

THE REEF SEEKER



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YOU NEED A VACATION

One of the great perks of this job (yeah, it really IS a job) is that I get the pleasure of taking a lot of you to many places around the world to go diving. And it actually gives me a lot of pleasure to see the joy you all get out of these trips.

A lot of people don't realize they need a vacation. Or perhaps they don't realize that they need something a little bit different that going to your childhood home for a week and hanging out with your folks.

One of the great things about diving is that it really does open up a whole world for you. Without diving, there's no way that places like Indonesia, Yap, the Galapagos, or Bonaire would be stamps in my passport. Without diving, there are places in the world (like the Maldives or Cocos Island) that I might not even know existed, let alone would have visited. And that's one of the intangible benefits of diving. It literally broadens your view of the world.

Dive travel is obviously something you can do on your own or as part of a group. For obvious reasons, I'm always in favor of group travel. At the risk of sounding too self-serving about it, really is a great way to go.

For one thing, you've already got people that you "know" or at least have something in common with (since they're also members of the group). It makes it a bit easier to get a dive buddy is you're traveling by yourself and overall, I suspect you'll have a better time than doing it on your own.

There's nothing wrong with setting it up by yourself. But by traveling as a group, if something like our recent problems in getting to Cozumel should befall you, you not only have more clout as a group than as an individual, but you've likely got a group leader (like me when you travel with Reef Seekers) who will take care of the details and smooth things out as best as possible. As the saying goes, that's why we get the big bucks.

And it's never too early to start planning. I'm already working on our 2008 schedule and (I just today got an e-mail from someone inquiring about the October, 2008 Sea of Cortez trip. That doesn't mean we can't set something up quickly, but it always pays to plan ahead, especially if you need to

clear vacation time or start saving your pennies.

You all know how much I love California diving. But I think you also know how much I feel my life has been enriched by the many experiences I've had on our out-of-the-US trips. Whether you do it with me or on your own, I hope some foreign travel is something that you've got planned for your future.

SHARK WEEK ON THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL

Just a friendly reminder that this is Shark Week on Discovery (check your local cable station for where it resides - on Time-Warner Westside it's channel 31). They've got stuff running all through the evening, but it appears the new stuff runs at 9PM each night.

We're very pleased to tell you that our own Tom Boyd was one of the camera guys for a show that airs Wednesday night. It's called "Perfect Predators" and runs in that coveted 9PM slot. Tom did most of the Bahamas underwater stuff. He said he hasn't seen the final cut but feels like it should be a really good show. Be sure to check it out.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Aug. 2 | Fish I.D. | Sept. 20 | Rescue |
| 8 | Night Diving | 27 | NAUI/PADI Advanced |
| 11 | Beach Diving/Navig. | | |
| 18 | CPR/Oxygen/1st Aid | Oct. 4 | Fish I.D. |
| 30 | Sea Signs | 10 | Night Diving |
| | | 13 | Beach Diving/Navig. |
| Sept. 6 | Fish I.D. | 18 | Tables |
| 9 | Beach Diving/Navig. | 20 | CPR/Oxygen/1st AID |
| 12 | Night Diving | 25 | Digital Diver |
| 13 | Photo Workshop | | |

DRYSUIT BUOYANCY

It seems to us that there's a lot of "bad" info going around concerning buoyancy and dry suits and we'd like to offer some thoughts for those of you diving dry or thinking about diving dry.

There are basically two schools of thought. School of Thought One says that you should not use your BC at all underwater and should only use your dry suit top control your buoyancy. The train of thought is that you will need to add enough air to offset the crush of the suit as well as to push the cold away, and then you add more air to attain neutral buoyancy. The thinking further goes on that this simplifies everything for you as you're just dealing with one inflation source.

School of Thought Two says that you keep as little air in your dry suit as possible, and use your BC to further control buoyancy. The thought is that you should only put enough air into the drysuit to offset the crush and push away the cold, and that you then add air to your BC for buoyancy control.

We're firmly in agreement with School of Thought Two.

Probably the worst thing that can happen to you in a dry suit is an

uncontrolled inverted ascent, when you get too much air in your feet, start to go up, and have no way to vent it off. You must twist and whip yourself around to get your shoulders high, and then you can vent.

The problem with dry suits vents are twofold. (1) There's only one of them, and (2) It's a relatively low-volume dump. It simply may be physically impossible for the dry suit dump valve to exhaust enough air fast enough to allow you to bring the out-of-control ascent under control.

By using the drysuit with minimal air, you not only lessen the risk of an uncontrolled inverted ascent, but you also now have the option of using the BC to vent off air and bring your ascent back under con-

trol. Most modern BCs have as many as four dump valves built in to them, and they're all relatively high-volume. So you stand a better chance of quickly dumping air through the BC than through the drysuit.

Bottom line is that if you're diving dry, it's imperative for you, no matter which method you want to use, to always be aware of how you're situated within the dry suit air bubble and, perhaps more importantly, how much of that air is in your feet. On top of that, you need to be sensitive to the beginning of an inverted ascent so you can arrest it before it gets out of control.

Either method can work. Some suggest that by using both the dry suit AND the BC for control, you may be task overloading. We'd suggest that if you can't handle both things, maybe you're diving skills aren't ready to handle a dry suit.

But the reality is that no matter which methodology you want to use for your drysuit, either one can work. It simply means that you, as a diver, has to have an awareness of what's going on around you, and a knowledge of what you need to do to control it.

DIVING VACATIONS

October 7-15 • Sea of Cortez
(20th Annual trip)

WHERE TO IN 2008????

