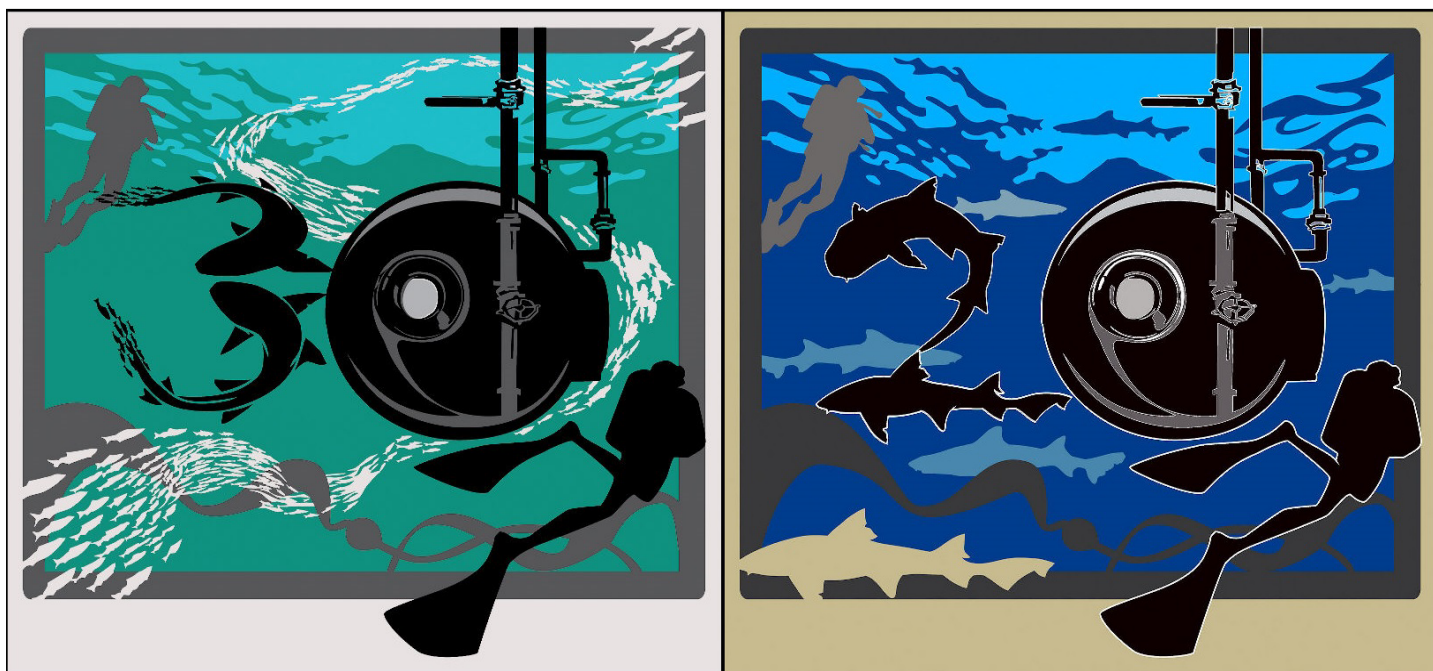


THE REEF SEEKER



REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213
(310) 652-4990
www.reefseekers.com
e-mail: kenkurtis@aol.com

May - 2018



MAY 2 - IT'S ALMOST HERE . . .

A lot of people ask us why we do this. My answer is pretty simple: I've always had a strong belief in the duty of community service and giving back to what provides for you. Scuba diving certainly is an integral part of my life. Whether it's a boat, a store, a club, a manufacturer, another organization, or an individual, those of us who work behind the scenes put a lot of time and effort into Chamber Day & Eve 2018 because we believe it's really important to have our Chamber available to us 24/7/365.

When a dive accident occurs, getting an injured diver to our Chamber alive means that he/she has an excellent chance of survival and recovery. Knowing this while you're performing first aid, administering oxygen, or doing whatever it takes is a reassuring thought.

Our Chamber is an invaluable safety net that we simply don't want to lose. Your participation helps to ensure our Chamber's future. Please go to www.chamberday.org and support our Chamber. And there are two specific things you can do that will make a big difference in our final total.



THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

If you are one of those poor, unfortunate souls who can't take a Wednesday off, we have the perfect solution—sign up for the *Flying Dutchman*. In nautical lore, the *Flying Dutchman* is bad news as it was the name of a mythical ship doomed to sail the seas forever and never reach port. But from a Chamber Day perspective, the *Dutchman* is a good thing because it helps us raise more money for our Chamber and gets you a unique T-shirt.

Our *Flying Dutchman* is the answer for folks who can't get wet on May 2 but who want to say they "dove" the event. You won't really go anywhere but you'll get all the other benefits of Chamber Day participation. An "on-board" raffle will be conducted, just like on all the other boats, and you'll get a T-shirt—but yours will be unique. (And every year the *Dutchman* logo is new and different.)

Cost for the *Dutchman* remains at \$95. This includes your T-shirt, on-board raffle ticket, and 5 Chamber Day raffle tickets. It's a great way to participate if you can't get

away for the day. Last year, we had 92 people "dive" the *Dutchman* each year and we're hoping that 2018 will be even better.



THE CHAMBER CHALLENGE

Each year the SoCal diving community raises extra funds for our Chamber through the Chamber Challenge. These funds are vital to the operation of our Chamber and account for over 50% of what we generally raise during the entire event. It's a simple concept: you make a donation and then "challenge" your friends and associates to do the same. Last year was an incredible year, with al-

most \$64,000 in Challenge donations so we've got our work cut out for us and we still have a ways to go since right now, we're just above \$60,000. So we can really use your help to beat last year.

Although contributions of any amount are welcome, we have a tiered level of donations, as follows:

Diamond – \$10,000
Platinum – \$5,000
Gold – \$1,000
Silver – \$500
Bronze – \$100

All Diamond, Platinum, and Gold donors will receive special recognition from our Chamber for their donation. Contributions can come from individuals, clubs, stores, boats, publications, and others. Contributions can also be made in someone's memory, either as an individual, or grouped together for a larger total. If the company you work for has a matching grant program, Challenge donations usually qualify.

Donations can be made either through our secure server at www.chamberday.org or by calling 310-652-4990. Cash, check, and credit card are all fine.

2018 DIVING VACATIONS

July 8-20 • Yap Immersion

August 18-25 • Isla Mujeres

September • Indonesia (??)

Oct. 27 - Nov 3 • Roatan

BONAIRE 2018 TRIP MINI-REPORT

Although firmly situated in the Caribbean, the week we were there, it seemed like Bonaire had become a suburb of Chicago, aka The Windy City (or in this case, the Windy Island). More on that in a moment.

One realization that hit me this trip was how the logistics of the trips have changed since we first started coming here almost 30 years ago. Back then, a 5-dive day was pretty typical: 2 boat dives in the morning, grab a quick lunch, and then load up the trucks for two shore dives in the afternoon, break for dinner, and then a 9PM-ish night dive. Rinse and repeat.

But as we age, our tolerance for that schedule seems to wane. Now, it's still two boat dives in the morning along with some grumbling ("8:30???? Can't we go a little later????"). That's followed by a leisurely lunch, perhaps a nap, a debate about whether or not we should drive somewhere or just enjoy the convenience of diving the house reef at Buddy (which is actually quite good), debating whether or not we'll do a dusk dive around 6PM, and then going to dinner in town where adult beverages can be enjoyed which – OOOOPS!!! – negates the idea of a later night dive. I think I ended up doing 18 dives on this trip (in the good ol' days I'd do 25-30) and that was about the average for everyone else as well. But that's also the nice thing about getting older: You don't feel quite as compelled to rack up the numbers.

One new thing they're doing at Buddy which I think is a great idea is that the DM/guides now wear an

UPCOMING LOCAL DIVES				
DAY	DATE	BOAT/SITE	PLANNED DESTINATION	PRICE
Wed.	May 2	Many boats	Chamber Day/Eve benefit	\$120
Thu.	10	Redondo	••• Night Dive •••	FREE!!!
Sat.	19	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$150
Thu.	24	- CLASS -	- NAUI NITROX -	\$25
Sat.	June 2	Redondo	Beach dive (single tank)	\$150
Sat.	30	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$25
Thu.	July 12	- CLASS -	- Fish ID -	\$150
Sat.	Aug. 4	Catalina Express	Avalon U/W Park (3 dives)	\$25
Sat.	11	Redondo	Navigation dive (single tank)	FREE!!!

orange rash guard over their wetsuit when they're leading a dive. This makes it very easy to see where the guide is as the dive progresses (and the group spreads out a bit). Nice touch, especially when they're looking for special friends.

