

ice.” We were dumbfounded. When Greg opened the door, there was Michelle holding a bag with the last bit of yogurt on the island until the next island freighter would stop at Statia. Locals are always kind and helpful. The Belgian chef of the Gin House (that Davison so aptly praised in his article) took extra trouble to cook special foods for lunch during Nan’s illness. Glenn or his apt staff rescued us several times when equipment broke. This friendly, safe atmosphere is what draws us to Statia. Golden Rock has a new, bigger, more stable boat that will accommodate groups of 20. This new boat also changes how gear is prepared from the previous reports about Golden Rock. You are responsible for your gear now. They happily help anyone that asks, but we prefer doing our own gear anyway after staying at resorts that advertise “you don’t touch your gear until you leave” and then beat it up by throwing it in piles. Golden Rock provides air dry space outdoors for you to hang the gear and you leave it and they will stow it indoors before they close for the night. Golden Rock can also arrange for you to fly to near-by Saba to dive. And a note to Mr. Davison about his suggestion to the people of Statia about trash clean up. Whether they heard about your suggestion or just decided on their own, the island was noticeably cleaner than our first visit in 2002. Take all possible medications and extra gear for repairs as Statia is limited on some supplies. Always allow at least a two hour lay-over in St. Martin because in St. Martin you are required to claim your luggage and recheck it on to your con-

necting flight and there are only one or two check in lines which can be very slow and long. Winair’s luggage allowance is 10 kilos per diver extra if you speak up and tell them you are a diver. If you are polite they often waive any additional over weight kilos. Our dive computer was still on and the hand luggage checker wanted the battery out. But when Nan explained that opening the o-ring sealed compartment would prevent her from diving in two days, he was agreeable to seeing it her way. Also get your tickets stamped “in-transit” at check in to avoid the airport departure tax in St. Martin. ATM and internet access is available in town. Use your last day to take an island tour with Mr. Daniel, who can make Americans ashamed that they do not know more about the Declaration of Independence. It is a must do for history buffs. Climb The Quill, the island’s extinct volcano and rain forest which also has rare orchid species. There isn’t much beach near where you stay on Statia but rumors are that the government is talking of recreating the beach that has eroded, so we will be looking in *Undercurrent* for updates.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

These small, intimate islands have a lot of “Old Caribbean” charm. Their strong suits are gracious hotels and old inns, verdant, green scenery, and lovely beaches. The diving is decent, but there are no thrills.

**Ken’s Dive Shop, Dive St. Kitts,
Timothy Beach Resort, Ocean**

Terrace Inn, May 2003, Arthur Graf (art9323@aol.com), San Antonio, TX.

Vis: 10 to 40 feet. Water: 82 to 89 F. Timothy Beach Resort: below average resort, isolated. No beach, just rocks. Within walking distance to beach. Food fair. Too many bugs. \$8 to town. Ocean Terrace Inn: top quality, good food, no bugs. Walking distance to town. Dive shop on premises. All dive shops will pick you up and return you. All dive boats in very good condition. Rental gear in good condition. Dive shops themselves lack a lot. Dive staff is very good. Low visibility, shallow reefs have quite a bit of algae on them. They should do more toward diving wrecks. (www.divestkitts.com)

Kenneth/Timothys Beach Hotel, July 2003, Bonnie Hirschhorn (bphirschhorn@hotmail.com), Bayside, NY. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 40 to 60 feet. Water: 78 to 82 F, calm, choppy, no currents. If I had known that Timothy Beach Resort was as isolated as it was from town with no public transportation available, and that there were no generators in the guest rooms and that power outages were common and long lasting; and if I had realized that the dive sites that were “best” were not visited “off season” because they were too costly to go to, maybe I would have returned to the Utila Lodge or used Sea Scuba in Cozumel. Kenneth Dive shop is the most reputable operation on St. Kitts, respected by all the locals and asked for by the tourists — but because it was off season the dive master would or could not go beyond Frigate Bay. Each set of dives included one wreck;

small critters abound and the dive master (Vijay) was great at finding the tiniest and most outrageous creatures. St. Kitts is a bustling island but many essentials for divers are unavailable (I could not find a 3.6 volt battery for my computer in any store in the capital) — bring all your “stuff.” The best meal I had was at the “X’s” restaurant, a shack in front of the Timothy Beach Resort. Made to order meals and a congenial staff.

