

ANGUILLA

Anguilla (almost rhymes with vanilla) is a small, pricey Leeward Island a few minutes' ferry ride from St. Maartin. Its main appeal lies in its beautiful beaches and exclusive ambiance. Good, typical Caribbean reefs are close in, but expect no drama. The fish population is low due to overfishing. It's not an island to visit just for the diving, but if you end up there, by all means get in the water. It's in the hurricane belt ...

Anguillan Divers, December 2003, Daniel Spitzer, Suffern, NY. Dives logged: 350. Vis: 40-80 ft. Water: 78 F. "A bad day of diving is better than a good day at work" is a well-known divers' aphorism. While not a "dive destination," Anguilla — a small friendly island at the northern end of the Caribbean chain, is well worth a visit. I have taken my family there yearly for over a decade now. Last year my son was certified by Norjon at Anguilla Divers. This year my nephew from Israel joined us and the three of us had a great time diving on three small wrecks and exploring some gentle reefs. Norjon from Holland and Robert from England are wonderful fun and run a nice dive shop. (www.anguilliandivers.com)

ANTIGUA

Beautiful beaches and scenery, high-dollar hotels, and forgettable diving. If you find yourself here, avoid boats that take divers

from the cruise ships, as they do only the close-in, shallow reefs.

Sandals, November 2003, Ken Robertson, Calgary, Alberta.

Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 25 to 30 Feet. Water: 82 to 83 F, calm, no currents. When one's wife is a non-diver, you occasionally end up at places where diving is not the resort's first priority and such is the case at Sandals' Antigua Resort. Having done my research, I had no delusions about the diving in Antigua. The reefs are fairly battered (Sandal's dive boat's careless anchoring destroyed more than one gorgonian while I was there) and there are not a lot of fish, let alone large ones. Certainly those I saw would likely be of interest to new divers though. I took my copy of Paul Humann/Ned Deloach's Reef Coral Identification and worked at learning more about corals and coral diseases. This made the trip both fun and educational! The Sandal's Resort is a very nice place to stay, but there are better values in other all-inclusives. The dive operation, with the exception of one instructor, was one of the weakest I have seen. I took the time to write to the Resort Manager with a list of suggestions for general diver safety. To his credit the guy did respond, but only to tell me that they do everything right and have very stringent safety procedures — yah right! But I guess that's the view from the rose colored glasses. (www.sandals.com)

ARUBA

Just off Venezuela's Caribbean

coast, Aruba has not been a prime scuba-diving destination, but bring your gear since some operators, especially those catering to the Dutch, will take you to some pretty decent diving. ... Miles of white sand, glitzy casinos, and beaches cater to windsurfers. ... For the best deals look into gamblers' packages. ... There are several good boat dives. The South Wall, past San Nicholas near the southern tip of Aruba, is also good. ... Aruba lies south of the hurricane belt.

Unique Sports of Aruba, Casa Del Mar, Hyatt, January 2004, Leora Rosen (leorar@comcast.net) Deerfield, IL. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 25 to 50 Feet. Water: 79 to 81 F, calm. Unique Sports of Aruba provided an enjoyable series of dives from very shallow (Pedernales wreck-25ft.) to the Sonesta airplanes at 90 ft. There were never more than 8 divers and divemasters were knowledgeable and able to find interesting critters; I saw 3 octopi on one dive during the day! Lots of smaller, colorful fish and healthy invertebrates on every dive, but not many big animals. Did see one enormous Southern stingray, and several morays. Wrecks are abundant, and the Antilla is particularly interesting if you've never actually gone through one before. Everyone was extremely friendly and helpful; they even helped with an emergency repair to my BC. The water was a bit cold for even those with a 3mm wet suit; after 40-50 minutes on the shallower sites, several of us were pretty chilled. Because they

follow a similar schedule every week, they print where they plan to dive, with a description, so you can plan your week's activities in advance. Aruba has lots of good restaurants, gambling, shopping and even movie theaters, so there's lots to do for non-divers as well. Get an "Aruba plus" card in advance to get 10% off lots of things, including dives and restaurants. (www.visitaruba.com/uniquesports)

THE BAHAMAS

The Bahamas are easily accessible from Florida and excellent for long weekends, with pretty reefs (though many are affected by algae), decent tropicals, and plenty of resorts that feed sharks. ... Keep hurricane season, June through October, in mind; winter weather from December to March means mid-70s, chilly water, and sweaters in the evening; average nighttime temperature is in the mid-60s, but can drop into the 50s if winter air blows off the continent. ... Out-island are resorts small and personal, but the best diving is now reached by live-aboards.

