

Underwater Photography

Nov/Dec 2014
Issue 81





The perfect combination

Macro or wide angle? Fill or ambient? Resort or liveaboard? At Wakatobi, you can have it all. Our waters offer everything from stunning reef panoramas to rare critter portraits. To round out the picture, add an image-making cruise aboard the Pelagian to your Resort stay.

This luxuriously appointed 36-meter yacht carries a maximum ten guests while cruising farther afield in the Wakatobi archipelago and southern shore of Buton Island. Custom-built tenders carry small groups of divers to venues ranging from open-water seamounts and dramatic coral reef formations to legendary muck diving sites.

Photographers are provided with a dedicated, climate-controlled camera room with numerous charging stations. Dive guides and crew are familiar with the needs of shooters, and assist or respect your requests for autonomy. On board, five staterooms provide ample space, including private shower rooms, while a gourmet chef provides fine dining.

Discover the possibilities of a combination resort and liveaboard experience by contacting your Wakatobi representative: office@wakatobi.com.



www.wakatobi.com

Contents

- 4 Editorial
- 5 News Travel & Events
- 12 New Products



- 28 FIX Neo Mini 500 FS light
by Phil Rudin



- 31 Ikelite DS161 Substrobe
by Phil Rudin



- 35 Sony F55 & Gates housing
by Dan Beecham



- 41 UPY London competition
by Alex Mustard



- 45 WPOTY 2014
- 49 El Hierro Open Fotosub
by Iker Vildósola



Cover shot by
Scott Portelli

Underwater Photography

A web magazine Uwp81 Nov/Dec 2014

- 52 Wakatobi
by Walt Stearns



- 60 Azores
by Scott Portelli



- 60 Gt White Sharks
by Joanna Lentini



- 70 Seychelles Nudibranchs
by Chris Mason-Parker



- 74 South West Ramblings 10
by Mark Webster



- 80 Parting Shot
by Dan Bolt

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www.pr-productions.co.uk
peter@uwpmag.com

Rights grab competitions

I really had thought that rights grab competitions - where the organisers can use the entries for whatever purpose they see fit for an infinite period of time - had been flushed out but unfortunately not.

'Guylian Seahorses of the World' is a Belgian underwater photo competition and the deadline for entries is November 11th 2014. Hopefully you are reading this after November 11th and did not enter the competition. If, unfortunately, you did you have just given the organisers carte blanche to do with your images as they please for as long as they want.

The press release they send out is friendly enough and there's even €750 of dive gear to be won but if you go into a little bit more detail it starts to get photographically sinister.

To be fair the organisers are reasonably open about their intentions. They say "The contest helps with our seahorse research by encouraging divers to look for seahorses, and spreading the word about seahorse conservation. The contest also gives us access to more photos to add to our data base for research. In turn, this research helps better protect seahorses and their habitats around the world."

Now that, at first, sounds fair enough. It's a testament to people power which the media tap into

Editorial

incessantly to help us make their programmes for them by tweeting and twittering our input. Delve a little deeper into the 6 pages of competition rules and way down on page 4 you are greeted with the plain legal facts as to the organisers intentions and I quote:

"8.2. The primary objective of the Photo Competition 'Guylian Seahorses of the World' is the acquisition of high-quality photographs of seahorses in their natural habitat, photographs that Project Seahorse and Chocolaterie Guylian NV can use for both their educational outreach efforts and for scientific study. Also NELOS and their 'Audiovisuele Commissie' and their 'magazine Hippocampus' may use the pictures. **Therefore, entrants grant the Organizers the full and royalty-free right to print, publish and use worldwide in whatever format all submitted photographs over an undefined period of time.** Entrants also agree that their submitted photographs can be reproduced royalty-free by the Organizers over an undefined period of time for commercial reasons in PR related documents, packaging, folders, catalogues and similar objects."

I'll leave you to make your own minds up.

UPY London

I'm excited to promote and to have been involved in this new competition which takes place in London next year. It makes the bold claim that it aims to find the Underwater Photographer of the Year (UPY) and I have been honoured to have been asked to be a judge along with Martin Edge and Alex Mustard.

Alex, in particular, has been involved since the very start of this project and his experience in entering, doing consistently well and judging major underwater photography competitions, has helped shape a contest that truly is for photographers.

Alex is too young to have been around when Diver magazine, here in the UK, used to organise The Brighton Underwater Film Festival. It was an event which attracted entries from all over the world when the postal system was the only delivery method!

Despite such a tedious method of entry it attracted world class images from around the world when overseas travel was nowhere near as available and the results were announced at a festival weekend in Brighton with major speakers from all four corners and trade stands from diving businesses large and small. It was a very exciting event.

The Brighton Film Festival morphed into "Image" and was followed by the British Underwater Image Festival organised by Dive Magazine and then it petered out as the digital world evolved with online entries and judging.

The result has had a diluting effect both in terms of numbers and prizes but UPY wants to get some of the more traditional values reinstated such as prizes available and judging methods.

In terms of prizes UPY London has 'complete' prizes i.e. an overseas trip which includes the flight and the judging will be done 'live' rather than remotely online.

Two days have been set aside for Alex, myself and Martin to meet up and have the entries projected for judging. Time will be taken to view and discuss the images and the final winners will not be decided upon until the next day when we have had time to let the images settle in. It's surprising how some images have instant appeal yet fail to sparkle a second and third time around and some others just get better with viewing.

I'm excited about UPY London. I think it's the underwater photo competition you deserve.

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

www.uwpmag.com

News, Travel & Events

Could you be named the Underwater Photographer of the Year?



That is what this brand new contest, the Underwater Photographer of the Year, London 2015 is hoping to discover. It is a competition for all types of pictures taken with cameras underwater: ocean and freshwater, wide angle and macro, wrecks, divers, models, abstracts and more. We simply want to celebrate the best.

The competition is based in Britain and has been launched to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the original Brighton Underwater Film Festival, in its day, arguably the world's most prestigious contest.

In addition, to the overall award, we will also name a British Underwater Photographer of the Year and a Most Promising British Underwater Photographer, 2015, open to both those that live in the UK and

www.uwpmag.com



International speakers from Brighton 1987 including Sylvia Earle, Stan Waterman, Emery Kristoff, Helmut Debelius and David Doubilet. Eagle eyed readers may even recognise a very young looking Peter Rowlands!



British expats.

A glittering selection of more than 30 prizes from leading brands Nauticam, Apeks, Fourth Element and Scuba Travel will reward the category




winners and more. Winning images will be exhibited at the London International Dive Show and prizes will be presented on the PhotoZone stage at the show, followed by an underwater photography social.

Perhaps, most importantly these days, the judges, Alex Mustard, Martin Edge and Peter Rowlands, will all meet, discuss and pick the winners face to face (no online judging!).

You've got to be in it, to win it!

www.upylondon.com



Issue 81/5 

Backscatter's Berkley White Cocos trip 2015



In 2015, Backscatter's Berkley White will be returning to Cocos Island, known for its hammerhead shark encounters, as well as other big animal action.

My Cocos trips always include a diverse group of people. Our typical mix is a majority of traditional scuba divers and a small group of rebreather divers. While our rebreather divers take their life support practice very seriously, they are there to shoot and explore and not just talk tech all day long. It makes for a great people mix and learning experience for everyone.

As with all my trips, I work with the diving staff to maximize every photo and video opportunity available. I have very specific dive sites and techniques planned for this trip.

As our trip draws near, I work with the world class Undersea Hunter dive staff to customize our itinerary to match current conditions. I can

promise our trip will deliver the best Cocos has to offer during our time there.

On our way out to the island, I'll give a brief presentation on my recommended diving and shooting techniques to help you avoid the pitfalls I experienced many years ago and get your head calibrated for shooting great images.

Once on island, I will give group presentations or personalized help based on requests and group interest. I of course can't fix every gear failure in the field, but my trusty tool kit and I will be by your side.

Join me for a photo expedition of a lifetime!

Contact Dan Baldocchi to reserve your spot. Space is limited!

Dan@UnderExposures.com

Call for entries: Beneath the SEA 2015



The Beneath the SEA International Imaging Competition 2015 is calling for entries. It offers many categories, including the Stan Waterman Award for Excellence in

Underwater Videography, the David Doubilet Award for Excellence in Underwater Photography and the Jim Church Award for Excellence in Underwater Creative Photography.

The deadline for entries is 12 December 2014, with the winners being announced at the event on 27 March 2015. Full details and entry forms can be found on the event's website.

www.beneaththesea.org

(Image is "Macho" By Uwe Schmolke)

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www.wallacea-divecruise.com

The Adventure Travel Show 2015 Olympia

The Adventure Travel Show takes place at London's Olympia on 17-18 January 2015.

This is your chance to immerse yourself in a weekend of adventure travel inspiration and discover off the beaten track travel experiences with the biggest collection of specialist travel operators under one roof. Plus, listen to over 100 FREE Talks from renowned adventurers, explorers, industry experts, guide book writers and expedition leaders who will help you uncover your perfect adventure.

The best adventure speaker line-up of the year will feature at The Adventure Travel Show 2015! Come and hear these incredible presentations and more, for a full speaker lineup please visit www.adventureshow.com

General show tickets cost £8 in advance or £10 on the door, under 16s are free. Weekend tickets are also available for £12 in advance or £15 on the door.

www.adventureshow.com

www.uwpmag.com

Speaker Announcements for the Adventure Travel Show 2015



Photo Credit: John Cleare

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, described by The Guinness Book of Records as the "world's greatest living explorer" has broken an array of world records and led many expeditions to remote regions. He truly is an icon for adventurous travel.

Having been the first person to reach both the North and South poles by foot, Sir Ranulph has not just limited himself to one type of adventure – he also led the first unsupported crossing of the Antarctic Continent which was in turn the longest unsupported polar journey in history, ran 7 marathons in 7 days on 7 continents (soon after suffering a major heart attack and a double bypass), climbed the North Face of Eiger and even conquered Everest in 2009 (aged 65).



Monty Halls, a former Royal Marines Officer, formed his own expedition company, leading diverse teams through some of the most demanding environments on earth. His projects have taken him on four circumnavigations of the globe over a five year period. Some of his expeditions have included the discovery of a sunken city off the coast of India, exchanging gunfire with poachers on the Nyika Plateau in Africa and many others. This year alone he has not

only run 6 UK dive expeditions, diving in remote locations that rarely, if ever, have been dived before with small groups of clients, as well as filming a new series for Discovery covering Guyana, Borneo and Venezuela. Monty has also presented five series for the BBC and is a successful writer and adventurer.

www.adventureshow.com



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11 Boat Dives
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April 23-30th 2015

\$1098.50



UnderwaterDigitalFiesta.com

Workshops led by professional photographer, **Phil Rudin**



Issue 81/7



Tonga July 21- August 1, 2015



The Kingdom of Tonga is located in the very heart of the South Pacific, lying east of Fiji and south of Samoa. It is one of the most scenic and unspoiled of the Pacific island nations.

Tonga is the only remaining Polynesian Kingdom and is not a mass destination like Fiji or Hawaii. Tonga has a NNE/SSW orientation with 176 islands ranging from high volcanic to low coral terrain that creates scenic variety unlike anywhere else in the world.

The islands are divided into four groups with Nuku'alofa, the

capital, located on the main island of Tongatapu. It is more developed than its neighbours but still maintains an unhurried and peaceful lifestyle. English is widely spoken, and travellers are sure to receive a friendly greeting from the locals.

The Kingdom of Tonga is located in the very heart of the South Pacific, lying east of Fiji and south of Samoa. It is one of the most scenic and unspoiled of the Pacific island nations.

booking@scubasympphony.com

Photo credit : BK CHIN

Oasis Photocontest 2014



The new edition of Oasis Photocontest 2014 is finally here, promoted by Oasis magazine. It's the major Italian competition of nature photography and one of the most important worldwide.

Registrations are open until 31 December 2014.

With a total money prize of 30,000 Euro the overall winner will receive a cash prize of 2,000 Euros and the prestigious Oasis Photocontest trophy, a valuable sculpture in bronze made by the Italian artist Michele Vitaloni. The best Italian author will receive a prize of 1,000 euros. Important cash prizes will be given to the top three winners in each section.

Another great prize that we have consists of the publication of your photo in the official Oasis Photocontest 2014 catalogue, the most important showcase of nature photography in Italy and at

international level, printed in English and Italian. In addition to the best 103 awarded images, the catalogue will feature a thousand photographs that will have reached the final.

This contest is divided into 9 sections (young people under 18 can participate in a category reserved for them):

LANDSCAPES. MAMMALS. BIRDS. ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS. STORYBOARD: STORIES TOLD THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY. UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY. PEOPLE. PLANTS. PETS

The deadline is December 31, 2014.

www.oasisphotocontest.com

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More flights to Wakatobi

When we launched our charter flight program a decade ago, we cut travel time and transfer hassles between the resort and Bali dramatically.

In the years since, our guests have enjoyed the convenience of landing at Wakatobi's private runway on Tomia Island, then taking a short boat ride to the resort. This reduction in travel time has allowed our guests to devote more of their holiday time to their experiences rather than their transits, and the average length of a Wakatobi stay is now 10 to 14 days.


In recognition of our guests' desire for more flexible and longer itineraries, we will soon expand the flight schedule. Beginning in mid March of 2015, flights to and from the resort will increase from five or six times a month to twice a week. Flights are scheduled each Monday and Friday, creating a more uniform calendar for arrivals and departures that allows guests to schedule stays in increments of seven, 11, 14, 18 and up to 21 night segments (even more if the guest desires). A complete flight schedule can be found on the Wakatobi website under Bookings.

The increased flight service will prove especially beneficial for




those wanting to book a combination land and sea package at the resort and aboard the Pelagian dive yacht. Once the new flights are added, the Pelagian's schedule will move to cruises of seven night durations, which will mesh with flight arrivals and departures. That said, the resort is still offering the possibility for guests to request or organize an extended cruise of 10 to 14 nights at select times of the year.

www.wakatobi.com



a resort where diving is passion



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Your advert could be here for just £50 and will be seen by over 10,000 underwater photographers worldwide. No other publication has such a targeted audience. For more details visit: www.uwpmag.com/?p=advertise

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Photo by Martyn Guess



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Ultimate Manado: Nick and Caroline Robertson-Brown 6-20 September 2015

Thresher Shark Expedition: Amanda Cotton 17-27 August 2015

Bali Mola Mola Safari - Steve Jones 20-30 October 2015

COMING SOON - Raja Ampat with Shannon Conway in 2015

COMING SOON - Manatees with Shannon Conway in 2016

EMAIL: divers@divequest-diving-holidays.co.uk



New to Worldwide Dive and Sail: The Junk

Worldwide Dive and Sail, the owners of the Siren Fleet and Master Liveboards, are now also the proud new owners of The Junk.

S/Y June Hong Chian Lee or The Junk, as she is known, is a restored teak wood Chinese merchant sailing vessel, that offers a unique liveboard diving experience in Thailand.

She has already started operations offering 6 night trips around The Similan and Surin islands. The Marine National Parks of the Similan Islands and the extensive reefs in the Surin Islands are without



a doubt the best diving in Thailand. All this as well as one of the best dive sites in the world, Richelieu Rock, and the chance to see the majestic whale sharks!

www.wwdas.com

Swim with Whale Sharks

July 2015 Isla Mujeres, Mexico

4 days on private charter
Limit of 6 guests

Dive with Hammerheads & Bull Sharks

January 25 - 31 2015

Bimini Bahamas

www.GregorySweeney.com

www.uwpmag.com





DS161 Lithium

The Choice of Professionals

Only a round flash tube and custom made powder-coated reflector can produce the even coverage and superior quality of light that professionals love. The first underwater strobe with a built-in LED video light and Lithium Ion battery technology, Ikelite's DS161 provides over 450 flashes per charge, instantaneous recycling, and neutral buoyancy for superior handling. The DS161 is a perfect match for any housing, any camera, anywhere there's water.



New Products

Sea & Sea MDX-A6000 housing for the Sony a6000



Designed to house Sony's a6000, 24-megapixel, APS-C, mirrorless system camera, Sea&Sea have produced the machined solid-block aluminium MDX-a6000 housing along with a completely new 'ML' port mount.

Two new 'ML' ports have also been introduced, along with zoom and focus gears, to allow a range of Sony E-Mount lenses and converters to be used.

And not forgetting Sea&Sea's tradition of quality and integration, the MDX-A6000 housing can also be used with the SA8 ball-arm system and a range of Sea&Sea strobes to create an ideal compact and versatile underwater photo system.

ML Ports support the following lenses; Sony E 16mm f/2.8 Wide Angle lens, Sony E 30mm f/3.5 Macro lens, Sony E PZ 16-50mm f/3.5-5.6

OSS Zoom lens. Conversion lenses VCL-ECU1 and VCL-ECF1 are also supported. The Sony E 10-18mm f/4 OSS Wide Angle Zoom lens and VCL-ESU1 conversion lens may be used when the ML Extension Ring 25 (#30122) is added.

All MDX - ML system products are scheduled to be available from the end of November.

www.sea-sea.com

60 metre GoPro Housing



Ultra durable and waterproof to 197'/60m, the GoPro Dive Housing for Hero 3, Hero 3+, and Hero4 with Backdoors is designed for deeper diving and extreme activities.

Its flat glass lens delivers maximum image sharpness above and below water.

This housing has a securely locking latch and more rugged construction than the standard housing.

Includes Standard, Skeleton and BacPac™ Backdoors.

Reef Photo Price:\$59.99

www.reefphoto.com

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+BaseGTM (With a mount base)

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(General purpose)

<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

Nauticam
innovation underwater

NA-GH4

housing for Panasonic Lumix
GH4 camera

LUMIX G



蓝天海

www.nauticam.cn

Nauticam housing for Olympus Tough TG-3



Nauticam is pleased to announce the release of its housing for the Tough TG-3, the pocketable “ultra-rugged” little camera from Olympus.

The camera is rated to 15m/50ft without a housing, but with the Nauticam housing, this diminutive camera will allow you to take super macro shots down at a whopping 100m or 330 feet.

The combination of the rugged camera and rugged milled aluminum housing is ideal for a rental fleet or similar situations where gear gets used and abused.

Small and rugged, the TG-3 is an adventure camera, ready for the owner to freeze it, drop it from 6 feet and stand on it. The camera is an automatic, point and shoot type of rig, though it does offer an aperture priority mode - very useful underwater.

The NA-TG3 is a milled aluminum underwater camera housing

that borrows from its innovative big brothers to bring legendary Nauticam durability and ergonomics to the Olympus TG-3. From the comfortable hand placement to the integrated thumb grip, the Nauticam housing makes shooting this camera underwater very easy.

All of the camera controls are clearly labeled, and the sculpted shutter button has an intuitive feeling not found in lesser housings. The video record button is easily identified by shape and color.

