



Olympus OM1 II, Nauticam housing, 2 x Scubalamp D-PRO strobes, 1/250 sec f8 ISO320 Yuneec 14-42 mm @14 mm Weefine WFL-02

responds to the rotation of the zoom ring, and the viewfinder image is replaced by a black screen.

The nearest camera repair shop is in mainland Mexico, in a city that you have to fly to by airplane. I contacted the repair shop online and they told me that this is a typical problem for this lens. You have to change the stub, a group of electrical contacts inside the lens that connects the motor and the lens processor. The part is inexpensive, but shipping the

lens across Mexico, and the labor to repair it all makes the cost of this service almost equal to the cost of the lens. It was urgent to find another solution. I started looking on eBay for used lenses and unexpectedly found another solution. Panasonic also produces lenses with micro4/3 mount. In their range of optics there is a similar lens with almost identical characteristics and dimensions. I found an interesting offer on eBay, Panasonic made a limited batch of 14-42mm lenses for YUNEEC, a drone manufacturer. For some reason part of the batch of these lenses ended up being available for sale. I bought this lens for only USD 100. Brand new! My buddy, an engineer from California, made a zoom actuator for this lens on a 3D printer and sent me a package from the USA. Within a week, I was back

to underwater shooting with my favorite configuration of photographic equipment.

The bottom line is that I can't find any differences in image quality between the Olympus 14 42 mm and YUNEEC/Panasonic lenses. The quality of the images that my not-so-new Olympus M1 Mark II camera produces still pleases me. And the main thing is that my clients like these pictures and buy them. So far I am not

going to switch to other photographic equipment, and I think that for my tasks, for commercial underwater photography, the quality of the micro4/3 sensor is quite enough.

The only criterion I would like to improve my kit is to shoot better quality video. That's why now I'm closely following the progress of micro4/3 cameras for video shooting underwater. And so far I don't know who will win - OM or Panasonic/ But that's a topic for another research and article.

I hope you found my experience interesting and learned something useful. Want to ask me questions,

message me on my website, Facebook or Instagram account.

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Smart choice

by Sabine Roesel & Mark Fothergill

My dive buddy, Mark and I met last year while volunteering at the Gozo turtle nest, which is another story altogether.

I had recently moved to Gozo from Germany with the intention to get back into diving after a break of 28 years. Mark was diving solo and looking for a regular buddy so it seemed the logical thing to team up. I quickly discovered, it's like riding a bike, once learned the 'muscle memory' kicks in and you quickly progress to where you left off.

We soon discovered that both of us love to dive at a glacially slow pace; searching for hidden treasures of nature and enjoying the different environment. Mark likes taking photos, but as a part of the dive, not as the purpose of the dive. He has delved into the higher end of underwater photography in the past with digital full frame SLR, but the attraction of enjoying a dive whilst manhandling equipment the size of an ROV wore off over time.

Nowadays, given the trade off in picture quality the objective is to use a set up which can be slipped into a thigh, or BCD pocket, but with expectancy of producing something better than your average holiday snap! Also, the convenience of this evokes the old David Bailey principle of always carrying a camera so an opportunity is never missed.

Both of us gravitated towards the Divevolk housing as we both have a collection of redundant (sacrificial?!) iPhones. The attraction of the deeper depth rating and pressure balanced housing and the ability to use the touch screen being most attractive.



Octopus Suzie's Pool Cirkewwa. Early morning, natural light. Water depth 5m. iPhone 11 Pro Max, Focal length 4.25mm, f/1.8. Taken with ProCamera app.

The diving in the Maltese islands is varied. There are great opportunities at shallow depths using available light and the effects that produces. Those who are familiar with the diving here know it can also get very deep, very quickly.

Over the past few decades the fish life has increased for a number of species (sadly not others), the underwater scenery is great given the often spectacular visibility. Of wrecks, there are plenty, both those sunk as artificial reefs and those as casualties of two World Wars.

Both of us have learned to work within the limitations of a smart phone and try to get the best





Tugboat Rozi, Cirkewwa. 30m water depth. iPhone 11 Pro Max, Focal length 4.25mm, f/1.8, 1/120 exposure. Panorama mode in iPhone Camera app. Colour image post processed in Photoshop Elements.

we can out of the simple set up.