Andros Island

Small Hope Bay Lodge, October 2003, Nicole Elise, Wilton Manors, FL. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 90 to 120 Feet. Water: 79 to 81 F, calm, no currents. As soon as you arrive and get checked in at the bar overlooking the clearest water that I have ever seen, you feel instantly relaxed. The shore

staff and the dive staff were helpful, professional, and friendly. The rooms were comfortable and the food was great! With an all-inclusive place I am sometimes wary about how the food will be, but they do a great job here. They also allow you behind the bar to make your own drinks if the bartender is not around. The diving was phenomenal with the Ocean Blue Hole being my favorite dive. They do the first level of this dive as part of the regular program with a maximum of 100 feet. The geological formations are amazing and the fish and corals at 60 feet were beautiful. After doing first level, I couldn't resist doing second level as a Specialty Dive. This was just me, the divemaster, and a pair of the biggest midnight blue parrot fish that I have ever seen (they were bigger than big Nassau groupers). Anyway, the dive blew me away (max depth 145 feet). As far as the other dives, they have a fun shark dive with a frozen chum ball that allows you to swim around a bit if you like (no arms locked kneeling on the sand). Other great dives that I did were Diana's Dungeons, Brad's Mountain, the Coliseum, Giant Staircase, and more. We saw dolphins off of the dock around 6:00 p.m. a few nights, a very nice segue into cocktail hour. This was definitely the best dive trip that I ever had. Pack shampoo and conditioner as they do not supply it in the rooms (you can purchase it in the gift shop along with a variety of other things). They are truly all-inclusive so there were no surprises when I checked out, and that was very nice. Rinse tank available on boat. Divemasters gave assistance passing cameras to guests

getting on and off the boat.
(www.smallhope.com)

Small Hope Bay Lodge, March 2004, Robert Duin (coachduin@hotmail.com) San Antonio, TX.

Experience: 83 dives. Vis: 40 to 80 feet. Water: 70–72 F. Very quiet, family-oriented site. Lots of kids to play with my kids (ages 11 and 18 — both divers). Operation very accommodating for more experienced divers. Great “blue holes”, Nitrox, and caring and attentive divemasters. Food was plentiful and tasty — great bar. Beautiful location. Hot tub and good snorkeling — lots to see. Cabins are simple, clean, and attractive — all facing the sea. Only problem — too much wind made it tough getting in and out of boat. No leeward side of island diving. Very healthy coral, lots of big fish, and the wall is awesome.

Small Hope Bay Lodge, June 2004, Jean and Bob Kirkpatrick (bojean1@bellsouth.net) Russellville, KY.

Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, no currents. Perfect place for a family vacation, from babies to grandparents. You feel at home as soon as you arrive. The staff — especially the locals — are friendly and accommodating. The food is served buffet style for lunch and dinner on a beautiful, shaded terrace, and is excellent. The staff takes care of younger children during cocktail hour and dinner, and plays with them while the adults enjoy their meal in peace. The bar is on the terrace, and all drinks are included. Breakfast is indoors, with a selection of hot and

cold dishes. There's a large lounge area, a library with reference books and game tables, a big playroom for children with a TV for videos, and a small shop. The resort is on a point with long beaches on each side and the dock in the center. The boats have center tank racks, which are hard to set up and cause traffic jams when people are between the seats and the tanks. Benches along the sides have covered storage, but you have to ask people to move to get to your items. They do furnish water, and a camera rinse tank, but there are no tables. You have to bring towels from your room. Tanks are loaded onboard, and you are responsible for getting all your gear to the boat. There is storage at the dock, but you go down a steep ladder to get to the boat. Nitrox is available at extra cost. The divemasters are nice about helping guests by lifting tanks for entries and exits. The reefs are not colorful and have a lot of algae. There are some interesting formations, such as the blue hole, and several speciality dives. Departing divers and snorkelers are given “Certificates of Accomplishment,” which are nice keepsakes. Three of our group were the first to ever take courses titled “Beach Ranger” and “Beach Naturalist.” They were given diplomas and T-shirts. Another favorite activity is a walk down to the creek which flows into the sea near the resort, and swimming or snorkeling there. Fishing is also available, and there are nature walks. A fabric called Androsia is produced nearby, and a trip to this building to make your own design can be arranged. It's hot. The cottages, which are along one of the beaches, are not

