

pools of water. When we shut off our lights, the pools were full of lantern fish, their faces glowing! A bare hand, in the water was soon covered by tiny red shrimp, scouring fingers and nails for a meal. The diving was very good. The visibility of 150 feet was superb. Marcus quietly questioned my dive buddy, found out what I liked to do, diving-wise (about anything), found out what kind of crackers I like to eat, chased all over the island until he found them (there's only three stores) and did everything he could to make me smile. Not an easy task. He was more of a host than a divemaster. His girlfriend from Switzerland was visiting and he invited us on a crew-only sunset cruise.

**Lebens Diving Services, March 2005, Peter Donahue (donahueelectric@aol.com), Waltham, MA.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 20 to 50 Feet. Water: 67 to 67 F, choppy, no currents. Lebens Diving Service in Bremer Bay is a six-hour drive from Perth. We carried our own tanks and had them filled at his store in a water bath (dangerous at best) and found out we would be charged double if we returned with less than 30 bar in our own tanks! This was for "my protection" and was never adequately explained. I was afraid I was in for a long couple of days with a dictatorial dive master. Australia is a country where divers still dry dust caps with a blast of air from their tanks ... a dangerous and unsafe practice and bothersome to my ears. Craig took us in a Zodiac in search of leafy sea dragons — an exotic creature that only lives in this part of the world. Within five minutes, he pointed out two. A small school of weedy sea dragons was nearby. We

ended up going separate ways and each of us returned on their own to the boat. We dived our own profiles and did whatever we wanted. A fishing buddy spotted a blue whale but we never saw it. I was so cold that Craig rented me his new dry suit for \$10. The water was not as clear on the reefs he took us to. But there were many small animals. Diving was \$80 US for two single tank boat dives with weights. Air fills were \$6.50 and we brought our own weights. There was no food, but there was fresh water on the boat. We dived the marine trail which was interesting and Craig sent us on our own afternoon shore dives. We found leafy sea dragons, weedy sea dragons, and spent one dive in the harbor with a sea lion.

## CHINA

### Hong Kong

**Ocean Sky Divers, Park Hotel, May 2005, Roger Gray, Annandale, VA.**

Experience: 300+ dives. Vis: 6 to 15 feet. Water: 78 F, calm and flat. Had set up overnight live-aboard to Marine Park, 5-7 dives. It was canceled because of rain. No storms or wind. But they ran local dive, in the rain. I did a 2-tank dive with them. No soft coral, hard coral is in bad shape. Almost no fish at all, only a few crabs. Nothing to see. Don't go! I did tell them that it does not rain underwater.

## INDONESIA

Indonesia is the hottest dive destination on the planet, thanks to

superlative diving. Good airfares and inexpensive food and hotels make it financially reachable for many North Americans who can afford at least two weeks' time. Bali's culture is fantastic (especially if you go inland) and the diving is good (but even better elsewhere) and inexpensive. Bali-based live-aboards regularly get excellent diving near and around Komodo Island and passengers visits the famed Komodo dragons on land. And, the live-aboards are now searching out new destinations. Perhaps no more diverse marine life exists anywhere than around the Raja Ampat islands, offshore Irian Jaya, which shares the same landmass as Papua New Guinea. Terrorism has put a cloud over Bali, but major dive areas can be reached without flying to Bali first. Check with the State Department before traveling, but nearly all diving is far from terrorist targets.

## Bali

**Aqua Marine, Amankila, Mel McCombie/Harris Friedberg (Mmccombie@aol.com), New Haven, CT.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 100 Feet. Water: 72 to 82 F, choppy, surge, currents. This is our second trip with Aquamarine Diving, headed by expat Brit Annabel Thomas, and we have nothing but raves. Her dive staff is expert at finding the unusual, and both of us love the service (gear carried, comfortable transport, nice boat). The staff knocked itself out to find interesting animals for us. As a travel agent, her recommendations for hotels covers

the charming budget site to the blow the budget site, and she takes care of every detail. I have enormous regard for her and shall book our next trip to Bali with Aquamarine. Amankila is amazing. Not only is the setting in the hills gorgeous, the villas luxurious, the food delicious, but it is the service that stands out. Warm, prompt, detailed — whether a pedicure or caring for our dive gear. Currents are strong and unpredictable; thermoclines abound; and excellent buoyancy control is a necessity. If you have the chops, however, you will have a great experience underwater and on land!

**Aqua Marine Diving, March 2005, Sally Schroeder (s72767@yahoo.com), Port Orange, FL.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 10 to 40 Feet. Water: 68 to 72 F., calm. Great muck diving, simple walk in with flat black sand, no surges, no rocks to climb over. Very fine black silt so be careful not to fin the bottom. Quiet back lagoon with a large tidal change. Follow the dive guides recommendations as to when the tides are best for diving. Otherwise the vis went to near zip. Currents were never an issue. Aqua Marine Diving set me up with my own driver, van with aircro and reading library of diving magazines and books, my own excellent dive guide and tanks and weights. We went where ever I wished for 4 dives daily. I picked Secret Bay for the great muck critters which we found in abundance. Frogfish, lots of different colored sea horses, many fingered dragonettes, flatheads, snake eels, grass flats critters all in green, razorfish, juvenile pennant batfish, 8-10 variety of eels, lots of sea lettuce critters, sea hares, pipefish. My

guide was patient about hunting for hard to see critters and always finding interesting photo subjects. Cost were reasonable for the diving/driving/accom/some meals. Accommodation choices all are simple, “relatively “clean and 5 minutes drive from the dive site. The only choice of on site accom. was really grim — even the grubbiest back packer would give this one a miss. We are talking about 1\* places as OK. It’s a remote area. If you need 3-4\* it’s a 40-50 minute drive away. Only down side would be piling into a car to wash camera at the hotel. Concrete area next to black sand walk in entry point. Overhead showers for rinsing off you and gear, picnic table sort of gear up area. No facilities for camera stuff, just benches and a shade tree or tow. No wash area specifically for your camera. Bring your own plastic bin.

