

## **Verhaal Caroline Castendijk**

I was born in Curaçao 67 yrs ago but grew up in the Netherlands. The first time I came back to Curaçao I was 35 yrs old. This was in 1992. By then Lions Dive was 3 years old and the hotel was still small and didn't have air conditioning in the rooms. But I didn't mind. The wind came through the shutters and made it very pleasant.

We had the first room in the building on the right, after you had checked in at the small reception (with a tiny touristic shop opposite the desk). There was only the restaurant (for breakfast, lunch and dinner, called Roemer's back then) next to the small pool and next to it there was a wooden staircase leading down to the beach, with the beach shower underneath it.

Back in those days (just like now in Hemingway) a band played music on Sunday evenings, but that happened around the pool and I danced my first Merengue with a Kurasoleño. Magical!

The beach didn't have those little wooden huts for shade on the beach yet. Hemingway was not yet built, nor the big 50m pool and the hotel consisted of only 3 buildings: one was for the reception and two with guest rooms.

The view was wide open to the Caribbean Sea. That was before Dutch started to build the (now) Royal Sea Aquarium Resort and the enlargement of the Seaquarium.

I loved the beautiful hotel, the sounds of the whistling frogs in the evenings when going to dinner, the friendly staff, the simple beach so I (we) returned several times requesting for the same room (which we always got) and then, in 2010 I decided to come back to live on Curaçao. Hemingway was built in the meantime and I came to dance every Sunday evening.... Memories, sweet memories.

I have moved to NL in 2021, but I will come back to my dushi island regularly.