

CAVES IN BRAZIL

– So much to explore, too little time

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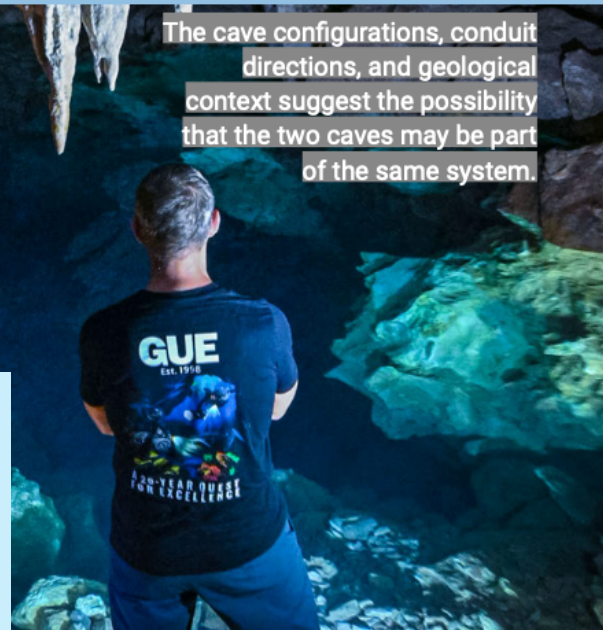


FACT FILE // THE REGION

BRAZIL



Nobres is located in the state of Mato Grosso, the mid-western area of Brazil, in the transition between two biomes, the Amazon rainforest and the Brazilian savanna ("cerrado"). The area offers all sorts of options for nature lovers, from crystal clear rivers to beautifully sculpted limestone mountains. Nature is exuberant, making the place a great destination for wildlife observation. It is located approximately three hours from the closest airport, which is in the city of Cuiabá.



The cave configurations, conduit directions, and geological context suggest the possibility that the two caves may be part of the same system.

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PROJECT SUMMARY BRIEF:

The 2022 planning stage: research permits were acquired with the collaboration of São Paulo's University's Geology Department, and the logistical preparations ensued: to move many thousands of kilos of equipment halfway across the country.

The May 2023 journey: a team of 4 divers, one archaeologist, one geologist, one filmmaker, two support members, and one local guide made the journey to Mato Grosso (for some, a drive of 2200 kilometers). The goal, to explore the caves located in the Gruta Azul State Park – mainly 'Dolina do Pai João' and 'Dolina do João Terêncio'.

The first dives: The first day of diving was used to bring the equipment closer to the entrance of the cave, and effort that required a dozen people to make multiple trips from the farm, where the trucks with the local gear were parked. Dives were long, followed by many hours of decompression. Most of the equipment was left at the cave entrance, making the trek back much easier. Although we are still in the early stages of exploration, it is speculated that; due to the configuration of the two caves, they could be part of the same system (even though they are separated by a distance of 7 kilometers) of the same system. Additional exploration is needed to confirm or deny this connection.

CONTINGENCY:

Later that night, we realised that survey data from Pai João was missing, and adjusted the plan to return the next day. The plan was simple: carry the equipment through the jungle as fast as we could, lower the gear down with ropes, dive, retrieve everything and be back at the farm before sunset. This time limit was imposed because we got lost enough times even during the day.