

What's Happening

Free

Spring 2010 | Volume 18, Issue 1



Tourism Information For North Sulawesi

To Our Visitors

Well, here we are coming up on nine years of publishing What's Happening Magazine and Manado continues to grow, maybe. what do we mean, maybe? Let's see what this year brings; reduced air access and financial ripples throughout the world's various economies may give us the time to catch our breath, re-group, and move forward with precision and renewed determination to make this an environmentally sustainable destination. Lets' hope so. Surely you our clients, friends & visitors bring to North Sulawesi a better educated diver & consumer of services than was the case 15 years ago.

Teaching others how to care for the environment both terrestrial and beneath the sea has become more & more of a priority here in Southeast Asia and as the destination grows we too, will begin to show signs of more sustainable development so that the things that we enjoy today will be here for generations to come.

So when choosing where you plan to stay or whom you dive with, ask the question, what do you do, to keep North Sulawesi intact for generations to come.

So enjoy, take only pictures leave only bubbles and some ideas for your dive operator, resort or tour operator. We need your input!

Sampai Jumpa Lagi (see you again)

Best regards,

Jeremy H Barnes

Editor: What's Happening

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Printed by: **Percetakan Offset Manado**

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Cover Photo

Vein Octopus,
shot at Hairball,
10 meters depth,
Canon D70 camera
with 60 mm lens in
sea and sea DXD70
housing, by Bruce
Moore - Black Sand
Dive Retreat.

Garuda Indonesia Schedule

Route	Flight	Departure	Arrival
Jakarta - Manado	GA 600	06.10 (+7 UTC)	10.30 (+7 UTC)
Manado - Jakarta	GA 601	14.10 (+8 UTC)	16.20 (+7 UTC)
Manado - Ternate	GA 600	11.10 (+8 UTC)	13.00 (+9 UTC)
Ternate - Manado	GA 601	13.40 (+9 UTC)	13.30 (+8 UTC)
Jakarta - Manado via Makasar	GA 602	08.30 (+7 UTC)	14.25 (+8 UTC)
Manado - Jakarta via Makasar	GA 603	15.05 (+8 UTC)	18.40 (+7 UTC)

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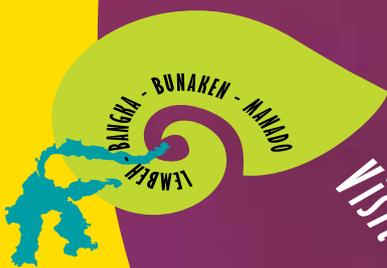


diving

Quick Change *Artists*

One of the most popular and interesting of the critters one searches for in Lembeh Strait are octopus. To non-divers, an octopus is often regarded with fear as they can seem creepy or even dangerous. But once encountered underwater, octopus are quickly re-assessed as intelligent and curious beasts, even entertaining.

There are so many different species, with new ones being identified on a regular basis, that just knowing what one is looking at can be a challenge. Add to this the ability to change color and texture and the task is all the more difficult. I have seen mistaken identification often in books and magazines, often with two pictures showing different colour phases of the same animal labelled as two different species. Notice in the photographs how the blurring octopus can change its colour from blending in whether on coral or halimeda algae, to showing warning colors – in this case the famous blue doughnuts. In the other set of pictures, the rare and equally venomous mototi octopus shows not only colour change, but texture.



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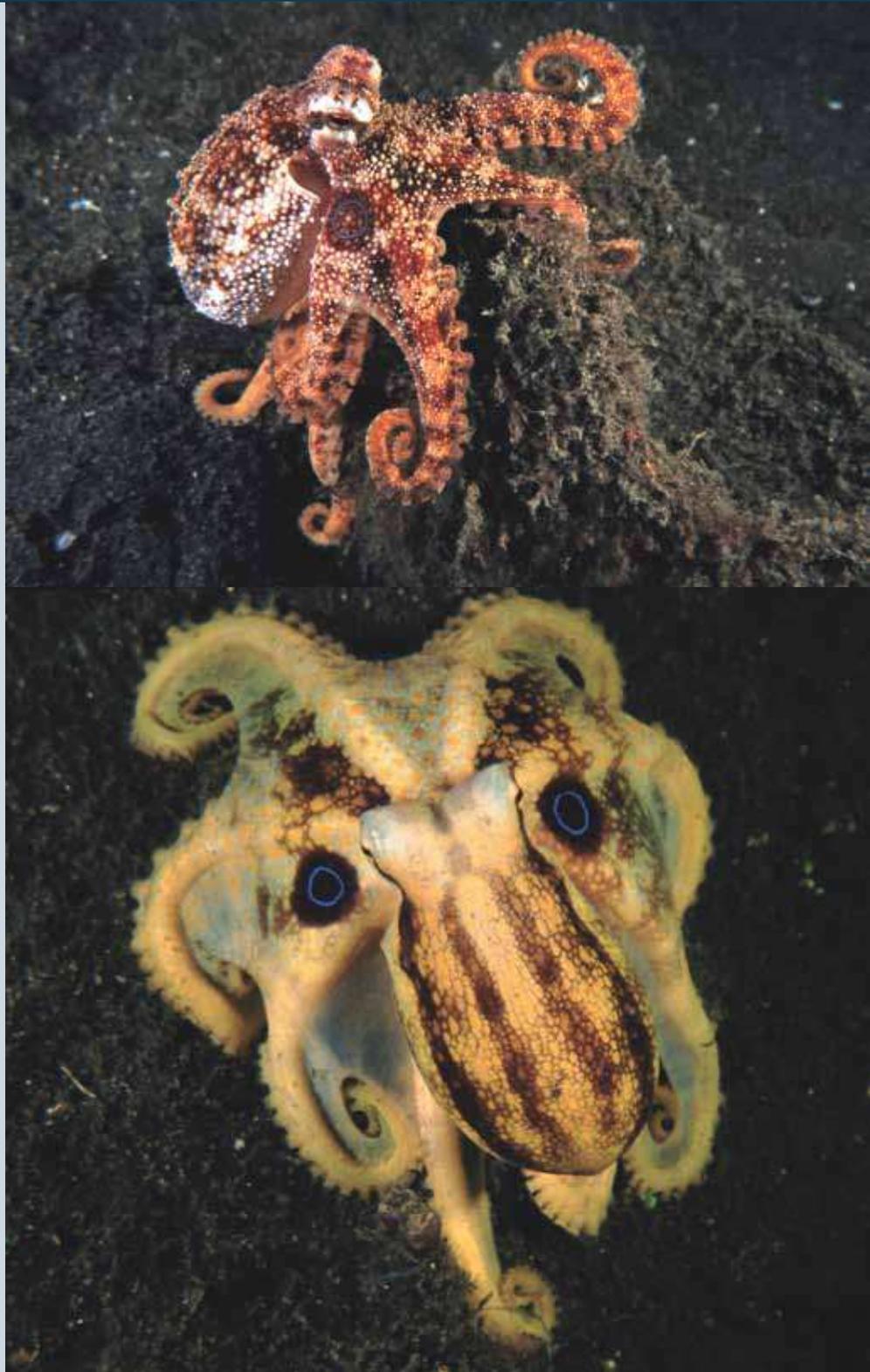


