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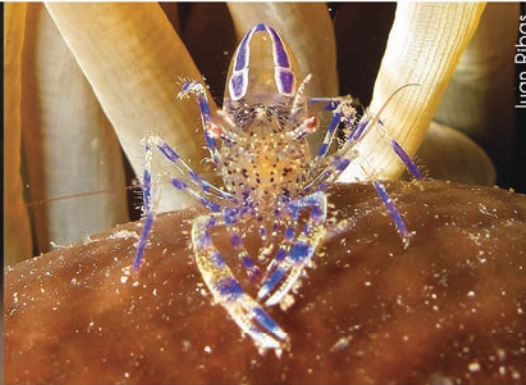
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FORMENTERA BENEATH THE SEA



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Formentera beneath the sea

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THE ULTIMATE PARADISE

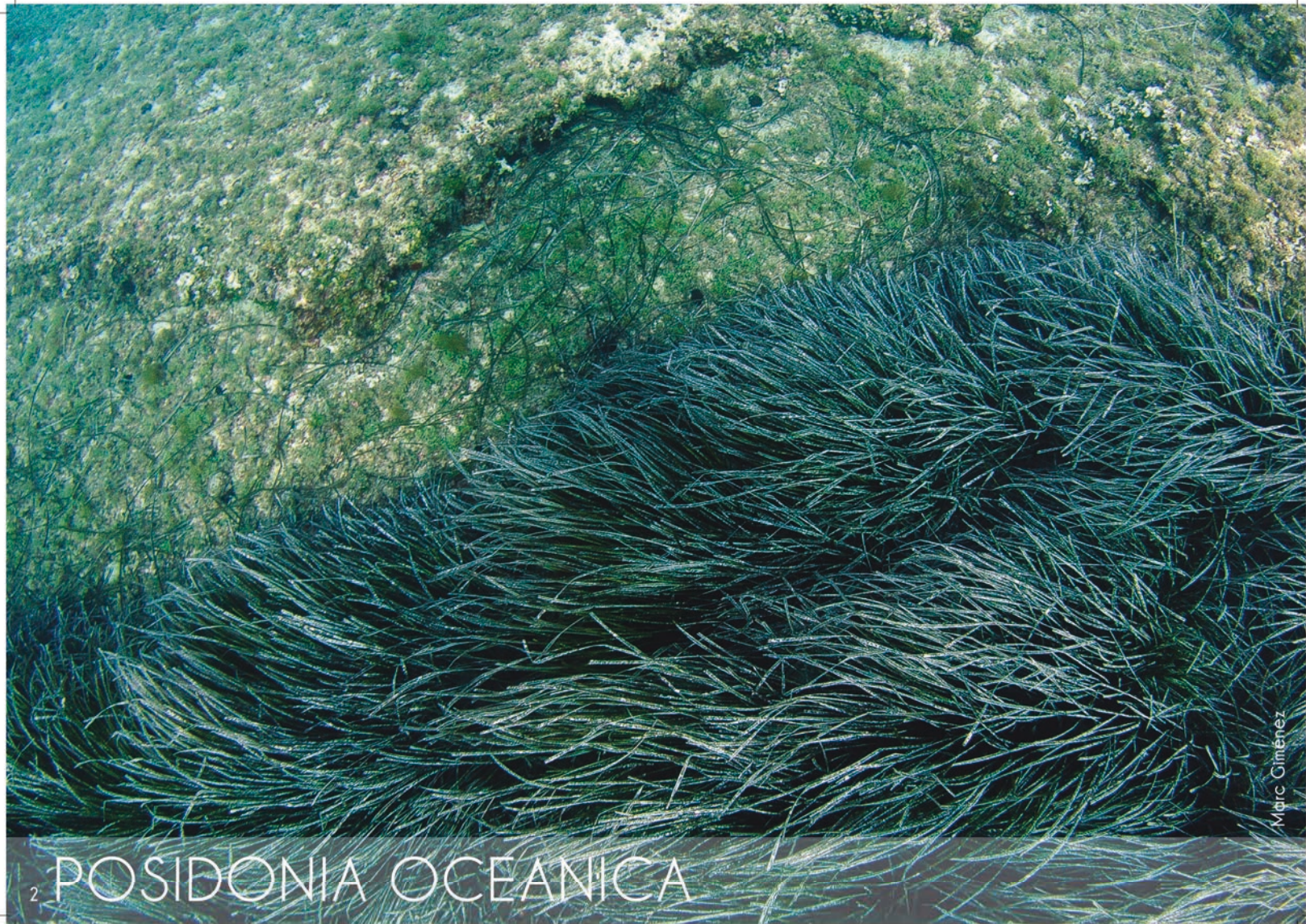
Formentera is of course known for its heavenly beaches of the finest white sand, but there is another paradise hidden beneath its waters, waiting to be discovered.

