

News, Travel & Events

Bunaken Oasis Dive Resort & Spa Named “World’s Leading Dive Resort” at the 2025 World Travel Awards



At a gala dinner in Bahrain on 6th December, Bunaken Oasis Dive Resort & Spa was named “World’s Leading Dive Resort” at the 2025 World Travel Awards, the travel industry’s most prestigious global honours programme. This award recognises the resort’s exceptional commitment to luxury, sustainability, and marine conservation in one of the world’s most biodiverse underwater environments.

Located within Indonesia’s renowned Bunaken National Marine Park, Bunaken Oasis has become synonymous with five-star diving experiences that balance indulgence and environmental responsibility. The resort offers guests a bespoke

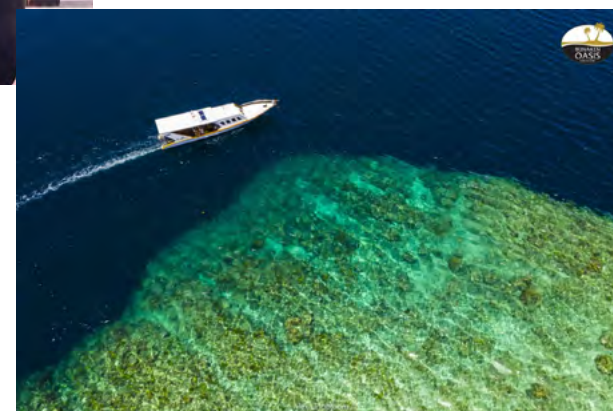
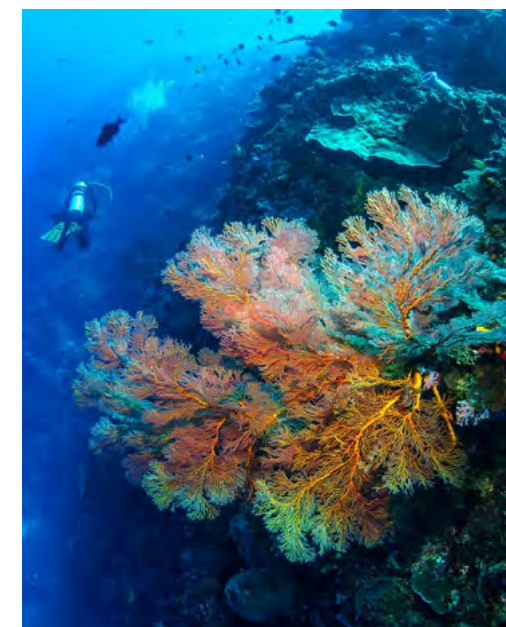
diving experience — combining state-of-the-art facilities, personalised service, and access to over 90 world-class dive sites, while non-divers, who account for about a third of guest numbers, are offered a captivating choice of land-based activities.

“We are truly honoured to be recognized as the World’s Leading Dive Resort,” said Elaine Wallace, British owner of Bunaken Oasis. “It’s a testament to our incredible team, our loyal guests, and our mission to provide luxury with a conscience — combining five-star comfort with a genuine commitment to protecting Bunaken’s extraordinary underwater world.”



Nestled on the tranquil southern shore of Bunaken Island, the boutique resort offers just 12 luxurious cottages overlooking the sea, a state-of-the-art dive centre, and a custom-built dive fleet designed to ensure the highest levels of safety, comfort, and environmental responsibility. The resort is also celebrated for its sustainability initiatives, including on-site water purification and blackwater waste management.

The World Travel Awards, established in 1993, recognise excellence across all key sectors of



the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries. Winners are chosen through votes cast by travel professionals and the public worldwide.

www.bunakenoasis.com



Immerse Yourself in the World of Underwater Imaging

NEWS

Keep up to date with everything that matters to underwater photographers, from the latest gear and gadgets to the newest developments in marine research

TECHNIQUES

Learn the fundamentals of underwater photography and progress to the latest, most innovative techniques taught by the top pros in the industry

ARTICLES

Discover the world of underwater imaging through compelling features from photographers, filmmakers, ocean scientists, industry experts, and more

