

an advanced dive. My impression is that some operators will take any level diver into the Blue Hole, and it can be dangerous. Taking the boat tour to the Mayan ruins in Lamanai was a great excursion. The food in Belize City is uniformly bland, and can get expensive without much increase in quality. (Ph: 800-815-1304 or (605) 578-1304; fax (605) 578-7540; e-mail vacation@tflats.com; website www.tflats.com)

BERMUDA

Despite Bermuda's pricey, elegant hotels and British manners, it's not a decent dive destination, even for beginners. Reefs are thin and there's sparse fish life. . . From January to March, the average high is 68 degrees, the low around 58. Summers are balmy, waters chilly. Bermuda's in the hurricane zone, around the same latitude as Charleston, South Carolina. . .

Blue Water Divers, September 2000, Nicholas A. Musashe, Winter Park, FL. Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 81 F. Dives logged: 60. Dive restrictions: Return 300 psi. Blue Water Divers has three dive operations on the island, so at least one of them can find good diving conditions each day. They go out of their way to find the best sites each day, but are very receptive to requests from divers. Knowledgeable, helpful, and friendly staff at all locations. (Ph (441)-234-1034, (441)-232-2911, (441)-232-2909; Fax (441)-232-3670; e-mail bwdivers@ibl.bm or bluewaterdivers@newsteadhotel.com; website www.divebermuda.com)

BONAIRE

In 1999, hurricane-driven waves damaged, even destroyed, many of Bonaire's beautiful shallow coral gardens, ruining snorkeling in many places. Still, Bonaire is a diver's island par excellence, with easy diving that's especially well-suited to beginning divers or those returning to the water after a long dry spell. Superb year-round weather, with lows around 74° at night and daytime highs around 89°. Expect some rain from October–January, but, since Bonaire lies outside the hurricane belt, dives are rarely canceled. . . . The dive industry here's thoroughly organized with many excellent operators and lots of places to rent tanks or book boat dives. Although the island's been heavily dived for the last two decades, its unusual coral formations harbor a wide range of tropicals and, while there are sharks or pelagics are rare, shore diving in front of every hotel is rewarding. . . . Savvy divers rent a vehicle to shore-dive the island (reserve ahead of time, or you may be out of luck — and don't leave valuables in your car). . . . The southern end of the island is often rough, but worth diving when conditions are favorable. . . . Avoid meal plans to take advantage of the many restaurants within walking distance of most hotels (and so you don't get stuck if your hotel chef is on leave). There's overnight film processing, good