Formentera's coastline boasts sea beds that we could certainly describe as exceptional, considered by all divers who have had the opportunity to explore the depths of our waters as among the best in the Mediterranean.

The customary tranquillity and clarity of the island's waters, thanks to the meadows of *Posidonia Oceanica* seagrass, make Formentera the perfect spot for lovers of diving and underwater photography, as the visibility is excellent, both in terms of distance and depth.

In 1999, the "Marine Reserve of Es Freus of Ibiza and Formentera" was established with the aim of preserving the natural environment, and it is within this area that the majority of the most interesting diving sites are located, renowned for their biodiversity and their stunning sea beds.





Marc Giménez

2 POSIDONIA OCEANICA

THE PEARL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

Formentera would not be known for its heavenly beaches of the finest white sand if it were not for its meadows of Posidonia Oceanica seagrass.

This is an aquatic plant, endemic to the Mediterranean, which colonises the sandy sea beds, forming underwater meadows of significant environmental importance, constituting one of the most important ecosystems in the Mediterranean, for several reasons:

- . It provides food and shelter for fish, bivalves, gastropods, echinoderms and tunicates, as well as being their breeding ground.
- . It supplies oxygen to the water through photosynthesis and absorbs CO₂, which is a major contributory factor to the clarity and transparency of the waters.
- . It protects the coastline against erosion by consolidating the substrate and acting as a natural barrier, cushioning the force of the waves and currents.

In 1999, the meadows of Posidonia Oceanica existing between Ibiza and Formentera and belonging to the Natural Park of Ses Salines were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. These meadows are those essential to and responsible for the vast biodiversity found in the waters surrounding the island. In fact, between Ibiza and Formentera lies the largest continuous meadow of Posidonia Oceanica in the Mediterranean (the largest known specimen of this plant), with a surface area of 700km squared and which has existed for 100,000 years.



Alberto Gallucci

4 DIVING

DIVING

Introduction to diving

The island offers the perfect environment and conditions for introducing yourself to the world of diving, giving beginners the opportunity to enjoy the activity for the first time in the sea itself, exploring the underwater paradise of areas such as the Marine Reserve of Es Freus.

And for those who, once initiated, wish to continue exploring the underwater world, the diving schools on Formentera offer courses ranging from the most basic levels to the most advanced.

Courses

PADI Open Water Diver

Scuba Diver

Advanced Open Water Diver

Rescue Diver

Dive Master

Photography Courses

Specialist courses: underwater naturalist, deep diving, nitrox, EFR (basic life support), etc.

And also the PADI Bubblemaker, a great way of introducing children aged 8 and above to the world of diving to a depth of 2 metres, closely supervised at all times by a PADI instructor.




