



C.D.A.A. Newsletter

No. 156 - JUNE 2021

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

(Incorporated in South Australia)

Print Post No. PP 100023987

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CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

ABN 65 062 259 956

P.O. BOX 544, Mt Gambier, SA 5291

GUIDELINES is a newsletter of the Cave Divers Association of Australia. All articles for the following issue are to be sent to the Publications Director, Email: publications@cavedivers.com.au

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CDAA INSURANCE

Web Site PDF: <http://www.cavedivers.com.au/public-documents>
Policy Type: Affinity Combined General & Products Liability Policy - LIU-CAS-AEAL-14-01
Insurer: Affinity Insurance Brokers Level 1, 1265 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham. VIC 3912.
Underwritten by Liberty International Underwriters ABN: 61 086 083 605.
Incorporated in Massachusetts, USA.
Name Insured: Cave Divers Association of Australia Inc. Policy# 441680
Public Liability: \$20,000,000 any one claim. Expiry: 30th September 2021.

Pine Tank Lodge



Photo by Liz Rogers

Just 5 minutes drive from the best Cave & Advanced Cave dive sites.

Lodge Features:

- Accommodates 14 divers in 7 rooms; three double bedrooms and four rooms each with two single beds.
- Two separate socialising areas
- Endless hot rainwater showers in two separate bathrooms.
- Airfills, Nitrox, Trimix, high pressure O₂
- Undercover gear drying
- Barbeque facilitates



Courses:

- Deep Cavern to Cave
- Approved IANTD Facility offering full range of Technical Courses, Nitrox, Trimix, Deco Procedures and Extended Range.
- CCR Training
KISS CCR Mod 1 – 3 Trimix

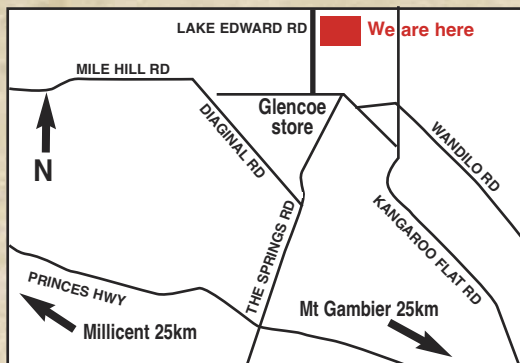
AquiferTec Australasia

- Specialist importers of Technical Cave Diving Gear.
- **KISS Rebreathers Australasian Agent/Distributor – Sidekick, Sidewinder, Classic and Spirit!**
- IANTD KISS CCR Training Mod 1-3, Inc. New Zealand and Asia Pacific.
- **Full range of Scorpion Lights, Cave Diving Lights.**
- Drysuits: Black Pearl Sole Australian Agent and Distributor.
- Shearwater Computers full range and best prices.
- SANTI Drysuits and undergarments
- **Full range of Analytical International Instrument (AII) CCR O₂ Cells and analysers.**
- Full range of Golem Gear tech gear (Inc. CCR BOVs, Side mount DSVs, Armadillo side mount system).
- Fill whips, digital gauges.
- Light Monkey full range
- Spools & Reels.



Pine Tank Dive Lodge AquiferTec Australasia

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Mobile: 0438 833 103
Email: stay@ptdivelodge.on.net
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PUBLICATIONS REPORT

MEGGAN ANDERSON



Dear members...

There is not much to report from my end outside of the daily grind. As there are only a four of us with access to the back office, quite a number of hours a week are spent just to keep up to date with CDAA day to day admin. If we are not immediately responsive to you, it's because we are light on so please be patient when enquiring about bookings or waiting for things to be approved. With June being membership renewal time and only one person (me) being able to process these, response times are going to be slower. I just tell myself it is the last time I'll ever have to do them and that daily walks to the letter box is good exercise! I've barely had time for this issue of Guidelines so I'm grateful to Dave for sourcing articles for us.

The good news is, there is a light at the end of the tunnel with our IT issues but it will take a few months. I sound like a broken record but we have certainly made progress in the last 3 months in that respect, so watch this space. Despite the heavy workload it has been good to see many members enquiring about rejoining after a few years away and doing refreshers and instructors seem to be running quite a few courses now after a slow 2020 due to COVID.

In this issue of Guidelines we are calling for nominations for some director positions, including mine. I just want to assure anyone who is interested in running for Publications not to be put off by the current situation, as the current workload is likely to have reduced significantly by the time I leave. I'll also do my best to give a decent handover. If you have the energy and you do have some spare time, please consider running and feel free to contact me if you have any questions about what the role entails.

Take care

Meg

Meggan Anderson #4942 | Publications and Records Director
M: 0415 291 904 | E: publications@cavedivers.com.au

Articles for Guidelines Sept. 2021 - Deadline is Aug. 13th

- Send articles and jpeg images by email to guidelines@cavedivers.com.au

Did you know?

You can opt for an electronic copy of Guidelines rather than a paper copy. Simply login to your CDAA online account, select the dropdown menu under the My Records tab and click on Update My Details. Handy for those who have multiple CDAA members in their household or for those wanting to do their bit for the environment!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

JUNE 2021

For the first time in what feels like a very long time, most things caving diving-related seem to be almost back to normal!

With an abundance of CDAA courses being run lately, we'd like to welcome all the new members who have joined the CDAA in the last few months. We'd also like to congratulate everyone who has successfully upgraded their CDAA certifications during this time.

Dive bookings across most sites have increased dramatically over the last quarter – with upcoming weekends at Tank Cave often fully booked several weeks in advance. Please note, the number of available Tank Cave 'slots' is capped at 12 divers per day in the interests of safety and conservation.

To ensure you don't miss out, please make sure your site applications and indemnities are current and book your spot with plenty of lead-time. If your circumstances change and you cannot dive for any reason, please cancel your bookings as soon as possible so that other members don't miss out unnecessarily.

As many members may already aware, we had a "near miss" at Pines Cave in March that resulted in a diver having to be resuscitated after suffering a hypoxic event while diving a closed-circuit rebreather. You will find an article in this edition of Guidelines about the incident. Once again, this is a stark reminder of how quickly things can go from good to bad, and why the CDAA's Training Standards and site access protocols are so important. It is only thanks to the quick response by long-time CDAA-Instructor Rubens Monaco and the CDAA members on site who provided immediate assistance that this incident did not result in tragedy.

I would like to pass on my sincere appreciation to the diver involved, Josh Richards, as well as Rubens and the other CDAA members on site

that day, for your willingness to provide feedback and share your experiences with us. The value of this cannot be overstated. With this information we can seek to improve the CDAA's emergency response processes and ensure that we all learn from these types of events.

To promote awareness of appropriate incident response procedures and ensure all members have access to up-to-date emergency contact information, we have included an Emergency Planning Information sheet in this edition of Guidelines. We encourage all members to carry a copy of this with them when they go cave diving. CDAA Records & Publications Director, Meg Anderson, has also assembled a post-critical incident self-care information pack. This is to assist members who have been directly involved in, or witness to, a critical incident while cave diving. This pack, and an up-to-date copy of the Emergency Planning Information sheet will be maintained on the CDAA website and is available to members via the member document library. On behalf of the CDAA National Committee,

Peter Wolf
CDAA National Director



Mary-Anne Mcleod,
Business Director



Kelvyn Ball,
Site Director



Tim Featonby,
Standards Director



Meggan Anderson,
Publications and
Records Director

STANDARDS REPORT

TIM FEATONBY



Hello fellow cave divers. I hope the last three months have treated you well. We have had a large number of courses run lately I would like to welcome all of our new members and congratulations to everyone that has advanced their skills.

I sent out an email the other week reminding members of the number one golden rule. Be correctly trained. We don't want any accidents want to keep our members safe, so just a reminder, do not dive in sites above your qualifications.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the vigilance, quick and decisive actions taken by Rubens Monaco that resulted in saving a diver's life recently when he went unconscious last month while diving a Closed Circuit Rebreather in Pines. I would like to congratulate him and the other divers that assisted on the day, well done.

I would also like to remind all of our divers of the requirements when using a CCR.

You must have a minimum of 20 hours post qualification on the unit you intend to use before taking it into any CDAA rated sites. Prerequisite for basic cave course divers must hold a Rebreather dive certification for the unit intended to be used during the training. Must have logged a minimum of 30 post

course rebreather dives totalling a minimum of 30 hours.

Prerequisites for cave course and cave rated sites divers must hold a Rebreather diver certification for the unit they intended to be used in the training. Must have a logged a minimum of 50 post course rebreather dives totalling a minimum of 50 hours.

