

Continued from Part 1:

**3/2/13 - Day 55 Part 2 – Benoa Port & Denpasar city, Bali, Indonesia:**

The next place that Putu took us was the **Angel to Angel Art of Silver** showroom ([www.angeltangel.net](http://www.angeltangel.net)). This was an upscale store that specialized in silver jewelry of all kinds. The outlandish decorations they have placed around the store caught our eye long before Putu pulled into the parking lot.

The photo below shows the jaw-dropping scene as we viewed the entrance to the store.



All of the dancers around the building and the filigree-like sculpture had the appearance of white porcelain.

The wall holding the company name was covered with frisky sculpted white frogs.







Here is another view of the frolicking life sized dancers near the store entrance.

Elsewhere the theme continued with the joyful dancers accompanied by dragonflies.

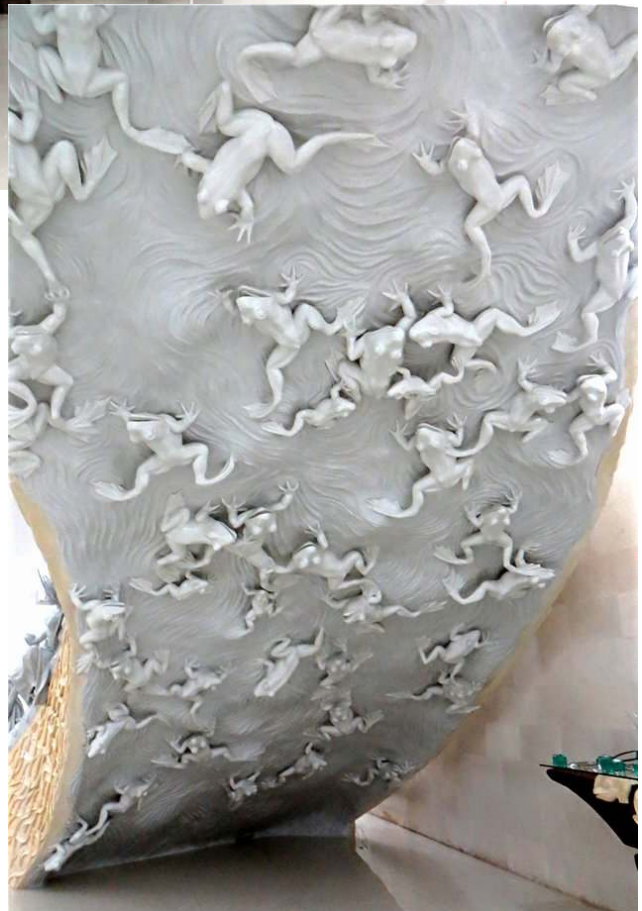




Inside the store the decorations were no-less unusual and amusing. The staircase leading to the second floor, shown below, was festooned with porcelain-like ladies in a somewhat more restrained pose than the celebrating sculptures on the outside.



The underside of the stairway was covered with more frogs like those near the company sign outside.



We were so intrigued by the over-the-top sculptures that the jewelry was almost a second thought. However, the attention given to display of the jewelry was just as magnificent as the sculptures, as illustrated by the photo below. In this scene the silver jewelry was placed in a forest of green crystal stems surrounding a dark silver dragon



A very pleasant young sales lady led us around the showroom, explaining what they had to offer. Our contacts with Balinese people in the streets or shops were always pleasant with them showing respect and a helpful attitude. Barbara selected a couple items that caught her eye and then we exited through a massive wooden front door. We couldn't resist hamming it up a little with this friendly frog serenely watching activity outside in the parking lot.

We left the Angel to Angel showroom with a feeling of appreciation for the imagination and talent that went into the building decorations, let





alone the wonderful silver jewelry.

We got back in Putu's van and he took us to what was billed as a typical Balinese home. After a 20 minute ride we were in the outskirts of town with houses separated by jungle-like vegetation. The home we were visiting was set up to receive tourists and we made a donation equivalent to \$2 USD. Near the entrance to the home was this Hindu shrine shown on the right. Nearly every home we saw on our drive today had some form of shrine (very simple or elaborate) in the front of the house. The shrine shown here we considered elaborate.



The home consisted of a walled enclosure with individual small buildings in the courtyard that was formed. In the first building was an elderly man who was cooking rice on a wood fueled stove, as shown on the left.

