

Screaming Skoda

BONAIRE ON WHEELS

Chris Ockeloen, aged (for sure) citizen of Bonaire, is the very proud owner of the one and only Škoda on the island of Bonaire. In fact he is the one and only owner of a screaming yellow-sprayed Škoda Felicia Fun. The two-seater/four-seater “convertible” pick up truck was manufactured in Czechoslovakia in 1999. It’s a Czechoslovakian design, fitted with a sturdy and lively Volkswagen Golf 1.6l. engine, delivered by the factories from Wolfsburg, Germany, with an overhead camshaft, a single barrel carburetor and a five-speed gearbox, delivering the engine power to the leaf-sprung rear axle.

Chris: “As a professional diver I love the color of this car. The body is sprayed yellow, the light alloy wheels are sprayed yellow, as are the bull bar and the spoiler. Everything on this car is yellow, except the tires, the wheels and the exhaust emission, which is light grey. And, of course, the license plate – B 1671 – is colored blue.”

And indeed, everything on this car is colored “diving yellow:” the body, the wheels, the leather steering wheel, the gear shift, the gauges in the dashboard,

the crown on the frogs on the vinyl and the carpet. It’s yellow all over the place.

Chris lives in a yellow painted house in the barrio of Hato, situated up north of



The Škoda Felicia Fun: Chris' Yellow Devil in two views

Kralendijk. He loves his work as a rescue diver at Yellow Submarine at Playa. Chris came to the Dutch Antilles in 1995 for the first time. Chris: “In those days we spent our holiday on Curaçao, learning scuba diving. They told us Bonaire was the place to be, speaking of diving, so we started visiting Bonaire during our next holidays. At this moment Bonaire is my home. I love my island, my privately owned house and my work, and I intend to stay here forever!

My Škoda Felicia Fun is perfectly equipped for the life on our island. It’s an ordinary pick up which is not ordinary. I can easily convert it from a two seater into a four seater! The car is made of solid European steel and high tech artificial material and well protected against the influences of the elements. In those days there were only seven cars like this in the Netherlands. Now, there are only six...”

Chris laughs. He is a spontaneous, serious and ludicrous man who loves life. Chris has earned membership into the Bonairean society. Please, stay on our island! □ J@n Brouwer

The 12th of a series of Bonaire Reporter articles by J@n Brouwer, featuring some of Bonaire’s interesting vehicles that are “on wheels.”

Disappointing Tai Chi Day



What was planned as a relatively large event to demonstrate the practice of Tai Chi turned into a bit of a disappointment for organizer Ron Sewell because few people showed up. Bonaire seemed clearly not ready to embrace the health art that brings a balance between body and mind.

All over the world Tai Chi exercises are done by thousands of people during World Tai Chi and Qigong Day. This is a yearly event on the last Saturday of April to emphasize on the positive effects that comes with the practice of Tai Chi and Qigong. For the first time Bonaire held the event at Parke Publiko.

Tai Chi instructor Sewell was to present Tai Chi to a broad Bonaire audience by giving a Tai Chi demonstration with his students and give the audience the possibility to participate. It took the Englishman weeks to organize, network, and to construct a fitting work-out program for the event. A proclamation was even signed by Commissioner James Kroon to make it an official day. Sewell did all this because he expected many people to be interested in it and expected almost 100 spectators; but only 12 showed up. The Park Publiko venue was a disappointment for Sewell. Tai Chi should be practiced in silence, and in relaxed circumstances. But Parke Publiko was very noisy, as the playground next to it was filled with playing children. Sewell:

If there will be another Tai Chi event next year is not sure.” For more information about world Tai Chi Day visit www.worldtaichiday.org. □

David Radomisli

A Shrink Looks At SCUBA

Looking For Another Reason To Stay Hydrated?



Guest Shrink: Robert Mankoff, PhD, Associate Professor of Medical Psychology, Medical University of the Americas, Nevis, West Indies

“Dr. Bob” has been diving since 1974 and has visited Bonaire several times.

Since your first dive, instructors, dive masters, store owners, boat operators, and your buddy have probably been nagging you about staying hydrated. Drink water between dives, avoid diuretics (things that encourage urination like coffee or alcohol), and drink more water when you get home.

Dehydration is thought to increase the likelihood of decompression sickness and is a relatively easy condition to remedy. Some divers (and I’ll plead guilty to believing this in the past) think that if you come to the boat well hydrated and sober, then replacing fluid after a single dive is not particularly important.

Other divers have a certain reluctance to drinking fluids on the boat because it leads to... well, a smelly wetsuit that you really don’t really want to pack with the rest of your vacation clothing.

You know the old saying: There are two kinds of divers. Those who pee in their wetsuits and those who lie about it. On the other hand, my dive buddy David says it can speed things up at Flamingo Airport when the pre-board officer gets a whiff while inspecting your luggage.

Sometimes the case is made that you need to drink because you are sweating in the heat, loaded down with gear, but in locations like Bonaire where boat rides are short (which usually means smaller boats without a head) and you aren’t sitting around sweating before your dive, it is tempting to forego drinks of water between dives. You had water with breakfast, you drink throughout the rest of the day, and you don’t really sweat a lot when you’re diving, right?

It turns out that you still need to drink between dives. Finally, there is hard scientific evidence that diving itself increases dehydration. It’s not just the sweating before you dive that causes dehydration. Submersion itself causes increased urine output and dehydration. So, that inter-dive watering is more than just a good thought.

A recent piece of research by Williams, Prior, and Bryson (Wilderness & Environmental Medicine, 2007 Spring; 18 [1]; pp 48-53) reveals that the act of diving itself appears to cause dehydration, even on recreational dives in warm water (e.g., tropical Caribbean) destinations. Across even a single dive in warm water, divers showed signs of increased dehydration in blood samples. They measured blood hematocrit from venous blood (a standard and precise way of determining level of hydration) following a single dive to less than 14 meters. Blood samples were taken 12 minutes before entering the water and a few minutes after leaving, so the loss wasn’t just caused by sweating as the divers waited. Deeper dives appeared to increase the level of dehydration. The amount of loss did not appear to be dramatic. They concluded that there is no reason to

change typical protocol, but it does lend support to the notion that you SHOULD have a drink of water between dives.

Obviously, all divers are concerned with preventing decompression illness, and many of our routines are designed to lower



Contributing author Bob Mankoff cave diving

the chances of DCI I and II. Some are superstition (I knew a fellow who ate a lemon every morning to ward off DCI), while some are backed up with good science (such as controlled ascent rate and precautionary decompress –safety stops), and some are just common sense. □

Story & photo from David Colvard, M.D.

David F. Colvard, M.D., is a private psychiatrist and clinical investigator in Raleigh NC, and a divemaster. He hosts www.DivePsych.com which provides evidence-based information for divers on psychological and stress factors in scuba divers.