TRAVEL

Read about the experiences of accomplished shooters as they visit the world's most iconic dive spots, and get inside tips on maximizing your dive vacation

EQUIPMENT

Use our comprehensive underwater photography and videography gear guide to find the best camera, lenses, housing, lighting, and accessories for you

CONTESTS

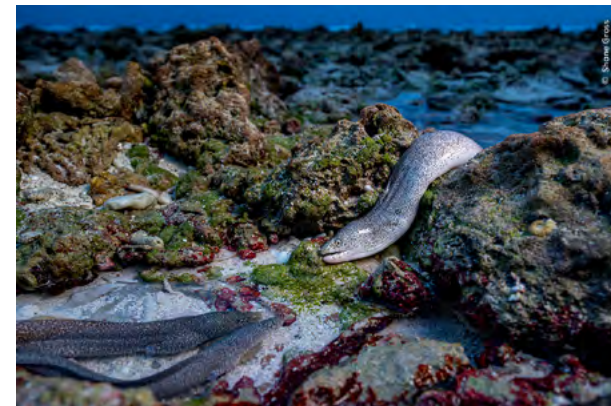
Submit your best underwater images and short films to our annual contests, including the prestigious DPG Masters Underwater Imaging Competition

Wildlife Photographer of the Year launches 62nd competition with stellar new jury panel and rule change

Wildlife Photographer of the Year has launched its 62nd competition, calling for entries from photographers of all nationalities, backgrounds and experience levels. The esteemed, international expert judging panel for this year's competition is also announced today, including two-time Wildlife Photographer of the Year Grand Title winner, Laurent Ballesta.

This year, the competition has updated its rule on baiting, owing to its enduring commitment to ethical wildlife practice above all else. From this competition onwards, any form of baiting will be prohibited, except where the photograph is the result of legitimate scientific research, which must be clearly stated in the image caption when submitted.

Previously, the competition's rules stated that the jury would strongly favour non-baited photographs, with live baiting or any means of baiting that may put an animal in danger, or adversely affect its behaviour, having been banned for many years. The change to a complete ban reflects the competition's



continued focus on championing images that celebrate the natural world with respect and integrity.

Wildlife Photographer of the Year is also committed to increasing female and non-binary representation and actively connects with female and non-binary photographers to encourage entry to its competitions. This includes an offer of a discounted entry fee to organisations that support diversity in wildlife photography.

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DIVE PHOTO GUIDE

www.divephotoguide.com · contact@divephotoguide.com

www.nhm.ac.uk/wpy/competition

www.uwpmag.com

Capturing Critters In Lembeh Workshop

Jan 8-21, 2027

Join Backscatter's own James Emery and acclaimed photo pro Marty Snyderman for the 2027 Capuring Critters in Lembeh photo workshop – the longest running underwater photography workshop in Indonesia.

James was the in-house photo pro at Lembeh resort for years and has returned numerous times to lead photography workshops.

Together with the expert dive guides and the Lembeh Resort Photo Center team, they'll provide you with unparalleled knowledge, personalized coaching, and all the tools you need to take your underwater photography or videography to the next level.

Why Join CCiL 2027?

- Daily seminars with the Pros covering advanced techniques, post-processing, and creative storytelling
- "Workshop Member Time": one-on-one guidance tailored to your goals and gear setup
- Incredible critter-rich diving across Lembeh's world-famous muck sites and reefs
- A supportive environment for photographers of all levels — from



compact shooters to DSLR and mirrorless pros

Whether you're joining us with your first compact camera, a brand-new mirrorless rig, or years of DSLR experience, Capturing Critters in Lembeh 2027 promises to be a truly transformative experience — both underwater and behind the lens.

www.backscatter.com

CITES upgrade whale sharks and all mobulid rays (inc manta rays) from Appendix II to Appendix I

We have some excellent news to share! The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species – CITES – has voted to upgrade whale sharks and all mobulid rays (including manta rays) from Appendix II to Appendix I, the highest level of protection from international trade.

Appendix I is the top tier: it's reserved for species at serious risk of extinction. International commercial trade in their parts is banned, and governments are legally obliged to prevent that trade and enforce the rules. It's very hard to get a species onto Appendix I, which is why this decision to list whale sharks and manta rays is such a significant step forward. In practice, it means any shipment of their products should immediately raise a red flag with customs and enforcement agencies.

