

# Quest

The Journal of Global Underwater Explorers



Vol. 25, No. 2 – May 2024

**PHOTOGRAPHER  
PORTFOLIO:  
BRANDI MUELLER**

**SAMPLE**

## **REC 1 DIVER**

Is this entry-level scuba course the diving industry's best kept secret?

## **DEEP CORE PROJECT**

Citizen science to support survival of deep coral reefs in Spain

## **CCR CONFIGURATION**

Sometimes an alternative to the J.J-CCR is the solution

## **UW COMMUNICATION**

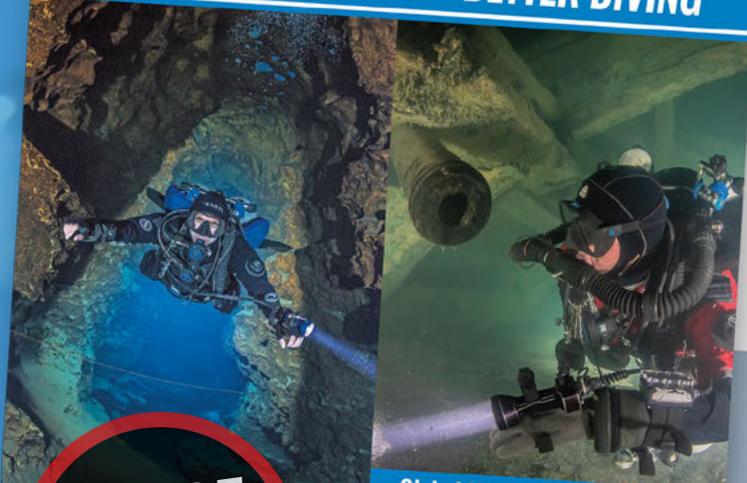
The key to team coherence and achieving goals

**EDUCATION · CONSERVATION · EXPLORATION · COMMUNITY**

# GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR DIVING



## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF BETTER DIVING



Global Underwater Explorers

**\$24.95**  
**€19.95**

GUE's strong commitment to exploration and conservation sometimes requires high-tech tools such as submersibles.

showed the degradation in water quality in a way that scientific measurements, data, and graphs never could. In light of this process, at least once per year, many groups, consistently perform more elaborate documentation, further submersible programs, such as GUE's documentation and Science Diver by curricula. All these efforts, small and large, lead to a growing body of data that means changes to the environment that are often difficult to observe. This process and the resulting data support public awareness and the development of more sophisticated measurements where appropriate.

As a steadily growing initiative, more than 100 Project Baseline divers, under the banner of Project Baseline, are now active around the world in environments ranging from coral to tropical reefs and from shipwrecks to freshwater lakes. They also online meetings take place, coordinated by Project Baseline staff and volunteers who share their and support each other in their global endeavors. Divers have also started to visit other projects, enjoying the friendship and hospitality of their teams while sharing equipment and expertise to their diving. Project Baseline is a GUE initiative but remains open to all divers, or even non-divers. As a volunteer endeavor, this project has many important roles to fill, whether that means joining the documentation of the water's surface, acting in a supporting

an ambitious program, including a diving vessel and two submersibles capable to 300 m/1000 ft. With these assets, GUE's most multi-site project that began in Florida and concluded in the Mediterranean. The vessel began her journey in Florida and sailed to the Bahamas, where participants continue to conduct more deep-water survey work. This effort continued along the coast of Portugal, engaging with existing deep research crews already underway for several years. All projects were able to work in tandem with the other divers, organize themselves into teams, and operate at project level with little or no preparation. After Portugal, GUE teams made their way into the Mediterranean, where divers visited contemporary and ancient shipwrecks, culminating in the exploration of a 2300-year-old trading vessel off the coast of Sicily. GUE maintains a close relationship with the Italian military known as the Operative of the Sea, and supports advanced conservation initiatives across Italy. In this case, GUE divers were able to recover 16 artifacts from 150 m/500 ft. These artifacts included a range of amphora alongside one of the most exciting finds, an ancient star burner used for sacrifice by mariners. GUE has accumulated a wealth of documentation, including video and thousands of images, ultimately producing a full-scale 3D digital replica of several dive sites, thereby developing

45 YET, THE SIMPLEST TOOL OFTEN PROVED TO BE THE MOST POWERFUL. TWO PHOTOGRAPHS, SEPARATED BY 10 YEARS.

RELIANCE UPON ARBITRARY RULES WHEN DETERMINING IMPORTANT PARAMETERS SUCH AS GAS PLANNING IS A RECIPE FOR DISASTER.

Get more information on an important part of safe diving and must be included in every training program.

Read and prepared for this eventually will likely respond more comfortably. The GUE system focuses on helping the diver in late a safe rescue. Even if the out-of-gas diver remains calm and first breath is guaranteed to be an effective one, as it comes from the diver was just breathing from.

The first part of our regulator configuration is the direct feed to the wing inflator. This hose should be an appropriate length to match the compressed hose on the wing itself. In a double cylinder configuration, the hose is fed from the right post first stage. In the event of a leaking or free-flowing inflator, divers can shut down that valve with their right hand, and since both the compressed hose and the rear wing dump are on the left, divers can use their left hand to dump gas.

THE CAT FORMULA  

$$CAT = C \text{ (consumption)} \times A \text{ (average depth)} \times T \text{ (time to surface)}$$

CONSUMPTION X A X T = AVAILABLE GAS

CAT Formula example  
 Planning a recreational dive to 30 m/100 ft, while using a 12-liter tank filled to 230 bar. What is the MDT needed for 100 min?

