



Underwater Photography

a web magazine
Issue 48
May/June 2009



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peter@uwpmag.com

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“Look-alike colors” do NOT perform alike!
...and here's why:

Experience demonstrates *URPRO Filters' proven performance cannot be matched by Copy Cat filters with "similar colors" and lower prices!* When you have the best underwater color correcting filters available, it is expected—and flattering—when others attempt to copy our success.

URPRO Filters are *scientifically designed professional-grade Underwater Color Correction Filters*. These Filters provide superior full-color images on all digital, cine, video, and film cameras. URPRO Filters embody exclusive and proprietary properties which regulate light to optimize underwater color correction. Using *natural sunlight only*, URPRO Filters restore the complete color spectrum to depths ranging between 10 feet and 60+ feet.

URPRO FILTER HIGHLIGHTS:

- URPRO developed the original underwater color correcting filter technologies for tropical blue green water and green algae water
- URPRO Filters are scientifically designed high-performance Underwater Correction Optical Filters
- URPRO CY Filters and URPRO GR Filters are Proven for their ability to provide the full color spectrum using natural sunlight or electronic flash in tropical blue green waters and green algae waters

URPRO MANUFACTURING STANDARDS

- URPRO exclusively manufactures URPRO Filters in Optical Glass and Optical Plastic
- URPRO Optical Plastic Filter manufacturing standards meet/exceed ISO 9001:2000, and meet/exceed other recognized international standards
- URPRO exclusively retains these underwater color correction trade secrets, proprietary manufacturing methodologies, and Patent(s)

URPRO TECHNICAL STANDARDS

- URPRO Optical Glass and Optical Plastic Filters have *identical color correction and light transmission characteristics*
- URPRO Optical Glass and Optical Plastic Filters boast parallel surfaces which provide superior light and image transmission characteristics
- URPRO Optical Glass and Optical Plastic Filters demonstrate edge-to-edge distortion-free image capturing capabilities
- URPRO Optical Glass and Optical Plastic Filters can be used inside/outside of an underwater housing
- URPRO Filters are *not affected* by salt or fresh water
- URPRO Optical Plastic Filters have a durable anti-scratch coating on both sides
- URPRO Optical Plastic Filters can be custom shaped for special OEM/Research applications
- URPRO Optical Plastic Filters are “mounted” in anodized filter rings, or can be “unmounted”



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PROS AND U/W MANUFACTURES USE URPRO

- URPRO Filters are routinely provided “as original Filters” by many very prestigious international camera and underwater housing manufactures. Some of these include Ikelite-USA, Gates Underwater Systems-USA, Amphibico-Canada, IMAX-Canada, Epoque-Japan, Foto Leone-Italy, Sealux-Germany, Sea&Sea-UK, Tocad-Japan, Nimar-Italy, Sony Corporation-Japan, Light & Motion-USA, Aquatix International-USA, BS Kinetics-Germany, Onderwaterhuis-The Netherlands, MediaSub International-France, and others

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News, Travel & Events

New Photo Website from Sea&Sea featuring Users Community



Sea&Sea are launching a new photographic website featuring on-line sales of SLR housings, strobes and accessories along with a Community section for all users of Sea&Sea equipment. Compact cameras will be listed for information purposes but will not be available on-line. These can be purchased through our dealer network and a Stockists page will be included on the site.

The Product section is designed to be user-friendly and help guide visitors logically through the options when putting together underwater photo systems and Product Support is featured to help owners get the most

out of their kit.

The Community section will host forums as well as allowing members to upload and share their portfolios and a light-hearted monthly photo competition will also be introduced soon. Other member benefits will include access to photo courses and photo orientated dives. This is a way for Sea&Sea to be more involved with customers and offers a place for everyone to share their experiences of the pleasures (and frustrations) of underwater photography.

www.sea-sea.net

www.uwpmag.com

The Fashion & Nudity Category In memory of Mike Portelly



Mike Portelly, one of the most talented and famous creators in the underwater photography community, passed away about a year ago, leaving many of his worshippers still with a taste for more. David Pilosof, publisher of the “Yam” magazine, creator of the Aphrodite Cyprus Experience competition and a close friend of Portelly’s, felt that his name should be perpetuated, positive that his work will serve as a great source of inspiration for young photographers and creators.

“Portelly’s photograph was the one to appear on the first “Yam” magazine cover, 24 years ago”, says Pilosof. “It was only natural that on the upcoming Aphrodite Cyprus Experience Competition we will create a category to perpetuate his name and wonderful art”.

“Many photographers, including myself, were very much inspired by Portelly’s work throughout the years

and I have no doubt that wherever he is watching us from, he will be delighted to see many new and young photographers competing in a category named after him”, says Pilosof.

The category consists of 5 best underwater fashion images, while at least one of them has to feature elements of nudity. The winner will be granted with no less than 4000 Euro in cash and a three weeks diving trip to Papua New Guinea , including airfare , a prize worth \$20,000 all together.

Looking to the ongoing success of this exciting category in memory of Portelly, next year Pilosof plans to also involve leading fashion houses and the FTV fashion channel, providing photographers participating in the competition with an opportunity to accomplish worldwide exposure and fulfill their dreams.

www.aphroditecyprus.com



WildPhotos 2009

23rd & 24th October 2009

October 2009 sees the return of WildPhotos, the UK's largest event dedicated to exploring the power of nature photography, organised by Wildscreen.

The world's finest wildlife photographers and industry experts, along with host Chris Packham, will inspire and enthuse anyone with a passion for wildlife imagery, whether amateur or professional.

WildPhotos will take place on Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th October 2009, and will return to the prestigious Royal Geographical Society in London.

World-renowned National Geographic photographer, Michael "Nick" Nichols, leads the line-up of speakers and also presenting their work will be winners from the Veolia Environnement Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, the results

of which will be announced shortly before WildPhotos.

WildPhotos will bring together many other inspirational wildlife and landscape photographers plus leading photographic agents, librarians and publishers to offer insights, tips and visions of appeal.

The event is programmed by Rosamund Kidman Cox, journalist and former editor of BBC Wildlife Magazine, and a judge of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition since 1981, launching it in its current form.

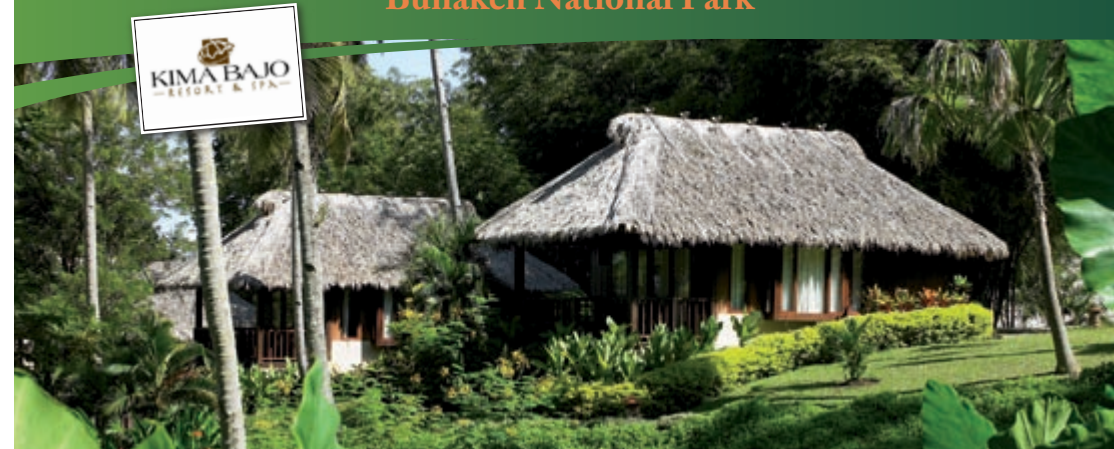
Online delegate registration will open at <http://www.wildphotos.org.uk> in early June 2009. Further details of speakers will be announced in the coming months.

www.wildphotos.org.uk

Dive THE BEST of both worlds

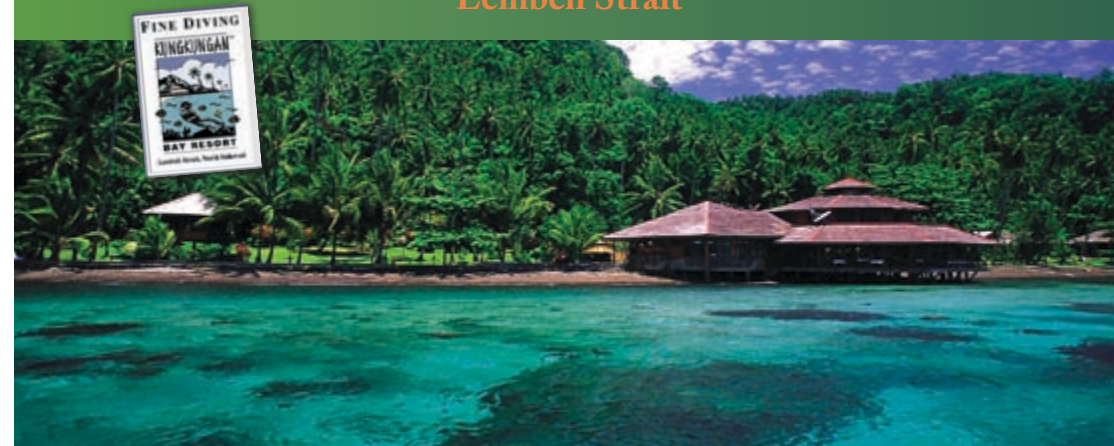
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BSoUP/Diver print competition winner



American photographer Marc Montocchio will be jetting-off to the Red Sea, courtesy of Oonasdivers, after his picture was chosen as best of the show at the new British Society of Underwater Photographers / Diver Magazine print competition.

A jury comprised of BAFTA-winning cameraman Peter Scoones, Diver publisher Nigel Eaton, Sea Life London Aquarium's Jamie Oliver and Alison Rider of Oonasdivers chose Montocchio's image of a hunting sailfish from among several outstanding entries. Said Peter Scoones: "The marlin picture was technically excellent and told a story. It was well composed and had all the right elements for the observer. There

was no question of why it was taken! Further, it easily fitted my definition of a good picture: I would like to have produced it myself!"

Nearly 160 underwater photographs had been entered in the competition, 80 of which were shortlisted and displayed at the London International Dive Show on 28-29 March. The exhibition will now go on display at the newly refurbished Sea Life London Aquarium before going on tour to the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth, and then the Birmingham Dive Show.

www.bsoup.org

www.uwpmag.com

DivePhotoGuide.com

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BSoUP Splash-In

July 4th 2009

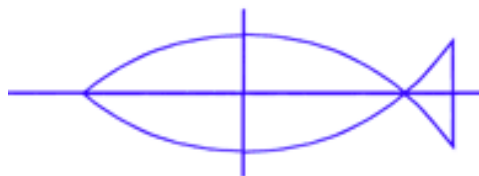
The British Splash-In Championship - 2009, organised by the British Society of Underwater Photographers (BSoUP) in association with the National Marine Aquarium, will take place on Saturday 4 July at Mount Batten and the National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth, Devon. All underwater photographers are invited to participate, whether they are members of BSoUP or not.

Prizes, trophies and individual awards will be presented for winning images in each category as judged by the audience present (see below for full details). In addition, a grand prize will be awarded by an independent panel of judges for the image selected as the best taken in local waters.

Viewing and judging of the images entered will take place at the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth on the Saturday night.

If you want to participate in the BBQ on Saturday evening please register your intention to attend by Wednesday 24 June latest (sooner if possible). If you have not registered in advance we cannot guarantee BBQ tickets.

If you want to take part in the Splash-In, but do not want the BBQ, you may register on 3 or 4 July, although we would prefer you to



register in advance.

Please register by one of the following methods:
registering online
emailing martha@mtressler.com
with a completed entry form
sending an entry form by post to Martha Tressler at the address on the entry form

SPLASH-IN CATEGORIES

There are four categories; Close-Up, Wide-Angle, Animal Portrait and Humorous.

A maximum of four images per entrant, two in any one category for the first three categories are allowed. In addition, each photographer may enter one image for the Humorous category.

Images entered in the Close-Up, Wide-Angle and Animal Portrait categories will also be entered in the overall competition for the grand prize to be chosen by a panel of judges.

www.bsoup.org

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New Products



Aquatica HD WAVE for Sony HD videos

Aquatica Digital has been providing for both the recreational and professional diver high quality underwater photographic systems for over 25 years. Given their tremendous expertise in designing & manufacturing underwater photographic equipment, they are proud to introduce the new “HD WAVE”, their first High Definition Video Housing for the current Sony HDR-SR11/12 and the NEW Sony HDR-XR500V/520V HD camcorders.

Built with the same high quality solid aluminum construction as their digital SLR housings, no compromise was taken to create the New “HD WAVE” Video Housing. Keeping in mind total ergonomics and underwater balance, its compact design makes the unit extremely user friendly. Our



engineers worked very hard on its design, giving a 30° viewing angle on the large side LCD viewfinder for optimal filming capabilities. Giving access to most all key camcorder functions, including the critical Manual White balance function; it will give users the ability to create the best possible HD video underwater.

www.aquatica.ca

Ikelite Nikon Coolpix L20



The Ikelite ULTRACompact digital housing for the Coolpix L20 really delivers when performance and durability matter. The ULTRACompact housing is high quality, built to last, and backed by Ikelite’s reputation for excellence.

All camera controls are fully functional through the housing and depth rated to 200ft (60m). Easy open latch and drop in camera loading make set-up a breeze.

The housing measures 6” (15.2cm) wide; 4.4” (11cm) high including controls; 3.4” (8.6cm) deep including port. The camera and housing weigh under 1.5 lbs (0.66kg) and are nearly neutral underwater.

Includes a 1cc tube of silicone lubricant, vinyl lanyard, flash diffuser, and flash deflector.

www.ikelite.com



Seatool Nikon D300 housing



Small and light enough to hand carry on aircraft, the Seatool ND300 offers exceptional underwater balance.

All camera controls are placed within easy reach, even for divers with small hands. The command dials and shutter release are exactly where you expect them to be for effortless operation, even one handed.

Your new Seatool ND300 housing comes standard with connections for optically fired strobes with optional single or dual Nikonos style bulkheads.

The Seatool ND300 offers three viewfinder options: Optical window, 45° or 180° Inon Magnifying Viewfinders.

www.reefphoto.com
www.seatoolusa.com

Gates DEEP RED



Gates DEEP RED housing for RED ONE™ represents a fusion of reliable and functional.

Via collaboration with Howard Hall, DEEP RED incorporates features reflecting decades of award-winning expertise: adaptable lens support, smooth zoom, comprehensive control access, compact aluminum shell, adjustable buoyancy/trim and Gates Precision Ports™ for no compromises image quality.

There are controls (All Mechanical) for Power, Record/Standby, System/Undo, Sensor/Exit/Video, Manual Iris, Manual Focus, Assignable Buttons 1/2 and Joystick.

The dimensions are 20.5" L x 11.7" H x 10.8" W " (52 cm x 28.5 cm x 27.5 cm). The housing weighs 55 lbs / 25 kg (complete w/camera) on land and is slightly negative but adjustable underwater. The depth rating is 450 feet / 137 meters

www.gateshousings.com

Fuji FinePix F200EXR and WPFX-F200 housing



Fujifilm's FinePix F30 was prized by divers for its extraordinary low-light capabilities and superb image quality. Today, Fujifilm is thrilled to announce a compact camera that surpasses the FinePix F30. The FinePix F200EXR, with a 28mm wide-angle lens, is Fujifilm's latest F series compact and features a new, revolutionary sensor – Super CCD EXR – designed to produce breathtaking photos in the most challenging conditions. When housed in WPFX-F200 housing, the FinePix F200EXR is waterproof to depths of 40 meters and is sure to delight divers everywhere.

www.fujifilm.co.uk

SUBAL CD5MII for Canon EOS 5D Mark II



The Subal CD5MII housing is machined from solid aluminium and retained with Subal's well established QuickLock latches.

There are controls for Power On/OFF, Shutter Release, Display Illumination, AF-On, Zoom (Manual Focus), Front and Rear Main Dial, Exposure Mode Dial, Lens Release and there are Push Buttons for: Metering Mode/White Balance, AF/Drive, ISO/Flash Compensation, Menu, Picture Style, Info, Play, Erase, AF Point Selection, Set, Live View.

Viewfinder options include standard, In Line GS180 or the 45° swivel WS45.

The housing is rated to 70 metres.

www.subal.com



Seatool Sony HDR-SR11/12



The Seatool SR11/SR12 underwater housing for the Sony HDV Handycam HDR-SR11/SR12 is one of the smallest, lightest underwater video housings ever produced.

At just 1.5kg it's small and light enough to hand carry on aircraft and because the housing body conforms so closely to the camera, the housing attains nearly neutral buoyancy (slightly negative) for effortless handling underwater.

