



### Guardian of the Oceans, Jacques Cousteau

The man rightly credited for having opened the world's eyes to the wonders of the oceans, Jacques Cousteau, died recently. As children, his award winning film *The Silent World* and his exciting TV series inspired many of us to explore that world for ourselves. And, he made that possible by his involvement in the development of **Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus**—scuba gear, as we know it today.

The Caribbean has much to thank Jacques for, in both opening up diving areas and campaigning for their protection. The Cousteau National Marine Park at Pigeon Island in Guadeloupe is a testament to his philosophy. This is a heavily dived area yet the coral remains in excellent condition and the marine life is as healthy as you will find anywhere in the Caribbean.

Jacques was 87 years old when he died. In the course of his lifetime we have moved from the underwater world being almost completely unknown to all but a few scientists, to hundreds of thousands of ordinary people exploring this alien world as recreational divers.

Jacques Cousteau did not see diving as a threat to the marine environment so long as it was properly managed. Instead, he believed that divers, through their experiences, would develop appreciation and respect for the underwater world, becoming campaigners and supporters of conservationist policies.

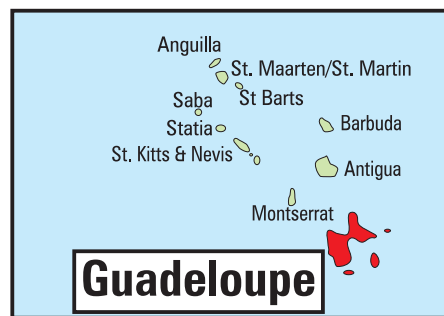
His most recent book *The Man, the Octopus and the Orchidea* continues the argument for conservation of the marine environment. The book, which he finished just before he died, calls in the debt of gratitude that we owe to him in a call for action, before it is too late.

## Guadeloupe

When you think Guadeloupe, think French. Guadeloupe is a department of France, the language and currency are French and it is a great place to experience a different culture and heritage. Tourism is a major industry and the majority of visitors come from France and other European countries. You are unlikely to run into many English-speaking people, though there is a good chance staff members of the larger hotels will understand English, and one or two places such as the Club Med do cater to Americans.

Guadeloupe is one of the largest islands in the eastern Caribbean and, together with the smaller islands of Marie Galante, Iles des Saintes and Desirade, it offers a wealth of holiday opportunities.

In outline Guadeloupe is shaped like a butterfly with two big wings. Each wing is a separate island and they are divided by a narrow mangrove-lined waterway called the Riviere Salee, over which there are two bridges. By some strange quirk the smaller and flatter island is called Grand Terre, (big land) while the larger and more mountainous island is called Basse Terre (low land or, possibly, downwind land).



Grand Terre lies to the east, and is geologically much older than Basse Terre—its mountains have been worn away to gentle hills and large flat areas. Much of it is cultivated in sugar cane, and many picturesque windmill ruins stand in the middle of green fields. Beautiful beaches adorn the coast, which has made this area popular with hotels.

The centre of tourist activity is around the town of St. Francois, towards the eastern end of the south coast, where there is a small marina, a casino, a golf course, lots of shops and many hotels and rental apartments. The breeze along the south coast is generally strong which makes this a very popular area for sailboarding, and even the armchair athlete can get a kick out of watching the experts leap the waves. It is, however, some distance from the main diving areas.

Pointe a Pitre, Guadeloupe's largest and most important town, is in Grand Terre, close to the Riviere Salee. Pointe a Pitre bursts with life and colour, with several open markets and many street sellers out on the sidewalks. Prices are usually reasonable and the town is often crowded with shoppers. Do not get so absorbed in the shops that you fail to look up now and again, for there

### Grand Terre

### Pointe a Pitre

are some fascinating old-style Caribbean buildings, elegantly built of wood, with gingerbread, balconies and roof overhangs.

Gosier, a short distance from Pointe a Pitre, is another holiday town, overlooking a little island with a beach, and popular with the beach crowd.

### **Basse Terre**

By contrast, Basse Terre is of more recent volcanic origin and is still steeply mountainous, with high peaks covered in dense rainforest. There are majestic hikes in these mountains complete with crater lakes and tropical waterfalls.



*Spectacular waterfalls fall from the peaks of La Soufriere mountain range.*

The 350-foot Carbet Waterfalls are in the south of Basse Terre and are definitely worth a visit. They are well-sign posted and from the parking area there is a lovely walk through the rainforest. It often rains so take good walking shoes and a dry shirt.

Route de la Traversee links the west coast of Basse Terre and offers a magnificent drive through the mountains

The city of Basse Terre, Guadeloupe's capital and administrative centre, is on the southern part of the west coast. While it lacks the flamboyant gaiety of Pointe a Pitre, it is a pleasant town whose buildings have handsome arches, large well-proportioned windows and small balconies. There are many shops, some boutiques and a good fresh food market.

Deshaies lies towards the northern end of the west coast—a pretty little town with a protected harbour and a popular yacht anchorage. One of Deshaies' attractions is the selection of pleasant and inexpensive

restaurants along the waterfront.

Farther to the north are some spectacular white beaches and a few hotels.

### **Pigeon Island**

Half way up the leeward coast is Pigeon Island, part of the Cousteau Underwater National Park. This is one of the most popular diving areas in Guadeloupe. It is in an area called Bouillante (boiling), owing to thermal springs that provide enough heat to generate electricity for the region. On one beach there is a small pipe that continually spouts out hot water, useful if the plumbing in your hotel breaks down.

### **Guadeloupe's Islands**

The islands associated with Guadeloupe are popular as day-trips for holiday makers staying in Guadeloupe. Every morning, high-speed ferries take off for these destinations laden with

passengers, bringing them back in the evening, sunburned, well fed and laden with souvenirs. A couple are also delightful destinations in their own right, worthy of consideration for your entire holiday, if your preference is for peace and quiet.

Marie Galante, like Grand Terre, is relatively flat, though hills and cliffs are often over 300 feet high and reach 600 feet in the highest places. The soil includes much clay, so the land retains rain and is thickly wooded and green, with many palm trees along the coast. It is a quiet backwater, an unspoiled haven, and an ideal place to wind down and take quiet walks.

Like Grand Terre, it is covered in sugar cane with many old windmill ruins. One of these, Le Moulin de Bezard, has been restored to working order. They hoist the sails daily and crush a little cane for visitors. It is one of the few chances you will have to see a working windmill in the islands. Ox-drawn carts are still in use, adding to the bucolic charm.

A wonderful selection of palm-backed beaches surrounds much of the island. A barrier reef lies quite close to shore along the beach at Capesterre. This creates beautiful turquoise shallow lagoons with good snorkelling just a short swim away.

The Saintes are an irresistible group of islands—small, dry and steep with red and brown cliffs. Mountains climb to over a thousand feet and white beaches abound. The only town, Bourg des Saintes, is on the largest island, Terre en Haut, and features cute wooden houses framed by flowers.

A climb to a lookout tower on the highest peak gives an almost aerial view of the archipelago. History buffs will enjoy the well-restored Fort Napoleon. There are ample restaurants, though not too much by way of nightlife.

Every day the tour boats arrive in Terre en Haut, creating a

## Marie Galante

## Iles des Saintes (The Saintes)



*The small church in Bourg des Saintes is typical of the proportions of these tiny islands.*

kind of rush hour as the day-trippers fan out over the island. This is a good time to go diving, as by evening they are always gone.

Language: French  
 Currency: French Franc  
 Population: around 420,000  
 Telephone code: (0590)

## Après Dive

Guadeloupe has a vast range of activities to occupy even the most hyperactive visitor. You may have to move around to take advantage of the many different faces of Guadeloupe so renting a car is a good investment.

## Golf

There is an excellent golf course in Grand Terre.  
*St. Francois: (0590) 88 41 87*

## Hiking

The French government is good at laying out hiking trails and marked trails can be found all over Guadeloupe, Marie Galante and the Saintes. In Guadeloupe some of the most popular hikes are to a series of waterfalls close by the Chutes du Carbet on Basse Terre.

In the Saintes, the island Terre en Bas is not heavily populated and has some great hikes.

## Horse Riding

Horse riding is available in several locations.  
*Le Grand Morne (Port Louis): (0590) 22 84 19*  
*Le Cheval Vert (St Anne): (0590) 88 00 00*  
*La Martingale (Baie Mahault): (0590) 26 28 39*

## Tennis

Most of the larger hotels have their own tennis courts. There are also tennis clubs where you can play for a fee.  
*Ligue de Tennis de la Guadeloupe: (0590) 90 90 97*  
*Marina Tennis Club: (0590) 90 84 08*

## Water Sports

Windsurfing and sports fishing are probably the two most popular water sports, and day charter yachts leave daily from St. Francois for the tiny deserted islands Ile de Petite Terre and for Marie Galante. There is a large fleet of charter yachts in Bas du Fort. For windsurfing just turn up at St. Anne or St. Francois and rent from the big stands on the beach.

In the Saintes, small outboard fishing boats suitable for visiting the different islands are available for rent. In Marie Galante windsurfers are available on the beach at Capesterre.

Charter Yacht Companies:  
*Cap Sud: (0590) 90 76 70*  
*Corail Caraibes: (0590) 90 91 13*  
*Locboat: (0590) 90 80 72*  
*Sunsail: (0590) 90 82 80*

*Stardust: (0590) 90 92 02*  
*Tropical Yacht Services: (0590) 90 85 52*  
*The Moorings: (0590) 90 81 81*

Guadeloupe has plenty of big modern giant supermarkets in shopping malls. You will be delighted by the French cheeses, wines, and bread. Boutique and souvenir shopping is excellent in Pointe a Pitre, St. Francois and the Saintes.

## Shopping

Guadeloupe is of a size where you can find quite a few nightclubs and discos. We have listed below just a few of the better known hotspots.

## Nightlife

*Caraibes, Gosier: (0590) 90 85 27*  
*Le Baron, Gosier: (0590) 84 09 95*  
*Loco Planete, Gosier: (0590) 84 85 75*  
*Disco La Coline, St.. Francois: (0590) 80 00 25*  
*Sombrero Disco, Marie Galante: (0590) 97 30 06*

*Departmental de Tourism Guadeloupe: (0590) 82 09 30*  
*USA: (212) 315 0726*  
*France: (44) 77 86 00*

## Information on accommodation

There are several flights a day from France. Connecting flights to other islands are also frequent. From the UK the easiest connection is via Antigua. From the US, there are some direct flights or connect via San Juan, Puerto Rico.

## Getting There

Guadeloupe has over 150 miles of coastline, and although not all of it offers good diving, the extent of the coastline means that there are several discrete diving areas. Basse Terre has the most diving and the largest number of operators.

## The Diving

The west coast of Basse Terre is steep sided and almost every headland would make a good dive. This coastline also has a number of islands and rocks which make good dive sites, most notably Pigeon Island, about half-way down the west coast. The other islands are off the north west corner.