6 SNORKELLING

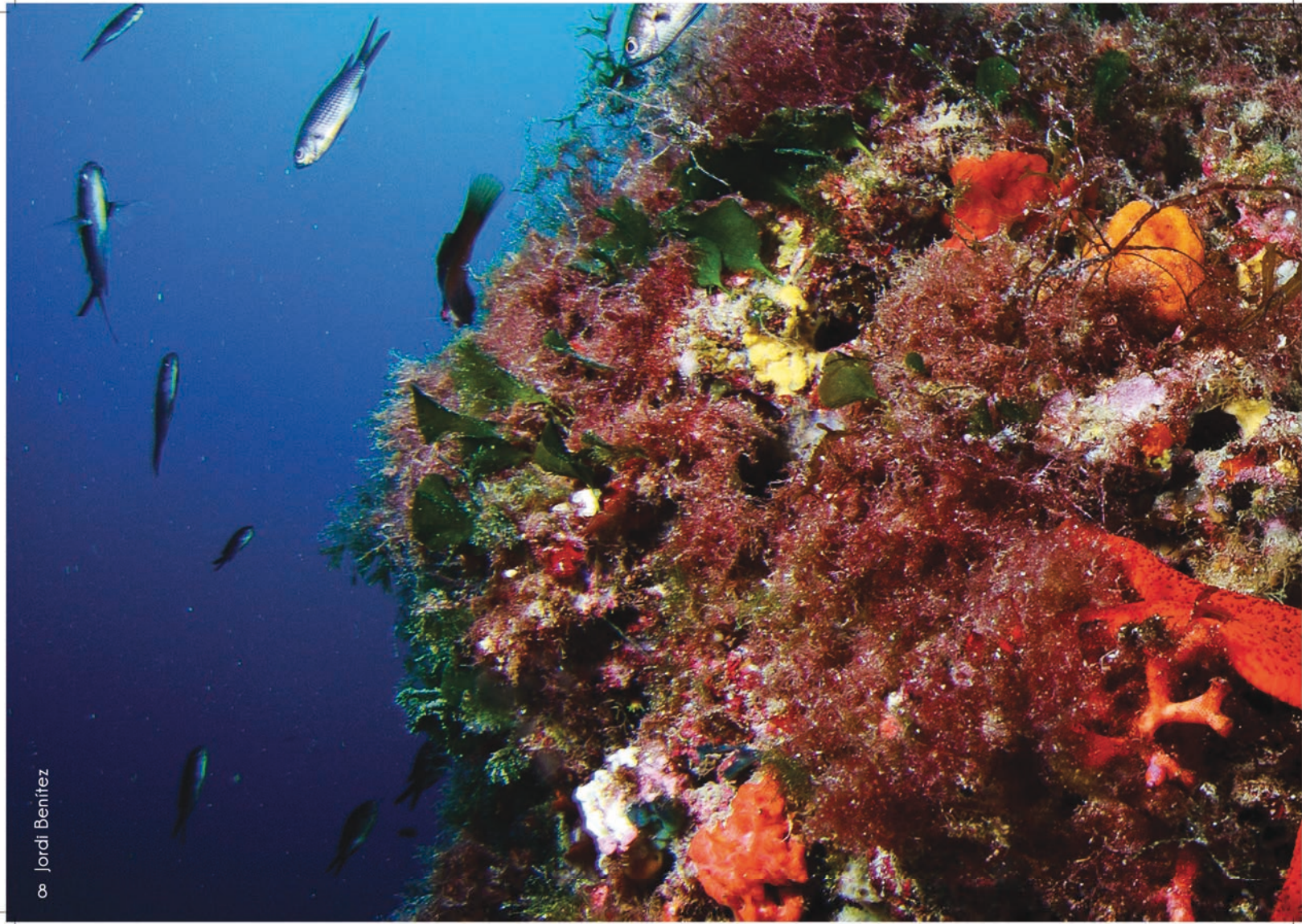
SNORKELLING

Snorkelling

This method enables you to reach the most hidden corners of the island and to explore them simply with a mask, a snorkel and fins. Formentera is known for its white sandy sea beds, with their vast range of all colours and hues imaginable, from the palest green to the deepest blue. It also boasts spectacular rocky beds that are home to a wealth of varied flora and fauna.

Top diving sites:

	DEPTH		LEVEL	BED
	MAX	MIN		
MARIANA PLATFORM	33 m	11 m	Advanced	Wreck on sand and seagrass
PUNTA PRIMA	31 m	8 m	Intermediate	Rock, sand and seagrass
PUNTA DE SA GAVINA	28 m	8 m	Beginner	Rock, sand and seagrass
ES RACÓ ALT	12 m	5 m	Beginner	Sand
ROCABELLA		12 m	Beginner	Rock, sand and seagrass
ES BANC	24 m	3 m	Beginner	Sand and seagrass
EL ARCO	17 m	15 m	Beginner	Rock and sand





TOP DIVING SITES



MARIANA PLATFORM

DEPTH: 11 TO 33 METRES

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE – ADVANCED

BED: structure of blocks resting on a sandy bed populated with seagrass.

This is a formerly floating platform that was used as a fish farm for breeding seabream right in the Mediterranean Sea and which, due to lack of maintenance, finally sank in 1996 following a series of storms between the island of Formentera and the islet of Espardell. This huge structure lies on its side on the sea bed and has become one of the most popular dives due to its spectacular nature and the wealth of marine species that inhabit it permanently, no doubt due to its location within the Marine Reserve of des Freus of Ibiza and Formentera, allowing the marine flora and fauna to abound with scarcely any outside threats to their ecosystem.

A shoal of barracudas usually swims around the wreck like guardians, indifferent to the curiosity shown by divers. The platform is also home to countless crustaceans, moray eels, conger eels, groupers, red scorpion fish and amberjacks, making this dive a spectacle for the senses.

PUNTA PRIMA

DEPTH: 8 TO 30M

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

BED: blocks of rock and sandy bed



This dive is an almost vertical wall of around 30m in depth, at the bottom of which large rocks have accumulated, as the cliff at the cape of Punta Prima has fallen away. This structure of rocks and crevices has become a refuge for numerous species such as groupers, octopus, red scorpion fish, moray eels, conger eels, lobsters, croakers and white seabream, among others. As you descend to the bottom of this impressive wall, you come to a sandy plain where you can find species native to this habitat, such as skate, atlantic stargazer, stingrays or greater weever.

