

## CAYMAN ISLANDS

***Cayman Aggressor IV, August 1999, Luther Johnson, McLean VA.*** Vis: 50-100. Water: 83-89 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: None specified but requested to remain within standard depths for air and Nitrox. (Aggressor Fleet 800-348-2628 or 504-385-2628 Fax: 504-384-0817; e-mail: [info@aggressor.com](mailto:info@aggressor.com); website [www.aggressor.com](http://www.aggressor.com))

***Cayman Aggressor IV, December 1999, Michael Farrell, Haleiwa, HI.*** Vis: 50 to 125 feet. Water: 75 to 78 degrees, calm and flat. Dive your own profile? Yes. Dive restrictions: normal Aggressor restrictions. Superb trip, great weather, great crew and boat. Dove Little Cayman, smooth crossing. Highly recommend for all divers this time of year; corals and fish not Palau, but very worthwhile.

***Cayman Aggressor IV, December 1999, Gregg M. Gaylord (gregg1954@aol.com), Sheboygan, WI.*** Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 76 to 79 Fahrenheit, calm. No decompression diving. "State of the art" dive boat. Rooms are ample size and comfortable. Showers are excellent. Dive deck is perfect with easy on/off. At Cayman airport with Aggressor crew members spotting your Aggressor luggage tags and take control. We dove the first few days at Grand Cayman dive sites. Due to "rough" winter weather, we couldn't cross to Little Cayman for a few days (the previous 4-5 trips never made it to Little Cayman). Our overnight trip to

Little Cayman was uneventful and we arrived at some of the most beautiful dive sites in the Caribbean. Soft sandy bottoms with large coral heads and a variety of fish life awaited at each Little Cayman dive site. Divemasters were available for all dives, but the "pool is open" was the only rule (other than safe diving) and you could dive your own profile and choose as many or as few safe dives as you pleased. Each new dive site was well planned and briefings were excellent. Diving was easy with little to no currents. We made it to Cayman Brac for the Russian frigate that made for 2 nice, if unspectacular dives. Either I am getting jaded or "Cayman ain't what it used to be." Perhaps December is not the best time to dive, but many of us felt that the number of species and numbers of each species was down compared to memories of a decade ago. Crew included an excellent camera pro and skipper as well as two new diving mates. The chef was the best ever. I have never had such wonderful preparations on a live-aboard. Would be the ideal "first" live aboard for new divers willing to finally go the live aboard route. Wish I knew before I left that the water is colder than I anticipated. I would have bought my 5 mm wet suit BEFORE this trip instead of waiting to make it my Xmas present!

***Cayman Aggressor IV, January 2000, Ann McGrath (amcgrath@att.net), Alexandria, VA.*** Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to degrees, choppy. Restrictions: 100 foot depth limit, return to the boat with 500 psi, usually

had a time limit also Nothing bad at all about the *Cayman Aggressor IV*! Boat was excellent, crew was excellent, service was excellent, food was excellent. Diving not as good as Belize, but very good. The island was a bit expensive, but beautiful. The *Aggressor Fleet* is the best on any sea. Excellent photo pro on boat, processed E6 for us.

***Cayman Aggressor, May 2000, Barbara Jones, (abjones@pachell.net), Anaheim, CA.*** Vis: 100 to 200 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 Fahrenheit, calm. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: 110' depth limit. I have been on 19 *Aggressor* trips and keep returning because of their reliable reputation. The crews are always helpful and go out of their way to accommodate. I have been on the *Cayman Aggressor* 13 times and have not had 1 bad trip. Diving Little Cayman is my favorite with its sheer walls. Accommodations are very nice with each cabin having a bathroom. The salon area is roomy and the upper deck provides areas for sun and shade along with a hot tub. UW Photography comments: rinse tank for cameras, large camera work table, E6 processing The crew is always there to help with cameras in and out of water.....rental cameras and strobes are available.

***Cayman Aggressor, May 2000, Patrick Donaldson, Darien, IL.*** Vis: 60 to 120 ft. Water: 82 to 84 degrees, calm and flat. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: none. Great boat, good crew but not great. Very good diving overall-B+

to A-; A novice would love the trip; the boat is in great shape, like new.