Recent global television coverage of one particular species, called the veined octopus, has brought renewed attention to Lembeh Strait. This species, commonly called "coconut octopus" is seen often and has gained notoriety for its ability to fashion a dwelling from matter found on the bottom, including pieces of dead shells, bottles, cans, wood, sandals or whatever they find, though they seem to favour discarded coconut shells, which are used as cooking fuel in the area. Divers who have "met" this critter find it fascinating and now casual TV viewers around the world have witnessed just one particular example of the intelligence of this family. The recent TV story on this species was shot in Lembeh Strait and labelled it "the first ever filmed", though hundreds of divers visiting this area with video cameras have already taken extensive footage even if they did not publicize their results. Another very cool critter is the hairy octopus, an undescribed species that in my opinion is just one of three different species that all fall under the general title of "hairy". Very shy, they were seen commonly in Lembeh late last year and caused much excitement as normally they are considered quite rare. Long-legged, they turn dark when moving over open territory as they forage, sometimes showing stripes if disturbed, but when on a rock or anything providing shelter, they manipulate their skin to form hair-like skin tabs, transforming their appearance substantially.

The two "Stars of the Show" in Lembeh are the mimic octopus and wonderpus. Both have just recently been officially described and named – *O. mimicus* and *O. photogenicus* respectively. Because of their vivid

striped patterns, it is thought that they have a poisonous bite, as why else would they advertise their presence? It has recently determined that they are closely related, though to those who learn to tell them apart, they are in fact quite different. The wonderpus stands alone, but within the mimic family, there are three distinct members – the mimic, brown mimic and white-v, with the latter possibly more than a single species. All living on the sand, they use different methods to hunt and some are active at night while others are not, though all share white dots down the length of each arm and a white "v" marking on the body.

The mimic and the wonderpus are thought to copy other marine creatures as a method of defense. In fact, all octopuses the world over are smart enough to mimic other animals and the best copy-cat behavior I ever witnessed was a veined octopus looking quite like a hermit crab. Swimming like a flounder is something all sand-dwelling octopus do and I believe that it is merely owing to hydrodynamics that they move this way: just to conserve energy. When threatened they usually



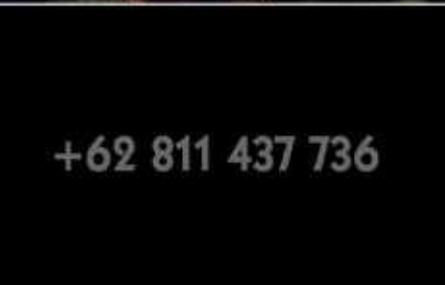


just try to puff up and make themselves as large as possible, which something many animals do (see the picture of the wonderpus reacting to a curious fish). As an additional method to deter predators, both mimics and wonderpus do perform obvious mimicry, usually of a more dangerous inhabitant of the same neighborhood, copying a wriggling sea snake, swimming with fins splayed on different angles like lionfish (both of whom have stripes as well), or bobbing in a hole like a mantis

shrimp. But many reports of copy-cat behavior seem to depend on the perspective of the viewer and owes much to the imagination. But it certainly makes for lively discussion on who saw what and keeps divers returning to find new behaviors and new species in the Critter Capital of the World.

Contributed by: Bruce Moore
www.blacksanddive.com

Quick Change Artist



conservation

Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue and Education Centre

Situated one hour from Manado between Girian and Kema, lies Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue and Education Centre. The aim of a rescue centre is to rescue and rehabilitate wildlife that is being kept illegally or inappropriately, and when possible, return it to the wild.

You may not be aware of this, but much of the wildlife you see in the markets and at the resorts is hunted and traded illegally. Many species of wildlife in Indonesia are threatened and therefore protected by the national government. These species are few in numbers and their population size is decreasing even further. This is due to habitat loss and hunting for consumption, pets and medicine on a local, national and international level. It should be noted, that you should never buy an animal from the market to "rescue" it, as this merely continues the trade by encouraging the traders to poach more from the forests. Instead, contact us, and we will alert the relevant authorities.

North Sulawesi is a hotspot for endemic (only found in that area) wild flora and fauna. You will find many different and unique species here. Unfortunately many are threatened and some even on the verge of extinction.

Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue and Education Centre currently cares for more than 200 animals of 38 different species from around Indone-



sia. All of these have either been confiscated from traders and smugglers, or handed over from their "owners".

Rehabilitation of these animals can be a lengthy process, because of the neglect and improper care many have experienced, yet it can also be very rewarding. To see animals bloom again when they are provided with an adequate environment, a proper diet and the ability to socialise with their own species really makes it all worthwhile.

The end goal of rehabilitation is to release the animals back into the wild. At Tasikoki, you can currently see a group of the Celebes crested macaque (yaki) ready for release. This group will be returned to the forest within a few months, and contribute to the wild population of Celebes crested macaque yet again. The Celebes crested macaque is Critically Endangered, and scientists say that they number as few as 600 individuals. This monkey is endemic to North Sulawesi, specialised to living in this area, and definitely worth saving.

