



## Interview with ZuBlu

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### **What inspired you to start ZuBlu diving? What is your mission, and your goals for the company?**

Starting ZuBlu was driven by two ambitions. Firstly, we wanted to create a better platform for people to discover amazing destinations and incredible underwater experiences. Having worked in the industry for many years, we were being continually asked 'where should I go to see XYZ?', 'what time of year should I go to see XYZ?', 'how do I get there and where should I stay?'. With our intimate knowledge of every destination we feature on the site, we are tackling the 'Where, when and how' that most people struggle to figure out.

Secondly, we are deeply passionate about conservation and the role tourism has to play in preserving the environments and destinations we feature on our site. So as well as giving our guests the ability to search for and discover new experiences, we are highlighting the efforts our partner resorts are making to reduce their impact on the environment and conserve the reefs and jungles they rely on for their businesses. We want to give our guests the ability to make more informed choices about where they should travel and spend their hard-earned money and holiday time. We are always trying to work with resorts that employ sustainable business practices and support conservation efforts, but of course there is a sliding scale of what resorts can do - particularly in remote locations where they may not have access to technologies or recycling facilities. Given this, we do not 'mark down' a resort if they do less for the environment than another resort; we simply highlight what they are doing and let visitors to our site decide where they want to go.

We also encourage our guests to consider their own impacts - their carbon footprint for instance, or the waste they produce when they travel - and to also get involved either through volunteering with or direct donations to conservation projects. We too are pledging a commitment to conservation through the ZuBlu Trust - an independent fund that we are currently in the process of setting up that will directly support conservation efforts in the destinations we feature.

Our mission is to simply provide a fantastic platform of discovery for divers, snorkelers and travellers, provide our guests with unforgettable experiences and most importantly, make a positive impact on the marine environment.

### **What sets your company apart from others in the industry?**

We are different to others in the industry for a variety of reasons. Firstly, we look to put the power of discovery into our guest's hands. We don't simply try to sell packages or deals that work best for us, rather we ensure the trips and experiences we create are tailored to our guests wishes, first and foremost. We are also trying to work with more sustainable resorts whenever possible and are actively encouraging, promoting and supporting conservation efforts. Finally, our plans to setup the ZuBlu Trust and to start directly funding conservation projects and scholarships is unique we believe.

### **Can you tell us more about how ZuBlu creates tailored and experience-based trips for their clients?**

ZuBlu is all about empowering our clients and fulfilling their wishes. The ZuBlu platform itself is designed to not only help people discover ideal destinations and new experiences, but also be inspired by what is out there! It's then our job to learn more about our clients and their preferences, and put together the ideal trip.

Having either worked at or travelled to every destination on the ZuBlu platform, we are experts at ensuring all elements of the trip are in place, perfectly. From landing at the airport at the right time so you don't miss the last ferry out to that island, to visiting in the right season to see turtles nesting, or avoiding that dodgy taxi rank that will overcharge you, we'll help you tackle the travel, so you can enjoy the journey.

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We've also stayed at or visited most of the resorts, so can recommend them with complete confidence. Tripadvisor reviews are helpful, but nothing beats first-hand experience. At ZuBlu we make it our job to find incredible destinations and resorts that offer that little bit extra - ones that have stunning diving and amazing services of course, but also a unique location perhaps, some amazing jungle trekking nearby or a great yoga teacher on site. Why? Because these are the places we want to experience ourselves. We see it as our responsibility to track down and share these once-in-a-lifetime experiences with our guests.

### **How do you want your trips to inspire people to help conserve our environment and wildlife?**

Inspiring people to help conserve our environment and wildlife is arguably the driving force behind ZuBlu. We hope that by giving our guests these incredible experiences in stunning locations, as well as simultaneously raising awareness of the conservation work that is actually being done to protect the very places we are sending our guests, we are going to create a stronger bond between tourism and conservation.

### **How do you see diving as beneficial to learning about our world?**

Diving is unique in that unlike other adventure sports or pastimes, you can get up-close-and-personal with extraordinary animals and some of the most complex and fascinating ecosystems on the planet, all by simply grabbing a tank or snorkel and mask. A guest could do their Open Water course, hop on a boat tomorrow and drop in on a coral reef with the highest recorded marine biodiversity on the planet, filled with fascinating interactions and behaviours. And these reefs are simply breathtaking - so full of colour and life. It is an extraordinarily humbling experience and all of us at ZuBlu feel privileged to share these experiences and destinations.

At the same time, we witness first hand, on a daily basis, the impact human activities are having on the marine environment. For so long, the seas and oceans have been man's dumping ground and inexhaustible larder - but that attitude is catching up on us. Divers are seeing changes in water quality, large fish species disappearing, plastic waste and discarded fishing nets smothering reefs and bleaching events across the globe. We are the underwater equivalent of a miner's canary - the first ones to sense danger ahead. As such, divers are generally very well-informed about conservation issues and sustainability, and they are definitely becoming vocal about what they are seeing. Perhaps the diving travel industry can become a leader and put sustainable practices at its heart - a model for the rest of the tourism industry we hope, and one that ZuBlu aims to be part of.

### **Where does your company host trips as of today? What about those spots makes them so special?**

ZuBlu currently offers trips and experiences in four countries - Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives and Philippines. Each of these countries have special regions and destinations that are home to some of the most spectacular diving experiences in Asia, as well as impressive diversity. These destinations also offer a wide range of other activities, making them ideal destinations for experiential travel and adventure. And most importantly, the ZuBlu team know these places inside out, so are able to ensure we can put together itineraries perfectly. As we grow, we will look to add more locations and countries.

### **Where do you see your company in the next few years? What impact are you hoping to create?**

Within the next few years, we aim to:

- Become the go-to company for in-depth knowledge of diving in Asia
- Establish ourselves as the leading diving travel provider in the region
- Expand the range of experiences we offer our guests to include more countries and destinations
- Make a significant impact on the marine world through inspiring our guests to support and get involved in conservation, organised ZuBlu-funded conservation projects and supported aspiring marine biologists with scholarships.

*Extraordinary*  
**Destinations**

*Exceptional*  
**Experiences**

*Inspirational*  
**Resorts**