

amusing. Their dive briefings, though incomplete, were always humorous. Bill, the engineer, takes care of the Video on board; is expert on marine behavior, some of his videos are fabulous. I had just gotten over the flu and expressed my concern to the crew that I was having sinus problems and I was hoping to make mostly shallow dives. It had taken me twenty minutes to clear on the first dive and I had a minor reverse squeeze upon ascending, so I took a day off. I mention I would like to dive shallow if possible, and could they tell me what is under the boat. The captain bellowed at me. "I'm not going to put my boat in twenty-eight feet of water and risk it for you, sir!" I replied I'm a guest on this boat and I would like to know what is under the boat. Bill the engineer gently gave me a profile that helped me decide if the dive should or should not be made. I received little helpful information, no support and as a result did less than 12 dives for the week. There was no effort made to accommodate my condition. They could have taken me in a dinghy a short distance to a shallow site and I could swim back. My sister told me that on several dives I could have dived with her, they had given me accurate or complete information on the dive site. If you have a disposition to seasickness, forget it! If your cabin is on the top floor it rocks big time and if you were in the bowels of the beast, less. The rooms are small and if you're tall your head and feet will touch both walls. Rooms have a sink and you share bathrooms. Phil the boat service person was terrific at cleaning and

keeping the bathrooms from smelling up our living quarters. Saba's reefs are lovely, filled with lots of life, but if shallow if your thing or walls forget this boat. Most of the dives are deep and they have a flat profile meaning you are going to be saturated. There are some shallow dives, but few. The reefs of St. Kitts and Statia are covered with red algae. Fish life is sparse. You do one pinnacle dive a Saba and the best diving is there, but they charge you \$3 per dive at Saba as a contribution to the Marine Park. If you're a photographer, leave your wide-angle lens at home and bring the macro. The macro opportunities are fabulous. There is an incredible diversity of Marine creatures on these sites: sea horses, decorator crabs, neck crabs, painted tunicates, leopard flatworms.

Star Clipper, September 2000, Marie Owens, Evergreen, CO. Vis: 50-80 ft. Water: 81-82 degrees. 170 passenger sailboat. We went to Leeward islands one week and Windward islands next week. Our divemaster Cyril and Instructor/Divemaster, Ricardo, took very good care of us. Great diving experience. Just fun doing. (305-442-0550; Fax 305-442-1611; e-mail stclippr@aol.com; website www.star-clippers.com)

TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

S/V Tao, 1999, Dr. Sarah Shoaf [sshof@wfubmc.edu], Winston-Salem, NC. My husband and I, along with another couple, chartered the S/V Tao for a week. Booking agent (Michele Renaud-Slavik, at charter@webaccess.net). We were

originally told the balance could be placed on a credit card, but were later pressed to bring only cash or traveler's cheques, lest we be charged a 4% surcharge. Captain Dave Matthews, cook Ruth and divemaster Roger comprised our crew, and greeted us at the Turtle Cove marina. The *Tao* is a 56' trimaran, which creates a stable base with little rocking. Accommodations include four double beds. However, since we were two couples, the crew used the other "guest" beds, rather than the more cramped "crew quarters" shown on their brochure. The rooms were clean, and typical of a boat, with space at a premium, and nooks and crannies for storage and equipment. The main portion of the boat has an eating/lounging salon, where meals were served. A CD player and cassette player, along with an assortment of musical choices. Two heads — one within the living quarters area, which was for liquid waste only, and a second head at the stern of the boat for solid wastes, inconvenient with seven people on board. The heads were narrow, and created a logistic dilemma for those without 28" hips. There was a sit-down shower facility in the boat, but the solar heater was not operative, and had to settle for cold showers. We had communicated with the captain that our intention was to get 4-5 dives a day: two in the morning, two in the afternoon, and a night dive. The four of us are experienced divers, and dive on computers. The weather was poor the first day and a half and decreased our diving. My husband is an underwater photographer by profession, and the crew

