

Diving with Ian Roriston and Villaricosub in Spain by Steve Marchant

On the 8th October, myself, Stephen (Father-in-law) and Phil (one of the members of Euro divers based out of Punta Prima, travelled down to see Ian at Villaricos. For me it was to see how Ian was enjoying his Spanish life and also to see what the diving was like down there. For Stephen and Phil it was a chance to see a new dive centre and also find some new sites for the Euro Divers clan to dive.

So at 06.30 we set from Punta Prima off down the AP-7, heading towards Almeria. Ian had said that the journey would take about 2hrs from where I was staying. Everything was going well until we came off the Cuevas Del Almanzora junction of the AP-7. It had taken us about an hour and 50mins to get to this point so after coming off the motorway it looked only about 10mins to Villaricos. Half an hour later and a phone call to Ian we finally reach the dive centre, after doing a few wrong turns (Spanish signposting is not exactly a must especially when you get into the smaller villages and roads).

And the 1st thing that greeted us when pulling upto the dive centre was that big smile that Ian always has on his face and his infectious laugh. He is really enjoying it over in Spain, and his Spanish is very good (soon be a local!), but he did say that he thinks he'll have to get a job soon as the couch potato lifestyle he's living might get a tad boring....how the other half live!.....

Villaricosub dive centre is a very clean, well run and organised establishment, and they have a lovely big, comfortable rib to go out diving on. The staff were very helpful and so friendly and certainly make you welcome.



From Left – Phil, me, Ian, A Spaniard (can't remember his name), and Juan (Villaricosub owner)

The Dive

After a tour of the centre and its facilities, we got our kit together, loaded it onto the trailer and we all walked the short distance down to the Rib some 150metres away. Shortly afterwards the trailer followed and we loaded the kit onto the boat and off we chugged out of the harbour. The dive site we were doing was called CERRO reef with a depth of some 35metres to the bottom. We all went down as a group on the dive, dropping straight down to the bottom to have a look at the bottom of the reef. There was not a great deal of fish life around but plenty of Moray eels that's for sure, one which was living inside a clam! After some 40mins on the reef mostly at depth, we headed back to the shot line and started our ascent. All of us had clocked up quite a bit of decompression time so when we were all hovering at 6m, and Gorka the dive guide came over and checked Stephen's computer and it said 15mins deco on it, his eyes nearly popped out of his head. I don't think he was used to divers doing this length of stop on his dives. He only had the 3mins safety stop as he had spent most of his dive at a shallow depth. All in all the dive was not too bad apart from the lack of fish life (Where I dive out of Cabo De Palos up near La Manga there are shoals of Barracuda, Groupers etc). But I'm sure there are better dive sites around that area, and no doubt Ian will ensure that if a club trip is organised for next year then he will take us to the best sites. After getting back to the harbour, unloading and washing off the kit, we left it to drip and we all went for a coffee at a typical Spanish café with Ian to end the day. Muchas Gracias Ian & Villaricosub, it was nice to see you again Ian.



From top left clockwise - Gorka the Dive Guide, Moray Eel, Mr Roriston himself and me.