The housing utilizes a flip out mirror & lcd reversing circuit, allowing the user to take advantage of the camera's LCD Screen for composition. Optional 3" external monitor now available.

www.reefphoto.com
www.seatoolusa.com

Ikelite Canon 5D Mark II housing

This heavy-duty clear polycarbonate case is contoured to the camera, durable, and completely corrosion free. Unlike aluminum housings there is a clear view of the main o-ring seal, port o-ring seal and camera controls.

The housing is depth rated to 200 feet (60m) and is only slightly negative in salt water depending on choice of lens port.

Controls are provided through the housing for every camera function except the multi-controller and kept water-tight with Ikelite pioneered Quad-Ring seal glands—proven to be the most reliable method of sealing controls. A large zoom control knob can be comfortably reached without removing your hand from the handle.

A full range of optical grade dome and flat ports accommodate most macro, wide angle and zoom lenses. Lens ports are sold separately.

The Super-Eye magnifier comes standard and offers enhanced visibility of the camera's viewfinder while wearing a diving mask. The camera's large LCD screen can be clearly viewed through the back of



the housing. The live preview feature of the Canon 5D Mark II model is accessible for framing your photos using the camera's LCD screen.

We feel that TTL exposure is so important in underwater photography that we include TTL conversion circuitry in every Ikelite digital SLR housing. The Canon eTTL2 conversion circuitry in the housing works perfectly with all current model Ikelite DS Substrobes.

www.ikelite.com

Subal ND90 for Nikon D90



The Subal ND90 housing is machined from solid aluminium and retained with Subal's well established QuickLock latches.

There are controls for On-Off/Display illumination, Shutter, Zoom (man. Focus), Front and Rear Main Dial, Flash Exposure Compensation/Flash mode, Mode, Lens Release, Focus Mode (AF-M), AF-Lock and there are Push buttons for Exposure Compensation, Metering Mode, AF, Delete, Playback, Menu, White Balance/Protect, ISO/Zoom out/Thumbnail view, Quality/Zoom in, Live View, OK, Info, 4-way controller.

Viewfinder options include standard, In Line GS180 or the 45° swivel WS45. The housing is rated to 70 metres.

www.subal.com



Subal ND30 Housing for Nikon D300 with GS Magnifying or 45° viewfinder



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Dive Rite LED LUX Canister Light

Burn time increased to six hours!

Over the past two years, LED technology has been advancing rapidly. The LED LUX is one of the brightest, most durable lights on the market with absolutely no trade-off in burn time.

Typically, brighter means less burn time, but not so with the LED LUX. Touting a new, compact



light-head, the LED LUX has an astounding number of lumens (almost 1000), yet has a six-hour burn time.

Ten thousand hours of bulb life and the robust nature of LEDs means the LUX continues to offer a high-output, tough unit that is ideal as a primary light, especially for divers who travel and need a durable light.

Operational to a depth of 152m the LED LUX has a PVC canister that is indestructible, even under extreme pressures. The canister lid houses the 'on/off' switch inside a switch guard to prevent accidentally turning the

light on or off.

A compression o-ring seal keeps water from entering the canister and locking latches prevent unintentional opening of the lid. Includes charger and comes packed inside a protective case.

Note: The LED LUX is not designed for use on land.

Suggested Retail Price is £712.83.

www.sea-sea.com



5 important reasons to make Reef Photo and Video your choice for underwater photo and video

1 We are divers and photographers

Everyone on our friendly staff is an underwater photographer. We use the gear that we sell, and we keep up with the latest imaging products for both underwater and topside.

2 U/W photography is our only business

We're not a dive shop and we're more than a camera store. We concentrate all of our energy on the constantly changing world of underwater imaging.

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5 Free Ground Shipping!

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Epoque ERX-C1010 for Canon Canon Rebel XS/EOS 1010



The camera is fast, easy to use and delivers perfect photos. It features a 10.1-megapixel CMOS Sensor, Canon DIGIC III processor, a bright 2.5-inch LCD monitor, and Live-View Function, in a compact design.

The Epoque ERX-C1010 housing will operate most of the cameras functions underwater. There are five interchangeable ports available for using the most popular lenses. A Zoom-port, two Macro-ports for the EF 50mm and EF 100mm macro lenses and two Dome-ports for wide angle and fisheye lenses, will be available for capturing every type of underwater subject and scene.

www.époque-japan.com

Fantasea LED 360 light



The Fantasea LED 360 light is made of polycarbonate and features 36 LED chips.

It uses 4 x AA batteries and burns up to 30 hours per set of batteries. An emergency flasher system is incorporated.

The Fantasea LED 360 light automatically shuts off for a second when flash fires and is waterproof to 40 metres/130 feet.

The package includes a mounting ring and stainless steel wing nut for easy attachment to a strobe arm or lens port bracket.

www.fantasea.com

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D70



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D200



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1Ds MarkII



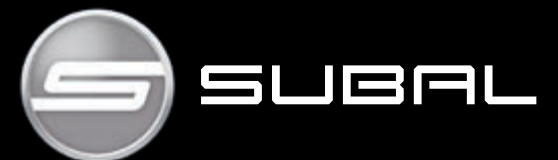
5D



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The History of Underwater Photography and Cinematography in Italy.

A comprehensive Italian underwater photo-cinematographic history has never been published. This volume considers the important events from its beginning in 1930's until the 1980's, chronologically related year by year and provided with more 250 vintage images.

The author Alberto Romeo, has grouped chronologically the various events considered to be the most important and interesting for each year adding for each decade both a general comment and a monograph.

The accounts are very precise and often come directly from the participants own mouths, people who have honoured the Author with their friendship.

In the years around World War II the Author has gone into depth from a purely historical point of view: the X Flottiglia MAS Gamma Group and the role that this military body had in the development of Italian underwater sport in the postwar years, trying to insert those underwater events into an historical context for that period, which is the real point of departure for contemporary Italian underwater sport history.

The author Alberto Romeo, is an underwater sport's doctor

and a photojournalist specializing in marine biology. He is a pioneer of underwater photography in Italy. years. In 1984 he was the first Italian champion of underwater photography; the C.M.A.S.

(World Underwater Federation) ranked him in the world's Top-Ten Underwater Photographers from 1987 to 1990. Romeo represented Italy in many international contests including in Maldives World Underwater

The History of Underwater Photography and Cinematography in Italy costs €30



www.editricelamandragora.it/it/libri.asp?collana=17#

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Sea & Sea MDX-PRO D700 dSLR housing



The latest addition to the MDX-PRO housing range, the MDX-PRO D700 for the Nikon D700 Full-Frame camera, is now shipping. This is a Limited Edition housing of 100 units worldwide, so availability is by definition limited!

Featuring advanced ergonomic design for ease of use and precision machined from solid block aluminium to be lightweight, the housing is protected by a dark blue anodised coating for durability. The MDX-PRO D700 is the perfect housing for the Nikon D700 and will be appreciated by the most exacting photographers.

The housing is very versatile and users can adapt it for different styles of photography as required.

For strobe use, the housing comes with type-N strobe connectors; one 2-pin connector for triggering strobes manually and one 5-pin

connector for using the Converter/N for dedicated TTL. It also features two fibre optic cable sockets which allow strobes to be triggered by the camera's built-in flash using the fibre

optic cable L-Type. Fitted with a 0.66x viewfinder as standard, 0.5x and 0.8x viewfinders for wide-angle and macro use are also available.

Shipping without handles, the user has the option of fitting the standard Ergo Grips or either the Sea-Arm VII or new Grip-Stay L.

The usual Sea&Sea refinements are standard such as a built-in leak detector, camera mounting tray, port lock and locking latches. Depth rating is 60m.

Suggested retail price is £2829.38 inc. VAT (without grips).

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Upgrading from a compact camera to a DSLR system is a big move financially but it does open up a whole new potential for you. Fortunately if you chose Ultralight for your compact strobe mounting arm system, it will cost very little (or even nothing) to upgrade. The same arms and arm clamps will perform seamlessly and you'll be upgraded to First Class in no time at almost no cost.



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Panasonic LX3 and UK Germany DL4



This combination, in photographic, physical and financial terms, is right at the top of the proverbial pile.

The Panasonic LX3 camera is 3rd generation camera aimed at the seriously demanding compact user. Bucking the trend to cram ever more pixels onto a chip, the LX3 offers 10 megapixels and concentrates on maximising the quality rather than relying on pixel count.

When announcing the camera, the company pointed out that more pixels on the same sized sensor does not always result in better image quality and described its approach with the LX3 as: “boldly reversing the industry trend of pushing toward ever-higher pixel counts.”

As well as all the usual Auto and Programme settings the LX3 provides full manual control through the whole

aperture and shutter speed range and RAW/JPEG still image recording as well as ‘HD’ video capability. Combine this with the fastest (f2) and widest (24mm) lens and you have, to my mind, the ultimate compact camera.

The DL4 aluminium housing oozes substance and dependability with a simplicity of line and design which sets it totally apart. But then so it should as the price inc taxes is around £1100.

And even at that price there are some controls you can’t operate such as the ON/OFF, aspect ratio or the focus mode underwater but, for me personally, that isn’t a drawback as I enter the water with one style of photography in mind and so devote the dive to that.

The camera fits snugly inside the housing without the need for an



intermediary mounting plate and it is held precisely in position. The housing can also hard wire trigger external flashguns in both manual and TTL mode and a ball socket is provided for mounting ball joint flash arms. There is also an accessory dome available for the 18mm supplementary lens.

There’s no denying that, by comparison to other compact housings, this is a very expensive camera/housing combination but, if you already own the LX3 camera, you are probably very particular about your photography having already chosen a camera that is virtually



without compromise.

As a result, it wouldn’t surprise me that you see the DL4 housing as an obvious choice for this camera.

Epoque ERX-C1010/ C-1010-X2 by Sim Chee Ghee

Introduced at the DEMA 2008 show, alongside a housing for Leica M8 (!), this compact housing ERX-C1010 is built for the Canon EOS 1000D/ Kiss F/ Rebel XS and the ERX-C1010-X2 for 450D/Kiss X2/Rebel XSi . Their housing for the new Canon EOS 500D/Kiss X3/ Rebel T1i will be released towards the end of May 2009, code named the ERX-X1010-X3.

The housing body retails at only ¥75,000 for the C-1010 and ¥80,000 for the C-1010- X2(Japan RRP without shipping & TAX), these housings are indeed very interesting for entry-level DSLR users, as well as compact camera upgraders, especially as both the Canon EOS 1000D and 450D are being offered everywhere at low prices!

Weighing at only 1930g on land, the housing is made of ABS resin and high intensity polycarbonate. Peculiarly designed, the semi circle top allows the camera flash to be raised, therefore enabling triggering of external strobes in slave mode. Coupled with a full diffuser, the



The housing is made of ABS resin and high intensity polycarbonate and weighs only 1930g on land.

camera flash can actually be used as it is underwater, with a limitation on the distance of course.

Fiber optic cables can be connected to the diffuser via Epoque's Fiber connector DS or industrial 3M velcro, which usually comes standard with OEM fiber optic cable set i.e. 10bar, Fantasea

The housing opens/closes with an oversized latch on the right side and a small latch on the top. The back cover is attached to the housing via a hinge on the left hand side. The camera screws on to an adapter plate, which slides and locks securely into the housing. A nice little touch is the docking groove for the hotshoe connector, which keeps it neatly in place should it not be needed.

Controls for almost all camera functions are available, including popping up the flash! A standard S6



A nice little touch is the docking groove for the hotshoe connector, which keeps it neatly in place should it not be needed.



The housing opens/closes with an oversized latch on the right side and a small latch on the top. The back cover is attached to the housing via a hinge on the left hand side.

bulkhead is provided and a selection of optional accessories (listed below) are available. Interesting for this price category is the availability of the ERX pickup finder, to be used with Canon's Eyepiece Extender EP-EX15II. This allows a 100% frame viewing and a 1.5x magnification. The pickup finder can be installed without any tools.

A comprehensive manual in Japanese and English is provided, as well as a spare O-ring, silicon grease and a tool to open the small top latch.

Ports , zoom and focus gears are available for selected Canon lens:
Flat port M60: EFS 18-55mm f3.5-5.6 IS/ EFS 60mm f2.8 Macro USM
Flat-port M50: EF 50mm f2.5 Macro



Flat port M100: EF 100mm f2.8
Macro USM
Dome port 170: EF 20mm f2.8 USM/
EF 24mm f2.8/EF15mm f2.8 Fisheye
Dome port 200: EFS 10-22mm f3.5-
4.5 USM
Specs:
Model: ERX-C1010/ERX-C1010-X2
Depth rating : 45m
Applicable camera: Canon EOS
1000D, Canon EOS 450D
Material: ABS resin, high intensity
polycarbonate, Brass, NBR,
Silicon rubber, corrosion resistance
aluminium alloy
Dimension: H200 x W198 x D130mm
Weight: 1930g (land), -100g
(underwater)

www.uwpmag.com

*Optional accessories:

- ER strap kit
- DX adapter kit
- ER Pickup Extender (needs Canon
EP-EXII)
- EUS- C430 (Housing for Canon
Speedlite 430EX/430EXII)
- Sync cord C (6pin)
- Sync cord N (5 pin)
- Fiber connector DS

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UK-Germany 50D Housing

by Mikko Voipio

During a liveaboard trip to the Red Sea last November some of the fellow photographers suggested I upgrade my good old Canon EOS 350D to a full frame one - the new EOS 5D Mk II. At the time I was convinced that I wouldn't upgrade the system for a while. I knew that the 350D with UK-Germany housing was small and not so heavy to carry on a plane.

The comments about an upgrade stayed afterwards somewhere back in my mind. During the holiday season the upgrade slowly began to sound more and more tempting. I started to investigate the EOS 5D Mk II as well as the DX size EOS 50D. Although the FX camera is superior in image quality in the end I decided to stay with the DX format. The 50D allows me to continue using existing lenses, like EF-S 60mm macro and Tokina 10-17mm fish-eye.

The EOS 50D is the latest of Canon's prosumer series DX DSLRs. It has the same 1.6 crop factor as earlier DX consumer/prosumer DSLRs and uses the same EF/EF-S lenses. The overwhelming 15 megapixels of 50D in DX sensor makes the pixel density extremely high. Theoretically this may not be an advantage in underwater photography because the optical energy per pixel is relative to the surface area of the pixel. However, Canon engineers have made incredible work to develop the sensor with practically no gap between pixels to maximize the photon count for each pixel.



The big improvement in EOS 50D is the bright 3" LCD display with 920000 pixels compared to the 230000 pixels in previous model, EOS 40D. The images look now much brighter and clearer on the screen. Also the new Digic IV image processor provides faster and better results. 50D also provides up to 12800 ISO speed. However, according to my experience the highest ISOs are not very useful due to the visible noise.

The LiveView function in EOS 50D is improved compared to the EOS 40D. 50D has still the Quick Mode but also new Live Mode and Live Face detection Mode both of which use the image sensor for focusing instead of the separated focusing sensor used in Quick Mode (the mirror is lowered down during focusing operation). However, the Quick Mode is focusing faster and more accurate than the two newer modes but requires interruption of the display.

The EOS 50D provides handy Quick Control Display where all the main photo parameters are visible at a glance - really useful feature for underwater photographer. The user can also modify



most of the parameters using Multi-control button and the display.

After some discussions and comparisons I decided to buy yet another housing from UK-Germany. Uwe Kiehl provided me the information I required promptly and promised to "customize" the housing a bit. The photos he gave convinced me that the quality looked at least as good as before. My good experiences with the 350D housing and ability to use old ports and zoom gears simplified the decision even more. The housing arrived just a week before my trip to Seychelles, enough to test the housing in a pool before the trip.

The UK-Germany 50D housing is designed using a CAD system and made of aluminium using 5-axis-CNC milling machine. The precise design and production explains why the front and back of the housing fits snugly together. The lap in front part makes the alignment easy and the risk to break guides is eliminated. The inside of the housing is coated with matt black material which prevents any internal reflections. The two halves are locked together using two latches with a locking



The EOS 50D fits nicely into the housing.

mechanism (prevents accidental opening).

The dimensions of the housing (std version) are 190mm by 165mm by 120 mm and it weights about 2 kg without port and camera. UK-Germany rates the housing to 70m.

The EOS 50D fits nicely into the housing. The camera is installed into a tray using the tripod mounting threads so it is easy to insert and remove from the housing. One can change memory card without sliding the camera out but the battery compartment cannot be opened. However, sliding camera partly out and the battery can be replaced, too.

There are windows for both displays: a small one on top of the housing and larger one on the back. Both windows are well placed. Due to the Quick Control display of the 50D the top one is not used much.

The housing provides two connection points for flash arms: on left and on top. Normally the left one contains Kilgus shoe but any other with M5 screws can easily connected. These holes are also used for the left handle option so the fixing is then



Tokina 10-17@12mm,, ISO 200 1/45th@F16

not available for a flash arm shoe. On top there are two holes with M5 threads and one with M8 tread which can be used for second flash arm connection or for a focus light. One S6 sync connector (on left) is included, second (on right) is optional.

