Underwater Photography

Jul/Aug 2018
Issue 103

"After years of travelling to the best dive sites in the world and often experiencing poor conditions, we found Wakatobi Dive Resort. They have a perfect balance of luxury with outstanding diving." ~ Kate Pagdget-Koh

An experience without equal

At Wakatobi, you don't compromise on comfort to get away from it all. Our private air charter brings you directly to this luxuriously remote island, where all the indulgences of a five-star resort and luxury liveaboard await. Our dive team and private guides ensure your in-water experiences are perfectly matched to your abilities and interests. Your underwater encounters will create lasting memories that will remain vivid and rewarding long after the visit to Wakatobi is concluded. While at the resort, or on board the dive yacht Pelagian, you need only ask and we will gladly provide any service or facility within our power. This unmatched combination of world-renowned reefs and first-class luxuries put Wakatobi in a category all its own.

wakatobi

www.wakatobi.com

Contents

Cover shot by
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Underwater Photography

A web magazine UwP103 July/Aug 2018

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Editorial

Photo trips

Bear with me again.

A long time ago there used to be a 'Splash In' in the UK where we all met up on the southwest coast in Plymouth for a day's diving and then had a competition in the evening to vote for the best image 'On the Day'.

It was a great day when we all got together with friendly banter hiding the competitive spirit but once all the images had been revealed it was a great opportunity to collar those whose images had impressed and talk about how they did it, where they went etc etc.

Most were flattered and more than prepared to divulge details for such were those days; we were all trying to improve. Not trampling over others backs to get to the top but working together yet individually to take images a step further forward.

The Splash In has sadly fallen by the wayside, expanded into a national On the Day competition (www.biupc.org) which has merits of its own but it lacks that gathering in one place of comradery both photographic and social.

As I've said before underwater photography can be a solitary pursuit so any opportunity to meet and actually dive with other underwater photographers must be a good idea. And that's where I think photo trips come in.

I'm not talking about workshops where a known name imparts his or her knowledge but rather a group of like minded enthusiasts who just want to meet up, dive and take pictures together. Just watching how someone else sets up their camera gear, conducts themselves underwater, the gear they use and the images they produce can provide a unique learning curve without the intimidation of structured talks, slide clinics and end of week competitions.

Such trips do tend to be organised by uw photo retailers who obviously want them to generate sales but it gives you the opportunity to perhaps try some new gear they have brought along without obligation but with their guiding hand and knowledge available. Either way it's win, win.

For the majority of underwater photographers a photo trip comes out of their annual holiday allowance and must more than likely be justified or bartered against a family trip so it's all the more important that a photo trip should be as enjoyably productive as possible.

I tend to keep in touch with the Uwphoto trade and try to publicise their trips wherever possible but if you know of, or are organising, such a trip, I would be happy to publicise it for you.

Sound advice

The plastic in the ocean campaign is gaining momentum impressively and is actually a credit to us as a Race that we are still capable of combining forces to bring about change for good. The downside is that it has to become dangerously bad for us to get mobilised and it's usually only encouraged by the media who aren't exactly believable or trustworthy in their motives a lot of the time.

Never the less our invisible world is being put under the spotlight which can be no bad thing. Hopefully it will also illuminate unsustainable fishing practices, polluted river run off and probably the least reported - sonar pollution. Just as with plastic, the latter is not a new problem but it suffers even worse from being invisible in an invisible world.

The human race only tends to believe what it can see and sonar pollution can only be heard.

Recent work is showing that fish as well as mammals are affected by sounds but we could have told them that a long time ago.

Rebreather users have always been able to observe and get closer to fish because of their lack of bubbles but we divers are, for once, not the main culprits in terms of scope and magnitude.

In addition to the military sonar which claims to be able to pick up and identify the echo and signature from a ship leaving New York from anywhere in the Atlantic there are the thousands of cargo ships worldwide whose propellers and sonar signature must be creating a cacophony of sound down there. Now I understand that a lot can be done to improve their soundproofing but unfortunately it doesn't have the added benefit of increasing a vessel's speed so I doubt if there will be much urgency there.

So much for the Silent World :-)

Peter Rowlands
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News, Travel & Events

Tiger Beach, Bahamas Shark Trips:

Two exciting cruises in 2019

Underwater at Tiger Beach, Bahamas several large tiger sharks cruise in a pattern while lemon sharks mingle with graceful Caribbean reef shark. Diving without a cage among these large sharks allows you to get up close and personal for a thrilling adventure full of action. Seeing this many species of sharks is an opportunity to appreciate and value their role in our oceans.

Our combined 9 day Tiger Shark and Hammerhead Trip March 2019 is in prime season for hammerheads. Tiger Beach is also active for Tigers and other sharks, and displayed good frequency of hammerheads the past few years. If we are not finding hammerheads, we head down to Bimini Island for a few days to look for them.

October 12 – 18 2019 is our 7 day Tiger Sharks at Tiger Beach Charter. Hammerheads are not in season so that action is all Tigers and other sharks.

Photographers will enjoy the clear water and bright sand bottom and taking images of sharks over the green sea grass or reefs. The hammerheads and tigers come close to divers creating opportunities for beautifully detailed video or stills.

Divers must be experienced: these are long and multiple dives with no cages and filled with the consuming action of sharks swirling around you.

We depart/return to West Palm, Beach Florida making for easy flight connections to any southeast Florida airport.

Our boat is the MV Dolphin Dream, a 86' expedition charter yacht with 5 shared cabins and diving platform. It holds 10 guests plus crew and is very stable and comfortable to ride through the Caribbean waters.

Underwater photographer host Gregory Sweeney is your host and is available to offer photography help and tips during the trip and while preparing for travel.

A few spaces remain on these popular trips

www.TigerSharkDive.com

In 2008, after developing curriculum for other organizations and doing classroom visits for friends, I decided to create my own shark education program.

In 2012 I got serious about it and Sharks4Kids was born. After a year of developing content with Duncan Brake and Dr. Derek Burkholder, we launched our first website on November 7, 2013.

The goal was to provide free online educational materials for teachers and students to help them bring sharks into the classroom. This has evolved tremendously in a short amount of time and we are now offering in person visits, full educational tours, snorkeling trips and shark tagging expeditions.

Our team has expanded and our reach continues to grow. We've connected with over 60,000 students in 44 countries and 48 US States through our in person visits, Skype Lessons and Google Hangouts.

We are partnering with research groups, conservation organizations and aquariums around the world to create new materials and provide even more opportunities for students. This has been an incredible journey and we are excited for the future. Please feel free to reach out with ideas, comments, suggestions or thoughts.

Jillian Morris-Founder & President

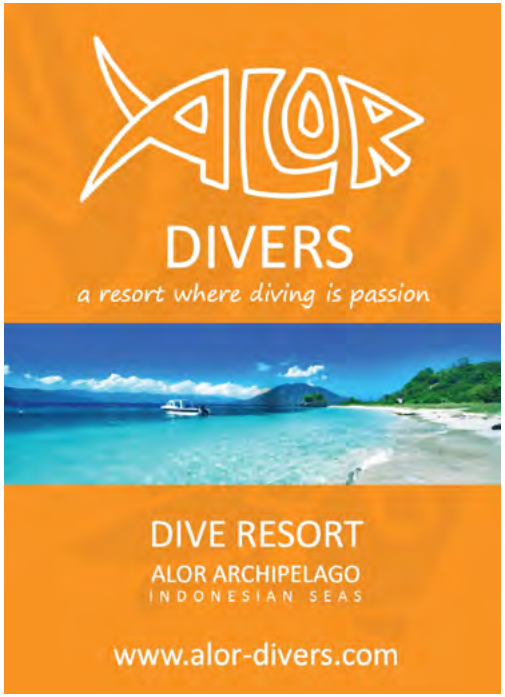
www.sharks4kids.com

Underwater Photography courses with Barry Neal

Underwater photography is one of the most popular diving specialties, and the rise of digital photography has made it easier and more fun than ever.

Underwater Photography courses are run by Barry Neal, a London based professional underwater photographer who has travelled the world putting his skills to good use. He has extensive experience of taking underwater photos and has travelled the world doing so. Our underwater photography course provides a thorough foundation in underwater photography. He has been a professional photographer for over 10 years and has visited destinations such as Azores, Bali, Java, Komodo, Bohol Philippines and Thailand. He'll take a look at your current knowledge and fit the course around you and you taking great underwater images.

www.oysterdiving.com



Pelagic Fleet

Pelagic Fleet is an adventure travel company determined to explore and protect the Mexican open ocean. Experience the best big animal encounters that nature has to offer on board our legendary signature vessel, the Solmar V or on our brand new boat, the Socorro Vortex: the fastest, biggest and most luxurious liveaboard in our fleet!

Also join us on one of our safari expeditions off Cabo before or after your liveaboard trip. Hop on our 32ft Intrepid, the Mobula, and free dive in the middle of the open ocean with

sharks, whales, marlin, mobula-rays, mola-mola, sea lions, whale sharks, baitballs, dolphin pods, and even orcas.

www.pelagicfleet.com

Reef Check Malaysia releases 2017 survey report; urges local management

Reef Check Malaysia today published its 2017 report on the health of coral reefs around Malaysia. While overall coral reef health is still good, there are disturbing signs of decline that need to be addressed urgently.

The report states that over the 227 reefs surveyed, the average live coral cover is relatively high at 42%. While this compares favourably on a regional level, this figure has been declining for four years, and over that period it has lost over five percentage points. Coupled with this, low numbers of fish and increasing amounts of negative indicators such as algae, give significant cause for concern.

Julian Hyde, General Manager of Reef Check Malaysia, commented that: “Although the headline figures show we still have some healthy reefs, the average masks some disturbing trends. Chief among the negative signs are indicators that suggest pressure from tourism is growing, which could have serious long term implications.”

Coral reefs are important ecosystems. Lau Chai Ming, Programme Manager and co-author of the report, explains: “Coral reefs are ecologically important as a key link in marine food chains. They are also economically important as a key attraction to tourists visiting Malaysia. Losing our coral reefs has implications for both food security and livelihoods. We need to manage them better”

This is the first time in eleven years of monitoring Malaysia’s coral reefs that Reef Check Malaysia has issued such clear warnings. Hyde says: “This comes at a time of change in Malaysia, and we hope the new government’s commitment to protecting the environment will be reflected in its response to this report.”

www.reefcheck.org.my

Reef Photo and Video Lembeh Workshop

October 04-14, 2019

We are very excited to offer this 10 night trip to Indonesia to participate in a one of our photography workshops.

Price includes transfer from Manado to the resort, nitrox, and 26 daytime boat dives. This resort offers a 2:1 diver to guide ratio + Reef Photo staff will be there too for photo support and expert guidance.

Dive packages include full board (3 meals per day), hot drinks and water, evening dinner on the day of arrival, and breakfast on the day of departure. The dives stated in the package are day boat dives only. Dives are non-transferrable and unused dives non-refundable. Package and room rates are based on double occupancy. There will be a single supplement option for this trip.

The resort does offer specialty dives for those that are interested: night dives, mandarin fish dives, and black-water dives for an additional fee. Minimum of 2 divers to book.

NAD-Lembeh Resort and the Lembeh Strait are famous all over the world for the peerless macro and muck diving.

NAD is also owner-operated, almost all year Simon and Zee are present on site. If they aren't at the resort, they are off on a photographic adventure or diving. They have 15 full-time guides who between them have over 100 years of diving experience in Lembeh.

Standard Beachfront Rooms are at ground level with 2 steps (we can add ramps for wheelchairs). The Bungalows are up approximately a dozen steps (New steps June 2015). All the rooms have air conditioning and hot water. Best flights to choose are Silk Air from Singapore to Manado; and lots of airlines fly from the USA to Singapore.

$1850 Per Person, Beachfront Room, Double Occupancy

$2095 Per Person, Deluxe Seaview Bungalow, Double Occupancy.

www.reefphoto.com/collections/workshops-1

Saeed Rashid workshop

6 - 16 July 2019

Get ready for a Special Siren Trip featuring Saeed Rashid of 'Focus Visuals'! We are excited to welcome Saeed on board the Philippine Siren, where he will host an exclusive photography workshop starting 6 July 2019.

Saeed is a seasoned diver and an award winning, published photographer, both above and below the water. He is a lecturer at Bournemouth University and a popular speaker at UK dive shows, but above all an energetic and enthusiastic teacher who is committed to helping you get the most out of your camera and pass on some 'tricks of the trade'.

Saeed will guide you in his relaxed and easy manner through the underwater photography process from start to finish.

Over the course of this 10 night liveaboard holiday, there is plenty of time to learn new skills and the stunning corals and marine life in the Visayas provide the perfect environment to practice those skills!

www.sirenfleet.com

Shark Quest with Mario Vitalini

22-29 Nov 2018

Shark Quest is all about diving the southern Red Sea at its seasonal best and spending more time on fewer, carefully selected dive sites. We trust the local knowledge and experience of our dive teams.

Building on their know how and recent sightings, they will select one of the big marine parks to dive. Be that Brothers, be that Daedalus, you can enjoy up to 3 days in the boat's selected pelagic hot spot. Dive where you have the strongest chances for sharks and rays. It's that simple.

Mikes Cameras Kit Photo Pro Mario Vitalini is on board.

Join our quest for the most inspiring and exciting pelagic sightings possible.

www.scubatravel.com

2018 National Geographic Travel Photographer of the Year winner

Nature 1st Place – and Grand Prize winner

Photo and Caption by

Reiko Takahashi / National Geographic Travel Photographer of the Year Contest | MERMAID

Reiko Takahashi's image of a humpback whale calf's tail has been named Grand Prize winner of this year's National Geographic Travel Photographer of the Year contest. Her caption for the photo reads:

"I was fortunate to have encountered a humpback whale with her calf on my first day snorkeling near Japan's Kumejima Island. Most of the time, the calf stayed close to her mom. At one point, the calf began jumping and tapping its tail on the water near us—it was very friendly and curious. Finally, the mother, who was watching nearby, came to pick up the calf and swim away. I fell in love completely with the calf and it's very energetic, large and beautiful tail."

Winners in three categories have also been chosen, from over 13,000 total entries. Takahashi's photo, titled Mermaid, also took first place in the Nature category – Cities and People round out the categories.

Take a look through the winning images above and see more outstanding photos from the weeks leading up to this announcement at National Geographic's website.

http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/photographer-of-the-year-2018/gallery/winners-all/1/

Sea Shepherd Operation Sola Stella

After a total of twelve months of patrols and twelve arrests, Operation Sola Stella has resulted in a dramatic drop in incidents of illegal fishing and the return of fish populations in formerly over-exploited coastal waters. Operation Sola Stella was Sea Shepherd's second joint operation with the Liberian Ministry of National Defense to tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Republic of Liberia, West Africa.

Early in 2017, working with the Liberian government, the M/V Bob Barker patrolled the waters with ten Liberian Coast Guard sailors and two Israeli maritime advisors and conservationists. Three months of at-sea patrols resulted in the arrest of five vessels associated with IUU fishing, with over 50 violations of Liberian law. In the last month of patrolling, Sea Shepherd did not encounter any illegal vessels, indicating that law enforcement at sea had a deterrent effect.

