

# NAUTILUS WATERSPORTS

Email: [nautilus@vanuatu.com.vu](mailto:nautilus@vanuatu.com.vu)

Web Address: <http://www.nautilus.com.vu>

P.O. Box 1231

Port Vila, Vanuatu

Ph: +678 22 398

Fax: +678 25 255

Following is a selection of reef sites regularly visited by one or other of the Nautilus dive boats, and most of which we have buoyed. Within a package of dives you can visit wrecks, reefs, caves, drift and wall dives, you can night dive in the warm tropical water. Our 25+ years of diving in and round Port Vila gives us the experience to offer the variety, which is the keynote to Vanuatu diving.

## REEF SITES

### **TWIN BOMMIES:**

Most species of tropical fish are to be found on this site which features a sheer wall as well as the two “bombora” formations riddled with grottos. The site is alive with fish life that are comfortable with divers and not afraid of the camera flash - depth from 10 mtrs on top of the reef to 24 mtrs over the edge of the drop-off.

### **HONEYBONE REEF:**

Only 20 minutes from the dive base with a depth of 9 mtrs to 26mtrs, this site features a variety of soft and hard coral representing all colors of the rainbow and brightly colored fish, with green and hawksbill turtles and moray eels to be sighted. Honeybone Reef is a great dive for both the inexperienced and the experienced divers.

### **MELE REEF:**

An extensive reef that rises up in the middle of Mele Bay to around 8 meters from the surface. The plateau is host to a large variety of reef life, including batfish, clown triggerfish and white tip reef sharks. The vertical wall descends to at least 35 meters and has interesting gulleys and alleys to investigate along the way. Mele Reef is a superb dive for all levels.

### **OLLIES LOLLY:**

A large reef starting 10 meters from the surface and dropping beyond 25 meters. It is home to a huge variety of fish along with a range of hard and soft corals. A draw card of this site is a rare red anemone filled with tomato anemone fish. This dive suits all levels of divers and is a photographers dream come true.

### **CATHEDRAL:**

At the tip of the Pango peninsular a vast cavern has formed which makes a spectacular dive - maximum depth 26 mtrs inside the cavern with shaft of light creating an unusual effect. It is possible to swim right through to the back of the cave to be amazed by the light display. Explore the outside and along the wall and look out in to the depths of the ocean.

### **KONANDA REEF:**

Konanda Reef is only a 15 minute boat trip on MV Cowrie from Nautilus base. With depths starting at 5 mtrs this is a great dive for all level of divers from the newly certified to the very experienced. Konanda Reef has a large variety of hard coral and fish life and is regularly visited by our friendly dugong.

### **PANGO WALL:**

One of the most diverse reef plains here in Port Vila. On the outskirts of Pango Point lies a reef, gently sloping down into the unexplored blue, being host with Anemones to Hawksbills, Nudibranchs to Yellowfin Tuna with mushroom corals and large Gorgonian fans, all of which is residing in her fantastic hard and soft Coral Garden which accompanies you throughout your dive.

### **KONANDA WALL:**

An excellent dive for the photography enthusiast. Start the dive at Konanda Reef then drop away to the sheer wall that descends well below 30 mtrs. Cruise along the wall seeing cuttlefish, nudibranch and flatworms and then finish the dive at a shallow reef with a large variety of reef life.

### **TWINS DRIFT:**

A superb drift dive starting at Twin Bommies and following the reef ridge for at least 200 mtrs. Schools of blue fin triggerfish accompany you along the dive and you're likely to see hawksbill turtles, moray eels and lionfish as you slowly drift along the dive site. A great dive for all levels with a maximum depth of 20 mtrs.

### **PANGO DRIFT:**

Start the dive following a sandy channel to a maximum depth of 28 mtrs the Pango Reef gently falls away into the depths below. Fantastic visibility ensures that you will see huge variety of reef and pelagic fish life, including white tip reef sharks, yellowfin tuna, sea snakes and sea pens. Swimming around huge limestone formations in the shallow reef at 5 – 8 mtrs finish the dive off.

### **NEVILLES SURPRISE:**

This site begins with a dramatic sheer wall that drops away to 26 mtrs with small bombora to investigate along the way. Drift along further down the site and follow the ridge at a shallower depth. A relaxing dive with great photography opportunities with extensive fish life and soft and hard corals.

### **PANGO / SEMLE / PANGO:**

Too much to see .. start the dive heading into the depths along the reef edge – then leave the reef and head out into the blue where the stern of the Semle Federsen wreck appears in the distance. Spend time exploring the wreck at 30 – 35 mtrs and then return back to Pango Reef where reef life abounds. A fantastic dive for the more experienced diver.

### **KATHLEEN:**

The only sea mound in Mele Harbour, this site is suitable for the more experienced diver as the reef starts at 18 mtrs. Drift around the reef taking in schools of barracuda, longfin bannerfish and fusiliers. A great macro dive for photographers with scorpion fish, nudibranchs and mantis shrimps hiding in the coral crevices. The wreck of the “Kathleen” lies too deep for recreational divers, but parts of the wreck can be seen at depths of 30 mtrs and below.