The housing uses UK-Germany bayonet port system. UK provides six different flat ports and two different dome ports plus several extension rings. The zoom/focus control is not in the port but in the housing. With the second handle on the left, like my old housing, the zoom knob is comfortably controlled while grabbing the handle. Even if a strobe arm is connected to the left side of the housing (standard set-up) the zoom control is easily operated. The zoom/focus control system requires tailored zoom-ring or focus-ring for each lens (ordered separately).

UK-Germany has changed the handles, a warmly welcomed improvement. The handles have now a shaped grip with rubber coating providing much better feel and ergonomics than the old ones. On top of the handle is an M8 threaded hole.

The Quick Control Display is by default

activated by pushing the Multi-control down. Unfortunately this cannot be done while camera is in the housing. However, this hindrance can be circumvented by programming the activation functionality to the Set button.

The main control knobs, the Quick Control Dial and the Main Dial, can be rotated while holding the right grip but it is not very comfortable with small hands like mine. On the other hand the exposure lock button is placed on the right hand side and can be operated easily with right thumb without leaving the grip.

A lens release knob is now included so changing the lens does not require removal of the camera. This speeds up lens changing and decreases the risk of leakage.

The most important disadvantage of UK-Germany products is the lack of any kind of instruction manual. If you are not familiar with the systems you have to guess what the purpose of any component/accessory is or you need to ask. Even though, according to my experience, Uwe provides good answers at least a short leaflet telling some hints about usage and maintenance would help a lot. Fortunately the knobs and buttons are (mainly) labelled.

The 45 degree viewfinder (an option) is great, much better than the standard viewfinder. The image is clear and larger. Also it helps to photograph slightly upwards. Because the viewfinder is rotating it is quite easy to use portrait composition, too. The only disadvantage is the slight coverage of the large display of the camera. When the viewfinder is turned sideways it is not a problem.

Although the trip to Seychelles was not mainly a dive trip I had some opportunities to leave my non-diving wife on the beach and head under the



*EF-S 18-55@18mm, Subtronic Mini's,
ISO 200 1/60th@F4.5*

waves of the turquoise Indian Ocean. During my half a dozen dives with the UK-Germany 50D I used either the Canon EF-S 18-55mm lens with a flat port or Tokina 10-17mm fish-eye with a dome port. Also two Subtronic Minis were included in my rig.

With 18-55 and a flat port the setup was slightly negative but easy to balance and nicely manoeuvrable. With the Tokina and the dome the system was lighter in water but still negative. When the strobes were pushed slightly forward (still out of image) the setup was in balance and easy to handle as well.

The first trial was made during a snorkeling trip. I had the Tokina with the dome port but no strobes. The dome was lifting the front but not too much. Underwater the system was very easily handled. However, it was quite challenging to take over-under images. The 45 degree viewfinder was then no advantage but rather a hindrance: hard to rise high enough if not standing on the bottom.

The dives provided a reasonable set of subjects



*Tokina 10-17@17mm, Subtronic Mini's,
ISO 200 1/125th@F8*

from eagle rays to nudibranchs. The first dive was spent to get used to the housing and - for me - the viewfinder but the following ones were productive. The bright image in the viewfinder and the large and crisp display were good tools to compose and review images. The controls worked fine and provided touch good enough to handle the camera. The access to the Quick Control display provided user friendly way to verify the parameters even it was not the most ergonomic way to modify those due to the mechanically overloaded nature of the Multi-control button (rotate-and-push operation to move into right parameter, then select and modify). This may be handy on land but with housing it's a challenge. Fortunately the parameters can be modified using some other method, too.

I also tried to use LiveView in a few places where the optical viewfinder was hard or impossible to use. It is, indeed, possible to take photos with LiveView but not easy. You have to push the AF button to focus which requires two hands or very awkward right hand grip. If one ends up using

LiveView the camera would be in a place where it may be hard to use two hands. Therefore taking pictures with LiveView requires some patience. I tried only the Quick Mode where the mirror is lowered for focus. Maybe the Live Mode would be more useful underwater if the display was not interrupted while focusing. However, operating the buttons would be the same. I wish Canon would adopt the Nikon way to control focus operation in LiveView modes (the trigger button).

The UK-Germany 50D housing for Canon EOS 50D is well made. It has a good look and a reasonably good feel. However, the mechanical overloading of controls, especially the Multi-control joystick like button, is really a challenge to housing manufacturers. UK-Germany has made a relatively good job with rotate-and-push type control even though the center push is not supported. Fortunately the missing activation of Quick Control Display can be programmed to the Set button. This is, indeed, a handy operation even for land photography: then the control view is much easier to activate.

Even though the upgrade from EOS 350D to 50D was a relatively big investment my feeling is still that it was worth the money. Now I am looking for the start of the local diving season with dives in the colder and darker Baltic Sea. Let's see how the housing can be handled with thick dry gloves.

Mikko Voipio



Cayman Workshop with Alex Mustard

Understanding, capturing and controlling light

16th-23rd January 2010



This workshop is themed on lighting: "Understanding, capturing and controlling both strobe and available light underwater" and is limited to 12 photographers.

We will dive on Grand Cayman's dramatic walls, the East End's atmospheric caverns, fishy shallow reefs and at Stingray City. There will be the traditional dawn stingray shoot to photograph the unique stingray schooling behaviour in the perfect light for both colour and black and white images. We will also aim for encounters with Cayman's larger creatures such as turtles, tarpon and reef sharks.



The trip is limited to just 12 people, which provides plenty of time for image critique and also a 1:1 pool session to refine wide angle lighting. The course also includes lectures, interactive image review sessions and photographic diving.

The workshop costs \$2,175 USD (excluding flights) for 7 nights accommodation at the luxurious Compass Point Resort, workshop, 6 days of diving, social evenings, rental car and high speed Wi-Fi.

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Sanyo Xacti VPC-HD2000

with Epoque/Patima housings

By Sim Chee Ghee

Sanyo's latest addition to its handheld upright camcorder series goes full HD! Offering smooth, true progressive full HD (1920x1080) 60fps recording, 12 interpolated megapixels of digital still with flash and full manual controls, this dual camera (as Sanyo calls it) appears to be an interesting option for the "travelling light" diver.

Barely larger than my palm size (Pic:Xacti4) and weighing only 311g including the battery, this puny lil' gadget will surprise many in terms of performance and handling. Low light capability and strong colors are its forte, coupled with 2.7inch LCD screen, 10x optical zoom lens, headphone jack, microphone jack, accessory shoe, a simple, intuitive menu control via joystick. The camera also accepts 40.5mm filters

Camcorderinfo.com just published a comprehensive review and considers the Sanyo Xacti VPC-HD2000 worthy amongst the top dogs in high definition camcorders.

My recent dive trip got cancelled before this review, so I wasn't able to

test it underwater. However watching some land footage via HDMI cable on our LG TV, which is only HD (720p) confirms the unbiased review to be truthful and honest. The colours and sharpness are indeed jaw dropping. I imagine it'd look even better on a full HD TV!

The camera is expected to retail at around USD \$600.00

Available housings currently are the Epoque EHS-1000HD and Patima Xacti housing.

Epoque EHS-1000HD

This housing has been around since the Sanyo Xacti VPC-HD1000, followed by VPC-HD1010 and now it can still be used with the latest VPC-HD2000.

A purely mechanical housing made of ABS resin in the front part and high intensity polycarbonate on the back cover, it offers control to all camera function, including the flip up the flash. Although scrolling through the menu takes some getting used to, however considering the attractive price it's well worth spending some



extra time learning the controls.

Basically the jog dial controls the menu and scrolls 4 ways ie up,down,left,right. The housing controls has only 3 ways - left,right,down. To go up, simply scroll all the way down, which is not a long way to go.

There's also a fiber optic connector on the top right side of the housing, thus enabling strobes in slave mode to be used. A standard M67 thread is available in the front port for filters, wide angle and macro lens.

Epoque recommends their popular DCL-20 wide angle lens with CY color correction filter for blue water. The latter is the rubberized type which simply snaps onto the lens. Manual white balance is recommended with the filter to achieve proper colours. Once One-Touch WB is pre-selected, this is



easily done in 4 steps ie

1. Menu
2. One-Touch, Set
3. Press Set again (aim at neutral background ie sand, palm, off-white slate)
4. Press Menu to exit.

The housing weighs only 660g on land, -60g underwater and opens /locks with a total of 7 small latches. These are small and could be a bit



issues, which upon checking was due to user misalignment of the camera in the housing. The camera inserts into the housing with opened LCD directly as it is, without any trays or adapters. Epoque attended to the problem and improved the housing by installing a nicely, chromed semi circle bracket on the top and 2 plastic brackets in the middle and bottom part and part to align the camera. (see pic: Epoque7)) Misalignment is therefore passé , however a caution note is still included in the housing packaging, warning users to be careful.

Specs:
 Model: EHS-1000 HD
 Depth: 45m (150 ft)
 Camera model: Sanyo Xacti VPC-HD1000, HD1010, HD2000
 Function: Almost all camera function
 Size: 176 x 124 x 143mm
 Weight: 660g (land) , -60g underwater
 RRP: ¥40,000

fiddly for users with large hands to open , however a tool is provided to help.

Worthy to mention are the accessories as well ie spare O-ring, silicon grease, 2 pieces silica gel (button type), hand strap, tripod mount and a comprehensive manual in English.

The top of the housing has a cold shoe aka hotshoe slot, although nothing is hot wired there , Epoque calls it Clog adapter. However judging from the 5 tiny screws holding it together I wouldn't attach an Ikelite DS-160 or Sea&Sea's YS-250Pro strobe on it! Lightweight strobes and/or video/focus light can be used here. It's not connected to the internal of the housing, so no worries about flooding there, it's just a pity if it breaks.

Apropo flooding, a few samples earlier versions of this housing reportedly have had some flooding

Patima Xacti Housing



This is a quite serious piece of machined aluminium housing with very fine workmanship. Very interesting and neat is the integrated remote control in the housing, thus enabling all functions of the camera.

Rated up to 120m, this beautifully crafted housing is machined from solid aluminium, anodized in silver and the port has the standard M67 thread for wet lens and filter attachment.



Almost all functions of the camera can be accessed except for the built in flash. There is a cold shoe for accessories on top of the housing and standard tripod mount is available.

The camera screws onto a fixing plate in the housing with the LCD wide open. Holding the housing with one hand feels very comfortable and secure with the neoprene strap. The housing weighs 1400g on land and



is slightly negative underwater. The weight does contribute positively to better handling underwater.

A very nice housing indeed and the higher RRP of USD \$1100 is fully justified by its quality, handling and Patima's great backup service.

Specs:

Model: Patima Xacti

Useable camera: Sanyo VPC-HD1000, HD1010, HD2000

Housing components: high quality aluminium, acetal, stainless steel

Manufacturing: CNC cutting out of aluminium

Coating: anodized coating after barrel sanding

Color: Silver

Camera attachment: Saddle type

Port: 67mm flat port, wide-conversion/close-up lens underwater exchange

Depth rating: 120m

Weight on land: 1400g

Control: ON/OFF, slow zoom IN, slow zoom OUT, quick zoom IN, quick zoom OUT, Photo/Rec/Standby/Play/Cross Buttons/Menu

Sim Chee Ghee

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Patima Housing for Canon G10

By Sim Chee Ghee

Bikini Atoll is now closed once again! But at least you can still see some of the majesty of the “Nuclear Fleet.”



By popular demand an expanded version of the eBook, *Ghost Fleet of Bikini Atoll* by Joseph C. Dovala, is now available. With almost 4x the pages it contains nearly 100 photos and much more text. The book is in PDF file format easily read by a number of free existing software programs such as Acrobat Reader. Electronic photo books, or eBooks, are able to showcase high quality images and text in a new, exciting, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly way. They have relatively small file sizes, usually less than 20mb. *Ghost Fleet of Bikini Atoll* (12mb, 89 pages) is only \$5.95 each emailed. Please visit www.jcdovale.com for details.



Patima housings are well known for their solid construction and well laid out control buttons. The housing for the Canon G10 is no different.

Made of CNC aluminium alloy and anodized in nice, sexy and shiny black, it comes with 2 ports and a new touch sensitive shutter lever works like silk underwater!

The housing weighs 1750 grams with the standard port and the dimensions without port are 185x 120x 80mm. Access to all controls are provided in a cleverly designed layout.

The basic port allows full zoom

and utilizes the full wide angle of the G10 at 28mm, this port can be easily confused with the other included port which Patima calls wide port. The latter is a short port with M67 thread, it allows one to attach external wet lens such as the Inon UWL-100 (hence the name “wide port”) or any M67 macro lenses. Full zoom is not possible with this port, the moment the camera’s lens touches the port glass, a “Lens Error” message will appear and one has to switch the camera OFF and back ON again to restore functionality.

Nevertheless the housing handles



extremely well underwater, the control buttons are well laid out and easy to use but the zoom toggle might be a bit small for users with big hands or gloves. The menu dial control is cleverly designed and located at the right side on the housing, so one almost never has to remove the right hand from the comfy neoprene hand strap.

The camera inserts into the housing via a baseplateplate which allows battery and memory card access without removing the plate, a nice touch! Standard locking latches are located on each side of the housing. The housing can be ordered

with a standard Nikonos bulkhead or Patima's TTL 6 pin (for Canon 580EX, 580EX II and Sunpak housing) .

The hotshoe connector inside the housing comes packed in a nice, cute little neoprene pouch. For fiber optic connection, an adapter is available right in front of the camera's flash, a simple screw in design. Fiber optic cable goes straight in without any adapter, tighten the screw and voila!

The port lock mechanism needs to be mentioned as well, just lift up the port lock knob on top of the port and turn the port anti-clockwise 45 degrees to unlock and vice versa to attach the port. Changing ports is almost effortless!

Housing specs:

Patima PDCH-G10 Housing

Materials: High- quality aluminum alloy, stainless steel, acetal, copper

Manufacturing: CNC machining out of aluminium ingot

Finishing: Black anodized after barrel, sanding

Port: UW removable wide conversion lens adaptable exclusive wide angle port (zoom

operation not possible)

Basic port (zoom operation possible)

Bulkhead: Patima type TTL 6 pin or Nikonos V

Depth rating: 120m

Size: 185 x 120 x 80mm (without port)

WeightL:1750g on land (including basic port)

Controls: Control Dial, Strap holder, Zoom lever, Accessory Show, Bulkhead, Sub-handle, Port x 2, Housing lock latch, Shortcut key , Exposure, Power , Shutter lever, Play, AE Lock, Setting, Menu, Display, Erase, Close-up, MF, Flash, Continuous Shooting, Strap

Sim Chee Ghee

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Compact Course Pt2

with Maria Munn

Welcome back to the second part of this quick start series in showing you how to get the very best out of your compact camera underwater. In this issue we are going to look at using apertures and shutter speeds as well as looking at different lenses to quickly help you get on the underwater track to really creative works of art.

Aperture Settings

The very mention of anything other than the Programme or Green Square Mode can make anyone's fingers freeze when an attempt is made to move out of these settings.

As many of my course guests have found, having the confidence to use different aperture settings on your equipment underwater will not only help to get much better sharpness in your overall images, it will also help you to create striking images when used together with a strobe. So where do you start and what does it all mean?

The aperture of your camera (the



Taken with a Fuji Finepix F30, INON Fisheye Lens and Inon D2000 Strobe, Aperture f2.8, Shutter Speed 1/60th this photo illustrates that when the aperture is too large, that the subject runs a risk of being overexposed.

f number) controls the depth-of-field in your image and is the area in front of and behind your subject which remains in focus. A shallow depth-of-field helps to give more prominence to your subject by throwing the background out-of-focus. Using the maximum depth-of-field on your camera will give you a really sharp, crisp image and is ideal for close-up subjects. All compact cameras have the ability to get great sharpness for



By closing down the aperture to f5.6, the subject's colours are more punchy and there is more depth of field.

macro subjects with the Tulip Icon and this can also help when using a wide-angle lens for close-focus wide angle subjects. More on the latter will be explained a little later.

Compact Cameras naturally have a good depth-of-field as the camera's sensor is so much smaller than SLR cameras. There are also fewer numbers to choose from, the range normally starts at 2.8 in most models up to F8 or F9.1 in some modes!



By closing down the aperture to f8, the blue background is far darker than the first photograph and there is a marked difference in depth-of-field.

such as Sea & Seas. Even though this number is much lower than F22 or F32 offered with SLR models, the range of depth-of-field achieved is more or less the same.

Using an aperture of F2.8 with a wide-angle lens is excellent for letting in the most amount of light possible when photographing wrecks, caves and big subjects such as whale sharks. Just remember that if you are using Manual White Balance on a bright

sunny day that the upper part of the picture runs a risk of being pink. It is also useful to use the black stickers which are provided with INON's wide angle lenses to help provide glare in the resulting photograph, or you could use a black marker and colour around the rim of the camera's zoom as well. An aperture of F8 or higher suits close-up subjects to obtain maximum sharpness by letting in less light. For cameras which don't have an Aperture Priority or Full Manual Mode, the widest aperture 2.8 or thereabouts is automatically selected when using P mode on the Sony, Olympus or Nikon models for example and M mode on the Fuji Finepix or older Canon Ixus models. The smallest aperture for macro subjects to obtain the greatest depth-of-field can be accessed by simply pushing the Tulip Icon. Using this button with forced flash within a foot of a macro-subject gives wonderful sharpness and punch as explained in the previous issue.