Lastly the prerequisites for advanced caves and advanced courses are that divers must hold a Rebreather certification for the unit intended to be used in the training. Must have logged a minimum of 50 post course dives, with a minimum of 25 dives (totalling at least 25 hours) on a rebreather in an overhead cave environment.

These requirements are for the unit being used and do not cross over from different units. For instance crossing over to a different type of CCR would require divers to get the prerequisite dives again using the new unit. The intention of these regulations are to ensure your safety and enable you to know your unit backwards before adding the complexities and task loading of cave diving to the mix.

Be safe, and enjoy.

Tim Featonby #3372
Standards Director

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Facebook: @Australian Drysuit Repairs
Email: info@australiandrysuitrepairs.com.au
phone: 0404 84 5050
Based in Altona Meadows, Vic



Hello Everyone,
Just a quick review of some of the sites.

The Shaft - You will all be happy to know The Shaft is opening up for bookings again shortly. We will post updates soon. Just a bit of house-keeping for access, you will need your phones on site to scan the QR Code the Landlords have ready for use.

Ela Elap is still currently closed.

Tank Cave - April 13, 2021 we had a working bee on site and a huge thank you goes out to Andrew (Otto), Mark, Sean, Stephen, and Josh for turning up and putting in a mighty effort helping me to clean up, install and revamp a tank stand and to fit a tank and piping which is now

supplying water. The pump is being installed next week. The old fence, windmill, pipes etc have all been removed and the old trees and bushes have been tidied up.

Yummy morning tea was provided by my wife Paula and then followed up with mega burgers for lunch made by Mark. Thank you to both.

The plan moving forward is to replace the existing portaloo with a complete new shower/toilet block which has been recently purchased. Plans under way for placement and another working bee will be needed to help install. So keep your eyes/ears out to help with exciting upgrade.

Kelvyn Ball
Cheers Kelvyn Ball – Site Director



During May 2021, Victoria our Products Officer organised a bulk order of merchandise! We had great feedback on the quality of the product last year and are continuing with the same supply. We even had some repeat orders with one member calling out how happy they were with their order last year.

I'm very excited to be able to announce that we will return to a live AGM and Symposium in Mount Gambier. We look forward to returning to the Main Corner Complex – City Hall, on Saturday 9th October, supporting the local community and seeing members face to face again.

As international travel does not look to be an option by then, we will plan for domestic and NZ speakers (thanks to the bubble!) this year. Please get in touch with myself or other committee members if you wish to present, or have a recommendation.

A SROP course will also be run over the AGM weekend. Expressions of interest can be

emailed to sar@cavedivers.com.au.

There are 3 National Committee positions up for nomination this year:

- National Director
- Publication & Records Director; and
- Site Director

Please refer to the Notice of the AGM for further details. The nominees will be announced in the September issue of Guidelines.

Hall of Fame nominations are to be submitted to myself, Business Director, by June 30th along with a supporting statement (Refer Section 5 of the Constitution). Life membership nominations are to be submitted to the National Committee also by June 30th (Refer section 4.1.2 of the Constitution). The election will continue to be conducted via electronic voting, further details to be provided closer to the time.

Safe diving all, Mary-Anne.

EMERGENCY PLANNING INFORMATION

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Always inform someone (who is not part of your dive team) of your dive plan
- Be prepared, and ensure you can provide critical information (such as your location) to emergency services when required
- **ALWAYS** plan your dive and dive your plan!
- Be trained to administer First Aid and CPR. It's better to have it and not need it, than need it and not know what to do!

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT RESPONSE:

In the event of an incident or accident, CDAA members are to:

1. Assist the person or persons injured.
2. Contact the emergency services if needed and provide clear and accurate information:
 - a. **WHAT** is the emergency?
 - b. **WHERE** is the emergency? Provide relevant information – street address, GPS coordinates, nearby landmarks
 - c. **HOW** do emergency services access the site? If possible, direct another member to meet emergency services at the road or a nearby intersection and direct them towards the emergency
 - d. **NAME** of the injured person/s
 - e. **YOUR NAME** and contact details
3. If a diver is missing, refer to the MISSING/OVERDUE DIVER directions below
4. While you are waiting for emergency services record as much relevant information as possible, including times, names and contact details and events leading to incident.
5. Contact the CDAA National Director and/or the CDAA Site Director as soon as possible.

MISSING/OVERDUE DIVER:

In the event that a diver has not returned to the surface by the expected time, it is important that members act quickly as time is of the essence. As a guide, if a diver is 15 MINUTES or more over their expected run-time, members are advised to;

1. Contact the CDAA Search & Recovery (SAR) Officer. In the event that the SAR Officer cannot be contacted, all the National Director, or Site Director. Follow the directions provided by the SAR Officer or relevant Director
2. Provide as much information as you can – names of the missing divers, summary of the dive plan, time the divers entered the water, equipment configuration used, expected run time, time overdue.
3. Further course of action, including the time allowed for any search should be determined based on the dive plan, extent of penetration and gas reserves of the missing/overdue divers.
4. Determine if there are other divers on site (or nearby) who may be able to assist with an emergency search? Note that this should ONLY be considered if available divers are suitably experienced, equipped, and have sufficient (additional) gas to undertake such a search and provide assistance.
5. If no other divers are available to conduct a search or the missing/overdue divers are not located and have not otherwise returned within the timeframe decided, enact the ACCIDENT/INCIDENT RESPONSE procedures listed above.
6. If divers are found to be deceased within the cave, do not disturb the scene. If possible, try to note down pertinent information - location, position, remaining gas, computer runtime, and exit the cave.
7. Contact CDAA National Director and CDAA Search & Recovery (SAR) Officer immediately. The SAR Officer will liaise with the relevant authorities as required.

NOTE: Members are advised not to make any statements regarding incidents or accidents to members of the public, to landowners, to the media, or via any other platform/media. Please direct all associated enquiries to the National Director for comment.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Police, Ambulance, Fire	000 or 112 (mobile)
State Emergency Services	132 500
Mt Gambier Hospital	8721 1200
Divers Emergency Service (DAN)	1800 088 200
CDAA National Director – Pete Wolf	0413 083 644
CDAA Site Director – Kelynn Ball	0428 842 259
CDAA SAR Officer - Richard Harris	0417 177 830
CDAA SAR Officer - Phillip Croker	0423 393 347

CAVE DIVERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA Inc.

Notice of 2021 Annual General Meeting, Election of National Committee Members and Voting for Member Motions & Constitutional Amendments

This notice is issued pursuant to Clause 12 of the Constitution and serves to advise members that the Annual General Meeting of the Cave Divers Association of Australia Inc. will be held on **Saturday, 9 October, 2021 at the Main Corner Complex – City Hall, Mt. Gambier, SA**

The Annual General Meeting will commence at 11:00am and will conclude no later than 12:00pm.

This notice also serves to call for:

- *Nominations for National Director, Site Director and Publication & Records Director
- *Member motions
- *Amendments to the Constitution

NOMINATIONS

The Returning Officer must receive nominations for the National Committee positions no later than the close of business Friday, 30 July, 2021.

Mail to: Returning Officer, CDAA - PO Box 9286, Mt. Gambier West, SA 5291
Email: returningofficer@cavedivers.com.au

MOTIONS & AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Business Director must receive member motions and proposals for amendments to the Constitution no later than close of business Friday, 30 July 2021.

Mail to: Mary-Anne McLeod, CDAA Business Director – PO Box 544, Mount Gambier SA, 5291

Items received after this date will not be accepted nor will any extensions to this date be granted.

ELECTION CRITERIA

Members intending to nominate for a National Committee position must be eligible members of the Association as defined in the Constitution. Nominations should be accompanied by a précis not exceeding two hundred and fifty [250] words detailing skills, experience and achievements relevant to the duties and responsibilities of the nominated position. The responsibilities of National Committee members are contained in the Constitution of the Association. Nominations must be in writing and be signed by the nominee, the proposer and the seconder all of whom must be eligible members of the Association.

POLLING

The polling date close for the election (if required) is Friday, 16 October, 2020.

The polling date close for the election (if required) is Friday, 1st October, 2021.

The election of National Committee members and voting on amendments to the Constitution will be conducted entirely by electronic ballot.

Voting will be conducted via an electronic ballot according to instructions to be sent via email to members. To be eligible to vote you must be a current member of the Association.

The electronic ballot must be completed by close of business, Friday, 1st October 2021 for management of the Returning Officer (Darren Walters #3555)

Detailed voting information will be provided via email and in the next issue of Guidelines.

