

Our Special Summer As Divers And Resident Bloggers

Hello everybody! We are Manuel Bustelo and Alana Alvarez, and we are lucky enough to say we are two of the ambassadors of this DAN-tastic family!

Besides our love for each other (yes, we are a happy couple), we also share a huge love for the ocean and for diving.





So, when the DAN Europe team proposed us to spend a summer with them, getting to know their headquarters and staff, and participating as Resident Bloggers in all the activities they offer, besides insurance, we jumped right into a huge YES!

We immediately packed our bags and all our diving equipment. There were a lot of limitations in the availability of flights, due to the COVID-19 situation, but that wasn't going to stop us. We would take all the sanitary precautions needed to protect us and others, but there was no way we would miss this opportunity.

As we love road trips, we decided that our best option would be to choose the one thing that proved to be our most loyal partner for so many other amazing travels: our beloved hybrid car. We drove 1700 km from Andorra, where we currently reside, to the DAN Europe Continental Office, in this little and charming Italian town called Roseto degli Abruzzi.





As soon as we arrived, we immediately realised that the long trip was well worth it! Not only the DAN Europe team received us in such a warm and caring way, but they also had prepared many interesting activities that we will be sharing with them - and with all of you through this blog - during the next few weeks.

The super fun itinerary will include some interesting, signature first-aid courses that are part of their educational offerings, such as:

- [Basic Life Support \(BLS\) & Automated External Defibrillation](#)
- [Oxygen First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries](#)
- [Advanced Oxygen First Aid for Scuba Diving Injuries](#)





We will also engage in citizen science initiatives, as DAN is deeply involved in [scientific research](#).

And, of course, there will be a lot of diving going on! Including taking the plunge into the world's deepest pool: [Y-40®](#). Woohoo!

We started this first week just getting to know better the team and the location. Roseto is a picturesque

coastal town located in the province of Teramo, Abruzzo region. A perfect combination between the blue of the sea and the green of its surrounding hills. There, the medieval village of Montepagano, with its luxurious vineyards and striking ancient Roman defensive walls, contributes to make this a magical and romantic place to enjoy and where to relax. And that's exactly what we did!



But not everything in life can be just pleasure and fun: we also came to dive, a true torture, isn't it? So, at the end of the week, we hit the road and drove to a nearby seaside town called Numana, where we were able to make our very first dive after the COVID-19 lockdown.

When we arrived at the dive center, we did not know what to expect regarding the sanitary measures to respect for the "new normal". Would it be safe to dive considering the current situation? How would we keep the right distance and stay protected in an environment where we ourselves and our equipment are constantly in contact with others?





We were pleasantly surprised by the very professional and organised way dive centers in this area have adapted.

In addition to the [recommended cleaning and disinfection measures](#), each diver had a designated and numbered area where to store their equipment and get dressed, keeping a reasonable distance from each other. All divers had to assemble their SCUBA units beforehand and were provided protective bags to cover regulators while the units were taken on the boat. There, each diver had to wear a protective mask (we had our supercool DAN-K01 textilprene ones!) and had a designated, comfortable area where to sit and get kitted out.

When all was ready, we embarked towards the point of immersion. On the day menu we had the **Nicole wreck**, an old, 120 metres long cargo which sank during a sea storm back in 2003, just a couple of miles off the Numana port. The cargo sits on the sandy bottom, in a perfect upright position, at a max depth of 16 metres.



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Over the years, the wreck was completely covered with mussels, ascidians, and sponges. It actually turned into a kind of natural reef, hosting an incredible variety of marine life: grey mullets, seabreams, boops boops, combtooth blennies hiding out in small holes, and a huge number of crustaceans (crabs, lobsters, shrimps, prawns) and nudibranchs. And more: bigger fishes such as snappers, amberjacks, redfish, conger eels, and even eagle rays can be spotted around. Visibility is often limited, but the site is teeming with life, and is a great place for macro photography, or observation of small critters with a good dive torch.



What an amazing way to start our adventure! We highly recommend it!

All this happened in just one week, and we are looking forward to our next exciting activities.

Stay tuned for more!

About the authors

[Manu Bustelo](#) is an environmental entrepreneur & MarCom specialist. He's worked in the adventure industry for over 20 years, representing numerous brand. He currently works with Aqua Lung, PADI & DAN Europe as an Ambassador. [Alana Alvarez](#) is a Pharmacist with a huge passion for the sea & conservation. When not scuba-diving or working as a DAN Ambassador, Alana fills in her time connecting the dots between cooking and sustainable eating. They are a loving couple but above all, a team.