

SOLANA RESORT, BATANGAS

As at June 2006

When racing yachtsmen prepare to enter the Verde Passage from Manila for the first time from the West we frequently joke that tacking North into Balayan Bay is a good option, to be taken at the first sign of a southerly knock off the rhumb line (Cape Santiago – Puerto Galera peninsula). In fact this is possibly the worst move a racer could make as it will cost a couple of hours at least to extricate the yacht from the lee of Maricaban Island.

However, while searching for Yacht Friendly Moorings along the Batangas coast, we have discovered one very special reason to make that tack, and perhaps forget about Puerto Galera completely for a couple of days. Punch these coordinates into your GPS and take time out to enjoy a little known sanctuary that will surely charm mind, body and soul.

The outer mooring is located near: N 13deg 42.20' E 120deg 52.62'.

There are three moorings located off the foreshore of Solana Resort, Mabini / Anilao, managed by Joel Uichico. The outer mooring (orange spherical buoy) lies in approximately 18 metres of water while the one to the East (orange spherical buoy) offers eight metres or more; the third mooring (black spherical buoy) is in about three metres and suitable for shallower draft vessels. Sailing yachts should be cautious when circling the shallowest buoy as there is a rocky outcrop immediately North.

From Cape Santiago take a heading of approximately 87 degrees M and this will take you direct to the outer mooring with no hazards. If passing between Maricaban Island and Sombrero Island take a heading of 75 degrees M for a clear run to the mooring. If arriving from the East through the passage between Maricaban Island and the Batangas coast then make your turn when the outer mooring position is on a bearing of 330 degrees M and you will be clear of all known hazards.

The moorings are sheltered from weather from the North, South and East, but are somewhat exposed to a westerly wave set.

Upon arrival during daylight (recommended) you can hail the resort and they will provide water transport to the shore. If you have your own dinghy then you can land it on the adjacent (East) sandy beach. The moorings are intended to be used by yachtsmen and visitors interested to discover a retreat where they can fill their waking hours drifting between good food, intelligently humorous conversation and moments (or hours) of self indulgence.

Solana Resort is a first class boutique resort nestled in the Batangas hillside, with an ambiance designed to suit its mixed and varied clientele.

The welcome is warm and generous from all of the staff and whether you are there simply landing for lunch and afternoon tea or, to take a few days of rest and relaxation the level of service is comparable to a fine hotel in Manila.

Thirteen air-conditioned casita rooms are available for short or long stays and, ideal for the day-sailor, a reduced room rate is offered for daytime-only use, which allows sufficient time to be tempted by the romantic interiors and sumptuous furnishings but not long enough to consider giving up sailing forever.

The focal point of the resort is the verandah pavilion, where snacks and drinks are served between meals and where at some point everyone pauses to introduce and discourse. Reclining there in the amply cushioned armchairs or easing into a suspended rattan basket chair it is easy to imagine a modern-day Hemingway studying the guests and their yachts from some cosseted vantage point, then lapping a novel of prosperous adventure and romantic intrigue.

The beer is cold and the water warm and inviting. Kayaks and various pedal driven watercraft are at your disposal and there is an adequate dive shop with dive master, equipment for rent and a service for refilling of tanks.

Sitting in the heart of the Anilao's scuba diving Mecca there are 35 dive sites within easy reach for both the novice and experienced diver. Corals and fish are in abundance within a few feet of the resort but once ashore, after a day of chasing sweetlips and groupa, you may wish to do nothing more than enjoy a relaxing massage and soak up the remaining rays.

The sun sets over Cape Santiago out to the West and, as the heavens migrate their hues from rich oranges and turquoise towards dusk, the forested hills that rise steeply behind the Solana Resort are filled to overflowing with the sweet scent of frangipani and sound of a thousand birds finding their perches and partners for the night.

An overnight stay at the Solana Resort, inclusive of all meals (including wine at dinner), is approximately US\$100 per person; an air-conditioned casita room designed for the day-sailor is approximately US\$40, with tasteful buffet meals charged separately. Crew bunkrooms and meals are also available.

For those with a fulltime crew aboard you can also reach Solana Resort by road and have your yacht meet you at the resort. Travelling from Manila you can either, drive towards Batangas, take the diversion road to Batangas Port and then turn right to Anilao via Bauan or, you can follow the roadside signs to Solana Resort, which require you to turn right off the Batangas road about three kilometers after exiting the Star Tollway -- this is the picturesque zig-zag route to Bauan. Once in Anilao town turn left and follow the Solana Resort signs all the way to enchantment. Travel time by road from Manila is between two and three hours.

If you live further North than Manila then you could alternatively charter the Subic Seaplane, which can deliver you to the resort within 40 minutes in all fair weather conditions except a strong westerly.

For more information call Joel on +63 917 300 1086, email solanabezo@gmail.com or visit www.divesolana.com