

be the only person who fell into the lake and lived to tell about it. A client dropped a video camera that ended at the edge of the lake. Stanley used a rope to lower himself down; he picked up the camera, and then climbed back up the rope. As he reached the rim, he lost his grip on the rope and fell 50' into the boiling lake, somehow landing on his feet. In a pain-crazed delirium he waded out of the boiling water receiving third degree burns up to his crotch. He quickly went into shock but someone pulled him out of the crater and a rescue helicopter was called, but the helicopter couldn't land near the lake so they had to carry him up to the ridge top flew him to Martinique where he spent 6 months in a hospital recovering from third degree burns. He showed us his badly scarred legs. On the way back there is a warm volcanic stream in which we stopped to swim. We spent some time walking the streets of the capital city, Roseau. The town has little charm but it is clean and safe. There's not much for handicrafts. Some very aggressive panhandlers, perhaps the result of so many cruise ships coming into port. The people of Dominica are poor, most making a subsistence living by fishing or farming (usually bananas), and the people look quite healthy (much more so than the typical North Americans), neat and clean (aside from a few scruffy looking Rastafarians). The island is also quite clean, both on land and in the water. On several occasions we were stopped by Dominicans who just wanted to give us a lecture on the beauty of their island. The favorite pastime of men

was Dominos, usually played in the evening on a makeshift plywood tables. We drove around ends of the island, and looping back through the center of the island. We passed many small fishing villages along the coast and small farming communities in the mountains, along with countless rivers and streams. (Ph: 767-449-8181; fax 767-449-8182; website www.natureislanddive.dm)

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Despite the recent flurry of advertisements touting the diving on the reefs of Dominican Republic, we have yet to hear from a well-traveled diver who thinks much of the diving.

Aquatic Adventures, Best Western Metro Marine Hotel; March 2001, John Wesolowski, (Jweso@home.com) Columbia, MD. Vis: 40-90 ft. Water: 81-85 F. Dives logged: 49. Aquatic Adventures owners Dave and especially Darrick run a first class dive operation. Divemaster Javier did an exceptional job of safely and comfortably guiding me wherever we went. He helped me safely dive my limits without ever making me feel I was endangering myself or others. great inclusive package. (Ph: (305) 827-0211; fax.(305) 827-0212; e-mail whales@aquaticadventures.com; website www.aquaticadventures.com)

David Castillo Diving, Playa Naco, February 2001, Craig Brown (cbrown4756@msn.com) Mason, OH. Experience: 0-25 dives. Vis: 50 to 70 Feet. Water: 75 to 80 F, calm. All

inclusive resort at Playa Naco. They had tour diving but consisted of 20+ divers at a time. We found David Castillo thru beach tour guides. David and his mate, Robert Collado have 30 years diving experience between them. Very helpful, friendly and wanted to make sure we enjoyed our dives. If you are a beginner or intermediate, these guys are great. If you are experienced and want more challenging dives, they are very knowledgeable about the best dive places. First days dive was 45 minutes at 60-80 ft. Air/Water temp: 85/78 Vis:50-70 ft. 200psi upon surfacing. 5-8 foot swells take there toll on those who are susceptible to seasickness. We were. Once in the water, great! Next day diving was at Sosua Bay. Very calm and clear. Depth 30-50ft, Air/Water temp: 85/78 Vis: 50-70 ft. Saw lot's of marine life, moray eel, lobster, urchin, barracuda, angels, coral, 4 ft high tunnel coral, fans, brain coral etc. Lot's of Fish! We took bread along to feed the Fish. Some areas claim to be lacking in fish, however, we saw lot's of fish in what David called the underwater gardens near Sosua Bay. If you are looking for luxury, dive elsewhere David Reyno Castillo @ 809-360-2210 or Robert Collado @ 809-396-2529 Bergantine Playa.

