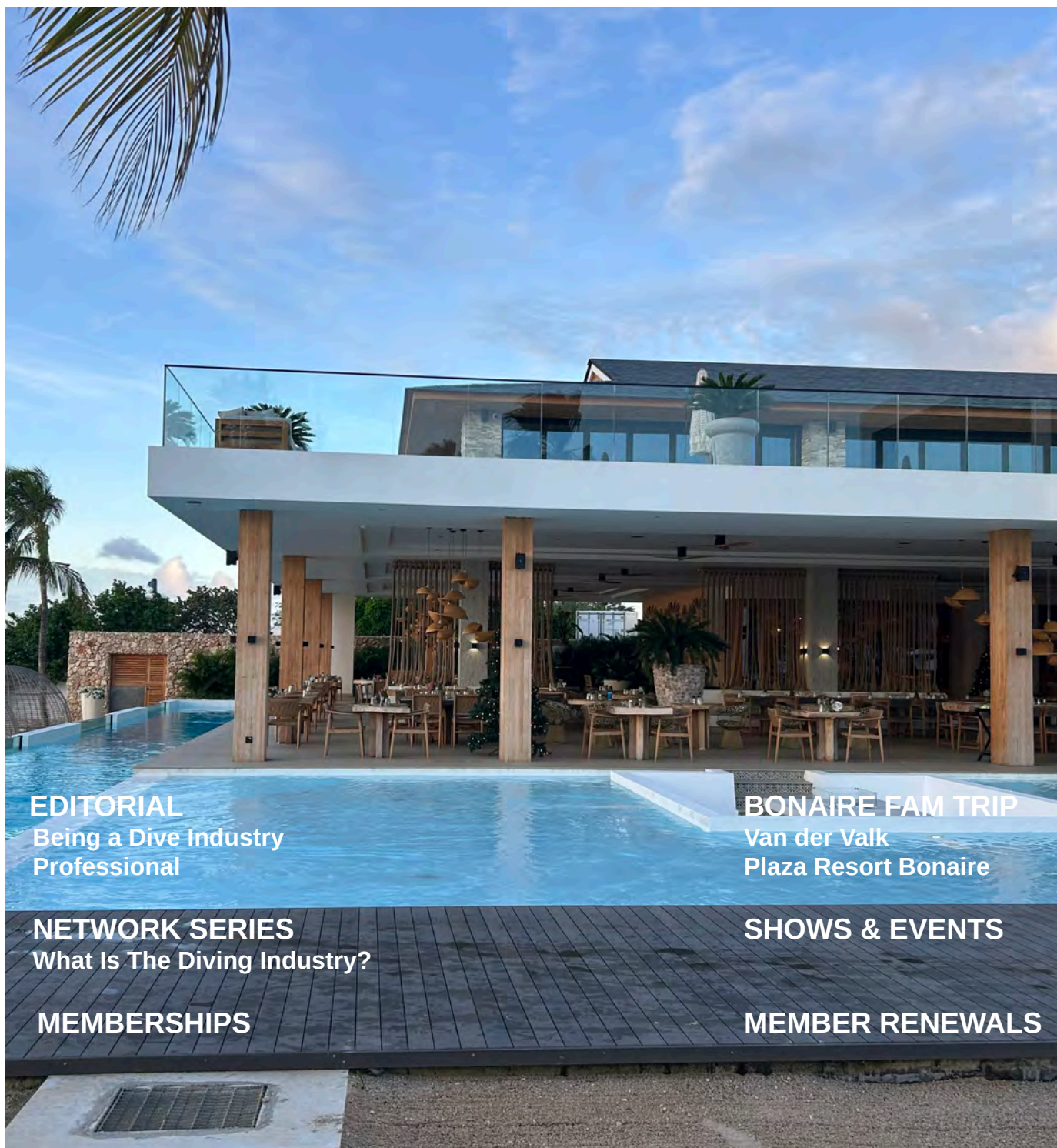


THE DIVE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONAL

January 1, 2025 - Vol 25, Issue 1



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Welcome to the January 2025 edition of *The Dive Industry Professional*. As a Trade Publication, *The Dive Industry Professional* is dedicated to the professional advancement of Dive Industry Professionals worldwide. Our mission is to bring buyers & sellers together by increasing our usage of 21st century marketing tools and technologies. We look forward to collaborating and working closely with our members, clients, and industry partners to bring you the best business of diving articles in the recreational diving industry.

In this month's issue we begin with our editorial, ***Being a Dive Industry Professional***. We begin our series about careers in the Global Diving Business Network as a Dive Industry Professional. We define what it is to be a Dive Industry Professional and talk about the opportunities there are available as a job, career, or profession. And that goes for diving and non-diving jobs as well.

Our Dive Industry Profile Series features our latest FAM Trip to Bonaire at the ***Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire***. If you sell dive travel at your dive center and consider yourself a Dive Travel Specialist, you will want to hear about how Roatan Charter runs their FAM Trips to new Dive Resort destinations across the globe. We participated in an Industry FAM Trip to Bonaire in December and did more than just stay at a great resort with a fabulous diving operation. We were treated to a sunset cruise and an Island tour to learn more about the beautiful Island of Bonaire. See what a World Class FAM Trip looks like when ***Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire & Toucan Diving Rolls Out The Red Carpet for their Guests***.

Our Industry Network Series investigates ***What Is The Diving Industry?*** As we move through the 21st century, it is important to build on a solid foundation to achieve industry growth, sustainability, and success. We answer the questions that are important to Dive Industry Professionals everywhere. Is the Diving Industry a recreation or a trade profession? If it is a trade profession, is it a job, collateral duty, career, or profession? To help us find our place in the Diving Industry, we define diving, the global diving community, the global diving business network, the diving Industry, and what it is to be a Dive Industry Professional. This is a ***MUST*** read for all of us who work in the business.

Our Membership page invites you to join the Dive Industry Association and find out why so many dive businesses become Members and renew in our Global Diving Business Network. And finally, our Shows & Events column brings you upcoming events for 2025. ***Enjoy the read.***

Gene Muchanski

Editor, *The Dive Industry Professional*

Dive Industry Association, Inc. is the Premier Trade Association in the Diving Industry, with Members Worldwide.

