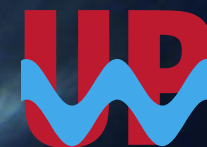


Underwater Photography

A web magazine
Oct/Nov 2004



Subal/Nikon D70
Ikelite/Sony 828
Sea&Sea DX-5000G
Fantasea LEDs

Subtronic Mini
Inon UFL-165AD
Easy websites
Wyland

Pro assignment
50 fathoms below
Devils Playground
Digital TTL

'Nemo' lighting
Book reviews
Classifieds
Parting shot



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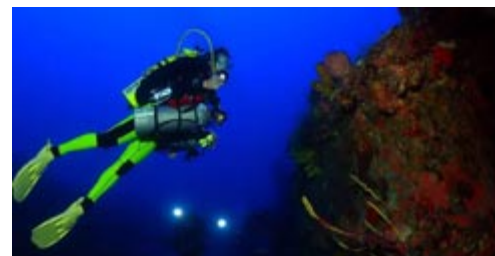
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Diving in the normal world

I am a very lucky traveller because most of my trips are booked through trusted agents like Divequest or they are journalist trips where the resort pamper me with good service.

I came back to earth (ha, ha) with a real bump this August however when, at the last minute, I decided to join an American friend of mine who had booked a week in the Red Sea on The Blue Pearl organised by London based travel agents Diving World.

On the whole the trip was fine from my point of view but it became obvious that two different groups were on board. One had booked from Thursday to Thursday whilst we were from Friday to Friday. The result was that we had to return to port a day early resulting in the loss of virtually a full days diving. Now by my reckoning that's a loss of 16% and both the Blue Pearl and Diving World must have known that they were going to short change our group all along.

To me it wasn't really that big a deal but another couple in our group had paid extra for the luxury top deck cabin only to find their air conditioning wasn't working and they had to sleep on deck after everybody had retired following their evening's revelling on the top deck. Another

Editorial

couple had booked on an entirely different liveboard (not through Diving World, I hasten to add) and were bounced onto ours at the last minute.

Mobile telephone communication was made during the trip between Diving World and the top deck cabin couple and I was astounded to be told by them that Diving World had said that Mr Rowlands and Diving World have "previous history" and that he will no longer be welcome to travel with us in the future.

When I picked up my jaw from the diving deck I faintly remembered what the "previous history" was but I can't really remember the full detail because it was well over 10 years ago. If my recollection is right I supplied underwater photos to Diving World for them to use in their brochure and was either never paid or maybe was paid, under duress, after some threatening letters.

For a nanosecond I was worried that my underwater photography career would be terminally curtailed. Unable to book through Diving World. Unable to access the quality diving and liveboards they can provide me access to.

And then I thought "Phew. Based

on my experiences on this trip, thank heavens for that".

Hurricane Ivan

There was a time in my diving career when I was very unlucky.

Back in the early 80's my first big overseas trip was to Baja on a liveboard for a week but a hurricane arrived the day after I did so we spent most of the time being battered in port watching Conan the Barbarian over and over again.

Next year I won a prize in an underwater photo competition for a week in the British Virgin Islands and, you've guessed it, the hurricane flew in a couple of days after I did. My diving buddy and I were into tennis at the time and we kept the locals amused by playing on puddle drenched courts trying to serve into the wind only to have Hurricane Hugo return our serves without us having to play a stroke. I also remember we were mildly inconvenienced by a power failure which meant having to have breakfast by candle light cooked on a portable gas heater.

New Zealand was next. Twice. A hurricane both times. For me that's a very long way to go and get my hair

ruffled.

I am obviously recounting my misfortunes because of the terrible havoc Hurricane Ivan has wreaked in the Caribbean but, having read some first hand accounts of the terrifying time many people had and the damage they suffered, I now realise that my experiences were pathetically pale in comparison.

From a diving point of view the damage suffered in Cayman has hit home the most and I hope they will be able to rebuild their properties and businesses as soon as possible.

With every disaster comes a tourist drought but I hope UwP readers will not succumb to negative decisions when booking your next photo trip and I, for one, want to lead by example and say that I intend to book a trip as a farepaying tourist and go for a week's underwater photography in Cayman. Maybe I'll see you there.

Apologies for any spelling mistakes

The past few issues of UwP have been proofread by my good friend Pat Morrissey but unfortunately he is on holiday away from an internet connection for this issue so I apologize for any spelling mistakes in this issue.

peter@uwpmag.com

Readers lives Cayman update

Endangered sharks

Just a follow up to your article on the recent shark attack on a surfer in Western Australia. Firstly, the great white is not only endangered in Australia, it is fully protected under law! Therefore I would assume that it would take an act of parliament to overturn this law to allow the death of this particular shark. Secondly, and I have supplied the video footage to Michael Aw, a local and highly popular current affairs program reported that the said attack was only an older shark teaching a younger shark how to “target humans.” This was then supported by Australia’s notorious shark hunter Vic Hislop. It was actually reported that there were originally two sharks present when the attack occurred. This evidence was supported by witnesses to the attack. So there you have it, sharks have been waiting for millions of years to be able to target humans for an easy meal. Especially when they swim out to you on surf boards.

Regards
Bruce

bruceterrill@optusnet.com.au

I was on holiday on Grand Cayman during the recent Hurricane Ivan and I certainly believe that the media has not picked up on the extent of devastation on the islands. As a result the island is not getting as much international emergency aid as it needs.

I was at the East End of the island for the storm and drove from there back to Seven Mile Beach (in the west) before leaving on an evacuation flight (a sentence that cuts a very long story short). The drive allowed me to see the massive devastation across most of the island. I still find it disturbing to talk about, so briefly most homes are damaged either by the wind ripping off roofs or water washing through them. People are without homes, power, water, phones and food, drinking water and petrol are rationed. The photo shows the state of the road just outside our shelter after the storm - it was washed away in places, while in others it was buried under trees, building materials and sand.

I spent the storm in one of the National Hurricane Shelters and was welcomed with tremendously warm Caymanian hospitality, under the most dire circumstances for the islanders. I now feel it is my duty to repay their hospitality by raising awareness of the



Photo by Stephen Broadbelt

plight of the people on the island after the storm.

The Cayman Islands have touched many people’s diving lives and I hope that this encourages you to give a little back in their time of need. Immediately the islands need humanitarian aid. You can help at both at National level (see www.caymanislands.com) or at a Local level by visiting the websites of resorts and dive centres you know - which are using their secure payment facilities to collect donations for their areas.

In the longer term the islands also need us not to forget about them.

Everyone I know in the Tourism Industry on the island seems dedicated to get up and running as soon as possible (despite not having water, power or phone lines at the moment). They hope to be operating before the end of the year. Once the tourism is open for business, please consider Cayman as a destination again - not only will you have a fantastic Caribbean Dive vacation (and there are even some new beaches!) but your business will help the island get back on its feet again.

Respectfully,
Alex Mustard
alex@amustard.com

Cayman dive report



Friends of mine at Ocean Frontiers went diving (for the first time since Ivan) and have this report on the reef condition. They dived on the Southern side of the island that was most exposed to the storm:

The staff made one extensive shore dive yesterday covering two of the most weather-exposed dive sites, River of Sand and High Rock Drop Off. Both are near the famous Cayman Blowholes on the south side of the island, near East End. The visibility was good and the whole area has a much “cleaner” appearance

as any algae that was there is now gone. Many new gullies, tunnels, and swimthroughs are now further exposed and safe for divers to enter and exit since most of the sand has washed away. In fact, much of the sand has naturally relocated and may be found on the new 30-foot wide beach that mother nature dropped on the Compass Point doorstep—happily there is a silver lining. The hard corals and reef structure seem to have been built to “hurricane code” appear to be in very good shape. While some sponges remain on these two dive

sites, many have tipped over, leaving their “root” for healthy regrowth. The parade of marine life was out in full force, with a large grouper, 2 turtles and a school of 5 barracuda escorting Steve around the reef. Given that this dive was made on two of Cayman’s dive sites that were most exposed to the full brunt of Ivan’s fury, the prognosis is excellent for the other less-exposed areas around the island.

Alex Mustard
alex@amustard.com

Highbury-Paragon warning

May I, through the pages of your magazine, send a warning to all photographers who are considering sending material to Highbury-Paragon, particularly “Digital Photography Made Easy” magazine.

In November last year, I was approached by one of their writers who wanted to do an article on my specialist use of a digital camera. I was asked to supply images for the

article, which I agreed to do providing I was paid for their use - this was agreed.

Having supplied the images, with an accompanying letter stipulating that they were not be used unless payment was forthcoming, I heard nothing more from them.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I discovered the article and my images in DPME Issue 35. Emails and phone calls precipitated no response to my request for payment. I sent an invoice in May which was also ignored. Finally, early in September, I talked to a person in the finance office who agreed that my invoice should be paid and that I should receive the cheque “next week”. I am still waiting!

Even a communication to the managing director of the organisation has received no response.

What can one do against a company like this other than take them to the small claims court?

I could be more understanding if I submitted the material on the chance they might use it, but I was approached by one of their writers and sent the photos at their request, so I simply cannot understand their attitude.

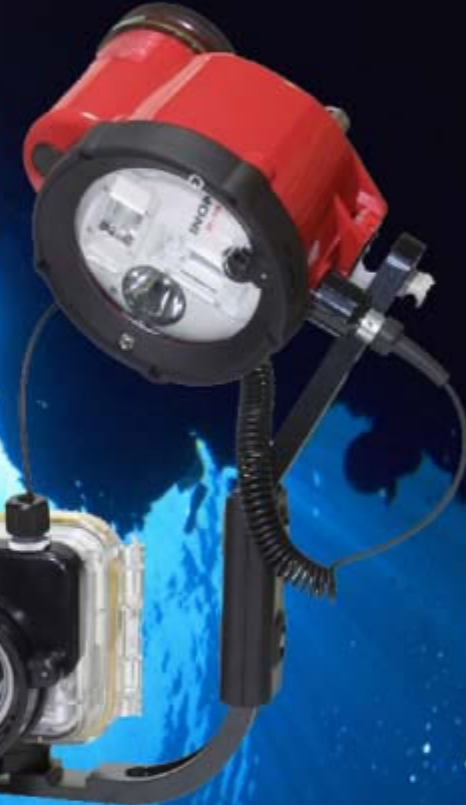
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News, Travel & Events

BIDP Bali Photo Dives 3 day/2 night/6 dives for \$268



We begin our dive extravaganza by heading North East to Tulamben, arguably Bali's most diverse diving location.

The stony beach continues under the water in a gentle shelf before meeting a dazzling house reef and dropping away into a steeper dark sand slope dotted with nudibranchs, anemones, and hidden treasures such as ghost pipefish. The Liberty shipwreck lies up against this slope. It is easily visible to snorkellers with the top at around 8 metres but dropping to 30 metres, it is best experienced by the diver. The wreck is easy to dive and provides habitat to a large number of fish in addition to a base for soft corals. Close to this location

our experienced and knowledgeable divemasters have found one of nature's magicians – the mimic octopus.

At the end of the bay a headland protrudes into the sea and provides a deep drop off. Corals and marine creatures cling to the rock face. The gorgonian fans are stunning. The dive site offers the opportunity to see frogfish, boxer crabs, harlequin shrimp and the delightful pygmy seahorses, to name but a few. Larger marine creatures such as humphead parrotfish and sharks patrol the drop off and the edge of the sand slope and the warm, tranquil waters provide ideal conditions for diving.

We will devote two days to this location, allowing divers to experience each of the environments detailed and revisit their favourites! An optional night dive at Tulamben is highly recommended.

After the final dive on day two, we move to Amed for an evening's relaxation before commencing our next days adventure. For most of the year Amed boasts calm water with minimal to manageable currents. Amed has three walls on the most popular stretch of reef which house myriad sea fans, sponges and fish life. Napoleon Wrasse and turtles are

regular visitors with Oceanic Sunfish (Mola Mola) being sighted in the deeper cold upwellings occurring in August to January.

The coral Gardens at Amed also provide excellent photographic opportunities with shallow water and good visibility enabling the jewel colours of the reef fish to be captured at their best.

On completion of the second dive on day three, we will return you to your accommodation in Sanur, Kuta or Nusa Dua.

For further details visit www.bidp-balidiving.com

Muck-diving and drop-offs - combined two-centre holiday

Eco Divers is offering a combined diving package giving divers the opportunity to dive two resorts and experience two very different worlds of diving in Bunaken and the Lembeh Strait.

Bunaken Marine Park has stunning bio-diversity and drop-offs while over in Lembeh, the world-class muck-diving promises a multitude of rare and mysterious 'critters'

For more information email Eco Divers: info@eco-divers.com or go to www.eco-divers.com

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Mola Mola © Robert Delfs

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Finding Dive Spots by Searching for Marine Animals

Two Dutch dive enthusiasts recently launched the website www.divestart.com, a website that helps divers to find worldwide dive locations. By making a selection from a list of sea creatures, the months they'd like to go diving and the region they'd like to visit, they can view a range of relevant results. Worldwide divers can access this information for free but with a message: Preserve the marine environment.

The goal of Divestart is to help divers enjoy the underwater environment and to create an awareness of its delicate nature. "We hope to use our website as a platform to stimulate global and local initiatives to save marine life", says co-founder Geerten van Hooff. "We are aware of the ongoing discussion on the impact of dive tourism on the underwater environment, but we believe that regions often benefit from adding dive tourism to fishing and poaching as the main source of income for locals."

Searching and navigating the website is easy and self-explanatory. Just select "what" you want to see and/or "where" you want to see it and/or "when" you want to go and Divestart will list all places that match

the set criteria, including details and an indication of the probability of encountering the marine life. The chances of actually getting to see the creatures is stated in four percentage brackets, but this is, of course, not guaranteed and is for indication only.

The idea of the website started when the founders were trying to find online information on where to encounter whale sharks and manta rays. "There are many websites that provide useful links to online resources, however, we simply couldn't find any structured information on this. So we started collecting and combining the information we got from various sources into a spreadsheet. We then thought others should benefit from it as well and, well, here's the result", says initiator Mark Kater. He claims that Divestart is "the only site to link data about where and when a particular creature may be encountered, and where this data is easily accessible through a powerful search function."

www.divestart.com

Rod Klein digital workshops

World Class Thailand Liveboard Ocean Rover & Digital Pro Rod Klein will join forces in 2005 for back to back Digital Workshops.

11 day charters will include the Andaman Sea and Myanmar. Only those interested in taking the Digital Workshop will pay the add on fee of \$250 US.

Beginners and experienced photographers are welcome, but you will be required to supply your own camera and housing system. Minimum system requirements: Digital cameras must have full manual controls, external strobe, and adequate housing. Recommended systems are Olympus 3000-8000 series, Nikon 5000-8000 series and any housed digital slr.

Photoshop sessions will be included and each participant, whether beginner or expert will receive individual attention.

Contact the Ocean Rover for booking information or Rod Klein for any technical questions

2005 Workshop Dates:

Mar 14-26 and Mar 28 - Apr 9

For more information e mail

info@ocean-rover.com

rod@rhkuw.com

Raja Ampat Indonesia Photo Trips

Last Chance for 2004

Nov. 14 - 26, 2004

Nov. 28 - Dec. 7, 2004

Deb Fugitt has 2 spaces remaining on each of 2 underwater photographer specialty trips to Raja Ampat, Indonesia for 2004. These trips are limited to 12 lucky divers and include extra diving, guides and services above the normal liveboard offering. If you can travel on short notice, contact Deb at tours@cityseahorse.com for details on last minute air travel & prices for diving and photography on the "world's richest reefs".

2005 Trips Announced

Oct. 20 - Nov. 1, 2005

Nov. 3 - 13, 2005

Two back to back charters are set for the 2005 City Seahorse Raja Ampat Dive / Photo Tours. Both are 11 night / 12 day trips with limited participation. This will be our 8th & 9th photo tours we've organized and escorted in Raja Ampat. Cost for 2005 trips is \$3245pp.

www.cityseahorse.com/rajaampat

For details, email:

tours@cityseahorse.com or

call 817 626-0636 in Texas.

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Cathy Church 2005 SuperCourses

June 18 - 26, July 9 - 17
July 23 - 31, August 13 - 21

A SuperCourse is a week of photo immersion with the best photo help in the world; you get structured instruction mixed with laughs, inspiration and individual help all day long and you are surrounded by others who share your interest.

Classes are limited to 14 and are taught by Cathy at Cathy Church's Underwater Photo Centre at Sunset House in Grand Cayman.

Cathy has been teaching these courses for over twenty-five years, and they just keep getting better.

It's not just a course; it's a wonderful vacation.

And, during the Digital Course, Jack and Sue Draahl, THE underwater digital guru, will join the digital class to teach you, along with Cathy and her staff.

There is no excuse for not taking this course if you want to take better photographs underwater.

For details visit

www.cathychurch.com

Reef Rainforest offers

Maldives - fabulous new Baani Explorer is now available for 7 night trips from US\$966 person in double ensuite cabins. Flights from UK around 500 sterling.

Indonesia - 16 day Digital photo tour across the Banda Sea from Maumere to Sorong on the Pindito for Oct 20-Nov 5 with Clay Wiseman. There will be a ton of equipment supplied by Amphibico. Truly a once in a lifetime experience! \$4390.00 includes photo seminar.

Galapagos - Galapagos Aggressor Nov 18-25, seven nights to Darwin and Wolf @ \$2675 person. Sky Dancer has a 7 nights Christmas charter to Darwin & Wolf for Dec 19-26 @ \$2795 person.

Tahiti Aggressor Mar 12-26, 2005 - "in search of Tigers" - unique 14 nights dive cruise thru the Tuamotus Archipelago from Rangiroa \$5190.00.

PNG - Febrina Mar 29-Apr 8, 2005 - ten nights from Milne Bay to Rabaul from \$3000.00 pp

Phoenix Islands - May 11-30, 2005 - three week epic adventure trip of a lifetime aboard the fabulous 120ft NAI'A from Apia in the Cook Islands. Price tag of US\$9688

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Divequest Secrets of Bali with Alex Mustard September 3rd-16th 2005

The small, exotic island of Bali is world famous for its beautiful landscapes and rich cultural heritage. Its world class diving is a much better kept secret. Dive sites such the Tulamben Wreck have been rightly famous for years, and photographs taken here have filled many coffee table books. Add to this small creature diving sites (frequently referred to as 'muck diving' sites), discovered in the last couple of years, that rival the best in the world, and offshore reef dives that produce regular encounters with Manta Rays.