## Basse Terre

The diving in this area is on fringing reefs and rocks. Several sites have pleasing underwater structures, such as arches and caves.

This is the only area to have any wreck diving. There are two wrecks near to Pigeon Island; one is relatively shallow and the other is deep enough to be dived as a decompression dive (it can also be dived within no decompression limits, but this leaves only a short bottom time).

Despite the popularity of Pigeon Island as a dive destination, the marine life is in good condition. We have dived here several times and we are always surprised at the quantity of fish and the

## Pigeon Island

quality of the sessile marine life. All the sites are buoyed and this has obviously contributed greatly to the preservation of the reefs.

### **Grand Terre**

There is less diving off Grand Terre, though there are many hotels and beaches, especially along the south coast. The majority of Grand Terre's diving is in the north and hotel guests are driven to the dive stores on the north coast.

Grand Terre does not have the steep sides of Basse Terre but it does have a large coral reef system. Captured in the wings of the butterfly is Grand Cul de Sac Marin reef system.

### **Grand Cul de Sac Marin**

Several miles of reef have developed in the sheltered waters between the two sides of Guadeloupe. Most of the area has been declared a marine park and access is restricted. There are parts of the reef where diving is permitted, allowing divers to see the various components of a natural coral reef, from elkhorn and staghorn corals on the reef top to brain and star corals down the reef face and plate corals on the deepest sections.

### **Iles des Saintes**

Iles des Saintes has a full complement of diving, which is quite separate from the rest of Guadeloupe's sites. The sites are around the many small islands that comprise the Iles des Saintes archipelago. One of Guadeloupe's most spectacular dives is north of Iles des Saintes (see site 27).

### **Marie Galante**

The same situation pertains to Marie Galante as Iles des Saintes. This is a discrete diving area, too far from the Guadeloupe mainland for operators to reach.

### **Rules and Regulations**

You may not take lobster while using scuba gear. Pigeon Island and Grand Cul de Sac are protected by Reserve Naturelle Rules.

#### **Reserve Naturelle Rules**

No anchoring  
 No spearfishing is allowed  
 Do not take any marine life  
 No long fins  
 Do not litter or pollute the water in any way

### **Independent Diving**

You are allowed to dive independently in Guadeloupe and there are a number of areas where it is easy to dive from a yacht's dinghy. There are no beach dives, however.

### **Safety**

Guadeloupe has a recompression chamber based in the hospital in Pointe à Pitre. (See the inside back cover for contact information.) The island has a good safety record. There are few sites where people dive deep and the French regulations require stores to adopt safe diving practices.

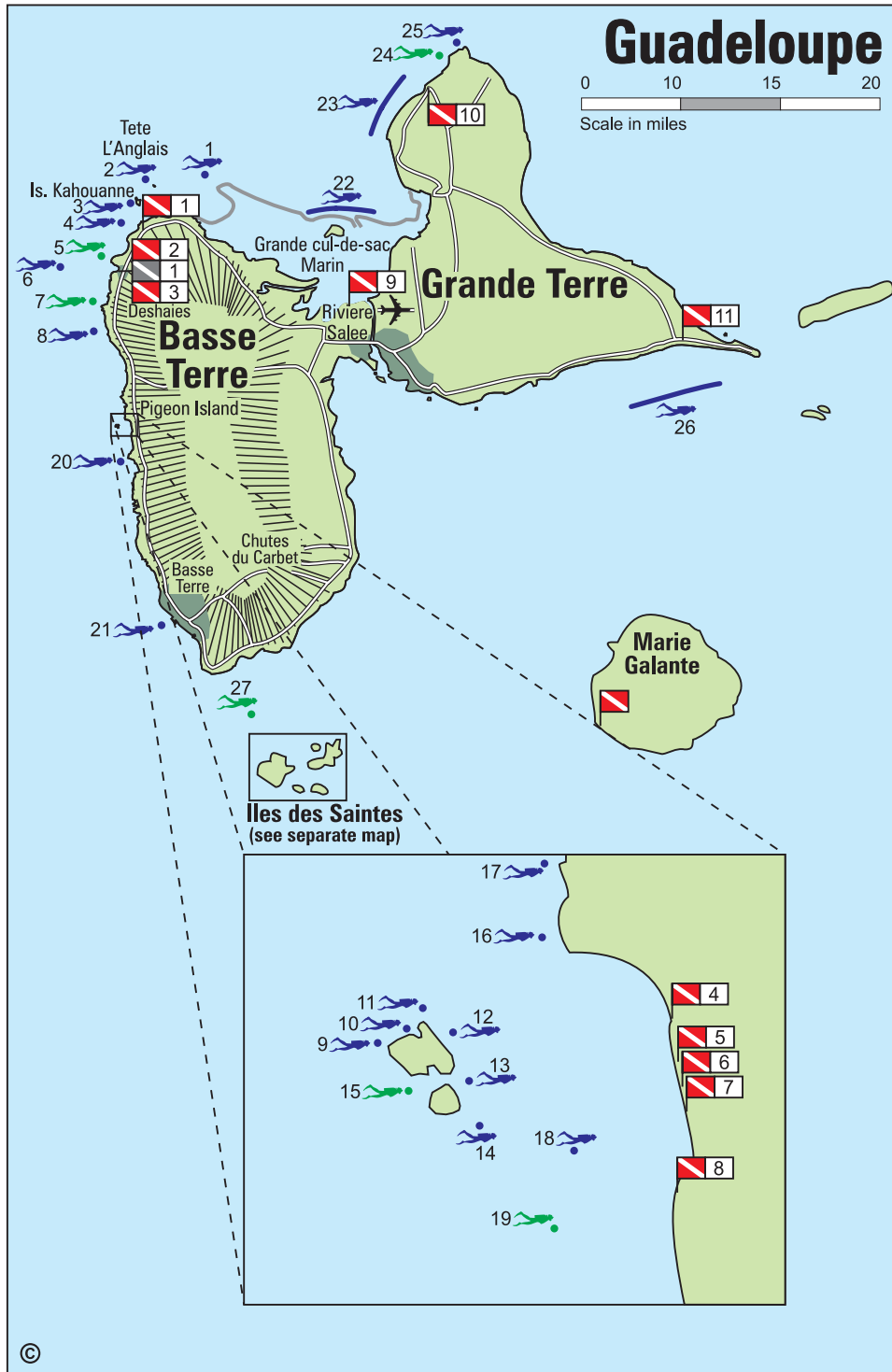


Being able to speak a little French will enhance the pleasure of diving in all the French islands and Guadeloupe in particular. We have developed a list of vocabulary relevant to diving which will supplement your regular vocabulary.

**Parlez Vous  
Français ?**

FRENCH VOCABULARY FOR DIVERS

General	bateau	boat
	club/centre de plongee	dive store
	courant	current
	enseigner la faire plongee	learn to dive
	epave	wreck
	faille	crevice
	gonflage/gonfler	inflate/fill
	grotte	cave
	pente	slope
	piscine	swimming pool
	profondeur	depth
	programme de plongee	dive schedule
	sable	sand
	sec	reef/shoal
	tombant	wall or slope
Marine Life	carangues	jacks
	corail	coral
	eponges	sponges
	langouste	lobster
	merou	grouper
	poisson	fish
	poisson papillion	butterflyfish
	poisson-perroquets	parrotfish
	poissons de pleine eau	pelagic fish
	requin	shark
	sordes	snapper
tortue	turtle	
Equipment	bloc	tank
	combinaison neoprene	wetsuit
	couteau	knife
	detendeur	regulator
	ordinateur de plongee	dive computer
	lampe	flashlight
	masque	mask
	palmes	fin
	stab/bouee de remontee	BCD
	tuba	snorkel



NO.	SITE NAME	DEPTH IN FEET	
1	Grande Coulee	25-70	
2	Tete a l'Anglais	30-70	
3	Kahouanne	25-60	
4	Grand Anse	40-70	
5	Gros Morne	10-80	U
6	Grand Sec	60-100	
7	Pte Ferry/ Les Grottes	10-35	
8	Baille Argent	10-40	
9	Pointe Barracuda (Pigeon Is.)	10-125	U
10	Aquarium (Pigeon Is.)	5-55	U
11	Source d'Eau Chaude (Pigeon Is.)	60-130	U
12	Mouillage Anticyclonique (Pigeon Is.)	25-130	U
13	Jardin de Corail (Pigeon Is.)	40-130	U
14	Tombant aux Carangues (Pigeon Is.)	25-130	U
15	Piscine/Swimming Pool (Pigeon Is.)	15-130	U
16	Pointe Malendure	30-80	
17	Jardin Japonaise	5-80	
18	<i>Fran Jack</i>	45-65	U
19	<i>Gustavia</i>	100-130	
20	Bouillante—Lizards Leap	60-130	
21	Fort St Charles	60-130	U
22	Ilet Fajou and Caret	15-100	
23	Arches	20-70	
24	Grotte Amedian	20-40	
25	North Point	18-100	
26	St. Francois	10-70	
27	Sec Pate	40-130	

**Guadeloupe Dive Sites**



NO.	OPERATOR	LOCATION	
1	Tropical Sub	Fort Royal	
2	Les Explorateurs	Deshaies	
3	Club de Plongee	Deshaies	
4	Chez Guy et Christian	Pigeon Island	
5	Archipel Plongee	Pigeon Island	
6	CIP Guadeloupe	Pigeon Island	
7	Aux Aquanautes Antillais	Pigeon Island	
8	Les Heures Saines	Pigeon Island	
9	Les Baillantes Tortues	Baie Mahault	
10	Blue Dive	Port Louis	
11	Dream Diving	St. Francois	

**Dive Operators**



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**1 Grande Coulee**  
**25'-70'**

A tumble of rocks down to sand at 70 feet makes this an interesting site for divers to explore. The site is exposed to northerly swells so growth is rather stunted. Encrusting varieties fare best in these conditions and the rocks have a generous covering of encrusting sponges, corals and coralline algae.

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**2 Tete a l'Anglais**  
**30'-70'**

It is pleasant diving anywhere around this small island, and there are at least three different spots where operators dive. One area has a cave at 45 feet and canyons dissect the rocky terrain right around the island.

The island sits on a sand base at between 60 and 70 feet. The sand invariably reveals a stingray or two and peacock flounders do their best not to reveal themselves.

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**3 Kahouanne**  
**25'-60'**

Kahouanne is a larger island than Tete a l'Anglais and two separate sites are used around its perimeter.

One site has a canyon that seems always to be harbouring snooks. These normally shy creatures will ignore divers so long as they do not approach them directly.

The second site is on the more steep-sided part of the island. The coral growth is plentiful. Soft gorgonians and hard coral cover the rocky substratum and where there is space, green rope sponges add colour to the scene.

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**4 Grand Anse**  
**40'-70'**

Grand Anse is a wall dive. The wall is small but well populated with invertebrate marine life.

