

and what few boats pass are small, not at all intrusive, and add visual interest. Three to four boats take Tongans to and from work, and others include a few cruising sail boats, a couple of dive boats, a water taxi and a few fishing boats. (Ph: +64-7 862 7456; fax +64-7 862 6668; e-mail dive_adi@wave.co.nz; website <http://www.divenewzealand.com/academy/enquiry.html>)

VANUATU

The world's largest air-accessible wreck, the *President Coolidge*, a 640-foot ocean liner converted into a troop ship, is a each dive on Espiritu Santo. It's mainly for advanced divers, starting at 70 feet and going down to 250. . . . Check with DAN about your evacuation insurance before going; you may not be covered due to the number of divers getting bent on this site. . . . Some diving is available from the capital city of Port-Vila, but it's not spectacular. . . . Little reef diving is offered so far. . . . Water temperatures in February hit the mid 80s and in September may drop as low as 70. . . . Don't miss the side trip to Tanna Island to visit the active volcano, dugongs, and Melanesian villagers living according to ancient customs. . . . Other side trips include the island of Pentecost in April to early June to see the land divers leap head-first from 70-foot towers with nothing but vines tied around their ankles. . . .

LIVE-ABOARDS

AUSTRALIA

Aquarius III, September 2001, David Vickery & Suzanne Leeson, Hoboken, NJ. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 100 to 150 Feet. Water: 75 to 77 F, calm. We drifted slowly past wide coral canyons with bommies in their midst. The swim throughs, tunnels, overhangs and overall immensity of the reef made me think of diving on Mars. Schools of 4-foot bumphead parrotfish were everywhere and regarded us with curiosity. An 11-foot hammerhead swam slowly by. The diving at Flora Reef in the Coral Sea looked virgin. The group swam away from the reef to surface in blue water for the pickup. The *Aquarius III* is 65' and holds 16 divers (they crammed a 17th into the crew's quarters) and 5 crew members, so with 22 people on board, it's, umm, cozy. We could deal with the crowded dive deck, we could take our meals topside because there wasn't enough room in the salon, and when necessary we could hide in our 'Master Stateroom' cabin, but we could not abide: 1) The bunks (the 'Master Stateroom' had two different sized foam mattresses forced sideways into an odd shaped space, creating bumps and valleys so bad that our shoulders and backs were so sore we thought we were bent) and 2) The food. Breakfast was served after the first dive and was toast and cereal. Period. For some unfathomable reason, lunch (burritos, cold cuts,