

Not true. We should be briefed at the beginning of the trip with opportunity to ask questions. We were told that we'd be able to go ashore and visit one of the many resorts, but that never happened. We were told it wasn't convenient. I'm not sure what the dive guides' problems were — burnout maybe — they told us they'd been on the boat a long time. Or maybe we're terribly spoiled having just come from *Ocean Rover* and her fabulous crew. It was disappointing to run into a couple of sour personalities. It's a shame because the owners have done a great job creating this beautiful boat. *Sea Spirit* is just too nice an operation to let a couple of disgruntled managers ruin it. We had great fun, and some memorable experiences with mantas which were worth the whole trip — but it could have been so much more enjoyable with a good divemasters. Here, there was no discussion. I felt uncomfortable asking for anything or making any recommendations because they showed so little grace and understanding. Never asking, "How are things?" or "What do you need?" or "Do you have any suggestions or questions?" They just weren't open to anything like that. So we did our diving and had our fun. Liked the boat very much and the diving was great. Arrangements by: Reef and Rainforest, 800-794-9767, www.reefrainforest.com. E-mail: Jenny@reefrainforest.com. UW photography comments: *Sea Spirit* and the accompanying dhoni have little space dedicated to cameras. One small charging station in the salon. For camera

maintenance we used dining tables or did it in our cabin.

(www.scubascuba.com)

RED SEA

Aqua Sport, Taba Hilton, May 2003, David Shem-Tov, London, NA.

Experience: 26-50 dives. Vis: 10 to 15 meters. Water: 23 to 24 C, calm, no currents. Escorted by dive guide Evgeny across from *Aqua Sport's* Eilat, Israel, location to their Hilton Taba, Egypt, affiliate, where we boarded a comfortable boat. Dive guide knowledgeable and offered detailed briefings. Once in the water, however, he exhibited excessive authoritarianism that irritated some divers. Clients were expected to set up their own equipment and change tanks. Assistance was offered in climbing to boat. Good lunch and complimentary lunch offered by friendly boat crew. A fair amount of small fish, but none over 1 foot. Abundance of healthy hard coral, but little soft coral. Very few divers reach north Egypt. Many Israelis are reluctant to cross border into Egypt right now. Most foreign divers go further south. Rental equipment available was a little tatty. Management in Eilat was distrustful of clients and demanded to hold on to C-cards, as well as a signed blank credit card voucher until invoice settled. I was staying with friends, but good reports from divers staying at the Taba Hilton, which offers substantially better deals than the Eilat hotels across the border, and where the Taba *Aqua Sport* office is located. (www.aqua-sport.com)