

never driven in and to a destination that is in "that" direction. The return trip --American said that we should arrive at the airport three hours ahead of departure. We arrived two hours ahead. It took us about 30 minutes to go through the security, get our tickets and to get to the gate. While waiting American Eagle had two flights to San Juan leaving ahead of ours. Our flight left Santo Domingo on time and arrived in San Juan on time, but couldn't get a parking space. We breezed through immigration. We waited and waited for luggage, when it finally arrived we breezed through customs and went to the American luggage check-in. Our flight had just left but they would put us on a later flight arriving in Dallas at 9:45 PM with no connecting flights to San Antonio until the next morning. Fly-Away had us set for one hour in San Juan. The San Juan desk said that we should have had at least a two hour lay over to make it through customs and immigration. So we had to cool our heels in DFW overnight. If Fly-Away had booked us on the earlier flight we would have had no trouble.

**Neptuno, BestWestern Metro, June 2002, Ray Fealko (raydar@netlink.net)**  
**Cortland, OH.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 75 Feet. Water: 80 to 81 F, choppy. Hotel excellent. All-inclusive package for \$40 day, safe water. Neptuno horrible dive operation. Very unsafe practices. They put us in dangerous situations daily. Cave diving beautiful but not set up for safety. No lines in places, bad visibility. Boats not adequate for long trips

in ocean. Engine problems. Inexperience with conditions, poor judgment. No safety precautions. We had to insist they call for help. Diving only fair in the Juan Dolio area, Boca Chica has some nice dive sites. Get on the bus and in five minutes you're in Boca Chica to dive. Catalina Island diving is excellent. Stay in that area if possible to save traveling. Santa Domingo is a nice city to visit. The tour of the historical city is wonderful. The country is nice and we were impressed with the people. (Ph: 809-526 1473; e-mail [coltrop@codetel.net.do](mailto:coltrop@codetel.net.do); website [www.neptunodive.com](http://www.neptunodive.com))

**Northern Coast Divers, June 2002, Clare Petosa, Manasquan, NJ.**  
Experience: 25 dives Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, no currents. Diving around Sosua is marginal at best. Take an excursion to Rio San Juan. Pristine reefs, amazing visibility and lots of fish that swim right up to you. I kept feeling something hitting my fin and saw a tiny damselfish guarding his house from me! I wouldn't go back specifically for diving. (Ph: 809-571-1028; e-mail: [northern@codetel.net.do](mailto:northern@codetel.net.do); website [www.northerncoastdiving.com](http://www.northerncoastdiving.com))

## GRENADA

Grenada's as lush as Caribbean islands get, with great local food, an extraordinary beach, friendly people, and the most picturesque capitol in the Caribbean. Diving is only average, with one exception: the biggest wreck in the Caribbean, the *Bianca C.*, a 592-foot liner that

burned in 1962 and was towed a mile off the beach to die. Unfortunately, it's not fertile ground for coral or fish, and the surface current is often strong enough to splay you on the downline - still, it's a unique Caribbean dive. . . . Grenada is out of the hurricane belt, though it's pelted by summer rains, which is why it's so lush. A fine way to visit the old Caribbean, get in a little no-hassle reef diving, sit in the sun, and drink rum in the rum houses along a harrowing perimeter road - which is about as safe as a Boston turnpike on St. Paddy's Day.

**Aquanauts Divers, Spice Island Inn, February 2002, Donald Hoft, Holliston MA.** Vis: 50-100 ft. Logged dives over 450. Sunny/windy; little chop, some current. Not a dive destination but it's a lovely island with nice people and lots to do topside. Aquanauts (<aquanautgranada.com>) now has a second shop at the Spice Island Inn on Grand Anse Beach. It's a big improvement over the previous owners. Good boat, professional staff, and work hard to make the most of each dive. Winter winds kept us on the west side of the island where you see ship wrecks, generally healthy soft and hard coral, not many larger Caribbean fishes but pretty good small stuff. Sites not dramatic but generally good. The *Bianca C*, the largest (600') wreck in the Caribbean is always a fun dive, and since last year have added a new and interesting wreck, the 250' cargo ship *Shakem*. It's between Quarantine Point and the *Bianca C* at roughly 100'. Already host to lots of

growth and other sea life; I liked it as much as the *Bianca*. Aquanauts will be running a live-aboard up the Grenadines starting within a few months. Could be interesting diving. Spice Island Inn is expensive but it's excellent; well-trained staff, generally good food, beach, and pool.

