

in the lee, but April and May are the best months, followed by October, November, and December. . . . The Solomons are a possible add-on from Fiji (1300 miles to the southeast) or Papua New Guinea (700 miles to the west); Honiara is on the main island of Guadalcanal; use it only for overnighing. . . . Solomon Islanders produce fine wood carvings. . . . This is serious malaria country. . . .

TONGA

This island grouping, with all the beauty of the classic south Pacific, lies 600 miles to the southeast of Fiji and can be reached via Hawaii, Fiji, or New Zealand. There are few dive operations here, but diving is good and may get better if other resorts open.

VANUATU

The world's largest air-accessible wreck, the *President Coolidge*, a 640-foot ocean liner converted into a troop ship, is a beach 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

Southern Australia

Falie, June 2002, John Crossley (jcrossle@csufresno.edu) Fresno, CA. Experience: 501-1000 dives. Vis: 30 to 50 Feet. Water: 61 to 64 F, choppy. This was a Stan Waterman trip that teamed up with the world famous great white shark expert, Rodney Fox, on the three-masted, 80-year-old classic sailing ship, the *Falie*. The cabins were decent size, but fifteen divers shared three large toilet/shower rooms. Meals included several choices and were well prepared. The great whites were there every day. We saw thirteen different ones in a week. At most we saw five in a day, about 9-16 feet long, but most was really thick and strong looking. Four divers could get into a 6ft by 6ft. steel cage lowered from the side of the ship to 60-80 feet, where we would watch the white sharks (and eagle rays, sting