Metric  
 $C = 40 \text{ Liters} / 20 \text{ Liters} = 2 \text{ divers}$   
 $A = 2.5 \text{ ATA} / 30 \text{ meters} = 2 = 21 \text{ m} = 3$   
 $T = 11 \text{ minutes} / 30 \text{ meters} = 50 \text{ m per minute at depth}$   
 $MDT = 40 \text{ Liters} \times 2.5 \text{ ATA} \times 11 \text{ minutes} = 1100 \text{ Liters} / 2 \text{ L tank}$

Two divers sharing gas from the deepest point require at least 1000 L in their 12 L tank to safely reach the surface while sharing from one cylinder.

Imperial  
 Planning a 100 ft dive while using a single aluminum 80 ft tank. What is the MDT?

THE SINGLE TANK/DOUBLE TANK - SAME CONFIGURATION  
 The single tank diver and the double tank diver have exactly the same regulator configuration. The pressure gauge memory and favorably low-actuator are placed in the water marker in front of the diver on either side of the tank.

THE DRY SUIT ALSO NEED A DIRECT FEED. This comes from the left post regulator and runs under the left arm and across to the back, or divers in cold water, a dedicated drysuit inflator bottle used. Given the lack of a second stage to feed the drysuit inflator is first stage requires an over-pressure valve. If the pressure builds in the first stage this allows the pressure to be vented safely. Nothing else is required on the regulator.

Finally, the submersible pressure gauge, or SPG, comes from the left post regulator on a 56-62 cm/22-24 in hose and is clipped to the hose near to the SPG. The SPG is fed from the bulkhead port to enable divers to gain some information about the status of their valves. If divers plan to check their SPG approximately

# NEW EDITION AVAILABLE NOW!

Order today at [www.GUE.com](http://www.GUE.com)

Available in English, German, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean.

# EDITOR'S LETTER

## Communication

I often ponder how the logistics of different leisure activities add to their charm. In skiing, for instance, you have those moments in the chair lift between your runs down the slopes.

In skydiving, there's that period of waiting on the ground before you board the plane for your exhilarating freefall. And in golf, the trek, be it on foot or by cart, from one hole to the next, is all part of the ritual. While these activities usually involve groups, and the chit-chat in between the active bits is part of the fun, they can all essentially be done alone. Diving, though, is a different kettle of fish.

In the late 1940s, when Jacques Cousteau's dive team had a close call with a member getting trapped alone deep inside a wreck and needing to ditch his cylinder harness to escape, the French crew made a pact never to dive solo again. This was the genesis of the "always dive with a buddy" strategy that has been a paradigm of recreational scuba diving ever since. While some agencies and some seasoned divers adopt a more flexible stance on solo diving, it's well known that team diving is a core principle in the GUE approach.

As a sensible diver who always dives in a team, communication is a crucial and unescapable aspect of every dive. Essentially, each new GUE course is about learning a specific language that enables efficient communication related to the activity at hand. Activities like decompression diving, cave diving, and CCR diving each have their own set of hand signals and

communication devices, tailored to the unique needs and scenarios of these diving styles.

Effective communication in diving encompasses not just clarity and intention during the dive, but also before and after it.

Creating a straightforward dive plan that everyone comprehends and agrees upon demands good communication skills. Similarly, post-dive debriefings, whether they are part of a course or not, hinge on the quality of communication. Discussing and evaluating each dive is crucial, making communication a central element of the entire diving experience.

This issue of *Quest* is dedicated to communication. Brad Beskin's CQ corner, featured on page 6, underscores the significance of feedback, and our comprehensive three-part series starting on page 50 explores the various underwater communication methods available to divers, illuminating the diverse techniques they can employ.

---

**“ Discussing and evaluating each dive is crucial, making communication a central element of the entire diving experience. ”**

---

**Jesper Kjøller**  
Editor-in-Chief  
[jk@gue.com](mailto:jk@gue.com)



**Editor-in-chief**

// Jesper Kjøller

**Editorial panel**

// Michael Menduno

// Amanda White

**Design and layout**

// Jesper Kjøller

**Copy editing**

// Pat Jablonski

// Kady Smith

**Writers**

// Brad Beskin

// Kees Beemster Leverenz

// Oliver Ober

// Kirill Egorov

// Daniel Riordan

// Nuno Padrao

// Dorota Czerny

// Erik Wurz

// Marc Gray

// Tom Goosens

// Fred Devos

// Todd Kincaid

// Chris Le Maillot

// Jarrod Jablonski

**Photographers**

// Kirill Egorov

// Jesper Kjøller

// Bori Bennett

// Sean Romanowski

// Guillermo Martín Cozzi

// Javi Sanchez

// Rafa Camacho

// Brandi Mueller

// Andrei Voinigescu

// Julian Mühlenhaus

// Imad Farhat

**Illustrations**

// Alexandra Huth

Quest is published quarterly by  
Global Underwater Explorers  
18487 High Springs Main Street,  
High Springs, Florida 32643  
[www.GUE.com](http://www.GUE.com)

# IN THIS ISSUE

## 6 QC CORNER // FEEDBACK

Every GUE course concludes with a feedback session. Trainees also give verbal and written feedback to the instructor and agency about their experience. Why is this so important for the quality assurance process?

