

Underwater Photography

Jan/Feb 2012
Issue 64





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Underwater Photography
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Cover shot by
David Hall

Editorial

Too many cameras

Is it just me or have the camera manufacturers lost the plot? Take Panasonic for example. I'm a great fan of their digital cameras but they confuse me.

Forgive me if I have missed something obvious but why do they have to have a GX1, G3, GF3, GF2, GH2, G2, G10, GF1, GH1 and a G1 in their current line up of Lumix G series cameras? Olympus are just as bad with their PEN series - E-P3, E-PL3 and E-PM1. And don't start me on colours. I'm sure there are other manufacturers who are at it as well but these two will do to prove the point.

Do we need so many cameras to choose from or are they just doing it 'because they can'?

I guess being underwater photographers we have an advantage because the housing manufacturers choose which model they think is best for us. As a result, if you are looking for a new camera it is always best to look at housing availability first and then take it from there.

Peter Rowlands

Readers Lives

Is an Olympus Pen PL 01, 02 or 03 the ultimate underwater digital camera?

With interest I read the Editorial article "Enough is enough" in UP 61, with your friend saying the Olympus E-PL01 in its PT-EP01 housing stopped him wanting to upgrade, because it has got everything a scuba diver expects from it. AJ remarked in Readers Lives "More enough" in UP62 that for most divers their camera is about the dive and the ability to record and share with friends. It is about the memories. For him a decent digital compact is good enough to fulfill his expectation: it takes pictures of fish and other critters, he and his audience may recognize above water.

This is also my number one objective. But I also want pictures of fish that moves around and not just sea slugs or frog fish and stone fish that do not feel compelled to freeze. I am thrilled by the colourful abundance of fish on tropical coral

reefs in the upper 10m, where one can take pictures with ambient light, and still correct the fading red and yellow with Photoshop and the like. On most dives I come across more different species of parrot fish or wrasse than I can remember. So I need pictures when I open my fish guide immediately after I surface.

By the way, I stick with digital compact camera's because they are small and light enough to fit in any luggage, including battery charger, UW housing and UW strobe or video light. Also because they are 5 to 10 times less expensive than a full fledged DSLR plus the rest of the gear.

But compacts have their weaknesses: trouble to AF and colour noise when there is little light. I discussed the matter with experienced underwater photographers while on a diving trip in Indonesia, where I was frustrated day after day with the AF of my Sea & Sea 860 refusing to focus one time out of two. I didn't use the click on precision cast plastic lens on the underwater housing, because it reduces the sharpness of the picture which fools the AF. A lot of times I had to point to a nearby object with more contrast, and to keep the trigger halfway down and move back to the subject. Needless to say that by that time most fish were gone.

A check on the reviews of

the Olympus PEN P3 and PL3 mirrorless DSLR on www.dpreview.com revealed that both have a much faster AF than the P1 and PL1 and an autofocus illuminator LED, which I think is a must for macro underwater work. The "aging" 12.3 MP sensor of the PEN P3 is blamed for colour noise at settings higher than ISO 1600, compared to more recent 16 MP sensors in competing brands.

But I finally bought an Olympus XZ 1 digital compact, because I got convinced that the engineers at Olympus developed eventually a digital compact with underwater photography in mind.

It has got a bright 4 x optical zoom lens 6-24 mm F=1.8-2.5, a 10 MP sensor with 60% bigger surface per pixel than a typical digital compact camera, an image stabilizer, and it can export in RAW. It has an autofocus illuminator LED light. So far for the features.

The benefits I expect from them are:

The lens allows me to take relatively big items from pretty close with little light.

10 x optical zoom lenses of prosumer compacts typically have lenses with longer focal length which are not bright at all. A 3 x to 4 x range is OK for underwater, especially when it starts well in the wide angle side and when the lens is bright. Murky

waters limit the shooting distance often to something in between 0.5 to 1.0 m.

Less colour noise in pictures taken under poor lighting conditions.

Colour noise is a matter of signal to noise ratio. The bigger surface one pixel, the bigger the signal. Colour noise is caused by diffraction of the light at the edge of each pixel, which is proportional to the side of the pixel. A pixel with 1.3 times the side of another one will have a noise ratio that is $(1.3 \times 1.3) / 1.3 = 1.3$ better than the other pixel.

Less shaken pictures.

A longer exposure increases the light the sensor captures, but also the risk of unsharp pictures when the camera is not held steady. An image stabilizer can bring some relief here, but is of no use when the subject is moving fast.

Post processing RAW files gives you more chances for a good end result than processing JPEG files.

RAW contains all the information that was captured by the sensor, without any post processing in the camera to enhance / influence the image and to compress the result before it is downloaded to the memory card. The compression is not reversible. Before you take pictures, you select settings based on assumptions of which conditions you expect to encounter. Inspecting a

picture on the LCD panel is looking at a preview of what you may get after processing the RAW file in a certain way. Because the dynamic range in a RAW file is bigger than in JPEG, borderline underexposed pictures may be post processed with RAW converter software to a better end result, than tweaked by preset programs and compressed to JPEG in the camera, and post processed on your pc.

Post processing colours is a must for under water pictures as the light spectrum varies with depth, distance to the subject, mix of ambient and strobe light, dirt & matter in the water... But if there is no red captured, because there was no red available during the exposure, it is no use to try. That is what strobes & video lights are needed for.

The RAW files from the XZ-1 may be imported into Capture One from Phase One, the best RAW converter software around.

But the proof of the pudding is the eating. I am still familiarizing myself thoroughly with my new camera and exploring the way I get the best results.

Two comments though for the developers of UW cameras:

1. Use the KISS principle (keep it simple, stupid) for the settings. The onset of nitrogen narcosis (drunkenness of the deep) is that

cognitive tasks become more and more difficult to perform with depth. Above water I can set up and capture a custom white balance without giving it a thought. At 15 m depth, I have to rehearse the procedure mentally 1 or 2 times before I can do it.

2. Stick to the body dimensions and the layout of the camera so that one can continue to use the same UW housing for the next upgraded version of the camera. This makes it less attractive to switch to another brand & type. A rugged body with an optically excellent lens and ergonomic knobs & switches, may only need a better sensor and better software to

stay current, reducing the ecological footprint of the camera. With a better sensor I mean a higher signal to noise ratio, not more pixels.

The affordability of digital compact UW cameras has made them popular with scuba divers. They deserve specialized cameras designed with their needs in mind, instead of adaptations of “dry” cameras.

Koen vander Meulen



Humpbacks!

Whale Discoveries and Douglas J. Hoffman have three special live aboard trips scheduled for Tonga in 2012-2013. These trips will visit the special grounds of the Southern Hemisphere Humpback Whales.

The trips are created with photographers in mind and the focus is remote mating and birthing areas with clear water with a small, select group of guests.

Those taking part will benefit from 35 years of combined experience observing whales in the wild. This crew has a great appreciation and understanding of humpback behavior. They will put that experience to work for their guests to provide the adventure of a lifetime.

Each itinerary will visit remote islands of Tonga, mostly uninhabited, that are known to be extremely productive in terms of whale encounters. Being far off the beaten whale watching path, this ensures private and uninterrupted unmatched encounters.



© Douglas J Hoffman



David & Tristin



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- Families Welcome



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Contact:

www.whalediscoveries.com

www.douglasjhoffman.com

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News, Travel & Events

**Underwater Photography
Workshop with Alex Tattersall**
Wadi Lahami & Liveaboard, Marsa Alam
19 - 26 September 2012



Dr Alex Tattersall is an award winning underwater photographer and the founder of UnderWaterVisions/Nauticam UK. Alex's previous Red Sea Workshops have been extremely popular and for 2012 we have introduced the mini safari, giving even more photographic opportunities. Diving here is some of the best you'll find in the Red Sea. Wadi Lahami lies opposite the famous Fury Shoals which are normally only accessed by liveaboard and a photographers dream location.

Cost: £1275 Includes: Flights, transfers, 3 nights Wadi Lahami, 4 nights liveaboard. 6 days diving & workshop.

www.oonasdivers.com

www.uwpmag.com



Committed Photography

Based out of Toronto Ontario, Committed Photography was started simply to help photographers. We set out to eliminate as much of the business process from the photographer as possible, granting them more time to focus on the photography itself. It wasn't much longer after that we realized how much greater of an impact we could make. With help from our photographers, Committed Photography is set to help over a dozen charities.

Committed Photography is an online gallery allowing customers to purchase professional photography from around the world. We print on a variety of materials including paper, acrylic, canvas and metal, and deliver purchases ready to hang. Photographers upload their work and set a desired price for each photo. Committed Photography manages everything else including the ordering, manufacturing, and shipping. We were started simply to help photographers and therefore there is no cost to them.

For any photographer looking to sell their work there is no cost. They also get to set the price and keep all rights to the work. The photographer receives a 20% commission on the total value of each sale (before taxes). This means that if the photo is paired with a frame they also get 20% of the value of the frame too.

www.committedphotography.ca

ReefID



In July 2010, a new organization called ReefID began collecting digital images from both professional and amateur underwater photographers in an effort to create the largest easy to use database of our ocean inhabitants to date. ReefID combines underwater images and visual aids that help sort through its continually expanding database. Using simple silhouettes and basic characteristics in dropdown fields, users are able to narrow down and ultimately identify marine inhabitants from their computers, tablets or cell phones.

The concept that it is being built with is making identifying what you see a fun and easy alternative to marine identification books that anyone can use.

The ReefID identifier provides information on common and scientific names as well as other information of interest about the marine inhabitants it displays.

www.ReefID.org

Issue 64/7





This is not my usual new image announcement._

As with so many worthy endeavors these days the Wildlife Waystation (my favorite animal sanctuary) is in extreme dire straights. In fact, for the 1st time in over 35 years they may have to shut down. This would be a DISASTER for many of the over 420 larger animals. Since they have no where else to go that would leave only one option left...

I would not want that to happen. I'm offering prints made from ANY of the images on my website, framed or unframed, for a donation to the WW

- they will receive 100% of the sales price.

Prices start at \$25.00 for an unframed 8x10 to \$120.00 for framed 13x19.

These could make a unique gift. Thank you.

www.jcdovale.com

<http://wildlifewaystation.org>



Find Photo Competitions

Are you fed up wasting time trying to find photo competitions only to learn that you are not eligible because of age, nationality or experience?

PCN has developed a new and exciting tool aptly named Photo Contest Finder which is free to use, just like all other PCN services.

Photo Contest Finder will save you time and make your life much easier. Say goodbye forever to scrolling through hundreds of contests on search engines to find those that are open to entry and for which you are eligible.

Join us today at <http://www.photographycompetitions.net/photo-contest-finder> and get those entries in to become a winner.

www.photographycompetitions.net

Maria Munn uw photo trips with Borneo Divers, Mabul Feb and Sept 2012



Maria Munn will be running small group, week long underwater photography trips with Borneo Divers in Mabul in February and September 2012.

The cost is £1,400 for a 7 night, 6 day accommodation and diving package on a full-board basis as well as personal tuition both above and underwater from Maria to help you get the very best results out of your compact camera and she guarantees that you will leave with an underwater portfolio of photographs to be proud of.

www.oceanvisions.co.uk

BBC's Frozen Planet Cameraman - Doug Allan
The Adventure Show, Olympia, London
28 - 29th Jan 2012



Join cameraman Doug Allan in his experiences of filming the BBC wildlife series "Frozen Planet".

In a career spanning 25 years, BAFTA and Emmy award winning photographer Doug Allan has made over 50 filming trips, taking him from the depths of the Arctic to the upper reaches of Mount Everest. Most recently known for his esteemed position as the cameraman for the BBC documentaries "Human Planet", "Ocean Giants" and "Frozen Planet", Doug has experienced, captured and shared his fascinating experiences and remarkable tales.

Awarded the Fuchs Medal in 1982 and then the Polar Medal in 1984, Doug is now set to join a select band of polar people as he prepares to collect a bar to his Polar Medal in January 2012, in recognition of his notable contribution to polar photography.

Following his talk Doug will be signing his new book "Freeze Frame".

<http://adventureshow.com>

Photography Adventures

visit www.GregorySweeney.com

Photo Tours:
Manatees, Sailfish,
Tiger Sharks,
South African Photo Safari

Whale Sharks

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private charter, limited to 7 guests



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Mozambique, Malaysia, Sipadan, Thailand, Similan Islands, Phi Phi Islands, Burma, Solomon Islands, Andaman Islands

www.scubadiveasia.com

Focus on Philippines with Alex Tattersall

14th - 25th April 2013

Alex Tattersall is a relative newcomer to the world of underwater photography making his photographic achievements during this short time 'in the industry' all the more impressive.

He has much experience in leading photo trips and prides himself on promoting a relaxed, non-competitive and creative environment for all in order to learn through maximum hands-on underwater photographic opportunities and the sharing of ideas and experiences between the group whilst not under the water. Through his principals of creativity and simplicity in underwater photography, you will learn many insights into the thought and technique behind the award-winning photos for which Alex is becoming increasingly well-known.

The focus of this trip is to maximize our time underwater where the real practical learning can take place. As such, formal, directed teaching will mostly give way to a more informal hands-on approach to improving our photography together in a relaxed, non-competitive environment. Although Alex will be available to share his technical and creative experience and provide feedback and suggestions



for developing your individual photographic style, the expectation is for all guests to contribute to a constructive and enjoyable peer-learning experience for all.

For his first Divequest expedition Alex has chosen to return to one of his favourite diving locations; Sogod Bay in The Philippines. This trip promises photographers some of South-East Asia's finest and most diverse photographic dive opportunities. Far from the beaten track, Sogod Bay offers world class diving within easy reach of the resort.

www.divequest.co.uk



Issue 64/10

DiveQuest

THE ULTIMATE IN DIVETRAVEL

Photo: Rachel Lee Horsfield



www.divequest-travel.com

The Cayman Photoquest with Martin Edge 5-15th May 2012

Ultimate Papua New Guinea with Michele Westmorland 9-30th October 2012

Bali: The Art of Underwater Photography with Shannon Conway 21 November - 1st December 2012

Galapagos: The Art of Underwater Photography with Shannon Conway 11-24th June 2013

The Fiji Photoquest with Martin Edge 4-15th October 2013

Palau: The Art of Underwater Photography with Shannon Conway 1-11th March 2014

Truk: The Art of Underwater Photography with Shannon Conway 4-11th May 2014



Ultralight, friends & customers trip

Raja Ampat

Nov. 27 - Dec. 12 2012



Paradise Dancer is a traditionally-crafted, three masted wooden motor sailor, stretching 188 feet long, 39 feet wide and accommodating 18 adventurous divers.

Paradise Dancer will cruise out of Sorong exploring the virtually untouched areas Raja Ampat islands. This is one of the world's richest areas in terms of marine biodiversity and truly a pristine paradise just waiting for you to discover.

11 nights, 9.5 days diving, 3-5 dives a day Cost: \$4545 pp double occupancy, includes transfers, all meals and diving while on the boat. There is a \$255 park fee and Nitrox is extra. Flights not included.

These are highly sought after trips on any live a board. They sell out quickly and far ahead of departure. Ultralight has 16 of the 18

spots on the boat. Because we have chartered the whole boat our prices are \$200 lower than advertised prices. Deposit \$1000 holds your spot

Raja Ampat, or the Four Kings, is located off the northwest tip of Bird's Head Peninsula on the island of New Guinea. Offering the best of "frontier diving", this remote archipelago consists of over 1,500 small islands, cays and shoals surrounding the four main islands of Waigeo, Salawati, Batanta and Misool. Formerly called Irian Jaya, the area is now part of the newly named West Papua province of Indonesia – the ultimate destination for LiveAboard diving

Write to terry@ulcs.com for more information or to sign up.

terry@ulcs.com

Worldwide Dive and Sail Rebreather trips

Worldwide Dive and Sail will also be offering rebreather-only diving trips throughout 2012 with plans for trips in Thailand and Indonesia underway. Their instructor trainer, Thomas Erbe, will be on board to teach not only the Rebreather Diver and Advanced Rebreather Diver courses but also to train instructors who already meet the course prerequisites.

During these trips divers can achieve up to 35 hours on the MKVI unit providing a perfect opportunity for PADI instructors to achieve the hours required to complete their instructor training. The Siren Fleet has 15 units for teaching and rental, however owners of the Poseidon Discovery MKVI can also bring their own unit along and dive dive dive! What's more all rebreather divers will be offered the trips at a 35% discount. So there is no better time than right now to reap the benefits of bubble-free diving at some of the world's best dive sites!

Rebreather diver courses start from 550Euro, with unit rental just 65 Euro per day.

www.worldwidediveandsail.com



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Underwater Competition 2012

Deadline for submissions Jan 23, 2012



The Underwater Competition series returns in 2012 for its 7th year with over \$100,000 in prizes.

Known as the “Super Bowl” of underwater imagery events, the series has developed a reputation as being one of the elite underwater photography competitions, and the Our World Underwater and DEEP Indonesia contests have truly showcased the unique art of underwater photography.

The competitions are designed for photographers for all levels, with categories ranging from novice to

professional and even commercial photography. As in the past, the Our World Underwater contest features technical categories, while DEEP Indonesia offers themed entry categories.

The series is organized and founded by DivePhotoGuide.com and Wetpixel.com – the two leading underwater photography websites.

As with every UnderwaterCompetition.com event, 15 percent of the entry proceeds will be donated to marine conservation efforts.

[www. UnderwaterCompetition.com](http://www.UnderwaterCompetition.com)

www.uwpmag.com

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never equaled”

New Products

Saga Fiber Optic Ring Flash

In the previous DEMA Show 2010 in Las Vegas SAGA presented a prototype and this year in Orlando, the production model for this system of fiber optic lighting.

This is an accessory that focuses light through optical fiber adapted to the flash head to conduct the light through the fiber and carry it in front of the magnifying glass ideal for extreme macro photography.

The working distance is the one that leaves us magnification approximately: 2.5 to 10cm. It can adapt to almost every port, except for some with multiple steps.

By providing a circular light, we can compose the image in any position either horizontal, vertical, or inclined and have perfect lighting in hard to reach places where a conventional flash could not properly illuminate such as cracks, holes, etc..

Made in Delrin and 2mm diameter coated fibers, it can be made for most flashes and ports.



www.sagadive.com

www.uwvisions.co.uk



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Fantasea FP7100 Housing for Nikon Coolpix P7100



The FP7100 Housing, specially designed for the Coolpix P7100, meets the same high and professional standards of function, style and durability, as featured on the popular and successful FP7000 Housing.

The new Coolpix P7100 delivers amazing image quality, High Definition (HD) movies, enhanced menus navigation and high speed performance to create an appealing package for both professionals and enthusiasts. Photographers will find that the Coolpix P7100, bundled together with the FP7100 Housing, provides a pleasurable and professional water sports photography experience. This system is capable of producing stunning results which can certainly compete with those produced by some of the DSLR systems out there.

The FP7100 Housing is ergonomically designed, fully functional and features easy-to-use,



clearly labeled controls. This shock resistant housing protects your P7100 camera from all damaging elements including water, sand, dust, snow, ice and pollutants.

The FP71000 Housing is compatible with the complete FP7000 dedicated accessory line, including wide angle and macro lenses. Additional accessories include a variety of color correction filters and lighting sets, which enable photographers to further enhance the quality of their images and videos.

The FP7100 has been successfully depth tested to 80 meters and is certified to a maximum depth of 60 meters, which is well beyond the 40 meter dive limit for recreational divers.

www.fantasea.com



Presents

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Ikelite Nikon Coolpix P7100 housing

Dive into underwater photography with this compact true TTL camera system. The Compact Digital housing is high quality, extremely durable, and backed by Ikelite's long-standing reputation for excellence.

Proprietary conversion circuitry allows two-way communication between the camera and Ikelite Substrobes providing true Nikon TTL exposure. In addition to providing the most accurate automatic exposure, this ensures a faster recycling time and longer camera battery life as compared to fiber optic TTL systems. Take advantage of this powerful feature by attaching any current model Ikelite DS Substrobe. See the "External Underwater Strobes" section for complete details.

All camera controls except Fn (FUNC) Button, Lens Ring Release Button and Diopter Adjustment Control are fully functional through the housing and depth rated to 200ft (60m).



