

currents and surge sometimes, must have buoyancy control and good air consumption to do silvertip shark feeding dive which is a great experience (unlike tourist shark-feeding dives in Bora! Bora which are fun but casual). Accommodations were great and food is good.

Tahiti

Aquatica Dive Center, La Meridien Hotel, May 2001, Arthur F. Graf Jr., San Antonio, TX. Vis: 30 ft.

Aquatica Dive Center. Aquatica is located at the Tahiti Beachcomber Parkroyal, but they offer free transportation from hotels. Aquatica is a first class shore diving service with excellent guides and good short range dive boats. They furnish aluminum 80's filled to 3000+ lbs. Visibility inside the reefs was about 30'. The dives consisted of slanting reefs and walls. Numerous reef fish and some sharks. The reefs consisted of hard corals in good condition. **(Ph: (689) 53 34 96 or (689) 77 60 01; fax (689) 43 10 65; e-mail dive@aquatica-dive.com or aquatica@mail.pf ; website www.aquatica-dive.com)**

Aquatica Dive Center, June 2001, Richard Heath (rehcpa@att.net) Surfside Beach, SC. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 25 to 100 Feet. Water: 76 to 80 F, calm. We cruised Tahiti aboard a Renaissance Cruise Ship: Aquatica Diving Center: Dive operation was very lax in pick up. Schedule called for 8:30AM — was picked up at a few minutes before 9. Dive boat small for the number of divers. Due to size of boat, had to return to shore to exchange tanks for

2nd dived. Water clarity, dive location and overall operation of dive was less than desirable. I dove 3 other islands in the French Polynesia, and if I would have know about the poor quality of this dive location, I would have skipped this first island. The others Moorea, Huahine and Bora Bora were all superior to this island and excellent dives well worth the whole trip! **(Per their website at www.renaissancecruises.com, Renaissance Cruises ((800) 525-5350) ceased cruise operations and filed for bankruptcy on 9/25/01.-ed.)**

Aquatica Dive Center, Beachcomber Hotel, July 2001, Jim & Donna Cox (jimndonnacox@home.com) Federal Way, WA. Experience: 0-25 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, choppy. Wonderful dive center. Didier (dive shop owner) and Lionell (instructor) were great! They were very helpful, patient and considerate to us. Gave us good directions and help on areas to improve. Facilities are clean and well organized. Rental equipment appeared to be in great shaper. Deco bar used on boat as well as extra tank with octos at deco. We dove both lagoon and open ocean. Deepest dive was 105'. Lots to see, corals, moray's Napoleon fish, etc., etc. Highly recommend for the beginner or experienced diver. Didier and Lionell both speak excellent English (as well as French of course). Clean dip tanks, can process film locally.

HAWAII

Hawaiian guides have generally developed great skill in finding the

unique: On the big island of Hawaii, Spanish dancers, rare juveniles, and lionfish are regulars. Kailua-Kona is filled with trendy shops to extract dollars from tourists in tacky hula shirts. The diving is mostly lava flow dives with relatively low coral cover. Sea turtles belly-up to boats of snorkelers to be fed lettuce, dogfood, or "turtle chow". . . .

There's excellent access to good shore diving at City of Refuge and at Puako at the northern end of the bicycle route for the Iron Man competition; still, the right guides provide fish fanciers a great experience. . . . Kauai has special trips available only in the summer. . . . Maui's diving is often to the backside of Molokini or Lanai and boats leave at 7 a.m., or earlier. . . . Development in Honolulu has burned out most Oahu diving. . . . There's limited fish diversity here compared to further west in the Indo-Pacific. Some reefs are barren due to commercial collection for aquariums. There are few soft corals and dull hard corals, but colorful, plentiful, and unusual fish make the diving interesting. . . . Expect clear water, visibility that's usually better than the Caribbean — around 100 feet — and air temperatures in the low 80s. Water temperatures hit the very low 70s in January and February . . . From roughly mid-December to mid-February, squalls can last several days; otherwise the climate's pleasant and unoppressive year-round. . . .

There are plenty of condos available everywhere (many with cars, which you'll need since the dive boats are not berthed at hotels); ask your dive shop to find you a place; they often have good prices. . . .

Kauai

Bubbles Below, August 2000, Dexter Quiggle, Woodland, CA. Vis: 60-80 ft. Water: 77 F. Great trip!! It's a long rough ride, but worth it. 3 tank dive. Boat comfortable, although they could use some bars or hang straps for the 2.5 hr return trip. Plenty of good munchies — good dive briefing — friendly and knowledgeable staff (Linda was great). We saw a parade of 40-60 gray and black tip sharks — a school of juvenile black tip sharks swimming in a slow circle in and out of a cave (they came within 6-10 ft just like curious puppies), large schools of jacks and coral reef fish — great caves and swim throughs. For advanced diver — it is truly world class diving. (Ph: (808)332-REEF(7333) or (808) 822-DIVE; e-mail kaimanu@aloha.net; website www.BubblesBelowKauai.com)

Bubbles Below, Sheraton Poipu Beach, August 2001, Tim & Nancy Nugent, Huntington Beach, CA. Vis: 80-100 ft. Water: 79-80 F. Weather: Warm and sunny. Sea conditions: 4'-6' swells, choppy. Some surge, even at 50 fsw. My wife and I were disappointed with the service we received from Bubbles Below. Their 35' trailer boat was marginally adequate for the wind/swell exposure that Kauai

receives, making very rough ride to the dive sites. There is really no proper seating for all the divers, and most needed to stand and brace themselves for the pounding (we normally dive in California, so are quite used to heavy sea conditions). There was no rinse tank aboard for my camera (or mask), even on the second day after I had inquired the first day. Our divemaster Byron believes in a mandatory follow the leader type dive. He likes to physically take divers by the hand and tow them to wherever they are 'supposed to be'. One diver who was hovering comfortably above the reef had Byron swim up and deflate his BC, so he would join the rest of the group on the reef! Everyone was treated like a beginner, regardless of their experience. His site briefings generally centered on 'just follow me'. Bubbles Below was not afraid to go the distance to the farther out sites. However I found the reefs somewhat more sparsely populated by both corals and fish than the previous week on the Kona but Kauai seemed to have more invertebrates. They have an incredible number of turtles, as well as some well-camouflaged frogfish. The food served between dives consisted only of candy bars and warm sodas or warm water. Granted, they only advertise 'snacks' on their website. Our afternoon and night dives were done on different reefs, even though several divers requested the same reef, to familiarize themselves with the topography in the daylight, but those requests were dismissed. When I discovered neither the boat nor the mooring would be sporting any

underwater lights, Byron's response was "Just follow me, I know where the boat is and you don't." They also did not supply nor require Cylume light sticks. They never even asked for our certification cards. I thought I could improve the situation by mentioning my 26 years of world wide diving experience, my own divemaster certification level, and my former Coast Guard years, but we were still told that we were required to stay with the group. The Sheraton was a very nice hotel, situated adjacent to some good shore diving, with nice beaches and facilities. Prices were quite reasonable, and the service was great.