JAN '08 - AUSTRALIA/CORAL SEA

DON'T FORGOT THE SOCIAL TRIPS

We've got a lot of great local trips on the agenda too. We mentioned last month that we've refined our local boat sked so that it's an every-other-week for the rest of the year (and will be that way in 2008 as well) but we still try to give you a great variety to choose from.

In August alone, we're going to Farnsworth Bank this coming Sunday (August 5), then to the Oil Rigs on August 12, and then to Santa Barbara on August 25.

In September, we're going to the wreck of the Olympic (we're one of the few shops to do this dive) on September 8 and then on to Catalina, and then on September 23 it's back to the Oil Rigs again (a very popular destination and a really great dive, especially this time of the year when you can get phenomenal vis and some really nice blue-water critter sightings).

So we try to have something for everyone. If you've got questions, be sure to call or e-mail and ask them. And don't assume that every trip fills up weeks ahead of time. (They don't - much as I wish that were so.) By the same token, if a trip does fill up, we still take a waiting list, and it's very likely that there will be some movement close to the trip date and we'll be able to put people on the waiting list on to the boat. That works out for everyone because the canceling diver gets a refund and the person who thought they were aced out of a trip gets to go diving. Win-win all the way around.

So be sure to do some local dives with us too. We try to make all of

UPCOMING BOAT DIVES

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Aug. 5 | <i>Great Escape</i> | Farnsworth/Catalina backside | \$130/140 |
| 12 | <i>Magician</i> | ••• Oil Rigs (limited load) ••• | 130/140 |
| 25 | <i>Great Escape</i> | Santa Barbara Island | 145/155 |
| Sept. 8 | <i>Magician</i> | <i>Olympic</i> wreck/Italian Gardens | 120/130 |
| 23 | <i>Magician</i> | ••• Oil Rigs (limited load) ••• | 130/140 |
| Oct. 6 | <i>Cee Ray</i> | Catalina (Italian Gardens) | 120/130 |
| 21 | <i>Great Escape</i> | San Clemente (Frontside) | 145/155 |
| Nov. 3 | <i>Great Escape</i> | Santa Barbara Island | 145/155 |
| 17 | <i>Magician</i> | Catalina (West End) | 120/130 |

Prices are listed as 14-day advanced purchase/regular. Food/air included all trips. All diving to be done on compressed air only - no nitrox. Fuel surcharge may apply.

our trips like a little floating party and we really hope you can join us for the fun.

"HOW TO BUY . . ." ARTICLES

If you're in the market for gear, from masks to computers to wetsuits (and in between) you might want to check out a series of articles on our website called "How to Buy . . ." that detail some of the things you should look for in various items. The articles can be found by going to the Reef Seekers home page (www.reefseekers.com), clicking on "Merch. & Mfgs." and then clicking on the "How to Buy" articles on that page. The articles are very generic without pushing any specific brands of gear and hopefully you'll find them useful in making purchase decisions.

REEF SAVER CARD

If you don't have a Reef Saver card, you spending 10% more with us than you have to. (Not that we don't enjoy taking all your money but we're trying to be reasonable about it.) A Reef Saver card, which costs \$50 for a year, entitles you to a 10% discount on local trips and

repair parts. (It doesn't apply to classes, labor, or foreign trips.) But the bottom line is that if you spend \$500 a year with us, which isn't tough to do, you ought to spend another \$50 and get a Reef Saver card so you can start enjoying a 10% discount on top of everything else you love (we hope) about Reef Seekers.

SPEAK UP

We can't emphasize enough the importance of speaking up when you have symptoms that could possibly be dive-related. If there is something wrong, the sooner you start dealing with it, the more likely it is that you'll get 100% resolution. If there's nothing wrong, the sooner you'll get peace of mind.

It may sound like a cliché, but better safe than sorry. If you ever need to contact the Medic Alert Center directly, their number is (323)887-5310 and then push "2" to be connected to hyperbarics and Dr. Sipsey. Or you can feel free to call us directly and we'll help you get the information that you need to determine what might be wrong.

If you have questions, give us a call. That's one of the (many) things we're here for.



WHAT WE'VE GOT COMING UP

It's still a work-in-progress but I've just today been trading e-mails with Mike Ball about going back to Australia in the middle of January. We're also looking into a Fiji trip for mid-March, a return to Palau & Yap in June, not sure what we might do next August, our 21st

trip to Baja in October, and who knows what else.

And don't be shy about asking about a destination that you haven't heard us mention A lot of times, it only takes one or two people to commit to a trip for us to start to make a go of it. Years ago, we had two people who really wanted to go to Papua New Guinea. They gave me dates that were good for them, we built a trip around those dates, and ended up with about a dozen people signing up. It was lovely. The moral is: It never hurts to ask.

It's also important to remember that we can sometimes set things up for you at the last minute. We're an Aggressor dealer and that means that we have access to their res-

ervation system so we know what can be had at the last minute. And because we "know" people all over the world, sometimes we can get you in to places that others will tell you are sold out. Despite my affinity for group travel (especially with me as leader), we're happy to work something out with you to get you on your way by yourself or in a small non-led group.

The bottom line with all of this is that we try to go to the places that you've expressed an interest in. So let us know what your needs are and we'll see what we can do. One of the advantages of not having the retail storefront for the moment, is that it allows for greater freedom to do more of these trips. So give us your best shot and let's see what we can put together.

PICTURE PAGE - Around the World

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2007)



**Lionfish
in Palau**



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WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



**Marble Ray
in Cocos**



**Juvy Giant Hawkfish
in Baja**



**Squid
in Bonaire**



**Blue Ribbon Eel
in Indonesia**