This dive is suitable for almost any level as at about 10m there is a platform ideal also for beginners.





PUNTA DE SA GAVINA

DEPTH: 8 TO 22 METRES

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

BED: rocky platform and cliff wall



This dive is along a rocky platform with a gentle drop that ends in a wall that drops to a depth of 22m. This serves as a support for algae, coral and sponges, making it extremely colourful. There is a small cave in the wall that is home to countless crustaceans, molluscs and fish.

On this dive you are likely to see shoals of croaker, salema and white seabream, moray eels, conger eels and groupers hiding in crevices or holes.

ES RACÓ ALT

CAVES OF PUNTA RASA

DEPTH: 12 METRES

LEVEL: BASIC

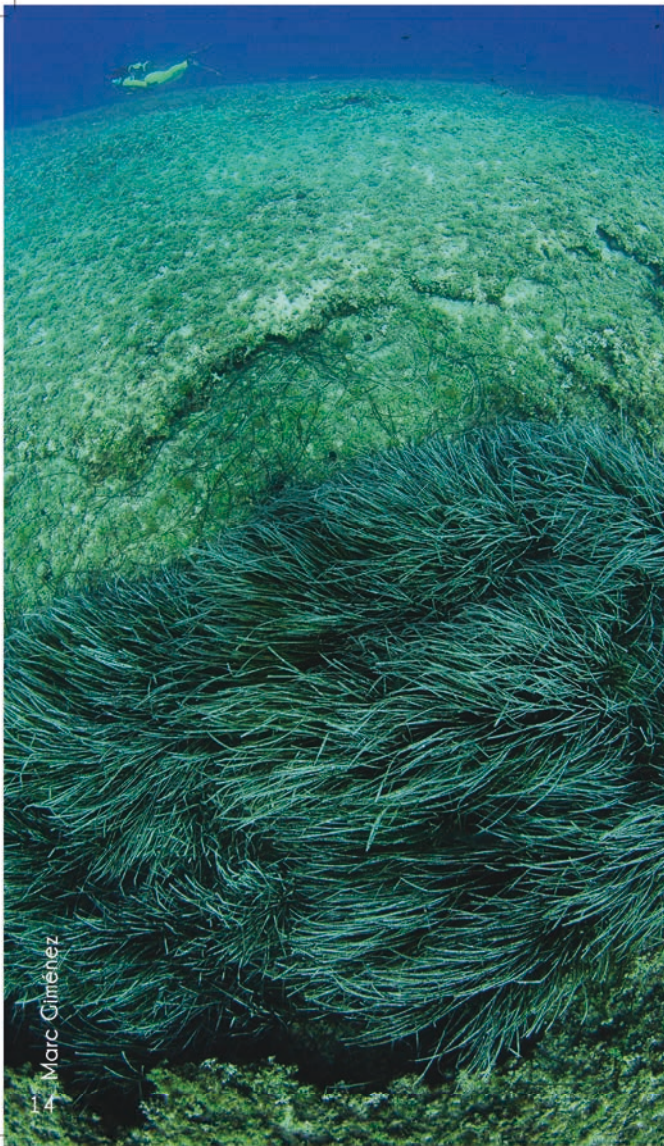
BED: caves of sandy bed



Sailing towards the south of Punta Rasa are the caves of Sant Guillén. These caves are known for their brightness and the spectacular contrasts of shades of blue as, being so close to the surface, the light filters through and illuminates a large part of the main cave. The caves also contain air chambers through which light also filters, enabling you to see their inner walls.

This dive is excellent for novice divers due to its simplicity.





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ROCABELLA

DEPTH: 12 METRES

LEVEL: BASIC

BED: sand and seagrass



This is a very simple dive, designed for diving at very little depth to admire the spectacle of the vast seagrass meadows. This area is one of the most productive ecosystems in the Mediterranean Sea, providing food and shelter for a multitude of marine species, as well as protecting the coastline against erosion from the waves and oxygenating the water through photosynthesis.

ES BANC

DEPTH: 8 TO 23 METRES

LEVEL: BASIC

BED: rocky and sandy



This dive starts on a rocky platform that stretches towards a wall that ends in a sandy bed at a depth of 23 metres. This extremely white sandy plain is home to a multitude of species, such as skate, greater weever and *Pomadasys bennetti*, as well as cuttlefish and squid which hide amidst the seagrass that partially covers it.