was able to accommodate his request for camera rinse buckets. The dive platform is narrow, with no room for equipment buckets. Our BCs and regs stayed mostly on one tank, with fills between dives. With only four of us, the compressor was able to keep up. Additional tanks were available. Stride off the side of the boat at a distance of 4'. A sturdy metal ladder was at the stern of the boat between two of the trimaran pods, and fins were handed to those on board. Cameras were handed down by rope. After the weather improved, we went to West Caicos, near a large wall. Sites were selected by our desire and their recommendations, and were quite good. We watched the *Sea Dancer* follow us to most sites. Beautiful walls with lots of soft and hard corals and abundant fish. On the edge of walls, larger animals predominated, with grouper, snappers, jacks, large green morays, an occasional shark, and eagle rays. Smaller fish included French, gray and queen angels, chromis, parrotfish, butterflies. In the sandy shallow areas, tile fish, flounder, conch, hermit crabs, and spotted morays. Cleaning stations with Pedersen shrimp and cleaner gobies. Barracuda hovered under the boat with most dives. Night dives brought out squadrons of squirrel fish, with huge channel crabs spotted, lobsters, octopus, brittle stars, basket stars and the coral polyps. Dome shallow areas were more of a coral rubble bottom from past hurricanes. At "Land of the Giants" we watched a squadron of six eagle rays glide by! Whale songs during most of the dives. Roger, our

divemaster, was very good at making suggestions for photo sites, dive sites, Since we didn't need him for other than the mundane work of getting us off and on the boat, He would frequently read or nap when we were diving, leaving whoever was first to return after a dive without assistance in boarding and stowing gear. I have bad knees, and a weight-integrated BC, and had asked that he pull my BC and tank up after every diver. He seemed a bit annoyed at having to do so, and often had me wait in the water holding the equipment before he would get to me. One night, Roger forgot to put the strobe in the water. Luckily, we had a clear night and half a moon. Food was tasty and filling, but a tad unimaginative. We would have preferred a cooked breakfast every morning, but got some nice pastries, cold cereal and yogurt for the first few mornings. Lunch was usually cold cuts or "cold cut melt" sandwiches, along with pasta and other salads. Dinners included shish-kebabs, grilled chicken breasts, linguini with meat sauce, and fish with pineapple sauce. Ruth baked a number of chocolate desserts. Once we made specific suggestions about food, Ruth was quite accommodating (homefries and eggs, French toast, sausage and omelets for breakfast, etc.). Ruth was a substitute for *Tao's* regular cook. Each time we made a specific request of the crew, it was taken to heart. However, when left on their own, the crew didn't know when to move to another dive site, how to vary the meals, or how to provide top-level service. Our request for "dive till you

drop" was easily accommodated, but not the "usual" for their charters, and they did not know how to provide that little extra bit of service that comes from observing the guests closely, and paying attention to their needs. I was not prepared for the two standard poodles, which had complete run of the boat (slept in the other couple's bedroom, plundered the galley trash, excreted on the deck, etc.), and were underfoot at every meal, and bulldozed humans out of their way. Luckily, they were even-tempered and mostly well-behaved. We would have liked somewhere to sit on board other than in the lounge between dives that would have been out of the sun; we learned they had a tarp that can be used as a sun shade but it was not volunteered. We motored everywhere — the mainsail was only unfurled once, in bad weather. Captain said best diving is May to September, when diving near Grand Turks can be inserted into the itinerary. Has potential to be a topnotch alternative to the larger dive boats. (**Tao Charters, Ltd., 649-231-6767; Fax: 649-941-5510; e-mail tao@tcway.tcwebsite www.tao.tc**)

