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Current Issue

Where To Buy

Reader's Poll

What is your main source for purchasing dive equipment?:

- Dive Center
- Internet

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Git 'R Done

By Daryl Carson (more by this author)

SCUBAPRO MK 11 R295 Regulator

I must have half a dozen regulators stuffed into my four dive bags. A couple are high-end breathing machines, but the rest are more economical and typical of what you might find in a dive shop's rental department. It dawned on me the other day that no matter how many Ferraris I buy, I'll never part with these Chevy workhorses. They're indestructible, and whether I use them as a primary, a backup or a loaner to a friend, they perform on every dive. They require no other care than a good rinse at the end of the day and an annual visit to the dive shop.



SCUBAPRO's MK11 R295 is this kind of regulator. Whether you make it your first regulator purchase or simply add it to your collection, it will be part of your dive kit for years to come. The MK11 first stage is of the ultra-reliable, balanced-diaphragm design, and it comes with a couple of nice features that give it an edge in its class. First is SCUBAPRO's Thermal Insulating System, which uses bushing inserts and ice-repellent coatings to make the internal parts of the first stage highly resistant to freezing. This means you can plunge into cold-water adventures confident that your reg is up to the challenge. Also notable with the MK11 is a full compliment of ports. With two high-pressure and four low-pressure ports, you'll have options for arranging hoses and be able to support extra gear, such as a drysuit. Not all budget-friendly regs offer such flexibility.

When I first hit the water with the MK11 R295, I stayed at the surface and began jostling the second stage around. The R295 doesn't have any diver-adjustable controls for breathing sensitivity, although it does have a fixed VIVA assist (a vacuum assist to help ease breathing effort). I was happy to find that submerging the second stage in all types of positions failed to cause any free-flow. Slipping beneath the surface, the first breath came easily, and I instantly appreciated the R295's lightweight design. Even with the standard mouthpiece, the reg was easy to keep in place, and by the end of the dive I hadn't noticed any jaw fatigue.

Descending, I spent most of the dive comfortably cruising in little or no current, but toward the end I decided it was time for a bit of a workout. I upped the pace of my fin-strokes and started doing laps around the little dive site. Keeping this pace until I started to feel a bit winded helped me really draw hard on the regulator, and it performed well. I did notice that the exhaust tee could be a little wider for my personal taste, although the design does a nice job of balancing the need for bubble dispersion with the benefits of keeping the second stage streamlined and lightweight.

One final selling point of the R295, and something that has made its predecessors popular in the technical diving community, is that it has a reversible low-pressure hose attachment. Having the hose come out of the left side of the second stage makes life much easier when you sling a deco tank under your left arm.

scubapro mk11 r295 regulator

Impressions A fantastic, budget-friendly regulator. Solid performance and features put it at the top of its class. Key Features Reliable first-stage design with Thermal Insulating System for cold-water conditions. Multiple ports allow flexibility in equipment configurations. Lightweight second stage is comfortable, and fixed VIVA assist performs well in a wide range of conditions. Contact www.scubapro.com

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