Other housing features include 2 fiber optic ports, easy access zoom lever, a 52mm threaded mount for auxiliary lenses, scratch resistant rear window, optional handstrap (p/n# 36316), mounts for the optional LCD Magnifier (p/n# 25106 and rails p/n # 25123), and a cold shoe mount.

www.nauticamusa.com



**Not a Digital SLR,
not a film SLR,
but with a picture quality
that exceed the two!**

APSG-DPM

Underwater Camera Housing for SIGMA DP1 Merrill
DP2 Merrill
DP3 Merrill



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>



Not a Digital SLR,
not a film SLR,
but with a picture quality
that exceed the two!

APSG-DPM

Underwater Camera Housing for SIGMA DP1 Merrill
DP2 Merrill
DP3 Merrill



<http://acquapazza.jp/en>

Fantasea FRX100 III housing for the Sony RX100 III



The new and stylish FRX100 III Housing, for the recently released Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 III camera, will be available at the end of November 2014, and we are now accepting orders!

The FRX100 III Housing was specifically designed for the Sony RX100 III, thereby providing the most compact, sturdy and ergonomic housing in the market for this camera.

Secure stock of the FRX100 III Housing, ensuring that you receive units as soon as the housing is released, and at the same time - take advantage of a special introductory offer. Please contact us about pricing, ordering and other information.

www.fantasea.com

Aquatica AD810 housing for the Nikon D810 camera



The Aquatica Team is proud to announce it is working on the Aquatica AD810 housing design for the new bench mark in digital photography, the Nikon D810.

The AD810 incorporates a multitude of refinements. Among them, access to the highly programmable Fn and DOF preview buttons. The many Custom Functions Modes roles that can be attributed to these two buttons sure made it worthy of our attention.

The housing features an internal flash up/flash down capability, a quick access ISO lever actuated by your thumb, access holes of different size are incorporated in the design and are ready to accept various accessories such as our own remote trigger, external monitors, newly introduced Surveyor vacuum monitoring system, or other third party accessories.

www.aquatica.ca



Nauticam A5000 Sony A5000



“Small & Versatile”

The Sony A5000 is blurring the lines between compact camera and DSLR with its 20mp APS-C sensor and selection of lenses allowing your pick of the right lens for the job. The 16-50mm power zoom kit lens is easily and comfortably controlled in the Nauticam A5000 housing, offering a user experience familiar to compact users, but elevating image quality to that of a DSLR system twice its size. So feel free to shoot it like a compact, but when you are ready, it can do so much more.

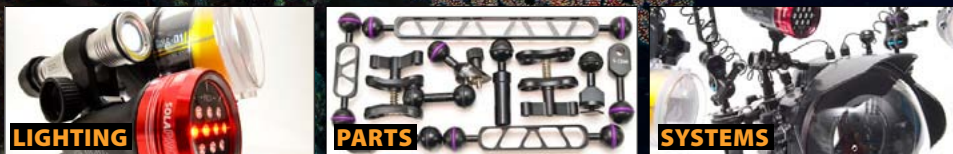
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Recsea CWS housings for Sony RX100 series



RECSEA is happy to announce the release of our new POM and Acrylic housing for the SONY Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 and RX100 II, the CWS-RX100 and CWS-RX100II. This "CWS" line of underwater housings offer our dealers and their customers a less expensive alternative. Still compact, still CNC machined, still full function, and still manufactured in Japan using quality materials.

Please note the CWS-RX100 and CWS-RX100II are the same housing but with slightly different internal pushbutton tabs and camera cushion configuration. And you'll be happy to know we will offer simple to install and inexpensive optional upgrade and downgrade kits for these housings.

www.recsea.com

Backscatter FLIP3.1 55mm

FLIP FILTERS



Backscatter Underwater Video & Photo is pleased to announce FLIP3.1 55mm threaded underwater color-correction filters for GoPro Hero4, Hero3+ and Hero3 cameras. In stock and shipping now!

Due to popular demand, these filters are now being manufactured to give the underwater GoPro shooter even more flexibility in how he achieves perfect underwater color. For use with the FLIP3.1 55mm adapter.

55mm SHALLOW - Optimized for use between 5-20 feet. All FLIP3.1 filters can be mounted on the FLIP3.1 frame or on the TOP FLIP as a second filter.

55mm DIVE - Optimized for use between 20-50 feet. All FLIP3.1 filters can be mounted on the FLIP3.1 frame or on the TOP FLIP as a second filter.

55mm DEEP - Optimized for use 50+ feet in excellent visibility. All FLIP3.1 filters can be mounted on the FLIP3.1 frame or on the TOP FLIP as a second filter.

www.backscatter.com

Issue 81/15





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Sea & Sea YS-03 universal lighting system

SEA&SEA continues our commitment to the underwater imaging industry by creating the YS-03 Universal Lighting System. Incorporating advanced functionality with convenience into an affordable, easy-to-use, compact underwater strobe.

The YS-03 Universal Lighting System offers more opportunity for exploration into the world of underwater photography. This great value strobe package includes everything that is needed to utilize the YS-03 to the fullest with most compact camera housings to capture the vibrant, colorful images everyone desires.

Included in the YS-03 Universal Light System: YS-03 strobe, compact flex arm with neoprene cover, compact digital tray, and the SEA&SEA Fiber Optic Cable II M/2.

Underwater lighting just became easier with YS-03 strobe. YS-03 is designed to mimic the light intensity of the camera's built-in flash. Say goodbye to manually adjusting the strobe output, as YS-03 is TTL. YS-03 is compatible with any camera containing a pre-flash and a TTL flash exposure function. SEA&SEA created this strobe for any underwater photographer with any level of



expertise. It is simple to use and easy to understand. With only one rotary power control, YS-03 is ready to start shooting beautiful images with a turn of the switch from OFF to TTL.

The compact flex arm with neoprene sleeve mounts to the compact digital tray and compliments the YS-03 impeccably. Adjusting the YS-03 strobe head to any angle is quick and easy with the smooth joints of the compact flex arm.

SEA&SEA's economical YS-03 Universal Lighting System (SS-03541) will be available early November, 2014 with a MSRP of \$349.00.

www.sea-sea.com

www.uwpmag.com



AMAZING MACRO OLYMPUS TOUGH TG-3



Click to View Sample
Images and Video!



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UNDERWATER VIDEO & PHOTO

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Backscatter_West

Backscatter_East

BACKSCATTER.COM/TG3

www.uwpmag.com

UnderWater Camera Stuff 5" Dome for Sigma 15mm



UnderWater Camera Stuff announced the release of their fourth Precision 5" Dome. Like the other versions, this Dome is designed for use on an Ikelite housing, is a half-sphere acrylic dome and uses the lens nodal point to calculate the dome position.

This newest Precision 5" Dome, the Prec-5in-Sho-Ike, is tuned for the Sigma 15mm f/2.8 EX DG and Nikkor 16mm f/2.8 AF Fisheye lenses. Having a dome tuned to a specific lens means that the images captured will be in focus from edge-to-edge.

www.UWCameraStuff.com

Seacam Nikon D810



Whether it is finest structures or fast movements, the 36.3 mp image sensor of the Nikon D810 guarantees superior photography in the FX format. As of now, our new SEACAM silver Nikon D810 housing enables the unlimited use underwater.

www.seacam.com

Subal Olympus EM1



The SUBAL EM1 housing for the Olympus OMD EM1 provides access to all camera functions.

Maximum depth: 70 m,
120m (Optional) Weight: approx.
1,8 kg Weight in water: nearly
neutral (depending on the port and
accessories)

www.subal.com



Nauticam NA-GH4 Panasonic GH4



**"Stunning 4K Video,
Compact & Affordable"**

Nauticam has crafted the ultimate housing for one of the industry's most exciting new mirrorless cameras: The Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH4. The NA-GH4 is designed with the video shooter in mind, featuring 15° angled ergonomic handles, the most user friendly control set in the business and a host of features now standard. Signature Nauticam Port Locking Lever, effortless but secure housing latch, integrated vacuum check and leak detection system. 4K is ready - are you?

www.reefphoto.com

Issue 81/17





ACQUAPAZZA

NEW TYPE



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APSO-RX100M3
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INON INC. is pleased to announce the official release of a cage, a semi-fisheye conversion lens and a wide close-up lens for GoPro® HERO3/3+ genuine dive housing (depth rating: 60m/197ft). They are not compatible with the 40m/131ft standard housing.



The INON SD Mount Cage HERO3/3+ incorporates an “SD Mount” bayonet system compatible with the INON UFL-G140 SD underwater semi-fisheye conversion lens or UCL-G165 SD underwater wide close-up lens exclusively designed for action cameras like GoPro® and can be easily and securely mounted or detached underwater.

This cage can hold INON Direct

Base III, Z Joint or Z Adapter MV to its top or bottom surface. The packaged “Male Adapter (GoPro®)” can be attached on top/bottom of the cage to use GoPro® compatible accessories.

The tripod screw hole (1/4 inch) on the bottom enables to use tripod/monopod and the durable construction machined from an aluminum block protects combined housing.

The INON UFL-G140 SD Semi-fisheye Conversion Lens gives an angle of view of approx.



151° on land which will narrow down to approx. 94° underwater. The angle of coverage varies depending on the camera edition and mode being used.

The INON UCL-G165 SD Wide Close-up Lens is a unique close-up lens providing slightly wide angle of view underwater 110° to have deeper DoF benefitting you with less out-of-focus close range clip which is not possible with standard close-up lens.



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Ikelite Canon PowerShot G7 X housing

Canon packed a large 1"-type 20.2MP BSI-CMOS sensor into a very compact and usable body. It also boasts speedy auto-focus and a sharp, 24-100mm equivalent lens which is perfect for shooting both wide angle and macro on the same dive.

This housing is just-right-sized to hold comfortably in your hand. Controls are provided for all important camera functions. Both the front control ring and rear dial are gear driven to place the controls within easy reach. A sensitive shutter lever makes it easy to half-depress the trigger for focusing and metering. All rear controls are clearly marked with engraved indicia which will never fade or fall off.

The housing port is designed to accept 3.0-inch diameter color filters, and wide angle or macro options with 67mm threads.

We recommend the Ikelite W30 Wide Angle Lens or INON UWL-H100 Wide Angle Lens for excellent edge sharpness with



minimal vignetting (dark shadows in the corners of the image). Vignetting may be eliminated by either zooming slightly or cropping in post-production.

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Nikonos Conversion System - V2

Two years ago we presented our lens project to quality conscious underwater photographers and achieved higher optical standards compared to regular lens port combinations. For the first time we had to manufacture those things we were talking of and that was a much harder task. There was a lot of work and trial & error involved. But at the end it worked out and was sold to the demanding customer. By now we have expanded our system to almost all housing brands.

Our conversion is a two stepped process. On one side we need to modify lenses to work with today's digital SLRs. The lens has to be sent in to us for conversion and servicing and it usually takes 3 weeks. We also do repair and replacement of scratched front lenses. Now the lens works with Nikon SLR but it's not waterproof with housing, so you'll need an additional adaptor for port opening. These are made of marine grade alloy and come hard anodized in black color.

Aquatica, BS Kinetics, EWA Marine, Sealux, Subal can all be modified to accept the Nikonos RS



13mm and 28mm prime lenses. Nauticam, Sea & Sea and the nju universal housing are able to accept the above plus the 20-35mm zoom and the 50mm macro. Seacam can accept 13mm, 28mm and 50mm.

There may be some additional work needed on the housings so for the up to date situation please contact

www.njusystem.com



Nauticam NA-RX100 III Sony RX100 III



"Simply Awesome"

With 20mp, this camera and housing package offers the complete control and image quality of an SLR system with the size and convenience of a compact system. Controls are simple, but well thought out with easy to access push buttons. Dual command dials immediately access frequently used manual settings like Manual Focus, F-Stop, and Shutter Speed. Full 1080P 50 mbps HD video performance and excellent wet lens options make for one powerful, compact package.

www.reefphoto.com

INON LF1100-W with free Dome Wide Filter LF-W



INON INC. is pleased to announce release of the third version of durable and user-friendly LF series LED flashlight, the LF1100-W and its optional accessories

The LF1100-W runs on 3 x AA batteries providing maximum 1100 lumen/85 degree coverage from its handheld compact body.

A simple yet durable switch provides two power setting(FULL/LOW). LOW mode (300 lumen) with longer burn time or powerful FULL mode(1100 lumen) is selectable.

The rated practical burn time with "Eneloop pro" rechargeable batteries, is approx. 50 minutes at FULL mode or approx. 235minutes (3hrs 55 min) at LOW mode.

INON INC. is also pleased to

announce compatibility of existing INON products with Nikon 1 J4/WP-N3, Canon PowerShot G1X Mark II/ WP-DC53 and Olympus TG-3/PT-056.

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Ikelite Fiber Optic Converter for SEA&SEA / Nauticam LED Triggers



Ikelite Fiber Optic Converter for SEA&SEA / Nauticam LED Triggers converts the electrical bulkhead of any Ikelite DS strobe into a fiber optic port.

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Acquapazza Sony APSO-A7 housing



Japanese housing manufacturer Acquapazza are continuing their development of a Sony APSO-A7 housing which was put on hold whilst the APSO-RX100M3 was developed.

Early in the development it soon became clear that the SAL50M28 macro lens would vignette when focused towards infinity with the existing port size.

Alternatives were considered from Sigma such as the 70 and 150mm macro lenses but it was thought that Sony 50mm macro lens

would be very popular so Acquapazza decided to redesign the port system for the APSO-A7.

This will take an additional amount of time but will be well worth the wait.

www.acquapazza.jp/en

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Whaleguide App

This app, which is available for iPad or iPhone and for Android tablets or phones, contains comprehensive information just like a good book, but has much more to offer: for example more than 50 short video clips, where one can observe the behaviour of whales and dolphins up close and listen to their voices. In addition there are more than 450 spectacular photos. The combination of photos and videos make Whaleguide a unique multimedia experience.

This “giants app” has been developed by Ralf Kiefner, wildlife photographer, filmmaker and author of the book “Whales and Dolphins, Cetacean World Guide”, that has been published in five languages and is generally considered a “must have” for whale watchers.

Sixty-seven species of whales and dolphins are explained in the app in detail in a way which is interesting and easy to understand. For each species the user will find a comparative size drawing, a quick ID, key numbers, a complete description, information about behaviour, diving behaviour, diet, reproduction, possible hot spots, interesting (and



some funny) facts, popular names, taxonomy, the scientific name and distribution.

This remarkable app is available at iStore or at PlayStore, in English and German version. For EURO 7,99 one gets the basic version with more than 230 spectacular photos, the complete text information and GPS function with Finder. In addition there are more than 260 extra photos (photo upgrade for € 4,49) and more than 50 short video clips (video upgrade for € 5,99) available (InApp buy).

www.ocean-pix.de/english/Apps/whale-app-en.html

British Sea Life ID Guide



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FIX Neo Mini 500

FS light

by Phil Rudin

In the world of underwater photography the focusing light has become an essential tool for both wide angle and macro photography.

The focusing light is most useful when ambient light drops as the result of low visibility, depth, subject placement, during night dives and because of equipment shortcomings like slow lens apertures.

The focus light assists in finding hard to see subjects, lights help to create contrast which increases auto focus speed, focus lights can be used to signal a dive buddy or the boat and much more.

Top rated focusing lights all have several basic essentials that make them stand out from the common dive light. First you need a light with a beam angle wide enough that you can position the light to cover the angle of view for the lens you are using and never need to move it again during the dive. The light also needs to have a red and a white beam. Red is the color of choice for night photography because it is far less likely to frighten marine life and it won't blind other divers when inadvertently shone in their direction.

A focus light should be small, light weight and rechargeable for best results when traveling or shooting locally. Many of the current offerings have become bigger, brighter and more costly as focus lights have become more mainstream among underwater photographers.



FIX Neo Mini 500 FS

The FIX Neo Mini 500 FS is breaking the bigger is better trend and going back to basics. The Mini 500 has been billed as “The next evolution in focus lights”

The Neo Mini 500 is both an economical and purpose built focus light with many advanced features. With the Neo Mini you can switch between white and red light with a single push of the on/off button. The white light works best in daylight for subjects that are at a distance or when a brighter



light is needed. The red light again is the color of choice for night diving.

Both beam colors have programmable output controls that allow you four levels of control, full, 75%, 50% and 25% output. The Neo Mini also has

a distress signal and an auto detect flash shut-off mode.

The auto detect shut-off mode (ASO) senses when the strobe fires and shuts the light off so that the photographer does not need to dim the light when shooting, a very nifty feature indeed. The light stays off for about a second and then turns back on so that you can continue shooting.

With a fully charged battery the easy to see status indicator glows green, then turns to red and then flashes to indicate the remaining battery run time. The Mini uses two common CR 123 batteries which are charged using world standard Micro-USB connectivity. The charger can be used with a number of different international plug types.

The Mini can also be used as a light source out of water as well. The Mini has an automatic power reduction mode which reduces output when the light starts to become hot so that the light will not be damaged. The Mini has a standard mounting point for ball head attachment or direct attachment to any housing system. The mounting attachment can also be removed depending on your personal needs.

The white light is 500 lumen and the red light is 100 lumen. Burn time is 120 minutes for the red light and 60 minutes for the white light. Charge time is two hours maximum at 1 amp. The Mini is rated to 100 meters (328 feet) and has a weight of only 160 grams or (5.64 oz.) The battery is charged by removing the threaded light head to access the battery pack. The battery pack can also be easily removed for shipping and travel.

In the field

In use the Neo Mini does an excellent job both as a day focusing light and as a dedicated night

www.uwpmag.com



diving light. With the ASO color shift does not occur in night macro shooting. No more red tinted images as a result of a bright red light that does not turn off at the time of capture. Zoom lenses with a maximum aperture's in the F/5.6 to 6.5 range on the long end now focus more quickly and with better sharpness of focus. This light is more than adequate for a two tank night dive. Best of all this excellent little focusing light retails for the bargain price of \$249.00.

Contact your local FIX retailer for your Neo Mini 500 FS. Thanks also to Reef Photo for technical support in regard to this review.

Phil Rudin

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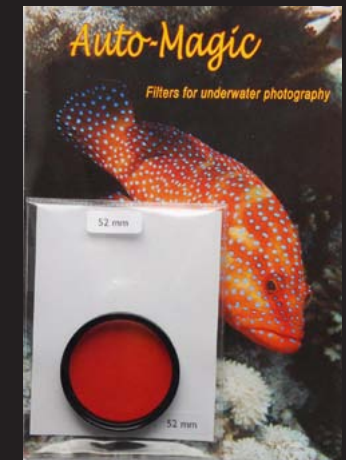
Workshops led by professional photographer, **Phil Rudin**



Issue 81/29



We've got you covered!



Magic filters are now available in 3 options. Original Magic for use in blue water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance, Auto-Magic for compact cameras in automatic point and shoot mode. GreenWater Magic for use in green water with DSLR and compact cameras with Manual White Balance. Prices start at just £19.

The Auto-Magic formula is now available in a Plexiglass filter that can be added or removed underwater.

www.magic-filters.com

Ikelite DS161 Substrobe with video light

by Phil Rudin

Ikelite Underwater Systems is a U.S. company which has been making underwater photography equipment since 1962. The company has an outstanding reputation for customer service both with new and ageing equipment, offering upgrades and fast service turnarounds to their many loyal customers.