Bubbles Below, Makahuena Condos, August 2001, Glen and Debra Jaffe (gjaffe@pacbell.net) Valley Village, CA. Experience: 25 dives. Vis: 75 to 150 Feet. Water: 77 to 78 F, calm surge. We agree with the positive reviews from last year's Chapbook. Bubbles Below is a superb operation and a can't-miss choice for experienced divers. You'll never find a more enthusiastic owner/dive guide than Linda Bail. Her knowledge of the sites and the fauna is unmatched. The pre and post-dive briefings are packed with detail. She has a knack for finding unusual creatures like the boarfish, frogfish, and morwong. No wonder world-famous marine biologists and photographers dive with her. The all-day three-tank trip to Niihau and Lehua Crater shouldn't be missed if it's being offered. Along with the dramatic volcanic undersea terrain, we saw gray reef sharks, whitetips, dolphins, and three of the rare Hawaiian

monk seals. The almost two hour return trip wasn't as bumpy as we had been led to believe. Linda passed out cushions and waterproof wind-breakers so we were reasonably comfortable.

Fathom Five Divers, August 2000, Dexter Quiggle, Woodland, CA. Vis: 50-90 ft. Water: 78 F. Dives — staff friendly. Boats comfortable — max of 6-8 divers. Dove 2 nice sites that had a great array of reef fish (turtle cleaning station — large schools of coral fish). They offered me a multiple dive discount without being asked, fairly priced. They cater to the beginner diver. If you still had plenty of air, there was no option to continue the dive — you had to surface. Apparent total disregard for the reef (on four of four dives, the anchor was thrown over with no regard for coral heads, and on three of the dives I saw pieces of coral broken off by the anchor). (Ph: 800-972-3078 or 808-742-6991; e-mail fathom5@fathom-five.com; website www.fathom-five.com)

Fathom Five Divers, Cliffs Club, August 2001, Mick and Elaine Jerome, Beloit, WI. Vis: 40-70 ft. Water: 78-79 F, choppy. Logged dives: 27. Dive restrictions: divemaster controlled, dove with divemaster off boat. Depth and time controlled by divemasters. Third trip with Fathom Five. Two boats 25 ft., max 6 divers on am or pm trips. I dive only with divemasters Charlie or Lenny — both have been with Fathom Five 15+ years. Very helpful and knowledgeable and safety conscious. First dive is 80-90 ft. and second dive 40-50 ft. 3+ minute safety stop required on every

dive. Lots of fish — turtles and some coral. Anchor line for descent and ascent.

Kona

Aloha Dive Company, November 2000, Bob Greaves, Bonita, CA. Vis: 70-90 ft. Water: 80 F. General profile discussed prior to each dive. Five dive days with Mike Nakachi and Earl. Most sites are 1 hr boat ride s/o Kona. Mike limits boat to 6 divers. In my 5 days we had one diver (me), up to 6 on 1 day. They are accommodating and helpful. Bottom is largely rock (lava) with growths of coral. One manta passed over head, on another day a lone hammerhead. A whale shark (20') surfaced 2' from boat — wow! Great variety of tropicals — eels and butterfly fish. (Ph: 800-708-5662 or Ph/fax 808-325-5560; fax ; e-mail diveadc@ilhawaii.net; website www.alohadive.com)

Aloha Dive Company, Royal Kona Resort, November 2000, Arnie and Lila Millsap (millsap@core.com) Leonard, MI. Vis: 50 to 120 Feet. Choppy surge currents. The Royal Kona Resort was a reasonable place to stay. Nothing fancy about accommodations but we really didn't use it for much except sleeping. Avoid rooms that face the Luau area, unless you like the festive noise. We were politely switched to a different room. Ocean-front rooms are worth the extra. We had a "corner king" in the main building with a nice veranda from which we could look back into the bay at the town. Aloha Dive Co. is first rate. They charge a more than some

operations, but it is worth it. Mike and his right-hand man Earl do all the little things that make the experience right. They even apply the anti-fog goo to your mask. Wonderful cookies (provided by Mike's wife Buffy) and juices are available on board. We had tropical dive suits but were a bit cold after the first dive. Without being asked, Mike handed us 3mm suits for the next dive — he brought them “just in case.” Mike offers different dive options. Choose the “remote dive” option. He has a fast boat and he takes a maximum of 6 divers to the South Kona sites that none of the other operations frequent. We saw nine hammerheads — average length 9-10 feet — on the FIRST dive. Saw several more before we left. Even when we didn't see big stuff, the dives were interesting. Mike is very knowledgeable about indigenous fish. Before each dive Mike would show us pictures of unique or rare species to look for. We found them almost every time. It is easy to make a shark dive interesting. Those dives where you seem to see the same old common wrasses and butterflyfish are tougher and Mike does it well. After one morning dives we a whale shark and were the first people in the water with a 20-25 footer. Mike's dive day was over and he could have ignored this. He chose not to because he thought we might have a unique experience. And did we ever! Twenty minutes of snorkeling with an absolutely cooperative whale shark. I dropped into the water 5 feet from its face and it never got much further away. My camera housing was damaged in a previous

stop on Yap and after trying to help me find a local repair shop, Mike loaned me his rental camera for the trip and didn't even charge me. Mike only allows 6 divers on the boat, so you book early.

Aloha Dive Company, August 2001, D. Wittrock (aws2211@cs.com) Six Mile, SC. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 + Feet. Water: 80 to 84 F, calm. Mike's knowledge of the dive sites and fish seemed limitless. He loves what he does. The customer service is unsurpassed. And Buffy's cookies are like Campbell's soup — um um good!

Dive Makai, Kanaloa-Kona, November 2000, Ben Glick, Williamstown, MA. Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 79-81 F. Dives logged: 1,250. Very pleasant diving. I have dived with Dive Makai for almost 20 years and they are the best people around. Special full day dive trips are always tops — many interesting fish and critters. The Kona Coast has had heavy fish collecting pressure in the past — hopefully recent protection will increase fish life in the more popular dive areas. **(Ph/fax (808) 329-2025; e-mail tom@divemakai.com; website www.divemakai.com)**

Dive Makai/Neptune Charlies/Silver Oaks Ranch, December 2000, Jay & Marketta Newby, Huntsville, AL. Vis: 50-100 ft. Water: 74 F. Dive your own profile our go with guide. Restrictions: Computer. I found out about Dive Makai and Silver Oaks from the Chapbook, and both were great picks. Dive Makai: It's all the

little things they do that make them stand out from everyone else, and they are unflappably friendly. I arrived with a nasty sinus infection and I had already paid for 80% of my dive package. Tom worked hard to find someone to fill our slots so we would not be charged for our cancellations. We did get in four days of diving. We were disappointed with the lack of fish life and coral by day two. The northern swells were big, so Dive Makai was limited in selecting dive sites. We dove Kauai 2 years ago. Our third day of diving was on New Year's day, and Dive Makai does not go out on that day, so we dove with Neptune Charlie's a small and new operator who can take up to 4 divers. His boat, a 29'cuddy, is fast and comfortable. Mark and Dee Ann Chesler are the owner/operators. Mark is a very experienced dive master on Kona and also a photo and video pro. We got to see what Kona diving was all about — fabulous! He took us to Keahole point and Kaiwi Point. Lots of fish and coral and we heard whales and dolphins underwater. His guide abilities and customer service was every bit as good as Dive Makai, but at \$85 for two tanks and only 4 divers max (though it was only the two of us on this day.) Still — it is hard to beat the camaraderie and diving fellowship on the Dive Makai boat, though it gets crowded at times with 12 divers. Their dive briefings are the best, with their photographs and years of experience on the Kona coast. Our last day of diving with Dive Makai was as good as the day before with Neptune Charlie's. Silver Oaks Ranch is a B &