**Aqua Marine Diving, March 2005, Sally Schroeder. (s72767@yahoo.com), Port Orange, FL.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 75 to 100 Feet. Water: 72 to 74 F., calm, surge. Excellent arrangement with Aqua Marine Diving for my own driver, dive guide (who was great), van w/diving reading material and airco, tanks and weights. I could stay at any priced accommodation and do as many dives daily as I felt like. Good driver knew how long it would take to various areas and drove carefully. All the AMD staff speak good English and are knowledgeable about the diving conditions, critters you are likely to see, helping with gear, great at finding good photo subjects. Good value. Large variety of fishes, big schools of jacks, lots of color, small corals with good bottom cover. Very pretty site.

I’m not into shore diving, but this was easy and great dives. Each resort had a wash area/bin for gear and separate for cameras, gear setup area was also OK. Water entry was quiet when I was there. But with a bit of wind or surge could be a real challenge with camera gear.

**Archipelago Dive, Taman Sari Resort, September 2005, John M. Artim (jartim@uistyle.com), Oakland, CA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 40 to 80 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, currents, no currents. The diving was good but not spectacular. Menjangan’s dives were the most interesting, with a nice variety of coral, smaller fish, and small critters. The food Ketut provided on the boat—thanks to his talented Auntie!—was excellent Indonesian fare. There was another dive operation at the resort but we did not have time to try them. Just offshore of the Taman Sari Resort there is a substantial effort at growing an artificial reef on wire frames. They are attempting to accelerate the process by applying a low DC voltage to the frame. The coral has not filled in much but there are a few sizeable heads growing on the frames. This is all an easy snorkel from the front of the resort. We had a deluxe room for \$60 US night. This was spacious with a lovely walled outdoor bath area, a porch, and a separate screened porch “daybed.” The resort has a spa (\$12 US for a 1-hour massage) and a decent restaurant. The pool and beach areas are comfortable and restaurant service is available at tables under the trees along the beach. We took a guided walk around the village and up a nearby hill—worth it for the view of the surrounding area and a peek at local life. UW Photography

Comments: Ketut, our dive master, was good about pointing out interesting creatures including many pygmy sea horses on a fan during a wall dive at Menjangan Island. No freshwater bucket on the dive boat.

**Bali International Diving Professionals (BDP), October 2004, Bob and Gayle Bringas (robertbringas@email.msn.com), Gaston, OR.** Experience:

400 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 ft. Water: 73 to 78 F, surge, strong currents. Three days of drift diving around Nusa Penida. We were fortunate to see Mola Mola in Crystal Bay and Gamat Bay. Dive skins and Polartecs were marginal, but it was the end of the trip for us and we didn't want to use the 2 mil wetsuits. Manta Point lived up to its name. It was the coldest water of the whole trip and the longest dive (70 minutes), but we couldn't tear ourselves away from the huge, majestic mantas. The dive operation is well run. They will rinse your gear and bring it to the boat each day. You waded out to the dive boat in Sanur Bay, but they have someone carry all your gear for you. They listened to what we wanted to do and did their best to accommodate us.

**Diving 4 Images, August 2005, Lorne (lorneedy@hotmail.com), St. Marys, Ontario.** Experience: 101-250 dives.

Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 85 F, calm. Put your hands in the hands of the experts and get 12 days of diving and spa treats for under the cost of a live-aboard. I tell people what we paid for our driver . . . they remark how reasonable and I add: "They throw in the SUV and gas." Secret Bay and Zen Beaches are new discoveries. As Diving

4 Images to arrange your trip along with the spa experience of Bali. Best single dive in all my experiences which include PNG, Coral Sea. Best week of diving ever. First dive in Bali saw 20 Lion Fish, three different seahorse and at least 20 different Nudibranch plus octopus, eels and lots of weird shrimp etc ... 50 steps from my S85 a night beach villa.

**Mimpi Resort, October 2004, Bob and Gayle Bringas (robertbringas@email.msn.com), Gaston, OR.** Experience:

400 dives. Vis: 20 to 70 ft. Water: 73 to 81 F, calm, flat. Four days of diving from the dive center at the Mimpi Resort. Visibility was 60 to 70 feet; reefs healthy. NO big stuff, but lots of unusual stuff: leaf fish, frogfish, Mandarin fish, orangutan crab, jawfish with eggs in his mouth. The dive center arranged two dives at Gillimanuk Bay. 20-foot visibility, water in the mid-70s, but doable in dive skins and Polartecs. Saw seahorses and devilfish, a first for us. The Mimpi Resort has a mineral hot springs on the grounds. We splurged and got the room with a private courtyard and hot tub. Each afternoon, as we got back from diving, the hot tub was filling with mineral water. The hotel spa offered massages and facials at reasonable prices .

**Mimpi Resort, December 2004, Lori Brown, Chris Green (DoctorSLB2001@yahoo.com), Bellevue, WA.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis:

to 70 Feet. Water: 88 to 92 F., calm. Liberty was hit by a Japanese torpedo while it was in Lombok in 1942. It was towed to Tulamben beach and left there. In 1963, a violent volcano eruption on

Bali (inexplicably) caused the ship to slide and sink right off the beach. The wreck is accessible as a shore dive. The beach is not a sandy beach but rather smooth, round, black, volcanic rocks. It is challenging to navigate over the rocks into the water. We set up our tanks at the dive shop. Then, local women carried the tanks, on their heads, over the treacherously rocky beach, to the entry point. One of the women carrying tanks was pregnant. The wreck is in several pieces and the coral growth and fish life are unbelievable. Indescribably imposing mass and shape. We returned in the morning, to photograph it with fewer divers about (there were about 10 the first day). At 25 feet, there was a school of 15 bumphead parrot fish. It was a memorable sight. The only other dive we did on our limited trip was the wall called the Drop Off. It's kind of a mucky reef. There was a huge purple fan about 6 feet by 6 feet and a blue spotted ray. I also saw numerous yellow margin trigger fish that seemed to tag along behind us. This dive sported numerous nudibranchs. The room was small but clean. There was a queen size bed and a loft with a twin bed for our son. The grounds were beautifully kept and their was a koi pond right outside our door. The ocean view was quite relaxing. The staff was unobtrusive but always helpful. My husband dropped his wallet on the grounds and it was returned by a gardener — with over \$300 in cash in it. The restaurant was outdoors and the Indonesian meals were good. The nasi-goreng, rendang, and Tom-yung-kung soup were all excellent. Fairly aggressive locals hawk-ing souvenirs who wouldn't take no for

an answer. The Mimpri Resort is about 2.5 hour drive from Denpasar Airport on a narrow winding road (I recommend something for motion sickness). The trip was through some breathtaking terraced rice paddies and imposing mountains and valleys.

