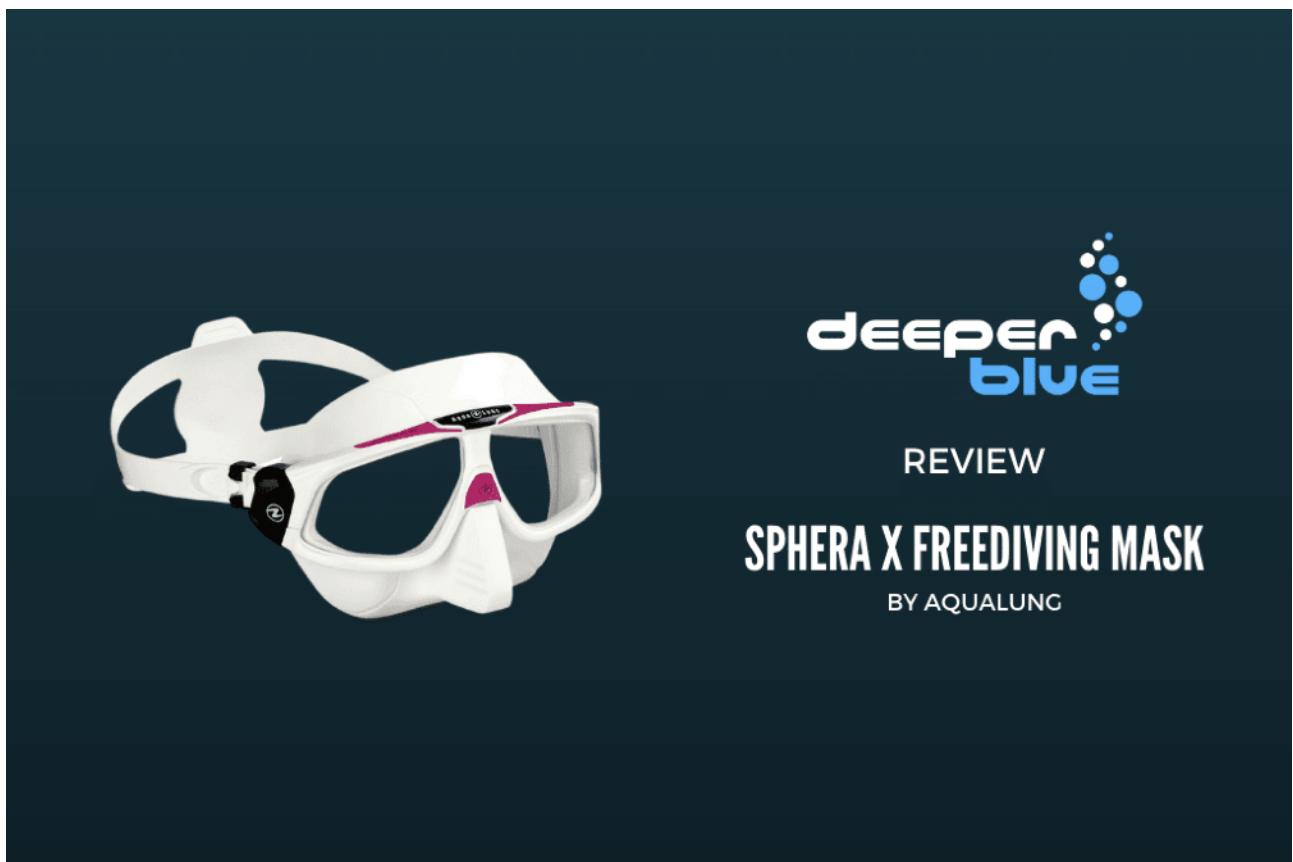


# Review: Sphera X Freediving Mask

By  
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Last winter I learned Aqua Lung had announced a new version of the venerable Sphera mask. The idea of an improved version of my fav freediving mask was pretty exciting.

## A Brief History of the Aqualung Sphera

The Sphera traces its lineage back to the Aqualung Falco. Arguably one of the first dedicated freediving masks, the Falco was named after Albert Falco; Avid freediver, long time companion of legendary sea explorer

Jaques Cousteau and chief diver and eventual captain of Cousteau's ship; the Calypso.

The Falco resembles the Sphera but has flat, glass lenses embedded in a rigid plastic frame. It was a pioneering design, combining low volume with a wide field of vision and a small profile.



Aqualung Falco – Note the rigid frame inserts holding the glass lenses

## The Sphera

The Sphera replaced glass lenses with curved polycarbonate – expanding the visual field, making the mask more compressible, and reducing the profile even more.