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EDITORIAL



Being a Dive Industry Professional

by Gene Muchanski, Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

Fifty-five years ago, I was graduating from High School. By the time you reached your senior year, it was expected that you had already made plans for what you wanted to do with your life. I wanted to be a diver. I had gotten scuba certified in my junior year and was the President of the Shelton High School Scuba Club. My Dad wanted me to go to college. It's funny looking back on that time. I wanted to be a diver and yet had no idea how to prepare for that. Was it a job or career I was thinking about? It never occurred to me. My Dad wanted me to go to college. And study what? Sure, a college education prepares you, but you really need to prepare for something a little more specific. All I knew at the time was that I liked diving, business, and education.

While I was earnestly looking for guidance, my Government stepped in and drafted me. Lucky # 7. First time I ever won a lottery. The Navy made me an offer to become a Navy Diver and pick any job I wanted. Sounded good to me, and for adding two years onto my two-year draft notice, the U.S. Navy would take care of all the paperwork and let the U.S. Marine Corps know that I chose the Navy. So, it was off to San Diego, California for basic training with through-orders to Supply School, Submarine School, and Scuba School at the U.S. Naval School Underwater Swimmers.

Enlisting in the Navy and picking Supply, Subs, and Diving turned out to be an excellent choice for me. It gave me thousands of hours underway to read up on

business, diving, and the need for a college education. I was fortunate to have a dozen well-meaning mentors onboard who shared their educational choices and career paths with me, during my time at sea. In my four years on submarines, I read everything I could on diving, especially about Jacques Yves Cousteau's life and adventures. Was he a Diver, Naval Officer, Marine Biologist, or Businessman? Above all, Jacques was an Entrepreneur. By the time I finished my active-duty obligation I knew I wanted to attend college, major in Business (Marketing actually) and work in the diving industry.

Everything I've done since graduating from the University of Connecticut with a degree in Marketing, has been centered around diving and the business of diving. The one thing I've learned and want to share with the younger generations after me is that ***you can't make a career out of diving.*** Diving is an activity you participate in, in order to do something. ***Companies don't hire divers; they hire people for what they can do while they are diving.*** You have to acquire a skill, trade, or profession first, and then specialize in applying it to the diving industry or the diving niche market. Let me explain.



While I was in the U. S. Navy and the Naval Reserves, I completed training at three Navy Diving Schools. U.S. Naval School Underwater Swimmers consisted of SCUBA Training. Deep Sea Diver training included lightweight and hard hat surface supplied air diving. Mixed-Gas Deep Sea Diver training included training with advanced air and mixed gas diving units, in addition to training in salvage, demolition, supervisor training, and hyperbaric operations. In my 24 years as a Navy Diver, I was fortunate to be called on to train, mobilize, and supervise diving operations. That was the easy part. The most difficult part of being a Navy Diver at the time was the underwater cutting and

welding, ships' husbandry, working with explosives, and being a competent salvage diver. When we looked for divers to fill a billet, it was for the skills they could perform underwater that mattered most. That means we had to train our divers in two or more specialties. They had to be trained and updated in diving programs, and they had to do the same in their specialty.

In the past 40 years as a Marketing Professional and Diving Industry Consultant, I have worked with diving enthusiasts who were thinking about getting into the diving industry as a job, business, profession, or career. We discovered that the topic of "Careers in Diving" is the biggest conundrum in global diving community circles. There doesn't seem to be any consistency of advice for business, job, or career seekers, regardless of whom they are asking. It was time to define the diving industry and look for common ground on what the industry had to offer in terms of business opportunities, job placement, and career potential. Of course, the more we looked into job and career potential, the more we realized that we had to establish and promote career opportunities within our industry first.

The Dive Industry Association has been defining, promoting, and serving the diving industry for 24 years. Our monthly Magazine, now in its 25th year, is called *The Dive Industry Professional*. As a worldwide marketing and trade association that is dedicated to bringing buyers and sellers of diving and diving related programs, products, and services together, it is our mission to define, analyze, and promulgate a clear pathway for commerce and economic growth and development in our industry. ***We define various parts of the industry for the purpose of understanding the flow of goods and services, from conception to consumption, through the industry's channels of distribution.***

The Global Diving Community: Let's start with the common denominator we all share. When a person gets certified as a scuba diver, they become a member of the Global Diving Community. We expand that classification to include individuals who are active in diving related activities such as snorkeling, freediving, mermaid diving, and more. Let's call all of them "Divers." Divers in the Global Diving Community are engaged in diving activities for their own purposes. They are all consumers of diving and diving related programs, products, and services. This is the niche

market we refer to in our articles about the diving industry.

The Global Diving Business Network: The business network is a group of businesses in various industries that specialize in the creation and sale of diving and diving related programs, products, and services. ***This network is the center of what we call the diving Industry.*** For clarification and understanding of the economic potential of the diving industry, we have to identify this network to collect statistical information from a broad range of industries that produce and sell products to the diving niche market. The core products of the recreational diving industry are diving equipment and supplies, dive training, dive travel, diving and diving related services, and lifestyle products.

Dive Industry Professional: Our definition of a Dive Industry Professional is someone who is employed, works, or owns a business in the Global Diving Business Network. To separate recreational divers from trade professionals we classify individuals who work in a business either on a part-time or full-time basis. Dive Industry Professionals can also be non-paid volunteers if they are performing their services for a business entity. We haven't crossed that bridge yet, but some-thing our association will be working on in the near future is talking about all the different positions you can occupy in the diving industry. For now, we will be showcasing the different professions that divers can train for to have a career in the diving industry.

The Four Pillars of Local Diving Communities: We have written extensively in [DIVE LOCAL](#) about the four pillars of local diving communities. They are Dive Stores, Dive Boats, Dive Clubs, and Diving Instructors. In dive destination communities they also include dive resorts, liveaboards, and dive operators.

Local Diving Community

1. Dive Stores
2. Dive Boats
3. Dive Clubs
4. Dive Instructors

These are trade professional groups that work 24-7 to build, grow, and maintain their local diving community and the global diving industry. Working with these groups is pretty clear-cut when we are talking about dive communities, dive businesses, and dive professionals.

