

Dive Into Lembeh

by Andy Deitsch

Situated on the mainland along the shores of Lembeh Strait in Indonesia, Dive Into Lembeh offers a haven for diving enthusiasts. Owned and managed by Miranda and Steve Coverdale, this boutique resort introduces guests to the captivating muck diving of North Sulawesi.

Miranda, hailing from Holland, and Steve, a Brit, have crafted Dive Into Lembeh with a focus on comfort and relaxation. Located in Kasawari Bay, the resort features nine sea-view private bungalows with modern amenities like TV, air conditioning, and a five-gallon water dispenser for hot and cold refreshment. Each bungalow also boasts a unique Japanese-style stone hot tub, perfect for unwinding (and warming up) after a day of diving. There is also a larger suite with similar amenities to the sea-view bungalows and for those who prefer an inexpensive option, a little further up the hill from the water are 3 longhouse rooms which are more simple yet still very comfortable.

Surrounded by lush greenery, the resort boasts a spacious restaurant and bar area. The expansive room features buffet-style dining along one wall, offering a variety of both

western and Indonesia style dishes. Adjacent to the bar, guests will find a cozy seating area furnished with comfortable couches, perfect for casual conversations about the day's dives or perusing critter identification books from the day's underwater adventures.

Renowned for its muck diving, Lembeh Strait is Dive Into Lembeh's main attraction. With its own house reef showcasing dive sites like Hairball and Aw Shucks, the resort provides unparalleled access to Lembeh's underwater wonders.

Guests can enjoy up to three daily dives aboard twin-engine fiberglass boats, exploring over 60 dive spots in the strait. For those who want more, the resort also offers a dusk mandarin dive and night dives along with unlimited shore diving. Whether observing elusive frogfish or photographing mimic octopus, each dive promises an encounter with Lembeh's diverse marine life.

The resort's dive center, equipped with Lembeh's largest camera room, caters to photographers of all levels. The room has plenty of outlets and power strips for all of your charging needs. Just in front of the



camera room are two large camera rinse tanks as well as a drying station with air hoses. In this same area near the rinse tanks is a large board showing the days diving schedule. Your name will appear on the boat that you are assigned to along with the dive sites that are planned for your boat.

Experienced dive guides accompany guests at a ratio of one guide for every two guests. The guides are experts on finding subjects and take pleasure not only in finding unique subjects but ensuring you have captured the photo you want to



get.

A typical day's diving starts at 6:30am with a light breakfast of coffee/tea, toast and cereal options. At 7am, it's time to get your tanks

analyzed for the day (for those diving Nitrox). Everyone boards their respective boats at 7:30am ready to head out for the first dive. Guests usually are back at the resort by 9am where a big breakfast is served. Besides the usually buffet selection of bacon, sausage and local porridge, there is also an egg station where you can order eggs any style.

Relax a bit or fiddle with your camera after breakfast and then prepare for the second dive which begins at 10:45am. Following the second dive, lunch is served. If you are late for lunch (say, getting carried away working on photos in your room), staff will come by and gently remind you that lunch is ready.

After lunch you have a bit more time to relax before the third dive of the day at 2:30pm.

If you have signed up for the mandarin dive, you have a bit of time but not too much since it leaves at 4:30pm. Night dives typically leave around 5:30pm. Following your last dive, your guide will take care of rinsing your dive gear and hang it back up in the dive locker ready for your next day of diving.

Dinner is a chance to relax and chat with others about the days diving. After dinner, you'll find several guests wander over to the bar area where the bar tender not only chats with guests but also is a very good

singer and ukulele player.

While diving in Lembeh is possible year-round, understanding North Sulawesi's climate can enhance your dive adventure. The region experiences two distinct seasons: the rainy season from November to March and the dry season from April to October.

During the rainy season, nutrient-rich waters nourish Lembeh's marine life, making it an ideal time for critter enthusiasts to encounter rare species. Conversely, the dry season offers clear skies and calm seas, providing optimal visibility for exploring Lembeh's dive sites.

Accessing Lembeh is convenient, with direct flights to Manado from Singapore via Scoot Airways or from Jakarta via Garuda Airways. Upon arrival, guests are greeted by resort staff who escort them to the resort along the newly built toll road, roughly an hour away.