The Ikelite DS 161 Substrobe is a high power wide angle strobe combined with a built-in 500 lumen LED video light. The Ikelite DS 161, product number 4061.1 includes the strobe head, rechargeable Li-ion battery pack with smart charger, diffuser, waterproof bulkhead cap, silicone lube and a two year manufactures warranty.

These strobes are very popular among professional photographers for shooting wide angle, portrait's and macro. The strobe has TTL for compatible Ikelite TTL systems and a manual power mode with 10 1/2-light stop increments. The strobe has a 90 degree angle of coverage without the diffuser and 100 degrees with diffuser.

The DS 161 remains one of the brightest strobes on the market with

a high guide number of 24 m at ISO 100 and is depth rated to 90 meters (300ft).

One of the important things that sets this strobe apart from many others in todays market is the quality of light produced by the round flashtube and reflector. With a flash color temperature of 4800K this strobe is designed to provide a soft and very even light coverage. The warm light delivered by this strobe eliminates the need for light dimming add-on diffusers.

The built-in 500 lumen video light provides a 45 degree angle of coverage which is perfect for close-up video and for use as a focus light. The LED light has 10 brightness settings plus SOS mode for emergency signaling. The LED shuts off automatically when being use as a focusing light in conjunction with the strobe firing to avoid any undesirable effects.

Southern Spiny Lobster, Canon 100D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm zoom ,Ikelite housing, Ikelite DS 161 in TTL, ISO-100, 55mm, F/16, 1/200 sec





Adult French Angelfish, Canon 100D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm zoom, Ikelite housing, Ikelite DS 161 in TTL, ISO-100, 55mm, F/11, 1/200 sec

I used the focusing light feature as my primary dive light a night dives of around three hours and took 200+ flash photos without running out of battery power.

The DS 161 has two main parts the strobe head and the battery pack. The strobe head contains the TTL and manual power settings control dial, three power gauge lights one of which is the ready light for the strobe, the round flashtube, the LCD video light, the diffuser mount, the bulkhead connector for sync cables and the mounting point for strobe arm attachment.

The battery is a proprietary Li-ion pack, the rear of the pack contains the locking system for attaching the battery to the strobe head. The side of the battery has the selection dial to turn the strobe/video light on and off plus a sliding lock that prevents the strobe from being turned on by accident. It is VERY IMPORTANT to engage this locking device if you are traveling or transporting

the strobe while assembled.

The battery is removed from the light head by pulling, lifting and then rotating the locking lever 90 degrees. Once separated a single O-ring sits inside the battery pack to seal the two parts together. This O-ring should be regularly maintained with lubricant after a proper cleaning. The charging point for the battery pack is also located inside the rear part of the battery. The rechargeable 7.4V Li-ion battery pack ships with an Ikelite 4067.1 Smart Charger and you should not attempt to use any other charger with this battery pack. Recharging time is approximately five hours and may vary depending on length of prior use and other factors. The smart charger ships with a flip out US style plug and includes European, Australian and UK plug adapters.

The included diffuser slips into place and locks by rotating clockwise. The diffuser has two lanyard holes to secure it to the strobe head. Not included

is the ball-type mount for mounting the strobe to Ikelite or non-Ikelite strobe arms. This is selected depending on your personal needs. The strobe also requires a sync cord which is not included again because of your personal needs. You can chose from a verity of cord types, first is the Ikelite coil cord for TTL with digital cameras using Ikelite TTL conversion circuitry. This is the proprietary conversion circuitry built into Ikelite housings for use with a verity of different manufactures camera systems.

Next is the Ikelite conversion circuitry for a verity of Ikelite housings for film cameras. Ikelite also has sync cords for Nikonos V and Nikonos RS cameras. Last are the sync cords for non-Ikelite housings for digital cameras and compatible TTL adapters. All of these cords use a five pin system for conversion of the TTL information.

Ikelite has also recently introduced the Optical Slave Converter for fiber optic/remote

slave triggering, part #4403. This part attaches to the strobes bulkhead connection and allows a 90 degree field of view for remote triggering. An included fiber optic cap can also be threaded to the optical slave for use with fiber optic cords. This can be used with some manufactures internal fiber optic flash triggering systems. Note that the optical trigger works with the DS-series strobes and only with manual strobe power settings, it DOES NOT work for TTL exposures.

Once the battery has been charged and installed turn the power switch clockwise to the strobe ON position, Rotate further to the ON with light position and the strobe and focusing light are now both turned on. Turn the dial counterclockwise to the Battery with light position to test the fuel gauge and to turn ON the video light. The fuel gauge will display 0,1,2 or 3 red LED lights to indicate the remaining power. With 3 LED's power is above 75%, 2 LED's above 50%, 1 LED above 25% and no LED less than 25%. The third LED will glow GREEN for three seconds when the strobe fires and a proper TTL quench has occurred. This light only illuminates when using TTL for exposures. Fractional power settings for manual flash photography are in half stops of light and should be used only after a full recycle indicated by the RED #2 ready light. Depending

on your camera type the lighting bolt ready light in the camera might flash to indicate a full recycle, consult the manual for your camera type.

My kit for the test dives

My test dives were made using the DS 161 with the Canon EOS 100D/SL1 camera and Ikelite housing with an Ikelite tray and arm system. Making its debut at DEMA 2013 the newly released Ikelite housing for the Canon EOS 100D SL1 has to be the smallest DSLR housing package I have ever seen. Smaller than many mirrorless camera systems this combination ticks all the boxes for the traveling photographer. The system is small, light weight and easy to pack in just about any airline carry-on bag. I would recommend this package to anyone looking for a small and cost effective system or to the photographer looking for a backup system. You can read my review on the Ikelite/Canon 100D/SL1 system in the May/June 2014 issue #78 of UWPMAG.com.

In the field

My field tests for this review were done with the Canon EF-S 18 to 55MM F/3.6-5.6 zoom lens, this is the kit lens sold with the Canon 100D/SL1 camera as a package by Ikelite and others. I used one DS 161 strobe with the system and placed it



Parrotfish, Canon 100D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm zoom, Ikelite housing, Ikelite DS 161 in TTL, ISO-100, 49mm, F/16, 1/200 sec

above the lens for both landscape and portrait shots.

I used an Ikelite six inch strobe arm and clamps to hold the DS 161 and it proved more than adequate for my needs. This small package is quite fun to shoot with and very well balanced. The DS 161 is just a shade negative in saltwater so the entire system could be handled with one hand even on shallow water dives of close to three hours.

I shot both day and night dives using only the strobe as my light source for focus, flash and dive light. I was quite impressed with the fast

recycle times while shooting both at the wide and closeup ends of the 18 to 55MM lens. The DS 161 90 degree AOV more than covered the lens at its widest angle and my images show very consistent and pleasing light.

In all disciplines of photography pleasing light is the difference between average and exceptional images. The DS 161 delivers very pleasing light and more. I did most of my shooting with the strobe in the TTL mode and found that the TTL was quite accurate in most cases. On some occupations while shooting at night I found that like all strobes



*Atlantic Horseshoe Crab, Canon 100D, Canon EF-S 18-55mm zoom
Ikelite housing, Ikelite DS 161 in TTL, ISO-100, 27mm, F/16, 1/200 sec*

shooting in TTL at night some shots tended to be overexposed. This was easily controlled by covering a bit of the light head with my fingers to reduce light. This takes less time than using EV controls on the camera for me.

The video light is more than adequate for many closeup/macro needs and for those like me who only use video on limited occasions in conjunction with still images. The DS 161 takes up a bit more space in your travel bag and weights more than its compact competitors but it excels in power and its broad range of uses. If you are an Ikelite housing system user the DS 161 would be a no-brainer

for me and well worth the tradeoff shooting with manual power settings for non-Ikelite housing users.

The Ikelite DS 161 MSRP is \$1100.00, combined with a TTL sync cord for Ikelite and the Ball Arm Mark II kit the MSRP is \$1475.00, extra battery packs MSRP \$200.00, a complete extra charging kit with plug adapters MSRP \$100.00 and the optical slave converter has an MSRP of \$125.00. All these products can be found at your local authorized Ikelite dealer.

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Phil Rudin

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Diving into a new camera system

by Dan Beecham

The decision to take the leap into a new camera system is always a daunting one. As an underwater cameraman this is the case even more so, as getting into a new camera system involves a financial commitment that is probably double that of a camera operator shooting on land due to the costs of underwater housings. Generally speaking underwater housings do not retain their value well at all – with this in mind you can see just how daunting making the decision of which camera to buy can be.

When the time came for me to invest in a 4K-camera system, the two choices at the time were the RED Epic, or the newcomer – the Sony F55. Many others exist today. I was to be purchasing the system with business partner Charles Maxwell, an Emmy award-winning veteran underwater-cameraman. I had been shooting with the Red Epic for a major client for around a year or so when we decided to partner up and buy a camera system together.

At this time I was getting very familiar with the RED system and

workflow, I was pretty intent on buying a RED for myself when the time was right. It was to my surprise then that Charles said he was looking at the F55 as an option. I started looking into the system and I liked what I found.

Both Charles and myself have been shooting with Sony cameras for a number of years. Charles' Emmy award winning Blue Planet footage of the Sardine Run was shot on the PD-150, since then a lot has changed. We have both worked extensively with a plethora of HD cameras; F900, F900R, Z1, EX-1 and EX-3 to name but a few – so I was excited about continuing to work with the Sony gear. There is a real level of comfort in knowing we are working with a camera manufacturer that we have a history with as well as one that has dealers and technicians locally.

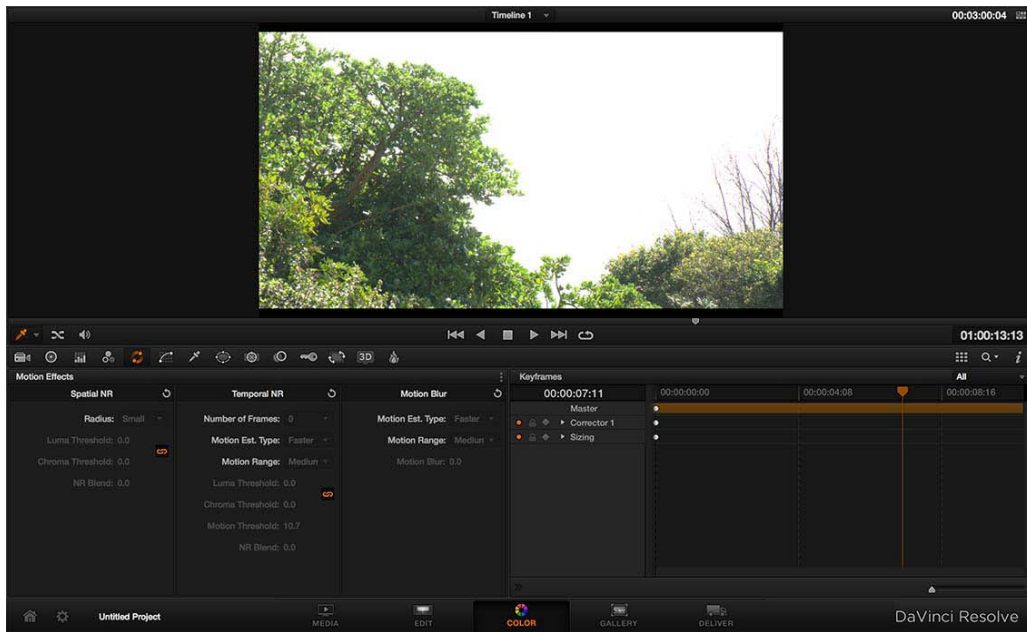
Once we took delivery of the camera and started working with RAW files from test shoots in DaVinci Resolve, I really started getting excited about the potential of the system for underwater work. Experimenting with test footage I



shot of Table Mountain, with bright white clouds that I intentionally over-exposed and being able to pull the exposure back is such a luxury, this

level of flexibility amazed me.

Once we had done our first dives with the camera and started grading the footage, I was astonished by



Pre post processing

how faithful the F55 colorimetry is underwater. We have shot underwater scenes such as kelp forests that I have honestly never seen captured so truthfully in terms of the colour reproduction.

As divers, we know what the colours of our subjects should be, and cameras sometimes reproduce them inaccurately. When grading RAW footage from our dives, we can match the colours exactly, getting completely faithful colour reproduction. The footage has an ethereal, otherworldly quality, which I think comes the F55's S-Gamut colour system, which allows it to capture a wider spectrum of colours than other cameras. It really feels like now we are showing

people the things we get to see on our dives and that we are getting much closer to them actually experiencing it themselves because of the immersive characteristics of the footage...and we all thought HD pictures looked good!

Many underwater photographers & cameramen will be familiar with the conundrum of whether to put a red filter onto their camera, depending on their diving conditions. The conundrum being that the depth you will work in means you need to replace red lost as you descend deeper into the water column, but then what if you are shooting at that depth with a filter fixed to the lens inside the housing and on ascending, something amazing is happening near the



Post post processing

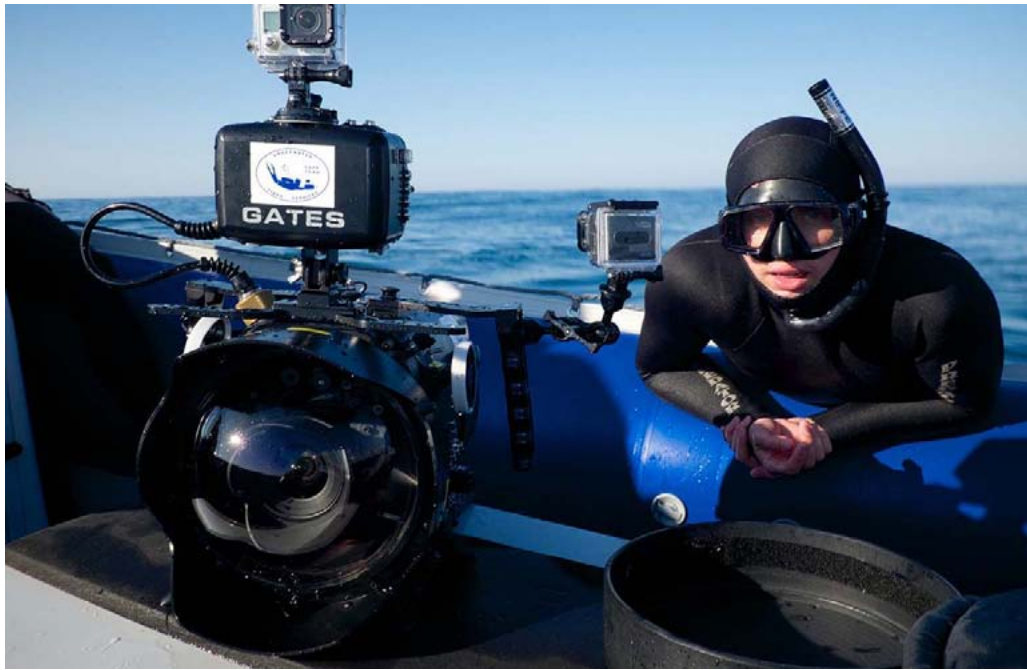
Frame grab



surface. Previously, with traditional video, you would end up with footage that is too red, to the extent that you cannot pull your colours back to what

they should naturally be.

We ran tests on land to see how the F55 RAW footage would handle this scenario. By doing kelvin and tint



adjustments in Sony RawViewer, we were able to eliminate the excess red in the image that came from having ‘Magic Filter’ attached to the lens. Quite amazing.

It feels to me that the Sony RAW truly is RAW in the way that I have associated RAW to be on a stills camera for so many years - you can't set a compression ratio like with the RED, which some people may regard as a hindrance because of the enormous files that are produced by the R5 RAW Recorder, but having seen just what you can achieve with them, I can say it's a sacrifice worth making. It also instills a strict shooting mentality, like in the days of film, which I think is a good thing.

www.uwpmag.com

Of course with the F55 we also have the option to shoot 4K in XAVC @ Slog2 which still retains the great dynamic range of the camera – this could be a feature we end up using on long shoots in remote locations, where storage space can be an issue. This will of course require a different mind-set regarding shooting. Exposure must be handled carefully when shooting Slog, and of course if we are not shooting RAW, we need to pay attention to white balance again.

Getting in on the F55 in the early stages is helping us to establish a reputation with the system, and indeed it has already started to generate work. The camera has been used for blue-chip natural history

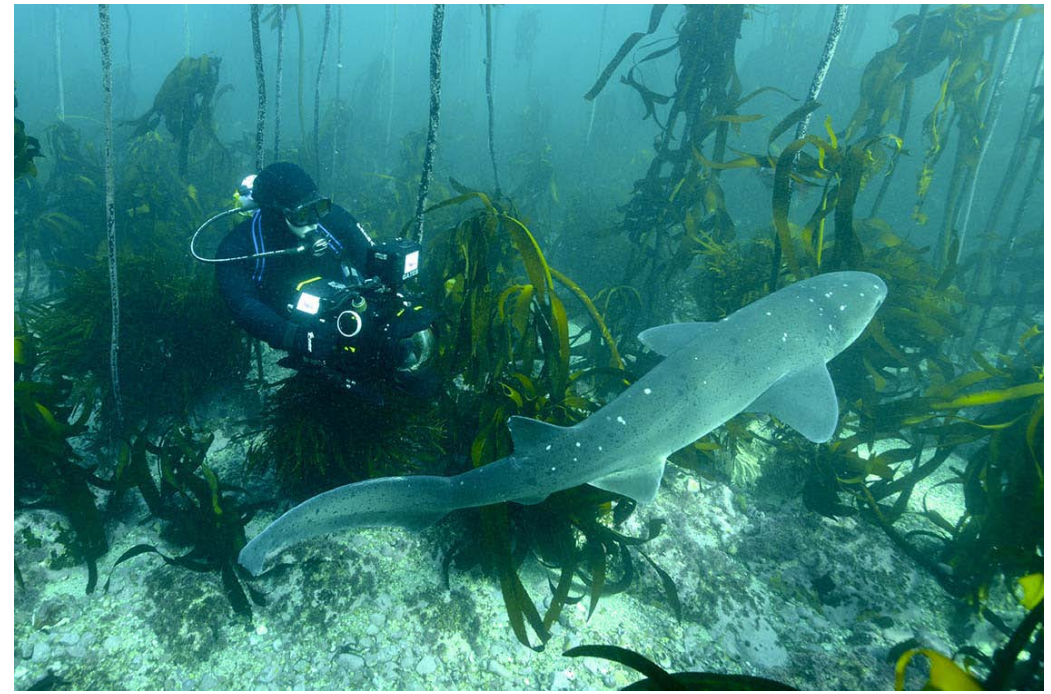
productions, TV series, and a couple of TV commercials. We've also been diving with it ourselves extensively in development of our 4K stock footage library.

Charles has been in the stock footage business for so long that he knows exactly what sells, so we have the advantage of being very targeted with what stock footage we go out to shoot. Every time we go to sea to gather stock footage it costs money – fuel for the boat, launch fees, skipper's fees, and bait. Of course there is also the time it takes to catalog and manage all the footage as well as the cost of keeping three copies of the footage as back-ups in different locations. In this sense

Charles' experience in the field is invaluable – and we are really able to maximize our time on the water.

