

ing for the Anchorage Hotel. What remains of the Herche's restaurant is an average restaurant the frequently ran out of many of the items and was over priced. However, there are not many other choices in Scotts Head. The only other restaurant was Roger's Place, which was a basic restaurant with not much of a menu. Fish, egg sandwich, ham and cheese sandwich, burgers and such were the only choices. One restaurant worth going to is Andre's Rainforest Bistro. Reservations are required well in advance, as you will probably be the only customers. The meal is large and reasonably priced. Choices are fish, chicken, or vegetarian. The meal comes with many varied vegetables grown on his farm. It is a must if you are on the side of the island. Andre will pick you up at your hotel and drop you back off for no extra charge. UW Photography
Comments: No good E6 on island.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

While few American's visit, it's a popular and well-developed tourist destination for Europeans, with plenty of all inclusive hotels on nice beaches. While there are a few good dives, it's generally mediocre and for experienced divers, generally insufficient for a week's trip.

Spring 2003, Jim Parkhill, Edinburg, TX. The four dive areas are far apart, but I dived them all. On the Southeast coast an hour and a half from Boca Chica is Bayshibel La Romans. Here I found the best diving including marine

life, visibility, calm seas and the diversity of dives. Bayahibe consists of about eight square blocks of dirt streets. It boasts two real restaurants and a handful of open air food stalls. There is one modest hotel and an odd assortment of cabanas or pensiones. The best meals were at the beachfront Bahia Restaurant where I could get 30 grilled shrimp, a mixed salad and two frosty Presidente beers for US\$13. Within a fifteen minute drive of Bayahibe are 5-star all inclusive resorts (Dominicas Palace, Iberostar, Coral Canon, Casa del Mar) that fill with Italians, Germans, French and Spanish. In three weeks I met or dived with only four Americans. The Dominicas was the based for the ill fated free diving incident that claimed the life of Audrey Mestre in front of Bayahibe. The Casa de Campo complex boasts five 18 hole golf courses and a mind boggling marina packed with yachts from all over the world. Catalinita Island — hour boat ride includes a short cut through mangrove lined canals out of an Indiana Jones flick. A drift dive follows the part of the wall exposed to the open sea. The first dive we saw the dolphins soon after we backrolled in and the second time the dolphins came around us while on the safety stop. One nurse shark and small ray, abundance of small spotted eels, trumpetfish and barracuda. The hard corals show a lot of damage but the site is full of sponges and fans. Max depth 75-80 feet. La Parguera: good assortment of the usual reef fish and critters, La Parguera gave us the largest barrel sponge that I have ever seen and a free swimming moray. Max depth 65 feet. The *St. George*

Wreck is a 240 foot steel freighter intentionally sunk in 1999. She sits upright with the super structure at about 50 feet and the bow in the sand in 150 feet and can easily be penetrated. Max depth 150 feet. Catalina Island — the wall starts at 20 feet and plunges to 130 feet. Although the wall is draped with sponges and elkhorn coral, there is little fish life. The Catalinita, La Parguera and the *St. George* dives were quite good while the others were quite mediocre.

ScubaFun; Martina booked my hotel on good faith without any deposit. On one occasion, when I didn't want to do the dive offered, she offered to send a boat from Scuba Doo just for me.

German DMs, Ollie and Frank, would always let me stay down alone and get in my 60 or 70 minutes. Or, if they got the others safely to the mooring line, they would stay down with me. Dive boats are boarded at a small beach about a block from the shop. Usually there were only three or four and never more than six. ScubaFun takes care of washing and storing gear. The Sosua/Puerto Plata area: Sosua lies at the center of the stretch of tourist venues along the North coast. The majority of dive sites, however, are just a short boat ride from the beach at Soma. Many all inclusive resorts as well as smaller, more moderately priced hotels. Puerto Plata is a rather unattractive bustling city, whereas Sosua is a small town full of good small restaurants, intimate hotels, small shops and open air watering holes. It lies on a large crescent shaped bay with a nice beach. There is white water rafting, ATV excursions, horseback riding and hik-

ing in the nearby mountains. The colonial town of Santiago is worth a visit. There is a thriving night life all along the North coast. Airport Wall starts at 40 feet and bottoms out at about 85 feet. It is a maze of caves, canyons and swim-throughs. Large schools of snappers, a variety of reef fish, numerous lobsters and eels and several rays. The highlight was spotting a couple of seahorses. Max depth 85 feet. Coral Gardens/Three Rocks — cluster of rocks and coral heads interspersed by wide stretches of sandy bottom.