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So come and visit Tasikoki and learn more about how you can help the remaining wild animals of North Sulawesi, and of entire Indonesia.

For more information visit
www.tasikoki.org

The Tasikoki team

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Tasikoki Wildlife Rescue and Education Centre



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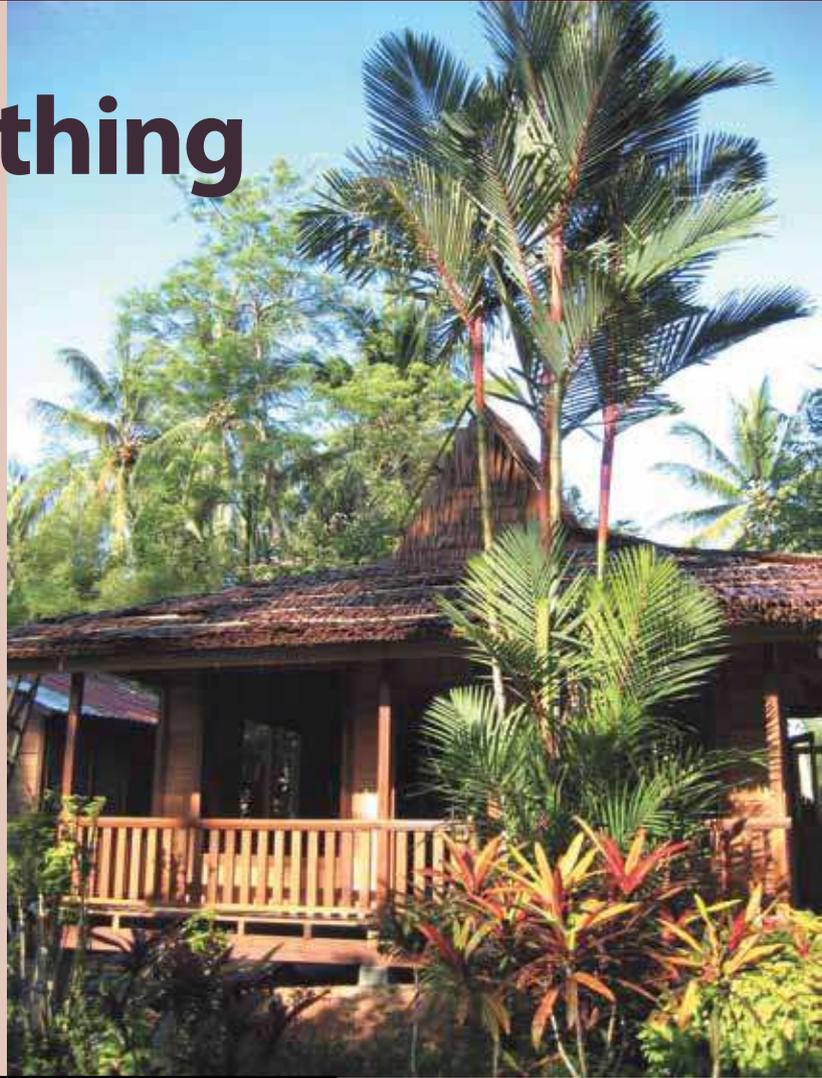
Another Cocotinos Property : Sekotong - Lombok

life story

Giving Something Back

Grass roof initiative, yes it could also be said "grass roots" initiative, read on; North Sulawesi's first and only grass roof home industry is one of the many projects of the Pulisan Village Development Fund. Here are some of the benefits of this newly developed home industry, it generates income in one of the poorer regions of the province, it helps to prevent annual fires and lastly it is a great natural roofing material previously undiscovered and underutilized, while lasting up to 15 years.

A background: vast stretches along the Minahasa northern shore and the offshore islands are covered by tertiary elephant grass (*imperata cylindrica*) vegetation which burns down annually during the

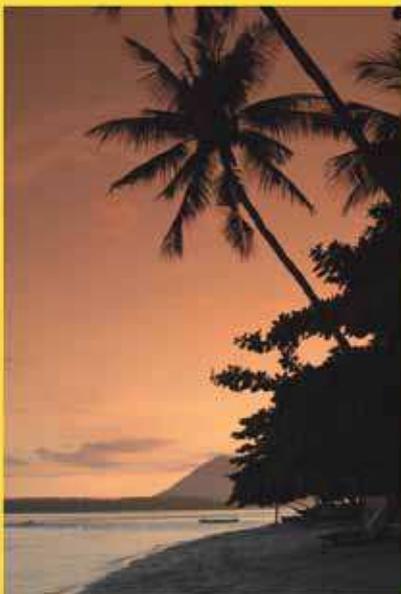


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dry season. It is either set alight on purpose by villagers (for farming) or accidentally caused by friction, carelessly dumped cigarette butts and gardening fires which got out of hand. The uncontrolled fires often harm fringe forest areas and its fauna. North Sulawesi, also known as the Wallacea fauna region, unlike Borneo, hosts a huge variety of small mammals like the black crested Sulawesi macaque and the tiny tarsier, reptiles and birds, as well as marsupials like the bear cuscus which cannot move fast enough to escape fires. The fires are also a contributory factor to haze and add negatively to global climate change.

Many farmers along the coast still use the archaic and damaging slash and burn technique (for farming) whereas poor soils and a long drought from June to November further limit farming possibilities. Fishing can be seasonal and uncertain. Additional job opportunities are scarce except for day labor in the building sector and jobs in the tourism industry. As we had been operating the Pulisan Jungle Beach resort for more than a decade, we started thinking about ways to help the villagers get out of the circle limited choices of employment. We decided to try and establish a grass roof home industry in Pulisan Village. It began back in 2008 when trying to order a grass roof for our kindergarten,