This industry is cyclical – there will come a time when we'll need to go out and reshoot everything we are shooting now in whatever the next acquisition format will be, but we enjoy the process. At heart we are people who love being out on the Ocean. In Cape Town we have an abundance of subjects at our disposal because we are at the meeting point for two great oceans, the Indian and the Atlantic.

Cold, nutrient rich water from the Benguela current and warm water from the Mozambique current give us an amazing natural biodiversity both



underwater and on land, so we can dive with seals, a plethora of sharks (including one of the best places in the world for filming Great White Sharks), kelp forests and many others subjects and ecosystems.

Getting the F55 out into some of these areas, and testing its capabilities has been really exciting, and we've not been disappointed by the results.

It's our hope that the F55 will stand the test of time, and the demand for 4K stock-footage will continue to grow. Everyone is talking about the F55 being a five-year camera, which I hope is the case. Sony's announcement of a hardware upgrade to allow shooting ProRes is a good

sign – it shows a commitment to the system, and that there will be more upgrades to come. I have faith in Sony in this regard – I hope that they realize that it was a gamble for customers to get into the system when the camera in its original firmware version was quite limited, and having to rely on the firmware roadmap and trust in Sony that they would come good on their promises. Of course this has been the case and in-fact they've delivered more than they promised – one of the benefits of working with such an established company that has a reputation to protect. Whether it be more firmware upgrades or hardware upgrades we need to pay for, they are

all welcome.

Once again, when it comes to changing cameras, for us it also means changing underwater housings, as generally newer cameras do not fit into older housings, so the longer life span we can get out of the system, the better. Back-up and support from Sony has been excellent locally. It's reassuring knowing we've got a good team of technicians near-by if the camera does develop a fault.

The recent addition of the record cache is also a great sign, it's so important for natural history work. For now it is quite limited, but it's my hope that this will be increased in future firmware versions, or with

a hardware upgrade. Hopefully with a future hardware upgrade we'll also be able to get higher frame rates when shooting at 4K. I have to admit to feeling a little bit limited when it comes to being able to shoot high frame rates at 4K. I would put at the top of my list for Sony start work on the ability to shoot 4K RAW @ 120fps. 120fps 4K in XAVC would be a welcome alternative.

With the F55 it's amazing how much you can pull back in the highlights and lowlights by adjusting your ISO - which of course for underwater work is fantastic. So many situations in underwater work have high-contrast, where subjects with

white patches such as manta rays (dark on top and white underneath) are a challenge to expose for. Another example where dynamic range of older cameras has let me down has been on the sardine run, when gannets dive into the water column leaving a bright white stream of bubbles behind them and whose bright white feather completely overexpose if you're not careful and expose for the darker sharks and dolphins.

Now being able to shoot RAW with the F55 this is no longer a concern – the camera's 14 stops of the dynamic range capture a huge amount of detail in the lowlights and highlights. Charles shot some material in a swimming pool on the F55 for a TV series - backlit of an actress swimming through frame. The highlights and lowlights both looked amazing, even straight off the camera. This footage was shot at about 5000 ISO - there was hardly any grain. This was shot XAVC @ HD, as the client only required it to be in HD - which leads me onto another point.

The fact that we are able to shoot in HD (or 2K) and we do not worry about the image being cropped or 'windowed' is fantastic with the Sony. Other camera systems crop into the sensor when you switch to lower resolutions. As any underwater photographer knows, wide-angle lenses are important our work – we use them all the time as underwater you have to remain close to your subject. If you back away you shoot through more water, degrading the image. One of the golden rules in underwater work is "get as close as you can, then get closer".

Much of our work is with large animals in low vis, so again wide angles are really important for us. Not having to worry about the sensor cropping if we shoot at lower resolutions is a real bonus, we



can swap between resolutions with no impact on the coverage of our lenses.

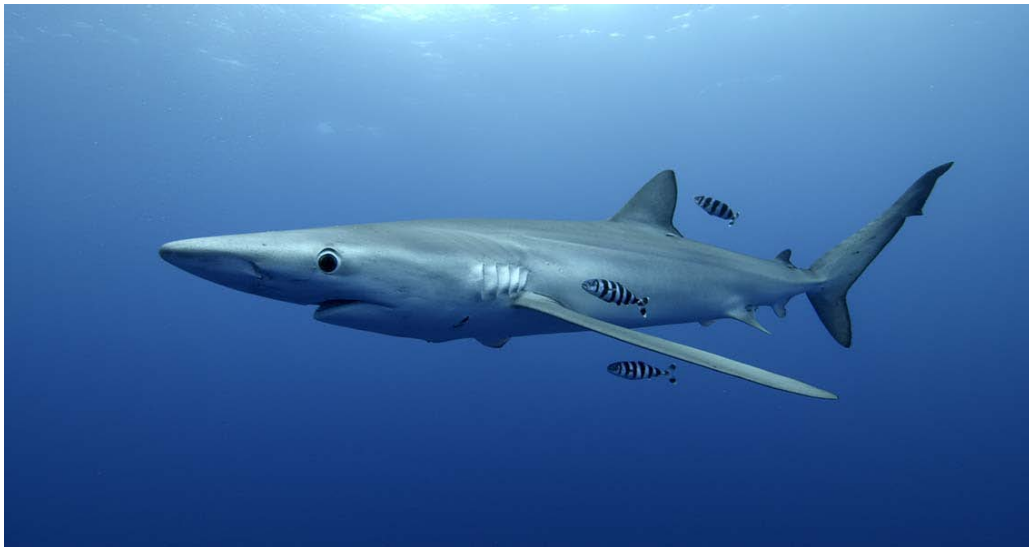
On the topic of lenses, I can't deny that I miss the days shooting with my Sony F-900R with the Canon HJ11 lens. This combination allowed me to shoot marine subjects from the largest in the ocean such as whales sharks, to some of the smallest such as nudibranchs, all with one lens, without the need to open the housing. With its zoom range and close focusing, it really was a dream. Oftentimes underwater you only have one opportunity to capture a behavioural sequence, if you don't get everything on that dive, you may not witness it again. We do not have the luxury of changing lenses underwater. In this regard the F55 underwater system has its limitations – but this is not a failing on the part of the housing, it's simply that the technology does not exist at the moment to have the



same kind of flexibility in one lens.

We've set ourselves up with a range of lenses with Nikon mounts including the Tokina 11-16mm, Sigma 17-70 and 60mm macro, these go onto the camera with an adapter from MTF Services. The lens selection is working just fine for us, but having something with the flexibility of an ENG style lens in the future would be fantastic. I have been thinking about options for using Sony's B4 to FZ lens adapter with an ENG lens in our underwater housing, but it's my feeling a lens originally designed for HD imaging will not be strong enough optically for working in 4K. I think the lens technology will catch up soon enough, and we'll just look back on the time we are in now as an awkward transition period.

Our underwater housing was built by Gates. People are often shocked when they first start



looking into the costs involved in underwater housings, but for us this is par for the course, and I wouldn't want to put my beloved F55 in a sub-standard product! Gates' optics are second-to-none, and this is essential. There's no point having such a fantastic camera and lens stuck behind sub-standard optics, degrading the image.

Gates have also worked hard to make the housing as versatile as possible. We can shoot with or without the R5 RAW recorder, and with larger batteries to give us longer run times (up to three hours with a large IDX battery). John Ellerbrock and his team have provided us with fantastic support when it comes to advice and back-up with the system, they're an essential part of our crew.

Getting to grips with the F55 has been a steep learning curve, and we're still continuing to learn about its potential. I'm not sure I'll ever have a camera that I am 100% happy with in this fast changing world, but with the F55, I have come pretty darn close.

-Dan Beecham

Dan Beecham is an underwater cameraman based in Cape Town, South Africa. With business partner Charles Maxwell (www.underwatervideo.co.za) he shoots on the Sony F55 with the Gates underwater housing.

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Charles Maxwell
2002 Emmy
Award Winner
for Outstanding
Cinematography

Underwater Photographer of the Year

The story behind a new competition

by Alex Mustard

What? Another underwater photography competition? I am sure that there are some readers that feel our community needs one about as much as it needs another underwater selfie!

But I hope to convince you that this one will be worth it. We've grand aims, we hope to create a contest that underwater photographers really want, one that draws on the past, but very much looks to the future, one which I hope anyone who reads Underwater Photography Magazine would want to be part of. Yes, we've set a modest long-term goal! We want The Underwater Photographer Of The Year to become the most sought after title in underwater photography!

Down the years I have competed in, sometimes won awards in and judged most of the major contests around the world. Some have got the detail right and some shockingly less so. But I have learned plenty from being on both sides of the judges' table and this has shaped the



Underwater Photographer of the Year (UPY). Let me explain.

Our formula is disarmingly simple. We hope that UPY will appeal because we have a judging process you can trust, with judges whose opinions on your work you want, giving out prizes that are really worth having and, most of all, titles you want to win.

UPY came about simply because a group of us want to do something right by our community. There is no single business, publication or brand that proposed this contest, hoping to grab images or credit. Simply we wanted to give great underwater photography as prominent a public



platform as we can and reward and promote the best of the best.

Standards in underwater photography have rocketed in recent years and UPY will allow both established names to reaffirm their reputations in a changing landscape and emerging talent to be recognised. In both cases evaluated objectively, free from the bluff and bluster of social media!

Judging is absolutely crucial to a competition and I only accepted to be part of UPY if we got this right. I have seen it done wrong too much in the past. Experience has shown me that the judging process is much better when all the panel meet face

to face. Online judging can work, but can have serious problems. In broad terms, it can lead to winners that are good and everyone likes, but nobody really loves. More interesting photos don't make the grade because if one judge doesn't "get it", its average score dips and it drops out of contention. When judges come together in a single room, the best images are discussed in much more detail, and pictures that judges feel passionate about are championed and proposed as winners.

It was also fundamental to have a really good panel. I don't believe you need a massive committee to judge a contest. In fact, I have observed that

big panels judge more poorly than small panels. I guess it is a natural reaction, when you know there are lots of other judges that your focus can wander. Too often I see judges not giving the entries and the rules their full attention. This is particularly problematic in online judging. Much better to have fewer judges knowing they have the full responsibility.

The judging panel of UPY 2015 will be Martin Edge, Peter Rowlands and me (Alex Mustard). I have found entrants most happy with the results when contests are judged by experienced and, importantly, active photographers. Especially so when they are names they know and really value their opinions on the photos. I have stood on many juries and the best have always been populated by underwater photographers.

Personally I couldn't be happier with my fellow judges, Martin and Peter are the guys I go to when I want opinions on my work. They don't have the same tastes in images as I do. But their opinions are ones that I listen to intently. I am sure competitors will agree with me in wanting their images to get the seal of approval from such luminaries.

Prizes are another area that many contests don't get right. Too many are dominated by what the community calls boomerang prizes. They seem



UPY Judges (Left) Alex Mustard (Chair), (Centre) Martin Edge and (Above) Peter Rowlands

good at first glance, but ultimately have so many conditions that they reward the donor far more than the winner. Dive trips can be the classic boomerang prizes when offered without flights, on limited dates and sometimes even with the requirement to pay for buddy or extra nights to claim. The result is that a surprisingly low percentage of the holidays you see in photo contests actually get claimed!

UPY has a very impressive selection of prizes on offer and it is a boomerang free zone! Our holidays come with flights (from the UK) and

all photographic and dive equipment prizes are ready to dive. Which is exactly what you'd expect from some of the best brands in diving: Apeks, Fourth Element, Nauticam and Scuba Travel. We simply wrote to the companies that we would like to win prizes from and we have fantastic collection including travel, photography equipment, wetsuits and regulators.

There are more than 30 prizes in all and each entrant can only win one. So hopefully lots of photographers will be going home happy and since you get to choose your prize (first

choice goes to most successful across the categories), the winners should get something they really want.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of UPY is that we are not controlling post processing. That doesn't mean this is a Photoshop contest, indeed we're unlikely to reward "Photoshop creations". We've chosen this route because we feel it most accurately reflects our community. The vast majority of underwater images we see in magazines, books and online are manipulated in Lightroom and Photoshop in traditional terms.



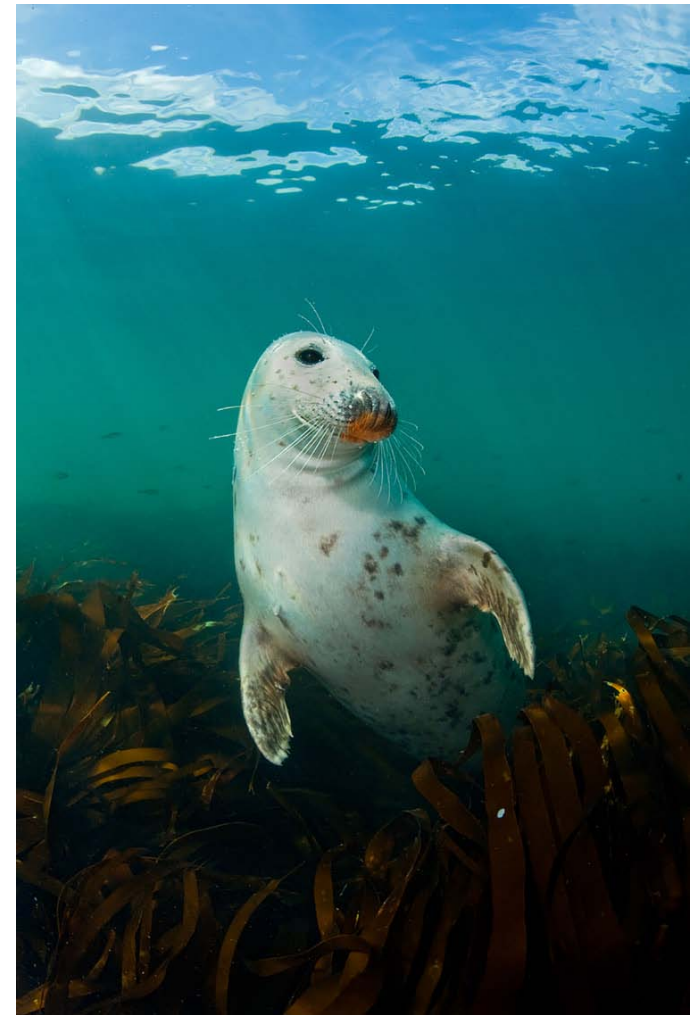
Furthermore, there are a many great competitions that reward the completely as-shot underwater image. The most prestigious of these is probably the Wildlife Photographer of the Year, but there are many more. So we've decided to take the modernist view.

Or perhaps it is not that modern! Post processing has always been a part of photography. Ansel Adams great prints are, of course, heavily post processed in the traditional darkroom, as were all entries early underwater photographs in contests. The late, great Peter Scoones would regularly stress that underwater photography greatly pre-dates slide film and lauding the straight from the camera transparency as a baseline is misguided. His view was simply this was a historical anomaly, simply the opinion of those that started underwater photography in the 70s, 80s and 90s, but not those who started before or since! While I don't agree entirely and personally still dedicatedly enter wildlife style contests, it is fair to say that Scoonesy's spirit flows throughout UPY.

While UPY is forward looking in this respect, it is also a competition with a clear eye on the past



and celebrating its British underwater photography heritage. In 1965, the first Brighton Festival of Underwater Images took place in the UK and for the next 30 years this was arguably the most prestigious contest and also the main meeting places for serious players to get together and talk shop. This was the days before the internet and handy bi-monthly free magazines! UPY is being launched to mark 50 years since the first Brighton Festival and to return a



premier underwater photo contest to the UK.

We're also bringing back titles and awards from the Brighton era and since our bricks and mortar home will be at the London International Dive Show (LIDS) in February, where the winners will be exhibited and the prizes dished out, we hope to create a strong festival vibe. LIDS is already the home of the PhotoZone, with two days of talks on underwater photography. There will

even be a judges' feedback session on the entries after the prize giving, where you can find out what they thought of all your submissions. And if underwater photographers need further encouragement, London's ExCel Centre is simultaneously hosting the Telegraph Outdoor Adventure & Travel Show, with even more photography talks by leading landscape and wildlife pros and you can even buy a combined ticket!

So what about those special awards? For many photographers the prizes will be less important than the chance to call Underwater Photographer of the Year, 2015, which goes to our best of show. For British entrants we also have a British Underwater Photographer of the Year and a Most Promising British Underwater Photographer 2015, which are open to British residents and British nationals living overseas, of which there are many in the world of underwater photography.

We're starting small with just 8 categories. There is a strong UK bias in our first year, but we expect the competition to become more international as it grows. I hope I've convinced you that we're doing things right, and that you will want to be part of the Underwater Photographer of the Year. The closing date is 5th January and the award ceremony is in London on 14th February, 2015.



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I hope to see you there, I am excited to find out who will be Underwater Photographer of the Year, 2015.

Alex Mustard
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Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2014

Now in its 50th year, the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition provides a global showcase of the very best nature photography. The competition is co-owned by two UK institutions that pride themselves on revealing and championing the diversity of life on Earth - the Natural History Museum and BBC Worldwide.

There is a major exhibition at the Natural History Museum that tours worldwide throughout the year. The winning images appear on this website, in BBC Wildlife Magazine and publications worldwide. As a result, the photographs are now seen by millions.

www.nhm.ac.uk

Winner 2014 Underwater Species Indra Swari Wonowidjojo, Indonesia Passing giants

During a new Moon, the lights from the bagans (semi-mobile fishing platforms) in Cenderawasih Bay in Irian Jaya, Indonesia, attract shoals of fish into the nets of local fishermen. The lights act as a signal to filter-feeding whale sharks, which have learned to suck on the nets to extract the fish. It's an easy meal, so easy that the whale sharks sometimes need to be shooed away from the nets, though some fishermen will feed them. Up to 10 whale sharks can cruise around a bagan at any one time, and the



location is now becoming a dive hotspot. Attracted by the spectacle, Indra spent a few days diving there. As a huge whale shark – at least nine metres long – glided by on one dive, she noticed another swimming a little deeper, in a different direction. She swam quickly to position herself above both of them when their paths crossed. She adjusted her strobe output and ISO so the great fish would both be sufficiently illuminated. ‘The sharks will happily swim straight into you, gently nudging you

out of their way,’ she says. ‘The fishermen see them as good omens and often jump in and swim with them.’ Elsewhere in Asia, these massive animals, the world’s largest fish, continue to be hunted.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II + 17–40mm lens; 1/100 sec at f11; ISO 640; Nexus housing + Inon z240 strobes.

Finalist 2014 Underwater Species

Brian Skerry, USA

Dolphin downtime



Brian travelled to the waters off northwest Oahu, Hawaii, to photograph spinner dolphins as part of a scientific project examining dolphin intelligence. The researchers were looking in particular at social alliances and feeding strategies. Spinners are well known for their acrobatics, leaping up to three metres out of the water and completing as many as seven revolutions in the air before plunging in again. It is not certain why they do this, though it may be to dislodge remoras, or suckerfish, from their bodies and for communication. Their spinning once caused them to be targeted for aquariums, but they are hugely social – living in large

pods of up to 200 individuals – so never survived well in captivity. The dolphins Brian was working with foraged at night for fish, squid and shrimps in deep water offshore, then came into shallow bays in the early morning to socialise and rest. The animals are often harassed by dolphin-watching boats. Brian was careful to position himself off to the side so as not to disturb the pod. Free diving to a depth of nearly 18 metres, he took advantage of the white sand backdrop to create his picture – a moment of dolphin downtime, his subjects relaxed in their world.

