

Otello Litardi: Our New Instructor Trainer in Italy

NAUI has a new Instructor Trainer in Italy. Otello Litardi qualified as an IT this June in a course conducted by NAUI Italian Representative, Nicoletta Codiferro. Otello, who is now 42, is unique in our ranks of Italian NAUI Instructor Trainers in that he has but one leg.

When he was six years old, Otello was diagnosed with osteomyelitis. Treated with surgery and cobalt therapy, it was thought that the treatment was successful. But a short time later it was determined that he had developed Ewing's sarcoma in his right tibia. Ewing's sarcoma is a very rare but highly malignant form of bone cancer that occurs primarily in children and adolescents (about 2 cases per million children annually worldwide). More surgery and heavy doses of radiation and chemotherapy were successful, and he was able to return to a semi-normal life as he grew up. But the bones were brittle; he was often breaking legs, and as he says, he spent much of his time wearing plaster casts, supports and braces, and because his right leg was not growing along with his left, orthopedic shoes. In 1987, when he was 19, the pain returned to his right leg; it was found that he had a necrotic area in his right tibia, and he underwent an amputation.

That, Otello says, was the beginning of a new life for him. Although he had to persuade others that he was able in spite of his apparent disability, with his prosthesis he could now go to the gym, play tennis, soccer, and handball, and he even acquired a girlfriend. In 1994/95 he became interested in scuba diving and took a course, passing all the requirements for a "normal" certification with FIP-SAS, the Italian federation. Now bitten by the scuba bug, Otello rose through certification levels, ultimately attending a NAUI ITC in Hurghada, Egypt, in May 1998. In 2001, he founded Blue & Blue Dive Club (www.bluediveclub.it), one of the biggest and more active diving schools in his area—Viterbo, a city and province just north of Rome. Finally, in June of this year, he completed his Instructor Trainer Workshop during an ITC conducted by Nicoletta Codiferro.

Otello has logged more than 1800 dives. With all of the trips he has conducted for his students and club members, his diving has taken him all around the world: Italy, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Oman, Tanzania, Maldives, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Cuba, and Santo Domingo. We welcome him to the rating—and the responsibilities—of NAUI Instructor Trainer.



Florida and Hawaii Come Together



From left to right: Derek Smith, Kevin Flanagan, Rick Gomez, Mike Terrell, Casey Coy, Mauritius Bell, William Browne, David Pence, and Peter DenHaan.

NAUI hosted one of the largest Inspiration/Evolution Closed Circuit Rebreather Instructor/Course Director Workshops organized by the University of Hawaii and DSO Dave Pence with diver candidates from the University of Miami with DSO Rick Gomez, from the Florida Aquarium with DSO Casey Coy and Diving Coordinator Mike Terrell out of Tampa, Florida, and Mauritius Bell, Unit Diving Coordinator for the University of Hawaii on Hilo.

Peter DenHaan, NAUI West Coast Representative conducted the workshop with four diver candidates, Instructor candidates Kevin Flanagan (assistant DSO) and Derek Smith (Marine Safety Officer) and Course Director Candidate David Pence (DSO) all from the University of Hawaii. William Browne, Assistant Professor from the University of Miami, already certified on the Inspiration rebreather, was there taking video with the Red One camera.

Everyone came well prepared and Kevin and Derek did an outstanding job under the guidance of David Pence. At the end of the seven day course everyone had a great experience and passed with flying colors.

Florida, USA

Italy

Washington, USA

Thailand