air conditioned, and the ceiling and floor fans don't work well enough to cool in the summer months. Naps are almost impossible, unless you're happy in a hammock along the beach, hopefully with a little breeze. Sleeping at night was uncomfortable. The cottages are basic — some more spacious than others — and have no phones or TVs. We compare it to summer camp, and not a fancy camp, at that. There's also a great need for shade on the long swimming beach. With young children, there's nowhere else to go during the day, as the rooms are too hot, and there are no umbrellas or covered thatches to get you out of the sun.

Cat Island

Hawk's Nest Resort and Marina, April 2004, Chuck and Nancy Anson (nanson@owl.csusm.edu), Oceanside, CA. Experience: 501-1000 dives Vis: 60 to 200 Feet. Water: 79 to 82 F, calm, no currents. Hawk's Nest is on the south end of Cat Island, a 45-minute taxi ride from the airport. Our package included transfers, room, meals, diving, taxes, and gratuity, a bargain over the ala cart pricing. Drinks are available at their nice honor bar. This is an up scale Resort and Marina with a dirt landing strip for private planes. The airstrip brings private pilots and small planes and the marina brings fishermen, sea faring travelers and small yachts. The diving was super good with visibility at 150'+ on the remote walls. There were caves, swim throughs, cuts, grooves, pinnacles, vertical drops with spectacular views and good healthy coral, sponge, and sea fan

growth on the walls, most as good as Cozumel. At The Trench we were guided down an open trench about 8' wide to a cathedral like-cave about 40' long and 30' high, encrusted with beautiful coral and sponge growth, that opened into the deep blue water at 105' to a wall that was covered with plate coral, huge barrel sponges, and large healthy gorgonians. There were large clusters of black coral under ledges and schools of horse eyed jacks, Bermuda chub, permit, ocean trigger, and yellow striped jacks. Shark encounters were limited to one Caribbean reef and a nurse shark. The shallower dives were good for fish life, large schools of the usual Caribbean tropicals and small critters, but vis dropped to 60'-80' and the flat bottom areas had the now new plague of algae. The dive operation is well run for a 2-person shop. Randy, the DM and boat captain, and wife JR handle the diving, as well as helping to manage the resort. The dive boat is a 28' fiberglass Merc Panga powered by twin Mercury outboard engines to get to remote sites quickly. There is no head but it is covered and rides comfortably. Aluminum 80s, with fills of 3000+, were racked in the center of the boat with seating along both sides. With six or more divers this will be difficult when moving around and gearing up. All safety gear, DAN oxygen, and radio calls to the resort prior to each dive with location and estimated time back on board, and another call when everyone was back was standard procedure. Randy has the dive sites on GPS and he leads a good dive. He lets you do your own thing once he knows your ability. Sturdy aluminum ladder. You could

hand up your gear before boarding the boat. He enjoys his work. The food was very good with a varied menu. At breakfast they take your lunch and dinner orders so meals were on time and cooked as you liked them. The staff gets to know you quickly and were friendly and efficient. The pool next to the dining room and bar area was a refreshing place to go after diving. The rooms were large and comfortable, with tile floors, air conditioning, king-sized bed, plenty of closet and drawer space, sliding door to a patio with a view of the ocean, nice sized bathroom with beautiful tile work, and plenty of hot water. The rooms had recently been refinished Bicycle from the resort to the marina about a half mile. Two trips per day for all dive days. Does require agility for the bikes and at the dock getting on and off the dive boat, especially at low tide. It's not valet diving, except that Randy does help with gearing up and exiting the water after the dive. A water cooler with clean water was provided for our cameras. The DM was professional with photo equipment handling. The boat is small and no specific dry camera area available. (www.hawks-nest.com)