## 12 REC 1 // DIVING'S BEST KEPT SECRET?

In this exclusive dive into the recreational diving space, German diver Oliver Ober takes us along on his personal odyssey to become a GUE Recreational Diver 1 instructor (and make it a viable business).

## 22 CORAL SOUL // CITIZEN SCIENCE IN SPAIN

The Deep Core Project in Punta de la Mona, Spain, led by Coral Soul, aims to conserve the threatened cold-water coral *Dendrophyllia ramea*, emphasizing the need for active intervention to protect the local marine ecosystem from human-induced damage.

## 34 ALTERNATIVE CCR CONFIGURATIONS

In specific scenarios, the JJ-CCR encounters certain limitations, and a more streamlined and flexible configuration can be a solution. Kirill Egorov shares his experiences with sidemount rebreathers.

## 44 PORTFOLIO // BRANDI MUELLER

Obsessed with the ocean from a young age, Brandi has always wanted to show everyone what she sees underwater—be it a tiny nudibranch or the inside of a WWII wreck.

## 50 UNDERWATER COMMUNICATION PART 1

Effective underwater communication is crucial for divers, as it enables the clear and concise exchange of information, reinforcing team coordination and goal achievement during dives.

## 60 CAVE DIVING // EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Diving training focuses on emergency preparedness due to potential issues like equipment malfunctions or a lost buddy, especially in cave diving where no direct route to the surface exists. This comprehensive training ensures safety and success in such challenging environments.

12



6



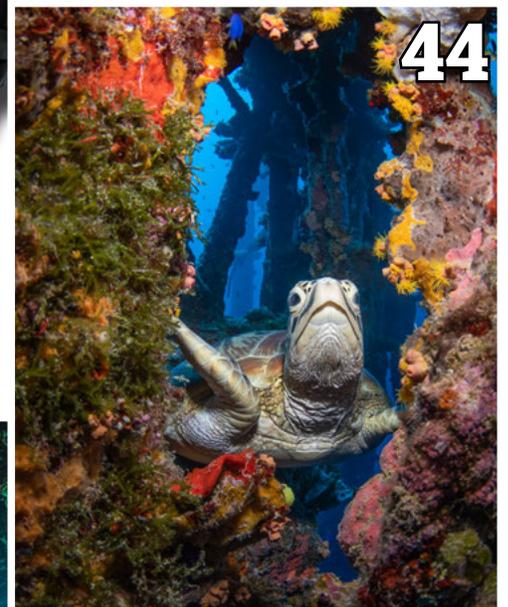
22



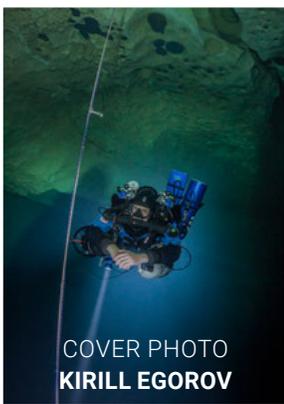
34



50



44



COVER PHOTO  
KIRILL EGOROV



60

# QC CORNER

# FEEDBACK

TEXT BRAD BESKIN // PHOTOS BORI BENNETT

Every GUE course ends with feedback. The instructor debriefs the trainee by identifying the improvements gleaned over the course, along with opportunities for continued improvement (either toward the next level of certification or before attempting the course again). Similarly, each GUE trainee has the opportunity to provide verbal and written feedback to both the instructor and agency about their course and progression.

**I**'ve told you previously that I read each bit of substantive feedback GUE trainees provide about our instructors and courses. This Quality Control (or "QC") data indicates key trends, which I believe to be basic success factors for any given course. While GUE Standards outline the basic requirements for both trainees and instructors—i.e., the minimum threshold for "quality"—these trends are what differentiate an exemplary experience for a trainee from one that could use improvement. This insight is essential. Its utility from a corrective point of view is obvious. But we also focus heavily on the positive indicators in the QC data in our attempt to harness our own success factors and propagate them. This is a promise I made to GUE and our instructors when I assumed this role, and we are expanding the QC footprint to emphasize that function.

## **Boogeyman function**

Yes, I am acknowledging imperfection on our part. To wit, not every course goes according to expectation. When feedback indicates a less than stellar experience for a trainee, the QC department tries to identify why. It may boil down to a lack of congruence between trainee and instructor personalities. It may owe to misaligned expectations, distractions on either side of the equation (or both), or even a personal misunderstanding. We then work with our instructors to galvanize these learning opportunities into plans for improvement—coaching, development, mentorship, etc.

It is rare that a course presents no opportunity for improvement. I'm confident I could debrief each trainee and tease out some aspect ripe for coaching, development, or mentorship. These are not failures; rather, they are inherent to the human condition—a recognition that even our

Communication is essential to a stellar trainee experience. Instructors must communicate clearly before, during, and after the course.



PHOTO BORI BENNETT



most masterful instructors can still hone their razor-sharp craft.

And, fortunately, it is even more rare that a substantial and material violation of GUE Standards occurs such that our disciplinary process is invoked and sanctions issued (what one ScubaBoard user recently referred to as our “boogeyman” function). While I’ll confess the name makes me chuckle, it is my least favorite part of the job.

So, what are these positive trends that make for an outstanding GUE course? Perhaps it is finally time for this QC Corner to talk about QC? None of you wants to look at graphs or trend-lines, so I have attempted to distill the data into a few key narrative themes. I have highlighted these themes with real, positive feedback from actual GUE trainees, scrubbed for anonymity as to both trainee and instructor. Emphasis is mine unless otherwise stated.

