

I arrived at the NSE training facility and could tell right away from the army truck parked in the driveway that I was going to fit right in. The large door rolled open, and I got my first look at the thirty-foot Pailolo. NSE is the only truly rebreather-friendly operation on the island. Both owners, as well as the Dive Master, Ryan Kenney, are closed-circuit certified. Other charters will let you dive closed-circuit, but they treat you as a curiosity.

We were led upstairs into a comfortable briefing room with a large map of the United States prominently displayed. This map was punctuated with stick pins marking NSE's route from New Hampshire to San Diego and then to Maui. After a thorough explanation of the safety equipment and a quick overview of

what we might encounter, the diving conditions, schedule of events and a list of recent aquatic sightings including turtles, black coral, various species of sharks, many species of tropical reef fish, scorpion fish and possibly the seldom seen bearded borefish.

With the gear already loaded, we made our way a short distance to the boat launch. Within minutes we were underway. The Pailolo has several comfortable seats with many handholds which everyone is encouraged to use. This boat is fast, steady and powerful. With seas running at 7-10 feet, we passed through several rain squalls followed by magnificent rainbows, arriving at the dive site about forty-five minutes later. With so much of the North Coast completely unexplored, Todd and Chris can pick somewhere new almost every time. The area they had chosen, Ryan called Po'i (poh'ee, means crest of a breaking wave in Hawaiian).