Hawk's Nest Resort, July 2004,
Karin Doggett (kardog@flash.net),
Ashland, VA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 85 F, choppy. Wonderful vacation. My buddy suffered from DCS last year after diving in Coz so we were looking for a laid back and safe facility. Randy, the divemaster, was patient, allowing us to decide what type of dive to do and also willing to take us on more

advanced dives when we chose. We had him to ourselves for all but two dives. We would meet somewhere around 10:00 a.m. Randy was both divemaster and captain so he'd tie up to the mooring, throw over the anchor into sand (and dig it down deep once he was in the water), call our location in and ETA back on board to his wife, J. R. in the office. We did some wall dives and tunnels in our first dives when it felt right. Then we'd head back to the marina for lunch he'd called in on the radio. After lunch and a brief rest, we'd gear up again and go to the shallow dive. We'd get back sometimes rather late. There are no night dives, due to sharks I'm told. We'd move our gear to the locked, airy area to rinse and dry before either getting a ride or riding our bikes back (over 1/4 mile) to the area of the resort where our rooms, honor bar, and restaurant were located. We really enjoyed the bikes once we got them, as opposed to rides. Rides back and forth were never a problem. We carried some gear back to our rooms in our mesh gear bags and this worked fine on bikes. Coral is covered with algae in the shallow sites especially. Did not see many large fish, though on deeper dives did see schools of spadefish, blue parrotfish and jacks. The tunnels were fun and exited on the wall at about 90 feet. Randy was an excellent DM and teacher and we felt safe with him. My buddy's BC was slowly self-inflating and he taught her how to deal with that by descending, adjusting buoyancy, then disconnecting line. My computer flooded and he loaned me one, no charge. The resort was great. Others working the resort

were nice; Randy and J. R. were running the resort and they did a great job. The food was generally great, esp. the fresh fish the boats sell to the resort. Our price included room, food, taxes and service charges, transfers and diving so all we had to pay for were purchases (from gift shop) and the drinks from the honor bar (including soft drinks and juices) and tips for bar and diving. We had a decent room overlooking the water. The AC proved fine as we'd need a light blanket by morning. Bathroom was fine, including nice toiletries. Things can go wrong on a small island. The last day the electricity was to be out on the entire island for 6 hours or the septic might get backed up. Cat Island is minimally developed. Our taxi driver took us on a tour (confirm prices first as he really overcharged us) of the southern end of the island and we saw the two other main resorts, Greenwood and Fernandez Bay. I think Hawk's Nest suited us better as rooms were ocean view/front and meals were included. Nothing was provided for UWPs. I had a digital Canon with housing and poured fresh water on housing and wrapped in damp towels between dives and could wash it off once back at shop.

Eleuthera

Valentine's Diving, Bahama House Inn, May 2004, Clem Clapp (cclapp@bellsouth.net), Maplesville, AL.

Experience: 251-500 dives Vis: 40 to 90 Feet. Water: 76 to 78 F, choppy, surge. Disappointed in diving. Did not do the Current Cut due to inappropriate tide. Corals were minimal. Not a lot of

fish other than smaller tropicals. Nice dive boat personnel. Seemed a little bored but were pleasant and helpful. Dive shop people helpful and attentive. Bahama House Inn (B&B) was nice place within walking distance to whatever you wanted to do. Accommodating owners. Very fine breakfast. This small island has been referred to as the Nantucket of the Bahamas. Cute little brightly painted cottages with picket fences. People were friendly and helpful. Golf cart was the main mode of transportation for everyone. Food was expensive at tourist restaurants. We dined at cafes generally visited by locals and enjoyed good meals at much lower prices. (www.valentinesdive.com)

Grand Bahama

Sunn Odyssey, Westin, March 2004, Daniel E. Spitzer, M.D, Suffern, NY. Dives logged: 350. Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 75 F. The husband/wife team of Nick and Karen are wonderful and dive-master Devito was great to dive with and discuss politics too! One of the best dives I've ever done was "Ben's Cavern" a cove, inland, with the top 25' fresh water, and salt below. Not to be missed! (Sunnodysseydivers.com)

Sunn Odyssey, Island Seas Resort, May 2004, J. Ray Behnke, D.M.D. Taylorsville, UT. Experience: 251-500 dives Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 Ft, calm, no Currents. We took our newly-certified "boss" and a co-worker couple with us. I prefer to not use a descent line since I usually have my hands full with camera gear and am prone to "mal-de-mer." When I