Later in the year, after Sea Shepherd had left, local fishermen reported that the illegal vessels had returned. Sea Shepherd headed back to Liberia with the vessel the M/V Sam Simon. Following that return, they arrested seven vessels.

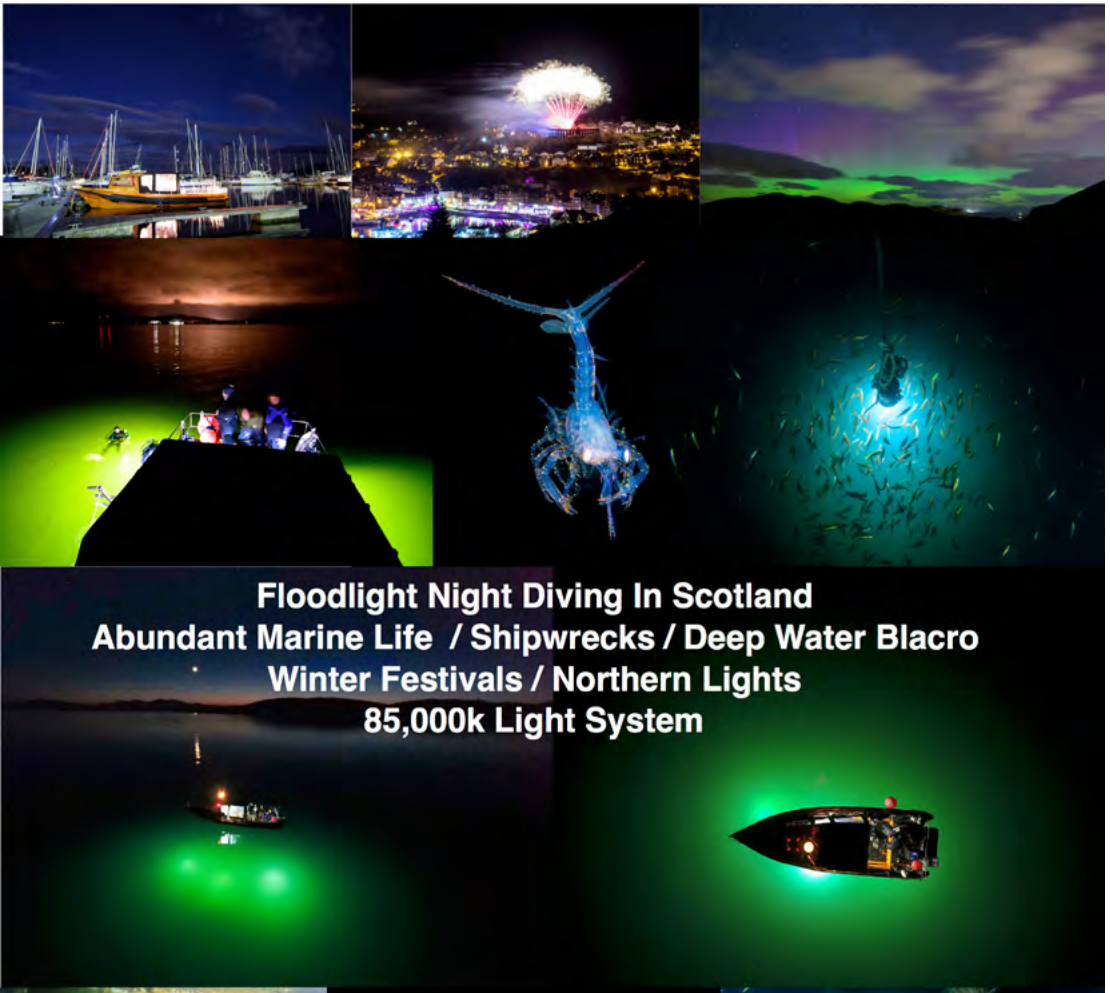
They also helped to intercept a trawler as it attempted to flee detention in Liberia. The arrested vessels include the F/V Labiko II, found on three international blacklists, and the F/V Hai Lung, an infamous fishing vessel that is blacklisted by several regional fisheries management organizations. On the Labiko II a shark liver oil production facility was discovered on board. Based on the amount of shark liver oil they were producing, the Labiko II was conservatively killing up to half a million sharks per year!

www.seashepherdglobal.org/our-campaigns/operation-sola-stella/

https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/get-involved/donate/

BASKING SHARK SCOTLAND

DIVE OBAN & ARGYLL



British & Irish Underwater Photography Competition 2018

This competition engages the British and Irish underwater photography community in a one day competition shoot out. It is accessible to people who live and dive at different locations around Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Northern Ireland and England.

A 1st September on-the-day multi-location competition format reduces the travel and cost burden for competitors, whilst at the same time encouraging a level of participation commensurate with a true championship.

Photographers will compete for five awards and associated prizes, foremost being a trophy in memory of one of BSoUP's co-founders, the late Peter Scoones, and the title British & Irish Underwater Photography Champion 2018

Images can be taken and submitted electronically from anywhere within the championship geographic boundary from 10pm Friday 31st August to 10pm Saturday 1st September 2018. The competition is open to all underwater photographers of all nations, with contestants demonstrating the underwater photographic and post-production skills to produce high impact British and Irish images within a limited time frame. Images can be from any body of salt or fresh water in the seas, rivers, streams and lakes of our islands.

BIUPC

BSoUP will convene a panel of three judges (to be announced) during the week following the competition. The results will be announced week commencing 10th September and the awards presented in London on 18th December 2018.

www.biupc.org

www.uwpmag.com

Philippine Department of Tourism announces 2018 Anilao Shootout

The Philippine Department of Tourism Office of Product and Market Development - Dive, in cooperation with DOT Regional Office IV-A and the Resort Owners Association of Mabini (ROAM) will be holding the 6th Anilao Underwater Shootout on November 27 to December 1, 2018 in Anilao, Mabini, Batangas.

The event is an international competition which aims to reinforce the Philippines' standing as Asia's premiere UW photography destination with the richest marine biodiversity in the world. Now on its sixth (6th) year, it has been dubbed by UW photography enthusiasts as "The World Cup of Photo Competitions".

This year, we are expecting to attract some 200 participants (UW photographers and fun divers) from North America, Europe, and Asia. Five world-renowned underwater photographers will also grace the event as judges for the competition.

Competition Classes

Open Class - Open to all participants.

Compact Class - The Compact Class is exclusive for participants using cameras without interchangeable lenses.

Categories

Macro/Supermacro - Any close-up photograph of small subjects and marine life

Marine Behavior – Photographs that feature any display of marine behavior such as feeding, breeding, etc.

Nudibranch – Nudibranchs should be the main subject of the photograph.

Fish Portrait – Photographs that prominently feature fish. Can be a face or full body shot.

Cephalopod – Photographs that feature squid, octopus, cuttlefish and similar animals.

www.anilaoshootout.ph

www.uwpmag.com

Sea Shepherd Operation Jairo

https://youtu.be/Tvknl3Vuo2k

Sea Turtles are some of the oldest living creatures on earth, having shared the earth with the dinosaurs. The oceans are in peril and all sea creatures need our help. Of the seven species of sea turtles, six are currently on the red list of endangered species.

Operation Jairo is in its third season and honors the life and work of Jairo Mora Sandoval, who lived and died protecting sea turtles from poachers.

All seven species of marine turtles are currently listed as threatened or endangered. Sea turtles have called our oceans “home,” for over 500 million years.

Sea Shepherd is partnering with researchers from the Antigua Sea Turtle Project (ASTP) to conduct surveys and conservation patrols of key sea turtle nesting sites in Antigua and Barbuda.

The remote beaches provide nesting grounds for three species of endangered marine turtles, including the hawksbill, green and leatherback.

All species face significant threats including poaching of nesting adults and eggs, sand mining, by-catch and coastal development.

The crew of the M/V Brigitte Bardot will partner with scientists who are conducting research to help identify key marine turtle nesting grounds and to implement surveys, which can yield critical information on sea turtle population trends, as well as patterns of habitat use and quality.

With your help, we can provide over a month of patrols, protection and research to ensure that these amazing creatures that have roamed the planet for more than 150 million years will continue to do so

https://seashepherd.org/campaigns/jairo/

https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/get-involved/donate/

The leading online resource for underwater photographers and videographers

TECHNIQUES
Learn the fundamentals of underwater photography and progress to the latest, most innovative techniques taught by the top pros in the industry

TRAVEL
Read about the experiences of accomplished shooters as they visit the world's most iconic dive spots, and get inside tips on maximizing your dive vacation

ARTICLES
Discover the world of underwater imaging through compelling features from photographers, filmmakers, ocean scientists, industry experts, and more

NEWS
Keep up to date with everything that matters to underwater photographers, from the latest gear and gadgets to the newest developments in marine research

GALLERIES
Browse the portfolios of the industry's biggest names in underwater photography and share your own work online with like-minded members

EXPEDITIONS
Journey with us to the hottest dive destinations on the planet and learn better technique from the most talented image makers in the scubaverse

DIVE PHOTO GUIDE

www.divephotoguide.com · contact@divephotoguide.com

the monterey SHOOTOUT
PRESENTED BY NCUPS

August 9-12th, 2018

Monterey Shootout

The Monterey Shootout is an underwater photo event focused on fun, education, and the goal is to inspire new underwater image-makers. Are you new to underwater photography or Monterey diving? Come meet a supportive group of die-hard Monterey divers, learn new shooting techniques in our shooting seminars, and maybe even discover a new dive site. Our friendly shooting competition not only rewards advanced shooters with amazing prizes but also bestows fantastic prizes to the newest shooters in the ranks.

Registration Only $25

One low price gets you into the Competition, cocktail party, and all Seminars

Expanded contest hours - Fri 7AM to Sat 7PM

Backscatter party on Saturday night at 6PM

First time underwater shooters will enjoy our introductory seminars held on Friday. Come meet fellow enthusiasts and learn from our professional presenters.

You don't need to be a pro to have fun and win big in our friendly competition. You just need to get in the water this weekend. Our 32 hour photo and video competition has categories for beginner, intermediate, and advanced shooters with great prizes from our sponsors. All competition entrants must register for a full weekend pass to enter.

Monterey diving is second to none when the conditions are right. We can help you find good dive boats, great dives, and places to stay during your visit.

www.backscatter.com

ikelite

SONY ALPHA A7 III
SONY ALPHA A7R III
SONY ALPHA A9

Three incredibly powerful cameras, one smart housing. Suitable for scuba, snorkel, surf, pool, and any application in or around the water. Optional TTL circuitry provides lightning fast strobe recycle time and extended camera battery life. Comfortable controls, durable and corrosion-free ABS-PC construction, and the versatile Dry Lock (DL) port system make this system ready for anything you want to throw at it.

Read more at ikelite.com.

New Products

Panasonic Lumix FT7

Panasonic is pleased to introduce a brand new, tough, compact camera geared towards lovers of outdoor adventures, giving you the chance to capture those moments your normal device can't handle.

The Lumix FT7 is waterproof (up to 31m / 102ft), shockproof (to 2m/6.6ft), freeze proof (to -10°C), dustproof and pressure resistant (to 100kg/220lbf) making it the perfect rugged companion for all your extreme experiences.

With a 20.4-megapixel high-sensitivity sensor which is joined by a 28mm wide angle 4.6x (28-128mm equivalent) optical zoom lens, the FT7 also features Power O.I.S (Optical Image Stabilisation) to help keep your shots steady.

New for the FT7 is a 0.2-inch 1,170k-dot equivalent Live View Finder for composing your images when screen use is impractical. Use the LVF to compose your shots in strong sunlight, with the added bonus of saving and extending battery life in harsh conditions - such as the cold. Meanwhile, the 3.0-inch rear monitor boasts the highest-in-class 1,040k-dot resolution and uses tough, tempered-glass.

Never miss an opportunity with full-resolution high-speed burst shooting at 10fps*, which is coupled with Light Speed AF. What's more, all your incredible exploits can be captured in stunningly smooth, high-resolution 4K Video. When 10fps isn't enough, use 4K Photo to grab even fleeting moments by shooting at 30fps in 8-megapixel equivalent resolution, extracting the best frame from a 4K burst to save as a photo.

For something extra special, take advantage of special modes such as time-lapse shooting, 22 creative filters and panorama mode, which can capture both horizontal and vertical images. The FT7 can even help with your night-time escapades, such as rock climbing or cave walking, as it can be used as a torch light, without the camera function being activated.

Other super-handy tools on board the FT7 include a compass and altimeter - making it ideal for a huge range of outdoor activities, including fishing, camping, diving, snorkelling, surfing, snowboarding, skiing and mountain climbing.

The FT7 will be available in 3 colour versions: orange, blue and black.

The Lumix FT7 will be available from July with an SRP of £399.

www.panasonic.com/uk

Nauticam NA-AU-EVA1 housing for Panasonic AU-EVA1 5.7K Super 35 video camera

Handheld cinema cameras suitable for underwater use are entering a new phase with new models offering advanced features and modularity rivaling their larger studio siblings.

The Panasonic AU-EVA1 brings a 5.7K Super 35 sensor to the arena. The camera is able to record 10bit 4:2:2 4K at 30p in 400Mbps in Super 35 mode. This downsamples the full 5.7K giving richer colors through the additional photosites. 2K, with a 4/3 crop is available at up top 240fps.

With the Version 2.0 firmware update the AU-EVA1 will receive DCI 4K/60p Raw SDI output at a 4/3 crop or 5.7K/30p with the full S35 FOV.

With a host of other cinema camera features, the EVA1 is sure to be at the top of independent and production underwater filmmakers wish lists alike.

Depth Rating 80m
Port Opening N120
Weight 6.27kg with handles and skids
Dimensions: 260mm x 201mm x 270mm (WxHxD) with handles and skids.

www.nauticam.com

Geneinno Titan Underwater Drone hits Kickstarter

Everyone loves drones because you can take fantastic aerial shots with them, hassle-free. But what if you don't want to go up in the air but deep into the ocean? Meet the new Geneinno Titan underwater drone which will soon be launched over at Kickstarter.

The Geneinno Titan is an underwater drone that dives to a depth of 150 m (almost 500 feet), which is quite impressive because it is exposed to a water pressure of up to 15 bar down there. It also sports a 4K camera and two powerful (1000 lumen each) headlights.

Geneinno was established in 2013 and one of their flagship products was the Poseidon underwater drone. Now they're back with a new kind of drone, the Geneinno Titan, which will be launched through a Kickstater campaign by the end of May 2018.

This new drone sports 6 thrusters which enables the Titan to move at a max speed of 2m/s. It can also rotate freely in a full 360° circle. The 8MP camera features a 160° wide angle lens and it shoots 4K. Unfortunately no more details about the codec, the bitrate and the sensor are available yet.

In order to control the drone, which is achieved by using a wifi connection, a accompanying buoy is connected by cable to the drone itself. The buoy floats on the water surface and sets up an ad-hoc wifi network to which you connect via iOS / android tablet or smartphone.

