

urday. We might have opted out of the Blue Hole trip and dived the local sites instead. But that would have meant giving up Long Caye, which was the best dive of the trip. During all dives, we were allowed to continue our dives as long as we liked, well past many in our group finished their own dives, as much as 20 minutes longer. The cabins were nearly full (softline(capacity is about 40 guests), but it didn't feel crowded. Food was decent, plentiful, but not exceptional. However, they had a tasty and extensive barbecue on Friday night.

Turneffe Island Lodge, April 2007, Lin Gitterman (m.l.gitterman@sympatico.ca), Toronto, ON. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 20 to 75 Feet. Water: 83 to 85 F, choppy, surge. Well-run operation, safety-focused with good, attentive dive masters and staff. Excellent food, housekeeping and ambiance. We were a little disappointed in the reef (are we spoiled now after Indonesia?) as much of it was broken (hurricane damage?), but our dive master showed us lots of things. Divers the previous week saw +15 sharks but we had a bad "shark week." Fresh warm towels on the dive boat along with oranges, water, etc., and divers are assisted to the utmost. You set your gear up on the first day and never have to do it again — it is hosed down daily by the staff and washed at the end of your trip. Lots of turtles, jacks, frog fish, parrot fish, etc. Rooms have been refurbished and are really nice but the cabanas could do with a bit of a facelift — apparently planned for next year. Note — you are dropped back in Belize by 9 in the morning so a later flight makes for a long wait in the airport.

Turneffe Island Lodge, May 2007, Bill McGrath (wfm3@cornell.edu), Chandler, AZ. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 75 to 150 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F,

calm. This is a well-run, guest-oriented establishment with well-maintained facilities, good food, a caring staff, and good diving. The place is idyllic; a small, private island 30 nm off the coast of Belize. The guests were an agreeable bunch, ranging from solo fishermen to couples with young adult children. Set your gear up the first day, and it magically reappears for each dive. The boats are relatively small, with few divers, so it's not crowded at all. The protocol calls for playing follow-the-divemaster, so independent divers might be disappointed. We did the Blue Hole one day; a real disappointment. We descended and came right back up without seeing a thing. An over-rated dive in my opinion. All in all, a delightful place with friendly people, sunny skies, and good chow. Wine list needs work, though.

BERMUDA

Dive Bermuda (formerly Nautica), September 2006, Paul Martin (Paul.Martin@GrammarSmith.com), Arlington, MA. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 Feet. Water: 75 to 78 F, choppy. Dived out of Hamilton at shop accessible through a fancy hotel lobby, but nobody seemed to mind us passing through in wet swim wear and T-shirts. The first tank was a shallow (45 feet) coral shelf, with no special features to bring us back. After a short ride (and short interval, but sufficient since so shallow) we dived a double wreck. The Montana was a Confederate States of America gun runner, a steel paddle wheel steamer that sank in the 1800s. That wreck still has a lot of vertical structure to enjoy, including some of the paddle blades and the boiler. Scattered on top and adjacent to this the Constellation, a 1943 wreck

of a wooden sailing ship that inspired Peter Benchley's book (and later movie) "The Deep." Though only the mast step of the original structure remains, the cargo is much in evidence. Their load of bags of cement have formed a surreal landscape of "pillows," with slate slabs destined for use in pool tables mingled among them. The rest of their cargo was more fragile or salvaged early on; the site is protected from collecting and still littered with the whiskey bottles from the more perishable part of the cargo. The double wreck was a lovely dive. The site is accessible even when the southern end of Bermuda is blown out by swell or high winds. The dive operation is targeting the cruise ships in Hamilton, and so, aims at easy dives and enforced profiles.

Triangle Divers, September 2006, Paul Martin (Paul.Martin@GrammarSmith.com), Arlington, MA.

Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 75 to 78 F, choppy. Triangle is near the causeway that joins St. George to the rest of Bermuda; they are working to garner the business for the northern end of the islands. They pick up and drop off to the cruise boat dock at St. George. Their boat was old and not a great setup for scuba (one ladder, extra long, for a SNUBA-style hard-hat bottom walk that they and some other Bermuda operations offer to non-divers), but the staff were working hard to make the dive experience a good one. We dived our own gear, but observed minor repairs done instantly to their rental gear. Dives were in afternoon, and first was a shallow reef at the northern corner of the whole Bermuda reef system. Nice healthy coral, but limited species. Basically coral heads forming a maze around a modest blue hole. Second was on the wreck of a dredge, scuttled around 1900. The lo-

icals just didn't need the boat any more and did a good job of sending it down to 80 feet, standing upright and opened up enough for non-hardcore-wreckers to swim through. It had been there long enough to grow some brain coral on it and was especially glorious in the blue-lipped tunicates that formed fist-sized clusters in many places on the upper surfaces and edges. Viz was clouded by rough wind so swimming down the mooring to the wreck and keeping it in sight was the only reasonable nav for this dive. Bermuda's massive reef system has been wrecking boats since humans got the technology to sail there, and it is still at work. It is not the sparkling clear water and creature zoo of the better Carib sites.

BONAIRE

To many visitors, Bonaire's attraction is shore diving, not only in front of their hotels, but via rental car to one of a score of marked sites — but keep nothing in those cars as many get broken into while divers are underwater. Still, Bonaire is a diver's island par excellence, with diving that's especially well suited for easy divers and those who want to concentrate on photography.

Bonaire Dive and Adventure, Sand Dollar, August 2005, Bruce Williams, Durango, CO. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm. Spacious condos with good water views, huge open balconies. Dated interiors but clean and well-kept. Full kitchens for eat-in, several good restaurants to walk to, and many in town (vehicle required). Maintenance person helped himself to \$20 when he came to our unit for an electrical problem. Bonaire Dive and Adventure sup-