Turks and Caicos Aggressor, September 1999, Dan Oliver, Walla Walla, WA. Vis: 30-70 ft. Water: 80-84 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: 110'. A plankton bloom had clouded the waters the past six weeks, reducing viz at French Caye to 30'. Hard to see the cruising mantas and gray Caribbean reef sharks. A good trip for the serious diver. Made 52 dives in two weeks. Be sure to dive Nitrox, a good course is

available. The two chefs have a friendly competition to the delight of the guests. We dove NW Point of Provo, West Caicos and French Caye. Learn to expect the unexpected. Sharks circling you upon ascent to fingerprint psypoma grouped on a gorgonian. (**Aggressor Fleet 800-348-2628 or 504-385-2628 Fax: 504-384-0817; e-mail: info@aggressor.com; website www.aggressor.com**)

Turks and Caicos Aggressor, October 1999, Bob Kaufman (rkaufman@cwv.net), Beckley, WV. Vis: 25-70 ft. Water: 81-83. Rainy. Water choppy, surge. Good camera table and rinse tank. Crew didn't seem to be all that interested in our diving experience. Selection of sites was poor, and despite complaints about several the boat didn't move. Did one night dive on a site we had not dived during the day. Not a crew member in the water on every dive to point out local sights, and several times there was a wait for assistance entering the water because only one crew member was helping and if he or she was busy there was no one to hand down your camera. The food was excellent, and the vessel, being newly remodeled, was in first class shape.

Turks and Caicos Aggressor, February 2000, Dan Oliver, Walla Walla, WA. Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 77-78 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: 110 ft. Had significant encounters with Humpback whales that had migrated to the Silver Banks, 110 miles from Grand Turk, from their summer home in the N. Atlantic. The

combination whale encounters for three days and diving 2.5 days on the Grand Turk wall is a great way to go. Full whale weeks are also available. Very special experience.

Turks and Caicos Aggressor, August 2000, Greg Falberg, Sunnyvale, CA. Vis: 50-150 ft. Water: 83-85 degrees. Dive restrictions: 110' max, 500 psi. Beautiful walls, lots of corals and sponges, short swim from mooring site. Convenient hang bar with two Nitrox regulators available. Two hot shower heads above dive platform at stern. Hot towels after dive. Great skipper, competent crew.

Sea Dancer, January 2000, Geoff Weg, Marina Del Rey, CA. Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 78 degrees. Dive restrictions: 130 ft. Have done many live-aboards all around the world and Peter Hughes' operation is first class, even service and food were excellent. Most of our diving was on the walls of West Caicos. Lots of healthy soft coral (fans and sponges), good amount of reef fish (but no big schools) and lots of big stuff — sharks, eagle rays, even humpback whales. Weather prevented us from rounding corner to French Caye, but even went out of their way to find good dives for us. Lots of deep walls, not for beginners. (**800-932-6237; 305-669-9391; Fax 305-669-9475; e-mail dancer@peterhughes.com; website www.peterhughes.com**)

Sea Dancer, January 2000, Vernon A. Jackson, Dumfries, VA. Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 70-75 degrees. Dive restrictions enforced: No deco. First

class from the moment you leave the airport terminal till they return you to the same terminal. Everything that they advertise is provided cheerfully and with a smile. The crew is fabulous, dedicated, professional and are people you want to get to know. The *Sea Dancer* is an excellent live-aboard, well laid out and organized. Time and money well spent. When they ring you for a meal to be served, you sit down to a gourmet meal, whether it is a lunch buffet or a breakfast/dinner sit down meal. After your dive is completed and you have stowed your gear beneath your seat, you step under a warm shower and are promptly wrapped in a warm towel from one of the crew. A small number of large pelagics, lots of small and medium size fish. The wall diving is second to the walls I found off the South side of Nassau.

