

Magic Oceans Resort

by Elisabeth Rosentreter

The Philippines consist of over 7000 islands and on many of them there is an opportunity for scuba diving.

Depending on the site that you dive, you could see a diversity of marine animals ranging from the tiniest seahorse, the pygmy seahorse, right up to the largest fish, the whale shark.

We have been diving in the Philippines on a regular basis for the past 4 years and found some amazing dive sites.

One of them was Magic Island in Moalboal on Cebu. The resort was very well organized and when

the owners told us they were building a new resort on another island, we were very interested.

We followed the construction of the new resort on Facebook with much anticipation. When it was completed and opened in June last year we booked a dive holiday for mid April this year. The new resort is called Magic Oceans and it has been built at Anda on Bohol Island.

To travel to the resort the flight from Manila to Tagbilaran on Bohol took around 1 hour and 15 minutes. We were then met by Magic Oceans resort staff at the airport and driven there in a very comfortable air conditioned 4WD. The road trip took about one and

a half hours and the highway was surprisingly new and very modern.

On arrival we were escorted to the bar and received our complimentary welcome drink which was made from fresh local mangos and it was refreshingly cool.

Our cabin was well appointed and had a very comfortable bed, mini bar and air conditioning.

All cabins have WiFi, though sometimes you have to go to the bar to get a good connection. This is an intermittent problem which pops up from time to time because the signal relies on the satellite connections and is something you just have to take into consideration when you are in the Philippines.

When we arrived at the resort I had a problem with my camera housing. It wouldn't lock properly and I was really worried on how to fix it. However upon mentioning my concerns to Eef Thurlings, the manager and part owner, he volunteered to have a look at it for me. Eef found there had been a few sand grains lodged in the sliding mechanism of the housing lock which he then removed. After thoroughly cleaning the housing he brought it back to me and the locking mechanism worked like a charm.

The food is a mixture of European and local cuisine and always very tasty and always more than you can eat.

The dive shop is extremely well organized with all the washing tubs clearly marked as to their use.

The camera room has plenty of power points for the recharging of your batteries and is well set up to maintain your equipment.

The dive sites we visited I would rate as some of the best we have come across. When you go to the Bargibanti dive site you can be sure there would be plenty Pygmy seahorses for every diver in your group. As a matter of fact this was the first time ever I found pygmy seahorses on my own. On one sea fan I counted at least 5. I even found some with a black skin, which I had never seen before.

On another dive site called Seahorse, you will find at least 5 different kinds with the thorny seahorse showing itself in 3 different colours.

When it comes to frogfishes, you sometimes won't believe your eyes. Some look like they are wearing the crown jewels and the little red ones seem to have had a

pedicure with white toe nails painted on.

On all dive sites, where ever there is a soft coral, you will find at least 2 candy crabs and even then they vary in colour tones. I have never seen so many of those cute crabs trying to decorate themselves so as not to be seen.

Our dive guide always knew where to find special subjects to be photographed.

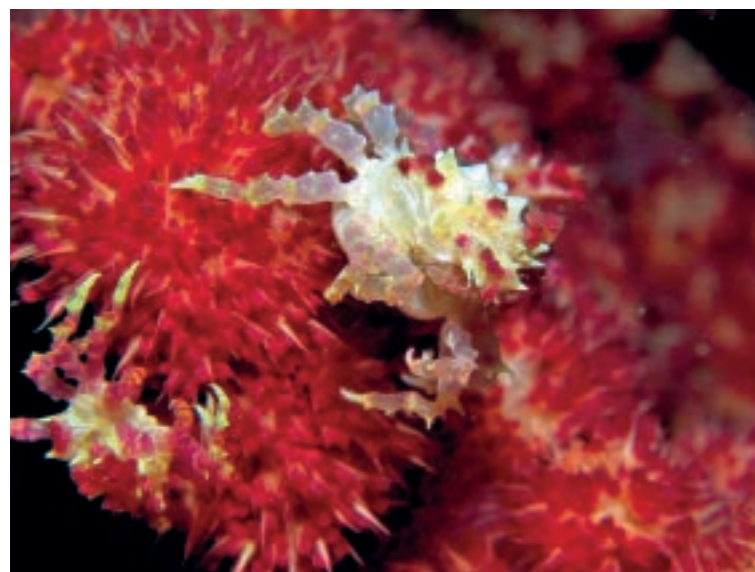
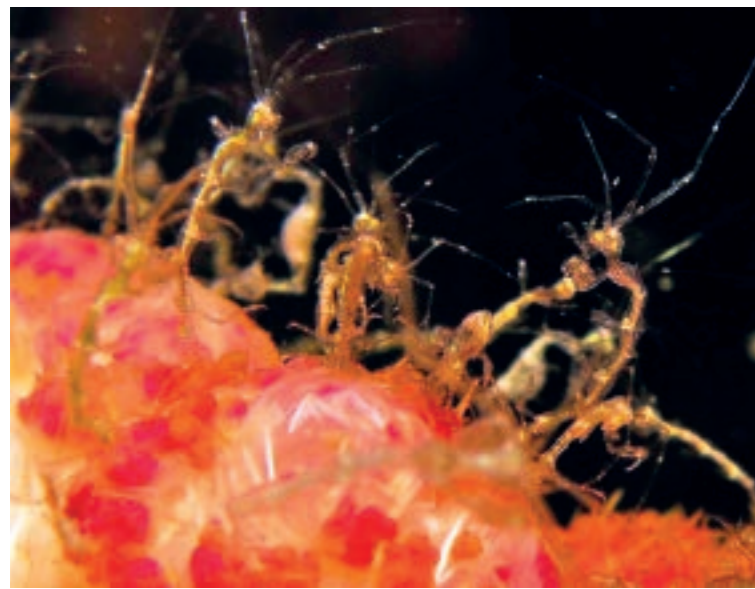
Two mornings in a row another dive group came back with photos and videos of a juvenile whale shark. I am sorry to say that we were not as lucky as them.

These days due to Rheumatoid Arthritis I have difficulty climbing the ladder into the dive boat while wearing my gear so I take it off while in the water. The boat crew were always available to assist me and so very helpful in carrying my BCD and dive gear out of the water.

All three dive boats have been locally designed and built with plenty of room to relax between dives. All of them have a sail cover so as to help protect you from the harsh Philippine sun.

On our way back from Tagbilaran to Manila we found out about new National Civil Aviation Security Program regulations which applied to all flights originating in the Philippines ie both Domestic and International : You are not allowed to carry ANY SCUBA DIVING EQUIPMENT in your Carry-on/Cabin Baggage - it must be checked in as Hold Baggage and it includes regulators. We found out that Power boards with an electrical cord were also prohibited in your Carry-on Cabin Baggage as well. The Airport Security personal checking your luggage at the Airport entrance will make you repack any items they find which are shown on their June 30 2015 Prohibited Items Listing before checking your luggage in.

We certainly will go back to Magic Oceans Resort.




MAGIC OCEANS
 ANDA, BOHOL, PHILIPPINES
 www.magicisland.nl info@magicisland.nl

