months as part of the Borneo Campaign in 1945, leaving only three buildings standing. The war in North Borneo ended with the official surrender of the Japanese 37th Army by Lieutenant General Baba Masao in Labuan on September 10, 1945.

After the war on the edge of bankruptcy, the British North Borneo Company returned to administer Jesselton but was unable to finance the huge costs of reconstruction. They gave control of North Borneo to the British Crown on 15 July 1946. The new colonial government elected to rebuild Jesselton as the capital of North Borneo instead of Sandakan, which had also been destroyed by the war. Colonial Office Reconstruction and Development Plan for North Borneo: 1948-1955 was set up by the British government. It approved £6,051,939 - £2,232,882 for rebuilding and £3,819,057 for new development. Roads built, harbor cleared, airstrips repaired, towns reconstructed and agriculture encouraged. R. E. Perry, first Director of Education was appointed to prepare a five-year plan for education development.

When North Borneo together with Sarawak, Singapore & Federation of Malaya formed the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, the state became known, as Sabah and Jesselton remained its capital. Jesselton was renamed Kota Kinabalu on September 30, 1968 and received official city status from the Malaysian government on February 2, 2000.



Above: A bird's eye view of the Kota Kinabalu skyline where the Sutera Harbor Resort, Marina and Golf Club can be seen. The red-roofed Magellan Sutera is on the left and the white Pacific Sutera Hotel is on the right, and nestled between these hotels lies Sutera Harbor Marina, Golf & Country Club, incorporating the 27-hole Graham Marsh-designed golf course on the far right; Below is the hotel row and commercial complex which was build entirely on reclaimed land and Pulau Gaya can be viewed across on the upper left side with its thousands of Bajau stilt houses



Kinabalu is named after Mount Kinabalu (4095m) and is the tallest mountain in South-East Asia. It is located in the Kinabalu National Park in the province of Sabah in Malaysian Borneo, about 50 kilometers east-northeast of the city. Kinabalu is derived from the name Aki Nabalu meaning the "revered place of the dead." Aki means "ancestors" or "grandfather", and Nabalu is a name for the mountain in the Dusun language. There is also a source claiming that the term originated from Ki Nabalu, where Ki meaning "have" or "exist", and Nabalu meaning "spirit of the dead".

Kota is a Malay word for a "fort", "town", or a "city". It is also used formally in a few other Malaysian towns and cities, for example, Kota Bahru, Kota Tinggi, and Kota Kemuning. It could also be used informally to refer to any towns or cities. Henceforth, a direct translation of the name Kota Kinabalu into English would be "City of Kinabalu" or "Kinabalu City". Kota Kinabalu lies on a narrow flatland between the Crocker Range to the east and the South China Sea to the west.



There are six islands off the coast of the city. The largest is Gaya Island, the site of the first British settlement. Approximately 8,000 people live there. The smaller islands, mainly uninhabited, are named Sapi Island, Manukan Island, Sulug Island, Mamutik Island and Sepanggar Island to the north.

Wendy Stuart wrote in her book on North Borneo, The Lingering Eye, "there is in the Sabah State Museum a Dutch map of Borneo and the

Celebes dated 1657 in which the settlement where Jesselton was to stand is clearly labeled Api Api. It may have some connection with the seaside tree with breathing roots that bears the same name". Another explanation is that the name Api Api is derived from the devastating fire which occurred in the city's early years ('Api' means 'fire' in the Malay language). In Chinese, the city is known as 'Api', which is the Hakka pronunciation for 亞庇 (Simplified Chinese; Traditional Chinese: 亞庇; Pinyin: yà bì).

Flat land is at a premium in the city centre, and there is a strict limit to the height of buildings. The airport is 7 km away, and the city is directly in the flight path. Most of the Central Business District (CBD) today is built on land reclaimed from the sea. The original local plant life has largely disappeared, but several hills within the city (too steep for building) are still clothed with tropical rainforest. One of these is Signal Hill, which confines the CBD to the shore. In the area of Likas Bay the remnants of an extensive mangrove forest was nearly lost. In 1996, a perceptive state government stepped in and declared 24 acres (97,000 m²) of the forest as a protected area. This forest is now known as the Kota Kinabalu City Bird Sanctuary.

Kota Kinabalu is generally isolated from the rest of the country; it is located about 1,624 kilometer (1,009 mi) from Kuala Lumpur in Peninsular Malaysia and 804 kilometers (500 mi) from Kuching in the neighboring state of Sarawak. The City of Kota Kinabalu is the capital of Sabah. Located on the west coast of "the Land Below the Wind", under the watchful eye of majestic Mount Kinabalu, and on the fringes of the South China Sea.