With two optional handgrips attached to the smart device (connected via bluetooth) you can control the Geneinno Titan even if its 150m deep. The buoy provides you with a live image from the drone and you can control the camera and the Titan itself from the comfort of your sun bed. No bulky diver's suit required.

The Kickstarter campaign will launch at the end of May. There's still no word about pricing yet but the predecessor of the Geneinno Titan, the Poseidon, costs about $1,700 (€1,400), so expect a similar price for the Titan. Geneinno promises, however, that Kickstarter backers will get up to 50% discount.

But remember: Kickstarter is not a shop and you don't buy things there. You simply support the manufacturer with your money and as a benefit –if everything goes smoothly– you'll get the final product at a discount.

www.geneinno.com/titan.html

200DL Ikelite Housing for Canon EOS 7D DSLR Cameras

Introduced in 2013, the Canon EOS 7D has an 18MP CMOS sensor with good autofocus capabilities and low-light performance. The APS-C crop sensor is great underwater for both close-up work with either a 60mm or 100mm Macro lens and wide angle with the fantastic Tokina 10-17mm Fisheye.

This housing features our robust new Dry Lock (DL) port system. "Dry Lock" refers to the placement of the o-ring on the outside of the port mount. This improves visibility and reduces the chances of water dropping onto your precious camera sensor. DL ports are the lightest on the market, yet robust and capable of standing up to rough surf. Attachment is quick and secure. A system of extensions can accommodate a huge variety of lenses.

Most popular zoom lenses and select lens focus rings can be engaged using a simple yet effective gearing system that puts adjustment right at your fingertips. A large, soft-touch lobed knob on the side of the housing makes fine tuned adjustments a breeze. Zoom and focus gears differ depending on which lens you are using. All are lightweight and affordable.

The included vacuum valve allows you to pressurize the housing to check for leaks prior to putting your expensive equipment in the water. Use of the vacuum valve requires a compatible Vacuum Pump with Gauge # 47011, sold separately.

www.ikelite.com

Fantasea and AOI UWL-400F wide angle lens

The Fantasea-AOI UWL-400F is a SUPER SHARP quality “wet” wide angle conversion lens. Featuring a wide field of view and zero minimal focus distance, the UWL-400F produces breathtaking wide angle and close focus images that are super sharp corner-to-corner and great on the details.

UWL-400F attaches to the housing lens port thread and can be installed and removed during the dive. The lens is compatible with most all cameras featuring a 24mm lens (or a higher focal range) and can also be used with some cameras featuring a wider lens by zooming in to avoid a vignette.

www.fantasea.com

INON underwater tripod system

INON INC. is pleased to announce official release of new underwater tripod system consists of “UW Tripod Hub” and “UW 3-Way Panhead” on May 31st, 2018.

Having “UW Tripod Hub” as a fundamental part, this newly designed underwater tripod system offers wide variety of configurations of “pan-head parts” and “tripod legs”.

In addition to use on land and in freshwater, whole system is usable in saltwater thanks to specially selected material, surface finishing and assembling method.

www.inon.jp

Hugyfot Dynamic Neutral Arm System

The Hugyfot DNA (Dynamic Neutral Arm) system is composed of different float arm segments that can be combined into a solid float arm that provides a specific lift and/or length for any housing configuration. Constant volume system with 100m depth rating.

www.hugyfot.com

Sealux HDFS7II housing for the Sony PXW-FS7MK2

The SEALUX HDFS7II is a safe, tailor-made housing for the professional PXW-FS7MK2 4K 4:2:2 10 bit camcorder made by Sony. This means it is one of the smallest and lightest aluminium underwater housings on the market for the PXW-FS7MK2. With this housing our main focus has been on operational versatility. An optional display case for the on-top-of-camera display supplied by Sony allows comfortable viewing of images from a swimming position. If an external monitor/recorder is to be used (such as the Odyssey 7Q), a cover plate will be fitted to it. 3 additional sockets, 1 x HDMI and optionally 2 x two-pole sockets allow connection of external devices, for example, an external monitor/recorder or a hydrophone.

www.sealux.de

Ikelite 200DLM/A TTL Housing for Canon EOS M50, Kiss M Mirrorless Digital Cameras

A professional grade, compact waterproof housing for Canon EOS M50 and EOS Kiss M mirrorless digital cameras. This system is perfect for any application in or around the water from scuba to surf to pool.

The Canon EOS M50 is a great mid-range compact mirrorless camera. A TTL flash hotshoe, 24MP APS-C CMOS sensor, and 4K video capture make it a good choice for underwater use.

Proper strobe exposure is the #1 most important contributor to sharp and colorful underwater photos, particularly below 30ft/10m. This is the only housing to include an integrated TTL circuit fine-tuned to the Canon EOS M50 flash exposure protocol for the fastest and most accurate exposure possible.

At this time, only Ikelite DS strobes are capable of powering the TTL circuitry. Non-Ikelite strobes featuring an electrical bulkhead may be attached by sync cord but must be used in manual exposure modes only.

High quality yet affordable optics are available for an extensive range of micro four-thirds lenses from wide angle fisheye to macro. Our custom optical grade acrylic domes provide the color, clarity, and durability of glass at a fraction of the weight and cost. Glass flat ports are available for macro lenses.

The DLM port system is designed to be tough enough for heavy surf and to provide reliability in remote locations. The lens port attaches without twisting, threading, or complex mechanisms.

www.ikelite.com

Seacam compact Sony A7 II R/S

The Seacam compact for the SONY A7II R/S sets new standards in design and ergonomics. Due to the special construction, the mounting of the camera is especially easy.

The housing is milled out of a saltwater-proof light metal alloy twice hardened and high-value anodized. Special longevity is achieved through use of materials of only the best quality: stainless steel, anodized aluminum, premium synthetics as well as Helicoil threads.

Double sealing with seamless, high-quality precision O-rings protects all shafts and press buttons. The main O-ring is of a particularly strong dimension.

The titanium safety lock fastening system safely secures both housing shells.

www.seacam.com

Gopole Triad Grip Gopro Tray

Triad Grip is a versatile mount that offers protection, stability and accessory mounting options for your GoPro® camera. Perfect for professional video production or underwater usage. Compatible with all GoPro models

Specifications:
- Dimensions: 10.5” x 6.0” x 1.0”
- Weight: 310 gr
- Materials: Plastic, Rubber, Stainless Steel Hardware

Included in the box:
- 1 x Triad Grip
- 2 x GoPro® Mounts
- 2 x Hi-Torque Thumbscrews
- 1 x Wrist-Strap

www.oceanleisurecameras.com

Valstech V Series for iPhone X

Machined from aluminum, the V-Series housing for iPhone X puts all the needed camera controls right at your finger tips.

Designed by photographers for photographers, the V-Series takes full advantage of the iPhone X’s imaging capabilities. Exceptional exposure control, extended dynamic range, outstanding noise reduction, color fidelity, and new levels of sharpness and detail, make the iPhone X the ultimate smartphone to use for underwater imaging.

With the ability to shoot 4K videos at 60 frames per second, the iPhone X is the ultimate underwater imaging camera for all divers. Gone are the days of packing and carrying cases of underwater photo gear.

www.valstech.com

Nauticam

innovation underwater

Think beyond what has been done before, work with the most demanding photographer on the planet, deliver beyond expectations, and never rest on past accomplishments.

www.nauticam.com

NA-XH1 Housing for FujifilmX-H1 Camera

NA-XH1 Housing for Canon EOS M50

Front lens replacement for Nikon R-UW AF 13mm Fisheye

In 2012 nju system's conversion of Nikonos RS lenses for Nikon DSLRs proved a huge success in the underwater photographers' world. Now we are proud to present new enhancements for the Nikonos RS conversion system.

We have received various requests from customers for repair or replacement of scratched and damaged front lenses after the last original spare part available was sold 5 years ago. The specially treated Nikonos glass broke immediately when trying to polish a minor scratch.

nju system has developed and manufactured a replacement of the original 13 mm front lens and improved the original design. The optical formula stays the same but standard optical BK7 grade glass is used. It is perfectly polish-able (by a skilled technician).

The original 13 mm frontlens is coated on one side only (the water facing front - good for optics but prone to scratches and damage by inappropriate cleaning) nju system's replacement lens for Nikonos RS 13 mm is coated on both sides with a new thicker type of multi coated layer eliminating reflections to a technical maximum of 99.5 %.

Price for replacement is 1.300 € for lens change only and 1.200 € if lens is sent in for conversion. Speaking of that we have changed our policy of only servicing nju system converted lenses, so all are welcome.

www.njusystem.com

Aquatica housing for Sony A7RIII & A7II1 coming soon

The housing has a depth rating: 90m 300ft can be upgraded to 130m 425ft with deep spring kit

Dimensions with grips : 355 mm x 150 mm x 127mm 14" x 5.9" x 5"

Weight with grips: 2.6 Kg 5.71b (12% lighter than our A7RII housing)

Retail starting at $2,499.00

Delivery late summer

www.aquatica.ca

Mangrove Videocompact VC-3L4

The VC-3L4 specially designed for underwater video and photo is supplied with one Solid-State LED module array emitting a staggering 7500 lumen. Featuring two output levels, the 50W light can dim from high to medium power output levels allowing you to dim lighting for a quick exposure adjustment. Sun-similar light in 16:9 illuminating with approx. 100° reflected beam angle and approx. 200 W (halogen).

www.aditech-uw.com

Subal AX1/Z150-4K

Subal provides a housing for the Sony FDR-AX1- 4K and PXW-Z150 - 4K cameras.

The housing is very compact and it is possible to operate all functions of the camera in the housing on manual way. Also you have electronic lanc control or infrared via electronic remote handle.

Functions: The housing has full manual control, as well electronic LANC control via the handles.Ports/ size: It comes with the Subal port size 4. So all Subal ports in size 4 from our photo camera system are usable. Vacuum system: Air Lock Vacuum control system available, manual with pump and electronic control system via signal and green light. The housing also has an inbuilt depth gauge.

Size/weight: LxHxW: 33x26x33cm Weight 6,2 kg

www.subal.com

Nauticam DSMC2 Redtouch 4.7 Monitor Back for Weapon LT

This replaces the standard back of the Weapon LT housings and allows for the use of the REDTOUCH 4.7" Monitor.

Nauticam RED housings are the smallest, lightest, and easiest to operate underwater housing for RED Cameras available. On location, the usability of this system is unmatched. Set up and tear down in minutes, easily swap batteries and recording media while the camera is mounted in the housing, and lens changes in seconds. The small size and light weight dramatically decrease resistance in water, especially when free diving.

Depth Rating 80m

www.reefphoto.com

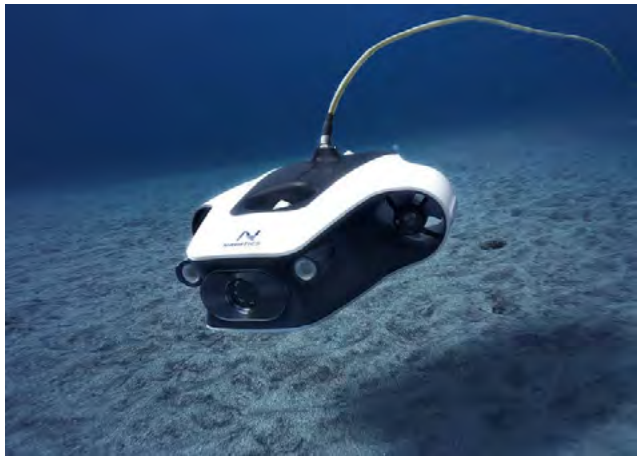
Frogfish Photography become Paralenz Ambassadors

We have become Paralenz Ambassadors! We knew we were going to like this new action camera, deigned for divers by divers, as soon as we saw it, but we had no idea how impressed we were going to be.

Find out more about the product, see what we think about it, and watch a video (unedited footage) from our recent trip to The Bahamas by clicking on the link below:

www.paralenz.com/2018/02/diver-spotlight-frogfish-photography/

Navatics MITO underwater drone



Accessible drones have brought aerial photography to the masses, and now underwater drones are doing the same, helping anyone become the next Jacques Cousteau. Navatics MITO, an underwater drone with a 4K camera and advanced active stabilization technology, is a new entrant that seeks to bring stable underwater drone photography to consumers and professionals alike.

After being previewed at CES 2018, Navatics MITO is gearing up for launch on Kickstarter.

The market has been growing rapidly for underwater drones. Navatics MITO stands out because of its small, 6.6 lbs. size, which is designed to meet airline specifications for a carry on, and its advanced stabilization algorithm, which allows for steady piloting and filming even in the most complex underwater environments.

Diving up to 130 ft., Navatics MITO shoots at 4K 30fps and shoots 8MP stills that can be stored on an onboard 64GB SD card. It also offers 1080p streaming to the accompany app, which features built-in tools for color correction and the ability to share images and video directly to social media.

Super early bird backers can get Navatics MITO $1,199, which includes the drone with a 4K camera, one battery, a remote controller that attaches to a smartphone, and a 50-meter (165 ft.) tether.

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/navatics-mito/navatics-mito-the-most-stable-underwater-drone

RGBlue System03 Twin Light 2600lm underwater video light

You can set up this light simply by connecting it to directly to the lens port. (with the optional rotating ring adapter set). This makes it easier to move the light source closer to the subject, enabling you to achieve high intensity in the most efficient way.

When this system is combined with one of the optional accessories such as the Micro Snoot or a Filter, it is possible to produce any type of subject lighting so you will be able to create a wide range of effects.

Flat light distribution with 100° emission angle, 2600 lm maximum light intensity, condenser lens provided

Flat light is distributed evenly throughout the emission angle of 100°, which is sufficient for shooting movies, as well as for wide-angle shooting. Maximum light intensity is more than enough with total flux as high as 2600 lm.

Both modules are completely waterproof, ensuring that water cannot penetrate and cause damage. Each module is provided with an IPX8 equivalent waterproofing mechanism that can stand up to a water depth of up to 100 meters during lighting (i.e. when the modules are connected).

Just two push buttons are all that's needed to control the switch ON/OFF, 4-step brightness control (1000 lm/1400 lm/1600 lm/2000 lm) and non-step brightness control (800lm to 2600 lm). Remaining battery power is indicated with an LED indicator. Safety mechanisms include a temperature sensor, overcharge, over-discharge, over-current and short-circuit protection circuit.

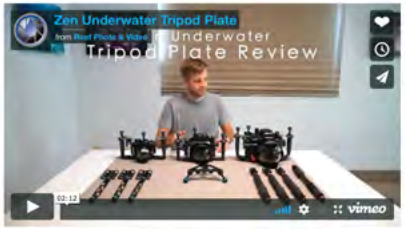
Bigblue Vl7200p Tri-Color Video Light

This great new addition to the Bigblue Dive Lights photo/video light family offers many features making it a great choice for any diver.

The VL7200PTC or Tri-Color is a self-contained, compact yet powerful, all-purpose dive light - but is best suited for video purposes with a 120° beam angle and 3 color settings - a cool white, warm white, and red mode. This light generates 7200 lumens, and is controlled by a reliable push-button. Also an option in the push-button system is a built-in red LED mode, great for lowering the color temperature and creating a great light for viewing all types of sea life. This light also comes with a ball joint for camera use, a sturdy glove, and has a reliable Li ion rechargeable battery and charger.

www.oceanleisurecameras.com

Zen Underwater Tripod Plate



The Zen Underwater Tripod Plate comes standard with 3x 1” ball mounts which can be used to attach any standard 1” ball arms. Also included are two 1/4 20 screws used to attach to your underwater housing. There is also a 12-24 threaded opening for Ikelite.

