

## John Melendres Shares His Expertise

Contributed by Yan Redoble  
Wednesday, 25 April 2007

Read snippets of wisdom and valuable pieces of advice from PADI instructor John Melendres, a diving enthusiast and professional diver with over ten years of experience.

### Getting Started:

You start by looking for a reputable dive center or an instructor. Choosing the right instructor will make the difference. When it comes to diver education, cheap course fees are always not the best. As they say, you get what you pay for. Consult your diver friends, and compare."

### Best Diving Spots in Cebu:

Cebu will never be short of dive spots. You have Mactan island, Talima in Olango island, Hilutungan and Nalusuan beside Olango, Pescador island in Moalboal, and Malapascua island for its thresher sharks! These are nice sites because of the variety of marine life that exist in these spots. Not all may have the big fish, but some have the small usually neglected creatures like the ghost pipe fish or the frog fish. They are very hard to spot and looking for them can also be a challenge."Best Diving Spots in the Philippines:

Two hours away from Mactan is Cabilao island, which features very nice coral formations, school of barracudas, and if you're lucky, hammerhead sharks. Balicasag island off Panglao in Bohol is also Fantastic! School of jacks and barracudas and plenty of reef fish. Further south is Apo island (you need to be experienced to dive Apo island, since currents could be a little scary). There, you will find lots of jacks and soft corals. In Dumaguete, drive south to the municipality of Dauin, there you will see frog fish, different kinds of ghost pipe fish, sea horse etc.... It's a photographer's wet dream! And the last, which is probably my favorite and the best the Philippines has to offer, is Tubbataha Reef in Sulu Sea. Save up money for it and at least once in your life, visit and dive the area. You will thank me for it."

### Buying Gear:

I love gear and I sell gear! But it's always good to find out first if you really want to continue to dive after your course. If you do decide to make it a hobby, it would be wise to invest in your own gear, as this would make you more comfortable in the water since you don't have to adjust to different rental gear every time you dive. If you still have doubts, at least get yourself the basic stuff – like your own mask and snorkel, fins, booties, and maybe a wetsuit. Give more time to think if you should buy a regulator and your buoyancy control device, since they are the most expensive dive gear. The dive computer is probably the best investment you can have if you decide to dive regularly. It just makes diving safer and more fun."

### Selecting Gear:

They always say that diving is fashion. Maybe that's true in a way. But when choosing your dive gear, always base it first on fit and comfort. The color, looks, and style follow. Buy a brand that is already known in the dive industry. Buy a brand that will give you after market support when you need it. Avoid brands with no dealers in the area. And lastly, ask me. I know what is good for you."

