

## Little Cayman, BWI

Route: Seattle—Charlotte, NC—Grand Cayman—Little Cayman US Airways

### Departure Day:

Check in at SeaTac was a breeze and everyone made it on time despite the traffic backup on our way into Seattle. Our red eye flight departed on time at 10:25 pm as we head to Charlotte NC. Arrival in Charlotte was right on time and we had 3 hours to kill before our 9:45 AM flight to Grand Cayman. As we sit and wait for our flight it starts to snow outside, just a little bit at first, but then the visibility drops and it's coming down in buckets. We need to get out of here soon or we might not be leaving at all! Finally, we're all aboard the flight when the Captain makes the announcement that all planes have to de-ice before we can take off and that's where the back-up starts. Finally after 90 minutes we are in the air for about a 3 hour flight to Grand Cayman.

### Day 1

No worries as we have 2 ½ hours to kill before our hopper flight over to Little Cayman. As we hit customs the lines are long and of course the one line we are in is going at a snail's pace! 45 minutes later we make it thru and hustle to get our luggage, now we are really running behind. We race off to the check in counter and they are holding the plane for us, which turned out to be a good thing as no one got charged for over luggage fees. Unfortunately, we hit security again and it is a fiasco as I was the first one in the group to go through and the last one to leave the security area. I could have strangled someone! Needless to say traveling in a group and wearing our trip shirts has its benefits as we got waived through the next leg as we are really late now. Finally, we are all onboard Cayman Airways twin otter and are airborne shortly after that. The wind is howling today so it is quite a ride through the clouds as we bounce around like a ping pong ball in the sky. The landing was even more spectacular as we came in sideways to the runway before a quick sharp turn to set her down. I think my finger indents are still in Bobs arm! The resort is only 5 minutes down the road as we do a quick check in and then off



to our rooms. As we wait for our luggage to arrive we make our way to the dive shop to hand in paperwork and analyze our Nitrox tanks. Pretty smooth so far, so we sidle up to the bar and order up some Rum punch cocktails. Dinner is at 6:30 pm and of course we are all starving, so as soon as the dinner bell rings we are there. It is buffet style with plenty of choices and tonight is some tasty BBQ ribs. Top all that off with some dessert and everyone looks exhausted, so we all call it a day and head back to our rooms.

### Day 2

Breakfast begins at 7:00 am and we need to be on the boat at 8:00 am this morning to get all our equipment situated for the first time. Still pretty windy today and cloudy so we have to stick to the lee



side (South Side) of the island. It is still great diving with a magnificent wall on the first dive and then tongue and groove coral heads for the second. Back to the resort for lunch and then right back out for the 3<sup>rd</sup> dive at 1:30. We find all kinds of great life along the shallows with Phil finding his first nurse Shark, good eye Phil! It seems so early as we are back at the resort around 3ish and are done for the day. Wow, we have down time to sit and relax as there is no shore diving here at Little Cayman Beach Resort. Is this what people really do on vacation?

Seems crazy to just sit in a lounge chair on the beach sipping my Pina Colada and typing this trip report before dinner, I think I might like it! All in all it was a great first day and we look forward to hopefully the wind dying down so we can get to the famous Bloody Bay Wall Marine Park area.

### Day 3

The wind is still up this morning, but we have blue skies and sunshine! It's still pretty cool out with the wind blowing so sweatshirts are a must. Apparently there are still 5-8ft waves breaking on the other side, so we will dive the lee side again. It's all about Nurse Sharks today, as we found a big one lying



inside the Soto Trader Wreck as well as one on the last dive at Pirates Point. Plenty of Stingrays all over in the sand and a few Eagle Rays were also spotted. The visibility has been incredible even with the rough water so the diving has been great. Dale hit his 500<sup>th</sup> dive the morning, congratulations Dale!



