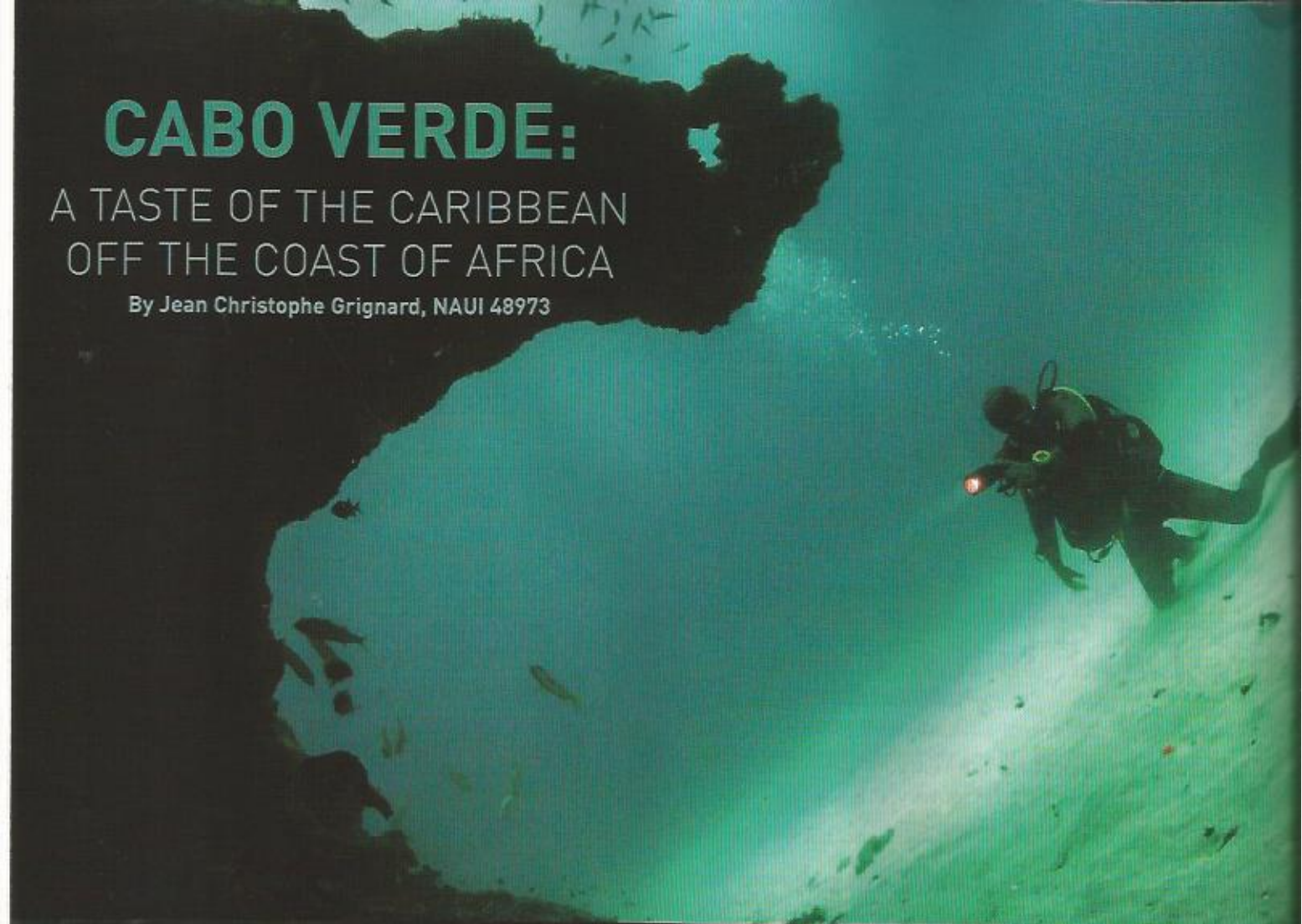


CABO VERDE:

A TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN
OFF THE COAST OF AFRICA

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According to legend, when God finished with the creation of the world, he had some sand and rocks left that he threw into the Atlantic Ocean and so were created the islands of Cabo Verde. But this legend does not explain the various and numerous downfalls of the islands' history. While walking on the sandy beaches, diving into the crystal clear water, or tasting a freshly fished lobster, we tourists couldn't imagine the sufferings of these pieces of land until Pedro, an ex-Portuguese sailor and now dive instructor on the island of Sal, explained to us the history of Cabo Verde.

The islands were first recorded in the time of Roman Emperor Claudius, but until 1456, there was no known activity there. In 1460, Diogo Gomes was sent on an African voyage by Prince Henry the Navigator and on his return rediscovered the islands. After Henry's death, the islands were visited by Diogo Afonso who named each island he found after the saint for the day of discovery: São Nicolau on the 6th of December, Santa Luzia on the 13th....