The tripod plate is compatible with multiple housings from compact to DSLR size. For complete compatibility, please give us a call!

www.reefphoto.com

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"Often copied, never equaled"

SeaLife DC2000

by Carey Rose

www.dpreview.com

I have an addiction to small cameras with big sensors. I've owned a Ricoh GR, original Fujifilm X100 and still have a Nikon Coolpix A knocking around. The EOS M100 and 22mm F2 combo also fits the bill.

But with how good 1"-type sensors have gotten lately and how well they can balance the compactness and speed of their lenses, I've been left wondering: Where are all the fixed lens, 1"-sensor compacts? The Canon G7 X II and G9 X II, Sony RX100-series and Panasonic LX10 all have short zooms in front of their sensors, and most manage to have pretty wide maximum apertures. Just think how fast and yet compact a prime lens could be on one of these.

Which brings us to the SeaLife DC2000, a compact camera with a 1"-type 20MP sensor and a 31mm-equivalent F1.8 prime lens in a waterproof, shockproof body. Despite being, on paper, pretty close to the ideal pocket point-and-shoot for me, it is most definitely not marketed toward me. It's really targeted at the diving community, not land-based photography enthusiasts. It's also not manufactured by one of the more 'traditional' camera companies, and as such, doesn't benefit from the years of refinements and iterations that the likes of Canon and Nikon can take advantage of.

Key features

- 20MP 1"-type BSI-CMOS sensor
- 31mm equivalent F1.8 lens
- Without housing, waterproof to 18m/60ft and shockproof to 1.5m/5ft
- Full manual and aperture controls
- 80MB internal storage, microSD slot
- 1080/60p video recording
- 3.5in / 9cm close focus
- Assortment of underwater and above-water scene modes
- Battery rated to 200 shots (CIPA)

I've been carrying the SeaLife DC2000 around with me over the past couple of weeks and attempting to use it as I use my Nikon Coolpix A - a fun snapshot camera to have on me that takes better quality images than my smartphone. Here's what I found.

The 1"-type sensor really makes a difference when the ISO value climbs. Processed in Adobe Camera Raw | ISO 1600 | 1/125 sec | F1.8

The SeaLife DC2000 in all its 1"-type sensor glory, and near its natural habitat.

©Allison Johnson. 11.6 mm, 1/30 sec, f/1.8, ISO 200

A macro mode helps you get up-close-and-personal with your subjects. Out-of-camera JPEG | ISO 125 | 1/1000 sec | F4.5

Image quality

First of all, the DC2000's image quality is pretty darn good. With what is likely the same sensor as a Sony RX100 III, you can expect good dynamic range and low light performance, particularly if you shoot Raw. The JPEGs out of the camera are solidly above-average with pleasing color most of the time, but sharpening and noise reduction are a little aggressive (no real surprise there). White balance strays a bit to the cool side, but whether you like that or not is really a matter of personal taste.

The lens is a great performer at all apertures

One criticism I have is that the tone curve applied to JPEGs can result in highlights that are a little abruptly clipped; it doesn't happen all the time, but I was happy to have Raw files to play with to smooth the highlights out when this happened. Though there are an abundance of scene modes (I almost exclusively shot with it in Program Auto or Aperture Priority), it'd be nice to see some JPEG fine-tuning adjustments on future models.

I have to say I'm impressed with the lens on the DC2000. It's a good performer at all apertures, is more than sharp enough edge-to-edge and even makes some decent sunstars. I just didn't expect this sort of quality from such a compact lens in a small waterproof body, and it's nice to be pleasantly surprised here. That said, there can be some green and purple fringing (lateral chromatic aberration) on high-contrast edges (see the image of the backlit trees earlier on), particularly if you're shooting backlit subjects and brightening in post. There's no profiles to correct this automatically in Adobe Camera Raw, but it's easily taken care of manually with a few sliders.

In use

Allright, so the images out of the DC2000 are pretty darn good. But what's it like to use?

It's a mixed bag. As you'd expect from a rugged waterproof camera, build quality is exceptional. The camera feels dense and solid, and though most buttons feel a bit mushy (a side-effect of the sealing no doubt), the shutter button has great feedback

and an easy-to-feel distinction between the focus half-press and a full press to capture an image. The mode dial is likewise better-feeling than I expected.

The controls, though, are downright strange if you've ever used a digital camera from one of the more established manufacturers.

When browsing your captured images in playback, you go back by hitting 'up' on the four way controller, and forward by hitting 'down.'* You will forget this, even after shooting with the camera for several weeks, and you will occasionally hit 'left' to go back. This will rotate your image 90 degrees counter-clockwise. You will then curse under your breath as you prepare yourself to hit that same mushy button three more times to turn the photo the right way around, with each press being followed by a pronounced delay if you've been shooting Raw files. There's also no way that I can find to view your shooting settings in playback.

However, once you enable the 'delete' function for eliminating single or multiple images, 'left' and 'right' on the directional pad become the method for browsing images.

The controls are downright strange

As far as the Raw files go, they're great to process but frustrating to capture. With around five full seconds required for the camera to write the huge 40MB files to the microSD card, this is not your next 'caught moment' burst camera. My old Coolpix A positively smokes the DC2000 in terms of interface and shooting responsiveness, regardless of whether I'm shooting JPEGs or Raws.

There's also a wireless button that does absolutely nothing most of the time. Only after you've established a connection to your smart device with the 'Link 123 Plus' app does the wireless button bring up a menu option to automatically send each image to your phone. You can't reassign it. I just downloaded my files from the card at the end of the day.

Lastly, when you go to change exposure parameters, you must press the 'OK' button before you can then adjust them by pressing up/down on the four way controller. Curiously, they work the opposite way I would expect, though, with 'up'

The Sealife DC2000 is also available with a 60m rated housing

lengthening the shutter speed and widening the aperture. You get used to it, but there's still a bit of a disconnect there.

Some of this should be qualified, though, that simply putting the camera into 'P' or Auto modes gives generally good results for casual shooting (much of the gallery was shot this way). Unfortunately, if you're hoping to fire off a quick shot or two to check settings (or if you're underwater, check framing), this does little to mitigate the lag if you're capturing Raw files.

The 60m rated housing is available with a 0.5x and 0.7x wide angle lens as well as a SuperMacro lens.

Should you buy one?

This is a tough one. I'm absolutely in love with the idea of this camera, but am having a hard time rationalizing purchasing one.

If you're in the market for a tough camera, like the Olympus TG-5 (a perennial staff favorite), the SeaLife DC2000 will absolutely reward you with higher-quality images if you can live without the zoom. It's a great beach or vacation camera that can stand up to a fair amount of abuse. Power-on is quick, and you can also take an image quickly after startup. And then you'll have to wait five seconds before the next image if you're shooting Raw.

I can't help but wonder how wide an aperture they could give this sort of prime lens if it were retractable and could forego the environmental sealing. That said, the SeaLife files stand up pretty well to those from my Nikon, and because of that sealing, I'll never get dust on the sensor (this is an ongoing battle I have with retractable-lens cameras that I always seem to be on the losing side of).

I'm going to keep hoping and praying for one of the established manufacturers to make something that can approach the philosophy of the DC2000, but with greater responsiveness and more modern controls (though it's possible SeaLife could address some of my qualms with a firmware update). If you can live with the operational quirks, it's easy to recommend the DC2000 on the merits of its image and build quality. And of course there's something to be said for the camera that's always with you to also be able to take a knock or two.

Carey Rose

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www.dpreview.com

www.careyrosemm.com

UWCameraStore Fiber Snoot Pro Dual

by Dan Bolt

Just after the last edition of UwP Mag came out I received one of the new dual-fibre snoots from UWCameraStore. I'm a big fan of snoots and have a few in my armoury – ranging from the Flip Snoot Pro from the same manufacturer all the way down to a 20cm length of old drain-pipe glued to a spare diffuser for my YS-D1. Don't laugh, it's surprisingly effective in the right situations!

So, enter with eager anticipation the "UWCameraStore Fiber Snoot Pro Dual". As the name succinctly suggests this is a dual snoot, which uses fibre cores fed through 2 flexible Loc-Line arms to channel the light precisely where the photographer wants it.

For us micro four-thirds shooters it can sometimes be hard to get the light where it's needed because m4/3rds lenses – and therefore ports – are so short there isn't physically much room to tuck strobe and snoot into the desired position. Take the Panasonic 45mm macro for example, the port for my Aquatica housing stands only 50mm proud of the housing.

The snoot is designed to fit snugly over the front of the strobe and on the model for Sea & Sea flash-units, two plastic 'pins' are used to firmly hold it in place. The first couple of times you insert the pins (they slot into the grooves on the outside of the strobe for the diffusers) they can be really hard to get in and out but after a few dives it becomes much easier. (Please note that this snoot is available for the YS-D1 & YS-D2, DS160 & DS161, Z-330, Z-240 & D-2000 strobes).

On the inside of the snoot there are actually three 'pick-up' groups of fibres. Two directly in-front of the flash bulb and the third is for channelling the on-board LED spotting light. Making use of the spotting-light is a great idea as it can help you see exactly where the light will land when you fire your strobe. This core makes up about 1/3rd of the total number of cores in both of the articulated arms. I found that the spotting light wasn't really powerful enough on my YS-D1 to make much difference on shallow

Inside the head of the snoot, showing the three pick-up cores

Hermit crab on Dead Mens Fingers. Olympus OM-D EM-1, Aquatica AE-M1, Sea & Sea YS-D1, Dual Fibre Snoot, Olympus 30mm macro, f/13, iso400, 1/320th

dives, but during deeper dives and at night this was surprisingly effective. In use it is also obvious that the third pickup core of fibres also transmits the strobe light so you end up with a nice even light across your subject.

At the end of each arm is an adjustable funnel, which allows for even finer control over the light beam and can also be removed completely to give a soft-edged beam if required.

As with all snoots the light actually transmitted to the subject is just a fraction of that created by the strobe itself. But being able to get the ends of the flexible arms so close to the subject meant I didn't have to dial up my YS-D1s as much as with my other snoots, saving battery and speeding recycle times.

The whole unit is designed to be mounted centrally over your housing's port so that you can have one arm on each side. For open reef diving this is the perfect placement as it leads to a nicely balanced set-up, but if your chosen subject is under a ledge or over-hang then all that bulk above the housing can cause difficulties getting into the right position to shoot.

The adjustable arms are 35cm long and can be bent into an infinite number of positions. Back, side and front lighting are all a breeze to achieve,

Fan worm. Olympus OM-D EM-1, Aquatica AE-M1, Sea & Sea YS-D1, Dual Fibre Snoot, Olympus 12-50mm at 30mm, f/8, iso400, 1/160th

Olympus OM-D EM-1, Aquatica AE-M1, Sea & Sea YS-D1, Dual Fibre Snoot, Olympus 60mm macro, Nauticam CMC-1, f/16, iso200, 1/320th

and even with the super-short working distance of the Olympus 60mm macro + Nauticam CMC-1 combo I was easily able to get the light just where I wanted it.

The more I used the Fibre Snoot Pro Dual the more I liked it, and because you're only using one strobe & mount, you can still take another un-snooted strobe to cover all situations. The all-plastic body is well made and very robust; I took the one I was leant for this review on a 1500 mile round-trip to the Highlands of Scotland and it performed flawlessly & came back as-new… though I have to confess that the cardboard box got a little soggy!

Dan Bolt
www.underwaterpics.co.uk

Don't settle for 2nd best

Film - No Filter No White Balance

Digital - No Filter Manual White Balance

Magic Filter Manual White Balance

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

Sony Alpha A7R III and Ikelite 200DL housing

by Phil Rudin

My first review of a Sony A7 full frame mirrorless camera was in UWP issue #86 in Sept/Oct 2015 covering the A7 II followed by an A7R II/Ikelite review in issue #90 May/June 2016. During the current release cycle Sony introduced the A7R III first on Oct. 25, 2017 followed by the A7 III which started to ship in April 2018. Sony has also released the High speed A9 sports camera and I am sure an A7S III video oriented body will be announced in the near future. All of these cameras have the same magnesium alloy body and the control placement is near identical, the A9 has an additional Drive/Focus mode dial on the left top of the camera. At this time I have both the A7R III and the A7 III in house. All three cameras work in the Ikelite 200DL housing which was shipped to me prior to the A7 III release.

Ikelite Underwater Systems is a USA based company which has expanded its distribution network to cover most areas of the world during its fifty plus years in business. Ikelite has a large and loyal customer base built on a foundation of excellent customer support and product reliability.

During DEMA in November 2015 Ikelite introduced a complete line of housings for the Sony Alpha A7 II, A7R II and A7S II Full-Frame mirrorless cameras. When these housings were introduced they used the traditional DSLR port mount and featured full TTL support for Ikelite's complete line of DS strobes.

The newly released Ikelite 200DL housings future the greatly improved "Dry Lock" port mounting system. New lighter ports are also being added to the product line and a lighter and thinner back plate is being developed for shallow water applications like surf photography.

Sony Alpha A7R III camera

Sony's new flagship Alpha A7R III is one of the third generation Sony full frame mirrorless cameras and the second generation to include sensor based in-body image-stabilization or (IBIS). Sony debuted the first Alpha A7, A7R & A7S cameras during 2013 when they were the first mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras to feature a full-frame (36 X 24 mm) image sensor with a body the size of the current Olympus E-M1 II & E-M5 II mirrorless cameras.

Sony has made it quite clear that they intend to challenge Canon and Nikon in the pro and "Pro-Sumer" markets by focusing heavily on their full-frame lineup of mirrorless cameras. Many readers are familiar with the A7R II and I would like to point out some of the upgrades in the A7R III that will be useful for underwater shooters.

The ISO range on the A7R III has been expanded to 100-32000 from 100-25600, the Electronic viewfinder is now 368K dot v. 235K, frame rate has been increased from 5 fps to 10 fps in continuous shooting mode, focus points have been increased from 399 to 425 and the LCD resolution has increased from 1229K dots to 1440K.

One of the biggest improvements for underwater photographers is a huge increase in battery life from a CIPA rating of 290/340 (EVF/

LCD) shots to a rating of 530/650 shots per charge. This is a figure that varies depending on the lens being used. With the Sony FE 90mm F/2.8 macro I was getting results in the 140-200 image range with the A7R II with the new A7R III that number has at least doubled. Dynamic range has also increased from 13.9 to 14.7 with a DXO rating of 100 up from 98 for A7R II. The A7R III has also added dual card slots with one supporting UHS-II ultra high speed cards.

The second large improvement for underwater photography is in auto focus speed and accuracy even in low light. The AF speed with the Sony 90mm macro was an issue with the A7R II. Thanks to the faster processing speed, improved circuitry and increase in AF points this is no longer an issue even at ten frames per second with wider lenses. The new body also has the same AF point joystick found on the Sony A9 which allows you to quickly move the focus points around in the frame.