There are currents along this coast occasionally, so you may find that you have to do it as a drift dive. Local operators know the spot well and choose their day accordingly.

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**5 Gros Morne**  
**10'-80'**

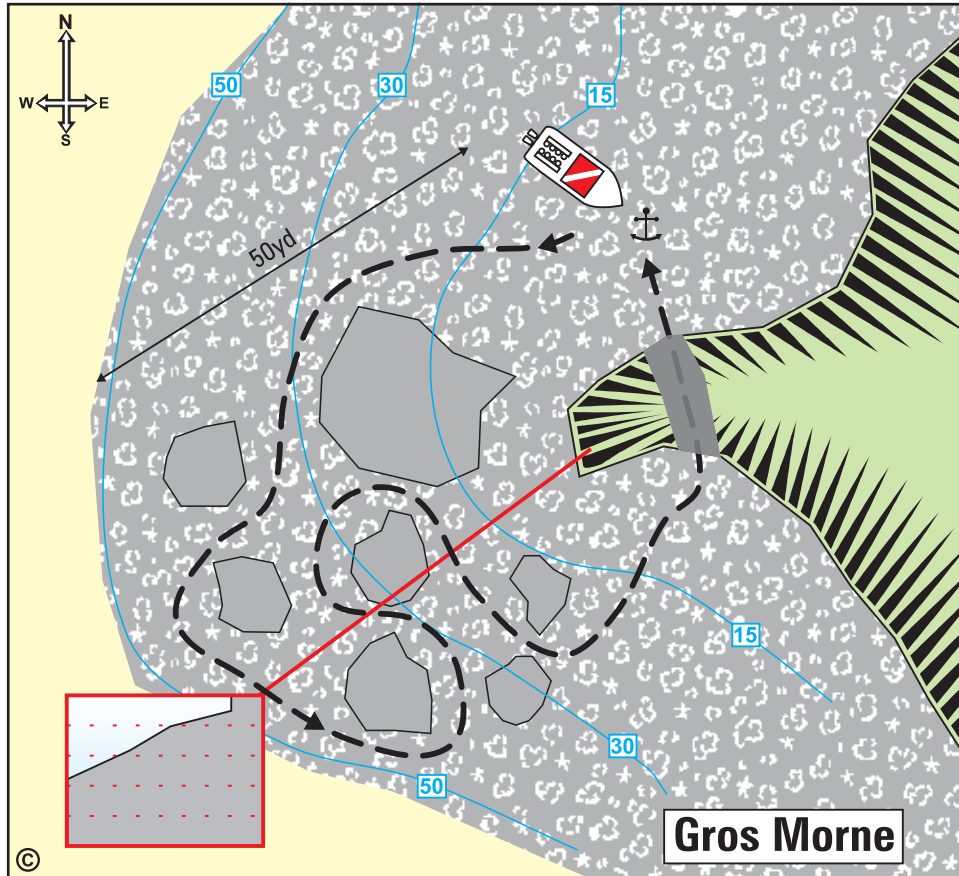

We are not sure what to expect from this inshore site and are delighted to find an extensive assembly of marine life, interesting underwater terrain and an enchanting tunnel.

It is an easy dive to do independently as it is around the headland to the north of the entrance to the bay. There is shallow water in which to anchor or tie a yacht's dinghy.

**Dive Profile**

The boat is anchored in 20 feet in an area of algae-covered rounded boulders. A podgy West Indian sea egg sits atop one of the rocks like a too-obvious clue to the wealth of invertebrate life that we will encounter.

We swim out toward the headland over mounds of boulder star coral. Several species of parrotfish are crunching dead coral



to extract the algae from it. Divers often worry about the damage that parrotfish do to coral, but all creatures on the reef have a role to play in maintaining the balance and health of the reef. Parrotfish only eat dead coral and in that way the algae is kept under control. You may see them taking chunks out of live coral as a means of marking territory. They will extract some nourishment from the algae within the live coral, but not sufficient to warrant the effort as a serious source of food.

Large numbers of tubeworms are embedded in the reef. They wave their feathery radioles at us or, if they do not like the look of us, whisk them away faster than the blink of an eye. Mauve, green and brown brain corals style complex patterns like a series of puzzles.

The other notable contribution to the colour on the reef is green finger sponges. Many of them have yellow sponge hydroids protruding through the sponge's excurrent openings. Thicket algae litter the substratum; lightly calcified, this alga fills many of the gaps between the rocks.

*Green rope sponges create a rich verdant covering on Gros Morne.*



We are following the edge of the reef where it meets sand at 40 to 50 feet. To our right are satellite rocks and capacious barrel sponges. Staying close to the rocks we can see plump anemones: corkscrew and giant anemones. Living in close harmony with a giant anemone is a banded clinging crab, a shrimp and an arrowcrab, a bit of a crustacean convention.

We reach a crevice between two large rocks and turn left to head toward the shore. A small wall is draped with sponges and corals. A patch of spiny flower coral with its fleshy polyps exposed looks like a crushed velvet cushion.

The water is crowded with fish throughout the dive. Out in the water column are Creole wrasse, yellowtail snappers, blue and brown chromis, and bar jacks. Near the rocks are highhats, comical juvenile spotted drums, bi-colour damselfish, and blue tangs.

At the end of the wall, Thiebault, our dive leader heads across an area of small boulders to lead us into the entrance to a tunnel. The tunnel is big enough to enter two abreast and is only 10 feet deep. The floor of the tunnel is sprinkled with football-size stones covered in purple crustose coralline algae, so that they look like beads or precious stones. But it is the walls of this 40-foot tunnel that are the real gems. Orange cup corals have massed on the wall covering almost every bit of rock. Deep in the tunnel, lower light persuades the polyps to burst out in bloom; these golden trinkets hang from the ceilings and walls in dense bunches.

A school of copper sweepers sway back and forth, adding their metallic twinkle to this priceless scene. As we emerge from the tunnel, despite being back in the light, the world seems a duller place.

*Thanks to Thiebault of Deshaies Club de Plongee.*

If you look at a nautical chart you can see the contour line marking the edge of Grand Sec. A series of steps descend from 60 feet. Grand Sec starts about one mile out from Deshaies and the particular spot operators dive has a big rock. There are a lot of gorgonians on the site and it is not unusual to come across a turtle.

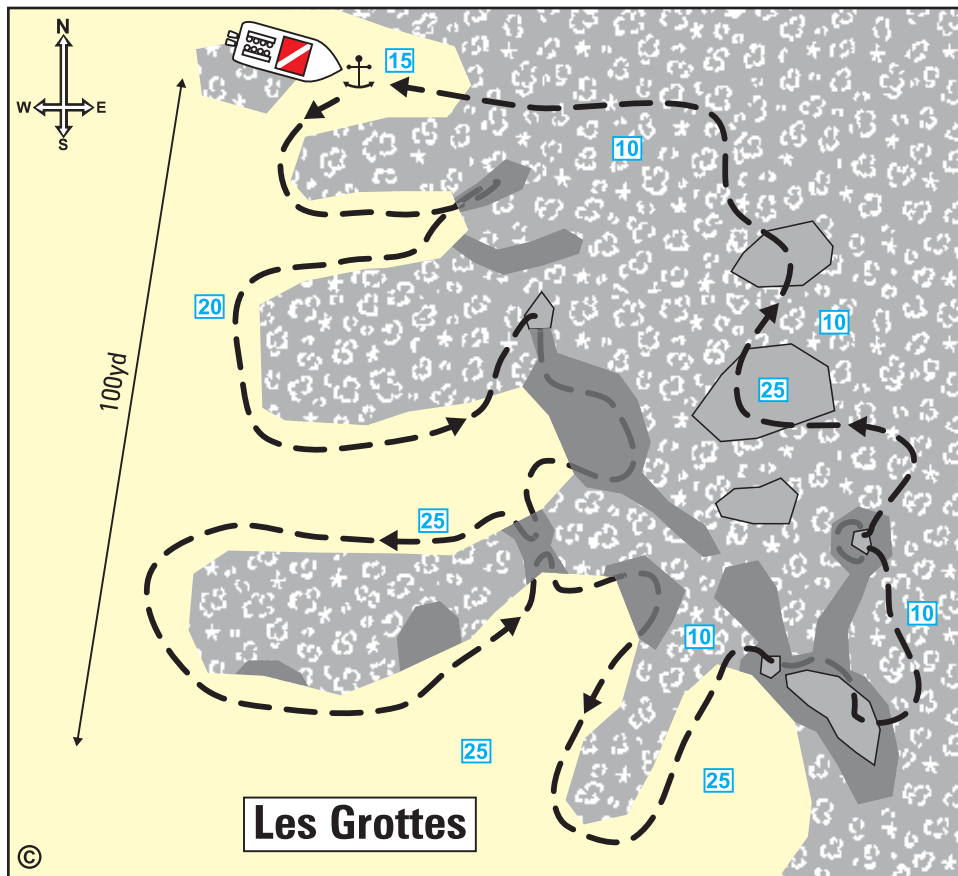
Corals are in good condition as the site is too deep to suffer damage from swells caused by tropical storms.

**Grand Sec 6**  
60'-100'

The dive is off Pointe Ferry just below the school. The site is undercut with crevices and some small caverns. To enjoy exploring the site you will need to take a light.

There are five caverns. The first is a small corridor, which is not good to enter if there is any surge. The second cavern has a sandy bottom and turtles occasionally rest there. The third cavern is a tight fit for a diver but shine your light in and see what lives

**Pte Ferry/ 7**  
**Les Grottes**  
10'-35'





inside. The fourth cavern is the most fun to explore. It is a big area and has a hole in the top. The diameter inside is about 20 feet. The fifth cavern is entered through a small hole which has a cavern below.

This is a great site for boning up on sponges. In the dark areas you will find orange ball sponges, whereas in the lighter areas tube, rope and barrel sponges predominate. Viscous sponges hang from the overhangs like treacle slowly running off a spoon.

The swim back to the boat over the rocks reveals a mass of smaller holes. Lobsters hide safely inside and on the top of the rocks you may find lettuce sea slugs. Big sea fans and gorgonians sway in the current as if they are trying to sweep you across the reef.

The area appears to be a fish nursery as there are very many juveniles. It is not always easy to identify juveniles, as they can have a completely different appearance from the adult of the species. We did identify juvenile bluehead wrasse, angelfish, and blue tangs.

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#### **8 Baille Argent** **10'-40'**

For some unknown reason this headland is a magnet for turtles. Dive leaders report regularly seeing as many as four during the course of the dive (though we never seem to be so lucky). The site also draws Bermuda chub and several types of snapper.

The terrain is a rock slope with sponges, hydroids and gorgonians growing along its length.

Many crevices and small holes make it critter-friendly habitat. On the outside of some of the holes you will see small piles of shells that have been discarded by octopus. The Caribbean common octopus is often seen out on the reef during the day and you may be lucky, as we were, and see one in the open, foraging for food.