### **Organization and efficiency**

These aspects are paramount to a first-rate course and the second most common source of constructive feedback. Instructors must use trainee time wisely and maximize quality training time, especially when they expect rigid punctuality and efficiency from their trainees. Our courses are expensive, and they often require trainees to take days away from work and family. Therefore, trainees do not tolerate wasted time on forms that could be handled in advance, poorly planned logistics, and other unnecessary wastes of time.

*“...The entire organization of the course has been spectacular, with respect to days, number of dives, theory class, field drills. Along with my fundamental course, these have been the most well-organized courses I have taken. I can only have positive comments to describe this course and the very high level of my instructor, who has played a formidable role throughout the entire process. In summary, with GUE Cave I have had the opportunity to enjoy the highest level training in my career as an instructor.”*

**GUE Cave 1 trainee**

Communication is equally essential to a stellar trainee experience. Instructors must communicate before, during, and after the course. This is both, by far, the most pivotal quality I see throughout student feedback as well as the most common cause of complaints. Instructors who communicate clearly, often, and thoroughly generate more positive feedback than those who do not and, by that indicator, produce more satisfied trainees. Instructors who embrace standardized pre-course communications about logistics and expectations tend to end the course with more satisfied students. And, when a provisional or incomplete becomes necessary, it is my observation that instructors who have over-communicated can deliver these less desirable outcomes to students who understand without indignation why they received them.

*“Great class, great learning environment, [Instructor] effectively communicated the material and the requirements. [He/she] worked with the students to achieve the standard and explained the why’s and how’s. Highly recommend.”*

**GUE Fundamentals trainee**

*“...[Instructor] was an excellent instructor for my GUE Fundamentals Course. [Instructor] was professional, kind and respectful at all times, he/she clearly explained every aspect of the course and fostered a very positive learning environment. [Instructor’s] extensive knowledge and experience ensured that I was safely executing the learning objectives (both in the water and on land) and [he/she] was instrumental in my progress throughout the course.”*

**GUE Fundamentals trainee**

### **Professionalism**

This is a tricky quality to ascertain. It is a catch-all for many other qualities and a demonstration of synergy between them. But, nevertheless, our trainees identify it as an important part of their satisfaction.

Interestingly, many of our first-time trainees note how surprised they are by our instructors’ professionalism. While I would hope our repu-

Instructors who communicate clearly, often, and thoroughly generate more positive feedback than those who do not.



PHOTO BORI BENNETT

tation would precede us, I nevertheless appreciate the fact that our instructors create this wow factor for those engaging with GUE for the first time.

Our trainees equate professionalism with humility—passion bridled by compassion—and demonstrable mutual respect. No one wants to spend the week with a self-indulgent walking ego. Locker room banter is more often a knock on professionalism than an enhancement. War stories must align with the trainee’s aspirations.

*“...[Instructor] is by far one of the best instructors that I’ve had a chance to meet in my entire diving career. Despite the fact that [he/she] has an amazing set of skills and extensive experience, [Instructor] is humble and understanding for the students. [Instructor] not only shared knowledge and skills required for the course itself but found extra time to focus on skills that will be useful for the next classes I plan to take. After the class, [Instruc-*

*tor] shared an extensive set of additional materials which should support me on my way to Excellence. Definitely I will recommend [Instructor] and [his/her] classes to other divers.”*  
**GUE Cave 1 trainee**

*“...In spite of [his/her] extensive experience and knowledge, [Instructor] is humble and is adept at communicating complex ideas about diving and diving-related techniques to [his/her] students.”*  
**-GUE Sidemount Trainee**

Criticism must be constructive and focused. The trainee should leave the class feeling that the instructor carved a path for them toward those aspirations.

*“...I particularly appreciated the time [Instructor] took at the beginning of the course to discuss my expectations and goals, and then even more importantly [he/she] helped me* ▶▶

*work directly towards those goals throughout the course. To end the course we again discussed my goals once more during a feedback session and during which [instructor] requested any feedback I have for him."*

**GUE Fundamentals trainee**

## **Feedback matters**

Of course, not every student finds the time to provide substantive feedback for our instructors. We get a lot of five-star reviews without any feedback. We also get some data-driven complaints without any substantiation. These are less helpful to us, and we are working on revising the mechanism to produce more substantive data to help our instructors grow.

If you are a trainee, please take the time to provide meaningful written feedback to your instructor and to GUE. We read it, we take it seriously, and we cannot do without it. We need to know where our instructors succeed and where they can grow.

If you are an instructor, you should be asking your trainees to provide this feedback to you, and you need to honor it with respect and a commitment to applying it. Finally, if you are an instructor who wants their feedback to sound more like the examples above, the QC department is at your service. Let's talk about coaching, development, and mentorship opportunities.

