

Mike Ball Expeditions

Your connection to the Great Barrier Reef—and beyond

Over the past 25 years, Mike Ball has developed his dreams and ideas into Australia's largest and most successful dive operation. Mike's live-aboards and PADI 5-Star facility are no strangers to the *RSD* Readers' Choice Awards. Over the past three years they've topped the charts in a variety of "best" categories: top dive experiences worldwide, dive staff, boats, most environmentally sensitive, value for diving dollar—even food.

tiger sharks... we encountered sea snakes, napoleon wrasse, eagle rays, groper, turtles, barracuda, a huge school of bat fish. None of the books or videos I had seen prepared me for the spectacle of the *Yongala* Wreck."

Travel 100 miles beyond the Barrier Reef into the Coral Sea for spectacular pinnacles and bottomless walls with 150-foot visibility. Witness exciting shark action at Scuba Zoo.

layer of reef fish. Large predators cruise—barracuda, jacks, tuna and sharks. All the niches filled to overflowing, textbook reefs, unsullied and largely unexplored. WWII relics: shipwrecks, B-17 Flying Fortresses and P-38 Lightnings. Night dive with *Nautilus*. The crew lures the chambered creatures from as deep as 3000 feet. Take impressive photos as they sink back to the depths.

Mike Ball goes the extra mile—or kilometer—for divers. On his three catamarans, the twin-hull design means smooth rides and safe, stable dive platforms. Divers appreciate other aspects: a crew-to-guest ratio of one-to-three for personal service. Spacious air-conditioned cabins, lounges and bars. A daily program of special dives, free reef ecology/biology courses, and entertainment. Large screens for viewing underwater video. Onboard E-6 film processing. Sumptuous Australian and vegetarian cuisine. Discovery Adventures packed with diving, whitewater rafting, and a low-altitude flight to Lizard Island with stunning vistas of endless reefs. Land and shipboard options for beginner and continuing PADI diver education.

Spoilsport is the flagship of Mike Ball's fleet of model live-aboards.



No other Australian dive operator matches the range of Mike Ball Expeditions. The live-aboards cruise in and beyond the Great Barrier Reef and north to remote locations in the Coral Sea and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Mike's trademark trips are as popular as ever, especially the seven-day *Spoilsport* cruises to *Yongala* Wreck and the Coral Sea. Raved one diver: "The *Yongala* was without doubt the best dive of our lives... As well as the

In 1996, Mike Ball acquired the *Telita*, increasing his fleet to four boats. The 60-foot, ten-passenger vessel is considered the "First Lady" among PNG live-aboards. Crafted from native hardwoods, she's a pure expression of class and character.

Diving PNG means reefs, coral gardens, walls, pinnacles and a dizzying host of species found nowhere else. Pristine, untouched dive sites remain as they have for millennia, bursting with obscene amounts of life: layer upon confetti

BOOK IT ▶ Mike Ball Expeditions range from two to thirteen days with a wide variety of itineraries, departure dates and air connections. Six-day Coral Sea/*Yongala* cruise, with unlimited diving, \$1511 to \$2069 through June '97. Ten-day *Telita* cruise PNG, ten days diving, \$3249 until end-December '97. From North America, contact Arizona, phone 800(952)-4319 or 1-888-MIKE-BALL, fax (520) 556-9598; e-mail: OzDive@aol.com Australia office: phone 61-77-723022; e-mail: mike.ball@t140.aone.net.au World Wide Web: www.infoweb.com.au/mike_ball

— Text by Rob Curran