**Mimpri Resort, September 2005, John M. Artim (jartim@uistyle.com), Oakland, CA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 35 to 60 Feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, calm, surge, no currents. We only did one dive from Mimpri, the last dive of a trip that included a live-aboard stay. This was to the patch reef just offshore Mimpri Resort. The dive was a good one. The guide was helpful and knowledgeable. The dive crew at the shop was helpful and did a good job rinsing my BC and other equipment. The resort is a good one. The accommodations are excellent. The food was just okay (we ate dinner out at an excellent restaurant down the street that included a Balinese dance performance). The service is okay, but the interactions with staff were not the pleasant ones I expect from Balinese. Mimpri has a beautiful pool above the cobble beach and ample chaise lounges. Take advantage of the massages on your chaise overlooking the sea — wonderful and the cost is only \$7US!

**Tausch Termina, September 2005, John M. Artim (jartim@uistyle.com), Oakland, CA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 40 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, calm, no currents. The diving at Tausch Terminal was good, the guides were good, but the resort staff and quality of the restaurant was not up to the standards of the other Balinese resorts we stayed at. The staff was a bit gruff

(unusual for Bali, where everyone is quite friendly). The food was mediocre.

**Tulamben Wreck Divers, August 2004, Charles Menbeck (blusky79@aol.com), Chicago, IL.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 40 to 50 Feet. Water: 80 to 80 F., choppy. Did a shore dive on the Liberty Wreck at Tulamben on Bali's East Coast, Bali's most popular dive. The history of this vessel dates back to World War II and in the early 1960's when a major volcanic eruption pushed it back into the sea. Suited up at the dive shop then walked across the road and down a rocky path to the volcanic beach. The women at the dive shop carry your equipment. They carry the tank by balancing it on their head as they walk. The wreck starts 200 feet off shore. Sponges and corals were abundant and healthy. Plenty of fish life. There's a saying that you will discover a new species on every dive here. My dive guide led me on an efficient profile as this wreck will allow you to dive between 80-90+ feet all the way up to 10 feet. Lots to see on the entire profile. Fish aren't fearful of divers. When doing a safety stop on the sand, many decent sized fish came up close swimming in circles around us leading me to believe that people have been feeding them. Worth the 2 hour drive from South Bali.

**Uli Aritonang, Rama Candidasa, May 2005, Carl Scott (carl@carlscott.net), Spring, TX.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 75 to 84 F., choppy. Rama Candidasa is a first rate seaside resort in a small town on the Northeast side of Bali. Some of the nicest reefs in Bali, and it is about an hour from Tulamben and Amed,

which offer excellent photo opportunities, but little coral. The facilities are in excellent condition, and the staff is warm and friendly. Rate is a less than US\$50 per day, including breakfast. The pool and restaurant were being renovated. Excellent restaurants within walking (or \$1 cab ride) distance, and prices are around US\$3. Uli Aritonang (tarulia@attglobal.net) is a PADI instructor who lives in Jakarta. She leads trips to Bali, Komodo, Alor, Manado and Lembah Strait (N. Sulawesi), Sorong, and Sangalaki. She will accommodate from one to as many as you want to bring. She puts together economical packages and knows the best places to stay, depending on the luxury you want. You decide where to dive each day, though she is capable of putting together a good schedule. You dive your way, on your schedule. She will even help you to barter with local craft vendors. I rate diving good to average by Pacific standards. With the exception of one area, corals are a little sparse. However, that one hosts huge table corals and a dizzying array of fish both large and small. Never saw sharks, mantas, or turtles, but there were bumphead parrotfish, Napoleon wrasse, and tuna, and nearly all tropicals. Macro life was abundant, especially in Amed (where the coral is starting a comeback from the last el niño) and Tulamben, which hosts a nice wreck just offshore. Water temps near Candidasa were in the mid 70's during the first few days, but typically hover around 82-84 F. Bali is a charming island, and its people hold their traditional way of life dear. They are Hindus, and their religious practices are a focal point of daily life, making for interesting photography and cultural

exchange. Carvings of wood, bone, and stone can be found everywhere, along with handmade textiles, woven items. The Balinese are warm and meek. Rama Candidasa does not cater heavily to divers, but the small resort next door provides dive services and excellent shore facilities. The boats anywhere in Bali are traditional wooden outriggers, made from a single tree, so they are narrow and deep. While adequate for diving and equipment storage, there are no specific facilities for photographers on any of the boats.

## Borneo

**R Extra Divers Nabucco, Nabucco Island Resort, July 2005, Kim Fox (foxoreilly@yahoo.com), APO, AP.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Water: 76 to 80 F, calm, choppy. Nabucco Resort provides Indonesia's topnotch diving. The dive sites are widely varied, and they plan dives to provide a variety and to fit with the weather and divers' schedules. The biodiversity is incredible, and you can see much of it from this one resort, including the so-called jellyfish lake at Kakaban Island, about an hour's boat ride from Nabucco. This saltwater lake contains nonstinging jellyfish in abundance, along with other creatures that have adapted. Snorkeling in the jellyfish lake is a must when visiting this area. Sangalaki Island, famous for mantas, can also be dived from Nabucco, but we only saw one manta. Most diving from Nabucco is easy, although a couple of sites have strong currents. There is no shore diving, though it is possible to snorkel in the shallow areas. The resort is beautiful and peaceful, an island to itself with only 15 or so bungalows. The

food was mostly quite good, although the late and slowly-served dinners are taxing for families with children. The resort staff, including dive boat captains and other dive staff, was friendly, helpful and accommodating. Getting to Nabucco is not easy, with several possible routes that end in a long and somewhat uncomfortable boat ride from mainland Kalimantan to Nabucco, which lies inside the U-shaped Maratua Island. The trip is worth it to experience the excellent diving and a well-run resort. We stopped at several other resorts during our diving day-trips, and for prices similar to others, Nabucco clearly had superior facilities and services.