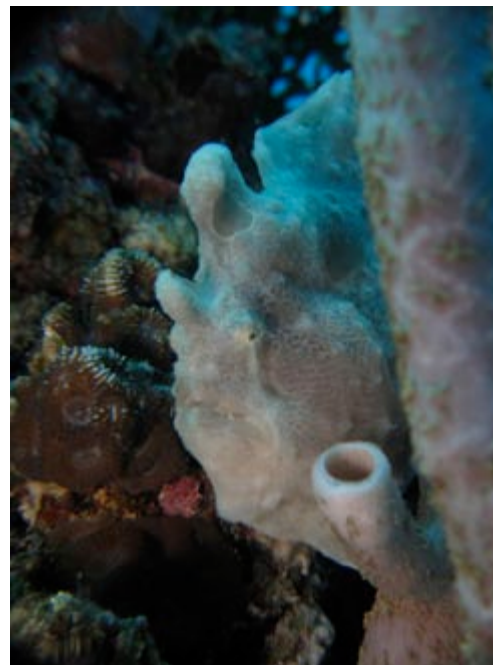
If using an external strobe with your camera underwater, control over the aperture is extremely important to help with correct exposure of your subject choice as well as control over your depth-of-field. Too much light with an aperture of 2.8 can burn out a wide photograph of a reef scene and too little light with an aperture of f8 runs a risk of making it appear too dark. When photographing reef

scenes with a wide-angle lens, a middle aperture number of 5.6 has always produced effective results whether shooting in the green waters of Alaska or blue waters of the Red Sea and has given me perfect results on every occasion.

Shutter Speed

Whereas the aperture determines how much light gets into the camera, the shutter speed determines the length of time it has to make an impact on the camera's sensor. This is measured in fractions of a second. A standard underwater shutter speed is 1/60th of a second to ensure that your picture remains sharp, but this is of course very dependent on your subject! If it is fast moving you will need a faster one to prevent it from being a blur. This can also be increased by changing your film speed to a higher one.

Some of the more advanced compacts have their own Shutter Speed Priority Mode or full Manual Mode where it can be changed. For those entry level compacts, there is also a useful tool called the Exposure Compensation/Value Tool (+/- button) which is on the back as a separate icon on most cameras or in the Function Menu of others such as the Canon Ixus range. This tool is a huge help with overexposure at



Slow Shutter Speed - Taken with a Canon Ixus 980, Aperture f8, 1/60th

By using a slower shutter speed of 1/60th, the background behind the frogfish is visible and I found it very distracting to the subject. By increasing the shutter speed to 1/500th in the next picture, I got rid of the distracting background to make the frogfish more prominent.



Fast Shutter Speed - Taken with a Canon Ixus 980, Aperture f8, 1/500th

the top part of the images in shallow waters where light is reflected by the sand or where there is a lot of ambient light, for example on morning dives. By choosing an EV value of minus 1 this can help to overcome this problem as it increases the shutter speed making the background blue or the photograph darker or freeze the rays of a sunburst in a cave. On the contrary, choosing an EV value

of plus 1 helps to slow down the shutter speed, bringing more light into the picture which can be useful when taking photographs in darker conditions. Just be careful that the shutter speed doesn't slow down and make the resulting photograph blurry. For those cameras with independent control over the shutter speed, the Exposure Value control is extremely useful when taking photographs of a

reef scene with a wide angle lens and strobe, helping to control how blue you'd like your background to be.

For those who have the ability to independently choose the shutter speed setting, the possibility of using the fastest speed in combination of f8 or your highest number (tulip icon) can create wonderful three dimensional effects where the macro subject stands out from the background by giving it a darker or even black background. This is also great for getting rid of rocks and clutter around subjects such as nudibranchs. Increasing the shutter speed is also great for freezing the sun's rays near the surface of the water for a creative effect. Just start from 1/60th sec and increase the shutter speed to 1/500th and see how the background gets darker.

Getting Creative Different Lenses, Different Uses

Adding different lenses to your compact camera will really start to enhance your underwater photography. But which lenses do you choose for which subject?

Wide Angle and Fisheye Lenses

A wide-angle lens is an absolute must for anyone who loves wrecks, caves, big animals such as



Taken with Sea & Sea I200, Aperture 2.8, Shutter Speed Not Known with a YS27 Strobe, a standard wide angle lens is great for large subjects and close-up wide angle subjects such as this Frogfish.

whale sharks, humpback whales or even turtles. By getting closer to your subject, the water column is automatically reduced helping the resulting picture to be not only sharper but you will also be able to fit more of your favourite subject in the frame. It is also a fantastic accessory for split-level shots where you can record a favourite scene both above water and underwater at the same time, this can be extremely effective when



Here are two photos of the Gianni D in the Red Sea, one on the left with an INON Wide Angle Lens and one on the right with an INON Fisheye Lens to show the difference in the field of view. Also notice how the straight line at the bottom of the wreck is slightly curved due to distortion created by the Fisheye Lens

photographing coral gardens in the shallows of beautiful sandy beaches fringed with trees overhead.

Epoque make wide angle lenses which simply screw into the existing threads of housings made by Olympus and Ikelite, or by using an adaptor for both Sony and Canon models. Remember to apply a little grease on the thread of the wide angle lens before screwing it into the housing's thread to avoid it getting permanently attached to the port! Other manufacturers such as Fuji, Fantasea and Sea & Sea make their wide angle lenses for their own housings. Inon make adaptors for a vast range of different housings for most compacts and either their wide angle lens or fisheye lens can simply be twisted into

the bayonet fitting with a quarter-turn. Just make sure that it locks firmly into place (or check that the arrows line up with each other), otherwise it can easily fall off whilst descending and can end up being a very expensive dive!

So what is the main difference between the two lenses? A standard wide-angle lens gives most compact cameras between 100 and 105 degree field of view but this also depends on the camera's own field of view. If your camera has a 28 mm field of view, you may end up with vignetting where there are black corners on the photograph, this can be fixed by simply zooming through the lens slightly. Inon's fisheye lens can give up to a 165 degree field of view and

is therefore much wider. It is the optimum choice of lens for compact cameras with the unique ability of being able to zoom completely through the lens to be able to capture close-up subjects (even ones which place themselves on the very dome of the lens itself are incredibly sharp!). At its widest setting it will add drama and ambience by being able to fit in more of the scene and from only half a metre away, it is even possible to photograph a whole diver. This lens will also distort straight lines which are close to the camera making them appear bent, and this can be also be used as a creative effect when looking down on a reef, giving it a rounded feel. It is also the choice of lens for reef scenes, enabling the user to get far closer than a standard wide angle to the reef and with one or two strobes, gives amazing, vibrant colour. More on this will be featured in depth in the next issue.

Macro Lenses

The macro function on most compact cameras is great by itself for photographing small subjects, but the built-in flash when used can sometimes burn out the resulting photograph of tiny or white-coloured subjects. Macro lenses can really help the photographer by being able to keep a distance of approximately 10 cms, therefore allowing sharp focusing on smaller subjects as well as shyer ones. They can also help give extra sharpness and definition to larger close-up subjects such as frogfish. I found macro lenses particularly useful when photographing white nudibranchs in Alaska, so that the flashgun was a little further away to light the subject and therefore prevented overexposure.

Epoque make macro lenses which can attach to the screw thread of housings made by Olympus



Fuji F30 Aperture f8, Shutter Speed 1/60th with Inon Close-Up Lens and Inon D2000 Strobe. I used this lens to be able to keep a little distance from my subject so as not to overexpose the white tips of this nudibranch whilst in Alaska.

and Ikelite, Sea & Sea and Fantasea make their own close-up lenses for their own cameras and INON make a close-up lens to fit into their bayonet adaptors for most compact housings. These can also be stacked to give extra magnification.

Some Olympus cameras have a Super Macro mode which allows photographers to get within 1 cm of the subject and still use a flashgun by tweaking the internal settings of the camera. Just be careful to keep the flash-gun on a really low power to just add a small burst of light to capture the subject.

To Sum Up

Course guests have loved the new creativity that using the different controls on their camera can give them, as well as the extra angles in their underwater photographs that they can achieve by using different lenses. I hope that this feature gives you the confidence to get out of 'Auto Mode' and if you have any questions at all, just drop me a line at maria@oceanvisions.co.uk.

In the next issue we'll be looking at how using a strobe will give your underwater photographs extra punch as well as composition ideas . Until the next time

Maria Munn

www.oceanvisions.co.uk

I am especially grateful to Cameras Underwater and Sea & Sea for the kind loan of equipment for this article.

www.camerasunderwater.co.uk
www.sea-sea.net

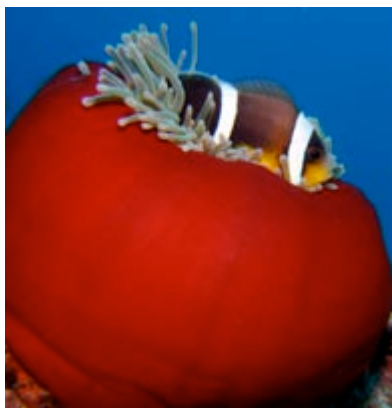


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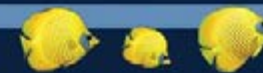
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Composition and Negative Space

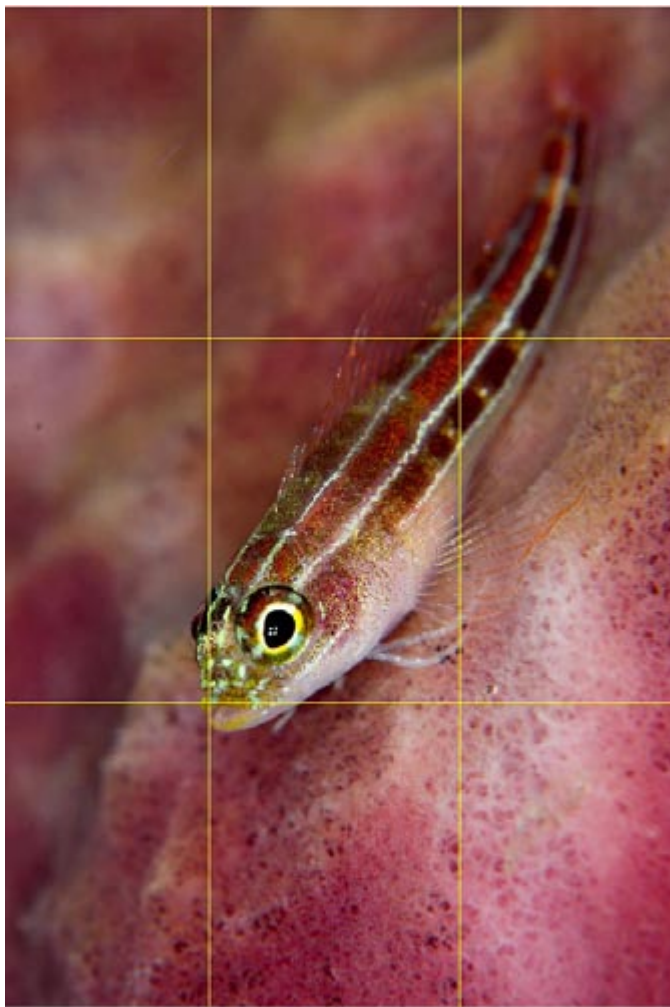
by Mark Webster

I am sure that we have all seen the results of a competition or perhaps an image in a prestigious publication and thought to yourself “I have a picture just like that”. When you examine your own image you may find that it is every bit as good as that winner, but more often than not you will pick out small differences and nuances that add that little extra to the published image. That little extra will almost certainly be due to composition which when planned and applied correctly can make even a common subject stunning.

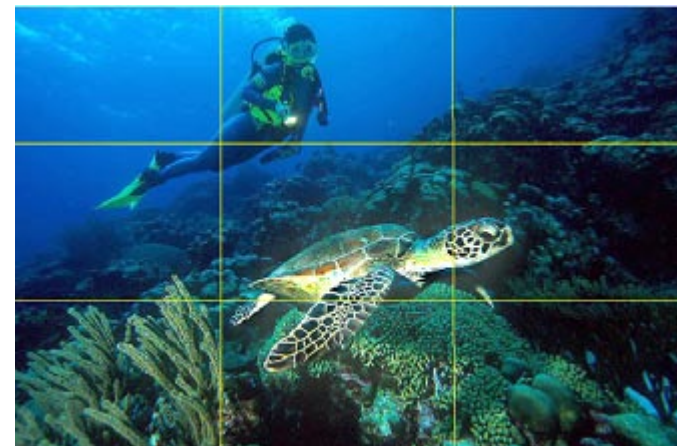
Looking at published images is often a good way to learn the art of composition. By mimicking the style of an appealing image you will probably be applying some of the basic rules of composition, albeit subconsciously in some cases. But if we understand a little of how these rules work it will help you deconstruct a successful image and perhaps see how they can work for your own image.

Although rules are made to be broken and not every powerful picture will follow them slavishly, it does help to have a grasp of the basic concepts and then to train ourselves to think about them when in the water and dealing with all the other variables.

The most basic tool is the rule of thirds, which has been used by all the great classical photographers and in fact can be traced all the way back to the ancient Greeks and Renaissance painters. Essentially it divides the image into



nine equal sections by drawing three imaginary horizontal and three vertical lines through the frame. This enables the photographer to position key elements of the image within, or at the intersection of these areas to create a flow and a central focal point in the composition. These are often referred to as the Power Points within the image. For example, the most important feature of a fish will be its face and the eye and mouth which in a portrait image may be composed in the centre or towards the lower



(Left) Rule of Thirds 1 – Triple fin blenny – this portrait format shot demonstrates a classic rule of thirds composition. The fish passes through three of the zones and the eye and mouth are close to one of the ‘power points’. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon wet lens, Inon Quad flash, ISO100, f18 1/125

(Above) Rule of Thirds 2 – Turtle and diver – In this image we have a primary and secondary subject placed in two zone areas to maintain a balance in the image. Both subjects are close to a ‘power point’ or intersection of a zone. Nikon F90X, Subal housing, 16mm fish eye, Sea & Sea YS120 and YS50 strobes, Elitechrome 100, f11 1/60

third of the frame to lead the viewer’s eye over the subject (see example). By using the rule of thirds you can achieve a better sense of balance in an image before you release the shutter.

You might position your subjects to pass through two or more of the “rule of third zones” to create a balance and lead the viewer’s attention across the image. The example of the turtle and diver illustrates this. Many cameras offer the option of a grid overlay in the viewfinder which can help



Diagonal - Crinoid shrimp – These two examples demonstrate diagonal composition in both a portrait and landscape format. Both are relatively bold and obvious diagonals but you can use this technique quite subtly dependant on the subject. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon wet lens, Inon Quad flash, ISO100, f18 1/30

you optimise the positioning of the major elements in your image. So the rule of thirds can help you plan a structure for an image before you



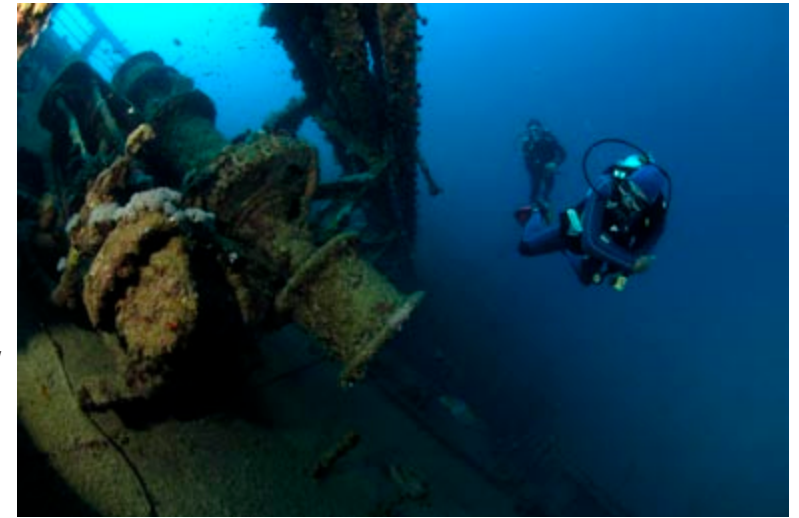
Diagonal and Negative Space – Ornate ghost pipefish. This is perhaps a simple image on initial appraisal, however it does combine a diagonal composition, a negative space that describes the subject's habitat and a natural light background to boost subject separation. Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 60mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f16 1/25

release the shutter. Use it as a starting point or guide but don't be a slave to it!

Composing your subject along

Perspective – In this example the slope and angle of the deck disappear and the overhead pipe rack run into the background of the image creating a sense of depth which is reinforced by the divers swimming up and following the line of the deck.