Sony currently offers a verity of excellent lenses with weather sealing which are well suited to U/W photography. In addition several other lens manufactures make direct mount auto focus and manual focus lenses for the Sony FE mirrorless cameras. Lens adapters like the Metabones, Sigma and others have also opened up the ability to use Canon, Nikon, Sigma and many other lenses with full AF and/or manual control as well. Many photographers have made the move from Canon or added the Sony Alpha A7R III body to their bag and still use their complete line of Canon lenses with an adapter.

Most photographers when they hear the word mirrorless camera naturally assume that this equates to a much smaller and lighter overall underwater camera system compare to like quality DSLR

camera systems. This is not entirely the case with the Sony A7R III system and should not be the only consideration when moving to a full frame camera. While the 42.4MP A7R III body at 627G (22.11oz) and 126.9 x 95.6 x 73.7 mm is smaller than the Canon 50.6MP 5DR body at 845G (29.81oz) and 152 x 117x 76 mm or the slightly heaver Nikon D850 the differences in systems for the most part ends there.

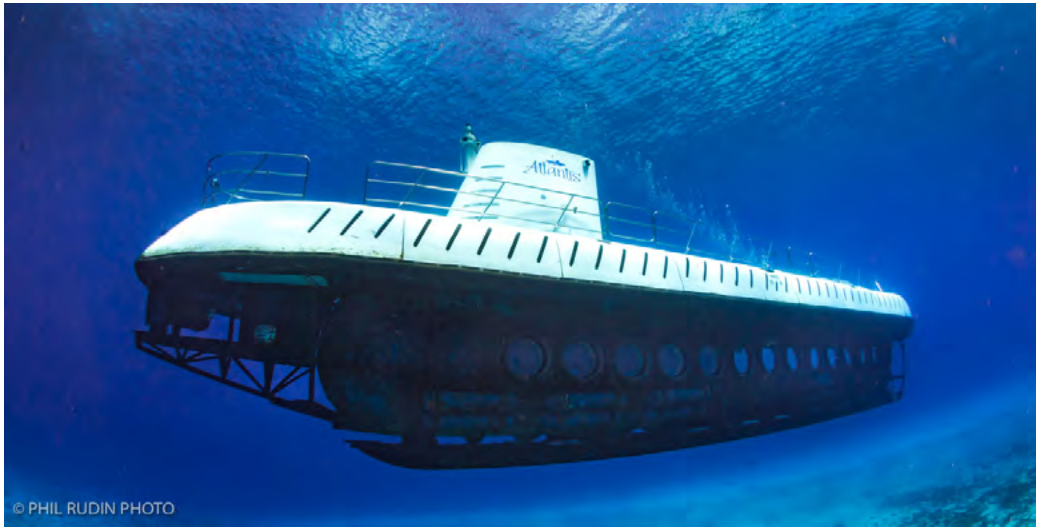
While mirrorless systems like Micro43 are able to incorporate much smaller lenses this is not the case with quality 35 mm full frame mirrorless lenses. Larger sensors mean bigger lenses with heaver glass to cover the larger full frame sensors. This is a simple issue of physics and while some mirrorless lenses for full frame can be designed a bit smaller and lighter than DSLR lenses those used for U/W photography remain about the same size and price as their full frame DSLR counterparts. As an example I shot the Sony A7R III with the Son

y 16-35 mm F/4 zoom, Sony 90 mm F/2.8 macro and Canon 8-15 F/4 Fisheye with metabones adapter for this review. The 16-35 mm on release in 2015 retailed at $1348.00 USD, weights 518G (18.27oz) and is 78x98.5mm (3.07x3.88 inches)

while the Canon 16-35 mm F/4L lens on release in 2014 retailed at $1199.00USD, weight 615G (21.69oz.) and is 82.6x112.8mm (3.25x4.44 inches) not a great deal of difference.

The Sony 90 mm F/2.8 on release in 2015 retailed for $1098.00USD weight 602G (21.23oz.) and is 79x130.5mm (3.11x5.14 inches) while the Canon 100 mm F/2.8L on release in 2009 retailed for $1050.00USD weight 625G (22.04oz.) and 77.7x122.9mm (3.06x4.84 inches). Again not much difference between these lenses which both focus at 1:1. With wide angle lenses like the 16-35mm on mirrorless full frame you can get away with slightly smaller ports (say 200mV230mm) and still get decent corners at F/13 and above.

Image quality with the A7R III is more than impressive at any ISO setting you would normally use underwater. The high resolution from the 42.4MP sensor allows a wide margin for cropping images. Be aware that high resolution full frame



Atlantis Submarine passing the C-53 Wreck, Cozumel Mexico, Sony A7R III, Canon 8-15mm Fisheye at 14mm, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-400, F/13, 1/125th sec.

sensor cameras do not allow much margin for error when it comes to focus and depth of field. Any mistakes in focusing will be obvious in the high resolution images and no amount of post processing will correct for those problem images.

The Sony A7R III retails for around $3198 / £3199 / body only.

Ikelite Alpha A7R III Housing and DL Port System

One of the nice advantages of the Ikelite A7 III, A7R III and A9 lineup is that all of the camera bodies use the same magnesium alloy frame with almost identical button placement so one Ikelite housing can be used with all three cameras with only slight modification.

The Ikelite Alpha A7R III housing design features the opaque light gray ABS-PC polycarbonate material for the front section of the housing with a transparent DSLR style polycarbonate housing back. This attractive gray housing color matches the Ikelite DS strobe line and always drew lots of attention from other photographers.

It seems no matter where travel I am always being approached with Ikelite equipment questions and comments. The light gray housing color also shades the camera and provides extra protection from the sun during long boat rides. The Sony

Mask/Glass Goby, Casa Del Mar House Reef, Cozmel Mexico, Sony A7R III, Sony 90mm macro, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-100, F/20, 1/250th sec

Alpha A7R III housing remains the only production housing I am aware of that supports TTL for the complete Sony A7 III/A9 series of cameras when paired with Ikelite DS series TTL strobes.

The housing can be purchased with a manual sync adapter or the optional ST1K Sony TTL kit with Hotshoe. The ST1K provides integrated TTL encoding specific to each camera model and tuned to Sony's exposure protocol. The TTL converter fits under the camera mounting tray and is a plug and shoot unit which requires no maintenance or additional battery. Exposure compensation in TTL mode is supported using the cameras built-in controls which can be accessed in several ways and assigned to different function buttons to suit the users needs. Other TTL strobes from Inon, Nikonos and Sea & Sea can also be used with Ikelite electronic sync connections but only in manual exposure modes.

The housing includes a base with left-hand quick release handle and rubberized grip, mounting threads for

Cenote Guide Miki, Tajma Ha, Yucatan Mexico, Sony A7R III, Sony 16-35mm at 16mm, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-3200, F/9, 1/100th sec.

an optional right grip, port opening cover which locks in place using the three threaded port locking screws, a waterproof bulkhead cap to protect the strobe cord socket when not in use, silicone O-ring lube and a one year warranty. A verity of optional gears are available which cover a wide range of both Sony FE and third party lenses. The Ikelite web site has a complete lens chart which is continually being updated as new lenses are released.

For this review I used three lenses the Sony FE 90 mm F/2.8 macro G OSS, the Sony Vario-Tessar T* FE 16-35 mm F/4 ZA OSS and the Canon EF 8-15mm F/4L Fisheye USM lens with Metabones IV adapter. All three lenses are quite good and were able to handle the high resolution Alpha A7R III (42.4 MP) sensor with outstanding results. The 90 mm macro is without question the sharpest macro lens I have ever used with any camera. Ikelite also supports a virtual laundry list of other excellent lenses from a verity of manufactures.

Palancar Gardens, Cozumel Mexico, Sony A7R III, Canon 8-15mm Fisheye at 8mm, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-400, F/10, 1/200th sec.

Field Testing the Ikelite 200DL Housing

The Sony FE 16-35 mm zoom produced sharp images using the Ikelite modular eight inch acrylic port and lens extension. I found best results with the Sony 16-35 mm zoom fell within the F/13 to F/20 range but I was not disappointed with wider aperture settings down to F/5.6. I have found that large acrylic ports tend to reflect the front of the lens back onto the sensor in direct sun light near the surface a bit more consistently than optical glass ports. This was the case using the Ikelite port at or near the surface in bright overhead sunlight with the

Sony 16-35 zoom.

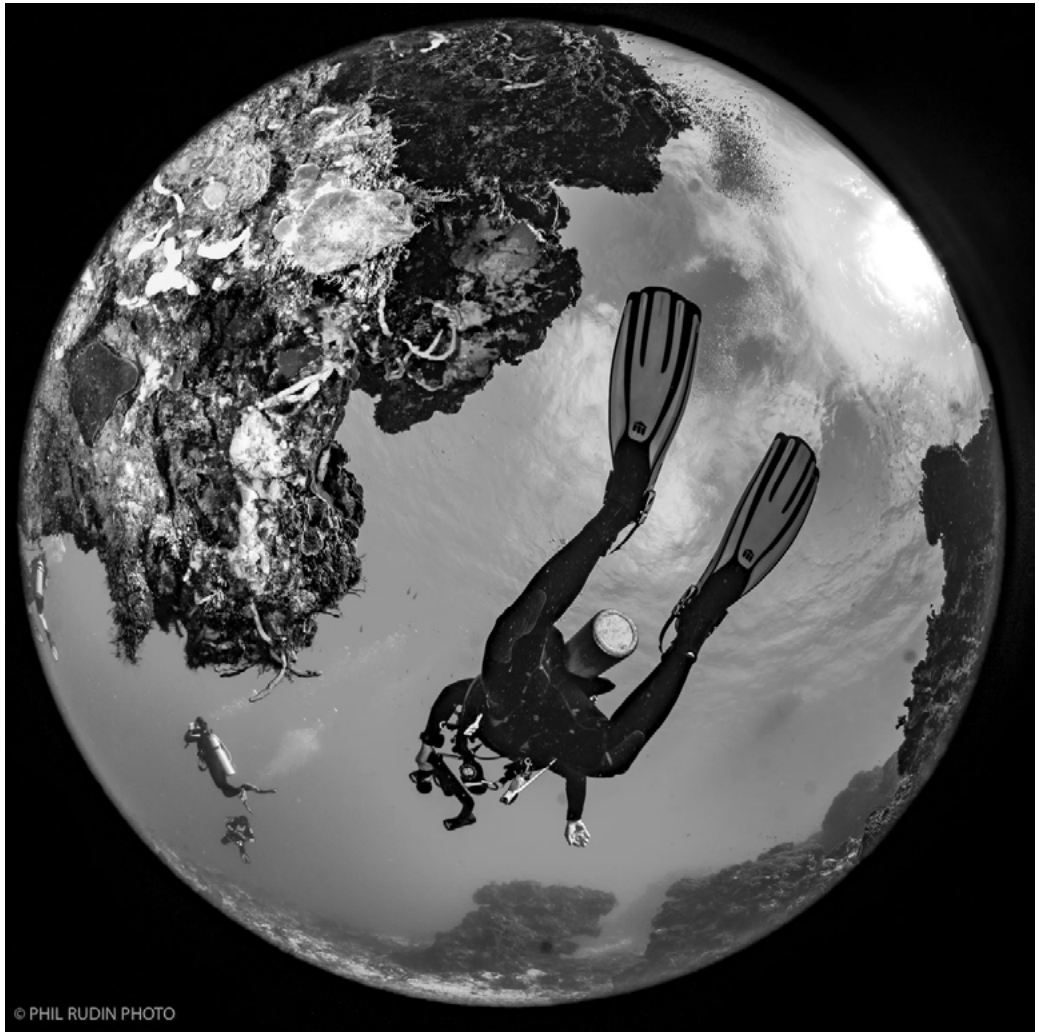
With the Canon 8-15mm Circular Fisheye lens results are best when you remove the shade from the eight inch dome prior to the dive. The 8mm circular fisheye end of the lens will vignette badly in the corners when the shade is left in place. This is an issue with all of the dome ports I have tried with this lens from 100mm to 230mm so you need to be aware that if your dome shade does not come off you will have issues with this lens.

The 8-15 fisheye lens has excellent depth of field from F/8 on the full frame sensor and I controlled exposure using shutter speed and ISO to balance lighting. The Ikelite eight inch dome with both the 16-35 zoom and 8-15 fisheye has a tendency to turn dome port up once in the water. The system is in fact completely buoyant in both fresh and salt water. Over time this can become quite fatiguing to the wrist and forearm especially while holding the entire system with one hand. A fix for this issue is in the works that involves a counter balance using a soft weight pocket with a small amount of dive weight added to balance the system. My prototype housing was not equipped with this feature so I can not comment on how well it will work.

To install both of the wide angle lenses the camera first needs to be mounted inside the housing.

Spinyhead Blenny, Casa Del Mar House Reef, Cozumel Mexico, Sony A7R III, Sony 90mm macro, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-64, F/18, 1/250th sec.

This requires that you mount the assembled camera (formatted card, fresh battery, etc.) onto the camera tray using the simple tripod screw and slide the camera into the mounting plate inside the housing. Be aware that the mounting plate has no lock so the best way to prevent the camera from moving is to point the front of the housing with the port side down until the housing is fully closed.



Palancar Gardens, Cozumel Mexico, Sony A7R III, Canon 8-15mm Fisheye at 8mm, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-400, F/10, 1/200th sec.

The hotshoe then needs to be pushed ALL the way forward into the camera hotshoe, next align the control levels over the controls on the camera. Once this is done the three lid-snaps can be secured using even pressure on all three at the same time for an even seal of the rear O-ring.

After the housing is closed the camera will not move and the lens and port can be mounted from the front. I keep the front cap on the camera until

I am ready to mount the lens to prevent the rather large sensor from collecting any dust bunnies. Make sure that the gear is properly mounted to the lens before it is installed on the camera again to prevent dust or worse from entering the camera body.

Once the lens is mounted and the gear sleeve is aligned rotate the zoom control on the left hand side of the housing to be sure the gear is rotating properly. The port is then installed over the lens and pushed into place over the housing O-ring.

Three small port locking screws are provided to hold the port in place on the housing mount. The housing comes with a vacuum valve already installed. I recommend that purchase the optional vacuum pump ($60.00 US) to add an additional layer of protection from flood damage to the system. The pump simply attaches to the valve, the vacuum is drawn and the system is ready to go. Be aware that some lenses (including the 90mm macro) have a push/pull manual focus ring near the front of the lens which needs to be pushed forward for auto focus to work. If you bump the focus ring into the manual focus possession while mounting the port the AF will not work so be sure to test AF before going into the water along with test firing the strobes.

The 90mm macro modular port system I used has three sections, the flat port, an extension ring and the base mount which seals to the housing. All three should be mounted together before being sealed to the housing. The flat port has the 67 mm threads common for use with accessory close-up lenses and flat port can also be used with other lenses and extensions.

