

November 2015



# Nautilus SCUBA Club Newsletter

Cairns QLD Australia  
<http://www.nautilus-scuba.net>

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Dive Trips

Club Meetings

Guest Speakers

Trip Reports

Editor: Phil Woodhead

Cover photo Rick Evans

TUSA Dive, Deep Sea Divers Den, Reef Magic Cruises, Mike Ball Dive Expeditions,  
Cairns SCUBA Air, Calypso Reef Cruises, Poseidon Cruises



**November Club Meeting**  
**Wednesday 25th**  
**From 7pm...**  
**Junior Eisteddfod Hall**  
**67 Greenslopes Street**  
**Cairns**

All the usual treats ,BBQ, Raffle,  
and the Nautilus pop up shop

**Guest speaker to be Ro Hill**



Order from the Nautilus Pop-up shop  
at the Club Meeting

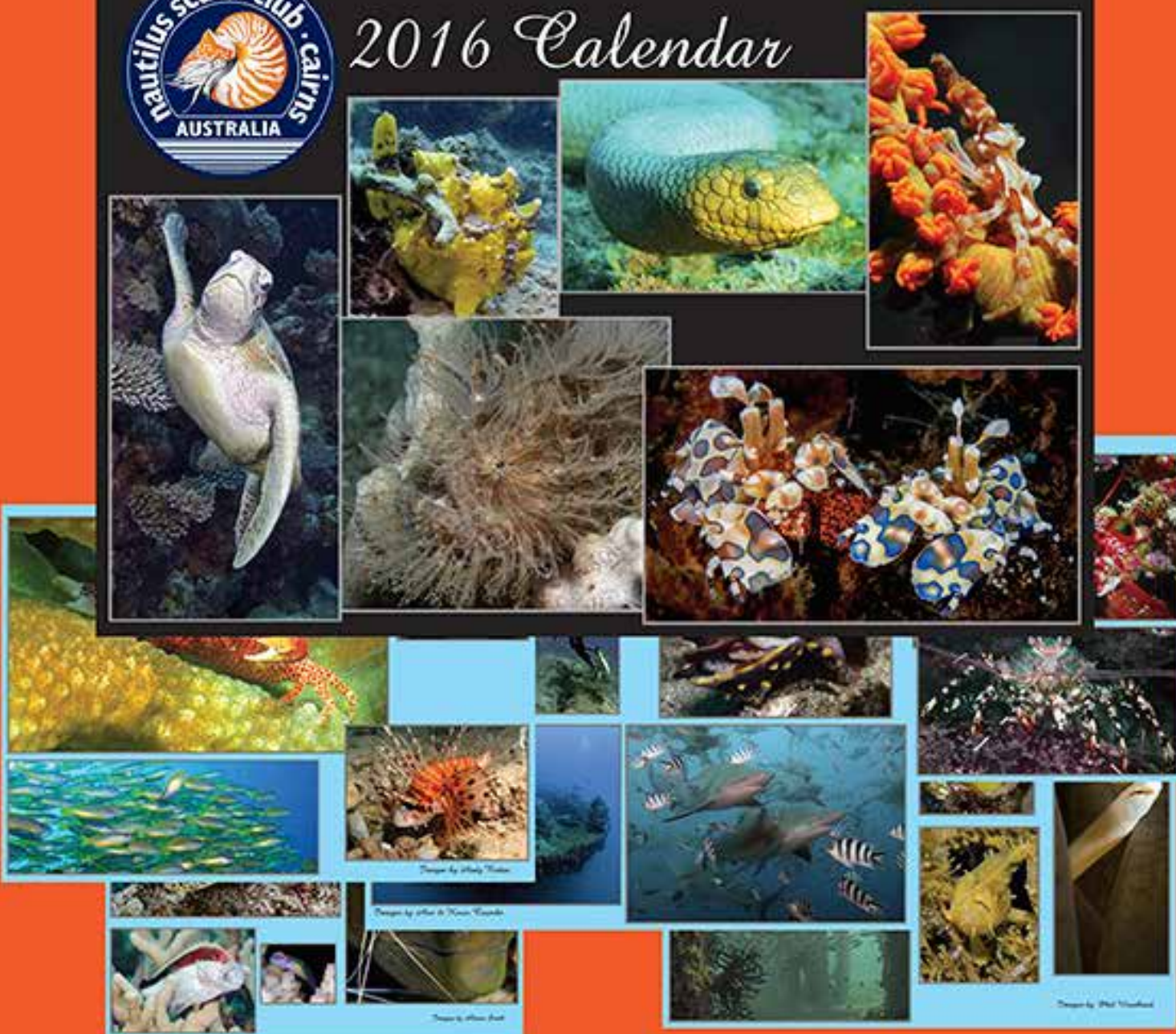
## The 2016 Nautilus Scuba Club Calendar is now available for pre - order