Nikon D100, Light & Motion Titan housing, 10.5mm FE, Subtronic Minis, ISO200 f8 1/30



an imaginary diagonal line is also a very powerful compositional tool. The diagonal is used time and time again in all types of photography, sometimes in a striking and obvious manner, whilst others are more subtle but none the less powerful. In doing this you will inevitably construct your image within the rule of thirds zones but obviously you need to consider where the focal point of the image should be positioned.

We also need to consider the format of the image, should it be a landscape or portrait? The great thing about digital imaging is that we can play with the composition, particularly if we have a static or co-operative subject. This will give you the opportunity to play with the

position of the main subject in the image area and assess the difference between say a horizontal and diagonal composition and landscape or portrait format. It is often said that a portrait or vertical image will have more impact but, whilst this may be the best format for a single fish, it is not something we should accept blindly. Twist the camera through 90° or more, watch through the viewfinder and take some sample shots to determine the best format – the obvious one is not always the best one.

Perspective, particularly in wide angle photography is another important compositional tool. We can make effective use of the forced perspective created by a fish eye lens in close focus wide angle by getting



Perspective - You can use the forced perspective qualities of a fish eye lens as a compositional tool to make a small or medium sized foreground object look much larger and a background subject appear to be farther away. A diver in the picture can also be used to mimic a diagonal in the main subject to strengthen the composition as shown here. Nikon F90X, Subal housing, 16mm fish eye, Sea & Sea YS120 and YS50 strobes, Elitechrome 100, f11 1/60

Perspective – This image uses the line of the deck head and walkway to draw the viewer's eye into the depth of the image. The diver swimming towards the camera emphasises this line. Nikon F801, Subal housing, 16mm fish eye, Subatec S100 and YS50 strobes, Ektachrome 100, f8 1/60

any diagonal line in the image to add a further sense of balance as shown in the example barrel sponge and diver image. Here the sponge is no more than 2ft (60cm) high, but looks far larger, and the diver perhaps 15 feet (5m) or so behind the sponge but looks further away due to the perspective distortion.

We can also use perspective to draw the viewer's eye into an image and add a sense of depth. This works well with wreck photography where, for example, the line of the deck or

a walkway can be positioned in the image to emphasis the perspective. Having a diver follow this line, perhaps towards the camera, is also very effective as shown in the two examples.

Positive Use of Negative Space

Negative space is essentially anything in the frame that is not the main subject or point of interest. The objective is to try and separate or distinguish your primary subject from

Wide Angle Negative Space
Silhouettes can be very powerful images and are simple to take. In this image the graphic straight lines of the hull and outrigger are mimicked by the position of the diver. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 10.5 FE, Subtronic Mini strobes, ISO100 f18 1/125.

the back ground and for this we need our negative space to be contrasting or complimentary. Another alternative is to choose a background that completes the story or balance of an image.

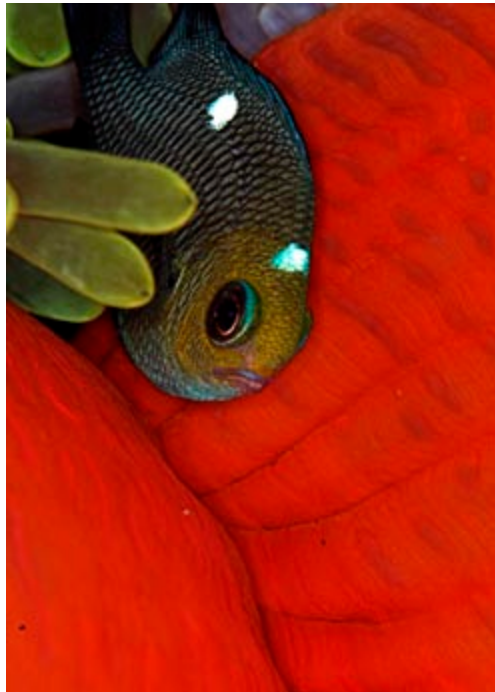
In wide angle our task is a little easier as we can use the backdrop

very close to a foreground subject to make it appear larger than it really is. Add a diver, sunburst, boat or all three and you have a powerful image. You can also get your model to mimic



Wide Angle Negative Space Adding a dive boat on the surface is one of the simple and effective ways of filling the negative space in a wide angle image. Remember to move the camera around to position the boat correctly and perhaps add a hint of sunburst. Nikon F801, Subal housing, 16mm FE, Subatec S100 strobe, Ektachrome ASA100 f16 1/125.

of the reef or open blue water as complimentary negative space and these will be a part of the image that generally do not fight with the main subject. Wide angle images often offer the opportunity to get below the main subject and adopt a view towards the surface. By adding a sunburst, a boat



Macro Negative Space Sometimes it is a good idea to look for the negative space first and then wait for a suitable subject to enter it. In this case the domino fish gave in to his curiosity and had to peek at the camera. Nikon D100, Light & Motion Titan housing, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200 f18 1/125.

on the surface or a diver we can create a balance in the image and fill the negative space.

Successfully positioning a diver in the frame can be difficult unless you have a dedicated model. Photographers in theory should make good models as we understand

the need to be positioned correctly in the image. However, we are often the most impatient of models as the urge to return to your own photography is ever present! If you are planning to pose for each other make sure you discuss your needs and a range of polite signals first! The other alternative when diving with a group is to look for good foreground compositions and then wait for a diver to pass through or direct one of the group into the frame. Even the duller of foregrounds can be made more interesting with the addition of a diver so try and imagine the possibilities even if the reef does not look inspiring to begin with.

Negative space in macro may be a little more challenging as reef features are often around or close behind our main subject which can produce busy or competing backgrounds. In these circumstances we can use the inherent shallow depth of field of the macro lens to our advantage to soften and blur the background. Basic macro guidance, particularly in underwater photography, is to use a small aperture to maximise the depth of field and therefore ease the task of focussing. But opening up the aperture a couple of stops say from f22 to f11 has a significant effect on DOF and if you are braver still then open the aperture to f8 or f5.6 and the reduction is

dramatic. Accurate focussing is more important and you will need to control the power of your lighting to ensure a correct exposure, but the result will be pleasing soft blurred backgrounds.

We can of course look for subjects in positions which allow us to exclude the background by shooting against open water and then choose to have a black background or a balanced light background. Balanced light backgrounds may need longer shutter speeds or perhaps an increase in ISO or a combination of both. Each subject will be different dependant on prevailing conditions and you will need to take a few shots to get the desired effect.

Subject separation is another consideration and is particularly important when working with camouflaged species. For example, we as photographers all know what a frog fish is and will be likely to be able to spot one in a reef image. But showing this to perhaps a non diver and they probably will see a lump of sponge. Adopting a low angle and placing a subject like this against open water now reveals a very strange looking fish. The viewer still may not know that this is a frog fish but you have succeeded in revealing the weird beast.

Another alternative is to look for interesting or striking negative space and then wait for an inquisitive



(Above) Separation 1 . We as photographers will know this is a frog fish but to the uninitiated this would be hard to spot due to the excellent camouflage. This sort of subject needs separation from the background to make it more recognisable. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 60mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f11 1/60.

(Right) This is the same frog fish as in image 1 but at the end of the dive.

The froggy had moved to perch in a tube sponge to improve his hunting but also offering me a lower angle to capture him against an open water background which reveals the face of a very odd looking fish. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 60mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f11 1/60.

subject to move into it. A good example of this is the brightly coloured skirt of a giant anemone which can range between scarlet and deep purple. Anemones may have clown fish, domino fish, shrimps or porcelain crabs as symbiotic residents and a bit of patient waiting and scanning through the viewfinder will pay off.

No discussion on macro photography is complete without

the mysterious and now popular term Bokeh, which does play a part in negative space. This term is derived from the Japanese word for 'fuzzy' or out of focus and is used to describe the way a lens reproduces a softly focussed background. So lenses are referred to as having good or bad bokeh and the key to this is apparently in the design of the aperture diaphragm – round ones tend to produce the most pleasing results.



(Left) Poor Bokeh – Nudibranch. In this image of a nudibranch we can see that the highlights in the background are reflecting back into the lens in the shape of the aperture – thus poor bokeh! Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f16 1/80.

(Right) Good Bokeh – Nudibranch. In this image the background is softly focussed and smooth with no distracting highlights - thus good bokeh! Nikon D100, Light & Motion Titan housing, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO200 f18 1/125.

Poor bokeh normally becomes an issue when reflections or highlights in the background (caused by backscatter for example) typically show the shape of the aperture, but sometimes you may have to look hard for this. Good bokeh produces smooth even backgrounds with no obvious

shapes. However I think that we could become overly concerned by this as most current macro lenses are well designed in this respect, although plainly some are better than others. In the real world getting the shot and composing well are probably more important.



Abstract – Giant clam siphon and mantle – Abstract images lend themselves well to the principles of composition. In this example we have the rule of thirds and a gentle diagonal with perspective flowing to the back of the image. Nikon D200, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Quad flash, ISO100 f16 1/80.

Although composition is crucial to a successful photograph it is all too easy to become a slave to it if you try too hard. Keep it in the back of your mind and break the rules occasionally. With experience you will learn to dissect the image you are viewing through the viewfinder and examine its compositional elements. By changing your position and twisting or moving the camera or just changing the format from horizontal to vertical,

you can vary the composition until it is arranged in a pleasing or striking manner before you release the shutter. Don't forget these are guidelines only and breaking the rules can also create stunning images. You will never know until you try!

Mark Webster
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Kingdom of the Whales

by Tim Rock

The last Kingdom in the Pacific. And one of the last places on Earth a person can meet, face-to-face, one of the ocean's largest mammals. Tonga. Sailors come to sail and party. Others drop out and drink kava. Locals live to praise the Lord with hauntingly beautiful choirs. Some come to stay in tidy lodges and wander deserted beaches. And whale lovers make the annual pilgrimage to see humpbacks.

Tonga's claim to fame for those wanting to be in the water with a whale is that it's one of the few places on the planet where it is still legal to snorkel with these gentle giants. Various laws in other whale grounds around the world like Hawaii and South Africa allow for whale watching, a fascinating experience in itself. But that way you only get to see a fraction of what's going on. In Tonga, you can watch above and below. It's an exciting and often humbling experience.

I was amazed at my first

encounter there. It was windy, spitting a bit of rain and the boat was bouncing around like a cork. We were told there was a baby frolicking at the surface and mama was probably down below sleeping. Now when a baby whale "frolics" it makes quite a splash. When we were told to get ready, I donned fins and mask and quietly slipped over the side of the boat.

We found the young whale as the waves rolled over our heads and washed saltwater into our snorkels. But that first close encounter blotted out any discomforts. Cold, waves and salty lungs were all but ignored. Here was something three times my size, covered already in barnacles, wanting to play with me!

Humpback babies gain about 70-80 kilos a day. So even though this was a "baby" it was like swimming around with a small van with fins. Even though the sky was cloudy and the water a bit stirred up, we looked

All photos were made using Aquatica D200 Housings and Nikon D200 cameras. The D200 with a Tokina 10-17 lens (mostly at 10mm) at 6.3 was the basic setting with manual adjustments for shutter. No strobes were used. Land images were taken with a Sigma 10-20mm with circular Kenko polarizer, Sigma 18-200 OS with circular polarizer and a Sigma 80-400mm OS Lens. Aerial were made with the Tokina 10-17 at 17mm.



down and could see the mother resting below. When the mothers rest they stay down about 30-40 feet below the surface for roughly 20 minutes at a time before they have to come up and grab a breath. Baby whales have to surface every eight minutes or so. Since whale babes are usually only children, I guess they get lonely and want a playmate so snorkelers may fill this void for the curious calves.

Occasionally the baby would dip down and make sure mom was still there. Then it would come back up, much to our glee, and rocket by. Lifting a fluke, it came so close I could count the barnacles and see tiny crabs on its mouth. After a while, the considerably larger mother decided baby was having too much fun. She slowly rose from the depths, gathered baby into her breast, cruised by and eyeballed us and, with a few measured kicks of the tails, they disappeared into the blue.

That was great. Little did I know it would get better.

Whale buffs are lucky. It is the general consensus that the most comfortable time to visit the tiny town at Vava'u is during the dry season between May and October. It is also considered to be the region's high season and coincides pretty much with whale season. But it's really not that rainy here. Mostly it rains at night and cools things off, making for great



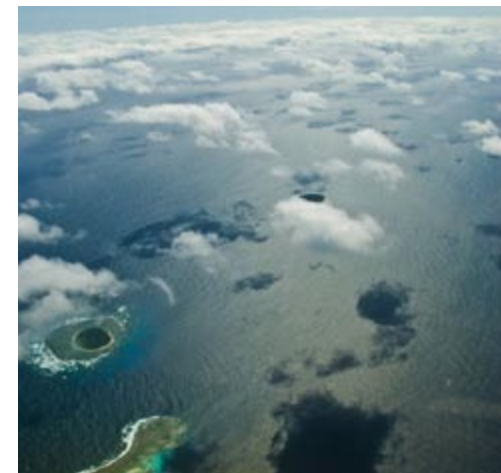
sleeping. Tonga lies solidly in the South Pacific's unpredictable cyclone alley. But they don't occur too often in Tonga. The weather and winds do change frequently, but it seems on average the spring brings 3-4 days of windy weather followed by 2-3 days of sun and flat seas.

The whales start to show up in late June to early July. August and September are considered to be the best months for whale observation.

Most visitors arrive at Fua'amotu International Airport, about 15km southeast of the main town of Nuku'alofa in the southern part of the country. You must then

catch a local flight to Lupepapau'u International on Vava'u in the north where most people stay in or around Neiafu town. It's up here that all whales seem to come, attracted to the many bays, protective limestone cliffs and warmer water. These whales feed in Antarctic waters about half the year and then migrate north to Tonga to have their young and breed.

Winging over Tonga on a sunny day is an eye-popping experience. The clear waters and sandy fingers leading to rich coral reefs make vivid emeralds and aquamarines. Large tracts of land give way to smattering of islands and hidden reefs. The other



way to see Tonga is to bring your own yacht, which is a popular pastime for sailors.

Tonga has a rich history. The Tongan archipelago is thought to have been first inhabited somewhere between 3000 BC, and 1100 BC. Tongan warriors have been called "Vikings of the Pacific" attacking neighboring isles and extending



the Tongan Empire to parts of Fiji, the Samoas, Tokelau and Niue. The monarchy has remained strong despite inconsistent efforts of first the Dutch and then the British to tame the Tongan culture. Captain James Cook called Tonga the “Friendly Islands”, a moniker that the islands retain to this day.

Westernized Tongans nowadays question the role of the monarchy, but Princess Pilolevu Tuita, daughter of Tupou IV, has been good for the whales. As a Patron of Whales ceremony, she just recently visited Vava’u and proclaimed Tonga a whale sanctuary and affirmed her father’s decision to stop whale hunting over

35 years ago.

A few days passed and the weather improved and so did the encounters. We watched for over an hour as a mother nursed a calf. The setting was a broad bay with the high cliffs of the islands on one side and a sandy, palm-lined beach off the other. Fruitbats winged overhead but we were fixed on what we saw below. Gentle and protective, the large female came up to breath, calf in tow, four times during our encounter. The calf came up many times in between. The sun started to set and the scene was about as tranquil as Nature can provide.

As we made our way back to

the boat, a gentle rain started. In the maze of islands that leads back to Vava’u, we came upon another mother and calf. The baby had its face out of the water and its mouth open. This was probably the first time it had experienced rain and was reveling in the massage the raindrops gave it while getting a taste of sweet, fresh water.

As the sea flattened out, we were able to head southeast past the many reefs and islets and out to the open sea. We had encounters with lone males singing, their plaintiff vocals vibrating through our comparatively tiny bodies. Breaching by males to attract a female or ward

off a suitor produced some spectacular jumps.

Females teaching babies to breach was even more entertaining. Mom would leave the sea with a huge splash. Baby would then emulate Mom, trying many times in succession to get the form and air that mama so adeptly had just shown.

We watched heat runs where males would try to run off a female’s escort in order to mate with her. This was like following a series of runaway train cars. Huge heads would plow through the sea. The challenged male would blow massive bubble streams as he voiced his disapproval of the challenge. We would follow these



breath.

We swam with these whales until we were exhausted. As if she knew we were done, the mother open her pectorals displaying her immense white breast and made a huge turn like a giant sea eagle swooping in for a landing. One turn, then another and off into the blue they went. For us, a truly perfect whale day. I hope they enjoyed watching our antics as well.

Tonga is still new to tourism and is a bit of a diamond in the rough, which is part of its charm. We were focused on whales but it has great hikes, healthy reefs and virtually untouched beaches as well as a special culture. People are friendly and quick to greet you with a "Malo e Lelei" (Good Day). Handicrafts are very nice and fresh fruits come to market daily. It's a laid back and fascinating little country to visit.

For me, the opportunity to get in the water and get within yards of a beautiful family of humpbacks was about as close to Nirvana as I think one can get. They are called gentle giants, and when not threatened they certainly seem to fit the moniker. Humpbacks in Tonga. Long live the Kingdom.

amazing displays of testosterone at 10 knots or more as they rampaged through the sea. One time we even saw the male still erect as he finished his victory mating.

