

Not bad value for \$155US per day double including breakfast. However, to add 2 dives per day for 2 people puts the daily cost way up there relative to a live-aboard. (Ph: (+960) 443847 (Maldives); fax (+960) 442665; e-mail sales@unisurf.com; website www.unisurf.com)

**Soleni Dive Centre, Soneva Fushi, March 2001, Erwin P. Staller (STALLER@VDOT.NET) Hauppauge, NY.** Vis: 60-100 ft. Water: 84-87 F. Dives logged: 200+. The Soneva Fushi Resort has divers from Germany, France and Great Britain mostly. We didn't meet any other Americans. The Soleni Dive Centre is a great operation with divemasters from Australia as well as Switzerland. Thomas Walchli runs the Center and he tries to dive everyday and make each dive an interesting experience. His staff would do anything to help you. A cup of tea, a towel and a piece of fresh coconut would be waiting for you on your return. I have had major surgery and cannot lift my tank and equipment so they brought my equipment to me at the edge of the boat and I would roll in. Most divers enter with a giant step. On the return, they removed my equipment in the water so that I wouldn't have to carry it up the ladder. The dhonis are sturdy and well maintained. Most dives are 30 minutes or less from the resort and definitely worthwhile. In 13 dives, we never repeated a dive site. Palau's Blue Corner cannot compete with my dive at the Shark Nursery, with sharks, manta rays and dolphins. The soft

coral still exists on wall dives but little coral is seen on the shallow surfaces although they do show signs of coming back. (Ph: 00960 23 03 04/05; fax 00960 23 04 74; e-mail soleni@dhivehinet.net.mv; website www.soleni.com)

**Vakarufalhi Resort, March 2001, Hellmuth and Ginette Kimberger, Austria.** Vis: 150 ft. Water: 27 C. Dives logged: Hellmuth: 1,455 and Ginette: 632. Dive restrictions: 30 meters. Possibility of "over-booking." Alternative accommodations provided at another island (Rangoli Hilton). (Ph: (+960) 450004; fax (+960) 450007; e-mail info@vakarufalhi.ch; website vakarufalhi.com)

## SEYCHELLES

Billed as 3000 miles from anywhere, this group of islands has been trying to promote itself to divers as THE place to see whale sharks, but this is unproved. From time to time live-aboards run to the out-island of Aldabra, which is reported to have excellent diving. . . . Island prices are high. . . .

## THAILAND

Thailand is a bargain. . . . Whale shark season is usually from March through May, with Richelieu Rock providing an excellent chance of encounters. . . . Trips to the Burma Banks were stopped for political reasons, but this area has been reopened along with some other

new areas; check before departure. . . .

## Phuket

**Fantasea Divers, January 2001, Joe Gallagher, Fort Wayne, IN.** Phuket is an hour's flight from Bangkok or Singapore, a flight that is very inexpensive when added on to an international ticket. Towels and a meal is provided along with local transportation to the boats from your hotel. There are many other dive operators in Phuket but they tend to be very crowded and not selective about dive sites nor too concerned with the safety of the divers. Fantasea's Dive Masters are well trained, confident and not too controlling. If they see that you are experienced they keep a watchful eye but let you enjoy the dive. Dive sites are varied but have much to offer. Beginner Divers normally go on one boat to a sheltered dive site off of Rachai Yai, an island an hours boat ride from Phuket. Rachai Yai has mild currents, elkhorn coral and abundant fish and if you are lucky an octopus or reef shark. More advanced divers go on a separate boat to Shark Point to dive with leopard sharks and to an Island, Koh Dok Mai to do a wall dive and swim with barracuda. At Rachai Noi I saw large mantas swimming in crystal clear water just below the surface above large rocks which are covered by giant sea fans. The coral life is abundant a 30-90 feet varying strong currents near the surface. I recommend a wet suit, the water is in the 80's but plankton is abundant and at times stings. The plankton attracts the fish life. I have dived with Whale

Sharks off of Shark Point. (Ph: (+66) 7628 1387; fax (+66) 7628 1389; e-mail [info@fantasea.net](mailto:info@fantasea.net); website [www.fantasea.net](http://www.fantasea.net))

**H20 Sports, Laguna, November 2000, Steven Schwankert, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong.** Vis: 30-50 ft. Water: 82 F. Dive restrictions: Relaxed, guided diving. Made two dives during the long weekend. Good service: pick-up/drop-off; two tanks; all equipment, fruit and unlimited soft drinks for US \$90. Viz wasn't great, but saw some octopus, two big puffers, lots of beautiful, soft corals. Not bad for land-based vacation w/ diving. (Ph: 76-270562; fax: 76-270563)

## TURKEY

**Aegean Pro Dive Centre, Bodrum August 2001, Charlotte and Bob Rubin (clrubin@aol.com) Brooklyn, NY.** Vis: 20-30 ft. Water: 78 F, calm and flat. Logged dives: 100+. Dive restrictions: time, depth, air pressure. I would not go out of my way to go to Bodrum to dive. Bodrum, a beautiful, up-scale, resort on the Aegean, professional Aegean Pro Dive Center. (Ph: +90 (252) 316-0737; fax +90 (252) 313-1296; e-mail [info@aegeanprodiver.com](mailto:info@aegeanprodiver.com); website [www.aegeanprodiver.com](http://www.aegeanprodiver.com))

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**Maku Diving, Holiday Beach Motel, January 2001. Peter Louwerse, Gibelhof, Switzerland.** Dibbah is located in the Emirate of Fujairah, on the Gulf of Oman, at the border of the