

NAPABAYAAN SA KUSINA  
continued from page 19

thing and he outdid himself when he grilled an enormous steak from Harry's Ranch perfectly. While with Rory, with whom we stayed the longest, I acquired the *napabayaan sa kusina* look.

As if her cooking were not enough, Rory also brought us to her favorite restaurants, among them The Steps of Rome, The Forge in the Forest and The Tuck Box (in Carmel), and Il Fornaio. When Via arrived from Spain, Malu used the occasion to treat Via, Mariel, Rory, Irma and me to a sumptuous crab dinner at The Crustacean. We pigged out on calamari salad with papaya, crab with tamarind sauce, crab with garlic and pepper and garlic noodles. We wiped out 4 gigantic crabs, just 6 of us, with no regrets. Good *chowun!*

I COULD GO ON AND ON TELLING YOU about the dinners and lunches we had with the rest of the family, but I would be remiss if I failed to mention our children's wedding anniversary treat. Carlo, Anton and Mariel treated Rene and me to a most memorable dinner in San Francisco which Carlo arranged -- from the transportation, to the menu, to the champagne. It was a belated treat because Carlo waited for Rene and me to be together in San Francisco.

On Saturday evening, June 09, a stretch limo picked us up from Orinda and took us downtown to the Embarcadero, to a restaurant named The Red Herring. I felt like the wife of a wealthy oil sheik riding in that limo which was big enough to hold a wedding party. We were led to a table right by the window looking out to the Bay Bridge and San Francisco Bay. We had an appetizer of mussels cooked in tomato, basil and jalapeño, a smoked tomato soup, Ahi Tuna with Daikon Radish Salad, and Roasted Maine Lobster with Yukon potatoes, washed down with a delicate bottle of Gewurtzraminer. The dinner scored a "10." The evening was capped with a bottle of champagne. The limo took us back to Orinda, both of us heady with the good food and wine, thrilled and overjoyed that our children gave us an evening that we will always treasure.

LL



Via and Mariel -- Giant Crabs



Rene and Bibot at The Red Herring

## COLEGIO GASTOS *SHOPPING 101*

by Mariel Santayana

OUR PLANE LANDED IN THE STATES ON APRIL 19, 2001 at exactly 12 noon. By 4:00 PM I was already at the mall buying a pair of shoes. This is the story of my trip to America ....

The first time I set foot in TJ Maxx, I was overcome with so much emotion. Aisles and aisles of clothing beckoned me, calling out my name! I never felt so much pressure in my life. It was an hour 'til closing time, and there was no way I could go through all those tops, skirts, pants and bags in sixty minutes! It was just too much for a girl like me. I suddenly found myself in a daze in the men's section where Carlo was browsing. He looked at me sheepishly and asked, "Why are you in the men's section?" I raised my head and almost wept, "I don't know!" I was getting so confused! Carlo, being the good older brother that he is, agreed to take me back. The next day, I spent an entire afternoon in TJ Maxx and it was heaven! I couldn't believe I was shopping for clothes with a grocery cart. I was especially proud of myself for buying a bag for only \$50. I saw the exact same bag here in the Philippines and it cost \$160!

When I think of paradise, of nirvana, of utopia, I don't visualize images of lush, green forests with birds singing and angels dressed in white - dancing, laughing and twirling around. I see H&M. H&M, in all its glory, was the only thing that compelled me to wake up early during my entire stay in the US. By 9:00 AM, I was out of the hotel, walking by myself to 5th Avenue. My mom was astounded! Her incessant nagging could never get me up in the mornings, only H&M had the power to do that.

I also fell in love with the Meier and Frank store in Portland! Everything I bought was on sale. I bought a Nine West bowling bag for \$25.00. I saw a smaller version of the bag that I bought in the Nine



Mariel passed Shopping 101 with flying colors

West store here in the Philippines and it cost more than \$50. I was so happy!

So... 6 pairs of jeans, 27 tops, 11 belts, 4 pairs of shoes, 13 bags, 2 pairs of shades and a helluva lot of makeup later, my plane lands in Manila at 10 in the evening. After convincing customs officials that I really didn't buy more than \$200 worth of goods in the States and that there's nothing inside my huge balikbayan box but bubble wrap, I was back home by 12 midnight. The next day at 4 in the afternoon, I was... you guessed it... back at the mall!

LL