Size and Weight.
7.5" wide x 6.8" high x 6.6" deep including controls and lens port. 191mm x 173mm x 168mm. 4.75lb (2155g) above water. Slightly negative buoyancy in fresh water.

www.ikelite.com

Aquatica D7000



Lightning Fast Focus
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Compact Size
Great Ergonomics

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Demand Quality?



MDX^{D7000}_{7D}

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Takes optional VF45 Viewfinder
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Locking Latches
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Fibre Optic Cable Socket x2
100m Depth Rated



WWW.SEA-SEA.COM

SEA&SEA
 THE UNDERWATER IMAGING COMPANY

Nauticam NA-D7000V



Unveiled with great fanfare at the 2010 DEMA Show, the original NA-D7000 housing grew to be one Nauticam's most successful offerings. A little over one year later, Nauticam is proud to announce an update that includes significant ergonomic improvements and new accessory compatibility.

In keeping with Nauticam philosophy, the NA-D7000V housing continues to improve new products by building on previous innovations. NA-D7000V inherits the outstanding ergonomics of its predecessor, and adds access to the multi-controller, "OK", and "Info" buttons at the right grip. Now nearly every function on the D7000 can be controlled from the housing handles!

A new lever to disengage the housing's zoom and focus control makes camera loading with a lens attached easier than ever! While no



control levels required presetting on previous housings, zoom or focus gears could occasionally snag on the control assembly. This new assembly eliminates inconvenience, and allows faster setup.

www.nauticamusa.com
www.nauticamuk.com

Nauticam USA

Nauticam Olympus XZ1



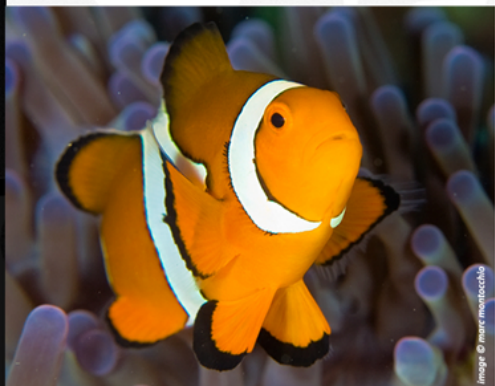
"Total control"

This camera and housing package offers complete control and image quality of an SLR system with the ease of use expected of a compact system.

Controls are simple but well thought out, with familiar push buttons for quick access to functions like macro mode, flash mode, etc. Dual control rings immediately access frequently used manual settings like ISO, F-Stop, and Shutter Speed. With a dedicated movie start/stop button recording 720P / 30fps video clips is only a pushbutton away.

www.nauticamusa.com

Hate Backscatter?



YS-01

Underwater Strobe

Compact & Lightweight
DS-TTL & Manual Control
110° Beam Angle (with Diffuser)
Built-In Modelling Light
75m Depth Rated



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SEA & SEA
THE UNDERWATER IMAGING COMPANY

Light and Motion Dive 500, 800 and 1200



We're thrilled to announce some very exciting updates to the Sola Dive line. The new Dive 800 will replace last year's Dive 600. The price points of the lights will also be changing; the Dive 1200 will retail for \$699, the Dive 800 will be priced at \$499, and the Dive 500 is dropping to \$299, making it the perfect entry-level light.

Along with the new Dive line, we are introducing some new accessories. For 2012, we will be shipping all of the Sola Dive lights with a ballistic nylon hand strap with a 15 degree slant, making it even more comfortable to dive hands-free. The Dive 1200 will also ship with a lightweight Pistol Grip, which will be available as a separate accessory for the Dive 800 and 500.

www.uwimaging.com

DiveBuddy.com Reveals New Website

The online social community for scuba divers, DiveBuddy.com, has been redesigned with an easy-to-use interface and new features.

Based on feedback from members, all of which are scuba divers or diving professionals, we've made the following enhancements:

- Scuba Earth: an interactive map that displays the location of dive sites, divers, dive centers, scuba events and dive clubs.
- Dive Log: record and print your dive logs, view dive activity graphs.
- Dive Site Photos: all dive site photos listed in one place, yet another way to find your next dive destination.
- Couch Surfing: find divers willing to share a room or house when you visit their location.
- Certifications: keep a record of all your scuba certifications in one place.
- Members Near Me: receive a notification when members join that live near you.

www.divebuddy.com

Nauticam
USA

Nauticam Olympus E-PL2



"Top of the Class"

E-PL2 shooters now have the option of stepping up to the durability and functionality of a rugged aluminum housing for their camera. The NA-EPL2 housing from Nauticam delivers the advanced functionality of the E-PL2 in style and with the ergonomics that people have come to expect from Nauticam.

This is a very compact and lightweight housing, with all of the E-PL2 camera controls available from the ergonomic grip sculpted into the side of the housing. A choice of hand strap and left/right handle means the shooter can customize the housing to meet their specific needs.

www.nauticamusa.com

New INON Products

INON Inc have announced the availability of several additions to their ball joint arm range aimed at providing increased capacity for strobes, aiming lights or other accessories.

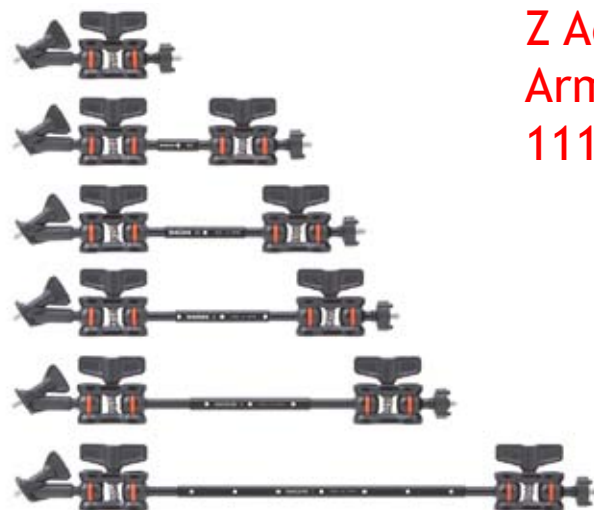
Multi Direct Base II WB



The new Multi Direct Base II WB has two INON Arm II system compatible ball-joints to hold strobes or LED flashlights at a time or to extend an additional arm.

M5 Joint

Optional accessory to attach a lens holder on Stick Arm or Multi Ball Arm to hold an attachment lens in the middle of the compatible arm. It is also possible to attach the Shoe Base in combination with optional Shoe Base Spacer



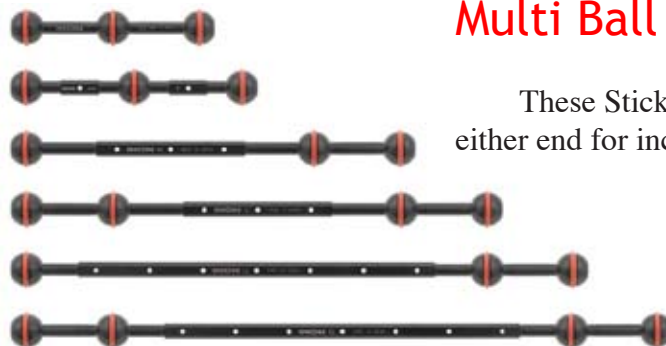
Z Adaptor MV, Stick Arms and Direct Base 111 and Clamp 111

These are the components which make up INON's new Stick Arm System.

Stick Arm XS is 75mm/3.0",
SS is 120mm/4.7",
S is 150mm/5.9"
M is 200mm/7.9"
LL is 320mm/12.6"

Multi Ball Stick Arms

These Stick arms have 2 balls at either end for increased capacity.



M6 Joint

An optional accessory to attach a Direct Base III which has INON Arm II compatible ball-joint, on "Stick Arm" or "Multi Ball Arm" to combine a strobe or LED flashlight on middle of compatible arm.



Shoe Base Spacer



Optional accessory to attach Shoe Base on Stick Arm/ Multi Ball Arms or Float Arm to hold a strobe or LED flashlight on the middle of the compatible arm.

Stick Arm Float S

Optional accessory to attach on Stick Arms or Multi Ball Arms to add approx. 84g (3.0oz) buoyancy underwater to lighten total underwater weight and make it easy to grip.



Double YS Adapter MV



YS Adapter WB MV



www.inon.jp

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APOL-XZ1
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Fisheye FIX Canon S100



Fisheye are pleased to announce the release of their FIX housing for the superlative Canon S100.

The FIX S100 is a compact, rugged, aluminium housing depth rated to 70m and providing full and easy access to this mini-powerhouse of a camera's functionality. The housing includes adapters for both 52mm and 67mm wet lenses and fiber-optic cable bulkheads for external strobe connection.

Monitor hood rails are included to mount an optional monitor hood and the housing features a cold shoe accessory mount for easy attachment of a focus/video light.

www.fisheyeuk.com

Laluz Optics L800 video and focus light



Laluz Optics Inc. introduced World's smallest 800 Lumens underwater Video & Focus light.

Model # L800 outer dimensions just 34 x113mm, Color Temperature 6500K, Maximum output 800 lumens run time 90 minutes, 80 degree light beam evenly illuminates the subject with no hot spots, One button control for easy operation, Three selectable output levels, Easily replaceable & rechargeable Lithium battery, popular YS type adapter. Depth rated 100m, Price only USD\$199

You can set it up as your focus, video light or your rugged pocket light for backup.

www.laluzoptics.com

**Nauticam
USA**

Nauticam NA-NEX5N Sony NEX-5N housing



"Back to the future"

The Sony NEX-5N provides DSLR image quality with the full HD video of a camcorder in a compact size. The Nauticam NA-NEX5N extends that capability with a form fitting aluminium housing and a full range of ports from fisheye to macro.

But the most innovative twist is a port adaptor to use Nikonos lenses from the pin sharp 15mm UW Nikkor to the super macro combination of 35mm and extension tubes.

For decades the Nikonos range of lenses were world leaders but the advent of digital saw them put on the shelf. Now we can use them all over again to benefit from the past with a camera for the future.

www.nauticamusa.com

Nauticam NA-NEX7 Housing for Sony NEX-7



Building on the success of the NA-NEX5 and NA-NEX5N housings, the NEX-7 supports all of the new controls on the NEX-7, including the triple command wheels. Not only are all the key controls supported, but they are logically placed and easily reached without moving the hand out of position. The shutter release is sculpted right into the housing such that the hand naturally finds it. A choice of hand strap and left/right handle means the shooter can customize the housing to meet their specific needs.

This housing also features optical correction for the excellent electronic viewfinder (EVF), letting the user dial in critical focus. An easy to reach, patent pending lever lets the user quickly switch between the EVF and the LCD. The housing takes advantage of the NEX-7 tilting

LCD display and angles it up at approximately 15° for easier viewing.

The popup flash is controlled with a clever single lever that both pops the flash up and disables it to allow for silhouette shooting. Fiber optic flash is of course supported, as is, optionally, electronic sync cord flash.

The NA-NEX7 housing uses the same Nauticam patented locking port release system as in the NEX-5, allowing easy and secure port changes. Ports are available for the major lenses that are useful underwater, including the Sony 18-55mm, 16mm pancake, 16mm pancake + FE adapter, and the 16mm pancake + WA adapter, and the new Sony 30mm macro lens.

www.nauticamusa.com



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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.

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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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<http://youtu.be/GNKt6tdlxzk>

<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

Ultralight GoPro Polecam



Ultralight Control Systems has developed a pole cam for the GoPro camera for under \$30.

The poles are made of wood and painted, one end is male and one end

is female. They are 24" long and you can add as many lengths as you desire.

Two ends are available. One end has the tripod mount on it the other one has a ball on it so it can be used with ULCS cages.

The poles are \$9.95 and the end with the tripod mount is \$9.95, the end with the ball is \$25.95

Using the cage allows you to avoid the tabs on the housing for extreme situations i.e. sharks, crocks, sailfish etc. This use of the polecam will give you the greatest flexibility on position of the camera with the cage on it.



www.ulcs.com

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APSO-NEX5N

Underwater Camera Housing for SONY NEX-5N



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

www.uwpmag.com

Dyron UV Light Solaris 4200



The Dyron UV Light Solaris 4200 is a Fluorescent light 5W with 16 Led 120 ° without hot spots (diffuse light)

The Efficiency under water is 4200 lumen and it runs for 30 minutes to 50 minutes (4200 / 2000 lumen)

Features include a secured on/off button, power settings from 40% to 100%, Sanyo Ni-Mh 7.2v (2 years warranty) 4 hours to charge the battery (external charging no need to open the light)

Length 17cm - Body diameter 6cm - Head diameter 8cm Weight on land 990grs

The Dyron UV Light Solaris 4200 comes with: - fast charger - removable grip - 2 large pieces of special soft filter for mask and housing

www.dyron.fr

Underwater Visions distribute Fisheye FIX

Underwater Visions are delighted to announce that they have been awarded the UK and Eire distribution for the Fisheye FIX range of lighting, wet lens and housing products. Fisheye have a long established reputation for premium underwater photography products and we very much look forward to being able to offer their products throughout the UK and Eire.

www.uwvisions.com

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WHAT LIES BENEATH?

Check out these latest additions to the OLC product range:



Hugyfot SLR housings

- Super sturdy construction
- 100m depth rating
- Pre-dive leak check
- Interchangeable port system



Nauticam SLR housings

- Innovative design
- 100m depth rating
- Extremely ergonomic
- Interchangeable port system

FIND OUT WITH HELP FROM



London's premier underwater camera store

Ocean Leisure Cameras is the one-stop central London underwater photography specialist store. You'll find the same old faces in store with some of the same kit and a whole lot of new stuff. For best advice and heaps of experience OLC is the place to go.

Within OLC you'll find all the top UW photo brands like: Canon, Panasonic, Inon, Sea & Sea, Hugyfot, Nauticam, Light & Motion, Fisheye and GoPro

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info@oceanleisurecameras.com
www.oceanleisurecameras.com

CAMERAS • HOUSINGS • LENSES • STROBES • LIGHTS • VIDEO • COURSES

LED lamp



Technical data	
Lamp	LED Seoul P7 / 10 Watt W724C0-E
Electronics	Microprocessor controlled
Lithon-Battery	7.4V, 2900 mAh, user-replaceable
Size	19cm x 2.5cm (Head: 3.3cm)
Weight	250 g

Our compact, lightweight and powerful lamp is ideal for most situations underwater. Its brightness surpasses that of similarly compact dive lamps, meaning that for many divers, it can take the place of a big main lamp. As a backup lamp, its modest weight and compact size make it fit into most jacket pockets.

Controlled by a microprocessor and dimmable in three steps, this lamp is a high-end product, made in Germany. The powerful lithium ion battery allows for a minimum of 100 minutes at full capacity, with no decline in brightness; at the lowest capacity level, it is a minimum of 400 minutes. The housing is milled from solid aluminium. It is sealed with double o-rings, approved for a diving depth of 300 metres and tested for 500 metres in the pressure tank. The high-quality piezoelectric makes for easy, one-handed control.

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For further information, visit our website www.heinrichsweikamp.de or contact us at info@heinrichsweikamp.de

When Your Image Matters...

Photo by: Stewart L. Sy, Owner SLS Photography

Aquatica A7D Housing for the Canon EOS 7D

SLS PHOTOGRAPHY
www.stewartsy.com

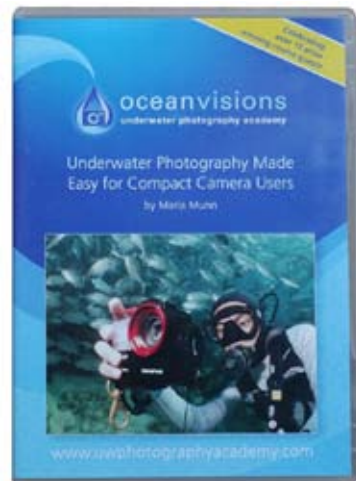
Your Source for Quality Underwater Photo Equipment & Instruction in Western Canada

AQUATICA Digital Technical Lighting Control ULTRAVISION SEA-SEA

Our Photo Workshops are endorsed by:

www.uwpmag.com

Maria Munn DVD



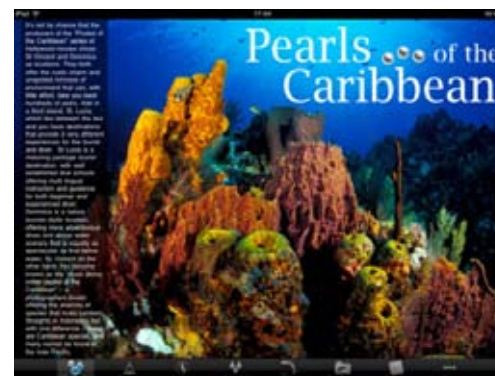
Following on from Maria's award-winning book, she has recently brought out a DVD called "Underwater Photography Made Easy for Compact Camera Users" which was filmed by Scubazoo on the islands of Mabul and Sipidan, Malaysia.

Comprising of over 40 mini-chapters and just over 50 minutes long, it guarantees to help beginners get the most out of their compact cameras to take beautiful underwater photographs just like Maria's 14 prize winning guests to date.

The price of the DVD is £29.95 with 10% being donated to help "The School of Hope" to give children a better education in Mabul and to the "SEAS Project" to help raise money to create a marine reserve in Sipidan.

www.oceanvisions.co.uk

Pearls of the Caribbean HD App



It's yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum as this app takes you on a journey both above and below water through three of the Caribbean's finest destinations: Dominica, St Lucia and St Vincent.

This application is a companion aimed at scuba divers but will also be of use to those that prefer to stay on dry land. It provides important information on dive centers, dive sites, weather conditions, as well as all the local information you need to ensure you make the right choices.

The application is also beautifully adorned with images from a world-class underwater photographer.

Before you invest in your trip, make sure you get this app!

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/pearls-of-the-caribbean-hd/id458084536?mt=8>

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Issue 64/25



Hidden Treasures , Guam's Marine Preserves

by Tim Rock

Hidden Treasures

Guam's Marine Preserves



Lonely Planet author/ photojournalist and Guam resident Tim Rock has just published a new book. It is called Hidden Treasures: Guam's Marine preserves. This is a gloss hard cover, 216-page, full color book with 330+ images of Guam's five marine preserves, World War remnants, National Parks and Federal Reserves and some of the natural marine resources. Plus there are also

images of Guam's historic past to include protected shipwrecks and remnants.

This is mainly a photographic book of images in and around Guam's

E-books of this book and 30 other Tim Rock books are now available on:

and iTunes:

<http://www.blurb.com/user/store/timrock>
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/artist/tim-rock/id307174147>

coral reefs, submerged resources and the special marine preserves. It is an unique offering containing a great variety of stunning marine life photos and scenic above water habitat imagery.

"I have lived on Guam for more than 30 years and I spend a lot of time beneath the waters here. It has become very important to me to see that our newly established marine preserves are supported and successful. With that in mind, I produced this book of some of my favorite spots in the preserves," says Rock. "We have been shooting at every opportunity for over a year. This visual record of the preserves comes at an important stage in their development."

This book is ideal as a handy and attractive small coffee table book and as a souvenir to show the western Pacific's amazing reef beauty and diversity. Currently, nothing like this about scenic Guam is available.

Get a print copy by going to:

www.mantaraypublishing.com

or

www.Amazon.com



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Ocean Art Underwater Photo Competition results



Tobias Friedrich, Best of Show and Wide-Angle Category winner
“Manta Madness”, taken in the Maldives



Lill Haugen, 1st Place, Coldwater
“Frozen Fjord”, taken in Oslo, Norway



Nataliya Chervyakova, 1st Place, Marine Life Behavior
“Hunting Leopard Seal”, taken at Petermann Island, Antarctica



Jackie Campbell, 1st Place, Compact Macro
“Hairy Stare”, Hairy frogfish, taken in Lembeh, Indonesia

The Second Annual Ocean Art Underwater Photo Competition, organized by the UnderwaterPhotographyGuide, has announced its winners for 2011.

This year's OceanArt Photo Competition represents entrants from over fifty countries. Over \$82,000 worth of prizes were awarded to 52 underwater photographers. Judges this year included prestigious professional photographers Marty Snyderman, Bonnie Pelnar, Martin Edge, and Tony Wu.