The Marine Megafauna Foundation team has been closely involved in the process. Dr Andrea Marshall led the global conservation assessment of giant oceanic manta rays, reef manta rays, and several of their mobula cousins, highlighting the threat to these species from fisheries. I led the new global assessment



of whale shark conservation status, formally published this year. These assessments brought together monitoring data and threat information from research teams around the world, and they were central evidence for both CITES and other international policy processes.

www.marinemegafauna.org

Bluefin Tuna & Blue Sharks - Best of Cornwall

Sep 2026



The SW coast of Britain is visited by two iconic marine species: bluefin tuna and blue sharks. In this unique adventure we will try to find both.

The return of Atlantic bluefin tuna to British waters after an absence of 60 years is one of the great marine comeback stories of recent times. These are the biggest tuna species, capable of growing larger than a polar bear and swimming faster than a great white shark. The bluefin can be seen leaping from the water as they pursue prey, and the holy grail would be to see them underwater on a baitball (word of warning: this is very difficult to achieve, but not impossible).

Blue sharks feed off the Cornish coast, and we can reliably find them by chumming the water to unlock exhilarating underwater encounters and photos.

Using an offshore safari model, we will set out each day in pursuit of elusive but worthwhile marine encounters. The timing of our visit is designed to maximise our chances when these waters are rich in life.

This is a brand new itinerary in my home waters.

www.henleypiers.com

Request Brochure

Tubbataha Reefs, Philippines with Nigel Marsh

22 - 31 May, 2026

Join Nigel Marsh for an incredible liveaboard dive trip to explore the legendary Tubbataha Reefs, Philippines. Declared a World Heritage site in 1993, the Tubbataha Reefs are located in the middle of the Sulu Sea, and fully protected they are overload with marine life. Only accessible for a few months of the year, the Tubbataha Reefs are made up of two large atoll reefs and a small coral reef.

Protected from fishing these reefs abound with reef sharks, schools of pelagic fishes, turtles, manta rays and a great variety of reef fishes and invertebrates. However, these reefs are also a good spot to see whale sharks, hammerheads and also dolphins and whales. Tubbataha Reefs are a wonderful spot for underwater photographers.

Our package includes:
Return Economy flights from Sydney, and domestic flights from Manila to Puerto Princesa.
One night accommodation at Puerto Princesa (twin share)
8 nights aboard the luxurious Atlantic Infiniti (twin share either Deluxe or Premium Cabin)
Up to 4 dives per day on full dive days
Tanks, weights, weight belts



All meals, tea and coffee
Airport transfers
Excluded payable locally: bar bill, gear hire, personal purchases, tipping, Nitrox (USD178), Marine Park fee (USD120) and Fuel Surcharge (USD120).

All bookings through Diveplanit, email: claire@diveplanit.com for details or booking or click on the link below.

[Trip Link](#)

claire@diveplanit.com

www.uwpmag.com



The Masters Class Series of Workshops for 2026

All workshops are fully inclusive of all meals, group ground transport, nitrox, guide, boat, diving fees
2 daily seminars, coaching and more!

Critterfest- January 27-FEB 6 + The Blackwater Edition FEB 6-Feb. 14

Bruce Shafer, Mike Bartick and Walter Marti-Photo, Editing and Video

Insider Divers-Simon Lprenz and Tobias Friedrich Feb 16-24th

Macro + Blackwater, Photo and Editing

Backscatter Macro Intensive + Blackwater March 8-18/18-22

Mike Bartick- Photo, Editing, Coaching



Bluewater Photo and Travel 2 sessions, April 16-26 | April 26-May 3

Photo, Editing, Coaching

Stephen Frink - Limited- May 9-16

Macro and Blackwater, Digital Darkroom

May 18-28 + The Blackwater Edition May 28-June 5th

Bruce Shafer, Mike Bartick, Walter Marti

Contact Mike Bartick for more details or questions- Groups are welcome

mike@DiveCBR.com or saltwaterphoto@live.com

Crystal Blue Resort, Anilao

www.DiveCBR.com

mike@DiveCBR.com saltwaterphoto@live.com

Get Your Macro On!