entered the water, I bounced back up to receive my camera and bobbed back down a couple of feet to get going down. Back on board he let everyone know how bad I was for not going down the line. Next dive, after receiving the camera I turned to find the line and without realizing it had drifted a little under the dive platform and it slammed down, gashing my head and giving me a view of "Starwars". On the bottom I saw a beautiful pair of midnight parrotfish and was concentrating on photographing them and didn't realize that he'd called everyone back to the boat. He started over to me and I noticed everyone on the ascent line and went over to follow him up. Onboard he went almost into a tirade pointing out how I had left my buddy (actually she had left me when told to go up) and I was in a decompression dive from my negligence. He said he had read it on my computer. I mused how he could see my wrist computer from 8 feet above me when I was hanging onto the rope with that hand, but dropped the whole thing. On shore I scrolled back to the dive and showed him that I was two bars away from the caution zone and asked how he thought we could enter a decompression dive when the maximum depth was 55 feet and time was 45 minutes. He stated that at least he had gotten me up onto the boat. The diving was good with the normal amount of sea life. Sunn Odyssey would be very good for beginning divers but my wife and I were not happy with the restrictions. Nick's wife, Karen, is a jewel in helping every way she can, as are the other divemasters. No E-6 facilities,

have rinse bucket, dry area is small shelf behind front window.

Sunn Odyssey Divers, Ritz Beach Resort and Ocean Reef, August 2004, Catherine and Gary (cgfredman@att.net) Mercer Island, WA.

Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 84 to 86 F, calm, choppy, no currents. Karen and Nick Rolle have run this operation for 25 years and are extremely safety conscious. Their current facilities might seem minimal, but they are building a major dive facility. This is a family run operation, very friendly and very helpful. Karen runs the office, Nick does most of the instruction from Discover Dive to all kinds of advanced certifications, and their children (ages 17- 25) handle the boat and lead the dives. They were fun to talk to and very knowledgeable and highly experienced. They provided good dive and boat briefings. Although we have our own gear, their rental equipment was well maintained. While one person led the dive the second brought up the rear with the third person staying on the boat. You had plenty of time to stop, hang, and watch without being rushed ahead. They checked to make sure everyone was OK and did a terrific job of pointing out interesting finds and even herding special subjects into camera range! They limit their boat to 10 people and several times there were only 4 or less. We had a variety of dives from wrecks to coral canyons and often finished with a shallow second dive requiring a smaller surface interval and a good 50+ minutes of exploring. Karen makes an effort to see that you experience a vari-

ety of dive sites but doesn't follow a rigid daily schedule as some operators do — i.e., if it's Tuesday, it must be Theo's wreck. Hey often asked us where we wanted to go or what we wanted to see. A few dives were canceled due to weather but we also had a tropical depression moving through. We liked being able to rinse our gear back at the dock, leave it hanging out to dry, and knowing that it would be locked up at night ready for the next day. We had great dives.

New Providence

Dive Dive Dive, November 2003, Howard and Geri Block, Juno Beach, FL. They are away from the casinos and the high priced restaurants. We had a lovely apartment that was spotlessly clean. The staff even were able to set us up for Nitrox. We never touched a tank or any equipment. They cleaned and set up daily. We were able to do 4 dives a day. Very reasonably priced. Great shark diving on the "Run way" about 25 sharks. This was not a feeding. (www.divedivedive.com)

Dive Dive Dive, August 2004, Chuck and Nancy Anson (nanson@owl.csusm.edu), Oceanside, CA. Experience: 501-1000 dives Vis: 70 to 90 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm, no currents. Their web site was informative and their responses to emails was prompt and thorough. They pick up at the airport and hotels They offer grocery transportation. Their onsite, individual one bed room units are large, well decorated, and clean, with cable TV, air conditioning, king size bed, tile

floors, spacious bathroom (with a tub), and one of the best furnished kitchenettes that we have encountered. Ask in advance for the one next to the canal. It has the best view through the sliding glass door and you are next to the patio where they serve fresh baked bread, tea and coffee each morning for their guests. The dive operation is next door with the dive boat at the canal's edge for easy entry and exits, rinse tank and drying facilities are close by. The whole facility is fenced except for that bordering the canal and they have friendly dogs in residence who keep things safe. The operation shows wear but is not run down. The dive boat is large with marine head, seating along both sides with ample storage under, aluminum 80's behind the seats, room for six divers, and a dive platform and easy exit aluminum ladders. There is a boat captain on board at all times and a DM on all dives and they both assist with gear handling. Safety gear and DAN oxygen was present as was radio. The diving was good and varied. We dove where shark feeds are routine and were visited by three large reef sharks. The School house, a great dive, was shallow, 30' max, had the most life and lots of small critters. Four wrecks that had various stages of encrustment. If the boat was going out for afternoon dives and there was space available, the guests could dive for free if they were on a 2-tank morning dive package. There is so much algae on the coral, except where there is some current, that it was somewhat disappointing. The staff has since changed at Dive Dive Dive and, I understand, the operation is for sale.

