

## **YACHT FRIENDLY MOORINGS – BLUE ROCK RESORT, SUBIC BAY**

As at October 2006

Near the northeast corner of Subic Bay lies the beach resort area of Barrio Barretto and Baloy Beach. The Blue Rock Resort is on the southern most point of Baloy Beach; fifty meters off the beach there is the Blue Rock Floating Bar. Near 14 deg 50' 80"N, 120 deg 15' 29"E. Approaching from where #4 channel marker buoy should be at the entrance of Subic Bay, off Grande Island, the bearing is approximately 25 deg GPS.

The Blue Rock Resort has recently laid two moorings for visiting yachts, each consisting of two concrete blocks (approximately one cubic meter per block), in six meters of water at low tide. The moorings and buoys will be found approximately 150 meters WSW of the Blue Rock Floating Bar. At the time of writing the buoyancy for the chain at the surface is provided by black plastic containers. According to "Tommo", owner and operator of the Blue Rock Resort, "each buoy has approximately two meters of rope to tie on to and they are sound even in a good blow". However, the moorings are not typhoon safe and you are advised to move to the East side of Subic Bay, to the pontoon facilities of Watercraft Ventures (reasonable price) or the Subic Bay Yacht Club (more expensive), if a storm is imminent.

The only hazard of note on the approach to the moorings is the extraordinary, European-style castle on a rocky outcrop about a mile off-shore and almost in line with a passage from Grande Island (defending the entrance to Subic Bay). Give the castle at least one hundred meters clearance on all sides. If approaching at night: the castle is not lit but should stand out well against lights ashore; and, it provides an excellent radar return. Nobody is quite sure who owns the castle although it has been recently repainted. It is reported to have changed hands at least twice on false papers during the past twenty years. So if someone tries to sell it to you during your visit then triple-check the Deed of Sale and the Land Title.

If the moorings are full when you arrive do not worry because the area around the moorings offers reasonably good holding (on sand/sandy mud), ideal for day sailors and those with an anchor watch posted.

Once hooked up on a mooring the Floating Bar is only a short paddle away for you and your dinghy – dinghies can tie up alongside, no problem – on the Floating Bar the beer is cold and the hospitality warm. There is no organized service to and from the moorings but if you make it known that you want to come ashore during daylight, the staff will find a way to fetch you.

Ashore you can taste the delights of Blue Rock's legendary proportioned menu items and every evening there is a Bar-B-Q, Aussie style. If you want a room ashore to sleep then the Blue Rock Resort, complete with dive shop, offers some of the best mid-range accommodation in the area.

Want to get wet? Rent a Jet Ski for an hour and zip across the Bay to check out Hanjin's new ship building facility – the largest in Asia – or take a leisurely banka ride to explore the almost deserted beaches and mangroves on the Bay's western shore.

Subic Bay is famous for the opportunities it offers for diving on World War II wrecks; there are a few that pre-date the war. Technical divers may follow the tall tales and temptation of Yamashita's Gold but may only be rewarded with a lobster tail. There are recently undiscovered wrecks (not quite an oxymoron) in the Bay including a Japanese Zero that was

reported found during the 1970's but has not seen the light of a diver's flashlight in recent years.

Don't want to dive? Then take a walk along memory lane and visit the various bars and restaurants in Barrio Barretto that have survived the departure of U.S. Forces, now reinventing themselves as icons of a forgotten era. Try Dryden's for a breakfast selection that defies comparison or, meet General MacArthur (a.k.a. Don West) at the General's Command Post for perhaps the coldest beer in the Barrio and where you can touch the original jeep used during the General's advance through the country in pursuit of the retreating Japanese – the jeep and the guns are originals although the guns have been made inoperative. There is a Veterans of Foreign Wars post (VFW 11447) in the Barrio where the "SOS" breakfast is reputed to bring back fond memories (if you served with the U.S. Navy).

Friday evening at around six, drop by Mango's for all the latest gossip from the "locals" during the traditional "happy hour". Or, if you are in the Barrio on a Monday evening then hop on over to the T-Rose Bar and guest house where there is a regular pool/billiards tournament starting at 7.00pm, open to all-comers

If you want to wander further then take a drive to the nearby town of San Marcelino (West then North along the Zambales coast) where you can find the Pasalubong Café . . . if for no other reason than to taste-the-best, order a homemade taco and be amazed at the taste and the price. On the way back drop into the Scots Foundation (a bit off the track but worth the visit) and meet Sherry Zimmer who has carved an orphanage out of the hillside for native (Aeta) boys.

The Blue Rock Resort yacht friendly moorings offer a change of pace and an introduction to a slice of Philippine history that is difficult to replicate.