

Scuba Diving Log

or

Comments about our scuba diving activities in the past 30 years

Going back over our more than 7000 dives (combined) we'd like to share with you our impressions about sites that might interest you! No hype, no advertising, no BS, ... just the plain facts of our personal experience :) Things do change over time so you should investigate the actual situation to protect you from disappointment in voyaging. The time of the year often affects the quality of the diving (visibility, fish & coral life, current, sea state,). Also, it is important to find a serious and reliable dive center that is willing to take you diving where the diving suits you the best and in safety & comfort! Check their websites, contact them in advance to see how accommodating they are, email to some of their past visitors, ... For more details about some of the areas, check our other articles on this website

Mediterranean:

Despite the abundant number of divers at the time (78'-82'), nice dives at the Medas islands and Cadaques in Spain.

Sea of Cortez. Guyamas, Mexico: Summer 1988

We dived 6 months working for Club Med, Sonora Bay. The best was diving with the sea lions off an isolated island off Guyamas. Got to watch the babies learn to swim and the big bulls charge us UW and veer off at the last second giving us a good look at his tonsils! Diving on the seamounts close to the coast wasn't that clear or interesting.

Northern Caribbean

Florida: 1987

Despite the hype, Pennecamp Park dives off Key Largo are for novices to diving or oceans. Nothing special. We got to see the botched up sinking of the Bibb & Dwayne Coast Guard Cutters for dive sites, tho!

Bahamas: 1985 & 1992-94

After all our years of diving around the world, the Bahamas still remain fond in our memories. We found some of the greatest wall diving in the Bahamas, especially off the Eastern islands like Crooked and Mayaguana where there are no dive centers, only us and the yacht! The blue hole cave diving in Andros, Abacos, and Eleuthera is unique, and some times tense and scary. DO NOT do Blue Hole diving with out training and research with the experts. Devil's Hole 30 miles from Eleuthera's Club Med is one of the most memorable adrenaline dives that we did (only between instructors). For miles, the bottom is only 3 m deep until you're over the big, black hole that only the Bahamians could find. It was like diving into a giant Amphora, where the sides curve away and all is black except for the circle of bright light above, growing smaller and smaller as you descend into darkness. Finally, at 50m (160ft), there is the top of a giant sand mountain and the light above is only the size of a peephole.

We'll never forget it!

Oh yeah, if you go spear fishing, you'll see sharks, and barracudas...up close and personal.

Turks & Caicos: 1994 Pleasant diving in "Provo", but the most impressive walls were off Grand Turks which is on the edge of the sea trench, and you're hanging over 3000 ft of water! The visibility was phenomenal, giving a panorama of the surface, the wall, and the abyss.

Cayman Is: Despite the hype, again, this was only pleasant diving. Not World Class. Except found a little known cave with turtle skeletons.

Eastern Caribbean:

Great diving around **Saba and St Kitts**. Managing the M/V Caribbean Explorer in 92-97'. Favorites: The Pinnacles and Diamond Rock on Saba, Wreck of the River Taw night dive, and Paradise Reef on St. Kitts.

Guadeloupe: Hundreds of dives around Pigeon Island (84'-85') and the good surprise to see the reef undamaged in 95' despite the hordes of divers around! Martinique: Diamond Rock w/ Club Med.

Western Caribbean: 1987-8

Belize: Half Moon Cay and Turneffe Reef and the islands out there. Good wall diving while we were managing the diving on M/V La Strega (88'). The famous Cousteau Blue Hole is not worth the effort. (Too deep, too enormous to get feel of a blue hole)

Southern Caribbean: 1997-8

ABC: Bonaire: Easy pleasant diving you can do from shore or dinghy or from numerous dive centers. The best organized for DYI divers. Coral was starting to have bleaching problems in 1997. Visibility great, good place to learn scuba. Curacao: Not as well set up for divers, but some nice diving.

South Pacific:

Cocos Islands: THIS was WORLD CLASS diving! On the way to Galapagos from Panama, the only way to dive it is live-aboard dive boat or private yacht. Mecca for Hammerhead sharks and big pelagics. You won't be disappointed! On one dive we must have seen 60 hammerheads, dozens of giant pelagic stingrays, and herds of lagoon white tips hunting like a pack of dogs, and then the most incredible school of jacks we have ever seen before or since. As far as the eye could see up, down, or across, it was silver with fish, then, thinking we saw the black shadow of another sea mount behind them, started swimming through the school only to realize the black shadow was the mass of the bodies of thousands of others in the school! Another unforgettable: having a small hammerhead bounce off my chest during a night dive (while Luc was elsewhere with the video!)