Nikon D4 + 17–35mm lens at 24mm; 1/500 sec at f11; ISO 1000; Subal housing.

Finalist 2014 Underwater Species

Fabien Michenet, France

Little squid

Planktonic animals like this juvenile sharpnose squid are usually photographed under controlled situations after they've been caught. But Fabien is fascinated by the beauty of their living forms and aims to photograph their natural behaviour in the wild. Night diving in deep water off the coast of Tahiti, he was surrounded by a mass of tiny planktonic animals. Apart from the occasional sound of a dolphin, it was silent, and he became fascinated by this tiny squid. Just three centimetres long, it was floating motionless about 20 metres below the surface. It was probably hunting even smaller creatures that had migrated up to feed under cover of darkness. Its transparent body was covered with polka dots of pigment-filled cells, and below its eyes were bioluminescent organs. Knowing it would be sensitive to light and movement, Fabien gradually manoeuvred in front of it, trying to hang as motionless as his subject.



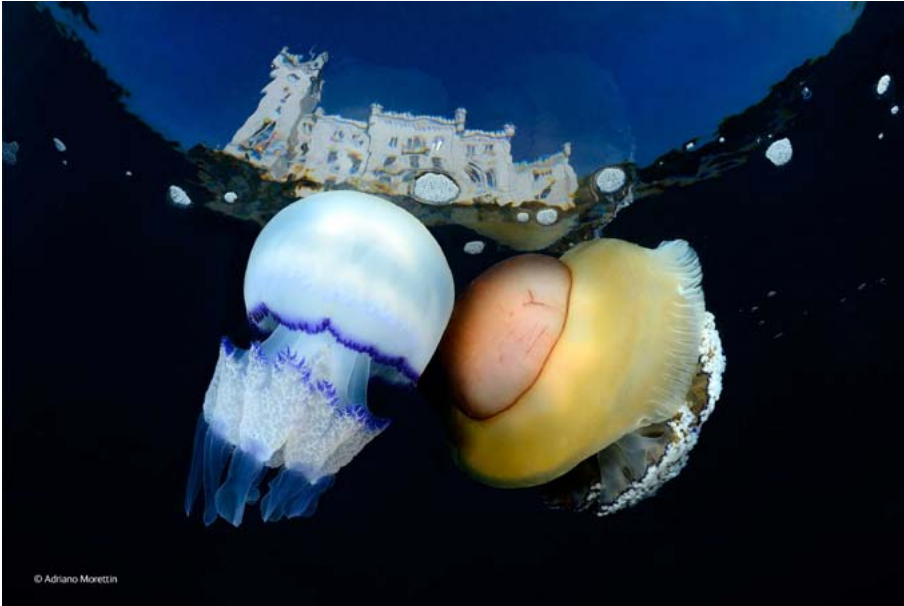
Using as little light as possible to get the autofocus working, he finally triggered the strobes and took the squid's portrait before it disappeared into the deep.

Nikon D800 + 105mm f2.8 lens; 1/320 sec at f16; ISO 200; Nauticam housing; two Inon Z-240 strobes.

Finalist 2014 Underwater Species

Adriano Morettin, Italy

Touch of magic



Adriano had this picture in mind for 15 years before he had a chance to capture it. The nineteenth-century Miramare Castle, near his home in Trieste, stands on a cliff overlooking the Adriatic Sea. Last summer, a significant jellyfish swarm gathered beneath the cliff. Hundreds of barrel jellyfish and tens of fried egg jellyfish congregated in the unusually clear water. Adriano needed to get close with his wide-angle lens, receiving many minor stings to his face in the process. But his real challenge was to follow the jellyfish as they moved, ‘using their domes like engines’. He waited patiently for two to touch

near the surface, getting just the right angle to photograph them with the castle behind. Most difficult of all was balancing the exposure of the jellyfish with that of the sunlit castle above to reveal the beauty of both.

Nikon D800E + Sigma 15mm f2.8 lens; 1/160 sec at f18; ISO 100; Seacam housing + Superdome; two Seaflash 150 strobes.

Winner 2014 Natural Design

Patrik Bartuska, Czech Republic

Cardinal sparks



Patrik’s goal was to photograph a group of beautiful Banggai cardinalfish, which are found only in the waters off Sulawesi, Indonesia. They are endangered because of overfishing for the aquarium trade. Patrik encountered this scene while diving in the Lembeh Strait to the north. The contrasts of movement and texture entranced him – the anemone’s soft tentacles swaying in the current and the flicks of the angular, patterned fish sheltering within them. During his trip he mostly came across small groups of adults gathered around the coral. But he was after a group associating with an anemone. During

the day juveniles use the anemones’ tentacles for protection, either avoiding their stings or being in some way unaffected by them. It took many dives before he found this large grouping. It appeared to Patrik like an underwater fire display, the tentacles like licking flames and the fish like erratic sparks. To capture the moving pattern he chose to shoot from above. Holding his position in the current, he waited for the fish to move so he could frame the composition.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II + 16–35mm f2.8 lens; 1/8 sec at f9; ISO 320; Seacam housing; Seaflash strobes.

Winner 2014 Plants & Fungi

Christian Vizl, Mexico

Glimpse of the underworld



Water lilies stretch up to the light through a layer of green mist in the Aktun Ha cenote, a huge sinkhole on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. Aktun Ha is part of a great ring of thousands of cenotes, created when the limestone bedrock collapsed to expose the subterranean groundwater. Christian has been photographing the cenotes for the past 10 years. What makes Aktun Ha special is its underwater garden. The water is crystal clear, except in summer when an algal bloom several metres thick can develop beneath the surface. Christian settled on the bottom of the cenote to compose a picture of this still, silent

underworld garden. The challenge was to balance the artificial with the natural light. The intensity and angle of the strobe illumination had to be just right. He wanted to bring out the texture of the leaves, flushed pink through ageing, without detracting from the natural light filtering down through the algae, or overexposing the skittish silvery fish. The resulting picture hints at why the ancient Maya considered cenotes to be sacred places and thought of water lilies as plants of the underworld.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II + 15mm lens; 1/160 sec at f14; ISO 200; 2 x Inon Z-240 strobes.

Finalist 2014 Invertebrates

Alex Mustard, United Kingdom

You have been warned



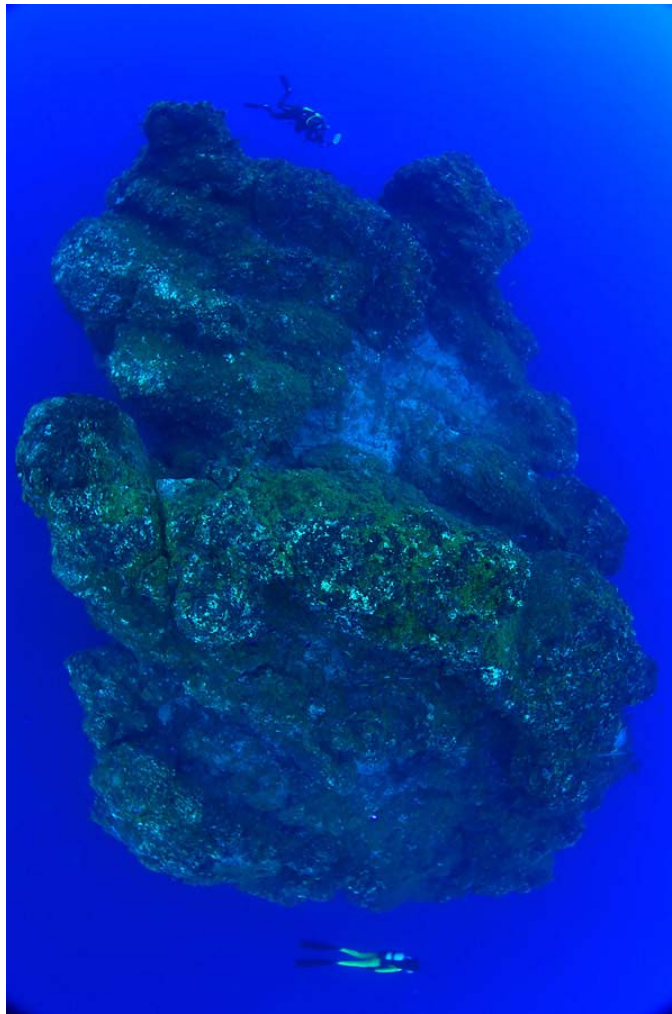
When Alex went diving in the Lembeh Strait in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, he was on a mission to celebrate the smaller sea creatures. Equipped with a new high-magnification lens, he encountered this variable neon nudibranch, a species of sea slug, crawling across the seabed. Less than two centimetres long, it has green gills on its back and orange mouthparts. It uses its orange, feather-like rhinophores to smell out its prey, primarily sea squirts. It incorporates distasteful chemicals from sea squirts' skin into slimy mucus, and uses its neon colours to warn predators that it tastes bad.

Alex wanted an eye-level view of this unforgettable mollusc. But even with a small aperture it was a challenge. There was little depth of field and the subject was moving – and even a slug's pace under magnification is surprisingly fast.

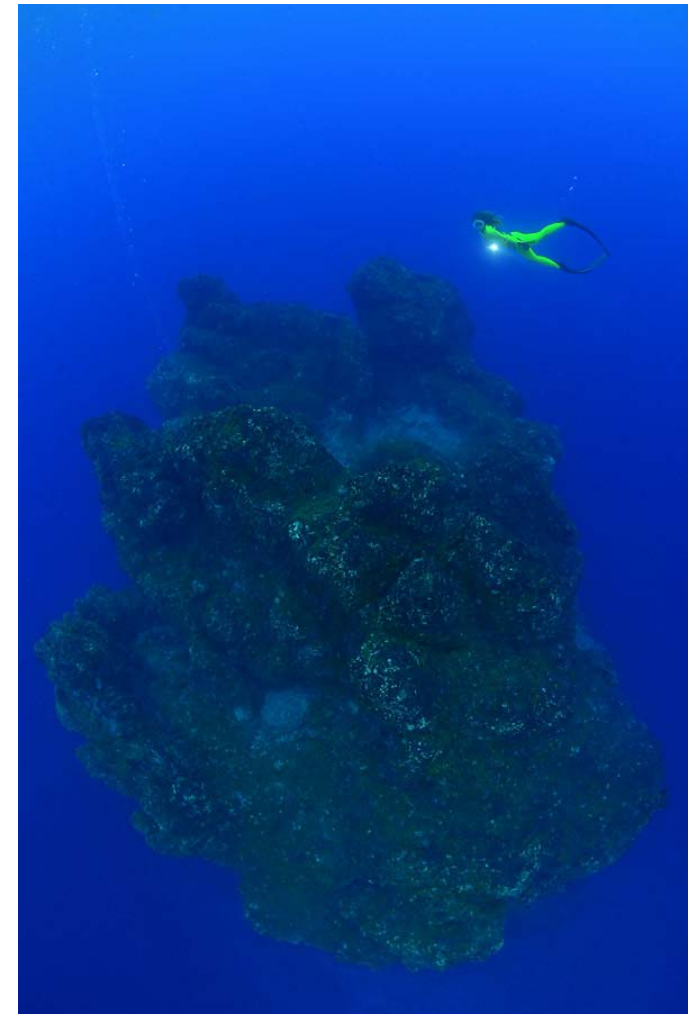
Nikon D4 + 105mm f2.8 lens + Nauticam Super Macro Converter; 1/250 sec at f40; ISO 200; Subal ND4 housing; two Inon Z-240 strobes.



The Heineken special prize award went to David Barrio.



Geological Environment Award went to Arturo Telle.



The best model was Abigail Martin



<http://openfotosub.es/2014/10/21/el-equipo-solrayo-se-alza-con-la-victoria-en-el-18o-openfotosub-islascanarias-latituddevida/#more-2726>

Don't settle for 2nd best



Film - No Filter
No White Balance



Digital - No Filter
Manual WB



Magic Filter
Manual WB

Digital cameras have opened up new possibilities to underwater photographers. For available light photography manual white balance is an invaluable tool for restoring colours. But when you use it without a filter you are not making the most of the technique. You're doing all the hard work without reaping the full rewards. These three photos are all taken of the same wreck in the Red Sea. The left hand image was taken on slide film, which rendered the scene completely blue. The middle image is taken with a digital SLR without a filter, using manual white balance. The white balance has brought out some of the colour of the wreck, but it has also sucked all the blue out of the water behind the wreck, making it almost grey. The right hand image is taken with the same digital camera and lens, but this time using an original Magic Filter. The filter attenuates blue light meaning that the colours of the wreck are brought out and it stands out from the background water, which is recorded as an accurate blue.

www.magic-filters.com

Wakatobi - The Big Picture

by Walt Stearns

There's no denying the allure of capturing images of those more elusive varieties of marine life that hide in the recess of a reef. Yet, in my experience, some of us photographer types run the danger of getting too lost in capturing the small details to the point of missing the big picture. Panoramic reef scenes will also draw many "oohs and ahhs" from an audience. These are the shots that instill in the diver's imagination the vision of that perfect tropical retreat: a place where waters covering pristine reefs are warm and clear, and the marine life is both abundant and diverse.

Having spent some time at Wakatobi dive resort in Indonesia's Tukang Besi archipelago, I can attest to the fact that a photographer could spend weeks on their highly celebrated House Reef and surrounding reefs filling memory card after memory card with spectacular marine life portraits and macro shots, without ever once running out of unique subject material. But that is only half the story. There is also the panoramic scenic images that depict just how remarkable a place really is.

Going after the big picture - shooting wide angle

One of the best ways to show the true scope and quality of a destination is by adding wide and super-wide panoramic images to the mix.

Wakatobi is one of very few dive resorts in the world that shouldered the burden of protecting their reefs through the creation of a privately maintained marine preserve. Drop in on just about any one of their 40-plus named sites and the evidence of their proactive conservation efforts is readily apparent in the vitality of the reefs.

In addition to remaining in a near-pristine condition, Wakatobi's

Wakatobi Reefs (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/160 sec., lens set at 17mm, Aperture F9, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's set between full and half power)

Wakatobi Reefs 2 (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/200 sec., lens set at 10mm, Aperture F6.3, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's set between half and quarter power)





The Blade looking down (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/100 sec., lens set at 10mm, Aperture F6.3)

underwater terrain encompasses some dramatic topography. There are steep reef slopes and vertical walls coming to within a few feet from the surface, submerged ridges and seamounts that vault from the depths with peaks cresting in the sun dappled shallows. A memorable example of this is the site

www.uwpmag.com



The Blade_2 – fan and sponge (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/100 sec., lens set at 10mm, Aperture F6.3, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's set at half power)

known as Blade.

Seen from above, Blade's profile almost defies description. Rather than the typical submerged pinnacle, the Blade's massive formation resembles a medieval battlement, averaging just seven meters across while spanning several hundred meters in



Diver & Reef - (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/100 sec., lens set at 13mm, Aperture F6.3, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's set at half power)

length, with each side of its vertical profile dropping precipitously into the deep blue.

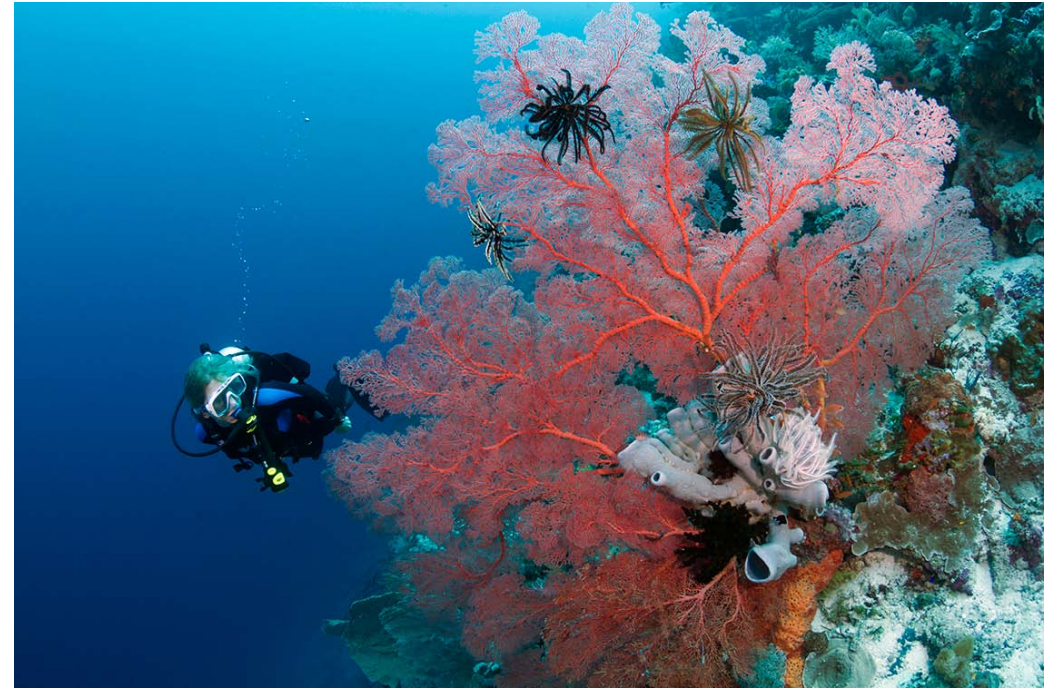
Rising above a vivid backdrop of chromatic blue, every facet of this grand rampart is covered in coral. Adding to Blade's unique and highly picturesque topography is a comprehensive collection of giant sponges, sea fans and soft corals, providing fantastic photo opportunities no matter which side you decide to explore.

When presented with a seemingly unspoiled reef system, I recommend dedicating some of your bottom time to shooting wide angle. When the waters are this clear, and provide ample ambient light to showcase these vistas in vibrant detail, exploit it!

No need to get into what brand/model DSLR camera and housing you have, as it is far less relevant to the subject than what you are using in terms of optics. My most preferred setup for scenics such as Blade when using an APS-C DSLR is the Tokina 10–17mm fisheye zoom behind a 200mm (8-



Hard Corals at Roma (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/125 sec., lens set at 10mm, Aperture F5.6, no strobes, available light only)



Diver & Seafan (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/80 sec., lens set at 10mm, Aperture F7.1, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's manually set with right strobe between half and quarter power, left strobe at half power.)

inch) dome port.

At Wakatobi's dive site Roma there is a giant scroll coral formation I have nicknamed "the rose" for its obvious shape when viewed from above. The only way I felt that I could do it the most justice was to shoot using only ambient light, as there was plenty available. Using strobes would only serve to light up the small amount of particulate in the water column between the coral and me.

Since there are no straight lines

on a reef, the barrel-like distortion created by the Fisheye's optics is seldom an issue. In fact the opposite is true, as the distortion can lend a little extra degree of drama to the subject. To convey a sense of scale, I had my model hover three feet above the coral.

