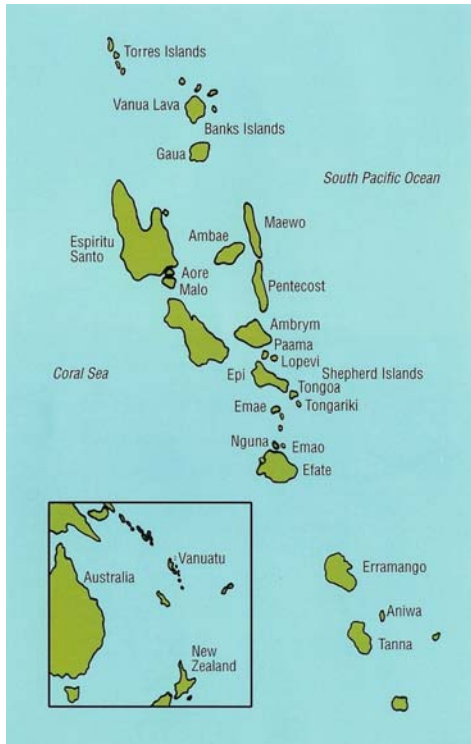


DEEP OCEAN EXPEDITIONS PRESENTS

Islands, Reefs & Volcanoes of Vanuatu

*With Ron and Valerie Taylor
Aboard the RV Akademik Shokalskiy
03rd – 16th April 2004*

THE BEST OF VANUATU DIVING AND SNORKELING



From its commencement in 1985, Mike McDowell and Quark Expeditions have operated adventures to numerous remote regions of the world. For this expedition we move our focus to the islands and reefs of Vanuatu (New Hebrides).

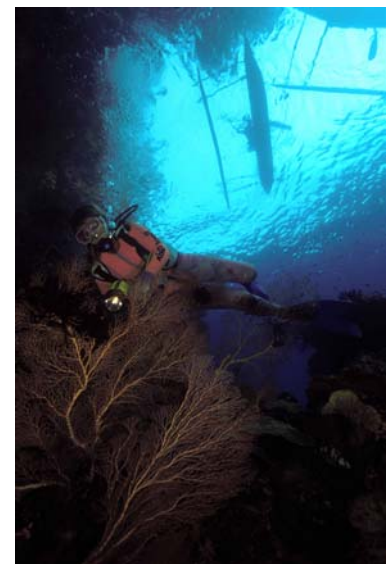
Following visits by two Spanish expeditions in the late 1500's whose aim was to locate Terra Australis, Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, Chief Pilot of the 1595 expedition returned in 1606 and claimed Espiritu Santo and all lands South of it to be under Spanish rule. The settlement established by de Quiros at Big Bay on Espiritu Santo lasted a brief 54 days before mutiny amongst the expedition's crew lead to its abandonment.

Subsequent visits by made by Louis-Antoine de Bougainville in 1766, James Cook in 1774, La Perouse in 1788, William Bligh (during the famed open boat trip from Pitcairn to Timor) and finally two further French expeditions by D'Entrecasteaux in 1793 and Dumont D'Urville in 1828. These latter expeditions, in search of the lost La Perouse expedition, increased European knowledge of the geography and culture of these islands which sit precariously on top of the fabled "Ring of Fire".

The Northern islands were formed when uplifted from the sea around 22 million years ago. Maewo and Pentecost Islands followed around 11 million years ago with the remaining islands forming as a result of two separate geological events that took place within the last 2 million years. This combination of volcanoes (Vanuatu has nine active volcanoes, two of which are under the sea), mountainous tropical islands with fringing coral reefs and off shore seamounts provide plenty of opportunities for us to explore the underwater world.

The twinkling waters and rich green rain forest-covered Isles of Vanuatu beckon snorkellers, scuba divers, photographers and naturalists alike. When it comes to diving and exploring Vanuatu offers unsurpassed beauty both above and below the water. Our itinerary includes superb locations in the clear turquoise water for which Vanuatu is famous. The thriving and diverse marine life will rival any dive location you have previously visited. The crystal-clear water flushed by local currents and the multitudes of colorful fish provide a paradise for underwater photography. The water visibility ranges from 80 to 120 ft., depending on the season. Water temperature averages 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

In addition to the underwater world, the culture and natural history of this fascinating group of islands provides us with another area of focus for the expedition.



ITINERARY

April 1 - Departure Los Angeles

For North American participants, a group flight (not included in the cruise price) can be arranged starting in Los Angeles.

April 2 - You cross the International Date Line en route, losing one day.

April 3 – Port Vila

Upon arrival in Vila participants traveling on the group flight will be transferred to our vessel Akademik Shokalskiy in Port Vila in the late afternoon and sail for Maskelyne Islands in the early evening.

April 4 – Maskelyne Islands

After the short overnight run from Vila we begin our diving in the calmer waters around Maskelyne Islands which will allow us all to test equipment and become comfortable with local conditions.

April 5 - Tongoa

The wall dives of Tongoa offer some of the best dives in Vanuatu.