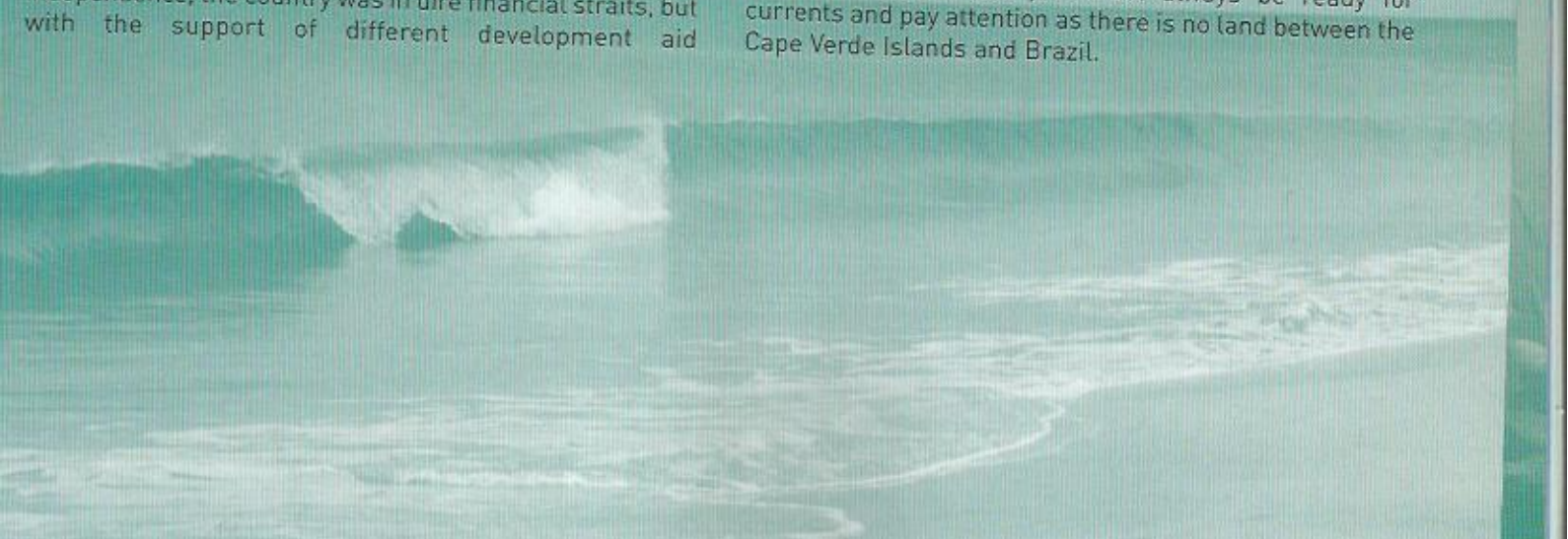
In 1462, the first European settlement city in the tropics was founded at Cidade Velha on Santiago. The city, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site, quickly expanded to become the capital. In the 16th century, Cabo Verde became an important waypoint for ships involved in the thriving slave trade with the Americas. The islands grew prosperous and were frequently attacked by pirates.

In 1951, Portugal changed the status of Cabo Verde from a colony to an overseas province. But one year after the 1974 revolution in Portugal, the Republica Cabo Verde was born and became independent on 5th July 1975. The islands have few natural resources, and following independence, the country was in dire financial straits, but with the support of different development aid

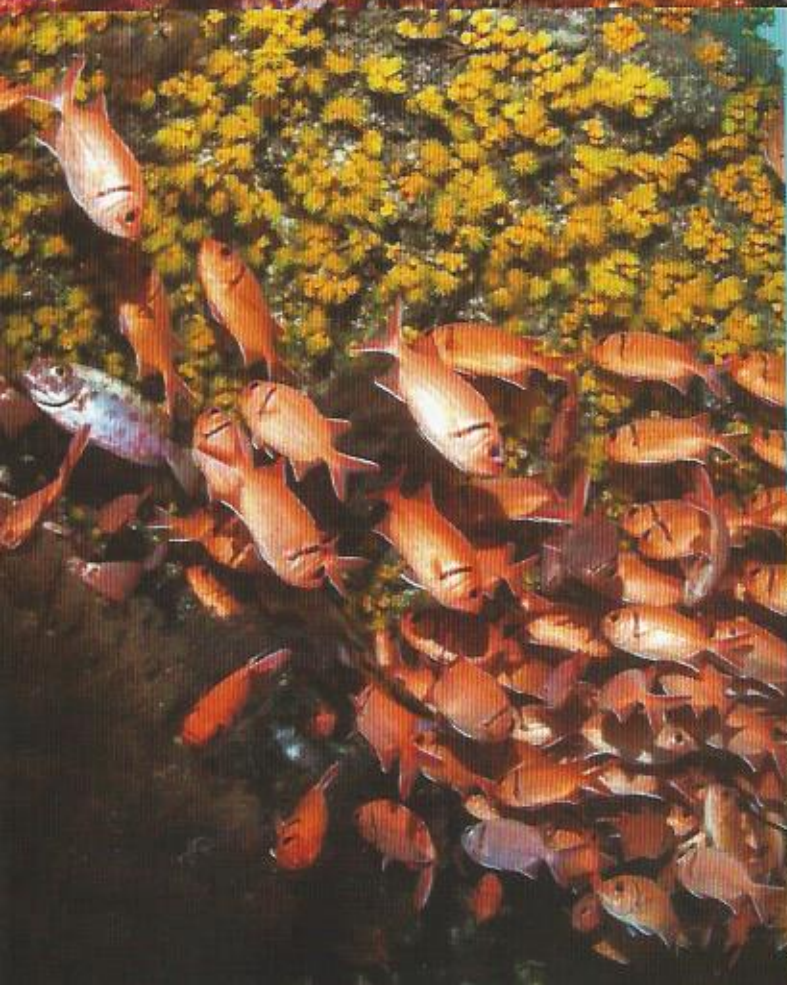
organizations the country has rebuilt and turned its fortunes around. It now has a significant tourist industry with over half a million visitors in 2013.