Sea Dancer, February 2000, Donna Teach, Bexley, OH. Vis: 60-100+. Water: 74-76 degrees. Dive restrictions: computer and recreational limits. Newly refurbished. Very comfortable cabins, easily accessible dive deck and comfortable salon. Crew worked hard and were proud of their boat. Diving above average. Notable animal encounters included squadrons of 11 eagle rays cruising the walls wingtip to wingtip. Had unforgettable encounter with two dolphins who stayed to play for more than 15 minutes. Good solid operation and good solid value. Bring your 4 mm wetsuit and a hood.

Sea Dancer, May 2000, C. Douglas Rorex, Fairfield, IL. Vis: 100-150 ft. Water: 77-78 degrees. Restrictions: limits of your training agency. Water temperature 78 F. The seas were calm. The visibility 100-150'. The reefs were healthy, the walls spectacular and the big stuff, sans Elvis and Whalesharks, were present: Caribbean reef sharks, an occasional blacktip reef shark, every other dive or so, southern sting rays — some of apocalyptic proportions — and spotted eagle rays. Shark hotel wall starts at 45', then drops to between 80' and 100' where there are rich coral plateaus and buttresses forming a shelf, then a nearly vertical plunge to the depths. There is also a chimney like passage beginning near the top of the wall and exiting at 130'. Nassau, black and tiger groupers in abundance, schools of Creole wrasse, boga, and chromis, tons of gobies. Found a rather odd single polyp coral at 80' colored neon orange, which should have been filtered out; some sort of bioluminescence must have been involved for it to have this bright fluorescent color at this depth. On one dive we saw 3 Caribbean reef sharks and 1 blacktip reef shark swimming lazy eights some 20' blow us. They went from cruising to warp speed in the blink of an eye. The fish in the immediate area scattered in every direction. When the blacktip turned back toward me, I caught a glimpse of what was left of a barracuda tail before the shark swallowed it. Seeing the sharks turn things up a couple of notches raised my respect. On a night dive hundreds of jacks and snappers took advantage of *Sea Dancer's* lights

to hunt. My wife found a squid and turned to signal me regarding its presence. I turned my light on it and before she could turn around to look at it again a large jack barreled out of the darkness and hit it. Tons of sponges is a sandy plateau between Provo and West Caicos. Tidal currents produce literally tons of sponges along the wall as well as a lot of fish life. Eagle rays, large Nassau groupers, mutton snappers, a spotfin hogfish, fairy and blackcap basslets. A small Nassau grouper was attempting to dislodge an octopus from its den. Above the den were sharknose gobies that I persuaded to clean my outstretched hand. Near the wall, covered in sand, were two giant southern sting rays, with an approximately 5' wing span, covered in sand. In the sand flats and eel grass were yellowheaded jawfish, razorfish, a dwarf wrasse, and buck-toothed parrotfish. Ian was the captain and Paul was second in command and both dove with us. Dave was the photo pro. Stanley prepares some of the finest food in the Caribbean, spicy, but without salt, and it is little wonder that year after year he is rated at the top of the live-aboard chefs. Iris, our winsome steward, was always there with a smile and a cheerful word — she has been with the *Sea Dancer* for six years and learned to dive during that time. The crew went beyond the call of duty to make sure we had a good time despite the failings of the boat. The advertised eanx (Nitrox) was not available because the main generator had failed the week before. Parts had not been received so there was little the crew could do, but limp

along on the smaller, auxiliary generator that wasn't working properly. It could not run the ac to the rooms and fill tanks at the same time. Some nights the cabins were like ovens until all the tanks were filled and other needs met. Other things had to be juggled: washing laundry, the ice machine, cooking and even the steering of the boat was dependent upon the auxiliary generator. Mid week repairs did alleviate some difficulties. Most of us know the world doesn't necessarily cater to our expectations, however, one pays a steep price for a live-aboard experience to get unparalleled comfort and convenience — to go along with the superb diving. The crew was up to the job. The boat was not. Upon our return, Peter Hughes sent a letter of apology, a \$150 check/person for the missing Nitrox, and half off a *Dancer* trip in the next year.

