

UNDER  
\$500

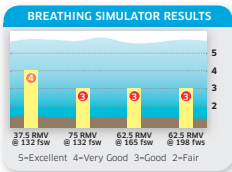


## Cressi-sub Ellipse Black/MC5

**FEATURES:** At just under 2 pounds, the Ellipse Black/MC5 is one of the lightest regulators of this test group and built to travel. The MC5 balanced-diaphragm first stage is a new design. Encased in a protective elastomer shell, it features three angled low-pressure ports and one high-pressure port. The Ellipse Black second stage is made of lightweight, high-impact thermopolymer and sports a full front-cover purge and a large dive/pre-dive switch.

**PERFORMANCE:** Underwater, the compact second stage was light in the mouth, breathed dry in all positions and cleared easily, either with a puff of air or a blast from the big purge cover. Even though it was one of the smallest second stages in this review, it had one of the largest venturi controls and purge button, for easy operation, even with gloves. Exhaust bubbles were a little more noticeable than other regs in this review, but that's to be expected with such a compact exhaust tee. The top-mounted venturi adjustment lever was easy to find and effective in preventing surface free-flows. During in-water dives, we rated it highly for comfort thanks to a light feel and a soft mouthpiece. On the ANSTI breathing machine, it earned Very Good scores within recreational diving range and Good scores under extreme conditions.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Extremely lightweight and priced at a very attractive MSRP.  
**PRICE:** \$299.  
**WEIGHT:** 1 pound, 15 ounces.



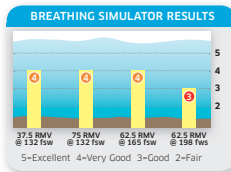
## Dive Rite 3000

**FEATURES:** This tech-ready reg pairs Dive Rite's proven 1208 diaphragm first stage with the new 3000-series second stage to create a full-featured breather. The first stage offers two high-pressure ports with four low-pressure ports located on a rotating turret to provide easy hose placement. It comes standard with a 300-bar DIN connector and yoke adapter and features oxygen-compatible Viton O-rings. The new 3000 pneumatically balanced second stage presents a full-size body with large flow control and venturi adjustments. All internal moving parts are Teflon-coated for cold water and use Viton O-rings with oxygen-compatible lubricant.

**PERFORMANCE:** The reg delivered Very Good performance in all but the most extreme breathing machine tests and in fact, turned in the best overall ANSTI performance of any regulator in the Under \$500 class. Like dialing in your precise breathing resistance? The flow control knob on the 3000 offers 4.5 full rotations and covers a noticeably wide range of control over breathing resistance. In Ergo tests, this new 3000 stage offered very good performance across the board. Its plastic case was light in the mouth, and the full front-cover purge is flexible and clears easily. It was also a dry, stable breather that offered great all-around performance during our test dives.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The 3000 offers very good performance, versatile user controls and is ready for DIN or yoke tank connection.

**PRICE:** \$450.  
**WEIGHT:** 3 pounds, 1 ounce (yoke).



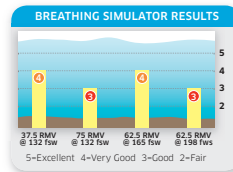
## Mares Prestige 12

**FEATURES:** While it's in the economy class of regulators, the MR12T balanced diaphragm first stage has been and continues to be a reliable workhorse. It has all the performance features of the company's high-end models, including the new Tri-Material first-stage valve and the Dynamic Flow Control low-pressure port that's dedicated to the primary second stage. The Prestige second stage features a mid-size case made from durable thermoplastic and a simplified design without user adjustments. It also has a large flexible purge cover.

**PERFORMANCE:** On our test dives, we found the Prestige light, comfortable and easy to use. It offered worry-free, dry breathing in all swimming positions, and on the ANSTI machine, it turned in work of breathing numbers that ranged from Very Good to Good in all depth/workload tests. The plastic second stage was comfortable with a soft mouthpiece and sits lightly and comfortably in the mouth. A small exhaust tee reduces drag, but the trade-off is greater bubble interference. All-in-all, we found the Prestige 12 to be a reliable regulator with the performance and simplicity that make it an ideal entry-level reg or a trusty backup.

**BOTTOM LINE:** This is a simple, dependable workhorse reg.  
**PRICE:** \$400.

**WEIGHT:** 2 pounds, 6 ounces.



## Tusa RS-530

**FEATURES:** This combination starts with Tusa's compact R-500 balanced piston first stage, which features a full complement of four low-pressure and two high-pressure ports and is equipped with a quick-adjustment screw for fine-tuning performance. At the end of the low-pressure hose is the company's S-30 thermoplastic second stage featuring a breathing resistance adjustment knob for on-the-swim flow control. It also has a new orthodontic mouthpiece and a chrome trim ring locking down a full front-cover purge.

**PERFORMANCE:** On our test dives, we noticed the mouthpiece right away. It features elongated bite tabs and required less bite pressure to hold comfortably in the mouth. The reg earned Very Good ratings in most ergo categories. The breathing resistance knob is clearly marked and offers a full turn of adjustment with an indexed click that allows precise tuning, and in the wide-open setting, cracking effort was followed by a dry, smooth inhalation. It also offered minimal bubble interference. The center purge is easy to locate and quick to clear. On the breathing machine, it excelled at recreational depths and workloads while receiving Very Good and Good scores in the other three tests.

**BOTTOM LINE:** The RS-530 is a comfortable reg with the added bonus of being the least expensive balanced piston first stage in this review.  
**PRICE:** \$399.  
**WEIGHT:** 2 pounds, 7 ounces.

