





vertical blue 2009

TEXT: Alexander Sarasitis
PHOTO: Fred Buyle, Grand Graves

Vertical Blue' is a freediving competition held at Dean's Blue Hole in The Bahamas. William Trubridge, a renowned freediver himself, organizes this event annually. Blue Holes are incredible geological formations. Dean's happens to be the world's deepest. This Blue Hole reaches as deep as 203 meters into the ocean floor, while its diameter ranges from 20 to 200 meters! 'Vertical Blue' is an exclusive invitational competition for top-notch athletes. This event only involves the

depth disciplines (CNF, FIM, and CWT). 'Competition' is a rather routine term for this invitational event. The fact is, setting new National and World Records is what the athletes are truly aiming for.

There were several reasons that brought me to The Bahamas. Primarily, I came to help and support Herbert Nitsch prepare for the competition. Secondly, I also offered technical support to a French motion picture team. Indeed, 3-D underwater filming is now a fact - even amateurishly. »

free diving competition



were equipment malfunctions (one time, Herbert's mono-fin slipped out of place). On the 4th day, Herbert's luck changed, as he recovered from his misfortunes and set a new World Record in Constant Weight. He dove 114 meters in 3'49" and completed the surface protocol within 6". Right away, on the next day! Don't these people ever rest? He achieved yet another World Record in the discipline of FIM, with a relatively easy dive to 109 meters and back in 4 minutes, 11 seconds. Given the ease with which he dove, with equalization as the only limit, Herbert decided to stun the whole world of freediving by making a shocking announcement of attempting 120 meters in CWT. His first attempt ended futilely as his new lanyard tangled, forcing him to abandon the dive. Nevertheless, there was still one final day of competition remaining. This time everything fell into place. In 3' 58", with just 7" for the SP, the incredible



leap to 120 meters made history. That was Herbert's 25th World Record. Compared to Herbert, William Trubridge has a completely different dive style. His flawless mono-fin technique enables him to complete his dives in significantly less time. A few days ago while training, William achieved 112 meters in Constant Weight, during a brisk 3 minute dive. Nevertheless, his great velocity often works against him while surfacing, inducing strong sambas. As the

organizer of 'Vertical Blue', William was too busy to set any new records during the first 7 days of the competition. On day 8, however, he surprised us with a brand new World Record in Constant No Fins. With a very strong dive of 88 meters in 3 minutes, 30 seconds, William Trubridge broke his own previous World Record of 86 meters, set last year at the very same event. The Italian Davide Carrera outperformed the National Record several times in CWT with dives of 94, 96, 98 and 99 meters. Although >>




he was more than able to pursue an additional 100-meter dive, he stopped at 99 meters despite the persistence of his fellow Italians.

As Davide himself explained, he wished to save his 100-meter dive for later this summer alongside his friend Umberto Pelizzari.

The Japanese Ryuzo Shinomiya was another athlete who raised his own National Record several times. Ryuzo added a few meters daily, until he reached 105 meters with an impressive

dive. 'Vertical Blue' ended with a big and blissful beach party, in the style for which we had all hoped.

In terms of location, organization, and athletic spirit, I must say that this was the best freediving competition I have ever attended.

Perhaps the only negative comment I have concerns the cost of staying in The Bahamas. Please discard this last bit if you are solely here for underwater purposes! 





HERBERT NITSCH

World record holder in constant weight (120m), free immersion (109m) no limits (214m)





designing for the future

Trygons revolutionary sled for Herbert Nitsch's No Limit WR at 700ft/ 214m

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMKIN-FOyPI>

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