

the Grand Princess cruise, using Dive Safaris. All gear was setup when we arrived at the marina for Dive Safaris. We were divided into groups of no more than 6 divers with a divemaster. Fantastic briefing, did not rush our dives, great leadership by dm. Friendly captain and staff, sodas, water and cookies between dives. (011-59957-3436; Fax 011-59952-8983)

Dive Safaris, March 2000, Mickey and Adam Fivenson, Traverse City, MI. Reef Sharks, turtles, whales, 200-year-old wrecks, coral pinnacle swim-throughs, lots of soft coral, nice variety of fish. St. Martin got panned in *Undercurrent* as not a serious dive destination, but Whitney Keough, proprietor of Dive Safaris, convinced me through a series of emails that the diving was as good as nearby Saba. With 30 years of sport diving under my belt, I hoped to show my 14-year-old son and 21 year old daughter, both newly certified divers, a memorable experience. The shop is next to the cruise ship tender drop-point. The dive guides are divemasters and higher. The comfortable boat is well-supplied including cans of pop, crackers and cookies: Whitney warned divers that the dive would be rough, but the experience was worth the puke. Son Adam said: My first “real” dive and once I adjusted, what I saw below amazed me. These were the organisms that I had one week before, been studying in Biology class. The fish, the coral, once I reached the diving depth, all of it was but an arms reach away. Among other things, there were numerous lobsters, with long feelers

sticking out from under rocks, a reef shark (from 10 yards away), a sea turtle, dozens huge yellow tail fish, and hundreds of other types of fish, coral, and undersea animals. The rough seas that day didn’t do wonders for my stomach either, but that didn’t stop me from enjoying the experience to the utmost.

ST. VINCENT

St. Vincent lies in a beautiful chain of islands and is heavily forested, with pretty reefs and a good range of fish species. . . . Daytime temperatures are in the high 80s year-round, the low 70s at night; afternoon cloudbursts are common; St. Vincent is in the hurricane belt. . . . The Grenadines — Bequia, Palm, Union, and Carriacou — are a sailor’s dream; they’re islands with small hotels, little dive operations, decent Caribbean diving, and few surprises. . . .

Dive St. Vincent, Grand View, October 1999, Laurie O’Conner (www.lo’connor@cityofsouthlake.com) Hurst, TX. Vis: 30-40 ft. Water: 82 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: 500 psi. Bill Tewes of Dive St. Vincent is very opinionated, but a good divemaster, eager to point out hidden critters. The waters around St. Vincent have obviously been heavily fished, the food chain just stops at a certain size. We saw lots of small critters and fish, but medium size and larger just don’t exist. The Grand View was excellent and very accommodating.

The larger room is worth the price. More to do and see topside on this island than most that we've been to. (Ph: 809-457-4714 or 809-457-4298, Fax: 809-457-4948, e-mail: bill2@caribsurf.com, Website: www.divestvincent.com)

Dive St. Vincent, Sunset Shores, February 2000, Sam Pearlstein, Fayetteville, NY. Vis: 40-60 ft. Water: 76-78 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: return with 400 psi. Our group had 27 people. Sunset Shores accommodated us very nicely. Rooms cleaned daily. TV and radio. Slides out to porch and fresh water pool. Bars by pool and by outdoor restaurant. Good tasting variety of fresh food including fruits and vegetables, three meals a day. Family-owned hotel. They care about their clients. Other restaurants a short cab ride away. Dive St. Vincent was a 100 yd. walk down the beach from hotel. Run ably by Bill Tewes who captained and led dives from our boat. He's animated and fun to be around; careful and extremely knowledgeable UW. Though we didn't see frog fish we did see a large black sea horse and two Whitenose pipefish. Dive sites loaded with small tropicals and critters that Bill was always pointing out. Schools of trumpet fish, many spotted drum, beautiful juveniles, spotted, goldentail and even viper moray and sharptail eels, variety of blennies. A macro delight on most dives. Shrimp and crab of all varieties. Bill has three boats that functioned fine all week. Sites were usually within 10-15 minutes from dock. Most sites dived

from mooring. Gear rinsed between dives. Very enjoyable week!