EDITORIAL

Other Work Involving Diving: There are many professions that employ certified divers and instructors. Some of them you would recognize immediately, and some may be new to you. Public Safety Divers are one excellent example. Professional Police Officers and Fire Fighters may be employed as a full time Public Safety Diver or be assigned that responsibility as a collateral duty. Our military has select groups of divers they train to perform various missions in the underwater environment. Their primary profession, for which they are recruited and paid, is Military Professional. Universities that have diving programs in their curriculum hire certified diving instructors to be their Diving Safety Officers. There are many other job descriptions in the workplace that require scuba diver training and certification. Too numerous to mention here, but it would be beneficial to the Global Diving Community if we could showcase some of these jobs and careers in our monthly trade magazine.

Non-Diving Jobs in the Global Diving Business Network: Not everyone who works in the diving industry is a certified diver. Far from it. Companies who produce diving equipment, dive training, dive travel, and lifestyle products hire tens of thousands of employees (we don't really know how many), to produce the diving equipment, programs, products, and services that are consumed by the Global Diving Community. They hire Engineers, Marketing Professionals, Salespeople, Graphic Artists, Skilled Craftsmen, Tool and Die Makers, Secretaries, Accountants, Attorneys, etc.

When I worked at U. S. Divers Co, I was hired as a Product Manager because I had a degree in Marketing and years of experience in dive equipment manufacturing. Being an Instructor Course Director wasn't one of the required skills for the job. It was amazing to see how many scuba instructors applied for a job with the company only to be informed by the HR Department that they didn't teach diving at U. S.



Divers. However, if you had a degree and training in engineering, product design, marketing, accounting or were skilled in a trade that the company needed, that would be a different story.

As you can see, the Global Diving Business Network needs qualified employees, business owners, and investors to keep our industry operating at optimal capacity. It's time we spell out the employment and business opportunities that are available to diving enthusiasts and non-divers alike. There is a lot of work to be done on defining the diving industry as it is today, and looking for our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

For more information about the Global Diving Business Network, contact Gene Muchanski, Executive Director of the Dive Industry Association, 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904. Phone: 321-914-3778. Email: gene@diveindustry.net Web: www.diveindustry.net

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DIVE RESORT PROFILE



Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire

A Roatan Charter FAM Trip

By Gene Muchanski, Editor

The Dive Industry Professional

It was two DEMA Shows ago that we first discussed conducting a FAM Trip to the Plaza Beach & Dive Resort Bonaire and their diving operation, Toucan Diving. At that time, the Plaza Resort Bonaire was undergoing major renovations to their resort and diving operation. As the renovations began and continued on schedule, our anticipation of a luxurious diving trip to the beautiful island of Bonaire grew. We received word early this year that the [Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire](#) and their diving operation, [Toucan Diving](#), would be ready to host our group by December. That's all that was needed for Debbie Helms and Liz Sanders at [Roatan Charter](#) to put their FAM trip plans in motion. Debbie Helms was kind enough to invite us to participate and we gladly accepted.

Conducting a Familiarization Trip, commonly called a FAM Trip, is a labor of love. FAM Trips are conducted primarily by Dive Travel Wholesalers for the express purpose of introducing their Retail Dive Travel Special-

ists to a new dive destination, resort, or liveaboard. The Dive Industry Association has worked with Tourism Bureaus, Dive Travel Wholesalers, and Resort Destinations, to identify Retail Dive Travel Specialists who routinely conduct group travel programs for divers. We make our recommendations to the Dive Travel Wholesaler who is conducting the FAM Trip and we put together a welcoming gift bag together, from our industry sponsors, to present to our attending guests.

FAM Trips are conducted for Dive Travel Specialists who have a history of running successful group dive trips. They are by invitation only and are usually reserved for Dive Travel Wholesaler's Dive Shop Partners. FAM Trips are not designed for Dive Industry Professionals looking for a free dive trip. They are an opportunity for serious Dive Travel Specialists who sell dive travel programs on a regular basis, to experience a new dive destination that might appeal to their dive travel customers.

There are three components to a FAM Trip that make it successful for all parties concerned. You have to start with a quality dive resort destination that would be attractive to a group of dive travelers. You have to

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invite an experienced group of Professional Dive Travel Specialists who have a history of running successful group dive travel programs at their dive center. You have to design a FAM Trip itinerary that is organized, well laid out, enjoyable, educational, and seamlessly executed.



Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire & Toucan Diving:

Conducting a FAM Trip is a partnership promotion between the hosting Dive Resort Destination and a Dive Travel Wholesaler. Dive Resorts usually are willing to host a FAM Trip when they are first built, are new to the diving industry, doing business with a new Dive Travel Wholesaler, or have undergone a major upgrade, expansion, or renovation. [Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire](#) is one of the top diving resorts in Bonaire and has just undergone a major facility renovation to their resort and their in-house diving operation, [Toucan Diving](#). The timing was right to show the diving industry the remarkable improvements they have made at their dive resort and to their diving operation.

Dive Travel Wholesaler: [Roatan Charter](#) has been serving the Global Diving Community for 44 years. Debbie Helms and her staff have over ninety (90) dive resort destinations, liveaboards, and dive operators they book dive travel to. I can't tell you how many dive stores they have as dive travel clients but I can tell you from personal experience that Roatan Charter is well respected and in high demand by Dive Travel Specialists across the globe. Roatan Charter is an all-inclusive Dive Travel Wholesaler, which means they are licensed to book airfare, cruises, dive trip vacations at dive resort destinations and liveaboards, land packages, safaris, and travel destinations of all kinds. As a Dive Travel Wholesaler, Roatan Charter can book

group travel trips for Dive Travel Specialists or arrange single traveler itineraries.

Information for Your Travel Book: If you have traveled with me before on an Industry FAM Trip, you'll know that I create a "Travel Book" for every trip I go on. Someone has to keep track of all the necessary travel data that is important to have on a dive trip. It might as well be me, since I'll need all the data to write follow-up articles about the trip. I am sure that if you are a seasoned Dive Travel Specialist, you may have your own version of a *Travel Book* with you when you conduct group trips. If you don't, then now may be a good time to start. Better yet. Come on a sponsored FAM Trip with me and I'll show you mine.

The reason I mentioned my travel book is not because I have OCD or anything. Well, I do have CDO, which is like OCD, but in alphabetical order like it should be! Seriously though, I got the idea of a travel book from Debbie Helms years ago. Debbie and the staff at Roatan Charter have a great habit of giving their clients all the information they will need to plan their trip. When they introduced the December FAM Trip to Bonaire, Roatan Charter clients received a one-page flyer that advertised the trip, including times, dates, prices, everything that was included in the package and everything that was not. The invitation included full contact information, availability parameters, and information about follow-up credits for future group bookings. I know that it is a lot of information to put on a one-page flyer, but you just have to see their recent one to really appreciate it. I think that designing a dynamic one-page flyer is a Superpower.

