

THAILAND

Genesis I, May 2003, Roger Gray, Annandale, VA. About 65-feet long and 12-feet wide, it holds 12 divers, three divemasters, and a Thai crew. It has two toilet/showers for everybody. Each cabin has its own A/C unit, and the cabins are small — just enough room to fit between the wall and the bunk beds. It has a nice camera area set up with 220 volts; if you are charging batteries, bring a converter. The Thai food on the boat was good and plenty of it. The trip was the last Thai-Burma trip for the year. The weather made for some rough seas, for it was the start of the monsoon season. Hit the water and keep going down as fast as you can to avoid rough seas. The seas were too rough to make it out to Black Rock or Burma Banks. It got so rough that we could not leave the Burma port on the last day and had to be bused back to Phuket. Genesis put us up for the night at Kata Beach. The diving very good, though we had to cut the number of dives from five to four a day due to rough seas. The visibility was not that good; you could make out sharks at 50 feet but not clear enough to take pictures. Up close to the reef visibility was great. All kinds of hard and soft corals and lots of small critters to take pictures of. We ran into squadrons of mantas on two dives at Kon Bon. In Burma, at South Twin Island we ran into Burmese fishermen using dynamite to fish. We were underwater at the time. The blast was on the other side of the island but it sounded like it was right on top of us.

Dive restrictions — 50 minute dive or 50 bar (750 psi) with a three-minute safety stop at 6 meters or 18 feet. All divers are given a safety sausage, so if you ran low on air the group stayed and you did your own safety stop. The divemaster would point the direction you were to go and slowly swim away from the island. At 18 feet you would send up the sausage and after three minutes come up and give the boat the OK signal. You could go off on your own dive plan, but because of rough seas it was not recommended. Some strong currents and surge. The dive crew was great; the Thai crew great. The only drawback was not being able to use the toilet while the boat was at full speed (water would splash out of the toilet at full speed). Burma with no guarantee to get to Black Rock or Burma Banks is not worth the \$140 fee.

(www.genesis-live-aboards.com,
www.phuket-scuba-diving.com)

Ocean Rover, May 2002, Fred Silvester, Salt Lake City, UT. Vis: 35 to 100 feet. Water: 80 to 84 F. Dives logged: 1,000. This was the best boat we have dived with. The Thailand and Myanmar Reef had good, healthy hard and soft coral. The macro life was excellent with species we had not encountered elsewhere. Still dynamite fishing in Myanmar and at places it showed. This was such wonderful diving and a great live-aboard.
(www.fantasea.net)

www.undercurrent.org