B at 1350 feet overlooking Kona. Rick and Amy Decker, long time Kona divers and photographers own and operate the ranch. They have 4 rooms with different amenities. Their web page is very honest and informative. Made us feel so much at home. They have their own rinse tanks, photo tables and storage areas for dive gear. They know and understand divers. They no longer serve a breakfast, but for everything they offer, plus clean comfortable rooms, they are still a great bargain. Ask Rick to show you his choreographed slide show. WOW! Web sites: <http://www.divemakai.com/>, <http://www.neptunecharlies.com/>, <http://www.silveroaksranch.com>.

Dive Makai, January 2001, Richard Hess and Diane Canfield, Chicago, IL. The good folks at Dive Makai are extremely easy to work with. And honest — they took time, to dissuade us from wasting time on a manta dive that had little-to-no chance of success. Their briefings were the best I've encountered, and the dive crew treated each person with courtesy, respect, enthusiasm, and good humor. For small-group, personalized, knowledgeable service, they get five stars (starfish?). The Pacific Ocean in January could learn a lot from Dive Makai. We are looking forward to a return trip in a month when it is in a better mood. Bottom line: Dive Makai rocks!

Dive Makai, January 2001, Phyllis & Paul Becker, Pt. Hadlock, WA. Vis: 50-75 ft. Water: 75 F. Logged dives: 245. Dive restrictions enforced: come up with 500#. You can't beat the level of customer service on Dive

Makai's boat. Personal attention given, help with equipment, good dive briefings pointing out what critters to look for on each dive. While underwater, dive guides find the well hidden leaf fish, juvenile scorpionfish, etc. you're free to stick with them, or do your own thing. Jan. is humpback whale migration season and saw them frequently on way to dive sites, as well as schools of dolphins. While Hawaii can't compare with Indian Ocean dive sites, it's worthwhile.

Dive Makai, Aston Keauhou Beach Resort, January 2001, Kurt Schwarz, Potomac, MD. Vis: 60-100 ft. Water: 75-76 F. Dives logged: 350. Dive restrictions: Night dive limited to 70 min. This was my 2nd dive trip with Dive Makai. Dive Makai is the best organization I have seen. Alexa, Amy, Kendra, Lisa and Mark are enthusiastic and work hard to give you the best experience. All my dives were 60 minutes plus, limited only to how long my air lasted. The night dive was limited to 70 minutes. The reef itself is not that spectacular (small hard coral heads on lava rock) but with their ability to point out the unusual, the diving is very enjoyable. I was shown 2 different pink leaf scorpion fish that produced great photos. Many different juvenile wrasses, flame angels, banded angels, opossum slipper lobster, yellow margin, white mouth, dwarf and zebra morays, devil and titan scorpions, triton, octopus, Heller's barracuda, and numerous green turtles. Saw plenty of humpbacks on surface intervals, but unfortunately did not see

any large animals other than turtles under water. The night reef dive was one of the best I've done (Dive Makai is not doing the manta night dive, unpredictable that mantas will show up and too many people). I saw a dragon moray, a yellow headed moray, free swimming with mouth agape, several lavender and regal slipper lobster, octopus, 2 large sponge crabs, reef and swimming crabs, numerous marble shrimp, purple flat worm a large blue spiny lobster. Fish life is somewhat sparse. The family of Hawaiian lion fish we saw 1-2 years ago is now gone due to fish collectors. The good news is as of January 2000, 1/3 of the coast is now banned to fish collectors so things should improve. If you want to dive lava tubes and caves, would recommend going in summer since winter swells kept us from going to southern part of island and made entry into shallow water difficult.

Dive Makai, Royal Kona Resort, July 2001, Richard J. Troberman (tmanlaw@aol.com) Seattle, WA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 79 F, calm no currents. Great operation. We did an "adventure day" which is an all-day, three tank dive instead of the normal two. On the way to the divesite (some 25 miles south of Kona) we encountered a pod a pilot whales. We snorkeled with them. The operation was in no hurry to get to the dive sites. If something interesting came up, we stopped and enjoyed it. Dive Makai seemed genuinely interested in making sure that everyone enjoyed themselves. The Royal Kona Resort is

old, but in relatively good condition, and is a great value. Kona is much more laid-back than Maui (kind of like Maui was 30 years ago), but there is a lot of construction going on there now.

EcoAdventures, Jack's Diving Locker, January 2001, Jim Entry.

250 dives in the last 5 years. They would not let me bring my dive bag on the boat. I was required to put my gear in mesh bags, so I could not take some little things that could help save a dive. They are expensive, but it is Hawaii and most things are. They push nitrox which is \$10 extra, which is useful on dives where we went greater than 90 feet. The dive guides were great, experienced, dove safely. And knew where to find both small and large marine life. Genuinely nice guys that cared about their clients. The major criticism of them is their owner and accountant. When I arrived I told them I had developed ear problems and the diving would need to be on a day by day basis. On the last day my ear hurt enough that I canceled my last dive. I decided rather than get a refund that I would like to give the money to the dive guides as an extra tip, but he did not think enough of his guides to do this for them. I was to do two night manta ray dives with Jack's Dive Locker. The dive guides were just as good or better and the store manager canceled the last dive without hesitation. (Ph: 800-949-3483; fax 808-329-7091; e-mail info@ecodive.com; website www.ecodive.com)

Eco Adventures, February 2001, Lee & Susan Morris, Portsmouth, VA. Vis: 80-100 ft. Water: 74-76 F.