Once we put a deposit down on the FAM Trip, Roatan Charter stayed in touch with us with information on our reservation, airfare, taxes, transfers, marine park fees, and a multi-page information sheet on the resort and the diving operation. Roatan Charter even sends out a handy packing checklist which covers home preparation, carry-on items, packing hints, health & beauty reminders and what kind of electronics to pack. As you progress with the trip planning, all of the information you accumulate goes into your Travel Book. It is a great asset to have so that you don't forget anything important concerning the trip. Staying on top of your travel details is so important, we will be writing a separate travel article on creating your own "Travel Book."

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We worked hard to put together an all-inclusive FAM Trip that would be pleasurable, educational, cost effective, and seamlessly executed. We weren't just selling a single destination. We were promoting the Caribbean as a prime travel destination. We were informing our clients about the entire Island of Bonaire, not just a few square miles of a nice diving spot. We were showcasing a beautiful dive resort that offered great accommodations, excellent service, exquisite dining, customer-centric management, multiple options for watersports and non-watersports activities, competitive pricing, and of course a great on-site diving operation.



Inviting Retail Dive Travel Specialists: Half of the fun of going on a FAM Trip is spending time with a great group of Dive Travel Specialists from dive stores across the United States. I personally prefer FAM Trips that allow a 2-person limit per dive store if they are sharing a room and also allow a single representative to have their own room. Roatan Charter does that on their FAM Trips. Our Bonaire trip had 10 travel buyers from six dive stores participate in the trip, along with three representatives from Roatan Charter and Dive Industry Association. On this trip we had dive store representatives from California, Connecticut, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. We would have had 2 more from a dive store in Vermont, but unfortunately, they experienced travel connection problems on their way to Bonaire.

FAM Trip Sponsors: Since 2019 we have been putting together Gift Bags for our FAM Trip Participants. We have sponsors who produce diving and diving related products that are useful, if not essential to have on dive trips to the Caribbean. Gift Bags, commonly called SWAG Bags, perform a number of important functions. Primarily, they are a token of our appreci-



ation to the qualified retail buyers participating in our FAM Trips. They are often items that can be used on a dive trip including such items as refillable water bottles, sunscreen products, insect repellent, sunglasses, and the like. Because we are spending 4-5 days with qualified retail buyers from dive stores across the country we get to demonstrate our mission of bringing buyers and sellers together for mutual benefit. Producers of diving and diving related products and services are always looking for new and existing wholesale dealers and our dealers are always looking for new vendors of useful products. We also present a gift bag to each of the buyers at the dive resort and dive operation's gift shop or dive store. Caribbean Resort Buyers and Dive Operators rarely get sales calls from vendors or their sales reps because of the high cost of making sales calls in the Caribbean. As Trade Professionals, we get to perform that service. Participation in our Gift Bag program has been well received by our Vendor Sponsors and Retail participants.

Gift Bags for Bonaire FAM Trip: We would like to thank [Divers Alert Network](#) (DAN), [Stream2Sea](#), and [Lita's All Natural](#), in addition to [Roatan Charter](#) and [Dive Industry Association](#) for donating products and participating in our 2024 FAM Trip to Bonaire. Your products were well received, appreciated, and used throughout the trip. We were delighted to introduce your company to our FAM Trip Guests. Thank you.

Getting to Bonaire: Bonaire is easily accessible from major airports throughout the United States. We flew American Airlines from Orlando, changing planes in Miami for a direct flight to Bonaire. Since most of our party made their connection in Miami, we had an opportunity to meet most of them before arriving in Bonaire. Other than having to change planes in Miami (twice) due to a mechanical problem with the

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first plane we boarded, we arrived in Bonaire a few hours after we finally took off.

Roatan Charter's dive trip information package prepared us well for the trip. Our Passports had been checked for expiration date, we remembered to renew our DAN Membership, get medical insurance coverage, purchase trip insurance, register with Toucan Diving and sign our Liability Release and Assumption of Risk Agreement, pay our Bonaire Visitor Entry TAX, and pre-pay the STINAPA Marine Park Fee. All of that information was three-ring hole-punched and put in our Travel Book. Our Hosts from Plaza Resort Bonaire and Toucan Diving met us at the airport baggage claim with their van. It is such a pleasure when airport transfers are included in a dive trip package.



Checking Into the Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire:

The moment you arrive at Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire you know that you chose the right place. The newly designed reception area with its incredible ceiling-high and reception-area-wide water wall is a work of art. Within minutes of arriving at the resort, the staff offloaded our luggage and had it taken to our assigned rooms. Jeroen Van Buggenum, the Toucan Diving Co-Manager, escorted our group to the Resort's upstairs conference room for the resort indoctrination and welcoming cocktail.

Jeroen introduced himself and various staff members of the resort and the diving operation. He gave us a professional digital presentation of the resort's campus and pointed out the areas that would be of interest to us. In addition to viewing the campus map and seeing various points of interest on the screen, we each received a welcoming package that included all the information we needed to know about times, dates, places, schedules, and available services at the



resort. I especially appreciated the FAM Trip itinerary that was provided, which gave us a day-by-day time schedule of the planned activities. We were assigned our own dive boat for the trip as well as a Captain, Crew, and two Divemasters. After we completed our necessary diving related paperwork, the only thing left to do before dinner was lift our welcoming cocktail glass and toast the beginning of a new adventure.

We Picked the Right Resort: If you are thinking about planning a group trip to Bonaire and you choose Van Der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire as your resort destination, I would say that you made the right decision. The resort services that are important to you and your customers are the same ones that are important to us as marketing and trade professionals, when we conduct FAM Trips on your behalf. The front desk staff at the Plaza was totally in-sync with the reservation arrangements that Roatan Charter made for our group, and they were aware of all the diving arrangements that we made with Toucan Diving. Our check-in and check-out were efficiently handled, and the staff was exceptionally courteous. The resort accommodation we booked for the trip was a good choice and I was very pleased with the room, the internet services, and the housekeeping services.

