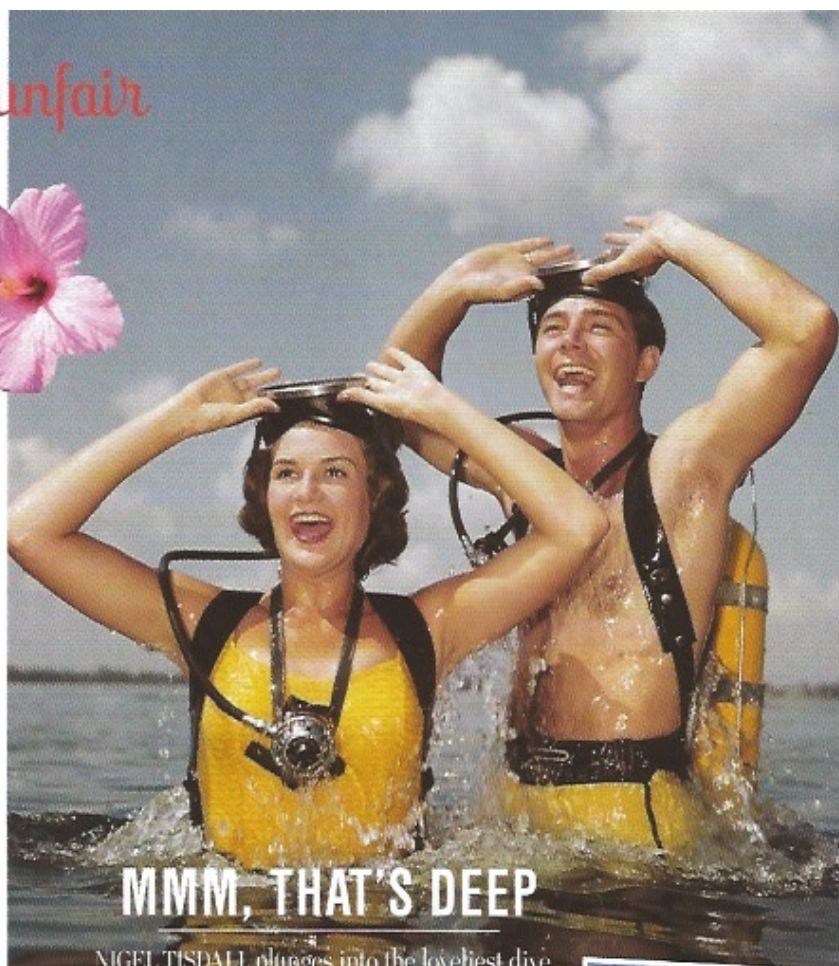


Funfair

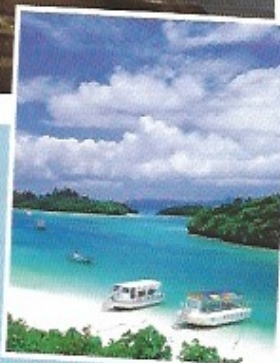


MMM, THAT'S DEEP

NIGEL TISDALL plunges into the loveliest dive sites in the whole wide underwater world

OKINAWA, JAPAN

Subtropical warmth, empty white-sand beaches and super-polite locals make Japan's southern archipelagoes perfect for island hopscotch. Start amid the big fan corals of the Keramas, just west of gateway island Okinawa. Further south, the Miyako Islands have over 50 dive sites plus the charming Private Resort Hotel Renn (resort-renn.jp), much loved by Yohji Yamamoto. At the end of the chain, the Yaeyamas boast manta rays, hammerhead sharks and the mysterious underwater ruins of Yonaguni. **EN ROUTE:** Drink in the views from the 53-floor Ritz-Carlton Tokyo (ritz-carlton.com/tokyo). abercrombiekent.co.uk



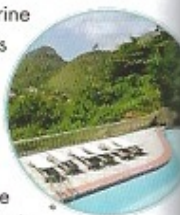
PLACENCIA, BELIZE

Visit in May and June, when the moon is full to watch the whale sharks gather for a feast of spawning snapper. Base yourself at Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn (coppolareorts.com), mixing trips to the cays and wall dives of the Belize Barrier Reef with inland river cruises and a visit to the world's only jaguar preserve. **EN ROUTE:** Start the party in Miami at Soho Beach House (sohobeachhouse.com). scottdunn.com



SABA, DUTCH CARIBBEAN

Saba is encircled by a marine park that has kept its waters a prime dive spot for the Caribbean cognoscenti. There are more than 30 sites offering hot-water vents, mighty pinnacles and pristine reefs, all without the crowds. Queen's Gardens Resort (queensaba.com) is the best place to stay. **EN ROUTE:** Overnight in Saint Martin at chic Karibuni Lodge (lekaribuni.com). diveworldwide.com



SIPADAN, MALAYSIA

Dive-versity is the keynote off the northeast coast of Borneo. Check into the over-water chalets of Sipadan-Kapalai Dive Resort (sipadan-kapalai.com) and you're all set for close encounters with swirls of barracuda, patrols of sharks, monumental coral walls and turtles galore. April to September is best. **EN ROUTE:** Take a break in Kuala Lumpur at Villa Samadhi (villasamadhi.com.my). originaldiving.com

RAJA AMPAT, INDONESIA

On the northwest coast of West Papua, Raja Ampat is the bullseye of the Coral Triangle, the richest marine environment in the world. The smart way to enjoy it is sailing on a designer liveaboard such as *Tiger Blue* (tigerblue.info), a 34-metre, Dutch-skipped traditional phinisi with red sails and robust teak fittings. There's no phone signal, just go-where-you-please days sleeping under the stars and saying hello to a fiesta of fashionista fish, slap-happy turtles, stealth-bomber mantas and the odd seigniorial whale. **EN ROUTE:** Beat the jet lag with a Balinese massage at Alila Jakarta (alilahotels.com). ampersandtravel.com



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES (COURTESY); CEES FISHERS; PHOTOGRAPHY INTERIORS; SARA LITVINSKY