I'll leave you with one of my favorite bits of trainee feedback in recent months:

*"From the outset, it was clear that [Instructor] was not only deeply knowledgeable but also genuinely passionate about diving, teaching, and*

*GUE. [Instructor] struck the perfect balance between being supportive and demanding, pushing us to exceed our own expectations while ensuring we always felt safe and confident in our abilities. [Instructor's] feedback both on land and in the water as well as the use of videos during our dive debriefs was hugely helpful. It was specific and clear, which enabled us to improve our skills by leaps and bounds in a relatively short period. [Instructor] was personable and funny, making this rigorous course more enjoyable. Yet, when the situation called for it, [Instructor] was appropriately strict, reminding us of the importance of safety and precision in GUE diving. It was clear he/she took our development and GUE standards seriously. What truly set this experience apart was [Instructor's] extraordinary patience, particularly during moments when I was struggling and becoming increasingly frustrated with myself. [Instructor] provided the reassurance and guidance I needed to overcome those hurdles, never once making me feel inadequate or rushed. Thanks to [Instructor's] expert instruction, support, and guidance, I became a significantly better diver and feel so much more confident in my and my teammate's abilities. We felt welcome and comfortable throughout the course, and despite how challenging it was, we thoroughly enjoyed the course. I cannot recommend this instructor highly enough. [Instructor's] dedication to his/her students, GUE, and diving is truly exceptional."*

**GUE Fundamentals trainee**

I cannot convey the pride with which I read feedback like this. This is our commitment to excellence at work. ■



**Brad Beskin**

Brad Beskin has been diving actively for approximately 29 years. He first became involved with GUE by taking Fundamentals in 2001, and then Cave 1 with Tamara Kendel in 2003. He is now a proud GUE DPV Cave diver and is actively working his way through

GUE's technical curriculum. When he is not diving, he earns his living as a civil litigator in Austin, Texas, and he also finds time to act as Director of Quality Control and the Chair of the Quality Control Board for Global Underwater Explorers.

# GUE TECH 1

## A GIANT LEAP FORWARD

Read more about  
the GUE Tech 1 course  
and see scheduled  
classes on  
[www.gue.com](http://www.gue.com)

### THE GUE TECHNICAL DIVER LEVEL 1 COURSE

- Cultivates, integrates, and expands essential skills required for safe technical diving
- Teaches you how to prevent, identify, and resolve problems
- Addresses the potential failures associated with twinsets
- Introduces accelerated decompression strategies, single stage diving, and the use of helium to minimize narcosis

**Is GUE Recreational Diver 1 the best-kept secret in diving? In this exclusive dive into the recreational diving space, German diver Oliver Ober takes us along on his personal odyssey to become a GUE Recreational Diver 1 instructor (and make it a viable business). This article inspires future dive professionals to embark on the journey with a clear vision. From equipment essentials to navigating logistical challenges, discover why GUE courses offer some of the most rewarding experiences for divers.**

TEXT **OLIVER OBER**

PHOTOS **SEAN ROMANOWSKI**



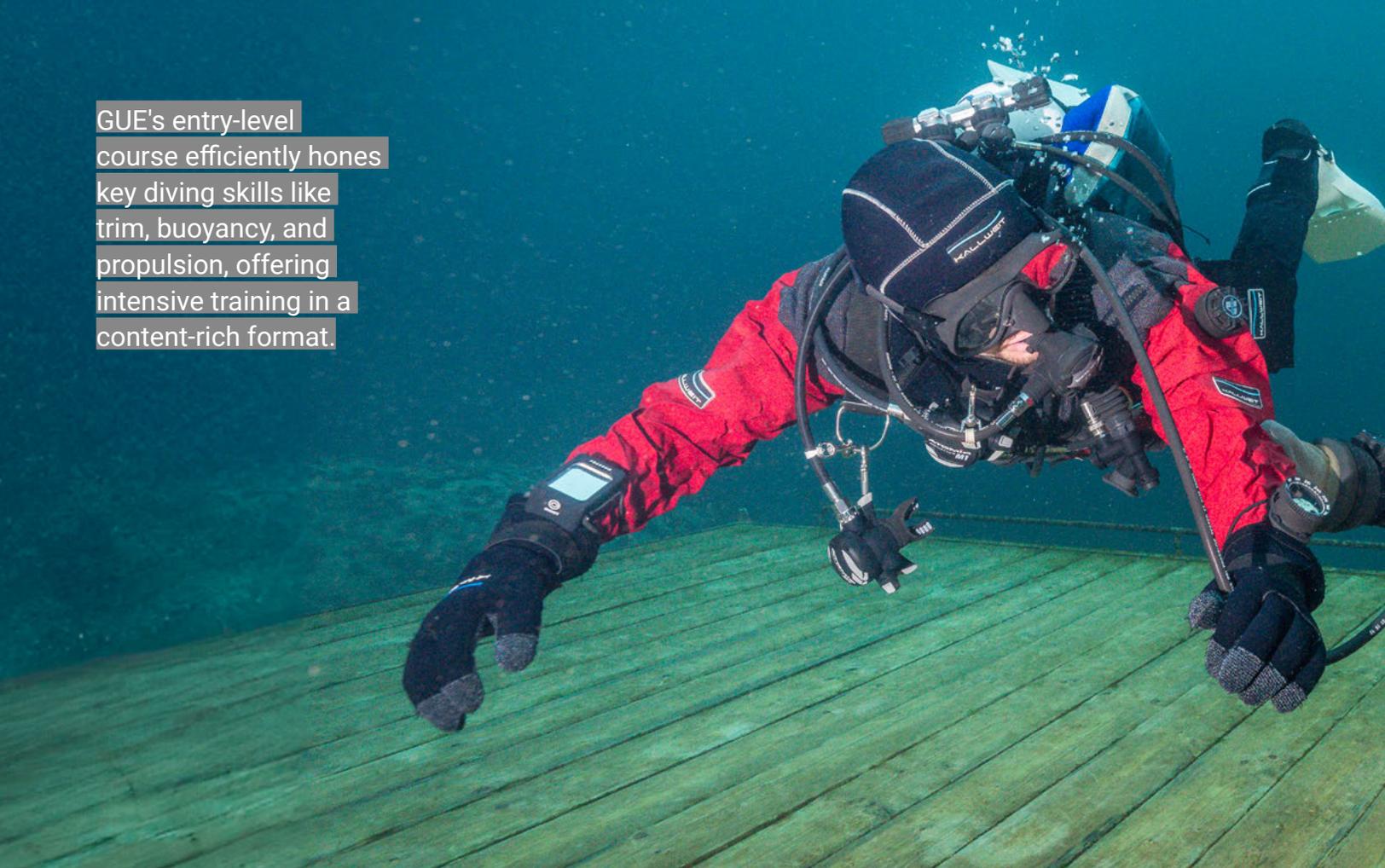
Oliver often needs to be inventive with his mobile dive center approach. Benches serve excellently for practicing finning techniques during dry runs.