Dives logged: 204 (Lee). Eco Adventures has anything most divers could want: magnificent sea life, swim throughs, lava tubes, long range and open water diving and it is all grade A, U.S. prime stuff. Safe, easy diving and edge hugging stuff. From the time you check in at the dive shop, you are reminded repeatedly by the staff that you are on vacation and are to "leave the work to us and enjoy your dives." You leave your gear at the dive shop — the crew takes it to the boat, sets it up and places your gear bag, on the sun deck. You amble down to the boat and they direct you to the sun deck where you will receive a complete safety briefing from the captain as well as a verbal tour of the boat (which includes a large, clean, working head and an on deck hot shower) followed by a briefing from one of the Dive Masters. While under way to the dive site, you will be introduced to your dive guide (no more than five divers to a guide) and he will give you your equipment location — which has already been set up for you and assist you with your weight belt. Upon arrival at the dive site you receive a briefing about the site which includes a diagram of the underwater terrain and a description of the sea life you may see. Colored pictures to aid in identification of underwater animals are displayed. You are never rushed on your dive — not into, out of, or while in the water. You may stop a time or two on the way to the dive site or detour to enjoy a humpback whale or a spinner dolphin. (I sighted 17 whales on one dive one day.) After the crew rinses your mask

and you get in the water for the first dive the serious fun begins. Susan has only 30 dives at this point. She has already identified well over 100 Fish species including six different morays including a dragon moray, many octopi, white tip sharks, green turtles, dolphin, frog fish, scorpion fish, and lion fish. Spanish dancers and other nudibranchs as well as worms etc. etc. There is something new on every dive. Having a guide is like going to a gourmet restaurant and having the chef select choice, morsels for you. People who insist on doing it on their own always seem a little disappointed when they hear of all the things a guided diver has seen. When you return to the boat, the captain is waiting for you at the ladder to take your camera to the rinse bucket and your fins and assist you to your place on the boat. While you have a nice lunch and enjoy the sun or perhaps a few whales the crew changes your tank and set you up for the next dive. Again the briefing, again the gourmet sea life morsels. Then a ride to the dock on the sundeck with a group of happy people. No, we do not have any business interest in Eco-Adventures. But, we, do have an interest — as does this magazine — in informing fellow divers of a great diving experience.

Eco-Adventures, King Kamehameha Hotel, March 2001, Philip Hamilton (jeepster@scubadiving.com) Sugar Land, TX. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 60 to 90 Feet. Water: 77 to 79 F, calm. The King K is a decent hotel, showing its age, but is well main-

tained by a friendly staff. It is in front of dive boat pier. Their main dive boat is a fifty-foot catamaran powerboat, with plenty of room to gear up below, and a sun deck to dry off and relax. Also on board are a head and a warm freshwater shower. The main drag runs from the King Kamehameha hotel on the north to the Royal Kona on the south. Plenty of touristy little shops, and a nice ones as well, with several restaurants. Eco Adventures modifies their schedule to fit divers from the cruise ship. Golden Arches: an old lava flow into the sea, with several arches and swim throughs. Balloonfish, Moorish idols, spotted trunkfish, and a choris, which looks like a thin clownfish, with white on orange coloration. Rudy, my leader, found some juvenile lionfish on the sandy bottom; saw a coronetfish, raccoon butterflies, bluespot groupers. During surface intervals, Eco Adventures provides a deli plate to make sandwiches. Lone Tree Arch Adjacent to our first site: threadfin and lemon butterflyfish, more balloonfish and a “humu humu nuku nuku apua’a”, or triggerfish, the Hawaiian state fish. With surge running, one has to time their pass through the arch to coincide with the movement of the water; otherwise you will just kick furiously without making progress. Rudy found a brown octopus, with a head about the size of a softball and long thin arms. On our return to the harbor, we ran across two humpback whales. Saturday, they departed before 7:30. “Suck em up” is a collapsed blowhole. If you get a little bit too high in the cavern beneath it, a quick change in

your depth will result. I was scheduled for an evening and night dive. We had eighteen divers and snorkelers, divided among three divemasters. Captain John took us up to the manta site, but it was too rough, so we had to seek calmer water. To appease my non-diving companion, we took a snorkeling cruise down to Ka'awaloa Bay. 55 foot catamaran, with bar and snacks. K-Bay is where Captain James Cook first landed. Even in the shallows, the fish were plentiful. We found puffers, triggerfish, trevallas, and tang. The boats all carry water slides for non-diving folks or children. I took an extended range trip which takes most of the day, and gives you an extra dive at deeper sites. Eco Adventures uses their 36 foot Radon. Swam with the spinner dolphins, 50 to 60, some mothers with calves hugging close. For 45 minutes, I kicked along, while the dolphins surfaced for some air within a few feet of me, dropped down to 45 or 50 feet, then later rose for more air. We dropped down the wall until we hit sand at 120 feet. Some long nose butterflies will develop a coffee brown color; Rudy explained that this is the only area the phenomenon occurs and if you were to place them in a tank, they would change back to the common yellow coloration. Waimea, which is a pretty little town on the north side of the island and to Kahuna and Akaka falls. There are hundreds of waterfalls on the northeast slope of Hawaii, but these are two of the biggest. Volcanoes National Park is 30 miles west of Hilo. The altitude at the caldera is 4000 feet above sea level, so a diver needs to be

careful about scheduling a trip here. Since my traveling companion doesn't dive, I bought two divers packages, and had Eco Adventures assign me all of the dives. Their package includes 5 nights in the hotel, two-tank dive days, a night two-tank dive, and rental car with unlimited mileage for around \$700/person.

Eco-Adventures, March and July 2001, Lauren Henderson, San

Antonio TX. Vis: 80-100+ ft. Water: 75-79 F, Air Temp. 80s. Restrictions: rec. limits 130, under the boat w/ 500psi. Dives are guided and seldom go below 70ft, that's where the fish are! The reefs are healthy with hard corals and lots of tropical fish. A wide variety of eels, butterflies, triggers, trumpets, wrasses, and invertebrates can be seen on every dive. Mike Farmer, part owner, is an extraordinary guide. He showed me some real Hawaiian treasures: dragon wrasses, flame angels, frogfish, turkey fish, devil and titan scorpionfish, harlequin shrimp, Spanish dancers, and jeweled anemone crabs. My close-up lens really got put to use. Also saw some big guys; dolphins, eagle rays, mantas, turtles and an occasional reef shark. All within 30-40 min. boat ride from operations I have ever experienced. Mark arranged my hotel, rent car, and dive package. Morning dives are 2 tank and include a deli lunch. Divers get a say as to the dive sites. They try not to repeat site. Manta night dive starts late in the afternoon with a dive at Garden Eel cove. Then after an hour surface interval and a chance to watch the sunset, the briefing begins for the

manta dive. On 2 out of 4 manta dives, a single manta showed up and what a show. The divers group at the bottom with lights pointed up. (The plankton is attracted to the lights and that brings in the feeding manta.) The manta swooped so close you often have to duck your head. As it opens its mouth you can see all the way through it's body. On both my encounters, the manta stayed 30-40 min. A

videographer accompanied the dive so not only did I come home with stills but I also have the whole experience on video. Another dive option is the long-range. This is a full day trip with 3 tanks and a deli lunch. (Make sure to take a dry bag, a couple of towels and a warm sweatshirt.) I did this trip in March and not only did we get to dive 3 great sites, we also donned our snorkel gear when we encountered a pod of dolphins in K-bay to the south of Kona. We finned as fast as we could to keep up with a pair of mating dolphins, what a sight! Another treat in March was the abundance of humpback whales. A pod of 7 came straight at the boat looking like submarines and at 50 ft from the boat they dove down; we could see their white side markings as they went under the boat. We also were treated to the songs of the bulls on a dive at Garden Eel cove. The 50ft boat is comfortable even when full with 20 divers. Diver's gear is set up by the staff and tanks changed between dives. They even defog your mask before each dive. Repeat divers can leave their gear (it is tagged by the staff) on the boat and it is rinsed, dried and on the boat the next day. Tanks are

topped off at 3000 psi, and Nitrox is available. The boat has a head, changing room, shower, camera table, and separate rinse buckets for cameras, wet suits, BCs and Regs. Each group of 6 or less is treated with individual attention and enters the water separately. Dive briefings are detailed with maps and picture book guides of the sea creatures that might be seen. Divers are grouped according to ability. Eco does a lot of certifications from OW to instructor. All the DM guides are very qualified and are at an instructor level or higher, but most of all they are fun and seem to love what they do. I am conservative on air and never felt rushed to finish a dive even if I went over the 60 min limit. When the others in my group were ready to ascend the DM would show them to the line and continue the dive with me. My dive master/dive buddy Chuck held my light so that I could get some awesome shots on the manta night dive! 1-800-949-3483.