Questions may be directed to Darren Walters, Returning Officer at returningofficer@cavedivers.com.au or Mary-Anne McLeod, Business Director at business@cavedivers.com.au

Please note that Australia Post quote 2-6 days for standard delivery from capital cities to Mount Gambier.

Detailed voting information will be provided with the ballot papers.

Ka Lee Tse,
Oskar Chen,
Lachlan Sung
and
Jonas Rehmann
after their BC course
in February.



Steven Miller, Mark Jamieson and Damien Zilm



David Nicolson and
Chris Rantall after
their BC course in
March.



Tamara Buddle, Zeke Fontaine, Jim Murdoch,
Kellie Stonier, Cameron Mackay, Elizabeth Hoger
and Teagan Rainford who completed their Basic
Cave course in April in Far North Queensland.



What's Your ppO2?

By Josh Richards

There's one thing watched by rebreather divers with greater concern above anything else - your partial pressure of oxygen, aka "ppO2." No matter how extraordinary it feels breathing warm air with no bubbles, clearing deco far quicker than your open circuit buddies and drifting around gently to the sound of your own breath; it all comes at the cost of knowing the gas in your loop can quickly and easily become toxic if you're not vigilantly watching your ppO2. If a solenoid sticks open or a manual add valve jams on, the flood of oxygen into the loop can drive your ppO2 over 1.60 and quickly lead to a hyperoxic convulsion that will ruin your whole day. On the flip side we need a ppO2 of about 0.18atm - equivalent to 18% oxygen on the surface - just to maintain regular brain function and about 0.15 to maintain consciousness. And as I was brutally reminded earlier this year, ppO2 also happens to drop rather rapidly just as you approach the surface when you think the dive is over.

Every step of my first rebreather course was punctuated by my instructor reminding me to be constantly aware of how much oxygen was in the loop I was breathing from. During our first training dive it felt like he was being over-the-top with his near-constant signals that demanded to know "What's your ppO2?" - couldn't he clearly see what it was from my handset AND the HUD flashing bright green directly in my face? And besides, it's not like it was often anything except 1.3 because my JJ was doing all the work for me - automatically squirting in a bit of O2 if the levels dropped a bit. If anything, the solenoid was a bit of a pain because it would throw out my buoyancy by dumping O2 into the loop whenever I wanted to ascend!

I got a fairly rude wake-up call on my second training dive though. We dropped below the surface, ran a bubble check and cell test at 6m, signalled that everything was okay, then started to swim towards a small wreck at 12m. I kept trying to sort out my buoyancy as we swam (studiously checking my ppO2 on my handset every minute or so) when suddenly my HUD lit up like an angry Christmas tree. I glanced at my handset which was all red too, saying something about "BUS FAILURE" for a few seconds before going completely blank - something was definitely wrong.

Besides "What's your ppO2?" the other thing my JJ instructor had drilled into me was "If you can't

trust your loop, you need to get off it". With no information coming from my oxygen cells to my handset or HUD there was absolutely no way to monitor what I was breathing, so I immediately bailed out. I swam up and tugged my instructor's fin to show him the now completely blank handset - he instinctively signalled for me to bailout... then looked relieved when he realised I already had. We turned the dive and surfaced (giving me the opportunity to practice my first bailout ascent) then chatted about what had happened. As a brand new rebreather diver, I didn't know if this was a common issue and started to worry that I might not want to continue down this whole CCR pathway but my instructor assured me that a complete electronics failure on a JJ was practically unheard of. Back in the workshop a quick look at the unit's head showed there might have been an issue in the factory with the waterproof "potting" that protects the electronics, so the folks in Denmark quickly dispatched an entirely new head and we shipped the faulty one back. A few weeks later we were back in the water and I finished the course without any further incidents.

The JJ-CCR is an extraordinary rebreather and it was the perfect introduction for someone like me shifting from backmount twins to a rebreather. If I'd never taken the plunge into cave diving I'd almost certainly still be diving a JJ and absolutely loving it. The moment I finished my Basic Cave

course in open-circuit sidemount though, it became crystal clear after over 20 years of ocean diving I'd finally found the niche I'd always been looking for. Unfortunately, that wasn't a niche that left much room for my JJ. The JJ-CCR is tough as nails, unbelievably reliable and has been dived to more than 290 meters in the ocean... but fully loaded with cylinders and sorb it's also half as heavy as I am! The moment I finished my CDAA Cave course I knew I'd lost any desire to go back in the ocean, and as soon as I tried using my JJ in places like Pines I realised the steel "cheese grater" that protects the unit's head also has a nasty habit of gouging out chunks of limestone from the cave - the hunt was now on for a new, cave-friendly rebreather.

It didn't take long to find one. I'd read a lot about the KISS Sidewinder, heard podcasts about it and one of my buddies from my Basic Cave course was now diving one and loving it. I liked what it

seemed to offer and I knew a top-class instructor who trained on them too. So, in early 2020 I sold my dearly loved JJ-CCR and ordered my Sidewinder. The week before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, I had booked my unit crossover course with one CDAA instructor and locked in dates for my Advanced Cave course with another. It also happened to be the week my partner at the time rolled her car into a tree at 110km/hr. After 6 weeks in hospital, she was discharged to rehabilitate at home with me as her live-in carer for the rest of the year. 2020 was brutal for many of us, but the one thing that kept me together through it all was knowing I'd be moving permanently back to Mount Gambier as soon as she was independent again - the moment I was back in the Mount I'd finally be able to do the unit crossover & complete the AC course, and in no time I'd be exploring Tank cave on my shiny new Sidewinder!



Rubens took me through the unit crossover, and besides a few rigging issues on the first day the whole thing went incredibly smoothly. The Sidewinder is supremely easy to breathe, so I didn't notice a radical difference from diving sidemount or the JJ, except I felt like I was now getting the best of both! Sure, I no longer had any electronics providing overwatch on my ppO2, so I had to add my own O2 when it dipped. But to counteract that, my basic flashing HUD had been replaced with a NERD2 - providing ppO2 and everything else a technical dive computer does and shoving it directly under my right eye as I dived. No way I'd forget to add O2 when it's literally centimetres from my face, right?

18 months after I'd been ready to do it, my Advanced Cave course finally rolled around. I was already a TDI Full Cave diver with about 100 hours of cave experience, so I felt fairly prepared for the AC course, and given I'd had a couple of months on the Sidewinder

I figured I'd be up for the challenge of doing it on my rebreather too - combining AC with TDI Full Cave CCR. What I didn't stop to think about was that I'd be doing AC on a rebreather and tacking on a hefty TDI course too, all while adjusting to owning my first home, running the active business that came with that home, and sorting out all the things that come from a breakup and an interstate move. I was stretched pretty thin, but I was used to pressure - I felt like I'd been trapped in a pressure cooker for all of 2020 and well before that everything I'd ever done with the military or for space-related projects had involved extraordinary levels of pressure too. So I started the course tired, but confident I'd manage everything that week above and below the waterline. And for the first 3 days of the AC course everything seemed fine. I was managing that outside pressure, felt comfortable and confident with the skills involved with the course, had readily taken feedback and immediately integrated it into my diving. I still felt bloody tired, but good about how everything was all going - I just needed to get to the end of Day 5 and get the course done.

We started Day 4 early at Pines, ready to finally enter the Advanced Cave areas and demonstrate skills we'd been polishing in Goulden's the days before. I geared up, waddled down the stairs, and then gently flopped backwards into the water trying to avoid disturbing the bottom near the last step. The moment I did, I heard an ominous "gulg" sound come from behind me, and immediately realised I'd left the rebreather loop behind my shoulders with the DSV open - the unit was flooding! I pulled the loop over my shoulder, closed it, checked the ppO2 was still safe, then reopened it to take a couple of test breaths to see if I'd stopped the flood in time. The counterlung made a bubbling sound, the ppO2 went haywire, and I immediately closed the loop again - it was clear the unit was completely flooded.

The Advanced Cave course isn't the time to have an easily preventable equipment failure and if I wanted that TDI certification I needed to fix the unit and get back in the water ASAP. Jon and Laurence were on the same course, so they went for their first dive with Rubens while I worked with another diver on-site to furiously dry out the canisters, counterlung and those all-important oxygen sensors. The truly bizarre ppO2 readings on my

NERD made it clear water had gotten into wiring between the O2 cells, so we focused our attention on drying the connections while changing the sorb and testing that nothing else had been damaged. An hour later the unit was back together and the O2 sensor readings had stabilised - just in time for Jon and Laurence to surface with Rubens. So I recalibrated the sensors, ran through my checklist again and began my pre-breathe to kick off my first dive of the day two hours later than planned.