Tonight was the managers Rum punch party which we all enjoyed with plenty of drinks and bar snacks. After dinner, Gene, Phil & Bob decide to do a night snorkel under the dock because Bob has been dying to try his new Sola NightSea Light. The wind has died down and the stars are out in full force as the rest of us

watch them from the dock. Bob found that the Goat Fish, Tube dwelling Anemones and Finger Corals were some of the best animals to fluoresce in bright green. There were some piling Crabs that glowed green and the Snails were orange. It was even exciting to watch them from the dock. Another great day can't wait to see what tomorrow brings.



## Day 4

Surprisingly the wind is up again this morning so we were not sure if we are going to be going around to the North side of the island. But luck was with us as our Captain Warren decided to go for it and around the West end we went, high swells and all. It was a little disconcerting when the other boats turned around shortly after rounding the corner, but Warren kept on. We weren't sure if this was a good thing or if Warren was just crazy! By the time we arrive at the dive site we were protected enough from the high



swells and could easily make the dive. The visibility was incredible which seems amazing due to all the wind, but the way the underwater reef is, it just is not affected. This was our first sighting of Turtles which we did end up seeing 4 on one dive. Lots of fish life and a great swim thru, and the reef topography here is incredible. After lunch, Gene decides that the 3<sup>rd</sup> dive is the one he has chosen to propose to Crystal underwater. We are ready, ring safely tucked in BC pocket, safety sausage with

question ready to deploy along with all our cameras ready to snap the big moment. Low and behold, Crystal decides she is not doing the dive and is going to go on the night dive instead, really? Can this be happening? Ok, plan B...we wait for tomorrow. We decide to practice to make sure everything will go off tomorrow without a hitch...hey Crystal, where are you? There's a guy underwater waiting to ask you a very important question!! Oh well, this makes for better stories later on. As we head back to the dock the dive manager radios the boat that a weather front is coming so there is no night dive tonight, they have rescheduled for Wednesday night. Oh well, the sun is out so we have a relaxing afternoon by the pool while it is nice and warm out. After dinner we go down to the dock and take a look at all the beautiful stars out on this clear evening. It is so incredibly peaceful out here. The front never showed up, but better



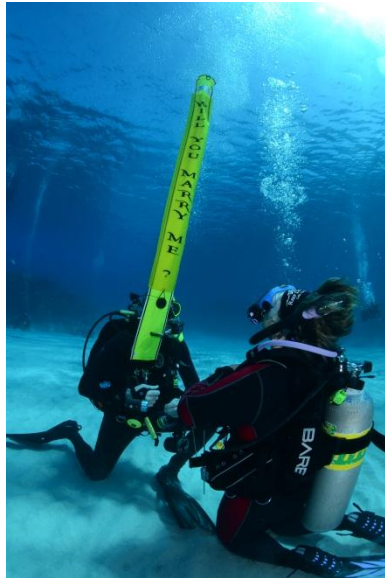
to be safe than sorry as there is always another night of diving. Tomorrow is calling for calm seas, and we all have our fingers crossed.

## Day 5

This is going to be a great day, the sun is shining and there is no wind this morning. The boat makes its way to the North side so we can dive the Bloody Bay Wall Marine Park Sanctuary. The diving over here is so dramatic with sheer walls and incredible swim thrus. The first dive was Randys Gazebo and it has a chimney swim thru that you have to drop head first into it at 25 ft and then drop straight down with a slight hook to the right and you came out at 100 ft. I had about ½ my body into the chimney and wondered if I could do this, it was very small and narrow and I barely fit myself and my camera thru it. After that, you swim along and



reach this incredible archway/gazebo that you can swim thru as well. The second dive was equally as good with great channels to swim in-between the coral heads. This was also the place where finally Gene asked Crystal to marry him. In a large sandy area, he got down on one knee and deployed his safety sausage that asked that all important question. Everyone was around and it was a really



incredible moment, she said YES! Congratulations Gene & Crystal! Our third dive was around to the North side while the wind was calm since they're calling for high winds returning on Friday. Most of us opted to do the night dive at the Soto Trader, and had several Octopus sightings, and giant Parrotfish. Bob and I tried out our Sola NightSea to check out what fluoresces in the Caribbean. The corals all light up as well as a small Mantis Shrimp, but none of the fish fluoresced and neither did the octopus. The really nice thing about this resort is that the diving operation and the kitchen work together, so we were able to have dinner when we returned at 8:00 pm. Another great day and we are really hoping that the wind holds out for at least one more day.

