

sired. Broken boats are the norm; delays in diving; slow tank fills with seemingly dangerous overfills. The crew was helpful and made an attempt at safety — although some of the practices did not seem that safe. On the admin side — the price always changed, nothing was done in writing, no timely feedback when setting up the trip; and no definite answer in getting details before arriving.

CROATIA

Shark Diving Center, September 2006, David Schwab (schwabd@bunt.com), APO, AE. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 20 to 30 Meters. Water: 12 to 17 C. Second time with this dive operation. Shark Dive Center was supportive of what our group wanted to do and responsive to our needs. Fully equipped shop. We brought our own equipment, to include cylinders, but were able to use the shop's for day trip w/two dives. Shop also arranged lunch on board — quite tasty! And plenty of food for little \$. Nitrox available for 2 Euros/cylinder (about \$2.60/tank). Divemaster briefed all Nitrox divers and oversaw checking of %. Safety-conscious. Dive boat was a tour boat, but it worked for our 20 divers. Lots of cover on deck, plenty of room, easy to get back on board. Center has other dive boats, too. Dived on three wrecks each at about 40 meters; plus two walls. Diagrams of each dive are on the website. Dive operation located in Medulin, near Pula, Croatia. This is a tourist area so there is plenty to do. Good food, sightseeing, transportation. Roman Coliseum in Pula isn't as grand as the one in Rome, but worth a visit. Medulin/Pula is in NW Croatia, just across the Adriatic Sea from Venice. English, German and

Italian spoken here. There's an airport in Pula.

SPAIN

Happy Divers, Atalya Park Hotel, April 2006, Nancy Aberg (codycreek@sisqtel.net), Greenview, CA. Experience: 250 dives. Vis: 6 inches to 5 feet. Water: 58 to 61 F, calm and flat, no currents. Divemaster, Sven, was really helpful and handled all problems without hesitation. He was a great instructor for the large classes they hold at that dive shop in a pool. If I had known of the poor visibility I never would have gone! Also, most dives are shore entry, or swim out to the site, then dive down. That is a big turn off for me as I have a back problem which I told them about beforehand. They alluded to using a boat ... only one dive that week used a boat. And Saturday, as there were 12 people who had signed up to dive, Peter, the owner of the shop, took 6 divers out first, dropped them off without a divemaster, left, and went back to get the other 6 divers and a trainee divemaster to be dropped off while he took the first group back to shore. If there aren't laws against this, there should be. None of those divers had ever dove there before and most were inexperienced divers — not a time to be without a divemaster or a boat in extremely low visibility!

UNITED STATES

Iowa

Lake Okoboji, August 2006, Larry Sensenig (sensenig@morningside.edu), Sioux City, IA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 15 to 20 Feet. Water:

calm. West Lake Okoboji is a “blue water” in northwest Iowa. For land locked Iowa, it is as good as it gets. There are dive services on the lake. You can shore dive or dive off private boats. Maximum depth is 120 feet but not much to see there. Thermocline at about 20 feet. There are some structures (pipelines) in the lake that attract fish, but you have to know where to find them (check with the local dive store). Fish can be abundant and large (15-20 pounds). When you're in Iowa and you just “have to get wet,” this is a good place to dive.

Michigan

Straits Scuba, Driftwood Motel, September 2006, Michael Bosveld (mbosveld@yahoo.com), Bloomington, MN. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 25 to 40 Feet. Water: 51 to 62 F, choppy. I was blown away by the wrecks' states of preservation and conditions. Each wreck was mostly intact and in great shape. These are all cold water dives made using a dry suit. We had to provide our own gear including tanks and weight. Air fills were available. The boat was comfortable, but with 17 divers aboard it was not spacious. All the wrecks are in deep water from 70 to 120 feet deep. This limited the bottom time for both air and NDC time. I am planning to return next year after completing my staged decompression diving certification, and bring double tanks. We dove five wrecks in three days and were blown off the wrecks on one morning. The wreck of the Cedarville lies in 45-110 feet of water is three quarters inverted and broken in half. The Cedarville was a steel hulled ore carrier and so large that I only had time to explore the stern section. The Eber Ward is a wooden

hulled ship in 90-110 feet of water. This wreck provides for 2 decks of penetration with open cargo holds. The penetration time was short due to the depth of the wreck. The William Young lies in 90-120 feet of water and provides a single deck of penetration with a nice swim through at the bow. The Minneapolis is in 80-125 feet of water. This wreck is a large wooden ship, and the boiler and parts of its engine are in great shape.

Missouri

Missouri Bonne Terre Mine, October 2005, Jack Gullo, Jr. (jgullo@carr.org), New Windsor, MD. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 100 Feet. Water: 58 F, no currents. Abandoned lead mine — water is crystal clear; there is no marine life, but the mine equipment — cart; trains; tools, drills — is just left as it was when the place flooded. Some overhead environments, but mostly open to the underground cavern above. No need for lights — all trails are lit from above. This place is unique. The staff is safe — briefings before the dive, dive leaders on the dive; and surface support available. Trails get progressively more challenging.

Ohio

Gilboa Quarry, August 2006, Wayne Taylor, White Lake, MI. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 10 to 25 Feet. Water: 42 to 74 F, calm. Gilboa Quarry is a local quarry privately owned and established for divers. There is a \$12 fee for divers, \$6 fee for non-divers, and \$8 if you choose to stay at their campground adjacent to the quarry. They offer Air, Nitrox, and Argon fills; but must show Enriched air certification. The quarry is set to dive a shallow area ranging from 15ft to 50ft, and a deep

side that has a platform established at 70ft and drops deeper from 115 to 140. To dive the deep side, a deep profile must be submitted with the dive operator. The deep side provides an excellent range for divers who wish to practice technical procedures and skills. The shallow side has items ranging from sunken boats, vehicles, and an airplane affording divers an opportunity to dive with these items scattered abroad. This site is used by many schools instructing their students in Open Water, or Advanced Open Water Certifications. There are suspended platforms at twenty feet affording Instructors and students platforms to perfect and practice their skills. There are times that the bottom composition is stirred with the multiple new divers that visit this site. Ideal diving condition is before 9am, and satisfactory diving condition is after 3pm when most classes have been completed.

White Star Quarry, May 2006, Wayne Taylor (taylor_wn@yahoo.com), White Lake, MI. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 10 to 17 Feet. Water: 52 to 66 F, calm, no currents. White Star dive site is a modest operation that is a descent training site for beginner divers. There are three platforms which instructors may use with student divers, and a few items that have been sunk that provide divers something to see while conducting their underwater exploration. Depths range from 25' to 50', with a hole that may be explored that reaches to 70'. The 70' dive is not one recommended for novice divers, as the hole is in conjunction to an overhead environment. This specific dive should be saved for those with experience for overhead environments. For experienced divers this is a good site to practice skills or newly acquired equipment for familiarization dives. \$10 fee per diver, and \$7 for air fill.

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