The Original Sphera

Low volume has long been a priority in freediving masks. Needing less air to equalize means more dive time. What's unique about the Sphera design is how easily it changes shape under pressure, remaining comfortable to greater depths before it must be equalized. This combination of low volume and compressibility results in a mask that requires very little equalization, making deep dives possible with minimal air expended.

## The Sphera X

First Impression: One day The Legendary Bob, owner of my local dive shop, the even more Legendary Scuba North, generously presented me with a brand-new blue Sphera X. My first thought was 'nice box'. Seriously, Aqualung has really gone all-in on the mask box thing.



#### The Sphera X

It's the sort of box one might actually use. It has a zipper and a little clip so you can keep it on your float. (or with you at all times, clipped to a belt loop..) It's fuzzy inside, almost like a musical instrument case, and big enough to hold my Doc's pro-plugs and a bottle of de-fogger (more on that later) along with the mask.

The Sphera X is cool looking. It's available in the awesome shade of blue pictured above, as well as black, clear, and white (with various trim options).



One of several trim options for the white Sphera X

## Small but maybe significant changes

First glance shows some added texture on the nose pocket, which is a bit more squared-off, and stylish patches of flat-finish on the mask body. The strap has been redesigned with more surface area – making it less fiddly to put on.



Two generations of Spheras – note the strapping and changes to the nose pocket  
The silicone of the mask body seems a little thinner and more pliable than on the older model – possibly making for a better seal.

## Once More Unto The Beach!

We headed out into West Grand Traverse Bay (a bay off Lake Michigan here in Northern Michigan). The air was warm and humid, the water much cooler. I was unconcerned about condensation because it says right there on the little warranty paper that the Sphera X comes with a fog-proof coating. HA! No. Evidently, mine missed that part, because this bad boy fogged up so completely in under five minutes that I nearly collided with a northern pike. I was able to fix it with some anti-fog I brought along just in case (in the aforementioned svelt and spacious box), and I don't count that against the mask – since it was likely just a one-off.

Once the fog issue was sorted I practiced making faces underwater to test my idea about thinner silicone improving the seal. The Sphera X did indeed seal better than the old model. In all other ways it carries on the virtues of its predecessor; a great field of view, comfortable, not needing much in the way of equalization.

For our next dive, I passed it to my daughter to get her impressions.



Claire, forming impressions of the Sphera X

She noted that the nose pocket, under slight compression, effectively pinches your nose more than the older model. If you keep your mask a little negative, this makes equalizing hands-free easier.

## Conclusions

- **Comfort, Compressibility, Volume, and View:** The Sphera line of masks is unique in a horizontal field of view (nearly 180 degrees) and compressibility. Glass lensed masks require greater rigidity because the lenses must be kept in the same plane. In low volume masks, this can result in a frame that presses uncomfortably against the brow ridge, and even very low volume masks can require earlier equalization to stay comfortable (for volume comparison of the Sphera with a couple of other freediving masks see my review of the [XS Scuba Apnos](#)). The Sphera X has the flexibility to fit a wide range of faces comfortably, and to stay comfortable under pressure at depth with minimal air spent equalizing the mask.
- **Polycarbonate vs glass lenses:** The Plexisol Polycarbonate lenses on the Sphera X have the same index of refraction as water. They

do not magnify like glass lenses, nor do they distort or interfere with binocular vision when the mask flexes under pressure.

## A Few Drawbacks

- Durability: Polycarbonate lenses scratch easily. This is no big deal if the scratches are on the outside – they'll fill with water and become invisible – but you should take care to avoid getting sand in the mask – or rubbing the lenses. With these masks, it's best to use an anti-fogging agent rather than the 'spit and polish' approach.
- Field of vision: The Sphera X has wonderful upward and horizontal fields of view. Looking down is where it falls short, which can be annoying for checking scuba gauges or wrangling fish.

## Summary

The Aqualung Sphera X continues the Sphera lineage as an outstanding and unique freediving mask. It improves incrementally upon the previous generation of Spheras – with stylistic updates, thinner and more pliable silicone, and a better strap. The zippered mask box is quite useful and easily attaches to a dive float.

## Features

- Available in 6 colors: Black, Navy Blue, Clair Glacier, White/Black, White/Raspberry, White/Tropic
- 180° distortion-free panoramic vision thanks to the exclusive Curved Lens Technology
- Plexisol® lenses with special anti-fog and anti-scratch benefits
- UVA/UVB protection
- Advanced Fit Technology (AFT) enhancing the sealing features of the silicone skirt, improving fit, comfort, and feel
- Easily adjustable buckle system
- An innovatively shaped strap better forms to the diver's head, increasing comfort and provides a more secure fit
- Attractive heavy-duty EVA box with corrosion-free zipper.

## Price

- Sphera X Freediving Mask – \$75 USD





**AQUALUNG Sphera X Mask -  
Navy Blue**

**\$75.00**