

our flight home and came home the next day. Some stayed on in Bali and dove a couple days and came home on their regular departure schedule. Steve Frink and his wife, Barb, in Florida, did what they could to make the return happen, but the boat isn't comfortable at all, it's not set up very well for diving, the food is so-so, and we only had a couple good dives, the rest were average with average viz — not what everyone was expecting after all the hype that has been printed about that area.

MALAYSIA

M/V Celebes Explorer, July 2007, Roger Gray, Annandale, VA. The Celebes is 100 feet long and 24 feet wide. It has 2 cabins on the main deck and 6 below deck for up to 18 divers. The most we had was 12, so I did not have to share a cabin. The cabins were surprisingly spacious. Each with its own private bath, shower and individually controlled air-conditioning. All meals are buffet-style, with plenty to eat. If you want something special, just ask the cook and he will try to make it for you. Beer is available. The Celebes does 4 days at Sipadan, 1 at Siamil, 1 at Kapalai and 1 at Mabul islands. Sipadan is by far the best diving, but the other islands have some good points. You could see 50 feet but not take any pictures. Only up close to the reef was the visibility good enough to take pictures. Water temperature was 82 to 84 F on the surface and 80 F at 75 feet. You can do up to 5 dives a day, 4 day and 1 night dive. Time limit is 50 to 55 minutes plus 3 minutes for safety stop. The divemasters and crew are outstanding. The diving is also outstanding. Small critters are everywhere, along with schools of large bumphead parrotfish. Too many turtles to count,

large school of barracuda and plenty of sharks. Just too many different kinds of fish to list: coral cat shark, leaf fish, frog fish, pipefish, Mandarin fish, crocodile fish, decorator crab, octopus, zebra moray eel, mantis shrimp, nudibranch and pygmy seahorse, and more. Sipadan and Siamil are a must-see if you dive Borneo. Kapalai and Mabul are OK as a change of pace dive. The currents can be strong at times and the surf choppy.

Ocean Rover, May 2007, Leona Holaday (leonaholaday@yahoo.com), Kihei, HI. Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 86 to 88 F, calm. The crew and service on this boat are consistently good from what I have heard, and my experience confirmed this. There were 10 on board, and only three were new to this boat, including myself. The rest were repeats, some more than once. The cabins were spacious and nicely appointed. I liked the fact that each shower had its own self-contained water heating unit so you couldn't run out of hot water. The crew was always there to help you - I could barely put on or take off my own wetsuit. The boat was built in 2000 and most of the crew had a hand in its construction, so they were like one big family. The diving was easy. Water extremely warm; I almost fell asleep underwater. Had my 5 mil as I get cold easily, but it was still warm with 4 dives a day. No big critters, but lots of nudibranchs. Limited visibility.

SeaVentures, July 2007, Leigh Clark (lamazon@iinet.net.au), Sandringham, VIC. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 5 to 15 Meters. Water: 27 to 29 C, calm, currents, no currents. SeaVentures is a converted accommodation rig which after a number of incarnations ended up moored off Mabul, being used as a dive platform. The rooms

vary; some are dry and nice, others are a bit damp and in need of repair — but after 5+ dives per day, the only time you are in your room is to download a card or sleep. The food, compared to other places we have just stayed in Malaysia, is nice — if you're a sweet tooth, you might feel a bit under catered for. All the staff are great. Some of the diving from other divers was not; the dive-masters could definitely be pointing out some of the bad techniques and behavior. The house reef is just fantastic for photographers, as you can spend as long as you want (or as your long-suffering buddy wants). We stayed for 9 days initially, and then extended for another 4. UW Photography Comments: No rinse tank on boat, but we were never more than 20-30 minutes from the rig. Separate rinse tank on the rig. There was no specific photo table or room, but your palatial accommodation had a small desk (which was transformed into a workbench for me).

MALDIVES

Baani Explorer, December 2006, Sally Byrd (ladybyrds@msn.com). Experience: 40 dives. Upon departure from Laguna Beach Resort, we were never informed of our pickup and where we would be met by a representative from the boat. We contacted Hussein Hamyz, boat manager. He informed us that we needed to be at the Male airport by 7 am. We sat at the airport until 12:15, arriving at the boat at 12:45. The cleanliness of the boat is atrocious. Dietary restrictions and food likes and dislikes were not forwarded on to the boat manager. The chef did not acknowledge any of our requests or restrictions but served tuna steaks/tuna fish two to three times every day. Daily

requests were made for fresh vegetables and totally ignored! The crew was never introduced to the guests and we did not know who was responsible for what. Room 11, Executive Honeymoon Suite, was infested with mold and the carpet was soaking-wet. The previous guest left the windows open for 3 days during a rain storm. The toilet seat was broken off. The bathroom shower and floor were dangerously slippery. There was no working air conditioning in Room 11. The temperature never varied from outside air temperature and extreme humidity. There was no hot water for three days. After that, unless you were the first off the boat and ran up the ladder in your room to shower, there was never hot water. In Room 11 the light next to the bed and the fan were on the same switch. So if you wanted the light off at night to sleep the fan went off, or vice versa. Bathroom door in Room 10 also, Executive Honeymoon Suite, did not stay closed. There was no toilet paper holder, so every time the boat shifted, the toilet paper would fall onto the wet floor. The rooms and sheets stunk like mildew, and sheets were never changed all week. The beds were extremely uncomfortable so we slept on the deck every night. Crew would smoke in the saloon, and all over the boat, which your website states is non-smoking, and totally disregarding that none of the guests were smokers. The disgusting smell would come through the vents into our rooms. The crew told us we could have fresh dive towels whenever we wanted, and we ran out on Tuesday night. There was nowhere to hang wet suits, clothes, or towels on the live-aboard. We had to use deck chairs, which took away from people using them. There were no fresh water tanks to rinse our gear. We had to drag our wetsuits back and forth. The