Giving Something Back

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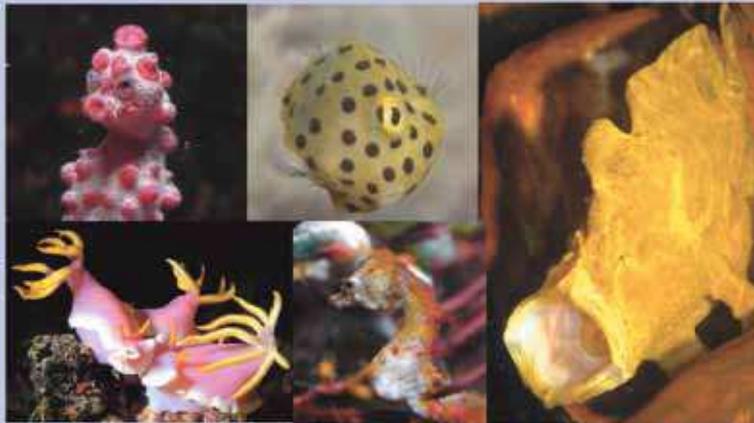
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a part of the Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort Village Development Program. North Sulawesi is a bit different from Bali and Lombok which had long developed the art of grass roof architecture. This material was not used before in North Sulawesi. It began when I tried to persuade the villagers to thatch the newly donated kindergarten building with grass elements, they were more than reluctant though and argued a grass roof would be primitive and prone to burn down during the long dry season. It took several tries and quite a bit of convincing before they finally agreed to take over the technique from a trainer, from Lombok. It was only after the first grass roof elements had been paid for, that public opinion changed and all of a sudden the whole village, old and young, men and women, participated eagerly cutting grass and bamboo, sorting, combing, and sewing. Hence a new "grass roots/roof" industry was born!! By the end April 2008 our pilot project, the village kindergarten "Kasih Ibu" of Pulisan sub-village Kinunang was thatched with more than 1000 grass elements. Further orders came from a private owner from Jakarta who built a pendopo at Long Beach. In September 2009 we had the Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort's main building thatched with this new product. The learning process has been completed and the community hopes for orders from outside the village began.



The Pulisan Jungle Beach Development Project currently operates two kindergartens, two village health posts, finances a university program in child education for two kindergarten trainers, a university program in health for two nurses. Over the years the fund has provided scholarships for more than 65 village children. Currently, nine villagers attend university programs in Manado, Tondano and Tomohon. In 2008 the first girl (from our village) graduated from the Underwater Eco Tourism Program of the Polytechnical University in Manado.

Contributed by: Katrin Weise,
 Pulisan Jungle Beach Resort
info@pulisaresort-sulawesi.com
www.pulisaresort-sulawesi.com



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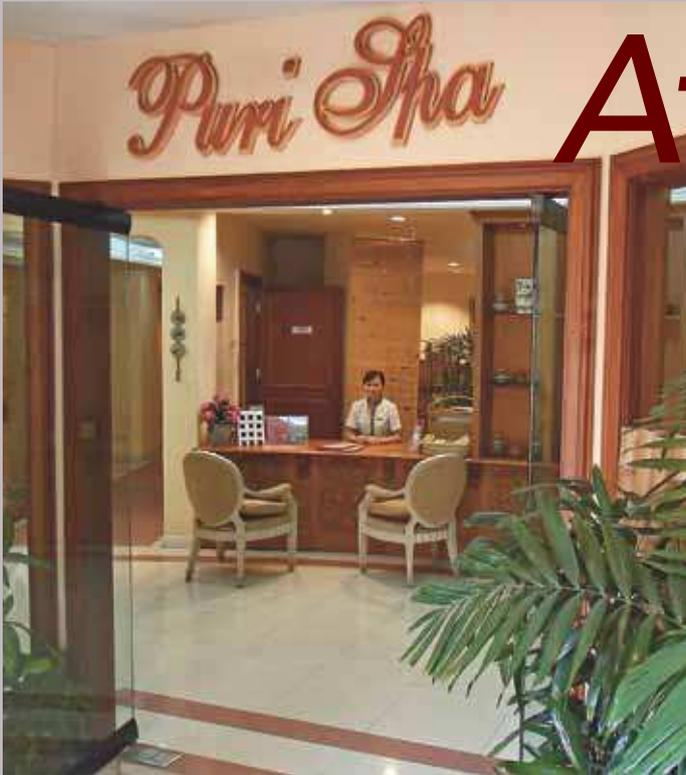


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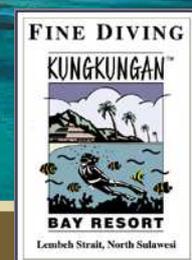


Afternoon Delight!

The three modes of transportation that I took to reach the Gran Puri Hotel: an ojek (motorcycle taxi), an overly-crowded public bus, and a mikrolet (a public mini van) show that my lifestyle as an English teacher in Tomohon is not an extravagant one. As an American scholar on a nine-month government program, I think it wise to live economically. In terms of transportation, this usually means taking public options rather than renting a car or a taxi. In regards to my personal life, it means that I have little resources to allocate towards pampering.

continued to page 21 ...

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lembeh strait

Ski Villas in Lembeh? *No, but...*



After a hearty breakfast of eggs and bacon, toast, muesli, coffee and a croissant and a banana, we were ready to strap on our skis, jump on a chair lift and take to the slopes....

...but no, wait, that's not right! There was no snow, it was 30° above, not below and this wasn't a ski villa. Where was I? I was confused! Why? My son Malcolm and I were at Eco Divers' new boutique, Lembeh Cottages. There was a distinct lack of white powdered peaks, fir trees

and snowboards, but soon I started to realize where my confusion had stemmed from. What Eco Divers has created here, compares closely with ski villas we've stayed at before. Most obviously, we weren't in a resort but in a more intimate setting - a large comfortable house, in a private road in a quiet part of Bitung town. Like a ski villa, Lembeh Cottages are set up for small

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The advertisement features a large image of a diver in a yellow and black wetsuit holding a large piece of coral. To the right is the Bastianos logo, which includes a sun, a mountain, and a palm tree. Below the logo are several small images showing resort amenities: a pink jellyfish, a bedroom with a canopy bed, a group of blue fish, a sunset over the ocean, a clownfish, a black and white fish, a woman in a red dress, a wooden building, a tropical landscape, a swimming pool, and a pig.

numbers of hardcore hobbyists to enjoy their hobby to the max, without breaking the bank. Only here the hobby isn't skiing, it's diving.