Kota Kinabalu features a tropical rainforest climate, under the Koppen climate classification. However, the city has noticeably wetter and drier seasons. Two prevailing monsoons characterize the climate of this part of Sabah, the Northeast Monsoon and the Southwest Monsoon. The Northeast Monsoon occurs between November and March with cooler temperatures and less rainfall, while the Southwest Monsoon occurs between May and September, which brings warmer temperatures and more rainfall. There are also two successive inter-monsoons from April to May and from September to October. Temperature variation throughout the year is small. However, April and May are generally the hottest months, while December and January are often the coolest. During this period (December and January), some surge of cold winds blowing from Siberia occasionally can drop the early morning temperature to 20° C. Rainfall varies markedly through the year. February and March are typically the driest months while rainfall peaks in the inter-monsoon period around October. Relatively humidity is quite high throughout

Located on the west coast of "the Land Below the Wind", under the watchful eye of majestic Mount Kinabalu, and on the fringes of the South China Sea, the state capital of Kota Kinabalu has many places of interest. It is a city popular with foreigners and locals alike, and the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, adjacent to the city is one of the top tourist destinations, perfect for relaxing, snorkeling and a wide variety of water-sports. Other places of interest include the Signal Hill Observatory, offering a bird's view of the city; the Sabah Foundation Building - a unique 30-storey building (it is a circular structure supported by high tensile steel rods, an architectural and engineering marvel, and there are only four such buildings in the world; it is Sabah's highest tower); the State Mosque, resplendent with its majestic domes and golden motifs is the central place of worship for KK's Muslim population; the new Likas Mosque, the largest in the state; and the Likas Bird Sanctuary.

The State Museum - based on the architecture of Murut and Rungus longhouses has several galleries exhibiting, among others, a cluster of human skulls from Sabah's headhunting past, totemic figures, old photographs, valuable ancient pottery from all over South East Asia and antique Korans. In the Heritage Village of the museum you find numerous life-size replicas of the traditional houses of the many ethnic entities in Sabah.

The Sutera Harbor Resort, Marina and Golf Club are located at the south end of the city and has become a major landmark. The complex makes Kota Kinabalu an instant resort city: it comprises two 5-star hotels, an international yacht club and an award winning golf course! Further away one could view in the distance the luxurious Shangri-la Tangung Aru Resort and Spa, one of three Shangri-la hotels in KK, Shangri-la Rasa Ria being the most expensive (it has its own golf course)."

BEN and I were quite excited to visit Kota Kinabalu as we have had several invitations from our Rotarian friends PP Alfred Sii and Rtn. Paul Thien, PDG Edward Burongoh and DG Zainie Aucasa to visit them. We have met Alfred and Paul a few times in Clark when they would make stopovers from their visits to Dagupan and Cebu and we treated them to a well-known Bulaluhan Place in Clark at the Air Force City and they really savored and enjoyed the Bulalo Soup every time they came.

Finally, we were on our way to Kota Kinabalu upon the invitation of DGN Robert Kuan of RI District 3830. He brought his wife Yvonne, his son Kelvin (and Kelvin's two sons, Carlo and Iñigo), second son, Jeremy, and Sammy Alarcon of Palawan with his wife, Nits and daughter Jenny who also joined our group. Just a mere one hour and 40-minute flight from Clark International Airport in Pampanga, Philippines, Kota Kinabalu conjures visions of mosques, temples and old buildings.

However, I was in for a surprise as KK is just like any bustling modern city by the sea. Considering that most of the hotels fronting the Boardwalk were built on reclaimed land, KK's hotel row you might say was properly planned and developed. The mere fact is that almost all of the hotels have a bird's eye view of the Tunku Abdul Rahman National park and just a 90- minute drive to majestic Mt. Kinabalu, KK's jagged peaked mountain.

As soon as we arrived, we were driven to Super Tanker Restaurant (it's name is rather unusual for a plush Chinese restaurant). We were served a 10-course dinner with crunchy thin slivers of green papaya sweet pickles and steamed peanuts as appetizers and up to now I can still recall some of the delicious chicken, duck and fish dishes that were served.



Above is the breathtaking view that greeted us every morning from our 7th floor hotel window

PP Frank Fu drove Ben and me to our hotel the Imperial Boutec Hotel, which overlooks the long Boardwalk across where countless restaurants were located.

