

Book Review

Reefs Revealed

By Alex Mustard

The Art of Diving was Alex's first book in collaboration with wordsmith Nick Hanna. Their combination produced what David Doubilet described as "The best book about diving since Jacques Cousteau's The Silent World" and of Alex's images he stated "Alex has a unique eye. This is underwater imagery at its best".

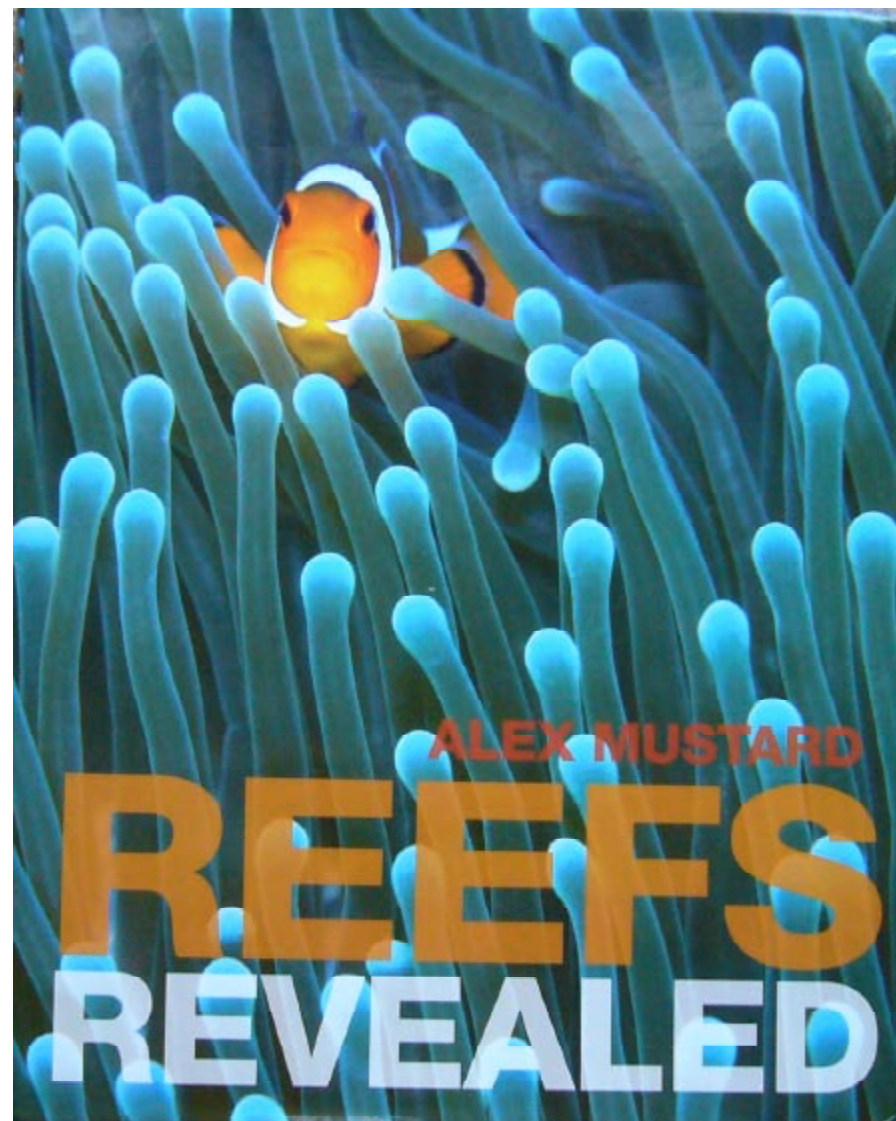
Reefs Revealed sees Alex flying solo, tackling a huge subject with his own combination of images and text. His background as a marine biologist provides him with an understanding of his subject but, as can so often happen with academics, the knowledge sometimes fails to transfer to the written word. Not so in this case. Alex's words are like his images - clean and concise, informative and readable. His introductory chapter is a good example of how to explain such a large subject globally yet precisely keeping the readers attention with a gifted blend of information and enlightenment.

The production of this book is opportune, coming at a time when the balance of the natural

world is in disarray with coral reefs representing the most delicate and totally dependent ecosystem of them all. Alex's images convey all that is magical about these wonderful and varied environments inhabited by weird and wonderful creatures. There is, quite literally, not a bad image in this book and, in true coffee table style, each image is accompanied by precise yet informative captions.

If pushed, I would make two negative comments. Firstly Alex has chosen not to include any images of damaged or dead reefs and I feel that this is an omission. Pictorially you come away from this book with an over-confident view of the situation that is far from the truth. Alex's text does cover the problem but I felt that even just a couple of 'reality' images would jolt the reader out of a false sense of wellbeing.

The second negative comment is, however, more personal. I'm credited in the Acknowledgements section and this is only right and proper as I travelled with Alex on several of the shoots for this book. Indeed I often gave up my diving time during these trips to act as his model underwater. So to read that, referring to my modelling, "a large object is useful to give some scale" is rather like one of Gary Larson's Far Side cartoons which shows the elderly Lone Ranger in a retirement home looking in an



Indian dictionary and discovering that kemosabe is "an Apache expression for a horse's rear end."

The kids of today have got no respect but, annoyingly, this particular one takes a mean image and writes a crisp word.

Reefs Revealed costs £30 and is published by Constable & Robinson

www.constablerobinson.com

Peter Rowlands
peter@uwpmag.com

www.uwpmag.com

Guidelines for contributors

The response to UwP has been nothing short of fantastic. We are looking for interesting, well illustrated articles about underwater photography. We are looking for work from existing names but would also like to discover some of the new talent out there and that could be you! UwP is the perfect publication for you to increase your profile in the underwater photography community.

The type of articles we're looking for fall into five main categories:

Uw photo techniques - Balanced light, composition, etc

Locations - Photo friendly dive sites, countries or liveaboards

Subjects - Anything from whale sharks to nudibranchs in full detail

Equipment reviews - Detailed appraisals of the latest equipment

Personalities - Interviews/features about leading underwater photographers

**If you have an idea for an article,
contact me first before putting pen to paper.**

E mail peter@uwpmag.com

How to submit articles

To keep UwP simple and financially viable, we can only accept submissions by e mail and they need to be done in the following way:

1. The text should be saved as a TEXT file and attached to the e mail

2. Images must be attached to the e mail and they need to be 144dpi

Size - Maximum length 15cm i.e. horizontal pictures would be 15 cm wide and verticals would be 15cm.

File type - Save your image as a JPG file and set the compression to "Medium" quality. This should result in images no larger than about 120k which can be transmitted quickly. If we want larger sizes we will contact you.

3. Captions - **Each and every image MUST have full photographic details** including camera, housing, lens, lighting, film, aperture, shutter speed and exposure mode. These must also be copied and pasted into the body of the e mail.