April 6 – Epi

Lamen Island, just to the West of the main island of Epi will be the focus of our visit to this area. We will make a drift dive along the Northern side of Lamen Island.

April 7/8 Sea-mounts West of Espiritu Santo & Tetawoia Reef

On all our expeditions we include time for visits to sites which are a little off the beaten track. The seamounts off the west coast of Espiritu Santo & Tetawoia Reef offer us the opportunity to explore the less visited underwater world of Vanuatu.

April 9 - Ureparapara

Ureparapara is located in the Banks Group an isolated area of Vanuatu known for its considerable Polynesian cultural influence.

The island is an extinct volcano notable for the opening to the sea of its central crater. Good diving, spectacular scenery and interesting cultural experience will make our visit to this island a highlight of the trip.

April 10 - Pentecost

Each Saturday in April on Pentecost the local people conduct the ritual known as Nangol where the local men jump from primitive towers using vines to arrest their fall. This internationally famous cultural event will be a highlight of our voyage.

April 11/12 – Mota/Gaua

We return to the Northern areas after our visit to Pentecost Island the previous day. Mota offers an entirely different experience due to it being an uplifted coral reef. The spectacular wall diving will be another highlight to our journey into the Banks Group.

Gaua is the second largest island in the Banks Group after Vanua Lava, and is home to the semi active Mt. Garet volcano, which last erupted in 1965. Our focus for this day, however, will be dives on the seamounts west of the island.



April 13/14 - Espiritu Santo

The site of a major US military base during the Second World War which saw some 500,000 personnel pass through the extensive system of camps which were constructed between May and September 1942.

Santo is best known for the impressive wreck of the President Coolidge and the vast quantities of often brand new military equipment that was dumped in the sea at the end of the war at Million Dollar point. Wreck dives will be the focus!

If time permits we will also include a trip by road to the northern side of the island to enjoy the island's many beautiful beaches and visit Big Bay site of de Quiros brief settlement.



April 15 – Ambrym

Overnight we will move to Ranvetlam on the northwest side of lush island of Ambrym dominated by the highly active twin volcanoes, Mt. Marum and Mt. Benbow.

For the active we will offer the opportunity to climb one of the volcanoes.

April 16 – Port Vila

After disembarkation mid morning we will transfer to the *Iririki* hotel where we will spend the night prior to departing the next day for your homes. A chance for some local sight seeing in the afternoon and also time to sample the well regarded local restaurants in the evening.



April 17 – Port Vila

Today we make an early start and transfer to the airport for your ongoing flight to your home base.

ITINERARY NOTES

The nature of the dive sites allows snorkellers and divers to be equally catered for. This, coupled with the fascinating cultural aspects of many of the island communities we visit, means that a varied and full range of options can be offered to all participants.

As always come with a flexible approach to itinerary as we often end up shooting off to explore new areas based on updated local information and tips on new underwater attractions.

LECTURERS / EXPEDITION STAFF

As with all Deep Ocean Expedition voyages a team of experienced staff will be on hand to offer their knowledge and assistance. Our staff will comprise of a team of experienced divemasters, zodiac drivers and experienced Australian divers Ron and Valerie Taylor who will offer their knowledge in a series of on-board lectures. European chefs and catering staff will serve to you international cuisine using quality fresh provisions. A Western Doctor experienced in dive medicine will also join the expedition team.

VISAS

Visas are not required for visitors from the US, all Commonwealth countries and most European countries. However all visitors must hold a valid passport and possess an onward air or sea ticket.

CRUISE PRICE

Prices quoted in US Dollars on a per person share basis. Single occupancy 1.4 times twin rate except for the Suite that is unavailable as a single. Airfare is not included.

- Deck 3 Twin with shared bath US \$4300.00
- Deck 4/5 Twin with bath US \$5100.00

- Deck 5 Superior US \$5400.00 (one cabin only)
- Deck 5 Suite US \$5800.00 (one cabin only)

CABIN CATEGORIES

Cabins on Deck 3 have a porthole and two lower berths with shared facilities.

Cabins on Decks 4 & 5 have windows, upper and lower berths and private facilities.

The Suite and Superior cabins have windows, lower berths, a sitting area and private facilities.

INCLUDED IN CRUISE COST:

- All meals, services of expedition staff and access to normal facilities on board *Akademik Shokalskiy*.
- Any miscellaneous taxes and port charges incurred throughout the cruise.
- One hotel night including breakfast prior to embarkation and one hotel night including breakfast after disembarkation in Port Vila.
- Transfers from the airport in Port Vila to the hotel on arrival and from the hotel to the airport on departure if traveling with the group.

NOT INCLUDED IN CRUISE COST:

- Airfares to and from the ports of embarkation/disembarkation. Any meals or arrangements before or after the voyage not specified above.
- Dive equipment such as regulators, computers, weight belts (weights are available on board), wet suits, flippers, masks, buoyancy compensators -- *All items must be brought by each individual*. Personal insurance or medical costs.
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, communications, etc. Gratuities to ship's crew. Overweight baggage charges. Any visas required to travel to countries visited on this itinerary. Airport arrival/departure or government taxes.