The next day, we woke up early as Alfred picked us up and together with Robert and Sammy, we had an early typical Chinese breakfast of Yau Cha Kui (deep-fried long doughnuts) smothered liberally with butter and kaya jam (coco jam) then cut into bite-sized pieces, banana fritters, and congee with the tenderest thin slivers of pork tenderloin boiled lovingly for hours, washed down with hot steaming white coffee sweetened with condensed milk or hot tea, either plain or sweet.



After the sumptuous breakfast, eight of us boarded a small coaster, which was hired by Rtn. Paul Thien and his group and we were to be whisked up into the Mt. Kinabalu National Park. In more than hour, we stopped at the Mt. Kinabalu lookout point but sadly; the majestic mountain was shrouded in heavy clouds. There were market stalls where luscious bananas, jackfruit, guapples, pineapples and other fruits were sold together with various handicrafts, t-shirts, hats, trinkets and other items. After a 30 minute-stop we reluctantly left, hoping that Mt. Kinabalu would a least show itself even just for a few minutes, but she never did. So we drove on to the Poring Hot Springs located more than an hour away.



After a longish drive through winding roads that reminded us of the lower zigzag road to Baguio complete with wild ferns and pine trees we reached Poring Hot Springs. Poring is the Kadazan word for "Bamboo". Thus, the true English translation of the Malay "Poring Air Panas" should be "Bamboo Hot Springs". However, it is now known as Poring Hot Springs. Back in the day, oh say, a million years or so ago, Mt. Kinabalu must have been an active volcano.



I had to content myself with this lovely photo of Mt. Kinabalu from the Internet as when we were there, she was shrouded in rain clouds. Its majestic and jagged peak shows its volcanic origin and at 4095.2 meters majestic Mt. Kinabalu is the highest mountain in South East Asia. It is so much higher than our Mt. Mayon, which stands at 2462 meters, and Mt. Arayat, which is 1026 meters



Above: At the Poring Hot Springs main entrance through a concrete bridge across a river rapids, with Kelvin Kuan, Eldest son of DGE Robert Kuan and his two grandsons, Carlo and Inigo; at right, posing with old giant bamboo groves growing in several thick clumps around the vicinity before approaching the main Hot Springs

“If you've ever been to the summit, you will see the obviousness of this statement there. No wonder, there were numerous clumps of giant bamboos strewn around the main entrance of the Hot Springs.

Today, Poring Hot Springs is the only evidence left of its former thermal self. During its history, Sabah, or North Borneo as it was previously called, was invaded and occupied by the Japanese. During the Second World War, Prisoners of War were commissioned to harness the previously natural setting at this location and it was turned into Japanese style hot tubs. I am unsure as to whether or not the facilities today are the original structures, but the Japanese style has been retained nevertheless.



On the way to the Poring Hot Springs there were various flowering heliconias to welcome the visitors, as well as gigantic rocks like the one behind Kelvin. The clumps of giant bamboos must have been growing there for ages



Above, I am posing in front of the main source of the bubbly hot springs, which is off-limits as the temperature is super hot! This is where all of the hot, bubbly sulphur-smelling hot water originates and comes through big pipes and goes down into the tubs and pools. Below, we got a family tub with hot and cold taps and Ben enjoys soaking his feet, while Carlo and Inigo soak theirs in the next one. Nits and daughter Jenny Alarcon share another tub and wait patiently for it to fill up which could take a while



As such, the hot tubs are built slightly below the actual source of the hot water. The hot water is piped (as at the source it is hot enough to hard boil eggs) and presented at the tubs along side cold water taps. Due to reasons of hygiene, the tubs are drained after each use, but they are also fairly large and thus sometimes take some time to fill. There are several other sized tubs scattered about nearby, which are not tiled and communal. Hot water flows freely through these and are always ready.



Upper photo shows a big kidney-shaped tub for big families; below left shows Kelvin and his boys having a respite prior to a one-kilometer canopy climb up the side of the mountain together with Ben and Tony, the driver

The other pools in the part of the facility are cold-water pools. There is a freely accessible rock pool, as well as the paid-access slide pool, which is a series of 4 cascading pools, the upper 3 of which are margined by a water-slide. The water in these pools is fed by a river and thus is constantly replenished. This part of the facility is quite popular amongst tourist and locals alike, especially during weekends and public- and school holidays.

