

day at Sechnea Sea (a French dive operation). We would gear up at the shop, trudge across the sandy beach, crash through the surf, then belly flop into the small Zodiac type boat. (I always had a terrible time getting into the boat resembling a beached whale.) After three days, the guide discovered it would be helpful to assist with carrying my camera. But it seemed if you couldn't tote your own gear — well too bad. We were usually diving in current and surge and at times the visibility was not the best. The Belarizonte Hotel was fine, but I think the Morbeza was a bit better and much more convenient for diving. There were many places to eat in Santa Laria. My favorite was Americas Café. The tuna fillet was excellent. The hotel restaurants also had good food, but for higher prices. The operator of the dive shop gave a Christmas party and invited divers. The grilled fish was super.

Santiago

Blue Adventure, Baia Verde, December 2000, Marilyn Kuokol, APO AE. I went with Peter Greims German operation called Blue Adventure out of Tarrafal. It was the same routine to get on the boat here as in Sal — only we walked the beach a good 300 meters — always fun in full scuba gear! I saw one tailless ray, one cuttlefish, and one 8 ft. nurse shark. There were not as many schools of fish or rays or sharks. And the only turtles I saw were in the hotel pool in six inches of slimy green water. (Talk about wanting to free the turtles!) They have a gorgeous wall that drops down over 100 feet. There were several huge serra (almost like tuna) that decided to be our

buddies for the dive. Baia Verde is on a beach hotel near a river. Arrive during daylight since you wonder where in the world the little boy is going with your luggage in the dark! The bungalows are adequate and clean — not plush. There's only one knob for the shower — and at times usually after a dive when I'm all salty and sandy no water at all. It's a step above camping out! Troupe of monkeys in the evenings careen from porch to rooftop to tree and then down the leaky water faucet. They are adept at stealing bananas at breakfast. The guide was very nice, but did not find any creatures for us and on one dive did not even get off the boat at all. Could have been more customer friendly. (Ph: +49 6241 925965; fax +49 1805 05255 999611; e-mail kontakt@blueadventure.net; website www.blueadventure.net)

FRANCE

Destination Plongee/N/A, Port St. Jean, Hyeres, France, June 2001, Howard Chalmers (hchalmers@mindspring.com)
Suwanee, GA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 40 to 50 Feet. Water: 55 to 60 F, choppy. Considering I don't speak French, I was concerned about diving here (dive briefings, etc.). The staff made me comfortable, pairing me with a divemaster that spoke some English. The only problems I had were limited time to try on rental equipment and metric conversions (kg of lead, depth gauge in meters, spg in bar). Great dive. The boat contained a couple of groups doing checkout dives so the site was geared toward intro divers, but they had no problem with my buddy and me

getting in the water first and being on our own. (Ph: 33-0494 38 35 85; fax 33-0 94 38 30 72)

GREECE

Aquatic World, Agia Efima, July 2001, Bob Lamberton (rdlamber@artsci.wustl.edu) **St. Louis, MO.** Vis: 80-100 ft. Water: 68 to 79 F, calm no currents. Experience: 251-500 dives. We try to get in a few dives each summer in Greece, where work takes us. The only dive operation on Cephallonia is Aquatic World (www.aquatic.gr) and were very pleased. Most of the diveable waters of Greece are off limits to divers for the protection of antiquities on the seabed, but Kyriakos and Mike have some fine sites, rich in fish by Mediterranean standards, legal, and only ten minutes from the dock in their two well-maintained RIBs. This is the only place I've seen Med parrotfish (*Sparisoma cretense*). As at other Greek sites, summer water temps are comfortable near the surface, but below the thermocline (40 ft in this instance) the temp plunges to 70 or less and most of us want more than 3 mm of neoprene. Excellent vis and a very professional dive operation. (Ph: 003 0674 62006; e-mail info@aquatic.gr; website www.aquatic.gr)

MEDITERRANEAN

Medes Islands

Calypso Diving, Miramar Beach Hotel, July 2001, Michael McCroskey, Houston, TX. The Medes Islands are reportedly the only national marine park in the Mediterra-

nean. A search at Google (using L'Estartit) will produce a wealth of information. It is some 70 km North of Barcelona on the Costa Brava and worth the trip. The diving is not Caribbean, but surprisingly good. We went to Barcelona on business and decided to try the Mediterranean. We discovered a small group of islands, recently protected that are recovering rapidly. The water is fairly cold (70 F), so a full wet suit is advisable, but the schools of fish, hardy coral species, and other life made it well worth the effort. We had a group of four divers and dove with Calypso Diving (email calypso@grn.es). Peter and Jacquelyn were great hosts and ran a good operation. Two of us used their gear and found it to be quality equipment in good repair. Their tanks were all steel with both normal k-valves and DIN valves. Both 12 liter and 15 liter tanks were available. The boat was converted from a small harbor tug, but served well for the 15-20 minute ride. Prices for gear and diving were reasonable. Miramar Hotel on the beach was quite adequate, but lacked some conveniences (like A/C and soap). It was clean, reasonably priced, and perfectly located for both diving and surface activities. <http://interhotel.com/spain/en/hoteles/4890.html>) (Calypso Ph/fax: +34 972 751488; e-mail calypso@grn.es; website <http://www.grn.es/calypso/>)

PORTUGAL

Azores

Aquarius Diver, Team Acores, Terceira, August 2000, Marilyn