**(Ph: 473-444-1126; e-mail aquanauts@caribsurf.com; website www.spicedivers.com)**

**Ecodive, July 2001, Winston Reed, Milford, CT.** Vis: 30-40 ft. on wreck. Water: 70 F. Dives logged: 164. You wade out into water, hand your gear up, then scamper aboard the skiff. 600 ft. long *Bianca C* — wreck 90-130 ft. deep. Lots of current. Needs down line — it is not clear to me why there isn't one. Swimming pool is completely collapsed. The way it's set up is you back roll off a sun protected skiff. Swim down as fast as you can to keep sight of DM (he swims like a dolphin). If you lose sight of DM you're out of luck as there is no down line, no mooring buoy. Bottom time very limited -- 130 ft. depth. Also vis is 30-40 ft. on wreck. Lots of fish around the foremast. Derrick Pielle is nice DM. Ed and other co-owner transported me personally, free of charge from/to Secret Harbor and would not accept a tip — outstanding service! **(Blueway Dive Center Ecodive: Ph: 02 345 37142; e-mail diveint@blueway.it; website http://www.blueway.it/divecentregrenada.htm)**

**EcoDive, True Blue Bay Resort, July 2002, Mark Thorne (thorne@mindspring.com) Raleigh,**

**NC.** Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm, currents. Amazing place to dive, hike, eat, and tour. Great wrecks. Gorgeous coral with schools of fish. Advanced or easy diving. Out of the hurricane belt. This place is absolutely enchanted. It has lush tropical rainforests, a large variety of spices, fruits. Everywhere I went were breathtaking vistas and overlooks. Eco Dive & Trek owner Ed sincerely enjoy diving with their customers, and were warm and genuine. (**True Blue Bay Resort: Ph: 866-3BLUEBAY or 473-443 TRUE; e-mail jennifer@truebluebay.com or dives@truebluebay.com; website <http://www.truebluebay.com>**)

## **GUADELOUPE**

Guadeloupe lies south of Antigua and north of Dominica. Because it's a French-speaking island, English-speaking tourists often have difficulty getting by. . . . Although there's wonderful shopping, a wealth of music and art, and the cuisine's out of this world, the diving is only average. Les Heures Saines (or "the quiet hours") is among the best operations at Pigeon, and they speak some English. . . . The French diving rules are a bit quirky. Unless you're a divemaster yourself, which allows you great freedom, you must dive with a guide. . . .

## **HONDURAS**

All dive resorts are on the Bay Islands: Roatán, Guanaja, Utila,

Cayos Cochinos, and other small cayes. . . . Honduras is home to the world's most aggressive no-see-ums; they bite, bite, bite, and many people have serious allergic reactions to the bites. Those who are unprepared — meaning DEET — often find their vacations ruined. . . . The diving features great walls, offshore seamounts, and excellent coral and gorgonians, although there are few large fish or lobsters due to overfishing. . . . Whale sharks are seen near Utila, while diving on Guanaja falls short of other venues. . . . There's limited access to beach diving except at CoCoView and Fantasy Island on Roatán, and Plantation Beach on Cayos Cochinos. . . . The rainy season is October through February, and northers can disrupt the diving. . . . TACA often overbooks, so reconfirm flights (which may not help) and carry essentials as TACA loses or delays luggage. . . . Spanish is spoken on the mainland, English in the Bay Islands. . . . Classic Central American jungles and Mayan ruins inland make great side trips. . . . Malaria protection is advised. . . .

## **Cayos Cochinos**

**Plantation Beach Resort, May 2002, Dick Puelicher, Chico, CA.** Experience: 51- 100 dives. Vis: 30 to 60 Feet. Water: 78 to 81 F, choppy. Dive boat to take us to island from main land broke down. Resort rented boat but lost one day as we waited overnight at La Ceiba for its arrival (resort paid for hotel). 3 hour trip to Cayos Cochinos.