## Raja Ampat Islands

**Sorido Bay Resort, June 2005, Wafa Abdelati (wabdelati@hotmail.com), Washington, DC.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 20 to 50 Feet. Besides living up to its reputation as one of the best dive sites in the world, the best features of this pristine location are the excellent accommodation and service. The spacious chalets are tastefully decorated and you can sit on your private deck to listen to the birds and sounds of the water. The library must be one of the best at any dive site. Dinner conversation with our well-informed and well-traveled host was a treat. The dive guides are skilled and know the sites quite well. But you'll need to rely on the books for name identification. Better boats are planned in the near future and a new dive operator was to start soon. Well-worth the long travel time to get there and the mosquito bites I came home with.

## Sulawesi

**Kungkungan Bay Resort, July 2004, Gary Krippendorf (gskrippendorf@hotmail.com), Redwood City, CA.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 15 to 50 Feet. Water: 77 to 79 F, calm. I planned the Lembeh Strait portion of our trip via telephone and e-mail with Linda at the Kungkungan Bay Resort (KBR) office in Concord, CA. Linda was good at answering our questions, and we booked a 6-night inclusive package. The KBR van picked us up at the Santika Hotel as arranged for the 2.5 hour ride to the resort. The KBR resort was in excellent shape and it was clear that maintenance was being kept up. The restaurant had a mix of western and Asian dishes. The breakfast buffet could have used a method to keep the cooked dishes warm. The cottage suite rooms were clean with lots of room to move around. Although not air conditioned, only one night we felt too warm. The view of the Lembeh Strait from the veranda porch was fantastic. Lembeh Strait is known for its muck diving and strange critters. Water was smooth and most boat rides were 10-20 minutes to the dive sites. Our maximum depth was 90 feet, though we spent most of our time between 30 and 60 feet. Most sites were sand bottoms with scattered coral heads. A couple of the sites had more bommie type coral formations. A couple dive sites had litter and trash on the bottom. Finding an octopus in a broken beer bottle was interesting, but I wish he had a more natural home. Most days there were just the 4 of our group in the boat along with the boat captain and 2 dive

guides. My wife and I would have our own dive master to guide us while our 2 friends had their own dive master. As we dove, when one dive master found something interesting, he'd tap his tank to get the other dive master's attention to make sure all four of us got to see the find. Our dive masters were able to find all sorts of well-camouflaged and truly unbelievable critters. We'd have to look several times carefully to see the critters, even while being pointed at by our guides. Before each dive we'd get a briefing for the site, which listed the critters known to be in the area. The guides made sure we saw them along with many others. Seeing a flamboyant cuttlefish capture a snack and a hairy frogfish gulp down a passing fish was memorable. I wish my eyesight were better so I could have made out more detail when looking at the pygmy seahorses. Five diving days and 16 dives just scratched the surface. We saw so many different things on each dive that we couldn't begin to log it all. The four of us would start talking about what we saw during the boat ride back to the dock and we'd keep mentioning more and more, things that we could describe, but couldn't name. We spent time most evenings looking through marine life references in the lodge, but still couldn't find the names for a few of our finds. Taking digital photographs was a big help, because it provided a record with a timestamp. Small boats did not have any facilities for cameras. Cameras safely handled and stored on towels. Shore facilities are excellent.

**Kungkungan Bay Resort, May 2005, Fred Turoff (fturoff@temple.edu), Philadelphia, PA.** Experience: 501-1000

dives. Vis: 20 to 60 Feet. Water: 76 to 80 F, calm, no currents. The rooms are spacious and well-kept. The grounds are cared for daily, the staff friendly and helpful. A short walk to the restaurant, main building or dive center. A beautiful pool beckoned. The food was wonderful, with buffet service for both breakfast and lunch, while dinner was an order-your-meal service with an ample menu. If you did a night dive, someone met the boat to take your order so that the food would be ready post-dive. For three days a small termite swarm invaded my room and left 2-foot-diameter rings of droppings and wings. They resembled circles of pepper grounds, and were only a nuisance. Since there was lots of stuff in the water, wide-angle photography was limited. Lembeh Strait is a macro heaven. . The divemasters often ask what you want to see and make a list that gets checked off as your visit progresses. I did 24 dives and shot 105mm Macro on 22 of them. I saw a frogfish and seahorses on most dives. There were no sharks, angelfish, large schools of fish or bigger creatures. However, I did see squid, cuttlefish, flamboyant cuttlefish and octopus; numerous shrimp species including several colorful peacock mantis shrimp, many crinoid and anemone shrimp; tiny crinoid and pink fairy lobsters; ornate ghost pipefish and Halimeda ghost pipefish; over 30 nudibranch species; numerous moray species; blue ribbon eels (with juveniles, which are black); Mandarin fish (a dusk dive to watch them mate); pink and yellow pygmy seahorses; numerous crab species including large decorator crabs that look like a pile of detritus moving across

the seafloor, zebra, xeno, porcelain, orangutan and spider; hairy, warty and other frogfish; thorny, smooth, estuary and common seahorses, seaspider, seamoths, juvenile batfish; scorpionfish and lionfish; waspfish; various flatworms. The dive guides knew where many creatures live, so they were quite helpful finding most everything we saw. Some creatures I wanted to see but didn't are: mimic octopus, wonderpus and stonefish. The afternoon dive I sat out on my last full day there (as I would fly within 24 hours) yielded a mimic octopus. A crinoid lobster decided it would rather live in a divemasters BC, so it swam from the crinoid into his jacket. The DM opened his BC and I returned it to the crinoid. Met people from England, Scotland, Australia, Japan, and Taiwan. The dive center featured a room dedicated to photographers/videographers. It had tables along opposite walls with one side 220-volt and the other 110-volt outlets. Outside this room, cameras were kept in plastic bins in several large freshwater baths. The cameras were transported to and from the boats in these bins. Dive groups numbered 3-6 per boat, with 1-2 divemasters each. The longest boat ride was no more than 15 minutes, with most shorter. Dive depths maxed at 88 feet, with most shallower to start and finished often in 10-15 feet. Most dives lasted an hour or more. Being thin, my two layers of wetsuits — a fleecy 3mm vest with hood and a fleecy full-body 3mm kept me warm enough for much of the dives but I did get chilled by the end of each. Topside weather was quite pleasant, and rain was minimal, although the week previous had rain

each day. Camera room was excellent. Capacity perhaps 12 photographers/videographers. Tables lined opposite sides of room. One side was 110v, other 220v. Several rinse tanks outside. Cameras were handled well by staff.