*The Caribbean common octopus braves the daylight hours in search of crustaceans that it will take back to its hole to enjoy.*





The site is subject to currents, which is perhaps why the marine life is so prolific. The slope drops gently and is covered in sea fans, filtering the water for plankton. A wide variety of corals have settled the slope and it is a good site to test your marine life identification skills.

**Pointe Barracuda 9**  
(Pigeon Island)  
10'-125'

The Aquarium is in a well-protected cove and is an ideal site for novices or for a first dive of a vacation. There is a gentle slope from 10 feet to 60. The large number of invertebrates make this an entertaining site. Look out for bristle stars tucked into sponges.

**Aquarium 10**  
(Pigeon Island)  
5'-55'

Hot springs seep through the seabed at 75 feet and again at 130 feet. Whether it is the warmth of the springs or the minerals they introduce is not clear, but the result is clear enough.

Corals and sponges are exceptionally lush, just as if someone has been adding fertiliser. Of course, corals do not thrive well in a nutrient rich environment (nutrients encourage the growth of algae which kills the coral by blocking light) but there is definitely something in the water that suits them.

**Source d'Eau 11**  
**Chaude**  
(Pigeon Island)  
60'-130'

The site is in the vicinity of a hurricane mooring. Around this side of the island there is a gentle slope from 25 to 55 feet, at which point the slope becomes a steep wall to sand at 130 feet.

Vibrant sponges intermingle with sea rods encouraging fish to play hide-and-seek with prey and predators.

**Mouillage 12**  
**Anticyclonique**  
(Pigeon Island)  
25'-130'

Although it is possible to dive deep on this site, the best coral formations are in the shallow areas. The site is used for training and is perfect for novice divers. A mass of tiny reef fish, delightful displays of rope sponges and wire corals will entertain and amuse novices and more experienced divers.

**Jardin de Corail 13**  
(Pigeon Island)  
40'-130'

A coral encrusted plateau runs from 25 to 60 feet before becoming a steeper slope to 130 feet. There is often current on this site, which brings pelagic species in to feed. Schools of jacks glint in the blue like distant aircraft. Spanish mackerel and barracuda will often pass by, usually just a few feet below the surface.

On the reef, crinoids, deepwater sea fans, wire coral and red rope sponges determine to draw your attention away from the blue, and blackbar soldierfish show off their rusty colours in contrast to the silver of the pelagic species.

**Tombant aux 14**  
**Carangues**  
(Pigeon Island)  
25'-130'

**15 Piscine/  
Swimming Pool  
(Pigeon Island)  
15'-130'**

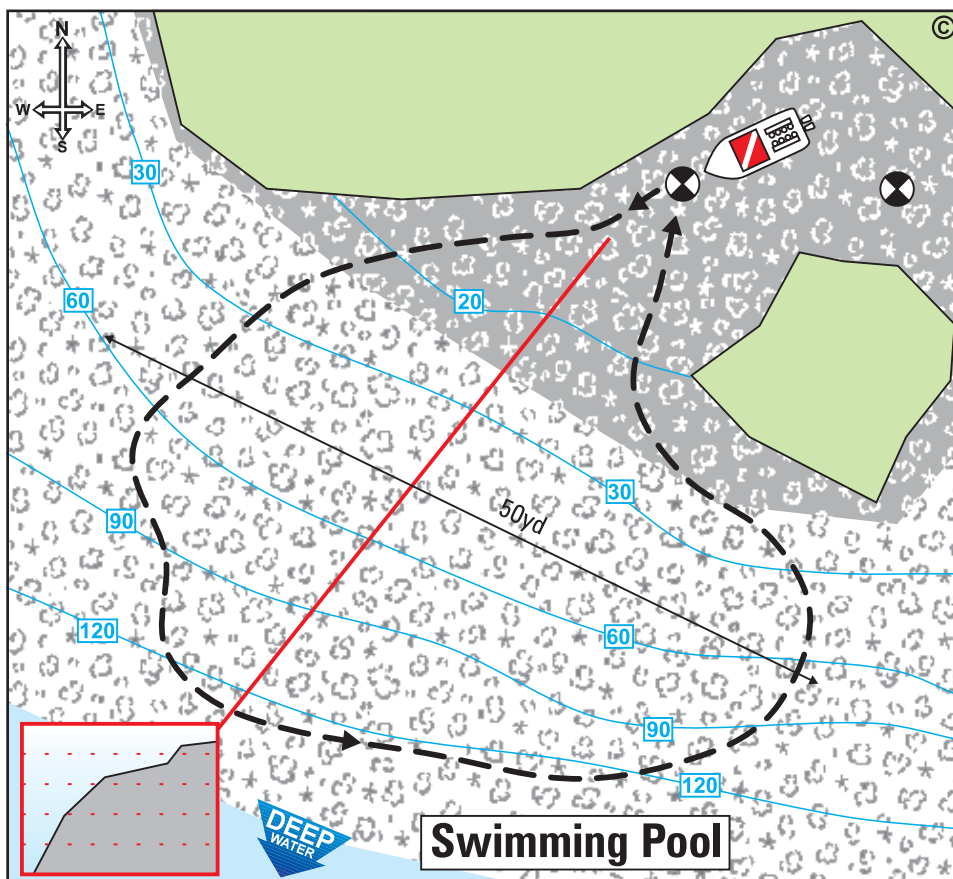
This straightforward dive always impresses us with its extensive biodiversity. It also has the advantage of having both an interesting shallow and deep section. The shallow section has a gentle slope whereas the deeper section is a steeper slope with a lip at 90 feet followed by another steep slope to 130 feet.

**Dive Profile**



The dive boat takes a buoy in the shallow part of the site and we head for the slope. This section of the site is a mixture of coral, sand and rubble. Several razorfish hover near the sand, ready to dive for cover. Razorfish have the peculiar practice of curling their bodies in an attempt to disguise themselves near gorgonians or rocks. They also have distinctive eyes—bright green with a cherry red iris.

We dip over a ridge and descend to the deeper section of the site. The wall is steeped in sponges and, on a flatter area at 90 feet, big barrel sponges dominate the scene. Brain coral is the main reef builder, though there is also an abundance of star and boulder coral.



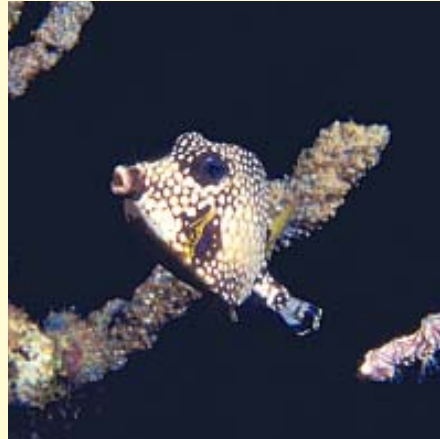
### Trunkfish—A Fish Take-Away, Ready Boxed.

The best way to explain how a boxfish is constructed is to compare it to a turtle, admittedly on a much smaller scale. Boxfish's bodies are encased in a hard shell-like carapace that has holes to allow for the fin attachments. The shape of this structure is rectangular.

The analogy with turtles goes only as far as the bony carapace because, unlike turtles, boxfish are poor swimmers. They use their somewhat stunted fins to achieve a sculling action that makes the fish rock backwards and forwards. The tail fin is used only when a burst of speed is required.

Though they are not efficient swimmers, they are quite agile and can swim backwards. This allows them to reverse into a crevice to avoid predators. Secreting toxins into the water is another successful defence mechanism (ask anyone who has kept a boxfish in an aquarium how successful it can be).

Trunkfish and cowfish are the two main types of boxfish on Caribbean reefs. They are generally solitary and hover near the seabed, where they feed on small crustaceans and worms. Not content to wait until a crab exposes itself, trunkfish will blast the sand with jets of water to uncover reluctant prey. On these occasions they are not always solitary. Other fish will watch what is happening and as soon as something edible is uncovered they will dive in and steal the hapless trunkfish's lunch. It is perhaps for this reason that they sometimes hunt at night.



**Trunkfish seem to move by will power alone, as their fins are lost in a blur of largely ineffective movement.**

A healthy covering of coral and algae has drawn a large population of parrotfish—stoplight and princess parrotfish, beaks bared, gnaw the dead coral. Creole wrasse, doctorfish, yellowtail snappers, horse-eye jacks and sennets fill the surrounding water with a variety of shapes and colours. But the prize for interesting shapes goes to the bizarre trunkfish. These fish remind us of vehicles in a sci-fi movie; they hover just above the seabed and maneuver in any direction without any obvious means of propulsion.

We swim over some large fields of finger corals sprinkled with anemones and corallimorphs. Another odd-looking creature, an orange filefish, watches our progress as we work our way back up the slope to the dive boat.

*Thanks to Dominique at Les Heures Saines.*

**16 Pointe Malendure**  
30'-80'

Off Pointe Malendure there is evidence of ancient geological activity. Huge boulders lie discarded on the seabed and coral heads have grown between and over them. Encrusting varieties have given the rocks a textured finish and sea plumes soften the landscape with their feathery fronds.

**17 Jardin Japonaise**  
5'-80'

This is a popular dive, despite the attractions of the nearby Pigeon Island sites. The site has deep crevices, a swim-through and a small cave.

On the sand are large coral heads and the dive leaders will take you on a meandering route through these large structures.

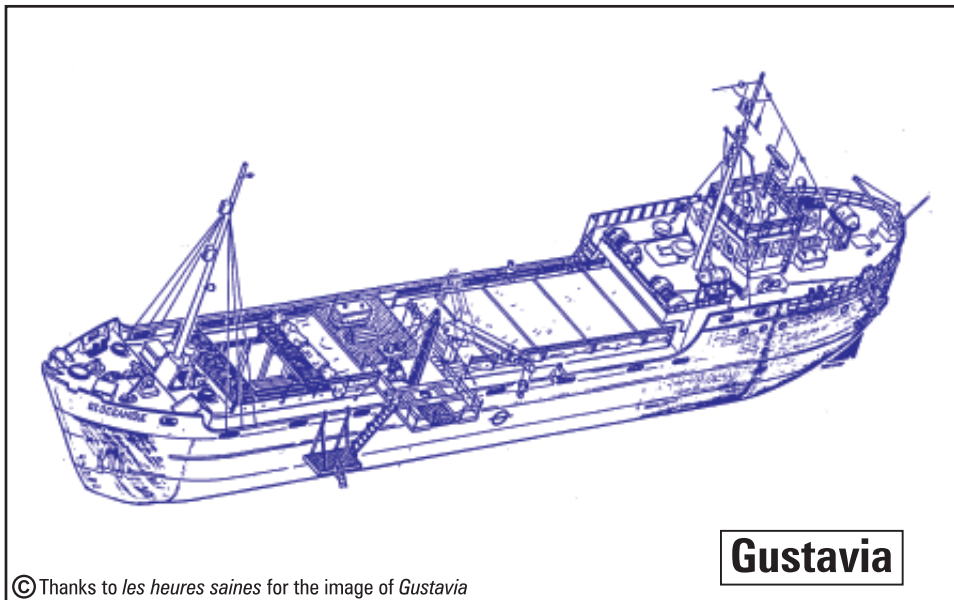
**18 Fran Jack**  
45'-65'

The *Fran Jack* was sunk in 1996. It is 90-foot dredger, sitting upright on sand and has most of its equipment in place. A hole has been cut in the roof over the engine, giving easy access to the interior of the ship. Take a light if you plan to enter the wreck, as there are areas where little light can penetrate.