During my review I used two Ikelite DS-161 strobes with four Ikelite seven inch double ball arms, an Ikelite dual sync cord and two Ikelite

Cenote Guide Miki, Tajma Ha, Yucatan Mexico, Sony A7R III, Sony 16-35mm at 16mm, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-3200, F/9, 1/100th sec.

dome diffusers. The dome diffusers widen and soften lighting much like a small soft box for land photography. The dome diffusers worked well for both wide angle and macro shots. These dome diffusers eat up about a half stop of light which I did not miss.

My prototype housing was not equipped with TTL circuitry so I was shooting with a manual sync cord during my three weeks of diving in the Cenotes of the Yucatan and then the wonderful reefs of Cozumel Mexico. I find Ikelite's DS-161 strobes to be among the best in the industry and they did not disappoint when used with Sony's Alpha A7R III camera and lenses.

The controls on the Ikelite housing are ergonomic and intuitive. While testing this system I shot using the LCD screen and for the first time the optional 45 degree viewfinder. Auto focus was fast and accurate using both the LCD and the accessory viewfinder. I preferred using the Sony A7R III's

Cenote Car Wash, Yucatan Mexico, Sony A7R III, Canon 8-15mm Fisheye at 8mm, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-200, F/8, 1/250th sec.

excellent electronic viewfinder with the accessory enlarging viewfinder especially when shooting macro.

The housing ships with a useful pickup finder but it does not do justice to the outstanding EVF found on the A7R III. I would recommend adding an optional Ikelite 45 or 180 degree optical viewfinder to the housing if you intend to us the EVF frequently. I found that the Sony 90mm macro would still hunt in some cases but the problem has been much improved over the A7R II I reviewed in 2016.

I have programed back focus as my main shooting configuration for high end cameras

Bridled Goby , Casa Del Mar House Reef, Cozumel Mexico, Sony A7R III, Sony 90mm macro, Ikelite 200DL housing, Two Ikelite DS-161 Strobes, ISO-64, F/18, 1/250th sec.

shooting both above and below water. I am happy to report that Ikelite has added a trigger control to support back focus on the new 200DL housings. The zoom/focus control on this housing is smooth and easy to reach with one finger. I controlled many setting like ISO, focus area, frame rate, focus point array and more from the large control display on the LCD accessed through the Fn button. Control changes are very easy to see and it is easy to navigate through a number of control functions using the arrow pad buttons on the rear of the housing.

For shutter speed and aperture control I used the front and rear control wheels. A complete housing manual describing all of the controls can be found on the Ikelite.com web site in the housing information area. Since I am not much of a video shooter you will need to look elsewhere for reviews of video performance using the A7R III. All signs point to excellent video features.

If you are seeking the very best full frame image quality with Pro level lenses the Sony Alpha A7R III system should be at or near the top of your wish list.

All of the Ikelite Alpha A7R III and other Alpha A7/A9 series housings retail in the US for $1695.00 USD, the eight inch DL port is $380.00 USD and the DL macro flat port is $315.00 USD, port extensions are in the $150.00 to $200.00 range depending on the lens being used. The Ikelite system is attractively priced and a great value considering the retail $3200.00 USD price of the camera body alone.

Thanks to the Ikelite team (ikelite.com) for their assistance with the underwater equipment used for this review. I would also like to thank Miki Kurimoto Owner of Scuba Freedom in Playa Del Carmen, Mexico. Miki is an excellent guide for all Cenote diving needs while in the Yucatan. Miki can be reached at scubafreedom.com, jp.scubafreedom.com for Japanese and at her Miki Kurimoto FaceBook page.

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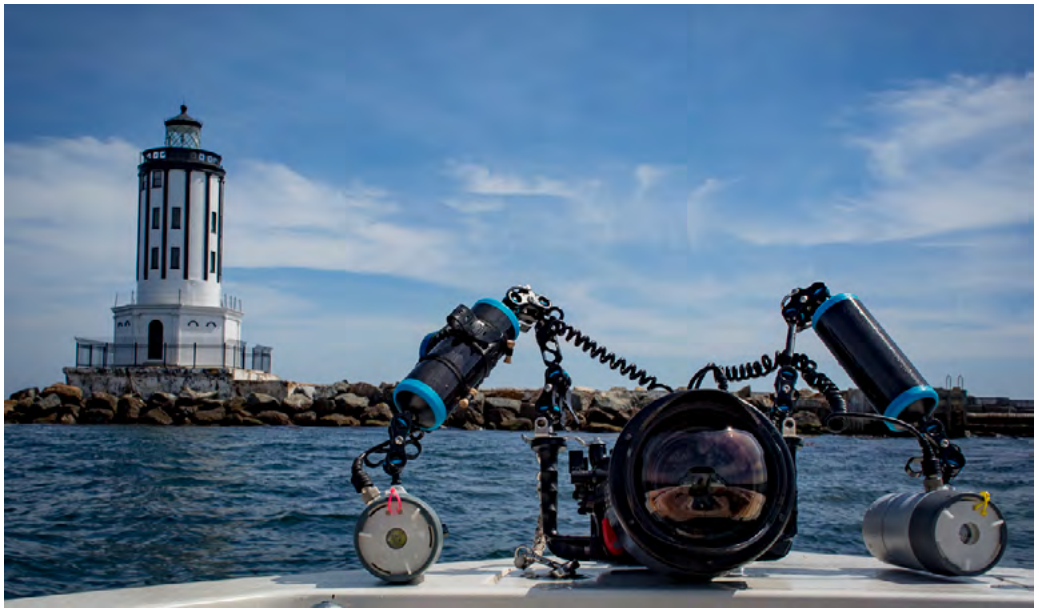
Nauticam WACP on Sony!

by Todd Winner

Images by Todd Winner and Mike Brock



The Nauticam 0.36x Wide Angle Conversion Port, WACP, has been getting a lot of attention lately and rightly so. In my opinion it is one of the most exciting products that has been designed for underwater photographers in years.

Most of the information that has been coming out has been related to Canon and Nikon cameras and if you are one of the many Sony full frame shooters you may have been feeling left out of the excitement. Well not any more! We have completed or testing with the Sony FE 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS and the results are exceptional.

The WACP is a true water contact optic. Like the legendary Nikonos film lenses it is designed to be exclusive used in water and not air. Domes suffer from corner softness especially when shooting with wide apertures. Water contact optics correct this corner softness allowing you to shoot at wider f/stops.

In addition the 0.36x Wide Angle Conversion Port increases the angle of view of any lens used behind it up to a maximum of 130°. This is a field

Sony a9, Nauticam housing, 28-70mm, Nauticam WACP

of view that sits between the popular full frame fisheye lenses (180 degrees diagonal) and ultra wide rectilinear zooms (approximately 110 degrees).

Although it looks like a standard port it is really a lens. The lenses that we use with the 0.36x Wide Angle Conversion Port act as the internal components of the lens, performing auto focus and electronic aperture. When placing a lens behind the WACP there is a 0.36x conversion, so a 28mm 75° lens effectively becomes a 10mm 130° lens. It is not limited to prime lenses or a single fixed focal length, the 0.36x Wide Angle Conversion Port is designed with full zoom through capability. The Sony FE 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS gives you almost a 3x zoom range and is able to focus as close as the front dome lens element. You can easily get wide, medium and tight coverage all on the same dive! If you switch to the Super 35 mode on the Sony bodies you can achieve even more reach. This is incredibly useful when shooting video.

The set up for the Sony FE 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS requires a 35.5mm N100 to N120 Port adapter, (37303) a 20mm extension ring, (21120) and a SE2870-Z zoom gear (37141).

www.nauticam.com

Still from video, Sony a7rIII, Nauticam housing,28-7-mm @28mm, WACP

Still from video, Sony a7rIII, Nauticam housing,28-7-mm @70mm, WACP

Todd Winner
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Mike Brock
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The Shootout 2018 results

by Adam Hanlon

The Shootout is a unique underwater photography event which pits teams in dive resorts around the world against each other in live shootouts. In 2016, a team at Lembeh Resort, Indonesia competed in a live shootout with a team at Gulen Dive Resort, Norway, with the former winning. From 16 to 23 June this year, a rematch was held, with the Lembeh team being captained by Alex Mustard and the Gulen team by Keri Wilk. The contest had three categories: Nudibranchs, Fish/Invertebrates and Wide Angle and at the end of each competition day, the participant's images went forward to a public vote on www.uwshootout.com.

The Nudibranch and Fish/Invertebrate rounds were both narrowly won by Team Lembeh, while Team Gulen won the wide angle category. These results allowed Team Lembeh to retain their title and win the contest overall. The actual winning margin was only 66 votes (of over 4000 in total), making it a very close run thing right up to the end.

Simultaneously to the the team contest was an individual contest between all the participants. This was won by Galice Hoarau of Team Gulen, with Nick More and Kellda Centeno of Team Lembeh taking second and third places respectively. Along the way, both teams created a simply stunning collection of underwater images, which is available to view on uwshootout.com. The 2018 Shoutout was such a a success that there are plans underway to run a further rematch in 2020.

www.uwshootout.com

Lembeh Resort
DIVE RESORT & SPA

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GULEN
Dive Resort

www.gulendiveresort.com
orjan@gulendiveresort.com

(Above) Team Lembeh (Below) Team Gulen

The Shootout 2018 - how it works

The Shootout is a live underwater shootout combining an individual competition with a team event between two resorts, one at Lembeh Resort and the other at Gulen Dive Resort.

There were three contest categories: Nudibranchs, Fish and Invertebrates and Wide Angle. The event consisted of a practice day for each category, followed by a contest day.

At the end of each contest day, team captains submitted a portfolio of participant's images from each resort. These were then be entered into a public vote on uwshootout.com.

The results of the public vote determined the individual placings. The image with the most public votes wins the category and the team with the lowest placing score overall (when all the team's placings are added together and divided by the numbers of photographers in each team) wins the team category.

It was the organizer's aim that each participant will enter an image into each category. Non-entry will result in a nominal placing of (joint) 50th in the category, and this placing will reflect in the individual and team scores.

The overall winner was determined by the individual with the lowest score from all their images entered over all 3 categories (again when they are added together).

The resort with the most votes in each category wins that category.

The resort with the highest number of votes (totalled over the 3 categories) wins overall.

Prizes were allocated according to individual and team positions.

The judging was overseen by a panel consisting of Adam Hanlon, Abi Mullens, Alex Mustard and Keri Wilk. This adjudication panel discussed and ruled on any disputes and made final decisions as and when required. In the event of a deadlock, Wetpixel Publisher, Eric Cheng, provided a casting vote.

Categories

Nudibranchs:

Practice day: 16 June.
Competition day: 17 June.

Submitted images must feature marine gastropods e.g. nudibranchs

Contestants may use any lens or combination of lenses they wish to create images.

The contestants may use guides on the practice day. On the contest day, guides can only be used to locate subjects and may not be used in any way as photographic assistants. Guide: participant ratio on contest day is 1:4.

Winner: Neil Rosewarn, Lembeh


1-Neil Rosewarn


2-Liz Wagstrom


3- Kelida Centeno


4-Taner Atilgan


5-Greg Sherman


6-Dag Leslie Hansen

Fish and Invertebrates

Winner: Nick More, Lembeh

Practice day: 18 June. Competition day: 19 June.

Submitted images must feature fish or marine invertebrates.

Contestants may use any lens or combination of lenses they wish to create images. The contestants may use guides on the practice day. On the contest day, guides can only be used to locate subjects and may not be used in any way as photographic assistants. Guide: participant ratio on contest day is 1:4.

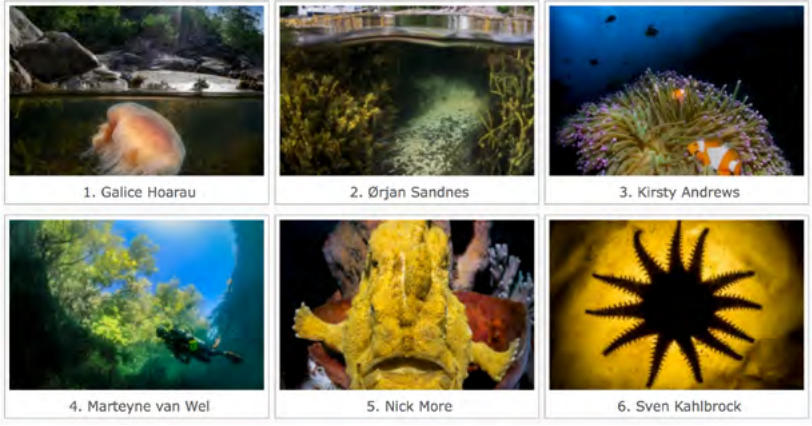
Wide Angle

Practice day: 20 June.
Competition day: 21 June.

Submitted images can feature any subject, but must be taken with a wide angle lens.

For the purpose of this category, a wide angle lens is defined as having a wider field of view (FOV) than a 35mm lens on a full frame camera in air (54.4°). Fisheye or rectilinear lenses are acceptable, as is the use of teleconverters and other optical devices as long as the FOV is still greater than 54.4°.

Winner:
Galice Hoarau, Gulen



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Manta Rays
The Oceans Gliders
by Attila Kaszo

Lady Elliot Island is a coral cay almost on the edge of the Continental Shelf on the southern part of the Great Barrier Reef. The largest and nearest mainland town is Hervey Bay from which regional aeroplanes commute to the Island.

Surrounded by a fringing coral reef, it's location is a magnet for large oceanic visitors like Manta Rays and Whales, which feed on plankton rich water fed by upwellings from the East Australian Current. There are of course many other notable species there as well, such as Dolphins and Turtles, but the main draw card is the Manta Rays (Manta alfredi).

Up close and personal, these rays are enormous, easily dwarfing the diver. Their wing span can extend to about 7mtrs, although the southern east population that frequent Lady Elliot Is., seem to average about 5mtrs across. They have the largest brain to body size ratio of any fish and can weigh in at over 1580kg.

An absolute delight to swim with because they are inquisitive and make great photographic subjects. That doesn't infer they are easy to get good photographs of, but rather like any wild animal patience and perseverance can be a virtue.

The most Mantas I saw on a single dive was six, and only on one dive were they completely absent, but the diving was still pleasant due to a school of Eagle Rays which where equally delightful to watch. Incidentally, Eagle Rays are not protected in Western Australia, and can be recreationally targeted by fishers. I question is why there isn't a Federal Government policy in place protecting these fish in all territorial waters.