**Kungkungan Bay Resort, July 2005, Bill and Alice Miller**

(willalmill@charter.net), Arden, NC.

Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 10 to 30 Feet. Water: 80 to 83 F, calm. Jim and Cary Yanny run a superb dive operation at Eco-Divers and make sure you have a great experience. The staff was wonderful, charming, and service oriented. The accommodations were stellar. Our bungalow was large, well equipped with tables, chairs, TV for digital viewing, covered porch, and huge bath with walk-in shower. Very clean, daily service, and bug free. The only bugs were a few mosquitoes after sunset along the water or near the jungle. The food was a combination of Indonesian and American. The Indonesian dishes were tasty but some pretty spicy. However, you could ask them to mildly season a dish. Breakfast and lunch were smorgasbord. Eggs cooked to order, omelets, pancakes, and lots of fruit plus bacon and sausage. Beef was rarely offered. Chicken and fish were the primary meats. No concern for safety; we felt relaxed during the entire trip. Singapore Air flight from Newark to Singapore (18.5 hrs) was unbelievable. UW Photography Comments: Fully equipped camera room with charging facilities and two large fresh water rinse tanks. Your cameras are transported to and from the rinse tanks by the staff in plastic baskets and ride in those baskets on the boat. There is a darkroom for

E-6, light tables and computer facilities for the digital shooters. All the "Critters from out of this World" are here and cooperative. We actually got tired of shooting frog fish and anemone fish. Guides know right where to take you. They will let you have all the time you need on any given subject if you want to stay put. This was mostly all muck diving and the water was cloudy. You had to follow the dive guides dressed in bright orange to find anything or to find the boat. Backscatter was a major issue.

**Kungkungan Bay Resort, September 2005, Joe Puglia (jpuglia@aol.com),**

**Orlando, FL.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 20 to 50 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm. Truly muck diving, also great diving. The bottom is mostly gray sand with sporadic coral heads. Critter heaven! waspfish, dragonets, frog fish, eels, ghost pipefish, pygmy seahorses, octopus (including blue ring and mimic) and different critters by the dozens. Its photo heaven! As Steve said "we avoid current like the plague." Buoyancy control is critical as the bottom can get stirred up easy. The boats return to the resort after every dive. The rides are short making the surface intervals nice. The boats are comfortable, but tricky to get in and out. The dive facilities are first-rate with a camera room and briefing huts that reduce sitting time on the boats. The outstanding staff handles and stores all your gear. The dives are all guided with no more than four in a group. The guide's ability to find things is uncanny. House reef — nice plus do the Mandarin dive. The resort is clean and comfortable. The food was plentiful but average. Our room was a nice

size and comfortable with A/C. Not all the rooms have A/C. The grounds were beautiful overlooking Lembeh Strait onto Lembeh Island. UW Photography Comments: Cameras are really babied with a separate camera and charging room. Excellent camera facilities.

**Lembeh Resort, October 2004, Jerry Tuttle (milo3@cox.net), Phoenix, AZ.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 25 to 75 Feet. Water: 82 to 85 F, calm. Well-run dive resort with an excellent dive staff. Divemasters know where to find the rare critters. Frogfish and ghost pipefish common. We found a wonderpus and rhinopias on the same dive. Divers are transported to dive sites quickly and in small groups so there were never crowds. Restaurant food is good and staff is friendly and efficient. Rooms overlook the strait and are large and comfortable. Outdoor Balinese showers are a nice touch. Video room has a satellite TV from which we could watch the Red Sox take down the Yankees in the 2004 playoffs.

**Lembeh Resort, October 2004, Dale Treadway (trdway@tconl.com).** Experience: 300+ dives. Water: 78 F., calm and little current. The resort has 9 cottages. Cottage #3B was terrific with 3 large rooms, king size bed and a wonderful breeze and view of Lembeh strait from the porch. Three meals a day, many choices off a large menu and all cooked to order. The best food of any trip. Fresh fried calamari was a favorite. During the week there was 3 evening theme buffets (Indonesia Food etc). They were good but you could still order off the main menu. Beer, wine and mixed drinks were not included in

package and were an extra cost. Murex Divers provided the resort diving with Bruce Moore managing to make sure your diving was both exciting and safe. Nitrox was available. wonderful critters, wonderful dive personnel pointing out all the critters. One dive master with each 4 divers so on that rare time when you can 5 or 6 divers you had two dive masters on the dive. They handled and cleaned all dive gear with all dives 5 to 20 minutes from the resort, which allowed a return to resort for dry clothes and camera changes between dives. Up to 5 days a day with night dives each night even if only one diver. Over 740 photos in only 17 dives. Five different frogfish, four different pipefish, various shrimp, numerous eels (4 in one hole), several dozen nudibranchs, leaf scorpionfish, anemones, crinoids, soft coral and fish of all kinds. No large fish or pelagics.

**Lembeh, April 2005, Brant Shenkarow (brantravels@yahoo.com), San Anselmo, CA.** Experience: 2,400 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 feet. Water: 78 to 81 F, calm and flat, no currents. Unique dive destination for photographers and all divers interested in small and odd critters. Comfortable and spacious bungalow accommodations. Excellent dive staff (Murex); guides are enthusiastic about finding subjects. The resort was half occupied, making it possible for my girlfriend and me to have a guide and boat to ourselves most of the time. There would be a problem with more than a couple of divers trying to shoot in any location because the silt builds up easily. Food and service were uneven at best, in need of improvements.

