

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.

Accommodations minimal, no hot water and only trickle of cold. Shower leaked into entry way. Hammock secured by 1-inch I bolt into rotted wood. Hammock collapsed dumping occupant onto concrete 3 feet below. When repaired, used same bolt and same piece of wood to secure. Food sometimes good, sometimes not. Dining/recreation area sometimes monopolized by staff watching action movies at full volume. Dive operator did not ask for C-cards. Rented boat not set up for diving. Did not leave dock until after 9 a.m. Dive master did not accompany divers. No snacks or drinking water on board. Dive your own profile. Very local dives only. Beautiful coral though limited vis (too murky to see much below 70 feet). Lots of small stuff but only a few barracuda and one turtle. Staff dragged regs and octo along dock on way to boat. No boat night dive or trip to marine research station as promised. Single fresh water rinse tank for both cameras and masks. (Ph: 800-628-3723 or +504 42 0974)

Guanaja

Bayman Bay Club, September 2001, Mark Beatty (mark@diveflag.com) Oregonia, OH. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 20 to 70 Feet. Water: 80 to 84 F, calm. Accommodations were run down and only partially rebuilt from hurricane Mitch. No hot water, some cabanas had no running water or inoperable toilets. All had missing or torn screens, therefore not bug resistant. Resort had cash flow problem in purchasing food for guests, stocking bar (they purchased one case

of beer each day). Homemade salsa made from Ketchup, only one salad dressing all week. Word was we had no hot water due to lack of money to purchase gas for heaters. Resort manager resigned half way through the week, and there were lots of internal personnel problems, although several staff members individually were great. We offered to pay bar bills daily to improve cash flow to purchase food. They asked one guest to borrow money when in town to buy food. They also did not have cash to make change when paying bills at the end of the week. Dive operation was poor, but staff was helpful under the conditions. Rental equipment we were forced to use since airline delivered nine peoples luggage three days late was in poor condition and short of needs. One of two boats was down. Poor maintenance on all equipment. Diving was poor in that there was no large sea life, coral had lots of algae growth and even schooling fish were hard to find. The only good dives were the Jado Trader on the windward side and a trip to Barbaretta. Dive staff poorly planned dives for photographers, taking us to west facing wall in the morning and east facing in the afternoon. Planned several dives as up-current swims. No communication on island. No television, fax, phones, email, or English speaking radio even for an emergency. We were there the week of Sept. 11 and could not notify family or even find out what was going on in the US for days. Guanaja is barren. Nothing available for purchase or sale, not even film or batteries. Little there worth photographing. Least video

I've ever taken on a week-long trip. Some dives only 3-5 minutes of footage. Dives poorly planned for photography. (Ph: 800-524-1823 or (954) 472-3700; e-mail info@baymanbayclub.com; website www.baymanbayclub.com)

Bayman Bay Club, June 2002, Karen (K-Fiedler@sbcglobal.net)
La Canada, CA. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm. I wish we had read our *Chapbook* before going! There were several stories similar to the one I'm going to tell. Our 1st night there, we had rats in our room and no electricity. So there we sat at 2:00 a.m. armed with only our dive lights! We finally got up and demanded they put the generator on so we could have the lights on to keep the rats at bay. We changed rooms the next day, but there was a trade-off -- no hot water for no rats! Nightly we would check our room and beds for any critters (tarantulas/snakes, etc.). The house-keeping was minimal -- only the beds were made, no sweeping the floors or cleaning the bathroom. But the girls were more than happy to eat your food and go through and steal your make-up while they were making your bed! We finally started to lock up our things while we were away. The trash cans in the bathrooms in the dining area had tissue with human feces in it though the girls had just "cleaned." The staff was incredibly lazy! The pseudo-manager, Jordana, was the unfriendliest person I've ever met. She wouldn't smile to save her life. The breakfast dishes would be left on the

table for hours while they played pool upstairs in the game room. One night, the dinner dishes were left out and a storm came up and blew everything onto the floor. In the a.m., the mess was unbelievable with broken glass and food all over the floor. There were mangos rotting all over the grounds and smashed into the stairs that had to be used to access the boat. There were an abundance of ripe mangos, but we were never served them unless we picked them up and asked for a knife. Which we did, because there was no food available between meals. But then the mango supply disappeared, because some locals came and gathered them up. Only on the last two days were we finally given any fresh fruit. We were served one plate of food at meals and that was it. Most of the time, there were no cokes or beers available either because the staff or locals had drunk it all or there was no \$ to buy any. Once we gave them \$60 to buy diesel for the generator and a bag of ice. We're still waiting to be reimbursed. We also went and bought our own drinks and snacks. We were told the owners often don't wire any \$ when there are only a few guests. There was a decaying rat in the upstairs office also. It's such a shame that the place is managed so poorly, because it is a beautiful location and could be really nice. Quick, somebody make the owners an offer they can't refuse! Somebody, save the Bayman!

Posada del Sol, June 2002, Juanita Linzey, Blacksburg, VA. Vis: poor.

Water: 78-83 F. Dives logged: 71 F. The resort is lovely and staff friendly. Besides our party of four, there were only two other couples. The dive shop was by the worse run we have ever experienced, and we have dove with many. The divemaster never checked to see if we were certified. We needed to rent equipment and though the resort has only five divers they couldn't furnish me with a size small BCD. For the first day of diving; although the water was rough and visibility poor on the resort side (South) of the island, this is where the dive was made because to go to the other side where the water was calm would have meant a 45 minute boat ride. The boat captain was new and did not know how to follow divers' bubbles, so upon surfacing, all were left stranded at sea. The divemaster had no emergency equipment. A fellow diver did have an inflatable sausage and whistle. However, even with these, we could not get the boat captain's attention. Eventually the dive master removed his fins and standing on a head of coral (bad!) waved them. Finally the boat captain saw the divers and picked them up after a terrible dive. (Dinner that night was overcooked, dry, hard fish). (Ph: 800-642-3483; website pds@roatan.com; website www.posadadelisol.com)

Posada del Sol, June 2002, Doug Schipull, Melrose Park, IL. Vis: 75-110 ft. Water: 82-86 F. Dives logged: 177. We enjoyed the accommodations. The staff were friendly, hard working and willing to please us. Posada del

Sol provided a great vacation. We were part of the Reef Guanaja Fish Survey Project. The diving was excellent and the dive staff were very supportive. The compressor was down during our stay and we had to pick up our tanks at another dive shop on our way to the dives.

