

## VIETNAM

### **Ana Mandara Resort, May 2002, Matt & Ellen Tate, Kokomo, IN.**

Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 35 to 60 Feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, calm, no currents. We went to Vietnam to check out the diving, based on a small ad in *Asian Diver*. We would not go back for the diving. It was just ok. The country and the people were fascinating. Things were done somewhat differently (this is the only country we've been in where you go through a metal detector after you get off the plane just to get into the country). (Ph: 84 - 58 - 829 829; e-mail [resvana@dng.vnn.vn](mailto:resvana@dng.vnn.vn); website [www.six-senses.com/ana-mandara](http://www.six-senses.com/ana-mandara))

## LIVE-ABOARDS

## AFRICA (EAST COAST)

**Kaskazi, February 2002, Leanne Wells (mwells42@wf.net) Mineral Wells, TX.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, calm currents no currents. This live-aboard trip along the east coast of Tanzania was all ugly. The *Kaskazi* is a catamaran that might accommodate six divers. We were ten and taxed the facilities to the maximum. There was one head with one shower that did not work. We had to use small amounts of rationed drinking water to rinse our faces between dives; forget showers. The single head serviced the nine divers plus crew of six. The air compressor is

in the middle of the mid-deck and did double duty as our only table for meals and social activities. If the compressor were running, there was no conversation possible. There was no bottled water, sodas, nor beer or any other alcoholic beverage. Twice we surfaced to find our "captain" drinking his own supply of refreshment: once a beer and another time a Coke. The food was terrible and lunch and dinners were large amounts of pasta dribbled with tomato sauce and seasoned with a few slices of zucchini. Dive gear was deposited in individual piles on the stern deck between dives and at night. Suiting up was a nightmare with no place to sit except the deck and gear was strewn all over. The *Kaskazi* was slow, rarely making over three knots under full sail (one sail was out of commission). Consequently it took forever to move from one dive site to another. There was only one zodiac, and divers were often in the water up to an hour before being picked up, a dangerous situation. On one night dive, the zodiac sprang a leak and we had to constantly bail to stay afloat; upon returning to the *Kaskazi*, we learned from divers who did not go, that the captain and crew had no idea where we had gone to dive. They even disagreed about the direction we had gone. If we had sunk, we would still be out there waiting. The Captain/divemaster ignored us most of the time and made sure that his own agenda and needs were accomplished. A Scandinavian, he was worse than useless. He was completely unfamiliar with the waters, very lazy, and short of temper always.

He told us we would sail at 0400 to be at a dive site early, and then slept until 10:00 so that we missed the morning dive. He seemed to have sodas and beer, but only the desalinized water was offered to guests though we asked. He followed his own agenda underwater, and we all cheered when a large Titan trigger attacked him. The entire facility and accommodation were so bad that we requested an early return and gave up a day and night of diving which we had paid for. A total disaster for which we paid dearly in dollars, travel time, and aggravation. While this boat operation might be ok for a honeymoon couple, it is totally inadequate for diving. A gentleman from South Africa who owns a dive operation and was there scouting for a boat opined that it was the worst operation he had seen, and complained as bitterly as we did. There was never an apology or attempt to make amends for the deplorable conditions. The boat looks pretty good on the Internet, but beware. (Ph: 254-0127-3517 or 254-0127-3224; e-mail [recycle@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:recycle@africaonline.co.ke); website [www.kaskazi.com](http://www.kaskazi.com))

### INDONESIA

**Baruna, September 2001, Carmen Scutella** ([quantum@madbbs.com](mailto:quantum@madbbs.com))  
**Jamestown, NY.** Vis: 40-100 ft. Water: 74-79 F. Logged dives: 100+. Dive restrictions enforced: Sometimes. Dove Sulawesi between Banda and Flores Seas. 44 dives — much damage due to blast fishing. (We were bombed twice in two weeks). Where there is reef is spectacular! Great night dives. What

pelagics are there are deep. I had to go to 180 ft. Saw a 6'+ grouper (600+ lbs.). (Ph: 62-361-753 820; e-mail [baruna@denpasar.wasantara.net.id](mailto:baruna@denpasar.wasantara.net.id); website [www.baruna.com](http://www.baruna.com))

**Baruna, May 2002, Hank Silver, Dallas, TX.** Aboard the *Baruna* a 100-ft solid vessel with marvelous accommodations for divers. Walter Davis, owner of The Scuba Shop in Dallas, assembled the trip. Walter has made so many dive trips to Indonesia we can't count them all. May avoids the rainy season and the typhoon season. We visited and dived Bali, Lombok, Alor, Rinca, Komodo, Flores, Sumbawa, Timor, Sumba, Roti, and some that had no names. *Baruna* handles 15 divers comfortably. There are 14 friendly crew members; there were only 11 divers so each had a cabin to themselves. The food was superb, varies daily, and is plentiful. I have been lucky to have dived around the world in 51 years of diving and rate these reefs as the very best. We were diving every day at 7 A.M. on pristine reefs, followed by four or five more dives a day into the starry nights. Every two hours the call "DIVE TIME" rang out and we donned gear for another plunge and new and exotic critters. I counted 26 species of nudibranchs! We saw pigmy sea horses, pipefish, rare moray eels, sea snakes, tiny shrimp and crabs, and the beautiful species of angelfish, butterfly fish, cuttlefish, rabbit fish, tunicates, cardinal fish, wrasses, anemone fish, and a few sharks, and turtles. There were so many lionfish we had to shoo them aside. Soft and hard corals