
and asked them to contact the *Bega Princess* to pick me up. A boat from Marlin Bay came and took me to the resort, where the *Bega Princess* was moored.

The divemaster never said a word, then avoided me the rest of the trip. Apparently the crew had searched around the dive site for about two hours, then notified Marlin Bay to get help. They missed me because the current was running in the opposite direction from where they searched.

The lessons are obvious. Carry and dive with your own safety gear, scuba sausage, flares, or a loud alarm.

If you're traveling alone, make sure that someone besides your assigned buddy knows your

limitations — someone who will wait for you on bottom if you're slow in descending, and who, if you're way behind, will realize you might not just be taking pictures.

If you think the operator is doing something wrong, speak up. If the divemaster ignores you, don't go in unless you're comfortable.

P.S.: I did receive a nice letter from my rescuer telling me how he thinks about saving my life every time he crosses that part of the sea. He asked me to please send him \$6,000 for a new engine for his boat.

Ellen Sarbone
San Francisco, California

In the real world, solo travelers get stuck with potluck, or, as Ellen

did, get assigned a divemaster who is also responsible for everybody else — although this dude didn't seem to think he was responsible for anyone. Speaking from experience, I'd rather dive solo than count on some of the loonies I've been paired up with (the one who clawed my face when he was out of air comes to mind). And, let's face it, photographers aren't the best of buddies, especially when they shoot macro and you long to see more than six square inches of the reef.

I do think, however, that it's unrealistic to expect an assigned buddy — or even more so, the entire group — to spend much time waiting for you in such situations. While that might be ideal, it doesn't happen and it becomes the diver's responsibility to join the group, not vice versa.

J. Q.

Random Scatterings

News from on line and on letters

Divers visiting **Belize's Rum Point** these days are complaining about an attitude problem — owner grouchiness, which puts a damper on the guests' good times. We noted in our October 1995 review that while it's a resort with interesting potential, it's family run and could use an infusion of people interested in turning it into the charming, friendly retreat it could be. . . . Divers continue to speak highly of the good vibes at **Fiji's Garden Isle Resort** on Taveuni; it's less expensive than Dive Taveuni and closer to the diving. . . . *In Depth* reader Guy Huse of Little, Massachusetts, warns about weight restrictions between **Grand Cayman and Little Cayman Beach Resort**. "Island Air delivers

baggage over 55 pounds 24 hours later, so we left our dive lights at home to stay under the limit. . . .

If you're one of the few owners of a pre-1988 Viking dry suit, it's been recalled — problems with the inflator hose, says the manufacturer. . . . **Force Fin** wearers take note: One voice on the net is offering to pay for your hotel and dive boat for three days if you can keep up with him and his buddies on a dive for 20 minutes at their spearfishing pace. They would be using freediving fins (the long blades). . . . Speaking of freediving, **Big Blue Divers in South Florida** offers PADI certified classes in apnea (breath-hold) diving. It is run by Jean-Jacques Mayol, the son of Jacques Mayol. Jacques Mayol is

the former world record holder and Jean-Jacques is a formidable freediver in his own right. He can be reached at 305-361-6558, fax 305-361-7678. The class instruction consists of pool, open water, classroom freediving-related physiology, and yoga. Once you've passed the class, you'll be ready for the **Casio Depth Meter** advertised in Cabela's catalog. The copy reads, "Measures up to six hours of dive time at one-second interval, and shows depth in one-foot increments up to 164 feet." Yet it states, "Not for scuba diving."

Suspicion confirmed: In October we printed a warning for those returning to the States through **Los Angeles International Airport** not to use the option of rechecking their bags for domestic U.S. connections at the conveyor belt just outside customs because dive bags were getting ripped off. This week six luggage handlers were arrested at LAX for stealing items from

luggage. . . . The FDA has banned the sale of over-the-counter cures for **swimmer's ear** because they don't work. In the absence of something to drop in your ears after the dive, try tilting your head to the side and pulling on your earlobe to straighten out the ear canal and let the trapped water out. . . .

Our reviewer who wrote last month about the excellent diving off **Hanish Island in the southern Red Sea** was surprised to find out that last week Yemen military planes attacked Eritrean warships in the waters around the island and that a Yemen garrison on the island was holding out against an Eritrean attack. "I spent a lot of time all around this island and saw no permanent structure, much less a garrison. The only people I saw in this area were very small, open wooden fishing boats every couple of days. . . ." I hope the issue is resolved; Eritrea holds promise as a stable country to access the diving in the southern Red Sea. . . .

John Suttles of New Orleans checked out the only dive operation located on the north central coast of **Roatan, Honduras: Ben's Dive Resort**. He says that he never saw another diver, but did see healthy, vibrant, and dramatic reefs, along with spotted eagle rays and sharks. As for the resort, John highly recommends it. "Ben and his manager, Robert, previously managed the dive operation at Fantasy Island and have imported the same management skills and attention to details, individual comfort, and interest." . . . As anyone who's been to the Bay Islands can attest, when the no-see-ums (a.k.a. "flying teeth") are out they can eat you alive and screaming, but it's time to back off from **DEET**, a chemical used in 97 percent of all bug sprays. ABC's *Prime Time Live* news magazine reported on reactions as severe as seizures, brain disorders, even death in children. I still have a bottle of 100 percent DEET (Jungle Juice) setting on my shelf, but the military now issues DEET no stronger than 33 percent. I usually dilute mine with Avon's Skin So Soft

to make it smell better and cover more uniformly. . . .

When Bruce Bowker of the **Carib Inn on Bonaire** was attacked on the scuba bulletin board on America Online by someone calling herself or himself "Jenny TRR," Bruce filed suit to find out who it was. According to a recent letter from Bruce, there never was a Jenny TRR. It was part of an elaborate group of defamatory schemes against the Carib Inn by an ex-employee who had been fired from the Inn several years ago. In a signed "retraction and apology," Steven T. Hunter admitted that he "intentionally and falsely" attacked the Carib Inn and its employees using several different names while on line. . . . **Off the Big Island in Hawaii** in 1993, two divers got into the water to photograph a pod of pilot whales. One of them almost drowned when one of the whales grabbed her in its mouth and dragged her down 40 feet. The National Marine Fisheries Service slapped a \$10,000 fine on the two for harrassing the whales. Recently a federal judge reversed the fine, saying that taking pictures or swimming in the water near the whales did not violate federal protections. . . .

Its name used to be Na Koro, before Jean-Michel Cousteau and Post Ranch of San Francisco bought the resort and turned it into **Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort**. Jean-Michel's father, Jacques Cousteau, and the nonprofit Cousteau Society filed suit saying that his son Jean-Michel could not use the family name. Now, according to a California judge's preliminary ruling, the resort may have a new, longer name, the "Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort," or a Fijian court may rule the name has to be "Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort Not Associated with Captain Jacques Cousteau or The Cousteau Society." . . . As if things weren't already bad enough for the Cousteau family with father suing son, their research vessel, the *Calypso*, is lying on its starboard side in 16 feet of water at the shipyard in Singapore after being hit by a barge.

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Editor



John Q. Trigger

Letters to the Editor/
Submissions

To contact our editorial office, write *In Depth*, P.O. Box 90215, Austin, TX 78709. Call 512-891-9812. Fax 512-891-9813. Internet address: IDeditor@AOL.com

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