Dive Into Lembeh offers a blend of luxury accommodation and world-class diving experiences. Whether you're an experienced photographer or a beginner, Lembeh welcomes you to explore its underwater wonders year-round. So, pack your gear, embrace the adventure, and immerse yourself in the underwater paradise of Dive Into Lembeh.



Percula clownfish captured using slow shutter to get some motion in the anemone tentacles and burn in the blue background.

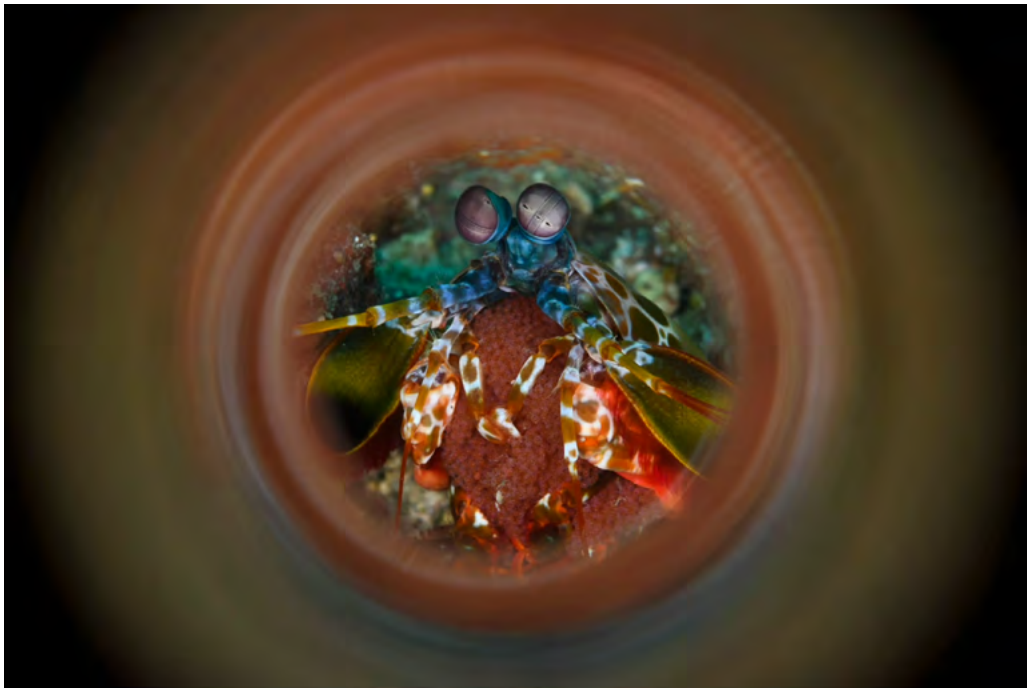
Capturing the Magic of Lembeh

This was my sixth trip overall and third year in a row. For the past couple of years, I've attended a photography workshop with my newsletter partner-in-crime, Byron Conroy. As readers of our newsletter know, I'm a big advocate for underwater photography workshops as a way to improve skills, get inspired to learn new techniques, and walk away with some incredible images. This year was no exception, and I spent time on dives honing techniques I had barely used before.

Lembeh Strait, renowned for its muck diving, is a highly productive location for underwater photographers. Each dive presents an opportunity to capture truly stunning images, thanks to the diverse and often bizarre marine life that thrives in the area's black sand slopes and rubble-strewn seabed.

The workshop took place at Dive Into Lembeh, a resort run by the wonderful Miranda and Steve Coverdale.

The workshop itself spanned nine nights, with eight days of diving. Some participants opted to extend



A peacock mantis shrimp with eggs captured using a light tube.

their stay for a few extra days to maximize their time in this unique environment.

We had an excellent dive-to-guide ratio of 2:1, ensuring that each pair of divers received plenty of personalized attention. The guides are incredibly skilled at spotting marine life, making each dive highly rewarding. Additionally, we had a maximum number of six guests per boat, providing plenty of space to maneuver and reducing the overall number of divers at a site, which greatly enhanced the experience.

Byron runs his workshops similarly to others but with a

distinctive twist—he takes a highly structured approach. Rather than covering techniques randomly, he builds progressively, ensuring that by the end of the workshop, attendees are combining multiple skills seamlessly.

Each evening, Byron delivers a lecture and conducts an image review, during which participants submit three images for group discussion. The next day's dives are designed to reinforce the previous night's lessons, allowing attendees to apply newly learned techniques in a practical setting.