Eco-Adventures, Royal Kona Resort, June 2001, Keith A. Trimels (trimbus@asus.net) Cheyenne, WY.
Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 60 to

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70 Feet. Water: 76 F. DM/Instructor, Michael Hendershot gave me much latitude. Other DM's/instructors not so understanding. The night manta dive worth the price of admission. Other dives included turtle cleaning stations, lava tubes, etc. Surge can be strong and scary to inexperienced divers. About \$100/2-tank Nitrox, but less with package deal — about \$700/diver for six dives, hotel (include American breakfast) and car for a week. Hotel needs updating, but is clean. Several nearby restaurants (Lulu's had slow service but good salads) for quick dining (ask DM for recommendations). Eco-Adventures (thru Eco-Tek) also offers Nitrox, decompression, deep and other technical dive instruction, along with the normal PADI courses.

Jack's Diving Locker, November 2000, Jeffrey Strathmeyer, Pleasant Hill, CA. Vis: 75' [down from usual 100'] as a result of an unusual record storm the day before that caused other side of "the big island" to be declared a federal disaster area. Water: 78. Jack's Diving Locker is certainly cheaper than Maui. Back for a second year. Great staff attitude. Treat customers as individuals. They understand that diving should be fun — even if your idea of fun is working hard to get that next certification. 38' boats (Na Pali Kai I and II) with lots of room and a limit of 14 divers (not to exceed a ratio of one instructor/group leader to six divers). Boats are quiet, leaving lots of opportunity for interaction with other divers and instruction for students. Dive in groups of six or less. Computer users

and others qualified can do what they want if cleared with crew. Other divers can remain down when air hogs surface. Dive sites chosen by consensus. Good pre-boarding and pre-dive briefings. Fish and critters are typical Hawaii fare, but great visibility. Instructors often know where a particular turtle, frog fish, etc. can be located. Staff takes good videos (even if made better than your real dive by the addition of file footage.) Golden Arches (frog fish and an octopus), Eel Cove (turtles and a very large school of raccoon butterfly fish) Kalooko Arches, and Turtle Heaven (large Hawaiian green turtle. These sites are 25-40 feet. Fellow divers reported lots of mantas for the night dives. Outstanding dive operation for students and less experienced divers. www.jacksdivinglocker.com indicates that more specialized dives can be arranged on smaller boat. (Ph: 800-345-4807 or 808-329-7585; e-mail dive@jacksdivinglocker.com; website www.jacksdivinglocker.com)

Jack's Diving Locker, January 2001, Richard Madlener, McLean, VA. Sunny. Water temp 77 with air 80. I wore a shorty over a farmer john. Other heartier souls got by (and were cold) in a 3 mil wet suit. Jack's is one of the best dive operations I have experienced in seven years of diving. I did four four-hour snorkeling trips and three two tank dives. When diving there was always a boat captain and two dive masters on the 38-foot boat and the number of divers was restricted to 14 though the most were 11. The crew brings your tanks to you

at the stern and helps you take them off after the dive. They rinsed gear after the dive and provide a bag and storage for people diving multiple days. There were no limits for divers with computers. The dive master was strict about diving the tables for people without computers. The dive briefings were detailed and the dive master took those who wanted to go on a tour. Hawaii diving is unspectacular compared to the Caribbean; however I did get to spend an incredible 15 minutes with my first whale shark and enjoyed seeing a variety of new small reef fish. The one turtle we encountered was happy to stick around. Every trip we saw dolphins, humpback whales or both. The surge was heavy which kept us from going to the manta sites. Since the Kona Surf Resort lights have been turned off there have been fewer mantas. It was a great trip; Jack's is professional.

Jack's Diving Locker, Hilton Waikoloa, August 2001, Tim & Nancy Nugent, Huntington Beach, CA. Vis: 80-100 ft. Water: 78-79 F. Professional operation. Their 38' boats are roomy and comfortable, have an onboard head, hot water shower, two rinse buckets and well designed exit ladder. Tanks are aluminum 72s and 80s. The divemasters/guides and skippers were excellent. Our group consisted of divers with experience ranging from 1st open water to one gentleman that had been trained by the L.A. County lifeguards 40 years ago, and the DMs handled them all with finesse. They offered us the option of following them, or break-

ing into our own buddy teams. Greg and Keller ensured everyone was having fun. Good coral diversity and coverage. Manta night dives — 2 or 3 large mantas the first night, and between 9-11 the second night, each with wingspans from 10' to 12'. Found the coral better on the big island than on Kauai. The food between dives consisted of sandwiches and cookies, along with cold water and juice. While the sandwiches were tasty, one that I would consider a worthy challenge to eat myself would be cut up into six servings. While I historically hate waivers and always try to negotiate certain terms, this one seemed unfair; including asking me to release them from liability even if their employee negligently ran me over with their boat. I don't mind releasing them if I either do something stupid or have a run-in with dangerous marine life, but I do not wish to release them if they back down on me, or leave me at sea. I was unable to negotiate any terms. The Hilton Waikoloa is a first class hotel. Their landscaping is over-the-top, with pools that just keep going on forever. Their grounds are so large that they have a monorail and classic mahogany boats that take you around the premises. Be prepared to pay top dollar for everything there.