Roatán

Anthony's Key Resort, May 2002, Bruce Brander (bruce.brander@shaw.ca) **Calgary, AB.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 75 to 125 Feet. Water: 80 to 83 F, calm choppy. I'd been warned that an experienced diver would find the dive sites a bit boring by the end of the week. It was more like after two dives. Of the half dozen boat dives we did, virtually everyone was the same 30'-40' of water on the top of the reef, about a 120' foot wall -- swim one way along the "wall" and then back along the reef (the only variation was that some dives were a drift dive with the same profile). Pretty good coral, but aside from some large grouper, and a couple of turtles, little in the way of fish life (some juveniles, virtually no adults). Even my 12-year-old daughter, and my dive buddy said they didn't find the dives too exciting. The best reef dive from the shore off Anthony's Key. They've got a dive shack there open 3-9 pm with tanks and weight belts. It was staffed with a real helpful guy (unlike a lot of other parts of the operation). The diving there was great -- short walk and snorkel out to the reef running from about 15' to a sand bottom at 55' (where they did their

dolphin dive). Great coral, lots of fish, many little canyons and swim throughs -- and you weren't being kicked in the head by 14 other people off the boat. Nice new boats, well-equipped. Their equipment shed could use improvement — everyone gets a peg on the wall to hang up all their stuff, so unless you haul your wetsuit home, nothing really dries. My daughter did the Dolphin Specialty Course. About five hours of lectures on dolphins, plus a couple of sessions in the water with their dolphins. She got to learn all the hand signals, getting the dolphins to jump etc. She even got to go right in the water and do the Sea World type things where the dolphins come up underneath, but their noses on the ball of your foot, and surf you around. On our preflight day she did their Trainer for a Day (which doesn't show up in their materials) where she got to work with the trainers for the entire day, preparing the fish for the dolphins, helping feed the all the dolphins, including the babies -- she couldn't have been more thrilled. They also offered a shark dive (standard tourist stand in a group and watch the sharks) and a dolphin dive -- where a couple of the Institute's dolphins follow the boat out, and then you do a dive in about 50' while the dolphins come down and swim with you. Accommodations are pretty basic. Only 16 of their 56 units are air conditions. Most of the units that don't have air are set up with screens on three sides so breeze gets through -- but they can still get pretty hot if you're not getting the breeze, or if you need to close the louvers for

privacy. The shower was only separated from the bedroom -- there was no separate door. When my daughter needed a shower, I just took a half hour walk. Pretty good food. Cold breakfast buffet (cereal, fruit, muffins), plus a good menu of hot items. Lunch and supper usually offered soup, salad, two different entrees (usually one fish and one meat of some sort) and dessert. They'd give both soup and salad if asked and would combine the entrees. Service and attitude was more problematic. They have a lot of repeat customers and a lot of dive groups. So by the time we got there late Saturday night (love TACA) they've got the main part of the good dining area set up with tables for groups of anywhere from 6-20+. Anyone else generally got the choice of roasting out in the sun, or sitting at the breezeless and viewless back of the dining room where the staff also ate (and even if you had a group of six, that didn't mean you got to sit at the table for six that had been set up for some dive club). We experienced some of the same on the dive side of things. If you were with a big group you knew what was going on at all times, but if you were traveling on your own, it sure helped if you'd been there before to know the routine. (e.g. on the Wednesday, we'd done the shark dive that left the dock early. We got back from that about 10:20, and couldn't figure out why everyone else on the boat sprinted to the regular Anthony's boats to head out on the 10:30 a.m. dive. It wasn't until the four of us were the only people at lunch, and then there were

no boats for the 2:30 p.m. dive that we found out when they said "Wednesday was picnic day" that meant the dive boats went to the picnic on Tabyana Beach, so if you weren't on a dive boat, you didn't go to the picnic and didn't get the afternoon dive. We were the only ones to come in off a delayed TACA flight late on the Saturday, and the Captain and Dive Master on the boat we were assigned to kept forgetting that we weren't part of the big group from San Francisco that had come in on time and was assigned to the same boat. The good side was that missing the boat dive on picnic day got us the great shore dive site, and my automatic reaction to these attitudes saved one heck of a lot of money in tips at the end of the week. For all of their write up about their photo shop the place isn't well set up for photographers. The photo shop guys are nice and give good service, but there is a complete lack of facilities for maintaining your own camera (maybe because they want you renting theirs?). You have your room, but a spot with one 60 W bulb at the back of the room doesn't quite have the light to be inspecting O rings etc., and in the heat of the day you'd be sweating like a pig in the room. I actually ended up doing most of my camera maintenance out on our sun deck -- had to be careful to get all the bug spray and sun screen off my hands, and it was a two person job because I needed my daughter to keep all the stuff from blowing away. (Ph: 800-227-3483 or 305-227-3483, e-mail: akr@anthonyskey.com)

Anthony's Key Resort, September 2002, Marc Massari (marcmass@earthlink.net) **Redondo Beach, CA.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 50 to 70 Feet. Water: 88 to 95 F, calm. The resort is beautiful. We stayed in a bungalow on the west side of the key and saw the sun set every night. The food was very good and the service was exceptional. While they serve the meals, you get to choose what you want and you can even ask for more than one option. Be prepared for the "no see ums." Try Cactus Juice(www.cactusjuicetm.com), we found that to work and you didn't smell like chemicals. We found the resort above water to be a "five," unfortunately, below the water a generous "three." Every morning you had to bring all your gear on board and set it up (they were nice enough to bring the tanks on board). The sites for the most part were a five minute boat ride. We found all the sites to look like one another, except for sites on the south side. They were much better, but the resort didn't want to go there(\$\$?). They did have large groupers and snappers, but other than that, it was a yawner. Mary's Place was the best dive of the trip. It is a deep dive through giant crevices and the fish life is good. If you have never seen seahorses before, this dive site will definitely take care of that need. The UWP setup was great. They really catered to photographers.

