Victorias Milling Company (vintage pictures from 1989)

Today I am posting some vintage pictures that I took in 1989 during my first travel in Negros (and in the Philippines). To be back in Negros after so many years was really a trip through memory lane. My love affair with the Philippines started during this first travel.

I was young, free and careless. I wasn’t that much into photography but I had always a camera with me. Of course it was still an analog camera. At that time I was backpacking and traveling on a budget and I couldn’t afford to take many pictures.

Anyway, 19 years after my first visit here, I have the impression that very little has changed. The old steam trains have almost all disappeared but the old trucks are still the same ones... and the local farmers are still as poor as twenty years ago. Yes, very little has changed in Negros Occidental...
I was less camera shy in my younger years and that is indeed me standing next to the conductor of the train.

The old trains included American Baldwins and Germain Henschells. Nowadays those trains are not in use anymore for hauling the sugarcane from the fields. But you can still see the railway tracks.
Victorias Milling Company is probably the largest integrated mill and sugar refinery in Asia and is open to the public. Alas you are not allowed to take pictures inside the mill.
Inside the mill compound stands the Church of St Joseph the Worker built between 1948 and 1950. Inside the church you can see a huge dense mural by Alfonso Ossorio called The Angry Christ, which depicts a square-jawed Jesus sitting in front of the hands of God.
The Hawaiian-Philippine Company was established on June 3, 1918 by Hawaiian sugar planters. The millsite is located in a 45 hectare area in the outskirts of Silay City. Visits can be organized by the Silay Tourism Office. Pictures are not allowed inside the mill.
The next day, the cane will be loaded onto a truck. The cane is compacted as much as possible, and loaded far above the sides of the truck. The harvest must be timed to allow the cane to be processed quickly at the sugar mill, as it will spoil fairly quickly.
It is nice to suck the sap of the sugarcane but you need good teeth.
Planting seed cane (cuttings).
After a field has been harvested, it is burned and must be plowed completely and replanted with fresh seed cane (cuttings).
Next time you put some sugar in your coffee don't take it for granted...
Ref.: http://my_sarisari_store.typepad.com/my_sarisari_store/negros_occidental_sugarcane/