

# Diving God's Rock



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The Bottom Bunch

Located within hundreds of feet of Quast's Rock, lies another gem of San Diego diving, that is known as Gods Rock. Located at 32 51.344 N and 117 16.621W\*, God's Rock is another



The colorful gorgonian fans and Purple Hydrocoral covering the top of a small arch.

divesite that follows the contour of the rock bottom coming from the south, and the deeper, sandy ocean bottom heading to the north. While Quast Rock was mainly a large, water worn rock, with boulders on is north and east sides, God's Rock is a boulder strewn field with a much smaller sculpted rock formation, at the sites highest point.

Where the rock met the sand, I read



The colorful reef, with sea stars, Strawberry anemones and sponges adorning its surface. One of the locals peers into the cameras lens, with a cloud of blacksmith in the distance.



Two orange Puff Ball sponges at the base of a Golden gorgonian fan.

nice depth to give you time to look around and explore.

With the beautiful weather and unseasonably warm temperatures the first half of the month, Jeff Hannigan, Dave Hubbard and I held great

hopes for a great dive this Sunday in mid February. Heading out Mission Bay Channel aboard the Extremis, the clouds hung heavy in the sky. Leaving the protection of the channel we found the wind blowing from the south, creating a three



A Red gorgonian fan against the boulders of God's Rock.

a depth of seventy-two feet. At the top of the highest formations the depth read fifty feet. Still a

to five foot swell. The decision was



Colorful Strawberry anemones populate the vertical rocks surface.

made to head north and make for the protection of La Jolla Bay. As we traveled north the

bow of the Extremis would occasionally dig into a passing swell, blasting water over the cabins windows and sending the water like rain onto the open rear deck. Jeff commented, "we're going with the swell now, it'll be a lot worse on our way back". The sound of crashing surf could be heard along the shores of Mission Beach. A boat passing us heading south was



A deep channel between the rock reefs offers a colorful foreground with multitudes of fish life beyond.

bashing its way through the oncoming swells. My hopes for a great dive were fading. It had now begun to rain.

Turning the corner, we headed east, into La Jolla Bay, behind the sea wall of

Casa Cove. Passing over Quast's Rock, we made our way east to try a new site known as God's Rock. After making a few passes we located its profile on the bottom finder. Leaving the warmth and dryness of the cabin we prepared to drop anchor. The rain was falling. In the distance, showers of rain, like a dark curtain over the ocean could be seen to the north and west.

Dropping



A school of Blacksmith pass between the upper pinnacles.



The beautifully sculptured rock of the high point of God's Rock..

anchor we prepared for the dive.

After donning our suits in the dry cabin we made our way out in the rain to assemble our gear.

Leaning over my tank to shield it from the falling rain, I put on my regula-

tor with the rains water running off the tip of my nose.

Back rolling from the side of the Extremis I crashed through the waters surface below. Immediately I was surprised at how blue the water looked. I began to descend, swimming towards the anchor line to lead me my destina-



A school of Sardines passes in the distance.

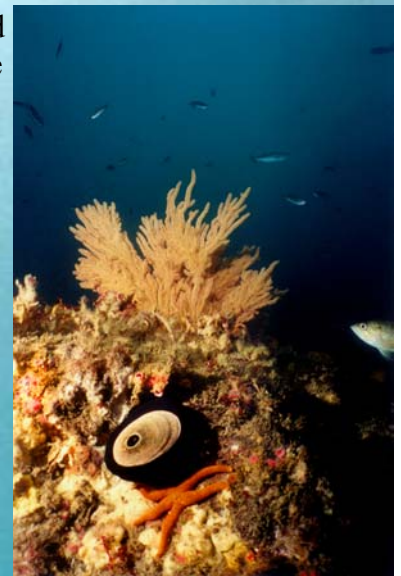


To the left, a yellow branch of Zoanthid anemones begins their take over of a Brown gorgonian.



The boulders to the northeast side of God's Rock.

tion. After descending about 20 feet I could make out details on the bottom.



A blood star and limpet together on the sponge covered reef.

Keeping the anchor line in sight I descended through the forest of kelp while swimming forward, toward the dark shapes in the distance. Large boulders, piled one against another, created deep cracks and crevices between. Gorgonian fans attached to the rocks surface were swaying lazily in the oceans surge. Looking into the crevices between the boulders I found White Finger sponges, reaching upward like a white gloved hand. They seemed to inhabit

the darkest most inaccessible places. In the distance the dark shapes of hundreds of fish could be seen hovering over the silhouetted contour of boulders and sculptured rock pinnacles, against the dark blue water beyond.



One of the local Sheephead comes in for a beauty pass, on the north side of God's Rock.

Suddenly the light from the sky began to grow dim, like a storm cloud passing before the Sun. Looking up I could see Jeff, with his cameras strobe arms extended outward like the wings of a bird, hanging below a immense school of Sardines. Their silver bodies shining



Looking out into open water to the east, from beneath the upper pinnacle.



A closer view of the pinnacles surface.

in the light of the over-cast sky. The huge mass of fish swirled in a counter clockwise direction. The core of the mass appeared black. With every exhalation



Two of God's Rocks upper most pinnacles.

Jeff's bubbles traveled in columns toward the surface. The Sardines would create openings within this

massive ball of life, like tunnels through rock to let the bubbles pass.

The deepest part of the dive is on the northeast side of this boulder garden, where the rock meets the sand at 72 feet. Rising towards the top of this rock formation is a small version of Quast's Rock. Beautiful

ful pinnacles extending upward and outward from the rock base beneath. Colorful sponges and Strawberry anemones inhabit their surface. Blacksmith and Sardines school over and between the rocks.

Rock fish, Sand bass, inhabit the boulders, with Garibaldi and



The kelp that surrounds God's Rock, as seen from twenty feet below the surface.

Sheephead mixed though out.

When I returned to the Extremis, the sky had changed to broken clouds. While still in the water I looked up at Dave Hubbard who

had returned moments before. Locking eyes we both started laughing, knowing our day in question turned into one of our most incredible and memorable dives ever.



Jeff Hannigan, our Captain, hangs at deco on the anchor line, leading to the bow of the Extremis, where Dave Hubbard stands.