**Lembeh Resort, May 2005, Janet Czap-ski (info@divetravelservices.com), Farmington Hills, MI.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm, no currents. The cottages are beautiful with a fabulous view of the Straits. All feature indoor/outdoor baths that are beautiful. The grounds are lovely (even in a torrential down-pour) and their infinity pool is inviting. The restaurant is well-equipped and meals were good but not great. Portions were ample but the menu is not exciting. Resort staff was friendly and accommodated all requests. Take strong legs, however, because everything is built into the hillsides so there are lots of stairs. All guides are well-trained and helpful. Cameras were handled excellently and critters were found in great numbers. Lembeh Resort and KBR across the Straits confer daily to make sure they are not taking boats to the same dive sites. Dive sites were uncrowded and you were free to join the two guides or go off on your own. Dives averaged 65 minutes. Depth limits were generally not an issue. Nitrox is an additional charge. Buying a boat diving package (three boat dives/day) entitles you to one unguided house reef per day. They have a lovely house reef that also features numerous mandarin fish at dusk. We booked a 4-night/3-dive day extension to our Raja Ampat live-aboard and wished we had stayed at Lembeh the whole time! The resort has a huge dedicated camera building with individual assembly/charging stations. The rinse tank near the shore is huge and the crew carries the cameras everywhere for you. The groups are small with two dive guides per group and all

you have to do is give them your "wish list" and start checking things off! Their guides are incredibly knowledgeable, friendly and respectful of the underwater environment.

**Lembeh Resort, July 2005, Sean Bruner sean@bruner.net), Tucson, AZ.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 20 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, no currents. We arrived at the Lembeh Resort in the afternoon after driving one hour from the Manado airport and taking the 10 minute boat ride from the police wharf across the straits. We made it in time for the house dive at dusk and saw mandarin fish mating 100 meters from the boat dock. The Lembeh Straits is a narrow body of water between the mainland port of Bitung and Lembeh Island. KBR Resort sits on the mainland directly across the straits from Lembeh Resort. though the straits comprise a busy shipping lane, with large ship traffic, it is breathtakingly beautiful, with lush green volcanic mountains rising up from the blue water which leads out to the Molucca Sea to the east of Lembeh Island. Diving in the straits is mostly in search of strange, exotic creatures, which can be found by the dozens in the black sand muck diving. There are also beautiful coral reef dives near the mouth of the straits to the north, and even a couple of wreck dives. Muck diving is superb. Fingered dragonets, mimic octopuses, flamboyant cuttlefish, various types of frogfish, ditto for ghost pipefish, mantis shrimp, pygmy and regular sized sea horses, and you might see all of the above on a single dive. Shooting with film is challenging, not because the subjects are difficult — they just sit in the

sand while you fire away — but because you usually run out of film before the end of the dive and miss some subjects, which happened to me with the mimic octopus. Subjects you might shoot half a roll on in some other part of the world, here you only take a couple of shots of for fear of running out of film. The resort sits on a hill overlooking the water and hills with a little cove where the boats dock. The rooms are like suites, with spacious bedrooms with king sized beds and a separate sitting room in front. The bathrooms are private, but outside, although covered from the rain, so the rooms don't get humid from the shower. There is a large veranda outside the room, providing a breathtaking view of the straits. The grounds are immaculately kept, with dozens of flowering plants. Butterflies dart from flower to flower. The restaurant has a menu of western and Indonesian dishes. They offer an appetizer, soup, salad, main course and desert. The food was good, but the fish, for example, was consistently overcooked. There was a library with a large television, which offered DVD and video, as well as satellite TV. There are no TVs in the rooms. There is a camera room with long, deep tables with shelves running above, plenty of outlets for 110 and 220 power for charging, well lit, and compressed air for cleaning and blow drying. There is a large rinse tank for cameras at the gear lockers and a large rinse tank for gear. Murex Diving has the most experienced guides in Lembah Straits. The boats are spacious and comfortable, with tank racks, covered seating area, and plenty of shelves for dry storage. Although there is no head

on board, the dive sites are all within 10-20 minutes of the resort. The crew is professional and helpful, and they set up your gear and take it out of the water, allowing divers to board the boat by the sturdy dive ladder without their tanks and BCs on. The dive guides were fantastic at pointing out critters, and were consistently cheerful and helpful, always willing to do a night dive upon request. We dove four times a day almost every day we were there. There is an unbelievable amount of litter in the water. The straits are next to a major city and accommodate a lot of boat traffic and there are also villages along the shore. Indonesians, , heave their trash into the water. On any given dive, we would see plastic tarps, tennis shoes, car parts, and many plastic bags and bottles. It was distressing. Upon leaving, the resort nicked and dimed us in a way that left a bad taste. Most hotels in Indonesia add a 21% tax and "service" charge. The tax is 11%, but the 10% service charge is not mandatory and is simply an industry standard that helps the owners, not the employees, by subsidizing wages. I'm sure some guests are tempted not to tip staff because of it. Also, we were charged a 3% fee for using a credit card, but if you tried to change dollars and pay that way, the rate they give you is 10% less than the actual exchange rate, making it better to pay the credit card fee. They also added a \$10 charge for checking out "outside of normal business hours" and the exchange rate for the \$10 was not at the rate given if you exchanged dollars, but at the actual rate. UW Photography Comments: Separate rinse tank at the dock for cameras. The camera room

was the best I've ever seen with long, large tables, good lighting, plenty of 110 and 220 outlets for charging, and compressed air for cleaning, drying.

**Siladen Resort, September 2005, Joe Puglia (jpuglia@aol.com), Orlando, FL.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 80 Feet. Water: 84 to 86 F, calm, surge. Siladen Resort and Spa is in Bunaken Marine Park. The walls are breathtaking with great coral fields for your safety stop. The variety of tropical fish is unbelievable. Besides all the fish you'll see pygmy sea horses, ghost pipefish and an endless variety of shrimp. The currents can be tricky. Popo Island had fantastic muck diving with the odd and unbelievable including one coral head with five leaf scorpions. We even found a splendid sea moth. The dive boats are large wooden vessels with plenty of room. They are comfortable, easy to get off and get on. The dives are all guided in groups no larger than four divers! The crew and staff do a great job plus you can dive your computer and your entire tank. The resort is fantastic! The rooms were large cottage types, most overlooking the beach and onto the mountains. The spa was great. The restaurant and the food were five-star. The facilities are well kept. The staff is at your call starting from the airport, onto the boat for the ride to the resort until you return to the airport. We coupled this with a trip to Kungkungen Bay Resort, Lembeh Strait.

