

THE **REEF** SEEKER



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THE REEF SEEKERS DIVER STIMULUS PACKAGE

Everyone else is getting an economic stimulus package, so why not divers too? (I was going to call this "Cash for Plunkers" - which I still like as a name - but then I'd have to hope you understand that you "plunk" into the water, etc., etc.) On it's most basic level we can say this: Reef Seekers is reducing the prices on all of our remaining local boat trips for 2009.

Pricing out trips is not as easy and straight-forward as it may sound. You have to take into account what the boat is charging you (varies by destination and vessel), add in what you think is a fair profit (we aim for 20% but it usually comes in at 12-15%), factor in credit card fees (another 3% for us), and then try to guess as to whether or not you'll fill the boat (less people means a higher per head price).

Ours gets even more complicated because we have our Early Purchase (cheaper) price and our Regular Price, and we also have the Reef Saver/Club 10% discount to factor in as well. So there are really four different prices for us for any trip (1) Early Purchase, (2) Early Purchase with Reef Saver/club discount, (3) Regular, and (4) Regular with Reef Saver/club discount.

Our goal is to reward those of you who commit early &/or who are regular divers with us. It definitely makes the pricing formulas more complicated. And if you just look at our "Regular" price and nothing else, it makes us seem more expensive than most. But we think overall, it's a fair price formula that works especially well for those who frequently dive with Reef Seekers.

All that being said, we're going to try to do better and we're dropping prices for the rest of the year. As many of you who have been on our boats lately know, we've run a lot of light loads. Sometimes, we've taken it in the shorts and literally lost money on trips. We know times are tough for everyone. So we're going to drop prices a bit in hopes that it makes it more affordable for some of you who haven't been able to dive or haven't been able to dive as often. It definitely makes it a little dicier for us as our break-even point (in terms of number of divers) rises, but we're committed to giving this a shot.

Here are the key changes:

- **The Regular Price on all trips decreases by \$20**
- **The Early Purchase Price on all trips drops by \$10**
- **Early Purchase Price is now good up until 7 days before the trip (it was 14 days)**
- **The difference between Early Purchase and Regular pricing is now \$5 (it was \$15)**
- **Reef Saver and Club discounts (an additional 10% off) still apply to both prices**
- **A list of affiliated clubs is now on our schedule (see page 3 in this newsletter)**

We know this is an expensive adventure sport but we're doing what we can. Obviously, the boats and the shops are businesses that need to make a profit. We know you understand that. So hopefully this helps a bit. In the immortal words of Mad Man Muntz (a 50s-era LA car dealer in his TV ads): "I'm losing money on every deal . . . but I make it up in volume!"

So let's go diving!!! Give us a call at 310/652-43990 and let's get you signed up.



THE JOYS OF YAP

I really like diving in Yap. First of all, they speak English there, which is always a help since that's all I can speak (since Pig Latin doesn't really count as a second language). Second, the place is amazingly friendly. Third, they have a very interesting culture and history. But more importantly, the diving can be simply spectacular.

In Yap, we get to do the following:

- Observe enormous Mantas getting cleaned inches away from your nose
- Watch tiny Mandarinfish mate nightly right in front of you
- Explore nearby "muck" reefs for strange & unusual critters
- Enjoy the pristine coral and exploding marine life of the southern reef walls
- Watch as dozens of sharks come in from azure blue water on the best shark feed in the world
- Stay at what is (IMHO) hands-down the finest dive resort in the world

I still need to firm up the exact dates but we're going back to Yap in July of 2010. The plan is for it to be a full week in Yap with six days of diving. With travel it's a 9-day trip, leaving LAX on Friday morning, arriving in Yap Saturday night, diving Sunday-Friday, exploring

Yap by land on Saturday, flying out in the wee hours of Sunday morning and - with the aid of the International Dateline - returning to LAX early on the same Sunday morning.