### **BIG DIPPER:**

An vast reef that rises up in the middle of Mele Bay to around 10 meters. The main feature of this site is the array of corals found along the reef wall and plateau. Huge plate corals, barrel sponges and brain corals are host to a large variety of reef life, with the occasional white tip reef shark enjoying the dive with you. A relaxing dive with maximum depth of 22 mtrs.

### **BLACKSANDS CAVES:**

This is a series of lave vents/tubes with a max depth of 20 mtrs. The caves have a crack running 90% along the roof so light is never really a problem. Two exit points during the trip through guarantees those who feel ‘closed in’ a chance of an early exit, meeting up with the group further along the way. Some great Bommies once out of the tube makes an excellent dive. You will come across soft and hard Anemones, Clown Fish, Lion Fish, Blue Spotted Sting Ray’s, the list just goes on.

### **BLACKSANDS WALL:**

Blacksands Wall is located close to Blacksands Caves, there is no need to go deep on this dive as there is plenty to see with a max depth of 25 mtrs. A sheer wall awaits you with new Gorgonian Fans nestled into the wall, soft corals and a variety of fish life. A dive this is great for the beginner through to the very experienced.

## **WRECK DIVES**

### **KONANDA WRECK:**

The daring of the keen wreck divers, “Konanda” sits flat on a sandy bottom at 26 mtrs, her derricks and rigging reaching up to within 10mtrs of the surface. Imagine, even the snorkels can enjoy themselves here on the nearby reefs as well, “Konanda” is an Island Trader, 45 mtrs in length, she was damaged in a vicious cyclone and deliberately sunk in October 1987 for the delight of our divers. She was carefully prepared so that penetration of the wreck in to the cabins and holds are safe and makes an ideal introduction to the fun of wreck diving.

### **STAR OF RUSSIA:**

80 mtrs in length and 13 mtrs in breadth, this grand old lady of the sailing ship days rests in Port Vila Harbor holding court for the divers attending by countless varieties of tropical fish fussing around on the tour around the shipwreck. Following the buoyed line to depth of 33 mtrs take a leisurely swim through the body of the ship which again, due to the rotting away of the teak decking, is perfectly safe for penetration. Build of bolted iron plates (shiplap style), this hull is intact with a romantic shapely bow. Divers can inspect the old anchor weighting equipment and a huge main bollard in the forward section, dead eyes and rigging along the railings, three massive masts and remains of a crow’s nest, to the wheel machinery at the stern which manipulated the rudder. A great shipwreck to enjoy and quite definitely of historical interest, the “Star of Russia” was built by Harlan and Wolff of Belfast (also famous for the construction of the Titanic). A challenging race was set up in the early 1900’s between this fast sailing ship and the first of the exciting new steamships – both crafts left Liverpool together, the steam ship setting off direct for Australia and the “Star of Russia” heading south to catch the wind – imagine the reaction when the steam ship puffed into Port Phillip Bay to find the “Star of Russia” had arrived three days earlier!!

**TASMAN:**

Less than 10 minutes from Nautilus lies the Qantas S26 Sandringham Flying Boar – now here is something different. With a wingspan of over 30 mtrs this bulky giant, abandoned and dumped in the Harbor after a mishap which rendered it unfit for further service, was discovered in 1978, after quite a search. To successfully explore the “Tasman”, the divers need to plan for 40 mtrs maximum depth. The mooring line leads on to the tail of the plane and from there is easy to swim above the wreck gaining an overall view of the plane and drop onto the nose and peer through the many windows. The spaciousness of the interior is surprising and the vastness of the wings which kept the old bird airborne is astonishing, just a reminder of the days when air travel was a long slow process. This particular craft was also a record breaker, she was the first plane to fly the Tasman Sea from Auckland to Sydney in less than eight hours.

**SEMLE FEDERSEN:**

A cargo carrying trading vessel well known around these islands over many years, this strong old ship was about to be relegated to the scrape heap as useless in 1985, when the Ports and Marine Department were persuaded that she would indeed be very useful as a new dive site and a home for the plants and animals of the sea along Pango Cost in Mele and this is where she reclines now. The “Semle” moved down the reef during Cyclone Uma in 1987 and the stern area, cabin and wheelhouse can be dived within 40 mtrs. The clarity of the water at this site is a feature, i.e. if you can see the whole ship at a glance while descending the mooring line, you have over 60 mtrs visibility. As a build up toward the “President Coolidge” in Santo, the “Semle” is a valuable experience.

**NIGHT DIVES:**

Come and join us on our (Night Dive) normally on Wednesday nights. At night the dive sites take on a new dimension as all the night dwellers come out from their hiding places. Get in early to be able to choose which dive site you will dive, will it be a wreck or a reef.