One main reason that this trip is scheduled for September is that this is the Sunfish season. Sunfish (*Mola mola*) are without doubt one of the most bizarre and mysterious fish in the ocean. Sunfish not only hold the record for the most eggs produced by any vertebrate (one small 1.4metre female has over 300 million eggs), they are also the heaviest bony fish (a 3.1metre-long, 4.2metre high specimen weighed 2.2 tonnes).

To take in all the characteristics of Balinese diving this group tour will take a circular route around Bali staying at three locations, Menjangan

Island, Gilimanuk or Secret Bay and Tulamben from where we can explore a multitude of very different sites. New sites are being discovered on Bali all the time and we may modify this itinerary slightly to include the hottest dive sites of the moment.

Travelling with knowledgeable and experienced marine biologist, Dr Alexander Mustard, is an ideal way to informally learn about some of the most unusual marine life you will ever see.

Alexander has also been responsible for pushing forward digital underwater photography in the UK, as the main digital speaker at the last two 'Visions in the Sea' Conferences and as a co-ordinator of the international digital photography website Wetpixel.com.

Alex feels that the sheer abundance and variety of subjects in Bali makes this an ideal trip for digital photographers. Throughout the trip, he will always be available for any informal discussions about photography and marine life.

www.divequest.com

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Komodo Underwater Photography Workshop November 2005



Mark Webster will be leading a photo workshop to Komodo and Rinca islands with Kararu Dive Voyages in November 2005.

The workshop will be based a luxury bugis schooner 'Sea Safari III'. The boat is well equipped for both film and digital photographers and daily E6 processing is offered (one film per day is included for film users).

The trip is booked directly with Mark - please e-mail to markwebster@photec.co.uk for booking details.

Visit the Photec website for Komodo workshop details and picture gallery www.photec.co.uk

Visit the Kararu website for details of the boat www.kararu.com

4Day Mola-Mola (Oceanic sunfish) and Pygmy seahorse Bali Package

September to November is the season for sighting the huge Mola-Mola (Oceanic sunfish) off east coast Bali, both at the outlying islands of Nusa Penida and Nusa Lembongan and outside Padangbai and Candidasa; while minute Pygmy seahorses (*Hippocampus bargibanti*) are found year-round in Tulamben Bay, home of the infamous USAT Liberty shipwreck.

Therefore AquaMarine Diving – Bali has put together a four-day/three night package to allow underwater photographers the maximum opportunity to photograph these unique fishes while staying in delightfully comfortable accommodation.

The price for two people is US\$870/£485 (US\$435/£242.50 per person). The price above is valid 1 October to 19 December 2004 and includes land and boat transport; 3nights twin-share deluxe air-con room; breakfast, lunch and soft drinks/water; diving as above; Divemaster; tanks/weights; all local fees and taxes; beach towels.

Evening meals are not included and sightings are not guaranteed.

www.AquaMarineDiving.com



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We do not work as agents for other companies

Digital SLR Housings



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Canon EOS 300D
Canon EOS 10D
Canon EOS D60
Nikon D70
Nikon D100



Digital SLR Housing

To extend the capabilities of the digital SLR cameras Ikelite has designed a new underwater housing. This housing is injection molded of clear polycarbonate for strength, visual access to the camera, lcd screens and camera controls. The ergonomic design places camera functionality at your fingertips for the ultimate in creative control. The interchangeable port system accommodates a wide variety of lenses from super-wide angle to super-macro. The rubber handles offer excellent grip and a quick release system for Ikelite's new SA-100 Arm system. An external Ikelite connector is provided to connect single or dual Ikelite Substrobes.

Features:

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- Clear View of LCD screen
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- External Connector for Substrobes
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Underwater Housings

for



Canon Powershot Pro 1



Olympus C-8080
True TTL with
Ikelite DS Substrobes



Nikon CoolPix 8700
True TTL with
Ikelite Substrobes



Sony DSC-F828

8 megapixels



Ikelite also offers a full line of housings for Non-SLR digital cameras. Beginner, amateur, or pro, simply get an Ikelite housing for your favorite digital camera. Choose from Canon, Nikon, Olympus or Sony, Ikelite makes housings for several camera models from each of these manufacturers.



Ikelite supports their underwater digital housings with a full line of accessories. Choose from trays with single or dual handle and quick release of strobes. The DS50 Substrobe is ideal for cameras with zoom lenses or choose the DS125 for use with wide-angle lenses. Many Nikon and Olympus models offer true TTL lighting exposure, or use our EV-Controller that gives 10 power settings in 1/2 stop increments for complete manual lighting control. Ikelite also offers a choice in versatile arm systems to meet your needs and budget.

New digital cameras are being introduced at a rapid pace. For the latest information on new digital housing models visit our web site.




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www.ikelite.com

New products

Ikelite Sony DSC-F828 housing



This rugged, thick wall housing provides controls for all camera functions and operates safely to 200 feet. A removable external UR-Pro filter is included.

The camera flash is blocked by the housing. Optional strobes do not operate TTL with the camera, but the Manual Controller provides 10 power settings with the DS-50 and DS-125 digital SubStrobes. A bulkhead in the back of the housing allows attachment of required optional #4103 sync cord.

The base provides a stable platform when housing is not used, but removes instantly to provide a lower profile if preferred.

This trouble free housing is moulded of clear polycarbonate. The Release Handle system allows



easy attachment and removal of SubStrobe mounting arms at the touch of a button.

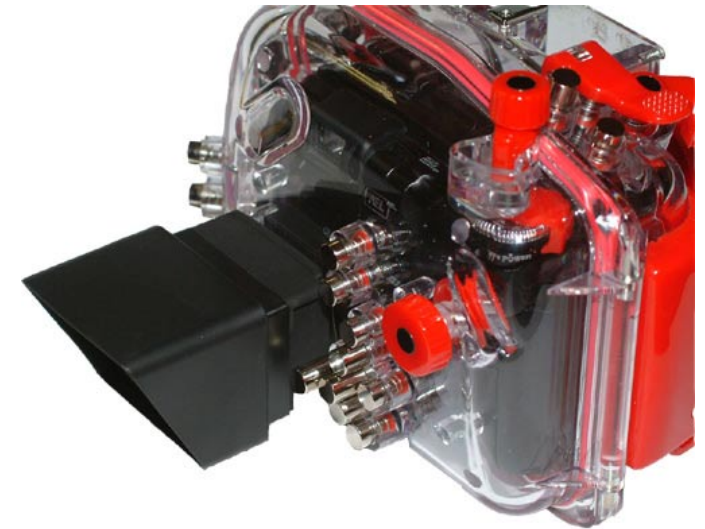
Complete housing weighs less than 8.5 pounds. It measures 8.5" wide, 12" wide with the removable handles attached; 8.5" high including the removable base; and 9.5" including the knobs and port.

Optional add-on lenses can not be utilized with this system.

For more information, visit

www.ikelite.com

UN Olympus LCD Magnifier



Developed by the Olympus PT underwater housing manufacturer, larger screen viewing is now possible with their new LCD magnifier. Complete with a monitor hood for optimum viewing, the magnification ratio is about x 1.2 depending on the camera being used. The advantages of the LCD Magnifier are that it makes it easier to check focus and provides a real solution to read camera settings for underwater photographers with poorer eyesight.

Compatible with the Olympus PT-015, 017, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023 and 024 underwater housings.

Size : 49mm (H) x 56mm (W) x 73mm (D)
Weight: 61g

Further details at

www.oceanoptics.co.uk

Sea & Sea DX-5000G Camera and Housing



The DX-5000G housing offers all the functions of the 5000G camera underwater.

The 5.13 mega pixel camera has a 28 - 85mm optical 3x zoom from wide-angle to telephoto and claims to have the world's fastest shutter release time lag of 0.12 second.

Macro photography shooting range as close as 1 cm / 1/3 inch and there are Aperture priority and manual exposure modes, AF target selection and six scene modes to match different shooting conditions

The 5000g can be powered by a high capacity lithium-ion rechargeable battery, AA batteries, or an AC adaptor

The polycarbonate housing is depth rate to 55 meters / 180ft, is (W x H x W): 150 x 94.9 x 103 mm / 5.9 x 3.7 x 4.1 inches and it weighs approximately 450 g / 15.9 oz. (housing only).

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SEEING IS BELIEVING. SUBAL ND70 WITH GS MAGNIFYING VIEWFINDER.



Digital SLR's are wonderful tools for the serious underwater photographer. But many camera and housing combinations share a weakness. There's no getting away from the fact that their reflex viewfinders are often small. This can make it hard to use manual focus and read critical viewfinder displays.



The solution is built into Subal's latest housing for the Nikon D70. Subal's new high eyepoint viewfinder is a genuine magnifier and greatly enlarges the camera's focusing screen. Though many other housings imply they use magnifiers, read the small print and you'll find they actually make the viewfinder even smaller. Subal's viewfinder is a much needed breakthrough.

Naturally the ND70 housing encompasses all the fine features synonymous with Subal. Twenty four controls provide unlimited scope for creative image making. A leak alarm is standard. The Nikonos V type socket accepts many popular flash units and is user switchable for TTL with the SB800 or manual with underwater guns. The aluminium hull weighs in at only a fraction over 2kg, so it's a pleasure to travel with.

With an all glass port system that covers lenses from 10.5mm fisheye to 200mm macro, the Nikon D70 and Subal housing is a system you have to see to believe.

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Ocean Brite is packaging the Jonah Housing with the 8" Dome Port & Cover, the 18/55mm Zoom Gear and the Canon 300D Digital SLR Camera with 18/55mm Lens for a total price of \$2,999.00. That's

Fantasea LED lights



Fantasea have announced two new LED lights which sound ideal as a general torch or a focusing/modeling light.

The first has 36 LED's and the second has 50. They are powered by 5 AA Alkaline or NiCad batteries and include a mounting ring for attachment to strobe arms or housings.

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Getting the ear of the housing companies

Have you ever felt too remote from housing manufacturers? Do you wonder why they occasionally waste their energies on housings that nobody wants? Wouldn't it be good if we could let housing manufacturers know what we want? Digideep.com, the Internet's most comprehensive site providing information underwater housings for digital cameras, has come up with a solution.

"There are currently 535 digital cameras in our database" says co-administrator Andreas Voeltz, "Only 308 of them have at least one

housing. That means 42% of the market has none!"

Of course not all digital cameras are ideal for underwater photography, but as Voeltz continues "it's absurd that 127 cameras have at least 3 companies fighting for housing customers. While the top 20 digital cameras are served with 8 to 15 housings, splitting the possible revenue into tiny pieces."

Digideep allows photographers to register their interest in seeing a housing for a particular camera model. Visit the site and find your camera of choice. If there is a housing available then it will be listed there. Housings are not usually available for brand new cameras, and in this

case the website gives you the chance to sign up for an email service that will tell you when housings are announced and available for that model. The Digideep database collates this information and automatically registers the number of independent requests for each camera. "This information is aggregated and made anonymous before it is made available to manufacturers" says Voeltz, "I'd like to emphasise that we never violate our users privacy."

This service is completely free to underwater photographers. It is our chance to let the companies know what we want. Housing manufacturers must pay a small subscription fee for this information.

"There are more than five international manufacturers who already subscribe to this new service. We would love to have more! We've found that the US Companies are much more market-wise than the European manufacturers. We also pass on data free of charge when the amount of requests demands it. For example, when the Sony DSC-F828 had 149 requests for a housing. We contacted all manufacturers who had developed similar housings for the DSC-F717 and pointed that out."

For more information visit www.digideep.com

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Subal ND70 housing for the Nikon D70 digital SLR camera

by Peter Rowlands

In the fast moving world of digital SLR cameras it is becoming more and more difficult for underwater housing manufacturers to produce quality housings before the model is either discontinued or devalued by rumours of a higher specification replacement.

Fortunately computer technology with laptop CAD design software right through to hugely expensive computer controlled mills has allowed those manufacturers who have invested in the technology to get their housings to market first. The Subal ND70 is one such example.

The Nikon D70 digital SLR camera became available in about April 2004 and Subal were able to get their first batch of housings into the market by August. This is a quite remarkable achievement by any standards but to produce a housing of such quality, design and finish is a credit to the team at Subal in Austria and especially Arnold Stepanek, their founder and designed.

The Subal ND70 is not the first housing that Subal have produced using this new technology so they are building on their experience with every new model they produce. Comparing the ND70 to the D10 for the Nikon D100, the first impression is how much smaller the new housing is. This will be a welcome feature for frequent flyers.

In terms of controls, the majority of the functions on the camera can be operated through the housing and they are On/off, Shutter release, Metering mode, Exposure compensation, LCD light, AE-Lock / AF/Lock Manual Focus/Zoom, Front command dial, Rear command dial, Zoom



/ manual focus, Autofocus select / Menu options, Delete, Mode / Mode window, Bracketing, Play / monitor on/off, Menu, Thumbnail button, Protect button, Enter, lens release.

The camera mounts very precisely onto a baseplate saddle which in turn slots into the front of the housing and holds the camera exactly in alignment with the housing controls. The rear housing is a clam shell design with a locating lug on the right hand side and a single QuickLock lever on the left. It is very easy and virtually foolproof to operate.

Generally the ergonomics are excellent but with so many controls on these modern cameras it is becoming harder for housing manufacturers to get all of the controls in the perfect place. In Subal's case I think they have got 22 of the 23 controls spot on but access to the front aperture knob is a bit of a stretch for the right hand middle finger past the large shutter release lever. My personal preference

would be for the right handle to be placed nearer the housing and the shutter release lever to be smaller and then access to the aperture lever would be much improved. A small change which I think would transform the performance of the housing. However this is a small flaw which I am sure I could learn to live with especially as the control requires far less turns than the D10 to change the aperture.

A big improvement over the D10 housing is the provision of a small port to view the position of the 'Mode' dial on the left hand side. This makes



operation of this control much more user friendly. However, unlike the D10, the ND70 does not have a Manual/Autofocus control which may be an important omission for some people but I was converted to Autofocus a long time ago and have no desire to go back to manual so it's not a problem for me. The On/Off control has been modified to a claw design which I feel is an improvement but there needs to be some lining up dots on the housing to indicate the position of this control internally.

Presumably for economic reasons there is only one flash sync port provided which seems a little shortsighted but I understand that, presumably as a result of customer reaction, a second flash sync port is an optional extra. In addition there is only one flash arm mounting shoe. This is mainly due to lack of space on the right hand side around the LCD viewing port but the base of the housing has two M6 threaded holes to attach a baseplate which could incorporate a flash arm on the right hand side.

There are two versions of the ND70. The

standard housing comes with a basic viewfinder optic similar to the D10 which gives an adequate view of the camera's viewfinder whilst wearing a low profile mask. The deluxe version incorporates the GS viewfinder magnifier which, for once, does exactly what it says. Many companies in the past have claimed their optics 'magnify' the viewfinder image when what they were actually doing was reducing it so that the full frame could be viewed.

The GS viewfinder magnifier actually enlarges the image by 150%, so Subal claim, but when you put your eye up to it it feels more like 1000%. The image is, quite frankly, superb. It is very large and sharp yet there is very little, if any, loss of brightness. To my optically challenged brain the GS viewfinder seems to produce the impossible in a comparatively small size. I cannot find words to describe how drop dead gorgeous the GS viewfinder is. It is a delight to view and compose images, it is easy on the eye but unfortunately a bit heavy on the pocket.

However once you have looked through the GS and then gone back to the standard viewfinder it's like looking through the wrong end of a telescope. That's how good the GS viewfinder is and, for me personally, the increased cost would be repaid every time I put my eye up to this superb optic.

Overall my impressions of the Subal ND70 are very positive indeed. It is superbly crafted and, in the main, very well designed housing. I have always been a huge Subal fan and the ND70 has done nothing to curb my enthusiasm.

The standard housing weighs approx. 1.8 kg (2.0kg with GS viewfinder) and is neutrally buoyant in seawater depending upon which port is used. It is depth rated to 70 meters (230 feet).

Peter Rowlands
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A Digital Velvia Revelation!

The SONY DSC-F828 / Ikelite housing Review by Michael AW

My first impression of the SONY DSC-F828 was akin to using Fuji Velvia film when it first hit the industry some 10 years ago. Okay - for the new breed of digital photographer, Velvia is not a new cyberspace language, not a pixel and certainly not a number. It is one of the greatest photographic films ever invented in the last century – it revolutionized colour dynamics - it introduced to underwater photography bold exaggerated colour, saturated rendition that had never before been achieved. Seemingly Velvia pops the colour of ornamental reef fishes, soft corals, produces absolutely pin sharp imagery and it consistently yields excellent results even in tough lighting conditions.

Indeed the SONY F828 gave me the same sense of astonishment when I reviewed the images after my first dive with it in a brand new Ikelite housing. The wow factor was a sensory overload and without a doubt it is the fastest prosumer camera I have ever used. As impressive as the performance may be, how does the Sony 828 rate among the emerging crop of digital cameras (where a new one seems to surface every other day of the week) – how does it rate as an underwater photographic camera?