It is still early days for there to be much marine life but it does attract a reasonable quantity of fish.

**19 Gustavia**  
100'-130'

*Gustavia* is the older of the two wrecks near Pigeon Island. She was sunk in 1991 so has more growth than the *Fran Jack*. She was a 160-foot inter-island ferry, originally



**Gustavia**

© Thanks to *les heures saines* for the image of *Gustavia*

called the *Geoceanique* and renamed the *Gustavia* in 1982. In 1989 *Hurricane Hugo* damaged the ship and she was sunk 2 years later.

This is a deep dive as *Gustavia* sits on sand at 130 feet. Operators will generally only take experienced divers (French Federation level 2 or PADI advanced). The deck house is at 100 feet so, even if you minimise the amount of time you spend near the propeller at 130 feet, you still only have a short time on the wreck.

You can penetrate the wreck and there is plenty to investigate. Because of the limited bottom time, keen wreck divers will want to dive here more than once in order to explore all aspects of the wreck, or do a decompression dive.

This site adds variety to the diving along this coast. Big coral heads are perched on a gentle slope and do not be surprised to see bubbles coming from the seabed. A small underwater hot spring is a reminder of the island's volcanic origins. There is a short swim over sand to reach the hot spring then spend the rest of the dive investigating coral heads and a gently sloping reef.

The coral is healthy and several species of hard coral grow alongside soft corals. Grey angelfish are abundant; perhaps they treat it like a beauty spa. They certainly seem keen to parade their assets and make several slow passes to make sure we cannot fail to see them.



*A jealous grey angelfish ensures it gets into the range of the camera flash when Brian is taking a picture of Colleen.*

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**Bouillante/ 20**  
**Lizards Leap**  
**60'-130'**

Just below the Fort, the shore is steep-sided and the steep slope creates an interesting dive site. The slope is undercut in places and schools of grunts shelter in these shady areas. As with most of Guadeloupe's diving, sponges add colour to the site and crop up in just about every morphological form—ropes, fingers, vases and encrusting varieties.

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**Fort St. Charles 21**  
**60'-130'**

## A Day in the Life of a Coral Polyp

The sun has not yet gathered itself above the horizon but enough light is preceding it to throw shadows on the reef. A few of the herbivorous fish begin to stir and the coral polyps begin to withdraw. The soft polyp body retracts into its calcareous shell.

The polyps have been filtering food from the water all night. Tentacles extended, they have captured plankton and passed it down into their stomach cavity.

As the day wears on they will digest the food and it will then be shared with neighbouring polyps that may not have been so lucky in capturing food. But other life is active within the polyp's body as the sun climbs the sky. Symbiotic algae perform photosynthesis. This reaction produces oxygen and also assists in the breaking



**Coral heads take on a soft upholstered appearance at night when the polyps emerge from their calcareous skeleton.**

down of the polyp food to produce digestible sugars. Estimates suggest that symbiotic algae process 90 per cent of the polyp's food.

Algae also process the polyp's waste products—ammonia and carbon dioxide. When mixed with water carbon dioxide becomes carbonic acid, which dissolves calcium, not what you need if you are a polyp trying to build a calcium home.

To protect them from predators during the day, the polyps secrete mucus and will stay tucked inside their shell while the diurnal fish graze the reef. At nightfall they will emerge again.

But do not think they lie inactive during daylight hours—this is the time for construction work. Calcium

is laid down to extend the basic structure (symbiotic algae are also involved in calcium fixation). Polyps build the reef by budding a sister polyp alongside, which ultimately becomes independent. That is how the winding valleys of brain corals develop; each polyp remains connected to the next one along the valleys. In other species, for example star coral, each polyp becomes separated and inhabits its own corallite cup.

Because the reef is a crowded environment, laying down calcium to increase the size of the colony can be an aggressive act. Coral species fight for space on the reef and have no qualms about taking another coral's territory.

Building their colony during the day is not the coral's only method of reproduction. Once a year, when they reach sexual maturity, there will be a night of broadcast spawning when they will release either eggs or sperms into the current as a means of generating new colonies. Though every night is not so exciting for the coral, divers at night can enjoy seeing the coral's polyps extended, turning those coarse rocky lumps of the day time into soft upholstered mounds at night.



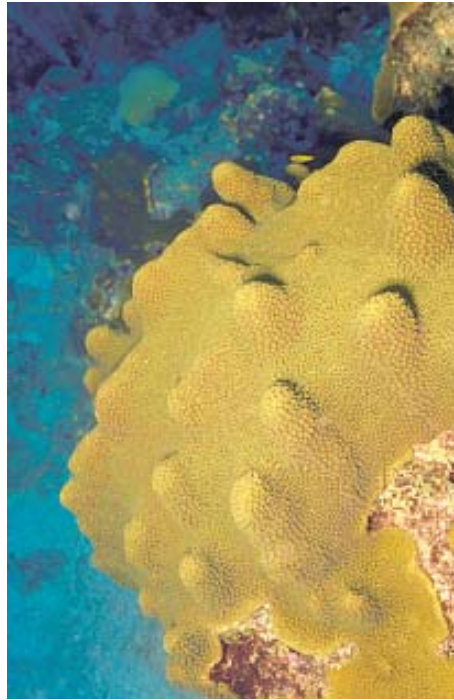
Fajou is not a dive site, it is a huge reef system with a dozen **Ilet Fajou and Caret 22** or more places where the diving is good. It is a marine reserve so operators have to dive on the edge of the area controlled by the marine reserve. This is a true coral reef and you will see a wide diversity of corals and attendant marine life.

**15'-100'**

Swells generated by hurricanes periodically damage the reef, but it slowly recovers again and new growth builds on old. Remember that this reef systems has survived hundreds of years of storms and must many times have been severely damaged. But this is no man-made structure, it is a living system capable of regenerating; so long as suitable conditions prevail the corals will continue to grow.

The best of the reef is generally around 45 to 50 feet. The reef drops down to between 100 and 150 feet. The areas where the dive stores go generally have sand at 100 feet. The slope varies in its angle of descent, falling almost vertically in places.

In the passages through the reef, currents provide nutrients essential for the survival of filter feeders. Coral cannot go looking for food; it has to catch whatever passes by and must make the best use of it. For example, the lovely colours that corals display are made by algae living in the coral's tissues and it is the algae that contributes much of the food.



*Coral polyps build beautiful structures and algae provides the colour.*

Although we have listed this as only one dive site, the area is large enough to support two or three different dives. Coral reef undermined by wave action has formed a number of arches. The smallest arch is almost 5 feet high and the largest is 20 feet.

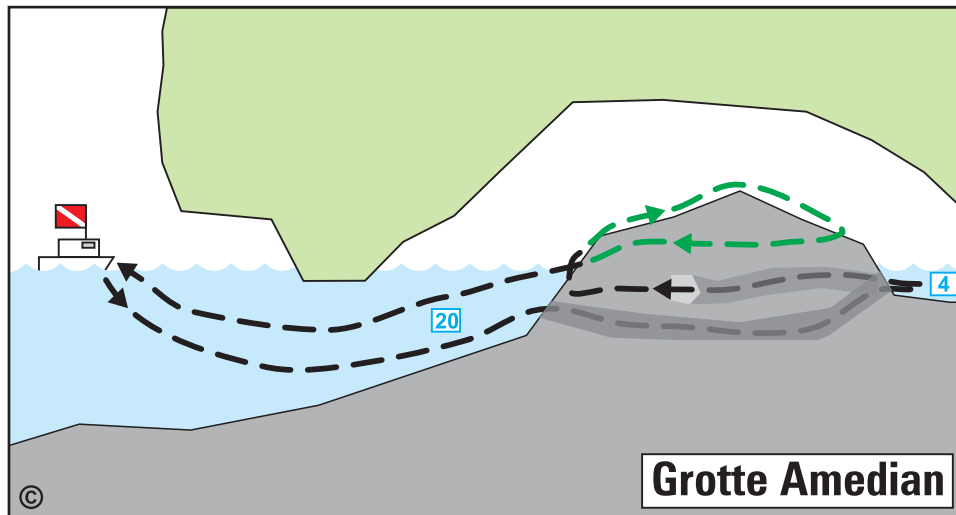
To the south of the arches is a small wall running to 50 feet. Coral growth is lush and sponges are exceptionally colourful. The cryptic terrain is perfect habitat for groupers and by their size we conclude that it affords excellent protection from predators. You may even be lucky and see a jewfish.

**Arches 23**  
**20'-70'**

A 60-foot tunnel provides access to this secret cave system. **Grotte Amedian 24** The tunnel is 6 feet high and it is an easy swim into the main part of the cave. You enter the cave at 20 feet and it goes in for 150 feet (there is air at the top of the cave). You will share the cave with tarpon and silversides, creating a silvery hue.

**20'-40'**





There are three different routes you can take to penetrate the area. This enables dive operators to choose a route that suits the experience level of the divers.

Look in the cuts in the cave walls and you will see copper coloured lobsters securely tucked inside.

*Thanks to Olivier and Eric of Blue Dive.*

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**25 North Point**  
**18'-100'**

The cliff continues underwater off the point to create a deep dramatic dive site. At 65 feet there is a step before the cliff descends again to 100 feet. At the base of the cliff are large boulders. This site eventually runs into the cave described in site 24.

