WINING AND DIVING
Combining a dive trip with wine tasting

Sport Diver ON TOUR
Florida roadtrip heads east to Fort Lauderdale

GETTING CREATIVE SHOTS
Incorporating unusual props into your underwater photographs

PLUS CUBA • PAUL ROSE • OMAN • ARE YOU A BAD DIVER?
"I have to confess that when the invitation came through in an email asking me if I would like to attend a BAD diving course, I was initially somewhat perturbed and rather offended"
Want to be a BAD DIVER?

Experienced instructor David Jones took umbrage when someone invited him to attend a BAD diving course, but he soon discovered it was more about becoming an underwater Indiana Jones rather than besmirching his scuba reputation.

Photographs by DAVID JONES
I have to confess that when the invitation came through in an email asking me if I would like to attend a BAD diving course, I was initially somewhat perturbed and rather offended. After 35 years of pretty consistently sticking my head underwater, I was fairly confident that I could hold my own among my fellow devotees of sub-aquatic sports when it came to ability. I certainly wasn’t in need of any corrective training akin to a driving awareness course in lieu of points for a speeding offense.

However, I had jumped to completely the wrong conclusion — this was an invitation to undertake the Basic Archaeological Diver course. It was a new one on me, but I have to admit I was intrigued. I have always been fascinated by all things archaeological and like nothing more than a good Wilbur Smith romp through ancient Egypt, or a Nat Geo documentary on Mayan ruins; in fact, even Baldrick getting over-excited on Time Team is enough to grab my interest — well, sometimes.

And while I was aware that the Nautical Archaeology Society ran courses, I had never really felt like going down that route. However, the BAD course was different. It was a PADI Distinctive Specialty, which appeared to place a lot of emphasis (like all good PADI courses) on fun. Written in part by Ginge Crook of MAST (Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust), who I had known for many years, had taught on an IDC, and have the greatest respect for, I thought I would give it a go.

The course I attended was run in Plymouth over two days. During the first day we covered quite a lot of theory, but it was all put across in an interesting way — and it was all relevant! The first aim was to examine what archaeology is, before moving onto the dos and don’ts of marine archaeology, and this elicited lots of anecdotal participation from the students on the programme. This was all about the organisations and legislation that you need to have a grasp off. Why was the UB81 changed from being...
"I know an awful lot of divers whose idea of a rummage dive includes carrying those well-known dive accessories, the crowbar, lump hammer and 50kg lift bag that could be well advised to attend this programme for that reason alone!"

A wipeboard is the marine archaeologist's best friend

Basic Archaeological Diver - Potted History
You don't get very far off the coast of England before you bump into a shipwreck: we have wrecks off our coast dating back to the Bronze Age, bearing witness to hundreds, if not thousands, of years of trade and cargo, people and ideas - and wars. They and their artefacts can tell stories that even the history books can't.

The PADI Distinctive Specialty course created by the Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust (MAST) aims to equip divers with the basics of underwater archaeology, how to record and interpret the thousands of wrecks off the coast of the UK and beyond - and there are more wrecks off the coast of the UK than any other country on Earth. The course is written and designed by maritime archaeologists with experience in a great variety of underwater sites around the world. It is all part of a cunning plan, of course, to recruit a new generation of eyes and ears to become the guardians of our underwater cultural heritage. The only hope we have of preserving our future is by learning from our past, by recording and appreciating our wrecks - these vessels represented society's most-developed or technologically advanced pieces of equipment, comparable to today's spacecraft.

Enter the vast amphibian army of fearless British sports divers. Armed with little more than tape measures and cameras, students learn over two days just how much of a difference they can make in preserving our underwater heritage.

Included in the price of a BAD course with MAST in Plymouth is a reduced price voucher to dive the Coronation protected wreck site, guided by one of the licensees, expert on the site and its history. All the profits from the course contribute to underwater heritage research projects. Thanks to its popularity, these proceeds have so far paid for the conservation of two of the 17th century Swash Channel wreck carvings.

Jessica Berry
CEO, Maritime Archaeology Sea Trust
www.thisismast.org

www.sportdiver.co.uk

Courses are currently available in Plymouth through MAST (www.thisismast.org), in Portsmouth through Triton Scuba (www.tritonscuba.co.uk), and In Tyne and Wear through Cormetons Dive Support (www.cormetondivesupport.com)