

enforced: be responsible. Only six divers on board so I could have my own room. Rooms are comfortable. Dive staff was excellent and attentive, captain was sick and stayed in his room for most of trip. Food was top notch. All diving is from a tender that picked up divers in a timely manner. Quite a bit of particulates in the water. Currents were moderate, shark action on many dives, circling schools of jacks and barracudas. Crocodile fish, giant clams, lots of very aggressive titan triggers — our group including divemasters were struck numerous times. Great array of tropicals. *Sun Dancer* is a comfortable, clean and photographer friendly boat! (Ph: 800-932-6237 or 305-669-9391; e-mail [dancer@peterhughes.com](mailto:dancer@peterhughes.com); website [www.peterhughes.com](http://www.peterhughes.com))

***Sun Dancer II*, January 2002, Dale Treadway (trdwy@tconl.com)**  
**Omaha, NE.** Experience: 101-250 dives. Vis: 60 to 100 Feet. Water: 81 to 84 F, calm currents. Wall dives full of wonderful hard and soft coral of many colors, schools of fish. Blue Corner action of sharks, schools of barracuda and fish and huge bumphead wrasse exciting. Reports of bleaching overdone. German Channel had spots that were noticeable but otherwise never noticed any. All dives were drift dives. The Philippine Sea and Pacific Ocean come together at Peleliu Point and the current was ripping! The staff obviously felt us divers were up to it and it was a thrill but was it safe? Two days later four divemasters from a land-based operation dove the same site (Peleliu

Express) and became lost at 11am when their chase boat couldn't find them. They had ascended after 18 minutes and could see the boat but drifted away into the Pacific Ocean. They were found seven hours later together and ok after a search by 20+ boats and two aircraft. They were miles east of Blue Corner. *Sun Dancer II* crew was friendly, diverse, fun yet serious about making sure we had a great time. *Sun Dancer II* is very comfortable. All cabins and salon had a/c, everything worked, food and service was very good + and no shoes for a week. It's a long plane ride, not cheap, and you may have some jet lag when you return.

***Sun Dancer II*, January 2002, William Renninger (billr@krcpension.com) Harrisburg, PA.** Vis: 40-60 ft. Water: 83 F. Dives accrued: 75. The *Sun Dancer II* is a beautiful ship. The cabins were fairly large and comfortable. The quantity and quality of the food was great. The ship was only half booked so we had plenty of room. The weather was nice, but a bit windy for Jan. Four dives per day was a treat. Three night dives are offered on Tues., Wed., and Thurs. Do not bother to pack a lot of clothing. 2-3 swimsuits, and a few shorts and t-shirts will be enough. Overall a great dive operation.

## NEW ZEALAND

***MSY Wind Song*, Windstar Cruises, April 2002, Jose Kirchner, Carmichael, CA.** Vis: 20 to 80 Feet. Water: 62 to 66 F, calm, choppy. For upscale dive cruising, Windstar Cruises operates 4 motor sailing

yachts (computer-operated sails): three with up to 148 passengers and 440-ft length, one 308 pax-535 feet. These are upscale, luxurious full-service cruise motorsailers with diving offered (at \$50 for a one tank dive). Cabins are all the same — bright, spacious en-suite with 24-hour cabin service, one larger owner's cabin. Food is world-class and varied, served in open seating restaurant or terrace café. The comparatively small size assures service you will not experience on a larger cruise ship — more like having your own yacht. This is an excellent holiday for the diver with non-diving family members — you dive, they beach it or do a shore excursion. April is NZ's fall, sunny and warm. Diving on the northeast quadrant of North Island can be spectacular — White Island, an active volcano can be dived (Dive White Island in Whakatane does day trips, at <http://www.divewhite.co.nz/>). Bay of Plenty and Bay of Islands are diverse, fishy and have engaging topography with lots of swimthroughs. Tutukaka/Poor Knights offers wreck diving and a spectacular marine preserve with pristine diving. Prices are low, with an exchange of almost NZD \$2.50 to the US Dollar. This St. Maarten-originating dive crew were reluctant to lay on much diving due to a small number of divers, or lack of familiarity with the waters and cool temps. In locations the onboard dive crew are unfamiliar with, don't count on doing much diving, and don't rely on Seattle sales agents to tell you much of value — they seemed clueless. Windstar

boats put in at small, cozy destinations, offering shore excursions, water sports from sailboarding to snorkeling and dive instruction. Prices are over \$4,000/person/one week MSRP, but one can get 40% discounts for advance booking, and some offers include free air to Tahiti. Everything is included. There is a “no tipping required” policy, and “casual elegance” (no ties, jackets, my kind of luxury). A very nice and luxurious vacation with diving in the Caribbean, a spectacular upscale holiday with very good diving in French Polynesia — where we had two dives day with experienced divers from Zodiacs (resort divers were accommodated separately). The dive crew was customer oriented and enthused. French Polynesian diving included colorful coral dive sites with sharks, mantas, Napoleon wrasse and more. (This was our 4th Windstar trip with diving.) Windstar Cruises <http://www.windstarcruises.com/> (800) 258-7245 Dive New Zealand magazine (stories, many links and resources) <http://www.divenewzealand.com>. Divers taken to site by rubber inflatable. Shipboard, crew flexible for rinse, secure storage, etc. (Ph: 877-827-7245; e-mail [info@windstarcruises.com](mailto:info@windstarcruises.com); website [www.windstarcruises.com](http://www.windstarcruises.com))

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

*Chertan, April 2002, Allan & Barbara Jones (abjones@pacbell.net) Anaheim, CA. Experience: Over 1000 dives. Vis: 40 to 100 Feet. Water: 80 to 82 F, calm. Our sixth trip*