Dive St. Vincent, February 2000, Dr. Barry Galsion (footman@ix.netcom.com), Boca Raton, FL. Vis: 80-100 ft. Water: 76-78 degrees. Not any big fish or pelagics but many small critters and excellent coral. Bill is well versed in small critters and can find many rare and unusual things. If you are a photographer, you'll have a great time. Dive your limits. We stayed at a place called "something" Shores, a walk from the dive shop. Food was excellent. Hotel was very nice.

Dive St. Vincent, Sunset Shores, February 2000, Peter Hartlove, Longmont, CO. Vis: 40 to 80 feet. Water: 76 to 78 degrees, calm and flat mainly. Dive restrictions: None. Overall a good trip, Caribbean standards. The first 2 days were stormy but things calmed down and weather was beautiful. I was with a group of 24 and Dive St. Vincent had never had such a large group. Bill Tewes and his crew were helpful and did a good job. Same-old-story big weather had pushed the frog fish and seahorses and they had not been found — 1 seahorse all week. That was disappointing but Bill did a good job of finding critters. The muck dive at Young's Island is interesting, I would go back to shoot froggies and horsies, once they are found. Is it the PNG of the Caribbean? Perhaps; pea crabs, lots of cryptic tear drops, blennies, spotted drums. Tons of small stuff. Had laundry done at the Sunset Shores and some of our articles came back with our room

number written on them — permanent mark. Well, we did get them back. The hotel was nice, clean comfortable, food was good usually buffet at night. Some nights are loud with live music but not late.

Dive St. Vincent, Sunset Shores, July 2000, Lannie Smith, Pasco, WA.

Water: 79 degrees. We went to St. Vincent in June 1999 too, we enjoyed it too much to not return. We enjoy seeing many unusual critters compared with other Caribbean diving. Weather was mild with occasional showers, but none while we were diving, vis is good. Bill Tewes and his crew take divers for a two-tank dive at 10:00 each morning, returning about 2:00. Bill is great at finding all sorts of small critters and fish. He's also very appreciative of being shown anything new or unusual. There are no discouraging restrictions, other than being careful with the reef. This isn't a site for sharks, turtles and rays. It's got tons of small, unusual fare, sea horses are not unusual, frog fish are returning. Sunset Shores Hotel just up the beach from Dive St. Vincent (arranged by Bill's shop). Snorkeling in front of the hotels was surprisingly great! There are lots of very good restaurants within walking distance, and a bus that will take you to town for a dollar. We found people very friendly, proud of their island and glad to share it. We took the ferry (\$5) from St. Vincent to Bequia and spent a week.

Bequia

Dive Bequia, Frangipani, June 2000, Lannie Smith, Pasco, WA. Dove with Bob Sach's operation. Primarily drift

dives. They get lots of one-time divers off the sail boats, so sometimes the boat was crowded, other times just 6 of us. Reefs are in good shape. No big fish, but lots of smaller ones and little critters. No restrictions — they let us dive as slowly as we wanted and for as long as we wanted. Frangipani — and loved it. Lots of places to eat. A low key, friendly island, but they advised us to keep things locked up. **(784-458-3504; Fax 784-458-3886)**

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad, the southernmost island in the Caribbean chain (it's actually south of Caracas) isn't for divers, but its smaller sister to the north is. . . . Diving from resort hotels along the southwest coast of Tobago is inferior to the diving to the north, where you'll find huge coral heads and good fish life, with mantas common in the spring. Strong currents and choppy water make this a place for experienced divers. (The owner of the Man Friday dive operation disappeared while diving in 1994, and his body was never recovered; his shop is now operated by his son. In 1997 a woman lost contact with her dive boat and spent 27 hours in the water before washing ashore.). . . . Blue Waters Inn is the main dive hotel; it's situated on a nice beach about 15 minutes from all sites. . . . Tobago is covered with rainforest and has good hiking, friendly people, and serene and beautiful beaches. Birding there is excellent (visit Bird Island offshore