There are at least 4 winners in each of 12 categories, including Wide-Angle, Macro, Portrait, Behavior, Novice, Nudibranchs, SuperMacro, Fashion, Coldwater, and 3 Compact Camera categories.

The Best of Show was a stunning wide-angle photograph of several mantarays, taken by Tobias Friedrich of Germany. Other stunning images include a hunting leopard seal, a pair of eels, and a beautiful squid composition. Thousands of entries were viewed by the judges before the final set of amazing images were selected, and deemed some of the best underwater photos in the world.

Judging was quite difficult due to the high quality of images. World famous underwater photographer and contest judge Martin Edge commented, “This year the judging was very tight due to so many superb images. After much discussion, agreements, and disagreements, we felt the winners really stood out.

For myself, the best in show was the most awesome shot in the entire collection.”

<http://www.uwphotographyguide.com/ocean-art-contest-winners-2011>

Bonica Snapper 1080P HDDV G8V15 Package



The Bonica Snapper 1080P HDDV G8V15 Package is an excellent entry level HD video package which can also shoot 8megapixel stills

There are 2 main video settings - 1440x1080P at 30 frames per second which gives the sharpest picture for the largest TVs and 1280x720P with full widescreen at 60 frames per second. This is the best balance of high definition and natural motion)

Footage is recorded on SD & SDHC memory cards up to 32 GB and the MOV files allow efficient compression and easy editing

The lithium ion battery can be charged with the included charger or a common mini USB computer cable

The silicon skin alone will keep your camera clean and dry to 12 feet (3.5m) underwater or anywhere else.

It also provides a great backup while inside the outer housing

The silicone skin mounted in the rugged polycarbonate outer housing will take your Bonica down 180 feet (55m)

A compact remote tucked in the housing under the control pins, eliminates complexity, and ensures control of all functions.

This Bonica G8V15 LED Video Light has six 3W (15W total) LED bulbs that provide 1500 lumens of light. Eight 2400 mAh NiMH rechargeable AA batteries (not supplied) power the light for 60 minutes of full-power burn time. The LED bulbs run at a cool temperature, so the light can be used above and below the surface.

Lights are extremely important for your underwater imaging system. The ocean is one big, blue filter. As



you descend, the reds and oranges quickly become muted shades of blue and gray. Shining a color corrected light source on your subject will bring back your subjects' natural color. The G8V15 with its daylight balanced 6500° K LED bulbs is the perfect light for this purpose. The 60° beam angle is wide enough for wide scenes, and the light does not produce hot spots.

The Bonica Snapper 1080P HDDV G8V15 Package sells for \$849

www.bonicadive.com

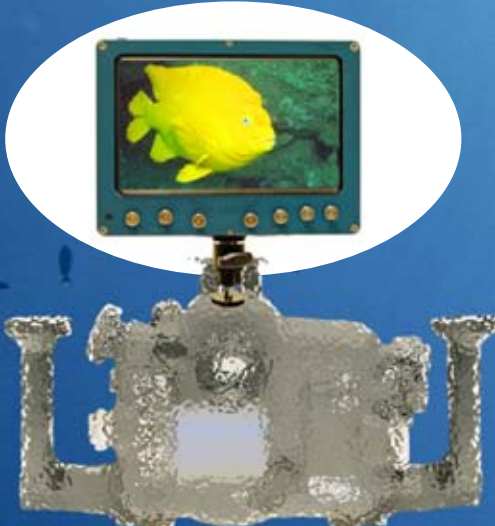
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- 6 adjustable backlight levels for day or night-time
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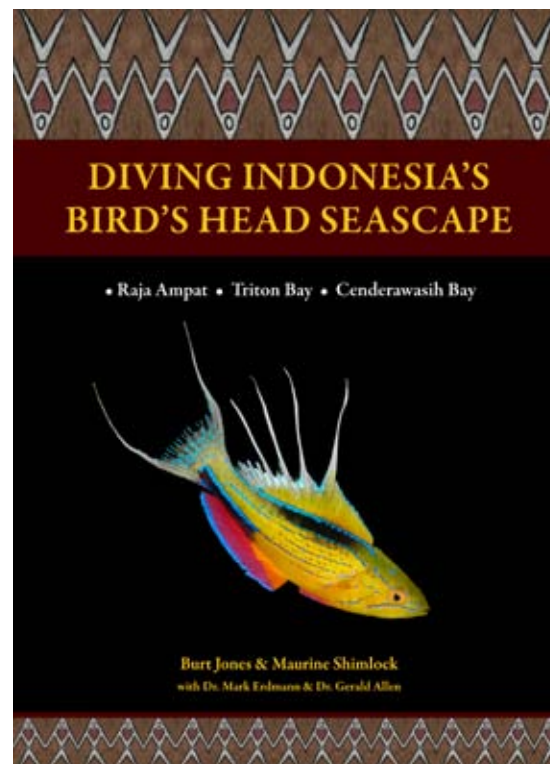


www.diveandsee.com
info@diveandsee.com

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Diving Indonesia's Bird's Head Seascape by Burt Jones or Maurine Shimlock

Where can divers swim with the world's most diverse fish and coral species, gawk as a squadron of mantas swoops overhead, poke around World War II wrecks, and encounter throngs of whale sharks? In Diving Indonesia's Bird's Head Seascape, the sequel to their Raja Ampat guide, authors Burt Jones and Maurine Shimlock use never-before-published images and maps to show readers where and how to dive beyond Raja and experience the reefs scientists have confirmed to be the planet's richest. More than 200 dive sites from Triton Bay, Cenderawasih Bay and Raja Ampat, the three regions that comprise Indonesia's Bird's Head Seascape, are described along with information on which camera setup to use and what animals divers can expect to encounter. Travelers will also find useful information on how to access each area's myriad shore-based attractions. At the moment, divers rate Raja Ampat as one of the world's premier regions, but this book will elevate its sister destinations by introducing divers to the incomparable reefs found throughout the entire Bird's Head Seascape.



To purchase: \$35 retail. 200 pages. Available through New World Publications. ISBN 978-979-1173-18-6

www.fishid.com

www.seasecretseavisions.com

2012 Calendar from Jeremy and Amanda Cuff



Photographers and photojournalists Jeremy and Amanda Cuff have published a new 2012 Calendar titled "Diving Dreams".

Jeremy said, "The Diving Dreams 2012 Calendar features a variety of images, mostly from our dive travels over recent times, and includes destinations such as Borneo, Belize, Egypt, Australia, the Philippines and the Cayman Islands."

The 2012 Calendar can be obtained from Jeremy & Amanda at a cost of £8.50 including postage (within the UK).

For further information, please visit Jeremy & Amanda's website.

www.ja-universe.com

DSLR Housings for

CANON

5D Mark II
7D
40D, 50D
60D
450D Rebel XSi
500D Rebel T1i
550D Rebel T2i
600D Rebel T3i
1000D Rebel T3

NIKON

D80
D90
D300
D300s
D700
D3100
D5100
D7000

OLYMPUS

E330

PENTAX

K-5
K-7

SONY

α33 SLT, α55 SLT
α35 SLT

DS160 Substrobe
The Substrobe DS160 has quickly made its mark becoming the favorite of underwater photographers.



DSLR Housings

Ikelite digital SLR housings offer top-of-the-line professional grade features in a contoured, durable and corrosion free case. A clear view of the camera and o-ring seals is an added advantage during both assembly and operation. Thoughtfully placed controls put important camera functions within comfortable reach.

Our proprietary circuitry remains the most accurate and reliable TTL on the market today. And because we feel that TTL exposure is so important to underwater photography, we build it into every digital SLR housing. Enjoy perfect exposure in every shooting scenario when used with compatible Ikelite DS Substrobes.

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- Tripod Mounting Point
- Pro Video Lite 3 Battery Pack Mounting Points
- Video Trigger Control for Cameras with Video

New Handles & Tray



DS161 Movie Substrobe
The DS161 Movie Substrobe combines all of the functionality of our renowned DS160 with a powerful 500 lumen LED video light. This strobe is everything you need for stunning photos and video.



Olympus PT-EP05L housing and E-PL3 camera

by Jussi Hokkanen

The nice people at the Olympus UK lent us the new Olympus E-PL3 camera and the PT-EP05L for a thorough test and we managed to give it a good soaking in the Northern Red Sea last week.

The E-PL3 is the latest PEN Lite camera in the series and as the previous PEN models the E-PL3 also comes with an Olympus housing. Made from polycarbonate, the PT-EP05L housing looks very similar to the previous PEN housings but there are also some differences. The most useful change is the new port with a 67mm thread and another new feature is the 4 led focusing lights on the port.

The E-PL3 camera continues the series of PEN interchangeable lens compact cameras and is only a very moderate update to the previous E-PL2 camera. Traditionally the E-PLx Pen Lite series have been situated underneath the true PEN E-Px series. However, with the latest models it is very hard to find any real differences between the higher E-P3 and the E-PL3 models. In comparison with the previous Pen Lite, the E-PL2, the differences are again marginal.

Both of the cameras have the same 12.3 megapixel sensor and identical functions including RAW capture. The only real spec change is the 1080 HD resolution with the latest model in comparison with the 720 HD resolution on the E-PL2. According to Olympus the E-PL3 is also a faster focusing machine in comparison with the previous model. The camera body itself has got some more visible differences like the E-PL3's tilting screen, which can be handy on land but completely useless underwater.

The new screen is in 16:9 format which will please video makers but leaves lots of empty space in the edges when using the camera in still modes. Generally the E-PL3 camera body feels a bit sturdier and more metallic in your hand.

Another thing worth noting is that the E-PL3 does not have a pop-up flash. It looks like Olympus has copied Sony's approach with the NEX range; these cameras did not have a built-in strobe either but came with a small clip-on unit that can be attached on the hot shoe. With the Olympus E-PL3 you will get the clip-on FL-





LM1 strobe with every retail package.

On the housing side the obvious novelty factor are the LED spotting lights. The 4 lights are situated around the port and powered by two AAA batteries inside the housing. A small electrical cable connects the battery casing to the lights itself. Internally the port is similar to the previous PEN housing ports, so if you want to use Zen ports with the housing, it is possible. The PT-EP051 has the same bayonet and port removal lock of the previous PEN housings, which can be removed with a screw driver.

Before removing the port you will also need to unplug the cable for the led lights. Pull the white socket carefully with small pliers to unplug. The first time you remove the port is can be extremely tight so use a rubber strap wrench for the job. After couple of times and some lubrication the port seems to loosen up and comes off easier.

The housing feels really nice in your hand and as always the clearly marked Olympus buttons are the best in the business. The size of the housing is considerable bigger than your average compact housing but still very manageable. The package is a bit buoyant underwater but when adding a strobe

and a lens it is extremely nicely balanced. The only criticism I have for the housing is the cheap flash mask. It's almost like the designers of the housing forgot to include this very much-needed mask when they were planning the housing and that the resulting floppy plastic bit was thrown in as an afterthought. The mask sheet is held in place with two supplied rubber push caps and when external strobes are in use by the sync cable ends themselves. Definitely not the most elegant solution but at least it worked during our test week in the Red Sea. And if you loose it you can always cut yourself a new one out of cardboard.

Where the Olympus E-PL3 camera and the PT-EP051 housing really shine is in practice. When we saw the first pictures of the housing we were intrigued by the possibility of using wet lenses with the set-up. Once we laid our hands on the first prototype we realised that the E-PL3 camera could also be used with a wet wide-angle lens. For the first time we would have a large chip system camera with full wet lens capability. And now after testing the package in anger I can reveal that this works even better than we thought.

The E-PL3 camera with the basic 14-42mm kit lens can be used with a wet 67mm macro and wide-angle lens during a dive. The new Inon UWL-H100 M67 type 2 wide-angle lens and the fact that the Olympus 14-42 lens is its longest on its widest position makes this all possible. The 14-42mm lens sits so near the port glass when on its 14mm (28mm) position that it does not vignette at all with the Inon lens and picture quality remains very good.

For macro just zoom the lens to the maximum tele position (84mm) and swap the wide-angle for a close up lens. It's worth noting that the 14-42mm lens does not focus very close without any assistance so it is not a perfect close-up lens but with a strong macro add-on lens you can get reasonably close and do everything apart from a super macro. You should get at least +10 macro adapter for general close-up photography and for smaller things even +16 is not too much. Stacking up is the key here; get a of couple different stackable macro lenses so that you can choose your magnification according the situation at hand.

Remember that the 14-42mm f3.5-5.6 II R lens that ships with the E-PL3 is a new and smaller



version of the previous kit lens and so the old 14-42 zoom gearing, the PPZR-EP01, does not work. However, I tested the 9-18mm zoom ring (PPZR-EP02) on the new 14-42mm II R and that seems to be a perfect fit. The 9-18mm and the new 14-42mm II R are almost identical in size.

Obviously if you already happen to have a lot of micro four thirds lenses you can also use them with this setup. We also tested the new 50mm f1.8 lens with macro add-on lens. Zen Underwater has a range of ports available for the PEN system wide-angle lenses. The dome ports are available for the fairly inexpensive Olympus 9-18mm and for the excellent but pricy Panasonic 7-14mm. You also have a super-wide choice as Zen is now doing a stubby dome port for the Panasonic 8mm fisheye lens.

The port LED lights clearly are one of the selling points of the new Olympus housings. The lights are nice touch but in real life of little use on day diving. On a night dive they work reasonably well as your macro focusing lights. These lights do not have the auto flash off function that “real”



focusing lights offer but the lights are hardly powerful enough to bleed into the photos when using an external strobe.

Olympus is a company that is not afraid to try new things and if the lights were more powerful and have the self-extinguishing feature they would be an awesome add-on but as it is they are more of a novelty than anything else. In the end nothing beats a good powerful spotting light smacked on an accessory shoe.

For this review I also used an Inon S-2000 strobe with the Olympus package. The strobe’s S-TTL function works faultlessly with the camera when on A and P mode; I did almost no adjustments during my dives. Olympus tries to push their own underwater strobes but I would give them a miss. The UFL-1 and 2 are quite slow and underpowered in comparison with the Sea & Sea and Inon models. When it comes to underwater strobes you are getting what you pay for; I’ve never tested a good cheap UW strobe.

The Olympus E-PL3 and its PT-EP051 housing package offer a lot for both the SLR and the

compact camera shooter. It can be a great package for the “first upgrade” as it offers the flexibility of a compact camera system with its wet lenses and is at the same time a significant leap up in image quality. I can also sincerely recommend it to an old SLR user. The image quality is very well on par with a basic SLR cameras and the housing package is so much lighter and cheaper. Additionally you will get all the manual modes and features of a digital SLR camera.

The PT-EP051 housing only costs about £600 in the UK and the full package with a camera and Inon wet wide-angle lens is only about £1500. It is impossible to find anything of this quality and size on the market for this price. And just before I forget I have to add that there is also an aluminium Nauticam housing made for the E-PL3 camera. So if you need to dive deep with your E-PL3 you have to go for the Nauticam option as the Olympus housing is only depth rated to 45 meters. The Nauticam housings is also double the price of the Olympus housing and as the PT-EP051 works so beautifully I’m not sure if I’d even want the Nauticam.

Finally Olympus has hit the jackpot with their underwater photographic product. They have been lost in the dark for years...in fact since the now ancient and almost forgotten C-5060. Let’s hope they can keep it up.

Jussi Hokkanen
www.deepshots.co.uk

www.oceanleisurecameras.com

Thanks to Paul “Duxy” Duxfield for additional photos and comments.

La Luz L800 focus/video light

by Peter Rowlands

I'm sure you've heard the one about a microchip manufacturer whose business was developing so much that they had to move into a smaller premises, well the same could be true for underwater torch manufacturers.

The advent of the LED (light emitting diode) has revolutionised underwater lighting and, when combined with good high ISO performance cameras is starting to offer a credible alternative to strobes. With these cameras being able to shoot stills or video it makes a lot of sense to consider LED lighting. Just as photographic technology is converging to produce stills/video cameras so too is LED lighting to produce aiming/video lights.

La Luz Optics is a Hong Kong based lighting manufacturer and their L800 light is based around a single 10w CREE LED behind a focusing lens which concentrates the beam into an 80° circle with no hot spots. The output from such a small device is very impressive indeed and makes it an ideal focus or video light. The outer dimensions just 34 x 113mm and the Color Temperature is 6500K. It is rated to 100 metres.

The L800 is powered by a single 4000mah 3.7v Li-Ion battery which takes around 8 hours to fully charge and will then give a burn time of 90 mins at High (100%) power, 180 mins at Medium (50%) and 10 hours at Low (10%). The settings are controlled by a single push button on the rear of the unit in the following sequence: Low, Medium, High and then Off. Rotating the rear section by just a quarter turn will ensure that the L800 does not come on accidentally when being handled or more importantly during transport. To be doubly sure, the battery can be removed altogether.

LED technology may be reworking the rule book but one thing remains true - light still generates heat and this is a problem for sealed waterproof designs. The result is that the L800 should only be used underwater to avoid over heating but that's not really a problem for us underwater photographers.

At \$199 plus shipping, the La Luz L800 is significantly less than the Fix LED750DX which offers a similar output and coverage but the L800 is about a quarter the size and weight so, as I said in the beginning, if the L800



takes off, La Luz will need to look for smaller premises!

La Luz deal direct from Hong Kong and when ordering I'd recommend adding a spare battery (\$25) and a Red filter (\$10). They ship within 1-2 days and they say allow up to 20 days delivery but mine arrived in less than 10 and that was over the Christmas period.

I will be using a pair of these tiny

lights for stills and video work over the next couple of months and will report back in UwP65.

Peter Rowlands
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iTorch Video Pro 3 light by Tim Moran

Built in China and distributed by i-Torch of Canada the build quality of the Video Pro 3 is impressive. Turning it on revealed an 80 degree 650 lumen beam with four incremental intensities (100%, 70%, 50% & 20%) plus a narrower angle low intensity red beam. The single 10 watt CREE LED is powered by four AA batteries and has a burn time of between two and six hours. The light head and battery compartment are sealed with two o-rings each, rated to 100 metres.

I elected to evaluate the Video Pro 3 at the National Dive and Activity Centre (NDAC) during a couple of technical dives to depth and on a shallower dive at recreational depth. Two lamps were mounted as wide angle focus lamps on my NA-7D shooting the Tokina 10-17mm glass. The clear, deep and dark water column at NDAC was usefully illuminated by the pair of Video Pros. I set the lamps so that the periphery of the two beams converged, partially overlapping at the AF point and picking up focus was easy and certain.

The lowest (20%) power setting was usually sufficient and did not create any hotspots in the resulting images. If a tad more light was needed it was simplicity itself to



use the push-button control on the rear of the lamp and I found that the wider illumination of the twin lamps usefully aided composition. I was especially pleased to find that there was not any flare evident in the resulting images which has been somewhat of a battle to control with my current wide angle focus lamps.

As video lamps, the Video Pro 3 will do a good job shooting macro and close focus footage with a colour temperature of around 5,500K. The redlight feature provides function as a macro focus light too.

To sum up, the i-Torch product is well engineered, very usefully featured and competitively priced at £225. As close to an 'all-rounder' as I have come across.

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Wide angle primes for Micro 4/3rds

By Phil Rudin

I had a chance to shoot Wide angle with the Olympus E-PL3 camera and Nauticam NA-EPL3 housing while diving with Splash Dive Center (splashbelize.com) in Placencia, Belize. I spent several days diving in the Silk Keys after the November 2011 DEMA show. My Nauticam NA-ELP3 housing was equipped with the Nauticam 4.33 inch dome port which I used with the Panasonic 8mm F/3.5 fisheye and the Olympus 12mm F/2.0. I found both lenses to be very sharp behind the dome with little corner softness. Both lenses focuses very close (to the dome port) which allowed me to get within inches of the Lion fish below.

The 12mm is a great lens for fish portraits and larger animals like the Loggerhead turtle feeding on lobster remains which had been dumped near the keys by local fishermen. I also took some split shots during lunch on one of the local keys. The smaller dome and 12mm lens combo set at F-22 using ISO-200 gave we a shutter speed of 1/160th in the bright mid-day sun light. The other 12mm images were also exposed at ISO-200 and



Nauticam NA-EPL3 housing with 4.33 inch dome port, 8mm fisheye in housing E-PL3 with flash and 14-42mm zoom, 12 mm in silver

1/160th in a range from F/7.1 to F/9 using two Inon Z-240 strobes for fill lighting.

