

Olympus Mju720 & PT-033

by Peter Rowlands

The Olympus Mju720 has a good solid feel right from the start. Its chrome and brushed metal surfaces will be hardwearing and its diminutive size hides a powerful performance. The 720 provides 7.1 megapixels with a 3x optical zoom (38-114mm equivalent 35mm).

For a full review visit the excellent www.dpreview.com.

Olympus more than any other digital compact manufacturer embraced the underwater market right from the start. As soon as a new model came to the market so too (usually) did a diving depth underwater housing. This combination must make the Olympus compacts the most popular for underwater use.

This popularity does not come undeserved because the quality of their housings is, in my opinion, the finest on the market. They have a feeling of rigidity and smoothness of operation that few other housings have and for them to be able to produce such a high standard at such a reasonable price is remarkable.

The other design attribute which separates Olympus from the opposition is their use of aluminium front port surrounds. These are

threaded to accept accessory lenses and filters and make them capable of taking on a wide range of subjects. This is a housing you can start off with straight away but then expand your accessories to suit your needs.

My only gripe with the housing design is the use of over centre catches for closure. Whilst these are very effective they are more complicated than other designs and require healthy fingernails to open them as they are well shrouded to prevent accidental opening.

The large 2.5" LCD screen is well shielded with an external rubber hood and, unlike most other manufacturers, the control icons



For someone who wants to dip their toe into underwater photography the Mju720 and PT-033 housing should prove an ideal partner.

(Right) The overcentre catches are good but need healthy fingernails to open them!

(Below) The camera fits very snugly into the housing and need no special alignment.





are moulded into the button surface making identification of each control extremely simple.

In a strange sort of a way the camera is easier to handle in the housing than it is on its own as the tiny fag packet size can make large fingers and thumbs unwieldy.

In terms of underwater use the 720 is basically a point and shoot auto camera with no control over shutter speeds and apertures except to a certain extent by using the 'scene' modes. Included in these modes are four settings for underwater but in practice I didn't find these improved things that much and would

recommend using a colour correcting filter for more colourful images (well I would, wouldn't I!).

Overall though for someone who wants to dip their toe into underwater photography the Mju720 and PT-033 housing should prove an ideal partner.

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