ProDivers, February 2003, Bill Ferris, New Tripoli, PA. Experience: 501-1,000 dives. Vis: 30 to 75 feet. Water: 75 to 78 F, choppy. Prodivers was great to dive with. Once the owner and I talked and he realized my desire to concentrate on UW photos, he did his best to steer me to good shots. Perhaps because of my experience, he also allowed me pretty much free rein to do as I wished. He did suggest to me a max. depth for each dive, which I respected. I dove with Auston on four dives over a two-day period and found him to be professional. The diving off of Nevis and St. Kitts was enjoyable and nondemanding. There was light surface chop and no surge. The reefs at Brimstone Shallow and Monkey Shoal seemed healthy with a good variety of fish. We saw spotted moray and nurse sharks at these locations. At Garden Eel Reef we also saw a good-size turtle. Although the boat was not set up specifically for UW photography, the crew and the owner were accommodating.

Scuba Safari, 4 Seasons, September 2003, Neil and Leslie Campbell, Scottsdale, AZ. Experience: 25 dives.

Vis: 70 ft. Water: 80 F, choppy, no currents. Scuba Safari is the operation recommended by the Four Seasons Nevis. Their boat anchors in the bay right outside the resort. Frankly, we expected more. 2 of the divers on the boat told the captain that it was their first dive in open water and we informed them that neither of the 2 of us are extremely experienced divers either (less than 25 dives each). Therefore, they were on notice that they had a fairly inexperienced group that day. The captain gave a brief but adequate pre-dive briefing. Once we hit the water, it was as if the divemaster had not heard the briefing. The captain said that the divemaster would regularly ask us to check on our remaining air and would want to know when we reached 1,500, 1,000, and 500 psi. He never asked and one time, as I hit 900, I had to race to catch up to him and tell him. The dives we took were pure "reef races." It was kick, kick, kick and try to stay up with the divemaster. He rarely looked back to see if anyone had fallen back. Several times I lagged to try to catch a look at something interesting or to take a photo, only to look up and see him several hundred yards ahead, swimming along obliviously. On one occasion, he came across a scorpion fish resting in the rocks. He kicked it several times with his flipper until it finally departed its resting spot so we could all get a better view. Later, he relentlessly (and unsuccessfully) chased a puffer for a good 2 or 3 minutes. When we got back onboard, he told me that he caught it a couple of days ago and "blew it up." On our second dive, we came across a sleeping nurse shark.

Again, he reached down and prodded it until it scurried away. These actions showed not only a disrespect for the fish and environment but also could have endangered the divers. When I asked the divemaster on the return trip about a number of fish that we had seen that I was not familiar with, he really couldn't identify any of them. It seemed that I knew more of the species (on my first Caribbean dive) than he did. The operation provided no snacks of any kind during their 15 or 20 minute surface interval. I gave the crew a \$20 tip (still asking myself why) and nobody even bothered to say thank you. Overall, the diving was OK. UW Photography Comments: No specific facilities for photography on boat. **(Ph: 869-469-9518; e-mail scubanev@caribsurf.com; website http://www.nevis1.com/scuba_safaris.html)**

ST. LUCIA

St. Lucia lies in the hurricane belt west of Barbados. Diving on this beautiful, heavily-forested island, with pretty reefs and tiny fish, is managed and controlled. ... Anse Chastenet hotel is located near the Pitons on the southwestern part of island, where the better diving is, but it's rigidly controlled; there's not much worth seeing elsewhere underwater. ... The year-round high is in the 80s days; night lows are in the 70s. Afternoon cloud-bursts are common.

Anse Chastenet, March 2003, Jim Rhodes, Lafayette, CA. Experience: 251-500 dives. Vis: 50 to 70 feet.