The Restaurant Momento: The resort restaurant serves three meals a day. They have an all-inclusive plan which we highly recommend. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are prepared buffet style, although Chefs are on-hand to prepare special meal options and everyday requests like omelets in the morning and Chef Specials at dinner. There were a number of things that really impressed me about Restaurant Momento. The menu was diversified and the selection choices varied from day to day. The quality, quantity, and variety of the food was excellent. The Chefs, Cooks, and

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Food Service Personnel did an outstanding job. As far as the service staff is concerned, they were the best.



Restaurant Memento might be considered the focal point of activity at the resort, but it is not the only place to eat or drink. The resort has the *Palm Bar* on the beach, next to the pool, that serves drinks and food. They also have the *Beso Poolbar* in the Grande Suite complex.

Toucan Diving – Our Dive Operator: The diving operation at Van Der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire is [Toucan Diving](#), a PADI 5 Star Dive Resort. Toucan Diving has over 25 years of experience in conducting enjoyable supervised open water dives and teaching scuba diving and scuba instructor courses. Denise Korsten and Jeroen Van Buggenum are co-managers of Toucan Diving. The diving operation has 19 staff Instructors, Divemasters, Watersports Specialists, Boat Captains, and a Mermaid Instructor. They have 4 dive boats, one of which is the dive catamaran, Silver Surfer. Toucan Diving is also a PADI 5 Star Instructor Development Center.



Our plan was to make 2 dives on Day 2 and 2 dives on Day 3 of the trip. We had 11 divers and one snorkeler in our group, onboard the spacious dive catamaran. We were pleased with the number of crew members that Toucan Diving provided for our group. Captain Jeroen and another crew member took care of the boat while Bruno Nieuwendijk and Marise Ravelli were assigned to take care of us. The Silver Surfer was an excellent dive boat. Very comfortable, plenty of room to stow our dive gear and dry clothes, easy to get around with dive gear on, and easy to get back onboard. Diving in Bonaire in December is enjoyable. 85-degree air temp and 84-degree water temp. No wind, no rain, just nice and sunny with a slight sea breeze. Our dives were clear, warm, and shallow. Just the way I like them.



Based on the four dives we experienced with Jeroen, Bruno, and Marise, I would have to give Toucan Diving two thumbs up for the way they conducted themselves with our group. They were personal, professional, and friendly. We actually wrote a feature story in the December 2024 issue of [The Dive Industry Professional](#) about diving with Toucan Diving, entitled *Outstanding Divemaster Award*.

Caribbean Sunset Cruise: On Day 3 of our FAM Trip, we were treated to a two-hour sunset cruise aboard the Catamaran MAXIM. [Bonaire Yacht Charters](#) runs the cruise directly from the docks at the Plaza Resort Bonaire. We enjoyed some bonding time with our FAM Trip guests and Denise Korsten from Toucan Diving while we enjoyed drinks and hors d'oeuvres, viewing the beautiful coastline of Bonaire. And yes, as the sun set into the horizon, I did capture the "green flash" on camera.

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Site Inspection: On Day 4 of the trip, our group had an opportunity to participate in a 2-hour site tour of the resort property. A good site tour is a must for any FAM Trip group. You can't fully appreciate a resort destination until you have walked the entire campus on a guided tour. I would like to offer my opinion here for the benefit of the Van der Valk Resort Management. I loved the guided tour that Denise took us on. It was very informative and the information we received will be beneficial in selling your property to our Dive Travel Clients, but because your campus is so large and there is so much to see, I would have preferred to take the tour using your golf carts instead of walking the entire property.

Island Tour: After our site inspection of the property, we regrouped for lunch and then got changed to take a 3 ½ hour guided island tour sponsored by [Bonaire Tourism](#). They contracted [Tropical Travel Bonaire](#) to provide an air-conditioned van, driver, and tour guide to drive us around the island to see some key points of interest on the island. Raymond R.B. van Asperen Vervenne did an outstanding job of showcasing his beautiful island. Besides seeing all the sites and hearing about Bonaire's fascinating history, we got a VIP Tasting Tour of the [Cadushy Distillery](#) (For the Adventurous Drinker and Curious Traveler). I enjoyed tasting the Sabu Gin, Captain Don Rum, Rom Rincon Rum, Kaomati Tequila, and Cadushy Vodka, but the Award-Winning Rom Rincon Rum won me over and came home with us.



We learned a lot about Bonaire on the island Tour. Thank you, Raymond. I am glad we had our conversations with the [Tourism Corporation Bonaire](#) at the DEMA Show, before our FAM Trip. Thank you, Annette Emerenciana and Crystel Pourier. It makes a big difference including an Island Tourism Bureau when conducting a FAM Trip on their Island. We'll try to do that on every FAM Trip from now on.

It was an action packed fourth day on the Island and planning to fly out in the afternoon of the fifth day was perfect. Our group was able to enjoy a last dinner together and even squeeze in a group breakfast the following morning. The Van der Valk Plaza Resort Bonaire and Toucan Diving had five days to impress us, and I can honestly say that they succeeded. Liz Sanders gave our group the Plaza Beach Resort pack-age rates for May 1 – October 31, 2025, and I believe that 5 out of the 6 stores have already booked group trips for this year.

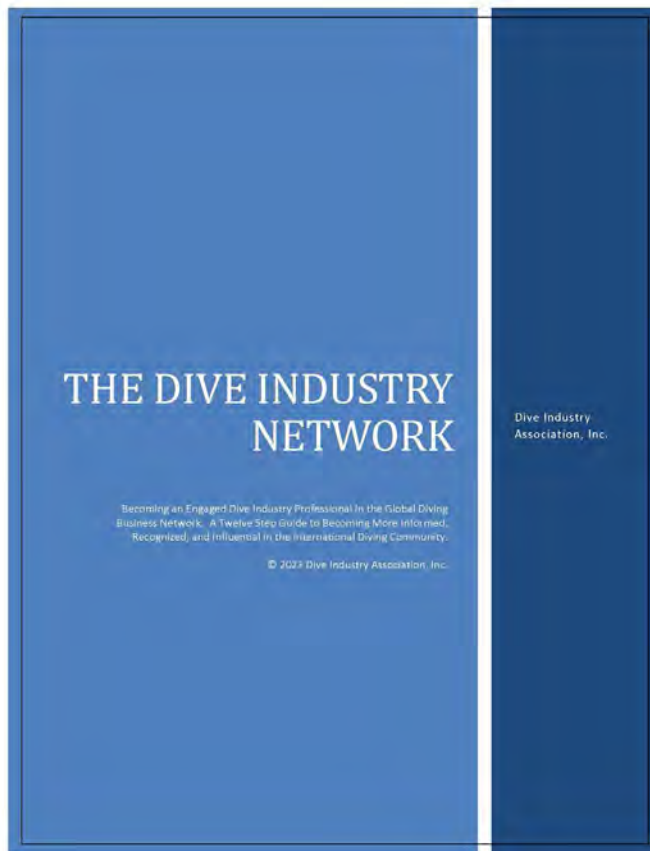


Thank you, Van der Valk Plaza Beach & Dive Resort Bonaire and Toucan Diving, for rolling out the Red Carpet for our group. Thank you, Debbie Helms and Liz Sanders, from Roatan Charter, for all of your hard work in putting this trip together. We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this trip and are looking forward to the next Caribbean FAM Trip Adventure.