Almost everyone I know uses a dual strobe setup. While essential for lighting up the subject evenly in the foreground, when shooting wide-angle, many forget to think about the

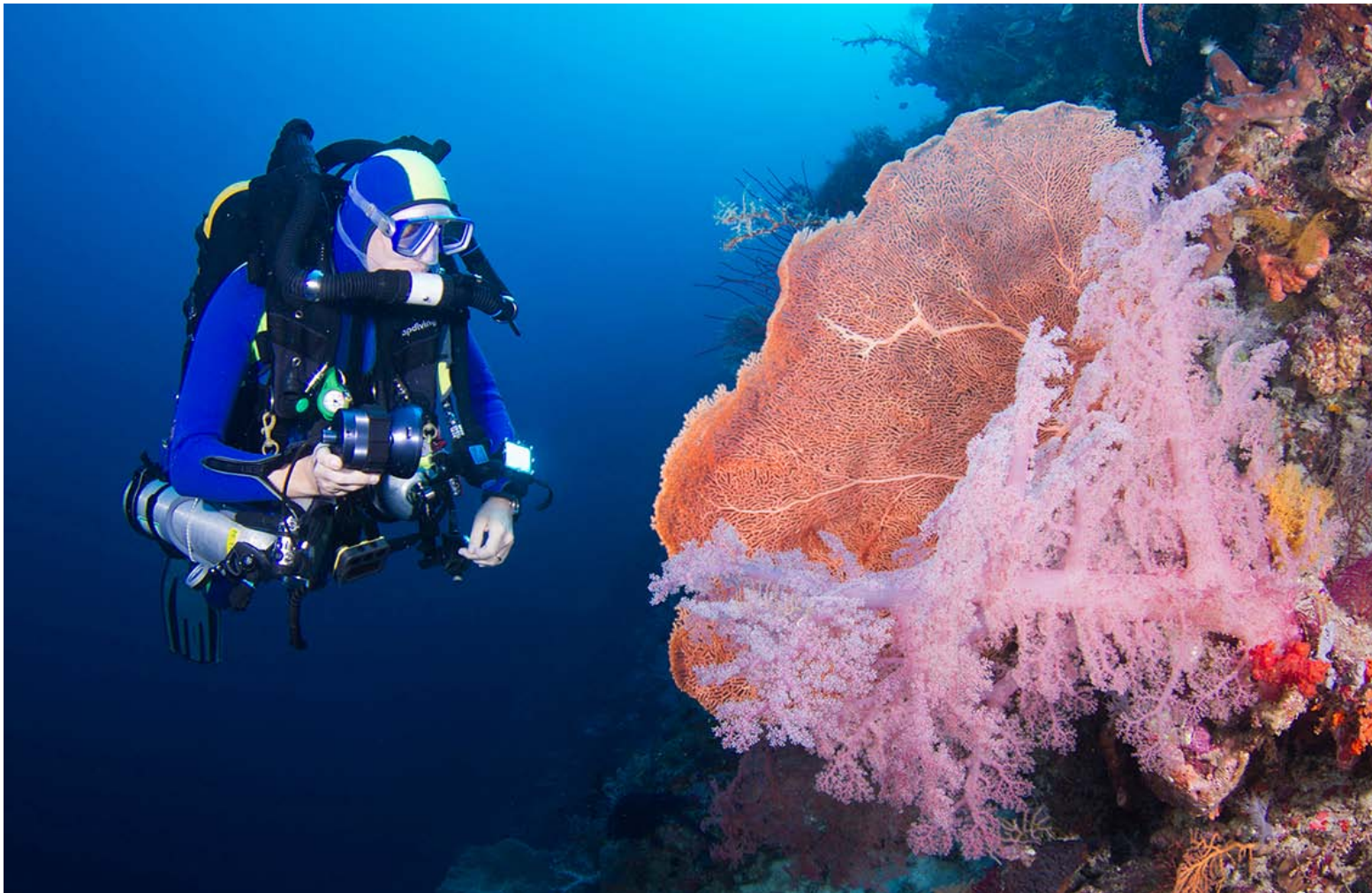
background. When it comes to the tropics, nothing says it better than balancing the ambient light with your own lighting to give it that inviting beautiful blue allure.

I am a firm believer in shooting manually, and this includes the strobes. At Wakatobi, my strobe output was rarely set above 3/4 power, more often the settings would get varied between quarter and half power.

Before setting up any shot, my

strategy always starts with knowing where the sun is, observing where the natural light is transitioning from bright to dark, and taking meter readings of the ambient light through the lens at each point. This allows me to establish a baseline for aperture values. I can then begin the work to best capture the blueness of the water in the background.

For example, at the site called Lorenz's Delight, I found a very large, beautiful red sea fan down the wall at



CCR Diver at depth. (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 300, shutter speed 1/60 sec., lens set at 12mm, Aperture F5.0, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's set manually between half and quarter power.)

110 feet. At that depth the ambient light was still pretty good, allowing me to stay at 200 ISO with meter readings ranging between f4.5 and f8. Once I had proper aperture values dialed to capture the ideal blue of the water, I turned my attention back to

the reef.

At that depth, the fan was more dark maroon than red, which I wanted to bring out, plus add a diver to the scene to give some scale of its size. To retain ambient light, I dropped the shutter speed slightly to 1/80 sec to an

aperture value of f7.1 (plus minus half a stop) to maintain enough depth of field for both the fan and diver.

This entire process might sound a bit too methodical, but remember that unlike a fish, a reef isn't going anywhere. You have ample time to

review your results and make the subtle tweaks needed to dial in your lighting and composition. Because LCD screens don't always tell the whole story, I always review the playback image against the camera's histogram display.

In addition to catering to recreational divers on nitrox, Wakatobi is well equipped to handle divers using rebreathers, including groups as large as 20.

Because of this, I wanted to somehow illustrate that aspect of their services with a CCR diver at a deeper depth. Doing so while retaining enough ambient light to keep the image looking Tropical Ocean rather than the bottom of a quarry presented some challenges. Most notably among these was interference from the reef's steep profile and dramatic overhangs, which cast broad shadows everywhere, further reducing the ambient light.

My normal tendency is to increase the ISO range from 200 to around 350 – 400 ISO.

But again, at a depth of 150 feet, light penetration from the surface through the clear waters allowed me to stick with 200 ISO, dropping the shutter speed to a 1/60 of a sec., which gave me a working aperture range of F4.5 – F5.0



Cuttlefish_1 (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/200 sec., lens set at 10mm, Aperture F9.0, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's manually set between half and full power.)

Few images offer more drama than a wide-angle shot that also includes an interesting marine animal like this Broadclub cuttlefish.

I have found that the Broadclub cuttlefish on the reefs at Wakatobi can be highly tolerant of divers. Providing you keep your movements slow and deliberate, they may allow you to get quite close for pictures.

Adding a human subject to a wide-angle shot not only adds interest, as people find people interesting, it also adds greater opportunity for telling a story.

Rather than simply swimming through the frame, have your model engage in some element of the scene.

If you are partnering with another photographer, an easy trick is to take a photo of them taking a photo. And if they are shooting with

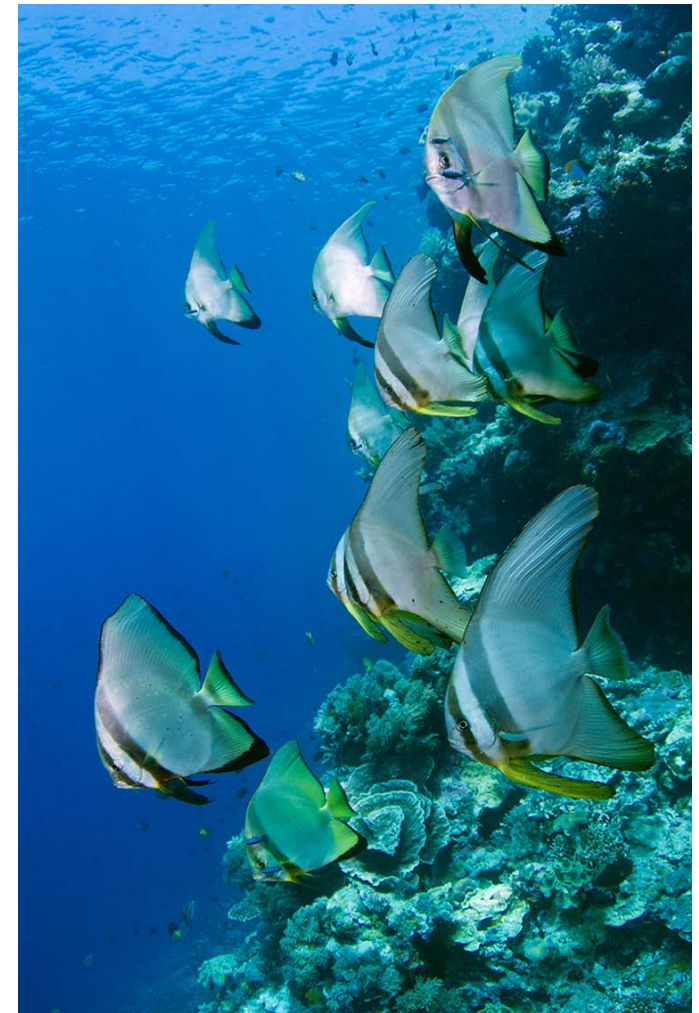


Cuttlefish_2 (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/125 sec., lens set at 14mm, Aperture F8, dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with the right strobe manually set to quarter power, while the left strobe aimed at the diver with the power setting to half power.)

a wide-angle setup as well, they are likely doing the same as you. When using fisheye lenses on people, the field distortion of the lens in the 10-11mm range can at times come off a little too excessive. I find this especially true when the subjects in a frame also include a marine animal. At such times I will often pull back a little, favoring the 13-17mm zoom range.

To up the ante a bit more, provided your subject is still being cooperative, you can shift positions and have another diver move slowly into the spot you just vacated to create a marine interaction portrait.

Keeping your movements slow and deliberate to avoid alarm in your subject will actually give you more time and photo opportunities as opposed to trying to rush through it. Exercising a little discipline pays.



Batfish_1 (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/125 sec., lens set at 17mm, Aperture F9.0. Taking into consideration the surface on the fish in the foreground will be highly reflective, strobe power was dropped to around quarter power on both Sea & Sea YS-250's.)

A school of fish will add a lot of life to your wide angles, but they also can be flighty subjects, which will require you to anticipate the shot well before it happens.

Here again, I suggest applying the same strategy I use for doing general marinescape shots; take meter readings as soon as you are at depth. This will allow you to establish a baseline for aperture values based on the surrounding levels of ambient light, and then be ready when that school of big-eye trevally, bumphead parrotfish, barracuda or batfish enter the scene and come into range.

After capturing some of the stunning reef panoramas, you can then turn your attention to the marine life. During a dive at Roma, I happened upon a pair of large octopus in what looked like a territorial dispute in the making, as both were taking up an erect posture two feet from one another.



Two Octopus (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/125 sec., lens set at 17mm, Aperture F9.0. strobe power on both Sea & Sea YS-250's were dropped just above quarter power)

There was clear water and ample ambient light available to both showcase the vibrancy of the octopus in the foreground and the vista beyond. Only a subtle amount of strobe lighting was needed, as the working distance between lens and subject was less than a foot.



Wakatobi House Reef (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/125 sec., lens set at 12mm, Aperture F7.1, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's at half power)

Getting back to the small stuff - macro

When combining wide angle and macro photography, my preferred game plan is do most of my wide angle shooting during the first half of the day, than switch over to close up work at some point during the mid afternoon.

In addition to Wakatobi providing three boat dives per day, you also have full access to the House Reef between 6 am and 10 pm.

Wakatobi's House Reef is often described as the world's best, and for good reason. It offers topography ranging from inshore grass beds to precipitous drop-

offs, perforated by clefts and caverns and decorated with a dazzling array of hard and soft corals.

The resort's House Reef is accessible from both the beach and the property's pier. The pier itself spans the entire 80 meters from the shoreline to the reef's drop-off. Looking down from the

end of the pier provides a window to what awaits, revealing a reef that takes a sudden plunge from snorkeling depths straight down more than 50 meters into the blue.

As a set for macro photography (and even a little wide-angle) the house reef is a photographer's paradise, with an almost inexhaustible wealth of subject matter to shoot.

During one dive, I was amazed to discover I didn't need to venture more than nine meters on either side of the pier to see up to seven different species of anemone fish.

The reef's two-meter deep plateau is also home to a healthy population of small bluespotted stingrays, pipefish, octopus, and nudibranchs living amongst the finger coral formations and grass beds.

Among the more cryptic critters found here are robust, ornate and halimeda ghost pipefish, as well as four species of pygmy seahorses, including Bargibant, Denise, Pontoh and Severn, plus the recently identified pygmy pipehorse, *Kyonemichthys rumengani*.

Macro photographers with an interest in invertebrates will be especially pleased by the diversity of animals that can be found on this reef during twilight and evening hours.

Given the wide variety of subjects, macro SLR shooters tend to bring a complement of lenses from 60 to even 180mm. Something in the range of a 100/105 mm lens can provide a greater range for capturing subject detail, shy creatures that require more space, but a great deal of the marine life at the House Reef can be shot with 60mm macro.

To further broaden your macro and/or wide-angle photography opportunities, Wakatobi also provides a drop off service for guests diving the House Reef. You and a buddy are ferried further



False Clownfish (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/60 sec., Lens Canon 60mm E-FS, Aperture F22, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with diffusers at half power.)



Spinecheck Clown (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/80 sec., Lens Canon 60mm E-FS, Aperture F16, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with diffusers at half power.)



Leaf Scorpionfish (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/250 sec., Lens Canon 60mm E-FS, Aperture F16, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with diffusers at half power.)



Regal Angelfish (Camera settings: ISO 200, shutter speed 1/80 sec., Lens Canon 60mm E-FS, Aperture F16, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with diffusers at half power.)



Fire Gobies (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/125 sec., Lens Canon 60mm E-FS, Aperture F29, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with diffusers at half power.)

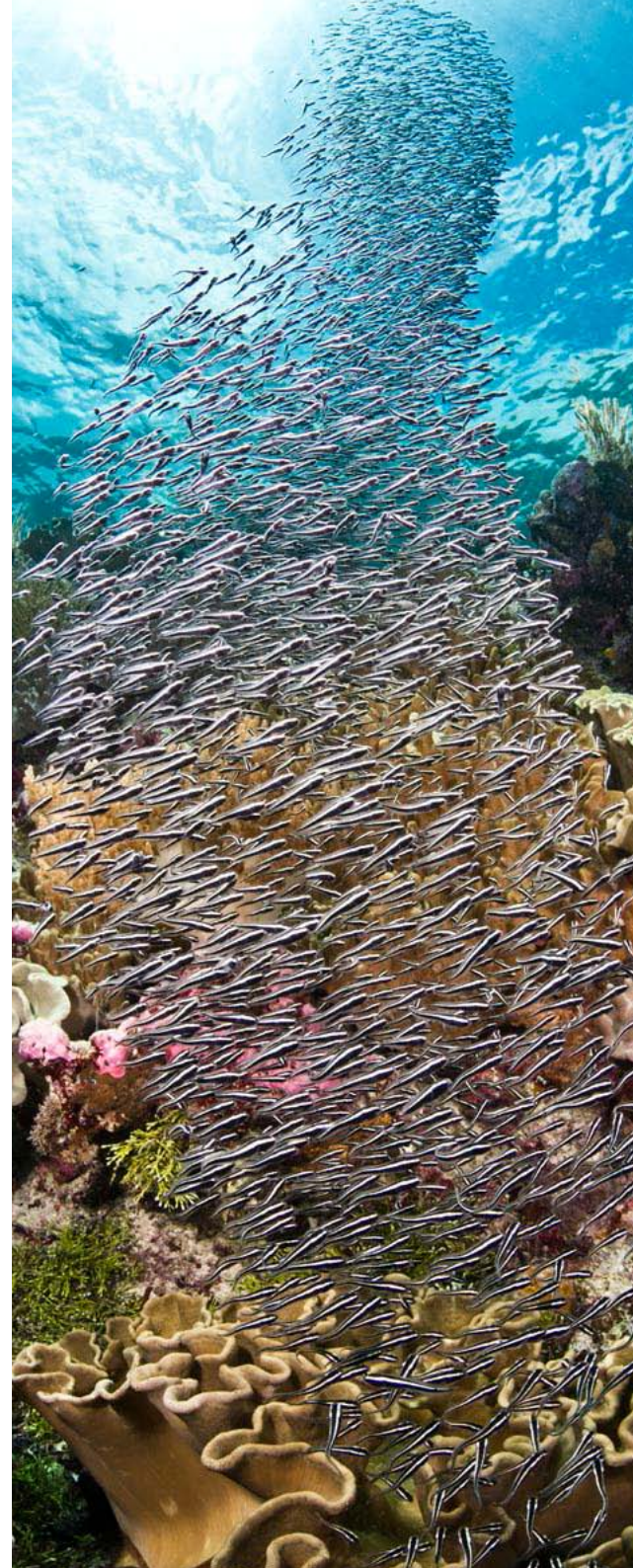
Nudibranch (Subal Canon EOS 7D, ISO 200, shutter speed 1/80 sec., Lens Canon 60mm E-FS, Aperture F27, Dual Sea & Sea YS-250's with diffusers at half power.)

down the reef in a small taxi boat by one of the dive staff, who then drops you off, from which point you work your way back to the resort with the current at a pace of your choosing. If your buddy opts out a Wakatobi dive guide will accompany you on the venture.

Between its great mix of beautiful reefs, drop-offs and unique

marine life subjects, as well as flexible dive services and choices, Wakatobi is a great place to hone your skills – be it wide angle, macro or both! Well, that sums up my game plan; what will be yours?

Walt Stearns
www.wakatobi.com



An experience without equal

"I dream of photographing underwater marine environments in wide angle where the water is clear, the light is beautiful, and the reef is healthy and teeming with marine life. Of all of the destinations I have visited around the world, Wakatobi remains the one where I was really excited on every dive by an incredible underwater perspective that made me think: 'OMG, how beautiful.'"

Warren Baverstock



www.wakatobi.com

A world of Diversity

by Scott Portelli

Imagine a place where the most mysterious of marine mammals roam the deepest parts of the Atlantic Ocean. It's a place where transient giants journey across oceans to the sapphire waters of a remote archipelago. A place of factual imagination where the largest toothed-whale on the planet live off the Kraken of myths – giant squid.

What is this place? The Azores.

Almost halfway between North America and Europe this isolated group of islands still has a strong European influence. It is steeped in Portuguese flavours; with good food, fine wines and a relaxed culture. Once a whaling nation, The Azores' livelihood is now built on tourism and watching the resident Sperm whales.

The Azores were formed from the blood of the Earth. The archipelago consists of nine islands of which Pico is the youngest and was formed just 300 thousand years ago. With a mountainous peak – a signature of its volcanic origins - Pico has an imposing landscape. It is here that I base myself, for its easy access to the action on the water.

