

there were few divers in the area. Dive sites were determined based on weather and the desires of the divers. Wrecks are in good shape, easily reached by shot-lines, and well described by the guides before the dive. Dive center's website (www.diving-shark.hr). All dives were relatively deep (30-45 metres), which might restrict beginners. Wrecks were a haven for u/w photographers. Medulin, Croatia (on the Istrian Peninsula) is kind of far away, even for Europeans. Can be reached by car via Austria and Slovenia, by ferry from Venice, or by air via Pula.

CYPRUS

Sun Fish Dive Shop, August 2004, Lisa Vignerot (lvignerot@hotmail.com), Stafford, VA. Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 75 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm, no currents. Went to Cyprus for work, and ended up diving with someone in the office who uses the dive shop. Overall, good group, good dive master and professional service. We started at the shop, had about a 35-minute car ride to the dock, and then loaded up the boat (everyone helped load/unload/pack/unpack). After a 5-minute cruise, we were at the Zenobia. We could see the ferry from the boat. Water was crystal clear. The dive boat accommodated several different dive shops, but it was not crowded and we all got in easily off the stern. The first dive was a deep dive of the rear of the ferry (110 ft). This boat was huge! There were lots of ways into the boat, but it is a dangerous penetration dive with all the loose cars, trucks, and other tractor-trailers whose chains are

starting to rust through. There wasn't much life around the ferry, but we did see a few sea cucumbers and other plant life, but there was so much to see on the ferry, it didn't matter. Some groups only did one dive, and some people had to get new tanks. After 1/2 hour, the boat left dock again and we went back out to the site. The second dive was toward the front of the boat, where we did penetrate the cafeteria and the pilothouse. Again, there was a lot to see on this dive. After we finished our dives, we started to go back to dock, but lost the engines, so we sat adrift for a while. Good thing I brought my own drinks and snacks (nothing was provided by the dive shop, which wasn't a problem since they mentioned that when I first talked to them). After they got one engine working, we limped into dock and had to get assisted in docking. After hitting the 'helper' boat and making him do an "abandon ship" and running over his boat, a bigger boat came to the rescue and got us into the slip (only after we hit the bow of the boat next to us trying to get in). We got the stuff unloaded and started back to the shop. We did stop at the bakery on the way home, which was heavenly. Overall, it was a professional group. They were informative about the dives. They kept a good eye on us and felt safe. The equipment was in good shape, and they were inexpensive compared with the other operations around Larnarca (\$115 for two dives and equipment).

SOUTH AFRICA

Sodwana Bay Lodge, August 2004, Nancy Aberg, Greenview, CA. Experi-

ence: 200 dives. Vis: 70 to 80 ft. Water: calm and flat. This was my 4th time at Sodwana Bay, which is always enjoyable. Excellent dive operation giving caring service and thorough briefings. Courses offered are good and inexpensive. I took Nitrox course. If while going to a dive site, you see dolphins, you can jump off and swim with them. The lodge serves very good food plus there is a bar downstairs by the pool. Lots of divemasters — constructive coaching is really appreciated.

SPAIN

Centro de Buceo Octopus, July 2005, David Schwab (schwabd@bunt.com). Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 15 to 25 Meters. Water: 22 to 28 Celsius, calm, no currents. Octopus Dive Centre is a small operation in Port de Soller, Mallorca; charming resort town, easy to reach from Europe. Owners Marc and Marilen take good care of their customers on two hard boats: Octopus I and III; dives at 10:00 and 16:00, night dives on request. Divemasters are very capable; safety and a good experience for the divers is important to them. Rental gear available, much of it new (Cressi), all in good shape. Twelve liter cylinders were filled to 200 bar or more. All guided lasted 55+ minutes. No corals to speak of (this is the Med!), but lots of rock formations and ocean grass. Sparse populations of large fish, some places there were lots of little fishies. Told there were mantas and eagle rays but saw none. Plenty of moray eels and barracudas. No wrecks, but one is dived occasionally in Palma. This area prob-

ably wouldn't get an experienced diver excited, but it is easy diving and a great spot for novices. Pleasant place to enjoy surface intervals; food is great (eat at the restaurant El Pirat). My accommodation was "okay" but there are better (4*) hotels available. Check info at www.octopus-mallorca.com; note info on their trips to the Maldives.

Canary Islands

Aqua Marina Dive Centre, Playa de las Americas, April 2005, David Schwab (schwabd@bunt.com). Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 10 to 20 Meters. Water: 18 to 19 Celsius, calm. Tenerife and its sister islands are the result of volcanic activity; except the critters, diving will remind you more of diving the quarry or lake back home. Lots of moray eels, sting rays and eagle rays. Barracuda, angel sharks, scorpion fish, and octopi also. It takes some looking in the right places to find these, but persistent divers with a good torch will be rewarded. Most dives are from a RIB; a couple of shore dives are a real challenge because of rocks and tides. Dives between 5 -- 45 metres. British owned/operated Aqua Marina Dive Centre (www.aqua-marina.com) is close to the beach, a short walk with equipment to load the RIB to sites nearby. Multilingual dive staff is first class: friendly, knowledgeable, professional and willing to ensure the customer has an enjoyable dive holiday. Good place for beginners: my companion took the PADI OW and AOW courses and is now an excited, certified diver. Rental kit is in good shape; plenty available. I would dive with Andy and Neil anytime. Tenerife is