Firstly the camera represents the next level



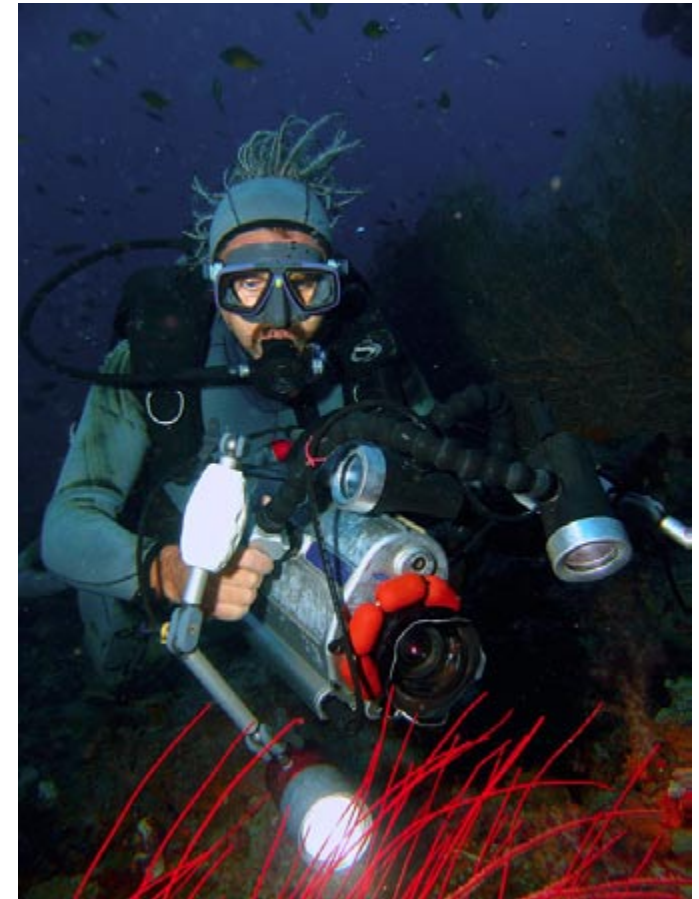
of digital still photography, which enthusiasts will surely appreciate. Encased in a black, magnesium alloy body, the F828 sets itself above the competition with several features that make it a contender as the best in its class:



An 8 Megapixel imaging chip – at time of writing this is greater than any entry level DSLR camera such as the Nikon D70, D100 or the Canon 300D, 10D

(Top right) 28mm, the SONY 828 and the glass port of the Ikelite excel in colour rendition and sharpness. DS125, 1/4 power

(Right) Fast to focus, fast to shoot - capturing a moving jack is merely point and shoot.



An integrated 28-200mm (equivalent in 35mm term) f/2-f/2.8 Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* zoom lens.

Capable of handling Compact flash cards (CF), including Microdrives up to 4GB

A brand new colour technology - a 4 colour RGB+E Super HAD CCD sensor, that uses Emerald Green as the 4th colour.

Standard or Real Colour

Like most gadget aficionados, I took the camera out of the packaging, inserted a 4gig microdrive, formatted it, popped the unit straight into a brand new Ikelite housing and took it for a test dive!

Well literally in that order with a few diversions in between – adjustments and water integrity test – only to return from the dive with some bizarrely gaudy and outlandish images – Willy Wonka’s Candy garden pale’s in comparison – sort of a case of Fuji’s Velvia that had gone seriously wrong. Well, when things go erroneous, the secret of the intrepid professional is to refer to the manual. I quickly discovered that the F828 camera has two colour “modes”, Real and Standard. One would think that the Standard mode, as default is the basic starting mode – wrong. Standard Mode is in fact an ‘UNREAL’ mode that significantly punched up colour to almost garish quality much like a Picasso with a bad palette .

I switched my test to use the ‘Real’ mode and the results excelled with the new RGB+E1 technology which supposedly adds an emerald-colored pixel to the filter pattern, thereby achieving color fidelity that is closer to our color perception. Though mustard, browns and oranges and yellows

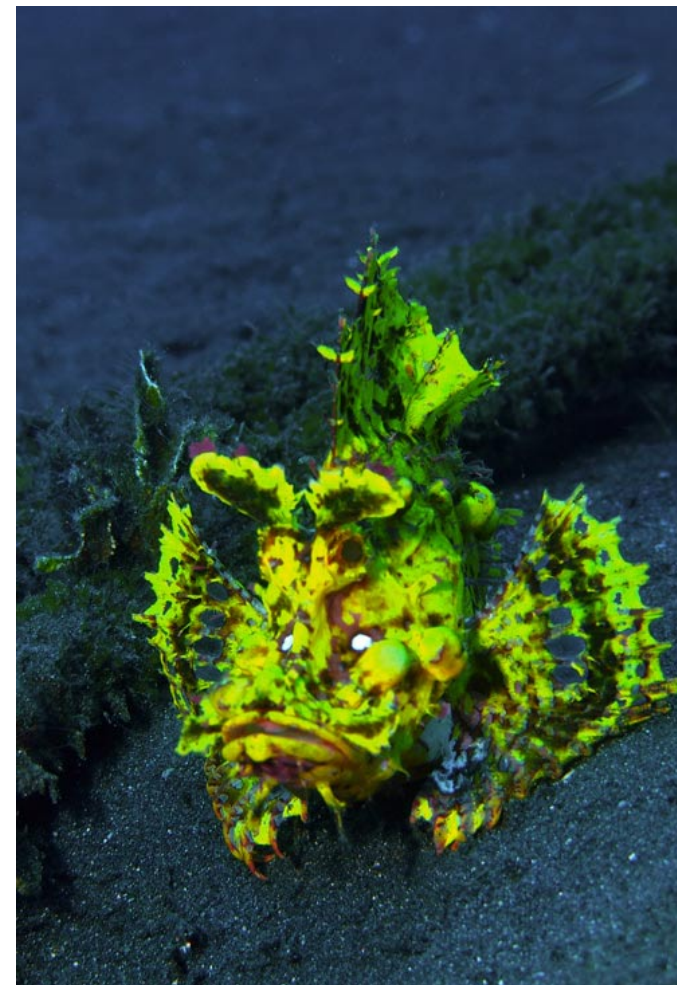


(Above) Standard colour

(Below) Real colour



look punchier, reds and magentas are very accurate and likewise blue and greens. Whilst skin tone is reasonably reproduced, neutral gray is quite consistent with a bias towards the red channel being weaker at lighter tonal values and stronger at



Whilst the camera excel in speed and sharpness for wide angle image, macro is only at best acceptable for this close up shot of a Rhinopias. DS 50 with manual controller

darker tonal values. Specifically, for the underwater images, I noticed the extraordinarily life-like rendering of blue and blue-green hues. Overall, images are punchy in the rendition of bright colours but naturally tolerable and pleasing to the eye.



Morning at the Waigeo/Gam passage, Raja Ampat - ambient light.

For the purpose of this review, I am limiting the context mainly for underwater imaging. There are already excellent benchmark test and reviews for this camera at <http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/sonydscf828/> and http://www.steves-digicams.com/2003_reviews/f828.html



3 Clowns - again the camera demonstrates its ability to focus and capture this image of moving clownfish. DS 50

The Ikelite Housing

As mentioned my test was conducted with a brand new Ikelite housing specially made for the F828 – Being new, I was advised there may be some teething problems. It took us just 15 minutes to figure some make-shift crude modifications to a few controls and the base plate.

Thereafter I was able to use the unit for a 10-day live-aboard trip without any problem. By the time this feature is in print, I am sure all the adjustment problems would have been rectified. Once set up, to replace battery and CF card, the back of the housing which is attached to the camera base plate has to be pulled out in entirety. Though this sounds like a complex process, after two dives, I was able to replace battery and CF card in under 3 minutes and that is doing it meticulously.

Like all Ikelite housings the molded corrosion free clear polycarbonate provides a clear view of the camera and ‘O’ ring seal. Around the rugged, thick walls, controls are provided to access all camera functions though I find some absolutely redundant such as the delete button. Time underwater is precious. By using at least a 1 gig card, there is no reason to waste effort and time to edit images during a dive. A first for Ikelite, the housing is equipped with a glass flat port. I took the unit 51m (168 ft) and access to all essential controls was not a problem.

Shooting mode & Strobes

Though the TTL is not supported with use of external strobe, my test was conducted with the DS 125, the DS50 with the Manual Controller which provides 10 power settings. However after a few dives, I preferred to bracket images by use of the shutter speed setting on Manual mode – whilst the F-stop is restricted between f2 to f8, the speed setting allows for from 1/30 s to 1/3200 second at 1/3 step increment! (see specs from images). Whilst preparing the camera, I did discover a weird flaw in the camera flash control. The Pop-up flash even when set to manual and external flash enabled, the

Autofocus & Shutter lag - though with a benchmark test of 1/10 second, shutter lag was rarely noticeable during the test. While shooting moving fishes has been a nightmare with ordinary prosumer camera, I find the F828 to be the quickest draw of its class. Likewise the autofocus is fast and rates well with the larger and more expensive DSLR cameras

Sharpness - lens Quality

Equipped with one of the most renowned lens in photographic industry – the F828's Carl Zeiss T* Vario Sonnar of 7.1 – 51mm focal length (equivalent to a 28 – 200mm zoom lens in 35mm terms) is a manual zoom allowing for precise framing control. Again this is a significant introduction to digital camera of its class. After exhaustive testing of about 1000 frames, I found the lens to be sharp from the range of 28mm to 70mm and only acceptable at range of 200mm.

While many argue that the price of the F828 is just about the same as an entry level DSLR such as the Canon 300D. Realistically, the CANON is significantly much more expensive. It is essential to compare, apples for apples - one has to add the price of additional lenses, ports and arms, oh yes did I mentioned paying excess baggage when flying or fees

for the chiropractor for carrying all the additional lenses, ports and arms for the CANON 300D. While for the SONY F828, all is required is the purchase of an Ikelite housing which even comes delivered with its own external UR PRO filter! Additionally the 8 megapixel imaging chip with the revolutionized 4 colour RGB+E Super HAD CCD sensor technology will literally blow a CANON to smithereens, all pun intended!

In my opinion the SONY is a camera for serious novices who wish to capture mind-blowing underwater imagery especially lush colourful seascapes but do not wish to be encumbered with the expense and weight of an SLR setup.

Michael Aw

www.asiangeographic.com



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Subtronic Mini TTL review by Mark Webster

Those readers with good memories may remember my review of the Inon Z220 several issues ago when I sang the praises of small flash guns. For the past few months I have been waiting patiently for the delivery of my Mini TTL's which are the latest offering from Subtronic in Germany. Subtronic have a well deserved reputation for producing their own superior flash guns and electronics for other manufacturers, but to date their guns have been a little large and heavy for my needs - one of my priorities is always to reduce the level of excess baggage I have to pay for when travelling! I was therefore very interested in the introduction of these new flash guns and as soon as I saw the prototypes I was immediately tempted to order a brace.

The Mini is a small and powerful package which comes in two versions - the standard TTL version and a 'digital' version which provides TTL exposure via a sensor that reads the flash output from the camera's onboard flash in the housing. Both versions have a power output of 100WS (f11 at 1m 100ASA), a beam angle of 90 degrees, and come in a tiny aluminium housing measuring only 160mm x 73mm weighing in at 0.8kg on land and 200g underwater. All functions are controlled through a single switch - TTL, four manual powers (F, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8) and three slave powers (F, 1/2, 1/8), pilot light and a SOS function. The unit is charged through the synch cord connector and there is a switch setting for this also.

So with a pair of these guns you can cover the lighting requirements for both macro and extreme wide angle, particularly if like me you prefer to balance the flash output with the ambient light when



shooting wide angle. If you are shooting digital you will also need less power output than you need with film.

My tests were made with the Mini TTL's using a Nikon D100 in a Light and Motion housing, which provides extensive control over the guns via the TTL circuit. I also used the four on board manual settings and found the power divisions provided very accurate control over the light output. I also shot back to back with a Nikon F90X to test the TTL exposure control with film which produced equally reliable exposures, particularly in macro and medium wide angle. As I always find, TTL reaches its limitations when ultra wide and fish eye lenses are used, but this is more a product of the camera's TTL sensor rather than a failure of the flash capability and is a common feature with all flash guns.

In the water there is barely any weight to the Mini TTL and in fact my Ultralight arms are heavier in the water, so handling and positioning the guns is very easy. Being so compact these guns are also very easy to position close to the housing port or framer



F90X, Subal housing, 105mm macro, twin Mini TTL's, Elitechrome EBX, f11 @ 1/125

when shooting macro. If you have two you can either shoot both via synch cords or have one on slave. The slave sensor responds well from oblique angles and operated faultlessly. The back plate features the legend 'TTL slave' but in fact this facility is not available on the first production run, however Subtronic tell me it is not far away and you can then have your gun upgraded. The slave will then also quench in response to the power output of the key

*(Right) Nikon D100,
Light and Motion
housing, 18-35mm
zoom, f14 @ 1/125, 200
ASA, twin Mini TTL's
(Far right) Nikon D100,
Light and Motion
housing, 10.5mm FE,
f16 @ 1/125, 200 ASA,
twin Mini TTL's*



flash, much like a Sea & Sea YS30.

The pilot light is in fact a high intensity LED which is not particularly bright in daylight, but surprisingly useful on a night dive. However, for auto focusing a macro lens at night you will want to add another light source I think. One advantage is that it consumes very little power when on.

Charging is via the synch cord plug either with the standard charger provided (4-6 hours) which is remarkably small and light, or you can specify a slightly larger fast charger which will take only 1-1.5 hours. From a full charge you will get around 80 flashes if firing at full power, but in reality if you are shooting in TTL (or lower power settings) you will obviously get more. If you fire at full power then the recycle time is 2-2.5 seconds, but once again this is very much faster on TTL or lower powers.

The colour temperature is quoted at 4500k which is quite warm, but I must say I did not notice much if any difference between these and my 'cooler' flash guns.

Travelling with these guns is bliss as they are so compact and light. A housed SLR system with two of these guns easily fits into a standard sized carry on and if your hand baggage threatens to go over your 5kg limit, then just pop them into your jacket pocket. If you already have larger heavier flash guns that must go into the aircraft hold then consider one of these as a back up which can travel with you in the cabin - complete peace of mind.

If I must offer a criticism it would be reserved for the synch cords. These are Subtronic's own design which offer an efficient double 'O' ring seal when mated to the Nikonos plug. The contacts within the plug

itself are designed to be compatible with either the Nikonos style plug with three rigid pins and two spring loaded pins, or the European style plug with five rigid pins. Maybe it is just me, but I find that the plug does not always mate immediately with the spring loaded pins, but once there and secured operates faultlessly. My preference would be for the Subal approach which has a Nikonos style connector on one end (with three pin sockets and two solid contacts) and a five pin socket on the other end for the flash.

So to sum up, if a flash gun can be sexy then the Mini TTL would certainly be a page three candidate.

For me they have all the attributes of small size, low weight, high power, adjustable output and built in aluminium like the proverbial brick outhouse. The price is also highly competitive when put up against similarly specified guns from other manufacturers - so if you are in the market for a new or replacement gun, for film or digital, then give these a close look.

Mark Webster
www.photec.co.uk

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Inon UFL 165AD

By Peter Rowlands

Japanese manufacturer INON just keep coming out with excellent accessories for digital 'point and shoot' cameras and the UFL-165AD is no exception.

Having resisted the temptation to upgrade my P&S camera, I still use a 4megapixel Olympus C-40 zoom in an Olympus PT-012 housing. The combination is a very small box of electronic tricks which is capable of big and varied images. Fortunately for me the UFL-165AD supplementary wide angle lens seems to have been designed with the PT-012 specifically in mind because the two go together like strawberries and cream.

The UFL-165AD has a bayonet mount so I had to use the INON bayonet mount adaptor which fits over the housing front port and is secured with a large knurled knob into the tripod socket. The UFL-165AD then goes onto the adaptor with a 90° rotation followed by a reassuring click as the lens is secured.

Now anyone who has read my ramblings in previous issues will know that I am a great fan of UR-Pro filters but unfortunately there is no commercial way to incorporate one into this combination because the rear element of the UFL-165AD protrudes back into the bayonet mount adaptor. Luckily though there is



just enough space between the rear element of the UFL-165AD and the front port of the PT-012 to put a 27mm diameter filter. I achieved this by cutting out a circular disc from a larger UR-Pro filter but I understand they sell a 27mm filter in a screw mount which would do the same thing if it was taken out of the mount.

The downside of such a DIY fix is that I have to take the UFL-165AD off underwater at the beginning of the dive to make sure there aren't any air bubbles stuck to any lens surface. This has to be done carefully to make sure the unretained filter doesn't fall out and flutter down the drop off. With all the bubbles removed the filter has to



The UFL-165AD increases the angle of coverage to 165° (which explains the name!). This is achieved with the presence of some barrel distortion but it is not as exaggerated as the 180° full frame fisheye lenses used on film and digital SLR cameras.



Without the UFL-165AD with the C-40 zoom at its widest setting. I was unable to use the Ur-Pro filter for this shot which explains the cyan/blue colour shift.

be persuaded to go back into position and then the UFL-165AD can be refitted. This is a bit fiddly but once done the outfit is ready for use.

With the UFL-165AD added, the buoyancy changes from slightly positive to negative but it is only very slight and the package is very easy to operate with one hand, if needed.

My first dive with this combo was on the wreck 'Salem Express' in the Red Sea and this proved to be the perfect subject to test its performance. Underwater the UFL-165AD

increases the angle of coverage to 165° (which explains the name!). This is achieved with the presence of some barrel distortion but it is not as exaggerated as the 180° full frame fisheye lenses used on film and digital SLR cameras.

First impressions are that this is obviously a very wide angle lens and it took a bit of time to realise that I could get much closer to subjects and yet still have them all in the frame. The added advantage is that this reduces the amount of water between



Taken from the same position with the UFL-165AD added. This increases the coverage considerably and the UR_Pro filter has restored the natural colours.

you and the subjects which improves contrast, sharpness and colour considerably.

My first shots on the 'Salem Express' were very pleasing indeed and I spent the whole dive with the camera lens at its widest setting which gave no cut off at the corners. It was only on a subsequent reef dive that I discovered yet another amazing capability of this lens.

Most dome ported supplementary wide angle lenses will only allow partial zooming in before the focus

becomes impossible but the UFL-165AD and C-40 zoom can be zoomed through the whole range (but not the digital zoom). The shots at the tele end of the zoom are not quite as bitingly sharp as at the wide end but they still acceptable.

At this point I was very impressed indeed but then I thought I'd try to find the Achilles Heel and approached a piece of coral about 30cm in length. I got the lens to within about 10cm of the coral at which point the wide angle of



*(Top left) Coral about 10cm away at widest zoom
(Top right) Same lens position at full telephoto!
(Bottom left) Widest zoom
(Bottom right) Fully zoomed in
(Below) My hand is touching the dome port yet it is still sharp!*



coverage still included all of the piece of coral. Having taken a shot, I stayed in exactly the same position and then zoomed in fully. I was absolutely amazed to see that the resulting shot was pin sharp! This capability makes the UFL-165AD and C40 a fantastically versatile combination.

