

TRAVELIFE

TIPS FOR THE
SOLO
TRAVELLER

ELECTRIC VEHICLES
TAKE CHARGE
ON HOLIDAY
ROUTES

WORLD'S
MOST
RELAXING
AIRPORTS

MONTREAL
IS CANADA'S
CAPITAL
OF COOL

STAYING **FIT**
ON VACATION



Diving
INTO A HOLIDAY
WITH SHARKS

CONTENT

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2019

www.travelife.ca



CLICK & READ

Go to a story by clicking on a page number!



62



SPECIAL REPORTS

- 18 Solo mom takes her kids along
- 24 Frequent Flyer 'relaxes' at airports
- 28 Jumpstart your fitness vacation
- 38 Electric vehicles plugged into future travel



- 68 Camera Corner: DSLRs vs Smartphones
- 114 New Google tools help travellers



24

OUR COVER

A lifetime desire to swim with sharks leads writer Cristina Huré on an adventure dive in the Bahamas that sees her come face-to-face with the great beasts and a new admiration for the tigers of the sea.

Read her report on Page 62

OUR STAFF

Publisher: Annie Tsu

Editor-in-Chief: Marc Atchison
marc.atchison@travelife.ca

Assistant Editor: Claudia Tsang

Designers: Joey Tang / Angel Huang

Copy Editing: Gale Beeby

ASIA

- 8 Bridging a large gap in Hong Kong
- 14 Taking a gamble on magical Macau
- 58 Skies light up over Taiwan

THE AMERICAS

- 80 Montreal is a fashion statement
- 102 Fab Five hikes in British Columbia
- 106 Shedding light on Cape Breton

THE CARIBBEAN

- 62 Diving into a vacation with sharks

EUROPE

- 34 Getting a taste of Ireland
- 42 Hip Helsinki draws a crowd
- 46 Sun spotlights Sardinia
- 50 Magical Meissen mystifies
- 56 German town coming up roses
- 72 Night to remember in Zurich
- 76 Hidden treasures in Greece
- 90 Coffee: How Swede it is!
- 92 Spain's cider house rules
- 96 Swiss hotel a real surprise
- 110 Day tripping on the Orient Express



