

mantas cruised by at a distance, then made successively closer appearances and brought four friends. The second dive was inside the lagoon by consensus, to look for eagle rays. Drift dive in a moderate current. 2 rays close with a whole squadron behind them, single turtle and a free swimming moray that went at least 6 feet. Huahine: I arranged by e-mail to go with OIRI Plongee (oiri.plongee@mail.pf 689 - 68-76-84), 2 dives and a day long excursion that includes lunch on a beach or motu, snorkeling and a visit to a pearl farm plus equipment rental and transfers. Service was excellent but laid back. The rental reg breathed so hard that unless I kept my head in one exact position the workload of just breathing raised my heart rate and gave me a headache.

Serge, the owner, accompanied us on both dives, giving a thorough briefing. Service was personal and friendly, and his love of diving comes through.

Visibility was 75' inside the lagoon. We saw a crowd of eagle rays, a large unicorn fish, another big puffer, a brilliant purple nudibranch, several beautiful trunk fish. On the second dive we also negotiated some interesting vertical chimneys. Single ladies beware: Serge is quite the flirt. Although I was amused hearing his theories of life and love while lounging on an exquisite beach, not everyone would be. It's helpful to speak some French here.

Moorea: Moorea Fun Dive (689-56-40-74), the ship's provider. They were professional and courteous. Gave a decent briefing, suggested we stay above 80 feet, where the best stuff was and enforced a safety stop. Both dives were outside the reef, with 100 + foot

visibility. Saw heaps of black tip reef sharks, some within 10 feet of divers, 2 big (10') lemons sharks slightly farther away, 2 green turtles and a huge puffer fish. Several remoras here, including some very friendly ones. Saw the whales breaching from about 100 feet or so distance. Raiatea: Hemisphere Sub, (hemis-subdivingmail.pf). Owner Hubert met the and it is easy to set up dives on the spot provided there is room. 2 dive masters for 5 divers; Both dives were outside the reef and conditions varied with the west side very calm and the windward east side kinda lumpy with a 4 foot swell. Between the two sites we saw many gray reef sharks, some very close, a big Napoleon wrasse, a school of barracuda, and more amorous remoras. **(Per their website at www.renaissancecruises.com, Renaissance Cruises ((800) 525-5350) ceased cruise operations and filed for bankruptcy on 9/25/01.-ed.)**

HAWAII

Kona

Kona Aggressor, August 2000, Lissa Woodbury Jensen, (xenadancer@dancerart.net) Kodiak, AK. Vis: 100 ft. Water: 74-80 F. Got stuck with a roommate that didn't know I would be there — uncomfortable at times as she was a bit of a snob. **(Ph: 800-348-2628 or 985-385-2628; fax 985-384-0817; e-mail info@aggressor.com; website www.aggressor.com)**

Kona Aggressor, September 2000, Thomas & Sue Downey, Frisco, TX. Vis: 75-150 ft. Water: 79-81 F. Capt. Alan and crew were outstanding. Boat

had all the amenities and more. Diving was awesome. Lots of creatures — several different varieties of eels — schools of dolphins and hammerheads — turtle cleaning station was fascinating, like Grand Central Station with turtles coming and going. Water a very comfortable 80 degree, vis aver. About 100 ft.

Kona Aggressor, January 2001, John Slattery (jamslats@aol.com) Palm Coast, FL. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 73 to 77 F, calm. Stable and roomy boat due to catamaran design. Spacious dive deck even with a full boat. Very nice upper deck for relaxing between dives. Since all cabins are right off salon, any late night parties will keep early retirees awake. Lots of colorful Fish but no coral. Large accessible multilevel camera table with charging station. Separate rinse tank.

Kona Aggressor, March 2001, Don Emmons, San Francisco, CA. Vis: 35-60 ft. Water: 75-78 F. Logged Dives: 500 plus. Dive Restrictions: 110 ft., 500 lbs. Typical of the Pacific catamaran except for its size which is smaller. It only accommodates 10 divers. The crew was great — they were on their best behavior because Alan Roberts was acting captain that week. It was a typical good, well run dive trip for an Aggressor boat. Good service, food and customer care. The equipment was well maintained and in good working order. Kona Coast diving was fine but not too exciting. It was a fine, laid back trip for intermediate skill level divers. Beginners were well treated. Experienced divers would want more excitement.

Kona Aggressor II, March 2001, Doug Borisky, New York, NY.

Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 120 Feet. Water: 73 to 76 F, calm. Captain García and his crew work incredibly hard to make sure that all of the passengers' needs are met. When my luggage (including my scuba gear) was lost on my flight to Hawaii, the crew worked with the airline to make the luggage appear including making multiple trips ashore to try to locate the luggage; and they made sure that I had clothes and gear to tide me over until the luggage arrived. The crews generally enthusiastic attitude also is noteworthy. UW photography instruction, tips, feedback etc. if you wanted it. Good, quick E-6 processing.

Kona Aggressor II, April 2001, Lauren Greider (scubama@hotmail.com)

Encinitas, CA. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 80 to 120 Feet. Water: 76 to 78 F, calm, no currents. Great trip considering it was Hawaiian diving! We took our two girls ages 12 and 15 for their first live-aboard. The crew was incredibly helpful on the boat and underwater. The boat was clean and comfortable. The food was great, prepared by chef Dave. We also kayaked along the volcanic coastline several afternoons. We snorkeled with schools of spinner dolphins that came within several feet. That night a manta came to the boat and played in our lights for several hours. The crew made this a great trip for our kids! Aggressor phone 800DIVBOAT www.aggressor.com Our whale sightings were on the surface! There were two generous tanks for cameras only.