Galapagos: Damned cold! We dove in August and visibility was not great, but had a nice dive with mantas, and seal lions. Went with a dive center out of Admiralty Bay.

French Polynesia: low visibility in Marquesas but had some great dives with Manta Rays. Guaranteed in Hiva Oa at small island across from harbor. In Eiao, mantas were in love with the dinghy and followed our wake, must have been mating season because they zoomed right at us u/w doing great "aerial" displays. One took off with Luc and the drift dive buoy in tow! Great drift dives in the passes of the Tuamotu atolls, especially Fakarava South Pass and the big Pass at Rangaroa (Sharks, mantas, turtles, dolphins, tunas, some times marlin). Challenging diving in strong currents, the pass is for strong, experienced divers. Go with a reputable center. Nice diving in the Societies (but remembered it to be better in '89 than 2001) swarms of black tip reef sharks where they do feeding, occasional big lemon shark(s) outside Bora Bora pass. Great wreck in Raitea right under the pier at a hotel near Uturoa pass. Viz is tidal and seasonally dependent. Great wreck(age) of WWI German ship outside the pass of Mopelia. Good drift dive in the pass too.

Cooks: '03 Overall, the diving out of Rarotonga is mediocre, not much coral or color, but there were nice moments. See photo of nudibranch:

Tonga: 2004-5 Vava'u for chance to encounter humpback whales w/ calves. Aug-Oct. Haapai group: Find Herbert in the capital town to take you to the Hot Spring Cavern and the Arches and swim-thrus

Fiji: 2005-6 This is where the diving in the Pacific starts to resemble some of the diving in the Indian Ocean! Except for Haapai, the first area with well developed soft coral gardens. Some of the sites that reminded us of Maldives and Red Sea: Kadavu Is. Especially the north side. Mantas are on the south side, as well as drift diving thru passes w/ soft corals. Rainbow Reef & Voli Voli Point, (Vanua Levu), Yadua Is. BIG shark encounter (not in cage) in Benga Lagoon. Go w/ Shark Divers out of Pacific Harbor. Mamanucas and Yasawas: Ho hum!

Vanuatu: 2006-10 Nice coral reefs scattered thru the island chain but no exceptional sites were seen by us. We did not dive very much here because we were too busy filming above the water so we may have missed good spots. Two of favorites are Tutuba Island (Santo), Ten Stick reef (SW Malekula). Disappointing were Cook's Reef and Million Dollar Point.

Northern Pacific

Marshalls: 2010 - old WWII wrecks generally in shallow water to check here and there (see our cruising notes for more details)

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM): 2010 - best wreck diving is in Chuuk (Truk) lagoon with lots of life on them. Have to dive with local dive operators. Beware of aggressive attitude of indigenous people, as commented on by the people of the other 3 states of FSM). Nice reef diving in Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap.

Palau: 2013 - A friend of ours described it well: not the best diving in any type of diving but excellent diving overall (macro, pelagic, wrecks. Note that the Truk Lagoon wreck are far more interesting & clearer water than in Palau! Expensive dive permits!

SE Asia:

Philippines: 2012-2017 Best diving was found in Tubbataha national park (see cruising notes). Apo Reef was second with some nice diving around Puerto Galera.

Borneo: 2018 some ok diving along the north coast along Sabah & Sarawak (Malaysia) and Brunei

Malaysia: 2018 no great diving found so far along the west coast due to poor visibility

Thailand: 2018 no great diving either along the west coast but we still have to check Ko Lipe and Andaman areas.

Indonesia: 2012-2019 best diving was found in Raja Ampat and Komodo! Reminded us our glorious dives in the Red Sea and the Maldives :)

Indian Ocean:

Maldives : 1987 We found it the best diving we've seen. Sharks, huge mantas, giant morays, big Napoleons, great soft corals, drift diving, amazing colorful fish! Fantastic viz (dry season) great terrain. This is where we saw our first and only WHALE SHARKS, two in the same place! And Luc had the video, albeit, only Sony 8mm at that time. Have heard that Maldives has suffered from bleaching and the last giant tsunami, tho.

Red Sea: 1986

Egypt: Club Med Hurgada (Club has been closed subsequently). Our first look at soft corals and the incredibly amazing colors in the corals and fish life! Same great stuff as Maldives, but colder water. Have also heard that Hurgada has become over-dived. It's for Europeans, as Mexico is for the Americans.