

Anse Chastanet, July 2007, Tom & Lynn Hayes (tomhayes@cox.net), Pensacola, FL. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 81 to 82 F, choppy. The rooms are spacious and the service is first-rate. There is no A/C, but there are fans and cooling is adequate. Mosquito netting over the bed is provided, and we had no trouble, even though it was fairly warm during the week. The views from the hillside rooms are spectacular. There are 305 steps from the beach up to rooms numbered 7, which have the best views. The Jade Mountain section is even higher, but tends to be a little pricey. However, there are beachside rooms which require no climbing. There is regular shuttle service for those who can't do steps. Diving is limited to scheduled boat and shore dive — no unaccompanied diving! A lot of beginners here on honeymoon, but the divemasters let us stay down as long as we got back on the boat with 500 psi. Snorkeling is great, and we saw nearly as much life as on the dives. The dive operation was also first class, although we did handle all of our own gear on and off the boats (shore boarding). The boats are great for diving — good exit and entry. Lots of excursions available through the resort, and they provide free kayak, sunfish, catamarans and sailboards. Food was tasty and varied — we never ate the same entree twice during the week. The week is not inexpensive, but we enjoyed every aspect of the trip. A direct flight from Atlanta made it easy to get to compared to many places. More banded coral shrimp, arrow crabs, eels and small critters than we have seen most anywhere, but not a lot of big fish, sharks or rays. Several people took a whale trip and saw several pods of pilot whales.

Scuba Steves Diving, August 2006, James Hawkins (jannajh@aol.com), San Antonio, TX. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 83 to 84 F, choppy. Boat was too small for number of people and, because of pick-ups of divers at cruise ships and training them, we would leave the dock at 8:30 am and return at about 3:30-4:30 pm for two-tank shallow dives. Not a good dive operation except for Scuba Steve. Coral and numerous small fish were beautiful.

ST. MAARTEN

French St. Martin and Dutch St. Maarten are two nations in one, with wonderful beaches, superb hotels, fine cuisine. A few diver operators are trying to find better diving for experienced divers, but the cruise ships dominate.

Dive Safaris, Wyndham Sapphire, February 2007, Tom Nagle (tomnagle@hotmail.com), Fargo, ND. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 50 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, choppy, no currents. Dive Safaris includes any equipment you need in the price. \$70 for the shark dive, \$93 for a 2-tank AM. The shark dive is well done. About a dozen in very close. The procedure is explained ahead of time and the dive very well controlled. We also did the Carib Cargo wreck and one reef. These are only mediocre. Beginners would do well here, but experienced divers are not given much freedom. A trip to St. Maarten is only worth it for the sharks.

Dive Safaris, Holland House Beach Hotel, May 2007, John Sekan, Las Vegas, NV. Experience: 200 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 feet. Water: 80 to 83 F, choppy, surge, mild currents. Excellent

dive operations. They really know how to treat their customers. Visibility was the best. colorful reefs. Shark dive was good and safe, and casual compared to other shark dives I have been on. St. Maarten does not have the timeless tropical charm that other islands have. No friendly destination appeal. Hotel and car level of service far below expectations. No kind words about Hertz — dishonest staff. Diving was good; the island is dirty. Books and videos about St. Maarten misleading.

Dive Safaris, September 2007, Don Winchester (DonWinchester@alltel.net), Mooresville, NC. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 50 to 70 Feet. Water: 84 to 86 F, calm, no currents. Dove as shore excursion from Disney Wonder cruise ship. Visited the 18th century HMS Proselyte's cannons, anchors and other debris, an unidentified steel-hulled wreck and several coral outcrops. Second tank was on the Maze. Dive master pointed out several lobster and other critters. A small sea turtle came floating out of the depths and accompanied us. Numerous small fish and small schools, barrel sponges and a nice elkhorn coral, but not in the quantities I expected.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Heavily forested St. Vincent lies in a beautiful chain of islands, with pretty reefs and a good range of fish species. Daytime temperatures are in the high 80s year-round, the low 70s at night; afternoon cloud bursts are common; St. Vincent is in the hurricane belt. The Grenadines — Bequia, Palm, Union, and Carriacou — are a sailor's dream;

they're islands with small hotels, little dive operations, decent Caribbean diving. St. Vincent has become the "small critter capital" of the Caribbean, perhaps because like most Caribbean islands, it's heavily fished.

Bequia

Bequia Dive Adventures, Gingerbread Hotel, May 2007, Rainer and Kristin Farrag, Dundee, IL. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, choppy, surge. We have made 3 trips to this place and find the diving to be excellent. Ron and Laury at Dive Adventures are great to dive with and find all kinds of cool stuff to photograph. The diving is in small groups so we go at our own slow speed. The reefs are so beautiful, you don't want to miss anything — seahorses, highhats, and other things you don't see everywhere. It can be difficult to get in and out of Bequia, but we find the best bet is to go through St. Vincent and then ferry over from there. The ferry is within walking distance of the Gingerbread Hotel but they will gladly pick you up. The dive shop is about 100 yards from the hotel. Not much going on in Bequia, but the people are friendly and the diving is wonderful! The furthest dive is only 15 minutes away. You return after each dive.

St. Vincent

Dive St. Vincent, Sunset Shores Hotel, May 2007, Peter J Maerz (pjmaerz@yahoo.com), Hollywood, FL. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 60 to 90 Feet. Water: 81 to 82 F, choppy, no currents. Great weather with a perfect breeze. A beautiful island studded with mountains and lush with vegetation. Bill Tewes remains one of the great diving