

**In this Guide You will Learn:**

- 3 Common Misconceptions About Diving**
- 5 Things Everyone Should Know Before Taking a Diving Course**
- How to Avoid 4 Dive Industry Rip Offs**
- The 6 Hidden Secrets About Dive Instructors and Facilities**
- 4 Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Dive Facility**
- Why You Want a Professional Dive Facility**

# Your Adventure Awaits...

## *A Consumer's Guide to Recreational Scuba Diving Instruction*

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- How to Avoid 4 Dive Industry Rip Offs
- The 6 Hidden Secrets About Dive Instructors and Facilities
- 4 Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Dive Facility
- Why You Want a Professional Dive Facility

A Report By:

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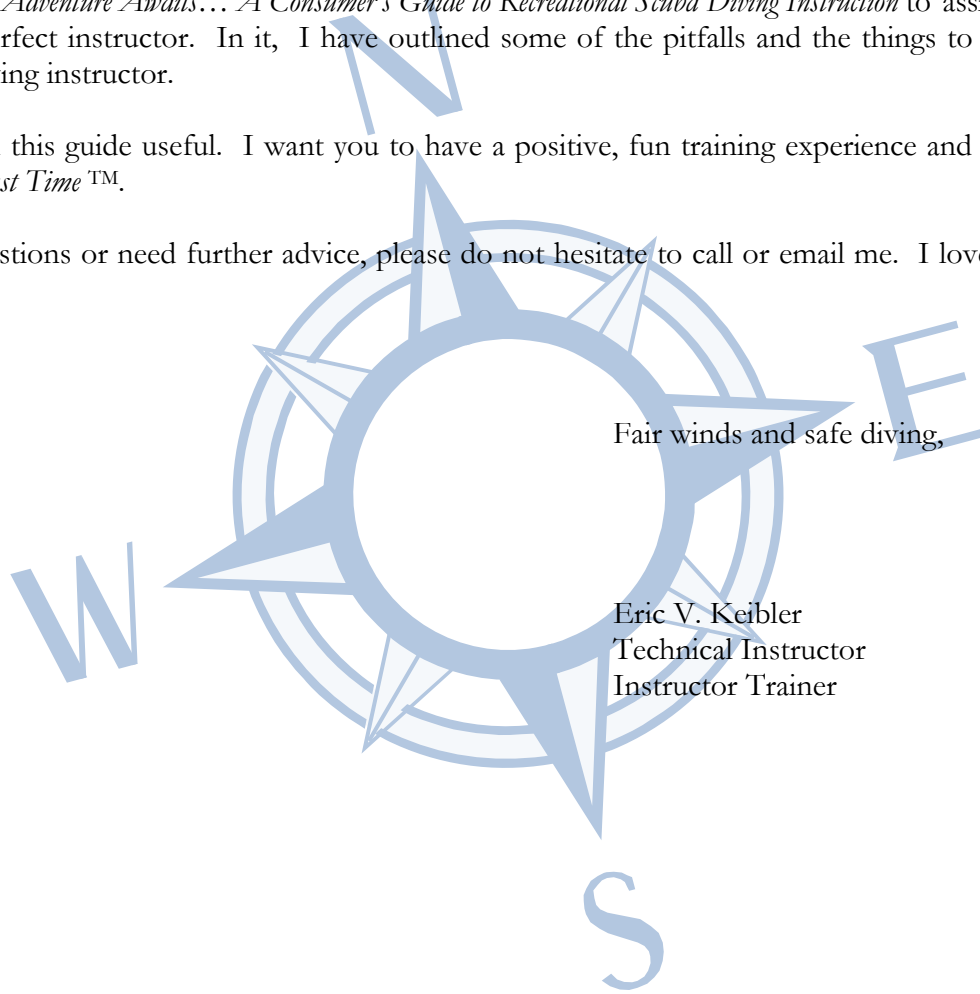
**Congratulations on taking the first step to a new adventure!** There is nothing like floating in a endless sea, the blue water spreading all around you, the fish and undersea creatures performing their special dances for you — dazzling you with every movement.

The underwater world is an exciting place full of mystery and beauty occupying men's minds for centuries. Who could forget the fantastic adventures of Captain Nemo in the *Nautilus* or the escapades of Lloyd Bridges and the secrets uncovered by Jacques Cousteau? Who did not swim with Marlin as he left on a journey to find Nemo encountering sharks, jellyfish and turtles along his way? This is the world scuba divers enter on a regular basis and the world you are about to enter into.

Diving into this hidden realm is a trip few have the privilege to make, and you are about to be one of the lucky ones. There are a number of things to consider in Scuba Diving Instruction and to make your journey easier, I have prepared *Your Adventure Awaits... A Consumer's Guide to Recreational Scuba Diving Instruction* to assist you in your quest to find the perfect instructor. In it, I have outlined some of the pitfalls and the things to look for when selecting a scuba diving instructor.

