

Editorial

Pool photography

Anyone who poo poos swimming pool photography as plain and boring should take look at the images on pages 26 and 27 from the CMAS International Indoor Meeting of Underwater Photography 2019.

They are just the highlights and show the creative achievements possible from such venues. True, these pools are photographically sterile but that's the point. It's a plain body of usually warm, clear water into which you can pour your imagination.

This style of underwater photography has never really taken off in the UK but in continental Europe it's very popular indeed and taken very seriously.

There is a great deal of planning, visualization and teamwork which goes into these events and CMAS and their co-collaborators are to be congratulated for their support in organising such events.

The images they produce are very dramatic, artistic and inspiring.

Collaborating

Louis Otis' and Fernando Lessa's excellent illustrated story about the revival of salmon in Vancouver is very positive but it is also good example of what can happen when two talents collaborate.

Fernando has been keeping me updated with his images recording the salmon revival in Vancouver but his pdf presentations were always understandably thin on words because English is not his natural written language. As a result I was rarely able to include his images but now he has collaborated with Louis we have the classic situation of one plus one equals three.

Louis is an emerging talent who actually pitched me the idea for the article. It was well presented, reasoned and not overblown and he could see that any exposure to his writing skills must be worth it on his CV.

The result is plain to see and the moral of the story must be that you may be a great underwater photographer but if you want to get your images published as illustrated articles you will probably stand an increased chance of success if you collaborate with a writer and then everyone's a winner.

Photo trips

I've said it before and I'm going to say it again because it's been a while.

Underwater photography tends to be a solitary pastime. In the main it's not a team game and usually has to be self learnt by trial and error.

The biggest leap forward I made in my formative years was putting an advert in the then BSoUP newsletter saying that I was planning on spending a few days prior to the 'On the Day' or 'Splash In' in the UK, practicing. The idea was literally that. Practicing; not competing. Diving together, trying out images (in those days it was an achievement to get the exposure right) and bouncing ideas off each other.

The result was a gathering of about half a dozen souls and we had a blast. The weather was good and we were all mad keen to progress without trampling over each other. We all had differing skills and histories but together we progressed and it became an annual get together which did lead to some of us doing well in the 'Splash In' some years.

Now I'm not saying that that is what you should do because that was then and this is now and there are a whole host of 'photo trips' available

commercially which, in a sort of way, replicate my start; they provide opportunities to meet and dive with like minded individuals and see where it leads.

Now I'm not talking about the high profile trips led by leading luminaries pushing for excellence but rather those trips with a competent underwater photographer on board going to photo friendly places at the right time of year. They are there to help you with or without lecturing, to be consulted if needed but above all to provide a convivial, hopefully non competitive trip to indulge and improve your skills with like minded individuals.

If you are on the learning curve there can be no better way to progress but don't go to show off; go to look, listen and learn and if you, in turn, can impart some of your knowledge and experience to help someone else then you will have contributed as well.

Many underwater photographers are repeat customers because these trips provide exactly what they need; a couple of trips a year slotted in between a busy business and family life where they can have a bit of 'me time' and indulge in their passion or hobby whichever level suits.

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