***Sea Dancer*, June 2000, Elizabeth Russell, West Mifflin, PA.** Vis: 50 to 80 Feet. Water 81 to 83 F. Two hour surface interval before diving; no diving if drinking alcohol. Crew did excellent briefings and service was good. The food was outstanding and they really tried to accommodate the vegetarians. I wish I had known that the boat was undergoing renovations during our trip. We had to step over wood, trim, and tools to get around the boat and at times couldn't use our cabin because it was being updated.

***Sea Dancer*, June 2000, Ed Stevens (Angelfish@aol.com), Austin, TX.** Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 80

Fahrenheit, calm. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: 130 feet. The food was too spicy, the overall menu second rate. On the last night all that was available was spaghetti and meatballs. The cook knew that we did not eat meat and offered us just spaghetti. We had to leave the boat to eat. Considering the cost of the trip, this was pretty disappointing. The crew was helpful and friendly. We dove the Peter Hughes live-aboard in Belize and enjoyed it more.

Sea Dancer, July 2000, Linden Crow, San Clemente, CA. Vis: 60-90 ft. Water: 80-82 degrees. Reef starts at 40-60 ft. Not good for beginners, walls. Crew was friendly but both sick and did least in the way of dive support. *Sea Dancer* is better than most boats but falls well below other Peter Hughes vessels.

Sea Dancer, September 2000, Mike Szathmary (szorro@scubadiving.com), Greer, SC. Vis: 50 to 70 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm. Dive your own profile. Great trip. Sponges were spawning which cut vis but that in itself was an experience. Real chance to see pelagics off the wall and the walls and fringing corals are home to all sorts of critters. My first live-aboard so I don't have anything to compare it with, but food, service, boat, crew, were all top notch.

Wind Dancer, January 2000, Nelson A. Benedico, Miami, FL. Vis: 60 to 75 ft. Water: 74 to 78 degrees, choppy, surge. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: flexible. The

Wind Dancer split its yearly trips between Grand Turk and to the South to the Silver Banks for the whale encounters. Ship a little bit crowded for 20 divers. Nitrox was free. Because of the weather conditions WD made the crossing just to Salt Cay and for only 1/2 day. Kelly's Folly was a great dive there. As a result several sites had to be repeated by the end of the week. This trip was the first of the millennium, but no y2k problems. No more large fish left in that area. Several good size octopus at nite and a couple of large sea horses. Plenty of beautiful walls. At the end of the trip you'll be hit with a \$20 per couple taxi fare, allegedly cost included, after they offer to take you to downtown Grand Turk, a 10 block easy walk. (800-932-6237; 305-669-9391; Fax 305-669-9475; e-mail dancer@peterhughes.com; website www.peterhughes.com)

Wind Dancer, April 2000, Dave Reubush, Hampton, VA. I would rate the boat 7 on a scale of 1-10. Nice boat good crew, but most of the cabins are below the dive deck so you have to climb stairs to get to the dive deck. The way the dive deck is arranged is a pain. The tank racks extend along side the entry level and that is also where everyone hangs their wet suits so you were constantly having to get past folks gearing up to get to your wet suits. The wind blew constantly which churned up the water so viz was reduced. We tried to go to Salt Cay one morning and did do two dives there, but the wind had the waves up and several people were getting