I understand the UFL-165AD will also work with the PT-014 and 016 housings as well as several Canon housings but I would recommend you check how fully compatible they are.

The UFL-165AD and bayonet adaptor cost about the same as the housing and camera combined but, for me, the additional expense is well worth the investment.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

Just Add Photos

Instant Bali Website & Gallery

by Deb Fugitt

Bali is one of our three most productive destinations for underwater photography. The sea surrounding Bali has an abundance of small exotic creatures and offers the opportunity to see larger species like the mola mola, manta rays and sharks. Bali offers wrecks, muck sites and reef diving. These diving opportunities, taken in combination with the low cost of accommodations, food and diving in Bali make this a “must do” stop on every trip we make to Indonesia.

As the webMs. for UwP and other diving and travel clients, I spend my days building websites, a job that seems fun at first thought, but is actually very tedious and stressful when working with clients who depend on their websites for their livelihood. At the end of each eye-crossing, boggled mind day, the last thing I want to do is build another website. So,

although we’ve made many trips to Bali over the years, I’ve always been too busy or burned out to build a photo gallery that wasn’t part of the work for a client.

Proimageguide’s “Instant Website, Just Add Photos” caught my attention. Right. No Dreamweaver, no layout problems, no PHP, CGI or perl, just add photos and content and leave the sticky bits to Proimageguide’s designers? I can have my Bali Gallery, indeed an entire website, without the usual hassle and without banner ads, Adwords or distracting links to Proimageguide’s offering? I was skeptical.

The proimageguide.com website offers a free 90 day trial offer. Free is well within my personal price range and within UwP’s budget. Being skeptical as well as rather paranoid about the use of my personal email addresses, I created a new email address

and used it to sign up for that free trial.

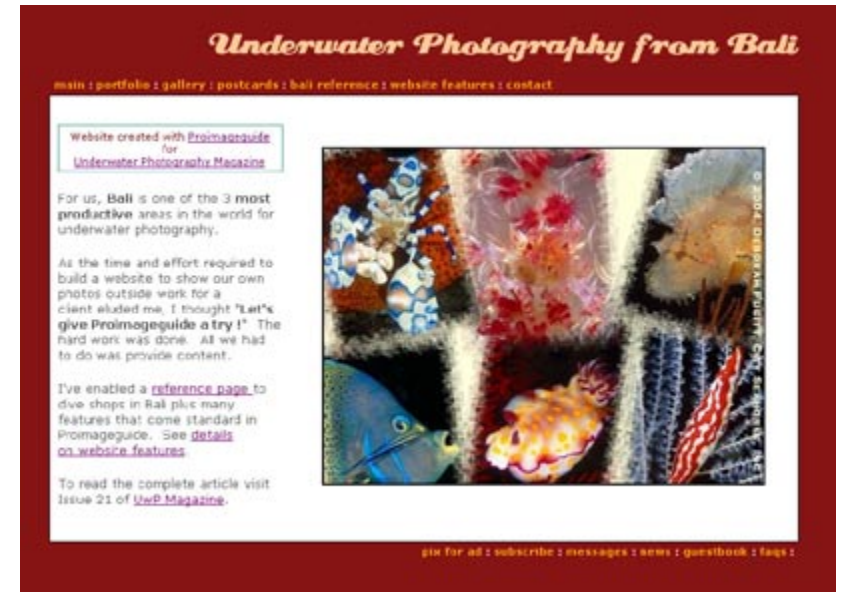
Within minutes, I received an email with the password for my new account, the URL’s of my new website, uwp.proimageguide.com, and of the documentation. I logged on and was instantly presented a menu to build my new Home page.

If you want to follow this article by viewing our webpage, the URL is bali.uwpmag.com.

Modifying the Home Page

Ah yes, Content. Out of the dozens of interesting images from our recent Bali trip, which should I use on my Home page? First I tried the Harlequin Shrimp from a sandy black sand slope near Tulamben. The shrimp was perched on a rusty-orange starfish and was one of many we found in a day’s diving with our Balinese guide and friend, Wayan, from AquaMarine Diving - Bali.

I used the Browse button to find the shrimp image on my PC and then clicked Save



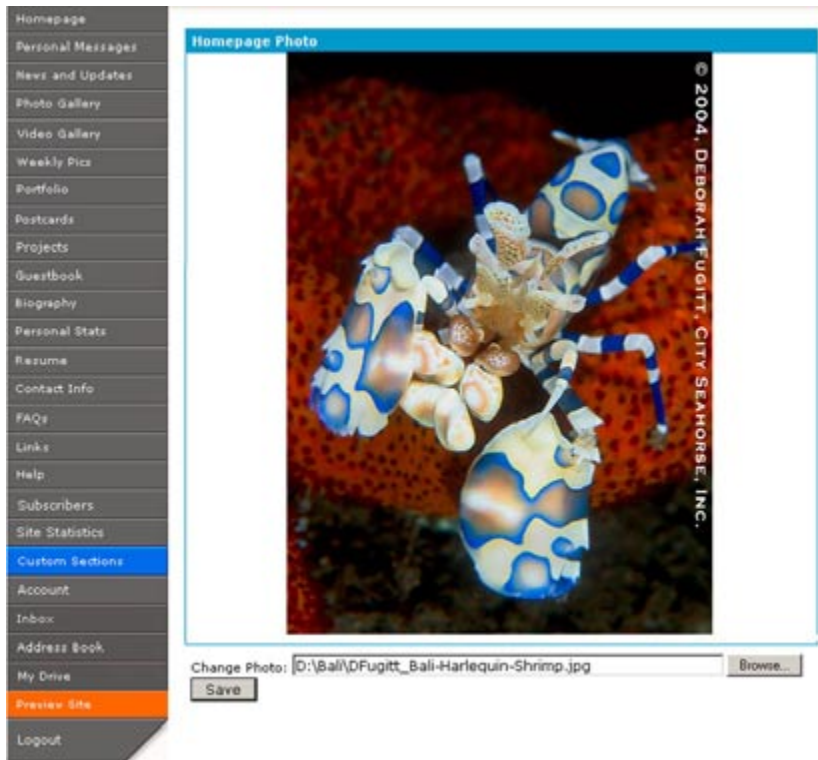
There were so many interesting photos that I made a collage instead of just using a single image for the Home page of our Bali website. There are links top and bottom which I have chosen to include from Proimageguide’s standard list, or have defined as “Custom Sections”.

to upload the image. It was instantly resized and added to my page. The browse-to-upload method, plus a Multiple Images function is used to add images on auto-formatted pages, such as Gallery and Portfolio.

On the same design page, I typed in text and used the formatting tools to make it look more interesting. Colors, text and fonts for the title, background and links of each page are selected using the

Account menu. During the course of my gallery building I changed these items several times since I could not make a final decision on the images I wanted to include. There wasn’t a font I really loved. When I mentioned this to Proimageguide support I was told they can add a title for me using any font I have licensed.

In the end, I decided to create a collage of images and use it for my Home page



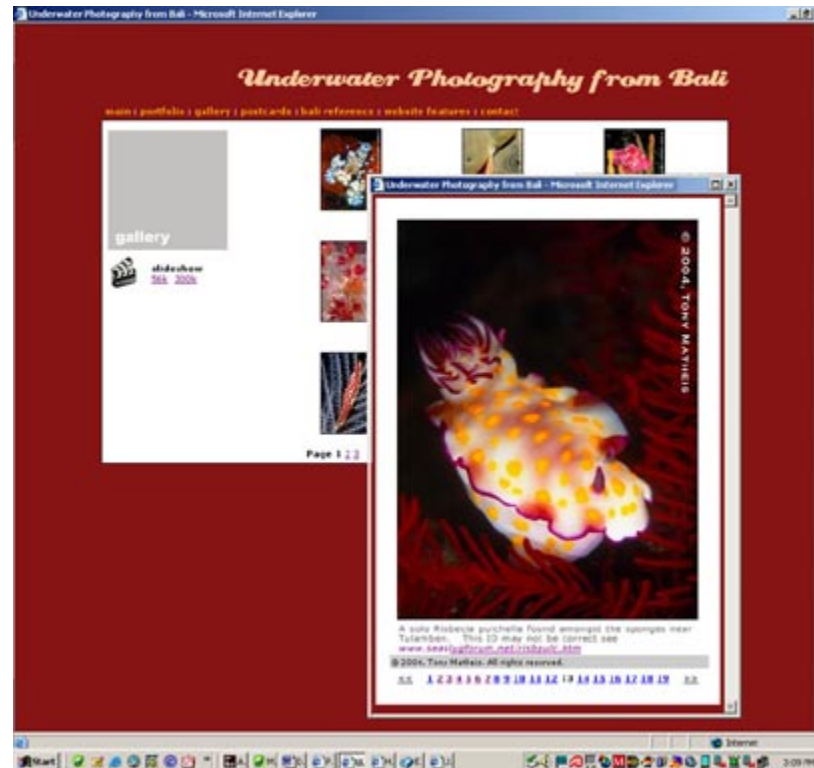
Should I use the Harlequin Shrimp for the Home Page? There are plenty of these shrimp on Bali's black sand slope that also had an abundance of these tasty (to a shrimp) orange starfish. Nikon F4S, 105mm, YS-300, YS-120, Nexus Housing, 1/60, F22, Velvia 50.

Gallery and Portfolio

These were the easiest and most fun sections of the site to create. The difficult part again was selecting the images. I recommend putting a copyright notice on each photo even though pages on Proimageguide sites disable

right click downloads to help prevent image theft.

Tony Matheis and I dive together and share many of the same creatures for our photos. We've seen most of the common nudibranchs in Bali and are always looking for something new. Many nudibranchs we find are in



Tony Matheis' photo of a Risbecia pulchella framed by red crinoid arms was a definite for inclusion in the gallery. Each gallery shows pages of thumbnails which expand to a large photo with caption. There is also a slideshow option. Nikon F4s, 105mm lens, Nexus housing, 2 x YS-120 strobes, Velvia

the sand and don't make very spectacular images. We were both happy to find a Risbecia nudibranch sitting on a dirty sponge but framed by red crinoid arms. Tony's photo of the striking fellow was a definite for inclusion in the underwater gallery. I've included several species of

nudibranchs in addition to several other creatures in our Bali website.

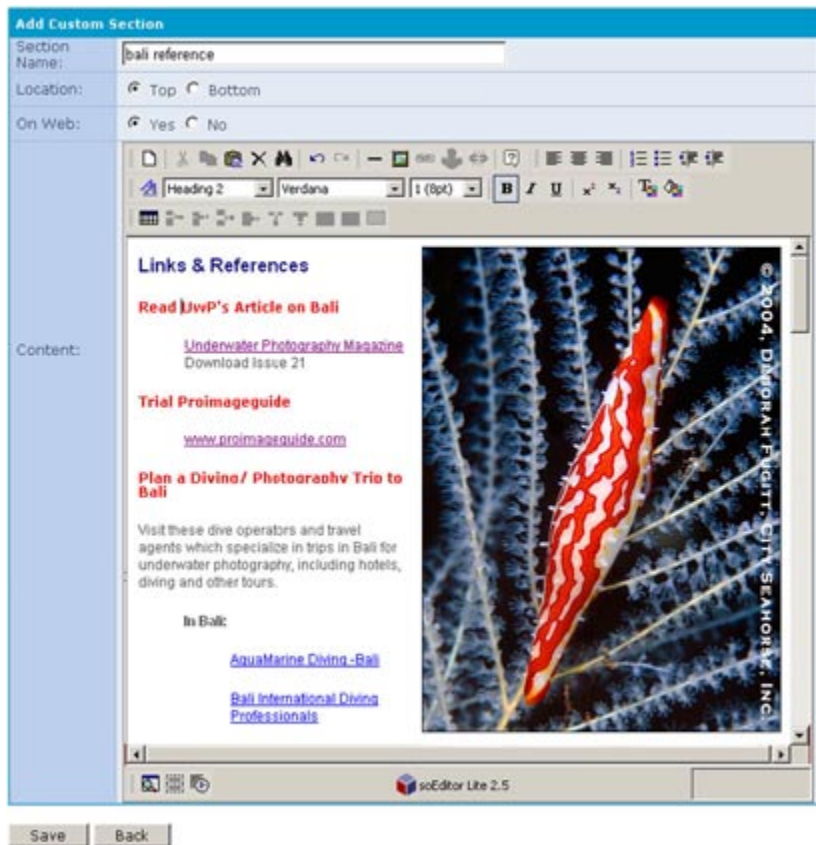
The gallery section of a Proimageguide website organizes images by sets so it is possible to split images into different categories, each in its own gallery section. For each gallery section, one

chooses an image and title to identify the gallery to website visitors.

Once a gallery section is defined, one links to a separate page to add photos to the gallery. I would browse to an image on my PC, enter some text for a caption in the form, and save. The image was uploaded and instantly available in my gallery. On the same page, there is even an option to add a slideshow with a choice of music and transition effects!

A gallery can be password protected, which is a very nice feature for restricting viewing of certain images to clients or editors (right, Peter?). Photos in a gallery can be organized to display in a different order by dragging image thumbnails into new positions.

Proimageguide resizes the images, creates the thumbnails, builds multiple pages and navigation through the gallery and builds the slideshow. It was true; all I had to do was add photos.



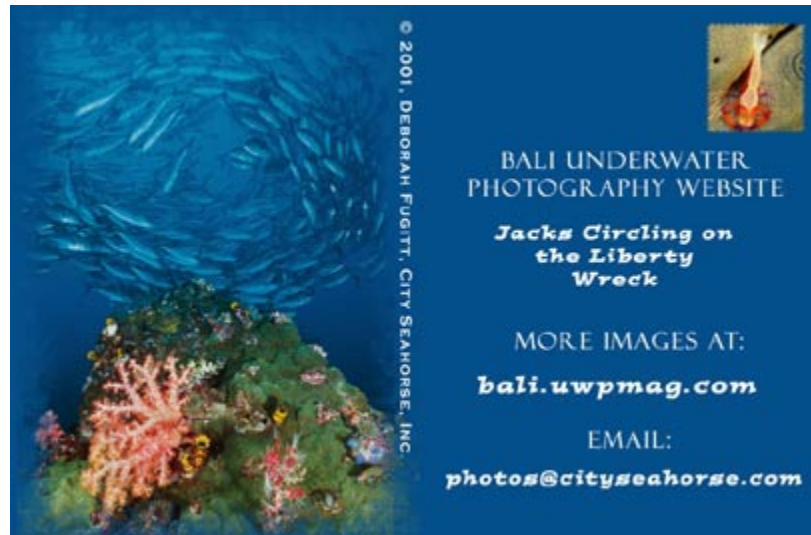
The allied cowrie photo is one of my favorites from our last trip. Use the Custom Sections menu to create a page not addressed by the standard menus. Nikon F4s, 105mm lens, Nexus housing with Woody's diopter, YS-300 & YS-120 strobes, Velvia 50. 1/60, f22, -.3 exp.

Add a Custom Page

Since I'm writing about my website for UwP, I thought it would be a good idea to use the Links menu to build a page with links to UwP, Proimageguide and

some of Bali's dive centers, illustrated with photos of course.

I couldn't place a photo on the preformatted Links page, so Proimageguide tech support suggested I create a custom page instead. Any



The resident school of Jacks is nearly always around the Liberty Wreck. Photographer's with an eye for composition can find plenty of subjects to use in the foreground. I used this photo on the Postcard page. Nikonos V, 15mm lens, 2 x YS-300 strobes with bee blasted domes, 1/90, f8, Velvia 50 pushed 1 stop.

page can be made unavailable or available. While working on a page it would be a good idea to make it unavailable until it is fully designed. Otherwise website visitors are looking at errors and construction.

In Custom Sections I created a new page and titled it "bali reference". The navigation for a new page is automatically added to all the pages at either the top or bottom of the page, a choice made by clicking a radio

button.

Text on most pages can be formatted using tools in the edit window. HTML knowledgeable users can switch to "Source Mode" to enter and edit the HTML for most pages.

The allied cowrie image on the Bali reference page is one of my favorite images from our June 2004 trip. We don't usually dive deep but I'd gone down to 80ft. just to see what was there. I saw a small feathery white coral,

not much bigger than my outstretched hand, with a pretty *Glossodoris nudibranch* attached! No matter how I tried to compose that perfect shot there was an unattractive lump on the coral that I just couldn't frame out of my shot. When I looked on the opposite side the "lump" was a small but very beautiful red cowrie.

Postcards

I turned a few of our images, UwP covers and screen prints of my Bali website into postcards with a process similar to creating a gallery. Visitors to the site can select and send a postcard that has my message attached.

Bali's Liberty Wreck is a great place for photographers. The old hands know that the best time to be there is before the day trip divers arrive. When the water is clear and the resident school of jacks is circulating around the wreck the wide angle photos ops can't be beat. I used one my older images from the wreck to create a postcard with a shrimp "stamp".

Other Features

The features I used in my Bali website are:

- Portfolio
- Photo Gallery
- News
- Postcards
- Guestbook
- Contact Info
- Subscribe
- FAQ
- Custom Section - bali reference
- Custom Section - about this website

I tested all of the available functions except for the Video Gallery which allows several 5Mb video clips to be defined. The Guestbook allowed me to review comments before allowing them to display on the Guestbook page; the News let me enter multiple news items that pop up in small windows when requested by my website visitor; and the FAQ required simply typing in questions and answers. (I like this as I only enter questions where I know the answer.) . Please [sign my guestbook](#) if you visit bali.uwpmag.com and have a comment.

The Subscribe page is a very nice touch. It allows the collection of email addresses and names of those who want to be on your list for

a newsletter, event announcement, maybe even people who are interested in a photo trip to Bali! The guestbook form has a checkbox that when checked will collect subscriptions as well. Plans to add subscription based services, such as mailing a newsletter are in progress.

There were several pages that I tested but did not add to my site. For a complete list see the proimageguide.com website and sign up for a free trial. Some of the pages I did not choose to include were a resume, biography and weekly image pages. Webmail and POP email addresses are part of the service. Proimageguide assigns a subdomain name to each account, but it is possible to register and use your own domain name with this service.

