

Interview with **Julio Osoria** and **Almendra Gomez**

2008 GoPRO Challenge Testimonial Contest
First Runner-up \$1,500 US Winners

2008 GoPROSM Challenge

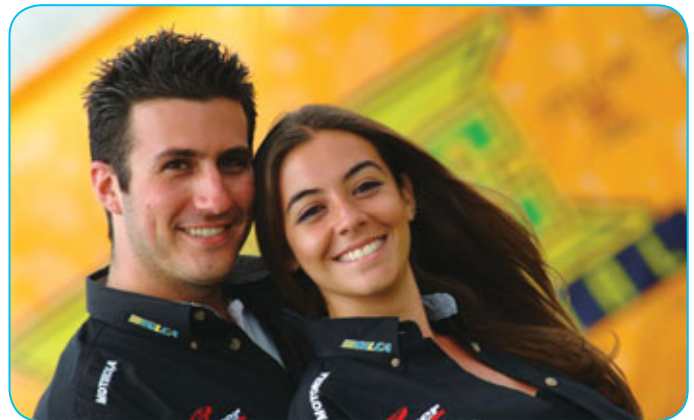
PADI: Tell us about your background

Julio: I was born in Chicago in 1977, an only son. I was raised in Guadalajara Mexico. I've been a marketing and advertising specialist for ten years and started my own agency in 2004. I started diving in 2002 due to a trip with my Boy Scout group (I've been a Boy Scout Member since '88).

We recently completed our Instructor Development Course at Dive Asia in Phuket, Thailand.

Almendra: I am 30 years old, the oldest of 3 siblings. (I have a sister, 29, and a brother, 23). I studied to be a fashion designer and worked in that field for over 8 years. My first job was designing baby clothes for a local company, and then an international firm hired me for menswear design, which I did for four years. Later, I moved to designing women's wear and accessories. About that time, I started freelancing, and decided to set up my own fashion studio.

So that's what I was doing, running my own fashion studio, in January, 2002, when my husband and I were asked to train a large group of Boy Scouts for a Jamboree in Thailand. (We were troop leaders from 1998 through 2007.) The activities included snorkeling, and that gave me the desire to try scuba diving. I started my PADI Open Water Course that December, and I loved it so much that I asked Julio to join me. We were certified together and from that day forward, we've been diving together in many different places.



PADI: Do you have a favorite dive buddy or buddies?

Julio: We are each other's favorite dive buddies. We enjoy it because we know each other's capabilities. We have done most of our dives together; we even have our own hand signs. It's like we can read each other's minds underwater. Also, whenever we see something exceptional, we are the first ones we want to share it with.

PADI: Do you have a favorite dive spot?

Julio: Los Arcos in Puerto Vallarta Mexico. It has it all, walls, reefs, caverns, lots of life.

PADI: Do you have a favorite specialty course?

Julio: Peak Performance Buoyancy

Almendra: Digital Underwater Photography



PADI: What inspired you to become a diver?

Julio: We had the opportunity to have more fun on that trip to Thailand with our Boy Scout group in 2002. We already did rock climbing, martial arts, camping, etc. and we wanted to learn something new.

PADI: Why did you decide to become a PADI Professional?

Julio: We were reevaluating our lives. Because of our jobs, we barely saw each other and had little time left for all our hobbies.

Almendra: We decided we wanted to live doing what we love most and share it with each other.



PADI: Why did you choose PADI?

Julio: PADI has the best materials, best support, best standards, professionalism, and we get more respect in the industry. It is also easier getting a job

PADI: Tell us about your current job.

Julio: We both quit our former lifestyles and sold our businesses. We went to Thailand, where we completed our IDCs and are now working at a wonderful PADI Dive Center, Sea Bees Diving. We are extra happy, enjoying the great weather and great experience. Recently, we were offered jobs at a PADI Gold Palm Resort in Bermuda called Blue Water Divers and Watersports; we'll be starting there in April.

PADI: Are you adventurous – like to travel?

Julio: We left everything, spent a month in the Himalayas, and headed for Thailand, so yes, we love to travel! In fact, this is one of the main reasons to be dive instructors - we get to travel and work anywhere.

PADI: Was there a PADI Pro who acted as your mentor? If so, who?

Julio: Yes, Luis Rivera from Guadalajara Dive Center. He also left a "great" job and opened the first PADI Dive Center in Guadalajara. He is a great diver and an excellent teacher, very strict regarding PADI standards; he is also a good friend.

PADI: What does winning the Go PRO Challenge mean to you?

Julio: More money for our IDC! It's difficult to put into words what it's like to drop everything, family, friends, jobs, and change your life. It's great to know that we get to tell our story to everyone. We are very excited.

PADI: How do you see your future as a PADI Pro?

Julio: Exciting – we see ourselves working, traveling the world, meeting new people, knowing new places, and gaining as much experience as we can until we can open our own PADI Dive Center or Resort.

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