I hope you will find this guide useful. I want you to have a positive, fun training experience and to make scuba diving a *Life Time Past Time*™.

If you have any questions or need further advice, please do not hesitate to call or email me. I love talking about Neptune's Realm!



Fair winds and safe diving,

Eric V. Keibler  
Technical Instructor  
Instructor Trainer



**Professional Diving Instruction, Equipment Sales & Repairs, and Travel**

# Eric V. Keibler



## DIVING CERTIFICATIONS

IANTD Expedition Trimix Instructor  
IANTD CCR Trimix Instructor Trainer Trainer  
IANTD CCR Trimix Instructor  
IANTD CCR Normoxic Trimix Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Rebreather Instructor Trainer - Inspiration  
IANTD Rebreather Instructor Trainer - O2ptima  
IANTD Adv. EANx Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Adv, Recreational Trimix Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Technical Instructor  
IANTD Inspiration Rebreather Instructor  
IANTD KISS Rebreather Instructor  
IANTD Dolphin Rebreather Instructor  
IANTD LSS Service Technician Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Deep Air & Advanced EANx Instructor

SSI Instructor Trainer  
SSI Dive Control Specialist Instructor

Medic First Aid Oxygen Instructor  
Medic First Aid Bloodborne Pathogens Instructor

NASDS Open Water Instructor Trainer  
NASDS Open Water Instructor  
TDI Extended Range Instructor  
TDI Advanced EANx Instructor  
SDI Open Water Instructor  
DAN Oxygen Instructor

IANTD CCR Trimix Diver  
IANTD Multi Stage Cave Diving  
IANTD Technical EANx Diver  
IANTD Rebreather Diver - Dolphin  
NASDS Dive Supervisor  
NASDS Expert Diver  
NASDS Open Water Diver

IANTD Trimix Diver  
IANTD Cave Surveying  
IANTD Rebreather Diver—Sentinel  
IANTD EANx Diver  
NASDS Oxygen Provider  
NASDS Advanced Open Water Diver  
NASDS Adv. Open Water Diver

IANTD Trimix Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Trimix Instructor  
IANTD Normoxic Trimix Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Rebreather Instructor Trainer - Evolution  
IANTD Normoxic Trimix Instructor  
IANTD Blender Instructor Trainer  
IANTD Normoxic Trimix CCR Instructor  
IANTD Sentinel Rebreather Instructor  
IANTD O2ptima Rebreather Instructor  
IANTD Sport KISS Rebreather Instructor  
IANTD Trimix Blender Instructor  
IANTD EANx Blender Instructor  
IANTD EANx Instructor

SSI Platinum 1000 Instructor  
SSI Advanced Open Water Instructor

Medic First Aid AED Instructor  
React Right First Aid & CPR Instructor

NASDS Master Open Water Instructor

TDI Technical EANx Instructor  
TDI Gas Blending Instructor  
SDI CPR & Emergency Oxygen Instructor

IANTD Trimix/EANx Blender  
IANTD EANx Cave Diver  
IANTD Rebreather Diver - Inspiration  
DAN Oxygen Provider  
PADI Rescue Diver  
NASDS Open Water Diver

## BIOGRAPHY

Eric Keibler and his wife, Ann, own Oceanic Ventures, Inc., a professional scuba diving education, equipment sales, repair and travel company located in Houston, Texas. Eric has been diving since 1982 and has been involved in diving instruction since 1988.

He is a graduate of Texas Tech University and is a Certified Public Accountant. As an auditor and a Computer Audit Specialist with Deloitte Haskins and Sells (now Deloitte & Touche), he worked with numerous small and medium sized companies. He also served as the Assistant Manager of Finance and the Employee Benefit Manager for the Baker & Botts law firm. Additionally, his past includes service as the Controller of a small services firm and a small business consultant.

His love of diving led him into the education field as a part-time instructor and later as a full-time professional instructor. He has trained students from ages 12 to 65 in all levels of diving from open water to instructor. He is a certified Advanced Nitrox Instructor Trainer, and in addition to teaching open water and continuing education courses, he is in charge of the company's technical diving and instructor development programs. Eric also serves as the Gulf Coast Regional Director of the United States Deep Diving Team, a national organization of technical divers involved in a variety of exploration projects.

When he is not at the store or diving, you will find him enjoying a fresh breeze aboard his Beneteau First 38 *Grand Cru*. His love of sailing began in Lubbock but he soon discovered Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. His long term plans include sailing and diving full time in the Pacific.