The Proimageguide service worked very well for us. I created the website and Tony (less knowledgeable about web design) signed up for an account and checked it out as well. Nothing crashed and it was all fairly simple to understand after trying a few things. We did think the documentation could be improved, particularly for people who are just getting started, but once we got a start, it was straightforward.

As a webMs. there were some things that I wanted to change and couldn't, like the background color behind the photos. Stark white

just doesn't do them justice. The near future promised to satiate those desires with more dynamic templates, new templates that can be modified by someone with web design experience, support for MAC OS (only PC / Windows for now), an e-commerce capability plus many small enhancements to make the service faster to use in implementing a website.

I've heard they are dropping their prices soon (probably before UwP21 is published) prior to the implementation of all the new enhancements. The lower rate will be locked in for people who subscribe to the service now. All upgrades are free to those who have signed up for a year's license.

Please explore our *Underwater Photography from Bali* website, bali.uwpmag.com. We'll be back in Bali in December for another round of great diving, so watch for updates to our gallery in January. This time I'll put Tony to work.

Our *Underwater Photography in Bali* website URL is bali.uwpmag.com

Deb Fugitt

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20 Questions with Wyland and Mike Veitch

Wyland, to most the name is synonymous with aquatic paintings. However, a one dimensional man he is not. Wyland Foundation, The Cousteau Society, Wyland Ocean Challenge, the Scripps Institute; these are a few of the environmental foundations and charities he is involved with. From humble beginnings as a struggling painter to the world renowned artist he is today, Wyland strives to spread the message of environmental awareness.

Right, first things first. What's with the single name?

Less is more. I like my family name and want to make it a name of honour.

What about your first few murals, are they signed with only the name Wyland?

Every mural since college is signed Wyland

In your wildest dreams did you ever think your murals would become the huge success they are today?

I always had a great confidence



in myself. I saw it building with the environmental movement. As environmental awareness grew, I knew appreciation for my artwork would also grow.

Nowadays demand for your murals is huge, how difficult was it to gain permission for your first "Whale Wall"?

Very difficult. It took three years in which time I almost gave up. But I am glad I didn't, I now have 89 walls in eight countries. I am in demand in 70 more countries but I am very careful about my selection process. I have a goal of 100 walls before I move on to other projects. No one thought I was serious when I said I would do 100 but I have accomplished everything I set out to do.

What ever gave you the idea to paint



such massive works of art?

I wanted to create lifesize creations so I needed a larger canvas.

You are also known as a big environmental activist, do you have your own foundation and/or do you contribute to other environmental causes?

We have passed the tenth anniversary of the Wyland Foundation. I have also started a non-profit organization with the Scripps Institute called the Wyland Ocean Challenge-Clean Water for the 21st Century and Beyond. Also, I have supported over 100 foundations over the last 20 years. Recently, I was asked to become a member of the board for the Cousteau Society.

What does that entail?

We are preparing to rediscover the destinations Jacques Cousteau visited. We study the films and compare what each location looks like today, chart all the changes since his time. I will also become a mentor for Pierre Yves Cousteau. We will continue in the footsteps of Jacques and continue his vision for the world's oceans. We are also starting the Wyland/Cousteau Cleanup Campaign, a five year program to clean the world's oceans. We will start on the east coast, then to the west, the third year will be the Great Lakes, fourth year encompasses the entire U.S., and the fifth year we take it international. We really want to cleanup the coasts and waterways, our motto is: "A million people will make a difference".

Who are your heroes?

Jacques Cousteau is my hero. His wisdom was so important and continues to be so today. He inspired my creation of a foundation for



environmental work

You are currently working on a project called "Clean Water for the 21st Century" that teaches children about the ocean, can you explain a little about it

Next year we will launch the curriculum to 60 million students across the U.S., from Kindergarten to 12th grade. It will be available to each and every school! There are four levels, each available free through the internet. We will be conducting another nationwide tour at schools and aquariums with special guests such as Dr. Sylvia Earle and Dr. Robert Ballard. The following year we will launch the program worldwide through the United Nations.

How many "whale walls" have you painted now?

89 walls in eight different countries.

Have you ever backed up from a wall and noticed that a whale's head is 4 times larger than its body?

Well, that used to happen when I was first starting out. Now I have a feeling for it, you can't fake it, it's a natural feeling.

You paint all your walls in a freehand style, others project images onto a wall and then paint over it, do you just laugh at these others or do you feel like smacking them for degrading a

natural talent?

I have a sense of perspective in my mind's eye, do the background first, it is a mass of colour coming into sharp focus, like a Polaroid. Then I step away and look at it. Then it is onto the animals and the final details. The giant murals take a week or less, when you work for free you learn to work fast!

A lot of your work is done suspended at great height, any near death experiences?

We have had scaffolding break and numerous close calls.

You have been diving all over the world, have you seen anything that filled you with so much inspiration that you had to get out of the water and draw it? You know something like whales mating, dolphins giving birth, shark ripping off an arm etc etc.

I have been diving for over 20 years visiting all the premier spots and have never had a bad dive, well maybe Boston Harbour. My favourite places would have to be Papua New Guinea, it has everything from pygmy sea horses to mantas, dolphins, and whale sharks. Also Fiji for the colours of the soft corals, some of the best photos I have taken are from Fiji.

Speaking of photos, you are known as a painter, what's with all these cameras?

I am building an image bank for a new fine art photo limited edition. I will be collaborating photos and paintings into one piece of art called Underwater Photography Painting, these will be available to collectors. It will be on canvas through something called the Giclee process.



Your marketing skills are legendary, what is the key to your success?

Using both sides of my brain. Artists work from the right, balance is the key to success.

You have a reputation as a hard driving perfectionist who is a bit hard on his crew, no sniveling and all that, is that true? You push the idea of Team Wyland. What does that encompass?

Is that true? Where did you get that?! It's all about good leadership, I know what I want to do and how to do it. If you snivel you are gone, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Pressure does make diamonds. I am very serious about my work, as an artist all I have is integrity, once that is gone you have nothing. Everything has to be done the

Wyland way or we don't do it. Team Wyland is all about tenacity and a hard drive to get the job done. Team Wyland is a group of dedicated volunteers with the same vision: to inspire people to have a positive impact on the planet. We are small but mighty! Everything is very team oriented we think big but are still focused on the end result. We have fun with no bureaucracy, everyone is involved 100%

You are mainly known as a painter, what other art mediums do you work with?

Actually, sculpture is my strongest medium, I am working on a series of bronzes. That will be my next 30 year project, 100 monumental life-size bronzes.



You have a reputation as a partier and a bit of a ladykiller, do you hang out with rock stars and party till dawn?

Not true! I rarely drink at all. I do throw some good parties though, I consider myself the designated instigator.

Do you get groupies? Are they normal girls or a bunch of dolphin hugging hairy hippie types?

Ah, the Wylandettes! They range all the way up to 90! Cradle to the grave man.

I understand you drive a BMW bike?

What?! Hell no, I'm a Harley man. I own four Harleys and I just

bought an Indian Chief. I love riding, I do it every day, its my favourite thing.

Mike Veitch
www.bigblueimages.com

Check out Wyland.com for more information on Wyland and what he is up to. Wyland.com is a fully functional site with virtual galleries and you can even volunteer to work on a Whaling Wall!

www.wyland.com



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Another Day at The Office!

by Paul Ives

Almost 20 years as a freelance advertising and commercial photographer has taken me to some interesting places and never ceases to offer endless challenges and job satisfaction. None more so than my recent visit to the sharks in Elsmere Port – the Blue Planet Aquarium in Elsmere Port that is! This promised to be a particularly tough assignment.

This was to be my second visit to the Aquarium. I had been commissioned by Blue Planet's advertising agency to shoot some new underwater images for a large 48 sheet promotional poster and to go into a revamp of the Aquarium's guidebooks and promotional literature.

On my first shoot, I had encountered many problems, largely from the low light levels in and around the tanks. Although to the visitor in the viewing tunnel, the lighting seemed bright, the tank lights themselves were deceptively low-powered. Without the right technique, I would end up with either very blurred sharks, or dark backgrounds once the flash started to fall off behind the subject. I had my work cut out!

In my first attempts, I'd had to use 400 ASA film push processed to at least a stop to be able to use a shutter speed of around a 15th to an 8th of a second at f5.6, and that was in the well lit part of the tank.

The results had been good, but I knew that what the agency really wanted was dramatic shark pictures with blue water background, just like in the



Sand Tiger 16mm nikkor 8th sec F8

All Shot On Fujifilm S2 pro set on manual exp mode & rear curtain Sync in Sea&Sea Housing with twin YS 120 strobes on manual setting for wide angle shots and ttl for 60mm shots. All shots set on 400 equivalent ISO setting auto White balance.

To get the best results out of the S2 I normally shoot raw files then once on the laptop convert to 16 bit RGB Tiffs . Then do any exposure or colour adjustments in levels or curves in Photoshop then convert back to 8 bit before any final tweaks retouching, sharpening if necessary and saving to disk. On this occasion however due to the time factor involved in making four dives, and downloading backing up and checking all images in the surface intervals I shot jpegs at fine setting. Then once back at the office images were uploaded from the Laptop to my G4 opened edited and the chosen images converted immediately to Tiffs before any adjustments were made to avoid any lossy compression deteriorating images.



Wilmer the Sand Tiger! 16mm nikkor 8th sec 5.6

sea! To achieve that, I would need some further creativity.

I had two potential allies the second time around. Firstly, a video crew were shooting some footage in the tanks on the same day, and the lighting crew had a couple of 500k spotlights. These powerful lights would be placed into the areas of the tank to be filmed. I knew we wouldn't be able to shoot in the same areas of the tank at the same time, but this extra lighting could be a real help.

Secondly, I'd managed to get hold of some new underwater camera equipment. I had been shooting

digital for my commercial work since Nikon first brought out the D1. Underwater however, I had remained faithful to my film cameras. This was largely because I shoot a lot of fisheye and wide angle, and I was concerned that the digital camera wouldn't stand up to highlight clipping with bright lighting and sunbursts due to its reduced dynamic range. However, for this shoot I had managed to borrow a housing for my Fujifilm S2 Pro.

I was excited about trying out the system underwater for two reasons; firstly, the benefit of immediate preview to check that my exposures



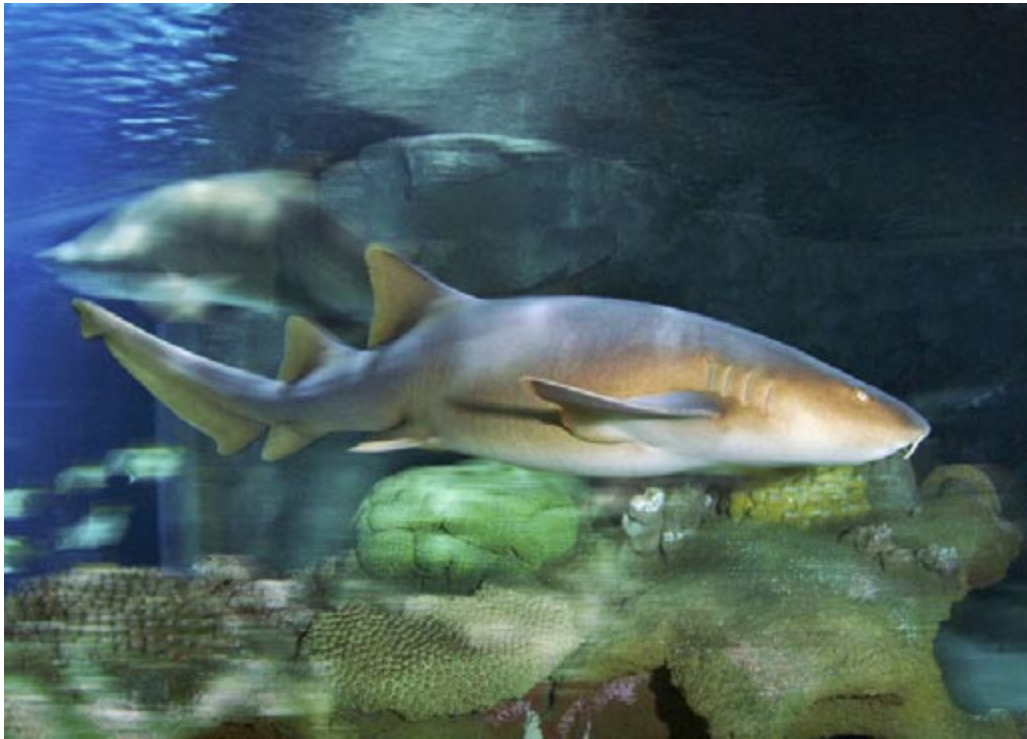
Speeding trevallies... 60mm micro nikkor 8th sec F8

were working. This would save a huge amount of time in having to shoot a test roll and get it processed. Secondly, I have found that working commercially with digital capture on location can deliver exceptional results in low light interior situations and can require much less lighting to fill in shadow areas than working with film. I was hoping that this would also apply underwater and help me to produce the blue water look that the agency was after.

With a budget for just one day's shooting and a maximum time allowed in the water by the HSE of 4

hours, I knew that I needed everything possible on my side to achieve the right results. With all the preparation complete, I started to load my two film camera housings, put fresh rechargeables into the S2 and get suited up for the first dive.

I had planned for three to four dives depending on the material I managed to shoot and had been allocated a safety diver, Rob, for the day. He had to make sure I understood the signals used by the resident divers. This included an instruction to stop immediately what I was doing and sink to the bottom,



Nurse Shark 16mm nikkor 8th sec F8

if they felt that one of the sharks was getting a little feisty. A task that was made a little easier by the fact that I was not allowed to wear fins and was over-weighted to “walk” on the bottom. Something that feels very strange after spending years as a diver aiming for inch perfect buoyancy!

For anyone who has never had the opportunity to dive in the shark tanks at the Blue Planet, I can assure you that the quantity and diversity of the life in the tanks never ceases to amaze you. Huge sand tiger sharks swim within feet of your head and after a

while you can almost forget you’re in an aquarium!

The main objective for the day was the dramatic shark pictures, so I planned to spend the first two dives concentrating on trying to achieve that. If they were achieved quickly, then I would start to shoot close-ups of the variety of smaller inhabitants of the tanks. So I picked up the S2 housing which I had fitted with my 16mm fisheye lens and went in search of some sharks, leaving the two film housings safely on the bottom at the tanks entrance point. And that’s



Barracuda.. 60mm Micro nikkor 8th sec. F8

where they stayed!

Once I started shooting I found the immediate feedback from the S2 invaluable. I would position myself in front of the sharks’ habitual swim path and shoot each time they came past that point. Within a few test exposures I had what appeared on the screen (and Histogram) to be well balanced exposures with much more depth and detail in the water behind the sharks than I had ever achieved on film.

Light levels remained very low and even shooting at an equivalent ISO400 my exposures were around an

8th to a 15th second at f8. Even where the film crew had blasted its 500 k spotlights, only made about a stop’s difference. I knew I had to try and use this to my advantage and there was no way the sharks were going to keep still for me!

Fortunately, I always have my cameras set on the rear curtain sync flash setting, so I started to experiment with slowly panning the camera alongside the sharks as they swam by, hoping that any blur in the shot would create a sense of drama and movement in the faster moving fish while keeping



Jacks .. 60mm micro nikkor 8th sec f8

the sharks' eyes and head acceptably sharp with any flash firing at the end of the shutter cycle.

After around 70 minutes dive time the previews were looking great and I couldn't wait to download the first images onto the laptop. The downloads confirmed my instincts - the shots did look great! Obviously, there were a few rejects where I had mistimed the shutter release or not panned at the right pace, but the balance of the available lighting with the flash was not bad at all. I had initially set the white balance to auto, and this seemed to be giving me a

fairly true water colour so I felt I didn't need to chance this and was eager to get in for another dive and try out some more positions in the tank.

It's a pretty eerie feeling watching the 9ft long sharks swim towards you; their piercing eyes seem to be locked on to you! With Rob watching my back I was able to get very close to them. I had my eyes stuck into the back of the camera housing which even with the increase of the focal length of the lens due to the S2's smaller than 35mm chip size using the 16mm fisheye, I felt I was almost touching the sharks. I swear I could

even feel the sharks brushing through my hair as they passed overhead!

Looking at the results on the laptop, the second dive was also a success. I was sure I now had enough shots of the sharks, so decided to reset the housing to take the 60mm micro nikkor and shoot some of the smaller fish in the tanks

This in itself was not easy. A few of the fish were cooperative, but most were very fast moving and, strangely enough, never seemed want to pose for a portrait. Once again I had to employ the panning and rear curtain sync technique. The schools of Jacks, in particular, gave me some real problems as they were buzzing around the tanks like harassed bees. Once again the feedback from the S2's screen was invaluable and although I couldn't be 100 percent sure that the shots were going to be acceptably sharp it gave me a good idea. And of course I could always delete the ones that didn't work before anyone saw them!

Once again the film housings stayed where I had put them. A valuable back up on the bottom of the tank! The Sea & Sea housing performed faultlessly, I had access to all of the camera's controls and was able to switch seamlessly between shooting with the TTL setting or manual flash with my twin YS120 flashguns. I also had immediate access

to check my exposures and of course could shoot a lot more frames on a one gig card than on a roll of 35mm film.

Commercially I have been shooting less and less film as more clients become confident in supplied digital files. My experience in the shark tanks has convinced me to buy my own digital housing. I guess my wish list for this Christmas will be a full frame Nikon lens based digital camera system with a much wider dynamic range!

Paul Ives
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Fifty Fathoms Below

Taking You and Your Camera to Their Limits

By Joseph C Dovala

The sound was unmistakable...