Unimpressive at first blush, the site ultimately impresses with the abundance of critters at each rock. The Rio San Juan Excursion — an hour drive east of Sosua. The trip down the river lasts all of five minutes, the river bottom is strewn with trash and the mangroves are malodorous. However, the dive at The Arches makes the excursion worthwhile. Although a lot of damaged coral and is lacking in marine life, the topography is riddled with tunnels and swim-throughs. The second dive at La Piscine was along the wall of a shoreline cliff with a plethora of nooks and crannies harboring lobsters and eels. Max depth 95 feet at the Arches and 45 feet at La Piscina. Five Rocks and West Wall: Both were dead, colorless and littered with trash. The Canyon — interesting topography but little marine life. Other sites just mediocre. Water 80 to 82 degrees and viz 40 to 50 feet. Northern Coast Divers: American owners Brad and Patricia Gordon are delightful folks. The DM was a middle aged Englishman, Robert Law. He had a knack for making even the most insipid

dive seem like fun. Eighteen minutes into one dive, a diver the size of a line-backer frantically gave Bob the "low air" sign. It was obvious that Bob never even considered taking the guy up. Instead, he put the panic stricken dude on his octopus and towed him around thorough the tunnels and swim-throughs which even the other two divers refused to go in to. When Bob got low on air, he just passed the giant off to me and my octopus and we managed to get a respectable 45 minutes out of that dive. The big guy came up raving about the cool tunnels. Northern's shop is on the main drag of Sosua and is well organized and equipped. The dive boats depart from Sosua Beach a three block walk from the shop. Rendezvous at the shop at 8:30 a.m. for the dive briefing for the 9:00 a.m. dive. Then walk the three blocks to the beach. After the first dive, the boat returned to the beach, you walked back to the shop and then cooled your heels in a clammy wetsuit there until the briefing for the second dive at 11:45 a.m. I suspect that the odd hour for the second dive was to accommodate the late night party people. In summary, there are a handful of dives sites in the D.R. which would satisfy all but the most demanding hard core diver, but the handful of good sites are spread across a wide geographical area. If one were to travel to the D.R. with the intention of staying in just one spot, the good diving would be exhausted in a couple of days.

(www.dr-protravel.com/Diving/Scubafun/scubafun.html,
www.northerncoastdiving.com)

Casa Daniel, Coral Canola, June 2002, Lynn Pardo, Baytown, TX.

Vis: 60 to 80 feet. Water: 76 to 81 F. Dives accrued: 500+. Dive restrictions enforced: time, 45 to 60 minutes. Nice mix of non-Americans: Germans, Russians, Spanish, etc. I liked the staff at Casa Daniel, which was Swiss, German, American. This was not luxury diving, but they aimed to please. It reminded me of diving 20 years ago. All sitting around the diver's living quarters, using the hose to rinse off. (www.casa-daniel.de/index.htm)

HAITI

Kaliko Beach Club, January 2003, Sue Sepelak (sepelak@erols.com), Columbia, MD. Dives logged: 560+.

Vis: 60 to 85 feet. Water: 76 to 78 F. Pristine reefs, colorful varieties of coral and reef fish. Spotted morays, puffers, wrasse, and squid were abundant. Resort was almost empty — testament to lack of tourist infrastructure in Haiti. Drove from Port-au-Prince to the resorts along Cote Des Arcadins. It was a long trek due to lack of paved roads. Very friendly staff at resort and dive operation (adjacent to the resort). Pegasus Services is probably one of the few remaining dive operations in Haiti. Operation run by Nicole and Jose Ray (509-558-5368). The diving is well worth the adventure you will have getting there. (www.kalikobeachclub.com)

HONDURAS

All dive resorts are on the Bay Islands: Roatan, Guanaja, Utila, Cayos Cochinos, and other small