

# My compact way

by Tony Reed

When I was asked by Peter Rowlands of Underwater Photography Magazine to select some of my favourite photos taken with a compact camera to showcase their capabilities, I jumped at the chance to show off and talk about compacts as I feel they get a little bit of bad press in the underwater photography world. With technology ever evolving and electronics becoming smaller isn't the future compact?

With that said they are still very limited in what they can do at the moment so for a lot of the time while taking photos you will need quite a bit of patience to capture sharp images!.

I do really enjoy using compacts for many reasons! The main reason being you can still get great acceptable photos with very limited technology. The fun part of that is the challenge in creating images you like the look of yourself. Another reason is the size of the cameras and housings as I do enjoy getting the camera into small crevices where the big housings just can't go! The results are often capturing some of the hard to find critters which don't like having their photos taken.

With the reduced size comes the reduced cost of transporting equipment abroad which is how it all started for me! With a big trip planned with lots of travel, I could not take the extra baggage for both cost reasons nor could I carry it all. On my return I was actually quite happy with my own photos for a change and whilst thinking about which way I was going to go in the near future I kept using the compact camera and trying to push



*Thurlestone Rockpool star trail double exposure using the live composite mode - Olympus TG4 with Weefine WFL-02 Lens and Light and Motion video light*

its limits! The longer I used it the happier I became not only with photography but diving itself! I could just clip the camera on and enjoy an hours dive without worrying about photos! It made it not only enjoyable but cheap and easy too and that was that! The decision was made to stick with the compact camera. By being happy underwater I could think more of what kind of images I'd like to try and take,

compositions and lighting just to challenge myself to see what I could achieve!

A more recent compact camera I have purchased mentioned in camera double exposures in the read out but I have not had a look at that yet! For double exposures I use the technology in editing software rather than in camera for the simple reason it hasn't been available in the older compact



*Jelly and dive screams Olympus TG4 -Weefine WFL-02 Light and Motion Gobe wide light - Exposure Time: 1/640, FNumber: 2.8, Focal Length: 4.5*

cameras and its also relatively easy to do using the software in app rather than the software in camera! I know it's a skill to do in camera double exposures but it's still the same process of mixing two photos with technology so maybe that's just me wanting the easy route rather than the harder one. It is something il be trying with the newer compact tho to see how much more difficult it is and to challenge myself once more.

99 Percent of the time my set up is really simple and does often surprise so many people! When they

ask what I use and I tell them just camera and housing usually clipped on until I need it and a small light and motion gobe 850 wide video light I won 10 years ago in a videography competition I get the "oh wow really is that all" response. It genuinely surprises people. The video light I won is actually brilliant for really close up critters as the light setting on minimum drops down to 80 lumens which really helps bring out internal colours of anemones and sea slugs. It's also tiny so it fits in my pocket and when needed i use the bar



*Disco Dorris on star ascidians from porthkerris- Olympus TG4 -Weefine WFL-02 Light and Motion Gobe wide light -Exposure Time: 1/200, FNumber: 3.5, Focal Length: 10.29*

*My rig. OM TG4, Weefine WFL-02 lens and hand held video light. Simples.*

mount option and clip it to my finger on my left hand while using the camera in my right. I also carry in my other pocket my wide lens (Weefine WFL-02) which I have found to be brilliant also for showcasing so many bigger subjects and getting wide structures in for the





*Sunset split - taken during this year's annual Torbay BSAC Splash In competition at Fishcombe, using Olympus TG4 - Weefine WFL-02 Light and Motion Gobe wide light. Exposure Time: 1/10, FNumber: 2, Focal Length: 4.5*

double exposures. That's my usual go to set up.

It wasn't until I started entering competitions that I found a new love for photography, a cause, setting challenges and pre thinking of images id like to try and capture! With entering came a lot of fun

but also the feedback from the judges which made me up my game and take everything onboard from all the experienced judges and competitors alike! I learnt so much from everyone involved and started to see improvements and some success with each



*Reflections taken at Hop Cove South Devon, Olympus TG4 - Light and Motion video light, Exposure Time: 1/160, FNumber: 3.2, Focal Length: 5.5*

year I entered up until the point of winning on a few occasions. That then lead me to different outlets with companies etc and im currently influencing for a relatively new brand to underwater photography, Marelux who I am happily taking photos for at the



*Tompot - Olympus TG4 - microscope mode with Light and Motion Gobe wide light Exposure Time: 1/100, FNumber: 4.7, Focal Length: 16.48*

present.

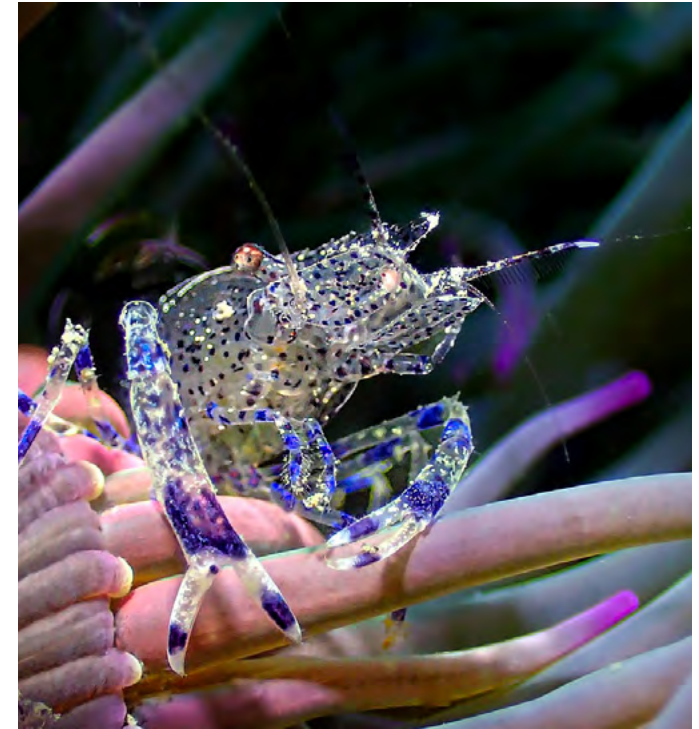
With some time, effort and patience you can achieve goals and go places with using compacts!

I always look forward to entering the next competition and if you have not entered before it's worth giving it a go! Even if it's just for the fun day it usually is! Not only do you get great constructive



*Life in those legs- from Swanage Pier looking up at the structure while capturing the life on the leg. Olympus TG4 -Weefine WFL-02 Light and Motion Gobe wide light- FNumber: 2.8, Focal Length: 4.5*

advice from the judges you also get a sense of achievement even if you don't quite succeed on occasions. I always thought when I started with my little compact camera that it was just not good enough to enter competitions and I think a lot of people feel the same way. Every one wants to improve don't they? Take the leap and give it



*Anemone shrimp from Babbacombe - Olympus TG4 in microscope mode with Light and Motion video light- Exposure Time: 1/200, FNumber: 3.5, Focal Length: 10.00*

a try! You just might surprise yourself and it could take you on a different dive journey completely!

I would like to think that I personally represent compact cameras here in the UK in a positive way and I hope I have shown that with a bit of work and effort any one can achieve acceptable images using compact cameras and the limited technology they offer. For many more images taken with my set up please feel free to take a look at my instagram account.

**Tony Reed**

[www.instagram.com/tony\\_reed\\_underwater/](https://www.instagram.com/tony_reed_underwater/)

[www.uwpmag.com](http://www.uwpmag.com)