***Little Cayman Diver, January 2000, M.S. Ginsburg, Tampa, FL.*** Our 3rd and last trip on this scow. Calling this rundown and poorly operated vessel a luxury yacht has become false advertising. The boat, divesites and service have really gone downhill. Capt. warned us off favorite sites like Magic Roundabout due to algae or sand inundation and we saw marked deterioration and algae coverage everywhere. Tame groupers and turtles were still around! Chef quit 1st night, so Capt. cooked and divemaster did dishes. We had amateur cooks for a couple days. They tried, but food worst ever on a boat. Provisioning was terrible with mostly cheese, dry cereal and processed meats. Capt. hid and hoarded snack foods and bonbons intended for the guests. We ran outta food on the last night and were sent ashore for a comp dinner. The Capt. smuggled in a girl and when we returned, she was lying around naked in the bow cabin where everyone's extra gear was kept. Tacky. There were only 4 guests and 3 crew, yet the heads were never cleaned and we finally emptied the overflowing waste baskets. Vessel stunk of bilge and diesel. Rm #2 AC was unadjustable, you either froze or baked. They fixed our windows, so we could get fresh air, when blue exhaust didn't pour in from poorly maintained engines. It was so bad, the engineer thought we were on fire at one point! We got a last minute deal, but the couple who paid top \$ for the special Y2K trip were

livid when the engineer admitted he'd left the advertised party favors, bubbly and chocolates in Florida. At midnight, the nicest guy aboard, our divemaster stayed up so we could dive. During dingy transfers, its prow repeatedly smashed into the metal transom and almost maimed a guest. The "highlight" of our voyage was the arrival of a 40' day boat from Brac, they expected us to provide lunch for their divers. Within minutes, this vessel, also run by *LCD*, sank right alongside us because its seacocks were left open. We rescued all aboard and got to dive the new wreck and recover the gear of the unfortunate divers. (800-544-2722; Fax 813-264-2742; e-mail [admin@littlecaymandiver.com](mailto:admin@littlecaymandiver.com); website [www.littlecaymandiver.com](http://www.littlecaymandiver.com))

***Little Cayman Diver, May 2000, Roger C. Dennis and Ruth Rouse, San Jose, CA.*** The operation had a good year in 1998 and in 1999 saw a lot of crew turnover, including captains. Current crew excellent. Some crew complaints about difficulties getting needed repair supplies — ice maker still not working after 6 months waiting for fittings to recharge with Freon. The boat is due for a major maintenance. We had the luxury of only 6 divers and 4 crew members (2 cooks). They normally operate 3-man crews for small groups, 4-man for full loads. The owners need to pay more attention to the "burn-out" factor facing the crew members — these people had been aboard for more than 3 months with only one day off in that entire time. Excellent live-aboard converted from a private yacht. They have repeat business, competitive prices, and one of the

best diving areas in the world for most all their dives with no long boat rides getting there. We are glad to have *Chapbook* information in pre-planning our dive trips.

***Little Cayman Diver, May 2000, Jeff Kugler, Hicksville, N.Y.*** Vis: 80 to 150 ft. Water: 80 to 82 degrees, calm and flat, no currents. Dive your own profile: no. Dive restrictions: time and depth; very liberal.

***Little Cayman Diver, May 2000, Mike Kaluza (mdiverk@aol.com) Lyndhurst, NJ.*** Vis: 80 to 200 ft. Water: 81 to 83 degrees, calm and flat. Dive your own profile, 133 ft. limit. The boat was in OK shape. It needs some work done to it, mainly minor stuff. Air condition works. Plenty of fresh water for showers. Bathroom facilities are in working order. No major problems with anything. They told me that film processing during my trip will not be a problem but it turned out to be so. Very good live-aboard vacation.

## CUBA

***Oceanus, May 2000, Mitzi and Bill Martain, Lexington, NC.*** Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 78-80 degrees. Fantastic opportunity to dive pristine, huge reefs. Virtually forests of black coral. 100+ hagfish and groupers. Flew into Cancun, cruised to Maria la Gorda, Cuba (12 hours). Crew all spoke English, food fantastic, divemasters terrific. Opportunity to tour inland schools, towns, rum and cigar factories with English speaking guide in