That first dive was naturally intense but relatively uneventful in retrospect. I followed Rubens down to the Dark Room while repeating skills we'd done countless times already; before turning around and doing a bailout ascent while managing the reel and collecting a stage and a jump on our way out of the cave. During the dive I'd seen the ppO2 readings start to bounce around a little unpredictably, and suspected that the cold was causing condensation to form in the cell wiring again. At one point the variation between the cells was enough to briefly cause a voting error before the cells seemed to stabilise again - not a dive ending event, but certainly something to watch carefully during an already intense "almost end of the course" kind of dive. Just after that voting error I remember thinking: "You're doing fine here... but I'd probably have called this dive and gone home for the day if this wasn't my AC course." In retrospect I know I should have called it right then... but it was my AC course, and after so much waiting and effort I was determined to see it through to the end. We finished that dive safely and surfaced without any other issues.

The second dive started an hour later in almost exactly the same way. I saw another voting error on descent, and really started to lose faith in the readings I was getting from the O2 sensors... but this was my last dive for the day, so that voice of caution was quickly silenced by my own overwhelming desire to "just get this done." I'd been waiting so long to do this course and it would open up so much if I could just keep it all together to the end of this dive. Besides, I'd have all afternoon to fully dry the unit and test the O2 cells before the relatively easy dives in Tank the next day!

We headed down to the Wedge Room where Rubens made me turn off all my lights and then

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navigated back out of the cave in the dark. Working our way back passed the stop sign and up through the chimneys, we paused briefly at 4-6m to get everything in order before popping out into the main chamber where I'd collect my stage and the final jump spool. That little pause was the perfect opportunity to not just sort out my reel, but also to ensure my breathing loop was safe. But I didn't, and it wasn't.

Focused on the course skills and now slightly distrustful of my cells, I hadn't been adding as much O2 to my loop during the dive: what if they were now wet and reading low, so adding too much led to a hyperoxic convulsion? The reality is I shouldn't have breathing from a loop I didn't fully trust, but if I'd stopped to think about it there was no physical way I could exceed a ppO2 of 1.6 anyway because I was back above 6m! But you're not thinking about that when you're already on the verge of hypoxia - you're just on autopilot and getting fuzzier by the second.

My last completely clear memory is unclipping my stage cylinder from the line at 4m. I have a hazy memory of clipping the stage on and struggling a little with the bottom clip, then following the line down to my jump spool, collecting it and the

cookies at either end, before following the line back to about 2m where a reel had been tied from the surface. There's a very faint memory of untying the surface reel and having Rubens appear on my right-hand side to shake my hand for a dive well done, and then having him signalling "What's your ppO2?" The next thing I remember is sitting upright on the bench outside the cave, with the top half of my drysuit removed, and having someone I didn't recognise asking for my full name, address, what day it was, if I knew where I was, and if I knew what had happened. What was clear was that something very bad had just happened, but I didn't know what it was.

About halfway through giving this unknown person my address, I realised they were probably trying to measure my GCS - the Glasgow Coma Scale that gets used to determine the consciousness level of someone who's in a coma or has suffered a brain injury. As I answered I looked down from their face and realised I couldn't see anything except their t-shirt because my vision had narrowed to a tiny spot. My muddled hearing told me there was a LOT of people nearby even if I couldn't see them though, and over the next few minutes my awareness gradually opened enough for me to

see an ambulance nearby as two paramedics brought a stretcher up to the bench. They asked me if I was okay to climb across and I was and as they rolled me to the ambulance, I saw someone I recognised and knew I had to apologise too. Was it Will, who supposed to be finishing his CDAA crossover course with Rubens immediately after my dive? Or was it Rubens, who I was sure I was just diving with? Whatever had happened and whoever I was apologising to, I knew I'd put a serious dent in their day.

My vision and hearing started to come back quickly in the ambulance, so much so that I gave a half-hearted attempt at flirting with the cute paramedic in the back - she repaid my efforts by smiling then stabbing me with a fluid line. By the time I was admitted to Mount Gambier Hospital I was lively enough to crack jokes with the staff about falling asleep underwater, and all indications were that I'd be completely fine. My initial blood samples indicated I had elevated levels of an enzyme often associated with heart damage, but which also shows up after hypoxic events. No one thought I'd had a heart attack, but out of an abundance of caution the doctors decided to keep me for an extra few hours to make sure the enzyme levels dropped again to be certain it was "only" an underwater hypoxic blackout. It was 10 pm by the time the all-clear came back, so we all decided it'd be easier for me to stay in overnight. I've got absolutely no memory of what happened that day in the 20 minutes between undoing the reel at 2 meters and then suddenly finding myself sitting on a bench answering questions with tunnel vision. But I do know a lot of really good people acted quickly to keep me breathing when I wasn't conscious enough to do it myself, and who made sure I didn't hurt myself or anyone else as I started to come around. I'll forever be grateful to Rubens for being the first to see something was wrong and immediately recognising it for what it was - his quick response and the actions of Pat and Helen (who surfaced right behind me) are almost certainly the reason I never completely stopped breathing, and why I never got water in my lungs.

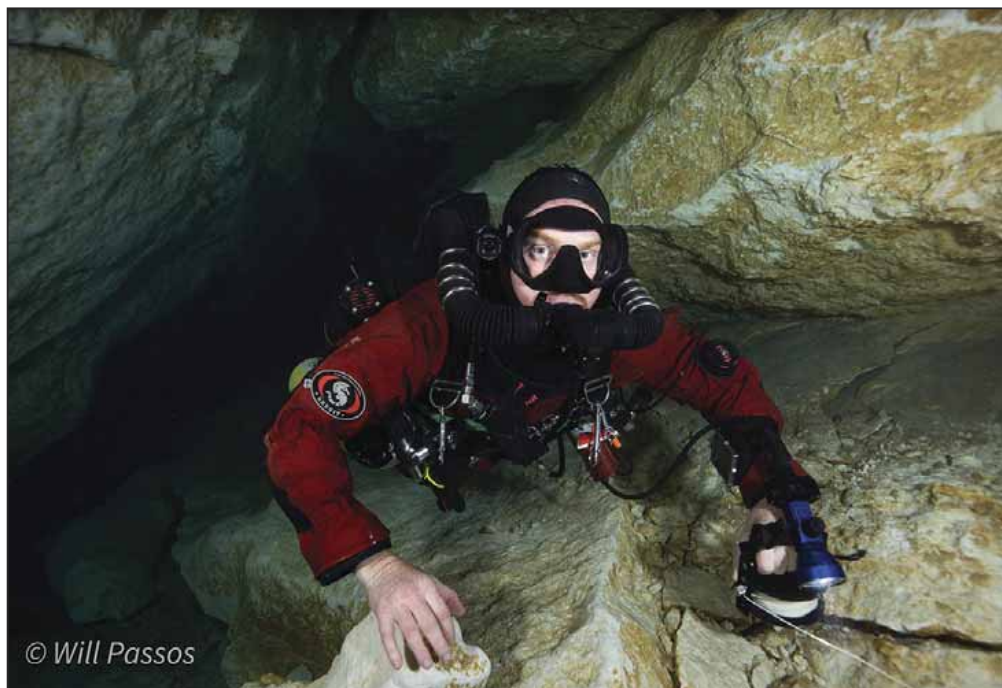
The call for help from the waterline was heard by eight CDAA divers in the Pines carpark, and all of them responded with everything they had. I'll always be grateful to Danny, Shane, April,

Andrew, Laurence, Jon and Burak for acting as quickly as they did to get an O2 reg in my mouth and using it to get me breathing properly again, for trying to help me as I lashed out in confusion when I started to come around, and for holding me steady as I walked up the stairs to the bench - I don't remember any of it, but I'm thankful you were all there and I'm sorry you had to see me like that. I've been in your shoes trying to keep friends alive, and it's almost always scarier and more damaging for the folks trying to help than it is for the person or people who need the help - thank you all for what you did.

One of the worst things I've ever had to do was to make a casualty evacuation call for a dying friend, so I'm especially aware of the impossible situation I placed Will in that day as he made the call to triple-0. Will had just parked when the call for help went out, but with no phone signal near where I was being given O2 he had to try and pass information to an emergency dispatcher without being able to get close enough to answer their questions about my situation. It also didn't help that he had to somehow provide an address for a cave in the middle of a pine forest. As regular cave buddies we trust each other with our lives, but I'm sorry I tested it that day and especially sorry I delayed his final crossover dive!