Marianna Sports, Sol de Plata, June 2001, Steve & Kathie Payne, Richland, IN. Vis:75 - 100 feet. Water temp. 88F. Although the diving wasn't bad, the dive operation needs work. Dives depart 1-2 hours late. Boats are just uncovered skiffs with outboards. When we complained about the trips running late the response was that people on vacation didn't want to be

rushed. From our perspective, people on vacation didn't want 2 hours of their time wasted waiting. We went to Catalina Island for a day of diving. The diving was much better than in Punta Cana. This certainly isn't a dive destination. The resort is awesome. The food was very good, the rum drinks potent! Very few of the staff speak English except for the front desk and activities staff. (Ph: 809-476-7777; e-mail guennin@yahoo.com)

R.E.D. Coral Divers, Costa Azul, February 2000, Steven Hersem, Whitefield, NH. Vis: 30-50 ft. Water: 72-75 F. Dive restrictions: Stay with DM, no more +/- 80ft. The dive operators at our resort, next to the Bavaro Palace, were totally incompetent. Made reservations with them first day there. Showed up at the beach for pickup ahead of time, they never showed. Spent rest of week with R.E.D. Coral Divers, at least they showed up. Some small fish but nothing great. Don't go to the D.R. if you're looking for even good diving. Grenada was a hundred times better. (Ph: 809-686-5797; fax (809) 686-5859; e-mail ramon.diaz@codetel.net.do)

Sea Pro Divers, Coral Canoa, May 2001, David Beecher (dbeecher@snet.net) Stamford, CT. Vis: 70-100 ft. Water: 80 F, calm & flat. Logged dives: 50. Dive restrictions: stay with group. Dive sites were close, great staff very helpful. Wreck dive St. George is a must. All inclusive resort, less than two years old, plenty to do for non-divers. Reserve your dives, small boats, even your trip with www.waterhousetours.com.

(Ph: 809-320-2607; fax 320-2607; e-mail seapro.sa@codetel.net.do)

Treasure Divers, Don Juan Beach Resort, February 2001, Bob Sines, Warren, OH. Experience: 251-500 dives Vis: 20 to 40 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, choppy surge no Currents. The resort is good and the food was fine. The dive operation was not what we were accustomed to using. Little English spoken, the boats were small and the seas were rough. Visibility was bad, very little coral, and hardly any Fish. I'm not sure where the dive magazines get the underwater shots to advertise the DR. (Ph: 800-820-1631 or 809-523-5320; e-mail treasuredivers@hotmail.com)

GRENADA

Grenada's as lush as Caribbean islands get, with great local food, an extraordinary beach, friendly people, and the most picturesque capitol in the Caribbean. Sadly, diving is only average, with one exception: the biggest wreck in the Caribbean, the *Bianca C.*, a 592-foot liner that burned in 1962 and was towed a mile off the beach to die. Unfortunately, it's not fertile ground for coral or fish, and the surface current is often strong enough to splay you on the downline — still, it's a unique Caribbean dive. . . . Grenada is out of the hurricane belt, though it's pelted by summer rains, which is why it's so lush. A fine way to visit the old Caribbean, get in a little no-hassle reef diving, sit in the sun, and drink rum in the rum houses along a harrowing perim-

eter road — which is about as safe as a Boston turnpike on St. Paddy's Day.

Aquanauts Diving, Secret Harbor, December 2000, James McMeins (marinenine@hotmail.com) Carnation, WA. Vis: 15 to 50 Feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, choppy surge currents. Secret Harbor is on a small secluded bay at the southeast end of the island on the Atlantic side. All the rooms are duplex units perched on the cliff over the water. The rooms consist of a very large bedroom with two antique four-poster beds with a dressing area, small refrigerator, large tiled bath with a huge bathtub, double sinks and a bidet. There is a sitting room with an arched rock wall. Fronting the sitting room are floor to ceiling windows with French doors that lead out onto the deck. The rooms are nice but need some upkeep. No curtains on the windows so be prepared to be woken early by the rising sun. The maid service kept the room up nicely. The main lobby, bar, front desk and dining room on top of the cliff above the rooms and the dive shop is on the water. A lot of climbing of stairs. Small beach and two lighted tennis courts but you have to buy your own balls and only one of the 4 lights worked so you have to play during the day when it can get in the 90s. Food prices very high, the service is atrocious! The tip is included in the prices for all food and beverages so not much incentive for the waiters. Only one breakfast was delivered in less than 30 minutes! Most meals would take an hour to get served.