Mauna Lani Sea Adventures, Mauna Lani Bay Hotel, August 2001, Richard Teitell (rteitell@home.com), Rydal, PA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 90 Feet. Water: 81 to 84 F, calm.

no currents. Mauna Lani Bay Hotel is a premier, deluxe facility, situated on a calm, sandy beach. It is a vacation destination where several dives is sufficient. (Other dive companies on the Big Island are more appropriate if extensive diving is sought.) Diving is from a 22' boat adequate for up to 6 divers. Backward roll to enter, and stern ladder for reentry. Diving sites are within a short 3 to 10 minute ride from the dock. Night dive available. We saw the usual variety of Hawaiian/Pacific reef Fish, and numerous turtles. Good hard corals for Hawaii. The Hotel maintains the on-site ancient Hawaiian Fish ponds, and raises turtles which are released every July. Excellent snorkeling beach, where we saw almost as much variety as when diving. Excellent family destination. (Ph: (808) 885-7883 or (808) 885-8848; e-mail winona@gte.net)

Pacific Rim Divers, June 2001, Kevin Cedergreen (kevceder@gte.net)
Kirkland, WA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 to 120 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm choppy. Great staff, small boat-six pack type. Very good pre-dive prep with pics of types of fish you might have not noticed and explanations of behavior you might see. Of the 20-30 dives I've done in Hawaii, these guys did the best. Sun heated shower water, but no head. I don't like being on a boat with UWPs so it was perfect that there weren't but 1 or 2 point and shot types on all three days. (Ph: (800) 988-4830; fax 808-326-7522; e-mail primdvrs@gte.net; website www.pacificrimdivers.com)

Sandwich Isle Divers, Hawaiian Oasis, June 2001, Bill Pace and Nancy Olah, Fort Mill, SC. Steve Myklebust is incredibly knowledgeable and has a great sense of humor. Absence of soft corals and sponges, but the abundant sea life made up for it. Although Steve's boat was a bit Spartan (we would have enjoyed shade, a head and fresh showers), his 27 ft. rig was more than adequate, and we got used to doing back rolls. Personalized attention throughout our six dives. Steve treats you like a "grown up" and lets you dive your own profile. We didn't mind paying diver's rates for our snorkeling son because Steve was gave such caring, personalized attention. Three dive masters went down with us on almost every dive, while whoever was acting as captain stayed topside with Nick. During our surface interval, we snorkeled with Nick. Steve tried to choose sites that would offer us a lot to see as divers, but would still have decent snorkeling. The people who work with Steve are exceptionally nice and interesting people: Walt Osborne (a retired policeman from California) and Chuck and Sylvia (two retired Secret Service agents who love to dive and have some terrific stories). We also enjoyed talking with Lara, Steve's charming wife, who is also a Captain. Never more than 3 or 4 divers. Steve has a degree in marine biology, the answers he gave to our questions with a solid factual basis. Interesting sea life. We've both been diving for 13 years, and this was among the easiest, most enjoyable. Stayed at a beautiful B&B, Hawaiian

Oasis. (Ph: 888-743-DIVE or 808-329-9188; fax (808) 326-5652; e-mail dive@sandwichisledivers.com; website www.sandwichisledivers.com)

Sea Paradise, Kanaloa Condominiums, December 2000, Dave Lamb (daveydick@excite.com) **Salt Lake City, UT.** Vis: 40 to 70 Feet. Water: 77 to 78 F, choppy surge. Sea Paradise is at Keouhou Bay away from the Kialua crowds. Never saw other dive boats at sites all south of Keouhou Bay. Most sites less than 20 minutes away. Comfortable boat carries 12 divers max. A little crowded with more than 8. Crew helpful and accommodating. Great at finding critters, though I was uncomfortable with some of their interaction. I hate to see octopus de-inked and handed around. On the other hand, placing a collector urchin next to a horned helmet or pushing a crown of thorns onto a tritons trumpet can result in a great photo op! I dived with Sea Paradise years ago. Most of the staff were still there. The shop and the boat looked at least 4 years older. And I'm sure a lot of the rental equipment is the same. Most of the diving was in the 40 to 70 ft range with 50 to 60 minute bottom times. Lots of arches, caverns and lava tubes. Saw octopus and eels on most dives plus crabs, lizard fish, a whip coral gobi, dragon wrasse, lion fish, elegant and yellow-tail coris, spaghetti worms, and fields of finger, plate, leather and Christmas tree coral, a large patch of garden eels and a very large (7-8 ft wingspan) Hawaiian stingray. No camera table or rinse tanks on the boat. I splashed my

camera with the onboard fresh water shower hose. (Ph: (800) 322-5662 or (808) 322-2500; fax (808) 322-2760; e-mail spscuba@interpac.net; website www.seaparadise.com)

Sea Paradise, April 2001, John Kendall (jkendall@altavista.net) **Denver, CO.** Vis: 60-100 ft. Water: 74-75 F, calm and flat. Dives logged: 85. Dive restrictions: 60 feet first dive, 50 to 60 feet second. Cool water required Polartec and shortie. Boat often a mix of new and experienced divers. Crew did a lot of work — rinsed gear at end of the day; set up BC's and tanks for every dive; lifted BC's and tanks for divers who sat on a wall at the stern (that separates the back of the boat from the dive platform). Dive leaders knew the sites well and were good at spotting wildlife. Nice cavern dives and lava tube diving. Primarily dives on the south part of Kona. These are all better diving sites. Small operation, but loyal following. Downsides: boat design and no afternoon dives, small (5 gallon) camera buckets.

Maui

B&B Scuba, Palms Wailea, October 2000, Martin Raffauf (MRAFFAUF@us.ibm.com), **San Mateo CA.** Water: 77-79 F. Warm, seas calm. Dive profile regulated depth and time. Diving surprisingly good. Weather calm and sunny. B&B Scuba is a good operation. A full dive shop that does training as well as runs a boat for daily two tank morning dives, usually to Molokini and a local offshore Maui site. Boat is new, comfortable, and well equipped. B&B

also rents tanks and does shore diving. Several good shore dives in Maui. Told us 70% of business comes from local people. They are the first out at 6am and first to get to Molokini so get the best buoys before anyone else is there. Conditions in Maui deteriorate in the afternoon (winds, surf), so all operations dive mornings.

Divemasters give good briefings, and point out a lot of good stuff. Warren is very good at finding stuff (eels, octopus, cleaner shrimp, sharks, scorpion fish etc). Shore Diving is also good early is the key. In afternoon, the trade winds come up making visibility decrease. We saw 30-50 ft vis on shore dives, 100+ at Molokini. B&B also does drift dives on back wall of Molokini for more advanced folks. They are 30% cheaper than the other major operations. (\$89 for two tank boat dive)—wet suits are provided free. We had three in our group who wanted to get certified, B&B worked within our schedules to make it happen. Palms Wailea is an excellent condo. No restaurant on site, but there are plenty of local restaurants. Maui is expensive. (Ph: (808)875-2861; fax (808)875-9752; e-mail bvarney333@aol.com; website www.bbscuba.com)

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures, October 2000, Randy Smith, Huntington Beach, CA. Vis: 40-100 ft. Water: 79-82 F. Restrictions: Max depth. Great boats, efficient operation, and the most knowledgeable, friendly and fun dive masters I have ever dove with. Critters you will see, and special behaviors/relationships. Allow you to

dive your own profile according to your computer, experience level and air consumption rate! I have logged over 60 dives with this crew over the past 5 years. (Ph: 800-635-1273 or 808-879-3584; fax ; e-mail info@mauiscuba.com; website www.mauiscuba.com/erd1.htm)

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures, Condo Rental, February 2001, Paul Italiano (Motion90@aol.com) Sausalito, CA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 80 to 130 Feet. Water: 77 F. Generally the diving was very good. Lots of variety, Ed Robinson's offered a good choice of dive sites which were decided each morning based on diver preferences and conditions. Cathedrals on the Lanai trip, night dive at Molikini (close shark encounters), and drift diving the outer wall of Molikini, were my favorites. On every dive we heard whales underwater, and saw numerous whales from the boat. Most of the time the water was flat and calm (choppy once) in some areas light currents dominated, the water was cool enough that I might have preferred a 6mm over my 3.2.