# RECREATIONAL DIVERSITY

*- The best kept secret  
in the diving world?*



GUE's entry-level course efficiently hones key diving skills like trim, buoyancy, and propulsion, offering intensive training in a content-rich format.



**T**he idea for this article stems from the invaluable advice and encouragement of my friend and mentor, a GUE instructor. It narrates my personal journey and the challenges I encountered en route to becoming a GUE Recreational Diver 1 instructor. It does not pretend to offer a definitive roadmap to instructor success but rather serves as my own personal reminder to commence your journey with a clear vision of your ultimate goal. I strongly advocate for beginning with the end in mind, the motto for the Rec 1 course.

My journey began twelve years ago when I started my Open Water Scuba Instructor (OWSI) training at a small, quiet dive center at a large German lake. A three-month internship before my instructor course began was mandatory. Here, I got to know the daily routine of a professional diving center and what efficient logistics look like in the diving industry: I learned to juggle tanks, that the sizes of diving suits usually do not match normal clothing sizes of a diver, and

that a diver's most individual piece of equipment is their mask. Each weekend, I learned that no matter how much I prepared for the diving guests, I always experienced a new level of unpredictability. That was fun.

### **Don't dig too deep into the past**

Almost a decade and many training experiences later, I became acquainted with the Global Underwater Explorers recreational diver training programs. It became a goal of mine to pursue an instructor rating, and so I began the process of GUE instructor development. First, an internship with passive observation of a course, then the instructor training course (ITC), then participation as an intern with live students during real GUE Fundamentals courses, and, in between, lots of video theory sessions to develop my teaching and presentation skills.

There are two paths to becoming a GUE instructor—the recreational or Fundamentals path. I made a conscious decision to take the Recreational Diver 1 & 2 instructor path.



PHOTO SEAN ROMANOWSKI

GUE's entry-level course is efficiently tailored to hone essential skills, and it is filled with valuable content. It provides students enough time for intensive training in trim, buoyancy, propulsion, and procedures. In my opinion, it's a true gem in the diving world. Unfortunately, the diving community is underexposed to the Recreational Diver 1 course. Most beginning divers are unaware of its existence, and only a few discover it via thorough research online or recommendations from active, ambitious divers; many Rec 1 participants want to start over as open water divers after a modest beginning in diving life.

It felt like there were already a lot of GUE Fundamentals instructors in Germany; when I looked at the course calendar, there were plenty of Fundamentals classes already scheduled. But Recreational Diver 1 and 2 courses were almost not represented at all. And I didn't even have to limit the search filter to Germany.

Ever since I started instructing beginners, I've cherished the gleaming, radiant eyes of students after their first open water dive, no matter how

poor the visibility was in a German lake. This underwater world, previously known to them only from the surface or from stories from other divers, became their new reality. I've come to learn that these Rec 1 graduates often become the better divers. A diver who never learned to kneel during procedures or to manage stress in their entry-level diver course will never do it unconsciously in real situations. Quite logical, isn't it?

### **Big business**

The day of my instructor evaluation (IE) for Rec 1 came quickly. After the stress of preparing for the IE and the joy of passing, a new challenge loomed: How to make my instructor business work.

I was not affiliated with any dive centers as an instructor, nor did I know more than a few dive center managers—and they were scattered around the world.

After approaching a few local diving centers in my area, it became clear that they all appreciated the quality of education provided



by GUE and its instructors. However, when it came to potential new customers in the form of novice divers, the previously enthusiastic and discussed collaboration seemed to be slightly disillusioned again. What now?

I had to come up with a concept that met the requirements of a GUE instructor willing to travel while also wanting a certain independence from other diving centers. My concept was based on the idea of a mobile diving center. This way, I could offer and conduct Rec 1 courses nationally at any time. I was independent of the logistics of traditional diving centers and could keep costs down.

## World Wide Web

Any service must be backed up by a good website nowadays. As I built my website, I considered what was important to me. Since each course contains many details that can make a difference, I placed great emphasis on a detailed description of the content, procedures, objectives, and expectations.

Hiring a professional web design company wasn't really financially feasible, so I started by researching which platform or provider would be most beneficial to me. Frankly, up to this point, I had no idea how to create something like this. After consulting with my IT friends, I opted for an open and expandable system without a website builder. After numerous YouTube tutorials on Wordpress, themes, backups, data protection regulations, long nights, and lots of coffee, my website was online six weeks later.