The Panasonic 8mm fisheye lens is very well suited to underwater photography but requires time to master due to the wide angle of view. When I started using fisheye lenses underwater I ended up with my fins, strobe heads, strobe cords, diver parts and more in the frame. Fisheye lenses because they are so wide often include the sun particularly when shot vertical. This can cause the sun to burn a hole in the image as in the upper right corner of the gorgonian image below. With the Jelly fish shot



Panasonic 8mm F/3.5 fisheye



Olympus 12mm F/2.0



Gorgonian, 8mm fisheye, ISO200, 1/160th, F/11



Vase sponge, 8mm fisheye, ISO200, 1/160th, F/11



Over/under with 12mm and 4.33 inch dome, ISO200, 1/160th, F/22



Tiger grouper, 12mm, ISO200, 1/160th, F/8

I put the sun to my back to avoid the problem and with the vase sponge I got low and close putting the sun behind the sponge. Fisheye lenses also distort objects with straight lines like wreckage, large animals and more. Because the lens is so wide it may fool the auto focus system as well. See in the photo below how the lens in auto focus chose to focus on the water drops on the surface of the dome (yes, that is how close the lens will focus) rather than the much larger boat.

The Olympus 12mm at around \$780.00 US and the Panasonic 8mm fisheye at around \$650.00 US are not cheap, however they can both be used with the same Nauticam 4.33 inch dome port and do not require zoom or focus gears when used

in auto focus. These lenses give two distinctly different wide angle options and offer first class sharpness across the entire frame. Both lenses are very small and well suited for travel as is the Nauticam NA-EPL3 housing.

Phil Rudin

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External SLR monitors

by Peter Rowlands

From an underwater photography equipment point of view, the 2011 DEMA Show was the year of the external HD monitor. True, they've been around a long while in the video market but this new batch are all designed to be used on SLR housings which have video capability.

Most SLR cameras now have the capability of shooting full HD video and with their larger sensors comes the ability to capture good footage at high ISO levels; perfect for underwater photographers. Unfortunately SLRs are ergonomically designed to take stills by looking through an optical or electronic viewfinder and then reviewing the resulting image on the large rear LCD screen. When shooting video on an SLR we view the footage being shot on the same LCD screen but ergonomically it is not ideal. It's a bit like using a two legged tripod. You have to hold the housing out in front of you in line of sight and this makes keeping the housing steady a significant problem. The last thing video shooters want is shaky footage.

It seems like all the manufacturers have twigged a solution at the same time because there were no less than 6 external monitors on display at DEMA! The reason that an external monitor is the solution for video is that it allows the viewing image to be placed where it is more convenient and at an ergonomically better angle. As a result the housing can be held with your arms 'tucked in' to your body which makes everything far steadier.





Dive and See already produce a 7" monitor and this 5" one will be available shortly

One of the main problems which had to be overcome when making an external monitor was working with mini HDMI connectors. Unfortunately these are flat and wide rather than round so a suitably large bulkhead connector had to be available on the SLR housing to allow this connector to pass through. It remains to be seen how robust the HDMI design of connector is. The majority of monitor designs incorporate a fixed through cable which means the SLR housing is attached to the monitor housing permanently. Only Nauticam bucked the trend with unpluggable connectors which will make storage for transportation much easier. The problems of the HDMI design means that not all current SLR housings can be used but I am sure that from now on designers are going to incorporate HDMI capability as standard.

Nauticam and Backscatter chose to house existing land monitors (Small HD4.3" and Sony CLM-C55

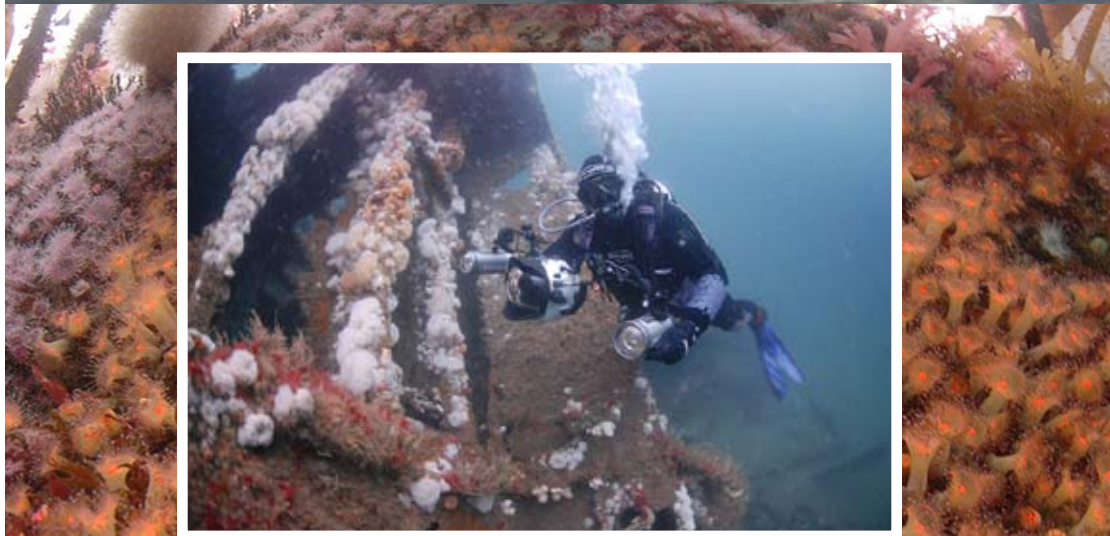
5" respectively) which makes carrying a back up much less expensive. Believe me the last thing you want in the field is to have to go back to viewing the camera's

LCD screen after you've got used to an external monitor! Aquatica have chosen to house an OLED rather than LCD monitor which gives improved brightness and contrast.

Nauticam have even produced a special version of their Nikon D7000 housing which is ergonomically much better for video use. 5 main controls have been moved much closer to the right handle which will make adjustments during shooting much easier.

I am sure there will be reviews in the coming months of these exciting new capabilities but more importantly there should be some much steadier underwater footage on YouTube!

Peter Rowlands
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Olympus XZ-1



Sea & Sea YS-01 review

by Lawrence Alex Wu

This mini gem of a strobe certainly packs a punch with lighting and features. And at almost half the price* and size of most reputable strobes, the YS-01 is a worthy picture perfect addition for any underwater photographer looking for strobes...for both macro and to my surprise, very wide angle underwater photography too.

Wide-angle photos require both power and lighting angle coverage so I was skeptical when this palm sized surprise popped into my hands. So armed with a pair of these twinkling twins and my wet wide-angle lens, I decided to really put them to the test. Thanks to AquaMaster Thailand, my local SEA&SEA distributor, and over the span of several trips, I tried them out in the shallows, at depth, in darkness and in good to bad visibility. Without a doubt, these tiny powerhouses proved impressive on size, weight, intensity, angle of coverage, battery consumption, recycle time and price...wow, what a mouthful! ...and did I mention I took them to 75 meters?...well, in my dreams, but they are rated for it!

For my wide-angle setup I insist on a 'wet' wide lens with my

compact housing. This not only widens my camera's angle of view but more importantly, it also reduces the subject-to-lens and strobe-to-lens distance giving clearer photos since there are less particles in front of the subject...Perfect for less than great visibility. My wide lens setup in particular gives a viewing angle of almost 135 degrees which means I can frame my modeling diver 1 meter away from top to fin...so let's light her up too!

With this compact and versatile setup, I ventured first to the eastern Chumphorn Pinnacles of Thailand, which graced my diving with 30+ meters of visibility! The topology here included steep bulging walls of coral, masses of schooling fish, giant harp corals larger than 'my' life (probably older too) and macro-wide-angle shots which require both close-up subjects and far away backgrounds to be lit up. All photographically challenging, but in the end, with the 110°x110° coverage (with diffuser) and GN (guide number) 20 for intensity – similar to the 110-alpha's 105°x105° + GN22 - all these shots proved easy photo picks for the YS-01...and pictures for my collection!



There's plenty of power from these strobes to fill flash close up subjects against an intense sunspot

*ISO 80 1/125 sec at f6.3 Canon PowerShot.G12. Dual Sea&Sea YS-01 strobes
INON UWL100+dome*

Next up was the other extreme with 5-10 meters of visibility in Coron's famous World War II shipwreck graveyard. Here silt dominates and daily tidal currents that wind through dozens of islands dares the underwater shooter to strobe their photographic memoirs. With my almost meter long strobe arms, I position my twin YS-01's as far behind my lens and as far apart above my hood as possible to avoid the ever-dreaded underwater snow storm syndrome call backscatter! With such low visibility, admittedly I had equally low expectations, but as the brief review of shots passed through my LCD screen, my amazement flared with hope as I saw vibrant images lit up one after another. And with my strobes' consistent reach of several meters in front of me, I was shooting up wartime guns and super structures like an M16 rifle on autopilot!

So after the success of strobing my wide shots I really had no doubts on the macro scale since it is less demanding on light intensity and sure enough, my twin YS-01s proved me right. With even lighting from the included diffusers and better yet a recycle time fast enough to keep up with my camera's 1 second per frame continuous shooting, these strobes delivered half power flashes triggered by its on-board flash, that outlasted my camera's limit of 20 continuous shots (using 4x Enelop's 2000mAH AA batteries)

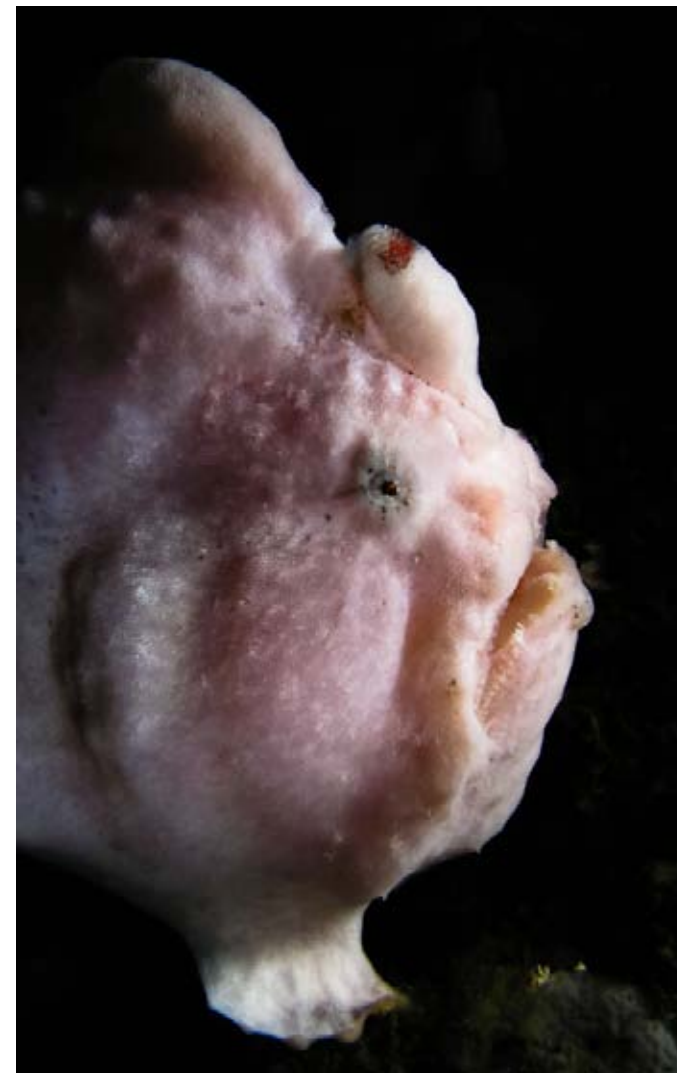
Then even at 1 notch down from full power flash dumps, they managed to pump out accurate lighting every 2 seconds on continuous shooting - which is way too much light for most macro shots anyway. Full power though, proved too much but then if they could keep up, these babies would probably be double the size/price and re-named from YS-01 to 110-juniors! And with almost comparable performance as the 110alpha strobes,



*Even and balanced lighting from dual YS-01 strobes
ISO 64 1/125 sec at f5.7 SeaNSea.DX-2G, Dual
Sea&Sea YS-01 strobes, INON UWL100+dome*

I really didn't miss the extra weight and bulk underwater AND while traveling.

Best of all, with the reputation of SEA&SEA strobes, even wide angle lighting and avoiding strong strobe shadows on subjects are now more affordable to everyone since two of these tiny strobes cost about the same as one large strobe... practically a revolution for the underwater hobbyist



*Using repetitive shots & slight movements of strobe
angles the right balance of shades & shadows can be
achieved.*

*ISO 64 1/1250 sec at f8.0 Olympus.C5050Z, Dual
Sea&Sea YS-01 strobes, INON UWL100+dome*



*Dual YS-01 strobes provide powerful intensity even for wide angle UW photography
ISO 64 1/80 sec at f5.1 SeaNSea.DX-2G, Dual Sea&Sea YS-01 strobes, INON UWL100+dome*

shooter!

Nowadays, a hard to find feature for mini sized strobes is a built-in LED target light but the one on my YS-01's was good enough to substitute my night dive torch. Great!...one less piece of gear to charge, carry and worry over! And not only is it a high-end white LED - as opposed to the cheapo LEDs that costs

pennies to produce - but it gives out a good even 1 Watt beam which I found I could use even for casual night dive video recording and photos! Bonus! Oh...and of course they work great as target lights too...I even managed a full 1 hour plus dive while strobing my photos!

Now, if you're not the night type scuba adventurer, the YS-02 is

technically identical to the YS-01 minus the LED light, DS-TTL and 5 grams! This shaves the price down about US\$100, but I find the LED a good replacement for my dive torch, which I use night and day to see what the real color of my subject is before its paparazzi appearance.

As SEA&SEA's entrance to mini strobe models, they've done a superb job with a few possible minor improvements. For gloved divers, the intensity dial might prove tricky, especially for feeling the increment clicks/changes. Next to it, I sometimes moved the power switch position accidentally de-synchronizing it from my camera's flash and likewise with strobe ignition/firing, I also got some missed firings on occasions. However, the strobe's SLEEP function, which automatically switches it off after 30 minutes, is a real battery saver for the light insensitive types.

Another great idea is the dual sync cord optical ports; one for triggering and one to trigger a slave strobe. It certainly made shooting any combination of strobes - be it the same brand or otherwise - a breeze to setup. Kudos to SEA&SEA for saving me hours of fiddling with tape, zap-straps and bungee cords to get strobes to fire together...especially if I decide a shot needs 3 or 4 strobes - attention cave photographers! Now if only they came with an external optical port

magnifier (as opposed to an indented port) so we could do away with the slave sync wire altogether!

For a strobe to be almost half the size, weight and price as most market strobes and still pump out comparable lighting with very decent recycle times and build, these strobes I'm sure are destined for stardom. And in these go-go gadget days, where we are so used to 'paying more for less', we can finally once (or twice if you buy two strobes!) say with the YS-01s you'll be 'paying less for more'!

Alex Wu

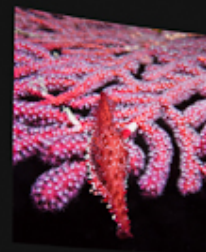
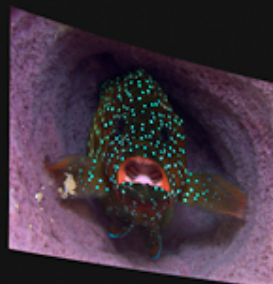
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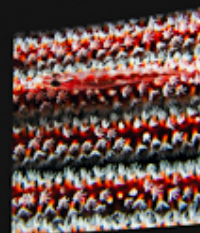
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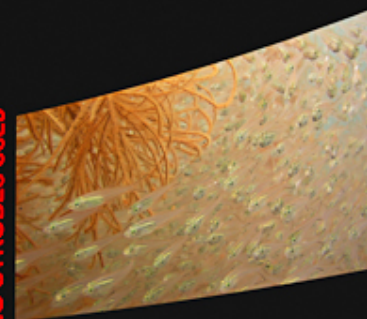
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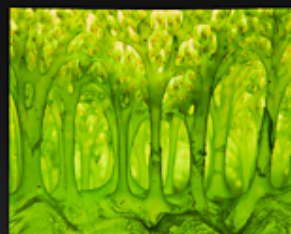
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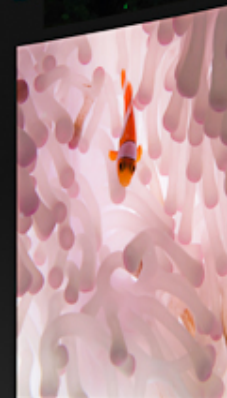
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INON X-2 Housing for the Canon EOS 60D

by Phil Rudin

For close to thirty years now I have owned Inon strobes. First a pair of Inon Z-220's which I used with my Nikonos RS cameras and now Inon Z-240's. All of the strobes are more than a bit beaten up now but still work as well as the day they were new and none has ever needed servicing. When I met Takuya Torii the Division Director for Inon's Global Operation Division at DEMA in November of 2011 and he offered me the opportunity to field test the Inon X-2 housing I was anxious to see if the X-2 housing was as good as my time tested strobes.

Inon Inc., is a Japanese company well known in the underwater photography world. Inon first announced the X-2 housing for the Canon EOS 10D and 20D cameras in February 2006. Since then Inon has followed up with Inon X-2 housings for the EOS 30D, 40D and 50D cameras. The release of the latest time-proven Inon X-2 for the EOS 60D was announced in October 2011.

THE CANON EOS 60D



The Canon EOS 60D camera has an 18.0 Megapixel CMOS sensor with the high performance DIGIC 4 image processor, a nine point cross-type auto focus system and 1080p HD video recording with manual controls. The camera will appeal to a wide range of underwater photographers from the enthusiast to the semi-pro level. The EOS 60D sits between the Rebel ESO 600D (kiss X-5) line and the EOS 7D which is currently Canon's top APS-C sensor offering. A wide range of reviews can be found on the camera so I won't go into a lot of detail except to say that EOS 60D is well



suited to underwater photography. Canon also has a wide range of lenses including several macro and ultra wide primes and zoom lenses which are clear winners for underwater photography. A verity of third-party lenses like the Tokina 10-17mm zoom are also supported for the Canon APS-C sensor cameras. My review will address shooting stills and I will leave the cameras video ability to others.

INON X-2 HOUSING for EOS 60D

The Inon X-2 for EOS 60D is a lightweight and durable corrosion resistant aluminum alloy body which separates into two half's. The front

half has the shutter release, shutter lock switch, main control dial, two M6 base mounting points, two double optical D connectors, flash up lever, zoom/focus knob, two lanyard mounting points and the two lock catches. The rear half of the housing has the power switch, mode dial, leak sensor buzzer/LED, a flash lowering lever, AF mode selection button, drive mode button, ISO speed button, metering mode button, top LCD panel window, AF start button (to AF off the start button and not the shutter release), AE lock/index button, Quick control dial, live view/movie shooting button, playback button, setting button, information button,

menu button, erase button, the rear LCD monitor window and the two stainless steel locking buckles which hold the housing half's together when closed. The housing is sealed by a single thick yellow main O-ring in the front half of the housing. The listed buttons, dials and levers are installed into brass bearings which prevent the aluminum housing body from being damaged by frequent movement of the controls. The flood-free optical D connectors can support up to four fiber optic cables which fully support the Inon line of S-TTL Auto Strobes. The simple and reliable "S-TTL" strobes include the Inon D, S and Z series strobes, as well as models from other manufactures. The front half of the housing also has two ports for bulkheads connectors like the Nikonos V and S6. These ports can also be used for adding things like a remote trigger and more.

The rear LCD window supports four different interchangeable viewfinders including the waterproof budget window, the pick-up finder II which extends the eye point without vignetting through a face mask, the straight life size (x1.0) viewfinder and the 45 degree life size (x1.0) viewfinder which rotates 360 degrees to allow shooting in vertical or horizontal composition. My X-2 housing was equipped with the straight life-size (x1.0) viewfinder



for field testing. I have used an Inon 45 degree finder for years with my personal housing so it was interesting to see the differences between the two. Both viewfinders provide an greatly enlarged view of your subject in the viewfinder and are well worth the added investment. I favor the 45 degree finder for macro and the straight finder for moving subjects like sharks and schooling fish. All of the Inon viewfinders can be removed and re-installed in the field with a small dedicated tool in less than five minutes. I always recommend a dunk test without the camera in the housing when changing the viewfinder in any

housing system.