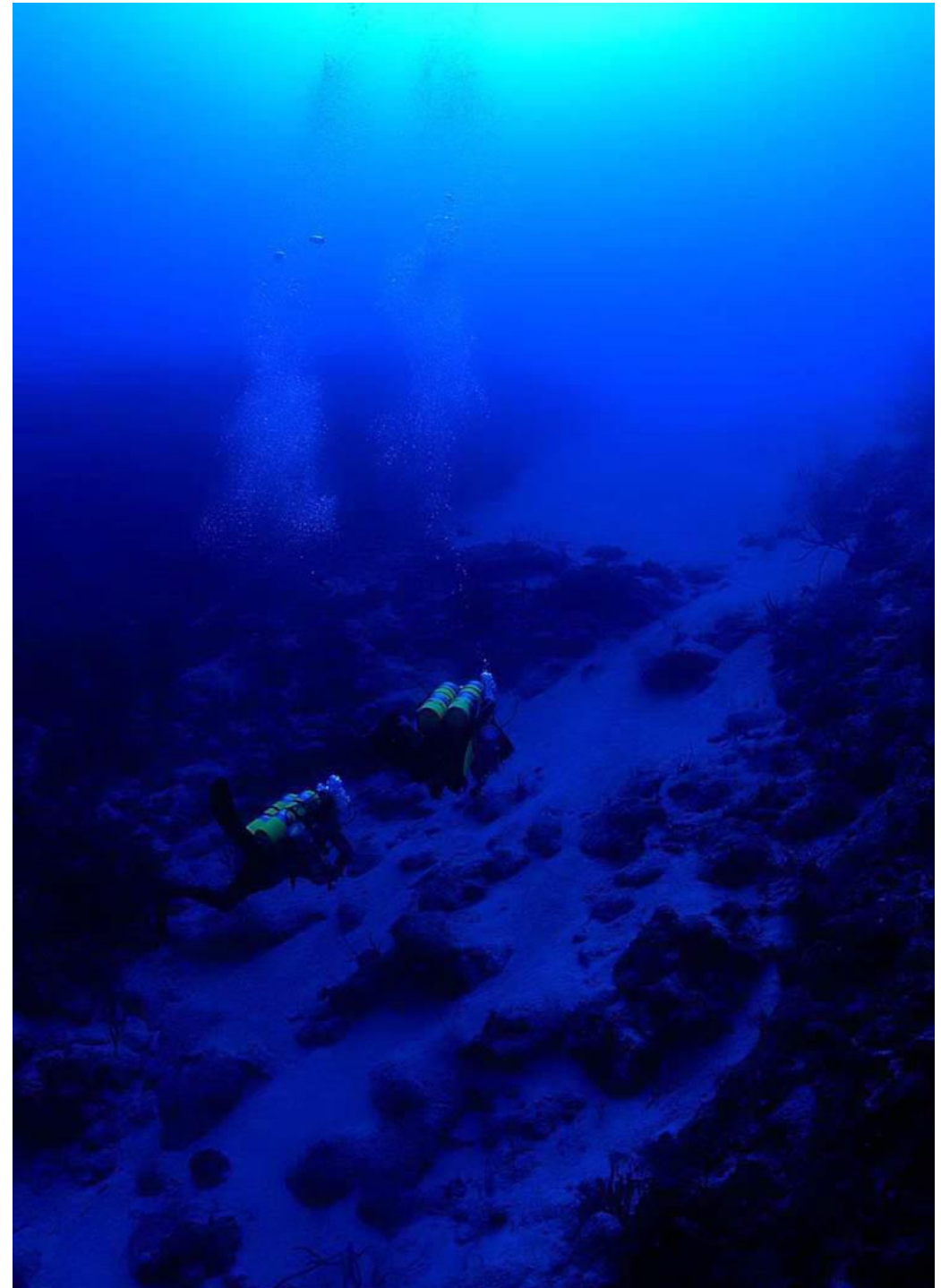
S-N-A-P! We had just reached 300 feet and my breathing rate skyrocketed beyond even the ten-fold increase from being thirty stories underwater. I took a quick look and test fired my camera. Luckily everything seemed to work and the ocean was still outside the housing. My camera in one piece, I calmed myself down and began to peer into the darkness. The dusky blue faded to black below my fins, but brilliant reds and yellows darted across the wall as our canister lights unleashed the true colors of the sponges and corals living in this twilight zone. Soon a very large barracuda curious as to what all the commotion was about joined us during our sojourn through his world. The amount of life at this depth is quite astonishing. Far below the surface, storm surges and large numbers of reckless humans have far less impact on sessile critters so they get lots of time to grow big and stay healthy.

Unfortunately, time was definitely not on our side. Despite carrying nearly three hundred cubic feet of breathing gas, our visit here is measured in just a few minutes. There is little or no opportunity to

setup a shot, and deviating from the very rigid dive plan is not an option except in an emergency. After nine minutes we passed through a coral chute and began our slow ascent back to sunlight. Settling in at our first deep stop of 195 feet I glanced down at the number "94" remaining on my one gig CF card. I now had some seventy minutes of decompression to ponder this observation. Eight images! Two hours of dive planning and more than a few dollars in helium – if I'm lucky one will be acceptable. To be sure, I can keep shooting until I'm clambering up the ladder with a hundred and eighty pounds of gear, but the dive objective and the bottom time were over in less than ten minutes.

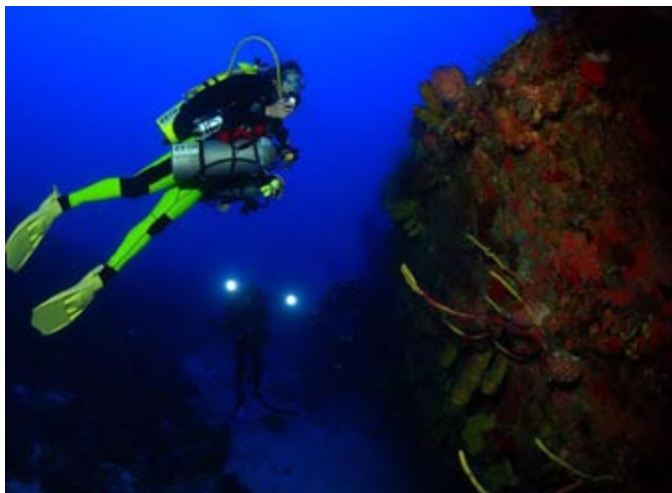
Was it worth it? In the final analysis I'd say yes - have to justify the \$180.00 gas bill some how! Beyond the task of surviving, the challenge of capturing the image you want at these depths requires

The long voyage back to the comparatively bright shallow reef waters via a steep sand chute. Grand Cayman Island. L&M Titan, Nik D100, 16mm, available light, ISO 200, f5.6, 125sec.



a healthy dose of familiarity with your photo system, confidence in your knowledge of the basics of shooting, and a bit of luck. Obviously dive training, experience, and skills must also be up for the undertaking. Choice of photographic equipment is paramount to contributing to the success of shooting below recreational limits. Many manufacturers rate their products based not only on the engineering but also the degree of acceptable warranty risk. When you start asking around you find out that most of the depth specifications are very conservative, as the development testing is often considerably deeper than the recommended rating. Of course, as a consumer, one has to accept the risk that taking a piece of equipment substantially below its rated capacity could mean losing it. For example, I know of a fellow who takes a Nikonos V (rated to 165 feet) down well below 200 feet and “most of the time” it comes back intact. When it doesn’t he either rebuilds it or retires it to the bookshelf. For me, I would not be willing to expend the energy required for this type of diving to have my camera system come up OK “most of the time.” Keep in mind though that a piece of equipment may be rated for 330 feet but it could still fail at 275 based on condition and maintenance.

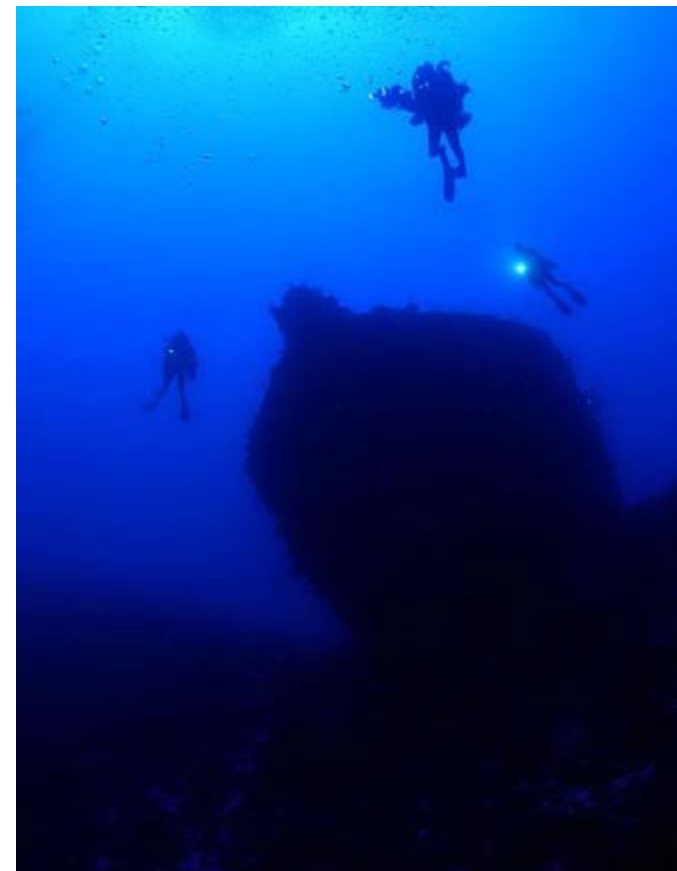
Watching fish swim around inside your flooded housing is not the only way to be carrying a useless box on a dive. Often in deep situations some of the features may not be functional or be difficult to utilize. At around 280 feet, during the dive in the opening paragraph, I was unable to use my shot preview button, as the housing spring was not strong enough to return it to the normal position due to the ambient pressure. This particular problem was more of an inconvenience however, because I could just bracket like the ol’ days (more on this



The deep walls of Cayman have vibrant coral and sponge populations such as these at 220 feet. Grand Cayman Island. L&M Titan, Nik D100, 16mm, Ike SS200 full power, ISO 200, f6.3, 125sec.

later). Housing controls that are used frequently will probably degrade the fastest over time. The o-rings or springs on these buttons may not have the same capabilities as when they were new (sounds familiar doesn’t it?) or their individual properties are not up to par. It is important that critical controls such as shutter releases, film advances, focus knobs, etc., are designed in such a way to minimize being deactivated by the effects of pressure. On many of the less expensive plastic housings you can actually see control rods bending out of alignment with camera buttons when at or beyond their depth ranges.

If you’ve ever seen a good submarine war movie you know water doesn’t drip in through leaks at depth – it explodes in! O-ring maintenance is even more crucial when dealing with 150psi of water trying to get into a box with only about 15psi of air



The view from 260 feet is awesome. The Carrie Lee sits upright, literally on the edge of a wall that towers thousands of feet above the abyssal sea floor. The next big hurricane could send her over the “top.” Grand Cayman Island. Light&Motion Titan, Nik D100, 16mm, available light, ISO 200, f6.3, 125sec.

pushing out. The slightest nick, piece of dust, or hair, on the seals can provide a great entrance for a high-pressure stream of water. With today’s sophisticated electronic cameras about a teaspoon of ocean is all you need to ruin your day. It takes even less to send a strobe into an electronic spasm of firings before



fizzing out. Because the cameras have become more complex so are the housings. Since most functions are available to the diver, it means there are a significant number of through the bulkhead buttons and levers. All of these must be made water tight with o-rings, shaft glands, etc. As such, even with “recreational” use it is a good idea to follow recommended service intervals. Preventative maintenance becomes imperative when constantly taking the system to its limits. With salt water damage it rarely pays to have the camera repaired. It almost always requires another trip to your favorite photo shop for a new purchase.

Anyone who has tried to get a meaningful photograph below the surface knows that time is not the only hurdle to deal with. Lack of light and contrast under the waves is almost always an issue for the underwater photographer and even more of a problem for the deep diver. Of course reduced turbidity, organics, etc., in the water column and less cloud cover above will mean more light available to use at depth. Usually tropical destinations meet these criteria and provide the most consistent clarity but not always. Diving under sheets of ice, some fresh water springs, and those magical days in temperate seas can also let the sunshine in. Sadly,



(Right) The price to pay for our 18-minutes of bottom time ñ some 50 minutes of decompression. L&M Titan, Nik D100, 16mm, Ike SS200 1/4 power, ISO 200, f4, 125sec. (Above) A welcome sight when drift diving for over an hour is the support RIB right on time. L&M Titan, Nik D100, 16mm, Ike SS200 1/8 power, ISO 200, f13, 125sec.

I can count the number of days on my fingers that I had “tropical like” conditions at home, so typically the natural light accessible is quite different between the two locals. In murkier waters opening the lens up as well as using longer exposures from 1/30sec or more can help when using diminished ambient illumination. Unless motion is desired a sturdy prop such as a tripod or something to brace against (without damaging marine life) is required and your subject cannot be moving. Coupling slower shutter

speeds with higher ISO’s of either film or digital capture makes a good tool to combat light loss, but there is a price to pay with increased graininess, camera shake, or noise in the final image. Shooting toward the surface will certainly help too, however the dive plan must take into account that the subject needs to be above maximum depth.

A sufficiently powerful strobe, or strobes, is essential if you’re going to unlock the colors and boost contrast. While there are some big



have finally made the switch to digital I feel well armed prowling the depths. The Nikon D100 can give me very fine publishable images and with the digital darkroom I'm able to carve out far more keepers per dive. By shooting in the "raw" format I have more control of exposure and contrast than I ever could with transparency film. Also, with instant feedback I can make effective changes on site (providing the access control is working!) Due to the very limited time at depth I usually just check gross exposure on the LCD. With more than a hundred raw images available on a 1-gig card I'm free to bracket all I want without worrying about running out of frames. A 2-gig card would double this luxury. Digital also allows ISO to be changed on the fly for as few or as many shots as you like. This is very handy when you want to change the "feel" of a shipwreck for example, without committing the whole roll to a particular ASA rating. That is not to say you can't produce fine images with film, for there are many superb photographs fashioned in just this manner. I am not attempting to debate film vs. digital either but rather to illustrate my increased successes with deep-water shots by using digital tools.

Technical or extended range diving is not a trivial pursuit. It takes serious commitment in time, money, and training to do it productively and

safely. It requires a very different approach to the dive than most people are used to with recreational scuba. Staying down a couple of extra minutes to get the shot, or dropping past dive plan depth limits to get under a subject, is not only hazardous to the individual attempting it but also puts the whole dive team in jeopardy. Like driving an automobile faster and faster there is less time to handle an emergency and the ramifications expand exponentially the deeper one goes. Simply bailing out and doing a "free ascent" is never an option. Adding the additional task loading of a camera should be done in stages, with lots of practice in shallower water and full technical kit to get an idea of how to manage the whole package in a safe and efficient manner. Few people venture to these depths and fewer still acquire photographs of the vistas they observe. For those willing to take the challenge and manage the increased risk, the rewards are many. Whether it is undersea scenics, large pelagic animals, or the mystery of a shipwreck, there are endless possibilities for the deep-water photographer to experiment with.

Joseph C Dovala
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powerful flashguns available, you must balance capabilities with size and complexity of system. I have found the Ikelite Substrobe 200 to currently meet my needs. With an underwater guide number of 38, and a potent built in modeling light, I can keep my photographic system manageable by using a single strobe on the deeper dives. And now that I

The Devils playground

by Anthony Grote

It is known as the Wild West. It is a place where man still has to totally conquer, a place where sea creatures still come to reproduce in relative peace, where forest meets sea, and where the devil has his playground.

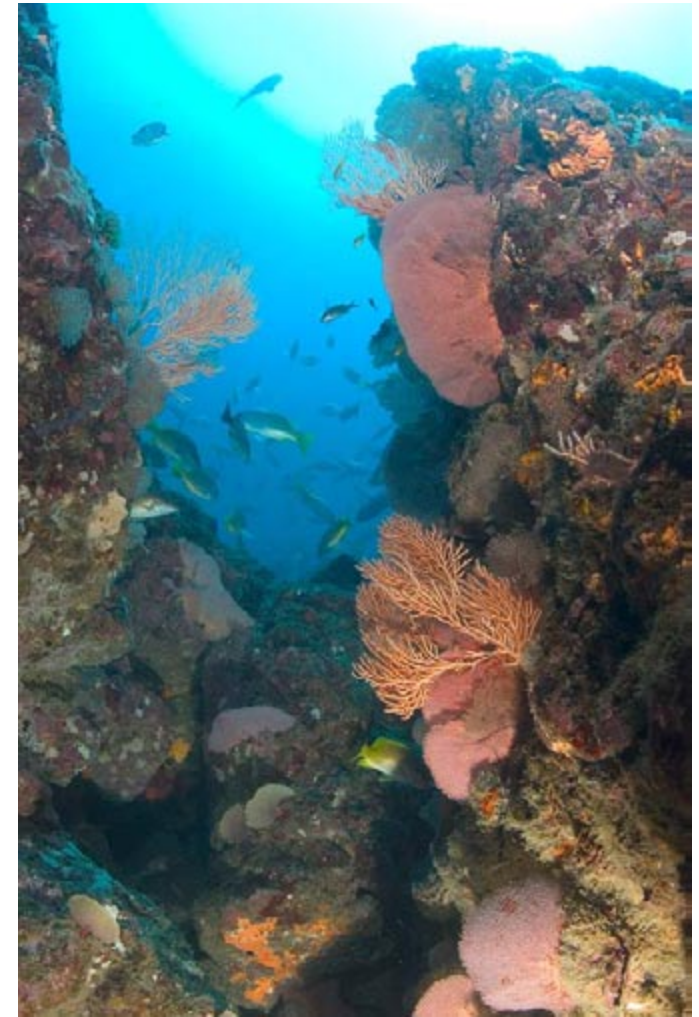
It was going to be a wild ride that would take us deep into the Osa peninsula, home of the last free roaming Jaguars. The coastline is a morass of unexplored wilderness, where small, coastal towns still have to be discovered, let alone discovering their tourism potential. The country is probably best known for its diving around the Cocos Island area. Unfortunately we were not going to get there this trip but where we were heading is known to come a very close second. In fact, the area where we were heading, known as Isla del Cano, is known to the locals as “The Little Cocos”. Drake bay (pronounced as “Dra-ka-ee”), was going to be our base from where we would explore this island.