## Equipment

Proud of my digital product, I kept my momentum. I made a plan of the equipment I needed as an instructor for beginners. Where could I easily obtain rental equipment under the premise of "quality in education and equipment?" Dive centers were enthusiastic at the prospect of renting equipment to my students.

So, I could borrow everything made of neoprene from the nearest dive center for upcoming students. Since I have a friend in my circle who is the CEO of a drysuit manufacturer, I could also rent those at a fair price.

Nevertheless, renting GUE standard equipment was the biggest challenge. I solved this quite easily by investing in it myself. Single tanks, more doubles, backplates both large and small with single tank adapters, contents of drysuit pockets, you name it. As a long-time technical diver, I only had to replenish my own stock of diving equipment.

The goal was always to provide complete, premium-quality rental equipment kits for two divers. This wasn't just for Rec 1 training, but also for Discover Scuba Diving programs. I also wanted some variety in the manufacturers of

the various equipment items for demonstration. The beginner diver should have a precise image of very good equipment according to GUE standards after Rec 1. Thus, the basement of my apartment quickly turned into my own mini GUE dive center.

When it comes to personal equipment for the new-to-diving Rec 1 students, I set the standard for very close supervision and consultation. To avoid making a wrong

purchase, I always emphasize the possibility of getting to know and understand dive equipment with my rental materials during the course.

Yet, who doesn't know this feeling? When someone is eager, they want to have their own equipment that they can use during the course. A Rec 1 student consciously chooses a Rec 1, so they usually also understand the costs of good equipment. Most students gladly accept my rental offer but still need to buy some things beforehand. This includes the ABC equipment with two masks, solid fins with booties, a snorkel, and wetnotes (as a lifelong reference after GUE courses). The book *Fundamentals of Better Diving* is also always suggested as preparation for Rec 1.

**“I had to come up with a concept that met the requirements of a GUE instructor willing to travel while also wanting a certain independence from other diving centers.”**

PHOTO SEAN ROMANOWSKI



The Rec 1 graduates, having experienced the German lake's underwater world previously known only through surface views and tales, often emerge as superior divers.

PHOTO SEAN ROMANOWSKI





---

**“ I had to come up with a concept that met the requirements of a GUE instructor willing to travel while also wanting a certain independence from other diving centers. My concept was based on the idea of a mobile diving center.**

---

A diver who never learned to kneel during procedures or to manage stress in their entry-level diver course will never do it unconsciously in real situations. ▶▶

---

**“ Due to my willingness to travel, each course differed in terms of planning, preparation, execution, and follow-up.**

---

The offer to provide equipment advice naturally extends beyond the course with me. From my experience, it is gladly taken advantage of.

### **Training locations**

Every beginner wants to train in water with clear visibility. In Germany, unfortunately, this is only possible in a pool in 99% of cases. Although the term "confined water" allows for some leeway for the first training dives, I wanted to ensure the possibility of initial training in the pool. Now, it should be noted that the vast majority of swimming pools in Germany are publicly owned, and they were simply booked solid by clubs.

Moreover, the pool operators were afraid of the scuba tanks damaging the tiles. Even if I could alleviate these fears, the exorbitant price for renting a pool lane for several hours was not justified. Established diving centers did have access to time slots in public pools, but it was only 1.5 hours per week. Thus, integrating with a dive center for pool training as part of an intensive multi-day training concept was not feasible.

There are indoor dive pools scattered across Germany. These ultimately became the solution for the beginning training sessions.

Fortunately, sufficient breathing gas logistics support the various lakes used for the open water sessions. The good storage capacity of several double 12-liter tanks minimized the need for multiple filling trips. This ensured that we never had any shortages in breathing gas supply, and that we could carry out subsequent dives almost without delay.

The subject of nitrox 32, on the other hand, is a whole different story. Our beloved sport diving breathing gas seems to be as scarce as helium. Although every diving school offers nitrox cer-

tifications in their course programs, the filling facilities themselves are very limited and often require a considerable amount of time and distance. Despite the challenges, at least every Rec 1 course could begin with a nitrox 32 fill. The availability of additional filling gases depended on the presence of a mixed gas filling station.

### **Backup**

A factor that demands attention has to do with spare parts, which are crucial. During the planning phase for Rec 1, I emphasize to the students who bring their own equipment that they should have appropriate spare O-rings for safety, for instance. With my rental gear, I make sure to have the necessary spare parts on hand. When it comes to regulators, I err on the side of caution and carry a backup first and second stage each.

My spare parts kit includes seal tape, a dry-suit repair kit, O-rings, corresponding LP and HP rubber hoses for the GUE configuration, bungee cords, technical greases, screws, and nuts. A well-organized toolbox with a medium-pressure gauge is also part of the setup.

After conducting several Recreational Diver 1 courses, I can offer a preliminary assessment. Due to my willingness to travel, each course differed in terms of planning, preparation, execution, and follow-up. I constantly had to adjust to students, locations, and logistical challenges. To ensure nothing slipped through the cracks, I developed a checklist in accordance with GUE PLAN. Despite meticulous planning, one must remain adaptable enough to calmly resolve any unexpected issues that arise during the course.

Ultimately, these GUE courses conducted outside of the usual routine proved to be the most enjoyable experiences. ■



**Oliver Ober**

Oliver has been immersed in the world of diving since 2005, captivated by the mysteries beneath the waves. Quickly driven to share his passion, he became a recreational instructor. However, a profound negative experience while diving in a jacket-style configuration initially led him to consider giving up teaching. Yet, fueled by his dedication

to CCR and cave diving, and his perpetual quest for skill development, he encountered the GUE Recreational Diver 1 curriculum during his GUE Fundamentals training. Captivated by the concept of "beginning with the end in mind," he found his path as a GUE instructor.

