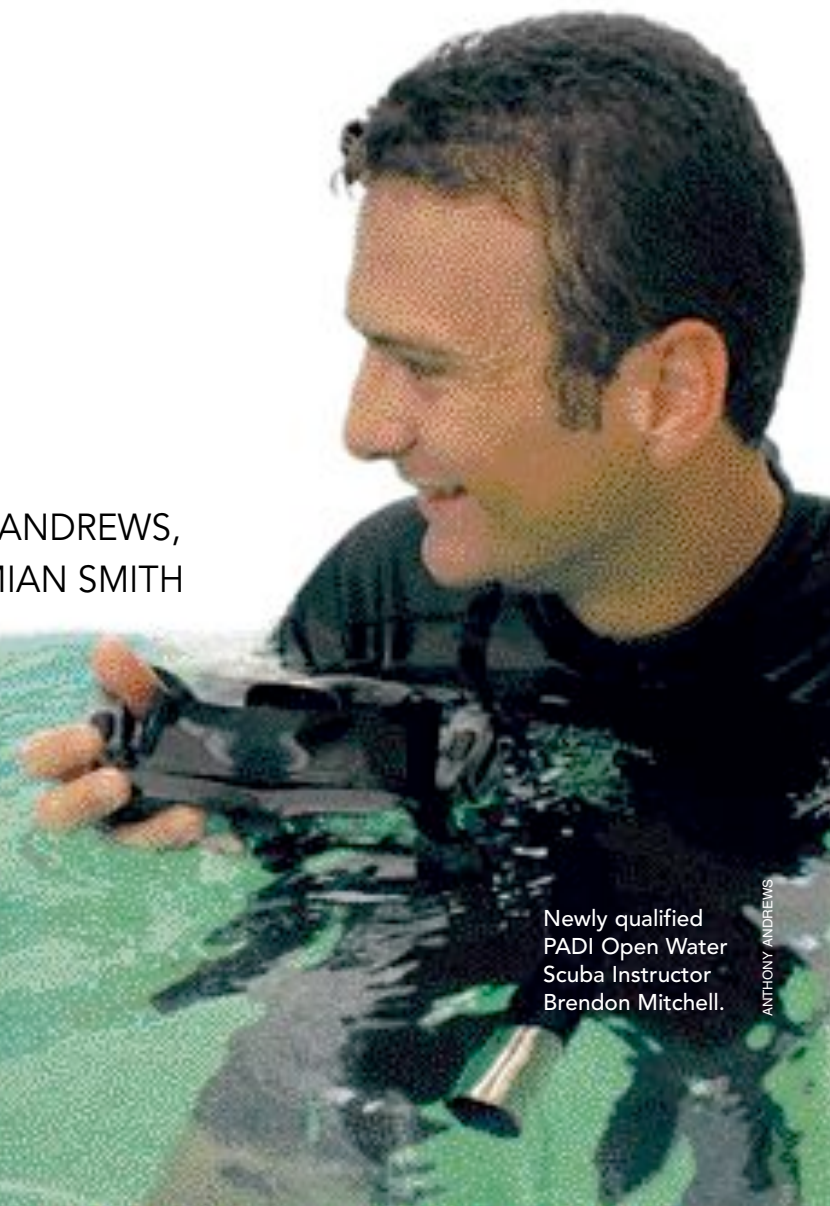


The finishing touches

+ THE INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT COURSE (IDC) TO BECOME A FULLY FLEDGED PADI OPEN WATER SCUBA INSTRUCTOR BROUGHT ME BACK, ONCE AGAIN TO SUNRISE DIVING ON PATONG BEACH. IT WAS THE REALISATION OF MY DREAM AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW AND BETTER LIFESTYLE. MY FIRST DIVE OVER A YEAR AGO NOW SEEMED LIKE A VERY DISTANT MEMORY.

: TEXT BRENDON MITCHELL

: IMAGES PAUL LEES, ANTHONY ANDREWS, STEPHEN LONGWORTH, & DAMIAN SMITH



Newly qualified PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor Brendon Mitchell.

ANTHONY ANDREWS



ANTHONY ANDREWS

My first Confined Open Water skills briefing.



PAUL LEES

Self study is a necessity.



DAMIAN SMITH

The perfect score.

The PADI Dive Master course was very intensive and I was fully expecting the Instructor training to be the same – but it was much more relaxed, and even more enjoyable! The IDC is comprised of two independent courses rolled into one; the six day Assistant Instructor (AI) and the Open Water Scuba Instructor (OWSI) also based over six days. The course is then followed by the Instructor Examination which takes place over two and a half days with the examiners flying in from the PADI Asia Pacific Headquarters in Sydney.