Back near the pools is the Jungle Restaurant. Almost part of the forest, the restaurant is of a standard quite higher than the facilities around it. The decor helps it to blend in and become part of the Jungle. They serve a buffet lunch and a la carte menus the rest of the day. The food is either western or popular local cuisine. They also serve soft drinks and alcohol, which along with the food is comfortably priced.

Other attractions include the Butterfly Sanctuary. Because Poring Hot Springs is a good 3-hour drive from Kota Kinabalu, it might have been worthwhile to spend a night here. Another good reason to do so, is to see the fire flies along the river, which of course is only possible at night.”



The above photos show what the Canopy Walkway looks like. I decided not to join Ben, Kelvin, the two young boys, Jenny, and Tony, the driver. They were supposed to be back in an hour but they came back only after one and a half hour. We were getting worried as it was starting to rain. Everybody was hungry and we were ready for a late lunch.

Tony drove us into the next town as he said that the restaurants in Poring Hot Springs were rather pricey. When we reached the next town, Tony wanted to bring us to a typical native restaurant but the two boys saw a KFC and we all shouted KFC and Tony was forced to go back and we had a sumptuous lunch of the familiar Fried Chicken and fries but I missed the usual gravy. All they had was hot catsup.

After the leisurely lunch we drove back to KK and this time it was really raining. On our way back we didn't stop at the Look out anymore but we finally had a glimpse of Mt. Kinabalu but it was getting too dark to take photos.



On our fourth day, as usual we had an early breakfast and then we went to market and DGE Robert brought lots of shrimp kropeck while Ben and I bought some sweet langka, guavas, and dried whole peanuts. PP Alfred bought some crispy lettuce and cucumbers for his salad.

A small yacht belonging to Rtn. Robert Lo of the RC of Kinabalu was loaned to us and while waiting for the skipper we paused for souvenir photos at the famous Sutera Harbor where two five-star hotels were based, the Magellan Sutera and the Pacific Sutera Hotel. Nestled between these hotels lies Sutera Harbor Marina, Golf & Country Club, incorporating the 27-hole Graham Marsh-designed golf course with a spectacular coastline view near the Harbor, a 104-berth Marina, the internationally renowned Mandara Spa and a host of other recreational facilities.

This Marina was to be the starting point of our island hopping cruise and we had several photos sessions before we boarded the yacht. We had a fabulous buffet set-up by PP Alfred and we munched on our appetizers and drank some White Coffee and tea from the yacht's kitchen brought up by the crew.

Finally the skipper came and we gassed up the boat for another 20 minutes and then we were on our way to visit the small lovely island of SAPI, one of the most popular islands adjacent to the Gaya Island the biggest one in the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park.





Above photo shows Ben getting hold of the white sand that is as white as Boracay's sand and the rocky cove at the back and the sand near the life guard reminded me so much of Boracay. The main difference was the small size of Sapi Island and it didn't have any permanent hostels or guesthouses and people came only for a day of picnicking, swimming or snorkeling.





Upper photo shows Kelvin and Jeremy Kuan getting ready for snorkeling; above photo shows our boat docked near the pier and behind can be seen part of Pulau Gaya, the biggest island in the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park comprising several green islands. Photos below show Pulau Sapi Map, one of several huge lizards (barag) in captivity and one of the huge shady trees favored by picnickers, swimmers and snorkelers or just plain sunbathers





Every Sunday, Gaya Street is closed to vehicular traffic as it hosts the Gaya Street Sunday Market. If you happen to be in Kota Kinabalu on a Sunday, you might want to pass by Gaya Street. The Sunday Market, or "Pasar Tamu" is an open market covering 400 meters, starts from the street after the city council building and ends at Sabah Tourism Board. You can find various type of local products, pearls, seashells, rattan products, wooden decors, pets, fish, fruits, Tenom Coffee, Sabah Tea, etc. The market opens 5 am - 1 pm. You might need a hat and a pair of comfortable shoes to make a smooth cruise through the market. As the market is crowded, do take care of your belongings. There are several KOPITIAMS (coffee shops) around the market you may take a rest and a sip of coffee there.



