

PROBE iDRY QUICK-DRY SEMIDRY WETSUIT REVIEW

By Nigel Marsh and
Helen Rose

www.nigelmarshphotography.com

If there is one thing we hate about diving it is getting into a wet cold wetsuit, especially over winter. When that cold wet inner lining hits your back your skin crawls and you can feel the warmth getting sucked out of you, even before you get in the water. Over the years we have tried many ways to avoid getting into that wet wetsuit, short of buying a dry suit, but we have recently used a wetsuit that solves that problem forever, the iDRY quick-dry semidry wetsuit from Probe Wetsuits.

We have been using Probe wetsuits for the past four years and have found them to be the most comfortable wetsuit we have ever owned. The fit, the style, the flexibility and of course the warmth of the Probe semidry wetsuits has impressed us immensely, and with no noticeable deterioration in the wetsuits after hundreds of dives, apart from a little colour fading, we thought it would be many years before we would have to get another one.

However, when Dave Griffiths, the director of Probe Wetsuits, contacted us to try out their latest range of quick-dry wetsuits, we naturally said we would give it a try.

The new iDRY quick-dry semidry wetsuits are available in 7mm and 5mm, but living in Brisbane the 5mm was all we needed for most of our dive adventures. The dive suits arrived the next week and once we unwrapped them they looked little different from the previous Probe wetsuits we have owned – black with a splash of colour, with thick knee pads and a rear zipper. The outside is the same super stretch neoprene that Probe pioneered in the wetsuit market, which makes the suits very flexible, but the inner fleece lining was very different – pink for a start, a woolly texture that is nice against the skin and reported to dry in minutes.

Keen to see how quick-drying the suits are we were almost tempted to stick them in the bath tub, but decided to wait a few days and go for a dive,



Helen in her Probe iDRY quick-dry semidry wetsuit with a turtle at Cook Island.

testing them over a double dive trip. Heading out for a dive trip off Brisbane in autumn the water wasn't exactly cool, around 24°C, but we would find out how quickly the suit dried between dives.

Putting on the wetsuit for the first time on the dive boat, we hadn't worried at home as we knew from past experience from using the Probe sizing chart that they would fit like a glove, the suit was just as comfortable and flexible as our Probe iFLEX semidry.

We had a lovely dive, being cosy and warm, and found that very little water actually entered the suit. Upon exiting the water and peeling down the suit it was hard to tell if the suit had really got wet inside, as it felt and looked dry.

That wouldn't do for the test so I jumped into the water with the suit inside out to get the inner fleece lining really wet.

Back on the boat we were amazed to see that you could literally see the suit dry before your eyes, changing colour from a dark pink when wet to light pink when dry – in only a few minutes – this was unbelievable. After only a couple of minutes the fleece lining felt dry!

This was too good to be true, so I dipped one arm back into the water to watch it dry again, and again and again. We even found that you could give the arm a shake and the water would flick

off, instantly dry! We don't know how the team from Probe Wetsuits have done it, but the iDRY does dry in minutes.

For the second dive we put on our dry wetsuits, what a nice feeling, no cold inner lining. Arriving home we washed the wetsuits and hung them on the clothes line and were amazed once more to watch them change colour as they dried in minutes. Getting photos of the suit wet was also a challenge as the water literally ran off it as soon as it was lifted out of the tub. We also found getting the inner lining wet was even a challenge; you had to constantly push it up and down in

the tub as the water just didn't want to penetrate the pink lining. We did find that the very tips of the wrists and ankles did stay wetter longer, over an hour, but found if you gave them a shake they would easily dry.

On the Probe website they have a video of the iDRY suit drying and then being touched with a paper towel after ten minutes and coming away dry. We reproduced that test and after ten minutes we tested it with a paper towel and could just get it moist by pressing it hard against the lining, but to the touch the fleece lining felt dry.

We must add that the outside of the suit stays wet just as long as any other neoprene wetsuit, but that doesn't go against your skin, so wasn't the point of this development.

After a dozen dives with the Probe iDRY quick-dry semidry we have to say it will be hard going back to our old wetsuits as this is easily the best wetsuit we have ever used – comfortable, warm, flexible and unbelievably quick to dry. We can't wait to use it over winter and never having to put on a wet cold wetsuit ever again!

But wait there is more (no not a free set of steak knives), the iDRY quick-dry range also includes gloves, hoods and wonderfully warm booties – which we have already nicknamed the underwater ugg boot, but that will have to wait for another review after winter diving tests.

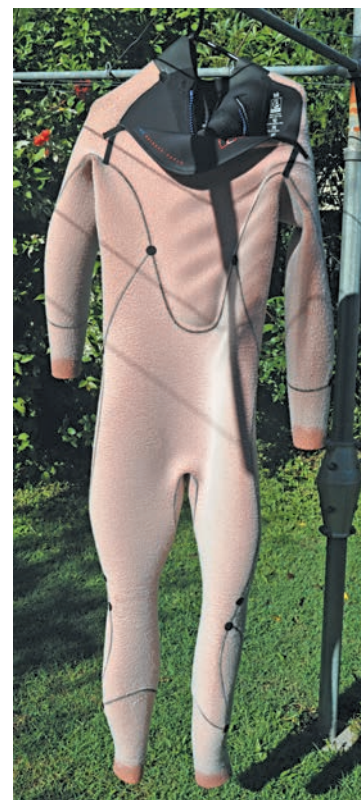
For more information visit – www.probewetsuits.com



Wet legs of the iDRY, you can see the water pouring off as it rapidly dries.



The Probe iDRY pink inner fleece lining, wet seconds after coming out of the tub.



Ten minutes of hanging on the line and the Probe iDRY quick-dry semidry is dry, apart from the tips of the ankles and wrists.



In this image you can clearly see the difference between the wet fleece lining (dark pink) and the dry (light pink).