The main issues we have found are:

- You can't use strobes, as they won't synchronize so use video lights which don't have the penetration - limited to macro, close up or night dives.
- Use red filters, or manual white balance down to 15m max, then consider monochrome at deeper depths and widen the dynamic range.
- Look for opportunities where the natural light creates interesting effects.

Sabine's bent is towards video using the native Apple app and filters. Stills are taken with the 'live fotos' option enabled at all times and sometimes as screenshots from the videos.

Sabine:

"I usually put the captures together into a clip, while also building up my very own marine life database.

The Mediterranean doesn't burst with many colorful creatures. It challenges its diving visitors more with very well camouflaged species who have extraordinary skills in hiding.

Furthermore, diving around Gozo and Malta offers underwater landscapes, seagrass meadows, multiple caves and wrecks as backdrop, which in themselves are subjects for stunning shots.

I have built up a wide collection of photos, some of which hold special memories, like my favorite one of a very curious juvenile grouper.

I spotted him under a rock in about 3m depth, just below the exit spot at Xatt L-Ahmar. With the idea of taking a quick shot before ending the dive, he decided my camera was an interesting object for further investigation. He swam right up to my lens so I just kept my shutter button pushed for taking a clip. The shot is a take out of that clip.

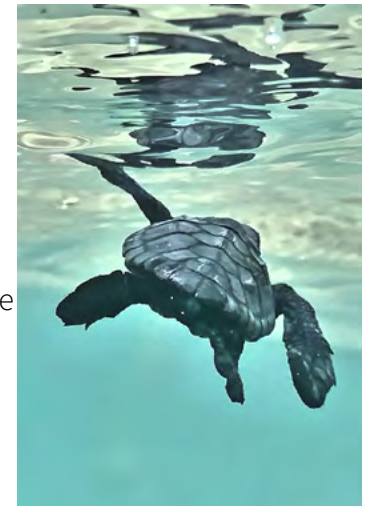
One of my favorites are octopus. On early morning dives, right after sunrise they normally are quite unfazed by the presence of divers. Watching them change color and texture always leaves me stunned and fascinated.

My most recent favourite is a picture of a Loggerhead hatchling was taken just a few days ago and is a good representation of my to diving related passion: Marine life conservation. As a volunteer for



*Juvenile Grouper at Xatt L-Ahmar
iPhone 14 Pro Max + Divevolk Seatouch 4 max
ISO 160, Ultra-Weitwinkelkamera 13mm, f2.2, 1/60s,
natural light*

*Loggerhead hatchling
at Ramla Bay, Gozo
iPhone 14 Pro Max +
Divevolk Seatouch 4
max
Video frame grab*



Nature Trust Malta, I have the opportunity to take footage when turtles get released after rehab, or when, like in this case, hatchlings get found on the bottom of the nest on inspection. Loggerhead hatchlings normally hatch during night time, so it's rare to capture them at daylight on the begin of their journey of 20 plus odd years, before the females hopefully return to nest on the beach they were born."

Mark:

“I have played around a bit with video, but stills are really what does it for me. I do use the iPhone app, but prefer to use ProCamera which allows manual white balancing and greater range of control over settings from manual to full auto, resolution, RAW/HEIC and JPEG and so forth. Post processing, I use Photoshop Elements as I can buy a single user one off licence for a reasonable price. I gave up using the full version of Photoshop as soon as Adobe went subscription only. And, I really don't require the full power of the application for my needs.

Fish portraiture and lighting effects are my primary interest.

The two aspects which I can fully exploit, even with a smartphone are using available light at very shallow depths (0-10m) and creating effects with back and white images at depth. The majority of my diving is at normal recreational depths up to 40m.”

The Maltese Islands boast a number of signature dives which lend themselves to divers of all certification levels and abilities. One of these, Cirkewwa, next to the Gozo ferry terminal offers a long reef dive and two wrecks (artificial reefs sunk intentionally) at around 35m. The site can be like Piccardilly Circus at times. Best is to arrive at first light and be out of the water before the dive schools arrive.

There is a shallow area of 5 meters water depth one of the entry/exit points which lends itself to snorkeling and shallow natural light photography. The octopus in the photo was taken in this area and happily played for 10 minutes before beating a retreat.