We had chosen to go rustic. Our camp was known as Pirate Cove, with no electricity (a generator runs for a couple of hours a day at which time you can charge batteries), and our room was situated amongst the coastal rainforest, with no windows so that the natural sounds filter in and sooth the soul. Despite being rustic, their dive center was well equipped, and their boats were first class. The staff was friendly and extremely enthusiastic, ready to take you anywhere and show you the surrounds. That afternoon we decided to explore



Drake Bay and were lucky enough to experience the call of free-living Scarlet Macaws as they fought amongst the trees on the beach. The locals were all friendly, greeting you as you walked past, even the local school was having classes on the beach, (which, I decided, was to be the best school I had ever seen).

The day got off to an early start after a hearty breakfast. We were escorted to our dive boat on a small rubber duck, and off we headed for Isla del Cano (which means “Island of many waterfalls”). Visible from Drake Bay, the Island is fairly large, covered in coastal rainforest and given the name because of the many waterfalls that appear in the rainy season. It took us about 35 minutes by boat to get into the shallow waters of the island. The crystal clear waters around the island allowed us to see our first encounter even as they dived under the boat. A school of Pacific Spotted Dolphins appeared, as we rounded the one end of the island, as if to greet us and welcome us to their domain. They played around us for about 5 minutes and then they were off in search of their daily feeding grounds. We



*Volcanic rocks covered in various corals
Nikon D100 Light&Motion Titan D100
Sea & Sea strobes Nikon 16mm f2.8 fisheye
1/90s – f9.5*

dropped off our picnic basket on the island (where we were to spend our surface interval) and off we headed to our first dive.

“El Bajo del Diablo”, or commonly known as The Devils’ Pinnacles, was to be our first dive.



*A Jewfish surrounded by juvenile Golden Jacks
Nikon D100 Light&Motion Titan D100, Sea & Sea strobes Nikon 16mm f2.8
fisheye, 1/45s – f8*

Famed as the most exciting dive around Isla del Cano, and I remember Lawson, our divemaster in El Coco (a diving area in the northern part of Costa Rica) saying “Make sure you dive the Bajo del Diablo, you won’t be sorry!” As we arrived at the divesite, we were greeted by the most amazing sight I have seen, an aerial display by Lesser Devil Rays, leaping into the air, powered by their large wingspans, somersaulting and landing back in the water with a large splash. One, two, three..eventually I lost count. The show carried on for

about 10 minutes when finally we were ready to jump in and hopefully see these animals performing for us beneath the waves.

We dropped down and soon found ourselves between the pinnacles, in the mire that belonged to the huge schools of fish that hung on the edges, as if guarding the entrance to a place where only the privileged are allowed. The walls were volcanic rock, encrusted with a multitude of corals and sponges, with bright pinky-orange sea fans. The schools parted as we slowly made our way around

one of the pinnacles and headed to the other end of the channel. As we came around the eastern pinnacle, Surgeonfish, a never-ending school, appearing from nowhere, more and more as if sent by the devil to chase us out of his domain, surrounded us. The school must have grown to close to 300 and still they danced around us, parting as we swam through to view what lay beyond. White-tip Reef Sharks appeared, parting the Surgeonfish in rapid swishes, and then disappeared. Leather Basses showed their faces here and there, Creole Fish danced around and above us. Amoca Jacks, Bigeye Jacks and Parrotfish darted around in search of that mouthful of food. Eventually, I looked at my buddy and shrugged, acknowledging her disbelief, as we just did not know where to look next. It was a show beyond all expectations, a sight that I had never seen before.

We dived the site again the following day. Unfortunately, this time, the channel between the pinnacles had been encompassed by a thermo cline, which resulted in the whole area being a green pea-soup colour and a waste of time trying to penetrate. However, the schools of Surgeonfish were still around, dancing between rocks, the White-tips were again patrolling for their share of the fiesta. Slowly, however, things got worse around the pinnacles so I

decided to move out into the blue. As we moved out we were greeted by a school of Bigeye Jacks that circled around and, once they were happy that we were no threat, moved off. My buddy signaled she was going up. I decided to hang for a couple more minutes, adamant that something else was to happen. It was not two minutes later, from the green depths appeared what I had been waiting for. A squadron of about 20 Lesser Devil Rays, the ones that had so amazingly performed for us the day before, flying wingtip to wingtip, appeared, moving effortlessly, slowly surfacing, glided along for a short while and then disappeared. It was a spectacle I will never forget. I had tried to fin to catch up with them and take some pictures, but never got within 20 meters. Only when I turned around and found my buddy was about 100 meters behind me, did I realize how hard I had finned but had got nowhere.

That afternoon, after a nice long surface interval on the island, with a wholesome lunch, we dived a site known as Los Arcos, or The Arches, a formation in the rocks that forms a perfect arch. Also packed with fish, taking refuge in the arch from the current, only moving out when approached. After taking some photos of the arch, my buddy called me to come see something. I could see in the urgency that she called it must



Two white-tipped reefsharks searching for food. Nikon D100, Light&Motion Titan D100, Sea & Sea strobes, Nikon 16mm f2.8 fisheye, 1/60s – f8

be something good. We went around a large rock and there taking refuge, in the shadow of a large rock, was a Jewfish (the size of a Volkswagen beetle), with juvenile Golden Jacks circling around it. We circled around slowly, aware of the large eye watching us. The animal seemed unperturbed. Only after a couple of photos did it move and begin circling the rock. We followed in fascination and once we had gone right around the rock, it decided it had had enough and moved off. We left it swimming in a northerly direction, guided by its smaller companions. The dive site

was totally different from that of El Bajo del Diablo, as the volcanic rock was dotted around like little islands, and each little island had it's own activities. The rocks would extend from the sandy bottom to just below the surface, a distance of about 15m. We came across one of these rocky islands to discover two white-tip reef sharks lying on the sands. Attempting to slowly glide closer for that perfect shot, it was not too be. These sharks were not having it! Off they went in search of another quiet resting place. Besides the sharks, the rocks housed Leather Bass, frantic

Blunthead Triggerfish, darting from one point to another biting of pieces from the rocks, and small schools of King Angelfish. After another action packed dive we surfaced, only to be met by a large, loosely formed school of Palometa's, showing off their yellow elongated dorsal and pectoral fins as if they were courting us on the way to the surface.

It was our last trip back from our playing fields, and with the island growing smaller in our wake,

I realized that we had just witnessed one of the best diving adventures that we had been on. We had dived with the devil and survived, and Lawson had been right, Isla del Cano, and specifically, El Bajo del Diablo, was indeed the best diving on the Rich Coast, known as Costa Rica.

Anthony Grote
www.overunderphoto.com

Fact file

Getting There

The easiest route, and the one we took is, via Miami, to San Jose, on American Airlines or Delta. From San Jose, there are two local airlines that fly to Drake Bay. Nature's Air flies to a small town called Palma Sur, from there you go by boat (about 2 hours ride) to your hotel. SANSA flies to Palma Sur, as well as direct to Drake Bay. Your hotel then organizes transport from the airport in Drake Bay to your hotel. Flights cost in the region of about \$170 return.

Keep in mind that internal flights, luggage weight restrictions are limited to 12.5kg per person.

Accommodation

There are numerous accommodation options, ranging in prices:

1. Pirate's Cove – www.piratecovecostrica.com
2. Jinetes da Osa – www.costaricadiving.com
3. Drake Bay Wilderness Lodge – www.drakebay.com
4. La Paloma Lodge – www.lapalomalodge.com

Nemo Lighting

by Alexander Mustard

“We might as well give up underwater photography and all take up animation,” was the reaction of Steve Warren, owner of Ocean Optics, on leaving the cinema at the end of the PIXAR’s film Finding Nemo. Steve’s cheeky quip succinctly summarises just how believable the superb underwater animation was in the film. As divers we should have been the hardest to convince because we are so familiar with the reality, but it was the divers that I know, and the photographers in particular, who were most enthusiastic about the film’s watery world. The result was no fluke; it was the product of more than three years of hard work by PIXAR. “In the end, the animation has to be believable,” comments supervising animator Dylan Brown. “You have to get into this fantasy world, forget about the technology and get sucked into the story.”

Andrew Stanton, the film’s director, explains PIXAR approach “Our starting point was to watch a lot of films with underwater scenes and analyze what made them seem like they were underwater. What made them not seem like they were in air?” The animators were set the task of trying to recreate real underwater sequences, in the computer. Dylan Brown continues, “The technical crew worked on it and eventually came back and showed us their work. We couldn’t tell the difference between the re-created footage and the original. It blew us all away.” All very interesting, but what has this got to do with underwater photography. Well, we can learn a lot from PIXAR. Buy the DVD and watch



the special features and you will be blown away by the animators’ understanding of what goes into making a image look like it is underwater. Stanton explains, “We came up with a shopping list of five key components that suggest an underwater environment - lighting, particulate matter, surge and swell, murk, and reflections and refractions.” The descriptions of the characteristics of the different types of underwater light, on the DVD, are the most comprehensive I have heard in my time in underwater photography. Armed with this new knowledge, I dug out my own photographs and examined them. Few of my underwater images contained any of the characteristic lighting traits of the underwater world. Of course, they were all taken underwater, but it seems that my traditional

photographic techniques (dominated by lighting from my strobes) blast away all traces of the real world. Clearly I had a lot to learn about underwater light! So I set myself the challenge of trying to take images that contained more of these components and therefore would look closer to reality. I hoped that such an image would be more persuasive in communicating the true feeling of being underwater. To achieve this goal I have had to come up with a new way of lighting my images. I have called this technique “Nemo Lighting”. I’m not fully convinced by the technique, but I would like to share my experiences with you since the process taught me much about the nature of light in the ocean.



Underwater the main (key) lighting comes from the surface and casts a shadow below the subject. But seawater also scatters light in all directions that softens these shadows, giving them characteristic blurry edges and a blue colour. Nikon D100 + 16mm lens. 40CC Red filter. Subal housing. 1/100th @ f9.5.

The Shopping List

The first step was to write a modification of PIXAR list to make it suitable for still photography. I have been back through the special features on my Nemo DVD and also spent time out on dives just watching the light. This is my Nemo Lighting shopping list that defines the types of lighting we get underwater:

1) Key downwelling light. This is the main light source: illumination coming down from the surface of the ocean, casting shadows beneath the subject.

2) Scattered light. Particulate matter in the ocean scatters light in all directions. This light partly fills and softens shadows compared with in air.

3) Caustic lighting. These are dancing light



Caustic lighting, the dancing patterns of light on the seabed, is very evocative of being underwater. This light pattern is created by refraction of the light at the surface and the type of pattern is determined by the sea surface state. A fast shutter speed is needed to capture clear patterns. Nikonos V + 15mm lens. 1/250th @ f5.6. EBX 100.

patterns on the seabed created by refraction of sunlight by waves on the surface.

4) Beams of light. The murk and the particulate matter in the water clearly show beams of light that are focused by refraction of light by waves at the surface.

5) Full colour. As divers we see plenty of colour everywhere, both in the foreground and background. Take an available light photo underwater and it will come out blue, but our brains are smarter than film and compensate our vision for the blue light.

Lighting in theory

The big advantage I had over the animators is that I was not starting with a blank canvas

(or computer screen). On a dive characteristic underwater light is all around. All I had to do was to figure out how to capture it. Colour was the only component that we see differently to it actually is and would probably be the trickiest to get right. The obvious solution for making the (1) downwelling illumination the key (main) lighting of a scene is to photograph using only available light. This will cast the main shadows below the subject that will also be soft and blue tinted as a result of scattering (2). Soft blue shadows disappear when an image is lit with a flash because the strong directional light from a strobe fills them and casts a black and clearly defined shadow (behind the subject) and fills the soft blue shadow created by the natural light.

Recording the dancing caustic lighting (3) on the seabed also limits the use of flash. Even a small amount will burn away the characteristic light and dark patterns from white sand. Sea surface conditions play an important role in defining the pattern of caustic lighting. A smooth, ripple free surface, is ideal for a well-defined latticework of light. An increase in wind speed increases the small ripples, which confuse the pattern and create a stippled lighting effect on the seabed. Larger waves create bigger blotches of light and dark with poorly defined edges. The type of caustic lighting does not concern me, after all each is characteristic of being underwater. What is important is using a fast shutter speed (1/125th or higher) to freeze the movement of the caustic lighting and to record the light and dark patterns in the final image.

Light beams (4) are also caused by refraction of light at the surface and seen because of the murk in the water. Not surprisingly they also need a fast shutter speed to freeze them, but strobe light does not lessen our chances with them.

Technique 1

Given the need to avoid strobes to capture factors 1-3, initially I planned to capture full colour (5) images using filters. Filters have become tried and tested technique since the proliferation of digital cameras (a fact well documented in UWP, not least because of the editor's enthusiasm for this technique). However, my first few shots highlighted a shortcoming with this as approach. Filters produced ideal lighting for the backgrounds and scenic shots: I could capture all the characteristic Nemo Lighting I wanted. Unfortunately it was too easy to lose the main subjects in these bright and colourful backgrounds (see the image of the barracuda). To be fair filters worked well when the main subject was set against open water or when over white sand that helped fill shadows on the subject and increased its contrast with the background (such as the diver and stingray shot). But when the background was the reef the subject was lost, along with the impact of the image. I needed a more robust technique, one that was more widely applicable than this predominantly shallow water method.

So it was back to the drawing board, well the special features on my Finding Nemo DVD! How did they solve the problem of not losing their



When shooting with filters in ambient light it is easy to lose the subject in a complex and colourful background. The upper barracuda stand out well against open water, but the lower fish are lost in the reef. For this reason I stopped using filters to achieve Nemo Lighting. Nikon D100 + 16mm lens. 40CC Red filter. Subal housing. 1/125th @ f6.7.

characters in the background? Their answer was by having individual fill lighting on each of the characters. To try to replicate this underwater I needed light coming from another angle, so I gave up on the filter and attached my strobes. But I knew I would have to try a new way of using them.

Technique 2

As underwater photographers we normally use strobes as the main (key) lighting on our subject. This is clearly true for macro, and I believe it is also true for wide angle. We often talk about using strobes to fill shadows in wide angle shots, but in reality this “flash fill” is most often the dominant lighting on the main subject and therefore I consider it the key rather than the fill lighting on the subject (in a studio sense). The secret



Beams of light are a characteristic and beautiful component of underwater light. Separate beams are created by refraction at the surface and we see them clearly because of the turbidity of water is much greater than air. Nikon F100 + 16mm lens. Subal housing. 1/250th @ f6.7. Velvia 100F.

to Nemo Lighting is to only use the strobes for true fill lighting at a much lower intensity than the available light, allowing the latter to act as the key lighting.

Of course the main reason we use strobes is to add colour to our

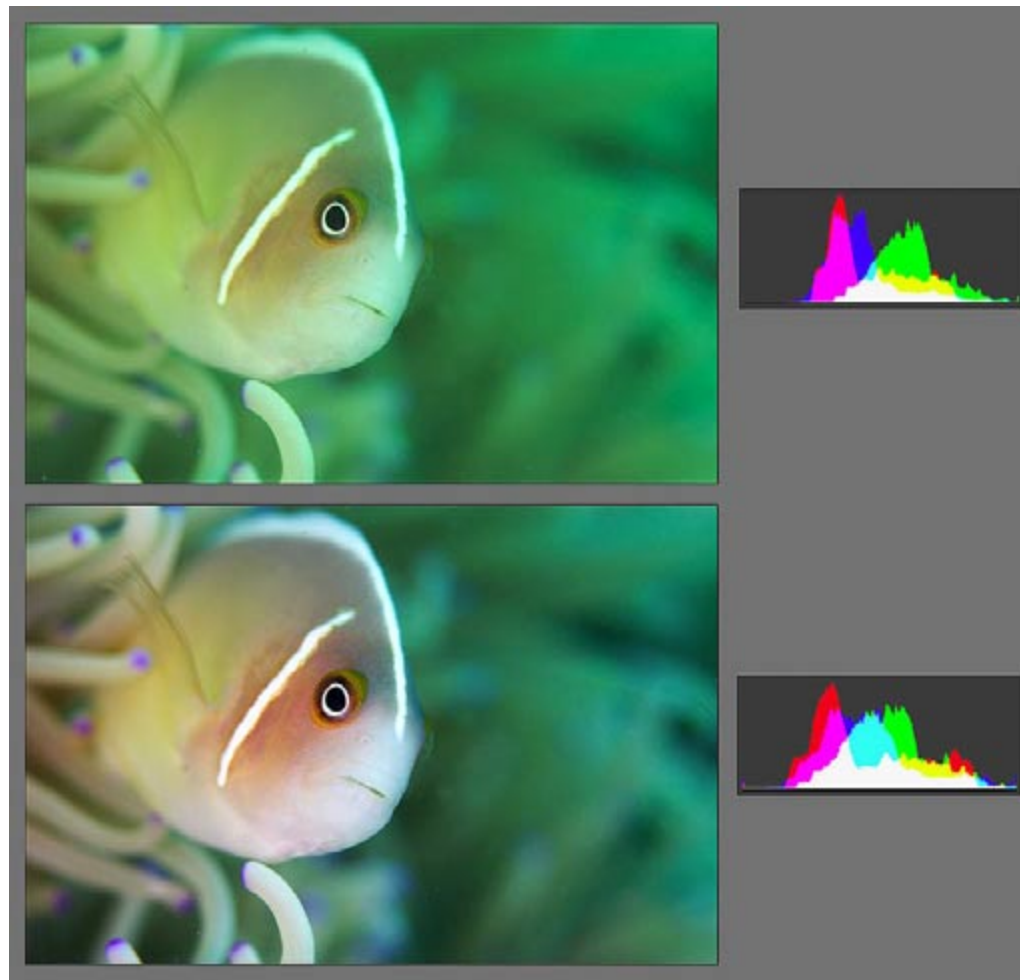
images. In Nemo Lighting, using strobes for low intensity fill light does not provide enough light to fully colour the subject. The resulting images are too blue. This is not too much of a problem with a digital camera: so long as there is some red light in the RAW image I can adjust the colour temperature and tint of the RAW image and bring out the colours I want. It is not possible to bring back colours that aren't there, which is why there is a finite depth (the depth of red light) on filter photography. If a completely blue image is warmed up everything becomes too warm and even the water goes red! But in this technique, that tickle of strobe light importantly provides enough red light to bring out the desired colours.