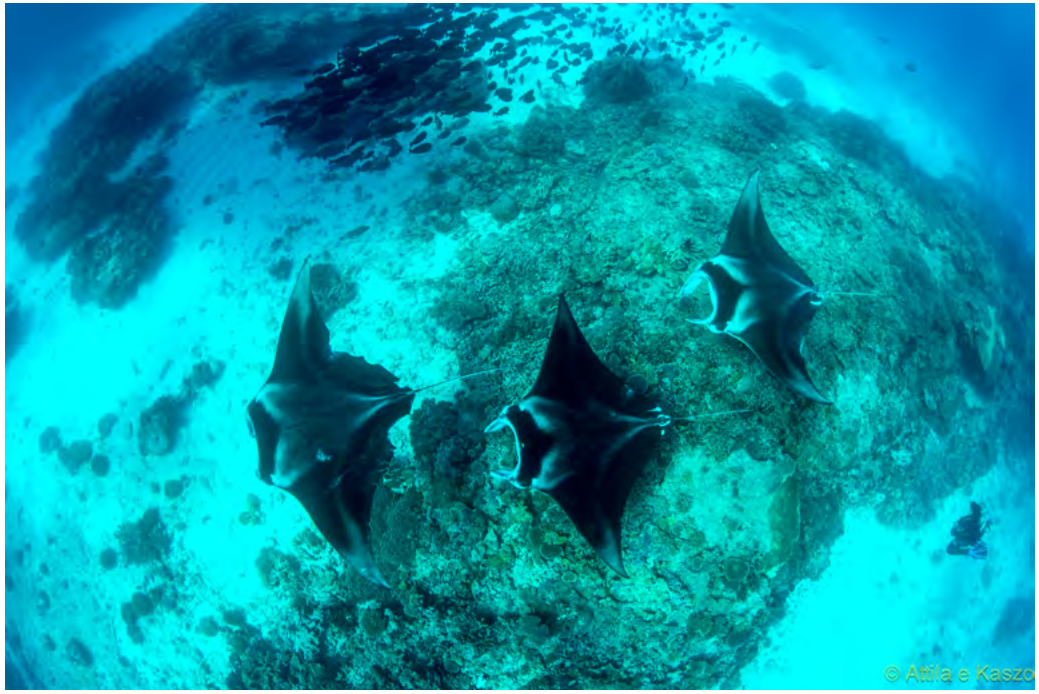
Aerial view of Lady Elliot Island positioned on the far south of the Great Barrier Reef in Queensland. The fringing reef is clearly visible and the islands airstrip can be seen cutting through the vegetation. Nikon D850 - Nikkor 24-70mm / 1/2000th @ f5–400iso

On most dives we experienced some level of current either at the beginning or end of a dive, but the current wasn't too difficult to cope with, even with my cumbersome 11kg camera rig. The chop on the surface however was a real pain to contend with.

The currents carry plankton and other sedimentary material from the Continental Shelf at various times of the year, to Lady Elliot Is. which lays only about 10km from the shelf. These nutrient rich upwelling's provide the food source vital for the Manta Rays and other marine creatures.

For photographers though, the nutrient filled water also provided a significant amount of backscatter which proved to be an issue for some

This Manta ray is almost motionless near a cleaning station. On the underside cleaner wrasse can be seen attending to their host.
Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/200th @ f13– Fill strobes, 400iso



Three Manta rays pass close to a diver dwarfed by their 5metre wingspan.
Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/80th @ f14– Fill strobes, 400iso

photographers, irrespective of how strobes were placed. I tended to use the strobes only as slight fill rather than any type of key lighting, relying on ambient light to give me the results I intended. In these circumstances it is almost impossible to get away from that "blue look", but somehow I think it works with Mantas.

Manta Rays are one of those animals that are awe inspiring for many reasons. Their size and ability to hover almost effortlessly in 3-4k currents as I witnessed in Indonesia, was astonishing.

What superb hydrodynamics this fish has to be able to manoeuvre its huge body so effortlessly and yet reach speeds exceeding 32km when challenged.

One of the things I found intriguing about Mantas are their markings. Each ray has unique marks, generally displayed on its underside, giving researchers a unique data base to operate from.

At Lady Elliot Is. I spoke with researchers from Project Manta, an organisation that has been actively monitoring Manta Ray behaviour and habitat range since 2007.

The research team have identified over 1,200 individuals since monitoring began, but they could not conclude if Manta numbers have increased or decreased. Through tagging methods, they did establish that revisits did occur, but the gender of the Rays was not known.

Lady Elliot Is. was declared a Marine Park in 2005 and accorded a "Green Zone" status. This zoning status effectively means "No Take" of anything terrestrial or underwater.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has allocated 33% of the entire park to such zoning measures. It is not clear whether the large numbers of Manta Rays visiting Lady Elliot Is. (about 80% identified, return annually) formed the basis of the zoning plan, as Project Manta didn't begin its monitoring program until 2007.

Even though the region has significant Manta Ray intrusion in "peak" season, and there appears to be some "resident" rays, the area could not be concluded as an aggregation site. Juveniles have never been

recorded, but pregnant rays have.

Although Manta Rays are found all around the shallows at Lady Elliot Is., they appear to favour an area where several coral heads or "Bommies" emerge from the otherwise sandy bottom. These coral formations form "cleaning stations" inhabited by cleaner wrasse. The fish play a vital role through a form of cleaning symbiosis, attending to the needs of all fish that visit, including these giant Manta Rays. Rays can be seen almost motionless above the bommies while they are attended to by the tiny wrasse. These are some of the best times to get good pictures of the "posing" Mantas.

The importance of these cleaning stations cannot be over emphasised. The fish visiting these areas rely not only on parasite removal, but also wound cleaning. So in effect these stations are more akin to a health clinic than a random cleaning stop.

Given that the range of Manta Rays extends from Heron Is. Qld to Solitary Is. off Coffs Harbour, NSW, and that effective and conclusive monitoring can take up to about twelve years, it's probably reasonable to expect conclusive data to be formed by this time.

What is known however, is that male rays reach maturity in 6-8 years while female rays mature in 10-13 years. The gestation period is between 12-13 months and at birth they have a wingspan between 1.2m – 1.5mtrs. Fertility is considerably low in comparison with other fish because females usually have 1 or 2 offspring at a time. Manta rays produce offspring once about every 2-5 years and can maintain this for about 30 years.

Without predation, human or otherwise they have been known to live for more than fifty years.

It also appears, that a trend toward greater

Manta ray (Manta alfredi) with resident Ramora fish.
Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/80th @ f8 – Fill strobes, 400iso

mortality of these beautiful fish is due to microplastics. These tiny plastic particles less than 5mm in size are ingested as the animal feeds on plankton in the water column.

An extract from a science paper provides an overview statement:

"The small size of microplastics (<5mm in size) are what make them an environmental hazard. Throughout the world oceans, filter feeding organisms like krill, fish, whales, rays, corals, sponges, crustaceans, and bivalves spend most of their time feeding on small organic particles in the water column. However, these organisms are not usually able to decipher plastic particles from their typical food source and end up consuming them. Microplastics are not easily broken down by marine organisms and often block their digestive tracts leading to mortality. Even if the organism is able to swallow and pass the plastic particle, it is still using precious energy to digest a particle

The Dive Staff at Lady Elliot Is. are well versed in Manta etiquette and its wise to follow their instructions if you want to get the beast out of the dives. Nikon D850 - Nikkor 24-70mm / 1/60th @ f2.8–640iso

Alan Simpson (Simmo) is the senior skipper at the resort, but has much more to offer divers than safety advice. He is a veteran diver with thousands of dives to his credit and over 50 years of experience.

Lady Elliot Island at sunset. Such a spectacular event that chairs, wine and nibbles are provided for the guests. Really a perfect way to finish the day.

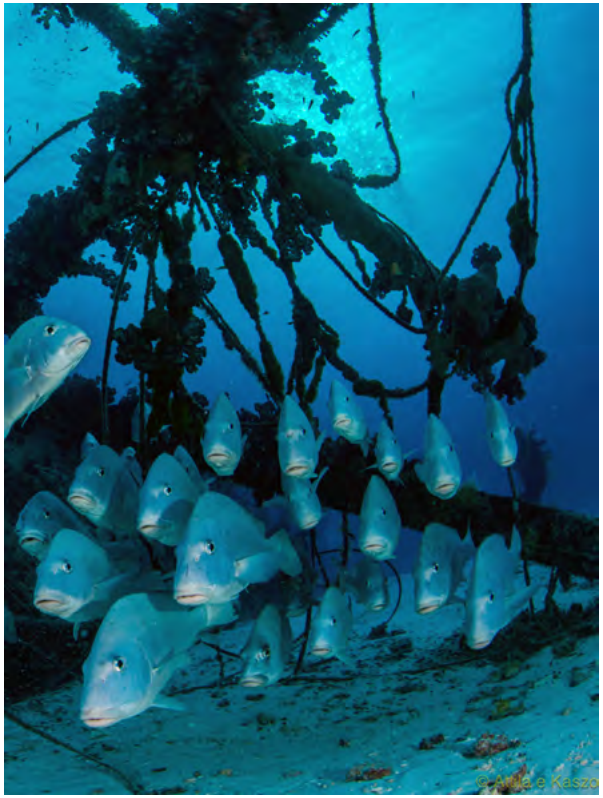
A Bull ray heading a school of Eagle rays around a bommie. Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/125th @ f8 – Fill strobes, 400iso

that has no nutritional or caloric value, leading to decreased fitness and energy. Studies have shown that marine species from the size of plankton all the way up to whales are ingesting microplastics in the marine environment (Wright, et al. 2013)."

I understand that the Manta Ray research team are also studying this issue and will publish their conclusions at the end of research. I think it's fundamental however to accept now with the research that has already been undertaken and finalised, that plastics are a significant threat to marine wildlife. This coupled with indiscriminate harvesting of sharks and rays globally and by-catch fatalities would seriously effect their population overall.

I still cannot find enough data on by-catch rates of Manta Rays in Australia, nor can I conclude the amount caught in shark mesh nets off the East Coast. I suspect it would not be a minimal amount, but even if it were, one death is one too many given their reproductive and maturity rates.

Given that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), considers the Manta Ray to be near threatened because of its low reproductive rate and consistent harvesting by fishers, Government intervention and action is imperative if we are to continue to see this species



(Above) Wreck of the yacht Severance at Lady Elliot Is. She sank in 1998 and rests in 21mtrs of water.
Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/250th @ f7.1 – 400iso

(Left) Big schools of Silver Sweetlip congregate close to the wreck as do other large fish species like Wobbygong sharks and Cobias.
Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/80th @ f14– Fill strobes, 400iso

A perfect shallow water artificial reef, the Severance is a haven for all sorts of marine creatures and makes a great photographic subject.
Nikon D800 - Sigma 15mm / 1/80th @ f7.1– 400iso

exist.

For me the other notable dive site was the wreck of the Severance. This intact yacht sank in 1998 in 21mtrs of water coming to rest on a sandy bottom. As an artificial reef in an otherwise baron region, it has proven to be a haven for all sorts of marine life. In my view the wreck is worth several dives (which I didn't have time for) to really get the benefits of all the macro life inhabiting the rigging and the superstructure.

In the short time I looked around there was just about everything a photographer is looking for in a dive site, from large pelagic fish to tiny invertabrates.

It's certainly worth the effort to visit Lady Elliot Is. during any season, but particularly during the Manta season June to August. Conditions can vary daily, but overall, the clarity is usually good enough to get some great shots of Mantas, especially if you stay on the bottom and let them come to you.

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Islands of Fire

by PJ Kotzé

I broke the surface in a daze of shock and disbelief and removed a plastic bag that had gotten tangled in my regulator…

The sun was setting as I wove my way through the plastic and trash floating around me in the calm water and as a Muezzin's call to prayer filled the air, a woman knee-deep in the water a few meters away disposed of her vegetable scraps in the sea.

This was me coming to terms with my first muck dive in the bay of Ambon, Indonesia. I was overwhelmed, confused and blown away - maybe it was the four back to back flights and 27 hours of traveling? Perhaps it was the incredible amount of life I had just photographed in the most bizarre spot I had ever visited that got to me. Probably both. The only thing I was certain of at this stage was that I had never seen such diverse macro life in such an odd setting before.

I was in Indonesia with Leon, my sailing, diving and general adventure companion (who also happens to be my father in law) about to embark on 12 days of what would be the best diving we had ever done in some of the most diverse and pristine locations Indonesia has to offer.

Our trip aboard the Mermaid 1 Liveaboard dive boat would embark from Ambon bay, a macro photographer's dream location and renowned muck diving spot. We would head for the remote volcanic Banda islands, offering massive wall dives crowded with prehistoric sea fans, big pelagics, banded sea snakes and generally epic diving.

The trip would then culminate diving in the remote sections of Raja Ampat, moving through the Misool area and ending in Sorong in the Northern stretch of the massive marine reserve.

A Diver is dwarved by monstrous fan corals - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/640

Trying to summarize the experience of diving in Indonesia is a difficult task as every dive could constitute its own article, but I will attempt to share some of the highlights of our Indonesian adventure.

As I briefly explained, Ambon is a weird place to dive, especially if one's trip starts here. Although the Bay of Ambon is extremely picturesque, the unfortunate reality about most of Indonesia is that many towns and harbours are extremely polluted and floating plastic in the water is quite common.

Being completely new to muck diving, I had no inkling of what to expect as we descended on our first dive. The term, muck diving never really sounded like something I'd like to do - I always saw myself as more of a pristine reef enthusiast but

I'm always open to new things… so I tried to keep an open mind as I descended to the featureless sand beneath me.

Once one sinks below the surface in Ambon, things get really weird really fast. Most dive sites are on sloping black sand walls within about 10 meters of the shore and when you settle on the sand and start looking around… you don't see much. Just patches of reef, some cans, bottles, a few anemones… and at this stage one might be forgiven for questioning your decision to take 4 back to back flights to look at someone's empty Coke can - this was my train of thought at least when I was signalled over by our incredible guide, Adnan to have a look at something. What followed would be repeated on almost every dive the next 12 days: Adnan would point, I would look, see nothing, Adnan would point again, I'd look again and then finally I'd see something amazing. In this case it was a Rhinopias or Scorpionfish native to Indonesia. Ambon is a paradise for different sorts of Scorpionfish and very rare Frogfish species such as the Psychedelic Frogfish and once you get your eye focused, you start seeing them everywhere. Frogfish, the most colourful Nudibranchs, Seahorses and basically everything a macro enthusiast could want, Ambon has it - although we haven't dived Lembeh yet (it's on the list) I could highly recommend Ambon for Macro photographers and it's safe to say that after only two days of Muck diving, I was loving it.

All too soon though, Mermaid 1 lifted her anchor and it was time to make passage to our next destination - the epic Banda islands.

The Bandas are a group of beautiful, small volcanic islands situated about 2000 km east of Java that offer not only pristine diving but also fascinating history.

During the 1600's and 1700's the small islands were the centre of the world's spice trade and were under Portuguese and Dutch rule for many years, resulting in the familiar terrible consequences of colonialism. Luckily their remoteness has ensured that the islands are in pristine condition above and below water and in stark contrast to the waters of Ambon, the clear waters around the Bandas feel very much untouched.

Our first Bandas dive was incredible and if I had to sum up my impressions in one word it would

(Left) Giant Frogfish - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/320
(Top) Chromodoris willani Nudibranch - Ambon
Canon 5D Mark 3, Canon L-Series F 2.8 100mm Macro Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 51 Strobes, ISO 320, F20, 1/250
(Above) Pygmy Horsehorse - Banda islands
Canon 5D Mark 3, Canon L-Series F 2.8 100mm Macro Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 51 Strobes, ISO 320, F20, 1/250

be, “Prehistoric”, and a wide-angle photographer’s dream. The islands rise from depths of up to 3km and offer wall diving that reminded me of the Brothers islands in the Red Sea. Massive sea fans and barrel sponges line the vertical walls surrounding the islands and when one looks out to the deep blue, Dogtooth Tuna, Giant Trevally and occasionally Scalloped Hammerhead sharks patrol on the edge of visibility which is regularly over 30m.