It works. Numbers are small: just six divers in each Cottage, in 3 double bedrooms with private shower-rooms. (Families and small group of friends can rent a whole Cottage to themselves, for total privacy.) Each Cottage comes with its own private chef and waitress to serve you a la carte breakfasts and dinners. Daily housekeeping is provided within the price. There's a tastefully furnished dining room and separate living room with comfy sofas, large flatscreen TV and MP3 player. Wireless internet is provided free. Best of all, each Cottage has an indoor camera room! The Belgian onsite manager, Tania van Aert, is a friendly hostess, who makes sure everything goes smoothly. She is fluent in English, German, French and Dutch and has 15 months diving/management experience in the Lembeh Strait area.



After breakfast we were picked up at 8am and driven to the speedboat. It's a ride of about 15 minutes, but it also gave us the opportunity to witness a little of how the locals live as we passed villages on the roadside. This made the trip anything but a chore.

Eco Divers runs two speedboats, each taking up to eight guests, in two groups of four per guide. That means that the maximum number of guests at Lembeh Cottages is always capped at a very exclusive sixteen. The speedboats are fast, spacious and comfortable. Their best feature is a jump gate, so we could just step off comfortably and avoid clumsy backward rolls.

What I liked most about the dive service is that between dives we were taken back to a large boat which serves as the "mother ship", sitting perfectly in the middle of Lembeh Strait. She has bathrooms, showers, tea & coffee, snacks, sundeck, camera facilities and charging for batteries. We ate a delicious hot lunch on-board after our second

continued to page 16...

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restaurant

Cuisine From *Different* Heights



structure, painted in immaculate white. It actually more resembles a private residence than a place where one is going for a meal. One senses that tonight will certainly be a new experience and our curiosity is instantly heightened.

This sense of mystery is compounded immediately on entering the restaurant. Out of the corner of our eye we spot plush sofas with brass coffee tables, huge vases filled with reeds, ornate lanterns and antique laces displayed in wall frames. This is no ordinary place.



On a hill just behind central Manado, just a short step from the noise and crowds is a restaurant with a real difference – Bumi Beringin.

You first start to notice the differences even before you get to the restaurant. On the short drive up to where Bumi Beringin sits, with a uniquely magnificent vantage point over the sparkling night-time lights of Manado Bay, elegant white pennants placed on either side of the road let you know you're coming to a place that is out of the ordinary.

Your first sight of the restaurant confirms this thought. Far from being a typical downtown Manado restaurant, the building is a large, imposing

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The welcome is warm and we are taken to a sofa to enjoy a drink while we peruse the menu. The place is getting to us and we're feeling somehow more sophisticated, acting more romantic than we usually would on a night out in Manado. We're comforted to see many familiar Manadonese and Indonesian dishes on the menu, yet we already sense that it's going to be served with a twist. We hope it will be no ordinary dining experience. We opt for one of the signature dishes: Nasi Idjo Komplit, green rice served with a barbequed prawn satay, potato chilli cake, cakalang rabe, deep fried julienne potato, fresh cucumber and basil leaves. As we're shown to our table we're excited as we try to anticipate, what's to come.

Our previous sense of excitement is fully justified as our food arrives. They say that one eats with one's eyes before one's mouth. The presentation of Bumi Beringin's dishes is certainly a visual feast. Wonderfully colourful and constructed into strange structures onto the long white plate, this looks more like an edible ship than a meal. There's a real sense of theatre here and we've quickly come to understand that this restaurant is on a mission to be different, even if that risks it being misunderstood. One thing's for sure, you're going to remember your evening at Bumi Beringin.

The food looks so good sitting on the plate that we're in two minds. Do we eat it, or should we maybe just take it home and put it on

display to impress friends? After a first taste we know which option to take - we set about demolishing the proud chef's art in quick order, washing the meal down with a cold beer. Soon the delightful presentation is just a memory and a satisfied feeling in our stomachs.

Dessert is all about comfort food: my wife orders pisang goreng (fried banana), which is served in the local style, accompanied by spicy "dabu dabu" sauce. The batter is light airy and just perfect after the heavy entree. I try the Panekoeken, a traditional pancake that the Dutch were good enough to leave behind as part of their legacy. Stuffed with fruit, palm sugar and shredded coconut, this hits the spot and satisfies my sweet tooth...for now.



How do we best explain this mysterious and unique place? The owner, a Minahasan lady, is undoubtedly proud of her Indonesian heritage and rightly so. Those with a keen eye and some knowledge of the history of North Sulawesi may spot that the building, at first sight not built on familiar lines, does in fact have a traditional Minahasan style element mixed in with the more obvi-

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ous colonial features. The large windows, whitewashed walls, slatted shutters and high ceilings give the place an air of being part restaurant, part museum. The quite background

music adds an upscale ambiance. Yet the friendly and relaxed staff, provide the balances to ensure that the atmosphere remains light and enjoyable.

Don't be scared off by the fancy setting – prices are still very reasonable for such an experience and the lunch-time menu offers particularly good value for staff outings. Just don't expect Bumi Beringin to be anything like the other restaurants in Manado. Expect something unique, something that will have you talking about it long after you've finished your meal and left. After all, isn't that why we sometimes chose not to stay at home but to eat out, to be different?

So, Bumi Beringin is a very different place and for an evening meal it can even be described as a romantic spot. One definition of the word romance means "to escape, mysterious, exotic", so if you'd like an evening of escape from the Manado you're familiar with, in a mysterious and deliciously exotic setting from a bygone era, give Bumi Beringin Restaurant a try.

Contributed by Jim Yanny
 (owner Eco Divers www.eco-divers.com)

Cuisine From Different Heights

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Ski Villas in Lembeh?

No, but...

continued from page 13...

dive. Basically, it was like being on a "day Liveaboard" – no cabins, but everything you need when diving without having to make any effort to find it. Total relaxation!

After our third dive some divers rested on Nautica before the night dive, but we were dived-out so we opted to head back to the Cottages, where we were greeted with a welcome drink and snacks before dinner.

While some people insist on staying at a resort, I liked the atmosphere that Eco Divers has created at Lembeh Cottages. It was all about serious diving but with a really friendly and sharing approach. It's for people who love diving, by people who also love diving. The staff are super-friendly and helpful, the food tasty and varied, the groups small and the service very professional yet personal.

