

Kiss Orca Spirit mCCR

As a fairly new diver, with less than 2 years experience, I will admit that initially I was a bit intimidated by diving closed circuit. Though as an underwater photographer I have always been intrigued by the prospect of silent, bubbleless diving for hours on end. The more I learned through my research, the safety aspects of an mCCR became apparent. Especially with such a stellar track record of safety, I knew that the Orca Spirit was what I wanted to try.

And after my first rebreather experience - all I can say is that I am hooked! Closed circuit diving has completely exceeded my expectations. The intuitive and lightweight design of the KISS Orca Spirit made it easy for me to learn and enjoy.

The Experience:

Once I began reading through the manual, the simplicity of the unit became very apparent. The user-friendly design combined with the quality instruction that I received from my patient and informative instructor Shane Thompson, helped me get confident with my ability to assemble/disassemble the Orca Spirit immediately.

With only AOW (Advanced Open Water) and Nitrox certifications under my belt, the classroom session was admittedly a bit intensive, though extremely rewarding. With little to no technical diving experience, I had a lot of new terms and information to digest. The next step was my confined water dive in the pool – finally a chance to try the unit out in the water! While dialing in my buoyancy and covering skills, I could not help but be stunned by how quickly I became comfortable. Thanks to the placement of the counter lungs, which is very similar to that of a jacket-style BCD, I was able to find my balance and trim in less than 5 minutes.

The next morning we geared up and headed out to La Jolla for my first ocean dives on the unit. This was a real treat, as I have wanted to dive La Jolla for years. After my pre-dive checks were complete, the Shores became an underwater playground for the next 4 hours! One of the key benefits of diving closed circuit that I noticed immediately was how easily I could swim through schools of fish, that octopus did not retreat into their lairs and I was even able to sit nose to nose with an angel shark. The only frustrating part was that I didn't have my camera on me during training.

The weight of the Orca Spirit is very similar to the steel 80's that I dive at home in Monterey. The trek from the parking lot through the beach on a low tide day wasn't actually that bad, despite the heat. At only 42 lbs complete, I am already planning and beginning to get excited about my next dive trip. Especially looking forward to the added benefits of minimal/no decompression times, silent and bubbleless diving.