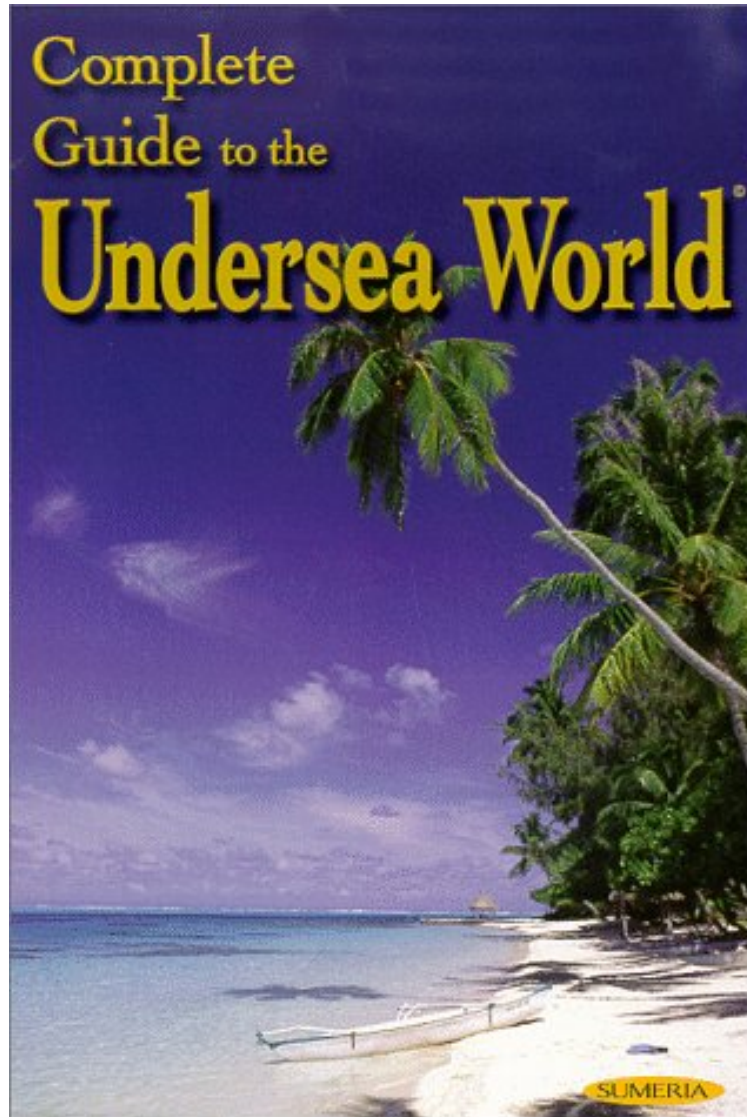


## Complete Guide to the Undersea World

*Jerry Borrell*

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**Jerry Borrell : Complete Guide to the Undersea World** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Complete Guide to the Undersea World:

The Complete Guide to the Undersea World is a travel guide to the best scuba diving and snorkeling in the world. Sumeria's goal in publishing this volume is to serve travel buffs and those readers of its OceanLife Series who are more interested in diving and snorkeling as recreational sports and less interested in the biology and ecology focus of the OceanLife series of CD ROMs and VHS videos. The Guide covers what the author has identified as the best diving

and snorkeling sites in the world based upon three criterion. First, the diving and snorkeling must be among the best in the world. Second, each destination must be readily accessible through commercial airline flights. And, third each destination must have a wealth of land-based activities, not just marine recreation, available. Given these criteria the volume covers diving in Hawaii, Fiji, The Great Barrier Reef, Tahiti, Truk, Palau, Indonesia, Cabo San Lucas/The Revilla Gigedos Islands, The Galapagos Islands, and St. Lucia. The product includes three films, from three to five minutes in length apiece, for each destination. These films provide an overview of each destination, the diving, and marine life. Each destination has maps with photographs of the best dive sites, land activities, and hotels. There are also ancillary sections of the product that serve to introduce the physical principles of Diving, marine ecology and ecological associations, dangerous marine life, and diving gear.