Eric is a member of the International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers Board of Advisors. Additionally, he is the co-founder of the United States Deep Diving Foundation, a non-profit corporation, and serves as one of its officers and directors. He is a published author and a professional photographer.

His diving travels have taken him all over the Caribbean and to the South Pacific. His diving experience also includes numerous Texas lakes, caves and other sites in Florida, and various dive spots in the Gulf of Mexico. He is a trained spear fisherman and boat captain.

**Oceanic Ventures**

*...your door to adventure!*

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## Your Adventure Awaits...

Have you ever watched a small child play in the park for the first time? Think back to that time and look at that small boy or girl. Do you see how excited she is? Watch him as he runs through the grass and stops just as quickly as he started to look at a leaf that has fallen. A moment more and he is off, chasing a butterfly, and then a puff of wind and a grasshopper catches his attention. Hopping along after the insect he soon notices a flower swaying in the wind. The fragrance of the newly opened bud floats by and creates another memory to be

recalled again and again. A moment more, he is off again.

This small child is off on an adventure, an adventure of discovery. He or she is experiencing the world with all of the senses, the sight of a butterfly, the smell of a rose, the feel of a leaf, the sound of the wind rustling through the trees—all creating memories and impressions. Now watching this child, do you remember when you looked at the world with a sense of wonder and awe? Can you remember the last time you experienced a new smell, a soft touch or an animal you have never seen before?

Do you miss seeing the world through a child's eyes—looking at a world where everything is new and exciting? Many underwater explorers have reawakened those feelings and seek to fill that need in a fun and exciting way through scuba diving.

There is a whole new world underwater, a world waiting to be discovered and to be experienced. Learning to be an underwater explorer is easier than you think.

## Three Common Misconceptions about Diving

Diving is a lifetime pastime, available to the entire family at all ages. However, many people have some misconceptions about scuba diving such as:

### **I don't know how to swim, so I could never become a snorkeler or scuba diver.**

Over the years, I have worked with a number of people who believed they could not swim well enough to learn to snorkel or scuba dive. And, while diving requires some swimming abilities, it does not require that you be able to swim a mile or race to the finish. I have found that most people can swim well enough to start diving and that as they continue as a diver, their swimming ability improves. For those few individuals who never learned to swim, there are ways to incorporate swimming instruction into the curriculum so you have fun while learning.



### **I am too old to learn to dive.**

While diving is a physical activity, there are various levels of diving activity and dive locations with entries and exits to accommodate different levels of activity and skill. I have trained people who were starting a new lifetime pastime, after they retired from the day-to-day workforce.

Several years ago, I had a student who was getting certified as a diver so she could dive on her honeymoon with her new husband in Grand Cayman. She was 66 and had just retired from Shell Oil and was marrying a wonderful man of 70 who was an active diver.

### **I do not have time.**

People today are busier than at any other point in our history. We all have business and family commitments occupying large portions of our schedules. And, diving is no different. There is a commitment of time required to learn to dive. However, shortening this time too much leaves you little time to assimilate the material and skills. A course that is too short also makes it difficult for you get completely comfortable with the skills prior to attending an open water evaluation session much less your first dive without the watchful eyes of your instructor.

A well-designed and executed scuba program should be a compromise between the time commitment required and the time it takes you to get comfortable with the material and skills. For most people, this is a four-to-five-week course that meets twice a week, usually in the evenings. By spreading the course out, you will have time to read and internalize the reading materials and have ample time to learn and perfect the skills necessary to venture into the undersea world.



While your instructor cannot make time in your schedule, he or she can certainly build a program to fit into your schedule. Carl Griffing, another instructor, had to work around the activity schedules of three busy teenagers and their mother who ran carpool for these kids and a younger daughter. He accommodated their schedule by holding class a few Saturday mornings and several pool sessions on Sundays in the family's pool. By using their pool and some weekend timeslots, the entire group was certified and ready for an overseas trip to Australia.

If time is a problem, your instructor should be able to arrange a course to meet your time parameters, while still providing you with quality instruction that focuses on safety, comfort and enjoyment. Expect nothing less.

## **Five Things Everyone Should Know Before Taking a Diving Course**

Like any industry or activity, there are instructional programs and facilities at both ends of the quality scale. So before enrolling in a scuba diving program or a snorkeling program, you should make sure the facility you work with and the instructor you hire meets some minimum standards.



### What are the Instructor's credentials?

When you enroll in a Scuba Diving program, you trust your instructor to have the knowledge and perception to understand your concerns and to help you learn to be a safe and skilled diver. An instructor with both diving experience and training is important. You should ask about the instructor's teaching credentials. Are they certified to teach the type of training you want? Do they have advanced instructor and diver ratings, or are they a relatively new diver and instructor with little or no experience?

