

Bloomberg Pursuits



By: Nikki Ekstein

September 23, 2016

If you don't have an underwater bucket list, Dive Butler can help.

Founded in 2008 by Alexis Vincent, the former scuba expert at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island, the company is built off a single premise: find the most spectacular dives in the world, and take guests there in the more luxurious way possible, always with a private instructor to lead the way.



■ Diving between tectonic plates in Iceland Source: DIVE.IS

Eight years on, the company has grown: now Vincent has a team of 50 individual "dive butlers" servicing yacht-goers around the world and consulting on their most ambitious diving needs. The result isn't just a wider network of travelers and associates. With more diver masters in more corners of the world, Dive Butler is now unlocking some of the most unique underwater experiences known to mankind—though many of them stand out precisely because they're so largely *unknown* at this point.

With Vincent's help—along with the help of a few other adventure experts around the globe—we've assembled a list worth printing, bookmarking, and checking off one by one. It'll take you from the Galapagos to the Andaman Sea to the world's most dramatic shipwreck sites, in the central Pacific. It'll take you under entire islands, into lava tunnels, below glaciers, and into underwater graveyards from World War II.



Prices can vary dramatically no matter which trip you choose.

As with the world's greatest overland adventures, there are reasonably priced options with companies like Infiniti Live Aboard that'll take you to extreme dive sites for as little at \$2,200 per week. And then there are outfits like Vincent's, which will transfer some of the region's best yachts to your preferred destination and coordinate every last detail—including certifications, permits, and equipment—for as much as \$250,000 per week. (He'll also offer consultations if your budget is somewhere in between.)



■ A polar dive in Antarctica Photographer: Norbert Wu/Getty Images/Minden Pictures RM

Between permits and yacht availability, these trips are logistical puzzles best left to the experts. And making them happen can take four to six months of advanced planning. In other words: now's the time to get started on Indian Ocean adventures, where many of these dives take place. Peak season spans from December to April.

Through Lava Tunnels in the Galapagos



■ A sun fish on the outskirts of Isabela Island, near the island's lava tunnels. Photographer: by wildestanimal/Getty Images

On a new itinerary through the Galapagos and the Amazon with Big Five Tours & Expeditions, travelers can be among the first to discover a series of underwater lava tunnels near the volcanic

Isabela Island. “This is a place that only a fraction of travelers go to,” said Ashish Sanghrajka, the company’s president, who sought to bring his guests an experience that would be missed on a conventional cruise.

It takes an hour to get here from Big Five’s partner lodges on Isabela Island—requiring the use of a Zodiac or dive dinghy—but the payoff is major.

“Given that this is the most active of all the volcanic islands in the region, the formations you can see on a dive are also the most unique,” said Sanghrajka. And just like the rest of the Galapagos, the islands’ lava tunnels are replete with endemic marine life: you’ll see everything from green sea turtles to white-tipped sharks and various types of rays, along with tons of bird sightings above sea level.