Parting Shot 4





Canon Rebel t1i, 55mm, 1/250sec, f8, Ikelite DS-51 strobe

When I look through the pictures I've taken on a dive, I always try to be critical and only post the very best ones. Although it is difficult to play judge, jury and executioner with my SD memory card, it's essential when each dive yields upwards of 200 images.

Although I think it's important to be critical of your own work, there are many times when I have pictures that I would love to share, not because they are 'good' but because they have a story behind them. The two images below fall into that category.

Let me provide the necessary background to allow you to appreciate these shots. On my last dive in Riviera Beach, FL, I saw what can best be described as some commotion on the seafloor. Going down for a closer look I saw a large peacock mantis shrimp (Odontodactylus scyllarus) clearing out a burrow. Always interested in reef invertebrates I was excited to find such a large, active mantid. I immediately began adjusting my camera settings as I approached the burrow in anticipation of getting a few good shots. However, as is often the case in underwater photography, this did not work out as I had planned.

I was only able to get one or two shots of the mantid up and out of his burrow because each time he came up he would throw a perfect sphere of sand and mud at the dome port of my camera. (In the first picture, you can see his ammunition, ready to be launched. The second picture is his projectile in motion.) I would then pull back, clean it off, and go back in for another shot. This back-and-forth dance went on for several minutes before I finally gave up and left in hopes of finding something a little more photogenic.

Kristian Taylor

Do you have an interesting shot with a short story behind it? If so e mail us and yours could be the next "Parting shot". peter@uwpmag.com