



rayaTM



Raya Divers Newsletter

It's time to dig up your mask and fins again since Raya Divers high season 2009-10 is about to start! While testing if your wetsuit still fits after the summer, read the latest interview with Janne Miikkulainen, the Managing Director of Raya Divers.

HELLO JANNE, SEEMS YOU ARE BACK IN BUSINESS. WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE SUMMER?

Yep, holidays are over. Summer was pretty much spent around Indonesia chilling out & surfing. This year I skipped my holiday to Finland. The holiday was fantastic but it's nice to be back working as well. Since August I've been back in the office, preparing and planning for the upcoming high season.

GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK! AND HOW HAS THE WEATHER BEEN THERE IN THAILAND?

Well, during the low season it rains a bit more and it's also more windy. Mostly the weather has been ok and we've been diving throughout the summer. By the way, summer months are perfect for diving since there are a lot less divers in the water and you see many more rare species. Now we are in October and some days it rains a lot but soon the sun will shine again – for the next six months non-stop!!

HOW IS YOUR CREW FOR THE COMING SEASON?

We start our full operation in October (when the charter flights start again). Next season our dive team is made up of mostly familiar old faces but there are some new diving professionals joining the team as well. We total about 60 people in our 5 shops.

ANY NEW THINGS COMING UP FOR THE 2009-10 SEASON?

The biggest thing is our brand new diving vessel for Phuket, which will make its maiden trip at the end of November. This 26-meter long boat is specially designed to fit all the needs of a diver. The dive deck has lots of space and there is also lots of airconditioned room if it gets too hot. On top, the sundeck will serve the people whose mission is to get a nice tan! In Koh Lanta and Krabi we are moving our offices to a better locations with a bit more space. At Raya Yai island we are building our new beach shop at Bungalow Bay (Ao Batok). Miska Martikainen, our team leader from Koh Lanta moves to Khao Lak, and long term Raya employee Sami Väyrynen will take over our Koh Lanta shop.

OK OK, BUT NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT DIVING! WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE OUT OF ALL YOUR DIVE SITES?

Naming just one dive site is pretty impossible. Raya Noi has always been close to my heart... during the full moon it can be pretty demanding due to the strong currents. But I also like Hin Muang a lot with the 60 meter vertical walls. On the other hand there are couple deeper dive sites at Similan

where I've done some fantastic dives.

I GUESS LIVEBOARDS ARE A GOOD WAY TO DIVE AS WELL, OR WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHO DO YOU THINK THE LIVEBOARDS SUIT THE BEST?

Liveboards suit all levels of divers but if you do your Advanced course before the trip, you will get a bit more out of it. The nicest thing about liveboards is that you stay aboard a diving vessel that has all the luxuries of a nice hotel. You eat fantastic food 4 times a day and there's no daily traveling from hotel to the harbor, harbor to the dive site etc., so you avoid the transportation hassle you get on daytrips. The daily program is very simple: You wake up, have a coffee, put on your bcd and jump in. Come up, take off your gear, have breakfast, rest, dive again, eat, rest, dive again.... There is nothing more relaxing than doing a 4-5 day liveboard!

HOW SHOULD YOU MAKE YOUR BOOKINGS TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU FIT IN?

Most trips you can book in Thailand after arriving here, but if you want to go on a specific date to a specific dive site, you should make your booking in advance. Most popular are the liveboards, dive courses and Similan daytrips, so those bookings you should do before arriving to Thailand.

GOOD TO KNOW. THANKS FOR ALL THE ANSWERS BUT WE HAVE A FINAL QUESTION: YOU'VE BEEN LIVING IN PHUKET FOR A VERY LONG TIME, CAN YOU GIVE US SOME INSIDER TIPS, SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN'T READ FROM TRADITIONAL TRAVEL GUIDES?

This one is easy, don't get stuck going only to Kata, Karon and Patong's busy beaches! Explore some other places in Phuket. Food is fantastic in Thailand and there are so many places to go off the beaten tourist track - for example the Natural Restaurant in Phuket Town. Another nice place is to go is to the Thai restaurants along Rawai Beach, sit on mats just next to the water and eat really local style. One of my favourite restaurants is Kaneng 2 in Chalong, best Tom Yam Kung soup ever! All these places offer fantastic Thai food for a very low prices. One more tip: Even if you like spicy food, do not ask to have it spicy in these local places!!

THANKS JANNE! I GUESS WE'RE READY TO ROCK THE SEASON NOW!

Story by: Hanna Raatikainen