\$10 each or 5 for \$40

Featuring images from the entrants of the  
2015 underwater photo competition



### 2016 Calendar





# Club Christmas dive

A day out of Port Douglas on Calypso.  
**SATURDAY 28th November**

At time of writing there are approximately 25 Nautilus Club members going out for the Christmas Club dive get together.

Remember You will need to be at the jetty just after 8:00 as the boat leaves at 8:30 sharp.

*(This dive is on SATURDAY 28 Nov, so it can tie in with the club Christmas meal in Port Douglas that evening).*

After our Christmas club dive we will be having some canapés and refreshments at the multi-award winning restaurant On the Inlet where everyone can meet the friendly resident grouper George (a fish in case anyone is confused). Please see website for any further details required see: <http://ontheinlet.com.au>

The delectable treats served here are completely free for any Nautilus members (drinks not included). Please note you do not have to go on the Christmas dive to get involved with the après dive party.

If you can only make it in the afternoon please feel free to come along and catch up with everyone. Just let Shey (events co-ordinator) know you are coming so that numbers can be kept track of.

Any non-members will have to pay for nibbles, please contact Shey for further details. Cost will be \$30.

★ The Menu is: Goats cheese red onion tartlet, Chemoula beef skewers with pita and yoghurt, Barramundi spring rolls with mango chutney, Seared scallops with pumpkin puree and sauce, Seared eye fillet with fondant potato and sauce, Cured ocean trout with lime and crème fresh and fried capers, in ripened bruchetta with marinated feta and basil, Oysters natural

★ If you have any questions or concerns regarding the food please feel free to contact Shey. The Nautilus Club look forward to seeing as many familiar faces there as possible; come along and get involved in the fun!



CLUB OVERSEAS TRIP FOR NEXT YEAR

# VANUATU

04 - 14 October 2016

## WRECK DIVING IN SANTO & PORT VILA Special Group Departure

11 Days / 10 Nights ex Brisbane  
from AUD \$ 2,750 per Diver

**Price includes:** (Non Diver from **AUD \$1850** per person)

- Return flights ex Brisbane to Santo & Port Vila flying with **Air Vanuatu** (luggage allowance 30kg per person)
- 6 Nights at **Coral Quays Fish & Dive Resort**, Santo -standard twin share garden bungalow with roundtrip airport transfers and daily breakfast
- 10 Shore Dives in Santo at **SS President Coolidge & Million Dollar Point** – with hotel transfers, dive guide services, tanks & weights
- 4 Nights at **Hideaway Island Resort**, Port Vila – twin share lodge rooms with airport transfers, daily breakfast & select resort activities (Kava tasting, kayaking, etc)
- 3 Dive Days (3x 2-tank boat dives) with **Big Blue** – includes gear pick up, dive guide services, tanks & weights (small local bus fee applies)
- Australian departure taxes and applicable airline taxes (\$265 & subject to change)

**Price does not include:**

- Travel insurance, meals other than specified and personal spending money
- Any excess luggage surcharges
- Airfares to and from Brisbane

**Booking conditions apply :** Prices subject to change at any time without notice due to currency fluctuations and supplier rate changes. Airfares are currently based on group airfares. To allow the use of this airfare and group package rates, a minimum of 6 passengers are required to travel. See other terms and conditions as per the Dive Adventures website: [www.diveadventures.com.au](http://www.diveadventures.com.au)

**Booking requirements :**

To secure your place on this trip, you will need to complete an online Booking Form and return it together with a non-refundable deposit amount of \$500 per person. Final payment due date is 1 August 2016

Booking Ref: S-18495

16/11/2015



**DIVE**  
ADVENTURES

IATA 0234182 4

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or

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photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs

Chertan ready fro boarding



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs

The next couple of dives, Cherie's Reef and Wahoo Point were wonderful deep water dives with everything from various pygmy seahorses, nudibranchs to large pelagics.