Between dives, Byron is always



A thorny seahorse captured using a snoot to isolate the seahorse and then a blue continuous light to separately light the background.

available to answer questions and encourage photographers to experiment with different approaches.

One of his key teaching points is that, in Lembeh, backgrounds are often unappealing due to the nature of muck diving. The challenge is to isolate the subject from the background effectively. There are multiple ways to achieve this, each offering a distinct visual style with its own advantages depending on the subject and conditions.

Byron begins with the fundamentals, such as shooting subjects against a black background,

introducing techniques like inward lighting, beam restrictors, snoots, and precise aperture and shutter settings. He demonstrates each technique using his own camera setup, giving attendees a hands-on understanding of how to manipulate lighting and composition.

As the workshop progresses, he introduces more advanced skills, including shallow depth of field, backlighting, colored and artificial backgrounds, natural background integration, creative lens use, slow shutter techniques, and, ultimately, motion blur with a snoot. The



Porcelain crab on a piece of soft coral.

final two nights include sessions on advanced post-processing in Lightroom and Photoshop. Yours truly helped with one of those sessions.

The group of attendees ranged from highly experienced underwater photographers to relative newcomers, some of whom had never attempted macro photography before.

Regardless of their starting point, the results at the end of the workshop were truly impressive, with every participant making significant strides in their photography.

The 2026 workshop is already sold out, but due to overwhelming demand, an additional week has been

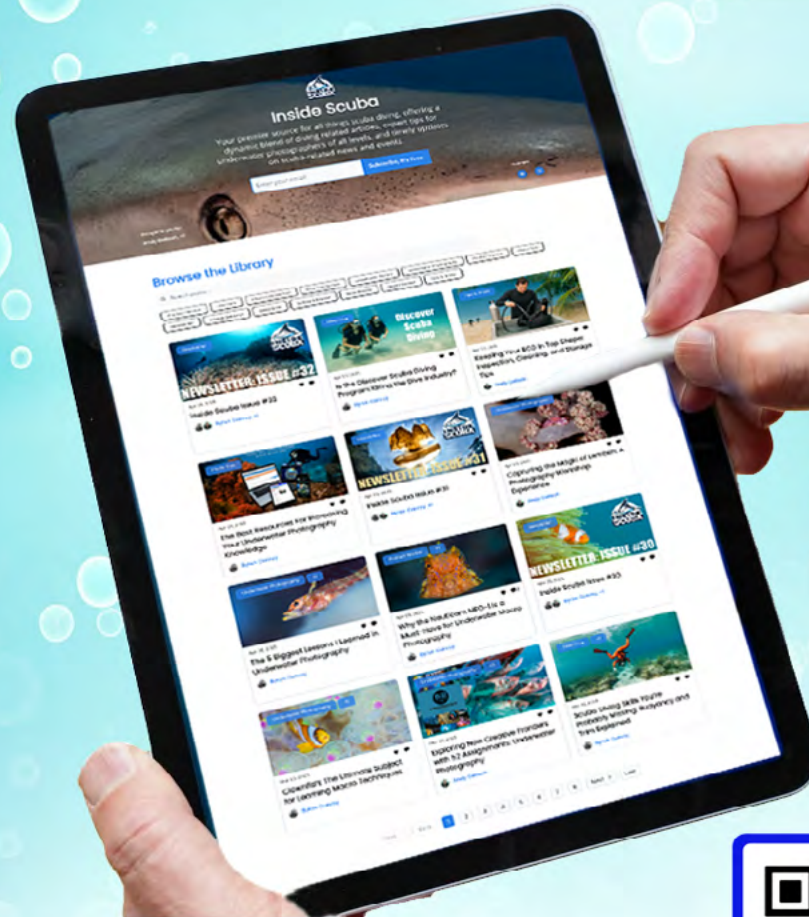
added, beginning April 18th for nine nights. The workshop will also be held in 2027, running for nine nights starting April 26th, with an optional 12-night extension. If you're interested in attending, contact Miranda at

info@diveintolembah.com

Andy Deitsch
www.insidescuba.online



Your Premier Destination for Scuba Diving News, Tips, and Underwater Photography Expertise.



Subscribe for free!
<https://insidescuba.online/subscribe>

