

**Welcome**

Welcome to the Tech Dive NZ August newsletter. It seems that spring has come early this year, with some great settled weather in between the more turbulent storms. Hopefully everyone has taken advantage of the weather to get some great diving in!?

**Photo of the Month**

This months featured photo is another “skive dive” shot, showing Matt Shortall in the Tunnel at the Poor Knights. For those who missed out on the diving, yes the visibility really was that good!



**What's Been Happening?**

We've only had one course running since the last newsletter, a Self Reliant Diver course that involved a fairly intensive day at Lake Pupuke and a day shore diving at Goat Island. Congratulations to Tim who completed the course, and hopefully his razor sharp legal mind won't object to us quoting him

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from the debrief in the Sawmill: “This is the best PADI course I’ve ever done”... thanks for the feedback, Tim!

As well as diver level courses, we’re still busy with professional level training. Scott, Lauren, Mike and Alice also completed their Assistant Instructor courses this month, and we look forward to diving with them and having them help out with our courses in the future.



We’ve had a number of dive trips away, including the spectacular August “skive dives”. This started off with an amazing night dive on the Waikato, followed by two dives the next day to the Poor Knights. The sea was calm both days, and enabled us to get the most out of the diving. Mel and Jamie took advantage of the conditions to do a 57m trimix dive at the back of the Tunnel as their first dive of the day, and then we were lucky enough to get to Taravana Cave – either a belated or an early birthday present for Jamie, depending on how you look at it!

Taravana Cave is a spectacular dive, with five of us completing the full 200m penetration – a fifteen minute swim each way in total darkness. But Mike, Chris and Aaron explored the cave entrance and no doubt are thinking right now about arranging Cavern courses in the near future!

We’ve also kicked off our regular social, which will be the first Thursday of each month. This month saw quite a few people congregating at the “Submerged” exhibition at the Flagstaff gallery, followed by drinks at the Abbey. In September, we’ll be just heading to the Abbey for drinks and nibbles on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

### What’s Coming Up?

As always, there’s plenty on the horizon both in terms of trips away and courses coming up, despite both Jamie and I having trips overseas in September! Early in the month, we’ll be running another GUE Fundamentals course for which there seems to be an ever increasing demand. Other than that, September is all about wrecks! I’m heading over to Canada and am planning at least one dive on the wreck of the Arabia in Lake Huron, a 40m three-masted barque that foundered in heavy seas and sank in 1884. Like many fresh water wrecks, she is in pristine condition as the photo here attests! For those interested in wreck diving, the Great Lakes offer huge potential and are often overlooked in favour of warmer water spots. Jamie is also spending some time on wrecks, with a trip to the Mikhail Lermontov for a few days before heading to the northern hemisphere for his sister’s wedding. And, on top of that, Mel is off to the Solomon Islands to explore some of the wrecks there – we’ll have to compare notes when we’re all back and try and decide which of the wrecks we’ve dived is the best! But don’t worry, we won’t keep



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the wreck diving just for ourselves and we'll arrange a wreck diving weekend sometime in October, with the option for wreck training as well. Looking further ahead to the end of October and November, we have a couple of trips planned to Matai Bay. The diving here is excellent, and hopefully in November we'll be finding some new caves in the area which will give us plenty of scope for both exploration and teaching cavern courses.

### Dive Trips

You can keep track of our planned dive trips on the website ([www.techdivenz.com/trips.html](http://www.techdivenz.com/trips.html)), but each month we'll provide you with a reminder of what we've got planned. Here's what we've got planned over the next couple of months, so get in touch if you'd like to come along on one of these:

- Solomon Islands, 6-13th September 2009
- Riwaka, 12th September 2009
- Lake Taupo and Waikato River Drift Dive, 3-4th October 2009
- October "Skive Dive", 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009
- Matai Bay, 24-26th October 2009
- Volkner Rocks, 5-7th February 2010

If there's anywhere you particularly want to go diving, either let myself, Jamie or Mel know and we will help arrange the trip.

### Dive Courses

Our scheduled classes are also on the website ([www.techdivenz.com/schedule.html](http://www.techdivenz.com/schedule.html)), though most of our courses are now full! For people interested in getting in to technical diving, we will be organising a number of TDI Advanced Nitrox & Decompression Procedures course in spring, and we're currently waiting on word from PADI before we start organising Advanced Wreck specialties.

### Tips and Techniques

A question commonly asked by divers is "How do I improve my gas consumption?". All of our courses deal to some extent with this by focusing on buoyancy, trim, fitness, correct weighting and efficient kicks. A significant factor is how often you dive – the more you dive, the more relaxed and comfortable you will feel; and the better your gas consumption will be. Take a moment to focus on your breathing, are you even aware of how fast you are breathing in and out? Whilst it takes time to achieve better gas consumption, don't forget that you've got other questions you could ask. Instead of "how do I improve my gas consumption?" why not ask "how can I make my tank last longer?" which opens up a whole range of options for extending your dives and having more fun. One of the most commonly overlooked options for longer dives is simply staying shallower. The shallower you are the less gas you are using in each breath, the longer your dive time can be, which means you'll be getting longer in the water which will drive your gas consumption down.

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**And Now for Something Completely Different...**

How do you explain this to your insurance company?

In mid August we spent a day at the lake to complete the rescue assessments for the Assistant Instructor course. During one of the rescues the rescuer inadvertently deflated the BCD instead of inflating it and as they unclipped it from the casualty it sank into the weeds at the bottom of the lake. No worries, it was only 4m deep – or so we thought.

30 minutes later we still had not found the BCD and were running out of air. We stopped to grab some food, get some air fills and reorganise our search. The weeds were proving as impenetrable as the Amazon jungle and visibility was almost zero. Whilst we waited we added up the cost of the missing gear, \$3.5k at least, plus the damage that would occur to the diver's car – the keys to the car were in the BCD pocket. The spare car keys were at work, but the work keys were also in the car. We started to debate which window to break...



Finally 90 minutes after losing the BCD we eventually found it – much to everyone's relief. The question – does Jamie certify the new AIs as search and recovery divers as well? Congratulations to Scott, Lauren, Mike and Alice on becoming AIs.