**Sulawesi Dive Quest, February 2005, Sally Schroeder (s72767@yahoo.com), Port Orange, FL.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 15 to 40 Feet. Water: 70 to 74 F., calm, currents. First class

diving. This operator is small, friendly, helpful, really caters to individual desires on what you would like to see, dive sites, food you like to eat etc. All local staff and ownership. Clean rooms, mosquito nets, tiled bathrooms, flush toilets. Basically a really nice little place right on the beach with porch. Excellent locale for those bizarre critters, muck diving at its best. All 3 dive guides are excellent. Critter wish list board determines where they will take you along with the currents. Doldrums weather all year round means some rain some sun daily. Electrical power is on anytime you request during the day and on all night. Extra plugs and adaptors really found when asked for.

**Thalassa Dive Center, Santika Hotel, July 2004, Gary Krippendorf (gskrippendorf@hotmail.com), Redwood City, CA.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 40 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm, no currents. Split our diving between Bunaken and Lembeh Strait. Bunaken National Park is north of the city of Manado. I planned the Bunaken portion of our trip via e-mail with Simone, the general manager of the Thalassa Dive Center. Simone was good at answering our questions via e-mail, and we booked the all inclusive "short and sweet" Package. She took care of everything, including arranging for our rooms at the Santika Hotel, bus pickup at the Manado airport, etc. We flew from SFO via Seoul to Singapore for an 8-hour layover. The Ambassador Hotel is right in the Singapore airport so no need to clear immigration and customs. Our Silk Air flight from Singapore arrived at the Manado airport at 1:30 pm. We were picked up by the Thalassa

/Santika Hotel bus for the 45 minute ride to the resort. We made a 6:00 pm night dive. The Santika Hotel and restaurant were excellent, although the food service was a bit slow. The rooms were clean with room to move around, the restaurants had a mix of western and Asian dishes. The \$10 massages available through the hotel were great. The wind patterns prevented us from going to Bangka, so all our dives were done in the Bunaken National Park. The water was like a sheet of glass and most boat rides were 15-20 minutes to the dive sites. Our maximum depth at Bunaken was 90 feet, though we spent most of our time between 45 and 60 feet. There was a mix of walls and fields of coral. They have 6-foot tides, so currents vary by site and time of day. Out of our 10 dives, 3 had mild currents and 1 had a strong current. Dalton and Djamal were our dive masters and were among the best we've ever had. They give good pre-dive briefings, which told us about the site and what kinds of things we'd see. The coral variety and colors were spectacular. The dive where we had the strong current had visibility of about 100 feet. The dive lasted about 65 minutes and we probably drifted 2.5 miles without ever seeing sand. Of course we saw lots of fish, too. Not bad for a 10 minute boat ride to the site. On all of our dives, there were large schools of small and mid-sized fish everywhere. Lionfish, blue ribbon eels, and the many varieties of anemone fish were among my favorites. There was one super aggressive anemone fish that actually took a bite out of my finger for taking his/her photograph. Better to be bit by a 2.5 inch anemone fish than

one of the 2.5 foot white tip sharks we saw at the next site. Three days and 10 dives just scratched the surface. We saw so much on each dive that we couldn't begin to log it all. The four of us would start talking about what we saw during the boat ride back to the dock and we'd keep coming up with more and more. Taking digital photographs was a big help, because it provided a record with a timestamp.

**Thalassa Dive Center, Hotel Santika, June 2005, Mel Cundiff, Boulder, CO.**

Experience: 1570" dives. Vis: 45 to 55 feet. Water: 83 to 84 F, calm and flat. Bunaken National Underwater Park has the best coral reefs in Northern Sulawesi and Santika has easy access to the diving there. The divemasters know the reefs and what to expect on all the dives. We saw a new species of seahorse. Great diving.

**Wakatobi Dive Resort, November 2004, Michael N. Hofman (mhofman@jmoyerlandscaping.com), San Francisco, CA.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 75 Feet. Water: 79 to 81 F, calm. Both of us (diver and snorkeler) were impressed with service, quality of reefs, interesting people, wonderful house reef and the location of the resort. From the moment we arrived in customs in Bali (the day before the charter to the resort) we were taken care of. The charter flight was great, the facilities and staff were wonderful and the dive staff was professional, available, but not overbearing. A friend who hadn't been diving in a while and she received a little extra attention whenever she needed it. The diving was interesting, and with Wakatobi's dedi-

cation to working with local villages to provide resources as an alternative to over fishing, we trust that fish life will continue to get better. We heard divers talking about seeing a school of more than 10 juvenile silver tips. Also there was a huge school jacks on the house reef, along with many other interesting fish to see (pygmy seahorses, leaf fish, frog fish, ribbon eels, etc.). Spend time in Bali. Great shore facilities with separate a/c rooms, fridges for film and plenty of space to set up and leave gear.

**Wakatobi, April 2005, Brant Shenkarow (brantravels@yahoo.com), San Anselmo, CA.** Experience: 2,400 dives. Vis: 50 to 200 feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm and flat, strong currents, no currents. Premier dive resort. First-class dive and resort staff. Very comfortable bungalow accommodations. Excellent food with several entree choices. Problem with keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold should be solved with new dining facility under construction as of Spring 2005. Spacious and comfortable dive boats and photo rooms dedicated to digital photographers. Indonesian diving at its best.

**Wakatobi, June 2005, Ernie Hounshell (erniekeys@msn.com), Ramrod Key, FL.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 60 to 150 Feet. Water: 79 to 80 F., calm. We were met at the airport in Bali, whisked thru customs and off to our hotel. After resting for two days in Bali, we flew the charter airline to the resort. Taxis took us to the boat for a 10 minute ride to the resort. Our luggage was waiting at our bungalow when we arrived. The dive boats are 70 feet with only 12 divers, toilet, camera rinse tanks

and snacks between dives. The reefs are pristine, some of the best coral I have seen in 20 years of diving. Very few large fish, but the reef fish and macro is outstanding. The dive guides point out the macro subjects (pygmy seahorses, shrimp, cowries, etc.). Some are difficult to see with a magnifying glass. Stay with the dive guide if you want to see the macro. The house reef is a wall, as good as any of the dive sites. They will drop you off along the house reef and let you ride the current back. The food was gourmet. They have a dedicated bread and pastry chef who turns out fantastic desserts daily. You are allowed to do all the diving you want on the house reef. The bungalows are comfortable, hot and cold water (safe to drink also) and kept clean daily. Plan to stay as long as you can afford as this is a long trip to get here. UW Photography Comments: Rinse tank on boats, large work table on boats for cameras, large dedicated camera room at resort with charging stations and E6 processing.