Bay Island Beach Resort, January 2002, Thomas Boldt, Santa Cruz, CA. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 50 to 80 Feet. Water: 70 to 75 F, calm. Huge sponges and vibrant reefs full of

life. Turtles, eels, lobster, many species of grouper and angel fish every dive. Very healthy reef and beautiful walls thanks in part to environmental protection. Great, fun dive staff that knew the terrain. Amazing canyons full of swim thrus and some very lively areas. The days it was choppy they took the boats to the south side of the island around Mary's Place and still brought us a hot lunch between the second and third dives of the day. Resort is all inclusive. Food at every meal was excellent including a traditional Christmas dinner. The staff was friendly and helpful, including the owners. It is a smaller resort, so I didn't get that Disneyland feel like at the Allegro in Cozumel or even at the neighboring Anthony's Key. The rooms lacked in ambiance. They keep repellent handy for the sand flies. They are a nuisance. Plenty to see. An external strobe for backscatter is helpful this time of year. Tons of macro and vibrant sponges. (Ph: 800-4-ROATAN or 561-624-5774; fax 561-624-7751; e-mail bibrusa@aol.com; website www.bibr.com)

Bay Island Beach Resort, February 2002, Bill Allenbaugh, Reynoldsville, PA. Vis: 60-100 ft. Water: 78-80 F. Lots of large grouper — a friendly environment. Spooky channel lived up to its name. Saw short nose bat fish. Good value for the dollar. Dolphin dive at Anthony's a must — Bugs were not an issue — a lot of swim thrus and drift diving.

CoCo View Resort, September 2001, Tina Petersen, Omaha, NE. Experi-

ence: 51-100 dives. Vis: 10 to 30 Feet. Water: choppy. CoCo View is a diver's resort. The dock and dive gear set up is the best. Each diver has lots of room to store equipment, with a separate garage for each dive boat. There were four boats running. Eight divers on our boat. Their moon hatch was pretty neat, allowing you to climb in after your dive from the center of the boat; we needed to remind them we wanted to use it before we got in. We dove Nitrox the entire week; we paid \$100 extra per person for unlimited tanks. The dive staff made an effort to carry your tanks for you, and sometimes your gear. It was raining, and the visibility was bad; We really enjoyed the unlimited shore diving, night shore diving too. The Prince Albert wreck is a swim from the resort. There is a large chain leading you out to the wreck. On our first few dives, we got a little lost trying to find our way out, because the chain is disappearing and you can't see it in some areas. After a few times out, we knew what direction to swim until we could see the chain again. The walls on either side of the wreck are pretty amazing, completely vertical, going below 100 feet. Few big fish, a few barracudas and a large green moray on the Prince Albert (he is lured there by the staff with some fish taken out daily). The boat dives were nice, great reefs and walls, but no pelagics, just small stuff. Each morning and afternoon the dive site your boat was visiting would be displayed on their bulletin board, with a detailed drawing outlining the site, depths, and current. There were two boat trips per day,

with one off-site reef dive, and one drop-off dive each trip. On the drop off dive they would place you on top of the walls on either side of the Prince Albert, you would swim from the wall to the wreck, then make a shore exit. Whale shark excursion to Utila was canceled because of weather. CoCo View is on its own little island, inside a bay. When you get on CoCo View Island, the only time you get off is if you schedule an excursion, or pay a taxi to come and pick you up. You should like the people that you are at the resort with because you are going to be spending all of your time with them! Every breakfast, every lunch, every boat dive, every dinner, every time you want to get a drink at the bar, etc. My husband and I also enjoy going into town to explore the culture a bit while on our dive vacations. CoCo View would call a cab for you, and take you in their shuttle boat to the road, but it was expensive. We did take the planned excursion to Gio's, a seafood place it was fantastic. We had fresh king crab and lobster. We got sick; diarrhea. Half the guests were sick part or all of the week. We did not drink the water (although we were told it was safe). I assume it was the water the kitchen was cooking with that made us ill. Granted, this is probably a problem with the water on the island, but it still really sucked being sick on vacation. My husband missed two days of diving, and I missed one day. A few people on the resort only got in a few dives the entire week. We went through the entire bottle of Pepto Bismol that I had brought, and there

was no more available on the resort. The resort has a limited selection of medications, and all of the stomach meds were gone two days after we arrived. The mosquitoes and sand fleas were very bad. On the last day when we took the island tour, we were told we couldn't use DEET because of the bird sanctuary we were visiting. I tried the famous Cactus Juice we had brought, but it did no good. I was very sick from all of the bites I got; my husband counted over 70! Solarcaine, is the best anti-itch product to use in my situation. In my opinion, 100% DEET is the best bug repellent. Cactus Juice is a mild repellent, and doesn't work as well. Another downfall was being told how much to tip, both on their website, and in the room literature. I considered this very tacky. When we visited the West End on the Island Tour, it felt more social, and fun. The West End gave you a feeling of what Roatán was really about. CoCo View made me feel trapped and isolated from the rest of the Island. (Ph: 800-282-8932 or 352-588-4132, e-mail: ccv@roatan.com; website www.cocoviewresort.com)

CoCo View Resort, November 2001, Jim & Jennie Morsch, West Chester, OH. Vis: 50-75 ft. Water: 79-82 F. Dives logged: 250. Dive restrictions enforced: Depth only, unlimited time. TACA was great. CoCo View drops divers off for the second dive of the trip, at the wall, outside the resort for a shore exit. This allowed for a very short SI! You had two options, dive shallow or skip the dive. This became a problem later in the week, of course.

CoCo View is a great location. Having your equipment stored a few steps from the boat made life easy. Shore diving was not good. The vis out to the wall was less than 25'!

CoCo View Resort, January 2002, Ray Haberman
(Masterdiver50@hotmail.com)

Naperville, IL. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 83 F, choppy. CoCo View is ideal for beginning and advanced divers. A resort that caters to divers and diving. Rooms aren't fancy but clean. Food served buffet style. Not a large selection but adequate. Skin-tastic a must. They had adequate fresh water rinse tanks on the boat and at the pier. Camera shop with very knowledgeable employees on site.

CoCo View Resort, February 2002, Scott Peirson, no city state listed.