There were many highlights while diving the untouched walls of the Bandas but undoubtedly I will never forget diving amongst the many Banded Sea Kraits that make the reefs around the smoking volcano, Gunung Api (Fire Mountain) their home.

Diving here is special; Gunung Api is a semi-active volcano with smoke regularly bellowing from it’s gaping mouth and black lava flows running down its sides into the sea where bubbles and jets of heated water can be seen and felt gushing out of the sand patches in the reef. Now, throw into this bizarre mix dozens of meter-long, highly-venomous (they don’t bite) and over inquisitive Banded Sea Kraits, crystal clear water and abundant pelagics and you start getting an idea of the Bandas.

Another unexpected highlight was diving a small, unassuming patch of rocks next to a pier on the main island, Banda Neira, where we got the opportunity to witness and photograph the playful and colourful Mandarin fish at dusk.

Before we knew it, our time in the Bandas had run out and Mermaid 1 made a course to Ceram, Misool and the abundant reefs of Raja Ampat. I couldn’t really imagine how it could get any better but as always, I was open to suggestions.

The last 5 days of our trip were spent diving Ceram, Misool and the Danpier straights in the greater Raja Ampat area. Let me put it out there, if you’re looking for pristine reefs with an unimaginable abundance of marine life, I doubt many places could top Raja Ampat.

Although the visibility was sometimes not as crystal clear as that in the Bandas, the extreme amount of marine life made up for it. My only problem was that I never knew whether to throw on the wide angle or macro lens as every dive would offer up practically anything a photographer could

Vortex of Jacks and Barracudas - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/250

Mandarinfish - Banda islands
Canon 5D Mark 3, Canon L-Series F 2.8 100mm Macro Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 51 Strobes, ISO 320, F20, 1/250

Orangutan Crab - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Canon L-Series F 2.8 100mm Macro Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 51 Strobes, ISO 320, F20, 1/250

Oceanic Manta - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/250

ask for; from incredible wide scenes to macro subjects everywhere.

One particular instance where I was very happy to have the macro lens was when our guide, Adnan, excitedly gestured me towards a Gorgonian fan. I honestly couldn't see what he was pointing at and took a photo just to make him stop waving around! Only upon looking at my camera's LCD screen did I notice the tiny Pygmy Seahorse he had been pointing out to me. On the same dive we also had the opportunity to photograph one of my favourite macro subjects, the Orangutan Crab.

There was just so much to see and photograph that it was difficult to get out of the water everyday, despite the fact that we were regularly doing four 90 minute dives daily. Diving on Nitrox combined with the warm to mild sea temperatures makes the diving here comfortable and mostly easy. Long, slow dives are the norm and one can easily just dive with a rash vest and board shorts - just watch out for the fire coral!

As the end of our adventure loomed on the horizon like an Indonesian rain storm, the coral triangle had two more surprises in store. The first being the opportunity to dive the picturesque mangrove reefs where corals seemed to be stacked like flower arrangements in gin clear water with mangrove trees forming the backdrop for amazing photos and scenes.

The second surprise happened as the final day of diving in the Danpier straits dawned on Mermaid 1. The mood onboard was somber but Raja Ampat had one last surprise for us… I had an idea that it might be something big when Adnan convinced me to use the wide lens for the last dive and as we dropped to the reef below, the show started. Oceanic Mantas swooping in formation into a feeding station provided the most amazing end to an incredible trip and I have to admit I was so entranced by the flying giants that I managed to surface with my air gauge hopping on zero…

All too soon we were awaiting our return flight in the busy port of Sorong and already the experiences of the preceding two weeks seemed like fantasy in the smog and city traffic.

Coral Arrangement in the Mangroves - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/250

Adnan, our Guide - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/250

Mermaid Liveaboard - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Canon L-Series F4 24-105mm, ISO 125, F5, 1/250

Reliving the experience of diving the waters of Indonesia through our images, I almost can't believe that we were there. Words fail to describe the intensity of experience when diving in the coral triangle, but I can wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who is looking for a bucket list diving destination.

There are various budget options and I can honestly say that after diving over the world, it was the best diving and underwater photography either myself or Leon had experienced. I'm unsure where we should go next as I'm afraid most places will be a disappointment after what we experienced in Indonesia, but as I said, I'm always open to suggestions. On to the next one!

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https://vimeo.com/262829331

"Ussie" (The Author, PJ on the right and Leon on the Left) - Raja Ampat
Canon 5D Mark 3, Sigma 15mm F2.8 Fisheye Lens, Ikelite Housing and Port, Ikelite DS 161 Strobes, ISO 320, F8, 1/250

South Pacific Dreamin'
Yap & Palau

by Jack Connick

Dropping into the warm, crystal clear water we spotted at least 3 or 4 species of sharks all in good numbers. We were on a shark dive on the remote outer reef of the Micronesian island of Yap. Grey reef sharks of moderate size, lots of smaller black tip reef sharks and quite a few larger silvertips were nosing around us looking for their afternoon snack. Good for us it was a small "chumsicle" of frozen fish, which they eagerly attacked on the bottom. For the next 45 minutes we excitedly clicked away and enjoyed the show. While the sharks were definitely curious about us, they kept their distance. Certainly, a great dive.

After many hours of flights on through the night and day, fifteen of us had arrived early in the morning the day before to this small island paradise for the first stop in our 2018 OOS South Pacific Photo Expedition.

Manta Ray Bay Resort on Yap was very well-organized and had us in our rooms quickly and up and diving by late morning the next day. The hotel is getting old now, and while it could use some updating, was spacious and comfortable. Meals were taken in their converted wooden sailboat anchored permanently on-site. They were surprisingly good, with lots of choices, even pizza!

Yap Divers had excellent facilities featuring "VIP" service where they take complete care of all your gear other than your wetsuit. There was a large camera room, and rental dive gear was available. The guides were excellent, and nitrox fills were included in our 3 dives a day package.

The diving in Yap is nearly all hard coral on fringing reefs. This mostly necessitated long boat trips out through the mangroves, and winding

channels along pristine coral reefs out to the blue.

The first day was somewhat cold and raining hard to our surprise. It meant we had to go pretty far out to get away from the run-off and green water. The hard coral reefs and walls were pretty, and the geography spectacular underwater, but besides fish, there was little invertebrate life

or colorful soft coral. Still the dives were fun, well run and organized which made my job as group leader easy.

The next day we ran out to see if we could find some mantas, as Yap is noted world-wide for these huge gentle fish. The mantas there are mostly "reef" mantas, and smaller than the large pelagic versions, but quite numerous. Or so we'd been told. The green water runoff to the lagoon made visibility pretty poor and the mantas stayed home.

The following day we went back and after waiting nearly 45 minutes, we were finally rewarded with a couple of mantas dancing around our heads for 10-12 minutes and we nailed a few keeper photos. Along with the shark dive that afternoon, we had a great day of it.

After more dives in clear water, and a fun tour and picnic on the Manta Bay Resort's private beach, we were ready for the next leg of our trip to Palau.

United Airlines in their wisdom has decided that you can't just take the old short "hopper" flight directly from Yap to Palau. You now have to return to Guam, wait most of a day, and then fly to Palau. This is a lot less than convenient, and Guam is not my favorite place to hang out. And of course, the street in front of our airporter hotel was blocked by a once-a-year marathon race and we had a heck of a time getting to it.

But all the logistics worked out, and we arrived in Palau later that evening and were met and

taken to the Rock Islands Aggressor for our week's long trip around the islands there.

This was the second OOS Aggressor Palau trip and having enjoyed a great trip 3 years ago, it seems like Palau is one of those destinations that bear repeating. I think what is most interesting from a photographers' perspective is the shear diversity of shots and situations you encounter, from pristine walls and reefs, sandy "bommie" covered bottoms, unique dives in German Channel, the caves and caverns of Blue Hole and Siaes Tunnel and world-famous high current dives on Blue Corner, Big Drop Off and outlying walls on Peleliu.

Besides all the great reef and wall diving, there's also a multitude of WWII wrecks and every dive has surprises; sharks everywhere, mantas, eels, huge schools of every fish imaginable, and lots of macro and invertebrate life.

Which is pretty much what we enjoyed that week on the Aggressor! These boats are huge catamarans, created as dive boats and are very comfortable. We were short a few divers, so the fifteen of us spread out a bit in the eighteen-passenger boat.

The dive deck is a bit smaller than you'd think, as all the tanks and dive gear other than your mask and wetsuit, stays on the auxiliary hard boat dive skiff. Divers just walked on board the skiff, loaded up cameras and the skiff is lowered into the water on a hydraulic lift! No death-defying leaps into inflatables, or difficult to crawl up ladders. We also could all backroll into the water in two groups, which meant that we could get our entire boat load into the water in a couple of minutes. A definite plus for bluewater, high current dives.

They've gotten rid of the large circular camera table that wasted a lot of space and replaced it with 3 long tables with 2 shelves which work out much better. Besides a comfortable lounge and bar (with free beer and wine), there's also dinette tables. Meals on the Aggressor have improved from their already good service to absolutely outstanding! Our chief prepared breakfasts to order, lunches with lots of great selections like sushi, pizza, salads, soups, and mouth-watering fine dining dinners served at your table. I felt like they had really stepped up their food from the last trip.

The cabins were generally comfortable, and the a/c now well controlled (many boats don't have good thermostats). I think the only drawback to the layout of the Palau and Rock Island Aggressors is the old-style bunk bed cabins. They're fine for

couples, with a larger double below but for singles, they are uncomfortable as older customers don't like the climb up to the narrow upper bunks. We also had some smelly holding tank issues with the boat showing its age, but, to be fair, it was going into annual maintenance the following week.

But back to the diving. One of the problems with Palau is that it's a bit over-loved by close-by Asian nations. These groups tend to be culturally exclusive and use their own hotels, dive operations and guides. As groups they also aren't usually the most experienced divers. The day boats have long rides in the morning and afternoon, so the good thing is that from a liveaboard it is easy to avoid these multitudes of divers by being able to dive earlier and later in the day. Or we could get to outlying dive sites, not accessible for the day from Korror.

For divers wanting a more remote experience, it's getting harder to find on Palau. Several times we were over-run by these eager, but inexperienced groups, or had to wait for them to leave the sites before we could dive. But we got lots of dives in and were able to do 4 dives a day, with a few night dive opportunities as well.

We had an outstanding dive on Peleliu with the clearest visibility of the trip. We lucked out and were able to experience the once-a-year mating congregations of long-finned snappers with thousands of fish moving along the bottom of the wall like a freeway, then bunching up and forming a vertical mass. We had the same luck finding a once-a-month congregation of bump-headed parrot fish with hundreds of the large fish massing together and shooting to the surface spewing eggs and sperm. It all happened so fast it was nearly impossible to take photos of, but they were a very unique experience that we all enjoyed.

Blue Corner didn't disappoint with lots of grey reef sharks swimming by, huge schools of jacks and a very gregarious and friendly napoleon wrasse hamming it up for photos. Siaes Tunnel (really a cavern) is deep, with the entrance at about 90' but we were surprised by a large school of jacks hiding there and the four unique small macro fish were spotted, living nowhere else on the reefs.

Jellyfish Lake is still closed as the jellies have died off, originally due to drought or overuse, but now nobody is quite sure of the issues there. However, we had a great dive on the Jake Seaplane with good visibility in the lagoon, and we finished the trip with an excellent

macro dive right outside of Chandelier Caves with lots of unique finds like mandarinfish, two-spotted gobies and pajama cardinalfish posing for our lenses.

Once back to Korror, the crew on the Aggressor dropped us off to a very nice new rooms at The Cove Resort until our trips home started that night. On the way back, a few us stayed over in Honolulu and enjoyed a quick trip to the Pearl Harbor Memorial for the morning. All in all, the 2018 OOS South Pacific Photo Expedition was a very successful trip with lots of great dives and hundreds of photos to edit! Thanks to our great customers who came along!

Jack Connick
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Photos taken by Jack Connick with a Nikon D850 with Nauticam NA-850 housing.

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 150dpi

Size - Maximum length 20cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 20 cm wide and verticals would be 20cm high.

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

by Peter Rowlands

I have always been attracted to easy solutions and the panorama is a good example. Take a series of overlapping shots from left to right and then use computer software to 'stitch' them together into the final image.

Way back in 2005 I wrote about the Olympus C40 and PanoramaMaker software (UwP24 May/June 2005 which is still available to download for free) and showed how a standard lens could be used to great effect to capture a wide angle scene using this panoramic technique.

Fast forward seven years and the iPhone 5 came out with a 'Pano' capability. Rather than take a series of still images for stitching later, it allowed you to pan from left to right in a smooth level movement and the camera/phone then produced a panoramic image right there and then. For me it was a lightbulb moment and from then on I have used this feature on every iPhone I have upgraded to. As you would expect the image quality has improved with each new model but a significant improvement took place when the 5 was replaced by the 6 and it became a feature which I thought would be well suited underwater.

News of any new Iphone housing was dashed when a quick check of the specs revealed that all of the housings I looked at would only allow stills and video to be shot and not Panos. This was nearly always due to the iPhone in a housing was being 'driven' by an 'app' rather than simply touching the screen and that, whilst no one would actually come clean and admit it, was because Apple, for some weird and annoyingly Apple trait, would not release the 'code' to allow this. Even the amazing Weefine Smartphone housing which controls the iPhone in some amazing and useful ways, could not provide control for Panos.

Enter ValsTech at DEMA 2016 and, for me, a pleasant surprise reunion with Val Ranetkins, the original founder and designer of Amphibico housings who quickly dissolved my lack of enthusiasm towards his new iPhone 6 housing. I had assumed that it was the same as other housings, controlled by an app, but Val took great pleasure in demonstrating that his housing controlled the camera by replicating finger touch through the housing and thereby opened up all of the iPhone 6's features.... including the Pano! My wallet sprang open and pledged to his Kickstarter project and a year later I took delivery at DEMA 2017.

For all sorts of reasons it wasn't until recently that I was able to try the housing here in the UK and even on the first dive it became apparent to me that this would provide a ground breaking capability underwater. True the housing is ergonomically not one of Val's finest hours mainly down to how the iPhone is controlled with our fingers on land, but all that can be forgiven when it can do Panos :-)

This shot, unretouched and straight from the camera, was the very first Pano I took at 20 metres in the UK with no more than 6 metres viz. The dome on the housing restores the land angle of the iPhone lens but it is still not very wide; that does, however, play right into the capabilities of the Pano function because there is virtually no typical ultra wide barrel distortion which even the most sophisticated stitching software struggles with.

This combination has produced an exciting immediacy back into my underwater stills rather like the instant feedback of video footage. Sure they are not much more than snaps but what they provide is a real feeling of what it was actually like down there and that, after all, is what we are trying to show our terrestrial friends, isn't it?

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Do you have a shot which has a story within a story?
If so e mail it with up to 500 words of text and yours could be the next Parting Shot.
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and yours could be in UwP104