

# Cousteaus Carry On

A third generation of diving's famous family follows in the footsteps of pioneering grandfather, Jacques-Yves Cousteau

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU



Fabien, Céline and Jean-Michel

Photos: Carrie Vonderhaar, Ocean Futures Society

**A**s a proud father, I always look forward to watching the accomplishments of my children and these past two months of May and June proved to be an amazing milestone for both Fabien Cousteau and Céline Cousteau.

Continuing the pioneering work of my late father Jacques-Yves Cousteau in ocean exploration and environmental awareness, my children, Fabien and Céline, led their own expeditions. Céline was land based in the largest and most biologically rich rainforest, the Amazon; and Fabien lived under the sea for an entire month. Please allow me this opportunity to brag a bit and share why I am so proud of their hard work and conservation efforts in turning the tide, making a difference and expanding our efforts to improve the quality of our life on the our blue planet, Ocean.

## Céline

My daughter Céline and her team traveled to a remote part of the Amazon to film her documentary, *Tribes on the Edge*, in the Vale do Javari region in the Brazilian Amazon. This is the same region where we visited in 2007 during the filming of my PBS documentary *Return to the Amazon*. The plight of the people in Vale do Javari touched her so deeply that she has dedicated the last several years of her life to raising the awareness and the funds needed to revisit the region and tell a deeper story of the people who live there. "It is undeniable that humans and nature are

intimately interconnected. Where there is environmental destruction, humans suffer and when indigenous communities vanish, we lose the guardians of the ecosystem," said Céline Cousteau, founder and executive director of CauseCentric Production.

Céline has enjoyed a long love of the Amazon region. In fact, as a 9 year-old she was a part of my father's 1982-1983 expedition where we explored the fabled rainforest over a 2-year period. She spent her school breaks with my father and me aboard *Calypso*. I have watched her thrive over the past decades and I couldn't be prouder that she just completed her own 'return to the Amazon'.

I invite you to learn more about her extraordinary expedition through her website [www.tribesontheedge.com](http://www.tribesontheedge.com) and by watching the teaser for the film. Please show your support by following her and her team on facebook and twitter as well to spread the word about her incredible voyage. Throughout their expedition they shared updates from the field when they had satellite uplink. Céline's nonprofit organization CauseCentric Productions produces and distributes multi-media content with an emphasis on short films to amplify

the voices and communicate the stories of solution-focused grassroots organizations and individuals working on environmental and socio-cultural issues.

**Fabien**

On June 1, my son Fabien ‘splashed down’ and entered the Aquarius habitat, the world’s only underwater research lab. There, he spent a total of 31 days living underwater with his team of scientists. This was the first time a mission of this length has taken place in the history of Aquarius. Aquarius rests 63 feet (19m) beneath the surface of the sea off the coast of Key Largo, FL and is operated by Florida International University (FIU).

Fabien’s groundbreaking expedition honored the 50th anniversary of the Conshelf Two mission led by my father, Jacques-Yves Cousteau, who is credited with creating the first ocean floor habitats for humans and taking a team on a 30-day mission. Mission 31 expanded the Cousteau legacy by one full day, 30 more feet depth and was successful in broadcasting every second of the adventure, exposing the world to the adventure, challenges and mysteries of what lies beneath the surface of the sea.

During the 31-day mission, Fabien and his team spent about six to nine hours a day diving for scientific surveys while his Bonnet Rouge (meaning ‘Red Cap’ in French and named in honor of his grandfather) production team filmed short and long format documentaries for Mission 31. You can watch their YouTube videos here ([www.youtube.com/user/Mission31channel/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/Mission31channel/videos)).

“There were a lot of challenges physically and psychologically,” said Fabien Cousteau, 46, who was born in Paris and grew up on his grandfather’s



Fabien - Mission 31 team leader

ships, *Calypso* and *Alcyone*.

“The benefit is that the backyard is infinite, the coral reefs are endangered and our scientific knowledge is critical in guaranteeing the long-term survival of the coral reefs. We marked a new era in ocean exploration and scientific research.”

I had the immense pleasure of joining Fabien in Aquarius on June 7th in honor of World Ocean Day on June 8th. I was also joined by my good friend, Dr. Sylvia Earle; we dove together alongside Fabien and his team to take part in this tremendous opportunity to better understand the complexities and fragilities of the coral reefs.

