

on divers lately have been worn by professional photographers.

There are plenty of other comfortable BCs, of course. Trying on a BC in a store is

only a start. If it's too tight, or rubs something painfully, you've got the wrong one; but until you're in the water with full gear, you won't know how a BC really fits.

The Alcyone retails right at \$500, with a street price of around \$450.

The bottom line:  
Two thumbs up!



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# Dolphin Dance

## Watch What You Wish For . . . You Might Get It

*Divers who paid UNEXSO to dive with the dolphins on Grand Bahama got what they wanted, and then some. Grouped in the water, the divers watched as a dolphin came into their midst — and attacked the divemaster. As one diver described it: "It was as though the dolphin was trying to knock off his dive equipment — first his mask and then his tank." The divemaster suffered a few broken ribs.*

*Want to dive with dolphins? Sure. However, even though I've experienced this thrill in the past with no problems, I've developed a more cautious attitude after reading accounts like the one above and the one that follows.*

To the Editor:

I thought that I should share the details of a recent trip I made to Lighthouse Reef in Belize. Lighthouse is about the closest thing to a live-aboard that you can get and still sleep on land every night. The resort is located on a private island 45 miles out in the Caribbean at the outer edge of Belize's famous Barrier Reef. The island's total population consists of the 16 or so guests and approximately the same number of staff. The dive staff rated a 10 for energy, competence, and enthusiasm. The dives ranged from scores of 5 to 9, based on dive site and visibility,

which varied from 50 to 80 feet. The food was good and plentiful, and the kitchen staff responded well to special requests (even going so far as to special order an extra-fiery version of the Habanero hot sauce that they have on the tables to be flown in with the provision plane). The no-see-ums were unseen but definitely in attendance. Good repellent worked adequately.

That covers the basics. The main reason for this letter, however, is to relate the particulars of a wildlife encounter that was attitude adjusting for me and hopefully will be for *In Depth* readers as well.

One of the highly publicized added attractions to diving this remote area of Belize is Honey the dolphin. Lighthouse Reef Resort, *Wave Dancer*, and the *Belize Aggressor* all share and promote the likelihood of Honey showing up at least once during a weeklong dive with any of these operators. Honey is a bottle-nosed dolphin who is, for unknown reasons, an outcast from polite dolphin society — maybe for shoplifting, one of our group jokingly speculated. Whatever the reason for her exile, Honey is an intelligent mammal who needs socialization. Since her own kind will

have nothing to do with her, she has taken to regular and close contact with the human divers who visit the area. There are several other dolphins around the world who, apparently outcast, have taken up with humans as well.

The opportunity to get up close and personal with a dolphin in the wild is an experience about which we all dream and, frankly, it ranked right at the top of my list in determining why I chose Lighthouse Reef as my dive destination for this trip. In the orientation talk, we were briefed on Honey and were told that she gets so involved in play that she sometimes tries to prevent her playmates from leaving the water once they have tired of frolicking with her. None of us could imagine ever tiring of swimming with a dolphin.

On the third day, we were back at the resort for lunch when Honey was spotted at the boat dock swimming around the moored boat. The desirability index of food dropped off the scale immediately and everyone rushed to don snorkeling gear for a swim with Honey. The dolphin was not disturbed in the least with the horde of playmates that descended upon her. She would

rush up to each new arrival with enthusiastic, head-bobbing welcomes. She allowed and, it seemed, even encouraged physical contact. What a thrill!

We all cavorted and played in a shallow-water game of tag. For an hour at least, Honey was an equal-opportunity playmate, giving us all about equal time. By then some of the humans did, in fact, tire of the experience and our numbers began to diminish. Honey seemed not to notice. There were, after all, still plenty of friends to play with.

As time went on, the play became more physical as the number of swimmers dropped, and Honey seemed to be developing a particular attachment to Max, an Austrian in his mid-fifties traveling with his nondiving wife. Honey and Max began to get quite physical with lots of rubbing and full-body-length caresses. She would swim under Max inverted and then float up underneath him. Finally he was wrapping arms and legs around Honey in full embrace and they would roll over and over in the water. Watching them together, I began to feel quite the voyeur. Only Max, one other diver, and I remained. Honey would break from Max and come over to us but then her play was decidedly less sensual. She would quickly return to Max again and again.

I noticed that Honey had become visibly stimulated by her intimate contact with Max. Her genital area was pink and engorged with blood, looking quite swollen and prominent. For almost another half-hour this continued. Max then decided to leave the water and swam for the dive platform at the back of the boat to use the ladder. Honey positioned herself between Max and the boat, gently discouraging him from leaving. As Max's efforts

## So You Want to Be a Publisher . . .

Here's an ad that ran in the back of the October *INC.* magazine:

### Business For Sale — California Diving Magazine

**The Business:** A diving-and-travel quarterly with a circulation of 40,000, half of that from newsstand sales. Overlooking the shimmering Pacific, the 10-year-old publication is produced by three full-timers and dozens of freelance photojournalists. More than 75% of revenues come from advertisements, which occupy 37% of the magazine's pages; 400 advertisers promote everything from resorts to scuba gear. The 9,000 paid subscribers make up 11% of revenues, with newsstand business accounting for another 4%, and a trickle of dollars coming from the 2,500 copies sent to diving shops. The seller wants more freedom to pursue lifestyle goals.

#### FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	1991	1992	1993*
Gross revenues	\$310,700	\$694,600	\$324,100
Recast earnings before depreciation, interest, taxes, and owner compensation	\$41,800	\$146,900	\$106,000
			*estimated

**Price:** \$500,000 (\$350,000 down, \$150,000 note to seller)

**Outlook:** U.S. magazine-ad revenues are on the rebound. From January to June 1994, they rose 9.7% over the same period last year, with ad dollars for travel and resort periodicals decompressing at an even faster clip. The domestic sport-diving market, which has been growing 15% to 20% annually, now reaches a wet-suit crowd of 6.5 million, and each year, 700,000 are certified. Industry watchers say monthly demand for diving mags is 520,000 copies. Thing is, five other competitors already ship more than 500,000. So to lure more divers, the owner floated a successful (if costly) direct-mail campaign. By the way, sunken '93 revenues shouldn't flag a trend; ascribe them to careless bookkeeping.

**Price Rationale:** The publication's depreciables — Macintosh computers, furniture, and other publishing paraphernalia — *might* fetch \$22,000 on a good day. The real value is in the soft assets: the copyright, mailing list, seasoned office manager, dedicated (but independent) ad-sales reps. Experts say if you use a multiple of three to four times 1992 earnings — provided the magazine keeps spinning off cash — the price, which has already been slashed once, is not unreasonable.

**Pros:** You'll spend 40% of your time diving off the Virgin Islands, Fiji, Belize, and Cozumel in search of stories — and advertisers. You might become the next Cousteau . . .

**Cons:** . . . or a snack for a great white. Also, we're talking specialty publications here; *Travel & Leisure* this ain't.—*Karen E. Carney*

**INC. has no stake in the sale of this business featured [and neither does In Depth — Ed.].**

[*INC.*] cannot confirm the accuracy or the other information offered by the seller. Inquires should be directed to Business Team Inc. , 408-246-1102.

to leave became more determined, so did Honey's commitment to keeping him in the water. She was now ignoring the other two of us and aggressively nudging Max away from the boat with body and flukes. I swam forward to help Max when I saw him lifted clear out of the water to the waist by a nose butt to his ribs!

He was now bordering on panic when Honey nailed him

## The Dirty Dive Boat

While all those dive operators tout their environmental sensitivity ("Hey, you, don't touch the coral"), their boats are the biggest polluters around.

Fifty-horse motors release up to 3 pounds of hydrocarbons into the air every hour. Up to a third of the gasoline that goes through two-stroke boat engines does not burn and is released into the water, killing anything around and then evaporating into the air. You can imagine what's happening to the water and air of the Keys, Cayman, Cozumel . . .

The U.S. government is wisening up. Beginning in 1998, the EPA will require marine engine manufacturers to sell cleaner-burning boat engines. While the pollution controls will add 10-15% to the price of a boat engine, the EPA estimates that boaters will save money from a 30% increase in fuel economy and improved performance.

The EPA requirements will apply to any marine engine of 600 horsepower or less, typically found on six-pack boats in the Keys and throughout the world. Whether American manufacturers can continue to sell polluting engines abroad is unclear.

another time. It was clear that Honey was not going to let Max get on the boat. I got to Max and told him to stop trying for the boat. Swimming to shore and then walking in seemed a better plan, and I strongly suggested it to him. With me between Max and Honey, we slowly swam and then walked ashore, Honey reluctantly letting Max leave.

I have great memories of my swim with Honey and a wonderfully exciting dive story to tell during surface intervals. Max, on the other hand, got a couple of cracked ribs that kept him out of the water for the rest of the week. I'm certain that, while I at first envied Honey's preference for his company, I got the better end of the deal and learned a painless (for me) lesson.

We must never forget that dolphins are big, strong, potentially aggressive wild animals despite their permanent smiles and friendly natures. These increasingly popular underwater encounters with large wild creatures are fabulously exciting, and I will be the first to line up and sign on for every one of them. I give credit and great praise to those dedicated, professional dive operators who work hard to offer dive-of-a-lifetime experiences in safe and reasonably controlled conditions. Yet undersea wild animals are still, by definition, *wild*. They deserve the respect and caution that we would give without question to a bear or a lion. We should appreciate them at arm's length, respecting and aware of what they are. The next time I spot a manta rider or a turtle wrestler or a moray hugger, I'll look at it a little differently.

— Don Bouchard  
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