The staff at the resort was friendly and helpful. The diving set up for both shore and boat diving is easy paced and leisurely and you never felt you where being mother-henned by the divemasters, but they where always there if needed. Erin and Billy assisted me at 10:30 at night with an ill friend to find the needed medication for my friend. Continental Airlines decided the fanny pack that I had worn from my departure from Chicago O'Hare became a security risk in Houston, on the way home!

CoCo View Resort, February 2002, Ernie & Marge Karalis, Algonac, MI. Dives accrued: 60. Vis: 80-120 ft. Water: 80-82 F. Dive restrictions enforced: 130 ft. CoCo View is by far,

the best diving operation a diver could ever dream of. Lots of gear lockers and drying stations. Divemaster and crew loaded all gear before every dive. Walk on fabulous large dive boats with lots of room. Four boats. Each person assigned boat and crew for week. All wall diving with lots of chutes, swim throughs and overhangs. Even with 25 knot wind, no current to speak of. Descend to mooring line then follow DM at whatever depth you're comfortable with. Most walls start at 25 ft., so no need to drop below 85', so lots of bottom time. Travel wall one way at depth then return to boat at 45' following back same wall at shallower depth. Lots of critters. Seahorses, eels, grouper, manta rays, eagle rays, even two whale sharks were followed by one other dive boat. No restrictions. Dive till low on air. Then return to boat. Follow DM or go off on your own. Experienced divers only. They don't babysit. Over-water bungalows had bottled water, fridge and hammock on porch. No seems a problem if you didn't spray. We came prepared because of previous reports we read in the *Chapbook*. No bites. Kept a bottle of spray in dive bag. We sprayed each other after rinsing off and taking off our dive suits. People got bit that didn't spray. Off and cactus juice worked great. Plenty of food. CoCo View handled everything at TACA counter. Checked our bags and cleared us through customs. Beautiful air-conditioned bus picked us up at airport and delivered us to dock where we were taken to CoCo View by boat. They delivered our bags to our

doorstep an hour later. They took bags to airport for us. Erin briefed us on everything and Nora took care of airport passports and customs. Jessi was the best divemaster. Took his time to point out critters. After first dive they drop you off in front of resort to dive either Newman's Wall or CoCo View Wall.

CoCo View Resort, May 2002, Bonnie Sharpless (bonnie.sharpless@valrad.com) Kearney, MO. Experience: 26-50 dives. Calm. Bring DEET! We were eaten alive by the no-see-ums. We looked like we had the measles, covered in red blotches, but they didn't itch, so we decided it wasn't worth worrying about. "What's the big deal; if they don't itch, who cares?" The answer: they will itch later, after it's too late. Mine didn't start itching until after we got home and then I was sleepless for a week! They sell a product called Cactus Juice that's supposed to be good, but the boutique at the resort was out of it, so we didn't get any until we took the island tour on our last day. They tell you that the water is safe, but that it just tastes funny (boy, does it), so they give you bottled water. But if you brush your teeth, etc., with the tap water, you're still likely to have some unpleasant side effects. Both my husband and I had some "intestinal discomfort," as did several other people. Each person who experienced this missed at least one dive, some missed entire dive days. Other than that, the place was great! We enjoyed the freedom of going on a dive boat or shore diving

the CoCo View Wall or the Prince Albert Wreck. Solo diving was allowed. If you wanted to dive with the DM, which was fine, too, and they would point out critters for you. Otherwise, you just made your way back to the boat when you were done. Do-as-you-please atmosphere for the diving. There was supposed to be a helicopter tour to Utila, but it wasn't available. There's a boat day trip to Utila. Lots of the usual Caribbean reef fish, some barracuda and a spotted eagle ray. Nothing spectacular, but lots of color. The visibility wasn't great on the shore dives, especially at the Prince Albert, but it was good on the boat dives. You're assigned a cube where you can store all your gear right at the dock. There are plenty of rinse tanks, freshwater showers and hangers. If you're going on a boat dive, they will set your gear up for you on the boat, so the livin' is easy. Shore dives are a bit of a walk from the storage area in full gear.

CoCo View Resort, June 2002, Bob Beason (beasonbb@att.net) Martinez, GA. Dives accrued: 500+. Dive restrictions enforced: depth and time. excellent shore diving with two walls and a wreck within snorkel distance. Our divemaster, Jesse, was great. He was knowledgeable, patient and safety conscious. Food was simple but well prepared and adequate quantities. The employees treated you like home folks. The boats are great with plenty of room for gear and camera equipment.

CoCo View Resort, July 2002, Rose Schmidt

(rosemarie.schmidt@marriott.com)

Garrett Park, MD. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 30 to 80 Feet. Water: 81 to 84 F, choppy. 4 boat dives a day (including 1 AM and 1 PM drop-off dive) and unlimited shore diving with access to 2 good walls, a ship wreck and DC3 wreck. Most diving is wall diving. Corals and sponges are healthy. Surprisingly few fish (either large or small). Excellent facilities for divers both on shore (with dip tanks, lockers, etc.) and on boats. Nitrox is \$100 or \$6 per tank. Dive master was ok, but not stellar. Dive shop employees made field repairs and quick turnaround, with low service charges. Food was better than expected for an all-inclusive; 1.50/ bottle for local beer. Owners were ever present making for diligent employees. Bring plenty of bug spray because they aren't kidding about the no-see-ums. Plenty of rinse tanks on shore, large camera table and dedicated rinse tank on boats. Developing available. No digital download facilities, but large TV to screen photos.

CoCo View Resort, August 2002,

Alan Thayer, Commerce Twp., MI.

Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 15 to 70 Feet. Water: 82 to 85 F, choppy, surge. 10th trip. Accommodations Spartan, but clean and comfortable. Staff helpful and knowledgeable. Food not gourmet, but tasty and substantial. Few pelagics. This is the place for macro life. Due to extreme diving freedom, not for unsupervised beginners, but OK if they come with own DM. Weather fair, 90 F, and

windy, so viz changeable and variable surge (made shore diving harder and newbies were disconcerted). Great place, though, already have reservations for Feb. 03. Overnight E6 available, as is film, rental gear and repair. Rinse tanks on boat and ashore. Good destination for macro photographers.