seasick. We did not even try to go to the 18th century wreck with cannons on it as there were 6 ft. seas there. So we spent the week running up and down the lee side of Grand Turk. The water was 75-77. The reefs were not real healthy and the fish life was not real prolific. Saw one eagle ray and 2 nurse sharks. Lots of Flamingo Tongues on sea fans and isopods on butterfly fish and others. The flight from Provo to Grand Turk is in a little 10-passenger puddle jumper — they use both low and high wing variety and they collect \$0.40/lb. for everything more than 40 lb. per person, but only from Provo to Grand Turk, not on the return. The highlight was an optional trip (\$35/person) to a cookout to Gibbs Cay just south of Grand Turk. This is Sting Ray city 20 years ago. The stingrays come in waist deep water and you can pet them while the local guys who run the trip feed them. All the ribs and chicken you can eat and all the beer you can drink. After eating, anyone who wants can go free diving for conch, clean it and grill that. Our flight out was in the afternoon so we were taken to the airport to drop our luggage and then to a local hotel for lunch. When we got back to the airport to catch the flight the cab driver tried to scam us \$8/person for the round trip to the hotel and back. There were several Europeans in the group who did not speak good English and were about intimidated enough to pay him, but I forced the issue and had him call the boat on his cell phone and confirm that the ride was on Peter Hughes. I wonder how many people go ahead and pay without protest?

Wind Dancer, May 2000, Jeff and Sherry Hotham, Phoenix, AZ. Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 79-81 degrees. Dive restrictions: none. Difficult to get to Grand Turk. Diving average to good, Caribbean scale. *Wind Dancer* boat not as good as Hughes boat in Belize; avoid cabin #4 — we had a continuous sewer smell that forced us to vacate the room daily, engine and generator noise was really bad, and heat control was difficult. Food only average, many meals burnt or overcooked.

Wind Dancer, July 2000, Kenneth (FORMR48L@AOL.COM), Modesto, CA. Vis: 40 to 70 Feet. Water: 84 to 84 F, calm no currents. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: 130 Feet, 700 PSI. Never checked to see if had exceeded either. Read the fine print! When they say you will dive Grand Turks that is all you will do. We spent the entire week moving a few hundred yards up and down the reef, a few hundred yards offshore of the island. After the second day it all looked the same. If you go into town on the last Friday night, beware of Jack the taxi pirate. The 4-mile round trip cost \$12/person with 8 people in the van. He did not want us to pay when we arrived at the restaurant, said he'd collect on the ride back. I now know why. If he had said \$6 per to get there, we all would have walked back. Crew and food were first-rate. Had the "grey" and "brown" water back up and overflowed into our room on the second day, the smell stayed for the whole trip!

Wind Dancer, August 2000, Vlad Pilar, Toronto, Ontario. Vis: 50-60 ft. Water: 76-80 degrees. Dive restrictions: 130 ft. Another great Peter Hughes operation. Spacious accommodations, great food, friendly, professional staff. Good quality, typical Caribbean diving. Stayed at the Turks Head Hotel 2 nights before boat trip. New managers (6 months), very efficient and pleasant. Hotel needs a refit (we were told it will be done Sept. 00)

Wind Dancer, August 2000, David Vickery/Suzanne Leeson, (twodivers@att.net), Hoboken, NJ. Vis: 40 to 150 Feet. Water: 81 to 83 Fahrenheit, choppy. Dive your own profile: yes. Dive restrictions: No diving below 130', one hour SIT, buddy required. We last visited Grand Turk in 1989 during a horrific winter storm and wanted to give it another chance. Peter Hughes offered a special discount to first time customers, free EANx, and included wine and beer, so we thought it would be a good deal. It was, but we're glad we got the discount, because full price for diving mostly on Grand Turk would be a bit difficult to justify. The *Wind Dancer* may not be the oldest ship in the *Dancer* Fleet, but it looks like it. The paint is old, the deck furniture is old and dirty, the sun deck carpeting is worn, the concrete dive deck looks like a bad New York City sidewalk, cabin water pressure is virtually nonexistent, there was the smell of sewage in the cabin deck passageway, and one cabin occupied by two women had, ah, cucarachas, which