Dedicated divers and instructors are always learning. Does your potential instructor believe in continuing education enough to keep learning personally? It has been said that if you are ripe and know it all, you are dying. Is your instructor ripe, or are they green and growing? Someone who enjoys learning is more fun to spend time with because they also enjoy teaching and helping you grow.

Another aspect of an instructor's credentials is experience. Does the instructor dive for pleasure or does he only teach? While teaching others to dive is very rewarding, it is also limiting. A well-rounded instructor dives for his own pleasure and to refresh his outlook on the underwater world. Someone who only teaches and rarely dives outside of a teaching situation will pass on little real experience to his students.

### Is the course setup as a complete course?



As strange as it sounds, many courses are setup to simply teach you to dive, not to help you become a diver. While this is a subtle distinction, it is an important one. A complete course that is designed to help you become a diver focuses not only on the basic knowledge that you need to enter the underwater world, but also teaches you the skills you will need, assists you in selecting the proper equipment necessary, and focuses on gaining experiences to make your diving adventures fun and enjoyable.

You can think of the concept of a complete safe diver program as a diamond. If one of the sides is missing or incomplete, the safe diver diamond does not exist. A program that focuses on all sides helps you to become a diver.

An open water course is also just the beginning. A successful instructor also helps his students expand their horizons through continuing education courses and by providing them with diving experiences.

Through continuing education programs, you increase your knowledge base. By traveling and diving, you expand your experiences, skills and knowledge. All of these contribute to your becoming a diver.



**Since diving is an equipment intensive sport, is the instructor willing and able to work with me personally to find equipment that is of good quality, safe, fits me and is appropriate for the style of diving I am planning to participate in?**

As I noted earlier, equipment is one part of the Safe Diver Diamond. Exploring the world under the surface of the ocean requires that you take your own life support system with you. And, since you are depending on it to take you under and return you to the surface, it is important to have a professionally fitted Total Diving System.

Your instructor should take the time to listen to your diving dreams. You have an idea of where you want to go with your new lifetime pastime, and your instructor should be able to help you get there and to help identify the equipment you will need to reach your dreams.

It is important that the instructor take the time necessary to work with you personally to find equipment that fits you and is both safe and durable. A professional scuba instructor will take the time to explain what you need to become a diver and will help you assemble a dive system that is the best value for your investment. Additionally, the same instructor will work with you as you progress through class to make sure the equipment you selected fits and works for you. If it does not work, he should be able to exchange it for you until you both are satisfied with the fit and function of every piece of equipment.

### **What if my schedule changes; can the instructor accommodate the changes?**

We live in an ever-changing world and while you may have every intention of attending every class session, “life happens,” and your schedule may change. Like you, your instructor has a schedule, but a professional instructor should have some mechanism to work with changes in your schedule. Whether it is bringing in an assistant to work with you one-on-one to get you back on track, or scheduling extra sessions to work around your schedule, your instructor should be able to accommodate some schedule changes.

Professional instructors have successfully integrated diving into the lives of busy professionals from doctors and lawyers to managers and CEO’s. As the saying goes, “where there is a will there is a way.” Your instructor should be able to help you reach your goals while working with your schedule and travel plans. Just remember to leave enough time to learn; becoming a diver does not happen overnight.

Keep in mind, if time is a problem, a professional instructor should be able to arrange a course to meet your time parameters, while still providing you with quality instruction that focuses on safety, comfort and enjoyment. Again, expect nothing less.

### **What about Me?**

Some instructors and dive facilities try to compensate for low class fees by increasing the class size and decreasing the personal time spent with the students. This maximizes their efficiency while minimizing your individual needs.

A good quality scuba program keeps the class sizes small and builds in time for your instructor to learn more about you and your needs, desires and wants. You are more than a number, and you should expect your scuba instructor to assist you in achieving your diving goals. This learning process should include some time before the program starts to help you understand what the course involves and what your commitments will be. It should also include some time during the program to let you ask questions and to let your instructor help you with the learning process. To assure that all four sides of the Safe Diver Diamond are being met requires some one-on-one time with your instructor.

## How to Avoid Four Dive Industry Rip-offs

Let's face it; in any industry there are individuals and stores that have borrowed from the old aluminum siding salesperson's playbook. They make offers they can't meet, offer attractive pricing with hidden charges and take your money with no easy means of getting back. So how do you find the diamond in the rough? Look for a caring person and a quality program. And, make yourself aware of the common tactics used in the diving business.

### Low Class Price

Many dive instructors and dive stores advertise a low class price. What you will discover, usually after you have enrolled in the course is that there are hidden fees. They will often charge you extra for books, logbooks and other educational materials, certification materials and open water sessions. Additionally, in these courses, there is little flexibility to accommodate busy schedules, illnesses or other issues that arise with many families. And when life does happen, there will often be an additional fee to reschedule the missed sessions.