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**26 St. Francois**  
**10'-70'**

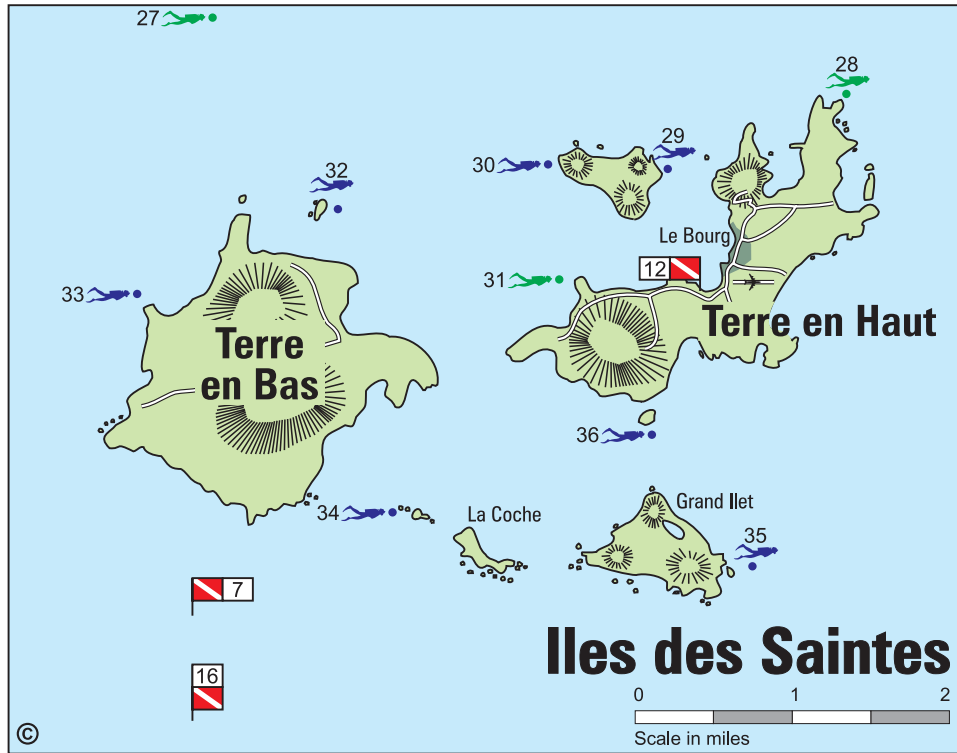
A long reef runs parallel to shore a few hundred yards off the beach at St. Francois. The terrain is similar all along the reef and although at one point it descends to 95 feet, for most of its length the maximum depth is 65 feet.





The reef slopes gently to seaward and there are some large rocks to add interest to the terrain. Much of the reef is covered in gorgonians and there are some impressive pillar corals. Small fish inhabit the reef and though you should not expect to see large groupers, there are many colourful reef fish.


**Iles des Saintes**

Iles des Saintes have numerous dive sites around the two main islands and several offshore rocks. There is a good range of dive sites though, unlike the mainland, there are no true coral reefs. There are a number of good quality dives that independent divers are able to make from a small dinghy.



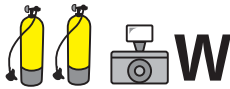


NO.	SITE NAME	DEPTH IN FEET		<b>Iles des Saintes Dive Sites</b> 
27	Sec Pate	40-130		
28	Pointe Zozio	15-40		
29	Le Bombard	10-70		
30	Point Cabrit	25-75		
31	Pain du Sucre	15-70		
32	Le Pate	20-50		
33	Pointe du Gouvernail	30-70		
34	La Vierge	30-50		
35	Sec Grand Ilet	5-105		
36	L'Aquarium	35-45		

NO.	OPERATOR	LOCATION	<b>Dive Operators</b> 
12	Centre Nautique	Terre en Haut	

## 27 Sec Pate

40'-130'



We have refrained from classifying sites by star ratings because both personal preferences and conditions make such ratings equivocal. We can with confidence, however, describe this site as a world class dive, whatever criteria one chooses to apply.

Half-way across the channel between Guadeloupe and Isle de Saintes is a small area marked on nautical charts as being 40 feet deep. This nondescript mark on the chart known as Sec Pate marks the site of a row of underwater pinnacles that look like witches hats.

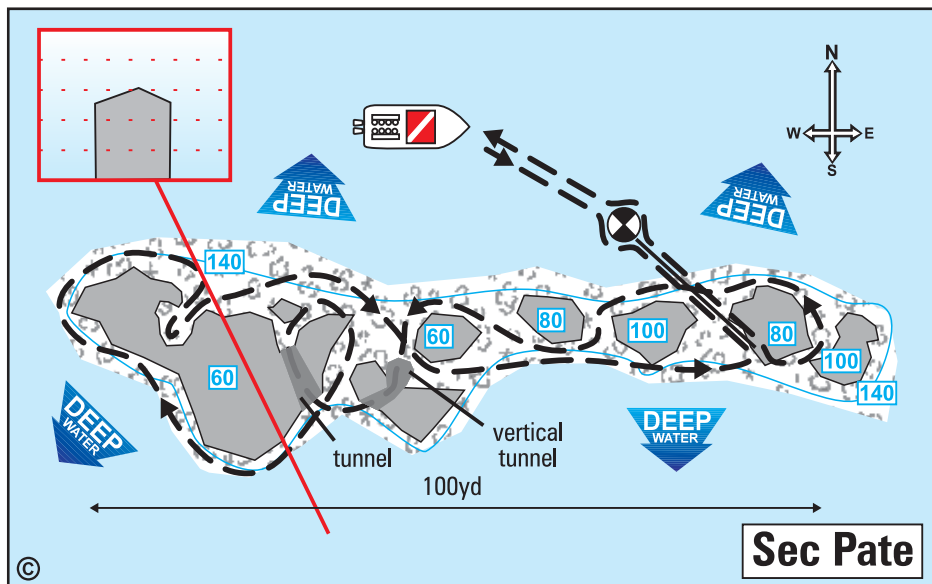
Note: Dive stores require divers to be CMAS level 2 or PADI Rescue diver or equivalent (they will take experienced divers who are PADI Advanced if you do a check out dive first).

### Dive Profile

Fierce currents rush through the channel and it takes three attempts for the dive instructor to attach a line to the buoy, which is attached to one of the pinnacles and lies 20 feet below the surface. We are briefed that we will be dropped up current and must grab the surface buoy when we drift down on to it. It is then a hand over hand haul to pull ourselves down the line to the pinnacle.

When we reach the top of the pinnacle, we let go of the line and make a quick dash for the lee of the rock to get out of the current. Before we have chance to wonder why we were making such a difficult dive, the scene captivates us.

The pinnacles bristle with deepwater sea fans and black corals. Fat juicy sponges ooze from the wall as if the rock's core was oil





*Rare green hydroids  
form thick bushes  
greedily filtering the  
rich currents that surge  
past the pinnacles*

paint that has been squeezed out by the pressure at 70 feet. Sprigs of white telesto give the whole edifice a frosty coating and we revel in the exceptional beauty of the site.

A narrow tunnel requiring a head down entry is a challenging experience that rewards us with a spectacular ride, and then launches us out into the all-consuming blue with no sign of the bottom below us. Not the moment to get vertigo.

We are grateful to a guide to follow, as this chambered terrain makes it easy to lose your sense of direction, and we are free to look out into the blue at the schools of sennets, rainbow runners, Creole wrasse, horse-eye and bar jacks. Individual ocean triggerfish and Queen angelfish seem to pop up around every corner, but as we are quite lost we have no idea if we are seeing the same one again and again.

The route funnels between the pinnacles. Brown sponges envelop jagged areas of rocks, softening their profile and giving a plump sumptuous feel to the terrain, as if we are passing along the aisles of a fabric store.

All too soon our time is up and we spend a long safety stop hanging on the line. The current is far too strong for it to be comfortable to spend any time on the surface (as it is we cannot look sideways without having our masks swept off) so we wait for the previous buddy pair to let go before we ascend. As soon as the instructor on the dive boat gives the signal, we let go of the buoy line and drift down to the dive boat, and grab the boarding ladders before we end up in Mexico.

And what better way to wallow in the experience than with a rum punch kindly offered by the boat captain.

(We dived Sec Pate again when there was much less current and, though thankfully a less challenging experience, we were equally enchanted by it.)

*Thanks to Dominique of Les Heures Saines.*

## 28 Pointe Zozio

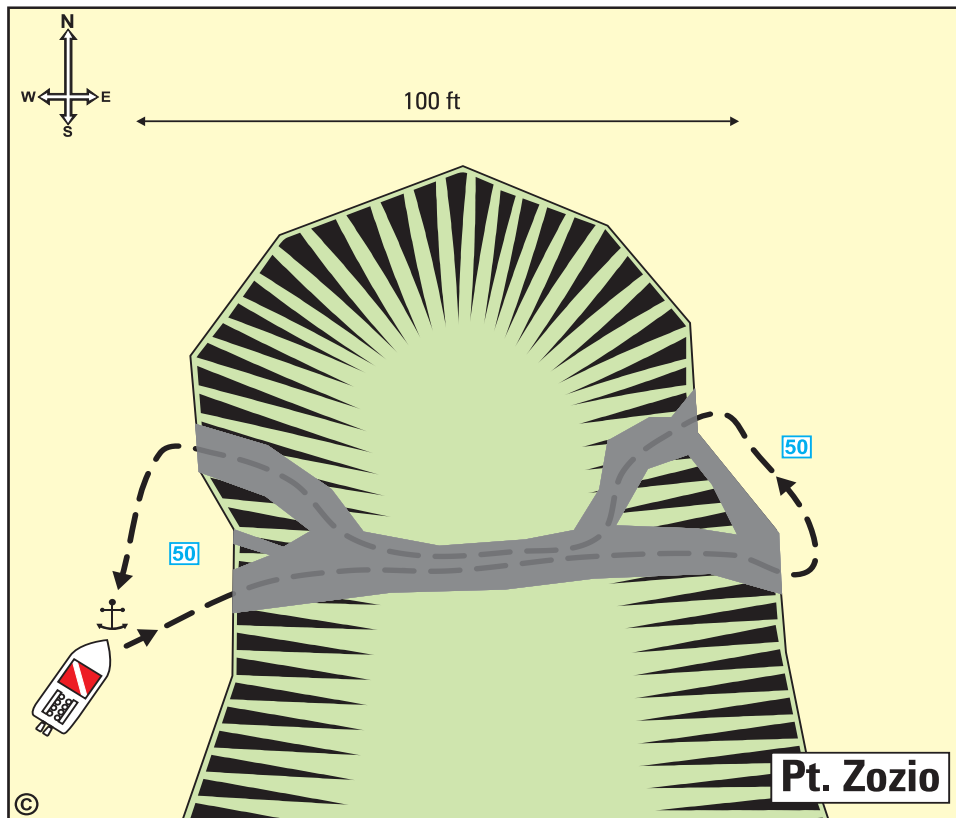
15'-40'



This is an exciting dive, which has caves and a tunnel through the headland. It can only be dived in calm conditions and is particularly susceptible to north easterly swells. Because it is an entertaining site, the operators will take advantage of calm weather to dive the site.

The tunnel is over 100 feet long. It is not narrow and should not pose a problem to any experienced diver. Around the headland are piles of rocks that warrant investigation. Because the headland faces into the channel between Iles des Saintes and Guadeloupe there is a good chance of seeing pelagice species as they take a ride on the current.

*Thanks to Cedric Phalipion of Centre Nautique.*



## 29 Le Bombard

10'-70'

There is a patch of sand which the dive boat or yacht dinghy can anchor on. The sand is scattered with coral heads and there is a gentle slope to 70 feet. Both grey and yellowtail snappers swarm around the coral heads giving the site a busy ambience.