Putu next took us to a building that served as the bedroom for the husband and wife. It had a woven bamboo wall to permit plenty of ventilation in this tropical setting.





A view of the bed and dresser within the bedroom is shown on the right.

Then Putu showed us an open structure with a bed placed in the center, as shown below.



This turned out to be a bed that was only used when someone in the family died. The body would be placed on the bed for a short period of time before a cremation ceremony.



Next we visited the pig pen that was in one corner of the courtyard. It was clean and well cared for, without the usual unpleasant odor that can develop. Putu made a side comment that this family was Hindu and if they were Muslim there would not be pigs on the property.



There were chickens here and there about the yard, as shown on the left and below.







The religious shrines associated with the Hindu religion were prominent in the courtyard, as shown on the left and below.

There were also these small offerings of food that were placed on the floor of the house, as shown below.





Gede, our dining room steward on the Amsterdam is from Bali and is of the Hindu religion. He shared some of his insight on the importance of these shrines in the Hindu home. We are thinking that his ideas may not conform precisely to an academic description but probably represent a typical understanding of this issue. He assigned great importance to the large shrines which represent the Gods responsible for the “good” side of Ying and Yang. He said his parents tend to these shrines in their home in Bali. When his parents can no longer tend to the shrines he will have his fiancé, wife, or other person take care of them until he can do it himself. If these important shrines are placed on the upper floors of tall buildings, higher than the 4<sup>th</sup> floor, they degrade the effectiveness of similar shrines on lower floors. For that reason the laws of Bali restrict buildings to a maximum height of 4 stories. The small offerings that are placed on the floor as shown above, are meant to serve the Gods who preside over the “bad” side of Ying and Yang. They must be honored and fed but the offering is not considered worthy of a high position so they are placed on the floor. We saw many of these offerings on the floors of shops and on the sidewalks in Bali and were afraid we might accidentally step on them. Gede said that the offering only has religious importance when the incense stick in them is smoldering. When the incense stops smoking the purpose of the offering has been fulfilled so if I were to step on it that would not be considered a significant blunder.

As we completed our tour of the typical Balinese home we took a picture of our guide, Putu, with Barbara and one of the houses in the courtyard.





The next destination on our tour of Penpasar today was a Hindu Temple. Putu took us to a temple that was set up to help the uninformed tourists, like us. The first step in the process was to present ourselves to a woman who had a large selection of sarongs. For the equivalent of \$4 USD we both got a flowing cloth sarong to wear as a cover for our bare legs. Then we walked into the Temple for a visit.



some rules in both Indonesian and English language.

We didn't have a problem with the rules so proceeded on with the tour.



Near the entrance a prominent pedestal, as shown below, displayed a sign with







Multiple shrines were positioned around the courtyards so that under crowded conditions many people could perform their worship services simultaneously.

This next structure appeared to be a sharply defined gateway, shown on the left, that led into a broad open courtyard. Around the courtyard were some covered kiosks where men were engaged in discussion. It appeared to be like a community center where people would gather to pass the time of day.



Also at the edge of the courtyard were tables hung with yellow cloth and holding an abundant display of food offering to the Gods. They were mostly fruits and vegetables. However, near the middle of the stack of items at the center of the picture was a roasted chicken flattened between the other layers.





Throughout our walk around the Hindu temple grounds we had heard a periodic loud thumping sound. There was no short term rhythm, just a single thump about once every minute. It turned out that the sound was caused by these two men shown in the picture on the right. They were each armed with a small log and they took turns whacking a large hollow log suspended between them. Unfortunately the significance of the drum beat was lost on us. It is another item to look up when we get home.



As we were preparing to leave the temple grounds some laughing and giggling got our attention. It turned out to be 3 little kids playing in one of the kiosks. There were plenty of Balinese adults around but none of them seemed to be bothered by the lack of decorum the kids were showing.



Putu next told us about the wood carving tradition in Bali and we set out in his van to check out a place he recommended. However, along the way we spotted a gasoline station and had to stop and get some pricing information. The Balinese apparently haven't adopted the nearly universal custom of posting prices in large numbers that can be seen from the street. We never saw any of those. We had to get out of the van and take a picture of the price shown on the gas pump, as shown on the right.

It appears that a liter of gasoline was selling for 4500 Rupiah per liter. The latest customer had purchased 22.22 liters at a cost of 100,000 Rupiah. At today's conversion rate was 9600 Rupiah per \$1 USD a liter of gas would cost \$0.47 USD. If we assume 4 liters per gallon that works out to about \$1.88 USD per gallon. That is a low price compared with most places we have been.