In the water the photographic approach is also quite different from standard techniques. For example, normally when I shoot a typical reef scene I find a nice coral, choose a camera angle that silhouettes it, back lit by the sun, against blue water. I meter on the blue water, exposing at say $1/90^{\text{th}}$ @ f8 and light the coral with my strobes at 1/2 power. Easy. To shoot Nemo Lighting I need to swim to the other side of coral so sunlight is illuminating and not silhouetting the coral. I expose for the coral, starting at say $1/45^{\text{th}}$ @ f8 but actually open up the aperture to get a faster shutter speed, such as $1/180^{\text{th}}$ @ f4, to capture



I felt that Nemo lighting would be effective in this image to show that it really was underwater and has not been put together in Photoshop. Note that the shadow of the model is soft and blue and falls beneath her. Also note how the reef and fish are full colour despite being far from the camera. Nikon D100 + 16mm lens. Subal housing. $1/180$ @ f8. 2 x Subtronic Alphas on 1/8 power.

caustic lighting more clearly. Then I need to drop the strobe power by 2 stops (to $1/8^{\text{th}}$ power) to account for the wider aperture and then reduce it by a further 2-3 stops (to $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ -



Shooting with the flash underexposed by 2-3 stops and the image lit mainly with ambient light mean that images came out too bluey-green. This can be overcome by white balancing the camera in situ or more conveniently in post processing if shooting in RAW format (such as this before and after example from Adobe Camera Raw). Top image Colour Temp = 5000 K, Tint = 0. Lower images Colour Temp = 5250 K, Tint = 74.

$1/64^{\text{th}}$ power) to provide fill without competing with the ambient lighting. The wider aperture also helps increase the contrast between the subject and

the background, by throwing the background out of focus. This works to enhance the impact of the otherwise naturalistic looking images.



Fish in Nemo Lighting. Note how both the foreground and background are colourful, but the background is thrown out of focus by the wide aperture. Not also how the backgrounds have soft shadows characteristic of being underwater, rather than the harsh shadows created by strobe light. All Nikon D100. 1/180th @ f5.6 with either 28-70mm or 105mm. 2 x Subtronic Alphas on 1/32nd or 1/64th power.

Conclusion

I am not completely convinced by Nemo Lighting. First I am very pleased that the technique embraces digital technology and produces a new type of image that could not be achieved on film. And at times I am

also thrilled by the different look of the images. While at other moments their naturalistic look just confirms to me why photographers have developed the standard techniques of underwater photography! I feel the main shortcoming of many of my Nemo Lighting images is that they

lack impact, so easily achieved when flash dominates the lighting!

So in conclusion I think that Nemo Lighting is a niche, rather than mainstream, technique. It is another string to my photographic bow: ideal for images where I want to overemphasise that the scene is

underwater. But I must add that Nemo Lighting is still very much work in progress. One of the shortcomings of the images I have shown here is that most are not great shots irrespective of lighting - the case for Nemo Lighting would be strengthened by better composition and more interesting subject matter.

The best thing to come from the experience is the education from PIXAR on underwater light (that I hope I have shared with you in this article). Anyone familiar with the ocean knows to always expect the unexpected. But I never expected to learn more about light underwater from an animated film on DVD than many years listening and learning from underwater photographers.

Alex Mustard
www.amustard.com

Alex will be giving a presentation at "Visions in the Sea" a one day digital seminar organised by Ocean Optics on October 23rd in London. For details visit www.oceanoptics.co.uk/visions04.html

Digital TTL

by Jean-Sebastien Morisset

My wife decided it was time to upgrade her underwater photography equipment. She's been using a Sony P&S with a Sony housing and Ikelite DS-50 for over 2 years, so this upgrade is long overdue. After looking over the features of different housings and cameras, she decided flash TTL was one of her requirements. This article explores the different options available, with flash TTL support, for underwater digital cameras in September 2004.

Underwater housing and substrobo (underwater flash) manufacturers have found several ways to offer TTL support:

Flash Sensor

This is the most popular technique. It consists of mounting a flash sensor in front of the camera's own flash, either inside or outside a transparent housing. The flash sensor detects the camera's pre-flash (used for metering purposes), triggers a pre-flash in the substrobes, detects the real flash from the camera, and then triggers the substrobes for the exposure. The power of the substrobo's output is based on the intensity measured by the sensor. The strength of the camera's flash may be limited, which may in turn limit the amount of light the substrobes will project. In clear housings, the camera's flash may also 'leak' into the surrounding water and create backscatter, ghosting and/or lens flares (especially with wide angle lenses). Since the camera has to use its internal flash for every



picture, you'll have to wait for it to re-charge every time. This will also drain your camera's battery much faster. Typically, substrobes are also much faster to re-charge, so you may be waiting on your internal flash while your substrobo is ready for the next picture. If your flash sensor is exposed to light from the surrounding water, your substrobo will probably fire when other photographers are around you. Near the surface, reflections may also trigger your substrobo.



Hot-Shoe

This second method is connecting a wire to the camera's hot-shoe. If the hot-shoe is "intelligent" (most dSLRs and some prosumer cameras), it will communicate to the substrobo the amount of flash required. The alternative is to set the power level on the flash / substrobo manually, and use the camera in manual mode. The protocols used to communicate between the hot-shoe and flash are often proprietary to each camera manufacturer. If housing and/or substrobo manufacturers want to support these protocols, they must decode the protocol and add an special electronics to their housing.



clear how - some electronics in the housing may be involved, or it may be completely camera based.

Most digital dSLR and prosumer cameras use a pre-flash to meter and determine the amount of flash required. Because light behaves differently underwater, pre-flash systems are less precise than film-based methods that measure light reflected from the film media. Currently, only the Fuji S2 Pro dSLR uses a more sophisticated system from Nikon called 3D Multi-sensor Balanced Fill Flash System. It fires a series of mini flash pulses instead of a single pre-flash. This should make metering a little more precise.

After considering all the usual quality issues (lens sharpness, chromatic aberration, image noise, auto-focus speed, etc.) and feature set, we were left with three cameras to choose from: the Olympus C-8080 Wide Zoom, Canon 300D, and Fuji S2 Pro.

All three offer flash TTL with a hot-shoe connection in an Ikelite housing. Choosing between the Canon 300D and Fuji S2 Pro also means choosing between Canon and Nikon lens mounts -- we plan on using Canon lenses in the future, so we decided against the Fuji S2 Pro. So that left the Olympus C-8080 WZ (plus: wide-angle converter, housing and dome port), and the Canon 300D (plus: wide-angle lens, macro lens, housing, flat port, and two dome ports). The Canon 300D is by far the more expensive of the two when you add the lenses and ports.

The only problem we could find with the Olympus camera was at the wide-angle end: 28mm + a 0.8x wide-angle converter gives just 22.4mm. The Canon 300D can go down to 16mm using the



new EF-S 10-22mm lens. We decided to visit a local dealer and try out the two cameras side-by-side, to see if one would be the clear winner. Personally, I liked the Canon 300D, but Melanie was un-decided until the sales person showed us the soon-to-be-released Canon 20D. Ikelite doesn't have a housing for it yet, and the flash TTL protocol hasn't been decoded, but we figure Ikelite will address these issues shortly. :-) So, in the end, we've chosen the Canon 20D to upgrade Melanie and my digital camera (yes, this will be an expensive upgrade). We'll be sharing lenses and will probably opt for the Canon EF-S 10-22 f3.5-4.5 USM, Canon EF 28-105mm f3.5-4.5 II USM and Canon EF 100mm f2.8 Macro USM lenses for underwater use.

Housed Flashes

Another alternative to support flash TTL underwater is to house the original manufacturer's flashes. The down-side to this for the photographer is maintaining one or two additional housings (batteries and o-rings). Typical flashes are also less powerful than some substrobes.

Before you start shopping for a camera, you should determine the TTL system you prefer (if flash TTL is a requirement for you), and find all the housings that support it. We chose the Hot-Shoe method for 2 reasons: It's reliable (unlike the sensor method), and we already have some underwater substrobes (so housed flashes would be an additional expense). At the moment, I'm only aware of Ikelite housings that offers TTL with a hot-shoe connection. They've decoded the TTL flash protocols for Olympus and the Canon 300D. The Fuji S2 Pro flash TTL is also supported, but it's not

Jean-Sebastien Morisset

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Book reviews

Under Antarctic Ice

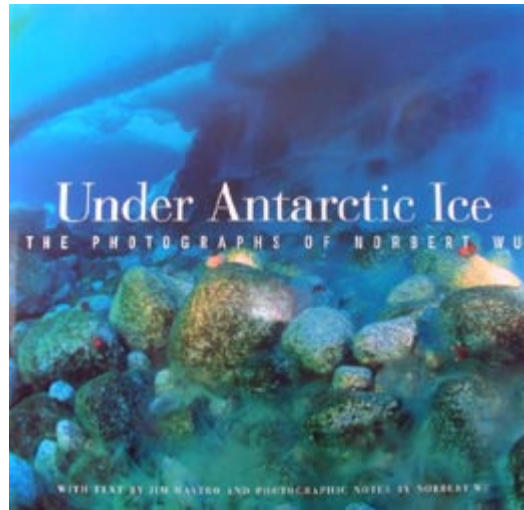
Under Antarctic Ice is a large 11"x10" (28x25cm) coffee table book written by Jim Mastro and illustrated by Norbert Wu.

Jim first went to Antarctica in 1982 and stayed there for six years ending up as the diving coordinator for the US Antarctic Program. Norbert is an independent filmmaker and photographer. In 1999 he was awarded a Pew Marine Conservation Fellowship Prize which he used to return to Antarctica in 2003 to continue his work in both stills and high-definition video.

The book is split into three main sections. The first, written by Jim, describes the natural history of the area and this is a captivating read about an area that is the size of the United States and Mexico combined.

The second section takes up the majority of the book and consists of Norbert's world class images with detailed and informative captions which make this book one you can immerse yourself in or dip into every now and again.

The photographs are, without doubt, astounding and a great deal of extreme physical discomfort and hard work must have gone into producing



such consistent quality. The captions reveal Norbert's expert knowledge of both his surroundings and his subjects and will leave you much better informed and inspired.

The final section is photographic notes relating to all the images and these give a fascinating insight into life behind the lens. Once again they are very detailed and most generously impart Norbert's knowledge and experience of how to operate in such environments.

Underwater Antarctic Ice is extremely good value at around £26 in the UK but be warned. If you buy this book as a present for somebody, you will probably end up keeping it.

For more details of Norbert's work visit www.norbertwu.com

An Essential Guide to Digital Underwater Photography

by Michael Aw and Mathieu Meur

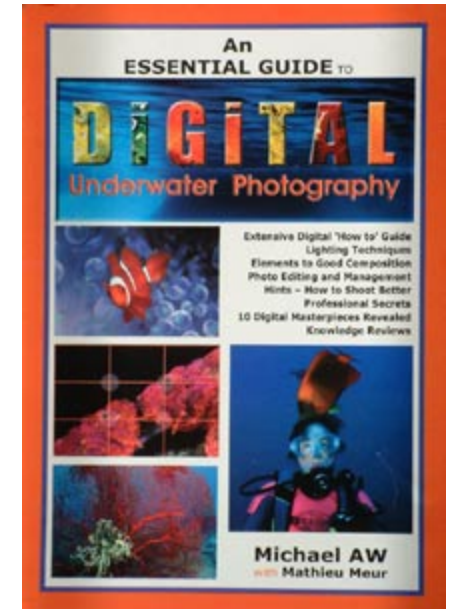
This 128 page book is like the Tardis. It seems small from the outside (approx 8" x 6", 21cm x 15cm) but inside it contains a wealth of information about underwater photography in general and digital in particular.

Initially I thought it was not going into enough detail but then I realised they were imparting salient points without flowery descriptions or explanations and sometimes, especially with digital, a longer explanation can be more confusing than a concise one.

The result is a master of simplicity and is very well illustrated with photos and diagrams. Also the flow of the book is very logical.

As a true convert to digital I was looking forward to the final section on Photoshop which is a programme so large and so multi-layered that I doubt if I will ever use more than 10% of its capability. Once again this section of the book was excellent for it only talked about those parts of Photoshop which are directly relevant to underwater photographers.

I'm sure other more copious books will come along in the future but I think Messrs Aw and Meur have got the balance just right first



time. They cater for beginners and advanced alike without talking up or down to either and, for once, the title of the book couldn't be more apt.

It is an essential guide which will accompany me on my travels from now on.

The Essential Guide to Digital Underwater Photography costs \$25 and is available at www.underwater.com.au/product.php/id/UWS001 and it should be available in most good underwater photography shops.

Peter Rowlands
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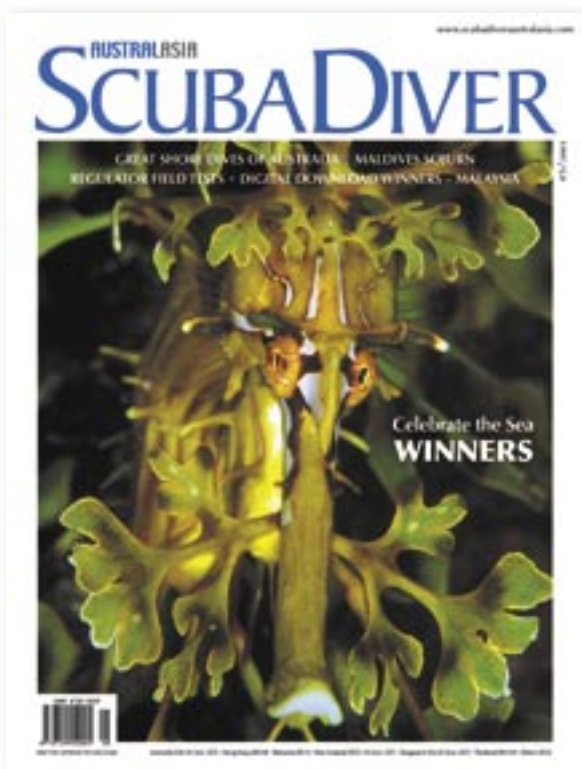
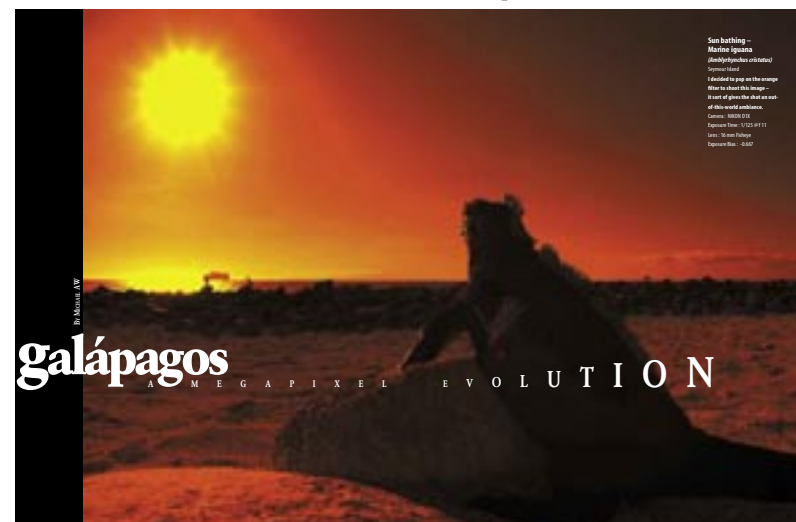


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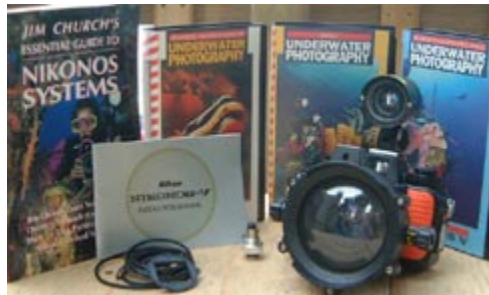
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Parting shot

The first day of our (my wife Brenda and I) holiday in Egypt on the Red Sea. We had arrived the previous evening at the Sharks Bay Hilton and I had just signed up with the local dive centre for a few dives in the coming week. I had decided to get wet ASAP and informed the instructor taking my details that I intended to go snorkelling as soon as they were through with me. I asked if I could borrow a weight belt and a couple of kilos of weights. The instructor obliged and informed me that if I were lucky I might catch a glimpse of a dolphin that sometimes comes around the bay to play with the swimmers. Glimpsing my camera he remarked that it would be a good photo opportunity. Full of anticipation and excitement I headed straight for the beach. Lots of swimmers and snorkellers but no dolphin. My disappointment was short lived when I entered the water and encountered the multitude of reef life for me to click away at.

After about 20 minutes I heard what appeared to be an increase in the level of excitement of a group of swimmers about 50 meters away. Looking across at them I clearly saw the cause of this excitement – yes, the dorsal fin of a dolphin was just

ahead of them and they were frantically trying (and failing) to catch it. The visibility in the water was excellent but not that good that I make anything out of the dolphin or its pursuers underwater. The dolphin was heading away from me and I recognised the futility in trying to follow. I counted myself lucky to have caught sight of the animal at all and returned photographing other smaller marine creatures.

No more than four or five minutes had passed when I was returning to the surface from a breath-hold dive to about 7 meters. Scanning the surface for fellow swimmers and snorkellers there it was, hovering effortlessly at a depth of about 3 meters and about 6 meters away watching ME intently. My need for air outweighed my desire to remain submerged. As I took several replenishing breaths the dolphin continued watching me. At this point I realised that I was in fact some distance from any of the other swimmers. I quickly readied my camera and submerged. Mid water I took aim and clicked away. To my astonishment the dolphin came closer. I was thrilled. It seemed as if the dolphin was posing. It moved slowly toward me seemingly fascinated by



my camera. After what seemed like an age but was probably only a couple of minutes the dolphin slowly moved away and out of site. I realised that other swimmers now surrounded me. It seemed a very personal encounter and I am pleased to have the

photographs to remind me of it.

Truly a remarkable start to a great holiday.

Alan Cryer
alan@crysam.com

Do you have a nice shot with a short story behind it?

If so e mail me and yours could be the next "Parting shot". peter@uwpmag.com