San Salvador

Riding Rock Inn, February 2004, Nancy Sack, San Francisco, CA.

Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 100 to 200 Feet. Water: 75 to 76 F, calm. Great trip. Weather had been rough before we arrived, but calmed day of arrival and we got out on the afternoon trip. Pleasantly surprised to see John Paul (the divemaster) & his wife Susan who we had previously dove with in Andros. Bruce, boat captain, also very helpful and accommodating. Tanks switched out for you, BC's brought to you at the ladder — spoiled! Hot showers and good facilities back at the docks. Excellent swim- thrus, dramatic chimneys. Turtles and sharks were seen fairly commonly, hammerheads on two occasions. Clean rooms at the hotel, good food and service in the lodge. A very relaxing, low-key place to dive with enough variety for both beginner or advanced divers. (www.ridingrock.com)

Walker's Cay

Walker's Cay Hotel & Marina, December 2003, Robert Morris morrisr1@wyeth.com, Wayne, Pa.

Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 20 to 50 Feet. Water: 73 to 77 Ft, choppy, surge. The shop took me out when I was the only diver. They use a nice 42 ft .turbo drive boat (no prop). The dives consisted of many caverns and swim-throughs and were short distances from the shop. I wore a 1.5 mm wetsuit and became cold. When other divers were on board (five divers altogether), the briefings were short and did not let the

novice divers realize what they would be getting into on swim-throughs. Some of those swim-throughs were long and had many turns and sometimes very dark ahead and a few divers were intimidated but felt that they had no option but to follow the divemaster. I'd rather see 2 divemasters on this type of dive so that one divemaster could take those who were afraid around the tunnels and meet the group on the other side. This small group became separated at one point and it was quite a while before the divemaster went to look for the missing. Saw many sharks (blacktips, Caribbean reefs, nurse and bull sharks) and more spotted eagle rays than anywhere I've been. Once, 8 Eagle Rays swam in a line along a reef. Not many regular Caribbean fish, only a few angels, trumpetfish, tangs, etc. Reefs in good condition; Shark Rodeo interesting and well done. (www.walkerscay.com)

BARBADOS

Barbados is busy and crowded, with lots of fast traffic, big splashy resorts, and restaurants galore. ... There's ordinary Caribbean diving with tropical fish, although big ones are rare, but it's fine for beginners or for a dive or two on a golf holiday. ... You still can find century-old bottles in the harbor and the wreck of the *Stavronikita* is interesting, but jammed with tourist divers. ... Keep hurricane season in mind.

Dive Shop LTD, Casuarinas Beach Club, June 2004, Ray Fealko (raydar

@netlink.net), Cortland, OH. Vis: 80-100 feet. Water: 80-81 F. Experience: 120. Beautiful place both in and out of the water. The reefs are lush and healthy with a wealth of small fish and lots of turtles on every dive. The Stavronikta wreck was impressive. Resort only rated a 2 star, but a much nicer resort than most others we visited. It is a lush and tropical paradise. It is home to monkeys, birds, and is the nesting ground for turtles. We got to see 2 come in from the ocean and lay their eggs on our beach. The owner gives tours to the guests. We did a bicycle tour of the north coast that turned into a fascinating day, with the owner explaining everything about her island home. Ate at Ostins Fish market and had the best fresh fish for \$10. It's easy to use the public transportation to get wherever you need to go inexpensively. It's a beautiful, friendly island and a great place to take families. (www.casuarina.com)

Reefers and Wreckers, Sandy Beach, February 2004, William Edwards, Placerville, CA. Vis: 50-60

ft. Water: 80-82 F. The amenities were good, but not great. However, the beach was fantastic. The restaurants in the St. Lawrence Gap area were very good to excellent. I would especially recommend David's Place located right on the ocean. I signed on for two dives with Reefers and Wreckers Dive Operation. They were very accommodating and picked me up at my resort even though their dive shop was an hour's drive away. My first dive was a wreck dive (an old freighter) and the most interesting thing about it was that