When the Onyx first came out a couple of years ago, it earned high marks as an easy-breathing reg. This year Zeagle added a dry-seal system to the first stage and a heat sink to the second stage, creating the Onyx CW (for cold water). Performancewise, not much has changed. The reg is still a giant-killer on the ANSTI machine, able to handle all standard RMV/depth-test levels with some of the lowest work of breathing in this category. This top-drawer behavior extended into the ocean, where test divers lauded it for its effortless, bone-dry breathing. The mouthpiece is rather large with long bite tabs; some test divers liked it, others found it a bit too much to swallow. It is equipped with the softest purge cover and best purge action in this category, and its user controls were rated among the best.

**BOTTOM LINE**
The Onyx CW was the only reg to end up on every test diver's Top 3 Favorites list, making it the unanimous pick for Testers' Choice in the $500 & Under category.

**LAB RESULTS**

**SPECS**

**PERFORMANCE TEST STATS**

**MADE IN** USA

**WEIGHT** 2.6 lb.

**FIRST STAGE** Balanced diaphragm

**PORTS** 2HP, 5LP

**SECOND STAGE** Pneumatically balanced

**USER ADJUSTMENTS** Dive/predive lever, breathing-resistance knob

**WARRANTY** Limited lifetime

**MSRP** $499

**INFO** zeagle.com

---

**ATOMIC AQUATICS VENOM**

This high-concept mask performs as good as its looks. Built a bit larger than others in this test — with its reinforced internal frame and double-layer, dual-color silicone skirt — the Venom is really comfortable on the face. But what’s immediately noticeable is the excellent horizontal view it provides, by far the best in this group. This is due to a large lens that flares out on its outside edges, made from a high-quality glass imported from Germany called Schott Superwite, which allows more light in to brighten the underwater view. The squeeze-button buckles are soft mounted to the mask skirt, providing flexibility in strap positioning, plus they can be folded flat for packing. It’s a winning design that earned the Testers’ Choice in the single-lens category. The Venom is also available with an antireflective coating (ARC).

**LAB RESULTS**

**HORIZONTAL VIEW** 95°

**UPWARD VIEW** 40°

**DOWNWARD VIEW** 50°

**VOLUME** Medium

**COLORS** Black/Gray, Black/Blue, Black/Red

**SKIRT** Black

**DRY WEIGHT** 9.5 oz.

**WARRANTY** Lifetime (frame); 1 year (buckles/skirt)

**PRICE** $199; $249 w/ ARC

atomicaquatics.com