The X-2 housing supports a wide range of lenses from the Sigma 10mm fisheye and Canon EF 8-15mm zoom to the Canon 180mm macro USM. Ports thread onto the the port mount and include the 170mm coated optical glass dome for the Canon EF 8-15mm, Sigma 10mm and Canon 15mm fisheyes, EF 20mm, Tokina 10-17mm and more. A 162mm dome port can also be used with the above listed lenses. Inon also has a very unique line of MRS macro ports for a variety of Canon macro lenses that can be manually focused utilizing magnetic attraction. Magnetic gears are made



Lionfish 60mm macro, ISO100, 1/250th, F/13

for the EF-S 60mm, EF 100mm's and EF 180mm macro lenses which provide smooth rotation of the lens barrel by turning the magnetic ring on the macro port much like the lens is controlled on land. A verity of extension rings can also be added between the housing body and macro port to support tele converters from X1.4 to X3. Unlike lens gears that are driven from a control in the housing body the same magnetic gear can be used with all of the tele converters

because the lens and port always remain in line when the extensions are added. The MRS 100 macro port can also be used with extension ring type M to lengthen the port for use with the EF 180 macro. Add extension ring 58 or 81 and 180 macro can be used with the EF 1.4X or 2X tele converters. Focus and zoom gears for non-macro lenses and the EF 50mm macro work off the housing zoom/focus control.



INON UFL-MR130 EFS60 SEMI-FISHEYE LENS

The Inon MRS60 port II is designed for use with the Canon EF-S 60mm F/2.8 USM macro lens and is equipped with the magnetic ring and gear. The unique front glass element is threaded and double O-ring sealed. When removed it can be replaced with the UFL-MR1330 EFS60 micro semi-fisheye relay lens. This rather odd looking double coated optical glass lens made from fourteen elements in eleven groups is designed to capture



Arrow crab UFL-MR130 EFS60 lens, ISO500, 1/125th, F/32

a distinctive ultra wide (130 degree) underwater images with a 0 cm focusing distance. The 312mm (12.28 inch) lens allows you to get very close to shy subjects without scaring them off. The 0 cm focusing distance allows tiny subjects to be captured with a wide background. This lens does not work in S-TTL and due to the extremely shallow depth of field auto focus is not practical making the MRS magnetic focus port a great tool. The 60mm macro lens needs to be set in the F/13 to F/32 range to obtain a sharp image with this lens. The 45

degree or straight viewfinder would be recommended for best results. Inon makes a port arm which can be installed onto the UFL-MR130 lens to mount strobes or a focusing light.

MY THOUGHTS ON FIELD TESTING THE INON X-2

My first dives with the X-2 housing were during a trip to Belize one week after DEMA. I was diving in Placencia with Splash Dive Center in the area of the Silk Keys. During my field testing I only had access to the MRS60 port II for the Canon

EF-S 60mm macro lens so my field review will focus on that lens and port system. The housing was setup with an Inon dual arm base and two Inon Z-240 strobes using fiber optic cables. The housing is very easy to assemble with the straight viewfinder and macro port being mounted in less than three minutes. The MRS60 gear slides onto the front of the lens without need for tools. If you have ever cursed at your DSLR housing while trying to align a zoom or focus gear with the pinion gear in the housing body you will appreciate the ease of installation with the magnetic gear. As you begin to slide the camera into the housing the magnetic attraction between the gear and the port pulls the camera into exact alignment over the tripod mounting screw. This screw is spring loaded and aligns in the tripod hole and threads with ease. To reduce the size of the housing the pop-up flash does fully deploy and should be raised after the camera is in the housing. This is done by turning the camera on and using the flash level on the front of the housing. The two locking buckles then secure the rear of the housing into place. When the housing back is removed access to the SD card is easy, however the camera needs to be removed from the housing to change its battery. I shot all of my field tests in the manual mode used by most underwater photographers

using the F/stop and shutter speed control dials most often during my dives. The shutter speed dial is next to the shutter and can be accessed with the right index finder without taking your eye away from the viewfinder. The large F/stop dial sits below the right thumb which allows it to be controlled with the palm of your hand while holding the ergonomically designed grip built into the right side of the housing. Changes in the cameras menu can also be made to assign different functions to these commend dials. In the water I found holding the housing and moving the commend dials with just my right hand to be very easy. The auto focus start level is also under the right thumb

and was set on the camera to control AF. With the lens switch set to AF this control can be used to AF the lens. If you want to use the manual focus just turn the port ring and the MRS system moves focus manually. The shutter will fire any time it is pressed in this configuration without re-focusing the lens. I really like this setup if you tend to switch from manual to AF several times during a dive. While the MRS magnetic focusing system may not be a exact as a fine tooth gear and pinion system it works very well for ensuring that the lens has reached 1:1 and worked quite well in my field tests with the UFL-MR130 semi-fisheye lens. In the water the 60 mm macro quickly locked focus in AF mode without the need for a focusing light. I had the housing setup with two Inon 200mm (7.9in.) float arms and two



Hard coral 60mm macro, ISO100, 1/250th, F/14



Green moray eel 60mm macro, ISO100, 1/250th, F/10

ULCS float arms which balanced the housing quite well with the macro port. Using the long semi-fisheye lens I put three 56 gram (2 oz.) close cell foam blocks near the end of the lens to add lift and trim up the system. This worked well and kept the lens from tipping down during the dive. I tested the semi-fisheye at the well known Blue Heron Boulevard Bridge in Palm Beach County Florida. The MR-130 installs by removing the threaded MRS60 port lens and replacing it with the long fisheye. The lens sits directly in front of the 60 macro lens when attached to the port so that there is an air interface between the two lenses. In the water the MR-130 is a challenging lens to master. I takes patience, determination and time in the water to



Gorgonian with eggs 60mm macro, ISO100, 1/250th, F/14

begin to master this unique lens. The depth of field for this lens is very shallow so trying to get a sharp animal eye with a 130 degree angle of view is a real challenge. The reward for your persistence with this lens are some very remarkable image possibilities.

The removable MRS60 port glass has a 67mm threat for adding closeup lenses to the front of

the port. The port glass should be tightened to the port with a small spanner tool designed by Inon for the job. I hand tightened the port glass and then installed a closeup lens and when I went to remove the lens the entire port glass started to come with it. Had I been in the water this could have caused a flood.

The Inon X-2 is a housing I would have no problem recommending as a solid high quality tool for the Canon 60D camera. In the US the housing runs around \$3295 with the pickup finder, \$3579.00

with the straight finder and \$3679.00 with the 45 degree finder. The MRS 60 port II is \$419.00 and the gear is \$169.00. The UFL-MR130 micro semi-fisheye relay lens is \$1099.00. US prices as of December 2011.

I would like to thank Takuya Torii for use of the Inon equipment, ReefPhoto video in Ft Laud. Fla. for technical support and Splash Dive Center in Placencia Belize for their wonderful hospitality during my field testing.

Phil Rudin



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GOPROIN'

By Christopher Hamilton

As most of you know, the latest generation of digital SLR's are equipped with very high quality HD video capabilities. For those of us that have already invested more than our share in an older yet perfectly adequate camera system, there is now an affordable solution to our video yearnings.

The GoPro Hero HD camera was introduced a few years ago and has taken the market by storm. It is tiny, powerful and best of all it is cheap. It even comes in a waterproof housing with a dome port, which is rated well beyond recreational scuba depths. However, there are a few problems that shooting underwater presents that GoPro did not consider.

The first drawback is that its fixed focus does not match the size and shape of its dome port. The lens is focused well beyond the virtual image created by the interaction of the dome port with water. The reason the GoPro is blurry underwater is due to the dome on the housing having a magnifying effect, which shifts the nodal point of the lens, creating a virtual infinity that is much closer. With a normal SLR lens we often use



Backscatter's flat port is glass with a 55mm filter thread in the mount.
www.backscatter.com

a diopter to bring the close focus of a lens closer and make it work with our dome ports. However the dome ports we use are typically 8" or larger. Roughly speaking, when you use a dome port underwater the new infinity is twice the diameter of the dome (i.e. if you focus a lens at about 16" with an 8" dome underwater, you will be in focus at infinity). Of course you can't see that far underwater....

The most common solution to this problem is to use a flat port instead of the dome. This is an easy fix with very promising results. There are a variety of options available. All these options are good. And with the exception of the UK housing and the Sartek GoPro Deep Housing,



Swiss company Subspace use a dome port and a dioptre lens
www.subspace.ch

which cost up to double the GoPro itself, they are all very fairly priced. However flat ports won't allow full 170° wide angle (R3) with good quality, and as we all know flat ports cause chromatic aberration in wide angle lenses.

Flat ports are a good start, but I wanted to shoot super wide, and get close. Shoot like an underwater photographer! I found one option that looks very promising by Subspace Pictures.

This product integrated a magnifying element of glass that brings the focus closer, and a dome port. Which should make for very high quality optics. I haven't seen it in the flesh yet, nor have I seen the



UK Germany make a complete housing waterproof to 100 metres.
www.uk-germany.com



My GoPro mounted on my SLR housing



Photo taken using my refocused gopro, with a drop of water between the dome and a red filter. Note that the area of the image that was shot through the water is in focus.

footage it produces, but the inventor is a Subeye Reflex user from way back and I have a good feeling he knows a thing or two about sharp optics. If anyone has one please let me know!

I was intrigued from the start by the dome port the GoPro comes with. It seemed a step back words to change it for a flat port. I kept thinking it was only a matter of pulling focus. It took some time to work up the nerve, but finally I took the little thing apart,

twisted the lens out a bit, and with a little trial and error, was able to get the right focus distance for the original dome, and I am now able to shoot in R3 underwater.

Like the principle of extension tubes, as you move the lens further away from the sensor you make the focus closer. That is all it took, a quarter turn and without spending any extra money, you too can have a GoPro that is in focus underwater.



A bit of PVC pipe and some bike grips and you have a sturdy base to hold on to, mount accessories on, and protect the camera with.

Of course it is out of focus above water, but who wants to shoot on land anyway?

The next hurdle is getting a steady shot. That is mostly up to you, but I have found a few ways to make this more achievable. Firstly you need a stable platform to hold the thing with. I have found the best way is to lock off the shot with a tripod; I like the waterproof, light



and easy gorillaPod. For hand-held shots I have a mount on my housing, and a device I made for a few bucks out of PVC pipe. Simple and cheap solutions that have been very successful so far.

The last thing I would like to mention is the lens. If you thought the GoPro was only for wide angle shooting, think again; you can get anything from circular fisheye to extreme telephoto from Ragecams, either pre installed as a package with a camera or as a do-it-yourself quiver of "primes". Twist to focus (fixed once you are underwater) and capture macro with your GoPro. This has proved to be a challenge, but that is part of the fun.

Christopher Hamilton
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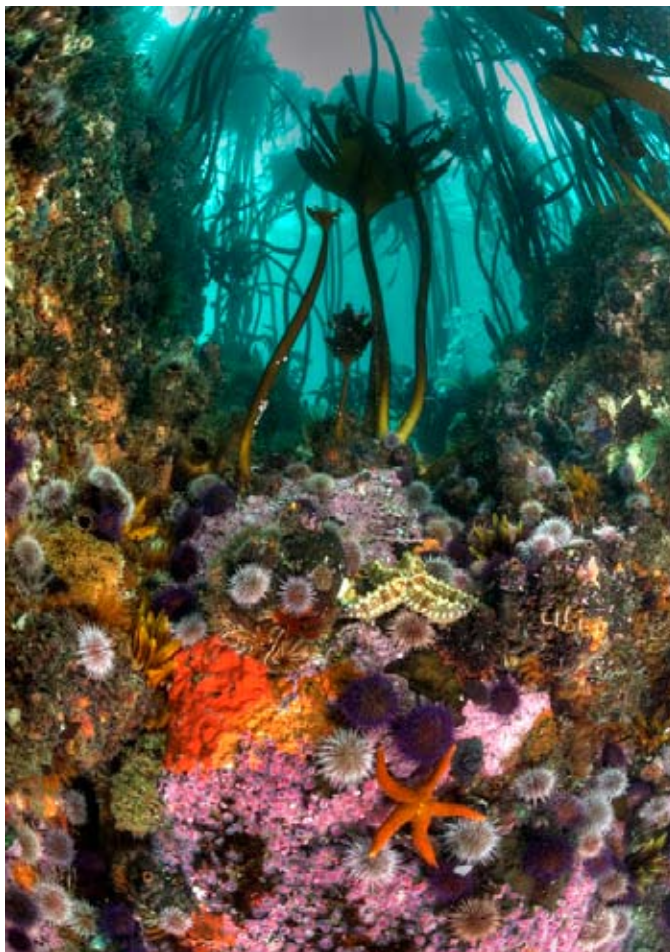
Diving Cape Town

with images by Geoff Spiby
and text by Georgina Jones

To the cursing Portuguese sailors battling to contain the wind in their fragile sails, it was the Cape of Storms. Their king, thinking of the wealth a sea route to the East would bring, named it the Cape of Good Hope. Subsequent explorers fell in love with its vertiginous mountains and shaded valleys and called it the Fairest Cape. Botanists studying the local vegetation, astonished by the variety and uniqueness of the plants, proclaimed it the smallest of the six known floral kingdoms, the Cape Floristic Region. Underwater, though no-one has yet given it a name, the wonderland unfolds even further.

Simply put, Cape Town is one of the most fascinating places to dive on earth. It combines really impressive megafauna with an astonishing array of invertebrate life, as well as soaring granite reef topography, kelp forests and ghostly wrecks, much of which can be reached by shore entries. On top of that, despite it being the most studied water around the South African coast, undescribed species are discovered on a regular basis.

The general format of Cape Town Peninsula diving is False Bay side in the winter when the north west winds blow, and what is known as the Atlantic side in summer, when south east winds cause the visibility to open up to over 20m, all the better to take wide angle images with. The two sides of the peninsula are very different indeed. Imagine the False Bay side as an Old Master painting, all olives, rich burnt oranges, terracottas and the



Old Master colours on a False Bay reef Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing 10.5 mm Nikon lens F8 1/60th sec ISO 200

occasional bright purple. The Atlantic side, by contrast, is more like an Andy Warhol: acid pinks, neon yellows, electric blues and vivid greens. Then there are pelagic trips, where it's all about blue. Operators take divers out south of Cape Point until they reach the warm waters of the Agulhas Current



A basket star on an Atlantic side reef Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing Tokina 10-17 @10mm F9 1/60th sec ISO200

and there they look for blue sharks and makos.

Great white shark cage diving is a guaranteed thrill, but increasingly, photographers are heading for a small surface-breaking pyramid-shaped rock south of Simonstown. It's known with startling originality as Pyramid. Here, either after a small

rocky clamber and a short surface snorkel or an even shorter boat ride, divers can revel in the presence of sevengill sharks in a mere 10m of water. These sharks are the only inshore members of the most ancient shark family, the Hexanchidae, and they inhabit the kelp forest around Pyramid all year. They're near-apex predators which grow to around 3m in total length and have only great whites or orcas to fear. They are opportunistic ambush hunters which may, acting on as-yet unknown signals, hunt as a pack, particularly when they go for seals. They are curious animals and will come close in to inspect divers in their regular circuits through the kelp forest, providing photographers with many opportunities for close-up images.

A bit further south of Pyramid is another rock, this one larger, flatter and rather smellier. With the same originality that marked Pyramid's naming, this rock is known as Seal Point and this is where a big colony of Cape fur seals haul out to mate and bring up their pups. Seals are a regular feature of Cape Town diving, and are known to startle many divers by diving down in front of them and barking. But diving with these underwater dancers is a real treat. Watching seals as they twirl, swoop and pose underwater, trailing silvery bubbles, all liquid-eyed and fluid of form, their land-based ungainliness seems like it must be an act.

Winter is the season when the southern right whales arrive around the peninsula to bear and raise their gigantic babies (a southern right is a decidedly nontrivial 700kilos at birth). The southern rights occasionally come right into the shallows and shore divers tell tales of giant shadows turning out to be whales playing around them. Humpback whales also pass through on their northward migrations, enlivening dives with their haunting songs.



The Andy Warhol colours of the Atlantic side Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing 10.5 mm Nikon lens F5.6 ISO160 1/60sec

Orcas visit, schools of yellowtail rush overhead, and common dolphins hunt in huge schools more than five hundred strong. Many divers, however, barely notice the megafauna, being seriously preoccupied with the benthic reef life. Cape Town's average visibility is 8m, which is to



Sevengill cowsharks come close in to inspect divers Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing 10.5 mm Nikon lens f5.6 iso 320 1/60sec



A crowned nudibranch on the wreck of the Pietermaritzburg Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing ISO250 F8 1/60sec Tokina 10-17mm @10mm

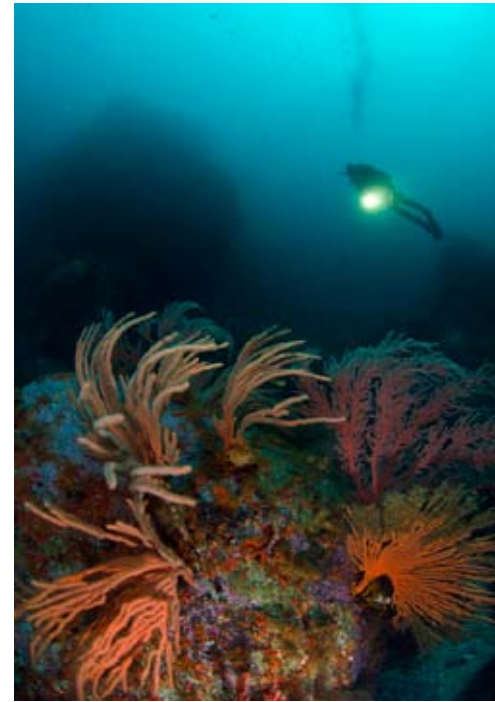


Heading into the kelp forest Nikon D-7000 camera in Nauticam housing with 2 Inon Z-240 strobes Tokina 10-17mm @10mm ISO 250 F8 1/60sec

say, the waters around the peninsula are a thin soup which provides nourishment for a host of filter feeders and planktivores. Carnivorous subsea forests of several species of seafan grow over a metre in total height, extending their delicate polyps into the water to extract their prey. Topshell snails, blue-spotted klipfish and long-legged spidercrabs take advantage of the fans' added vantage point and pursue their own hunts. The fractal nets of basket stars unfurl to catch passing small crustaceans.

Octopus lurk in holes, surrounded by debris gardens of mussel shells.

The reefs are made up of densely covered granite boulders, jumbled together to form swimthroughs, overhangs and the occasional cave. Rearing peaks reach up towards the surface and sudden faults provide a glimpse into the life of shy dark-loving species like the mouth-brooding seacatfish or John Browns, brown fish with cerulean blue eyes and protruding yellow teeth enough to give any fish dentist nightmares.



A seafan forest on Atlantis Reef. Nikon D-7000 camera in Nauticam housing with 2 Inon Z-240 strobes Tokina 10-17mm @10mm ISO 320 F8 1/60sec

For photographers it's hard to know where to start. Macro subjects are everywhere you look and often even finding a fingertip's space to balance requires a concentrated search. Over a hundred species of nudibranch are known from False Bay and more are being described with extraordinary regularity. Some, like the locally common gasflame, are huge by nudibranch standards, growing up to 10cm in total length,



A gasflame nudibranch in an unusual pose Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing Nikon 60mm F36 ISO 100

others are tiny but vivid splashes of colour, while still others are extremely well camouflaged and almost indistinguishable from their prey.

Camouflage is something of a motif: smoothskin scorpionfish are extremely common but seldom seen, so well do they blend in with their environments. Their bigger cousins lurk on reefs almost undetected apart from the sheen of their eyes. The toothed decorator crab which, as its

name implies, is usually covered with a fantastic array of camouflaging growths and is almost always very hard to spot. When recently moulted though, it is a dangerously conspicuous magenta, a problem it solves by hiding in the fields of striped anemones commonly found on False Bay reefs. These anemones have the unusual ability of firing sticky defensive threads through their body walls and the crabs co-opt them for their own defence.

