

ARGENTINA

Acuanauta Diving Center December 2005, Harvey Monroe (CheMono@aol.com), Santa Fe, NM. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 10 to 25 Feet. Water: 52 to 52 F, choppy, no currents. This is cold water dry suit, altitude, alpine diving. I was basically given a tour of a man-made underwater recreation area with several sunken boats and underwater sculptures. We then visited a moderate wall which dropped about 40 feet. There were freshwater mussels, crayfish and a few trout. This is an Argentine destination for Winter and Summer recreation and the Lake District is a scenic area.

BRAZIL

Fernando de Noronha

Atlantis, November 2005, Matt Lanning (matt@mattlanning.com), San Francisco, CA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 30 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, choppy, surge, currents. I booked my trip with Atlantis Divers and allowed them to also book my accommodations, which was a huge mistake. I had 50+ dives upon arrival and a couple of specialty courses, but did not have my advanced card. I had 25+ dives deeper than 60', but was relegated to the open water beginner boat until I paid \$800USD for the full advanced course, at which time I was put on the advanced boat the next morning and immediately dove to 130'. It was all about the \$\$ to them. The dives were beautiful and the life abundant, but the currents and surge were strong. This could be a great spot for advanced diving, but the operators are set up for folks who dive only once or twice

in a week long vacation and did not know how to handle my situation when I asked to dive 3-4x per day. I ended up back on the beginner boat in the afternoon, just to get in the water. Additionally, even with the advanced status, we still dove the SAME three sites on three consecutive days (though there are 15+ sites on this island). After much complaining by numerous divers, they finally took us to another site the following day. Not an island for 'real' divers. It is a beautiful and amazing island with the best beaches in Brazil, but it is best for honeymooners who want a couple of dives, not for folks on a true dive trip. Book your own accommodations. The only really good place to stay was \$500USD/person/night. Yes, that expensive. \$100USD/night put me in a 6'x8' hovel with a shared bathroom and no breakfast. If you do plan on going, make it clear that you want to do multiple dives and get them to commit to the type of plan you really want. Atlantis is the only operation with more than one boat, which allows for an advanced group to do better dives. Aguas Claras and Noronha Divers each have only one boat. Little or no nightlife, and few noncouples who travel to this destination. English is spoken, but only in a few locations.

Atlantis, Pousada Solar dos Ventos, August 2006, Bruce Newman, Rio de Janeiro, RJ. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 80 Feet. Water: 78 to 79 F, calm, surge. An impressive craggy volcanic island sprouting up miles from the seafloor hundreds of miles from the coast, Fernando de Noronha is almost the only place in Brazil where good diving is possible. The water is warm enough as it is only four degrees south of the equator. It is hard to get to (only 400 visitors are allowed on the island at a time), well protected by IBAMA, the