

Mask CRESSI PINOCCHIO

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PEOPLE OFTEN LIKE TO CLING to equipment with which they are familiar, even after something obviously better has come along. That's why Cressi still makes the Pinocchio mask, so-called because it was the first diving mask to include a compartment for the nose, and thus allow mask-clearing.

You may find it amazing that such a revolutionary design step needed to be taken, but the Pinocchio mask was first designed way back before the war. That's World War Two, for younger readers. In fact, the Pinocchio's design is older than I am!

While Commander Buster Crabb took on Italian divers sinking Allied shipping in the harbour of Gibraltar armed only with a pair of Navy shorts, a pure oxygen rebreather and some swimming goggles, those cunning Italians had proper scuba equipment that included masks that they could clear of any water for unimpeded vision.

Cressi-sub was formed, and production accelerated once peace came. In those days the skirt was made with natural rubber, and divers often wondered why they came up with red faces. We were less aware of allergies then.

The modern Pinocchio has what looks very much like a black silicone skirt, but it smells like rubber. Otherwise it is made in the same injection moulds used more than half a century ago.

The giveaway is the fact that I had to tidy a lot of swarf from the skirt before it was ready to use. Some of those divers who bought Pinoccios when they first took up diving still replace their old ones. They stick to what they know, and Cressi is reluctant to cut off their supply.

The Pinocchio is a single-lens plate design masquerading as a twin-lens mask. A metal clip keeps the top and bottom from spreading apart and distorting the mask frame.

I thought this clip was packing for transport, but the importer told me that if I removed it, the mask would keep flooding.

The straps are attached directly to the skirt via old-fashioned metal buckles.

It was interesting to use an item of diving equipment from yesteryear, but I can't understand why anyone would want to use a Pinocchio mask in preference to, say, a Cressi Big Eye Evo.

We all had a good laugh trying it, but frankly it doesn't measure up to what we expect today.

Its saving grace is its ridiculously yesteryear price, so if it fits you, try it!

Comparable Masks: None

SPECS

PRICE £17

LENS Single

CONTACT www.cressi.it