Fantasy Island, September 2001,

Don Henderson, Lockney, TX. Dives

Logged: #19-36. Vis: Clear. Water: 80+F. I had to request additional bug spraying every other day, not all of the windows would lock -- although the little isle had tight security, and the warnings to not drink tap water were not obvious. Really enjoyed the food, the grounds, great services, and nice employees. Sure, there were bugs, and a large iguana dumped in my dive bag one afternoon, but I was In Central America; just a part of the adventure. I was still pretty new, which I offered at the briefing, and I would have preferred a better explanation of what would be expected of me, than being admonished later for mistakes in ignorance. They did not encourage buddies, but just hoped everyone would follow the leader. I was the only single on a boat of married couples, and I would have fared better if I had switched to the other boat that had many singles. Otherwise, the boat captain and dive master were super. No one ever suggested any tip guides, and I fear I did not express my gratitude and I should have -- leaving a dollar or two after each buffet meal and a few bucks each for each of the boat fellows; probably should have given them a hundred to split! (**Ph:**

800-676-2826 or (504) 455-5222; e-mail fantasy@bonnebeach.com; website www.fantasyislandresort.com

Fantasy Island, March 2002, Bruce W. Currier (kidsofphil@msn.com) Belding, MI. Experience: 51-100 dives. Vis: 50 to 70 Feet. Water: 80 to 81 F, calm choppy surge. The resort is fine. Rooms are somewhat run down but clean. Lacked hot water periodically but that apparently got repaired. The staff is excellent, helpful, friendly and courteous. It's an all inclusive, food is buffet style and usually consists of a very large variety of entrees at all meals, from no-risk American dishes to a bit more exotic food, but occasionally the temperature of the steam tables left the food near room temperature. Three boat dives per day, most within minutes of the resort. First dive at 9:30, return to resort and head back out at 11:00 for second dive. Last dive at 2:30. One night dive per week. One trip to West End per week, weather permitting. We attempted it our first day but the seas were too bad so we aborted. Dive-master lets you do what you want, even allowing two divers to go to 150 feet. Roatán has great walls and nice coral, but few large fish. We did see two mantas. Great shore dive on CoCo View wall, which drops to 110 feet just offshore. On the same dive you can explore the wreck of the 150-foot Prince Albert steamer, home to one of the biggest green morays you'll probably ever see, and a downed airplane and a shallow reef called Newman's Wall.

Fantasy Island, March 2002, Jill Neeman (jillpei@inebraska.com) Lincoln, NE. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 75 to 150 Feet. Water: 80 to 81 F, calm. Rooms were adequate and air-conditioned. The food was superb and plentiful, a good variety. The dive staff was friendly and accommodating. Hank, the manager, allowed us to teach our certification dives off the boat, rather than off the shore. Our divemaster Willie was great! Very helpful and found seven seahorses for us! The dive boats need to be updated/repared. When seas were rough, tanks with BCD's and regs/computers attached were falling out of the holders. We had three broken hoses because of this. Bungee cords to hold the tanks would solve this problem. We did a paid shark dive and the AKR Dolphin Dive. I'd recommend both! The staff from Fantasy Island takes your claim tickets and grabs your bags for you and whisks them through customs. They threw all of the claim tickets on the floor so we were on hands and knees searching for a claim ticket for one piece of luggage that didn't arrive. Though we never found the claim ticket, the dive gear showed up two days later. Fantasy lent rental equipment for no charge until gear showed up. No see-ums were bothersome during the day if it wasn't windy, otherwise not too bad. All the staff was superb -- especially Hank in the bar and the manager of the restaurant. Separate rinse tank on boats for cameras. Divemaster was always good at pointing out seahorses, etc., for photographers.

Fantasy Island, April 2002, Jeff Bloomer (jlbdiver@aol.com)

Columbus, MS. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 75 to 100 Feet. Water: 85 F, calm no currents. Food was plenty varied. The help was gracious. There was the attack turkey prowling the grounds but he was caged for the last few days as he had attacked one female guest. The rooms are nice by Caribbean standards and the AC worked good. A crowd from a cruise ship one day took over the beach and outdoor restaurant but other than that it was just divers. Nelson, the DM, was knows how to find the critters so plenty of macro shots of seahorses are available. Eagle rays and tons of moray eels too. Took one pic of two morays twisting around each other mouthing each other. Great night diving with plenty of stuff. Wrecks off the beach. 3 boat dives per day and unlimited shore diving. One day the dive operator takes you to the other side of the island to dive and have lunch. The diving over there was a nice change. No shopping to speak of -- the area was real run down and not a place you cared to spend any time. The no-see-ums never bothered me but some people who laid on the beach had some pretty bad bites. We changed planes in La Ceiba on the way home and TACA took us off our plane and put us on a smaller one with most of our stuff left sitting on a cart. A TACA rep. said that the luggage would be 15 minutes behind us on another plane. Once we landed in San Pedro Sula the Manager said they would hold our flight to make sure the bags made it. He lied. In New Orleans

I talked with a rep at luggage claim and she gave me the usual "Fill out a form" treatment. I had the name of the Manager I had spoken within San Pedro Sula and proceeded to the TACA counter. Once there the manager had the unfortunate luck to come out of his office and I grabbed him. I made him call Honduras and locate our bags while I waited and we accounted for all 9 bags. He wasn't too interested in helping me until I started pressing him about being lied to. I ended up staying overnight, at TACAs expense, and claimed all the bags the next morning. I'm glad to see in the latest emailed *Undercurrent* newsletter that someone else will be added as an air carrier.

Fantasy Island, April 2002, Barb Bohan, Annapolis, MD. Experience:

251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 75 Feet. Water: 78 to 80 F, calm choppy currents. Old, old boats with little storage facilities for gear. Always doing orientation dives (shallow). Made the experienced divers wait while the newly certified spent ten minutes getting into the water. Couldn't dive your own profile -- had to file along with the divemaster. Restricted to 100'. Same old stuff.

Fantasy Island, May 2002, Roger Gray, Annandale, VA. Vis: 25-75 ft.