emerged nightly from their shower drain. So at least there was entertainment for the rest of us. The cabins themselves were cleaned daily, but teeny. Best if only one person changed at a time. I liked the A/C, Suzanne didn't. Jeez, Peter, fix it or sell it. On the other hand, the food was great, typical live-aboard Oh-my-god-they're-bringing-more (fill in the blank with cheese, brownies, cookies, chips, etc.) Breakfasts always featured freshly baked muffins, Danish, or doughnuts, as well as eggs, bacon, ham, toast, fruit, and cereal. Lunches had hot soup, and good carbo loading stuff like pasta, chili, burgers, Tex-Mex, and so on. The set place dinners were excellent, had small portions, but seconds were available if you asked. Tony, the chef, was great in general but excelled at baking. However, the early dinner at 6:30 precluded any watching-the-sunset-with-an adult-beverage activity, and the shades were drawn in the dining lounge so you couldn't even see the sunset thru the windows. The crew was professional, safety-oriented, fun to be with, knowledgeable, hardworking, and sincerely interested in giving the customer a great vacation. Unfortunately they were saddled with a mediocre boat. Grand Turk has some good dive sites. Black Forest has an undercut wall with red and purple encrusting coral, and five species of black coral in abundance. MacDonald's has some great swimthroughs and cuts. Some sites had lots of fish; some had few. Pelagics were on vacation when we were there. The odd nurse shark was

seen by the odd diver from time to time. The schedule called for two dives on one site in the morning and three dives at a second site in the afternoon and night. Some sites were ho-hum; if we hadn't been anchored there, we wouldn't have done them twice. The trick is to get away from Grand Turk to Salt Caye or, preferably, South Caicos. We were there during a windy spell and the crew was reluctant to face seas of 4-6 feet to make the trip to South Caicos. One morning we woke up at 6 AM, the sea was flat, they told us we were going, but first we were going to have one morning dive. By the time we were all back on the boat at 9:30 the wind was back and we had missed our shot. We felt the crew was under orders to provide five dives a day and not to upset the guests with rolling seas. But for a two-hour crossing, we could have easily lived through a few bumps for better diving. Next time, Peter, start the bloody engines early and GO.

UNITED STATES

Florida

Ultimate Getaway, April 2000, Trey Dawson, Palm Harbor, FL. Vis: 40 to 60 ft. Water: 73 to 76 degrees, choppy, strong currents. Done it before-always good. Capt. Rick and Second Capt. Doug very capable. Tough on semi-vegetarians, but I got by. I got the cook, to pan fry some fish for me. Unusual current, so Capt. Rick afforded us many drift dives; not an easy task w/a 100' boat! Always feel safe on this boat, good crew. I see a little degradation of coral

and fish. Spear fisherman's wet dream. Enjoy your publication very much, no B.S. Keep that real sh-t coming. **(941-466-3600; ultgetaway@aol.com)**

Texas

M/V Fling, July 2000, Edwin L. Granite, D.M.D., P.A., Wilmington, DE. Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 81-85 degrees. Dive restrictions: 100 ft. max. no drinking. Disappointing. No large animals. Spoke to another diver who had been 5 times, he saw no large animals (although one whale shark was reported sighted). Oil rig dive was interesting. Worth the trip but disappointed. "Cramped" quarters — Spartan conditions is understatement (29 divers-3 toilets). **(409-233-4445; Fax 409-233-0040; e-mail rinn@republic.net; website www.rinnboats.com)**

M/V Spree and Fling, August 2000, Jill M. Haley, (JMHDiver1@aol.com), Edmond, OK. Vis: 40-60 ft. Water: 82-84 degrees. Dive restrictions: 100 ft. depth limit. A pretty good operation. Definitely "no frills." Not much privacy for dressing because all the bunks are together. Good food and diving! I would bring a pillow and not so many clothes. **(409-233-4445; Fax 409-233-0040; e-mail rinn@republic.net; website www.rinnboats.com)**

M/V Fling, August 2000, Clem Clapp, Maplesville, AL. Vis: 60-85 ft. Water: 80-82 degrees. Dive restrictions: 100 ft. depth and 500 lbs. on board. First live aboard — two days. Good group, no cowboys or