### All you need is a swimsuit and a towel...

Instructors and dive stores that advertise "all you need is a swimsuit and a towel," are not really offering you a quality experience. They have a selection of fins and masks that are often low-quality, old and in disrepair. Unless you have the "universal face," you may find it difficult to find a mask that fits. Additionally, if you do find a mask that will work, a snorkel that doesn't have too much mold in it, a pair of dive booties that are not too disgusting, and a set of fins that might work, you will have to repeat this drill every time you attend a pool class and an open water session. And, we have not even considered wearing rental wetsuits, which is like wearing someone else's underwear after two other people have worn them.



Most people find that having their own personally fitted Total Diving System makes the course safer and more enjoyable. Because your equipment is the same each pool session and during the open water evaluation session, most people find that they can concentrate on the course and the skills being taught. A full-service dive facility should be able to assist you with the fitting and assembly of your own

personally fitted Total Diving System within your budget. Additionally, by having your own personally fitted System you are one step closer to becoming a diver rather than just learning to dive.

### **You should only buy this brand of equipment...**

Many people are brand conscious and believe in purchasing only one name brand line of products, and diving manufacturers have tried hard to build this brand loyalty to their equipment lines. However, each manufacturer has a wide variety of products in their line that vary in fit and quality. Since you are assembling a life support system, it is important to purchase items that fit you and your diving goals rather than to blindly purchase a specific brand. Your instructor and other personnel at a full-service dive facility can select from a variety of manufacturers' products to find the best mix of equipment to provide comfort, quality and value to fit in your budget to achieve your adventure goals.

### **You can complete your course in a weekend...**

We are all busy people with schedules that are full of business and family engagements; but, completing a scuba course in weekend is simply dangerous. While learning to scuba dive is not necessarily difficult, it does involve entering a world devoid of air, with a life support system on your back. I find most divers need some time to assimilate the skills and material. I also find that by taking more time up front in the learning stages, you will be more comfortable and will enjoy your first trip rather than just surviving your diving experience. Remember, there is a difference in becoming a diver as opposed to merely learning to dive.

## **The Six Hidden Secrets about Dive Instructors and Facilities**

Borrowing from the old siding salesman's playbook again, some facilities have covered some of their flaws with a thin veneer. Visiting the facility, talking with the staff and asking questions will help you peel away that veneer and see the real thing that lies beneath. Some of the things that lie hidden are detailed below.

### **Inexperienced teaching staff**

It is sad to say that there are some certified diving instructors who have done little diving outside of a classroom setting. They have done primarily local diving and may not have even experienced a real salt water dive. While they are certified to teach you a scuba course, what is the quality of the course they are teaching? Can they really impart any practical experience to you?

### **Unprofessional Instructors**

Doctors, lawyers, accountants and food service people are required to take continuing education courses from time to time. However, many scuba instructors attend little more than an agency standards update every two years, if that much. Like any industry, scuba diving is evolving and changing, and an

instructor needs to keep growing and changing. Like you, they do this through participating in continuing education programs and seminars. You should insist on an instructor who is active in the industry and not someone who just teaches scuba.

### Independent Instructors

According to the dictionary, an independent instructor is “free from the influence, guidance or control of another or others.” And, while “independence” is something we all strive for, in scuba education it is a two edged sword; and unfortunately the student is usually the one who pays the price for a “free spirit.” There is little practical quality control over independent Instructors in scuba diving because training agencies usually become involved only when it is too late or there is an accident.

Because of this, you should look for a dive instructor that is affiliated with a full service dive facility. This provides you some level of quality control. Further, some dive facilities operate a quality assurance program that helps maintain the high standards set by the facility and the training agencies.

### Independent Facilities

A dive facility that teaches using a recognized national or international training program does not necessarily mean that they are an active part of an organization. Many of these facilities operate in a vacuum, with little interaction with other facilities or divers around the world.

A full-service store that is active in the industry maintains an active interaction, not only with the training agency staff, but also with other dive facilities and destination dive operators. This gives these facilities a feel for the industry's movements and allows their diving clients access to information, trends and new ideas from around the country and the world.



Annual Dealer Conference—Tampa, Florida  
(L-R) Doug McNeese - Executive Director, Eric Keibler, Eric Peterson - Southwest Representative, Ann Keibler

### Store owners and managers who do not teach.

As unusual as this sounds, there are a number of dive facilities owned or operated by people who are not instructors or who are instructors who no longer teach any classes. You can ask yourself one question, “if they do not teach, how can they help their teaching staff improve their courses and develop personally as an instructor?” The simple answer is, they can't. While most storeowners are primarily managers, it is still important that they teach. Teaching keeps you fresh and alert to students' needs. And, building a professional, high-quality staff that loves what they are doing requires that you understand their needs and those of their students.