I have a direct line to what is happening on the water through our

vigia (the name given to the whale spotters). The vigia are ex-whalers whose job it was to sound the alarm to let the whalers know there was a whale ready for the taking. The once proud whale hunters now work for the local operators, to ensure sightings of whales and dolphins are relayed back to the skippers by radio. Although many of the old vigia's reminisce about the prosperous years of the whaling era, they now use their skills and experience for ecotourism.

When we visited our vigia, Antonio, he was still sitting in the cramped wooden lookout where he had sat for 40 years on a wooden stool. He has been watching the behaviour of marine mammals for so long that even from great distances he could tell you what species it was, how long a whale had dived, and pinpoint where it would surface.

Pico has an imposing landscape

Sperm Whales

Canon EOS 5D MK II, 15mm Fisheye Lens , Seacam Housing 1/400, f6.3, ISO 200





Sei Whale

Canon EOS 5D MK II, 15mm Fisheye Lens, Seacam Housing, 1/400, f4, ISO 400

There he would sit. His binoculars glued to his face. Endlessly watching: frozen.

Suddenly he would flick his arm out and point: a sperm whale, over 20 metres long! I asked a friend what all the excitement was about, and she translated; “This whale is worth a lot, it is a big whale, I would get good money”. He was referring to the whaling days when a whale this size would fetch a hefty fee to the spotter that directed the whalers to its location. A long-gone era but the memories remain.

The diversity of marine mammals is what brings most people to the Azores. The resident sperm whales, bottlenose and common dolphins ensure opportunities to interact all year round. But the rare encounters with species such as Cuviers Beaked whales, Northern Bottlenose whales, Pilot whales, Risso Dolphins and False Killer whales is what makes this place so unique. Each day presents the chance to see something new or rare. That is what excites me.

Even the floating rubbish drifting



Common Dolphin Pod

Canon EOS 5D MK II, 16-35mm Lens, Seacam Housing, 1/125, f7.1, ISO 320

across the ocean has its surprises. I quickly learnt that every bit of flotsam and jetsam floating around the Azores had a potential hidden gem, and I took every opportunity to jump in the water and see what marine life had made this their home. Whether it was Trigger fish living in a barrel, or crustaceans hitching a ride on an old fishing net, there was always something living beneath the surface. If it floated, there were fish. The sad irony is that if you remove the rubbish you are also potentially destroying the habitat of a number of animals relying

on this floating haven.

The currents bring debris from the North that travels around the archipelago distributing remnants of discarded waste. The clear indication of human impact, nylon fishing nets, plastic bags, rubber barrels, without any expiry date, is ever present. Our impact has a lasting effect and in some instances cannot be reversed.

As with many whaling nations, years of whaling had exhausted the stock of sperm whales. The last Sperm whale slaughtered in the Azores was in 1984. It is encouraging to see these



*Mobula Rays, Princess Alice Pinnacle
Canon EOS 5D MK II, 1/160, f6.3, ISO 200*



*Sperm Whale
Canon EOS 5D MK II, 1/400, f6.3, ISO 200*



*Eye of the sperm Whale
Canon EOS 5D MK II, 15mm Fisheye lens, Seacam
Housing, 1/400, f5, ISO 200*

*Portuguese Man o War
Canon EOS 5D MK II, 16-35mm Lens, Seacam
Underwater Housing, 1/160, f13, ISO 320*



days that the sperm whale population is in recovery and they are now a part of the culture of the Azores.

Now, heavily protected by the Azorean government, the marine life around the Azores is abundant. It consists of permanent residents as well as many migrating species of whales, dolphins and bird life. In the winter months the baleen whales come to the Azores in search of food. Blue whales, Sei whales and Brydes whales all feeding on bait balls of small fish.

Each year restrictions are in place between July and August, which is the peak of the whale watching season. But often these are the best times of year to document the behaviour of a multitude of species migrating to and from the Azores. The protection of the marine mammals in these waters is partly due to continued effort and collaboration between operators and the government. It is in the best interest for the operators to educate their clients, but it is clear that they also have a passion for the marine environment and seek to protect these

natural resources for more than just commercial purposes.

Our Skipper is a true Azorean and anyone that meets him can tell he has a passion for this amazing place and its marine life. Every day he teaches me about people, the islands, the weather and the animals we encounter. He calls me ‘the lucky one’, as I tend to be on the boat when we encounter something rare.

I recall one evening we were out on the water. The sun was low, around 8pm at night. The water was calm, glassy. It felt like I was alone on the ocean. We spotted something – just a shimmer in

the distance - and decided to stop the boat.

Suddenly, a pod of beaked whales sheared alongside the boat. The undulating pod was so close I could reach out and touch them. The Skipper watched amazed, and murmured 'in all my years, I have never seen the beaked whales behave in this way'. Time simply stopped.

The Azores brought me luck on another occasion. I was chatting to some divers and photographers in the bar and they were talking about subjects they wanted to see and photograph while in the Azores. The recurring theme was that they were looking to see a Mola Mola (Sunfish) and they had been trying for a few years with no success. Well as fortune might have it, a skipper on another boat radioed to let us know he'd found a Mola Mola. The large sunfish was feasting on the abundant Portuguese Man-o-War. I slid into the water and watched as the huge fish slowly sucked the purplish-blue tentacles into its mouth. Despite being stung vigorously myself, I was determined to stay in the water as long as possible as who knew when the opportunity would present itself again. Sunfish are the largest boned fish in the ocean and look awkward as they move along the surface but their technique seemed to be effective.

When I got back to the bar that night, news had already got around that we swam with the Sunfish and there were a few envious punters that were determined to find their own Mola Mola. I tried not to look too pleased with myself. I wished them luck. Two days later I came across another sunfish and managed to get in the water again. I was a little reluctant to step foot in the bar that night, because apparently I was the only person to swim with a sunfish so far that season and twice in a matter of days would just be rubbing it in.



Risso Dolphins, spy hopping
Canon EOS 5D MK II, 100-400mm Lens, 1/500, f10, ISO 200

Despite the positive impact on the marine mammal populations, there is an ongoing challenge to ensure that the waters around the Azores stay protected. Fishing is still a substantial part of the community's livelihood. The fishing boats with their sustainable fishing practices leave the harbour, toting fishing poles to catch tuna, but I was informed not all is what it appears.

There is still a risk of overfishing in the area and the risk of long-line fishing which is decimating shark populations. But again local operators have started to explore the alternative and now shark diving in the region is starting to grow and the value of a living shark versus a dead shark is becoming more prominent.

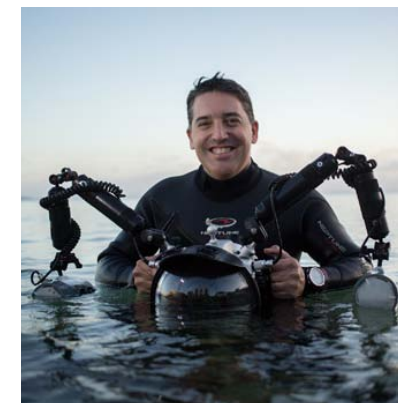
Before I arrived, I had an ambitious wish list. The Azores delivered on it entirely. There is so much more to explore and protect. Truly an underwater world of diversity.



Mola Mola (Sunfish)
Canon EOS 5D MK II, 16-35mm Lens, Seacam Housing, 1/320, f3.5, ISO 200

Note: All images taken under a special permit granted by the Regiao Autonoma Dos Acores, Secretaria Regional Do Ambiente E Do Mar, Dreccao Regional do Ambiente.

Scott Portelli



Small ads



SOLD! – Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII

Ikelite housing for a Canon 5D MKII, Ikelite 8" dome port (no scratches) for a Canon fish eye lens, Ikelite ports Canon 17-40mm and a macro 100mm IS lens. I am based in Scarborough, U.K. £1100 ovnoraminrobin@hotmail.com

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I'm selling a fantastic underwater housing extrem'vision(up to 100 m!!) and video camera sony vx 2000 in really good condition!!!coming with a pelican case!!!!The underwater housing is coming with :- 2 lenses (1 macro and 1 wide angle) - 1 red filter. - 2 set of o'rings - Sillicon for the o'rings. - Digital screen.The sony camera vx 2000 is coming with :- A set of batteries (2 large,1 medium,1 small) - 5 new dv tapes. - 2 cleaning tapes.Extrem'vision is a French Brand known worldwide.it's strong,reliable and easyto repair if any problems....REALLY GOOD CONDITION!!!!2000 euros!!!!!!fabien mouret

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Subtronic Nova analog version no ttl converter

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Ref C146

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Aquatica housing 5D, 8 inch dome, dome shade and canon 5D body including 2 spare batteries and spare charger for sale £1600 + p&p.Housing:Aquatica 5D housing - good to 90m, 8" optical acrylic dome port – some minor scratches but not visible in photos, 8" dome shade / guard, for wide angle lenses, Spare O ringCameraCanon 5D, 3 Batteries, 2 Chargers, StrapAll for £1600+ p&p, will accept paypal, or cashPlease feel free to ask any questionThe equipment has not been used for a while but I have just upgraded to a canon 5D mark II package so have this for sale.I am based in London and if you wish to come round and have a look/examine the equipment prior to parting with your money we can arrange that.

Email: martin.abela@hotmail.co.uk [Ref:c145]

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The Better of Two “Greats”

By Joanna Lentini

While on a recent trip to South Africa, I received a message from an old dive buddy in Singapore asking for some advice. He was planning his own trip to SA when he noticed my on-line post about cage diving with Great Whites, which I had just completed with a top operator in Simons Town. He was trying to decide between two highly touted locations for Great White action, and asked if I had any recommendations. Having just completed my trip at False Bay based on recommendations I had received, I thought some first-hand perspective would allow me to offer the most meaningful advice. Therefore, with some time to kill and an innate curiosity, I booked a second trip out of Gansbaai and set out to compare the two Great White hotspots in South Africa myself.

Every journey has a jumping-off point and for mine the day began early in scenic Cape Town. Up well before sunrise, I threw on my thermals and swallowed the dramamine on my bedside table. The night before my hotel reception had received a message from the tour operator strongly encouraging that I take motion-sickness medicine before

bed and again upon waking. This reminder had me a bit concerned about the sort of sea conditions to expect. In fact, I'd be lucky to get out to sea at all, as it turned out bookings for the two prior days had been cancelled due to unusually rough conditions.

Arriving in the hotel lobby, I was reassured to see my driver waiting, but quickly learned the decision to go out wouldn't be made until our arrival in Simons Town almost an hour later. By the time we reached the marina it was still dark and the mid-September air was quite crisp. As I hung around waiting for the gates to open, drifting back into the sleep I had cut short earlier that morning, I was suddenly awakened by an interesting aroma wafting through the air . . . the familiar stench of chum. The trip was on and off we sailed into the sunrise over the calm vista of False Bay.

Shortly after heading out, the crew explained that the final decision to put the cage in the water could only be made once we arrived at our destination beside the famous Seal Island. To prepare for the hopeful outcome, they organized the twelve of us into groups of three and began to



Seal Island

All underwater images were taken with a GoPro Hero 3+ with no filter and just natural lighting





match us up with equipment. It was then asked which group would like to get into the cage first. Due to either deference, fatigue, or indifference, no one stepped forward with a strong preference, so groups were selected at random. I was placed in Group 3. In hindsight, I should have fought for the first round, as the sharks clearly started off much more curious and energetic with the action slowly dropping off with each subsequent group. The crew confirmed this trend, which is why they allowed the latter groups to stay down slightly longer than the earlier ones, but this wasn't an even trade from my experience.

Twenty minutes in, we were safely anchored aside the fragrant and bustling island of 60,000 cape

fur seals. The scent of a fresh kill was in the air and everyone eagerly began scanning the open ocean for seals heading back to terra firma. I was awestruck by the spectacular mountain backdrop with the still rising sun shimmering across the waves. For me, this legendary locale had lived up to the wildness for which it is known.

About ten minutes after our arrival, the crew shouted "two o'clock!" Turning as fast as I could, I caught a quick glimpse of a massive predator breaching water as it chased a seal in the distance. Unfortunately, the three shots I got off were out of focus, but the viewfinder was sharp and I was excited just to have seen it. Sadly, that would be my boat's

last sighting of a full breach for the day. If these breaches are what you're after, then False Bay is clearly the top destination as such activity is uniquely common to the area around Seal Island, especially between the months of June and September. However, while the likelihood of witnessing this phenomenon here is very good, it's not guaranteed, and I was lucky to see just one even if I did crave more. Regardless, the regular topside action still remained exciting and worth the trip on its own.

With sharks in the vicinity, the crew decided to lower the cage into the water. When my turn came, I carefully slipped into the narrow cage with GoPro in hand. As I entered the cold water I became sandwiched

between two men. If you have the option, it would be wise to position yourself at one end of the cage, ideally closest to the chum line. Time after time the sharks would follow the chum line back to the boat, so try to make your way to whichever side the chum guy has positioned himself.

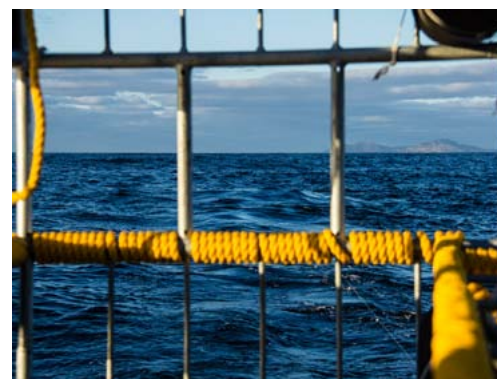
Once inside the cage, I focused on finding the best position to steady myself. Without gloves, it was difficult to get a firm grip on the smooth metal railing and the snorkel didn't quite cut it. After some time I managed to secure my feet under the bottom bar and switched from snorkel to breath holds. Trying to steady my GoPro was also a challenge as I was rocked back and forth inside the cage by a churning current. Generally,

I'd have it mounted to the top of my DSLR housing providing much more stability. However, I had decided to leave my preferred set-up at home due to strict weight restrictions I'd face later in my itinerary with light aircraft in Botswana. This turned out to be the right decision as the space and conditions would not have accommodated a large dome port. Regardless, I was thrilled and humbled by several close encounters over the course of 35 minutes.

To end the adventure we took a spin around Seal Island, which was a worthwhile outing on its own. The aggregate of sights, sounds, and horrific stench rivaled the most memorable parts of the trip. It was great to see that the seals frolicking in the shallow pools were as curious about us as we were of them. Heading back to Simons Town I was saddened at the thought of leaving this magnificent place.

Fortunately, just three days later, I would be able to satiate these passions again.

After scrambling to find a last minute opening on a reputable boat I was on my way to the fisherman's village of Gansbaai. After a 9am pickup in Cape Town and a much longer drive in store, I sat back and marveled at the coastal road winding its way through the mountains. Due to protests blocking traffic on the



usual route our detour added a half hour to the two-hour journey. About a half hour before Gansbaai, I passed the town of Hermanus on the opposite side of Walker Bay, which is very well known for its Southern Right whales. If you're planning a cage diving trip in Gansbaai and want to avoid the long drive from Cape Town, staying in Hermanus a night or two is definitely a good option to break up the trip. Together, their collective coastline offers one of the only areas in the world where these whales can be viewed consistently just 5 meters from shore. About a hundred whales make

this bay their vacation home between June and December, thanks in part to the warmer water temperature for the calves.

After arriving in Gansbaai, we were served a tasty lunch accompanied by a shark conservation

video. While eating, I couldn't help but notice the stark contrast in numbers vs. Simons Town. This group was roughly triple in size, which contributed to the more tourist-y feel of the experience. To be sure, the well-rated operator was



professional and certainly knew their stuff. The food was a nice touch as well. However, the intimacy and more authentic expedition feel were diminished.

After lunch we were given a life vest and poncho and asked to make our way to the marina. All bundled up, the midday sun was quite warm as I boarded the huge vessel. Approaching our destination, the crew pointed out Shark Alley between

Dyer Island and Geyser Rock from a distance. I was disappointed to learn we wouldn't be diving there as visions of the climax to the Halle Berry direct-to-DVD flick, *Dark Tide*, flashed through my mind.

Upon arrival, we found a massive cage floating alone in the open ocean. The crew scrambled to get it attached to the boat while everyone else sorted through the cold, wet neoprene gear. With the False Bay experience fresh in

my mind, I was anxious to volunteer as soon as the crew solicited divers. I made it a point to try to be the first in the cage this time (closest to the chum line) and as no one else was lining up my chances were looking good. However, just as I was about to hop in, a couple seemed to come from nowhere to push their way past me. I guess they also got the memo.

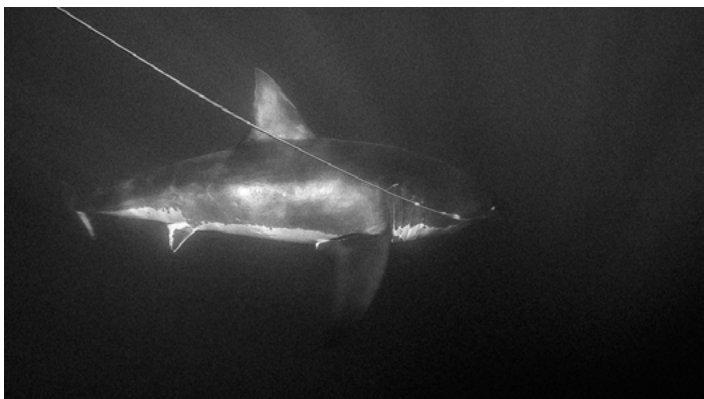
With two to my left and nine to my right, this wasn't going to

be fun. Almost immediately the volatile surges began. There were moments half of my body was out of the water and others when I had five feet of water above my head and was struggling to come up for air. Swallowing large gulps of chum-filled, seawater did not enhance my experience. The nine people to my right tumbled through me like bowling pins as I struggled to understand why the crew would pack so many people into a cage in rough conditions.

Tiring, I tried desperately to hold on for the ride and see the main attraction. This became nearly impossible as the visibility fell off tremendously. The cage seemed to have a life of its own and its eerie metal sounds were starting to creep me out (*Dark Tide* again played in my mind). I had just about reached my limits when out of nowhere an enormous Great White body slammed the metal bars in front of me. The viz was that bad.

This time around I far more enjoyed photographing the sharks topside as the midday sun made them much more visible from above. They also appeared noticeably bigger than their cousins over in False Bay but not quite as significantly as I had been foretold. I was offered another chance in the cage with the last group. I graciously declined. This was not

a difficult decision. Of course, I cannot hold the conditions against the tour operator or the location itself. It very well could have been the same way in False Bay. However, had this been my only cage dive experience (as it was for most on board), I would have been sorely disappointed.



