

The HangLine

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Canadian Mermaid in the Caribbean

By Bill Nadeau

She faces west into the fading sunset, the sun gleaming off her bright eyed face and extended hand, her long locks flowing behind her in the drifting water. Poised gracefully, the mermaid stares off over the magnificent wall into the deep waters of the Cayman ridge which drops thousands of feet into the abyss between the Yucatan Basin and the Cayman Trench. She stands as yet another great accomplishment for Canadian Sculptor Simon Morris, well known in the dive industry for not only his work in the scuba equipment industry but also for his bronze underwater art as well.

Sunset House Diving Resort on Grand Cayman worked with Morris to sink the nine foot bronze Mermaid statue in early September but Hurricane Keith, which slammed Belize and the Yucatan Peninsula, delayed the event by more than a month.



Finally in November 2000 she was towed

out by Sunset House flagship Manta and lowered into its final resting place. Sitting in 50 feet of water surrounded by a colourful





reef and a profusion of schooling fish she is already beginning to attract hundreds of divers from the other resorts. The dedicated dive resort faces due west and is a popular spot for not only its first class shore diving and charter

operations, but its spectacular view of the daily sunset.

Siren of the Sunset Reef as she is known to diving locals is aptly named after the Grand Cayman resort, Sunset House, which commissioned Canadian artist Simon Morris to prepare the second Mermaid of its kind. The first located in British Columbia, in waters near Powell River. 'Amphitrite', (in mythology, Queen of the Sea and wife to Poseidon) is another name given to the Cayman mermaid by Kathleen Huber of Philadelphia, in a contest the resort held months prior to her original scheduled sinking.



Keith Sahm, manager of the popular Caribbean resort is excited about the new attraction. *"It has been a long time in planning to finally sink the mermaid but he figures it was a worthy task."*



The shore site, a short walk from the resort's dive shop and hotel rooms also features a World War II landing craft, eels, rays, sharks and a wall that drops to thousands of feet below. Both shore divers and other charter companies are now making Sunset Reef a regular stop on their diving itinerary. The local submarine tour company 'Atlantis Adventures' even stops to show its 48 passengers the Canadian artwork.

Moments before we lowered the mermaid into the water I asked Simon how he felt. *"You just can't imagine!"* was his reply.

Actually I could after I saw the look on the faces of his family who attended the event and were part of the diving ceremony.

For more information on Sunset House, the shore diving and the mermaid visit their website at www.sunsethouse.com.

~Safe Diving