Active, growing facilities are usually run by Instructor Trainers and Instructor Certifiers. This means that the owners of the facility are committed to growing their operation and the industry by educating new Open Water Instructors. These facilities tend to have active, vibrant staff members who love

scuba! Additionally, if you get excited about scuba diving, having trainers and certifiers on staff will enable you to extend your education to the Instructor level.

### All Sales Final

Like any equipment-intensive sport, scuba requires that you have equipment to participate in the activity. Most of us like to own our equipment, which provides us the luxury of diving at a moment's notice. But like anything, sometimes things do not fit or work as we had intended. Unfortunately, many dive shops have an "all sales final" approach to equipment sold in their facility, which means that once you take it out of the store it is yours whether it works or not.

A better idea is to find a retailer who wants you to be happy with your purchase. These retailers will generally work with you to find the proper fit or to locate the ideal item that does what you want it to do, even after you get back from your first dive trip. Their policy is that if they can't make it work for you, you are entitled to a refund. These are the true customer service professionals.

## Four Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Dive Facility

When the desire for an adventure overtakes you, you have to appease the inner beast and enroll in a scuba diving course. But how do you choose a facility? We recommend that you take a little time and visit the dive facility before enrolling in a course. Meet the staff, ask questions and listen. Some of the common mistakes people make when choosing a dive facility are:



### Choosing a company who you would not trust your children, your spouse or your mother with.

Trust is a word that is used in all sorts of industries, and in diving you should ask yourself, "Would I trust these people to take care of me, my children or my mother?" If your answer is "no," then keep searching. In a way, you are putting your life in their hands; you have to trust that they will take care of you and teach you how to take care of yourself.

### Choosing an instructor or facility with limited scope.

While your dive facility may not be able to repair your car, fix your dinner, or baby-sit your dog, they should be able to meet all of your diving needs, expectations and desires. Do they actively teach a wide variety of courses so you can continue your diving education beyond your Open Water Diver course? Is your instructor qualified to take you from a new diver to an advanced or master diver? Is the facility capable of teaching you to dive as deep as you dream of going or training you to discover new things on your

diving adventures? Learning to scuba dive is like joining a family, except this time you get to pick the family! It is nice to find one that has members doing all sorts of things and is willing to help you reach your goals.

### Choosing a facility that is more interested in filling classes than in you.

Let's face it; people are in business to make money. In the dive business, teaching classes and selling equipment are the ways dive stores make money. However, why choose a store that is more interested in themselves than in you? Why not find a facility that is interested in you—your goals, your dreams, your family? Any good business should take an interest in you first and filling their classes and selling equipment second. In other words, select a facility that truly offers personalized service and stands behind what they do.

### Choosing a dive facility with no testimonials.

If their clients are not saying good things about them, then how can you expect to get a good result?

## Why You Want a Professional Dive Facility...

You work hard, and when it comes to your spare time, you want to maximize the enjoyment and minimize the hassles. Working with a full-service, professional dive facility will contribute to your adventures and enjoyment of "Neptune's Realm." But how will you know a full-service, professional dive facility when you see one? Size is not really a good indicator, nor is quantity of their advertising. Remember, sometimes the best things come in small, unwrapped packages. Instead, look at the people, the programs and the services they offer.



### Staff

A truly professional dive facility has an experienced staff of instructors, including the owners, dive leaders and sales people, that love what they are doing and are willing to offer you the level of personal service that you need. These professionals are dedicated to diving and work at maintaining their level of competence.

### Programs

You are beginning a lifetime pastime and you want to do more than just learn to dive. You want to be "green and growing, not ripe and dying." The facility you select should offer a full range of continuing education programs *and* actively teach them. Programs from open water to diver leadership and from

recreational to technical allow you to expand your diving to meet your goals and desires. Offering programs for children of all ages and for adults at any experience level means you will have more fun and can truly make diving a family activity. Additionally, a dive shop that offers training for children, young adults and adults means that they are committed to you and your family.



### Equipment

Equipment is an important side on the Safe Diver Diamond, and the dive facility you select should be able to offer you a wide range of quality products at a good value. You should also expect that the sales and educational staff understand the product's features and how those features will benefit you personally.

### Travel

Participating in a new adventure is probably why you want to start diving in the first place. Having an active travel department with a mix of local, international and expedition travel opportunities is important to keep your interest level up and to keep you and your family involved in diving.

### Repair

Your equipment is your life support system when you swim below the surface. You should expect that the facility you select has trained service technicians on staff with the ability to help you maintain and repair your equipment to keep it operating as it was designed. But not only should the facility have technicians on staff, they should maintain a reasonable parts inventory to assure timely service of your equipment.