DIVING.

It is hard to decide on which island(s) to go when visiting Cabo Verde. But for scuba diving the best choice is Sal. The beaches are picture perfect; the water is clear, warm, and full of corals and marine life with reefs, volcanic caves, and wrecks to explore; and its temperature varies from 22 to 28 °C (71 to 82 °F). The massive array of fish includes shoals of rockfish, bream, dolphins, turtles, and sharks. Catsharks are frequently seen, and with some luck you can also observe tiger, lemon, hammerhead, and mako sharks. Five species of turtles can be seen, and loggerhead turtles come ashore to lay their eggs each year from June to November. An NGO called SOS Tartarugas is working on the protection of these nesting turtles and their habitat. Last but not least, while underwater, you may have the chance to hear humpbacks singing. The best time of the year for diving conditions is April to October, but you must always be ready for currents and pay attention as there is no land between the Cape Verde Islands and Brazil.



• Clockwise from top: There are many opportunities to explore • Morays of all sizes and colors occupy the wrecks and reefs
• Arrow crabs are easy to find • Trumpetfish shelter in the caves.



WRECK DIVING.

Around the island of Sal and especially near the town of Santa Maria, wrecks are younger and in better condition and full of life. The *Santo Antao* is a small trawler, 45 meters (148 ft) long. She sank in 1966 after running aground on rocks close to shore and now lies portside down on a sandy bottom at a depth of 12 meters (40 ft). The ship is broken into three parts. The former cargo hold has been completely destroyed, but the bow and stern are in good condition. The *Santo Antao* is now home for a multitude of fish. Schools of soldierfish and grunts guard their precious house reef. Morays of all sizes and colors occupy any gaps the wreck has. Colorful nudibranchs are everywhere, and pufferfish swim around the divers in a kind of classical ballet.

This wreck is suitable for divers of all levels. Due to the shallow depth and depending on the weather, the visibility can quickly change from 5 to 30 meters (16 to 98 ft).

Another interesting wreck is the *Kwarcit*. Also known as the *Boris*. This old Russian fishing boat of 50 meters (134 ft) used to carry illegal immigrants from Senegal to the Canary Islands. On one trip in January 2006, her engine was damaged as she left the island of Sal, and she was towed into the port. She proved to be impossible to repair, so the Harbor Patrol decided to sink her in order to create an artificial reef. At a depth of 28 meters (90 ft), she sits upright on her keel, fully intact. The holds and bridge can be easily accessed. Even though the *Kwarcit* is one of the youngest wrecks around Sal Island, she is already covered by corals, especially by the magnificent sunset cup corals on the bow. She is also a comfortable home for numerous species, like slipper and rock lobsters, scorpionfish, and stingrays but she also has nudibranchs and fireworms to please macro photographers. In spite of the current that can sometimes be a little strong, this wreck is accessible to all divers.

Reef Diving

In the Cabo Verde waters, you will see volcanic lava shoals falling sheer away to reveal caves and cracks full of tropical fish, as for example in Cavala. This is a fantastic wall dive that starts at 28 meters (91 ft) and falls down to 65 meters (213 ft). There you can meet every kind of pelagic fish.

At 4 km (2.5 miles) off the island of Sal, Choclassa deep allows a variety of dives. Starting at 14 meters (45 ft), the site drops off to over 300 meters (1000 ft). Tuna, marlin, morays, turtles, lobsters, stingrays, mantas, many other pelagic fish, and sometimes whale sharks can be seen.

The most popular dive site near Santa Maria is Tres Grottes (Three Caves). You can dive there by day or night after a boat trip of 15 minutes. The maximum depth is 18 meters (59 ft). These three easily accessible, wide open caverns are full of marine life, and you will possibly come across lobsters and turtles within.

In the North of the island, near Buracona you can swim through caves and overhangs at 22 meters (72 ft). As they are made out of black basalt, the light effects are exceptional. And at Regona, you can discover caverns connected to one another and open to the sea.

So Cabo Verde waters and especially those around Sal have something for every diver, beginner and advanced. Photographers and videographers have the opportunity to shoot many different species ranging from nudibranchs to whales. Non-divers will also find pleasure in walking on the white sandy beaches, discovering the salt marsh, or shopping in the numerous craft shops. Both will spend the evening in a local restaurant, dining on fresh tuna or lobster.

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