

## BARBADOS

Barbados is busy and crowded, with lots of fast traffic, big splashy resorts, and restaurants galore. . . . There's ordinary Caribbean diving with tropical fish, although big ones are rare, but it's fine for beginners or for a dive or two on a golf holiday. . . . You still can find century-old bottles in the harbor with the Dive Shop. . . . The wreck of the *Stavronikita* is interesting, but jammed with tourist divers. . . . The average daily temperature is in the mid-80s year-round; there's considerable rain from June to January, and it's important to watch for hurricanes. . . .

**Coral Isle Divers, Settlers Beach, January 2000, Jeremy Butler, Friday Harbor, WA.** Vis: 20 to 80 feet. Water: 79 to 82 F, choppy. Dive restrictions: Follow DM, time; depth profile was announced but not really enforced. 500 psi. Settlers Beach in Holetown. Nice "villas" on beach, with kitchen so you can make your own breakfast and lunch. Great restaurants all around. Dived ten dives with Coral Isle Divers because they are the only shop with Nitrox. Their 40 ft. boat is good, with safety gear, head and cold drinks. Divemasters are personable and competent, and give adequate briefings, do not set up your gear for you, but did check that air was turned on. Did an adequate job of pointing out the few underwater sights there are in Barbados. There are good wreck dives especially the

Stravronikita which I dived twice: once with no current, and once with a strong current. On the Stav, I saw the largest barracuda I have seen in 100 dives. They get a lot of cruise ship divers which reduces the enjoyment of the dives due to the "lowest common denominator" factor. On the dives where there were only a few, experienced, divers everyone had a better time. Kip — the owner — told me he had given up his cruise ship concession, so perhaps there will be fewer tourist divers in future. The shop's rental gear seemed to have some problems (with regulators): in ten dives I noticed at least three regs or gauges that were not working right. Your note on Barbados in the Chapbook could mention that there is lots to do in Barbados, compared to many Caribbean islands. Museums, old sugar mills, plantation houses, great beaches on the east side. A friendly island. Not the place one would go if diving were ones top priority. Good wrecks, healthy corals, but most of the fish end up in the country's excellent restaurants! (800-513-5840, 246-434-8377; 246-431-9068)

## BELIZE

Inside the world's second-largest barrier reef, English-speaking Belize sports three major atolls—but not much in the way of beaches. . . . Most of the good diving is reachable from live-aboards or from resorts on the offshore cayes. . . . The deeply-cut, spur-and-groove coral reefs of Ambergris Caye, the largest and