### Gas Fills

You started diving to go diving, and to venture underwater you need some breathing gas. Whether it is air, nitrox or trimix, the facility you select should be able to provide you with all of your breathing gas needs. You should have confidence that this part of your life support system is pure, filtered, dry and safe.



### Rental Program

Sometimes you just haven't found the need to acquire for every piece of diving equipment. Whether it is a cylinder or a dry suit that you want to try before you buy it, or a one-time visit to a California kelp bed, the facility should offer a range of equipment for you to hire. Of course, no facility can have everything, but they should have enough contacts in the industry to help you find a rental unit if one is available to rent.



## Social Activity – The Club Program

Diving is more than a hobby—it is a lifetime pastime. The facility you choose should be a well-rounded one, not only supplying your equipment and training needs, but also provide for the social aspect as well. From work boots to suits, divers are fun people who enjoy getting together to trade “fish stories” and to learn about new opportunities for diving and other adventures. Look for a facility that will allow you to learn more through the casual interaction with other people who love the sport.

## Personal Service

Above all, you should expect that the facility you choose is there for you. The staff should care about you and your dreams, goals and aspirations. And while they may not be available at all times, they should be able to set aside some time to work with you personally so you can find and achieve your desires in diving.



## Recommendations

If you have decided to discover the adventure that awaits you underwater, I would like to offer you these recommendations:

### Make a Commitment

If you really want to try scuba diving, make a commitment to becoming a diver. Devote the time and resources necessary to experience the underwater world in a safe and enjoyable way. That way your first experiences under the surface will be memorable and ones you will want to repeat again and again.

### List Your Objectives

There are many aspects of diving—what interests you? Do you want to have an activity that you and your children can do together for years to come? Do you want to dive the *Andréa Doria* or float along a beautiful coral reef? Perhaps you love photography and want to broaden your horizons and your portfolio. Whatever your goals and objectives are, make a list of them so you have a better idea of what you are looking for in a dive instructor.

### Ask Questions

When you are visiting a dive facility and/or talking to a dive instructor, ask them questions. You may want to know:

1. What are their qualifications?
2. Do they have family programs?
3. Do they have Open Water Classes, and when do they meet?

4. What are the class costs and other costs associated with the course?
5. Do they actively teach continuing education courses? How often do they teach them and when?
6. Do they have a repair facility, and what are the qualifications of the repair technicians?
7. Do they have a Club and other social activities?
8. What is their guarantee and return policy?
9. Do they have a travel; program? Do they offer a variety of diving and travel opportunities from local trips to international trips to the Caribbean and the Pacific?

### Once You Are Satisfied...

Once you feel that you are dealing with a professional instructor that you trust, enroll in the class, purchase the necessary equipment to get started, and then get started!

Remember, your adventure awaits. Leaving terra firma for a visit to Neptune's Realm is an experience that everyone should make. But rather than just looking through a glass, scuba divers get to interact with new creatures and touch the sea. Enroll in a scuba diving course and *open your door to adventure!*



## Finally...

I hope you have enjoyed this educational booklet, *Your Guide to Adventure...A Consumer's Guide to Recreational Scuba Instruction*, and found it informative and useful.

I wish that everyone was a diver and could experience the world hidden beneath the surface first hand. As you begin your adventure, please remember that your enjoyment is directly related to the quality of the instruction you receive. If you have any questions or would like to talk to me further about scuba diving, please feel free to contact me at the address below. And remember, I want to hear about your underwater adventures!

Eric V. Keibler  
Oceanic Ventures, Inc.  
2715 Bissonnet, Suite 302  
Houston, Texas 77005

(713) 523-DIVE (3483)  
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## At Oceanic Ventures, We Promise to Our Clients — Diving Is ...A Lifetime Pastime

As you enter the underwater world you will find incredible beauty, unparalleled in the world above the water. Below the surface are canyons larger than those in Arizona, mountains taller than the Himalayas and teeming with life known and unknown. Scuba diving opens a door to a fantastic new world that reveals itself only a little during each submersion.

Like an astronaut exploring outer space, scuba divers exploring inner space must rely on equipment. This life support equipment needs to be of the highest quality and maintained on a routine basis by trained professionals.

Here at Oceanic Ventures, we pride ourselves in helping our clients obtain the best fit possible and designing systems that fit your needs. We work hard to stock the right equipment for the dives you want to make. And, if we do not have it in stock, generally we can get it.