Perhaps the most perfect day was the long encounter we had in deep, blue crystal clear water far out to sea. A mother, older baby and male escort seemed perfectly at ease with our presence. The baby was going bonkers, pectorals open and playing deep, then playing at the surface, then tail slapping ad infinitum, then back down for more play. Mom would watch patiently. At one point she breached and then baby tried it. All the while, the male cruised below, coming up at long intervals for a

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海中遊泳
 ~ Into the Sea ~

Adventure of an amateur

By Alex Goldblum

The goal was simple; freeze the action of one of the most dynamic, high velocity hunts in the ocean. Sailfish have been clocked in excess of 65 miles per hour and are to be found hunting Brazilian sardines along the continental shelf circa fifty miles north East of Isla Mujeres in the Gulf of Mexico. My guide was the renowned Amos Nachoum, owner and director of Big Animals, an organisation solely focused on bringing its clients close to the largest and most impressive inhabitants of the animal kingdom. I had accompanied Amos to the Arctic circle to photograph Orcas in 2005 and although I have since felt a huge affinity to underwater photography, due to other commitments I have only spent a total of four weeks developing the required skills. So when I spoke to Amos about this trip I was (rightly!) concerned whether my skills were honed enough to be able to capture this amazing scene.

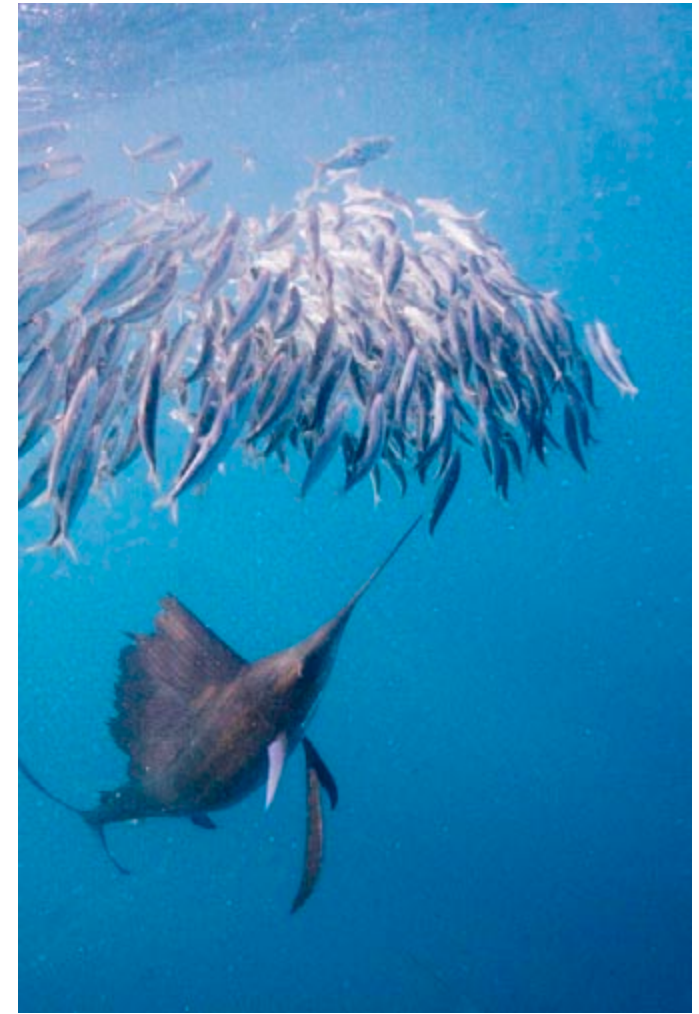
I arrived in Isla Mujeres to find the other two guests were published underwater photographers and as we attended our evening briefing I realised I may well be out of my depth. The weather had been mixed and sightings had been limited to single fish in greenish water with significant amounts of plankton around. ISO management would be important as would optimising strobe power. Amos laid down the gauntlet early - we all needed to capture a Sailfish re-entering the water with a sardine in its mouth. We also needed to be close



The sport fishing fleet at Isla Mujeres

enough to these high velocity fish to capture the iridescent flash across the body and flaring of the dorsal fin. Most of the week would be snorkelling/freediving and only if the baitball was moving slowly would we don our ponytanks.

The first morning we established the routine for the week - rise at 5, order our burrito at the



Piercing portrait. Canon EFS 10-22 @f18, 18mm, 1/250 ISO 800 Exposure corr -1.33. Canon Eos 20D in a Subal Housing with a dome port.

harbour and depart before sunrise. A two-hour journey out to the continental shelf gave us plenty of time to discuss camera set-ups. I was shooting a Canon Eos 20D in a Subal housing, the others flagship Canons and Nikons in Subal and SeaCam housings. It was suggested we use 640 ISO to



Dorsal Fin. Canon EFS 10-22 @f13.0, 22mm, 1/250 ISO 800 Exposure corr -.33. Canon Eos 20D in a Subal Housing with a dome port.

start with. My first mistake - the 20D has a choice of 400 or 800 so I opted for 800, remembering that I took some pretty good shots of the Orcas on ISO 800 and not remembering too much noise on those prints. I also assumed there will be plenty of opportunity for trial and error.

We all looked out for the promising sign of sailfish - frigate birds bunched in a funnel cloud formation close to the surface. If the birds were high or were moving quickly from spot to spot it meant the baitball was either too deep or too spread out. Either of those signs could also mean Bonitos, in which case the Sailfish would not be found close. We were extremely fortunate to spot the tell tale signs within the first few hours of searching. Our first encounter was on the first day at around 10:45 and it was incredible. More than 30 Sailfish corralling, piercing and splitting the schools of several hundred Brazilian sardines.



Hunters gather Canon EFS-10-22 @ f13, 22mm, 1/250 ISO 800 Exposure corr -.33. Canon Eos 20D in a Subal Housing with a dome port.

When the bait ball is still large it moves fast; we were finning as fast as we could to keep up with the action. Occasionally we lost sight of the baitball and needed to look above the surface to locate the frigates hovering above the frenzy. The paddling was exhausting but once we caught up with the action we were rewarded with an orgy of feeding and started to frame the shots. The advice we received was simple; stay with baitball as the fish are swimming extremely quickly making it very difficult to frame shots worthy of publishing. Given that publishing wasn't my goal I must admit to occasionally just panning, pointing and shooting hopefully on the off chance luck was on my side and that the Sailfish would fill the frame. I stayed predominantly focussed on the baitball framed through the viewfinder and took literally hundreds of shots in excitement. The sailfish did not literally pierce the sardines, rather they skillfully tapped a

single sardine away from the school, temporarily stunning it and then just swallowed the fish. I was using shutter priority set a 1/250. My single strobe was set to minimum power but I quickly realised the advantage of the extra light was being offset by the backscatter and overexposed sardines. So the strobe was switched off and I just resolved to swim as close as possible to the baitball to ensure the ambient light was enough to bring out the vivid colours the sailfish exude during the hunt. After roughly an hour the baitball began to diminish in size and the pace began to slow. We donned the pony tanks and descended to a maximum of 10 metres. Whilst circling the baitball something remarkable happened. In a split second the sailfish disappeared leaving me and Amos looking at each other rather bewilderedly. Then seemingly out of nowhere a very large school of Bonitos charged the baitball sending it into what only could be described as sheer panic. The baitball mistook us for protection and surrounded me and Amos - for around 15 seconds we had bonitos and sardines literally colliding with our legs. I captured a shot of the sardines surrounding me with one of the fish in the centre of the shot seemingly crying out for help.

In all the action on our first day lasted an exhausting 2 hours.

Upon returning to the boat Amos informed us we had had witnessed something very few people had experienced and that we shouldn't hope to see that sort of action for that length of time for the rest of the week. This is when the alarm bells began to ring. In the excitement I hadn't been reviewing that many shots and the ones I did review looked OK on my 1.8 inch viewfinder. I didn't notice the noise..... Some perfectly framed shots of the sailfish piercing the bait ball were simply too noisy.



Portrait. Canon EFS 10-22 @f10, 22mm, 1/250 ISO 800 Exposure Corr -1. Canon Eos 20D in a Subal Housing with a dome port.

Following the first day's action ensued two days without encounters. The first was too windy to sail and the second we didn't find a single frigate bird in the sky. This gave us an extended opportunity to analyse the pictures and give/receive feedback. It was during this time that being around such experienced photographers paid dividends. Tricks of the trade were shared and together with Amos we focussed a lot on composition, the



Seeking cover Canon 10-22 @f13, 22mm, 1/320, ISO 800 Exposure Corr -.67. Canon Eos 20D in a Subal Housing with a dome port.

use of ambient light, exposure etc. I also began to appreciate the lot of the serious wildlife photographer and hoped for at least a few more interactions so I could correct the original mistakes I made.

Day four we were lucky - a series of encounters throughout the day gave me the opportunity to try some shots on 400 ISO. The shutter speed of 250 was still fine and I decided to initially remove the strobe from the set up,

creating less drag and thus more of a chance to keep up with the frenetic pace ahead of me. I took a large number of shots, however I had a new challenge with my camera - it simply would not focus on several occasions. I changed shutter speeds and apertures but nothing seemed to work. To this day I do not know what happened. The shots I did take however were much less grainy and I captured a few shots of the much sought after 'sardine in mouth'. However there was still too much backscatter surrounding the shot preventing it from being publishable.

In the evening we compared shots and received candid feedback from Amos regarding predominantly composition and lighting. My shots told a good story he said, but were just not clear enough. The first batch was too noisy and the second was too far away (I was shooting a 10-22 @22m and felt that if I had got any closer I would have ended up in the middle of the bait ball.) I was missing the spectacular flashings of colour and there appeared to be some dust on my sensor! The other guest's shots were considerably better. They were cleaner, crisper and contained much more vivid colours. I resolved to get at least one shot which would receive the compliments from the critical group but was running out of time.

Another two days passed without

a great deal of excitement. One achievement was to find a remarkable patch of blue water amidst the green expanse along the continental shelf. We all hoped to have our next sighting in that stretch, however we had since come to terms with the fact the mother nature really does call the shots and that maybe she thought we had had a good enough crack at the whip. A single encounter left me wondering whether our luck had run out and fearing that day one had been the golden opportunity ruined by my inexperience. By this point the other guests were happy with their shots (one of them even got a shot of the sailfish with two sardines in its mouth....)

On our last day, after about 4 hours searching for the frigates in the right formation we hit the jackpot. In a very blue stretch of water (we had had encounters in green water making the shots much less picturesque) we encountered two bait balls and dozens of Sailfish. Due to the blue water and the sun penetrating the water ISO 400 was absolutely fine (In hindsight I could probably have gone to 200). The colours on the Sailfish were magnificent and the action was as enthralling as ever. And then it happened; a number of sailfish had driven the bait ball right to the surface and the annihilation began. Sailfish after sailfish breeched



shot and certainly not as good as the others', whose photos the readers of this magazine may see appearing in competitions in the coming months.

During the week spent hunting the sailfish my photography skills (and fitness level!) improved significantly. I learnt from my mistakes and from the generous coaching not only afforded to me by Amos but also by the other divers on my trip. Before I embark on my next fast moving photo trip I am considering a more leisurely underwater photographic experience to hone those skills and enable me to operate my camera like second nature – something I learned the hard way is crucial if you are going to get 'that shot'.

Alex Goldblum



in what looked like an attempt to catch the sardines by surprise. As they re-entered the water, as Amos had said they would, with a fish in their mouths....my autofocus jammed again. Later I learned that the other divers had been alternating between autofocus and manual with a flick of a switch. Something they said really paid dividends when shooting fast moving/large animals. I didn't have this functionality on my camera but it will be a consideration if I ever decide to upgrade. Despite all this I was able to capture a sailfish re-entering the water with a fish in its mouth, unfortunately it is not my best

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Diving in Lake Päijänne

with Sauli Havas

I first tried underwater photography two years ago in Indonesia. I bought my compact Panasonic DMC-TZ3 and a housing for it at Singapore airport on my way to Bunaken. I was naturally amazed by the clear tropical waters and the rich and colourful under water scenery there. Almost anywhere I turned my camera there was something to shoot at. In every issue of this magazine we can enjoy excellent photos taken under similar conditions. Back home in Finland I started thinking about the differences between photographing conditions under water here and there. For a starter here the fresh water lakes are covered with ice 4 to 6 months every year. In depths more than 10 meters the water temperature is usually year round below 10°C and on warm summers surface waters might reach +24°C for a short period of time. A great amount of dead plant debris accumulates to the lake bottom during each cycle of the seasons making them muddy. Humus, pollen and plankton floating in water reduces visibility so that sunlight hardly penetrates below 15 meters. These



Päijänne National Park, Finland

three factors: water temperature, turbidity and sunlight and their strong seasonal changes are the three most important ones when comparing diving conditions in our lakes and in the more temperate waters.

In winter the lakes are frozen and water temperature under ice is little more than zero. There is not much biological activity and small particles settle down in the still water. Diving under ice requires special training



Going through the Vääksy channel from Vesijärvi to Päijänne. The water level in Vesijärvi is some 3 meters higher than in Päijänne.

Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3
Technical info: f3.3, 1/400s, 100ISO

and arrangements but is tempting because in late winter in March-April when light penetrates through the ice cover visibility is at it's best. Soon after the ice melts and sun starts to warm waters visibility decreases



Colourful under water vegetation (Myriophyllum) growing on the sandy bottom in Lake Päijänne.

Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3
Technical info: f3.3, 1/50s, 100ISO

dramatically because the waters in lakes turn over. At +4°C water is heaviest and when surface water reaches this it sinks to the bottom causing in return an upwelling of turbid lower waters. After this shock



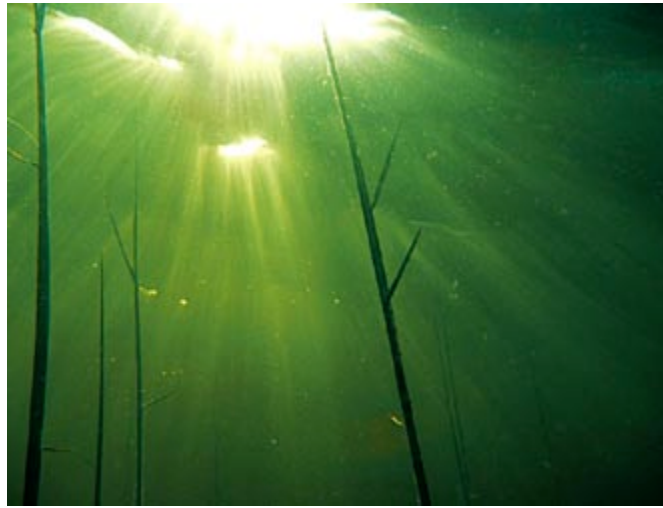
Forestry and transportation by tugboats has left a lot of logs lying on the bottom.

Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3

Technical info: f3.4, 1/13s, 400ISO

visibility gets better in early summer only to worsen again when waters warm up. In spite of these seasonal changes wind is the one most important factor affecting visibility. The average depth of lakes in Finland is typically 10-15 meters and one windy day can stir the waters so that visibility drops to near zero. In tropical waters the visibility also varies depending on currents but at open sea where coral reefs grow it seldom gets really bad. Here you must always consider this when planning your photo sessions. If you are not an expert diving under ice your chances are best in early summer in May-June after a few days calm when the visibility can be up to 10-15 meters. Only there are not very many days like this in a year.

Because at most times the visibility is not the best possible the amount of natural light is



Sunlight penetrates the surface and falls down like light yellow veils.

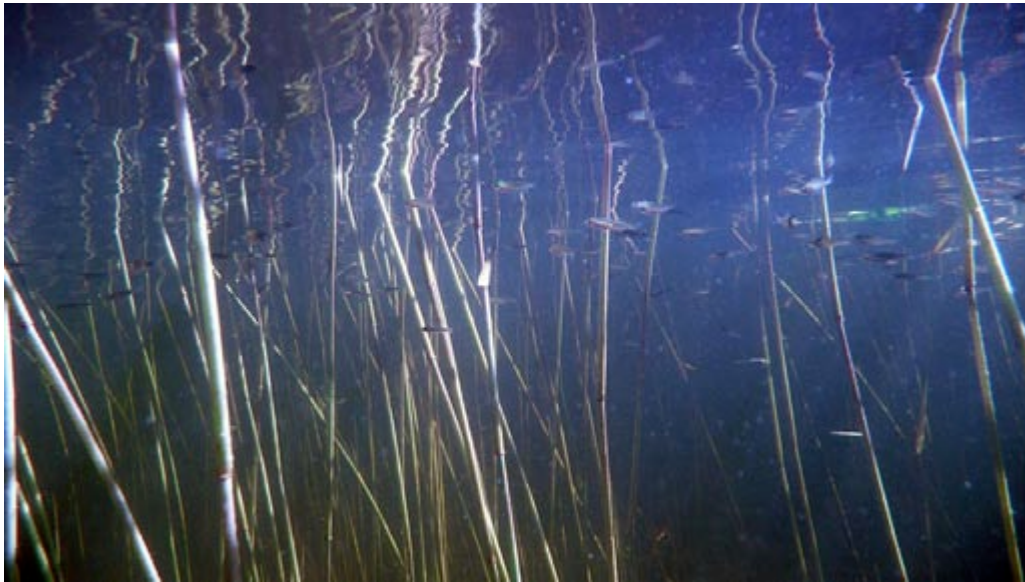
Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3

Technical info: f3.3, 1/400s, 100ISO

crucial to your photographing. Southern Finland lies around 60° north latitude. This means that we have big seasonal variations in the length of the day and amount of available light. In winter the sun is up only from 9 am to 4 pm at noon reaching maximum altitude of only 30°. In summer the sun is up from 4 am to 10 pm and reaches up to 60° on the southern sky. This is a big difference to the tropical areas around equator where the sun is year round up from 6 am to 6 pm and travels directly over your head. We have here long dusk after sun goes down when in the tropic lights go out like in a turn of a switch. This means that around midsummer in June there is plenty of light but later in the summer it is best to time your dives just before or after midday if you want to see something without a torch. From these circumstances there follows

also one other difference which is not so obvious. Water scatters light but on a clear day it still has a direction. Also under water the sun at noon shines from south. There is a dramatic difference if you look at the same scenery against the light from north to south or to the opposite direction. On a cloudy day with evenly lit sky the colour of the water is basically green but if you turn your camera to the south on a bright day you can see fantastic shades of orange and intense red. In my opinion the shadows also give depth and character to the scenery compared to the more flat directly overhead light in the tropics. The drawback is that more than often you have to get along with too little sunlight which means longer exposure times and difficulties in photographing moving objects and balancing yourself.