## Day 6

The sun is out, and the wind is up, but Warren says he thinks we can still dive on the North side. Rounding the West end it is pretty rough, but we keep going. Peggy was the first for fish feeding followed quickly by Gene and the rest of us just hang on until we reach a calmer patch of water. Tied up to the mooring it is a bit calmer so we jump in and the dive is magnificent. We have a new guide today,



Dottie who will be in charge of a Lionfish roundup. Out on the wall we are soon joined by a friendly Grouper who is waiting for us to

find him a Lionfish to eat. We locate a good size one but we can't get it out of the coral head far enough for the Grouper to swallow it. Meanwhile, Dottie has found a juvenile which she collects alive in a plastic bag, which she will take back with us so the people doing all the research can study it. All of a sudden the Grouper sees the Lionfish and takes off straight for Dottie, but she doesn't see him coming and he literally swallowed the Lionfish, bag and all! I thought she might lose a finger over this one! She finally gets the baggy out of the Groupers mouth so she can release the Lionfish and the Grouper inhales it in a blink. That was crazy! The second dive was beautiful with nice swim thrus and down deep we could see all the Grouper swimming back from the Full moon Spawning. The boat ride back around to the other side was not as bad as coming out and there would be no more fish feeding for the day. The last dive we spent on the South side and it was quite calm as Dottie showed us 2 new fish we had never seen before,



the Pike Blenny and Sailfin Blenny. The Sailfin Blenny was quite entertaining as he

would fly out of his hole and throw up his "sail fin" to look mean and fierce. Dottie also took out 3 huge Lionfish on the dive and brought one up on the boat to give us a bit of an education about the fish. The guides spend 1 day a week going out in a group to cull the Lionfish off the dive sites. The other day they had gotten 37, which was a pretty good count over 10 dive sites. If they don't do this the Lionfish would



take over the reefs in no time and they eat all the native fish species. Back at the dock, we discover there are not enough people to run the night dive, so I guess we will just have to sit back and relax. We meet up at the pool to start on our group sign that will hang in the bar after we leave. Scott actually had a piece of wood in his luggage that he had brought from Costa Rica. Not intentionally, but apparently he never unpacked his luggage when he got home so the wood then traveled to Little Cayman. This was perfect because we didn't need to go and look for a piece of driftwood to make our sign out of. This will be a 2 day process as it took us one day just to get all the names on the board. Lots of drinks and wine later we head to the dock to look at all the stars and try to figure out what we're looking at. So much for our Starwalk app, it's not working so well.

## Day 7

Last dive day, seems like we just got here! The wind is up again this morning but Warren wants to try and get around to the North side one more time. It's rough but not as rough as yesterday, at least no one is feeding the fish so far. Another gorgeous wall dive and we finally see a Giant Green Moray at a





cleaning station. The waves are picking up so we head back around to the south side for much calmer waters for our final dive. We swim out to the drop off to say our final farewell and a nice Black Tip Reef Shark cruises by. Congratulations to Marle, as this last dive of the trip is also her 500<sup>th</sup>, way to go Marle! Back at the dock we get busy drying out all our dive gear, good thing it is sunny and breezy so it shouldn't take too long. After lunch Kathy gets back to work finishing up our sign as she wanted to get Gene & Crystals



proposal drawn on it. All finished, the sign looks fantastic and we have to thank Kathy & Scott for all the hard work. Scott was in charge of the placement and got the maintenance team to hang it in the best spot between the two bar TV's. If you're ever in Little Cayman be sure to look for our sign. The rest of



the day is spent exploring the small town and relaxing on the beach. Time for a group shot

at sunset and that pretty much wraps up our day. Another great dinner and a few drinks at the bar rounds out a really nice trip.