In the rocky wall there is a small cave formed by sea erosion and inhabited by sea anemones, sponges and a multitude of crustaceans, among other species.

On the currents of the wall swim amberjack, salema and white seabream, and spectacular groupers and moray eels peer out from the cracks, lying in wait for all kinds of fish on which they feed.





EL ARCO

DEPTH: 4 TO 18 METRES

LEVEL: BASIC

BED: rock and sand



In the area of Can Marroig there are two arches of rock submerged not too far from the surface, forming a stunning underwater landscape which is home to a large variety of flora and fauna, making it the ideal enclave for photography enthusiasts.

Algae, coral and sponges, to name a few examples, live on their walls, and during your dive you are also likely to come across the odd shoal of barracudas as they swim around the rocky structures, or octopus, red scorpion fish, groupers or red mullet that inhabit their base.

EL DADO

DEPTH: 10 TO 35 METRES

LEVEL: BASIC

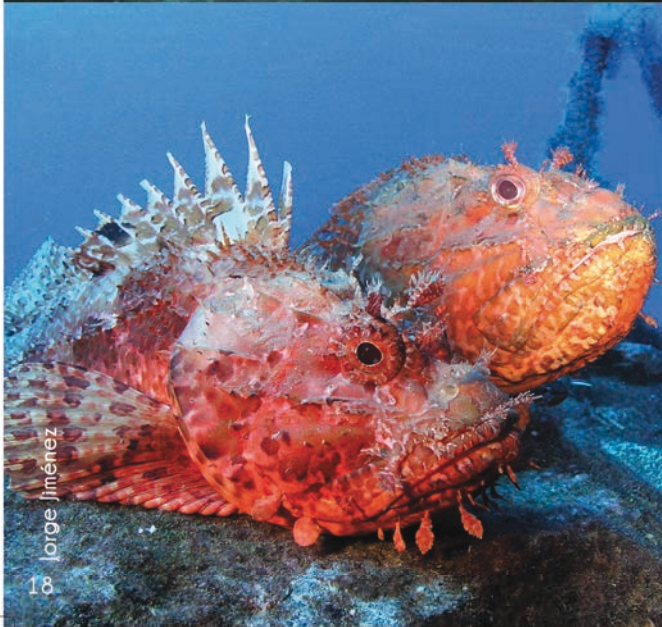
BED: rocky



This diving site is one of those with the most abundance and variety of sea life of all the spots described so far. The dive is divided into two parts: firstly, there is a shallow area teeming with small fish such as Mediterranean rainbow wrasse, ornate wrasse, Comber and East Atlantic peacock wrasse. The shallowest parts are full of sea anemones, sponges and algae, covering the rocky wall in beautiful colours. This part is ideal for beginners due to its simplicity.

Secondly, there is also a wall with large blocks which provide shelter for croakers, moray eels, white seabream, scorpion fish and other fish found in rocky areas.





DON PEDRO

DEPTH: 43 METRES

LEVEL: ADVANCED

BED: sunken wreck

The Don Pedro is a wreck of 147 metres in length that rests at some 47 metres below the surface after crashing into the islet of El Dado and sinking in July 2007.

At this point, two different dives are possible: one at the bow end and the other at the stern. Perhaps the more interesting of the two is the one at the stern because of its huge propellers, the aftercastle, the bridge and the handrails and staircases of the deck.

As the wreck has only been submerged for a relatively short period of time, it is gradually being colonised by various species. Sponges, starfish and algae were the first to take up residence on its surface, followed by shoals of Mediterranean horse mackerel, barracudas and amberjacks that feed on the small fish that take shelter in the wreck.

LA BOTA

DEPTH: 10 TO 32 METRES

LEVEL: BASIC

BED: rock



Near to the island of Es Vedrá there is a rocky promontory which at its highest point reaches up to less than one metre below the surface. Due to its shape and location, it is usually surrounded by currents, resulting in an abundance of flora and fauna. Some of the most noteworthy species to be found are tuna, barracuda, white seabream, croaker, etc., although the undisputed star of the show is the seahorse, which is being spotted in this area more and more frequently.

The dive is normally started from below and you gradually ascend as you swim around the rock formation, making it a very straightforward dive.



DIVING COMPANIES

There are three diving companies on the island that run snorkelling and diving trips to the sites mentioned above:

VELL MARI

Tel. 971321205

E-mail: formentera@vellmari.com

ORCASUB

Tel. 971328001-639601839

E-mail: ddorcasub@yahoo.it

BLUE ADVENTURE

Tel. 971 321 168 - 636 817 419

E-mail: info@blueadventure.com



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