For future FAM Trips or to book group trips with Van der Valk Plaza Beach & Dive Resort Bonaire, contact Debbie Helms, Roatan Charter, P O Box 877, San Antonio, FL 33576. Phone: 800-282-8932, Ext 204. Email: debbie@roatancharter.com Web: www.RoatanCharter.com



INDUSTRY NETWORK



What Is The Diving Industry?

by Gene Muchanski, Editor
The Dive Industry Professional

As we move into the new year, *The Dive Industry Professional* will be doubling down on being the industry voice of the business of diving issues in the Global Diving Community. **Many of the articles we produce this year will be based on how we view the diving industry world view.** We will be asking and answering foundational questions that may or may not have been discussed before or clarified in the past, pertaining to diving as a recreation, a sport, or a profession. By focusing on “Business of Diving” issues, research and published articles, *The Dive Industry Professional* will continue to be the Industry voice for the Global Diving Business Network. As Dive Industry Professionals working in the trade, when we speak about the “Diving Industry” we are actually referring to diving and diving related businesses within the Global Diving Business Network. Individuals who work in this global network are referred to as Dive Industry Professionals.

When we discuss matters that pertain to the diving Industry, we are talking about diving, the business of

diving, and the people that work in those businesses. Most of the primary research that is taking place in our industry today is being performed by a handful of marketing researchers who are spending the necessary time, money, and manpower to define the industry as it exists today, and to build a foundational template that can be used for the industry’s expansion, growth, maintenance, and success. There are very few Professional Dive Industry Planners in our Industry at this time. Mainly because industry planning is not a revenue generating career path. Most of the self-appointed Dive Industry Planners that I know have other vested interests in the Global Diving Community, the Global Diving Business Network, or the Diving Industry. Over the past 70 years, the industry has become what it is today, mainly by trial and error. There has been no Master Plan for its creation, growth, maintenance, and success. I am aware that a select few companies have their own agendas for their companies and not necessarily for the benefit of the entire industry. If they do have an industry-wide plan, they certainly are not sharing it with anyone.

When we talk about diving, do we just mean SCUBA diving, or does it include different types of underwater exploration? Is diving a means to an end or is it an end unto itself? Is it a recreation, hobby, sport, or profession? Is scuba diving a skill, duty, job, career, or profession? Can you find employment as a scuba diver, or do you have to get “a real job” to be able to afford it? How much does it pay and are there opportunities for advancement? Is scuba diving an industry or is it a specialty niche market? If you work in a scuba diving business, does that make you a Dive Industry Professional? What qualifies a person to be a Dive Industry Professional? In the scuba diving market, who are the buyers and who are the sellers? Who are Trade Professionals and who are consumers? Who runs the diving industry?

If you are looking for answers to any of these questions, you’ve come to the right place. No, this is not a Pandora’s Box or a Trojan Horse trick, although it may seem like that to some. It may in fact be a clear pathway to a growing and harmonious industry. If our industry is going to attract the best and the brightest people to fill our employment vacancies, we need to spell out the opportunities, benefits, and compensation potential for choosing the diving industry as a career path.

What Diving Is: As we said in this month’s editorial,

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diving is an underwater activity. It is performed with or without diving equipment. It includes snorkeling, free diving, scuba diving (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus), and surface supplied diving. It also includes diving-related underwater activities like mermaid diving. All types of diving can be used as an end in itself to just to go underwater and explore, but most of the time it is used as a means to do something underwater. It has taken the recreational diving community 70 years to figure out that diving is merely a means to an end. ***That's why you can't have a career in diving. You can have a career as a diver or a career in the diving industry, but you first have to specialize in an end use activity or profession first.***

How Diving Is Organized: Diving can be different things to different people. In fact, many specialty groups and niche markets have been created based on the different applications and uses of diving equipment, training, travel, and lifestyle products. Diving starts out as an activity or an experience, then proceeds to a recreation, hobby, or lifestyle. For many, it can turn into job, collateral duty, profession, or career. Dive Industry Planners have come to an agreement that the term "Divers" can be classified into two distinct categories: Recreational Divers and Trade Professionals.

Diving as a Recreation: Snorkeling, Freediving, and Scuba Diving are great in a recreational setting. It's a social activity that can be done in lakes, rivers, quarries, and the oceans all across the planet. When coupled with other activities like underwater photography, marine and oceanographic research, cave diving, wreck diving, environmental studies, spearfishing, mermaid diving, and dive travel, it can turn into a life-long hobby. All certified divers and diving-related participants make up a large portion of what we call the Global Diving Community.

Diving as a Trade Profession: Divers who use their diving skills to earn money are considered Dive Industry Trade Professionals. We made this category all-inclusive because we treat all divers who are engaged in business as Trade Professionals. Once a person starts making money from their hobby, they have to declare their income to the federal government (in the United States). If they work for a business that specializes in diving and they own their own business that involves the sale of diving programs, products, or services, we can classify them as Dive Industry Professionals who are working in the Global Diving Business Network.