I was very much looking forward to beginning the IDC as I'd always wanted to teach but never found an activity that held my interest – until now that is. The Dive Master course had taught me everything I needed to dive safely with students, but the IDC would show me how to pass that knowledge on to others. Sunrise Diving Course Director, Tony Andrews would once again be at the helm as he'd been throughout my diving career and the familiar banter started almost immediately after I showed up. I used the two day IDC preparation provided by Sunrise Diving to its fullest extent. Tony and I went over the previously studied Dive Master material which helped me familiarise myself with the course ahead, along with some additional theory.

The first thing you notice on the IDC is that you spend the majority of your time in the classroom and very little time in the water. The course is designed to give you the ability to use a variety of training



STEPHEN LONGWORTH



ANTHONY ANDREWS



PAUL LEES

“ To say I was a little nervous would be an understatement, though I was very confident with my abilities. ”

Environment and the Recreational Dive Planners. Following the exams we were each allocated three presentation scenarios to be given the following day covering Confined Water, Open Water and Classroom. That evening we enjoyed a couple of beers on the beach, but only after we'd planned our presentations for the following day.

I was very excited on the second day, it was my big chance to get back in the water and show off the skills I'd been

also learn how to instruct the Emergency First Response (EFR) qualification, one of my personal favourites. As with the Dive Master course, you're expected to complete knowledge development reviews in your own time – which I found took about an hour per evening. The course was excellent once again, everyone from Sunrise Diving were very supportive and were more than willing to help out at any opportunity.

The IDC course absolutely flew by, with each day building on the knowledge of the previous one. Then it was time to take the Instructor Examination (IE). To say I was a little nervous would be an understatement. Though I was very confident with my abilities, I really wanted to pass the first time. Sunrise Diving had organised everything for me, from accommodation near the assessment centre to the lovely Ayala who supported me throughout the examinations.

The first day of the IE was held just up the road from the Sunrise Diving centre and their accommodation at neighbouring Kata beach. We arrived in plenty of time and found our place early. Everyone looked nervous but the examiners calmed things down with a string of terrible icebreaking jokes. The day consisted of two exams. The first was the 'Standards Exam' (Open Book) which involved scenario based questions identifying whether they were within PADI Standards or not. The second covered five theory topics from the Dive Master course namely, Physics, Physiology, Equipment, Skills and



practicing. It was a beautiful sunny morning and it was good to see everyone again. First of all came the confined water (pool) presentations which went well followed by the 'skills circuit' which I must admit, I was very confident about. From there we went back to the Kata Beach resort for the classroom presentations. I've always enjoyed this sort of thing. The PADI presentation system is easy to follow with structured sections to reinforce knowledge throughout.

The Open Water final assessment took place off Kata Beach just a few minutes from where the IE was being held. We each had to perform and demonstrate to presentation standard, two teaching scenarios, one of which was knot tying drills. We also had to demonstrate a rescue, again to presentation standards. Perfect water conditions helped; there was little current that day.

Aside from the knot tying, my designated scenario was the five point descent with reference line. You brief your mock students (fellow instructor candidates on the examination) on the beach about the skill you want them to perform then take them into the ocean to perform it. But there's a twist – the PADI Examiner is instructing one or two of them to make mistakes in performing the skill, which must be identified in a timely manner to avoid anything going horribly wrong!

With the briefings, skills and debriefings over, it was time for the rescue demonstrations. By this point it didn't feel like an examination any more; all the written exams were out the way and it was as if you were teaching for real.

We all left the water in high spirits and waited for our results, though I have to say most of the conversations centred around where we were all going to meet up for a beer whatever the result.

Finally, after what seemed like ages but was actually only a few minutes, we all got the handshake from our examiner and his congratulations. It was an amazing feeling – a journey which had started from very humble beginnings was now fulfilled. I couldn't wait to get back to Sunrise Diving and let Tony know that we hadn't let him down and his 100% pass rate was still intact! However on the way back from the beach I began to think "where's the fun in telling him I passed when I can wind him up telling him I haven't for an hour... or maybe three?" What was even better was that all the others joined in, even the staff. Superb!

When we finally came clean and told Tony the truth, it finally started to sink in and we all chatted about what Instructor life would be like and what the next step would be...

But that's another story!

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3	

- 1 Good friends Brendon & Tony take time out at Koh Racha Yai.
- 2 My training is complete.
- 3 The Sunrise Diving Team.

For more info on PADI courses visit: www.padi.com/padi/en/kd/padicourses.aspx

