

ADEX 2006 report

by Eric Cheng

After three weeks in Palau and Yap at the Digital Shootout 2006, I flew to Singapore for this year's Asian Dive Expo (ADEX).

ADEX is tiny compared to shows in the United States and Europe, and I was told beforehand by more than one person to “not expect much.” But what I discovered when I arrived was a tight network of dive operators, tourism representatives, manufacturers, distributors, publishers, editors, and photographers working together to further the industry as a whole (for the most part). Three days hardly seemed like enough time to meet and befriend all of the people I wanted to see, and evenings were spent out dining and hanging out at bars, often into the early hours of the morning.

Bonica Precision



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William Wai (Left) of Bonica was showing off the Digital Snapper, a 3 megapixel “camera in a drysuit.” The camera itself is waterproof and dustproof for snorkeling. When placed in its underwater housing, it can then be used while scuba diving. The Digital Snapper can be purchased alone for \$199 USD, or with a tray, arm, macro lens (wet), and strobe for \$599 USD.

Green Force / Hugyfot

Tom Leys took me through a tour of the Hugyfot underwater housing for the Nikon D200. Hugyfot housings have always been beautiful and compact, designed to hug the housed camera for the smallest possible package. Hugyfot has traditionally not been well represented in the States, but you can expect more representation in the immediate future.

I can see why the housings have been popular



in their target markets: they feel great in the hand, and are well-designed. But a small, rounded package has its compromises: Hugyfot housings require an allen (hex) key to open and close, and the company sticks to this design principle, refusing to switch to any sort of latch -- until a nicely designed latch exists, they say.

Green Force lights are very popular in Europe, and are probably the only lights than can be assembled into different forms based on a modular light, cable, and battery system.

Olympus

A strong supporter of underwater photography, Olympus had a prominent booth where they were showing off E-System underwater housings & accessories and the new μ [mju:] 720SW camera, which is 7.1 megapixels and waterproof to 3 meters (10'). It looks like a wonderful camera for snorkeling and dive deck use.

Patima

Patima is a well-respected engineering firm in Korea, but has not penetrated much of the Western market yet. The first distributors are being set up in the States, and the housings will surely be successful if Patima can set up good distributors and contacts overseas. Patima housings are machined aluminum, and have a nice feel to them. They are priced well and may end up being one of the only machined aluminum housings roughly in the same price range as plastic housings.

Patima currently only has one dSLR housing (for the Canon Digital Rebel XT / 350D) and one video housing (for the Sony HC1), but have plans to expand their line-up soon. They also have a line of underwater lights, which seem to be high quality and flexible, with various mounting options and battery shapes.



Seacam



Consistent design is one of Seacam's goals, and it really shows. Seacam had on display their brand-new Nikon D200 housing, which has the same, luxurious feel as the rest of Seacam's products. I'll bet I could switch to a Seacam-housed D200 and barely notice.

I also played with Seacam's new strobe, which has an indicator



that displays the last fired % power in order to prevent wrong settings. Seacam claim that their strobe is the only one that can fire in E-TTL with two strobes connected at once (E-TTL support requires S6 bulkhead and cords). The Seacam strobe doesn't currently have removable batteries,

but they assured me that removable batteries will be a feature of the next strobe they design.

Eric Cheng

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