It's also possible, since you've already traveled that far, to tack on an extra week somewhere else nearby. Palau & Truk (Chuuk) are the two that immediately come to mind but the Philippines, Kosrae, and even Guam are also possibilities. The extra time could be scheduled either before or after our week in Yap.

I don't have firm pricing yet as a lot of that depends on airfare which can fluctuate wildly. A "good" price is around \$1700 and it can go as high as \$2400. So if this is a trip you're interested in, the sooner you let me know and the sooner we lock in airfares the better off for all concerned. With the diving, land stuff, crew tips, etc., the total cost (including air) is usually around \$4000-4500.

But it's great trip and one you should definitely consider. This will mark my 6th trip to Yap and - as I frequently say about many dive spots - I wouldn't keep going back if it wasn't worth it. I hope you can join me.

HOW TO STOP A FREE-FLOW

We had an interesting and potentially dangerous situation happen on our recent dive at Santa Barbara Island. On the first dive, one of our divers had her octopus start free-flowing as she neared the bottom at 80 feet. She couldn't get it to stop. In a fairly short amount of time (a few minutes) it depleted her tank.

Now before we go any further, we give kudos to Reef Seekers staff DM Jan Larson. Jan was not diving with this group but happened to be nearby, saw what was going on, and immediately came to the diver's aid with an octopus offering. So the diver was on Jan's octo while the tank was being depleted. Jan and the diver made a normal ascent - with a safety stop - and then came back to the boat. (And if you've ever wondered why we have three DMs who actually dive on each trip, it's for things like this.)

We couldn't find anything wrong with the octo on the boat (and on a subsequent dive with me), so the logical assumption is that it probably was possible to stop the free-

(continued on page 4)

DIVING VACATIONS

October 11-18 • Sea of Cortez

**February 7-13, 2010 • Florida
(Manatees & Caverns)**

May 21-29, 2010 • Bonaire



**IMPORTANT STUFF
YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Tickets are fully refundable with 14 days or more notice.
8-13 days notice, future trip credit.
7 days or less, no refund/credit.
But if we sell spot, refund is issued.

All diving must be done within recreational sport diving limits: depths 130' or less, no-deco bottom times, with standard compressed air used as a breathing gas.

Limit one scuba tank per diver.
Pony bottles do not count as a second tank.

All of our *Great Escape* trips have a limited number of staterooms (bunks with a door), reservable for \$10/diver extra.

Boat landings & locations:
Cee Ray - Queen's Wharf (LB)
Great Escape - Queen's Wharf (LB)
Sea Bass - Ports O' Call (SP)
Driving directions on our website.

Phone reservations are accepted on all trips and will be held for up to 72 hours.

After that time, unpaid reservations can be cancelled without notice.

All destinations are dependent on weather and may be changed at our sole discretion w/out notice.

You must show your certification card at sign-in.
No c-card, no scuba diving.

A general briefing is conducted on each trip and is mandatory for all divers.

We generally try to offer 4 dives on all trips but sometimes, due to various circumstances, we may only be able to offer 3.



**REEF SEEKERS DIVE CO.
NEW LOWER PRICING!!!
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER, 2009
Also on-line: www.reefseekers.com**

Prices listed are for early purchase (spots must be *paid in full* 7 days or more prior to the trip) and regular purchase (paid in full less than 7 days before trip). Early Purchase saves you \$5. Reef Saver discounts (10%) apply to both prices.

Reservations: (310)652-4990

(If you get the machine, please leave a message.)