Water: 80-82 F. Dives logged: 200+. Dive restrictions enforced: depth limits and back on boat 500 psi. All-inclusive resort. Rooms were nice. The food was better than I had expected. Use lots of bug spray, no-see-ums are vicious. Dive boats were large and roomy. Had 14 divers

on boat with plenty of room. Competent and friendly divemaster and boat captain. Service gear before you get there. Dive shop can do few repairs. The diving was very good, the reefs seem healthy and had lots of small critters, no big fish. Trip to west side of island to dive with turtles worth the trip. Got 3 boat dives a day — 2 a.m., 1 p.m. also could shore dive just about anytime. Wind made seas 3-7 ft. Very had to get back on boat. Our four new divers got beat up on the ladder. The more experienced divers made it just fine. I was told it was rare to be so rough for six straight days.

Inn of Last Resort, December 2001, Gregg Thomas & Carol Downie (cdownie186@aol.com) Rochester, MN. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 80 to 81 F, choppy surge. Customs and baggage claim in Roatán is hectic. You surrender your passport, baggage claim tickets, and entry fee to someone in the small, crowded arrival hall that is hollering the name of your resort. He then disappears, but everything worked out fine. Rooms are spacious and the grounds well maintained. They have done a nice job of incorporating the resort into the forest, without removing more vegetation than necessary. This is a good alternative to the larger resorts on the island. All meals are served by wait staff, no buffets except on BBQ night. Two boatmen and one DM available. They were competent and helpful. The locally made, wooden dive boats were slow but the dive sites were only minutes from the resort. We

returned to the resort after every dive for the surface interval. Water on board. We had 5-8 divers on the boat each day. Not many people at the resort. The fish and creatures were typical, the most exotic thing we saw were spotted eagle rays. The swim-throughs were spectacular. ILR has its own shallow lagoon that is good for snorkelers. On our last day we had an enjoyable visit to Carombola Botanical Gardens.

Inn of Last Resort, June 2002, Leslie & Michael Bardelli (lbardelli@snet.net) New Milford, CT. Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 82 to 84 F, calm, no currents. Small, rustic resort made up of four buildings. The lodge that faces Gibson Bight encompasses the dining room, bar, lounge, and game area. The other three buildings are the guest quarters. The rooms are large with a queen and two twin beds, a small but functional bathroom and air conditioning with two ceiling fans. Each room has a large open closet and a large window that faces the gardens. The food is great with a new restaurant manager. Breakfast is off a standard menu. Lunch and dinner are a fixed menu posted daily. Meals were plentiful. Appetizers before dinner. The bar is on a check system. No money until you check out. Diving is great. Two large dive boats each with a dry area, two rinse tanks, one dedicated to cameras and plenty of under bench storage. Platform on the back for giant stride entries and two ladders for exit. The boats have roofs that have ladders for those who want

to sun bathe. Most sites are within a 10-minutes and three single tank dives per day. Surface interval is at ILR. Dive times are 8:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.. Dives are lead and last usually 50 minutes with a 3-minute safety stop required. The diving is mostly wall diving, going to a planned depth and working your way back shallow. Each week a two tank dive, picnic lunch down on West Bay Beach and a night dive are planned. Lots of turtles, a few spotted eagle rays and tropical fish galore. Dive shop is on the dock. They have fresh water rinse buckets for your gear. Pegs to store gear; the shop is locked when no one is inside and at night. The resort has a lagoon with a dock and chairs to watch the sunset. The water at the dock is 4 feet deep and goes to 10 feet out by the reef. There is a cut in the coral with a marker. You can swim through to dive Fish Den. You can dive from the lagoon any time, let them know ahead and the staff will have tanks there for you. Perfect diving vacation. A dry storage area in the center of the boats for setup, film change, etc., no shortage of subjects to shoot. (Ph: 888-238-8266 or 011-504-445-1838, e-mail information@innoflastresort.com; website: www.innoflastresort.com)

Paya Bay Dive Resort, September 2002, Russ Langley (brlang@bellsouth.net) **Charlotte, NC.** Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 60 to 200 Feet. Water: 83 to 85 F, calm, choppy. Relatively remote resort on the northeast side of Roatán. There are no additional options on this end

of the Island. It's a beautiful location sitting on a peninsula that juts out into the sea with a steady breeze that keeps the bugs to a bare minimum, but bring your DEET regardless. Lurlene and Mervin McNab are the owners and some of the friendliest people I have met. Chef Charles prepares excellent food, conch, lobster, shrimp, fish and plenty of meat and potatoes if you want. Tom McNab, Lurlene and Mervin's oldest son makes a mean Island cocktail and is a fine bartender. If you're lucky, he will have the time to take you out to his favorite snorkeling locations. Of the eight rooms four have a/c. The breeze in the front four rooms is good enough not to use a/c. The back four rooms have a/c for a reason, but you still may not need it. The rooms are clean and each has a private balcony. They are nice by any standard. The electrical lines do not go out this far on the east end, but Mervin has done an incredible job with his generators, plumbing and electricity. During the day, they sometimes shutdown the generators to save diesel, making showers and a/c more dependable in the mornings and evenings, small inconveniences. Two beautiful beaches. The diving was awesome. You can dive your own profile at Paya Bay. The good colorful reef is not that deep, so therefore there is no reason for the divemasters to have much of an issue with that. 45 to 60 minute dives on 80s are the norm. Some of the healthiest and most colorful reef I have ever seen in the Caribbean. I saw one other dive boat over seven days of diving. Coral swim-throughs and caves, Elkhorn

coral, giant barrel sponge, lobster, moray eels, turtles, schools of fish, grouper, barracuda, nurse sharks and octopus. The Caribbean is slowly losing its fish and corals to over harvesting and pollution, but this end of Roatán still looks pretty good. It's fished pretty heavy, but there are still plenty of them. If you will not be back in time for lunch, Chef Charles will send sandwiches along, like tuna fish with his special sauce. Plan to chip in with the handling your gear, like cleaning and storing. Any good diver would do that anyhow and should not be comfortable with someone else taking care of his equipment. This is the closest thing to having your own boat. In Paya Bay and Roatán I found paradise. (Ph: 888-662-2466 or 936- 628-2204; e-mail payabay@globalnet.hn; website www.payabay.com)

