

UNITED STATES - FRESHWATER

Lake Huron

Thunder Bay Divers, September 1999, Alan Thayer, Commerce MI. Vis: 15-25 feet. Water: 43-51 degrees, calm and flat. Dive your own profile. Dive restrictions: 130 feet. Great wreck diving. Capt. Slim runs a good day boat briefing done w/ sketches of wrecks, objects to look for. Has grill on board so you can make lunch on all day trips. Has well-equipped dive shop at marina. Crew very helpful. Drysuits recommended. Town of Alpena has plenty of inexpensive accommodations. (517-356-9336; 517-356-1894)

Thunder Bay Divers, June 2000, Tim Lee, Monroe, MI. Vis: 20 to 40 ft. Site: wreck of 500 ft. German freighter, Nordmeer. Ran aground Nov. 1916, in good shape but ice is starting to take its toll. Ship is being slowly torn apart. 2 tank all day charter. Went out of Alpena on 45 ft. tugs, Thunder Bay Divers that is due to be replaced by a 40 ft. coastal patrol boat. Let's hope so, took 2 hrs. to go 17 miles! Expensive. \$85, not including the tanks or weights they rent for \$10. If cold water gear is needed some is available but call in advance. There are more than 20 divable wrecks in Thunder Bay; to get more for your money do wrecks closer to dock. Larry is good captain and knows wrecks better than anyone. Dive your own profile. Season starts in late May to mid-September. Water is very cold; you cannot get by with anything short

of 7mm full hooded wetsuit and drysuit is recommended.

Missouri

Deep Earth Divers/West End Divers January 2000, Guy Johnson (siberia@netexpress.net) Coal Valley, IL. Vis: 75 to 150 Feet. Water: 58 F. Had to follow the leader and stay above 50 feet. No wandering off, no personal dive lights and no cameras. The billion-gallon underground lake, the Bonne Terre mine dive near St. Louis. The water is clear and tap water pure. No fish or plant life. There are various tours or paths to follow showing different areas of the old lead mine that they allowed to fill with water. After watching a video the dive begins with each diver showing their skills in mask clearing and buoyancy. Nine different tours but new divers must do #1 and #2 first. Several interesting swim throughs and various abandoned mining equipment made the trip worthwhile. The air and water temps are the same all year long so it's a great trip during the winter months. A SSI mine diver certification is available for \$50. This lets you advance to the next numbered tours otherwise you always start at #1. There's full sized locomotive at the bottom!

SPAIN

Llafranc, Costa Brava

Triton Diving, June 2000, Pat Bridges, Nashville, TN. Vis: 25 ft. Water: 61 degrees. Dive restrictions: no. Twice-daily boat trips to a delight-

ful reef with thick forests of lime green sea fans and plentiful fish. I know Indo-Pacific and Caribbean fish; these guys were “not in the book.”

The boat captain, Emilio, and his co-owner speak English, Dutch, Spanish and German and gave a complete briefing to the Dutch and Spanish groups on board (and me!) in our familiar language. Serious double-tank divers on the boat. They buddied me with a Spanish-speaking fella whose goal on this dive was to find a specific variety of red and blue shrimp that lives at 25m). I tagged along, taking it all in, until we left the 16E (C) water with 30 bar on our pressure gauges. Basic hand signals and similar dive histories gave my “foreign” buddy and me a mutual comfort level regarding our safety and trust in each other. Divers share an international fellowship. (34-72-30-24-26; Fax 34-72-30-30-20)

BRAZIL

Bahia

Dive Brasil Adventures Excursion Club, Glenn D. Savage, Bridgeport, CT. Vis: 60-90 ft. Water: 78-90 degrees. 9 day trip. All gear was new and provided by the Club here, before departure. Safety signaling equipment part of the package. Customized case to hold two tanks and one carry-on containing regulators, light, computer, knife, tank valves etc. were used. 23 scheduled dives and two tanks at the hotel for shore diving across the street. Dives included those on two deep and intact upright wrecks and a half dozen

broken up wrecks in shallower waters. Other dives included a deep wall and shallow reefs. No shortage of fish! Saw batfish and flying fish. They served breakfast at hotel, lunch and liquids on dive boats and dinner at local restaurants ranged from beef to sushi. The locals were warm hearted and we made friendships. Alcoholic beverages and between meal liquids and snacks were not included in the excursion price, take an additional 100 dollars for one week's consumption. (ATM machines are easily accessible and often in English and Portuguese). American Express Travelers a hassle to convert to cash. Ratio of women to men in this city of three million is approximately 12 to 1, but disproportionately high lesbian population reduces ratio to 9 to 1. Panhandlers abound in NYC, but the predominant beggars in Salvador are children. However sad these encounters were, if we had elected to go elsewhere and remained behind the walls of a resort facility, we would never have met the wonderful Brazilians we encountered.