

## You break it, you've bought it

By Ruth Ostrow

MY friend Julian is having a closing-down sale of his shop, Shikara Design, in Byron Bay. The sign on the shop window says: "Everything for sale is covered under the Jumbangay Clause", pronounced Jum-Bung-Ay. Most of his stuff is from India and Bali – antiques, statues, pillows, rugs, furniture and rugs.

Jumbangay, he says, putting on a false Indian accent and wobbling his head, essentially means broken. "It's buyer beware. I'm selling everything cheap, but you have to know that this stuff has survived weeks being banged around in container ships, and is made with a few flaws every now and again," he grins. "You know what I mean!"

I did know exactly, holding a gorgeous white rug that had black smudge marks in several places, inspecting a magnificent Rajasthani wardrobe that had black peeling lacquer, testing out a day-bed that had nails sticking out underneath it and looked like it might Jumbangay to the floor at any minute.

And it got me thinking a lot about the whole bargain basement of life. We all shop for lovers, partners and friends under the Jumbangay clause. There is a silent agreement made between seller and purchaser that somewhere down the track, the fatal flaw is going to be revealed – a husband whose nails suddenly start sticking out of his cracked head, a wife whose lacquer begins to peel, a girlfriend who had a big stain you never saw under the rug of her heart.

"There is no returning under the Jumbangay clause," Julian tells me, still wobbling his head. Having lived in India for many years he has a good grasp of Indian philosophy, which is very profound. Everything is flawed, life is flawed, crammed, crazy, full of floods, poverty and misfortune, but live joyfully anyway!

"Jumbangay is about acceptance, and not suffering the disappointment of thwarted expectations," he says. "Jumbangay is the belief that things are as they are, not as they should be. Yes, you are flawed, but I take you anyway. And I bring along a bit of Super Glue for the ride."

I ended up buying the day-bed, which was covered in gorgeous red silk. Julian, despite his Jumbangay clause, turned the thing upside down and hammered in a few of the nails.

"It's Jumbangay, but it will last longer than you or your children," he laughs, and I know, at the deepest level, that I have gotten something very precious from this transaction.

[www.ruthostrow.com](http://www.ruthostrow.com)

© Ruth Ostrow

First published in The Weekend Australian SAT 13 JAN 2007