

MASK

SCUBAPRO FRAMELESS GORILLA

IT SEEMS AGES SINCE I'VE HAD A NEW MASK FIX. This time I've got hold of a square-profile model, the Frameless Gorilla from the Scubapro stables, designed and built to suit the larger-faced divers among us.

I've been told that I've got a "big head" and I'm a bit of an animal under water, so this mask should fit the bill perfectly. I took it for a few UK dives to check it out while gratifying my addiction for testing masks.

The Design

Built using Scubapro's original frameless platform but in a slightly bigger size, the Gorilla is aimed at larger divers. The square-profile single lens is big and wide and made from standard tempered glass, moulded directly into the silicon skirt without the use of a frame.

The push-button strap-buckles are fitted directly to the sides of the skirt, allowing for the mask to collapse and fold relatively flat for stowage in a BC or drysuit pocket.

A double-edged seal set around the inside of the skirt increases the mask-to-skin contact area, enabling a better watertight fit. The mask-strap has a square-profile headband that mimics the mask's shape.

The Gorilla I had on test was clear in colour, with a matte finish. It also comes in all-black.

In Use

I didn't think I fell into the "larger-sized diver" category, yet I found that this model fitted me



perfectly – so much so that I may need to rethink my mask sizing from now on.

The nose-pocket is what I'd describe as "Goldilocks" – it isn't capacious and it's not tiny but just right, encompassing my oversized hooter snugly and causing no discomfort.

Strap-adjustment was a simple affair, with the push-to-release buckles fitted directly to the skirt easy to locate and operate, even with 5mm gloves. The angle of the buckle-mount is slightly positive and sent the strap naturally to the upper part of my head and away from my ears, with the rear headband perfectly situated on my cranium.

The single lens has a slightly green tint to it. I wouldn't normally have noticed this on a black-skirted mask, but the green glass was quite evident when viewed from the side through the translucent silicon, though you'd have to be eagle-eyed to notice any detrimental effects this might have when you look through it.

I hadn't dived with a clear-skirted mask for some time; I normally opt for black silicon to prevent stray light from interfering with my camera viewfinder.

The clear skirt on this Gorilla let in a lot of peripheral light and the underwater world instantly seemed a brighter place. It was as

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if I had removed a set of blinkers, or the sun had come out from behind the clouds.

Of course, it could have been the huge angle of view offered by the wide lens sitting close to my eyeline.

As with most frameless masks, the internal volume is minimal, which made equalising or mask-clearing almost an afterthought.

The silicon used is thicker than that in most other models on the market, which stiffens the skirt and stops it collapsing under pressure. It also made it feel very robust, giving the Gorilla an indestructible persona.

This stiffer skirt and excellent fit allowed me to establish a decent seal without over-tightening the strap, leaving that tell-tale red circle on my face that seems to generate so much mickey-taking during post-dive drinks.

Conclusion

In my time at **DIVER** I've discovered masks designed to be universal and fit as many faces as possible, and others made specifically to fit women, youths or even infants.

However, masks designed for the larger-faced exponents of our sport seem relatively few and far between – and some of these are so big that their volume could be measured in gallons.

I didn't find the Frameless Gorilla mask that



Yvonne Tatchley sports a Frameless Gorilla.

big, and it also fitted Wraysbury's resident instructor Yvonne Tatchley, who is seen modelling it.

On the other hand, I may very well have underestimated the size of our heads.

Joking aside, we should all know that it's not style, colour or materials that matter when it comes to dive masks – it's fit that's king. ■

SPECS

PRICES ▶▶ £79

FRAME ▶▶ None

LENS ▶▶ Single, tempered, square profile

SIZE ▶▶ Larger fit

COLOURS ▶▶ Clear or black only

CONTACT ▶▶ www.scubapro.com

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