OUR VESSEL

The vessel for this superb voyage will be the *Akademik Shokalskiy*. She is an ideal floating hotel and dive/snorkel support vessel, built in 1982, she was designed as an oceanographic research vessel.

An excellent feature of *Akademik Shokalskiy* is a very large open aft deck area which is close to the waterline. This will be very suitable as a dive "kit up" and storage area. Lots of other open deck space allows comfortable "sun bathing" and viewing. As usual, the vessel is equipped with three Bauer Marine dive compressors, dive tanks and other necessary support equipment. The vessel will carry four Mark V heavy duty Zodiacs for our on water transportation needs.

RV AKADEMIK SHOKALSKIY SPECIFICATIONS

Delivered:	1982
Length:	71.60 metres
Beam:	12.60 metres
Draught:	4.50 metres
Speed:	max 12.5 knots
Gross Registered Tonnage:	1,764
Net Registered Tonnage:	529 tonnes
Port of Registry:	Vladivostok
Capacity:	46 pax maximum
Flag:	Russia



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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
INFO@DEEPOCEANEXPEDITIONS.COM

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Reservations and Payment. A deposit of US\$1,500 per person is required to confirm a reservation with final payment due 90 days prior to departure. All prices and payments are in US dollars and no other currencies can be accepted.

Cancellations and Refunds. All requests for cancellations must be received in writing. Cancellations received 90 days prior to departure are fully refunded less an administrative fee of \$500 per person. Please note that within the 90-day limit all deposits and tariffs are forfeited. If cancellation occurs within the 90-day period and full payment has not yet been received, the full penalty will still apply and unpaid monies are due immediately. For these and other reasons mentioned below, you are strongly encouraged to obtain trip cancellation insurance. Prices quoted are based on group participation and no refunds will be made for any part of the program in which you choose not to participate, including any helicopter flying time (if applicable and which, at the discretion of the captain and expedition leader, may or may not be utilized). It is understood that refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for any reason whatsoever.

Itinerary. The itinerary described is subject to change at the discretion of the ship's master. This is an expedition to a remote part of the world and we reserve the right to change the itinerary due to weather conditions, availability of anchorages, political conditions and other factors beyond our control without consulting the participants. It is understood that such decisions will be made in the best interests of all passengers aboard and with regard to the safety of the vessel. Participants have no right to any refund or other considerations in the event of these inevitable itinerary changes. Nothing in this brochure is meant to signify the use of any specific design or model of helicopter. Not all voyages include the use of helicopters.

Rates. Voyage rates are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect at the time of printing and are subject to change prior to departure. Substantial changes in tariffs, exchange rates and the price of fuel, services and labor sometimes increase the cost of expedition arrangements significantly, and we reserve the right to alter our prices accordingly.

Responsibility. Please read this important information carefully. The payment of a deposit of any part or full payment for a reservation on this tour shall constitute consent to all the provisions contained herein.

Quark Expeditions Inc. (QEI) and Supernova Expeditions Ltd. (SEL) act as general sales agents for the vessel and as such exercise every possible care. However, QEI, SEL, their subsidiaries and/or associated Agents, shall not be held responsible for property loss or damage and/or any damages resulting from illness, personal injuries or death which may be sustained by reason of, or while engaged on, any tour whether due to the ownership, maintenance, use, operation or control of any aircraft, helicopter, automobile, bicycle, boat, vehicle, hotel, common carrier or any other conveyance used in carrying out these tours. We can assume no liability due to any cause whatsoever whether caused by failure or delay or other irregularity, acts or omissions occurring during a tour under which the means of transportation or other service provided thereby is offered or supplied by owners, operators or public carriers for whom QEI and SEL act only as agent.

QEI and SEL reserve the right (at their discretion) to alter or omit any part of the itinerary or change any reservation, feature and/or means of conveyance without notice and for any reason whatsoever and without allowance or refund and with extra costs, if any, resulting there from paid by the passengers. We reserve the right to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part.

QEI and SEL shall not be responsible for any injury to person (whether or not resulting in death) or damage to property arising out of any act of war, insurrection, revolt or other civil uprising or military action occurring in the countries of origin, destination or passage. **QEI and SEL strongly urge individual passengers obtain appropriate insurance coverage.** Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely.

In case of a medical problem arising during the voyage, either on board or on shore, which results in costs for evacuation, use of aircraft or repatriation, the responsibility for payment of these costs belongs solely to the passenger. **QEI and SEL strongly advise that passengers ensure that such eventualities are covered by travel insurance.** If not covered by travel insurance the responsibility still remains with the passenger and QEI and SEL specifically decline any responsibility whatsoever.

The transportation companies concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not aboard their carriers or conveyances. The passenger contract in use by the carriers concerned (when issued) shall constitute the sole contract between the transportation companies and the purchaser of these tours and/or passage. By accepting the ticket the passenger also agrees to its terms and conditions.

By forwarding of deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she does not have any mental, physical or other condition or disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers. QEI and SEL reserve the right to cancel or withdraw any person as a member of the tour at any time.