Another of the worst things I've ever had to do was walk into an Emergency Department to see a partner after a near-fatal accident, so I'm grateful for the concerned but calm care that Chloe responded. As soon as Rubens contacted her she immediately jumped in the car and drove the 2.5 hours over from Horsham to see I was okay in person, stayed long after visiting hours ended, and used her own medical expertise to translate the discussion about those elevated enzymes for me. Before Chloe arrived, Rubens, Danny, and Will all managed to visit ED too and check I was okay - each helping me to understand what had happened in those critical 20 minutes I don't remember. Laurence & Jon tried to visit too, but the ED nurses decided I'd already been turned into enough of a rockstar patient and wouldn't let them exceed the visitor cap.

It meant the world to walk out of Mount Gambier Hospital the next morning to be greeted by Chloe and Will carrying my soft toy wombat "Big Russ." It has also meant the world to have so many folks



throughout the CDAA check-in to make sure I was okay both physically and mentally in the weeks after it happened. The support from the directors in particular has been exceptional and the entire experience made it clear to me just how tight knit the small cave diving community in Australia is. Like any family, we grumble about each other at different times, and that can occasionally spill out into outright hostilities and feuds. But when someone is in real trouble, Aussie cave divers will drop everything to help any way they can. I'm

immensely grateful to be part of a community of folks who not only pulled together to literally save my life that day but have also encouraged me back in the water to finish my AC course... while also good-naturedly reminding me where the O2 button is on my rebreather!

If there is anything else to take away from this entire experience, it's to slow down. Even with a couple of decades working, teaching and playing underwater, my circumstances above the water-line meant I was trying to do too much too soon, and I only narrowly avoided a permanent brain injury or death as a result. Cave diving and rebreathers are both amazing, but they're also pretty unforgiving if you don't do things properly - try to remember we're all involved in an incredibly rewarding but slow-paced sport. There's plenty to see at every stage of training, so take your time and enjoy it: call the dive if things don't feel right, and no matter what you're doing, keep asking "What's my ppO2?"



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Cave Diving in the Country of the Ancient Philosophers

Story and photography by Laurent Miroult

Have you ever had the opportunity to have a great meal in a restaurant while your portable compressor fills your cylinders, plugged into an outlet on the terrace? A somewhat peculiar situation which has proven once again that Greek hospitality is not an empty word.

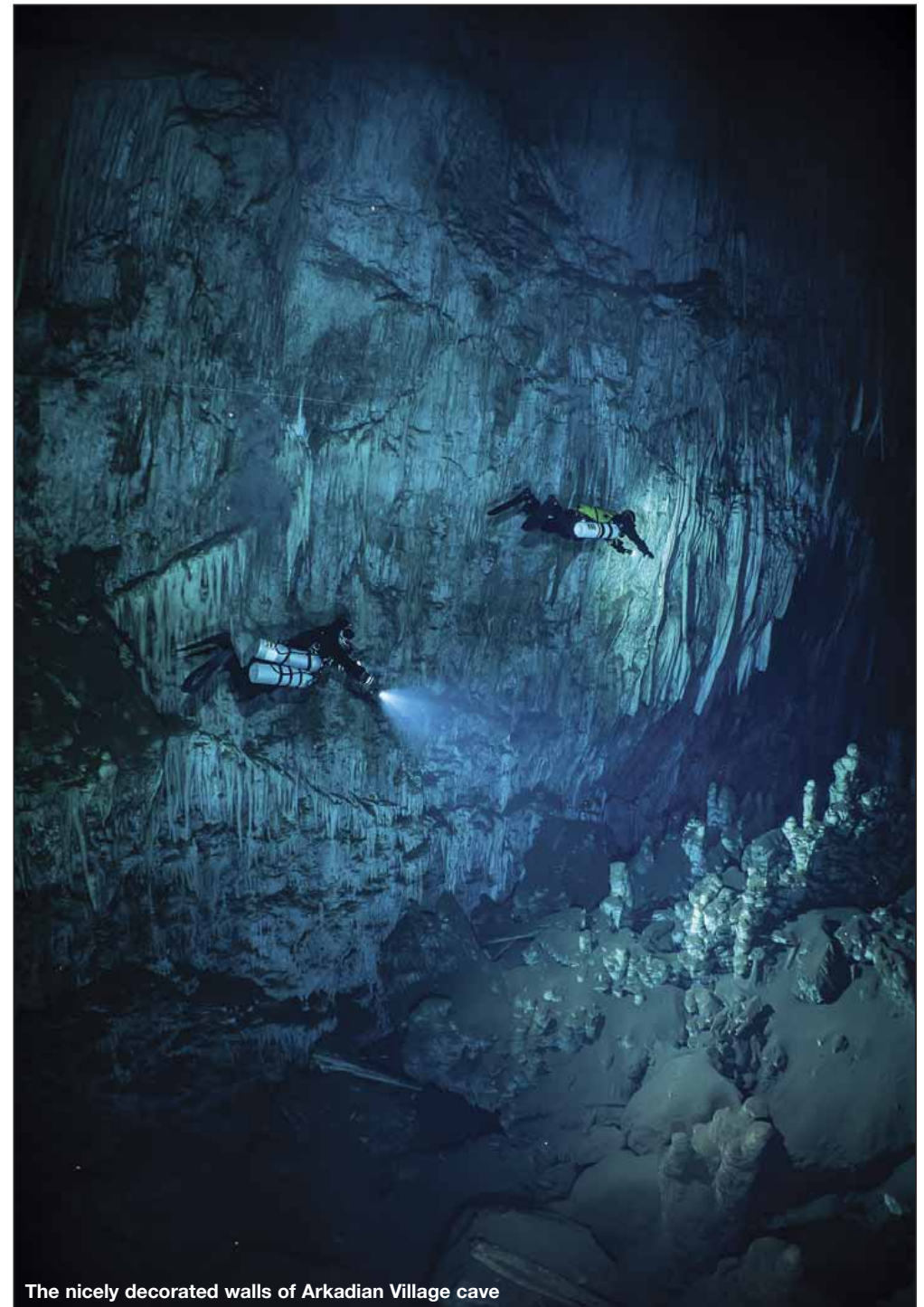
Add beautiful Caves, postcard landscapes and excellent cuisine with complimentary dessert, and you get an optimal mix for lovers of underground diving off the beaten track.

In 2019 I was fortunate to be invited by Stratis Kas to discover and photograph the Amphitrite Cave in the Aegean Sea. Stratis is a professional Greek photographer, passionate diving instructor, talented videographer, and most gracious host. In the beginning of 2020 I also had the opportunity to visit three other Caves of the Peloponnese, again with the excellent logistics of Stratis and in the company of Rob Neto.

The first Greek cave I had an opportunity to dive, Amphitrite, is an underwater cave accessible from the sea between the islands of Paros and Antiparos. It is a huge cave, something between and cavern and cave, with two main entrances of relatively small size, both located at a depth of about 6m. It is accessible only by boat next to the uninhabited islet of Panteronisi. The walls of the entrance to the cave are decorated with brightly colored underwater life like most of these sea caves. The cave's interior is huge with superb formations. The highest points of these as well as the ground are covered with a thin white film of sediment



contrasting with the dark color of the speleothems and the vertical walls of the cavity. In this cave one can observe several columns of impressive size. The dark color of these formations is due to the presence of microorganisms. The maximum depth is 53 m but it is possible to do a nice circuit at less restrictive depths. The temperature inside the cave is around 18 degrees Celsius. The logistics are not always easy, particularly from the point of view of the availability of certain gas mixtures, but Stratis is well organized to optimize diving conditions. Diving on the island of Antiparos is a real pleasure but it is