As always Eco Divers, a PADI 5 Star centre, has spared no expense when it comes to fitting its boats with full safety features, including proper lights and radios, oxygen and first aid. There's also NITROX available (max 32%).

So, divers, if you can do without a swimming pool and being on the water, try it. Lembeh Cottages has all the convenience of a live-aboard and all the comfort of landed accommodation – that's the best of both worlds!

By: Jeremy H Barnes, Safari Tours & Travel

Not *Nearly* Native

When travelling in Indonesia, we like to think of ourselves as not being tourists, after all we live in Indonesia. More so our (albeit basic) knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia means that we were at home. However, the efficient and necessary visitor plaque with our name that was held by a tour guide from Manado Safaris at the airport didn't support our claim. They welcomed us warmly. We weren't home. We had come from Java and this was Sulawesi, and how different it is.

We chose to stay in the Minahasa highland and travel around from there. With only 4 days, we split our time equally between the sea and the hills – or volcanoes as they are here. Another warm welcome at the Gardenia Country Inn was followed by tea and cakes that befitted the picturesque gardens that the owners have carefully crafted from many corners of the world. Their souvenirs from their visits was a extraordinary blend of gardens

continued to page 24...



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Color in Motion: Gorontalo's Cultural Festival

The master of ceremonies has tried several times to get the small children off the steps of the stage and out of the back stage entrance. He is not being too insistent. After all, it's their older siblings who are waiting to perform. Gorontalo Province's annual cultural festival provides evidence that the people here still operate from a village mindset where distance between performer and audience is meaningless. Look around the audience, crowded with young people as well as families. Over there is a trio of girls in matching yellow lace gowns, mingling with the crowd as they wait their turn to sing. And over there is the handsome lute player from last night, smoking with his friends.



But it's time to begin. Out comes a row of men carrying handmade rabana drums and lead by a single lute player. All are dressed in matching outfits, long sleeves and long trousers, all of a single color. Each man has woven songket cloth of bright patterns and colors wrapped around his waist. They sit along the back stage bench and begin to beat their drums with a furious rhythm that seems impossible to maintain without damaging motor function in their hands. The lute player begins plucking a lively, traditional riff that will circle repeatedly. From opposite corners a couple dressed in traditional costume dance in. She begins singing. Shortly, he will respond.

This is Gorontalo's unique "Paiya Hungo Lo Polo" duet. The tune is set by tradition, but each performing couple must create romantic and poetic lyrics in Gorontalo, a language that is still widely spoken here. These duets are usually about love and its many complications. If the reaction of the

crowd tonight is any indication, this pair should score well with the judges. He has just finished singing his initial reply and the crowd lets out a simultaneous cry of pleasure. Who is neglecting whom in this relationship? The drummers beat louder. Now it's her turn to respond. Her voice soars above the balmy night air. When their witty tête-à-tête is over, they sing together in harmony, then retreat. After a bow, the band follows.

Next is a children's dancing group consisting of five pairs of girls and boys dressed in matching bright colors. They are one of several troupes that will perform the "Pore-pore" (POH-re POH-re) dance. The couples start to swirl with performers' hands moving as much as their feet. Choreographers for each group will interpret the same song using numerous traditional movements. The annual cultural festival draws performers young and old from all parts of the province to compete for the rotating trophy and various group prizes. Gorontalo stands in sharp contrast to other places in the world where traditional art forms are dying. On certain nights, too, groups perform original dramas and interpretive dances. The festival begins in late May for about four consecutive nights, usually at Gorontalo City's public square in front of the governor's mansion. The children take a bow together, then file off stage.

The next comes six boys dressed in black and ready to perform traditional self-defense moves called "Langga." The crowd is a bit disappointed when a rabana-drum-and-lute band follows the boys onstage and begins to play. That means that this will be a stylized performance and not a knockdown

fight. However, pairs of fighters demonstrate the appropriate throwing techniques, complete with synchronized backward somersaults on the part those who get thrown. It seems each boy gets to demonstrate his skill at throwing his opponent. But with so much happening, it's hard to keep track.

After stagehands re-position microphones on the platform, a group of men with rabana drums enter and form a line across the back and sit cross-legged. With drums in place, the central drummer raises his hands and hits his rabana, leading the troupe to begin a lively rhythm. A couple in traditional clothing enters and begins to sing a cappella in the alternating style typical of Gorontalo music.



The crowd seems to know this song and immediately gives a shout of approval after the first three notes. Numerous eyes and noses peek through the gaps in the stage's side banners only a few feet away from the singers. During this song, sharp vocal cries from the drummers punctuate intervals between singing parts. The crowd joins at the appropriate moments, ignoring the distinction between performers and the audience. After all, this is Gorontalo where the extended personal relationships of village life still thrive. So, during the closing applause, make your way behind the stage and ask to snap some photos of those colorfully dressed performers. They graciously agree.

Contributed by: **Jansen Allen**

Wings Air, a subsidiary of Lion Air, now makes daily flights from Manado to Gorontalo. Its schedule allows for international connections with Silk Air. On-line ticket purchase is available at: <http://www2.lionair.co.id/> Also check the web site for current flight times. Baggage allowance is 15 kilos free.

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Photos: Anthony Hansen,
 Massimo Boyer, Paola Bearzi

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It's sunset approaching while I lounge at poolside overlooking a lush green golf course with a back drop of Klabat Mountain and swaying coconut trees. It's the night before I head back home, and I am quietly reminiscing the past week. Diving in Bunaken, a marine park of unbelievable beauty, visiting hot springs in Tondano, visiting Tarsius at Tangkoko the smallest of all mammals.

Yes you've guessed it, I am in Manado, north Sulawesi staying at the newest hotel; Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. Of course I also spoil myself while I was here with daily Spa treatments from InBalance Spa. Enjoyed poolside breakfast from Square, evening of Teppanyaki at Wasabi, follow by Jazz sounds in Lokon Wine and Cigar. A nightcap on the balcony before falling into a wonderful deep sleep.



Please keep my room for me next month, I will be back again for sure.

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Afternoon Delight!