**Wakatobi, June 2005, Mel McCombie/Harris Friedberg (Mmccombie@aol.com), New Haven, CT.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, calm, choppy, surge, currents. This was our second trip to Wakatobi and the resort has made improvements, as we knew the owner, Lorenz Mader, would in the most environmentally responsible fashion. Each cottage and room now has air-conditioning; internet service (for a small fee); and the water in the taps and shower is clear, clean desalinated water (a change from the groundwater of the past). Diving is legendary: perfect coral and benthic cover; critters galore

(a macro nut heaven); fabulous staff; and the front yard dive remains one of the best in the world. The food has improved and we enjoyed more fresh veggies than we expected (in the past, the remoteness of the resort meant rather limited foods). The only complaint I heard was that the food was not Indonesian enough — but then, I also heard American divers say how glad they were that the food was so international. The kitchen staff was more than happy to accommodate special requests (like mine for spicy sambals). It may be the best diving in the world.

**Wakatobi Dive Resort, June 2005, Tom and Cindy Casey (caseytravel@sbcglobal.net), Martinez, CA.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 79 F, calm, currents. We had read good reports about Wakatobi in Undercurrent, but we were not impressed with the diving. The resort and dive operations were expertly run; great macro, poor wide angle opportunities, too much current and no big fish. No schools of fish; the reefs are severely over fished. The wall diving got tedious, as they all had the same to offer, strong currents and minimal fish. The typical dive day consisted of a two tank AM dive, returning at 12:30 PM — 1PM, lunch, then a one tank dive at 2:15-ish, returning at 4:30-ish — this made it difficult to get in a 4th dive on the house reef. Night dives were offered twice in the 10-day trip, although you could dive the house reef at night if you wanted. We had exceptional service and accommodations, but the diving would not entice us to return.

**Wakatobi Dive Resort, July 2005, Marc & Maureen Duggan (marcandmaureen@cox.net), San Diego, CA.** Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 Feet. Water: 80 to 81 F, calm. Wonderful accommodations, food, and diving. The resort has small, cozy bungalows (maybe 20) that are just the right size for two: comfortable bed, sofa, writing desk, cabinets for clothes, A/C, and modern bathrooms, no phones or TVs and the power is 220 volt (110v is available in the camera room). All bungalows are reached by shell-lined paths (we took the advice of going barefoot the entire time). The dining area is a large, open area with long tables and chairs. Food is top-notch and fresh, including the pastries after dinner, served buffet-style. Local dishes and traditional fare are usually provided each meal. Mixed drinks and beer were fairly priced, but the wine was high. By the water were umbrella covered wood tables for playing cards, talking, eating or having drinks at sunset. There is a room with a video monitor for kids to watch movies and a computer for Internet connection (additional fee). There is nothing else on the island other than the resort and small village. The staff is incredibly nice and attentive, greeting you with smiles (and the boat/dining area staff greeting you by name. They assign you a diver number and gear box, where you place all your dive gear. Every morning it is placed on the boats, set up on tanks and taken off at the end of the day by a staff member. There are three separate rinse tanks for electronic gear (cameras, computers), dive gear, and wetsuits. Boat crews were impeccable, offering

assistance in and out of the water and warm drinks (tea, hot cocoa) after each dive. There are three boat dives per day. They permit additional shore dives any time on a nice, large house reef. Nitrox friendly. Thorough dive briefings are given each morning. They allow divers to dive their own profiles. They require every diver to do a checkout dive, I believe to group divers with similar skills on one of the three dive boats. Our divemaster, John, has a great personality and was good at finding multiple blue ribbon eels, a frog fish, a ghost pipefish, crocodile fish, scorpion fish, many pigmy seahorses (smaller than you would think), a rainbow full of nudibranchs, sea snakes, leaf fish, multiple large and small cuttlefish (and their eggs nestled in corals). We didn't see any large animals (a couple of bugs in crevasses, but no pelagics). The corals, fans and other sea life were gorgeous, large and undamaged (the resort has ensured that many reefs are not used for fishing). Vis was occasionally reduced and darkened, as several brief rainstorms came through churning up the sea. However, it's a great experience to surface in a downpour! Dives are slow paced and thorough with John scanning the reefs and walls for things you could miss. Patience within the dive group is required for viewing so many small critters with a magnifying glass, one person at a time. The flight from LA to Singapore is 17 hours, and then another 2.5 from Singapore to Bali. A night stay over in Bali before taking their charter plane to Sulawesi the next morning (the Hotel Intercontinental is very nice — [www.bali.intercontinental.com/](http://www.bali.intercontinental.com/)). The resort built the airstrip in

Sulawesi, where you take a boat approximately 20 minutes to the resort. We stayed another four days in Bali at the Four Seasons in Sayan ([www.fourseasons.com/sayan/](http://www.fourseasons.com/sayan/)). UW Photography Comments: Great setups all around. Resort featured a separate large camera room with work benches and dual power (110/220). Large boats had rinse tanks, large camera platform and attentive personnel. Dive guide attentive to photographers allowing plenty of time for everyone (non-photographers, photographers and videographers) to see subject matter and get the shots we wanted.

## MALAYSIA

Sipadan, a tiny island off Borneo where 20 divers and others were kidnapped by Filipino Muslim terrorists, no longer has land accommodations. Yet, one can still reach the good diving around the island from other resorts. Malaysia has diving that competes well with Indonesia, but its diving infrastructure is not comparably developed.

**Borneo Divers, Mabul Resort, July 2005, Jerry Tuttle (milo3@cox.net), Phoenix, AZ.** Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 75 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm. Borneo Divers does a great job of getting you from Kota Kinabalu to the resort and back. The resort cottages and clean and comfortable, the resort staff is competent, friendly and helpful. The food is repetitious and bland and the menu is some odd idea of what the western and European palates want. Except for fried noodles every morning