After a hot shower (another nice amenity not offered in False Bay), I browsed the gift shop and picked up a shark tooth as a memento. On the drive back to Cape Town, I contemplated what advice to give to my friend. I was glad to have been afforded the landscape and adventure of both, yet my preference was clear. While the trip from Gansbaai offered a warm welcome and clean send-off, False Bay won on both intimacy and undersea experience. Time of day may have enhanced the topside lighting for me in Gansbaai, but the early morning breaching activity is a real allure for False Bay at Seal Island giving it an edge both above and below sea level. The massive colony of fur seals also enhanced my vote for False Bay, so perhaps a closer encounter with Dyer Island and Geyser Rock might have helped balance the scale. In the end, it

largely came down to the benefits of eco-tourism vs mass-tourism, and my trip from Simons Town won hands down. Of course, the opportunity to see a Great White Shark in any circumstance or setting is nothing short of a privilege, so either venue ticks this “bucket list” item quite effectively.

Joanna Lentini

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Nudibranchs of the Seychelles

by Chris Mason-Parker

When considering Seychelles as a dive destination, it is the underwater seascapes and charismatic megafauna that spring to mind. Enormous granite boulders lie on the seabed as if scattered by some giant invisible hand. Stacked loosely together, they provide numerous swim-throughs and overhangs, where whitetip reef sharks and huge marble rays make their homes, and hawksbill and green turtles swim lazily by.

With so much of the ‘big stuff’ to preoccupy even the most jaded of divers, it is easy to see why the smaller inhabitants of the reef are often overlooked. However, for those willing to take the time to search, the Seychelles archipelago provides a wealth of macro subjects, not least an impressive variety of nudibranch species.

To date, the nudibranchs of Seychelles have been understudied, with little information available regarding species diversity and distribution. What is without doubt is that the seagrass beds, coral reefs and sponge encrusted granite boulders

provide the perfect habitats to support a diversity of opisthobranch species.

Although nudibranchs are found within the granitic islands year round, certain species are seasonal and diversity definitely peaks at particular times of the year. The southeast monsoon from June to October brings cold plankton rich upwellings to coastal waters. It is at this time of year that the visibility and water temperature drops and it coincides with a proliferation in nudibranch species.

During this period a localised population explosion of the Dorid nudibranch, *Gymnodoris ceylonica* takes place within the Baie Ternay Marine National Park. *G.Ceylonica* is virtually absent for the rest of the year, both within Baie Ternay and elsewhere within the inner islands. However, as sea temperatures decrease in June and July, large numbers of the species appear within the seagrass beds of the bay. Clusters of nudibranchs group together among the blades of seagrass, with their bright orange egg strings. Both



Localised population explosions of Gymnodoris ceylonica occur at the same time each year. Canon 7D, Canon EF 100mm macro USM, Ikelite Housing and single Ikelite DS160 strobe. ISO 320, f/22, 1/250

Goniobranchu gleniei is frequently found on granitic sites. Canon S90, internal flash. ISO 200, f/2.8, 1/500

mating and feeding behaviour can be easily observed, with the seahare, *S.longicauda*, the preferred food choice.

The main island of Mahé has numerous productive dive sites for nudibranch hunting. The Twin Barges





Close up of the perfoliate rhinophres of Phyllidia ocellata. Canon 7D, Canon EF100mm macro USM, Ikelite housing and single Ikelite DS160 strobe. ISO 200, f/8, 1/200



Goniobranchus conchylitatus is often observed crawling along the substrate. Canon 7D, Canon EF100mm macro USM, Ikelite housing and single Ikelite DS160 strobe. ISO 125, f/10, 1/250



The psychedelic colours of Hypselodoris pulchella at Twin Barges. Canon 7D, Canon EF100mm macro USM, Ikelite housing and single Ikelite DS160 strobe. ISO 160, f/14, 1/250

wreck is a pair of old barges deliberately sunk in 1989 to create a new dive site near the Corsaire Reef. Today the barges are encrusted in corals and sponges and are a great place to find nudibranch species. A variety of nudibranchs are often encountered on each dive, often crawling across the vessels surfaces or on the adjacent reef.

To the north of Beau Vallon bay, the tiny islet of Lilot is an excellent site for uncovering opisthobranchs. The reef is famous locally for its soft corals and throws up a variety of nudibranch species. Halgerda wasinensis and Nembrotha lineolata are particularly common here, the latter appears to be extremely localised and up to now, does not appear to have been observed outside of this dive site.

Another species of Opisthobranch prone to population explosions is Cyerce nigricans. At certain times of the year these sapsuckers are found

The cryptic colouration of Phyllidiopsis cardinalis makes it difficult to distinguish when on the reef. Canon 7D, Canon EF100mm macro USM, Ikelite housing and single Ikelite DS160 strobe. ISO 200, f/16, 1/250





The sapsucker Cyerce nigricans is capable of ejecting its cerata when threatened. Canon S90, internal flash. ISO 160, f/2.8, 1/500

Night dives provide the opportunity to find species such as Platydoris formosa. Canon S90, internal flash. ISO 80, f/9, 1/60

in large numbers in the waters around Curieuse Island, where in less than one metre of water they can be observed feeding on the algae Chlorodesmus sp.

Granitic sites have a good diversity of nudibranch species too, with Goniobranchus conchyliaus, Goniobranchus gleniei and Goniobranchus albopunctatus all regularly encountered alongside multifarious species of Phyllidia sp.

Night dives in Seychelles provide fantastic opportunities to photograph nudibranchs. Spanish dancers are particularly common with bright red,



orange and mottled specimens observed crawling across the reef. Other large species such as Platydoris formosa and Dendrodoris carbunculosa have also been encountered.

While Seychelles may not have the abundance of nudibranch species that turn up in certain locations in southeast Asia, with a little local knowledge there should be plenty to keep most enthusiasts in the water. With over eighty species

already identified and no doubt numerous more waiting to be discovered the islands are only just beginning to give up their secrets.

Chris Mason-Parker
www.archipelagoimages.net

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South West Ramblings 10

by Mark Webster

The UK summer season is always unpredictable at best, although the months of May, June and July had produced some consistently warm and calm conditions to cheer us up after a particularly stormy winter. But it could not last of course and the winds gradually began to increase in early August before the tail end of hurricane Bertha brought gales and heavy rain to most of the UK. In the south west we also get a second plankton bloom in August and this arrived at the same time to further reduce the visibility when combined with the disturbance of fine silt by the rough weather, which has been a left over from the massive seas of the winter. So when the weather and visibility gods are aligned against the intrepid underwater photographer we have to make the best of the conditions when the opportunity arises to get under the water.

The colour of temperate waters is generally toward the green/grey end of the spectrum, although before and between plankton blooms in high summer there are some sunny days when the water does display a Mediterranean or tropical blue. However, the latest plankton bloom

had induced a very deep green, but all is not lost as this can provide a very striking background to some of our more colourful subjects. So even in difficult conditions we can still produce some successful images with a little planning and good knowledge of your local dive sites. Perhaps the first thing to do is to create a list of subjects both macro and wide angle that feature colours that will contrast well with a deep green background and then match lighting techniques to reduce the inevitable backscatter.

One of our smallest and most colourful subjects must be jewel anemones. These colonial anemones thrive on high energy sites where they are swept by strong currents bearing the nutrients that sustain them. Often these anemones are on fairly flat or

Even when the plankton is thick and the water is green we can still produce some successful CFWA images with a fish eye lens. Be as close to the subject as you are able and then adjust the flash position and background exposure. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom. Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f13 1/60.





If the visibility is really poor then full macro with a 105mm lens is the only way to go and you will still produce some very pleasing images of these pretty anemones. . Nikon D300, Subal ND20, 105mm micro, Inon Z240 flash gun with fibre optic snoot, ISO 200 f11 1/60.

overhanging reef walls or rocks and you may need to search hard for a single anemone or group that is positioned against open water to create a green background. This can be further complicated by the desire to introduce a little brightness or even a hint of sunburst by looking for a subject in the correct position to allow an upward view towards the surface. Patience will often turn up something, but often the best looking anemones are in the hardest to access positions or require a downward view reducing the natural light intensity behind the subject. When this occurs you can experiment with faster ISO and slower shutter speeds and then perhaps boost the brightness of the background in post processing if needed.

Having found your ideal group of jewel anemones in the perfect position you can begin



Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 400 f29 1/200.

to work on the image itself in macro, wide angle macro, close focus wide angle or a wide angle seascape. In poor visibility conditions we can of course reduce the effects of potential backscatter by working as close as possible to the subject which can be achieved with either lens choice, although the lighting in wide angle will be a little more challenging. Using edge lighting in macro will reduce the effects of backscatter in front of the subject, but can still illuminate suspended particles in the water column behind the subject. These particles are more obvious against a darker background, so increasing the brightness of the open water will mitigate the effects but when conditions are really poor then you may have to wait until post processing to clean up the image.

Wide angle is of course a different story



Jewel anemones are often found in the company of other species like these daisy anemones which provide a striking contrast with the saturated colours of the jewel anemones and green water background. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom. Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 200 f13 1/60.

and you will need to experiment with the strobe placement to find the best position for the prevailing conditions. If you are using a fish eye then ensure that the flash guns are well behind the dome port, possibly behind the housing, to ensure that you do not pick up flare and scatter at the edge of the frame. Then it is a matter of adjusting the strobe angle relative to the subject for the best edge illumination and also the distance of the strobes from the housing, which generally increases as your distance from the subject increases.

Normally you will be working with wider apertures than in your macro images so it is a little easier to balance the exposure of the open water background with the flash exposure and brighten it as required. Don't forget to boost your ISO if you begin to struggle with slow shutter speeds as

shooting with say ISO 400 or even faster makes little difference to image quality with the current generation of DSLR's.

If you are struggling to exclude backscatter, especially with a wide angle lens, another lighting option is a snoot which can produce some interesting images in which you can adjust the "mood" by reducing or increasing the natural light exposure. You don't need to invest in an expensive adjustable commercially made snoot to try this, simply look in your recycling bag for suitable plastic bottles to cut up or use a plastic flower pot or investigate plumbing fittings. A few minutes with a Stanley knife and a roll of black duct tape or carpet tape can produce a number of size options to experiment with.

Personally I love this sort of DIY tinkering, particularly if the end result is a satisfying image, but if you don't and you have deep enough pockets then have a look at the bespoke options online. If you are old enough to have watched Blue Peter in your formative years then

Another option for lighting wide angle images when visibility and light levels are low is to use a snoot. You don't need to splash out on expensive snoots from the flash gun manufacturer, in this case the snoot is a 100mm/4" flower pot! Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom. Inon Z240 flash gun with snoot, ISO 100 f10 1/160.

playing with bits of plastic tube and sticky tape will be second nature to you!

Snooting is also very effective in low visibility macro images as well, although the size of your snoots will be much reduced to reduce the area of illumination. Fibre optic snoots are good in this application although they can be a real pain to aim at the subject. I use a small "Mitylite" torch attached to the end of the snoot, but some fibre optic snoot systems will also boost and transmit the light from the flash gun focus light using a lens which may be easier to use. When you have found a suitable subject to snoot light



in macro it is worth playing with both dark and balanced light backgrounds. The dark backgrounds can be used as they are and also saved on the card for potential double exposure opportunities on subsequent dives. Ensure that you have left enough space around the subject for the second exposure if you are planning to use this technique.

One of the classic double exposure background is a sunburst on the surface which is always very striking with a macro image. The sun may be shining when the visibility is low but is much more difficult to expose, although



You can try and be subtle with a double exposure and just introduce a hint of surface light behind a subject that would be difficult to compose with CWFA. This Tritonia nilsodhneri nudibranch on a sea fan is an example, with the addition of an under exposed surface to add a little light and impression of depth. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro and 10-17mm FE zoom, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 100 f25 1/250 macro, ISO 100 f16 1/200 wide angle.

you can try working in very shallow water to capture the effect. But perhaps in these conditions we should try to be a little more subtle and just use the sun to provide a lighter open water background or hint of sun to combine with a macro subject that is normally difficult to shoot with balanced light.

One example I tried

is the Tritonia nilsodhneri nudibranch only found on gorgonian sea fans which are normally found in deeper water in positions which are not ideal for a balanced light macro image. The same thought can be applied to other macro subjects to keep you occupied in low visibility dives. These images won't work every time of



There are small and large caves and swim throughs and one tunnel through the reef at St. Anthony which are best explored at high water. When the tide is running it can be a struggle to swim up the gullies here – note the angle of the kelp behind the diver. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom. Inon Z240 flash gun with snoot, ISO 200 f11 1/60.

course, but it is all part of the learning process and refinement of techniques to add to your arsenal to be applied as conditions dictate.

With the beginning of September the water clarity began to improve again but we still had persistent east winds, when I was at home and able to dive, which limits the available dive sites. However, one of our favourites close to St. Anthony's light house is mostly sheltered from the easterly winds and provides some excellent diving and occasionally a few surprises.

There is a small cave system here which can only be explored easily on a high water spring tide in calm conditions, so we started our dive here after a bit of a struggle against the flooding tide to enter the gully with the caves. The walls of the gully

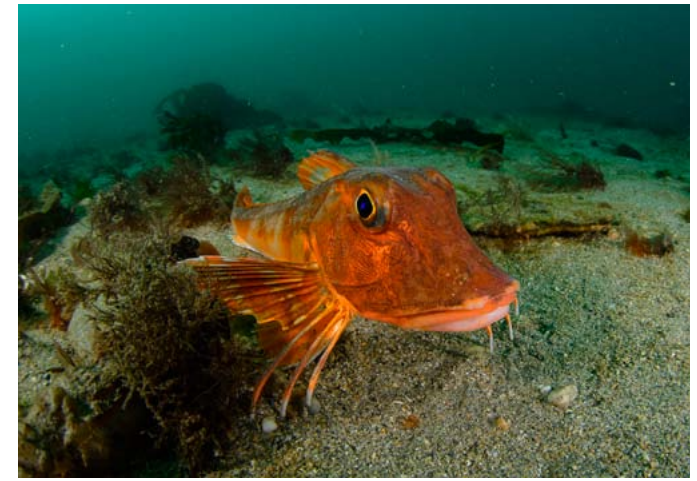


This enterprising spider crab is nobody's fool! This crab pot had several crabs in residence, but this wise old spider crab just climbed on top to reach in and pick out the bait through the netting. He just gave me the beady eye as I got closer....stay away this is mine! Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom. Inon Z240 flash gun with snoot, ISO 200 f13 1/60.

are covered with jewel anemones and invertebrates which gradually reduce as you enter the shelter of the caves. Having a diver pose at the mouth of the cave will produce some classic compositions and keep the camera busy for a while.

The light house at St. Anthony marks the north east side of the entrance to Carrick Roads and the Fal river so there is a real mixture of habitats here ranging from reef to sand and gravel, more silty conditions and even eel grass beds. From the caves and gullies we moved back onto the sand and gravel and I began to stalk some of the many juvenile cuttlefish which are common here in late summer.

Cuttlefish can be fickle creatures...one day they will come to you and pose almost touching the dome, whilst the next on the same location they will



I was slowly getting closer to a cuttlefish after a long pursuit when on the edge of my viewfinder I saw something orange moving. Looking over the top of the housing revealed this red gurnard only a few inches away. Sometimes we are so focused on the subject in mind that we can miss a better opportunity as this proved to be. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 10-17mm FE zoom. Inon Z240 flash gun with snoot, ISO 200 f11 1/125.

scoot off as soon as you turn towards them. I was having one of those days when each subject would decide to scoot just as I got ready for a shot.

I then turned my attention to a wise spider crab that was sitting on top of a crab pot picking out the bait by reaching in through the netting and inevitably the cuttlefish began to gather to see what was happening. But as soon as I turned the camera towards them they began to get stage fright once more. I decided to follow one of the larger ones slowly and finally began to get close enough for a shot, but as I began to frame the critter through the viewfinder I noticed something orange moving in the corner of the frame.



There are plenty of classic macro subjects still to be found on low visibility dives. If you fix a maximum subject distance in your mind and get the strobe positioning set for this first you can then begin the hunt for subjects that will fit the picture area. This juvenile Tompot blenny was only 50cm/2" or so in length so was a perfect size for the 105mm lens. Nikon D7100, Subal ND7100, 105mm micro, Inon Z240 flash guns, ISO 100 f25 1/250.

When you are using a fish eye anything that appears in the corner of the frame is generally pretty close and as I looked up over the housing I found that I had settled right beside a reasonably large red gurnard. These fish are normally very skittish unless you find them at night when the light will mesmerize them, but this one was gently picking its way over the seabed towards me with what seemed to be an inquisitive look (can fish have those?). This turned out to be the most friendly red gurnard that I have ever encountered and

it just kept circling me and coming ever closer until it actually touched the dome with its "snout" possibly investigating the reflection.

So I ended up spending 30 minutes or so with this fish while the nervous cuttlefish gathered around to watch and looked a bit miffed that they were not receiving the expected attention. Well you cannot hope to please all the marine life on a dive, but the photographer was certainly happy when I surfaced after more than an hour in the water.

So even if a good summer does not always provide the best diving and photography conditions, that does not mean we should despair or just give up.

Low visibility and low light conditions should be seen as a challenge that will inevitably improve your photography for those dives when you can see several metres or more and the sun on the surface. An added benefit is that low visibility will force you to move much more slowly and focus on smaller areas on the reef which often reveals subjects or activities

that you would normally miss.

The visibility will always improve eventually and we should then be ready to make the most of the conditions and if you are lucky enjoy some interaction with marine life which makes the wait for good conditions even more worthwhile. Autumn is approaching now with stormy seas no doubt but there will be opportunities to see what the marine world has on offer as the season changes.

Mark Webster
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Guidelines for contributors

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parting Shot

A new lens for £2.99?

The Olympus 9-18mm rectilinear wide-angle lens is a superb choice for topside landscapes covering the 35mm equivalent of 18-36mm, but in the less than crystal clear waters of the UK I have struggled to find subject with this it truly does shine.

With the exception of Basking Sharks (which it is pretty useful for to be honest) the characteristics of the lens make it hard to hit a 'sweet spot' in terms of subject size, focusing distance and edge crispness. Even shooting behind a dome port it is easy to get soft edges, with the not-very-close closest shooting distance forcing you to use close your aperture to avoid the issue. In low-light conditions this means you have to ramp up the iso to a higher than ideal value to let ambient light in. Similarly as many of the UK's marine fish aren't good at getting close, the zoom range available isn't really that great for fish portraiture either. You can see why I've been struggling.

And so it was while reading through the back catalogue of UWP mags on my hard-disk that I came across my old review of the Olympus 12-50mm lens. In it the editor of this esteemed publication suggested to me that I try a +2 dioptre on the lens inside the dome port and that got me thinking about how effective that might be with the 9-18mm too. So a couple of days later I got the chance to give it a go on a night dive from a local beach.

Well, what a surprisingly big difference that small, £2.99 dioptre has made to the usefulness of the lens? Suddenly now it can focus very close to the dome port even at the 18mm end which brings into play a whole host of other imaging possibilities.



And was my mind playing tricks on me or was it quicker to focus too? Yes with closer focusing comes more work to attain sharp edges, but coupling my 'new' lens with a snoot meant I could now compose things like the attached image. No cropping, with a subject about 40mm tall - previously out of scope for this lens. £2.99 well spent I think.

Hermit crab. Olympus E-PL5, Olympus 9-18mm at 18mm, 1/250th, f/5.6, iso400, 1xYS-D1 + snoot

Dan Bolt

www.underwaterpics.co.uk

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