It is self evident that we can't compete with the tropical waters in abundance of life or visibility but I thought that we must have something that is unique to our waters and as much worth photographing. What that might be and how to capture that? I started my first experiments last summer. I am fortunate to live by one of the biggest lakes in Finland. My home town Lahti lies on the southern end of lake Vesijärvi and from here starts a continuous water route going up north for about 400 km. It consists of three big lakes: Vesijärvi, Päijänne and Keitele which are connected by channels. Of these Päijänne is the biggest covering more than 1.000 km² and reaching a maximum depth of 95 meters (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Päijänne). In ancient times this water route was the highway of hunters on row boats. Up to the 60's it was used by forest industry to transport logs to the sawmills. Now it is used mostly by private yachts and passenger ships. In the high season



After hatching these small fish swim in the warm surface waters protected by the thick reed.

Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3
Technical info: f3.3, 1/60s, 100ISO

around midsummer there is usually a queue of boats all the time at the Vääksy channel connecting Vesijärvi and Päijänne.

In southern Päijänne there lies a wonderful group of more than 50 partly sandy and partly rocky islands. They are protected and belong to the Päijänne National Park. Biggest of them is the 7 km long and only 500 m wide Kelvenne island (<http://www.luontoon.fi/page.asp?Section=5239>). In geological terms the island is a partly submerged esker which formed during the final stages of the last ice age about 10.000 years ago. It

even has a small bowl shaped inland lake and a couple of lagoons which formed when large moraine covered ice blocks melted after the continental ice retreated and left big holes in the ground. It has kilometers of beautiful sandy beaches which continue long under water. The water is quite clear thanks to strict laws which in the late 60's banned all unpurified waste waters. In fact the water is drinkable. Two of my daughters also dive and during our weekend trips to Kelvenne I started experimenting with uw photography in our own waters.

We started our trips from the



Boats in one of the beaches in Kelvenne in late July.

Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3
Technical info: f3.3, 1/800s, 100ISO

Lahti harbour packing all equipment in bags to an open boat in the morning. With a small coffee break at the Vääksy channel we were at Kelvenne (N 61°23,1' E 25°26,7') some 60 km from Lahti in about two hours. In early summer there is only little traffic and on our first trip in May 11th we had the whole big island to ourselves. At midsummer every boat owner is on the move and the most popular beaches are full of boats parked side by side. In Finland we have this so called every man's right which means that you can boat, swim, walk and camp where ever you want if you only stay more than about 50 m away from a dwelling. With hundreds of kilometers of uninhabited shoreline this means that you can always find a beach or cliff of your own if you want privacy. We started our dives from the shores of one of the islands

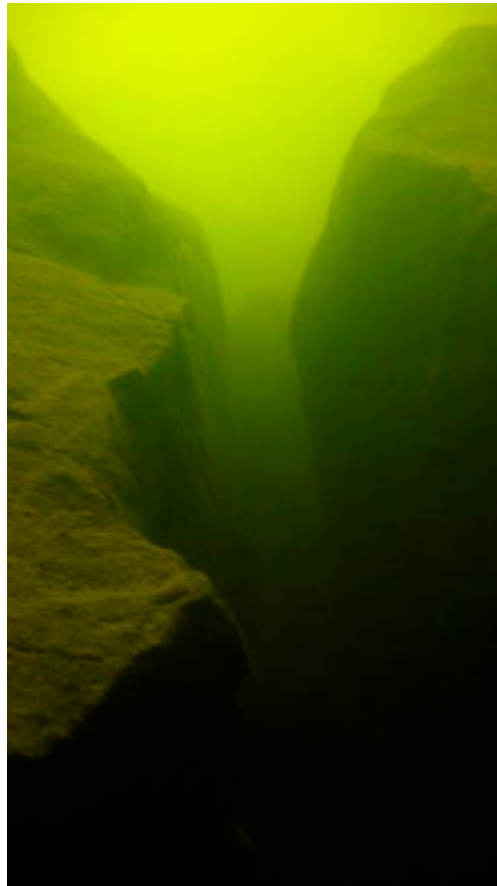
and usually followed the shoreline. First going to one direction at about the depth of 10-15 meters and after an u-turn diving back at the depth of 3-5 meters. We dived in 5 and 7 mm wetsuits which were warm enough for 40 to 50 minute dives but you also need a hood and gloves. During the dives water temperature typically varied from around 18°C to 13°C. Sometimes I also snorkeled without scuba equipment but if you want to take photographs it is a bit demanding to balance your self at the bottom for a longer time although not impossible if you weigh yourself properly.

Soon I discovered that we indeed do have something special that the tropical waters don't have. We have plants. Below 10 meters there is not enough light for most plants to live but above that the vegetation is quite rich. In Päijänne there has been recorded more than one hundred different species growing in the water. Most of the plants in a lake start anew every year. In early summer there are only small green sprouts in the bottom but during the summer the plants grow with amazing speed and vivid colours. In late summer the waters near shoreline are in many parts almost unpenetrable thick with vegetation. During winter the visible parts of the plants die and the cycle starts again next year. So far the only exception I have encountered is Lake Quillwort



Lush under water vegetation growing on the sandy bottom in Lake Päijänne. Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3 Technical info: f3.3, 1/30s, 125ISO

(Isoetes lacustris), which is one of the deepest growing plants in our lakes and seems to keep green during winter. This is a major difference compared to the static +30°C year round waters. Another difference I



Paljaskallio is a small rocky island in Päijänne with a steep vertical drop of over 20 m and big boulders surrounding it. Camera: Panasonic DMC-TZ3 + housing Panasonic DMW-MCTZ3 Technical info: f3.3, 1/8s, 200ISO

can't describe accurately in physical terms. It has to do with the way light penetrates to the water. Maybe it has something to do with the atmospheric conditions, the angle of the sunlight and the fresh water chemistry and

wave formations. Light falls like a wavy curtain below the surface and it pierces blinding bright holes to the water through which beams of concentrated sun light embroider the bottom and plant foliage. The colour of the water can be anything from green to light to deep blue or reddish. In these photos there are examples of three different places around Päijänne National Park. Big house size boulders and narrow passages between them in Paljaskallio, submerged old logs and plants struggling up from the muddy bottom in Neitsaari and sunlight playing on sandy bottom and colourful plants in Kelvenne itself.

There is also animal life e.g. crayfish, perch, pike, gastropods and larva. In Kelvenne there are also fine examples of Freshwater Sponge (*Spongilla lacustris*) growing in branched formations more than one meter high. These are the closest we can get to the corals here. The fish spawn in shallow water in early spring. Soon after that you might find yourself in the middle of a school of fish of hundreds of two to five centimeters long young fish taking protection amidst the thick reeds.

Adult fishes are wary and possibilities of getting good photos of them in their natural environment are very small. So far I have been fascinated by the light, the textures

and patterns created by waves and light and the quick pace plants are growing during the short summer. The beauty lies not in the spectacular but in the small things and the mood. So what next? Surely I am going to continue my pursue to this area. Last October I visited the Red Sea and after the head spinning fish soup and coral gardens at Sharm I am again more than anxious to explore the barren waters here. I know that at some point I probably must change to a DSLR and flashlights. Also everyone seriously diving in these waters must use a drysuit. That will also open the clear winter time under ice waters to you. But right now I feel that it is more important to explore the possibilities and philosophy of photography in these waters rather than concentrate on improving equipment.

Sauli Havas



Sunny Skies and Strange Life in the Maluku Sea

By Michael Emerson

My teenage son, Jonathan, and I left Minneapolis on Thursday evening and finally touched down in the Ambon, Indonesia airport at lunch time on Sunday. We were surprised by an airport that was modern and looked more like one that you might find in Hawaii rather than on a remote island in Indonesia. While we were tired and jetlagged, we were also ready to put our gear together and get ready to hit the water.

Our equipment for the week would be a Nikon D700 with a brand new Subal ND 700 housing that arrived just a week before we boarded the plane for Indonesia. I have been using a Nikon D200 for three years before it met a watery death in the waters of Komodo last August. I share ownership of the equipment with a doctor, Bill Harb, whom I met three years ago on the Spirit of the Solomons liveaboard. Our sharing arrangement allows both of us access to great equipment for our once or twice a year trips to the best dive locations. I shoot all of my photos using raw mode on the N700 which

allows me to take about 105 photos on a 4Gb card. In addition to my camera and housing, I utilize an Inon Z220 and an Inon Z240 for lighting.

Up until two years ago, the island of Ambon was perhaps best known as a location of civil war between Muslims and Christians. The conflict was artificially manufactured by Indonesian military who were looking to regain power by having something to fix. Fortunately, that chapter has been closed and today a visitor is hard pressed to even imagine this recent violent past. The residents of Ambon are warm and friendly. We were even invited into the home of a local family when we had to be 'rescued' when our bus back to the resort did not show up. All of this is a great benefit to

Although Ambon is largely known for muck diving, the nearby islands of Palau Tiga had spectacular visibility and healthy corals. Taken with Nikon D700, Subal ND700, Nikkor 14mm lens, Inon Z240 and Inon Z220 strobes. ISO 200, Aperture priority 8.0 with 1/60 shutter speed.





Sea horses of many colors and size were in abundance at Laha, more than anywhere else I have been. Taken with Nikon D700, Subal ND700, Nikkor 60mm lens, Inon Z240 and Inon Z220 strobes. ISO 200, Aperture priority f25 with 1/60 shutter speed.

divers who have begun to understand the riches under the waters of Ambon Bay.

Maluku Divers has reopened after closing during the civil war and was the home and dive center for our eight day experience in the Maluku Sea. They have a resort with easy access to the ocean and six lovely bungalows that are spacious and air conditioned.

Sea urchins are a great source of material for the macro dive

photographer and those in Ambon Bay are full of little subjects. I used a 105mm Nikon lens with a Macromate wet diopter to get up close and personal with Coleman shrimp and Zebra crabs tucked inside these colorful pin cushions. This was also my first foray into the use of manual focus. This configuration was also ideally suited for shots of pygmy seahorses but we did not find any of these little guys while we were there. All in all the 105 plus Macromate was



Harlequin shrimp had eluded me in my previous 300 plus dives, Here we saw 2 pairs and a singleton on one dive. Taken with Nikon D700, Subal ND700, Nikkor 60mm lens, Inon Z240 and Inon Z220 strobes. ISO 200, Aperture priority f25 with 1/60 shutter speed.

powerful, but very hard work to get perfect. I would get close to a desired focus and then move the camera back and forth to get a perfect focus. Even with the aperture set to a very small F36, the depth of field is practically zero.

The area of diving is relatively small compared to Lembeh. But the density of critters was amazing. On our last dive at the Rhino City dive site we saw 3 rhinopias of different colors, 4 large seahorses

of different colors, a jawfish, a flamboyant cuttlefish, a family of pigmy cuttlefish, 3 snake eels, a warty frogfish and a beautiful shrimp in bubble coral. There were other critters that I had already seen so I didn't have the time to photograph them. On the next to last dive of the trip, I saw five harlequin shrimp, a pegasus sea moth, and an equal number of interesting subjects. Divers in recent weeks had seen a wonderpus and blue ring octopus. The only true



We saw Rhinopias of three different colors in one dive at a site aptly named Rhino City. Taken with Nikon D700, Subal ND700, Nikkor 60mm lens, Inon Z240 and Inon Z220 strobes. ISO 200, Aperture priority f32 with 1/60 shutter speed.

disappointment was the departure of the recently discovered Ambon frog fish which hasn't been seen in the past two months.

Was the muck diving as good as Lembeh? The two areas are similar rather than different. Both areas demonstrate the ability of a strange looking creature to use a tennis shoe as a home. The clarity of water in Ambon was far superior to what we experienced in Lembeh. Clarity comes with some current which was always present on the Ambon sites.

Of course, the one big advantage of Ambon is that you will be the only boat in the water and probably one of a half dozen divers to visit a site on a particular week.

While Ambon is primarily known for its muck diving, its nearby reefs do not disappoint either. The small island grouping of Palau Tiga is reachable with a one hour boat ride on board the fast boat from Maluku Divers. Diving here requires that one of the local dive staff members visit the local chief and ask permission to dive in the island

waters. One day, several of us dove down to try and locate some fishing equipment that had been lost. The mission was unsuccessful but secured a future permission to dive these beautiful reefs.

The most spectacular dive here started with a quick descent to 100 feet with a strong current that carried us along a pretty wall. The most notable feature of the dive was the constant presence of thousands of red-toothed triggerfish along with smaller schools of fusiliers and pyramid butterfly fish. We also saw a good sized black-tipped shark that somehow had eluded the relentless shark finners that have decimated the stock of sharks throughout the world.

Towards the end of the dive, we drifted up to a spectacular reef top at 20 feet and found a healthy and colorful reef that was as pretty as I have seen in Fiji or Komodo. It was here that the new FX format of the Nikon D700 made the biggest difference in my ability to capture the beauty of the reef. With a 14mm lens, I was able to capture the same angle as a fisheye 10.5 on the DX format camera without the distortion that comes with the fisheye format. In my recent dive trips, I have focused primarily on macro photography, but I have a renewed interest in taking in the wider beauty of the reefs with this new lens and sensor format.

All in all, our trip to the Maluku Sea and Ambon Island was a great diving experience and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to photograph a full range of highly unusual fish, shrimp, and crabs. The scars of the civil war were invisible to us while we were there and you could not imagine an island where the people were more friendly and wanting to help you have a great time. The island is lush and beautiful and will help you fill in your time in between dives unless of course you are busy trying to figure out the names of all of the subjects from your last set of photos.

Michael Emerson



Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter
Manual WB



Magic Filter
Manual WB

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards.

These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter; using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

www.magic-filters.com

For Muck's Sake

by Michael Gallagher

Most visitors readily concede that Sydney is one of the world's best cities. Fabulous beaches, trendy bars, great restaurants, a magnificent harbour, hot summers, the list goes on. But surely the list doesn't include world class muck-diving?

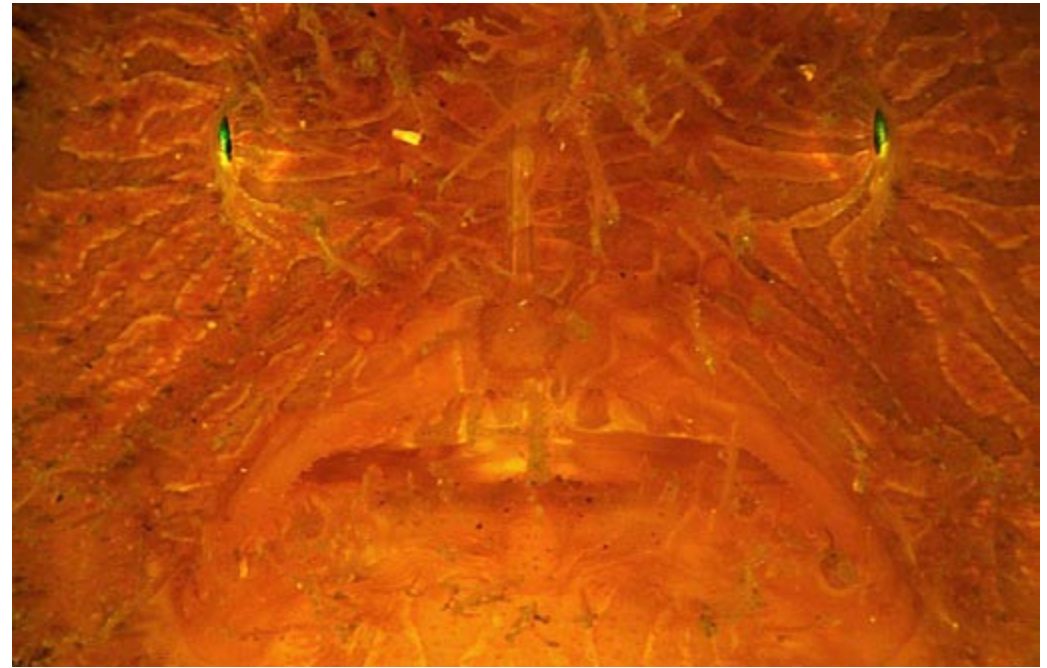
My day started early, my jet-lagged daze evaporating the instant I remembered why I had set such an offensively timed alarm call. Dive conditions in Chowder Bay - a small bay on the north side of Sydney's inner harbour, not far from famous Taronga Park Zoo - were forecast to be at their best early morning. That was all the motivation I needed to spring out of bed with the sun barely above the horizon.