Cape Town is blessed with no less than four different species of inshore catsharks: puffadder and dark shysharks, and pyjama and leopard catsharks. All four have the habit of curling up into a ball when threatened, presumably to make them too big for the predator to swallow. Of course, given that the biggest of them, the pyjama catshark is a not-specially huge 1.2m in total length, this strategy only works for a relatively small predator. All four species lay eggs in cases known as mermaids' purses, and divers with torches can sometimes see the living jewel of the embryonic shark as it dreams and grows inside.

As the earth swings round and presents its southern hemisphere to the sun, so the prevailing wind changes to the south east and this is where Atlantic side diving comes into its own. Sun strikes down through kelp forests and lights up a myriad vividly



*Southern right whales come to Cape Town in the winter to calve and mate.
Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing ISO200 F8 1/90sec Tokina 10-17mm @10mm (no strobe)*

coloured invertebrates. Sponges are resplendent in acid yellow, scarlet, purple and bright green. Anemones are electric blue or purple-splotched orange. Hydroids resembling hard corals are pink and prolific. Over and around them all are the small flames of nudibranchs in a bewildering array of colours and shapes, some only ever seen on this coast. The crabs are here too: the amazingly camouflaged sumo crab blends almost invisibly with the

reef. Its cousin, the shaggy sponge crab, which has considerably longer hairlike growth on its carapace, would be a lot harder to spot were it not for its strange predilection for decorating itself with a variety of vivid sponges (the neon green one is a particular favourite) or soft corals. Klipfish perch on the invertebrates, posing like eager starlets, and silver hottentots drift like dream fish through the kelp.

The undersea topography of



A Cape fur seal, marine ballerina Nikon D-200 camera with Sea & Sea housing and Nikon SB-800 strobe in Subal housing Nikon 10.5mm F5.6 ISO 160 1/250sec

the Atlantic side is mostly massive granite outcrops which rear up from the seabed in walls and soaring cliffs, tumble together to make caves and swimthroughs and provide sheltered environments for the more delicate animals: brittle fan hydroids and lacy false corals cluster in crevices. It's a fantasia of neon and acid colours, and after a good south east blow,



A school of hottentot Nikon D-7000 camera in Nauticam housing with 2 Inon Z-240 strobes Tokina 10-17mm @10mm ISO 320 F8 1/60sec

the visibility can be well over 20m. Divers wander in crystalline blue of a clarity matched only by its low temperature: the deep upwelled water can be under 10°C.

It's hard to know what most to emphasize about Cape diving. Even the storms which so imperilled the early explorers have played their part. There are more than 500 wrecks within an hour's drive of Cape Town and many more as yet unaccounted

for. For wreck enthusiasts, there are wrecks dating from the 1600s to last year to explore. Some vessels have been scuttled to provide artificial reefs, or have succumbed to Navy target practice. Others ran afoul of the storms for which the Cape is justifiably legendary and provide divers with both exploration and epic tales of misadventure, bravery and, occasionally, sheer farce. These tales must sometimes be enjoyed on land

rather than while en route to or from a wreck dive: it is the Cape of Storms after all.

But it's not stormy all the time. And for much of the year divers and underwater photographers revel in the rich submarine wonderland that exists all around the peninsula of the Fairest Cape.

Images

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www.geoffspiby.co.za

Text

Georgina Jones
www.surg.co.za



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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

Ascension Island

By Paul Colley OBE MA FRAeS LRPS

It is possible that few (if any) people reading this article will have been diving in the seas around Ascension Island. The small, remote and rugged volcanic island is 9_ flying hours from the UK and over 500 miles south of the Equator in the South Atlantic Ocean. With only a small local population and limited logistic support, the Island is still used as a staging post for the Falkland Islands, and it can be a difficult place to get to and to operate from. Although the water is generally warm and clear, with less than a 1m tidal range and modest currents, diving conditions can be challenging. Some parts of the coastline are buffeted by huge swells and strong surge, with over 4000 miles of uninterrupted deep seas subject to almost permanent strong winds. Swells during the expedition that this article chronicles were routinely 1 to 2m high and the surge sufficient to move divers a few metres laterally and vertically. Even loading and unloading diving equipment from Guano Jetty, the natural volcanic harbour near to the expedition base at the north-west of the Island, was testing. We had a tough start when two large waves swept much dive gear (and almost some of the team) off the

natural rock jetty and into the sea, during one of our first attempts to load the dive boats. But for those who can get to the Island and adapt to these conditions, it allows the rare privilege of diving where the marine life is both prolific and unspoiled.

The team of twelve divers comprised a Royal Air Force adventurous training expedition. We used two tiller-steered RIBs to access the dive sites and Nitrox for nearly all of the dives to help manage the risks of decompression illness, because the Island has no recompression facilities. We also restricted diving to a maximum depth of 30 metres and stayed well clear of any mandatory decompression stops, even though most divers were qualified to operate well beyond those limits. The RIBs were permanently moored at sea to avoid them being damaged by the rugged volcanic rocks that form the natural harbours; there are no moorings alongside any harbours on the Island, because of the heavy Atlantic swells.

The diving was as spectacular and varied as it was challenging. In November, the water temperature was 24-25 Celsius, but 5mm wetsuits guarded against chilling topside winds



(Above) The team of twelve divers comprised a Royal Air Force adventurous training expedition.

(Right) Safety stop at China wreck. Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing, 1/250sec, f13, ISO 800, 10-17mm @ 10mm

and a strong equatorial Sun. Wetsuits also guarded against abrasion from the pumice-like rocks, which were hard to avoid in the shallow surge and whilst loading and unloading the boats. Despite the heavy swells and fierce surge, which sometimes reduced inshore visibility, the water further





*Jacks at White Rock
Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240
strobes and a Subal ND30 housing,
1/100sec, f8, ISO 200, 10-17mm @
10mm*



*Grouper and Blue Tang on the China
wreck anchor. Nikon D300, with twin
Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30
housing, 1/250sec, f7.1, ISO 200, 10-
17mm @ 10mm*



*Black Durgon detail.
Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240
strobes and a Subal ND30 housing,
1/125sec, f7.1, ISO 200, 60mm with +3
dioptr*



*Diver at Red Rock swim-through.
Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240
strobes and a Subal ND30 housing,
1/125sec, f7.1, ISO 200, 10-17mm @
10mm*

out was often crystal-clear. The underwater topography of the volcanic reefs produced a huge variety of dive sites from sheer walls and drop-offs to caves, swim-throughs and blow-holes, which were home to Green and Hawksbill turtles, Jacks, Ocean and Queen Trigger fish, Squirrelfish, and different species of Moray eels. Other species (including sharks) can abound, but our pelagic sightings on this

expedition were limited to a solitary Manta and 2 species of turtle.

For me, the signature fish of the Island became the Black Durgon; a small Triggerfish that schooled in hundreds and occasionally thousands around the divers. At distance, the Durgon looks jet black with white lines neatly edging the base of its dorsal and anal fins. But they often sleep or seek sanctuary in small rock

crevices, where you can photograph them close up and it is worth it, because at close range the black changes to brown and then a riot of electric blue, bright yellow and deep orange. As with many fish that are so abundant, but so beautiful, they become a photographer's favoured target.

So too did the many species of Moray Eels. My favourite was the

Fangtooth, with its distinctive fleshy horns atop a toothy maw. Some were covered in tiny parasites, which we occasionally saw on the eyes of the Morays, despite the clear presence of cleaner shrimps on all of the dive sites. Ascension is the only place that I have seen the Broadband Moray, which must be one of the ugliest creatures around the seas off the Island. Fondly referred to by



Golden Moray
*Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240
 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing,
 1/125sec, f13, ISO 200, 60mm with +3
 dioptre*

the team as Nora Batty, due to large folds of skin that looked like ill-fitting stockings, popular rumour had it that these large eels had no teeth. A first glance appeared to confirm it, but some macro shots soon exploded the myth; the images revealed large arrays of tiny, needle-like teeth.

The wrecks around the Island became a favourite haunt for us. Although the shallower ones were awash with macro critters, the surge was so strong that it became a very hit-and-miss affair trying to get images. I tried for 2 weeks to get a decent image of a very common fish, the Red-Lipped Blenny. Like the Durgons, they looked black from a distance. But close up they were comical-looking characters with a reddish-brown skin, bright red eyes



Divers over China wreck
*Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240
 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing,
 1/125 sec, f8, ISO 200, 10-17mm @
 10mm*

and 2 small red horns that topped a playful, cheeky-devil face. Absent my favoured 105mm lens (weight was a big factor for the logistic plot), which could have worked well on these skittish creatures despite the surge, I settled for a 60mm lens and a +3 dioptre. It captured the spirit of this character-full little fish, if not the very fine detail of its wonderful face.

Arguably, the best scenic dives in Ascension are around the exposed south-east corner of the Island at



Black Durgon school
*Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing, 1/100sec,
 f9, ISO 200, 10-17mm @ 10mm*

sites known as Boatswain Bird Island and Boatswain Bird Rock, some 50 minutes to one-hour transit from our expedition centre. But the winter weather was steadily closing in and we had to restrict our journeys to more local sites; the seas were pretty rough for handling such small boats. One of my favourite dive sites was known as China wreck, so-dubbed because the divers who first found this wreck spotted some Chinese porcelain in the cargo. But the

wreck's real origins were unknown to us. Sitting at approximately 18m, at one end there was a beautiful natural amphitheatre, which dropped off to 30m and which held a big school of Squirrelfish, several big Groupers and dozens of Morays. At the other end was a huge anchor encrusted with bright red sponges. The ribs of the ship's hull were sprawled out across the reef and home to countless Morays. I've never seen more of them anywhere in the World. This



Squirrelfish

Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing, 1/125sec, f8, ISO 200, 60mm

dive screamed out for wide angle work and most of my decent images of the anchor and amphitheatre were taken with the ubiquitous Tokina 10-17mm, most often opened out to 10mm. But getting light onto the full spread of the beautiful anchor, without producing excess backscatter or uneven lighting, was a real challenge. I was never really satisfied with my many attempts, but I did catch a Blue Tang crossing a Grouper resident at the base of the anchor and it captured

the feel for part of this beautiful dive.

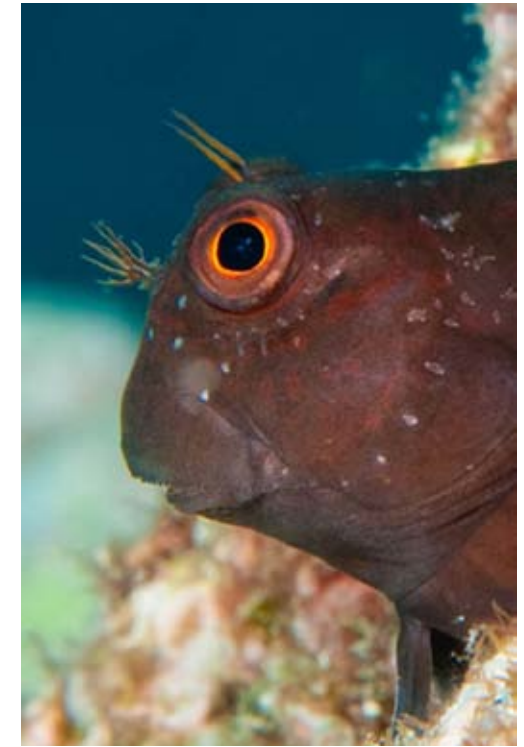
To help with the Ascension Island Government conservation programme, we conducted some marine life surveys and the diversity was staggering. In a small transept set out in a bay near our loading jetty, we counted: 100+ Apollo Damselfish; 1 Ascension Goby; 8 Ascension Wrasse; 1 Mottled Blenny; 20 Yellowtail Damselfish; 100+ Black Durgon; 8 Spotted Moray; 10 Sergeant Major; 75+ Squirrelfish; 10+ Island Hogfish;



Loading at Guano Jetty

Nikon D300, 1/125sec, f6.3, ISO 200, 10-17mm @ 13mm

15 Ocean Surgeonfish; 15+ Blackbar Soldier; 3 St Helena Butterflyfish; 1 Spotted Scorpionfish; 1 Fangtooth Moray; 3 Blue Tang; 15+ Creolefish; 1 Dragonet; 5 Sea Chub; 3 Tilefish; 2 Scarlet Striped Cleaner Shrimp; 1 Scrawled Filefish; 4 Soapfish; 2 Broadbanded Moray; 4 Grouper; 100+ Yellowtail Goatfish; 1 Island Boxfish; 3 Porcupinefish; 1 Hermit Crab; 1 Crayfish; 1 Trumpetfish; 4

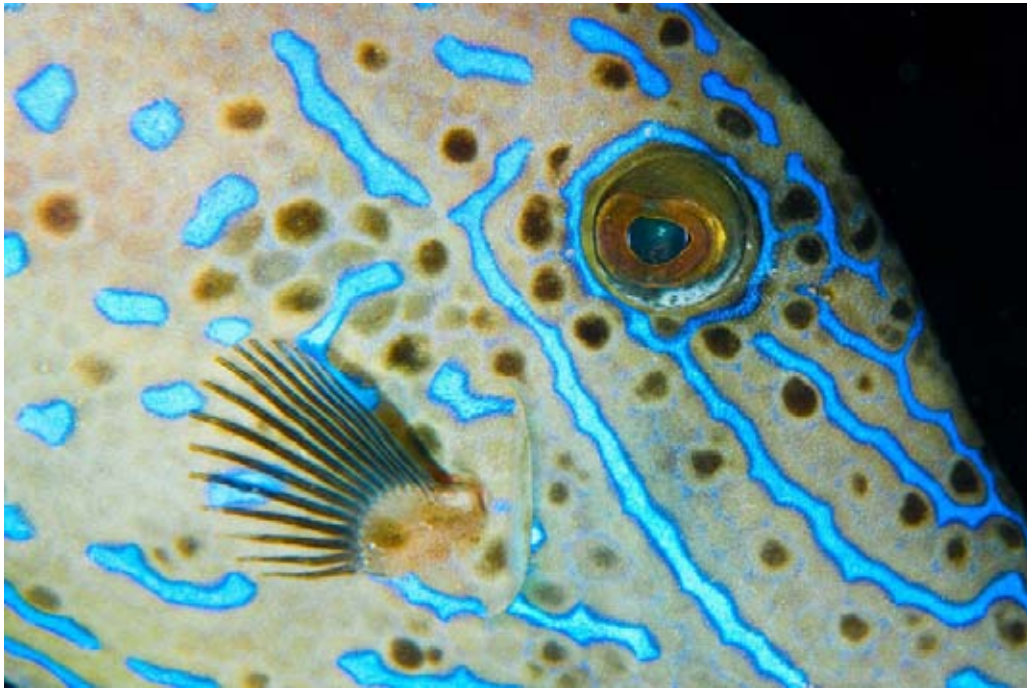


Red Lipped Blenny

Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing, 1/125sec, f13, ISO 200, 60mm with +3 dioptre

Needlefish; 1 Hawksbill Turtle; 4 French Angelfish; 1 Octopus; and 15+ Redlip Blenny! Enough to keep both wide angle and macro enthusiasts occupied for months.

I took only 2 lenses on this 2-week trip; the wonderful Tokina 10-17mm which, even with my Nikon D300 DX format, is an amazingly versatile wide angle companion. I agonised before the trip about which



Scrawled Filefish detail. Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing, 1/125sec, f8, ISO 200, 60mm with +3 dioptre

macro rig to take, but thought that the NIKOR 60mm AFS proved a good choice with the DX format, particularly as I could embellish it with a +3 dioptre. And there is something good about being forced to squeeze the most out of a limited lens choice; I found myself thinking much harder about my photography and would even consider taking only 1 lens next time to really force me to explore the edges of its envelope.

The biggest difficulty by far was trying macro photography in strong surge. It was so tempting because of

the prolific marine life, but I fear that I wasted some time. Although it was worth a go, the strike rate of decent images was low. Perhaps in future I should stick with wide angle in those conditions and keep the macro for deeper dives, where there is a fighting chance of achieving both decent composition and good focus.

But what a trip. As a relatively inexperienced photographer, I was delighted with many of the images. I am hugely indebted to Pete, who took the lead for organising and supervising the expedition, and to



Grouper. Nikon D300, with twin Inon Z240 strobes and a Subal ND30 housing, 1/125sec, f8, ISO 200, 60mm with +3 dioptre

Brabs for his sage advice and help with diving supervision. But every member of the team got stuck in to make this venture a success. It was teamwork at its very best and as a result, I and those colleagues who took their cameras underwater too, were tremendously pleased with the results.

Paul Colley
www.mpcolley.com



Paul Colley is an amateur photographer, a member of the Royal Photographic Society and of the British Society of Underwater Photographers.

As President of the Royal Air Force Sub Aqua Association, he takes every opportunity to pursue his passions for diving and underwater photography.

Although relatively new to both disciplines (he used his first underwater compact camera in 2006 and DSLR in 2008), he has been instructed by top UK photographers Martin Edge and Alex Mustard, to whom he is eternally grateful for passing on some essential skills).

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SS Thistlegorm Past & Present

by Mark Webster

The SS Thistlegorm is one of the best known and most popular wrecks in the Red Sea and is inevitably on the must do list for both live aboard and day boat divers. If you visit her for the first time today you might come to the surface feeling you have seen an impressive wreck, but in fact she is now a shadow of her former glory and is slowly being destroyed by her own popularity.

I was fortunate enough to have dived the Thistlegorm shortly after she was re-discovered at the end of 1992. The skipper of our tiny live aboard (the Sally) had heard a rumour that an Eilat based live aboard named the Sunboat had found a stunning new wreck in the gulf of Suez. His plan to find it was simple – wait for the Sunboat to come past Sharm el Sheikh and shadow her at a safe distance. Once the Sunboat was moored to the wreck he boldly rushed in and dropped us on the line and spent our dive being given a hard time by the skipper who was not pleased at all! We were oblivious to this as we approached the bow to be totally stunned by the wreck below. Diving her today it is difficult to imagine that the wreck was a spectacular artificial

reef absolutely smothered in coral growth and teeming with reef fish as well as pelagics in the open water.

But first a little history in case you are not familiar with this wreck. The Thistlegorm was built in 1939/40 by the North Eastern Marine Engineering Co. Ltd of Sunderland and launched to join the war effort on 9th of April 1940. She was a medium cargo vessel, 415 x 58 x 25ft, with a gross tonnage of 4898t and armed with a 4.7” gun and one heavy calibre machine gun both of which were surplus from the First World War. Her last voyage was from Glasgow to Alexandria in 1941 for which she was loaded with a cargo of small arms ammunition, shells, land mines, armoured vehicles, jeeps,

(Top) SS Thistlegorm launched in 1940

(Right) Thistlegorm 2011 – part of the cargo of motor cycles in #1 hold. In the background can be seen the rolling stock bowser on the port side forward deck which is beginning to sag and fail. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f8 1/30



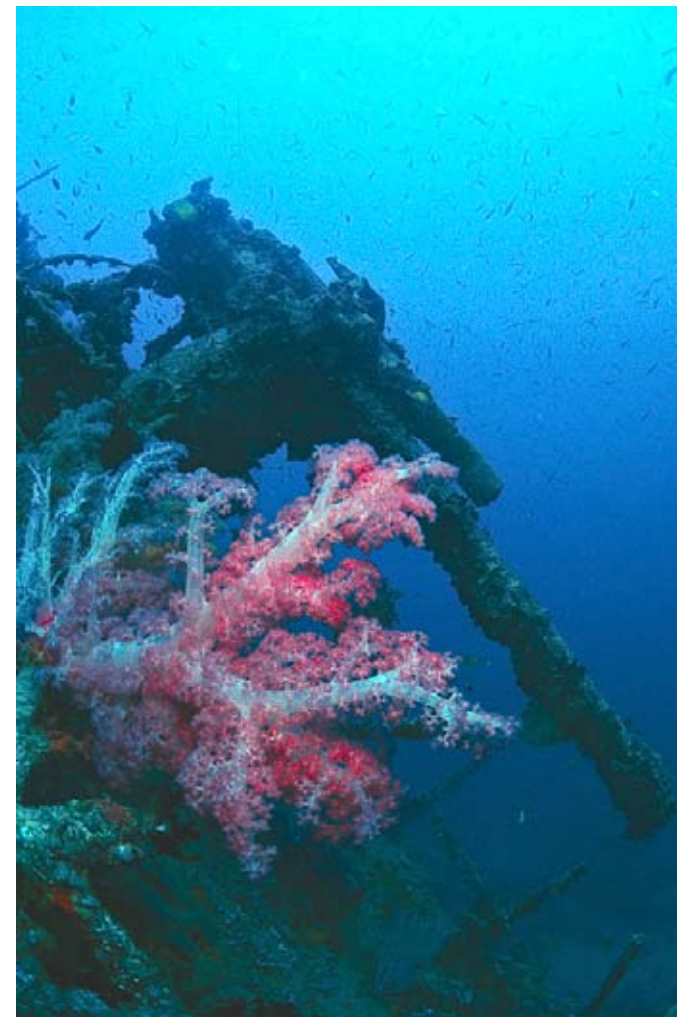
motor bikes, steam locomotives and rolling stock and, surprisingly, wellington boots. All this was destined for the allied forces in North Africa and as the Mediterranean was closed to allied shipping the routing of the convoy voyage was to be via the Cape and then up the East coast of Africa and into the Red Sea. The journey was uneventful and the log shows that she anchored safely at the end of September with other convoy ships at safe anchorage 'F' off Shadwan Island in the Straits of Jubal (now Gubal) at the southern end of the Gulf of Suez. The convoy was unable to proceed immediately to the Suez canal due to a collision between two vessels in the canal. The convoy remained peacefully at the anchorage until the silence was shattered at 2 a.m. on October 6th by the arrival of four Heinkel He 111's of flight 11/ KG26 seeking to sink the Queen Mary which was thought to be at the anchorage carrying troops. Fortunately the Queen Mary was in fact still much further south with some 2000 Australian troops on board. Finding their original target missing and running low on fuel, one of the Hienkels singled out the Thistlegorm for attack.