[www.intoabyss.de](http://www.intoabyss.de)



# GUE PREMIUM DIVE CENTERS

**Area 9 Mastery Diving – Kralendijk, Bonaire**

➔ [www.masterydiving.com](http://www.masterydiving.com)



**Base1 – Sardinia, Italy**

➔ [www.baseone.it](http://www.baseone.it)



**Deep Dive Dubai – Dubai, UAE**

➔ [www.deepdivedubai.com](http://www.deepdivedubai.com)



**Dive Centre Bondi – Bondi, NSW, Australia**

➔ [www.divebondi.com.au](http://www.divebondi.com.au)



**Duikcentrum de Aalscholvers – Tilburg, Netherlands**

➔ [www.aalscholvers.nl](http://www.aalscholvers.nl)



**Eight Diving – Des Moines, WA, USA**

➔ [www.8diving.com](http://www.8diving.com)



**Exploration Diver – Hangzhou, China**

➔ [www.facebook.com/qiandaolake](https://www.facebook.com/qiandaolake)

**Extreme Exposure – High Springs, FL, USA**

➔ [www.extreme-exposure.com](http://www.extreme-exposure.com)



**Islas Hormigas – Cabo de Palos, Spain**

➔ [www.islashormigas.com](http://www.islashormigas.com)



**Living Oceans – Singapore**

➔ [www.livingoceans.com.sg](http://www.livingoceans.com.sg)



**Scuba Academie – Vinkeveen, Netherlands**

➔ [www.scuba-academie.nl](http://www.scuba-academie.nl)



**Tech Korea – Incheon, South Korea**

➔ [www.divetechkorea.com](http://www.divetechkorea.com)



## Third Dimension Diving – Tulum, Q. Roo, Mexico

➔ [www.thirddimensiondiving.com](http://www.thirddimensiondiving.com)



## Zen Dive Co – Los Angeles, USA

➔ [www.zendive.com](http://www.zendive.com)

zen dive co.

## Zero Gravity – Quintana Roo, Mexico

➔ [www.zerogravity.com.mx](http://www.zerogravity.com.mx)



# GUE DIVE CENTERS

**Buddy Dive Resort – Bonaire**

➔ [www.buddydive.com](http://www.buddydive.com)



**Dive Alaska – Anchorage, AK, USA**

➔ [www.divealaska.net](http://www.divealaska.net)



**Faszination-Tauchsport – Sauerlach, Germany**

➔ [www.faszination-tauchsport.de](http://www.faszination-tauchsport.de)



**KrakenDive – Tossa de Mar, Spain**

➔ [www.krakendive.com](http://www.krakendive.com)



**Living Oceans Malaysia – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

➔ [www.livingoceans.com.my](http://www.livingoceans.com.my)



**Moby Tek Dive Center – Pahang, Malaysia**

➔ [www.moby-tek.com](http://www.moby-tek.com)



**Paragon Dive Group – Arizona, USA**

➔ [www.paragondivestore.com](http://www.paragondivestore.com)



**Plongée Nautilus – Quebec City, QC, Canada**

➔ [www.plongeenautilus.com](http://www.plongeenautilus.com)



**Scuba Adventures – Plano, TX, USA**

➔ [www.scubaadventures.com](http://www.scubaadventures.com)



**Scuba Seekers – Dahab, Egypt**

➔ [www.scubaseekers.com](http://www.scubaseekers.com)



**Tauchservice Münster – Münster, Germany**

➔ [www.tauchservice.info](http://www.tauchservice.info)



## Tech Asia – Puerto Galera, Philippines

➔ [www.techasia.ph](http://www.techasia.ph)



## Unique Diving Center – Shanghai, China

➔ [www.uniquediving.cn](http://www.uniquediving.cn)



# SUPPORT GUE

Become a member today and get full access to the rest of Quest!

Sign up at [www.gue.com/membership](http://www.gue.com/membership)

Additional benefits include:

	Conservation \$39	Silver \$150 \$200+ in perks	Gold \$350 \$600+ in perks	Platinum \$1,000 \$1200+ in perks
Limited edition Platinum member-only jacket				✓
Free admission to the biennial GUE Conference for each year of membership				✓
Free access to GUE PDF books; discount on GUE's DecoPlanner 4 software			50%	FREE!
Free registration for all GUE classes for the duration of your membership (intern registrations not included)			*Limit Two	✓
Discount on GUE.tv, GUE's video learning site designed to educate and inspire divers of all training levels		50% OFF \$150 Value	FREE! \$300 Value	FREE! \$300 Value
Personalized GUE gear stickers		5 Small 5 Large	10 Small 10 Large	20 Small 20 Large
Member-exclusive mask strap with monochrome GUE logo		✓	✓	✓
Free high-quality, annual member t-shirt; receive a new shirt with every renewal!		✓	✓	✓
Free access to all current GUE course presentation materials (PDFs)		✓	✓	✓
Your membership helps support conservation initiatives, including Project Baseline	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discount on GUE Store purchases	5%	10%	15%	25%
Quest PDF: GUE's quarterly online journal	Quest	Quest	Quest	Quest
Subscription to GUE's private Quest mailing list	✉	✉	✉	✉
Access to GUE training supplements and procedural manuals	✓	✓	✓	✓