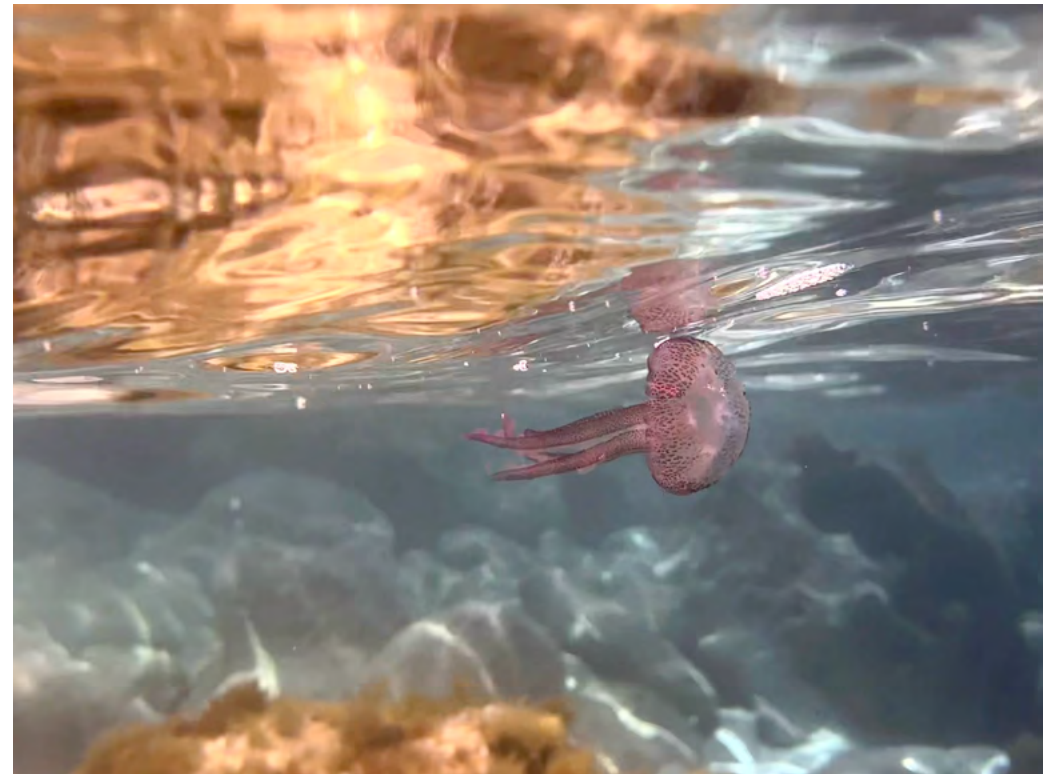
My image from Cirkewwa depicts Fried Egg Jellyfish (*Cotylorhiza tuberculata*) at Suzie's Pool. This was shot for the lighting effect alone. The water depth here is 2m, or less and in the mornings the downward reflection from the surface can create some great effects.



Fried Egg jellyfish at the entrance to Suzie's Pool, Cirkewwa. 1.5m water depth. iPhone 11 Pro Max, Focal length 4.25mm, f/1.8, 1/60, ISO 875 exposure.



MV Xlendi Wreck, located at Xatt L-Ahmar Dive Site. iPhone 14 Pro Max + Divevolk Seatouch 4 max. ISO 400, Ultra-Weitwinkelkamera 13mm, f2.2, 1/60s, natural light



Reflections ... Mauve Stinger at Dahlet Qorrot. iPhone 14 Pro Max + Divevolk Seatouch 4 max. ISO 64, Hauptkamera 24mm, f1.78, 1/729s, natural light

These jellyfish swarm the Maltese Islands for a few weeks most summers and can grow to about 40cm across. They are completely harmless. Suzie's Pool is named after the wife of Peter Lemmon who has written one of the definitive guides to Maltese diving (now on the 5th edition).

The other photograph is of the tug boat Rozi which is just off the reef at the northern tip at a maximum depth of 37m. The Rozi was sunk as an attraction for Captain Morgan Cruises who at the time ran a mini

submarine and served as focal point for the dive. Being a tug boat it was constructed of heavy gauge steel and has hardly deteriorated in the 20 odd years I have dived there. The photo was taken with the iPhone Camera App in Pano mode taking advantage of the excellent underwater visibility there.

I was looking for something atmospheric and the conversion to monochrome and stretching the dynamic range in Photoshop Elements together with the bend