I am a proud father everyday, but these past two months were extraordinary. Please join me in congratulating Fabien and Céline as they successfully completed once in a lifetime journeys! Céline’s CauseCentric.org and Fabien’s Mission-31.com [ ]



Return to the Amazon - Céline Cousteau with Marubo Tribe

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# Cousteau Mission 31

Recalls pioneering Conshelf experiments

At press time the saturation diving component of Fabien Cousteau's Mission 31 had just completed. The son of DIVER columnist Jean-Michel Cousteau, and grandson of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Fabien spearheaded the initiative, underscoring the human-ocean connection through the lens of exploration and discovery. Along with two other aquanauts, Cousteau spent 31 consecutive days in the Aquarius habitat in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, nine miles off Key Largo, diving daily and working with other divers split into two, three-diver teams. Aquarius Reef Base (ARB) is the world's only undersea Research Station and Mission 31 the longest project the subsea lab has hosted in 21 years of operation.

Mission 31 honours the 50th anniversary of Jacques Cousteau's month-long Conshelf Two mission in the Red Sea. The pioneering Cousteau, regarded as one of the fathers of the Aqualung, is also

credited with creating the first ocean floor habitats for humans and taking a team of ocean explorers on the 30-day Red Sea mission. In all, three Conshelf projects were undertaken. "Mission 31 pays homage to my grandfather's work and all aquanauts who have since followed his lead in the name of ocean exploration," Cousteau's grandson said of his venture.

The Conshelf (for Continental Shelf Station) experiments took place in the 1960s; the first and third were in the Mediterranean off the south coast of France. Essentially, all three were proof of concept undersea 'living' trials in the pioneering days of saturation diving. They advanced our understanding of human physiology and technology in the ocean world.

Mission 31 expands the 50-year-old Conshelf Two legacy by one full day, 30 more feet of depth and, with advanced communications technology that provided continuous broadcast of the entire mission to a world audience.

Areas of study during Mission 31 included:

- Climate change and the related challenges of ocean acidification
- Ocean pollution with an emphasis on the effects of plastics
- Over-consumption of resources with specific focus on the decline of biodiversity

Science partners for Mission 31 included Florida International University (FIU), assisting with scientific and topside mission control support led by the FIU Medina Aquarius Program team as well as faculty and students from FIU's School of Environment, Arts and Society. Northeastern University's Urban Coastal Sustainability Initiative also provided additional scientific advice, led by marine and environmental sciences professor Mark Patterson, Ph.D.

During the 31-day mission, Cousteau and team members spent up to nine hours a day conducting science diving experiments. Throughout, his film production team was busy shooting short and long format documentaries of the mission.

Cousteau and his team conducted daily Skype video calls with classrooms around the world through Skype in the classroom, the global education partner for Mission 31, with curriculum material available to teachers at [www.mission-31.com](http://www.mission-31.com).

A privately funded expedition, Cousteau's mission received support from corporate sponsors that included Nokia Lumia, Hewlett-Packard, Plant A Fish, Symantec, Aquarius Foundation, Town & Country magazine, Ritz-Carlton, Turks and Caicos Reef Fund, Wheelabrator Technologies and DOXA, among others ([mission-31.com/about-mission-31/our-partners](http://mission-31.com/about-mission-31/our-partners)).

### The Mission 31 Team

Fabien Cousteau, Mark Hulsbeck and Ryan LaPete saturated for the full 31-day mission. Kip Evans, Adam Zenone and Andy Shantz participated during part one of the mission, beginning June 1, while Matt Ferraro, Liz Magee and Grace Young joined part two at the midway switch over June 16-17. For full team bios go to [www.mission-31.com](http://www.mission-31.com)