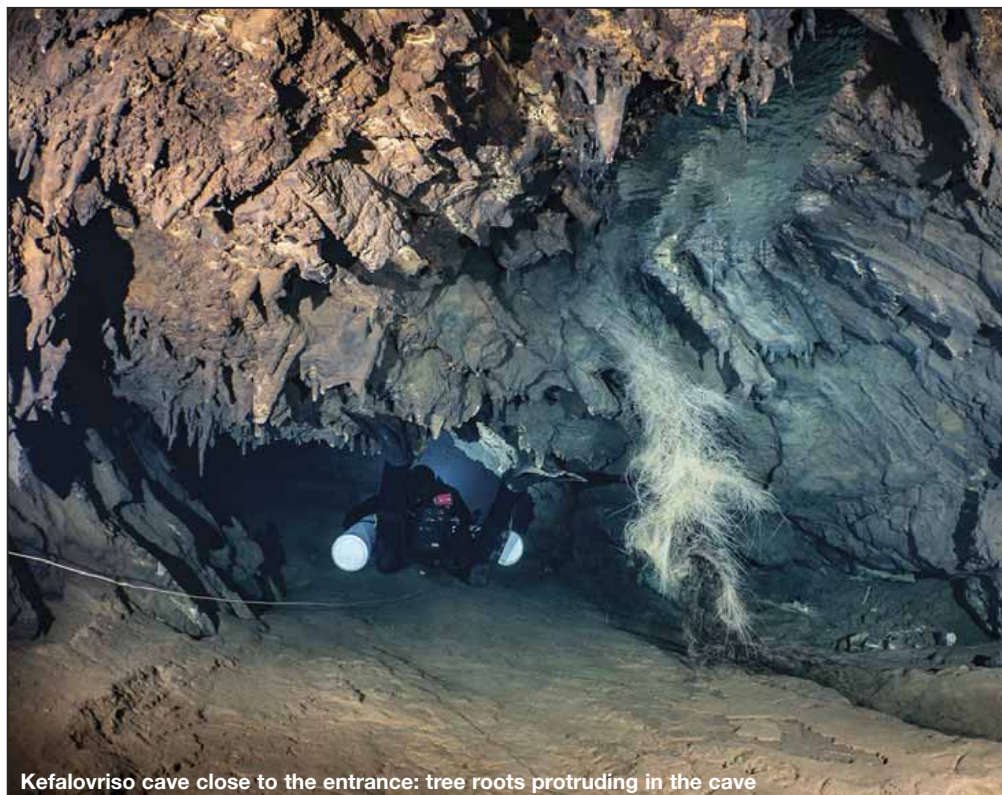
The nicely decorated walls of Arkadian Village cave

advisable to avoid the high season of the island (July-August) very popular with tourists. These islands are accessible by ferry or plane / ferry combination from Athens, Paros having its own airport. We really appreciated the typical small restaurants, with a family atmosphere, near the port of Antiparos.

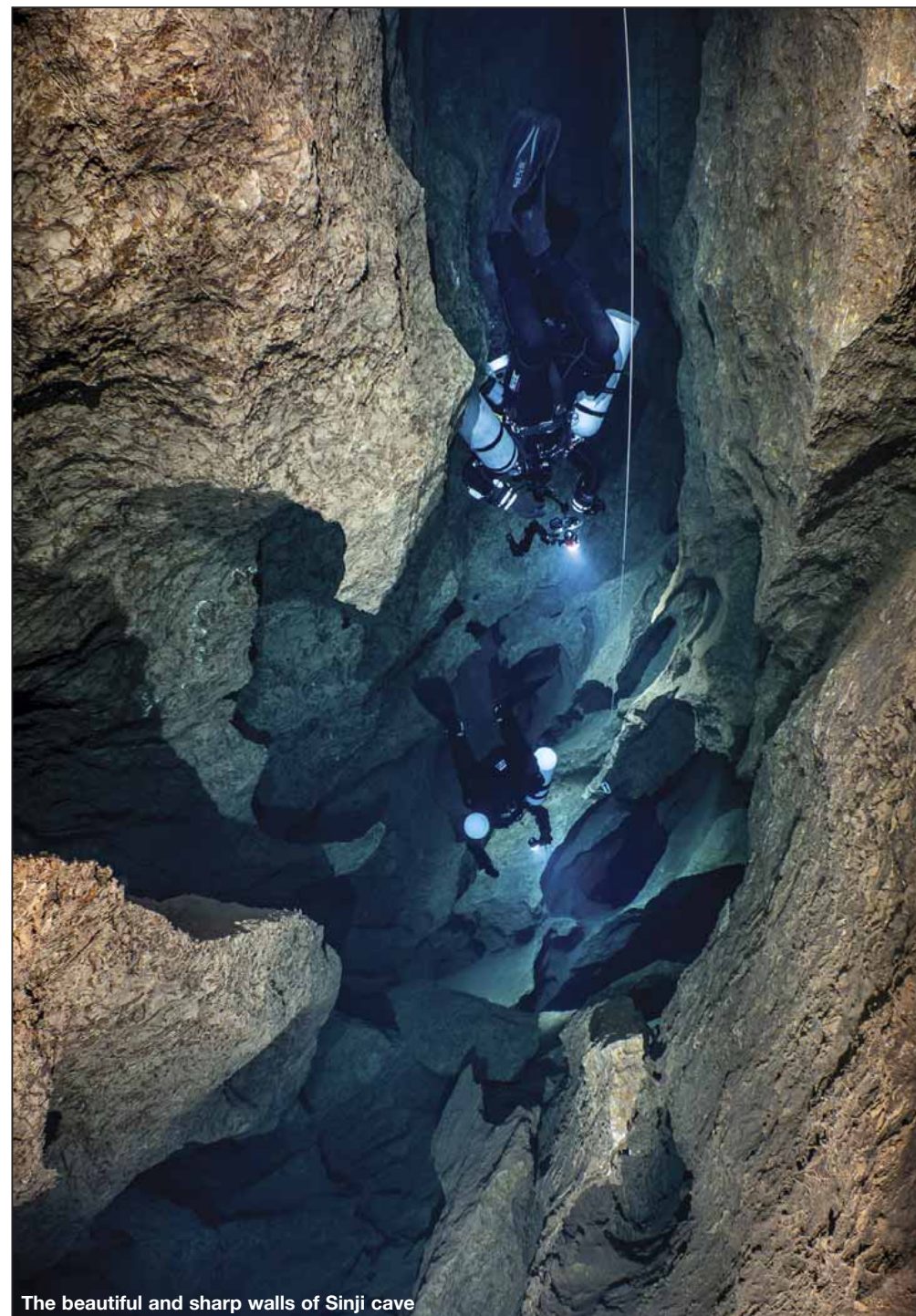
Back on the mainland, a short drive from Athens, the Peloponnese also offers some really worthwhile dive sites. I was fortunate enough to be able to discover the sites of Kefalovriso, Sinji, Arkadian Village and finally the well known Vouliagmeni Cave in Athens. Vouliagmeni is located on the outskirts of the city of Athens, about 25 minutes from the city center. The other sites are not as easily accessible because they are located between an hour forty and two and a quarter hours by road from Athens and the closest dive center. Once again, the excellent logistics and organization of Stratis made the overall planning as easy as possible. Rental cylinders, weights and a portable compressor are added to what we were able to carry

in our luggage. It is also very easy to find nice accommodation on these routes to reduce the trips between each diving day. There is not really an ideal season for these caves since the diving conditions are not influenced by the weather. That said, the dry suit remains a must for most of them. Even though the journeys to their respective entrances are short to very short, the high temperatures of the Greek summer could be unpleasant at times.

Our first dive was at the Kefalovriso cave at the foot of the mountain and the cemetery of a small village with the same name in the province of Argos. The cave has about 400 m of penetration into a more intimate cavity, without real difficulty, however this cave is located at an altitude of 750 m. The maximum depth is 28 meters, with a few air pockets and formations only at the entrance. The cave is not very large and there is a lot of percolation while the soil is made of clay in many places. We must therefore expect a return with poor visibility despite all the precautions that we



