
While in some parts of the world, tipping is a way of life, I like the approach in Fiji. No tipping, but at the end of the trip one may contribute to the Christmas Fund,

which goes to staff members and, because of strong family ties, really to their village — the kids, elders, whomever. Most resorts carefully write the guests name

and the amount of the tip in a book, then distribute at year end. That always gets my attention.

J. Q.

The Price of Solitude

Do you have to share quarters?

Dear Editor:

It was my privilege to be a passenger on the *Sun Dancer* the week of December 15–22. A fine boat, and a terrific crew. That said, I was unhappy with the situation at the Palau Pacific Hotel on the final night of the trip. I traveled to Palau as a single diver. When I booked with the *Sun Dancer's* Coral Gables office, I was informed that I would, in all likelihood, be sharing the cabin on the boat. I expected this, and was willing to accept that situation. I was not, however, informed that this would be the situation at the hotel on the final night. I was

only informed that a room at the Palau Pacific was included in the package price. After six days in a small cabin with a complete stranger, I had no interest in further contact with my cabin mate, but only upon my arrival at the Palau Pacific did I find out that we were booked into the same room. My only recourse for solitude was to pay for my own room at the full rack rate of \$255 per night.

Jack Doll, APO

I, too, would have been surprised to reach the hotel and find that I still had a roommate. As a frequent single traveler on

live-aboards, I'm accustomed to sharing quarters with strangers. That's life on a boat; if you want a cabin of your own, you can expect to pay one and one-half times the cost of the trip. But that shouldn't apply to your hotel room.

Even though the *Sun Dancer's* literature specifies "all prices per person on a shared basis. . . . Staterooms are double occupancy," I can easily understand how you were surprised to find yourself with a roommate at the Palau Pacific Resort.

I called the Aggressor fleet to see if you would have had to share a room if you had been traveling on the *Palau Aggressor*. You don't stay the last night at a hotel; you spend it aboard, with your roommate, of course.

Unfortunately, the norm in travel is that you suffer for traveling alone. Even though I think it could be more clearly stated in the pre-travel literature that the hotel is also based on double occupancy, the single traveler has to assume that everything is priced on a share basis unless clearly stated otherwise.

The burden has been placed on the consumer, the single traveler, to find out ahead of time the penalties of being an individual. I hope that after reading of your experience, other single divers will avoid having to face similar surprises.

One consolation: wasn't the diving on Palau great?

J. Q.

John Gaffney

John Gaffney, founder of the National Association of Scuba Diving Schools (NASDS) and one of the more colorful men in modern diving, died at the age of 62 on February 6. Although John's presence has

not been felt in recent years, his contributions shaped a large part of recreational diving. NASDS was the first certification agency tied to dive shops — excuse me, I mean dive stores. John insisted that the term "dive shop" was inappropriate and unprofessional.

John was an innovator. He introduced visual tank inspection, the safe second stage, and the first buoyancy compensator, among many other things that have influenced our safety and style of diving. Each of these innovations created major controversy in the diving community. Today, most of them are industry standards. And today, we are better divers and safer divers because John insisted. He will be missed.