
Unexpected Beauty of South Cebu

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During our March 2007 visit to Carcar, my wife and I decided to explore the south side of Cebu. Having left the Philippines at age 11, I've been having this urge to explore the sights and sounds of the Philippines and catch up on what I have been missing. There was no better way to start the journey than to start the exploration of the entire south of Cebu, spanning from Carcar, Sibonga, Argao, to Santander, then up to Barili, then back to Carcar again. The almost non-stop drive took us about 6 hours to circle the entire south using the national road. What I saw during those six hours was simply breathtaking. It was a huge eye opener for me to say the least. An "enlightenment" if you will.

Having been back and forth between Hawaii, which is where I'm based, and the Philippines several times in the course of few years, I have started to develop an idea of what to expect when I'm in the Philippines: drivers always honking their horns, heavy bumper to bumper traffic in the middle of a smog, drivers turning lanes without warnings, pedestrians not afraid to get killed, zero enforcements of zoning laws, streams full of crap, zero traffic signs, and oh, have I mentioned lots of bad and dis-courteous drivers? Added to those is the tropical dry heat that can penetrate your skin even if your skin is five inches thick! In other words, my idea of this place was in no way in comparison to the tropical Hawaiian paradise that I have been luxuriously accustomed to for over 20 years. That is, of course, until my wife and I took that fateful journey to the south of Cebu.

With some minor exceptions of here and there, South Cebu is truly a "hidden paradise." It didn't take long for me to realize this after exiting Argao town. Argao town is known for gorgeous beaches, but none of them are visible from the national road. So I was not able to verify this with my own eyes. It is when we were in between Argao town and Dalaguete town that paradise was starting to unravel. It began with the quality of the road. Not a single bump or pothole on the road did our vehicle experienced. In fact, the drive was so smooth that I stood at the bed of the pick up vehicle throughout the trip without any problems at all. Philippines is well known for poorly constructed roads even in the major metropolitan areas. But the south road that we were on was exceptionally high quality. The road markings or lane divider were very similar to the road markings in the state. I couldn't even tell any difference between the south Cebu road and the Kamehameha freeway here in Hawaii. The unexpected remarkable quality of the road definitely put everyone in the mood for a smooth enjoyment of more unexpected paradise ahead of us. TO BE CONTINUE....

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