Alam Batu, Bali with Reef Photo

Jul 10-19, 2027



Dive, shoot, relax and learn alongside our Photo Pros in Indonesia's best destinations. Elevate your imaging with hands-on guidance at these expert-led workshops. Whether you just got your first system, recently upgraded or are an experienced shooter, our underwater workshops will improve your imaging in some of the world's best dive destinations.

We're always adding more Workshops to the list so join our newsletter to get notified when new destinations are added.

Alam Batu Beach Bungalow Resort is the go-to resort for underwater image makers looking to capture the macro critters of Bali. While dive resorts located

within Tulamben are limited to shore diving, Alam Batu is able to dive all of Tulamben's sites by boat as well as a host of other sites that are not shore accessible to other divers. With two large camera rooms and several large boats, Alam Batu will impress even the most seasoned underwater shooter.

Bali isn't just about diving and that's why they've included unlimited spa treatments and cultural tours in the package. Dive in the morning, spa in the afternoon? Tour in the morning and dive in the afternoon? Totally up to you! Join us at our favorite resort in Bali and take your macro imaging to the next level.

www.reefphoto.com

Macro Mastery Workshop – Lembbeh with Kate Jonker

22 May - 1 June 2026

1 FEMALE SHARING SPOT AVAILABLE

Ready to capture the magic of Lembbeh's world-famous critters?

This 10-night macro photography workshop is your chance to transform the way you shoot underwater.

Through detailed and easy to understand lessons and group image reviews, you'll gain the skills and confidence to produce incredible macro images.

You'll also receive a 1-on-1 Zoom coaching call with Kate before the trip so you can arrive feeling confident and camera-ready.

We'll explore one key technique every two days so you can properly absorb, apply, and refine each new skill with real underwater practice.

This workshop is structured to give you practical skills you'll use for life. By the end, you'll know how to:

- Set up your camera for razor-sharp macro images
- Use a diopter to fill the frame with small subjects
- Control your strobe positioning for even, creative lighting
- Master your snoot or snoot torch for dramatic lighting
- Capture dreamy bokeh and create artistic compositions



- Experiment with creative lighting tools like torches and accessories
- Build your own signature shooting style

www.katejonker.com



Lisbon Underwater Film Festival Publishes Official Selection of Films, February 13th-15th, 2026

The Lisbon Underwater Film Festival (LUFF) announced today the publication of its official list of selected films, in accordance with the dates established in the Festival Rules & Terms.

The 2026 selection features an outstanding and diverse programme of underwater cinema, bringing together internationally acclaimed filmmakers and emerging voices from around the world. Among the selected titles are *Deeper* by Jen Peedom, *Dive Into the Darkness* by Nays Baghai, *Sequoias of the Sea* by Natasha Benjamin and Ana Blanco, and *The Island of the Shark Guardians of Malpelo* by Annie Crawley.

The official selection also highlights new talent, including the documentary *23 Miles* by promising young Portuguese director Vasco Coelho, alongside many other compelling works.

In total, the Lisbon Underwater Film Festival will screen 48 films across three competitive categories — Short Film, Documentary, and Ocean Conservation — for more than 20 hours of ocean-themed screenings.

The festival will take place from



February 13 to 15, 2026, at the iconic Cinema São Jorge, in the heart of Lisbon, Portugal.