Reef House, April 2002, Suzanne Gerber (zuzanne2@aol.com)
Brooklyn, NY. Vis: 40-60 ft. Water: 79-81 F. Dives logged: 195. Dive restrictions enforced: Based on divers experience. Nearly every dive featured steep walls, challenging swim throughs and rich coral gardens at shallow depths. The DM 's let us dive deep first dives once we proved our competence. Though we had hoped for more large pelagics (not a single turtle in 17 dives and just two nurse sharks), we learned that poverty drives natives to over fish their rich reefs. But patient divers are rewarded. One day, two large green morays were out swimming in the corals. Another, a close encounter of a group of 11 curious Caribbean reef squid was a

peak experience, as was the sighting of a pod of 7-10 dolphins swimming alongside the boat. Still bring bug spray, your own wine and don't buy the "Maya artifacts" or "sea pearls" the owner may try to sell you. A family of octopi reside in the resort "pool" and provided hours of great entertainment. One day we spotted three scorpion fish. (Ph: 800-328-8897 or 011-504-452297, e-mail reefdiving@aol.com; website www.reefhouseressort.com)

Sueno del Mar (Dream of the Sea), September 2002, E. Richard Feig, Baton Rouge, LA. Vis: 80-100 ft. Water: 84-87 F. Dives accrued: >500. Rented house in West end, about 1/4 mile from dive shop. One tank at 8:30, 10:30, 12:30. Dive sites only 5 to 15 minutes from dive shop. Dive boat returns after every dive for showers, soft drinks. Excellent operation. House \$450/week (now \$600/week). Rented Isuzu Trooper 1995 with a/c \$300/week. Dives with package \$20 for one tank dive. Also dived at Fantasy Island one day. \$60 for two tank dive. House: [#10714](http://www.VRBO.COM). Most of Roatán very nice. Coxen Hole is the armpit of creation! (Ph: 800-298-9009 or +504-445-1717; website www.suenodelmar.com)

Utilla

Laguna Beach Resort, December 2001, Roger Gross, Fayetteville, AR. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 80 to 100 Feet. Water, calm. Beautiful place; large, nicely isolated cottages, amazing service with "whatever you want" attitude. Divemaster and boat

captain highly skilled and completely flexible; whatever we wanted, they provided. Seven whale shark encounters in six days, including one at fifty feet. The captain, Wagner, is a genius at finding the whale sharks and placing the boat so that you slide off the stern and there you are, 8 feet from the shark. Awesome. Eagle rays, cobia, dolphins on the bow wave (spinners one day, bottlenose another). Wish they had a film developing service and the food, though good and plentiful, could be more interesting. Good place to get advanced certifications at low price. (Ph: 800-66-UTILA or 337-893-0013; e-mail res@utila.com)

Laguna Beach Resort, February 2002, Mark Favret (mefavret@worldnet.att.net)
Columbus, OH. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 90 Feet. Water: 79 to 82. F, choppy surge. Boat diving mainly but shore diving is an alternative. The diving boats, are easy to exit and enter. Two dives in the morning after breakfast then we returned for lunch at the resort. Two more dives in the afternoon, one might be a night dive. The dive master always reviewed the dive site before diving. Safety always brought up and present in the attitudes throughout the week. Most always the dive master was on a dive and often lead the dive. If you showed capability and experience, you could dive a parallel profile to the group. Windy conditions with high wave action on some days. This affected the visibility and made a strong to mild surge with a mild

current. Large variety of soft and hard corals and were in good health with lots of reef fish. Lack of large fish or schools of large fish. We did hunt whale sharks and saw the behemoths twice from a distance before they departed for the sanctuaries of the deep. Large schools of bottlenose dolphins meet up with the boat several times. Bungalows were cleaned and beds made while out on the morning dives. The grounds were under constant care and improvements. The food was buffet style with an American twist and Honduran flavor. Usually there were two main entrees and it was plentiful and filling. The selection for each meal was definitely not gourmet but delicious and healthy. Louisa, a British expatriate was our dive master knew her dive sites and was very friendly and helpful. Farron, the boat Captain, a Honduran, was very good with the gear and maneuvering the boat. These two showed a lot of patience and liked to be with people. Had film available but no processing available on shore. Boat setup was fine with dry tables and large fresh water dip tanks.

Laguna Beach Resort, April 2002, Scott & Jann Taylor (scottjann@cdsnet.net) Cave Jct., OR. Water; 80-82 F. Dives accrued: 200+. Dive restrictions enforced: within 130', 60 min. max. A fabulous trip. Laguna Beach is a jewel. The cabanas are clean and cozy and are nestled on a peninsula with the lagoon at your back porch and the sea a stone's throw from your front porch. The grounds are beautiful and

immaculate. Decent food in a comfortable setting. Excellent dive operation with superb boats. Easy and fun diving with lots to see and photograph. Snorkeled with whale sharks one afternoon! A visit to “town” is a short boat ride away. The town is small and quaint with limited shopping but lots of photo ops. We have traveled all over the Caribbean and Laguna Beach and Utila are right at the top.

**Laguna Beach Resort, May 2002,
John & Sue Hale, Hot Springs, AR.**

Vis: 40-100 ft. Water: 80-81 F. Dives accrued: 500+. Normally stayed with divemaster but could follow own plan. Max. depth was 135'. One of the better dive resorts and dive operations we've experienced in 25 years of world diving. Modern dive boats in excellent condition, clean, plenty of room and knowledgeable divemasters. Captain Ferran went out of his way to find whale sharks. Choppy water made seeing them difficult. But we went in the water seven times one day to see them. April or Sept. would have less wind, making for calmer water conditions. Very good wall diving on So. side of island, 100'+ visibility. Lots of tropical fish, some lobsters, good coral. Three dives/day and two night dives/wk. Food was good and plentiful. Honor bar at reasonable prices. Rooms were large, clean, a/c equipped and had deck facing small bay. Carry on as much gear as possible. Luggage does not always arrive on time. Dive shop has good gear for rent. With windy conditions no-sees were not a problem. Bring

your DEET — if it's calm you'll need it. Resort is isolated from town.