Kefalovriso cave close to the entrance: tree roots protruding in the cave



The beautiful and sharp walls of Sinji cave



Nikolaos Arkadian Village



The karst in Kefalovriso cave



The deep and unexplored section of Arkadian Village cave, with a silty bottom



The arch at Vouliagmeni cave




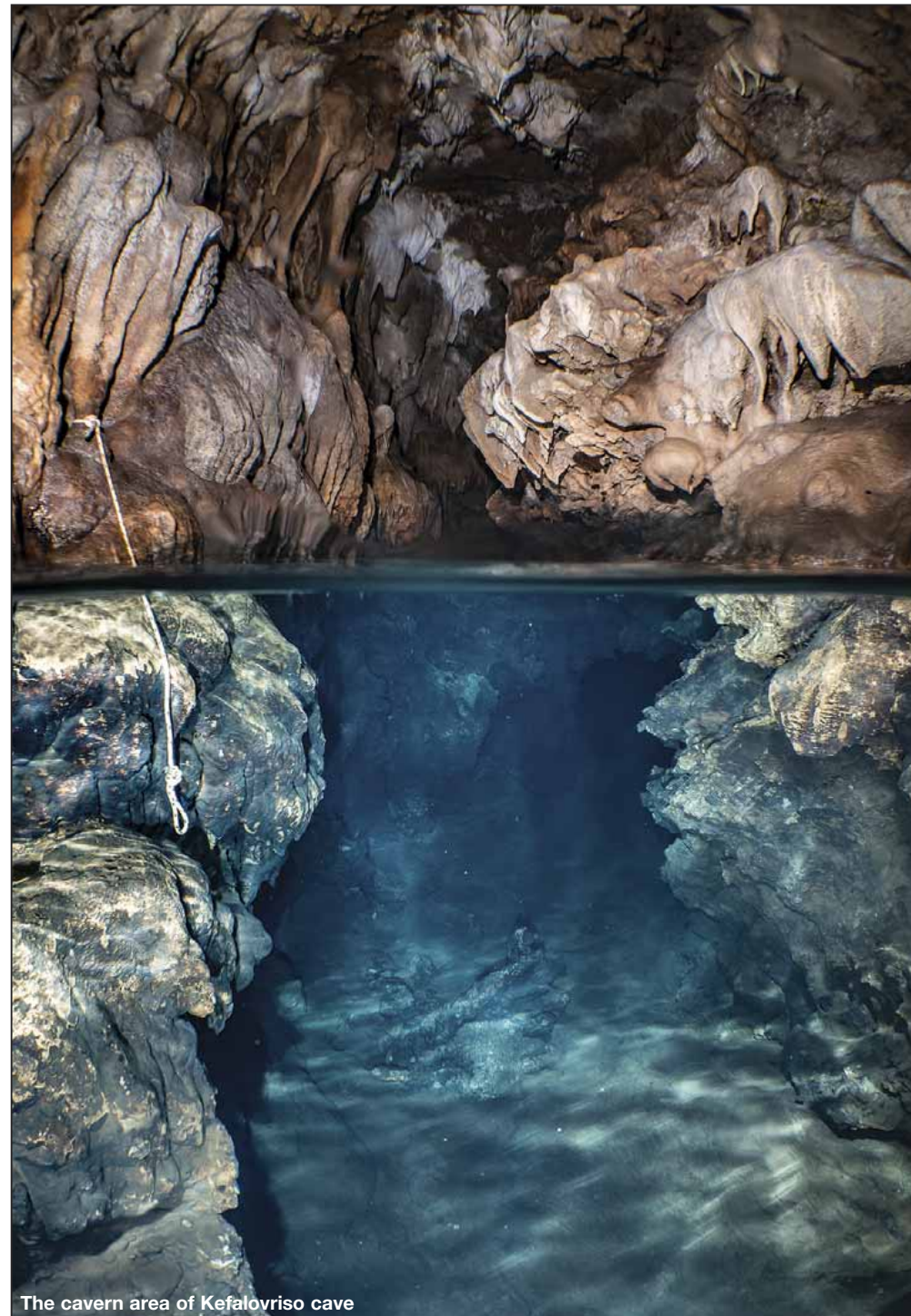
Stratis Kefalovriso



Laurent Kefalovriso entrance

could take. The water temperature is around 10 degrees. The presence of divers will certainly attract some curious locals but they are very welcoming and very motivated to promote a tourist activity in this region already known for its beautiful hikes.

About an hour from Kefalovriso, the source of Sinji is located near the village of Kandila in a plain in the mountainous province of Arcadia. The setting is splendid, even magical, and very easy to access. The very entrance to the cavity is a minor restriction but nevertheless accessible in back-mount or rebreather. It is one of the most beautiful caves in Greece. The passages are numerous and very varied, mostly at shallow depths of maximum 20 meters. However at the center of the cave (it's a circuit) two vertical wells extend to depths with unknown depths of more than 185 meters. The shapes of the walls and the variations of the passages, right from the entrance, are exceptional. The conditions are really fantastic with great visibility. The water temperature is around 10 degrees Celsius. It was near this site that we were able to fill our cylinders with our compressor while we sat down in a nice local restaurant. This unique site by its characteristics alone is worth the trip: 



The cavern area of Kefalovriso cave

one of the most beautiful places I have been able to visit.

About one and a half hours from Sinji are Arkadian Village Cave, located near a picturesque beach at the foot of the tourist village of the same name. The access is more difficult than the other sites and it can be advised to bring ropes to lower the equipment in the basin. The water is brackish and visibility is average at shallow depth due to many sediments. The very entrance to the cave is 30 meters deep and the bottom is over 56 meters.



Laurent Sinji entrance



Nikolaos Sinji entrance

The main passage measures approximately 60 by 20 meters. In depth, visibility is excellent with a discreet halocline. No doubt this cave is connected to the sea in one way or another. Small entrances are also present at the bottom of the nearby sea. The colors are very varied with whitish and bluish reflections overhanging a background covered with a fine sediment. Superb vertical walls are dotted with multiple formations surrounding a gigantic stalagmite over 20 meters high.

Closer to Athens is the tourist site of Lake Vouliagmeni. A popular spot for Athenians as a natural pool and a place to cool off on sultry summer days. This lake is the result of the collapse of a huge cave a few thousand years ago. It gives access to a cave of gargantuan proportions with 14 different passages, a maximum penetration of (not yet fully explored) 3123 meters and depths of the order of 50 to 60 up to more than 100 meters. Some passages are most likely connected to the

nearby sea. The deeper we are, the higher the temperature, with an average of about 20 degrees at the surface and 24 degrees at 40 meters. Even lower, this water heated by the bowels of the earth reaches 29 degrees. With thermal properties it is also very rich in minerals. This is a guided and paying dive under the supervision of George Vandoros. The walls although very pretty do not offer the beautiful formations of Arkadian Village but the passages are majestic and impressive due to their size, that is to say from 60 to 150 meters wide.

There still seem to be other lesser-known sites, including one worthy hope of a local cave resembling a famous prestigious site in the Caribbean, but where diving remains prohibited for the moment ... soon to follow. It is certain that cave diving has great potential in Greece as well as sea diving. On every occasion Stratis Kas was able to share with us his passion for these underground gems from a country with a rich past, while being the perfect representative of Greek hospitality and a perfect conductor. All that remains is good memories and the impatience to discover other cavities in this beautiful country where you can expect a warm wait.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Laurent Miroult is a Belgian radiologist living in Belgium and working in France. He has been diving since 1996 and is actively cave diving since 2014. Passionate for underwater photography he mostly focuses on pictures of underwater caves from all over the world. He has certifications from different agencies. You can visit his non commercial website which presents a huge number of his pictures: www.cavediving.pictures. He dives mostly in France and Florida. Cave diving is for Laurent more about contemplation than adrenaline, while



his photography is aimed at bringing back memories and showing the importance of conservation of our environment.



Exploring the depths of Hell's Hole

Story and photographs Leon Rademeyer

My feet leave the edge of the viewing platform and I am suddenly dangling in mid-air, with only my abseil lines and harness keeping me from plummeting towards the water's surface more than 30 metres below. There is a slight jolt on the main line as I am slowly lowered into the depths of Hell's Hole on the outskirts of Mount Gambier in South Australia. As I descend, the sinkhole's size becomes apparent. Measuring 45 metres across, the walls drop vertically to the water's surface, making abseiling the quickest way to access what lies beneath.

It's early morning on 27 February and I am the first of 10 CDAA divers being lowered. We are divided into three teams with each team allocated a dive time of 30 minutes before the next one enters the water. Logistically the heavy lifting and safety aspects of the operation are taken care of by the Mount Gambier and District SES Vertical Rescue

Team as part of their rescue training exercise. After a thorough safety briefing and equipment check, they manually lower us to the water's surface and haul us up again utilising an intricate pulley system.

As I reach the water's surface, I unclip the lines from my harness and wait in the water for my dive



SES crew and Meg far right



Tiny and Kelvyn with SES member centred.



Damian Bishop (middle)

gear to be lowered. It gives me time to take in my surroundings and affords me a special view from the water upwards - to where the rim of the sink-hole meets the sky. While I don my gear my two diving buddies are lowered, and we are soon ready to submerge. The water temperature is around 16C and it is murky until we drop below 15 metres where it

becomes clearer with a visibility of around 12 metres at a maximum depth of 25 metres. There are swim throughs among clumps of boulders scattered in deeper regions, but the shallower parts are littered with rotting tree debris. Those with a keen eye could come across the odd possum carcass or even spent firearm casings among other rubbish.