## Departure Day

An easy morning as we don't have to be ready to depart until 9:45 am for the tiny little airport 2 minutes down the road. It's windy again today so it might be a bit of a bumpy ride and a very exciting landing in Grand Cayman. As soon as we land in Grand Cayman it is go time. The airport is a zoo, and the check in lines are long and the staff still move at the typical Caribbean snail's pace. Just to get our bags checked in takes an hour, then there is security which the line is now as long as the room itself. By the time we make it in the holding lounge, I don't think they can put another person in this room. I think every flight is leaving at the exact same time. Our flight is scheduled to depart at 1:35pm and it is now 1:15 pm and we haven't heard one word about our flight. Everyone is getting antsy so the people start crowding the gates, and there is nowhere to go when they call for our flight. We are in a cross pattern with another flight boarding and it is everything you can do to inch forward. We have never seen an airport in such a state of chaos. Forget your boarding group if you can make it to your gate, you're boarding. Surprisingly our plane loads super-fast and we are ready to depart, almost on time. The flight is short to Charlotte

NC, only 2 ½ hours, but we are now 30 minutes behind schedule and our layover was under 2 hours to begin with. Upon arrival in NC an announcement is made that 5 planes have landed at one time and the immigration hall is too full. They are holding us hostage on the plane for 10 minutes before they even open the door. By the time we get to immigration the room is completely full and the people keep coming. I have to give them credit as the line is really in constant motion as we slowly move forward. We're down to 45 minutes before our flight departs when we finally reach our luggage in customs. Throwing bags back on the belt we bolt for our flight but we have one more security obstacle, we pick the shortest line and things are looking good. At this point we are hoping the rest of the group has already made it through or gone another way. By the time we make the gate it is final boarding and we are a few of the last ones to board. Amazing, our entire group has made the flight! Now only 5 hours before we hit Seattle, so we can just sit back and relax.

We land in Seattle after a very easy flight home and we all say our goodbyes until our next dive adventure!



Thanks everyone for joining us, we had a fantastic time and we look forward to traveling with you all again.

Cheers, Kelley & Bob

This is our first trip to Little Cayman, so now we have been to all three. I would have to say that each island offers you a completely different experience. We stayed at Little Cayman Beach Resort and really enjoyed the resort. It has a beautiful pool and hot tub which was always full at the end of the day. The resort sits on a white sandy beach with a beautiful blue lagoon for a view. You can stroll along the sandy beach for a long time and rarely run into another person. Our group was all inclusive which included 2 free drinks a day. The daily buffets had plenty of tasty choices, ranging from soups and salads to roasts and lamb chops. The breakfast buffet had a cook to order egg station as well. We dove with Reef Divers which is the on-site dive operators. The dive operation was very good, and Captain Warren was awesome! The dive boat had plenty of room for our group and the crew carried all your equipment to the back of the boat, where you just had a seat and then fell off the boat. The diving was great. We had high winds for almost the entire week we were there and the visibility was still crystal clear. The underwater topography is incredible with plunging steep walls, swim thru's and chimneys. The Nassau Groupers are plentiful and very camera friendly making for great photography. The water temp was running anywhere from 77-80 degrees.

After all the years we have been running trips we had our first ever underwater proposal! We wish Gene & Crystal the best of luck! If you are looking for big nightlife, clubs and lots of entertainment than this is not the island for you. This place is quiet and laid back just the way we like it. We gave this place the big thumbs up and we would definitely run a trip here again.



# Little Cayman

March 1-9, 2013

Anacortes Diving Adventure Team



Kelley, Allison, Kathy, Marle, Ken, Bob, Dale,  
Scott, Peggy, Crystal, Gene, Dana, Phil, Carol, Dave