

divers and our dive gear was set up each morning when we arrived at the boat. Boats were quite comfortable. The dive staff was knowledgeable, helpful. They suggested dive sites and allowed divers to pick their dives. Champagne dive site is an experience, with volcanic vents bubbling from the ocean floor. Diving is diverse, with many fish, turtles, eels, frogfish, seahorses etc. Most sites are old, submerged, volcanic peaks loaded with overhangs and crevices for the macro life. Dives were usually limited to 90 ft. Then the slow ascent spiraled up and around the peaks. Vis. Was 80-125 ft. The topography of this island coupled with the diving makes it a great destination. We spent one week diving and one week up in the rainforest at Papillote Wilderness Retreat, luxuriating in the beauty of the "nature island."

Nature Island Dive, November 1999, Lynn Hensel, Barrington, IL. Water: 82-84 degrees. We stayed in the downstairs portion of the cottage (oceanfront) owned by the dive operation. It was lovely. Unfortunately, Hurricane Lenny has wiped it out. The upstairs 1 BR is still available and is perfect for 2 people. The diving was great, close to the dock, great visibility, warm water, lots of fun fish, swim throughs, sea horses! People very friendly. A few restaurants but this is not a touristy island. Great biking and kayaking. Beautiful scenery. (Ph: 809-449-8181, Fax: 809-449-8182)

Nature Island Dive, Oceanview Apts. and Crescent Moon Cabins, May 2000, Gary Lemme, Holiday, FL. Vis: 60 to

80 ft. Water: 80 to 82 degrees, calm and flat, no currents. Dive your own profile: no. Dive restrictions: depth. Second trip to Dominica. Stayed at Oceanview Apts. In Scott's Head. Dove Nature Island Dive, 5 min. drive. Oceanview great, run by great people, great views, great gardens, quiet, cooked our own meals; stayed 12 nights. In between dives went to apartment for 1 hour surface interval. Dives in marine reserve good to outstanding. N.I. was well run. Good, fully equipped, fast boats; no cattleboats. Dives guided, 80 ft. max, depth only restriction. Didn't mind but there sure were some interesting reef formations below us. Dramatic wall dives into extinct volcano. Atlantic dives were outstanding w/hoards of jacks. 3,250 psi every tank; spent last night at Crescent Moon cabins in a mountain valley. Cabins and surroundings beautiful; owners were very friendly, knowledgeable and gracious hosts; food prepared fresh from on premises-grown food. Outstanding and inexpensive. Cabins overlook valley and sea below. You can lay in bed and look down valley to ocean; we hiked in the mountains and drove all around. We will wonder why the majority of travelers have yet to discover this heaven on earth.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Despite the recent flurry of advertisements touting the diving on the large Caribbean island of Hispaniola that the Dominican Republic shares with Haiti, I have yet to hear one report of good

diving attributed to the island, the second largest in the Greater Antilles chain (exceeded in size only by Cuba).

Big Blue Swiss Diving School, Sol De Plata, June 2000, Daniel L. Kopetski, Portland, OR. Vis: 50-80 ft. Water: 78-82 degrees. Well-run German owned-resort but locales slow and on island time compare to us. They had good attitudes and friendly. The food was mediocre at best and some dishes defied description. Resort was clean with lots of amenities, well suited for families with activities for kids. Big Blue very helpful and gave good service. I took two students to certify for open water and went on to do their advanced. Big Blue is SSI but managed to get us PADI materials! The dive sites were suitable for the students but nothing special for experienced divers. Dive boat open skiff with no ladder. Airfare expensive.

Paradise, Punta Cana, November 1999, Ann Underwood, New Milford, CT. Vis: 25 to 35 feet. Water: 70 to 75 degrees, choppy. Dive your own profile: no. They told us this was an up and coming location. We had high hopes that they would dash. We went for a 7 day all inclusive. The hotel promised premium everything which was not so. You had to make reservations for dinner every day instead of all at one time. The food was eatable, that's all. Cable TV didn't work most of the time. We had repeatedly to beg for extra pillows and an umbrella. Hardly anyone spoke English. My fiancée took the resort course; no classroom instruction and

only 30 min. in the 4 ft. pool. Even though I'm a divemaster and Rescue Dive team member, I had to do a checkout dive. The staff told me my regulator was broken — obviously they haven't seen the new and improved regs. You had to make reservations the day before you wanted to dive. But space was very limited, so either you got up super early to make reservations or you didn't dive as much as you'd like. Bottom line, don't expect to dive 2-3 times a day, instead hope to dive once per day. This was more like going to camp than going on vacations. We wrote a letter to Apple vacations stating our dissatisfaction with our \$2800 vacation — they refunded \$500. **(Paradise Watersport & Dive Center, Hotel Paradise, Punta Cana, Bavaro, Dominican Republic; Telephone (809) 688-8150; Fax 688-8150)**

GUADELOUPE

Guadeloupe lies south of Antigua and north of Dominica. Because it's a French-speaking island, English-speaking tourists often have difficulty getting by. . . . Although there's wonderful shopping, a wealth of music and art, and the cuisine's out of this world, the diving is only average. Among the best dives are the Islets Pledgeon, cone-shaped, coral-covered islands that fall to the bottom at 160', and La Sec Patê, a group of large boulders rising to about 40' below the surface. Les Heures Saines (or "the quiet hours") is among the best operations at Pledgeon, and they speak some English. . . . The