Two bombs struck the Thistlegorm just aft of the bridge which immediately started a blazing fire. The crew began to abandon ship without delay as it was obvious that there was imminent risk of explosion from the cargo of munitions. All but nine of the crew survived and the survivors were picked up by HMS Carlisle which was anchored nearby. Ten minutes after the attack there was a huge explosion and the Thistlegorm quickly sank from sight.

The wreck was then forgotten until the early 1950's when Jaques Cousteau and the Calypso were guided to the wreck by Bedouin fishermen and were



Thistlegorm starboard side walkway aft of bridge 1995 – healthy colonies of soft corals covered the wreck during this period. Nikon 801, Subal housing, 16mm FE, Subatec S100, Ektachrome 100, f8 1/60



Thistlegorm 4.7" stern gun 1995 – the sern of the wreck was populated with healthy colonies of soft corals and the gun itself was covered in invertebrate growth. Today it is used as a convenient mooring point. Nikon 801, Subal housing, 16mm FE, Subatec S100, Ektachrome 100, f8 1/60



Thistlegorm 2011 – on the port side adjacent to the collapsed mid section of the wreck lies the remains of one of the locomotives. This is one of the deepest areas of the wreck to visit, but worth a few minutes to capture some images. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f8 1/30

able to identify her having recovered the bell. The wreck was then featured in the February 1956 edition of National Geographic Magazine and Cousteau's exploration was documented in the film 'The Silent World'.

Now of course many of the dive boats operating from Sharm El Shiek, Eilat and Hurghada regularly visit the wreck on a daily basis and

it is not uncommon to find up to twenty boats on location, all of them wanting to moor into the wreck or at least have a down line attached as the currents can be strong here. This has inevitably taken its toll and there are virtually no hand rails left and sections of the wreck have been torn away by thoughtless mooring. On my most recent visit there was even a boat moored to the stern gun,



Thistlegorm forward port walkway 1993 – this was the first year that dive boats began to visit the wreck regularly, although the numbers were very small. Coral growth remained healthy although there are already large amounts of expired air trapped. Nikon 801, Subal housing, 16mm FE, Subatec S100, Ektachrome 100, f8 1/60.



Thistlegorm forward port walkway 2011 – the same location this year has very little coral growth left and stanchions have been torn away on the port gunwale by mooring lines. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/80



Thistlegorm 2011 – crocodile fish are common on the wreck and are often consumed by escaping bubbles from groups of divers swimming below. This one occasionally achieved lift off from the volume of bubbles, but seemed oblivious to it all. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/30

so it is only a matter of time before that feature disappears as well. The huge volume of divers exploring the internal sections of the wreck has also accelerated corrosion due to the trapped air and nitrox which has led to the collapse of deck heads throughout the vessel. Couple this with the poaching of artefacts by trinket obsessed divers over the years means the continued destruction of the wreck

seems inevitable,

There was an attempt in December 2007 by the Hurghada Environmental Protection and Conservation Association (HEPCA) to install moorings around the wreck and it was temporarily closed to divers during this period. However, this was not a success as the moorings were inadequate and failed and they were too far from the wreck for divers to

use the connecting swim lines when strong currents prevailed.

So what is left today and should we make the effort to dive the wreck as photographers? There is certainly very little coral or marine growth left on outer surfaces of the wreck, with only one or two isolated soft corals that have somehow survived. You can find more healthy colonies of soft corals by swimming off the wreck on the debris field in the centre, an area that divers do not routinely visit, and capture some colour with the wreck as a backdrop. During the day when the day boat fleet is on location the number of divers on the wreck can reach epic proportions. If you are on a live aboard then diving late in the day and staying overnight to dive early in the morning will ensure that you have the minimum number of divers on the wreck. Timing your dive to avoid the dive schedule of the other boats will also help.

If the current is not too strong and the visibility is reasonable then you can go for the big picture of the stern or bow using natural light. On the wreck itself there are still some features that may go well with a diver in the image and of course there is still fish life on the wreck many of which are so accustomed to divers that they are happy to pose. On my last dive a I spent a happy few minutes with a small octopus and a jealous goat fish

on the bow that were competing for a cover shot. Look out into open water as well during your dive as there are often schools of pelagic fish and a resident school of bat fish which are also keen models for the camera.

Inside the wreck there is of course the cargo for which the Thistlegorm is famous which comprises trucks, motor bikes, munitions, aircraft wings and engines and those wellington boots. This is probably where you will find most photographers heading for, but with numerous other divers exploring the holds it can be a challenge to get a clear shot and the visibility will suffer, so timing is everything.

Outside on the forward decks there are items of rolling stock which are also bereft of marine life now. The deck under the bowser adjacent to No.1 hold on the port side is now sagging and it may not be long before this falls into the hold. Crossing over the collapsed section of the wreck on the way to the stern you will find more of the cargo including the armoured tracked vehicles which are again a feature for a diver image. At the mid section it is worth swimming off the wreck on the port side to visit the steam locomotive which remains mostly untouched. When you reach the stern the main attraction is the 4.7 inch gun, which hopefully will not continue to be used as a convenient



Thistlegorm 2011 – despite the lack of corals there is still a lot of small reef fish life with fusiliers, sergeant majors and anthias common with fly bys from larger species like jacks and tuna. Nikon D300, Subal ND2, 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f11 1/30

mooring. Swim off the stern if the current allows and capture the stern and its mezzanine deck with the propeller below.

The depth range and configuration of the ship makes for easy and reasonably safe diving (computer recommended), although you should be wary about penetrating too deep as there is some silt about and there is no telling how unstable the cargo is. Being at the entrance to the Gulf of Suez the Thistlegorm is

exposed to strong currents, so you should ensure that you always return to your own down line (which is sometimes difficult to spot amongst all the others!) and carry a flag or SMB as open water decompression could take you quite a way up or down the Gulf!

So as a hulk with an interesting cargo the wreck still has its attractions, but it is difficult not to feel sad if you have seen this wreck following the first few years of

rediscovery. It may be too late already to save the wreck from continued attrition, but it seems that the local dive operators fail to see that they are destroying a very valuable asset for short term gain. Perhaps the answer is to restrict the numbers of divers and boats visiting with a permit and fee system similar to the one introduced in Sipadan to reduce numbers and also establish a usable and adequate mooring system to protect the structure of the wreck. There are many divers and photographers who will not agree with this view, but for me most wrecks only really become a part of

the sea when they are colonised by marine life and the Thistlegorm may now never return to this condition.

To illustrate this article I have included some scanned images from my early dives to compare with images taken in 2011. Although the quality of the images now pales against the resolution of current digital cameras, hopefully they will highlight a little how the wreck has changed over the intervening years.

Mark Webster
www.photec.co.uk

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Great White Shark adventure

by Josh Cortopassi

Technically, I embarked on my 2011 Great White Shark adventure from the Ensenada port. But my shark adventure began in the womb. My earliest drawings before preschool depicted sharks. Perhaps they were sparked by the famous tram ride at Universal Studios, or by peeking out of my room to glimpse a few seconds of “Jaws” after my bedtime. At any rate I was hooked, and it became a life goal to see — in person — one of the creatures I loved at first bite.

My “carcharodon christening” was 10 years ago with Rodney & Andrew Fox in South Australia. We set sail aboard the historic Falie, whose nets along its mast served as a hammock from which to view playful dolphins racing and jumping below. Rodney had us riveted with his mammoth bite scar and tales of survival and midget divers during the filming of Jaws. But after 5 worrisome “no-show” days at the Neptune Islands, the natives were restless.

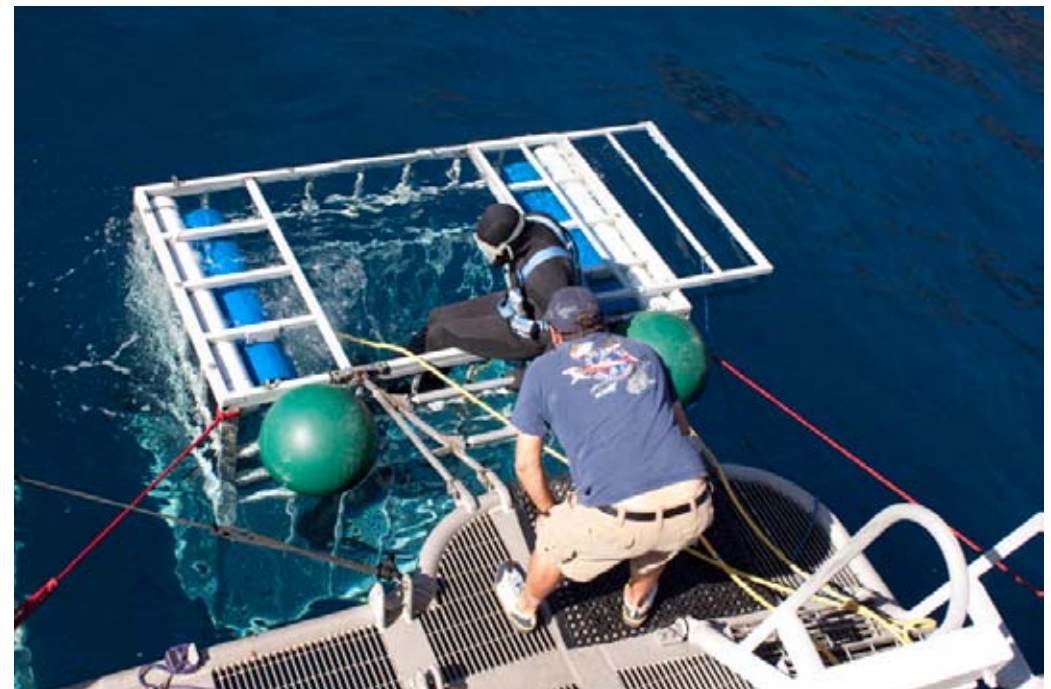
Finally, over the last two days, Lady Luck arrived in the form of three 11-to-13-foot juvenile white pointers. I vividly recall that first glimpse of the curious and beautiful hunter, which repeatedly circled

our ocean-floor cage perilously close. I’m not religious, but this I decree: When the fierce, magnificent predator’s eye locks onto yours as it glides past only feet away — it’s like a religious experience. What is it thinking? HOW does think? Has it seen a human before? In my case, all fear was replaced with exhilaration and profound awe of this primitive-yet-advanced example of evolutionary perfection.

Unfortunately, our wild guests departed before the remainder of our team could summit their Everest of dive trips. However, for those of us fortunate enough, that voyage on the Great Australian Bight with

*(Top) Unique fin notches act like fingerprints in shark identification
Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Sea and Sea RDX - 500D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm, natural light, F f5.6, 1/125, Shutter Priority ISO 400*

*(Right) Lawrence Groth assisting another safe cage entry.
Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Canon EF 28-135mm f/3.5-5.6, natural light, f7.1, 1/200, Shutter Priority*





Upon boarding the 112-foot Solmar V, you are treated to cold beverages and gourmet platters of fresh fruit and hors d'oeuvres.

the legendary shark victim-turned-advocate was truly memorable.

My next endeavor came in the form of an incredible 30th birthday gift from my wife: a 1-day Great White Shark excursion for the two of us. Destination: Farallon Islands. Documentaries on these massive sanctuary sharks had me drooling at the prospect. Unfortunately, the luck of nature was not with us that day, for we returned sharkless. Farallons visibility is practically nil, so I'm not convinced we would have even seen one if present! Shark or no shark, this still ranks as my most meaningful birthday present ever. Best wife ever.

But this photo essay is not based on Australia or San Francisco. My sights were now set on Mexico. Great White Adventures boasts a 100% success rate at Guadalupe Island. An air conditioned charter bus safely escorts you from San Diego to



The business end of an apex predator

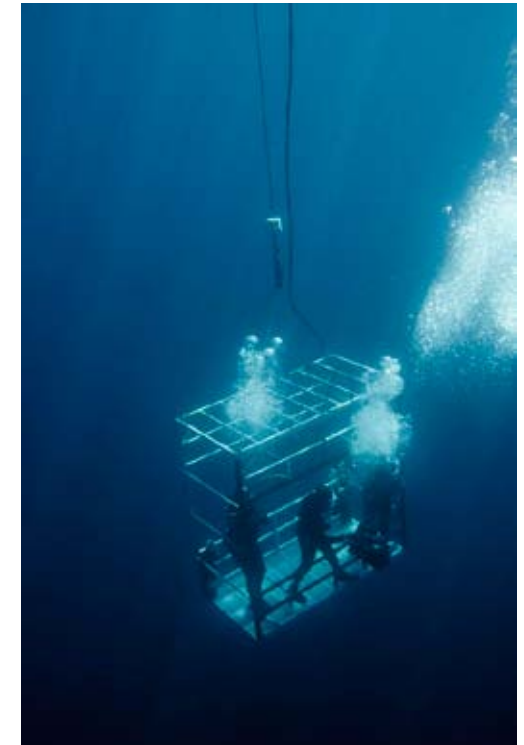
Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Sea and Sea RDX - 500D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm, natural light, F f8, 1/125, Shutter Priority ISO 400

Ensenada, where you are greeted by GWA owner Lawrence Groth.

Upon boarding the 112-foot Solmar V, you are treated to cold beverages and gourmet platters of fresh fruit and hors d'oeuvres. The luxury yacht's interior is trimmed with beautiful wood finish and glass etched with murals of marine life. The cabins are tight, but the bunks are comfortable; anyway, you'll spend most of your time in the cage or in the dining cabin eating fantastic food and

editing your photos over a margarita. There are plenty of 110 volt outlets to charge your gear.

You can spend your outgoing voyage in a variety of ways... read a book, prepare your camera gear, take a nap... or in our case, enjoy free-flowing margaritas while rocking out to your iPod on the top deck! The journey is 18 hours, but fear not... you'll arrive an hour after awaking to the smell of bacon and huevos rancheros the following morning.



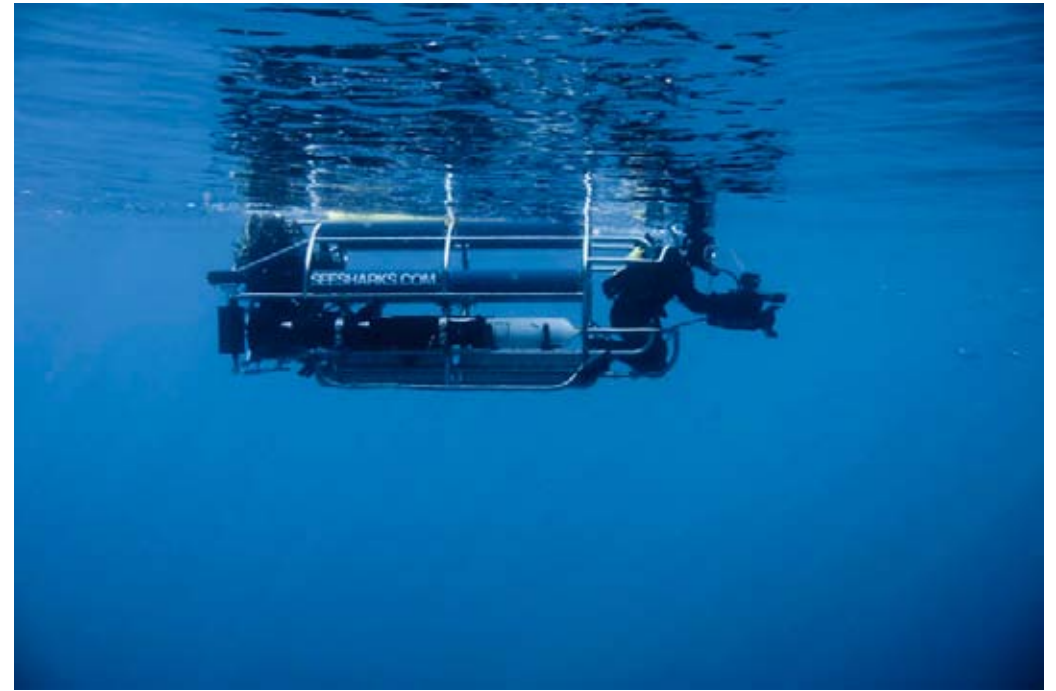
The 40-foot submersible offers peaceful, up-close encounters
Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Sea and Sea RDX - 500D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm, natural light, F f8, 1/200, Shutter Priority ISO 400

After a safety briefing, into the water you go! There are two aft 4-person surface cages and one submersible cage, in which a divemaster escorts two certified divers to a depth of 40'. Air is supplied to all cages via hookah.

Certification is required only



Post-breach bubble streams emanating from the eyes and snout
Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Sea and Sea RDX - 500D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm, natural light, F f8, 1/320, Shutter Priority ISO 400



The Pelagic Explorer sub in action
Canon EOS Rebel T1i, Sea and Sea RDX - 500D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm, natural light, F f5.6, 1/125, Shutter Priority ISO 400

for the submersible, and by all means, bring your C-card since this experience is a must! At times, we found ourselves surrounded by 5 to 7+ different sharks, coming and going at various depths. In previous years, the cage was wide open. Hypothetically, a shark wanting to “investigate” might have a diver dodging behind one of the four support bars. This year, the cage is closed, but the top flips open if you are feeling adventurous enough for the makeshift “observation

deck”... and you certainly will.

I was constantly on the lookout for sharks... above, below, behind... after all, these are stealthy ambush predators. That said, not once did I feel threatened by one of these goliath sharks, especially 40’ below, where their behavior is entirely different! At the surface, they exhibited more aggressive behavior towards the bait. Down below, they curiously cruised by the cage to investigate, yet never made a threatening move toward the

divers.

Great White Sharks, I believe, may be less likely to approach you for a “test bite” if they know you are aware of their presence. As ambush predators, they aim to surprise their victims (perhaps an unsuspecting elephant seal or large wounded fish). Choosing prey with their backs turned maximizes the potential success for a meal. Perhaps our calm body movements and always facing the sharks contributed to our seeming

mutually respectful encounters below. Still, I don’t possess the “huevos” to free-dive with White Sharks any time soon.

Two “shark wranglers” bait the surface throughout the day, while crewmen affix weights and assist divers in safely entering and exiting cages with any camera gear. A cinematographer also documents the action, and from this footage, professionally edited DVDs are available for purchase by the time you

reach shore.

Did I mention how fantastic the food is? From fresh, hot Mexican tortilla soup upon exiting the cage, to a filet mignon dinner on your return voyage. The crew hustles the entire trip, so tip well!