Trouble struck about 6am the following morning when we were leaving our Wahoo Point mooring.

The mooring line was entangled in the propeller and in freeing it, there appears to have been some miscommunication amongst the crew members. Unfortunately, a local PNG crew member and an experienced dive guide, Sebastian, was still under water and got struck by the propeller. Frantic efforts to save him continued throughout that day with our resident

Our trip began with uneventful flights from Cairns to Alotau via Port Moresby. Chertan owner and skipper, Rob Vander Loos, and his crew collected us from Gurney Airport and transferred us to a jetty in Alotau to board the vessel, MV Chertan. We settled in quickly and found it a very comfortable set up for sleeping, eating and diving! First dive site of Gona Bara Bara greeted us with lots of mantas on the surface, but only 3 cruised by when we were under water at the cleaning station. We did further dives here and that was my introduction to muck diving. Those who were patient enough to wait at the cleaning station were rewarded with manta encounters close up, while the rest of us went to the muck sites to explore the various macro critters. By the time we moved on to dive the various Samarai Island jetties, I was hooked on muck diving as much as the photographers in the



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs

group. It needs to be noted that not ALL were thrilled with muck diving!

Some of us managed to go ashore with the Chertan crew that night to watch the Cowboys win the NRL Final. The local Samarai Island residents made us all feel welcomed, and that includes the diehard Broncos fans!



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs

Doctor Mal and Nurse Lyn taking control of immediate first aid through to evacuation by helicopter several hours later. They did a magnificent job of managing Seb's serious injuries and massive internal bleeding with limited medical resources. Staff from Tawali Resort (mainly Mark Watkins, the resort owner's on-site rep) supplied a stretcher and logistic support e.g. finding possible helicopter landing sights, etc. Tawali Resort was most gracious in then taking us in, setting Rob and Chertan crew free to deal with their distress and support of Seb and his family at Alotau Hospital.



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs

We settled in quickly at Tawali and were grateful to debrief as all had been touched by the horrific events of the day. Diving at Tawali continued to be excellent. The day boat had a roomy dive deck, was a well crewed vessel, and the dive guides were great at pointing out fish and macro critters. It took us out each day at 8 am for 2 dives before lunch aboard, then another



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs

dive after lunch. On return to Tawali jetty, the house reef was available to dive anytime. Kevin spent much of his time there to photograph the ever-elusive mandarin fish and ghost pipefish! Food was a problem - well definitely for some of us. Aboard Chertan (Rob's wife, Molly's cooking), at the resort, and lunches on the day boat had great variety and was very tasty. Most of us overindulged, yet relished it all and had even second and third helpings. We needed to return home to lose some weight!

There is incredible variety of diving in Milne Bay and we all felt we needed to return. From muck dive sites, we came away with photos of various pygmy seahorses, frogfish, sea moths, octopi and helmet gurnards, to name a few. Another favourite was Deacon's Reef close to Tawali Resort, that had a bit of everything. From the shore of overhangs and caves, it drops quickly to coral beds and pinnacles, before a steep drop off only about 30 metres from shore that attracts pelagics. The range and varied topography of this site was a delight to negotiate on its own and the delights of the reef, fish and critters were a bonus. All agreed this site is like the Yongala wreck, a site one could dive often. Enjoying the trip, the diving, and each others' company were

Malcolm McDonald and Lyn Kerr (the extraordinary lifesavers of the trip), Kevin and Ann Coombs (the diving legends ..or fanatics?!), Akiko Murakami and Judy Nickles (the constant chatterboxes), Sue Brown and Tim Trim (the quiet gentle souls), Margit Hocheder and David Meyer (the 'deep' ones). Thanks to Chertan and Tawali for the great diving experiences - we shall be back! Thanks also to club members for such an enjoyable and memorable trip together.



photo by Ann & Kevin Coombs



The injured Chertan dive guide, Sebastian, otherwise known as 'Seb' or 'Sebba', remains in hospital but is said to be making steady progress. The latest we heard was that he was talking and eating well and was even speaking of returning to work with Chertan as soon as he recovers. What a difference a month makes!

