

SHARM TIME

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BLUE TIME

Only One Apnea Centre, a record factory in Sharm: Federico Mana -100

- You feel very small, almost insignificant being down there...- said Federico Mana being back from 100 metres depth holding his breath.

Cristal clear waters, excellent weather conditions, and a mild in water temperature all year round, are an outstanding setting for outstanding performances in free-diving training. For these reasons Umberto Pelizzari, the Italian free-diving living legend, in 2003 decided to start in Sharm el Sheikh the Red Sea branch of his Apnea Academy, the prestigious free diving school and instructor development agency.

- The Red Sea has fantastic reefs, is within easy reach from Europe, it offers the possibility to find current-free spots, a very important issue when free-diving- said Umberto Pelizzari, in an interview released in 2003.

Since then, two AIDA (*International Association for Development of Apnea*) World Championships were held, and several World Records breaking took place in Sharm. In a few years Umberto's magic touch and the realistic fervour of Fabio Brucini, from FreeStyle Company, made of Sharm el Sheikh an international destination for free-divers enthusiasts and world champions as Carlos Coste. This successful burst of free-diving/apnea international events brought even more experience, skills and professional growth in Sharm. Most recently a few resident athletes and free-diving instructors de-

veloped in Sharm el Sheikh the Only One Apnea Centre, a world-class facility for free-divers. And more records came.

In August 15th and August 22nd 2009, Federico Mana, an Italian athlete and sharmer, broke two Italian Free-diving records:

-100m CWT (constant weight discipline) and -92 FIM (freeimmersionapnea) in

the calm waters of Sodfa, straight in front of the Sharm Club Hotel. Ten humans only in the world can say: I have been that deep without the help of a sled to descend, only relying on my fins and lungs - and now Federico is one of them. In a three minutes dive Federico swam down to the depth to 40 metres, where his body become less buoyant, and sunk to the abyssal depth of one hundred metres. He swam up again holding the -100 tag in his hand, a timeless swim toward the surface, and the air. From the floating platform two AIDA judges evaluated Federico's performance and, after the canonical thirty seconds, issued their verdict: Federico Mana is the new Italian Record holder.

A week later, on August 22nd, one more successful attempt: -92 in Free Immersion. The free Immersion apnea is a muscular demanding discipline. The athlete pulls him/herself down to depth and back to surface grabbing a descent line. Federico's performance took 3' 20" time, breaking one more Italian free-diving record. Time says a lot about the physical effort, if comparing to the three minutes needed to go and back from 100 metres depth.

Such performances don't happen by chance: steady training, a strong will, balanced mind and diet, and a good organization are the assets for a serious record attempt. Federico is a well-known





free diving and yoga instructor; he is the author of the manual 'Tecniche di Respirazione per Apnea', (Breathing Techniques for Free-diving) published in Italian by Magenes, and a friendly sharmer. He became Apnea instructor in 2002, and in 2003 he was offered by Umberto Pelizzari to work as instructor in Sharm el Sheikh, and he accepted. His champion career started in Sharm el Sheikh, breaking for the first time twice the Italian record in 2007, (-52 and -60 constant weight without fins) and again twice in 2008: -89 and -90 (constant weight apnea). He moved to Italy last year, but could not stay long time away from his Red Sea and his athletic ambitions. He was back to Sharm to train for the records.

A meeting in the desert with his trainers and the team was his first step. While in Sharm Federico started a silent descend toward his within, toward the record. Every morning he improved his body and thorax elasticity through long yoga sessions, reaching the body awareness he needed to evaluate himself, his level of fitness. He trained his mind to recall images, feelings and pleasant encounters.

If you ask Federico why Sharm el Sheikh, he would answer that in Sharm he had a chance to swim with dolphins and mantas, and even sharks, during his preparation.

But dazzling marine life, relaxing evenings in the desert, friends and excellent weather condition would be just a nice setting for training, and Only One Apnea Centre offered Federico Mana the right location and the organization he needed. Experienced safety divers, professional trainers, underwater video-operators and medically trained personnel, a suitable swimming pool, and a fully equipped floating platform fitted with a descend line down to 150 metres, are exactly what an athlete needs to reach safely an ambitious objective. Comfort too is an important issue regarding a world-class sport performance. Having everything at hand and within a few steps distance from the hotel room is a winning combination rare to find worldwide.

- Even though Apnea is perceived as an individual sport, behind any record there is always a good teamwork, the cooperation of many, – said Federico Mana.

– I wish to thank the organization of Only One Apnea Center and Free Style Company, and my sponsors: CAMELDIVE, Imperial Bulldog, Benti Sub, and TS contact lenses for their support in this adventure-

Federico is a tall and lean gentleman, and wishes to dedicate his -100 record to a special creature of the oceans. He remembers of an oceanic white tip shark swimming curious and peacefully around him, during a training session in Sharm.

- Every year more than one hundred million sharks are killed worldwide. They are killed because a shark fin's soup served in the Asian restaurants. This barbaric massacre is endangering these noble creatures and threatening the whole marine ecosystem- he said.

Congratulations, Federico!

And as a sharmer to a sharmer I'd better say: mabruk!

Claudio di Manao