#### Fabien Cousteau,

##### Mission Leader/Executive Producer

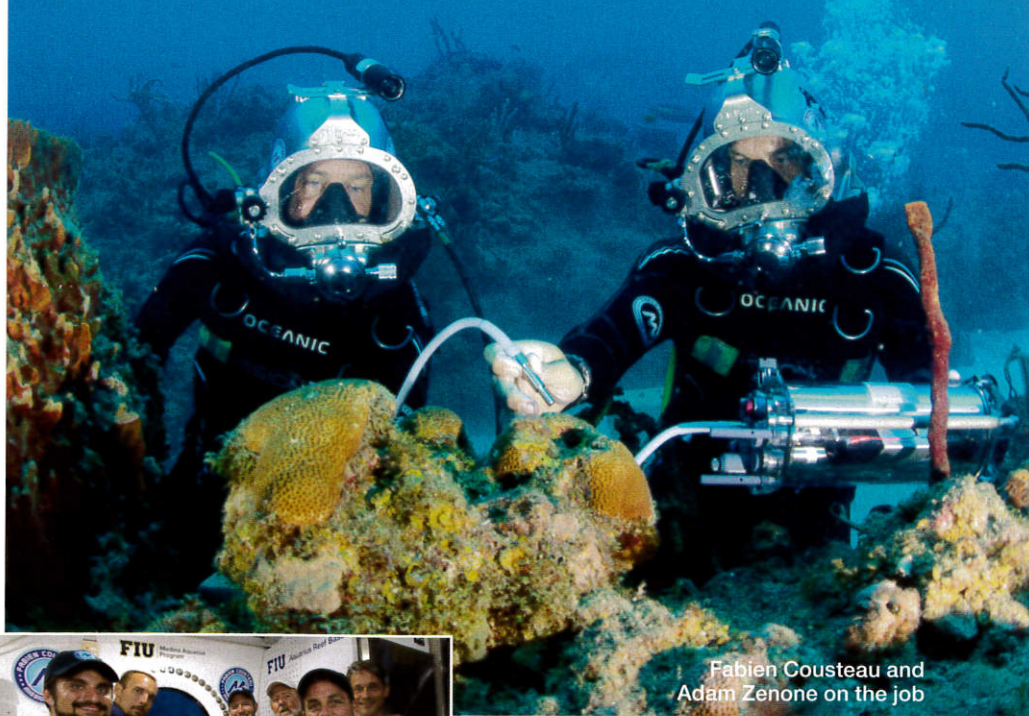
Fabien Cousteau is an oceanographic explorer, conservationist and documentary filmmaker. As the first grandson of Jacques-Yves Cousteau, Fabien spent his early years aboard his famous grandfather's ships, *Calypso* and *Alcyone*. He learned to SCUBA dive on his fourth birthday. Today, he continues to fulfill his family's legacy. His nonprofit organization, Plant A Fish, empowers communities and children to restore local water ecosystems through the healthy 'replanting' of key marine species with the ultimate goal of planting one billion fish worldwide ([www.plantafish.org](http://www.plantafish.org)). For more go to [www.fabiencousteau.org](http://www.fabiencousteau.org)

#### Ryan LaPete, Aquarius Reef Base Crew/

Mission Specialist, graduated Florida State University's Underwater Crime Scene Investigation program and joined the crew in support of operations at Aquarius Reef Base in 2008. His work with Aquarius has been dedicated to the advancement of ocean science and to promoting awareness of fragile ocean ecosystems.

#### Mark Hulsbeck, Aquarius Reef Base

Crew/Mission Specialist, served in the United States Navy for five years as an Aviation Anti-submarine Warfare Operator and helicopter search and rescue air crewman. He subsequently earned a degree in geology from the University of South Florida. Hulsbeck then joined the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Corps, in which he served on numerous research vessels. Hulsbeck's



Fabien Cousteau and Adam Zenone on the job



Aquonauts in Aquarius

professional qualifications include a United States Coast Guard Captain's 100-ton license. He is also a Professional Association of Diving Instructors Master Scuba Diver Trainer, Divers Alert Network Instructor and a Dive Medical Technician. Mission 31 will be Hulsebeck's 22nd saturation mission in Aquarius.

#### Team 1

**Kip Evans, Cameraman**, has been exploring the ocean and guiding conservation efforts through his documentary photography projects for more than two decades. He has participated in or led more than 50 expeditions throughout the world including recent explorations in Alaska, Cuba, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico and Panama. He has worked on a number of National Geographic Society projects including the 'Sustainable Seas Expeditions'.

**Adam Zenone, Mission Scientist**, is a graduate student at Florida International University with aspirations to continue exploring, studying and conserving the world's oceans. When not in the lab or collecting data, he is interested in educating others about the incredible diversity and importance of the environment.

**Andy Shantz, Mission Scientist**, is a community ecologist and Ph.D. candidate at Florida International University studying the interface between physiology and ecology on coral reefs. His research

focuses on animals' physiological responses to their environment and how the impact of human driven environmental change will impact them.

#### Team 2

**Matt Ferraro, DP/Cameraman**, is a documentary producer and director who has led teams to every corner of the earth and into some of the most extreme environments imaginable in order to bring home the story. His passion is to tell stories that make a difference. His 15 years in film production include work on the seven-episode PBS series, Jean-Michel Cousteau Ocean Adventures'.

**Liz Magee, Mission Scientist**, is program coordinator of the Three Seas Program in addition to serving as the Diving Safety Officer for Northeastern University. She has been a research diver for 10 years, with more than a thousand research dives, and is an active AAUS Scientific Diving and NAUI Scuba Instructor.

**Grace Young, Mission Scientist**, is an MIT graduate in Mechanical and Ocean Engineering. She's dedicated to developing technology to explore and manage sustainably the ocean's resources, while conserving its fragile ecosystems. Young is recipient of numerous academic awards, including the Wallace Prize as MIT's top ocean engineering undergraduate and Keil Award for excellence in ocean engineering research. [1]

## More Mission 31:

[www.mission31.com](http://www.mission31.com)  
[www.facebook.com/CousteauMission31](https://www.facebook.com/CousteauMission31)  
[www.twitter.com/Mission\\_31](https://www.twitter.com/Mission_31)