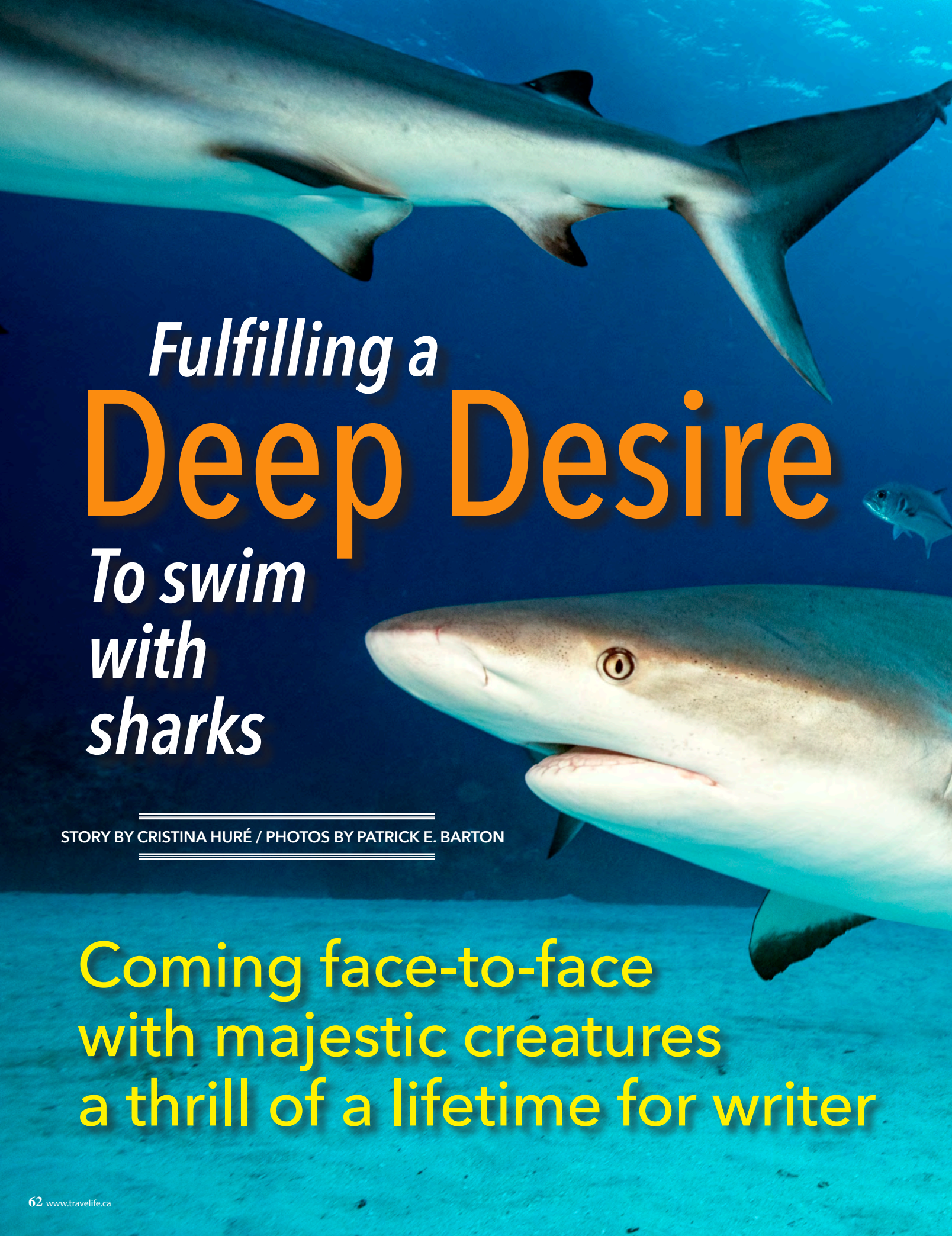
80

CONTRIBUTORS

Amy Laughinghouse, Shelley Cameron-McCarron, Patti Shales Lefkos, Karen Asp, Kathryn Dickson, Dennis Chu, Isabel Leong, Mark Stachiew, Cristina Hure, Patrick E. Barton, Rosalind Cummings-Yeates, Olivia Johnson, Gilly Pickup, Mike Fuhrmann, Athena Lucero, Marc Atchison

OUR ADDRESS

Travelife, 15 Kern Road,
Toronto, Ont., M3B 1S9



Fulfilling a
Deep Desire

*To swim
with
sharks*

STORY BY CRISTINA HURÉ / PHOTOS BY PATRICK E. BARTON

Coming face-to-face
with majestic creatures
a thrill of a lifetime for writer

TravelLife contributor Cristina Huré and photographer Patrick Barton celebrate after spending the day swimming with sharks in the waters off the Bahamas.



FREEPORT, BAHAMAS – It's late when I show up at the dive centre in my string bikini, full of adrenaline and ready to go find Nemo. The dive centre's owner looks me up and down and then bursts into laughter.

"Put this on, or your skin will attract the sharks!" the dive master jokingly orders while tossing me a wetsuit.

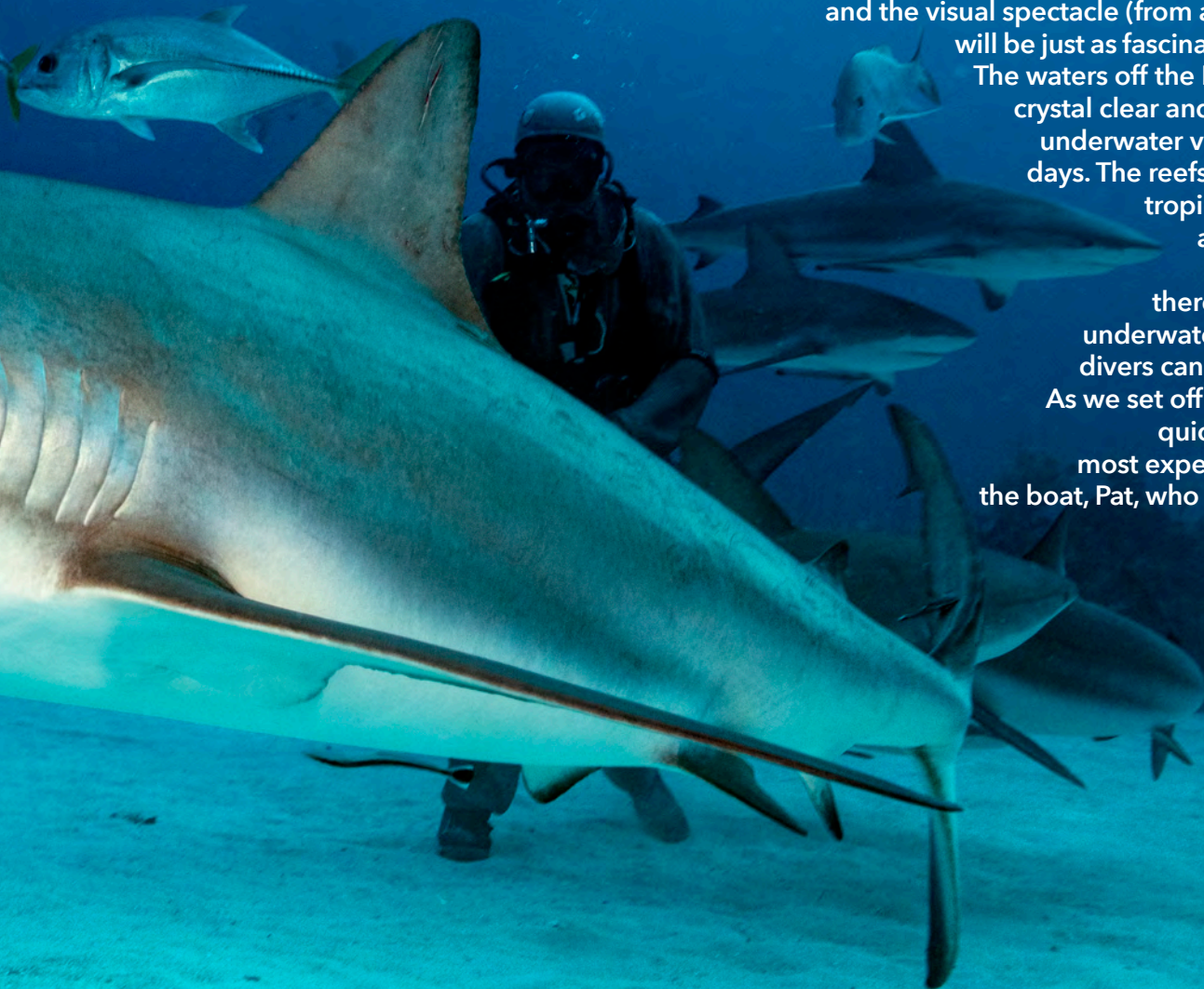
I've signed up for a day of underwater adventure in this Caribbean vacation hot spot, regarded by experienced divers as having some of the best dive sights in the world. I'm not a novice. I've snorkelled many times and scuba dived once in the Gili Islands in Indonesia. However, my diving qualifications won't permit me to join the more experienced divers on this day as they explore 10 metres below the surface.