The Global Diving Business Network is a term we coined to categorize businesses that produce or sell diving and diving related programs, products, and services. The businesses in the Network come from many different industries, listed in the United States NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) Codes Manual. We study the businesses within these industries that produce diving equipment, diving services, dive training, dive travel, and diving lifestyle products and sell them in our niche market. ***The Global Diving Business Network is the center of what we call the Diving Industry.***

The Diving Industry: Businesses in the Global Diving Business Network produce the programs, products, and services that are sold to divers in the Global Diving Community. ***It is our mission as a Trade Association to know the buyers and sellers of diving equipment, training, travel, and lifestyle products, so we could facilitate trade between them. Hence, the definition and purpose of a Trade Association.***



"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

The Diving Industry Association: As the premier Marketing and Trade Association in the Diving Industry, it is our mission to bring buyers and sellers together for mutual benefit. To be able to successfully complete our mission for the good of the Global Diving Community, we have become students of supply side and demand side economics, as it applies to diving and diving related programs, products, and services, in order to be able to research, study, define, analyze, and advise our business clients in the Global Diving Business Network. An Industry Trade Association represents and advises producers and suppliers of diving and diving related programs, products, and services. In order to do that, we have to have a thorough understanding of the products being sold, the markets in which they are offered for sale, and the buyers who make the purchases. None of the buying and selling processes happen automatically. It only comes to fruition after a great deal of market and marketing

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research.

The Bridge Connecting Buyers and Sellers: Identifying buyers and sellers of specific programs, products, and services is paramount to being financially successful in the marketplace, but there is so much more to it than that. The marketing profession was created for two main purposes to facilitate commerce between buyers and sellers. To bring buyers and sellers together, you must first build a marketplace. A marketplace is where buyers and sellers come together to transact business. There are many examples of marketplaces, especially in the 21st century. A marketplace could be a brick-and-mortar store, a mall, a field, a trade show, a mail order catalog, or an online website. A marketplace is wherever products can be bought and sold.

Once a marketplace has been established, it is marketing's responsibility to inform potential customers about the products being sold and how to go about acquiring them. If you think of Marketing as a bridge that connects buyers and sellers, you can visualize numerous marketing vehicles crossing that bridge to carry messages about the products that producers build to the intended buyers that purchase them. All of the foundational effort that goes into building a marketplace and servicing a market is what makes up the Diving Industry. This is the critical role that Marketing Professionals play in the industry. The ongoing buying and selling process of diving and diving related products is more than a four-day event. It is a year-round activity, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. It is global in nature and utilizes multiple seasonal curves. It is an ongoing annual process orchestrated from a playbook that Professional Dive Industry Planners have created for their clients. Do you see the importance of researching, analyzing, and creating a master plan for the creation, growth, and management of a unified diving industry now? That bridge we built to connect buyers and sellers cannot only be open four days a year. It has to be functional and operational at optimal performance all year round.

The Dive Industry Foundation: The Dive Industry Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax exempt organization that conducts primary and secondary research in the diving industry. Conducting market research is critically important to the economic development of the industry, and to the businesses that operate in the Global Diving Business Network. It should be a bigger priority for businesses that specialize in the diving niche market, but because it is a non-reve-



Promoting Economic Development in Water Sports

nue generating activity, very little emphasis or funding is given to market research. The Dive Industry Foundation has taken it upon themselves to conduct primary and secondary market research to understand the composition of the supply and demand sectors in our industry channel of distribution. Our mission is to research, study, analyze, and advise on data that is collected from buyers and sellers of diving and diving related programs, products, and services. As a public service to the Global Diving Community, the Dive Industry Foundation conducts research on current "State of the Industry" issues, as it applies to the sources of diving equipment, dive services, dive training, dive travel, and diving lifestyle products. The Foundation publishes a list of current Dive Stores in the United States on its [DIVE LOCAL](#) website.

An Industry Master Marketing Plan: The Dive Industry Foundation has a Vision and a Master Marketing Plan for the Diving Industry. If you follow our blogs and business articles you will see what we have been working on for the past eight years. The Dive Industry Association is the industry marketing consulting company that uses this master plan to bring buyers and sellers together, all year round. They work with their members to increase exposure, establish brand recognition, and increase sales to more potential buyers. They help them increase their market penetration by using modern marketing tools and techniques, which is a prerequisite to increasing market share. Every legitimate diving industry business should be an active member of the Global Diving Business Network.

For more information about the Global Diving Business Network, contact Gene Muchanski, Executive Director of the Dive Industry Association, 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904. Phone: 321-914-3778. Email: gene@diveindustry.net Web: www.diveindustry.net

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS



"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

We would like to thank the following New Members for joining our Global Diving Business Network.

We would like to thank the following Charter Members and Members for renewing with us for another year.

NEW MEMBERS

0438 – ScubaFit LLC – Service Provider, Training – www.scubafit.com

RENEWING MEMBERS

0073 – Discovery Diving Co. – Dive Center & Dive Operator – www.discoverydiving.com

0135 – Prescription Dive Masks – Manufacturer, Mask Lenses – www.PrescriptionDiveMasks.com

0138 – Captain Slate's Scuba Adventures – Dive Operator – www.captainslate.com

0163 – Diveheart – Non-Profit Organization – www.diveheart.org

0331 – Innovative Scuba Concepts, Inc. – Manufacturer – www.innovativescuba.com

0346 – Beqa Lagoon Resort Fiji – Dive Resort & Dive Operator – www.beqalagoonresort.com

0348 – American Cylinder & Safety LLC – Service Provider – www.AmericanCylinderandSafety.com

0351 – Dream Weaver Travel – Travel, Wholesaler – www.dreamweavertravel.com

0357 – Lita's All Natural LLC – Manufacturer – www.litasallnatural.com

0369 – Stream2Sea – Manufacturer – www.stream2sea.com

0416 – CHART – Non-Profit Organization – jstich@cfl.rr.com

0420 – Ultralight Camera Solutions, Inc. – Manufacturer – www.ulcs.com

0423 – Villa on Dunbar Rock – Travel, Dive Resort – www.DunbarRock.com

0424 – Cabanas on Clark's Cay – Travel, Dive Resort – www.ClarksCay.com

0429 – The LZK Group LLC – ZooKeeper – Manufacturer – www.LionfishZK.com

0431 – Sierra Diving Center – Retail Dive Center – www.SierraDive.com

MEMBERSHIP. BENEFITS. YOU.

BECOME A DAN MEMBER TODAY.

