

UNDERWATER *Journal*

A Diving Adventure Magazine



Laguna Beach Resort

- *The right blend for diving
the island of Utila*

Going CCR

- *Beyond the basics*

Goliath Summer

- *Discover Palm Beach
Florida's big show*

Bonne Terre Mine

- *One cool dive in
America's heartland*

Key Largo Reloaded

- *A dive with Spencer Slate
and Atlantis Dive Center*

Dangerous Seafood

- *Is it safe to eat?*

This publication is
underwritten in part by:



Issue 17 - 2010

Explore, Discover, Challenge



Pg 6

Pg 3 Editor's Page

Pg 6 Key Largo Reloaded

A father-son dive with Spencer Slate revives cherished memories about diving the Florida Keys.

Pg 12 Bonne Terre Mine

Diving in North America's underground billion gallon lake. Walk down an old mule trail to get to your next exciting dive site.

Pg 21 Beyond the Basics

Teaching an old dog new tricks. The perspective of a veteran technical instructor's transition to diving rebreathers.

Pg 26 Laguna Beach Resort

A look at one of Utila, Bay Islands premier dedicated dive resorts.

Pg 40 Goliath Summer

South Florida's BIG SHOW is underway. Why you shouldn't miss spending some time with reef cruisers bigger than you. We're talking Goliath groupers.

Pg 49 Dangerous Seafood

What you need to know about toxins in our beloved table fare.

Pg 55 Kona Manta Concert

A night to remember diving Kona's acclaimed coast.

**Look for UWJ-issue18
October 30th!**

Editorial Disclaimer

The articles, positions and statements contained in this publication are not necessarily those of SDI™, TDI™ or ERDI™ its BOD, officers or employees. Opinions, conclusions, and other information in this publication are solely those of the Editor /Writer and are neither given nor endorsed by the agencies mentioned. Total editorial freedom and expression is solely retained and the responsibility of the Editors /Writers.

Cover: This gaudy clown crab struck a pose on an azure vase sponge on the house reef fronting Laguna Beach Resort, Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras. Photo taken by Walt Stearns. Camera system: Nikon D300/Subal housing, Nikon 60mm AFS macro lens at F/22, shutter 1/25 sec.



Pg 12



Pg 55

Editor - Walt Stearns
email: wstearns@uwjournal.com

Associate Publisher - Karen Stearns

Associate Editor - Steve Lewis

Copy Editor - Brian Bienkowski

Art Direction - Cheri Craft

Josh Miller

Webmasters - Margaret Chatham

Tony Isse

Advertising - Ralph Viscusi

email: rviscusi@uwjournal.com

Contributors

Pierce Hoover

Michael Salvatore

Christopher Weaver

Bob Stearns

The Underwater Journal is published by Ocean Arts, Inc. All content in this publication is protected, copyright © 2010. No use may be made of material contained herein without written consent from Ocean Arts, Inc.

Inquiries: info@uwjournal.com

How would you like to walk down an old mule trail to get to your next dive site, which is about 150 feet below the ground? Or choose from more than 24 different trails in an underground lake the size of a small town? How about diving in 58-degree water year round, with at least 100 feet of visibility? Well, if this sounds like a great adventure, read on. Located in the heart of America is a unique dive resort 62 miles Southeast of St. Louis. Where are we talking about?

"Bonne Terre Mine" of course!



**Story & Photos
by Michael Salvatore
and Christopher Weaver**

In the early 1700s, prospectors surveyed the Bonne Terre area in search of gold and silver deposits. While these surveys failed to yield the desired metals, large surface deposits of lead were identified. In 1864, the area's first mineshaft was constructed, and three years later, a company named St. Joe Lead was formed. Soon, St. Joe Lead owned and operated most of the area's mineral mines, including Bonne Terre. From these mines, a steady stream of lead ore, cobalt, nickel, and silver was unearthed and removed. St. Joe Lead became one of the few truly successful mining operations of its time. Bonne Terre continued to operate successfully until 1962.

During that century of continuous operation, the hard-working Missourians who were employed in the operation created a huge, multi-level subterranean cave and cavern system. This system plunged more than 500 feet beneath the surface in some points and stretched for over four miles at its widest point. The entire town of Bonne Terre could easily fit within the confines of this enormous underground structure.



© Eco-Photo Explorers

For SCUBA divers, the cessation of mining activities would eventually mean the creation of a marvelously unique dive resort. When the mine shut down in 1962, the gigantic pumps, which had kept the area dry for so many years, were also turned off. Clear, pure water began to fill the cavernous Bonne Terre Mine. Some of the large rooms and



OLYMPUS
DIVE CENTER

The Better Way To Dive North Carolina

- Charters
- Wreck Diving
- Shark Diving
- Rebreather Friendly
- Scuba Instruction
Beginner to Instructor

www.olympusdiving.com
252-726-9432
713 Shepard Street, Morehead City, NC



connecting tunnels became completely flooded, while others remained only partially submerged. Eventually, the flooding stopped when the water level matched that of the surrounding water table. The large mineral mine was about to begin the next phase of its existence... as a dive resort.