I deliberately chose midweek to dive, betting that most Sydneysiders would be at work and that visitors rarely found their way to this particular part of Sydney. Not that I have anything against other divers, but it doesn't take much for Chowder Bay's delicate silty seabed to be stirred up and visibility destroyed. As luck would have it, I was to be the only diver in the water that morning, together with Ronnie my Glaswegian guide.

I must confess that things between Ronnie and me didn't start well. During early pleasantries I joined what I suspect to be a long line of punters who adjudged his accent to be an open invitation to discuss the legendary Scapa Flow. As it turned out, Ronnie had never dived Scapa Flow and was clearly pained to be asked about it for the trillionth time. I quickly changed the topic to the underwater residents who awaited us.

The list of potential sightings, according to Ronnie, was tantalising - anglerfish, pipefish, sea horses, moray eels, flounder, snake eels, the deadly blue ringed octopus, cuttlefish, dumpling squid, frogfish, and more. I had my underwater camera set to macro and an itchy shutter finger. Needless to say, kitting up was swift and we were soon giant-striding off the jetty into the 18 degree water. The dive conditions which met us were

All photos were taken with a Canon 20D plus 60mm macro lens in an Ikelite Housing with double DS-125 substrobes both set to TTL. Camera set manually to (approx) f22, 1/160s, ISO 200.



Striped Anglerfish



Octopus



Snake Eel



Sea Horse

excellent, with visibility never less than 8 metres or so. Nor was there any unpleasant surge which has typified my experience of Sydney diving.

Chowder Bay has a long history (by Australian standards at least) of use for military purposes, which explains why the silty seabed is strewn with all manner of associated debris. It is amongst the large admiralty anchors, small boats, rail tracks, crates, cages and pipes (even a motorcycle!) that we conducted our search for Chowder Bay's critters.

Immediately upon descent we were met by a family of cuttlefish - Mum, Dad and Junior. Being just the size of my hand, Junior was clearly nervous, and anxiously squirmed his way between Mum and Dad, doing

his best to hide behind their tentacles. Mum and Dad were having none of us though, flashing their warning colours and coolly staring us down until we moved on.

We didn't move far before Ronnie stopped to inspect an algae-covered metal cage, then gestured to me enthusiastically. I had never seen a sea horse before, and was struck by how small, delicate and perfectly camouflaged it was. Such a noble head, such an amazing gripping tail. Fantastic! We were to admire another 5 or 6 sea horses on that first dive, all the same species (hippocampus whitei) but each a different size and colour to the last.

As we carefully picked our way further out into the bay, we encountered all manner of other critters amongst the debris and in the muck. A snake eel stared curiously at us from the safety of his perfectly formed hole in the sand. A small moray guarded the entrance to an abandoned pipe. A tiny shrimp perched upside-down on the gunwale of an overturned dinghy. A flounder hid half-buried in the silt, just eyes and lips protruding, invisible to all except Ronnie. An octopus peered at us from his burrow, drawing back rocks and shells for additional protection as we closed in. A pipefish lay curled up in the sand, making no effort to retreat or hide but tough to spot nonetheless.

All too soon it was time to surface. We sipped flat whites (Aussie coffees) in the sunshine, chattering like excited school kids about what we had just seen. Talk then turned to the dive which lay ahead, and our chances of seeing an anglerfish, that superbly camouflaged benthic carnivore which uses its modified dorsal fin as a lure, wriggling it at nearby fish to entice them within range of its enormous mouth. Ronnie was not hopeful - he hadn't spotted one in the bay for months. Gloved fingers and bootied toes were crossed as we re-entered the water.

It was a thorough search - every

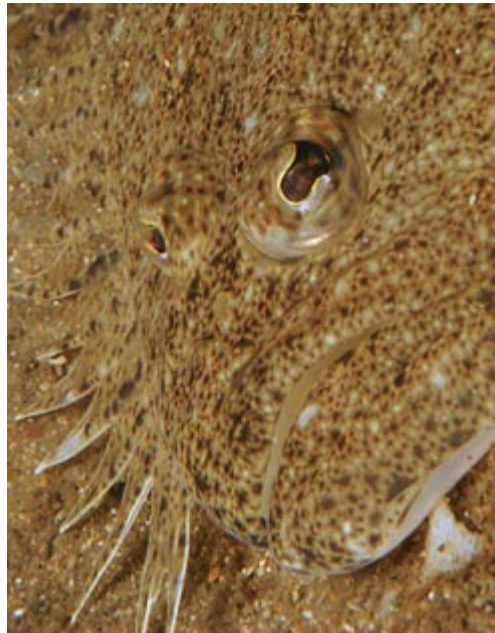
possible anglerfish hiding spot was investigated, whilst every anglerfish sized lump was closely scrutinised. Finally, towards the end of the dive, Ronnie punched the water above his head triumphantly. There, lying in the silt in front of us, was a magnificent striped anglerfish. These fish can be any colour, from black to white and anything in between, but ours presented itself in spectacular orange to match some nearby sponges. So broad was my smile that the seal on my mask started letting in water at the sides! After many minutes of admiration, and dozens of photos, we reluctantly headed back.

Yet Chowder Bay was to yield one more secret to us before the end of the dive. Under the jetty, as we were preparing to ascend, the tiniest flicker of movement in the silt caught my eye. This painted anglerfish, a smaller species than the striped anglerfish we had met earlier, was so perfectly camouflaged that it would have been invisible but for its lure which wriggled hypnotically at a nearby school of tiny fish. Ronnie and I were equally hypnotised, enthralled by the swishing of the lure and the prospect of witnessing a strike. Sadly it wasn't long before our dwindling air supplies forced us to return to the surface, confident though that the painted anglerfish wasn't going to miss out on lunch.



Painted Anglerfish

As I demolished my own lunch, I mused over the very quirky type of diving on offer at Chowder Bay - close encounters with unique and often flamboyant critters in the muck, an underwater photographer's paradise. This may not appeal to many divers I know, given that there is no "big stuff" like sharks and turtles, no tropical reef paradise, no famous wreck. Yet after my own highly memorable and richly rewarding experience, I understood why a Scot would shun the famous World War I wrecks in his own backyard and devote himself instead to diving on the other side of the world at Chowder Bay.



Flounder

As for Sydney itself, well, the list of accolades just got a little longer.

Michael Gallagher



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The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. We are looking for interesting, well illustrated articles about underwater photography. We are looking for work from existing names but would also like to discover some of the new talent out there and that could be you! UwP is the perfect publication for you to increase your profile in the underwater photography community.

The type of articles we're looking for fall into five main categories:

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards

Subjects - Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.**

E mail peter@uwpmag.com

How to submit articles

To keep UwP simple and financially viable, we can only accept submissions by e mail and they need to be done in the following way:

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail

2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.

File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality. This should result in images no larger than about 120k which can be transmitted quickly. If we want larger sizes we will contact you.

3. Captions - **Each and every image MUST have full photographic details** including camera, housing, lens, lighting, film, aperture, shutter speed and exposure mode. These must also be copied and pasted into the body of the e mail.

Parting Shot 1

At the beginning of March this year I was out with my other half walking the stunning Coastal Footpath around the South West of the UK. We stopped at one particular cove to watch a couple of seals bobbing up and down and playing with each other in the water. Seeing these beautiful mammals always puts a smile on my face and an ache in my heart to jump in and join them!

And here was my opportunity: two seals in a quiet cove away from local boat traffic, it was too good to pass up. So the next day hoping above hope that they were still there, in heavy rain and Force 7 winds I donned my wetsuit and snorkelling gear and with camera in hand entered the water to see what I could see. Which initially, with 3m vis, was not a lot.

The possible photographic opportunities were racing through my mind along with F-stops, exposure settings, shutter speeds, ISO values and a burning desire to get some decent photos! In fact I was so carried away with preparing for my first encounter that when it came I nearly needed another wetsuit, but you don't need to know about that.

The two big, beautiful female Grey Seals had crept up on me and

surfaced a mere 2 meters from where I was bobbing on the surface. After my heart had come back down to a more normal rate I was very pleased that they had made the first move and seemed to be happy to investigate my fins and allow me to get fairly close.

Over the next 30 minutes or so I was lucky to be allowed to play with these stunning creatures - but I can hardly remember any of it. I was so desperately trying (and failing) to get a perfect image that I actually had lost sight of the amazing experience I was having there!

I mentally slapped myself about the face and realised that I was being afforded a great privilege and I wasn't truly appreciating it. So I clipped the camera onto my SMB and started to play with these ladies - and what a treat! For another 30 mins they allowed me to become an honorary (but admittedly rubbish) seal. Obviously I lost all the games we played; like who can swim the fastest, who can hold their breath the longest and who looks cutest while hanging head down in the water amongst the kelp. But it was just me and them, free to interact and enjoy being under the



Canon Ixus 980is, Inon UFL-165AD Fisheye, camera on full auto, natural light. Post processing to tweak white balance.

waves.

When I did reach for my camera again I stuck it on full 'auto' mode and simply held the shutter button down. I didn't even bother framing the shots with the LCD screen - here was a moment too special to waste fiddling with endless settings. Ok, so the photos that came out will never be published nor win any awards; but the ones I took shooting from the hip

are a more realistic recording of the encounter and conditions, and I think have captured more of the essence of the time I spent with the seals.

Dan Bolt

www.underwaterpics.co.uk

Parting Shot 2

I was delighted to receive Issue 45 last November, having just returned from Palau a month earlier. You guys have done a great job with the magazine and I enjoy each one cover to cover. My first reaction to the Jellyfish shot on the cover was that the photographer had just been to Jellyfish Lake in Palau. When I finally got to page 45, I learned that the cover shot was actually Jellyfish Lake in Kakaban, Indonesia, although the resemblance to my experience in Palau was remarkable.

I spent a week in Palau last October with a couple of my dive buddies, after a business trip to Asia. We applied the diver's version of the old adage "Las Vegas is always on the way home", met in Guam on a Friday Night and then on to Palau for several days of great diving. We stayed at the Palau Pacific Resort (PPR) which was a great home base, but honestly we didn't spend much time at the resort, as this was a guys trip consumed by diving.

We dove with Sams the entire week. I am usually reluctant to use the largest outfit on any island, but Sams came recommended by a combination of friends, dive buddies and dive shops. While I am sure there are other great dive shops on Palau, our

experience with Sams was great. They picked us up by boat each morning. The first morning, I was still in a NYC state of mind, so when the boat didn't come exactly on time, I was nervous. After that, I quickly adjusted to Island time. They never forgot to pick us up.

Jellyfish lake was a worthwhile visit. Kind of like Stingray City on Grand Cayman, you should do it once in your life, maybe twice, if you get the opportunity to go back to take friends or family. I had been coached to make sure I took a lot of pictures by diving down to 10-15 feet (you snorkel only-no tanks) and shooting up at the sun through the many Jellies. You have undoubtedly seen many such pictures. I did a few of those, but suffered from some buoyancy issues-- I left my 3 Mil on and I carry about 20 lbs of extra natural buoyancy around the waist (carefully sculpted from too much fermented barley and hops-more on that later), so after trying to stuff a few rocks in my pockets, I abandoned that effort and concentrated on taking pictures with my strobe extended out over the Jellies. This was pretty successful--although you be the judge.

After diving at Sams is also a good time. I am usually one who gets off the boat, packed up and back to the Hotel in pretty short order to



This picture was taken with an Olympus 5060 in a Light and Motion Tetra housing at ISO 100, F 3.5 at 1/640, with the strobe extended out over and pointed straight down on the Jelly.

get showered. Hanging at the bar at Sams provides the opportunity to enjoy fresh Tuna Sashimi and freshly brewed Red Rooster Beer (brewed locally in Palau - helps maintain that natural buoyancy), and of course swap dive stories. You needn't worry about being on the last boat back to the resort, because they will take you back whenever you are ready, by either car or boat.

On the camera front, I have had great experiences with my Olympus 5060 in a L&M Tetra housing for the past 5 years. I will likely get serious and move up to a DSLR, probably a Nikon D700 in a Subal at some point in my future.

Ryan Burdeno

Parting Shot 3

It was another wonderful clear morning under the Thai sun and I was about to take one diver out to the marine park of the Phi Phi Islands. The boat brought us out to the Bida Islands, 8km south of Phi Phi Don Island in the Andaman Sea. It was unusual, as I took my camera with me and a diving customer. Normally I don't like to do that as I figured that my pictures weren't really great when I had someone with me to look for and also my divers didn't get the attention they deserved when I was distracted by my precious gear. But my buddy from Switzerland was like a fish in the water and he was very happy to get some shots of himself diving so I decided to take my camera and try out my new wide angle lens for the first time. I didn't even have the full zoom gear yet, but I was really curious to see the potential of this expensive piece of Japanese optics.

We decided that the captain would drop us on the steep 'Low season' side of Bida Nai. After a dive to 30 metres we moved into shallower water and I suddenly heard a wild clanking that wouldn't stop. To find its origin I turned myself around and around and then suddenly right above

us, there he was, this massive bus of a fish. A whale shark. On his side, banging his guts out was our skinny French videographer, appearing really small beside the huge fish and you could see his excitement from far away. I was stunned for some seconds but then checked for my buddy and we ascended further to around 15m to follow the whale shark side by side. He moved in slow motion but it was fast for us.

I realized what luck I had, to have for the first time my wide angle with me and encounter the perfect subject for it. So I started to shoot and swim to bring him in a good position, breathing heavily after a while.

But suddenly my camera jammed! It wasn't focusing anymore and I couldn't release the shutter. What? Why exactly now? I couldn't explain this problem. I turned the camera off and on and it worked again but just for one shot. Off and on, looking through the viewfinder, shot. At least I could take around 30 shots like that in total.

The shark had deep cuts on his back, two deep fresh wounds parting his dorsal fin. It must have been hit by a twin engine boat close to the



Canon EOS 350d with Canon 10-22mm, Sea & Sea housing, one YS-90auto, 1/160, f5, ISO100

surface. On my shots later I could see his red flesh.

Back on land I tried to find the reason for my camera being jammed, but I could find no explanation. As soon as I took my camera out of its housing the problem didn't persist. The following shoot outs it only happened occasionally again until one time I heard the shutter button clicking. Once I took the camera out of the housing it was clear to me - the button just got stuck. I finally solved

the problem by putting a rubber band around the release lever that changed the angle of contact with the button.

Our whale shark is now registered with www.whaleshark.org as T-023, and one of my images was used in a promotional brochure for the organization.

Tobias Reitmayr
www.divologist.de



Parting Shot 4

Just outside of Carmel Bay in Monterey CA, a mile off the 18th green of the Pebble Beach Golf Course, lie three submerged rocky peaks known as the Monterey Pinnacles. Jutting to within 15 feet of the surface they are exposed to the full effects of deep ocean swells and currents. Thick stands of kelp often form an umbrella over the profusion of life below. Many cuts and crevices provide vertical relief for a plethora of invertebrate life with barely an open square inch of real estate to be had. Hydrocoral, anemones, bryozoans, sponges, nudibranchs, and sea stars are jammed packed in a rainbow of colors. Ling cod, sculpin, gobies, and rockfish share the crowded bottom living conditions and most cracks in the rock are likely to be somebody's home. A whole dive could easily be spent exploring just one of these crevice walls.

Nutrient rich waters allow the whole food chain to thrive. Dolphins, sharks, seals and sea lions have been seen with some regularity. Visibility

ranges from around 20 – 80ft plus and is usually better than beach sites because of its off shore location and the near constant flow of currents. The close proximity of the Monterey Submarine Canyon can help serve up quite a menu of gelatinous critters; jellies, ctenophores, salps, and other plankton glide by in countless numbers. During a safety stop one of these open ocean drifters, aptly named an egg yolk jelly, made a lone flyby adding a vibrant splash of color to the last minutes of a truly magnificent immersion. My dive buddy had just put up his SMB and happened to be in the right location. I only had time for one image before the jelly and my buddy were out of position.

*Nikon D2x, Subal ND2 housing,
Nikkor 10.5mm FE, 1/125 sec, f10, ISO
200, Twin Sea&Sea YS-120 strobes on
1/2 power.*

Joe Dovala
www.jcdovala.com

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