Speaking of diving . . . we did some.

Even though we had mostly lovely dives and great fish and coral, the conditions were not optimal while we were there which was mainly due to a persistent wind. Bonaire is known to be in the tradewinds path so you normally expect that there will be light wind coming out of the Northeast at around 10mph. What we got was seven days of strong wind coming out of the east, generally running 20mph fairly consistently with occasional gusts up to 30mph. This may have lowered the water temps a bit (I read 80-81° on my gauges which was the same as 2017 but it just felt colder). And while we usually had 60-80' vis, we also had some spots where there was lower vis and the water looked a little milky.

The wind was accompanied by cloud cover but the upside of all of this was that the air temp was just a bit cooler, so instead of walking around dripping sweat with hotter temps and less wind, it was fairly comfortable. And the persistent wind kept any bugs at bay. Inter-

estingly on our Saturday departure day, the wind died down and the cloud cover was much less and you could REALLY feel the difference.

But the wind also made the surface choppy and that affected some of the dive sites we could visit. It made for an especially interesting dive at Rappel where the chop was really slamming the boat left and right once we tied up to the mooring line. We knew we needed to do a quick entry but we didn't realize the chop was going to be so strong that it actually snapped the mooring line. All of a sudden, our boat was free-floating towards the rock wall with divers already in the water in between. Not good.

But our DM/captain Craig was quick to the throttle and we avoided a crash (and we didn't slice-and-dice any divers with the prop), Craig motioned the in-water divers to go down, re-positioned and then live-dropped everyone else, and once underneath you had no inkling of the surface chaos so the dive itself was quite nice. At the end of the dive DM Laurent (who was the in-water DM/guide) got everyone together, directed all to hold on to each other, Craig got the boat in close and threw out a tag line, I got on board to help divers up and Craig held the boat in position while Laurent pulled off fins and shoved finless divers

to the swim step. It all worked out well and kudos to the group. It also underscores that when conditions get a little gnarly, it pays to listen to your dive leaders. We really DO know a thing or two about all of this and following our instructions can make a difficult situation much easier.

The flip side of that was a wonderful dive we had at South Bay, which is on Klein Bonaire. The dive was nice enough with a teeny-tiny baby Spotted Drum and a Sharptailed Eel, but what REALLY made it special were the four Squid that we came across at the end of the dive. And they seemed almost as curious as us as we did about them. We spent a good ten minutes with them (based on my photo timestamps) and what was most in-

triguing was how they stayed in formation, generally in a straight line and moving all together. Very nice to observe.

Another special experience was the appropriately-named site called Somethin' Special, which is just south of Buddy's near the entrance to the marina. We started off with a Hawksbill Turtle meandering around at 80 feet, then swam by the garden of resident Garden Eels, had plenty of Angelfish, Spotted Drums, small Cleaner Shrimp, a Peacock Flounder, and more. And we ended the dive seeing a Lizardfish strike a Needlefish from behind and catch it, but not quite all the way as the needle was still sticking out of its mouth, and you could see the rest of the fish bulging through the belly of the

Lizardfish (photos of this are on SmugMug). We followed this guy around for a while as he tried to complete his capture and we thought there were times when the Needlefish might even emerge unscathed. For everyone (except the Needlefish), this dive was truly "Somethin' Special."

In fact, you just can't generally go wrong with Bonaire and Buddy Dive. Even though we didn't have an optimal week conditions-wise, we had a great time, made a number of really good dives (as hopefully you will tell from, the pictures), and renewed old friendships and made some new ones.

If you're looking for a place that's fairly easy to get to, then Bonaire might be the ideal place for you.

PICTURE PAGE - Bonaire

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2018)



***Squid
at South Bay***



P.O. Box 634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



***Head-on
Peacock Flounder***



***Up close
with a Tarpon***



***Lizardfish with
a Needlefish meal***



***Spotted
Cleaner Shrimp***