You can go either way around this headland and it is a sheltered pleasant dive for independent divers. At 75 feet you will find a small wreck, a 35-foot fishing boat that attracts many fish. The wreck is sitting on sand and though, the boat's life is over, the sand is alive with urchins, sea cucumbers and sand divers.

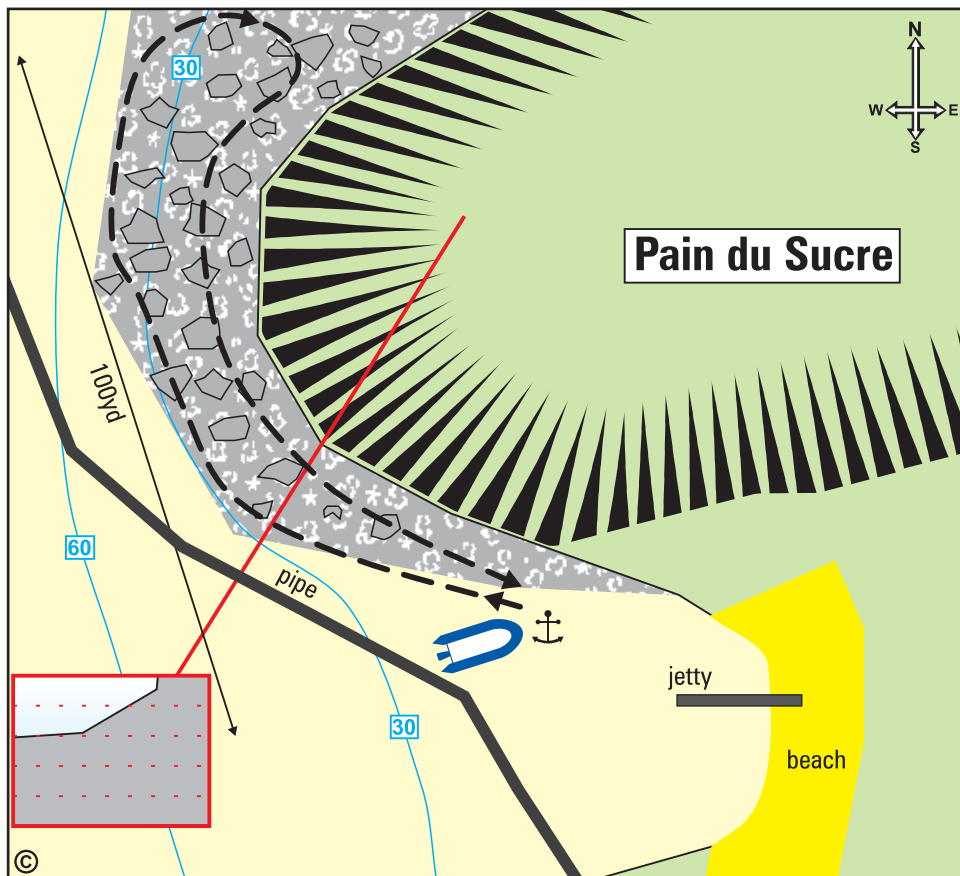
**Point Cabrit 30**  
25'-75'

A steep-sided pimple of a rock, called 'sugar lump' in French, would appear to be a very unexceptional dive. There is no reef as such; instead the rocky underwater terrain has become encrusted with sessile marine life. Large boulders and smaller scree are jumbled together at the base of the rock. The slope peters out at 70 feet and becomes fairly flat and sandy.

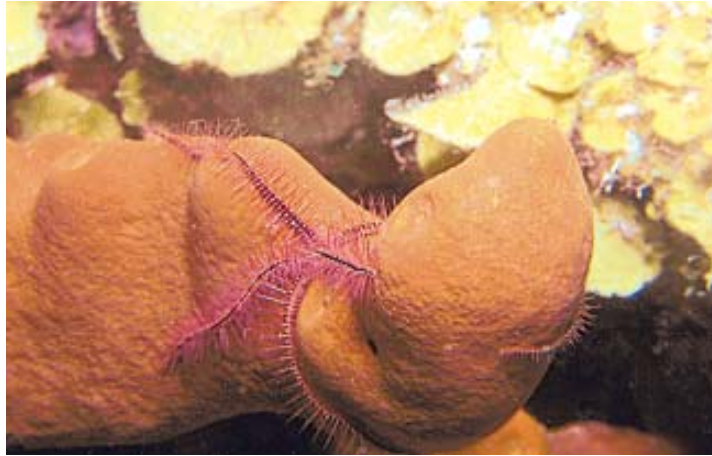
**Pain du Sucre 31**  
15'-70'



However, without exception, every time we dive here we find something interesting. It is rather like a lucky dip, sometimes you get the big prize but even if you do not, you always get something.



*The stringy legs of brittle stars sprawl across sponges.*



### Dive Profile

If you are diving from a yacht's dinghy, anchor on sand well into the bay in 25 feet. Dive boats will usually drop you further out, toward the corner in slightly deeper water.

We begin the dive along the edge of the rock slope and follow it out and around the almost circular Pain de Sucre. From the surface, one of our group looks down and sees what looks like a seahorse. A quick descent confirms the sighting as a longsnout seahorse approximately 5 inches long. Its tail is wrapped securely around a piece of weed. Lucky dip prize number one.

Other interesting creatures are present in greater numbers. Dozens of brittle stars are entwined in the many rope sponges. Their legs overlapping each other so that what in fact is several specimens looks like one item. After 50 feet a large pipeline skirts the edge of the rock slope, a useful navigation aid for those diving independently.

There is a good deal of turf covering much of the substratum. Algae species include grape algae, green hanging vine algae and crustose coralline algae. As a consequence this is damselfish heaven. Each damselfish farms its own patch but the sheer numbers make them highly territorial. They rush up to us and make their views about our proximity to their territory very clear.

As we are swimming at the base of the slope, we have sand to our left. Here lurk no end of critters. Snakefish and sand divers perch motionless except for the faint pulse of their inhalations. Donkey dung sea cucumbers play dead, sneaking in a small movement when you are not looking. Keener to show off its unusual locomotive method is the flying gurnard that spreads its wings and disappears from view.

At half-tank we turn around and return along the reef in 35 feet. The spaces between rocks are crammed with anemones, urchins, arrow crabs and shrimps. In holes where nothing else has taken up squatters rights, we see fish sheltering, especially

moray eels, burrfish and various squirrelfish. We see hamlets, chromis, trumpetfish, harlequin bass, and wrasse. An upsidedown jellyfish is another interesting prize from the lucky dip. They are mildly toxic so we practice our hovering skills just out of reach.

Back under the dinghy our seahorse is still there, but this time we catch it swimming out in the open. They are not very efficient swimmers so we have plenty of time to admire it. It even accepts an offered finger to grasp for a brief moment before continuing its journey.

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Operators dive on the east side of Le Pate. The dive is along a vertical rock face. Bermuda chub are a common sight and there is a resident barracuda waiting to greet divers as they enter the water.

Conditions are variable and surface conditions are occasionally rough.

**Le Pate** 32  
20'-50'

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The fish on this site are the main attraction, more so than the terrain, which is a scree slope covered with big boulders and a modest amount of coral and sponge. Snappers, surgeonfish, sergeant majors, and parrotfish range around the boulders.

**Pointe du Gouvernail** 33  
30'-70'

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La Vierge has interesting underwater terrain. A winding canyon and an arch are particularly notable features. Much of the cover comprises sponges and you may notice bite marks where turtles have bitten off chunks.

**La Vierge** 34  
30'-50'

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This is a very beautiful dive, the centre piece of which is a pinnacle. The site is in an exposed position and the base of the pinnacle is at just over 100 feet so operators consider it an advanced level dive. Strong currents add to the difficulty of the dive.

You can get right around the peak on the dive and you will almost certainly see jacks, barracuda and large snappers. Lovely sea fans adorn the face of the pinnacle and in among them you will find angelfish displaying their glorious colours. Pray for fine weather so that you can make it to this site.

**Sec Grand Ilet** 35  
5'-105'

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L'Aquarium is so called because it attracts hordes of fish. Grunts, snappers, angelfish and jacks are common species on this site.

A deep canyon is smothered in sponges and a large arch dominates the scene. The arch is 6 feet high and 15 feet wide. It is not unusual to find a turtle inside.

**L'Aquarium** 36  
35'-45'

## Guadeloupe Diving Facilities

Guadeloupe has many dive stores and retail outlets, which is due in part to the size of the island. However, the stores are not evenly spread around the island and you will find clusters of stores near to popular diving areas or where there is a concentration of hotels.

All of the stores have to work within the French regulations, although some are also associated with international organisations. You will find that French diving practices prevail—steel tanks, single-tank dives, decompression dives where appropriate.

Not all of the stores have staff who speak English, though usually at least someone has enough to be able to communicate the basics. They will certainly endeavour to ensure that you understand any safety briefings.

### Equipment

Dive boats range from open pirogues to large comfortable catamarans, which is hardly surprising when some stores travel no more than 5 minutes to the dive sites whereas others make excursions of 2 hours or more.

Rental gear was of a good standard but do not be surprised if your rental gear does not have an octopus. This is not a requirement under French rules.

When using steel tanks remember to use less weight, at least 4 pounds fewer than normal.

Most operators do not sell equipment, except for second hand items, so arrive with what you need or be prepared to visit Pointe a Pitre to the specialist retailer there.

### Cost

Diving in Guadeloupe is relatively inexpensive. Packages in particular offer good value. Also because single-tank dives are the norm, they are competitively priced whereas on islands where 2-tank dives are the norm, single-tanks can be prohibitively expensive.

Costs include equipment rental.

Single-tank	\$30-40	FF 180-250
5-tank package	\$150-185	FF 900-1,100
10-tank package	\$285-350	FF 1,700-2,000
Referral	\$170	FF 1,000
Discover Scuba	\$40-50	FF 250-300

### Operators



#### Deshaies

Basse Terre has by far the most dive operators. There are two main centres: Deshaies and Malendure (Pigeon Island). There is also a store reported to be in Riviere Sens, but we were not able to make contact with them.

Three stores are in Deshaies, one has a main base at the Fort Royal Hotel. Tropical Sub **1** used to have only the Fort Royal operation but in January 1998 they opened a store on the



beachfront in Deshaies. Divers can meet the dive boat at Fort Royal or in Deshaies.

Tropical Sub dives the sites along the north west of Guadeloupe and goes to Pigeon Island once a week. They also go to Grand Cul de Sac Marin to dive the sites there. A trip to Pigeon Island takes all day, leaving at 9:30 a.m. and returning around 5 p.m. Two dives and a picnic lunch on the beach are provided.

Les Explorateurs **2** is a relatively new store though proprietor Marc Jobin has been working in the dive business in Guadeloupe since 1990. Les Explorateurs uses steel tanks and all equipment is carried to the boat for you. Trips to Pigeon Island include a 2-tank dive and leave at 8 a.m. and return at 2 p.m.