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures, Marriott Resort, February 2001, Rob Mougey, Highlands Ranch, CO. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, choppy. Ed Robinson leaves from Kihei boat ramp and requires divers to show up by 6:30 am. If you are staying in Lahaina/Kanapali, this means a 50 minute drive. The only changing/shower facilities are public rest rooms. Very sparse and dirty. The diving is well organized, if not a bit overly efficient. Everyone enters and returns

to the boat at the same time. Depth limits and times are strictly enforced as is remaining air. We were taking pictures and dive masters didn't like us hanging back. Typical Hawaiian marine life, some nice schools of fish and the occasional shark. Watched a school of bottlenose dolphins during the surface interval on the backside of Molokini. Whale song was amazingly clear. Ed Robinson mistakenly charged us for Polo's which we did not order or get. We ended up filing a fraud charge with Visa. In addition, they charged us for a missed dive due to a power outage in Kanapali from an overnight storm. Flexibility is not a word which is understood here.

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures, Mana Kai, June 2001, Bill Ewin, Grapevine, TX. Vis: 100-150 ft. Water: 77-79 F. Logged dives: approximately 20. Dive restrictions: 500 lbs, loosely around or above DM. Dove 4 tanks including one night, one wreck and 2 Molokini. Great safety briefs (especially at night). Helpful without being condescending. They hauled all the stuff. Worked with two different crews. Everyone was very friendly and informative. No rushing. Relaxed. Organized. A little pricey, but so is everything on Maui.

Ed Robinson's Diving Adventures, July 2001, Paul Quick, Claymont, DE. Vis: 100-150 ft. Water: 75-80 F. Logged dives: 50. Dive restrictions: 130 ft. max., back on boat with 500 psi. A top of the line operation, run by divemasters who knew the water and reef life. Guided dives with 4 divers to a guide. Good snacks during surface

interval. Divemasters set up and stored our dive gear. Excellent pre and post dive briefings. Don't dive at night if you are prone to sea sickness.

Extended Horizons, June 2001, Jerry Loveless, Las Vegas, NV. Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 77 to 78 F, calm. Once an outstanding "six-pak" operation. Taking only five or six divers, they were attentive, and personalized each dive to the tastes and desires of the passengers. However, Erik has taken on a partner, Chris, and they have now moved up into the "cattle-boat" category. Having purchased a larger boat, they jam it over-full of divers, and have lost the personal touch that made them so much fun to dive with before. The operation has taken on a totally different look and it's just not fun anymore. There was little or no accommodation for photography. (Ph: 888-348-3628 or (808) 667-0611; e-mail info@scubadivemaui.com; website www.maui.net/~scuba/ratelist.html)

Lahaina Divers, Marriott Resort, February 2001, Rob Mougey, Highlands Ranch, CO. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 81 to 83 F, choppy no currents. Lahaina Divers runs an efficient operation. Easy access and convenient times from Kanapali area. The boat is adequate with good cover. We dove Lanai on a two tank dive. Crew was mildly observant and was most interested in getting us in and back out of the water as quickly as possible. Dive sites were well populated with

small fish and schools. Lunch was provided in the form of cold cuts. Small rinse tub on boat. (Ph: 800-998-3483 or 808-667-7496; fax (808) 661-5195; e-mail lahdiver@maui.net; website www.lahainadivers.com)

Lahaina Divers, March 2001, Tom Wolf, Huron, OH. Water: 76-77 F. Conditions: windy but dry, choppy seas, some moderate currents. 3 mil rental wetsuit (in good condition). Operation requests that you limit your depth to 80' max. — but most dives were drift dives with the divemaster setting the profile. The Reliant (their smaller boat) proved to be just fine even with 16 (max. 18) on board. The boat is older (we dove on her in the late 80's) but is in excellent repair. We were glad to be on a larger (and very heavy) boat in the chop. Captain Vince honored our requests for specific sites and handled the boat in a very professional manner. The divemasters paced the dives well for both the beginners and more experienced divers, though not having a chase boat meant that all surfaced when the first ran out of air. The groups were limited to 8 for each divemaster and the more experienced divers were in one group, which increased the bottom time. Divemaster Dave was particularly good — as a result, we saw some a purple frogfish, many turtles, bicolor fairy basslets, 5 different moray species. Going and coming Vince stopped the boat to watch the whales — one pod of 2 adults and 1 calf came within 100' of the boat under their own power. Both spinner and bottle-nose dolphins were in the bow wave at

various times. An excellent lunch and snacks were served in generous quantities, as well as endless soft drinks and water.

Maui Diver Shop, Sugar Beach Condos, August 2001, Alison Stenger (astenger@pcez.com) Portland, OR. Experience: 251 dives. Vis: 50 to 70 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, choppy surge no currents. Maui Divers is a visually slick operation. Don't bother! Neither of the two stores we visited were eager to help females, and if we hadn't checked our rental tanks before leaving the store, we would have been out of luck. Two of the three tanks had blown O-rings, and the other tank was nearly out of air. The man who brought the tanks out of the back tried arguing about the O-rings. Two young people who joined us wanted to rent snorkel gear. \$8/day at Maui Divers, \$1.50/day at Dive and Sea! If you must rent from Maui Divers, talk with Sherry at the northern Kihei store. She will help you. One good thing is Maui Divers' free dive guide booklet. In July I rented an Aluminum 63 (tank) from Maui Divers, although the policy was to save these tanks for their instructors. In August, when I tried to rent 63's, Maui Divers refused. Went down the road to Jake at Dive and Sea. No problem! We rented a couple tanks from him — all O-rings fine and tanks were topped off. Two people rented B.C.'s from him, and both leaked at the vest, but not too badly. Jake was helpful in giving dive site info. for shore divers, and even told us where to watch for the tiger shark who

had recently attacked a turtle. His crater dive is from a 6 pack, and he'll go out with only a couple of divers. The turtles were the largest we've ever seen, but the fish are generally very small. We saw lots of juvenile fish (triggers, damsels, butterfly fish of several types, etc., and some small adults, but very few reef fish nearing the size of those off the Big Island. Some days lots of surge, but no current. Makena Landing, Ulua, and Milepost 14 are terrific! Snorkel or dive. All shallow, but easy access and relaxing. (Ph: (800) 542-3483 or (808) 879-3388; e-mail Sylvia@MauiDiveShop.com; website www.mauidiveshop.com)

Mike Severns Diving, Luana Kai, July 2001, Richard J. Troberman (tmanlaw@aol.com) Seattle, WA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 100 Feet. Water: 78 F, choppy. They are extremely knowledgeable about the marine life at the dive sites, and not only tell you about the behaviors of certain species, but also about the behavior of certain individual fish, which they have been following for years. Did a special night charter to Molokini crater for a coral spawn (rice coral), where we were joined by four huge mantas. They leave from the Kihei boat ramp at 6:30am to beat other boats and the trade winds. If you are staying in Lahaina or Kapalua, you have to leave for Kihei before the sun comes up, but the diving experience is worth it. (Ph: (808)879-6596; fax (808) 874-6428; e-mail severns@mauigateway.com; website www.mikesevernsdiving.com)

Mike Severns Diving, July 2001, Mary Stiles, Los Gatos, CA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 78 F, choppy. Great critter briefings. Great dives — couldn't do the Molokini wall due to a swell. Two of our party were novice divers, never been on a boat before. No extra consideration was given to them. Dive guide abandoned group at 50 feet to go back deep and search for artifacts. I wish they had told me to look elsewhere when I made the inexperience of our group known when making the reservation.

