
The Return of the *Cehili*

Out of limbo, but not out of problems

As the editor of *In Depth* knows all too well, 20 divers and I rode the emotional roller coaster associated with the fate of the *Cehili* during July and August 1994. Eventually, with the help of multiple faxes, we confirmed arrangements for our trip. Mr. Thorson, the boat owner, was most accommodating. He even allowed us to board 2 days early.

On Board

The *Cehili* is spacious, to say the least. The dining room and salon easily accommodated all the passengers. There is a separate, well-stocked library, as well as two TV monitors, a VCR, and a stereo with tape and CD player. The *Cehili* now has five double rooms, four mini suites, and a master suite with separate sitting room and bedroom, all with bathrooms. The cabins are large, clean, and comfortable with daily (almost) maid service. (This was especially remarkable, as we did not sail with a full crew.) Noise from the ship is variable, with the compressors and anchor contributing the most discomfort (not a problem at night). The ride is smooth.

We had only two major problems – water and insects. The water heater was not working, and while the showers were comfortably warm, they were not hot; overall, no big deal. Arrangements were made for an electrician to investigate the problem after our cruise. A roach infestation grew worse with each passing day. I am told this is a chronic problem; it is not pleasant. More aggressive extermination is definitely indicated.

Food was plentiful but repetitious. Breakfast included cereal, toast, waffles or pancakes, and fruit, with eggs cooked to order. Lunch and dinner were virtually interchangeable. The beef satay, spring rolls, flan, and spicy shrimp were delicious but infrequent. Dinner on the last night was inedible. Alcoholic beverages were available, but in limited supply, and we were advised to bring our own. (Be advised that Indonesia limits transportation of alcohol to one liter per person.)

In the Water

Did I mention diving? This is where the *Cehili* shines. The dive deck is huge, with ample gear storage space, adequate areas for rinsing cameras and gear, and a work station for camera equipment. Unfortunately, E-6 processing was not available this trip.

Many of our dives were drift dives. We often ended up quite far from our starting point, but we were always picked up quickly once we surfaced (I used my safety sausage only once in more than 40 dives). The enthusiastic zodiac driver helped us with our gear and sped us back to the *Cehili*, where other crew

After reading our warning in the July 1994 issue about the Cehili possibly going out of service, longtime In Depth subscriber Gary Lindenbaum was in close contact with our editorial office trying to figure out whether his group would be able to stay on the Cehili or have to find an alternative. The Cehili did return to service, and I asked Gary to give us a report on the "new" Cehili.

My guess is that the Cehili picked up the bugs while in drydock in Singapore. I was on the boat earlier and never saw anything creepy crawl on board. I found the boat's spaciousness a delight, and food was four star, downgraded only because of my personal preference for more exotic, less American-style cuisine. Let's hope the current problems are temporary.

Larry Smith gets my vote for divemaster of the year. I like his style, and he has a knack for reading the water and finding the best dives in unknown areas.

I can testify that the Banda Sea diving is the better diving. Look for this region to become a new hot spot for diving — lots for fish, great coral, pelagics, unexplored, and interesting topside.

Most major wholesalers are booking the *Cehili*: try Island Dreams (800-346-6116), Tropical Adventures (800-247-3483), or Adventure Express (800-443-0799).

members carefully unloaded our dive gear and cameras. Larry Smith is an excellent divemaster; he always seemed to know whom he needed to dive with and who could dive independently. Overall, this is one of the best crews I have ever seen.

If you've never been to the Indo-Pacific, you'll find the diving in Sangihe truly awesome; if you've been here before, you may be slightly disappointed with this route. There is reef damage from dynamite fishing, and we saw only a few pelagics. However, the Bunaken wildlife preserve provided magnificent diving for both beginner and experienced divers. Healthy reefs harbored sea snakes, lionfish, jacks, wrasses, triggerfish, anemones, moray eels, giant clams, and all the usual Pacific reef inhabitants in large numbers, especially blue-spotted stin-grays. If you're wondering where all the sharks have gone, I found a large number of them (the fins, anyway) on the Chinese restaurant menus in Singapore.

My Bottom Line

Overall, the *Cehili* is a good dive boat with some growing pains. It has the potential to be a great dive boat once the bugs (no pun intended) have been worked out. Would I dive on *Cehili* again? Yes, but with a proviso: I would take the Ambon/Banda sea cruise, which I hear is much better. ■

Lie Down and Live!

When to be horizontal and helpless

The rescuers get there as soon as they can and pull some poor soul out of the water, where he's been floating for half an hour. They sit him down with a cup of hot tea — which he consumes, along with a chocolate bar.

Five minutes later, he falls over dead.

There are many historical examples of what is now being labeled “post-immersion collapse” or “post-rescue death” — victims who die *after* having been snatched from danger. A recent issue of the

SPUMS Journal reprinted an article that appeared three years ago in the *Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Service** reviewing several decades of evidence on post-immersion collapse.

Out of the Water and Into the Morgue

Testimony from the *Titanic* inquiry revealed several cases of victims who were pulled from the water onto lifeboats, only to die promptly thereafter. Similar reports exist from naval catastrophes during World War I.

In World War II, men and women were again cast into cold water in large numbers, and just as in World War I, many of them didn't survive much longer than the time it took to bring them back onto another vessel. This time around, however, record-keeping must have been better. Allied medical reports warned about this “danger for shipwreck survivors,” which often seemed related to immersion in cold water, although others died after being rescued conscious and active from water as warm as 65°F.

Death by Sling

Golden, Hervey, and Tipton, the authors of the Royal Navy Medical Service article, cite more recent examples associated with rescue by helicopter. It turns out that a large