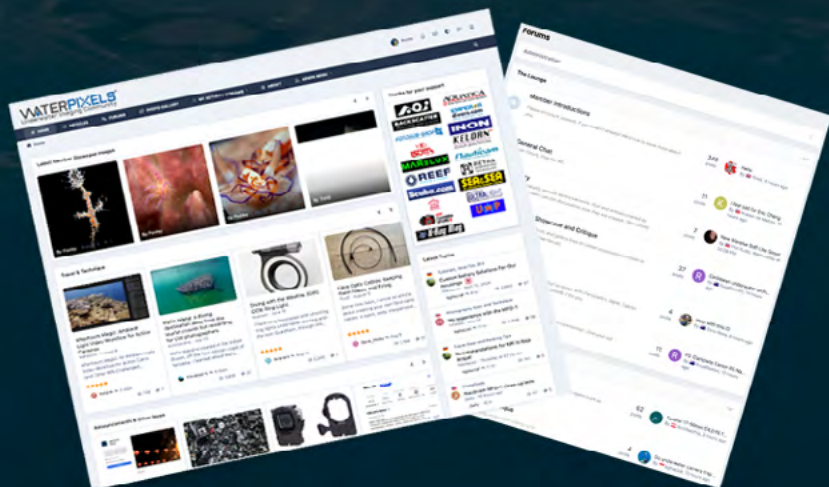
www.lisbonunderwaterfilmfestival.com

www.uwpmag.com



WATERPIXELS™

Underwater Imaging Community



Setup in late 2023, Waterpixels is a thriving online community for underwater image makers.

With over a 1000 members, the forum is run by a small, dedicated team of individuals who share a passion for underwater photography and who want to support the underwater imaging community.

Our objective is to provide members with a free community website and share advice, experience, knowledge and ideas that can enhance skills and creativity.

To support our commitment to keeping Waterpixels accessible to everyone, there is no charge for membership. We aim to cover running costs through sales of Waterpixels merchandise, donations from our community members, and, perhaps in time to come, carefully selected advertising partnerships. We do not sell or pass on data.

By joining Waterpixels, you become part of a vibrant community that is driven by a common love for underwater imaging. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting your journey, whether you use a large mirrorless or DSLR system, a GoPro or a compact, we welcome you to explore our platform, engage with fellow members, and take advantage of the wealth of resources available to you.

www.waterpixels.net

Mike & Mike Photography School



Join world-renowned underwater photographers Mike Haber and Mike Mesgleski for an immersive learning experience designed to take your underwater photography skills to the next level. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned pro, this hands-on workshop will provide expert guidance, stunning dive locations, and personalized feedback to help you master the art of underwater photography.

For over thirty seven years, Aggressor Adventures® has been the exclusive home of the Mike & Mike Photography School. This partnership has trained hundreds of photographers while diving in some

of the most beautiful destinations worldwide.

Whether you're a beginner or advanced photographer, Mike & Mike will help you quickly improve your underwater photography skills.

Through these immersive photography courses, Mike & Mike have helped their students create thousands of beautiful images. And with the skills they've learned from Mike & Mike, those students continue to create even more unique and captivating images long after they have left their workshops.

Mike & Mike

www.uwpmag.com

SEPTEMBER FRONTLINES UPDATE



Antarctica's Whales Under Threat

Dear Peter,

The Southern Ocean is one of the most remote places on Earth, yet the pressure on it has never been greater.

Every year, fleets of massive industrial trawlers descend on Antarctic waters and haul in staggering amounts of krill, billions of these tiny crustaceans that whales, penguins, seals, and seabirds depend on for survival. In fact, this year's haul was one of the largest ever recorded.



Krill are the foundation of the Antarctic food web. Remove them, and entire ecosystems collapse. For whales in particular, krill mean life itself.

www.seashepherd.org

www.seashepherd.org/donate/

Underwater Stories from the Red Sea

Camel Dive Club & Boutique Hotel in Sharm El Sheikh — one of the Red Sea's pioneering diving centres, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

To mark the occasion, we're launching a special initiative: Underwater Stories from the Red Sea — a creative contest dedicated to authentic underwater storytelling through photography and video.

The idea is to celebrate emotion and narrative, not just technical excellence — inviting divers, photographers, and ocean lovers to capture the spirit, atmosphere, and connection of the Red Sea.

The contest runs until February 1st 2026, with the winner receiving a diving holiday for two at Camel Dive Club, including one week's accommodation and five days of diving on a private boat alongside the jury and their partners — during our 40th Anniversary Week in December 2026 in Sharm El Sheikh.

The jury includes Alex Mustard, Pietro Formis, Alexander Kassler, Frederico Serra, and Vasco Pinhol, each bringing a unique voice in underwater photography and visual storytelling.



SCUBA COURSES



SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL



DIVING WITH CAMEL



PRIVATE BOAT RENTALS



DIVE & STAY



FOOD & DRINKS

www.cameldive.com