Not to worry. The dive master informs me I'll still be able to dive using snorkel equipment and the visual spectacle (from above)

will be just as fascinating, if not more.

The waters off the Bahamas are crystal clear and offer incredible underwater visibility on sunny days. The reefs are healthy, the tropical fish radiate – a splendid range of colour – and there's a fair share of underwater wreckage that divers can explore.

As we set off from the dock, I quickly befriend the most experienced diver on the boat, Pat, who is armed with an





Shark expert Jay attracts the sharks with some bait. Distracting the majestic creatures allows divers to get even closer to them.

impressive stock of underwater photography equipment.

I'd never met an underwater photographer before, so I was fascinated by the whole process of assembling the gear and then transporting it along with the cumbersome dive gear – wetsuit, regulator and tank.

There are 12 of us on the boat headed to Shark Alley, notorious for its bounty of reef sharks. Jay, the man with the magnetic charm and boundless energy who feeds sharks for a living, instructs everyone on the boat to remove any shiny objects and hands us a striped baton. I wonder how a mere rod could really help us fend off sharks underwater.

"Just in case," he says. "You can use this to distract them."

The rule is as follows: If a shark gets too close, you can either push it away with your baton or shove it in the shark's mouth if absolutely necessary.

Jay prepares for the dive by putting on his steel chain-mail shark suit and fills a bucket with fish for bait. Then, he and the dive master slip into the water and the rest of us quickly follow. A rope helps the experienced aquanauts descend and they form a circle around Jay

on the ocean floor, awaiting the sharks' arrival.

As I'm viewing from the bobbing surf above, it doesn't take long for the sharks to arrive – they sense it's their regular feeding time and begin to swim around Jay. He knows the sharks well and controls their movements. They let him touch them and even allow Jay to hold them upwards from their snout while spinning them around. There is a clear power dynamic at play here – Jay is the master.

Soon, little sharks are swimming just a few metres away from me. I'm tempted to reach out and touch one but after seeing their appetite for meat, I choose to keep my fingers intact.

A stingray joins the party and elegantly drifts in front of my face to see what all the fuss below is about. Its fins ripple like sheets of silk as it wades over the divers, casting a cloud-like shadow on the feeding ground below.

When Jay moves, the sharks follow. He brings them closer to me, so close that they end up directly beneath me.

I don't understand why the movies always depict sharks as aggressive creatures when they're really not.



In fact, they don't even like human flesh. Shark attacks on humans are really shark mistakes.

As my photographer friend Pat captures the underwater show, his flash illuminates the scenery, catching the eye of a shark at the same time the bait runs out. The shark bites the flash, thinking it's more food, and Pat jabs his baton in its mouth to push it away. A close call, but an understandable mistake on the shark's part. After nearly an hour, Jay finally walks along the ocean floor, away from the boat to distract the sharks and allow the dive crew to begin their ascent.

As if the experience was not exhilarating enough, we start to feed the sharks from the boat to see what they look like from above the surface. Some jump out of the water to seize the fish with their powerful jaws and razor-sharp teeth. When the feed runs out, we start to make our way back to shore. The air of excitement is palpable to everyone on board.

There were 23 sharks swimming around me and I still have all my limbs. Success!

When we reach shore, I dive into a cocktail and think about the shark story I'll be able to tell my grandkids one day. It really is a whopper of a fish story. ●



According to the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), more and more females are getting into the sport. In 2016, the diving certification trend tracked by gender was 63 per cent male compared to 37 per cent female. There's about 16,000 women registered with PADI but the number grows every year.