JOIN NOW



SHOWS & EVENTS

2025 TRADE SHOWS



January 8-10, 2025: Surf Expo. 48th Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center – West Concourse, 9899 International Drive, Orlando, FL. Contact Rod Tomlinson. Toll Free Phone: 800-947-7873. Phone: 678-781-7900. email: rod.tomlinson@surfexpo.com Direct: 678-781-7914. Web: www.surfexpo.com



January 18-26, 2025: Boot Düsseldorf – 54th International Boat Show. Düsseldorf, Germany. Diving Pavilion in Hall 3. Contact: Justin Kesselring, Project Manager, Messe Düsseldorf North America, 150 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2920, Chicago, IL 60601. Phone: 312-781-5180 email: info@mdna.com Web: <http://www.mdna.com/trade-shows/details/boot>



March 15-16, 2025: The Boston Sea Rovers 71st Annual International Underwater Clinic. CoCo Key Hotel & Water Resort, Danvers, MA Contact David Caldwell, Exhibit Co-Chairman, Email: djc.searover@gmail.com or visit www.bostonsearovers.com



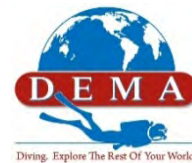
March 28-30, 2025: Beneath the Sea - 46th Annual International Oceans Exposition. New Jersey Meadowlands Expo Center, Secaucus, NJ. Contact Maria Hults. Phone: 914-664-4310. Fax: 914-664-4315. email: info@beneaththesea.org Web: www.beneaththesea.us



May 31 - June 1, 2025: Scuba Show. 38th Annual Consumer Scuba Show. Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, CA. Contact Mark Young, Executive Director. Phone: 816-665-8679. email: mail@scubashow.com Web: www.scubashow.com



September 4-6, 2025: Surf Expo. 48th Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center – South Concourse, 9800 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819. Contact Rod Tomlinson. Toll Free Phone: 800-947-7873. email: rod.tomlinson@surfexpo.com Direct: 678-781-7914. Web: www.surfexpo.com



November 11-14, 2025: Dema Show. 49th Annual Industry Trade Show. Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL. Phone: 800-687-7469, email: Web: www.demashow.com

SHOWS & EVENTS

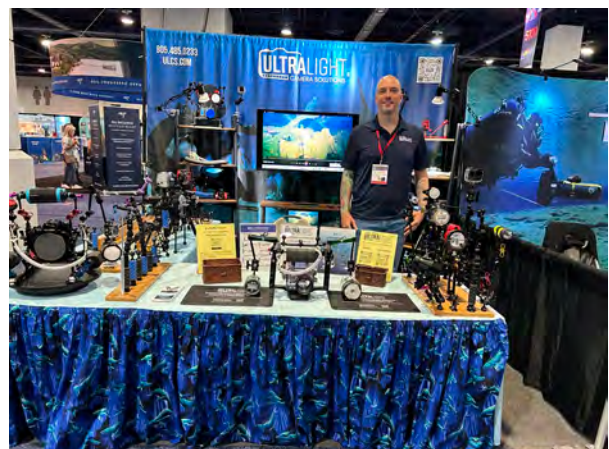
2025 PHOTOGRAPHY EVENTS



August 23 – September 7, 2025: **MantaFest Photography School & Contest**. 19th Annual Event. Yap, Micronesia. Contact Bill Acker. Web: www.mantaray.com



TBA 2025: **BlackwaterFest 2025 Photography School**. 3rd Annual Event. Yap, Micronesia. Contact Bill Acker. Web: www.mantaray.com



MEMBERSHIP



The Dive Industry Association is a Marketing and Trade Association dedicated to *"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time."* Founded in April 2001, Dive Businesses and Individuals have joined our association to promote their business and grow the diving industry.

"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

Our Purpose is to build a cohesive and functional Global Diving Business Network.

Our Vision is to *Build a Better Industry, One Member at a Time.*

Our Mission is to Bring Buyers & Sellers together to facilitate business success and industry growth.

Our Focus is to concentrate on the industry's sale of diving equipment, training, travel, and lifestyle products.

Our Goals are to:

- Unite the Industry to a common purpose
- Promote Professional Business Development within our Membership
- Generate maximum marketing exposure and sales leads for our Members
- Increase business opportunities for our Members

Reasons to Join: Annual dues are \$125. Annual renewals, if paid by your annual renewal date are \$100. There is no place in the industry where you get as much coverage for so little an investment. The association promotes your business using blogs, websites, directories, social media, at trade and consumer shows and through direct referrals. Our networking capability is the envy of the International Diving community. The discounts you receive from Constant Contact by being a member and the FREE weekly press releases you receive more than pay for your dues many times over. Don't be a *Lone Marketeer*. Join the Dive Industry Association this year.

For more information: Contact Gene Muchanski, Executive Director, Dive Industry Association, Inc., 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, Florida, 32904. Phone: 321-914-3778. eMail: gene@diveindustry.net Web: www.diveindustry.net





"Building a Better Industry, One Member at a Time"

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Company Name: _____

☐ Proprietorship ☐ Partnership ☐ Corporation ☐ LLC Years in Business: _____

Contact Person: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Contact Person's Position: _____ Years with Company: _____

Business Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Business Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Toll Free Phone: _____ Toll Free Fax: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Facebook: _____ Skype: _____

E-mail Address for directories: _____

E-mail address for DIA correspondence: _____

Web Site (URL): _____

Trade Directory by-line (1-2 lines only): _____

DEMA Member? ☐ No ☐ Yes Number: _____ Votes: _____ Voting Delegate: _____

Category – Business - (Choose One) \$25 Registration Fee + \$100 Annual Membership Dues

- ☐ Manufacturer ☐ Distributor ☐ Retail Center ☐ Charter Boat ☐ Dive Club
☐ Service Provider ☐ Industry Media ☐ Trade Association ☐ Training Association
☐ Service Organization ☐ Trade Show Organizer ☐ Training Facility ☐ Travel Business

Category – Individual - (Choose One) \$25 Registration Fee + \$50 Annual Membership Dues

- ☐ Sales Representative ☐ Professional Educator ☐ Industry Professional

Payment Method: ☐ Cash / ☐ Check / ☐ Credit Card / ☐ PayPal / ☐ Square

☐ Check (payable to Dive Industry Association, Inc.) \$ _____ Check # _____

☐ If paying by Credit Card, please fill out: Type: ☐ American Express ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ CVV: _____

Card Holder's Name: _____ Signature: _____

☐ Referred by: _____

* DIA retains the right to re-classify members according to our membership standards.

Mail to: Dive Industry Association, Inc., 2294 Botanica Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904-7339



DIVE INDUSTRY FOUNDATION

PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WATERSPORTS