In 1975, Doug and Cathy Goergens, owners of a St. Louis area dive shop, took

their first look at Bonne Terre Mine. At that time, it was being operated as a standard tourist attraction, but they decided that it would make an ideal location to conduct open water training. Eventually, the Goergens developed this area into a full-blown dive resort, complete with dive shop, guided tours, equipment rentals, nitrox, and bed and breakfast style lodging. For the Northeast diver searching

for an inexpensive getaway dive trip, Bonne Terre makes an excellent destination. With a year-round air temperature in the mine of 62 degrees and a constant water temperature of 58 degrees, divers can enjoy this unique location throughout the year.

The diving at Bonne Terre begins with an orientation meeting, complete with a map-assisted briefing and the viewing of a mandatory



"All the trails are illuminated from above by over 500,000 watts of lighting, which cast an eerie glow throughout the entire place."

safety video. All first time divers must make a dive on *Trail One* as a prerequisite to the rest of their diving. Although a portion of this dive is devoted to standard checkout procedures such as mask clearing and air sharing (*even a Cousteau dive team was required to do this!*), *Trail One* is an exhilarating dive with plenty to see and explore.

Much of the swimming may be over deep water (120 feet or more). As divers become more accustomed to the location, many other trails are available for more intense exploration. Some trails lead divers through submerged passageways (e.g. *Shark Tunnel* and

Fat Man's Ore Dump) that connect the various rooms or underwater trails in the area. Others take divers through abandoned elevator shafts and along huge, vertical columns of rock, which were carved out by mine workers years ago. The surface is always just a short swim away and no overhead environment experience is required. However, most of the dives involve nearly continuous swimming. Make sure you are in reasonable shape so that you may completely enjoy these fascinating glimpses into the mining history of Bonne Terre.

Divers are not permitted to take dive lights or knives with them on

the best value...

is with US!



Unique Dive Experiences. Exceptional Value.

Bahamas Galapagos St. Kitts/Saba Turks & Caicos

SAVE \$500

- EASE** Gear up once. Up to 5 dives are offered per day!
Dive sites are steps away.
Ease getting to dive sites well off shore.
- PRICE** **SAVE \$500** per person on specific weeks.
Room, meals, snacks, beverages & diving included.
Up to 27 dives offered for the week.
- VALUE** Completely relaxing week - nothing is rushed.
Low per night, all-inclusive cost.
98%+ of our guests would recommend us to a friend!

Call us with your questions!

EXPLORER VENTURES

1.800.322.3577 • info@explorerventures.com
Outside US/Canada: +1.307.235.0683 • www.explorerventures.com



tours average between 40 to 60 feet and usually consist of no more than eight divers per group. Cameras are permitted on all trails except *Trail One*.

Along the way, divers will often run across artifacts from the days when the mine was in the business of producing minerals. These artifacts were abandoned when the mine was shut down and were never recovered when the flooding began. These abandoned items evoke a nostalgic feeling as the diver swims by. Some of the more interesting objects are the ore carts. While still resting on

their dives. (Camera mounted focusing lights and u/w video lights maybe used if permitted by the dive guide.) This is done to discourage people from wandering off into the many side rooms and trails in the cavern. All the trails are illuminated from above by over 500,000 watts of lighting, which cast an eerie glow throughout the entire place. Each dive is conducted as a guided tour, with a lead diver showing the way and a safety diver following behind. These divers carry bright HD lights to help illuminate some of the more interesting parts of the trails. Depths of the guided





their rail tracks, they look as if they are all set to resume carrying their loads to the surface. Other tools, such as pickaxes, shovels, rail spikes, lamps and miners helmets lie about the bottom. You can swim over small buildings and even a locomotive engine laying on its side, giving the diver a sense of flying over an active mining operation.

All artifacts are the property of the Bonne Terre Mine facility and divers are prohibited from removing them. Artifacts may be picked up and handled, but must be replaced back where they were found.

Each dive presents interesting and unique vistas and experiences. On one particular dive, we swam up to an opening in a large rock wall, which permitted us a view of an adjoining room. Awed by the sight before us, we rested on the rocky ledge, and simply stared in amazement at the enormous room in front of us. We gazed upon huge columns (shaped like hourglasses) of rock, stretching from the floor at around 100 feet to the surface. In this room, we could see strange rock formations and several groups of artifacts. Our eyes strained to see the





Shearwater Research

Simplicity is the Ultimate Sophistication

Dive Computers & Rebreather Electronics for Technical Divers

- **Powerful**
- **Simple**
- **Reliable**



www.shearwaterresearch.com

email: info@shearwaterresearch.com call: 604-669-9958



"National Geographic, in a testament to the uniqueness of this special place, has ranked the Bonne Terre Mine as one of America's Top 10 Adventures."

other side, barely discernible at the edge of visibility. With an eerie green glow from the lamps above, combined with the vastness of the room, we felt as if we were truly in an alien world. We soon left, but the memories of that dive remain with us to this day.