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However, I certainly appreciate the times when I am able to treat myself, though grooming is not a priority or a mainstay of my lifestyle here. So it is not hard to understand my excitement as I got out of the mikrolet that day, entered the Gran Puri Hotel lobby and headed to the fifth floor spa area.

Though the Gran Puri Spa is not a destination spa that boasts extensive exotic grounds and swimming pools, its situation inside a four-star hotel that offers all of the aforementioned amenities plus more allows this spa to focus on what spas should do best: to provide weary customers with a rejuvenating experience that relaxes their bodies and that clears their minds.

This day spa is modest, yet elegant in its simplicity. It offers a sufficient selection of Indonesian traditional and modern massages, bath, and detox treatments that are suitable for fatigued foreign travelers or Manado natives who feel well overdue for rest and relaxation. Some of their notable services include a Mandi Susu (Minahasa Body Silk Bath), a Sopotan Volcanic Detox, a Body Scrub and a Traditional Indonesian Massage.

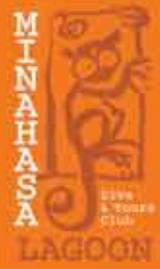


Most rooms are moderately sized and thoughtfully adorned to provide a tranquil atmosphere and intriguing hints of Indonesian culture.

The rooms are colored in warm and natural hues of gold, brown, and white. Pleasant elements in the rooms include beds neatly covered with herb-scented batik linen, an additional batik covering blanket, a wooden-carved dresser to store client's belongings and brightly-colored Indonesian artwork framing the walls.

From my experience, what spa treatments the Gran Puri does offer, it does well. I tried and enjoyed the Hot Stone Massage treatment.

Though I was somewhat apprehensive about my modesty before the session, my fears were quickly dispersed once I saw my masseuse give me a friendly smile. She was considerate of my feelings by giving me enough time to undress and to replace my outfit with a fluffy white cotton robe. When she reentered, I was given a minute to clean my feet in warm water before beginning the hot



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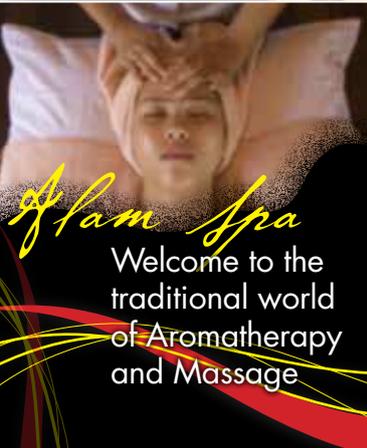


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stone treatment. My masseuse began massaging the pressure points in my lower body, starting with my feet and moving to my legs. She later ascended to my back and arms.

Skillfully the masseuse completed the process of smoothing oil over the areas that she was massaging, attacking tension points with her heated hands, and finally resting the hot stones over meticulous areas of my body for relaxation.

She was professional and gracious throughout the treatment: answering my inquiries about her profession and about her family. This conversation was especially useful in the beginning of the massage as it helped me to forget about the prior events of that day, good, bad or ugly and just focus on that simple moment. But as time went on I became more silent, my muscles more relaxed and my mind freer of worries.



Afternoon Delight!

eateries of the **month**

Manado can be an excellent place to sample the savory flavors of Asia. If you have the time, try the following for an inexpensive sampling of truly Manadonese cooking.

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Pizza Hut

Mega Mall
 Great pizza, delivery by phone

Raja Sate

Located on the #39 Jl. Pierre Tendean (boulevard)
 Great Sate (beef, chicken, goat, squid and more), vegetables are fresh, cold beer – fast service, better than average atmosphere- owner speaks English

Black Canyon

Manado Town Square
 Asian Fusion

Gardenia Country Inn

(Phone: 351282)
 Located off the main road in Tomohon - outdoor setting, great for lunch, some of the best food in North Sulawesi, call first!

Bumi Beringin

Jl. Sam Ratulangi (ph. 854747)
 Superb atmosphere, AC, great mix of Indonesian and Manadonese cuisine.



Towards the end of the massage, I noted that I would like to have my eyebrows trimmed and asked if they offered that service at Gran Puri. Well, while there were not beauticians available that afternoon, my attentive masseuse, who kept her own eyebrows well-maintained, kindly offered to help me groom my eyebrows. When the session was over, I not only felt improved but looked better too. As I redressed, the masseuse prepared some hot honey ginger tea for me to drink in the lobby.

Overall, I enjoyed this spa experience and would certainly visit the Gran Puri Spa again. I soaked up the beautiful elegance of the spa and the extravagance of the hotel before I left. I traded the comfort that I had just experienced for hot Manado weather and bustling traffic.

I returned to Tomohon using the same reasonable means with which I came: a small mikrolet, an unimpressive crowded public bus and an ojek. But my return trip was sprinkled with pleasant memories of an exceptional afternoon well-spent.

Contributed by: **Erica D. Copeland**
(visiting/teaching Fulbright Scholar)

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Not Nearly Native

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with papyrus that reminded one of Egypt next to a lily pond that Monet could easily have painted and other corners with tones reminiscent of the Far East and other places. Adjacent was an organically farmed vegetable plot which we also got to enjoy gastronomically in Mandanese recipes at the restaurant. Our boat trip to Bunaken Island was on a Sunday and the harbour was full of Manadonese also heading in the same direction for a day's adventure. Being off-season, we were almost starting to feel that we were at home until we approached the Bunaken shore. Our marvelling at the fish and coral could only have been from first timers, although their beauty and variety would almost certainly raise the same amazement time and time again. After a gentle landing, we walked onto this mangrove



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shore with its black, but soft sand. A morning of snorkelling was followed by a visit to the kampung in the hills above to get a glimpse of what lies behind the façade of this famous island. The simplicity and cleanliness of the village that we saw reminded us somewhat of our other experiences in Java.

Though only a few kilometres away, as we climbed up the Mahawu crater the next day, we saw the contrast of the highlands from the sea side. With no familiarity of what we had seen the previous day (other than our guide), we witnessed the diversity of the region. The mountain was farmed as far and as high as the eye could see. Ox laden carts brought carrots, cabbages and other vegetables to the main road where they were collected. The farmers' lives were a world apart from their seaside neighbours who fish, work in the city or run tourist stalls on the island shores.



