



I had been in contact with Jeff Parker, Marketing director at A.P.Valves, and he'd seen my underwater images on my web site. We finally met at LIDS 2000 and over a coffee looked through my portfolio, talked about photography and how we could work together on an advertising campaign.

My underwater work has always been personal work. Often it is shot when I'm taking a summer break from the studio and I consider it very important to be shooting these images for myself, with no brief and no art director.

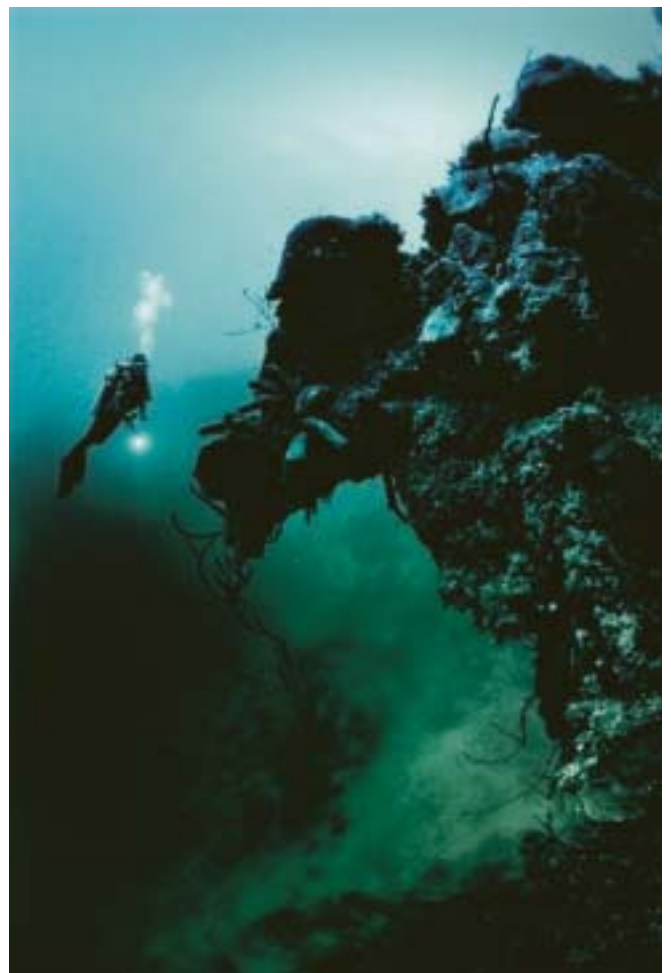
The outcome of my meeting with Jeff was that I'd go away and shoot a series of strong images where the diver in each shot was wearing a Buddy BCD. The shots would be used for A4 ads and A3 posters. Okay, so there was a brief of sorts but a very loose one. I was more than happy with this arrangement and so away I went for two weeks to Little Cayman, with my buddy and model Kim Linford. The Caymans would give us good visibility, reasonably predictable light, interesting topography plus the chance to shoot the Russian Frigate at Cayman Brac.

While shooting I was basically conscious of a number of things:

Firstly light. We always tried to shoot early or late in the day so as to take advantage of the moulding and rays that the light produces at those times of day.

Secondly space. I love space, editors love space, designers love space and generally so do art directors. With that in mind when shooting you will increase your chances of selling stock images when you leave room

Julians' magic





for logos, text and headlines etc. Because I was shooting black and white it was important to have strong composition. Light and space will always help you enormously here. Look for strong shapes and think about the light.

Lastly the star of the show, the model. It was vital that she appeared comfortably within the composition. Kim and I had devised various hand signals so I can direct her into the spaces of an image and carefully position her in the water. Luckily for me Kim is extremely comfortable underwater and generally positions herself with little or no direction while also paying attention to her gauges, torch beam direction and fin alignment etc. I also like to wait for her to exhale as I think air as bubbles look great. With all of this to consider I'm sure it is harder work for her than it is for me most of the time! When I give the out of film sign (which is dangerously close to the out of air sign!) she's off to do what she enjoys most, slowly finning along the reef looking at "cheeky" fish.

When all is said and done I tried to make the images look as natural and as casually observed as possible.

I used a Nikon F90x with Nikkor 16mm f2.8 AF-D fisheye housed in a Subal housing. Much to the irritation of the guys at Optics I still don't use any flash (one day Steve!) and as a result have a very simple and easy to handle underwater rig. The Subal is a joy to use and the F90x has more than enough features to keep me happy. The 16mm is an amazing lens. Pin sharp and incredible value for money. Film stock is Fuji Neopan 400 rated at 800asa.

Negatives were scanned using an Imacon Flextight Precision II and worked up on system using Live Picture 2.6.2. Final rgb.tif's were sharpened and converted to 70mb cmyk.tif files using a ColorSync workflow and PhotoShop 6.

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