The day of the accident on 6 Oct 2015, Seb's outlook was rather grim. It was truly a life-or-death situation, where his blood pressure and pulse were rapidly dropping with the helicopter nowhere to be seen or heard. Yet, he managed to hold on to his life by a thread, long enough to be airlifted to Alotau Hospital, where he underwent multiple surgeries and blood transfusions that same day and in the following days and weeks. At this point, his prognosis was still very uncertain with talk of double amputation, or at the least, permanent disability.

Yet more surgeries later, Seb has so far made a remarkable recovery, astounding all those around him. The latest prognosis is that he should make a full and lasting recovery. The road to recovery may still be long and arduous, and yet, if anyone can prove us wrong and make a speedy recovery, it would have to be the resilient man that is Seb!

This leads me to ponder two things: Firstly, as experienced

a dive operator as Chertan is, accidents can and do happen – hence the importance of each of us taking adequate dive and travel insurance. Secondly, that what seemed at first to be a very desperate situation was in fact the most serendipitous of all. The fact that Mal & Lyn, the finest doctor & nurse team, happened to be on that same trip, the fact that the doctor at Alotau Hospital happened to be a well-respected PNG surgeon who immediately took control, the fact that there were so many local people coming to donate blood, and the fact that Seb was surrounded by so many people who cared... It was definitely not his time to depart yet.

The trip participants were all touched by this incident and were moved to do something. Everyone rallied around and worked as a team to assist in the immediate rescue effort, and both Trip 1 and 2 participants were gracious in accepting the changed itinerary of their trips. I'd like to thank all of them for their cooperation and contributions. It was very heartening to see the outpouring of generosity amongst the trip participants, the wider Club members and the community. The Club was able to donate a new Medical Trauma Kit to Chertan, given that their own kit was heavily depleted in this incident. This new kit was hand-delivered to the Chertan owner, Rob, by Alison Smith, who went on the 2nd Milne Bay trip. Thanks goes out to Cathy Meehan (Club member) and Deep Sea Divers Den for their assistance in procuring the kit. The Club was also able to raise, thanks to all of you, the sum of \$1200 (approx PGK 2400) for Seb and his family (wife and four young children, aged 5 to 10)



through the allocation of our October raffle ticket sales (\$625) and further donations from generous Club members and their friends. I am told by a PNG doctor friend that this sum should be the rough equivalent of a



full year's school fees (including stationery costs) for the 4 children (PNG Government heavily subsidises education).

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Tawali Resort owner, Sir Michael Bromley, his on-site rep, Mark Watkins, his wife Nicole (booking manager), and the rest of the Tawali Resort staff for coming to our assistance and making us feel welcomed, without which, we would not have been able to continue enjoying our trips/dives. Finally, but definitely not least, the biggest thanks goes out to our resident heroes, "Lifesaving Team Extraordinaire", Dr Malcolm McDonald & Nurse Lyn Kerr, without whom the outcome could have been very different indeed. They worked tirelessly and selflessly to save Seb's life and continued to work behind the scenes long after Seb had been flown out. In recognition of their tremendous achievements, the Club was able to honour them with a surprise award ceremony at the Oct Club meeting. Mal & Lyn, I hope we never have to call upon your skills in future (I say this, of course, with the utmost respect)!



# THINGS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT NEED TO KNOW

- There is no club meeting in December
- There will be a Lake Eacham get together in the early new year (details will be announced)

- The giant squid has the largest eyes in the world
- A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out
- A Blue Whale's heart only beats nine times per minute



Coral spawning is due to take place approximately 5 days after the full moon which occurs on November 26th 2015

## REQUEST FROM THE NEWS LETTER EDITOR

I do know that a lot of Nautilus Club members go diving with a buddy or with small groups and go on trips within Australia and overseas. Your newsletter needs content, so please send in stories and pictures. If you do not take underwater photos perhaps a collaboration between a photographer and writer is the way to go.

# PARTING SHOT



Image by Colin Tonazzi