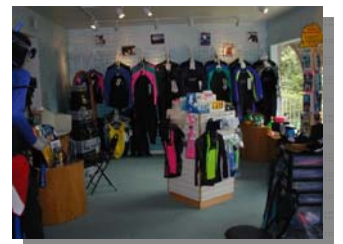


Remember it is our goal to help you become a diver, no matter the level, and to that end, your comfort and safety is paramount. It is because of our desire for your safety and comfort that we ask you to let us assist you with your equipment needs. Buying your equipment from us assures you that you will obtain the best fit possible and a staff trained to maintain the equipment. Remember, at Oceanic Ventures we want you to be happy with your equipment purchases. If we cannot fix the problem to your satisfaction or come up with another solution, we will give you your money back. We call that our "Neiman Marcus" return policy.

You have trusted us with your life in class, trust us all along the road to helping you to become a safe diver. It takes all of the sides on the Safe Diver Diamond to become a safe diver: Knowledge and Skills developed in your open water and continuing education courses, the proper Equipment, personally fitted to you, and Experience through open water sessions and diving after your course.

Your instructor and the other professionals at Oceanic Ventures are here to assist you with your equipment purchases, adventure and vacation planning, continuing diver education, as well as regular diving and social activities.

Let us be your *Scuba Concierge!*



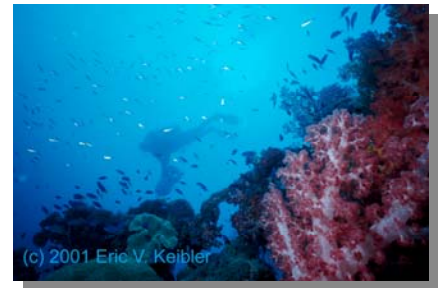
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# ***Oceanic Ventures, Inc.***



Oceanic Ventures, Inc. opened its doors in 1990 with one thing in mind — offering professional scuba diving instruction, travel, equipment sales & repairs with exceptional client service. It has been our goal to be the leading full-service retailer in the Houston area specializing in small classes and personal service. We also like to say that “*if it is taught in scuba, we teach it!*”™” Some of our strengths are:

- 30+ Years of SCUBA Education
- Training from initial Open Water courses to Instructor Trainer programs
- Recreational and technical diving educational programs
- Local, national and international training programs
- Low instructor to student ratios
- Full-service dive travel agency
- Full-service equipment sales and repair facilities
- Certified Pure Air Station, featuring complete air fill gas blending facilities for Air, Nitrox, Trimix, Oxygen and Argon
- Instructor-lead travel adventures and expeditions
- Experienced in Underwater Photography, Marine Life Awareness, Underwater Vehicles, Cave and Wreck Diving.
- Scuba Ranger, Starfish, children and family programs



Oceanic Ventures, Inc. is the premiere dive operation in Texas. As the first full-service IANTD Technical Training Facility in Texas, we were the first Nitrox Training facility, and the first Nitrox and Trimix Blending facility in the area. We remain the only IANTD Platinum Technical Training Facility in Texas and were recently awarded a Diamond Facility award

from IANTD. We are also an SSI Platinum Instructor Training Facility, an NASDS Gold Dealer, and a TDI Facility. Our staff remains the most qualified instructional staff in the industry with most of our instructors and dive coordinators having advanced certifications in Cavern, Cave, Wreck, Technical and Trimix diving.

One of our goals is to be as Sylvia Earl says “*ambassadors for the sea,*” helping to create a *lifetime pastime* for our clients — you, your family and your friends. The staff at Oceanic Ventures strives to make your experiences fun and rewarding.



serious diving. serious fun.



# What Others Say About Eric & Oceanic Ventures, Inc.



Robert Thompson,  
Attorney  
Houston, Texas

I have trusted them with my entire family. The course was wonderful.

I am very grateful for all your efforts



Dick Long  
CEO Diving Unlimited  
International  
San Diego, California

I loved the course!



Stephanie Watowich  
Medical Researcher  
Houston, Texas



Mimi Celis  
Software Engineer  
San José, CA

I don't travel with anyone else!

They have been wonderful all the way. My son started in Scuba Rangers and now we are both certified. - thank you for taking care of us.



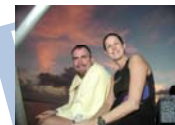
Jean Janssen,  
Attorney  
Houston, Texas



Jess Stark  
Owner Stark  
Industries  
Houston, Texas

When do we go, I'm ready!

They are great with children!



Holland Geibel,  
Mother  
Houston, Texas



Jeffrey Bozanic  
Author  
California

A real ambassador for the rebreather world. Thanks for all your hard work!

Excellent!



Susan Williams  
Banker  
Chase Bank, N.A.  
Houston, Texas

I will never forget diving with my teen aged son for the first time. Thank you for the memories.

I enjoyed the course and I learned a lot.



Pam Radford,  
Owner—Legal Media  
Houston, Texas