National Geographic, in a testament to the uniqueness of this special place, has ranked the Bonne Terre Mine as one of America's Top 10 Adventures.

Even though the Mine operates year round for land and boat tours, scuba diving is only conducted on weekends.

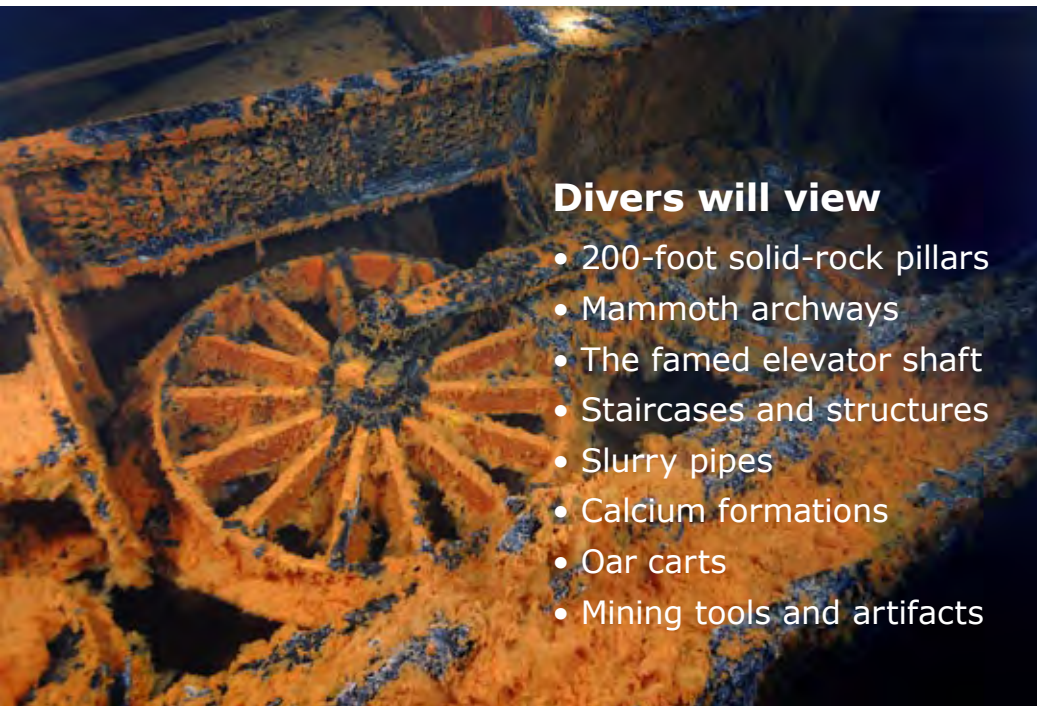
However, on rare occasions, diving may be done during the week if special arrangements are made in advance. It is an excellent location for those wishing to experience cavern diving in a unique and controlled setting. However, don't be misled. Even though the diving is supervised,

these dives are challenging. Divers will have to swim long distances and, because of the water temperature, full 7 mm wetsuits or dry suits are recommended. To the first time visitor, even the smaller trails can be disorienting. Some of the swim throughs are just long enough to raise the heartbeat of experienced divers, and the depth of the water is considerable in many locations. But, if you want to get away and test your skills, or just find a place to dive during the long, cold Northeast winter, let us recommend Bonne Terre Mine. There's even a Mine Diving Specialty Certificate (SSI) that divers

can earn. For the Non-Divers accompanying these Deep Earth Divers, there's plenty to see on the resort as well as guided land and boat tours of the mine.

So come and be a Deep Earth Diver! It is a trip you won't soon forget!

- MS & CW



Divers will view

- 200-foot solid-rock pillars
- Mammoth archways
- The famed elevator shaft
- Staircases and structures
- Slurry pipes
- Calcium formations
- Oar carts
- Mining tools and artifacts

Diving in the Billion Gallon Lake

Access to Bonne Terre Mine is by Reservations Only!

Cost: \$290 per diver for a 3 Dive Package (3Day/2Night) which includes lodging, three dives, tanks and weights.

All divers are required to present:

- "C" Cards: Openwater Equivalent from the following agencies - SSI, NAUI, NASDS, YMCA, PADI, PDIC, NASE, IDEA, SPI.
- Two forms of picture ID
- Log book showing recent diving activity.

Note: Minimum age for diving is 15, if under 18, parental permission is required. Retuning divers should bring previous log pages of completed trails.



**Address: West End Diving
11215 Natural Bridge Road
Bridgeton, MO 63044**

**Ph: 314.209.7200
web: www.2dive.com**



Michael Salvatore & Christopher P. Weaver head Eco-Photo Explorers, a New York based organization promoting interest in protecting our ocean environment by creating awareness through the use of underwater photography.



Eco-Photo Explorers
Your Source for Scuba
Diving Adventure!