**Laguna Beach Resort, July 2002,
C.Broughton, Rockville, MD.**

Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 60 to 90 Feet. Water: 82 to 86 F, calm, surge. Beautiful setting for the resort. Nice sand beach but use insect repellent. No see ums were bad even on windy days. Bungalows well equipped and spacious. Very quiet and private; felt safe. Diving was very good. Lots of fish life. Larger boat in good shape. Food was OK, edible but monotonous. Smaller boat was in need of repair — smoky and smelly. Three flights from east coast. Took all day to get there.

**Laguna Beach Resort, August 2002,
Clem Clapp (cclapp@aol.com)**

Maplesville, AL. Vis: 60-100 ft. Water: 82 F. Dives logged: 188. Dive restrictions enforced: one hour and back on boat. Loved it. Wife (non-diver) said it was one of best vacation with family, two diving daughters. Isolated and quiet. No phones. 24 hr. electricity and a/c. Nice beach with coconut palm shade. Eagle rays and tarpon on pier each night. Good quality buffet meals designed around dive trips! Decent shore diving. Attitude of Accommodation by management and dive staff. Diving freedom. “Follow me slowly or do your own thing.” No shirt or shoes for a week!

**Laguna Beach Resort, September 2002, Marc Massari
(marcmass@earthlink.net) Redondo
Beach, CA.** Experience: 501-1000

dives. Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 88 to 95 F, calm. Utila lies in the shadow of bigger Roatán, but the diving is definitely much better. Laguna Beach Resort was very nice. The manager (Luciano) welcomed us at the small airport and escorted us to the resort on a small island. There we were met by his girlfriend (eight years, lets go Luciano) Romina, who gave us the grand tour. They catered to every need. The food was great and plentiful and all of us ate together. No see ums are there in force! For those of you like me who have never had to worry about biting bugs, take note, these bugs didn't get the message. Captain (Wagner) and Divemaster (Dan) were the best. They took care of every need. They have the fastest boat on the island that came in handy when we were hunting for whale sharks. The boat was clean and in great condition. It included two rinse tanks for camera's and gear, and plenty of room to relax. The dive sites included swim through's, caves, pinnacles, giant walls, health coral and great marine life. The walls went down almost 3000 feet, and you could see pelagics swimming right along the wall. We saw Southern sting rays, eagle rays, big grouper, huge schools of jacks, tangs, barracuda, tuna and more. The highlight was the blue water diving. You don't have to go far offshore to see big pods of dolphins (which we snorkeled with), and whale sharks. Probably one of my greatest life experiences was swimming with a 35-foot male whale shark. We did four dives with the fish and the only word to describe it is surreal.

Utila Lodge, November 2001, Jim & Jennie Morsch, West Chester, OH.

Vis: 75-100 ft. Water: 72-82 F. Dives logged: 250. Dive restrictions enforced: Depth only. The crew took care of your gear. You pack the gear in a mesh bag and leave it on board. It will be rinsed and back on board the next day. We were always looking for whale sharks. But there were none. The crew said that it has been over a month since they saw one. The lodge is a really nice destination. No complaints. (Ph: 4253335 or 4253327; e-mail info@utiladivecentre.com; website www.utiladivecentre.com)

Utila Lodge, January 2002, Ray Haberman

(Masterdiver50@hotmail.com)
Naperville, IL. Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 50 to 100 Feet. Water: 79 to 82 F, choppy. Small lodge that immediately makes you feel at home. Rooms are large, comfortable and clean. Food is served buffet style. Quantity and quality of food were excellent. Dives are limited to two in the morning and one in the afternoon. Two of the PM dives are night dives. The CoCo View/Utila Lodge "Too Good To Be True" package is an excellent way to spend two weeks diving in Honduras.

Utila Dive Center, Mango Inn, July 2002, Julie Conner

(snow_julie@hotmail.com)
Pearland, TX. Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 15 to 30 Feet. Water: 80 to 86 F, calm. No whale sharks, however we saw lots of turtles, eels, rays and huge schools of various kinds of fish. Very accommodating to our schedules.

We were advanced open water certified while there and the price and training facilities were great! All the dive staff was friendly, outgoing and helpful. Accommodating for underwater video and helped us find good subject matter for filming.

JAMAICA

A lovely island with plenty of hotel amenities (and lots of swinging-singles and couples-only all-inclusives), but the impoverished population (22 percent of whom are unemployed) eats anything a fisherman can scoop up, and you can hardly blame them. . . . Experienced divers will become bored on the first dive, but the diving's okay for beginners (although the local divemaster may be poorly trained. . . . Jamaica lies in the hurricane belt. . . .

Seaworld at Jack Tar Hotel/ Wyndham Rose Hall, Montego Bay, December 2001, Paul Farago (farago54@juno.com) Lakewood, OH. Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 60 to 80 Feet. Water: 77 to 79 F, choppy. Due to water conditions near the hotel we were not able to use the dive service at the Wyndham. The Wyndham made arrangements at another facility at the Jack Tar Hotel. The shuttle sent from the Jack Tar was an old four door Datsun that could go over 20 mph! It showed up an hour late! The dive shop was very unorganized and the rental equipment looked like it was run over by a tractor. The dive boats were very small and cluttered. There were double the

passengers it should have carried. There was no room to store anything besides your BC and regulator. There were snorkelers, student divers, passengers just along for the ride. The dive master told three of us (who were the only divers not on our 1st dive) to wait for him below the boat. He didn't show up for 15 minutes. We spent the next fifteen minutes swimming around the reef and then had to surface because a new diver was having problems with equipment before which he never used. The boat was gone. It took the snorkelers to a more shallow area. We had to wait at the choppy surface for sometime before the dive boat found us. A lot of trouble for a few minutes of diving. The water was clear and the reef was in good shape. It was obvious this was just a cattle boat operation trying to make all the money they can. They returned to show Wyndre before the second dive. I decided it would be more fun to sit by the pool and drink rum punch. (Wyndham Rose Hall: Ph: 800-441-0418 or 876-953-2650; e-mail wr-resmanaager@wyndham.com; website <http://www.wyndham-jamaica.com>)

Breezes, Run Away Bay, August 2002, Frank Longo, Carrollton, TX. Although they advertise diving, it is at the bottom of the list when it comes to priorities. Breezes claims to have two PADI instructors and a couple of dive masters. The qualifications are at best questionable. On a night dive to fifty plus feet for forty minutes we were told by the dive guide (PADI instructor) to make a direct ascent with no