Upper photo shows the majestic Mt. Kinabalu. We finally saw it as Kokol Hills has a spectacular view of both the mountain and the KK skyline and in the distance Gaya Island on Likas Bay can be seen just behind the clouds





Upper photo shows the jolly group of KK and Philippine Rotarians and spouses just before a glorious sunset. Datu PP Vincent Pung and his spouse Datin PP Rubina, who are standing on the left, hosted the sumptuous barbecue. Above photo shows all the spouses after the enjoyable Barbecue Dinner

Below left shows DGE Robert Kuan, PDG Edward, PP Sam and PDG Ben Henson and below right shows me and Mariana, spouse of PDG Edward Burongoh of D. 3310



Above from left... Datu PP Vincent Pung, the gracious host of the Barbecue Dinner, DGE Robert Kuan, PDG Edward Burongoh, PP Sammy Alarcon and PDG Ben Henson

Below...watching the sunset at the Kota Kinabalu Yacht Club while sipping cool calamansi juice



Alfred offered to drive us up to his farm on our third day but we had to wake up at around 6:30 AM so we could again have an early breakfast at one of those Kopitiam. We had our usual Yau Cha Kui, White Coffee and Sweet Tea. This time I had Noodles. We were told that we would see Alfred's small house with a dairy farm and as his 4-wheel drive negotiated the steep narrow, we held our breaths as we were streaking through thick jungle terrain with lots of wild ferns, bananas and pine trees and palms. We were not prepared for the breath-taking view that greeted us when Alfred finally parked his 4-wheeler. We were on the topmost part of Kokol Hills and on the steep driveway going up, we saw Alanna's Lodge (named after Alanna, Alfred's only daughter) for the first time. We were speechless! It was a huge sprawling house perched precariously on the side of Kokol Hills. On the left was a glorious view of Mt. Kinabalu while on the right was a spectacular panorama of the KK skyline with Gaya Island seen in the distance.

At Alanna Lodge the fresh, cool breeze and lush greenery as well as the scents and sounds of the tropical rainforest greeted us. The temperature was pleasant and ideal—between 18°C to 23°C. Standing at 2400 feet above sea level, it had a stunning 360° view of the surroundings and reminded us of Tagaytay. We enjoyed the fresh cool mountain air and the green scenery. From there it is just a 90-minute drive to majestic Mt. Kinabalu, KK's jagged peaked mountain that can be viewed from the Crocker ranges and from the Kokol Hills. One could easily gaze upon the timeless beauty of the majestic Mount Kinabalu, the vast, rich rainforest of the Crocker Range, or look over the city of Kota Kinabalu (KK) and towards the 5 Islands of Tunku Abdul Rahman Park and the horizon beyond it.

At dawn, the Lodge must be enveloped by a mystical mist, and at dusk, lit by spectacular sunsets. When the night draws in, the sky above must be splattered with countless twinkling stars and an amazing view of the night-lights of the city.

On our last day, a Sunday, we were all looking forward to the Grand Barbecue to be hosted by PP Vincent Pung who owned a big piece of property near Alanna's Lodge also on Kokol Hills. Robert and his friend who just got back from a visit to Australia fetched us from our hotel. I brought along a shawl, as it gets chilly up there in the late afternoon and evening. It was great to meet new friends and also renew our friendship with PDG Edward Burongoh and his spouse Mariana who we haven't seen for quite a while. The gracious hosts were PP Datu Vincent Pung and his spouse, PP Datin Rubina. We had sumptuous appetizers prepared by PE Frederick and lamb and chicken barbecue. For dessert, Datin Rubina had some freshly picked strawberries from her garden. It was indeed a great gathering of past, present and future officers of KK and Philippine Rotarians. And just like in the Yacht Club where Rtn. Paul Thien and his spouse Margaret brought us to wait for the sunset to set in, PP Frank Fu and I clicked away at our cameras to get unforgettable sunset views for my blog. PP Frank was kind enough to pick us a few times and bring us back to our hotel. He even gave us some homemade Kaya for us to try when we got home.

All in all it was such an unforgettable 6 days of adventure...driving through dense forests that were just a few kilometers from the city... getting chilly in Kokol Hills, soaking in the Hot Springs, snorkeling and swimming, but most of all, it was a Marathon Eating adventure that stimulated the tastes buds from the start, (at Super Tanker Restaurant where we were served a 10-course meal), to the countless breakfasts, snacks, and dinners... and cruising slowly to Sapi Island where we had a sumptuous buffet prepared by PP Alfred and our first taste of homemade Kaya, prepared by PP Fran Fu. To cap it all Rtn. Paul Thien and PP Alfred Sii brought us to this small restaurant that was super-crowded, as DGE Robert simply had to have lunch there. We all agreed that it was a lunch to top it all especially the Lechon Kawali, which was to die for! We are again being invited to grace the 60th anniversary of the Rotary Club of Kota Kinabalu in late November, right after the Zone Institute in Selangor... care to join us anyone?