All trips include food, sodas, up to 3 airfills

**NEED RENTAL GEAR? GET A 20% DISCOUNT AT
HOLLYWOODIVERS, OCEAN ADVENTURES, & SCUBA HAUS
(SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY)**

DAY	DATE	BOAT	INTENDED DESTINATION
Sunday	Sept. 13	Great Escape	Catalina (West End)
		Early Purchase (thru 9/6)	\$130 / \$117.00 (Reef Saver/club)
		Regular price (9/7-13)	\$135 / \$121.50 (Reef Saver/club)
Saturday	Sept. 26	Great Escape	San Clemente (Frontside)
		Early Purchase (thru 9/19)	\$155 / \$139.50 (Reef Saver/club)
		Regular price (9/20-26)	\$160 / \$144.00 (Reef Saver/club)
Sunday	Oct. 18	Great Escape	Farnsworth/Catalina back
		Early Purchase (thru 10/11)	\$140 / \$117.00 (Reef Saver/club)
		Regular price (10/12-18)	\$145 / \$121.50 (Reef Saver/club)
Saturday	Oct. 31	Great Escape	Santa Barbara Island
		Early Purchase (thru 10/24)	\$150 / \$135.00 (Reef Saver/club)
		Regular price (10/25-31)	\$155 / \$139.50 (Reef Saver/club)
Saturday	Nov. 14	Sea Bass	Oil Rigs (limited load)
		Early Purchase (thru 11/7)	\$135 / \$121.50 (Reef Saver/club)
		Regular price (11/8-14)	\$140 / \$136.00 (Reef Saver/club)
Sunday	Dec. 6	Great Escape	San Clemente (Pyramid)
		Early Purchase (thru 11/29)	\$155 / \$139.50 (Reef Saver/club)
		Regular price (11/30-12/6)	\$160 / \$144.00 (Reef Saver/club)

TO GET THE 10% DISCOUNT, BUY A REEF SAVER CARD FOR \$50.
IT'S GOOD FOR ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF PURCHASE.

OR BE A MEMBER OF AN AFFILIATED DIVE CLUB.

A PARTIAL LIST: Aquarium of the Pacific Dive Team, Barnacle Busters,
Blue Water Divers, Burbank Dive Club, Douglas Dive Club,
LABUE, Laguna Sea Dwellers, Lost Patrol, Pacific Explorers,
Sole Searchers, West LA Dive Club

Thanks for choosing Reef Seekers

flow. So I thought I'd write this with a few tips:

1. Realize that ANY regulator can free-flow. Regulators are designed to fail "open".
2. Once a reg starts free-flowing, it will continue to do so unless YOU do something. It won't stop on its own.
3. If you can't immediately get it to stop, you need to go on someone's alternate air &/or begin an immediate ascent to the surface,
4. You can breathe off a free-flowing reg if necessary. (You can even practice this by using the reg's purge button.)
5. Smack the reg into your palm to dislodge anything that might be inside.
6. Face the regulator mouthpiece

straight down which frequently stops the free-flow.

7. You can also seal up the mouthpiece with your hand while facing it down to try to get it to stop.
8. Don't waste too much time as you're depleting your air supply rapidly.
9. If you do get it to stop while at depth, look at your air and decide if you have enough to continue the dive or if you should ascend and abort.

Free-flows happen and it's not the end of the world . . . as long as you deal with it promptly. The biggest thing to remember is that your air supply is quickly going away. Get back to the boat and give the reg and good going-through to make sure the free-flow won't be a recurring problem.

WARMER WATER???

All I can tell you is that the water was warm enough at Santa Barbara this past weekend that I dove in my 3mm jumpsuit instead of my full 7mm suit. Granted, I also wore my 7mm drysuit hood and while I could feel the chill of the water, it was certainly tolerable. Best of all, I shed 8 pounds due to the less-thick suit I was wearing.

The point of this is that (1) the water really does seem to (finally) be warming up and (2) as we get some warmer water, you might want to think about adjusting what you're wearing. In diving, "less" is always more (except for air) and if you can shed some neoprene and weight, you'll probably have a more relaxed, enjoyable dive.

PICTURE PAGE - The joys of diving

(All pix by Ken Kurtis © 2009)



***Doing good deeds
at the Avalon Cleanup***



P.O. Box 11634
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

WWW.REEFSEEKERS.COM



***"Enjoying" the
challenge of rocks***



***Shared experiences
underwater***



***Hanging out
with old friends . . .***



***. . . and making
new acquaintances.***