

Created by: Debra C. Argen
Itacare Eco Village



Itacaré Eco Village – An Eco Resort with Pristine Beaches!



Did you ever consider staying at an Eco Resort, where you could frolic in a waterfall, stroll along pristine soft white sand beaches, or lie in a hammock under the shade of a coconut tree while listening to the sounds of monkeys playing in the nearby rainforest? Itacaré Eco Village, which is now 4 years old, has it all without being spoilt.

In January 2005, Edward F. Nesta, Regina and Gilberto Sacilotti and I flew from the São Paulo airport to Ilheus, in the state of Bahia. From the airport we hired a taxi to drive us the 55 minutes from Ilheus to **Itacaré Eco Village**, www.ecovillage.com.br. We were pleasantly surprised when we entered the gates of the resort to see a capivara (an adorable Brazilian rodent) and her baby in a pond, horses and their colts, and also Emus, which we were later told were there as part of a rescue and revitalization project.



After a quick check-in, we were driven to our “village”, where we went to our rooms to freshen up a bit before heading out to explore the resort. The guest rooms were large with tropical inspired colors and paintings on the walls, and had ceiling fans as well as air-conditioning. We had a king bed, a rattan round table with 2 chairs, a white leather chaise, a large satellite television, and a sliding door that led out to a verandah with a hammock, where we could relax with views of the sea. The dressing area had a sink, hairdryer, a safe and a mini-bar. The bathroom had a walk-in shower. Foreign travelers will be pleased to know that the rooms have both 110 and 220 voltage.

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In the evening, we enjoyed an arts & crafts lesson with Ray Costa, who taught us the art of making objects with palm fronds. Ray was a patient teacher as Regina, Edward and I tried our hand at making a palm leaf cricket, which was easier said than done, especially when drinking a Batida da Coco, which is a delicious libation of coconut milk and cachaça, the national alcohol of Brazil. Afterwards, we had a buffet dinner at the resort's restaurant, followed by a romantic stroll back to our rooms under a moonlit sky.

The next morning we woke early and took a walk along the wide stretch of beach, which we had all to ourselves. The early morning sunlight was already intensely bright, reminding us that we were indeed in the northeast of Brazil. After a tempting buffet breakfast, we checked our email in the reception area, before we toured the resort with Paulo, who drove us around the complex. In addition to the 5 "villages" with 32 accommodations at Itacaré Eco Village, there is also the opportunity to purchase a house on the vast grounds. We also made a stop at their other beach, Prainha, which was voted by a Brazilian travel magazine in 2004 to be the 8th best beach in Brazil, which is high praise indeed, when you consider the immense shoreline and beaches of Brazil. Prainha is truly beautiful with a sweeping crescent shape beach that almost looks unreal. Combined with the natural beauty of the spectacularly colored weaver birds which create nests that look like crocheted bags hanging from the trees, lush landscape of the rainforest that reaches down to the sea, and the exotic fruit that abounds, the resort is a special place to escape to and relax. Regina and Gilberto love waterfalls, and since the resort boasted a small waterfall, we stopped to walk along the trail and take a quick dip in the cool water to cool off a bit, before continuing our exploration. The resort also grows cacao, (which is the basis for chocolate), which they harvest. Paulo took us on hike through the woods to see the cacao plants and to eat delectable wild mangoes that were still warm from the sun. (Read about cacao in the **Gastronomy** section.)



We also had the opportunity to sit down with Cleber Isaac Filho, Director of Marketing, and learn more about this interesting resort and how it came to be. Itacaré Eco Village started out as his family's coconut plantation, though at the time it was considered to be a "black sheep" by the family since it didn't produce enough coconuts, and they wanted to sell off the property. However, Cleber's father decided with his heart, rather than his head, that he could not part with the property and bought the other family members shares of the property. He then had to decide what to do with the land. Four years ago, Itacaré Eco Resort was born, where the resort and the houses are interspersed between the coconut trees to create a natural balance between man and nature. Itacaré doesn't have sugar cane, and as such has kept their natural rainforest. Guests can take a class, swim, surf or enjoy water sports in their crystal clear waters, kayak

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down a river, hike through the trails, swim in a natural pool or in a swimming pool. He also let us in on a little secret, that they will be adding a Spa in December 2005, which provides us with the perfect reason to return to Itacaré Eco Resort, as if we needed an excuse!

For additional information on Bahia, please contact the **Bahia Tourism Office** at: www.bahia.com.br.

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Itacaré Eco Village

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