

Advanced Nitrox

The weekend 22-23 April 2006, we were 5 from the Diving Club Draaben and 1 from the club Delfinen who participated in the first CMAS Advanced Nitrox course which was held in south Fuene.

Prior to the course there had been quite a lot correspondence with the instructor Mogens Braae who had to be the instructor. During our storm of emails back and forth Mogens repeatedly addressed the issue if we remembered to do the needed training in the practical skills. Since this had been going on for some time, I was somewhat irritated, then one of the others who were to participate in the course and I took a trip to Kreidesee in Germany to do a bit of skill training. It was something of an awakening because none of the practical skills were easy to do. Just a simple thing like taking the mask off, and then take it on again was a problem. The reason for this was that the temperature in the Lake was only 4°C. In addition to the headaches created by the cold water in your face it made you involuntarily took a deep breath and held their breath, it required something of a major effort to exhale again. As we also had to lie horizontally freely balanced in the water. This was no good as we immediately began floating towards the surface when we took the deep breath. We could not expect the water temperature in the Danish waters would increase significantly before the course; we suddenly got busy to get out and practice.

The 22nd April we all met in the diving club Draaben at 0800. Mogens had taken Flemming Holm along as assistance instructor. They were a really good team and managed to convey the theory on a good and entertaining way. Throughout the course, there was a very positive atmosphere; also at some point when we encountered some confusion about the use of the deco table, it was taken with a big smile by all.

One of Draaben's tireless members had agreed to arrange the catering for us on the course. It also proved to be very good as there was much to be learned in the course of the day, so it was luxury, that dinner just were ready on the table. Benjamin who was the good food fairy ´ appeared at 16 o'clock and made sure that the hot supper was hot. It was something Mogens greatly appreciated, indeed so much that Benjamin was offered free membership of the Club in which Mogens was member. After supper, Mogens and a few diving tales, it was time for the Grand finale, THEORY TEST, the result of the test, we would get to know the next morning, so it was a long night for us, "pure bastards" who was on the course.

Sunday the 23rd April we met at the Club at 0700 in order to go out on the blue water and have the practical tests done. The first skill tests were the ones who had to be performed at approximately 5 meters of water. The test was carried out for various reasons on MTB 1 in the bay lunkebugten (it was mostly due to the fact that Mogens had not yet seen a single one of the 5 MTB's that is there). We 6 carried out the skill tests in more or less artful execution. Mogens og Flemming was also heavily

impressed that it could be done with the equipment we had gotten screwed together for this occasion.

After a brief pit stop in Vindeby to get a few bottles charged and created a minor raid wearing dry suit at the local bakery, it went toward Lehnskoven (West from Svendborg). Here we could find the 15-18 meters we needed for the last skill tests. In its simplicity was to simulate a 42 meter dive, with deployment of the SMB, gas switch, etc. everything as you would do on a real dive.

It was at this dive it dawned for most of us that even though we were all reasonable experienced sport divers, we were only beginners in technical diving. While we dived Mogens og Flemming lay constantly horizontally and with their arms folded over their chest, they used only the legs to maneuver with while at the same time, they maintained the depth. Now there was something we yet had a lot to learn.

Well back on the dry shore, during the evaluation we had to recognize (and that is, of course, never funny) that we are facing a heavy modification of our equipment and diving techniques. But we were all very satisfied with the course, because it had opened our eyes to a whole new world where ordinary sports divers can learn a great deal.

Now that we got the "driving license" to dive with accelerated deco, we are facing the greatest challenge, to get the needed routine and training of the necessary skills. I would like to say a big thanks to Mogens and Flemming for spending a weekend on us and thanks for a good and instructive course. In my opinion most Nitrox Divers should take this course in order to become better divers.