

Regulator Cressi Ellipse cold water MC9

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Sean at O'Three remembers me from the days when I had long hair that I tied in a pony-tail for diving, and had become well-known for being ruthless in print about items of diving equipment that were patently no good.

He remembers my original regulator tests in 1991, when I panned some notable brand names. I observed that manufacturers were getting much more canny now, and only sending me good stuff - which naturally makes my job harder.

Cressi is a case in point. Twenty years ago, I wouldn't have given its regulators house-room. I visited the factory in Genoa and shocked some of its staff by telling Mr Cressi this to his face.

He isn't stupid, and immediately set his staff off on the quest to build a better product. We have seen a gradual improvement over the years that has culminated in this Cressi Ellipse coldwater regulator, which is very good indeed.

First Stage

First stages all seem to be going the way of the original Apeks dry-sealed design, and this Cressi MC9 example with the coldwater membrane fitted is no exception.

You shouldn't need to keep the innards dry for a good coldwater performance, but it certainly keeps any detritus in the water in which you're diving away from the mechanism.

It's a squat unit, with two high- and four medium-pressure ports mounted conveniently around it. The "coldwater" end has the familiar plastic diaphragm that domes outwards in a satisfying way when you open the tank valve.

Second Stage

The Ellipse Balanced second stage is one of the lightest around. It has a characteristically fashionable small exhaust-T that only just directs exhaled bubbles sufficiently away from the face, and there is a Venturi plus/minus lever on the top that reduces the chance of exponential free-flows at the surface, but had little discernable effect under water, so I left it always at the minus position.

There is a heat sink in-line on the hose that emulates the Apeks design, and I confess that I swapped the hose for a braided Apeks job that routed more comfortably.

Not to be outdone by Apeks, Cressi has included a second heat-sink within the second-stage body.

The breathing resistance knob panders to the needs of American consumers who believe that less is more but more is better. I cannot foresee any situation in which I would want to increase the cracking pressure of a properly maintained regulator. I would just inhale less forcibly.

Purge Control

The front part of the second stage is sufficiently firm to allow you to operate the purge control without blasting your tonsils away.

You can adjust the range as you like, from a slight trickle of air to a full gush, without too much dexterity needed.

Comfort

I felt that the mouthpiece material had the consistency of a winegum, and replaced it with a much better one. This instantly turned the regulator into one of the lightest and most comfortable in the mouth I have used.

COMPARABLE REGULATORS TO CONSIDER:

Sherwood SR-1, £360

Apeks XTX50, £352

SPECS

PRICE £307

FIRST STAGE Diaphragm

PORTS 4 mp and 2 hp

SECOND-STAGE ADJUSTMENTS BRA and venturi plus/minus

DRY WEIGHT 800g

CONTACT www.cressi.com

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