Octopus Reef, October 2000, July 2001, Mary Stiles, Los Gatos, CA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 78 F, choppy surge. Rene provides custom guided shore dives off Maui. She has an incredible knowledge of the local marine life and delights in sharing it; detailed briefings, uncanny ability to find creatures during dives. Did four refresher shore dives (under 40 ft depth) each with over an hour bottom time and incredible numbers of creatures. She will vary the location and time of dives to get the best dive possible. In July we returned for two fantastic night dives — squid, octopus, eels, invertebrates of all kinds. She did a future buddies dive experience with our eight year old and her friend. Absolutely great personal service. Swells decreased visibility and made diving impossible some days. Algae bloom was certainly evident. scores of turtles, including a turtle cleaning station. Sharks at Molokini. (Ph: (808) 875-0183 ; e-mail info@octopusreef.com; website www.octopusreef.com)

ProDiver Maui, March 2001, Glenn Leneker (gleneker@home.com) Vancouver, WA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 Feet. Water: 71 to 74 F, calm. Maui Pro Diver is a small boat that uses Kihei boat ramp. Pierre and boat captain Dave were very interested in providing good service. They go early at 5:45 am so as to be first boat at Mokokini Crater. This puts you back at 10:30 am. Only 7 people on the boat. Whales were in calving and very vocal underwater. Good briefings and tried to show unusual sea life (frog fish). (Ph: (808) 875-4004; fax (808) 875-1448)

Pro Diver Maui, April 2001, David Whiteside (whitesidedd@softcom.net) Sacramento, CA. Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 78-85 F, calm and flat. Logged dives: 125+. Dive restrictions: depth. Great small operation. 6 divers max. 4th trip in 10 years with Pierre Rosier. Very knowledgeable of dive sites, especially Molokini and surrounding islands. Pierre is the best. Should book ahead.

ProDiver Maui, June 2001, Jerry Loveless (JerryL3515@aol.com) Las Vegas, NV. Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 77 to 78 F, calm. Spacious boat limited to six or seven divers. They also run an occasional "repeat customer" trip for divers who have been with them before. On these trips, they relax the restrictions and let divers control their own dives. Pierre, the owner, and Dave, Divemaster and Boat Driver, do a fabulous job of taking care of the needs and desires of their customers. They are the first boat out in the

morning leaving at 6 a.m. sharp, and are back early — usually by 10 a.m. leaving a full day for other activities in beautiful Maui. Pierre, covers all the rules and regulations in his briefing with a sense of humor and with respect to the divers. He's a very pleasant but no-nonsense leader and makes you feel like there's no place he'd rather be than with you. A real pleasure to dive with. Once he's comfortable with your dive skills he relaxes many restrictions and let's you do your own thing. Sweet rolls, crackers and muffins are available as is coffee, hot chocolate, and "more tea selections than the executive suite of the Four Seasons Hotel." Little special accommodation for photography.

Oahu

Captain Bruce's, October 2000, Andrew Merrill (amerrill@gci.net) Fairbanks, AK. Vis: 10-60 ft. Dives logged: 70. Very good for the price. Dive sites were great. Saw several sharks and lots of turtles. The service was OK but the divemasters were a little too relaxed. The first dive was great but we feared for our lives on the ride to the boat. They had a divemaster who hadn't driven in 3 years pick us up in the company van. We had two close calls on the road. (Ph: 808-373-3590; fax 808-394-9421; e-mail info@captainbruce.com; website www.captainbruce.com)

Ocean Concepts Scuba, March 2001, Mike O'Hagan (ohagan@freenet.de) Stuttgart, BW. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 75 to 90 Feet. Water: 72 to 75 F, calm. Professionally run

operation with a strong emphasis on customer service. Divemasters are friendly, knowledgeable and flexible in accommodating divers of all experience levels and helpful before, during and after each trip. Dived from their boat, South Seas II, out of the Waianae Boat Basin on the leeward side, about 45 minutes from Waikiki. Logged eight dives, including the Mahi wreck, Makaha Caverns, aircraft remains, Land of Oz and Black Rock Cave. Ocean Concepts has six shops around Oahu and will pick-up divers from many Waikiki hotels. Upon arrival at their Waianae shop, Mahi Divers, they whisk your gear to the boat while divers enjoy fresh fruit and juice and receive a pre-dive brief.

Ocean Concepts manager, Jim Byrem, provides thorough brief touching on everything from boat and dive safety to seat assignments and weather conditions, stressing customer satisfaction. When you get to the boat, your tank, BCD and regulator are ready to go and later swapped out by the crew during the surface interval. Rental rigs include computer. Cameras — only fresh water rinse tank. Boat seating in shade or sun, as you choose. Octopi, triggerfish, moray eels, Moorish idols, other tropicals and large and small sea turtles. I came across rare frogfish, leaf scorpionfish, horned helmet conch, trident's trumpet, brittle star and a flight of six eagle rays. One dive site almost had to be changed because a humpback whale and her calf were loitering around the mooring buoy. Whales were still in the area when we surfaced after our dive. Another day the

U.S. Air Force was doing over-water parachute exercises; quite a show. Huge sandwiches and drinks during the surface interval and fresh pineapple after the second dive. \$65 for a two-tank dive. **(Ph: 800-808-DIVE or (808) 677-797 or (808) 682-2511; fax (808) 682-1031; e-mail info@oceanconcepts.com; website www.oceanconcepts.com)**

Ocean Concepts Scuba, Hilton Hawaiian Village, July 2001, Paul Bayard (pbayard@cfl.rr.com)
Winter Park, FL. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 Feet. Water: 75 to 80 F, calm no currents. The entire experience was a real treat. When I asked them what I should bring on the boat with me they said your bathing suit and a towel. They took care of the rest. Super divemasters. Very knowledgeable of the area. Everybody friendly. Probably not too exciting for the professional UWP but for beginner and intermediate it would be excellent subject matter.

JAPAN **Okinawa**

U.S. Military Bases, Kyle O'Malley, Le Center, MN. Vis: 30-70 ft. Water: 60-75 F. Dives logged: 200+. Diving on Okinawa is a different angle than your usual Resort Reports. If you have relatives or friends serving with the U.S. Military there it is an affordable and really uncomplicated trip — otherwise it would be too expensive through the Japanese resorts and hotels. The Marine and Air Force bases have hostel facilities for visiting relatives. Dive gear