Lawrence also operates a custom-built, steel-caged submarine which he personally captains with his cinematographer to document up-close encounters away from the boat. Currently it is restricted to crew use, but I'm hoping the sub will become available to guests in the future.

Last year, a playful Guadalupe fur seal spent much time frolicking at our cages, flirting with divers and of course, stealing a nibble from the bait. And in the company of roughly 17 individual sharks during our visit, what a brave soul was he. "Sammy", as I nicknamed him (after Davis, Jr. — his eye looked fake!), would follow sharks 3 times his length down into the abyss. So long as he flanked them behind the mouth, sharks had no interest in wasting energy on the quick and agile pinniped. This opportunistic predator conserves energy in the absence of a "sure kill". It was stunning to watch the two species interact as they may have since long before human existence.

Also fascinating is the behavior between the sharks themselves. Two individuals would approach

one another either head on or along converging paths, until one would give way in an apparent exercise in dominance. Their body language is also evident in their "aggressive" posture, featuring an arched back and lowered pectorals.

Shark enthusiasts are aware that scientists identify individuals by dorsal & pigment patterns, scars and other markings. But it was interesting for a spectator such as myself to become acquainted with, recognize and look forward to seeing specific sharks the subsequent year.

It may sound ridiculous, but sharks actually do seem to have unique personalities, as much as a big fish is capable of. A large female known as "Lucy", for example, has a crippled tail. Slow, cautious, and inquisitive, she settles for the scraps, but wears a fearsome face that demands respect. "Cal Ripfin" earned his monicker by his shredded dorsal fin, and is a real player who seems to have boundless energy. Then there is "Zapata", who is so bulky that one of his eyes appears to be inset, making him identifiable even with his dorsal above the surface. Yes, with time you actually recognize sharks by their faces!

The sharks are also resilient healers. A pancake-sized bite hole in the side of Zapata's head is all but closed up a year later!



A battle-scarred great white begins her silent, rapid descent into the abyss

Canon EOS Rebel T7i, Sea and Sea RDX - 500D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm, natural light, F 8, 1/125, Shutter Priority ISO 400

Multiple times we witnessed a shark fully breach the surface. During one instance, I spied the shark 50+ feet below. It peered up slightly at the bait, and with a few massive caudal kicks, shot up and out of the water in a spectacular display of raw power! The entire event transpired in less than 3 seconds. Had the target been a live meal, its death would have been instantaneous.

Knowing the importance of

a shark's energy conservation in between occasional meals, I had mixed feelings about the practice of baiting once I saw this breach event. Like it or not, chumming affects shark behavior. Their time at the boat could be better spent pursuing real food. On the other hand, many sharks have recurred at hotspots for a decade or more despite the presence of dive operators, and are obviously thriving (bar fishing nets, bonehead



Nothing satisfies like a savory Mexican BBQ after a hard day's shark dive!

sport fishermen, and callous finning operators). And for struggling nations, the shark tourism industry is a viable fiscal alternative to finning. Until evidence dictates that baiting is definitively detrimental to the species, I will continue to be drawn to them by the same force that's pulled since I could walk.

Last year, I rented a camera system consisting of a Canon T1i in a Sea & Sea RDX housing. The strobe spent 5 days in its Pelican case, since I was able to get an exposure with acceptable noise levels in available light. Besides, I prefer underwater subjects in natural light to those with

flash... unless it's at a depth where absolutely necessary. And sharks are no exception — their skin looks stunning in the diffuse light at 40' afforded by the submersible cage!

The T1i and RDX were simple to use and performed well. The camera shoots 1020 @ 24fps or 720 @ 30fps. I opted for full HD at the expense of fps, and the quality was fantastic. The SanDisk Extreme III SD cards never hesitated while shooting HD video or RAW & JPG.

One gripe with the housing: the camera mount did not provide clearance for the battery door. Consequently, swapping spare

batteries required unscrewing and replacing the mount each time. Consider that the battery might last 2 hours with aggressive shooting and shot review, and you are in the water most of the day; that's a lot of battery swapping. So the issue becomes a minor annoyance.

This year, I housed my Canon 5D Mark II in a Sea & Sea MDX - PRO. No battery door clearance issues, and the system performed great. Last year I had trouble getting the full shark into frame, so I bought a Tokina 12-24mm lens for the trip. Since Sea & Sea doesn't offer a zoom gear for this lens, I followed an online tutorial to "MacGyver" one using PVC pipe and industrial grade velcro. The \$15 solution worked like a charm, saving me over \$200 by way of Backscatter's custom-machined zoom gear. Both housing rentals were from Hollywood Divers, who I highly recommend.

Unfortunately, 1 day into the trip, my brand new Tokina failed! A backup 28-135mm Canon lens saved the day. Though not as wide as desired, it performed well. To be honest, 12mm is perfect for close encounters, but so wide that you often need to crop in extensively. Next time I may try a happy medium with Canon's 16-35mm.

Photographing sharks underwater has a learning curve for amateur or intermediate photographers. You're

dealing with fast, unpredictable animals, backscatter, operating controls through neoprene gloves and much more. Having picked the brains of several experienced photographers, my image quality improved a bit this year, and I hope to learn and improve on future trips.

To sum up Guadalupe: When it comes to service, food, 100' visibility, and tons of sharks... Great White Adventures deliver the goods!

Josh Cortopassi
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The “Pearl of the Atlantic”

by Augusto Salgado

After more than 20 years diving and doing underwater photography, I decided that it was time to improve my photographic techniques, not as I had been doing just buy reading and practicing, but by direct exchange of experiences.

With this in mind, I decided to participate in one of Alex Mustard's workshop in the Red Sea, where I was able to achieve all my goals, including the workflow after we returned to the boat. All of this in a friendly and highly cooperative mood, between all of us.

Having gained a new approach to my underwater photography, I was ready to put in use all that I had learned in my next holiday in the Madeira Island, also known as “The pearl of the Atlantic”, where my family roots are.

The Madeira archipelago, as two main islands – Madeira itself, and Porto Santo –, plus the Desertas group and the Selvagens, both uninhabited. Madeira Island, is at a latitude 32° 40' N, so we can find some sub-tropical species not found on the Portuguese mainland, but it doesn't have all the big fauna that we can find in the Azores.

The water temperatures range from the 18 in the winter to the 22° C in the summer, with almost the same temperatures on the surface, although the highs can reach 28° C. Whilst the visibility can reach 20 meters, typically it is around plus 10 meters, although in winter, due to the rain that flows to the sea, it can drop significantly.

There are plenty of flights from Portuguese mainland or directly from Europe, mainly England and Germany, and there are plenty of hotels, many of them with direct access to the sea, but only some with diving centers. There is also a dive chamber in the island.

Diving occurs mostly on the South coast, as in the North, although

(Top) The front of the Tubarão Diving Center in Funchal-Madeira, on the ground floor of the Pestana Palms Hotel

(Right) A friendly interaction with one of the small groupers in “Garajau” reserve. Nikon D300, Sealux housing, Sigma 17-70 at 17 mm, 2 Z-240, f.8, 1/80





Morey eel being “cleaned” by shrimp in “Clube Naval”. Nikon D300, Sealux housing, Nikon 105 mm, 2 Z-240, f.22, 1/125 and Sola 600P light

there are some pristine spots, the big Atlantic waves seldom present good diving conditions.

The main diving spots are situated in “Garajau” nature reserve which, after a difficult start with local fishermen, is now fully established and preserved by all. Here a diver can always encounter lots of marine life. The resident groupers that are the reserve’s symbol, and they are very friendly, allowing the photographer to get real close. But other big species exist, as big stingrays, sometimes

mantas pass by, or you can be very lucky and encounter a sea lion.

A night dive can always be arranged, providing there are a minimum number of divers interested, providing very interesting photographic macro subjects. But, in all these dives, be aware when you touch the bottom, as there are plenty sea orchids, especially active at night.

Of the other diving spots, outside the reserve, the one I recommend most is the wreck of the dredger “Bowbelle”, called “Bom



(Above) In the summer and in some places divers can spot seahorses, this one was in “Clube Naval”. Nikon D300, Sealux housing, Nikon 60 mm, 2 Z-240, f.20, 1/160

(Right) Bow of the Bowbelle. The bottom lies at 30 meters deep, on a sandy bottom. Nikon D300, Sealux housing, Tokina 10-17 at 10 mm, 2 Z-240, f.10, 1/40





Inside bridge of Bowbelle showing that some equipments have already been removed as souvenirs. Nikon D300, Sealux housing, Tokina 10-17 at 12 mm, 2 Z-240, f.8, 1/50. One of the strobes was remotely triggered using Triggerfish slave sensor

Rei” while under Portuguese flag. This ship might recall some bad memories from English divers, as she was responsible for a tragic incident in the Thames in 1989. On the 20 August 1989, a passenger boat with 130 partygoers on board was hit by the Bowbelle, several times her size, making the Marchioness capsize and killing fifty-one young people. The wreck lies at a depth of 30 meters, upright but it’s broken near the bow that for the last years has been listing

forward. As she lies on a sand bottom, the wreck provides safe refuge to several species, making it a very pleasant dive. The only drawback is that it will take almost one hour to get to the spot, but with good visibility and no current, it’s a great dive.

In the Funchal area, I also recommend another diving spot, usually known as the “Clube Naval”. Here you can either do a normal dive, or a drift dive, depending on the current, and on the bottom, in



A “big” stingray on a sandy bottom. Nikon D300, Sealux housing, Sigma 17-70 at 17 mm, 2 Z-240, f.7, 1, 1/20

the middle of the rocks, we can spot several species of moray eels, sharing the tight spaces with cleaning shrimps, giving the photographers great opportunities, provided you have a good aiming light.

But, if your travel partner is not a diver, don’t worry; there is plenty to do, especially if you enjoy walking near nature, along the “levadas”, a system that carries fresh water from the highs to the lower part of the island.

Talking with divers from Malta or Canary Islands, they say the fauna is similar, but mainly in the “Garajau” reserve, there is much more life than in either islands. So, come and dive in the “Pearl of the Atlantic”...

Alves Salgado

Image postprocessing tutorial packages by Jack and Sue Drafaahl

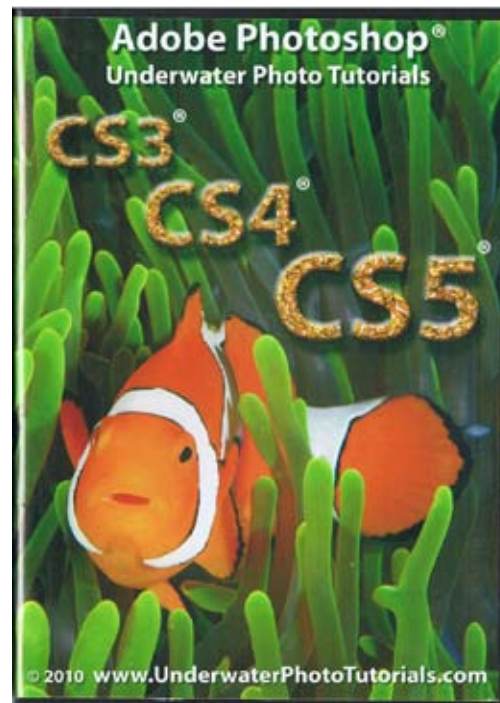
Reviewed by Alex Tattersall

As someone with a stubborn willingness to work within the confines of what I find comfortable and familiar, I was happy to be asked to review these two software packages to expand my own understanding of the possibilities for post-processing my own images.

Jack and Sue Drafaahl have, at least since I became involved in underwater photography, long occupied the spot as chief gurus of post processing. It is inevitable then that they have continued their work into providing electronic tutorial support and advice both in the form of an online programme (available at www.underwaterphototutorials.com) and a series of three DVDs. The three DVDs currently available are tutorials for Lightroom 3 (US\$75), Photoshop CS3, CS4 and CS5 (US\$100), and Photoshop Elements 6,7,8,9 (\$100). All are available to purchase from the website which considering they contain some 12-16 hours of tutorials each, to me represents very good value for money. As I don't use Photoshop Elements, I took Peter R up on the opportunity to briefly review the other two DVDs.

Both tutorial DVDs are logically presented into key themes which are further broken down into bite-size clips (between 5 and 20 minutes) each identifying and clarifying one feature of the software packages. The clips are based around a hands-on screen capture demonstration with continuous instructive talk through. The impressively extensive collection of tutorials guides the viewer from the most basic of introductions, through file management and workflow, into the more advanced of features, such as 3D models and animation. Example photos edited throughout the tutorials are mostly fairly unspectacular underwater shots selected frequently due to the lighting/exposure/etc. problems they present. The tutorials successfully demonstrates how post processing software can be used to correct issues that previously would have resulted in the photo being sent straight to my the trash bin

I'd suggest that the DVDs are best viewed methodically from one tutorial to the next as later presentations contain implied knowledge from those previous. Trying to dip in and out of each theme



therefore may become problematic for this reason. This means that the ideal approach to these software packages is to put aside an hour a day to follow the course through. With an excitable small child and a busy small business, finding this time for me though seems to be becoming increasingly difficult, but I believe it to be well worth the investment.

Overall then, as a relative beginner in the world of post-processing software, I have been very impressed by these products and can only wonder at the amount of time and energy the Drafaahls have invested in their development. More



information can be seen at www.underwaterphototutorial.com

Alex Tattersall
www.uwvisions.com

www.underwaterphototutorials.com

UwP is looking for someone to review the 3rd DVD "Adobe Photoshop Elements 6-9. If you use this software and would like a copy in return for a review please e mail UwP

peter@uwpmag.com

Book Reviews

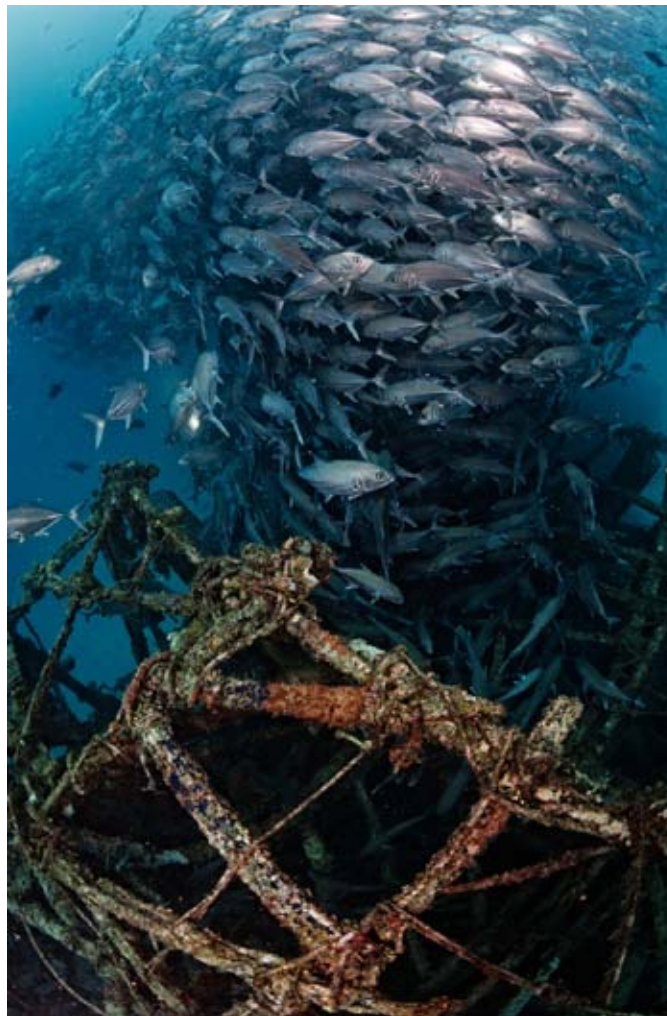


Hidden Sanctuary by Imran Ahmad

Hidden Sanctuary is a quality photographic record of the Sipadan Mabul area both in terms of the biodiversity and health of the region but also of the conservation work being done.

Some 10 years ago, a project was spearheaded to attract coral growth by the owner of Sipadan Mabul Resort, Mr Robert Lo.

Even back then he saw the need of an artificial reef at his door step. It started as a simple reason to provide shelter where marine life could procreate

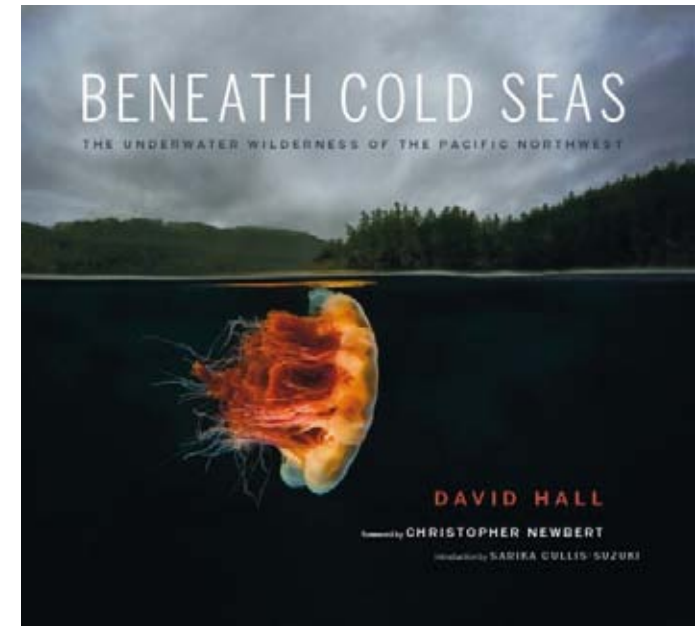


and flourish. Structures made out of wood, concrete and various types of materials were used to attract this marine life.

Copies of Hidden Sanctuary can be purchased at Sipadan Mabul Resort and Mabul Water Bungalows

www.sipadanmabulresort.com

For more information, contact
mabul@po.jaring.my



The North American Publishers are Greystone Books and the David Suzuki Foundation (Vancouver); University of Washington Press (Seattle) \$45.00

Beneath Cold Seas by David Hall

Coincidence had it that I had just returned from my first trip to British Columbia in September when I received an electronic copy of David Hall's excellent book. As a result I know that these waters are not easy to operate in with strong currents, cold temperatures, variable visibility and low light levels.

However looking through this coffee table book you would be forgiven for thinking that these waters are just an emerald version of the tropics with vibrant colours and exotic inhabitants. The level of consistency and standard of imagery is

www.uwpmag.com



DAVID HALL
Illustrations by CHRISTOPHER NEWBERT
Illustrations by SAKIRA COLLIS-BUSBY

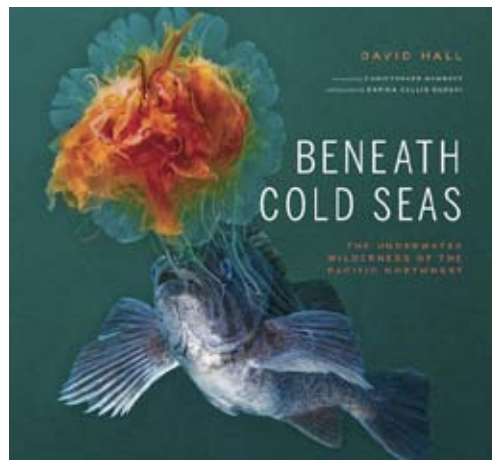
BENEATH COLD SEAS

Published by Saraband
Glasgow
160 pages
£20

quite exceptional and it captures the wild spirit of this corner of the planet page after page.

The highlights for me were the split level shots which combined moody surface light with perfectly balanced artificial light. Indeed in many of them the split was carefully chosen to create a downward angle rather than a horizontal one and the artificial light seemed to penetrate unnaturally far through the water.

Beneath Cold Seas has taken over 15 years to achieve but the hard work has been worthwhile and it is difficult to image that there will ever be a better collection of photographs to come out of this area.



The UK Edition Publisher is Saraband (Glasgow) 9781887354905 • Cased with jacket • 160 pages • £20

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David Hall's website
www.seaphotos.com
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Guidelines for contributors

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



No Parting Shots came in for this issue
but if you have an image which has a
'story within a story', we'd love to hear
from you.

E mail us and yours could be
the next "Parting shot".
peter@uwpmag.com