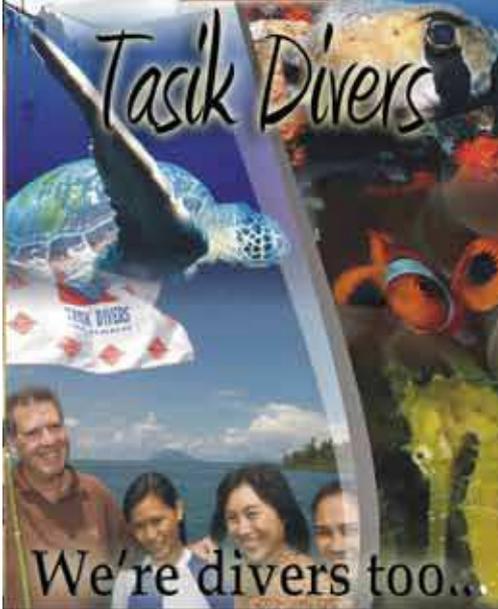
With such diversity, there is much to see in the area. We missed out on seeing more of the beauty hidden behind the book cover of Manado's reputation of a diver's paradise.

As we travel through this archipelago, we see more that a conference of unique islands make up this beautiful host country.

Contributed by: **Nina Milne** -
 Expat living in Jakarta



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visitor story

Modoinding – *The Vegey Highlands*



Modoinding is well known for its vegetables, namely potato (big and small ones). I managed to plan a day trip to the highlands famous for its cool and fresh air, in addition to the abundance of vegetables being planted due to the altitude and also the soil, a mélange of sand and rich black soil. We left Tomohon half past eight in the morning. I invited my local friend and his wife to join us. According to Pak Yus the 'Supir' the journey would be 3-4 hours (one way), thus it was the main reason why we decided to leave early (though early should be not later than 6am by local standard) in order to complete the return leg before sunset. As we left Tomohon, the cool air gradually disappeared, replaced with the 'standard' warm and sweaty atmosphere. Driving via the coastal road presented us with a different view.

We passed by Amurang and took the left turn towards a non-stopping winding road; sandwiched by coconut trees. The hairpin twists and turns resulted into a "casualty" as my friend's wife vomited a couple of times, luckily I brought along the "the bag" from the seat pocket aboard the plane. Slowly, the air quality improved as we climbed higher towards the highlands.

There were plenty of young cloves being planted along the way, occasionally locals were seen cleaning and carrying bananas back to the buyers' vehicles parked by the roadside.

One wondered the price of the bananas and other fruits procured by the middlemen, is the "bucketful of sweat" generated by the farmers was properly rewarded? The thoughts disappeared as we approached Modoinding as the signboard welcoming us to the "District of Potatoes". The scenery was breathtaking as the plains were solely planted with vegetables. Based to the middlemen and locals alike, 90% of the products are sent to Manado and a small portion being exported to other islands namely Kalimantan and Java.

The temperature is rather pleasing and comfortable as it maintained around 20 Celcius, very much cooler than Manado or Amurang. Since I prefer cool places, indeed the trip to Modoinding is very much needed to recharge my battered body. One thing for certain, basically nearly every Kabupaten in Sulawesi, the existence of clove trees

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is undeniable. Despite on higher grounds and cooler climate, they grow very well most probably due to the soil, rich with the right ingredients.

We proceeded deeper into the area, vegetables were grown everywhere ranging from carrots, cauliflower, cabbages, potatoes, broccoli and many others; I did saw coffee too.

Finally we caught a glimpse of Lake Moat, one of the highest lakes in Sulawesi. There is a small island as it is actually surrounded by the hills. The air is refreshing and every person we met seemed to be occupied with their work; either carrying the yields from the farms or attending the farms; planting, harvesting and fertilizing. Indeed the area is 'the' place for growing vegetables no doubt about it. Intensive labour farming had given the local folks plenty of employment, though not much but a steady income to earn a decent living. We stopped by the lake to admire its beauty, rather small but occupied with various of activities from fishing, fish rearing and other agriculture related. We move forward and climbed up a hill as our 'Supir' mentioned that the view is rather awesome from the top. Finally, we arrived to the top and indeed the scenery is beyond words as we were presented with a comprehensive view of the valley and the mountains bordering Modinding. I must say it was worth the journey (twists and turns). There is a huge bungalow on top of the hill and an open-aired round shape hall. After exchanging words with the caretakers (surprisingly 2 families being appointed as the caretakers), they gave us a thorough guide of the bungalow and the 'hall'.

Currently the bungalow is being used as the 'administrative centre' during any events such as feast or any activities for the local community. It also caters for any group or individual who wishes to stay in Modinding for several nights. As the bungalow has 3 rooms and extra large hall/living area upstairs, a group of 10 pax would not pose a problem.

Furthermore, there are 'local chefs' who are ever ready to cook for the group (buy your own stuff and they will cook for you – local or western cuisine). The best part of all, there is no fixed rate for staying in the said bungalow, it is up to your contribution ('partisipasi') in order to maintain the house and its surrounding area. We toured the interior which was

nice decorated with teak furnitures (definitely from Japara, Java), complete with a refrigerator and 'cosy' bathrooms. There are three big balconies on each wing (front, left and right) providing ample space for travelers/visitors to view the valley. At night the temperature is expected to drop below 13 degree Celcius making it one of the coolest place in North Sulawesi and indeed a pleasant place to take a break from the heat of Manado.

After completing the tour, we decided to make a move and promised that we'll indeed spend a night or two in near future as I was keen to sample the experience plus to judge the ability of the 'Cook cum Caretaker' of the said bungalow. Journey home was rather quick as it always seems to be in any trip; the return leg is less exciting but in this case it was smooth and relaxing despite the long hours spent in the 'mobil'. Finally we reached Tomohon slightly after 7pm and bid farewell to my local friends before heading to my resting haven; Onongs Palace Resort at Kinilow. It was indeed a memorable journey as I plan to visit Modinding soon.

Contributed by : **Muqaddis Ahmad Radhi** –Penang, MALAYSIA.



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