We proceeded on to the woodcarving shop that Putu had in mind. After about a 30 minute ride we pulled into the driveway of Imade Pastika Wood Carver's Community to have a look at what his team of craftsmen had produced.

Imade Pastika came out and gave us a description of how wood carving craftsmen are trained and mentored until they become master craftsmen. They go through stages of Student, Teacher, Craftsmen, and then finally Master. Only the Master carver is allowed to sign his carving with his name when it is put up for sale.



Here on the right is a picture of Mr. Pastika standing with some of the master pieces he has carved.

Apparently, Pastika is a Balinese name that many people have. We had a steward on the Amsterdam on a former cruise with that name.

A couple of his craftsmen were working on new carvings, as shown below.



Mr. Pastika mentioned the 2002 terrorist bombing in Bali and the bad economic fallout from that event. It appeared that he had a fairly large inventory of carvings remaining on his shelves.







There was one large carving made of mahogany that was particularly attractive. It portrayed a fisherman about to cast his net. One impressive aspect of the carving was that the texture of the fish net was reproduced in the wood.

After looking around a good deal we picked out a carving made of mahogany depicting three elephants walking in single file, as shown below. We'll add these to our elephant collection back home.

We said goodbye to Mr. Pastika and his wood carving showroom. The dogs of Bali, resting in his courtyard seemed to be taking our departure without too much excitement.





We climbed into Putu's van and headed back to Benoa Port where the Amsterdam awaited. The 6 mile ride took about 45 minutes in the heavy traffic and a fairly intense rainstorm that popped up. The return trip produced the same thrills as the ride into Denpasar this morning. However, with Putu's expert driving we survived. A couple of the views we had of passing traffic are shown on the right and below.



We arrived back at Benoa Port in good shape and said our goodbyes to Putu. He had been a good guide and we were happy with the day's experience.

Back on the Amsterdam there was a big party planned on the LIDO pool deck. The Amsterdam staff had decorated the area to look like a "Pasar Malam". The Pasar Malam is also known as the "Night Market" which is a traditional social and marketing event that takes place in market squares and streets all across South East Asia. Vendors display and tout their wares as people browse through the stalls and converse with their neighbors. The Amsterdam staff worked hard to set it up with the ultimate goal of giving the passengers a good night's entertainment and an opportunity to purchase some Balinese products with profits going to the charity known as the Rainbow Foundation Rehabilitation Center. This is a medical shelter for children from all over Indonesia situated in Bekasi (15 miles outside of Jakarta). About \$2500 USD was raised during the Night Market event this evening.



We attended the event with our friends, Roy and Gayle, as shown in the picture on the right. A good time was had by all. Some of the sights around the LIDO deck are shown below.





Roy and Gayle even had enough courage to ride in an authentic Becak-Becak (cycle taxis) that had been brought on board.

This “Night Market” celebration capped an entire week of special events. Mr. Stein Kruse, the CEO and president of Holland American cruise line had joined the Amsterdam in Australia and participated in several events that were



carried out to recognize the loyalty of passengers who consistently book cruises with Holland America ships. It had been a busy and enjoyable week for us that ended with a great tour in Bali today. Our only regret was that we missed seeing grandkids, Emily and Andrew, performing in the “Sound of Music” high school stage production back home.

The large amount of new construction to improve the

infrastructure of Bali around the port and highways was evident during our visit. The 2002 terrorist bombing of a resort in Bali reduced the tourist traffic in Bali to nearly zero for several years afterwards and the people suffered serious economic hardship. The government and business people have made a concerted effort to revive the tourist business and their efforts appear to be paying off. Not only has the infrastructure been improved but important signs have a portion in English to help the tourist. In addition, the shops usually have one or more friendly staff people who can converse in English and English speaking taxi drivers are plentiful. Australians were the main foreign tourists in Bali prior to the terrorist bombing attack in 2002 and suffered the most casualties in the bombing. Presumably they are coming back now along with other English speaking foreigners to enjoy this tropical haven.

The Amsterdam got underway about 11:30pm and left the harbor at Benoa Port. We were sailing north to our next port of call which will still be in Indonesia but in the city of Makassar on the island of Sulawesi. After a day at sea we expect to arrive in Makassar on March 4.