

REGULATOR ATOMIC T2X

ONE OF THE BEST-PERFORMING

REGULATORS I have ever used is the Atomic T2. It was designed by Dean Garraffa after he left Scubapro. He and business partner Doug Toffs originally wanted to make the regulator for Scubapro, but the management of that branch of the big US corporation was focused only on the bottom line at the time, and wouldn't countenance it. So Dean and Doug started Atomic Aquatics, and the rest is history.

First stage

Naturally, Dean's initial concept had a lot in common with his former Scubapro piston-type designs, but it went several steps further by using titanium, almost unheard of at the time.

Some of you may believe that nitrox and titanium make unhappy bed-fellows, though I have yet to experience my regulator bursting into flames while under water.

This is probably because the temperature required for ignition is rather higher than even the warmest water in which I dive.

Atomic titanium regulators are nitrox-ready for up to 40% O₂, straight out of the box.

Next, Atomic incorporated into the design the idea that the valve seat and poppet should never be in contact unless the valve was pressurised. This prevented engraving between the two surfaces during storage. Everyone is familiar with the complaint that a regulator that was OK last time it was used is now freeflowing, but that doesn't apply to this one.

Like the best Scubapro piston-type regulator, the T2X has five medium-pressure ports on a revolving turret, and two high-pressure ports that are fixed.

The T2 and those that went before it were

unashamedly aimed at the US market, and divers who habitually dive in warm and temperate waters, but Atomic has now addressed the needs of those who enjoy coldwater diving. The first stage of the new T2X is different, in that the chamber is permanently sealed for coldwater use.

The design has been honed further still, and Dean and Doug claim that the T2X is "the best-performing and most corrosion-resistant regulator on the market".

Second stage

The pair then got to grips with the second stage, putting a universal joint where the hose was connected. Universal joints on other regulators reduced their performance, but Atomic was keen to ensure that their one would cause no reduction in the air-flow.

They also looked at the venturi plus/minus switch, which disrupts the airflow behind the pressure-sensing diaphragm, and decided to give it an automatic function.

The T2X has a pressure sensor that adjusts the venturi vane according to the depth at which the regulator is being breathed.

It still has a knob on the side, so that the user can add to the effort needed to crack open the valve during the first part of an inhalation. I've never understood why anyone would need this unless the regulator was badly set up by a service technician, but I'm told that you can't hope to sell a regulator in the USA unless it has this feature.

Different manufacturers use different terms for this adjustment – we at **DIVER** coined the term BRA, or "breathing resistance adjustment".

Purge Control

The second stage is built like a jewel. Unscrewing the front and removing the inner pressure-sensing diaphragm reveals a valve mechanism that looks like part of a Swiss



watch, only bigger. Pressing the soft front cover puts pressure on the valve lever, which works in a nicely progressive, yet very effective way.

Comfort

Even the mouthpiece is better than that of most other regulators. It is generous in size, robust enough to stop the regulator wilting, and ribbed for an easy grip. Inhaling gives a broad and diffused stream of gas that is as natural as one can expect from an artificial source.

There is something confidence-boosting about a regulator that can give you as much as you want but never gives any impression that it might blast your tonsils down your throat.

The universal joint where the hose meets the second stage precludes any tendency for the mouthpiece to be pulled away from you. Overall, performance and comfort is sublime.

If you think I've been over-generous with my praise for this product, I should mention the one downside. It costs a grand. ■

COMPARABLE REGULATORS TO CONSIDER:

Scubapro A700/MK25, £599

Sherwood SR1, £379

Apeks XTX200 Tungsten (Swivel), £491

SPECS

PRICE ▶▶ £999

FIRST STAGE ▶▶ Environmentally sealed piston

PORTS ▶▶ 5mp, 2hp

SECOND STAGE ADJUSTMENTS ▶▶ Auto venturi, BRA

WEIGHT ▶▶ 2kg

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DIVER GUIDE ★★★★★★★★★★

