

Parting Shot

by Peter Rowlands

You've got me again because, once again, there have been no Parting Shot submissions :-(Hint, hint.

Anyway, a long, long time ago, November 2002, Debbie and I went to Dominica for a holiday dive trip and had a great time. We stayed at the Castle Comfort Lodge (CCL) and dived with Dive Dominica but also met and dived with Simon Walsh of Nature Island Dive. More of him later.

The house reef at CCL was off the jetty with a sloping reef down to about 15 metres. It was a doddle and perfect for a dive in between the two boat dives a day package.

In November 2002, UwP was just over one year old and still in its vertical format. Digital photography was in its infancy and I was using a Nikon Coolpix 5000 in a Subal CP5 housing. Magic Filters hadn't been invented yet so I was using a UR Pro filter and mainly available light. The house reef was perfect as a practice ground and the instant LCD playback made the learning curve much faster. There was an abundance of colourful subjects to practice on.

Finning along the edge of the reef on one of my early dives I spotted not one but two striated frogfish

(*Antennarius striatus*) - a perfect, static subject, superbly camouflaged. Because they had been so easy to spot, I thought no more about them until underwater photographer Maria Hults and organiser of the annual Beneath the Sea Show in New Jersey, who was also at the CCL, saw my images and was amazed. She had never seen one before in all her 30 (at the time) years of travel and, it turned out, the CCL dive guide at the time said he had only ever seen one, and that (then) was over a decade ago.

The frogfish remained put for a couple of days and were photographed by all interested; and then we never saw them again. Dominica has a lot to offer visiting divers and I wrote about the trip in UwP12 Apr/May 2003.

So what?

Well fast forward to November 2025, 23 years later, and I am walking the aisles at DEMA in Orlando and who do I bump into but Simon Walsh who is on the Dominica Tourist booth. Handshakes and back slapping later, we catch up and both remember the trip warmly but then he says "Do you know, no one has ever seen a striated frogfish since yours!" Feeling suitably



Coolpix 5000, Subal CP5 housing, standard lens, URPro filter, available light

special I said my cheerios and blow me down, in the next aisle was Maria Hults on the Beneath the Sea booth! Talk about a small world.

It just goes to show how lucky

I was on that most enjoyable trip to Dominica.

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Do you have a shot which has a story within a story? If so e mail it with up to 750 words of text and yours could be the next Parting Shot.

Images can be any size bigger than 20cm (horizontal or vertical) @ 150dpi saved as jpeg format and about 500 - 750 words would be fine.)

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