ers sometimes get jaded. Too many bad movies, books, music CDs, whatever - in my case, it's multimedia CD-ROM's - and you start wondering if any of this stuff is worthwhile. Then some unexpected little gem comes across your desk and single-handedly restores your faith in the medium. That's what happened to me recently when Complete Guide To The Undersea (about \$50) arrived in the mail. I'm not even a diver. But I couldn't help admiring this title just because it's beautifully crafted and offers a generous helping of absolutely top notch - and original - images and digitized videos. I doubt I'll ever see the breathtaking scenery of Bora Bora.... But I have some notion now of what these places look like. Undersea World is from tiny Sumeria Inc. ([www.sumeria.com](http://www.sumeria.com)), a quirky San Francisco publisher of travel and science CDs and videos. The firm's flagship product is the six-part OceanLife series of multimedia CD-ROMs. Don't expect to find Undersea World on the shelf at your neighborhood electronic mass merchant. You may have to search around for it a bit. But it will be worth the trouble. Sumeria titles don't try to seduce you with flashy user interfaces or gimmicky interactive activities - although they are always very easy to use and pleasant to look at. Instead, they concentrate on providing solid content, and lots of it. The core of this one is a guide in pictures and video to dive sites like and Bora Bora. Others include Fiji, Bali and Galapagos - not your every-day holiday destinations. You start at an attractive map of the world showing the sites. Click on a site and you go to the destination. For each, there is an introductory movie. These are not the stingey, amateurish 20-second clips you get on too many CD-ROM's. And many of the images here, especially in the underwater footage, are magnificent. For each destination there are also movies about the diving - summarizing both the good points and the bad - and the local marine life, as well as text and pictures on local accommodation, things to do "topside" and how-to-get-there information. It's not for everybody. But if you're a diver - or just someone whodreams of far away places - you should have this disc -- Gerry Blackwell, Toronto Star, March 1999

From the Publisher During the eight years that we have been filming the OceanLife Series, eight volumes on marine biology and conservation, the publisher is frequently asked by travelers for our opinions of the best diving sites; places where a vacationer can go and have a great underwater experience. Making such recommendations for anyone's vacation is a weighty responsibility. Most travel books for example, merely describe the sites and facilities of destinations-leaving the actual selection up the reader. In making these admittedly subjective recommendations for travelers with a love of the water we have risked a considerable amount of Sumeria and Mr. Borrell's credibility. Everyone has different tastes; while we know that we can never satisfy everyone's individual tastes, or that we cannot anticipate bad experiences that anyone may experience, we feel that given the experience of the author as a PADI divemaster and scuba diver for over thirty years, and based upon the author's experience in filming Sumeria's OceanLife Series, the guide should prove invaluable to people seeking the best diving and snorkeling vacations. Keep in mind the criteria we have listed in the overview. If you a world-weary dive-traveler who has been on a dozen dive boats in remote areas you won't be happy with our selections. If you're a beginner to advanced diver, and if your idea of a dive vacation is something other than diving four tanks a day, you should give our ideas consideration.

From the Author In producing a guide to the best diving I have intentionally avoided recommending several types of sites; locations where there are cattle-boat style dive operators; locations that are overcrowded and badly run due to over-traffic such as the Cayman Islands; and places that may well have great diving, but which are simply too difficult to reach. There were four other disqualifying factors for sites or boat operators that would otherwise be on this list; political unrest and/or corruption that make travel dangerous at best (site such as Ambon, Sulawesi, Java, the Red Sea, and New Guinea); boats that are so badly operated that they should not be allowed in the water (The Silver Cloud, now withdrawn from the Galapagos Islands waters'), or operators that have provided such a poor experience that we cannot recommend them to visitors (Bob Soto in the Cayman Islands; the Febrina in New Guinea; Splash in Palau, and so many others); and finally sites where diving tourism is destroying the reefs (places such as Sipadan in Borneo, Grand Cayman Island, the British Virgin Islands, the Florida Keys, the Philippines, and several areas of Indonesia such as Flores). There will be of course, much criticism of my selection criterion; however as Sumeria is not dependent upon advertising as are magazines- the reader can be assured that our motives in making our recommendations are based on reasons other than economics of publishing. I hope that we also have the best interest of the reef environment in mind, and not the well-being of the various well financed dive-travel promotional groups. To be certain, we are re-evaluating several locations for inclusion in future editions. Cozumel, for example, has in recent reports, turned a new leaf and is working improve its

diving operations vis a vis its attitude towards divers as visitors that must be treated well and not as so many dollars per head. It is not clear however, that efforts to protect the reef are of paramount concern to Cozumel's operators at the same time. We understand that diving and dive tourism have become a significant factor in developing economies; however by avoiding places that are destroying their reefs for near term economic gain we can insure that future generations will have the opportunity to visit coral reefs as well. Finally, we want to recommend places that we feel provide the best overall experience to the marine visitor. Heron Island, on the Great Barrier Reef, for example, is certainly not the best diving on the Great Barrier Reef; but for couples that want to lie on a beach as well as dive; for families with small children who want a great variety of activities; visitors who have an interest marine life in a more general way and who will be thrilled by the islands bird life, nesting turtles, and walkable coral lagoon; there are few places like this island on earth. A guaranteed good time.