Meg strapped and ready to go

We surface after an enjoyable dive, send our gear up the line and wait for our turn. Since we are still wearing our abseil harnesses, we simply secure them to the lines before being hauled up. The ascent is much slower than the descent since the line on the surface has to be reset every 10 metres or so. This means we are hanging in mid-air for a

few minutes after every stop. We are grateful though, since the prospect of attempting a suspension ladder ascent at this stage is painful to say the least. Once on dry land we fall in with our SES friends to haul our buddies out. It takes around 10 people on a line to haul one diver out with relative ease.



Meg being lowered

The day comes to an end in a flash and by late afternoon everyone is packed and ready to depart. Only one quick stop to make for the cave divers on their way home, The Bellum Hotel.

- Hell's Hole is situated on a native forest reserve around 20km from Mount Gambier. The reserve and sinkhole are managed by ForestrySA. A special thank you to ForestrySA, Mount Gambier and District SES and CDAA Site Director Kelvyn Ball for making the day possible.

A thank you message from your graphics guy, Dave Bryant...

It's not often I write about the Directors of the CDAA whom over the past 20 years I have dealt with in producing Guidelines, and as I don't write an actual report I just wanted to thank Meg Anderson and the many, many, other Publications Directors and of course all other Directors throughout my time designing the magazine. In past years I have done some 'creative' design to the layout of the publication, while more recently I was requested to stick with a simplistic, formal layout for the magazine.

I can't believe it has been 20 years. We have come a long way from a B&W (commercially offset-printed) publication to the digital era where we no longer need negatives or plates, inks and clean-up, just the flick of a switch and presto, it's printed, well sort of!

As for the next Publications Director, I am here to assist and I would love to give the layout a bit more graphic licence, but we will see what happens for the December issue. Thank you for everyone's support, stories and great photos - keep them coming, thanks!

In Guidelines, future issues...



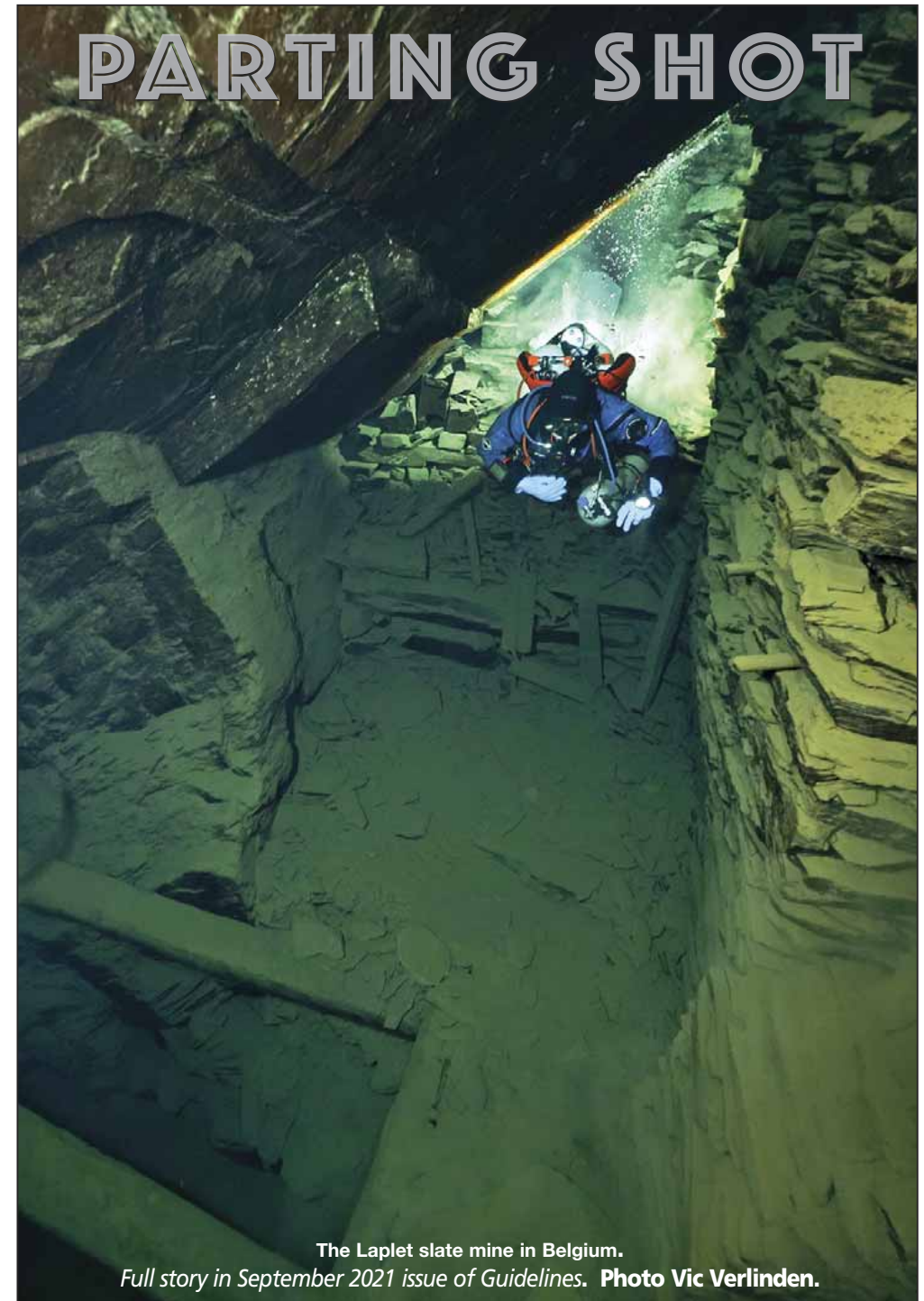
Photo Kurt Storms



Photo Guy Bryant

- 2021 AGM and Symposium
- Belgium Mine Diving with Vic Verlinden.
- Shallow Caves in Florida with Guy Bryant.
- Felicitas German Slatemine with Kurt Storms.
- Plus stacks more amazing photos & great reading!

***WE NEED MORE LOCAL STORIES TOO,
SO KEEP THEM COMING, THANK YOU!***



PARTING SHOT

The Laplet slate mine in Belgium.

Full story in September 2021 issue of Guidelines. Photo Vic Verlinden.

CDAА INSTRUCTORS

NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave
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NEW SOUTH WALES

 FEATONBY, Tim (CDAА 3327) Worwong Heights, NSW Mob: 0402 129 253 E: tim.featonby@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
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SOUTH AUSTRALIA

 PAYNE, Timothy (CDAА 2640) Mob: 0448 147 927 E: Tim@diveessentials.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
---	-----	-----	-----

VICTORIA

 BARCLAY, Gary (CDAА 1735) Mob: 0407 527 921 E: garinda@bigpond.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
---	-----	-----	-----

 BOWMAN, Jane (CDAА 1880) Mob: 0407 566 455 E: janelbowman@hotmail.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----

 CLARIDGE, Linda (CDAА 2214) Mob: 0408 052 070 E: garinda@tpgi.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----

NAME	Basic Cave	Cave	Adv. Cave
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VICTORIA Continued


 DALLA-ZUANNA, John (CDAА 236) Mob: 0407 887 060 E: jdz@paintandcustom.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----

 DALE, Steve (CDAА 3926) Mob: 0468 417 211 Email: info@extremewatersport.com.au	Yes	Yes	
--	-----	-----	--

 EDWARDS, Chris (CDAА 2247) Mob: 0417 116 372 Email: chrisedwards01@me.com	Yes		
---	-----	--	--

 MONACO, Rubens (CDAА 1731) Mob: 0413 429 533 E: info@idcscuba.com.au	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

 BICANIC, Josip (CDAА 4691) Mob: 0412 571 779 Email: joseph_b@me.com	Yes	Yes	
---	-----	-----	--

 PAYNTER, Geoff (CDAА 3784) Mob: 0407 445 112 E: gpaynter60@bigpond.com	Yes	Yes	Yes
--	-----	-----	-----

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OZTek'22 Conference - with an emphasis on technical and advanced exploration and innovation, hear presentations from the best-of-the-best, divers at the top of their chosen areas of expertise pushing boundaries below and beyond.

OZDive Expo - showcasing everything great about diving: Travel, Training, Equipment and Photography, including talks and workshops to inspire and motivate.

Pic: Alison Perkins. OZTek2019 Marine Diver Category

NEW OZTEK/OZDIVE DATES

OCT 1/2, 2022

**MELBOURNE
CONVENTION &
EXHIBITION CENTRE**

OZTek
ADVANCED DIVE CONFERENCE
OZTEK.COM.AU

OzDive '22
EXPO
OZDIVE.NET.AU