Marc's divers are from local hotels and yachts. This friendly, small operation is able to tailor diving to the abilities of its divers. Marc will organise walking tours for those who like to combine underwater and land exploration and he is able to speak English.

Stephan and Thiebault are the owners of Deshaies Club de Plongee **3**. This is also a small business that offers a personalised service; you dive with the owners of the store. The store is adjacent to a river that runs through Deshaies so the dive boat is moored right outside the store.

Their diving range is sites 1 to 8, though they will go to Pigeon Island by request. When they go to Pigeon Island they prefer to dive the *Gustavia* (site 19) than the reefs, and they return after one dive. Stephan and Thiebault speak English well and endeavour to deliver good diving and efficient service.

We thought Deshaies had lot of stores for a small town until we discovered that Malendure had five stores. Two of the operators are owned by or have a close association with a hotel.

CIP Guadeloupe **6** has the same owner as the hotel Le Jardin Tropical. The hotel is a 5-minute drive from the dive store and there is shuttle service between the two. The hotel has a friendly relaxed atmosphere. Meals are inexpensive and there is a pleasant dining area equipped with bar and pool table. Accommodation is in one of 14 air-conditioned bungalows. A 7-night/10-dive package costs \$600 per person double occupancy, including breakfast.

You can dive with CIP Guadeloupe if you are not staying in the hotel, just go along to the store on the beach at Malendure.

*From Le Jardin Tropical, guests can see the Pigeon Island sites they have been diving that day.*



**Malendure  
(Pigeon Island)**

The other operator associated with a hotel is Les Heures Saines **8** and Hotel Paradis Créole. The Paradis Créole is on the hill behind Malendure and has a lovely view over Pigeon Island. A 7-night/10-dive package is available from \$600 per person, double occupancy. Rooms and bungalows are available and the hotel has a swimming pool and patio bar. Lovers of French food will adore the fine dining on offer and to eat this well in such beautiful surroundings seems too good to be true.

Paradis Créole welcomes children and Les Heures Saines has children's diving equipment, so they too can sample the underwater world. We found the dive store staff to be very professional and helpful and most were able to speak English.

Les Heures Saines is a large and well organised dive operation that offers an exciting range of diving. Every day their boats dive on the sites at Pigeon Island but in addition, the largest of the store's three boats makes diving excursions to Iles des Saintes. Twice a week, weather permitting, Les Heures Saines dives Sec Pate (site 27); an exceptionally impressive site between Guadeloupe and Iles des Saintes. If you are staying in Iles des Saintes you can arrange for Les Heures Saines to collect you from the dock there.

*One of Les Heures Saines' three dive boats departing from the dive stores' dock.*



Chez Guy et Christian **4** is the oldest operation in Malendure and the current owners bought the store in 1995. There is a stable staff, many have worked at Chez Guy et Christian for some time. The boats take divers from local hotels, guest-houses and bungalows to Pigeon Island to dive.

Jean Pierre Rebus is the owner of Archipel Plongee **5**, situated on the beach directly opposite Pigeon Island. Jean Pierre claims to be the only truly Guadeloupian dive store (most people working in the dive business in Guadeloupe were originally from France). Archipel Plongee dives the sites around Pigeon Island and Malendure.

Finally, Aux Aquanautes Antillais **7** is at the southern end of the beach. The store's owner is a tour operator so many of Aux Aquanautes Antillais' guests are referred to the store by her. They come to dive Guadeloupe's Pigeon Island from as far afield as Ste-Anne at the south eastern tip of Guadeloupe.

The majority of Grand Terre's dive operators are in the north, in easy reach of Cul de Sac Marin. We found four stores in total but could make contact with only three of them. There are also a couple of dive operators in St. Francois.

Pointe-a-Pitre has a diving retail outlet. Antilles Sea Service Import is in the Port de Plaisance Marina. They rent equipment, fill tanks and rent boats. They do not offer dive trips. (See contact information.)

North of Pointe a Pitre is Les Baillantes Tortues **9**, a small dive store offering a high level of personalised service with quick access to the reefs of Grand Cul de Sac Marin. The store is well established and has relationships with local hotels to provide diving for their guests. Cor, the stores owner and dive instructor, can also recommend local bungalows for those who wish to self cater.

Dream Diving **11** is in the marina in St. Francois and divers are drawn from local hotels. Owner, Frederic Oustry, speaks some English and provides services to divers in Club Med, just along the coast in Ste-Anne, many of whom are American. Seas are rough off this exposed coast and so Frederic tries to keep the boat journey times to a minimum. He dives a strip of reef that is between 200 and 400 meters offshore.

The other store located in the marina is Octopussy. The store owns an open boat with two 150 hp engines and has a booth by the boat where you can book diving. Octopussy's diving range is the same as Dream Diving.

At the other side of the island, facing Grand Cul de Sac Marin is Blue Dive **10**, based in Port Louis. Olivier and Eric are the enthusiastic owners of this store. They have a large (30-foot) comfortable boat and make an effort to ensure that their guests have fun.

Blue Dive divers are from local hotels and others are transported from hotels on the south coast—Ste-Anne and St. Francois. Club Med takes guests to Blue Dive as does Nouvelle Frontier. The store is closed on Sunday and for the month of September.

In Anse Bertrand is a store called Ange des Caraibes. We were unable to make contact with the store's owner, but we have included the telephone number and contact name below.

## Grande Terre

### Iles des Saintes

Only one store is based on Iles des Saintes, though Les Heures Saines also dives here. Le Centre Nautique **12** is owned by Alain and Adry, who also own and run the restaurant and accommodations attached to the dive store.

Alain and Adry spend 6 months in France and 6 months in Iles des Saintes (October to May) each year. The store remains operational when they are in France and is managed by one of their dive instructors. Le Centre Nautique dives all the sites around Iles des Saintes plus Sec Pate once or twice a week, depending upon the experience level of their divers.

Le Centre Nautiques' accommodation is in standard rooms, studios and bungalows and ranges in price from \$500 to \$600 per person for a 7-night/7-dive package which includes lunch. Le Centre Nautiques also has Hobie cats for rental.

*Centre Nautiques' dive boat's are moored on the dock a few yards along the beach from the dive store and restaurant.*



Divers on yachts can arrange to be collected from their yacht. Though there is easy independent diving here, it is worth arranging to dive Sec Pate (site 27) with one of the stores that dive there.

### Marie Galante

There is a store in Marie Galante. The store is affiliated only with the French Federation and the operators do not speak English. French speaking divers making a day visit to Marie Galante may want to take the opportunity to do a dive, but there is insufficient range of diving to fill a full one-week vacation on the island. Contact information for the store is given below.

**Ad for Les Heures Saines**

**Contact  
Information  
Deshaies**

**1** Tropical Sub      Jean Pierre      Tel: (0590) 28 52 67  
Concaud      Fax: (0590) 28 53 48  
e-mail: [deshaies@mygale.org](mailto:deshaies@mygale.org)

**2** Les Explorateurs      Marc Jobin      Tel: (0590) 35 78 83  
Fax: (0590) 28 58 91

**3** Club de Plongee      Stephan &      Tel: (0590) 28 53 74  
Deshaies      Thiebault      Fax: (0590) 28 53 74

**Pigeon Island**

**4** Chez Guy et Christian      Claude Bonnard      Tel: (0590) 98 82 43  
Fax: (0590) 98 82 84

**5** Archipel Plongee      Jean Pierre Rebus      Tel: (0590) 98 93 93  
Fax: (0590) 98 99 28

**6** CIP Guadeloupe      Mark      Tel: (0590) 98 77 23  
Fax: (0590) 98 74 33

**7** Aux Aquanautes      Pascal Geissler      Tel: (0590) 98 87 39  
Antillais      Fax: (0590) 90 11 85

**8** Les Heures Saines      Dominique Déramé      Tel: (0590) 98 86 63  
Fax: (0590) 98 77 76  
e-mail: [heusaine@outremer.com](mailto:heusaine@outremer.com)

**Grand Terre**

**9** Les Baillantes Tortues      Cor de Munnik      Tel: (0590) 98 28 38  
Fax: (0590) 98 28 38  
e-mail: [divecor@wanadoo.fr](mailto:divecor@wanadoo.fr)

**10** Blue Dive      Olivier and Eric      Tel: (0590) 85 53 09  
Fax: (0590) 85 53 09

**11** Dream Diving      Fredeirk Oustery      Tel: (0590) 35 85 55  
Fax: (0590) 32 63 48

Ange des Caraïbes      Anse Bertrand      Tel: (0590) 22 01 74

Antilles Sea Service      Port de Plaisance      Tel: (0590) 90 98 51  
Fax: (0590) 90 98 17

Octopussy Centre      St. Francois      Tel: (0590) 35 30 86  
de Plongee

**Iles des Saintes**

**12** Centre Nautique      Alain and Adry      Tel: (0590) 99 54 25  
Fax: (0590) 99 50 96

**Marie Galante**

Balaou Club      Ziton      Tel: (0590) 97 75 24  
Fax: (0590) 97 75 24

### Guadeloupe Dive Operators

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Troical Sub	Les Explorateurs	Club de Plongees Deshais	Chez Guy et Christian	Archipel plongee	CIP Guadeloupe	Aux Aquanaut Antillais	Les Heures Saines	Les Baillantes Tortues	Blue Dive	Dream Diving	Centre Nautique	
<b>STORE</b>	Year Established	1993	1997	1993	1978	1995	1990	1988	1994	1994	1993	1992	
	Number of Bases	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
	Instructors	3	2	2	7	3	6	1	8	1	2	2	5
	Diving Associations	FP	FP	FPS	FP	F	FPS	F	FNP	FP	FP	FNP	FP
	Divemasters	2		2			2	1	2	1	1		
	Languages	EF	EF	EFI	EFGS	EF	EF	EF	EFS	EDGF	EFS	EFS	EF
	Pers. Liab. Insurance	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>BOATS</b>	No. Dive Boats	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	2
	No. Divers per Boat	20	5	6-14	10-35	8-17	18	20	8-40	12	8-20	8	10
	No. Boats with Shade	1			1	1	1	1	2		1		
	No. Boats with Toilet								1				
	No. Boats with FW								1				
	Dives per day	1/1/1	1/1/1	1/1	1/1/1	1/1	1/1/1	1/1	1/1/1	OD	2/1	1/1/1	1/1
	Time to dive sites	5-35	5-25	5-25	5-10	5-10	5-15	5-10	5-90	5-40	5-35	10-35	5-20
	O <sub>2</sub> on boat	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	VHF on boat	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	Equipment sets	20	6	20	40	25	20	18	80	10	25	10	30
	Equipment for sale				1				1	1			
	Equipment for rent	•	•							•	•	•	•
	Photo equip. rent				•	•				•	•		
	Tank fills	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•
	Nitrox												
	Equip. servicing	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•